

What if a Million More People Lived in Central Texas?

Help Us Prepare. Answer the Survey Inside.



Fifteen Minutes Can Help Shape Your Future.

You can complete the Regional Vision Survey on pages 7 and 8 in just a few minutes, and your feedback about possible growth scenarios and other related issues can help create a meaningful vision for Central Texas' future. Considering our population may



double within the next 20 to 40 years, Central Texans must make some tough decisions to ensure that future growth occurs sensibly. Critical issues, such as how and where land is developed for housing and jobs, the types of homes we live in, how we travel around the region and how we treat our environment, are all connected. Each decision can affect many different aspects of our region's future.

Please take a few minutes to review the material in this packet and mail your survey responses by October 26, **or complete the survey online at www.envisioncentraltexas.org.**

This is your chance to provide input about growth in our region. Don't let the future take shape without you.

Learn More About the Four Growth Scenarios

- Watch one of these special broadcasts about Envision Central Texas:



- *Austin Now* on KLRU-TV 9 at noon and 9 p.m., Oct. 10 and 5 p.m., Oct. 12 and on KLRU-TOO at 8 p.m., Oct. 16.



- News 8 Town Hall Meeting on Oct. 15 at 7 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. and Oct. 16 at noon.

- Visit www.envisioncentraltexas.org or call us at (512) 916-6037 to schedule a speaker for your group.

What Is Envision Central Texas?

*Envision Central Texas is a nonprofit organization composed of concerned citizens from **Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williamson** counties.*

The Board of Directors represents the business community, environmentalists, social equity organizations, neighborhoods and policy makers, and shares the common goal of addressing

growth by considering the interests of the region's existing and future citizens. Our values are based on a set of guiding principles established by the Board of



Directors that are available on our Web site at www.envisioncentraltexas.org/resources.php. The organization has no regulatory powers and does not seek to impose a plan on the region or its local governments. Instead, Envision Central Texas' mission is to work in cooperative partnership with all entities and individuals to help guide the region toward a common vision.

How the Process Works

Envision Central Texas has created and compared four potential growth scenarios to understand the public’s opinions about how our region should grow. These scenarios are not forecasts, predictions or plans, but are stories about what might be. They present possible futures based on existing trends and information gathered from opinion surveys, focus groups and public workshops exploring our region’s values and preferences.

In the fall of 2002, Envision Central Texas conducted a series of regional workshops where the public told us how and where they would like to accommodate an estimated 1.25 million people and 800,000 jobs over the next 20 to 40 years. They created nearly 100 maps for us to examine, each showing a potential future for Central Texas. This collection of workshop maps ultimately produced the four regional growth scenarios presented here.

Each scenario offers a unique snapshot of the future, including several factors that show how growth can affect our region in different ways. You may see several advantages and disadvantages to each scenario depending on how you believe our region should grow. By responding to this survey, you can help Envision Central Texas understand and combine public opinions to create a shared regional vision.

Our Region Today

We can’t talk about the future without understanding what Central Texas is like today. Based on the latest available information, the following statistics present a current snapshot of Central Texas.

Developed land (2000)	1,157 sq. miles
Agricultural and range land (2000)	2,646 sq. miles
Land in the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone	226 sq. miles
Annual weekday travel time per person (1997)	244 hours/year
Housing options (2000)	
Single-family houses	64%
Townhouses, apartments, condos	36%
Regional transportation options	Highways, roads, local and express buses

Note: One square mile is equal to 640 acres. One acre is roughly the size of a football field.

Important Ideas About Growth

As you read about each scenario and complete the Regional Vision Survey, it may be helpful to consider these concepts regarding possible patterns and consequences of growth.

REDEVELOPMENT (See questions 1, 10, 15 and 16)

Redevelopment is new growth in existing communities and neighborhoods, either replacing buildings or filling in empty land within that area. Examples of redevelopment could include replacing a warehouse with a new shopping center or constructing a new apartment building on an empty lot. In the scenarios, less growth on undeveloped land increases redevelopment in existing communities.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT (See questions 4, 5 and 17)

Mixed-used development means combining different types of development (housing, shopping and offices) in the same location, such as an apartment building with retail shops on the ground floor. However, most of today’s new developments are for a single use. With neighborhoods of single-family homes separated from large shopping centers, residents generally drive from one location to another. Mixed-use development can create walkable communities for those who live, work and shop in the same area.

INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS (See question 6)

Infrastructure costs for new development include both public and private expenses for local roads and utilities like power, water and wastewater service. Because infrastructure costs for redevelopment can vary widely, the four scenarios only include some of the costs for new development on undeveloped land.

DEVELOPING OVER AQUIFERS (See questions 3 and 14)

Aquifers are the underground layers of earth that store most of Central Texas’ water. Developing over contributing areas can increase pollutants and decrease the amount of water replenishing aquifers. This insert contains data about the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone. Information regarding other Central Texas aquifers can be found at www.envisioncentraltexas.org/resources.php.

ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND SERVICES (See questions 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16)

Deciding where to locate new jobs and homes poses a dilemma for low-income areas. Without new development, a low-income area may be slowly abandoned, reducing the availability of local jobs and the quality of services like health care and transportation. However, new development can affect the cost of living. This may force long-time residents and businesses to relocate, changing the character of a neighborhood completely. In rural areas, pockets of low-income neighborhoods may lack adequate roads, water, wastewater and parks.

Future Regional Transportation Options

Consider these possible transportation options as you compare each scenario's regional transportation system.

TOLL ROADS

With multiple lanes for heavy traffic, toll roads require drivers to pay a small fee each time they access the roadway. Entrances and exits are typically farther apart than regular freeways.

EXPRESS BUSES

Express buses offer nonstop service for longer trips, such as traveling to downtown Austin from a suburban park-and-ride station. Express buses typically run during morning and afternoon rush hours, and may share common lanes with other traffic or use high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes.

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT

Light rail is a railway system of single cars or short trains that travel either on city streets or reserved lanes. Routes connect central urban areas to nearby suburbs with frequent service (about every 15 minutes).

BUS RAPID TRANSIT

Combining rail transit's quality with the flexibility of buses, bus rapid transit connects suburbs to cities with limited stops. It can operate in common lanes with other traffic, high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes or reserved bus lanes.

COMMUTER RAIL

Using locomotives and multiple passenger cars, commuter rail trains run on conventional railroad tracks and typically travel longer distances. Trains generally run every 30 minutes during morning and afternoon rush hours. With several miles between stops, commuter rail can connect a central urban area to communities 10 to 50 miles away.



What Are the Trade-offs?

In addressing future growth, Central Texans must consider both the positive and negative effects of investing in new homes, businesses, parks and transportation options. For example, the four scenarios allow us to measure possible effects on housing and jobs in low-income areas, but measuring the potential implications for health care, public schools and the cost of living is more difficult. With any growth scenario, Envision Central Texas is committed to working with local governments and citizens to better understand these trade-offs while addressing social equity and other issues.

What's Next?

Envision Central Texas needs to hear from you. Your responses to this survey will contribute directly to shaping a vision for our future.

