



Changing Demographics in Central Texas: *Riding the Wave or Wiping Out*



On October 6, 2006, more than 350 Central Texans gathered at the Woodward Hotel & Conference Center in Austin, Texas, to discuss how the population of our region is growing and changing and the implications of these demographic trends on the fabric of our communities. This seminar, entitled **Changing Demographics: Riding the Wave or Wiping Out**, was hosted by the Envision Central Texas Social Equity and Economic Development Coordination Committees, with Spansion as the presenting sponsor.

During this three-hour event, participants examined not only the latest information about population growth, but explored its potential impact on key issue areas such as transportation, workforce development and equity. Dr. Steve Murdock, state demographer of Texas and the director of the Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research and the Texas State Data Center at The University of Texas at San Antonio, began the day with a compelling presentation of statewide and regional demographic trends. Participants then broke into four groups to discuss local issues in more detail and to identify key concerns and possible actions to address those concerns. Each session was facilitated by two local thought leaders who helped frame the conversation and lead the group's discussion. What follows in this report are highlights from Dr. Murdock's presentation and a summary of the discussions that took place within each breakout group.

Keynote Presentation Highlights:

Population Change in Texas and Central Texas: Implications for Human and Socioeconomic Resources in the 21st Century

by Dr. Steve Murdock, Texas State Demographer

Note: The entire powerpoint presentation may be downloaded from www.envisioncentraltexas.org under *Resources*.

“Demography is a divine calling; if you fail to understand these issues, plan to fail.”

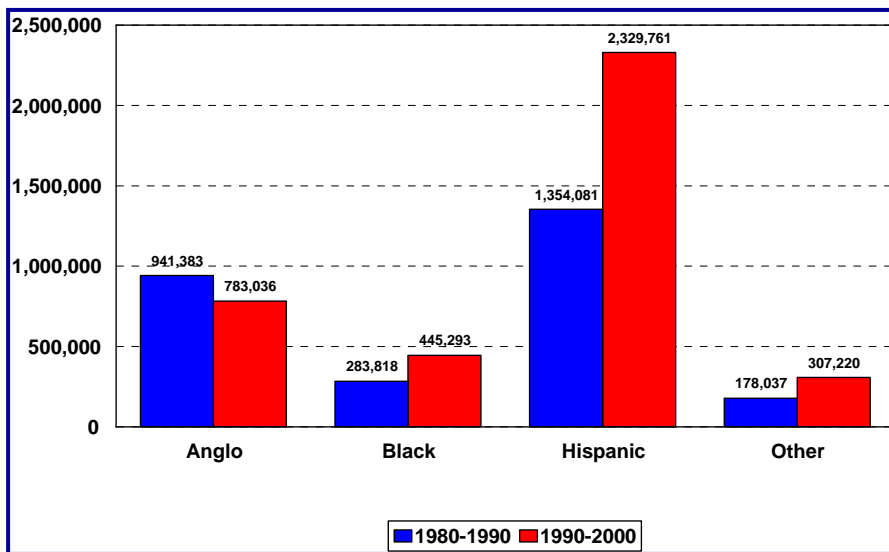


Every year since Texas joined the United States, our rate of growth has been faster than the country as a whole. Texas was the eighth fastest growing state in 1990 and the seventh fastest growing post-2000. Utah is the only other state with a greater rate of natural increase.

There have been important changes in the composition of Texas’ growth. Population in rural areas in many parts of the state is declining. Though the actual population numbers are critical, changes in ethnic composition are more important. We need to understand that diversity is increasing as a national phenomenon, not just in states like Texas, California and New York. The way that Texas looks today is the look of the United States of tomorrow. In 2004, less than half the Texas population was Anglo.

There is a dramatic contrast between the age and ethnicity of the Texas population in 2000 and the projected age and ethnicity of our population in 2040. Understanding these changes is important

