

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Regional Strategic Plan 2000



Counties of: Dimmit, Edwards, Kinney, LaSalle,
Maverick, Real, Uvalde, Val Verde, Zavala

Submitted by: FUTURO Communities, Inc.
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MIDDLE RIO GRANDE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLAN – 2000

I. PREFACE

For a region whose greatest challenges require creative and sustained efforts and attention over many years, informed planning and a long-term perspective are crucial. A strategic plan is a tool important for such perspective and deliberate action. It enables incoming leaders to build upon past accomplishments and appreciate long-term trends and consequences, as well as to capitalize on currently developing prospects.

The following is the Regional Strategic Plan for the Middle Rio Grande Development Council. It proposes to make clear *where the Middle Rio Grande Region has been, where we are, and where we are going*. It is a product of community meetings throughout the region, discussions with local leaders, and research and analysis performed by agency staff and their consultants. The Regional Strategic Plan outlines economic and social conditions within the Middle Rio Grande Region and recommended goals for the development of our region over the next five years. In addition, under the direction of the Council's Board of Directors and specifically the Economic Development Committee, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and the Transportation Committee, the agency has identified four priority areas to be addressed in the next two years.

Structured as a planning tool, the following document begins with listings of key leaders within the organization and continues with an introduction that specifies the Council's mission and purpose. Next, the history of the Council along with its vision for the future is outlined, beginning with its inception in the 1970's. Before delving into the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), the nine-county Middle Rio Grande Region's characteristics are plotted in various graphs to provide a snap-shot view of the population and its associated demographics. The SWOT analysis represents input from the public forums and from current planning documents gathered from area agencies whose general functions overlap the Council's planning functions. The next section on recommended action plans for the coming five years is crucial to the proper implementation of the strategic plan. Finally, a list of information references is included. The last section of the document is devoted to the participant sign-up sheets collected at the nine public forums.

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II. INTRODUCTION

GENERAL STATEMENT OF MISSION

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

MISSION

As authorized under the Regional Planning Act of 1965, the Middle Rio Grande Development Council was established in 1970 to act as the Regional Planning Commission and Council of Governments for the Middle Rio Grande Region of Texas. Subsequently, the Council was designated as an Economic Development District by the U.S. Department of Commerce, to serve as the primary economic planning entity for its jurisdiction. In these capacities, the Council is composed of member municipal and county governments, independent school districts, and special purpose governmental districts. Its general mission is the planning and coordination of programs and efforts to improve the socio-economic condition of the region, the effectiveness of its public services, and the quality of life of its citizens. The specific terms of that mission, and the goals and objectives to be pursued are defined and determined by the action of the Council's member governments, acting as a Council, and through the actions of its Board of Directors.

COUNCIL GOALS

Within the framework of its statutory authority and this general mission, the Council has, over the years, adopted the following goals for its collective efforts, beyond the goals outlined in each of its individual program plans, and reflected in its Annual Program of Work:

- Improvement of the overall capacity of the region's economy and, thereby, the economic opportunities available to its citizens;
- Improvement of the skills and capacities of the region's labor force, to insure its ability to capitalize on improved economic opportunities;
- Improvement of the capacity of local governments and public service institutions to develop and deliver quality public and community services in support of the region's development efforts;
- Improvement of the quality of life for all of the region's citizens, and particularly of its elderly residents;
- Elimination of unnecessary programmatic and administrative duplication in the delivery of public services in the region through operation of the Texas Review and Comments System.

Other goals, in the areas of Criminal Justice, Community Development, Human Resource Development, Elderly Services, Emergency Services, and Federal and State Program Coordination, have been added subsequently by the action of federal and state authorities, and the ratification of the member governments.

COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

In pursuit of these goals, the Council has adopted the following by way of general objectives which are over and above the specific program objectives for each individual program and operating division outlined in the Annual Program of Work. Such objectives are to:

- Act as a forum for the development of regional consensus regarding local, state, national and international issues that relate to the accomplishment of the Mission and Goals outlined above;

- Articulate those consensus positions and defined regional interests in appropriate public and private forums at all levels;
- Design, organize, seek funding for and, when deemed appropriate, operate and deliver, or oversee the delivery of, programs aimed at the achievement of the Mission and Goals of the Council; and
- Harmonize the diverse regional interests, and create and maintain a climate conducive to the definition of regional issues.

COUNCIL PROGRAM OF WORK

The Council's Program of Work, and the Budget allocation of financial and staff resources required to carry it out, is developed and adopted annually by the Council, subject to amendment by the Board of Directors as conditions subsequently warrant. Their purpose is to plan, obtain federal grants, and administer programs, and now additionally to implement programs in the area of workforce development.

Founded in 1970 by the local governments of the nine-county Middle Rio Grande Region and designated as a State Planning Region by Governor Preston Smith, the Middle Rio Grande Development Council has grown into one of the most important governmental institutions in Southwest Texas. In the thirty years of its existence, the Council has made significant contributions to the life of the region, the structure and substance of its economy, and the lives of its citizens. Its history can be divided into three distinct periods that roughly coincide with the three decades during which it has existed.

III. HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE RIO GRANDE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

MRGDC IN THE 1970s

The Seventies can be said to have been the Middle Rio Grande Development Council's decade of organization and formation. This was the period in which the Council was first established and began to sort out the scope of its mission and the role it would play in the region. The impulse that led to its formation arose from two parallel sets of concerns on the part of the region's governmental officials: 1) the need to attract

public resources to meet local service needs, and 2) the desire to effectively realize the state and federally funded programs that were already in existence and operating within the region.

With offices located in Del Rio, the forerunner to the Council, the South Texas Regional Economic Development District (STREDD), was officially dissolved and renamed the MRGDC. Officers were elected, including the first Executive Director, Richard P. Thomas, and the member counties of the Council were finalized. With their designation by the State as a clearinghouse for virtually all federal-funded projects in the area, the Council's first efforts focused on the proper planning and coordination of local public services and governmental programs. During this time South/West Planning Associates undertook regional planning for the Council. Their plan covered education, water and sewer development, economic development, health care, and regional housing, with economic development, criminal justice, and transportation being among the first areas in which the Council took action. The Criminal Justice Advisory Committee was the first of many advisory committees and councils created by the MRGDC to assure the widest possible local input into the region's law enforcement and criminal justice efforts.

In 1973, three years after its founding, the Council was designated as an Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce and embarked upon a twenty-year economic development effort. Other more focused and transient planning efforts were conducted in the areas of transportation and water resource development.

In the mid-1970s, with the advent of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and the Older Americans Act, the Council entered the arena of human resources and human services programs for the first time. It was designated as the regional sponsor and administrative overseer of the CETA program, and as the Area Agency on Aging, responsible for the delivery of Older American Act programs and services in the entire area.

In the late 1970s, the Council formed a contract with Southwest Texas Junior College to take over its Law Enforcement Training program, and it was at this time that the Council was deciding whether or not to continue with their offices in Del Rio. The Council's initial staff had grown to almost sixty, and the aggregate funding from all of its

contracts had reached \$3 million per annum. Its policy-making and central administrative structure was essentially in place, and it had become a force in local affairs throughout the region.

MRGDC IN THE 1980s

In general, the Eighties can be characterized as a period of survival, consolidation and dramatic growth. The late '70s and '80s were transition periods in the life of the Council, and a period of considerable political and economic turmoil in the region and within the Council in particular. It featured the only significant rupture in the structure of the Council with the withdrawal of two of its most important local government members: the city of Del Rio and Val Verde County, and the subsequent transfer of MRGDC's headquarters from Del Rio to Carrizo Springs. By 1981, the continued existence of the Council and its designation as Council of Governments under the provisions of the Texas Local Government Code were at risk.

The period between 1982 and 1983 represented the turning point in the life of the Council. The 1983 elections saw a turnover in a majority of the members of the Board of Directors as seven of the nine counties and a majority of the region's municipalities elected new chief elected officials. Also, in 1983, the city of Del Rio and Val Verde County returned as members.

Working closely and cooperatively with each other and with Council staff, the new Board of Directors developed and implemented a new set of program policies and processes that shifted the approach of the region from competition to cooperation. The region's communities worked together to establish a series of cooperative formulas through which available resources could be allocated throughout the region on an equitable basis, eliminating, or at least reducing, past disputes. This solution, known as the "Gentlemen's Agreement", is voluntary and provides for the equitable division of regional allocations on the basis of an established formula, thus assuring that there are projects available in every county each year.

It worked so well that in 1983 this formula allocation approach was applied to the Elderly Services programs, making these services available uniformly in eight of the

region's nine counties for the first time; and in 1984 it was applied to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

1984 also saw the establishment of the Middle Rio Grande Private Industry Council to oversee the implementation of the Job Training Partnership Act in the region, and for the first time the local private sector was brought into the Council's deliberations in a substantive way. The Council was designated as Grant Recipient and Administrative Entity for the JTPA program. The available resources were allocated throughout the region by the same type of formulaic approach previously applied to the Aging and CDBG programs, and the JTPA program was implemented in the region with a minimum of turmoil.

The latter half of the Eighties was devoted to the growth of the Council's available service mix, and the expansion of its service offerings. GED preparation and adult and youth educational remediation were added to the JTPA scope of services, and direct economic and industrial development services were incorporated into the planning and economic development efforts. JTPA Service and Education Centers were established in every county in the region. Finally, in 1988-89, the Council entered the fields of solid waste management and 911 emergency response services.

By the end of this eventful decade, the Council's staff had grown, and its aggregate contract resource base had increased to almost \$7 million. It had operations and offices in each of the nine counties, its headquarters remained in Carrizo Springs, and it had developed a large and sophisticated planning and program development effort in Uvalde.

MRGDC IN THE 1990s

If the themes of the Eighties were considered turmoil and growth, those of the Nineties were consolidation and diversification. The general cooperative approach to decision making remained the same, but this decade saw a concentrated effort on the Council's part to diversify its resource base, and to broaden the range of programs it managed and services it delivered to the governments and citizens of the region.

It entered the direct business service arena, establishing a Small Business Development Center with operations in Del Rio, Eagle Pass and Uvalde. It extended its

911 effort into the mapping and addressing of every residence, government and business location in the region through the use of GIS mapping technologies. The Middle Rio Grande Development Foundation was created as a separate 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization to serve the needs of the Council's goals aimed at benefiting all the region's elderly service centers and to its only Native American tribe, the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas.

In the area of Job Training, the Nineties saw the development of an extensive network of partnerships with local school districts for the provision of remedial education and GED preparation services to the region's "at risk" youth. By the mid-Nineties, the region saw the creation of the Middle Rio Grande Workforce Board (MRGWB), which became the recipient of all "workforce" funding for the Middle Rio Grande Region. Prior to the creation of the MRGWB the Council had been the recipient of all JTPA funding. The MRGWB was now the Governor's designated administrative entity for the region. The Council was later designated as the Fiscal Agent for the MRGWDB, but found itself having to respond to a Request for Proposal released by the MRGWDB for essentially the same services it had been providing to area residents within the region for over 20 years. In May 1998, through a competitive process, the Council was awarded the bid as "Operator" for all workforce programs to be sub-contracted by the MRGWDB. At the end of 1998 the council had 98 employees.

As a result of the aforementioned "Gentlemen's Agreement" approach to community development funds disbursement, in the eight years leading up to 2000, the region's local governments have laid more than 15 miles of water lines and 18 miles of sewer lines, built 8 community and elderly nutrition centers, 2 fire stations and 4 EMS stations, and paved almost 100 miles of county roads. It has enabled an almost complete transformation of the region's system of public infrastructure. Over the past ten years, the Council's staff has administered over \$10 million in CDBG funds, and will continue to do so working closely with local communities, chambers of commerce, and industrial foundations to help support and sustain local development and marketing efforts.

Another notable accomplishment by the leadership of the Council during 1998 was their assistance in coordinating the development of the Middle Rio Grande (FUTURO) Empowerment Zone application that included several census tracts and

developable sites in the counties of Dimmit, La Salle, Maverick, Uvalde and Zavala. The FUTURO project application was awarded a rural designation as a Federal Enterprise Community in January 1999 by the Clinton Administration.

In a larger sense, the Council has come to be one of the primary representatives of the region and its interests in state and national administrative, regulatory and legislative forums. It consistently and effectively represents the region in legislative and congressional sessions by aggressively providing information to State Representatives and Congressional Legislators on the needs and interests of the region's communities and citizens, particularly in the fields of workforce, transportation, health, education and criminal justice.

THE FUTURE

The future of the Council, like that of the region, is not yet set. The political and governmental revolutions that are currently under way in Austin and Washington, the economic revolution associated with the North American Free Trade Agreement that is currently under way in all of North America and particularly here along the U.S./Mexico Border, represent challenges that both pose problems and offer opportunities for the region and for the Council.

The future of both depend, as they have since the Council's inception in 1970, upon the continuing wisdom and leadership of the region's elected officials, acting through the MRGDC Board of Directors, and upon the vision and efforts of the Council's staff, under the direction of the Executive Director.

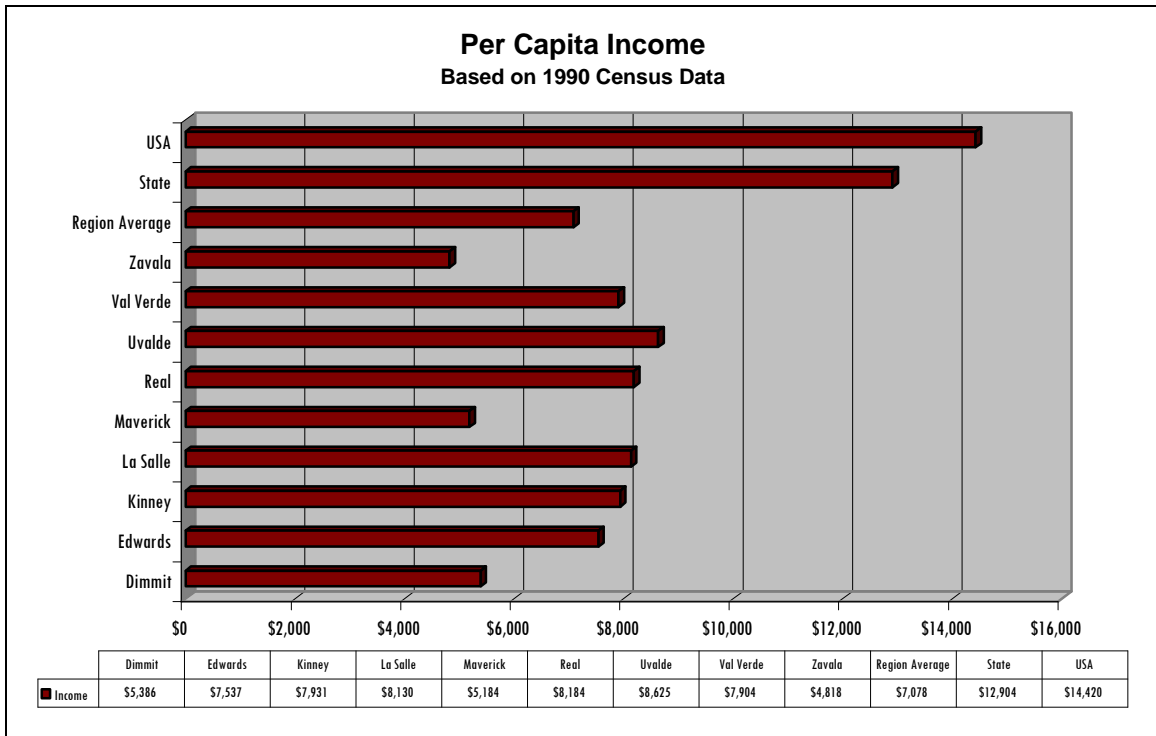
IV. REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

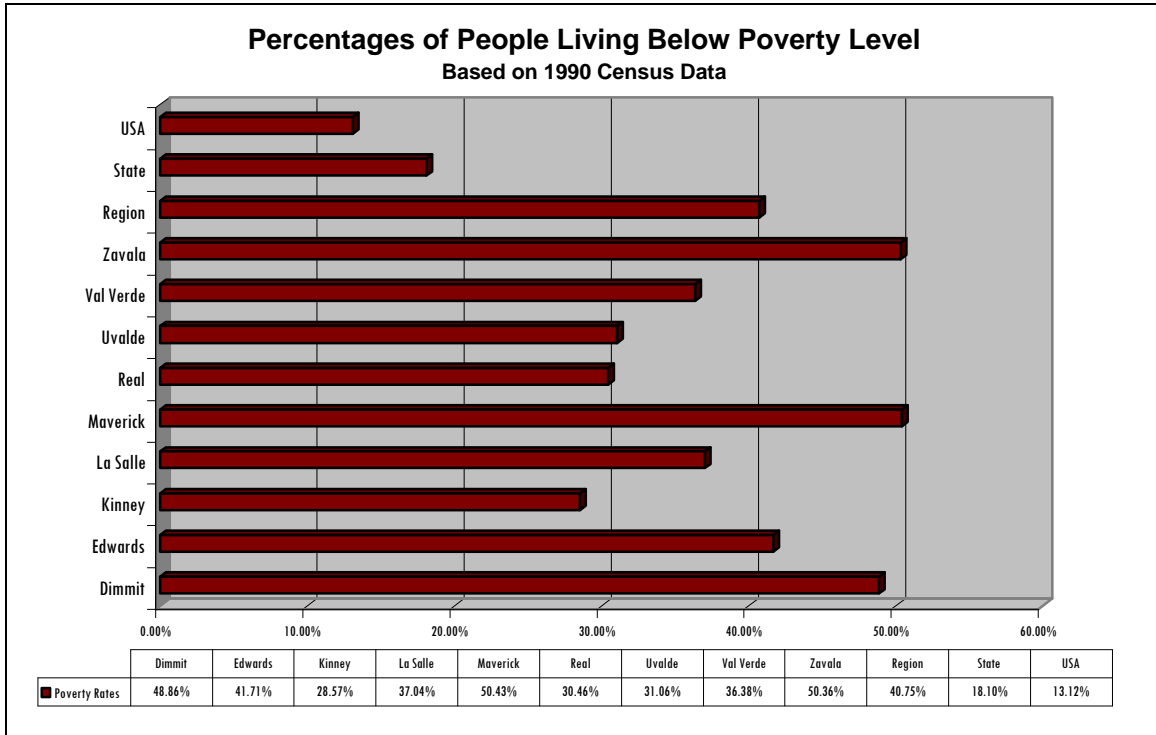
Population Overview:

The Middle Rio Grande Region is located along the U.S.-Mexico border, adjacent to the Mexican State of Coahuila. The area comprises 14,333 square miles with a population of approximately 155,600 in 15 incorporated cities and 22 unincorporated communities. Nine counties make up the MRG Region, including Dimmit, Edwards, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, Val Verde and Zavala. "Approximately 70% of the population live in incorporated areas; 50% of the total population live in the larger

communities of Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde.” (MRGWDB Integrated Strategic Plan, 2000.)

Four of the nine counties that comprise the Middle Rio Grande Region – Dimmit, Zavala, Maverick, and La Salle – are among the twenty poorest counties in the United States according to a report by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Middle Rio Grande Region is approximately 76% Hispanic, according to the 1990 Census. Projections from the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by the year 2005 the Hispanic population will grow to 80%. The population in the Middle Rio Grande Region living below poverty is 40.75%, with an average per capita income of \$7,078, compared to the State average of 18.09% and \$12,904, respectively. The current rate of unemployment for the region (according to figures for May 2000 from the Texas Workforce Board) is approximately 11.6%, compared to the State at 4.2% and the United States at 3.9%. (Previously mentioned statistics are depicted in the following charts.)



