

Land Use and Mobility

Section Sponsor



Density of New Development

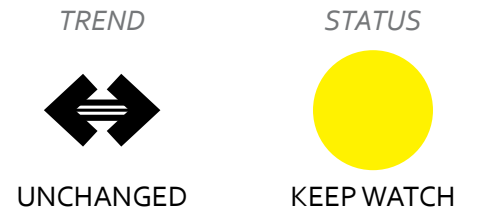
Rural Land

Publicly Owned Open Space

Time Spent Commuting

Vehicle Miles Traveled

Density of New Development



CURRENT STATE

The recession severely slowed new development across the region, but the region continues to add significant units in and outside of incorporated areas.

IDEAL STATE

Development is encouraged in appropriate areas to ensure affordable infrastructure, preserve open space, promote ecosystem health, minimize pollution, and support economical and efficient transportation.

CONTEXT

Density has many definitions and to be done successfully must be designed to optimize many location factors such as schools, mobility networks, public safety, and patterns of health, as well as economic costs and benefits of infrastructure and tax base.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES

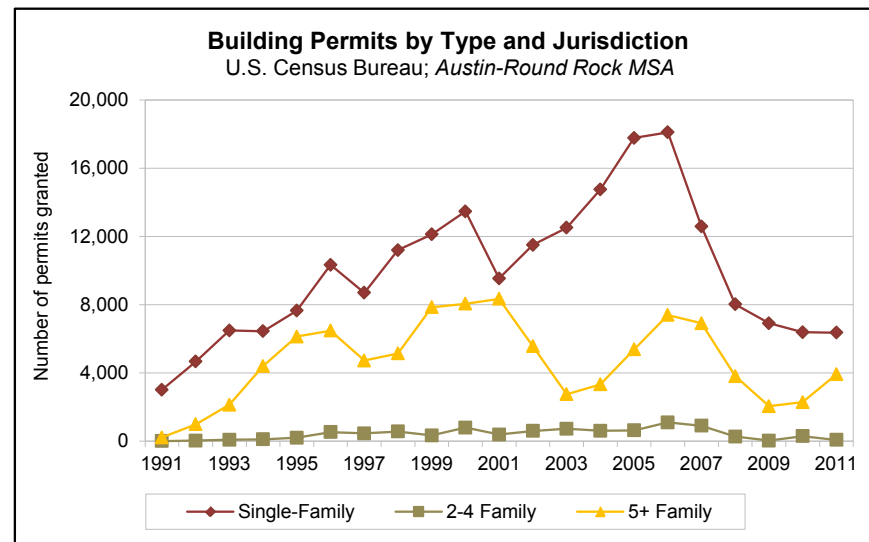
Municipal Comprehensive Plans

SOURCES

Page 114

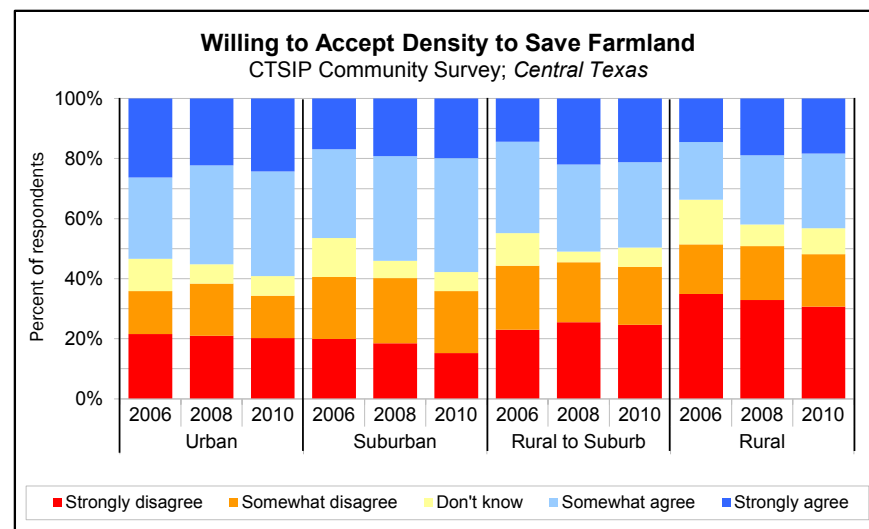
Building Permits

- Single-family residential permits were trending steadily upwards for 15 years until 2006 when they began a sharp decline, along with multi-family permits.
- Despite recent declines, Austin was ranked the #1 healthiest housing market in 2010 by Builder.com and Hanley Wood Market Intelligence, based on the number of permits issued in 2009.



