

2026 EDITION

Your Katy TX *Home Buyer Guide*

A complete guide to buying in one of Texas' fastest growing suburbs. Neighborhoods, schools, current market data, and the home buying process from offer to closing.

Jonathan McNabb

REALTOR® · Texas Real Estate Commission Licensed
Nest Ahead · Katy, TX

(281) 549-8099 · jonathanmcnabbrealtor.com

WELCOME

A Note from Jonathan

Thank you for downloading this guide. I am Jonathan McNabb, a REALTOR® with Nest Ahead serving Katy and the greater Fort Bend, Harris, and Waller County markets. Over twenty-five years across the real estate and legal industries have given me a keen eye for the contracts and disclosures that shape every transaction, and Katy has been one of the fastest growing suburbs in Texas through most of that stretch.

Whether you are relocating from out of state, comparing new construction in Cane Island to resale in Cinco Ranch, or buying your first home in Texas, the goal of this guide is to give you a clear, honest picture of what to expect.

Inside, you will find a community by community breakdown of Cinco Ranch, Cross Creek Ranch, Firethorne, Falcon Point, Cane Island, and Old Towne Katy. You will also find a current snapshot of the 2025 versus 2026 market, the schools and amenities that shape buyer demand, and a step by step walkthrough of the buying process in Texas.

When you are ready to talk about your specific situation, I am only a call away. Until then, I hope this guide helps you make a confident, informed decision.

Jonathan

Years Active	25+ years across real estate and legal industries
Education	Master of International Business (MIB), Houston Christian University
Honor Society	Delta Mu Delta International Business Honor Society · Kappa Tau Chapter
Brokerage	Nest Ahead · Katy, TX
Service Area	Fort Bend, Harris, and Waller Counties
Recognition	TREC licensed REALTOR® in good standing · 5-star client satisfaction
Direct Line	(281) 549-8099
Email	jmcnabb@nestahead.com

CHAPTER 1

Why Katy

Katy is a Houston area suburb sitting at the intersection of Fort Bend, Harris, and Waller Counties, anchored by I-10 and the Westpark Tollway with quick access to the Energy Corridor, Downtown Houston, and the Texas Medical Center. The broader Katy region is now home to more than 340,000 residents and has been one of the fastest growing suburbs in Texas, driven by award winning Katy ISD schools, master planned communities, and a diversified employment base across energy, healthcare, and engineering.

At a Glance

City of Katy Population	Approximately 26,000 residents
Greater Katy Region	340,000+ residents
Median Household Income	Approximately \$110,000
Median Age	Approximately 36
Counties	Fort Bend · Harris · Waller
School Districts	Katy ISD · Lamar CISD · Royal ISD
Primary Zip Codes	77449 · 77450 · 77493 · 77494
Energy Corridor Commute	20 to 30 minutes via I-10
Downtown Houston	35 to 50 minutes
Texas Medical Center	40 to 55 minutes via Westpark Tollway

What Sets Katy Apart

The combination is unusually compelling for relocation buyers: a mature inventory of master planned and golf communities; some of the highest performing public schools in Texas through Katy ISD; no state income tax; direct I-10 access to the Energy Corridor and Downtown Houston; and quick reach to George Bush Intercontinental and Hobby airports. Few Texas suburbs assemble all of those traits at this price point.

CHAPTER 2

Communities at a Glance

Katy's housing market is organized around master planned and golf communities, each with its own price range, lifestyle, and amenity profile. Use this table as your quick orientation. The next pages dive deeper into each area.

