



Waller County Comprehensive Strategic Plan

Prepared for:
Waller County, Texas



ECONOMIC
Development



WALLER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN

July 2017

Prepared for:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Long-Term Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Waller County comes at a most opportune time; a time when Texas has the second highest state population growth rate and Waller County is projected to increase its population by over 100 percent by 2050. County leaders of Waller are known to be forward thinkers and want to get ahead of the curve by planning for growth.

Waller County leaders envision a balanced and sustainable economy, which leverages and preserves its natural resources, farm lands and agriculture while also providing opportunities for attracting skilled workers through innovation and job creation. One path to developing this economy is through the adoption of a single vision: Waller County will be one of the first strategically-planned counties in Texas with a focus on responsible growth that preserves the heritage of the County and its natural resources.

A Master Planned County assumes all cities within the County are working in unison with the County. Individual cities and communities are integral for this process to be successful. This Comprehensive Strategic Plan develops guidelines and parameters that Cities can follow as a roadmap into the future.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

After meeting with stakeholders and conducting an assessment of Waller County's current status and future potential, the following recommendations are made:

- **Collaboration and continuous communication on economic development efforts is vital.** ED strategies should be aligned between the County and its Cities. To accomplish this, regular meetings should be held between County and City leaders that address plans for development and smart growth. Meetings should be open to other stakeholders such as ISDs, local business and industry leaders, developers, economic development organizations, etc. This helps maintain positive relations with stakeholders, which may determine the success of Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) and growth plans.
- **Support infrastructure development that will attract both businesses and new residents.** Drainage, or flooding, and transportation concerns are the main drivers and management in these areas is critical for future sustainability. Under this objective:
 - Support the expansion of the Houston Executive Airport, including serving as a Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), as it will become a crucial component of Waller County's transportation infrastructure as growth continues.
 - Follow through on Special Considerations from the State to control issuance of utility/electric power to ensure that regulations of sewer, water, driveway, and flood avoidance are followed. Maintain ongoing collaboration with adjacent counties particularly concerning flooding, drainage, and roadway right-of-ways. Right-of-ways should be purchased in anticipation of infrastructure development.
 - Develop General Capital projects and obtain funding for them.
 - Consider regulations and incentives to control light and noise pollution outside of the main corridors.
 - Update the Thoroughfare Plan, including clearly marked evacuation routes.
 - Continue weekly meetings with County leaders and developers to ensure they understand the County's development vision.
- **Ensure reliable Taxi/Shuttle/Uber/Lyft transportation services are available to connect the County and the region, especially to major transportation infrastructure points such as airports.** Commuter rail with park and ride areas could also help facilitate movement within the County and relieve congestion on roads.

- **Create a Master Drainage Plan with a Flood Plan Administrator.** Consider a County-wide Drainage District or encourage cities to create Drainage Districts if they do not currently have them. Planning may also include a flood mitigation plan that involves the development of a regional detention basin(s) or pond(s) for multi-purpose use.
- **Continually review land use and plan for future developments, taking into considerations other County Master Plans developed.** Create a Future Land Use map for the County that includes development regulations such as right-of-ways, size of lots, green space, areas for residential and industrial growth, subdivision ordinances, and connectivity paths in residential areas.
- **Ensure new housing development matches the demographics of the population and industry profile to ensure it is affordable for all.** Based on current demographics, a retirement village or senior living facilities would be a possible housing development investment.
- **Support should be given to ensure each city has their own zip code.** Each incorporated city wants to have their own zip code, not only for identity but also for realizing their tax base. With that and the desire to have some control over growth, each city in the County should be encouraged to develop and adopt zoning ordinances and regulations that correlate with the overall County vision.
- **Institute a County Business Retention and Expansion Plan (BRE) for businesses outside city limits.** With a one employee economic development organization, a possible solution to having a vibrant BRE program is to develop a volunteer-based BRE plan. Attracting and retaining businesses that cater services and efforts to retaining 15 to 24 year olds could bolster this age group. Lastly, develop a stronger partnership with college(s) for Workforce Development to support the BRE plan.
- **Support educational partnerships and progress that increases school performance to the benefit of the County.** Quality education leads to the desired and required skilled workforce the County needs and makes the County more attractive for families to relocate for an extended period of time.
- **Increase in staffing, facilities and locations to protect residents and businesses, including fire, medical and law facilities.** As areas increase in population, the need for more staff to protect residents is paramount. A new larger Sheriff's office and jail are needed to continue to serve the County's growing population as people are accustomed. A hospital within the County would meet the growing need for quick access to medical care in addition to reputable specialized health centers, to support the aging community. Creating a hospital district is one way to fund the hospital construction.

- **Establish a County-wide formal image control or oversight policy.** With this, it would be beneficial for some County and City officials to attend training sessions on digital marketing, ethics, messaging and public relations.
- **Maintain and expand Waller County's unique cultural, natural, and historical identity.** This adds to quality of life in the County and helps shape the image non-residents have of Waller County.
 - Develop a County-wide tourism plan and market it to promote both the natural and historical heritage of the County. Promoting historical locations will help Waller County preserve its historical heritage as it grows and evolves over the next 20 years.
 - Develop and implement a Master Parks, Hike and Bike Trails Plan for the County to be known as a pedestrian-friendly County.
 - Protect the County's water resources including underground aquifers, creeks, rivers, and ponds. Coordinate efforts with the Texas Railroad Commission and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to assess regulations and enforcement limits on the number of permits issued for drilling, removing water from creeks and the Brazos River, and dumping in ponds and creeks.
- **Be proactive with obtaining funding for projects.** Implement a County Hotel Motel Tax to generate funds that can be reinvested into the County to support other recommendations offered by this Comprehensive Assessment. Additionally, assess the possibility of creating a County Assistance District to fund qualified projects within the County. Research and apply for applicable grants, such as for inner city municipal utility districts, and hire an experienced grant writer to serve the County's need.
- **Develop City Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ).** These County–City partnerships lead to the development of a viable long-range plan for an area of a particular City that may presently lack a wide range of commercial, warehouse and industrial opportunities due to infrastructure limitations. New commercial, office/warehouse, industrial, and logistics/distribution construction are often key components of these development programs. TIRZ funding is available and the subsequent development activity within the TIRZ will provide increased employment opportunities and an additional tax base to benefit the County.

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INTRODUCTION

Planning Context, Legal Basis, Planning Area

The Comprehensive Strategic Plan is a statement of Waller County's vision for its future and a guide to achieving its goals over the next decade. The plan includes responsive strategies for addressing issues identified through the public planning process that are both fiscally responsible and politically feasible. This plan aims to create a roadmap for the County as a whole which influences individual cities within the County in terms of land use compatibility, economics, mobility, and quality of life. Waller County's Comprehensive Strategic Plan provides the legal basis for County regulations and policies that guide the physical and economic growth of Waller County over time.

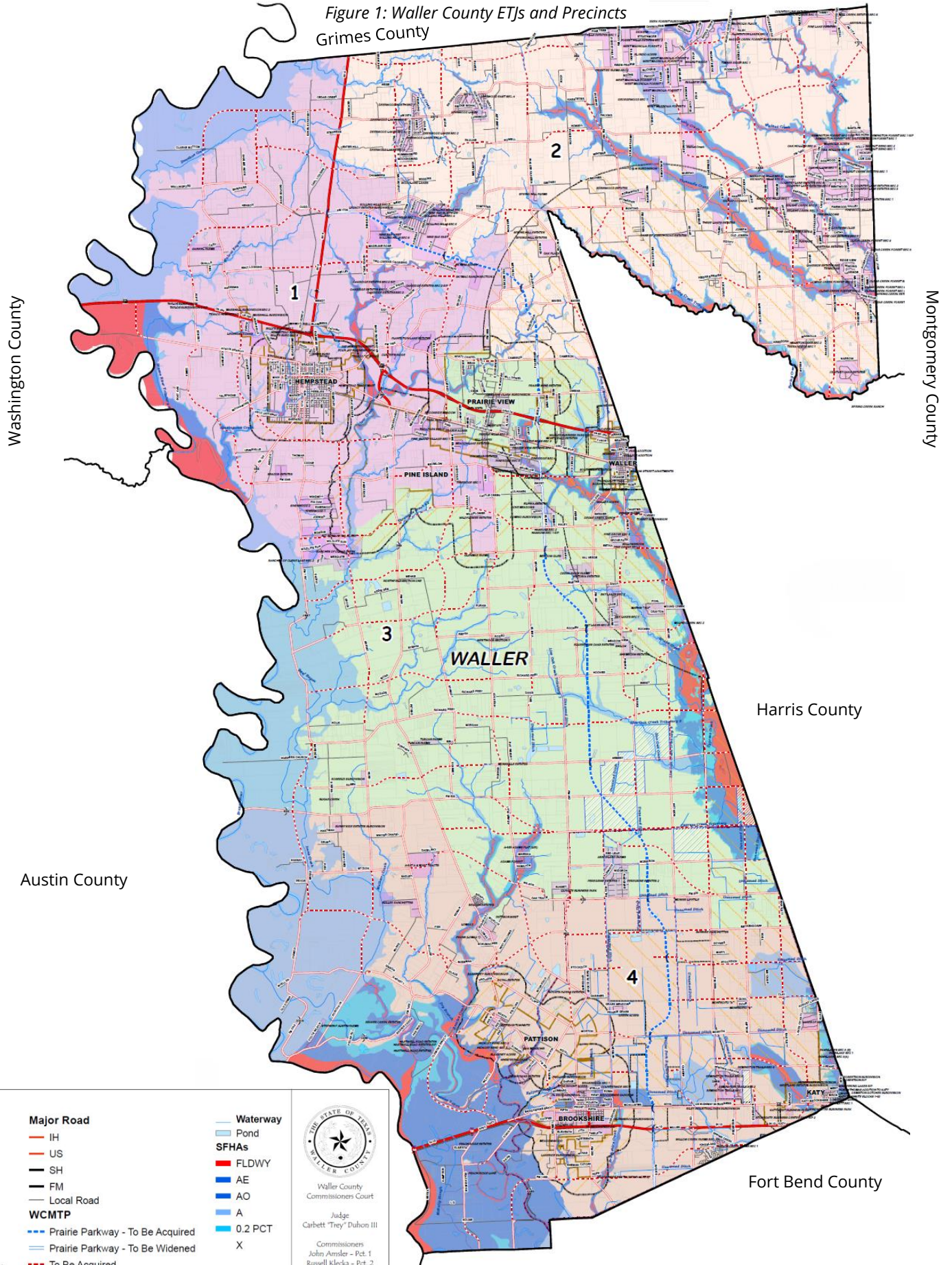
Location

Waller County is part of the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metropolitan Statistical Area—a rapidly growing part of both Texas and the United States. Waller County is approximately 517.8 square miles and is adjacent to six counties: Fort Bend, Grimes, Harris, Montgomery, Austin, and Washington County. Additionally, the Brazos River runs along the western border of the County. Waller County is served by U.S. 290 in the north and Interstate 10 in the south, both crossing from east to west.

Planning Area

For the purposes of this plan, the planning area is described as the entirety of Waller County, encompassing a total of 331,392 acres. This includes both city extraterritorial jurisdiction areas (ETJs) for each city and parts of the City of Houston ETJ. Figure 1 depicts a map of Waller County's current City and ETJ boundaries.

Figure 1: Waller County ETJs and Precincts
Grimes County



LEGEND

Comm Precincts	Major Road	Waterway
1	IH	Pond
2	US	SFHAs
3	SH	FLDWY
4	FM	AE
Parcel	Local Road	AO
Subdivision	WCMTF	A
City Corp. Limit	--- Prairie Parkway - To Be Acquired	0.2 PCT
City ETJ	--- Prairie Parkway - To Be Widened	X
COH ETJ	--- To Be Acquired	
B-K Drain. District	--- To Be Widened	
Katy Prairie Conserv.	--- Sufficient Width	
	(Major Interchange	

Waller County
Commissioners Court
Judge
Carbett "Trey" Duhon III
Commissioners
John Amador - Pct. 1
Russell Klecka - Pct. 2
Jason Barnett - Pct. 3
Justin Beckendorf - Pct. 4
Oval Rhoads, PE, County Engineer
Greg Duncan, Road Superintendent

Source: Waller County Website, 2017

Why a County-Wide Plan

The Texas Local Government Code grants municipalities the ability to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of a city. In an effort to unify and guide the development of individual communities, especially cities that may not be able to obtain their own personal comprehensive plan, Waller County strives to become the first master-planned county through the development of a County-based comprehensive plan. Comprehensive plans generally include guiding principles related to land use, transportation, utilities, and growth, but can be tailored to meet the needs of the locality. This Comprehensive Plan assesses the growth and development of Waller County and provides legal basis to guide the creation and update of development regulations, including ordinances and subdivision regulations.

Once adopted and established as the Comprehensive Plan guiding Waller County's physical and economic development, zoning changes should be considered and acted upon in compliance with the adopted strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. This plan should be used to make decisions about private development applications, public utility extension and public infrastructure priorities.

Scope of the Comprehensive Plan

The scope of work includes the following sections: Image, Land Use, Economic Development, Transportation, and Annexation/Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The plan elements have been renamed, combined, expanded upon and reordered to develop a cohesive plan using the most current data available.

A comprehensive plan does not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries, and is not a development regulation. It does, however, establish the vision for Waller County that will be used to guide decisions made at all levels, from County Judges and other County staff, to Mayors and City Council, to the City Managers and other City staff. The decisions made at all levels should support the vision established for Waller County, making the process and outcomes more consistent and predictable for both the residents and the development community throughout the County. The plan is intended to be flexible, as to respond to future uncertainty and opportunity, while specific enough to provide direction for consistent decision making at all levels.

The purpose of this Plan is to establish clear goals to facilitate policies that accommodate anticipated growth and guide future development over the next 10–15 years. The Plan facilitates economic development, protects existing neighborhoods, safeguards natural resources, enhances mobility, creates opportunity, and focuses on community.

Plan Creation Process

In order to facilitate a thorough and comprehensive document for Waller County's Comprehensive Strategic Plan, TEEEX reviewed numerous City and County documents, as well as conducted interviews with local and county leaders. TEEEX's process to create the Plan comprised the following:

1. Met and worked closely with Prairie View A&M University's Cooperative Extension Program which was charged with conducting an in-depth economic and demographic County assessment. Led by a Steering Committee, they accomplished this through a collection of data and input via numerous public meetings and focus groups and held two Community Forums. In addition, they received community feedback through an online survey. These activities led to a foundation for a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis.
2. Attended Steering Committee meetings and helped facilitate several focus groups and the two Community Forums with the Cooperative Extension Staff.
3. Reviewed documents (see separate Appendix booklet) developed by partnerships between the Cooperative Extension and several organizations which informed parts of the in-depth economic and community assessment:
 - a. The Texas Target Communities Program of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning in the College of Architecture at Texas A&M University produced *Waller County, TX: State of Community Report 2016* (Appendix I: Waller County, TX: State of the Community Report 2016); and
 - b. Purdue University, Center for Regional Development completed a *Regional Data Snapshot Industry Cluster Analysis SET Session 1, Prairie View Region, Texas, October 2016* (Appendix II: Purdue Regional Data Snapshot Industry Cluster Analysis 2016).
4. Reviewed the Cooperative Extension Program's completed final report on their project (see separate Appendix booklet, Appendix III: Waller County Strategic Planning Guide: 2017–2037) which forms the basis for this Long-Term Comprehensive Strategic Plan.
5. Conducted one-on-one interviews with County leaders garnering insight as to their current and future goals.
6. Crafted and documented the Long-Term Comprehensive Strategic Plan with the vision statement, strategies to achieve goals, and action needed to accomplish the objectives.
7. Facilitated a discussion of the Plan with designated County officials prior to finalizing the recommendations.
8. The final step—submission of the Waller County Comprehensive Strategic Plan to County officials for adoption of the Plan.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis (SWOT) of Waller County was developed from a cross-section of community and leader input and supported by research results from this Comprehensive Strategic Assessment. The SWOT assessment serves as a measurement of current conditions and a framework in which to plan for smart, controlled growth. The SWOT analysis is divided into four sectors to assess the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing both the public and private sectors in Waller County. Many of the concerns are based on the impact of the anticipated explosive growth in population in Waller County and the region over the next 30 years.

High on the list are concerns for expanding County-wide infrastructure including broadband to accommodate growth, providing additional and affordable quality housing that matches the County's demographics, and protecting natural resources within the County. Specific quality of life issues includes high speed rail and the landfill, which can decrease property value and cause environmental discomfort for residents. Natural disasters are also a major issue for Waller County, as flooding is a problem and better drainage infrastructure is needed. As development and growth continue, the lack of water rights control in rural areas and fears of the irreplaceable loss of green space due to improperly controlled development are also valid concerns. Additionally, cities such as Prairie View and Pattison lack a zip code which not only helps provide a sense of identity as a community, but offers socio-economic benefits such as tracking demographic changes or conducting market analysis that allow communities to be better served.

Waller County does not have its own hospital, which could make potential residents wary of locating in the County, although high quality facilities are located in nearby Houston and Bryan/College Station. There is a concern that due to Waller County's aging population, a need exists for quality, general and specialized health services to be located nearby. With an aging population, it is also important to attract and retain younger generation professionals to balance the age demographics. With this, jobs, restaurants, and shopping are currently far from residential areas which is less attractive to professional workers, especially in younger age brackets.

Another major threat is the perception of Waller County to non-residents, who may be hesitant to visit, live, work, or start a business in Waller County due to what they may have seen or heard about Waller County in the past. Moving forward Waller County will need to overcome these weaknesses and threats to provide a County-wide image that will attract residents, visitors, and businesses of all varieties. This will take the commitment and cooperation of County and City leaders, residents and other entities such as businesses, schools, and economic development organizations.

The Opportunities and Strengths of Waller County give a positive basis for overcoming the challenges. To start, Waller County has leadership in place that demonstrates a shared vision of the future of Waller County. The County is well-situated with easy access to US

Highway 290 and Interstate 10, and metropolitan locations that provide additional health, recreational, and other amenities while still allowing residents to live in a more rural setting.

Waller County is blessed with an abundance of land and natural resources, with a particular abundance of water that drives the agricultural production in the County. Other production and business development within the County could be fueled by the Houston Executive Airport and Highway 36A (if constructed) that will carry goods from Port Freeport. County & city-wide consistency on building codes and development will help make Waller County a business-friendly environment, leading to industry growth and expansion. Waller County's low County property tax rate is also attractive for both businesses and residents.

Visitor and tourism branding has great potential to enhance the public's perception of Waller County. Waller County has a rich heritage and, therefore, strong tourism potential. Establishing at least one County park in each precinct and highlighting outdoor activities, such as biking along County roads or hiking through the Katy Prairie Conservancy, will help provide additional connectivity throughout the various communities in the County and help preserve the natural resources for future generations to enjoy. Additional utilization of the fairgrounds and drawing in quality performers and events for all ages can help bring attention to the County. Promoting the variety of historic sites found throughout the County and perhaps creating a "Heritage Trail" with stops at the sites will help draw in visitors. With this tourism, a County hotel motel tax or sales tax could be implemented that will help bring in additional revenue to use for local projects benefiting the County as a whole.

These activities and attracting new residents and businesses will facilitate the expansion of public transportation and connectivity throughout the County, which may include a sophisticated bus system and commuter rail with convenient locations in all portions of Waller County. Maintaining an active dialog between Waller County and regional authorities, like the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), is of paramount importance to ensure and capitalize on the coordination of infrastructure and transportation enhancement while the entire County experiences growth. Restaurants and retail areas need to be easily connected to residential areas either via public transit or physical location. Additionally, the creation of in-city municipal utility districts will help provide the infrastructure required to support an influx in residents. Residents and businesses will value quality education and vocational training opportunities in all areas of Waller County as a basis for deciding if Waller County is the place to raise a family and draw from a skilled workforce.

Overall, this SWOT finds Waller County well positioned to benefit as the region continues to grow in population and economic strength. Waller County has the potential to achieve its vision of being one of the first strategically-planned Counties in Texas that becomes a model of responsible growth and preserves a County's heritage and natural resources. This vision will lead Waller County to become a county of choice to live, work, and play.

Waller County SWOT Analysis

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision of County leaders Easy access to Hwy 290 & I-10 Agriculture & natural resources Houston Executive Airport Lower County tax rate <p style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">S</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County-wide infrastructure Lack of housing Lack of water rights control Jobs, restaurants, & shopping far from residential areas Lack of communication between County leadership, residents, & entities <p style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">W</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land space potential Industry growth & expansion Hwy 36A for commercial development & business County & city-wide consistency on building codes & development Tourism & recreation Tax revenue use for local projects Public transportation expansion In-city municipal utility districts Quality education & vocational training throughout the County <p style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">O</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High speed rail Landfill Natural disasters Loss of green space Economic disparity for Prairie View & Pattison due to no zip code Lack of hospital in County External perceptions <p style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">T</p>

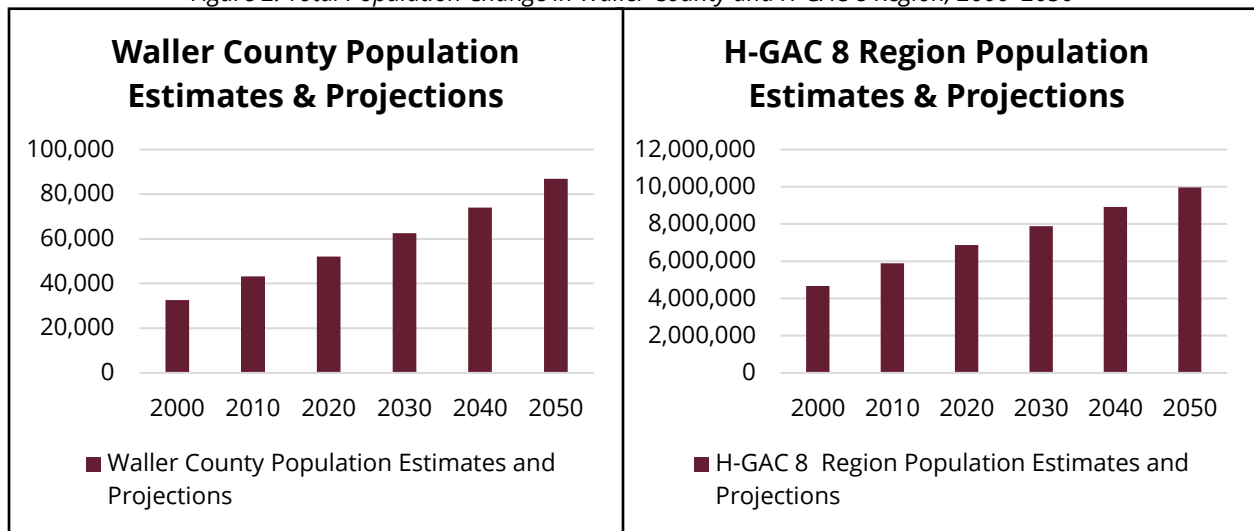
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IMAGE AND IDENTITY

Population

Waller County has had population growth since the 1950's. The County's population was about 50,115 in 2016, an 11.8% increase from 44,825 people in 2014 based on Census Bureau estimates. On average, between 2005 and 2015, the County's population has grown at annual rate of 2.7%. During the 2000–2010 time frame, the H-GAC 8 Region (includes Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller Counties) population grew about 26.2%, while Waller County's population increased by 32.2%. Waller County anticipates larger projected growth percent changes throughout the 2020 to 2050 projections, with an estimated population of 86,862 in 2050. County officials consider that this projection is extremely conservative.

