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Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis and Houston Parks Board Complete Hill at Sims Regional Park in Sunnyside

Transformative investment marks Sunnyside's first new greenspace in nearly 50 years, expanding equitable access to nature and flood resiliency across south Houston

Community invited to celebrate grand opening on May 30

HOUSTON — May 28, 2026 — The Office of Commissioner Rodney Ellis and nonprofit Houston Parks Board (HPB) today announced the completion of Hill at Sims Park, a 100-acre regional park in Sunnyside that transforms critical flood mitigation infrastructure into a vibrant public space designed for both recreation and resilience. The nearly \$30 million project — delivered through a public-private partnership — is the neighborhood's first new park in nearly 50 years, expanding access to trails, nature, and outdoor recreation for families across Sunnyside and south Houston. A public grand opening celebration will be held on Saturday, May 30, at 9 a.m.

Hill at Sims will serve nearly 50,000 residents and strengthen connections to 12 nearby schools and community anchors including religious institutions, a public library, hospital, community college, and multi-service centers through new trail infrastructure.

“For too long, communities like Sunnyside — where I grew up — have gone without the parks and greenspaces they deserve. Hill at Sims changes that,” said Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis. “At a time when working families face rising costs and shrinking public resources, investments like this matter. Safe, beautiful places to gather and enjoy time outdoors should not be luxuries reserved for the wealthiest neighborhoods.”

Built within an existing stormwater detention basin, the nature-based park offers a wide range of recreational amenities designed to serve residents of all ages. Features include **The Brown Foundation Hilltop Pavilion**, situated atop a 60-foot hill with scenic views of Downtown Houston, Uptown, and the Texas Medical Center; **nearly 5 miles of paved and dirt hike-and-bike trails**; the **Dr. Alma Allen Bridge** connecting Sims Bayou Greenway to the park, including the **Hildebrand Foundation Overlook**, a unique glass viewing platform with vistas of the park; six overlook areas throughout the park, including the **Beth White Overlook**, named in honor of HPB's former president and CEO; the **Anthony W. Hall, Jr. Pier**, funded by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, which provides water access for recreational fishing; the **Congressman Al Green Pavilion** with access to an outdoor classroom and flexible lawn space



for educational and community programming; and **six large-scale murals** by local and international artists created through a partnership with **Street Art for Mankind**.

“Hill at Sims reflects the kind of forward-thinking design Houston needs as we adapt to a changing climate,” said Justin Schultz, president and CEO, HPB. “Through strong public-private partnership and the leadership of Commissioner Ellis, we’ve transformed essential flood infrastructure into a resilient, nature-based park that expands access to greenspace, strengthens community connectivity, and turns a regional challenge into a lasting public benefit.”

Hill at Sims connects to nearly 20 miles of trails along Sims Bayou Greenway, part of the broader Bayou Greenways network — an interconnected system of more than 170 miles of hike-and-bike trails across the Houston region that supports recreation, mobility, and alternative transportation.

The park’s 100-acre stormwater detention basin, owned by the Harris County Flood Control District (Flood Control District), provides nearly 325 million gallons of stormwater storage capacity along Sims Bayou. Hill at Sims transforms critical flood mitigation infrastructure into a dual-purpose community asset, serving as a model for future projects across Houston and beyond.

“Hill at Sims reflects how strategic partnerships can elevate infrastructure projects beyond their primary purpose,” said Dr. Tina Petersen, executive director, Flood Control District. “While the Harris County Flood Control District’s mission is centered on delivering flood mitigation infrastructure, we welcome opportunities to collaborate with partners who bring expertise in parks, trails and recreation to create added value for the communities we serve.”

The total cost of Hill at Sims is nearly \$30 million. Public funding totals nearly \$22 million from the Office of Commissioner Rodney Ellis, along with federal and state funding secured through the advocacy of State Representative Dr. Alma Allen and Congressman Al Green. HPB secured nearly \$8 million in private investment from The Brown Foundation, Inc. Additional in-kind contributions supporting the park’s natural features were made possible through partnerships with Texas Parks and Wildlife and Trees for Houston, which supplied more than 670 native trees to the park.

“The Brown Foundation is proud to have invested in the transformative Hill at Sims park project for the Sunnyside and south Houston communities to help enhance quality of life,” said Nancy O’Connor, president, The Brown Foundation, Inc. “Access to quality greenspace brings families and individuals closer to healthier lives and stronger communities. The hilltop pavilion’s panoramic views of Houston’s skyline serve as a powerful reminder of the connection between great public spaces and thriving neighborhoods.”

The vision for Hill at Sims was shaped by extensive community engagement, including more than 20 meetings and input from over 700 residents. The grand opening celebration on Saturday, May 30 will invite the community to experience the park and mark the occasion.

For additional details regarding the Hill at Sims grand opening, visit bit.ly/HillatSimsOpening.

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About The Office of Commissioner Rodney Ellis

A longtime civil rights leader with more than four decades of public service, Commissioner Rodney Ellis represents Harris County Precinct One, a diverse, 365-square-mile region in the nation's third-largest county. Under Commissioner Ellis' leadership, the office champions purpose-driven public service to improve quality of life, build thriving communities, and advance opportunity, equity, and justice for all. Precinct One is home to more than 1.2 million residents, over 8,500 acres of greenspace, and major regional assets including the Texas Medical Center, George Bush Intercontinental Airport, leading sports and entertainment venues, several Fortune 500 headquarters, and all of Houston's major institutions of higher learning. For more information, visit www.hcp1.net.

About Houston Parks Board

Houston Parks Board expands, improves, and protects parks and greenspace throughout 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 over 15,000 acres of parks and greenspace. In addition to leading the transformational Bayou Greenways initiative, Houston Parks Board maintains more than 3,400 acres of the region's greenspace and has supported over 250 park projects large and small. For more information, visit houstonparksboard.org.

About The Brown Foundation, Inc.

The Brown Foundation, Inc. is a private family foundation dedicated to making Houston a stronger, more vibrant community. Founded in 1951 by Herman and Margaret Root Brown and George R. and Alice Pratt Brown, the Brown Foundation has distributed more than \$2 billion in charitable grants to the Houston region and beyond. For more information, please visit brownfoundation.org.

About Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work with the appropriate regard for community and natural values. With more than 1,500 bayous and creeks totaling approximately 2,500 miles in length, the Flood Control District accomplishes its mission by devising flood damage reduction plans, implementing the plans, and maintaining the infrastructure. For more information about the Flood Control District, visit HCFCD.org or follow us @HCFCD on Facebook and Twitter for all the latest #HCFCDnews.