Community	Price Range	Character
Cinco Ranch	\$350K to \$1.2M	Master planned · Katy ISD · resort pools · flagship community
Cross Creek Ranch	\$380K to \$1.4M	New construction · Fulshear · Lamar CISD · trail systems
Firethorne	\$320K to \$900K	Family friendly · neighborhood lakes · Katy ISD · 77494
Falcon Point	\$400K to \$1.1M	Established golf community · mature trees · 77494
Cane Island	\$420K to \$1.5M	New build · I-10 access · modern amenities
Old Towne Katy	\$280K to \$700K	Historic · walkable · Heritage Park · 77493

NOTE ON BORDERS

Katy spans four primary ZIP codes (77449, 77450, 77493, 77494) across portions of Harris, Fort Bend, and Waller Counties, and the city of Katy proper covers only a fraction of that footprint. Cinco Ranch, Cross Creek Ranch, and Firethorne sit primarily in Fort Bend County; Old Towne Katy anchors 77493 inside the city limits; and Cane Island straddles Waller and Harris. Always verify a property's exact municipal boundary, school zone, MUD, and PID at the address level before making an offer.

CHAPTER 2 · CONTINUED

Cinco Ranch & Cross Creek Ranch

Cinco Ranch (Fort Bend County)

PRICE RANGE: \$350,000 to \$1,200,000

The flagship master planned community in Katy, Cinco Ranch is defined by award winning amenities, top rated Katy ISD zoning, and miles of greenbelts and lakes. Inventory ranges from townhomes and entry priced single family in the low \$350s up to estate homes near \$1.2M. Resort pools, tennis and pickleball complexes, and a robust schedule of community events make this the most active resale market in the area.

***BEST FOR:** Families and relocation buyers who want award winning Katy ISD schools, deep amenity infrastructure, and the most active resale market in the Katy area.*

Cross Creek Ranch (Fulshear)

PRICE RANGE: \$380,000 to \$1,400,000

Cross Creek Ranch is the newer generation master planned community west of Katy proper in Fulshear, anchored by resort style pools, an extensive trail system, and Lamar CISD schools including the modern Fulshear High School campus. The community is still actively building in later sections, so buyers can choose between new construction with full design center customization or quick move-in resale homes from earlier phases.

***BEST FOR:** Buyers who want the newest housing stock, resort style amenities, and access to Lamar CISD's growing campus network in Fulshear.*

LOCAL INSIGHT

Cinco Ranch and Cross Creek Ranch frequently share buyers, but the trade off is straightforward. Cinco Ranch gives you the most established amenity base in the area and Katy ISD zoning. Cross Creek Ranch gives you newer housing stock, modern community design, and Lamar CISD. The right answer depends entirely on school preference, how much new construction matters to you, and whether your weekday commute leans east on I-10 toward the Energy Corridor or stays west in Fulshear.

CHAPTER 2 · CONTINUED

Firethorne & Falcon Point

Firethorne (77494)

PRICE RANGE: \$320,000 to \$900,000

Firethorne is an established community on Katy's far west side known for mature trees, neighborhood lakes, and quick access to I-10. Inventory is smaller and resale opportunities tend to move quickly when priced right. The community attracts buyers who want a settled, family friendly neighborhood with Katy ISD feeders rather than the largest amenity center on the market.

***BEST FOR:** Families who want a mature, established neighborhood with strong Katy ISD zoning and an easy I-10 commute east toward the Energy Corridor.*

Falcon Point (77494)

PRICE RANGE: \$400,000 to \$1,100,000

Falcon Point is an established golf community wrapped around the Falcon Point Country Club with custom and semi-custom homes, mature landscaping, and lot premiums that reflect direct course frontage. Inventory turns over slowly and resale opportunities command strong prices, particularly on lots with course or water views.

***BEST FOR:** Golfers who want an established country club atmosphere, larger lots, and a community with limited and high-quality inventory turnover.*

NOTE ON SCHOOLS

The vast majority of Katy is zoned to Katy Independent School District, consistently ranked among the top districts in Texas. Portions of Fulshear feed Lamar CISD, and a small western edge falls within Royal ISD in Waller County. Boundaries are drawn at the address level, not the community level, so two homes on the same street can sometimes fall in different elementary zones. Always confirm the assigned elementary, middle, and high school for the specific address before making an offer.

CHAPTER 3

Katy Area Schools

Katy is primarily served by Katy Independent School District, one of the most highly regarded public school districts in Texas. Portions of Fulshear and the newer master planned communities west of Katy feed Lamar CISD, which has expanded rapidly with modern campuses. A smaller western edge falls in Royal ISD in Waller County. The three high schools below are the most commonly requested by relocation families touring Cinco Ranch, Cross Creek Ranch, and the surrounding communities.

