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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**HOUSTON PARKS BOARD RECEIVES \$3.6 MILLION FROM LOCAL FOUNDATIONS**

***The Brown Foundation, Inc. and The Wortham Foundation, Inc. award funding to Bayou Greenways 2020 project***

**HOUSTON – July 1, 2015** – The Houston Parks Board announced today that The Brown Foundation, Inc., and The Wortham Foundation, Inc., have pledged a \$2 million grant and a \$1.6 million grant, respectively, in support of Bayou Greenways 2020, a city-wide public-private endeavor led by the Houston Parks Board that will create a continuous parks system along Houston’s major waterways.

“Both the Brown Foundation and the Wortham Foundation have long been supporters of parks and green spaces in Houston,” said Roksan Okan-Vick, FAIA, executive director of the Houston Parks Board. “It is extremely gratifying to have this vote of confidence from these outstanding institutions.”

When it is complete, Bayou Greenways 2020 will elevate Houston to one of the top “quality of place” cities in the nation. It is the most ambitious park acquisition and improvement project in the history of our city. Bayou Greenways 2020 will add 1,500 acres of new parkland throughout the City of Houston and connect 150 miles of new and existing trails along nine of Houston’s bayous.

In addition to the many benefits that come with expanding park acreage in Houston, the Bayou Greenways will help make parks accessible to many Houstonians – and, just as important, will bring parks to neighborhoods that have consistently been “under-parked.” The Bayou Greenways will run through nearly every neighborhood in the city, creating parks right where people live.

The “Parks by You!” city bond referendum of 2012, approved overwhelmingly by Houston voters, set aside \$100 million for Bayou Greenways 2020. Houston Parks Board is responsible for raising the additional \$120 million in private funds for the \$220 million project. More than \$93 million has been raised to date, including the most recent grants from The Brown Foundation and The Wortham Foundation.

Founded by Herman and Margaret Root Brown and George R. and Alice Pratt Brown in 1951, The Brown Foundation has distributed more than \$1.4 billion in grants to public charitable purposes, principally for support, encouragement and assistance to education, the arts and community service.

The Wortham Foundation was established in 1958 by Gus and Lyndall Wortham, and today the foundation exists to continue Gus and Lyndall's legacy, primarily in their support for the performing arts and museums and civic beautification projects.

Both foundations have made significant impact in the improvement of the city of Houston and in the lives of its residents.

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The **Houston Parks Board** is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization whose mission is to create, improve, protect and advocate for parkland in the Greater Houston region. Since its inception in 1976, the organization has raised and leveraged millions of dollars and touched at least 75 percent of the City's parkland either through acquisitions and/or capital improvements. For more information, visit [www.houstonparksboard.org](http://www.houstonparksboard.org).

**Bayou Greenways 2020** will create a continuous park system along Houston's major waterways. The project will establish an interconnected system of parks and trails linking people, places and green space while enhancing air and water quality, reducing flooding and stimulating economic development. The Houston Parks Board is leading the private fundraising of \$120 million and managing the acquisition, design and construction of the Bayou Greenways 2020 Project over the next five years. Bayou Greenways 2020 was made possible by Houston voters who supported the "Parks by You!" city bond referendum of 2012. For more information, visit [www.bayougreenways.org](http://www.bayougreenways.org).