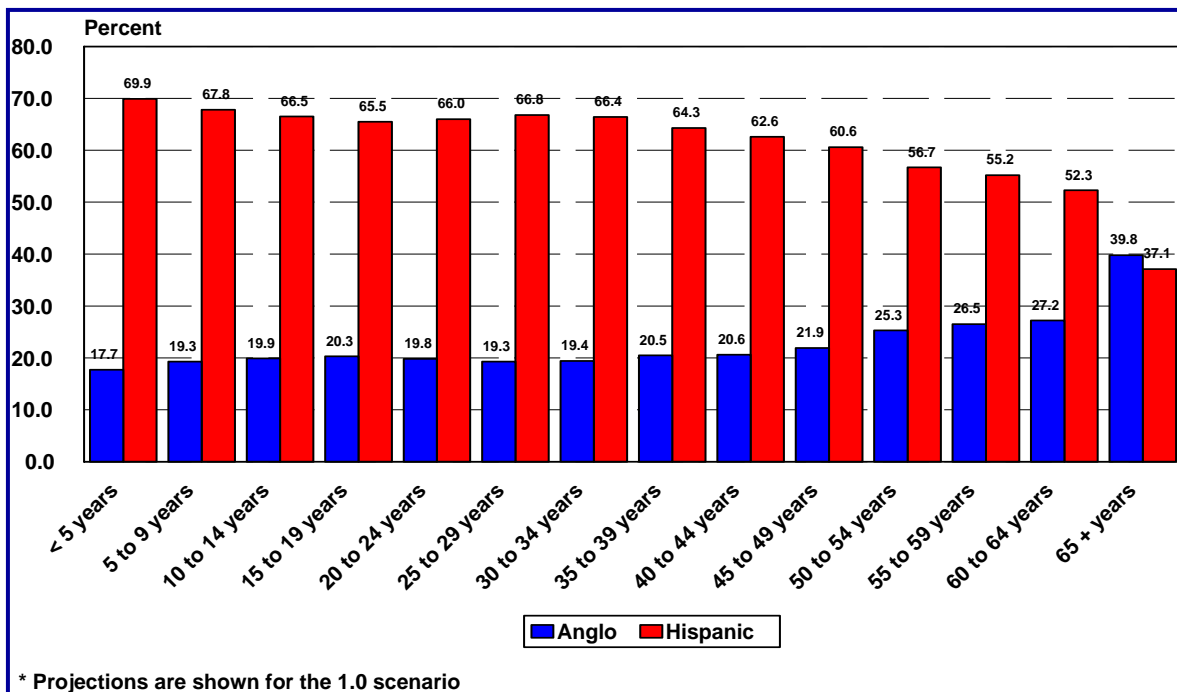
Numerical Change in Population by Race/Ethnicity in Texas for 1980-1990 and 1990-2000



Source: Texas State Data Center, Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio

because of their effects on the socioeconomic structure of Texas and the country as a whole. Another significant factor is the age of the population. Baby boomers have had a tremendous impact on our country and the ripples have been felt in every stage of life (elementary schools, high schools, housing, etc.). The boomers are now beginning to turn 60 and are looking towards retirement. This large segment of aging boomers will have a

Percent of Texas Population by Age Group and Ethnicity, 2040*



Source: Texas State Data Center, Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio

dramatic effect on everything from housing to health care in the very near future.

In seventeen years, Bastrop County will double its population from that of today. It will take Hays 14 years and Williamson County only 13 years to do the same. It is projected that Bastrop will grow six times as large from 2000 to 2040. Hays will experience a 147% growth increase in the next forty years and Williamson County will increase 204%. Growth rates in Travis County will be more consistent with statewide growth rates. Over the next 40 years, Texas will continue to grow very rapidly and the pockets of especially fast growth areas will also continue to outpace the state as a whole. It is essential for governments and organizations to do more long-range planning even though it is not popular to do so.

There is no formula for disaster greater than failing to plan and think ahead. It is time to plan for growth together, regionally. Managing growth is necessary. If you don't, you may not get the growth you desire. It is also critical to plan for the demands this growth will place on our infrastructure. We must take care that the elderly do not get left behind. Bear in mind that we will have to deal with them differently when they're a much larger percent of the population. We need

Capital Area Future Population Projections					
	1990 U.S. Census Population	2000 U.S. Census Population	2010 Projected Population	2020 Projected Population	2030 Projected Population
Bastrop County	38,263	57,733	97,294	135,975	158,859
Caldwell County	26,392	32,194	43,564	61,755	90,485
Hays County	65,614	97,589	168,807	248,737	304,161
Travis County	576,407	812,280	1,065,624	1,317,386	1,597,554
Williamson County	139,551	249,967	402,291	539,937	643,341
Austin MSA	846,227	1,249,763	1,777,580	2,303,790	2,794,400
CAPCOG Region	919,456	1,346,833	1,910,712	2,471,916	2,988,280
<i>For more population estimate information go to: http://eire.census.gov/popest/estimates.php</i>					

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

to fix the things that need fixing now because it will not be any easier in 30 years. Negative attitudes about other ethnic groups can be dangerous to Texas. We must consider how each of our fates are intertwined. If we do not change attitudes and if we do not respond to these changes, our region and our state will become poorer, less educated and less competitive. Demographics are **NOT** best left to demographers.