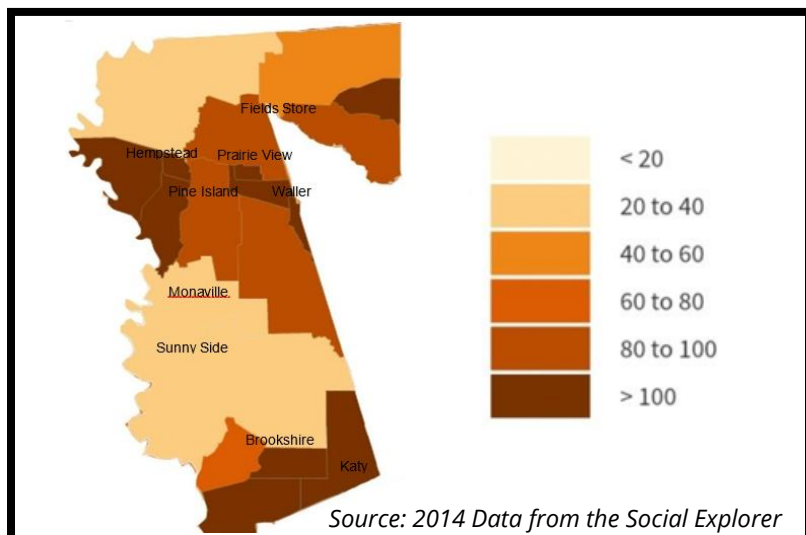
Figure 2: Total Population Change in Waller County and H-GAC 8 Region, 2000–2050



Source: Office of the State Demographer (OSD), 2016

Based on the 2010 to 2014 American Community Survey, the average population density of Waller County is 87 people per square mile, which is less than the Texas average of 99.9 per square mile.

Figure 3: Population Density for Waller County, 2014

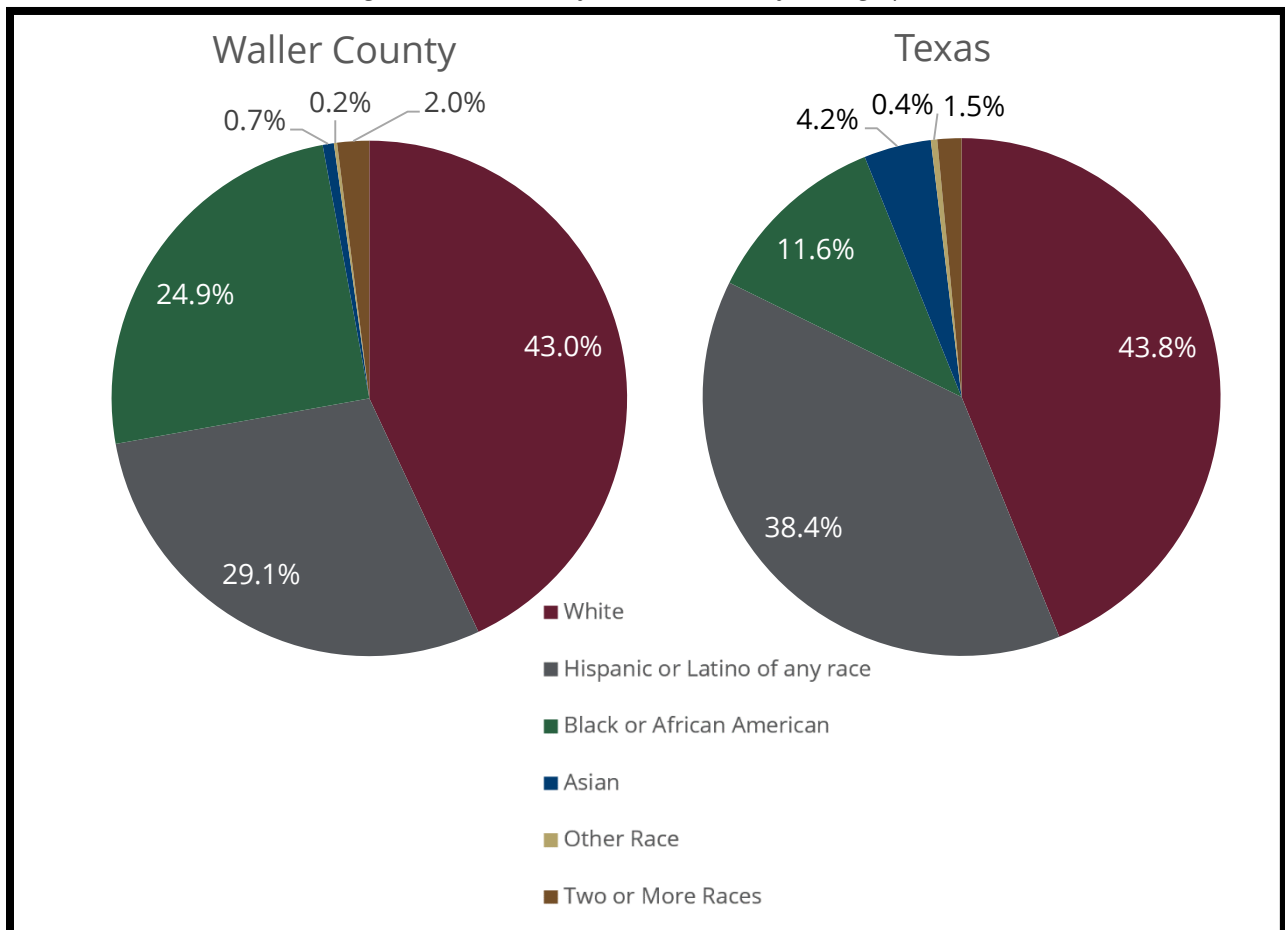


Source: 2014 Data from the Social Explorer

Race and Ethnicity

Figure 4 below represents Waller County's estimated racial and ethnic breakdown in comparison to that of Texas, which acts as a baseline measurement. Similar to Texas as a whole, Waller County is predominately comprised of White individuals, Hispanics, and African American/Black individuals. Compared to Texas, Waller County has about a 9% smaller Hispanic population and 13% larger African American/Black population. By respectfully and appropriately addressing the needs of each ethnicity, this blend of different cultural backgrounds can prove to be a source of strength for the County as it grows. Such diversity can attract a broader range of tourists and businesses can reach a wider audience, making them more profitable.

Figure 4: Waller County Race and Ethnicity Demographics

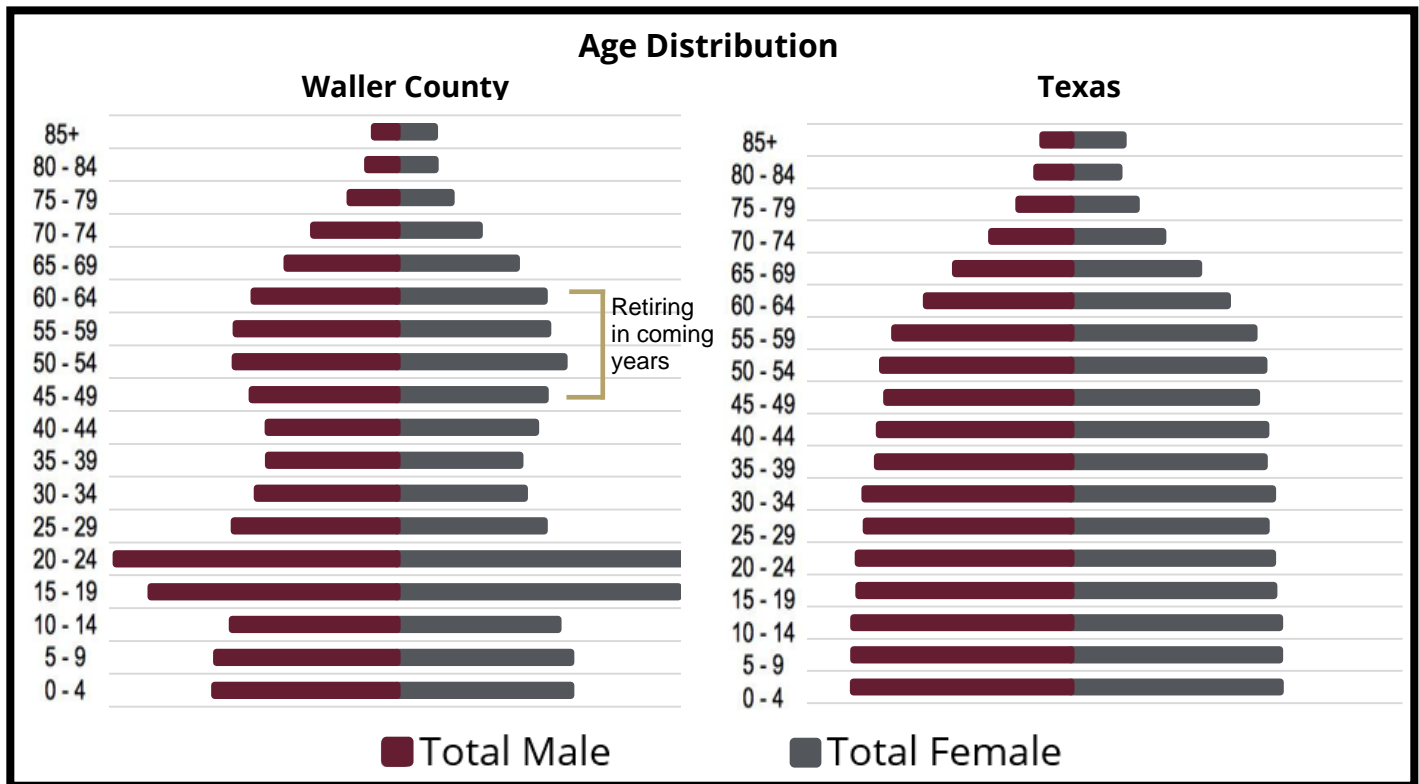


Source: US Census Bureau, 2015

Age Distribution

Age distribution offers valuable insight into the County's economic composition and income potential. Figure 5 below indicates Texas has a relatively young population, compared to national standards, whereas Waller County has an uneven distribution of the ages with a bubble of aging individuals moving up towards retirement in the next decade. The younger age bracket is primarily comprised of 15 to 24 year olds, likely students or recent graduates. As younger generations indicate future potential, it is important that Waller County focuses on catering to the needs of this generation and retain these individuals for the benefit of the County as a whole. Compared to Texas, Waller County is somewhat lacking in the 25 to 44 age bracket which is a prime portion of the workforce. According to 2015 Census Bureau estimates, the median age nationally is 37.6; the median age for Texas is 34.1; and the median age in Waller County is 29.1.

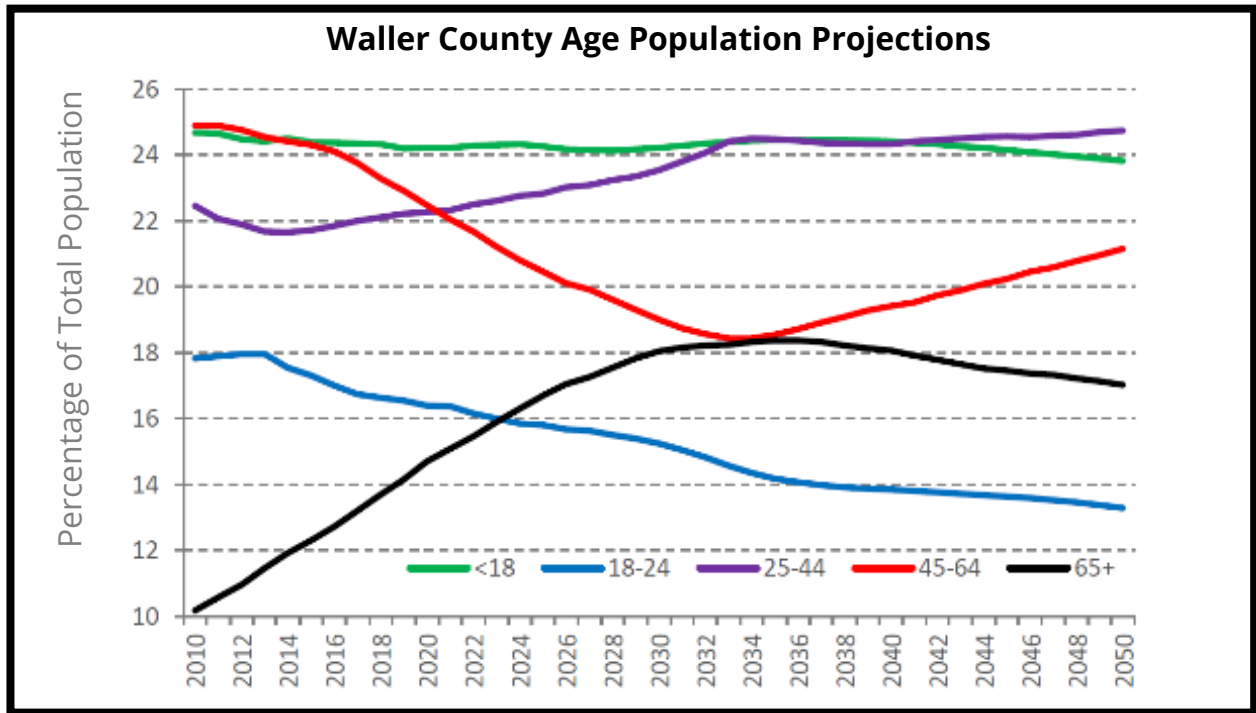
Figure 5: Age Demographics for Waller County



Source: Texas Demographic Center, Office of the State Demographer, 2015

Based on population projections, there will be proportionally more people ages 45 and up in the next 20 years, representing mid-career residents, retirees, and elderly which will need a younger population of support. The younger age brackets of less than 18 and 25 to 44 age groups will remain relatively stable for the next few years, as the 18 to 24 age group is projected to decline. This forecast, shown in Figure 6, reiterates the need for the County to focus its efforts on retaining and expanding the number of individuals from these lower age brackets.

Figure 6: Projected Age Demographics for Waller



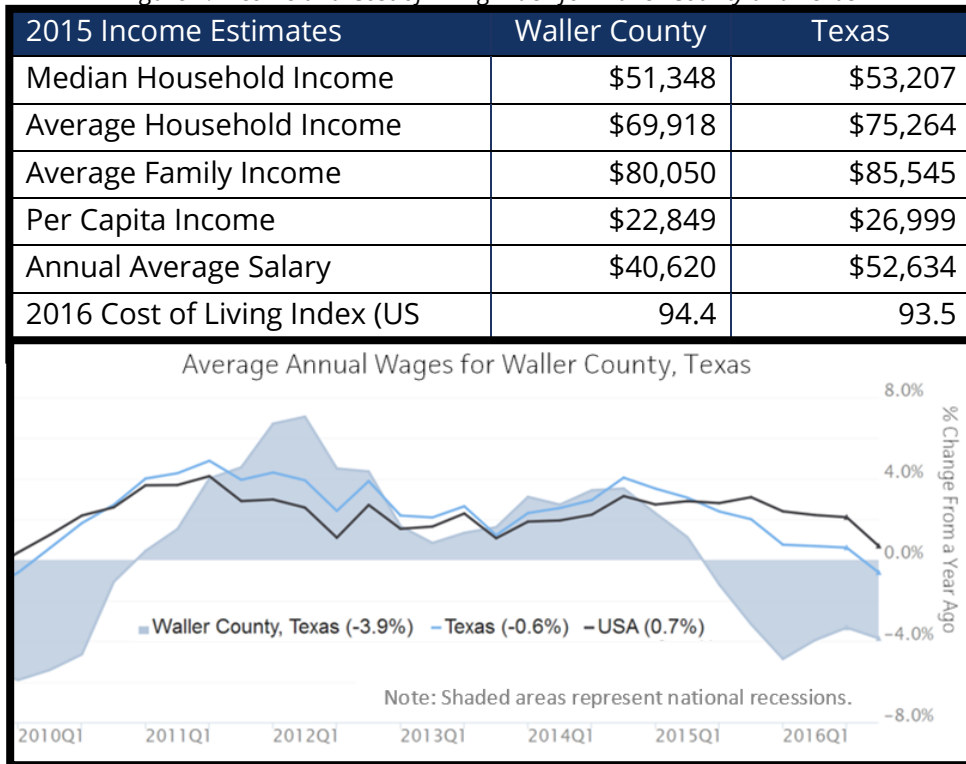
Source: Texas Demographic Center, Office of the State Demographer, 2015

Household Income and Cost of Living Index

The economic vitality of households in Waller County can be measured with using income measurements such as median household income; which includes transfer payments, wages and investment income; and per capita income; which indicates the average income per person within a specified year. Based on the different income measurements, as seen in Figure 7, Waller County consistently falls below all Texas averages. For example, the average annual wages for a worker in Waller County was lower than the state average at \$40,620 in the final quarter of 2016, a decrease of 3.9% over the preceding four quarters. Figure 8 shows that income tends to be higher in locations closer to Harris County, based on 2014 estimates, likely due to competitive metropolitan salaries and higher costs of living.

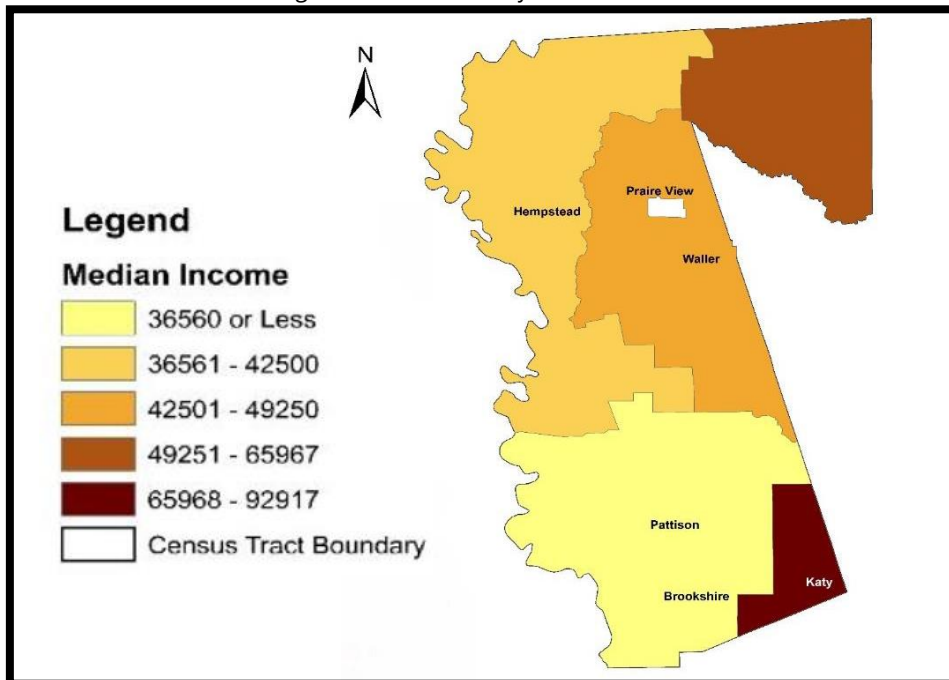
The cost of living index is based on the cost of food, housing, utilities, transportation, health, and other miscellaneous factors (clothing, entertainment, etc.) compared to the US indexed at 100. A cost of living index of 94.4 in Waller County means that the County is 5.6% less expensive than the US average. At times, lower incomes can be offset by a lower cost of living; however, in the case of Waller County, the average cost of living is 0.9% higher than the Texas average. This may be attributed to its proximity to Houston, which has a cost of living of 102, and the fact that some of its communities cross into Harris County.

Figure 7: Income and Cost of Living Index for Waller County and Texas



Source: American Factfinder, 2015; Chmura, 2016; JobsEQ, 2016

Figure 8: Distribution of Median Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014

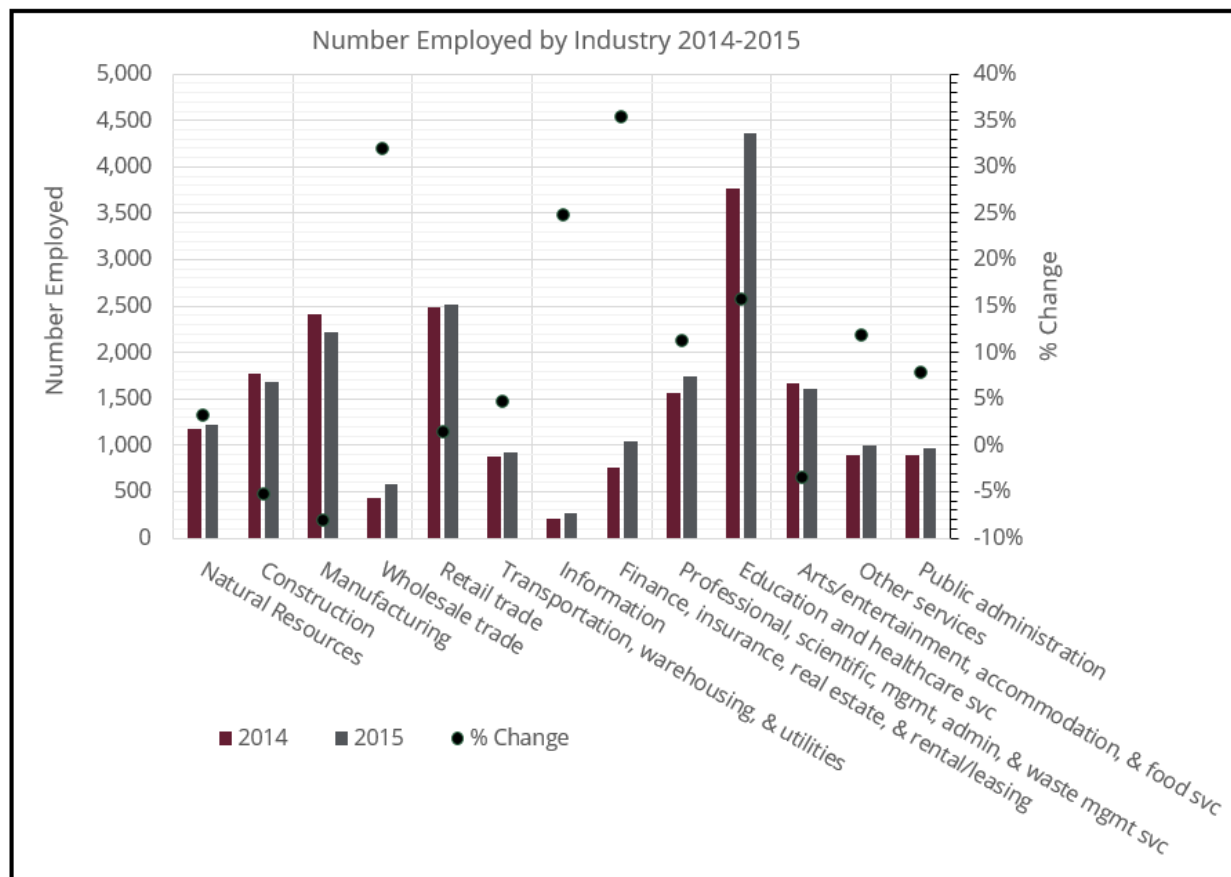
Employment by Industry

As can be seen in Figure 9, the number of civilians employed have experienced positive growth in the recent past, with an increase of 6.24% from 2014 to 2015. This points to economic growth within Waller County, although regionally strong sectors like manufacturing and construction have experienced negative growth. The high turnover in the leisure sector which includes food services, may account for some of the decline in this area that is crucial to attracting and retaining younger individuals.

