



Mayor Sylvester Turner



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Credit: M2L Associates, courtesy of Houston Parks Board

Historic MacGregor Park to Receive Long-Planned Improvements Based on Community Feedback

The project, made possible by a catalyst gift from Kinder Foundation, will be led by Houston Parks Board

HOUSTON – December 13, 2023 – Following a comprehensive and community-based master plan process, the Houston City Council approved long-planned renovations to MacGregor Park, a 65-acre park along Brays Bayou in southeast Houston. For nearly a century, MacGregor Park has served as a gathering and recreational space for many Houstonians. This 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 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. Today, this much-loved regional park suffers from high levels of use combined with aging infrastructure.

The total cost of the project is \$54 million, with a \$27 million catalyst gift from the Kinder Foundation. Houston Parks Board will raise an additional \$12.5 million; the City of Houston contributed \$5 million 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. Houston Parks Board and the project partners will proceed with design in 2024 and construction is estimated to begin in 2025.

“MacGregor Park has a rich history in Houston,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “I’m proud of the project team for championing the voices of our community throughout this process. Reinvigorating the park will positively impact many Houstonians for generations to come. Thank you to the Kinder Foundation for their catalyst gift, and to Houston Parks Board for finishing the master plan and leading the fundraising.”

“We remain committed to investing in projects that increase the quality of life for our community,” said Nancy Kinder, President and CEO, Kinder Foundation. “MacGregor Park is one of Houston’s most beloved parks, and we’re thrilled to contribute to a project that further develops and preserves this important greenspace in southeast Houston.”

“Revitalizing MacGregor Park plays an important role as we strive to transform Houston into an interconnected network of parks, trails and greenways for a healthier Houston, and more equitably distributed parks in our great City” said Barron Wallace, Chairman, Houston Parks Board. “The planned enhancements will honor the park’s history and cultural significance, increase equitable access to greenspaces and contribute to a greater quality of life for the surrounding community. We greatly appreciate the substantial catalyst gift from the Kinder Foundation which made the project possible.”



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The MacGregor Park renovation is aligned with Houston Parks Board’s Strategic Plan to improve regional parks as destinations along the Bayou Greenways system.

The original MacGregor Park master plan was created in 2016 by the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) and City of Houston. Houston Parks Board then spearheaded a master plan update in 2021, underwritten by a \$350,000 gift from the Kinder Foundation. The planning process included lead consultant M2L Associates and was guided by a committee comprised by the City of Houston, the Kinder Foundation, HPARD, Friends of MacGregor Park, MacGregor Park Conservancy, University of Houston, and Houston Southeast Management District. Community input was also a crucial component of this process.

“Through over 1,200 community interactions — meetings, work sessions, events, a survey and thousands of emails — the project team heard what Houstonians want and need from MacGregor Park,” said Beth White, President and CEO, Houston Parks Board. “Thanks to this input, the collaboration among many individuals and organizations, and the generosity of our donors, we will be able to achieve the community’s vision for this important regional park, one of the treasured parks along Bayou Greenways.”

“The park users and neighbors are deeply committed to MacGregor Park,” states Dr. Teddy McDavid, Board Chair, Friends of MacGregor Park. “We love our park and consider it our place of natural beauty, culture, history, recreation and education. We are very grateful to see this plan become a reality.”

“MacGregor Park has always been a symbol of community spirit and resilience in Houston,” states Councilwoman Dr. Carolyn Evans-Shabazz. “The planned improvements are not just about aesthetics and amenities; they represent a deeper investment in the health, wellbeing, and joy of our community members. I am wholeheartedly looking forward to seeing the park flourish as a beacon of nature, culture, and community engagement.”

“MacGregor Park is one of Houston’s treasures, and we are proud to have initiated the master planning process,” states Kenneth Allen, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “The improvements planned for this park will continue its evolution as a source of pride for neighborhood residents. It will also become a magnet for new visitors to the park and the Third Ward community.”

The master plan calls for several updates including the renovation of The Homer Ford Tennis Center, which will become a state-of-the-art facility with tournament-hosting capabilities. The swimming pool and historic community center will be renovated. The perimeter trail around the park will be extended by 1.25 miles, linking to the existing Bayou Greenways trail along Brays Bayou and enhancing connectivity to a network of community bike lanes. A natural amphitheater will be created near the bayou for programming and communal gatherings. An all-abilities, ADA-accessible playground will be added, and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza will be refurbished.

The design and construction will be overseen by a standards committee comprised of representatives from the City of Houston, the Kinder Foundation, Houston Parks and Recreation Department, and Houston Parks Board.

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.

The City of **Houston Parks and Recreation Department** (HPARD) stewards and manages 382 parks and over 39,501 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.

The 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.