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**Look for our annual Healthcare Directory next month**

KATY EDITION

Volume 2, Issue 3 | Nov. 27-Dec. 18, 2013

# Growth on horizon in area north of I-10

## Grand Parkway attracts developers

By Nick Cenegy & Christine Hall

The area north of I-10 along the Grand Parkway is poised for widespread residential developments in coming years spearheaded by some prominent home builders, according to industry experts.

“That whole area is very soon to be transformed into everything that you can imagine, schools to churches, everything residential,” said Will Holder, president of Trendmaker Homes and past president of the Greater Houston Builders Association.

Much of the land, which stretches from the easternmost border of the city of Katy to the edge of Cy-Fair, is under contract by builders and

developers, he said.

“I think that access is key but I think that the timing is also important, at a time when the southern area is pretty darn full,” Holder said.

With the concrete poured for the Grand Parkway, and a December 2013 opening slated, properties throughout the area are under contract or are in negotiation, Katy AEDC President Lance LaCour said.

“The quality residential developments that are planned to be constructed along the Grand Parkway will continue to place the Katy area as the top community for growth in the Houston region and one of the top communities for growth in the U.S.,” he said.



Shawn Egges

KB Home's Katy Oaks is among the first developments to begin construction of homes in the area.

### New developments

Among the most notable of the new developments, Newland Communities—the group responsible for developing Cinco Ranch—has about 4,000 acres under contract in the vicinity of Hwy. 529 and Peek Road, said David Jarvis,

regional director with Metrostudy—a group that tracks property transactions for the home building industry. DR Horton has about 500 acres in the area and Lennar Homes has about 100 acres in the area, he said.

Much of the previous growth in the region has

taken place south of I-10 in areas that ultimately became Cinco Ranch, CrossCreek Ranch and Firethorne.

“We see this as an extension of the Katy south market,” Jarvis said.

KB Home has 60 acres at Morton Ranch and  
See **Development** | 20

# Katy tollway could stretch to Sealy

## Funding, public input required before moving forward

By Nick Cenegy

An extension of the I-10 managed lanes to Sealy is in preliminary design stages, although there are several key steps necessary before construction could begin and there is no immediate timeline for the project, Texas Department of Transportation officials said. The effort comes two months after a price increase from five dollars to seven dollars on the existing managed lanes successfully thinned traffic on the tollway and increased participation in vanpool, as well as the Katy area METRO Park and Ride centers.

“The proposed lanes would be similar to the existing ones,” TxDOT

spokesman Danny Perez said. “However, more public involvement is needed before design and construction is to begin. At this time, the managed lanes are in the planning stages.”

The project calls for adding two managed lanes on each side of I-10 from Hwy. 6 to Sealy. Presently the Katy managed lanes run about 12 miles, one toll lane and one HOV lane on both sides of the divider, from Loop 610 to Hwy. 6. The proposed lanes would make the total distance about 42 miles.

With the existing HOV lanes, drivers with at least one passenger can travel for free in either direction during peak hours Monday through Friday, 5 a.m.–11 a.m. and 2 p.m.–8 p.m. Solo drivers can drive in the managed

See **Tollway** | 21

## TxDOT project selection process

### Planning

Projects may begin from a number of sources, including local, state or federal level entities.

### Initial Design

Local officials, public and TxDOT district employees build a proposal. Engineers, planners and environmental specialists evaluate the project's viability and environmental implications.

### Planning

The proposed project competes with other local projects for funding. Final selection rests with TxDOT and local officials.

### Development

The advanced development phase includes transportation planning, design and right of way acquisition, environmental planning, and preliminary engineering.

### Construction

Construction contracts are awarded through a competitive bidding process. After the bid gains final approval, construction begins.



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John and Jennifer Garrett began *Community Impact Newspaper* in 2005 in Pflugerville, Texas. The company's mission is to build communities of informed citizens and thriving businesses through the collaboration of a passionate team. Now, with 15 markets in the Austin, Houston and Dallas/Fort Worth metro areas, the paper is distributed to more than 1 million homes and businesses.

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## FROM THE EDITOR



About a month ago, I ran into a married couple who read our paper. The husband dukes it out on I-10 every day. He said he'd be happy to pay a little extra to be able to jump on the Katy Tollway at Fry Road instead of at Hwy. 6—where it begins now. He was curious about whether the toll

lanes would ever be extended. I told him I'd make a few calls on it and find out.

This month we bring you the result of those calls in a story about some designs underway for an extension of the tollway—not just to Fry Road—but all the way to Sealy.

Truth is, it may never happen. It is in the earliest of stages and funding is a perennial issue for road projects.

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

### TAKE THE POLL

This month we report that TxDOT is designing an extension to the toll and HOV lanes on I-10 that would reach Sealy. Construction, however, is contingent upon finding funding for the project and public support.

### What do you think about a proposed extension of the I-10 managed lanes (toll and HOV) to Sealy?

- ☐ This is a good way to reduce traffic on I-10
- ☐ There are better ways to reduce traffic on I-10
- ☐ Public roads should not charge tolls
- ☐ Other projects in the area deserve attention first
- ☐ Other

➔ **Take the poll online at [impactnews.com/kty-poll](http://impactnews.com/kty-poll)**

Look for the results right here in next month's print edition of *Community Impact Newspaper*.

The idea of paying tolls for a public road, itself, can be controversial in this region. It will be interesting whether this one gains traction.

I've also spent some time in recent weeks poking around the area along the soon-to-be-open Segment E of the Grand Parkway. Everyone I've talked to familiar with the area has told me to take some pictures now—it won't be the way it is for long. Based on the research for our story on the area this month, I believe them.

It is hard to get a fix on all of the groups negotiating for land in that area. It is clear, however, that all the activity could easily shift Katy's "center of gravity." The proposed building along the Grand Parkway is poised to shift the balance farther north.

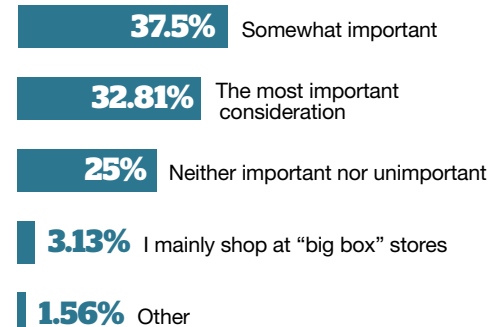
Nick Cenegy  
EDITOR

ncenegy@impactnews.com

### LAST MONTH'S POLL RESULTS

Last month we reported that residential growth in the Katy area has provided a lot of opportunity for entrepreneurs to start up new businesses. There is also a formidable network of organizations that provide business counseling services.

### How important is it to you that the businesses you support in the Katy area are locally owned and operated?



Results from an unscientific Web survey, collected Oct. 24–Nov. 21, 2013

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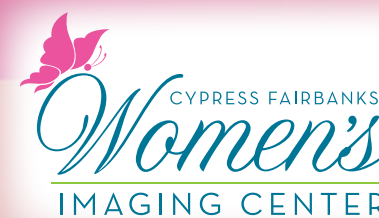
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# IMPACTS



## Now Open

**1 The Water Tree Katy**, at 19716 Saums Road, offers a new source for water. The business, which opened Oct. 5, offers affordable, alkaline antioxidant water and a variety of filters. The store sells water by the bottle or gallon and has a refilling service. Home systems, countertop systems and tap water filters

are also available, as well as showerheads that remove chlorine, soften the water with natural minerals, and put in Vitamin C and citrus aroma therapy. 281-827-1209. [www.watertreekaty.com](http://www.watertreekaty.com)

**2 Texas Lone Star Doors**, at 5718 Third St., offers a variety of interior and exterior doors—primarily residential. The business, which serves communities

around the Katy area is family-owned. 832-689-2578. [www.texaslonestardoors.com](http://www.texaslonestardoors.com)

**3** Katy area residents have a new way to satisfy their sweet tooth at **Schokolad Chocolate Factory**. The chocolatier, located at 2020 South Fry Road, Ste. D, produces a variety of treats on-site, including its signature truffle, a three-

generation European recipe. The shop offers 70 different styles of truffles and almost 1,000 novelty shapes of chocolate, including a variety of sports-themed shapes, baby shower gifts, wedding favors, tool kit-shaped chocolates, a chess game and religious iconography, all in edible chocolate boxes. 832-321-3580. [www.schokolad.com/store45](http://www.schokolad.com/store45)

**4 Memory Nails & Spa**, at 4031 FM 1463, Ste. 27, offers a botanical/herbal manicures, pedicures, facials, waxing and other services. The business, which formally opened Oct. 19, welcomes walk-in customers as well as by appointment. 281-394-5633.

**5 Amazing Lash Studio**, at 6501 South Fry Road, Ste. 400, offers natural-looking mink eyelash extensions. The business, which opened Nov. 1, offers customers a variety of lengths and looks to choose from. 281-653-8877. [www.amazinglashstudio.com](http://www.amazinglashstudio.com)

**6 Jimmy Chango** opened a third location Nov. 19 at Westgreen Boulevard. The restaurant serves a variety of appetizers, salads, soups and fresh Mexican grille dishes, including beef and chicken fajitas, mahi-mahi, crispy chicken flautas, burritos and enchiladas. The dining establishment offers a designated wheat-free, gluten-free menu. 832-321-5927. [www.freshmexfun.com](http://www.freshmexfun.com)

**7 At JoJo's Mongolian Grill & Sushi**, in the Katy Ranch Crossing Center at 24449 I-10, Ste. 400, guests can create their own bowls by choosing from fresh meats, vegetables and fruit, combined with their choice of sauces, grilled to their liking. The grilling process allows chefs to cook the food without using a lot of oil. The restaurant also offers delivery service in a limited area. 281-769-9955.

**8 Floss**, at 9727 Spring Green Blvd., Ste. 200, offers a new experience in dentistry. The group, which opened its Cinco Ranch location in November, provides general and cosmetic dentistry,

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Compiled by Nick Cenegy

as well as orthodontic work and other services, in a modern, high-tech environment. 832-589-0671. [www.flossdental.com](http://www.flossdental.com)

**9 Posh Salon & Spa**, at 3522 S. Mason Road, Ste. 200, opened in early November. The business specializes in haircuts, highlighting, coloring and extensions. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are preferred. 832-437-5620

## Coming Soon

**10 Vericare Vision**, at 1251 Pin Oak Road, Ste. 128, offers eye exams, glasses and frames, one-hour lens cutting service and contact lenses. The vision center will open its doors Dec. 2. 832-802-1295. [www.vericarevision.com](http://www.vericarevision.com)

**11 Venetian Nail Spa**, at 2643 Commercial Center Blvd., Ste. B330, in LaCenterra at Cinco Ranch will offer nail care, waxing and eyelash extensions services. Construction is in its final stages and the owners anticipate an early December opening. 281-394-5220. [www.facebook.com/venetiannailspakaty](http://www.facebook.com/venetiannailspakaty)

**12** Houston-based developer Vista Equities Group broke ground on **Phase III of LaCenterra at Cinco Ranch**, expected to be completed in fall 2014. It will consist of 37,000 square feet of retail space, anchored by Trader Joe's, 36,000 square feet of Class A office space and a parking garage. Hoar Construction will oversee the construction of the project. It is on the southwest side of LaCenterra at Cinco Ranch.

