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PRESS RELEASE

MKT Bridge Now Open Following Completion of Necessary Repairs

Beloved Heights Hike and Bike Trail connector reopens after fire causes extensive damage

HOUSTON – May 27, 2022 – Houston Parks Board is excited to announce MKT Bridge is now open to the public. An essential component of the trail system in the Heights connecting to White Oak Bayou Greenway, MKT Bridge sustained extensive damage due to a fire in August 2020. Houston Parks Board, a non-profit organization, worked closely with the City of Houston, owner of the bridge, and Harris County Flood Control District to restore the bridge.

“Houstonians love MKT Bridge. We sincerely appreciate the public for their patience and for utilizing the detour while the bridge remained under repair,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “It is important for our city to have safe, connected trails for pedestrians and cyclists. I thank Houston Parks Board for sharing this belief and taking the lead on this repair project.”

Initial repairs to MKT Bridge began in summer 2021. While conducting this repair work in August 2021, contractors and structural engineers found additional damage caused by the fire that was not visible during the initial assessment of the bridge’s condition. It was determined further repairs were needed before the bridge could safely reopen, which was disappointing to the community users.

“First and foremost, I want to extend our deep gratitude to the community for its understanding as we worked as quickly as possible to make MKT Bridge safely accessible once again,” said Beth White, President and CEO of Houston Parks Board. “The journey to reopening took longer than anticipated, and we are thrilled to have this essential connector reopen in time for summer. Thank you to the City of Houston and Harris County Flood Control District for your partnership in this effort.”

Following expedited approval of the additional design plans from the City of Houston and Harris County Flood Control District, on site construction to MKT Bridge resumed in March 2022.

“The reopening of the MKT Bridge is a welcomed relief for our neighbors who utilize the bridge for recreation and wellness,” said Kenneth Allen, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “The Parks and Recreation Department is happy to see its return. A big thank you to the Houston Parks Board for spearheading the effort to restore and improve this important City asset.”

The recently completed repair work included adding steel channels and bracing to the timber piling, transferring weight from the bridge to the ground.

“The reopened MKT Bridge will serve as a vital link in Houston’s bike network — a network that has seen incredible ridership growth since the bridge was shuttered in 2020,” said Joe Cutrufo, Executive Director of BikeHouston. “We commend Houston Parks Board and all involved entities for their work in bringing this critical transportation infrastructure back online.”



Led by Houston Public Works, construction is ongoing to the MKT Trail Spur Connector located northwest of MKT Bridge. When complete, this project will connect White Oak Bayou Greenway to the MKT Trail through greenspace along the north side of White Oak Bayou. Fencing has been installed along the construction site for the safety of trail and bridge users.

“I am thrilled MKT Bridge is reopening, and just in time for summer. As a critical link in the Heights trail system, I am grateful for the efforts of Houston Parks Board and the voices of so many who urgently expressed how important this bridge is. With the repairs completed, residents will once again have a safe connection, and even greater access, to our trails and green spaces,” said District C Council Member Abbie Kamin.

For images of the repaired MKT Bridge, click [here](#).

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Houston Parks Board creates, improves, protects, and advocates for parks for everyone. 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 green space 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 green space and supports park projects large and small. For more information on Bayou Greenways and Beyond the Bayous, visit www.houstonparksboard.org.

The **Houston Parks and Recreation Department** (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages 381 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.