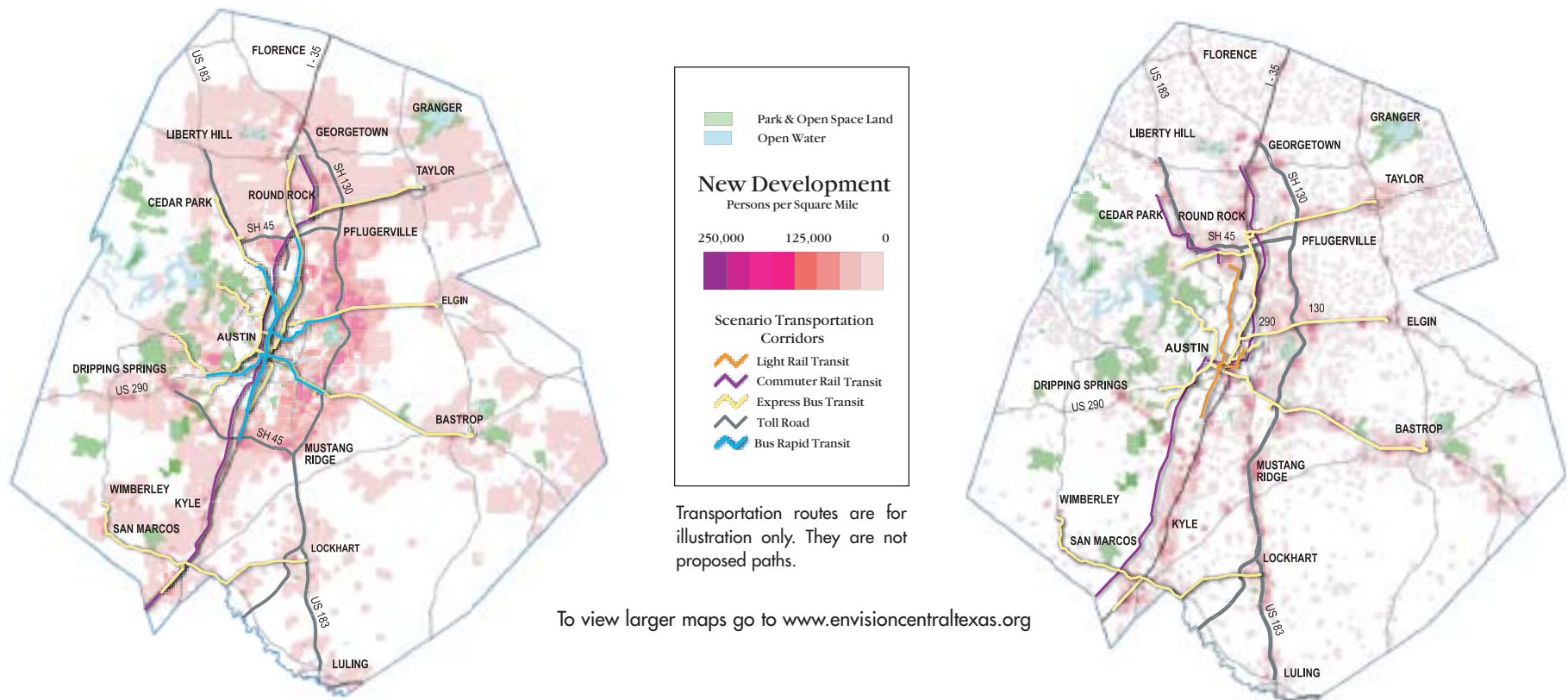
After collecting the responses of thousands of Central Texans, Envision Central Texas and its team of experts will analyze the data to understand significant differences in opinion among the region's many counties and communities. Addressing those opinions will help guide the development of a shared vision and recommended strategies for the future of Central Texas. A draft of that combined vision will then be available for the region's review and comments.

In spring 2004, after the public's comments are incorporated into the recommended vision, each individual city, county or other agency may choose how to implement the vision and apply what has been learned from the region's citizens. Envision Central Texas will continue to work cooperatively with these cities and counties to find appropriate strategies and tools for achieving that shared vision.

Four Possible Futures: Comparing the Numbers

Scenario A Based on recent trends and models of how our land and economy have developed, Scenario A presents how Central Texas might look like if we continue to grow the same way. Most new residents would live in single-family houses in neighborhoods built on previously undeveloped land, and most jobs would be in Travis County. Redevelopment of existing towns and neighborhoods would be very limited. As new development spreads outward, some trips would get longer, and people would spend more time traveling between home, jobs, schools and shopping. With most jobs located in Austin’s central urban area, regional transportation options would include toll roads, new express bus routes, a commuter rail system and a central bus rapid transit system.

Scenario B In Scenario B most growth would surround major roadways – both existing and new ones. Each county would experience significant housing and job growth, with about 20 percent of new residents living in redeveloped areas of existing neighborhoods. Mixed-use developments would also be more common than in Scenario A, with townhouses and apartments sharing space with retail and office buildings. However, most new residents would still live in single-family houses. Despite an overall decrease in daily travel time across the region, the central urban area would experience significantly greater traffic congestion. Regional transportation options would include toll roads, new express bus routes, a commuter rail system and a central light-rail system.



To view larger maps go to www.envisioncentraltexas.org

Compare to chart on page 2

Land developed (see questions 1 and 10)	
New land developed	732 sq. miles
Redeveloped land	1 sq. mile
Agricultural and range land developed (see questions 2, 10 and 15)	546 sq. miles
Land developed over Edwards Aquifer recharge zone (see questions 3 and 14)	56.7 sq. miles
Annual weekday travel time per person (see questions 4 and 9)	295 hours/year
Housing options (see question 5)	
Single-family houses	63%
Townhouses, apartments, condos	37%
Infrastructure costs for new development (see question 6)	\$10.6 billion
Regional transportation options (see questions 4 and 9)	Roadways, toll roads, express bus, commuter rail, limited bus rapid transit

Note: One square mile is equal to 640 acres. One acre is roughly the size of a football field.