**13 North Houston Vet Specialist (NHVS)** plans to open a clinic at 19450 I-10 in January 2014. The group currently operates in two locations, one in Spring and another in Willowbrook. The Spring location is a multi-specialty referral-only hospital. The Willowbrook location specializes in emergency and internal medicine. [www.nhvetspecialists.com](http://www.nhvetspecialists.com)

**14 Ivy Kids**, an early learning and child care center, plans to open Jan. 7 at 27270 Cinco Ranch Blvd., The center works with children six weeks to 12 years old. All meals and snacks are provided. The center teaches the Abeka curriculum and offers Spanish and science elements in its program. The business is licensed for 250 children and is open for registration. 832-595-1900. [www.ivykids.net](http://www.ivykids.net)

**15 Country Inn and Suites-Katy**, at 25218 Marketplace Drive, is building a hotel with approximately 229 rooms. The building is expected to be completed in 2014.

**16 Brickhouse Cardio Club** plans to open at 692 S. Fry Road in January 2014. The workout studio combines elements of dance and aerobics to help members get fit. Instructors offer Zumba, Zumba Toning, Hip Hop Cardio and a variety of other classes. 713-865-0767. [www.brickhousecardio.com](http://www.brickhousecardio.com)

**17 Orchard Park of Katy**, at 24802 Kingsland Blvd., is a community that will provide assisted living and memory care services for 97 residents. The five-acre tract adjacent to Katy Mills Mall is expected to be complete during the Spring-Summer of 2014. 855-752-0400.

## Relocations

**18** Dr. Agnes Kisch and her practice **Westside Pediatrics** relocated Nov. 8 to a larger stand-alone building at 20903 Kingsland Blvd. The new facility doubles the practice's square footage and allows a total of nine examination rooms, instead of four. Westside Pediatrics was formerly at 707 S Fry Road, Ste. 275. 281-578-5788. [www.drkisch.com](http://www.drkisch.com)

**19 Mystic Wonders Antiques and Collectibles**, at 5725 Second St., offers a variety of items, including a wide selection of crystal, furniture—china cabinets, lamps, dining room tables and buffets—and a variety of Christmas decorations and collectables. The store

opened in its new location Nov. 16 after moving from 10910 Old Katy Road. 832-265-6468. [www.mysticwonders.net](http://www.mysticwonders.net)

**20 Vintage Vogue** is moving from its Cypress location to Junk Street Market at 5625 Second St. in Historic Old Town Katy. The shop offers vintage and vintage-inspired home decor, handmade jewelry and gifts—all from local designers. The store also provides custom furniture finishing, painting, re-staining and reupholstery. 281-391-5865. [www.vintagevoguecypress.com](http://www.vintagevoguecypress.com)

## Anniversaries

**21 Katy Budget Books**, at 2450 Fry Road, marked its 30th Anniversary in November. The store offers thousands of new and used books as well as assorted gift items and book related accessories. The store also hosts 40–50 author signings each year with nationally and internationally renowned best selling authors, in addition to hosting a local author day six–eight times per year. 281-578-7770. [www.katybooks.com](http://www.katybooks.com)

**22 Quilting Your Quilts**, now at 7107 Pembrough Lane, is celebrating its one-year anniversary. The business specializes in assembling and finishing quilt projects for its customers. Patrons bring in the top and the backing of their project, then the shop's computerized machine assembles the quilt. 281-948-5548. [www.quiltingyourquilts.com](http://www.quiltingyourquilts.com)

**23 Texas National Outfitters**, at 3522 S. Mason Road, Ste. 300, celebrated its one-year anniversary. The retail store, which specializes in Western wear, offers handmade products and clothing for men, women and children from boots to jackets to accessories. Other items include home décor, such as art collections, decorative gun casings, and even wine and whiskey barrels. 281-392-2668, [www.t-n-o.com](http://www.t-n-o.com)



Co-owner Michael Morgan fills a jug with alkaline antioxidant water at **The Water Tree Katy**.



George Tannous, general manager of **Jimmy Chango**, welcomes customers to the new location.



**JoJo's Mongolian Grill and Sushi** offers fresh meats and vegetables in custom combinations.



**Country Inn and Suites-Katy** is constructing a new hotel near Katy Mills Mall with about 229 rooms.

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## DEVELOPMENT

# Katy clears way for Cane Island

By Nick Cenegy

The Cane Island master-planned community is a few steps closer to beginning construction following several actions taken by the city of Katy in early November. Katy City Council, acting on the recommendation of the City Planning and Zoning Commission, voted Nov. 18 to approve an amended city ordinance outlining code requirements for Master Planned Community Districts, created a new MUD within the city limits and also opted to annex about 597 acres of land at the future community site. The city also successfully lobbied the city of Houston to release approximately 480 acres from Houston's Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction, which it intends to annex.

**"I think it's going to be something that people can be real proud of."**

—Fabol Hughes, Mayor

"These are steps in the right direction," Katy Mayor Fabol Hughes said. "It opens the door to a wealth of opportunity for people."

The City Planning and Zoning Commission voted Nov. 4 to amend the city's Master Planned Community District ordinances. The new rules, which were negotiated in conjunction with the Cane Island developer—Nevada-based development firm Rise Development—are meant to "encourage the unified design of large primarily residential communities consisting of 800 acres or more," according to the document.

Hughes said that having the amended ordinance written will allow much more efficiency in both the Cane Island development and any additional developments proposed in the city.

"There will probably be some refinement, but having it written will make everything easier," he said.

The negotiation process with Rise

allowed for a true give and take, he said.

"I feel really good about it," Hughes said. "We worked on it for a long time, and we got them to give us [the things] we asked for."

Dan Naef, CEO of Rise Development, told the planning commission at its Nov. 4 special meeting that it has been "a wonderful experience working with your staff and all of the other elected officials."

The MPC District ordinance allows greater latitude in lot sizes, street widths, design and layout. At the same time, it outlines tighter requirements for community features such as public parks and playgrounds, churches, schools, libraries, fire and police stations, as well as code standards and specific architectural requirements.

Hughes said it will probably be a little more than a year before the builders start constructing homes at Cane Island. They have to build in the infrastructure and a recreation center first, he said. But as far as the negotiations with the city are concerned, they are ready to build houses, he said.

"I think it's going to be something that people can be real proud of," Hughes said. "Once they see what starts happening, they are going to want to move out there."

The city is anxious to see construction begin as well. It stands to make money from permit fees, connection fees and ad valorem taxes.

To help the process along, Hughes met with Houston Mayor Annise Parker's office last month to request that the city release about 480 acres currently in its ETJ.

Houston agreed in principle but it will take 90–120 days for the formal paperwork to be complete. The city is releasing the land to Katy with no price tag attached.

"There might have been a price had there been some sales tax revenue there," Hughes said. "But logistically they can't really offer anything to that

## Amendment Highlights:

### Master planned community district ordinance

The city's ordinance that outlines regulations regarding master planned communities was updated in November to accommodate the new Cane Island development and to make it easier for future large developments to move into the city.

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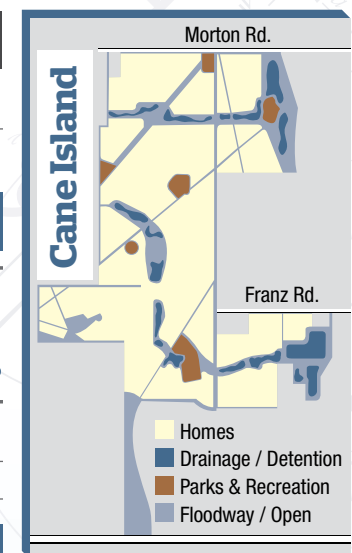
**LESS THAN 55 ft. SHALL NOT EXCEED 25% OF THE TOTAL LOTS** | **LESS THAN 70 ft. SHALL NOT EXCEED 70% OF THE TOTAL LOTS** | **70 ft. OR GREATER SHALL COMPRISE AT LEAST 30% OF THE TOTAL LOT LOTS**

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**MAJOR THOROUGHFARES SHALL HAVE A RIGHT-OF-WAY WIDTH OF 100 ft.**

**SIDEWALKS ALONG PUBLIC STREETS SHALL BE 4 ft. IN WIDTH ON BOTH SIDES**  
OR EIGHT FT. IN WIDTH ON ONE SIDE



Source: city of Katy

area. The nearest services they had were 10 miles away on Fry Road."

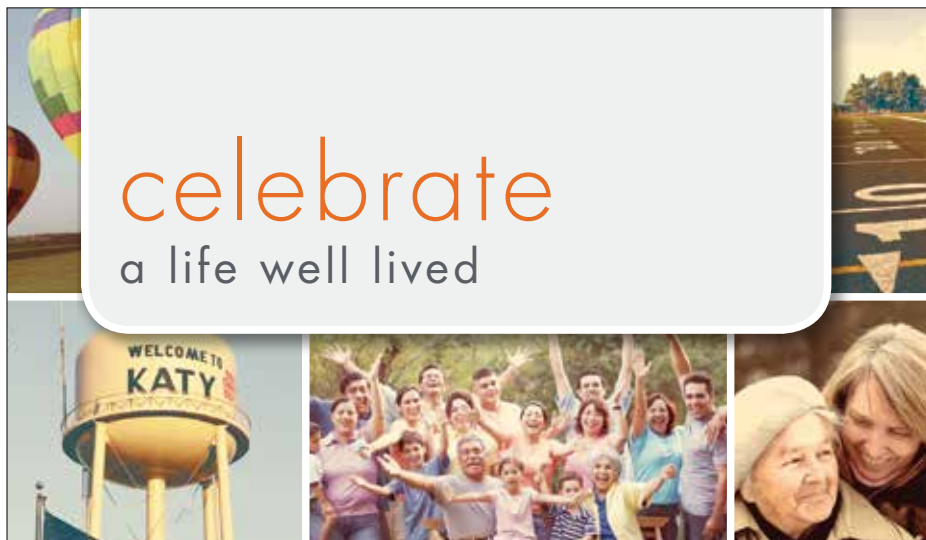
Rise Development has also recently contracted to buy an additional 500 acres of land contiguous to the land they already own, bringing the Cane Island total to 1,500 acres, or space for about 300 homes.

When that sale is final, Katy will go back to Houston to ask it to release the added land. Each time Houston releases land, Katy will annex it, Hughes said.

"[Rise] wants it all to be in the city of Katy," he said.

On Nov. 18, the council also approved the city planning commission's recommendation to create Harris-Waller Counties MUD No. 3, encompassing about 608 acres of the Cane Island land. The creation of another MUD—No. 18—was recommended by the commission but the land is still in the Houston ETJ and no action could be taken on it by the Katy City Council.

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BRIEFS

# Voters give greenlight to \$184.9 million Fort Bend mobility bond

By John Rigg

Fort Bend County voters approved the county's proposed \$184.9 million mobility bond 73 percent to 27 percent out of a total of 22,023 votes on Nov. 5.

