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Private Equity-Backed Texas Housing Development Taps Muni Market.

- **Muni authority seeking debt for residential development**
- **Developers are planning to build more than 1,000 homes**

In suburban Texas, a neighborhood complete with an amphitheater, dance hall and goat farm is scheduled to be erected 40 miles from Houston's downtown — providing municipal-bond investors a window to bet on one of the fastest-growing areas of the US.

In a transaction that priced this week, a municipal authority sold high-risk, tax-exempt bonds to finance infrastructure associated with a housing development dubbed Two Step Farm. The planned community stretches more than 2,000 acres in Houston's sprawling metropolis. The first phase will have more than 1,000 homes priced between $350,000 and $1 million, as well as parks and amenities.

The bonds are backed by future revenues generated by the project, meaning investors are wagering that the development will be built out and populated. Texas metros are seeing the most sustained population growth of all the nation's major cities this year, according to US Census Bureau data. Houston added nearly 140,000 people to its population this year, following closely behind Dallas. San Antonio and Austin also ranked in the top 10 of the largest increases in new residents.

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