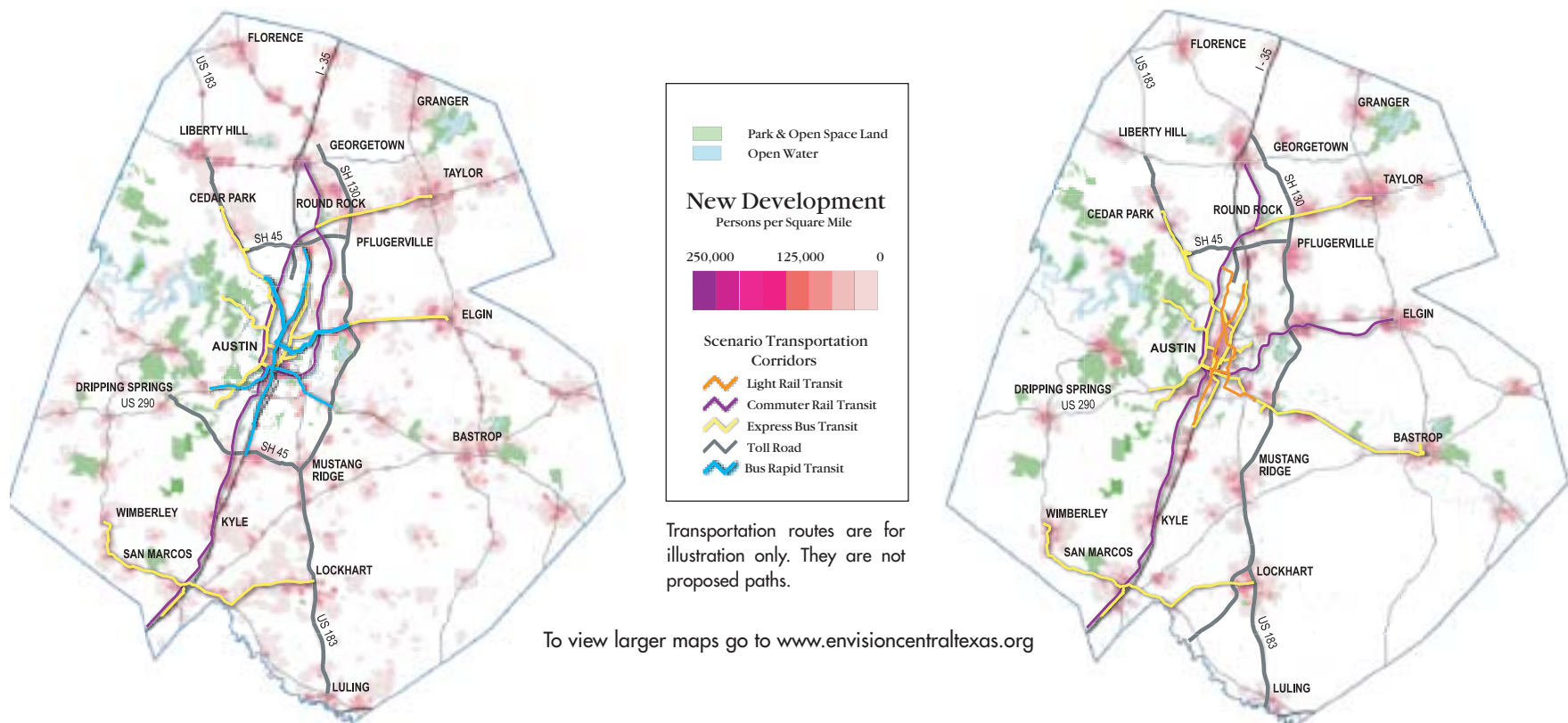
Compare to chart on page 2

Land developed (see questions 1 and 10)	
New land developed	301 sq. miles
Redeveloped land	9 sq. miles
Agricultural and range land developed (see questions 2, 10 and 15)	239 sq. miles
Land developed over Edwards Aquifer recharge zone (see questions 3 and 14)	30.2 sq. miles
Annual weekday travel time per person (see questions 4 and 9)	279 hours/year
Housing options (see question 5)	
Single-family houses	63%
Townhouses, apartments, condos	37%
Infrastructure costs for new development (see question 6)	\$5.5 billion
Regional transportation options (see questions 4 and 9)	Roadways, toll roads, express bus, commuter rail, limited light-rail transit

Note: One square mile is equal to 640 acres. One acre is roughly the size of a football field.

