



PARK-SMART PRECINCT ONE

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



Image: dabfoto creative

“I’ve toured Precinct One and our parks and trails by bike, car and walking it – before and after Harvey. As a result, I’ve gained a unique perspective on the importance of creating equitable access to quality parks and green space for all people and communities in Precinct One. Parks should not be considered amenities, they’re necessary. Parks connect our communities, support healthy lifestyles and provide green spaces with environmental and cultural benefits.”

“Park-Smart will bring to life opportunities and ideas that will enhance the lives of our neighbors, friends and families for years to come.”

- Precinct One Commissioner Rodney Ellis

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Parks for equity, health and resilience

Open space, parks, gardens, and trails can provide critical green infrastructure to help Precinct One improve community health and well-being, build social connections necessary for community resilience, and meet environmental challenges. Parks and green space can benefit all residents of Precinct One by:

- Providing a fun and safe outdoor experience;
- Increasing community cohesion and equitable economic opportunity;
- Providing mental and physical health benefits, including lowering stress, blood pressure, and risk of heart disease;
- Improving local air and water quality;
- Mitigating climate impacts, such as flooding and rising temperatures.

Precinct One

Precinct One of Harris County in southeast Texas is one of the most vibrant and ethnically diverse areas in the country. The Precinct covers over 360 square miles, an area larger than New York City. The communities which comprise Precinct One range in character from urban to rural, but face many of the same challenges. The devastating impacts of Hurricane Harvey demonstrated the region’s vulnerability to severe storms and flooding, but also highlighted Precinct One’s community spirit and ingenuity, pointing the way toward a Precinct in which expanded parks, trails, and green space foster exceptional community resilience.

What are the goals of Park-Smart Precinct One?

Park-Smart Precinct One Plan will increase environmental and community health and resilience through expanding access to parks and greenways. This plan will build on the efforts of Precinct One, the City of Houston, and local groups such as Houston Parks Board, to increase access to high-quality parks and trails.

This project will:

- Evaluate Precinct One's current park and trail resources to identify and prioritize gaps in access, especially for vulnerable communities
- Identify barriers to using local parks and trails for underserved populations, and identify key areas to enhance active transit routes
- Convene diverse local partners, foster deep community engagement, and help build consensus through developing shared priorities, vision, and strategies
- Assess existing green infrastructure resources in Precinct One and identify high priority areas for future investments
- Identify ways to integrate arts and culture into parks and greenways to engage local communities and reflect their unique stories
- Develop a web-based decision-support tool to support strategic identification of park priorities through advanced query and state-of-the-art geographic analysis

Who is involved?

This is a collaboration of The Trust for Public Land and Precinct One. From The Trust for Public Land, the project brings together mapping and planning experts, the Climate-Smart Cities™ team, Parks for People staff, the Center for City Parks Excellence, and leaders in creative placemaking and community health. Houston Parks Board and Asakura Robinson are also partners in this effort. Representatives of local agencies and community groups will participate as members of a Steering Committee. This project is being funded by Precinct One and by a generous grant from the Houston Endowment.



Image: Asakura Robinson

What is the project timeline?

This project began in August 2017 and will be completed in early 2019. The first phases of the project will focus on community engagement, including steering committee meetings, interviews and focus groups, speak-out events, a precinct-wide telephone poll, and community workshops. Following community engagement, the focus will be on park and trail evaluations, green infrastructure assessment, and an active transportation study.

What is community resilience?

A resilient community has a sustained ability to use its resources to withstand and recover from adversity, as well as adapt to changing conditions. In an exceptionally resilient community, even the most vulnerable community members are resilient in the face of challenging environmental and social circumstances.

Why is Park-Smart Precinct 1 important?

This unique project will advance equitable access to quality parks and green spaces for all Precinct One communities. The plan will create tools to improve the health and quality of life for residents, expand environmental safeguards, and help build long-term community resilience for all residents and neighborhoods in and near Precinct 1.

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The Trust for Public Land protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

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Precinct One is committed to becoming a national model for delivering responsive public service utilizing inclusive, innovative and collaborative approaches to improve the quality of life, advance equality of opportunity, and promote fair treatment of all people in Harris County.

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