The bond outlines 62 projects throughout Fort Bend County, and the money is split up between the county's four precincts. When funds from the bond are disbursed Precinct 1 will receive \$53.4 million; Precinct 2, \$47.5 million; Precinct 3, \$58 million; and Precinct 4, \$26 million.

"We are set to begin preliminary work on many of these projects and hopefully will begin to see construction in the next two years," County Judge Bob Hebert said.

The mobility bond does not call for a tax rate increase, and it is structured so the county will pay 50 percent of the construction costs of the joint projects with cities, including Sugar Land and Missouri City.

Rapid population growth and the need for improved mobility in Fort Bend County prompted the

Commissioners Court over the summer to call for the bond election. The bond is the third called since 2000.

Hebert said if residents want to avoid gridlock, he expects a mobility bond election to be held every six to eight years.

"There are 62 projects outlined in this bond, and all of them are vital to mobility in the county," Hebert said. "All of this money is earmarked for road improvements throughout Fort Bend County. I think it is vital that we continue to build on our infrastructure to meet the transportation demands of all Fort Bend County residents in addition to the 25,000 to 35,000 new residents that are moving here each year."

More than 625,000 people live in Fort Bend County, which is up more than 75 percent from 354,452 residents in 2000, according to U.S. Census data. The population is expected to rise to more than 1 million by 2020.

# Katy ISD officials 'disappointed' over failed bond, no plan yet to return to ballot

By Nick Cenegy

Katy ISD officials say they have no immediate plans to bring the proposed \$99 million bond package voters downed at the ballot box Nov. 5 back before the public.

"There currently isn't any set plan or timeline for bringing these projects back to the voters," district spokesman Steve Stanford said. "When and if they do, it is too soon to say what a future bond package may look like."

About 54 percent of the 16,559 total votes in Harris, Fort Bend, and Waller counties were opposed, while 46 percent favored the proposition, which would have provided a new stadium, agriculture center and STEM project center.

"We are obviously disappointed that the bond did not pass as we believe each of these facilities would have been a benefit to students," Stanford said. "We also know that we still need a second stadium to address scheduling issues with seven varsity teams."

Residents in two of the three counties voted it down. In Harris County voters rejected the proposal 55-45 percent. Fort Bend County residents opposed it 54-46 percent.

Results from Waller County showed a narrow margin of support for the proposal, with 51-49 percent supporting it. The difference in that county was five votes.

The most contentious of the proposed bond projects was the 14,000-seat, \$69.5 million, second football stadium complex, meant to better accommodate the activities of the district's seven high schools. The money would have also provided for the construction of a \$25 million agriculture facility and a \$4.5 million science, math and technology project center.

District officials maintained that they did not expect an increase in the tax rate, often citing the most recent bond, approved in 2010, which was expected to raise the tax rate but ultimately did not. That \$459 million bond passed narrowly by a margin of about 3 percent.

Harris County voters opposed the 2010 measure, 51 to 49 percent. Fort Bend County voters, however, supported it 57 percent to 43 percent. Waller County rejected it 62 to 38 percent.

## KATY ISD BOND RESULTS

### HARRIS COUNTY

55% OPPOSED

### FORT BEND COUNTY

54% OPPOSED

### WALLER COUNTY

49% OPPOSED

Source: Katy ISD

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EDUCATION

# Katy ISD making grade, growing

By Nick Cenegy

Katy ISD is meeting or exceeding all state education standards, remains in good standing fiscally and is planning for increased enrollment projected at three to five percent annually in the next few years, Superintendent Alton Frailey said.

Frailey presented the district's report card to community leaders, educators and administrators Nov. 1 at the annual State of the District address.

Growth was a major theme of the presentation, as the district tries to position itself to respond to burgeoning communities and businesses in the area.

"We are a very attractive place to a lot of folks who want the best, a lot of folks who are in search of something better," Frailey said. For that reason the district's numbers are changing, he said.

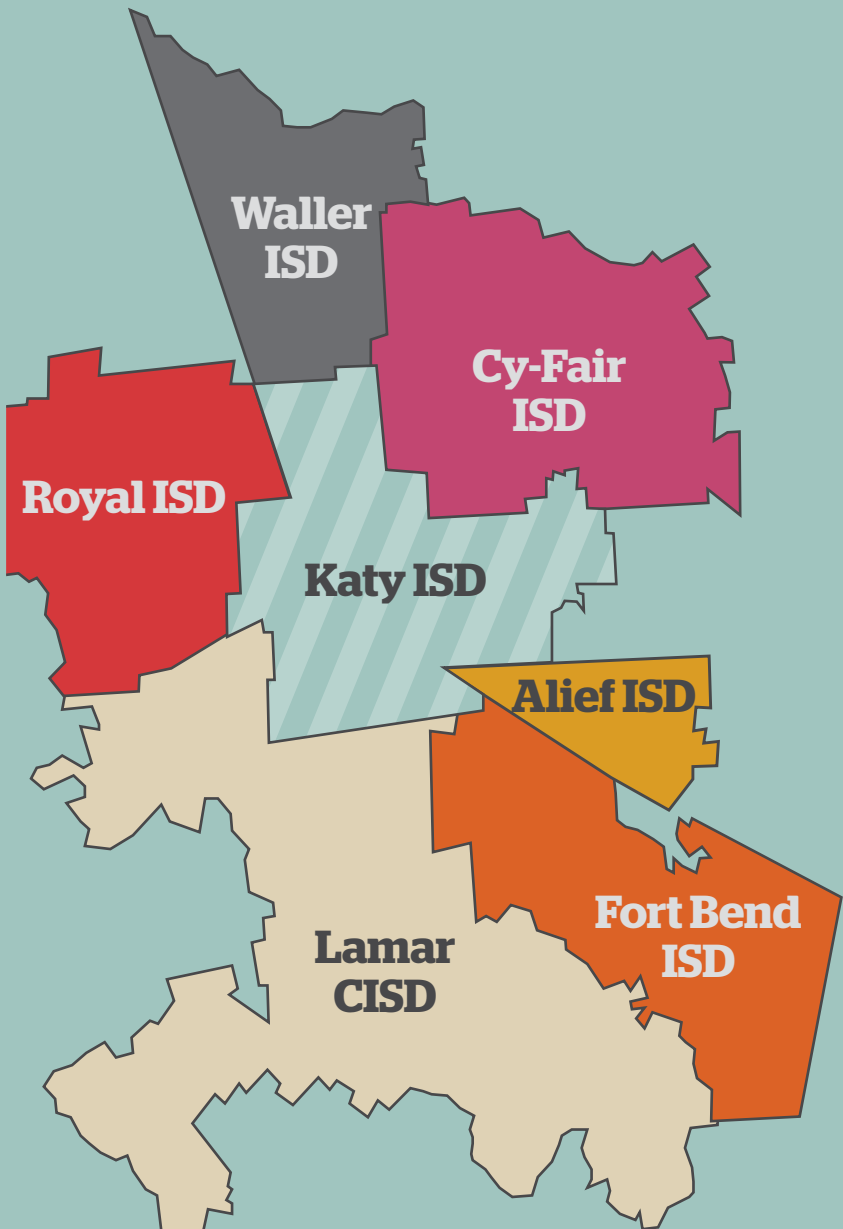
Here are a few take-aways from the address:

- Total enrollment in Katy ISD is 66,957 students. The student population grew from last year's 64,059. There are now a total of 58 schools.
- The largest source of growth in the last year—76 percent—comes from subdivisions that are not yet built-out. That amounts to an increase of about 2,100 students last year solely from new homes. Students from subdivisions that are considered built-out account for 14 percent of the growth during the last year, but they make up a large part of the total population, at 49,721.
- A much smaller portion of the growth comes from apartment or multi-family housing—collectively about 10 percent.
- Enrollment is expected to break 75,000 by 2016.
- Of the 58 districts in the state with more than 20,000 students, Katy ISD is ranked ninth in having the fewest socioeconomically disadvantaged students. About 30 percent of students in the district fit those criteria. By comparison, about 38.5 percent of students in Fort Bend ISD are socioeconomically disadvantaged and about 41.25 percent of students in Klein ISD.

## Growing Strong

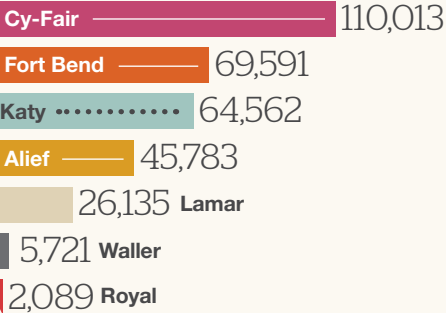
K.I.S.D. LEADING WEST HOUSTON IN KEY AREAS

A variety of new housing developments north of I-10, as well as the complete "build-out" of areas south of the interstate have Katy ISD officials anticipating steady growth in the district over the next ten years.

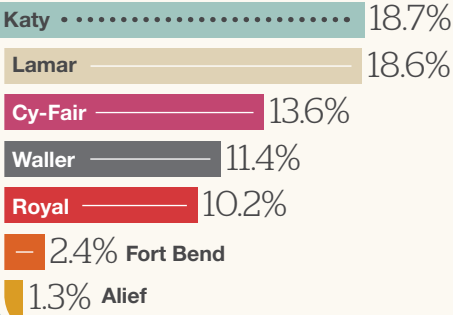


Sources: PASA and Katy ISD

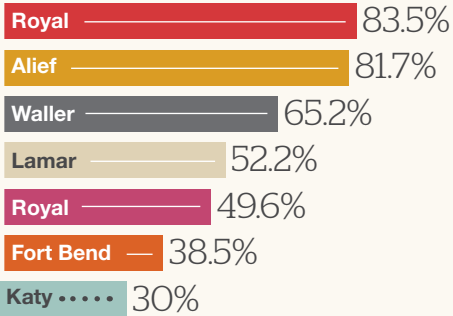
### Total Enrollment (2012)



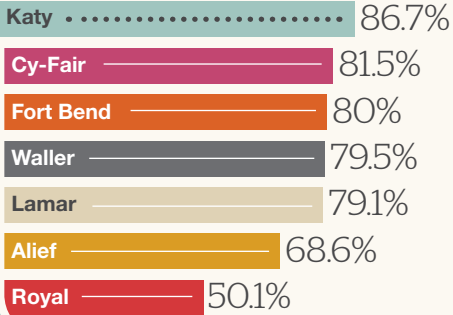
### 5-Year Change in Enrollment



### Economically Disadvantaged



### STAAR Passing Grade (Level II)



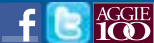
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INSIDE INFO

Compiled by: Nick Cenegy




# The Merrell Center

The Merrell Center, at 6301 S. Stadium Lane, is familiar to many Katy residents but few know how it functions or the extent of its uses.



