

# Llano County Transportation & Economic Development Plan Update

July 25, 2022



Prepared by the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) with funding from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)



## Executive Summary

Lying at the western extreme of the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) region and proudly holding on to its title “Deer Capital of Texas,” Llano County may give the impression that it is immune to many of the growth pressures being experienced by its eastern neighbors that are closer to Austin and along the Interstate Highway (IH) 35 corridor. Not so. Llano County faces challenges to remaining the great place to live, work, and visit that it has been for a long time. Population growth, housing costs, workforce training, traffic safety, and broadband availability are all topics that county residents were able to easily identify as items to address when CAPCOG began working on this Transportation and Economic Development Plan (TED) in Summer 2021. This plan examines each of those items and identifies others that should be considered for future growth and development of Llano County.

While for decades, Llano County grew at a relatively slow pace, growth has picked up considerably in recent years. From 1970 to 2010, Llano County’s population grew by 1-4% between each decennial Census. Between 2010 and 2020, grew by 10 percent, adding about 2,000 new residents, mostly in the Horseshoe Bay and Kingsland areas, and the county grew by over 3% just between 2020 and 2021. This growth suggests that more people will continue discover Llano County as the rest of Central Texas continues to see robust growth, increasingly in counties around Austin. with the county’s population growth continues to be driven by new residents 45 years and older.

The county, which has historically been very rural, is poised for increased business growth along with ongoing increases in residential development. The county has been an affordable option for people who commute to jobs in Travis, Williamson, Burnet, and other nearby counties but there are ongoing plans for more upscale subdivisions while the demand for workforce housing is increasing without plans to address it.

Residents travel outside of the county for groceries, housewares, and other goods much of the time – nearby Burnet County’s growth has fueled a variety of commercial development ranging from big box stores to locally-owned shops, particularly in the downtown Burnet area. That said, commercial development follows residential development fueled by population growth so Llano County is in a good place to begin preparing for how it could absorb and benefit from future development including some small employers.

In 2015, the first Llano County TED was completed by CAPCOG with strong participation by local elected officials, community leaders, and citizens. At that time the county was not seeing the growth it is currently and, although the plan laid out many options to kickstart economic development efforts, the momentum was hard to sustain once the planning process was done. There is a greater need now to move forward with strategies that will address challenges and build on opportunities.

Many of the transportation issues from the last plan have been addressed or are in the planning stages. Ongoing and new issues addressed during the TED Update meetings are largely a result of general growth within the county but also an indication of more pass-through traffic which can create both opportunities and challenges. For example, the City of Llano’s downtown area – one of the County’s best assets – is where State Highway (SH) 16 bottlenecks at the bridge crossing the Llano River. The plan’s Steering Committee voiced concerns for the long-term viability of the bridge. It is a good time for the community to consider a location nearby for secondary crossing and begin to think about how the current, historically significant bridge could fit into efforts to expand tourism in central Llano.

The three cities of Llano, Horseshoe Bay and Sunrise Beach Village make up approximately 35 percent of the county’s population, while the county’s four Census-Designated Places (CDPs) (Kingsland, Buchanan Dam, Buchanan Lake Village and Tow) account for 45% of the county’s population, with unincorporated

areas outside of a CDP account for 20% of the County's population. The largest community in the county is Kingsland, with a 2020 population of 7,028. As Kingsland continues to grow, there will be an increasing need for traffic circulation, sidewalks, recreational facilities, emergency services, and public safety. These pressures, along with the desire for more employment opportunities and many other livability issues has caused many community members to consider incorporating as a city to provide additional mechanisms to manage ongoing growth Kingsland is perhaps the county's biggest challenge and its biggest opportunity. It is the most viable area for small to medium size employers (15-50) to locate. Nearly 2,500 commuters leave Llano County each day for employment in nearby counties. Bringing some employers to this area would provide tax revenue to support new infrastructure as well as create jobs closer to home.

Many of Llano County's main challenges aren't unique to the county, but they will make a significant difference in how the area will grow and progress in the future. Poor access and limited options for broadband services will restrain business expansion and make the county unattractive to younger generations who may otherwise wish to live in the county, especially given its affordability in other respects relative to more expensive counties within the region. It may also hold back professionals who would like to live in Llano County and telecommute to a job in Austin or other urban areas.

With its recent trends in fast growth and the many opportunities that have been identified, Llano County is facing possibly one of the most important times in its history. The commitment demonstrated by stakeholders in the early stages of developing this Transportation and Economic Development Plan can provide the momentum needed for success in its implementation.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction:

Llano County's original TED was produced by the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and adopted by the Llano County Commissioners' Court in December 2015.. The original plan involved community meetings, a community survey, travel demand modeling completed by Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI), demographic and economic analyses, and recommendations for transportation and economic development projects and strategies. This document represents an update of that plan. It studies the demographic and economic factors that influence the county's growth and implications for its transportation infrastructure and economy. It also provides a review and status report for projects identified in 2015, and recommendations based on current data and input from the community.

History and experience suggests transportation has significant implications for economic development and vice versa. When performed in conjunction, transportation and economic development planning can be mutually reinforcing. The partnership between CAPCOG and TxDOT provides a plan that can serve Llano County as a foundation for future planning efforts. CAPCOG is committed to providing assistance to Llano County in its efforts to implement the plan once adopted by the Commissioners Court.

## Public Input

The 2021-2022 Llano County TED Update meetings were organized with assistance from County Judge Ron Cunningham, and at least one additional member of the Commissioners Court attended each meeting. This involvement demonstrated the type of leadership needed to ensure efforts to implement the plan are carried out by Llano County and other officials. Perhaps even more importantly, this plan is based on broad participation and support from local residents to ensure its overall sustainability.

CAPCOG conducted two steering committee meetings in Llano in June and July of 2021 with public and private sector representatives selected by County Judge Ron Cunningham. The committee included representatives from the City Councils of Llano, Horseshoe Bay, and Sunrise Beach Village; Llano Independent School District (LISD), the Mid-Coast Central Medical Center, and Ben E. Keith Beverages. The June meeting kicked off a roundtable discussion on the top economic development needs for Llano County which resulted in broadband, workforce development in the trades and hospitality industry, workforce housing/infrastructure (water and wastewater), and county-wide tourism being identified as the greatest needs. The July meeting discussion focused on transportation priorities including downtown issues such as traffic bottlenecks on the historic Roy B. Inks Bridge, hazardous cargo parked on the square, and parking issues for larger vehicles such as recreational vehicles (RVs), trailers, and trucks. Concerns were brought up regarding the condition of the historic Roy B. Inks bridge on SH 16 and the need for an alternative bridge nearby.

Two outreach meetings open to the public were conducted in Llano in October 2021, one in Llano and one in Kingsland. The main topics of discussion at the Llano meeting on economic development revolved around broadband, workforce housing, and utility infrastructure needs in the City of Llano. In the Kingsland meeting, broadband, parks and recreation facilities for the unincorporated community, and the potential for a tri-county community college with Burnet, Gillespie, and Llano counties were the main topics of discussion.

Finally, a county-wide tourism meeting was held in October 2021 that included travel and tourism representatives from the communities of Castell, Kingsland, and Llano, TxDOT, and the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association. Discussion items focused on identifying vacation rentals, collection of hotel occupancy tax (HOT), and the potential for a Llano County Visitor Center with staff on the east side of

the county.

## Geography of Llano County

Llano County, like all counties, includes a variety of communities. As a starting point for this plan, a review of some of the basics on the geography of the county is helpful.

- Llano County is 934.06 square miles located in the Texas Hill Country, adjacent to Blanco, Burnet, Gillespie, Mason, and San Saba Counties, about 1-2 hours away from Austin and San Antonio.
- There are three incorporated cities located in Llano County:
  - **Llano** (the county seat), which is located close to the center of the county;
  - **Sunrise Beach Village**, which is located in the southeastern corner of the county along Lake LBJ; and
  - **Horseshoe Bay**, which is also in the southeastern portion of the county along Lake LBJ, and which partially extends into Burnet County.
- There are a total of four “Census Designated Places” (CDPs) located in Llano County, which constitute distinct, identifiable communities despite being unincorporated: Kingsland, Buchanan Dam, Buchanan Lake Village, and Tow, all of which are located along the Colorado River/Lake Buchanan.<sup>1</sup>

*A **Census Designated Place (CDP)** is a populated area that generally includes one officially designated but currently unincorporated community, for which the CDP is named, plus surrounding inhabited countryside of varying dimensions.*

*CDPs are used to collect statistical data that would normally be collected in the event that the area was an incorporated municipality, such as population, housing, education, and economy.*

*The boundaries of a CDP have no legal status and may not always correspond with the local understanding of the area or community with the same name. Since the 2010 Census a CDP’s name must be one that is recognized and used in daily communication by the residents of the community and the CDP should have boundaries based on the area associated with residents’ regular use of the named place.*

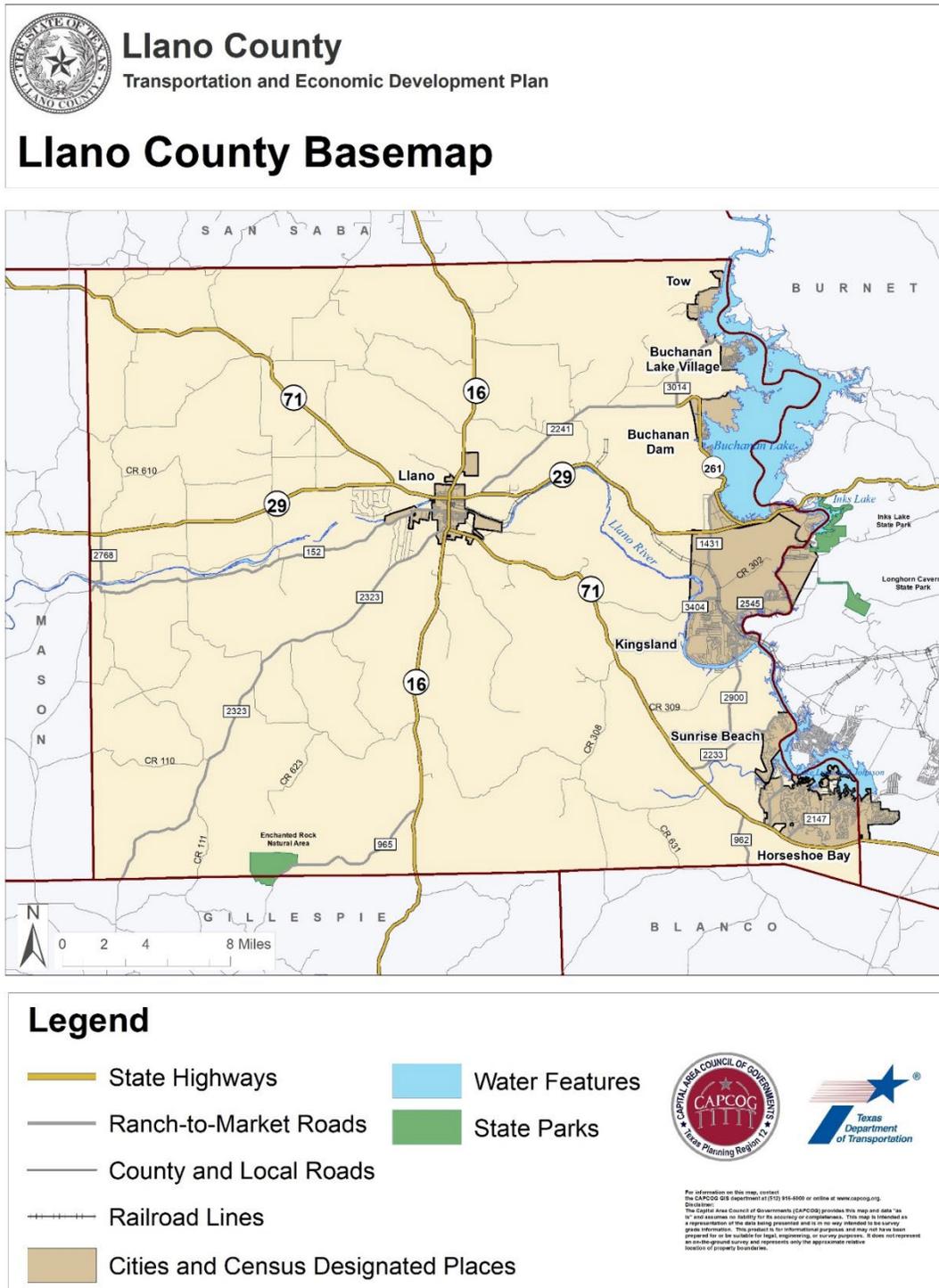
- The County also has a number of other smaller communities that are not incorporated cities or CDPs but may have a post office or otherwise can sometimes self-identify as a distinct community such as Valley Spring in the northwestern corner of the county and Castel along the western edge of the county.
- There are three “urban clusters” that the Census Bureau identified in Llano County following the 2010 Census:<sup>2</sup>
  - Llano (2010 population: 2,832, population per square mile: 1,349.20)
  - Kingsland (2010 population: 6,433, population per square mile: 713.60)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/FR-2018-11-13/2018-24571/context>

<sup>2</sup> The Census Bureau will be releasing new “urban areas” based on the 2020 Census in December 2022.

- Horseshoe Bay (2010 population: 3,134, population per square mile: 1,002.10)
- There are 8 ZIP codes in use in Llano County:
  - 78607 (Blufton Post Office, located along Lake Buchanan south of Tow)
  - 78609 (Buchanan Dam Post Office, located at the southern end of Lake Buchanan)
  - 78631 (Harper Post Office, located in Gillespie County)
  - 78639 (Kingsland Post Office, which also extends into Burnet County)
  - 78643 (Llano Post Office, covering most of the county's land area)
  - 78657 (Horseshoe Bay Post Office, which also serves a part of Burnet County)
  - 78672 (Tow Post Office, located in the northeast corner of the county)
  - 76885 (Valley Spring Post Office, located in the northwest corner of Llano County)
- Three school districts serve Llano County:
  - Llano Independent School District (LISD), which serves most of the county
  - Burnet Consolidated Independent School District (BCISD), which covers a small area of the county around Lake Buchanan
  - Johnson City Independent School District (JCISD), which serves a small area in the southeast of the county south of SH 71
- Llano County is one of ten counties in State Planning Region 12 –(CAPCOG), along with Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Travis, and Williamson Counties.
- Llano County is one of 11 counties in the TxDOT Austin District, along with Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Gillespie, Hays, Lee, Mason, Travis, and Williamson Counties.
- Llano County is in the Hill Country Transit District (HCTD), along with Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Mason, Milam, Mills, and San Saba Counties.
- Llano County is served by Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area, which includes all of the CAPCOG counties except Travis County.
- Llano County is located in the service district for Central Texas College (CTC), along with Gillespie, Mason, Burnet, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Mills, McCulloch, and San Saba counties, along with parts of Bell, Williamson, and Travis Counties, but is not located in the taxing district for CTC.

Figure 1-1. Llano County Base Map



## Chapter 2. Existing Conditions

The first step in the planning process was to gain an understanding of the existing conditions in Llano County. Several factors were considered, including:

- Demographic and socioeconomic data,
- Land use,
- Housing,
- Internet access;
- Traffic volumes for multiple modes of travel,
- Vehicle crash data,
- The availability of alternative modes of transportation,
- Economic conditions, and
- Natural, environmental, and historical features.

Understanding these factors provided the basis for population projections, an evaluation of transportation needs, possibilities for economic development, and priorities for preservation.

### Demographic and Socioeconomic Data

Planning for the Llano County's economic development and transportation needs requires a solid understanding of existing demographic conditions and trends. Data discussed in this chapter are based on data from the 2010 and 2020 decennial censuses, the Census Bureau's 2021 annual population estimates, Emsi (economic modeling software), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). This section provides details on:

- Population counts and densities,
- Growth rates and migration,
- Age distributions,
- School enrollment,
- Educational attainment,
- Poverty rates,
- Language, and
- Race and ethnicity.

### Population Counts and Densities

The U.S. Census Bureau's most recent population estimate for Llano County showed a total population of 21,978 as of July 1, 2021.<sup>3</sup> 65% of Llano County's population lives in unincorporated areas, which includes four "Census Designated Places" (CDPs), while the remaining 35% of the population lives in

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Vintage 2021 Population and Housing Unit Estimates. Incorporated Places and Minor Civil Divisions Datasets: Subcounty Resident Population Estimates: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021 (SUB-EST2021). Available online at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-total-cities-and-towns.html>

three cities: Horseshoe Bay, Llano, and Sunrise Beach Village. While the City of Llano is the county seat and close to the geographic center of the county, Horseshoe Bay actually now constitutes the largest city in Llano County. The following table summarizes the July 1, 2021 populations, land areas, and densities for the county, each city in Llano County, and the unincorporated areas of the county.

Table 2-1. Populations and Densities of Llano County and its Cities, July 1, 2021

City or Place	Population, July 1, 2021	Land Area (Square Miles)	Density (persons per sq. mile)
<b>Horseshoe Bay City</b>	4,257	14.32	313.5
<b>Llano County Part</b>	3,428	12.11	299.3
<b>Burnet County Part</b>	829	2.22	389.6
<b>Llano City</b>	3,325	5.27	635.1
<b>Sunrise Beach Village</b>	739	1.69	453.3
<b>Unincorporated</b>	14,240	894.90	15.9
<b>Llano County Total</b>	<b>21,978</b>	<b>934.06</b>	<b>23.5</b>

While the Census Bureau provides annual estimates of city and county populations, it does not provide annual population estimates for CDPs. Therefore, the most recent population data for these communities are from the 2020 Census. The following table summarizes the population data for each city, each CDP, the remainder of the unincorporated area of the county, and the county as a whole from the 2020 Census.

Table 2-2. Populations and Densities of Llano County and its Cities, CDPs, and other areas, April 1, 2020

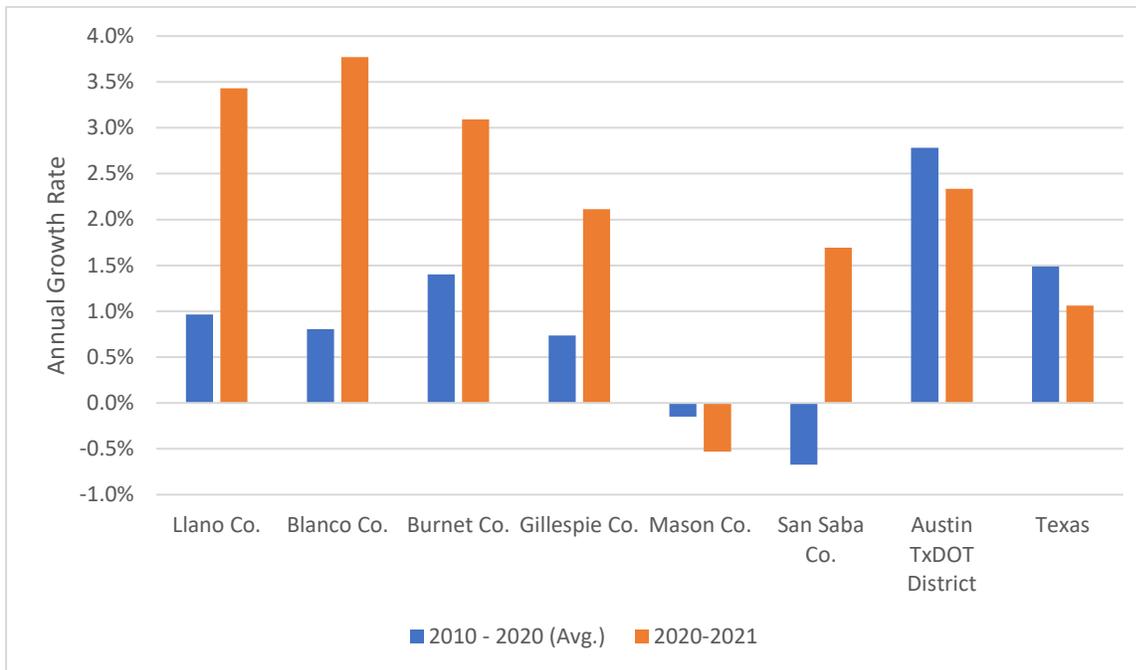
City or Place	Population, 2020	Land Area (Square Miles)	Density (persons per sq. mile)
<b>Buchanan Dam CDP</b>	1,508	7.75	194.6
<b>Buchanan Lake Village CDP</b>	720	1.49	483.2
<b>Horseshoe Bay City</b>	4,257	14.32	297.3
<b>Llano County Part</b>	3,428	12.11	283.1
<b>Burnet County Part</b>	829	2.22	373.4
<b>Kingsland CDP</b>	7,028	9.05	776.6
<b>Llano City</b>	3,325	5.27	630.9
<b>Sunrise Beach Village</b>	739	1.69	437.3
<b>Tow CDP</b>	226	1.82	124.2
<b>Remainder of County</b>	4,269	894.90	4.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,243</b>	<b>934.06</b>	<b>22.7</b>

As the table above shows, the Kingsland CDP accounts for roughly half of the total population in the county's unincorporated areas and one-third of the county's total population. It also has a higher population and population density than any of the three cities in the county. The other three CDPs in Llano County (Buchanan Dam, Buchanan Lake Village, and Tow) constituted another 12% of the county's population. Approximately 65% of the county's 2020 population was located in cities or CDPs along Lake Buchanan, with 16% located in the City of Llano, with the remaining 20% located in the remaining unincorporated areas of the county.

## Population Growth Rates and Migration

Data from the Census Bureau’s July 1, 2021, population estimates show rapid growth in Llano County of 3.43% compared to July 1, 2020.<sup>4</sup> Llano County grew faster than all but one of the surrounding counties, and had the 2<sup>nd</sup>-highest growth rate among adjacent counties. Llano County’s 2020-2021 growth rate exceeded the growth rate for the Austin TxDOT district and was more than 3 times faster than the statewide growth rate of 1.06%. This appears to reflect a broader trend in these counties (except for Mason County) of growth quickening from 2020-2021 relative to growth rates in the prior decade.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 2-1. Average Annual Population Growth Rate, 2010-2020 and 2020-2021



The Census Bureau’s 2021 county population estimates also include an analysis of the components of change from one year to the next. The following table shows the data for Llano and surrounding counties.

