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Houston Maritime Center to move to Midway's East River mixed-use development

Museum plans to expand footprint on Buffalo Bayou's banks in future phases of East River in coming years

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Houston-based Midway has landed another tenant for the first phase of its sprawling East River mixed-use development near downtown.

The Houston Maritime Center has leased 6,281 square feet for a museum focused on the history of the city's nautical past.

"We are thrilled that Houston Maritime Center will be a part of East River's first phase," said Brandi McDonald-Sikes, principal and senior adviser at SVN - J. Beard—Greater Houston, the office leasing representative for East River. "The early industrial history of the East River site was shaped by Houston's reliance on Buffalo Bayou, which provided access to



COURTESY OF MIDWAY

The Houston Maritime Center has leased 6,281 square feet for a museum focused on the history of the city's nautical past in Midway's East River mixed-use development.

the Gulf of Mexico and was strategically important for many local businesses in the early 20th century. It's an ideal setting for patrons to learn about the rich maritime history that fuels our city while also enjoying spectacular views of downtown."

The Houston Maritime Center was founded in 2000 by James Manzolillo, a shipbuilder, inventor, businessman and educator. As a naval architect, Manzolillo traveled extensively, collecting artifacts from around the world. Before his death in 2007, Manzolillo decided to share his collection with the public by creating a museum focused on the history of ships and sea exploration.

Established in 2000, the nonprofit Houston Maritime Center hosts a variety of virtual and in-person educational activities, modules, lectures, programs and events for all ages.

The center currently occupies an interim space near the intersection of Navigation and Canal streets in the East End. However, it plans to relocate to the new space in East River's Trail Head 1 (Building F) in spring 2023.

"Midway's visionary plans for East River blend history, culture, innovation and modern community," said Houston Maritime Center Executive Director Leslie Bowlin. "We are thrilled to be a part of this monumental project that will help us attract further growth and visibility within the community, increasing membership, visitor ship and support. Our new space — larger with increased exhibit and event space — will be our berth for the next several years as we work to raise the funds needed to expand our footprint on the banks of the bayou in future phases of East River."

The first phase of Midway's East River development will offer 300,000 square feet of office space, as well as The Laura, a five-story multifamily project that is slated to begin delivering units in late 2023.

Midway has also announced plans to build a nine-hole, par-3 golf course anchored by a new restaurant within East River.

Retail tenants confirmed for the first phase of East River include Broham Fine Soul Food & Groceries, Lick Honest Ice Creams, El Condor Coffee Roaster, Tomi Jewelry, Urbn Dental, and a new event venue and rooftop bar from the owners of The Astorian. Office

tenants include Impact Networking, Method Architecture, which unveiled plans for its new office space in July, and Teal, which provides a cloud-based system for delivering hot water to buildings without water heaters.

The 26-acre first phase broke ground in August 2021 and is expected to be completed next year.

Overall, East River spans 150 acres in the historic Fifth Ward, adjacent to the East End District. It will be completed in multiple phases over many years.

Midway bought 136 acres for its East River development in July 2016. The site used to belong to Houston-based KBR Inc. (NYSE: KBR) and is bordered by little over a mile of Buffalo Bayou.

Elsewhere, Midway announced this week plans to redevelop the former ConocoPhillips headquarters campus in the Energy Corridor District into a mixed-use property called Watermark District at Woodcreek.

The 70-acre site will include new Class A office and multifamily space, high-end retail and restaurants, and boutique hotel opportunities. Construction is expected to begin in the first half of 2023.

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