Density to Preserve Farmland

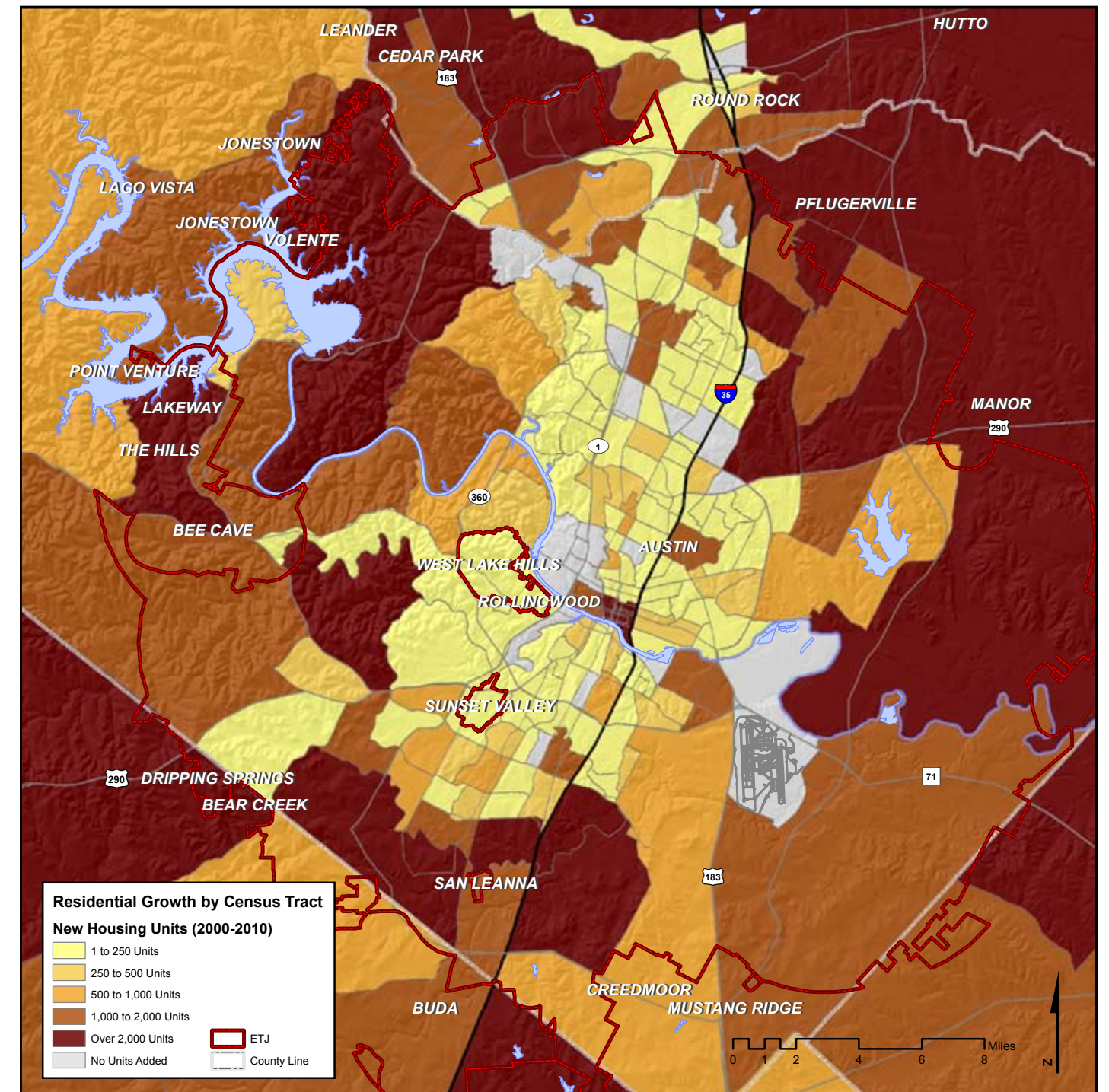
- Rural residents reported the highest percentage unwilling to accept density in order to protect natural and farming land, although rural respondents' perceptions have changed since 2006.
- The percentage of suburban residents who "somewhat agree" with accepting density has increased from 2006.



Survey Question: Agreement: I am willing to have more people live in my neighborhood so that less natural land or farming areas have to be developed.

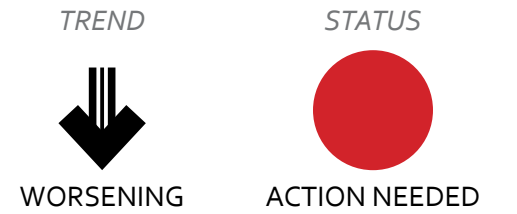
2000 - 2010 Residential Growth in Austin

- Darker shades on the map indicate census tracts with higher levels of residential growth.
- The bulk of new residential growth is taking place on the urban fringe, in the city's extraterrestrial jurisdiction (ETJ), indicating low density development and sprawling urbanization.



Data sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Capital Area Council of Governments and City of Austin

Rural Land



CURRENT STATE

Rural areas of Central Texas continue to absorb huge population growth and face increasing fragmentation and conversion to unplanned urbanization.

IDEAL STATE

Development is encouraged in appropriate areas to ensure affordable infrastructure, preserve open space, and ecosystem health, minimize pollution, and support economical and efficient transportation.

CONTEXT

Rural lands, which are predominately privately owned, serve many purposes in Central Texas - for agricultural production, stormwater retention, aquifer recharge, cultural heritage, tourism and animal habitat.

These contributions of rural land may need to be valued as 'green infrastructure,' as vital to the health of the regional as transportation and land use investments.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES

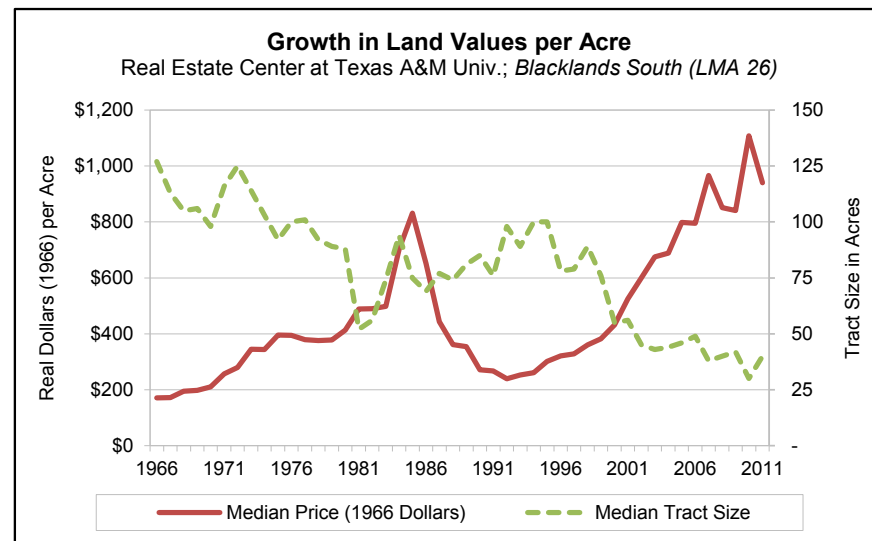
Rural Wastewater Systems
Agricultural Land Value

