

A Comprehensive Plan for the City of La Feria, TX

August 10, 2016



Prepared By:



In Association With:

Sigler, Winston, Greenwood & Associates
TIP Strategies, Inc.
Rojas Planning, LLC
Langford Community Management Services, Inc.

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR THE
CITY OF LA FERIA, TEXAS

August 2016

Prepared by:

K. Friese & Associates, Inc.

In association with:

Sigler, Winston, Greenwood & Associates
TIP Strategies, Inc.
Rojas Planning, LLC
Langford Community Management Services, Inc.

"FINANCED THROUGH THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. The preparation of this document was financed through provisions of a Texas Community Development Block Grant with funds allocated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development".

"The Texas Department of Agriculture in conjunction with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development furnished financial support to the activity described in this publication which does not necessarily indicate the agreement of the Texas Department of Agriculture or of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development with the statements or conclusions contained in this publication."

Contents

1	Background and Introduction.....	1-1
1.1	Location and History	1-1
1.2	Past Studies	1-2
1.3	Survey.....	1-3
1.4	Base Map & Digital Mapping.....	1-3
2	Natural, Cultural and Historical Resources	2-4
2.1	Natural Resources	2-4
2.2	Cultural and historic Resources.....	2-7
3	Demographics	3-10
3.1	Methodology.....	3-10
3.2	Historic	3-10
3.3	Current Population Estimates	3-11
3.4	Current Population Characteristics	3-12
3.4.1	Beneficiaries.....	3-12
3.4.2	Housing Characteristics	3-12
3.4.3	household income	3-13
3.4.4	Population Distribution (Spatial)	3-14
3.4.5	Benchmarking with Surrounding Communities on selected characteristics	3-16
3.4.6	Population Projections.....	3-16
3.4.7	Major Themes of the Demographics Analysis	3-18
4	Housing.....	4-1
4.1	Background	4-1
4.2	Methodology.....	4-1
4.3	Factors Affecting Current Housing	4-1
4.4	Housing Analysis.....	4-2
4.4.1	Condition Summary and Comparison Table	4-2
4.4.2	Housing Condition Concentration.....	4-3
4.4.3	Year housing built	4-5
4.4.4	Number of Units in Structure	4-5
4.4.5	Housing Occupancy/Vacancy.....	4-6
4.4.6	Owner/ Renter Occupied	4-6

4.4.7	Median Home value.....	4-7
4.4.8	Current Market Value	4-7
4.4.9	Fair Market Rent	4-7
4.5	Future Housing Needs.....	4-7
4.5.1	Projected Units Needed.....	4-9
4.6	Local Capacity.....	4-10
4.7	Major Themes of the Housing Analysis.....	4-11
4.8	Housing Plan.....	4-11
	Housing Goals & Objectives.....	4-11
5	Economic Development.....	5-1
5.1	Historic Development and General Characteristics	5-1
5.1.1	Development of the Economy	5-1
5.1.2	Development Corporation Act.....	5-2
5.1.3	Retail Sales Tax Trends.....	5-4
5.2	Relationship to the Region	5-5
5.2.1	Connectivity	5-5
5.2.2	Role in the Region.....	5-7
5.2.3	Employment Growth	5-8
5.2.4	Specialization	5-10
5.2.5	Productivity (Manufacturing)	5-12
5.3	Barrier Analysis	5-12
5.3.2	Cost factors	5-14
5.3.3	Operating Condition Factors.....	5-20
5.4	Additional Data Sources and Needs	5-22
5.5	Retail Threshold	5-22
5.6	Destination Redevelopment Concepts.....	5-23
5.7	Medical, Laboratory & Care Facilities	5-24
5.8	Major Themes of the Economic Base Analysis.....	5-25
5.9	Economic Development Plan	5-25
5.9.1	Economic Development Goals & Objectives.....	5-25
6	Existing Land Use	6-1
6.1	Overview	6-1
6.2	Land Use Inventory & Analysis.....	6-1
6.2.1	Existing Land Use Map.....	6-2

6.2.2	Benchmark Assessment	6-2
6.3	Major Themes of the Existing Land Use Analysis	6-3
7	Future Land Use Plan	7-1
7.1	Future Land Use Planning Area	7-1
7.2	Land Use Goals & Objectives	7-1
7.3	Land Use Descriptions	7-2
7.3.1	Residential Areas of the Plan	7-2
7.3.2	Non-Residential Areas of the Plan	7-3
7.3.3	Special Land Use Areas	7-5
7.4	Targeted Land Use Programming	7-6
7.5	Future Land Use Map	7-7
7.6	Land Use Quantity	7-7
8	Central Business District	8-1
8.1	Background	8-1
8.2	Determination of the CBD Planning Area	8-3
8.3	Commercial Area Inventory	8-3
8.3.1	Existing CBD Inventory Map	8-4
8.4	Relationship of CBD to other Development	8-6
8.5	CBD Analysis	8-7
8.5.1	Existing vs. Projected Commercial Acreage	8-7
8.5.2	Used vs. Vacant Commercial Acreage	8-7
8.6	Redevelopment Concepts	8-7
8.7	Major Themes of the CBD Analysis	8-8
8.8	Central Business District Plan	8-8
8.8.1	CBD Goals & Objectives	8-8
8.8.2	CBD Plan Map	8-10
8.8.3	CBD-Specific Capital Improvements	8-10
9	Thoroughfare Plan	9-1
9.1	Background and Purpose	9-1
9.2	The Functional Classification System	9-1
9.3	Inventory of Major and Collector Streets	9-4
9.4	Traffic Count Data	9-5
9.5	Analysis	9-5
9.6	Future Thoroughfare Plan	9-6

9.7	Future Thoroughfare Plan Map.....	9-6
9.8	Thoroughfare Goals & Objectives	9-7
10	Street Study & Plan.....	10-1
10.1	Street Classification.....	10-1
10.2	Street Conditions.....	10-1
10.3	Street System Analysis	10-1
10.4	Major Themes of the Street Study	10-2
10.5	Goals & Objectives	10-2
11	Water System Study	11-1
11.1	Service Area	11-1
11.1.1	CCN	11-1
11.1.2	Unserved areas.....	11-1
11.2	Water System Inventory	11-1
11.3	System Condition Assessment	11-1
11.3.1	Water Sources/Availability	11-1
11.3.2	Water quality.....	11-1
11.3.3	Storage facilities	11-1
11.3.4	Pressure	11-1
11.3.5	Distribution lines	11-2
11.3.6	Operation procedures	11-2
11.3.7	Water costs to city.....	11-2
11.3.8	Water cost to customers and review of current needs.....	11-2
11.4	Future Water System Map	11-3
12	Wastewater System Study.....	12-1
12.1	Service Area	12-1
12.1.1	CCN	12-1
12.1.2	Unserved Areas	12-1
12.2	Wastewater System Inventory.....	12-1
12.3	System Condition Assessment	12-1
12.4	Wastewater System Analysis	12-1
12.4.1	Soil & Terrain	12-1
12.4.2	Inflow & Infiltration.....	12-1
12.4.3	Treatment.....	12-1
12.5	Operation Procedures	12-2

12.6	Cost to customers and review of current needs	12-2
12.7	Future Wastewater System Map	12-2
13	Parks, Recreation & Open Space Study	13-1
13.1	Inventory	13-1
13.2	Public Input	13-3
13.3	Analysis (NRPA Standards)	13-4
13.4	Major Themes of the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Study	13-6
13.5	Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan	13-6
13.5.1	Parks, Recreation & Open Space Goals & Objectives	13-7
14	Capital Improvement Program	14-1
14.1	FINANCIAL ANALYSIS	14-1
14.2	CAPITAL NEEDS LIST	14-2
14.3	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM	14-5
14.4	Application of the Plan	14-8
15	Subdivision Ordinance	15-1
16	Zoning Ordinance	16-1

Tables

Table 1.	Decennial Census Population	3-10
Table 2.	Population by Age Cohort	3-11
Table 3.	Household Size and Ownership Characteristics	3-11
Table 4.	Comparison of Population Estimates	3-12
Table 5.	Summary of Beneficiaries (2014 ACS)	3-12
Table 6.	Household Income Distribution (2014 ACS)	3-14
Table 7.	Demographic Comparison with Surrounding Communities (2009-2014 ACS)	3-16
Table 8.	Comparison of Population Projections	3-16
Table 9.	Housing Snapshot	4-2
Table 10.	Housing Inventory 2007-2016	4-3
Table 11.	Year Housing Built (2014 ACS)	4-5
Table 12.	Number of Units in Structure (2014 ACS)	4-5
Table 13.	Housing Occupancy/Vacancy, 2010-2014	4-6
Table 14.	Owner vs. Renter Occupied (2014 ACS)	4-7
Table 15.	Median Home Value, 2010-2014.	4-7
Table 16.	Housing Market Snapshot, May 2016	4-7
Table 17.	2016 Fair Market Rent (Brownsville-Harlingen MSA)	4-7
Table 19.	Economic development sales tax rates for selected cities (with amount of tax and effective date)	5-2
Table 20.	Economic Development Corporation revenues and objectives for selected cities (ranked by total revenue as reported)	5-3

Table 21. Taxable retail sales per capita, 2013 (La Feria with comparison to peer communities).....	5-4
Table 22. Taxable retail sales, five and ten-year trends. (La Feria with comparison to peer communities in rank order, Cameron/Hidalgo Counties, and State.	5-5
Table 23. Inbound Crossings by Port of Entry and Mode (2014), for POEs in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr Counties.....	5-7
Table 24. Employment Trends, 2004-2014. Covered employment growth in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, with comparison to Texas.....	5-8
Table 25. Private Sector Employment Summary, 2003 and 2013. (ZIP Code 78559 with comparison to Cameron County).....	5-8
Table 26. Number of Private Sector Establishments by Major Industry (2013 vs. 2003) La Feria area (ZIP 78559) with comparison to Cameron County.....	5-9
Table 27. Industry Concentrations (September 2015, Cameron and Hidalgo Counties).....	5-10
Table 28. Value added per Production Worker Hours, Manufacturing (NAICS 31-33).....	5-12
Table 29. Selected broadband indicators as of June 2014.	5-13
Table 30. Number of Licensed Commercial Motor Carriers, Selected Cities.	5-13
Table 31. Wages by Major Occupational Group, 2014. Brownsville and McAllen MSA with comparison to State and US.....	5-14
Table 32. Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers (numbers in 1,000s)	5-15
Table 33. Average Price of Electricity (cents per kWh) to Ultimate Customers by End Use Sector (Texas with comparisons to neighboring states and US, ranked by average for all sectors, October 2015, preliminary)	5-15
Table 34. Regional Retail Electric Service Rates, October 2015 (Cents per kWh), Based on average annual rate published for regional providers by the Public Utility Commission.....	5-16
Table 35. Average costs for water and wastewater in Texas communities by population group (Texas Municipal League Annual Water and Wastewater Survey Results, 2015)	5-16
Table 36. Commercial Customer Water Rates, City of La Feria	5-17
Table 37. Commercial Customer Sewer Rates, City of La Feria	5-17
Table 38. Rio Grande Valley Market Data, Year End 2015.....	5-18
Table 39. Comparison of Various Property Tax Rate Components for Selected Jurisdictions, 2015.....	5-19
Table 40. Financing Costs in Cameron County, December 2015, with comparison to state average and national peer group.	5-19
Table 41. Cost of Doing Business (ranking on overall index and components). Higher ranking indicates higher costs relative to the US, lower ranking indicates lower costs.	5-20
Table 42. Operating Condition Factors Matrix	5-21
Table 43. Existing Land Use Inventory.	6-1
Table 44. Existing Land Use Benchmark Summary	6-3
Table 45. Existing land uses within the Central Business District.....	8-4
Table 46. Functional Classification, Roadway Characteristics, Examples, and Standards	9-3
Table 47. Future Thoroughfare Projects Summary.....	9-6
Table 48. Street System Project Summary	10-3
Table 49. Water System Project Summary	11-2
Table 50. Wastewater System Project Summary.....	12-2
Table 51. Facility Inventory.....	13-2
Table 52. Most requested park needs.	13-4
Table 53. Most requested indoor facilities.....	13-4
Table 54. NRPA Park Standards	13-5
Table 55. NRPA Facility Standards	13-5

Table 56. New Park Development Project Summary..... 13-8

Table 57. New Trail Project Summary 13-8

Attachments

Attachment 1	Community Input Survey
Attachment 2	Base Map
Attachment 3	Existing Land Use Map
Attachment 4	Future Land Use Map
Attachment 5	CBD Inventories & Maps
Attachment 6	Existing Major/Collector Road Inventory
Attachment 7	Future Thoroughfare Map
Attachment 8	Existing Street Conditions Map
Attachment 9	Street Cost Estimates
Attachment 10	Existing Water System Inventory
Attachment 11	Future Water System Map
Attachment 12	Existing Wastewater System Inventory
Attachment 13	Future Wastewater System Map
Attachment 14	Parks, Recreation & Open Space Map
Attachment 15	Digital Attachment

1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan contains the City's official policies on land use, transportation, housing, environment, and utilities. Its policies apply to both public and private properties.

The Plan is used by the City Commission to evaluate land use changes and to make funding and budget decisions. The Plan is used by the Planning and Zoning Commission and other City Commissions to help them in making decisions and recommendations to City Council. The Plan is also used by City Staff to regulate building and development and to make recommendations on projects. It is used by citizens to understand the City's long-range plans and proposals for different areas in the City. The Plan provides the basis for the City's development regulations and the foundation for its capital improvements program.

The La Feria Comprehensive Plan is to be used by all members of the community, as well as any other person or organization interested in the future of the City. City Staff, Planning and Zoning Commission and elected officials should continually review and update the Plan to fully understand the policies and programs that will help the City to achieve its vision for the future.

1.1 LOCATION AND HISTORY

La Feria is situated in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, in Cameron County and bordering on Hidalgo County. It is near the intersection of I-69E/US 77 and I-2/US 83, in between the cities of McAllen and Harlingen.

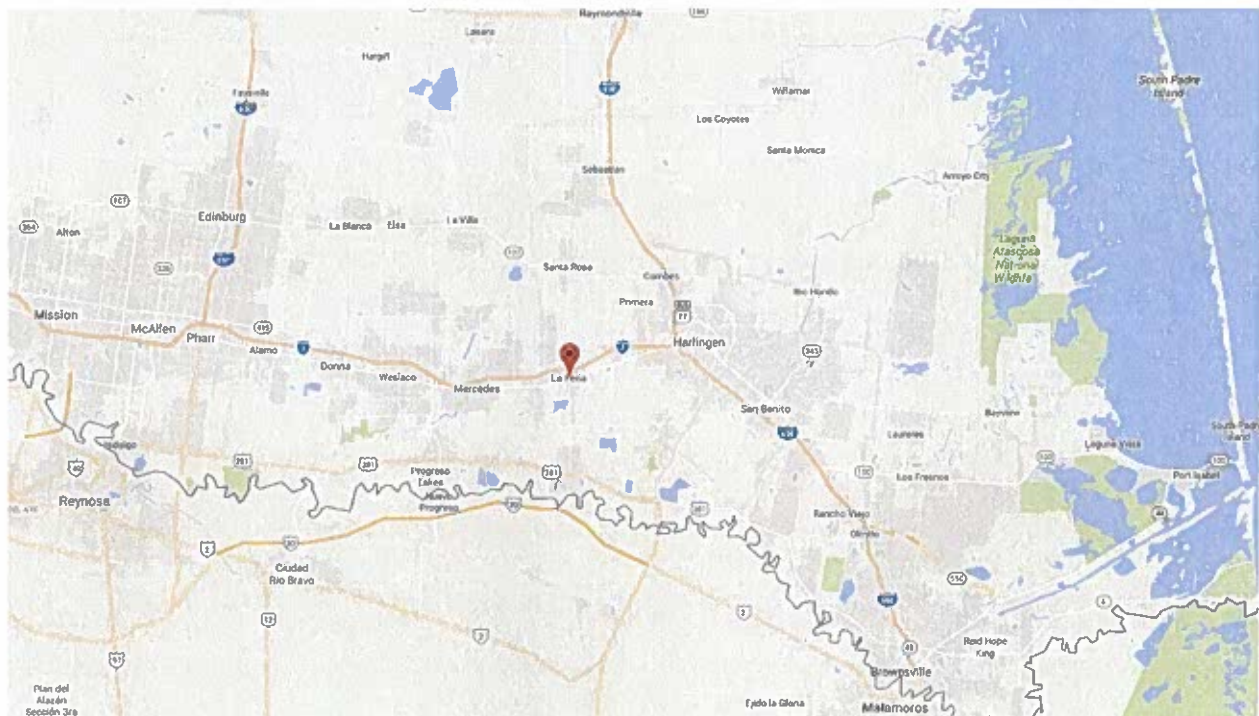


Figure 1. General Location Map (Source: Google Maps)

The city of La Feria (the Trade Center in Spanish) is located at the intersection of U.S Highway 83 and Farm Road 506, twenty-four miles northwest of Brownsville in Western Cameron County. The area was first settled when the land was assigned by Spain in 1777 to Rosa Maria Hinojosa de Balli as part of the La Feria land grant. The Balli family established several farms with headquarters on the La Feria Grant. The family maintained control of the land well

into the mid-1800's, and the community that grew up on the grant remained a ranching center into the twentieth century. In 1909 G.J. Schoenberg, a local land developer developed the town of La Feria. That year the La Feria Post office was opened. A railroad stop named Bixby was established a mile from the town when the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway was built through the area in 1911. In July 1912, the founding fathers of La Feria stole the Bixby depot and hauled it to the new town site. La Feria incorporated in about 1915 with a population of 200, a bank, two



Figure 2. Historic La Feria.

churches, and a weekly newspaper, the La Feria Leader. In 1925, estimates of the population ranged from 236 to 825.

In 1936, the community had various dwelling, one business, one farm, three schools, two churches and an expanding population that was estimated at 2,630 by 1949. In 1960, the town supported the La Feria News, three elementary schools, a

junior high school, a high school, and a population of 3,000. The town reported ninety industries in 1967, including fruit and vegetable canneries, manufacturers of carnival equipment, cotton trailers, and liquid fertilizer, and three cotton gins. The tourist trade had expanded considerably, and tourist facilities were available at the community center park. In 1990, La Feria had 4,360 inhabitants and thirty-five businesses.

La Feria as well as Cameron County has been greatly blessed with the tourist trade with the Snowbirds spending their winters in the Valley. At times, the surge of winter snowbirds increases the local population to twice the size of the summer population.

Cameron County created and organized in 1848 with an original area of 3,300 square miles taken from Nueces County, was named for Ewen Cameron. The county was later reduced to 863 square miles when Willacy and Kennedy counties were created. As part of the Rio Grande delta, Cameron County has sandy soils which, under irrigation produce citrus fruits, vegetables, and cotton. Livestock raising was the first major industry; beef and dairy cattle, poultry, and bees are produced commercially.

In 1850 and in 1853 the Rio Grande Railway and Turn Pike Company and the Brownsville and Rio Grande Railway were projected for the county, but neither was built; the first railroad actually built in Cameron County was a military road constructed by Philip H. Sheridan from Brazos Santiago to White Ranch. A line chartered in 1866 to build from Point Isabel to Brownsville did not materialize, but in 1871, the Rio Grande Railway between those points did begin operation. The St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railroad built across the county in 1904 and the San Benito and Rio Grande Valley Railroad was built in 1912. In 1927 the San Antonio and Aransas Pass was completed from Harlingen to Brownsville.

Sugar cane and sugar mills as well as irrigation increased industry and population, as did the tourist business. World Wars I and II brought increased military activity and international trade, which was promoted by completion of the ship channel, which made Brownsville a deep-water port. Population in 1940 was 83,202 and 139,722 in 2000.

1.2 PAST STUDIES

The City's current, effective comprehensive plan is the 2007-2025 Plan prepared by Design Services, Inc. in 2007.

The City also received assistance from the American Planning Association in 2013 for a Community Assistance Plan.

Both of these documents were reviewed in their entirety, and to the greatest degree practical, this document utilized those foundations where appropriate. The authors of this plan are grateful to the efforts and recommendations made in these prior planning documents. Both of these documents are available online at: <http://www.cityoflaferia.com/departments/planning-and-community-development/>

As a matter of course and diligence, the consultant team reviewed current water, sewer, drainage, flood protection, and regional transportation plans.

1.3 SURVEY

In order to engage the public and receive input on a variety of tasks, a survey was made available to the community from May 26th to July 22nd of 2016. The survey was available online as well as on paper copies which were located at City Hall in the main lobby. The survey was distributed in both English and Spanish. A copy of the survey questions and a summary of the responses is available as Attachment 1 to this Plan. There were 34 responses.

1.4 BASE MAP & DIGITAL MAPPING

A set of digital map layers were collected from multiple sources, including the Texas Natural Resource Information System (TNRIS), the Cameron County Appraisal District, the Texas Department of Transportation, and the City of La Feria city engineer (Sigler, Winston, Greenwood & Associates). These map layers were placed in their native formats into ESRI ArcGIS 10.2 software, within the Texas State Plane coordinate system, South zone, NAD 83 datum and US Feet units. A base map is included here as Attachment 2.

The base map data was used to help create other digital map layers, such as land use and building footprints in the Central Business District. The resulting files are organized geospatially as a geodatabase, which is included in the digital Attachment to this plan.

2 NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

This Chapter serves to identify the significant natural, cultural and historical resource areas within the La Feria planning area. Generally, this discussion presents a cursory, screening level perspective on the environmental issues that may affect planning level decisions in the area around La Feria.

2.1 NATURAL RESOURCES

There are several endangered and threatened species known to reside within the La Feria planning area. The figure below shows the possible range of these species. In connection with any activities planned in these areas, a more detailed environmental analysis should be performed, to determine the presence of this species and an appropriate plan of action.

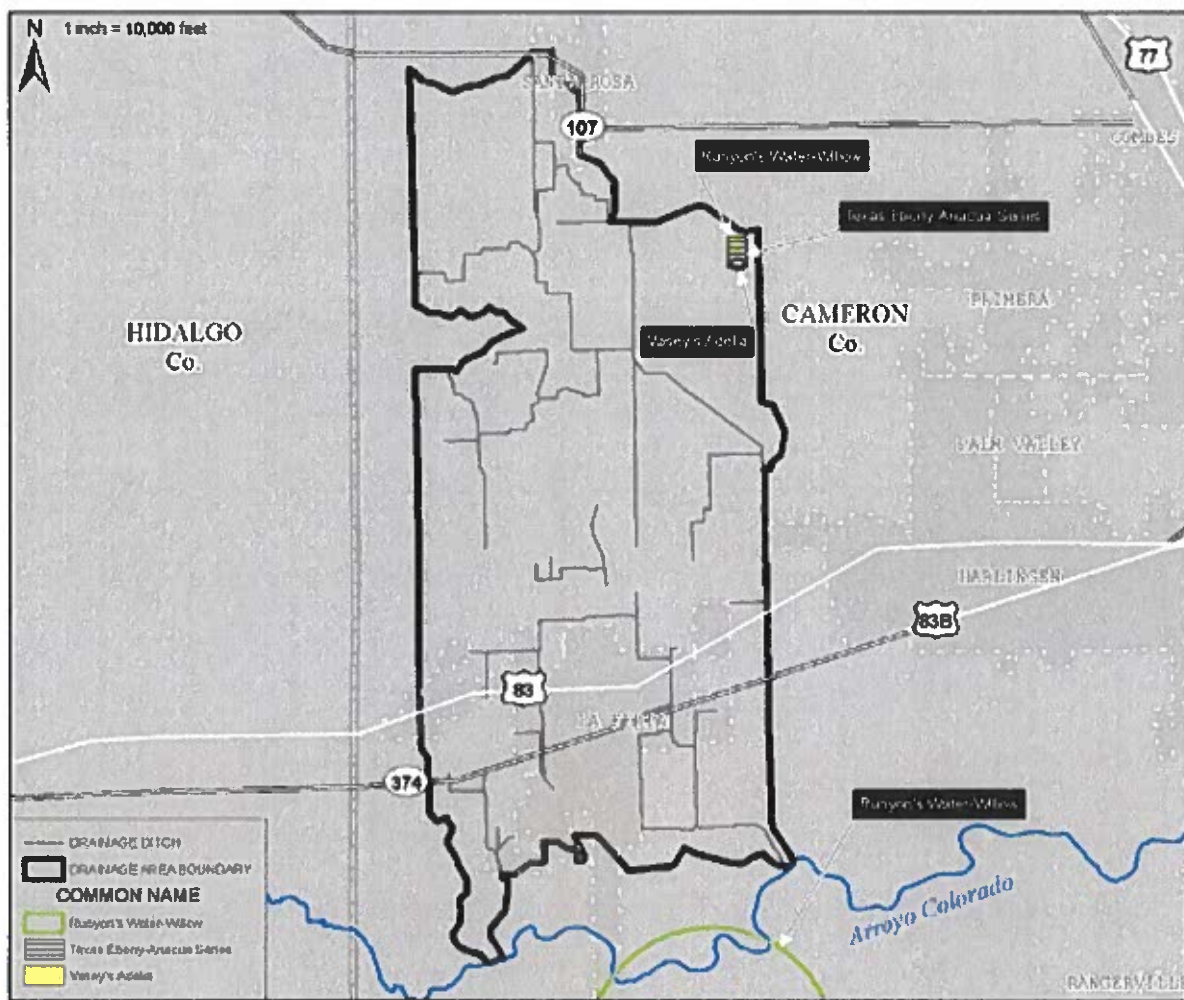


Figure 3. Endangered and Threatened Species Map

The Ocelot once inhabited the area in much greater numbers but habitat loss of the extensive shrub lands to agriculture and urban development over the past 60 years has diminished their numbers greatly. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is undertaking efforts to preserve and re-vegetate wildlife corridors so that the species can bounce back from near extirpation in the United State. The USFWS is also working with TxDOT to provide safe passage under roads due to the high mortality rate from being hit by vehicles.

There is also a very concerted, on-going effort within Cameron County to preserve and enhance habitat, particularly for migratory birds. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Wildlife Corridor, comprised of various park, preserves and wildlife management areas as a joint effort of USFWS and TPWD, is an effort to create connected habitat areas that will permit the safe flow of animal and plant species. The city's activities and undertakings should seek to enhance the USFWS efforts to protect native species that inhabit the area and to re-introduce those that once used to. The map on the following page clearly shows where these land conservation efforts are creating corridors and large tracts of land in the La Feria planning area.

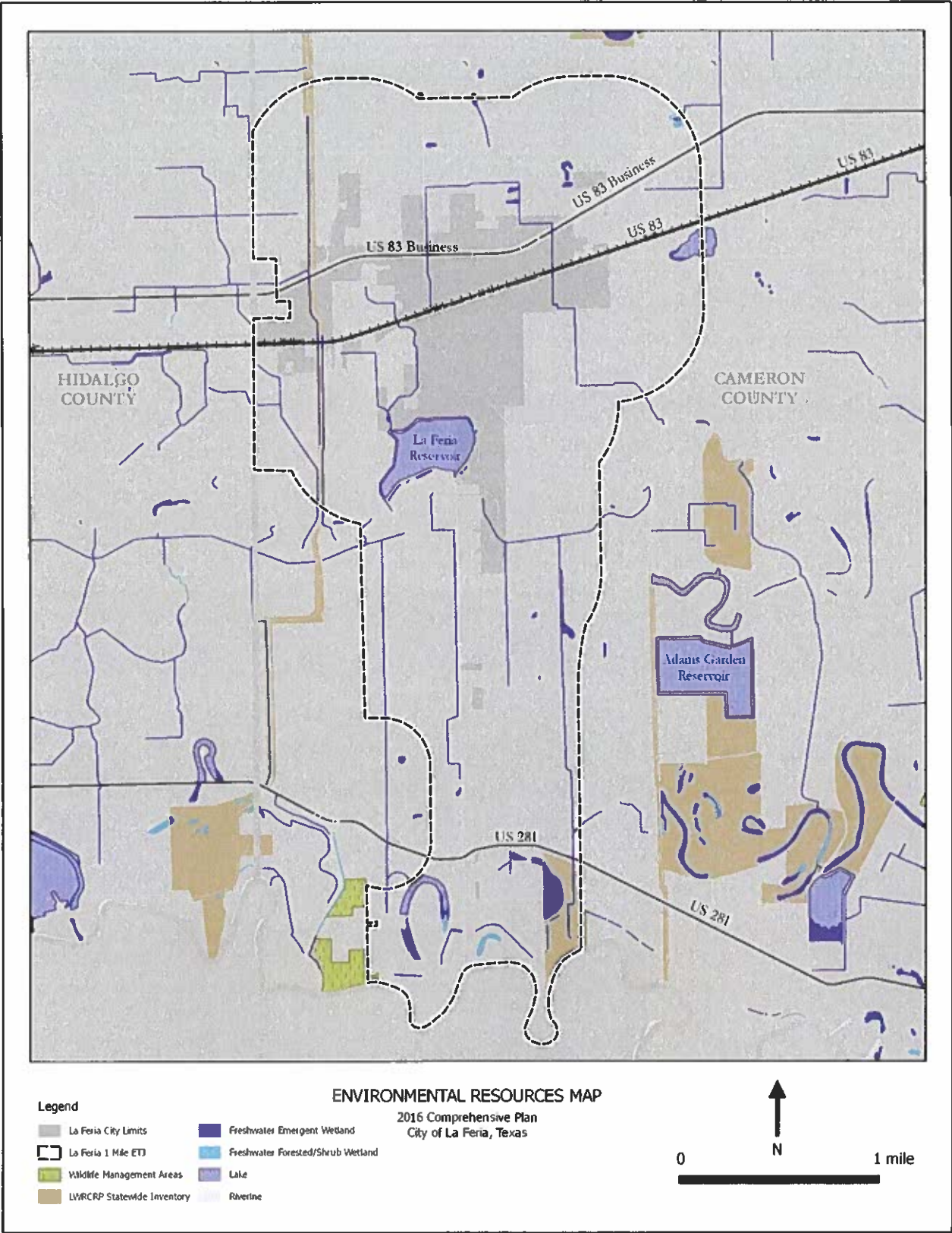


Figure 4. Environmental Resources Map

The Environmental Resources Map provides the location of wildlife management areas, Land and Water Resources Conservation (LWRCRP) Statewide Inventory, and water bodies found in the National Wetland Inventory. The following are brief descriptions of each.

Wildlife management areas are operated by the wildlife division of Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) and are established to represent habitats and wildlife populations typical of each ecological region of Texas. They also offer the public to learn and experience the natural part of Texas and the systems that support life.

The goal of the 2010 Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan (LWRCRP) is to guide TPWD in conserving the state's natural and historic heritage and in providing public access to the outdoors. The map shows a portion of the 92,319 acres of Lower Rio Grande Valley national wildlife refuge operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and TPWD to accomplish many of the habitat preservation and restoration objectives already discussed.

The National Wetland Inventory is produced by USFWS and provides information to the public on the extent and status of the nation's wetlands. The following are the types of wetlands found within La Feria.

Freshwater- Forested and Shrub wetland - Forested swamp or wetland shrub bog or wetland
Freshwater Emergent wetland - Herbaceous march, fen, swale and wet meadow
Lakes - Lake or reservoir basin
Riverine - River or stream channel

2.2 CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) serves as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended. This state agency coordinates the nomination of numerous sites as State Archeological Landmarks or for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Division of Antiquities Protection of the Texas Historical Commission coordinates the program by identifying and protecting important archeological and historic sites that may be threatened by public construction projects. Designation is often sought by interested parties as the most effective way to protect important archeological sites, lands, and structures threatened by new development or vandalism.

An archeological review of the area was not conducted in association with this plan and no registered American Indian, Native Hawaiian or Native Alaskan cultural or religious sites are located on or near the planning area. The Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas at Eagle Pass is the closest of the three federally-recognized Indian tribes in Texas. Eagle Pass is located about 240 miles from La Feria.

