



Houston Parks Board's playground improvements have been informed by its Neighborhood Partnership Program. Photo by: F. Carter Smith, Houston Parks Board.

HIGH LINE NETWORK CASE STUDY

Identifying All Paths to Equity

Organization: Houston Parks Board

Park: [Bayou Greenways 2020](#)

Location: Houston, TX

Infrastructure type: Waterfront / Waterway

Theme: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Project phase: Open / Ongoing

With the vision for a continuous park system along 150 miles of Houston waterways, the Houston Parks Board is managing a project that impacts a majority of Houstonians. Sixty percent of them will live within 1.5 miles of the Bayou Greenway when complete. The Board is also playing a leading role in Mayor Sylvester Turner's 50/50 Park Partners initiative. The innovative public-private partnership, which includes 50 businesses, aims to improve neighborhood parks across the city.

To make sure there was a common understanding of what a long-term commitment to equity looks like, the organization created a staff-led task force and convened sessions across all departments and levels. Through these conversations, they established shared definitions, goals, and strategies—and built collective buy-in. The process lasted eight months. During a retreat to close out the effort, task force subgroups presented the equitable outcomes they identified, alongside strategies and resources needed to reach them. Tangible results include: a park equity investment matrix, a staff manual, and an internal equity plan.

“Bringing cross-departmental members of our organization into the discussion provided an opportunity to expand how our organization defines equity. We committed to and carefully reviewed our policies and procedures and doubled down on our commitment to equity as we design, build, and maintain parkland throughout Houston,” says Communications Director Nicole Romano. “The formation of our inaugural task force was a tremendously important step, but just the first one. I am proud to be a part of the ongoing and future work we are doing to address long-term issues that require significant analysis and further work to replace systems, policies, and practices that perpetuate racism.”

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Related Resources:

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WHO WE ARE

Presented by the High Line, the High Line Network is a group of infrastructure reuse projects—and the people who help them come to life. As cities become denser and land for traditional parks becomes more scarce, residents are finding creative ways to bring greenspace to their neighborhoods. Projects in the High Line Network transform underutilized infrastructure into new urban landscapes. Redefining what a park can be, these hybrid spaces are also public squares, open-air museums, botanical gardens, social service organizations, walkways, transit corridors, and more. For more information about the High Line Network, please visit network.thehighline.org