



Press Release

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Connectivity Celebrated in Downtown Ribbon Cutting Ceremony *Buffalo Bayou Path Linked Through TIGER Grant*

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, the Buffalo Bayou Partnership and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department will celebrate the completion of the Buffalo Bayou Path: Smith Street/Travis Street Link at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 31, 2016. The ribbon cutting ceremony celebrates the completion of the second of six TIGER funded projects currently underway in the city. The project unites previously disconnected bayou bank pathways for the use of walkers, runners, and bikers. Funding for this project was made possible through a \$15 million USDOT Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant awarded in 2012 for the Houston Regional Bike/Pedestrian Connections to Transit project. The total project cost for the Buffalo Bayou Path is \$4.8 million. Construction costs total \$3,862,651 with the Buffalo Bayou Partnership contributing over \$1 million for design and construction, and the Main Street/Market Square Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ #3) contributing \$150,000 to construction.

"This new piece of Houston's bayou trail system is much more than three-tenths of a mile of steel and concrete," said Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner. "It is a beautiful piece of engineering and another big step forward in our plan to link our bayous and create an extensive, world-class trail system fitting to our Bayou City."

The project ties together two stretches of the Buffalo Bayou Trail by bridging a gap between Travis and Smith Streets. The scope of the project includes construction of approximately 1,500 linear feet of concrete trail, bridging, and lighting. The Buffalo Bayou Partnership is the project partner that provided the local matching funds for the completion of this project.

"The TIGER trail is a vital link in Buffalo Bayou Partnership's efforts to create a trail system from Shepherd Drive on the west to downtown's Allen's Landing and then all the way to the Port of Houston Turning Basin. We are very proud that our organization was able to contribute \$1 million toward the matching requirement of the federal TIGER grant," said Anne Olson, President of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership.

The Buffalo Bayou Path: Smith Street/Travis Street Link project continues the goal of uniting 6 trail segments along major transportation corridors to create alternative transportation connections for Houstonians.

"We are happy to be opening another link in our network of pedestrian and bike trails," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "This project makes a huge difference in the way we get around in Houston. Building out all the gaps in our trail system improves off-road transportation and recreation opportunities in our city."

The six separate TIGER projects are expected to improve mobility in Houston by eliminating major gaps on primary off-street bicycle/pedestrian transportation routes and in the city's bike grid. They are also expected to provide extensive connections to residences, employment centers and bus and rail transportation and complete a portion of the inner city bikeway plan for shared use paths. The expanded pathway system will eventually include new directional signs and pedestrian amenities, including benches, bike racks, waste receptacles, lighting, trees and other landscaping, and an electric shuttle between two University of Houston campuses. The Houston Regional Bike/Pedestrian Connections to Transit projects include:

- 1) The White Oak Bayou Path: Alabonson Road/Antoine Drive (0.8-mile commuter extension of shared-use path)
- 2) The White Oak Bayou Path: 11th Street/Heights Bike Trail/Stude Park Links (1.4-mile gap closures and bridge construction project)
- 3) The White Oak Bayou Path: Connections to Residential Neighborhoods and Buffalo Bayou Path (0.2-mile gap closure project and 0.7-mile connections to shared-use path)
- 4) The Buffalo Bayou Path: Smith Street/Travis Street Link (0.3-mile gap closure project)
- 5) East Downtown Connections: Transit/Residential/Commercial Connections (8.6-mile gap closures and key connections project)
- 6) Brays Bayou Path Gap: MLK/Old Spanish Trail Link (1.6-mile gap closure project and 0.6-mile alternative transit path)

About the Buffalo Bayou Partnership

Created in 1986, Buffalo Bayou Partnership is the 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization transforming and revitalizing Buffalo Bayou, Houston's most significant natural resource. For more information, visit www.buffalobayou.org.

About the Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,859 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 Summer Food Service Program or the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.