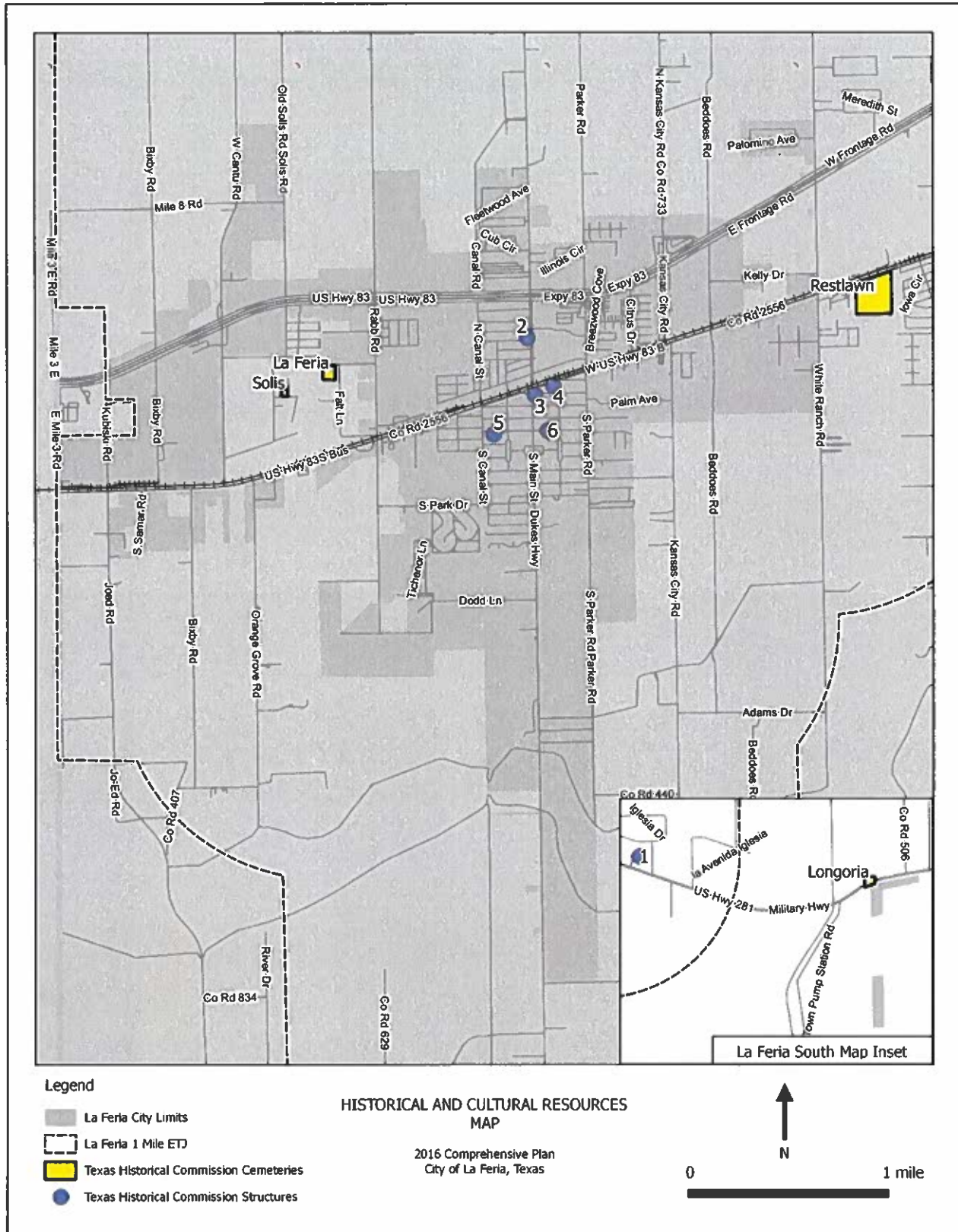


Figure 5. Historical and Cultural Resources Map

The Historical and Cultural Resources map provides the location of cemeteries and structures recognized by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) within and around La Feria's planning area. In addition to the four (4) cemeteries labeled on the map there are six (6) structures identified. Common management practices associated with preservation of historic structures include a city historic preservation program, tax incentives for preservation of historic homes, and city and non-profit programs that provide resources to owners that cannot afford to maintain historic structures that they inhabit. Additional information provided by the THC on these structures is provided below listed by corresponding number on the map.

- 1) **Rancho de Santa Maria**
Part of Spain's 1777 La Feria Grant (12.5 leagues), partitioned into 6 units 1843. Here in 1850's was a sub-post of Fort Brown (28 mi. SE) and Fort Ringgold (65 mi. NW). This was proposed site in 1860's for "Homeville", this locality's first small-acreage promotion. Present compound, built 1870 by L.J. Hynes, has buildings for dairy, kitchen, ammunition. Hynes, first Postmaster (1876), had stage depot, general store, telegraph office, shipping wharf on river. Chapel was built 1880. In 1892, Frank Rabb bought the ranch. In 1916 border troubles, U.S. Army established headquarters here.
- 2) This is a neighborhood survey of a house estimated to have been built in 1914.
- 3) **First Bank in La Feria**
The Cameron County Bank of La Feria, this community's first bank, occupied this structure soon after it was founded in 1912. The building was erected by W.A. Strickland, a well-known contractor here. Organized as a private institution, the bank received a state charter in 1913. Its founder was Illinois-born Bailey H. Dunlap (1886-1957), who served as first mayor of La Feria in 1915. The bank was rechartered as the First National Bank of La Feria in 1925. After 1927, this building was occupied by other businesses.
- 4) **La Feria Marker**
Site is on land surveyed 1777 for Spain's grants to Don Juan Hinojosa and Jose Mari Balli, ancestors of priest for whom Padre Island was named. By 1790's it had a fairground (Hence name, La Feria) for Fiestas, horse racing, and other sports. After Mexican War (1846-48), Balli heirs had title confirmed by Texas. In 1850, Nathaniel White (d. 1901), cattleman and reputed smuggler, opened anglo ranching here. In 1906, townsite of La Feria was platted under original name. It is now a trade center for a thriving agricultural area.
- 5) **Rosalio Longoria House**
The oldest residence in La Feria. Built in 1909 by local carpenter Felipe Perez for Rosalio Ponce Longoria (1872-1965), a contractor who cleared land for developers to build railroads and other Rio Grande Valley improvements. His board and batten house originally had two main rooms, two small bedrooms, the long front porch and a kitchen with brick chimney for a wood burning stove. The bathroom, a small porch, and the little family room were added about 1950.
- 6) **Dunlap House**
Rio Grande Valley developer W.E. Stewart began construction of this adobe brick and stucco residence in 1912. Before it was completed, he sold the house to his employee Bailey H. Dunlap (1886-1957), a native of Illinois. Dunlap started La Feria's first bank, the Cameron County Bank, and was involved in real estate dealings throughout the valley. He served as La Feria's first mayor in 1915 and participated in numerous civic and religious organizations. In the 1920 and 1930s, the structure was enlarged and remodeled by W.E. Strickland, the original contractor.

3 DEMOGRAPHICS

3.1 METHODOLOGY

Demographics are characteristics of a given population such as number of people, how many are from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, different age ranges, income ranges and so on. This plan takes a look at how the demographics of the area look today and identifies trends over time. Looking at many different characteristics of a population paints a more detailed picture of how the city is changing so that decisions of how and where to grow are better informed.

Different sources are used to estimate existing populations. Local data such as total number of residential water utility customers can be used to get fairly accurate local population estimates.

Use of Census 2010 Block Group Data is used to determine current population characteristics and 1990-2010 Place Data is used to identify long term trends. Forecast scenarios will also be evaluated for projected population counts.

3.2 HISTORIC

Population

The population of La Feria has grown over time with periods marked by dramatic increases in growth. The following table shows the historic growth of the City of La Feria over the past 100 years. The decades of 1920-1930, 1940-1950, and 1990-2000 experienced the greatest increases in population. The decade of 1960-1970 was the only ten-year period of population decline over the past century.

Table 1. Decennial Census Population

Historical population per U.S. Decennial Census		
Census	Population	Percentage Change
1920	236	—
1930	1594	575.4%
1940	1644	3.1%
1950	2952	79.6%
1960	3047	3.2%
1970	2642	-13.3%
1980	3495	32.3%
1990	4360	24.7%
2000	6115	40.3%
2010	7302	19.4%

Age

Table 2. Population by Age Cohort

Age Cohort	Year	1990		2000		2010		2010-2014 ACS	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
0-19*		1,529	35.5%	2,077	34.0%	2,493	34.1%	2,511	34.4%
20-44		1,498	34.8%	1,749	28.6%	2,097	28.7%	2,211	30.3%
45-64		680	15.8%	1,135	18.6%	1,538	21.1%	1,359	18.6%
65+		607	14.1%	1,154	18.9%	1,174	16.1%	1,220	16.7%
Total Population		4,306		6,115		7,302		7,301	
Median Age		29.1		34.5		33.6		34.1	

*For the 1990 Census this age cohort was measured at 0-18 rather than the 0-19 cohort that was used in the following Census years.

Based on the 2010 Census, 16.1% of the population is 65 years of age or older which is significantly higher than Texas at 10.3% and Cameron County at 11.1%.

Household Size

The most recent estimate for average household size in La Feria comes from the ACS 2010-2014 and is 3.26 persons per household. This is higher than the average for the State of Texas at 2.82 persons per household. Household size has been steadily increasing in the area over the last couple of decades with renter occupied housing consistently exhibiting more people per household than owner occupied housing.

Table 3. Household Size and Ownership Characteristics

	1990	2000	2010	2014
Average Household Size	2.77	3.03	3.05	3.26
Average Owner Occupied	-	2.95	3.01	3.14
Average Renter Occupied	-	3.27	3.13	3.5

3.3 CURRENT POPULATION ESTIMATES

The 2013 American Planning Association Study also provides a population forecast from The Nielsen Company. In this report the population of La Feria is projected to be 8,019 in 2018.

The American Community Survey is used most extensively in this demographic analysis of La Feria. The 2009-2014 5-year ACS population estimate for La Feria is 7,301.

Census population estimates program are the official estimates from the Census in the interim years between the decennial Census. La Feria has a 2014 Census population estimate of 7,308

Local utility data provides another opportunity to estimate the total current population. The Texas Water Development Board provides for a methodology to estimate current populations based on residential water meter counts and recent household size data. Multi-family accounts are not considered in this analysis since there is not an accurate count of units that are on a master meter. It is also assumed that the number of wells in the city the size of La Feria may offset the relatively small number of multi-family units on a master meter. An advantage to using local utility data is that it provides a more recent population estimate than Census data or American Community Survey estimates. As of January 2016 there are 2,296 residential water accounts and the 2014 ACS estimate of 3.27 people per household. The population estimate of **7,508** is the most current estimate available and when compared to the 7,308 estimate for July of 2014, this appears reasonable.

Table 4. Comparison of Population Estimates.

Population Estimates	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
2007 Comprehensive Plan			8,510			
2013 APA Plan	7,510					8,019
ACS 2014		7,308				
Census Estimates		7,301				
Water Utility Data				7,508		

3.4 CURRENT POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

3.4.1 BENEFICIARIES

The following table is a demographic summary from the 2014 American Community Survey for La Feria providing population estimates for the following racial and ethnic groups.

Table 5. Summary of Beneficiaries (2014 ACS)

Demographic Summary	Population Estimate
Current Population Estimate	7,301
White	6,458
Black or African American	14
American Indian and Alaska Native	0
Asian	205
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0
Some Other Race	624
Two or more races	0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	6158
Not Hispanic or Latino	1143

3.4.2 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Median Household Income (annual): \$29,130

Median Rent: \$648 /month

Median Cost to Owner with Mortgage: \$1,089/ month

Median Cost to Owner w/o Mortgage: \$231/ month

Household with no vehicle available: 8.2%

Households that are housing cost burdened (Housing costs that exceed 30% of household income:

Owner Occupied Housing: 264

Renter Occupied Housing: 500

This analysis suggests that 34% of households in La Feria are housing cost burdened. 764 housing units have housing costs that exceed 30% of household income of the total 2,281 occupied housing units.

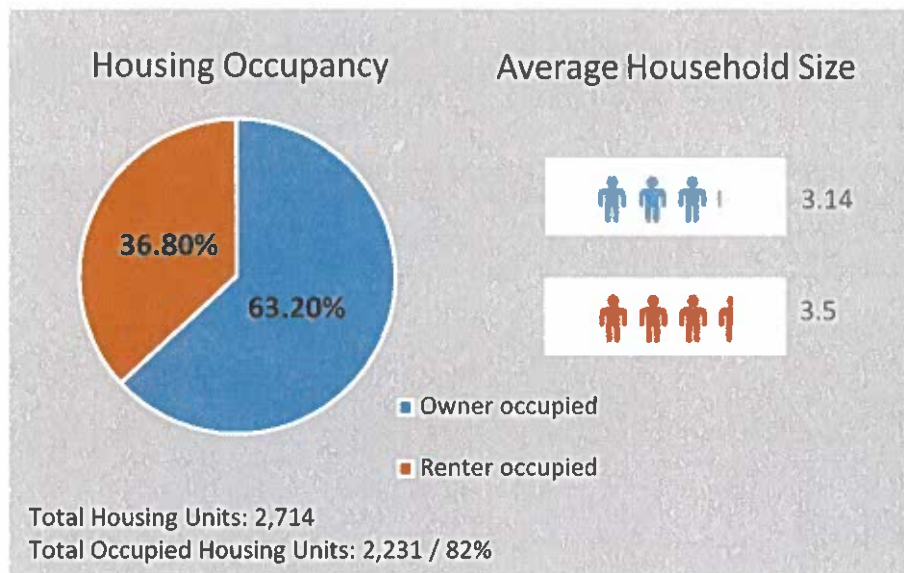


Figure 6. Housing Occupancy and Household Size

3.4.3 HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The 2014 American Community Survey data has median household income at \$29,130. The Decennial Census for years 2000 and 2010 describes the median household income as \$24,660 and \$23,983, respectively. The economic downturn at the end of the last decade is likely the cause for the drop in median household income between 2000 and 2010, however, an increase of 18% has been estimated between the years of 2010 and 2014. The following table describes household incomes for La Feria from the 2014 American Community Survey.

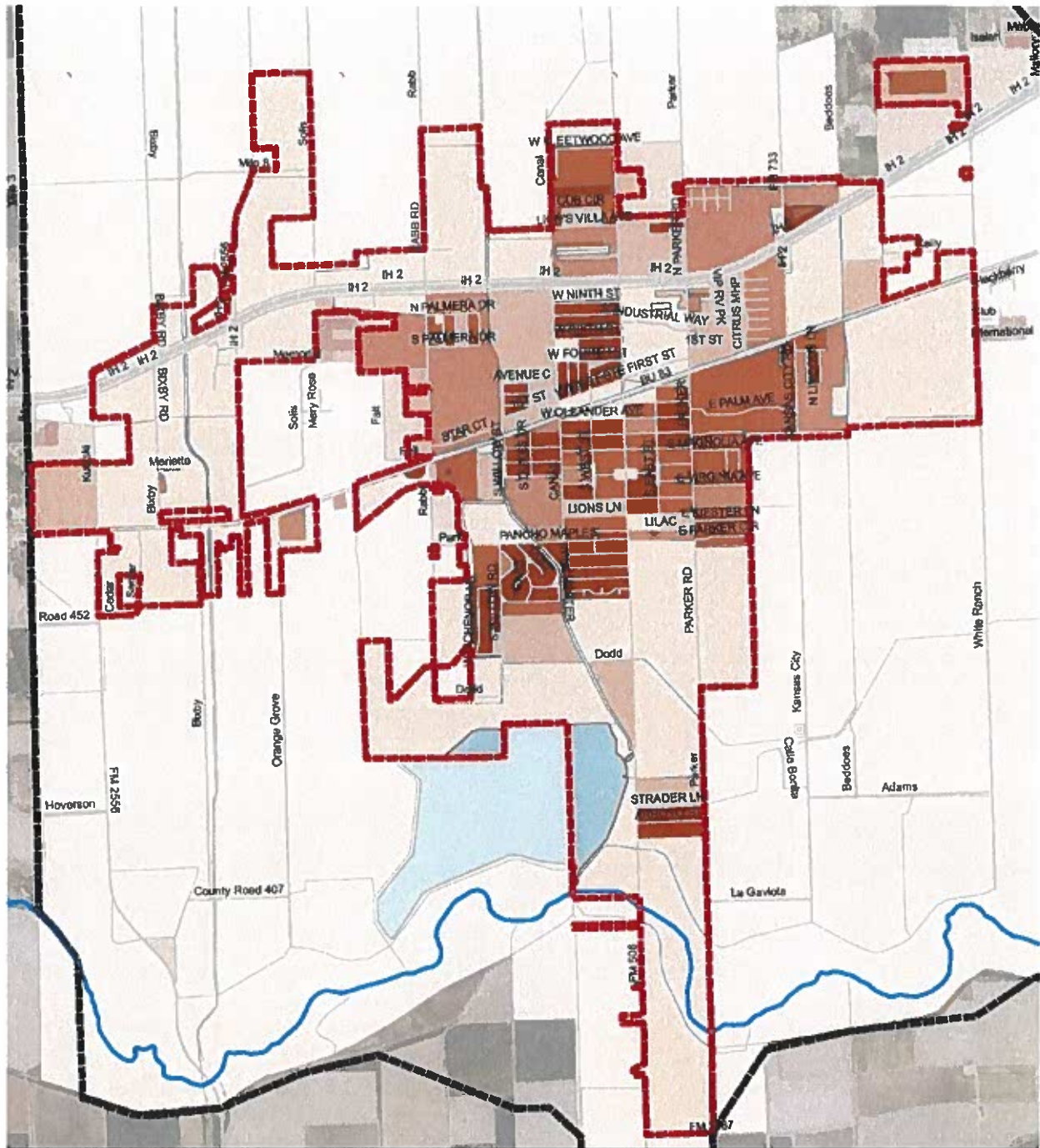
Table 6. Household Income Distribution (2014 ACS)

Annual Income	Households
<i>Total households</i>	<i>2,231</i>
Less than \$10,000	278
\$10,000 to \$14,999	248
\$15,000 to \$24,999	432
\$25,000 to \$34,999	392
\$35,000 to \$49,999	294
\$50,000 to \$74,999	217
\$75,000 to \$99,999	142
\$100,000 to \$149,999	133
\$150,000 to \$199,999	50
\$200,000 or more	45

3.4.4 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION (SPATIAL)

Block or block level distribution of classes protected by federal fair housing laws on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap (disability), national origin, and family status.

The map below is a population density map of 2010 Census Blocks using population counts and area to determine number of people per acre. It is clear from the map that densities higher than 1 person per acre are consistently found just inside the jurisdictional limits of the city. The natural land use transect of rural conditions to gradually more urban is well preserved around the current limits of La Feria. The provision of water and wastewater services from Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) and surrounding jurisdictions competing for land may at times result in less orderly land use planning. The population density map suggests that this has not yet happened in the area surrounding La Feria, however, the surrounding communities will continue to have a relationship with La Feria most principally along the Interstate 2 and Business Hwy 83 corridors which will be important to consider when planning for future land uses.



Legend

Census 2010 Blocks

- 0 - 1 People per Acre
- 1 - 2 People per Acre
- 2 - 4 People per Acre
- 4 - 8 People per Acre
- 8 + People per Acre

La Feria City Limits

Planning Boundary

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Population Density Map City of La Feria, Texas



Source: Census 2010

Figure 7. Population Density (2010 Census, Block level reporting)

3.4.5 BENCHMARKING WITH SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES ON SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The following selected ACS 2014 community characteristics of La Feria are compared with surrounding communities and the whole of Cameron County. The table is presented with communities increasing in population size from left to right. Benchmarking of this type helps the community and decision makers understand what some of the challenges La Feria is facing but also what opportunities may be available in the region.

Table 7. Demographic Comparison with Surrounding Communities (2009-2014 ACS)

Source: ACS 2009-2014	Palm Valley	Santa Rosa	Combes	Primera	La Feria	Mercedes	Weslaco	Harlingen	Cameron County
Total Population	1,628	2,881	2,991	4,138	7,301	16,271	36,752	65,677	415,103
Median Age (years)	57.6	26.2	38.1	28.4	34.1	28.2	33.6	32.7	31.0
Age 18 years and over	81.9%	63.2%	74.5%	69.9%	70.1%	62.2%	68.8%	69.5%	67.7%
Age 65 years and over	38.6%	7.7%	17.6%	9.4%	16.7%	13.3%	16.5%	13.4%	11.7%
Housing Units	872	812	1,101	1,316	2,714	5,630	14,471	24,630	144,180
Median Home Value	\$159,000	\$50,900	\$75,800	\$85,200	\$56,900	\$58,300	\$71,700	\$78,500	\$77,400
Average Household Size	2.08	3.55	3.07	3.44	3.27	3.47	3.12	3.14	3.44
Median Household Income	\$71,591	\$20,500	\$36,855	\$44,250	\$29,130	\$30,644	\$37,057	\$34,868	\$33,390
Mean Travel Time to Work(in minutes)	17.2	18	21.1	22.3	17.7	19.5	19.8	17	19.8
Percent Unemployment	1.1%	20.0%	6.3%	6.6%	17.7%	18.3%	10.9%	8.9%	10.5%
Income is below poverty level	4.8%	54.8%	26.6%	31.1%	37.5%	42.8%	27.7%	32.2%	34.8%
Ages 25+ High School Graduate or Higher	94.3%	49.6%	65.2%	76.2%	67.7%	60.1%	68.0%	72.5%	64.1%
Ages 25+ with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	44.0%	4.4%	8.1%	15.4%	8.8%	12.7%	16.8%	13.6%	16.1%
Population with a Disability	2.7%	18.4%	13.9%	11.7%	17.4%	18.5%	15.8%	12.2%	13.3%

3.4.6 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The table below provides population projections for La Feria from the Texas Water Development Board 2016 Regional Water Plan. In this forecast, the current population of La Feria which is estimated to be 7,308 in 2014 is expected to roughly double by the year 2060 or in 46 years.

Table 8. Comparison of Population Projections

Projections	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Texas Water Development Board*		8,610		10,059		11,530
1998 Comprehensive Plan		9,620				
2007 Comprehensive Plan**	8,510	9,140	9,880			

*The TWDB projections extend to the year 2070 and are illustrated on the graph

**The plan estimates an increase of 890 people during the winter for each projected year

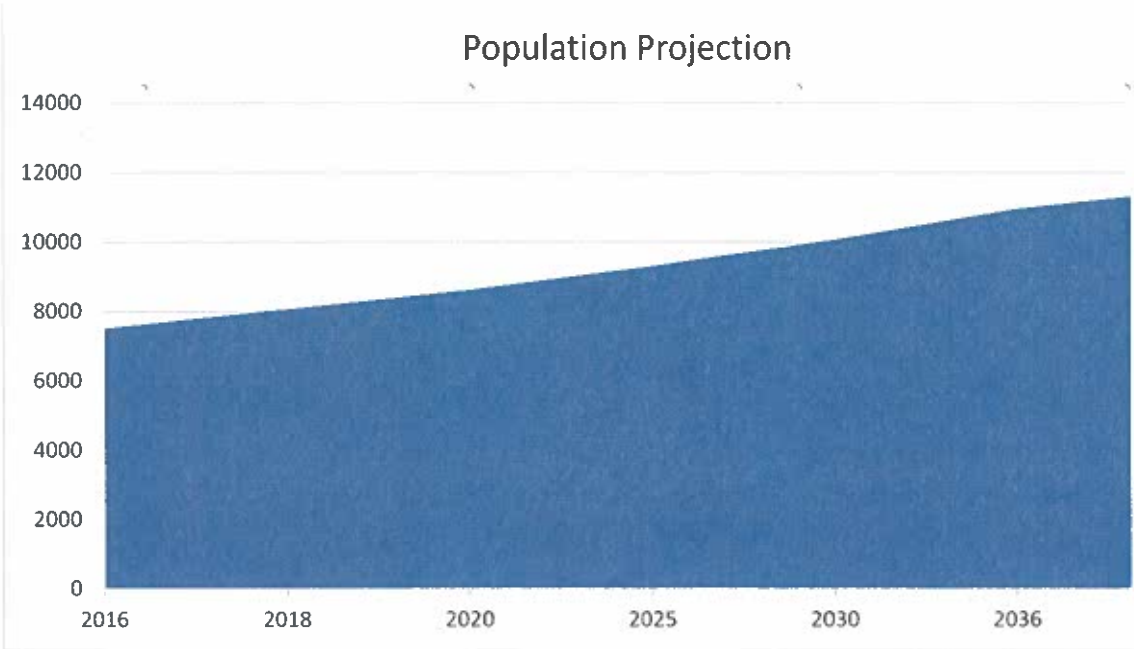


Figure 8. Population Projection 2016-2036 (KFA)

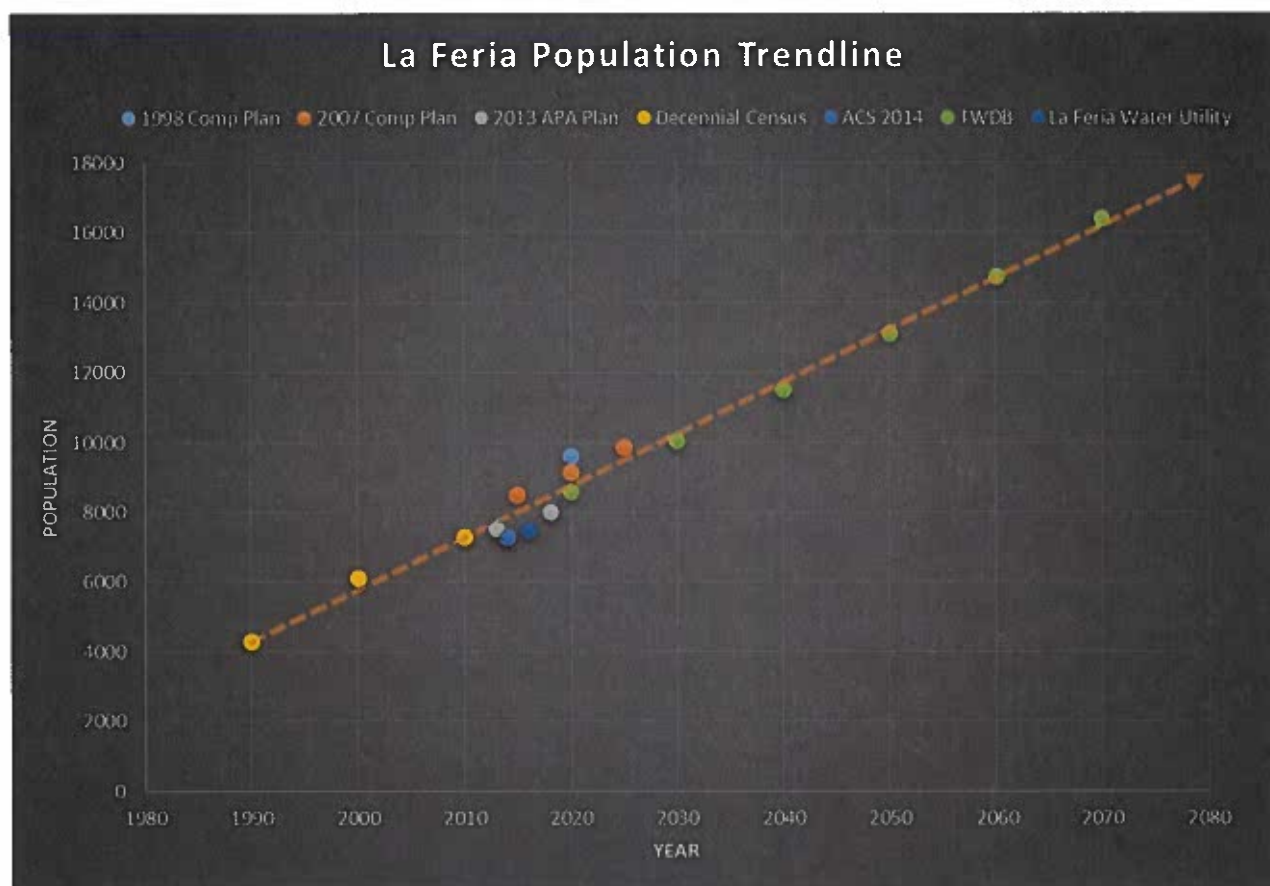


Figure 9. Comparison of Population Projections

3.4.7 MAJOR THEMES OF THE DEMOGRAPHICS ANALYSIS

- Based on methodology from the Texas Water Development Board using residential water accounts and household size to estimate current population, the population of La Feria as of January 2016 is approximately 7,508
- The Population is expected to approximately double in the next 45 years based on projections from the Texas Water Development Board
- Household size is getting steadily larger since 1990 Census
- The 45 and over age group is becoming a larger share of the overall population while the under 45 age group is becoming smaller.
- La Feria has the opportunity to control the orderly growth and development of the City into the future based on current ETJ and population density distribution.
- Higher unemployment and poverty rate than the county.
- After a drop in median household income between 2000 and 2010, there is an increase of 18% between 2010 and 2014.
- Households making more than \$50,000 per year are increasing at a rate higher than the county.
- ~30% of households are housing cost burdened and 18% of housing units unoccupied.

4 HOUSING

4.1 BACKGROUND

Affordable, high quality housing is key to attracting and retaining residents, businesses and employers. La Feria's residential neighborhoods can be counted among the city's assets. It is predominantly developed with single-family detached housing with many options for other types of housing throughout the city including manufactured homes, recreational vehicle pad sites, and other attached multifamily housing types. La Feria currently has a good balance of housing options within the centrally located neighborhoods with multifamily properties sprinkled throughout single-family neighborhoods in ways that gently fit the context of those areas.

The housing plan includes an inventory of current housing within the city and an analysis based on this inventory and other available data. Major trends emerge from the data from which general observations can be made. Goals are then provided based on these observations that describe community driven values. Objectives are then defined to ensure that the city's housing policies clearly inform future decisions regarding housing stabilization, growth, and development.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

A windshield survey was conducted from April 11th-13th, 2016 to assess housing within the planning area on condition, vacancy, and lot improvement. The survey involved using Cameron County parcel data as a base layer loaded into GIS software to assess the housing stock in La Feria on a lot by lot basis. The previous 2007 comprehensive plan housing conditions inventory was used as a starting point along with the existing land use layer developed for this plan to identify parcels with residential uses that would be assessed for the survey. A summary was created of housing conditions across the city by housing type (single-family, manufactured home, Recreational Vehicle, and Multifamily) and compared to the previous assessment. The condition of residential units are assessed with a scale of standard, deteriorated, or dilapidated. Finally, as part of the windshield survey, a determination was made on occupancy status.

4.3 FACTORS AFFECTING CURRENT HOUSING

The economic and social vitality of a city is closely related to the variety of housing within it. A community is made up of important roles played by children, singles, young couples, seniors, and empty-nesters. The local housing supply in La Feria is primarily comprised of 60% single-family detached residential with a mix of Recreational vehicle and multifamily residential properties making up the other 40% of housing. This represents a good balance of housing types but more could be done to provide a range of housing that is affordable and appeals to more segments of the population. There is a lack of diversity of housing types in La Feria commonly referred to as the missing middle, housing between single-family residences and larger multifamily housing such as apartments. This includes such housing as fourplex, townhouse, courtyard apartment, condominiums, retirement villages, work/live housing, and other such housing. The City of La Feria has recently partnered with the South Texas Collaborative for Housing Development to bring quality, affordable housing developments to the area; Sunflower Estates Apartments and the Sunrise Terrace Subdivision.

Despite the age of the housing in the central neighborhoods, many residences show signs of recent improvement or redevelopment. This is also evident based on the significant drop in dilapidated structures since the 2007 housing conditions analysis. Even so, there remain small pockets of deteriorated housing structures that are in need of stabilization. The tree-lined smaller local streets throughout the city are inviting and walkable yet older centrally

located neighborhoods lack significant sidewalk infrastructure. The development of high quality pedestrian, bike, and vehicular connections between residential neighborhoods to each other, parks, schools, library, and the businesses that serve them would build on the city's existing assets by further integrating these community facilities into the neighborhoods. Connectivity will also need to be preserved as development expands out from the central core by identifying opportunities to connect adjacent residential and commercial developments at site plan stage. The intuitive grid pattern becomes disconnected and disorienting with off-set alignments and dead ends as the street network expands out into the ETJ. If allowed to persist, this type of development pattern results in traffic issues and undesirable areas of low value due to disconnection and difficulties in providing service.

The La Feria Independent School District is another community asset and as a district which exceeded all state target scores, it attracts young families and the businesses that want to employ them in addition to preparing youth for future success. Good schools help catalyze reinvestment in existing neighborhoods. LFISD and the City of La Feria should continue to create partnerships to develop strategic policies that achieve common goals such as strengthening neighborhood school involvement, Safe Routes to School, and school attendance zones that consider and overlap with natural neighborhood boundaries.

The following table, summarized 2010-2014 ACS Data, provides a snapshot of recent housing conditions in the City of La Feria.

Table 9. Housing Snapshot

Housing Units	2,714
Households	2,231
Persons per household	3.27
Owner-occupied housing unit rate	63.2%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units	\$56,900
Median gross rent	\$648

4.4 HOUSING ANALYSIS

4.4.1 CONDITION SUMMARY AND COMPARISON TABLE

The table below details the results of the 2016 housing conditions survey with a comparison to the 2007 housing survey conducted by SWG. A few key observations when comparing the two surveys from the table below include:

- 25% of the single-family lots are unimproved (vacant).
- The number of standard single-family units has increased by 230 while the number of deteriorated single-family units has decreased by 185.
- The number of dilapidated structures has increased substantially.
- The number of recreational vehicles (RVs) has been reduced by nearly half.*
- The number of manufactured homes has nearly doubled.*
- Multifamily structures have both decreased in quantity and quality.