School	Grades	Highlights
Tompkins High School	9 to 12 (Katy ISD)	Strong academic and athletic reputation in west Katy. Feeds Cinco Ranch and Cross Creek area neighborhoods. Notable AP and dual credit offerings.
Seven Lakes High School	9 to 12 (Katy ISD)	Consistently among the top performing campuses in Katy ISD. Highly competitive academic and STEM programs. Serves much of central Cinco Ranch.
Fulshear High School	9 to 12 (Lamar CISD)	Modern campus serving Cross Creek Ranch and Fulshear. Growing AP, career, and technical pathways. Anchor school for newer master planned communities.

Charter, Private & Magnet Options

Beyond the traditional public campuses, the Katy area has a healthy roster of charter schools (Harmony School of Innovation, Royal Public Schools options) and private options including The Village School, British International School of Houston, and Founders Classical Academy. Faith-based K-12 options include Faith West Academy and St. Peter's Christian Academy. If private or charter schooling is a factor, I can map drive times against your shortlist before you tour properties.

SCHOOL SHOPPING TIP

Texas operates on a strong neighborhood school framework, with transfer options available through the district choice process. Your assigned zone school is guaranteed by the address, but magnet, dual language, and choice campuses each have their own application timelines and lottery deadlines. Worth working through those details before you commit to a specific street.

CHAPTER 4

Activities & Lifestyle

Life in Katy balances small town history, master planned amenities, big city access to Houston, and a level of outdoor space that is unusual for a major metro suburb. Here is what residents actually reach for on a typical weekend.

Historic Downtown & Community Events

Historic Downtown Katy and Katy Heritage Park anchor the original townsite, with the MKT Railroad Depot Museum at the center. Seasonal markets, the Katy Rice Harvest Festival, and regular small town gatherings keep the downtown calendar full. Katy Mills Mall adds outlet shopping, dining, and entertainment under one roof for the entire region.

Parks, Trails & Outdoor Recreation

Mary Jo Peckham Park is a community favorite, with a stocked fishing lake, miniature golf, paved walking trails, and a covered playground for younger kids. Thomas Park adds open sports fields. The Mayde Creek Trail System threads through neighborhoods and into Cinco Ranch greenbelts, giving cyclists, joggers, and families with strollers miles of connected paved trail without driving.

Golf & Country Clubs

Falcon Point Country Club anchors the established golf scene in the heart of 77494. Other regional options include Meadowbrook Farms Golf Club in Katy and a wider rotation of public and semi-private courses across Fort Bend and Waller counties. Several master planned communities also feature resort style pool complexes and full racquet sports clubs as part of HOA amenities.

Commute & Connections

I-10 East and the Westpark Tollway both run through the Katy area. From central Katy, the Energy Corridor sits roughly 20 to 30 minutes off peak, Downtown Houston 35 to 50 minutes, and the Texas Medical Center 40 to 55 minutes via the Westpark Tollway. George Bush Intercontinental Airport reaches roughly 45 minutes to the northeast and Hobby Airport about an hour to the southeast.

CHAPTER 5

2025 vs 2026 Market Snapshot

Katy cooled through 2025 as Texas property tax burdens, insurance costs, and elevated mortgage rates softened buyer demand. Conditions reset into early 2026, with year-over-year median prices softening between 2% and 6% depending on the neighborhood and price band. Inventory has climbed to a six year high near 4.9 months of supply, above the national average of roughly 4.1 months. The market is the most balanced it has been since 2019.

FULL YEAR		YEAR TO DATE	
2025		2026	
Median Home Value	\$355,000	Median Home Value	\$338,000
Median Sold Price	\$355,000	Median Sold Price	\$345,000
Median List Price	\$400,000	Median List Price	\$398,000
YoY Price Change	+2.4%	YoY Price Change	-3.0%
Sold Over Asking	9%	Sold Over Asking	6%

Source: Houston Association of REALTORS (HAR) and local MLS data. Data as of April 2026.

