

FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF JPARA@BIZJOURNALS.COM

From the Houston Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2017/12/07/7-000-acre-master-planned-community-to-be.html>

7,000-acre master-planned community to be developed in east Houston

🔑 SUBSCRIBER CONTENT:

Dec 7, 2017, 8:22am CST

East Houston is on the verge of a population, industrial and retail explosion.

That's according to Courtland Holman, the executive director of the Dayton Community Development Corp. The city is planning for its current population of 7,400 to double or triple by 2035, according to its recently approved comprehensive plan. Dayton resides inside Liberty County, which projects its population to increase from about 78,000 in 2014 to over 118,000 by 2035, according to its strategic plan.

Helping to facilitate this growth is River Ranch Holdings LLC. It has been working with Dayton city officials for about a year to begin building a master-planned community just outside the city limits, according to Kimberly Judge, the director of planning in the city of Dayton.

In March, the private company purchased 6,935 acres in Liberty County near Dayton from landowner Weldon "Buddy" Alders, according to the Liberty County Appraisal District. The land was appraised at \$959,740 for 2017.

Alders confirmed to Houston Business Journal that he sold about 7,000 acres for an undisclosed amount in the spring to an entity wanting to build a master-planned community.

"They've got big plans, and I'm all for it," Alders said. "It'll be a bonanza of growth."

River Ranch did not return HBJ's multiple calls for comment. According to several sources, including the Houston Chronicle, River Ranch is made up of Ed Gray of Baytown's Gray Enterprises — the property's developer— Bill Sjolander and the Angel brothers from Baytown's Angel Brothers Construction.

Preliminary plans announced in 2016 for the 7,000 acres — possibly 9,000 acres when finished — called for about 14,000 homes, which would add about 35,000 people to the city, per Chronicle reporting. Holman estimated — using the rough estimate of three people per house, and three houses per acre — that the completed community could accommodate 21,000 homes, or 63,000 people.

A municipal utility district for the community was approved in March, according to the Chronicle. In total, there will be 15 new MUDs, Gray told the Chronicle in September.



COURTESY CITY OF DAYTON

River Ranch Phase I general development plan outside Dayton.

The general development plan for the first phase was approved by the Dayton City Council in early September, Judge said. The plan for 671 acres includes 230 large estates, 1,070 standard residential lots — or about 1,300 homes. The plans also call for a 12-acre school site, 5 acres for a wastewater plant and roughly 135 acres for commercial real estate.

Houston-based Landev Engineers is the engineer on the project and developed the first-phase plans. The next step, Judge said, is to submit preliminary plat plans.

She said that house construction in this first phase could begin in about a year, once the infrastructure is put into place. River Ranch will first need to put in a water sewage plant and roads. She said that the plans don't have a completion date or investment costs for the first phase.

She added that the city needs the housing.

“We’re very excited about the development,” she said. “We are in need of homes. ... We have a shortage of them right now.”

The county estimates that within three years there will be 15,000 new homes developed. In total, there's over 44,000 lots owned by developers that can be built on.

Planners contribute the growth to lack of land in Houston.

“If you think about it, and look at the overcrowdedness of Houston, if they’re looking for an open space, Dayton is the next place to come,” Judge said.

Holman agreed, saying “All of the east side of Houston is the last area to grow in the Houston MSA.”

In 2017, he contributed to three big commercial deals for Dayton. In June, Sumiden Wire Products Corp., a group company of Sumitomo Electric Industries, opened a \$15 million 110,000-square-foot manufacturing facility. In October, Roll-Lift USA, which is part of The Netherlands-based Roll Group, held a grand opening of its new \$1.2 million location on a 10-acre leased property. And Kansas-based Wachter opened an approximately \$1.5 million building in the city.

Dayton has more deals on the horizon, he said, especially thanks to the 1,500-acre Gulf Inland Logistics Park. Plans for this \$10 million industrial park were revealed in 2012.

He also said the Dayton Community Development Corp. is talking with several retail developers. Between the proposed Grand Parkway expansion, which will have four interchanges in Dayton, and the expected home growth, Holman is worried about the city’s downtown area. He’s working on a downtown revitalization plan, which he expects will bring between 30,000 to 50,000 square feet of retail to compete with potential big-box retailers that could arrive with the Grand Parkway.

Jen Para

Web producer

Houston Business Journal



