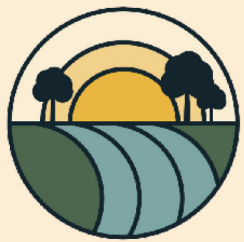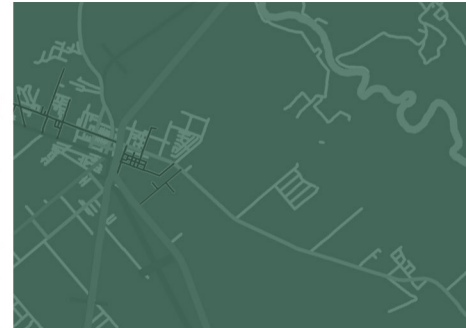*"We are stronger as a county when we all work together"*

LIBERTY COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN
2025 - 2035

LIBERTY ★ COUNTY

established 1836

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAN OVERVIEW
GUIDING

The "Liberty County Strategic Plan 2025 - 2035" outlines a roadmap to guide future growth and development in Liberty County over the next decade. This document is an update of the Liberty County Strategic Plan 2016. The plan serves as the official policy guide for decision-making related to development, environment, transportation, housing, economic development, facilities, and public services. As such, it may be used to:

- Communicate the overarching vision;
- Guide development approvals by representatives such as elected officials;
- Serve as a basis for regulations such as subdivision regulations, building codes, etc.;
- Inform and support capital improvement plans.

The plan has been prepared through robust collaboration among local government officials, community stakeholders, residents, educational institutions, and other local/regional organizations via a series of public workshops, surveys, virtual engagement, pop-up events, and focus groups. The plan has six focus areas, organized as chapters, each containing specific goals, objectives, and actionable steps intended to guide decision-makers and community partners.

By implementing the recommendations in the "Liberty County Strategic Plan 2025 - 2035," community leaders aspire to grow Liberty County as a place where residents can live safely, prosper economically, and enjoy a strong sense of community. Ongoing community participation remains critical to implementing the strategies and adapting them to changing needs.

DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS *CHAPTER 3*

Goal 3.1: Unite our communities and actively coordinate our regional efforts
- Maintain an inter-organizational council, with membership open to all cities, counties, and community organizations, for holistic land and water management.
- Coordinate with municipalities to guide development toward areas with appropriate infrastructure and away from hazard risks.

Goal 3.2: Build community resilience
- Establish development regulations to reduce hazard exposure.
- Increase staff capacity for permitting and enforcement.
- Improve damage assessment capabilities and floodplain management.
- Enhance flood resilience through strategic property buyouts.
- Develop public education initiatives on hazard risk and regulations.

Goal 3.3: Protect and preserve the natural environment
- Support agricultural land and farming communities.
- Coordinate with partners on natural asset protection and funding.
- Support environmentally responsible energy development.

TRANSPORTATION *CHAPTER 4*

Goal 4.1: Improve the safety of the transportation system
- Reduce vehicle crashes.
- Decrease hazards where sidewalks exist.
- Reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

Goal 4.2: Provide travelers with transportation options
- Improve public transportation.
- Expand sidewalk, trail, and bike path networks.

Goal 4.3: Provide a high-quality road system
- Perform regular maintenance on all county roads.
- Alleviate vehicle congestion and hazardous hot spots.
- Establish robust road-building standards from the onset.

HOUSING *CHAPTER 5*

Goal 5.1: Increase the range of housing options.
- Improve senior living experience and quality of life.
- Increase supply of multi-family homes.
- Increase supply of single-family homes.
- Integrate alternative housing types.

Goal 5.2: Encourage high-quality housing
- Strengthen building standard enforcement.
- Reduce disaster-related damage.

Goal 5.3: Reduce housing cost burden.
- Increase supply of affordable housing.
- Broaden and inform home-purchase opportunities.
- Broaden and inform rental assistance.

Goal 5.4: Manage housing growth for resilient and productive communities
- Increase density in and around urban areas.
- Guide new construction to safe areas.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT *CHAPTER 6*

Goal 6.1: Increase employment opportunities by attracting a diverse mix of industries
- Create a business-friendly environment.
- Develop the County as a regional freight hub.
- Develop tourism around hunting, fishing, rodeo, and agriculture.

Goal 6.2: Support existing assets and expand opportunities for new businesses
- Promote local business expansion and retention.
- Identify opportunities for local groceries, retail, and food services.
- Expand sports-based affordable entertainment.

Goal 6.3: Establish programs for a skilled and competitive workforce
- Align skills training with employer needs.
- Improve adult education.
- Encourage entrepreneurs via financial literacy and self-sufficiency programs.

FACILITIES *CHAPTER 7*

Goal 7.1: Provide community facilities and services that support human capital
- Invest in educational facilities.
- Increase access to social services.
- Expand county facilities for broader community services.

Goal 7.2: Enhance public safety infrastructure and services
- Expand emergency services for swift response.
- Strengthen collaborative emergency response and disaster management.

Goal 7.3: Adopt environmentally friendly practices
- Improve recycling and waste management to handle growth.
- Protect groundwater sustainability and water resources.

Goal 7.4: Improve communication channels
- Expand physical infrastructure for broadband.
- Equip residents with digital literacy skills.
- Foster civic engagement through transparent communication.

HEALTH *CHAPTER 8*

Goal 8.1: Enhance food security and strengthen the local food network
- Establish a locally sourced regional food system.
- Expand deliveries in food deserts.
- Promote education on nutrition and healthy eating.

Goal 8.2: Improve public health outcomes and increase access to services
- Improve coordination among healthcare providers.
- Expand specialty health services.
- Increase community health and trauma care in low-income or rural areas.

Goal 8.3: Promote active living and a healthy environment
- Advance waste management practices and reduce hazard exposure.
- Enhance emergency preparedness.
- Increase public access to recreational facilities and green spaces.
- Promote community-based active living programs.

PLANNING TEAM

Core Team

Jay Knight, County Judge
Alexis Cordova, Former Liberty County Extension Agent
for Family & Community Health

Special Thanks to the following Steering Community and Focus Group Stakeholders, for volunteering their time to work on this project:

Alma Rodriguez, CH&P Management
Carolina Lopez-Herrera, TXDOT Beaumont
Christine Shippey, Covenant With Christ International
Christine Underhill, PHR 6/5 DSHS
Danielle Lewis, City of Cleveland
Danny Lee, City of Cleveland
Darrel Broussard, Cleveland P.D
David Douglas, Liberty County Constable Precinct 5
David Hunter, Liberty County
Derek Woods, Dayton Police Chief
Eisha Jones, TUFF Kids
Emilio Levario, City of Cleveland
Evan Roberson, Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare
Barbara McIntyre, Liberty County Long Term Recovery Committee
Greg Arthur, Liberty County Commissioner
Griselda Gonzales, GRIS Engineering
Hortencia Alvarado, PHR 6/5 DSHS
Jennifer Billings, City of Dayton
Jennifer Perkins, City of Dayton
Jessica Johnson, Dayton ISD
Katie Marek, Lee College

Kaylee Motley, PHR 6/5 DSHS
Kelly Axton, Cleveland ISD - Board Members
Kimberly Judge, City of Dayton
Larry MacNeil, Liberty Dayton Regional Medical Center
Laura Lane-Worley, Lee College
Mary Arrendell, City of Plum Grove
Myria Schubert, The Vindicator
Phillip Stewart, USDA-NRCS
Rachell Hall, City of Cleveland
Randall Walter, Liberty County Constable Precinct 6
Rena Davis, Liberty County Hospital District
Robert Reynolds, City of Cleveland
Roger Brookes, City of Cleveland
Roscoe Warrick Jr. - City of Cleveland
Russel Payne, The Vindicator
Scott Lambert, Mission Realty
Scott Swigert, City of Cleveland
Sean Anderson, City of Cleveland
Shane Burleigh, Dayton Police
Sherry Sikes, City of Dayton
Stacey Brown, City of Kenefick
Stephen McCanless, Cleveland ISD - Superintendent
Ted Smith, Liberty County Sheriff's Office
Tom Branch, City of Liberty
Willie Carter, Cleveland ISD - Board Members

Texas Target Communities Planning Team:
Jaimie Hicks Masterson, Director
Jeewasmi Thapa, Senior Program Coordinator
Cedric Shy, Program Coordinator

Faculty:
Christine Wen, Bill Eisele, and Ivis Garcia

Students:
Jordan Gregory, Muyang Li, Kelly Brasseaux, Sam Fowler, Reece Neathery, Hannah Solis, Sarah Cumm, Tanner-Fuller, Jeff Puckett, Joseph Allen, William Mohamad, Disha Chaturvedi, Travis Crowe, Parth Bhagwat, Vimesanuo Kraho, Elizabeth Dupont, John Hoang, Alexander Hardy, Taylor Cooleen, Connor Ford, Cassidy Fielding, Caroline Couch, Mahya Mahdavi, Noah Garcia, Farzana Ahmed, Keerti Rath, Melissa Hatton, Cole Bakley, Laura Gunn, Subin Yee.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN LIBERTY COUNTY AND TxTC

In the fall of 2022, the County of Liberty and Texas Target Communities (TxTC) partnered to update the Liberty County Strategic Plan: 2016 - 2036. The community steering committee and the residents were integral to the planning process, contributing to the thoughts, desires, and opinions of community members—as well as their enthusiasm about Liberty's future. The result of this collaboration is the updated County of Liberty Strategic Plan, which is the official policy guide for the community's growth over the next twenty years.

BACKGROUND OF TxTC

The Texas Target Communities program was initiated in 1993 by the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning at Texas A&M University. This program selects small communities from the state of Texas and provides residents with valuable assistance in planning. At the same time, it serves as a "real world" learning laboratory for graduate students. Students gain valuable planning experience while the targeted community receives assistance that can make a positive difference in the quality of urban life for its residents. Communities are chosen for participation in the program based on demonstrated need and their commitment to the planning process.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

COUNTY OVERVIEW

Liberty County has been experiencing dramatic growth in recent years. The 2020 Census population was 91,628 people, and the latest estimate (2022) puts it at 102,000. Liberty County is home to 18 communities in southeast Texas and is part of the thriving Houston metropolitan area, including Liberty, Dayton, Cleveland, Ames, Daisetta, Dayton, Devers, and Hardin. Recent growth is concentrated around Plum Grove where a new section of Highway 99 cuts through. The County, 1,158 square miles in area, is located to the northeast of Houston and shares its eastern border with Harris and Montgomery Counties and southern border with Chambers County. The Trinity River runs down to the Galveston Bay, bisecting the County into eastern and western halves down its seat, also called Liberty. The natural space consists of mostly forests and woodlands in the north and pastures and croplands in the south, Davis Hill State Park, and the Trinity River National Wildland Refuge.

CONTEXT
LOCATION

Liberty County is located in southeast Texas between Harris County and Hardin and Jefferson Counties. It is part of the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land metropolitan statistical area also known as Greater Houston and a member of the Houston-Galveston Area Council.

Interstate 69 goes through the northwest corner of Liberty County and by Cleveland City. US Highway 90 extends across the southern half of the County and through Dayton City and Liberty City as it connects Houston to Beaumont. The Grand Parkway toll road cuts through the southwest corner of the County as it loops around Houston. Three major railroads go east-west across the County. Lying between the industrial powerhouses of Houston and Beaumont-Port Arthur near the I-10 corridor, Liberty County is poised to participate in and benefit from the economic development of the region.

The Trinity River bisects Liberty County into east and west halves. The Trinity River National Wildland Refuge and Davis Hill State Park protect parts of the wooded wetlands along the river. Outside the wetlands, forests are more common in the northern half of the County while pasture and cropland is common in the southern half.

Liberty County is rich in natural resources, with abundant forest, wetland, and rich biodiversity along the Trinity River. Water availability and soil quality have helped agriculture thrive as a major source of economic activity.
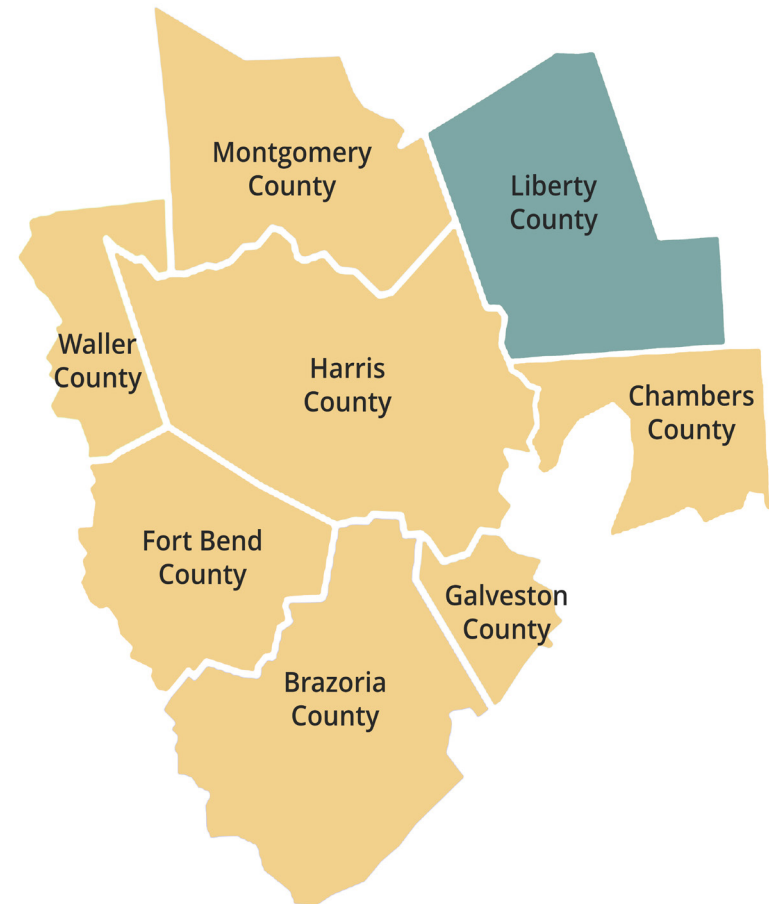
Liberty County is a member of the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the 8-county Houston-Galveston metropolitan region

QUICK LOOK
STATE OF COMMUNITY
2020

DEMOGRAPHICS

91,628
residents in 2020

146,794 - 166,806
projected residents in 2050

Projected Population through 2050

Legend:
- Population
- Geometric Projection
- Texas Demographics Center

Age

- 65+ 5%
- Under 18 29%
- 45-64 27%
- 18-24 10%
- 25-44 29%

34% Hispanic/Latino

Race

- Two or More 11.2%
- Other 18.2%
- Asian/Pacific Islander 0.6%
- American Indian 1.2%
- Black 7.8%
- White 61.0%

Educational Attainment

Categories: Less than High School, High School Graduate, Some College, Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Graduate or Professional Degree

22.5%
speak Spanish at home

8.9%
speak English less than "very well"

HOUSING

33,182
homes in 2020

63%
housing on County land

Housing Type

Categories: Single-Family, Multi-Family, Mobile Homes, Other
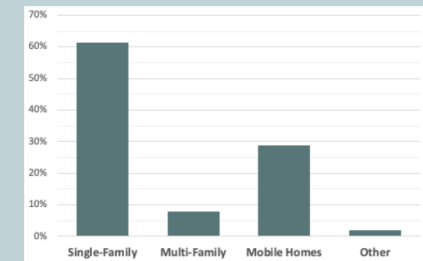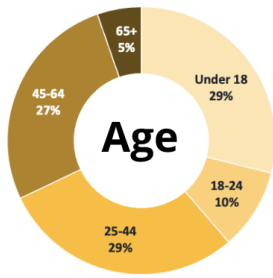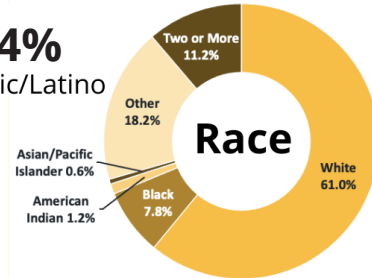
1990
median year housing built

85.6%
occupied

14.4%
vacant

17%
lack internet access

$115,300
median house price

$857
median monthly rent

25.7%
cost-burdened households

Cost-burdened Households

Categories: Homeowners, Renters (2015, 2020)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020).
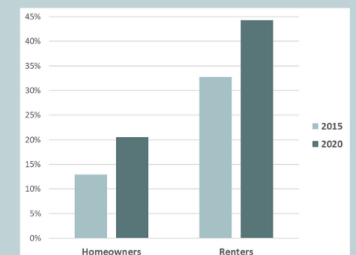
ECONOMY

$50,917
median household income

14.8%
live in poverty

Employment Status

| 0% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 100% |

■ Employed ■ Unemployed ■ Not in Labor Force

ECONOMY

29,632
jobs in 2020

4,100
jobs added since 2010

Largest Industry Sectors

Government 18%
Construction 13.4% `Growing`
Retail Trade 11.1% `Shrinking`

ENIVRONMENT

59
endangered, threatened, or rare species

Land Cover
Wetland 36.7%
Agriculture 30.3%
Forest 20% `Shrinking`
Developed 7.5% `Growing`

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

15 fire depts

2 hospitals

31 schools

6 police depts

4 nursing homes

22,466 students

HAZARDS

High Risk
Flooding
Hurricanes
Tornadoes

Moderate Risk
Drought
Lightning
Heat Events
Wildfire

TRANSPORTATION

7
highways (federal & state)

5
railroad lines

Key Projects
I-69 Expansion
US 90 Widening
SH 99/Grand Parkway `Recently Completed`

TRANSPORTATION

39.3 min
mean travel time

Commuting to Work
Other Means 1.4%
Work from Home 5.7%
Walk 0.8%
Transit 0.4%
Carpool 9.9%
Drive Alone 81.8%

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

18 parks

8 community centers

8 cultural institutions

POPULATION
GROWTH

The total population of the three largest cities in Liberty County accounts for 24,527 of the County's total population of 91,628, which means that 26.8% of the total County's population is located within the county's three largest cities. The City of Liberty has a population of 8,279 which is the second largest in the population and has a density of 229 people per square miles. However, the City of Cleveland has a population of 7,471 and a density of 825 people per square miles.

The population for Liberty County increased 21.1% from the 2010 population of 75,643. The population for the Houston and Galveston area was 6,087,133 in 2010 and increased by about 19.9% to the population of 7,297,022 in 2020[1]. Compared to Liberty County, the population of the state of Texas grew at a lower rate of 15.9% from 2010 to 2020[2].
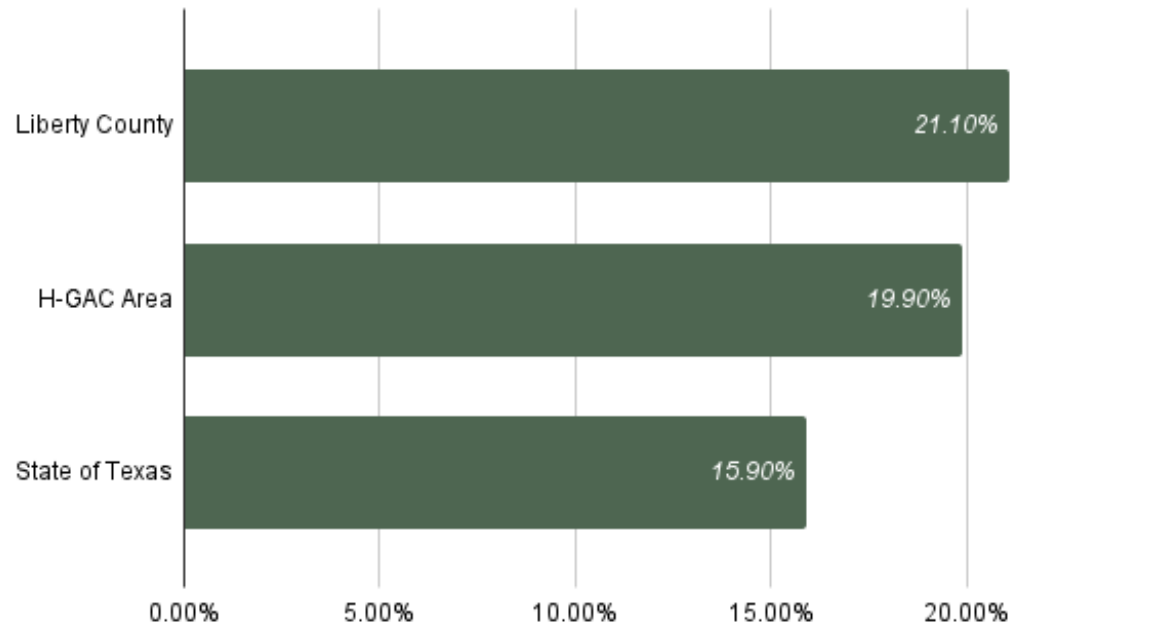
Figure 1.1 Population Growth from 2010 to 2020 in Liberty County, H-GAC, and Texas
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau & H-GAC Population Change Table, 2020)

POPULATION
PROJECTION

Due to the low response rate during the 2020 Census because of the coronavirus pandemic and significant population shifts during that time, the reported population could be an underestimation. Various population projections place the 2030 population for Liberty County between 94,523 and 112,341 people, an average of 12.9% increase from 2020[3].

Projection Based on H-GAC Regional Growth Forecast

In the report of the H-GAC Regional Growth Forecast, the population increased 130.71% from 2000 to 2050 in the 8-county H-GAC Transportation Management Area (Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller counties)[4]. The population projection for 2050 will be 190,933 residents in Liberty County, which is much higher than the data in other projection programs.
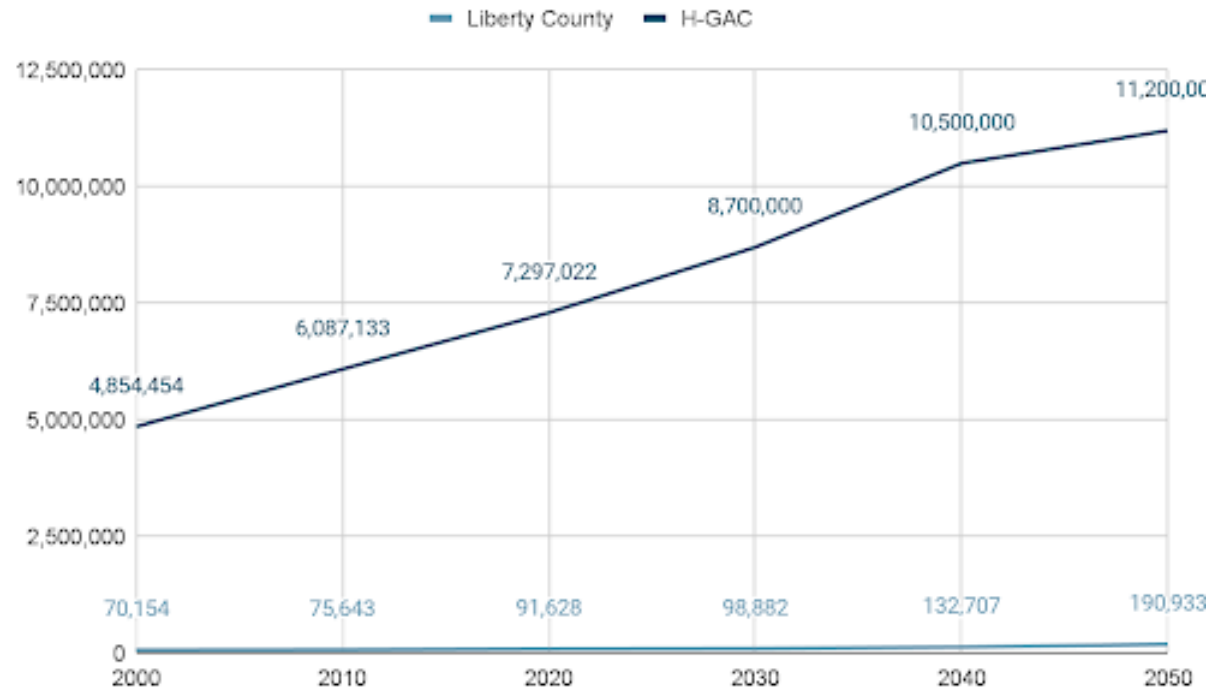
Figure 1.2 H-GAC Regional Growth Forecast from 2000 to 2050
(Source: Houston-Galveston Area Council)

AGE AND GENDER
DISTRIBUTION

The population of Liberty County is composed heavily of people working and young adults. This can be seen in the population pyramid in Figure 1.3. The largest age group is those aged 25-65 years (44,344 residents), with only 13.0% of people over 65 years (11,176 residents)[5].

The larger size of the working-age population may indicate a large workforce and opportunities for strong productivity and economic development. The level of education may need to be a priority to satisfy the demands of a larger population of 5 to 24 years old with a population of 24,451.

	Male	Female
85 years and over	342	567
80 to 84 years	465	970
75 to 79 years	959	907
70 to 74 years	1677	1395
65 to 69 years	1717	2177
60 to 64 years	2107	2490
55 to 59 years	2987	2680
50 to 54 years	2654	2620
45 to 49 years	2776	2881
40 to 44 years	2797	2699
35 to 39 years	2290	2910
30 to 34 years	2881	3146
25 to 29 years	3119	3307
20 to 24 years	2986	2709
15 to 19 years	2945	2876
10 to 14 years	3651	3004
5 to 9 years	2979	3301
Under 5 years	3151	3051

Figure 1.3 Liberty County Population Pyramid
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020)

RACE AND ETHNICITY
DISTRIBUTION

Liberty County is predominantly white with 69% in 2020, with 8% of the black population and 34% of residents reporting Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Projection trends indicate a continued rise in the Hispanic population in the next 30 years. Other racial groups including Asians, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders are 20%[6].