Table 2-3. Components of Population Change for Llano and Surrounding Counties, 7/1/2020 - 7/1/2021

County	Natural Change	Net Domestic Migration	Net International Migration	Total
<b>Llano</b>	-252	995	5	729
<b>Blanco</b>	-65	505	-1	432
<b>Burnet</b>	-183	1,743	-8	1,527
<b>Gillespie</b>	-165	713	27	565
<b>Mason</b>	-11	-11	2	-21
<b>San Saba</b>	-10	106	2	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>-686</b>	<b>4,051</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3,329</b>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Vintage 2021 Population and Housing Unit Estimates. Incorporated Places and Minor Civil Divisions Datasets: Subcounty Resident Population Estimates: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021 (SUB-EST2021). Available online at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-total-cities-and-towns.html>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Censuses, 2010 and 2020. Avg. growth rates reflect compound growth.

Notably, virtually all of the growth experienced in Llano County and all of its adjacent counties was driven by net domestic in-migration, which more than over-compensated for the net decrease in population from natural events.

Looking over the prior decade, the following table shows the Llano County population in 2010 and 2020 from the decennial censuses, as well as the populations of the various cities and CDPs within the county.

Table 2-4. 2010 and 2020 Populations for Llano County and its Communities

Geographic Area	2010 Population	2020 Population	Change	% Change
<b>Llano County</b>	19,301	21,243	1,942	10.06%
<b>City of Horseshoe Bay</b>	3,418	4,257	839	24.55%
<b>Llano County Portion</b>	2,682	3,428	746	27.82%
<b>Burnet County Portion</b>	736	829	93	12.64%
<b>City of Llano</b>	3,232	3,325	93	2.88%
<b>City of Sunrise Beach Village</b>	713	739	26	3.65%
<b>Unincorporated</b>	12,674	13,751	1,077	8.50%
<b>Buchanan Dam CDP</b>	1,519	1,508	-11	-0.72%
<b>Buchanan Lake Village CDP</b>	692	720	28	4.05%
<b>Kingsland CDP</b>	6,030	7,028	998	16.55%
<b>Tow CDP</b>	n/a	226	n/a	n/a

The Kingsland CDP and the Llano County portion of Horseshoe Bay accounted for 90% of the population growth from 2010 – 2020. The remaining area of the county, excluding these two areas, grew by only 198 residents. The Census Bureau’s July 1, 2021, population estimates continued to show higher growth in Horseshoe Bay since 7/1/2020 relative to the other cities in the County:

- Horseshoe Bay (Llano County portion): +4.52%
- Unincorporated areas: +3.56%
- Sunrise Beach Village: +2.68%
- Llano: +1.76%

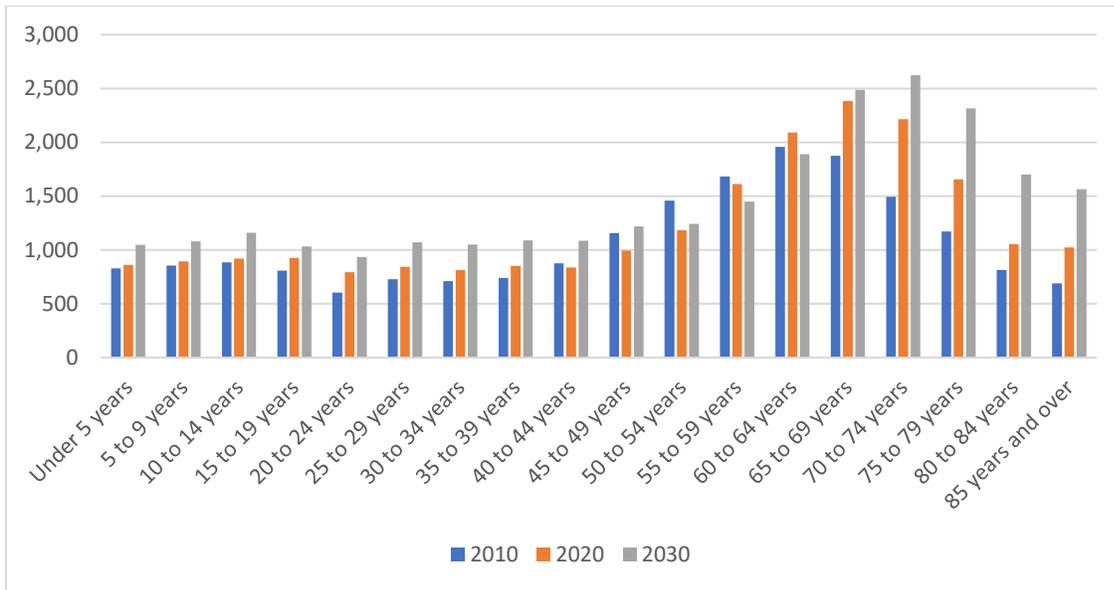
July 1, 2021, population estimates are not available for CDPs, but anecdotally, the population increases in unincorporated areas is likely dominated by growth in the Kingsland CDP.

### Age Distribution and Population Growth

One of the key demographic issues that Llano County faces is the shrinking share of the working-age population. Between 2010 and 2020, the non-working-age population groups of seniors (65+) grew by 38% and children (younger than 15) grew by 7%, but the working-age population (15-64) grew by just 2%. Over the next decade, the population is expected to add another 4,085 people (19% growth), but 75% of that growth is projected to be seniors (58%) and children /under the age of 15 (18%). Growth is expected to be particularly strong in the highest age groups: +40% for ages 75-79, +61% for ages 80-84, and +53% for ages 85+.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Source: Emsi Q3 2021 Data Set

Figure 2-2. Population by Age Group 2010, 2020, and Projected for 2030

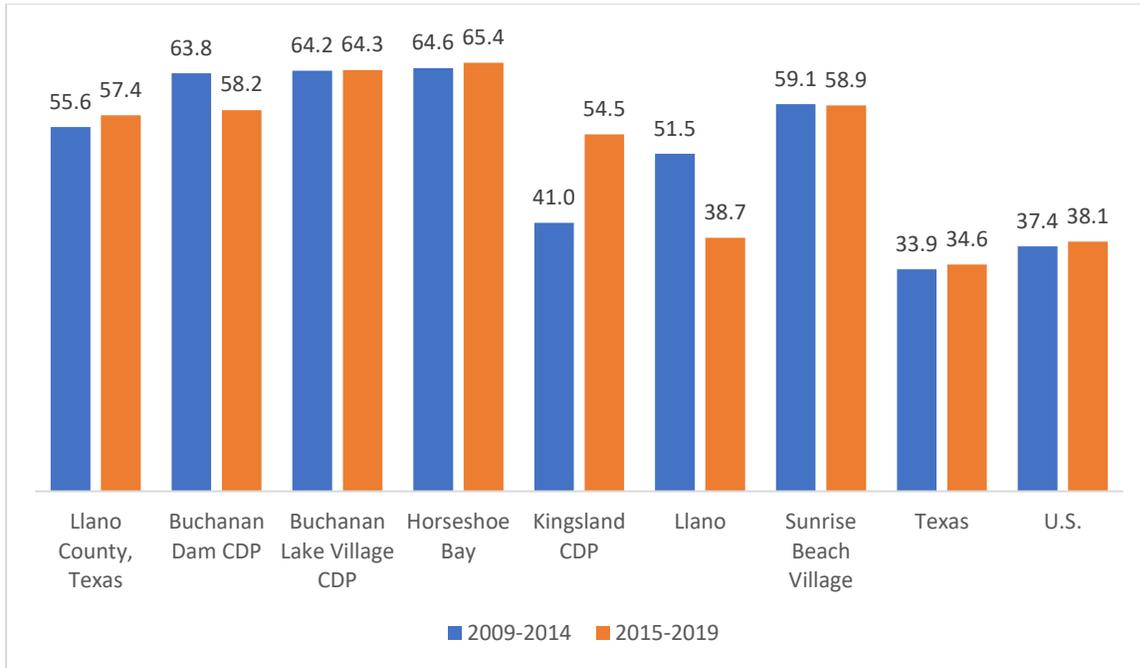


These trends have led to the county’s median age increasing from 55.6 years old in the 2009-2014 American Community Survey (ACS) to 57.4 years old in the 2015-2019 ACS.<sup>7</sup> And while the state’s population and U.S. population also grew a bit older during these years, Llano County grew older quicker, with some communities having median ages of over 60 years old. Within Llano County, the demographic profiles of Kingsland and City of Llano have reversed themselves, with Llano now being the youngest community within the county and Kingsland’s population starting to more closely resemble the other lakefront communities with older populations.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Note: While the Census Bureau released 2016-2020 ACS data in March 2022, CAPCOG uses the 2015-2019 American Community Survey throughout this report due to its availability earlier in the project and the abnormal social and economic conditions in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the effects it may have had on data collection efforts that year.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables: TableID B01002: Median Age by Sex. Available at [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Median%20Age&g=0100000US_0400000US48_0500000US48299_1600000US4810984,4810990,4834862,4839304,4843144,4871228,4873424&tid=ACSDT5Y2019.B01002&hidePreview=true):

Figure 2-3. Median Age 2009-2014 and 2015-2019

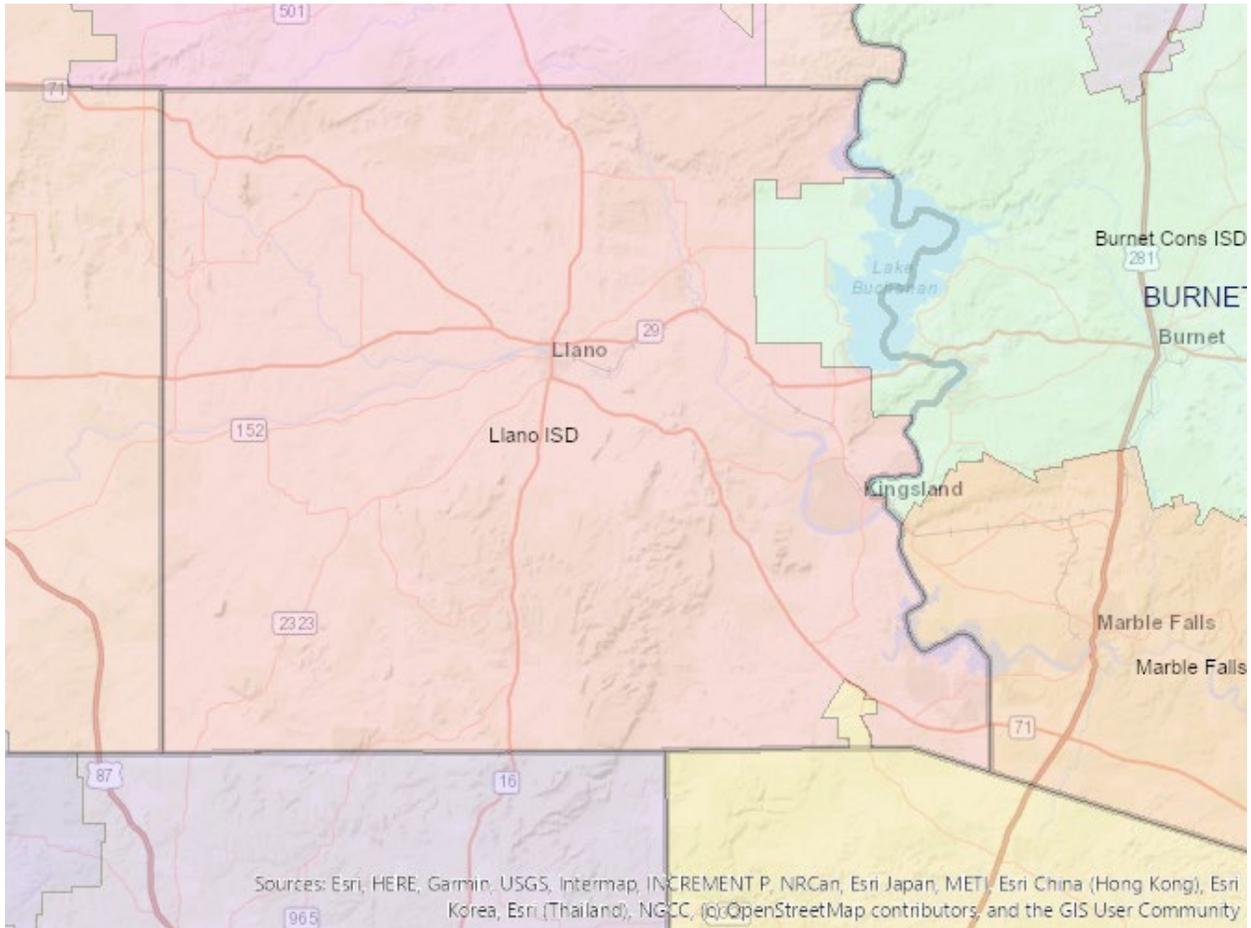


### School Enrollment

Most, but not all, of Llano County, is served by LISD. There are also portions of the county near Lake Buchanan that are covered by BCISD and a small area along the Blanco County border covered by JCISD . A map of the school district boundaries is shown below.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Source: Texas Education Agency School District Locator: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/general-information/school-district-locator>.

Figure 2-4. School Districts in Llano County and Vicinity



There are four schools located in Llano County, all of which are LISD schools:

- Llano Elementary (K-5, plus early education and pre-K);
- Packsaddle Elementary (grades K-5, plus early education and pre-K, in Kingsland);
- Llano Junior High School (grades 6-8);
- Llano High School (grades 9-12).

The portion of Llano County that is covered by BCISD sends children to schools located in Burnet.

The 2020 Census showed no full-time residents in this part of the county.<sup>10</sup>

The number of students enrolled in each grade district-wide is shown below, followed by overall school enrollment trends since the 2014-2015 academic year.

<sup>10</sup> [https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerwebmain/TIGERweb\\_main.html](https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerwebmain/TIGERweb_main.html)

Figure 2-5. Llano ISD Enrollment by Grade, 2020-2021 School Year

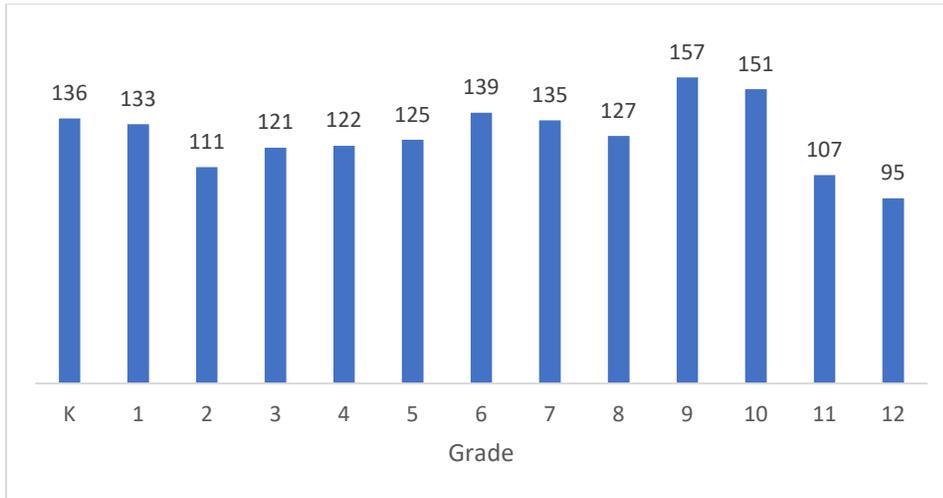
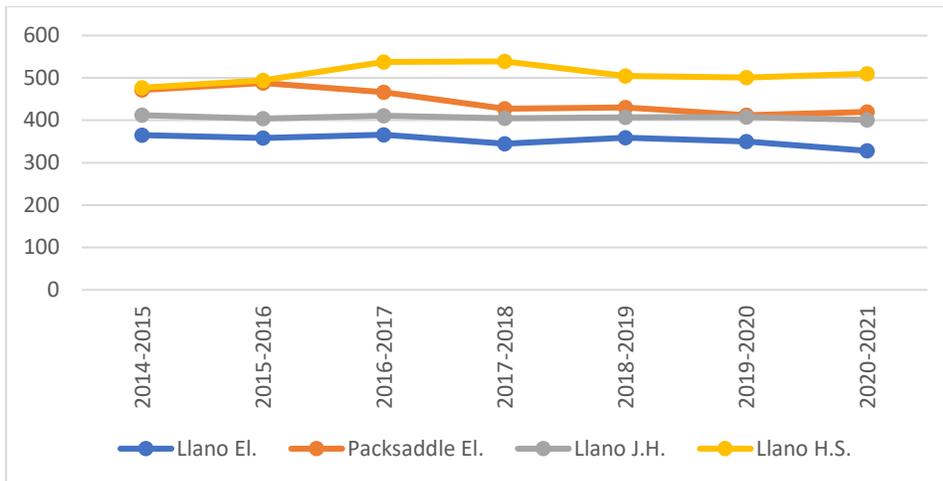


Figure 2-6. Llano ISD School Enrollment Trends 2015-2016 through 2020-2021



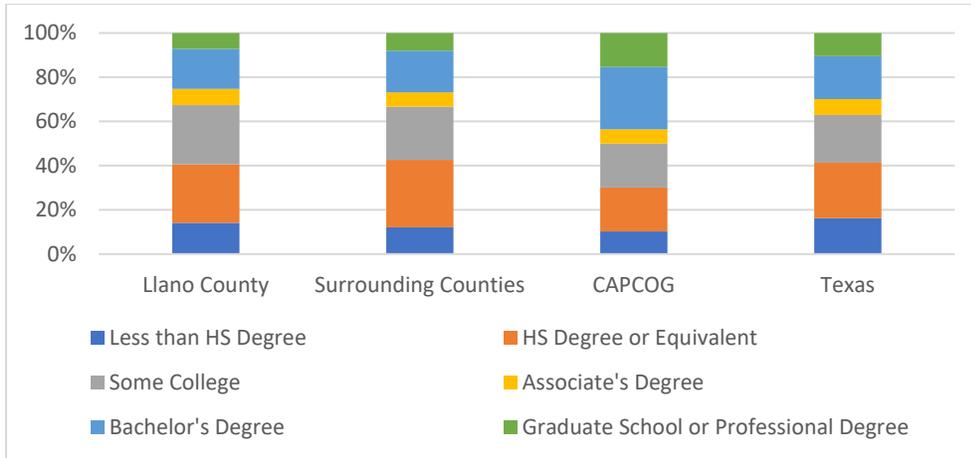
Total K-12 enrollment for LISD for the 2020-2021 school year was 1,659, down 7% from a peak of 1,781 in the 2016-2017 school year. All four schools have seen decreases in enrollment relative to 2016-2017 enrollment, with enrollment at the two elementary schools down 10% each, enrollment at the junior high school down by 2%, and enrollment at the high school down by 5%. However, with the number of children under the age of 15 projected to grow by 20% over the next decade, and the significantly higher number of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders than current juniors and seniors currently, both an opportunity and a challenge are expected for the county. Training and retaining these young people to remain in Llano County after completing school should be a higher priority for the county. In addition, making sure that there is quality, affordable childcare available will help ensure that the maximum number of working-age people are able to enter and remain in the work force.

### Educational Attainment

The 2015-2019 ACS showed educational attainment in Llano County lagging behind adjacent counties and the state as a whole, and significantly behind the CAPCOG region as a whole. During that time 33% of Llano County residents 25+ years old had attained at least an associate degree, which is identical to the 33% for adjacent counties, and slightly less than the 37% for Texas, and considerably less than the

50% COG-wide rate. For that same period, 25% of the population 25 years old or older had at least a bachelor’s degree, compared to 27% for adjacent counties, 30% for the state as a whole, and 44% for the CAPCOG region.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 2-7. Llano County Educational Attainment for Population 25+ Years Old 2015-2019 Compared to Surrounding Counties, CAPCOG, and Texas



### Poverty

Poverty rates in Llano County are lower than they are statewide. The City of Llano, however is the only area of the county with a poverty rate higher than the state.<sup>12</sup>

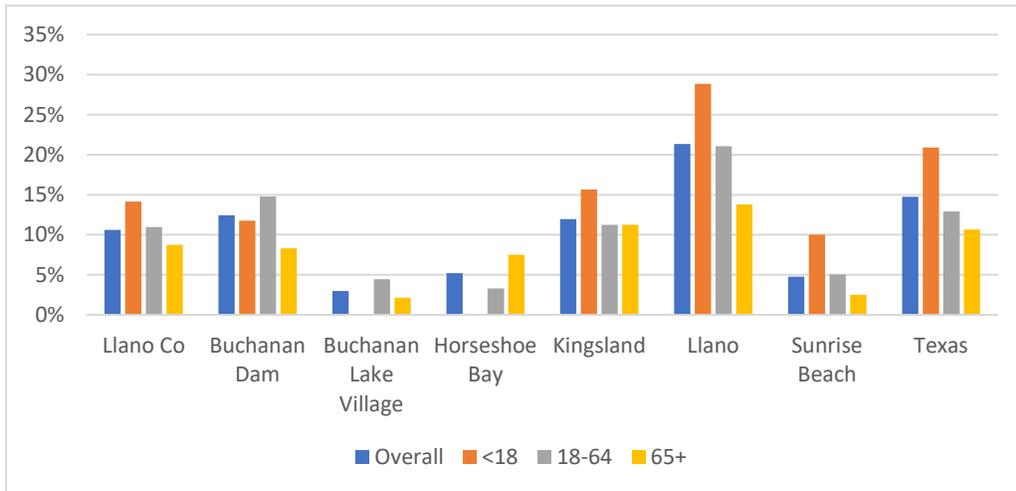
**Federal Poverty Level Definition:** *The United States Department of Health and Human Services defines the federal poverty level (FPL) based on a household’s annual income and how many people are in the household. For 2021, the FPL is defined as:*

- \*\$12,880 for individuals,*
- \*\$17,420 for a family of 2,*
- \*\$21,960 for a family of 3,*
- \*\$26,500 for a family of 4,*
- \*\$31,040 for a family of 5,*
- \*\$35,580 for a family of 6,*
- \*\$40,120 for a family of 7, and*
- \*\$44,660 for a family of 8*

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2015-2019 American Community Survey. Table B15003: Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2015-2019 American Community Survey. Table S1701.