April 2026 Key Indicators

Median Sale Price	\$405,000
Median Days on Market	38 days
List to Sale Ratio	97.4%
Active Listings	2,100+
Active Listings With Price Drop	More than 35%
Average 30-Year Mortgage Rate	Approximately 6.33%

CHAPTER 5 · CONTINUED

What the Market Means for You

If You Are Buying in 2026

Katy is sitting in the most balanced market it has seen since 2019, and the scale is leaning toward buyers. More than 35% of active listings have taken at least one price reduction in 2026, and homes are averaging 51 to 69 days on market. That spread tells you everything: pricing accuracy matters more than it has in the last 18 months. Three priorities will serve you well.

- 1. Get pre approved before you tour.** A formal pre approval letter (not a pre qualification) is what listing agents take seriously, especially on competitive new listings in Cinco Ranch or Cane Island. I refer to local lenders who turn pre approvals around in 24 to 72 hours.
- 2. Understand comps.** Comps, short for comparable recent sales of similar homes in the same community, are the single most important input to a competitive offer. Master planned communities price very differently than nearby established neighborhoods, so I pull comps from inside your specific community whenever possible.
- 3. Know your non negotiables in advance.** Lot premium, school zone, MUD or PID exposure, pool, garage spaces, golf or water view. The moment you can articulate these clearly, the search narrows from hundreds of listings to a manageable handful.

If You Are Selling in 2026

Pricing right out of the gate is the single biggest decision you will make. The first seven to ten days generate the strongest showing activity and the most serious offers. Miss that window with an aggressive price and you will spend the next 60 to 90 days chasing the market down. Overpriced listings face real resistance right now, with more than a third of Katy active listings already involving a price drop.

The exception is well-presented, properly priced inventory in the most desirable Katy ISD and Lamar CISD pockets. In Cinco Ranch, Cross Creek Ranch, and the high-demand Tompkins and Seven Lakes feeder zones, accurately priced new listings still attract multiple buyers in the first wave of showings. Pricing strategy, professional photography, and a real launch plan across Zillow, Realtor.com, HAR.com, Redfin, and the MLS remain the three biggest levers a seller controls.

ONE ON ONE MARKET ANALYSIS

The numbers in this guide are area-wide averages. Your home's specific value depends on community, school zone, MUD or PID exposure, lot premium, pool package, and current condition. I am happy to run a no pressure market analysis on your address. Call or text (281) 549-8099.

CHAPTER 6

The Home Buying Process, Step by Step

In Texas, a typical financed home purchase takes 30 to 45 days from executed contract to closing, with most Katy buyers moving through the full process (from initial consultation to keys) in 45 to 75 days. Cash purchases can close in as little as 10 to 14 days. Here is the full sequence.

1. Mortgage Pre Approval

3 to 7 days

A lender reviews your income, credit, and assets, then issues a letter stating the loan amount you qualify for. This is your first credibility signal in a competitive offer.

2. Define Your Search Criteria

Ongoing

Communities, price range, school zones, must haves, deal breakers. The clearer your shortlist, the faster you will find the right property.

3. Tour Properties & Make an Offer

Variable

Once you find the right home, we draft the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC) One to Four Family Residential Contract: purchase price, earnest money, option fee and option period, financing contingencies, closing date, and any inclusions or exclusions.

4. Negotiation & Contract Execution

1 to 5 days

Seller may accept, counter, or reject. Most deals require at least one round of counter offers. Once signed by both parties, you are under contract.

5. Option Period, Earnest Money & Inspection

5 to 10 days

Earnest money (typically 1% of price) and the negotiated option fee are delivered to the title company and seller within three days. The option period gives you the unrestricted right to terminate. Inspector evaluates structure, roof, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and foundation.

6. Loan Application, Appraisal & Title

21 to 30 days

Formal mortgage application within days of contract signing. Lender orders an appraisal to confirm value. Title company searches public records for liens, easements, and ownership history, and orders HOA and MUD resale certificates.

