



# Strengthening Space City

Three major facilities set to centralize and expand aerospace manufacturing and innovation in Houston

Houston Spaceport will soon be the home of brand-new facilities for three companies leading the charge in commercial aerospace manufacturing and technology. The expansion of the spaceport, which is co-located at Ellington Airport, is solidifying Houston's role as "Space City."

Houston Spaceport is one of 14 FAA-licensed commercial spaceports in the country but stands apart in its urban setting and unprecedented access to a thriving aerospace community. By combining the Houston Airport System's (HAS) resources and infrastructure with local aerospace talent, Houston Spaceport offers unmatched opportunities for businesses in the aviation and aerospace sectors.

HAS has laid the groundwork for companies to join the spaceport. It recently completed a large-scale infrastructure development project led by subsidiaries of infrastructure services provider Texas Sterling-Banicki and now has 150 shovel-ready acres for businesses to build on. Three major companies—Axiom Space, Collins Aerospace and Intuitive Machines—are already underway on new state-of-the-art facilities. Combined, the companies will create 700,000 square feet and house around 1,800 employees.

"The Houston Spaceport has gone from a concept in 2012, to a licensed facility in 2015, to a fully active commercial spaceport, where the very components of what is necessary to go out to space are being built in Houston," says Arturo Machuca, Director of Ellington Airport and Houston Spaceport. "That vision we had of being Space City, having the perfect infrastructure and perfect talent and human resources here, was not far [off]...[Companies] need to make sure that the assets, the talent, the resources that a business needs when it turns commercial are easily accessible, and that's what the Houston Spaceport is providing when compared to others spaceports."

## ANCHOR TENANTS

Intuitive Machines was among the first to announce construction plans at Houston Spaceport. The company currently occupies space at the Houston Aerospace Support Center (HASC) but is now underway on a new 125,000 square-foot facility. The building will house Intuitive Machines' aerospace operations, including the creation of the Nova-C Lunar Lander, which will be used to deliver NASA payloads to the moon. Its transition to the new facility will begin in May 2023.

Collins Aerospace is nearing completion of its new eight-acre facility at Houston Spaceport. The 120,000 square-foot building will be split between office and manufacturing space to support its Mission Systems business. Additionally, the facility will feature a 10,000 square-foot startup incubator for small aerospace businesses and universities to collaborate on space technology challenges. Collins Aerospace

## Houston Spaceport

DIRECTOR, ELLINGTON AIRPORT & HOUSTON SPACEPORT  
Arturo Machuca

LOCATION  
Houston, Texas

## Griffin Partners, Inc.

FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN  
Fred Griffin

LOCATION  
Houston, Texas

plans to move into the new facility in early September 2022.

Finally, Axiom Space broke ground on its new 22-acre headquarters at the spaceport this May. The 420,000 square-foot campus will be constructed in two phases, the first of which totals 106,000 square feet and includes a hangar for Axiom Station—the first private space station—modules. Phase 1 is expected to be complete by summer 2023. Phase 2 will add facilities for labs, mission operations and training, aircraft operations and offices.

Houston-based Griffin Partners is the development manager for each of the three construction projects, serving as a liaison between the companies, HAS and the project teams. Griffin Partners maintains constant communication between all parties to ensure the projects are progressing smoothly and that each company meets its pre-set deadlines.

“We’re working closely with Houston Airport System, the City of Houston and private companies,” says Fred Griffin, Founder and Chairman of Griffin Partners, Inc. “Obviously, there are many challenges to be sure we can complete these projects on time and within the budget. And, since a lot of the things that are being built have never been built before, that’s a challenge.”

Machuca notes that challenges have been overcome thanks to the tremendous spirit of collaboration each party has brought to the table, sharing a common goal of furthering aerospace innovation in Houston.

“The whole project is very exciting. Each of the companies are fantastic to work for. But most importantly, they’re doing something that is very unusual, and I think that’s why the Houston Spaceport has become the paramount spaceport in the United States,” Griffin says. “There are a lot of things happening...Griffin Partners is very excited to be a part of it.”

#### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Even more exciting things are coming to Houston Spaceport that will truly solidify its place as Space City. HAS is working on the construction of a \$137 million full-length taxiway to connect the spaceport to Ellington Airport.

The spaceport has also established connections with San Jacinto College to develop a workforce training program called the EDGE Center. This

program connects students with companies like Axiom and Intuitive Machines to serve the industry. Houston Spaceport is also in the early stages of development on an aerospace institute to further train local engineers and scientists.

As Axiom, Collins Aerospace and Intuitive Machines near completion of their facilities and make landmark leaps in the industry, Houston Spaceport will continue to stand at the center of commercial aerospace activity.

“For me, one of the most exciting things is to be part of this revival for Houston—and not just for Houston but, I dare say, for the entire country, and maybe for the world—in which space is now becoming a big part of our everyday,” Machuca says. “I think the activities we have been [conducting] in space since 20 years ago when the space station was launched are clearly showing a tremendous impact—great benefits for us down here on Earth. And I think that for me, being able to get this vision built and to now be in a practical and real position of development for companies connected to space is just fantastic. It’s really a dream come true.” 

#### TEXAS STERLING – BANICKI, JV LLC (TSB)

Texas Sterling – Banicki, JV LLC (TSB) is a Sterling Infrastructure, Inc. Joint Venture (JV) that was formed for the specific purpose of pursuing Aviation Work in the Texas Market. TSB offers the Civil expertise and local knowledge of Texas Sterling Construction (TSC), along with the Aviation and Civil expertise of J. Banicki Construction, Inc. (Banicki). These two entities have come together to form a company that can handle any civil aviation project. TSB provides the Design-Build Services for Infrastructure for Spaceport Development at Ellington Airport (EFD). TSB has vast institutional knowledge of the site’s infrastructure and serves as a knowledge leader working closely with the Spaceport and its future tenants. Over the past two years, the TSB team has built strong relationships with the Houston Spaceport team and the major tenants already under contract. They also serve as environmental stewards and share observations and recommendations for protecting the development site and surrounding areas.



**HOUSTON SPACEPORT**

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Services Provided include:

- Demolition | Underground Utilities (Water, Sewer, Storm Sewer)
- Excavation & Grading | Lime Treatment of Material | CTB (Cement Treated Bas) | Asphalt Pavement | PCCP – Aprons, Taxiways, Runways and Roadways | Lighting

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