SOURCES

Page 114

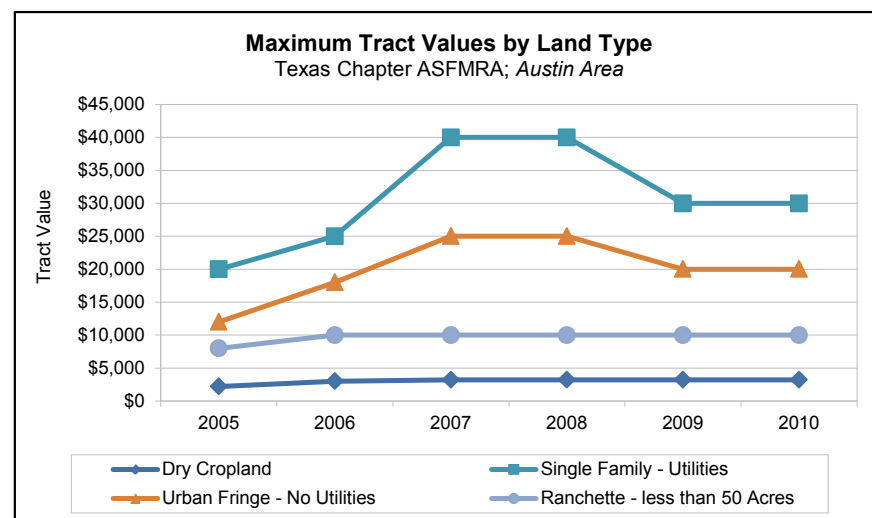
Market Value of Agricultural Land

- The increase in dollar value per acre of land and the decrease in tract size over time demonstrate the pressure to develop agricultural lands in urbanized regions into more "market responsive" land uses such as residential subdivisions.
- Land values across Central Texas increased steadily between 1997 and 2008 before the economic crisis caused values to become more volatile.
- Real values are adjusted for inflation and are in 1966 dollars.



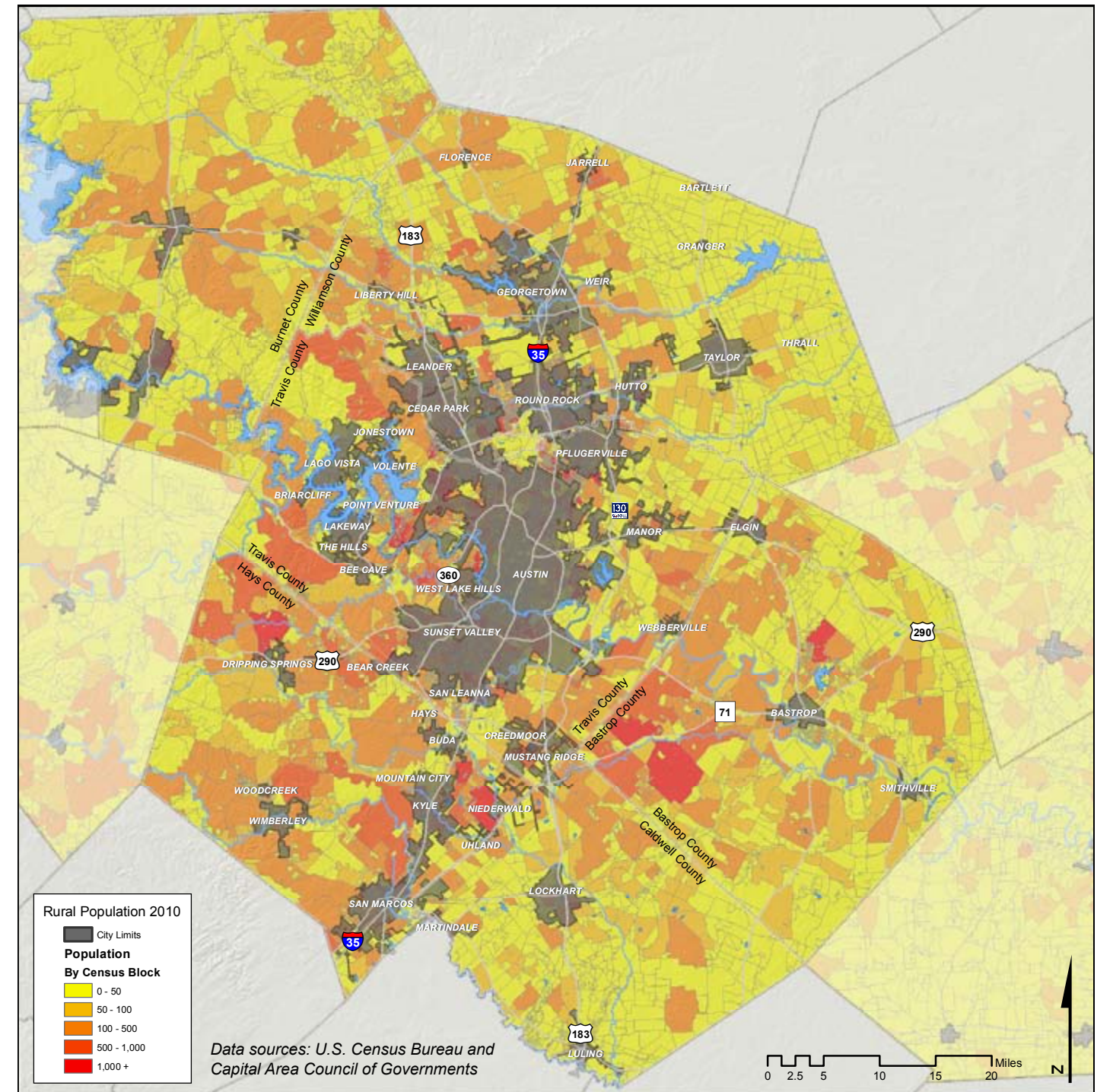
Value by Land Type

- Before decreases in 2008, recent years had seen increases in the value of both land on the urban fringe with no utilities and single family areas with utilities.
- The land values of cropland and rural areas outside the urban fringe have remained consistent.