**The imagery used for the basic count of manufactured housing units and RVs was taken in January 2016 so it represents the time of year that La Feria has historically has its highest numbers of RV's located in the city.*

Table 10. Housing Inventory 2007-2016

Single Family Structures		March 2007 Total	April 2016 Total
	Standard	972	1,157
	Standard Vacant	14	4
	Substandard	797	567
	Substandard Vacant	50	13
	Dilapidated	3	57
	Dilapidated Vacant	6	29
	Vacant Lot		252
Manufactured Structure			
<i>note: Imagery Date 1/21/16</i>	MH Standard	378	724
	MH Standard Vacant	54	0
	MH Substandard	47	53
	MH Substandard Vacant	19	0
	MH Dilapidated		0
	MH Dilapidated Vacant		0
	Vacant Lot		38
Modular House			
	M Standard	29	**
	M Standard Vacant	3	
	M Substandard	15	
	M Substandard Vacant	5	
	M Dilapidated		
	M Dilapidated Vacant		
Recreational Vehicle			
<i>note: Imagery Date 1/21/16</i>	RV	637	332
	RV Vacant	13	
Total Single Family Structures		3,042	2,936
Total Single Occupied Structures		2,878	2,890
Total Vacant Lots			290
Multifamily Structures			
<i>Note: The K. Friese + Associates housing survey of 2016 considers multi-family parcels within the city and not number of structures.</i>	Standard	59	40
	Standard Vacant		
	Substandard	2	9
	Substandard Vacant		
	Dilapidated		3
	Dilapidated Vacant		1
	Vacant Lot		25
Total Multifamily Structures		61	53
Total Vacant Lots			25
Total Residential Structures			
		3,103	2,989
Total Vacant Lots		*	315

Source: K. Friese & Associates housing survey of April 2016

*Vacant Lots not counted in 2007 Housing Inventory

** Modular homes included with Manufactured Structure count in 2016 Housing Inventory

4.4.2 HOUSING CONDITION CONCENTRATION

The following graphic is referred to as a "heatmap", and can be used to show the relative concentration of a quantifiable characteristic, such as housing condition. It is intended to show in general terms areas of focus or concern, without individually identifying properties. This can be utilized to develop policies to counteract blight, if it exists or is developing. In this case, the graphic was generated to show general areas of standard and deteriorated housing within the City of La Feria. This is a graphic representation of the housing conditions survey data in which values are represented by colors on a gradient from yellow (deteriorated) to blue (standard). It is clear from the map below that deteriorated structures are predominantly concentrated in the older central part of the city with some

pockets to the south and southwest. Residential areas toward the edges of the city have been built more recently and as can typically be expected, are in better condition. Dilapidated housing, while present in areas throughout the city, is not concentrated in sufficient quantities to appear on the heatmap.

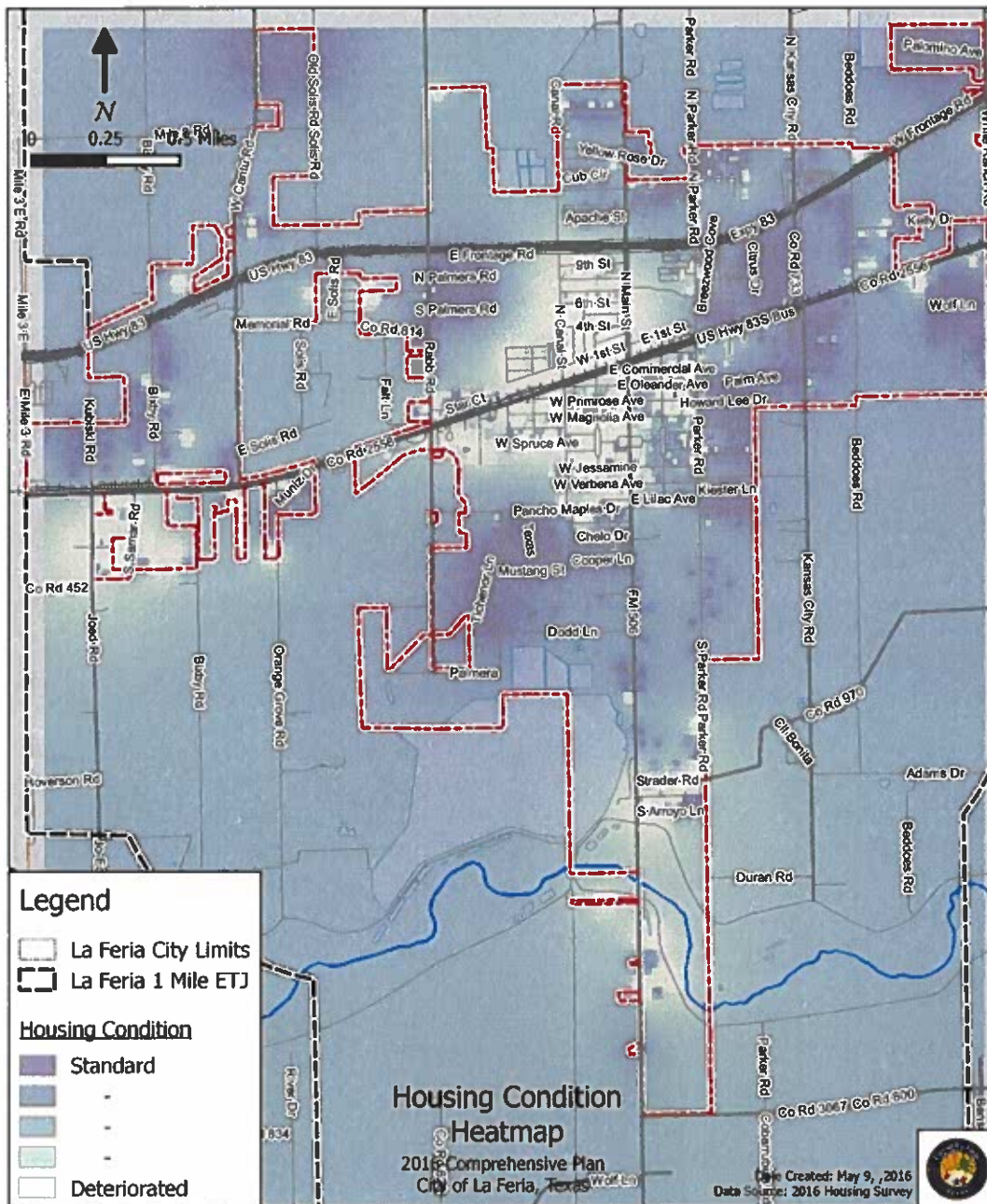


Figure 10. 2016 Housing Conditions "Heatmap"

The decennial Census and the American Community Survey 2010-2014, updated annually, provide counts that give a better understanding of the housing within La Feria. These include housing age, housing type, occupancy status, and median home value.

4.4.3 YEAR HOUSING BUILT

Based on the American Community Survey 2010-2014, 84% of the housing in the city was built in the 40 year period between 1970 and 2010. More than 50% of the housing in the city was built in the 20 year span between 1970-1990.

Table 11. Year Housing Built (2014 ACS)

Year Housing Built	2014 ACS	Percentage of Total
Built 2010 or later	11	0.4%
Built 2000 to 2009	509	18.8%
Built 1990 to 1999	411	15.1%
Built 1980 to 1989	812	29.9%
Built 1970 to 1979	549	20.2%
Built 1960 to 1969	194	7.1%
Built 1950 to 1959	143	5.3%
Built 1940 to 1949	61	2.2%
Built 1939 or earlier	24	0.9%
Total housing units	2,714	100%

4.4.4 NUMBER OF UNITS IN STRUCTURE

At nearly 60% of the total 2,714 housing units, single family detached housing is the predominant housing type in the city.

Table 12. Number of Units in Structure (2014 ACS)

Number of Units in Structure	Count	Percentage
1-unit, detached	1610	59.3%
1-unit, attached	14	0.5%
2 units	166	6.1%
3 or 4 units	64	2.4%
5 to 9 units	135	5.0%
10 to 19 units	24	0.9%
20 or more units	13	0.5%
Mobile home	654	24.1%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	34	1.3%
Total Housing Units	2,714	100%

At 24% of the total housing units, mobile homes comprise nearly a quarter of the total housing units in the city. The American Community Survey estimates for mobile homes are consistent with the findings of the 2016 housing survey, but appear to undercount the RVs within the city. This is likely due to the fluctuating RV population throughout a typical year.

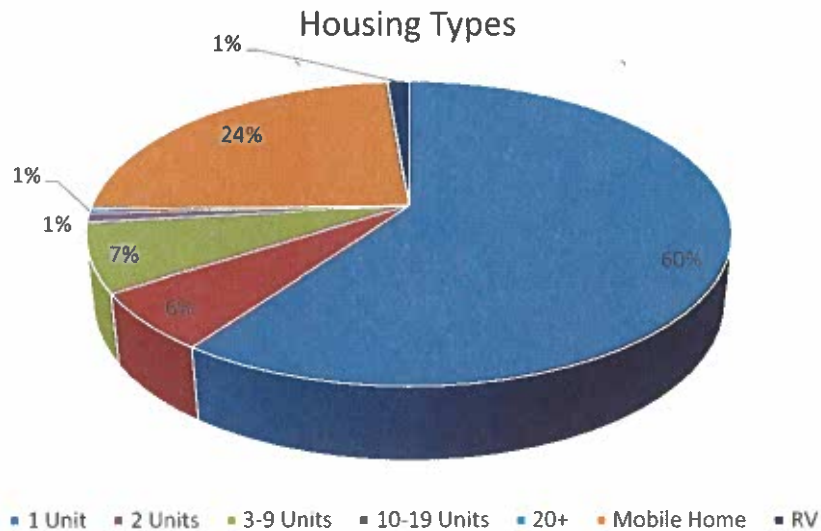


Figure 11. Housing Type (2014 ACS)

4.4.5 HOUSING OCCUPANCY/VACANCY

The following table shows that a slight decrease in total housing units is estimated for the time period between 2010-2014 with a decrease in occupied housing units and increase in vacant housing units. This is well within the margin of error for the American Community Survey housing unit count in La Feria of +/- 259 units. Consequently, this decrease does not reflect an alarming trend or a shortage in housing units. With additional development activity in the years of 2014-2016 it is also expected the total number of housing units in the City of La Feria have increased.

Table 13. Housing Occupancy/Vacancy, 2010-2014.

	2010 Census	2014 ACS	Percentage Change
Total Housing Units	2,867	2,714	-5.3%
Occupied Housing Units	2,396	2,231	-6.9%
Vacant Housing Units	471	483	2.5%
Percentage of Vacant Units	16.4%	17.8%	8.3%

The vacancy rate is estimated at 17%, based on an average of the 2010 Census count and 2014 ACS estimate. The higher the vacancy rate (15% or higher), the more options there are for buyers and the lower housing prices should be; however, the community will also be susceptible to downturn and a lack of continued investment. At lower vacancy rates, prices will rise and investment will be attracted. At very low vacancy rates (less than 7%), there is a risk of speculation and bubble pricing, which can be damaging for the community. Ideally, these forces should stay in balance in order to maximize choice and affordability. KFA recommends that the City target a 10%-12% vacancy rate as a way of continuing to encourage investment and provide choice.

4.4.6 OWNER/ RENTER OCCUPIED

The table below provides ACS estimates for total occupied units within the city and how many of those units are owner and renter occupied. Cameron County Appraisal District (CCAD) data can be used for comparison and to estimate total percentage of owner/ renter occupied housing throughout the city of La Feria for current year 2016. Based on appraisal roll data there are 2,209 residential structures within the city, 42 of those structures are multi-family. Using homestead exemption status and owner and site address information from the appraisal district it is

estimated that 1,228 residential structures are owner occupied. This suggests an owner occupancy rate closer to 56% for the City of La Feria.

Table 14. Owner vs. Renter Occupied (2014 ACS)

	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Total Occupied	Percent Owner Occupied
2014 ACS	1,410	821	2,231	63%

4.4.7 MEDIAN HOME VALUE

The median home value according to the 2014 5-year ACS in La Feria, Texas is \$56,900. The median home value according to the 2010 5-year ACS in La Feria, Texas is \$45,900. This represents an increase of 24% in median home values in the city over past 4 years.

Table 15. Median Home Value, 2010-2014.

	2010 Census	2014 ACS	Percentage Change
Median Home Value	\$45,900	\$56,900	24%

4.4.8 CURRENT MARKET VALUE

Based on realtor.com*, the following is a snapshot of the housing market in La Feria, Texas on May 7, 2016. The building cost for new construction is estimated at \$90.35 per square foot and a representative residential structure would cost \$108,415 (RS Means, 2nd Quarter, 2016). Therefore, the base costs to acquire existing real estate are somewhat lower than new construction and may justify renovation versus new construction.

Table 16. Housing Market Snapshot, May 2016

Median Listing Price	Price Per Square Foot	Median Closing Price
\$95K	\$68	\$92K

*Housing Market median prices are based on all properties for sale in realtor.com, land and multi-unit residences included.

4.4.9 FAIR MARKET RENT

Fair Market Rents (FMRs) are established every year by HUD for each Metropolitan Statistical Area in the country to determine Payment Standards for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, maximum rents in HOME financed rental projects, and initial rents for Section 8 project based assistance. Though the MSA for La Feria includes an area that is broad with wide variations in neighborhood rents, the FMR serves as a barometer to assess local rents and housing costs.

Table 17. 2016 Fair Market Rent (Brownsville-Harlingen MSA)

Unit Type	Efficiency	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR
Fair Market Rent (Monthly)	\$415	\$435	\$582	\$795	\$798

4.5 FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS

As discussed in Chapter 1, Demographics, 34% of households are housing cost burdened. The area Median Family Income is lower than that of the region and the city can seek to address the supply side of housing in response. This means that the city can look to identify and implement strategies that provide for housing that is affordable to these households. These households then have more disposable income to inject into the community on other necessities

and discretionary items. Strategies include encouraging a mix of affordable housing types in the missing middle in high opportunity areas close to jobs and services, continuing to work with local housing providers and housing assistance providers, and rehabilitating existing affordable housing stock.

Based on the results presented in the heatmap, the central area of the city exhibits the highest concentration of deteriorated residences. Investment in the area could be catalyzed by further rehabilitation of existing properties and provide close-in, walkable, small single-family homes in high quality neighborhoods. The number of vacant lots in the central area of the city also presents infill housing opportunities. Many of the vacant lots in the single-family neighborhoods are either vacant because they do not have any structures on them or they have a small portion of a single-family home on them. In addition, many of the older single-family homes in the central area straddle two lots and incentives to redevelop these areas could be explored. Such measures could include amending the land development code to allow for building on smaller lot sizes or a small lot amnesty tool for particular neighborhoods of the city to encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment in the historic core.

As Baby Boomers hit retirement age, surveys show they want much the same housing that Millennials do. Walkable high quality housing in close proximity to goods and services. The drop in RV units coupled with the increase in individuals 45 years and older in the city conveys a move away from a desire to visit in an RV and toward a permanent resettlement. This is evident from the manufactured home communities that have increased in number and housing share over the past decade. The city should also explore strategies that encourage placement of housing for retirement age seniors in vibrant activity areas that do not isolate the elderly and foster the development of life-cycle housing in all neighborhoods. Life-cycle housing is the idea that there is sufficient diversity in the neighborhood of housing type, size, and affordability to allow people to age in place if desired.

4.5.1 PROJECTED UNITS NEEDED

The number of dwelling units necessary to serve the projected population increase through the year 2040 is provided in the following table. The projected number of dwelling units by the year 2040 is based on the following:

1. The city's population is estimated to be **11,530** in 2040.
2. The vacancy rate of total dwelling units is approximately 17% based on an average of the 2010 Census count and 2014 ACS estimate. This vacancy rate appears high and likely includes vacant RV pad sites. As a result a more reasonable assumption of **12%** for the vacancy rate will be used to determine housing need in future years.
3. Census count information from 2000 and 2010 has people per dwelling unit of approximately **3.0** which is consistent with the 2016 housing unit count and population estimate.

Source/Type	Year	Population	Housing Units	Occupied Units	Units Needed
Census	1990	4,360	1,571	1,073	-
Census	2000	6,115	2,895	2,021	-
Census	2010	7,302	2,867	2,396	-
ACS	2014	7,301	2,714	2,231	-
Estimate Utility	2016	7,508	2,989	2,630*	-
Projection	2020	8,610	2,870	2,526	0 in four years
Projection	2025	9,300	3,100	2,728	111 in five years
Projection	2030	10,059	3,353	2,951	253 in five years
Projection	2035	10,795	3,598	3,167	245 in five years
Projection	2040	11,530	3,843	3,382	245 in five years

*Occupied units arrived at by using 12% vacancy rate

4.6 LOCAL CAPACITY

The following entities are those that exist as a local resource toward achieving some the housing goals described in this chapter.

CITY OF LA FERIA/TDHCA HOME PROGRAM

The City of La Feria has completed 9 reconstruction projects under the HOME Program.

CAMERON COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Cameron County Housing Authority's jurisdiction is from South Padre Island to La Feria in Cameron County. The CCHA provides low-income families with safe, decent, affordable housing in addition to promoting programs that will lead to economic self-sufficiency and enhance the quality of life for resident families. The La Feria and La Feria Hawkins are run by the Cameron County Housing Authority and provide 36 units and 20 units, respectively, with rental assistance to very low income households. In addition, Cameron County Housing Authority provides 1,019 Section 8 rental vouchers in La Feria. To qualify for most rental assistance programs a renter must earn no more than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

CITY OF LA FERIA TAX INTEREST REINVESTMENT ZONE (TIRZ)

The City of La Feria TIRZ district is created to develop long-range revitalization plans for areas of the City, which have lacked a wide range of commercial, and single and multi-family housing opportunities. New commercial/retail/food service/office warehouse/ industrial and lodging construction are the key components of the revitalization plan. Increased employment opportunities for La Feria and surrounding county and community residents will be enhanced through the development and redevelopment activity within the Zone. This TIRZ was created with resolution 2010-01.

RETIREMENT COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP

This group was established by the City Commission to identify and pursue retirement community housing opportunities within and for the residents of La Feria.

LOCAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The South Texas Collaborative for Housing Development, Inc. (STCHD) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2009 to provide decent and affordable housing to low and moderate-income families throughout Texas other than Dallam, Lubbock, Hudspeth, and Orange counties.

Currently, the STCHD has an apartment complex as well as an affordable housing subdivision in the La Feria area. These are Sunflower Estates Apartments, and the Sunrise Terrace Subdivision. Cumulatively, these developments provide 208 apartment units that are 1, 2 and 3 bedroom, and 70 single-family rental houses with two, three, and four bedroom units available.

The STCHD also manages single-family rental homes in La Feria. The rental homes include three bedrooms and two baths. In addition, the STCHD offers a number of individual properties for sale with seller financing and general contractor services available. This provides prospective buyers with a simple all-in-one process to purchase a home.

4.7 MAJOR THEMES OF THE HOUSING ANALYSIS

Good balance of housing types

- *There is a good balance of housing types both in terms of scale and in geographic distribution with multifamily units of varying size sited contextually within and around single-family neighborhoods.*

Decrease in dilapidated housing

- *There is substantial decrease in the amount of dilapidated housing in the city overall showing evidence of significant demolition, construction, and remodeling activity since 2007. Approximately 25% of housing is considered substandard in 2016 compared with 31% in 2007.*

Approximately 25% of residential lots are unimproved

- *This presents a substantial infill opportunity in the central area of the city with older housing more likely to be in substandard condition.*

Fewer Recreational Vehicles

- *The 2007 Housing Inventory counted 637 occupied RV sites while the 2016 Housing Inventory counted 332 occupied RV site. The number of RVs has been nearly halved since 2007.*

4.8 HOUSING PLAN

HOUSING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

HOUSING GOAL 1: PROMOTE QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

High quality housing that is affordable to a wide range of income groups and people will attract residents and businesses to La Feria.

Objective H-1.1: Encourage the construction of housing throughout the city which is “affordably priced” at a burden of less than 33% of the median household income. (Median HH Income per ACS 2014 = \$29,130, Monthly housing costs @ 33% = \$801.00)

Actions:

- 34% of households are currently housing cost burdened which means they pay more than a third of total income on housing costs. Build a substantial portion of new housing at \$801/ month or less to bring down this percentage to 20% or less within 5 years.
- 25% of those new housing units provided for households that are housing cost burdened should be renovated, rehabilitated units in existing affordable neighborhoods.

Target Date for Achievement: 2021

Objective H-1.2: Pursue partnership opportunities with local affordable housing providers to provide a variety of housing with options for seniors, young families, and people making 50% or less of area median household income. (50% or less of Median HH Income per ACS 2014 = 14,565, Monthly housing costs so that these household are not cost burdened = \$401.00)

Actions:

- Work to approve and develop a variety of single-family, missing middle, multi-family, and assisted living affordable housing projects affordable to people making 50% or less of area median household income.
- Meet with local housing partners at least 4 times per year to discuss affordable housing opportunities.

Target Date for Achievement: 2019

Objective H-1.3: Invest in public facilities and pursue zoning policies in the traditionally underserved areas of La Feria north of Interstate 2.

Actions:

- Implement the recommendations of the water, sewer, and streets master plan components for areas North of I-2.

Target Date for Achievement: 2026

Objective H-1.5: Ensure quality housing construction through code reviews and compliance inspections.

Actions:

- Permits are requested and completed for at least 95% of all building activity, reducing the frequency of unpermitted work.
- Compile a list of active registered electricians and plumbers doing business in La Feria to provide to the public.

Target Date for Achievement: 2021

HOUSING GOAL 2: DEVELOP LA FERIA AS A FULL-LIFE CYCLE CITY

A diverse mix of housing options throughout all areas of the city allow people to remain in place throughout different life stages and events and provide stability to neighborhoods by allowing long-time residents to remain.

Objective H-2.1: Create complete neighborhoods across La Feria that have access and transportation options to healthy food, good schools, retail, community services, and parks and recreation.

Actions:

- Walkable complete communities are established with public amenities, neighborhood retail, housing, and office appropriately scaled and within a ¼ mile of all residential units.

Target Date for Achievement: 2031

Objective H-2.2: Encourage the development of “missing middle” housing to provide a variety of home ownership opportunities and to serve different housing needs.

Actions:

- Amend zoning regulations by the end of 2017 to reflect more areas permitted for duplex, triplex, four-plex, townhomes, and other residential housing types.
- Consider allowing residential above retail, or live/work units, in retail zoned districts.

Target Date for Achievement: 2017

Objective H-2.3: Target older areas of the city with higher concentrations of deteriorated housing, for redevelopment with changes to code, incentive programs, and public investments.

Actions:

- Consider an amendment in 2017 to the zoning regulations to clarify appropriate areas and guidelines for accessory dwelling units.
- Consider a small lot amnesty program for targeted areas of the city.
- Create expedited permit process for residential additions of 500 square feet or less.
- Expand and connect sidewalk network with wheelchair accessible ramps.

Target Date for Achievement: 2017

HOUSING GOAL 3: SUPPORT HOUSING STABILIZATION ACTIVITIES

Housing stabilization activities are those that assist in the production and preservation of affordable housing for low-income families and individuals.

Objective H-3.1: Pursue funding opportunities with local housing providers and state and federal housing programs to stabilize housing in targeted areas of the city.

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) The TDHCA administers many housing related programs for the State of Texas and an overview can be found at the following: <https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/overview.htm>

Selected programs include:

Single Family Housing

- Neighborhood Stabilization Program
<https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/nsp/>
- Homeowner Rehabilitation Assistance (HRA) Program (HOME)
<https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/home-division/hra.htm>
- Housing Trust Fund
<https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/htf/>

Multifamily Housing

- Housing Tax Credit Programs
<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/multifamily/housing-tax-credits-9pct/index.htm>
<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/multifamily/housing-tax-credits-4pct/index.htm>

- Multifamily Bond Program
<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/multifamily/bond/index.htm>
- Multifamily Direct Loan Program
<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/multifamily/home/index.htm>

Objective H-3.2: Encourage the review and adoption of codes and ordinances that improve local housing and increase efforts to enforce current code, especially for emergency related repairs.

Action:

- Review the threshold for requiring a permit for emergency roof or window repair.
- Allow a general permit program to streamline emergency repairs

Target Date for Achievement: 2021

Objective H-3.3: Develop city programs that educate, incentivize, or assist property owners in rehabilitating deteriorated properties.

Action:

- Develop an emergency supplies program with non-profit partners to proactively deter housing deterioration from water leaks. This would include building supplies such as shingles, siding, decking, valves, and others.
- Support the efforts of non-profit housing repair assistance programs

Target Date for Achievement: 2021

5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development can be defined as the application of public resources to leverage additional sources of investment. By this measure, La Feria has excelled. To date, the city has brought in millions of dollars in state and federal funds to accomplish a broad range of capital projects, including drainage improvements, extension of water and wastewater services, and the construction of a number of public facilities. As its next challenge, the city's success at leveraging federal dollars must be balanced with equal success at capturing private investment.

5.1 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- **Retail Trade** – Retail plays an increasingly essential role in economic development. In addition to providing an amenity for residents, retail developments often shape decisions about infrastructure investments. Large or unique retail outlets may draw in dollars from outside the community, providing an important revenue source for local government. And, in Texas, retail sales tax dollars are an important source of funding for economic development.
- **Industrial** – This sector typically includes goods-producing industries (i.e., manufacturing), as well as related activities like logistics and distribution. Other industries normally characterized as industrial include utilities, mining, and heavy construction. Traditionally, industrial employment has been highly sought after due to its earnings potential and the “multiplier effect” of spending on inputs to production (namely raw materials and energy). The value of industrial jobs remains high despite the increasingly global nature of the manufacturing supply chain and downward pressure on wages.
- **Service** – This sector of the economy encompasses a broad array of occupations serving individuals and businesses. In addition to the entry-level positions often associated with the concept, this sector includes high-wage professional jobs, in fields like engineering, legal services, and healthcare. In recent decades, employment in service industries accounts for an increasing portion of employment nationwide.
- **Government/Administrative** – This sector includes a variety of agencies and quasi-agencies at the local, state, and federal level. Because of its diversity—the sector encompasses administrative functions, as well as publicly operated schools and hospitals—the public sector provides an essential avenue of employment for individuals across a broad range of skills. Once considered to have high job security, budget cuts at all levels of government have resulted in substantial job losses in this sector.

5.1.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMY

Like the Lower Rio Grande Valley generally, the Cameron County economy has its roots in agriculture. Widely known for citrus, the region has long produced a broad range of crops, including cotton, sorghum, and sugar cane. Much of the region's earliest history was tied to the processing and shipping of agricultural products, aided by the completion of the Port of Brownsville in 1936. The region's proximity to Mexico and relatively low cost of living has driven the growth of light manufacturing in the area.

The McAllen–Edinburg–Mission metropolitan area plays a key role as a trade center, drawing people from both sides of the border with an array of retail establishments and personal and professional service providers, including a substantial network of healthcare assets. Tourism is another key aspect of the regional economy, as thousands of “Winter Texans” flock to the area each year to avoid colder northern climates. The area is also a popular vacation destination for Mexican nationals, many of whom have invested in second homes in the region.

La Feria was originally settled as part of a large Spanish land grant to the family of Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí, labeled the first “cattle queen” of Texas. The city retained its agricultural roots well into the last century. Located on what is now an interstate highway, the community's location within the fast-growing Lower Rio Grande Valley offers

a multitude of opportunities. Its geographic location places La Feria in the path of development moving outward from Harlingen and McAllen. In addition, the introduction of the Regional Academic Health Center in Harlingen 2000—now the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine—coupled with demographic trends and the region's proximity to Mexico, has led to a dramatic rise in healthcare related development in the region. The city's ability to capture its share of the region's growth will be a key element in its future success.

5.1.2 DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ACT

Like many parts of the state, passage of the Development Corporation Act of 1979 (the Act) has played an essential role in funding economic development in the region. As initially passed, the Act allowed municipalities to create nonprofit development corporations, which operated separately from municipalities and were funded from private sources. Following a change to the Texas Constitution in 1987 which recognized economic development as a public good, the Act was amended to add Section 4A. This expansion of the Act authorized eligible communities to enact a dedicated sales tax as a means of funding development corporations.

These "4A" corporations (now known as Type A corporations) focused on funding projects in support of new and expanded industrial and manufacturing activities. Section 4B was added in 1991 authorizing the levying of a tax for a broader range of economic development activities. So-called "4B" or Type B corporations can fund all the activities of a Type A corporation, as well as quality of life improvements, such as parks, sporting facilities, and affordable housing. The tax enables hundreds of Texas communities to create a significant revenue stream for economic development.

Under Texas law, local governments are allowed to impose up to an additional 2 percent on top of the state sales tax rate of 6.25 percent, for a maximum allowable rate of 8.25 percent. Table 19 below shows the current local sales tax rates for La Feria and surrounding communities. Each of the profiled cities instituted some form of the economic development tax in the 1990s. La Feria and Donna are only cities among the benchmarks that levy both the 4A and 4B versions of the tax. The remaining cities have each used their remaining taxing authority for property tax relief. San Benito imposed both the 4A and 4B tax in the early 1990s, however, the 4A levy was replaced with the more flexible 4B version in 1995.

Table 18. Economic development sales tax rates for selected cities (with amount of tax and effective date)

	Economic Dev. Type A		Economic Dev. Type B		Property Tax Relief		Regular Rate	
	Amount	Effective Date	Amount	Effective Date	Amount	Effective Date	Amount	Effective Date
City of Alamo			0.005	10/1/1998	0.005	10/1/1998	0.01	10/1/1969
City of Donna	0.005	4/1/1996	0.005	4/1/1996			0.01	4/1/1968
City of Hidalgo	0.005	4/1/1990			0.005	1/1/1990	0.01	10/1/1969
City of La Feria	0.005	10/1/1990	0.005	7/1/1995			0.01	7/1/1968
City of Mercedes	0.005	10/1/1990			0.005	10/1/1990	0.01	4/1/1968
City of Los Fresnos			0.005	7/1/1995	0.005	10/1/1993	0.01	7/1/1970
City of Port Isabel			0.005	1/1/1995	0.005	1/1/1990	0.01	7/1/1968
City of San Benito		¹ see note	0.005	1/1/1995	0.005	10/1/1993	0.01	4/1/1968
City of Weslaco	0.005	10/1/1990			0.005	10/1/1990	0.01	4/1/1968

Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

¹San Benito had 4A tax from 01/01/1993 through 12/31/1994

Economic development corporations (EDCs) funded in this manner are required to file an annual report with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. The Economic Development Corporation of Weslaco reported the highest among the benchmark communities according to the most recent reports available for each community, with more than \$3.3 million dollars in total revenues in fiscal year (FY) 2014, of which \$2.8 million (85 percent) were derived from sales tax. Weslaco was followed by San Benito at \$2.5 million in total revenue. However, the San Benito EDC had the lowest share of total revenues from sales tax among the profiled organization in the year analyzed at just 40 percent. The remaining 60 percent of reported revenues were from grants and matching contributions, rental income and user fees, and bond proceeds and loans.

The EDC reports also indicate the “primary objective(s)” of each organization. Funding for infrastructure and job creation and retention were the most commonly cited objectives. Five of the nine communities profiled indicated that tourism-related activities were among their chief objectives (San Benito, Mercedes, Alamo, Donna, and Port Isabel); while three cited sports facilities and recreation (Alamo, La Feria, and Los Fresnos). San Benito was the only EDC to list community development as a primary purpose; La Feria was the only one to cite affordable housing.

Table 19. Economic Development Corporation revenues and objectives for selected cities (ranked by total revenue as reported)

City	Revenues reported (and fiscal year reported)			Corporation name	Primary Objective (s)					
	Sales Tax	Total	FY		Infrastructure Projects	Job Creation/Job Retention	Tourism	Sports Facilities/Recreation	Affordable Housing	Community Development
Weslaco	\$2,847,102	\$3,336,919	2014	Economic Dev. Corp. of Weslaco		x				
San Benito	\$980,862	\$2,472,996	2014	San Benito Economic Dev. Corp.	x	x	x			x
Mercedes	\$1,837,676	\$1,966,122	2013	Dev. Corp. of Mercedes	x	x	x			
Alamo	\$866,661	\$867,269	2014	Alamo Economic Dev. Corp.	x	x	x	x		
Hidalgo	\$509,974	\$536,936	2013	Hidalgo Economic Dev. Corp., Inc.	x	x				
Donna ¹	\$526,132	\$531,399	2014	Dev. Corp. of Donna, Inc. (4B)	x	x	x			
Donna ¹	\$526,132	\$526,880	2014	Donna Economic Dev. Corp. (4A)	x	x	x			
Port Isabel	\$493,733	\$493,733	2013	Port Isabel Economic Dev. Corp.	x		x			
La Feria ¹	\$291,358	\$442,382	2014	La Feria Ind. Dev. Corp. Inc. (4A)	x	x				
La Feria ¹	\$291,358	\$295,864	2014	La Feria Economic Dev. Corp. (4B)	x			x	x	
Los Fresnos	\$182,422	\$182,566	2014	Los Fresnos Community Dev. Corp.	x	x		x		

Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

¹Note: If total revenues for 4A and 4B corporations were combined, figures for La Feria and Donna would be higher than current order suggests.

5.1.3 RETAIL SALES TAX TRENDS

Although the city has seen steady growth in its taxable retail sales, La Feria continues to lag surrounding communities on per capita basis. At \$2,197 per person in 2013, La Feria's taxable sales fall well below the state average of \$6,124. In fact, all but a handful of the peer comparisons had below-average taxable retail sales per capita. The exceptions were Mercedes, with per capita taxable retail sales of \$18,276 (reflecting the presence of the Rio Grande Valley Premium Outlets); Port Isabel at \$12,035 (a figure likely driven by the region's tourism industry), and Weslaco with \$8,744 in taxable retail sales per capita (driven by a growing cluster of chain and "big box" retailers, including Wal-Mart, Lowe's, and Academy).

Table 20. Taxable retail sales per capita, 2013 (La Feria with comparison to peer communities)

Place	Amount subject to tax, 2013	Population estimate (July 1, 2013)	Taxable retail sales per capita
Mercedes	\$300,161,281	16,424	\$18,276
Port Isabel	\$61,067,472	5,074	\$12,035
Weslaco	\$326,844,303	37,378	\$8,744
State of Texas	\$161,964,639,745	26,448,193	\$6,124
Alamo	\$98,855,316	19,223	\$5,143
Hidalgo County	\$4,108,215,306	818,553	\$5,019
Cameron County	\$1,766,688,468	421,288	\$4,194
San Benito	\$101,545,194	24,671	\$4,116
Hidalgo	\$34,631,857	12,357	\$2,803
Donna	\$42,621,409	16,653	\$2,559
La Feria	\$16,860,423	7,673	\$2,197
Los Fresnos	\$11,185,264	6,274	\$1,783

Sources: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (retail sales); Texas State Data Center (population estimates). Population figures from the Texas State Data Center were used to allow comparison across multiple jurisdictions. July 1, 2013, were most recent estimates available at the time of analysis.