Scenario C In Scenario C growth would occur in both emerging new towns and existing communities. Today's towns and cities would all gain jobs and residents, but even more mixed-use development would place fewer new residents in single-family houses. New towns would also be built along major roads and railways, preserving open space and undeveloped land between communities. With jobs spread across the region, most people would spend less time traveling between home, work, schools and shopping. Regional transportation options would include toll roads, a commuter rail system and extensive express bus and bus rapid transit networks.

Scenario D In Scenario D most growth would occur in existing towns and communities. More land would remain undeveloped than in other scenarios, with more than one-third of new households and two-thirds of new jobs located on currently developed land. Growth on previously undeveloped land is most limited. Each county would experience substantial housing and job growth, but significantly fewer new residents would live in single-family houses. People would spend the least amount of time traveling between destinations. Regional transportation options would include toll roads and extensive commuter rail, light-rail and express bus networks.



Compare to chart on page 2

Land developed (see questions 1 and 10)	
New land developed	267 sq. miles
Redeveloped land	12 sq. miles
Agricultural and range land developed (see questions 2, 10 and 15)	212 sq. miles
Land developed over Edwards Aquifer recharge zone (see questions 3 and 14)	0.1 sq. miles
Annual weekday travel time per person (see questions 4 and 9)	263 hours/year
Housing options (see question 5)	
Single-family houses	59%
Townhouses, apartments, condos	41%
Infrastructure costs for new development (see question 6)	\$4.9 billion
Regional transportation options (see questions 4 and 9)	Roadways, toll roads, extensive express bus, commuter rail, extensive bus rapid transit

Note: One square mile is equal to 640 acres. One acre is roughly the size of a football field.

Compare to chart on page 2

Land developed (see questions 1 and 10)	
New land developed	132 sq. miles
Redeveloped land	16 sq. miles
Agricultural and range land developed (see questions 2, 10 and 15)	109 sq. miles
Land developed over Edwards Aquifer recharge zone (see questions 3 and 14)	0.6 sq. miles
Annual weekday travel time per person (see questions 4 and 9)	248 hours/year
Housing options (see question 5)	
Single-family houses	48%
Townhouses, apartments, condos	52%
Infrastructure costs for new development (see question 6)	\$3.0 billion
Regional transportation options (see questions 4 and 9)	Roadways, toll roads, extensive express bus, extensive commuter rail, extensive light-rail transit

Note: One square mile is equal to 640 acres. One acre is roughly the size of a football field.

Four Possible Futures: Evaluating Quality of Life

Life in Scenario **A**

Most growth would continue to occur as it has in recent years.

Many people would live in new subdivisions in Travis or Williamson counties in single-family homes. With residential areas distinctly separated from retail and business areas, most people would have to leave their neighborhoods to work, shop, dine or find entertainment. Because of this separation, the average person would drive about an hour or more each day. Some downtown Austin workers would travel on express buses, commuter rail or the limited bus rapid transit system. Plenty of neighborhood parks would be available, but many people would have to drive several miles to reach open countryside. And with more farmland being converted to development, many rural residents would find themselves closer to town than before.

Life in Scenario **C**

Most growth would occur in both emerging new towns and existing communities.

Many people would live in Bastrop, Caldwell and Hays counties, with new towns arising along roads and railways as today's towns expand. Residents could choose from a variety of housing types, but more townhouses and apartments would generally reduce the availability of new single-family houses. With more mixed-use development, homes would be closer to businesses and stores, and many people would work, shop and dine within their local communities rather than traveling around the region. Those working in downtown Austin could travel by commuter rail, express buses or the extensive bus rapid transit network. Most towns would stay distinctly separate, and open countryside would be within a short drive for most people. Since new rural subdivisions would be fairly scarce, farms and ranches would remain farther from town.

Life in Scenario **B**

Most growth would surround major roadways—both existing and new ones.