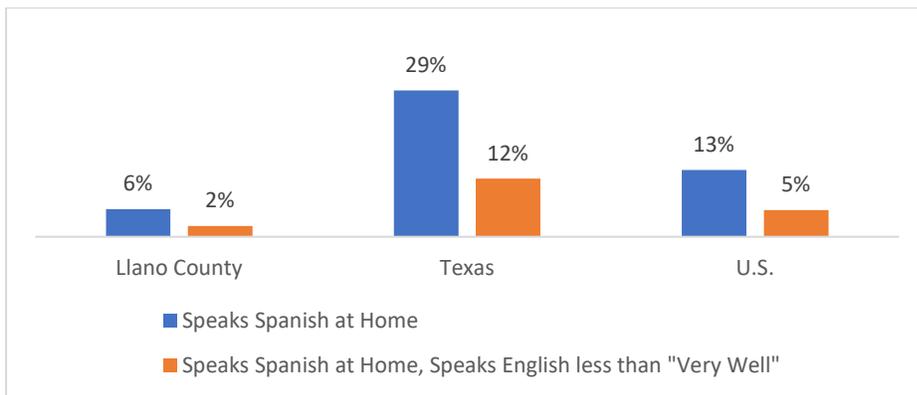
Figure 2-8. Poverty Rates in Llano County Compared to the State, 2015-2019



### Language

One key demographic issue for economic development is the extent to which people within a community are able to communicate with one another and the extent to which language skills other than English, especially Spanish, might be important to conduct business. In Texas and across the U.S., large numbers of residents primarily speak a language other than English at home. Some may not speak English at all. This reduces one potential barrier to economic development (lack of bilingual employees) while potentially presenting another. That is, the county may lack Spanish-language businesses, services, and workers that would make people who primarily speak Spanish want to live or work in Llano County.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 2-9. Spanish-Speaking Population 5+ Years Old as % of Total Population 5+ Years Old

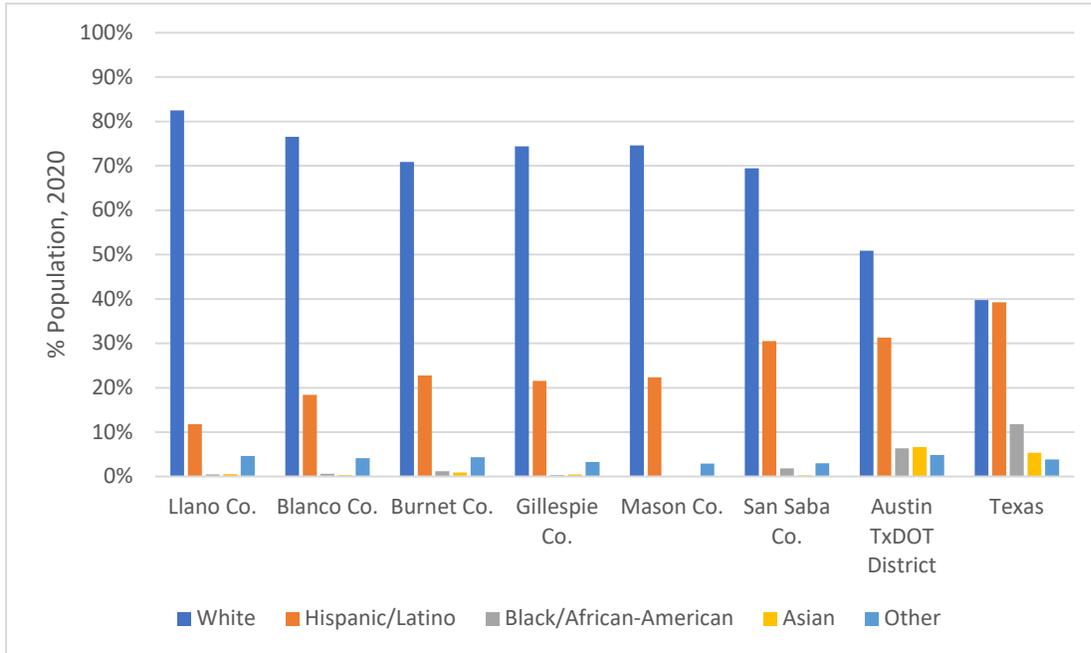


<sup>13</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2015-2019 American Community Survey. TableID C16001: Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over.

## Race and Ethnicity

Data from the 2020 Census show that Llano County is less demographically diverse in terms of race and ethnicity than the state and the rest of the TxDOT Austin District, and also less diverse than all of its neighboring counties.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 2-10. 2020 Llano County Population by Race and Ethnicity Compared to Adjacent Counties, Austin District, and State



In 2020, the racial/ethnic breakdown of Llano County’s population is:

- White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino: 17,530
- Hispanic or Latino: 2,508
- Two or More Races, Not Hispanic or Latino: 807
- Asian Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino: 121
- American Indian and Alaska Native Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino: 115
- Black/African-American Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino: 97
- Some Other Race Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino: 61
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino: 4

## Land Use

Land use is a term used by planners and policymakers to describe how humans use individual parcels of

<sup>14</sup> White, Black/African-American, and Asian figures represent “single race” and “not Hispanic or Latino.” “Other” includes all other people not Hispanic or Latino, including “American Indian and Alaska Native,” “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander,” “Some Other Race” alone, and “Two or More Races.”

land. Terms commonly associated with land use include:

- **Type** (residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, etc.)
- **Intensity** (meaning rural, exurban, suburban, and urban)
- **Density** (persons or households per square mile)

Land use has a great influence on the transportation facilities and services nearby, and likewise, the transportation facilities and services heavily influence nearby land use. Understanding changing land use patterns provides insight for future transportation requirements. In order to project the transportation needs, land use patterns must first be identified. Once land use at a particular time in the future is projected, the transportation improvements necessary to serve those land uses can be determined. Since improvements to the transportation system may also result in changed land use patterns, planning for transportation and land use is cyclical and should be reevaluated frequently.

### Overall Land Use

Data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s “CropScape” tool provides detailed data on land use across the country each year based on satellite imagery and the National Land Cover Database (NLCD). The most recent data from 2020 show the vast majority of land in Llano County is undeveloped shrubland and forests.<sup>15</sup> Together, these make up 89% of all land in the county. Agriculture accounts for about 5% of total land use, and developed land accounts for about 4%, with wetlands and water making up the remaining 3%.

Table 2-5. Llano County Land Use, 2020

Category	Acres	%
<b>Developed/High Intensity</b>	344	0.06%
<b>Developed/Medium Intensity</b>	989	0.16%
<b>Developed/Low Intensity</b>	2,205	0.36%
<b>Developed/Open Space</b>	19,525	3.16%
<b>Crops</b>	6,260	1.01%
<b>Grass/Pasture</b>	25,465	4.12%
<b>Barren</b>	185	0.03%
<b>Forest</b>	86,875	14.05%
<b>Shrubland</b>	458,087	74.10%
<b>Wetlands</b>	121	0.02%
<b>Water</b>	18,179	2.94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>618,235</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Zoning Maps

In the absence of an on-the-ground inventory of current land uses, the zoning maps for the incorporated cities of Horseshoe Bay and Llano are included in this plan<sup>16</sup>. Although the zoning assigned to a parcel does not represent the way in which it is being used currently, it does represent the proposed or desired use of the parcel, and likely, the way it will be used at some time in the future. Except in rare cases, most tracts’ current land uses are consistent with their designation in a zoning map.

<sup>15</sup> <https://nassgeodata.gmu.edu/CropScape/>

<sup>16</sup> Sunrise Beach Village has a zoning ordinance that divides the city into distinct zoning districts, though it does not include a map in a form similar to the other zoning maps included in this report.

Therefore, using the cities' zoning maps for this plan provides the level of detail necessary and serves well as a planning tool for future land uses.

Not all cities use the same zoning district designations. However, they typically include districts that fit into four categories: residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural/open space. Residential is usually broken down into different densities and commercial may be divided among several categories of commercial use. Regardless of these differences, the maps for the two Llano County cities for which maps are included can be examined, and it can easily be determined which uses are to be expected in specific locations as well as the amount of land that they occupy.

Figure 2-11. City of Llano Zoning Map

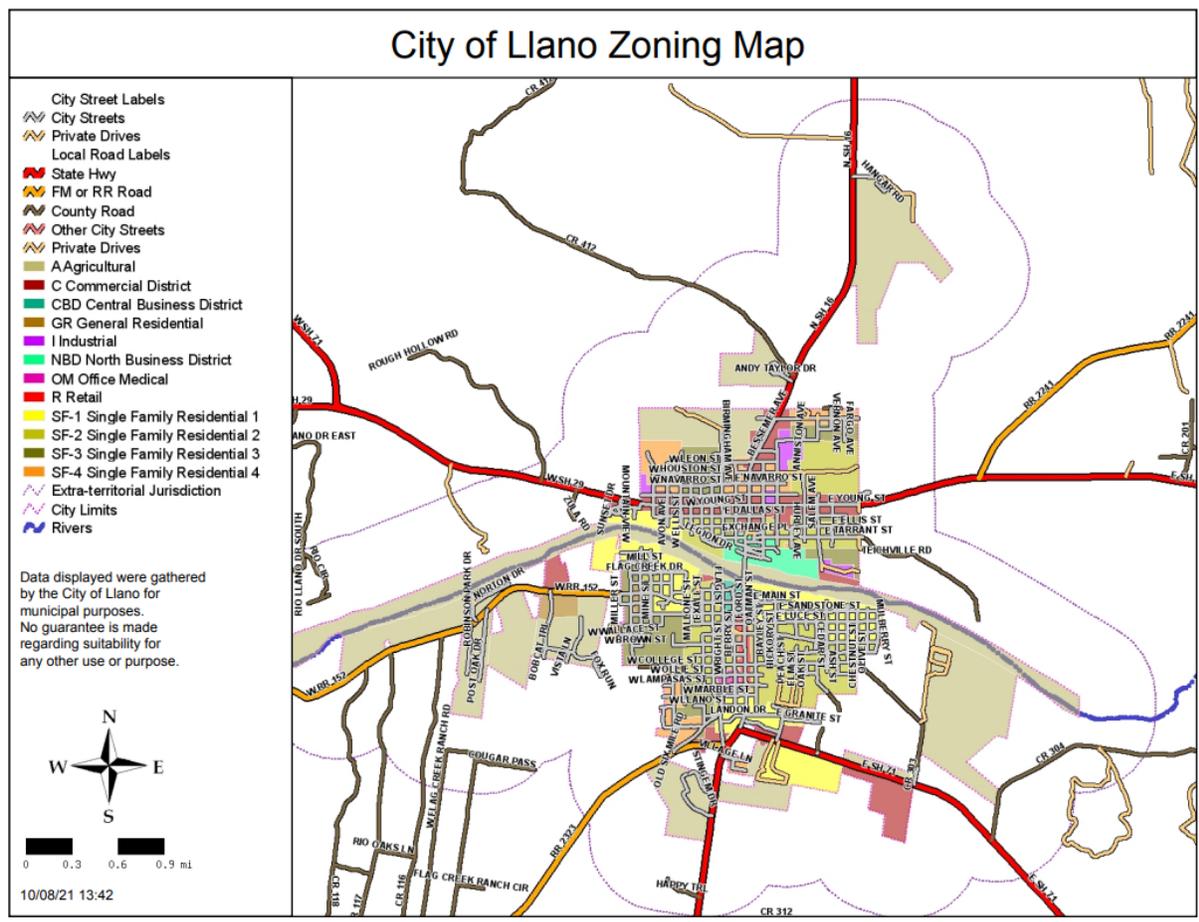
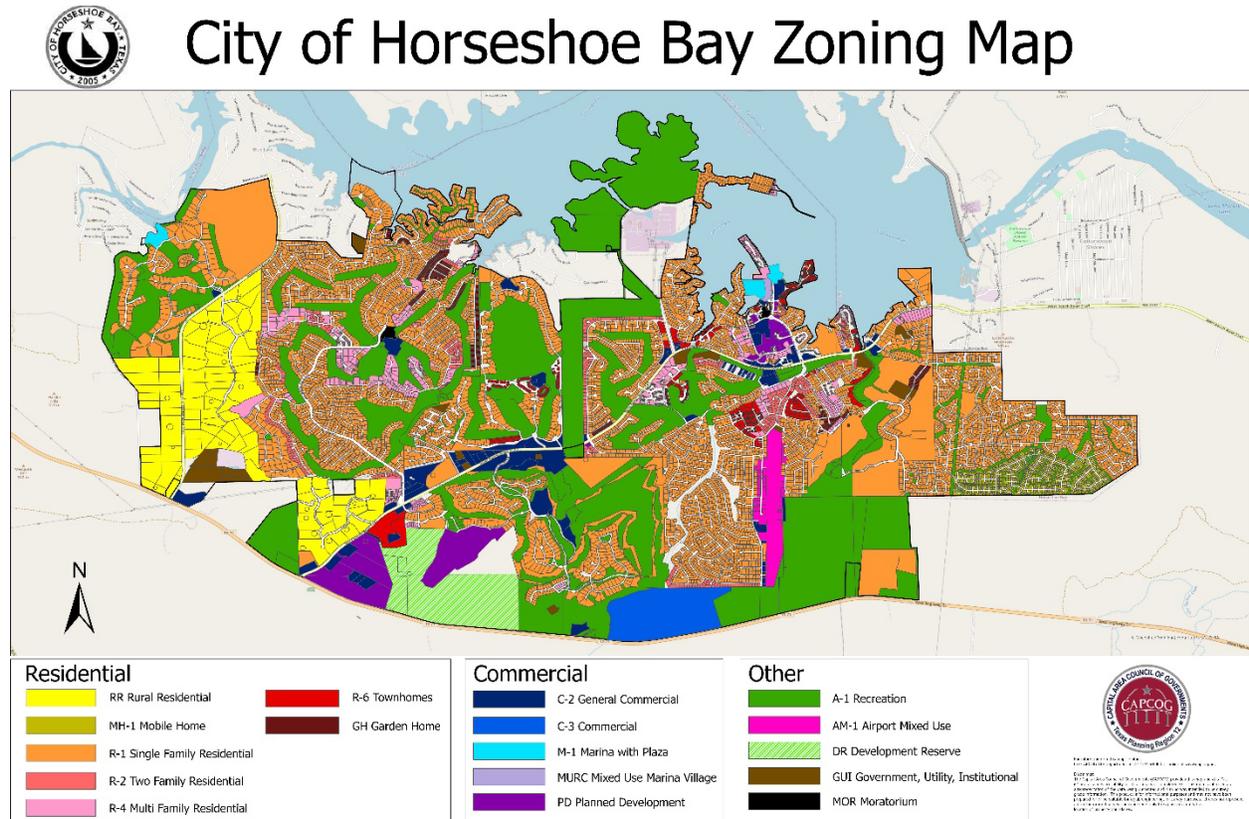


Figure 2-12. City of Horseshoe Bay Zoning Map



CAPCOG was unable to obtain a current zoning map from the City of Sunrise Beach Village.

### Floodplains

The most recent floodplain maps and list of structures (address points used for emergency communications) show that just under 10% of structures within the county are in the 100-year floodplain (i.e., a 1 in 100 annual chance of flooding). The table below provides a summary for each city and unincorporated areas within the county.<sup>17</sup>

Table 2-6. Structures Located in the 100-Year Floodplain

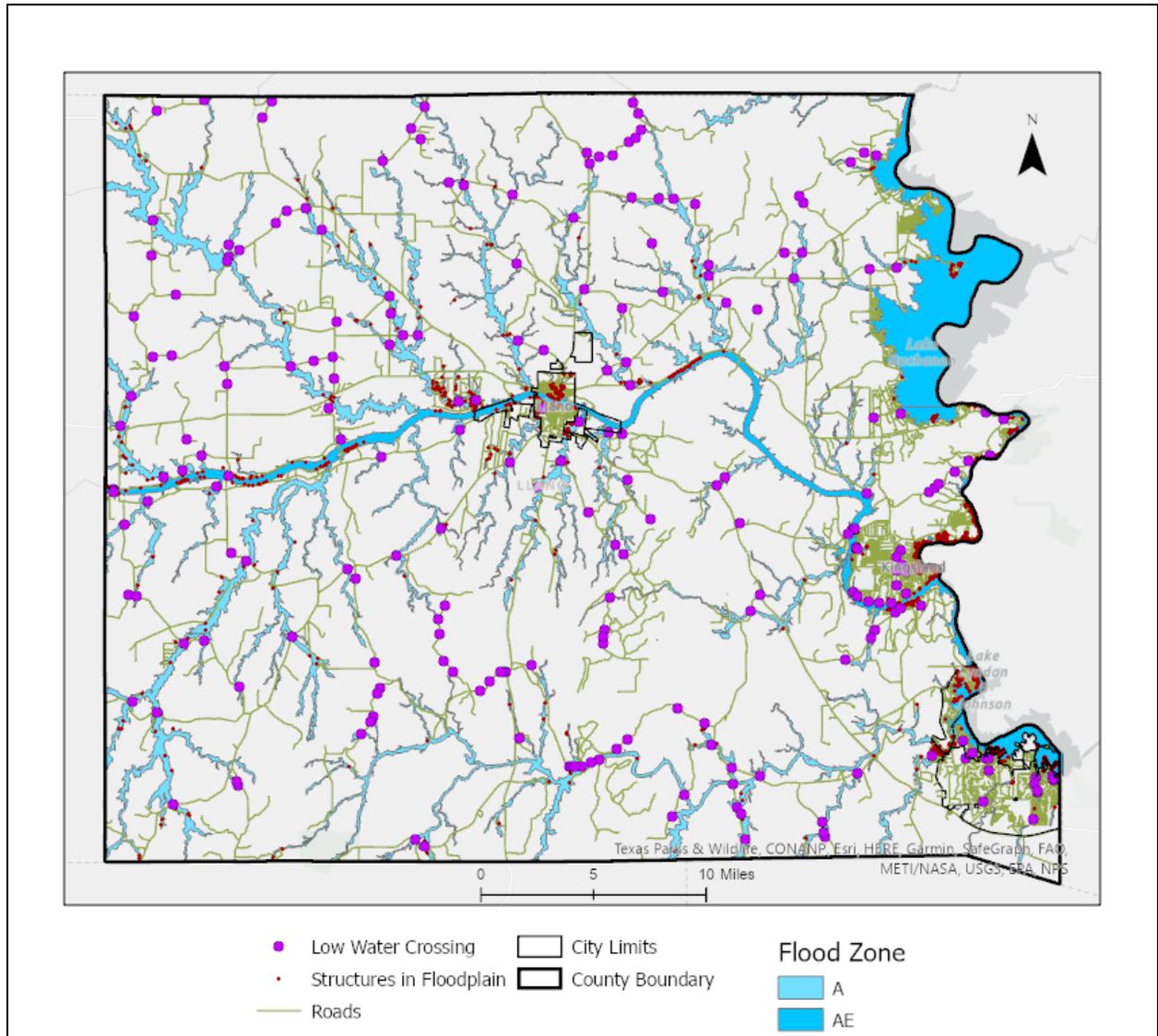
Area	Total Structures	Structures in Floodplain, Sept. 2021	% in Floodplain
<b>Horseshoe Bay (Llano County Portion)</b>	3,860	315	8.16%
<b>Llano</b>	1,010	149	14.75%
<b>Sunrise Beach Village</b>	2,206	124	5.62%
<b>Unincorporated</b>	13,250	1,394	10.52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,326</b>	<b>1,982</b>	<b>9.75%</b>

<sup>17</sup> FEMA. <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/advanceSearch#searchresultsanchor>. Accessed 9/30/2021.

The most recent Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the county went into effect on January 21, 2021 and covered about 43% of the county's land area.

The Texas Natural Resource Information Service (TNRIS) maintains a database of low-water crossings that shows 228 located throughout Llano County. 111 of these low-water crossings are located in the 100-year floodplain, while the remaining 117 are located outside of the floodplain.<sup>18</sup> The map below shows the locations of the floodplains, structures within the floodplain, and low-water crossings.

Figure 2-13. Floodplains and Low-Water Crossings



<sup>18</sup> TNRIS. Low-Water Crossings. March 8, 2021. <https://twdb-flood-planning-resources-twdb.hub.arcgis.com/documents/01971d31bdcc4ad780f4adb1b3d6ddcb/about>

## Housing

This section provides basic data on housing unit counts, vacancy rates, housing types, and housing costs.

### ***What is a housing unit?***

*As defined by the US Census Bureau, a housing unit is a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied (or if vacant, is intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live and eat separately from any other persons in the building and which have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall.*

## Housing Unit Counts

The 2020 Census showed 7% growth in housing units since 2010. This growth rate was less than the population growth rate of about 10%. Growth in individual communities within the county ranged from less than 1% to greater than 12%.

*Table 2-7. 2010 and 2020 Housing Counts for Llano County and its Communities*

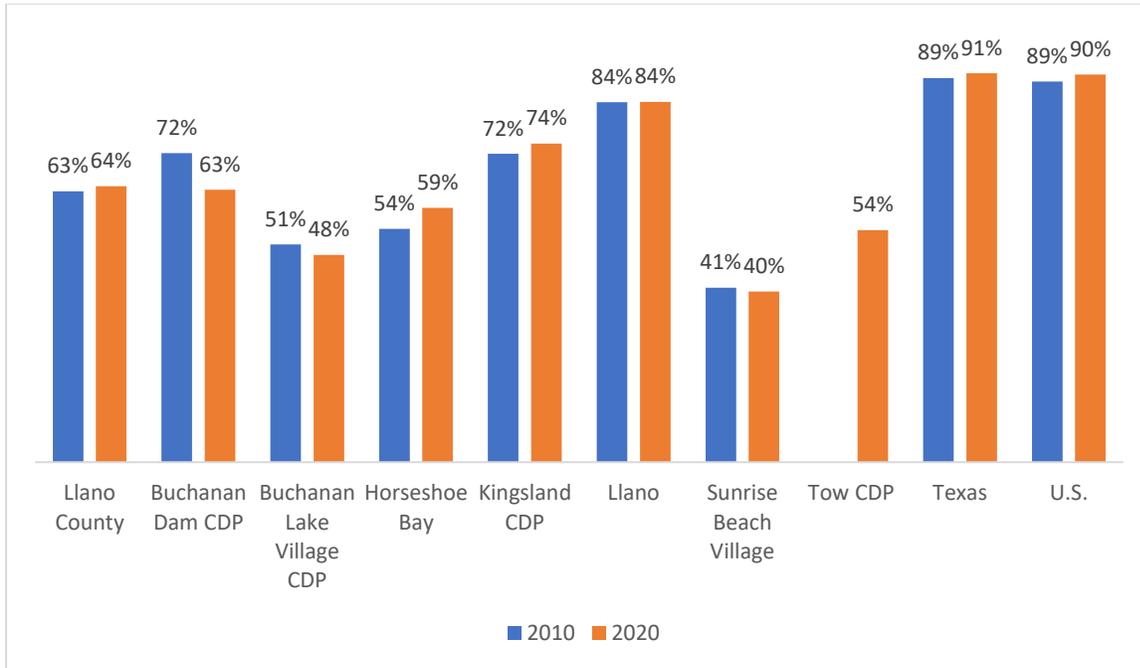
<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>2010 Units</b>	<b>2020 Units</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Llano County</b>	14,280	15,242	962	6.74%
<b>City of Horseshoe Bay</b>	3,131	3,568	437	13.96%
<b>Llano County Portion</b>	2,756	3,093	337	12.23%
<b>Burnet County Portion</b>	375	475	100	26.67%
<b>City of Llano</b>	1,615	1,684	69	4.27%
<b>City of Sunrise Beach Village</b>	901	962	61	6.77%
<b>Unincorporated</b>	9,008	9,503	495	5.50%
<b>Buchanan Dam CDP</b>	1,214	1,222	8	0.66%
<b>Buchanan Lake Village CDP</b>	690	715	25	3.62%
<b>Kingsland CDP</b>	3,714	3,980	266	7.16%
<b>Tow CDP</b>	n/a	213	n/a	n/a

The Census Bureau's latest estimates of housing units showed a total of 15,562 housing units in Llano County as of 7/1/2021, a 1.9% increase (294 units) from 7/1/2020. This rate shows a much faster rate of annual growth in housing than the prior ten years, but it lags behind the county's population increase from 2020 to 2021 of 3.4%. Anecdotally, this may reflect a phenomenon of people who own 2<sup>nd</sup> homes in Llano County moving and making it their primary residence. However, it may also make the housing market in Llano County tighter as population growth continues to exceed the growth in housing units.