During the past five years, however, La Feria has seen higher rates of growth in its taxable retail sales relative to most benchmark communities. Between 2009 (the official end of the economic downturn) and 2014 (the most recent full year available at the time of analysis), the city experienced a growth of 9.3 percent, well above the state average of 5.5 percent. Only Donna experienced stronger annual growth during this period. Viewed over a ten-year period (2004 to 2014), Mercedes tops the list with an increase of 30.0 percent over the decade. Alamo and Los Fresnos round out the top three, with increases in taxable retail sales of 9.6 percent and 8.3 percent, respectively, between 2004 and 2014.

Table 21. Taxable retail sales, five and ten-year trends. (La Feria with comparison to peer communities in rank order, Cameron/Hidalgo Counties, and State.

2009-2014			2004-2014		
Donna	1	10.6%	4	7.9%	
La Feria	2	9.3%	5	7.8%	
Los Fresnos	3	8.6%	3	8.3%	
Hidalgo	4	7.0%	8	4.6%	
Weslaco	5	5.6%	6	7.0%	
Mercedes	6	4.9%	1	30.0%	
Alamo	7	1.2%	2	9.6%	
San Benito	8	0.7%	7	5.7%	
Port Isabel	9	-0.7%	9	3.7%	
Cameron County		1.7%		2.5%	
Hidalgo County		3.6%		4.7%	
Texas		5.5%		4.7%	

Sources: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. Figures for Texas include in-state and out-of-state sales.

5.2 RELATIONSHIP TO THE REGION

From an employment standpoint, Texas is growing faster than US, and the Lower Rio Grande Valley is growing faster than the State of Texas as a whole. This regional growth is led by Hidalgo County, but La Feria is outpacing Cameron County's growth—likely because of its relationship to region (i.e., positioned at Hidalgo County line). This presents a very advantageous picture going forward.

5.2.1 CONNECTIVITY

The City of La Feria is extremely well connected to both the McAllen MSA and the Brownsville MSA, as well as located within 25 miles of four international border crossings.

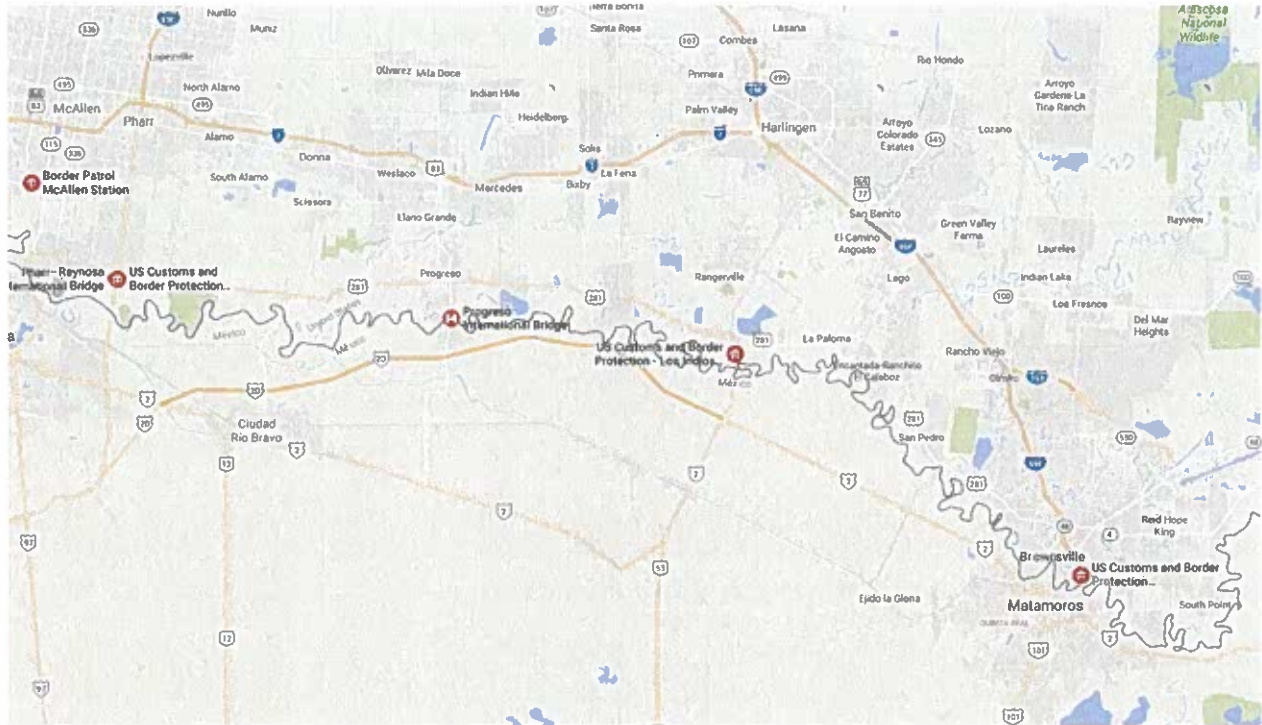


Figure 12. Major international border crossings withing 25 miles.

The following information is excerpted from Wikipedia to describe the Interstate system. There are three major transportation routes linking areas of the region: Interstate 69E, Interstate 2, and Interstate 69C (I-69 corridor). Interstate 2 runs east to west from the City of Brownsville to McAllen and westward towards Laredo. Interstate 69E runs north-south from the City of Brownsville, runs concurrently with highway Interstate 2 to the City of Harlingen, and then North to Raymondville and out of Willacy County towards the City of Kingsville and the City of Corpus Christi. Interstate 69C is referred to as the I-69 corridor that runs north to South. It begins at the U.S./Mexico International Bridge in Reynosa, Mexico and runs through the cities of Pharr and Edinburg through the northern boundary of Hidalgo County.

Interstate 69C (I-69C) is a south-north freeway running through South Texas. Once complete the freeway (with connections to Mexican Federal Highway 97) will begin at Interstate 2/U.S. Highway 83 in Pharr and head northward before terminating at I-69W/US 59 in George West near I-37. For its entire length, I-69C shares its alignment with US 281.

Interstate 69E (I-69E) is a south-north freeway running through South Texas. Once complete the freeway will begin in Brownsville and head northward before terminating near Victoria as both I-69W and I-69E intersect into Interstate 69 towards Houston. For its entire length, I-69E shares its alignment with US 77.

Interstate 2 (I-2) is a west-east Interstate Highway running through the Lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. It begins at the intersection of U.S. Highway 83 (US 83) and Business US 83 west of Palmview and heads eastward before terminating at I-69E/US 77 in Harlingen. For its entire length, I-2 shares its alignment with US 83. I-2 also parallels Mexican Federal Highway 2, a major east-west route that traces the Mexico-U.S. border along the Mexican side of the Rio Grande.

5.2.2 ROLE IN THE REGION

The region's growth is due in part to its pivotal role in international commerce. The Lower Rio Grande Valley has 13 bridges into Mexico, which are organized into five ports of entry (POEs) for reporting purposes:

Brownsville

- Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates (*US Route 77*)
- Gateway International Bridge (*International Blvd.*)
- B & M (Brownsville & Matamoros) Bridge (*Mexico Blvd.*)
- Free Trade Bridge (*FM 509*)

Progreso

- Weslaco-Progreso International Bridge (*FM 1015*)
- Donna International Bridge (*County Road 1554*)

Hidalgo

- Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge on the Rise (*US Route 281*)
- McAllen-Hidalgo Bridge (*US Route 281 spur*)
- Anzaldúas International Bridge (*Stewart Road*)

Rio Grande City

- Los Ebanos Ferry (*FM 886*)
- Rio Grande City-Camargo Bridge (*Pete Diaz Ave.*)

Roma

- Roma-Ciudad Miguel Alemán Bridge (*US Route 200*)
- Lake Falcon Dam Int'l Crossing (*Farm-Market 2098 Spur*)

In 2014, these five POEs recorded nearly 5.6 million pedestrian crossings and nearly 12.0 million vehicle crossings. Of these, the four Cameron County bridges (reported as Brownsville port of entry) accounted for 40 percent of pedestrian crossings and 38 percent of vehicle crossings, or roughly two out of five trips for each mode. Personal vehicles comprised the majority of the vehicle crossings at all five POEs

Table 22. Inbound Crossings by Port of Entry and Mode (2014), for POEs in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr Counties.

Port of Entry	Pedestrian	Vehicles				Trains
		Total	Trucks	Personal Vehicles	Buses	
Brownsville	2,232,400	4,543,168	209,989	4,325,554	7,625	685
Hidalgo	2,290,469	5,121,217	530,093	4,565,037	26,087	0
Progreso	760,655	1,215,863	41,416	1,174,447	0	0
Rio Grande City	60,193	392,101	32,459	359,642	0	0
Roma	247,768	711,458	7,556	703,473	429	0
TOTAL	5,591,485	11,983,807	821,513	11,128,153	34,141	685
<i>Brownsville % of total</i>	40%	38%	26%	39%	22%	100%

Source: US Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Notes: This dataset covers inbound border crossings. US Customs and Border Protection does not collect data on outbound border crossings. Figures represent total annual crossings, not the number of unique vehicles, containers, passengers, or pedestrians entering the US. In other words, a motor carrier may cross multiple times a day as it loads and unloads shipments between the US and Mexico.

5.2.3 EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Cameron and Hidalgo Counties have experienced significant employment growth, with combined gains in the two counties matching the brisk pace set by the state. Annual average employment in the two-county region increased by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.1 percent between 2004 and 2014, just slightly ahead of Texas' 2.0 percent CAGR during the same period. However, employment growth in Hidalgo County has outpaced Cameron County, with Hidalgo County accounting for roughly three out of four (74 percent) of the nearly 69,000 jobs added during the period.

Table 23. Employment Trends, 2004-2014. Covered employment growth in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, with comparison to Texas.

	2004	2014	Change, 2004 to 2014		
			Net change (#)	% change	CAGR
Texas	9,323,537	11,379,184	2,055,647	22%	2.0%
Cameron County	115,947	134,059	18,112	16%	1.5%
Hidalgo County	188,649	239,524	50,875	27%	2.4%
Two-county total	304,596	373,583	68,987	23%	2.1%

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages). CAGR = compound annual growth rate. See Additional Data Sources and Needs (p xx) for discussion of exclusions.

Data compiled by the US Census Bureau helps illustrate employment trends in La Feria relative to Cameron County. Employment in La Feria (defined here as ZIP Code 78559) averaged nearly 1,200 workers in 2013, the most recent year for which ZIP Code-level figures were available at the time of analysis. This figure represents an increase of slightly more than 16 percent from 2003. By contrast, paid employment in Cameron County rose by just over 7 percent during the same period. Average annual payroll per employee in the La Feria area was slightly above the county average in 2013. Payroll data were not adjusted for inflation and cannot be compared across time. However, the analysis suggests wages in the La Feria area have risen faster than the county average during the decade. In 2003, average annual payroll per employee in 78559 was roughly \$150 higher than the county average; in 2013, the gap had grown to slightly more than \$1,800.

Table 24. Private Sector Employment Summary, 2003 and 2013. (ZIP Code 78559 with comparison to Cameron County)

			Change 2003-2013	
	2003	2013	Net	%
ZIP Code 78559				
Total number of establishments	119	126	7	+5.9%
Paid employees for paid period including March 12	1,014	1,178	164	+16.2%
First-quarter payroll (\$1,000)	\$4,804	\$7,795	*	+62.3%
Annual payroll (\$1,000)	\$20,544	\$32,682	*	+59.1%
Annual payroll/paid employee (calculated)	\$20,260	\$27,744	*	+36.9%
Cameron County				
Total number of establishments	6,107	6,306	199	+3.3%
Paid employees for paid period including March 12	92,532	99,190	6,658	+7.2%
First-quarter payroll (\$1,000)	\$442,912	\$614,007	*	+38.6%
Annual payroll (\$1,000)	\$1,861,014	\$2,570,207	*	+38.1%

Annual payroll/paid employee (calculated)	\$20,112	\$25,912	*	+28.8%
---	----------	----------	---	--------

Source: US Census Bureau (County Business Patterns and ZIP Code Patterns) Notes: Figures are for establishments with paid employees and exclude most public-sector employment. *Dollar values not adjusted for inflation. As a result comparisons should be limited to relative change among jurisdictions rather than change in dollar value over time.

Table 26 uses the same data to illustrate the distribution of private-sector employers by industry category in La Feria (ZIP Code 78559) and Cameron County. Retail represented the largest share of establishments in 2013, both for the ZIP Code and the county as a whole. For Cameron County, the loss of 59 retail establishments between 2003 and 2013 reduced the sector's share of all employment from 19 percent to 17 percent. While the number of establishments remained unchanged in La Feria over the same period, the share of all establishments declined slightly as other sectors gained locations in the area. Most notable is the increase in the number of establishments in the Healthcare and Social Assistance Sector. In 2003, La Feria had only one establishment in this sector, accounting for 1 percent of the total. By 2013, this number had increased to 11 establishments, representing 11 percent of all establishments. Cameron County also saw gains in Healthcare and Social Assistance-related establishments, which rose from 13 percent of the total in 2003 to 16 percent in 2013, second only to retail.

Table 25. Number of Private Sector Establishments by Major Industry (2013 vs. 2003) La Feria area (ZIP 78559) with comparison to Cameron County.

Industry Code & Description	ZIP Code 78559				Cameron County			
	2013		2003		2013		2003	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Total for all sectors	126	100%	119	100%	6,306	100%	6,107	100%
44 Retail Trade	20	16%	20	17%	1,100	17%	1,159	19%
81 Other Services (except Public Administration)	18	14%	14	12%	555	9%	591	10%
72 Accommodation and Food Services	15	12%	12	10%	694	11%	575	9%
62 Health Care and Social Assistance	14	11%	1	1%	1005	16%	801	13%
48 Transportation and Warehousing	11	9%	16	13%	306	5%	328	5%
23 Construction	9	7%	12	10%	319	5%	401	7%
31 Manufacturing	6	5%	4	3%	198	3%	222	4%
42 Wholesale Trade	6	5%	9	8%	353	6%	343	6%
53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	6	5%	6	5%	324	5%	306	5%
52 Finance and Insurance	5	4%	3	3%	450	7%	375	6%
54 Professional, Scientific, and Tech Services	5	4%	4	3%	498	8%	422	7%
56 Admin/Support & Waste Mgmt.	5	4%	2	2%	211	3%	226	4%
61 Educational Services	3	2%	14	12%	66	1%	59	1%
11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2	2%	1	1%	41	1%	66	1%
55 Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	1%	1	1%	27	<1%	26	<1%
21 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil & Gas Extraction	—	—	—	—	6	<1%	1	<1%
22 Utilities	—	—	—	—	14	<1%	19	<1%
51 Information	—	—	—	—	72	1%	86	1%
71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	—	—	—	—	64	1%	72	1%
99 Industries not classified	—	—	—	—	3	0%	29	0%

Source US Census Bureau, ZIP Code Business Patterns and County Business Patterns

Note: Figures exclude public sector establishments.

5.2.4 SPECIALIZATION

Location quotient (LQ) analysis is a statistical technique used to suggest areas of relative advantage based on a region's employment base. LQs are calculated as an industry's share of total local employment divided by the same industry's share of employment at the national level. If the local industry and national industry are perfectly proportional, the LQ will be 1.00. LQs greater than 1.25 are presumed to indicate a comparative advantage; those below 0.75 suggest areas of weakness but also point to opportunities for expansion or attraction. A high LQ may also indicate that the good or service is being exported outside the region (or for industries like tourism, that customers are being drawn to the region).

LQs calculated by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics highlight several areas of specialization in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties. Home health related jobs are highly concentrated in the area relative to the US—as evidenced by LQs exceeding 10.0 in both counties—with roughly 38,500 workers employed in the industry across the two counties. Employment in doctors' offices is also slightly more concentrated in both counties. Taken together, these findings point to the counties' role in providing health care and services for surrounding counties.

Transportation and warehousing is another sector where both counties have specializations. Employment in Freight Transportation Arrangement (NAICS 4885) exceeds the national average in Cameron (LQ = 2.56) and Hidalgo (LQ = 2.49), as does General Freight Trucking (NAICS 4841). Cameron also has specializations in Support Activities for Water Transportation (NAICS 4883), reflecting the presence of the Port of Brownsville, Port of Port Isabel, and the Port of Harlingen.

Table 26. Industry Concentrations (September 2015, Cameron and Hidalgo Counties)

NAICS Code	Description	Sept. 2015	LQ (US = 1.00)	LQ >1.25 in both counties	Avg. Weekly Wage	% Chg. From Prior Year
CAMERON COUNTY						
6216	Home health care services	15,060	11.74	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$272	-1
3366	Ship and boat building	1,122	8.44		\$1,064	+11
4883	Support activities for water transportation	315	3.42		\$754	+24
5614	Business support services	2,762	3.23	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$416	-7
1119	Other crop farming	213	3.04	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$462	-4
6241	Individual and family services	5,535	2.71	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$277	+2
4471	Gasoline stations	2,383	2.70	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$386	-36
5323	General rental centers	104	2.67		\$542	+0
4885	Freight transportation arrangement	511	2.56	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$602	+5
4521	Department stores	2,747	2.16	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$342	+0
4239	Misc. durable goods merchant wholesalers	582	2.06		\$539	-4
4421	Furniture stores	415	1.96	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$485	+3
3335	Metalworking machinery manufacturing	343	1.96		\$911	+9
3321	Forging and stamping	152	1.58		\$789	+30
7131	Amusement parks and arcades	326	1.53		\$372	+0
8122	Death care services	200	1.53		\$562	+3
6211	Offices of physicians	3,699	1.51	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,071	+0

NAICS Code	Description	Sept. 2015	LQ (US = 1.00)	LQ >1.25 in both counties	Avg. Weekly Wage	% Chg. From Prior Year
4231	Motor vehicle and parts merchant wholesalers	481	1.50		\$737	+8
4413	Auto parts, accessories, and tire stores	767	1.45	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$493	+4
4529	Other general merchandise stores	2,553	1.43	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$445	+3
5616	Investigation and security services	1,201	1.40		\$551	-17
6244	Child day care services	1,095	1.38		\$340	+14
4411	Automobile dealers	1,636	1.35	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$843	-3
4841	General freight trucking	1,297	1.34	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$847	+4
HIDALGO COUNTY						
6216	Home health care services	23,442	10.16	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$266	+2
6241	Individual and family services	10,980	2.99	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$254	+2
4859	Other ground passenger transportation	489	2.81	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$429	+21
2131	Support activities for mining	1,599	2.74	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,307	-8
2213	Water, sewage and other systems	231	2.74	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$611	+0
4885	Freight transportation arrangement	895	2.49	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$802	+26
4421	Furniture stores	838	2.20	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$624	+6
6219	Other ambulatory health care services	1,087	2.19	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$613	+9
1119	Other crop farming	262	2.08	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$461	+9
4841	General freight trucking	3,502	2.01	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$736	-3
4521	Department stores	4,528	1.98	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$358	-0
6111	Elementary and secondary schools	2,616	1.97	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$765	-6
1111	Oilseed and grain farming	200	1.96	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$493	+14
7212	RV parks and recreational camps	222	1.92	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$316	+4
4482	Shoe stores	661	1.86	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$341	+2
4471	Gasoline stations	2,935	1.85	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$365	-32
4244	Grocery and related product wholesalers	2,412	1.85	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$758	+4
4481	Clothing stores	3,097	1.83	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$277	+3
5179	Other telecommunications	248	1.76	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$569	-11
3114	Fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty	582	1.75	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$466	-7
6115	Technical and trade schools	344	1.73	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$720	+4
4413	Auto parts, accessories, and tire stores	1,610	1.69	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$538	+1
5614	Business support services	2,546	1.66	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$483	+13
4452	Specialty food stores	652	1.60	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$505	+7
4533	Used merchandise stores	439	1.48	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$341	-5
4529	Other general merchandise stores	4,657	1.45	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$429	+7
6211	Offices of physicians	6,376	1.45	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,105	+1
5172	Wireless telecommunications carriers	325	1.42	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$687	-14
4411	Automobile dealers	3,006	1.38	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,030	-4
6213	Offices of other health practitioners	1,909	1.35	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$625	-2
3273	Cement and concrete product manufacturing	434	1.32	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$636	+3
4511	Sporting goods and musical instrument stores	1,204	1.32	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$348	+5

NAICS Code	Description	Sept. 2015	LQ (US = 1.00)	LQ >1.25 in both counties	Avg. Weekly Wage	% Chg. From Prior Year
1112	Vegetable and melon farming	257	1.31	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$797	-8
2373	Highway, street, and bridge construction	749	1.26	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$749	-2

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages). Data are from detailed files downloaded from the US BLS showing employment by month within each quarter and the corresponding LQ. September 2015 was the most recent month available at the time of analysis. See Additional Data Sources and Needs (p xx) for discussion of exclusions.

5.2.5 PRODUCTIVITY (MANUFACTURING)

Productivity is a measure of the value added during the manufacturing process. It is generally considered to be a reflection of the education and skill level of the workforce, the application of advanced processes, and the efficient use of capital equipment (such as production machinery and computers). Productivity is measured by showing the value added per unit of input (usually labor) in the production process. Value added is the difference between the value of goods being shipped out of the plant (for example, finished pickup trucks) minus the materials (such as paint, plastics, metal parts, electronics, and glass) and wages (paid to the workers) that were required to build the finished good.

A broad measure of productivity can be calculated using data from the Economic Census, a survey of business conducted by the US Census Bureau in years ending in '2' and '7.' Based on data from the 2012 Economic Census, the productivity of La Feria's manufacturing workers exceeds that of peer communities (for which data were available), but falls below state and national levels. However, productivity calculations are influenced by the mix of industries present. As a result, comparisons with local peers (which are likely to be more similar) or to national averages (which include the broadest mix) are most appropriate.

Table 27. Value added per Production Worker Hours, Manufacturing (NAICS 31-33)

	Number of est.	Number of employees	Annual payroll (\$1,000)	Production workers, average for year	Production workers, annual hours (1,000)	Value added (\$1,000)	Value added per production worker hour (calculated)
Texas	19,782	767,024	42,529,752	535,317	1,093,353	224,438,438	\$205.28
US	297,191	11,214,165	593,397,004	7,823,314	15,644,691	2,300,722,545	\$147.06
La Feria	5	60	2,275	48	88	10,103	\$114.81
Mercedes	11	158	5,050	109	196	14,180	\$72.35
San Benito	17	251	8,885	183	382	19,722	\$51.63
Weslaco	12	92	4,251	61	129	6,423	\$49.79
Donna	8	278	7,831	231	445	18,039	\$40.54

Source: US Census Bureau (2012 Economic Census), TIP Strategies (calculation of value added per production worker hour). Data were insufficient to include the following peer communities: Alamo, Hidalgo, Los Fresnos, and Port Isabel.

5.3 BARRIER ANALYSIS

This section provides an overview of factors that influence La Feria's development potential. To the extent possible, these factors are compared with peer communities in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, as well as with the state or the US. The section concludes with a matrix summarizing the community's relative performance on each factor using the following scale: favorable (+), neutral (=), or negative (-).

5.3.1.1 UTILITIES/COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

The National Broadband Map provides a standard set of data on broadband access across every community in the US. As of June 2014 (the latest available), the region's access to broadband services was comparable to that of the state and the US with the exception of fiber. While 25 percent of residents nationally had access to that technology, it was not readily available in Hidalgo or Cameron County at the time of the analysis. Download speeds for some customers, most notably residential, were also lower than state or national levels at this time. While similar data were published for communities, data for La Feria and La Feria North were not included due to the small number of cases (fewer than five) upon which the data were based.

Table 28. Selected broadband indicators as of June 2014.

	Cameron County	Hidalgo County	Texas	US
Percent of the population with access to:				
Wireless	100%	100%	100%	99%
Cable	92%	88%	86%	89%
DSL	82%	78%	86%	90%
Fiber	0%	1%	11%	25%
Median download speeds (Mbps)				
Home	3.93	4.99	5.93	6.70
Education/Community Center	–	18.52	12.78	9.99
Medium/Large Business	–	–	9.36	8.86
Small Business	4.88	3.27	2.74	4.39
Mobile	2.19	1.99	2.41	2.13

Source: National Broadband Map (based on data from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's State Broadband Initiative). Data based on fewer than 10 records were omitted (-).

5.3.1.2 TRANSPORTATION

The rail network in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties is comprised of tracks owned by the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) along with multiple shortline railroads, including the Border Pacific Railroad (BOP), the Brownsville and Rio Grande International Railroad (BRG), and the Rio Valley Switching Company (RVSC). In addition, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) also has trackage rights allowing the railroad to operate between Brownsville and Houston. [Source: Texas Department of Transportation, *Lower Rio Grande Valley and Laredo Region Freight Study: Final Report*, July 2011 and www.bnsf.com.]

Trucks remain the primary method of freight transport in the Lower Rio Grande Valley-Laredo region according to a study of freight movement by the Texas Department of Transportation. At the time of publication (July 2011), slightly more than two-thirds of the region's truck traffic (68 percent) was moving to and from other metropolitan areas in the state, including Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, Waco, San Antonio, and Corpus Christi. These figures were projected to remain relatively stable through 2035. A look at the number of licensed motor carriers for selected cities reveals the dominance of truck transportation in the region.

Table 29. Number of Licensed Commercial Motor Carriers, Selected Cities.

	Number
Weslaco	162
Donna	97

San Benito	87
Alamo	82
Mercedes	62
Hidalgo	40
Los Fresnos	30
La Feria	24
Port Isabel	1

Source: Texas Department of Motor Vehicles. Note: The number of carriers licensed in a particular city fluctuates based on factors including the activation/deactivation of licenses and changes in the reporting address of the business.

5.3.2 COST FACTORS

A variety of costs affect business location decisions. This section provides an overview of La Feria's competitive position with regard to a number of such factors, with comparison to other communities in the region and to the state and US, where applicable.

5.3.2.1 WAGE LEVELS

Wage rates in the Brownsville metropolitan statistical area (MSA) are lower for most occupations than in the McAllen MSA. Both metro areas have wage rates well below the state and US. From an industry recruitment standpoint, the region's low labor costs represent an advantage. For talent recruitment and retention, however, low wage rates can be a negative.

Table 30. Wages by Major Occupational Group, 2014. Brownsville and McAllen MSA with comparison to State and US.

SOC Code	Description	Total Employment (Brownsville & McAllen MSAs)	Brownsville MSA	McAllen MSA	Texas	US
	All Occupations	372,220	\$10.95	\$11.32	\$16.18	\$17.09
11	Management	10,250	\$34.86	\$36.72	\$46.69	\$46.75
13	Business and Financial Operations	8,560	\$25.96	\$25.47	\$31.53	\$31.15
15	Computer and Mathematical	2,600	\$25.45	\$23.80	\$37.16	\$38.18
17	Architecture and Engineering	1,820	\$29.71	\$25.16	\$38.46	\$36.43
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science	1,240	\$25.25	\$21.97	\$27.86	\$29.55
21	Community and Social Service	4,550	\$19.40	\$20.11	\$20.47	\$19.85
23	Legal	1,350	\$24.50	\$25.10	\$36.56	\$36.95
25	Education, Training, and Library	36,940	\$21.00	\$21.89	\$22.69	\$22.43
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	2,070	\$14.88	\$16.28	\$20.04	\$21.72
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	22,210	\$29.38	\$27.32	\$28.93	\$29.67
31	Healthcare Support	16,530	\$9.26	\$8.99	\$11.83	\$12.71
33	Protective Service	10,600	\$16.85	\$17.93	\$17.79	\$17.88
35	Food Preparation and Serving Related	33,640	\$8.85	\$8.84	\$8.95	\$9.20
37	Bldg./Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	10,450	\$8.86	\$9.45	\$9.74	\$11.19
39	Personal Care and Service	42,940	\$8.57	\$8.49	\$8.85	\$10.22
41	Sales and Related	42,910	\$9.54	\$9.51	\$12.37	\$12.19
43	Office and Administrative Support	62,950	\$10.98	\$11.69	\$14.87	\$15.64
45	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	1,590	\$11.48	\$8.79	\$10.42	\$9.74
47	Construction and Extraction	9,880	\$12.66	\$13.31	\$16.97	\$19.90

49	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	12,520	\$13.14	\$13.59	\$18.79	\$20.25
51	Production	13,760	\$11.03	\$12.23	\$14.65	\$15.25
53	Transportation and Material Moving	22,890	\$10.34	\$10.31	\$13.65	\$14.20

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey.

5.3.2.2 UNIONIZATION

Texas has low rates of unionization relative to other parts of the country. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 5.6 percent of wage and salary workers in the state were represented by unions in 2015. This group includes both union members (4.5 percent of the total) and workers who report no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union contract. Nationally, nearly 14.8 million workers age 16 years and over were union members in 2015, comprising 11.1 percent of all wage and salary workers. Roughly 16.5 million were represented by unions (12.3 percent of the total).

Table 31. Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers (numbers in 1,000s)

	US		Texas	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
Total employed	131,431	133,743	11,205	11,177
Members of unions ⁽¹⁾				
Number	14,576	14,795	543	503
Percent of total employed	11.1	11.1	4.8	4.5
Represented by unions ⁽²⁾				
Number	16,152	16,441	700	626
Percent of total employed	12.3	12.3	6.2	5.6

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics NOTE: Data refer to the sole or principal job of full- and part-time wage and salary workers. All self-employed workers are excluded, both those with incorporated businesses as well as those with unincorporated businesses.

(1) Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union.

(2) Data refer to both union members and workers who report no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract.

5.3.2.3 UTILITY COSTS: ELECTRICITY

Data compiled by the US Energy Information Administration shows Texas's rates among the lowest in the nation for commercial and industrial users. From an economic development standpoint, Texas' low rates relative to neighboring states presents an advantage.

Table 32. Average Price of Electricity (cents per kWh) to Ultimate Customers by End Use Sector (Texas with comparisons to neighboring states and US, ranked by average for all sectors, October 2015, preliminary)

	Residential		Commercial		Industrial		All Sectors	
	rank	value	rank	value	rank	value	rank	value
US	—	12.73	—	10.70	—	6.88	—	10.33
Louisiana	50	9.55	43	8.66	45	5.62	50	7.83
Arkansas	49	10.00	47	8.27	41	5.88	47	7.96
Oklahoma	38	11.12	49	7.72	50	5.01	48	7.96
Texas	35	11.41	51	7.59	48	5.30	42	8.28
Colorado	29	11.74	26	9.83	20	7.14	23	9.65
Kansas	24	12.34	24	9.88	19	7.17	21	9.77
New Mexico	22	12.71	18	10.29	34	6.15	24	9.55

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Form EIA-826, Monthly Electric Sales and Revenue Report with State Distributions Report (Table 5.6.A. Average Price of Electricity to Ultimate Customers by End-Use Sector).

The Texas Public Utility Commission publishes average annual rates for retail electric providers in areas of the state that are open to competition. Much of the Lower Rio Grande Valley falls in the AEP Texas Central service area.

Table 33. Regional Retail Electric Service Rates, October 2015 (Cents per kWh), Based on average annual rate published for regional providers by the Public Utility Commission.

	Rates (Cents per kWh)			
	Based on Average Monthly Usage			
	500 kWh	1000 kWh	1500 kWh	2000 kWh
Minimum published rate	10.50	9.34	8.79	8.64
Maximum published rate	17.40	15.92	15.62	15.47
Average calculated from published rates	12.74	11.11	10.57	10.43
Median calculated from published rates	12.78	10.81	10.25	10.04

Source: Public Utility Commission of Texas, Competitive Markets Division. Note: Average and median rates calculated by TIP Strategies using average annual prices per kilowatt-hour (kWh) published by the PUC for 11 retail electric providers in the AEP Texas Central service area. Actual rates charged by a specific provider may differ from those shown depending on a variety of factors including customer usage level and season.

5.3.2.4 UTILITY COSTS: WATER/WASTEWATER

Data compiled by the Texas Municipal League can help gauge La Feria's position relative to other similarly sized communities in the state. According to the TML's most recent survey, the average cost of water usage of 5,000 gallons in communities of La Feria's size was \$32.10. The cost of wastewater service for residential usage of 5,000 gallons was \$27.30.