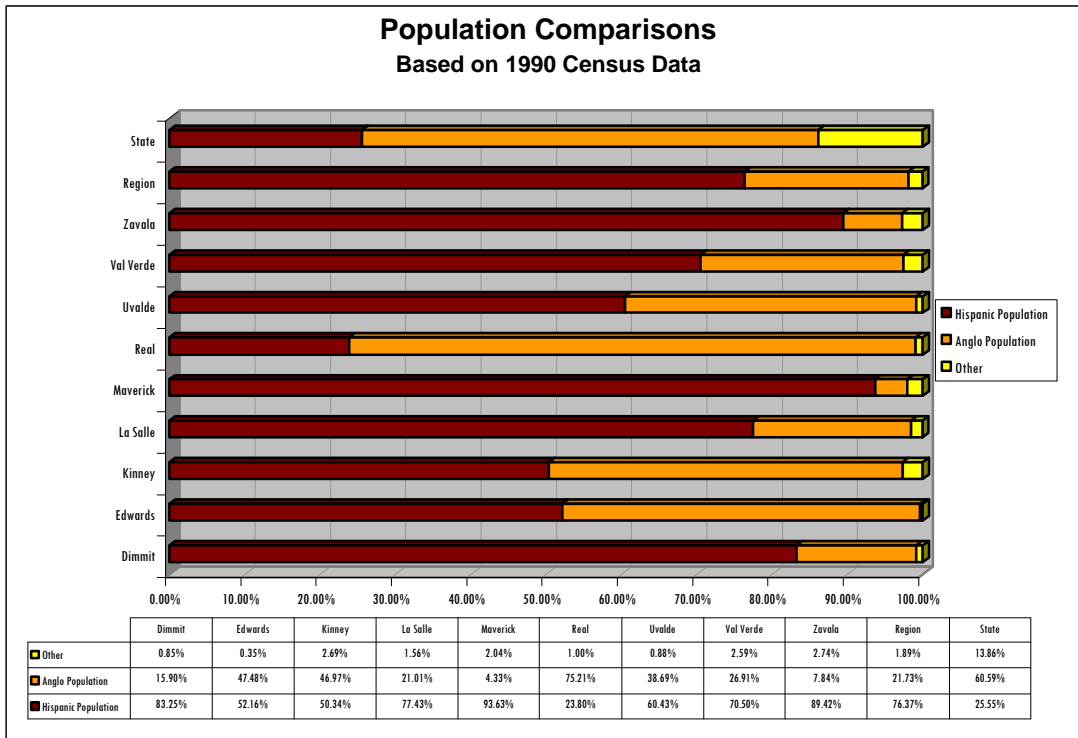


Mexican migration into the Middle Rio Grande Region, especially after 1994 with the devaluation of the peso, has historically been a low skilled population and has contributed to the high levels of poverty and unemployment and caused increases in public service demands in an area that already suffers from a stagnant economy and limited tax base. Combined with relatively small and low density populations, these factors have lead to greater dependence on public assistance has caused a greater drain not just on local government but on state and federal resources, as well. Perhaps it is time the region re-visited state and federal allocations in discussions with legislators and congressional representatives. Because the region as a whole is aware of the inequity and funding allocations to rural areas, it is imperative that communities steer clear of in-region conflicts, and rather band together and form a united front for the betterment of the region.

Population Growth-Projected

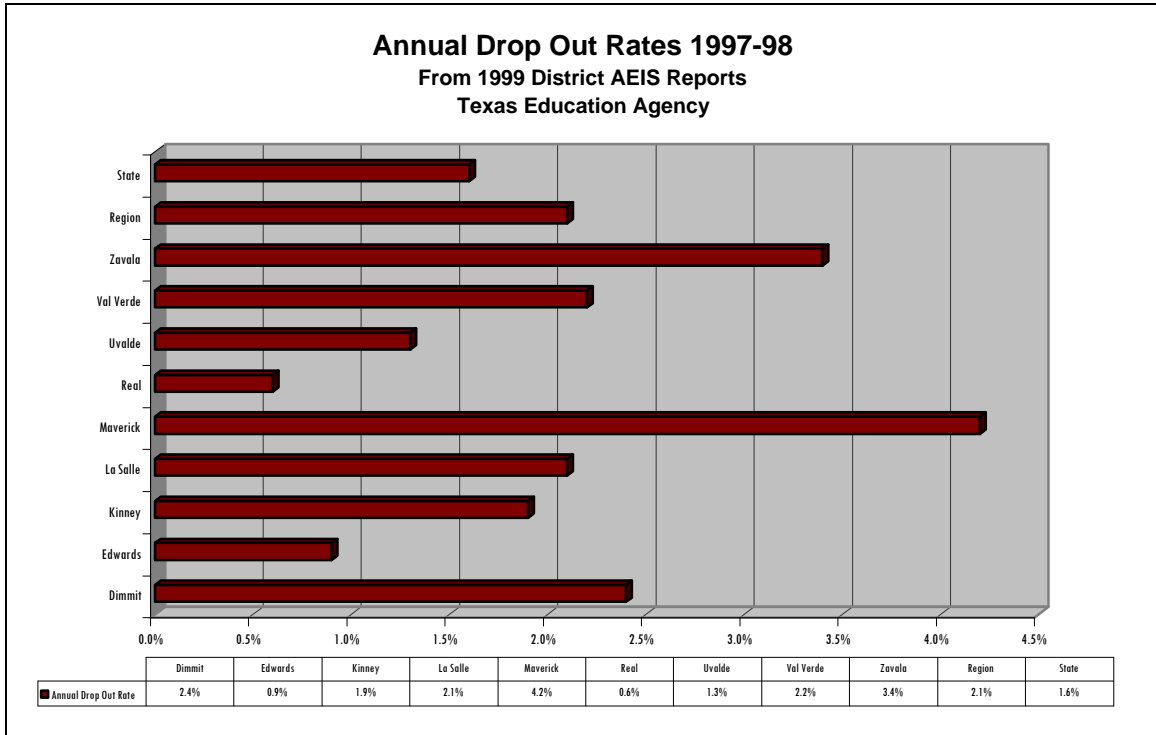
The growth rates for the state of Texas are predicted to increase by nearly 100% between 1990 and 2030. Projections show that Texas population will be at more than 20 million for the 2000 census count, but will jump to more than 34 million by the year 2030. But of significance is that the growth of its minority population will, by the year

2008, outnumber the Anglo population. In a presentation by Steve Murdock to the South Texas Future of the Region Conference in San Antonio, Texas in October 2000, he stated that, in addition, by the year 2030 the Hispanic population will grow to approximately 46% of the overall state population.



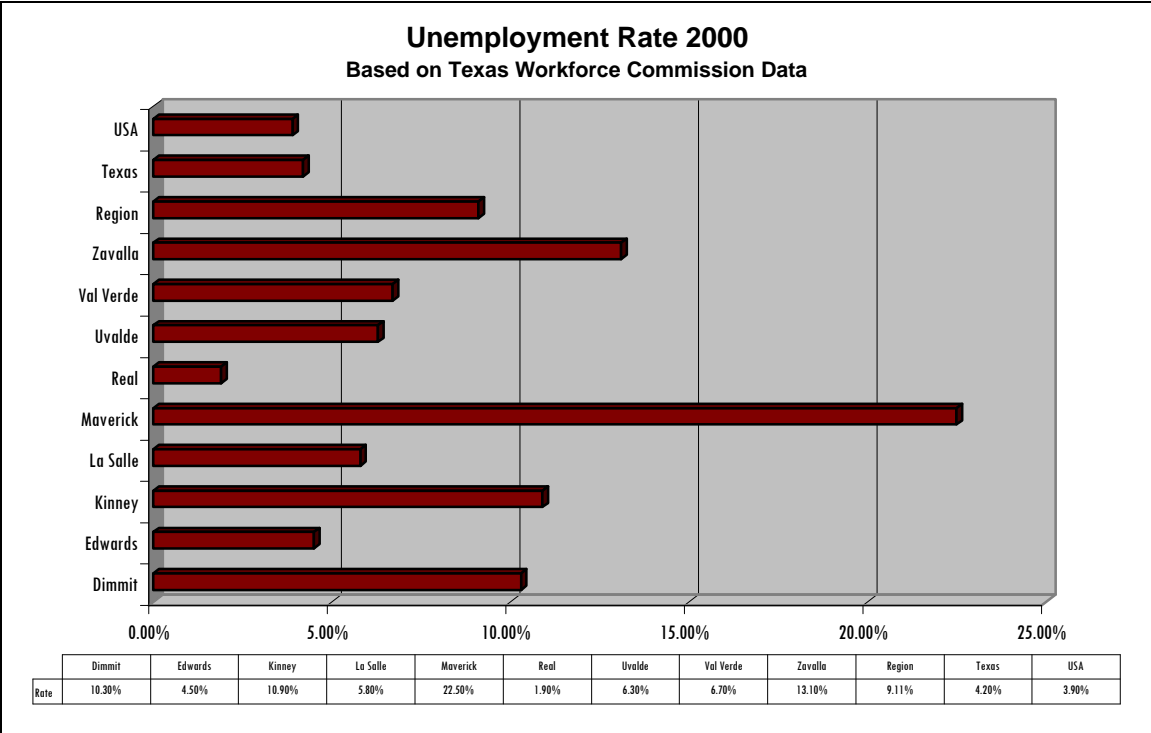
Educational Attainment

While most of the region's school districts boast low dropout rates, the regional average is still almost 25% higher than the State.

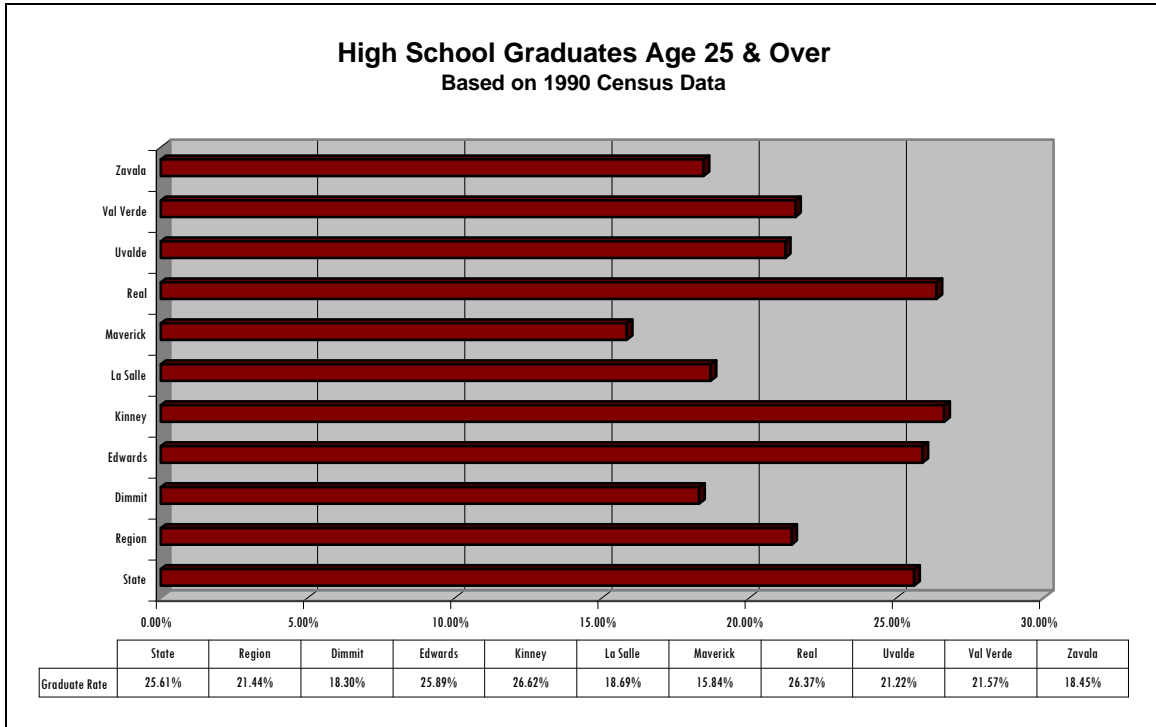


The percent of persons age 25 years and above with less than a 9th grade education for the state of Texas is 13.45% compared with the Middle Rio Grande Region where the percentage represents approximately one-third of the population at 35.70%. (LWFDB Integrated Plan FY 2000-2004).

According to Steve Murdock, demographer with the Department of Rural Sociology at Texas A&M University, “Texas will increase its population by nearly 100 percent between 1990 and 2030.” The border area of Texas that includes the Middle Rio Grande Region is growing at a faster rate than the rest of the state. Statistics show that this population is less educated, less fluent in English, and less likely to have or acquire the skills needed that provide livable wages.



While there is an increasing need to provide quality training, not just education – there is a difference, the training must be to a degree that it leads to better paying jobs that offer more than poverty level wages. (LWFDB Integrated Plan FY 2000-2004).



Of particular interest and added concern is the number of Hispanics that are reflected in the statistics above. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, of the Hispanics that makeup the total regional population, only 10.83% have a high school education, with only 1.49% having attained a four-year college degree or higher.

Safety:

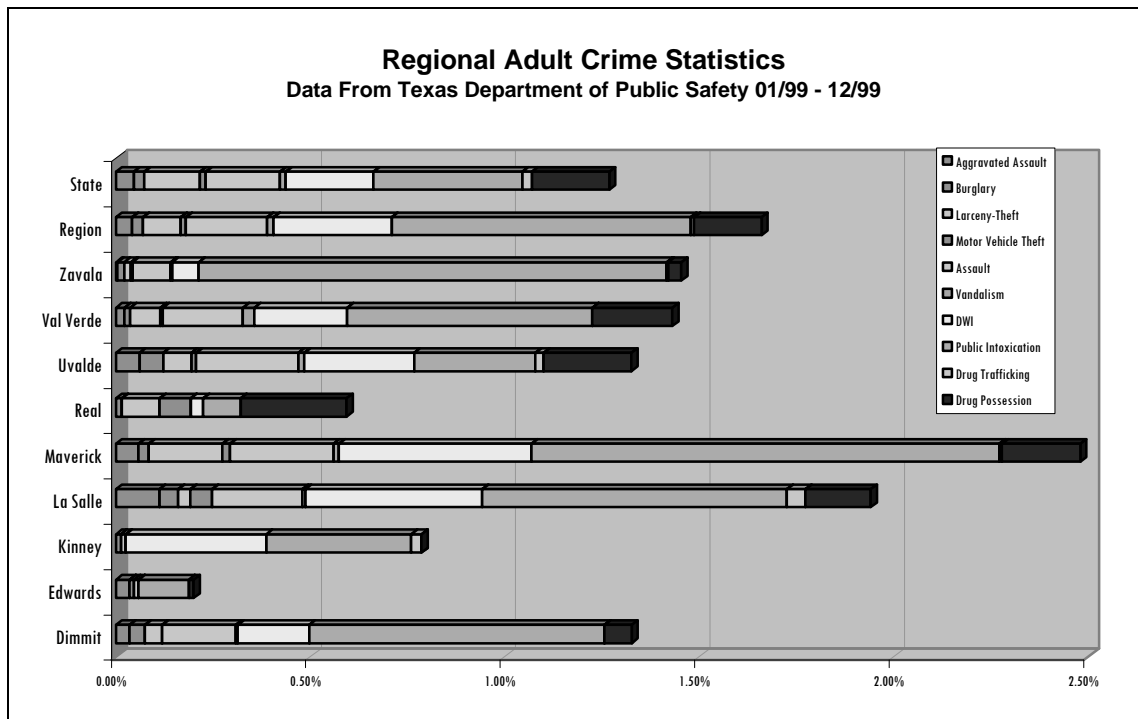
Criminal Justice:

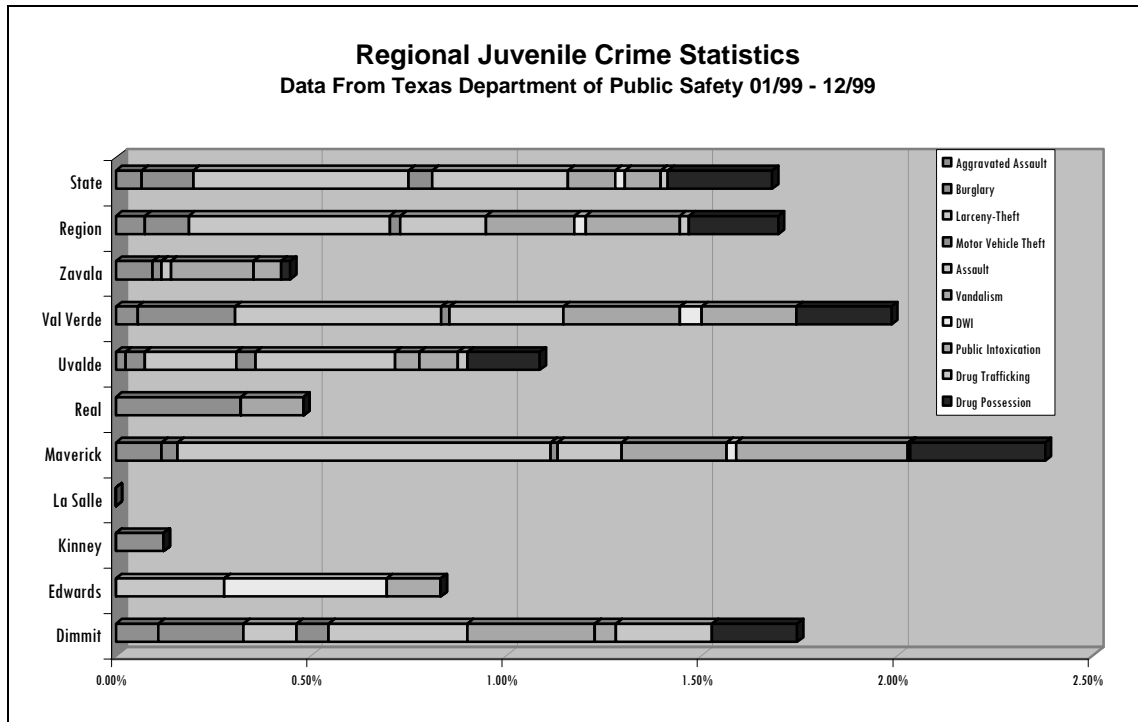
Drugs In Our Communities: In the Middle Rio Grande Region the incidence of experimentation with illicit substances among students tends to be higher, or as high, among students outside the border region, according to a comprehensive report by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA). This has less to do with ethnicity of the youth – although there are differences – than with the proximity of our region to the border. As TCADA mentions in the overview of their December 1999 *Research Brief on Substance Abuse Trends in Texas*, illicit drugs continue to enter from Mexico through cities and towns along the border, moving northward for distribution in Dallas/Fort Worth, and eastward toward Houston. One consequence of sharing the border with Mexico is that many of the drugs controlled in the States are for sale in pharmacies in Mexico and, if declared, are legal to bring into our country.

By far, the drug of choice in all of Texas is alcohol, being the most abused, having the most dependents, causing the most deaths and arrests, and being the most common basis for substance treatment admissions. Our nine-county region is far from immune to this phenomenon. In 1998 there was on average, 280 instances of public intoxication, 600 instances of DWI, and 92 deaths related to alcohol throughout the region according to the TCADA report.

There are substance abuse treatment providers located in Dimmit, La Salle, Maverick, Uvalde and Val Verde Counties, while licensed chemical dependency counselors are available in La Salle, Maverick, Real, Uvalde and Val Verde counties. Most of the centers, though, only treat patients on an outpatient basis and do not have the facilities to house them. Only the centers in Val Verde and Maverick counties are able to house patients for any length of time.

Crime: Beyond the substance abuse problem, there is also the matter of all other crimes committed. Throughout the Middle Rio Grande Region the most commonly committed crimes are larceny-theft and vandalism among young people, and DWI and public intoxication among adults according to 1999 data from the Texas Department of Public Safety. In our region, though, the incidence of crime is still quite high in comparison to the state averages, as demonstrated by the charts below.





The incidence of violent crimes like murder, rape and robbery were almost non-existent in the region – and so were not included in the rates – while other crimes like adult public intoxication and DWI were as high or significantly higher than those of the state. Vandalism and public intoxication were higher among young people in the region as compared to the state averages. At present, most of the smaller communities rely on the county sheriffs and/or constables for law enforcement, and residents expressed the need for higher skills training of officers, more equipment, and implementation of both crime prevention programs and an increase in both juvenile justice and accountability. Presently the only juvenile detention facilities in operation in our region – which contains more than 50,000 youth – are in Dimmit and Val Verde County, according to the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. The Dimmit County facility has beds for only 26 males and females, while the Val Verde facility can only serve 10 males. A juvenile Boot Camp in La Salle County no longer serves the county.

