

A New Standard of Living Evolves in Sugar Land Area

The extension of the Southwest Freeway to Sugar Land cleared the way for **the growth of residential development during the 1960s. The state's** highway project extended the freeway through rice fields in Sharpstown to U.S. Highway 90A, a milestone that spurred the development of Sugar Creek and other areas.

The Imperial Cattle Ranch sold about 1,200 acres to a developer to create **what became Sugar Creek in 1968. The area's first master-planned** community introduced country club living near Sugar Land. It had the feel of rural estates with upscale amenities that included a Robert Trent Jones golf course.

Prior to the development of Sugar Creek, the Kempner family set the stage for upscale residential communities in Sugar Land with the development of Venetian estates. Pictured is an early view of Venetian Estates. They dredged canals in family-owned farmland and swamp to build the **neighborhood. The development served several purposes – nice, new** waterside homes, the elimination of a swampy area inhabited by alligators and continued flood control protection.

Venetian Estates greatly benefited from the extension of the Southwest Freeway, which improved access and sparked renewed interest in the rural neighborhood. Also during the early 1960s, a new subdivision development called Covington Woods introduced contemporary affordable housing in Sugar Land for the first time.

Based on the success of Covington Woods, Venetian Estates and Sugar Creek, developers began looking for new opportunities in the Sugar Land

area. In 1972, the Kempner family sold 7,500 acres to Gerald Hines Interests for the development of First Colony. It was one of the largest land sales in Texas history. Development of 10,000 acres began in 1977 by Sugarland Properties Inc. and would follow the next 30 years. The master-planned community offered homebuyers formal landscaping, neighborhoods segmented by price range, extensive greenbelts, a golf course and country club, lakes and boulevards, neighborhood amenities and shopping.

The rest is history.

Money Magazine and CNNmoney.com rank Sugar Land as one of America's Best Places to Live.
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