**500,000**  
VISITORS EVERY YEAR




**145,000**  
SQUARE FOOT  
**ARENA**

MERRELL CENTER BOOKING IS SPLIT EVENLY

50	School District &
50	Non-District Events

TYPICALLY BOOKED


**40 out of 52**  
**WEEKENDS**



**10-12**  
**STUDENTS**  
EMPLOYED IN PAID ROLES

## SEATING CAPACITY

FOOTBALL	4,500	BASKETBALL/VOLLEYBALL	5,600
CONCERTS	4,500	COMMENCEMENT	7,000




## Graduation at The Merrell Center

**6 KATY ISD** —  
HIGH SCHOOLS EVERY YEAR  
(TOMPKINS FIRST GRADUATING CLASS IN 2016)


**4 LAMAR CONS. ISD** —  
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS

**1 ROYAL ISD** —  
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

**\$ FUNDING FOR The Merrell Center**  
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Developed in partnership with the city of Katy and the Katy Development Authority

**NO ADDITIONAL TAX DOLLARS**   
**WERE USED TO BUILD THE MERRELL CENTER**  
Source: Ben Rolens, general manager of facilities, The Merrell Center



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## CALENDAR

Compiled by: Nick Cenegy

## November

**28 YMCA Thanksgiving Day Turkey Dash**

The 11th annual YMCA Thanksgiving Day Turkey Dash features a 10K, 5K, 1 mile kids fun run and a 1 mile walk/run. The event is Katy's largest fun run. Awards are given out for various age categories. The event also features door prizes, complimentary refreshments and a kids fun zone. Last year more than 5,800 people participated and the event raised more than \$158,000. Register to participate or volunteer online. 6:45–10:45 a.m. Prices vary by event. 22807 Westheimer Parkway, Katy. 281-392-5055. [www.ymcaturkeydash.org](http://www.ymcaturkeydash.org)

**29 Cross Creek Ranch Tree Lighting**

Residents bring their families to join Santa Claus at Cross Creek Ranch for a ceremonial tree lighting. Festivities include hot chocolate and cookies with Mrs. Claus and pictures with Santa. The event features music, arts and crafts and a countdown to the lighting of the community tree. 6–8 p.m., 7 p.m. (tree lighting) 6450 Cross Creek Bend Lane, Fulshear. 281-344-9882. [www.crosscreektexas.com](http://www.crosscreektexas.com)

## December

**01 American Legion Oratory Scholarship Contest Deadline**

Students can talk their way into taking home some college scholarship money by competing in the American Legion Annual High School Oratorical Scholarship Program. Katy area Post 164 is sponsoring a \$250 scholarship. Contestants could also be eligible to compete at the national level for \$18,000, \$16,000 and \$14,000 scholarships. 281-463-7477. [www.legionpost164katytx.org](http://www.legionpost164katytx.org)

**05 Holiday on the Plaza: City of Katy Christmas Tree Lighting**

The 41st annual Christmas Tree Lighting at Harvest Plaza includes the official lighting of the city's Christmas tree and photos with Katy's Santa Claus. The event features local entertainment from church and school choirs, dance teams, and the Katy Tiger mascot. The Parks and Recreation Department presents children's activity booths with holiday activities, ranging from letters to Santa to making Christmas ornaments and candy cane reindeer. Photos with Santa are available for \$5. 5:30–7:30 p.m. Free. 5701 Third St., Katy. 281-391-4800. [www.cityofkaty.com](http://www.cityofkaty.com)

**05 through 06 Holiday Home Tour**

The 10th Annual Holiday Parade of Homes, sponsored by the Cinco Ranch High School Cougar Stars Dance Team, features five Katy-area homes. Participants can tour homes decorated for the holidays while being entertained by songs from the

Cinco Ranch High School Bravo Show Choir and the Cinco Ranch High School Orchestra. Proceeds support the dance team's annual activities. Tickets are available at Beau Kisses, Curtain Call, Hauerland's, Ya Ya Club or from dance team members. 6–10 p.m. \$12. 281-237-5261. [www.crhscougarstars.org](http://www.crhscougarstars.org)

**07 Holiday Gift Market**

The Cinco Ranch Ladies Club hosts "A Jazzy Christmas" gift market. Guests can enjoy food and music while perusing the gift market. A silent auction will benefit the Fort Bend County Women's Center. It is not necessary to be a member of the Cinco Ranch Ladies Club to attend. 11 a.m.–1 p.m. \$30 (adults), \$15 (children 10 and younger). The Golf Club at Cinco Ranch, 23030 Cinco Ranch Blvd., Katy. 832-437-0502. [tina\\_walgenbach@yahoo.com](mailto:tina_walgenbach@yahoo.com). [www.cincoranchladiesclub.org](http://www.cincoranchladiesclub.org)

**07 Fulshear Festival of Lights and Victorian Christmas**

The city of Fulshear hosts its annual tree lighting and light parade on Main Street. The tree lighting takes place at 6 p.m. followed by the light parade on Main Street. Residents can get into the spirit by dressing in Victorian period clothing. The event also features Santa and Mrs. Claus, horse and carriage rides, a stylized photo booth, chancel bells, letters to Santa and kids games. 6–9 p.m. Free. 281-346-1796. [www.fulsheartexas.gov](http://www.fulsheartexas.gov)

**07 Messiah Sing Along**

Residents can enjoy an evening of choral music from St. Peter's United Methodist Church, Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Community Church, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The event features solo and chorus selections from "Christmas Portion Part 1," the "Hallelujah Chorus" and "Amen." 7:30 p.m. 20775 Kingsland Blvd. 281-492-8031. [www.stpkaty.org](http://www.stpkaty.org)



Courtesy Katy Market Days

**14 Katy Old-Fashioned Christmas Festival**

The fourth annual Katy Old-Fashioned Christmas Festival, organized by Katy Market Days, features produce, arts and crafts, antiques, jewelry, and gifts. Guests can eat and enjoy a variety of entertainment, including carolers and snow. Festivalgoers are encouraged to bring canned

goods for a local food pantry. The snow, which is free for kids, begins at 11 a.m. 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Free. Avenue B, Katy. 281-391-1993.

**14 Party on the Parkway**

The West Houston Association and the Grand Parkway Association hosts a "Party on the Parkway" celebrating the opening of Segment E featuring a 5K run and a 1K family walk on the newest segment of the Grand Parkway before it opens to traffic. The event benefits HEART. 8:30 a.m. \$15 (1K), \$25 (timed 5K). 713-692-4278. [www.heartprogram.org](http://www.heartprogram.org)

**14 Toys for Tots Street Meet and Collection Drive**

Participants can ogle hot rods and contribute to a good cause at the West Houston Muscle Toys for Tots collection drive. Guests are asked to bring at least one full bag of new toys for a boy or girl for entry into the car show. 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Caliber Collision, 25430 Bell Patna Drive, Katy. 281-347-4100. [www.westhoustonmuscle.com](http://www.westhoustonmuscle.com)

**15 "Celebrate the Season" Concert**

The Lone Star Symphonic Band celebrates the holiday season with a concert titled, "Celebrate the Season." The Kilpatrick Elementary Choir performs several pieces during the concert as well. The event also features ensemble performances by the Lone Star Symphonic Band Woodwind Quintet and Lone Star Symphonic Band Flute Choir. 4 p.m. \$5.50 (advance) \$10 (day of). CrossPoint Community Church, 700 S. Westgreen, Katy. [www.lssband.org](http://www.lssband.org)

Worth the **TRIP****DEC 13 through 15 Tomball German Christmas Market**

The Tomball German Christmas Market, sponsored by the Tomball/Telgte Sister City organization, includes four music stages, 175 vendors, carnival rides, bungee-jumping, a rock wall, petting zoo and pony rides. The food vendors sell traditional German food and drink, such as Bratwurst, red cabbage, sauerkraut and apple strudel. The event includes free hayrides and Christmas lights tour at the Tomball museum district. 6–10 p.m. (Fri.), 10 a.m.–10 p.m. (Sat.) 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (Sun.). Free. 281-379-6844. [www.tomballsistercity.org](http://www.tomballsistercity.org)

## Online Calendar

Find more or submit Katy events at [www.impactnews.com/kty-calendar](http://www.impactnews.com/kty-calendar).

To have Katy events considered for the print edition, they must be submitted online by the first Friday of the month.

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## BUSINESS

# The Cellar Door

## Local business wines and dines customers

By Matt Stephens

As many as half of The Cellar Door's customers know little to nothing about wine the first time they walk through the front door, but it doesn't take long for the Katy winery to turn the first-timers into seasoned connoisseurs.

"It's fun watching them evolve from beginner, entry level wines," owner Ron Holsomback said. "Over the course of the year they're drinking Napa tannic [cabernets]. It's like we develop wine snobs. It's part of the evolution as they grow."

Holsomback opened the store in August 2010 with his two brothers, Don Holsomback, and Andy Lahaye, a chemical engineer who crafts the winery's own wines. Holsomback said the brothers have lived in the Katy area for much of their lives and hoped to bring the California wine experience to their hometown.

The winery produces 12-18 of its own wines, ranging from those as robust as the Tuscany-style Trio Rosso to popular fruit wines, including Girls Night Out, a peach flavored chardonnay, and the Cellar Holiday Delight—a cranberry-infused chardonnay that comes back every November and sells out in as little as six weeks.

The business also offers as many as 120 bottles from popular regions, such as South America and South Africa, as well as unusual wines from as far as Macedonia, Austria and Greece. Holsomback said The Cellar Door's wine consultants try to match a customer's tastes and preferences.

"Instead of going into a tasting room and being rushed out the door so they can get the next wave in, they can sit down and experience the wines," Holsomback said. "[Staff] helps guide the guest in the direction they want to go

instead of pigeonholing them."

General Manager Frankie Salinas said the 300-plus members of The Cellar Door's wine club are integral to the business, as their preferences help mold the always-evolving wine list. The wine club members regularly attend events at the winery, host wine tastings at their homes and even use the winery as a venue for important events.

"We definitely have a long-term relationship with most of our guests," Holsomback said. "After a while, they're more like family than they are like customers, and that's the way we think of them. We want the winery to be part of the Katy fabric, the Katy family."

Salinas said the winery recently expanded, making room for a kitchen. He and Holsomback said chefs are asked to cook a menu that pairs well with particular wines, such as tuna and chicken for white wines and tomato-based flatbread pizzas and steak for red wines. Holsomback said the winery offers 10-12 types of cheese, as well as Katy-based Araya chocolates to pair with wine.

"That was what we felt like we were missing—how the food and the wine [work together]," Holsomback said. "You need food to marry the two, and that's why we put the kitchen in."

In addition to expanding the menu to provide more food options, Holsomback hopes to start importing grapes from Argentina, Spain and Chile to provide more variety in the businesses' wines, rather than just grapes from California and Canada. The owner also hopes to start offering The Cellar Door wines in liquor stores and restaurants.

"We've touched on that a little bit, but we haven't had the volume," Holsomback said.



Kelly Hammons

The Cellar Door produces more than a dozen of its own wines and stocks more than 100 other bottles.

### Regular events

**Education classes:** 90-minute classes educate customers on pairing wine with cheese and chocolate and are held every Saturday at 1:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. (\$20).

**In-home tastings:** The Cellar Door can bring tastings to customers' homes for a group of 12-20 people. (\$8-10 per person)

**Painting parties:** Partnering with Crazy Canvas, The Cellar Door hosts painting and wine parties for small groups. (\$30 for one hour or \$40 for two hours per person)

**Live entertainment:** The winery hosts open mic night Wednesdays, as well as live acoustic and jazz music on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays every week.