Public Safety:

The Middle Rio Grande Region encompasses 14,333 square miles of semi-arid land, from the Edwards Plateau in the north to the Brush Country in the south. “Most of the residents in the region have four legs and spend their lives running from one bush to another across open areas of sand and rock.” The two-legged variety is more rare. Policing this open range is for the most

part the job of county Sheriffs and Highway Patrol officers, but in each town and city in the region there is at least one officer whose duty it is to protect the lives and property of the region's citizens.

911:

The major points of discussion for 911 revolve around input received prior to the community meetings from Board of Directors of the COG and the Regional 911 Advisory Committee. In addition, input has been compiled from call takers, communication supervisors, police chiefs and sheriffs, as well as the public. A review of systems that includes equipment, use of equipment, procedures, training, maintenance and resources is conducted by 911 staff is conducted in order to provide performance based information. Major upgrades or changes are discussed and developed in advance based on technology, the benefits to the entire regional 911 system, the pitfalls, and the costs of the upgrade or change. The capacity of the 911 centers to handle the technology is also considered, due to staffing loads, and facility size, and the physical ability of the center to house and operate the system is critical. The Advisory Committee forwards all performance records and requests to the MRGDC Board of Directors with any recommendations for approval

At the present time, all systems in the Middle Rio Grande Region are comparable to the largest metropolitan city in the State in terms of the available technology.

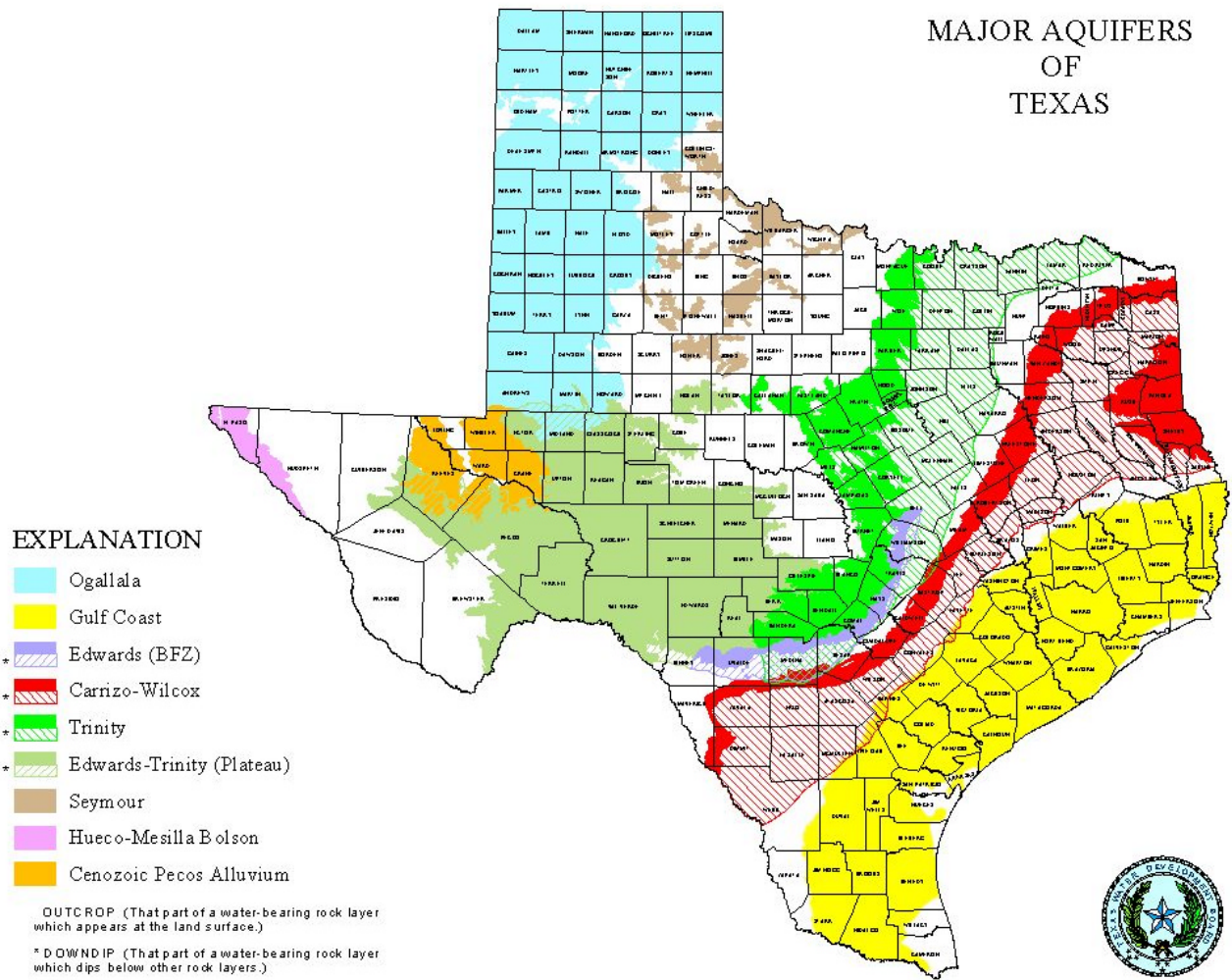
Consolidated Planning:

Water:

At present, the sources of water are mostly from aquifers in the region: Val Verde, Edwards, Real, and parts of Kinney and Uvalde counties sit on the Edwards-Trinity aquifer, while parts of Maverick, Dimmit, Zavala and Uvalde are on the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer. Additionally, Uvalde, as well as parts of Kinney, also sit on the Edwards recharge zone. Fractured boundaries, in terms of water sources for the nine-county region impair the Middle Rio Grande's ability to coordinate and deliver services.

In the latter part of the 1990s, the Border Region experienced both a long-term drought and two, short-term statewide droughts. Drought is a normal part of the hydrological cycle, as are floods, but the statewide droughts of 1996 and 1998 produced widespread crop failure and

significant environmental distress and required more than 300 cities and utilities to implement some form of water demand management. Most of these demand management measures were taken because the utilities, especially those in South Texas, had to ration water due to diminished supplies. In between the two droughts periods, 1997 turned out to be one of the wettest years in recent Texas history, with El Niño and La Niña often being cited as the cause for these massive fluctuations in the normal weather patterns. Following this, a 10-month drought period saw significant drops in reservoir and aquifer levels over much of the border region. Agricultural impacts of the drought were significant with estimates of total losses of approximately \$5 billion.



Of the two droughts, the 1996 drought had more impact on long-term water supplies. Statewide surface water levels dropped to 68% of conservation storage capacity. Eight reservoirs in Northern Mexico, on streams that feed into the Rio Grande system, have a combined storage capacity of 5.9 million acre-feet, almost equal to the combined (US and Mexico) capacity of Falcon and Amistad together. These eight Mexican reservoirs are at only

29% of capacity. Therefore, any rainfall on the watersheds above these eight Mexican reservoirs will be captured by these reservoirs before it enters the Rio Grande, thus diminishing the capacity of the Rio Grande to supply water to the middle and lower Rio Grande Regions.

The drought affecting the Rio Grande Basin is a drought of historic proportions. Texas will become even more vulnerable to the impacts of drought in the future. It is vital that Texans be aware of the consequences of even short droughts and develop contingency plans for longer-term droughts. Such plans would include preparing for both agricultural and the hydrological impacts droughts have on the economy.

The region needs to continue to look for more drought-proof sources of water. Alternatives includes that which is a result of water reuse and desalinization of brackish and saline waters, using water more efficiently through conservation practices, developing conventional supplies where economically and environmentally feasible, and educating the communities on water shortage and drought prevention measures.

These aquifers are limited, though, and even now are feeling the effects of drought and over-use. The economic and environmental well being of the region and all of Texas depends on how well we manage our available water resources.

As of May 2000, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), where the above-mentioned information came from, has issued several alerts for all of Texas concerning the paucity of available water, the inability of the weather thus far to provide adequate rainfall to this part of the state, and the dangers that drought conditions pose to the environment. Specifically TWDB mentions that the Crop Moisture Index registers “severely dry moisture” in the southwest part of the state, that 44 of 254 counties are under outdoor burning bans, that the statewide conservation storage at the end of May was the second lowest in 23 years of data for this time of year, and that Amistad Reservoir and Falcon Reservoir held 36.3% and 10.7% respectively of conservation storage and have continued to decline since early April.

Solid Waste:

According to a 1999 report by SCS engineers for the Middle Rio Grande Development Council, there are presently six landfills operating in the Middle Rio Grande Region. All are publicly owned facilities, with one operated under contract by a private operator. The Carrizo Springs landfill accepts municipal waste from Carrizo Springs, Asherton, Big Wells and Catarina, and also by Zavala County which includes La Pryor and Batesville. Crystal City uses its own landfill for disposal and accepts waste from residents of Zavala County who bring it

themselves. The City of Del Rio operates its own landfill and accepts waste from Del Rio and Val Verde County including the unincorporated communities of Comstock and Langtry. Maverick County's landfill in Eagle Pass only accepts yard clippings, brush, construction and demolition debris, and other materials, but hauls its other waste to San Antonio's landfill. The Uvalde County landfill also only accepts brush, grass clippings and the like from the City of Sabinal and Uvalde County residents. The City of Uvalde's landfill, though, accepts other waste from the Cities of Leakey in Real County, Rocksprings in Edwards County, and Uvalde. Unfortunately, the Uvalde landfill no longer accepts waste from Leakey, and in October of 2000 Rocksprings will also have to find another site to dispose of their waste. After this time, the Uvalde landfill will only accept waste from the City of Uvalde and from the collection stations in Uvalde County. For all the other smaller towns in our region, there are collection points and drop off stations where trash is collected and then hauled to its designation landfill.

The communities in our region are not aware of the long-term consequences of continued illegal dumping in their individual counties. True, the number and availability of drop off sites in the region has reduced the overall amount of illegal dumping, the fact that a fee is charged for each load does not guarantee that illegal dumping will not continue, even though the fee is between \$.50 and \$1.50 per bag region-wide. For now, the cost of disposing of solid waste is fairly low, but only because we have the benefit of landfills within the region.

At some point, however, each landfill will reach its maximum capacity - the end of its lifespan - and will have to be closed. At that point, the region will have no choice but to pay to have their waste hauled to San Antonio or farther. These costs, which are low now, will rise considerably and are passed on directly to the residents in the form of increased taxes.

Also, many residents are not aware of the fact that many landfills restrict the type of waste they accept. They might think that because they have a landfill in the town their waste doesn't need to be hauled somewhere else when in fact that waste has always been hauled to another site. As an example, Eagle Pass's solid waste has been hauled to San Antonio for years because its landfill is restricted to organics only – yard waste, brush and tree branches.

What has been considered but not yet acted upon in a regional manner is a concerted effort at recycling of household waste. Eagle Pass currently has a recycling program, but it is limited to 400 homes and is still only on a "test basis." The essential problem with any recycling program is the cost of creation of a new program or expansion of an existing program. A feasibility study within the region would demonstrate the viability of such a program region-

wide, the cost of hauling 100% of waste to another landfill versus the savings of recycling some percentage in terms of hauling charges and a profit from the recycling itself. As the engineers noted in their extensive report, “the additional recyclables generated would also allow the city to better utilize its recycling center, thereby lowering the effective cost per ton of recyclables by spreading the fixed costs of the facility over more tons of recyclables processed through the facility.”

Infrastructure/Transportation:

Roadways/Transportation

The Middle Rio Grande Region of Texas is traversed by major transportation highways including Interstate Highway 35, US Highway 90, US Highway 83, and US Highway 57, all of which serve as major distribution highways for the region’s growing truck/transportation industry as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement, (NAFTA). Increased and significant access to the growing NAFTA-generated trade using the major north-south US-Mexico transportation network significantly deteriorates the road conditions in a region whose long range plans developed by the Texas Department of Transportation were never intended to accommodate the amount of traffic that the region is currently experiencing – never mind the safety issues. Another factor attributing to the increase in traffic, especially to Highway 57 and Highway 83 is the addition of the Second International Bridge in Eagle Pass. The region’s lack of a full-time fully-funded transportation policy planning mechanism (such as the urban areas’ MPO-Metropolitan Planning Organization) inhibits the Middle Rio Grande Region’s ability to plan long term and limits the region’s access to state and federal transportation dollars.

In terms of intermodal transportation issues, there is a separate planning process through a separate transportation provider as determined by the Texas Department of Transportation called the Community Council of Southwest Texas. At the present time the Council recognizes CCSWT’s plan to meet the needs of the region and attempts appropriate measures to incorporate efforts with the regional needs as identified.

Information Access/Technology

Technologies that exist in the region include the ability to access the electronic commerce and information base of the Internet. Most of the communities in the Region have some Internet access, but it is still based mainly on private access to ISPs through low-bandwidth modems. The Middle Rio Grande Council has broadband access through their development centers, as does Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) and Sul Ross – Rio Grande College (SR-RGC).

Also, the school districts in each county have access to T1 lines that connect them to SWTJC and the State Education System's Region XX Center in San Antonio. What remains to be accomplished is providing a greater access to the residents of the communities through DSL or cable, both of which provide much greater bandwidth than the phone systems.

Community and Economic Development:

Business Development:

In an article available on the World Wide Web, a spokesman for the State Comptroller's office felt that "while real earning per capita in the Border region will more than double by 2020, the region's standing relative to the rest of the state will *deteriorate* during this same period." The region suffers from a poor economy brought on by lack of adequately paying jobs and businesses just barely keeping afloat. "The private sector is characterized by small business. A large percentage of these businesses are under capitalized, less than effectively managed, and lack business plans or knowledge of how to develop one. Access to technical skills and operating capital is a deficit for competing in the 21st century. Small businesses understand the significant opportunities with the developments of NAFTA and the emerging "information age" economy, but lack the expertise or skills to capitalize on them." (MRGWDB Integrated Plan, FY 2000-2004).

According to U.S. Census-Economic Indicators, the Middle Rio Grande Region of Texas is among the poorest areas in the state and the nation. The economy is not conducive to providing jobs that meet the employment needs of its growing population. And, in fact, the Middle Rio Grande Region, due to its geographic location on the U.S/Mexico border, is in keeping with predictions that the Southwest Border Region of the United States is currently one of the fastest population growth areas in the nation.

Community and Human Development:

Colonias in the Middle Rio Grande Region distinguish it from other impoverished areas of the country. There are eighty-three colonia subdivisions within the Region. Dimmit County has six, Edwards County has one, Kinney County has two, LaSalle County has seven, Maverick County has forty-four, Real County has none, Uvalde County has nine, Val Verde County has

twelve, and Zavala County has two. The colonias are a perennial problem for all the counties in the region except for Real County. They exist outside the boundaries of the towns and cities in an area that has little or no infrastructure including utilities, roads, mail service, and all the other things taken for granted within the municipal city limits. The people who live in these areas are in need of all the basic services, yet have no base from which to complain – they exist in a legal gray zone between the city and the county.

The residents within the municipal boundaries do have a say in what happens in their communities. However, their concerns are for the health and well being of not only themselves and their neighbors, but their town as a whole. They have expressed concerns about the appearance of their towns as it affects its ability to attract businesses and new residents; they feel that the more appealing a town appears, the more it will attract the attention of outsiders who can only bring prosperity and progress. To this end they desire to implement or improve upon beautification projects, adult education programs, affordable housing initiatives, employment opportunities, job creation, and the improvement of their community and county identities. As a Region, it is more difficult to concentrate on such specific areas, but by improving the identities of each of our communities, the identity of the whole Region improves.

Aging:

At present our elderly (ages 60 and over) make up over 19% of our regional population (nearly 1 in every 5 persons) and yet the services they require to maintain relatively healthy, happy and secure lives are lacking in most of the Region. Of the total elderly population in the Middle Rio Grande Region, 65.25% are Hispanics and 34.10% of the total elderly population, including Anglos and other minorities, live in poverty. What our residents have told us is most in demand are programs to address the high costs of medication and added funding for the nutrition centers in the communities that are fortunate to have them. Many more feel that they need an ombudsman program that will advocate for fair treatment in the region's long-term care facilities. In simplest terms, all the services the elderly require to live the twilight years in dignity and peace are needed.

Population trends show that Texas is aging in relation to the country and that the baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, are approximately 30% of the Texas and U.S. population. Additionally, as stated by Dr. Murdock (October, 2000):

“Equally important the age structure of Texas shows an important interrelationship with race/ethnicity. By 1996, less than half of the population less than 25 years of age was Anglo while 75 percent of the population 65+ was Anglo and, in 2030, when 18 percent of the population will be 65+, 25 percent of Anglos but less than 12 percent of Hispanics will be 65+. Texas will increasingly have a large number of older Anglos being taken care of by a population with an increasingly proportion of young minorities.”

GIS/Technology:

At present, the only GIS mapping capability that the Middle Rio Grande Region has is associated with the functioning of the 911 emergency management system. Having this capability outside the restrictions put upon the program would mean a more thorough knowledge of the infrastructure of our region and thus the needs for improvement or repair of that system and the ability to affect those repairs in a timely manner.

V. REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

Middle Rio Grande Region:

To develop as accurate a picture of the state of the region as possible, the MRGDC staff and its consultants took to the road during the month of May for a series of community meetings for the purpose of identifying the needs as well as the strengths of each county in the Middle Rio Grande Region. The community meetings were following by a four-month period of review on behalf of the MRGDC Board of Directors and the Economic Development Committee. *The Committee zeroed in on several needs including:* Safety/911 – the way calls are received at the 911 center and are transferred/dispatched to the proper emergency team, i.e. fire department, EMS, etc.; Consolidated Planning/Solid Waste – the need for regional unity over solid waste issues/regional waste management institution; Consolidated Planning/Infrastructure – the need to address connectivity/technology gaps and the need for access to affordable broadband services; Consolidated Planning/Transportation – the need to study the pros and cons of MPO/RPO benefits to the region; Community and Economic Development/Business Development – the need to increase public education to correlate with workforce needs; Community and Economic Development/Community and Human Development – the need for the establishment of a top tier University in the region; and Community and Economic Development/Aging – the need to address alternative living quarters/housing and assistive living quarters and the need to expand on the aging plan to include transportation and duplication of services

The following is a listing of regional needs and opportunities as recognized during the community meetings. The list is not prioritized by order of importance. A particular need and/or opportunity was chosen as regional if it appeared in the needs assessment of more than three of the nine counties of the Middle Rio Grande Region. The Action Plan (begins on page 91) is the only section of the strategic plan that has any reference to order of importance on a regional level.

