

May 2023

Robins Landing Frequently Asked Questions

What is Robins Landing?

Developed by Houston Habitat for Humanity, Robins Landing is a vibrant master-planned development serving low to moderate income Houstonians in their journey to homeownership. In addition to providing critically needed affordable homes, Robins Landing will serve the entire East Houston community by providing access to essential services and amenities that make a thriving community.

Where is Robins Landing located?

The 127-acre site is located in Northeast Houston near Tidwell Road and Mesa Drive.

How will Robins Landing be developed?

Completion of Robins Landing requires three areas of activity: Land Development, Residential Real Estate Development (new home construction), and Other (non-single family) Real Estate Development. Land Development is often referred to as “below the ground” activity, while Real Estate Development (Residential and Other) is referred to as “above the ground” activity.

- As the land developer, Houston Habitat is taking raw land and adding the infrastructure for the entire project, including clearing and grading, installing sewers and utilities, and creating streets, curbs, residential building lots, and commercial pad sites. Houston Habitat is responsible for the funding of this work.
- As a residential real estate developer, Houston Habitat will build single-family homes. Similarly, Houston Habitat’s two residential home builder partners, Chesmar and CastleRock, will also build single family homes. Each is responsible for funding its own residential real estate activities.
- Other (not single-family) real estate development, including multi-family housing and amenities such as a library and clinic, will be completed by independent community partners. Each of these partners will fund its own activities.

How many housing units will be at Robins Landing?

Robins Landing is designed for those in all stages of life and is set to include more than 450 single- family homes. There are also plans for additional multi-family and senior-living units in the future.

How will single-family homes be priced, and who will be able to buy a home?

One hundred (100) single-family homes will be built by Houston Habitat for Houstonians earning 80 percent or below the City of Houston’s average median income (AMI).

The Houston Habitat homeowners in Robins Landing will partner with Houston Habitat through its homeownership program, including demonstrating a need for housing, the ability to pay back an affordable mortgage, U.S. citizenship or permanent residency status, and a willingness to provide “sweat equity.” Sweat equity includes construction work on Habitat homes, taking financial literacy courses, participating in home maintenance classes, and community service. To find out more about the Houston Habitat homeownership program, please visit our website <https://www.houstonhabitat.org/>.

The remaining homes will be built and sold by partner builders CastleRock Communities and Chesmar Homes. 300 homes are reserved for those whose income is 120 percent or below the City of Houston AMI and 68 homes will be available at market rate.

When will homes be ready for purchase?

Houston Habitat plans that homes will be available to purchase in the second quarter of 2023. Currently, the construction industry is facing an inconsistent supply of cement and other supply chain issues which will impact when building can begin and how quickly it can progress.

How do I become a Robins Landing homeowner?

There are two ways to become a Robins Landing homeowner. You can participate in Houston Habitat's Homeownership Program, and be matched to a home in Robins Landing. Robins Landing is one of several locations in which Houston Habitat builds new homes and homeownership program participants are not able to self-select a specific neighborhood. Or you can buy a home from one of our partner builders, CastleRock Communities or Chesmar Homes.

Will Robins Landing have any other features in addition to mixed-income housing?

Yes, Robins Landing will be a complete community with access to essential services on site. Houston Habitat is collaborating with community partners to deliver more than housing to Robins Landing residents and those living nearby. Plans include a 12-acre central park with access to hike-and-bike trails, a community garden, a neighborhood resilience hub, and more. A Town Center will include essential services, including a Legacy Community Health Clinic and Houston Public Library branch.

I thought Houston Habitat's focus was housing. Why are you including these other features in Robins Landing?

Hardworking families need more than a house to thrive; they also need access to parks, fresh food, libraries, childcare, healthcare, and job training. These critical services and amenities characterize strong, thriving communities.

How much will it cost to develop Robins Landing?

