

WHITE OAK BAYOU

Representatives: Bob Lee/Mark Steuer (WOBA) Date: 4/5/2022

Planning and Policy Activities:

- North Canal Bypass Project – As of March 2022, Harris County Flood Control District’s (HCFCD) website <hcfcd.org> provides no updates on the North Canal Bypass Project beyond December 2019. In the fall 2019, the City of Houston received a \$46-million Hazard Mitigation grant from FEMA to help fund the North Canal project, which at the time was expected to be completed by the end of 2025 at a cost of \$131-million. HCFCD’s website previously stated that “grant funding calls for completion of the first phase of the project by 2022.” A Preliminary Engineering Report was expected to be complete by early 2022, but thus far this report has not been made public.

On-the-Ground Projects

- C-14 Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project Update – Based on independent observation, construction is continuing on 15.4 mile White Oak Bayou channel conveyance improvements along the final two segments covered by this Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project. Construction from Hollister Street to F.M 1960 (Discrete Segment 105), which began in the fall of 2020, was anticipated to be completed by the end of 2021, and construction from Cole Creek to Hollister Street (Discrete Segment 104), which was begun in the spring of 2021, was expected to be completed in the spring of 2022. HCFCD’s website has extended the expected completion date of both projects to summer, 2022.

In conjunction with this project, existing adjacent bike trail segments have been temporarily closed, but the project includes the eventual restoration of those trail segments as well as extension of the trail from Hollister Street to Jones Road. About one mile of the trail extension from Hollister to Fairbanks North Houston Road has been completed.

- Burned MKT Hike & Bike Bridge Repair Update (old Heights RR trestle)
Houston Parks Board announced in late March that repairs are expected to be completed by late summer, 2022, weather permitting. Also, construction to complete the gap in the White Oak Bayou Trail from Stude Park to the MKT trail along the north bank of WOB is expected to complete this summer.

Outreach/Publicity:

- The White Oak Bayou Association has begun preliminary discussions with stakeholders regarding concrete channel-lining removal and restoration of the banks to a more natural condition along a limited reach of the bayou. Our intent is to build consensus among neighborhood, environmental, and recreational groups before approaching potential funders.

- We have presented Houston Parks Board with a proposal to cooperatively establish a pocket prairie (1-2 acres) along the bayou greenways trail just north of 11th street. The project was recently approved, and exotic plant removal will commence shortly. Soil will later be brought in, and planting native grasses and forbs will take place in late winter/early spring of next year.
- Our next scheduled event will be a bike tour on May 15th along the lower WOB, highlighting Houston's early history along its banks. It will be led by Andrew Grocock, a local historian who will supplement the discussion with many historic photographs.
- WOBA participated in the Citizens Environmental Coalition sponsored annual Earth Day celebration at Discovery Green on April 10th . Our objective was to educate the public about our mission, and to grow our membership towards achieving our vision of a healthier and more natural bayou.