



New Partners for Smart Growth
Evaluating the Livable Community
January 28, 2006

Overview for Today

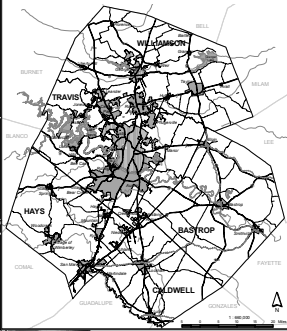
- What is the Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project (CTSIP)?
- Smart Growth and Central Texas
 - Lessons learned re: evaluation of liveability
- Evaluating the Livable Community
 - Identifying Needs
 - Informing Policy
- Q&A



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Our Central Texas Region



Our Region

Vision

The Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project is the voice for sustainability in Central Texas.

Mission

The Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project promotes sustainability on the interdependent nature of social, environmental, and economic health in our region.

Definition

Sustainability addresses the needs of present and future generations without compromising economic vitality, social equity, ecological integrity, or citizen engagement.

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History: Why

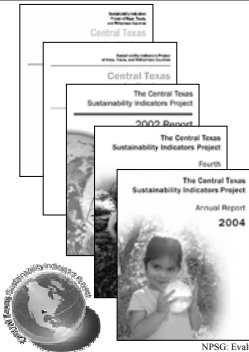
- In late 1990's Central Texas problems were increasingly multi-jurisdictional in nature and interdependent in cause/effect.
- We lacked an independent voice for identifying the complex problems, possible solutions, and monitoring.
- Indicators Project model had worked well in other communities.
- Ongoing and early efforts underway:
 - Many environmental groups, but little cross-issue coordination.
 - Beginnings of Envision Central Texas.
- Indicators and evaluation had to be regional.
 - Data and action needs to scale from neighborhood to region.



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History: To Date



- Five Annual Reports,
 - 2000-2005, now biennial
- Recognition among elected officials, business and community leaders.
- Established website.
- Initial partnerships with other regional efforts.
- Collaborations focused on reducing overlap and filling gaps in data collection.



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Central Texas: Overall Population

United States Decennial Census Population Growth				
	1980	1990	2000	
				Num. Change Percent Change
				1990-2000 1990-2000
Bastrop	24,726	38,263	57,733	19,470 50.9%
Caldwell	23,637	26,392	32,194	5,802 22.0%
Hays	40,594	65,614	97,589	31,975 48.7%
Travis	419,573	576,407	812,280	235,873 40.9%
Williamson	76,521	139,551	249,967	110,416 79.1%
Austin-San Marcos MSA	585,051	846,227	1,249,763	403,536 47.7%
State of Texas	14,229,191	16,986,510	20,851,820	3,865,310 22.8%

Source: Texas State Data Center, U.S. Census Bureau

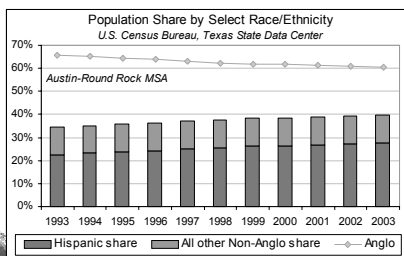


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Big Picture: Minority-Majority

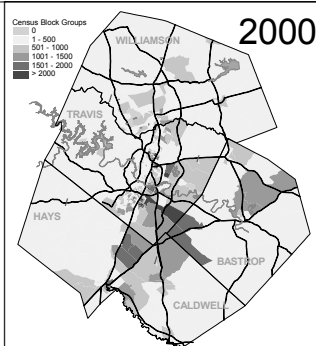
- When no one race/ethnic group is a majority.



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Detail: Hispanic Population

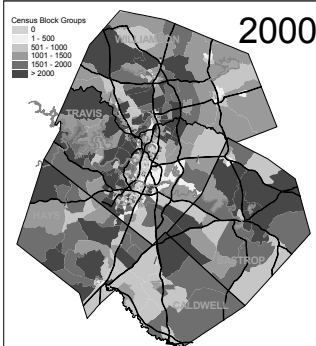


- Growing across region, but also dominating corners of the region.

Community

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Detail: White

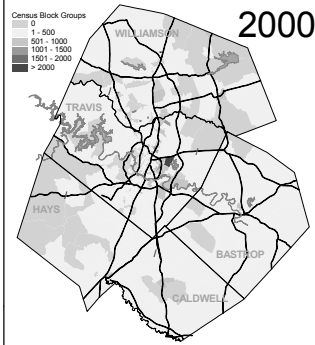


- Largest single race group.