For more on demographic trends, including the report "The Texas Challenge in the Twenty-First Century", visit the Texas State Data Center website at: <http://txsdc.utsa.edu/>

Breakout Sessions:

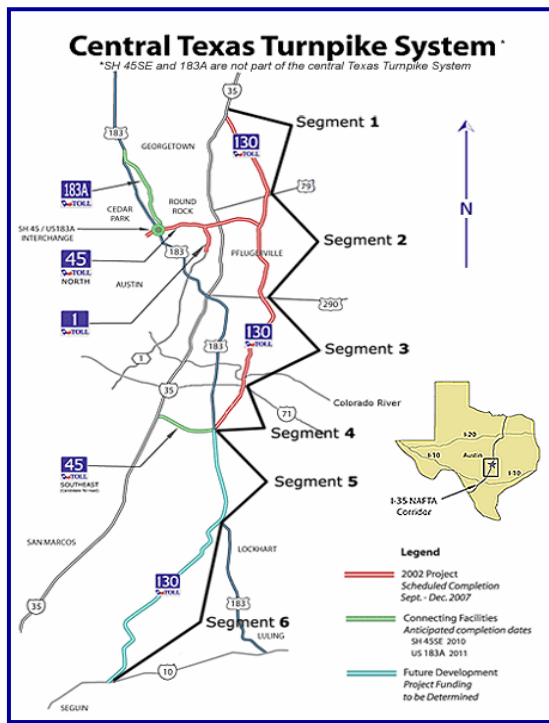
SH 130: Unifier or Divider?

Construction of State Highway 130 is well underway, with segments of the toll road already open. The way in which development occurs along SH 130 will determine how hundreds of thousands of people live, work and travel in Central Texas. This breakout group focused on the potential impact of SH 130 on our region.

Thought leaders: *Alice Glasco, Alice Glasco Consulting*
 Tom Yantis, City of Georgetown

State Highway 130 (SH 130) provides an opportunity for increased mobility and improved connectivity between cities in our region. It will be a catalyst for new development and economic growth in communities along its path. However, the way in which development occurs along SH 130 is critical to ensuring it will be an asset, rather than a detriment, to local communities and the region as a whole. The group discussed the importance of inter-jurisdictional collaboration and regional planning to avoid undesirable outcomes, while at the same time balancing property rights and the influence of the market.

Concerns were raised over infrastructure challenges, such as a lack of east-west road corridors



linking SH 130 to IH 35, or the strain new development will place on water systems. Independent School Districts will be under tremendous pressure to educate their growing population, but the structure and funding necessary for the physical infrastructure is lacking. In some communities, there is an urgency to put aside land for new schools now but they may lack the financial resources to do so. It will be important for fast growing communities to have employment centers, in addition to residential growth, so that they can have a more balanced tax base and have the funds needed to provide the infrastructure and services this new growth will demand.

Breakout Sessions:**SH 130: Unifier or Divider? (con't)**

The group also discussed the impact SH 130 will have on rural communities and small towns in the region. Residents of these communities must have their voices heard and be well represented in the process or these rural areas will suffer. Effective agricultural lands are important and need to be included in any vision and planning done along the corridor. There needs to be more outreach to rural communities and planning efforts must take their concerns into account.

Much of the conversation focused on the importance of planning authority and tools that jurisdictions can use to shape growth. Since much of SH 130 runs through unincorporated areas, one of the most commonly sited challenges was the fact that counties have limited land use planning authority. Cities, on the other hand, must be prepared to provide the services that are required by law to those areas which are in their jurisdictions or that they annex.

Shaping growth along SH 130 will require leadership, innovative ideas, and support from a large and diverse group of people, both along the corridor and around the region. A number of possible solutions or action items were identified during the group's brainstorm session:

- Encourage legislative action that would provide counties with additional land use planning authority and other tools to manage growth
- Develop a regional plan for the SH 130 corridor
- Improve coordination among existing planning entities, including municipalities, counties and the metropolitan planning organization
- Foster a better balance of market and governmental ability to affect growth and provide services
- Use SH 130 as a test case for legislation that would allow a longer time for municipalities to provide a phased-in provision of services.
- Create a new coalition to negotiate growth challenges, including transportation, subdivisions, independent school districts, etc.
- Address issues related to CCN's and other private water providers ability to provide the needed capacity
- Examine how other areas have addressed growth challenges, such as Spring, Texas

Breakout Sessions:**Future Economic Growth: Are We Educating Our Workforce?**

Like many regions around the country, Central Texas is grappling with challenges in our educational system and how best to ensure our citizens are well-educated and can compete in the global economy. Education ties directly to earning power for individuals and economic vitality for communities. This group explored how well we are doing in educating our workforce and the implications for our future economic prosperity.

