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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**North Houston District planning and infrastructure projects now in high gear for Spring 2024**

***Improved quality of life, safety and aesthetics all major factors***

**HOUSTON, TX (March 5, 2024)** – Several infrastructure projects for the North Houston District (NHD) are now in high gear in early 2024, ranging from parks to sidewalks to pedestrian improvements, thanks to the awarding of major grants and funding from key partners. A business improvement district, NHD leverages public and private partnerships to provide enhanced services in transportation mobility, public safety, beautification, recreation, strategic planning and development.

“North Houston District is in the midst of implementing significant infrastructure and improvement projects that will positively impact quality of life in the North Houston area,” says Robert Fiederlein, the District’s vice president of planning and infrastructure. “We have received grants and funding from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, US Soccer Foundation, Harris County Precinct 2 and Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), enabling us to move forward on park, street and sidewalk renovations and upgrades. The District is excited to work on these transformational projects with partners who support our objectives.”

**Major Projects**

1. **Thomas R. Wussow Park Renovation** – NHD received a grant for \$455,013 from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) for the Wussow Park Renovation Project, which focuses on improving area residents' health and wellness and enhancing the natural aspects of the District's signature, 11-acre park in North Houston. The estimated project cost is \$940,000, and the TPWD grant will cover nearly half, with the other portion coming from North Houston District. Planning and permitting have begun.

Improvements include:

- Construction of two youth soccer fields, an accessible and shaded fitness area with workout stations, and expansion of the playground area for toddlers and children.
- Three separate Park planting areas: a coastal prairie along the bayou trail, a pollinator garden, and plantings in an on-site drainage ravine to filter out pollutants to Greens Bayou.
- Additional upgraded lighting to improve security, including for new walking paths, picnic areas, and park benches.

2. **Mini Pitch Partnership** – A new mini pitch will accompany the new youth soccer facilities. A mini pitch is an enclosed, hard surface space with goals at each end. Sometimes referred to as “futsal,” the game is popular worldwide. The North Houston mini pitch will be one of over a dozen around the Bayou City, but the first to the north side The District will install the foundation, and once completed, the U.S. Soccer Foundation, in conjunction with Houston Dynamo and Dash, will build the mini pitch, providing materials, including the acrylic surface, perimeter fencing, goals, and lighting via a \$100,000 grant. The District allocated over \$125,000 for design, construction, and installation and will fund ongoing maintenance. A ribbon cutting is anticipated this spring.
3. **Airline Drive Pedestrian Improvements** – The North Houston District will partner with Harris County Precinct 2, which will cover half of a \$330,000 project to improve and enlarge a one-mile stretch of pedestrian walkway along both sides of Airline Drive from West Road to Aldine Bender. This area gets substantial foot traffic with people walking to and from buses, area schools and local businesses. The sidewalk work complements METRO’s BOOST plan along Airline Drive to install enhanced bus shelters and raised curbs.

A grant from Precinct 2 will cover half of the \$330,000 project, leaving the District to pay the remaining \$165,000. The construction, which will widen the sidewalk from 6 feet to 10, aims to provide a safer and more walkable area. Work is slated to begin in spring of 2024; officials expect the work to last between 60 and 90 days. Gauge Engineering is designing the project and will provide construction oversight and administration. A construction firm has not yet been named.

Despite removing sidewalk lighting, Fiederlein said safety will not be compromised, as the area’s median lighting is adequate. However, NHD will work with CenterPoint Energy and the City of Houston to upgrade the median lights along the affected roadway for maximum pedestrian safety.

“We want the area to be accessible with good pedestrian, bike, and car mobility and this Airline Drive project aligns with that goal,” Fiederlein said.

4. **H-GAC Transportation Policy Council Grant for Sidewalk Project** – This project, with an estimated cost of \$2,470,000, will help fill in gaps in the District’s sidewalk network, bring narrow sidewalks up to standard, and make safety improvements for transit users, including high-visibility crosswalks. The streets to be improved are in the District’s northeast quadrant, north of Greens Road - Imperial Valley Drive, Regional Park Drive, Wayforest Drive, and Harvest Time Lane.

The improvements were first identified as part of the Livable Centers Study in 2019-2020. The typically required 20% cost match from the District has been modified to a 10% cash match and a 10% in-kind match, making the District’s portion approximately \$250,000. The in-kind match can be accomplished by completing other planned transportation projects in the District, such as the Airline Drive improvements. Detailed planning and permitting will be completed in 2024; construction is expected to begin in 2025.

“I’m extremely proud of our District staff who have worked so diligently to secure major funding through grants and public/private partnerships and bring these projects to

fruition," says NHD President Greg Simpson. "We appreciate the confidence shown in the District by these partners, along with their generosity.

"Every entity involved is committed to the highest standards of excellence," Simpson continues. Our mutual goal is to make the District even more accessible, livable and aesthetically pleasing for our surrounding business and residential stakeholders, along with visitors to the area."

To learn more about the North Houston District, go to [www.northhouston.org](http://www.northhouston.org).

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**Link to photos [here](#)**

Courtesy of North Houston District

### **About the North Houston District**

Created in 1991 by the Texas Legislature, the **North Houston District** is a business improvement district that leverages public and private partnerships to provide enhanced services in transportation mobility, public safety, beautification and recreational development, marketing and strategic planning and development. Minutes from Bush IAH, the District's 12-square-mile service area has 20 million square feet of office, retail and industrial properties. The District area includes more than 3,800 businesses, 68,000 employees and 118,500 residents. For more information, visit [www.northhouston.org](http://www.northhouston.org).