**Other events:** With space large enough to accommodate 55-60 people, The Cellar Door hosts wedding receptions, anniversary parties, baby showers, birthdays and even the occasional wedding.

### Popular menu items

**Fruit wines:** Made in-house, these wines include the Dulce Vinob, Girls Night Out, Texas Bluebonnet, Sweet Souther Blush and Cellar Holiday Delight. \$6 (glass), \$17 (bottle)

**Trio Rosso:** This in-house, super Tuscany-style red wine is a customer favorite. \$7.50 (glass), \$22 (bottle)

**Cheese:** Meat and cheese trays with a variety of 10-12 cheese options pair well with particular wines. \$9.99-\$17.99

**Signature flatbreads:** Pairing well with red wines, these tomato-based pizzas include the Tuscany, Valencia, Sonoma, Genoa and Bordeaux. \$6-\$17

### By the bottle

**300** Wine Club members

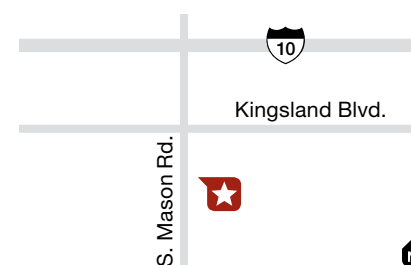
**120 WINES**  
from around the world



**12-18**  
types of wines made by The Cellar Door

**\$15-\$200**  
price range for a bottle

### The Cellar Door



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## DINING

# Mantra

## Restaurant serves fresh, unique Indian cuisine

By Tamra Santana

**M**antra owners Mahesh and Rupa Oberoi have been serving Houston area residents quality, fresh Indian food for more than 30 years. The couple opened Mantra in Katy eight years ago, offering a blend of traditional and unique Indian recipes.

The pair, who are now Katy residents, were both born in India, lived in England for 25 years and have lived in the Houston area for 27 years. Those locales have influenced the cuisine at the restaurant, which offers an English flare to many menu items.

Indian food is very popular in England, Mahesh said. That makes the restaurant's food have special appeal for English-born Katy residents, he said.

Mantra serves a mixture of family recipes and traditional Indian cuisine. The menu items are the work of Rupa, who has perfected various dishes over the last three decades.

The food offers customers a wide palette of flavors, including many curry dishes and dishes made with a variety of fresh vegetables.

Mantra, located off busy Mason Road, instantly transports diners to India with its décor and soft Indian music. The restaurant offers a quiet and relaxing dining experience.

Mahesh and Rupa emphasize customer service and will prepare any dish as spicy or as mild as the customer desires.

"We will cook the food the way the customers want," he said. "It's no problem."

The restaurant offers a daily lunch buffet, which is prepared fresh each morning. Mantra also makes homemade cheese and yogurt weekly. The yogurt is made with celery, onion and tomatoes, mixed with salt and pepper and a special curry spice called chaat masala.

"We make everything ourselves," he said. "Nothing is precooked."

Mantra also provides catering as well as a room in the restaurant for small private parties.

"That room is full every weekend with private parties," he said.

This is the fourth area Indian restaurant owned by Mahesh and Rupa. They also owned Shiva in Rice Village for 15 years, but sold it to start Mantra, located closer to their home.

"We are doing very well," Mahesh said. "We are busy during lunch for our buffet, and we are very busy on Friday and Saturday nights. I'm very happy with the location. Katy is growing every day. Business is quite good."

### Customer favorites

**Paneer Mantra:** cubes of homemade cheese cooked in a tomato-based sauce, finished with butter and topped with cream (\$10)

**Shabnam-E-Bahar:** Homemade cheese, mushrooms and peas cooked delicately in a creamy nuts and raisin sauce (\$10)

**Murgh Tikka Masala:** Tender boneless pieces of chicken, cooked in a clay oven and finished in a rich tomato-based sauce flavored with fresh Indian herbs (\$14)

**Gosht Rogan Josh:** Cubes of lamb cooked in a mildly spiced Kashmiri sauce and served Kashmiri style (\$15)

**Gosht Madras:** A classic hot and spicy lamb curry from the South of India (\$15)

**Tandoori Pomfret:** Whole pomfret fish marinated in a special marsala and cooked in tandoor (\$18)

**Murgh Shahi Korma:** Boneless chicken pieces cooked in a rich almond sauce, served with a garnish of sliced egg and dried fruits (\$14)

**Goat Curry:** Goat curry cooked in Indian spices with a touch of nutmeg (\$15)



Mantra, on Mason Road, serves an English-influenced Indian cuisine, including a variety of curries.



The restaurant's ambiance is relaxing and includes colorful Indian décor and music.



English curry chicken is served on a bed of saffron rice, accompanied by french fries and sweet mango chutney (\$18).

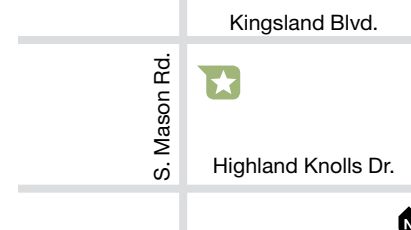


Co-owner Mahesh Oberoi and his wife, Rupa, have been in the Houston area for 27 years.

### At the buffet:

- Chicken curry
- Tandoori chicken (whole, marinated pieces of chicken)
- Meatballs
- Chicken Tikki Masala (chicken cooked in a tomato-based sauce)
- Pulao rice
- Da Makhani (a lentil dish)
- Green beans
- Navaratan Korma (vegetarian dish made with a cream and tomato-based sauces and nine vegetables)
- Giobi Aaloo (mixed vegetables)
- Saag Paneer (finely cut spinach cooked with homemade cheese)
- Zeera Aaloo (potatoes and green bell pepper)

### Mantra



829 S. Mason Road, Ste. 265-270  
Katy • 281-647-6111  
www.mantraindianrestaurant.com  
Lunch Hours: Tue.-Fri. 11:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; Sat.-Sun. 11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
Dinner Hours: Tue.-Thu. 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Fri. 5:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m.; Sun. 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Closed Monday

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## NONPROFIT

# Katy Prairie Conservancy

## Group preserves prairie environment

By Shawn Arraji

Every great city has a great green space nearby. This was the philosophy of the group of people who founded the Katy Prairie Conservancy in 1992—a group composed of conservationists, farmers, ranchers, hunters and birdwatchers who wanted to make sure, no matter how much Houston grew, a portion of the natural prairie would always be protected.

“We’re part of a coastal prairie system that originally spanned 9 million acres from the Gulf of Mexico and into Louisiana,” KPC Executive Director Mary Anne Piacentini said. “About 15 percent of that prairie still exists and about one percent of it is left in pristine condition.”

A little more than 19,000 acres of the prairie in western Harris County have been saved, 13,000 of which are owned by KPC. Another 6,200 acres are protected, but through conservation easements and public-private partnerships with entities such as the Harris County Flood Control District.

As a nonprofit, KPC looks for ways to protect the prairie ecosystem while also giving people opportunities to enjoy it

through programs and tours. Birdwatching is popular on the prairie, where more than 300 species have been spotted, including hawks, eagles and owls. The challenge, conservation stewardship director Wesley Newman said, is coming up with ways to let people enjoy the prairie while making sure they are safe. As a private landowner, KPC is liable if someone gets hurt.

“Some people like to go on guided tours, but some people just want to go out on their own,” he said. “We have all the things out here that make this place interesting but some of them, if you’re not careful, can hurt you.”

Newman said KPC still has a ways to go in terms of opening things up for the public to explore, but the staff is working to provide as much access as possible.

“We’re working diligently and cautiously trying to figure out the logistics to provide relatively unfettered access so people can appreciate this without having to be supervised,” he said.

In addition to providing educational and recreational opportunities to people, the prairie and wetlands also serve



Mary Anne Piacentini and Wesley Newman, with KPC, look for wildlife near the Hebert Reservoir.

important environmental purposes, improving air and water quality and absorbing rainwater, which reduces flooding.

“The wetlands are called ‘nature’s kidneys’ because they capture and break down pollutants from road sediments,” Piacentini said. “The water that comes out is cleaner than the water that goes in.”

Whether the KPC grows to 50,000 acres or only gets to 25,000, Piacentini said the goal will always be to serve as a green space giving animals a place to live and Houstonians a reprieve from the hustle and bustle of city life.



More than 300 bird species have been spotted on the land including the Kestrel pictured above.

### Katy Prairie Conservancy

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www.katyprairie.org

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# Volunteer Guide

**American Red Cross** is where more than 1.2 million people volunteer with the Red Cross nationwide. The American Red Cross is the pre-eminent provider of life-saving services, including disaster preparedness, emergency social services, health and safety training and in some areas, local non-emergency transportation.

531 FM 359 S., Brookshire  
281-822-4220  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

**The Arc of Katy** is a day program for adults and summer camp for youths that provides participants with life skills, recreation and community involvement. Volunteers perform community service by visiting the food bank, taking field trips, visiting entertainment venues, crafts and exercise.

P.O. Box 6133, Katy  
832-754-9802  
[www.thearcofkaty.org](http://www.thearcofkaty.org)

**ARTreach** is a nonprofit arts educational outreach program that provides mentoring and art-related programs to children, adults and elderly with special needs. It is seeking volunteers interested in sharing their time and talents with others.

4211 Stonecroft Circle Drive, Katy  
713-444-1897  
[www.artreachonline.org](http://www.artreachonline.org)

**Christ Clinic of Katy** serves the uninsured and those without governmental assistance in the Katy area. In 12 years, it has served more than 7,000 patients. Its staff is made up of volunteer medical staff which includes doctors, nurses and administrative assistants. Volunteers are always needed.

5504 First St., Katy  
281-391-0190  
[www.christclinic Katy.org](http://www.christclinic Katy.org)

**Fort Bend County Public Libraries - Cinco Ranch Branch** accepts applications for a wide range of volunteers, 16 years and older. The work is on a call-as-needed basis to help shelve books and lend a hand with programs.

2620 Commercial Center Blvd., Katy  
281-395-1311  
[www.fortbend.lib.tx.us](http://www.fortbend.lib.tx.us)

**Harris County Public Libraries - Katy Branch** accepts volunteers, high-school age and older, to help with the shelving of books and preparing of programs.

5414 Franz Road, Katy  
281-391-3509  
[www.hcpl.net](http://www.hcpl.net)

**Friends of Maud Marks Library** is an organization dedicated to providing programs for children and adults, and books and equipment to the library and community. Volunteers assist with fundraisers, book sales and donations.

1815 Westgreen Blvd., Katy  
281-492-8592  
[www.maudmarksfriends.org](http://www.maudmarksfriends.org)

**Home Delivered Meals of Katy The Society of St. Stephen** has coordinated home delivered meals, sponsored by First United Methodist Church in Katy since 1984. The group delivers hot meals five days a week to homebound seniors and disabled or seriously ill adults across the Katy area.

