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Media Contact:

Mireya Reyna, Elmore

Mireya@elmorepr.com | 832-459-7761

[Images Here](#)

Credit: *Courtesy of Houston Parks Board*

Award-Winning Design Firm Selected to Lead Historic Renovation of Houston’s MacGregor Park

HOUSTON – May 22, 2024 – Houston Parks Board is thrilled to announce that the internationally renowned design firm Hood Design Studio, led by creative director Walter Hood, has been selected to spearhead the historic transformation of MacGregor Park following a comprehensive national search for a landscape architect to lead the renovations. Hood brings a wealth of experience in culturally significant projects and a deep understanding of working closely with communities to deliver on their aspirations. The renovation project, with a total cost of \$54 million, is a collaborative effort involving multiple funding partners, including a \$27 million catalyst gift from Kinder Foundation. Design work has recently begun, with construction anticipated to start in late 2025.

A 2019 MacArthur Fellow, Hood is known for his innovative approach to urban design. His career, spanning nearly four decades, has garnered international acclaim, with commissions such as the monumental sculpture [Double Sights](#) at Princeton University, conceptual gardens for the [International African American Museum](#) in Charleston, South Carolina, and the [Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing Park](#) in Jacksonville, Florida. In Houston’s historic Third Ward neighborhood, Hood Design Studio curated the installation for [Project Row House’s ‘Shotguns 2001’ exhibit](#). These projects embody Hood's approach of blending history, culture, and equity into transformative landscapes.

“The collaboration between Hood Design Studio and our esteemed local partners represents a pivotal moment for MacGregor Park,” said Nancy Kinder, President and CEO, Kinder Foundation. “We are proud to support this milestone project that helps to ensure the community can enjoy this beloved greenspace for generations to come.”

A multidisciplinary team, with significant local representation, will also support the project under the leadership of Hood Design Studio. Talley Landscape Architects will serve as the Landscape Architect of Record, while Moody Nolan will contribute their expertise in building architecture and interiors to ensure the facilities of MacGregor Park can be enjoyed by the community for decades to come. Walter P. Moore will handle civil, structural, traffic, and water resource engineering, with Infrastructure Associates managing mechanical, electrical, and plumbing and lighting. Hollaway Environmental will focus on ecological considerations, and Omega Associates and Engineers will support geotechnical engineering.

“We are honored to work alongside the Houston Parks Board, the Kinder Foundation, and project stakeholders to reimagine MacGregor Park. Our design will build on the masterplan while paying homage to the park’s historic link to the community and cherished recreational amenities,” said Walter Hood, Creative Director, Hood Design Studio. “Ultimately, we seek to infuse the park with nature — a realization that it sits along Brays Bayou. Situating this park within nature is an aspect that many other parks in Houston have benefitted from, but to date, MacGregor has not. Together, we are committed to



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creating a revitalized space that enhances MacGregor Park as a beloved community space, that is idiosyncratic, embraces difference, and tells a unique story.”

For nearly a century, MacGregor Park has served as a gathering and recreational space for many Houstonians. The renovations to MacGregor Park represent a unique opportunity to revitalize a historic greenspace in Houston, while preserving its cultural significance and legacy. The highly active park is home to a Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial statue by sculptor Ken Washington, as well as the Homer Ford Tennis Center where Olympic and professional athletes, like Zina Garrison, have trained. Additionally, the park’s basketball pavilion was much loved by Phi Slama Jama, the University of Houston’s basketball team that rose to fame from 1982–1984.

“Walter’s past work emphasizes the importance of working with community to honor history, celebrate culture and inspire innovation, making him a natural fit with Houston’s iconic MacGregor Park,” said Beth White, President and CEO, Houston Parks Board. “Having Walter and Hood Design Studio lead the transformation of MacGregor Park is an incredibly exciting opportunity.”

In December 2023, the Houston City Council approved long-planned renovations of the 65-acre park along Brays Bayou in southeast Houston, following years of extensive and thoughtful community engagement to ensure that the design reflects the needs and aspirations of the local residents.

“I am thrilled by the milestone announcement of Hood Design Studio leading the historic renovation of MacGregor Park,” said Dr. Teddy McDavid, Chair of the MacGregor Park Conservancy and Chair of the Friends of MacGregor Park. “This marks a significant step towards revitalizing our beloved park, which holds immense cultural and recreational value for the southeast Houston community. I am excited to witness the impact the transformation will have on fostering a stronger sense of belonging and connectivity among this entire community.”

A standards committee comprised of representatives from the City of Houston, Kinder Foundation, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, and the Houston Parks Board will oversee the design and construction.

“The addition of Hood Design Studio to our project team brings expertise and creativity that aligns perfectly with our vision for preserving the rich cultural and historic heritage of MacGregor Park,” said Barron Wallace, Chairman, Houston Parks Board. “As a 30+ year resident of the community where MacGregor Park is located, I am confident that these improvements will ensure the vitality of the park and adjacent trails for future generations of the city.”

Additional funding for the project comes from the City of Houston which contributed \$5 million and funding the ongoing maintenance plus another \$1.5 million from the City of Houston’s Capital Improvement Plan; Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) 7 will contribute \$4 million designated for parking and access improvements; and a \$4 million Community Project Funding Grant sponsored by Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee. Texas Children’s Hospital has contributed \$1.5 million with Houston Parks Board raising an additional \$11 million towards the improvements.

“Parks are the canvas of a community, and park equity is the root from which community wellness grows,” said Kenneth Allen, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “We are truly grateful for the public/private investment and expertise that will breathe new life into MacGregor Park and



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expand park benefits to serve the diverse needs of all Houstonians, especially the residents of southeast Houston.”

“For almost 70 years, the mission of Texas Children’s has been to help ensure the health and well-being of the communities we serve. We are proud to help support the revitalization of such a historic park,” said Mark A. Wallace, CEO, Texas Children’s. “It’s great to be part of this project and contributing to the beautification of a park visited by many of our patients and families.”

For additional details regarding MacGregor Park and to stay informed of the latest updates, visit <https://houstonparksboard.org/macgregor-park/>.

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Houston Parks Board expands, improves, and protects parks and greenspace in the Houston region. Since 1976, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization has utilized public-private partnerships and its extensive philanthropic, government, and community relationships to provide equitable access to quality parks and greenspace to the Greater Houston region. In addition to leading the transformational Bayou Greenways initiative, Houston Parks Board cares for more than 2,600 acres of greenspace and supports park projects large and small. For more information, visit houstonparksboard.org.

Hood Design Studio, Inc., founded in 1992, is a social art and design practice based in Oakland, California. The studio’s practice is tripartite: art and fabrication, design and landscape, and research and urbanism. This breadth allows the studio to understand each place in its scale and context, with an approach adapted to the particulars of a space. The studio’s work strengthens endemic patterns and practices—ecological and cultural, contemporary and historic, as well as those that remain unseen or unrecognized. Urban spaces and their objects act as public sculpture, creating new apertures through which to see emergent beauty, strangeness, and idiosyncrasy. For more information, visit hooddesignstudio.com.

The **Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD)** stewards and manages 382 developed parks, more than 167 greenspaces, and over 38,486 acres of parkland for the City of Houston. HPARD develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all ages and abilities. The Department is nationally accredited through the National Recreation and Park Association’s (NRPA) Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. For more information on the Houston Parks & Recreation Department, visit <http://www.houstonparks.org> or email us at askparks@houstontx.gov.

Kinder Foundation, a family foundation established in 1997 by Rich and Nancy Kinder of Houston, Texas, provides transformational grants that impact urban greenspace, education, and quality of life. More at www.kinderfoundation.org.