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PRESS RELEASE

Images and renderings [here](#).

Credit: Courtesy of Emancipation Park Conservancy / Perkins & Will

Emancipation Park Conservancy Embarks on Dynamic Expansion Project

Upgrades will strengthen the park's role as a hub for community, history, and celebration for years to come.

HOUSTON—Oct. 13, 2025— Today, Emancipation Park Conservancy (EPC) announces the start of a major expansion project at Houston's historic Emancipation Park. Work is expected to be completed by June 2026, ahead of the park's annual Juneteenth celebration.

The expansion will significantly enhance the park's role as a cultural and community anchor in Houston's historic Third Ward. Plans include:

- **New State of the Art Performance Stage:** The stage will grow to more than 5,000 square feet, featuring a new outdoor performance stage, green room facilities, climate-controlled storage facility, and an audio-visual tech room. Located at the southeast corner of the campus near Elgin Street and adjacent to the historic Eldorado Ballroom, the new amenities will create a premier home for arts and cultural programming.
- **Cultural Center Renovation:** The 11,000-square-foot center will undergo a remodel, adding digital story telling capabilities and gift shop space and audio-visual capabilities for rentals while reimagining the front plaza with improved landscaping. These updates are designed to increase visitation, expand community events, and strengthen the park's role as a central gathering space for art, history and heritage.

"This investment in Emancipation Park is about more than expanding a space; it's about preserving history and creating a vibrant hub for cultural expression," said Ramon Manning, board chair, EPC. "It builds on the park's improvements in 2014 by allowing us to increase programming capacity and ensure the park remains a central gathering place for performances, celebrations, and community connection."

The project represents a significant investment in the future of Emancipation Park, with an estimated cost of \$18.5 million. Funding for the stage has been made possible through the support of lead funder, Kinder Foundation. Additional funders include Brown Foundation and Cullen Foundation. EPC is actively working to close the final gap in funding to ensure the project's success.

"Kinder Foundation is proud to continue supporting Emancipation Park, a place with deep cultural and historic significance," said Nancy Kinder, president and CEO, Kinder Foundation.

“The park’s upgrades, including the stage expansion, will ensure Emancipation Park remains a place of community and celebration for generations to come.”

“Emancipation Park is a valuable treasure for our community, and its history is an integral part of Houston's history. The significant upgrades will ensure that it continues to play a vital role in Houston's future. I thank Nancy and Rich Kinder for their generous investment, and I appreciate the conservancy for its dedication to the stewardship of Emancipation Park. I look forward to seeing everyone enjoying the park once construction is completed,” said Mayor John Whitmire.

“Emancipation Park is a cornerstone of Houston’s Park system and essential for bringing communities together. This project will invite more residents and visitors to connect, celebrate, and participate in its rich history,” said Kenneth Allen, director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department.

Due to the construction, the Cultural Center and the lawn between the Cultural Center and Recreation Center will temporarily close to the public. All other areas of the park — including the playground, splash pad, and sports courts — will remain open.

The expansion is being carried out in collaboration with Perkins & Will, the award-winning global architecture firm. The firm, which designed the park’s original improvements in 2014, has returned to lead the design of this project. Building on the success of the park’s updates in 2017, which enhanced key areas of the park and reinforced its role as a central gathering space for the Third Ward community, the expansion adds a new outdoor performance stage and remodels the Cultural Center. This project advances EPC’s core programmatic pillars: education, economic empowerment, health and wellness, and arts and culture.

About Emancipation Park Conservancy

Established in 2014, Emancipation Park Conservancy (EPC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to restoring, managing, and enhancing Emancipation Park. The organization is committed to creating a vibrant open space that embodies both environmental and community excellence, all while preserving the park’s historical legacy. Through targeted capital initiatives, operational improvements, strategic partnerships, dynamic programming, and engaging events, EPC strives to transform the park into one of the nation’s premier landmarks and an internationally recognized destination.

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