

Midway's East River master plan applies a multiphase approach over a 20-year period. Phase I is expected to break ground this summer, with completion slated for early 2023.



# BAYOU BEAUTY

East of downtown, a new redevelopment project will transform 150 acres of unused riverfront property into a series of greenspaces and walkable districts. Spearheaded by Houston real estate developer Midway, East River ([eastriverhtx.com](http://eastriverhtx.com)) reimagines a long-forgotten area along the Buffalo Bayou. Here, Midway CEO Jonathan Brinsden chats with us about the city's new waterfront destination.

BY KILEY FAULKNER

**In a city as large as Houston with so many development opportunities, what drew you to this specific location?** The East River site is the largest redevelopment tract inside the 610 Loop, and we were drawn to it for a number of reasons. First, it's located just 1 mile from Houston's central business district, providing convenient access to all the cultural and entertainment venues in the surrounding area. Second, it presents the opportunity to create a truly livable, walkable urban community from scratch. Third, it is large enough to create many mixed-use spaces within a master-planned, controlled environment. And fourth, it connects Houston's urban fabric to an impressive mile of waterfront along Buffalo Bayou that's been inaccessible to the wider community for decades.

**Can you give us an overview of the East River project and its phases?** While market forces will influence each phase, each is anticipated to include a mix of uses. Phase I, approximately 26 acres at the intersection of Jensen and Clinton drives, will include offices, retail, restaurants and multifamily living, as well as over 13,000 square feet of plaza greenspace with a full calendar of events and live

music. Future phases will include these concepts along with hotels, entertainment, medical, educational and other elements found in mixed-use urban environments. Houstonians are invited to experience the site via early-stage activations currently underway, which include the Moonstruck Drive-In Cinema at East River and a 60-foot-by-20-foot Houston-themed mural inspired by the surrounding historic communities of Fifth Ward and East End.

**What is your overall vision for this project?** East River will transform the city's waterfront east of downtown into a new economic center. While there has been a lot of redevelopment occurring east of downtown, it's been mostly piecemeal and lacked cohesive planning. East River's size gives it the critical mass needed to become the principal anchor and catalyst for the area. East River will introduce thousands of new job opportunities for residents in the area, including both construction jobs and permanent businesses that will open within the development. A particular focus is to provide such opportunities for the Fifth Ward and Second Ward communities.

RENDERING COURTESY OF MIDWAY