



Media Contacts:
Trudi Smith, tsmith@buffalobayou.org,
713-752-0314 x103
Claudia Morlan, claudia@elmorepr.com,
832-725-6884

“Buffalo Bayou’s Back” with transformation of iconic Houston greenspace Buffalo Bayou Park complete in Fall 2015

*\$58 million bayou park project embraces the natural environment alongside the city’s historic waterway
while offering range of amenities*

Public celebration set for October 3, 2015

HOUSTON – September 8, 2015 – [Buffalo Bayou Partnership](#), the non-profit organization transforming and revitalizing Buffalo Bayou, will mark the completion of the \$58 million renovations to Buffalo Bayou Park in Fall 2015, making it one of the most iconic park spaces in the city.

In a short four years, the 160-acre, 2.3-mile greenspace along Buffalo Bayou – which never closed during construction – has seen vast improvements. The renovations include reconstructed 10-foot-wide concrete and six-foot-wide bayou-side trails; two pedestrian bridges crossing the bayou; enhancements at [Eleanor Tinsley Park](#) (home of the Freedom Over Texas Fourth of July celebration); signature blue trail lighting designed by New York’s [L’Observatoire](#) and artist Stephen Korn and only seen along Buffalo Bayou; new art work by Houston artists [John Runnels](#) and [Anthony Thompson Shumate](#); kayak and bike rentals; and gardens and overall improvements to the landscape. In addition, major destinations include one of the largest dog parks in the city completed in January (Johnny Steele Dog Park); the Barbara Fish Daniel Nature Play Area and Picnic Pavilion; Wortham Insurance Visitor Center, The Brown Foundation Lawn and park gateway (The Water Works); and a visitor center, “grab and go” food service, and *The Dunlavy* private event space developed by Clark Cooper Concepts overlooking Buffalo Bayou (Lost Lake) to come this fall.

The grand opening celebration of Buffalo Bayou Park will take place on **Saturday, October 3, 2015** with a day full of unique performances, music and activities, and a spectacular procession designed in partnership with New York-based [Processional Arts Workshop](#) known for its work on the second phase opening of the High Line. Details [here](#).

According to Houston Mayor Annise Parker, “Buffalo Bayou is embedded in the rich history of Houston. The vision and investment of our philanthropic community has delivered a premier park asset to our city – one that will be enjoyed for generations to come.”

Buffalo Bayou Partnership President Anne Olson went on to say, “Great public spaces are key to a city’s vitality – they are gathering places, they attract and retain residents and top talent. Buffalo Bayou Partnership had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to revitalize the iconic Buffalo Bayou Park, and in doing so, garner nationwide attention for the investment Houston is making in its greenspaces.”

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The \$58 million project was a public-private partnership led by Buffalo Bayou Partnership, the [City of Houston](#) through the [Houston Parks and Recreation Department](#), the [Harris County Flood Control District](#) and the [Kinder Foundation](#).

The Kinder Foundation provided catalyst funding of \$30 million in 2010, an unprecedented gift to Houston's park system. Buffalo Bayou Partnership raised an additional \$23.5 million for the project and oversaw the design and construction. Buffalo Bayou Partnership will maintain and operate the park with funding of \$2 million per year provided by the Downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) #3.

"As Houston's population grows, so will the desire for quality of life amenities like parks and greenspaces," said Nancy Kinder, president, Kinder Foundation. "As a foundation, we saw an opportunity to work collaboratively to develop the urban jewel that is Buffalo Bayou Park, which will be enjoyed by individuals from all parts of Houston."

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Using Buffalo Bayou Partnership's [Buffalo Bayou and Beyond \(2002\) Master Plan](#) as a guide, the goal and charge of the design team including [SWA](#) (lead consultant), [Reed-Hilderbrand](#), and [Page](#) was to restore the area to a more natural and self-sustaining state, reintroduce native landscapes and add amenities to enhance the safety and enjoyment for visitors.

