Bayou Greenways: An Urban Park System Like No Other.

SESSION SUMMARY
Big ideas take time, for Houston it took 100 years. Circulating since 1912, Houstonians recently voted resoundingly yes to implementing a vision of interconnected parks along ten major City bayous. Once completed, 60% of Houstonians will live within 1.5 miles of the 300 mile long green matrix.

SPEAKERS
Joe Turner, has been the director of the Houston Parks & Recreation Department since 2004. He is responsible for overseeing the stewardship of approximately 38,000 acres of parkland, associated recreational programming & activities, parks budget management, facilities management practices, and staff. With an Executive Master’s of Business Administration Degree and park management background, he pursues his belief in responsive government, customer service, and the need to preserve parkland and greenspace for today’s park visitors & for future generations.

Matt Baumgarten, ASLA, is an Associate with SWA Group and has over 8 years of professional landscape architecture experience. As a lead project designer, he utilizes his background in ecology and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin to create land based solutions for complex domestic and international projects. With an emphasis on public parks and open spaces, riparian corridors, waterfront development, and regional planning, Matt brings an innovative, yet pragmatic design approach to environmentally challenging sites.

Roksan Okan-Vick, FAIA, is the executive director of the Houston Parks Board (HPB), a non-profit organization that creates, improves, and protects parkland for Houston. She leads and directs all aspects of the organization’s business and serves as liaison to city government, other green space organizations, national park organizations, outside consultants, foundations and the board of directors. Previous to serving as the Parks Board director, she was the first woman director of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) and the executive director of the Friends of Herman Park (FHP).
LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- Learn the history and significance of advancing Arthur Comey’s Bayou Greenway vision.
- Identify the important roles played by public and private partners.
- Explore the master plan design framework and its component parts.
- Understand the process used to construct the ultimate vision.

PRESENTATION OUTLINE
1. Introduction: “America’s Next Great Global City”
   - Bayou?
   - Regional Environmental, Economic, and Social Influences
   - Future Projections
2. Arthur Comey: The First 100 years
   - 1800’s - Settlement of Houston
   - 1900’s - Arthur Comey’s Greenway Vision
   - 1950’s - Development Pressure and Flooding
   - 2000’s - Landscape Infrastructure
3. Park Space in Houston:
   - It’s Not All Concrete – Inventory and Analysis of Houston’s Park System
   - Who Does What? – Public/Private Partnerships
   - Don’t Forget to Mow the Lawn! – Operations and Maintenance Overview
   - Land Matters - Acquisition and Enhancement Process
   - Overall Scope of Work
     - Connect new and existing greenspace along 10 major bayous
     - 4,000 acres of land acquisition
     - 150 miles of new trails for a total of 300 miles of connected greenway
     - Flood control – detention, conveyance, water quality improvements
     - Park enhancements – tree planting, prairie restoration, trailheads/parking, shelters, signage/wayfinding, environmental education
   - Context
     - Comparable projects and precedents
   - Funding Overview
     - City of Houston Bond issue
     - Private match to City of Houston Bond issue
     - State/federal project funding
   - Phase One – “Bayou Greenways 2020”
     - Master Plan overview
     - Project design standards
     - Implementation process and schedule
     - Long term maintenance
5. Closing Remarks