**Regional Conservation News Release Template – Low Impact Development**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[Month] [Date], [Year]

Contact:

**[NEWS RELEASE HEADLINE]**

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**[CITY, STATE]** – From abundant forests, native prairies, and more than 16,000 miles of bayous, rivers, and coastline, the Houston-Galveston region is home to numerous natural assets. It also has a rich agricultural heritage and continues to grow in both population and land development. As the region grows, builders and developers can play a vital part in promoting resilient communities by integrating natural areas into public and private built environments. One way to ensure new development supports the region’s natural resources is through building in low impact development practices and methods.

Low impact development is a method of developing land and designing sites that leaves natural areas untouched or installs features designed to replace the function of natural areas that may have been removed. It seeks to find a balance between ecosystem services provided by natural areas and the economics of successful development.

When designed, constructed, and maintained properly, low impact development can provide many benefits to the environment, local governments, developers, and property owners. Low impact development practices like using green infrastructure to manage stormwater can filter pollutants, reduce stormwater runoff, and providing community amenities. Low impact development is often less expensive than traditional development infrastructure because it uses natural features.

*[The three paragraphs below provide examples of low impact development projects and their benefits. You can use these as examples to highlight the potential benefits of your own low impact development project, or you may replace the paragraphs with information about your project and use them as a guide in how to discuss it.]*

An example of low impact development in a municipal setting is the rain garden at Dickinson Public Library in Galveston County. The Dickinson Public Library leveraged a minor landscaping need as an opportunity to educate and demonstrate environmental stewardship to residents. The 1,000-square-foot rain garden demonstrates the use of native species and other design considerations for improving water quality through biofiltration of stormwater.

Queenston Manor is an example of low impact development designed for a multifamily development in Houston. When the site plan was initially prepared, a detention pond was proposed to manage the site’s runoff. This feature consumed a large area, making multifamily development financially infeasible. Redesigning the site with low impact development practices increased the amount of land available for buildings, allowing the developer to construct 48 additional units, increasing the project’s potential revenue.

Features included a system of rain gardens and bioswales between buildings, creating a stormwater filtration system, and attractive landscaping amenity for residents. Parking spaces in the development are surfaced with permeable pavers, allowing stormwater to soak directly into the ground below. A network of underground cisterns collects the stormwater that seeps through engineered soils from the rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable paved parking lot above. Water collected in underground storage can be used for irrigation or infiltrating underlying soil. This storage serves as an alternative to above ground stormwater detention areas, freeing up more land for other uses.

To learn more about low impact development in the region, visit H-GAC's Low Impact Development website at www.h-gac.com/low-impact-development. To learn more about conservation in the region, visit the H-GAC’s Regional Conservation Initiative web page at www.h-gac.com/regional-conservaion.