Many people would live and work in new developments near existing neighborhoods in Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays and Williamson counties. New subdivisions would offer a broader mix of housing type and size, with some commercial development for local shopping. Many activities would be available in local neighborhoods, with almost everything else accessible within a short trip by car or bus. Many people would work in downtown Austin, taking the express bus or commuter train each day. Once downtown, several destinations could be reached by the light-rail system. Other jobs in neighboring communities would be within a short drive on the highway. Neighboring cities would grow closer together along major roadways, and most people would live a few minutes' drive from open countryside. Some formerly rural residents may find themselves closer to development along the region's major roadways.

Life in Scenario **D**

Most growth would occur in existing towns and cities.

As today's communities gain residents, more people would live in townhouses, condos and apartments that could redevelop existing buildings and vacant lots. More mixed-use development would place jobs, stores and restaurants nearby in new or remodeled buildings. Many people would be able to dine and shop close to their workplaces or homes, frequently walking, biking, riding the bus or using the light-rail system. Those needing to commute downtown could ride express buses or commuter rail. Numerous parks would be located in newer areas of towns. The region's cities and towns would remain distinctly separate instead of growing closer together, and open countryside would remain as close as today. Since new rural housing would be limited, most existing farmland would stay undeveloped.

Complete the Regional Vision Survey on pages 7 and 8 or participate online at www.envisioncentraltexas.org.



The Regional Vision Survey for Central Texas

Thank you for taking the time to read about the scenarios. PLEASE tell us what you want for our future and mail your completed survey by October 26. **You can also answer this survey online at www.envisioncentraltexas.org.**

For each question below, place an X in the box of the scenario you like best. Next, rate each issue according to how important it is to you by circling the appropriate word in the right column. If you need to skip a question your responses will still be counted. You may only mark one answer for each question.

(Cut here)

Example: What is your favorite color?

Blue

Red

Purple

Green

Importance to you?
High
Medium
Low

Scenario **A**

Scenario **B**

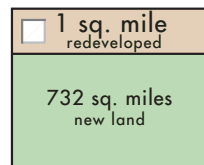
Scenario **C**

Scenario **D**

1. Which scenario do you think would provide the best potential use of land for Central Texas' future?

[New land developed (■) versus land redeveloped (■)]

In 2000, 1,157 sq. mile of developed land existed.

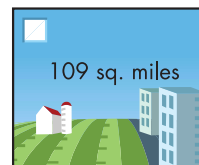
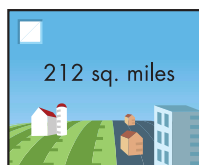
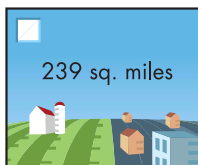
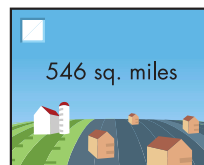


Importance to you?
High
Medium
Low

2. Which scenario do you like best regarding the future use of agricultural and range land?

[Agricultural and range land converted to development]

In 2000: 2,646 sq. miles of agricultural and range land existed.

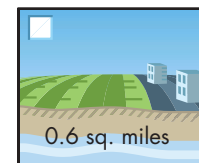
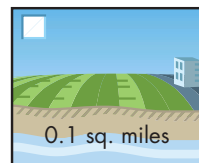
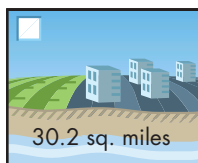
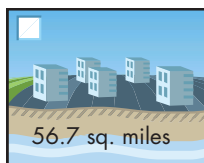


Importance to you?
High
Medium
Low

3. Which scenario do you like best regarding future development over the Edwards Aquifer?

[Land developed over the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone]

The total Edwards Aquifer recharge zone is 226 sq. miles.

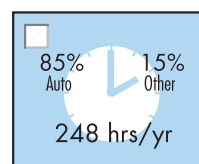
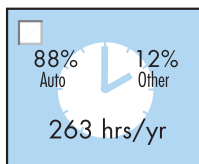
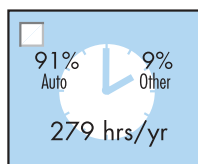
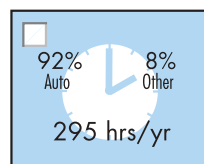


Importance to you?
High
Medium
Low

4. Which scenario do you think would best serve our future transportation needs?

[Percentage of trips by auto versus other types (bus, rail, bike, walk), and average hours/year per person spent traveling on weekdays]

In 1997: 93% auto, 7% other, 244 hours per year.

