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## Input needed on connecting Cypress Creek greenway parks

By Bryan Kirk Published 3:39 pm, Tuesday, March 19, 2013

The **Houston Parks Board** is asking for public input at open house meetings concerning a case study examining ways to implement the Cypress Creek Greenway.

The open house meetings will be March 21 and March 26 in Spring and Humble.

**Meredith Dang**, land use transportation coordinator for the **Houston-Galveston Area Council**, said the case study is part of a larger grant to study regional sustainable development.

"The Houston Parks Board wanted to look at the Cypress Creek Greenway and look at what could be done to connect these open spaces and trails along Cypress Creek," Dang said.

### More Information

If you go

The Houston Parks Board will host open house meetings to seek input about the Cypress Creek Greenway.

March 21: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Cypress Creek Christian Church, 6823 Cypresswood Drive, Spring

March 26: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble

Details: To learn more, go to [houstonbayougreenways.org](http://houstonbayougreenways.org)

"One of the components of that is we are looking at ways to promote (sustainability) at the local level," Dang said.

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The Cypress Creek Greenway stretches about 40 miles from Spring Creek just north of **Bush Intercontinental Airport**, to west of U.S. 290 into Waller County.

The Cypress Creek Greenway is only a small part of the H-GAC study, but it's an important part to the Houston Parks Board.

**Jen Powis**, spokesperson for the Houston Parks Board, said the study is in conjunction with the Bayou Greenways 2020 parks bond that was approved by voters in November.

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The Bayou Greenways 2020 initiative seeks to connect all of the green space and parks in the city of Houston.

However, much of the Cypress Creek Greenway is outside the city limits of Houston, but the vision for bayous like Cypress Creek are the same, Powis said.

"Just like in the city of Houston, there are pieces of parkland along the bayou, there are pieces of trails along the Cypress Creek already," Powis said. "What this case study is looking at is how do we take that next step? How do we finish the job and connect it all up?"

The connection of the various parks in Harris County has long been a passion for Precinct 4 Commissioner **Jack Cagle**.

Since 2011, Cagle has been involved with the greenway projects to connect the parks along Spring Creek and Cypress Creek.

"This is a passion of our parks department within the county to try and help with interconnectivity," Cagle said. "It is one of those things that operate on multiple levels."

Cagle said having interconnectivity between the parks would allow parks personnel to travel easily between the parks, and also provides consumers with a different and possibly healthier transportation option.

Cagle said having the parks connected would allow some commuters to ride their bike through a county park either all the way into their jobs, or ride their bicycle to a Metro bus stop nearby and use public transportation.

Powis said the Houston Parks Board will be joined by **CDS Market Research and Marsh Darcy Partners**, who through the \$100,000 grant awarded by H-GAC last year, will examine the economic benefits and environmental health benefits in connecting Cypress Creek with the existing parks and trails.

**Steven Spillette**, president of CDS Market Research, has been involved in the information gathering process with the Houston Parks Board and Marsh Darcy Partners since December 2012.

"We've been doing a lot of background work to compile demographics and economics in the area, the status of governance ... and developing a public outreach strategy," Spillette said.

"In many ways, the core of this effort is having very extensive dialog with the community in the Cypress Creek corridor."

Since then, CDS Market Research - an urban consulting and market research group - has conducted numerous small group meetings

Of course, Powis said they want to know what the public wants from this study.

"We tend to think there is (support), but it may be that the people may not have connected the dots in their head about how we do this," she said.

"This type of proposal is really retrofitting in parkland and trails. This entire corridor is built up and part of the challenge (so many) are encountering is that Cypress Creek has lots of individual municipal utility districts.

"It's a pretty complicated endeavor with lots of different people involved, which is why this

case study is so valuable."

The Houston Parks Board will conclude its study at the end of April, Powis said.

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