7. Final Walk-Through & Closing

1 day

Walk through is typically 24 hours before closing. At settlement you sign loan and title documents at the title company, wire closing funds, and receive keys. Welcome home.

CHAPTER 7

Financing & First Time Buyer Programs

Your loan structure has as much impact on monthly cost as the purchase price itself. Here are the most common options for Katy buyers in 2026.

Loan Type	Min Down	Best For
Conventional	3% to 5%	Strong credit (680+); flexible terms; PMI drops at 20% equity
FHA	3.5%	Lower credit scores (580+); first time buyers; mortgage insurance assumed
VA	0%	Active duty service members and veterans; no PMI; competitive rates
Jumbo	10% to 20%	Loans above the 2026 conforming limit (\$806,500 in Harris & Fort Bend)
TSAHC / TDHCA	Up to 5% DPA	Texas state down payment assistance; income and price limits apply

Texas Buyer Assistance Programs

TSAHC Home Sweet Texas Home Loan Program. The Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation's flagship program for moderate income Texans. Provides a 30-year fixed rate mortgage plus up to 5% down payment assistance. Income and purchase price limits apply.

TSAHC Homes for Texas Heroes. Same fixed rate mortgage and down payment assistance structure, dedicated to teachers, peace officers, firefighters, EMS, corrections officers, and qualified veterans.

TDHCA My First Texas Home. The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs offers competitive fixed rate first mortgages with down payment assistance for first time buyers and qualifying veterans across Harris, Fort Bend, and Waller Counties.

LENDER REFERRALS

I work regularly with several local Katy area lenders who know Katy ISD and Lamar CISD financing patterns, builder preferred lender incentives, and MUD or PID resale certificate requirements inside and out. Ask for introductions when we connect.

CHAPTER 8

Closing Costs & Property Taxes

Buyer Closing Costs in Texas

Buyers in Texas typically pay 2% to 4% of the purchase price in closing costs, depending on the financing structure, whether a survey is required, and lender specific fees. Here is a rough breakdown for a hypothetical \$405,000 purchase.

Cost Item	Typical Amount	Notes
Owner's Title Insurance	\$2,200 to \$2,400	Rate set by Texas Department of Insurance; protects against title defects (typically seller paid in Texas)
Lender Title Policy	\$300 to \$500	Required by lender; simultaneous-issue discount applies
Lender Origination & Fees	\$1,500 to \$4,000	Varies significantly by lender and loan type
Appraisal	\$500 to \$700	Paid up front, typically at application
Home Inspection	\$400 to \$700	Optional but strongly recommended during option period
Option Fee	\$100 to \$500	Paid directly to seller for the right to terminate during the option period
Survey	\$450 to \$700	Often required by lender or title; sometimes provided by seller
Recording & State Fees	\$150 to \$300	County recording costs
Prepaid Taxes & Insurance	\$5,000 to \$9,000	Escrow for first year of property tax and homeowners insurance

Property Taxes in Katy

Property tax rates in Katy typically run 2.5% to 3.3% of assessed value depending on the county, school district, and any Municipal Utility District (MUD) or Public Improvement District (PID) overlays attached to the parcel. Levies combine county (Harris, Fort Bend, or Waller), school district (Katy ISD, Lamar CISD, or Royal ISD), city, and any MUD or PID assessments. On a \$405,000 home, expect annual property taxes between roughly \$10,000 and \$13,000 before exemptions.

Texas Homestead Exemption removes a portion of your home's assessed value from school district taxes and provides additional reductions for other taxing units. Once homesteaded, your assessed value is also capped under the 10% annual appraisal cap, a meaningful long term advantage. Over 65 and disability exemptions stack on top. Apply through your county appraisal district (Harris, Fort Bend, or Waller CAD) within the year following your purchase.

CHAPTER 9

Katy Real Estate FAQs

Quick answers to the questions relocation buyers and first time Texas buyers ask most often. Full conversations are always better in person.

How is the Katy, TX real estate market right now?