Regional Problems/Needs:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Youth Facilities/Services/Activities
2. Youth and Community Drug Prevention & Deterrence Programs
3. Juvenile Justice Services
4. Substance Abuse Services

5. Address Gang Activity in the Community
6. Implement Education and Coordination among Local Resources within the Community
7. Address issue of Parental Involvement & Accountability with Youth

Public Safety

1. Funds for Personnel and Infrastructure
2. Increased Training of Law Enforcement
3. Officers need more Support/Community Involvement
4. Regulatory Authority to address Environmental Problems
5. Funding for EMS and Fire
6. Improve Emergency Care

911

1. Address the issue of how 911 calls are received, transferred and dispatched.
2. Ability to Track Cellular Phone 911 Calls
3. Continue mapping and addressing component of 911
4. Increase public education outreach of proper use of the 911 system

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Public Awareness of Water Issues
2. Regional Unity over Water Issues that include bi-national/cross-border needs
3. Services and Technical Assistance from State Agencies

Solid Waste

1. Address Issue of Illegal Dumping
2. Public Awareness of Solid Waste Issues
3. Lack of state/federal programs and funding for Recycling Programs
4. Federal and State Rules bureaucracy impedes solutions
5. The need for Regional Unity over Solid Waste Issues/Regional Waste Management Institution

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Study the pros and cons of an RPO or MPO designation for the region
2. Connectivity/Technology – Affordable Broadband for Communities/Businesses
3. Need air service for region
4. Expertise in Planning and Development
5. Federal/State coordination with Local Transportation Needs
6. Inadequate funding for roads/highways
7. Mass transit system

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Regional Strategies for Job Creation/Economic Development/Marketing
2. Incentive Programs to Stimulate Economic Development

3. Economic Dependence Upon Federal Funds
4. Capital Investment in Housing/Affordable Housing
5. “Brain Drain” & other Out-Migration Problems
6. Increased Public Education to correlate with workforce needs
7. Convention Facilities
8. Alternate Income Sources-Niche markets, etc...
9. Value added processing
10. Global Market Vision
11. Need for a regional geographic service area adhered to by all state agencies

Community & Human Development

1. Increase Leadership Capacity
2. Address the “Digital Divide”
3. The need for the establishment of a top tier University in the region
4. Public Awareness of Economic Development Efforts
5. Politics Play a Large Role in Setting Goals/Hinders Participation of Qualified People
6. Inability to keep up with service demands-infrastructure and service needs

Aging

1. Alternative Living Quarters/Housing & Assisted Living
2. Ombudsman Program
3. Funds for Nutrition Services/Center
4. Adult Day Care
5. High Insurance/Medication Costs
6. Transportation for elderly; duplication of services
7. Address long-term elder care

GIS/Technology

1. Local Technical Assistance
2. Basic Mapping Services

Regional Strengths/Opportunities

SAFETY

1. Sense of Regional Cooperation
2. Presence of some neighborhood associations
3. Two judicial districts
4. Violent crime rate below state average
5. Presence of local law enforcement
6. Presence of best 911 Technology available
7. Consolidated 911 Plan for the Region

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

1. Mild winters, long growing seasons
2. Presence of local landfills
3. Presence of recycling centers

4. Presence of public awareness in regards to environmental issues
5. Regional presence of technological infrastructure

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Enterprise Communities/Enterprise Zones
2. CNATC – Central North American Trade Corridor (Hwy 83)
3. Existing local plans/Previous strategic planning experience
4. Untapped tourism potential
5. Diverse, bi-cultural communities/ties to Mexico
6. Abundance of land
7. Large, willing, able, and trainable population
8. Good place to raise kids/small community environment
9. Strong religious participation
10. Willing government structure
11. Access to area hospitals
12. GIS mapping technology is accessible

VI. REGIONAL ACTION PLAN PRIORITIZED

The following recommended action steps are to be used by the Middle Rio Grande Development Council as a blueprint for direction into the 21st Century. The action plan is based on recommendations from the Economic Development Committee and the participants present during the community meetings, as well as research collected by the consultant organization on the strategic plan. The research included best practices in other Texas Councils of Governments and plans that have been successful in other similar communities.

The first four recommendations were specifically approved by the MRGDC Economic Development Committee on October 17, 2000 and it is the hope of the committee that the region join together in implementing the first stages/tasks of the four recommendations over the next two to five years.

ACTION PLAN - PRIORITIES

PRIORITY #1

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING: Solid Waste

GOAL: Regional Unity on solid waste issues

STRATEGY: Create a Regional Waste Management Institution to meet the future needs of the region.

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Propose a structured apparatus/institution aimed at regional waste management.	1-2 Years	MRGDC Solid Waste Committee	MRGDC, TNRCC, Local Governments
Identify all solid waste facilities and create a data base that outlines the life span of each facility – include the recent BECC study.	1-2 Years	MRGDC	MRGDC, Local Governments, TNRCC, EPA, BECC
Address the federal and state rules and bureaucracy that impedes solid waste solutions	1-2 Years	MRGDC, Local Governments	MRGDC, Local Governments, TNRCC, EPA, Parks and Wildlife Departments, USDA Soil and Conservation,
Develop and promote a regional solid waste plan that includes bi-national partnerships with Acuna and Piedras Negras.	1-2 Years	MRGDC, Local Governments	MRGDC, Local Governments, TNRCC, EPA, Parks and Wildlife Departments, USDA Soil and Conservation,

PRIORITY #2

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING: Technology, Transportation, and Basic Infrastructure

GOAL: Rural Communities that incorporate information technology as a tool for economic development

STRATEGY: Provide information technology and affordable broadband access to the rural communities/region-wide

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Conduct a needs assessment of available technology	Year One	MRGDC, FUTURO-CTC, SWTNet Consortium, SWB	MRGDC, FUTURO-CTC, SWTNet Consortium, Public School Systems, SWTJC, SR-RGC, SWB, Local ISPs
Support the expansion and financial needs of technical and academic training	Ongoing	MRGDC, FUTURO-CTC, SWTNet Consortium, SWB	MRGDC, FUTURO-CTC, SWTNet Consortium, Public School Systems, SWTJC, SR-RGC, SWB, Local ISPs
Develop a legislative strategy for funding for technology programs that address the digital divide	Ongoing	MRGDC, FUTURO-CTC, SWTNet Consortium, SWB	MRGDC, FUTURO-CTC, SWTNet Consortium, Public School Systems, SWTJC, SR-RGC, SWB, Local ISPs

PRIORITY #3

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING: Technology, Transportation and Basic Infrastructure

GOAL: Better Access to State and Federal Planning funds for regional transportation infrastructure needs.

STRATEGY: Provide a means to study the creation of a fully-funded full-time policy transportation planning staff that will get the region into the transportation game plan.

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Research and identify states that currently support similar mechanisms, and the pros and cons to establishing such	Year One	MRGDC	MRGDC, Local Governments, TXDoT, FUTURO
Create position paper that supports or negates the region’s need for such a policy transportation planning staff.	Year One	MRGDC, Local Governments	MRGDC, Local Governments, TXDoT, FUTURO
If position paper is to support mechanism, determine best way to present report to state and federal authorities	1-3 Years	MRGDC, Local Governments	MRGDC, Local Governments, TXDoT, FUTURO
Develop a process that allows for support of the Region’s Intermodal Transportation Plan	Year One	MRGDC, Local Governments	MRGDC, Local Governments, TXDoT, FUTURO, Federal Hwy Administration, USDOT
Identify a system that will allow all transportation players to deal with the conflict of collective security vs. sovereign security. (local vs. regional)	Ongoing	MRGDC, Local Governments	MRGDC, Local Governments, TXDoT, FUTURO, Federal Hwy Administration, USDOT

PRIORITY #4

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Community and Human Development

GOAL: A free-standing baccalaureate/graduate institution system within the region.

STRATEGY: Pursue the establishment of a free-standing baccalaureate/graduate institution system within the region

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Create committee that will study the region and begin compilation of demographics on population needs in support of a university	1-2 Years	MRGDC, City/County Government, School Districts	MRGDC, City/County Governments, School Districts, Higher Education, TEA, Tech Prep, TWC, MRGWF
I.D. possible higher-ed systems, costs to communities, and be prepared to provide information to the 2003 legislature	1-2 Years	MRGDC, City/County Government, School Districts	MRGDC, City/County Governments, School Districts, Higher Education, TEA, Tech Prep, TWC, MRGWF
Develop a legislative program that aims at achieving the support needed for a top-tier University.	1-2 Years	MRGDC, City/County Government, School Districts,	MRGDC, City/County Governments, School Districts, Higher Education, TEA, Tech Prep, TWC, MRGWF

PRIORITY #5

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Community and Human Development

GOAL: Increased leadership capacity and community awareness of education and training opportunities.

STRATEGY: Promote Institutional development of post-secondary non-baccalaureate educational and training opportunities.

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Locate and identify education and training needs and resources and facilitate opportunities in coordination with educators.	1-2 Years	MRGDC, City/County Government, School Districts	MRGDC, City/County Governments, School Districts, Higher Education, TEA, Tech Prep, TWC, MRGWF
Research available alternate curriculum for proposed changes to the state's education system.	Year One	MRGDC, City/County Government, School Districts	MRGDC, City/County Governments, School Districts, Higher Education, TEA, Tech Prep, TWC, MRGWF
Support the establishment of apprenticeship pro-active training programs.	Ongoing	MRGDC, City/County Government, School Districts, FUTURO, SWTJC	MRGDC, City/County Governments, School Districts, Higher Education, TEA, Tech Prep, TWC, MRGWF
Encourage Hispanic leadership as a means to economic prosperity in the region due to the majority population	Ongoing	MRGDC, City/County Government, School Districts, FUTURO, SWTJC	MRGDC, City/County Governments, School Districts, Higher Education, TEA, Tech Prep, TWC, MRGWF

VI. COUNTY ASSESSMENTS

Dimmit County Assessment

History:

Dimmit County was created in 1858 from portions of Maverick, Webb, Bexar, La Salle and Zavala Counties. It was named for Philip Dimmit, and was organized in 1880 with Carrizo Springs as its county seat. Travel, exploration, colonization and trade came into the Dimmit County area over the “Old San Antonio Road”. In 1865 the first permanent settlement in the county was made at Carrizo Springs by families from Frio, Atascosa and Goliad Counties. Raising stock was the natural business and cattle were driven to Dodge City and Abilene, Kansas up the Chisholm Trail. In 1880, Asher Richardson for whom the town of Asherton was named introduced wire fencing. By 1890, artesian wells brought irrigation into use and the county became agriculturally productive. Other towns in Dimmit County include Big Wells and Catarina.

Problems and Baseline Conditions:

Indicative of the area’s economic problems is its high unemployment, low wages and declining work force. The high school dropout rate is high, educational attainment is low, median household incomes are less than half of the state average and nearly half of the residents live below the poverty level. Because their economy has relied upon agriculture, the petroleum industry and some manufacturing and tourism, they have suffered because all four are suffering in today’s economy.

Dimmit County Prioritized Problems:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Lack of Transportation for Youth
2. Enhance youth and community drug prevention programs
3. Create facilities for use by area youth
4. Improve Juvenile Justice Services
5. Address issue of teenage pregnancy
6. Create family counseling and budgeting services
7. Address the increase in gang activity within the community

8. Improve Emergency Shelters and Services
9. Address issue of parental involvement with youth
10. Implement education and coordination among local resources within the community

Public Safety

1. Emergency Response System
2. Need for Fire Safety Equipment
3. Neighborhood Associations
4. Address Traffic Control Issues
5. Officers need more support/community involvement
6. Need more funds for personnel and infrastructure
7. Need better paying law enforcement jobs
8. Need better management of law enforcement
9. More dedication from law enforcement
10. More pedestrian walkways
11. Need for emergency shelters
12. Lack of regulatory authority to address environmental problems

911

1. Need for increased fire and EMS funding
2. Enhanced training for emergency personnel
3. Ability to track 911 cellular phone calls (so 911 can make a call back)
4. Ability to map all houses in an area
5. Regional training center to keep from sending out dispatchers
6. Track calls by a physical map where a cellular caller is as he moves down the highway

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Lack of Public Awareness of Resources
2. Need water distribution systems
3. Local water used by others upstream/downstream
4. Lack of regional unity
5. Lack of services and technical assistance from state agencies

Solid Waste

1. Public Awareness and Education
2. Curtail Illegal Dumping
3. Enhance Recycling Program
 - a. Awareness and Support
 - b. Incentives / Reimbursement

- c. Regional Agreement to buy Tire Shredders
- 4. Support a consolidated Regional Landfill
- 5. Solid waste management problems
- 6. Solid waste problems due to federal and state rules

Infrastructure/Transportation

- 1. MPO/RPO
- 2. Not enough inter-local transportation (e.g., from town to hospitals)
- 3. Poor federal/state coordination with local transportation needs
- 4. Disproportionate share of state/federal funds for transportation needs
- 5. Lack of public transportation
- 6. Lack of connectivity/technology – broadband for community
- 7. Lack of expertise in planning and development

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

- 1. Strengthen Government Participation - Excessive economic dependence on government
- 2. High unemployment
- 3. Better jobs
- 4. Regional strategies for job creation/economic development
- 5. Lack of structured approach to attract economic development
- 6. Capital investment in housing
- 7. Affordable housing for all incomes
- 8. Availability of commercial loans
- 9. Need incentive programs
- 10. Need more retail

Community & Human Development

- 1. Handicapped Services
- 2. Improve Beautification
- 3. Improve Leadership
- 4. Surveyor
- 5. Regional Effort to Improve Veteran Services
 - a. Emphasis on Medical Services
- 6. Better distribution of disaster area relief funding among residents
- 7. High poverty limits economic opportunity
- 8. Low levels of citizen participation
- 9. Need for awareness efforts in economic development
- 10. Lack of convention facilities
- 11. Lack of implementation
- 12. Politics play a large role in setting goals/hinders participation of qualified people.

Aging

1. AAA (Walk in)
2. Community Awareness
 - a. Elderly Services Fair
 - b. Elderly Awareness Fair
3. Elderly Housing
4. Alternative Living Quarters
5. Advocacy (Ombudsman)
 - a. Local Representation
 - b. Social Services
 - c. Awareness of Home Abuse
 - d. Address cost of prescription medication
6. Elderly Abuse
 - a. Respite care
 - b. More funding for nutrition programs
 - c. Overloaded caseworkers
 - d. Increase coordination of services with local agencies
7. High Poverty
8. Need for public transportation services

GIS/Technology

1. Access to the Internet
2. Need for local technical assistance
3. Need for basic mapping services

Dimmit County Prioritized Opportunities:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Previous Strategic Planning
2. Good place to raise kids and grow-up
3. Small Community environment
4. Network of extended families
5. Youth leadership programs
6. Counseling for at-risk youths
7. Good linking to existing resources

Public Safety

1. Radar Speed Control Boxes
2. City beatification plan is working on removing abandoned buildings and cars

3. Volunteer fire department with basic emergency training
4. Consolidate 911 plan for the MRG Region
5. Systems in place

911

1. Best technology available (as good as Fort Worth or Dallas)

CONSOLIDATING PLANNING

Water

1. Adequate water/wastewater
2. Mild winters, long growing seasons

Solid Waste

1. Dimmit County Landfill
 - a. State recognized/New/Exemplary
 - b. Presence of Recycling Center
2. Presence of some public awareness

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Southwest Texas Network Consortium-access to technology
2. Infrastructure for distance learning

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Hunting Business/Services
2. Downtown Beautification
2. Local businesses
 - a. Jalapeno Factory
 - b. Mesquite Beans
4. Neighborhood housing services in the city and county
5. Reasonably priced land and building sites
6. Tradition of lending a helping hand
7. Willing government structure

Community Development

1. Comprehensive GIS Plan
2. Community Festival
3. Abundance of land
4. Government and community leaders services accessible

5. Large willing, able, and trainable population

Aging

1. Adult Day Care
2. Nutrition Center
3. Hospital
4. Dialysis/Physical Therapy
6. Physicians/Specialized Services
7. Presence of Comprehensive Plan
5. Extended health services
6. Grant to develop elderly housing
7. Expanding health care programs
8. Alternative medicine available (holistic medicine)
9. AAA

GIS/Technology

1. Cooperation with community college to upgrade technical skills
2. Some mapping services available

Edwards County Assessment

History:

The Spanish explored the area now known as Edwards County as early as 1675. This Hill Country County was created in 1858 from the Bexar District of frontier Texas and named for the Nacadoches empresario, Hayden Edwards. Prolonged Commanche and Apache Indian raids along the Nueces Strip prohibited settlement and formal organizations until 1883. The County's first settlers were a hearty lot of European sheep and goat drovers who found its terrain similar to the highlands of their homeland. It has three towns: Carta Valley, Rocksprings, and Barksdale, with Rocksprings being the largest and the county seat. Rocksprings, with a population of 1,390 today was named after the seeping springs in the area and the many rocks and is known as the "Angora Goat Capital of the World," having hosted the Angora Goat Breeders Association there since 1926. Edwards County ranks first in the state in Angora goat and mohair production. Another special attraction is the Devil's Sinkhole that has a sunken mountain 256 feet below the natural terrain and is the home to a colony of over 1 million bats.

Problems and Baseline Conditions:

The residents of Edwards County seemed greatly concerned with the incidences of crime in their community, particularly as it applied to their young people. The need for drug intervention programs, programs for youth to keep them out of gangs and away from the lure of easy money that comes from drug sales, treatment centers for mental health, violence and abuse, emergency shelters for victims of abuse and domestic violence, and programs to keep their children in school. They have also voiced many concerns about the state of their law enforcement program and the state of training, management, and dedication by their officers. They feel that the juvenile justice system lacks efficiency, although they feel that prevention would be preferable to punishment.

In this part of Texas, water is always an issue, and the Edwards County residents feel that better education on water rights is needed, as is recognition and awareness of what rights the residents have to the water in the aquifer that exists partially beneath their county. Solid waste disposal is also an important issue, especially implementing a long-range solution for disposal taking into account the impact on the environment. The

concerns they have are similar to other counties in the region, and it appears they desire region-wide solutions that also address local issues.

According to 1990 Census data for the county, the incidence of teen pregnancy is almost twice the state average, unemployment is comparable to the State, the median household income is about half of the State average, almost half of the population lives below poverty level, and 15 percent are on public assistance. Many of the houses in the county have inadequate plumbing, most get their water from wells and use septic systems for waste disposal, and there are still some houses without a telephone and that burn wood for heat. There exists an overall need for improvement in infrastructure. It's difficult to bridge the gaps when there's no solid foundation upon which to build the bridge.

Edwards County Prioritized Problems:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Parental/Youth Accountability Plan
2. Alcoholics Anonymous Program
3. City Ordinances Not Being Enforced (zoning/lack of regulatory authority)
4. Need for teenage pregnancy prevention and education services
5. Address school and community drug problem
 - a. Drug trafficking corridor
6. Need to address gang activity within the community and in school
7. Need for alternative youth programs
 - a. Youth Community Centers
8. Need for substance abuse treatment services
9. Need for education and coordination among local resources within the community
10. Need for a domestic violence shelter and counseling services
11. Need for family counseling & family budgeting services
12. Need for sexual abuse counseling services
13. Need for emergency housing
14. Need for school dropout prevention programs for youth
15. Need for public transportation services for youth
16. Lack of juvenile detention facilities
17. Inefficient juvenile justice system
18. Need more law enforcement/interdiction
19. Need bi-national cooperation

20. Need for mental health services for the population that does not meet MHMR criteria
21. Lack of parental involvement

Public Safety

1. Not Enough Being Done
2. Inter Local Agreement on Regulatory Authority
3. Laws not Enforced
4. Additional State Law Enforcement
 - a. Game Warden
 - b. Highway Patrol
 - c. Too Large of Area
5. Need for Emergency Medical Services
6. Mechanism for community crime prevention
7. Officers need more support/community involvement
8. Need more funds for personnel and infrastructure
9. Need better paying law enforcement jobs
10. Need better management of law enforcement
11. Insufficient training of law enforcement
12. More dedication from law enforcement
13. Need enforcement in all areas
14. More pedestrian walkways
15. Need emergency shelters
16. High crime rate
17. Lack of Federal and State awareness of border safety issues
18. Lack of regulatory authority to address environmental problems

911

1. Need for increased fire department and EMS funding
2. Enhanced training for emergency personnel
3. Need for upgraded equipment and vehicles
4. Ability to track 911 cellular phone calls (so 911 can make a call back)
5. Ability to map all houses in an area
6. Regional training center to keep from sending out dispatchers
7. Track calls by a physical map where a cellular caller is as he moves down the highway

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Need education and awareness (water resources)
2. Keep San Antonio from getting our water
3. Need education on Water Rights
4. Address brush Control for Enhance of water recharge (cedar)

5. Address needs of areas that have no water service
6. Need water distribution systems
7. Address use of water by others upstream/downstream
8. Need regional unity
9. Need services and technical assistance from state agencies
10. Cross border disparity between Mexico and U.S. with realistic interdependence
11. Drought conditions affect water balance in agriculture v. municipal uses

Solid Waste

1. Need public cooperation
2. Enhance county sanitation system
3. Prevent illegal dumping
4. Address subdivision waste control
5. Continue recycling awareness, efforts and participation
6. Need more than one sewer hook-up per house
7. Need cleanliness
8. Address solid waste management problems
9. Address solid waste problems due to federal and state rules
10. Need regional unity
11. Address pollution from Mexico
12. Address lack of vision
13. Address disposal of old tires
14. Need for research on environmental problems in border areas
15. Increase knowledge of environmental management
16. Address growing populations and abuse of the environment
17. Need for sanitation and treatment system for sewerage and garbage

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Improve Hwy 377 (poor)
2. Include MPO/RPO
3. Need Bus Service
4. Address Anti Trust Problems with connectivity – pricing
5. Provide education and information to the public
6. Need planning and development
7. Enforce city ordinances
8. Improve poor highway system
9. Improve poor federal/state coordination with local transportation needs
10. Address disproportionate share of state/federal funds for transportation needs
11. Need public transportation
12. Address connectivity/technology – broadband for community
13. Need infrastructure-domestic water resources, water & sewer facilities
14. Need expertise in planning and development
15. Need regulatory authority
16. Address traffic congestion due to trains