Table 34. Average costs for water and wastewater in Texas communities by population group (Texas Municipal League Annual Water and Wastewater Survey Results, 2015)

Population Group	Water		Wastewater	
	No. of cities reporting	Avg. cost reported for 5,000 gallons	No. of cities reporting	Avg. cost reported for 5,000 gallons
2,000 or less	294	\$38.18	259	\$23.96
2,001 - 5,000	138	\$34.13	139	\$27.20
5,001 - 10,000	81	\$32.10	80	\$27.30
10,001 - 15,000	38	\$30.79	38	\$29.23
15,001 - 20,000	28	\$27.36	29	\$26.86
20,001 - 25,000	10	\$36.71	10	\$33.67
25,001 - 30,000	11	\$29.76	11	\$27.62
30,001 - 50,000	25	\$29.02	25	\$27.77
50,001 - 75,000	13	\$30.00	13	\$30.26
75,001 - 100,000	7	\$24.28	7	\$24.83
100,001 - 200,000	15	\$25.97	15	\$22.97
200,001 - 350,000	4	\$22.98	4	\$24.09
350,001 - 500,000	1	\$19.94	1	\$27.40
MORE THAN 500,000	3	\$28.58	3	\$32.56
Total / Averages	668	\$34.49	634	\$26.07

Source: Texas Municipal League, Annual Water and Wastewater Survey Results (2015)

Table 35. Commercial Customer Water Rates, City of La Feria

COMMERCIAL RATES		
NC-1		
INSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 3,000 gal	\$22.50
	>3,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$4.90
OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 3,000 gal	\$29.25
	>3,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$6.13
NC-2		
INSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 10,000 gal	\$53.45
	>10,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$4.90
OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 10,000 gal	\$69.48
	>10,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$6.13
NC-3		
INSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 40,000 gal	\$198.25
	>40,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$4.90
OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 40,000 gal	\$247.84
	>40,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$6.13

Table 36. Commercial Customer Sewer Rates, City of La Feria

COMMERCIAL RATES		
NC-1		
INSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 3,000 gal	\$20.50
	>3,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$3.60
OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 3,000 gal	\$26.65
	>3,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$4.68
NC-2		
INSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 10,000 gal	\$46.80
	>10,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$3.60
OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 10,000 gal	\$60.84
	>10,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$4.68
NC-3		
INSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 40,000 gal	\$163.25
	>40,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$3.60
OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS	First 40,000 gal	\$212.07
	>40,000 gal, per 1,000 gal	\$4.68

5.3.2.5 LAND & BUILDING COSTS

NAI Rio Grande Valley year-end market report provides an overview of real estate costs by property type for the Harlingen/Brownsville and McAllen/Mission markets. Effective average costs per square foot (the base rent plus any additional fees and escalations) are significantly higher in the McAllen/Mission area. This price differential can also be seen in the cost of developed land.

Table 37. Rio Grande Valley Market Data, Year End 2015.

	HARLINGEN / BROWNSVILLE				McALLEN / MISSION			
	Low	High	Effective Average	Vacancy	Low	High	Effective Average	Vacancy
SUBURBAN OFFICE								
New Construction	\$12.00	\$20.00	\$16.00	15.0%	\$12.00	\$36.00	\$30.00	15.0%
Class A	\$12.00	\$20.00	\$16.00	3.0%	\$10.00	\$21.00	\$20.50	25.0%
Class B	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$11.00	10.0%	\$8.00	\$16.00	\$16.00	12.0%
RETAIL								
Downtown	\$4.80	\$15.00	\$9.90	5.0%	\$10.00	\$21.00	\$20.50	15.0%
N'hood Service Center	\$8.00	\$12.00	\$10.00	5.0%	\$12.00	\$22.00	\$23.00	12.0%
Community Power Center	\$12.00	\$18.00	\$15.00	5.0%	\$15.00	\$32.00	\$31.00	15.0%
Regional Malls	\$30.00	\$55.00	\$42.50	2.0%	\$30.00	\$100.00	\$80.00	4.0%
DOWNTOWN OFFICE								
Class A	\$15.00	\$21.00	\$18.00	10.0%	\$12.00	\$25.00	\$24.50	70.0%
Class B	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$11.00	20.0%	\$8.00	\$15.00	\$15.50	20.0%
INDUSTRIAL								
Bulk Warehouse	\$2.40	\$5.25	\$3.83	10.0%	\$3.30	\$7.80	\$7.20	15.0%
Manufacturing	\$3.00	\$6.00	\$4.50	10.0%	\$4.25	\$11.00	\$9.75	6.0%
Flex	\$3.00	\$12.00	\$7.50	5.0%	\$5.00	\$8.00	\$9.00	10.0%
	HARLINGEN / BROWNSVILLE PRICE/ACRE				McALLEN / MISSION PRICE/ACRE			
DEVELOPMENT LAND	Low		High		Low		High	
In Office Park	\$87,120		\$435,600		\$174,240		\$566,280	
In Industrial Park	\$35,000		\$87,120		\$54,450		\$130,680	
Office/Industrial-Non-park	\$35,000		\$87,120		\$43,560		\$65,340	
Retail/Commercial	\$174,240		\$435,600		\$240,000		\$914,760	
Residential	\$35,000		\$90,000		\$21,000		\$82,000	

Source: NAI Rio Grande Valley

5.3.2.6 PROPERTY TAXES

Table 39 provides a comparison of selected property taxes for each of the benchmark communities. The calculations are intended for purposes of comparison only. They exclude rates for special districts, such as drainage or emergency medical services, which might be levied in portions of selected jurisdictions, as well as the rate for South Texas ISD (which serves Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy). As a result, they should not be interpreted as the rate that would apply to a specific property within a given city. Based on these calculations, Donna had the highest total tax rate,

followed by Mercedes and Alamo. Within the four Cameron County communities analyzed, La Feria had the highest total rate as calculated.

Table 38. Comparison of Various Property Tax Rate Components for Selected Jurisdictions, 2015

Jurisdiction	City	County (Name)	ISD (Name)	Higher education (College)	Total of Rates Shown
Donna	0.982828	0.590000 (Hidalgo)	1.258200 (Donna)	0.185000 (South TX College)	3.016028
Mercedes	0.755000	0.590000 (Hidalgo)	1.380000 (Mercedes)	0.185000 (South TX College)	2.910000
Alamo	0.588100	0.590000 (Hidalgo)	1.399200 (PSJA ¹)	0.185000 (South TX College)	2.762300
Hidalgo	0.351400	0.590000 (Hidalgo)	1.530000 (Hidalgo)	0.185000 (South TX College)	2.656400
Weslaco	0.676700	0.590000 (Hidalgo)	1.139700 (Weslaco)	0.185000 (South TX College)	2.591400
La Feria	0.760000	0.399291 (Cameron)	1.299100 (La Feria)	n/a	2.458391
San Benito	0.728125	0.399291 (Cameron)	1.304900 (San Benito)	n/a	2.432316
Los Fresnos	0.715000	0.399291 (Cameron)	1.190000 (Los Fresnos)	0.107905 (TX Southmost)	2.412196
Port Isabel	0.626327	0.399291 (Cameron)	1.081634 (Point Isabel)	0.107905 (TX Southmost)	2.215157

Source: Specified rates as published by Cameron County and Hidalgo County appraisal districts. Totals calculated by TIP Strategies. Totals exclude special districts (e.g., water, drainage, EMS) and South Texas ISD which serves students across Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy County (2015 rate = 0.049200). Totals are for purpose of comparison only and should not be interpreted as reflecting the applicable rate on a given piece of property within the jurisdiction. ¹Pharr-San Juan-Alamo

5.3.2.7 FINANCING & STATE COSTS

Financing costs in the region differ by the type of loan and the size of the issuing bank. Table 40 provides examples of costs reported by three Cameron County banks of various sizes as of December 2015. Each bank's financing costs are then compared to a group of peer institutions (as defined by Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council) and to the state average. While the sample is not comprehensive, it suggests that financing costs in the region are higher than average, with some exceptions. However, average rates in Texas are higher than reported by the national peer groups for nearly every loan type and size of bank shown.

Table 39. Financing Costs in Cameron County, December 2015, with comparison to state average and national peer group.

	Insured commercial banks having assets between:						State avg.
	\$50M and \$100M*		\$300M and \$1B		\$1B and \$3B		
	Local bank	Peer group	Local bank	Peer group	Local bank	Peer group	
Yield on or Cost of:							
Total Loan & Leases (TE)	6.07	5.53	6.32	5.04	5.46	4.71	5.66
Loans in Domestic Offices	6.07	5.52	6.32	5.02	5.46	4.68	5.64
Real Estate	6.03	5.39	6.39	4.98	5.85	4.69	5.49
Secured by 1-4 Family Res. Property	6.07	5.44	6.32	5.00	5.66	4.58	5.65
All Other Loans Secured by Real Estate	5.93	5.41	6.41	5.01	5.89	4.76	5.43
Commercial & Industrial	6.22	5.83	6.00	5.17	4.49	4.74	5.65
Individual	8.39	6.92	8.86	6.42	5.21	5.94	7.02
Agricultural	N/A	5.35	6.44	5.15	5.77	4.84	5.71
# of banks in peer group:		295		1,239		342	447

Source: Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council, Uniform Bank Performance Reports for selected Cameron County banks. Note: *Category includes banks with assets in the specified range and "with 2 or fewer full service banking offices and located in a metropolitan statistical area." M= million; B=billion; TE = tax-exempt

While there are a number of rankings of business costs at the state level, Moody's Analytics Cost of Doing Business Index is one of the few that includes metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). Moody's index compares the cost of doing business across four components for metropolitan areas: unit labor cost, energy costs, state and local taxes, and office rents. States and the District of Columbia are ranked on three of the four components, due to a lack of state-level data for office rents. Labor costs represent a significant component of the ranking and are based on Moody's calculation of compensation per dollar of output for selected industry classifications at the three-digit level. Texas' relatively low unit labor costs and tax burden contributed to its ranking among the lowest-cost states. Likewise, both the Brownsville and McAllen rank among the lower-cost MSAs among the 384 areas evaluated.

One challenge presented by the use of the Moody's index is its treatment of energy costs. The energy cost index compares average commercial and industrial electricity costs (in cents per kilowatt-hour) for each state and MSA against the national average. Because industrial rates are typically significantly lower than commercial rates, however, the two rates are combined into a single component for each geography, with the relative importance of each rate weighted to reflect the national consumption patterns. While this step is taken to reduce bias (because areas with a large proportion of industrial users would appear to have exceptionally low rates), it likely discounts the competitive advantage of states like Texas. This discrepancy can be seen in the fact that Texas ranks 28th among states on energy costs in the Moody's index, despite having commercial and industrial rates well below the national average according to the published data presented in Section 5.3.2.2.

Table 40. Cost of Doing Business (ranking on overall index and components). Higher ranking indicates higher costs relative to the US, lower ranking indicates lower costs.

	Brownsville MSA		McAllen MSA		Texas	
	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank
Cost of Doing Business	86	226	90	153	92	39
<i>Unit Labor Cost</i>	95	217	98	181	94	40
<i>Energy Cost¹</i>	122	81	139	57	89	28
<i>State & Local Tax</i>	68	341	66	360	82	47
<i>Office Rent</i>	50	363	49	364	—	—

Source: 2012 State Cost of Doing Business Index, as published in *North American Business Cost Review: 2014 Edition*, Moody's Analytics (October 2014). State rank is among 50 states and District of Columbia. Regional figures are ranking for Brownsville and McAllen metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) among 384 metro areas evaluated. ¹The energy cost component combines industrial and commercial electricity costs into a single rate weighted according to national consumption patterns. This step is taken to minimize the bias created by states with "a particularly large portion of industrial consumption" since rates for industrial customers are typically much lower (see Figure xx). As a result, this approach overstates energy costs for states with large industrial users like Texas.

5.3.3 OPERATING CONDITION FACTORS

The data presented above was used to prepare the matrix of "operating conditions factors" presented below. Where applicable, ratings are based on quantitative findings. However, not all factors are readily quantifiable. For these factors, the rating is based on the experience of the consulting team in evaluating markets across the US.

Table 41. Operating Condition Factors Matrix
Strength (+), neutral (=), weakness (-)

	Rating	Comments
Unskilled labor supply	+	Employment data point to a large supply of unskilled labor and competitive wage rates in the region.
Skilled labor	=	Skilled labor is in tight supply nationally. The workforce analysis points to concentrations in several "middle skills" jobs including teachers, public safety workers, welders, and fabricators.
Productivity	+	Calculations of value added per production worker hour point to higher levels of productivity for manufacturing operations in La Feria relative to peer communities.
Unionization	+	Texas has low rates of unionization relative to other parts of the US. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, an average of 5.6 percent of employed workers in the state were represented by unions in 2015 compared with 12.3 percent nationally.
Labor-management relations	+	Texas is a right-to-work state which is generally seen as an advantage in industrial recruitment.
Electric power availability	+	Many retail electric providers serve the region. Industrial rates in the state are significantly lower than in most parts of the US.
Water and sewer availability	+	La Feria has completed a number of improvements to its water and wastewater system. Based on a comparison with average rates for similarly sized communities, La Feria's rates are competitive.
Gas availability	=	Service is available.
Common motor carrier service	=	La Feria has fewer licensed motor carrier services located within its border, however, these services are widely available within close proximity.
Telecommunications availability	-	Based on published data, La Feria has more limited access to broadband than surrounding communities.
Rail/freight services	+	The presence of the Port of Brownsville coupled with the region's proximity to Mexico helps ensure the presence of a strong transportation assets including Class 1 rail service (Union Pacific) and a network of freight transportation services.
Availability of air service	+	The region is served by three commercial airports—Valley International Airport (Harlingen), McAllen Miller International Airport, and Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport—as well as a number of general aviation facilities.
Vocational education facilities	+	La Feria is roughly 20 minutes from one of 10 campuses in the Texas State Technical College system.
School facilities	=	La Feria ISD meets academic performance standards and outperforms a number of peer communities with regard to annual dropout rates.
Medical services	+	The Lower Rio Grande Valley has a wide range of healthcare assets. The presence of a medical school should continue to attract personnel and establishments to the region.
Natural features, resources, and geography	+	La Feria's proximity to Mexico, easy access to coastal areas, and favorable weather provide advantages relative to other parts of the state and US.
Economic development tools	+	The presence of the economic development sales tax provides Texas communities with a dedicated source of funding. La Feria

	has the maximum allowable rate and the presence of both Type A and Type B funds provides maximum flexibility.
Financing costs	According to published data reviewed for this analysis, financing costs in Cameron County are slightly above the state average and slightly higher than peer institutions in each asset size.

5.4 ADDITIONAL DATA SOURCES AND NEEDS

Few published data sources track economic activity below the county level. As a result, it is difficult to parse out La Feria's economic picture from that of Cameron County. In the case of workforce, the analysis is further complicated by differences in methodology and coverage between the various data sources used. Data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), produced through a state-federal partnership, is one of the most commonly used and most comprehensive sources of employment statistics. However, QCEW does not provide data below the county level and only captures workers covered under the state's unemployment insurance program. As a result, it *excludes* self-employed workers, most agricultural workers on small farms, all members of the Armed Forces, elected officials in most states, most employees of railroads, some domestic workers, most student workers at schools, and employees of certain small nonprofit organizations.

ZIP Code Business Patterns (ZBP) data, compiled by the US Census Bureau, is useful for understanding sub-county employment trends. A related data set, County Business Patterns (CBP), was used to provide context for La Feria within Cameron County. Employment figures differ from those found in QCEW due to both time periods—2013 is the most recent for the ZBP/CBP data—and coverage. Like QCEW, the ZBP/CBP data do not include self-employed individual and those employed in private households (e.g., nannies, cooks, maids, gardeners). Unlike the QCEW (which does capture some farm workers and public-sector employees), the ZBP/CBP data *exclude* all agriculture employment and most government workers (e.g., public school teachers, postal workers, and members of the Armed Forces).

Finally, the commuting data presented is part of the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) Partnership. This relatively new program, housed at the US Census Bureau, combines information from a number of federal agencies to document local workforce characteristics. While the data do include government workers and estimates of self-employed workers (based on federal income tax data), reporting inconsistencies can affect data quality. In La Feria, for example, employees of the La Feria ISD are not captured in the city's commuting patterns. According to the Census Bureau, school district employment is often aggregated at regional "headquarters" locations rather than at the place of employment (i.e., the individual school). As a result, commuting patterns understate the number of people who work in La Feria.

For purpose of this analysis, the data reviewed is appropriate and reflects commonly accepted standards. Steps for tracking local economic activity at the local level in the future include:

- compiling data on building permits and certificate of occupancy filings to track business growth,
- conducting annual business retention surveys to gauge hiring plans and identify employer needs, and
- collecting aggregate data from major employers regarding the ZIP Code of residence for their employees to supplement federal commuting patterns data.

5.5 RETAIL THRESHOLD

During the course of discussions with the City Commission and the public, the desire for more retail opportunities was expressed. Respondents to the community survey indicated that "Encouragement of new business to locate to

La Feria” was a top priority, as was the need for retail, restaurants, a grocery store, and entertainment options such as a movie theatre.

The consultant team reached out to Dallas and Austin-based developers who have studied the Lower Valley for possible retail and entertainment projects, to ask about the barriers to development. Their response was the same: a major anchor grocery store and pad tenants for fast food are looking for a population of 30,000 people within a 20 minute drive. The reality is that La Feria and its surrounding area within a 20 minute drive have not yet achieved that population threshold. The consultant estimate at this time is that within a 20 minute drive radius, there is between 12,000 and 18,000 population.

Both developers reassuringly indicated that they have “no doubt” that the area will achieve that status within the planning horizon for this document.

5.6 DESTINATION REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

A second topic which drew questions at the initial public meeting and comments in the community input survey concerned the redevelopment possibility for the block manufacturing facility adjacent to the Central Business

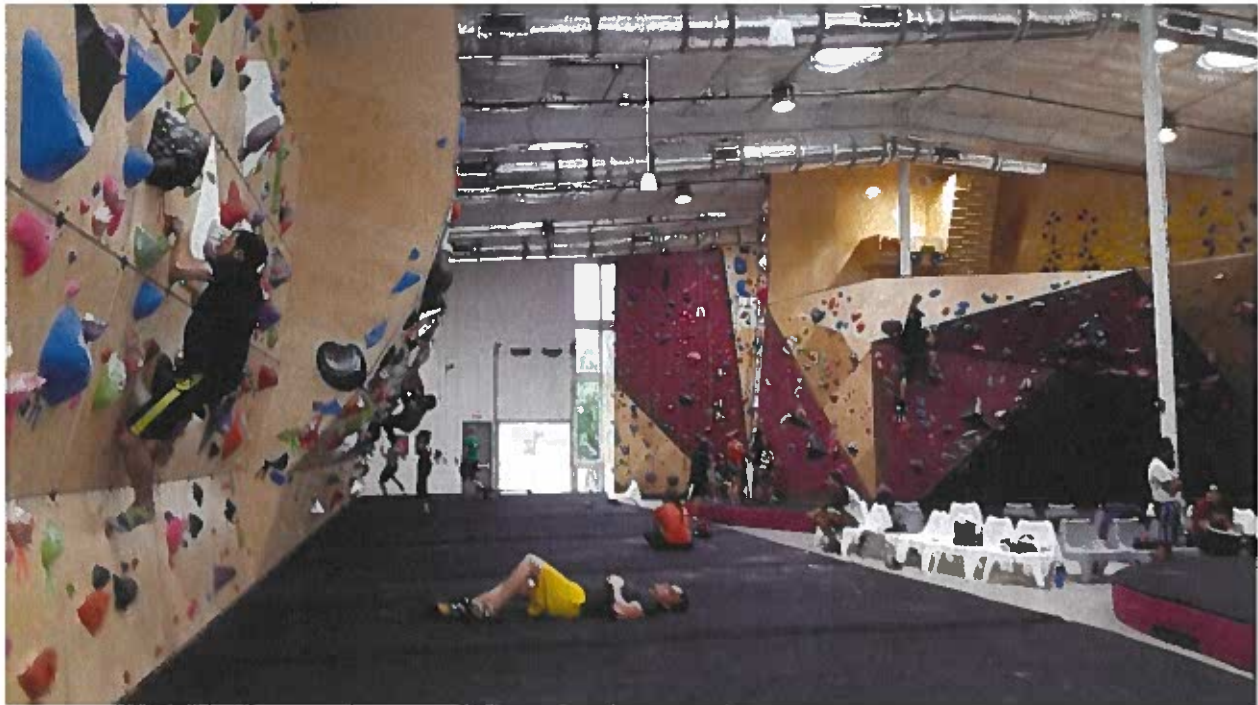


Figure 13. Indoor Climbing Gym as a redevelopment concept.

District, or simply its relocation. The respondents and public comment expressed concern about the aesthetics of this site. The consultant recommendation in this instance is to begin a dialog with this property owner, with the intent of understanding their operation and potentially their needs for expansion, or what might incentivize a voluntary relocation. It should be remembered at all times that the operation has been a taxpayer and member of the business community for many years. Once the business operations needs are understood from the perspective of the owner, a “win-win” alternative site can be brought forward.

There are several older and vacant warehouse facilities along the railroad tracks which may no longer be suitable for the manufacturing or distribution activity for which they were originally built. These spaces may be suitable for renovation into an indoor entertainment venue (such as a “Main Event” or “Laser Tag” or even an indoor rock-climbing facility), and this would be worth incentivizing not only due to the recapture of tax base, but their proximity to the CBD and the type of use which is compatible with CBD goals, and an expressed need for more entertainment options.



Figure 14. Museum/Learning center
Redevelopment Concept (Example: Hill
Country Science Mill, Johnson City, Texas)

In any case, whether as part of a relocation for the existing tenant or the repurposing of a vacant building, the underlying “30,000 population” criterion must be met. However, from a policy perspective, the City can position itself to be able to take advantage of such an opportunity when it does arise.

One alternative redevelopment strategy for these structures is the development of a museum, such as the Hill Country Science Mill in Johnson City, Texas. This old cotton mill was repurposed several years ago with a series of science-based exhibits intended for school groups. Given La Feria’s excellent schools and its history, a museum of this concept could be a good fit. Funding would most likely require private and/or non-profit fundraising. Again, the proximity to the Central Business District would make this destination a good magnet to bring visitors to restaurants.

5.7 MEDICAL, LABORATORY & CARE FACILITIES

The economic data also revealed that La Feria is well-suited to provide medical and nursing care given the number of existing facilities and a workforce with experience in all aspects of care. Regionally, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Medical School has opened, and the La Feria ISD specialty programs are producing a talented workforce which can be harnessed locally. While it is not likely that a new regional hospital will be built directly in La Feria, the fact that the city sits midway between McAllen and Harlingen and the hospitals in those cities means that there is equidistant proximity for support services, such as testing laboratories or even potentially for medical supply manufacturing.

5.8 MAJOR THEMES OF THE ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS

- *La Feria is well-positioned for success. Its location along an interstate highway between two fast-growing metropolitan areas and proximity to Mexico mean the city is in the path of growth in all sectors (residential, retail, healthcare, and industrial).*
- *The presence of the economic development sales tax ensures a steady source of funding for economic development. The passage of both Type A and Type B tax provides maximum flexibility in the use of funds.*
- *La Feria has outpaced Cameron County in terms of the rate of growth of jobs and establishments, and has shown strong retail sales growth (in percentage terms) relative to its peers.*
- *Local and regional strengths include healthcare, transportation and warehousing, retail, and agriculture.*
- *Retail and entertainment uses will begin to emerge as the area population grows.*
- *Redevelopment opportunities will exist with older industrial facilities.*

5.9 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The following goals and objectives provide a framework for a more aggressive approach to economic development going forward.

5.9.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Position La Feria to capture outward expansion of development from McAllen and Harlingen.

Goal 2: Make downtown a focal point for activity.

Goal 3: Continue to build on the city's talent-focused assets.

Objective ED-1: Present a clear, integrated permitting and economic development process.

Actions:

- Continue to offer the Code of Ordinances online
- Develop and provide development-related information online (forms, checklists, process flowcharts, calendars, etc).
- Build out the economic development page of the city's website. This page should include information about relevant data and assets, available incentives (including non-financial incentives such as fast-track permitting), and contact information.

Target Date for Achievement: 2017

Objective ED-2: Create a pro-active zoning scheme which recognizes regional expansion, in anticipation of the "30,000" threshold.

Actions:

- Utilize the Future Land Use Map to indicate that the City is supporting new growth in preferred locations.
- Develop a distinct "highway commercial" district which provides predictable standards for such things as building articulation, lighting, landscaping, for example.
- Develop a Gateway overlay district with input from the development community to help create landmarks at key locations.

Target Date for Achievement: 2018

Objective ED-3: Support the emerging agglomeration of logistics, trucking, limited warehousing and distribution in the Cantu Rd/FM 2556 Corridor.

Actions:

- Visit with these business owners to determine their needs
- Create a formal Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP)
- Ensure that capital improvements, such as road maintenance of expansions, are completed and funding is available.
- Protect these uses from conflicting adjacent uses (low and medium density residential, for example)

Target Date for Achievement: 2018

Objective ED-4: Embrace multiple opportunities for medical services and care facilities

Actions:

- Look for opportunities to have aging care and medical care collocated or in close proximity
- Conduct additional investigations into medical support service opportunities, such as laboratories, medical equipment manufacturing or medical supply manufacturing/distribution.
- Use Technology Center and relationships with OLLU and LFISD to identify and train key and emerging medical care-related occupations.

Target Date for Achievement: 2019

6 EXISTING LAND USE

6.1 OVERVIEW

The Future Land Use Plan is perhaps the most important component of a Master Plan. The Future Land Use Plan is not only a map indicating preferred patterns of future development, but also background and guidance to City staff and elected officials, the public, and the development community on why and how land should be utilized in particular areas of the community. At the core of the Future Land Use Plan are the promotion of public safety, health, and well-being, and the preservation of important community features.

The Future Land Use Plan should be particularly consulted by the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and City Staff in decision-making about changes to the zoning map and ordinance, the coordination of public improvements during the subdivision process, economic development activities, the consideration of revisions to codes such as: zoning, subdivision, sign regulations, landscape requirements, building codes, etc. and the pursuit of grant funding.

6.2 LAND USE INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

An inventory of existing land uses was conducted as a quantitative means of assessing the relative availability of land uses and their spatial distribution throughout the community. While this analysis can be helpful in identifying overall trends, it is only one indicator of a community's health and its ability to respond to changes in regional economic conditions.

A windshield survey of every parcel in the city, including some areas of the ETJ, was performed during the period of March 22 – March 23, 2016 and April 11 – April 13, 2016. The windshield survey utilized 2015 Cameron County Appraisal District parcel layer data, the 2007 Comprehensive Plan information and aerial photography to assist in determining land uses, property boundaries, and occupancy/active status.

The land uses were identified and categorized, along with their corresponding acreages, using a three-digit coding/classification system, modified from the Fairfax County, Virginia standard method¹. Since the Fairfax method provides detail down to the detailed use level, these uses were then aggregated within the Fairfax hierarchy to provide a general (single digit code) reporting classification profile.

Table 42. Existing Land Use Inventory.

Land Use Classification	Area (ac)	% of total
Agricultural	1939.2	40.5%
Commercial Services	131.9	2.8%
High Density Residential	92.0	1.9%
Industrial	94.9	2.0%
Low Density Residential	1329.7	27.8%
Manufactured Housing/RV	97.1	2.0%
Medium Density Residential	9.24	0.2%
Comm. Svcs./Mini-warehouse	9.24	0.2%

¹ <https://www.planning.org/lbcs/background/scopingpaper.htm>

Office	2.28	0.0%
Open Space	582.39	12.2%
Parking	1.92	0.0%
Parks	28.98	0.6%
Public/Institutional	188.88	3.9%
Retail	68.85	1.4%
Right-of-Way	47.87	1.0%
Utilities	163.40	3.4%
Total	4788.19	100%

6.2.1 EXISTING LAND USE MAP

The land use inventory was mapped during the windshield survey process in an ESRI format .shp file, within Quantum GIS 2.12 software. This map is color-coded according to the Fairfax standard model. This Existing Land Use Map is included as Attachment 3.

6.2.2 BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT

The land use “health” of a community is really a qualitative question asked about a dynamic, organic entity. Much like the lab work that is common to provide some indicator for a person’s health, there is a benchmark assessment that can be done which is intended to provide a snapshot of the community’s land use health. There are some limitations to trying to employ a benchmark land use comparison approach. However, as long as the community recognizes this and establishes policy based on this partial representation of the community’s health, but other more significant factors, such as debt ratios, vacancy rates, commuting patterns, and housing cost trends, this analysis can still present some fair and general insight. There is no standard local, regional, or state-wide comparative model which is readily available for use in La Feria. Many communities over time have utilized the Bartholomew model as a benchmarking means². However, this is based upon decades-old land use and economic considerations, is generally indicated for larger cities, and therefore should be interpreted with caution. The Bartholomew method was intended to ensure that ample space was eventually zoned for various uses, and that overzoning³ did not occur. To this extent, the exercise is still relevant, but in comparing industrial and commercial land uses, there have been fundamental economic shifts since Bartholomew first developed this method. Additionally, in present-day La Feria an aging baby boomer demographic will impact the guideline ratios suggested by the Bartholomew model.

In the table below, the column “Acres per 100 Persons” should be compared to the Standard Model ratio. Where the Acres per 100 Persons value is lower than the Bartholomew Standard model, it can be interpreted that the community has not dedicated enough land use area in its planning to meet the needs of the community “at a healthy level”. Likewise, where the Acres per 100 Persons value is higher than the Bartholomew Standard model, it implies that there is either significant market choice or even the risk of overzoning (if the plan were implemented into zoning). In lieu of a Bartholomew ratio to benchmark parks and open space land use, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standard values have been included.

² Bartholomew, Harland. *Land Uses in American Cities*. Harvard, 1955.

³ Overzoning is a condition in which the relative overabundance of a land use results in land devaluation, due to the loss of unique characteristics that are usually suited to the particular land use.

Table 43. Existing Land Use Benchmark Summary

Land Use	Area (ac)	Acres per 100 persons	Standard Model (Bartholomew)	NRPA Standard
Agricultural	1,939	2.58	n/a	n/a
Single Family Residential	1,436	1.91	12.00	n/a
Multifamily Residential	92	0.12	0.30	n/a
Commercial	212	0.28	0.83	n/a
Industrial	95	0.13	3.00	n/a
Parks/Open Space	611	0.81	n/a	0.625 - 1.05
Public	402	0.54	7.00	n/a
TOTAL	4,788			

6.3 MAJOR THEMES OF THE EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

Residential Land Use Themes

- *Single Family in some cases is situated too close to highways*
- *Single family is located at future arterial intersections in some cases.*
- *Multi-family options well-spaced/placed to create new village centers*
- *Mobile home rules (city ordinance and private) have been mostly effective at managing appearance*
- *RV parks are situated in some cases too close to major highways and will likely be moved and or phased down or out over time.*
- *Connectivity between neighborhoods needs to be addressed*
- *Oldest part of La Feria retains character as a desirable neighborhood with many options.*

Retail Land Use Themes

- *Key Intersections with good access and high visibility are under-developed.*
- *There is a diversity of restaurants and entertainment missing from the present mix of retail uses.*
- *Local neighborhood businesses (personal services) are under-developed and need guidance and assistance with structural renovations*
- *Central Business District is over-represented with professional and personal services (vs. retail and entertainment)*

Commercial/Industrial Land Use Themes

- *Emerging agglomeration of logistics/trucking and limited warehousing in USDA study area (Cantu Rd./FM 2556)*
- *Repair-type uses emerging in areas close to residential and without development guidance*
- *Low rate of manufacturing-type industrial activity overall*
- *Two older industrial areas along railroad downtown surrounded by vacant land, suggesting that they may need redevelopment.*

Institutional

- *Both LFISD and City of La Feria facilities are highly concentrated in the central part of the city.*
- *There is a lack of institutional uses north of Expressway, south of Arroyo, and west of the canal.*

Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Agriculture

- *Parks are exceptionally well developed compared to many cities of this size.*
- *Parks provide an exceptional diversity of uses and recreational opportunities for a city of this size.*
- *Parks are heavily concentrated in the central part of La Feria*
- *Conversion of agricultural land part of urbanization process and also influenced by global market conditions.*
- *Citrus is still present and worthy of preservation to retain that connection to La Feria's roots.*

7 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

7.1 FUTURE LAND USE PLANNING AREA

The Future Land Use Map is shown on Attachment 4. This map depicts the location of residential and non-residential land uses inside the current city limits its extraterritorial jurisdiction, and beyond these limits in anticipation of growth.

7.2 LAND USE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Play to La Feria's inherent strengths of location, schools, available land and infrastructure capacity, to capture outward expansion of development from McAllen and Harlingen.

Goal 2: Provide a careful balance of land uses, offering a broad mix of residential and non-residential uses.

Goal 3: Focus on placemaking and compatibility.

Objective FLU-1: Promote managed, well-coordinated development that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

Actions:

- Consult the plan regularly, in decisions about zoning, land use, interdepartmental and interagency coordination, as well as day-to-day development issues and applications.
- Maintain a continuous and coordinated planning process that involves citizens, stakeholders, the Commission, various city departments, and outside entities in deliberations concerning policy
- Develop a standard requirement for the separation and buffering of adjacent, incompatible or conflicting land uses.

Target Date for Achievement: 2016-2036

Objective FLU-2: Encourage a continued diversification of the tax base by planning for the inevitable retail and commercial service areas along major thoroughfares and intersections, to increase opportunities for residents and business development

Actions:

- Provide distinct industrial and commercial service areas where they naturally agglomerate, but reserve them separate from residential areas.
- Maintain a continuous and coordinated planning process that involves citizens, stakeholders, the Commission, various city departments, and outside entities in deliberations concerning policy
- Protect key retail-oriented intersections with targeted retail zoning districts, and gateway designations where necessary.
- Proactively begin discussions with target retail and commercial developers about the need for anchor retail goods, services, and entertainment.

- Prepare a 3-year Municipal Annexation Plan to secure the city limits within the ETJ.