The data suggests that the wholesale trade, finance & insurance, and information industries are expanding the most in terms of the number of employees percentage-wise. These numbers do not indicate the quality of the positions or the amount of pay, but they can highlight industries that are hiring and expanding within the County. The educational & health services sector, retail trade, and manufacturing sectors currently employ the most people in Waller County suggesting that these are the major industries supporting the County currently.

Waller County currently has a strong agricultural presence and is home to several prestigious horse farms, and numerous working and show cattle ranches. Waller County also boasts of strong farming operations with an emphasis on rice farming.

Figure 9: Number of Employees by Sector in Waller County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015

Top Local Employers

As is typical in Texas and specifically the Houston Area, top employers in Waller County include school districts and manufacturing companies. The County is also home to large landscape nurseries and food distributors.

Primary and Secondary Educational Institutions

Educational institutions offer economic benefit to the County as places to develop a skilled workforce, provide childcare for working parents, add to quality of life that will attract new residents and businesses, and as employers. Waller County is home to Waller ISD, Hempstead ISD, Royal ISD, Katy ISD, and Prairie View A&M University which are described in further detail in the Image and Identity Section of this Plan.

Briarwood-Brookwood, Inc.

Established in 1985, Briarwood-Brookwood is a non-profit community for adults and youth with special needs situated on 475 acres in Brookshire, TX. Employed are 250 individuals that do not reside in the community.

Briarwood School is a school for children with learning disabilities. It serves 329 children in grades K through 12 who have a wide variety of learning disabilities. The majority of the operating funds are received through monthly tuitions, which are based on a “break-even” concept. Teachers are paid based on experience and backgrounds. Any child with a learning disability is eligible for enrollment.

Brookwood Community was established to offer both a residential and day program for functionally disabled adults. It serves 108 residents and 55–60 day program participants who have a wide variety of disabilities. Brookwood is funded entirely by the private sector, relying on tuition, operating contributions (from individuals, foundations, corporations, and religious organizations) and revenue derived from the sales of crafts and horticulture products made by the Brookwood citizens.

Food Distributors

Waller County is home to both Goya Foods of Texas and the Alpha Foods Company.

Goya Foods is the largest, Hispanic-owned food company in the United States known as the premier source for authentic Latino cuisine. Founded in 1936 by Spanish immigrants, Don Prudencio Unanue and his wife Carolina, their story is as much about the importance of family as it is about achieving the American dream. Goya is headquartered in New Jersey with 26 facilities throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Spain. Goya Foods of Texas is located in Brookshire, TX and serves as one of the manufacture and distribution centers, employing 225 individuals.

Alpha Foods niche market are Texas public schools. They are the largest vendor to Texas public schools by region and have a presence in each region. Alpha Foods has a strong future in store and are considering further expansion. Located in Waller, TX since 2010, Alpha Foods employs 75 people and is family owned and operated.

Nurseries

Magnolia Gardens Nursery is a direct wholesaler offering a large selection of plants and flowers. Employing 170 individuals, this is a family owned and operated business established in 1978 located on 150 acres in Waller, TX.

For over 25 years, Creekside Nursery near Hempstead has provided plants, plant material, specialty retail items, edibles and topiaries to customers in Texas and nearby states. With over 300 employees, the nursery continues to expand their products and grow their business.

Manufacturing

Located in a region known for its manufacturers, Waller County boasts a diverse portfolio of companies that support a variety of local industries such as oil and gas, construction, aerospace, refining, petrochemical, power generation, exploration and production, geophysical/seismic, semiconductor, medical, and offshore industries. A selection of these companies can be seen in the Table 1.

Table 1: Selection of Major Manufacturing Companies in Waller County

Company & Description	Location	Year Founded	Employees
Alegacy Equipment, LLC	Waller	2013	250
Focuses on fabricating and packaging natural gas compression equipment. Located in the Alegacy Business Park.			
Cimarron Energy	Katy	2017	45
Manufactures oil and natural gas production and processing equipment providing separation, flowback, and environmental product to exploration and production companies throughout the US and internationally. They just moved into the facility in February 2017. Product focus at the Katy Plant includes manufacturing production equipment, pressure vessels, gas processing equipment, pump skids, compressor systems, and lease automatic custody transfer (LACT) units.			
East Texas Precast Company	Waller	1982	250
A PCI certified C4A plant that serves Texas and West Louisiana. Started as a small structural precaster and since expanded their specialized services to include parking garages, architectural cladding, industrial facilities, and design assist projects.			
Grundfos CBS, Inc.	Brookshire	2006	270
A large-sized organization in the pumps and pumping equipment manufacture industry. Generates an estimated \$71.51M in annual revenue.			
HDH Instruments	Pattison	1978	85
Specializes in deep-hole drilling, honing and machining of precision tubes. Family owned & operated.			
Igloo Products Corp.	Katy	1947	1,000-1,200
Offers super-functional, best in class ice chests and personal hydration products manufactured under the Cool Gear brand to help bring clean water to worksites and recreational activities. Headquartered in a 4,000,000 sq. ft.-plus facility in Waller County.			

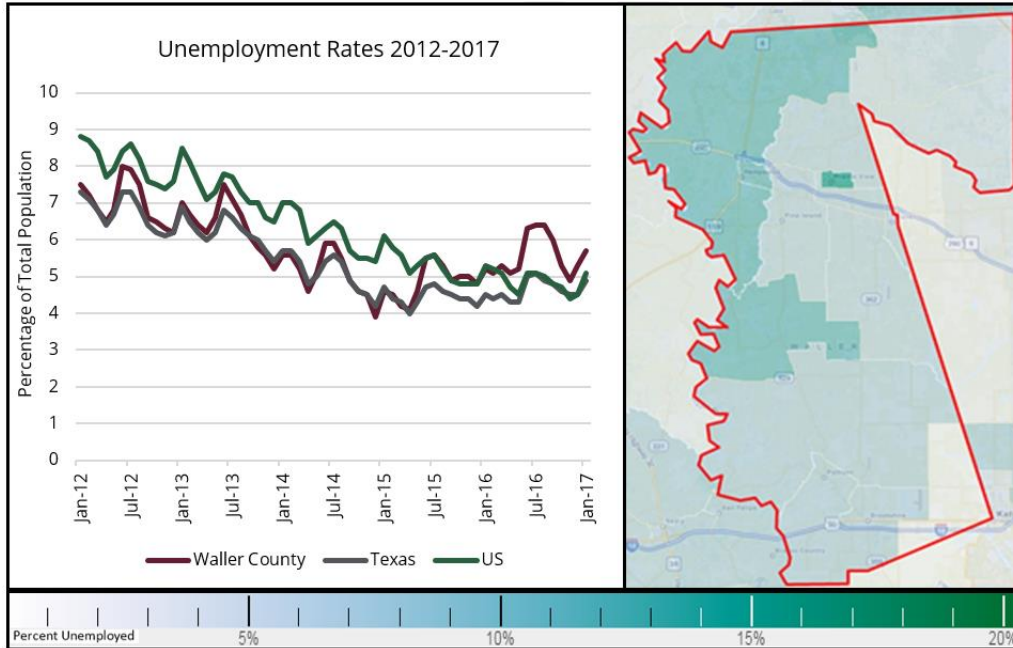
KGSBO (Knust-Godwin SBO)	Katy	2016	100
Recently Godwin SBO merged with Knust to form Knust SBO. By merging two industry leaders in precision manufacturing, this represents over 100 years of combined experience in the oil and gas, geophysical/seismic, semiconductor and medical industries.			
Logan Industries, International	Hempstead	2002	106
Services include hydraulic field and offshore equipment services, and pump repair. Offers a wide range of products, such as cylinders, tensioners, spoolers and spooling, carousel handlers, reelers, subsea packets and clump weights, and compensators. Acquired by the Netherlands Company, Doedijns in 2012 to further enhance their already established hydraulic division in Europe and to capitalize on the US and global offshore market controlled by many of the US suppliers.			
Mueller Environmental Designs Inc.	Brookshire	1992	70
Manufactures the highest quality equipment for the natural gas industry. A preferred provider of separation, air filtration, mist elimination, noise and emission control among field engineers. Expanded their facility in October 2016.			
Orizon Industries, Inc.	Brookshire	1988	250
Manufactures and supplies fabricated industrial steel structures for refining, petrochemical, power generation, exploration and production, and offshore industries in the US and internationally. Offers conveyor systems for applications, including food processing, equipment skids, fender systems for ports, caged ladder systems, configurations for tanks and vessels, and custom accessories including clamps/shoes. Operating as a subsidiary of Spitzer Industries, Inc. since April 2008.			
Thomas Instrument	Brookshire	1952	48
Provides engineering, manufacturing, assembly, testing, and repair/overhaul services in the aerospace industry. Corporate Headquarters are located in Waller County.			
Weatherford Well Integrity Services	Katy	1992	237
A division of Weatherford International, specializing in R&D in the following areas: Wireline Services technology to ensure critical subsurface information is delivered; Secure Drilling Services (SDS) which provides advanced drilling technologies to overcome challenge pressure profiles, improve well integrity, and optimize drilling performance; and the Tubular Running Services (TRS) which provides well integrity, safety, and efficiency in all aspects from the pipe yard to rig floor through to total depth.			

Source: Company Websites and Interviews

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate is a popular indicator of an economy's performance in a region. The unemployment in Waller County has been below the National and State Averages for the majority of the past five years, until 2016 when it rose above both averages and continues in this trend, suggesting a recent lapse in economic growth. In general, Waller County follows a trend mimicking the Texas unemployment rate's ups and downs. As of January 1, 2017 Waller County had an unemployment rate of 5.7%, compared to 4.9% in Texas and 5.1% for the nation as a whole. Within the County, higher unemployment is found further from Houston in the northwestern part of the County, in addition to Prairie View due to the student population. Monthly, non-seasonally adjusted rates for Waller County and the US and the distribution of unemployment rates in the County are shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Unemployment Rates and Distribution in Waller County



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Economic Data (2017); www.city-data.com (2013)

Workforce Board Area

Waller County is part of the 13 county Gulf Coast Workforce Board with 25 offices in the Board area; one of which is in Hempstead in Waller County. The largest county in the Board area is Harris County, with an estimated four million people. Being mixed with a large population such as this, Board area statistics and demographics become skewed for the less populous areas such as Waller County. However, it is still important to acknowledge the data to know what is supported and projected for the Board area. The Board identifies occupations in high demand and ones that they forecast will grow and/or decline in a 10 year period which can be used as a resource when deciding which industries Waller County should target. The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is also an important resource as a member of the Greater Houston Partnership, which works to market high-demand careers in fields such as the petrochemical and other important local industries. These efforts on the Board's behalf for this Partnership can also be applied and used in Waller County. Overall, workforce services are targeted to job seekers and businesses in the community. Services offered include job search assistance, referrals and payment for child care, job fairs, job and skills training and assistance matching job seekers to employer openings. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the state agency that oversees the Workforce Boards, helps fund training programs and supportive services for those that meet the workforce criteria and eligibility. According to TWC, over \$134 million in financial aid was spent assisting individuals in the Board area to get a job, keep a job or get a better job.

Education

Education is typically a factor considered by those looking to move into a new location—both individuals and businesses—and quality schools can result in higher housing market values and housing demands. Businesses will consider education and housing when moving to a new location, especially if they expect to recruit or bring their employees to the new site.

Primary and Secondary Education

Waller County is home to four independent school districts. Hempstead Independent School District (ISD), Katy ISD, Royal ISD, and Waller ISD all provide primary and secondary education in Waller County. Katy and Waller ISDs both serve students from outside Waller County, which can account for their larger attendance, while the Hempstead and Royal school districts are completely in Waller County. There is also a private school system with Waller Christian Academy in Waller with studies for pre-kindergarten thru 9th grade and the Community Christian Academy in Hempstead offering services for pre-kindergarten to 5th grade. The closest charter schools, such as Trinity Charter School (grades 6 to 12) and Aristoi Classical Academy (Kindergarten to 11th grade), are located in Katy outside of Waller County.

Table 2: 2015–2016 Academic Excellence Indicators for Public Schools in Waller County

Schools	Hempstead ISD	Katy ISD	Royal ISD	Waller ISD	Region 04	State
Performance Rating	Met Std.	Met Std.	Met Std.	Met Std.		
Enrollment	1,666	72,725	2,267	6,542	1,190,725	5,284,252
5 Year % Enrollment Change (2011–16)	8.66%	19.98%	12.24%	20.57%	*	*
Attendance Rate	95.2%	96.9%	96.2%	96.3%	95.8%	95.7%
Completion/Student Status:						
Annual Graduate Count	82	4,684	104	334	68,341	313,397
Longitudinal Graduation Rate ¹	86.3%	93.5%	93.5%	97.9%	88.5%	89.0%
2016 STAAR % Met/Exceeded Progress for All Subjects/Grades	49%	68%	55%	61%	62%	62%
2015 Avg. SAT Score	1151	1586	1167	1360	1386	1394
2015 Avg. ACT Score	18.7	24.1	18.4	19.2	21.5	20.6
Economically Disadvantaged	1,357	20,614	1,733	4,098	694,110	3,118,758
% Economically Disadvantaged	82%	28%	76%	63%	58%	59%
English Language Learners	400	11,839	895	1,705	260,328	979,868
Avg. Yrs. of Teacher Experience	9.0	11.4	7.3	9.8	10.2	10.9
Avg. Actual Teacher Salaries	\$44,620	\$55,955	\$51,867	\$55,619	\$55,580	\$51,891

¹The percentage of students from a class of beginning ninth graders who graduate by their anticipated graduation date or within four years of beginning ninth grade.

Source: Texas Education Agency 2015–2016, *Data Unavailable

Hempstead ISD

Hempstead ISD is comprised of one early childhood school for prekindergarten to 2nd grade, an elementary school for 3rd to 5th graders, a middle school serving grades 6 to 8, and one high school for grades 9 to 12. The district covers 190 square miles. Bond issues in 1996, 2001, and 2006 have allowed this district to continually build and renovate their

facilities to better serve their students. Its students are exclusively those from northwestern Waller County and were numbered at 1,666 in the 2016 district snapshot. Fairly steady enrollment, decreasing graduation rates, lower SAT and steady ACT scores, and increasing numbers of post-secondary students can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Hempstead ISD Enrollment Past Four Years

Year	Enrollment	Longitudinal Graduation Rate	SAT/ACT All Subjects Score	Graduates Enrolled in TX Institute of Higher Education
2016-17	1,613	*	*	*
2015-16	1,666	86.3%	*	*
2014-15	1,483	86.3%	1151/18.7	*
2013-14	1,551	91.0%	1300/18.2	51.7%
2012-13	1,525	98.8%	1273/18.2	49.4%

*Source: Texas Education Agency 2015-2016, *Data Unavailable*

Hempstead ISD was put on notice to be closed in 2015 if drastic academic progress was not made due to unacceptable performance in previous years. The school board hired a new superintendent in 2015 with the expectation to turn the academic performance around within three years. At the end of the 2016 school year, the district was taken off the list to close because significant progress was made—all schools met standards excluding the middle school. After analyzing problem areas, new programs were started with the focus on programs to positively affect student performance:

- A day care for employees children beginning at age 2 opened
- A day care for 3 and 4 year olds open to all qualifying Pre-K students (bilingual students, students with deployed parent, any student who has ever been in foster care and all free and reduced lunch students)
- The Career and Technology Education program was bolstered
- New partnerships with businesses were developed
- Free lunch offered to students Pre-K-5th grade
- Sponsoring of the summer food program
- Parents of children in day care for 3 year olds are required to attend parenting classes
- Student expectations are spoken and spelled out starting in Pre-K-2nd grade
- Newcomer program began for 6th-12th grade students helping Spanish speaking students adapt to the school
- Dual credit program with Blinn College

Preliminary information indicates academic performance in all grades is on the rise this year. Success in sports, more positive parent involvement, an active PTO and more business support have been observed.

Priorities for the near future include recruiting teachers, overcoming the racial divide, having affordable housing and continuing the upward movement of academic success.

Katy ISD

The Katy ISD serves the Southeastern tip of Waller County, 181 square miles, with most of the students coming from Harris and Fort Bend Counties. With 9 high school facilities including a specialized career training center, 14 junior high schools, and 40 elementary schools, Katy ISD has the largest student population out of the four ISDs serving Waller County with 75,248 students in the 2016–2017 school year. The 40th and newest elementary school is opening in the fall of 2017 south of I-10 in Waller County with a 1,030 student capacity and a site has been purchased for a second elementary in Waller County in the Cane Island subdivision. Increasing enrollment, higher SAT and ACT scores and graduation rates, and number of graduates enrolled in higher education can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Katy ISD Enrollment Past Four Years

Year	Enrollment	Longitudinal Graduation Rate	SAT/ACT All Subjects Score	Graduates Enrolled in TX Institute of Higher Education
2016–17	75,428	*	*	*
2015–16	72,725	93.5%	*	*
2014–15	70,126	93.5%	1586/24.1	*
2013–14	67,015	92.6%	1584/23.9	65.4%
2012–13	64,408	93.3%	1580/23.9	65.4%

*Source: Texas Education Agency 2015–2016, *Data unavailable*

The Katy ISD is the 2nd fastest growing district in Texas in the accumulation of students, adding around 2,500 students per year. They have been in the top five districts for growth the past 20 years. With the increase of students, the district is planning the construction of new schools in those areas of fastest growth and where the current school will reach capacity in the near future. With the three year bond cycle, planning for new schools is at the forefront along with setting boundaries for those schools.

Katy ISD partners with Houston Community College to offer dual credit courses. There are a large number of students in the Advanced Placement courses in the district. Additionally, the district has a large Career and Technology Center (Miller Career & Technology Center) offering numerous courses to give students a head start in career exploration. Lastly, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) courses give students another avenue to advance their education.

Priorities for the district include planning for growth and boundaries, maintaining a school system versus a system of schools, financing and of most importance—academics.

Royal ISD

Royal ISD in southern Waller County (159 square miles) serves 2,365 students from the communities of Brookshire, Pattison, Sunnyside and the surrounding areas with two elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools. Royal ISD currently has the only early college high school (ECHS) out of the four school districts serving the County. In conjunction with Lone Star College, ECHS opened for the first time for the 2015–16 school year. An ECHS is an independent public high school designed to provide a smooth

transition from high school to college allowing students to earn a high school diploma and two years of college credit including an Associate's Degree. All students have access to special programs such as compensatory and special education, English as a second language (ESL), career and technology education (CTE), gifted and talented (G/T), honors, pre-advanced placement (PAP) and advanced placement (AP) programs, in addition to dual credit programs. Statistics can be seen in Table 5 which show slight increasing enrollment and lower graduation rates, standardized test scores, and number of graduates enrolled in higher education.

Table 5: Royal ISD Enrollment Past Four Years

Year	Enrollment	Longitudinal Graduation Rate	SAT/ACT All Subjects Score	Graduates Enrolled in TX Institute of Higher Education
2016-17	2,365	*	*	*
2015-16	2,267	93.5%	*	*
2014-15	2,200	93.5%	1167/18.4	*
2013-14	2,174	98.1%	1309/19.5	38.0%
2012-13	2,088	95.6%	1422/19.0	47.3%

Source: Texas Education Agency 2015-2016, *Data unavailable

The majority of high school students are enrolled in a course in the Career and Technology Education program, Early College program, STEM, or Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program, all creating pathways for students' futures. Some of these programs start in elementary and middle school. The district also has a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club with an engineering focus to spur interest in the STEM program. A dual language program is slated to start next year. Residents in the district find these multi-program opportunities a real advantage for the students and surrounding employers.

Several new neighborhoods are being built which will increase the enrollment in years to come. Priorities for the district include academic performance at a higher level, lowering the teacher turnover, and attracting developers who will construct higher value homes.

Waller ISD

Waller ISD serves the communities of Hockley, Prairie View, Pine Island and Waller with five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school serving 6,926 students in the 2016-2017 school year. The district covers a 328 square mile area. Increasing enrollment, lower SAT and ACT scores, a lower graduation rate, and a steady number of graduates enrolled in post-secondary school can be seen in the Table 6.

Table 6: Waller ISD Enrollment Past Four Years

Year	Enrollment	Longitudinal Graduation Rate	SAT/ACT All Subjects Score	Graduates Enrolled in TX Institute of Higher Education
2016-17	6,874	*	*	*
2015-16	6,542	97.9%	*	*
2014-15	6,234	97.9%	1360/19.2	*
2013-14	5,895	98.6%	1380/19.6	49.6%
2012-13	5,705	98.9%	1418/20.3	49.9%

Source: Texas Education Agency 2015-2016, *Data unavailable

The Waller school district is focused on attendance, academics and attitude. This is promoted from the superintendent's office throughout the district. The district is seeing growth in the number of students and forecasts this will continue with the new residential developments underway and the new businesses opening within the district. The district anticipates the need for a new middle and high school within the next 2–3 years. A new Career and Technology Education building has just opened. Partnerships with local businesses bring innovative ideas to the program giving students firsthand information and experience about careers.

The district has started a new outreach program to engage the Hispanic population in education and to break down barriers. Understanding cultures and addressing language barriers have been successful with the program.

Priorities for the district include putting the student first, giving students as many opportunities as possible to excel, planning for growth, and collaborations with businesses.

In conclusion, all four school districts focus on student success, academics, community engagement and support, and business collaborations realizing they must educate and teach their students the skills they will need to fill the job spectrum—from service related to manufacturing to engineering and all points in between.

Post-Secondary Education

Prairie View A&M University

Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU), established in 1876, is the second oldest university in Texas. PVAMU is a state-assisted, public, comprehensive land grant institution of higher education accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Inc. (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees.

Additionally, each school, except the College of Juvenile Justice and Psychology, has a program with a special accreditation. PVAMU is a component institution of the Texas A&M University System comprised of eight different colleges, shown below, with 124 undergraduate and 32 graduate programs of study found within the eight colleges, in addition to various certificates. As of fall 2016, there were 7,455 undergraduates and 1,307 graduate students enrolled. This is the only University found within the borders of Waller County and thus provides an important talent pool for businesses to recruit. This school caters toward employee advancement, with a weekend and evening MBA offered. Businesses can also take advantage of research and development facilities on the campus, including a Small Business Development Center.

