

From the Mid City Messenger

<http://midcitymessenger.com/2014/11/04/childrens-museum-on-track-to-open-in-city-park-by-2017/#more-7969>

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*The Louisiana Children's Museum Early Learning Village is slated to open in late 2017. Design is by Mithun, in collaboration with Waggoner & Ball Architects and Gyroscope, Inc.*

The Louisiana Children's Museum is on track to open a first-of-its-kind early childhood campus in New Orleans City Park by winter 2017, officials said at a recent board of director's meeting for the park.

Called The Early Learning Village, the museum will be built on 8.5 acres in City Park. The 58,000 square foot facility will house the children's museum with a nature center, literacy center, teacher resource center and performing arts center, according to information provided by the Children's Museum. It will also have plenty of outdoor activities, including an edible garden, kitchen, discovery walks and programs exploring the park's various ecosystems.

The new complex will also allow the museum to participate in on-site collaboration with other organizations, according to Alison Stouse, the new development's project coordinator.

Board members made the museum's new development official when they voted at last week's meeting to approve a resolution authorizing the park's employment corporation to execute a cooperative endeavor agreement with the Louisiana Children's Museum.

“The project is, for the moment on track,” Stouse told board members, adding that the museum’s architects visited the site last week. “We’ll be fully operational by 300th anniversary of the city if we are — and we seem to be — on track.”

The \$38 million Early Learning Village project is being funded in three ways, according to Stouse: private funds raised by the Louisiana Children’s Museum, state funding and whatever profit will be made when the museum sells its building on Julia Street.

The new project is getting more than \$20 million from the State of Louisiana, Stouse added, and the museum anticipates raising \$13 million through a private campaign goal. Of that, officials have already raised \$5 million, she added.

The park’s CEO, Bob Becker, added that officials had long waited for the agreement to be approved, since the park included the new children’s museum as part of its Master Plan as early as 2005. Earlier this year, the park held a hearing on the plan so the public could provide input, he said.

“This has been a long time coming,” Becker said.