Issues and Actions: Hill Country Population Growth

Our Hill Country counties are growing rapidly.

Over the past decade, we’ve added nearly 700,000 people - and not just in San Antonio or Austin. Suburban areas like Comal, Bandera, Hays, and Kendall counties experienced huge population gains between 2000 and 2010. We are rapidly losing farms and ranches to housing developments and shopping malls. We are draining our water resources and we are struggling with numerous infrastructure, financial and social challenges that accompany such rapid growth.

The Hill Country is projected to add another 2 million people over the next four decades. Some counties, including Bandera, Comal, Hays, and Kendall, are expected to more than double in population by 2050*. Our 18 counties will grow to a population greater than all of Colorado (projected 5,044,930 in 2050), squeezed in a region just a little bigger than the entire State of Maryland.

Population density is an often reported and commonly compared statistic for places around the world. The Hill Country region’s population density is currently 185 people per square mile growing to 300 people per square mile by the year 2050. In comparison, the entire US currently has an overall population density of 76 people per square mile.

We need to think carefully about how we grow and how we sustain our natural resources. Our economy depends on it and more importantly, our children depend on us to get it right.

*These 2050 population projections are from the Texas Water Development Board. Many western Hill Country communities including Uvalde County consider these projections to be lower than what is actually anticipated.