



Media Contact:

Mireya Reyna, Elmore

Mireya@elmorepr.com | 832-459-7761

Full Design Guidelines: [Download Here](#)

Credit: *Courtesy of Houston Parks Board*

Houston Parks Board Unveils Design Guidelines for Greenways and Trails

The guidelines establish a set of standards to support a comprehensive regional trail system that enhances community safety and connectivity

HOUSTON – Sept. 6, 2024 – As Houston Parks Board (HPB) continues to build upon the more than 150-mile Bayou Greenways trail system that they helped create and now maintain on behalf of the City of Houston, the organization announces the release of Design Guidelines for Greenways and Pedestrian and Bike Trails. Funded by a generous grant from the Houston Endowment, the comprehensive set of guidelines aims to ensure all greenway and trails, regardless of the owner, have a level of consistency and safety for users. These guidelines do not replace the City of Houston’s Infrastructure Design Manual and other applicable regulations but act as a set of recommendations to ensure a high level of comfort, safety and appeal for Houstonians and visitors to our great city.

“Each community across the region has unique needs and conditions, which is why it’s important that our recommendations are flexible for various environments,” said Beth White, President and CEO, Houston Parks Board. “Through these new guidelines, we hope to provide all stakeholders and decision-makers with a framework that clearly illustrates the importance of sustainable trail and greenspace design.”

Derived from the organization’s extensive trail-building experience, the guidelines provide a cohesive and flexible framework that offers specific recommendations for different possibilities and conditions. These guidelines are also intended to be an educational tool, offering explanations about why specific recommendations were developed and detailing why each element of the greenway system is important for everyone to consider when designing new trails and greenspaces.

“Houston Parks Board was grateful to collaborate with a diverse set of public, private and non-profit partners to formalize these recommendations,” said Justin Schultz, Chief Program Officer, Houston Parks Board. “These guidelines, which are intended to be a living document, offer an opportunity to continue to collaborate with our colleagues who care about the urban realm. It is our hope that our partners will embrace these guidelines as we collectively work to make an interconnected network of parks and trails throughout our region.”

HPB was delighted to partner with Huitt-Zollars to help develop the guidelines, and they have received Gold Best Practice Awards from the American Planning Association (APA) Texas and APA Houston as part of their annual Planning Achievement Awards. The Best Practice category

emphasizes results and demonstrates how innovative and state-of-the-art planning methods and practices help to create communities of lasting value.

“We are honored to receive the Gold Best Practice Awards from APA Texas and APA Houston for these guidelines, which are designed to be a resource to all the entities that design, build and maintain Houston’s greenways and trails,” said Christof Spieler, Director of Planning at Huitt-Zollars. “These guidelines set a standard so that people in neighborhoods across the region can have access to high quality connected greenspace.”

The guidelines examine a range of greenway elements and specific trail locations along bayous, utility easements, and public infrastructure. In each scenario, the recommendations are organized by Typical, Recommended and Special Conditions to allow design flexibility.

The guidelines can be accessed and downloaded [HERE](#). HPB encourages partners to share this information with collaborators and consultants to use as a reference in the design process for new greenways, pedestrian and bike trails.

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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.