Community

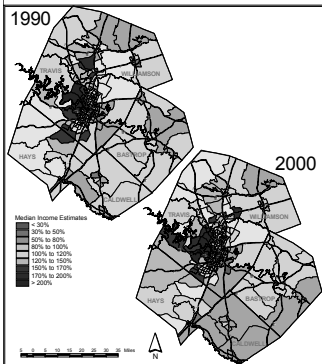
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Detail: African-Amer. Population



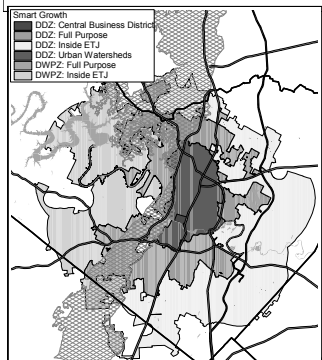
- Spread out, but also heavily concentrated.

Detail: Household Income



- Wealth increasingly concentrated.
- Poor to poorer.

Austin Area and Smart Growth



- Complex, diverse region
- Water geography drives growth concerns
- Smart Growth policies begin in late 1990's
- Next wave of pressure is coming

Mueller Redevelopment



- 709 acres
 - 145 ac. Parks
 - 4,600 du
 - 4M sq. ft. commercial
- High community engagement
- Congress for New Urbanism Charter Award, 2000
- National League of Cities, Howland Award, 2005

community

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Envision Central Texas



Scenario D
Compact
Growth

- Grew from a common need for a consistent Vision for the region that can be customized by jurisdictions
- Many indicators passively connected to Vision
- Now integrating into ongoing planning

community

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Lessons Learned for Evaluation

- Central Texas Sustainability Indicators
 - Lots of data, but not tied to a vision
 - Strong initial public engagement, but thin since
- City of Austin Smart Growth policies
 - Strong leadership, kinda-sorta public support
 - No clear measures associated to goals up front
- Mueller Airport Redevelopment
 - Strong public engagement, conceptual measures
 - Solid informal strategies behind community vision
- Envision Central Texas
 - Just enough of all ingredients
 - Now to implementation



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Lessons Learned

- If I had it to do over again
 - Engage early at lowest level for broadest impact
 - Vision and Values
 - Goals, Measures, Strategies
 - Plans and Projects
 - Evaluation
 - Rinse and Repeat



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Identifying Needs: Criteria

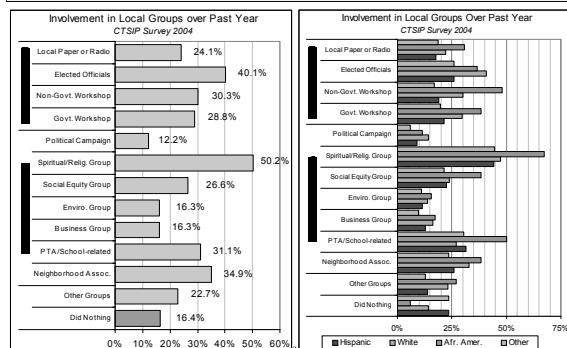
- Engagement
 - Go to them, listen for their hopes
 - Lowest level means household and neighborhood
- Set evaluation measures
 - What does success look like? By when?
 - Manage expectations here
- Iterative process
 - Initial projects need to be low hanging fruit
 - Build the relationships and trust, makes the harder work easier



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Additional Indicators: Engagement



Identifying Needs: Methods

- Engagement
 - Go to existing community gatherings
 - Humility is a virtue, and opens your ears
 - Don't be afraid to "get in the weeds"
 - Be a catalyst for organizing, but don't organize
 - Always a role for leadership, but leaders can be fickle
 - Nothing will ever replace the value of face to face interaction



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Identifying Needs: Methods

- Measures for Evaluation
 - Must be derived from and owned by community
 - Top down measures of liveability will not last
 - Use the mountains of data, beware the gaps
 - Primary data gathering is expensive but worth it
 - Qualitative data can be more compelling and honest than quantitative data
 - Perception of liveability is often more important
 - Always question the data before believing it
 - Adopt measures from other stakeholders' perspective
 - Create a mutual responsibility to succeed



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Identifying Needs: Methods

- Iterative process
 - Communities are dynamic, so must be the process
 - Don't get married to a timeline
 - Trust is earned once everyone has shared both success and missteps
 - Liveability occurs when many things converge, often along different timelines and from different sources
 - Initial success prepares the community to do more



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Informing Policy: Criteria

- Vertical and horizontal scale
 - Idea that every household's needs are reflected in a household across the county and in the region
- Resolve concerns at lowest level possible
 - Don't be concerned about who gets credit
- Own the complexity
- Pick your battles
 - Compromise happens



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Informing Policy: Methods

- Vertical and horizontal scale
 - Be consistent
 - Integrity of evaluation is a meta-measure
- Resolve concerns at lowest level possible
 - Get to know the front-line staff and community leaders, the people who actually do the work
 - Strive to be apolitical



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Informing Policy: Methods

- Own the complexity
 - Okay to say "I don't know the whole answer," but this is a good first step
 - Avoid sugar-coating issues for political expediency
 - Connect to market forces
 - Be the bridge between different reward systems
- Pick your battles
 - Commitment must be to long term engagement, measures, and process (always have a BATNA)
 - Avoid falling on your sword (too often)



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Thank You

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