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NEWS RELEASE

Mayor Sylvester Turner, Commissioner Rodney Ellis and Houston Parks Board announce significant partnership as Bayou Greenways 2020 nears completion

HOUSTON, TX – February 17, 2020 – Houston Parks Board and Commissioner Rodney Ellis today announced that Precinct One will enter into a partnership with Bayou Greenways 2020, the ambitious park project to create and connect over 150 miles of trails and 3,000 acres of green space along Houston’s major waterways. The partnership will include a \$7.4 million commitment pledge from Precinct One to expand park and trail access, preserve green space and increase environmental resiliency in low-to-moderate income areas served by Precinct One. The partnership and commitment is contingent upon approval of the Harris County Commissioners Court on February 25, 2020.

“I am proud to say that Bayou Greenways 2020 is on track for substantial completion by the end of 2020,” said Beth White, President and CEO of Houston Parks Board. “Precinct One and Commissioner Ellis have been longtime supporters of parks in Houston and we appreciate Precinct One partnering further with us to build Bayou Greenways.” When complete, 1.5 million Houstonians will live within 1.5 miles of a bayou greenway.

“Great parks and trails should be an essential part of every neighborhood. Everyone should have access to green spaces that enrich community experiences, improve quality of life, and foster environmental resiliency in all of our communities,” said Commissioner Rodney Ellis. “That’s why Precinct One is proud to invest in Bayou Greenways 2020 to benefit underserved communities through an investment that will connect them to opportunity, enrich quality of life and help protect neighborhoods from flooding.”

The enhancement and preservation of green space are essential components for flood protection and mitigation. This particular investment will benefit communities in low-to-moderate income areas that have historically gone without critical investments in flood protection.

Houston Parks Board is on track to deliver more than 150 miles of trails as Bayou Greenways 2020 nears completion. By the end of 2020, 94% of Bayou Greenways projects will be complete or under construction.

“Bayou Greenways 2020 is the single biggest down payment on park equity in Houston – a down payment that would not have been possible without the support of Houston voters in 2012 and the superb project management of Houston Parks Board,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “This initiative is a shining example of what can be accomplished when the public sector and nonprofit community unite under one goal.”

In 2012, thanks in part to the “Parks By You!” campaign, Houston voters overwhelmingly approved a bond proposal that set aside \$100 million for Bayou Greenways 2020. Houston Parks Board was responsible for raising an additional \$120 million for the initiative, which included an extraordinary lead gift of \$50 million in 2013 from the Kinder Foundation. This \$7.4 million commitment from Precinct One will help Houston Parks Board surpass this goal.

“Eight years ago, Nancy and I were inspired by the idea of a continuous system of parkland and connected trails along Houston’s bayous,” said Rich Kinder, Chairman of the Kinder Foundation. “Our gift was contingent upon successfully identifying a new source of funding to maintain the greenways after they were built. We wanted to help transform our City by adding significantly more parkland, but only if the new parkland would not become a burden to already stretched City budgets. Fortunately, the conservation and maintenance plan is working very well.”

As of January 1, 2020, Houston Parks Board maintains 2,300 acres of Bayou Greenways across the region. This includes regular mowing of green space, planting of wildflowers and native grass seeds, clearing litter and debris, graffiti abatement, and flood cleanup by the organization’s Conservation and Maintenance Team. Over the past three years, \$3 million has been spent to restore the greenways after storm events including the Memorial Day storm, Tax Day storm, and Hurricane Harvey. More than 2,800 dump truck loads of silt and flood debris have been removed to date.

Nine of Houston’s major bayous are being transformed as part of [Bayou Greenways 2020](#), a public-private partnership between the nonprofit Houston Parks Board, the City of Houston, and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. The initiative is implemented in close collaboration with the Harris County Flood Control District, which manages the county’s bayous and creeks for drainage and flood risk reduction.

For photos and b-roll of Bayou Greenways 2020, please click [here](#). Photo credit: **Anthony Rathbun, Courtesy of Houston Parks Board.**

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A nonprofit 501(c)(3) dedicated to providing access to quality parks and greenspace in the Greater Houston region, **Houston Parks Board** creates, improves, protects and advocates for parks for everyone. Since 1976, the organization has utilized public-private partnerships and its extensive philanthropic, government and community relationships to improve parks large and small. Houston Parks Board is currently leading the transformational \$220 million Bayou Greenways 2020 project to complete a 150-mile network of connected parks and trails along Houston’s major waterways. For more information, visit www.houstonparksboard.org.

Bayou Greenways 2020 is one of the most ambitious parks projects in the U.S. By transforming more than 3,000 acres of underutilized land along Houston’s major waterways into linear parks, Bayou Greenways 2020 will complete a 150-mile network of connected parks and trails. The \$220 million project will connect people, places, and green space while enhancing air and water quality, preserving flood-prone areas and stimulating economic development in Houston. Public investment was matched by significant private contributions including an extraordinary lead gift of \$50 million in 2013 from the Kinder Foundation.

The **Houston Parks and Recreation Department** (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,851 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.