Katy is moving toward a more balanced market in 2026. The median sale price sits around \$405K, homes are averaging 51 to 69 days on market, and inventory has reached a six year high near 4.9 months of supply. The biggest 2026 shift: more than 35% of active listings have taken at least one price reduction. That is a market that rewards accuracy over optimism.

How long does it take to buy a home in Katy?

From initial consultation to closed keys, most Katy buyers move through the process in 45 to 75 days. That includes lender pre approval (3 to 7 days), home search and offer (variable), option period and inspection (5 to 10 days), appraisal and underwriting (21 to 30 days), and final closing.

What is an option period in Texas?

The option period is a negotiated window, typically five to ten days, where a buyer pays a small fee directly to the seller for the unrestricted right to terminate the contract for any reason. It is the time to complete inspections, review HOA and MUD documents, and negotiate repairs.

What are typical closing costs for a Katy home?

Buyer closing costs in Texas usually run 2% to 4% of the purchase price, covering items like title policy, lender fees, appraisal, survey, and prepaid escrows for taxes and insurance. Sellers traditionally pay agent commissions and the owner's title policy, with totals around 6% to 8% depending on negotiated terms.

How do property taxes work in Katy, TX?

Property tax rates in Katy typically run 2.5% to 3.3% of assessed value depending on the county and MUD or PID overlays. Homestead, over 65, and disability exemptions can lower the bill significantly. Always factor full tax rate plus exemption eligibility into your monthly payment calculation.

What is the difference between Katy ISD and Lamar CISD?

Most of Katy proper falls in Katy ISD, a long standing top rated Texas district. Parts of Fulshear and the newer master planned communities west of Katy fall in Lamar CISD, which has grown rapidly and built modern campuses. Both perform strongly, and zoning often drives buyer preference more than overall reputation.

Can you help me relocate to Katy from out of state?

Yes. Relocation buyers make up a significant share of my clients. I provide virtual neighborhood tours, school zoning maps, commute analysis to the Energy Corridor and Medical Center, and live walkthrough video for any listing. Many clients close on a Katy home without ever flying in until inspection week.

Do you work with new construction builders in Katy?

Yes. Builders in Katy welcome buyer agent representation, and having an agent at your side does not raise the price. I review builder contracts, negotiate upgrades and incentives, and protect you through inspection and walkthrough, all at no cost to you as the buyer.

NEXT STEPS

Let's Find Your Home

You have the lay of the land. The next step is a conversation about your timeline, your priorities, and the specific communities and properties that fit. Whether you are 30 days out or six months out, I am happy to talk.

What Clients Say

"Jonathan makes the homebuying process very easy for his buyers. His knowledge and experience makes every closing smooth."

AMANDA · 5.0 / GOOGLE

"Great people, very polite, professional and friendly. I am beyond grateful to be able to sign for my brand new house."

GABE BRO · 5.0 / GOOGLE

Contact & Areas Served

DIRECT LINE

(281) 549-8099

EMAIL

jmcnabb@nestahead.com

WEBSITE

jonathanmcnabbrealtor.com

OFFICE HOURS

Mon to Fri: 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Sat & Sun: By appointment

BROKERAGE OFFICE

Nest Ahead

23015 Colonial Parkway

Building A, Suite A-108, PMB #16

Katy, TX 77449

AGENT

Jonathan McNabb

REALTOR® · TREC Licensed

MIB · Houston Christian University

AREAS SERVED

Katy, TX · Cinco Ranch · Cross Creek Ranch · Firethorne · Falcon Point · Cane Island · Old Towne Katy · Fulshear · Richmond · Fort Bend County · Harris County · Waller County · ZIP Codes: 77449 · 77450 · 77491 · 77492 · 77493 · 77494

ONE LAST THING

If this guide was useful, the best thanks you can give me is a quick text or call when you are ready. I read every message personally and respond within hours. Jonathan.

Jonathan McNabb, Licensed Real Estate Agent in Texas, with Nest Ahead. Brokerage office at 23015 Colonial Parkway, Building A, Suite A-108, PMB #16, Katy, TX 77449. Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed. Equal Housing Opportunity.