PVAMU has developed a 2015–2020 strategic plan that builds upon their previous five year plan as they move toward their ultimate goal of providing a high quality education and a vibrant learning environment for all their students. The institution's core values are access and quality, accountability, diversity, leadership, relevance, and social responsibility. The school's mission is dedicated to achieving excellence and relevance in teaching, research and service, while also seeking to invest in programs and services that address issues and challenges affecting the diverse population of Texas and a global society. PVAMU's vision as

an “institution of the first class” is to build off their historical foundations to provide solutions for new problems and needs at every level of society. As stated directly in their strategic plan vision statement, “The institution will provide educational experiences leading graduates toward professional practice and meaningful societal participation; service opportunities will be enhanced through leadership development, service learning and community outreach; and research will be conducted that includes the creation, dissemination and assessment of new knowledge and practice.”

Table 7: Areas of Study at PVAMU

Colleges:	
Agriculture & Human Sciences	Education
Business	Juvenile Justice & Psychology
Arts and Sciences	Nursing
Engineering	Architecture

Source: PVAMU

Texas State Technical College

Texas State Technical College (TSTC) is a technical-vocational training institute and state agency with 10 locations throughout Texas, with the closest in Rosenberg, Fort Bend County which borders Waller County. Founded in 1965, TSTC focuses on workforce development and is accredited by SACSCOC to award Associate degrees and Certificates of Completion. Spring 2016 enrollment among all campuses totaled at 9,360 individuals. The Waller County Economic Development Partnership and TSTC have partnered to identify and address the needs of businesses by offering custom workforce training programs such as welding and industrial technology. TSTC operates a mobile unit to deliver skilled crafts training that has been and can be utilized in the future by the County. A list of the six degree and certificate programs offered at the Fort Bend TSTC campus are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Areas of Study at TSTC, Ft. Bend County

TSTC Areas of Study:		
Cyber Security	HVAC Technology	Precision Machining Technology
Diesel Equipment Technology	Industrial Maintenance Technology	Welding Technology

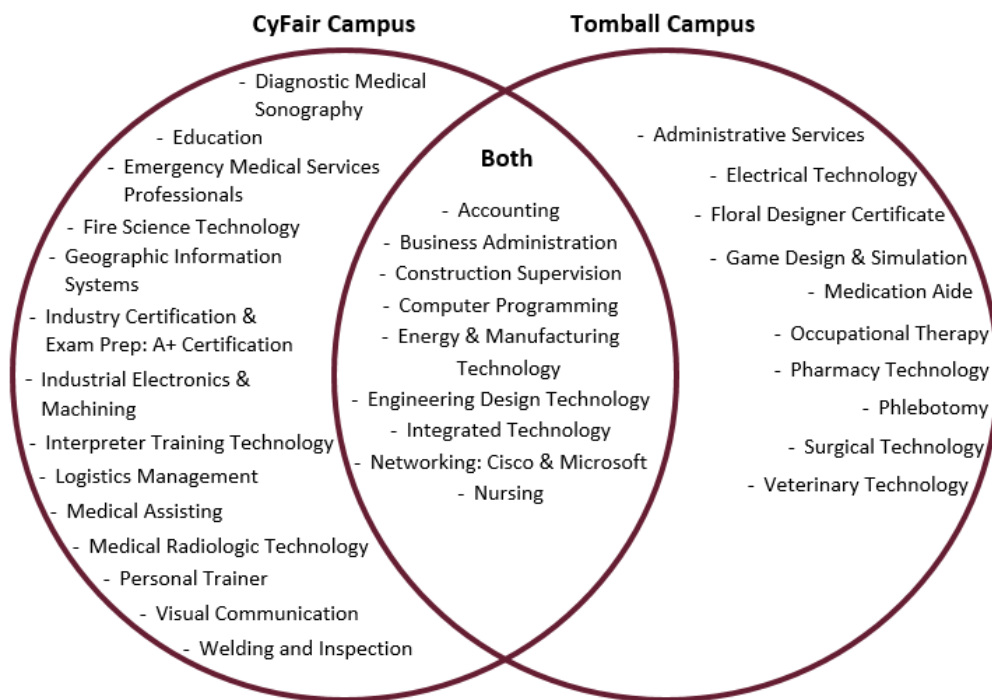
Source: Texas State Technical College

Lone Star College-CyFair & Tomball Campuses

Lone Star College (LSC) is a community college founded in 1973 that is accredited by SACSCOC to award Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT), Associate of Science (AS) and Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees. LSC-CyFair in Cypress, TX and LSC-Tomball in Tomball, TX are the closest to Waller County of the six LSC campuses. LSC enrollment numbers in spring 2017 for Tomball were the lowest of the six campuses at 9,379, whereas the LSC-CyFair Campus served highest headcount of the six LSC campuses at 20,338 for-credit students during the same semester. These campuses offer both credit and noncredit degree and certificate programs in a variety of areas, as shown in the Figure 11. LSC also offers workforce development training; specifically, LSC-Tomball works closely

with Waller ISD to provide vocational education and dual credit classes, in addition to adult learning and workforce development.

Figure 11: Areas of Study at Cy-Fair and Tomball LSC Campuses



Source: Lone Star College

Blinn College

Blinn College is a community college with four campuses, with the headquarters located in Brenham, Texas, less than 30 miles from the northern part of Waller County. A smaller satellite campus is located in Sealy, Texas within 15 miles southwest of Waller County that offers academic transfer, workforce training and continuing education classes. Blinn College is accredited by SACSCOC to award associate degrees, with various specialized program accreditations. This is a two year college, with close associations to the Texas A&M University System to help students continue their education. Blinn College had 2,038 students enrolled on its Brenham campus in spring 2016. This school offers a total of 19 Associate of Arts (AA), 12 Associate of Science (AS) and 21 Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, 22 certificates, and 14 occupational skills awards (OSA) throughout the programs listed in Table 9.

Additionally, Blinn College is committed to offering noncredit workforce education classes that cater to the workforce training needs of individuals, businesses and industry. These courses are offered in a non-traditional format with daytime, evening, and weekend options to make these courses available to everyone. Technical/Career classes typically last between 1–9 months and are designed to prepare even those without a high school diploma the knowledge and ability to enter the workforce directly after course completion. Skill Upgrade courses typically are only 8–40 hours of class time designed to equip current workers with up-to-date skills in a specific area. These classes are available at each Blinn location.

Table 9: Areas of Study and Workforce Education Courses at Blinn College

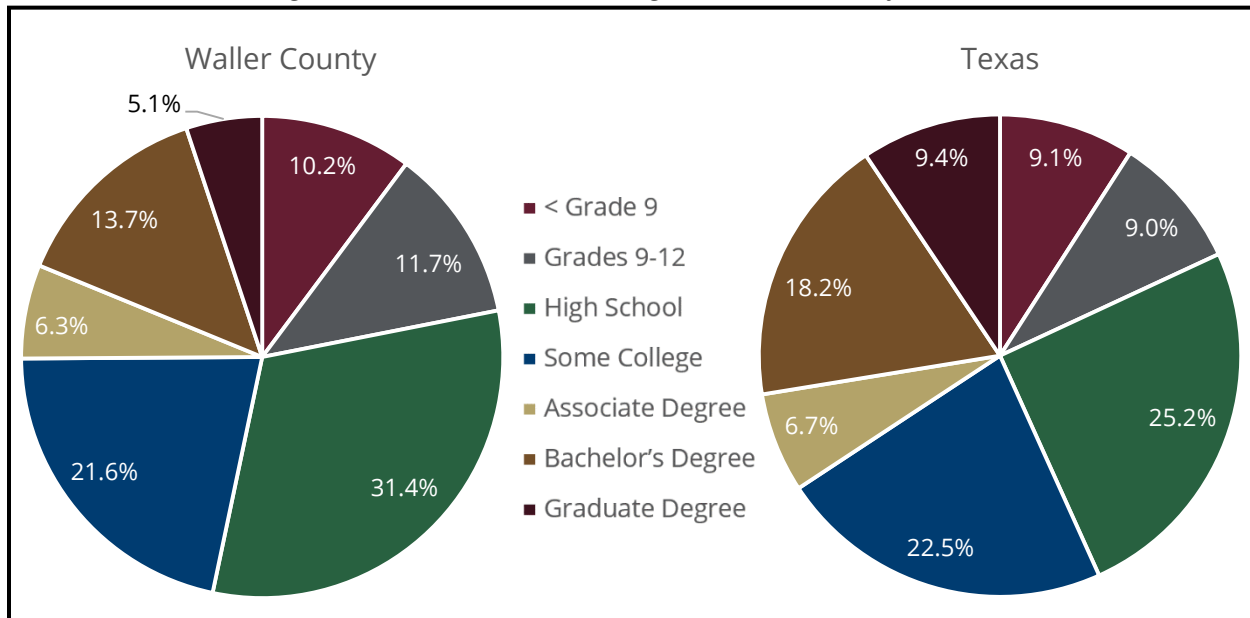
Blinn College Programs:		Blinn College Skills Upgrade Classes:
Applied Business	Office Administration	Business Communication
Art & Visual Communication	Physical Therapist Assistant	CMA Refresher
Associate Degree Nursing	Radiologic Technology	Computer Software: Office/QuickBooks
Child Development	Real Estate	CPR (Red Cross and AHA)
Criminal Justice	Surgical Technology	Critical Thinking
Dental Hygiene	Therapeutics Manufacturing	Customer Service, Supervision
Emergency Medical Services	Veterinary Technology	Electrical Refresher
Fire Science	Vocational Nursing	Forklift Operator Certification
Health Information Technology	Welding Technology	OSHA 10 & 30 hour safety classes
Legal Assistant		Time Management
Blinn Workforce Development Classes:		
CDL Truck Driving	Machining	Certified Medication Aide
Medical Secretary	Certified Nurse Aide	Pharmacy Technician
Electrical Technician	Phlebotomy	HVAC Technician
Welding		

Source: Blinn College

Educational Attainment

Data sources indicate that the overall population in Waller County is lagging behind in educational attainment. There are more individuals than the State average over the age of 25 who stopped their education at or before grade 12. Additionally, while more people in Waller County have at least a high school diploma, compared to the State, fewer individuals in Waller County have post-secondary degrees than the State average.

Figure 12: Educational Attainment Age 25+ in Waller County and Texas



Source: American Factfinder, 2015

Public Health and Medical Facilities

Waller County is part of the 16 county Health Service Region 5/6S in southeast Texas. The County is not located within a hospital district nor does it currently have a hospital within its borders. Therefore, the Waller County residents rely on the high quality medical facilities found in the Houston area.

Health Facilities

Waller County has a limited number of its own health facilities, but has access to the large variety of top medical facilities found in nearby Houston. Nearby hospitals include the Tomball Regional Medical Center, the North Cypress Medical Center, Methodist West Houston Hospital, Cypress Fairbanks Medical Center, Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital, Houston Methodist St. Catherine Hospital, the CHI St. Joseph Health Bellville Hospital, the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center and Clinic in Brenham and three large hospitals in Bryan/College Station. Baylor Scott & White also has a full-service primary care clinic located in Hempstead, including an on-site laboratory. There are eight licensed pharmacies in Waller County, with two in Brookshire, two in Waller, three in Hempstead, and one in Prairie View at the University.

Health Center Program grantees and Look-Alikes are community-based and patient-directed organizations serving those with limited healthcare access due to low income or homelessness. According to American Community Survey 2015 estimates, about 10,346 civilians, or 22.7% of the population, in Waller County were uninsured compared to about 20.6% uninsured in Texas. Waller County has two Health Center Program grantees and Look-Alikes clinic sites: the Brookshire Center and Health Point Hempstead.

Outreach, Screening, Assessment and Referral Centers (OSARs) are a primary contact for those seeking substance abuse treatment services, regardless of ability to pay, and are located at Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs). The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) in Houston and the Gulf Coast Center in Galveston are the OSARs/LMHAs that serve Waller County. Career and Recovery Resources, Inc. is a Substance Use Program Center and has two offices found in Waller County, one in Brookshire with adult outpatient services and one in Hempstead offering individual outpatient services, specializing in females. The closest substance abuse facilities outside Waller County include The Turning Point, Inc. in Katy focusing on youth outpatients. Additionally, Counseling and Recovery Services in Tomball, TX specializes in Opioid Treatment Services.

Health Personnel

Waller County has a higher ratio of people per health personnel in each of the seven health provider categories compared to Texas, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Health Personnel in Waller County

Health Personnel Type	Number of Personnel	Population: 1 Service Provider Ratio	Texas Ratio
Pharmacists	12	4,294	1,123
Registered Nurses	63	818	126
Direct Patient Care Physicians	5	10,306	554
Primary Care Physicians	3	17,177	1,372
Dentists	5	10,306	2,137
Occupational Therapists	4	12,883	3,349
Mental Health Providers	17	2,862	1,070

Source: Texas Department of State Health Services, 2016

The Department of Health and Human Services has designated Waller County as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for Mental Health Care with High Needs and Primary Care, since 2008 and 1978 respectively. Additionally, the Waller Service Area is considered a Medically Underserved Area (MUA). Primary care providers such as nurse practitioners (NPs), physician assistants (PAs), and clinical nurse specialists are projected by the Health Services Research Administration projects to grow over the next decade faster than their physician counterparts and are an important resource to alleviate medical service shortages, especially as demand will be increasing in Waller County.

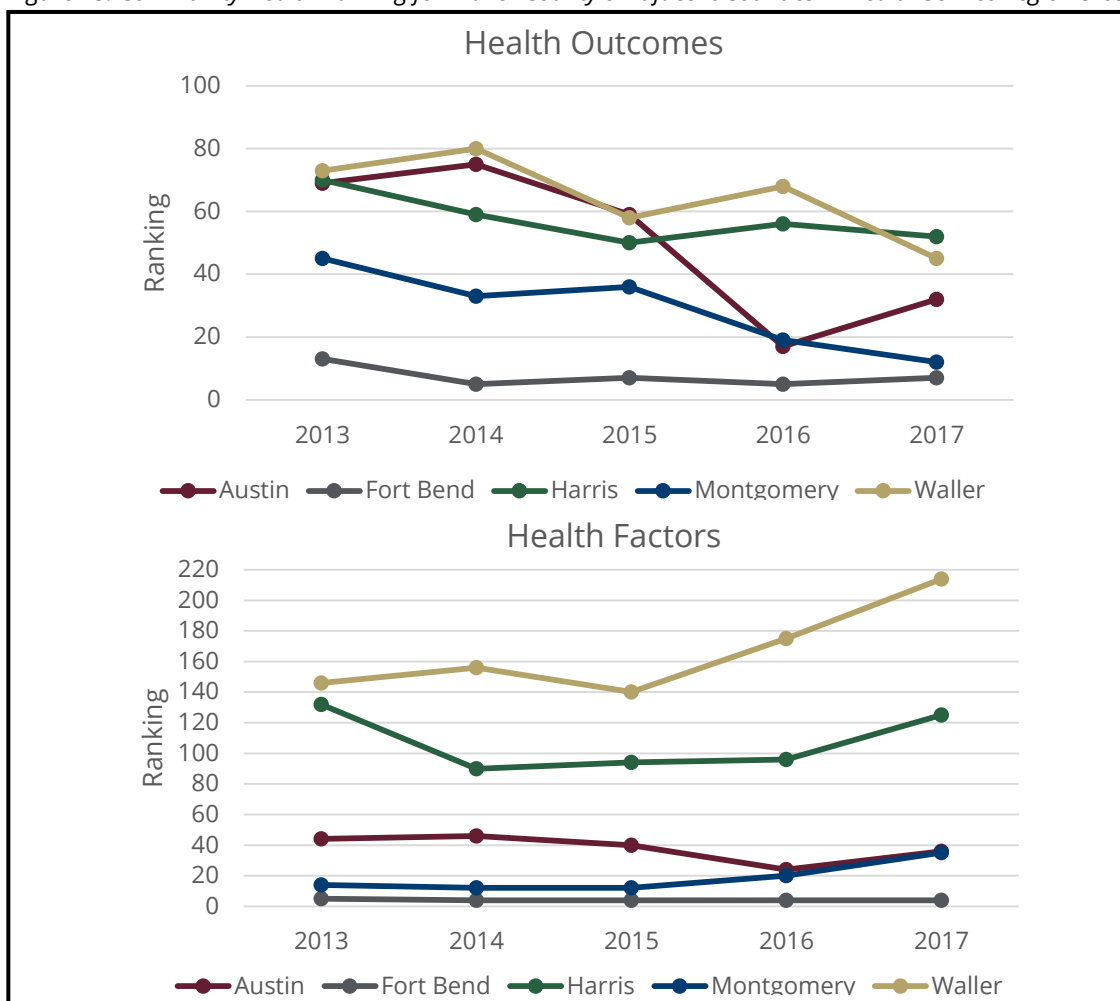
Health Rankings

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), is committed to “building a culture of health, county by county,” and provides two different County Rankings that communities can use to develop and push for local health improvement initiatives. As shown in Figure 13, these rankings capture the overall health of each county using a wide spectrum of indicators in different areas of a person’s life. The Health Outcomes Ranking is a 50/50 weighted ranking of quality of life and length of life. The Health Factors Ranking is weighted 30% to health behaviors like exercise and drug use, 20% to clinical care including access and quality of care, 40% to social & economic behaviors such as income and education, and 10% to the physical environment including factors like transit and water quality. The graphs below provide a ranking comparison over the past five years for Waller and its adjacent counties that are found in the same Health Service Region (5/6S). These indicate that Waller almost consistently ranks lower than its neighbors in the same Health Service Region, with a downward trend in health outcomes contrasting with an upward trend in health factors. In 2017, Waller County Ranked 45th in Health Outcomes and 214 in Health Factors, out of 243 ranked Texas counties. These rankings show that Waller County has a drastic need for improvement in the health sector to better serve its citizens.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is committed to improving healthcare access by strengthening the healthcare workforce and achieving health equity; thus, it has billions of dollars' worth of grants to improve and expand services for underserved people. Being an underserved County, Waller should apply to receive funding from HRSA. PVAMU was the last entity from Waller County to apply and receive a grant from HRSA, which was a \$101,445 Advanced Nursing Education Grant to enhance the health workforce. Additionally, the RWJF Culture of Health Prize offers a networking resource to improve local health community, in addition to \$25,000 monetary compensation for winners, and can be used as a marketing tool for Waller County to spotlight it at this crucial time of growth.

In conclusion, Waller County has room for improvement in making healthcare more readily available for its citizens and increasing the quality of the healthcare currently in place. Targeting the healthcare job sector and utilizing available support from private and government entities is highly encouraged and will lead to increased incentive for businesses to relocate to Waller County.

Figure 13: Community Health Ranking for Waller County & Adjacent Counties in Health Service Region 5/6/5



Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

Goals, Objectives, Actions—Image and Identity

Vision: Waller County will be one of the first strategically-planned counties in Texas with a focus on responsible growth that preserves the heritage of the County and its natural resources.

Goal—Image and Identity

The image of Waller County shall be that of thriving communities that meet the needs of their citizens and businesses in positive ways and address problems in a cooperative manner.

Objective A: Promote positive County-wide community identity, pride, sense of well-being, and self-image for Waller County residents and businesses.

- Action 1: Develop a County-wide formal image branding campaign that is a cooperative effort among County and City leaders, economic development organizations, schools, and other industry entities.
- Action 2: It would be beneficial for some County and City officials to attend training sessions on digital marketing, ethics, messaging and public relations.
- Action 3: Promote events that celebrate the County's heritage and brings citizens together such as general festivals, historical events, or nature-based events.

Objective B: Foster a positive interactive relationship with the public and encourage citizen involvement.

- Action 1: Continue efforts to instill a stronger sense of civic pride by encouraging involvement in public decision-making and soliciting citizen input.
- Action 2: Remain dedicated to ensuring transparency related to County and City operations, services, and plans.
- Action 3: Conduct a periodic assessment to determine popular amenities.

Objective C: Improve the health, education and livability of Waller County residents through partnerships with local school districts, health care institutions and government officials.

Action 1: Develop a support group to help implement and support plans to improve the quality of life in Waller County that involves a variety of individuals representing citizens, businesses, city leaders, and schools.

Action 2: Work towards bringing in a spectrum of comprehensive preventative, primary, behavioral, and other specialized health services and emergency facilities into Waller County, including a County Hospital, and promoting these services to enhance the healthy image of the County.

Objective D: Establish a reputation for high quality education capable of drawing in and retaining a skilled workforce in the County, to the benefit of attracting targeted businesses and development in the area.

Action 1: Establish a community support group involving parents, educators, student, and community leaders that can help implement and support plans to enhance education.

Action 2: Promote innovative and quality educational programs that the local school districts implement in order to provide a positive employment base for local industries and businesses on an on-going basis.

Action 3: Establish a collaborative network between Waller County's ISDs and PVAMU to generate a high skilled workforce and offer an opportunity for job fairs that attract businesses looking for all skill levels.

Action 4: Develop and promote high paying certification programs, alternative education and vocational training programs, university-level skill building programs, and district-wide cluster skills training.

Action 5: Develop employer-student relationship programs, such as mentoring programs or opening a career and technology facility supported by community employers

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Planning Considerations

Business attraction and retention, job creation, income growth, and an increasing tax base are paramount to the economic well-being and quality of life for a community, county or region. Waller County is home to a growing number of businesses and industries and is well positioned for continued economic growth. Its proximity to Houston and Bryan/College Station provides a large consumer base for Waller County to take advantage of as they plan their growth.

This section provides a brief overview of the economic conditions in Waller County and establishes strategies to enable continued opportunity and growth.

Economic Development Organizations

The Waller County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP) is a non-profit corporation incorporated in 2002 that contracts with Waller County to provide free economic development services to the local communities. The WCEDP is comprised of an appointed board of directors with members representing the County Commissioners and County Judge, each chamber of commerce, each local economic development group within the County, and Prairie View A&M University. The WCEDP also works closely with the Greater Houston Partnership to create local opportunities. Private enterprises can join WCEDP by paying annual dues and general membership includes free access to all nonproprietary GIS information, project information, board meetings, and two annual networking membership meetings. Trustee Memberships provide the option to serve on the board and these members are featured on the WCEDPs website.

According to the Partnership's website, "[Their] services range from helping to create business plans to working with prospects moving into the area. As [they] continue to grow [their] services will also include support for economic development through GIS, web, and marketing collateral." The WCEDP is a useful resource for businesses looking for funding projects and the organization can help with application processes. Additionally, the Partnership offers a series of articles designed to inform and educate the public about economic development activities. In both 2013 and 2015 the Partnership received the Texas Economic Development Council's annual Community and Economic Development Award in recognition of excellence in economic development. Only five such awards are given statewide each year.

Local economic development groups within the County are found in Brookshire, Hempstead, Prairie View, and Waller. Their focus and missions are similar to the WCEDP and the Greater Houston Partnership in that they aim to attract, retain and expand businesses and industry.