## Occupancy Status

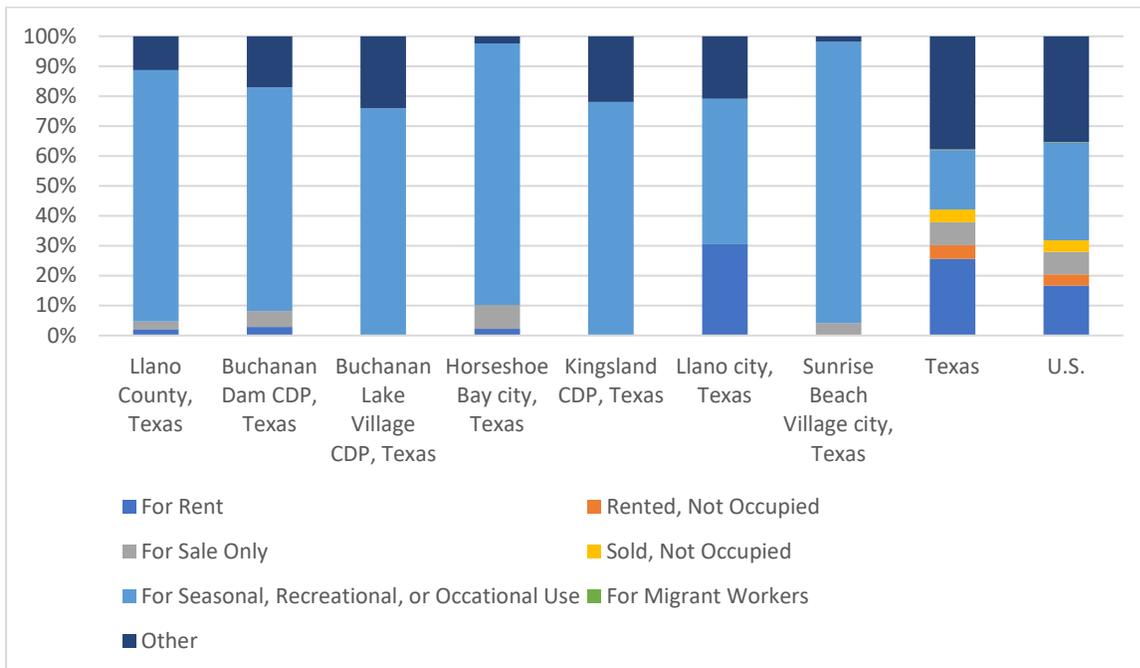
With the exception of City of Llano, housing occupancy rates across Llano County are far below the average for the state and in the US. In 2020, only 64% of all housing units were occupied, compared to 91% statewide and 90% nationally.

Figure 2-14. Housing Occupancy Rates 2010 and 2020



This reflects a large number of housing units within the county serving as 2<sup>nd</sup> homes: 5,593 in the 2015-2019 ACS. These types of housing units are particularly prevalent in the communities along the western shore of Lake Buchanan and the rest of the Colorado River.

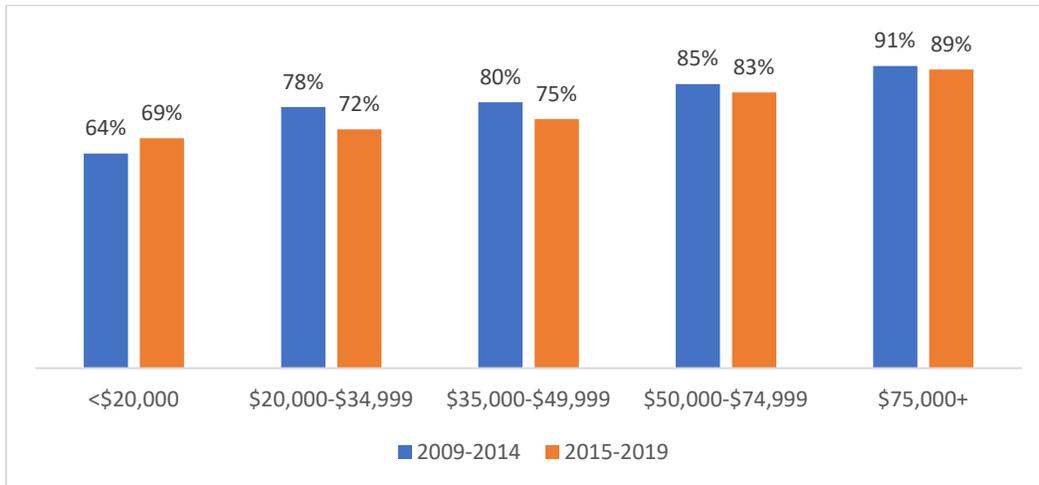
Figure 2-15. Types of Vacant Housing



## Housing Type

Overall, 78% of occupied housing units in Llano County are owner-occupied, while the remaining 22% are rented. Since 2014 home ownership rates have increased at the lowest end of the income spectrum, and more households with incomes above \$20,000 are now renting.

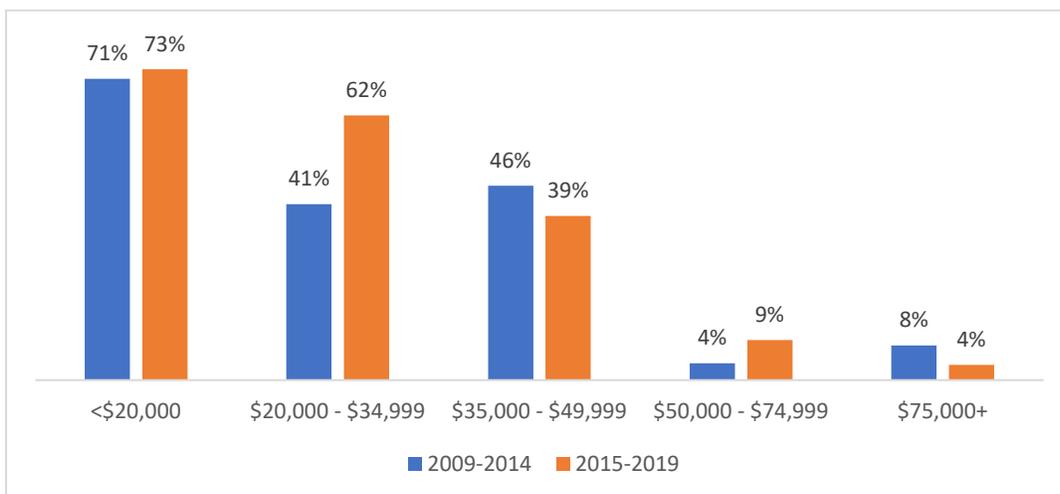
Figure 2-16. Percentage of Households in Llano County that are Owner-Occupied by Household Income



## Housing Affordability

One of the concerns expressed by stakeholders early in the process of the development of this plan was the lack of worker housing. County-wide 19% of households spend more than 30% of their income on housing, but more than one-half of households that earn less than \$35,000 a year spend more than 30% of their income on housing. While the overall share of households that pay more than 30% of income has gone down from 23% in 2014, a significantly greater share of households that earn less than \$35,000 now pay more than 30% of their income on housing, especially households making between \$20,000 and \$35,000. This suggests a shortage of houses with sales prices less than \$120,000 and/or rental units with monthly rent less than \$800.

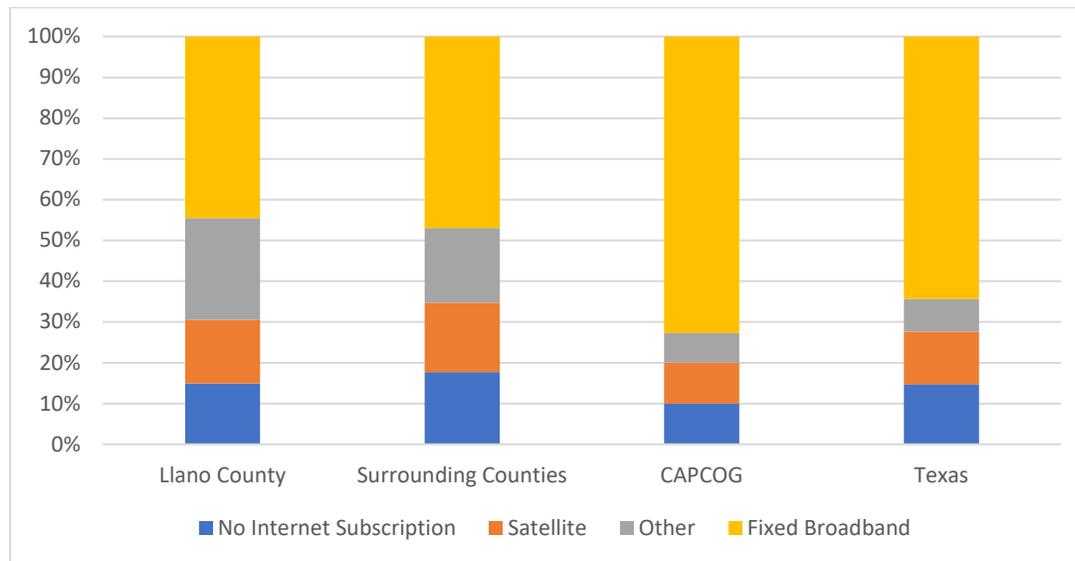
Figure 2-17. Percentage of Households Spending More than 30% of Income on Housing Costs



## Internet Access

The 2015-2019 ACS showed 44% of the households in Llano County reported having a subscription to some type of fixed Internet service (cable, fiber optic, or DSL). These figures reflect only the type of service used without respect to speed. This figure is somewhat lower than surrounding counties (47%), and significantly lower than the state as a whole (64%) and the CAPCOG region as a whole (73%). County-wide 15% of households have access to the internet only through cell phone service, 24% have access to the Internet some other way, and 17% of all households lack any Internet access at all.<sup>19</sup>

Figure 2-18. Household Internet Subscriptions 2015-2019 Compared to Surrounding Counties, CAPCOG, and Texas



An analysis of broadband availability conducted by Connected Nation<sup>20</sup> estimated the number of households in each county across the state with access to fixed broadband services at different speeds.

### **What is Broadband?**

*The term broadband commonly refers to high-speed internet access that is always on and faster than traditional dial-up access. Broadband includes several high-speed transmission technologies, such as fiber, wireless, satellite, digital subscriber line, and cable.*

*Over time, the term broadband has come to mean faster and faster Internet speeds. The current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) definition requires consumers to have access to actual download speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps or they would be considered unserved. At the time that work began on this plan, a more commonly-held definition of broadband was at least 100 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload. Consumers having service at a level less than*

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates. Table B28002: Presence and Types of Internet Subscriptions in Household.

<sup>20</sup> <https://connectednation.org/>

that were considered to be underserved. Since then, that standard has increased to 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

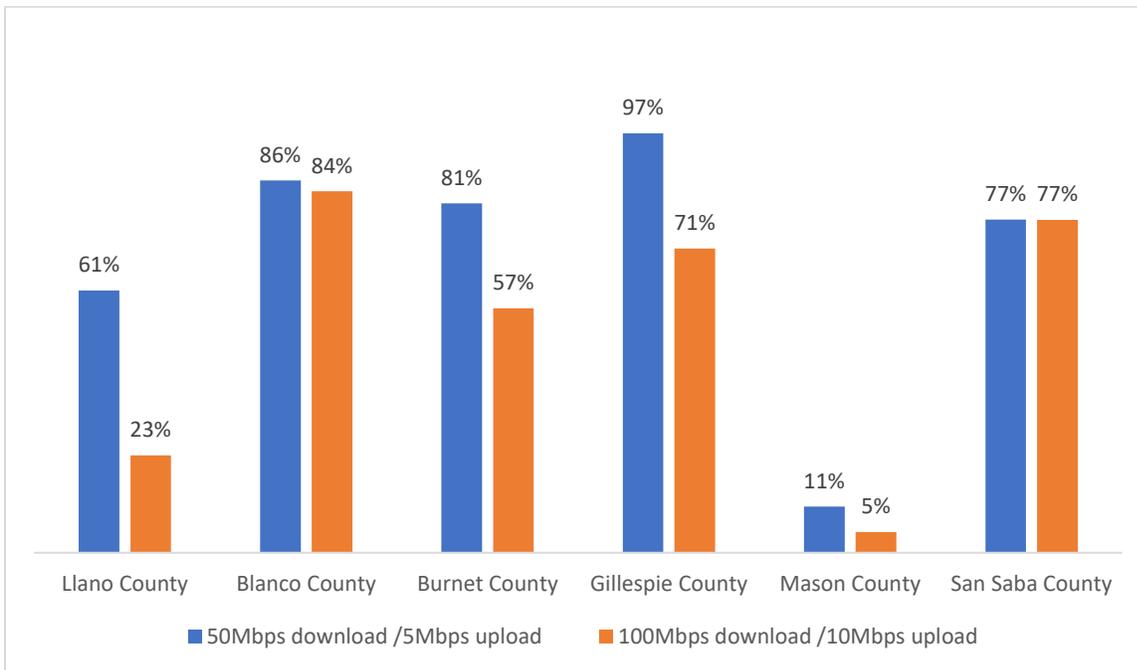
Data for Llano County by download and upload speeds are shown below.<sup>21</sup>

Table 2-8. Connected Nations Fixed Broadband Availability by Speed, January 31, 2022

Speed	Household Availability	Unserved Households
<b>10 Mbps Download / 1 Mbps Upload</b>	96.7%	295
<b>25 Mbps Download / 3 Mbps Upload</b>	94.5%	496
<b>50 Mbps Download / 5 Mbps Upload</b>	60.9%	3,522
<b>100 Mbps Download / 10 Mbps Upload</b>	22.6%	6,974

While the vast majority of the county’s population has physical access to fixed broadband service at 25 Mbps download / 3 Mbps upload, Llano County has substantially less access to higher-speed broadband services than neighboring counties with the exception of Mason County, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 2-19. Percentages of Households with Access to High-Speed Fixed Broadband Services



The levels of service that are actually available to residents of Llano County are likely much lower than this data indicate. A Broadband Feasibility Study prepared for Llano County by CobbFendley points out that broadband availability and level of service data are based on less-than-reliable sources such as self-reporting from providers and aggregating at the census block level. The reporting method prescribed by the FCC allows service providers to report areas and service levels that they intend to provide rather than those that they are currently providing. Aggregating levels of service over an entire census block gives the impression that all consumers in that census block receive the same level of service, although it may only be a few that actually receive the level indicated. Additionally, the CobbFendley study

<sup>21</sup> <https://connectednation.org/texas/county-maps/>

indicates that one of the providers – whose service area covered much of the county – has ceased operations. Since the time that the company had stopped providing services, it was discovered that FCC maps overrepresented the providers service area. Therefore, the eastern, more populous area of the county is actually receiving service levels lower than previously thought.

Access to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet is a key factor that people look for in deciding where to live, and with Llano County’s growth now dependent on in-migration from other parts of the state and country, the lack of access to high-speed broadband services poses a significant barrier to economic development within the county, especially relative to its neighboring counties. For example, some portion of Mason County’s continued population decrease is likely driven by the lack of broadband services. Expanded access to and reduced costs for high-speed broadband services could enable Llano County to attract and retain more people who may work in computer-intensive/telecommuting jobs who wish to live in a rural setting, and would make Llano County a more attractive location for businesses to locate and expand. Improved broadband services in Llano County is also an important factor for tourism.

There are 15 Internet service providers currently providing services in Llano County. They are Rio Broadband, Bee Creek Communications, Gulf Coast Broadband, Texas Wireless Internet, Central Texas Telephone Coop, Charter, Particle Communications, ERF Wireless, Frontier, Hill Country Telephone Coop, HomeSmart Internet, Rise Broadband, Texas Broadband, VGI Technology, and Zeecon Wireless.

## **Economic Data**

This section includes basic economic data for Llano County, including overall economic output by industry, employment data, and an analysis of current job postings.

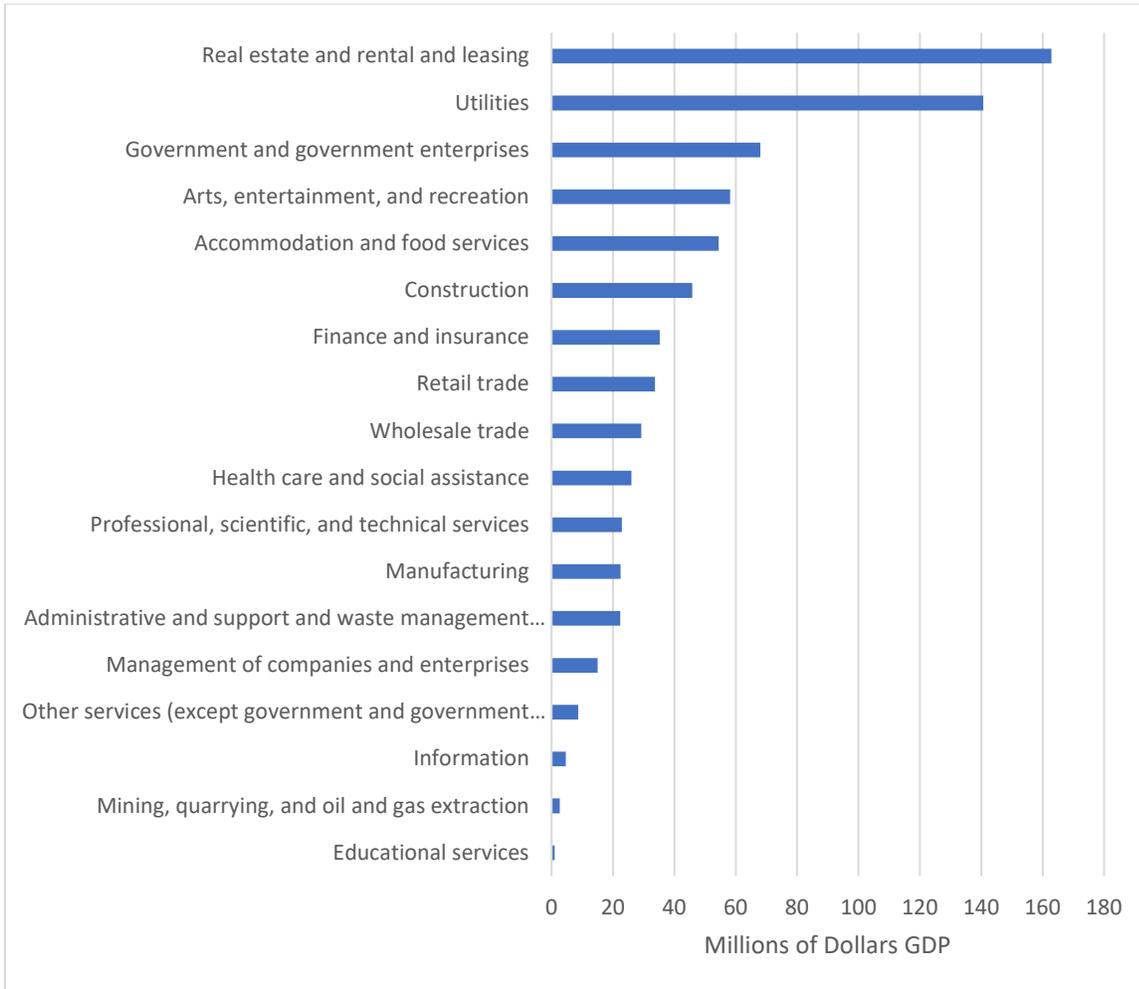
### **Total Economic Output**

Total economic output, the total value of all goods and services produced in an area, for Llano County in 2020 was \$844 million. The following figure shows the output by industry.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, GDP by Region.

Figure 2-20. Economic Output by Industry, 2020



## Employment Data

As of August 2021, the total civilian labor force in Llano County was 8,828 (i.e., the number of people living in Llano County who are in the labor market). A total of 8,414 were employed, while 414 (4.7%) were unemployed.<sup>23</sup>

Emsi's 2022 Q2 dataset shows 6,069 jobs located in Llano County (as opposed to workers who live in Llano County). The Accommodation and Food Services is sector employs the most workers in Llano County, accounting for 17.34% of all jobs. Government accounts for 14.30% of all jobs, followed by Retail Trade (12.92%) and Construction (12.81%). The following table shows the total number of jobs in each industry, as well as the average earnings and the job concentration (# of jobs in an industry/# of total jobs in the area) compared to the same ratio for jobs of that industry the U.S. (i.e., the location quotient or LQ).<sup>24</sup>

Table 2-9. Jobs, Growth, Concentration Compared to U.S., and Earnings by Industry

NAICS 25	Description	2021 Jobs	Avg. Earnings Per Job	Job Concentration Compared to U.S.
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	132	\$40,000	1.74
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	18	\$87,422	0.93
22	Utilities	65	\$89,832	3.15
23	Construction	778	\$51,284	2.21
31	Manufacturing	144	\$61,365	0.31
42	Wholesale Trade	225	\$71,088	1.03
44	Retail Trade	784	\$31,894	1.30
48	Transportation and Warehousing	29	\$56,253	0.11
51	Information	38	\$32,896	0.34
52	Finance and Insurance	250	\$84,973	0.97
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	159	\$61,300	1.52
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	268	\$72,769	0.63
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	<10	Insf. Data	0.01
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	312	\$34,506	0.84
61	Educational Services	68	\$44,162	0.43
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	363	\$45,419	0.46

<sup>23</sup> <https://texaslmi.com/LMIbyCategory/LAUS>

<sup>24</sup> Source: Emsi 2022 Q2 Data Set, accessed 6/14/2021, including QCEW employees, non-QCEQ employees, and self-employed.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.census.gov/naics/>

NAICS 25	Description	2021 Jobs	Avg. Earnings Per Job	Job Concentration Compared to U.S.
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	182	\$48,749	2.03
72	Accommodation and Food Services	1,052	\$37,464	2.34
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	325	\$26,260	1.05
90	Government	868	\$63,869	0.97
99	Unclassified Industry	<10	Insf. Data	1.08
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,069</b>	<b>\$49,211</b>	<b>n/a</b>

### Analysis of Job Postings

While current job postings may only provide a snapshot in time, they can be useful for understanding which companies are hiring and what kind of skills are in demand.

