



MEMORIAL PARK MASTER PLAN FACT SHEET

OVERVIEW

- **The Memorial Park Master Plan** is a visionary plan for the future of Houston's largest urban wilderness and recreation park. The Master Plan focuses on: restoring the Park's ecological systems and creating greater resiliency; reconnecting the Park's land, waterways, trails, and people; consolidating compatible uses together in appropriate areas; tending to the land and the Park's cultural history, maintaining balance through responsible management; and enhancing the overall Park experience and amenities. It includes capital improvements, long-term conservation, and an operations and maintenance plan for the Park. **The Ten-Year Plan** enables the design and construction of significant components of the Memorial Park Master Plan and was made possible by a catalyst gift from the Kinder Foundation, which leveraged funding through the Uptown Development Authority and by the generosity of other donors. Execution of the Ten-Year Plan is overseen by the Memorial Park Standards Committee, a partnership comprised of Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Memorial Park Conservancy, the Kinder Foundation, and Uptown Development Authority.

ORIGIN

- The need for a Master Plan stemmed from multiple sources, including natural disruptions such as Hurricane Ike in 2008 and the 2011 drought; a growing population and increasing demand for Park space; a desire for connectivity; opportunities to improve infrastructure; public safety and conservation practices.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- An essential component of the Master Planning effort was a market study and a robust public input process. This input process ensured that all Houstonians had the opportunity to shape the future of Memorial Park.
- Engagement highlights included:
 - 3,300 participants in public process via public meetings, online input and focused workshops
 - 8 large public meetings (1,200 people attended) were held along with community meetings across Houston
 - 288 participants joined 20 focus workshops geared toward educators, local neighborhoods, teens, recreation, diversity and inclusion, and young professionals
 - 20 in-depth interviews with experts, such as demographers and park industry leaders

- An interactive microsite resulting in 29,061 pageviews, 9,691 unique visitors, and 1,829 survey participants engaged online

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects is leading design of the Master Plan incorporating public input that engaged over 3,000 participants and comprehensive site research with 75 scientists.
 - **Public Input Key Findings:**
 - Improve access to the Park
 - Enhance existing character and amenities within the Park
 - Establish a healthier ecology telling the story of the Park's history
 - Better signage and communication about offerings
 - Increase safety
 - Continue to ensure a balance between nature and recreation
 - **Scientific Expert Key Findings:**
 - Human activity has shaped the Park over time: it is not a “pristine” or “remnant” landscape
 - The Park is spatially fragmented by roadways and feels much smaller than it is. Reconnecting areas with the Park provide greater opportunities for restoration and recreation.
 - The Park was not always as densely forested in the areas beyond the “gallery” forests along the bayou and its tributaries.
 - The soils and hydrology of the Park are the foundations for the plant communities they support and indicated a greater variety of forest and open grassland savannas and prairie would yield a more stable and resilient landscape.
 - Active management and continued maintenance are essential for a stable and resilient Park landscape.
 - **Master Plan Design Guiding Principles**
 - Based on the studies from public input and scientific site research and analysis, we established the Master Plan's Guiding Principles:
 - Restoring the ecology of the Park and our connection to it
 - Consolidating compatible uses together in appropriate areas
 - Tending the land and our cultural history, maintaining balance through responsible management
 - Reconnecting the land, waterways, trails, people and memories
 - Enhancing the overall park experience and its amenities

TEN-YEAR PLAN

- The Ten-Year Plan enables Memorial Park Conservancy to design and construct significant components of the Memorial Park Master Plan and was made possible by a catalyst gift from the Kinder Foundation, which leveraged funding through the Uptown Development Authority and by the generosity of other donors. Execution of the Ten-Year Plan is overseen by the Memorial Park Standards Committee, a partnership comprised of Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Memorial Park Conservancy, the Kinder Foundation, and Uptown Development Authority.
- Projects included in the Ten-Year Plan:
 - **Eastern Glades**
 - Reclaiming 100 acres of largely inaccessible parkland, Eastern Glades encapsulates the vision of the Master Plan. The project expands picnicking, parking, and restrooms; extends the running trail to a full 3-mile loop; establishes a 5-acre lake and wetlands; provides trails and boardwalks to experience Park wildlife and natural habitats; and honors the Park’s military history. Phase I of Eastern Glades opened in 2018; the completed project is scheduled to open in 2020.
 - **Sports Complex Phase I**
 - Sports fields and volleyball courts will be relocated to join the recreation facilities in the northeast quadrant of the Park as part of the early phase of the future Memorial Park Sports Complex.
 - **Central Connector - Land Bridge and Prairie**
 - A land bridge over Memorial Drive will reunite the north and south sides of the Park, providing safe crossing for people and wildlife. A restored network of native prairie and savanna will act as a green sponge, helping to absorb stormwater, mitigate flooding, and conquer the effects of concrete in the heart of a densely populated urban environment.
 - **Running Complex**
 - The existing Cullen Running Trails Center will anchor a new timing track, pavilion and restrooms, and will serve as a gateway to the Park’s southern wilderness for runners, bikers, hikers, and nature enthusiasts alike.
 - **Memorial Groves**
 - A living memorial to the WWI soldiers who trained at Camp Logan, trees aligned in regiments will shelter gathering spaces for reflection and education among the 100-year-old remnants of the camp.
 - **Connectivity: Trails and Bridges**
 - A series of trails and bridges will increase connectivity within and beyond Memorial Park, converting the Park from an isolated urban greenspace into a key connector along Houston’s greenways and hike-and-bike paths,

encouraging access and welcoming multi-modal forms of transportation to and through the Park.

- **Outer Loop Trail**
 - The existing multi-modal portion of the Outer Loop Trail will be extended through Memorial Groves, Eastern Glades, and the Sports Complex, completing an important amenity for those pursuing north side recreation, including joggers and cyclists.
- **Old Archery Range Improvements**
 - An initial phase of improvements to this 30-acre park parcel on the west side of I-610 will include bayou bank stabilization, improved trails, and other upgrades.
- **Stormwater Management**
 - Stormwater management improvements will take place throughout the Park and will include ravine and bank stabilization, and other erosion analysis and mitigation efforts. Subsequent ecological resiliency will help retain stormwater onsite and reduce erosion into Buffalo Bayou.

FUNDING

- The Kinder Foundation’s gift of \$70 million served as a catalyst to secure over \$50 million in funding from the Uptown Development Authority for public infrastructure improvements and maintenance of Memorial Park.
- Memorial Park Conservancy continues to raise the remaining funds needed to complete the Ten-Year Plan projects: a goal of \$50 million by 2024, the 100th anniversary of the founding of Memorial Park.
- The Ten-Year Plan has also benefitted from the support of the Houston philanthropic community, including: Laura and John Arnold; The Brown Foundation, Inc.; Clay Development & Construction, Inc.; The Cullen Foundation; The Fondren Foundation; Wendy and Jeff Hines; Houston Endowment Inc.; Hobby Family Foundation; Rochelle and Max Levit; Robert R. and Kay M. Onstead Foundation; The Powell Foundation; The Wortham Foundation and other generous foundations and individuals.