Chambers of Commerce

Waller County is served by the Hempstead Chamber of Commerce (COC), Katy COC, Waller Area COC, and the West I-10 COC that meets the business needs of the Brookshire and Pattison area. Some benefits for businesses that join Chambers are invitations to attend special events, opportunities to participate on committees, online business directory access, and the availability of other business resources that will benefit both new and existing companies. Overall, these organizations serve as an important networking resource for businesses to gain visibility within their respective communities.

Small Business Development Center

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at Prairie View A&M University offers resources and technical assistance for future and existing business owners in Waller and Grimes counties. PVAMU's SBDC is a partnership between the U.S. Small Business Administration, the State of Texas, and Prairie View A&M University and is a member of the Texas Gulf Coast Small Business Development Center Network that serves 32 counties in Southeast Texas. Through this network and partnership, the SBDC can provide its services—business advising, online and in-person workshops and seminars, assistance pursuing new markets, applying for loans or funding assistance, and developing business or marketing plans—for free or nominal charges.

Business Incentives

Waller County offers a variety of incentives to help finance economic development projects within the County. Incentives can come from the State, County, and City levels and companies can utilize the Waller County Economic Development Partnership to receive assistance in applying and taking advantage of these opportunities. The following business incentives are advertised on the Waller County website.

Chapter 380/381 Development Agreements

Chapter 381 of the Texas Local Government Code allows counties to provide incentives encouraging developers to build in their jurisdictions and allows counties to negotiate directly with developers and businesses. For instance, it gives Waller County the ability to develop and administer a tax abatement agreement program, as well as a public money loan and grant program, that promotes business location and commercial activity within the County. These agreements are often best suited for larger projects or industrial development and negotiated based on the project's total community impact, its strength, and location. At the city level, Chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes municipalities to offer incentives in the form of loans or grants of city funds or services at little or no cost to stimulate business and commercial activity. Such agreements can allow projects to begin sooner than if other funding solutions were utilized.

Enterprise Zone

Waller County meets the requirements to be considered an Enterprise Zone, which entitles businesses to apply for and receive financial aid to promote job creation within the Zone. Companies must be nominated by local communities as an Enterprise Project to be eligible to participate in this program. For projects located within an Enterprise Zone, like Waller County, the company must ensure that at least 25% of their new employees will meet the economically disadvantaged or enterprise zone residence requirements. State deadlines are on the first working day of March, June, September, and December. The level and amount of state sales and use tax refund, shown in Table 11, is related to the capital investment and jobs created by the business. Along with this state refund, local communities must offer incentives to participants such as tax abatement, tax increment financing and one-stop permitting. Waller County does offer tax abatement for qualifying businesses, which must be applied for prior to construction. Companies must complete a free economic impact analysis and based on the results can submit an application for tax abatement to the County, along with an application fee.

Table 11: Enterprise Zone Program Refunds

Level of Capital Investment	Maximum Number of Jobs Allocated	Maximum Potential Refund	Maximum Refund per Job Allocated
\$40,000 to \$399,999	10	\$25,000	\$2,500
\$400,000 to \$999,999	25	\$62,500	\$2,500
\$1,000,000 to \$4,999,999	125	\$312,500	\$2,500
\$5,000,000 to \$149,999,999	500	\$1,250,000	\$2,500
\$150,000,000 to \$249,999,999	500	\$2,500,000	\$5,000
\$250,000,000 or more	500	\$3,750,000	\$7,500

Source: Waller County Economic Development Partnership Website, 2017

The Texas Capital Fund

Waller County and its cities are eligible to apply to the Texas Capital Fund program, based on their population size. The Texas Capital Fund (TCF) program is a federal grant program administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture with the primary goal of job creation and retention for low and moderate income persons. This fund encourages business development, retention, and expansion via funding to eligible applicants for projects related to public infrastructure, real estate development, or the elimination of deteriorated conditions. Awards can range from a minimum of \$50,000 to a maximum of \$1,500,000, with higher awards given to projects creating or retaining more jobs, as well as having a higher level of matching funds.

Type A and B Programs

In Waller County the cities of Brookshire, Hempstead, Prairie View and Waller offer incentives through the A or B programs which impose a special sales tax for economic development purposes set at 1/8, 1/4, 3/8, or 1/2 percent to finance a wide range of economic development activities. Economic development projects located within city limits, or the city's ETJ, can be qualified to receive this incentive.

Freeport Tax Exemption

The Freeport Tax Exemption is an inventory tax exemption applied to products shipped into and out of Texas within a six month period. This incentive benefits manufacturers with large inventory costs and companies specializing in product distribution. This exemption is available from Waller ISD, Hempstead ISD, and all cities in Waller County except Katy.

Waller County Industrial Development

Due to its proximity, Waller County is considered part of the Greater Houston area and their industrial breakdowns are similar in some respects. Like Houston, Waller County has a prominent oil and gas industry presence while also boasting of a significant growing food industry presence. Likewise, Waller County stands to benefit from the region's top industry sectors which also includes aerospace & aviation, distribution & logistics, and advanced manufacturing and technology as the perimeter of the Greater Houston area continues to expand north and west. As a result, Waller County is becoming strongly sought out among multiple industries wishing to locate or relocate. With Waller County's population anticipated to reach more than 50,000 people by 2020, County and City leaders will want to ensure that the County has the proper infrastructure to support this growth.

Daiken Industries

In 2015 the County's industrial footprint was about to change. Daiken Industries announced it would build a new \$417 million campus approximately 3–4 million square feet on 90 acres in Waller, TX albeit Harris County side. The Japan-based manufacturer of heating, cooling and refrigerant products acquired Houston-based Goodman Global Group Inc., a manufacturer of HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) products for residential and light commercial use in 2012.

The new campus became operational in mid-2016 with total projected employment estimates climbing upwards of 5,500–6,000 over the next five years. Although Daiken-Goodman is physically located in Harris County, Waller County and its workforce are poised to greatly benefit from the economic growth and footprint of this international leader in HVAC. Waller County offers an outstanding combination that includes the ability to provide a highly educated skilled workforce, as well as a favorable year-long climate necessary for manufacturing and operational excellence.

As a result of the Daiken-Goodman campus locating along the Waller-Harris County line, the Waller County Business Park in Waller County and nearby properties have become areas of extreme interest to the numerous suppliers that need to manufacture in close proximity to the Daiken-Goodman's campus.

Establishing an active dialog with Daiken-Goodman, in addition to existing oil and gas, food, aerospace, and distribution companies in Waller County will prove most beneficial in identifying and encouraging the attraction of suppliers and services to locate in Waller County.

Amazon

In March 2017, Amazon.com, Inc. announced plans to open its tenth Texas fulfillment center in Katy where it will create 1,000 new full-time jobs. The one million square foot facility will be developed by Duke Realty on I-10 in Waller County, an industrial corridor that also features the headquarters of companies like Rooms-To-Go and Goya Foods. Amazon has agreed to remain at this location for at least 20 years, leading to an estimated \$200 million economic contribution during this time-frame. Benefits to the County include an annual job fair hosted by Amazon, increasing job opportunities, support for local businesses, and educational support for career advancement outside of the company. For example, Amazon will pay up to 95% of tuition for courses related to in-demand fields for its full-time employees, thus raising the educational attainment level in the County. This project will also help expand the County's tax base which can lead to community enhancements.

Houston Executive Airport

The future of the Houston Executive Airport in Waller County is a gem to the County's future prosperity. With its strategic location right off of Interstate 10 and with Amazon building its fulfillment center adjacent to the airport, the Houston Executive Airport could benefit from an entirely new customer base including suppliers along with considerations to serve as an MRO. This Airport and its benefits to Waller County are described further in the Transportation section of this Plan.

Business Parks

Waller County is home to seven business/industrial parks: the Quixote, Hempstead, Emerson, Waller, Alegacy, West Ten, and Katy Prairie Business Parks.

The Quixote Business Park located in Brookshire, TX is a light industrial commercial complex with over 120 acres that is centrally located at FM 529 and 362 in Waller County. Its location is ideal in providing quick access to both I-10 and US 290 for businesses that need access to Houston, San Antonio, and Austin. This business park offers sites from 3.85–11.804 acres.

The Hempstead Business Park located in Hempstead, TX, is a 25 acre master-planned, deed restricted business park. Located in the path of expansion of the Greater Houston area on US 290, between Houston and Austin, this park is fully developed with all utilities available from the City of Hempstead. Sites from 1–12 acres are available.

Emerson Business Park located in Waller, TX is located one-half mile west of the intersection of FM 362 and Business 290. It is within the City of Waller ETJ and receives city

utilities. Local incentives include Freeport exemption from Waller ISD and local county tax incentives for qualifying businesses. Sites from 2–40 acres are available.

Waller Business Park located in Waller, TX offers a convenient location just off US 290. It is also within the City of Waller ETJ and receives city utilities. Local incentives include Freeport exemption from Waller ISD and the City of Waller. Additionally, local county tax incentives are available for qualifying business. Sites from 2–4 acres are available.

Alegacy Business Park is the newest business park in operation and growing in Waller County, located five miles from the Daiken-Goodman Campus with access off of Business 290 in Waller, TX. It is also only twelve miles from the Grand Parkway. This is a heavy industrial park with over 70 acres available with the option to divide into smaller tracts. Local business incentives include Freeport Tax Exemption from Waller ISD, City of Waller and Emergency Services District (ESD), as well as potential tax abatements from Waller County and the City of Waller. CenterPoint Energy, AT&T and Alegacy Gas supply services to the park, in addition to City of Waller water & sewage.

West Ten Business Park is a premier master-planned business park located on I-10 and Highway 90 in Katy, Texas. West Ten's 470 acres provide occupants with unparalleled access to community amenities, a major transportation corridor, visibility, a high quality employee base and close proximity to Houston's Energy Corridor. West Ten's planning reflects a desire to maximize values and promote a long-term real estate solution for the tenants in the park.

The Katy Prairie Business Park is located northeast of Highway 90 and Igloo Road in Katy, TX. The park comprises 40 acres, with sites available from 1–23 acres. This business park's features include design build/build-to-suit, speculative buildings for lease or sale, direct access to I-10, regional detention, deed restrictions and tax exemptions/abatements. It is also one mile from the Houston Executive Airport.

Economic Stability

The County must remain diligent in maintaining a robust financial policy and prudence while addressing the challenges of growth and redevelopment within the County. Waller County has low tax rates and no county sales tax, which is attractive to citizens but can also lead to the lack of funding for crucial infrastructure and economic development advancements. Other funding sources such as grants and a general capital projects fund can also help promote economic stability and growth in the near future.

General Capital Projects

A Capital Project Fund is used to account for financial resources used for the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities and infrastructure. These projects often include new development or renovations to important community resources such as utilities, recreation centers, road and traffic improvements, libraries, fire safety, city lighting for safety, parks, hike and bike trails, and drainage ways. These capital projects can be done at the County and City level. Depending on the project, they are financed by general and proprietary

resources such as unrestricted fund balances, grants, and bond proceeds. Some specific funding options for these projects include Certificates of Obligation, General Obligation Bonds (G.O. Bonds), and Revenue Bonds.

A Certificate of Obligation is a streamlined method of financing that a county or city may use to pay a contractual obligation incurred in: (1) a construction contract; (2) the purchase of materials, supplies, equipment, machinery, buildings, land, and rights-of-way for authorized needs and purposes; or (3) the payment of professional services, including services provided by tax appraisers, engineers, architects, attorneys, map makers, auditors, financial advisors, and fiscal agents.

General Obligation Bonds are best suited for major capital projects where the Commissioner’s Court believes that it is important for voters to have the opportunity to pass upon the project. These bonds are issued after approval at a bond election. Currently, Waller County officials anticipate a general obligation referendum in November 2017 to fund the building of a proposed new jail and sheriff’s office.

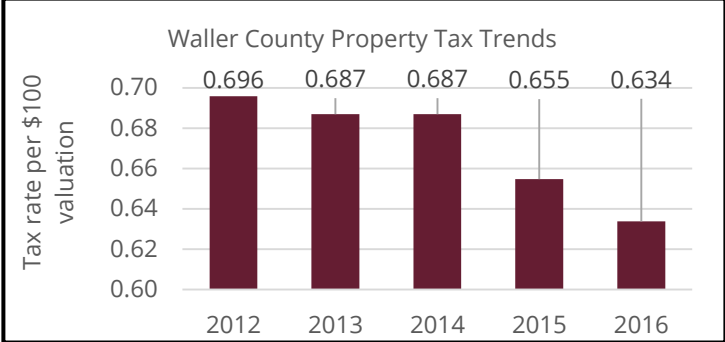
Revenue Bonds are secured by the pledge of revenues of a project and are special obligations of the issuer (as opposed to general obligations) that are payable solely from the revenues derived from an income-producing facility. These bonds are not subject to a demand for payment from taxes. No election is required under state law to issue revenue bonds.

Other than the pending general obligation referendum for the new jail and sheriff’s office, Waller County has no Capital Projects presently.

County Tax Rates

Waller County has no sales tax, so consumers only pay the 6.25% state sales tax and any city-imposed sales tax. Property taxes in Waller County have seen a decreasing trend to the lowest rate in the past five years in 2016 at a rate of 0.63373 per \$100 valuation. This is less than the average effective property tax rate in Texas of about 1.94%. School tax rates range from 1.38 to 1.528817 per \$100 valuation. Only the Cities of Brookshire, Hempstead, Katy, Prairie View, and Waller have city taxes, ranging from 0.4358 to 0.730490 per \$100 valuation. The County does not impose a hotel occupancy tax. Overall, taxes in Waller County will not serve as a deterrent for interested residents, businesses, and visitors.

Figure 14: Waller County Property Tax Rate 2012-2016



Source: Waller County Appraisal District, 2017

Infrastructure

It is crucial to assess if there is sufficient infrastructure to support Waller County's growing population and future economic growth. Plans should be developed to ensure that infrastructure deficiencies do not inhibit growth in the present or future.

Several key parts of infrastructure that can impact a business' decision to invest in Waller County include current and potential electrical capacity, broadband reliability, and water availability and quality. There are 19 municipal utility districts (MUDs) in Waller County, primarily located along the Fort Bend border. These jurisdictions provide utility services to district residents, such as water and electricity.

Electricity

The primary electrical distribution companies in Waller County include CenterPoint Energy and the San Bernard Electrical Co-op (SBEC), estimated to serve 60% and 40% of electrical needs respectively. Citizens of Waller County can choose from a variety of retail electric companies, such as Reliant, to find competitive pricing in the CenterPoint service area only.

Electrical companies, such as SBEC, constantly assess their service areas to ensure the safe and reliable flow of electricity to service endpoints. They engage in system engineering studies to evaluate loads on system substations and feeders and make system improvements to better accommodate current and future loads. Such studies provide a 10-15 year outlook on the electrical system needs, which are then reviewed and implemented as two year work plans based on actual load growth. For the SBEC service area in Waller County, a 3.5% growth in the electrical system has typically been realized annually. Large residential subdivision growth and commercial business growth in the northern portion of Waller County will escalate the need for new electrical substations and electrical transmission lines to supply power to these new loads.

Electricity distributors also evaluate and develop strategies to meet the needs of individual users, both residential and commercial. This may include offering distributed generation to grid connections for individual renewable energy power sources or electrical grid system improvements for load changes or increases at individual endpoints in the system. Electrical companies are implementing system self-healing or smart grid technology into their system feeders to lessen the effects of power outages and to minimize the amount of time to restore power. Such improvements are first implemented in highest density areas before spreading to other areas.

Brazos Valley Connection

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), the state grid planner, estimated that electricity demand in the Houston area would exceed supply by 2018. Thus, the need for an additional “electric” transmission line became the Brazos Valley Connection. This project started construction in February 2017 and is expected to be finished in June 2018. The 345 kV transmission project was proposed in 2015 by CenterPoint Energy and fully approved in April 2016. The route for this line passes through the northern portion of Waller County as it connects the Gibbons Creek Substation in Grimes County and the Zenith Substation in Harris County, with the goal of connecting Houston to the Limestone Substation in Limestone County. According to the project website, they will use double-circuit steel vertical monopoles approximately 149–169 feet tall in a new 90 foot wide right-of-way. This project does not provide Waller County with additional electricity to meet its electrical demands but travels through a portion of the County. However, the power poles established in the County could be used to attach broadband or other smart technology devices to in order to enhance connectivity in this part of Waller County.

CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC (CenterPoint Energy), who is in charge of the project, is an electric utility that maintains the electric infrastructure in a 5,000 square mile service area in Houston. This company does not generate power or sell it to customers.

Broadband

According to BroadbandNow, approximately 39,000 people in Waller County lack access to 25 megabits per second (mbps) of wired broadband and about 9,000 do not have access to any wired internet, compared to almost 84% of Texans having access to broadband of greater speeds. Twenty-four percent of residents have access to fixed wireless internet service and only 2% have access to fiber optic internet.

The San Bernard Electric Co-op is currently looking for proposals for a broadband feasibility study as it considers adding WiFi hotspots to its power poles. Such a project could increase the connectivity of Waller County and make it more attractive to future businesses and residents.

Figure 15: Brazos Valley Connection Transmission Line



Source: Brazos Valley Connection Website

Water

The availability of water has long been an issue to several geographic regions across the country, and the densely-populated area around the Gulf Coast of Texas is very aware of this. Water plays a vital role in the operation of every aspect of daily life from transport to the production of agricultural goods and supporting growing populations.

Waller County is in the Bluebonnet Groundwater Conservation District (GCD), which also includes Grimes, Austin, and Walker Counties, in the 20 county Groundwater Management Area (GMA) 14. Waller County receives water from the Chicot, Evangeline, Burkeville, and Jasper Aquifers of the Gulf Coast Aquifer System. The Texas Water Development Board require GCDs to monitor available groundwater for these aquifers, which are estimates of annual pumping rates, in volumes per year, that are guided by desired future conditions of the aquifers established by groundwater management areas. Waller County's estimated annual pumping rates through 2070 remain constant based on the 2016 adopted report.

The 2007–2011 pumpage average was less than 25,000 acre-feet for Waller County. Harris County had the largest draw of groundwater of over 205,000 acre-feet of pumpage, almost exclusively for municipal use, then manufacturing and power. Compared to other counties in GMA 14 where municipal pumpage dominates, Waller County has a considerable portion of their pumpage going towards irrigation, followed by municipal and livestock usage. Waller County primarily uses groundwater for its water supply, thanks to its historical abundance, easy accessibility, and high quality. However, with population growth and changes in water usage, increasing demand could shift water usage to alternative supplies. Steps should be taken to ensure that the County's precious water resources are properly managed and protected as growth continues.

Flooding

When choosing where to build new developments and locate new businesses in Waller County, it is important to consider potential flood risks. By avoiding development in these areas, or finding smart ways to develop them, the County will avoid future problems and expenses that may arise due to natural phenomena beyond their control.

As of January 2017, FEMA released Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and a Flood Insurance Study (FIS) Report for Waller County and Incorporated Areas. The most recent documents prior to this update are from 2009. Future updates will be posted as they become available on the FEMA website. Interactive maps are also available to determine flood risk for those interested in moving to or developing in Waller County. Any construction in unincorporated areas of the County requires a floodplain development permit, or a permit exemption, prior to construction.

The 2017 Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps can be found at:
<https://hazards.fema.gov/femaportal/prelimdownload/searchLoad.action>

Goals, Objectives, Actions—Economic Development

Vision: Waller County will be one of the first strategically-planned counties in Texas with a focus on responsible growth that preserves the heritage of the County and its natural resources.

Goal—Economic Development

Elevate Waller County's identity, competitive advantage and economic development position in the regional marketplace.

Objective A: Create county-wide unity and leadership using County leaders as the catalysts.

- Action 1: Build upon the regular Waller County Economic Development Partnership meetings to improve communications, share information, host special events, and act as a forum with speakers from major industries.
- Action 2: Engage and support Waller County's existing businesses by supporting programs and services that foster healthy businesses and encourage growth.
- Action 3: Actively market the location advantages of the County for business and industry.
- Action 4: Cooperative efforts by the County, Economic Development Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Independent School Districts, higher education agencies and residents will support retention and expansion of existing businesses and attract new businesses in targeted economic sectors.
- Action 5: Support Pattison and Prairie View in obtaining their own zip codes.
- Action 6: Institute a County Business Retention & Expansion plan for businesses outside city limits in order to increase activities and contacts.

Objective B: Create a competitive business environment that positions and differentiates Waller County in its economic diversification strategy.

- Action 1: Promote and support industry clusters and strategies in pursuit of economic diversification.
- Action 2: Integrate marketing activities among EDOs and Chambers of Commerce.
- Action 3: Promote the advantages and services of business and industrial parks in the County.
- Action 4: Remove obstacles between businesses and the County to leverage resources for growth and retention.
- Action 5: Concentrate on the attractiveness of economic and business development infrastructure, competitiveness, first impressions of facilities, and available County resources.
- Action 6: Capitalize on the regional location of Waller County and position the County as a regional (hub) destination for doing business.
- Action 7: Develop City Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) as a County–City partnership.
- Action 8: Encourage nominations for Enterprise Zone Projects within the County.

Objective C: Increase capacity for residential, business and commercial growth through continued Infrastructure improvements, as this is key to attracting new businesses and retaining existing ones.

- Action 1: Address gaps in economic development infrastructure.
- Action 2: Develop a County-wide wireless plan integrated with the development plan and subdivisions.
- Action 3: Explore federal and state grant funds that can improve access to broadband in the community.
- Action 4: Increase electrical system reliability and capacity.
- Action 5: Implement automated systems, or smart grid, technology based on user density.
- Action 6: Follow through on Special Considerations from the State to control issuance of utility/electric power to ensure that regulations of sewer, water, driveway, flood avoidance, etc. are followed.
- Action 7: Implement an aggressive Capital Improvement Plan to prepare for and capitalize upon development opportunities in the County.

Objective D: Preserve and enhance water resources and management.

- Action 1: Form a task force that partners with experts like PVAMU researchers to identify water resources, availability, and impact in Waller County with the power to enforce and educate on relevant environmental issues.
- Action 2: Create a County-wide Master Drainage Plan with a Flood Plan Administrator.
- Action 3: Establish a County-wide Drainage District or encourage cities to create Drainage Districts.
- Action 4: Develop a County-wide flood mitigation plan that involves the development of a regional detention basin or pond for multi-purpose use.
- Action 5: Develop a County-wide flood emergency management plan.
- Action 6: Develop a unified set of regulations to protect water that acknowledges issues such as drilling, extracting water from and dumping into aboveground water sources.

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LAND USE

Planning Considerations

The community is enhanced through the quality of its growth, development, and redevelopment over time. Planning for and accommodating the future growth of Waller County is essential to ensure that the needs of the County are met today and over the next 10–15 years.

This chapter provides guidance for the future physical development of Waller County. The purpose is to provide policy direction for decisions related to the investment in public and private infrastructure, as well as the compatibility and appropriateness of land uses. This includes the rezoning of property within incorporated areas and private development decisions as they relate to the County as a whole. This chapter establishes strategies and actions that enable effective planning for future growth, including both the creation of opportunities to accommodate desired development and opportunities to preserve rural areas.