The nonprofit has identified \$33 million in funding for infrastructure which delivers resiliency and supports above-ground development on the 127-acre site. Funding includes:

- An investment of \$4.79 million from the City of Houston from previously appropriated TIRZ Affordable Housing funds.
- A \$1.5 million commitment from Habitat for Humanity International.
- An interest-free loan of \$7.5 million from Arnold Ventures, which assisted in securing an additional low-interest loan of \$2.5 million from Houston Housing Finance Corporation.

The remainder of the funding comes from traditional sources, such as the sale of land for single- and multi-family housing and for nonresidential uses such as health care, and libraries.

In addition, Houston Habitat has launched a capital campaign to raise \$10 million from philanthropy for above the ground features and to ensure adorability, sustainability, and resiliency.

What is the timeline for Robins Landing?

Robins Landing will be built in phases. Site infrastructure is now underway with Phase 1 of new home construction slated to begin in early 2023. Phases 1-4 (approximately 80-120 lots per phase) will deliver 468 single-family lots and a 12-acre central park. Phase 5 is planned to consist of mixed uses and amenities to support the entire community. The goal is to complete all phases by December 2026.

What is the status of the Resilience Hub?

Houston Habitat is committed to locating a city of Houston Resilience Hub. This hub would be a physical space for residents to obtain necessary services like food assistance and community education, and to connect with resources during emergencies like extreme heat, flooding, and/or power outages in Robins Landing. Houston

Habitat will engage with community members and organizations to design the Resilience Hub based on community needs and desires.

The Resilience Hub will be part of Phase 5 and its timing and construction will be driven by available funding.

Why is Houston Habitat planning this ambitious project?

There is a critical (and growing) shortage of affordable housing in the greater Houston area. As the Kinder Institute and others have documented, rising median home prices have resulted in lower home ownership rates, especially for people of color. The number of affordable rental units has also declined dramatically. As a result of these and other trends, households at the lower end of the economic spectrum are increasingly burdened by housing costs. Having to spend more income on housing leaves less money for food, health care, and other essentials.

What is the average median income within a 5 to 10-mile radius of Robins Landing?

According to the 2020 Census, the median household income within the census tract is \$32,345.

Have you considered that this area always floods?

Houston Habitat adopted "no increase in flooding of the surrounding community" as a design standard for Robins Landing and required its consultants take into account the area's flooding history in designing Robins Landing to meet that design standard.

Robins Landing is designed to meet standards derived from Atlas 14, the post-Harvey rainfall study that interprets historical data to predict future rainfalls. These standards, which are being implemented throughout the project's development, exceed the City of Houston's building code requirements. We are confident that Robins Landing will not contribute to more flooding and anticipate that the decisions made in planning will help mitigate future potential flooding.

We are also hoping to include a Neighborhood Resilience Hub in the development. It will serve as a community gathering center and will activate as a natural disaster preparation, response, and recovery hub when disruptive events occur.

Will drainage patterns change once the site is developed?

Before development, the site drained to the shallow roadside ditch on Tidwell Road, then to the lower lying streets in adjacent neighborhoods before entering Halls Bayou. Once fully developed, stormwater will drain to the 12-acre central park, then flow south through a culvert under Tidwell Road to 20 acres of added detention, all before flowing into Halls Bayou.

Will Robins Landing make flooding worse in neighboring subdivisions?

Land development, with its addition of streets and sewers, can often increase the speed with which water draining from it reaches a bayou. Sometimes, the water comes faster than the bayou can handle, which can result in flooding. The Robins Landing's stormwater management system, however, is designed to slow the water down to its pre-development rate before it is released into Halls Bayou.

As designed, it will help reduce, not increase, flooding in surrounding neighborhoods. It is important to remember that it is hard to predict the rainfall amount, intensity, duration, and location of future storm events, so there are no guarantees.

How much will Houston Habitat profit from Robins Landing?

Houston Habitat is a nonprofit organization. The investment in Robins Landing is \$44 million, all of which will be fully utilized. There is not a profit for Houston Habitat.

What will be the impact on traffic along Tidwell Road?

A turning lane will be built on Tidwell Road at the entrance to Robins Landing. There may also be other temporary impacts to traffic on Tidwell Road during construction. We hope to notify the public in advance of any significant lane closures.