5601 First Street, Katy  
281-733-2037  
[www.firstmethodistkaty.com](http://www.firstmethodistkaty.com)

**Katy Heritage Society** needs volunteers to keep its historic homes open for public tour. Homes are open the first weekend of every month. Ad-

ditional volunteers would allow the homes to be open more often. Volunteers can work events, help with museum exhibits, be a chairperson for one of the group's structures or perform at the Tradition Bank Bandstand.

5990 George Bush Drive, Katy  
281-391-2550  
[www.katyheritagesociety.com](http://www.katyheritagesociety.com)



Courtesy KCM

**Katy Christian Ministries (KCM)** is a social service nonprofit agency. It offers a wide variety of services; financial assistance, food pantries, a crisis center for domestic abuse and sexual assault centers and hotlines. KCM offers a variety of opportunities for those interested in volunteering, including age-appropriate services which include food and furniture drives and assisting with store sales and donations. Volunteers must be 13 years of age or older.

5011 East 5th St., Katy  
281-391-5261  
[www.ktcm.org](http://www.ktcm.org)

**Katy ISD Partners in Education** offers a number of programs and events designed to make volunteering in Katy ISD easy. The department coordinates School-Business Partnerships, Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS), KEYS Mentoring, Sister Schools and Junior Achievement.

6301 S. Stadium Lane, Katy  
281-396-2461  
<http://kisd2.katyisd.org/pie>

**Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center** provides visual and performing art programs along with other enrichment opportunities through live theater performances and classes for children. This nonprofit organization offers music, art shows and live theatre year-round. Volunteers, age 16 and older, can assist with concessions, production support and art projects.

2500 S. Mason Road, Ste. 290, Katy  
281-829-2787  
[www.kvpac.org](http://www.kvpac.org)

**Krause Children's Center** is a residential treatment center for abused and neglected children, ages 11-17. Aside from interacting with the children, volunteers can help in numerous activities from event planning and repair service projects to providing makeovers for the children.

25752 Kingsland Blvd., Katy  
281-392-7505  
[www.krausechildcenter.org](http://www.krausechildcenter.org)

**Pregnancy Help Center** is dedicated to meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those facing an unplanned pregnancy. The center educates on sexual responsibility and offers Christ-centered counseling. Volunteer opportunities include medical services, administrative assistance and mentoring.

1450 E. Summitry Circle, Katy  
281-599-0909  
[vsc@phckaty.org](mailto:vsc@phckaty.org)

**RSVP** is America's largest volunteer network for people age 55 and over. The group offers a full range of volunteer opportunities with local organizations in Harris and Waller counties, including assisting in early childhood development programs, helping the elderly and disabled through home delivered meals, Medicare and senior fraud education, and telephone reinsurance programs.

443 Danover St., Katy  
713-595-8157  
[www.rsvpvolunteers.com](http://www.rsvpvolunteers.com)

**Special Pals** offers affordable pet care services, rescuing and rehabilitating homeless companion animals, finding forever homes and providing education about responsible pet ownership. Special Pals is a no-kill, nonprofit animal shelter that relies on donations to continue making an impact. Youth and student volunteers are encouraged to apply. Volunteers age 12-15 years old are required to attend orientation and volunteer with a parent, teacher, or guardian. Volunteers 16-17 years old will need to attend orientation with a parent, teacher, or guardian, but will be able to volunteer on their own after that.

3830 Greenhouse Road  
281-579-7387  
[www.specialpalshouston.org](http://www.specialpalshouston.org)

**Memorial Hermann Katy** promotes redefining health care in every aspect, including volunteers. The areas of service include the information desk, gift shop, nursing units, surgery waiting areas, transportation, physical therapy and patient advocates.

23900 Katy Freeway, Katy  
281-644-7581  
[www.memorialhermann.org](http://www.memorialhermann.org)

**CHRISTUS St. Catherine Hospital** provides a vast array of services in medical care and addresses the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of its patients. Volunteers work directly with patients and families or in administrative areas.

701 S. Fry Road, Katy  
281-599-4502  
[www.christusstcatherine.org](http://www.christusstcatherine.org)

**Houston Methodist West Hospital** has a variety of volunteer roles to fit individual time commitments, schedules, abilities and interests. Volunteers may work directly with patients or choose to work behind-the-scenes, providing administrative support.

18500 I-10, Houston  
832-522-3062  
[www.houstonmethodist.org](http://www.houstonmethodist.org)

**Texas Children's Hospital - West Campus** volunteers make commitments to support patients, families and staff in a selected assignment once a week for a two-three hour shift for a minimum of six months. Although TCH does not offer opportunities for clinical exposure or shadowing medical staff, there are a variety of volunteer assignments available

18200 I-10, Houston  
832-824-2257  
[www.westcampus.texaschildrens.org](http://www.westcampus.texaschildrens.org)

This guide is not a comprehensive list of all area organizations that need volunteers. If your organization is not included, please email us at [listsings@impactnews.com](mailto:listsings@impactnews.com), and we will add it to our online list.

For more Katy area volunteer opportunities, visit:  
**[impactnews.com/volunteerguide](http://impactnews.com/volunteerguide)**





# Harris family

County namesake derived from early settlers

By Shawn Arraji

**T**he history of Texas conjures up images of hard-fought battles for independence led by legendary figures such as Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin. However, before all of that took place, a lesser-known historical figure named John Richardson Harris was among the first to settle the Harris County area.

Harris sailed to Texas from New Orleans in his own boat and was a part of the Old Three Hundred—the name given to the group of 300 colonists who settled Austin Colony in 1823 under the direction of Stephen F. Austin. Harris received a title to 4,428 acres of land and settled what would eventually become Harris County, wrote historian Adele B. Looscan, author of “The Pioneer Harris of Harris County, Texas.”

“[He] found what he regarded as an ideal location for a city

at the junction of Buffalo and Bray’s bayous,” Looscan wrote. “He seems to have been the only one of that early period who foresaw the future of Buffalo Bayou.”

Harris built a house, opened a store and built sailboats that started making shipments between his colony and New Orleans. He originally named his colony Harrisburg. The town of Harrisburg was surveyed and laid out in 1826. In 1827, John was joined by his brother David, and his other brothers—Samuel and William P. Harris—soon followed him.

In 1829, when John was traveling to New Orleans to get a part to complete his sawmill, he never returned. His death was attributed to yellow fever.

David continued his brother’s work at the sawmill and in leading ships. Several of the ships he commanded were responsible

for key events leading up to the 1835 Texas Revolution, including an attack on a Mexican garrison under Tenorio to help free imprisoned colonists. William also came into command of the ship Cayuga, leading several missions to deliver aid to the Texan army.

As Mexican armies advanced, the Harris house was used as a meeting place for the cabinet of the Texas provisional government, with John Harris’ widowed wife serving as the host. It was at one of these meetings where David Burnet—president of the Republic of Texas—designed the Texan naval flag.

“It was copied from that of the United States of America, except a single white star shone on the blue field instead of a galaxy of stars,” Looscan wrote.

The cabinet, along with other settlers in Harrisburg, retreated to Galveston. When the

John Harris was one of the first settlers in Harris County in the 1820s.

Mexican army reached Harrisburg, they completely destroyed it, not leaving a single house.

The Harris family home was rebuilt by the next generation. It served as a tavern that provided bed and board to Texan soldiers during the revolutionary war.

Following the war, William played a role in bringing a railroad through Harrisburg. In 1840, William was a part on

the committee that established the railroad’s route. This was also the time the area became known as Harris County.

“Each Harris brother bore a part in the colonial life of Texas,” Looscan wrote. “They were influenced by very strong ties of brotherhood, yet each one possessed an equally strong personality, which expressed itself in shaping their lives.”

Courtesy Texas Historical Commission



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## NEWS

## Voters reject Astrodome proposal

**CYPRESS** Harris County voters rejected a proposal Nov. 5 to repurpose the iconic Astrodome into a multipurpose special events center.

Forty-seven percent of voters were in favor of the proposal, while 53 percent voted against it.

Proposition 2 would have allowed the county to issue up to \$217 million in bonds to finance the redesign and redevelopment of the Astrodome as a space for community and sporting events, festivals and conferences. The proposal required a tax increase of about \$8 a year for a house valued at \$200,000, according to the county budget office.

A group of nonprofits in Houston and Harris County came together earlier this year to form the Save the Dome coalition, which worked to educate voters

about Proposition 2 in an attempt to save the building from potential demolition in the months and weeks leading up to the election.

"We had a very positive response from voters we talked to, so we are disappointed," said Beth Wiedower, senior field officer for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, one of the nonprofits involved with the coalition. "We are sad to lose this great icon. I know a lot of folks were surprised that Harris County voters and Houstonians didn't turn out in higher numbers to support the Dome."

The final decision on how to proceed with the Dome, which has remained unfit for occupancy since 2009, is now up to Harris County Commissioners Court. The governing body voted in August to give voters the opportunity to



Courtesy Reliant Park

decide the future of the Astrodome, following the reveal of the proposal by the Harris County Sports and Convention Corporation.

"I don't think a lot of voters understood it was their last option," Wiedower

said. "There were a lot of plans and ideas submitted in the last four to five years as to what to do with the Dome, but we're not sure voters understood the gravity of this vote. It truly is a case of the voters have spoken." *Full story by Marie Leonard*

## TRANSPORTATION

## Leaders tout Grand Parkway's future influence on Cy-Fair

**CYPRESS** Segment E of the Grand Parkway is poised to open in December, connecting Cypress and Katy by a 15-mile toll road and bringing with it potential residential, commercial and job growth.

During the Nov. 7 Cy-Fair Houston Chamber of Commerce mobility forum, officials discussed the affect the toll road could have in the Cypress area, comparing it with the rapid growth that occurred after Segment D opened in the mid-1990s in Katy and Fort Bend County.

"We're looking at a game changer here with the Grand Parkway coming in," said



Shawn Arraji

Peter Houghton, chairman of the West Houston Association.

The Cypress area should expect to have much growth that occurs in the years following the opening of the Grand Parkway, which is similar to what occurred in and along the master-planned communities in Fort Bend County such as Cinco Ranch and Seven Meadows.

*Full story by Marie Leonard*

## BUSINESS

## Fort Bend Brewing Co.

**SUGARLAND** During its first year of operation, Fort Bend Brewing Co. has grown to distribute more than 1,000 barrels of craft beer to nearly 200 restaurants, bars and retail locations around the world through the efforts of a small full-time crew and a handful of community volunteers.

"When we started this venture, we wanted to combine creativity, brewing traditions, the Texas state-of-mind and imagination with high-quality ingredients to make exquisite craft beer," co-owner Ty Coburn said. "It's taken a lot of hard work, good brews and more hard work."

Sharon and Ty Coburn opened the brewery in November 2012 to bring the art of craft brewing to Fort Bend



Shawn Eggs

County, becoming the county's first craft brewery.

"Our goal now is to come out with our seasonal beers," Sharon said. "Craft beer drinkers always want to know what you are brewing next. We try to put something new on the board for each tour. It won't always be distributed, but it is something for those on our tours to try."

*Full story by John Rigg*



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# Development

Continued from I 1

Porter roads where it is building the Katy Oaks Preserve and Katy Oaks Estates communities. Both will consist of one- and two-story single-family homes that range in size from 1,800 to 3,200 square feet, KB Homes spokeswoman Cara Kane said.