The top 10 companies posting jobs from September 2020 through August 2021 are shown in the table below.<sup>26</sup>

Table 2-10. Top 10 Companies Hiring Workers in Llano County, January 2021 – December 2021

Company	Total Unique Postings	Median Posting Duration (days)
<b>Baylor Scott &amp; White Health</b>	510	46
<b>Horseshoe Bay Resort, Inc.</b>	434	56
<b>Chalk Mountain Services of Texas LLC</b>	104	59
<b>Dollar General Corporation</b>	99	43
<b>Doordash</b>	88	45
<b>Kansas Hospital Association</b>	78	31
<b>CRST International Inc.</b>	73	9
<b>U.S. Express, Inc.</b>	65	24
<b>Kingsland Community Center</b>	52	11
<b>Sierra Hills Care Center</b>	49	12

A majority (56%) of unique job postings had no educational level listed, while 27% required a high school degree or GED, 13% required an associate degree, 10% required a bachelor's degree, 3% required a master's degree, and 2% required a PhD or professional degree.

The top 10 qualifications for current job postings are shown below. Transportation and health care-related qualifications make up all of the top 10 qualifications.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Emsi Q3 2021 Data Set

<sup>27</sup> Emsi Q3 2021 Data Set

Table 2-11. Top 10 Qualifications for Job Postings September 2020 – August 2021

Qualification	Postings with Qualification
Commercial Driver’s License (CDL)	675
Licensed Vocational Nurses	147
Certified Nursing Assistant	110
Certified Medical Assistant	65
American Medical Technologists	54
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Card	49
Certified Clinical Medical Assistant	39
NHA Certified	38
Medical License	36
Licensed Practical Nurse	34

## Transportation Data

This section provides information on vehicle activity within the county, commuting patterns between Llano County and other counties nearby, crashes, and transportation projects in the county.

### Daily Traffic Counts

The following two figures show overall average daily vehicle counts and truck counts throughout the county from TxDOT’s 2020 Road Inventory<sup>28</sup>. As figure 8-1 shows, vehicle activity is concentrated in southeastern part of the county between Llano, Kingsland, and Horseshoe Bay. Figure 2-22 shows truck counts, and while the truck activity is more evenly distributed throughout the county, it is also primarily concentrated in Llano, Kingsland, and Horseshoe Bay.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/transportation-planning/roadway-inventory.html>

Figure 2-21. Llano County Average Daily Traffic, 2020

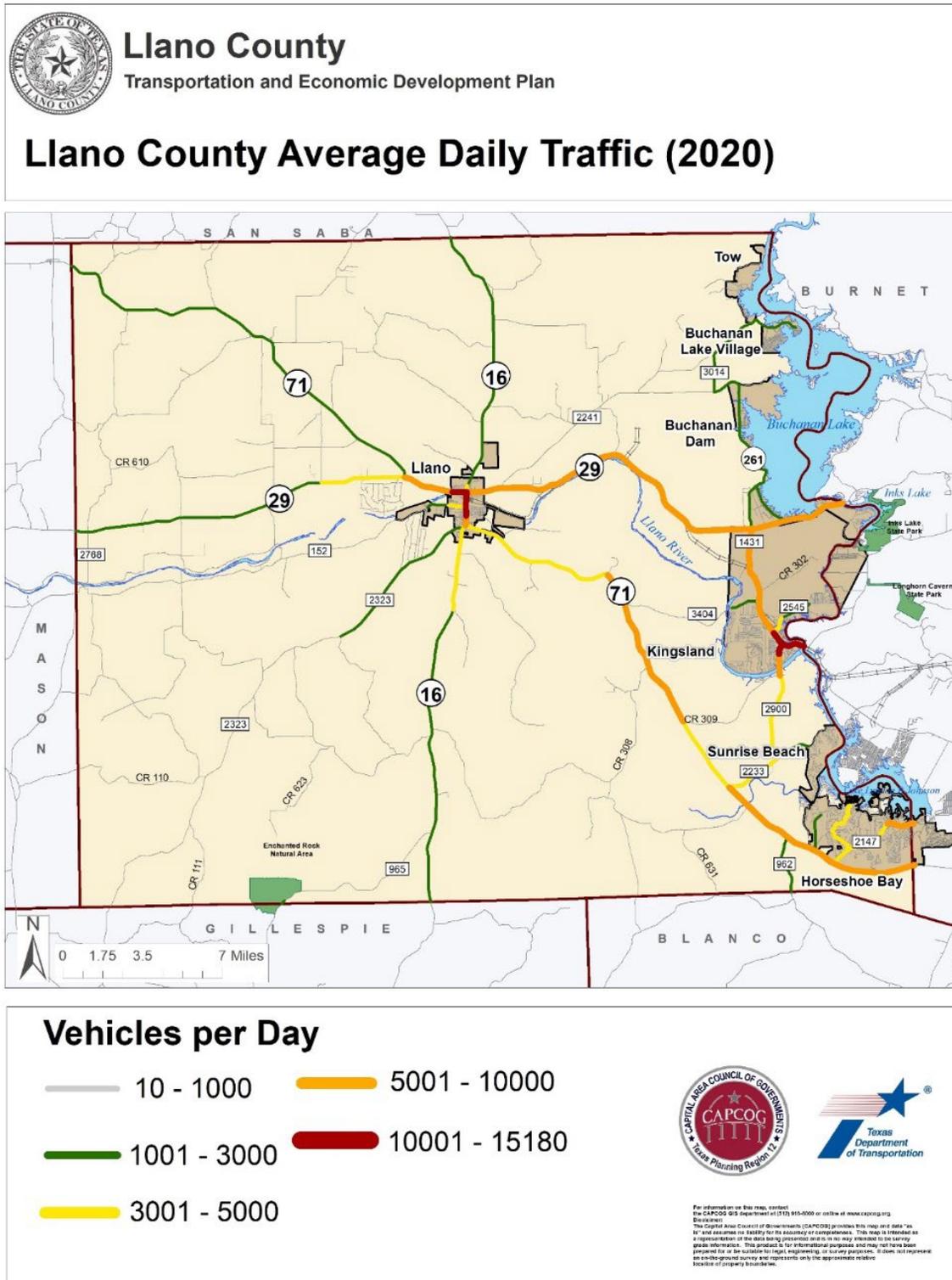
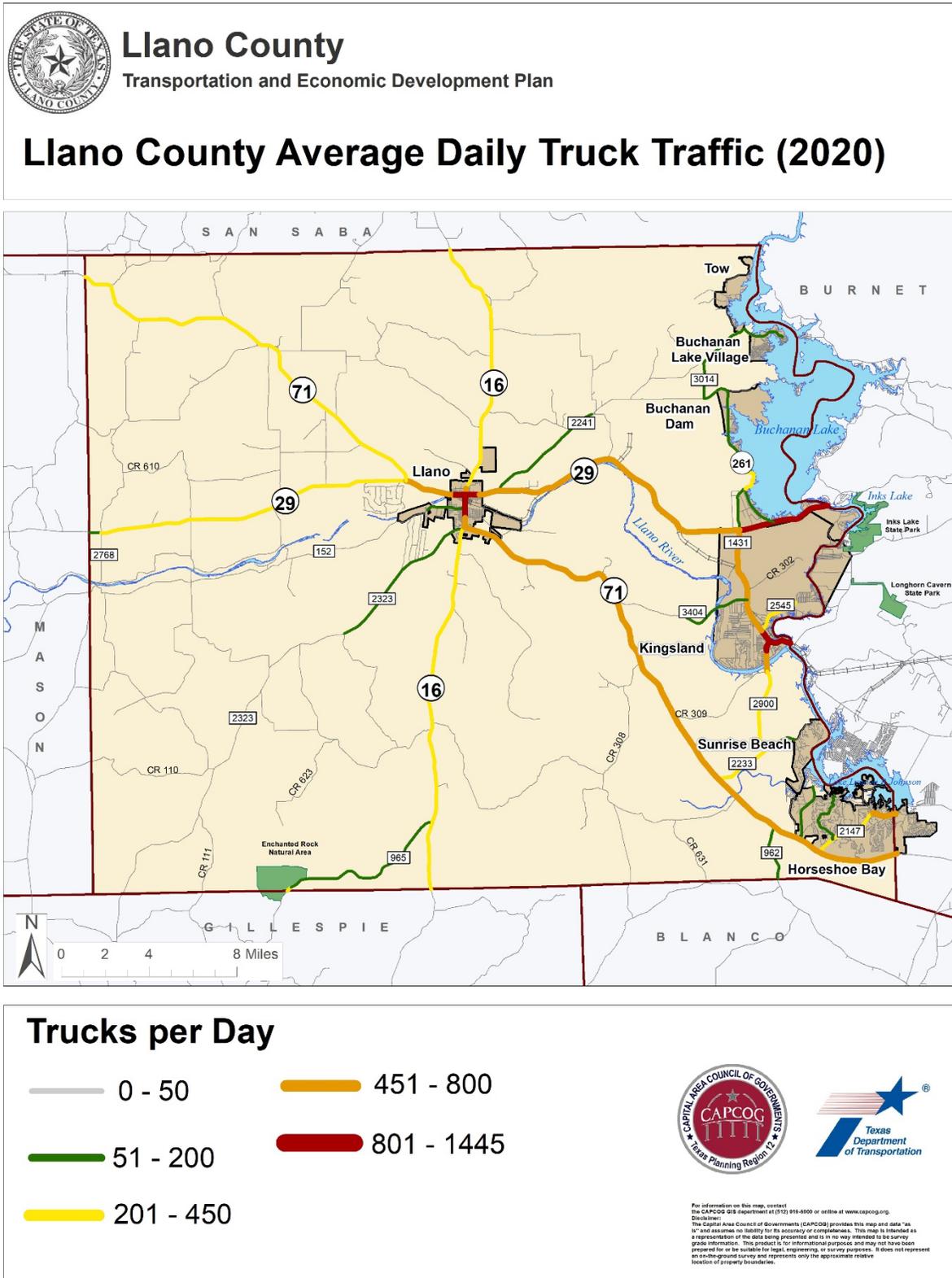


Figure 2-22. Figure 2 22 Llano County Average Daily Truck Traffic, 2020



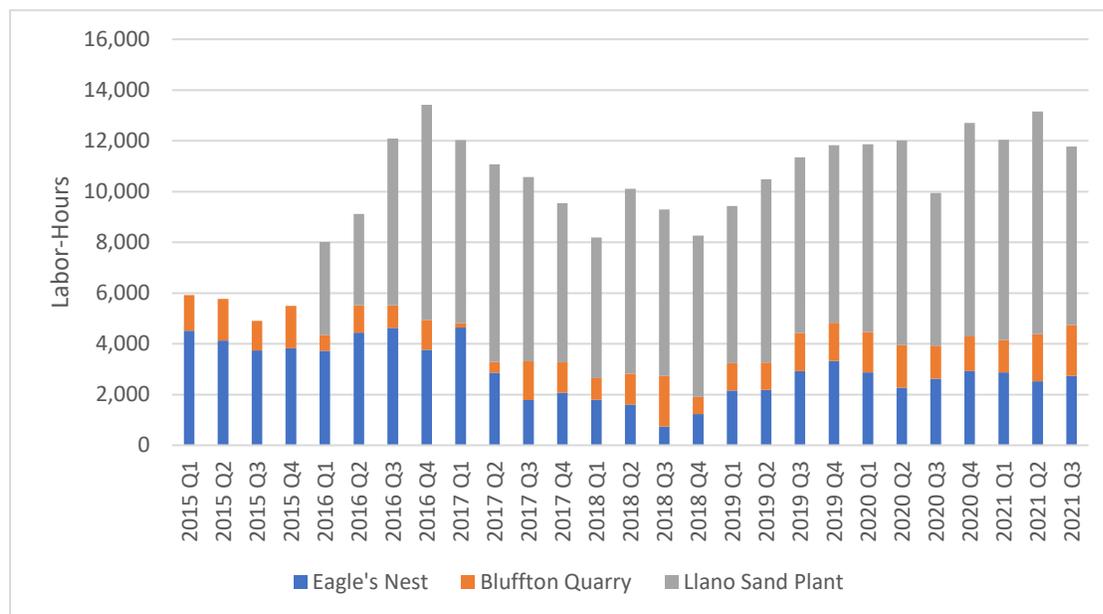
One of the issues that community members expressed concerns with is the amount of truck traffic from sand/gravel trucks and how those may be affecting the conditions of surrounding roadways. There is no known source of data that would enable direct accounting for the number of trucks these facilities are generating per day. Data from the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) show three active quarries in Llano County.<sup>29</sup> The following table provides details on each quarry.

Table 2-12. Active Quarries in Llano County, 2021

Quarry ID	Company Name	Quarry Name	Product	Location
4104751	Chanas Aggregates LLC	Eagle's Nest Mine	Construction Sand and Gravel	850 East State Hwy 29 Llano TX 78643
4104806	Chanas Aggregates LLC	Bluffton Quarry	Crushed, Broken Stone, Not Elsewhere Classified	1739 CR 218 Bluffton TX 78607
4105185	Collier Materials	Llano Sand Plant	Sand, Industrial, Not Elsewhere Classified	1490 HWY 29 Llano TX 78643

Production data from MSHA show that activity at Llano County quarries in 2021 was 2-3 times higher than it was for comparable quarters in 2015, primarily due to the addition of the Llano Sand Plant.

Figure 2-23. Active Llano County Quarry Production by Quarter, 2015-2021 (labor-hours)



Additional truck traffic may travel through Llano County from quarries elsewhere in the region.

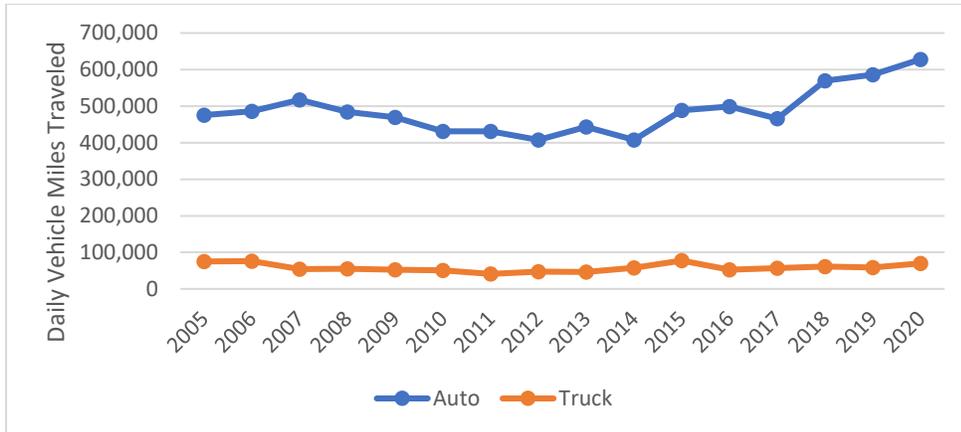
### Vehicle Activity Data

Llano County's average daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in 2020 was 698,359, just over 10% of which was from trucks (70,096). The County experienced an increase in VMT in recent years, including an increase from 2019 to 2020, which bucked the statewide and districtwide downturns in VMT that

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.msha.gov/mine-data-retrieval-system>

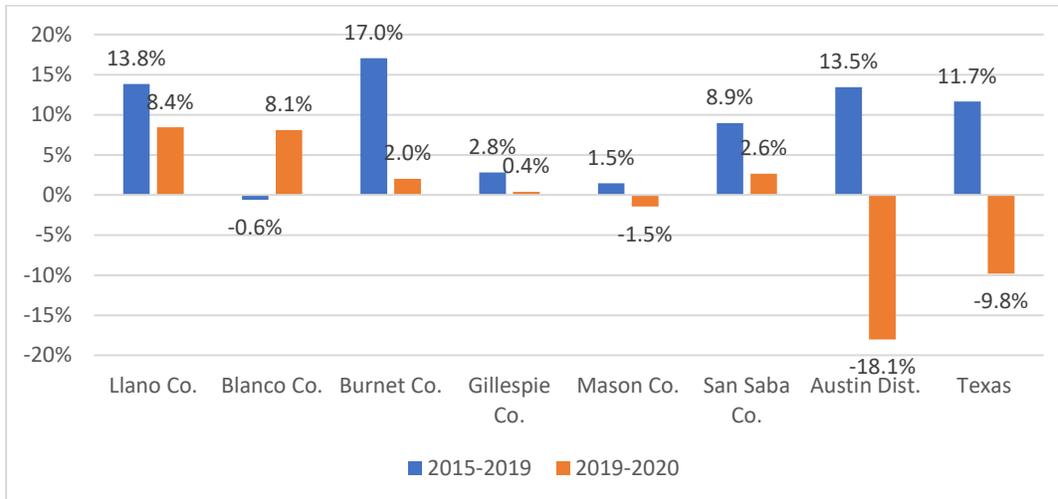
coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. Llano County VMT rose by 8.4% whereas it declined statewide by 9.8% and district-wide by 18.1%. Blanco, Burnet, and Gillespie Counties also saw increases in VMT from 2019-2020, but Llano County's VMT grew by a higher percentage than any other county within the district.<sup>30</sup>

Figure 2-24. Figure 2 24 Llano County Auto and Truck VMT by Year, 2005-2020



Excluding the 2020 data from the analysis, Llano County's VMT growth of 13.8% from 2015-2019 was slightly ahead of district-wide growth of 13.5%, and ahead of state-wide growth of 11.7%. The following figure shows a comparison of Llano County's VMT growth for the periods of 2015-2019 and 2019-2020 to surrounding counties, the Austin district, and the state.

Figure 2-25. Comparison of 2015-2019 and 2019-2020 VMT Trends



<sup>30</sup> TxDOT Multi-Year Roadway Data Table, 2005-2020. Available online at: <https://ftp.txdot.gov/pub/txdot-info/tpp/roadway-inventory/data-table.xlsx>.

Figure 2-26. TxDOT Roadway Functional Classification and Railroad Lines



The following table summarizes 2020 daily VMT by functional class and rural/urban setting.<sup>31</sup>

Table 2-13. 2020 Daily VMT by Functional Class

Functional Classification	Rural	Urban	TOTAL
Minor Arterial	369,193	0	369,193
Major Collector	197,783	54,398	252,180
Minor Collector	22,790	4,644	27,434
Local	37,797	11,755	49,552
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>627,563</b>	<b>70,796</b>	<b>698,359</b>

The next table shows daily VMT and daily truck VMT for on-system (TxDOT maintained) roadways in the county.

Table 2-14. Llano County On-System VMT by Route

On-System Route Name	Daily VMT	Truck VMT	Truck VMT %
RM 152	10,020	598	5.97%
RM 962	4,202	180	4.29%
RM 965	4,693	695	14.81%
RM 1431	61,183	4,991	8.16%
RM 2147	22,380	1,662	7.43%
RM 2233	11,439	842	7.36%
RM 2241	16,155	1,043	6.46%
RM 2323	11,853	777	6.55%
RM 2545	7,924	552	6.97%
RM 2768	681	60	8.75%
RM 2831	4,182	285	6.82%
RM 2900	26,425	1,961	7.42%
RM 3014	3,294	219	6.64%
RM 3404	2,633	181	6.86%
SH 16	83,351	9,188	11.02%
SH 29	163,185	20,387	12.49%
SH 71	189,619	23,264	12.27%
SH 261	15,179	1,047	6.90%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>638,398</b>	<b>67,933</b>	<b>10.64%</b>

### Commuting Patterns

The U.S. Census Bureau's ACS includes questions about place of work that can be used to analyze commuting flows between counties. The most recent commuting flows data provided by the Census Bureau for 2011-2015 showed that there were 6,337 workers in Llano County. Most of Llano County's workers (4,855) also lived in Llano County. Burnet County accounts for the largest number of Llano County workers who reside outside of the county.

Of the workers who live in Llano County and commute to jobs outside of the county, 57.3% commute to Burnet County, 21.5% commute to Travis and Williamson Counties, and 21.2% commute to other

<sup>31</sup> Defined as whether the roadway is located in an "Urban Area" as defined by the Census Bureau or not.

counties.<sup>32</sup>

Table 2-15. Llano County Commuting Flows To and From Other Counties from ACS, 2011-2015

Other County	Lives in Other County, Works in Llano County	Lives in Llano County, Works in Other County	Llano County Net
Blanco	32	22	10
Burnet	1,139	1,414	-275
Gillespie	14	47	-33
Mason	34	0	34
San Saba	20	19	1
Travis	81	427	-346
Williamson	35	104	-69
Other Counties	127	434	-307
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>2,467</b>	<b>-985</b>

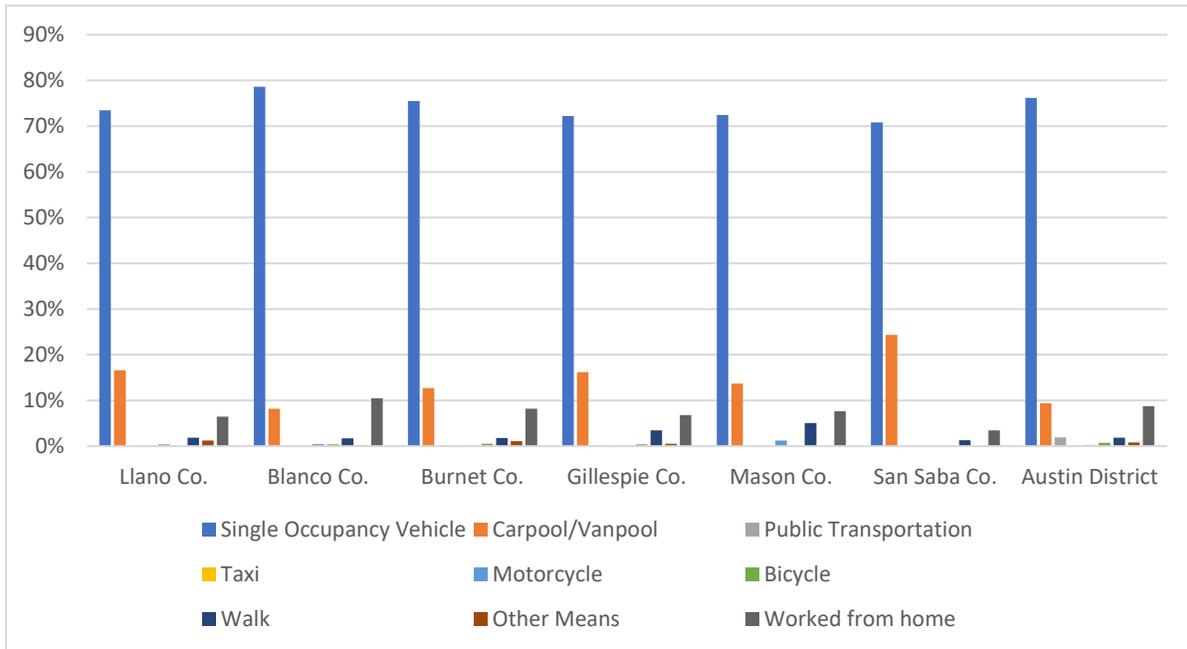
These data show significant commuting linkages exist between Llano County and Burnet, Travis, and Williamson Counties. Additionally, Llano County is a net exporter of workers to other counties.

