

EXISTING CANAL HOME COMMUNITY

DESIGN CONCERNS

It has been almost a decade since a canal home community has been built in Clear Lake, likely because of the lack of available, developable land. In some cases, lot sales were relatively slow generally for the reasons indicated below; including the deployment of over-price custom homebuilders and critically poor canal and lot design limiting the boating capabilities and reducing demand.

TownHarbour has eliminated 100% of the design flaws and is perfectly designed for deep water mariners who want to live on the water with their large boats behind their homes.

Waterfront Communities Planned For Custom Home Builders: Virtually all waterfront lots in canal and marina home developments were planned for custom home builders of high and very high-end homes.

Custom Homes Are Not Economically Competitive: These custom homes were priced 30% to 100% higher than a top production homebuilder would market for the same size homes. These *custom homes are not economically competitive* with top production homebuilders resulting in slower sales.

Limited Production Ability of Custom Home Builders: Custom Home Builders do not have the financial or production capability to build significant inventory and generally must wait for pre-sales before starting construction thus slowing down absorption.

An exception to this is Axis Point which developed Lake Cove/The Sanctuary (the largest canal development in Clear Lake) in which Axis built moderate-priced custom inventory and had the ability to produce inventory resulting in faster absorption.

The Peninsula and Cypress Bay Production Builders: It should be noted that well after development completion of these two communities, production builders Gehan and Hovmanian, acquired lots and were able to build and sell homes at a strong pace.

Existing Canals Were Designed For “Small Powerboats Only”: Virtually all existing canals will only accommodate shallow draft, small to mid-size powerboats typically shorter than 26’ and lower than 10’ tall. Owners of waterfront homes tend to own *larger craft in the 32’ to 50’ plus range* including sailboats, powerboats with fishing rigs, and trawler/cruisers with cabin sleeping accommodations. These larger deep-draft boats are currently forced to be docked in marinas which can accommodate them. **This ignores the key advantage of living on the water on a canal which is having your boat docked behind your home.**

Look in the marinas. You will see 80% or more of the marina boats are sailboats between 32’ and 50’ (most in the range of 38’ to 45’). The remaining percent is almost exclusively large powerboats with cabins which range from 35’ to more than 50’.

These high mast sailboats and larger powerboats make up the vast majority of the Clear Lake market, yet none will fit behind the homes in the existing canal communities, which is a profound canal design flaw.

On the other hand, look in the existing canal home developments. More than 98% of existing boats there are smaller, low-profile powerboats and no sailboats. Why? Because that is all that they can fit behind their houses, not what they prefer.

Canal Home Communities Developed by Non-Mariner: Except for communities developed by Axis, all canal home communities were developed by non-mariners.

Flawed Canal / Boat Slips Design: These non-mariner developers designed canals and slips for boats sized well smaller than what is required for waterfront home buyers forcing them to keep their larger boats in marinas defeating the concept of backyard boat slips. Critically, they were not sensitive to boating requirements as to canal width, water depth, restrictive easements, overhead obstructions to navigation (bridges) and slip size.

Poor Canal Design: Most of the existing canal home communities have more than one of the design flaws below, especially for boats in the 32' to 50' range:

- **Shallow Water:** most sailboats require 5' to 6' of water depth minimum. Large powerboats often require at least 5'. With winter low tides, this is very often not available in existing canals.
- **Narrow Canals:** Existing canals range in width generally from 50' (Lazy Bend) to 80'. Boat houses are popular and important and if allowed, leave only approximately *20' to 35' feet of fairway separation* which is minimal for small powerboats and not at all workable for the target 32' to 50' range. TownHarbour will have a *140' expansive canal with 30' x 50' slip areas behind each house and 80' of fairway well large enough for 50' long boats.*
- **Boat House Restrictions:** Several canal communities (Constellation Point, Lazy Bend) restrict the use of much desired boathouses which are needed for most powerboats which cannot be left in the water.
- **Overhead Obstructions:** Seabrook Island and Lake Cove, which make up more than 50% of the market, are both behind low bridges over NASA Rd 1 eliminating all boats with height including sailboats, fishing boats and trawlers. Cypress Bay has a powerline eliminating all but very small sailboats (none are located there currently.)
- **Easements:** Some developments have major easement restrictions. Constellation Point has a pipeline easement on the west side separating the homes to over 100' from the water even eliminating a water view. On one east side a concrete covered easement separates backyards over 60' from the water eliminating backyard boat slips.
- **Open Unprotected Shallow Water:** Some waterfront lots (*Beacon Island*) are on open water which is shallow and subject to wind and wave surge. These require expansive long piers to reach water depth and are expensive to build and maintain. Note that Beacon Island has approximately 20 lots currently available at widths below 40' and a front foot and square foot price roughly double that of TownHarbour. These lots are on water open to Clear Lake wave action and require long piers to reach depth. On open water subject to wind and wave action, only boats which are on raised out of the water lifts can be docked. Moreover, no in-the-water sailboats or powerboats can be kept on these piers because the wind and wave action would totally destroy them.
- **Canal Lot Design Issues:**
 - **Limited Size Backyards:** Most canal communities have relatively short lot depths (130' or less) which results in *small backyards and steep slopes to the water*. Minimum lot depth at TownHarbour is 172' providing approximately an additional 50' of backyard and more gentle slopes.
 - **Flood Plain Concerns:** League City requires top of slab to be 24" above the current or projected flood plain and less than 9" of pooling in the streets. TownHarbour will be filled to 15.25 MSL elevation (mean sea level) and allow for conventional slab-on-grade, post-tension construction. This will be the highest MSL level on Clear Lake as many other canal home communities are well below the flood plain and future homes will require fill or piers.

Perfectly Designed for Deep Water Mariners