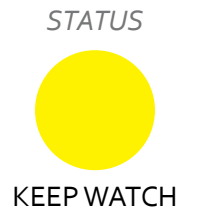


Rural Population

- The map below shows the areas outside of city limits that have substantial numbers of inhabitants.
- Scattered and undirected new development indicates a lack of applied vision for growth in the region and will likely adversely affect trends in investment in schools, water, energy, public safety, and health facilities and services.
- The most populated census block outside of municipal boundaries has 2,291 inhabitants, found near Lake Travis.



Public Open Space



CURRENT STATE

Renewed creativity in securing open space for public and non-public access will be needed to keep pace with population growth.

IDEAL STATE

Central Texas parks and public green spaces provide affordable public recreational opportunities to a growing population while protecting wildlife habitats and environmental quality.

CONTEXT

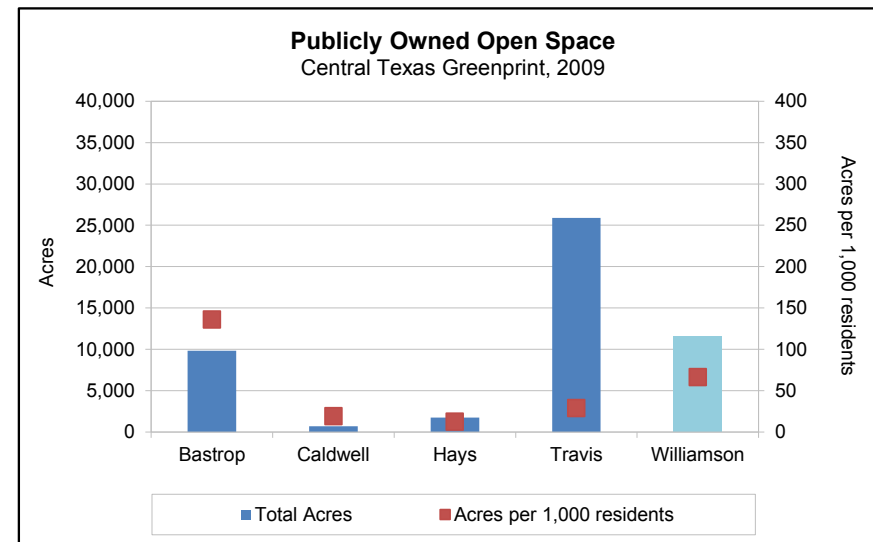
The planning and construction of parks and other public open spaces is known to be a crucial factor in maintaining societal and personal health as well as contributing to the quality of life and economic development potential of a region. Ensuring an adequate, if not equal, distribution of public open spaces is often difficult.

Publicly owned lands, and private, are increasingly viewed as "green infrastructure" - as necessary a system to maintain a region as any other type of investment.

SOURCES

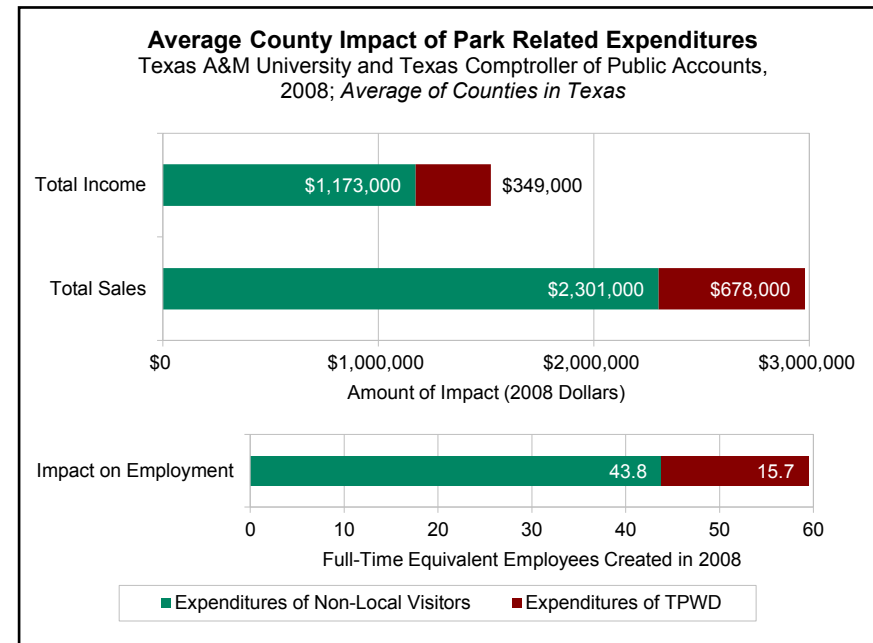
Public Open Space

- Caldwell and Hays Counties have little public open space and parks relative to their more urban neighbors. Hays County has a considerable amount of preserve lands with limited or no public access.
- Bastrop has considerable open space per capita, attributable to Bastrop and Buescher State Parks.



