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## Press Release

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### **Houston Celebrates One Hundred Years of Parks In Citywide Celebration at Gragg Park**

In 1916, Houston City Council formally created the Houston Parks and Recreation Department to oversee a fledgling park system of 750 acres of land and a handful of parks. Since then the system has grown to over 37,800 acres of land and 350 parks serving neighborhoods all across the City. In celebration of its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary the Houston Parks and Recreation Department will hold a Citywide Celebration at Gragg Park at 2999 South Wayside on October 1, 2016 from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm with an official ceremony and time capsule dedication at 11:00 am.

“One hundred years ago city officials had a vision of what Houston could be. They envisioned Houston’s growth and its citizens need for green spaces to relax in, to recreate in, and to retain an attachment to the natural world. Today, our neighborhoods benefit from their forethought as we celebrate the first 100 years of Houston’s parks department and the park system that we all enjoy.”

As part of the Department’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Gragg Park, the department’s main headquarters has been renovated. The neighborhood park, located off of Wayside Drive in southeast Houston, will provide many new amenities for the local communities to enjoy.

“We invite all of Houston to come by and see all the new amenities at Gragg, Gonzo’s Parade of Elephants next to the new GameTime playground, the new Musco Sports Field and the new Houston Strider trail. The park is going to be a gift to the community and the festival will be filled with lots of interactive displays from our many park partners,” Turner continued.

The October 1 event will include an appearance and autograph opportunities from Houston Dynamo Brian Ching as well NBA Legends of Basketball including former Houston Rockets Major Jones, Robert Reid and John Eagan; Philadelphia 76ers and Milwaukee Bucks Harvey Catchings; Cleveland Cavaliers Brad Branson; Sacramento Kings Kevin Loder; Seattle Supersonics Mel Hughlett; and Harlem Globetrotters Reggie Dixon, Steve Jones, and Howard Smith. In addition, there will be food, music, and displays by H.P.A.R.D. partner organizations including the Artist Boat, Buffalo Bayou Partnership, the Heritage Society, the Hermann Park Conservancy, Houston Audubon, Houston First Tee, Houston Parks Board, Houston Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership, the Houston Public Library, Trees for Houston, Memorial Park Conservancy, METRO, the Houston Police Department, Houston B-Cycle and more.

The scope of work for the Gragg Park renovation includes: a new playground, a new sports field, sports field and site lighting, trail work, earth work, extensive landscaping with irrigation, site furnishing, fencing, new parking construction and renovation of existing parking, and entry signage.

The project is funded through Parks Consolidated Construction Funds, Park and Recreation Dedication Funds, Parks Special Revenue Funds, Parks Special Funds, and Council District Services Funds, and through an interlocal agreement between H.P.A.R.D. and the Houston Parks Board. The total amount funded is \$3,473,954.00. The Jerdon Contract amounts to \$3,007,937.43 and funds for Design Services come to \$249,954.00. The Houston Parks Board funding is \$216,000.00, which includes a Musco donation of \$175,000 to \$200,000 in lighting and a match of \$20,164.87 by GameTime toward playground equipment.

*The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,851 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).*