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Need credentialed contractors
 - a. Licensed
 - b. Bonded
2. Need state to identify location/profile
3. Need recognition for public attractions
4. Address regional inequity
5. Hard to get things done
6. Need for more retail
7. Need better paying jobs – regional inequity
8. Growing beautification
9. Lack of structured approach to attract economic development
10. Lack of good jobs
11. Need incentive programs
12. Need to identify key industries
13. Need more retail competition
14. Excessive economic dependence on government
15. Need economic diversity
16. Need Marketing Agriculture Diversification
17. Declining downtown areas/business districts
18. Large barter system
19. Large underground economy
20. Need capital investment in housing
21. Need affordable housing
22. Limited supply of local contractors
23. Need regional strategies for job creation/economic development

24. Need understanding between general population and leaders
25. Mom & Pops v Corp businesses

Community & Human Development

1. Lack of cultural enrichment and opportunities
2. “Brain drain” and other out-migration
3. High poverty limits access to technology & economic opportunity
4. Low levels of citizen participation
5. Need for awareness efforts in economic development
6. “Historical hangover” on racial problems
7. Lack of gender equity
8. Declining tax base
9. Need convention facilities
10. Need beautification efforts
11. Need for educated/skilled workforce

12. Need professional leadership
13. Need implementation
14. Politics play a large role in setting goals/hinders participation of qualified people
15. Politics more opportunities for continued education

Aging

1. Need Respite Care
2. Need Ombudsman Program
3. Need for added funding for nutrition services
4. Need Accessible Services for Elderly
5. Enhance recreational activities
6. Need Adult Day Care
7. Need Facilities with air conditioning
8. Address high poverty
9. Address high insurance costs and prescription medication
10. Need for alternative living quarters
11. Need adequate elderly housing
12. Need recreational activities for elderly
13. Increased transportation services

GIS/Technology

1. Regional
2. Need for local technical assistance
3. Need for basic mapping services

Edwards County Prioritized Opportunities:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Rocksprings Youth Organization (youth organization)
2. 4-H Program
3. Teen parental responsibility
4. Previous Strategic Planning
5. Good place to raise kids and grow-up
6. Small community environment
7. Know your neighbors
8. Strong religious participation
9. Network of extended families
10. Youth leadership programs
11. Community has keen interest in drug abuse problem
12. Some counseling for at-risk youth
13. Alcoholics Anonymous programs

14. DARE programs
15. Good linking of existing resources

Public Safety

1. Public Interest
2. Strong local law enforcement presence
3. Federal/state law enforcement presence
4. Neighborhood associations
5. Violent crime prevention partners
6. Public support for community crime prevention

911 Planning

1. Systems in place

CONSOLIDATING PLANNING

Water

1. Presence of some water/wastewater systems
2. Mild winters, long growing seasons

Solid Waste

1. Continue effort in Recycling Program
 - a. Regional
 - b. Local
2. Presence of some public awareness

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Member of NETXV system
2. Existing local plans for transportation
3. Southwest Texas Network Consortium-access to technology
4. Infrastructure for distance learning

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Reasonably priced land and building sites
2. Rich soil and long growing seasons
3. Airports unimpeded by development
4. Wide open spaces, communities are not land-locked; plenty of land for development

5. Diverse, bi-cultural communities
6. Tradition of lending a helping hand
7. Willing government structure
8. Technical Assistance available for communities

Community Development

1. Large willing, able, and trainable population
2. Training institutions somewhat accessible
3. Unique architectural designs
4. Government and community services accessible
5. Government and community leaders can't hide
6. Services have a face associated with them
7. Opportunity to seek public office

Aging

1. 1-800-224-9415
2. Nutrition Center
3. Small town makes access easy
4. Access to telemedicine
5. Expanding health care programs
6. Alternative medicine available (acupuncture, curanderas)

GIS/Technology

1. Some mapping services available

Kinney County Assessment

History:

Named after Henry Lawrence Kinney, the founder of Corpus Christi, Kinney County boasts one of the earliest cavalry posts at Fort Clark Springs that contains one of the most important assets in the area, Las Moras Springs. The springs were a favorite stopping place and campground for Comanche, Mescalero, Lipans, and other tribes, and lay on the eastern branch of the Comanche War Trail into Mexico. The fort was established in 1852 and the last building completed in 1857, and was manned by both federal and state cavalry until it was closed in 1946. In 1971 it was purchased and opened as a private recreation community, and today has two golf courses, spring-fed pool, RV park, motel, tennis courts, nature trails, restaurants, and a military museum.

Soon after the fort was established a neighboring settlement originally called Los Moras – later named Brackett after O.B. Brackett who built the first house and business there, and then Brackettville – was created as a supply village for the Fort. Today it is known mainly for its recreational facilities, and for Alamo Village, a movie location with an authentic reproduction of the Alamo mission and accompanying San Antonio village where more than a hundred movies and documentaries have been filmed. With a population of 3,119, Kinney County has only two towns, Brackettville and Spofford. The county boasts mainly sheep, goat and cattle ranches, though there are some farms growing hay, oats, sorghum, and cotton.

Problems and Baseline Conditions:

One concern for the residents in Kinney County is the incidences of drug use and teen pregnancy in their schools. They feel that there needs to be better intervention programs and increased awareness among the parents. They have stated a need for youth activities on one hand and better juvenile facilities on the other, substance abuse treatment services and alternative youth programs, gang activity awareness and coordination among local resources. According to the 1990 Census, the majority of the population (total 2,266) is between 25 and 44 years old, half of which are Hispanic, and the other mostly Caucasian. Both dropout rates and unemployment is low, but so is the

median household income. Poverty levels are above average, and 20% of the residents are on public assistance.

Kinney County Prioritized Problems:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Facility for 4-H Club (barn)
2. Enhance DARE Program
3. Public Awareness Counseling Services
 - a. Illegal Alien Criminal Act
4. Need help in restoration of damaged property
5. Need motivation for Parental Participant
 - a. Accountability
 - b. Responsibility
6. Parents meet with Probation Officers
7. Need Parenting Education (youth guidance)
8. Address drug problem in schools and in community
9. Need to address gang activity within the community and in school
10. Need for teenage pregnancy prevention and education services
11. Need for alternative youth programs
12. Need for substance abuse treatment services
13. Need for education and coordination among local resources within the community
14. Need for a domestic violence shelter
15. Need for domestic violence counseling services
16. Need for family counseling & family budgeting services
17. Need for sexual abuse counseling services
18. Need for emergency housing
19. Need for school dropout prevention programs for youth
20. Need for public transportation services
21. Need for day care services
22. Need juvenile detention facilities
23. Need efficient juvenile justice system
24. Need more law enforcement/interdiction
25. Need bi-national cooperation
26. Need for mental health services for the population that does not meet MHMR criteria
27. Need parental involvement
28. Need for Better Control of illegal immigration

Public Safety

1. Additional Training brought to the area for Law Enforcement
2. Officers need more support/community involvement

3. Need more funds for personnel and infrastructure
4. Need better paying law enforcement jobs
5. Need better management
6. Better training of law enforcement
7. Need dedication from law enforcement
8. Need enforcement in all areas
9. More pedestrian walkways
10. Need emergency shelters
11. Address high crime rate
12. Need Federal and State awareness of border safety issues
13. Need regulatory authority to address environmental problems

911

1. Need for increased fire and EMS funding
2. Enhanced training for emergency personnel
3. Need for upgraded equipment and vehicles
4. Ability to track 911 cellular phone calls (so 911 can make a call back)
5. Ability to map all houses in an area
6. Regional training center to keep from sending out dispatchers
7. Track calls by a physical map where a cellular caller is as he moves down the highway

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Form Local Group (planning)
2. Educate Community on Resources
 - a. Awareness
3. Water Conservation-Resource Availability within the Community
4. Need water distribution systems
5. Address water use by others upstream/downstream
6. Lack of regional unity
7. Lack of services and technical assistance from state agencies
8. Lack of recognition and awareness (water resources) and where it originates from
9. Address cross border disparity between Mexico and U.S. with realistic interdependence
10. Drought conditions affect water balance in agriculture v. municipal uses

Solid Waste

1. Need Recycling Program
2. Keep Communication with SWAC
3. Address cleanliness; too much trash/dumping
4. Solid waste management problems
5. Solid waste problems due to federal and state rules

6. Need regional unity
7. Address Pollution from Mexico
8. Need community support
9. Lack of vision
10. Address disposal of old tires
11. Need for research on environmental problems in border areas

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Need for MPO/RPO
2. Poor highway system
3. Poor federal/state coordination with local transportation needs
4. Disproportionate share of state/federal funds for transportation needs
5. Need public transportation
6. Lack of connectivity/technology – broadband for community
7. Address lack of infrastructure-domestic water resources, water & sewer facilities
8. Need expertise in planning and development
9. Need regulatory authority
10. Traffic congestion due to trains
11. Presence of colonias

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Need affordable housing
 - a. First time buyers
2. Continue efforts towards attaining Detention Facility
3. Need structured approach to attract economic development
4. Need good jobs
5. Need incentive programs
6. Need to identify key industries
7. Need more retail competition
8. Excessive economic dependence on government
9. Need economic diversity
10. Declining downtown areas/business districts
11. Provide hands on training for jobs
12. Large barter system
13. Large underground economy
14. Need capital investment in housing
15. Lack of affordable housing
16. Limited supply of local contractors
17. Need regional strategies for job creation/economic development
18. Need understanding between general population and leaders
19. Non-developed tourism opportunities
20. Low regional profile
21. Mom & Pops v Corp businesses

Community & Human Development

1. Need for Adult Continuing Education (HD)
2. Need for cross boundaries in community
 - a. Apathy
3. Need cultural enrichment and opportunities
4. Address “Brain drain” and other out-migration
5. High poverty limits access to technology & economic opportunity
6. Increase levels of citizen participation
7. Need for awareness efforts in economic development
8. “Historical hangover” on racial problems
9. Need gender equity
10. Address declining tax base
11. Need convention facilities
12. Need beautification efforts
13. Need for educated/skilled workforce
14. Need professional leadership
15. Lack of implementation
16. Politics play a large role in setting goals/hinders participation of qualified people.
17. Politics more opportunities for continued education
18. Develop work center for handicapped adults (17 years and older)

Aging

1. Public Awareness on the Ombudsman Program
2. Need funding for Nutrition Center
3. Need for added funding for nutrition services
4. Address Extremely High Medical Bills
5. Need Financial Training to Family Members
 - a. Elderly Future Needs
6. Need for respite care services
7. Address high poverty
8. Need for day care services
9. Address high insurance costs and prescription medication
10. Need for alternative living quarters
11. Need adequate elderly housing
12. Need recreational activities for elderly
13. Need Increased transportation services for elderly

GIS/Technology

1. Need for local technical assistance
2. Need for basic mapping services
3. Reliable Phone System- Internet services

Kinney County Prioritized Opportunities:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Church Support/Counseling
2. Development of Boys & Girls Club
 - a. Planning Stages
3. Large Volunteer Base through Retirement Community
 - a. Potential
4. 4-H Club
5. Previous Strategic Planning
6. Good place to raise kids and grow-up
7. Small Community environment
8. Know your neighbors
9. Strong religious participation
10. Network of extended families
11. Youth leadership programs
12. Community has keen interest in drug abuse problem
13. Some counseling for at-risk youth
14. Alcoholics Anonymous programs
15. DARE programs
16. Good linking of existing resources

Public Safety

1. Lack of Emergency Plan (committee formed/in process)
2. Awareness of Emergency Plan
3. Need for more Fire Volunteers
 - a. Emergency Medical Services
4. Strong local law enforcement presence
5. Federal/state law enforcement presence
6. Neighborhood associations
7. Violent crime rate below state average
8. Presence of crime prevention partners
9. Public support for community crime prevention

911 Planning

1. Systems in place

CONSOLIDATING PLANNING

Water

1. Planning Committee
 - a. Area in Place
2. Adequate water/wastewater
3. Mild winters, long growing seasons

Solid Waste

1. Large Public Awareness
2. Some Funds Available

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Existing local plans for transportation
2. Southwest Texas Network Consortium-access to technology
3. Infrastructure for distance learning

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Employer Services through MRGDC
2. Reasonably priced land and building sites
3. Rich soil and long growing seasons
4. Airports unimpeded by development
5. Wide open spaces, communities are not land-locked; plenty of land for development
6. Diverse, bi-cultural communities
7. Tradition of lending a helping hand
8. Willing government structure
9. Technical Assistance available for communities

Community Development

1. Large willing, able, and trainable population
2. Training institutions somewhat accessible
3. Unique architectural designs
4. Government and community services accessible
5. Government and community leaders can't hide
6. Services have a face associated with them

Aging

1. Large Volunteer Base
2. Health Fairs
3. Good Food/Nutrition Center

4. Access to telemedicine
5. Expanding health care programs
6. Alternative medicine available (acupuncture, curanderas)

GIS/Technology

1. Some mapping services available

La Salle County Assessment

History:

La Salle County straddles the South Texas Brush Country and the Texas Winter Garden agricultural region. Once occupied by Coahuiltecan and then migrating Apaches, and named after French explorer Robert Cavalier Sieur de la Salle, the County became a military outpost in the 1850s. In 1858 the County was created from Bexar County. The 1870s saw a rise of ranching, and in 1880 it was formally organized. Other towns in the county include Artesia Wells, Encinal and Flowerton.

Located halfway between Laredo and San Antonio, and Del Rio and Corpus Christi, Cotulla, largest city in La Salle County is a city whose citizens are working toward a community that is economically and socially diversified. The county seat of La Salle, Cotulla was named after Joseph Cotulla, a Polish immigrant who established the townsite upon learning that the International Great Northern Railroad was extending its line through the county. It's economy has been based largely on cattle and sheep ranching, though oil discovered in the 1950s helped boost the economy. Its main business is agriculture growing corn, grain sorghums, peanuts and watermelons, and cattle production. Both Lyndon B. Johnson and O. Henry once called Cotulla home.

Problems and Baseline Conditions:

The residents of La Salle are concerned for the most part about the prevalence of drugs both in their schools and in their community. Most of their criminal justice concerns center around the youth: juvenile programs, alternative education services, reductions in truancy rates, prosecutions of juvenile offenders, juvenile detention facilities, dropout prevention programs, reductions in gang activities, and drugs in schools. They voiced the need also for better treatment of domestic crime issues, and the need for better traffic lights, especially in the school zones.

La Salle County Prioritized Problems:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Address drug problem in schools and in the community

2. Need to address gang activity within the community
3. Need for teenage pregnancy prevention and education services
4. Need for alternative youth programs
5. Need for substance abuse treatment services
6. Need for education and coordination among local resources within the community
7. Need for a domestic violence shelter & counseling services
8. Need for family counseling & family budgeting services
9. Need for sexual abuse counseling services
10. Need for school dropout prevention programs for youth
11. Need after school care programs
12. Need juvenile detention facilities
13. Need efficient juvenile justice system
14. Need more law enforcement/interdiction
15. Need for mental health services for the population that does not meet MHMR criteria
16. Need parental involvement
17. Need parenting skills and proper guidance for youth
18. Need prosecution of juvenile offenders
19. Need vocational education for students that don't attend college
20. Need for reduction in school Truancy Rate
21. Need for alternative education services
22. Need for more strict enforcement of the law
23. Need more funds for juvenile programs
24. Need to build on community centers/services
25. Inpatient facility
26. Awareness/Education on existing resources
27. Need resources for sex offenders (youth)
28. Funds for Pre & post adjudication
29. Awareness of the process
30. Foster care needed

Public Safety

1. High domestic issues crime rate
2. Need for traffic lights
3. Need for proper school zone traffic devices
4. Officers need more support/community involvement
5. Need more funds for personnel and infrastructure
6. Need better paying law enforcement jobs
7. Need sufficient training of law enforcement
8. Need dedication from law enforcement
9. Not enough pedestrian walkways
10. Lack of emergency shelters
11. Lack of regulatory authority to address environmental problems
12. Need equipment for law enforcement officers
13. Need for a neighborhood watch program
14. Need for crime stoppers program

911

1. Dispatcher training
2. Need for increased fire and EMS funding
3. Enhanced training for emergency personnel
4. Need for upgraded equipment and vehicles
5. Ability to track 911 cellular phone calls (so 911 can make a call back)
6. Ability to map all houses in an area
7. Regional training center to keep from sending out dispatchers
8. Track calls by a physical map where a cellular caller is as he moves down the highway

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Need for upgrading water distribution systems
2. Address water use by others upstream/downstream
3. Need regional unity
4. Need services and technical assistance from state agencies
5. Need recognition and public awareness (water resources)
6. Drought conditions affect water balance in agriculture vs. municipal uses
7. Need source of good, clean, safe drinking water
8. Need adequate amounts of water
9. Need more accurate water usage reportage
10. Improve water conservation awareness

Solid Waste

1. Lack of Regional Unity – Beyond the Boundaries of the COG
2. Take a Position on Regional Solid Waste
 - a. Cost
 - b. Location
3. Educate the Community
4. Address cleanliness; too much trash/dumping
5. Solid waste management problems
6. Solid waste problems due to federal and state rules
7. Need community awareness & support of recycling programs
8. Need vision
9. Address disposal of old tires
10. Increase knowledge about environmental management
11. Address growing populations and abuse of the environment
12. Need for systematic street cleaning
13. Increase access to landfill

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Need for MPO/RPO
2. Need for Financial Expertise
3. Improve coordination between federal/state and local transportation needs
4. Increase share of state/federal funds for transportation needs
5. Need public transportation
6. Need connectivity/technology – broadband for community
7. Need infrastructure-domestic water resources, water & sewer facilities
8. Need expertise in planning and development
9. Need local regulatory authority
10. Address presence of colonias
11. Improve street conditions

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Need structured approach to attract economic development
2. Need good jobs/ job opportunities
3. Need incentive programs
4. Need to identify key industries
5. Need more retail competition
6. Address excessive economic dependence on government
7. Need economic diversity
8. Address decline in downtown areas/business districts
9. Large barter system
10. Large underground economy
11. Need capital investment in housing
12. Need affordable housing
13. Increase supply of local contractors
14. Need regional strategies for job creation/economic development
15. Need understanding between general population and leaders
16. Develop tourism opportunities
17. Increase regional profile
18. Mom & Pops v Corp businesses
19. Need passenger railroad service access into and out of town
20. Address resistance to economic development
21. Need for increased promotion of agriculture and wildlife related commodities
22. Need customer oriented management in local businesses

Community & Human Development

1. Need cultural enrichment and opportunities

2. Address “Brain drain” and other out-migration
3. High poverty limits access to technology & economic opportunity
4. Increase level of citizen participation
5. Need for awareness efforts in economic development
6. Address “historical hangover” on racial problems
7. Need gender equity
8. Address declining tax base
9. Need increased beautification efforts
10. Need for educated/skilled workforce, provide more opportunities for continued education
11. Increase pool of qualified workers
12. Need professional leadership
13. Need implementation
14. Politics play a large role in setting goals/hinders participation of qualified people.

