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Judge@elmorepr.com | 309-531-2210**Full Guide: [Download Here](#)**Credit: *Courtesy of Houston Parks Board***Houston Parks Board Releases Disability-Inclusive Parks and Trails Guide***The nonprofit parks leader offers this information as optional considerations for all parks and greenspace projects*

HOUSTON — Nov. 12, 2025 — Houston Parks Board (HPB) is proud to announce the release of a Disability-Inclusive Parks, Trails, and Playgrounds Best Practices Guide (the Guide). Funded by The Brown Foundation, Inc., the Guide provides flexible recommendations that foster the development of inclusive parks and trails. Informed by comprehensive research, community focus groups, and a steering committee comprised of disability-inclusion experts, the Guide offers forward-thinking strategies to encourage all greenspace projects to integrate accessibility and inclusiveness at each stage of the process.

More than one-in-four adults in the U.S. have some form of disability, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Everyone deserves access to parks and greenspaces to connect with nature. Accessible parks and trails offer strong benefits, especially for people with disabilities. Spending time in nature supports physical health, reduces stress, and fosters social connection. These spaces also promote independence, helping people with disabilities stay active and engaged in their communities.

By focusing on equity, HPB aims to equip organizations nationwide with practical strategies to pursue disability-inclusive opportunities within their project parameters and available resources.

“Our goal is to inform park developers, advocates, and decision-makers and encourage them to use these guidelines when designing or developing parks and trails in their area,” said Beth White, President and CEO, Houston Parks Board. “We understand that each community and park landscape across the country is unique. Through the Guide, we share our collective knowledge to evolve standards for this work, laying the foundation for change in Houston and beyond.”

The Guide offers recommendations to enhance existing parks and trails, design new spaces that are both functional and inclusive, and assist planners, designers, and policymakers in incorporating inclusion into these projects. HPB has developed a framework to integrate disability-inclusion throughout the planning process. A critical component of each step is community engagement. From conceptual planning to evaluation, organizations must receive input from people with disabilities to inform decision-making.

“The Guide could not have been completed without the thoughtful collaboration and input from more than 50 stakeholders,” said Justin Schultz, Chief Program Officer, Houston Parks Board. “Though the information is centered on the Houston region, Houston Parks Board and our partners crafted the Guide to serve as a valuable tool for communities everywhere. We believe this can be used as a starting point or helpful reference for park and greenspace developers nationwide.”

The Guide examines and offers flexible strategies, ranging from enhanced general park features, such as entrances and signage, to specific types of playground equipment. The information provides aspirational examples that far exceed the minimum legal standards outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). HPB views the Guide as a living document and encourages all organizations to regularly evaluate and evolve these practices.

“As someone who grew up using a wheelchair, I know what it feels like to be on the outside looking in when public spaces aren’t built for everyone,” said Michelle Colvard, HPB Board Member and Inclusive Parks Study Guide Steering Committee Member. “This guide represents an important step toward changing that. It draws insights from Houstonians with disabilities, community stakeholders, and best practices from across the country to help cities design parks, trails, and recreational areas where all people can move, explore, and connect.”

HPB partnered with Huitt-Zollars to develop the Guide. In 2024, HPB and Huitt-Zollars proudly [released](#) Design Guidelines for Greenways and Pedestrian and Bike Trails, which received Gold Best Practice Awards from the American Planning Association (APA) Texas and APA Houston.

The Guide can be accessed and downloaded [here](#).

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Houston Parks Board expands, improves, and protects parks and greenspace throughout the Houston region. Since 1976, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization has utilized public-private partnerships and its extensive philanthropic, government, and community relationships to provide equitable access to over 14,000 acres of parks and greenspace. In addition to leading the transformational Bayou Greenways initiative, Houston Parks Board maintains more than 3,300 acres of the region’s greenspace and has supported over 250 park projects large and small. For more information, visit houstonparksboard.org.