Are there plans to widen Tidwell Road?

A turning lane will be constructed on Tidwell Road at the entrance to Robins Landing. Any further widening of Tidwell Road would be a City of Houston capital improvement project. The city prioritizes and plans capital improvement projects based on areas of identified need – not in anticipation of potential need. Therefore, the city does not plan to widen Tidwell this year. As more people move to Robins Landing and the number of drivers in the area increases, however, we hope the city will respond with an appropriate plan to widen Tidwell Road.

Are there plans to improve Verde Forest Park?

Parks and green spaces are valuable assets for any community and Houston Habitat is eager to see Verde Forest Park thrive. We have met with Houston Parks and Recreation Department about potential future improvements, and we hope the park will be on their priority list for improvements in the future.

Will the apartments planned for Robins Landing be low income?

Our vision is that Robins Landing will provide quality, community-focused housing options to accommodate people in all stages of life, including those whose situation is best served by the option of an apartment.

Apartments can serve as an important stepping-stone for individuals and families as they plan for future homeownership. The apartments will also provide a valuable option for those who are looking to live near to family members in and around Robins Landing. We anticipate families and individuals moving into the apartments will be in a similar demographic as those moving into single-family homes.

Why are trees being cut down?

One of the results of construction of homes and roads on previously raw, undeveloped land is the loss of some trees. However, we are maintaining a perimeter tree buffer and will also do some reforestation with a view to making Robins Landing's greenspace consistent with that of the surrounding area.

Are you working with any Minority, Woman, or Small Business Enterprises (MWSBE) to develop Robins Landing?

We are following the City of Houston requirements regarding the use of MWSBEs and we are actively seeking City of Houston approved MWSBE vendors. When there are no City of Houston approved vendors to utilize, we work with vendors who have one or more of the following certifications: ESBE, HABE, MBE, SBE, and MWSBE. For our home building activities, our goal is 35 percent inclusion of MWSBEs.

Is there a grocery store planned for Robins Landing?

Houston Habitat understands that a grocery store is a sought-after and valuable resource for any community. Typically, grocery stores look to enter an area based on its number of rooftops. To that end, we see Robins Landing as the catalyst to attract the interest and commitment of a grocery store.

Why would you open a new library in Robins Landing instead of repairing the Lakewood Library?

We recognize how important libraries are as community anchors and understand the desire to have the Lakewood Library rebuilt. It is our understanding that the decision is not an "either or." Rather, both opening a new library in Robins Landing and rebuilding the Lakewood library are being considered. Ultimately the decisions surrounding any library's construction, relocation, or repair are not within our control. And of course, the new library in Robins Landing will be open to all nearby neighbors – not just those living in Robins Landing.

Are there plans for a Community Benefits Agreement for this project?

No. A Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) is an agreement that a for profit developer enters into with a coalition of community-based organizations and/or a governmental entity. The developer commits to equitable development (through specified community benefits) to obtain or in exchange for community support for its project and the government subsidies it seeks.

There are two primary reasons why a CBA is not a fit for Robins Landing:

1. Robins Landing is already designed to provide the same benefits that a developer typically commits to in a CBA. These benefits include affordable housing units, services such as a public library and clinic, and amenities like parks.
2. Robins Landing is being developed by Houston Habitat, a nonprofit organization. Houston Habitat's entire investment in Robins Landing will be used to deliver the project. There will be no overage or profit for Houston Habitat.

As a not-for-profit organization that empowers people to build a better future for themselves and their families by completing financial and home maintenance training, building homes alongside volunteers, and by purchasing their homes with an affordable mortgage, Houston Habitat has a proven track record for providing a hand up and helping people achieve strength, stability, and self-reliance in East Houston and throughout the city.

Houston Habitat, through Robins Landing, has demonstrated its commitment and remains committed to engaging the community. To date we have engaged partners, donors and other stakeholders and interested parties. Our goal is to continue to engage with and provide updates to all through our website and our community meetings.