The population of Hispanics or Latinos is approximately equal to the population of Not Hispanic and Latinos in Texas[7]. However, the percentage of Hispanics or Latinos is much higher at the state level compared to Liberty county.
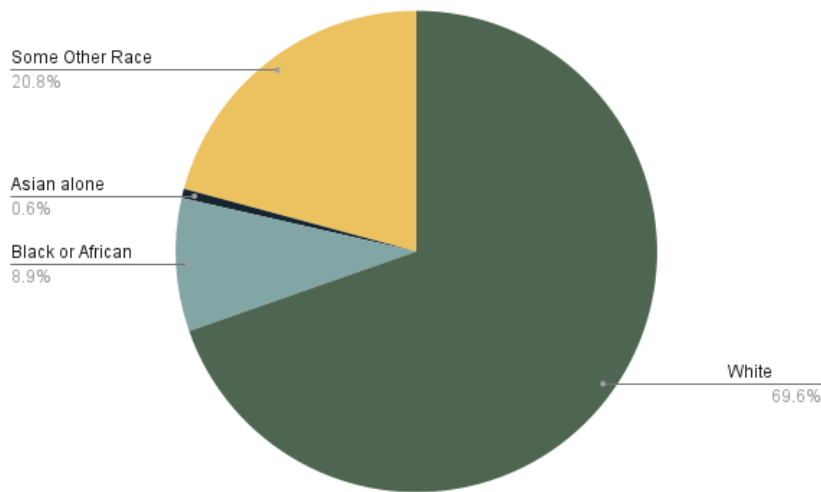
Figure 1.4 Liberty County Race Distribution (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020)
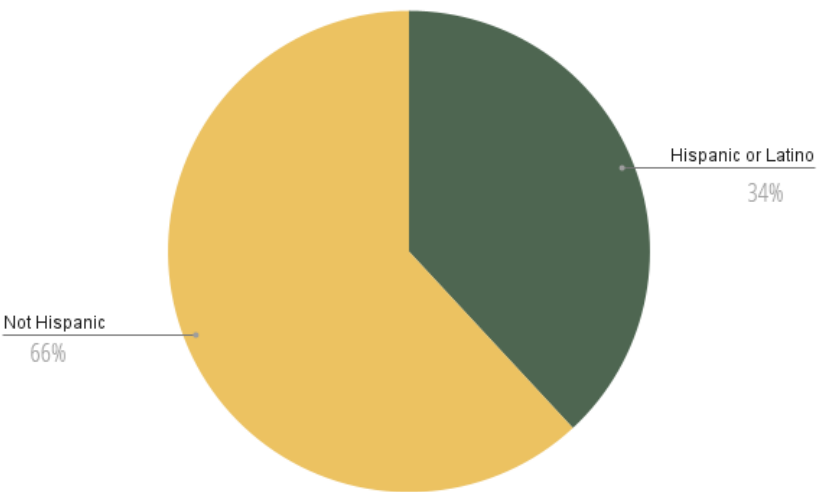
Figure 1.5 Liberty County Hispanic or Latino Population (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020)

POPULATION

EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

Education

78.3% of those aged 25 and older in Liberty County have attained a high school diploma or equivalent as their highest level of education. Another 39.2% attained at least some college, while 9.9% earned a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree as their highest level of education[8]. This is contrasted with the entire State of Texas, in which a higher proportion of the population has attained a bachelor's degree or higher (30.7% in 2020). The population is 21.7% greater than 25 years old with less than a high school education in Liberty County, which can pose a great threat to the health of the area and can be a precursor to stagnation or decline in the economy.

Language

In Liberty County, 76.6% of the population speak English only, and 22.5% of the population speak Spanish at home[9]. There are 8.9% of the population aged greater than 5 who speak English not well or not at all in Liberty County in 2020, which is lower than the population of Texas but greater than nationwide.
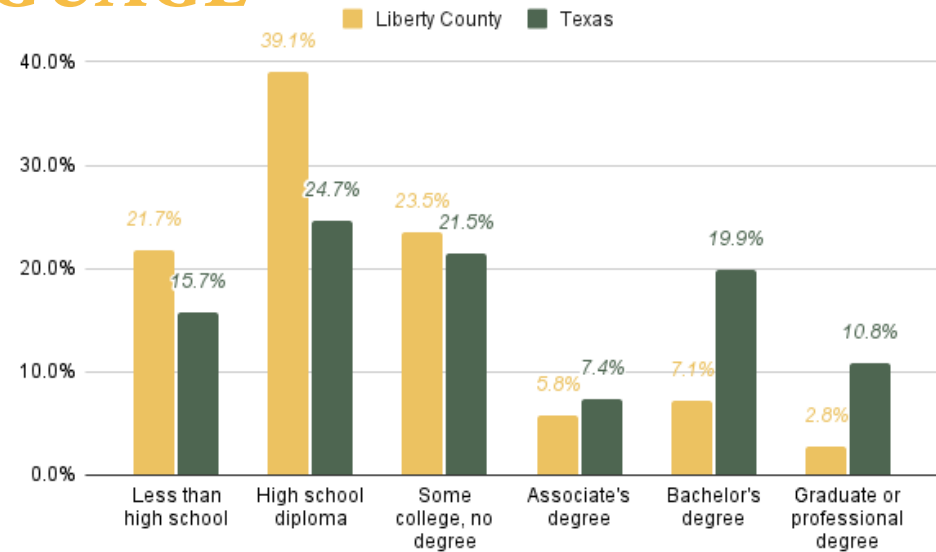
Figure 1.6 25 and older highest educational attainment in Liberty County and Texas
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020)
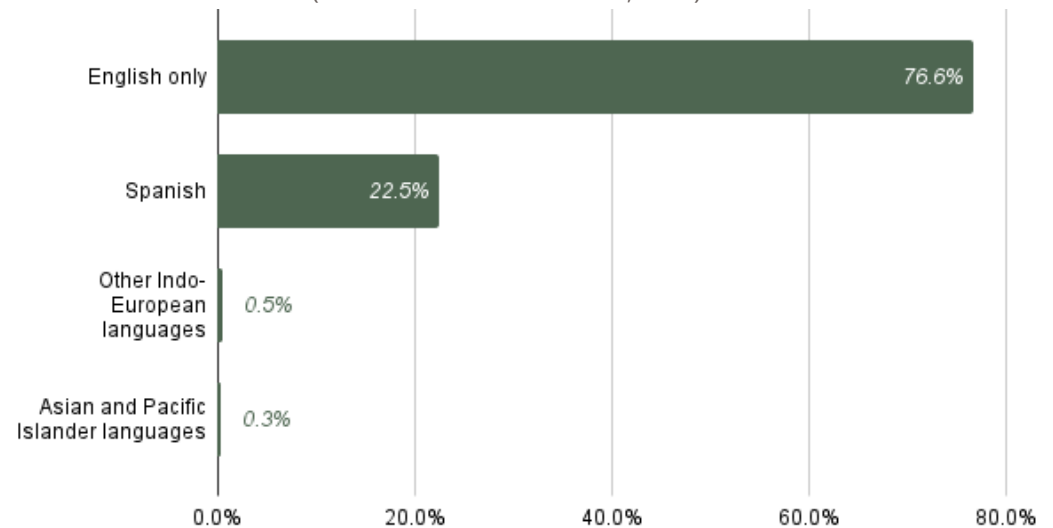
Figure 1.7 Types of Language Spoken at Home in Liberty County
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020)

OUR
CHALLENGE

Liberty County currently faces five main challenges:

1. *Managing growth sustainably to preserve the county's rural character while accommodating new development.*
2. *Enhancing disaster preparedness and resilience in the face of extreme weather events.*
3. *Balancing needs for a growing population with environmental conservation efforts.*
4. *Expanding infrastructure and services relative to the population growth*
5. *Addressing housing needs and ensuring economic opportunities reach all parts of the county*

Not only has Liberty County's population been growing at 3-4% a year for the past five years, but the Census captures only an incomplete estimate due to the low accessibility of many unincorporated communities. The 2021 American Community Survey subsequently registered a 7% growth in one year. The latest estimate from 2022, around 102,000, may be much lower than the actual population.

As is common with many places growing this fast, infrastructure is not keeping pace with the population influx. There is often a long lag between new homeowners settling in and property tax revenues, which constitute over 2/3 of County revenues, reaching the administration. With relatively low commercial activity and land use authority, revenue-raising options are limited.

Many resources and services currently offered by the County are not enough to cater to the unique needs of the growing community. As Liberty County's population continues to grow, many existing services and resources must be expanded to meet the evolving needs of the community. Infrastructure improvements are particularly important to serve both growing and underserved areas within the County. Additionally, more community engagement and educational efforts are needed to build trust in public institutions, including law enforcement. Without this trust, residents may delay seeking essential services, such as healthcare, vehicle insurance, or responding to the Census.

The County's geography also presents challenges, as it is prone to natural disasters like storms and floods. Vulnerable households, particularly those in hazardous areas, face increased risk, and poor-quality structures and infrastructure are often unable to withstand the damage, leading to high rebuilding costs.

These challenges notwithstanding, the County's numerous assets can be leveraged for balanced growth, high quality of life, social cohesion, and disaster resilience.

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CHAPTER 2
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY IN THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The Liberty County Strategic Plan 2025 - 2045 was driven by a collaborative effort between county officials, a community steering committee, and Texas A&M University. A dedicated group of graduate students specializing in planning and transportation conducted in-depth research, data analysis, and community engagement. Through stakeholder interviews, online platforms, and focus group workshops, they gathered critical insights into the county's unique challenges and opportunities. These engagements shaped solutions addressing key priorities such as growth management, transportation safety and expansion, economic development, community facilities, housing, healthcare access, and hazard management. This planning process reflects a broad collaboration involving local government, local educational institutions, healthcare providers, nonprofits, civic organizations, residents, business owners, developers, and more.

QUICK LOOK

CHAPTER 2

Strategic Plan 2016
Update

Planning
Process

Public
Engagement

MOTIVATION FOR THE UPDATE

In 2015 Liberty County connected with Texas Target Communities of Texas A&M University through its AgriLife Extension program to create the very first comprehensive plan which aimed for maximum utilization of the County's many unique assets such as its undeveloped lands, untapped markets, and unwavering citizens committed to the well-being of their communities. And yet, so much more has happened since the plan's adoption that an update was requested. The main goal for the 2023 update is to adjust priorities/strategies based on new developments in the interim and the altered trajectories resulting from these changes.

The planning team, formed in 2015 from a core team of stakeholders and staffers of Texas Target Communities of Texas A&M University, came to an agreement in 2022 that a comprehensive update was needed for Liberty County's strategic plan given the extensive and significant changes that have taken place since its adoption just six years prior:

- accelerated population growth around Cities of Cleveland and Plum Grove
- real estate development around highway 99
- growing frequency and intensity of adverse climate events
- growing need for expanded infrastructure, health services and community facilities

Reorientation from 2016

The current planning process was initiated to ensure that the county's growth continues in a direction that aligns with the community's values and needs, while also incorporating the lessons learned since the first plan's adoption. The 2016 plan was co-created through an in-depth community engagement process, including 17 meetings and public forums. The plan charts a vision for Liberty County to be:

- Family-Friendly
- Resilient
- Equitable
- Sustainable Growth

With the same goal of creating a sustainable future for Liberty County, objectives and priorities were adjusted in response to new changes, developments, and projections. By 2022 when the plan update was put in motion, it was apparent that clustered housing developments away from environmentally sensitive areas, walkable and vibrant downtowns, infrastructural improvements in industrial areas, and quality education and healthcare need to happen as soon as possible in order for the County to capitalize on the spillovers from the Houston metropolitan area's meteoric rise in economic power. The updated community vision is:

"LIBERTY COUNTY SUPPORTS A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE BY NURTURING A HEALTHY, FAMILY-FRIENDLY, RESILIENT, AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITY, AND WELCOMES SUSTAINABLE GROWTH WHILE CONSERVING NATURAL ASSETS."

Engaging the Community

Recognizing the importance of continuity and fresh perspectives, the County Judge, along with the County Extension Agents, formed a Core Team to lead the update process. This team extended invitations to community leaders and stakeholders from across Liberty County, forming a Steering Committee that represented a broad spectrum of interests and communities. The committee included both members who had participated in the original planning process and new stakeholders, ensuring a comprehensive approach that built on the foundations of the first plan while integrating new insights and ideas.

Planning Process

Public participation is the crux around which planning revolves. Not only is it essential to seek community input in regular intervals, but also keep our inquiries as open-ended as possible so as to let community-constructed definition and discourse guide our process and output. Going into the field without prior assumptions, we gradually build out our frameworks and solutions through the reiterative feedback-adjustment loops. At the same time, we acknowledge the inherent limitations of participatory planning and make recommendations for creating spaces that would allow marginalized populations to take the center stage of planning for their communities. Figure 2.1 shows the planning process, which is interspersed with stakeholder meetings, focus groups, and presentations.

Comprehensive plan update process - from evaluating the existing plan to customizing data-driven solutions, tailored to local needs and constraints

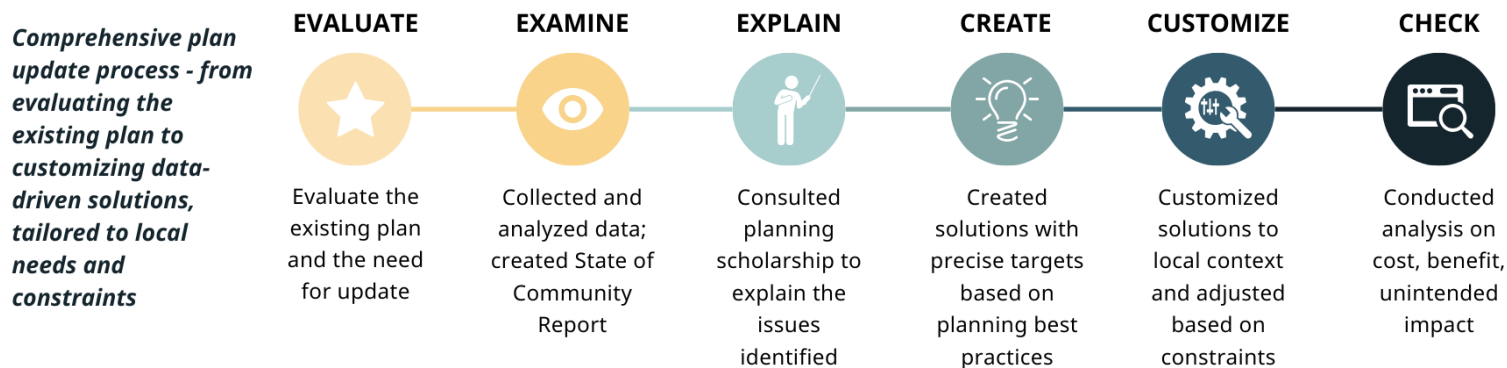| EVALUATE	EXAMINE	EXPLAIN	CREATE	CUSTOMIZE	CHECK
Evaluate the existing plan and the need for update	Collected and analyzed data; created State of Community Report	Consulted planning scholarship to explain the issues identified	Created solutions with precise targets based on planning best practices	Customized solutions to local context and adjusted based on constraints	Conducted analysis on cost, benefit, unintended impact

Figure 2.1: Planning Process

PLAN UPDATE
PROCESS

Initial Steering and Visioning

The planning process officially began on September 29, 2022, with a virtual Project Introduction meeting for the Steering Committee. This session was crucial for setting expectations, introducing the project scope, and outlining the timeline for the plan update. Following this, on November 16, 2022, the planning team presented the State of the Community during the Liberty County Health Summit in Dayton, where they initiated the Vision Evaluation process. At this summit, the community recognized the critical importance of health as a guiding principle for the county's future, advocating for its integration into the county's vision statement. This meeting also marked the launch of the Virtual Engagement Platform, designed to ensure broader community participation throughout the planning process. The website allowed for wider participation and input from residents throughout the planning process. Community members were able to share their insights by visiting the project website. Through Idea Wall, survey, forum, and other interactive features, residents contributed their ideas, concerns, and aspirations. The website also served as a comprehensive resource hub, providing access to materials and information shared during public meetings.

Focus Groups and Strategy Development

On January 30, 2023, the Steering Committee reconvened virtually to discuss the project timeline and ensure alignment on upcoming activities and milestones. Shortly thereafter, on February 13, 2023, a Focus Group Workshop was held in Liberty, which became a turning point in the planning process. Task forces delved into key issues within Housing, Transportation, Health, Community Facilities, and Economic Development, reassessing the relevance of goals from the 2016 plan and identifying new priorities. This workshop facilitated a reflective exercise where participants could assess ongoing initiatives, recognize potential roadblocks, and propose additional considerations for the updated plan. The Steering Committee then met again on February 27, 2023, to reflect on the outcomes of the workshop, discuss project updates, and refine strategies moving forward. The collaborative efforts continued on March 7, 2023, during a joint Planning Steering Committee and Stakeholder Presentation. This virtual meeting allowed the committee to present preliminary data and strategies, gathering essential feedback and guidance on proposed goals and approaches.

1

Know your community
Look at the infographics for county-wide data

Vision Forum
Discuss the current values and vision statement.

2

Learn about planning
Read through our frequently asked questions

Idea Wall
Post a sticky note about your thoughts on the community.

3

Get Involved
Participate in the Vision Forum and Idea Wall

Health Priorities Survey
Please fill out this survey about health in Liberty County.

Figure 2.2: Virtual Engagement Platform

PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT

The next phase of the process emphasized extensive public engagement to ensure that the plan reflected the community's needs and aspirations

On April 24, 2023, a Public Meeting in Dayton offered an opportunity for community members to engage with strategies related to Housing, Transportation, Health, and Economic Development. The meeting featured a Plan Recommendation Presentation by Texas A&M University students, followed by an interactive Gallery Walk where residents could review and comment on various plan elements. This engagement was followed by the Development Consideration Meeting on June 23, 2023, held in College Station, where participants focused on updating conceptual development maps, validating environmental and community data, and identifying priority areas for future investments.

As the plan update progressed, continuous community involvement was maintained. On September 13, 2023, the Steering Committee met virtually to review the plan's progress and discuss additional engagement strategies. Later, on September 27, 2023, a series of engagement activities took place in Cleveland. These included a Steering Committee Meeting to validate goals and discuss recommendations, a Cleveland Rotary Club Presentation to gather feedback on community needs, and Pop-up Engagements at various locations such as Cleveland High School and Walmart. These pop-ups were particularly effective in reaching a broad cross-section of the community, allowing for inclusive feedback and understanding of community priorities.

The outreach continued on October 18, 2023, with a Cleveland ISD Town Hall that provided a platform for further community input, particularly from residents and stakeholders invested in the future of local education. On October 26, 2023, a virtual Focus Group Discussion with County Emergency Management was held to integrate emergency management needs into the plan, emphasizing the importance of building community resilience in the face of natural disasters. The following day, October 27, 2023, saw a creative engagement effort during the Trunk or Treat Event at the Santa Fe Admin Building, where the community was invited to provide feedback in a more informal, family-friendly setting. Finally, on October 30, 2023, another Public Meeting in Dayton provided a detailed discussion on development considerations, housing, transportation, economic development, and environmental issues through an interactive station-based format, ensuring that all voices were heard and incorporated into the plan.

Final Steps and Implementation

As the planning process neared completion, the focus shifted towards finalizing the plan and preparing for implementation. On December 11, 2023, a virtual Public Presentation provided a comprehensive update on the project, summarizing the progress made and gathering final feedback before the plan's adoption. The final Steering Committee and Community Leaders Meeting took place on May 13, 2024, in Dayton. This meeting was dedicated to discussing the implementation phase, assigning responsibilities, addressing any remaining gaps, and finalizing the implementation table. The insights and feedback from this meeting were instrumental in ensuring that the strategies outlined in the plan were actionable, realistic, and aligned with the county's long-term vision.

SURVEY   SOCIAL PINPOINT   PUBLIC MEETING   FOCUS GROUPS

Figure 2.3: Engagement Tools used in the Process

PROJECT
TIMELINE

Community Needs and Visioning

- September 29, 2022: Virtual Introduction to the Steering Committee.
- November 16, 2022: Liberty County Health Summit in Dayton - State of Community and Vision Update.
- November 2022: Virtual Engagement Platform Launch.

Community Feedback on Strategies

- April 24, 2023: Public Meeting in Dayton - Strategies Gallery Walk (Housing, Transportation, Health, Economic Development).
- June 23, 2023: Development Consideration Meeting in College Station.
- September 13, 2023: Virtual Steering Committee Meeting - Plan progress and engagement strategy discussion.
- September 27, 2023: Steering Committee Meeting, Cleveland Rotary Club Presentation, and Pop-up Engagements for community feedback.
- October 18, 2023: Cleveland ISD Town Hall - Community outreach and draft plan feedback.
- October 26, 2023: Virtual Focus Group Discussion with County Emergency Management - Integration of emergency management strategies.
- October 27, 2023: Trunk or Treat Pop-up Event for informal community engagement.
- October 30, 2023: Public Meeting in Dayton - Interactive discussion on development, housing, transportation, and economic development.

1   **2**   **3**   **4**

Focus Groups and Strategy Development

- January 30, 2023: Steering Committee Meeting.
- February 13, 2023: Focus Group Workshop in Liberty - Task forces addressed Housing, Transportation, Health, Community Facilities, and Economic Development.
- February 27, 2023: Virtual Steering Committee Meeting to review workshop outcomes and refine strategies.
- March 7, 2023: Joint Planning Steering Committee and Stakeholder Presentation - Preliminary data and strategies presented for feedback.

Implementation Plan

- December 11, 2023: Public Presentation summarizing progress and gathering final feedback.
- May 13, 2024: Final Steering Committee + Community Leaders Meeting in Dayton - Implementation phase discussion.
- September 2024: Core Team review of the final plan.

CONTINUING
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Moving forward, the County's community engagement efforts need to target its rural and Hispanic population. Census figures show that over one-third of the County population is Hispanic and that over one-fifth of census blocks are majority-Hispanic. The most pressing challenges in engaging these groups are:

• Inaccessibility due to inadequate broadband coverage, which hinder accurate census taking, resulting in undercounting and hence overlooking off-grid populations.

• Cultural barrier between residents who are from all over Central America and public officials who have experience working only with Mexican communities.

• Linguistic barriers as many County resources are presented only in English, and that census takers are English-speakers.

These barriers hinder the timely collection and dissemination of accurate and legible information, which are crucial for effective community engagement. The lag and breakdown of data transmission in both directions undermine residents' trust in public authorities and awareness about the resources available and government employees' understanding about specific community concerns and needs.

To improve information transparency and access, data from various agencies need to be consolidated at the county level and clearly presented in both English and Spanish in a variety of digital and printed formats. Digital displays should be interactive, fast, and mobile-friendly.

Implementing the solutions in this document and moving Liberty County forward requires all hands on deck, which is referred to as "collective impact" in the field of community development–collective meaning multi-sectoral, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-level collaborations with community residents at the center. One approach to collective impact is establishing a community indicator program with local nonprofit organizations to monitor quality of life. Through such a program, stakeholders would decide on a "common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone organization" that would coordinate and sustain these efforts. These institutions would promote accountability, community capacity, and participation.

ENGAGEMENT OUTREACH

CHAPTER 3
DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

# *GROWTH AS A MARATHON— PLANNING FOR THE CENTURY*

As Liberty County continues to experience rapid growth and increasing development pressures, there is an urgent need for a unified and strategic approach to manage this expansion. The county's proximity to the thriving Houston metropolitan area and its population boom, particularly in unincorporated areas, requires an updated strategy that aligns with new challenges and future opportunities. This chapter outlines goals and strategies to guide Liberty County's development in a manner that supports sustainable growth, enhances community resilience, and preserves the natural environment. The recommendations build on existing planning efforts while introducing new approaches to address the county's evolving landscape.
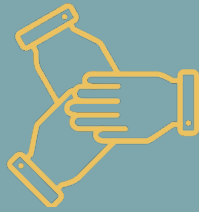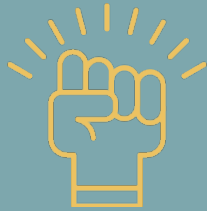
Unite Communities
regional and local collaboration, growth management

Build Resilience
hazard reduction, standards, floodplain management, buyout program

Protect Environment
land conservation, agricultural preservation, green infrastructure, renewable energy, parks and trails

EXISTING
CONDITION

Regional Growth

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) region is one of the fastest-growing areas in the United States. According to HGAC projections, the region's population is expected to increase significantly over the coming decades, driven by its strong economy, strategic location, and appeal as a place to live and work. As of the most recent estimates, the HGAC region's population is over 7 million people. By 2045, this number is expected to swell to approximately 10 million, representing an increase of nearly 40%. This growth is concentrated particularly in and around the Houston metropolitan area, but it is also spreading outward into suburban and rural counties, including Liberty County. The regional growth forecast estimates show Liberty County's population will double by 2045.
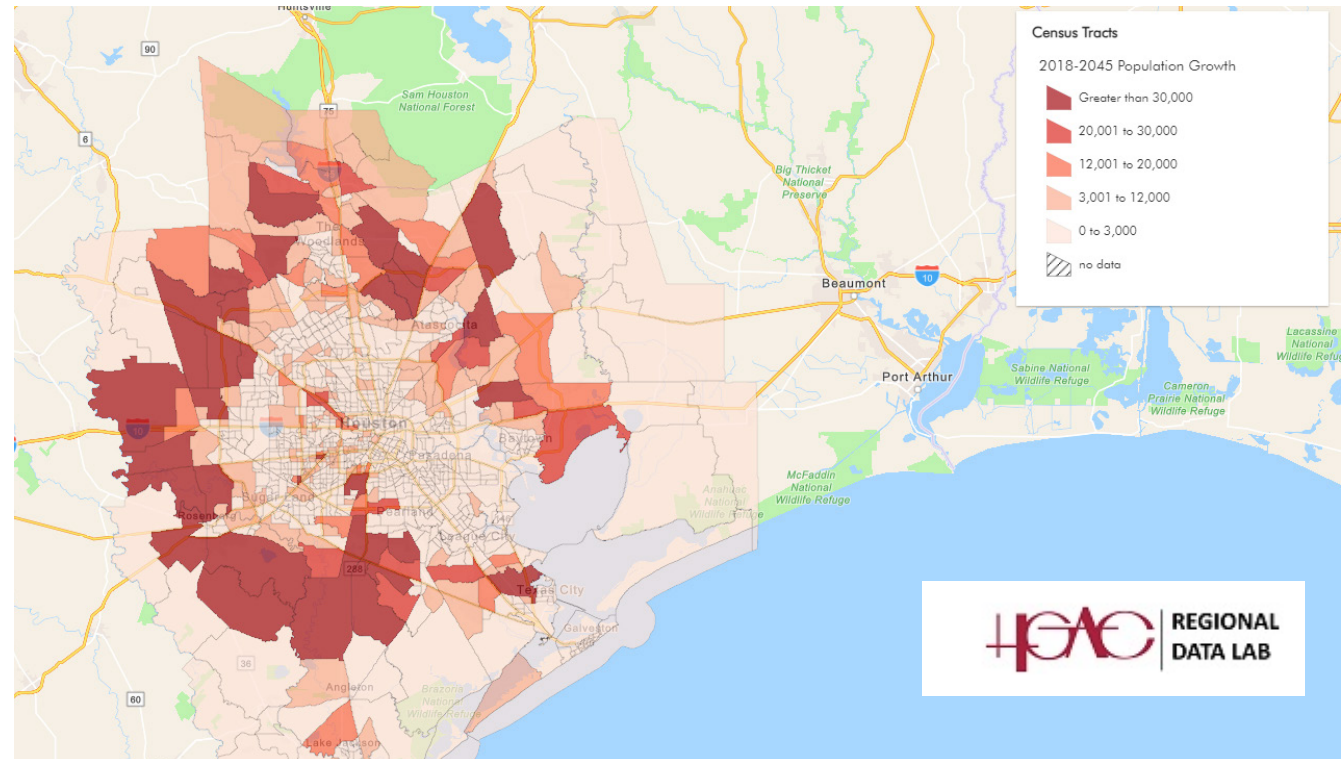
Figure 3.1: H-GAC Region Population Growth Projections 2018 - 2045

Natural Assets and Environment

The Trinity River, a major waterway running through the county, is central to the Trinity River Basin, one of Texas's most extensive river systems. The Trinity River National Wildland Refuge and Davis Hill State Park protect parts of the wooded wetlands along the river. Additionally, the Big Thicket National Preserve, partially located in Liberty County, is known for its biodiversity and ecological significance. Outside the wetlands, forests are more common in the northern half of the county while pasture and cropland is common in the southern half. The county's agricultural lands and forests are essential for farming, ranching, and timber production.

