

**SOUTHERN EDWARDS PLATEAU
Preliminary Land Use Projection Scenarios
for Habitat Conservation Plan**

Objective

- The objective of the Land Use Projection Scenarios is to provide land use and housing scenarios to determine the extent of demand on endangered species habitats.

Background Historical Growth & Development

- The Southern Edwards Plateau Region is characterized by Texas Hill Country geography, agricultural land, low density single family housing development in rural counties and rural areas of the more urban counties as well as higher density single family and non-single family development in the “High Growth” Sectors.
- The Region added 97,882 single family housing units from 2000 to 2009, an average of 10,876 units and an increase of 5.5% annually.
- Growth projections for the Area are based in part on population projections and on historical housing absorption rates for each of 34 Sectors identified for small area analysis.
- Existing residential development in rural counties is typically ½ acre minimum lots with many homes on lots larger than 2 acres. The overall single family density within the regions is 1.18 units per acre. This is the net single family density representing single family housing units on land that is designated as single family use by each County Appraisal District and does not include very large tracts of vacant land.

Land Use

- Wendell Davis & Associates estimates that the Southern Edwards Plateau Region incorporates 3,638,716 acres of land in the Counties of Bandera, Blanco, Comal, Kendall, Kerr, and Medina with 300,098 acres in the study portion of Bexar County.
- An estimated 1,356,342 acres are considered to be undevelopable due to floodplains, steep slopes and public preserved land.
- Rights-of-way are considered to be developed land uses and are excluded from available land, but are only estimates since they are not actually “parcels” in Appraisal District records. Additional ROW is also factored in proportionately as other land is developed. Rights-of-way are estimated for each sector based on total developed land, and assumed factors range from 10% in very rural areas to 20% in urban areas.
- In 2009-10, approximately 251,738 acres in the Region were in single family use.
- Single family use is currently 7% of Total land and 52% of total developed land with estimated rights-of-way included.

- Based on projections of demand for housing and associated land uses, demand for land in the following sectors exceeds the supply of vacant developable land before 2040: All Bexar County Sectors in the Study Region; Comal Sectors ECC3 and ZNB and Kendall Sector ZEKC.
- For this demand to be accommodated, allocations were made to adjacent sectors, which means that Blanco Sector KSBC; Kendall Sectors ZNKC and ZWKC; Bandera Sector ZEBC1; and Medina Sector ZEMC1 received the excess growth.
- Absorption projections for the preliminary land use assumption plan appear to be high, but have been tempered through allocation of some excess demand to areas outside the study region. As some sectors within the Study Region are built out, excess demand will shift to outside the region to other areas of Bexar County and to Western Guadalupe County.

Land Use Assumptions

- Single family housing development drives all other land uses.
- Future sewer service will be provided by SAWS in a defined area, primarily in Bexar County, as well as other areas within the Growth Sectors. In addition to a community water system, “urban” lot sizes (less than one acre), require community sewer for development.
- Future growth over the next 30 years will be similar to that experienced in the area from 2000 to 2009. *This is a realistic scenario under current policies. However, policy changes in cities and their extraterritorial jurisdictions or even State-wide could affect the density and/or the pattern of development.* This might also affect the geographic location of future growth.
- The key factor for residential development is the predominance of ½ to 1-acre lots due to requirements for individual septic systems. *For growth sectors we use densities of 2.5 to 6.0 units per acre for single family growth and 16.0 to 33.0 units per acre for non-single family. In rural sectors we use 0.5 to 1.0 units per acre for single family and existing density up to 6.0 units per acre for non-single family, which includes manufactured homes, duplexes, etc.*
- Floodplains, steep slopes and publicly preserved land are classified as Undevelopable for single family use in this analysis because it is not available for future development.
- Vacant platted and pending lots will be absorbed in subdivisions and Sectors where they exist.
- Preference in allocation of single family growth will be shown for absorption in those Sectors that are considered to be in the path of growth and those Sectors that have experienced housing growth over the past 5-10 years.
- Master Planned Developments (MDPs) and other planned developments known at the time of this study will be preferred for development allocation as demand occurs in a Sector.

- Commercial uses are assigned to MDPs, known master plans or appropriate locations where single family growth occurs. Generally, locations in the path of growth and accessible to major roads, highways and thoroughfares are preferred.
- Although the absorption rate for 2000-2009 averaged *11,401* units annually, *future absorption is projected to average 11,932 annually for the next 30 years.*
- Considerations for *potential* single family residential land use are as follow:
 - Character of surrounding land uses
 - Proximity to major road and street access
 - Proximity to schools and fire protection
- Non-Single Family (including apartments, duplexes, 4-plexes, manufactured/mobile homes) units and acres are present in some of the Growth Sectors based on available data from County Appraisal Districts. *Multi-family uses are included in non-single family units and acres. For 2009 the acres are from appraisal district files and the number of units is a result of Total Housing Units less Single Family housing units. Densities are calculated from these estimates.*