Planning helps to ensure quality neighborhoods, efficient infrastructure, the creation of economic development opportunities, and the preservation of farmland and natural features. Land use planning appropriately considers the placement of land uses and provides predictable outcomes.

Planning considerations should include:

- Accommodating Waller County's projected population growth and encouraging quality development by residential and commercial developers.
- Supporting economic development through attraction of new and expansion of existing businesses and quality of life—social, cultural, capital—making Waller County a place where not just businesses want to locate, but families of their employees want to call home.
- Quality of life issues including parks, youth programs, school districts, arts, walking and biking trails, outdoor sporting events, being pedestrian friendly, and safety.
- Infrastructure improvements in the County are vital for growth. As decisions are made for future land use, concurrent decisions must be made for infrastructure development and improvements.

Existing Land Use

Land use refers to how land is currently being used and how it should be used in the future in Waller County.

Existing land uses in Waller County include residential, commercial, industrial, parks and open space, agricultural, government-owned and vacant land. The County does not currently have a County-level Existing Land Use Map, which would be beneficial in guiding future smart growth and infrastructure development. This map would conventionally include the types of land use shown in Table 12.

The Existing Land Use Map is not a zoning map, but a snapshot of the uses as they exist. Because of changes over time, the existing land use may not be consistent with the existing zoning of incorporated areas or the desired future land use of the area.

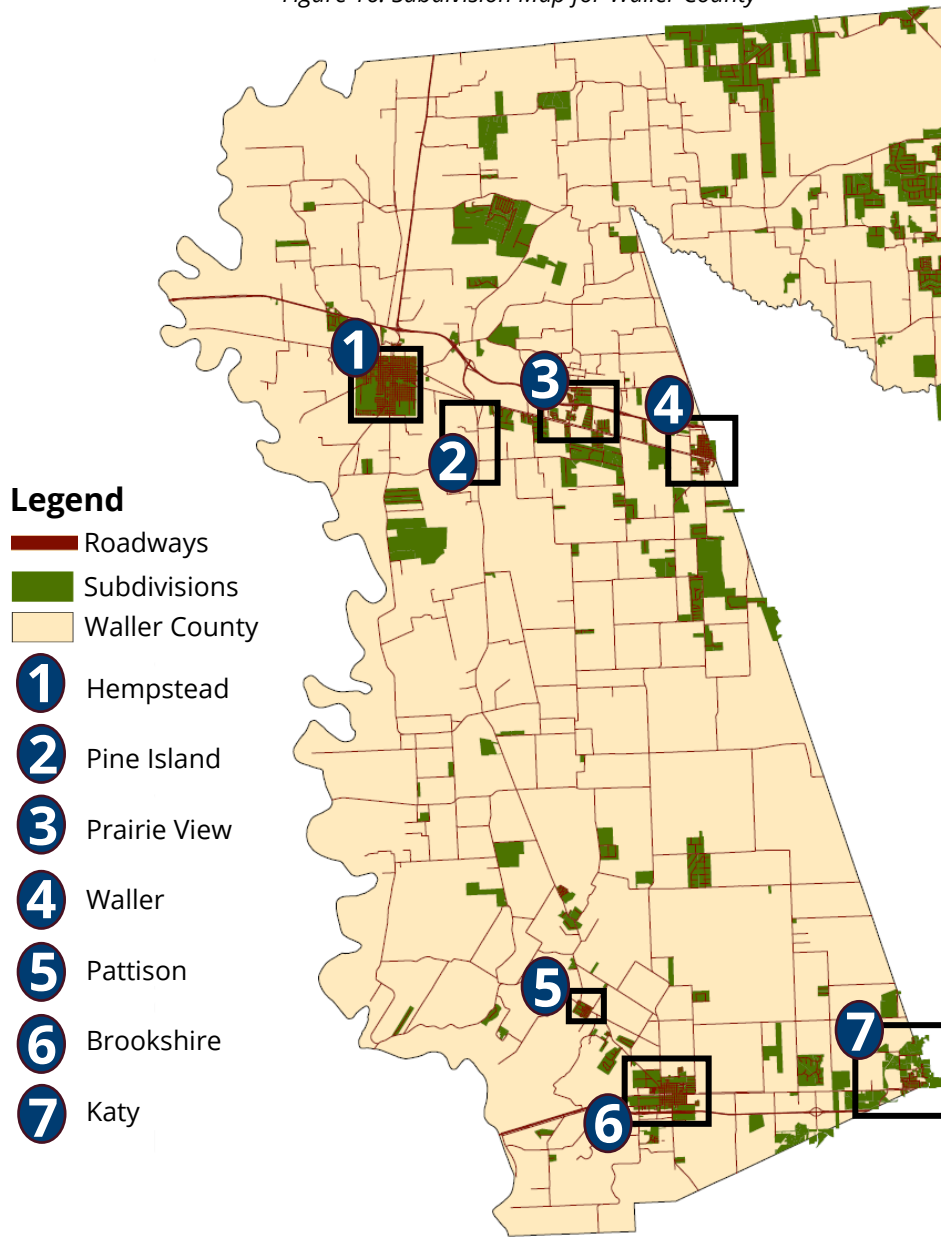
County platting maps for residential areas are currently available, with an example shown in Figure 16.

Table 12: Land Use Map Features

Type of Land Use	Description/Examples
Single-Family Residential	Conventional, detached single-family structures on individually platted lots. Includes both urban-scale and estate-scale residential.
Multi-Family Residential	Includes apartment buildings and complexes, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, and attached townhome structures.
Mobile Homes	Includes mobile homes and manufactured homes.
Commercial	General commercial, retail, restaurant, and office buildings.
Industrial	Manufacturing, warehousing, assembly and distribution, light industrial offices, and wholesales.
Agricultural/Parks & Open Spaces	Active agriculture, including ranchland with livestock, cultivated cropland, orchards, and vineyards. Also, public parks, golf courses, and other public open spaces.
Public / Semi-Public	Utilities, hospitals, schools, libraries, etc.

Source: Jennifer Prochazka, AICP, TEEX Adjunct

Figure 16: Subdivision Map for Waller County



Source: Waller County Appraisal District, 2016

Future Land Use & Urban Growth

The future land use plan guides land use decisions to ensure opportunities for economic development, neighborhood compatibility, a variety of housing options, adequate open space, and areas for needed public facilities.

The Future Land Use map is an illustration of the desired distribution of future land uses within Waller County to guide land use and development decisions over the next 10–15 years. A parcel-by-parcel analysis of the incorporated areas and their respective ETJs should be performed and incorporated into the County-wide Future Land Use map. Land use and growth strategy in Waller County relies on continued coordination with the incorporated areas and special utility districts within the County.

At the County level, a Future Land Use map is a high-level planning document that incorporates the same types of land uses found on an existing land use map. A detailed Future Land Use map is needed for Waller County with policy emphasis on the following:

- Concentrating urban-scale development within or adjacent to incorporated areas,
- Preserving commercial and industrial opportunities in proximity to the existing regional road network,
- Providing opportunity for estate-scale residential development in unincorporated areas,
- Retaining agricultural lands, and
- Preserving floodplains for their natural function.

Distribution of future land uses should aim for the most efficient and cost-effective delivery of services, maintaining the rural character in much of the County, while capitalizing on infrastructure investments in state roadway facilities through the area, including reconstruction of Hwy 290 and the opening of the Grand Parkway. New urban residential development should be concentrated in areas contiguous to or within incorporated areas of Waller County to take advantage of existing infrastructure. Areas slated for urban development should be in areas that offer a full range of urban services, including access to adequate water and wastewater infrastructure and urban street infrastructure. Areas without these amenities should be slated for more rural or estate residential development.

Non-residential growth, including commercial, office, and industrial land uses should be located as to capitalize on the existing regional transportation network and be served by urban utility infrastructure.

Waller County, like most county governments, does not provide water and wastewater services to its unincorporated areas. Most of the developing areas outside of city limits rely on special utility districts and/or on-site utility systems such as water wells and on-site septic systems. Many municipalities require annexation as a condition of providing municipal services for urban development beyond their corporate boundaries. The County and respective municipality should encourage or require annexation as a condition of utility services beyond its corporate boundaries and outside of current utility service areas.

Policies requiring annexation for municipal utility access, can also act to limit potential proliferation of special utility districts in non-urban areas.

Because counties in Texas do not have land use control through zoning, Waller County should encourage municipal annexation to allow geographic growth of the incorporated areas and land use control in urban areas and along key corridors, when eligible under statutory requirements and when desirable by the municipality.

As urban areas grow, property owners will face increased pressures for development on the fringe of incorporated communities. The agricultural economic base should be preserved by identifying the most productive farm lands in Waller County and working with those land owners.

Residential growth in the unincorporated areas of Waller County tends to be rural or estate-scale development, meaning single-family homes on lots greater than one acre. This type of development helps to preserve the existing character of the more rural areas of the County, but tend to have a high cost of services due to inadequate public infrastructure, including a sub-standard roadway network. Development of unincorporated rural areas often means that adequate public facilities, such as parks and schools are also not available. Additionally, this type of development can lead to fragmented agricultural land if not planned appropriately. Encroachments to producing agricultural lands should be minimized to reduce urban runoff and alteration of drainage patterns that may adversely affect them.

This Comprehensive Strategic Plan and a Future Land Use map is not a zoning ordinance and does not establish zoning districts or zoning district boundaries in Waller County. Rather, zoning is a primary implementation tool of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan. However, only incorporated areas have the ability to zone in Texas. Waller County has very limited control over the growth and development of land outside of existing incorporated boundaries. While the County does not have the authority to control the land use or density of development within its boundaries, incorporated cities within the County can promote and protect the general health, safety, and welfare of persons residing in and adjacent to the municipalities in the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), the unincorporated area that is contiguous to the corporate boundaries of the City.

Waller County does have the authority and responsibility to ensure that minimum subdivision standards are met in unincorporated areas of the County through the review and approval of subdivision plats. In coordination with its incorporated jurisdictions, Waller County can also control and prevent the creation of substandard development in areas intended to become a part of the incorporated urban areas in the future—ensuring that these areas do not become liabilities upon future annexation. The cities also have to ensure adequate water, wastewater, and street infrastructure exists to serve developments.

Housing

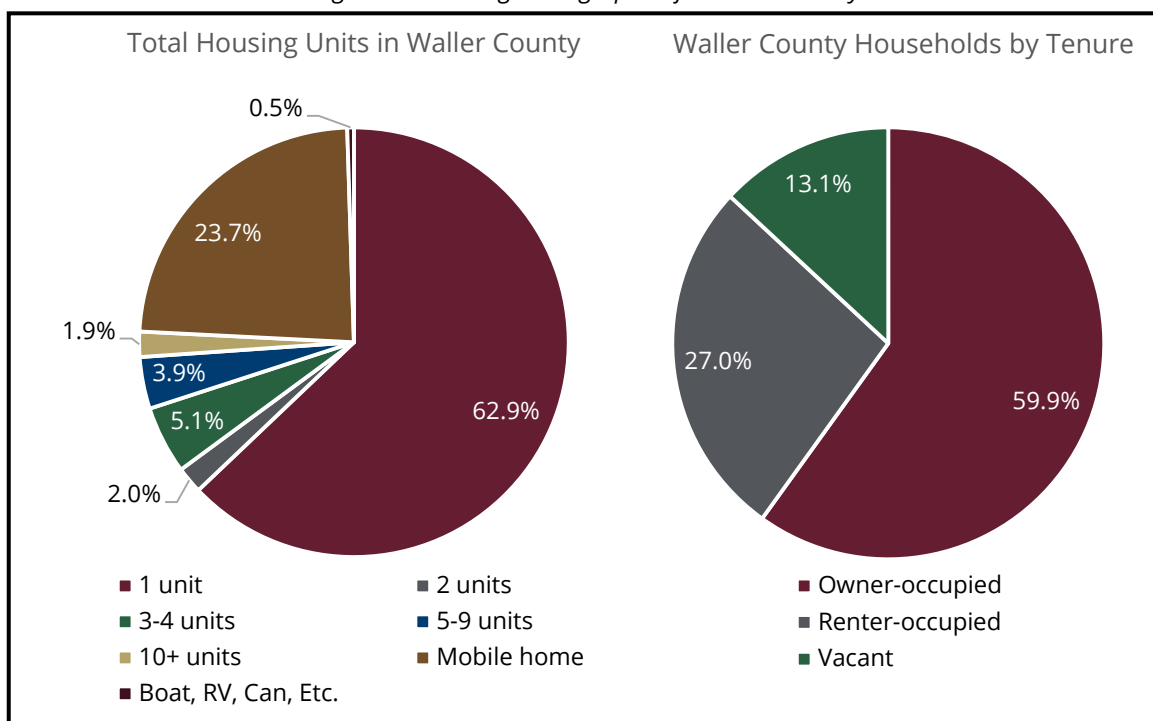
Housing availability, quality, and affordability are all important aspects that people and businesses consider when deciding where to live and work. In particular, businesses want to grow in a place where they can get their employees to come and live. The County realizes that housing must be accessible to people of varying demographics and price ranges.

Housing Demographics

Over 50% of the homes in Waller County were built between 1980 and 2009, with only 3.7% built since 2010. Waller County has been working to provide more modern housing to match their expected growth through new developments including Twinwood and Kickapoo that will be attractive to potential new residents.

Census Bureau estimates from 2015 indicate that the total number of housing units in Waller County is around 16,035, with a homeowner vacancy rate of 1.5% and a rental vacancy rate of 8.9%. One-unit detached houses are the most commonly seen in the County at about 9,648 units, followed by 3,804 mobile homes. More than 75% of homes have two or three bedrooms. Over 70% of householders moved into their units between 2000 and 2014, reflecting the current growth in the County.

Figure 17: Housing Demographics for Waller County



Source: US Census Bureau, 2015

The National Association of Realtors currently has over 800 listings of homes for sale and over 20 homes for rent in Waller County on their website. The Census Bureau's 2015 estimates valued over three-fourths of the occupied units in Waller County to be less than \$300,000, with a median value of \$144,200. This is higher than the Texas median value of owner-occupied housing units of \$136,000. The 2017 median listing price of \$286,000 for all properties in Waller County, including land and multi-unit residents, is only a little lower than the \$295,000 median listing price for Houston. The median list price has had a negative year-to-year trend since November 2015 and was 17% lower in March 2017 compared to March 2016. The median number of days properties were on the market was about 18 days higher than a year earlier in March 2016. This drop in the average number of days on the market since last year reflects the decreasing demand for homes in Waller County, which is also seen in the lower market values. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, the median rent in 2015 was about \$798 with no rent exceeding \$2,500, compared to the Texas median rent value of \$882. This information can provide insight into the types and pricing of new housing to bring to Waller County.

Table 13: Median Values for Select Housing Statistics

Median Housing Statistics	Waller County
Housing Value (2015)	\$144,200
Listing Price (2017)	\$286,000
Closing Price (2017)	\$166,000
Gross Rent (2015)	\$798
Price per Square Foot (2017)	\$115
Number of Days on the Market (March 2017)	89 days

Source: National Association of Realtors (2017); US Census Bureau (2015)

Household composition data from 2015 estimates reveals that over 70% of Waller County households are family households, with about 54% being married-couple families. Those with families tend to own the houses they live in rather than renting them, whereas the majority of non-family households are renters. Two and four-plus person households are most common in Waller County, which is important to consider when designing houses to fit expected occupant sizes. Only about 16.5% of occupied housing units have school-age children, aged six to seventeen years old, in residence. This could be due to a variety of reasons such as the age of the population being older. Most householders in the County are aged 35 to 65, which matches current age demographics and consideration must be given as to how to accommodate these householders as they age. Younger ages tend to rent housing units, rather than owning a unit, so these types of homes should cater toward younger age brackets. Overall, Waller County should focus on creating a mix of "aging-friendly," "family-friendly," and "business-friendly" housing communities.

Future Housing

Housing Waller County residents into the future requires a viable range of competitive residential options, including those that accommodate the needs of professional business talent attracted to Waller County as industries continue to expand, as well as those that offer affordable housing options to young families and elderly people.

Due to Waller County's location in the region, the workforce has a greater deal of flexibility on where they choose to live and work into the future. When communities fail to adequately address housing demands, large segments of the workforce may choose to commute in from outside of the County. This could result in the County being unable to attract the skilled labor force needed to attract quality industry to the local communities.

Based on demographic trends, a variety of new housing product types are appropriate for Waller County. Waller County has low vacancy rates for rental housing, making unit turnover slow, and affordable and attractive options limited. New rental housing units, multi-family in particular, should be located in proximity to industry and schools.

There is also a low inventory of quality and/or affordable for-sale housing options in Waller County. In the past five years, only 110 building permits were authorized in Waller County for new private housing structures. Housing the growing population will require significant new construction to bolster the housing supply and provide desired housing options to the workforce that Waller County seeks to attract and to retain its current population as it ages.

Waller County is expected to more than double its 2010 population by 2050. Closing the gap between the supply and demand of quality and affordable housing options should continue to be a priority in Waller County. Factors that influence the revitalization and expansion of housing include availability, cost of land, community support, financing programs, infrastructure, and the desire and capacity of developers to build affordable housing—to include the management of and reduction of restrictions or barriers for developer-investors to enter the market. Land development standards should be reviewed to ensure that increased cost of development does not make affordable housing options scarce. As a master-planned County, this is the time for the County to take a lead role in housing development regulations and ordinances, with recommendations on zoning to cities.

For the past several years, Waller County has needed more homes, both single & multifamily. With the increasing population, increasing enrollment at PVAMU, and new businesses moving into Waller County and the nearby vicinity, housing demands are rising. New housing developments are currently underway or near completion, which include master-planned communities, such as Twinwood and Cane Island, and residential subdivisions including Kickapoo, Saddle Creek Forest and West Magnolia Forest. With the explosive growth and business development expected, these homes will help meet the demand in the near future.

Waller County's strategic location in the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA makes it a prime location to plan, develop and build a master planned County. There is ample room

for a large-scale development featuring a wide range of housing prices and styles, as well as an array of amenities with multiple non-residential land uses. Taking the time to plan in advance and obtaining community input, a master-planned county could offer amenities that would attract active families and businesses seeking quality neighborhoods.

Annexation and ETJ Growth

Annexation allows, and may even require, cities to extend municipal services, regulations, and taxing authority into areas contiguous to the city limits. Benefits of annexation may include enhancement and protection of gateways, maintaining the ability to annex additional land over time, extension of development regulations and life-safety codes, and increased tax base. A cost-benefit analysis should be completed by the municipality for each area anticipated for annexation. Growth of the region should be continually monitored, as it may be advantageous to annex areas prior to development. Additionally, potential legislation continues to be introduced at the State level that could limit a city's ability to annex land and grow its corporate boundaries. Because of this threat to growing cities, annexations should be undertaken sooner rather than later for eligible areas.

In Texas, there are three primary ways that cities can annex contiguous property in their ETJ, as stated below. In all cases, annexed land must be in the city's ETJ, must be contiguous to the current city limits, and is limited to no more than 10 percent of its incorporated area each year (with 'carryover' permitted up to 30 percent). For agricultural properties, a non-annexation agreement must first be offered to property owners that would allow them to remain in the city's ETJ for a period of 10 years if the property is not developed.

Three Year Annexation Plan

Since 1999, the Texas Local Government Code requires cities to adopt a three year annexation plan. This plan must address timing of areas for annexation, requires an inventory of services and facilities, and requires a municipal service plan identifying services that will be provided to the proposed annexation areas. Annexation of areas included in the City's annexation plan may not be annexed sooner than three years after inclusion in the plan, and such annexation must be completed within 31 days after the third year of the date the area was included. Areas included in the annexation plan, but not ultimately annexed, will not be eligible for annexation for another five years.

Exempt Annexation Process

Texas cities may annex areas without including them in the three year annexation plan if they contain fewer than one hundred separate tracts of land on which one or more residential dwellings are located on each tract.

Property Owner Petition

Owners of land contiguous to the city limits may request to be annexed into the city through a petition, which must be acted on by the respective City Council.

Policy Considerations

Land use policies are intended to guide land use decisions and were developed based on input throughout this planning process. These over-arching policies ensure that decisions made by the incorporated areas and the County further the vision of Waller County.

When evaluating land use, the following policies should be considered:

- The County and Cities will use the Comprehensive Strategic Plan to guide decisions on applications for development when facilities and services are not readily available or where capacity is limited.
- The Cities will rezone property in compliance with the adopted Future Land Use plans, when requested and appropriate.
- The County and Cities will encourage and/or direct development to areas that maximize existing water, wastewater, street, and drainage infrastructure to avoid costly infrastructure improvements and long-term operations and maintenance costs.
- The County and Cities will, over time, improve public facilities and services to ensure that they are adequate so that appropriate development opportunities are created and encouraged.
- The County and Cities will provide opportunities for and encourage a variety of housing types to adequately house all of the County's existing and future residents.
- The County and Cities will encourage an economically viable and compatible pattern of future land use and development, maximizing the market value.
- The County and Cities will ensure, through land use decisions, a fiscally responsible and well-managed land development pattern, including the provision of adequate public facilities and services (streets, drainage, water and wastewater infrastructure), including both availability and capacity.
- The County and Cities will enhance development regulations to manage and provide for growth opportunities.
- The County and Cities will convene an Annexation Team comprised of a sub-committee of the City Councils, Planning & Zoning Commissions, County Judge and Commissioners and County and municipal staffs to determine the most feasible and politically soluble way to expand their physical size through Annexation.
- The Cities will plan for future annexation areas. Urban densities will be encouraged in and near incorporated areas. These areas are intended to allow for new neighborhoods, office parks, and retail and restaurants nearby.

Goals, Objectives, Actions—Land Use

Vision: Waller County will be one of the first strategically-planned counties in Texas with a focus on responsible growth that preserves the heritage of the County and its natural resources.

Goal—Land Use

There will be a balanced and diverse use of land within the County to provide for a wide range of residential opportunities, commercial activities, recreation and agriculture.

Objective A: Encourage the most desirable and efficient use of land and buildings while enhancing the physical and economic environment of Waller County.

- Action 1: Develop and utilize a County-wide existing land use map that includes the ETJs.
- Action 2: Create and implement a County-wide future land use map that includes the ETJs.
- Action 3: Develop and adopt an Annexation Plan that includes ETJs.
- Action 4: Continue County weekly meetings with developers to ensure they follow the County's development vision.

Objective B: Promote smart, clean growth with consistent regulations and codes throughout Waller County.

- Action 1: Establish a forum to discuss zoning, building permits, and building quality standards that involves public leaders such as city councilmen, mayors, judge, and commissioners.
- Action 2: Explore tax incentives for energy efficient builders.
- Action 3: Implement regulations and incentives to control light and noise pollution outside of the main corridors.
- Action 4: Encourage and/or direct development to areas that maximize existing water, wastewater, street, and drainage infrastructure.
- Action 5: Increase infrastructure capacity for future growth, especially for roads and bridges.

Objective C: Preserve the rural and agricultural nature of Waller County.