Figure 3.2: Natural Assets in Liberty County

County Authority

In Texas, counties have historically had limited land use control authority compared to municipalities. Unlike cities, cou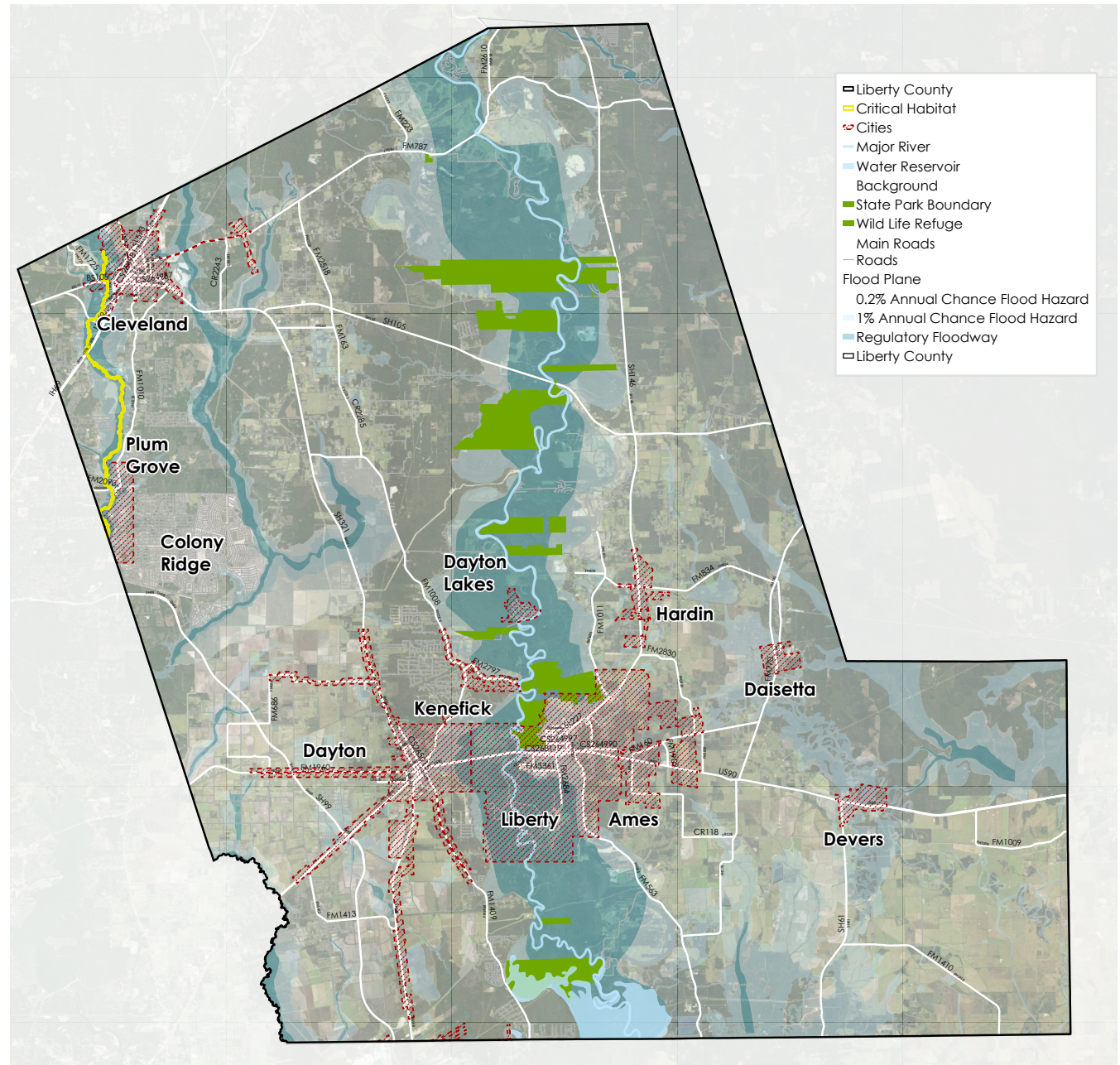nties lack the legal tools like zoning to enforce comprehensive land use regulations in unincorporated areas. This limitation poses significant challenges for rapidly growing counties like Liberty County, where rapid development can strain infrastructure and increase flood risks. Given these constraints, regional coordination becomes essential for managing growth effectively. However, there are some tools the County can use to manage growth.

Texas counties have several tools available under the Texas Local Government Code to manage growth and promote economic development.

Subdivision Regulations (§ 232) Counties can regulate the division of land into lots, including requirements for infrastructure such as roads, drainage, and utilities. Subdivision regulations ensure that new developments are appropriately planned and connected to existing infrastructure, supporting sustainable growth.

Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) (§ 372) Counties can establish PIDs to finance public infrastructure improvements in specific areas. Property owners within the PID pay special assessments to fund the improvements, which can include roads, parks, and utility services.

Enterprise Zones (§ 2303) Counties can designate areas as enterprise zones, providing tax incentives, and other benefits to encourage businesses to locate or expand within these zones. This tool helps attract investment and job creation in economically distressed areas.

Regulation of Manufactured Home Communities (§ 232) Counties have the authority to regulate the development of manufactured home communities, ensuring they meet standards for infrastructure, safety, and livability, which is crucial in managing growth in rural areas.

Floodplain Management (§ 240) Counties can adopt regulations to manage development in flood-prone areas, including restricting or prohibiting construction in floodplains. This helps to mitigate flood risks and manage growth in a way that protects public safety and property.

County Assistance Districts (§ 387) Counties can create County Assistance Districts to provide a range of public services, including infrastructure improvements, emergency services, and economic development initiatives. These districts are funded through a sales tax approved by voters within the district.

Interlocal Agreements (§ 791.001) Counties can enter into interlocal agreements with other local governments to collaborate on infrastructure projects, service delivery, and economic development initiatives. These agreements can help manage growth and development more effectively across jurisdictional boundaries.

Building Codes and Safety Regulations (§ 233.001) Counties have the authority to adopt and enforce building codes in unincorporated areas, which ensures that new construction meets safety and quality standards. This is crucial for managing growth and maintaining community standards as development occurs.

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) (§ 311) Counties can establish TIRZs to encourage investment in underdeveloped or blighted areas. This tool allows for the reinvestment of tax revenues generated from the increased property values within the zone back into the area to fund public infrastructure and improvements.

Trinity River Basin State Regulations

Texas has a variety of state regulations pertaining to the Trinity River Basin. According to the State Water Code, the water in all rivers residing in or passing through the state belong to the State of Texas. The State Water Code outlines the procedure for permitting water use throughout the state, which coincides with the removal of water from these channels. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has specified flow measurement regulations at six distinct measurement locations in the basin. Measurements taken by the TCEQ at these sections in 2009 during different seasons of the year help determine the extent to which additional water may be removed from the river basin for use. One of these measurement locations is in Liberty County, near Cleveland. The State Water Code requires that the TCEQ submit biennial reports related to the implementation of flow standards for each of the water basins. Additionally, the code allows the TCEQ to set a schedule for re-evaluating the flow standards in a minimum of once every 10 years.

Sources:

Texas Commision on Environmental Quality - Trinity River Basin: (https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/water_rights/wr_technical-resources/eflows/trinity-san-jacinto-galveston-BBASC-BBEST)

2016
STRATEGIC PLAN

Development Considerations chapter in the Liberty County Strategic Plan 2016 laid the foundation for managing anticipated growth over a 15-year period, responding to population increase and growing extreme weather events. The plan process included discussions on three potential growth scenarios—'Country Living,' 'Garden City,' and 'Clustered Communities'—each reflecting different approaches to accommodating new development. These scenarios helped shape the Future Development Map to balance growth with preserving natural resources and community character. Residents expressed a preference for the 'Garden City' scenario, which promotes small-town density, walkable communities, and infill development within city limits. There was strong support for conservation districts to protect floodplains and natural resources, along with concerns about the impact of rapid growth on infrastructure and services.

Future Development Map, influenced by the preferred growth scenarios and community input, focused on guiding development toward areas with existing infrastructure and away from high-risk areas such as floodplains. Dayton and Cleveland were identified as key areas for managed growth due to their proximity to Houston and the potential for economic development.
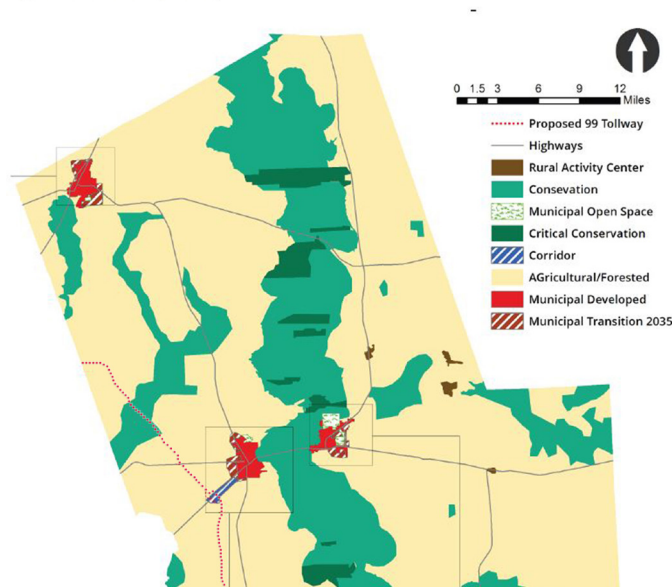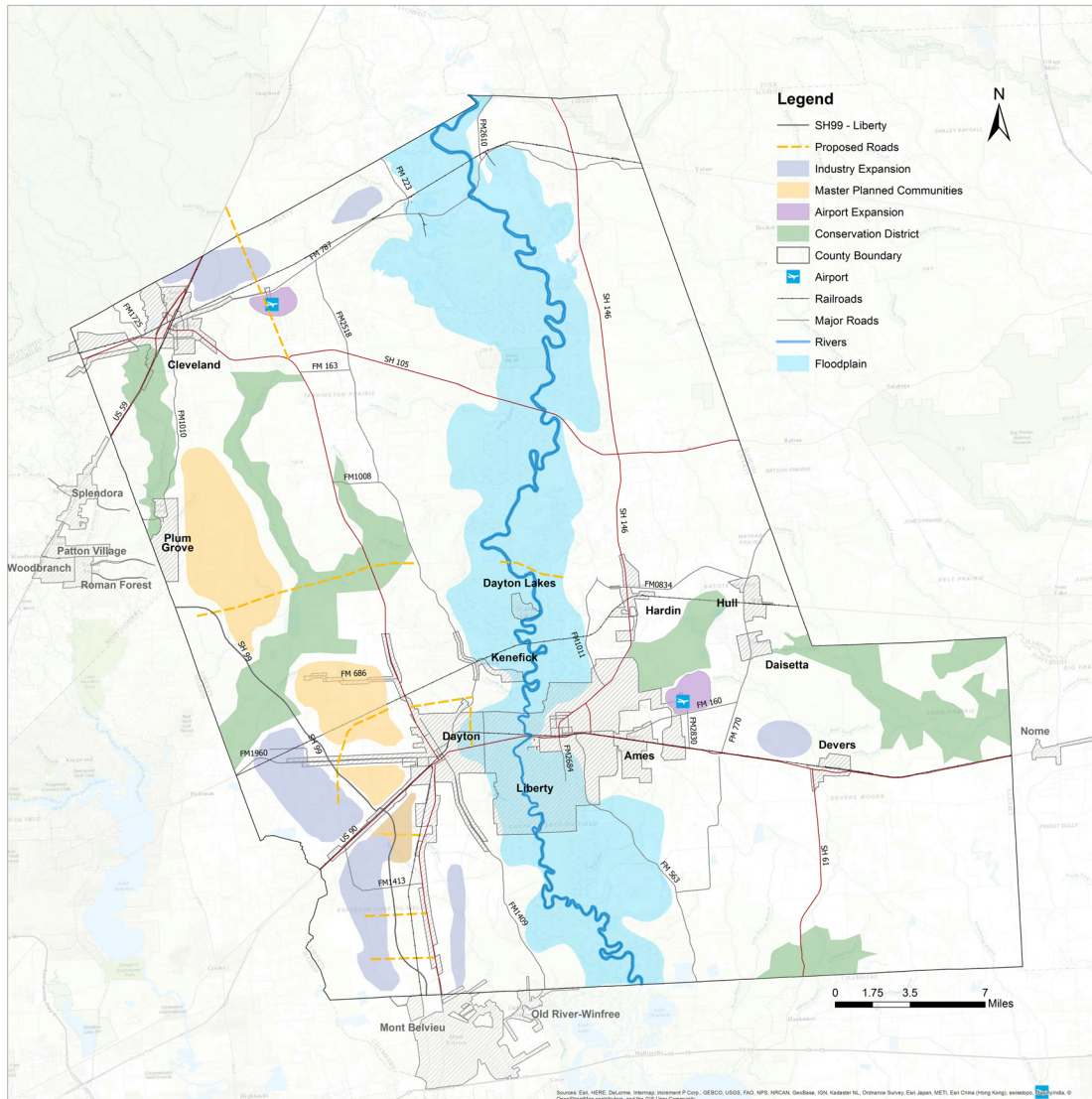

Figure 3.3: 2016 Future Development Map

Figure 3.4: 2016 Future Economic Development Map

PUBLIC
FEEDBACK

Preservation of Small-Town Character: Many residents expressed a strong preference for maintaining the 'small-town' feel, where neighbors feel connected. There is a shared desire to foster development that enhances this close-knit, community-oriented atmosphere.

Support for Infill Development: There is broad support for focusing development within incorporated or developed areas, particularly through infill projects that make better use of existing infrastructure. Residents believe that this approach will help manage growth more sustainably while preserving the open spaces and rural character of the unincorporated areas.

Concerns About Unchecked Growth: While acknowledging the inevitability of growth, particularly in the southern portion of the county around Highway 99, many community members are concerned about the pace and nature of this expansion. They fear that rapid development could lead to a loss of the county's rural charm, increased pressure on existing services, and greater strain on stormwater infrastructure.

Need for Conservation: A recurring theme in the feedback was the importance of preserving natural resources and floodplains. Residents would like to see more parklands and local green spaces.

Infrastructure Challenges: With the county's flat terrain, residents have observed that increased development with less permeable surfaces leads to more frequent road flooding and accelerated deterioration of infrastructure. There is a need for drainage systems improvement, to manage runoff and protect both residential and commercial properties. Traffic congestion, particularly in high growth areas, have become a pressing issue as housing developments increase.

FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT

The Future Development Map, updated to reflect current trends, community feedback and the updated goals, will guide Liberty County's growth in a balanced and sustainable manner. The map integrates elements from the previous plan and new priorities, focusing on preserving the rural character of the county while accommodating necessary growth in targeted areas.

LEGEND
- ✈ Airports
- Railroads
- Existing Parks
- Conservation District
- Master Planned Communities
- Future Solar Farm Development
- Agricultural Land
- Future Open Spaces
- Industry Expansion
- Airport Expansion
- Proposed Railroad
- Proposed Roads
- Liberty County
- Cities
- Major River
- Regulatory Floodway
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard

Figure 3.4: Future Development Map
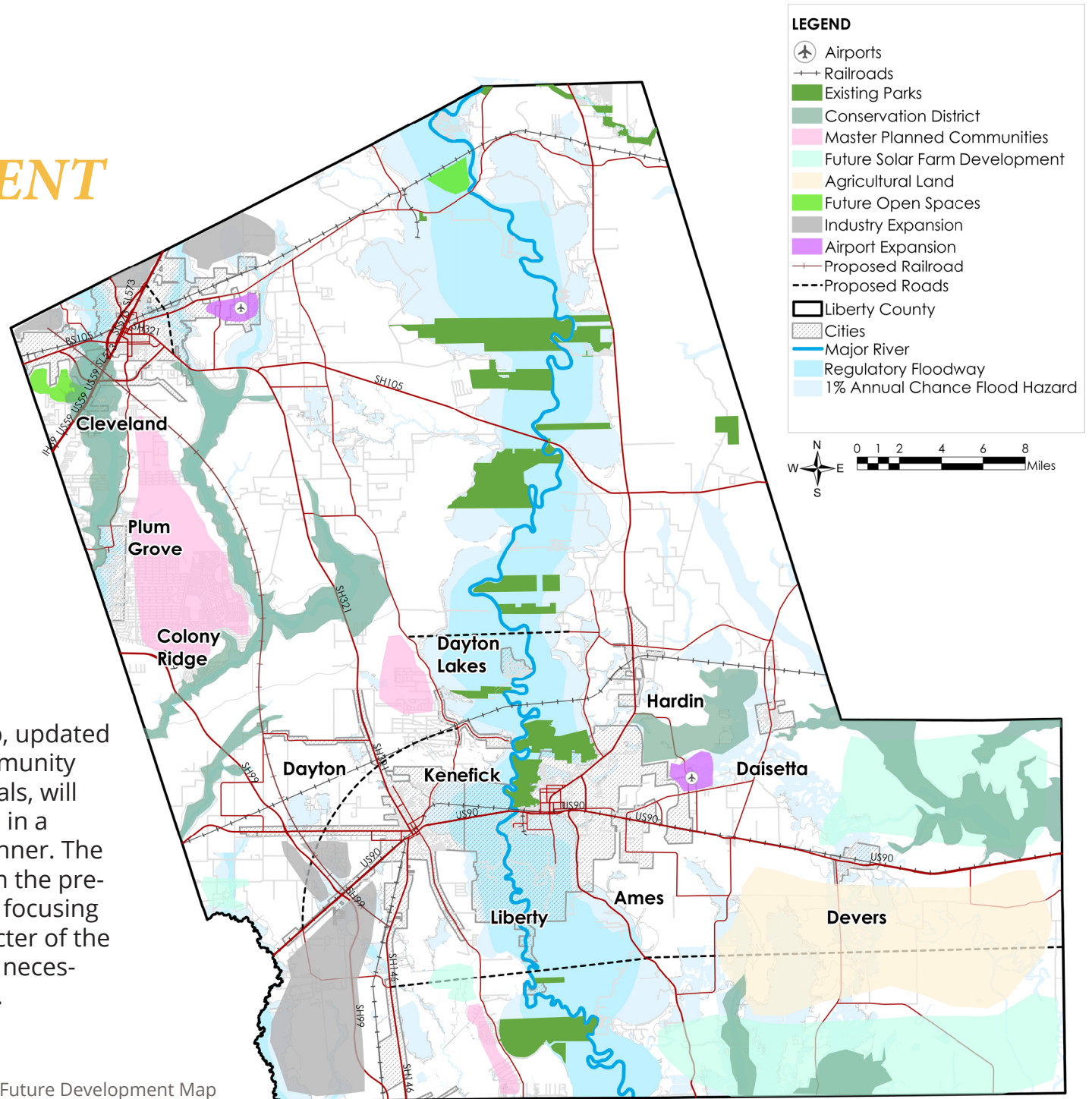
<u>Overview of Goals</u>

3.1: Unite our communities and actively coordinate our regional efforts.

By working collaboratively with municipalities, regional planning organizations like the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), and other stakeholders, Liberty County can align development strategies with broader regional goals. This approach allows for a more cohesive management of land use, infrastructure, and environmental resources, ensuring that growth is sustainable, hazard risks are mitigated, and the quality of life for residents is preserved. Regional coordination also enables the County to leverage shared resources, expertise, and funding opportunities, addressing the challenges posed by limited land use control authority in a more strategic and unified manner.

3.2: Build community resilience by reducing hazard exposure within the County.

Liberty County's vulnerability to natural hazards, particularly flooding, requires a proactive approach to building community resilience. This section looks into proactive steps to build resilience to natural hazards like flooding by implementing new development regulations, adopting stronger building codes, updating infrastructure standards, increasing staff capacity for enforcement, creating a digital GIS-based inventory, and enhancing damage assessment capabilities through partnerships and advanced tools.

3.3 Protect and preserve the natural environment.

The natural environment and rural heritage are fundamental to Liberty County's identity and are significant community assets. The county is committed to safeguarding agricultural land and supporting the farming community while preserving the natural environment. Initiatives include protecting vital natural areas like wetlands and floodplains, expanding the area's open spaces and trails network, and identifying suitable locations for large-scale projects, including renewable energy initiatives with minimal environmental impact.

GOAL 3.1: UNITE OUR COMMUNITIES
ACTIVELY COORDINATE OUR REGIONAL EFFORTS

Objective 3.1.1 Maintain an inter-organizational council, with membership open to all cities, counties, and community organizations, for the purpose of holistic management of the land and water within the County and to improve collaboration.

Objective 3.1.2 Coordinate with municipalities in the County to guide development to areas with appropriate infrastructure and away from hazard risks.

- **Action 3.1.1.1:** Expand the inter-organizational council with membership open to all cities, unincorporated communities, special districts, and a broader range of stakeholders for regional planning and land management.

- **Action 3.1.1.2:** Implement an annual program to facilitate active collaboration among all members, focusing on growth management, conservation efforts, and sustainable land use practices.

- **Action 3.1.1.3:** Develop a process to discuss and approve all future amendments and changes of development codes by the County Commissioners Court, with consultation by the inter-organizations referenced above.

- **Action 3.1.1.4:** Regularly participate in the Houston-Galveston Area Council meetings to connect regional goals, initiatives, and funding to the County.

- **Action 3.1.1.5:** Continue to work with HGAC, the County Emergency Manager, and cities to monitor, evaluate and update hazard mitigation plan, based on the new and changing conditions in each jurisdiction.

- **Action 3.1.2.1:** Regularly communicate with cities to stay informed on new development, annexation plans, and encourage alignment with the county plan for regional growth and land management.

- **Action 3.1.2.2:** Discuss the future land use with all the municipalities to encourage future growth in the transition development areas to support efficient provision of community services and infrastructure.

- **Action 3.1.2.3:** Work with cities to identify and market areas for infill development and redevelopment based on infrastructure availability.

- **Action 3.1.2.4:** Enhance cooperation with cities within the County, particularly in the high growth areas, to encourage adoption of stricter regulations with two feet base flood elevation, and higher drainage standards.

- **Action 3.1.2.5:** Develop interlocal agreements to share resources related to development reviews, platting, and code enforcement between the County and the cities.

HGAC's "Our Great Region 2040" Plan

The "Our Great Region 2040" plan is a long-term plan developed by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC) to guide the growth and development of the 13-county Region over the next several decades. The plan prioritizes coordinating infrastructure, housing, and transportation investments to enhance existing neighborhoods and create new areas of opportunity. The plan aims to ensure that the Region remains resilient and adaptive to economic challenges and natural disasters.

Our Great Region 2040 is based on goals organized around the "People, Places, and Prosperity framework." Some development considerations relevant goals are:
- The Region coordinates infrastructure, housing, and transportation investments, creating areas of opportunity and enhancing existing neighborhoods.
- The Region values and preserves its unique ecosystems, working landscapes, parks, and open spaces, and the ecological benefits they provide.
- Communities have a range of quality housing choices that meet the diverse needs and preferences of all residents.
- The Region efficiently uses, reuses, and conserves its natural resources by managing waste.

- Communities are strengthened by strong social ties, local gathering places, and residents who participate in social, civic, service, and faith organizations.
- Transportation infrastructure promotes effective goods movement and is well-connected to other global destinations.
- The Region embraces its rich multicultural, historical, and natural assets to ensure our communities retain their unique character.
- The Region is resilient and adaptive to economic downturns and environmental or natural disasters.

As part of the HGAC region, Liberty County will benefit from the strategies laid out in the "Our Great Region 2040" plan. Liberty County should align local planning efforts with these shared regional goals.
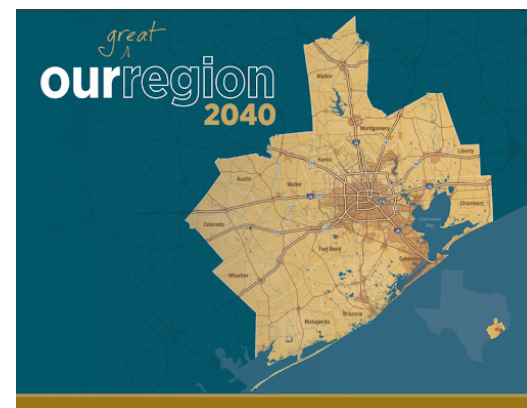
GOAL 3.2: BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE
BY REDUCING HAZARD EXPOSURE

Objective 3.2.1 Establish development regulations to reduce hazard exposure within the County.

- **Action 3.2.1.1:** Adjust permitting process to coordinate with water, electricity, phone/Internet providers, emergency management office, school districts, and Liberty County Central Appraisal District before development occurs.

- **Action 3.2.1.2:** Continue including Fire Marshal and County Engineer in the permitting process before the commissioners court approval.

- **Action 3.2.1.3:** Require hazard risk assessment studies for large development applications in the vicinity of hazard prone areas

- **Action 3.2.1.4:** Adopt stronger building codes, such as the latest SmartHome America's FORTIFIED Standard and the latest International Building Codes.

- **Action 3.2.1.5:** Work with County Commissioners and the Engineering Department to update the roads and drainage standards for subdivisions and developments in the county.

- **Action 3.2.1.6:** Develop and implement a regularly updated digital GIS-based inventory for all SFHAs structures, substantial damaged properties. and repetitive loss properties regardless of the cause (e.g. fire, flooding, etc.).

- **Action 3.2.1.7:** Apply to the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System.

- **Action 3.2.1.8:** Create a central repository of information and a coordination mechanism among all entities involved in development regulation and drainage management (e.g., small drainage districts, water control and improvement districts, special utility districts).

- **Action 3.2.1.9:** Complete county-wide drainage study and create a county-wide drainage district to implement impact fees for drainage infrastructure.

Objective 3.2.2 Increase staff capacity for permitting and enforcement of development regulations.

Objective 3.2.3 Improve damage assessment capabilities, and ensure comprehensive floodplain management beyond Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs).

- **Action 3.2.2.1:** Evaluate staff capacity and consider adding designated staff for development oversight in each precinct.

- **Action 3.2.2.2:** Hire additional building inspectors to enforce the updated floodplain damage ordinance through Sheriff's Office and Floodplain Administrator, ensuring constructions are elevated two feet above the base flood elevation and incorporate ATLAS 14 data for rainfall determinations.

- **Action 3.2.2.3:** Adopt permitting and inspections fees.

- **Action 3.2.2.4:** Develop a succession and training plan for the Floodplain Administrator role to ensure there is continuity for the role.

- **Action 3.2.2.5:** Conduct staff training sessions on the new digital inventory system to ensure effective use and maintenance.

- **Action 3.2.3.1:** Establish partnerships with professional organizations for damage assessment support in line with state and NFIP protocols, incorporating advanced risk reduction strategies.

- **Action 3.2.3.2:** Forge partnerships with nonprofits, and universities for quick spatial data analysis and support in mapping and planning efforts.

- **Action 3.2.3.3:** Utilize GIS tools and collect essential early damage assessment information, including high-water marks and aerial disaster impact pictures.

- **Action 3.2.3.4:** Use and regularly update the Substantial Damage Estimator (SDE) software with information on all structures in SFHAs and improve software flexibility.

- **Action 3.2.3.5:** Implement consistent training programs for local officials to maintain equitable and defendable records throughout the substantial damage evaluation process.

- **Action 3.2.3.6:** Enhance internal capacity by training staff in substantial damage estimations to expedite the evaluation process without over-reliance on external assistance.

- **Action 3.2.3.7:** Train staff on the Individual State of Texas Assessment Tool(i-STAT) Damage Survey process and distribute the survey and instructions to residents through the County website and flyers in community centers.

- **Action 3.2.3.8:** Include GIS staff, tax assessors, and floodplain management administrators in emergency operations planning for efficient data sharing and recovery efforts.