Target Date for Achievement: 2017

Objective FLU-3: Promote development and redevelopment with distinct characters and identities, and allow these areas to maximize their potential while providing shared open space and a well-connected transportation network

Actions:

- Create the first of several “Pubelito Moderno” mixed residential and care developments to accommodate multiple stages of housing needs and promote the interaction between different cohorts within the community.
- Preserve the remaining citrus orchards by allowing for increased density in exchange for preservation. Convert the orchards to public use.
- Allow small footprint retail and personal service uses to occur within walking distance of integral neighborhoods.

Target Date for Achievement: 2019

Objective FLU-4: All areas within the City of La Feria should have access to public facilities, services, and parks within 1-1/2 miles

Actions:

- Begin a site selection process for police, fire department and EMS facilities north of I-2.
- Secure the property necessary to implement the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan

Target Date for Achievement: 2016-2036

7.3 LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

7.3.1 RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF THE PLAN

The plan is designed to protect existing residential neighborhoods. As growth occurs, it will be important to recognize the existing areas with careful separation and buffering of uses. In addition, the Thoroughfare Plan has been designed to route non-residential traffic outside of these areas and facilitate access and circulation between residential and retail/commercial areas. The Plan includes three general groups of land use, of an approximate density to correspond to their intensity (and utility service planning).

7.3.1.1 LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE (< 2 UNITS PER ACRE)

This use is representative of traditional, single-family detached dwelling units, including larger-lot residences, and reflects the largest land use category. Low density residential land use areas are usually not located adjacent to major thoroughfares or other incompatible land uses, and are in proximity to existing single-family residential land

use. As the City contemplates changes to its zoning regulations, it should encourage a variety of lot sizes within the low density district, to offer good market choice.

7.3.1.2 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE (2-5 UNITS PER ACRE)

This use generally includes two-family, attached dwelling units, such as duplex units, patio homes, and townhomes. Medium density land uses often provide areas for “empty nesters” who may not want the maintenance of a large-lot single-family home, and for young families who may find a townhome or duplex more affordable than a single-family home. It is anticipated that new areas for medium density land use will be developed in the future.

7.3.1.3 HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND USES (5-12 UNITS PER ACRE)

At the top end of the density scale, high density typically includes apartments and condominiums in attached buildings. Generally, medium density uses should also be permitted in any area designated for high density use, as the Future Land Use Plan emphasizes flexibility as a stated goal. The plan includes several areas for multiple-family or higher density residential development. These areas have been located next to collectors or major arterials to promote ease of access and to avoid congestion. Multi-family complexes would be appropriate in density ranging from 4 to 16 units per acre. Densities proposed higher than this should require additional review of traffic impacts, location, and utility considerations.

7.3.2 NON-RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF THE PLAN

7.3.2.1 RETAIL USES

Retail land use areas are intended to provide for a variety of retail trade, personal, and business services and establishments. Retail establishments generally require greater visibility than do other types of nonresidential land use (e.g., office, commercial).

Within the plan, key intersections with good access and high visibility are designated for retail development. For example, the plan recognizes the four key intersections which are adjacent to the Expressway exit and entrance ramps.



Smaller retail and personal service uses are also envisioned as a part of existing and future neighborhoods. While these locations are not called out directly on the map, they are part of the neighborhood character and are supported in revisions to the zoning regulations.

7.3.2.2 COMMERCIAL LAND USES

Commercial Service land use includes repair, business-to-business services, and logistics. Areas designated for commercial land use are intended for a variety of commercial uses and establishments with outside storage, display and sales. Examples of such uses include automobile-related services, manufactured home sales, self-storage units, welding shops, and pawn shops.

Commercial uses often locate along major thoroughfares not because they need the same level of visibility as retail uses do, but because they need the accessibility. The key difference is that commercial uses generally have a greater need for outside storage areas, and these areas tend to reduce the aesthetic quality of major thoroughfares.

As observed in the existing land use pattern, there is a natural agglomeration of logistics and warehousing establishments. These users need large, flexible space and large unimpeded outdoor storage area for supplies and equipment which is easily accessible by large and even DOT-permitted oversize vehicles. Because this use will continue to be critical to the economic vitality of the city, ample space is envisioned in the areas where this is occurring (such as the Cantu Rd./FM 2556 area) is provided, taking advantage of natural open space buffer features such as the canal.

7.3.2.3 INDUSTRIAL

Industrial users generally fall into two categories: those dealing in raw materials processing or resource extraction, and those which are involved in manufacturing, assembly, or other production. These users are not always compatible, and the risk for a city is in assuming that they will be. Generally, a distinction is made in the zoning regulations and unless there are existing areas of mining or raw materials processing, very little provision of more intense industrial use should be made. Careful, proactive encouragement is required, and land is sought to be suitable for industrial land use based on the following criteria:

- Access to an existing or proposed major arterial;
- Access to a railroad;
- Relatively flat or gently sloping site
- The site will not negatively impact the existing or proposed residential areas; ; and
- A relatively large amount of land can be assembled in one area;

General planning criteria for industrial uses suggests that the minimum size requirements for preplanned industrial parks area about 200 to 300 acres. Approximately three to five percent of a city's land (0.2 to 0.3 acres per 100 persons) is often allocated to industrial uses..

7.3.2.4 CIVIC AND INSTITUTIONAL

Binding the residential and commercial uses together are the civic and institutional uses that support public space, public administration, utilities, and schools. These uses often have very specific land use requirements. For example, schools must manage large populations, peak traffic flows, and indoor and outdoor activities. A wastewater plant is strategically located with respect to topography, as is an elevated storage tank that provides drinking water at a higher pressure. Land must be reserved for these types of facilities throughout the community.

The current institutional facilities are concentrated in the central part of the city. This is efficient for the current population and allows mixed and multi-use to occur which reinforces a vibrant central city.

Additional institutional uses will be needed north the Expressway, south of the Arroyo, and west of the canal.

7.3.2.5 PARK, OPEN SPACE AND AGRICULTURE

There are numerous benefits associated with keeping open, green space in the community, both for the active and passive use of residents and visitors. Indeed, access to even modestly-developed parks has been shown to further "active living". Therefore, care has been taken to position parks in proximity to existing, emerging, and future neighborhoods.

Open space is also an important land use technique to further the goal of compatibility. Uses which are specifically intense, such as an airport or industrial operation, should be buffered along the perimeter with open space.

As La Feria's history is rooted in agriculture and uniquely in citrus groves, there is significant cultural value in preserving the citrus that is still in production or even fallow. These areas should be incorporated into open space and pocket park planning as the areas surrounding them develop.

7.3.3 SPECIAL LAND USE AREAS

There are several areas of the City which are unique in the function and character and consequently are classified differently in the future land use planning context, in order to provide more direct policy guidance. These are described in the following paragraphs and indicated on the Future Land Use Map.

7.3.3.1 OLD TOWN LA FERIA / ANTIGUA LA FERIA

Old Town La Feria, or Antigua La Feria, is a name used to describe the oldest neighborhoods of the City which surround the central business district. The predominant land use in this area is single-family homes on smaller lots, though some duplex and personal services uses are part of the fabric. The purpose for this district is to allow for development and re-development in a manner which preserves the scale and character of the neighborhood, but also provide for flexible housing options and neighborhood-scale retail and personal services.

7.3.3.2 CBD / CENTRO

The Central Business District ("Centro") refers primarily to the Main Street/FM 506 Corridor. This area is envisioned as a commercial center and destination central gathering place for the community, consisting of a mix of professional offices and services, restaurant, and entertainment uses. The area incorporates and enhances the existing historical buildings, culinary diversity, and thrives on a pedestrian, walking retail environment.

7.3.3.3 VILLAGE / PUEBLITO MODERNO

The Village concept is a land use area envisioned to promote full life cycle living, through a full range of housing and care options, planned for walkability. Starter homes, duplexes, townhomes, garden homes, casitas, assisted living, nursing care and child care are developed in close proximity and share common park and open spaces, neighborhood retail uses, health care facilities, and civic facilities. The areas designated as such on the Future Land Use Plan function as compact neighborhoods. They are intended to attract new residents to La Feria and offer more options for existing residents. An example of such an area is the Presbyterian Village North in Dallas, Texas. This concept fits the city's economic strengths, too, as a provider of health care services and strong capabilities to train health care workers in various capacities.

These areas are strategically placed throughout the community, near existing public facilities (such as transit stops, library, and parks and occasionally near existing citrus, to be able to incorporate it as open space in the future, or with the development).

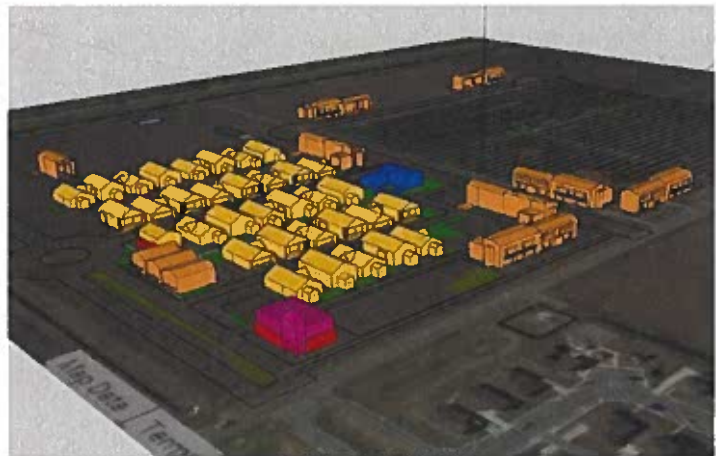


Figure 15. Mixed residential concept oriented toward preserved citrus grove.

7.3.3.4 GATEWAY / PORTALES

As a city grows, it must necessarily take on new centers. These centers of activity announce to the outside world that "something valuable is happening here". The vacant bank building at the intersection of FM 506 and the

Expressway is one such example. The architectural uniqueness of the “blue dome” suggest that it is an important place, and is visible from a great distance away on the expressway. Another important portal is the approach from the south on FM 506, just before the bridge across the Arroyo Colorado. This change of urbanizing area to the vast greenspace of the Arroyo is an important entry that defines La Feria’s relationship to the natural environment – and it should be celebrated. Gateways require a bit of architectural “announcement” that the spot on the ground is important.

7.4 TARGETED LAND USE PROGRAMMING

The Future Land Use Map incorporates multiple locations for the following land use needs, based on their site, visibility and access needs.

Future Needs • (Examples)	Site Needs	Visibility Need	Access Need	Adjacent Land Use Compatible/(Incompatible)
Logistics/Transportation • Commercial Motor Carriers • Warehousing-Distribution	2-5 ac	Low	High	Industrial, Commercial Services, Agriculture, Open Space/(Single Family, Retail)
Major Anchor Retail • Grocery/Household Goods • Home Improvement • Movie Theater	6-15 ac	High	High	Retail, Office, Lodging, Multi-Family/(Single-Family, Industrial)
Healthcare • Specialty clinic • Rehabilitation • Medical Supplies • Laboratory	0.5 ac – 30 ac	Medium	Medium	Most residential, Office, Retail / (Some Industrial, some residential)
Downtown Culinary District • Restaurants • Destination Restaurants • Commercial Kitchens • Culinary Education	Varied sizes Shared parking Foot traffic District character	High	Medium	Retail, Office, Lodging, High Density Residential, Institutional / (Some Industrial, some residential)

7.5 FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map is included as Attachment 4.

7.6 LAND USE QUANTITY

The following table describes the land areas provided within the Future Land Use Map, and an assessment of the sufficiency for each land use category to meet future demands.

		2016	2020	2025	2030	2040	
	Area (ac)	Acres per 100 persons	Acres per 100 persons	Acres per 100 persons	Acres per 100 persons	Acres per 100 persons	Build Out Population
Agricultural	1310.6	17.46	15.22	14.09	13.03	11.37	
Single Family Residential	8100.4	107.89	94.08	87.10	80.53	70.25	28,351
Multifamily Residential	445	5.93	5.17	4.78	4.42	3.86	3,783
Commercial	1032.6	13.75	11.99	11.10	10.27	8.96	
Industrial	93.2	1.24	1.08	1.00	0.93	0.81	
Open Space	2093.1	27.88	24.31	22.51	20.81	18.15	
Public	182	2.42	2.11	1.96	1.81	1.58	
Total Build Out Population							32,134

8 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

8.1 BACKGROUND

The Central Business District (CBD) often functions as the physical and visual focal point of a community. The image and appearance of a CBD can drive the aesthetic of an entire community. Due to suburbanization and the scattering of commercial land uses, the CBD can be seen shrinking. This can have a serious eroding effect in the community due to its contribution to a relatively large share of the city's tax revenue. Shopping trips to larger, sprawling cities come at the expense of a smaller CBD that lacks the parking and pavement widths.

La Feria's Central Business District is located on the south side of US Business Highway 83 at Main Street, also referred to as FM 506. It is among the first developed parts of the City and remained the center of local commerce until the late 1950s when the area to the north and along Business Highway 83 developed along with the proliferation of the automobile.



Figure 16. Panoramic view of the east side of Main Street.

The La Feria CBD exhibits many of the desirable qualities of a small town, and these should be preserved into the future, as partially guided by the plan.

1. Access from all parts of the city to the "city center"
2. Sufficient and logical vehicle circulation
3. Sufficient retail establishments and opportunities for redevelopment, as a tax-base driver
4. A mix of office, financial, governmental, and cultural/civic land and building uses.
5. An adequate mix of on and off-street parking which are situated conveniently to all points of the CBD.
6. Separate, sufficient, logical pedestrian circulation.
7. An architectural aesthetic which reflects the city's history, common in color and scale, and scaled to the pedestrian experience.

The Central Business District not only functions as a center for commerce, but also as a focal point for community activities such as parades or festivals. Typically, the density of a Central Business District is not replicated in modern land development. While this can be required of new or emerging development, it is not meant to replace the value of the CBD in the community's history. Thus, renovation and redevelopment within the CBD must build upon these historic characteristics.

The potential strengths of a vibrant CBD are recognized in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan (prepared by Design Services, Inc.) remain appropriate in 2016, and therefore are incorporated here:

- Quick access to frequently needed items not necessitating a major trip, such as everyday foods, medications, meals, etc.
- Selected goods and services not supplied by the typical outlet, for instance a specialty line of clothing, a quality gift shop, a fresh fish market, etc.
- Personal relationships with customers, clients and patients and an intimate knowledge of their preferences, needs, and credit standing, and conversely, the customer's knowledge of where to find a trustworthy product or professional.
- Accessibility to bicyclists and walkers, such as the elderly and the young.
- Unhurried low-pressure atmosphere, which turns errands into excuses for social outings instead of hurried hunts.
- Relative safety in a familiar and uncrowded area where mothers can keep track of children and the elderly are not intimidated.
- Entertainment value in any special features the place may have, such as bandstand concerts, an outdoor café, or a sidewalk fair.
- Unique character, the flavor and surprises offered by a center which has evolved over the years as contrasted to the cookie-cutter package design of even the best malls.
- Locally-oriented services such as the community post office, banks, utility companies, library, etc.
- Community activities, whether political, ceremonial or institutional, and the place for informal daily contacts.
- Civic symbol, a sense of place, character or history.
- A source of human resources for volunteer services, such as volunteer firemen or service clubs.

Typically, however, within the last 60 years, Central Business Districts have not been able to compete with modern shopping center developments due to the following factors:

- Perceived lack of parking, vacant buildings, neglected buildings or absentee ownership, traffic congestion, lack of variety or customer appeal.
- Vacancy and dilapidation of buildings are the biggest concern because these place downward pressure on surrounding areas, and if left unmitigated, can result in more rapid deterioration.

The principal reason for envisioning and securing the future of the CBD is that it provides the best opportunities for developing specialty retail sales tax base, which will ultimately draw down the burden of property taxes on residential properties.



Figure 17. One of several culinary landmarks in the La Feria CBD

The most recent study of the Central Business District was done in 2007 by Design Services, Inc. Prior to that work, Government Service Agency, Inc. prepared a study in 1991. More recently in 2013, a team of visiting planners associated with the American Planning Association developed a Community Assistance Plan which outlined several key components for future development.

8.2 DETERMINATION OF THE CBD PLANNING AREA

The CBD planning area was selected based on a review of past studies and the apparent extent of commercial activities. Boundaries were set using streets since these are familiar and easy demarcations for most to make. The Central Business District was defined for the purposes of this planning effort as an approximate five-and-a-half block area located south of US Business Highway 83, north of Magnolia Avenue, East of West Street, and West of East Street. The focus of the CBD is the Main Street corridor, but the relationships between the intersecting street corridors (Commercial Avenue, Oleander Avenue, Primrose Avenue, and Magnolia Avenue) and Main Street are also critical.



Figure 18. Central Business District boundary

8.3 COMMERCIAL AREA INVENTORY

In April and May of 2016, K. Friese & Associates, Inc. performed a walking and windshield survey of the downtown area, in order to complete an inventory of assets and facilities within the CBD.

8.3.1 EXISTING CBD INVENTORY MAP

Two maps have been developed which describe the existing land use, street rights-of-way, pavement widths, sidewalks, parking, the condition of buildings, traffic controls, and traffic volumes/turning movements. These are included as Attachment 5.

8.3.1.1 EXISTING LAND USE

Each parcel in the CBD was inventoried and classified according to a three-digit method (Fairfax County, VA modified standard). The classification of land uses indicates that there are a mix of retail, service, dining, office and professional service uses located directly along Main Street. There are also several key buildings which are vacant, notably the two-story building at the southeast corner of Main Street and East Commercial Avenue and the old theater building on East Oleander Avenue.



Figure 19. The old theatre building, ready for preservation, but with all of the right pedestrian elements in place for redevelopment.

Table 44. Existing land uses within the Central Business District

Land Use Code	Land Use Classification	Area (ac)
011	Single Family Residential	6.16
036	Apartment Residential	2.05
216	Parking	0.72
222	Gas Utilities	0.07
231	Telephone Utilities	0.48
336	Drug Stores	0.14
337	Specialty Supply	0.07
351	Restaurant	0.52
352	Restaurant	0.40
353	Restaurant (Carry Out)	0.07
365	Car Wash	0.24
391	Vacant Retail	0.71
421	General Low-rise Office	0.67
422	Medical/Dental Office	0.51
429	Converted Residential	0.11

510	Finance, insurance, Prof Services	0.79
511	Bank	0.21
512	Bank with Drive Thru	0.44
520	Personal Services	0.62
530	Motor Vehicle Repair	0.54
540	Other Repair	0.34
590	Other Consumer/business services	0.07
601	Government complex	3.18
710	Religious Institution	0.97
751	Nursery school	0.48
813	City Park	0.09
971	Vacant	1.31
215	ROW	12.45
	Total	21.97

This analysis suggests the following:

- There is a healthy mix of residential land use within the CBD – which can support businesses in walkable proximity.
- The government complex area, consisting of city administration, utility administration, fire department and La Feria Independent School District, is at capacity. Further expansion should be cautioned here to avoid displacement of necessary retail and restaurant uses, and to provide a better distribution of these services within the community. Alternatively, if expansion is demonstrated by a future study to be warranted in this area, multi-story redevelopment is an option, provided parking is also developed.
- The majority of space along the eastern side of Main Street between Commercial Avenue and Oleander Avenue is occupied by professional medical facilities. While it is desirable for these types of facilities to be located within walking distance and general proximity to residential areas, the current occupancy takes valuable retail storefront away from potential retail users.
- There is insufficient specialty retail to support a vibrant CBD experience.

8.3.1.2 STREET ROWS/PAVEMENT WIDTHS

The attached map shows the existing streets in the CBD area, their corresponding rights of way and pavement widths. The ROW and pavement widths are sufficient for current and future needs. All of the streets in the CBD are curbed with gutter and storm sewer drainage facilities. All of the streets are in good condition, with only minor, scheduled maintenance, performed as necessary under a general program.

8.3.1.3 SIDEWALK

The sidewalk network is well developed and generally integrated into the CBD, as shown in the attached map. Some additional extensions will be necessary over time. Generally, however, the sidewalks are of sufficient width and separated from vehicle travel for pedestrian traffic. They will not easily accommodate increased bicycle traffic, and therefore this need must be met within the vehicular paved section. Sidewalks are shown on the second of the two attached maps.

8.3.1.4 PARKING

A mix of parking is available on-street and off-street. Angled parking stalls are available along Commercial Avenue on both sides, as the street is one-way eastbound. Parallel parking is also available along Main Street, and Oleander and Primrose. This allows for plenty of space for traffic in each direction.

Off-street parking is found in three areas, internal to the blocks. This concept allows for central parking to be available and an unbroken retail frontage. Parking is shown on the second of the two attached maps.



Figure 20. Off-street parking, west side of Main Street.

8.3.1.5 CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

The buildings of the Central Business District are among the oldest in the city. Generally, the buildings appear to be in fair to good condition, though with some obvious cosmetic defects, such as sagging canopies, broken mortar lines, peeling paint and the like. It should be anticipated that these buildings will require some structural repair and replacement of roofing systems and doors and windows as they re-develop or take on new tenants who must make repairs under current code. A structural or forensic evaluation was not performed and the interiors of these buildings was not evaluated under the scope of this planning effort.



Figure 21. An example of poor building condition. Not typical for the whole.

8.3.1.6 TRAFFIC CONTROLS

Traffic controls, including automatic signals, are shown on the first of the two attached maps. It is not anticipated that changes will be necessary over the course of the planning horizon, other than the replacement or maintenance of existing equipment.

8.3.1.7 TRAFFIC VOLUMES/TURNING MOVEMENTS

The Texas Department of Transportation publishes annual traffic counts at various points along the highway system. For the CBD, the intersection of FM 506 and Business Highway 83 is one of the points monitored from year-to-year. The first map attached to this Chapter shows the traffic counts (ADT) from 2014, the most recent data available.

8.4 RELATIONSHIP OF CBD TO OTHER DEVELOPMENT

The CBD is a distinct area compared to the highway commercial and retail use along I-2, and compared to the shopping-center and older warehouse mixed area in between the CBD and Expressway.

The following figure shows this relationship.



Figure 22. Relationship of CBD to distinct, adjacent areas.

8.5 CBD ANALYSIS

8.5.1 EXISTING VS. PROJECTED COMMERCIAL ACREAGE

The data collected indicate that there are approximately 6.45 acres of commercial land within the CBD. The commercial area in the CBD is not expected to increase much; therefore, the ratio of existing to projected will be approximately 0.9-1.0 for the planning horizon. It should be noted that while this overall ratio is expected to remain stable, some conversion of uses within the overall commercial class is expected. For example, it is expected that the existing Medical Office facilities will be converted to retail use within the planning horizon.

8.5.2 USED VS. VACANT COMMERCIAL ACREAGE

Based upon the walking survey of the CBD and a GIS analysis of building footprints, it is estimated that there are approximately 3,000 square feet of vacant floor area relative to the approximate acre of floor area available. This represents approximately 6.9%, or a ratio of 0.069.



Figure 23. Vacancy

8.6 REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

There is little doubt that redevelopment energies and resources will be necessary to create the potential for a vibrant CBD. A concerted effort involving a niche for La Feria, the subsequent promotion, and strategic capital improvements



Figure 24. Commercial kitchen for lease concept. (Example from: <http://www.citycookhouse.com/>)

would be necessary. One concept recommended for exploration is the creation of a culinary district. This ties into La Feria's rich traditions with food and festivals, the long-standing dining establishments already in the downtown, and a recent national interest in regional and craft cuisine.

The eventual success of this would be the result of entrepreneurs. Whether food trailer start-ups or established restaurateurs, there are already food artisans in the community. As an initial step, the City could develop a commercial kitchen in one of the older warehouse spaces across from the CBD. This kitchen could then be available to caterers, culinary students in a LFISD or OLLU course, and even available for temporary lease.

The other component to this effort would be to begin promoting festivals centered on food and drink. This would then hopefully build momentum towards a larger movement and renaissance in the CBD.



Figure 25. 2019 La Feria Fiesta de Dulces.

8.7 MAJOR THEMES OF THE CBD ANALYSIS

- *Effectively cut off from strip retail to the north, poor pedestrian access*
- *Medical offices along Main Street are an impediment to developing a retail or dining experience.*
- *Window space is critical for retail user to display wares. In many cases, this space has been blocked over or repurposed.*
- *There is not expected to be considerable expansion of the CBD*
- *There is opportunity for entertainment growth to fill the existing space, catalyzed by culinary arts and traditional cuisine.*

8.8 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN

8.8.1 CBD GOALS & OBJECTIVES

CBD Goal 1: Downtown will be a focal point of activity for the community, with a vibrant mix of retail, service and other community-oriented activities and opportunities.

CBD Goal 2: Continue to build on the city's talent-focused assets**CBD Goal 3: Preserve the walkable, pedestrian oriented scale of the CBD****Objective CBD-1: Embrace and protect the architectural core of La Feria****Actions:**

- Consider creation of an Historic District to protect the La Feria Bakery building, Professional Office building and Old Theater Building.
- Establish a façade enhancement program to assist property owners in improving the streetscape of Main Street. Fund it through hotel/motel tax.
- Establish an emergency repair fund to be used to prevent vulnerable properties from falling into further dilapidation.
- Consider a fee waiver program for safety improvement inspections and permitting

Target Date for Achievement: 2016-2020

Objective CBD-2: Become a "Main Street" City**Actions:**

- Review the requirements for participation under Main Street Texas program
- Review local business owner support to enter the program
- Hire a full-time Main Street Director
- Budget for the local program

Target Date for Achievement: 2018

Objective CBD-3: Support increased opportunities for culinary arts in the CBD**Actions:**

- Identify/Create/Appoint an organization which can spearhead the vision of La Feria as a culinary destination in the Valley over the long term
- Promote and build on La Feria's existing base of restaurants in the downtown
- Identify vacant facilities which could be renovated into commercial kitchens, available for lease, instruction or catering.
- Partner with LFISD and OLLU on educational opportunities for food service/preparation/culinary arts.
- Promote festivals/events which feature food and beverage traditions and innovation, or otherwise encourage residents to attend (e.g. "Date Night" or eventually "Movie Night" or "Cooking Demo")
- Identify and engage entities looking to develop a brewpub, distillery, or similar craft beverage establishment.

Target Date for Achievement: 2017

Objective CBD-4: Develop the physical connection between the CBD and the shopping and residential area to the north of Business Highway 83

Actions:

- Coordinate with TxDOT Pharr District on the process and timing for improvements to the intersection.
- Commission an architectural and preliminary engineering study of a bold, unique crossing of the Business Highway crossing along Main Street that will remove the visual barrier to crossing the highway and railroad. Use the 2013 APA Plan as guidance.
- Introduce landscaping and tree colonnade per the 2013 APA Plan
- Consider the creation of a Public Improvement District (PID) to support local area connection improvements in the CBD, targeting drainage, sidewalk, intersection signalization, landscaping and shared outdoor space.

Target Date for Achievement: 2016-2020

8.8.2 CBD PLAN MAP

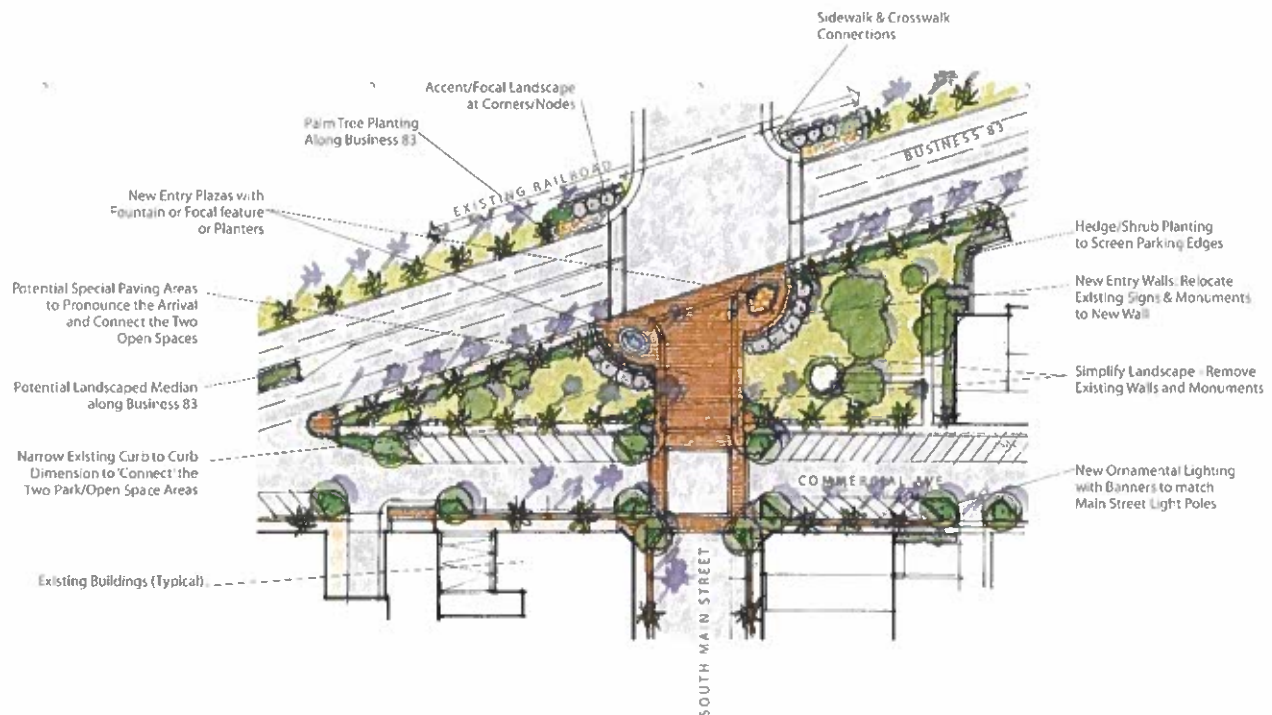
The APA Plan developed in 2013 provides excellent guidance for the physical, capital improvements that should be made. This Plan is included here in Attachment 5.

8.8.3 CBD-SPECIFIC CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The APA Plan prescribes the introduction of trees into the right-of-way as well as other roadway cross-section improvements. There are many other improvements which could be undertaken, but the following represent the most urgent within the next five years.

8.8.3.1 SIDEWALK/MEDIAN/CONNECTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

This project follows the design guidance from the APA Plan, as described in the following figure from the 2013 study.



The cost is estimated at a preliminary level at \$2,000,000 for these improvements. Sources of funding could include Transportation Enhancement Funds (via MPO), general obligation bonds, a Public Improvement District (PID), hotel/motel taxes, or other grant funding. This project should begin design in 2017 and seek construction start by 2019.

8.8.3.2 FAÇADE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

A grant or revolving loan fund program could be established with a set amount of seed money. These funds would be used to improve facades and canopies along Main Street, especially for projects which make display window space usable to the fronting sidewalk. The cost to start is \$100,000. Potential funding sources include hotel/motel tax funds for tourism development, a Public Improvement District, or other grant funding.

8.8.3.3 BUILDING INTEGRITY/STABILIZATION PROGRAM

A grant or revolving loan fund program could be established with a set amount of seed money. These funds would be used to help property owners make emergency repairs, or used to assist in outside funding for improvements to roofs, masonry, windows, doors that are necessary to stop water intrusion or acceleration of dilapidation. The cost to start this program is \$100,000. Potential funding sources include hotel/motel tax funds for tourism development, a Public Improvement District, or other grant funding.

9 THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The Thoroughfare Plan serves to work together with the Future Land Use Plan and the Comprehensive Plan to guide future policy, program, and project decisions necessary to sustain La Feria through the planning horizon. The sections that follow highlight the following:

- Evaluating the existing transportation system, featuring an overview of the functional classification system and available transportation data
- Current and future strategies overview to address key aspects identified from public input and quantitative data
- Thoroughfare Map
- Thoroughfare Plan, including tools to guide future roadway improvements through the subdivision ordinance and platting process.
- Implementation and funding of the Thoroughfare Plan
- Recommendations for strategic goals, policies, and actions

9.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The availability and quality of transportation networks and infrastructure have a symbiotic relationship with growing areas and various land uses. The purpose of such networks is to provide accessibility to different types and intensities of land uses. It is very much a supply and demand relationship, whereby the demand for land for development and growth is dependent upon, among other things, the supply and type of transportation available. At the same time, the transportation system must also function to provide effective and efficient mobility to the traveling public and transport of goods. Roadways, in particular, are a key infrastructure in La Feria serving the purposes above, and thus, the primary focus of this chapter.

Evaluating the body of existing information, which reflects current travel patterns and the functioning of the roadway system, together with community input, is crucial in planning for a balanced, transportation improvements approach.

9.2 THE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

When considering and planning for a transportation network, roadway facilities and infrastructure have generally been allocated and placed according to a hierarchical structure of freeways, major and minor arterials, collectors, and local roadways, which serve separate, important functions in the overall system. Functional classification, as exhibited in the graph below, is the process by which roadways are grouped into categories according to two important variables: mobility and access.

