

PROJECT OWNER

**City of Seabrook**

**SEPTEMBER 30, 2025**

**Parks and Natural Areas Awards Program:  
On-the-Ground Project Over \$500K**

# Bayside Park

PROJECT DESIGNER

**Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.**



## Project Overview



 *Bayside Park*     *Streetscape Enhancements*

**715 Main Street, Seabrook, TX 77586**

**Project Owner:** City of Seabrook

**Design Firm:** Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

**List of Project Partners:**

- Seabrook Economic Development Corporation
- Galveston Bay Estuary Program
- Galveston Bay Foundation

**County:** Harris County

**Size:**

- Park area: 2.35 acres
- Streetscape: 1,500 LF

**Value:**

- Park area: \$2.7 million
- Streetscape: \$1.7 million

## Key Elements of the Project

When plans were made to relocate the wastewater treatment plant, the City of Seabrook saw a unique opportunity to transform the site into a waterfront park—leveraging the pristine waterfront and addressing Old Seabrook’s lack of sizable park space and unique sense of place. Developed in collaboration with stakeholders, including the Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Galveston Bay Foundation, business owners, and neighbors, the master plan focuses on ecological education, shoreline restoration, new amenities, and a revitalized streetscape. Key priorities include revitalizing Old Seabrook, easing storm prep, reducing severe weather damage, streamlining long-term maintenance, and ensuring sustainability.



## Project Objectives

- Transform the old wastewater treatment plant into vital public park space.
- Create opportunities for nature access and hands-on ecological learning.
- Use native landscaping to increase storm resiliency, conserve water, reduce maintenance, and support environmental education.
- Regrade the site to prevent bowl-shaped drainage issues, making post-storm cleanup easier and reduce debris buildup.
- Design for storm surge conditions and raise key infrastructure—including the pavilion, plaza, and restrooms—to higher elevations. Past storms have shown the entire site can be submerged during major weather events.
- Support storm prep with mobile, trailer-based restrooms, and removable pavilion sail shades, allowing quick relocation to protect City assets.
- Integrate the park into the Main Street streetscape to strengthen the sense of place, boost recreation value, and energize the community.

## How does the project meet these objectives?

The Bayside Park project transforms a former wastewater treatment site into a vibrant public park, fulfilling community and ecological goals. It provides nature access and education through a pavilion designed for outdoor learning, nature play areas, and ecological signage. Native landscaping enhances storm resiliency, conserves water, reduces maintenance, and restores wildlife habitat. The site’s regrading eliminates bowl-shaped drainage issues, improving post-storm cleanup. Recognizing the site’s vulnerability to flooding, key infrastructure like the pavilion and plaza are elevated, while mobile, trailer-based restrooms and removable sail shades allow rapid storm preparedness. The park integrates with the Main Street streetscape, boosting recreation and economic vitality in Old Seabrook. Bayside Park serves as a regional model for resilient, sustainable waterfront development that balances public use with environmental stewardship.

## Cost-Benefit and Funding Solutions

The City considered renovating the existing wastewater treatment plant office building into expanded public restrooms. However, an architectural analysis revealed that renovating the existing structure would be cost-prohibitive and exceeded the building's insurable value. Given the storm-prone location, any structure would require a finished floor elevation 17-feet above the surrounding grade, which would necessitate costly accessible routes with ramps or an elevator.

To address these challenges, the City and design team explored two creative solutions: 1) a mobile, trailer-based restroom similar to those at special events, or 2) a barge-based restroom similar to a house boat that could sit in the water and move up and down with the tide. After evaluating both options, the mobile restroom was selected for its affordability and flexibility. This also allowed the City to relocate the trailer-based structure quickly in advance of storms, preserving infrastructure and allowing more funding to be directed toward park improvements.

By reimagining the Main Street streetscape, the Seabrook Economic Development Corporation (EDC) recognized the park's potential to spark reinvestment in the area and generate new business. The expansion of Highway 146 had previously disrupted access, causing many businesses to relocate. Bayside Park, with its unique waterfront access and inviting public amenities, is designed to serve as a destination for both residents and visitors. This renewed activity is expected to support local commerce and strengthen the economic vitality of Old Seabrook.

## Collaboration

The Galveston Bay Estuary Program and Galveston Bay Foundation played central roles helping shape the project throughout the design and public engagement phases. To support ecological preservation and restoration, they conducted a vegetation and wildlife survey, advised on successful shore-line vegetation installations, and offered funding opportunities for the future implementation. By leveraging the expertise of these organizations and working alongside community stakeholders, the project team prioritized ecological restoration and created a resilient, community-driven park.



## Public Involvement

The idea for Bayside Park originated during the City's Comprehensive Plan process, which identified the former wastewater treatment site as a potential park. This broader planning effort laid the foundation for community support and long-term vision.