- **Action 3.2.3.9:** Provide training for elected officials to communicate effectively about post-disaster mitigation options, ensuring clarity and support for substantial damage activities.

Objective 3.2.4 Enhance flood resilience through strategic property buyouts and hazard mitigation.

- **Action 3.2.4.1:** Consider the impacts outside SFHAs and update flood risk information to reflect current realities.
- **Action 3.2.4.2:** Implement a communication strategy to inform and engage homeowners in targeted areas on the benefits and process of voluntary buyouts, ensuring fair and transparent dealings.
- **Action 3.2.4.3:** Partner with local and state conservation agencies like TWPD to plan the repurposing of acquired lands into green spaces, flood mitigation areas, or recreational parks to benefit the broader community.

Objective 3.2.5 Develop public education initiatives to promote hazard risk and existing regulations awareness

- **Action 3.2.5.1:** Create brochures to educate landowners and developers on the newly adopted floodplain regulations, other existing regulations, and information on what local governments can and cannot do.
- **Action 3.2.5.2:** Regularly update the County website with hazard risk information, adopted regulations, and newly updated hazard mitigation plan.
- **Action 3.2.5.3:** Provide targeted assistance to property owners in the 100-year floodplain for retrofitting existing structures to meet new flood-proofing and elevation standards.
- **Action 3.2.5.4:** Develop resources to educate potential homebuyers on the flood risk and the ongoing buyout programs in targeted areas along the Trinity River.
- **Action 3.2.5.5:** Implement educational programs about the benefits of flood insurance, regardless of SFHA status, targeting misinformation and communicating changing flood risks.
- **Action 3.2.5.6:** Connect real estate agents to FEMA resources to train them to accurately convey flood risks and insurance needs to clients.

Buyout Programs

Buyout programs can help communities that have experienced multiple disasters or severe damage by reducing the impact of future disasters and encouraging revitalization efforts and public spaces.

After Hurricane Harvey, Liberty County received $6 million in CDBG-DR funds for the County's voluntary buyout program. This program offers buyouts to property owners in select target areas in Liberty County who suffered property damage during Hurricane Harvey. Any real property acquired through this buyout program will result in the land remaining open green space in perpetuity. The goal is to increase regional resiliency by removing residential dwelling units from its jurisdiction's most dangerous flood-prone areas.

Key Considerations for Buyout Implementation

A successful program relies on a well-conceived buyout process. CDBG-DR has identified some strategies for implementation of buyout programs.

Public Engagement and Communication
- Clearly communicate ongoing costs to homeowners, businesses, and the larger community in the buyout area.
- Continuously highlight the benefits of the buyout and resettlement process.
- Clarify potential uses for the buyout area (e.g., open fields, gardens, recreational facilities, flood storage).
- Develop FAQs to address common concerns, including public access and participation options.
- Ensure program materials cater to both homeowners and businesses, addressing their unique needs.
- Train staff and partners to effectively communicate program benefits.
- Engage local social service agencies to offer emotional support to participants.

Accessible Application Process
- Implement a web-based and mobile-friendly application process.
- Provide intake services during evenings and weekends.
- Host public meetings and clinics with government officials, banks, and legal aid to assist applicants.

Fair and Transparent Compensation
- Ensure buyout amounts are perceived as fair and avoid overcompensation.
- Use a transparent approach to calculate awards, considering all relevant factors (e.g., property value, other benefits, business income losses).
- Offer flexibility in program timing, with a range of support options (e.g., relocation funds, rental assistance, financial counseling).
- Allow property owners time to develop relocation plans.

Health and Safety Compliance
- Adhere to health and safety codes
- Ensure security and necessary measures for vacant properties.
- Address potential contamination or hazardous materials when dealing with industrial properties.
- Engage qualified contractors and seek state environmental department support if needed.

GOAL 3.3: PROTECT AND PRESERVE
THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Objective 3.3.1 Protect agricultural land and continue supporting the County's farming community.

- **Action 3.3.1.1:** Coordinate with federal, state, and local governments, community groups, and private landowners to promote long-term preservation of farmlands.
- **Action 3.3.1.2:** Promote easement for agricultural land to ensure protecting working farmlands through USDA's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- **Action 3.3.1.3:** Develop incentives for continued rural and resource uses, like tax breaks or rural agriculture development districts.
- **Action 3.3.1.4:** Connect landowners to conservation partners like Texas Land Conservancy for education on ways to conserve their land and maintain the rural landscape.

Objective 3.3.2 Coordinate with local and regional partners on protection of natural assets, park land needs assessments, land acquisition costs, and funding.

- **Action 3.3.2.1:** Align with HGAC Our Region 2040's initiative to conserve natural assets and look for opportunities for multi-benefit green infrastructure projects and designing with nature, and expanding the region's network of open space and trails along waterways and floodplain.
- **Action 3.3.2.2:** Identify and preserve key natural areas like wetlands and other critical areas through partnerships with TPWD, land trusts, TWDB, and other organizations
- **Action 3.3.2.3:** Work with HGAC to create watershed protection plans to protect regional recharge zones, water sources, waterways, and wetland buffer areas
- **Action 3.3.2.4:** Explore funding opportunities to acquire high risk flood prone land for open space and stormwater management practices, such as detention areas
- **Action 3.3.2.5:** Incorporate parks and open spaces into new subdivision regulations to requiring developers to build parks and green spaces within new developments
- **Action 3.3.2.6:** Require developers to establish maintenance of parks and open space within new developments through HOAs
- **Action 3.3.2.7:** Require trails/greenways to connect neighborhoods, major natural areas, parks, and recreation facilities, and education centers to enhance and extend the recreational experience.

Potential Green Infrastructure Solutions for Liberty County

Align with HGAC Our Region 2040's initiative to conserve natural assets and look for opportunities for multi-benefit green infrastructure projects, designing with nature, and expanding the region's network of open space and trails along waterways and floodplain.

Permeable Pavements
Permeable surfaces could be introduced at community facilities like libraries, parks, and government buildings to manage stormwater on-site. Collaborating with cities and local partners, such as developers and transportation agencies, could help extend these efforts to parking lots, sidewalks, and low-traffic roads.

Rain Gardens and Bioswales
Installing rain gardens and bioswales along streets, in parks, schools, and community centers could serve as both flood mitigation and educational tools. These features can help manage floodwaters and improve water quality by filtering pollutants before they enter local waterways.

Detention Ponds and Stormwater Parks
Converting detention ponds into multi-use stormwater parks near community centers, schools, and recreation facilities could offer both flood mitigation and open space. By partnering with cities and regional entities like the HGAC, Liberty County could develop innovative projects that provide recreational spaces while managing stormwater.

Riparian Buffers
Protect and restore vegetation along the banks of rivers and streams, like the Trinity River. These buffers can also support wildlife habitats and recreational spaces. Enhancing riparian buffers along streams near community parks or recreational areas could help reduce flooding risks and improve water quality. Cities and Liberty County could collaborate with local environmental groups, state agencies, and HGAC to protect and restore these critical areas.

Wetland Restoration
Wetland restoration could be incorporated into larger projects, such as developing flood-prone community facilities or unused public land. By working with conservation organizations, state agencies, and cities, Liberty County can explore opportunities for restoring wetlands to improve flood resilience. Promoting these efforts through public-private partnerships and highlighting successful case studies could raise awareness about the environmental and economic benefits of wetlands.

Objective 3.3.3 Support an environmentally and financially responsible energy development.

- **Action 3.3.3.1:** Determine suitable areas for renewable energy including assessing impacts to natural and cultural resources and environment.

- **Action 3.3.3.2:** Consider strategies and regulations to assess and minimize the impacts of renewable energy development (e.g roadway maintenance, decommissioning).

- **Action 3.3.3.3:** Implement holistic oil and gas regulations so that oil extraction is contained within a certain area, making it less hazardous for habitats and visitors.

- **Action 3.3.3.4:** Explore opportunities for brownfield identification and remediation.

Case Study: Turtle Bayou Nature Preserve

Located within the former Turtle Bayou Oil Field in Chambers County, the 514-acre tract was once home to legacy oil wells and waste pits, which posed significant environmental risks. In 2012, the Chambers-Liberty Counties Navigation District acquired the property and established it as a conservation easement, permanently protecting the land. The site underwent significant rehabilitation through the Texas Railroad Commission's (RRC) Oil & Gas Regulation and Cleanup Fund, which is dedicated to addressing abandoned oil and gas sites across the state. The RRC's Brownfield Response Program provided technical assistance and was supported by a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. These efforts enabled the cleanup of the site and its conversion into a natural habitat.

Managed by the Galveston Bay Foundation, the Turtle Bayou Nature Preserve offers recreational opportunities such as hiking, birding, and kayaking. Birdwatching towers and walking trails allow visitors to enjoy the restored landscape.

Resources and Partnerships for Liberty County:
- Texas Railroad Commission's Brownfield Response Program: Liberty County can utilize this program for technical and financial support in identifying, assessing, and remediating brownfield sites.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Grants: The EPA offers various grants for brownfield cleanup and redevelopment.
- Conservation Organizations: Partnerships with conservation groups can help manage preserves, offer conservation easements, and ensure that environmental goals are met.
- Chambers-Liberty Counties Navigation District: This district has experience managing conservation projects like Turtle Bayou and can be a partner.

Source: H-GAC Regional Conservation Initiative Model Projects

Considerations for Solar Farm Development

The County should optimize solar farm development benefits and reduce negative impacts, focusing on environmental, economic, social, and cultural aspects.

Economic and Community Engagement
- Ensure local access to renewable energy credits, improving green credentials and possibly lowering energy costs.
- Encourage Community Benefits Agreements between developers and the community for local hiring and contributions to community services.
- Provide resources and workshops for landowners leasing land for solar projects, covering lease rates and contracts.

Environmental Conservation and Land Use
- Identify specific areas suitable for solar farms, considering environmental sensitivities, wildlife habitat, agricultural value, and proximity to existing infrastructure.
- Promote the integration of solar farming with agriculture (agri-voltaics) to allow for dual land use, preserving agricultural productivity beneath solar panels.
- Encourage native ground covers and pollinator-friendly landscaping to enhance biodiversity.
- Promote buffers to minimize solar farms' visual impact.

Infrastructure and Safety
- Implement impact fees for developers to cover the costs associated with increased road maintenance and potential infrastructure upgrades.Consider runoff and drainage changes.
- Ensure developers plan for extreme events and natural disasters.
- Require a detailed decommissioning plan outlining the removal of panels and restoration of the land post-decommissioning, ensuring financial guarantees are in place.

CHAPTER 4
TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

Due to its proximity to the Houston Metropolitan Area, Liberty County has a complex transportation system with varying strengths and weaknesses. The completion of SH 99, a high-capacity, high-speed tollway, on the western edge of the county has greatly increased traffic to the area, creating more economic opportunity as well as congestion and safety issues. This chapter will outline the existing conditions of Liberty County's current transportation system, summarize public feedback received, and propose several recommendations to create a more safer, sustainable, and high-quality transportation system. The chapter will culminate with an implementation table with specific and actionable recommendations.

QUICK LOOK
CHAPTER 4

Transportation Safety
Signage, safe sidewalks

Multimodal Options
Public transit, biking, sidewalks, trails

High-Quality Roads
Maintenance, expansions, standards

EXISTING CONDITIONS
ROAD SAFTEY

Liberty County's road system consists mostly of local roads within Cleveland, Liberty, or Dayton's city limits and extraterritorial jurisdictions. One interstate, IH 69 N, runs through the northwest corner of the county, through Cleveland, and continues into Houston. Several principal arterial roads connect the three major cities with each other and with the rest of the county. The rail lines throughout the county cause congestion issues, particularly within Dayton.

There are several points of high congestion that should be addressed, including the intersection of US 90, SH 146, SH 321 in Dayton. Travelers commuting into Houston through Dayton, and an at-grade rail crossing, increase the severity of the congestion in the area. Safety issues are present throughout the county, especially in the cities. US 90, in the southern half of the county, has the highest number of crashes as well as the most severe crashes. Large trucks and narrow shoulders may contribute to severe crashes and increase congestion throughout the county, but especially on the west side, closest to Houston. Several improvement projects are planned within the county, mostly by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Beaumont District (BMT).

Pedestrian safety issues are apparent, especially in and around school zones. Stakeholders identified the need for safety measures for children walking to and from school, even during "off" hours when they may be returning from sports practice or extracurricular activities. Bicycle infrastructure, including bike lanes, do not seem to be a current priority for residents of Liberty County. However, with the projected increase in population, the necessary infrastructure should be considered to support bicycle use for recreation or short-distance travel. Current transportation options, the existing transportation network and traffic counts, safety/crash analysis, public feedback, and recommendations are discussed in greater detail in the sections that follow.

Public engagement indicated a desire for decreased congestion, especially within Dayton. Additionally, there are concerns about the state of the transportation system within the rapidly growing developments in Liberty County, especially Plum Grove and Colony Ridge. Insufficient development regulations have created rapidly-deteriorating and poorly-designed roads, which the county is responsible for maintaining.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION

NETWORK

Liberty County's well-developed road network provides easy access to major cities and other parts of the state, making it an important transportation hub in East Texas. Liberty County has a well-connected road network that includes Interstates, US highways, State highways, and Farm to Market (FM) roads covering 3,335 lane-miles within the county. Functional classification is a system used to categorize roads based on the level of movement and/or access a roadway provides.

The Liberty county road network includes roads of all the functional classification, as described below:

- **Interstate** - An Interstate is a limited-access highway, designed for longer distance, high-capacity, high-speed, limited access and is intended to provide safe, efficient, and reliable transportation between major cities and regions. Interstates are a critical component of the U.S. transportation infrastructure, providing connectivity and mobility for both commercial and personal travel. IH 69 N is the only Interstate highway that runs through Liberty County connecting Houston with Cleveland and later merging into US 59 (Future IH 69 N).

- **Freeway/Expressway** - A freeway is similar to an Interstates. It is designed as high capacity, high speed, limited access to ramps but with a shorter distance compared to Interstates.

- **Principal Arterial** - Principal Arterials are roads designed for high speed, high-capacity primarily providing for movement in the transportation system. The principal arterials in Liberty County are SH 99, US 90, US 59, SH 321, SH 105 connecting major cities like Dayton, Cleveland and Liberty in the county.

- **Minor Arterial** - Roads that connect principal arterials with major collectors, providing connectivity within communities like residential, shopping and recreational areas. Examples include portions of FM 1960, SH 146, FM 563 and FM 787 are the minor arterials running through Liberty County.

- **Collector** - Roads that connect minor arterials with local streets and are designed for moderate traffic and are typically used to distribute traffic within a residential or commercial area. A few collector street examples in Liberty County are FM 1008, FM 1409, SH 61, FM 787 and FM 1010.

Functional Classification of Roads, 2021

- Interstate
- Other Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Road

- City Limits
- Liberty County Boundaries
- Other County Boundaries

Scale 1:380,000

0   2.5   5   10   Miles

N

Sources: Texas Department of Transportation, U.S. Census Bureau
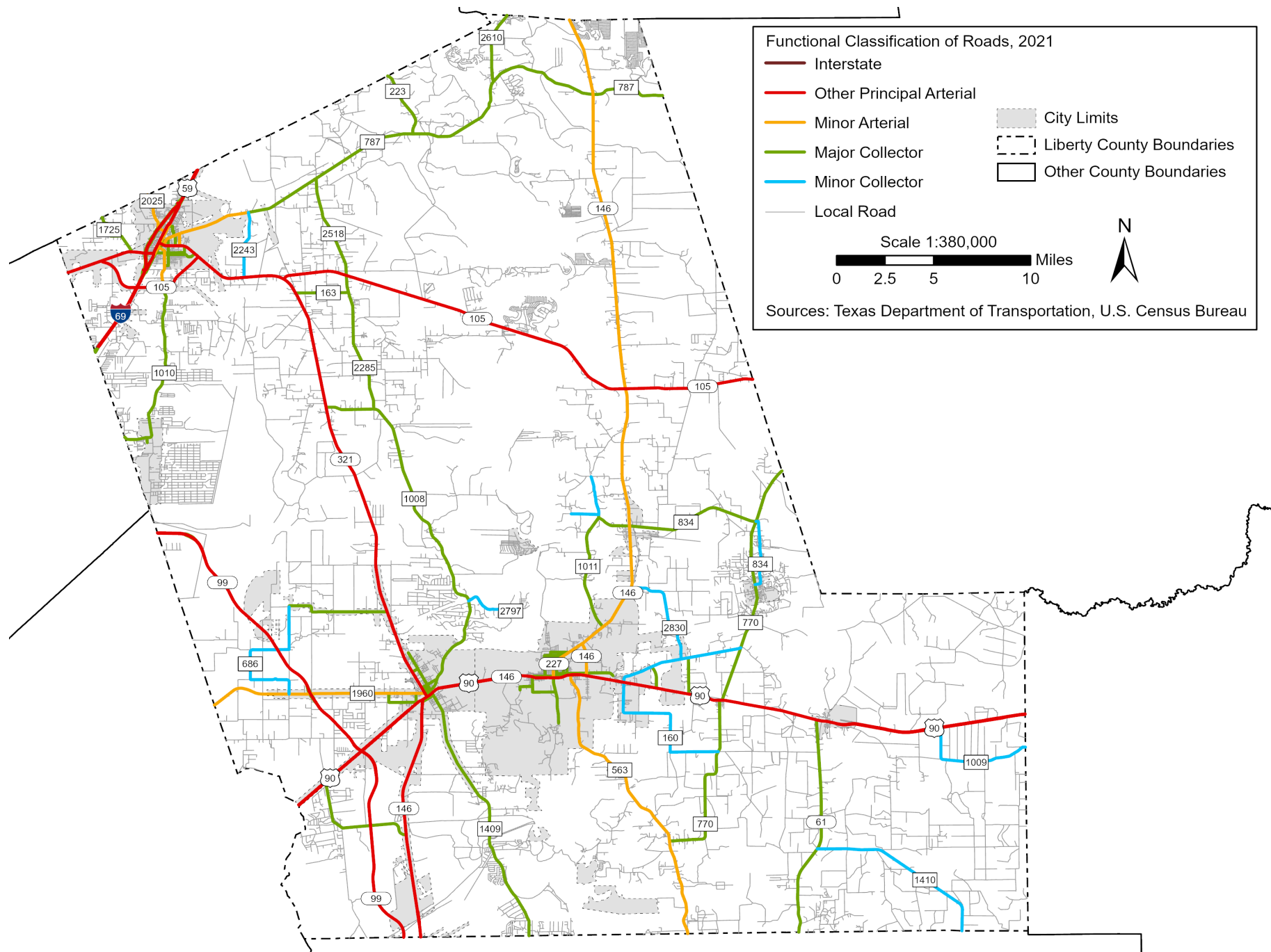
Figure 4.1. Liberty County Functional Classification of Roads, 20[2,3],

EXISTING TRAFFIC
COUNTS

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is a commonly used traffic parameter that represents the average number of vehicles that pass a particular point on a roadway over the course of a year, divided by the number of days in that year. AADT is an important measure for transportation planners and engineers as it identifies traffic demand of a road. Figure 4.2 shows a road map of Liberty County with AADTs for the year 2021. It is clear that the intersection of US 90, SH 146, and SH 321 in the city of Dayton has a high traffic volume, which might result in congestion problems. The IH 69 N and US 59 along Cleveland are also amongst the high traffic volume sections.
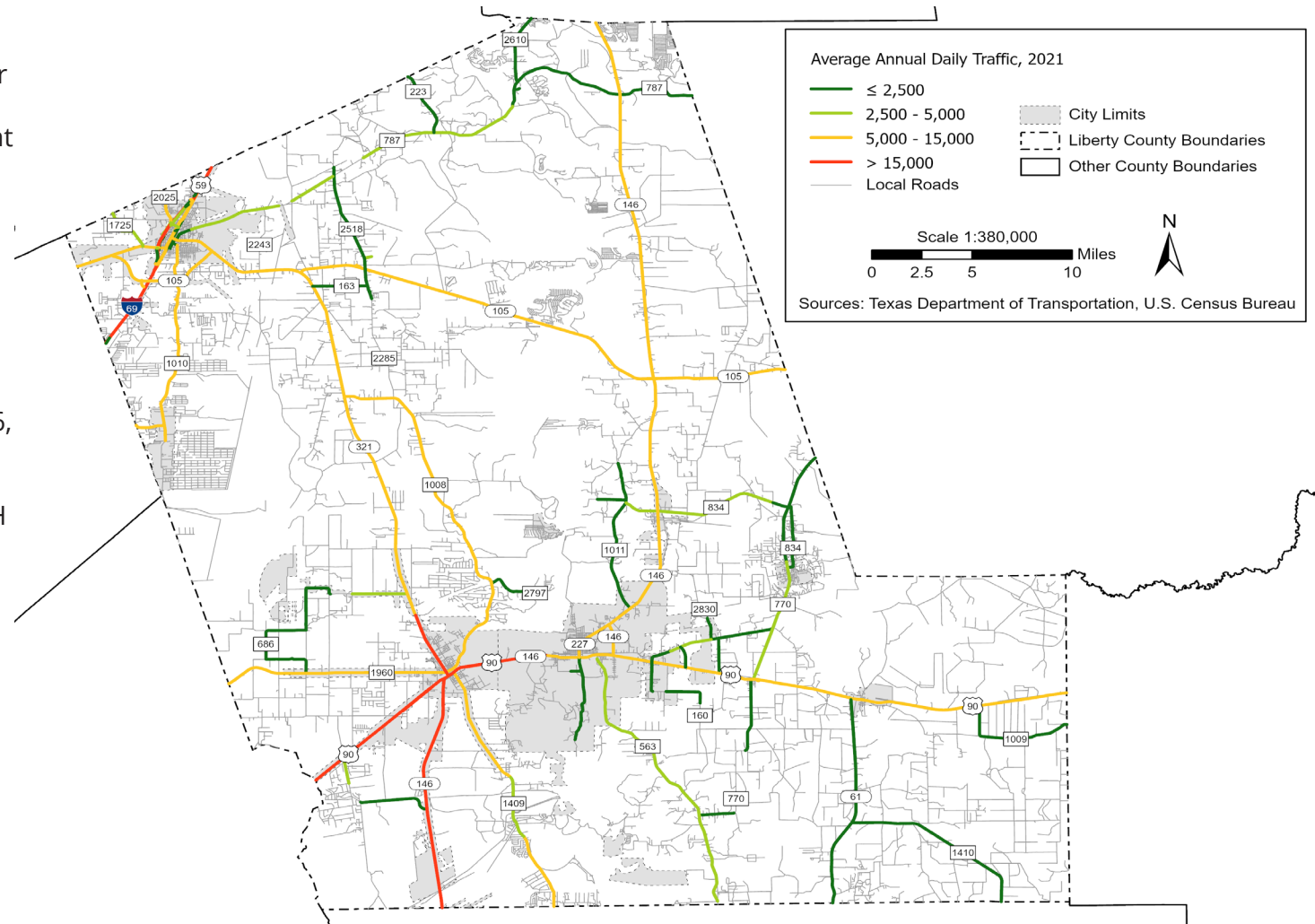
Figure 4.2. Liberty County Average Annual Traffic Count, 2021

CRASH
DENSITY

Data on crashes within Liberty County occurring from the beginning of 2018 to the end of 2022 were collected from the Texas Department of Transportation's Crash Records Information System (CRIS).

Crashes in Liberty County most often occur at the intersections of major roads, especially at the intersections of US 90 and SH 321 in Dayton, as well as at SH 146 and SL 227 in Liberty. Crashes are frequent along the IH 69 N corridor through Cleveland, occurring largely at the intersections of IH 69 N and SH 105 as well as IH 69 N and SH 321.