While the latest county-to-county commuting flow data from the ACS is 2011-2015 (since it is a special tabulation of data), more recent commuting mode data is available from the ACS. The 2015-2019 ACS shows that 73% of workers who lived in Llano County drove alone to work, while 17% carpool or vanpool, 6% worked from home, 2% walked, fewer than 1% used a motorcycle and 1% used some other means. No workers used either taxi or public transportation.<sup>33</sup> The figure below shows data for Llano County alongside adjacent counties and the district.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2015/demo/metro-micro/commuting-flows-2015.html>

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Census. Bureau. 2015-2019 American Community Survey: Table B08301: Means of Transportation to Work; Universe: Workers 16 years and over. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B08301%3A%20MEANS%20OF%20TRANSPORTATION%20TO%20WORK&g=0500000US48021,48031,48053,48055,48171,48209,48287,48299,48319,48411,48453,48491&tid=ACSDT5Y2019.B08301>

Figure 2-27. Means of Transportation to Work by Mode, 2015-2019.

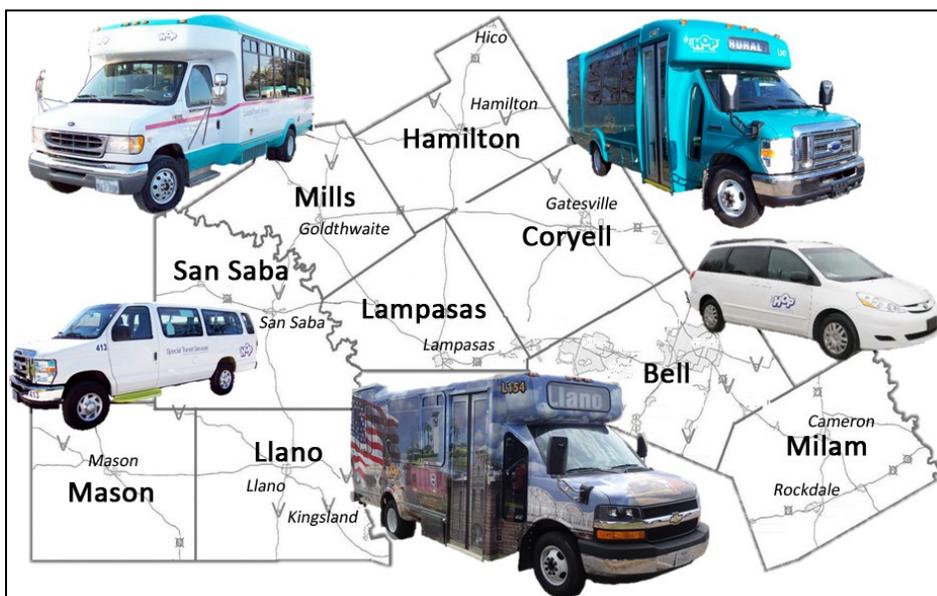


### Transit

Llano County is located in the service area for the Hill Country Transit District (HCTD), making it the only county in the CAPCOG region not served by the Capital Area Rural Transit System (CARTS). A map of the HCTD service area is shown in the figure below. HCTD provides only demand response services for Llano County.

Mason and San Saba are the only counties adjacent to Llano County that are also in the HCTD service area. Burnet, Williamson, and Travis Counties – the counties with which Llano has the strongest commuting linkages – are all in the CARTS service area.

Figure 2-28. Hill Country Transit District Service Area

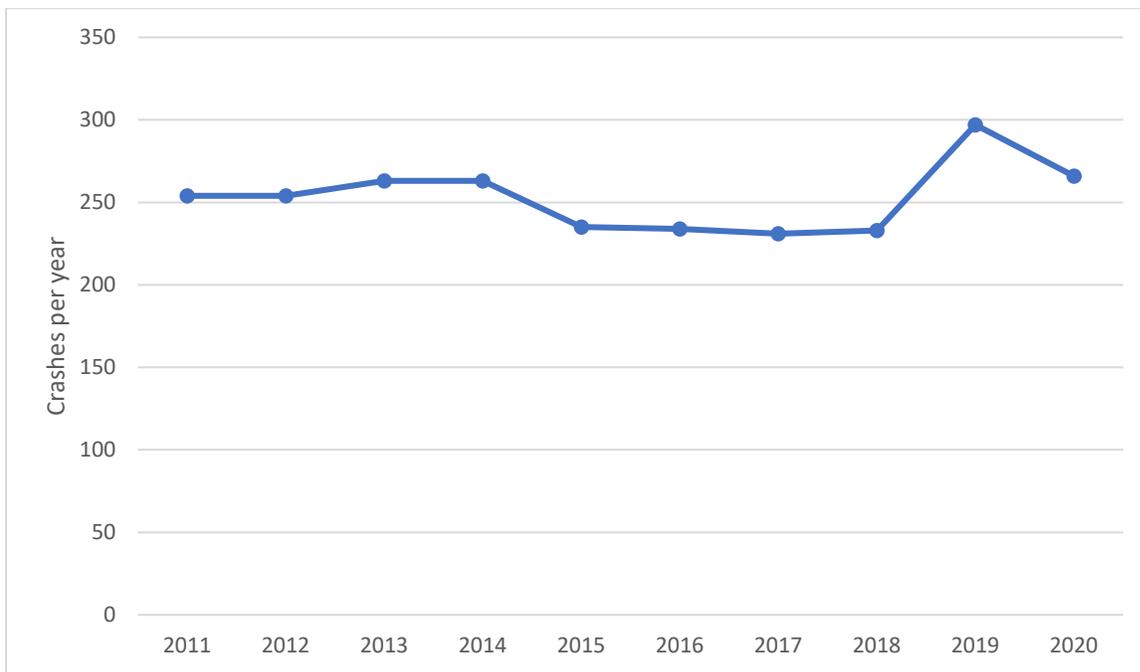


The City of Horseshoe Bay has a significant challenge since it is split between Burnet County and Llano County, and therefore, split between the two transit service areas. HCTD’s 2020 National Transit Database (NTD) profile indicates that it had 67 vehicles in service in 2020, and averaged 1,231 average weekday vehicle trips and 59 average Saturday vehicle trips. Like all transit agencies across the country, these numbers were down significantly from 2019, when HCTD had an average of 2,000 trips per day on weekdays and 76 trips per day on weekends.<sup>34</sup>

### Crashes

Crashes occurred on a relatively flat trend over the past 10 years, with a notable uptick in crashes in 2019 but then a decrease in crashes in 2020.<sup>35</sup>

Figure 2-29. Crashes in Llano County Per Year, 2011-2020



The following two maps show the location of serious crashes (involving death or suspected serious injury) and less serious crashes from 2016-2020.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/transit-agency-profiles/hill-country-transit-district>

<sup>35</sup> <https://cris.dot.state.tx.us/public/Query/app/home>

Figure 2-30. Locations of Fatal and Serious Crashes in Llano County, 2016-2020

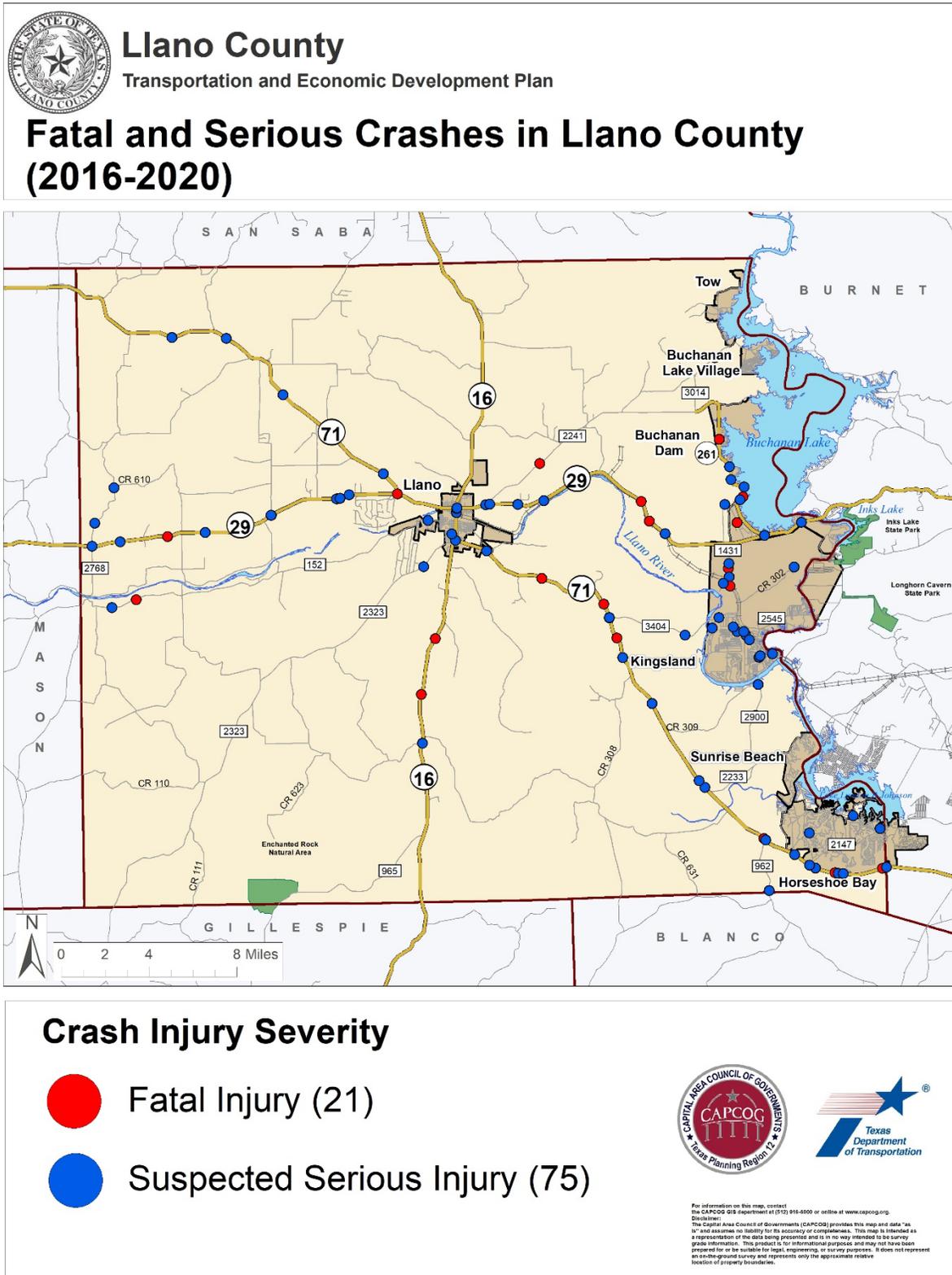
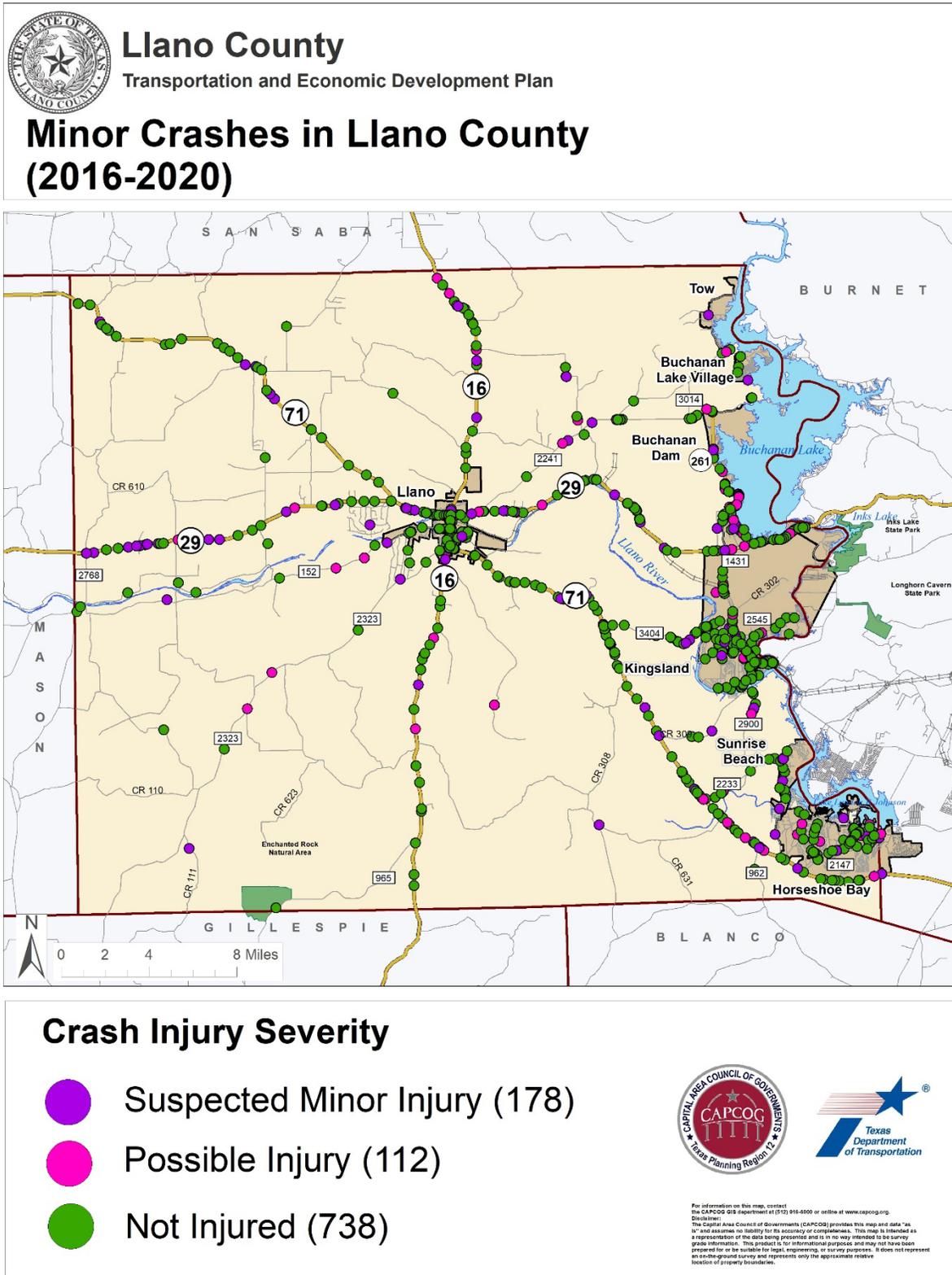


Figure 2-31. Locations of Minor Crashes in Llano County, 2016-2020



### Selected Bridge Characteristics

Three specific bridges came up during the course of this project that were of particular interest:<sup>36</sup>

- The SH 16 Bridge in Llano (also known as Roy B. Inks Bridge)
- The Ranch-to-Market (RM) 1431 Bridge in Kingsland
- The RM 2900 Bridge in Kingsland

Characteristics of the three bridges of interest are:

*Table 2-16. Selected Bridges in Llano County*

<b>Item</b>	<b>SH 16 (Roy B. Inks) Bridge in Llano</b>	<b>RM 1431 Bridge in Kingsland</b>	<b>RM 2900 Bridge in Kingsland</b>
<b>Year Built</b>	1936	1964	2019
<b>Lanes</b>	2	2	2
<b>Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)</b>	12,551 (2020)	13,241 (2020)	6,197 (2016)
<b>Projected AADT</b>	15,890 (2033)	14,240 (2031)	10,780 (2036)

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<sup>36</sup> <https://gis-txdot.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/txdot-bridges>

## **Chapter 3. Transportation**

This plan combines transportation with economic development because these two issues can influence each other – transportation infrastructure can impede or leverage business development. Economic development can drive demands for transportation capacity based on new and expanding businesses, housing development, and other secondary impact. As noted in the 2015 plan, transportation infrastructure must be periodically assessed and updated with needs identified by the local governments in partnership with TxDOT – this can also help shape decisions being made by local officials as growth occurs.

Projects identified during the development of the 2015 TED focused on roadway safety, repairs, and expansion of capacity but input from the surveys and meetings also noted more signage for tourism was needed and there was interest in pedestrian/off road hike and bike trails and transit service.

During the 2021 meetings for the updated plan, issues related to road capacity and passing lanes received much discussion as well as bottlenecks and traffic flow in the downtown area. Managing truck traffic, overweight trucks, and trucks moving through the downtown with hazardous materials again were a bigger issue as the County has seen an overall increase in traffic moving through Llano on SH 16.

### **Progress on Projects Identified in 2015 Plan**

When the Plan was completed, TxDOT had several projects scheduled to begin that would address the more immediate transportation needs.

The following table summarizes projects that were on the 2015 Llano TED list of recommended and planned transportation improvements that TxDOT has made progress on.

Figure 3-1. 2015 Llano TED Projects that have Progressed

2015 TED Project ID	Location	Issue/Problem	Community's Recommended Solution/Improvement	Agency's Comments	Funded	Responsible Organization	CSJ	TxDOT Comments
1	Low water crossing east of the Llano Bridge	This low water crossing needs improvement	Reinforce the crossing to ensure bridge is adequate in the event of an emergency	TxDOT Conducted bridge feasibility study that evaluated alternatives	N	City of Llano	0290-01-044	New bridge crossing study - complete
7	SH 71 at RM 2147	Too short of a left turn lane onto RM 2147 from SH 71	Longer turn lane; striping/reflectors	Let date December 2015; complete summer of 2016; resurfacing 0.2 mile west of RM 2233 to Burnet County Line; Est. cost \$2.6 million	Y	TxDOT	2687-01-013	Construct left turn lanes and resurface - Complete
26	Llano Bridge	Needs to be wider	Make into a four lane bridge	TxDOT conducted bridge feasibility study that evaluated alternatives	N	City of Llano/TxDOT	0290-01-044	Bridge Feasibility Study

2015 TED Project ID	Location	Issue/Problem	Community's Recommended Solution/Improvement	Agency's Comments	Funded	Responsible Organization	CSJ	TxDOT Comments
32	RM 1431 in Kingsland from RM 2545 to RM 3404	Congestion with left turns	Add center turn lane and sidewalks	Evaluate for cost feasibility	N	Llano County/TxDOT	1378-05-027	Covert 4-lane undivided to Super 2 with shoulders - complete
33	SH 29 east of Llano	Need passing lane	Add passing lane; add left turn lanes; add shoulders	Evaluate for future Super 2 (phase 1); highest ranked Llano Co project on CARTPO <sup>37</sup> 2014 Regional Priority list	N	TxDOT	0150-04-047, 0150-04-049, 0150-04-048, 0150-04-046	Construct Super 2 with passing lanes – Construction almost complete
34	SH 29 west of Llano	Need passing lane	Adding passing lanes; widen shoulders, turning lanes	Evaluate for future Super 2 (phase 1)	N	TxDOT	n/a	Super 2 on SH 29 from Llano city limits to Mason Line on long-range plan. Unfunded.

<sup>37</sup> Capital Area Regional Transportation Organization

2015 TED Project ID	Location	Issue/Problem	Community's Recommended Solution/Improvement	Agency's Comments	Funded	Responsible Organization	CSJ	TxDOT Comments
35	SH 16 south of Llano	Need passing lanes; important for medical services; tourists have no way to get off highway for pictures; many accidents	Add passing lanes; widen shoulders, turning lanes	Evaluate for future Super 2 (phase 1)	N	TxDOT	Na	Super 2 on SH 16 from Gillespie County Line to San Saba Line on long-range list. Unfunded
36	SH 16 north of Llano	Need passing lanes; important for medical services; tourists have no way to get off highway for pictures; many accidents	Add passing lanes, widen shoulders, turning lanes	Evaluate for future Super 2 (phase 2)	N	TxDOT	n/a	Super 2 on SH 16 from Gillespie County Line to San Saba Line on long-range list. Unfunded
38	RM 2147 in Horseshoe Bay (from Ferguson Dr. to SH 71)	Left turn lane needed through western portion of Horseshoe Bay	Left turn lane; widen road	Evaluate for right-of-way acquisition	N	TxDOT	2687-01-013	Construct left turn lanes and resurface – complete

2015 TED Project ID	Location	Issue/Problem	Community's Recommended Solution/Improvement	Agency's Comments	Funded	Responsible Organization	CSJ	TxDOT Comments
42	SH 71 north of the City of Llano	No shoulders	Add shoulders	Evaluate for future Super 2	N	TxDOT		Super 2 on SH 71 from Mason County Line to SH 29 on long-range list. Unfunded.
49	RM 152 in Llano	Add walkway or sidewalks into town; a lot of people walk these streets and they need a place to walk other than the road; bike and pedestrian lane	Walkways, bike trails, and hike path	City applied for Transportation Alternatives Program funding	N	City of Llano/TxDOT	0396-09-021	Ped trail, sidewalks from Post Oak to Malone St – Complete
50	SH 16/SH 71 at Llano High School	Students walking on shoulders	Add sidewalks	Evaluate opportunities for funding in conjunction with the City	N	City of Llano/TxDOT	0290-01-047	Install ped signal and crosswalk at SH 29 – Complete

## Other Projects Identified as Priorities

Beyond projects listed above that TxDOT has noted progress on, there are three additional issues that were identified by stakeholders as top priorities, including:

1. RM 1431 bridge crossing the Colorado River at Kingsland;
2. The intersection of SH 16 and SH 71 south of City of Llano; and
3. The intersection of SH 16 and SH 29 north of City of Llano.