Aging

1. Address high insurance and prescription medication costs
2. Need for alternative living quarters
3. Need adequate elderly housing
4. Need recreational activities for elderly
5. Need for added funding for nutrition services
6. Increased transportation services
7. Need for adult day care
8. Need for nursing home/long-term care facility

GIS/Technology

1. Need for local technical assistance
2. Need for inventory of water systems

La Salle County Prioritized Opportunities:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Low Drop out rate
2. Little or no truancy
3. Some youth leadership programs
4. Previous strategic planning
5. Good place to raise kids and grow-up
6. Small community environment
7. Know your neighbors

8. Strong religious participation
9. Network of extended families
10. Community has keen interest in drug abuse problem
11. Some counseling for at-risk youth
12. Alcoholics Anonymous programs
13. DARE programs
14. Good linking of existing resources

Public Safety

1. Strong local law enforcement presence
2. Federal/state law enforcement presence
3. Neighborhood associations
4. Violent crime rate below state average
5. Presence of crime prevention partners
6. Public support for community crime prevention

911 Planning

1. Systems in place

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Adequate water/wastewater
2. Mild winters, long growing seasons

Solid Waste

1. Presence of some public awareness

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Existing local plans for transportation
2. Southwest Texas Network Consortium- access to technology
3. Infrastructure for distance learning
4. Presence of Community Technology Center

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Enterprise Community Designation
2. Reasonably priced land and building sites
3. Rich soil and long growing seasons

4. Airports unimpeded by development
5. Wide open spaces, communities are not land-locked; plenty of land for development
6. Diverse, bi-cultural communities
7. Tradition of lending a helping hand
8. Willing government structure
9. Technical Assistance available for communities

Community Development

1. Labor Programs Available
2. Large willing, able and trainable population
3. Training institutions somewhat accessible
4. Unique architectural designs
5. Government and community services accessible
6. Government and community leaders can't hide
7. Services have a face associated with them
8. Opportunity to seek public office

Aging

1. Nutrition Center
2. Access to telemedicine
3. Expanding health care programs
4. Alternative medicine available (acupuncture, curanderas)

GIS/Technology

1. Community Awareness
2. Some mapping services available

Maverick County Assessment

History:

Maverick County was traversed by many early Spanish expeditions including: Fernando Azque in 1665, Bosque-Larios in 1675, and the Alonso de Leon Expedition in 1688. The Old San Antonio Road, an important 16th century trade route, crossed the Rio Grande just south of present day Eagle Pass at the San Juan Bautista Mission. This was the first in the chain of Spanish missions established in Texas. Anglo settlement began in 1849 with the establishment of the U.S. Army Fort Duncan. The community of Eagle Pass was founded in 1850 under the protection of the Fort. Maverick County was organized in 1871 and named for the colorful Texas Pioneer, Samuel Maverick. Eagle Pass is the county seat for Maverick County. Other towns include Quemado, Normandy, and El Indio. Major business include agriculture growing oats, sorghums, wheat, pecans and vegetables, oil production operations, and cattle feedlots.

Problems and Baseline Conditions:

Although the spirit of Eagle Pass is strong, the citizens face an array of problems in their daily lives. Citizens spoke of their community's lack of support for programs and projects. Part of this problem, they said, was due to political gridlock that ultimately leads to their need for inter-agency cooperation, leadership, and vision. In addressing Eagle Pass's public safety problems, citizens stated first and foremost the need for strict enforcement of existing ordinances and laws. They mentioned that this problem was in part due to the need for better management and training of law enforcement personnel. They felt that funding in the border region should be based on daily populations rather than fixed populations, that cooperation among law enforcement entities was important, and that the issue of drug problems needed to be discussed openly and honestly.

Three high school aged boys, seated in the front row of a recent Town Hall meeting, talked about their perspectives on the issue of public safety. According to them, Eagle Pass is in dire need of after school/gang prevention programs. One specifically addressed the issue: "We (youth) have nothing to do after school. So it's easy for us to do something that will get us in trouble." Others agreed that police officers need more community support and involvement, especially from the kids and parents.

As far as solid waste management is concerned, the consensus was that trash dumping and lack of cleanliness were the greatest problems. There is also a lack of funding and few efforts to remedy this and other problems, such as downtown decay and the need for better lighting and pedestrian walkways. Of greater importance was the concern about the traffic congestion due to the trains. Citizens also understand their need for attracting and keeping key industries. They realize that this is critical for maintaining economic growth that in turn will benefit most other issue areas. The problems with families and youth development are centered on poverty, drugs, and lack of prevention/awareness. The young boys again stated the need for recreation that would help prevent many problems, most of which are drug and alcohol related.

Other issues that came up in the strategic planning meeting concerned water in the county, particularly the source of water and alternatives to the only source thus far utilized: the Rio Grande River. They felt that cooperation among the region was necessary to any resolutions to its growing concerns over the amounts of water available and the condition of the water. They discussed alternatives such as bringing water in from other locations and collection of rainwater. Business development was also a concern among the residents, though Maverick County is experiencing somewhat of an economic boom at present. They still felt that an economic development sales tax would add incentive to any companies looking at their area, that they should support the retention and expansion of local businesses, and that they needed an identity by which to make themselves more of a prospect for future development.

Maverick County Prioritized Problems:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Need to educate public and parents
2. Parental Responsibility and Accountability
3. Need Drug Deterrence Program
4. Address Denial on Drug Issues
5. Need In house Treatment Facility
6. Need Legislative Changes
7. Need Fire Arm Registration

8. Need Harsh Punishment/Gun Law
9. Address Community Apathy
10. Need for Federal Court Locally
11. Need Coalition to Enforce Law
12. Address Drug problems in schools and in the community
13. Need to address gang activity within the community
14. Need for teenage pregnancy prevention and education services
15. Need for drug prevention and education programs
16. Need for alternative youth programs
17. Need for substance abuse treatment services
18. Need for school dropout prevention programs for youth
19. Need after school programs
20. Need for education and coordination among local resources within the community
21. Need for a domestic violence shelter & counseling services
22. Need for family counseling & family budgeting services
23. Need for sexual abuse counseling services
24. Need for emergency housing
25. Need for public transportation services
26. Need juvenile detention facilities
27. Need efficient juvenile justice system
28. Need more law enforcement/interdiction
29. Need bi-national cooperation
30. Need for mental health services for the population that does not meet MHMR criteria
31. Continued problems of border area as drug trafficking corridor
32. Need parental involvement & proper guidance for youth

Public Safety

1. Need Border Funding based on daily populations
 - a. Actual Numbers
 - b. Seasonal Numbers
2. Need Better Coordination in Law Enforcement Efforts
3. Officers need more support/community involvement
4. Need more funds for personnel and infrastructure
5. Need better paying law enforcement jobs
6. Need better management
7. Need sufficient training of law enforcement
8. Need dedication from law enforcement
9. Need enforcement in all areas
10. Need more pedestrian walkways
11. Need emergency shelters
12. Address high crime rate
13. Need Federal and State awareness of border safety issues
14. Need regulatory authority to address environmental problems

1. Mapping- Identify Fiscal Location
2. Need staff
3. Need dispatcher training/funding
4. Keep/Maintain technology equipment
5. Need to Set Up Local 911 Department
6. Need for increased fire and EMS funding
7. Enhanced training for emergency personnel
8. Need for upgraded equipment and vehicles
9. Ability to track 911 cellular phone calls (so 911 can make a call back)
10. Ability to map all houses in an area
11. Regional training center to keep from sending out dispatchers
12. Track calls by a physical map where a cellular caller is as he moves down the highway

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Need Proper Amount of Water
2. Need to Find Additional Sources of water
3. Need Good Cooperative Support in Region
4. Need Public Awareness/Education
5. Need Means to Capture Rain Water
6. Need water distribution systems
7. Address water use by others upstream/downstream
8. Need regional unity
9. Need services and technical assistance from state agencies
10. Address Cross border disparity between Mexico and U.S. with realistic interdependence
11. Drought conditions affect water balance in agriculture vs. municipal uses

Solid Waste

1. Need of Regional Land Fill Site
2. Need Public Education
3. Need Funding for Enforcement
4. Enhance Recycling Program
5. Need Up front information
6. Cost for Landfill
 - a. Location
 - b. Type of Trash
 - c. Community Acceptance/Regional
 - d. Explore County Tax
7. Address lack of cleanliness; too much trash/dumping
8. Solid waste management problems
9. Solid waste problems due to federal and state rules
10. Need regional unity

11. Address pollution from Mexico
12. Need community support
13. Need vision
14. Address problem of disposal of old tires
15. Need for research on environmental problems in border areas
16. Need knowledge about environmental management
17. Address problem of growing populations and abuse of the environment

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Need of Overpasses
 - a. 3 Additional
 - b. Speed Process
2. Need street Development off the Loop
3. Need for MPO
4. Need better highway system
5. Address poor federal/state coordination with local transportation needs
6. Need larger share of state/federal funds for transportation needs
7. Need public transportation
8. Need connectivity/technology – broadband for community
9. Need infrastructure-domestic water resources, water & sewer facilities
10. Need expertise in planning and development
11. Need local regulatory authority
12. Traffic congestion due to trains
13. Address presence of colonias

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Need economic Development Sales Tax
2. Need structured approach to attract economic development
3. Address declining AG Industry
4. Need changed Mind Set
 - a. Seasonal Workers
5. Need quality of life improvement
 - a. Opportunities
 - b. Entertainment/Recreational
6. Identify Area (on the map)
7. Need good jobs
8. Need incentive programs
9. Need to identify key industries
10. Need more retail competition
11. Need to reduce economic dependence on government
12. Need economic diversity
13. Address declining downtown areas/business districts
14. Address high unemployment

15. Problem of large barter system
16. Problem of large underground economy
17. Need capital investment in housing
18. Need affordable housing
19. Need larger supply of local contractors
20. Need regional strategies for job creation/economic development
21. Need understanding between general population and leaders
22. Need tourism opportunities
23. Raise regional profile
24. Mom & Pops vs. Corp businesses
25. Need for optimizing bridge/border port

Community & Human Development

26. Need for Beautification Program Enhanced
 - a. Chamber of Commerce
27. Lack of cultural enrichment and opportunities
28. Address “brain drain” and other out-migration
29. High poverty limits access to technology & economic opportunity
30. Need more citizen participation
31. Need for awareness efforts in economic development
32. “Historical hangover” on racial problems
33. Need gender equity
34. Need convention facilities
35. Need for educated/skilled workforce
36. Need increased pool of qualified workers
37. Need access to technology
38. Need professional leadership
39. Need implementation
40. Politics play a large role in setting goals/hinders participation of qualified people.
41. Provide more opportunities for continued education

Aging

42. Need Good Nursing Home
 - a. Ombudsman Program/Coordinator
43. Need Awareness of Services Available
44. Need Legal Awareness
45. Need Fair/Inclusive Services
46. Need for more Home Care Funds
 - a. Hispanic Community
47. Need to develop Media Connective Committee
48. Need funding for increase in aging population
49. Need to localize media contact
 - a. Personalize
 - b. Follow up

50. Address high poverty
51. Need for respite care services
52. Address high insurance costs and prescription medication
53. Need for alternative living quarters
54. Need adequate elderly housing
55. Need recreational activities for elderly
56. Need for added funding for nutrition services
57. Need increased transportation services
58. Need for adult day care

GIS/Technology

59. Need for local technical assistance
60. Need for basic mapping services
61. Need for local infrastructure inventory of water works and street lights
62. Increase potential for enhance city planning, depiction of demographic info, re-districting, crime reporting, etc.

Maverick County Opportunities:

Eagle Pass can boast of a number of opportunities and assets. The community can see improvements in regional planning efforts. Good leadership has also contributed to the efficiency and professionalism of medical and police response units. Trade with Mexico was identified as the greatest opportunity under the sustainable development issue area. Supportive and closely-knit families and education systems play a critical role in unifying the regional efforts towards betterment. Eagle Pass has one of the largest youth populations in the region and residents are ready to capitalize on this asset. They identified the eagerness of young people as one of their greatest assets.

The local educational system is sound and it has contributed to unification of the community (i.e., parents, teachers, and students). There is also a high demand for affordable housing. The low interest rates and taxes and the availability of federal assistance have been identified as opportunities for the many seeking affordable housing. In order to combat the local drug problems, the community is seeking additional programs to facilitate these efforts.

Local health care facilities and services are currently prospering. The city is growing into a regional level-2 trauma center and plans to make current services more accessible.

Maverick County Prioritized Opportunities:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

63. Summer Youth Programs
64. Strong Cultural ties
65. Previous strategic planning
66. Good place to raise kids and grow-up
67. Small community environment
68. Know your neighbors
69. Strong religious participation
70. Network of extended families
71. Youth leadership programs
72. Community has keen interest in drug abuse problem
73. Some counseling for at-risk youth
74. Alcoholics Anonymous programs
75. DARE programs
76. Good linking of existing resources

Public Safety

77. Network BTW all Local Law Enforcement
78. Strong local law enforcement presence
79. Federal/state law enforcement presence
80. Neighborhood associations
81. Two judicial districts
82. Violent crime rate below state average
83. Presence of crime prevention partners
84. Public support for community crime prevention

911 Planning

1. Systems in Place

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

85. Adequate water/wastewater
86. Water available for recreational purposes
87. Mild winters, two growing seasons

Solid Waste

88. Environmental organizations on both sides of border

89. Presence of some public awareness

Infrastructure/Transportation

90. Existing local plans

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

91. Abundance of Hotels/Motels
92. Supply Maquiladoras with equipment - value added
93. NAFTA/Border location a plus
94. Reasonably priced land and building sites
95. Rich soil and long growing seasons
96. Extensive network of ties in Mexico border communities
97. Airports are unimpeded by development
98. Maquiladora presence in Ciudad Acuna and Peidras Negras
99. Wide open spaces
100. Communities are not land-locked; plenty of land for development
101. Winter Texans
102. Diverse, bi-cultural communities
103. Tradition of lending a helping hand
104. Willing government structure
105. Technical Assistance available for communities

Community Development

106. Large willing, able and trainable population
107. Training institutions
108. Unique architectural designs
109. Government and community services accessible
110. Government and community leaders can't hide
111. Services have a face associated with them
112. Opportunity to seek public office

Aging

113. More Skilled/Professional Population
114. Nutrition Center Available
115. Elderly Housing (high rise)
116. Access to specialized medicine
117. Access to telemedicine
118. Expanding health care programs
119. Available hospitals
120. Alternative medicine available (acupuncture, curanderas)

GIS/Technology

121. Some mapping services available
122. Southwest Texas Network Consortium
123. Infrastructure for distance learning

Real County Assessment

History:

Leakey is one of the most scenic and picturesque areas of the rugged Edwards Plateau of which Real County is part. Elevations range from 1,500 to 2,400 feet with deep canyons and tree covered hills within this area rich in history. Originally part of Bandera County, what was to become Real County was originally named for John L. Leakey, the first permanent inhabitant in the region after the disappearance of Comanche, Apache and Lipan-Apache tribes who had lived here long before.

The Spanish settled Real County in 1762 when the Franciscan Mission of San Lorenzo de la Santa Cruz was founded to christianize the Comanche and Lipan Apache Indians. The mission became U.S. Army Camp Wood and later the community of Camp Wood. In 1847 Anglo-American settlers established a colony which is now known as Leakey. In 1883 Leakey was chosen as the county seat of Real County, a town was laid out, and a courthouse was built which housed a school. By 1890, the population had risen to 150. Three years later Leakey became the county seat for Real County.

Real County was one of the last Texas counties to be created. It was formed in 1913 and named for Julius Real, a local legislator and rancher. The county's first Anglo settlers were ranchers. Sheep and goat ranching and tourism comprise the major portion of the economy. Real is a leading wool and mohair producing county. The county offers visitors many different activities including hunting, fishing, biking, swimming, and hiking, among others, and is close to Garner State Park to the south that is the most visited park in the State. Unfortunately, area tourism is not constant enough to support the economy of the County.

Problems and Baseline Conditions:

Real County residents, though not numerous at the meeting, showed great concern for the supply of water in their area, particularly discussions on water rights, brush control in the recharge zone, the use of small dams to increase recharge, a water enhancement study and a continuation of the weather modification program to increase rainfall in their county.

As pertains to solid waste, the residents discussed enforcement of illegal dumping laws, especially in the Nueces River and surrounding areas. They also want the issue of trash hauling costs addressed, along with recycling programs and alternative disposal methods such as burning their trash. For Real County which has to haul its trash to Uvalde, the costs of disposal are a real issue and a concern.

Real County Prioritized Problems:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Address drug problem
 - a. Community
 - b. Children/Students
2. Need Stricter Enforcement of Probation
3. Need After-School Programs
 - a. Midnight Basketball
4. Football Games-After Activity
5. 4-H and FFA Programs
 - a. Parental Involvement
6. Low Dropout Rate

Public Safety

7. Need Funding for Personnel
8. Need Training for Law Enforcement
9. Need Juvenile Officer
10. Need Inter local Agreement between city and county
11. Need Access to domestic violence services
12. Need Uvalde and Real Counties Cooperation on Youth Detention
13. Need jail
14. Low Crime Rate
15. Need DARE Programs
16. Need to enhance Emergency Medical Services

911

17. Need ability to track 911 cellular phone calls (so 911 can make a call back)
18. Need ability to map all houses in an area
19. Need regional tracking center to keep from sending out dispatchers
20. Need to track calls by a physical map where a cellular caller is as he moves down the highway

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

21. Need water Enhancement through Brush Control (cedar)
22. Need management Plan for Brush Control
23. Need Awareness
24. Areas still need Water Systems
25. Need Educational Programs
 - a. Water Rights/Private Property
 - b. Water Conservation
26. Need small dams for recharge
27. Need water enhancement study (through Brush Control)
28. Need continued weather modification program

Solid Waste

29. Address Trash Dumping (illegal)
 - a. Nueces River
30. Need More State Collaborative Efforts
31. Need Public Awareness
 - a. Environment
32. Need recycling program
33. Need Enforcement of Litter Laws
34. Need Proper Disposal Areas
35. Problem of Hauling Solid Waste Long Distance
36. Need Five Year Strategic Plan
37. Need Alternate Disposal Methods (inciner.)
38. Need Sewerage Treatment (smaller community)
39. Need More Information

Infrastructure/Transportation

40. Need Public Internet Access
41. Need a Four Lane Highway-US 83
42. Need to Add Highway 83 to Trunk System
43. Need for RPO
 - a. Planning and Development
44. Need Public Transportation
45. Need Traffic Studies

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

None

Community & Human Development

46. Need Strategic Plan for Long Term Economic Development
 - a. Tourism
47. Need to Explore “Wet” County (Alcohol)
48. Need Reservoir between Campwood to Leakey
49. Need Cleaner Communities
50. Need Zoning Laws
51. Need Training of Local/County Public Officials
 - a. Zoning Ordinances
52. Need Tourism Diversification

Aging

53. Need Pharmacy
 - a. Access to Medication
54. Need Assisted Living Facilities
55. Need Home Health Care

GIS/Technology

None

Real County Prioritized Opportunities:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

None

Public Safety

None

911 Planning

None

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Good Water
2. Edwards/Real Water Plan

Solid Waste

1. Committee
2. Sewerage Treatment Plant (presence of) in Leakey

Infrastructure/Transportation

56. Access to Internet
 - a. School/Library
57. Technology Plan
58. SWTNET
59. 56K Access (phone lines)

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Lodging-Campsites

Community Development

1. Educated Workforce
2. Lack of Jobs
3. No Available Workforce
4. Lack of Housing (any)
5. Increase Community Participation in Leadership

Aging

1. Skilled Population
2. Nutrition Center
3. Commodities Program
4. Ombudsman Program

GIS/Technology

None

Uvalde County Assessment

History:

Uvalde was settled in 1853. The town plan with four unique central plazas endures today. The early economy was built around agriculture. The location near Fort Inge Cavalry Post and the road connecting San Antonio with the Western United States enabled the community to prosper. An indicator of the commercial and cultural growth of the city was the building of the Grand Opera House in the 1890s.

Uvalde County has a colorful past and its people have left their mark on history. Uvalde's name originated from a mispronunciation of the name of the Spanish General Juan de Ugalde who led the defense against the Coahuila Apaches. Other notable citizens include Pat Garrett, King Fisher, Vice-President John Nance Garner, Dale Evans, Dana Andrews, Johnny Rodriguez, H.B Zachry, Joe Newton, Harvey Ben Kinchlow and former Governor Dolph Briscoe.

Uvalde, Texas is the quintessential small town at the crossroads of two of the longest highways in the United States. US 83 connects the Mexican border to the Canadian border and US90 connects the East Coast to the West. It is a town inhabited by 15,000 people who build rounds around towering oak and pecan trees. The lawns on the main street are so well kept they resemble vivid green Astroturf prime for Friday night high school football.

Yet, drive a few block behind the nice home and antique shops on Main Street and another side of Uvalde is revealed. Deteriorating houses; abandoned cars; alleys and streets littered with trash and broken glass; children walking to school; and the working poor rushing to work as a new dawn breaks.

Problems and Baseline Conditions:

Uvalde has produced its share of doctors, accountants, and other professionals, but these professionals have left their hometown, and those that remain are too busy with the dictates of business commitments to devote sufficient time to serving as good role models. Relations between persons of differing ethnic origins in the Winter Garden area have not been clearly defined, but rather they are like a heated family argument that while settled remain a bitter memory. The scar remains.

Big institutions dominate a large part of the economic life of Uvalde. Small businesses have difficulties obtaining capital.