FIgures 4.3 and 4.4 illustrate crash hotspots within Liberty County that have occurred between the start of 2018 and end of 2022. The high crash frequency on these roads is likely related to their high average daily traffic. Far and away, the highest number of crashes occurred on US 90, also the site of the highest number of crash-related injuries in every category. Normalizing crash density by AADT reveals that a disproportionately high number of crashes occur on SH 321 between Cleveland and Dayton, as well as, to a lesser extent, on SH 146 north of Liberty.
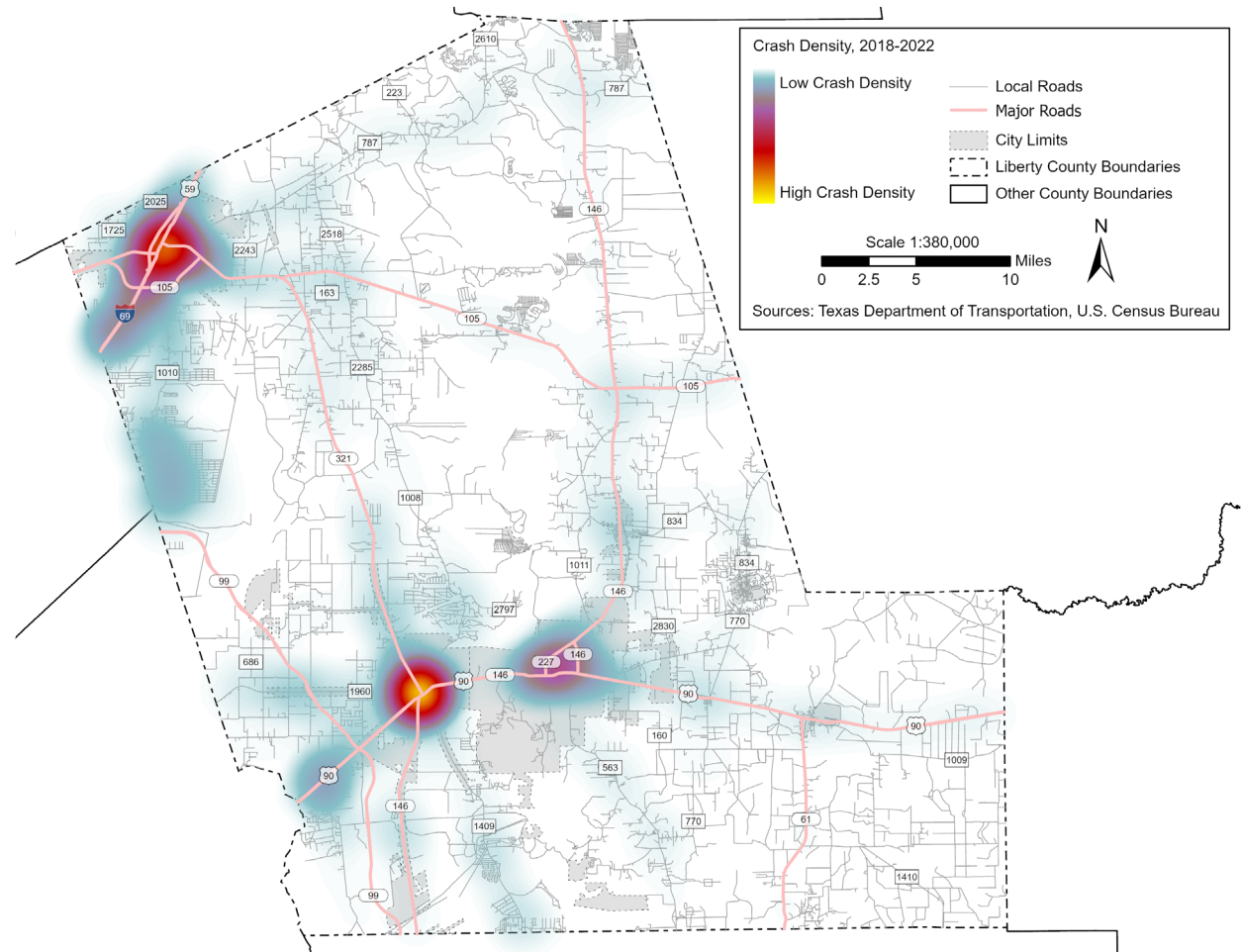
Figure 4.3. Liberty County Crash Density, 2018-2022[1,2]

CRASH
DENSITY

Figure 4.4. Cleveland, Dayton, and Liberty City Crash Density, 2018-2022[1,2]
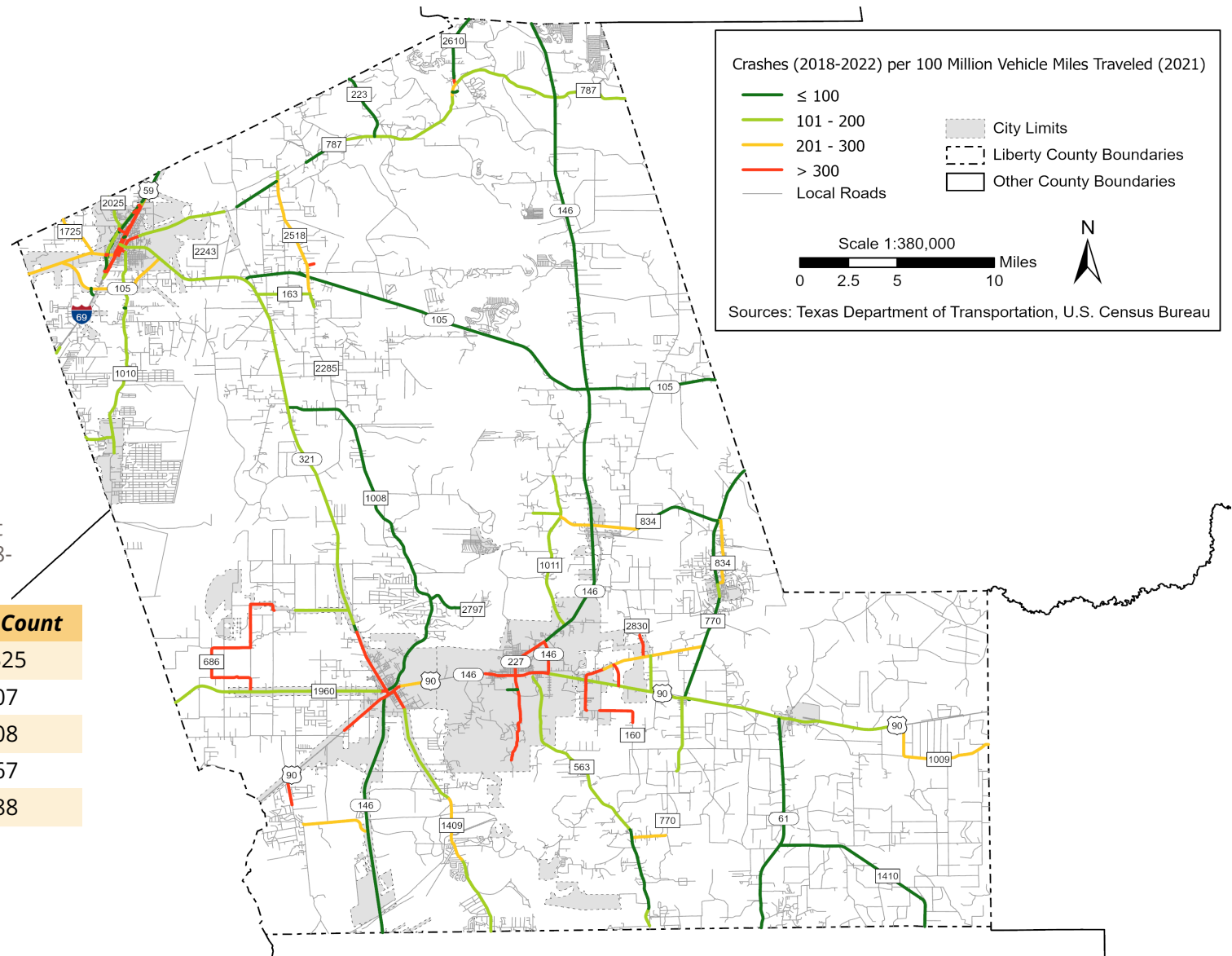
CRASH
DENSITY

Table 4.1. Liberty County Frequent Crash Locations, Major Roads, 2018-2022[1]

Road Name	Crash Count
US Highway 90	1,325
State Highway 321	807
US Highway 59 (IH 69 N)	708
State Highway 105	567
State Highway 146	488

Crashes (2018-2022) per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled (2021)

— ≤ 100
— 101 - 200
— 201 - 300
— > 300
— Local Roads

City Limits
Liberty County Boundaries
Other County Boundaries

Scale 1:380,000

Miles
0   2.5   5   10

N

Sources: Texas Department of Transportation, U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 4.5 Liberty County Crashes Normalized By Traffic Count[1,2]

PLANNED IMPROVEMENT
PROJECTS

Several transportation projects are planned for the county, which are listed in Table 4.2. The majority of the projects are funded by the TxDOT BMT with a few being funded by the City of Dayton. The projects listed were sourced from the TxDOT 2023 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) Listed Projects and the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan Fiscally-Constrained Project List. The location of TxDOT planned projects as shown in TxDOT Project Tracker are depicted in the map in Figure 4.6.

One of the major projects (CSJ ID: 0028-03-111) that TxDOT plans to construct is the overpass bridge over the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) to eliminate the at-grade crossing in the City of Dayton. This bridge will help to reduce the interaction of trains and vehicles at the US90/UPRR intersection.

Phase	Projects	Est. Cost
Construction underway or begins soon	90	$244,338,000
Construction begins within 4 years	50	$235,811,372
Construction begins in 5 to 10 years	6	$252,077,454
Planning, 10+ years	5	$177,092,870
Feasibility Studies	1	$200,000

Figure 4.6 Liberty County TxDOT Projects
(Source: TxDOT Project Tracker)

Table 4.2. Existing Planned Improvement Projects for Liberty County[4,5]

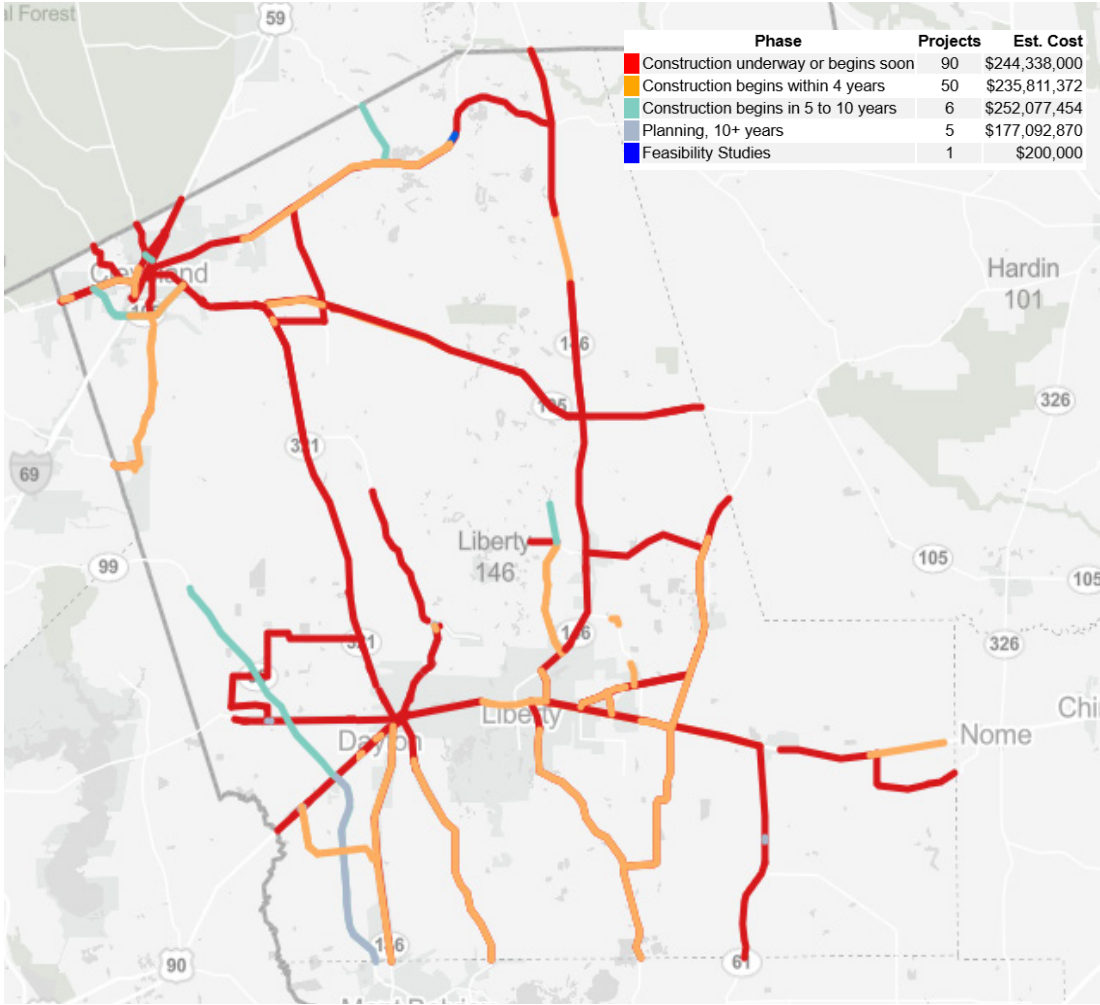| No.	Highway	From	To	Description	Estimated Construction Cost (in millions)	Funder	Fiscal Year
1	US 90 at UPRR	-	-	Build an overpass bridge over the existing UPRR and eliminate the at-grade crossing in the city of Dayton	N/A	TxDOT BMT	2024
2	US 90	FM 563	SH 61	Reconstruct and widen the existing US 90 from a 2-lanes undivided roadway to a 4-lanes with a possible divided median and left turn lanes throughout the corridor.	90	TxDOT BMT	2027-2032
3	US 90 at UPRR	-	-	Construct four grade separations on US 90 (2 EB, 2WB) at relocation UP railroad tracks	70	TxDOT BMT	2025
4	US 59	South end of Cl bypass	Mont/CL	Reconstruct and widen to 6 main lanes with frontage roads	142	TxDOT BMT	COMPLETE
5	SH 105	SH 321 W	SH 321 E	Increase pavement width and add left turn bays and shoulders	$15.25	TxDOT BMT	COMPLETE
6	Waco St	SH 321	FM 1960	Construct 3 Lane roadway w/CLTL, sidewalks on east side and storm water sewer improvements	$21.03	City of Dayton	2032
7	SH 105 bypass	SH 105 W	SH 105 E	Widen from 2-lanes to 4-lanes	$12.29	TxDOT BMT	2034
8	SH 105	Mont/CL	SH 105 bypass	Widen from 2-lanes to 4-lanes divided	$15.55	TxDOT BMT	2030
9	FM 1960	SH 321	SH 99	Widen from 2-lanes to 4-lanes	$34.69	TxDOT BMT	2030
10	FM 2052	SH 69	SL 573	Add additional bridge width at US 59 for turn lanes and install turn lanes on FM 2052 from US 59 to SH 573	$5.01	TxDOT BMT	2035
11	SH 146	1.9 miles N of SL 227	US 90	Widen from 2 to 4 lanes, add turn lanes, and diamond grind pavement	$20.81	TxDOT BMT	2035
12	FM 1008	CR 632	N Winfree St	Increase pavement width and add left turn bays	$23.55	TxDOT BMT	2040
13	FM 787	At Trinity River	-	FM 787 Trinity River Bridge Relocation in Liberty County	$46.75	TxDOT BMT	2035
14	US 59 N	San Jacinto C/L	0.65 Miles S of SL 573	Convert mainlanes to freeway and construct two 2-lane frontage roads	$59.39	TxDOT BMT	COMPLETE

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION
OPTIONS

Brazos Transit District

Beyond the existing road network, the current transportation options in Liberty County are limited. The county is primarily serviced by the Brazos Transit District, which is a political subdivision of the State of Texas. It is funded through the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) and TxDOT. Within Liberty County, however, services are mainly found only in the three major cities, with Cleveland having isolated routes in the north and Dayton, Liberty, and Ames having some shared routes. Residents of the county must have access to the Internet to find information regarding pricing, route locations, specific rules, and must know aspects of using the Brazos Transit District's services.

Though the Brazos Transit District has discounts for those who are elderly or disabled, individuals must also be able to make their way to pick-up and drop-off locations to access this service. Beyond the three major cities, Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland, the Brazos Transit District does not service any other portions of the county. With it being the primary option available, the county residents are forced to rely on cars as the sole form of transportation.

Railroad

The county is also serviced by Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) and Union Pacific Railroad (UP), which both own, operate, and have track rights on the rail systems within and throughout Liberty County. According to a 1962 Official Railway Guide[1], in the past, passengers were able to take Southern Pacific lines five and six from New Orleans to Houston, Beaumont, Rome, Liberty, and Dayton. Nowadays, however, the rail lines are exclusively used for freight. CMC Industries, outside of Liberty, operated a 2,000 acre rail storage facility, assisting in this endeavor. Additionally, the Liberty County Commissioner (via the Order of the Liberty County Commissioner's Court) created the Liberty County Rural Rail Transportation District to assist with developing, financing, constructing, and operating public rail infrastructure throughout the county. Work being done currently is focused on developing a 32-mile rail line that connects CMC's rail yard with BNSF's Cleveland rail yard.

PUBLIC
FEEBBACK

Texas Target Communities conducted two meetings with community leaders in Liberty and Cleveland on February 13, 2023, to solicit feedback on the existing transportation network, progress made from the 2016 plan, and where improvements need to be made. The following is a list of major themes among the comments.

Highway improvements are relieving traffic from local roads
The construction of IH 69 N and other expansion projects in the northern portion of the county have reduced congestion through Cleveland. SH 99 (Grand Parkway) has removed some of the north-south traffic through Dayton, but it is often too expensive for locals to regularly use due to the tolls.

Bike lanes are essentially non-existent, and shared-use paths may be an approach to improving bikeability.
Many roads are in deteriorating condition and do not meet current needs, so building bike lanes is not seen as a priority. Building shared-use paths, however, would separate bikes from cars and serve both bicyclists and pedestrians.

Many road designs are inadequate for current demand and future development
Many roads in the rural portions of the county have no shoulder, making it hazardous for stranded motorists, roadside workers, and police officers and limits the ability to enforce traffic laws. On the numerous two-lane roads, the yellow line serves as the only barrier between opposing high-speed traffic, and serious and fatal crashes are common. The portion of Grand Parkway in this two-lane configuration is particularly hazardous (there was a fatal crash on opening day), and a crash on this road often requires first responders to completely close the toll road for several hours because of limited passing space and the need to divert traffic to surface streets.

Pedestrian safety is a major concern
Sidewalks are often in bad condition and connectivity is poor. More crosswalks are needed, especially near schools. Houston Street in front of Liberty High School has had several vehicle-pedestrian crashes as students try to access commercial establishments on the other side of the road, and some crosswalks and better pedestrian infrastructure are needed to make this area safe.

Public transportation service can be improved in the future.
The elderly and indigent are the main users of the existing service, but it is not typically a feasible option for travel by most residents because many own cars and travel far between home, work, and services.

There are several traffic chokepoints in Dayton that need to be addressed through better connectivity
Most of the traffic in Liberty County funnels through Dayton– north-south traffic between northern Liberty County and the refineries in Baytown, east-west traffic between Liberty and Houston, and when there is congestion on IH 10 E, travelers between Beaumont/Louisiana and Houston may take US 90 as an alternate route, clogging an already overburdened road. There is only one way in and out of Kenefick, and that road requires driving through the heart of Dayton. An at-grade rail crossing on US 90 in Dayton regularly causes several miles of backup on all roads leading to town, and the only grade-separated crossing easily floods with even small amounts of precipitation, though there are projects slated to address both of these issues. An additional connection from US 90 to Kenefick, as well as a partial or full loop around Dayton's core, would redistribute some through traffic and alleviate bottlenecks.

Streets in Colony Ridge are subpar
The roads in Colony Ridge are not very old, yet they are deteriorating quickly and are not built to a high standard. The poor condition of the roads increases the wear-and-tear on not only personal vehicles but school buses, fire trucks, and police cars as well. The multi-lane roundabouts are not constructed to modern standards and may contribute to crashes because they are improperly painted.

Overview of Goals

1. Improve the saftey of the transportation system

Of utmost importance is ensuring the transportation system within the county is safe for drivers, transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike. To accomplish this goal, Liberty County officials must look at the system holistically and propose multiple different actions, targeting different areas. Goal one is broken down into three objectives, which focus on reducing crashes, reducing hazards, and promoting pedestrian health.

2. Provide travelers with sustainable transportation options

As the threat of climate change becomes an increasingly pressing issue, local governments wish to provide a transportation system that is both environmentally sustainable and economically viable. This includes increasing residential access to social, cultural, and economic opportunities through a well-connected and modally diverse transportation system. It also includes efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and heavy reliance on automobiles for transportation, creating an active transportation system that is convenient and comfortable for all residents.

3. Provide a high-quality road system

As Liberty County continues to grow in population at a rapid pace, it is important to produce a road system that meets the traffic demand and meets high standards for quality. Roads should be built to last, following robust quality standards, and regularly maintained to prevent larger, more costly issues in the future. The rapid growth within the county also presents an opportunity for expanding transit service. One strategy for accomplishing reducing congestion is to encourage alternative modes of transportation besides single-occupancy vehicles. Providing travelers high-quality, robust transit options allows for increased mode share and limits the number of low-occupancy vehicles on the roads.

GOAL 4.1: IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Objective 4.1.1 Reduce vehicle crashes. To decrease the rate of vehicle crashes, the county should consider reducing speed in areas where there are higher levels of traffic.

- **Action 4.1.1.1:** Provide more efficient signage in intersections, roundabout, and freeway exits in Cleveland and Plum Grove, and throughout the County.
- **Action 4.1.1.2:** Work with Cities to ensure safe connectivity through the County by reducing high speed traffic.
- **Action 4.1.1.3:** Widen SH 99 in Dayton to reduce crashes.

Objective 4.1.2 Decrease hazards near present sidewalks. A safe and accessible sidewalk network is a way that Liberty County can promote walking and biking.

- **Action 4.1.2.1:** Complete a walk audit and rate conditions, accessibility, safety and comfort.
- **Action 4.1.2.2:** Work with Cities to repair and replace current sidewalks within Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland city boundaries.
- **Action 4.1.2.3:** Encourage municipalities to adopt Complete Streets policies and increase sidewalks, which improve access for all.

Objective 4.1.3 Reduce pedestrian injuries and deaths. The third objective is focused on reducing pedestrian injuries and deaths.

- **Action 4.1.3.1:** Assist Cleveland ISD in increasing the safety of pedestrians in crosswalks in Plum Grove by providing better lighting and signage improvements.
- **Action 4.1.3.2:** Adopt high-visibility crosswalk and pedestrian shelter guidelines for roads within county jurisdiction.
- **Action 4.1.3.3:** Create a county-wide Safe Routes to Schools Program.

GOAL 4.2: PROVIDE TRAVELERS WITH
SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Objective 4.2.1 Improve public transportation. To decrease reliance on single-driver vehicles for transportation and expand transportation access to a wider share of its population.

- **Action 4.2.1.1:** Work with city agencies and BTD to promote cycling and walking to public transportation stations by making trips easier, faster, and safer.
- **Action 4.2.1.2:** Work with BTD surveying residents about the riding experiences improving the quality of services.
- **Action 4.2.1.3:** Coordinate with TxDOT and BTD to establish a county-wide public transit plan to increase the access of public transportation for residents.
- **Action 4.2.1.4:** Work with HGAC Transportation Policy Council to include Liberty County in any mass transit plans going forward
- **Action 4.2.1.5:** Establish the park and ride lots to connect Houston METRO stations.
- **Action 4.2.1.6:** Cooperate with Houston METRO to coordinate express bus service in the City of Dayton within 5 – 10 years.

Objective 4.2.2 Improve access to sidewalks, trails, and bike paths. Liberty County can promote a sustainable transportation system is through the development of walkable, pedestrian-oriented infrastructure, and encourage biking.

- **Action 4.2.2.1:** Adhere to the H-GAC Bikeway Viewer[11] and Tx-DOT Bicycle Tourism Trails Example Network[12] to propose the new bikeways county-wide.
- **Action 4.2.2.2:** Encourage Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland to develop bicycle plans.
- **Action 4.2.2.3:** Work with Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland to create new bikeways as outlined in the Bike/Pedestrian Plan section.
- **Action 4.2.2.4:** Coordinate with the bikeway improvement from Liberty County Mobility Study (H-GAC) by following the standards for sidewalk development.
- **Action 4.2.2.5:** Conduct a Pedestrian and Bicycle Road Safety Audit in Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland to determine areas with the greatest need for sidewalks.
- **Action 4.2.2.6:** Encourage cities to improve thermal comfort for pedestrians by providing shade trees and man-made shade structures along sidewalks. Refer to TxDOR Landscape Design Manual for guidance.

BIKE/PEDESTRIAN
PLAN

Based on feedback from the Liberty public meeting, it is clear that people desire more sustainable transportation options for their daily entertainment and exercise needs. A review of the 2045 H-GAC Regional Active Transportation Plan reveals that there are currently no bikeways in Liberty County, with only a few existing sidewalks in Cleveland and Dayton. Figure 4.7 recommends bike and pedestrian infrastructure for the county.

The plan recommendation adheres to the H-GAC Bike Viewer and TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trails Example Network. According to the H-GAC Bike Viewer, the proposed bikeways will connect Houston, Mont Belvieu, Dayton, and Liberty City, mainly located in the southern part of Liberty County. The TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trails Example Network features a comprehensive bikeways network across Texas, proposing bikeways at the state level. The proposed bikeways for Liberty County span from the west of Dayton City to Liberty City, crossing the Trinity River and extending to the north along FM 146. Combining these two proposed bikeways would create an initial bikeway plan for Liberty County. The new bikeways will not only contribute to the creation of a comprehensive bikeway network throughout the state but also attract more residents in Liberty County to use these new facilities.

It was made clear from the public meeting, as well as the available data, that pedestrian walkways in highly trafficked areas were a necessity. Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland should prioritize connecting pathways in their downtown areas, as well as near schools.

Beyond newly installed sidewalks, the county must consider inventorying existing sidewalks to determine greatest maintenance needs.

The sidewalks proposed in this plan promote the use of the Brazos Transit District and the use of the neighborhood parks and green space.

The proposed sidewalks in this plan and where they are located, closely aligns with the sidewalks proposed in the H-GAC plan. Sidewalks in the H-GAC plan are set as follows:

- Standard 6' width where right-of-way allows; minimum 5' width
- Minimum 8' width sidewalk when said sidewalk in adjacent to moving traffic
- Sidewalks on both sides of the street
- Amenities (shade, lighting, and benches) where right-of-way is available
- Parallel Curb Ramps for all newly installed sidewalks
- Appropriate stormwater drainage
- Use of traffic signals and crosswalks
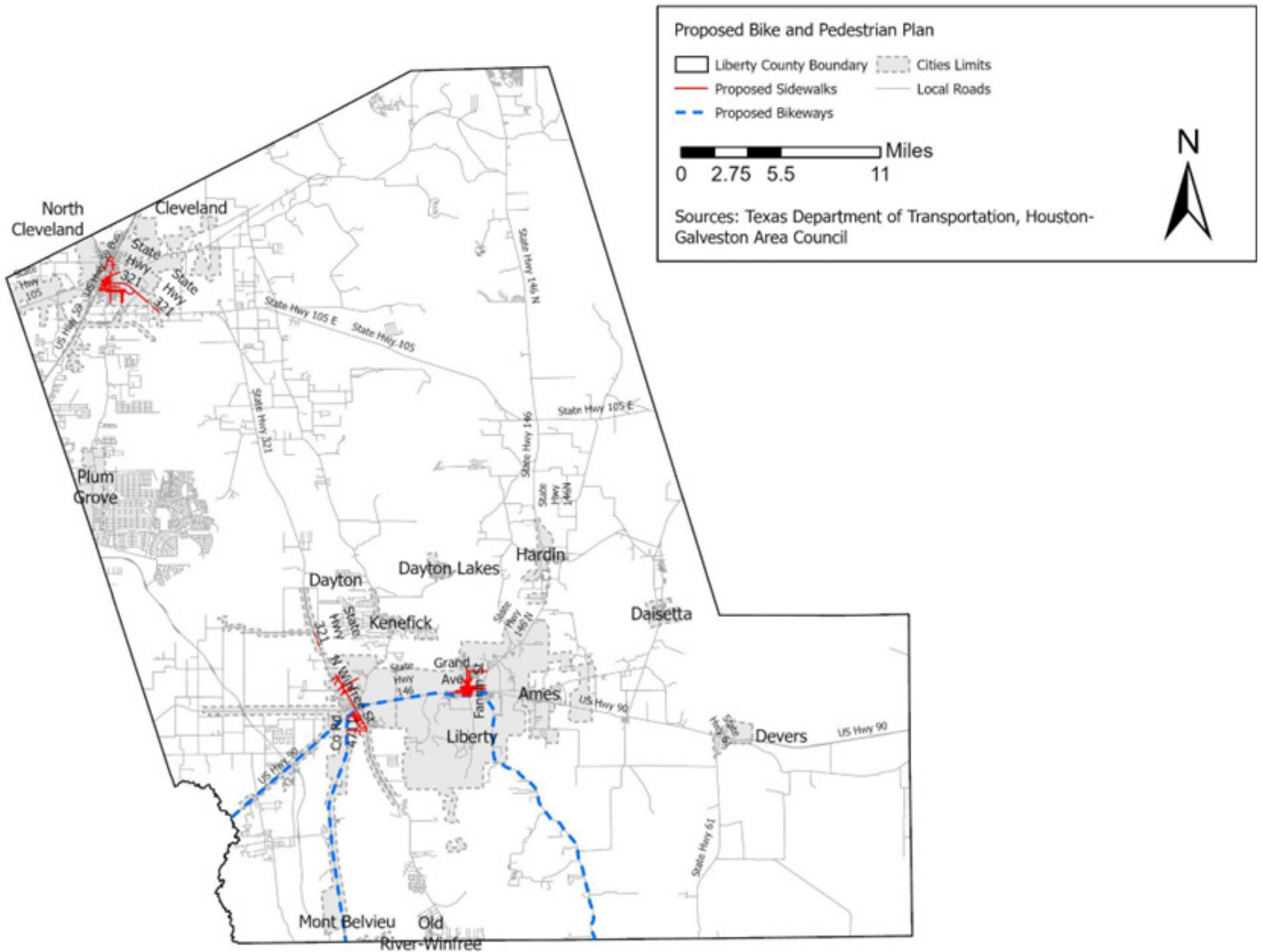- Approved traffic calming countermeasures