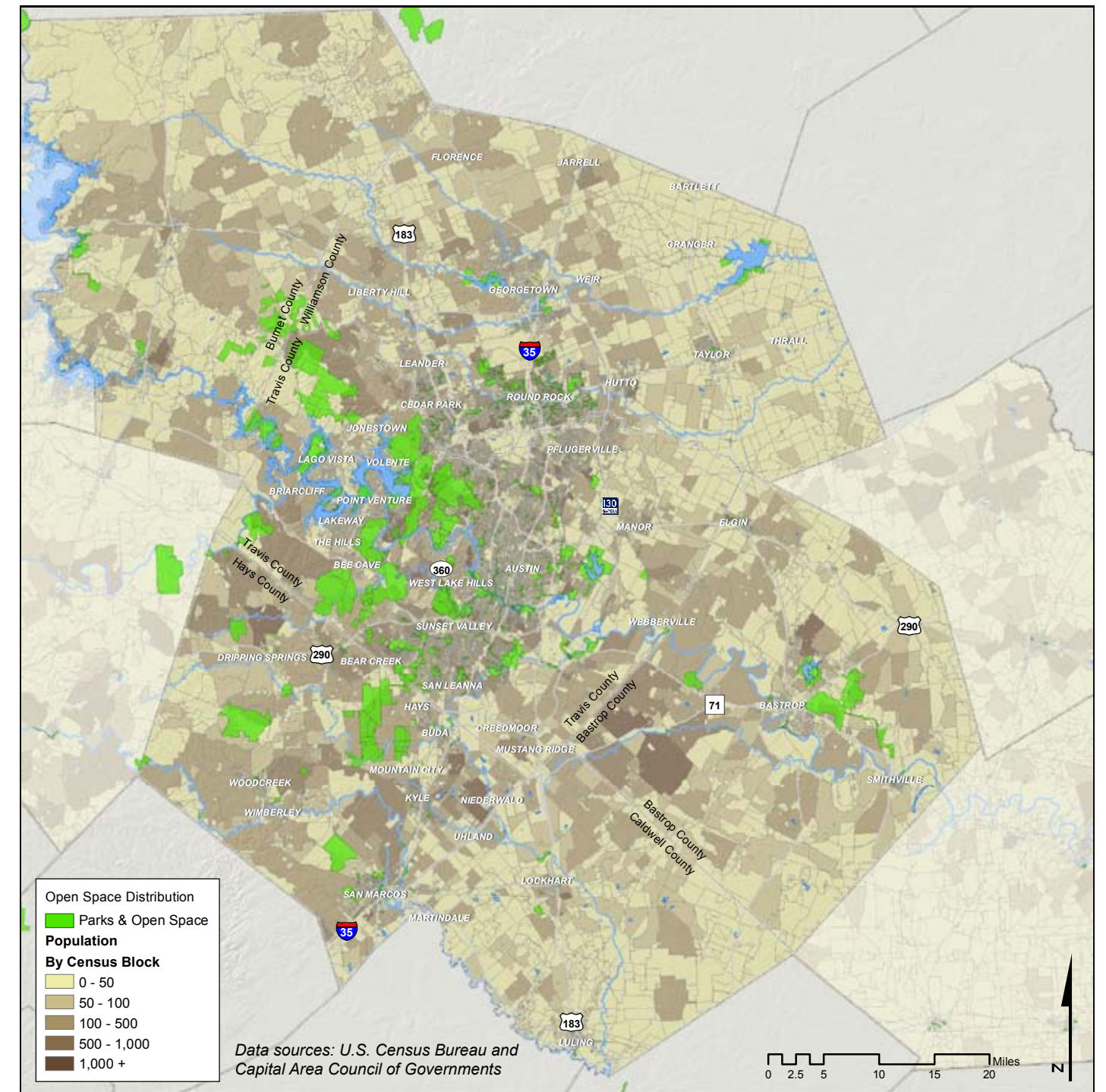
Economic Impact of Texas State Parks

- Communities benefit economically from parks directly from tourist and visitor spending at area businesses, such as restaurants, retail stores, and hotels.



Open Space

- The map displays dedicated open space and parkland and its spatial relationship with resident distribution in Central Texas. The map highlights that public open space is concentrated along the western part of Central Texas and is not evenly distributed throughout the counties, leaving some populated areas underserved.



CURRENT STATE

Perceived change in commute times varies across the region. The use of, and preference for, commuting options is also variable.

IDEAL STATE

Central Texans have access to affordable and reliable transportation alternatives that allow them to travel efficiently throughout the region.

CONTEXT

Many regions are diversifying their transportation networks by improving transit services and coordinating investment with other infrastructure such as emerging centers, water supply, open space areas, and schools. A shift in perceptions about mobility needs is driving efforts to bring housing and jobs closer together to mitigate long commutes.

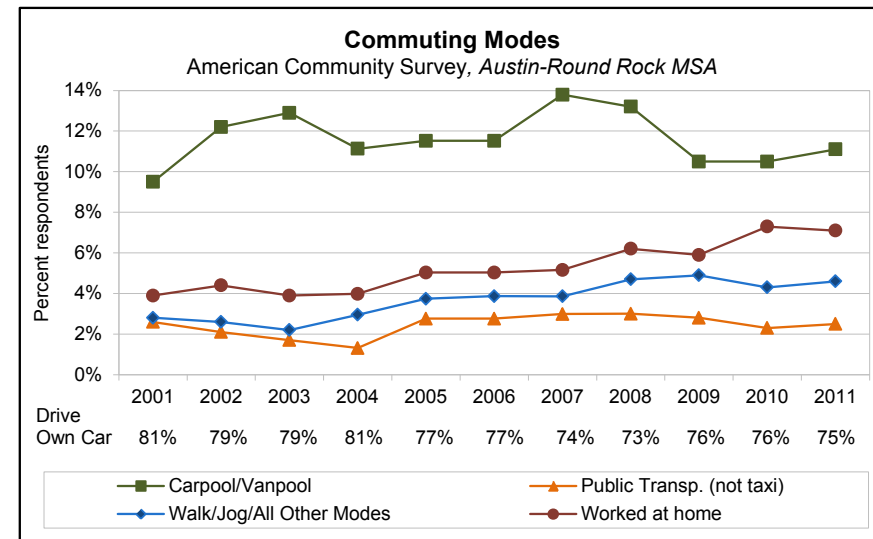
ADDITIONAL MEASURES

Unlinked Passenger Trips on Capital Metro
 Bus Operating Expenses Per Passenger Trip