The first two of these issues were also identified in the 2015 Plan:

- Project 6 in the 2015 plan recommended adding signage on the approaches to the RM 1431 Bridge to help enhance safety due to the lanes converging from 4 to 2 on either side of the bridge; and
- Project 10 in the 2015 plan recommended a speed sign or bumps to slow traffic at SH 16 and SH 71.

TxDOT has indicated interest in expanding the capacity of the RM 1431 bridge from 2 lanes to 4 lanes, which would address the concern noted in the 2015 Plan. A short-term improvement in signage as recommended in 2015 could also improve safety and traffic flow at the bridge.

For this study, there was a consensus among steering committee members that a traffic light was needed at the intersection of SH 16 and SH 71, rather than just a stop sign or traffic bumps as was previously suggested. Currently, amber flashing lights are installed at this intersection, and a stop sign for drivers approaching SH 16 from SH 71 turning left, but no stop signs for traffic travelling along SH 16. While the speed limit does slow from 55 miles per hour (mph) to 45 mph as SH 16 approaches SH 71 from the south, the steering committee members felt that additional safety enhancements at this intersection were a priority.

The intersection of SH 16 and SH 29 to the north of Llano does have a 4-way traffic light and a 35 mph speed limit approaching the light. However, steering committee members felt that additional safety measures at this intersection were appropriate. TxDOT's project tracker website indicates that there is a \$106,869 safety improvement project (project ID 029001047) at this intersection that let in April 2020 and which should be completed soon.

## Current and Upcoming Projects

TxDOT's project tracker includes 20 projects in Llano County valued at over \$36 million that are either currently underway, beginning construction soon, or which TxDOT anticipates to commence construction in the next 4 years. There are no additional projects identified beyond the 4-year time horizon.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> [https://apps3.txdot.gov/apps-cq/project\\_tracker/](https://apps3.txdot.gov/apps-cq/project_tracker/)

Figure 3-2. Llano County Projects in TxDOT Project Tracker as of June 2022

Project ID	Road	Description	Bid Received Date	Phase	Construction Cost/Estimate
268701013	RM 2147	Roadway Rehabilitation/Reconstruction with No Added Capacity: SH 71 to Ferguson Road	Dec-19	Construction underway or begins soon	\$2,394,881
29001047	SH 16	Hazard Elimination and Safety: Safety Improvement at Intersection with SH 29 in City of Llano	Apr-20	Construction underway or begins soon	\$106,869
15004049	SH 29	Highway Improvement: Super-2 Highway from 2.7 miles west of RM 1431 to RM 1431	May-20	Construction underway or begins soon	\$4,653,515
28907023	SH 16	Preventative Maintenance: Overlay from North of SH 29 to SH 29 in City of Llano	Dec-20	Construction underway or begins soon	\$301,389
29001048	SH 29	Preventative Maintenance: Overlay from SH 29 to Llano High School in City of Llano	Dec-20	Construction underway or begins soon	\$1,060,249
15004048	SH 29	Construct New Roadway Lanes: 3.8 miles east of RM 2241 to 5.5 miles west of RM 1431	Jan-21	Construction underway or begins soon	\$5,448,732
91425008	CR 103	Bridge Replacement: Over Llano River	Apr-21	Construction underway or begins soon	\$1,599,440
15004046	SH 29	Highway Improvement: Super-2 Highway from 0.3 miles west of RM 2241 to 3.8 miles east of RM 2241	Aug-21	Construction underway or begins soon	\$7,398,989
54701027	SH 261	Resurface Roadway: Beachcombers Loop to SH 29 (along Lake Buchanan)	Sep-21	Construction underway or begins soon	\$470,164
28907021	SH 16	Preventative Maintenance: Seal Coat 6.302 mi. S. of RM 501 to SH 29	Sep-22	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$1,224,090
300701009	RM 2233	Resurface Roadway: SH 71 to RM 2900 (West of Sunrise Beach Village)	Sep-22	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$1,346,515

<b>Project ID</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Bid Received Date</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Construction Cost/Estimate</b>
<b>15004050</b>	SH 29	Preventative Maintenance: Seal Coat from RM 1431 to Burnet County Line (Buchanan Dam area)	Sep-22	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$1,868,013
<b>70004051</b>	SH 71	Resurface Roadway: Overlay from East SH 16 to CR 304 (mostly City of Llano)	Jan-23	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$1,803,766
<b>310101008</b>	RM 2900	Resurface Roadway: RM 1431 to the Colorado River in Kingsland	Oct-23	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$615,317
<b>15003021</b>	SH 29	Preventative Maintenance: Overlay from Autumn Avenue to Wells Avenue in City of Llano	Sep-24	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$554,464
<b>15004051</b>	SH 29	Preventative Maintenance: Overlay from Wells Avenue to RM 2241 just East of City of Llano	Sep-24	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$571,429
<b>29001049</b>	SH 16	Seal Coat from Llano City Limits to Llano/Gillespie County Line	Sep-24	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$2,173,936
<b>137805029</b>	RM 1431	Seal Coat: SH 261 to 0.5 mi. S. of SH 29	Sep-24	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$1,142,277
<b>341501004</b>	RM 2831	Seal Coat: End of maintenance to SH 71	Sep-24	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$970,888
<b>15002042</b>	SH 29	Preventative Maintenance: Overlay from Pecan St. to Autumn Avenue in City of Llano	Dec-24	Scheduled for construction in next 4 years	\$4,653,515

## Bridges

### SH 16 Llano Bridge

There were three different project suggestions related to the SH 16 (Roy B. Inks) Bridge identified in the 2015 Llano TED:

1. “Reinforce the low water crossing east of the Llano Bridge to ensure bridge is adequate in the event of an emergency”;
2. “Make the Llano Bridge more attractive”; and
3. “Make the Llano Bridge into a four-lane bridge.”

The discussion during meetings for this TED Update indicated greater concerns related to long-term viability of the bridge. There was considerable discussion about the age of this bridge and when and where a replacement bridge would be located.

One important factor for any planning around the bridge is its listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This status means that, “project development must proceed according to federal and state laws governing historic bridges,” according to Section 1.3 of TxDOT’s Historic Bridge Manual.<sup>39</sup> Relevant federal laws include the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106 of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) (which relates to public involvement processes), and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. Relevant U.S. Department of Transportation regulations include 23 CFR 774, which requires analysis of alternatives to actions that could avoid or minimize harm to a historic bridge, including all bridges that would be demolished, relocated, or otherwise adversely affected if federal funds are used to fund all or a portion of the project. Alternatives that TxDOT considers for each historic bridge include:

- No build;
- Build a new bridge at a different location without affecting the historic integrity of the structure by bypassing the historic bridge with an alternate alignment;
  - Rehabilitate the bridge in situ for pedestrian use;
  - Stabilize the bridge in situ as a monument;
- Rehabilitate the historic bridge for continued vehicular use;
  - Rehabilitate the bridge for continued two-way use;
  - Rehabilitate the historic bridge for use as part of a one-way pair;
- Replace the historic bridge;
  - Rehabilitate the historic bridge for pedestrian use at a new location; and
  - Demolish the bridge.

Relevant state law includes Chapter 191 of the Texas Natural Resource Code, which prohibits demolition or alteration of historic properties without consultation and approval from the Texas Historical Commission (THC). TxDOT will work with the THC on projects using state funds that impact a bridge listed on the NRHP. Federal funds can be used to rehabilitate bridges for continued vehicular use if they are considered “significant” under 23 U.S.C. 144. Such bridges are eligible for federal funding if the rehabilitation will restore load capacity and safety features required for the intended service life of the

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<sup>39</sup> [http://onlinemanuals.txdot.gov/txdotmanuals/his/definition\\_and\\_identification.htm](http://onlinemanuals.txdot.gov/txdotmanuals/his/definition_and_identification.htm)

bridge. Historic bridges rehabilitated for continued vehicular use with only state funds, including maintenance projects, usually do not have limits on funding.

The TxDOT Highway Bridge Program (HBP) can provide funding for maintenance and rehabilitation of historically significant bridges located either off-system or on-system. TxDOT also manages the Bridge Maintenance and Improvement Program (BMIP or Category 6 BMN) to improve the physical conditions, though not the functionality, of on-system bridges by addressing structural conditions before deterioration becomes irreversible.

If the bridge was going to be converted to a pedestrian-only bridge, the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside program within the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program, can be used to fund the preservation and rehabilitation of the bridge. These funds are overseen by TxDOT's Public Transportation and Transportation Planning and Programming divisions.

TxDOT conducted a feasibility study in 2014 to "investigate the feasibility of an alternate bridge crossing over the Llano River in the event that access across the existing Roy Inks Bridge on SH 16 is prevented." The report noted that "in the event the bridge is closed, the shortest available detour using a similar highway capacity and design across the Llano River is approximately 80 miles."

The most feasible and cost-effective route at that time was from Sheffield Avenue on the north side of the river southward to Bayley Street. Llano County officials indicated concerns with having trucks carrying hazardous waste materials moving through a residential area and wanted a different route considered. TxDOT staff have indicated rehabilitation work on the current bridge will be undertaken but such has not been scheduled yet.

Next steps for bridge traffic though Llano fall into two categories:

1. The shorter-term task of settling on a route and funding options for an alternate crossing that could provide some back-up options in the event the Roy Inks bridge is blocked or temporarily incapacitated (including if it needed to be temporarily closed for rehabilitation work), and
2. The longer-term task of identifying options for a permanent replacement for the bridge.

### **RM 1431 Bridge**

The need for expanded capacity for the RM 1431 bridge was discussed again. This bridge is part of the most populated and highest growth area, and bordering Burnet County. RM 1431 currently has four lanes of traffic on both ends of this bridge which narrows down to two lanes. TxDOT has begun looking at how to expand and upgrade this bridge, either to four lanes or a two/one with a turning lane.

### **RM 2900 Bridge**

The RM 2900 bridge was reconstructed in 2019 and provides a route from Kingsland across the Llano River to RM 2233 and is heavily used as an alternate to taking RM 1431 through Marble Falls. This bridge was washed away in a 2018 flooding incident and meeting participants remain concerned about its long-term viability; however, the bridge was rebuilt based on a comprehensive hydraulic analysis and constructed 5 feet higher in the center to withstand future flooding.

### **Federal Bridge Investment Program**

On June 10, 2022, the US Department of Transportation announced the Bridge Investment Program (<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/bip/index.cfm>). The program provides grant opportunities to rehabilitate, replace, preserve, or protect existing bridges that are in poor condition, or are at risk of falling into poor condition. Pre-construction activities such as planning and feasibility analysis are also eligible activities. The City of Llano, as well as Llano County and TxDOT, are all eligible to apply for the grant program. The program is proposed to be funded through 2026.

## **Parking and Traffic Flow in Downtown Llano**

Traffic continues to stack up on SH 16 in Llano's downtown – this is exacerbated with parking along this route by people going into the businesses or courthouse. This can be addressed by TxDOT restriping this section of the road to add capacity but is contingent upon the county and city identifying other parking options away from the downtown square. Parking along Berry or Wright Streets could be designated 30-minute slots for quick visits while tourism-related customers are taking in several businesses and parking in a longer-term lot.

The City of Llano is considering the addition of three off-street parking areas that would serve the downtown area. Of the three areas, two are located on the south side of the river and are within walking distance to the courthouse as well as shops along Ford, Berry, and Main Streets. Existing sidewalks provide a connection between the proposed parking and downtown. These two parking areas combined could provide 50 - 75 additional parking spaces.

There are currently approximately 30 parallel parking spaces on Ford Street (SH16) within one block of Main Street – some striped, some not. Should these road segments be restriped to accommodate greater capacity on SH16, the reduction in the number of spaces can be offset by the additional spaces in the proposed parking areas. Still, the two-lane Roy Inks Bridge will be a bottleneck and the bridge rehabilitation or replacement alternatives previously mentioned should be considered to address the need for increased capacity on SH 16.

## **Transit Services**

TED Update meetings reflected an ongoing need for senior transit services but also included discussion about transit to get people to jobs and just making the public more aware of the services provided by Hill County Transit District. Currently HCTD only provides Special Transit Services on a trip by trip basis including services for seniors. Local governments may be able to fund services including fixed routes and should work with the transit district to assess and plan based on ridership criteria.

## **Safety Projects**

The intersection at SH 16 and 71 south of downtown Llano has raised concerns for many and may be a candidate for safety improvements beyond what is there. Several intersections on major roadway systems are candidates for traffic signalization beyond what may be in place.

## **Other Projects**

RM 2147 through Horseshoe Bay connects US Highway 281 to west SH 71. Traffic has increased significantly with the growth of both Horseshoe Bay and Cottonwood Shores as well as a substantial increase in tourism traffic in the area. As mentioned earlier in this report, Horseshoe Bay's growth has been outpacing every other part of the county, growing by 4.5% from 2020 to 2021

SH 16 is a "north/south" route that goes through Llano connecting Fredericksburg to the south and San Saba to the north. The consensus is that, increasingly with recreational vehicles as well as trucks, the road is becoming more dangerous and a Super-Two approach would be helpful although the committee felt the longer-term goal should be a four-lane road between Fredericksburg and Llano.

## **Summary of Recommended Transportation Strategies**

CAPCOG's recommended transportation strategies for Llano County to pursue are listed below:

### **Strategy 1.1: Identify Preferred Site for Secondary Bridge in Llano**

Within 1 year of finalization of this plan, Llano County and the City of Llano should work with TxDOT to either start proceeding with planning efforts to develop one of the options identified in the 2014

feasibility study (a bridge or low water crossing from Bayley Street to Sheffield Avenue) or identify some other preferred option for a secondary crossing. The main problem with a low-water crossing is that it could not serve as an official alternate route for SH 16 at whatever point TxDOT needs to work on the Roy Inks Bridge. It would also leave the two sides of the city isolated from one another in such a situation if even a modest flooding event occurred along the Llano River in the city. A low-water crossing can, however, serve the dual purpose of a dam to impound water in the Llano River that the City of Llano, and possibly others, could use as a water supply. The process to receive approval from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for such a dam would involve getting it included in the 2026 Region K water plan, which could take longer than the time needed to have an alternate river crossing in place. Therefore, if desired, this option should be evaluated very soon. If it is to be pursued, the identification of a project sponsor (possibly Llano County or City of Llano) and preparation of a proposal should begin immediately so that it can be submitted to the Region K group by August 2023.

### **Strategy 1.2: Work with TxDOT for Long-Term Solution for Roy Inks Bridge in Llano**

Simultaneous with the work Llano County and the City of Llano should start working together and with TxDOT on long-term plans for the bridge, keeping in mind the constraints TxDOT faces in working with the bridge due to its listing on the NRHP. One option to explore would be to stage the construction of the secondary bridge and the rehabilitation work in such a way that would enable each bridge to serve as a single-direction, 2-lane route across the river, functioning as a pair. This could help alleviate bottlenecks that occur as vehicles approach the bridge from either side.

### **Strategy 1.3: Work with TxDOT on Improving Conditions on RM 1431 Bridge**

The county should work with TxDOT to plan for the expansion of capacity of the RM 1431 bridge from 2 lanes to 4 lanes. This will be complicated by the lack of nearby alternate routes over the Colorado River. In the meantime, TxDOT may wish to consider providing additional warning devices to the existing signage approaching the bridge from both the Llano County and Burnet County sides to ensure that drivers have adequate warning that the 4-lane approaches to the bridge are narrowing to two as was recommended in the 2015 plan.

### **Strategy 1.4: Shift Parking Away from SH 16 in Downtown Llano**

Moving parking away from SH 16 in downtown Llano would enable TxDOT to restripe SH 16, extending the 4-lane configuration further into downtown Llano and improving traffic flow.

### **Strategy 1.5: Continue to Evaluate Transit Demand**

While Llano County does not currently have access to any fixed-route services and current conditions may not be right yet for such an investment, stakeholders have continued to bring this issue up, and the growth in the communities clustered around the southeastern corner of the county on both sides of the river could make limited pilot projects or microtransit options viable at some point in the next few years.

### **Strategy 1.6: Improve Safety at Intersection of SH 16 and SH 71**

The steering committee strongly endorsed the idea of enhancing safety at this intersection. Adding a traffic light in particular was noted as desirable.

### **Strategy 1.7: Actively Pursue Grant Funding**

The county and city should actively pursue funding opportunities from TxDOT and U.S. DOT to advance transportation projects. In addition to TxDOT's existing funding sources, the federal infrastructure bill includes lots of funding opportunities that Llano County could pursue to advance its transportation priorities. For example:

- The U.S. DOT is awarding \$5 billion from FY 2022-2026 in funding through its Safe Streets and

Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program (currently open, through September 15, 2022)<sup>40</sup>

- The U.S. DOT is awarding \$1 billion in competitive funding for a new Rural Surface Transportation Grant (RSTG) program from FY 2022-2026<sup>41</sup>
- The U.S. DOT is awarding competitive funding through its Bridge Investment Program (BIP) from FY 2022-2026<sup>42</sup>
- Texas is being allocated \$577 million in funding for bridge funding for FY 2022-2026 as part of the 2021 Infrastructure Bill<sup>43</sup>
- TxDOT's biannual coordinated call for projects provides opportunities for expanded active transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks and bike paths in rural areas.

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/rural-surface-transportation-grant>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/bip/index.cfm>

<sup>43</sup> <https://highways.dot.gov/newsroom/dot-announces-historic-bridge-investment-under-bipartisan-infrastructure-law>

## **Chapter 4. Economic Development**

Llano County's strengths are obvious when you visit and experience the richness of its natural resources, the chain of Highland Lakes that flow through the county, the historic properties and points of interest. The county continues to be an attractive place for people to visit. Deer hunters continue to flock to this area during winter months, and the City of Llano downtown features many historic buildings including the courthouse and a movie theater.

Llano County currently has a high concentration of businesses that cater to visitors such as accommodations and food services, as well as entertainment and recreation. The county is poised to capitalize on its natural resources by continuing to add to the sales tax base and HOT revenue. The growing attraction of new residents and tourists to the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) should mean an ever-increasing supply of potential visitors to the county seeking to find nature at its best and encounter rural Texas.

Economic development is about making communities the best versions of what they can be and the easiest place for residents as well as visitors to spend their money. Tourism can do both since what is good for the tourist is typically good for the local. Tourism is the most cost-effective and clean industry that brings new dollars into Llano County and its cities without having to incur the high costs and ongoing maintenance of infrastructure often required by other industries.

Given some of the challenges already described in this report, such as educational attainment, housing affordability, and broadband access, the county has a few disadvantages when it comes to business development. On the other hand, several good opportunities exist that the county could capitalize on: developable land is plentiful in the county in proximity to utility providers; areas of the county are also well-connected to each other by highways as well as to areas outside the county; and the tourism industry remains strong providing the county with a steady economic base.

The high proportion of rental homes and the high employment in tourism related jobs also show, however, that the county appears to be heavily dependent on its tourism industry. While tourism provides a good base for the county's economy, any downturn that affects the industry could have a detrimental effect on it – as was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Tourism**

The 2015 Plan strategies recommended enhancing tourism opportunities, beginning to think about expanding jobs with more small and medium sized employers, and expanding broadband services to support telework opportunities as well as entrepreneurial efforts. These are still important strategies that have become even more feasible given the increased opportunities for tourism and business development. Ideas and recommendations voiced in the plan update meetings included a regional approach to tourism including maximizing use of the county's HOT revenue, improved broadband service, training to support workforce development, housing for an expanding workforce and ongoing development of Llano's downtown business and visitor opportunities.

#### **Strategy 2.1: County-Wide Tourism Committee**

Llano County should appoint a county-wide tourism committee or board that includes representatives from both incorporated and unincorporated areas who are experienced members of the local travel and tourism industry and assist in welcoming visitors to the region. The Committee should report monthly or quarterly to the county judge or commissioners court on progress that is being made on county tourism priorities such as developing a cohesive county-wide tourism plan that emphasizes accountability for the

economic impact and return on investment of the county HOT revenue for special events and tourism programs that apply for county HOT grant funding. This group could be the foundation for a county tourism staff if the county pursues opening a county visitor center.

### **Strategy 2.2: Joint County-Wide Tourism Website**

Consider a joint county-wide website for all Llano County communities with website links to the individual participants, a one stop shop that promotes history, arts and cultural, sports, and parks and recreational products. Example daytrip or multi-day/weekend itineraries could be produced for each tourism category to give visitors a view of the county through local eyes. Visitors could fulfill their desires to go where the locals hang out by viewing “best kept local secrets”. Local small businesses should be featured since shopping is the number one visitor activity. This approach leverages resources and strengthens the tourism product.

### **Strategy 2.3: County Visitor Center**

Study building a new county visitor center on the east side of the county to capture the Highland Lakes’ growing population and increased visitor traffic. EDA’s Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation funding, <https://eda.gov/arpa/travel-tourism/> is still available at the state level, so the county should work with the Travel Texas State Tourism office to tap into their grant opportunities.

### **Strategy 2.4: Joint Agreement for HOT Funds**

The committee should consider a joint agreement between Llano County and City of Llano to promote each other with HOT funds. Some tourism projects the county-wide committee could start prioritizing include: participating in the state’s Travel Texas cooperative marketing campaign, <https://gov.texas.gov/travel-texas/page/co-op-opportunities> ; partnering with the City of Burnet on “Bluebonnet Capital of Texas’ cross promotions; exploring the ideas of an outdoor events venue, possibly near water, on the east side of the county; and begin early event planning preparations for the next total solar eclipse at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, April 8, 2024.

### **Strategy 2.5: Enhance HOT Collection from Short-Term Rentals**

One issue the steering committee noted is that the extent to which people may be renting homes through companies like AirBnB but not paying the HOT is unknown but believed to be significant. The county should contact other tourism-oriented counties or municipalities to determine what practices they have in place to ensure accurate collection of HOT funds from short-term rentals. There are also several for-profit companies that provide this service.