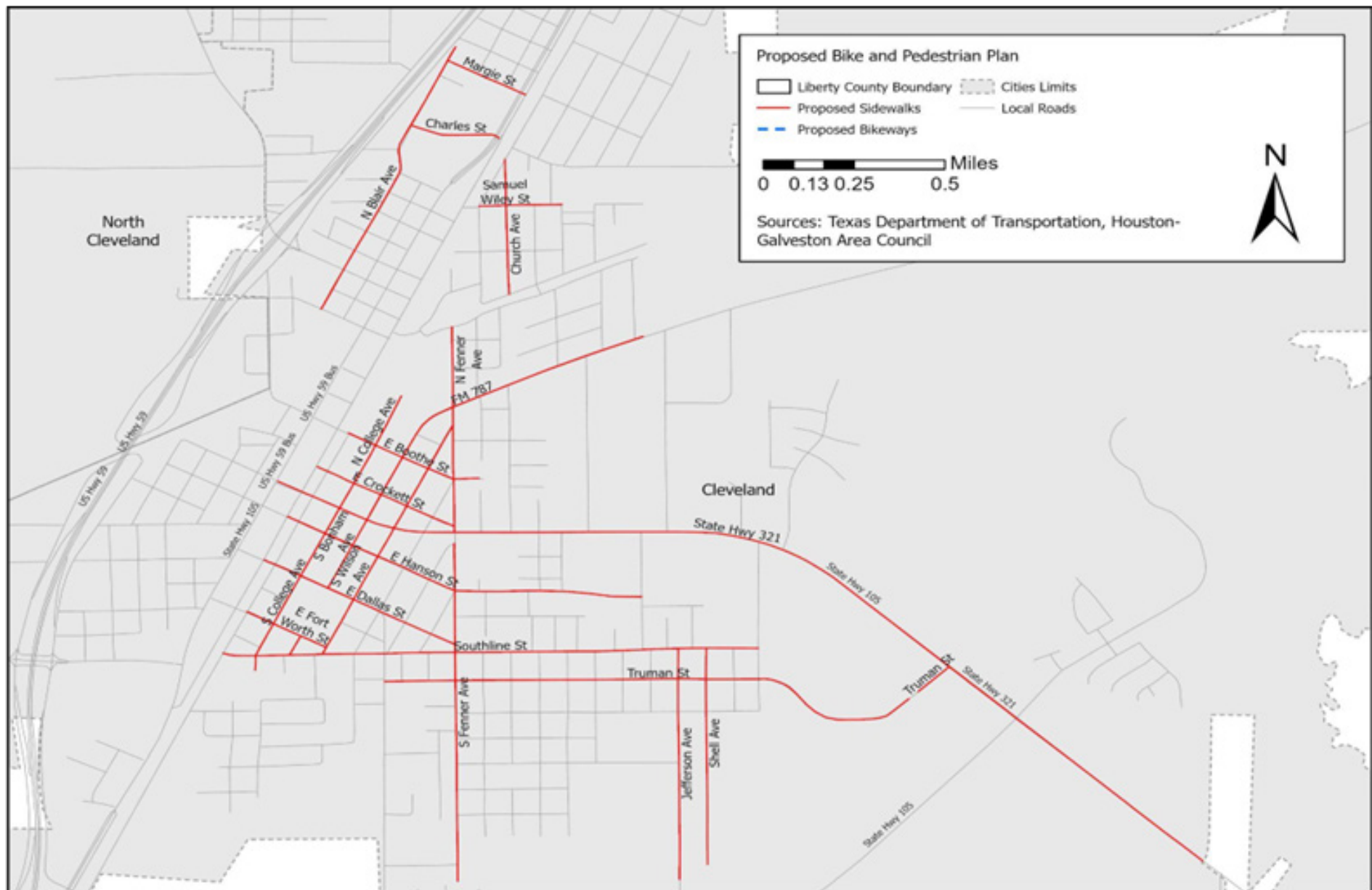Figure 4.7. Liberty County Bike and Pedestrian Plan
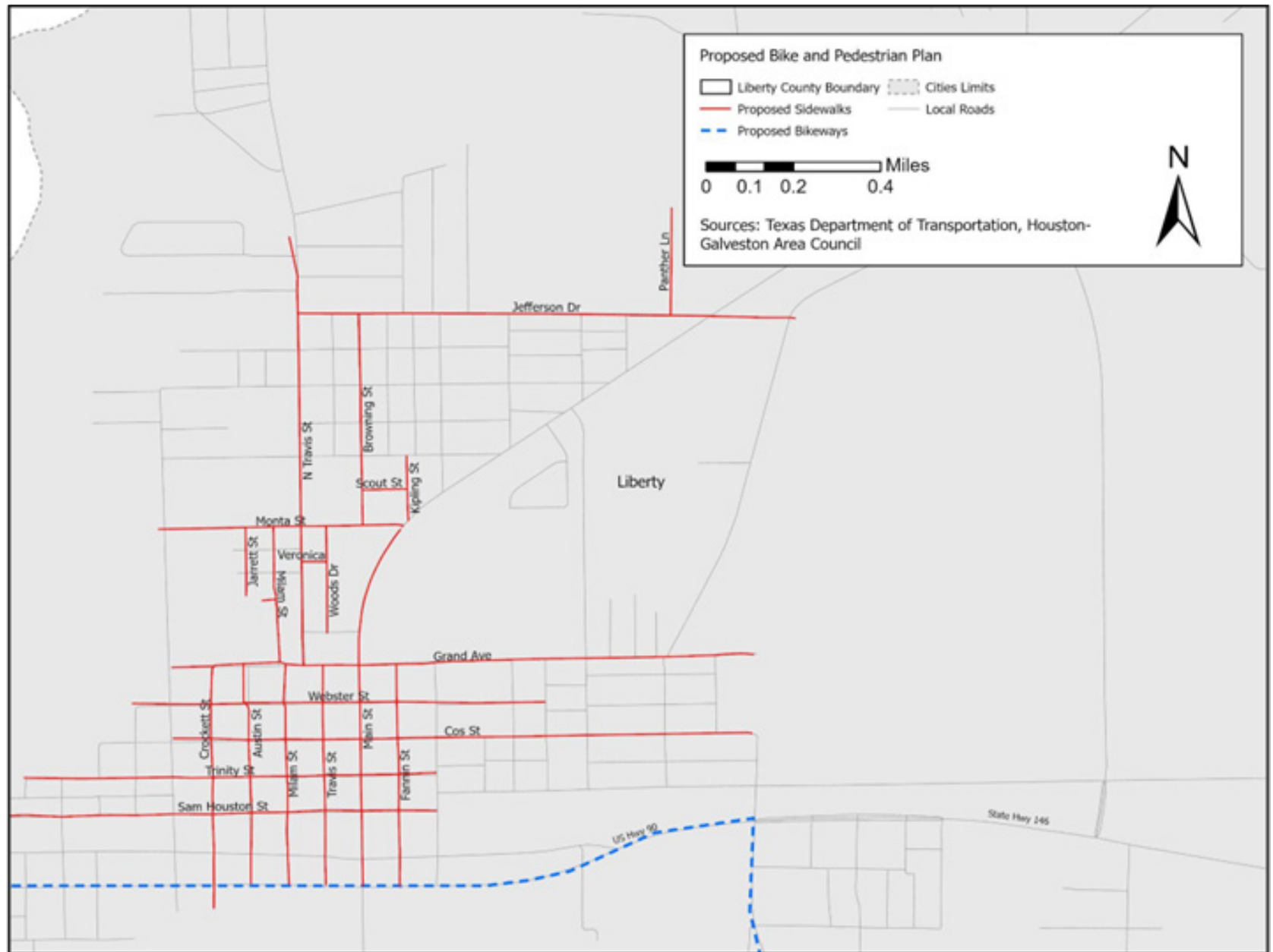
Figure 4.8. Cleveland, Texas Bike and Pedestrian Plan

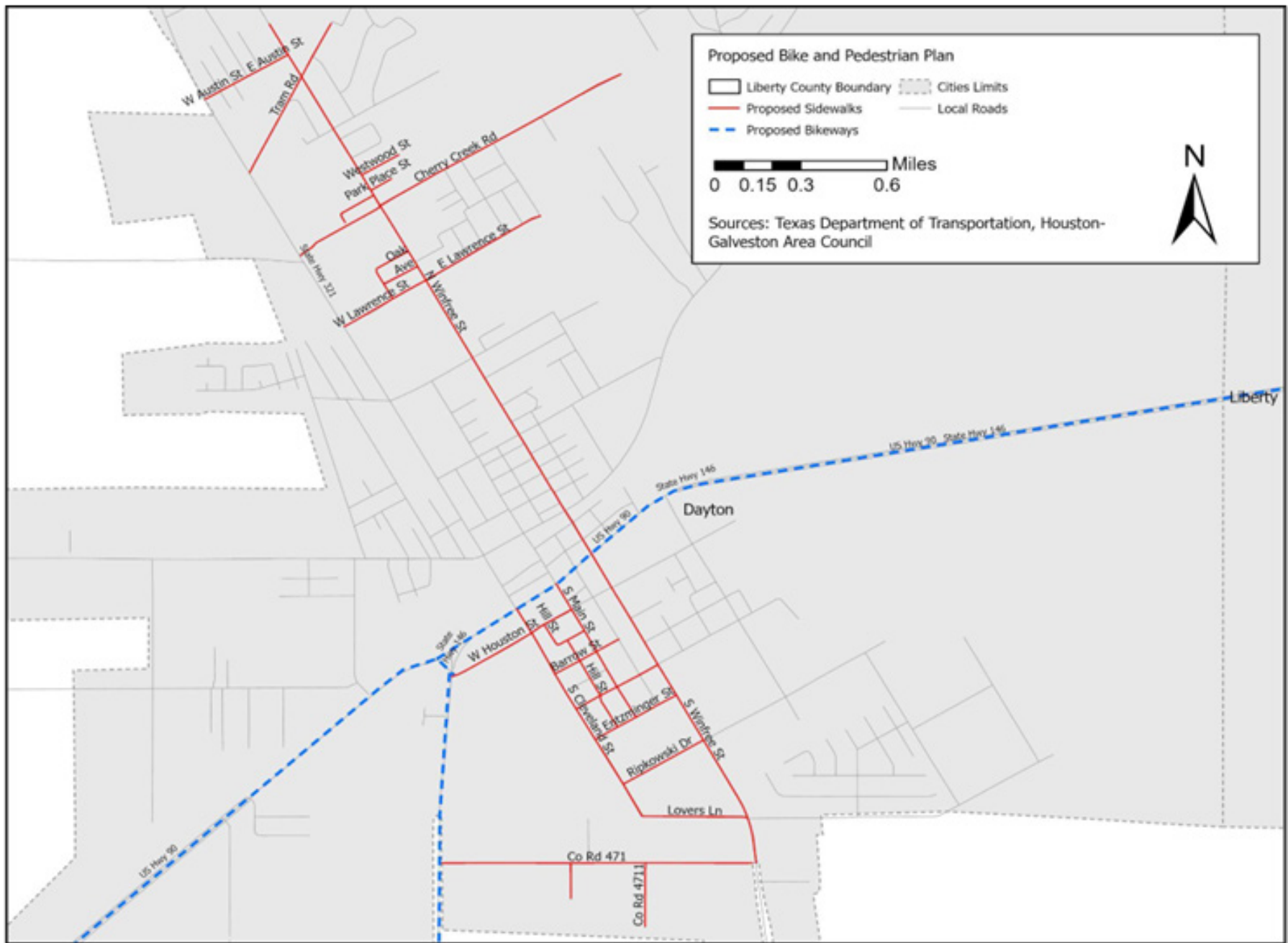Figure 4.9. Liberty, Texas Bike and Pedestrian Plan

Figure 4.10. Dayton, Texas Bike and Pedestrian Plan

TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

To enhance transit services in Liberty County, close coordination with the Brazos Transit District (BTD) is essential. The following recommendations highlight opportunities where collaboration can improve service efficiency, accessibility, and infrastructure for the growing rural population.

Accounting for Population Changes with a New Route

To ensure Liberty County's transit services are properly aligned with population trends, a study should be conducted to reassess routes. Population growth has largely occurred in rural areas, notably in the rapidly expanding Colony Ridge subdivision, which was likely undercounted in the 2020 Census. A short route connecting Colony Ridge to Plum Grove, or extending to Cleveland, should be considered to meet the transit needs of this growing area.

Improving Rider Experience by Adding Stops

Rural Liberty County residents, particularly those who are low-income, elderly, or disabled, depend on transit services to meet their daily needs. Historically, these populations in rural areas have not received adequate service due to the dispersed nature of rural living. Adding ADA-compliant stops in key population centers would not only boost ridership but also provide riders with a sense of dignity and accessibility, allowing them to choose a safe, reliable system rather than being forced to rely on personal vehicles.

Improving Service by Reducing Headways

To improve service frequency, the Brazos Transit District should assign a dedicated bus for each route serving Dayton, Liberty, and Ames. Adding two cutaway buses would allow these routes to operate on a 30-45 minute headway, compared to the current 1 hour 50 minutes. This would provide more convenience for riders, particularly those traveling between towns, such as Ames to Dayton, where current schedules are inadequate, and the first bus does not leave Liberty until 9:00 a.m. Shorter headways would significantly improve accessibility and usability.

Installing EV Chargers at Liberty Municipal Library

Installing electric vehicle (EV) chargers at the Liberty Municipal Library for buses serving Liberty and Ames would facilitate the shift to electric buses and provide public access to charging infrastructure. As rural communities transition to electrification, such infrastructure is crucial for ensuring that the financial and environmental benefits reach lower-income residents. Adding EV chargers at the library would not only support bus electrification but could also offer a public charging option, making electric vehicles more accessible to private owners.

GOAL 4.3: PROVIDE A HIGH-QUALITY
ROAD SYSTEM

Objective 4.3.1 Perform regular maintenance on all county-maintained roads.
Equally as important as building high quality roads is performing regular maintenance to ensure the quality remains high through heavy use.

- **Action 4.3.1.1:** Create a realistic and thorough maintenance schedule.

- **Action 4.3.1.2:** Develop an easy-to-use system for reporting, prioritizing, and updating safety/quality issues.

- **Action 4.3.1.3:** Update maintenance schedule on a semi-annual basis.

- **Action 4.3.1.4:** Prioritize regular road and bridges inspections, monitoring, and maintenance of roads and bridges that frequently flood or at risk of damages, especially prior to hurricane season.

- **Action 4.3.1.5:** Include storm sewer, ditch, and vegetation maintenance tasks in the maintenance schedule for safety considerations and drainage functionality.

- **Action 4.3.1.6:** Train staff and create a process for prompt and safe damage assessments and repairs of roads and bridges after flooding events.

Maintenance Schedule
To ensure the safety of road users and service capacity of each road, the county must perform regular maintenance on its road system. Table 4.3 lays out suggested actions on a timetable based on frequency or age of a road. Chief among these recommendations is the adoption, implementation, and updating of a five-year capital improvement plan (CIP) that identifies prioritized projects and activities by year and their cost estimates. This type of plan would allow for the county to budget and prepare for necessary upkeep and construction costs. To prioritize projects, each road should be assessed annually of its condition and performance, and the results can be used to amend the CIP. The remaining actions incorporate preventive and regular maintenance and reconstruction of asphalt roads based on industry standards[22].

Table 4.3 Proposed Maintenance Schedule

Frequency	Action
Continually	Sweep and clean streets
	Maintain landscaping
	Fix potholes
	Ensure new roads meet county standards
1 year	Assess conditions of each road and signage
	Update existing Capital Improvement Plan
	Fill cracks
5 years	Adopt new Capital Improvement Plan
	Seal coat roads
	Repaint lines
10 years	Resurface roads
	Replace deteriorating signage
20 years	Reconstruct Roads

Objective 4.3.2 Reduce vehicle congestion and hazardous hot spots.
Part of building a high-quality road system is addressing hazardous areas and congestion to maximize traffic flow.

- *Action 4.3.2.1:* Provide better drainage along SH 321 to prevent flooding in north Dayton. Consider upgrading the water pump through HGAC resiliency funding.

- *Action 4.3.2.2:* Provide extension of bypass FM 1413 loop to bypass the intersection of US 90, SH 146, FM 1409, FM 1008, and SH 321 in Dayton.

- *Action 4.3.2.3:* Widen principal arterial roads SH 321, SH 105, SH 99 ramp, and US 90 from 2 to 4 lanes and create an additional left turn lane at SH 146 and US 90.

- *Action 4.3.2.4:* Winden Hwy 146N from Loop 227 (Main Street) and the Hwy 146 Bypass to North of Hardin.

- *Action 4.3.2.5:* Widen FM 563 from Hwy 90 south to the Liberty County Line.

- *Action 4.3.2.6:* Implement grade separations at SH 321 and SH 105; US 90 at UPRR; and SH 573 at UPRR.

- *Action 4.3.2.7:* Extend SH 105 loop and proposed roadway at FM 787.

- *Action 4.3.2.8:* Raise and extend the Trinity River Bridge on FM 787 to match ATLAS 14 standards.

- *Action 4.3.2.9:* Widen and improve drainage on FM 2025 at US 59 in Cleveland area.

- *Action 4.3.2.10:* Inspect road quality and upgrade frequently flooded roads including CR 388 (Low Water Bridge Rd.) and FM 1725 in Cleveland area.

- *Action 4.3.2.11:* Widen FM 1010 from two lanes to four lanes and replace Plum grove Bridge on FM 1010 and 3550.

- *Action 4.3.2.12:* Re-route County Road 2331 in Dayton Lakes Estates to area not prone to flooding.

- *Action 4.3.2.13:* Inspect road quality and upgrade frequently flooded roads in South Liberty County including FM 563.

- *Action 4.3.2.14:* Collaborate with TxDOT and H-GAC for the Southeast Texas Truck Parking Plan to develope truck parking areas along IH-69 N and SH 105 near Cleveland and along SH 99 corridor near Dayton using new Category 10 Carbon Reduction funding.

- *Action 4.3.2.15:* Work with TxDOT to get SH 99 Heavy Truck Route Pilot Program extended to the new segment of SH 99 all the way to IH-69 N in Montgomery County.

- *Action 4.3.2.16:* Adopt a County Thoroughfare Plan and connect with Chambers County, Harris County, and Montgomery County for regional coordination of thoroughfare plans.

Objective 4.3.3 Ensure roads are built to high standards from the onset.
Safety issues can arise from poorly-designed and poorly-constructed roads.

- ***Action 4.3.3.1:*** Encourage cities to adopt established road development and safety standards.

- ***Action 4.3.3.2:*** Plan and improve the road network in Plum Grove, keeping in mind the rapid growth of this area.

- ***Action 4.3.3.3:*** Facilitate coordination between TxDOT and growing developments early in the development process.

- ***Action 4.3.3.4:*** Develop County Corridor Agreement Program through TxDOT to identify future transportation corridors within the County.

TxDOT County Corridor Agreement Program

The TxDOT County Corridor Agreement Program provides a platform for counties to work together with the Texas Department of Transportation to identify and plan for future transportation corridors. According to Section 201.619 of the state Transportation Code, "corridors identified in the agreement must be derived from existing transportation plans adopted by the department or commission, the county, or a metropolitan planning organization." Counties seeking to initiate an agreement with TxDOT are encouraged to do so by reaching out to the District CCA Coordinator. Counties can initiate an agreement by completing corridor plans, posting them publicly on the county website, and submitting them, along with other documentation, to TxDOT for an agreement request. Corridor agreements are able to be adjusted by future agreements between TxDOT and the county.

RECOMMENDED
THOROUGHFARE

Figure 4.11 shows the recommended thoroughfare plan for Liberty County, along with the numbered locations of proposed improvement projects. The functional design criteria and overview of these projects are further listed in Table 4.3.

Proposed Improvements *(See Figure 4.11)*

1. SH 321 intersection with SH 105 -Proposing grade separation at the intersection
2. SH 321 - Widening from 2 lanes to 4 lanes
3. SH 105 - Widening from 2 lanes to 4 lanes
4. US 90 - Widening from 2 lanes to 4 lanes
5. FM 1413 - Extension of bypass FM 1413 loop
6. SH 105 - Extension of SH 105 loop
7. FM 787 - Extension of proposed roadway
8. US 90 at UPRR - Grade separation at the intersection
9. SH 146 intersection with US 90 - Additional left turn and right turn lanes at the intersection
10. SH 573 at UPRR -Grade separation at the intersection
11. SH 99 ramp - Widening of ramps from 2 lanes to 4 lanes
12. FM 1010 - Widening and development of bridge connecting Plum Grove
13. FM 563 - Windeing from Hwy 90 south to the Liberty County Line
14. SH 146 - Widening of Hwy 146N from Loop 227 (Main Street) and the Hwy 146 Bypass to North of Hardin
15. FM 1413 - Expand to connect FM 1413 to FM 56316.
16. FM 563 - Upgrade frequently flooded road
17. CR 388 (Low Water Bridge Rd.) and FM 1725 in Cleveland area - Upgrade frequently flooded roads
18. CR 2331- Re-route CR 2331 in Dayton Lakes Estates to an area not prone to flooding
19. Relocate the Trinity River Bridge to a safer area
20. FM 2025 - Widen and improve drainage on FM 2025 at US 59

Figure 4.11. Recommended Projects for Thoroughfare Plan

Legend
- Liberty County
- Airports
- Proposed Roads
- Minor Arterial
- Principle Arterial
- Interstate
- Minor Collector
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Railroads
- Major River
- Cities
- Roads

Flood Plane
- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Regulatory Floodway
- Proposed Pedestrian
- Proposed Bicycle Tourism Trails
- Proposed Improvement
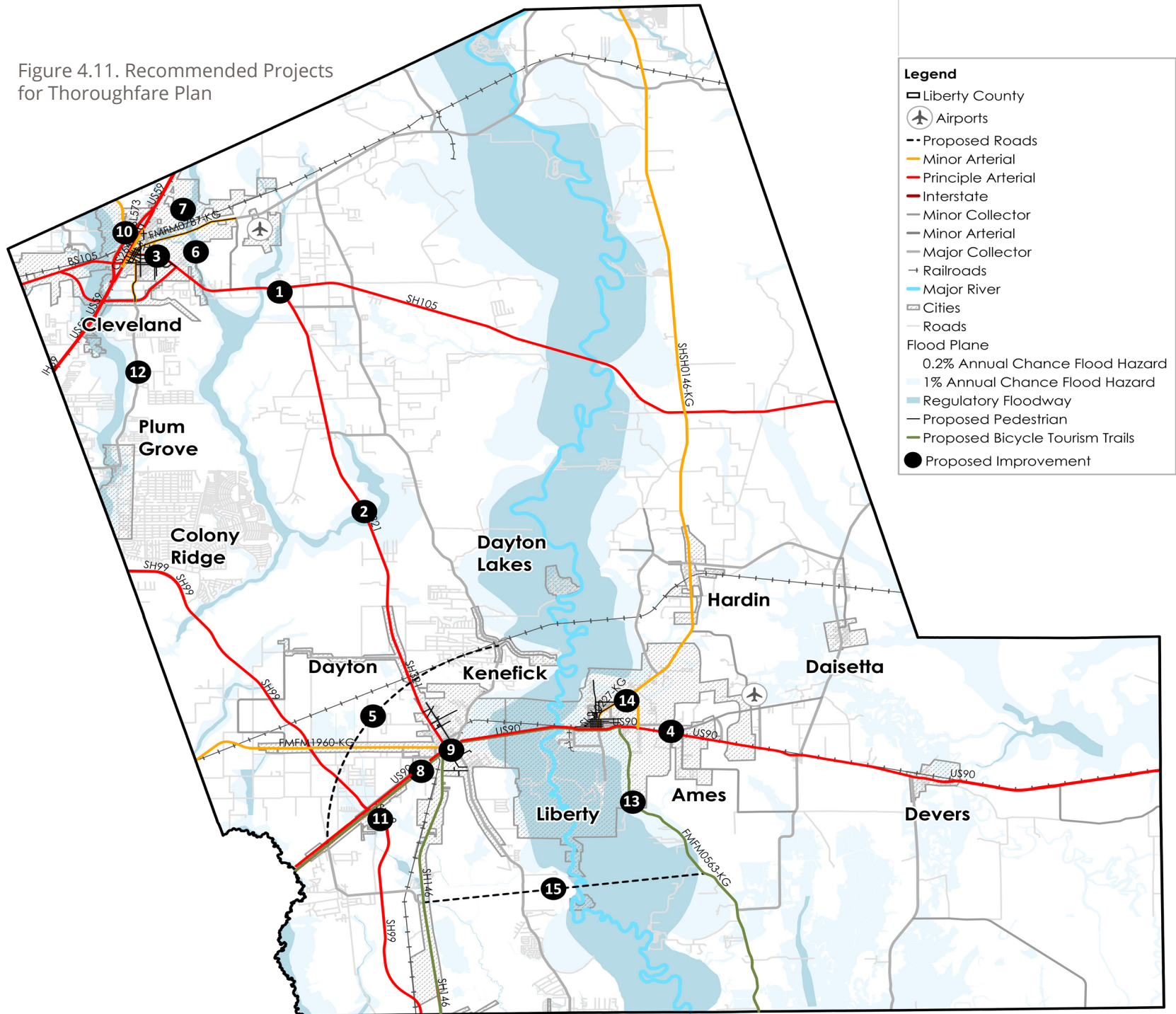
RECOMMENDED
THOROUGHFARE

No.	Highway	From	To	Overview	Functional Classification	No. of lanes	Speed Limit (mph)	Remark
1	SH 321 intersection with SH 105	-	-	Proposing grade separation at the intersection	-	-	-	PR
2	SH 321	US 90	SH 105	Widening from 2 lanes to 4 lanes	Principal Arterial	4	55	SP
3	SH 105	SH 321	FM 573	Widening from 2 lanes to 4 lanes	Principal Arterial	4	50	SP
4	US 90	SH 146	FM 61	Widening from 2 lanes to 4 lanes	Principal Arterial	4	65	UTP
5	FM 1413	US 90	FM 1008	Extension of bypass FM 1413 loop	Major Collector	2	50	SP
6	SH 105	SH 105	FM 787	Extension of SH 105 loop	Principal Arterial	2	65	SP
7	FM 787	FM 787	US 59	Extension of proposed roadway	Principal Arterial	2	65	SP
8	US 90 at UPRR	-	-	Proposing grade separation at the intersection	-	-	-	UTP
9	SH 146 intersection with US 90	-	-	Proposing additional left turn and right turn lanes at the intersection	-	-	-	PR
10	SH 573 at UPRR	-	-	Proposing grade separation at the intersection	-	-	-	PR
11	SH 99 ramp	SH 99	US 90	Interchange Improvements - Widening of ramps from 2 lanes to 4 lanes	Ramp	4	50	PR

Table 4.3. Details on Selected Proposed Improvements Projects in Liberty County

CROSS-SECTIONS
OF PROPOSED ROADS

As most of the major roads in the county merge at the city centers of Cleveland and Dayton, the intersections in these cities are often prone to congestion, which results in problems like traffic delay and higher cost of travel. In Cleveland, the at-grade railway crossing in SH 573 and the intersection connecting SH 321 and SH 105 to the east of Cleveland are recommended to have grade separations for an even distribution of traffic to ensure a smooth flow in all directions.

