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**Kinder Foundation’s \$70 Million Gift Accelerates Visionary Plan for  
Houston’s Memorial Park**

*City of Houston setting new standards in green-space planning and public-private funding*

**Houston, TX – May 10, 2018** — With focus on creating the best urban park in America, Houston’s Kinder Foundation has granted \$70 million to fast-track Memorial Park’s Master Plan, one of the nation’s largest and most distinguished restorations directed by Memorial Park Conservancy, Houston Parks and Recreation Department, and Uptown Development Authority. This gift has energized the Park’s public and private partners to invest up to \$205 million in the Park over ten years.

Innovative landscape architectural firm, Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects (NBW), led the Master Plan’s design (completed in 2015), incorporating extensive public and stakeholder input as well as expertise from a broad coalition of collaborators and experts, including ecologists, soil scientists, foresters and historians. The NBW-designed master plan, which was led by Principal Thomas Woltz and Senior Associate Jeff Aten, balances ecological restoration with new features that reveal and celebrate the many cultural events that have shaped the park. With Kinder Foundation’s \$70 million lead gift, the largest single parks grant in Houston history, a progressive public-private funding model is in place to complete much of the Master Plan within ten years. This gift also catalyzed a public-private park operations model to provide for park care and maintenance for decades to come.

Memorial Park is special because of its central location and size; at nearly 1,500 acres, Houston’s largest public space is almost double New York’s Central Park. The park’s 600-acre urban wilderness is one of the largest centrally located urban forests in the country. Memorial Park is also remarkable because it is the only site of a former WWI training camp in the U.S. that has not been completely developed.

“Kinder Foundation’s historic gift will bring Memorial Park to its full potential, and improve Houston’s mobility, connectivity, economic vitality, and resiliency,” said Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner. “Houston applauds Kinder Foundation for consistently taking the lead to revitalize and expand our parks, greenways, and public spaces that perpetuate quality-of-life features that make our city great.”

Over the past decade, Kinder Foundation’s generosity has propelled Houston into the national spotlight as one of America’s most green-forward cities, notable across the globe. Giving \$106 million in transformational parks grants before Memorial Park’s gift and often serving as the cornerstone for additional philanthropic and government investing, Kinder Foundation’s inspiring public-private partnerships have changed Houston’s color palette from gray to green. Landmark successes include Discovery Green, Buffalo Bayou Park, and Bayou Greenways 2020.

Their legacy continues with Memorial Park. Kinder Foundation chairman Rich Kinder said, “Through a carefully designed public-private partnership, Memorial Park will reach its true potential. Projects completed over the next decade will connect neighborhoods to neighborhoods, attach Memorial Park to Houston’s growing hike-and-bike networks, and provide access to hundreds of acres of inaccessible parkland through a series of bridges and access points.”

A signature land bridge, featuring a restored prairie ecology, natural storm drainage and retention systems, and trails, will create a cohesive park experience. This central connector will provide safe passage for humans and wildlife over the park’s dividing thoroughfare.