Pricing in Katy Oaks starts from the high \$100s, and the builder has sold 24 homes since August, she said.

Kane said the Katy market is a very desirable area, including the properties north of I-10, primarily due to some of the amenities that residents will have the opportunity to use. In addition to convenient Grand Parkway and I-10 access, Katy Oaks residents will be near the 76-acre Mason Creek Hike and Bike Trail and less than a mile from Katy Park, she said.

Heather Gustafson, a spokeswoman for Newland Communities, said the company is still finalizing plans for its new west Houston/Katy development and could not yet release specific information.

Steve Sellers, president of Tangley Development Company, said the group is planning a residential development in the area, but there are a few outstanding development issues that make him unable to give specific information.

Near KB Home's development, Long Lake Ltd., parent company of Postwood Homes, owns land along the east side of Grand Parkway, the majority of which is north of Morton Ranch Road, said Bob Brown, a sales counselor for Long Lake. He said there are plans for a master-planned community of between 2,000 and 2,500 homes.

## New schools

Katy ISD purchased land at Stockdick School and Peek roads several years before the Grand Parkway extension was approved, said Steve Stanford, a spokesman for the district. The land will be used to build a high school, middle school and elementary school.

The site is contiguous with Ventana Lakes, a 480-acre development at Clay and Peek roads, which was originally a Mischer Investments property but is now owned by DR Horton.

"The district is looking forward to seeing

the proposed developments come to fruition," Stanford said.

The district will watch closely as students move into the area, and count on the proposed schools to provide needed relief for both Morton Ranch and Katy high schools, he said.

## Floodplain

One factor that is slowing development, however, is that the location of many of the proposed communities just north of Hwy. 529 is inside 100- or 500-year floodplains, according to data from Harris County Flood Control District.

Builders and developers address such issues fairly frequently, said Holder.

"There are standard practices that allow you to dig lakes in the floodplain area and raise the area on the borders," he said.

The result, which is documented in a letter of map amendment, is that certain areas are dug out and the areas around them, where houses would be, are built up above the floodplain. One notable example is the Royal Oaks community, where lakes and reservoir space have been carved out and incorporated into a golf course, leaving the homes above the floodplain, he said.

## Commercial development

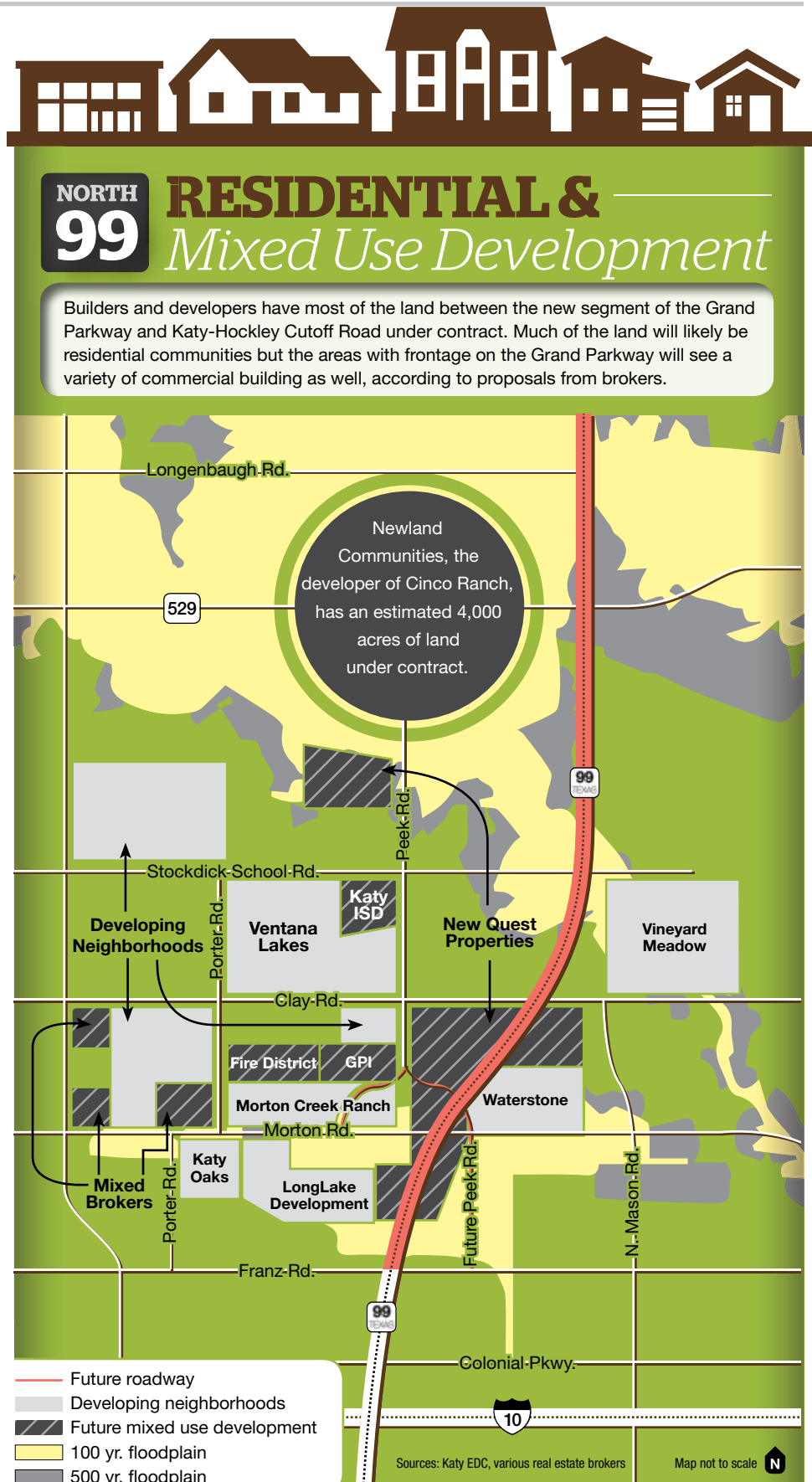
There are also preparations for several commercial and light industrial developments in the vicinity, according to area real estate brokers.

Hart Schleicher, broker at Capital Real Estate Commercial, Inc. said his company represents a 70-acre single tenant industrial park at Peek and Clay roads, as well as an 18-acre property on Stockdick Road just south of 529.

The group is entertaining proposals for possible tenants, but nothing has been finalized yet, he said.

"I think the Grand Parkway is the biggest key to it," he said.

There is some spec warehouse distribution property but not single tenant manufacturing space, he said.



Find related stories at [impactnews.com](http://impactnews.com). Keyword Search

Grand Parkway, master planned communities



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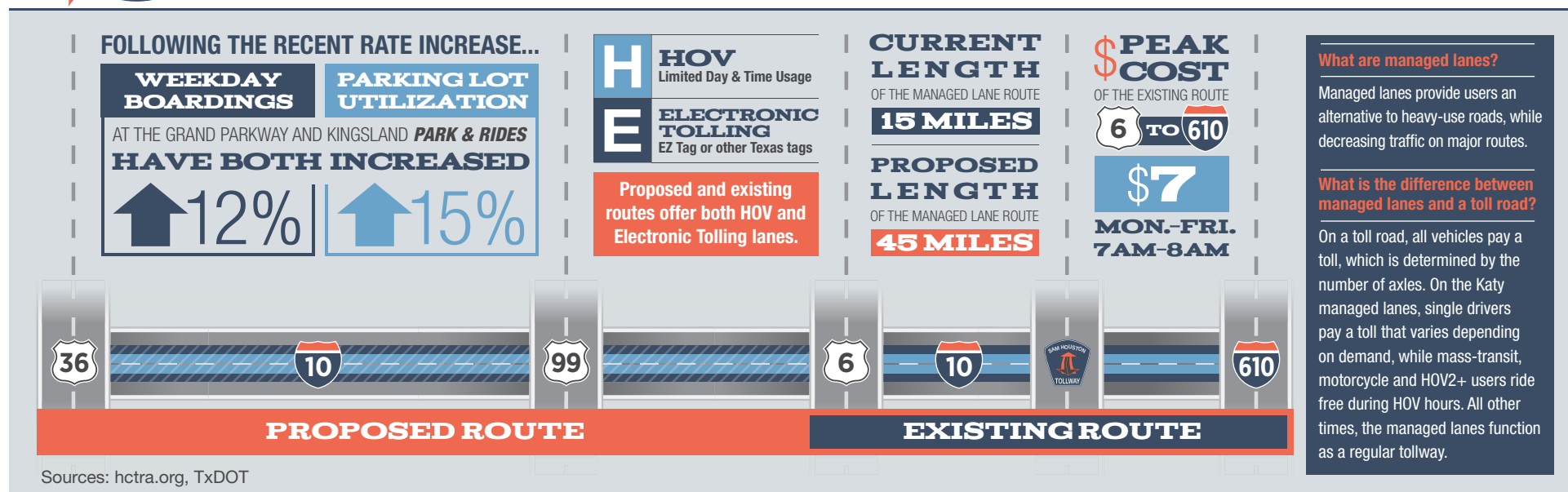
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# KATY TOLLWAY

Proposed Extension From Hwy. 6 to Sealy, TX

In an effort to keep congestion on I-10 west of Houston in check, the Harris County Toll Road Authority raised toll rates in September on the existing Katy managed lanes, which run from Loop 610 to Hwy. 6. To further accommodate traffic, TxDOT is designing an extension of the lanes to Sealy, but it is in the preliminary stages.



## Tollway

Continued from I 1

lanes for a toll—billed electronically by an EZ TAG or other interoperable Texas toll payment tag.

The Katy Managed Lanes, which opened in April 2009, were designed to siphon some traffic off of I-10 that, even since the most recent mainlane expansion in 2003, remains a headache for commuters.

So far the September toll increase has done what it was expected to do by decreasing traffic on the tollway at peak hours by about eight percent and increasing the use of alternative modes of transportation such as the Park and Ride, Harris County Toll Road Authority and METRO officials said.

In fact, increased ridership has prompted METRO to add two morning and afternoon trips to their service in January 2014 on each of its routes from the Katy area—221 Kingsland and 222 Grand Parkway, METRO officials said.

### Funding issues

TxDOT's general guidelines for proposed road projects emphasize its preference

for securing local funding when possible. Even after the plan exists and some of the early design work is done, TxDOT will likely need another entity to assist with the funding. That leaves a few possible groups, including the various counties along the stretch, other local governmental entities and federal dollars.

Adam Collett, spokesman for the HCTRA, which operates the current managed lanes said that right now HCTRA is not part of the funding solution.

"That is TxDOT's jurisdiction out there, even if the county wanted to build managed lanes there, it would have to start with TxDOT," Collett said.

HCTRA's investment in the I-10 reconstruction project that yielded the existing managed lanes was about \$250 million. The funds for that project came from toll collections from its other operations and not from tax revenue, according to the agency's website.

The state still owes Harris County about \$85 million for road construction projects, including for right of way and engineering on Segment E of the Grand Parkway, Harris

County Precinct 3 Commissioner Steve Radack said.

