

**Fenix Estates**  
**A Permanent Supportive Housing Project**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**What is Fenix Estates?**

Fenix Estates will be located on acreage that was a vacant motel located at 3815 Gulf Freeway that was initially purchased by the Non-Profit Housing Corporation of Greater Houston (Housing Corporation) with grant funds provided by Harris County for conversion into permanent supportive housing. In March 2015, with the approval of Harris County, the Housing Corporation announced its intent to transfer its interest in the property to the Harris County Housing Authority. The project has been designed to include 200 efficiency and one-bedroom units to be developed in two phases. Phase I will consist of 110 units for adult men and women with incomes at or below 50% of the area median income (AMI) that were formerly homeless; and Phase 2 will consist of 90 units for persons with incomes above 50% AMI and may include some market rate units.

**Fenix Estates is NOT:**

- A treatment facility,
- A halfway house,
- A soup kitchen,
- Transitional housing, nor
- SRO housing.

**What is Permanent Supportive Housing?**

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is a proven solution in providing a home to persons most in need housing. It combines affordable housing with services that help people who face the most complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy and dignity. PSH is a nationally recognized model that is shown to improve housing stability, employment, mental and physical health, and school attendance; and reduces active substance use. Research and studies of PSH throughout the country show people in supportive housing live more stable and productive lives.

**What is the project mission?**

The mission of the project is to provide a safe, supportive living environment for formerly homeless persons to allow for the improved quality of life including:

- Long-term housing stability;
- Better health outcomes;
- Reduction in use of substances;
- Reduction in use of public crisis systems including the jail; and

Increased access to mainstream services (employment, rehabilitation, and other services). The mission will also be expanded to include approximately 25,000 square feet of office space that will house HCHA's administrative offices and the current teams of Veterans Affairs employees who serve formerly homeless veterans housed throughout Harris County.

According to HCHA, the mission for the final 90 units is subject to community input and regulatory and funding constraints. However, HCHA proposes that the additional 90 units provide housing for individuals at a higher income bracket that would allow for a true mixed-use, mixed-income development.

**What will this project cost?**

The total project cost is currently estimated at \$37 million of which Harris County has already committed \$21 million for acquisition, design and construction of Phase I.

**How will this project be funded?**

The project is funded with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funds, CDBG Entitlement funds provided by Harris County, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Federal Home Loan Bank funds, private debt, and bonds.

**Who can live at Fenix Estates?**

Primarily formerly homeless adult men and women with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income (AMI) can live at Fenix. Occupancy per unit will be limited according to HUD guidelines to ensure no overcrowding.

**How will residents be selected?**

Units constructed in Phase I will be made available for lease to persons enrolled through a Coordinated Access System that allows formerly homeless persons to connect to permanent housing that includes supportive services. Similar to any apartment complex, each resident will sign a lease and be required to uphold the conditions of their lease to continue to reside in their unit. Units constructed in Phase 2 will be marketed to person primarily earning no more than 80% AMI but market rate units may be made available to the general public.

HCHA screening will ensure that no sex offenders and no individuals with recent (less than 5 years) violent felonies will be housed. HUD guidelines, which HCHA follows, also prohibit leasing to anyone convicted of manufacturing methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

**What services will residents receive?**

A comprehensive array of services will be made available on site to the residents to provide the supportive environment to allow them to sustain their housing. Services will include but not be limited

to case management, employment and training, life skills training, peer support services, recovery support services, mental health and physical health care, and social and recreational services.

**Will residents be required to work?**

Residents will be encouraged to seek work when appropriate, and increase income. Those residents interested in training and employment opportunities will be provided with access to those services. Work is not a requirement but residents will be responsible for payment of rent. In certain cases, residents will be provided services to access disability income when applicable.

**How long will they be able to live there?**

Similar to any apartment complex, each resident will sign a lease and be required to uphold the conditions of their lease to continue to reside in their unit. Residents may reside in their unit as long as they abide by the lease agreement. At the end of the term of the lease the resident may move, or renew their lease to continue to reside at the property.

**What if residents are engaging in illegal activities?**

Engaging in illegal activities is prohibited on the property. Residents observed engaging in such illegal activities will be reported to the proper authorities and be subject to eviction as would be the case in any apartment project.

**Under what conditions will a resident be evicted?**

Residents who violate their lease agreement will be evicted. However, property management and case management will work closely together to support the resident from returning to homelessness, and only resort to the eviction process as a last resort.

**Why does our community need this project?**

Homeless persons are frequent users of high-cost public crisis systems, such as jails and hospitals. In our community during a one year period 2011-2012, 920 persons were released from the County Jail 5 or more times after sentence completion. Of these persons, 579 (63%) were homeless and many were also disabled. Lack of housing is the primary factor in their use of such crisis systems. Our community needs this project to reduce the taxpayers burden for funding such crisis systems, and provide an effective and humane alternative to chronic homelessness.

**Is it realistic to think this project will end homelessness?**

This one project will not end homelessness in our community, but will go a long way towards providing an environment that supports persons who have multiple barriers that have kept them homeless. A coordinated system of access to housing will ultimately help our community end chronic homelessness, or long-term homelessness for individuals who face these barriers.

**Where can I get more information about Houston, Harris County’s homeless population and plans to address it?**

The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County is a leading source of information related to homelessness in our community. Please visit their website for more information:

[www.homelesshouston.org](http://www.homelesshouston.org). Also, see *Opening Doors*, [www.usich.gov/PDF/OpeningDoors\\_2010\\_FSPPreventEndHomeless.pdf](http://www.usich.gov/PDF/OpeningDoors_2010_FSPPreventEndHomeless.pdf) , the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness throughout the country.

**How will the building be secured?**

This will be a gated apartment community where security is of the utmost importance to ensure a safety of our residents. The building will have on-site property management staffing, and security cameras. The property will be fully fenced and gated as well, with clearly marked entry points, and exit points. The property will not be accessible to non-resident homeless persons. This is not a soup-kitchen, it is an apartment complex.

**Will this project drive down property values?**

Based on studies of similar projects, Fenix Estates will not negatively impact surrounding property values. In a report published by the United Way of Greater Houston in 2010, it was concluded that permanent supportive housing units have no negative impact on their neighbor’s property values. The study reviewed six properties both new construction and acquisition/rehabilitation and determined that property values closest to the supportive housing increased at a higher rate than those in the larger neighborhood. The findings in this local report are consistent with similar findings in other communities across the country. When developed properly, permanent supportive housing as well as affordable housing can become an enhancement to neighborhoods and cause increase in property values.

**What is the process for addressing neighborhood complaints? Who is the contact person for the project?**

Question, inquiries or complaints may be submitted to the Harris County Housing Authority, or to Harris County Community Services Department:

**Harris County Housing Authority  
(713) 578-2100  
Horace Allison, AIA**

**Harris County Community Services Department  
Office of Housing and Community Development  
Daphne Lemelle, Community Development Director  
(713) 578-2000**