



Press Release

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\$1,881,000 White Oak Bayou Path To Open TIGER Project Extends Hike/Bike Trail, Adds Amenities For Users

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor Annise Parker, Council Member Brenda Stardig, District A, and the Houston Parks Board will celebrate the completion of the White Oak Bayou Path (Alabonson Road to Antoine Drive Link) on Thursday, July 9, 2015, at 10:00 a.m. with a ribbon cutting ceremony. This opening marks the completion of the first of six TIGER grant-funded projects currently underway in Houston.

"These six TIGER projects are an important part of the development of alternative links in Houston's transportation system and show our commitment to providing off-road hike and bike networks for all Houstonians," said Mayor Annise Parker. "Imagine how great it will be to bike for miles along some of the area's scenic waterways."

Funding for this project was made possible through a \$15 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant for Regional Bike/Pedestrian Connections to Transit originally executed in March of 2013. Project partners providing local matching funds included the Buffalo Bayou Partnership, the Greater East End Management District and the Houston Parks Board. The Alabonson Road to Antoine Drive link was built in partnership with the Houston Parks Board for a total project cost of \$1,881,000.

"This new segment of the White Oak Bayou Greenway is an important piece of the Bayou Greenways 2020 project, which will create a continuous system of parks and 150 miles of hike and bike trails along Houston's major waterways," said Roksan Okan-Vick, FAIA, and Executive Director of the Houston Parks Board. "Before long, shared-use trails will run the length of White Oak Bayou within the city limits, which will greatly enhance Houstonians' alternative transportation options."

The project includes a concrete trail from Antoine Drive to Alabonson Road, which extends the White Oak Bayou Hike and Bike Trail another 0.8 miles. Other features include a retaining wall; a pedestrian bridge; a pedestrian High-Intensity Activated CrossWalk beacon (HAWK), which is used to stop road traffic and allow pedestrians to cross safely; signage; landscaping; a parking lot; and other amenities.

"I am excited about this new amenity in District A. The new trail will showcase our scenic waterways and will highlight this section of District A that is quickly becoming a premier destination to work and live," said Council Member Brenda Stardig, District A. "This will add new opportunities for outside activities and connectivity. I have no doubt that this trail will be a positive addition to the District A community."

When all trail sections are completed, it will be possible to travel the path along White Oak Bayou from far northwest Houston to Buffalo Bayou and downtown Houston.

“We are happy to be opening this wonderful stretch of hike and bike path,” said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “Every new link in this network is a great step forward in our efforts to improve off-road transportation and recreation opportunities in Houston.”

The design and engineering consultant for this project is Traffic Engineers, Inc.; the construction contractor is Gadberry Construction Company, Inc. The funding sources for construction are \$1,504,800 from the federal government and \$376,200 from voter-approved park bond funds. The Houston Parks Board raised private funds for design and engineering.

The six TIGER projects are expected to improve mobility in Houston by eliminating major gaps on primary off-street bicycle/pedestrian transportation routes and in the city's bike grid. They are also expected to provide extensive connections to residences, employment centers and bus and rail transportation and complete a portion of the inner city bikeway plan for shared use paths. The expanded pathway system will eventually include new directional signs and pedestrian amenities, including benches, bike racks, waste receptacles, lighting, trees and other landscaping, and an electric shuttle between two University of Houston campuses.

The Houston Regional Bike/Pedestrian Connections to Transit project consists of 6 separate projects:

- 1) The White Oak Bayou Path: Alabonson Road/Antoine Drive (0.8-mile commuter extension of shared-use path)
- 2) The White Oak Bayou Path: 11th Street/Heights Bike Trail/Stude Park Links (1.4-mile gap closures and bridge construction project)
- 3) The White Oak Bayou Path: Connections to Residential Neighborhoods and Buffalo Bayou Path (0.2-mile gap closure project and 0.7-mile connections to shared-use path)
- 4) The Buffalo Bayou Path: Smith St./Travis St. Link (0.3-mile gap closure project)
- 5) East Downtown Connections: Transit/Residential/Commercial Connections (8.6-mile gap closures and key connections project)
- 6) Brays Bayou Path Gap: MLK/Old Spanish Trail Link (1.6-mile gap closure project and 0.6-mile alternative transit path)

About the Houston Parks Board

The Houston Parks Board is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization whose mission is to create, improve, protect and advocate for parkland in the Greater Houston region. Since its inception in 1976, the organization has raised and leveraged millions of dollars and touched at least 75 percent of the City's parkland either through acquisitions and/or capital improvements. For more information, visit www.houstonparksboard.org.

About the Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,859 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.