From the start of the project, the City prioritized inclusive engagement to capture a wide variety of perspectives and input on the community's vision for the park. The City assembled a stakeholder group comprised of business owners, neighbors, a council member, an economic development corporation member, and Galveston Bay Estuary Program and Galveston Bay Foundation representatives who participated in meetings with the design team. They provided input on each phase—including the site analysis, conceptual ideas, and draft master plan—and attended the final presentation to council and EDC for adoption.

## Meeting Community Needs

The Old Seabrook area of town lacked public park space, a gap first identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Bayside Park directly addressed this need by converting underutilized land into accessible green space. The 2019 Seabrook Open Space and Parks Master Plan recommended:

- Leveraging partnerships for funding and services
- Acquiring open space or preservation and future development
- Promoting trails and natural resources to increase access
- Creating education initiatives tied to capital improvement projects

Bayside Park addresses these needs through its ecological restoration, nature education pavilion, and improved trail connectivity. The park's design encourages outdoor learning, supports public health, and strengthens connections to nature. The design of Bayside Park fulfills these goals with:

- Partnerships with Galveston Bay Estuary Program and Galveston Bay Foundation provide professional expertise in ecological conservation such as the vegetative shoreline and grant funding for improvements.
- The conversion of the former wastewater treatment plant site into a park space provides for much needed open space.
- The ecological benefits of coastal prairie and vegetative shorelines help to promote nature and increase habitat for wildlife. The improved safety features of the streetscape promote use of trails in lieu of cars in the area.
- The nature education center and pavilion can be used as an outdoor classroom, promoting education of the ecology in the area and allowing for future educational programming.

## Model for Similar Initiatives in the Region

Bayside Park offers a model for other waterfront communities in the area, balancing recreational needs with storm resilience and ecological restoration. The City's creative use of mobile infrastructure, including the trailer-based restrooms and removable shade structures, illustrates how to protect investments in flood-prone areas.

The park also reflects Seabrook's commitment to sustainable landscapes and wildlife access. This led them to prioritize the site as a nature education and ecological restoration. Nature education was prioritized by providing a venue for classes and access to view coastal flora and fauna of the area. Native coastal prairie grasses and vegetative shoreline plantings reduce maintenance, improve erosion control, attract wildlife, and restore precious habitats. Educational signage and nature play areas further promote ecological awareness and community.



## Preserving Natural Areas

As a former wastewater treatment plant, the site existed of treatment tanks, concrete paving, and few to no natural areas. According to the Galveston Bay Estuary Program survey of species, the perimeter of the existing site had established itself as mostly invasives along the water's edge. While wildlife was observed, the conditions weren't ideal.

The new master plan re-envisioned the site as a park that fosters nature education and reestablishes native vegetation, restoring the native habitat and inviting wildlife back to the area. Native grass plantings and shoreline vegetation help purify water, stabilize the shoreline, and support biodiversity. Transforming the site from an industrial facility into an ecological asset highlights the project's strong commitment to environmental stewardship.



## Improvement of Park Areas

While the existing streetscape allowed for waterfront views, sidewalks for strolling, and frontage for fishing, the proposed master plan significantly expands the recreational value of the area. New amenities transform the park into a multi-use destination.

The pavilion is designed to host small classes and acoustical events, while the open lawn and plaza spaces support a variety of activities, such as farmers markets, event seating, and casual picnicking. Nature play areas and educational signage invite visitors to engage with the local ecology, supported by demonstration plantings that showcase native species. Restroom facilities and shaded seating areas encourage longer visits, enhancing both quality of life and the vitality of Old Seabrook's businesses. Along the streetscape, improvements include upgraded lighting, wide sidewalks, crosswalks, bump-outs, and site furnishings that create a safer and more comfortable pedestrian experience. Shade structures and newly planted trees provide inviting spaces for picnics and community events, such as RC sailboat races and waterfront fishing.

## Resiliency and Sustainability for the Area

Storm resiliency and sustainability were at the forefront of the City's mind when re-envisioning a park space at Bayside Park. Due to the site's location in a storm prone area, the City explored ways to better design the site for storm preparedness and cleanup, while focusing infrastructure investments at high elevations to protect it from flooding. The pavilion was designed with removable sail shades that could easily be taken down before a storm. The restroom facility is mobile and trailed-based, allowing it to be relocated in advance of severe weather. Previously, the bowl-shaped site collected debris during flooding, complicating cleanup. To prevent this, the site was regraded to improve drainage and minimize debris buildup. These improvements help reduce the strain on City maintenance crews during post-storm demands.

Durable materials such as concrete paving and flood-resistant structures were selected to withstand flood damage. Coastal prairie grasses were planted along slopes to reduce maintenance and water use, promote wildlife and nature education, and improve erosion control. Additionally, native shoreline planting flowers maintenance upkeep, fosters natural ecosystems, and protects the bank from erosion. Resiliency and sustainability were integral to the project design, helping protect the site from natural disasters, support ecological education, and extend the life of the City's investment.