


**Resolution of the Board of Directors
In Support of Increased Park Funding through Proposition Four**

The Greater Houston Partnership supports Proposition 4 authorizing \$1 billion in general obligation bonds for maintenance, improvement, repair, and construction projects and provides specifically \$52 million in regional park maintenance funding.

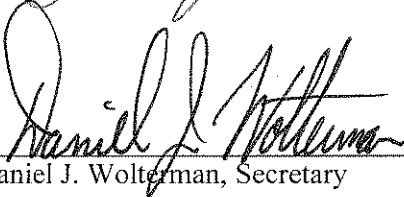
The Greater Houston Partnership further acknowledges that the preservation of historical sites and parks such as the Battleship Texas, San Jacinto Battleground, Lake Livingston and Varner Hogg Plantation promote and enhance the quality of life in the Houston region and ensures future economic growth.



John D. Hofmeister, Chairman



Jeff Moseley, President and CEO



Daniel J. Wolterman, Secretary



MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 3, 2007
TO: Greater Houston Partnership Board of Directors
FROM: Bob Nicholas, Chairman
Quality of Life Advisory Committee
SUBJECT: Resolution of the Board of Directors In Support of Increased Park Funding through Proposition Four

RECOMMENDATION

The Greater Houston Partnership supports Proposition 4 authorizing \$1 billion in general obligation bonds for maintenance, improvement, repair, and construction projects and provides specifically \$52 million in regional park maintenance funding.

The Greater Houston Partnership further acknowledges that the preservation of historical sites and parks such as the Battleship Texas, San Jacinto Battleground, Lake Livingston and Varner Hogg Plantation promote and enhance the quality of life in the Houston region and ensures future economic growth.

BACKGROUND

On November 1, 2006, the Greater Houston Partnership passed a resolution to support the recommendations of the State Park Advisory Committee including promoting:

- adequate funding to maintain and operate existing state parks
- additional funds for acquisition of new state parks to meet the needs of a growing state population, and
- support of local park grants.

These recommendations ensured increased parks access to future generations of park users as well as promoting and enhancing economic activity across the region. Regional State Parks, such as the Battleship Texas State Historic Site, Brazos Bend State Park, Galveston Island State Park, San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site, Sheldon Lake State Park and Varner Hogg Plantation promote and enhance the quality of life in the Houston region, as do local parks developed with park grants.

This spring, during the 80th Texas Legislative Session, House Joint Resolution 65 (HJR 65) passed creating Proposition 4. HJR 65 would permit the Texas Public Finance Authority to issue up to \$1 billion in general obligation bonds, the proceeds of which would be dedicated to maintenance, construction, repairs, and equipment purchases. This amount will result in \$52 million becoming available for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to spend during the 2008/2009 biennium for major park repairs.

The proposed amendment would appear on the ballot as follows:

“The constitutional amendment authorizing the issuance of up to \$1 billion in bonds payable from the general revenues of the state for maintenance, improvement, repair, and construction projects and for the purchase of needed equipment.”

More than 10 million people visit the state parks annually, generating \$793 million in sales impact, \$456 million in Texans’ personal income, and 11,928 jobs. Of the 28 reasons out-of-state visitors choose to visit Texas, 13 are State Park experiences. However, Texas ranks 49th in the nation in state spending per capita for state park operations. Less than *one-fifth* of the estimated tax revenues generated by sporting goods sales (earmarked up to \$32 million by the Legislature in 1993 to support the park system) actually go to the park system. Voters in 2001 approved \$101 million in bonds to support repairs in the State Parks, yet barely more than one-half of that money has been made available for parks.

Appointed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) in 2006, a statewide 17-member Advisory Committee released recommendations to the TPWD on ways to maximize funding options to ensure a properly maintained, adequately staffed, attractive and accessible state parks system. These recommendations were unanimously adopted by the TPWD and have been presented to the public and elected officials

The following are some of the regional park projects that will benefit from Proposition 4:

Battleship Texas	\$25,000,000
Lake Livingston	\$607,874
San Jacinto Battleground	\$435,750
La Porte Regional Office	\$290,936

In addition to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, eight other state agencies will benefit from the passage of Proposition 4. The Texas Department of Public Safety will use their funds to build a new driving training track (emergency vehicle operations course) and regional crime lab facilities. Texas Historical Commission bond proceeds will be used for county courthouse restorations and the repairs and renovations of those state historic sites that are to be transferred to THC from TPWD.

FISCAL IMPACT

Enhanced quality of life in the Houston region will ensure future economic growth.

OPPOSITION

None

RESOURCES REQUIRED

None