SOURCES

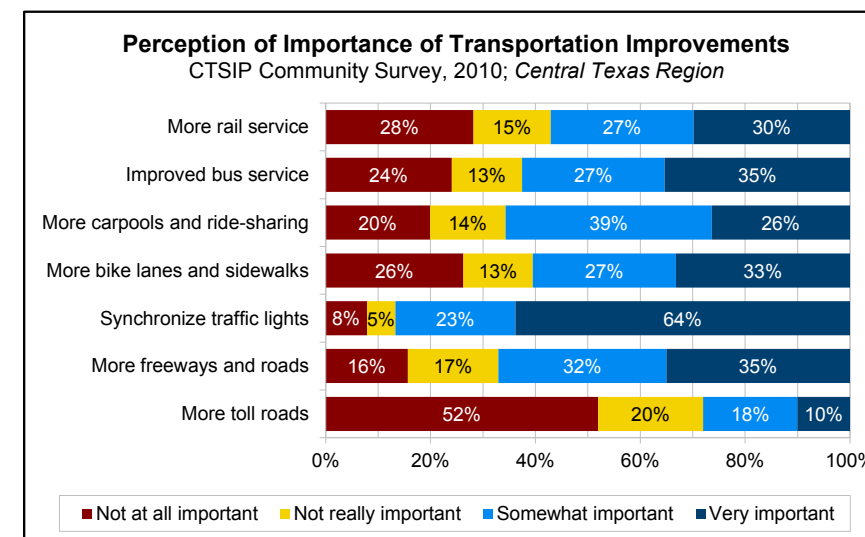
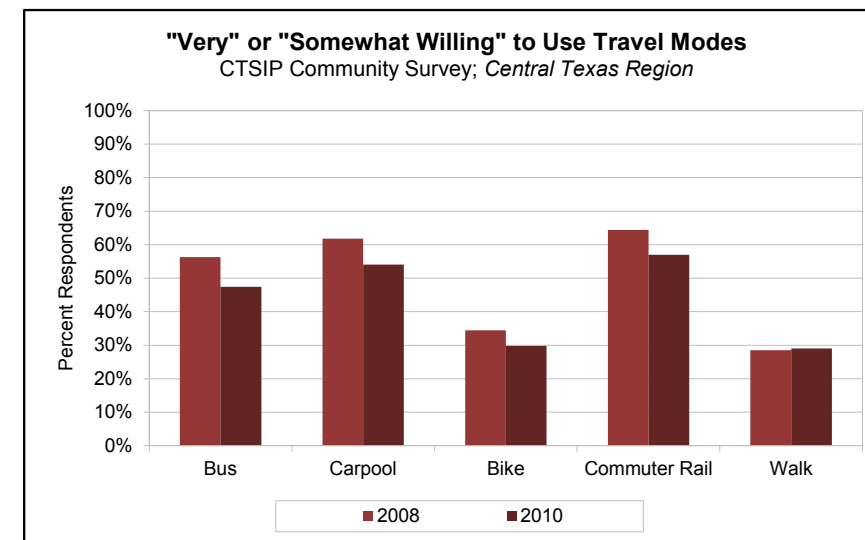
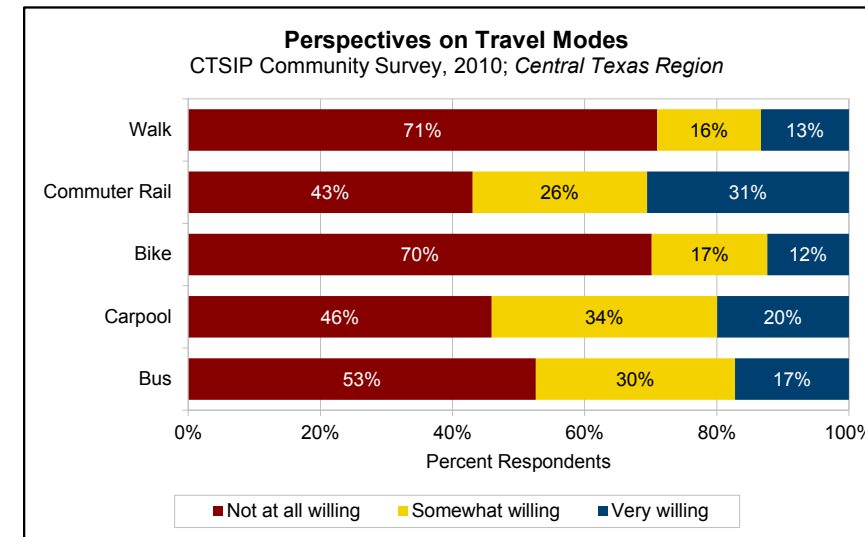
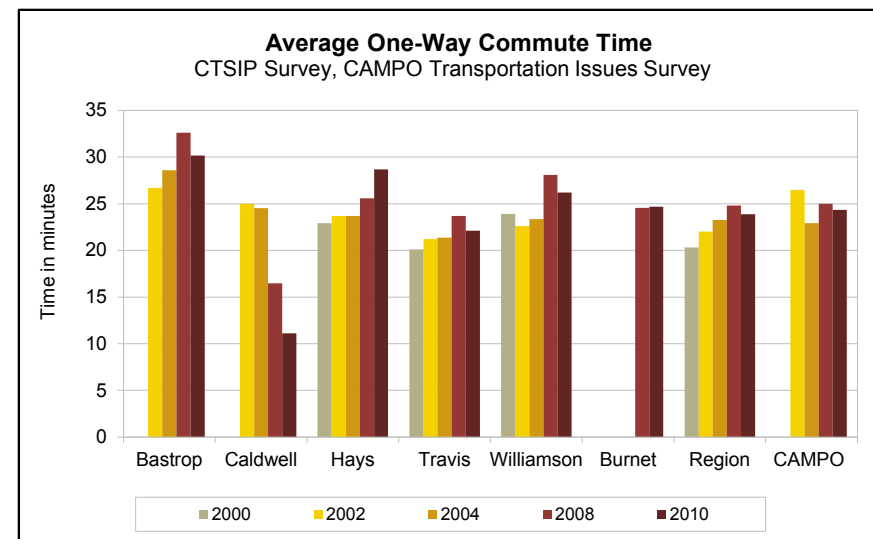
Commuting Modes

- In 2011, 75% of Central Texans commuted alone to work in their own cars, virtually unchanged over the past decade.
- More people walk, jog, or bicycle to work than those who use public transportation to commute and the trend is slowly climbing. This can inform future decisions about infrastructure investment in "complete streets," or neighborhoods with connected streets complete with bicycle lanes and sidewalks.