"The success and popularity of Buffalo Bayou Park demonstrates the vital importance of riparian open space for our ever-growing urban populations, and highlights the importance of finding the right balance between hydraulic, ecological and human needs," said Kevin Shanley, former CEO, SWA.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

Buffalo Bayou starts just west of Katy, Texas, and flows approximately 53 miles east through some of Houston's most populated neighborhoods including Briar Forest, Memorial, River Oaks, Downtown Houston, the East End, and on to the Port of Houston, Houston Ship Channel and into Galveston Bay. Ever since the Allen Brothers founded Houston in 1836, Buffalo Bayou has played a critical role in the evolution of the city.

Buffalo Bayou Park spans the banks of the bayou immediately west of Downtown Houston from Shepherd Drive and Sabine Street and is enjoyed by growing, densely populated neighborhoods to the north and south. Approximately 44,000 households can access the park within a 10-minute walk and approximately a half million people within a 30-minute bike ride. This population represents the ethnicity of Houston itself with a cultural mix including 34% White, 20% Black, 39% Hispanic, 5% Asian and 1% Multicultural. Overall, Buffalo Bayou Partnership anticipates park visitors may reach one million on an annual basis.

According to the Urban Land Institute and Price Waterhouse Cooper's ["Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2015" report](#), Houston was ranked the country's number one "market to watch." The neighborhoods

surrounding Buffalo Bayou Park have enjoyed residential and commercial growth with a number of developments underway by Christopher Sims Luxury Builders, Fisher Homes, GID Urban Development Group, JLB Partners, JPI/TDI, Midway Companies/Lionstone Group, Pace Realty Group, Pinto Realty Partners, and Richdale Group, among others.

Additionally, the Downtown Redevelopment Authority and the City of Houston Department of Public Works and Engineering are [investing \\$10 million to improve the flow, functionality, safety and aesthetics of Allen Parkway](#), the thoroughfare that extends the entire southern boundary of Buffalo Bayou Park.

As with past Buffalo Bayou Partnership capital improvement efforts, Buffalo Bayou Park reflects a strong public-private partnership and collaborative process. Feedback and support from the Houston community played an important role in developing the project's master plan and design. The park itself was conceived and is enjoyed by Houston's diverse community – all ages, ethnicities, genders and income levels.

MILESTONES

- 2010: Kinder Foundation approaches Buffalo Bayou Partnership with catalyst gift of \$30 million; Steering Committee formed including Buffalo Bayou Partnership, City of Houston, Parks and Recreation Department, Harris County Flood Control District and Kinder Foundation.
- 2011: Houston City Council, Harris County Commissioners Court Approval; Master Plan complete; Community Meetings
- 2012: Construction starts (July)
- 2013: Pedestrian bridges complete (October)
- 2014: Partner secured for private event space *The Dunlavy*/Clark Cooper Concepts (July); Enhancements at Eleanor Tinsley Park complete (August); Harris County Flood Control District channel work is complete (December)
- 2015: Johnny Steele Dog Park complete (January); Barbara Fish Daniel Nature Play Area, Lost Lake, The Water Works, and all park improvements complete (Fall)

#

About Buffalo Bayou Partnership

Created in 1986, Buffalo Bayou Partnership is the 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization transforming and revitalizing Buffalo Bayou, Houston's greatest natural resource. Buffalo Bayou Partnership's geographic focus is the 10-mile stretch of Buffalo Bayou from Shepherd Drive to the Port of Houston Turning Basin. Over its 29-year history, the board and staff have raised and leveraged more than \$150 million in private and public funds for the bayou's redevelopment and stewardship, spearheading award-winning projects such as Sabine Promenade and Sesquicentennial Park, protecting land for future parks, constructing hike and bike trails, and operating a comprehensive clean-up program. The organization has effectively changed the public's perception of the bayou from a drainage ditch to a valuable civic asset and amenity.

Follow Buffalo Bayou Partnership

www.buffalobayou.org

www.facebook.com/buffalobayou

www.twitter.com/buffalobayou

www.instagram.com/buffalobayou

Downloads available [here](#).