At the intersection of SH 146 and US 90 close to the City of Dayton, there exists a single left-turn and right-turn lane, with an adjacent two-way left-turn lane to provide access to the establishments along SH 99. At the intersection, only a single turn-lane is operational, which often leads to congestion and queue spillback. To ensure smooth flow of left turning vehicles, it is recommended to construct an additional right turn lane and convert the existing two-way left turn into a single left turn lane.

The existing traffic between Cleveland and Dayton on SH 321 is high in volume, often leading to travel delays. To accommodate the heavy flow of traffic, it is proposed to widen SH 321 between Dayton and Cleveland from a 2-lane highway to a 4-lane highway. Another widening project recommended is SH 105 loop from SH 321 to FM 573 from a 2-lane highway to a 4-lane highway. This would help diverge the traffic flowing east through Cleveland.

Figure 4.12. Existing SH 321

Figure 4.13. Sample illustration of widening of SH 321 from 2 lanes to 4 lanes
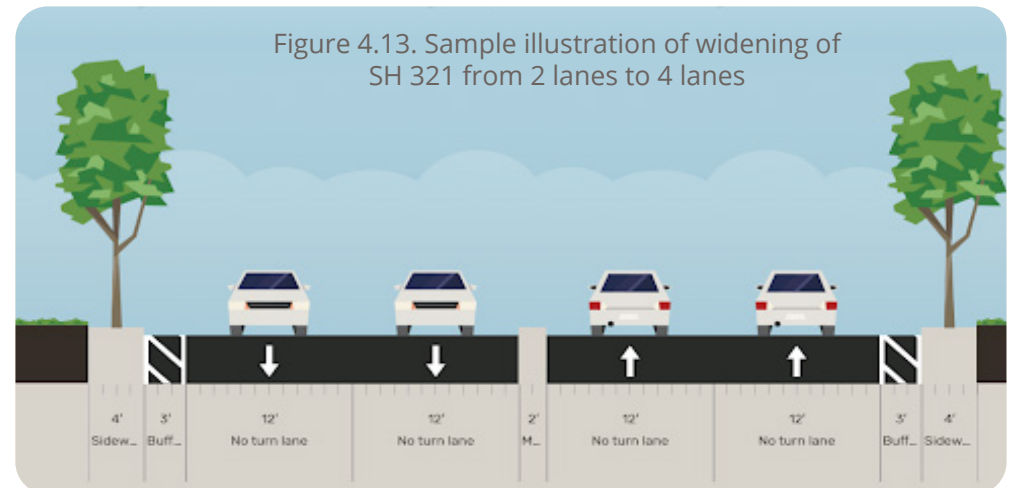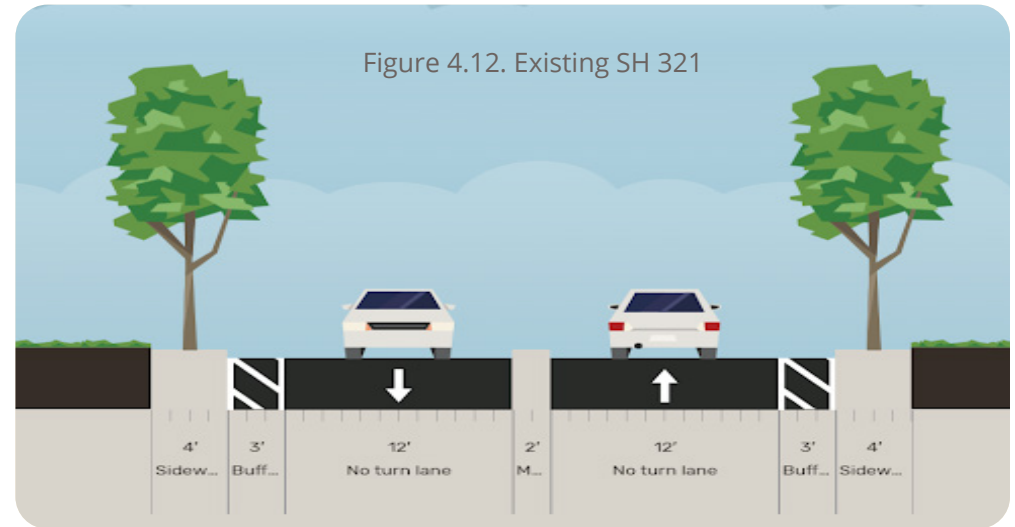
CROSS-SECTIONS
OF PROPOSED ROADS

Along the same lines, US 90, the roadway connecting Dayton and Devers experiences high traffic as it connects major destinations like Houston and George Bush Intercontinental Airport. To accommodate this, another widening is proposed to improve the capacity constraint of US 90 from 2 lanes to 4 lanes. The vehicles traveling along SH 99, take an exit along US 90 to travel toward Dayton. Based on public feedback this exit along SH 99 towards US 90 is a single-lane ramp, which often has a heavy traffic flow causing congestion. To improve this traffic condition and ensure smooth merging, widening this ramp from 2 to 4 lanes is proposed.

To improve the connectivity and traffic circulation in and around the cities of Dayton and Cleveland, some extension and new highway projects are proposed. One such project is to extend the FM 1413 loop from US 90 to FM 1008 connecting the highways US 99 and SH 321. This would improve the circulation of vehicles and help alleviate the major congestion in Dayton. Providing more travel route options around the city minimizes the travel cost for the residents of Keneficks, Mont Belvieu, and vehicles traveling to and from Cleveland and the surrounding counties. Due to the presence of the two railway crossings along US 90, the vehicles along this route often experience bumper-to-bumper traffic. Providing a grade-separated railway crossing at these two locations will help to resolve these congestion issues.

Figure 4.14. Existing intersection of SH 146 and US 90
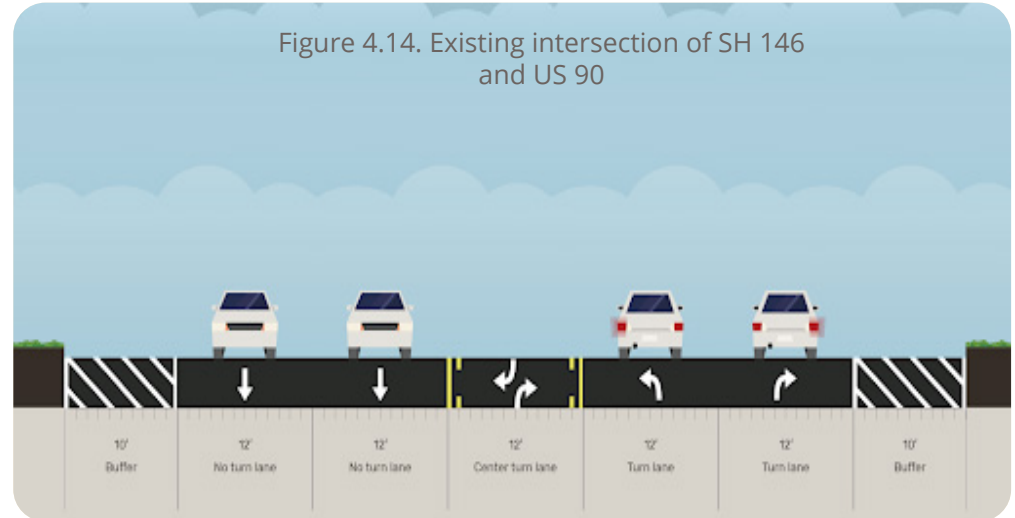
Figure 4.15 Sample illustration of lane configuration along intersection of SH 146 and US 90
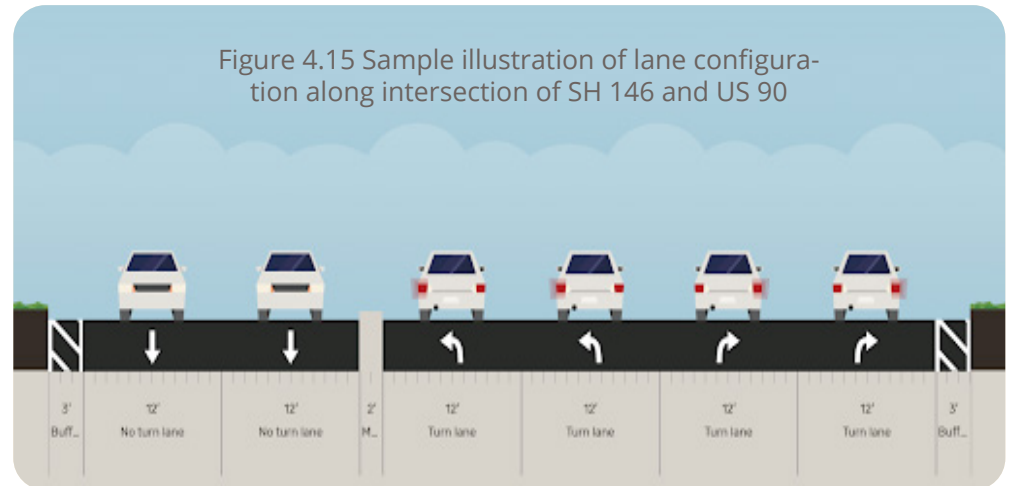
It is proposed to extend the SH 105 loop to FM 787 to deviate the people traveling between the southwest and the east direction of Cleveland who need not travel through the intersection in the city. Doing so would help relieve congestion in the center of the city and also decrease the travel time for vehicles traveling along these directions. Extending the SH 105 loop further from FM 787 to US 59 provides a complete bypass to Cleveland City, which will help the people traveling along SH 105 to directly merge onto US 59 without entering Cleveland and help reduce congestion.

When looking into the design and implementation of plans for each classification of roadway, the right-of-way must be taken into consideration to ensure that all planned facilities are within this distance. This can include pedestrian sidewalks, bicycle facilities, shoulders, parking lanes, medians, etc. The right-of-way standard is influenced by traffic volume requirements, lane use, cost, the extent of ultimate expansion, and land availability.

Figure 4.16. Existing ramp along SH 99 along US 90
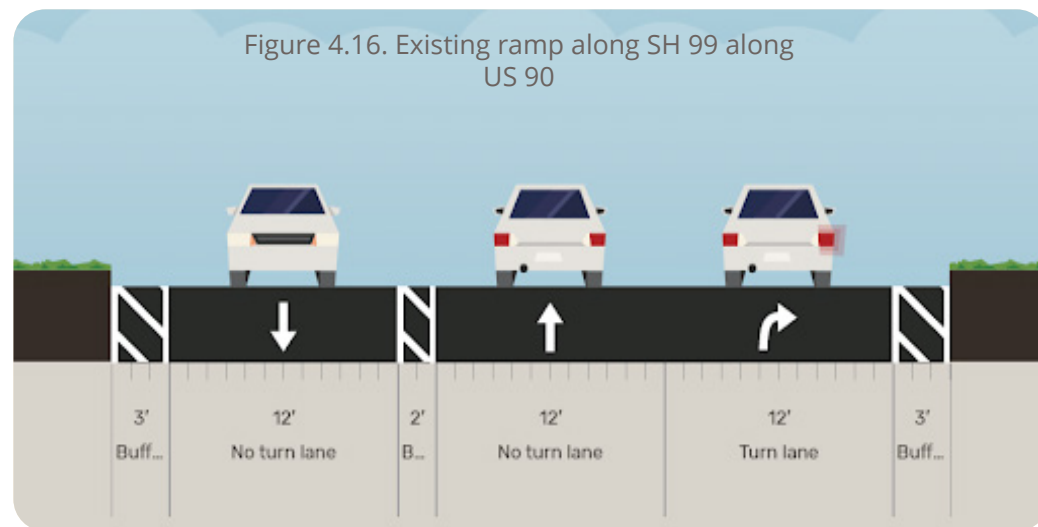
Figure 4.17. Sample illustration of widening of SH 99 ramp along US 90
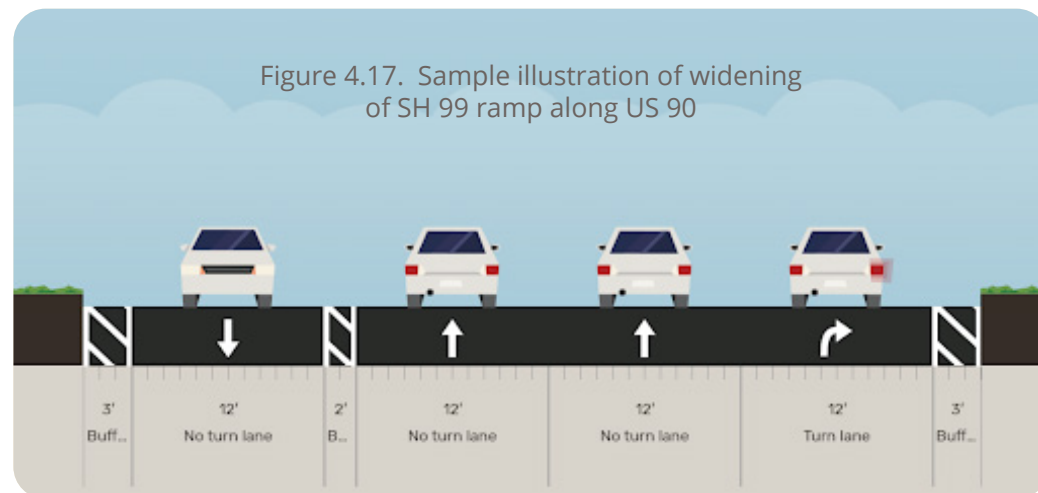
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CHAPTER 5
HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

Housing is a fundamental component of Liberty County's growth and quality of life, playing a critical role in shaping the well-being of its residents and the overall resilience of the community. As the county continues to expand, ensuring equitable access to a variety of affordable, high-quality, and resilient housing options is essential. This chapter explores several key topics this chapter addresses include housing choice, quality, and affordability, particularly in ensuring that the rapid pace of new housing development benefits existing and incoming residents. Of particular concern are impacts on vulnerable populations including low-income households, seniors, and youth. Limiting the proportion of housing stock at risk of natural hazards, especially flooding, is another key priority for the county.

Housing Choice
senior living, multi-family, single-family units, alternative types

Housing Quality
building standards, code enforcement, disaster-proofing

Housing Affordability
supply of affordable housing, rental and owner resources

Resilient Housing Expansion
in-fill, new construction, buyouts

EXISTING CONDITIONS
HOUSING COUNT

Liberty County is experiencing a surge in housing growth. The County's housing age mirrors Texas' housing age, yet a substantial amount is mobile homes. A large majority of households have high-speed internet but, options for providers are limited in several cities. Liberty County housing is cheaper than housing in Greater Houston and Texas; however, it is less affordable now than in previous years.

Dayton, Liberty, and Cleveland have the most housing units with over 3,000 units each. All other cities in Liberty County have less than 500 units each. The smallest city is Dayton Lakes City with about 50 units. 63.4% of Liberty County's housing units are on unincorporated land. Based on Figure 5.1, most of the unincorporated housing is on the west side of the Trinity River and closer to the Houston Urbanized Area[5].
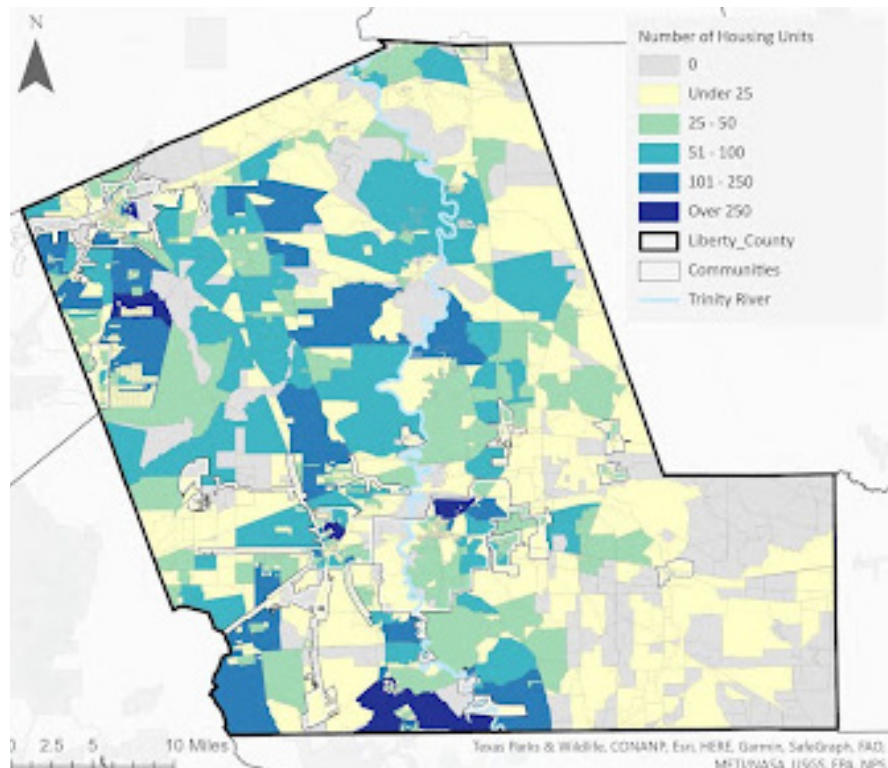
Figure 5.1 2020 Liberty County Housing Units Map
(Source: IPUMS NHGIS)

Table 3.1 Liberty County Housing Unit Count by Place
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020)

Place (Cities and CDPs)	Housing Count
Dayton City	3,434
Liberty City	3,329
Cleveland City	3,075
Ames City	438
Plum Grove City	405
Daisetta City	364
Big Thicket Lake Estates CDP	362
Hardin City	332
Hull CDP	305
Kenefick City	256
Devers City	162
North Cleveland City	96
Dayton Lakes City	49

EXISTING CONDITIONS
HOUSING TYPE & GROWTH

Housing Type

Housing in Liberty County consists mainly of single-family structures. Figure 5.2 compares housing types in Liberty County with Greater Houston and Texas. 61% of the County's housing is single-family units which are similar to the proportion of single-family housing in Greater Houston and Texas. However, Liberty County lacks multi-family housing. Only 8% of the County's housing is multi-family while nearly 30% of Greater Houston's housing and 25% of Texas' housing is multi-family. Although, Liberty County does have cheaper housing in the form of mobile homes. Nearly 29% of Liberty County's housing is mobile homes. This is several times larger than the proportion of Great Houston's and Texas' housing that is mobile homes. The remaining 2% of Liberty County's housing is boats, RVs, and vans that people live in[6].

Housing Growth

From 2000 to 2010, the County gained 2,400 new housing units[1]. Since 2010, the County has gained over 4,400 units to reach a total of 33,182 housing units in 2020[2]. The rate of growth is increasing as well. Housing growth in the 2000s was 9.1%[3]. The growth rate increased in the 2010s to 15.4%. Based on Figure 5.3, housing growth has been concentrated in the last few years. 86% of the last decade's growth occurred between 2015 and 2020[4].

Liberty County

Other 1.9%
Mobile Homes 28.9%
Multi-Family 8%
Single-Family 61.2%

Greater Houston Area

Mobile Homes 4.6%
Multi-Family 29.3%
Single-Family 65.9%
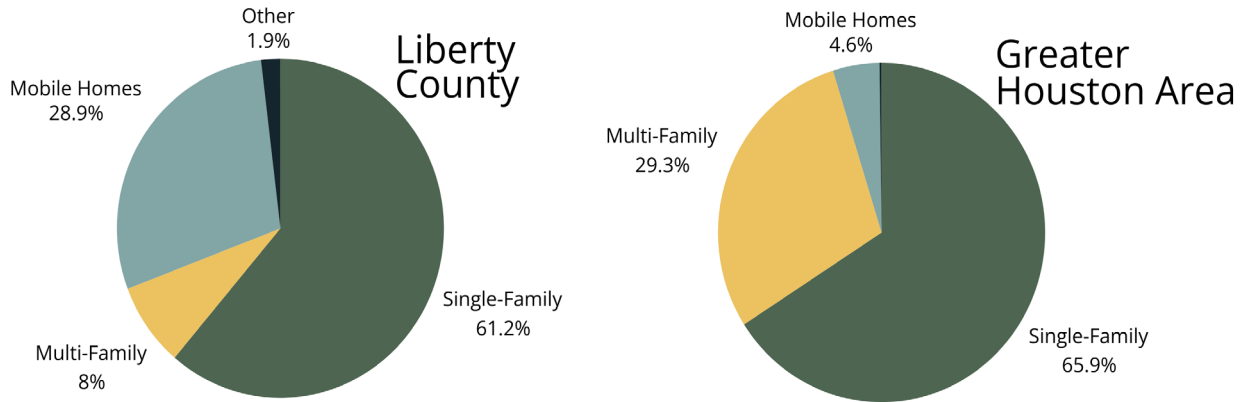
Figure 5.2 Greater Houston, and Liberty County Housing Type (Source: American Community Survey, 2020)
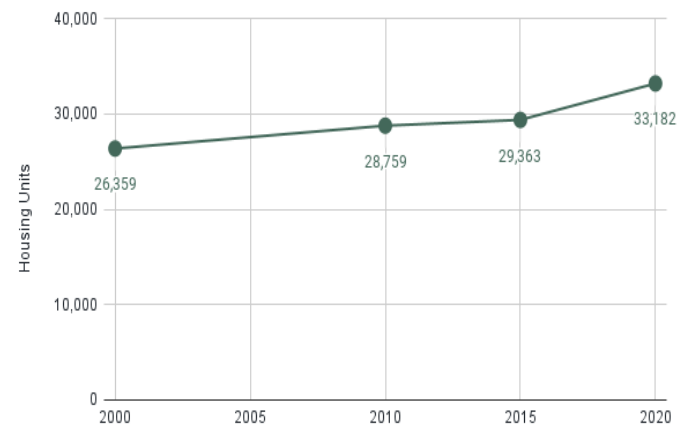
Figure 5.3 Liberty County Housing Units Growth (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 - 2020)

Housing Units

40,000
30,000
20,000
10,000
0

26,359
28,759
29,363
33,182

2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

EXISTING CONDITIONS
OCCUPANCY & VACANCY

Liberty County has a slightly lower percentage of occupied housing than Greater Houston and Texas. Based on Figure 5.4, Greater Houston and Texas have very similar percentages of occupied housing, 91%, and 89% respectively. Liberty County's percentage of occupied housing is slightly lower at 85.6%. As the result, the share of vacant housing in Liberty County (14.4%) is higher than the proportion of vacant housing for Greater Houston and Texas[7].

Liberty County housing is more likely to be occupied by the owners than Greater Houston and Texas. As shown in Figure 5.5, 67% of housing units in Liberty County are owner-occupied. This is about 11% greater than the percentage of owner-occupied units in Greater Houston and Texas. The percentage of renter-occupied housing in Liberty County at 18.7% is about half that of Greater Houston and Texas at 35.6% and 33.6% respectively[8].
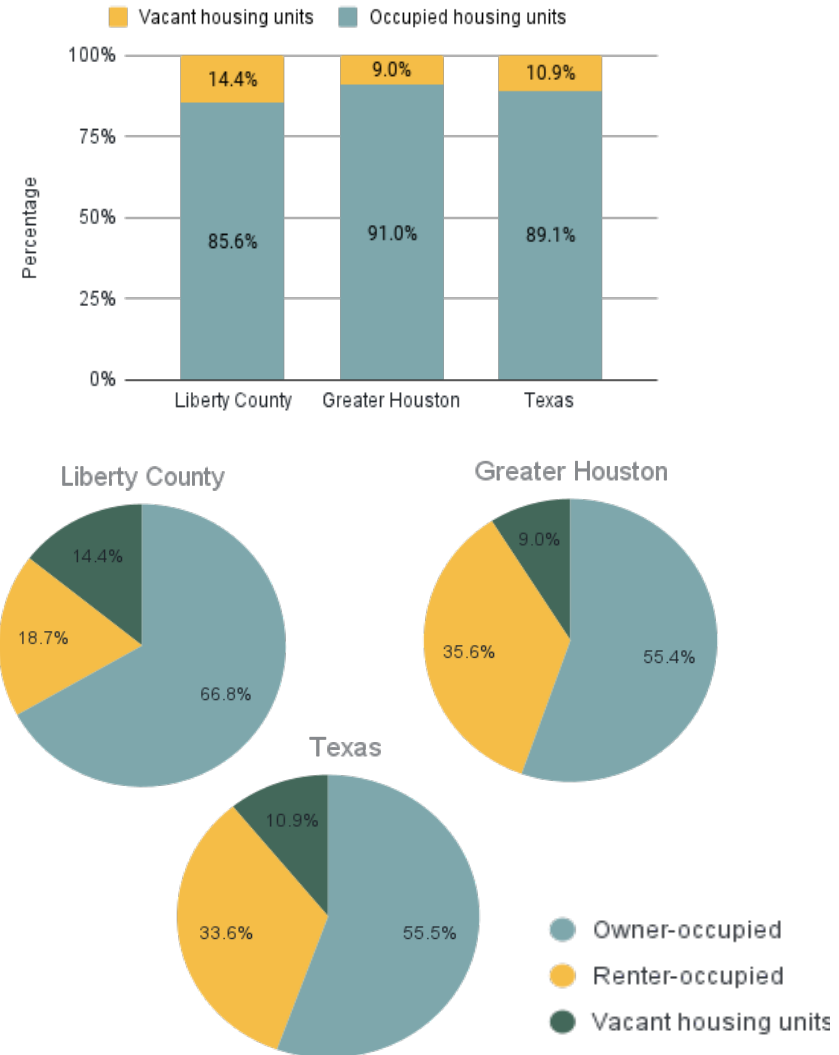
Figure 5.4 & 5.5 Texas, Greater Houston, and Liberty County Housing Occupancy
(Source: American Community Survey, 2020)

EXISTING CONDITIONS
VALUE & COST

Housing Value

In 2020, the median value of owner-occupied units in Liberty County was $115,300. This is about half the median value of owner-occupied units in Greater Houston ($208,100), and it is still substantially less than the median value of Texas' owner-occupied units ($187,200)[11].

The value of owned homes in Liberty County is more concentrated in cheaper price ranges than the value of homes in Greater Houston and Texas. Figure 5.6 shows that when compared to Greater Houston and Texas, Liberty County has the highest percentage of housing units in the unit value ranges that are less than $150,000. In addition, Liberty County has the lowest percentage of housing in all the unit value ranges greater than $150,000 when compared to Greater Houston and Texas[12].

Housing Cost

The largest cost for owners is mortgage payments. In 2020, the median monthly housing cost for households with mortgages was $1,365 which is over three times the median amount paid by households without a mortgage ($428). For renters, the largest cost is gross rent. The median price of rent in 2020 was $857[13].

