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## Press Release

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### **\$1 Million Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Grant Signals Improvements Coming to Squatty Lyons Park**

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department was awarded a \$1 million Local Parks Urban Outdoor Grant by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department during their August 20<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting. The \$1 million grant will be combined with \$1 million in City funds to create and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities for Northside/Northline area residents.

"The renovation of Squatty Lyons Park will give Northside residents access to improved outdoor recreational activities, connect existing pathways, and refurbish the existing sports fields," said Houston Mayor Annise Parker. "The residents of this area have expressed their wishes to have these improvements, and the City of Houston is proud to provide them."

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission approved more than \$7 million in competitive grant funds for 25 community parks all across the state. A portion of the funding for these grants comes from the sporting goods sales tax through the Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) and the Texas Large County and Municipality Recreation and Parks Account (Urban Account).

"I applaud the City of Houston's efforts and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's decision to invest in north Houston to help finish the renovation and revamp of Squatty Lyons Park," said State Representative Armando Walle. "I have worked throughout my time in public service to fix and update this park where I grew up playing baseball, so I am thrilled to see this finally materialize for the community and the kids and parents of the North Houston American Little League, who never stopped advocating for that community."

"This funding is great news for the Northside residents in my district, as the park improvements will beautify the neighborhood, encourage healthy activities and increase civic pride," said Senator Sylvia R. Garcia, District 6. "I am thankful to all who helped secure this grant and I am excited about all the benefits to the community that will result from it."

Additional funding comes from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which is appropriated annually by Congress.

"This is big win for our community," said Congressman Gene Green, 29<sup>th</sup> District of Texas. "Public parks and recreational trails help us create healthier communities by setting aside space for families and children to get outside. That's particularly important in our urban area."

The proposed improvements to Squatty Lyons Park were identified as needs in both the department's updated Parks Master Plan and in Capital Improvement Project meetings hosted by District Council Member Ed Gonzalez (District H) regarding neighborhood(including park) needs.

"The \$2 million in combined funding from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the City of Houston will allow for a significantly improved Squatty Lyons Park," said Council Member Ed Gonzalez, District H. "Our District H families will benefit tremendously from improved facilities and grounds, helping to keep our community healthier, more active, and safer. I'm proud to have advocated for this funding and commend both the City and State leadership that made the leverage of these funds possible."

Squatty Lyons Park is located in North Houston off of the Hardy Toll Road, in Park Sector 2 of the department's 21-Park Sector system. The recent Parks Master Plan Project, which will be presented to the Quality of Life Committee on August 26, 2015, and to Council in September 2015 identified needs in Park Sector 2 which this combined funding will address.

"We are thankful to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for this grant funding. It will allow us to address some of the needs of the community in this particular park sector," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "The funding will be combined with City funding to address needs that the Parks Master Plan Update identified, which included the expansion of playgrounds and trails in this area."

The Squatty Lyons Park Improvement Project scope of work will include:

- Three existing little league fields will be leveled and resodded, lights will be upgraded with new controls and irrigation systems installed.
- The remaining fields will be reoriented and completely rebuilt with new fences, dugouts, field preparation, lighting and irrigation. One of the fields will be accessible to children with disabilities.
- Additional parking will be provided with required detention
- New features will include a concrete loop walking trail with picnic area, an expanded playground along with a new concession and restroom building.
- Native tree plantings with irrigation.

*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](http://www.houstonparks.org).*