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Missouri City's Awakening Offers Residential/Commercial Growth Opportunities

As Fort Bend County continues to grow at a rapid pace, so does Missouri City. Its momentum is non-stop as demonstrated by population growth figures.

The community's four square mile land purchase southwest of Houston back in 1890 marked the beginning of an area that would explode with growth 100 years later. In 1990, the sleepy community was no more. Today its approaching population of almost 60,000 is a clear indication of how it has awakened out of a deep slumber and the bedroom community that it once was is no more. This city is projected to double its population base over the next 20 years with

many retail opportunities to follow.

Missouri City's recent growth has been due in part to the availability of land for home developers. These residential growth opportunities have resulted from and been impacted by an incoming population of new residents seeking premier locations in this part of Fort Bend County. It is envisioned that most of Missouri City's population growth will continue to come from future residential development, primarily from large scale master planned areas such as Sienna Plantation and Riverstone, both of which are in the southern part of the city.

Planned for 5,000 homes and 16,000 residents, Riverstone is located on State Highway 6 just west of Murphy Road/University Boulevard. This type of new residential development with 185 homes already sold is the type of complimentary growth indicator that is expected to continue to entice commercial development in demand to accommodate and support new, developing population clusters in the city.

Sienna Plantation, a 10,500-acre development off State Highway 6 and Sienna Parkway, currently has 2,000 homes with 7,000 residents. It anticipates over 20,000 homes when built out with a population

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in excess of 60,000. Today, Sienna Plantation is in Missouri City's extra territorial jurisdiction and through a development agreement, it will be gradually incorporated into the city over the next 20 years.

Aside from the major master planned developments underway in Missouri City, many opportunities also exist for the continuation of residential infill development in other parts of the city.

As new rooftops continue to go up, retail follows. This is certainly true in Missouri City. Major national retailers such as Home Depot, Super Target, Kohl's and Wal-Mart have already led the way. In the early stages of development is the "Shops at Riverstone" planned as a 400,000 plus square foot retail development. Kohl's and Chili's are the first of the nationally known

tenants to occupy space there.

Other retail opportunities are hard to miss with the much anticipated Fort Bend Parkway Toll Road in Missouri City slated for operation next fall. Wal-Mart was the first to reserve a piece of that action with its purchase of 35 acres earlier this year off Highway 6 at Lakeshore Harbour Boulevard.

Besides the obvious residential and retail potential, Missouri City offers developers ample opportunity for new office and industrial development. A recent economic development study by the AngelouEconomics Group from Austin, Texas highlighted three geographic sectors in the community as favorable, immediate opportunities for commercial development.

The first of these, Beltway Crossing, a 400 plus acre

site at Highway 90 and the Sam Houston Toll Road, is identified as an area for commercial development with ready access.

With the Fort Bend Parkway Toll Road just around the corner from completion, approximately 1,000 acres have also been identified as available for sale for future office and industrial development.

Also at Sienna Plantation, as part of its master planned development, a 155 acre Town Center with over one million square feet of commercial development is on the drawing board. As part of this development in the third sector identified by AngelouEconomics is the Missouri City campus of Houston Community College to be built on a 30 acre tract, with construction expected to begin by 2005. A Fort Bend Library is also being considered on that site. Missouri City's first retail center at Sienna is the Bees

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Creek Market with 22,307 square feet. The first phase of the project will open by December and already 60 percent pre-leased.

According to Bob Graf, Missouri City's Economic Development Coordinator, "the time is right and the development community needs to take a good, hard look at the many opportunities available today in Missouri City with an eye towards tomorrow's development."

Growth opportunities from new population clusters are all part of Missouri City today. While it may have been envisioned at one time as a residential adjunct to neighboring metropolitan Houston, it is now on the fast track towards maximizing its self-maintenance viability. This Missouri City is not the formerly characterized sleepy suburb, but a giant awakening to a new and vibrant future with residential and commercial explosions already

happening in this part of Fort Bend County.

For more information, please visit the City's website at www.ci.mocity.tx.us or call Bob Graf, Economic Development Coordinator, at 281-208-5540. ■