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Park Photos: <https://bit.ly/2SvniGU>

Photo Credit: Anthony Rathbun, Houston Parks Board

NEWS RELEASE

Bayou Greenways Park now open on White Oak Bayou

New park celebrates the ambitious Bayou Greenways 2020 initiative

HOUSTON, TX – May 28, 2021 – Houston Parks Board is pleased to announce the opening of Bayou Greenways Park, located at the intersection of White Oak Bayou Greenway and the Heights Hike and Bike Trail. Named after the transformative Bayou Greenways initiative, the park celebrates the future fulfillment of a century-old vision for Houston’s bayous and parks to serve as the backbone of Houston’s park system.

To date, there are 122 miles of greenway trails being used by the public, and more than 3,200 acres of new greenways and parkland to explore as the Bayou Greenways 2020 project continues. In addition to constructing trails, Houston Parks Board has acquired 779 acres to date with more acquisition underway of new land for the greenways and adjacent parks. This land will be preserved and protected as parkland in perpetuity. Of the newly created parkland, 83% is in neighborhoods with low-to-moderate income or which have traditionally lacked parkland.

“Bayou Greenways is truly a Houston project. Big, bold and ambitious,” states Beth White, President and CEO of Houston Parks Board. “Houston is fast becoming a city known for its parks, and we are proud to play a role.”

“We were inspired by the plan to create greenways and parks in areas of Houston that have little or no access to parks,” shares Rich Kinder, chairman of the Kinder Foundation. “It is really meaningful to know that our investment in this project is being used to make sure that greenways and parks will be created along Halls, Hunting, Upper Greens and Sims bayous along with other major bayous.” In 2013, the historic lead gift of \$50 million from the Kinder Foundation, was the single largest park donation in Houston’s history.

About Bayou Greenways Park

At 1.47 acres, Bayou Greenways Park sits on land acquired by Houston Parks Board in 2008 and will provide an oasis for the highly used trails along White Oak Bayou. The park is framed by woodland on the southwest and a majestic line of sycamore trees along the northeast, with a broad grass knoll that rises gently to a height of more than 50 feet above the nearby White Oak Bayou channel. This high prospect offers dramatic views of the Houston skyline and the surrounding landscape.

“I congratulate the Houston Parks Board on another important park addition to the Bayou Greenways network. The new park provides another opportunity for Houstonians to enjoy the outdoors and also

recognizes the many donors who have partnered with the City to make Bayou Greenways a reality,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner.

Additional features of the park include:

- A bridge pathway lined with historic Houston bricks and a metalwork railing
- A main plaza featuring a map of Bayou Greenways with sandblasted design of Houston’s bayous and associated landmarks
- Views of White Oak Bayou from an overlook and shaded boardwalk area
- An open lawn with magnificent views of Downtown Houston
- Poetry panels along the lawn perimeter and a poetry wall at the main plaza
- Gateways with custom *Bayou Greenways Park* education and wayfinding signage
- Recognition of Bayou Greenways 2020 donors throughout the site, from panels at the gabion bridge and overlook railings to metal inscribed medallions on the gabion bridge
- Trail connections to the White Oak Bayou Greenway and Heights Hike and Bike Trail
- Seating areas with custom benches and brick-clad seating walls
- Bicycle racks
- Native tree, wildflower, and bioswale plantings
- Trailhead and parking lot located at 1648 Studemont Street on land owned by TxDOT

“The opening of the beautiful new Bayou Greenways Park is another example of the united effort to make Houston one of the nation’s most park accessible cities,” said Kenneth Allen, Interim Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “Thank you to our generous partners who recognize the need and importance of park equity in our City and were bold enough to do something about it. We applaud the ongoing work of Bayou Greenways 2020 and wish it much success going forward.”

About Bayou Greenways 2020

By transforming underutilized land along Houston’s major waterways into linear parks, Bayou Greenways 2020 will deliver a 172-mile network of connected parks and trails when complete. The initiative is the result of a dynamic public-private partnership between Houston Parks Board, the City of Houston, and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. The complex and groundbreaking 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.

As Houston Parks Board continues work on the greenways, Houstonians are encouraged to discover and explore the new trails and parkland and celebrate what has been recognized as the single largest investment in park equity in Houston. 39 miles of new trail are in various stages of planning, design, and construction. An additional 11 miles of greenway are delayed due to permitting or postponed as Houston Parks Board coordinates with projects by other entities along the bayous. Upon completion, the organization will deliver well over the 150 miles of trails originally conceived at the beginning of the project.

The fundraising journey began in 2012 when Houston voters resoundingly approved a bond to provide \$100 million in funds to the Bayou Greenways 2020 initiative. In 2013, City Council approved a formal agreement with Houston Parks Board (HPB) establishing HPB’s maintenance responsibilities and standards for the Bayou Greenways.

Thanks to the visionary leadership of the Kinder Foundation and its transformational gift of \$50 million, as well as the extraordinary generosity of the Hildebrand Foundation, Houston Endowment, The Brown Foundation Inc. and many other Houstonians, Houston Parks Board surpassed its goal of assembling more than \$225 million to invest in Bayou Greenways.

Maintaining the Bayou Greenways

As part of the commitment to the Kinder Foundation, Houston Parks Board is preserving and caring for the Bayou Greenways improvements. Today, the Bayou Greenways Conservation and Maintenance Team is responsible for the management and care of approximately 2,600 acres of green space. This includes regular mowing, litter cleanup, debris removal, clearing of graffiti, and amenity restoration. Further, this team plants wildflowers and native plants, installs bird and bat boxes, and engages the Green Team volunteers in stewardship of conservation areas.

Since 2014, Houston Parks Board has removed 1,381 dump truck loads of floatable litter and debris from the greenways as part of regular maintenance activities. More than 2,910 dump truck loads of silt and flood debris have been removed to date following significant rain events.

For press kit including photos and Bayou Greenways 2020 fact sheet, click [here](#). **Photo credit: 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 greenspace 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.