

# Lake Olympia developer preserves natural habitat

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**L**AKE Olympia rests at the southwestern edge of metropolitan Houston, along 130 acres of natural lakes and miles of wooded shoreline and natural reserves.

Within this scenic 1,000-acre enclave are some of Houston's most picturesque lots, featuring a complete range of homes, including low-maintenance garden homes, upper-end homes by leading volume builders and custom and estate homes on lots of 1 acre and more. Prices range from the \$100,000s to more than \$1 million.

Lake Olympia is the brainchild of Andrew Choy, a developer managing the community's growth.

Choy's approach to developing the landscape of Lake Olympia has been to preserve as much of the natural environment as possible.

For home buyers, Lake Olympia provides a variety of home styles and prices to meet the needs of several major buyers' markets.

Choy places great value in designing a development plan to attain long-term goals.

"You've got to be a long-term planner," Choy said. "In real estate, you can make it if you can stand the heat of the cycles. If you understand there are going to be cycles and operate conservatively, you'll be successful. At Lake Olympia, we only do one section at a time, and try not to overbuild."

The result is a residential community that delivers quality homes, records successful sales and main-

tains high property values.

A Houston resident since 1969, Choy entered real estate development after graduating from the University of Houston with a business degree. He joined a partnership of developers who built residential communities in the Alief area before striking out on his own in 1982 to find a new project.

Choy targeted the southwest Houston area because he liked its predominantly residential character.

"I found the land that is now Lake Olympia during a flyover in a helicopter," Choy said. "Most people didn't know about this piece of land, with its lakes and trees. I was told it was a swampy area with shallow lakes and little vegetation — too much of a challenge for most developers. But I felt like I could turn this into a real beautiful development by turning the swampy areas into beautiful lakes."

The Lake Olympia property, originally part of one of Texas' earliest land grants, had been in the same family for more than 100 years. The property includes a site where Texas slaves gathered to hear of abolition for the first time. A tree on this spot has been preserved in a park, according to an agreement between Choy and the former landowners.

Missouri City officials and Choy also agreed the property would be developed in an open space concept.

"We left a lot of nature untouched and turned the lakes from 3 to 8 feet deep," Choy said. "The 1,000 acres of land includes 130 acres of lakes and 9.5 miles of lake shoreline."