## **Broadband**

The success of a community has become more dependent on how effectively the community adopts technology resources, that includes access to reliable, high-speed networks. Increasing broadband expansion and adoption throughout Llano County will contribute to greater quality of life. Teleworking or telecommuting – working outside of the conventional workplace and communicating with it by way of telecommunications – became popular during the COVID-19 pandemic when many organizations began to allow staff to telework. Teleworking is quickly becoming a critical part of growing a local economy because it represents an opportunity to attract or retain employees even though their employer may not be located within the community. However, this only works if those employees have access to advanced broadband infrastructure. In Llano County, the lack of broadband access is a significant barrier to organizations being able to offer this, if needed. According to Connected Nation Texas, approximately 58% of residents in Llano County indicate that they telework at least part of the time.

In 2021, Connected Nation Texas completed a broadband action plan for a three-county region that

included Llano, Blanco, and Burnet Counties.<sup>44</sup> Connected Nations developed three recommendations with detailed recommended actions:

1. The Commissioners' Court should appoint liaisons from each community to oversee and facilitate broadband advancements through regular meetings and coordinated community engagements;
2. Expand and encourage local organizations (and service providers) to deploy or amplify free public Wi-Fi so that residents across the three counties can access high-speed internet service in public and private spaces across the Hill Country; and
3. Increase broadband adoption and use among residents through digital inclusion and digital skills workshops.

Survey results for Llano County showed that while there are certain stakeholders (such as agriculture) that still lack physical access to broadband services, the biggest barrier to broadband services in Llano County is not physical availability, but affordability.<sup>45</sup> One program that could significantly help Llano County lower this barrier for many of its residents is the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program.

*The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Affordable Connectivity Program (<https://www.fcc.gov/acp>) provides discounts on Internet service and devices to help expand access to broadband services, including:*

*\*Up to \$30 per month discount on Internet service; and*

*\*A one-time \$100 discount on a laptop, desktop, or tablet.*

*Households are eligible if they have income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, as well as anyone who meets at least one of the following criteria:*

- 1) *Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year;*
- 2) *Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income Internet program;*
- 3) *Participates in one of these assistance programs:*
- 4) *The National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision;*
- 5) *SNAP (7.3% of all households);*
- 6) *Medicaid;*
- 7) *Federal Public Housing Assistance;*
- 8) *Supplemental Security Income (SSI);*
- 9) *WIC;*
- 10) *Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits; or*
- 11) *Lifeline.*

<sup>44</sup> <https://connectednation.org/llano-county-texas/>

<sup>45</sup> [https://connectednation.org/texas/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2021/06/Llano-County\\_Portal-Results\\_06042021.pdf](https://connectednation.org/texas/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2021/06/Llano-County_Portal-Results_06042021.pdf)

### **Strategy 3.1: Pursue Connected Nations Recommendations**

The Connected Nations recommendations for the community are based on extensive data collection from within the community and are tailored to Llano County's particular circumstances. Their recommendations provide a good starting point for Llano County to help advance broadband within the county.

### **Strategy 3.2: Promote the Affordable Connectivity Program Within the County**

Based on the income qualification alone, at least 21% of all families and 31% of all residents would qualify for this benefit, bringing approximately \$462,000 per year in assistance to Llano County families for the subscription benefit. By promoting the use of this program by residents, Llano County can both reduce household costs for existing users of broadband, reduce cost barriers to households that wish to have broadband service, and expand the customer base within the county, thereby increasing the attractiveness of the county for service providers to further expand access.

### **Strategy 3.3: Pursue Funding Opportunities through the State Broadband Office**

Texas' new Broadband Development Office (BDO) is due to release a Statewide Broadband Plan in the summer or 2022 and will be awarding a substantial amount of grants in the near future. This includes:

- \$500.5 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA);
- At least \$100 million of \$42.5 billion nationwide from the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program;
- Funding from the IIJA's \$2.75 billion Digital Equity Act.

While these funding opportunities have not yet been announced, the BDO is expected to have a process in place to start accepting applications by October 2022. In order to maximize the benefits that these funding sources can deliver, Llano County should be ready to aggressively pursue funding opportunities. Llano County's current broadband study can help position the county to do exactly this.

### **Strategy 3.4: Internet Provider Industry Day**

Llano County can host a "Internet Provider Industry Day" to open discussion on proposals to help fix broadband issues in the region. Competition provides residents with choices for service, allowing households the ability to switch providers if their current service does not meet their needs. Work with the Internet service providers to extend access coverage throughout Llano County. Expanding service throughout Llano County will require working with these providers to build public-private partnerships to help increase affordability and access to more broadband service options.

### **Strategy 3.5: Evaluate Recommendations of CobbFendley Broadband Feasibility Study in Parallel with the Strategies in this Report**

The Broadband Feasibility Study currently being performed by CobbFendley examines the broadband existing conditions and limitations to improvement in greater-detail than this plan. The study proposes several scenarios to add the infrastructure necessary to improve service, and it also identifies several operations models that the county would need to consider should it proceed with its Broadband Improvement Initiative.

As the county evaluates the build and operations options in the study, it should do so while taking the strategies in this plan into consideration. For example, transportation improvements included in this plan may present opportunities for infrastructure location, enhanced Internet speeds could make workforce training programs more available, or an incorporated Kingsland may choose to initiate its own broadband improvement project much like the City of Horseshoe Bay.

## **Downtown Llano**

The heart of the county is the county seat of Llano, and the heart of Llano is its historic downtown district. In addition, one of the county's best natural assets runs through downtown, the Llano River, which makes it distinct and different from any other surrounding Texas downtown. Along with the restored Romanesque Revival Llano County Courthouse and a collection of small businesses in surrounding historic buildings, downtown Llano offers a great opportunity for future upper-floor residential development, small business development, and continued destination tourism.

### **Strategy 4.1: Get the Most out of Downtown Llano**

Downtown Llano, beyond the square, with its close connection to the Llano River, is a major county asset in regard to economic development. Downtown county-owned properties that are soon to be vacant or underutilized should be identified and considered for possible use by shops and other small businesses. The county should consider teaming up with the City of Llano Main Street Program, (<http://www.llanomainstreet.org/>) to offer county-owned properties as economic incentives to attract developers and businesses or uses that meet the top requests and demands by residents. Vacant or underutilized second and upper floors could be used as residences by locals or for lodging by tourists.

A viable tool for rehabilitation and renovating older properties is the Texas PACE Program <https://www.texaspaceauthority.org/service-areas/>, which can provide gap financing for downtown revitalization projects and other older buildings that when upgraded, provide necessary commercial building infrastructure. The TX-PACE program enables commercial property and business owners, as well as non-profits, to lower their operating costs and use the savings to pay for eligible water conservation and energy efficiency. The county should invite progressive local and regional bankers across the county to meet the TX-PACE program leadership to learn about the financial tool and how it could help their customers and communities.

### **Strategy 4.2: Pursue Downtown Revitalization and Main Street Grants**

The county should consider applying for grant funding through the Texas Department of Agriculture's Downtown Revitalization and Main Street Programs, <https://www.texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/RuralCommunityDevelopmentBlockGrant%28CDBG%29/CDBGResources/Applications/DRPMS.aspx> for a cohesive downtown streetscape project connecting both sides of the bridge and provide pedestrian amenities like ADA-accessible sidewalks, historic lighting, as well as shade and buffer from the SH 16 traffic and the Texas sun. Downtown infrastructure improvements along with a colorful banner program can create a more consistent and vibrant look, increasing downtown's curb appeal and the amount of time, thus money, that locals and tourists will spend at shops on the square.

### **Strategy 4.3: Find Use for Hotel Property Owned by the County**

Explore the adaptive reuse of the downtown historic hotel property owned by the county as a mixed-use project with a county visitor center and shared workspace offering free wi-fi on the ground floor with upper-floor residential and/or lodging on the other floors.

### **Strategy 4.4: Be Strategic about Parking**

Every downtown program that is actively involved in commerce and tourism identifies parking as an issue. City of Llano will need to look at maximizing downtown parking options as well as creating more spaces in walking distance. Using a consultant who has experience redesigning downtown parking including restriping for a more effective layout around the courthouse square to increase the number of legal public parking spaces.

The County and City should also look at lots owned by the county or city in and around downtown that

could possibly be restriped with directional signage from the highways that allow public parking for local downtown businesses and special events. This could also assist with larger vehicular traffic like horse trailers that pass through downtown but don't stop due to a lack of parking for their size of vehicle.

Finally, it's not unusual that the shortage of parking spaces is partly due to downtown businesses' employees parking on the street in front of the businesses. The City of Llano should identify a location for downtown employee parking to free up the valuable on-street parking spaces for customers only during downtown restaurants and retail store hours.

## **Workforce**

Economic development depends on having workers. One of the challenges Llano County has is not unusual for any community - matching employers' needs with current workers' skill sets. Fortunately, access to the programs of CTC, Texas State Technical College (TSTC), Austin Community College (ACC), and Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area (WSRCA) can provide options to guide jobseekers.

### **Strategy 5.1: Determine Llano County's Training and Community College Service Needs**

Work with CTC, TSTC, WSRCA, and ACC, to determine Llano County's top workforce training needs and community college services that are needed in Llano County. If Llano County's current labor market data won't support a dedicated campus, then a training center for the community, school districts, and potential industry partners could be viable.

The county, cities, and LISD should work with CTC and ACC to determine if ACC would be able to offer mobile training in the area. If so, ACC and county representatives can determine what training would be the most beneficial for the county's residents and employers.

### **Strategy 5.2: Use Vacant/Underutilized Property for Continuing Education or Training**

Consider using a vacant or underutilized county property to create a multi-use facility where continuing education or customized training could be provided in partnership with a willing community college partner. Another possibility would be a dedicated Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center that works as a feeder for the Llano County school districts, similar to the East Texas Advanced Manufacturing Academy (<https://etxama.org/>), and during non-school hours the multi-use facility could be used for other training needs for the general community and industry.

### **Strategy 5.3: Encourage the Expansion of Apprenticeship Programs**

Apprenticeship programs could be a good fit for Llano County employers to provide customized training on site. Since many high school graduates don't stay in the county due to the lack of job opportunities, offering apprenticeships that offer training with a career path in a company provides a good opportunity for those graduating who are not college-bound.

In Burnet County, a small plumbing apprenticeship program is a cooperative agreement between Workforce Network, Inc., which has received grant funding through Texas Workforce Commission for a High Demand Job Training grant; Winn's Career Education, who is the apprenticeship training provider; and local employers.

Another program to consider is Adaptive Construction Solutions which is an apprenticeship training provider that has worked to bring apprenticeship opportunities to companies in welding and other skilled trades. Located in Houston, they work with companies across Texas, and have partnered with Bastrop County on welding, ironworking, and building construction.

There are also pre-apprenticeship training programs that may be willing to start up classes quickly in Llano County. Skillpoint Alliance offers heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC); electrical; and plumbing introductory courses that will give a job seeker exposure to the trades in a short amount of

time, less than six weeks, prior to or at the start of employment. Lone Star Construction Trades Training also offers 40 hours of hands-on training covering basic electrical theory, electrical code, blueprints, safety and other topics to prepare an individual for entry into the occupation.

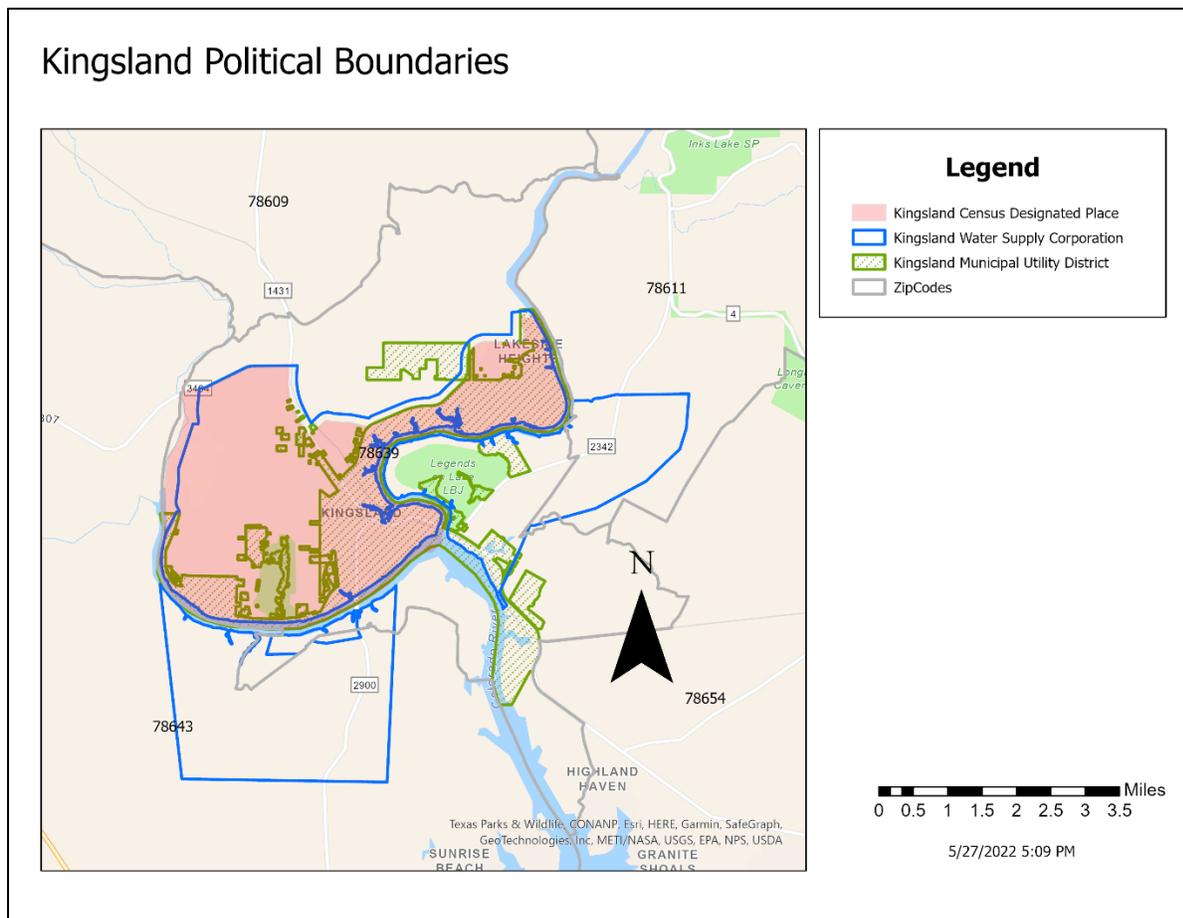
# Chapter 5. Community Development and Kingsland

One of the most significant CDPs in the entire CAPCOG area, in terms of population, land use, and city-like characteristics, is Kingsland.

The Kingsland CDP has an estimated population greater than 7,000, numerous retail businesses, a chamber of commerce, and a vibrant tourism industry. Public facilities in the community include a library, lakeside park, and water and wastewater utilities. The library belongs to Llano County. The park was deeded to the community and entrusted to the Kingsland/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce for operation and maintenance. Water service is provided by the Kingsland Water Supply Corporation while wastewater service is provided by the Kingsland Municipal Utility District.

The Kingsland CDP includes Llano County’s most densely populated census tracts (772.3 people per square mile). Of Llano and surrounding counties, only Granite Shoals (in Burnet County) has a higher density than Kingsland.

Figure 5-1. Kingsland Boundaries



There were attempts to incorporate the Kingsland community into a municipality in 1974, 2003, and 2011. All were unsuccessful. While incorporation can bring with it things that some residents may believe to be undesirable, there are certain benefits that densely populated areas can receive from incorporating into a city rather than remain the same as other, less densely populated areas of the county. Services that are typically provided by a city include:

- Development regulation
- Road construction and maintenance
- Police protection
- Fire protection
- Parks and recreation

## **Development Regulation**

While Texas counties have some authority to regulate the development of land, it is very limited when compared to the authority given to cities. County land development authority lies nearly entirely in regulating the subdivision of land. Cities, in addition to regulating subdivisions, can adopt a zoning ordinance to specify appropriate locations for certain uses, establish standards to which commercial sites must be developed, and regulate dangerous and unsightly signage, among other things. The land development authority not only gives cities the ability to direct how land is developed, but also allows cities to provide needed facilities and services for its residents. For example, as part of the subdivision process, a city may be able to acquire public park land from a developer or receive traffic impact fees to go toward needed road improvements.

## **Road Construction and Maintenance**

Road maintenance is actually a major part of county operations in Texas, and it is also an important function that cities perform. Whereas counties must spread their road maintenance funds over a large geographic area, cities are focused on smaller areas and fewer roads than the county. A city street maintenance project that would have had to compete with roads in other areas of the county for funding stands a better chance of being funded when the funding and the decision-making are done locally. Cities in Texas also usually construct and maintain roads differently than counties do. That is, cities are more likely to include features such as curbs and sidewalks. Several state funding programs and grants provide opportunities for funding of curbs (drainage) and sidewalks (safety) for which cities can apply.

## **Police Protection**

All areas of a county are served by the county sheriff's office regardless of the area being in an incorporated city or not. County sheriff's offices usually only patrol areas that are outside of cities and have large areas to patrol. Cities patrol areas that are inside of the city which is usually a smaller area than what the sheriff's office was patrolling before city incorporation. As cities grow in population, it is common practice for them to increase the number of patrols and divide the city into smaller patrol areas. This is typically thought of as being a higher level of public safety and often the primary reason why many areas choose to incorporate as a city.

## **Fire Protection**

Texas law allows for significant fire protection services to be provided without being done so by a city. In Texas, establishment of emergency services districts (ESD) is common in rural and urban areas alike. An ESD is a geographic area in which firefighting, fire prevention, emergency medical services are provided. The ESD has its own governing board and is able to levy a property tax as well as collect sales tax to fund its operations. Although there are a few ESDs in the Kingsland vicinity, none cover the area of the CDP. The Burnet County ESD #3 is immediately across the Colorado River from the Kingsland CDP. Although this area is likely considered by many to be part of the Kingsland community, it is not within the CDP defined boundary. At least a portion of the CDP is served by the Kingsland Volunteer Fire Department, which is a non-profit organization and does not receive any public funding.

## **Sales and Use Tax**

The Kingsland area currently has no local sales tax. Only the 6.25% state sales tax is collected on retail sales in the Kingsland community. Incorporated cities are able to collect a 1% general-purpose sales and use tax. Additionally, a city could collect up to an additional 1% sales tax for special purposes such as economic development and emergency services. The collection of local sales tax could significantly fund city services.

State law allows for the collection of up to 2% in local sales tax, yet it does not give priority to any type of local government entity in adopting a tax to be collected.<sup>46</sup> That is, cities, counties, emergency services districts, and special purpose districts could each adopt a sales tax up to each entity's permitted limit, until the 2% limit is reached. Once the local sales tax rate reaches the 2% limit, no additional local sales tax can be imposed. The only other entity that includes the Kingsland area and is eligible to adopt a local sales tax is Llano County. Other eligible entities could be created in the future under the provisions of Texas law that allows for the creation of such an entity. The Kingsland community may want to consider incorporating solely for the reason of adopting a local sales tax before any other entity or entities capture the entire 2%. After adopting a sales tax, a city can remove it or even coordinate with another eligible entity to reallocate the local sales tax – usually through a required election. Failure to incorporate would not necessarily prevent the residents of Kingsland from having to pay a sales tax, but it could prevent the community from controlling how those funds are spent.

## **Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT)**

In addition to a local general-purpose sales tax and special purpose sales taxes, an incorporated Kingsland would be able to adopt a HOT. Kingsland has several lodging establishments and short-term rental units that are already collecting the Llano County (4%) and state (6%) HOT. Since a combined rate of 10% is currently being collected, a city would be able to adopt an HOT up to its maximum allowable rate of 7% without exceeding the combined rate limit of 17%. Additionally, the city could choose to adopt and collect the HOT in its ETJ up to a combined rate not to exceed 15%.

## **Additional Considerations**

In the event that the Kingsland community incorporates as a city, the city would also be eligible for certain economic development, transportation, and other type grants that the area must now rely on Llano County to seek. As a city, Kingsland would have a revenue source to serve as the local match – typically required of such grants.

### **Strategy 6.1: Regularly Estimate Tax Revenues that Could be Collected**

One step that the community could take on a regular basis (quarterly or annually) to evaluate this would be to estimate the sales taxes and HOT that could be collected from an incorporated Kingsland by using data on state sales and HOT collections for the area. Keeping this data readily available would help community members evaluate the tradeoffs of remaining unincorporated versus incorporating.

### **Strategy 6.2: Continue to Evaluate Possibility of Incorporating Kingsland**

If incorporated, Kingsland could be the largest city in Llano County. The city would be able to implement services that are either only permitted for cities or are only typically provided by cities. The city would qualify for various federal or state grants; be able to control land use and protect property rights; establish specific services like fire, EMS, parks, and negotiate for employers to locate there and provide

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<sup>46</sup> In the event that local sales taxes applying to the same area are approved by voters on the same election day, and imposition of the taxes will exceed the 2% local limit, provisions in state law dictate which of the approved taxes take precedent.

employment options closer to home. With the number of retail establishments in the Kingsland area, an incorporated municipality may be able to fund a significant amount of services and reduce its dependency on property tax – a benefit many cities cannot enjoy. The fact that that Kingsland MUD doesn't have any current debt removes a significant obstacle to incorporation. Llano County should continue to work with the MUD and other community groups to evaluate the possibility of incorporating at some point in the future. At a minimum, the community should be very careful in considering any actions that might interfere with the ability of the community to incorporate at a later date (such as any large new debt issuances).

The Texas Municipal League (TML), <https://www.tml.org/>, is one of the best resources for a community that wants to incorporate.

## **Chapter 6. Implementation and Next Steps**

This plan has been completed based on input from the community, business leaders, and elected officials and represents viable strategies as a starting point; however, implementation will require a formalized approach. Recognizing that Llano County, not unlike most counties, has limited staff to oversee an implementation process, the Commissioners Court should consider delegating the process to an Implementation Committee whose members can make a reasonable commitment to take the following steps:

- Review the recommended strategies and select 2-3 priorities which can be developed into actionable goals
- Establish a timeline and list of tasks divided among committee members
- Identify contact information for resources for both funding and technical assistance so committee members can understand how to access these and what they can provide
- Determine which agency (county administration, city administration, citizens groups, others) should play the lead role in implementing each step
- Develop a plan of action for the priorities and goals and report back to the Commissioners Court with recommendations and requirements as applicable.

The success of implementation will depend on how quickly this process begins after the plan is adopted by the Llano County Commissioners Court, the support from other local governments and organizations, and how soon the committee can make its recommendations to County Officials regarding next steps.

CAPCOG staff, with the support of the Austin TxDOT District Office, appreciate the opportunity to develop this plan update and are committed to support the implementation committee as it undertakes the steps outlined above.