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PRESS RELEASE

Houston Parks Board's Partnership with Google Maps Makes Houston's Greenspaces Accessible Online

Miles of trails and parkland now available on Street View for virtual tours

HOUSTON – May 3, 2016 – Beginning today, people around the world can tour Houston's parks, trails and greenspace network without leaving their homes, thanks to a partnership between Houston Parks Board (HPB) and Google to make some of the most popular outdoor recreational areas in Houston accessible on Street View in Google Maps.

The launch of the images occurred at today's press conference in Austin, where Google and Texas tourism leaders announced that more than 80 locations and tourist attractions captured through Street View imagery across the state of Texas will be featured on Google Maps in partnership with Houston Parks Board, Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau and Visit El Paso. This announcement coincides with National Travel and Tourism Week, May 1 – 7, which celebrates the contributions made to the U.S. economy by the travel industry.

"The new Street View images make Houston's green spaces accessible in a whole new way," said Tom Bacon, Houston Parks Board chairman. "Anyone with internet access can now virtually explore some of what our city has to offer in terms of outdoor recreation and routes for off-street transportation. The Street View images of the bayous also give a glimpse of what is in store when Bayou Greenways 2020 is complete: a continuous parks system along Houston's major waterways."

From the Pyramids of Giza to the Amazon Rainforest, Street View features panoramic imagery of destinations around the world. Many of these images are collected using the Google Trekker, a 40-pound backpack equipped with GPS technology and cameras that record a 360-degree image. The goal of the Trekker is to access locations only accessible by foot.

As participants in the [Trekker Loan Program](#), Houston Parks Board personnel carried the Trekker approximately 150 miles to collect images of Houston parkland and the emerging Bayou Greenway network, including along [Brays Bayou Greenway](#), [White Oak Bayou Greenway](#) and [Halls Bayou Greenway](#). With this imagery, people all over the world can take self-guided tours of these locations, giving them a sense of what it would be like to visit in person.

“As Texans, we love the outdoors, and thousands of residents and visitors take advantage of our parks and trails on a daily basis,” said Gerardo Interiano, Google’s Head of External Affairs in Texas. “Today people can take virtual tours of more than 80 locations across our beautiful state right from the Google Maps app on their Android or iOS phones. Now the rest of the world can know, what Texans already know, and what Willie Nelson taught us: there’s no place but Texas.”

Of the 31 sites mapped through the Trekker program, 25 are part of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department park and greenspace system. This includes trails currently being developed as part of the Bayou Greenways 2020 program.

“Google Trekker will allow people from all over the world to take a look at some of Houston’s most beautiful parks and greenspaces,” said Joe Turner, Director of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “This will give the world a different view of Houston.”

Additional mapped parks and greenspaces that can also be viewed on Street View in Google Maps include the following parks within the Houston Parks and Recreation Department’s system:

- Sections of [White Oak Bayou Greenway](#), [Hunting Bayou Greenway](#) and [Sims Bayou Greenway](#)
- [MacGregor Park](#)
- [Hermann Park](#) and the [Bill Coats Bridge](#)
- [Memorial Park](#)
- [Buffalo Bayou Park](#)
- [Keith-Wiess Park](#)

As well as several county parks, including:

- [Arthur Storey Park](#)
- [Terry Hershey Park](#)

Special thanks to the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Memorial Park Conservancy, Hermann Park Conservancy, Harris County Precinct One, Harris County Precinct Three and others that welcomed the Trekker to photograph their greenspaces.

To view a full list of trails, greenways and parkland in Houston now available on [Google Maps](#), visit www.houstonparksboard.org/google-trekker.

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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.

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. Houston Parks Board is leading the fundraising of \$120 million and managing acquisition, design and construction of the Bayou Greenways 2020 Project over the next several years. Bayou Greenways 2020 was made possible by Houston voters who supported the “Parks by You!” city bond referendum of 2012.

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages 370 parks totaling 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 Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.