- Action 1: Establish County-wide uniformity in regulations and ordinances to preserve natural resources such as water and support rural agriculture, where necessary.
- Action 2: Develop a program to provide assistance to farmers wishing to establish an ongoing year-round Waller County farmer's market.
- Action 3: Establish secure networks to produce agriculture products for urban and suburban neighbors.
- Action 4: Promote dove and waterfowl hunting in tourism and branding.

Objective D: Provide for new housing development that matches the demographics of the County's population and industry profile to ensure it is affordable for all.

- Action 1: Ensure there is an adequate variety in terms of housing types within the County that will meet the affordable housing needs of all income and age levels.
- Action 2: Establish areas within Waller County that would be appropriate for higher end homes and/or master planned communities.
- Action 3: Certify that new residential areas are developed to a high standard by reviewing and revising, if necessary, the existing standards for residential development.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Planning Considerations

Planning for adequate county-level community facilities and services ensures that Waller County can meet the demands of its growing population. Existing residents and businesses rely on a basic level of services that should be maintained and enhanced as Waller County grows.

Waller County provides a large range of services to its residents and businesses, including emergency services, utilities, and public facilities. This chapter identifies existing community facilities and services and provides strategies to ensure that levels of service are maintained as the County grows over the next 10–15 years.

Waller County Facilities

At the County level, Waller County has a limited number of facilities available for use and no county parks. Recreational and public meeting centers are primarily found at the city level, which is consistent with most communities, however the County just opened a new and attractive Community Center.

Waller County Community Center

Waller County opened its own community center located in Prairie View in 2017 that provides space for public meetings. This single-story newly completed public recreation building is approximately 4,544 square feet of floor area and designed with the option for future expansion and related site improvements. The large windows overlook part of the Prairie View A&M campus. There is a large meeting room with multimedia capabilities, tables and chairs and an attached kitchen for serving. Additionally, there is a smaller meeting room for use with less people. The County maintains oversight and usage of the building.

Waller County Fairgrounds

The Waller County Fairgrounds, located in Hempstead, is owned and operated by the Waller County Fair Association (WCFA) whose mission is to promote a wholesome and productive lifestyle for youth. Initiated in 1945, the WCFA is a charitable tax exempt 501c3 non-profit organization run by volunteers. A board of directors is appointed each year and members work with individuals in the community to successfully produce their events. The WCFA hosts a variety of annual events including a demolition derby, BBQ cook-off, county fair, rodeo, and sportsman extravaganza. Additionally, they provide many academic and vocational scholarship opportunities to support area youth and advance their mission.

The fairground facilities are available for rent as a whole or by individual parts, paid in advance, by public or private parties. Fairground facilities include:

- A 100x275 foot covered show barn and arena with bleacher seating
- A 100x275 foot rodeo arena, outfitted with bucking chutes and bleachers

- An indoor hall and outdoor pavilion with over 80 picnic tables and the capacity to accommodate about 2,000 people
- The indoor Barbara Carpenter Building, with central air and heating, that can seat about 300 people and includes 20 folding tables and chairs, plus a full kitchen with two refrigerators and three ovens
- A concession stand
- Overnight hookups with electricity and water located across the street from the fairgrounds
- About 30 acres of parking, with stone and grass options

In their commitment to supporting youth, FFA and 4H shows can rent the show barn, Barbara Carpenter Building, and concession stand at a discounted price. Unless receiving approval by the WCFA board, events must take place between the hours of 8 am to midnight. This versatile mix of facilities makes the Waller County Fairgrounds accessible and useful for a variety of groups.

Community Facilities

Waller County is home to a variety of recreation and community centers that serve the community in promoting a healthy lifestyle. More sporting opportunities and professional sport teams can be found in the nearby Houston Area.

Brookshire has both a Civic and Convention Center, which are available for rent between the hours of 8 am to midnight by residents and non-residents when no city activities are planned. The City of Waller also has a Civic Center, with a banquet hall and kitchen, available for rent for public and private events by residents and non-residents. Katy has a variety of community and recreation centers available just outside of Waller County's borders. For instance, the Leonard E. Merrell Center is a 145,000 square foot multipurpose center owned by Katy ISD that was built in 2005 and includes an arena, lobby and meeting rooms. The arena includes 21,600 square feet of space with seating up to 6,000 based on the event. The lobby offers 6,700 square feet of event space with natural lighting and there are three meeting rooms each at 40x25 feet that can be combined into a single large room. It also features on-site parking, locker rooms, a loading dock, temperature controlled meeting spaces, full service catering, professional staff, and multi-media capabilities including wireless internet.

Another option is the City of Katy's Woodlands Park and Community Center which includes an eight acre park with a barbeque pit, covered basketball pavilion, picnic tables, and playground. The Community Center is 31x43 feet, with maximum occupancy at 200 people, and has a full kitchen, indoor restrooms, tables and chairs. It can be rented on an hourly basis for special events. Community fitness classes and senior services day activities are held at this location.

Dedicated Recreation Centers

The Hempstead Recreation Center is open Monday to Thursday 8 am to 9 pm and Friday 8 am to 5 pm, with daily and annual prices based on residency status and age, with 65 years

and older receiving free membership. Scheduled activities include computer and sewing classes, volleyball, basketball and walking. Facilities available for rent include a gym, kitchen, concession stand, four conference rooms, pavilions, water park, and fields for soccer, softball, and football. Rentals are available for Sunday to Thursday 7 am to 10 pm and Friday to Saturday 7 am to midnight.

Community members can also obtain membership to the PVAMU Student Recreation Center for a monthly fee, which includes discounted guest passes. The PVAMU Rec Center membership includes access to a variety of services including locker and equipment rentals, a rock climbing wall, bowling center, a fully equipped gym, and pool access. The Center offers fitness programs, such as Zumba and cycle classes, and their 10,000 square foot fitness center workout space includes 50 cardio, 33 selectorized, and 30 plate loaded/free weight pieces. The PVAMU Recreation Center is open 7 am to 7 pm Monday thru Friday.

Additionally, the PVAMU Recreation Center's Camp on the Hill serves children ages six to fourteen in the Waller County community to promote personal awareness of healthy lifestyle choices. The camp includes breakfast, lunch, and snacks to fuel the pre-planned activities designed to promote cooperation, coordination, and critical thinking. Trained counselors teach basic skills related to a variety of sports ranging from swimming to flag football and tennis. This camp takes place in June and July with weekly sessions held Monday thru Friday, 7:30 am to 5 pm.

Waller County Outdoor Recreation

City parks can be found throughout the County; however, currently there are no County-maintained parks in Waller County. There is also no hike and bike master plan for the County, which could be made in conjunction with the creation of County parks. Biking is currently available along several Farm-to-Market roads. Bike races such as the Bluebonnet Express Metric Century passes through Waller, Pine Island, Hempstead, and Prairie View on its 75 mile race route.

The Houston Oaks Country Club in Hockley is a private membership club offering stocked fishing ponds, trails, softball, swimming, equestrian activities, shooting sports, tennis, spa, golf, and more. Other golfing locations include the public Legendary Oaks course and the semi-private Waller Country Club.

With its rural and agricultural attraction, Waller County is a prime spot for hunting migratory birds and fishing. The Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC) also showcases Waller County's natural beauty, as it is home to over 300 species of birds, 110 mammals, amphibians, and reptiles and over 600 species of plants. This is a non-profit land trust with the goal to "protect greenspace for its conservation and recreational benefits, enhance wildlife habitat, restore tallgrass prairie and wetlands, sponsor scientific research, and offer public programming and activities to introduce the general and school-aged public to the sights and sounds of the prairie." Since 1992, KPC has protected over 20,000 acres of the Katy Prairie either through purchases or conservation easement agreements. Funding

comes from a variety of sources including foundations, organizations, corporations, individuals, and competitive federal grants.

Another outdoor local attraction is Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resort located in Waller and offering cabins, tent, and RV camping. Attractions include swimming and water rides, volleyball, basketball, nature trails, theatre, mini golf, game room, fishing and more. It is open all year round.

Additionally, Dewberry Farms, located in Brookshire, has over 35 attractions including an eight acre corn maze, pumpkin picking, pig races, pony rides, a railroad ride, snack shops and a country store. Dewberry Farms is open to the public Saturday and Sundays from late September to November or Monday through Friday 9 am to 2 pm for school groups or private groups, by reservation. It opens for the Christmas season at the end of October, when people can purchase Christmas trees from the farm.

Waller County Historical Locations

The Waller County Texas Historical Society & Commission is a non-profit organization providing information on the history of Waller County and its historical sites. The Society also operates the Waller County Historical Museum in Brookshire, which is currently closed due to water damage, but hopes to reopen by the end of 2017. The museum primarily features recreated period rooms in the Donigan House, which is a Texas Historic landmark with archives for historical research. It also has two rooms of rotating displays that change every two months.

Additionally, the Waller County Aviation Museum Inc. in Waller is an IRC 501c3 non-profit organization formed in 2012 that promotes aviation history within the County and participates in air shows.

There is also a privately-funded Veterans Memorial 501c3 non-profit Texas corporation started in 2014 that is seeking to build a memorial for servicemen.

Right along the border of Waller and Harris County is the Katy Heritage Museum, the Katy Veterans Memorial Museum, and the Katy Heritage Society. Altogether they offer free features including historical homes for viewing, various vintage farming equipment and artifacts from Katy's past, antiques, photos, military exhibits for every foreign conflict involving the US, and special events such as concerts and vintage baseball games. The Houston area has a variety of high caliber museums that residents in Waller County can visit.

According to the Texas Historical Commission there are 55 historical markers located throughout Waller County near old plantations, cemeteries, and churches. Six of the seven National Register properties in the County are in Prairie View, with the seventh being Liendo Plantation in Hempstead. The Liendo Plantation offers tours and hosts special events, such as weddings and a civil war weekend. Promoting these historical locations will help Waller County preserve its historical heritage as it grows and evolves over the next 20 years.

Waller County Libraries

Libraries provide easy access to information and resources important for personal and community growth. They are excellent resources for job searching, skills development, and entertainment that add value to any community.

Located in Hempstead, the Waller County Library is the main public library in the County. Its only branch library is the Waller County Brookshire-Pattison branch located in Brookshire. The main library is 5,896 square feet and the branch library is 4,400 square feet with 0.22 square feet per capita. There were 14,195 registered users in 2015 with 0.70 library visits per capita. The total number of collection items were 52,437 in 2015, or 1.12 items per capita. There are 7.5 full time equivalent paid staff and one American Library Association (ALA) Master of Library Science (MLS) Librarian. The library's full operating revenue comes from the County. The Waller County Library has a variety of free programs for community members including summer reading programs for kids, crafting and game sessions, storytime, tutoring, movie nights, senior technology classes, and cooking workshops. The library is open 9 am to 5 pm Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; 11 am to 7 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays; and Saturday 9 am to noon.

The Waller County Library is a member in the TexShare Program which is a consortium of Texas libraries that share materials, purchase online resources, and provide support and expertise for their customers. Through this, Waller County has access to their database program that provides ad-free, reliable electronic resources in a variety of disciplines for their patrons 24/7 for a greatly reduced price compared to a separate purchase. Funding for this program is in part due to a grant from the US Institute of Museum and Library Services to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. Additionally, with a TexShare card patrons can visit 524 public, academic, and medical libraries throughout Texas and borrow books. Traditional library loans are still available via the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's Navigator Interlibrary Loan (ILL).

The two other libraries located in Waller County are the Melanee Smith Memorial Library in Waller and the Prairie View A&M University Library in Prairie View. The Melanee Smith Memorial Library has a variety of books and computers with internet access for patrons to enjoy. This library also offers a summer reading program for children. It is open 9 am to noon Tuesday thru Saturday, in addition to being open 1 pm to 5 pm Tuesday thru Friday. The Prairie View A&M University library, known as the John B. Coleman Library, is accessible to community members who can obtain a card for \$10 per year, although TexShare member patrons can use special ID cards from their home institutions to checkout materials. It offers the benefits of a university library in educational materials and research assistance, interlibrary loan services, study spaces, databases in a variety of disciplines, physical and electronic resources, special collections and reference material ideal for research needs. The library's hours vary depending on the semester and special holidays.

Tourism / Ecotourism

Waller County is well-positioned next to the largely populated Houston area which provides a large potential tourist base for the County. Tourism can help support the County's goals at preserving both its natural heritage and historical roots by generating funds to support these goals. Additionally, tourism can foster a strong interest and value base that provides local residents and businesses with incentives to not develop these areas. Visitors contribute to the health of retail businesses in the County and they may themselves invest in starting businesses or setting up country homes in Waller County. The year-round moderate weather combined with its natural features, recreational opportunities, libraries, and historical sites all provide strong incentives to visit and/or move to Waller County.

According to the Perryman Group as quoted in the Houston Business Journal (see Table 14 below), a Waco-based economic analysis firm, Waller County generated \$109,717,244 in gross product in 2016 from the tourism industry. This industry includes restaurants, hotel and lodging, amusement venues and other tourism related properties. Harris County had the highest tourism gross product in Texas, totaling \$23 billion. For the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land metropolitan statistical area which Waller County is a part of, about \$1.55 billion of local property tax from tourism went to ISDs, \$46 million went to cities, and \$82 million went to counties or other entities in 2016. Property tax revenue from tourism was included for hotels, motels, restaurants, entertainment venues and other real estate assets.

Based on fourth Quarter Hotel Occupancy Tax Receipts Data from the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, there are 14 hotels located within Waller County's borders with over 460 rooms to accommodate visitors. They are located throughout the County with four in Hempstead, three in Waller, five in Brookshire, one in Prairie View, and at the Houston Oaks Country Club in Hockley. Visitors can also stay at additional hotels located nearby within towns like Katy and Waller, but outside the County's borders.

Table 14: Regional Tourism Impact 2016

County	2016 Gross Product	# of Permanent Tourism Industry Jobs
Grimes	\$42 Million	502
Waller	\$110 Million	1,223
Austin	\$122 Million	1,220
Washington	\$148 Million	1,681
Montgomery	\$2.2 Billion	25,041
Fort Bend	\$2.2 Billion	25,849
Harris	\$23 Billion	25,849
Texas	\$128 Billion	1,400,000

Source: Houston Business Journal

Public Safety Services

Law Enforcement

There are six law enforcement groups in Waller County working in conjunction with the Texas Department of Public Safety: the Waller County Sheriff's Office, Brookshire Police Department (PD), Waller PD, Hempstead PD, Prairie View PD, and Prairie View A&M University PD. Altogether, there are approximately 135 commissioned officers in Waller County in addition to over 30 civilian employees. As seen in the table below, compared to the State, Waller County had a lower robbery, burglary, larceny, and auto theft crime rates in 2015. Although the rates of crime per 100,000 people were higher for murder, rape, and assault in Waller County, the total crime rate in Waller County was lower than Texas as a whole at 2,036.9 versus 3,233.3 crimes per 100,000 population. The Texas crime rate is based on the 2015 Texas population of 27,469,114.

Table 15: 2015 Crime Rates in Waller County

Waller County Totals Population 46,933	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Auto Theft	Total
Number Offenses	4	26	30	169	180	498	49	956
Rate Per 100,000	8.5	55.4	63.9	360.1	383.5	1,061.1	104.4	2,036.9
TX Rate Per 100,000	4.8	44.4	116.1	245.2	555.0	2,023.6	244.2	3,233.3

Source: Texas Department of Public Safety, 2015

The Waller County Sheriff's office has four sites: one main facility that includes the jail and three small satellite offices. Currently, the Sheriff's office employs 91 people comprised of jailers, bailiffs, dispatch, animal control, mounted patrol, deputies, support staff and canines. The jail averages 85 prisoners a day with room to house 110 people. The lobby to enter the Sheriff's office is common with the lobby to go into the jail area. Officers are equipped with body cameras with camera footage retained for 90 days.

The Sheriff's office oversees the 9-1-1 dispatch service that covers all areas inside Waller County excluding the area covered by the Katy Police Department. In 2016, they received 33,962 calls for service.

The County recently purchased 7.5 acres of land on Hwy 90, close to Katy and Brookshire, with immediate access to Interstate 10. The County plans to build a Precinct 4 County Annex which will bring County services closer to citizens who live in the southern part of the County. Opening in 2018, citizens can access services of the Justice of the Peace, Constable, County Clerk, County Commissioner, and Department of Public Safety at this location.

Additionally, the County has an Emergency Management Coordinator with the duty of organizing and directing the emergency management program. He reports to the County Judge. The emergency response plan goes into effect when the emergency exceeds the resources of the local fire departments, law enforcement agencies or emergency medical services. The plan includes traffic flow in times of emergencies, mitigation, education,

response duties and takes into account special needs facilities. In 2016, the Office of Emergency Management was activated twice for extreme flooding.

As the County increases in population, careful consideration needs to be given to increasing the number of substations, equipment, fleet and personnel in order to provide public safety. The current Sheriff's Office is crowded and creates concern with the jail being in the same building. The number of officers will be critical in being able to respond timely to emergency calls, whether residential, business or on the roadways.

Waller County Fire Departments & Emergency Services

The Waller County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) administration and training office is located in Hempstead, in addition to one medic station. Other medic stations include one in Pattison in the Pattison Area Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) and two in Waller, with one housed in the Waller VFD. The Waller County EMS offers training such as CPR and emergency vehicle operation classes throughout the year. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, Waller County had 108 EMS personnel in 2016, a ratio of 477.1 people per EMS personnel. This is a little higher than the Texas ratio of 455.5 people per EMS personnel, showing that there is room for additional EMS personnel, especially as the population grows.

There are eight volunteer fire departments offering services in Waller County, in addition to one partially volunteer and partially-paid fire department. There are 237 total volunteer firefighters ready to serve Waller County residents, with 170 considered active. The Tri-County VFD, located in Hockley and servicing the northeastern portion of Waller County, also has 17 paid firefighters on their team. There are two fire departments located in Hempstead, two in Brookshire, one in Prairie View, two in Waller County and one in Pattison. Some fire departments also provide fire education; for example, the Waller VFD visits schools to teach children about fire safety.

There are three Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) in Waller County, which allow 9-1-1 calls for fire to transfer seamlessly without compromising crucial data such as location and number information provided during these 9-1-1 calls. They include the Brookshire Police Department, the Waller County Sheriff's Office, and the Waller Police Department. As the County increases in population, the need for new fire stations and emergency personnel will be paramount to providing quick and effective response to calls.

Goals, Objectives, Actions—Facilities and Services

Vision: Waller County will be one of the first strategically-planned counties in Texas with a focus on responsible growth that preserves the heritage of the County and its natural resources.

Goal—Facilities and Services

To provide a broad range of community services, safety initiatives, and recreational facilities for the residents and visitors of Waller County.

Objective A: Maintain and enhance County sports facilities, community event center, and library facilities.

- Action 1: Encourage community support and feedback on use and expansion of services and facilities.
- Action 2: Maintain a strong maintenance and upgrade of all County-wide service facilities.
- Action 3: Support plans to increase events at the Fairgrounds.

Objective B: Enhance and expand parks and open spaces to meet the needs of Waller County residents for opportunities to experience the outdoors and to enhance the overall image and character of the community.

- Action 1: Develop and implement a Master County Parks Plan that is integrated with a Master Hike and Bike Trails Plan.
- Action 2: Develop partnerships to acquire and establish a County Park in each precinct.
- Action 3: Develop a bike trail system using existing roads, making all roads multi-modal.

Objective C: Increase tourism in Waller County.

- Action 1: Coordinate a County branding and tourism strategy between the County, cities, chamber of commerces, economic development organizations, and school districts in order to capitalize on Waller County's heritage and assets.
- Action 2: Develop and implement a County-wide tourism plan.
- Action 3: Promote retail, restaurants, and entertainment districts that are connected to residential areas.
- Action 4: Implement a County Hotel Motel Tax to generate funds that can be reinvested into the County to support tourism and growth.

Objective D: Continue provision of public safety services to ensure an efficient and safe County.

- Action 1: Maintain high standards and ongoing training in all sectors of the County's and City's law enforcement and first responders.
- Action 2: Begin evaluation to locate new fire stations and police substations in proposed ETJ annexation areas.
- Action 3: Increase County jail and additional law enforcement office facilities in areas of higher population growth.
- Action 4: Develop a college law enforcement internship program that effectively utilizes college interns in assisting local law enforcement and allocate space at law enforcement agencies to accommodate interns.
- Action 5: Establish and conduct a uniform and organized survey method to conduct individual policeman and departmental performance ranking.
- Action 6: Enhance community relations by maintaining a positive media campaign that informs and educates the community on the role and dedication of law enforcement, fire, and EMS services in Waller County.

TRANSPORTATION

Planning Considerations

An adequate transportation system is vital to economic growth and quality of life in communities. The expansion of transportation infrastructure has the ability to both create opportunities and improve conditions in Waller County. Transportation planning addresses all modes of travel, including pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, transit, rail, and air. Waller County stakeholders have voiced various desires related to transportation in the County. This includes increasing accessibility via bus and commuter rail, while avoiding high speed rail.

This chapter describes the Waller County's existing transportation network and future plans for the transportation infrastructure in the County and nearby regions which may impact the County. The purpose of this chapter is to ensure that Waller County's multi-modal transportation network is enhanced through both public and private investment. Updating transportation in the region will make Waller County more attractive to businesses and tourists, while accommodating the current area residents.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is a regional organization bringing together local governments to tackle region-wide issues and conduct regional planning. H-GAC has a 13 county service region and is designated as Waller County's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Transportation Management Area (TMA). Therefore, it is responsible for helping plan to accommodate the growth within the region with sufficient transportation infrastructure. H-GAC works on various projects including environmental and congestion assessments, a long-range Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is a four year program of capital improvement projects proposed for funding by federal, State, and local sources within the Houston-Galveston Metropolitan Area. Its TMA status allows H-GAC to have more authority in setting priorities for implementing projects listed in the transportation improvement program.

Bus Stations (Inter-City / Intra-City)

City and County leaders and citizens have expressed strong interest in having bus stops in convenient locations throughout the County, which can help with both unifying the County via connectivity and decreasing congestion which can become an issue as populations grow. According to the Gulf Coast Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan demographic profiles, revised in July 2016, low ridership and low funding led to the termination of previous flexible bus routes in Waller County communities. However, the Colorado Valley Transit (CVT) has future multi-county (Austin, Colorado, Waller, and Wharton) transit routes planned for non-holiday weekday 6 am to 6 pm with local stops in Brookshire, Hempstead, Prairie View and the University, and the City of Waller. Additionally,

flexible route and demand response services allows for tailored transportation requests to provide coverage even in low density areas and throughout the County. Set, customized routes for six to fifteen people who travel over fifteen miles to work, with similar schedules and living location, can be created with the STAR Vanpool as well. This particular service is offered by the CVT in conjunction with the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County. These bus services are a valuable asset for accommodating residents, businesses, and people visiting Waller County.