Seniors are not shy with their opinions, and Uvalde seniors are a force. They were quick to mention the need for services for all, not just the few who could afford them. Seniors were tired of others who take advantage of them because of their inability to read or because of hearing problems or because they did not understand English. They simply wanted to be treated with respect and to live in a decent home. Seniors in Uvalde wanted to feel as if they were not being brushed aside, but could contribute their part to their family.

Uvalde County Prioritized Problems:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Need Better Treatment of Illegal Aliens
2. Need DETOX Facility
3. Need More Experienced County Court Judges at Law
4. Address Culture of Undefined (unknown) Expectations
5. Need Alternatives in Criminal Justice System
6. Need Moral Guidance/Knowledge
7. Address Substance Abuse in General
8. Need Drug Abuse Treatment Program
 - a. Below Convicted Level
9. Need to Address Youth Detention/Regional Local
10. Need to Address Ranchers treatment of illegal immigrants

Public Safety

11. Need Equality in Enforcement
 - a. Need Sensitivity Training
12. Need Funds for EMS/Fire
13. Need Training
 - a. Entry Level vs. Advanced
14. Need Emergency response
15. Need to Address Hazardous Materials Transportation
 - a. Capacity to Respond
16. Need More Sidewalks
17. Need to Increase Retention

18. Possibility of SWTJC doing Training for Dispatchers
19. Possibility for Database to Track 911 information
 - a. In terms of specific crime
 - b. Historical Data
 - c. Funding and Training

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

20. Need Awareness of Rural vs. Urban Water Rights
21. Need Regional Approach to Defining Water Problems
22. Need Taxation
 - a. Appraisal Issues (Property)
23. Need Public Awareness of Resources
24. Municipal vs. Agriculture Uses
25. Weather Modification Issue

Solid Waste

26. Need More Local Government Awareness
27. Need Recycling/Alternatives
28. Need to Consider Environmental Impact
29. Need Responsible Application of Federal Authority
30. Increased Off Site Dumping
31. Inconsistent Regulation of Burning
32. Need community support, education, and awareness
33. Solid waste management problems
34. Solid waste problems due to federal and state rules
35. Need regional unity
36. Problem of Disposal of old tires

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Need NAFTA Impact Mitigation
2. Trucking
3. Bypassing Local Access
4. Need Maintenance of Farm to Market Roads
5. Need Maintenance of Local Roads
6. Need to Prioritize Local Needs
7. Need MPO/RPO
8. Need to Put highway 83 on State Plan (Trunk System)
9. Need to Join Existing Effort for regional MPO
10. Potential Regulatory Infrastructure
11. Recognize regional access of cable networks
12. Regional production facility
13. Utilize SWTJC

14. Transport facility for regional vision and knowledge
15. Need to Create a regional coalition for more study
16. Need more input/notice on planning from public
17. Involvement with city/county officials needs improvement
18. Need more funds for planning, disproportionately small share of state/federal funds for transportation needs
19. Need local regulatory authority
20. Need better federal/state coordination with local transportation needs
21. Need public transportation
22. Need connectivity/technology – broadband for community
23. Need infrastructure-domestic water resources, water & sewer facilities
24. Need expertise in planning and development
25. Need Local Access TV/Regional (Via Cable)
37. Need Regional Production Facility
 - a. Utilize SWTJC
27. Need Transport Facility
28. Need Regional Vision and Knowledge
29. Need More Access to DSL
30. Need Regional Coalition to Study these Issues
31. Need More Small Radio Opportunities

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Need More Sustainability
2. Need Small Business Support
3. Address Workers Compensation Issue
4. Too many low wage jobs
5. Need good corporate citizens that pay good wages and invest in Uvalde
6. Need secondary supplier market
7. Low skilled workforce/limited employment opportunities
8. Low Availability (credit)
9. Need available housing (middle range; senior citizens; homeless)
10. Need coordination and planning
11. Need structured approach to attract economic development
12. Need incentive programs
13. Need more retail
14. Excessive economic dependence on government grants
15. Need economic diversity
16. Declining downtown areas/business districts
17. Need regional strategies for job creation/economic development
18. Need understanding between general population and leaders
19. Need to develop tourism opportunities
20. Low regional profile

Community & Human Development

1. Need More flexibility in matching/leveraging funds
2. Need park improvements (park surveillance)
3. Need cultural enrichment and opportunities
4. Address “brain drain” and other out-migration
5. High poverty limits access to technology & economic opportunity
6. Need higher levels of citizen participation
7. Need for awareness efforts in economic development
8. Address “historical hangover” on racial problems
9. Need gender equity
10. Declining tax base
11. Need convention facilities
12. Need beautification efforts
13. Need for educated/skilled workforce
14. Need professional leadership
15. Need implementation
16. Politics play a large role in setting goals/hinders participation of qualified people.

Aging

1. Cost Issues (Medicare) (MAACs)
2. Federal Cost Reimbursement Issues
3. Need Specialty Care
4. Need Geriatric Care
5. Need Education/Prevention of Diabetes
6. Need to Address High Cost of Medical Supplies
7. Need Health Awareness
8. Need Elderly Health Fair to increase awareness
9. Need Funding for Nutrition Programs
10. Need Access to (and coordination among providers) primary care
11. High turnover among health care personnel
12. Elderly lacking services
13. Elderly are living in substandard housing or are homeless
14. Economic division exists among the elderly
15. High Poverty
16. Need increased transportation services
17. Need for Adult day care
18. Need for respite care services
19. Need More volunteers for ombudsman program
20. Need “Elderly Fair” to create awareness of all available services

GIS/Technology

1. Need for local technical assistance
2. Need for basic mapping services

Uvalde County Opportunities:

Admitting there is a problem is the first step toward solving it. Uvalde residents know that the Main Street prosperity does not reach down its side streets and into its back neighborhoods. Uvalde residents know their city has a problem and is prepared to change.

A major opportunity for sustainable community development in Uvalde is its natural beauty. Clear streams or sloughs flow into the Leona River among the towering oaks making Uvalde a great escape destination from the harried pace of life just 90 minutes away in San Antonio. Uvalde offers visitors and residents alike the recreational facilities at the Leona River including a large playground, plenty of picnic tables, a tranquil view of the river, and a nine-hole golf course.

Location, location, location. Literally at the crossroads of America, Uvalde has the real potential to be a national distribution point for goods and products. U.S. highway 83 runs from the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas and Fortune 500 manufacturing plants in northern Mexico to North Dakota and the Canadian border. U.S. 90 runs from the nation's busiest naval ports in southern California to growing populations in northern Florida and the deep South.

Uvalde is planning for a sustainable economic future. Several public entities have competed or are completing comprehensive plans in partnership with other local entities.

Uvalde County Prioritized Opportunities:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Strong family roots and good morals
2. Educational opportunities for all
3. Strong religious involvement
4. Extended, supportive families
5. Affordable and accessible support programs and activities (eg, Boys & Girls Club)
6. Good job training for kids
7. Good schools
8. Community getting more involved (city & county officials)
9. Previous Strategic Planning

10. Good place to raise kids and grow-up
11. Small Community environment
12. Youth leadership programs
13. Counseling for at-risk youths
14. Good linking to existing resources

Public Safety

1. P.A.L. Program
2. Good/friendly/professional law enforcement officials in city and county
3. Good prevention programs (eg. DARE, TRIAD, Boys & Girls Club)
4. Quick Response rate by police
5. Good streets help with safety issues
6. City beautification plan is working on removing abandoned buildings and cars
7. Volunteer fire department with basic emergency training
8. Public support for community crime prevention

911 Planning

1. Consolidated 911 plan for the MRG Region
2. Systems in Place

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Adequate water/wastewater
2. Mild winters, long growing seasons

Solid Waste

1. Regional Landfill
2. Continue Regional Studies
3. Presence of some public awareness

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Uvalde CISD has facilities plan
2. Christian based plan for housing
3. Southwest Texas Network Consortium-access to technology
4. Infrastructure for distance learning

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Location good for business
2. Neighborhood housing services in the city and county
3. Reasonably priced land and building sites
4. Willing government structure

Community Development

1. Economic Development Plan
2. Capacity to train workforce (schools, college, university)
3. Great awareness of need of change
4. Emphasis on job creation and training
5. Economic Development Plan
6. Abundance of land
7. Government and community leaders and services accessible
8. Large willing, able, and trainable population

Aging

1. Senior Citizen Day
2. Nutrition Center
3. Experienced agencies (e.g., department of Aging)
4. Grant to develop elderly housing
5. Expanding health care programs
6. Alternative medicine available – Holistic Medicine
7. Elderly Play Day

GIS/Technology

1. Some mapping services available

Val Verde County Assessment

History:

Early civilization in Val Verde County has been documented by more than 400 archeological sites and cave pictographs dating from 4,000 B.C. Cabeza de Vaca traversed the county in 1535 in route from Galveston Island to Mexico City. He was followed by numerous Spanish expeditions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Spanish missionaries established the San Felipe Del Rio (St. Phillip of the River) mission in 1808 on the bank of San Felipe Springs near present day Del Rio. Five men with a vision of an irrigation canal system to serve a city founded the city primarily as a farming community, due to the proximity of the San Felipe Springs and the vast amounts of surrounding fertile land. From 1871 to 1874 the town grew slowly, but with the threat of Indian and bandit raids, Camp Del Rio was established in 1876 as an outpost of Fort Clark. The first post office was established in 1883 and the name of the town became Del Rio.

By 1885 the raids had ended and so the camp was abandoned, but Del Rio became a boomtown with the completion of the railroad connection between the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railroad with the Southern Pacific. Italians by way of Mexico grew vineyards and built a winery, Italians from New York built the jail and courthouse and other structures, stockmen established ranches making Del Rio the wool and mohair capital of the world, and in 1885 Val Verde County was created by the state legislature out of portions of Kinney, Pecos and Crockett Counties. Del Rio was elected the county seat and in 1887 the courthouse was built. In that time the population increased to over 2,000.

Other events included the incorporation of the town in 1911, the building of Laughlin Air Force Base in 1942, and the construction of Amistad Dam between 1965 and 1969 in a joint venture between the United States and Mexico to dam three rivers creating one of the largest artificial lakes in the country with 800 miles of shoreline. The County has seen the likes of Judge Roy Bean, has a history going back 10,000 years as evidenced by one of the richest concentrations of aboriginal art in the country, once housed the secret U-2 project during the Cold War, boasts the highest bridge in the State

of Texas rising 273 feet above the bed of the Pecos River, and saw the final link in the southern transcontinental railroad made.

Problems and Baseline Conditions:

Despite this glorious and prosperous past, Del Rio has suffered from the shift within our country away from an agrarian based economy toward one based on consumer goods and manufacturing. The residents of Del Rio have voiced many concerns about their community including the need for youth facilities, elderly services, a local university, solid waste management, and water resource development. Del Rio has a population, according to the 1990 Census, of 38,721. Of those 36 percent live below poverty, the median household income is \$18,042 as compared to \$30,056 for the U.S. households and \$27,016 for the State of Texas. Only 56 percent of the population has graduated from High School, and 12 percent of school-aged children are not in school and not working. Unemployment is at 7 percent. The majority of the population is between the ages of 25 to 44 years old.

Val Verde County Prioritized Problems:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Enhance/Add Sports Facility

Public Safety

1. Need Training School Security
2. Need Neighborhood Association
3. Qualified Law Enforcement Leaving for Federal Jobs

911

1. Need Consolidated Planning
2. Ability to track 911 cellular phone calls (so 911 can make a call back)
3. Ability to map all houses in an area
4. Regional training center to keep from sending out dispatchers
5. Track calls by a physical map where a cellular caller is as he moves down the highway

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Need to Enhance Regional Planning
2. Need to Seek Alternative Water Sources

Solid Waste

1. Need Recycling Program
2. Address Disposal of Batteries
3. Alternative Procedures/Enhance

Infrastructure/Transportation

2. Create an Alternate Loop
 - a. CTE
 - b. SWB
3. Need for MPO/RPO
4. Need to Enhance the Development of International Airport as a part of TX DOT
5. Need Storm Water Management/Drainage
6. Address Increase in Heavy Traffic Trailer Trucks

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Need to Create Tax Incentive Plan
2. Need Hanger/Warehouse Spaces
3. Need Assisted Funding for Construction
4. Need Local Warehousing/Value Added Supplies for Maquiladoras
5. Need Distribution Centers
 - a. Freight
 - b. Finished Goods
6. Need for More Input from Business Sector
7. Need Coordination between Community Business (Leading)
8. Need Education Regarding Agriculture
9. Need to Develop Economic Development Corporation
 - a. Funding
 - b. Sales Tax

Community & Human Development

1. Need Stand Alone four year University
2. Need to Enhance Professional Leadership
3. Need to Promote Beautification Efforts

4. Address Out Migration of Potential Skilled Workforce
5. Create Leadership Program (Adults)
6. Need More Cohesive Leadership (working as one unit)
7. Need for Post-Graduate Education

Aging

1. Need for Assisted Living
2. Need for Respite Care
3. Need Participating Providers with Insurance Carriers
4. Need General Counseling/Support Groups
5. Need to Enhance Existing Hospice Program
6. Need good Nursing Home Ombudsman Program and/or Coordinator
7. Need awareness of services available (legal services, etc.)
8. Added Funded for Home Care, Insurance and Prescription, medical supplies, nutrition services, transportation
9. Address Medicare cost issues – MAACs (Federal Cost Reimbursement)
10. Address the high poverty issue

GIS/Technology

1. Need Flood Management (County)
2. Need Training on GIS Systems
3. Need to Consolidate with other cities, school entities for central station
1. Need to Educate Community Regarding System
2. Need City & County Coordination
3. Need County Appraisal District Coordination

Val Verde Prioritized Opportunities:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Counseling Services
2. Battered Women Shelters/Domestic Violence
3. Victim Assistant Program
4. Sexual Abuse/Assault Counseling Services
5. Citizen Police Academy/Support Group

Public Safety

None

911 Planning

None

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Community Aware of Resources

Solid Waste

1. Availability of Landfill Life
2. Regional Committee

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Increase of Import/Export Traffic

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Del Rio International Airport
2. Local Winery
3. Amistad Dam/Tourism
4. Developed Industrial Park
5. Fast Border Crossing
6. Mexico (Gateway to)
7. Strong Presence of Border Patrol/Customs Federal Agencies/State Agencies
8. New Subdivisions (Housing)
9. Arts/Cultural Activities
10. Increase of Winter Texans
11. Historical and Architect Sites
12. National Rodeo Event (Annual)
13. PBRA
14. 2nd Largest Water Springs in Texas
15. Filming Industry
16. Destination Site for Winter Texans
17. Val Verde Water Bottling
18. Laughlin Air Force Base
19. Educational Institution
20. Largest Pilot Training Base

Community Development

1. Higher Education
 - a. SWTJC
 - b. Tech School
 - c. SRSV (Rio Grande)

d. Park College

Aging

1. Nutrition Center Available
2. Elderly Housing: Roswell Home, Rotary Village
3. Access to specialized medicine
4. Access to telemedicine
5. Expanding health care programs
6. Available hospital
7. Experienced agencies (AAA)
8. Grant to develop elderly housing

GIS/Technology

1. City Map with some County Information Available
2. Utility Maps of the City of Del Rio
3. Digitized Aerials of the City of Del Rio
4. Zoning Maps
5. ETJ Maps
6. Customized Maps

Zavala County Assessment

History:

The area, which is now Zavala County, was first explored in the seventeenth century. It was named for the Texas revolutionary leader Lorenzo De Zavala, former Spanish Governor of Mexico and the first vice-president of the Republic of Texas. The Presidio Road, more commonly referred to as the Old San Antonio Road, traversed the county and was the major eighteenth century transportation route between San Antonio and Monterrey. The county was created in 1848 but was not formally organized until February 25, 1884 with Batesville as its county seat. The S.A.U. & G. Railroad came to Crystal City in 1909, by-passing Batesville, and the county seat was moved to Crystal City in 1928. The only other town in the county is La Pryor.

The County faces a multitude of problems that may often seem insurmountable. What makes its problems unique is the fact that so many of its difficulties are rooted in the region's distinct history. Poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, and racial segregation have existed in the area for the greater part of the century. These chronic problems have had an adverse effect on the entire well being of the community. Among others, the community is struggling to address the problems of inadequate housing, limited health services, declining infrastructure, insufficient elderly and youth activities.

Problems and Baseline Conditions:

When the residents of Zavala County finally got together to enumerate what they felt were the most pressing problems in their community, there was an amazing consensus on which needs must be given priority. Surprisingly enough, the first problem they identified was not a concrete, measurable need like more housing, better streets or a bigger medical clinic, but something intangible and more difficult to define. They agreed that one of Crystal City's biggest hindrances to development are the poor image the area projects. This perception originates from several sources: the region's chronic poverty, its large migrant labor population, and the pervasive need in the area. Poor image is also the result of political and racial conflicts that erupted in the 60s and 70s, the aftereffects from which the town is still recovering.

Concerns voiced by the residents included education and youth development. Again, their primary concern was not quantifiable like better school facilities or a recreation center for the youth. Instead, the residents felt that there was a lack of parental and community support for education and the school system, which manifests itself in the region's very low attainment and graduation rates. In terms of youth development, residents said there needed to be more communication between parents and youth, that the youth needed encouragement to voice their concerns and make an investment in the future of their community.

As to economic development, Zavala residents worry that the county's current infrastructure (sewage, utilities, roads) is inadequate to accommodate future development. They understood that even if a new industry wanted to locate in the region, it would be unable to do so because the county lacks the physical capacity. Their traditional reliance on agriculture and ranching has meant that despite abundant land, and cheap labor, it never developed any extensive manufacturing or industrial base. Dependence on agriculture also meant that small farmers in the region were especially hard hit by mechanization and the trend of consolidating farms into large holdings.

The residents of Zavala County are proud of their ranching and agricultural history, but they also realize that in some ways their reliance on these systems has held back the development of their community. The region's poor economic outlook is further exacerbated by high unemployment and a lack of job opportunities. Lack of economic opportunity, in turn, has resulted in a steady out-migration since the 1960s.

