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## Press Release

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### **Houston Parks and Recreation Department Hosts National Recreation and Park Association Congress**

*Members Will Convene at George R. Brown Convention Center October 7 - 11*

The National Recreation and Park Association (N.R.P.A.), the leading advocacy organization in the country dedicated to the advancement of public parks, recreation and conservation, will be holding their annual convention in Houston the week of Oct 7 through Oct 11. The Houston Parks and Recreation Department will serve as the local host for the event.

"We are honored to be the local host for the N.R.P.A.'s Congress and Exposition," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "We are proud of our city and our profession, and of our park system. We thank Houston First for their assistance from start to finish. They have made sure that all details have been taken care of and they have been instrumental in ensuring that the convention at the George R Brown Convention Center will be a success."

In response to the recent closure of National Parks, he stated, "It is even more important now for us to bring attention to local parks around the country that are still open."

As part of the N.R.P.A. convention, a Parks Build Community initiative was undertaken to renovate a park to create a gathering place for youth, families and adults. Shady Lane Park was the park selected for this project. In 2001, the neighborhood surrounding the park, located adjacent to Halls Bayou, was devastated by Tropical Storm Allison. To mitigate future flooding risks, the Harris County Flood Control District purchased a portion of the area, adjacent to Shady Lane Park, for a detention basin. When not in use, this area will now provide additional recreation space for the community.

The N.R.P.A.'s Parks Build Community initiative has transformed Shady Lane Park into a unique nature themed park. Together, these projects will change the neighborhood and provide access to over 68 acres of parkland for the community. In the near future, a new 4-lane road and sidewalks will be built and a new METRO shelter will be added. Houston Mayor

Annise D. Parker and N.R.P.A. officials will take part in the grand opening at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup>.

N.R.P.A. members attending this week's event are park and recreation professionals and citizen advocates who represent public spaces in urban communities, rural settings and everything in between. They hold a shared belief in N.R.P.A.'s mission to advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people.

The National Recreation and Park Association Congress and Expo convention promises to be a great one, filled with learning opportunities for all park and recreation professionals.

*The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,832 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](http://www.houstonparks.org).*