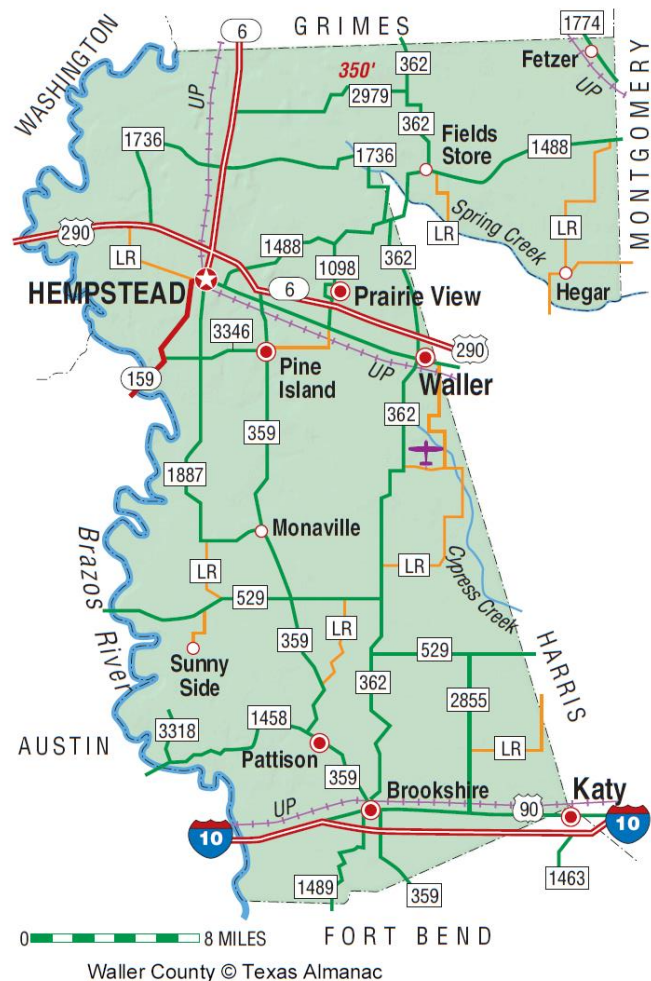
The Colorado Valley Transit has a 3,200 square mile and four county service area, including Waller, Colorado, Wharton, and Austin Counties. It is the largest rural transit provider in H-GAC's 13-county service region, making over 86,394 trips in 2015 between the four counties. The CVT is authorized under Texas Transportation Code Chapter 458 and receives state funding for its services. Riding the bus is a very inexpensive service with demand-response service available by day-advance reservations for only \$2.00 one way for inner county and \$5.00 one way between its service area counties. Free fare is offered for seniors over 65 years old in Waller County.

Highways / Roads

Interstate 10 (I-10) and Hwy 90 service the southern part of Waller County, with I-10 connecting Houston with San Antonio. I-10 in Brookshire had the most traffic with 54,014 cars running on it daily in 2015. Hwy 90 had 5,684 cars pass on it daily to the east of Brookshire and 1,285 to the west. The largest count on Hwy 90 in Brookshire was 10,754 a little to the east of the FM 359/362 intersection.

US Hwy 290 connects Houston to Austin, passing through the northern portion of the County, and provides an important transportation artery to attract businesses to Waller County. To the west of the US 290 intersection with Hwy 6 north of Hempstead, daily traffic counts in 2015 were at 20,362 while to the east 34,239 people drove on US 290 daily.

Figure 18: Waller County Boundary Road Map



State Hwy 6 connects to US Hwy 290 in Hempstead and leads up to College Station, where Texas A&M University is located about 45 minutes away. The 2015 traffic counts on Hwy 6 above the US 290 intersection were at 17,845 daily, while below the intersection in Hempstead the daily count was 7,737 cars. There are also several Farm to Market (FM) roads connecting the northern and southern parts of Waller County, with FM 359, FM 362, and FM 1488 being the most traveled. FM 359 continues into Fort Bend County, while FM 1488 runs into Montgomery County to connect Hempstead and Magnolia. In 2015, FM 359 daily traffic counts averaged 4,508 where it entered into Pine Island. FM 362 in Brookshire averaged 4,182 cars daily in 2015, while FM 359 between Pattison and Brookshire averaged 6,979 cars daily. FM 1488 headed northeast of Hempstead averaged 4,127 cars daily in 2015, with 6,666 near the County border.

Waller County Mobility Plan

The Houston-Galveston Area Council has partnered with Waller County to create a mobility plan. The Waller County Mobility Plan (WCMP) will examine current and future mobility needs in the County. The 18 month study will examine the existing roadway network conditions and identify roadway needs and barriers while preserving the County's environmentally sensitive areas, agricultural land uses and cultural heritage. The plan will include a list of recommended roadway projects that will address the identified traffic issues. In addition, the study will recommend revisions to the County's thoroughfare plan and create Implementation Workbooks for each of the participating jurisdictions. The first stakeholder meeting for the Waller County Mobility Plan kicked-off in May 2017.

Highway 36A Study

The 2012 H-GAC Regional Goods Movement Plan identified the need for an "Urban Core Relief/Port Connector Route" to connect local port areas to major roadways, while bypassing highly congested areas in the region. Local businesses would also be able to benefit from the enhanced access to markets the mobility upgrades would provide. A study on the environmental impact of Hwy 36A is part of the effort to create a Houston freight relief route recommended by the H-GAC Regional Goods Movement Plan and other regional mobility studies, in addition to providing a better hurricane evacuation route system. Outside of Waller County, TxDOT is expanding SH 36 to four lanes from the Port of Freeport to US 59/I-69S, with an expected letting date of 2018 for the portion north of West Columbia and 2022 for the portion south to Freeport. Additionally, the development of a four-lane limited access roadway connecting SH 36 west of Spur 10 near Rosenberg to Interstate 10W and US 290/SH 6 in northern Waller County is being considered. TxDOT will conduct the environmental impact study to affirm the purpose and need of this proposed project, identify reasonable alternative alignments such as reusing existing roadways, evaluate their contribution to the project, identify environmental impacts, confirm the plan is consistent with currently existing mobility plans, suggest preferred "build" alternatives if necessary, and estimate the development costs. The estimated cost to develop the complete Draft Environmental Impact Statement is \$2 million in Surface Transportation

Program funds for TxDOT and about 400,000 Transportation Development Credits. A completion date is not currently available for the SH 36 updates in Waller County.

I-10 Expansion Project

To decrease traffic congestion, facilitate hurricane evacuation, and improve safety, I-10 will be widened and its frontage roads converted from two-way to one-way roads. As seen in the Expansion Map, I-10 will be widened from 4 to 6 lanes from Brookshire (FM359) to Sealy (SH36/FM3538). Additionally, vertical clearances will be increased to facilitate freight movement, as this project is part of the effort to create a regional “relief route.” Funding was committed in 2016 for the first part of the I-10 expansion to the Brazos River in Waller County. This portion of the project has a June 2017 letting date and the total project cost will be \$568 million. Overall, this expansion project will make I-10 one of the widest highways in the area.

Figure 19: I-10 Expansion Map



Source: TxDOT

Katy Prairie Conservancy Economic Impact and Benefits Study

The Katy Prairie Conservancy's (KPC) Economic Impact and Benefits Study identifies ways that KPC may be impacted by future mobility needs and plans, such as the proposed Highway 36A. Their goal is to “develop and deliver a strategy for mobility that protects and expands the land and offering to protect the [Katy Prairie] and existing KPC lands.” Past and current studies will be consulted to determine how future transportation systems will affect the natural lands of the KPC, in addition to creating and analyzing alternative routes proposed to pass through or by the Katy Prairie or KPC. An out-of-state, public-interest traffic engineer consultant will handle the mobility portion of the Economic Impact and Benefits study. Other portions of this study, led by Allied Ecological Services, will cover the importance of the Katy Prairie based on the services it provides. Field work on this study is expected to be completed in the fall of 2017 and the final report completed by the end of 2017.

Air Transportation

Houston Executive Airport

Houston Executive Airport is a privately-owned public access airport built on the 1,980 acre site of an old 1962 private airport, Air Rice, with the first plane landing in 2006. It is conveniently located near I-10 and a rail line which offers benefits to incoming businesses which may want to utilize the airport. It was constructed by WCF, LLC to provide a new business aviation airport and business and technology center for corporations and individuals on the west side of the Greater Houston Metropolitan Area, which previously lacked any airports west of the Grand Parkway. This airport provides relief to business travelers who want to avoid the congestion found at the William P. Hobby International Airport and George Bush Intercontinental Airport.

The Houston Executive Airport offers a 6,610 x 100 foot runway and the largest arrival canopy in the world, at 0.75 acres. The airport has 10 large community hangars, 60 individual plane hangars and a control tower. Located on site is also the Henriksen Jet Center which provides a variety of amenities including car and catering services, a comfortable lounge, Wi-Fi, a concierge service and more to support traveling businessmen. Revenue includes hangar fees and fuel charges with taxes being paid to Waller County.

The vision the owner has for the Houston Executive Airport includes adding a second parallel runway and extending the length of the runway, as well as increasing business presence at the airport by developing it into a business and technology zone for corporate and support sector offices. Additionally, the owner is interested in the airport being home to light industrial and high-tech manufacturing, distribution and warehouse facilities, and aviation/high-tech education and training centers. Airport executives realize the importance of diversification and have managed to widen their customer base outside of oil and gas. The full realization of this will make the Houston Executive Airport a greater asset for Waller County, which will benefit from the businesses that will be drawn to the area and the tax revenue the site will generate. The challenge they face is funding to grow and expand infrastructure.

Sugar Land Regional Airport

The Sugar Land Regional Airport (SLRA), located about 25 minutes south of Katy, is also designated as a relief airport for the George Bush Intercontinental Airport and Hobby Airport in Houston. It is the fourth largest airport in the greater Houston area and focuses on serving as a corporate business executive airport for the Houston Metro area. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) ranks the SLRA as a National General Aviation Airport, one of only eight in Texas, and the airport has no current or future plans to provide commercial airline services.

The SLRA is a public use facility with regular service hours from 5 am to 11 pm daily. Lounges, conference rooms, WiFi, retail shops and food, car rental facilities, a flight school, aircraft repair and avionics sales are all available at this airport. Other amenities include a six-bank complex of nested t-hangers for lease, a 20,000 square foot terminal, state-of-the-

art 85 foot Air Traffic Control Tower and radar system, a reinforced concrete 100 x 8,000 foot runway, an all-weather instrument landing system and high-intensity lighting. The runway configuration is capable of handling 268,000 takeoffs or landings annually, with current annual operations exceeding 90,000. This SLRA offers free U.S. Customs and Border Protection Services regularly Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5 pm. Revenue generated by the City's owned and operated, multi-award winning GlobalSelect FBO helps fund airport improvements.

George Bush Intercontinental Airport

The George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) is located in north Houston, about an hour from Waller County using U.S. 290. It ranks as the 11th busiest airport in the US for total passenger traffic, citing over 40 million passengers served in 2015. IAH offers services to about 180 different destinations all over the world via its five terminals and runways. Twenty-nine passenger airlines fly into and out of IAH. Total 2015 cargo activity at IAH account for \$15 billion in international trade. It ranks 18th in the nation for trade tonnage, handling over 429 thousand metric tons of freight in 2015.

William P. Hobby Airport

The William P. Hobby Airport (HOU) is located in southeast Houston, around 40 minutes via I-10 from Katy. In 2015, it opened an international terminal complex serving Mexico, and Central and South America. This airport served over 12 million passengers in 2015 and ranked as the 36th busiest airport for passenger totals in 2014. Hobby Airport is served by passenger service airlines: American Airlines, Delta, jetBlue, and Southwest Airlines which is its largest. Passengers can fly to over 55 destinations around the world via Hobby Airport. In 2015 the airport also opened a federal inspection services facility.

Easterwood Airport

Owned by Texas A&M University, this small airport located in College Station, TX is less than an hour north of Waller County. It offers daily nonstop flights via Delta and American Airlines to the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and George Bush Intercontinental Airport which allows passengers to connect to a large variety of locations worldwide. Easterwood Airport has three runways with the dimensions of 2134 x 45 meters, 1572 x 46 meters, and 1570 x 46 meters.

Railroad Operations

As with most areas in history, railroads played a huge part in attracting businesses and settlers to Waller County. In 1858, the Houston and Texas Central Railway was built into the County, terminating in Hempstead which grew into a major trade and agricultural production center. The County boomed soon after. Similarly, later rail links encouraged the growth of communities like Pattison, Prairie View, Brookshire, and Waller. As time progressed and technological advances were made, dependency on rail for transport of both people and goods decreased. However, with the population explosion in the region, a need to alternate mobility infrastructure have led to proposals for both regular and bullet passenger trains. Currently such services are not available in the County.

The area still holds a demand for rail services in the transport of commercial goods. Union Pacific railroad (UP) runs along Hwy 6 and Hwy 290. The railroad passes by the Emerson Industrial Park, home to Emerson Process Management, located in the town of Waller and then heads into Harris County. Additionally, UP passes briefly through Waller County along FM 1774 in the northeastern part of the County. In the southern portion of Waller County, the Union Pacific line runs along Hwy 90 into Harris County, with rail access in Brookshire.

Other rail lines in the region, although not passing through Waller County, include the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway and the Kansas City Southern (KCS) Railway. BNSF leaves Houston headed southwest to Rosenberg along US 90, then follows Texas 36 North adjacent to Waller County through Sealy and Somerville. KCS lines start in Rosenberg heading southwest along US 59 and west along US 90A, then along I-10 westward from Columbus, TX.

Regional Commuter Rail

The Gulf Coast Rail District (GCRD), with the assistance of the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) and other regional engineers, conducted a feasibility study in 2012 on developing a regional commuter rail system, independent of existing freight tracks, that runs through Waller County to Hempstead. Commuter rail systems are an important component of providing traffic relief as the region's population grows. GCRD considered both right-of-way options adjacent to freight lines or abandoned freight rail corridors that extend into Waller County along the Union Pacific Railroad Eureka Subdivision. This is a 44 mile corridor running along US 290 from northwestern Harris County to the City of Hempstead. The Conceptual Engineering Study

Figure 20: Hempstead Regional Commuter Rail Study Area



Source: Gulf Coast Rail District

for Hempstead Corridor Commuter Rail Study was funded under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 (ARRA) and provides data regarding potential ridership, station locations, connectivity to local transit and essential capital improvements. Additionally, connections to access the existing Amtrak station in downtown Houston have been considered by GCRD. Based on the TxDOT 2016 Texas Rail Plan Update, an Austin to Houston Passenger Rail Study completed in 2011 also included potential alignments between Austin and Hempstead, with the potential connections in Bryan/College Station or Brenham. These connections would help increase educational opportunities for Waller County residents and bring in travelers and businesses into the County, while helping control traffic congestion. The final Hempstead report in 2012 and the 2015 Commuter Rail Feasibility Final Report indicated that these commuter rail projects are both feasible and viable, with the ridership adequate to justify the investments made. Such projects would not impede the operations of the Class I railroads currently in operation in the region. Currently, these projects are waiting on resources to move forward.

High Speed Rail

The proposition of a dedicated high speed passenger rail connecting Houston and Dallas is currently being considered by entities outside of Waller County. No stops on the rail are planned for Waller County. If built, part of the rail line would be built in the northeastern portion of the County, greatly affecting agriculture, cultural heritage, and land values.

At present, Waller County, the City of Waller, and the Waller County Sub-Regional Planning Commission have all passed resolutions in opposition to this project due to the negative impacts this project may have on Waller County, its residents, and the tax base. Concerns include impacts on quality of life, economic development, Waller ISD, and natural areas within the County. An environmental impact study has not been completed to date. Additionally, the property rights of private landowners in rural areas are a major issue, as many do not want to give up their land for the high speed rail. With little to no consultation of local governments on the project, the County continues to reach out to larger entities, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, to make their voice heard on this issue.

Goals, Objectives, Actions—Transportation

Vision: Waller County will be one of the first strategically-planned counties in Texas with a focus on responsible growth that preserves the heritage of the County and its natural resources.

Goal—Transportation

The transportation network of Waller County shall connect the individual cities of Waller County and the region to provide reliable access to a variety of neighborhoods, businesses, and services.

Objective A: Provide an efficient, safe and connective transportation system that is coordinated with existing needs and plans for future growth.

- Action 1: Participate in the completion of the Waller County Mobility Plan and implement recommendations as funding allows.
- Action 2: Review and act as necessary on the results of studies including the Highway 36A study by TxDOT and the Katy Prairie Conservancy, H-GAC regional mobility studies and thoroughfare plans, and the current plans to expand I-10.
- Action 3: Use transportation studies in conjunction with the Existing and Future Land Use Plans to ensure that the various land uses within the County are accommodated by the transportation system.
- Action 4: Purchase right-of-ways where needed in anticipation of infrastructure development.
- Action 5: Ensure that the following concerns are addressed when making decisions regarding transportation within Waller County:
- * Regional transportation
 - * Roadway integrity (i.e., ensuring mobility)
 - * Roadway maintenance
 - * Connections between existing roadways
 - * Traffic concerns and signalization
- Action 6: Ensure updated evacuation routes are available to both private and public entities.
- Action 7: Identify and improve condition of roads and bridges as per a Capital Improvement Plan.

Objective B: Enhance the connectivity of Waller County with public transportation, both inter- and intra-County.

- Action 1: Strengthen coordination efforts with the Colorado Valley Transit to increase the number of buses, bus stops and frequency of services for residents and visitors to easily travel throughout Waller County and the region.
- Action 2: Explore feasibility of requesting extension of HOV/Bus lane from Houston to Hempstead.
- Action 3: Invest in commuter rail initiatives, with a park and ride setup, to decrease road traffic as population grows.
- Action 4: Ensure reliable Taxi/Shuttle/Uber/Lyft transportation services are available, especially connecting communities with major transportation infrastructure points like airports.
- Action 5: Support the expansion of the Houston Executive Airport.

Objective C: Support and improve alternative transportation modes within the County, including pedestrians and bicycles.

- Action 1: Develop and promote a Master Hike and Bike Trails Plan that creates a bikeway system of safe and efficient on-street bikeways and off-street paths to meet the recreational and alternative transportation needs of residents.
- Action 2: Provide safe road and bridge crossings for hikers and bikers.

IMPLEMENTATION & ADMINISTRATION

Waller County's Comprehensive Strategic Plan is a long-range policy document intended to guide the decisions of County and City leadership, including the County Judge and Commissioners, County Staff, Mayors and City Councils, Planning and Zoning Commissions, and department representatives from across the County. The Comprehensive Strategic Plan is the guiding policy document for the decisions made on behalf of the community over time. The planning horizon is approximately 10–15 years, and so community leaders must remain committed over the long term with decisions that further the goals and vision of the residents of Waller County.

The purpose of this chapter is to lay out a framework for implementation. This chapter includes a description of the roles and responsibilities of implementation of the Plan and establishes a process for annual review and periodic evaluation of the Plan. Key stakeholders, including Waller County residents and business owners, landowners and developers, and other influential civic groups or organizations must be re-engaged throughout the implementation of the County's Comprehensive Strategic Plan. Public involvement may include advisory committees, public community meetings, open houses, and other public forums.

The Plan's recommendations must be integrated into County and City policies, programs, and daily operations, including development, project management and administration, regulation and enforcement, and provision of utilities, facilities, and/or services. This Plan must also be used in conjunction with the plans and programs of the County's individual counterparts and regional neighbors.

Plan Implementation Methods

The Comprehensive Strategic Plan should be continually consulted to ensure that decisions that are made further the goals and strategies of the Plan. There are several specific ways in which the Comprehensive Strategic Plan should be implemented, including the creation of small area action plans, zoning regulation, subdivision regulation, Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and annexation.

Development Regulations

Action Plans

The Comprehensive Strategic Plan is a bird's eye view of Waller County. Engaging residents and stakeholders at this level is often difficult. Through a separate small area action planning process, residents can more directly affect the future of the area where they live and work. Small area action plans are focused action plans for targeted areas of the County and may include city, neighborhood, corridor, district, or downtown plans. These plans build on the vision and strategies adopted during the comprehensive planning process, putting them into action on a smaller scale. Small area action plans are adopted as

amendments to the County's Comprehensive Strategic Plan and are an implementation tool of the Plan.

Zoning Regulation

To more effectively control land use with limited powers, Waller County leaders need the cooperation and buy-in of City leaders within the County. Since counties cannot establish zoning, encouraging consistency and commitment to a unified County-wide Plan related to zoning, regulations and ordinances is paramount.

If done in compliance with the Comprehensive Strategic Plan, city zoning can be one of the most effective implementation tools. Zoning most directly affects the built environment and physical form of the cities and can create or alleviate compatibility issues between uses. Existing zoning districts should be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan. When possible, individual rezoning applications should be reviewed for consistency with the Future Land Use Map and the strategies contained in the Comprehensive Strategic Plan before land is rezoned.

Subdivision Regulation

The purpose of subdivision regulations is to ensure that land being prepared for sale or development has adequate streets, utilities, and drainage. Subdivision regulations protect the public from purchasing properties with inadequate provision of utilities or without emergency access. The subdivision review process also ensures that public improvements meet the city and county standards prior to being dedicated to the public. In Texas, cities have the authority to extend subdivision standards into their ETJ to ensure that as areas are annexed that they do not become a liability to the city.

Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and Annexation

Cities within Waller County should exercise their limited development controls in the ETJs to ensure adequate infrastructure in developed areas as they are annexed in the future. Requiring adequate fire flows (flow rate of a water supply that is available for firefighting), potable water and wastewater infrastructure may help Waller County influence the timing, pattern, and quality of development in the ETJs. Through annexation, cities are also able to control land use and site development standards. Benefits of annexation may include land use controls, additional area for future growth, alleviate health or life safety concerns through application of building and fire codes, and increased property/sales tax. A careful cost-benefit analysis should be done when considering annexation.

Annual Plan Review

Waller County's Comprehensive Strategic Plan should be monitored to ensure that the goals of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan are relevant over time. The Plan is a living document that should be consistently reviewed and potentially amended to reflect changing desires of stakeholders and changing conditions of the County.

County staff should prepare an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the Plan, including implementation efforts over the previous year, consistency of decisions made, needed

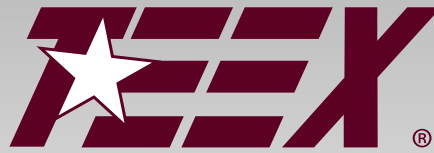
amendments to ordinances and regulations, challenges in Plan implementation, and recommended amendments to the County's Comprehensive Strategic Plan. This annual evaluation should be presented to the County Commissioner's Court in a public forum for their review and acceptance. During this annual evaluation, an action plan should be established for Plan implementation over the upcoming year.

Periodic Plan Evaluation

Upon each five year anniversary of the adoption of the County's Comprehensive Strategic Plan, Waller County's leadership should re-engage the stakeholders to assess the County's progress in the implementation of the Plan. At this time, demographic shifts and trends, original assumptions, current state of the economy, and changes in County circumstances should be evaluated and needed Comprehensive Strategic Plan amendments should be recommended to the County Commissioner's Court.

Keeping the Plan current and responsive to current needs of Waller County and its residents is crucial to the long-term success and implementation of the Waller County Comprehensive Strategic Plan.

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