



Press Release

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\$6.6 Million in Transportation Enhancement Program Grants Provide Funding for Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail Projects *The Four Funded Projects Will Increase Connectivity Across Houston Area*

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department has received four Transportation Enhancement Program grants totaling \$6,594,406 to go toward the completion of four major hike and bike trail projects. The projects underscore the City's continuing commitment to providing trail connectivity to neighborhoods across the area.

"These four grants will help us provide Houstonians with connections to existing off-road trails that will have long lasting positive impact on current and future generations," said Mayor Annise Parker. "This helps toward our goal of stringing our green spaces together to provide expanded recreation options and improved quality of life for our residents."

Three of the four funded projects will connect existing trails, parks, bus and METRO rail stops, and neighborhoods along Brays Bayou. The fourth will tie into an ongoing flood control project on Hunting Bayou.

"We are working with our existing partners to make trail connections that make a difference in people's daily lives," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "That partnership at work between city, county, and other entities involved in transportation will greatly increase the ability for people to get around and enjoy life in Houston – without always relying on cars."

The four HPARD projects all qualified for TxDOT Transportation Enhancement Program grants under Category 1: Provision of Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles. The projects include:

1. Mason Park Pedestrian Bike Bridge (TE Funding: \$3,544,579)
The construction of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Brays Bayou, along with 200 feet of new trail on each bank, will link existing paths with neighborhoods, business districts, and community service institutions.
2. University Connection (TE Funding: \$1,844,655)
This project will provide a safe pedestrian/bicycle crossing for Brays Bayou near two new light rail transit centers, two universities, and many neighborhoods in the MacGregor Park area. It will connect paths along Brays Bayou and Martin Luther King Boulevard.

3. Hunting Bayou Gaps (TE Funding: \$607,430)
This project will connect 1.5 miles of trails along Hunting Bayou with one mile of new construction. It will use work underway as a Harris County Flood Control project to connect Mickey Leland and Hutcheson Parks.
4. Hermann Park/Brays Bayou Connectors (TE Funding: \$597,742)
These trails are part of a comprehensive plan to connect 35 miles of existing trails stretching from the Houston Ship Channel to West Houston. It will complete heavily used trails in Hermann Park and increase pedestrian connection to several universities and the Texas Medical Center.

The estimated total overall project cost is \$12.6 million: \$6.6 million in Federal funds and a combination of public and private funds of \$6 million for the local match. The Houston Parks Board (HPB) is providing the local match totaling \$4,087,978 for construction of 3 projects—Mason Park Bike/Pedestrian Bridge, University Connections, and Hunting Bayou Gaps. The match will be funded with City of Houston Bond funds appropriated through the BG2020 Interlocal Agreement. The HPB is using private funding estimated at \$1,650,303 to pay for the design of the 3 projects. The Hermann Park Conservancy is providing the local match for construction and design totaling \$179,916 for the Hermann Park/Brays Bayou Trail Connectors.

TxDOT administers the federally funded Transportation Enhancement Program (TE), which provides opportunities for non-traditional transportation related activities. Projects should go above and beyond standard transportation activities and be integrated into the surrounding environment in a sensitive and creative manner that contributes to the livelihood of the communities, promotes the quality of our environment, and enhances the aesthetics of our roadways. Projects undertaken with enhancement funds are eligible for reimbursement of up to 80 percent of allowable construction costs.

Project nominations are submitted to the TxDOT Houston District Office. Eligible nominators are limited to state agencies or political subdivisions eligible to receive and manage federal transportation funds. The Houston-Galveston Area Council Metropolitan Planning Organization reviews all nominated projects in their area which passed TxDOT and Federal Highway Administration's initial review of eligibility for evaluation and selection within their allocated funding. The H-GAC Board approved the H-GAC's Transportation Advisory Council project selections in their May meeting. The Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) has the final approval. H.P.A.R.D.'s projects were approved by the TTC in their July meeting.

About the Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,832 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.