Thought leaders: *Barbara Mink, Austin Community College Board of Trustees*
 Jeffrey Richard, Austin Area Urban League

Forecasts of future demographic trends point to declining educational attainment, declining average annual income, and lower lifetime earning potential for citizens of Texas. A key priority for our region will be to ensure that we educate all of our children and equip them with the skills they need to obtain quality jobs. The group discussed some of the current regional challenges and efforts underway to address those challenges.

The *Closing the Gaps by 2015* plan was mentioned and the group discussed how it is unfolding at Austin Community College (ACC). Minority enrollment rates at ACC are up 9-10%. It was suggested that the “10% rule” which provides admission of the top 10% of a high school graduating class to any public state university, seems to be helping to raise educational attainment rates for minorities.



Some of the challenges in the educational system include the fact that there is no central, coordinated effort for mentoring or “stay in school” programs in middle and high schools. Concerns were expressed about *No Child Left Behind* and vouchers resulting in students leaving public schools for private schools, ultimately causing the public system to fail.

Currently, the system starts to lose students in the 3rd to 5th grades, often because of issues tied to English fluency. There needs to be a stronger push for immigrant transition to the public school system that goes beyond a simple standardized test (which is usually given in English).

Breakout Sessions:**Future Economic Growth: Are We Educating Our Workforce (con't)**

Another concern is that the public dialog about education does not typically include renters and college students, but instead focuses on homeowners. There must be representation of all stakeholders, which includes renters, students, and people in low-income communities. Their opinions and energy needs to be captured and incorporated into our decisions to ensure an effective approach to addressing problems in the system.

It is important to remember that schools deal with more than just educational issues, but they deal with broader social problems as well. It is crucial that we leverage family and social networks more effectively, especially in Hispanic communities where families play such a strong role. We cannot forget about the importance of setting up care and education for children in the 1-4 year age range, as this sets the stage for success in later school years. We also need to focus on adults, many of whom dropped out (15) or more years ago and need re-training in order to secure higher paying jobs.

In summary, it is critical that public policy is aligned with existing and future gaps in our education system and that resources match up with needs more effectively. Some possible actions to address these gaps include the following:

- ❑ Increase structured mentoring programs for all levels of education
- ❑ Conduct infrastructure planning now to deal with increased demand later
- ❑ Go statewide with *Youth Launch*, which engages youth in community service
- ❑ Develop “parent centers” as part of schools
- ❑ Align tests covering K-14
- ❑ Provide adult education – ongoing, remedial, job training
- ❑ Encourage the University of Texas to proactively recruit for minority enrollment
- ❑ Use older students as mentors
- ❑ Support initiatives like the E3 Alliance which seeks to better align the practices of our regional education system
- ❑ Engage the business community to be more active in mentoring college students

Breakout Sessions:**Intra-regional Mobility: Why Do We Go Where We Go?**

For most people, the cost, time and effort invested in getting where we need to go is a major factor in our everyday life. Transportation systems that are effective, efficient and serve the needs of citizens are critical to our region's future. This group examined the implications of growth trends on mobility.

Thought leaders: *Bill Hamilton, Bill Hamilton Associates*
 Michael Aulick, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

The impact of our region's rapid population growth has affected our daily lives in many ways, but maybe none so obvious as the increased traffic congestion and decline in our ability to effectively get where we need to go. The prospect of not only continued rapid population growth but the significant changes in the age, ethnicity and other demographic characteristics of our community have catalyzed a number of efforts to address regional mobility. While historically the philosophy may have been "don't build it and they won't come", the current focus is on how we can best shape and influence growth in ways that will improve mobility and our overall quality of life.

The group discussed a myriad of interrelated issues that drive mobility patterns and impact the effectiveness of an overall transportation system. One such issue was how the location and



distribution of jobs and employment centers compares to residential development patterns. Historically, there has been an imbalance of jobs and housing in our region, with the majority of large employment centers concentrated in Travis County while residential development expanded in the surrounding counties. In recent years, this trend has changed and Travis County's percentage of the total employment in our 5-county MSA has declined. Another consideration relates to changing employment patterns, with

people switching jobs more frequently which impacts their commuting patterns. Other trends, such as home-based jobs and telecommuting, may also have a role in impacting mobility issues.