"I'd like to see them pay us back first," he said. "But the reality is with Harris County growing the way it is, and the multi-county region growing, you're seeing a huge impact on the Katy Freeway. You can see the congestion, more and more people pour in on I-10 from the west."

The completion of the Grand Parkway will be interesting to watch in terms of its impact on traffic on I-10, he said. It is still unclear what kind of an impact it will have.

"It will take a lot of study," Radack said. "This [I-10 toll way expansion] was talked about five years ago, I don't know how far it's going."

At points farther west, I-10 moves across Waller County beginning around the retail center Holiday World of Houston and extending to the other side of the Brazos River bridge.

Waller County Precinct 4 Commissioner Stan Kitzman said while the county would not likely be able to assume any real financial responsibility for the project, he is optimistic that TxDOT is looking at I-10

again.

"It just stands to reason that there is going to have to be more capacity on I-10," Kitzman said.

Looming ahead is a growing list of road projects feeding I-10 in the Katy area, including an overpass at Cane Island Parkway, Fulshear Parkway extending from Hwy. 1093, and, one day, the opening of Igloo Road and the 36A Prairie Parkway, he said.

Kitzman said he understands that conflicts may arise over the idea of charging tolls for public roads in the area—the belief in Texas that public roads should be free—but he also understands that TxDOT is stretched thin across the state.

"I get on the toll lane, I'm willing to pay that little extra to do it," he said. "If it helps relieve some of that pressure that we're going to increasingly feel, then we should do it. A lot of people are pretty emotional about that though."

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Managed lanes, tollway, I-10, HOV



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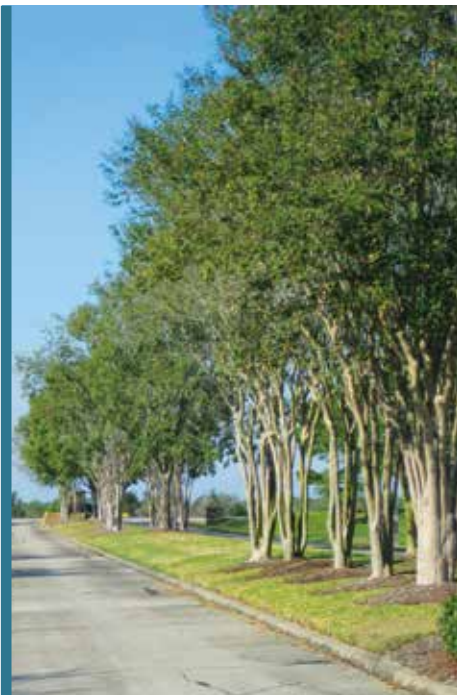
REAL ESTATE

Featured Neighborhood

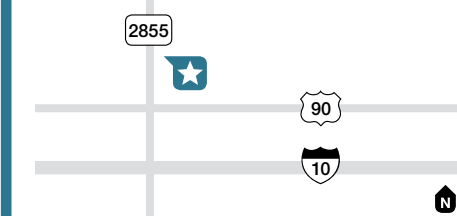
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Overview

**Build-out year:** 2007  
**Number of homes:** ~144  
**Square footage:** 2,424–5,510  
**Home values:** \$385,000–\$571,000  
**HOA dues (estimated):** \$850/year  
**Amenities:** Maintained horse trails, fishing ponds  
**Property taxes:**  
B-K Drainage District \$0.092671  
Katy ISD \$1.526600  
Waller County F-M \$0.034733  
Waller County \$0.661092  
Waller Harris ESD \$0.099500  
**Total (per \$100 value)** **\$2.414596**

Homes on the market (As of Nov. 1, 2013)

No. of homes for sale	5
No. of homes under contract	0
Average days on the market	164

Annual home sales (Sept. 30, 2012–Oct. 31, 2013)

No. of homes sold	3
Square footage (low/high)	2,921 / 3,300
Selling price (low/high)	\$385,000 / \$571,000

Featured homes

1418 Winding Canyon Ct.



3–4 Bed / 3 Bath      3,155 Sq. ft.      \$399,900  
Century 21 Western Realty, Inc      (281) 392-9272

1210 FM 2855



5 Bed / 4 Bath      4,386 Sq. ft.      \$584,693  
Keys & Capital Global Realty      (832) 437-0471

202 Stone Bush Ct.



5 Bed / 3½ Bath      3,435 Sq. ft.      \$475,000  
Keller Williams Premier Realty      (281) 220-2100

1426 Winding Canyon Ct.



4 Bed / 4 Bath      3,195 Sq. ft.      \$439,900  
Heritage Texas Properties - Memorial      (281) 493-3880

Market Data

On the market (November 1, 2013)

Price Range	Number of homes for sale for last 6 months					Average days on the market for last 6 months				
	77094	77449	77450	77493	77494	77094	77449	77450	77493	77494
Less than \$149,999	—	63	11	10	—	—	89	42	188	—
\$150,000–\$199,999	—	68	14	14	3	—	79	49	61	21
\$200,000–\$299,999	—	13	25	21	45	3	65	62	104	77
\$300,000–\$399,999	4	—	7	6	101	57	—	55	106	77
\$400,000–\$499,999	1	—	6	12	59	11	—	57	94	80
\$500,000–\$599,999	1	—	3	2	44	35	—	68	260	95
\$600,000–\$799,999	2	—	4	2	47	57	—	87	62	109
\$800,000–\$999,999	3	—	—	1	4	92	—	—	60	126
\$1 million +	—	—	1	—	6	—	—	104	—	131

Monthly home sales

Month	Number of homes sold					Average price				
	77094	77449	77450	77493	77494	77094	77449	77450	77493	77494
October 2012	10	124	70	28	191	\$323,950	\$110,130	\$229,627	\$176,847	\$301,777
October 2013	11	113	76	48	180	\$353,681	\$131,773	\$242,855	\$168,583	\$337,703
September 2013	13	144	104	41	239	\$345,947	\$130,242	\$263,582	\$184,760	\$340,093
August 2013	15	150	137	38	264	\$343,448	\$133,475	\$261,291	\$192,358	\$334,501
July 2013	16	151	130	39	273	\$561,375	\$128,079	\$284,015	\$165,893	\$319,714
June 2013	17	157	115	57	261	\$597,373	\$120,331	\$278,137	\$194,507	\$320,150
May 2013	20	131	116	36	320	\$474,287	\$119,169	\$284,595	\$181,127	\$394,917
April 2013	18	101	100	31	253	\$397,258	\$118,670	\$241,082	\$208,165	\$323,910
March 2013	8	127	88	31	224	\$314,781	\$118,838	\$288,821	\$180,664	\$303,505

Where Are The Buyers Coming From?

Besides the typical First Time Homebuyers, the Move-up Buyers and the Downsizers, in a market like Katy, our growing job market is bringing Buyers from around the country and around the world.

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\$25 gift card offer.  
See page 24.



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See page 27.

### The Cottage Door

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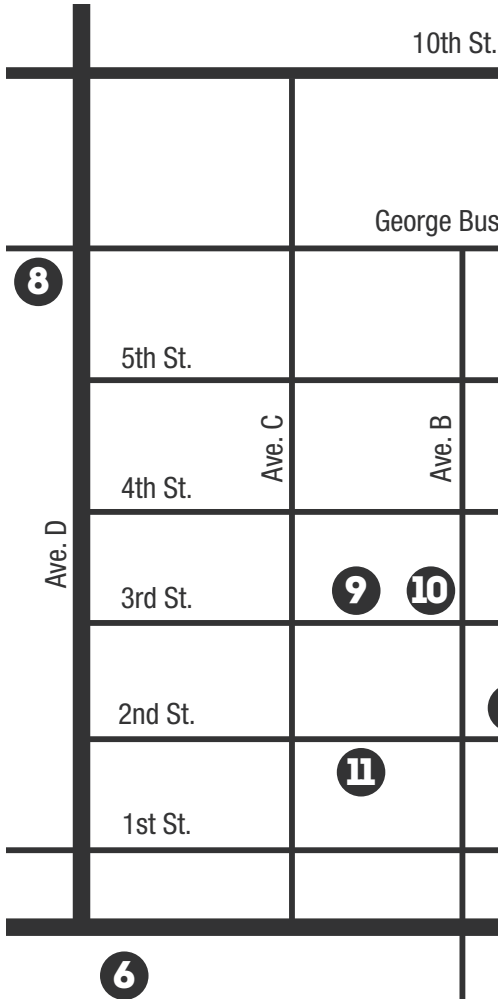
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Map showing streets: 10th St., George Bus, Ave. B, Ave. C, Ave. D, 5th St., 4th St., 3rd St., 2nd St., 1st St.

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h Dr.

Ave. A

East Ave.

7

2

3

4

1

5

Pin Oak Rd.

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DEC. 5

city of Katy Christmas Tree Lighting

5:30pm–7:30pm on 3rd St.

DEC. 9

City Council Meeting

6:30pm at the Katy Municipal Complex Council Chambers. 910 Ave. C

DEC. 14

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DEC. 14

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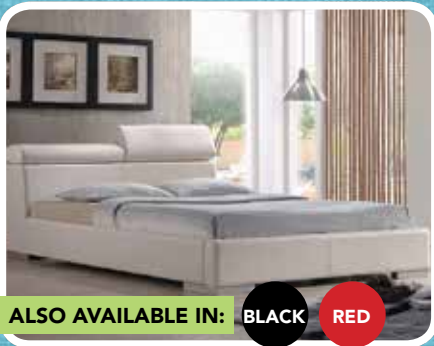
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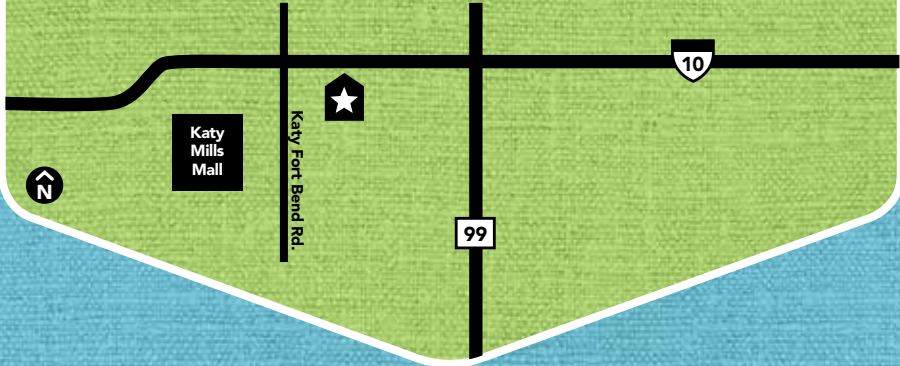
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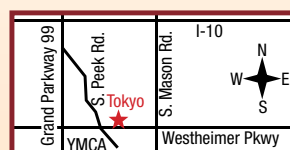
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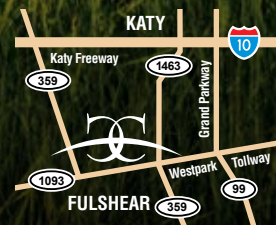


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