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Photo credit: *Anthony Rathbun, Courtesy of Houston Parks Board*

PRESS RELEASE

Construction Begins on New Segment of Sims Bayou Greenway

New segment to provide key connection for communities east and west of I-45

HOUSTON, TX – May 13, 2021 – This morning, Houston Parks Board, Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Houston Botanic Garden, Perry Homes, Harris County Flood Control District, Gulfgate TIRZ 8, Hobby Area Management District, and various elected officials celebrated the groundbreaking of a new 1.09-mile segment of Sims Bayou Greenway. The new segment will connect communities east and west of I-45.

“The new Sims Bayou Greenway segment will be a transformational project that creates value for the community and connects Houstonians on both sides of I-45. This construction connects neighborhoods to parks - while preserving the greenspace’s ability to absorb water during rain events for surrounding communities. I am grateful to those who have the vision and remain steadfast in fulfilling the goals of the Bayou Greenways 2020 Project,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner.

“We are excited to begin construction on this new Sims Bayou Greenway segment as it is an essential connector for communities at opposite ends of I-45,” said Beth White, President and CEO of Houston Parks Board. “As part of Bayou Greenways 2020, our goal is to bring Houstonians closer together and strengthen communities in innovative ways. We are thankful to all our project partners for making this key connection a reality.”

This new segment of greenway will begin at Glenbrook Park where the existing Sims Bayou Greenway ends. The trail will head west along the bayou's south side, adjacent to the new Houston Botanic Garden site, and cross over to the north side of the bayou at the recently refurbished pedestrian bridge.

“Sims Bayou is a Houston treasure—with natural banks, it provides a beautiful habitat and a wonderful setting for both the Bayou Greenways trail and the Houston Botanic Garden. As a major destination on Sims Bayou, the Garden looks forward to the connectivity that this trail will provide to people all along the bayou and the opportunity for trail users to enjoy the beauty of Sims and the Garden,” said Claudia Gee Vassar, President & General Counsel of Houston Botanic Garden.

From the Houston Botanic Garden site, the greenway will continue along the bayou and connect into a new trailhead at River Drive and the I-45 feeder road. The greenway will then cross under I-45 and connect into an existing Sims Bayou Greenway trail, which ends west of Reveille Park. As part of this project, Houston Parks Board will also build a new greenway from Reveille Park to just east of Reveille Street.

Through its \$1 million sponsorship of the Bayou Greenways 2020 initiatives, the Perry Homes Foundation has committed to beautification efforts near Sims Bayou. The Foundation's support will be recognized at the bayou bridge connecting Sims Bayou to the Houston Botanic Gardens.

"The Perry Homes Foundation is honored to be able to give back to the City of Houston in such an impactful way, providing important enhancements near Sims Bayou and surrounding greenways and waterways," said Kathy Britton, Perry Homes CEO. "We are passionate about making a difference in our local communities, and these types of projects are a core part of our Foundation's mission. The beautification efforts will offer yet another way for locals to explore Houston's incredible outdoor scenery and amenities, which make this region one of the best places to live and raise a family."

"The beginning of construction on this section of the trail is an important milestone in the Bayou Greenways 2020 project," said Kenneth Allen, Interim Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "It will make the City more connectable, and we are proud to be a part of this team effort that will bring Houstonians closer together with an emphasis on better health."

Notable new features of the segment include:

- A new trailhead at the intersection of River Drive and I-45 feeder road, which includes a 6-foot-wide loop walking trail, small parking lot with ADA-accessible parking space, seating, signage, trash cans, recycling bins, and new native trees and plants
- A connection to the sidewalk at the intersection of the I-45 feeder road and River Drive
- New gateways at the Westover and Reveille Street intersection and at the Telephone Road and Reveille Street intersection, both of which includes a trail connection into the neighborhood, signage, trash can, and recycling bin
- A 10-foot-wide concrete trail along Sims Bayou

Thanks to funding by the Gulfgate TIRZ 8, construction of three neighborhood connections from the greenway to Reveille Street, Telephone Road, and Bellfort Street will be included in the project.

"TIRZ 8 is pleased to be a key partner in this wonderful project as part of our mission to encourage economic development, and improve the health, safety and well being, of southeast Houston and the community at large," said TIRZ 8 Chairman Sonny Garza. "We will continue to work toward making the natural resources of 'our own backyard' accessible for the enjoyment, health and safety of all residents."

Construction is expected to conclude in Spring 2022. Residents should be mindful of the active construction site along Sims Bayou as well as all intersections and connecting streets. Residents and the public should not enter areas surrounded by orange construction fencing.

Following construction, Houston Parks Board will continue ongoing maintenance of Sims Bayou Greenway, which includes weekly trash pickup, bi-weekly mowing of grass along the trail, upkeep of the trail and amenities, and any necessary flood cleanup.

Sims Bayou Greenway is one of nine bayous being transformed as part of [Bayou Greenways 2020](#), a public-private partnership between the nonprofit Houston Parks Board, the City of Houston, and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. The initiative is implemented in close collaboration with the Harris County Flood Control District, which manages the county's bayous and creeks for drainage and flood risk reduction. Bayou Greenways 2020 will transform 3,000 acres of underutilized land along nine

major waterways and create a 150-mile network of connected parks and trails along Houston's major waterways.

Thanks to Kinder Foundation's visionary leadership and transformational gift, as well as the extraordinary generosity of the Perry Homes Foundation, Hildebrand Foundation, Houston Endowment, The Brown Foundation Inc. and many other Houstonians, Houston Parks Board has surpassed its goal of assembling more than \$225 million to invest in Bayou Greenways. The fundraising journey began in 2012 when Houston voters resoundingly approved a bond to provide \$100 million in funds to the Bayou Greenways 2020 initiative. Houston Parks Board has since more than matched this number through a \$125 million capital campaign.

For photos of Sims Bayou Greenway, please click [here](#). Photo credit: **Anthony Rathbun, Courtesy of Houston Parks Board**

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A nonprofit 501(c)(3) dedicated to providing access to quality parks and greenspace in the Greater Houston region, **Houston Parks Board** creates, improves, protects and advocates for parks for everyone. 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 complete 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 complete 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. Public investment was matched by significant private contributions including an extraordinary lead gift of \$50 million in 2013 from the Kinder Foundation.

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