



For more information contact:  
Darrel McCook or Monica Thornton  
Piedmont Park Conservancy  
404-875-7275

**Breaking New Ground in Piedmont Park**  
***Key Community Leadership and Lead Gifts Kick Off 53-acre Park Expansion***

Atlanta – Piedmont Park Conservancy last week announced plans for its capital campaign that will ultimately transform 53 acres of blighted, fallow land into new, useable green space. Honorary chairs Stephanie and Arthur Blank, and campaign chair, Larry Gellerstedt III, President of Cousins Properties Office/Multi-Family Division, will lead the first phase of the campaign, themed “Breaking New Ground.”

John Izard, Executive Director for Cushman & Wakefield of Georgia, Inc. and Michael (Mickey) Brown, Executive Vice President, Customer Service Organization for Southern Company are Vice-Chairs for the campaign that will extend the Park north from the Park Drive Bridge to Piedmont Avenue at Ansley Mall.

The “Breaking New Ground” campaign has recently received challenge grants of \$10 million and \$5 million from the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation and The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, respectively. Other gifts include \$1 million from both AT&T and The Kendeda Fund, \$125,000 from the Georgia Power Foundation, and \$100,000 from both The Kresge Foundation and the Livingston Foundation. The City of Atlanta has committed approximately \$5 million in public funds as well.

“The Conservancy’s strong history of stewardship with Piedmont Park and its commitment to access, connectivity and environmental sustainability is in line with the goals of our family foundation,” Arthur Blank said. “The foundation is committed to funding projects along the BeltLine and the work being done at Piedmont Park is setting the standard for all future Atlanta parks.”

“The tremendous leadership that has signed on and the initial gifts received from corporations and foundations signal that we have broad-based support and are poised to succeed with this expansion plan -- our most ambitious undertaking to date,” said Debbie McCown, president and CEO of Piedmont Park Conservancy.

With an estimated budget of up to \$45 million, **phase one** of the expansion plan focuses on preparing the previously undeveloped land, improving public accessibility, as well as integrating pathways and trails along the proposed BeltLine. Park users will have immediate access to the landscaped pathways, benches and picnic areas throughout the newly created parkland.

The first phase will lay the foundation and infrastructure to accommodate future amenities, such as recreational fields, boundless playgrounds, community gardens, and an interactive water fountain and skate park.

“In a region where every acre of green space is precious and rare, Piedmont Park can grow by 40 percent without a single dollar from this campaign being spent for land acquisition,” said Larry Gellerstedt. “Integration of these 53 acres will dramatically transform how the park serves the public.”

Phase one also includes the renovation of the historic Bathhouse and pools, which will begin after Labor Day. The Kresge Foundation’s grant, which was awarded through its competitive Green Building initiative, will aid the Conservancy as it seeks Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification on the Bathhouse renovation.

As it has with all of its renovation projects, the Conservancy is developing plans for the pools and Bathhouse project with input from an advisory committee consisting of representatives from more than 50 neighborhoods, organizations and constituent groups along with representatives from Atlanta City government.

In 2005, Atlanta City Council approved the planned expansion, which addresses the eighth and final project outlined in the 1995 Piedmont Park Master Plan, and adheres to the fundamental principles guiding the rehabilitation of the Park.

Mayor Shirley Franklin commented, "The City of Atlanta was built on collaboration and partnership between our political leadership and our corporate and civic community. Piedmont Park Conservancy's relationship with the City of Atlanta is one of the best examples of this public-private partnership. By working together, we can act quickly to preserve 53 acres of additional parkland, something that is essential to our future quality of life."

“The fact that our organization has been entrusted to coordinate the enhancement of Atlanta’s most beloved park is truly an honor, and we are thrilled to be a part of the mayor’s vision of establishing a best in class park system for the people of metro Atlanta,” McCown said.

###

**About Piedmont Park Conservancy:** Founded in 1989, Piedmont Park Conservancy operates through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Atlanta to maintain and restore historic Piedmont Park. The Conservancy has already raised and invested more than \$23 million in private funds for several completed renovations around the Park, including Oak Hill, Active Oval, Lake Clara Meer and The Meadow.