



## CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date:  
District B, District H  
Item Creation Date: 9/22/2022

MYR - Buffalo Bayou Partnership Agreement

Agenda Item#:

### **Background:**

City Council approval is recommended for an ordinance allowing the City of Houston (the "City"), Harris County (the "County"), and Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP) to operate, maintain, and develop "Buffalo Bayou East" in a manner consistent with the Buffalo Bayou East Master Plan (the "Master Plan") in coordination with the City's approved Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and other private and governmental efforts along Buffalo Bayou and the adjacent communities.

In 2019, building on its legacy of creating award-winning urban green spaces, BBP unveiled a Master Plan for Buffalo Bayou East, which encompasses the four-mile stretch of the bayou from US 59 to the Port of Houston Turning Basin. With significant community input over a two-year period, the core principles of authenticity, inclusivity, connectivity, and resiliency emerged to guide the Buffalo Bayou East Master Plan. The plan envisions parks and destinations that reflect the cultural and industrial legacies of Buffalo Bayou East, while simultaneously ensuring that these spaces welcome long-time residents, and connect neighborhoods to the waterfront.

The Master Plan is not only about parks and trails – it is a comprehensive community development plan for a part of town that has not seen this level of investment before. The cultural destinations, infrastructure improvements, and connectivity in Buffalo Bayou East came directly from the input BBP received from the East End and Fifth Ward communities.

The City, County, and BBP now intend to enter into the Agreement thanks to a historic public-private partnership anchored by a \$100 million gift from a major donor, which is used to leverage another \$200 million of public and private investments. The funding and resources under this Agreement will advance construction of a significant portion of the Master Plan over a 10-year period and coordinate already planned or approved projects (including CIP No. N-100027, S. Lockwood Paving and Drainage; and CIP No. E-000244, Hispanic History Research Center) to enhance the investment, connectivity, and amenities within the surrounding communities.

A key component of the Agreement is Buffalo Bayou East Park (the "Park"), a collection of Park Projects designed to create continuous park system along Buffalo Bayou between the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge near downtown and Lockwood Drive. The Park includes public easements and land owned by either the City, County, or BBP. The Park includes "park within a park" areas such as Tony Marron Park and Japhet Creek Park.

Funding Summary for the Capital Investments over the ten-year implementation phase include:

- \$178.5M for Park Projects: BBP - \$118.5M; City - \$36.7M; and County - \$23.3M
- \$117.9M for Non-Park Projects: BBP - \$51M; City - \$46.8M; County - \$1M; and Federal - \$19M

The combination of private and governmental sources will fund projects that:

- Create a more robust restoration, expansion, and improvement to existing City parkland, including Tony Marron Park and Japhet Creek Park.
- Extend a continuous hike and bike trail along a two-mile stretch of Buffalo Bayou from the existing trails into downtown at the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge to the east to Lockwood Drive. The main bayou trails will meet or exceed current Buffalo Bayou Park design standards and include connections to the surrounding Fifth Ward and greater East End communities.
- Build two new trail connections across the bayou connecting the Fifth Ward and greater East End communities.
  - Gregg Street Bridge – East River area to the south bank trails; and
  - Japhet Creek Bridge – Japhet Creek Park Phase 2 to the expanded Tony Marron Park.
- Build a new Central Maintenance Facility for maintenance operations for the Park.
- Add new, County-owned parkland within Park to compliment the City-owned parkland.
- Create new or enhance public streets near the Park, including:
  - A new neighborhood street with enhanced pedestrian improvements and a high-comfort bicycle facility between N. York Street and Lockwood Drive (Marron Park Way).
  - Pedestrian and bicycle enhancements along Navigation Boulevard (between Lockwood Drive and Mack Street) and Lockwood Drive (between new Marron Park Way and Harrisburg Boulevard).
- Build a new multi-family development comprised of 80 units, 72 designated as affordable, consisting of 1, 2, and 3-bedroom units with direct link to bayou trail system and park amenities.

link to layout trail system and park amenities.

- Create a new, 25,000 square foot Houston Public Library (HPL) facility that will include the Houston Hispanic Research Center and an HPL Express, providing an invaluable repository for Hispanic heritage and access to technology, materials, and programming for all ages.
- Reimagine the industrial remnants at Turkey Bend into a vibrant civic destination along the waterfront.

Funding for on-going maintenance and operation of the Park (excluding the trails within the East River Development) will generally be shared the three parties: BBP (50%), City (25%), and County (25%). The City will leverage its partnerships with the East River development and HCID #23 to maintain and operate the trails within East River and the new Gregg Street Bridge.

On September 27, 2022, a presentation was given to the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Committee providing an overview of the terms of the Agreement. Council is asked to approve recommended changes to Chapters 26 and 32 in a separate action in parallel with this recommendation to approve the Agreement.

DocuSigned by:



Andy F. Iken, Chief Development Officer

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