



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Downtown Greenway, East Boulevard/T.J. Jemison Boulevard Construction**

BATON ROUGE, LA (June 21, 2019) – Construction has begun on phase two of the Downtown Greenway at East Boulevard/ T.J. Jemison Boulevard and is expected to be complete in the spring of 2020. The Downtown Greenway is a 2.75 mile interconnected network of bike/pedestrian pathways connecting Baton Rouge’s public parks and recreational facilities, inner city communities, and cultural attractions through the use of greenways, or linear parks. The multi-phased, alternative transportation project will utilize the existing BREC parks, interstate infrastructure, and public right-of-ways. It creates the link to over 7 local parks – Memorial Stadium, Expressway Park, Brooks Park and City Park, Arsenal Park, Convention Street Park, Seventh Street Senior Citizens Park – strengthening the social cohesion, promoting community revitalization and adding economic value to Baton Rouge communities. The Downtown Development District is the lead agency responsible for administering the Downtown Greenway project, in partnership with the East Baton Rouge City-Parish, BREC, and the Capitol Area Finance Authority.

The concept for the Downtown Greenway began in Plan Baton Rouge II as a public, alternative transportation system that connects the surrounding inner city neighborhoods to the ‘Central Green,’ a system of greenspaces in the heart of Downtown Baton Rouge that includes North Boulevard Town Square, Repentance Park, City Hall Plaza, and Riverfront Plaza. Influenced by Plan Baton Rouge II’s recommendation, a Feasibility Study was conducted by ABMB Engineers, Inc. to determine viable locations and estimate total cost. In 2012, the City-Parish of Baton Rouge and the Downtown Development District were awarded a technical assistance grant from the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Greening America’s Capitals Program to fund the schematic plan created by Spackman, Mossop, & Michaels + Tipton Associates. The final design and construction documents were created by Design Workshop and their sub-consultants including; Reich Associates, Fenstermaker, Forte & Tablada, Walter Kulash, and Chris Davala.

Approximately \$3 million dollars has been acquired from national, state, and local grant resources to plan and/or construct the Downtown Greenway including: FHWA Louisiana Recreational Trails Program, LA-DOTD Transportation Enhancement Program, LA-DOTD Transportation Community and System Preservation, EPA Greening America’s Capitals Program, and the Capital Area Finance Authority. The construction of the East Boulevard/ T.J. Jemison Boulevard portion of the Downtown Greenway was funded by an approximately \$1.47 million grant provided by the Louisiana Department of Transportation’s Transportation Enhancement Program.

Construction on the Downtown Greenway sections at Expressway Park and Myrtle Street were completed in 2015 utilizing two grants from the FHWA Louisiana Recreational Trails Program. The Expressway Park project, a partnership between the DDD/City-Parish and BREC, included a 700' linear foot, 12' wide path with trailhead facilities, bike racks, accessible ramps, work out station, and connections to the park's other amenities. A multi-use path was also installed along Myrtle Street, connecting the Lincoln Theatre to the Downtown Greenway at Expressway Park, as part of a partnership between the DDD/EBR City-Parish and Build Baton Rouge.

The North Boulevard Promenade section of the project was also completed in the winter of 2016 and was constructed by Rotolo Consultants Inc. It features a 10' wide bicycle path and complementary separate pedestrian path or garden walk. Thousands of plants were installed and highlight the beautiful oaks along the boulevard. Water fountains, benches, and bike racks are provided, as well as exercise equipment and signage. The project features green painted bike lanes and crossings, which is a first for the State of Louisiana; having been approved by DOTD.

*"We are excited to see phase two of the Downtown Greenway begin construction, linking Expressway Park to North Boulevard and furthering the ultimate goal to connect our inner city neighborhoods to downtown's attractions and work force opportunities. We are grateful to our community partners that have helped us make this vision a reality" - Davis Rhorer, DDD Executive Director*

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