Figure XX: Functional Classification System

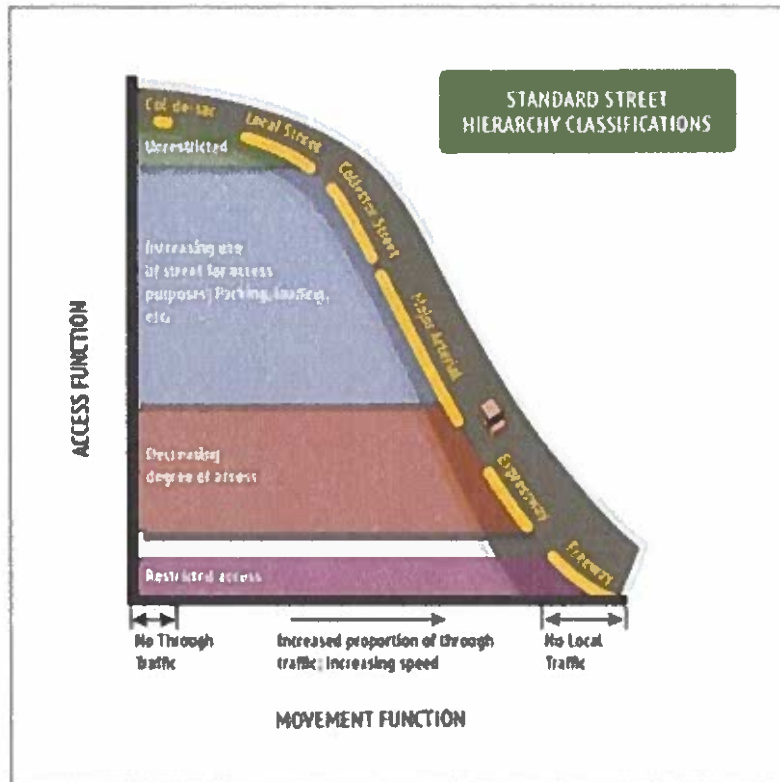


Figure 26. Street hierarchy. Access vs. Movement

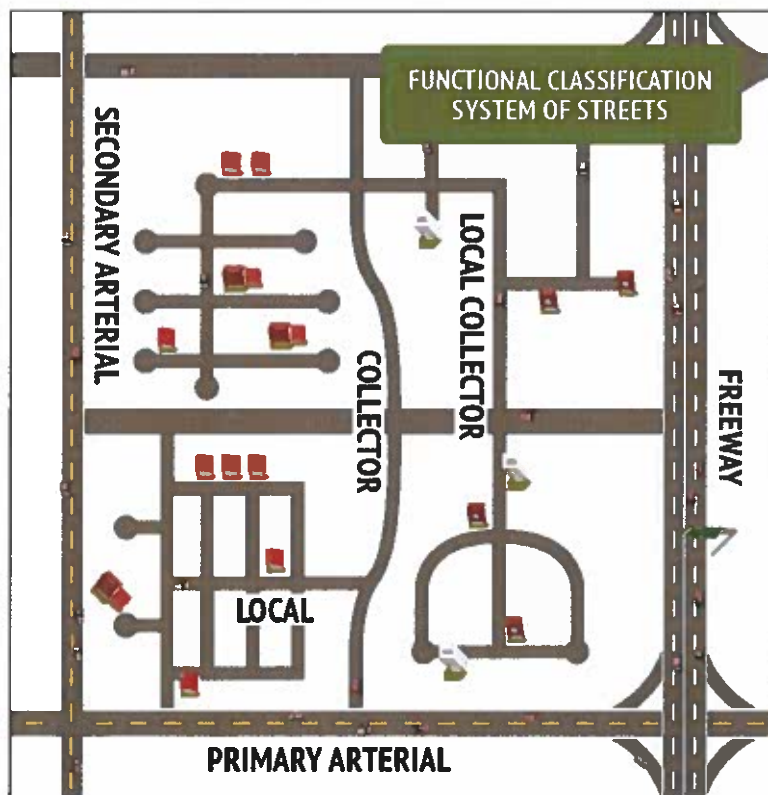


Figure 27. Functional Classification System Schematic.

Freeways, at one end of the spectrum as depicted above, are access-controlled facilities that provide the principal means of travel through a region (or mobility), with ideally uninterrupted service. From there, arterials, typically subdivided into major and minor arterials, also serve a primary function of moving traffic, but within more locally-defined parts of a region and are especially important for accessing various destinations and land uses at a local scale. Continuing in this same pattern, collectors act as the next immediate relief facilities to distribute traffic and provide access to local roadways within a community. The distinction between major and minor in describing certain arterials and collectors is made as a function of volume. At the other end of the spectrum from freeways, local roadways provide the most immediate access to adjacent property in the community.

Table 46 below provides additional details regarding the functional classification of a roadway network and classifies existing roadways within La Feria for additional context.

Table 45. Functional Classification, Roadway Characteristics, Examples, and Standards

Functional Classification	Roadway Characteristics	Existing La Feria Examples	La Feria Standard Right-of-Way & Pavement Width
Freeway	<p>High speed, divided highway with full control of access and grade separated interchanges</p> <p>Moving inter- and intra regional traffic and providing access</p> <p>Providing mobility across metropolitan areas and between major activity centers (2 or more miles)</p> <p>Interstates especially serve longer trips in high traffic volume corridors</p>	I-2, US 83	150' – 200' ROW 100' Pavement
Major Arterial	<p>Typically divided street with major access points at intersections with the surface street system.</p> <p>Some direct access permitted to abutting land uses</p> <p>Primary function to serve major centers of activity. Service to adjacent land uses are secondary to mobility service.</p>	Business 83	100' ROW 80' Pavement
Minor Arterial	<p>Number of lanes and type of median directly relate to traffic volumes and adjacent land use</p> <p>Augments and feeds major arterial system and distributes traffic to geographic areas smaller than those served by the higher system, with more emphasis on service to adjacent land uses</p>	FM 506, FM 2556, Kansas City Road	80' ROW 60' Pavement
Collector	<p>High access to local streets and driveways</p> <p>Connect local streets to the arterial system. Typically used for trips that are near their origin or destination point, primarily connecting neighborhoods within and among communities</p>	Solis Rd, S. Park Dr, Industrial Way	60' ROW 39' Pavement
Local	<p>High access to driveways</p> <p>Provides direct access to adjacent property</p>	Fleetwood Ave, 7 th Street	50' ROW, 29'-31' B-B

9.3 INVENTORY OF MAJOR AND COLLECTOR STREETS

A current inventory and condition of major and collector streets in the City of La Feria is attached as Attachment 6.

9.4 TRAFFIC COUNT DATA

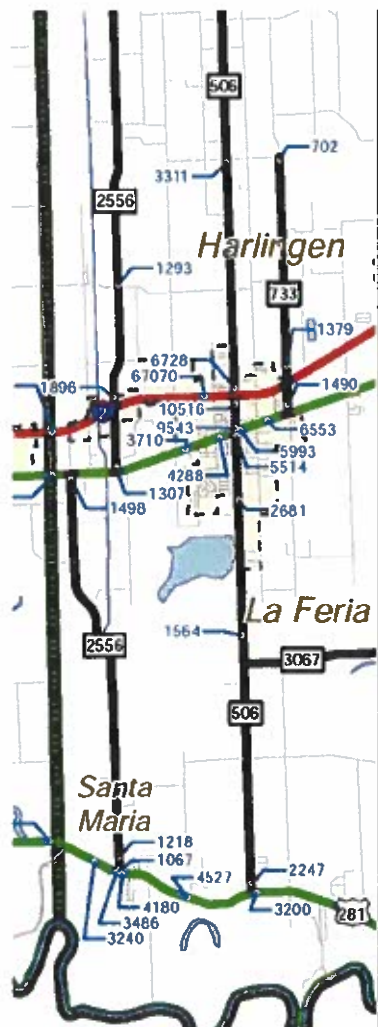


Figure 28. Traffic Counts (TxDoT, 2014)

The Texas Department of Transportation collects data on an annual basis to monitor volumes and turning movements, as a basis for planning new improvements and other management techniques. The following graphic shows the data collected in 2014, the most recent data available for the City of La Feria and the surrounding area.

9.5 ANALYSIS

In consideration of the traffic count data, inventory, road conditions, and growth projections, the following major issues have been identified.

- The network demonstrates good spacing and distribution of north-south arterial-level roads, but is missing several key east-west arterial and collector roads.
- There are several collector streets which are potentially underdesigned relative to their current function (i.e. 60 ft of ROW/ 39' of pavement).
- There are several arterial (major) streets which are potentially underdesigned relative to their current function (i.e. 80'-100' ROW/48'-60' of pavement).
- The prior plan (2007 Comprehensive Plan) indicates that truck traffic from the Los Indios and Nuevo Progreso border crossings will more acutely impact the City of La Feria in the future, particularly the FM 506 north-south arterial, and the FM 2556 arterial. The most recent traffic counts here, however, do not indicate that these thoroughfares are currently seeing decreasing levels of service or congestion.
- There is overall a number of disjunctions in the thoroughfare network (also applies to the local street layout) which will result in inefficiencies over time. The continued effort to develop a grid system will ultimately reduce these inefficiencies, and even reduce the need for wide rights-of-way and pavement widths. Over the long term, this is the most economical strategy for the city.

9.6 FUTURE THOROUGHFARE PLAN

In order to maximize circulation in different areas of the city, several projects have been identified, along with a very coarse estimate of construction cost. It should be noted that more precise costs can only be estimated with engineering and survey data. The projects are shown to occur on 3 year intervals. This timing may change, pending development activity or the availability of outside funding. The projects are shown in their approximate priority, based upon land development patterns (increasing density and land costs).

Table 46. Future Thoroughfare Projects Summary

Project ID	Description	Target Date	ROW Required (ft)	Length (ft)	Paved Width (ft)	Unit Cost (2016 \$/lf)	Estimated Construction Cost	Possible Funding Sources
A	Cantu Rd-Beddoes Rd. Connector	2020	80	11,500	60	\$450	\$5,175,000	MPO, Cameron County, Local Issuance, Developer Contribution
B	Beddoes - White Ranch Connector	2023	80	6,000	60	\$450	\$2,700,000	Developer Contribution, Local Issuance
C	Cantu Rd - Dodd Ln Connector	2026	80	7,500	60	\$450	\$3,375,000	MPO, Cameron County, Local Issuance, Developer Contribution, 4A Corp
D	Parker Rd - Kansas City Rd. Connector	2029	80	9,000	60	\$450	\$4,050,000	Developer Contribution, Local Issuance
E	Kansas City Rd. - White Ranch Rd. Connector	2032	80	4,000	60	\$450	\$1,800,000	Developer Contribution, Local Issuance
F	FM 2556 - FM 506 Connector (Zimmerer)	2035	100	9,500	80	\$675	\$6,412,500	MPO, Cameron County
TOTAL EST. COSTS	(2016 Dollars)						\$23,512,500	

Notes:

- Project costs assume construction cost only. Right-of-way acquisition, engineering, finance costs not included.
- Unit costs determined from average of recent (2016) Pharr District bid tabulations for comparable projects, per lineal foot.
- (Ref: CSJ 2966-01-009, CSJ 0921-02-301, CSJ 0220-01-023)

9.7 FUTURE THOROUGHFARE PLAN MAP

Attachment 7 demonstrates the relationship and grid pattern which will serve to enhance mobility throughout the City of La Feria and its planning area.

9.8 THOROUGHFARE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Thoroughfare Goal 1: Achieve a balance in land use and transportation infrastructure that makes living, working, shopping and playing in La Feria safer and more convenient for residents and visitors.

Thoroughfare Goal 2: The cost of developing transportation infrastructure will be shared in proportion by those who benefit from it the most – developers, the City, other government entities, and existing residents.

Thoroughfare Goal 3: Provide choices to get from A to B.

Objective T-1: Traffic generating uses such as employment centers, retail centers, industrial centers, and schools are located to ensure they are accessible and compatible with adjacent land uses.

- *Action T-1.1:* Truck traffic-generating uses should be located adjacent to arterial roadways with ease of access to the region.
- *Action T-1.2:* High trip-generating uses such as employment and regional centers should be located adjacent to arterial roadways, major collector streets, or freeway frontage roads in accordance with a Traffic Impact Analysis.
- *Action T-1.3:* Coordinate with La Feria ISD on bus routes and alternative routes to existing and new schools.
- *Action T-1.4:* Pursue a Safe Routes to School program to encourage walking and bicycling to schools.

Objective T-2: Use the Thoroughfare plan as a guide to determine, classify, locate and schedule roadway development improvements.

- *Action T-2.1:* As development applications are considered, consult the Future Thoroughfare Plan to determine connectivity and route alignments, as well as right-of-way dedication requirements.
- *Action T-2.2:* As CIP projects are considered, consult the Future Thoroughfare Plan to determine connectivity, route alignments, as well as right-of-way dedications.

Objective T-3: Maintain access while not affecting the flow of traffic for primary and secondary roadways.

- *Action T-3.1:* Continue to employ access management techniques such as shared driveways and cross-access easements to reduce the number of driveways on high-volume roadways.
- *Action T-3.2:* With state and regional partners, coordinate the construction of a bypass to re-route truck traffic congestion away from downtown La Feria.
- *Action T-3.3:* Employ context-sensitive design to reinforce rural streetscape elements and tree preservation.

Objective T-4: Monitor the growth and function of the City's roadway network continuously, including a broad base of stakeholders, in order to promote safety.

- *Action T-4.1:* Form a Street Committee from members of the general community, business community, and the logistics industry, and task this advisory group with evaluating the roadway network on an annual basis, with the goal of promoting safety. The Committee should have ex officio participation from the public works, police, and fire departments.
- *Action T-4.2:* Develop a GIS dataset to assist the committee and public works and engineering staff in documenting road condition and other details.
- *Action T-4.3:* Collect and analyze data for high crash locations.
- *Action T-4.4:* Review TxDOT's traffic count program and coordinate locations and timing to augment TxDOT's efforts with locally collected data.

Objective T-5: Ensure the development of a well-connected network of streets and sidewalks.

- *Action T-5.1:* Review the policy of the subdivision regulations that directs avoidance of connectivity and a grid-like pattern.
- *Action T-5.2:* Review the block length requirement of the subdivision regulations to require shorter block lengths or pedestrian paths.
- *Action T-5.3:* Require the extension of streets (as with utilities) to connect adjacent, undeveloped property.

Objective T-6: Promote transportation and active living choices as an integral part of the growth of the city.

- *Action T-6.1:* Identify bicycle and pedestrian connections to key community facilities, such as schools, parks, and downtown amenities.
- *Action T-6.2:* Review the requirements for sidewalk construction in the subdivision regulations.
- *Action T-6.3:* Review the potential for "complete streets" as a requirement for new development, and the integration of complete street principles in CIP projects.
- *Action T-6.4:* Consult the bicycling community, Parks and Recreation committee, and other area interest groups in planning safe routes through the community.
- *Action T-6.5:* Coordinate bus routes and Safe Routes to School with La Feria ISD.

10 STREET STUDY & PLAN

10.1 STREET CLASSIFICATION

The following classifications are based on actual usage. The minimum desired features are described below and reflect the current City of La Feria Subdivision Ordinance.

Major Thoroughfare	Major Thoroughfare should have a Right of Way Width of Eighty Feet (80') and a Paving Width of Forty Eight Feet (48').
Collector Street	Collector Streets should have a Right of Way Width of Sixty Feet (60') and a Paving Width of Thirty Nine Feet (39').
Local Residential	All other streets not otherwise identified above are "C" Local Residential Street which should have a Right of Way Width of Fifty Feet (50') and Paving width of Thirty Feet (30').

10.2 STREET CONDITIONS

The engineering evaluation of the existing paved streets within the City of La Feria divided the pavement into three categories - good, fair, and poor.

Definitions (For paved surfaces, asphalt pavement, unless otherwise stated)

- 1. Good -** Street surface has very little, if any deterioration. Resurfacing will not be needed for several years - more than 3, but resurfacing will be required within the next 5 or more years, beginning in 2022.
- 2. Fair -** Street surface has noticeable wear and/or deterioration. Some cracking of asphalt wearing surface. Few if any potholes. Resurfacing is needed within a few (approximately 3) years, beginning in 2020.
- 3. Poor -** Street surface shows significant wear and/or deterioration. Definite cracking of asphalt wearing surface, and a definite number of potholes. Resurfacing is needed at this present time, or within the next year, beginning in 2017.

Attachment 8 is a map which shows the existing pavement conditions, the various use categories of the streets, local residential, collector, or major thoroughfare, and the current right-of-way widths.

The most recent prior study made on the City of La Feria Street System.

- (1) 2007 City of La Feria Comprehensive Plan (Volume 2) by Design Services, Inc. and Sigler, Winston, Greenwood & Assoc., LLC.

10.3 STREET SYSTEM ANALYSIS

There are approximately 49 miles of streets in the City of La feria, and over 99 % of them are paved. The existing street system very adequately serves the current traffic flow, and the streets are well maintained.

With continued growth, the City of La Feria Planning Department will be developing priorities for street improvements. At the current time, it is estimated that within the foreseeable future, Beddoes Rd will need major improvements.

Beddoes Rd will mostly be New Construction with curb and gutter to a 40' B-B, in order to handle future developments.

Also, without question, new East and West streets will need to be developed and constructed in the section North of Expressway. Right-of-way will also need to be purchased. These future corridors are part of Phase III and are shown in attached map.

In terms of timing, it is estimated that the development of the E-W street(s) North of the Expressway, and the Beddoes Road improvements will probably be needed in 5 years or more.

10.4 MAJOR THEMES OF THE STREET STUDY

- Resurfacing of streets in need of the work in order to provide protection to the existing investment as well as to meet a goal of meeting adequate streets for the public.
- There are several city streets that have no curb and gutter and use road side ditches to collect and remove storm water. These are additional maintenance expenses to the city. They are also easily overwhelmed in heavy rain fall in short periods of time. Improving these streets to curb and gutter will extend their service life.
- There are various narrow concrete roads from the 1920's just outside the city limits and within the 1 mile ETJ.
- Poor street conditions in La Feria Gardens. This subdivision is situated just outside the city limits and within the 1 mile ETJ.

10.5 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

To provide adequate streets over which automobiles and trucks can move people and goods to their destinations. The street system is to be composed of improved wearing surfaces and storm drainage systems that will allow for all weather traffic movements.

The streets are to be designed to serve specific functions as local residential streets, collector streets, and/or major thoroughfare streets, and to be properly located to serve their intended purposes.

The majority of the existing paving – is in good condition. In other words, over 90% of all the streets within the city limits are paved, and the majority of paving is in good condition. With very few exceptions, the streets have curb and gutter.

The City of La Feria has done a good job of providing paved streets and maintaining them.

Nearly all of the paved streets were constructed using the flexible base and wearable pavement design, of compacting the subgrade (typically the native soil), adding caliche and compacting, and then applying the asphalt pavement wearing surface.

For new streets developed as a part of the new subdivisions, Section 4 of Exhibit A (Minimum Design Standards and Specifications) of the City of La Feria Subdivision Ordinance briefly addresses the minimum acceptable criteria required by the City of La Feria for paving of streets. This should accomplish at least two goals – (1) That the City of La Feria Planning Department and the prospective subdivision owner would have a common basic for agreement; and (2) That by this thoughtful process, the best choices of right-of-way widths, paving widths, and best construction practices would be selected for new streets.

New streets to be developed, but not within a subdivision should be done by a joint effort of the City Planner and City Engineer.

Finally, to establish an adequate schedule of ongoing maintenance and repairs to the existing street system in order to keep them in optimum condition.

A map accompanies this report, which shows the existing pavements conditions along with the various use categories of the streets – local residential, collector, or major thoroughfare.

Proposed future improvements are also shown.

The goals and objectives, along with estimated costs, are as follows. Detailed cost estimates are included as Attachment 9.

Table 47. Street System Project Summary

Objectives	Estimated Cost as of 8/16	Phasing for Work Proposed
The Re-paving of Existing Streets in Poor Condition		Phase I
The Re-paving of Existing Streets in Fair Condition		Phase II
Future Street Improvements/Extensions		Phase III

11 WATER SYSTEM STUDY

11.1 SERVICE AREA

11.1.1 CCN

The existing City of La Feria Water CCN encompasses approximately 9,159 acres. The current population within the city limits is 7,838 or 2,613 connections.

11.1.2 UNSERVED AREAS

Approximately 98% of the inhabitants of the City of La Feria obtain clean drinking water from the City Water Plant. Small pockets of homes within the City of La Feria ETC continue to use well water for domestic use. These areas are within the current CCN and waterlines can be extended to serve these areas.

11.2 WATER SYSTEM INVENTORY

The components of the existing water distribution system can be identified with the aid of a distribution system map attached hereto as Attachment 10. This map provides the location of the existing lines, line sizes, fire hydrants, elevated storage tanks, ground storage tanks, and water treatment plant.

11.3 SYSTEM CONDITION ASSESSMENT

11.3.1 WATER SOURCES/AVAILABILITY

The City of La Feria is entitled to 1,800 acre-ft of adjudicated municipal surface water rights from the Rio Grande. This amount of acre-ft converts to a daily average flow of approximately 1.61 MGD, and the water treatment plant has a maximum production capacity of 4.0 MGD. Surface water is the raw water of choice for the municipalities of the Rio Grande Valley. Furthermore, raw water from the Rio Grande is not only used for drinking purposes, is has industrial use, and heavy agricultural use.

11.3.1.1 STATE WATER PLAN

The City of La Feria is within the State water planning Region M. The current operating plan is the 2016 Region M Water Plan.

11.3.2 WATER QUALITY

The quality of potable water is ranked with respects to established parameters. The water produced at La Feria's water treatment plant is monitored on a daily basis and test results are compared with the state regulations established by Sub-chapter F *"Drinking Water Standards Governing Drinking Water Quality and Reporting Requirements for Public Water Systems"* of the Texas Administrative Code.

11.3.3 STORAGE FACILITIES

The City of La Feria Water Treatment Plant has a combined storage capacity of 600,000 gallons. A 1,000,000 gallon clear well has also been installed adjacent to the water treatment plant. In addition to this, the City of La Feria also owns two elevated storage tanks each with a capacity of 250,000 gallons.

11.3.4 PRESSURE

Water pressure refers to pressure in the distribution system; section 290.46 (r) of the 30 TAC 290 requires that "all public water systems shall be operated to provide a minimum pressure of 35 psi throughout the distribution system

under normal operating conditions. The system shall also be operated to maintain a minimum pressure of 20 psi during emergencies such as firefighting." Under normal operating conditions, the pressure in the existing distribution system exceeds the minimal required normal operating pressure. Recent improvements to the water distribution system have greatly improved pressures in surrounding areas during a fire fighting condition. Improvements included larger lines, increased looping of waterlines, and additional fire hydrants throughout the city.

11.3.5 DISTRIBUTION LINES

The City of La Feria currently maintains approximately 65 miles of waterlines ranging from 1.25" to 16" in diameter. The majority of the waterlines in the system are made of PVC. Several projects have been completed replacing old Asbestos Cement (AC) Pipe with newer C-900 PVC waterline. All new construction is specified to use C-900 PVC pipe as well as C-905 transmission pipe.

11.3.6 OPERATION PROCEDURES

The water treatment plant is managed by a licensed operator. It employs a total of four persons including the manager, and the day is divided in two eight hour shifts. Their responsibilities include the operation and maintenance of the plant. All plant operations are as per 30 TAC 290 regulations. Operational procedures includes test water quality as stated in section 1.3.3, flush the system, test fire hydrants and pressure in the system.

The distribution system is the responsibility of the utilities department. This department is in charge of providing maintenance to valves, water meters, and repair lines and fire hydrants. At this time there is no maintenance schedule. Maintenance is provided as necessary. However it is recommended to prepare a maintenance schedule for valves, as opening and closing, since this will prevent them from freezing and will increment the service life. A frozen valve can become useless during a water leak. In addition it is recommended to establish a service life for both water meters and valves, and replaced them as they reach the established service life. A faulty water meter gives faulty readings that translate to water loses in the system.

11.3.7 WATER COSTS TO CITY

The City of La Feria owns its yearly 1800 acre-ft of raw water from the Rio Grande, but has to pay pumping and infrastructure, canals and reservoir, use to the La Feria Irrigation District No. 3. The fee is nine (9) cents per every thousand gallons of raw water pumped.

11.3.8 WATER COST TO CUSTOMERS AND REVIEW OF CURRENT NEEDS

The most recent schedule of service and rates shows that the minimum charge is \$10.55 per 3,000 gallons and the rate per 1000 gallons over minimum is \$2.85 for a consumption range of 3,000 to 5,000 gallons and if this consumption range is exceeded then the rate becomes \$1.65 for 5,000 to 10,000 gallons.

Table 48. Water System Project Summary

Objectives	Phasing for Work Proposed	Estimated Cost as of 8/16
Improvements needed Within the next 5 years	\$1,354,831.10	Phase I
Improvements needed Within the next 5-10 years or less	\$5,382,648.60	Phase II
Improvements needed after A 10 year period	\$2,281,756.40	Phase III

11.4 FUTURE WATER SYSTEM MAP

The future needs of the City as established by the Future Land Use Map were assumed and future demand will be met via the improvements identified on the Future Water System Map, Attachment 11.

12 WASTEWATER SYSTEM STUDY

12.1 SERVICE AREA

12.1.1 CCN

The existing City of La Feria Sanitary Sewer CCN encompasses approximately 9,159 acres. The current population within the city limits is 7,838 or 2,613 connections.

12.1.2 UNSERVED AREAS

Approximately 98% of the inhabitants of the City of La Feria obtain clean drinking water from the City Water Plant. Small pockets of homes within the City of La Feria ETC continue to use septic tank with drain fields. These areas are within the current CCN and sanitary sewer lines can be extended to serve these areas.

12.2 WASTEWATER SYSTEM INVENTORY

The components of the existing wastewater collection system can be identified with the aid of Attachment 12, Existing Wastewater System Inventory. The existing collections lines consist of 6, 8, 10, 12, and 15 inch diameter gravity lines, the location of which are shown on attached map. There are currently 15 lift stations of various depths and capacity situated around the city, two of which are to be completed by the end of 2016. The lift stations generally collect raw sewage of the surrounding areas or within approximately 0.25 mile radius via gravity sewer lines. Then the sewage is either pump to a secondary lift station near the sewage plant or straight to the plant for treatment.

12.3 SYSTEM CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The City of La Feria and its personnel have done a great job in maintaining all lift stations in favorable operating conditions. This prevents excess down times and extends the service life of the equipment. The majority of the lift stations also have an odor control unit that is maintained by the city. Pumps and motors from each lift station also operate using SCADA software controlling their cycling throughout the day.

12.4 WASTEWATER SYSTEM ANALYSIS

12.4.1 SOIL & TERRAIN

The soils in the City of La Feria consist of mainly HO, and HU, which corresponds to Hidalgo Sandy Clay Loam and Raymondville Clay Loam. The terrain in the City of La Feria is generally flat with a gradual North Easterly slope of approximately one foot per mile. Ground water is shallow, usually at 8-10 foot depths. The ground water becomes difficult to control at depths of 16-21 feet below natural ground. Areas around the city continue to be agricultural and farm land including many citrus groves.

12.4.2 INFLOW & INFILTRATION

Influent flow records kept by the wastewater treatment personnel do indicate an increase in flow to the wastewater treatment plant when it rains thus indicating some infiltration. A study to further quantify the amount of infiltration beyond what the daily records show has not been performed.

12.4.3 TREATMENT

The existing Wastewater Treatment Plant

12.4.3.1 INDUSTRIAL WASTE AND SPECIAL TREATMENT

There continues to be no significant volume of industrial Wastewater if any at all, and therefore no special treatment facilities or techniques are required.

12.5 OPERATION PROCEDURES

The Wastewater treatment is operated by a licensed operator and his staff, and the daily procedures include, maintenance, inspections, testing, and record keeping. The collection system is operated and maintained by the Utility Department.

12.6 COST TO CUSTOMERS AND REVIEW OF CURRENT NEEDS

Table 49. Wastewater System Project Summary

Objectives	Estimated Cost as of 8/16	Phasing for Work Proposed
Improvements needed Within the next 5 years	\$3,807,984.88	Phase I
Improvements needed Within the next 5-10 years or less	\$7,634,137.00	Phase II
Improvements needed after A 10 year period	\$11,134,244.80	Phase III

12.7 FUTURE WASTEWATER SYSTEM MAP

The City's future wastewater needs are met with the improvements shown in Attachment 12.

13 PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE STUDY

13.1 INVENTORY

La Feria's park system includes four municipal parks: Scott Sloan Park, Veterans Memorial Sports Complex, Tony Unger Park, and Tiny Town Park. There is also one future municipal park located in the northwest portion of the Town, south of Interstate 2. These five municipal parks provide a variety of facilities including a pool, basketball courts, baseball/softball fields, horseshoe pits, and much more. The Scott Sloane Memorial Park is considered an important neighborhood park, because it contains a pool and a variety of walking/jogging trails for citizens to enjoy. There is also a Recreation Center that provides computer labs, foosball, soccer fields, and more. Just south of the City is a Nature Center that contains natural walking trails along with educational opportunities for citizens and visitors alike. Below is a map of the current Parks & Recreation facilities. A full inventory is provided herein. It is important to note that many of the existing parks are located centrally. There are no recreation facilities north of Interstate 2 in La Feria.

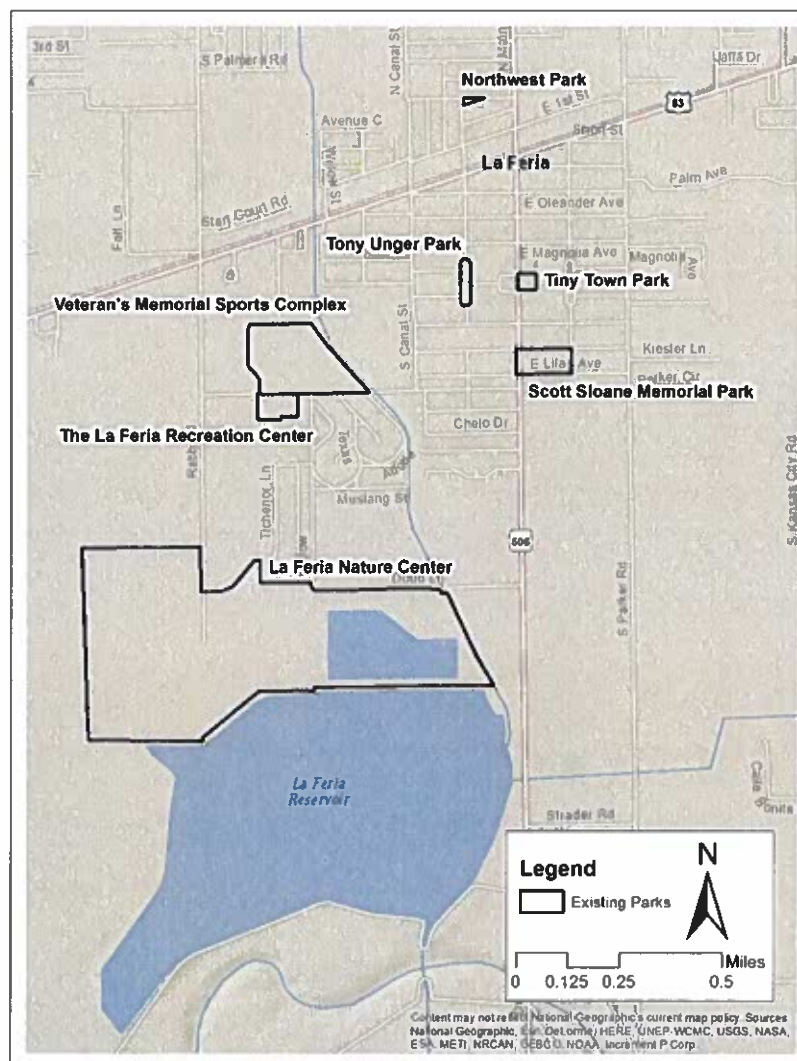


Figure 29. Existing park and recreation facility locations



Figure 30. Concept in progress for Northwest Park (courtesy of Megamorphosis)

The following table is a complete inventory of facilities available to the citizens of La Feria. The first 12 are facilities recognized by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as the minimum standard for parks.

Table 50. Facility Inventory

Recreational Facilities	Tiny Town Park	Scott Sloan Park	Tony Unger Park	Memorial Sports Complex	Recreation Center	Nature Center	Total
Baseball Field		1		4			5
Lights		8		30			
Benches		2					
Bleachers		3					
Batting Cages				1			
Softball Field				2			2
Basketball Courts	1	1	0.5	1	4		7.5
Football Fields				1	1		2
Golf Courses							0
Horseshoe Pits		2	1				3
Picnic Shelters	1	1	1			1	4
Playgrounds	1	1	1	1			4
Monkey Bars	2	1		1			
Toddler Swings	4						
Swings	4		2	4			
Slide	1						
Geodesic Dome			1	1			

Toss Ball Court	1						
Soccer Fields			1	1	1		3
Swimming Pools		1					1
Tennis Courts							0
Sand Volleyball Courts			1				1
Walking/Jogging Trails	1			1		1	
Benches	9	11		5		12	
Picnic Tables	2	6	3				
Security Lights	7		4				
Trash Dispensers	5	6	1	1			
Restrooms	1	1		1	1	1	
Water Fountain	1	1					
Shuffleboard		2	1				
Parking Spaces		17	12			24	
Handicapped		1				4	
Adult Stretching Area			1				
Training Station				1			
Computer Lab					1		
Computers					12		
Foosball					1		
Lounge Area					1		
Auditorium/Flex Room					1		
Natural Open Space						1	
Education Building						1	
Fishing Area						1	
Observation Stations						7	

13.2 PUBLIC INPUT

A public survey was distributed to residents to gain feedback on the Comprehensive Plan. A portion of this survey focused upon the park system in La Feria. It found that 53% of the residents in La Feria are satisfied with the existing recreational facilities. This is only half, and it could be related to the poor accessibility and distribution of the existing parks. Many of the parks are clustered together and centrally located. When asked if La Feria should build new parks only 40.63% of citizens believed new parks should be built, and 31.25% of people disagreed on new parks being built in La Feria. Most people agree that improving local parks should be a priority for La Feria, 68.75% believe improvements are necessary, only 6.25% disagreed on improvements for existing parks, the rest remained neutral.