Breakout Sessions:**Intra-regional Mobility: Why Do We Go Where We Go? (con't)**

The changing demographic makeup of our community is also a key consideration for the future of our region's transportation system. As people come to Central Texas from other parts of the country and the world, they bring with them different expectations, experiences and behaviors related to the utilization of public transportation. Socio-economic factors will continue to shape not only our ability to pay for needed infrastructure, but the diverse range of alternatives that we will need to provide and how those options link people to housing, jobs, shopping and other daily needs. Affordable housing is key and new development patterns, such as mixed-use, must not be priced out of reach for large segments of our citizens. Also, as our population ages, we will need to provide access and choices to older citizens and provide alternatives to cars.

A variety of other issues will affect how our region handles mobility challenges. Individual attitudes and behaviors regarding public transportation, competing priorities and tradeoffs about convenience and cost, external factors such as the price of gasoline, political will to balance local short-term costs against regional long-term benefits, the role of the market in driving growth – all of these and more will have an important part to play. It is important for us to understand the implications of the trends we see and determine how we can best prepare for the future. The group brainstormed a variety of possible actions or strategies, including:

- ❑ Capture best practices from other communities and then build on those for our region
- ❑ Use private financing to build infrastructure
- ❑ Enhance city streets to relieve traffic pressure on interstates
- ❑ Co-locate employment centers with housing around the region
- ❑ Foster telecommuting and transit ridership
- ❑ Provide options other than motor vehicles, including bike and pedestrian
- ❑ Ensure that alternative transportation options are extended to suburban areas
- ❑ Offer an effective transportation system (highways/mass transit)
- ❑ Connect transportation to densely populated areas and to other services/activities
- ❑ Understand and enhance the private sector's relationship with public transportation providers

Breakout Sessions:**The Changing Social Fabric: How Do We Respond?**

As our community continues to grow and change, the foundational threads that weave together our social fabric – health, safety, housing, education, equity – have become stretched and strained. This group discussed how future demographic trends will impact these issues and how we can best respond in ways that ensure well-being and opportunity for all members of our community.

Thought leaders: *Corina Jaimes, Community Action, Inc.*
 David Balch, United Way Capital Area

The broad ranging challenges that our region faces today related to inequities and shortcomings in education, health care, safety, income, etc. must be addressed, as these challenges will only increase in urgency as we continue to grow and change. The group discussed a number of the major issue areas related to the health of our social fabric and how we can begin to close the gaps that currently exist.

The importance of regional economic self-sufficiency, and the corresponding systems that would support this, were identified as key concerns. The group discussed the need to effectively address issues such as those related to affordable housing, increasing income levels of those with lower incomes, educational achievement, health and mental health,



services for the elderly and sufficient infrastructure (especially in rural areas). Education was viewed as a cornerstone for our community's long-term vitality and there was a desire expressed for a major coordinated initiative that would bring up the region's educational level. Enhancing communication between schools and the community and educating the public on the importance of school bonds were seen as key to success in this arena.

Another topic that the group discussed at length was the importance of an educated and engaged citizenry. As our population continues to become more diverse, it will be critical

Breakout Sessions:**The Changing Social Fabric: How Do We Respond? (con't)**

that all sectors of our communities are engaged in shaping public life. Citizens must be educated about the issues and work with each other toward solutions. Voter registration and voter turn out are key indicators of civic engagement. Public service should be encouraged.

Lastly, the group discussed the importance of connecting the various conversations that are underway in our community. Currently, we have an education conversation, or a health care conversation, etc., without a forum or mechanism to bring these conversations together and see how the issues are interrelated. Not only are the issues interrelated, but so are each of us in various ways and understanding these connections will be key to our community's health. There were several possible action items or next steps that the group identified, including:

- ❑ Fund public relations efforts that increase understanding of issues through a coordinated, professional marketing/public awareness campaign
- ❑ Develop a regional "think tank" around community coordination and education
- ❑ Coordinate a regional community dialogue and inform existing initiatives
- ❑ Increase civic engagement around community issues

Closing Presentation:

The group convened for the closing plenary session to hear the reports from the thought leaders of the four breakout groups on the main issues and ideas raised in their discussions. Dr. Murdock summarized his reflections from the day, including the importance of regionalism, equity, and understanding the close tie between economics and demographics. He urged attendees to recognize the needs and priorities of various stakeholder groups, to look at issues holistically, and to freely and proactively share ideas. He felt that a significant step toward achieving a positive impacts in the near term would be to create an effective system for engaging all of the disparate entities from across the various sectors in a regional dialogue. The thought leaders added that we need a comprehensive understanding of where we are today, a system to monitor progress over time, and a focus on incorporating best practices. They advised that the Envision Central Texas Committees will be looking at the key issues discussed and analyzing possible actions that might be taken to address these important challenges.