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NEWS RELEASE

Bayou Greenway Construction Begins on Sims Bayou

Landscaping, trails planned between Heatherbrook Drive and Hillcroft Avenue

HOUSTON, TX – October 13, 2016 – On Thursday morning, Houston Parks Board, Council Member Larry Green, District K, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department and the Harris County Flood Control District celebrated the groundbreaking of a new segment of Sims Bayou Greenway. This new linear park, which will stretch 1.8 miles along the bayou from Heatherbrook Drive to Hillcroft Avenue, will be just one piece of the ambitious parks project Bayou Greenways 2020.

Bayou Greenways 2020 is a public-private partnership between the nonprofit Houston Parks Board, the City of Houston and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department and is being implemented in close collaboration with the Harris County Flood Control District. It will transform 3,000 acres of underutilized land along nine major waterways into a 150-mile linear park system that crisscrosses the city, giving the public unprecedented access to one of Houston's best natural amenities: its bayous.

Along this new segment of Sims Bayou Greenway, existing asphalt trail will be replaced with a new concrete hike-and-bike trail, and native wildflowers will be planted throughout. The project will also include a trailhead at the future site of Blue Ridge County Park with parking, signage and seating, as well as 1,000 new tree plantings thanks to Trees for Houston. Construction of this segment of greenway, designed by landscape architecture firm Murr Incorporated and engineering firm A & S Engineers, Inc., is expected to be complete by spring 2017.

"Today's groundbreaking on Sims Bayou Greenway is another success in our effort to connect people all over Houston to parks and greenspace – and to one another," said Beth White, President and CEO of Houston Parks Board. "This project will transform this underutilized area into a neighborhood destination. This is the first Bayou Greenways 2020 project to break ground on Sims Bayou, and we are excited to bring new opportunities for recreation, conservation and alternative transportation to south Houston."

"I'm thrilled that construction of this Bayou Greenways project along Sims Bayou is finally underway," said Council Member Larry Green. "The District K constituents voted for the Bayou Greenways 2020 initiative back in 2012. Now, we are excited that the first leg of this transformative hike-and-bike initiative has begun. This new bayou amenity will offer the greater Hiram Clarke community the comforts seen in other Bayou Greenways projects across the Houston landscape."

"This project is another giant step forward for Houston's green spaces," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "The ambitious effort to connect neighborhoods across the city with bayou trails will have an almost unimaginable effect on the way we live as we go forward. I can't wait to see how our friends and neighbors will use this new park space for recreation and transportation!"

“The Bayou Greenways project is a great compliment to the recently completed Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction project,” said Matt Zeve, Harris County Flood Control District Director of Operations. “The open space along the bayou, made possible by the project, provided the ‘palette’ for the Houston Parks Board and partners to deliver these linear park features in a cost-effective manner so that communities along Sims Bayou can enjoy them.”

In 2012, thanks in part to the “Parks By You!” campaign, Houston voters overwhelmingly approved a bond proposal that set aside \$100 million for Bayou Greenways 2020. Houston Parks Board is raising a matching \$120 million and is managing acquisition, design and construction of the Bayou Greenways. More than \$103 million has been raised to date, including a historic \$50 million donation from the Kinder Foundation.

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A nonprofit 501(c)(3) dedicated to providing access to quality parks and greenspace for all people, **Houston Parks Board** creates, improves, protects and advocates for parkland in the Greater Houston region. 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 create 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 create 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.