When asked if the City of La Feria should plant more trees, 60.6% of citizens agreed that new trees should be planted and 33.33% of citizens remained neutral. Only 6.06% of citizens disagreed on trees being planted.

Residents were also asked to choose the five most desired recreational facilities from a list. Based upon the total scores, the top ten facility needs were determined, and are used as a starting point for priority needs in any new facilities or improvements made to existing facilities. The survey results are provided here, in order of "most requested" to "least requested":

Table 51. Most requested park needs.

Facility Type	Requests
Swimming Pool	16
Indoor Recreation Center	14
Trails for Walking and Jogging	14
Picnic Tables	14
Picnic Areas	12
Natural Habitat Areas	11
Large Event Pavilion	10
Amphitheatre	9
Camping/RV Sites	9
Playground Equipment	7

An additional swimming pool was overwhelmingly voted on for residents, along with an indoor recreation center, more trails, and picnic tables/areas. An additional question was asked about what specific activities would be most preferred in an Indoor Recreation facility. The following table summarizes these preferences in order of “most requested” to “least requested”:

Table 52. Most requested indoor facilities.

Facility Type	Requests
Movies	13
Volleyball	8
Basketball	7
Game Area	7
Craft/Meeting Area	6
Weight Lifting	5
Raquet Ball	4
Aerobic/Dance Area	3

13.3 ANALYSIS (NRPA STANDARDS)

Traditional parks standards are set by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The NRPA suggests 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. This means that La Feria needs to have at least 70 acres of land devoted towards parks and open space. With The Nature Center, La Feria is currently exceeding the normalized standard. But, without The Nature Center, La Feria needs about 50 acres of more park space.

The NRPA also gives various categories of parks and how many acres are needed to meet minimum standards.

- **Mini Parks:** Typically cover less than 1 acre and have a service radius of less than ¼ of a mile.
- **Neighborhood Parks:** Have a service radius of ¼ to ½ a mile. They are 2 – 10 acres, optimally 5 acres of space. They require 1 – 2 acres per 1000 people.
- **Community Parks:** Adequate size to accommodate activities associated with neighborhood parks & a special attraction that draws people from a larger area (pond, lake, pool). Generally, contain 25 – 50 acres and serve a variety of needs. Radius is typically ½ to 3 miles. Require 5 – 8 acres per 1,000 residents.

Below is a table that shows La Feria’s existing parks and their category.

Table 53. NRPA Park Standards

Park	Category	Acres	Total NRPA	Needed	Comments
Northwest Park	Mini Park	0.3			Future park to be built.
Tiny Town	Neighborhood Park	1.2			
Tony Unger	Neighborhood Park	1.7			
Scott Sloane	Neighborhood Park	5.3			
Recreation Center	Neighborhood Park	3.7	11.9	14	Adding more parks in Northern portion of town will help meet standard
Veteran's Memorial	Community Park	23			
Nature Center	Community Park	192.8	215.8		Exceeding standards for Community Parks

La Feria's population is estimated currently at 7,508. Specific data on ethnicity, age, and income are provided in the Demographics chapter of this report. Based upon this, there are some assumptions the City can make based upon need for facilities to meet NRPA standards for parks and open space facilities. Table_ displays these 12 facilities and the population support needed for each facility. These are just suggestions made by the NRPA, community needs and feedback are more important when considering what funds to allocate to parks and recreation facilities.

These standards should be seen as a beginning point for the City. Additional park requirements and park facilities will result in more than just these minimum requirements. As La Feria expands its park system into other parts of the city, the standards set by the NRPA can be kept in mind when constructing new parks and what facilities to allocate funds and resources too. Based upon NRPA standards, La Feria needs a golf course and tennis court.

Table 54. NRPA Facility Standards

Facility Type	NRPA Type	Existing Quantity	NRPA Standard	Comments
Baseball Field	1 per 3,000	5	2	Exceeding standards
Softball Field	1 per 3,000	2	2	Exceeding Standards
Basketball Courts	1 per 5,000	7.5	2	Exceeding Standards
Football Fields	1 per 20,000	2	1	Exceeding Standards
Golf Courses	1 18-hole standard per 5,000	0	1-2	There are several within a 10-mile radius of the city.
Horseshoe Pits	1 per 7,500	3	1	Exceeding Standards
Picnic Shelter	1 per 2,000	4	4	Meeting Standards
Playgrounds	1 per 2,000	4	4	Meeting Standards
Soccer Fields	1 per 10,000	3	1	Exceeding Standards
Swimming Pools	1 per 20,000	1	1	Meeting Standards
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000	0	4	La Feria does not meet the national standard but has not expressed a need
Sand Volleyball Courts	1 per 5,000	1	1-2	Meeting Standards

13.4 MAJOR THEMES OF THE PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE STUDY

- *There are high quality parks located centrally, but there are not parks and recreation facilities equally distributed throughout the City.*
- *Citizens are mostly interested in expanding and improving accessibility to swimming pools and recreation centers to all parts of the City.*
- *An integrated trail system would increase park connectivity and allow for more accessibility to all parks throughout the City.*

13.5 PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN

Based upon the community survey and NRPA standards for parks, La Feria should focus on building parks within the northern portion of the city that include a new recreation center and swimming pool. The below map illustrates the location of existing and future city parks, as well as a “butterfly trail” connecting them. These parks are shown on the Future Land Use Map, with the intent that as development occurs, appropriate park dedications will take place to build the City’s park infrastructure. The new plan will create 17.8 miles of trail and an additional 163.2 acres of park, making La Feria’s total acreage of park at 390.9 acres. The map displaying these facilities can be seen in the following page.

The “Butterfly” Trail network creates a figure 8 surrounding the city that connects the various existing and proposed parks, recreational facilities, and natural open areas. For purposes of grant funding, the Butterfly trail has been split into 12 increments that can be implemented in phases over many years. Each increment ranges from half a mile to a maximum of 2 miles. The first phases are identified as areas most critical to connect, starting centrally and expanding outwards towards northern communities farther from existing parks. As more of the parks identified in this Comprehensive Plan are built, more are connected through consecutive phases of this trail plan. Some of these trails will be built into parks, while others will follow existing roadway cross sections or be incorporated into.

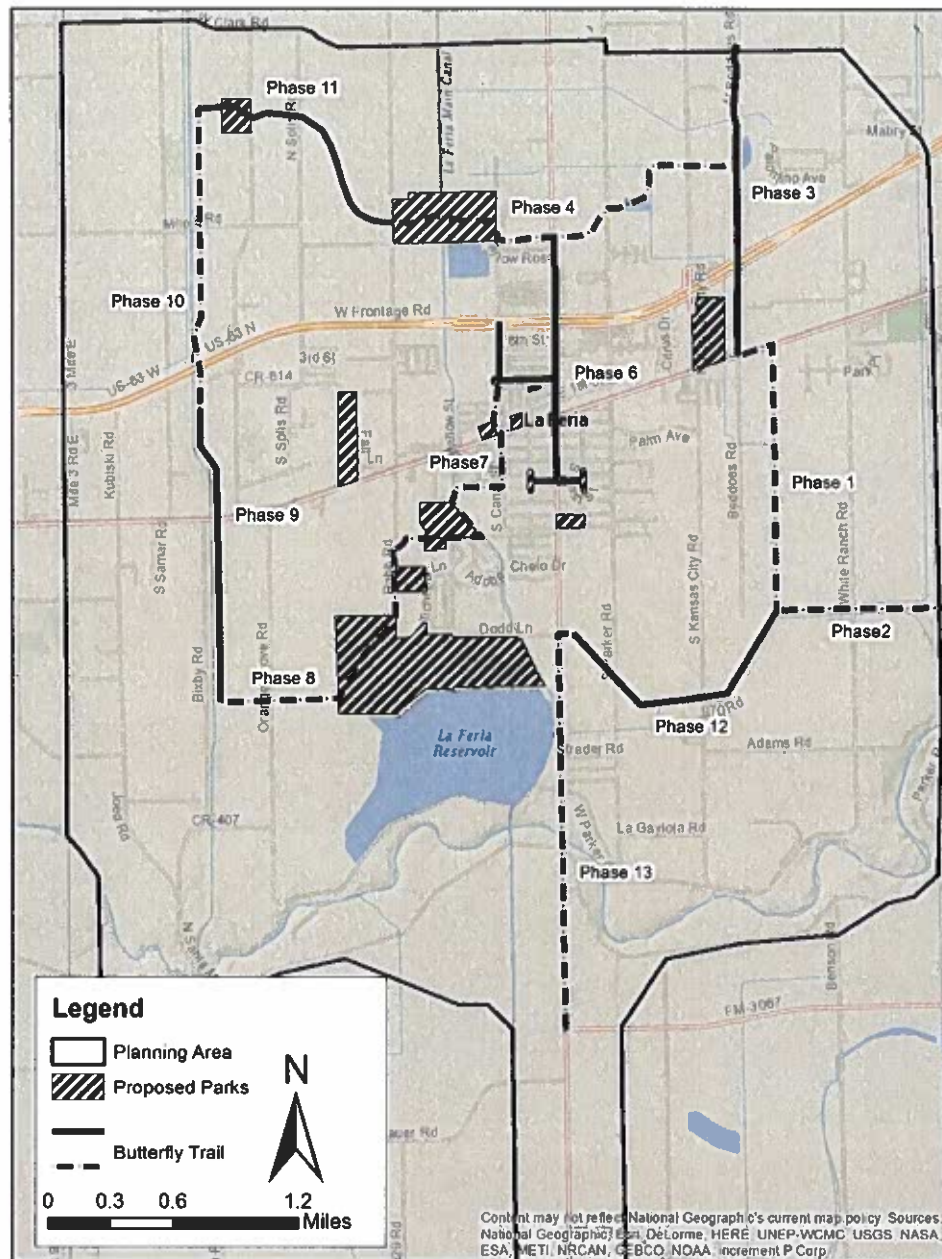


Figure 31. Ultimate Proposed Trail Network

13.5.1 PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Parks/Rec/Open Space Goal 1: Expand the La Feria park system to provide resources and facilities to the northern portion of the city.

- Objective Pro-1.1: Identify parcels that can be converted into parks and open space.
- Objective Pro-1.2: Avoid parcels that are too centrally located that further cluster existing parks and recreational facilities in one place.

Table 55. New Park Development Project Summary

Project Identifier	Description	Target Date	Land Acquisition Required (ac)	Unit Cost (2016\$/ac)	Improvement Costs	Estimated Base Cost	Possible Funding Sources
A	First Street Park (Market Concept)	2020	2.3	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$73,000	LFIDC, Private, General Fund
B	First Street Pocket Park (Splash Pad)	2023	1.2	\$10,000	\$100,000	\$112,000	LFIDC, Private, General Fund, TPWD
C	Memorial Drive/ Falt Lane Park	2026	25	\$12,000	\$75,000	\$375,000	Private, General Fund, TPWD, TDA
D	Main Canal Park	2029	73	\$10,000	\$350,000	\$1,080,000	Private, General Fund, Bond
E	Rabb Rd. Open Space & Buffer Park	2032	10.7	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$132,000	Developer Contribution, Local Issuance
F	Kansas City Rd. Citrus Park	2035	31.5	\$12,000	\$25,000	\$403,000	Private, General Fund, TPWD, TDA, Bond
Total Est. Cost						\$2,175,000	

Parks/Rec/Open Space Goal 2: Connect existing and future parks.

- Objective Pro-2.1: Develop the Butterfly Trail system that seeks to connect existing and future park parcels.
- Objective Pro-2.2: Where greenbelt connections are not feasible, require wide sidewalks and bicycle pathways along road corridor to reconnect to trail system.
- Require bicycle racks at trailheads and recreation facilities.

Table 56. New Trail Project Summary

Project Phase	Description	Land Acquisition Required (Miles)	Target Date	Unit Cost (2016\$/mile)	Estimated Base Cost	Possible Funding Sources
1	In-between White Ranch Rd and Beddoes Rd running north to south	1.4	2020	\$179,340	\$250,936	TIGER, FTA, Private, General Fund

2	Running east to west on Evans Canal	0.9	2020	\$179,340	\$161,406	TIGER, FTA, Private, General Fund
3	North of 82 on Beddoes Rd. Bike Signage	1.5	2020	\$27,240	\$40,860	TIGER, FTA, Private, General Fund
4	Connecting Beddoes Rd to proposed park D	1.9	2021	\$179,340	\$340,746	TIGER, FTA, Private, General Fund
5	83 down Duke's Highway to Tiny Town Park. Bike Signage.	1.39	2021	\$27,240	\$37,863.6	TIGER, FTA, Private, General Fund
Total Est. Cost					\$831,811.60	

Parks/Rec/Open Space Goal 3: Build a second recreation center in the northern portion of the city that provides many of the services and facilities identified in the community survey as lacking at the current recreation center.

- Objective Pro-3.1: Draw from the community survey to provide a swimming pool and volleyball court.
- Objective Pro-3.2: Take standards from NRPA analysis and consider providing sand volleyball courts and a tennis court in any new recreation or park facility.
- Objective Pro-3.3: Identify partners for the development of recreation center such as the YMCA.

14 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

14.1 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Municipal Operating Funds

All municipal governmental revenue and expenditure operations can be said to be either governmental, proprietary (or enterprise), or fiduciary in nature. Governmental operations are those usually not engaged in by private business such as police and fire protection services. These are usually financed by the General Fund or from other sources not directly related to the operations themselves.

Proprietary or Enterprise Operations are those, which are similar to the operations of private business such as water, wastewater and sanitation departments of a city. They are financed by direct charges assessed against the citizens benefiting them. However, the major difference between private enterprise and the enterprise funds of a city is the profit motive. A city is not concerned with making profits again. The city, however, must be concerned about establishing reserve funds for each of the city's enterprise activities. This assures the city that they can keep facilities operating when major problems occur or when additional State and Federal requirements are imposed, without seeking outside financial assistance.

Fiduciary Operations are those undertaken by a government on behalf of, or in a fiduciary capacity for some other persons or groups. Examples of fiduciary operations of the City are State and Federal Grant Programs. Many times fiduciary operations are considered either as Proprietary or Governmental.

The need to account for separate operations differently, and the fact that many governmental revenue sources carry legal restrictions regarding how they are spent, has resulted in the development of fund accounting for governments. Fund accounting emphasizes separate detailed accounting and reporting for each of the several sub-parts of a government, called funds, rather than accounting and reporting for the governmental unit as a whole. The following types of funds by the City are:

General Fund – are all resources not required to be accounted for in another capacity.

Proprietary Fund – to account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to a private business, and where the intent of the governing body is that the cost (expenses including depreciation) of providing goods or services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered through user fees.

Debt Service Fund – to account for resources and expenditures used in repaying long term debt (General Obligations Bonds, Revenue Bonds, and Certificates of Obligation)

Trust and Agency Funds – to account for resources held by the City in a fiduciary capacity on behalf of other parties. These can include projects involving state or federal funds, private donations for a particular purpose, foundation grants, ect.

The City should always attempt to maintain the minimum number of funds consistent with legal and operating requirements. Excessive funds can result in inflexibility, undue complexity and inefficient financial management, such as, more time will be required to post ledgers, reconcile bank balances, prepare financial statements, and to conduct the annual audit.

14.2 CAPITAL NEEDS LIST

Capital Needs List by Planning Element

Park and Recreation projects

- First Street Park (Market Concept)
- First Street Pocket Park

Central Business District

- Sidewalk/Median/Connectivity Improvements
- Façade Enhancement Fund
- Building Integrity Fund

Streets

- First Street From Main Street to Parker Road 48' B-B - Resurface
- Fifth Street From Villarreal Street to Main Street (FM 506) - 30' B-B Resurface
- Angelita Drive From Chelo Drive (West) to Main Street - 30' B-B Resurface
- Apalooza Street From White Ranch Road to East Palomino Street (30' B-B) Resurface
- Arroyo Lane From Main St (FM 506) to Parker Road 22' (No curb&gutter)
- Beddoes Road Extension from South City Limits to FM 506 (40' B-B) New Construction
- Beddoes Road From 600ft. South of U.S. 83 Business to South City Limits -
- Beddoes Road From U.S. 83 Business Highway to US 83 Expressway-
- Cactus Lane (Palmera Heights) from Palmera Drive to Hibiscus Drive -
- Canal Street From First Street to Fourth Street 40' B-B - Resurface
- Canal Street From Fourth Street to U.S. 83 Expressway 40' B-B - Resurface
- Canal Street From Business 83 to First Street 40' B-B - Resurface
- Chelo Drive From Main Street to Pancho Maples Street (30' B-B) Resurface
- Citrus Drive From Business 83 to Expressway 83 - 25' (no curb & gutter) Resurface
- Commercial Avenue From Main Street to East Street- 51' B-B Resurface
- Dodd Lane From Main Street (FM 506) to Water Treatment Plant (40' B-B) New Construction
- East Palomino Avenue (Ranch Blanco Estate) 30' B-B Resurface
- East Street From Verbena Avenue to Jessamine Avenue- 31' B-B Resurface
- East - West Connector From Parker Road to Kansas City Road (40' B-B) New Construction
- East - West From Dodd Lane to Orange Grove Road (40' B-B) New Construction
- Extend FM 3067 From FM 506-West to FM 2536 (Jo-ED Rd.) (40' B-B) New Construction
- To Extend East - West Clark Road From Kansas City Road to White Ranch Road (40' B-B) New Construction
- First Street From Main Street to West Street (40' B-B) Resurface
- Fleetwood Avenue (Barrington Estates) 30' B-B New Construction
- Kiester Lane From Parker Road to drain Right-of-Way - 40' B-B Resurface
- Kubiski Road From U.S. 83 Business Highway North 1,600 ft. 18' (30' B-B) No curb & gutter- Re-construct
- La Feria Industrial Park Phase II Industrial Way- Westerly 415 ft. Partial Resurface
- Lilac Avenue From West Street to Main Street -(No curb & gutter) 20' B-B Resurface
- Magnolia Avenue (N&S - Magnolia Heights)From Magnolia Avenue to Cul-de-Sac-
- Magnolia Avenue East & West From Magnolia Heights (30' B-B) Reclaim
- Magnolia Heights Avenue- From Magnolia Avenue South to Cul-de-Sac (30' B-B) Resurface

- North Parker Road From North Property Line of South Texas Haven Subdivision to Industrial Way 40' B-B - Resurface
- North Palomino Street From West Palomino to East Palomino Street (30' B-B) Resurface
- North Parker Road (Reclaim with 2.0" HMA - 40' B-B) Industrial Way to Frontage Road
- North Parker Road From Business 83 to North Property Line of South Texas Haven Subdivision 40' B-B - Resurface
- Orange Grove Road From Business 83 South to City Limits - 40' B-B New Construction
- Palm Avenue From Parker Road to Kansas City Road (30' B-B) Resurface
- Parker Circle From Parker Road to Cul-de-Sac - 36' B-B Resurface
- Parking Lot for the Swimming Pool.... Resurfacing of & Drainage Improvements
- Ruby Lane From Star Court to Star Court -30' B-B New Construction
- Seventh Street From Canal Street to Main Street (FM 506) 34.4' B-B - Resurface
- Six Street From Canal Street to Main Street (FM 506) 30' B-B - Resurface
- South Palomino Street From West Palomino to East Palomino Street (30' B-B) Resurface
- South Parker Road From Irrigation Canal to Arroyo Street (40' B-B) New Construction
- South Parker Road From Magnolia Avenue to Lilac Avenue (40' B-B) Resurface
- South Samar From U.S. 83 Business Highway to South End 18' (30' B-B) No curb & gutter- New Construction
- Spruce Avenue (Reclaim with 1.5' HMA - 30' B-B) West Street to Canal Street
- Star Court From Rabb Road to Cul-de-Sac (North La Feria Village) 30' B-B New Construction
- Tim Garcia Street From First Street to Fourth Street 31' B-B - Resurface
- Tract V Street From Parker Road to VIP RV Park Fence (30' B-B) New Paving-including curb & gutter
- Villarreal Street From First Street to Fourth Street 31' B-B - Resurface
- Virginia Avenue From Parker Road to drain Right-of-Way - 32' B-B Resurface
- West Street From First Street to Fourth Street 40' B-B - Resurface
- West Street From Business 83 to First Street 40' B-B - Resurface
- West Street From Angelita Drive to Pancho Maples (30' B-B)
- West Magnolia Avenue From Willow Street to Canal Street - 31' B-B Resurface
- West Palomino Street From South Palomino to North Palomino Street (30' B-B) Resurface
- West Street From Perimeter Street around Unger Park - 21' B-B Resurface
- West Street From Pancho Maples to Lilac - 20' (No curb & gutter) Resurface
- West Verbena Avenue (Lion's Lane) From Canal Street to LFISD School Street -
- Willow Street From First Street to Avenue C - 30' B-B Resurface
- Winchester Street From Pancho Maples to Mustang Street- 30' B-B Resurface
- Water Treatment Plant Drive & Parking Area (New Paving-Including Curb & Gutter)

Thoroughfares

- Cantu Rd/Beddoes Rd. Connector
- Clark Rd. Extension
- Cantu Rd/Dodd Lane Connector

Water System

- 8" Waterline on FM 506 south to City Limits 6250 Feet
- 8" Waterline on Pancho Maples from Winchester to S. Rabb Rd 2100 Feet
- 10" Waterline on S. Kansas City Rd East to Drain Ditch 3125 Feet
- 10" Waterline along Canal E. to FM 506 and N. to Clark Rd 7200 Feet
- 10" Waterline on Jo-Ed South City Limits to FM 407 6200 Feet
- 8" Waterline on S. Bixby Rd from Bus. 83 to FM 407 7775 Feet

- 8" Waterline on Orange Grove Rd South to FM 407 7500 Feet
- 10" Waterline along FM 407 from Jo-Ed Rd to Orange Grove Rd 3670 Feet
- 10" Waterline along S. Kansas City Rd S. Phase I to Adams Dr 5300 Feet
- 8" Waterline along Calle Bonita Subdivision 1300 Feet
- 10" Waterline along Adams Dr from S. Kansas City Rd to White Ranch Rd 3850 Feet
- 12" Waterline along White Ranch Rd S. of City Limits to Adam Dr 8200 Feet
- 10" Waterline from Beddoes Rd to White Ranch Rd 2800 Feet
- 8" Waterline on Beddoes Rd 2800 feet S. of Bus. 83 to Proposed 10" 1350 Feet
- 10" Waterline on Beddoes Rd 4150 feet S. of Bus. 83 & East to Kansas City Rd 1500 Feet
- 10" Waterline Along Old Solis Rd North of Expressway 83 4425 Feet
- 12" Waterline Along Rabb Rd North of Expressway 83 3730 Feet
- 10" Waterline 4400 feet North of Expressway 83 from Old Solis Rd to Canal St. 4900 Feet
- 10" Waterline 2700 feet North of Expressway 83 along FM 506 1750 Feet
- 10" Waterline 4500 feet North of Expressway 83 from FM 506 to Parker Rd 1450 Feet
- 10" Waterline 4500 feet North of Expressway 83 from Parker Rd to Kansas City Rd 2800 Feet
- 10" Waterline Along Kansas City Rd North 2250 Feet
- 8" Waterline East from Kansas City Rd to Beddoes Rd 1450 Feet
- 10" Waterline along FM 2556 North to Clark Rd 3400 Feet
- 10" Waterline along Clark Rd from FM 2556 to N. Rabb Rd 3700 Feet
- 12" Waterline along N. Rabb Rd 2450 Feet
- 10" Waterline along Clark Rd from Rabb Rd to FM 506 4000 Feet
- 10" Waterline along Clark Rd from FM 506 to Kansas City Rd 3900 Feet
- 8" Waterline along Parker Rd from approximately 4560 feet North of US Expressway 83 to S. Clark Rd 2450 Feet
- 10" Waterline along Kansas City Rd from approximately 3100 feet North of US Expressway 83 to Clark Rd 3670 Feet
- 8" Waterline to Kansas City Rd Acreage Subdivision 1380 Feet
- 8" Waterline along Beddoes Rd approximately 2130 feet North of US Expressway 83 to Clark Rd 4000 Feet
- 10" Waterline along Clark Rd from Kansas City Rd to Beddoes Rd 1350 Feet

Wastewater System

- 15" Wastewater Line along Beddoes Rd and to Rancho Blanco Estates 8786 Feet
- 12" Wastewater along FM 506 North Approximately 2200 Feet
- 6" Wastewater Line for Lobitas Estates 4650 feet
- 12" Wastewater Line East of Existing LS on S. Kansas City Rd and along Beddoes Rd North 3800 feet
- 12" Wastewater Line from Existing LS on S. Kansas City Rd and along Kansas City Rd South 3650 feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along Beddoes Rd approximately 2000 Feet North of US Expressway 83 3750 Feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along North Kansas City Rd to Clark Rd 6300 Feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along Parker Rd from Windsong Village Subdivision North 4000 feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along US Expressway 83 North Frontage between Old Solis Rd and Rabb Rd 6850 feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along South White Ranch Rd 9400 Feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along South Kansas City Rd 2300 feet
- 15" Wastewater Line along Orange Grove Rd South 6800 feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along North Rabb Rd approximately 3300 Feet North of US Expressway 83 3700 Feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along North FM 2556 to Clark Rd 3000 Feet
- 15" Wastewater Line along US Expressway 83 North Frontage Rd between Kubisky and FM 2556 and along North Bixby Rd 4000 feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along Bixby Rd between Mile 8 & Clark Rd 5280 feet

- 12" Wastewater Line along Mile 8 Willacy Main Canal & Mile 3 E 3200 Feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along South Kansas City Rd 2300 feet
- 15" Wastewater Line along Orange Grove Rd South 6800 feet
- 12" Wastewater Line along South FM 506 16800 Feet

14.3 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

The hereafter Recommended Capital Improvements were based on studies of the Comprehensive Planning activities. Each specific program listed in this Capital Improvements Program exhibit was assigned one of the thereafter priority terms.

M – Mandatory	Item protects life or health.
N – Necessary	Item is an important public service.
D – Desirable	Item replaces an obsolete facility.
A – Acceptable	Item reduces operating costs.

Recommended Capital Improvements for a five year period (2017-2021) are listed below with a code symbols in the above need classification and an anticipated source of funding as listed below for the implementation projects.

GO – General Obligation Bonds
AF – Assessment fees from property owners or developers
RB – Revenue Bonds
City – Funding from General Fund or Proprietary Fund
CDNG – Community Development Block Grant Funds
GS – Other Grant Source

The engineering firm of Sigler, Winston, Greenwood & Associates, Inc. completed a study of the city's streets, wastewater system, water system and storm drainage. These studies identify both present day needs as well as future needs for the community. This Capital Improvements Program is predicated upon these studies.

FIVE YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS BY YEAR AND PRIORITY

FY 2017 – Water System

<u>Need Class</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
N	8" Waterline on Pancho Maples from Winchester to S. Rabb Rd 2100 Feet	\$154,109.20	
SUBTOTAL		\$154,109.20	

FY 2017 – Wastewater System

N	6" Wastewater Line for Lobitas Estates 4650 feet	\$649,216.40	
SUBTOTAL		\$649,216.40	

FY 2017 – Street System

N	North Parker Road (Reclaim with 2.0" HMAC – 40' B-B) Industrial Way to Frontage Road	\$250,245.61	
N	Tract V Street From Parker Road to VIP RV Park Fence (30' B-B) New Paving – including curb & gutter	\$64,046.12	
SUBTOTAL		\$314,291.73	

TOTAL----- **\$ 1,117,617.33**

FY 2018 – Water System

<u>Need Class</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
N	10" Waterline on S. Kansas City Rd. East to Drain Ditch 3125 Feet	\$243,512.50	
SUBTOTAL		\$243,512.50	

FY 2018 – Wastewater System

N	15" Wastewater Line along Beddoes Rd And to Rancho Blanco Estates 8786 Feet	\$1,504,525.68	
SUBTOTAL		\$1,504,525.68	

FY 2018 – Street System

N	South Parker Road From Irrigation Canal To Arroyo Street (40' B-B) New Construction	\$620,091.13	
N	Spruce Avenue (Reclaim with 1.5' HMAC - 30' B B) West Street to Canal Street	\$116,879.47	

SUBTOTAL	\$736,970.60
-----------------	---------------------

TOTAL	\$ 2,485,008.78
--------------	------------------------

FY 2019 – Wastewater System

<u>Need Class</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
N	12" Wastewater along FM 506 North Approximately 2200 Feet	\$364,632.80	

SUBTOTAL	\$364,632.80
-----------------	---------------------

FY 2019 – Street System

N	Dodd Lane From Main Street (FM 506) to Water Treatment Plant (40' B-B) New Construction	\$727,405.35
N	Beddoes Road From 600 ft. South of U.S. 83 Business to South City Limit – 40' B-B New Construction	\$406,134.00

SUBTOTAL	\$1,133,539.35
-----------------	-----------------------

TOTAL	\$ 1,498,172.15
--------------	------------------------

FY 2020 – Water System

<u>Need Class</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
N	10" Waterline along Canal E. to FM 506 And N. to Clark Rd 7200 Feet	\$534,262.40	

SUBTOTAL	\$534,262.40
-----------------	---------------------

FY 2020 – Wastewater System

N	12" Wastewater Line from Existing LS on S. Kansas City Rd and along Kansas City Rd South 3650 feet	\$709,494.80
---	--	--------------

SUBTOTAL	\$709,494.80
-----------------	---------------------

FY 2020 – Street System

N	South Samar From U.S. 83 Business Highway to South End 18' (30' B-B) No Curb & gutter – New Construction	\$394,831.61
N	Kubiski Road From U.S. 83 Business Highway North 1,600 ft. 18' (30' B-B) No curb & gutter Re-construct	\$353,934.08

SUBTOTAL	\$748,765.69
-----------------	---------------------

TOTAL	\$ 1,992,522.89
--------------	------------------------

FY 2021 – Water System

<u>Need Class</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
N	8" Waterline on FM 506 South to City Limits 6250 Feet	\$422,947.00	
SUBTOTAL		\$422,947.00	

FY 2021 – Wastewater System

N	12" Wastewater Line from East of Existing LS on S. Kansas City Rd and along Beddoes Rd North 2800 feet	\$580,115.20
SUBTOTAL		\$580,115.20

FY 2020 – Street System

N	Magnolia Avenue East & West From Magnolia Heights (30' B-B) Reclaim	\$69,383.57
N	Magnolia Heights Avenue – From Magnolia Avenue South to Cul-de-Sac (30' B-B) Resurface	\$33,358.02
SUBTOTAL		\$102,741.59

TOTAL----- **\$ 1,105,803.79**

14.4 APPLICATION OF THE PLAN

It must be recognized that any plan for the future must be based on an estimate of certain growth, conditions, trends and projections. These conditions may change and vary from time to time, and when they do, the Capital Improvements Program should be re-analysis. This may require selected improvements to be implemented immediately or even delayed. Projects recommended for the 2017 to 2021 Capital Improvements are illustrated on the Capital Improvements Map.

Finally, this plan is not meant to be inflexible, but rather a tool to help establish a course of action. The saying, where there is a will there is a way" appropriately applies here.

15 SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE

The City enacted subdivision regulations in 2008 and has successfully codified these regulations under Chapter 10 of the Code of Regulations.

A review of this ordinance indicates the following points for consideration:

- Generally, the subdivision regulations are fully sufficient to protect the city's interest with respect to the division of land under Texas Local Government Code (LGC) 212.
- Section 7-1(b) duplicates its statutory origin under LGC §212.015. It may be more efficient to refer to the application requirements only (leave out the qualification criteria) and simply refer to the statute.
- Section 8, concerning amending plats duplicates its statutory origin. It may be simpler to note that the City Manager has the authority and reference "Sec. 212.016, as amended."
- Attachment A, Section 6 in re Utility Easements. Consider amendment of text to state "Width of easements shall be *subject to approval by the City Engineer* based on space needs, *according to common engineering practice.*"
- There does not appear to be a provision for requesting a variance. Recommend adding a section to allow variances to be heard by the City Commission and approved if a finding of fact is made to document the unique situation.

16 ZONING ORDINANCE

The City adopted zoning in 1997 with amendments entered in 2001 and 2008, and has codified these regulations under Chapter 14 of the Code of Ordinances.

A review of this ordinance indicates the following points:

- The ordinance adequately furthers fair housing and eliminates the disparate treatment of protected classes under Federal Fair Housing law.
- The Commission may wish to consider referring to church use as “Assembly”, and distinguish therein only as it relates to size (e.g. less than 10,000 GFA vs greater than 10,000 GFA), but not with respect to civic, fraternal, social or religious assembly. This avoids potential challenges under the Religious Freedom and Restoration Act.

In order to implement the Future Land Use Plan, the following revisions are recommended:

- Establish a floating zone for uses which would implement the “Pueblo Moderno” land use classification. The district could be titled “Mixed Residential Care District”. Setbacks would be based upon minimum fire separations and could require the provision of common open space. Build-to lines would also be appropriate, as would parking lots which are internal to the site in order to create a pedestrian-oriented streetscape.
- Establish an overlay zoning district for Gateway areas. This district would apply additional building placement and design standards which encourage architectural elements visible from a distance. Stricter sign regulations and materials requirements may also be appropriate.
- Develop a standard requirement for the separation and buffering of adjacent, incompatible or conflicting land uses (bufferyards).