Zavala County Prioritized Problems:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Need to Collaborate/Coordinate Efforts
2. Need Parent/Guardian Accountability
3. Need to Enhance Parent Participation
4. Need Community Accountability
5. Need to Develop Community Coalition
 - a. 5%
6. Need to Continue Efforts towards Gang Deterrence

7. Need DARE Program
8. Address Drug Trafficking (Border)
9. Need Funding-Juvenile Detention
 - a. Local/Regional
 - b. Services
10. Address Truancy (Problems)
11. Need to Expand CJ Program to Junior High Level (Career Investigation)
12. Address increased gang activity within the community
13. Need for teenage pregnancy prevention and education services
14. Need transportation to address youth needs
15. Drug abuse within the community (adult & youth)
16. Need for drug prevention and education programs
17. Need for alternative youth programs
18. Need for education and coordination among local resources within the community
19. Need for a domestic violence shelter and counseling services
20. Need for family counseling & family budgeting services
21. Need for emergency housing
22. Need Boys and Girls Club

Public Safety

1. Need for Additional Training/higher level (EMS)
 - a. Upgrading Skills
 - b. Buy in from Medical Community
2. Need to Coordinate Civil Action
 - a. ER Response Plan
3. Address Problem of Abandoned vehicles and buildings
4. Not enough police fire, emergency personnel
5. Need traffic lights for school area
6. Need enforcement in all areas
7. Need emergency medical service at night
8. Need Fire Safety Equipment
9. Officers need more support/community involvement
10. Need more funds for personnel and infrastructure
11. Need better paying law enforcement jobs
12. Need better management
13. Lack of dedication from law enforcement
14. Need more pedestrian or bike trails, and sidewalks
15. Need emergency shelters
16. Need regulatory authority to address environmental problems

911

1. Need for increased fire and EMS funding
2. Enhanced training for emergency personnel
3. Ability to track 911 cellular phone calls (so 911 can make a call back)

4. Ability to map all houses in an area
5. Regional training center to keep from sending out dispatchers
6. Track calls by a physical map where a cellular caller is as he moves down the highway

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

1. Need to Enforce Protection of the Environment/Water
2. Jurisdiction/Water Rights
3. Identify Nueces River Authority Member
4. Educate Community/Public Awareness
5. Over the Limits on Radium
6. Check Quality of Water
7. Support for Reservoir
 - a. Recreational
 - b. Tourism
8. Need water distribution systems
9. Address local water use by others upstream/downstream
10. Need regional unity
11. Need services and technical assistance from state agencies

Solid Waste

1. Need Public Awareness
2. Look into the Problems due to Federal/State Rules
 - a. Delays
3. Educate Community on Process
 - a. Cost
4. Need Recycling Program
5. Address Problem of Used Tires
6. Need Consolidated Regional Landfill
7. Sewerage, utilities, infrastructure capacity not large enough to handle future development
8. Address problem of cleanliness; too much trash/dumping
9. Solid waste management problems
10. Solid waste problems due to federal and state rules
11. Need regional unity
12. Need community support

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Need to Address Street Problems
 - a. Drainage
 - b. Maintenance
 - c. Repair/Paving

- d. Signage
 - i. Materials
 - ii. Traffic Signs
- 2. State Plan
 - a. Hwy 83
- 3. Need for MPO/RPO
- 4. Poor federal/state coordination with local transportation needs
- 5. Need fairer share of state/federal funds for transportation needs
- 6. Need public transportation
- 7. Need connectivity/technology – broadband for community
- 8. Need expertise in planning and development

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

- 1. Need Affordable Workman's Compensation/Requirements
 - a. Insurance Rates
 - b. For Business Owners
 - c. More flexibility with requirement (MRGDC)
- 2. Need good jobs
- 3. Need Hotels, visitor lodging
- 4. Need affordable housing
- 5. Need homes for middle-income families
- 6. Need commercial loans
- 7. Need structured approach to attract economic development
- 8. Need incentive programs
- 9. Need more retail competition
- 10. Reduce economic dependence on government
- 11. Address high unemployment
- 12. Need capital investment in housing
- 13. Need regional strategies for job creation/economic development

Community & Human Development

- 1. Need for more Skilled Workforce
 - a. Higher Skills
- 2. Need Higher Education
- 3. Need Multi-purpose Center/Funds
 - a. Licensed Personnel
 - b. Team Recreation Center
- 4. Need Hospital
- 5. High poverty limits access to technology & economic opportunity
- 6. Need higher levels of citizen participation
- 7. Need for awareness efforts in economic development
- 8. Need convention facilities
- 9. Need beautification efforts

10. Need professional leadership
11. Need implementation
12. Politics play a large role in setting goals/hinders participation of qualified people.

Aging

1. Need Handicap Access
2. Address High Cost of Medications
3. Need Affordable Hearing Aides
4. Need Additional Funding for Nutrition Center
5. Need Nursing Home
6. Need Ombudsman Program
7. Need to increase the Reimbursement Rate for Adult Day Care
8. Need Awareness of Available Services
9. Address High Poverty
10. Need Increased transportation services
11. Need for respite care services

GIS/Technology

1. Need Geographic Information Systems
2. Need Access to the Internet
3. Need for local technical assistance
4. Need for basic mapping services

Zavala County Opportunities:

While fraught with problems, the Zavala County also possesses a great number of resources with which to meet these challenges and those that lie ahead. First settled in the early 1900s, Crystal City has persevered through droughts, floods, agricultural plagues, fickle economic markets, racial strife, and dramatic political change. In times of difficulty, residents have survived by relying on the things that drew them together: a strong sense of family and community, deep cultural pride, religion, and a determined spirit.

Zavala takes immense pride in its local history and heritage. From the raids of Pancho Villa in the early 1900s to the Japanese internment camp erected during World War II, the county has had a colorful and noteworthy past. Despite conflicts in the past, the county is also proud of its bicultural and bilingual heritage. It celebrates its history with events like the annual Spinach Festival, folkloric dances, and religious observances. Such

events allow families and neighbors to connect and form the strong social networks that have supported them through the rough economic times.

Despite out-migration and a declining population base, the residents of Zavala County remain optimistic about their future. They realize that survival of their communities means focusing on the future and creating a place where their children can stay and lead productive, prosperous lives. To accomplish this, residents suggested ways to develop the resources they already possess. This includes implementing the regional economic development plan drafted by the Middle Rio Grande Development Council for Zavala and the surrounding counties; utilizing the area's land and water resources for diverse economic activities like manufacturing or light industry; promoting the region's tourism potential by capitalizing on its history, natural beauty, and mild climate; expanding the number and variety of courses being offered at the local community college's satellite campus; and expanding the existing programs for at-risk children and teens in the district schools. These are just a few of the ideas which residents offered to tap their community's underutilized resources.

Zavala County Prioritized Opportunities:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

1. Lots of Participation
 - a. Religious Organizations
 - b. Parents in the Schools
 - c. Criminal Justice Program
 - d. F.A.S.T. Program (S.A.)
2. Previous Strategic Planning
3. Good place to raise kids and grow-up
4. Small Community environment
5. Network of extended families
6. Youth leadership programs
7. Counseling for at-risk youths
8. Good linking to existing resources

Public Safety

1. City beatification plan is working on removing abandoned buildings and cars
2. Volunteer fire department with basic emergency training
3. Lack of stop signs is being addressed in the regional plan
4. Neighborhood associations
5. Public support for community crime prevention

911 Planning

1. Consolidate 911 plan for the MRG Region
2. Systems in place

CONSOLIDATING PLANNING

Water

1. Adequate water/wastewater
2. Mild winters, long growing seasons

Solid Waste

1. Presence of some public awareness

Infrastructure/Transportation

1. Southwest Texas Network Consortium-access to technology
2. Infrastructure for distance learning

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

1. Presence of Large Industry
2. Neighborhood housing services in the city and county
3. Availability of affordable housing
4. Reasonably priced land and building sites
5. Tradition of lending a helping hand
6. Willing government structure

Community Development

1. Annual Festivals
2. Regional economic development plan
3. Establishment of communications lines between the county/city governments and other agencies.
4. Large willing, able, and trainable population

Aging

1. Some Good Health Care
2. Nutrition Centers
3. Services/Resources (MRGDC)
4. Grant to develop elderly housing
5. Expanding health care programs
6. Alternative medicine available (acupuncture, curanderas)

GIS/Technology

1. Community college offering more classes in the community
2. New schools
3. STAR counseling
4. Even Start program
5. Some mapping services available

VII. ACTION PLANS, NON-PRIORITIZED

SAFETY: Criminal Justice

GOAL: Thriving, healthy young people with greater potential for productive lives, better standards of living and more positive futures.

STRATEGY: A reduction in juvenile crimes and the number of juvenile offenders and at-risk youth

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Coordinate with local and federal agencies to create programs to get kids off the street and into activities that allow them to work off their excess energy in a positive environment that encourages personal growth	Year One	MRGDC, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, Cities, Counties,	MRGDC, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, Cities, Counties, Higher Education Institutions, School Districts, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, National Institute of Justice
Work with community and state organizations to promote youth leadership programs	Ongoing	MRGDC, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, Cities, Counties,	MRGDC, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, Cities, Counties, Higher Education Institutions, School Districts, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, National Institute of Justice

SAFETY: Criminal Justice

GOAL: Thriving, healthy young people with greater potential for productive lives, better standards of living and more positive futures.

STRATEGY: Promote youth leadership programs

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Identify all agencies that work with youth and coordinate meetings to discuss leadership curriculum	Year One	MRGDC, FUTURO, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee	MRGDC, Department of Criminal Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Education, Private Foundations
Pursue programs that emphasize community involvement, leadership, and skills training among youth	Year One	MRGDC, FUTURO, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee	MRGDC, Department of Criminal Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Education, Private Foundations

SAFETY: Criminal Justice

GOAL: Children immune to the lure of drugs and the inherent danger of the drug culture

STRATEGY: Work with local agencies to solve the problems of drug use in the community

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Continue to coordinate with local agencies for programs to keep youth away from drugs	Ongoing	MRGDC, FUTURO, School Systems, Juvenile Justice Systems, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee	MRGDC, Cities, Counties, Higher Education Institutions, School Districts, Non-Profit Organizations, DARE, TCADA, Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Department of Health, Department of Human Services, DEA
Create a task force to study the factors that lead to youth gang affiliation in rural border regions	1-2 Years	MRGDC, FUTURO, School Systems, Juvenile Justice Systems, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee	MRGDC, Cities, Counties, Higher Education Institutions, School Districts, Non-Profit Organizations, DARE, TCADA, Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Department of Health, Department of Human Services, DEA
Work with local organizations to set up a Big-Brother, Big-Sister program using adult volunteers from the community	1-2 Years	MRGDC, FUTURO, School Systems, Juvenile Justice Systems, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, FUTURO	MRGDC, Cities, Counties, Higher Education Institutions, School Districts, Non-Profit Organizations, DARE, TCADA, Services, DEA

SAFETY: Criminal Justice

GOAL: A greater number of youths finishing high school and better able to join the workforce.

STRATEGY: Promote life-long continuum for drop-out prevention and recovery

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Coordinate programs to teach vocational skills to unrecoverable youths	Ongoing	MRGDC, FUTURO, School Systems, Juvenile Justice Systems, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee	MRGDC, Cities, Counties, Higher Education Institutions, School Districts, TCADA, Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Department of Health, Department of Human Services
Work with Vocational schools to develop curriculums that teach GED and vocational training, concurrently.	1-3 Years	MRGDC, FUTURO, School Systems, Juvenile Justice Systems, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee	MRGDC, Cities, Counties, Higher Education Institutions, School Districts, Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Department of Health, Department of Human Services

SAFETY: Criminal Justice

GOAL: Alternatives to Juvenile Detention for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders

STRATEGY: Pursue region-wide juvenile probation programs that promote accountability in both youth and their parents.

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Promote programs that allow youths to work at community service or trade skills in lieu of detention.	Ongoing	MRGDC, FUTURO, School Systems, Juvenile Justice Systems, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee	MRGDC, Cities, Counties, Higher Education Institutions, School Districts, Non-Profit Organizations, DARE, TCADA
Create a task-force to study possible accountability measures against parents of juvenile offenders	1-2 Years	MRGDC, FUTURO, School Systems, Juvenile Justice Systems, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee	MRGDC, Cities, Counties, Higher Education Institutions, School Districts, Non-Profit Organizations, DARE, TCADA,

PUBLIC SAFETY: 911 and Emergency Services

GOAL: Emergency services that better serve the residents of and visitors to our region and provide quicker access to emergency care and adequate overall public safety facilities, including EMS, fire protection and law enforcement.

STRATEGY: Promote regional cooperation between federal, state, and local public safety agencies.

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Develop a centralized data base that identifies all public safety type services provided by all entities in the region.	1-3 years	MRGDC, 911 Advisory Committee, Local governments	TXDot, DPS, Advisory Commission on State Emergency Communications
Maintain and support data base and continue to develop 911 mapping and addressing programs	Ongoing	MRGDC, 911 Advisory Committee, Local governments	TXDot, DPS, Advisory Commission on State Emergency Communications
Promote coordination and support funding of public safety programs for the Region	Ongoing	MRGDC, 911 Advisory Committee, Local governments	TXDot, DPS, Advisory Commission on State Emergency Communications

PUBLIC SAFETY: 911 and Emergency Services

GOAL: Emergency services that better serve the residents of and visitors to our region and provide quicker access to emergency care and adequate overall public safety facilities, including EMS, fire protection and law enforcement.

STRATEGY: Work to increase public education on the proper use of 911 services.

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Create a regional link between public education and emergency service providers	Year One	MRGDC, 911 Advisory Committee, Local governments, Public School Systems	TXDot, DPS, Advisory Commission on State Emergency Communications, TEA, Department of Justice
Continue to develop and provide educational program on emergency services	Ongoing	MRGDC, 911 Advisory Committee, Local governments, Public School Systems	TXDot, DPS, Advisory Commission on State Emergency Communications, TEA, Department of Justice

PUBLIC SAFETY: 911 and Emergency Services

GOAL: Emergency services that better serve the residents of and visitors to our region and provide quicker access to emergency care and adequate overall public safety facilities, including EMS, fire protection and law enforcement.

STRATEGY: *Improve Trauma Care*

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Identify needs and alternatives for a trauma care program for the Region	1-3 Years	MRGDC, Local Government, TDH, DPS, EMS Providers, Health Care Providers	MRGDC, Local Governments, TDH, DPS, EMS Providers, Health Care Providers, Red Cross,
Encourage and promote the development of a Regional Trauma Center and include Mexico	Ongoing	MRGDC, Local Government, TDH, DPS, EMS Providers, Health Care Providers, Equal partners in Mexico, Media	MRGDC, Local Governments, TDH, DPS, EMS Providers, Health Care Providers, Red Cross, Counterpart agencies in Mexico
Identify and participate in local health care forums to assist in planning for trauma center to include all resources.	Ongoing	MRGDC, Local Government, TDH, DPS, EMS Providers, Health Care Providers	MRGDC, Local Governments, TDH, DPS, EMS Providers, Health Care Providers, Red Cross,

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING: Water

GOAL: Regional Unity on all issues involving water

STRATEGY: Develop comprehensive integrated regional management plan for water resources

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Identify all water districts and taxing authorities	Year One	MRGDC, Local Water Districts,	TWDB
Encourage more coordination and funding for the development of additional regional water supply sources	Ongoing	MRGDC, Local Governments, Local Water Districts/Boards	TWDB, Private Foundations, USDA Soil and Water Conservation, Agriculture Extension Service, EPA, Texas Department of Health
Develop funding for planning and implementation of flood control and drainage improvements	Ongoing	MRGDC, Local Governments, Local Water Districts/Boards	TWDB, Private Foundations, USDA Soil and Water Conservation, Agriculture Extension Service, EPA

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING: Water

GOAL: Regional Unity on all issues involving water

STRATEGY: Increase or initiate programs of public awareness

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Identify agencies currently offering water education/awareness in the region	Year One	MRGDC	MRGDC, Public School Systems, Water Districts/Board, Texas Department of Health
Partner with state agencies to obtain services and technical assistance concerning water issues		MRGDC, Local Governments, Public School Systems	TWDB, MRGDC, Agricultural Extension Service, University of Texas

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING: Solid Waste

GOAL: A clean, healthy environment based on sustainable development.

STRATEGY: Expanding the existing services of the solid waste office through grassroots community actions

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Promote region-wide recycling programs	Year One	MRGDC	MRGDC, Local Governments, TNRCC, EPA
Explore solutions for the proper disposal of used tires and decrease illegal dumping.	Year One	MRGDC, Local Governments	MRGDC, Local Governments, TNRCC, EPA, Parks and Wildlife Departments, USDA Soil and Conservation
Disseminate information on the economic benefits of establishing sustainable development projects (eco-industrial parks and brownfields)	1 – 3 years	MRGDC, Environmental Organizations, Local Government	Local Government, Economic Development Agencies, Chambers of Commerce

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Business Development

GOAL: *A strong entrepreneurial spirit that creates savvy small business owners*

STRATEGY: *Identify all types of small business needs and opportunities*

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Inventory all small business in the region by type and specific needs and input into a centralized regional data base	1-2 Years	FUTURO, MRGDC, SBDC, Local Governments, Private business, Chambers of Commerce	TDED, HUD, USDA, TWC, SBA
Identify international promotional activities and centralize in a regional data base	2-3 Years	FUTURO, MRGDC, SBDC, Local Governments, Private business, Chambers of Commerce	TDED, HUD, USDA, TWC, SBA
Promote regional training for all governments on available resources and develop resource handbook	Year one	FUTURO, MRGDC, SBDC, Local Governments, Private business, Chambers of Commerce	TDED, HUD, USDA, TWC, SBA
Promote and identify women owned businesses and Hispanic owned businesses	1-2 Years	FUTURO, MRGDC, SBDC, Local Governments, Private business, Chambers of Commerce	TDED, HUD, USDA, TWC, SBA
Create a business mentorship and training program, especially for women owned businesses	1-2 Years	FUTURO, MRGDC, SBDC, Local Governments, Private business, Chambers of Commerce	TDED, HUD, USDA, TWC, SBA

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Business Development

GOAL: A strong entrepreneurial spirit that creates savvy small business owners

STRATEGY: Retain and Promote Growth of Existing Small Businesses

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Develop regional incentive programs for small businesses	1-2 Years	FUTURO, MRGDC, SBDC, Local Governments, Private business, Chambers of Commerce	TDED, HUD, USDA, TWC, SBA
Support the development of small business incubators	Year One	FUTURO, MRGDC, SBDC, Local Governments, Private business, Chambers of Commerce	TDED, HUD, USDA, TWC, SBA
Inventory all business support programs	1-2 Years	FUTURO, MRGDC, SBDC, Local Governments, Private business, Chambers of Commerce	TDED, HUD, USDA, TWC, SBA

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Business Development

GOAL: The expansion of industries, in general, that take advantage of global trade opportunities.

STRATEGY: *Expand regional cooperation between communities to capitalize on opportunities that require urban-like populations and performance.*

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Coordinate meetings (quarterly) between all entities to keep abreast of all economic development efforts	Ongoing	MRGDC, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Committees-both private and public	Non-profit agencies, CDCs, CDFIs, Utility Companies, SWB, Federal and State agencies
Update Regional and Community Profiles	Ongoing	MRGDC, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Committees-both private and public	Non-profit agencies, CDCs, CDFIs, Utility Companies, SWB, Federal and State agencies
Develop a Regional Marketing Strategy	1-2 Years	MRGDC, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Committees-both private and public	Non-profit agencies, CDCs, CDFIs, Utility Companies, SWB, Federal and State agencies
Focus on economic incentive for industry with high paying jobs	Ongoing	MRGDC, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Committees-both private and public	Non-profit agencies, CDCs, CDFIs, Utility Companies, SWB, Federal and State agencies

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Business Development

GOAL: The expansion of industries, in general, who take advantage of global trade.

STRATEGY: Encourage the expansion of international trade.

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Support the creation of an International Trade Center	Year One	MRGDC, FUTURO, Local Governments, Higher Education Agencies, State Legislature	Higher Education Coordinating Board, TWC, DOL, DOE
Identify resources that offer technical assistance to businesses for international trade	Ongoing	MRGDC, FUTURO, Local Governments, Higher Education Agencies, State Legislature	Higher Education Coordinating Board, TWC, DOL, DOE

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING:

GOAL: The marketing of agricultural products appropriate to the region.

STRATEGY: Identify markets and promote value added agricultural products.

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Identify all value-added industries and create a centralized regional data base	1-3 Years	Local Governments, USDA, Ag Extension Service	Local, State and Federal Agencies: USDA, TDED, Texas Department of Agriculture, Processing and Packaging Industries
Promote and market the sale of value added products	Ongoing	Local Governments, USDA, Ag Extension Service	Local, State and Federal Agencies: USDA, TDED, Texas Department of Agriculture, Processing and Packaging Industries

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Aging Services

GOAL: Enhanced programs designed to meet the needs of the current and future elderly population

STRATEGY: Maximize coordination and partnership building between federal, state, and local agencies.

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Develop structure for updating current resource information on all elderly services	Year One	MRGDC-AAA	TDOA, Private foundations, Health Providers
Explore funding opportunities for nutrition services and ombudsman programs	1-2 Years	MRGDC-AAA	TDOA, Private foundations, Health Providers
Promote the development of housing facilities for the elderly and physically impaired	Ongoing	MRGDC, Housing Authorities, HUD, Texas Rehab Commission, Local Governments	MRGDC, Housing Authorities, HUD, Texas Rehab Commission, Local Governments
Research alternative programs and promote legislative proposals that supplement or address the high costs of medical care for the elderly.	1-3 Years	MRGDC, Housing Authorities, HUD, Texas Rehab Commission, Local Governments	MRGDC, Housing Authorities, HUD, Texas Rehab Commission, Local Governments

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: GIS/Technology

GOAL: Maximum use of GIS as a comprehensive planning tool for Region 12

STRATEGY: Encourage local governments to systematically install, monitor, maintain and improve public infrastructure.

TASK	Time Frame	Responsible Agency	Resources
Explore funding sources for the creation of a GIS department	Year One	MRGDC, FUTURO, REVEZ	MRGDC, Local Governments
Implement GIS services	Year One	MRGDC, FUTURO, REVEZ	MRGDC, Local Governments
Provide an affordable means for GIS mapping service availability to the entire region	Year One	MRGDC, FUTURO, REVEZ	MRGDC, Local Governments

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