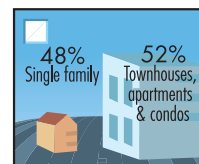
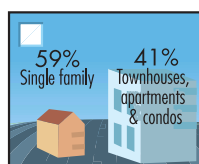
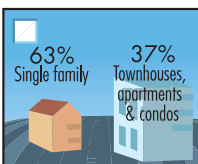
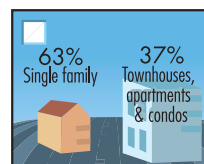


Importance to you?
High
Medium
Low

5. Which scenario do you think would provide the best future housing options?

[Single-family houses versus townhouses, apartments and condos]

In 2000: 64% single family, 36% other.

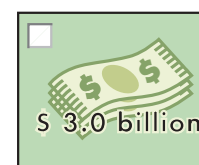
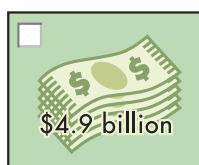
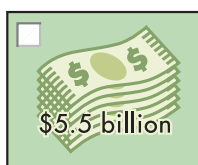
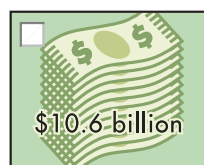


Importance to you?
High
Medium
Low

6. What level of investment would you prefer for new development?

[Infrastructure costs for new development on previously undeveloped land]

See infrastructure costs on page 2.



Importance to you?
High
Medium
Low

7. Which scenario do you think would provide the best overall quality of life for Central Texas' future?

Scenario **A**

Scenario **B**

Scenario **C**

Scenario **D**

I do not like any of these scenarios.

(Continued on next page)

The Regional Vision Survey for Central Texas (See other side for questions 1 through 7)

Now that you have seen how life in Central Texas may look in the future, circle the number that best represents your opinion. You may only circle one number for each question.



Example: Is it too hot in Texas? YES 1 2 **3** 4 5 NO

8. How do you think the quality of life in Central Texas would be affected if the population doubles to 2.5 million people during the next 20 to 40 years?
 Much better 1 2 3 4 5 Much worse

9. What do you think should be the focus of future transportation investment?
 1 2 3
 Mostly roads Mix of roads and transit Mostly transit

10. What would be the best way to fit 1.25 million more people in Central Texas?
 Put people in already developed areas 1 2 3 4 5 Put people in undeveloped areas

11. In what areas do you think new jobs should be located in the future?
 Where jobs are now 1 2 3 4 5 Spread throughout the whole region

12. How important is it to consider social equity issues on an equal basis with other growth issues when planning for Central Texas' future? (See page 2)
 Very important 1 2 3 4 5 Not at all important

13. How concerned are you with maintaining affordability in Central Texas?
 Very concerned 1 2 3 4 5 Not at all concerned

14. How concerned are you that the water supply keeps pace with development in Central Texas?
 Very concerned 1 2 3 4 5 Not at all concerned

15. How important is retaining the character of rural communities in Central Texas?
 Very important 1 2 3 4 5 Not at all important

16. How important is retaining the character of existing urban neighborhoods?
 Very important 1 2 3 4 5 Not at all important

17. How important is it that jobs and shopping are safely accessible by walking/biking from neighborhoods?
 Very important 1 2 3 4 5 Not at all important

18. Please circle the THREE issues in the list below that you think are most important for the future of Central Texas:
 Air quality Cost of living Farm land preservation Health care Housing choices
 Jobs Land use Parks/Open space Public education Public safety
 Racial issues Social equity Transportation/Congestion Water availability Water quality

Please help us make sure we hear from all of Central Texas by circling the appropriate answer to the following questions. (No identifying information will be released nor will this data be used for anything other than this survey.)

County where you live: Bastrop Caldwell Hays Travis Williamson

ZIP code of your home address: _____

Race/Ethnicity: African-American Asian Hispanic White Other

Age: Under 18 18-24 25-44 45-64 65 and over

Years lived in Central Texas: 5 or fewer 6-10 11-15 16-20 more than 20

Gender: M F Do you have children under 18 at home?: Yes No

Please cut out and mail this survey by October 26.
 You may also complete it online at www.envisioncentraltexas.org.

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(Fold twice and tape closed before mailing. Do not use staples.)



Austin, TX 78704-5751
 2512 S. IH-35, Ste. 220
 Envision Central Texas

Send to:

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