

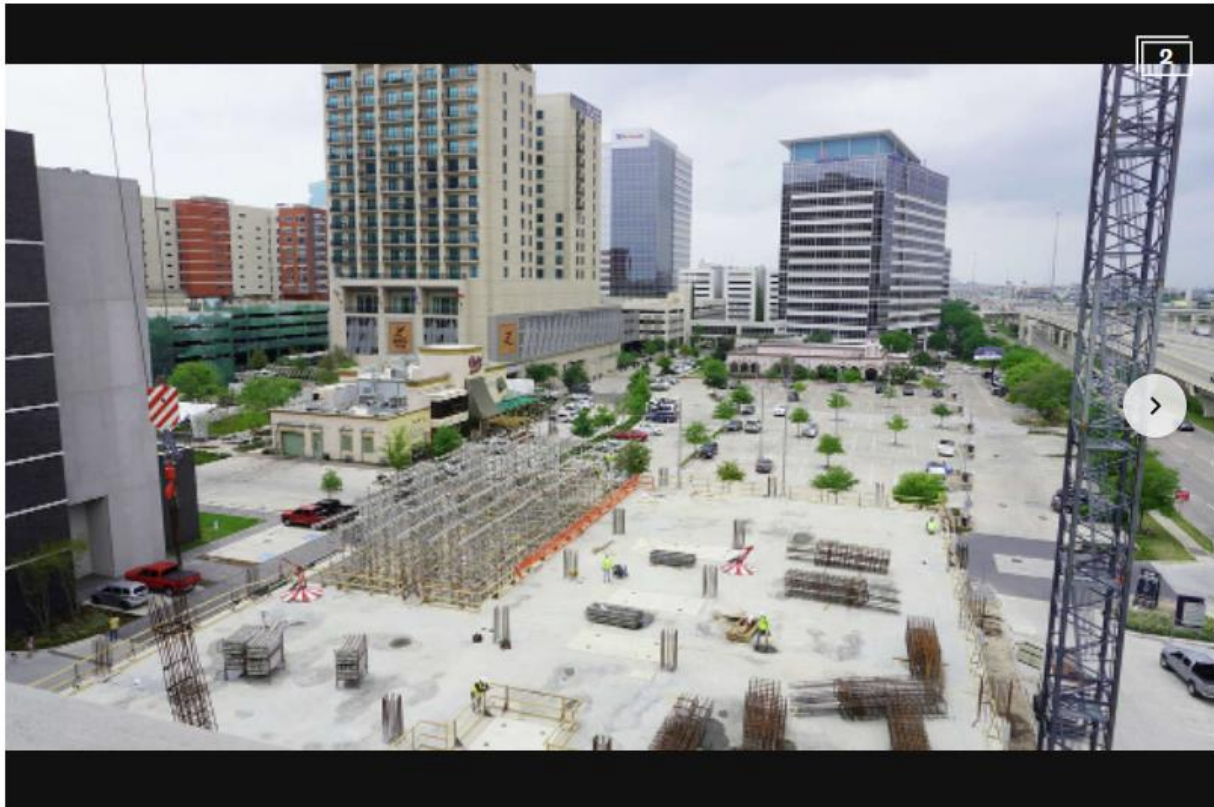
MetroNational starts on 9-story office building at mixed-used development in Memorial City

The building was put on hold during the pandemic as companies shifted to remote work.



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MetroNational is developing a nine-story, 190,000-square-foot office building at 9753 Katy Freeway in Memorial City.
MetroNational

Houston-based MetroNational resumed construction last week on a nine-story office building at its Memorial City mixed-use development in west Houston after a more than two year pandemic-related pause.

The building, at 9753 Katy Freeway, broke ground at the end of 2019, just before COVID upended the office market as companies shifted to remote work.

The 190,000-square-foot building will offer first-floor restaurant and retail spaces and a location next to the Lawn, a new 30,000-square-foot greenspace for entertainment and community events, and Memorial City Mall. Designed by Kirksey Architecture, the glass building features a two-story lobby with a 27-foot art wall.



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“When an office tenant walks outside of 9753, they will have immediate access to restaurants, entertainment and outdoor amenities that they can enjoy before, during and after office hours,” Jason Johnson, president of MetroNational, said in an announcement. “Our main priority as we envisioned the post-pandemic work environment was ensuring that we kept the public connected through community-driven experiences.”

No tenants have been announced and MetroNational said it is still marketing the space for a lead tenant.

Houston's office vacancy rate climbed to 20.5 percent in the first quarter, up from 19.9 percent the year earlier, according to commercial real estate firm Transwestern, but developers continue to build office buildings with modern amenities desired by companies.



— The McKinley at Memorial City, a 25-story, 278-unit apartment tower at 9757 Katy Freeway, was completed in July 2021. MetroNational

With the recent completion of downtown's Texas Tower and Hewlett Packard Enterprise's new campus in Spring, only 820,000 square feet of office space is under construction in the Houston area, according to Transwestern. The biggest project is Skanska USA Commercial Development's 28-story 1550 on the Green in downtown.

Slated for completion in the second quarter of 2023, 9753 Katy Freeway is next to The McKinley, a 25-story luxury apartment high-rise completed by MetroNational in July. The office building, at the southwest corner of Bunker Hill and the Katy Freeway, has floors with 22,605 square feet of rentable space.

The construction coincides with a \$20 million renovation project at MetroNational's Memorial City Plaza, a three building campus on Gessner. Renovations there will bring new lobbies with expanded seating, a fitness center, full-service conference center and meeting rooms, specialty coffee shop and a covered outdoor dining patio with spaces for food trucks and events.

MetroNational is a privately-held real estate investment, development and management company with more than 10 million square feet of commercial real estate. The company's 3.2 million-square-foot office portfolio is 91 percent leased.