Average One Way Commute Time

- For the most part commuting times have increased across Central Texas, most notably in Bastrop, Hays and Williamson Counties. Caldwell County, however, has seen a significant decrease in commuting times between 2004 and 2010.



Alternative Commute Modes

- Central Texans are generally unwilling to use alternatives to driving alone, even if conditions were right for them.
- Of several available alternative options, Central Texas commuters are most willing to use commuter rail, if conditions were right for them.
- Over 70% of commuters are unwilling to bike or walk to work, likely a reflection of a lack of proximity to work.
- From 2008 to 2010, willingness among Central Texans to utilize alternative travel modes for commuting decreased in all categories besides walking.
- Reduced willingness to utilize alternative commute modes represents a disconnect with regional planning goals, which include providing more quality alternative transportation options for commuters.

Survey Question (both charts): If the conditions were right for you, please tell me if you would be very, somewhat, or not at all willing to use the following alternatives to driving alone to work/school/other destination:

Improvement Priorities

- Over 60% of Central Texans consider synchronized traffic lights to be a "very important" transportation improvement.
- More toll roads are "not at all important" for 52% of respondents.
- Concerning other transportation improvements, less agreement can be seen among respondents, however most respondents list them as at least "somewhat important."

Survey Question: I'm going to read a list of things typically cited to improve transportation. For you, please tell me if these are very important, somewhat important, not really important, or not at all important?

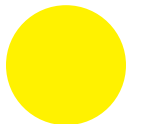
Vehicle Miles Traveled

TREND

STATUS



UNCHANGED



KEEP WATCH

CURRENT STATE

Despite the dip in vehicle miles traveled per capita, our regional transportation system remains congested.

IDEAL STATE

Central Texans have access to affordable and reliable transportation alternatives that allow them to travel efficiently throughout the region.

CONTEXT

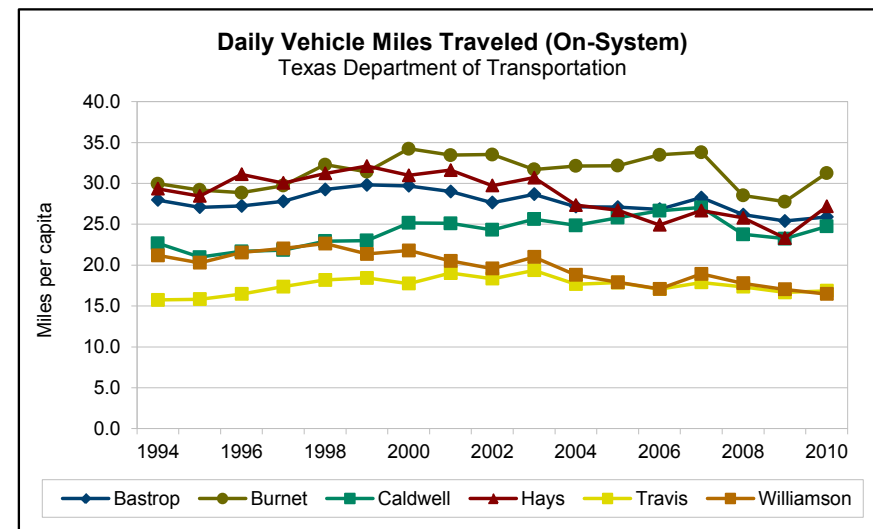
The effort to reduce daily vehicle miles traveled (DVMT) depends on planning and building a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system to strategically distribute work, personal and other trips. The effort also depends on individuals and families to adapt their lifestyles and travel behaviors to take best advantage of the system available to realize savings in fuel, emissions, time, and improving quality of life.

SOURCES

Page 114

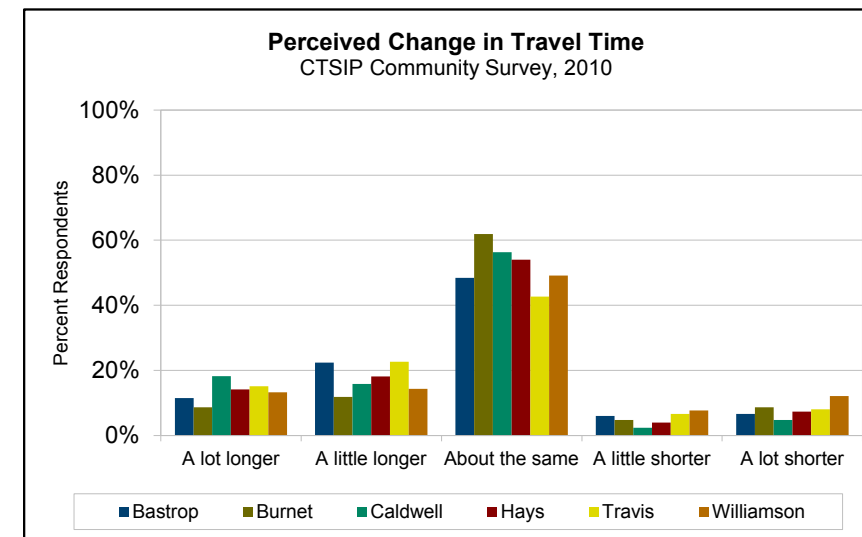
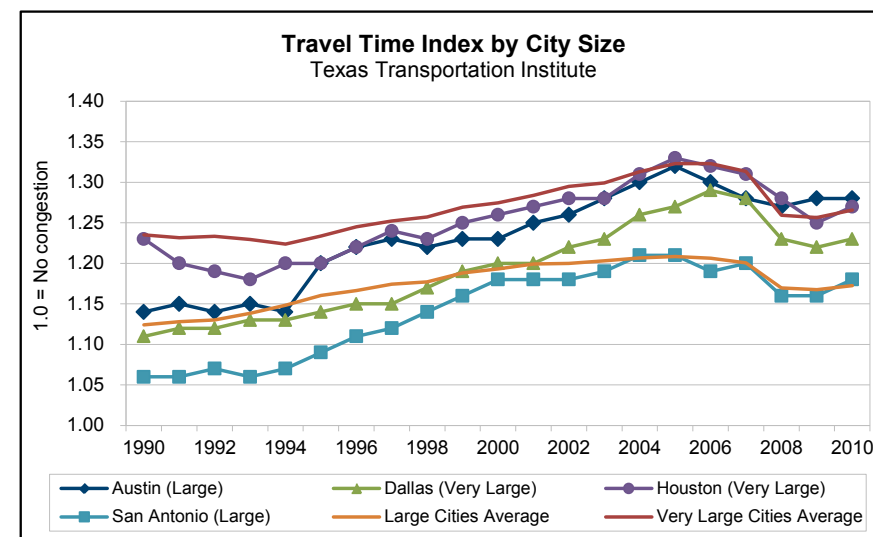
Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled

- Vehicle miles traveled throughout Central Texas declined between 2007 and 2009, before jumping again in some counties in 2010.
- On-system roadways are roadways designated on the State Highway System and maintained by TxDOT.
- Although daily vehicle miles traveled are reportedly on the decline, Austin has seen a fairly significant increase in carbon emissions from transportation since 2000 (not shown).



Travel Time Index

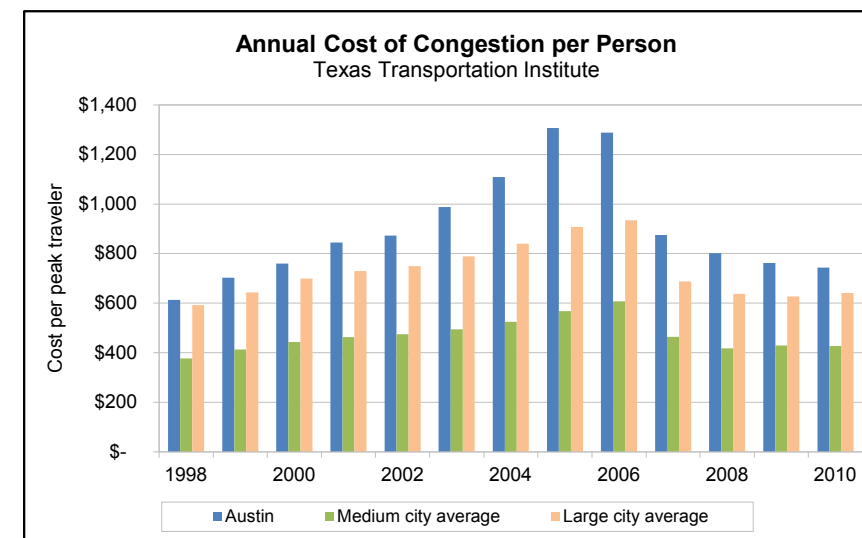
- The Travel Time Index (TTI) is the ratio of peak period travel time to free flow travel time. The TTI expresses the average amount of extra time it takes to travel in the peak relative to free-flow travel.
- Congestion in Austin is well above the average for a city of its size, with a TTI higher than Houston, Dallas and San Antonio in 2010.



Travel Time

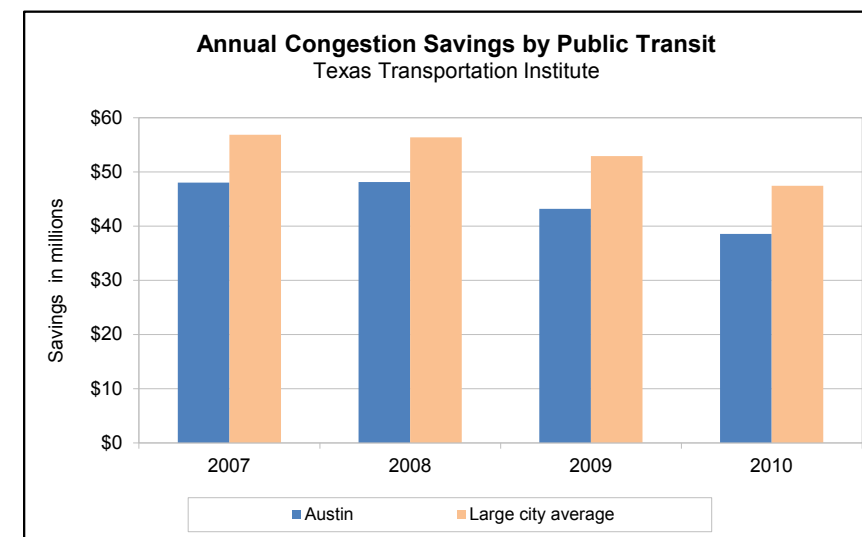
- Of residents that have seen a change in travel times over the past two years, twice as many think travel times have gotten longer rather than shorter.
- The most frequent reasons for shorter travel time were changes in job (27%) or residence (17%) location, rather than improvements in traffic congestion (6%) or better roads (9%).
- For those with longer travel times, 65% of people believe the cause is that traffic congestion has gotten worse.

Survey Question: Compared to 2 years ago, would you say that these days your total travel time is . . .



Cost of Congestion

- The average cost per commuter in the Austin area has fallen sharply recently, coming closer in line with the average costs for other "Large" cities.
- A University of Texas at Austin survey in 2004 revealed Austin area commuters would be willing to pay \$12 to save an hour of commute time.
- Note: TTI altered its methodology for the most recent report. The congestion estimates for all study years are recalculated every time the methodology is altered to provide a consistent data trend.



Public Transportation Savings

- Public transportation serves to alleviate congestion, resulting in savings to residents spending less time in traffic.
- The Austin area lags behind the average congestion savings being realized in other "Large" cities.
- Note: Due to methodology changes, TTI data for this measure is only available from 2007 to 2010.