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Midway breaks ground on 150-acre East River development, reveals new tenants

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Houston-based Midway broke ground on its long-awaited East River development Aug. 26.

The 150-acre mixed-use project in the historic Fifth Ward, adjacent to the East End District, will be completed in multiple phases over many years.



COURTESY MIDWAY

The first phase, which will span about 26 acres at the intersection of Jensen Drive and Clinton Drive, is slated to be complete in 2023. It will include approximately 250,000 square feet of office space, 110,000 square feet of retail space and more than 13,000 square feet of plaza greenspace.

“Our team toured nearly two dozen leading-edge projects in five states across the country to examine best practices in repurposing industrial and commercial waterfront developments,” said [Jamie](#)

Bryant, Midway's president and COO. "We continue to distill the best ideas, adapt and apply them. East River Phase One will set the tone for a world-class, community-oriented destination by focusing on connecting Houston's urban fabric to central green spaces, active transportation, upgraded infrastructure and an impressive mile of waterfront along Buffalo Bayou that was inaccessible to Houstonians for decades."

Along with the groundbreaking, Midway also announced three new tenants for the first phase on Aug. 26.

Houston-based commercial architecture firm Method Architecture will occupy 9,000 square feet in East River 1 (Building C). The firm currently has offices in Houston, Dallas, Austin and San Antonio.

Teal, which provides a cloud-based system for delivering hot water to buildings without water heaters, has leased 12,000 square feet in the same building for its new corporate headquarters. The company currently has offices in Missouri City, Austin, Dallas, Atlanta and Denver.

Finally, the owners of The Astorian event venue near Sawyer Yards will open a new 20,000-square-foot private event space and rooftop bar in Trail Head 1 (Building F). The yet-to-be-named event space will include a ballroom, bride and groom suites, and an outdoor wraparound deck with panoramic views of downtown Houston and Buffalo Bayou. The Buffalo Bayou location and natural surroundings will influence the design of the venue, which also will feature smart technology, configurable spaces and a partially covered patio to accommodate a variety of events. The rooftop bar will be open to the public as well as available for private parties.

Previously announced plans for East River include an apartment community as well as a golf course anchored by a restaurant and patio bar. The five-story multifamily component, called The Laura, offer 360 apartment units. Teal will provide hot water for The Laura, which is part of East River Phase One.

East River 9, a nine-hole, par-three golf course open to the public, and Riverhouse Houston, a family-friendly restaurant and patio bar, are expected to open in 2022. East River 9 will feature stadium lights for evening play; holes that range from 80 to 150 yards; a

natural grass, 300-yard driving range; a 12,000-square-foot social putting green; and a 1,000-square-foot pro shop. Riverhouse Houston will offer a scratch kitchen menu plus beer, wine and spirits. There will also be a kids playscape, outdoor games and fire pits, and Riverhouse Houston will frequently host live music in the evenings.

East River 9 is working with Phillis Wheatley High School in the Fifth Ward to create an inclusive environment for students and their families. PGA Reach Southern Texas, the charitable foundation of the Southern Texas PGA, also plans to host programs at the venue.

Negotiations are currently underway for another 30,000 square feet of office space and 31,000 square feet of retail space. Limestone Commercial Real Estate President [Brandi McDonald Sikes](#) and [Sobi Qazi](#) are serving as exclusive leasing agents for the remaining office space in Phase One. [Lacee Jacobs](#) and [Laura Harness](#) from Midway's Strategic Leasing and Advisory team are handling the retail space.

The East River project team includes Page, commercial architect of record; OJB Landscape Architecture, landscape architect; BGE, Inc., civil engineer; Burton Construction, commercial general contractor; Harper Brothers, infrastructure general contractor; Daly, commercial structural engineer; Telios, commercial mechanical, electric and plumbing; EDI International, multifamily architect of record; Munoz + Albin, multifamily design architect; Mayfield and Ragni Studio (MaRS), multifamily interior design; OHT Partners, multifamily general contractor; HE, multifamily mechanical, electric and plumbing; Schultz Burman Engineering, PLLC, multifamily structural engineer.

[Midway bought 136 acres of its East River development in July 2016](#). The site used to belong to Houston-based KBR and is bordered by little over a mile of Buffalo Bayou. Previously announced plans for the 150-acre project include 8.9 million square feet of office space, 1,440 multifamily units, 390 hotel rooms and 475 single-family homes.

In August 2020, Midway partnered with Houston-based Moonstruck to [create Moonstruck Drive-In Cinema at East River](#). Unlike many temporary drive-ins that popped up amid the Covid-19

pandemic, the East River site shows new releases. The companies plan to continue the East River drive-in "for many years to come," Andrew Thomas, Moonstruck co-founder and Showboat owner, said last August. Future plans include hosting drive-in concerts, showing classic films along with other new releases, and other experiences, he said at the time.

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