Monthly rent in Liberty County is cheaper than in Greater Houston and Texas, and the distribution is concentrated towards a lower price range. In 2020, the median rent in Liberty County was $857. This was substantially less than the median rent for Greater Houston ($1,136) and for Texas ($1,082). In Liberty County, 47% of rental units charge between $500 and $999 a month. Based on Figure 5.7, no rental units in Liberty County charge over $2,000 a month while 7.3% of rental units in Greater Houston and 6.0% of rental units in Texas charge over $2,000 a month[14].
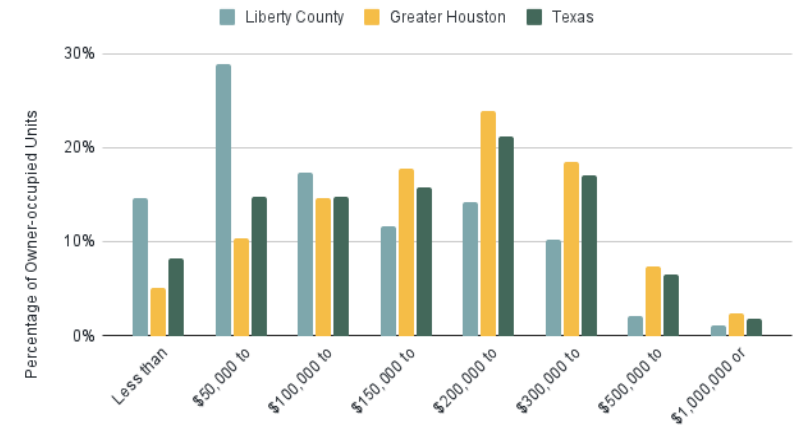
Figure 5.6 Texas, Greater Houston, and Liberty County Value of Owner-occupied Units
(Source: American Community Survey, 2020)
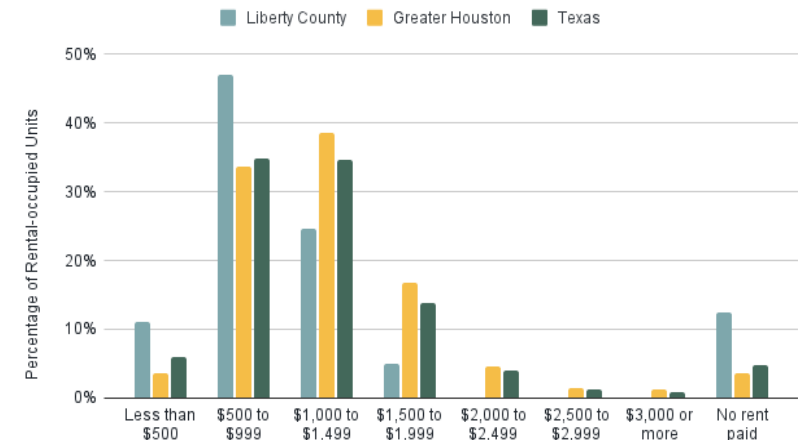
Figure 5.7 Texas, Greater Houston, and Liberty County Monthly Rent Price
(Source: American Community Survey, 2020)

EXISTING CONDITIONS
COST BURDEN

Despite housing being less expensive in Liberty County than in Greater Houston and Texas, it is becoming less affordable for more residents. A household is cost-burdened if 30% or more of its monthly income is spent on housing costs (mortgage, rent, utilities, etc). 19% of Liberty County households were cost-burdened in 2015. By 2020, this had risen to nearly 26%. Homeowners were less likely to be cost-burdened, but over five years the percentage of cost-burdened homeowners increased by about 8%. Renters were more likely to be cost-burdened and saw a 12% increase in the percentage of cost-burdened households. By 2020, the percentage of renter households that were cost burdened was close to half[15].

Figure 5.9 Liberty County Housing Costs as Percentage of Income for Owner-Occupied Units (Source: American Community Survey, 2020)

Figure 5.8 Liberty County Cost Burdened Households by Type (Source: American Community Survey, 2015 and 2020)
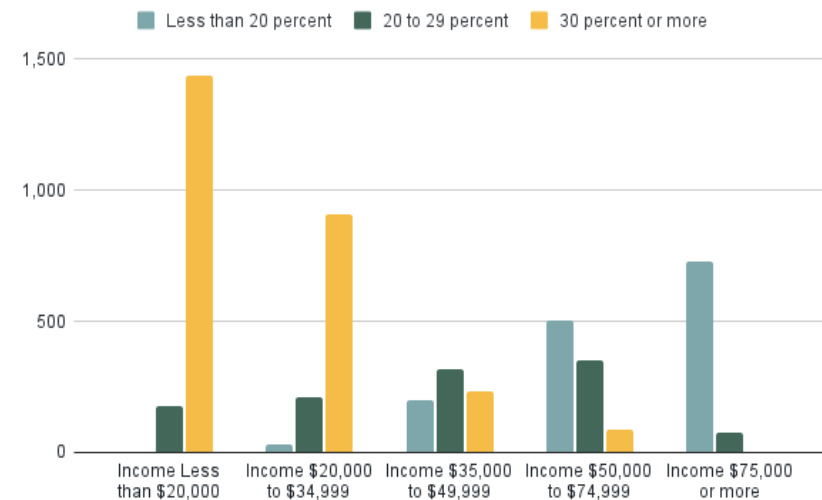
Figure 5.10 Liberty County Housing Costs as Percentage of Income for Renter-occupied Units (Source: American Community Survey, 2020)

PUBLIC
FEEDBACK

Affordable Housing
- There is a lack of affordable housing options, with rising costs since the pandemic making it difficult for local residents to afford homes.
- Concerns about development costs are seen as barriers to both developers and residents
- Newer developments are often high-end, starting at $200k+, leaving a gap in housing for lower-income residents.
- A lack of shelters or transitional housing for the homeless and those in need of temporary support.

Housing Supply and Variety
- There is a need for diverse housing types, including apartments, transitional homes, and smaller, more affordable housing options.
- A lack of new apartment buildings, with no new developments in 25 years, despite apartments being a viable affordable housing option.
- High demand for senior housing and the need for more ADA-compliant facilities.
- Need for more affordable solutions like "cottage" homes, tiny homes, and starter homes.

Infrastructure Strain and Rapid Growth
- The rapid pace of new home development is outpacing the growth of local services and infrastructure, such as schools and roadways.
- A desire to preserve the rural and country lifestyle, and concerns about unchecked growth

Overview of Goals

5.1 Increase the range of housing options

Having adequate housing options is an integral part of successful communities. All people are different and have varying resources to put toward housing. There are many individuals and families who either do not want or cannot afford single-family detached housing. Unfortunately, this is the most common housing type in rural Texas, as it accounts for 61.2% of housing units. This section consists of strategies for addressing housing needs related to housing choice. Opportunities include adding senior housing, multi-housing (i.e. apartments and townhomes), accessory dwelling units, manufactured homes, and public housing.

5.2 Encourage high quality housing

Liberty County should strive to provide high-quality housing to its residents. As the County continues to experience rapid growth, it is imperative that new housing units are built to high development standards to ensure their safety and longevity. In addition, housing units that already exist should be properly maintained. The County can also work with residents to prevent damage from disasters

5.3 Reduce housing cost burden

Reduce the housing cost burden for low income Liberty County residents. This topic must work in tandem with housing quality and housing choice. Affordable housing is defined as rent or mortgage payments that are equivalent to 30% or less of a household's annual income. Currently, housing affordability is a significant issue for renter households making less than $35,000 per year in particular.

5.4 Effectively manage housing growth to ensure resilient

Resilient housing is an important factor for sustainable and productive development patterns. As development continues to spread across the county specifically in unincorporated areas, it is important to make every effort to manage the standards of development in both extraterritorial jurisdictions and in unincorporated areas.

GOAL 5.1: INCREASE THE RANGE
OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Objective 5.1.1 Improve senior living experience and quality of life.

- **Action 5.1.1.1:** Incentivize senior home construction via universal design principles in existing neighborhoods to create accessible, age-mixed communities. Incentives may include waiving permit and development fees.
- **Action 5.1.1.2:** Require/build communal neighborhood amenities for senior housing.
- **Action 5.1.1.3:** Proactively reach out to affordable housing developers to reduce housing cost burden for low income residents of Liberty County, particularly those with an annual income of $35,000 or less.

Objective 5.1.2 Increase supply of multi-family homes.

- **Action 5.1.2.1:** Incentivize new construction, conversion, and upcycle to apartments by removing any regulatory barriers to conversion to middle density housing.
- **Action 5.1.2.2:** Encourage cities to zone for multifamily housing.

Objective 5.1.3 Increase supply of single-family homes.

- **Action 5.1.3.1:** Subsidize upgrades to uninhabitable and/or vacant homes via grants and loans (e.g. Community Development Block Grants and Single Family Housing Repair Grants).
- **Action 5.1.3.2:** Allow sub-lease of ADUs for owner-occupied single-family homes.

Objective 5.1.4 Integrate alternative types of housing.

- **Action 5.1.4.1:** Create more complete neighborhoods of manufactured homes by planning for recreation, retail, educational facilities, public safety and fire, etc.
- **Action 5.1.4.2:** Allow for tiny home construction in designated residential areas.

Senior Homes

Senior housing was identified as a need during 2023 community engagement efforts. Senior housing is typically a multi-unit development that is specifically designed to increase the quality of life for the aging population. To be eligible, individuals must meet an age requirement, which is typically 65 years and older. Our objective is to improve senior living experience and QOL, increase supply of multi-family homes, and integrate alternative types

Multi-family homes

To obtain more multi-family housing developments, Liberty County can target new construction, convert current units, or upcycle apartments. A few potential strategies to attract new construction include:

- Streamlining development approval process: Shortening the development approval process can make Liberty County a more attractive place for developers. Offering a comprehensive review process can reduce the time necessary to approve development plans. This tool can be offered specifically to multi-family housing developers.
- Reducing or waiving development fees: Waiving fees, specifically for multi-family developments, reduces costs for the developer and can attract them to the County.
- Tax abatements or exemptions: Reducing tax requirements can incentivize multi-family housing by exempting taxes for a specific period of time following the development's construction.

Miscellaneous: ADUs, public housing, etc.

There are several housing types that Liberty County can use to increase housing choice. Options such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs), mobile homes, and public housing can provide residents with options other than single-family units. ADUs, also called granny flats, in-law suites, or guest houses, are small, independent dwelling units located on the same lot as a single-family home. These units can be stand-alone structures like tiny homes or additions to existing homes. Whatever the style, ADUs have the potential for increasing housing affordability and expanding the range of housing options for a community. By selling or renting an ADU separately from the primary residence, the owner can have a steady source of income while providing an affordable home to a tenant. They can also provide an opportunity for older residents to "age in place" and live on the same property as their families in their own space.

GOAL 5.2: IMPROVE HOUSING
QUALITY

Objective 5.2.1 Improve enforcement of building standards to ensure safe and healthy living conditions.

Objective 5.2.2 Reduce damage from disasters.

- **Action 5.2.1.1:** Broaden the range of responders that can carry out inspections.
- **Action 5.2.1.2:** Publish homeowner guide on the harms of living in substandard units and methods to improve and repair a home.
- **Action 5.2.1.3:** Create higher development standards specifically regarding updated building codes and subdivision regulations.
- **Action 5.2.1.4:** Enforce building codes to ensure new construction meets minimum standards for safety and habitability.

- **Action 5.2.2.1:** Require disaster-proofing (structural reinforcement, rapid rebuild, etc.) for buildings within the 100 year floodplain.
- **Action 5.2.2.2**: Subsidize upgrades to occupied housing units.
- **Action 5.2.2.3:** Increase education & outreach of disaster recovery process by working with County Long Term Recovery Group.

Quality

Public engagement efforts revealed major concerns about the decreasing quality of housing options available to Liberty County residents. To address this issue, County officials should focus on both reform and enforcement of the Liberty County Subdivision Ordinance construction standards. Proper enforcement of development standards includes regular inspections as well as increased presence of enforcement agents in the community. The number of field inspectors should be increased from 3 to 6 to ensure each agent has the capacity to conduct thorough inspections. Additionally, other existing County officials can be trained to perform inspections, such as police and fire officers, to expand the pool of inspectors. Performing random inspections is a way of increasing compliance at a low cost. Local and county law enforcement, fire departments, and health departments are important stakeholders. Updates to the County Subdivision and Development Regulations should include changes to the minimum lot setbacks and developments to be served by on-site sewage facilities.

Reduce Damage from Disasters

Liberty County should also focus on decreasing housing damage due to disasters including flooding, wildfires, hurricanes, and tropical storms. A significant portion of Liberty County is located in the floodplain. The 2016 plan outlined the critical topic of vulnerable housing in hazard prone areas and highlighted disaster relief programs such as RAPIDO and government hazard relief funding through the Liberty County Disaster Recovery Housing Guidelines. These two programs should be an urgent priority for county officials in order to mitigate housing damage.

The county should increase its educational awareness to residents of the availability of both Texas Homeowner assistance programs and federal CDBG recovery funding opportunities in case of loss of property due to hazards. Development standards should be amended to include guidelines for building resilient housing.

Some techniques for hazard mitigation include:
- Improved drainage to decrease damage from flooding and erosion
- Incorporating xeriscaping and pervious cover in landscape design to decrease vulnerability to drought
- Elevating and anchoring manufactured homes
- Relocating utilities and water heaters above base flood elevation

The County should consider adopting ASCE/SEI 24-14 - Flood Resistant Design and Construction, a standard which specifies minimum requirements for construction of buildings in flood-prone areas[29].

GOAL 5.3: REDUCE HOUSING COST
BURDEN FOR LOW INCOME RESIDENTS

Objective 5.3.1 Increase supply of affordable housing.

- **Action 5.3.1.1:** Advertise federal and state affordable housing programs to developers.
- **Action 5.3.1.2:** Review and update regulatory barriers to affordable housing construction while maintaining regulations that pertain to safety and public health.
- **Action 5.3.1.3:** Provide additional county incentives to creation of affordable units.

Objective 5.3.2 Empower Liberty County residents to make informed housing purchase decisions and become educated homeowners through education and outreach.

- **Action 5.3.2.1:** Publish guide on resources and pathways to homeownership.
- **Action 5.3.2.2:** Establish community land trusts to assist in purchasing homes.
- **Action 5.3.2.3:** Create a first-time homebuyers program focusing on young teachers, police officers, other workforce, and young families.

Objective 5.3.3 Inform and assist residents seeking to secure quality affordable rental housing.

- **Action 5.3.3.1:** Create a countywide security deposit assistance program.
- **Action 5.3.3.2:** Publish guide on rental assistance programs.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing tends to fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Small size: 1200 square feet or less for a 3 bedroom dwelling unit, to as small as 500 square feet for one bedroom or studio dwelling units. Tiny homes are typically considered to be 600 square feet or less.
- **Inexpensive materials:** constructing housing with inexpensive materials can lead to affordable dwelling units, but presents concerns with maintenance costs and safety, especially during natural hazard events.
- **Old structures:** As dwelling units age, they may become more affordable relative to newer construction.
- **Subsidized:** Housing can be made affordable through various subsidy programs that reduce the cost of a dwelling unit to below market rates through both supply side and demand side subsidies. Common subsidy types include Section 8 vouchers, Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) housing projects, community land trusts, and public housing units.

There are three public housing authorities in Liberty County. The Liberty County Housing Authority serves the entire County and participates in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. Cleveland City and Dayton City are also served by their own public housing authorities, the Housing Authority of Cleveland, and the Housing Authority of the City of Dayton. Neither authority participates in the HCV program, but they both participate in the Public Housing program[18].

The Housing Authority of the City of Dayton operates the only public housing project in Liberty County. Fortunately, there are 13 other apartment complexes in the County that provide affordable units. Most of these are in Cleveland City and Dayton City, though a couple are located in Liberty City. These complexes receive funding from several government programs in order to provide affordable housing. These programs include the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance, Section

202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, Section 515 Rural Rental Housing, Section 521 USDA Rental Assistance, and Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing[25].

Senior Homes Case Study: *Jefferson, North Carolina. A rural town of 1,500 (2021), has successfully implemented affordable senior housing by revitalizing an old community asset[20]. The town repurposed an old hospital that was built in the New Deal era; it now holds 46 units for low-income seniors ages 62 and up. It is also available to disabled individuals who are ages 45 and up. This infill development has provided the community's elders a new sense of community, security, and independence. It encourages social interactions, hosts events, and increases the quality of life of its residents. This project was financed by partnering with Red Stone Equity, a national company that lends money for low-income housing projects in return for tax credits and interest. The project also received money from several deferred loans including one from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati's Affordable Housing Program[21]. Liberty County can mimic this project by obtaining loans and grants from public or private entities. The implementation of affordable senior housing would mitigate the issues of seniors losing their independence, feeling lonely, and lacking proper social lives.*

Housing Affordability

Another key consideration from the 2016 Strategic Plan that continues to be relevant is the need to reduce the housing cost burden for low income Liberty County residents. This topic must work in tandem with housing quality and housing choice. Residents participating in focus groups affirmed the need to focus on housing affordability, noting the rapid increase in housing prices since the COVID-19 pandemic combined with interest rate increases in 2022 and 2023, as well as the prevalence of older homes that are often affordable but in need of maintenance. In addition, residents highlighted the opportunity for increased affordable housing due to Liberty County's abundance of inexpensive land and the potential of empowering low to moderate income residents through home-buyer assistance and education programs.

One area of focus for Liberty County should be providing rehabilitation programs and grants for existing housing for qualified homeowners, such as low-income and/or elderly populations. In addition, the County should partner with cities to support housing repair programs. Another strategy the County should pursue is to increase incentives and reduce regulatory barriers to affordable housing construction. This would include leveraging publicly owned land to incentivize desired housing types by giving it to developers willing to build affordable housing or selling it at a steeply discounted price. Expedited permitting for housing that complies with the subdivision ordinance may serve as an additional incentive to developers. Finally, amending the subdivision ordinance to reduce artificial barriers to the market providing smaller, more affordable dwelling units through reduced minimum lot sizes or setbacks will enable a greater number of small and affordable units to be built.

Finally, focusing on outreach and education can help lift Liberty County residents who are on the verge of homeownership and assist those who live in substandard housing. Strategies in pursuit of this goal include the County running a homebuyer education program, publishing homeowner maintenance guides, and facilitating emergency preparedness planning, particularly for residents who live in flood-prone areas. Key to this strategy is connecting residents with local resources to improve their housing situation.

GOAL 5.4: MANAGE HOUSING
GROWTH TO ENSURE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Objective 5.4.1 Increase density in and around urban areas.

- **Action 5.4.1.1:** Partner with cities and developers on in-fill opportunities.

- **Action 5.4.1.2:** Encourage cities to work with developers to encourage construction in areas with existing infrastructure capacity, such as an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

- **Action 5.4.1.3:** Provide additional county incentives to creation of affordable units.

Objective 5.4.2 Direct/steer new construction to safe areas.

- **Action 5.4.2.1:** Provide financial and regulatory incentives for building in safe areas.

- **Action 5.4.2.2:** Expand the buyout program for repetitively flooding areas.

Growth Priority - Working with the cities

To create sustainable development patterns, housing growth should be incentivized within incorporated areas of Liberty County. Housing located within an existing ETJ will align with existing infrastructure, school districts, and vital services such as fire, police, and healthcare. One way to incentivize this urban growth is through infill strategies. Vacant or underperforming parcels could be incentivized for redevelopment through reuse strategies or given incentives from a city such as density bonuses, lot coverage, or parking reductions. Many of these available incentives would require a review and possible amendment to a city's development regulations. Additionally, the County can help influence urban infill by coordinating with cities to create land banks and through the acquisition of delinquent or vacant parcels. Additiotionally, the county should partner with cities to assess publicly owned land that is not being utilized to the highest level of service and incentivize residential infill development.

New state laws and de-annexation from city ETJs (extraterritorial jurisdictions) are allowing developments to bypass city restrictions, but there are concerns about long-term planning and governance in these areas.

HOUSING
EXPANSION

Density is an important factor for sustainable and productive development patterns. As development continues to spread across the county specifically in unincorporated areas, it is important to make every effort to manage the standards of development in both extraterritorial jurisdictions and in unincorporated areas. To manage sprawl in unincorporated areas the county should work closely with cities and municipalities to encourage and consolidate growth within their respective ETJs. To focus growth within the ETJ, amendments to a cities unified development code could encourage and allow higher density and enable more flexible development standards. Together, these strategies could incentivize and direct housing development towards urban areas as opposed to sprawling rural growth.

In unincorporated areas the county should work with developers and review their subdivision ordinances to encourage conservation development patterns such as cluster housing. Conservation development promotes the preservation of open space, natural lands, and farmland in the organization of a development. Integrated into the open space, homes are clustered together creating pockets of developed areas. The county should look to incentivize developments over 300 acres with density and minimum lot size bonuses if the preservation of land and dedication of open space equals 30% of overall development area.

Unmanaged Growth

Urban Center

Managed and connected nodes

Urban Center
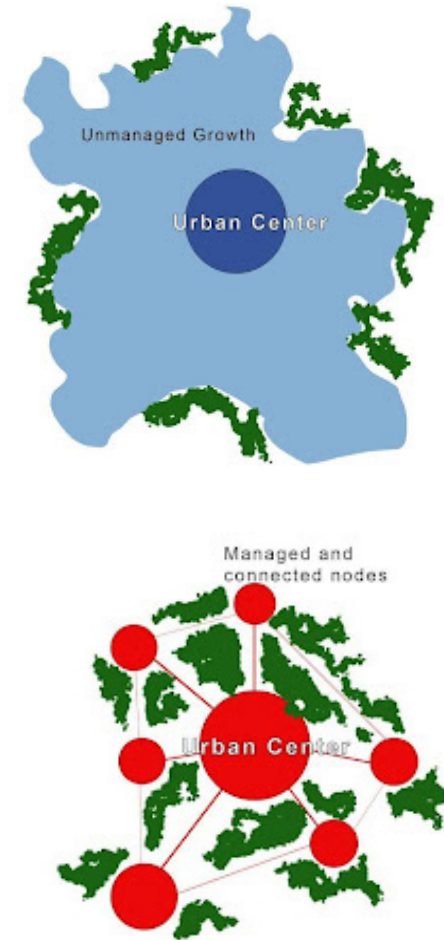
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CHAPTER 6
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Liberty County has a wealth of untapped resources in its labor force, market, and land, and opportunities to expand industries, commercial activities, and education levels. The county should seek industrial development through expansion of the warehousing, high manufacturing, freight transportation, and agrotourism industries. To provide for increased commercial development, the county should encourage the development of vibrant downtown areas with local businesses. Finally, to capitalize on its local workforce, the county should provide increased job training opportunities for adults and students, expanding opportunities for entrepreneurship.

QUICK LOOK

CHAPTER 6

Economic Diversification
Industrial development, freight hub, tourism

Commercial Growth
Business support, retail growth

Workforce Development
Education, job training, entrepreneurship

EXISTING CONDITIONS
INDUSTRY SECTOR

As of 2020, there were 29,632 jobs in Liberty County. This represents an increase of 4,100 jobs or 16.1% since 2010. This is about halfway between the national growth in jobs (10.3%) and the state growth in jobs (20.3%)[1]. Per capita income also greatly increased from $29,296 in 2010 to $40,904 in 2020[2].

The largest economic sectors in Liberty County are Public Administration, Construction, and Retail Trade. Construction was also the fastest growing sector in the past decade. The fastest shrinking industries are the Retail Trade sector and the Health Care and Social Assistance sector. The Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting sector is the most specialized, and the Utility sector has the highest economic base multiplier. A large number of people commute into and out of Liberty County for work, particularly in the southwest direction towards Houston. Jobs in Liberty County are most concentrated in the three largest cities: Cleveland City, Dayton City, and Liberty City.

Employment Share by Industry Sector
The largest industries by employment
- Public Administration - 18.0% of jobs
- Construction - 13.4% of jobs
- Retail Trade - 11.1% of jobs[3]

Location Quotient Analysis
The location quotient (LQ) states the level of industry specialization in Liberty County by comparing employment share with Texas as the benchmark region. An industry with an LQ greater than 1.0 creates more goods and services than what is locally demanded and exports excess supply. These industries are considered specialized by the public and called basic in economic analysis. An industry with an LQ of less than 1.0 creates fewer goods and services and must import to meet local demands. These industries are called non-basic. An industry LQ equal to 1.0 creates enough goods and services to meet local demand.

There have been some changes in industry specialization since the 2015. The Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting sector continues to be the most specialized industry in Liberty County. By 2020, the Utility sector has become a new basic industry. However, the Transportation and Warehousing sector and Manufacturing sector lost their status as a basic industry.

Specialized industries
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting sector with an LQ of 2.45
- Construction with an LQ of 1.93
- Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction with an LQ of 1.53
- Public Administration with an LQ of 1.48

Economic Base Multiplier Analysis

The economic base multiplier approximates how many additional jobs are created by basic jobs. Basic jobs are those creating goods and services to be exported out of Liberty County. Only basic industries have basic jobs. Basic jobs create additional jobs by bringing earnings from exported goods and services into the local economy. This increases local demand for goods and services, and jobs are created to meet the increased demand. Overall, Liberty County has an economic base multiplier of 5.912. This means that every basic job creates almost six additional jobs. Seven industries in Liberty County have basic employment. The Utility sector has the highest multiplier with nearly seven additional jobs for every basic job even though it has one of the smallest job shares. Public Administration, the largest sector by employment, has a multiplier of three. The Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting sector has the lowest multiplier at about 1.7.

Table 6.1 Liberty County Economic Base Multiplier by Industry Sector
(Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020)

NAICS Code	Industry Sector	Economic Base Multiplier
22	Utilities	6.972
44-45	Retail Trade	6.125
81	Other Services	5.815
92	Public Administration	3.070
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	2.865
23	Construction	2.077
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1.689
	Overall	5.912

EXISTING CONDITIONS
ECONOMIC GROWTH

Several factors influence growth in local employment. Shift share analysis shows how much of the change in employment can be attributed to state employment growth, county employment growth, and the proportional mix of industries in the county. Overall, Liberty County gained 4,100 jobs from 2010-2020. Texas employment growth should account for over 4,700 jobs in Liberty County. However, the county did not grow as fast as the state. Likewise, the mix of industries in Liberty County also results in about 600 fewer jobs.

The fastest-growing industry in Liberty County from 2010-2020 was Construction. The next fastest-growing was Public Administration, with an increase of 525 jobs. Other fast-growing industries are Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, Transportation and Warehousing, and Other Services sectors.

Retail Trade is the fastest-shrinking industry from 2010-2020; it lost over 300 jobs. Another fast-shrinking industry is Health Care and Social Assistance, which lost over 200 jobs. This may be due to at least one hospital closing down and another changing ownership[6]. The most stable industries are the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction sectors and the Real Estate and Rental and Leasing sectors.
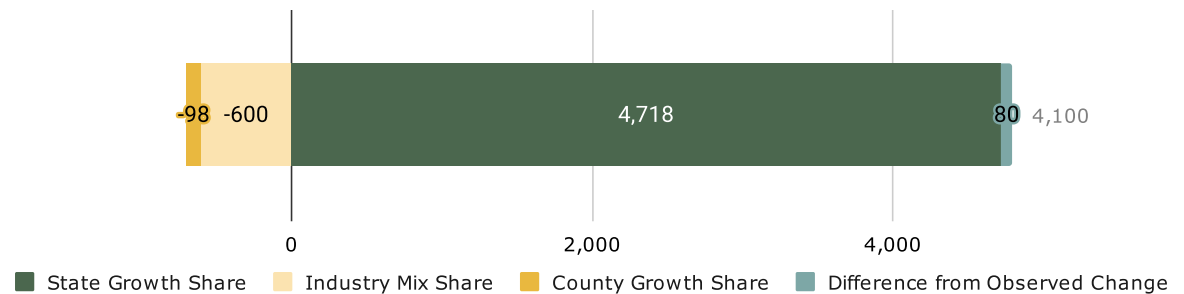
Figure 6.1 Liberty County Total Employment Change from 2010-2020
(Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis)

Legend: State Growth Share | Industry Mix Share | County Growth Share | Difference from Observed Change

Values: -98, -600, 4,718, 80, 4,100
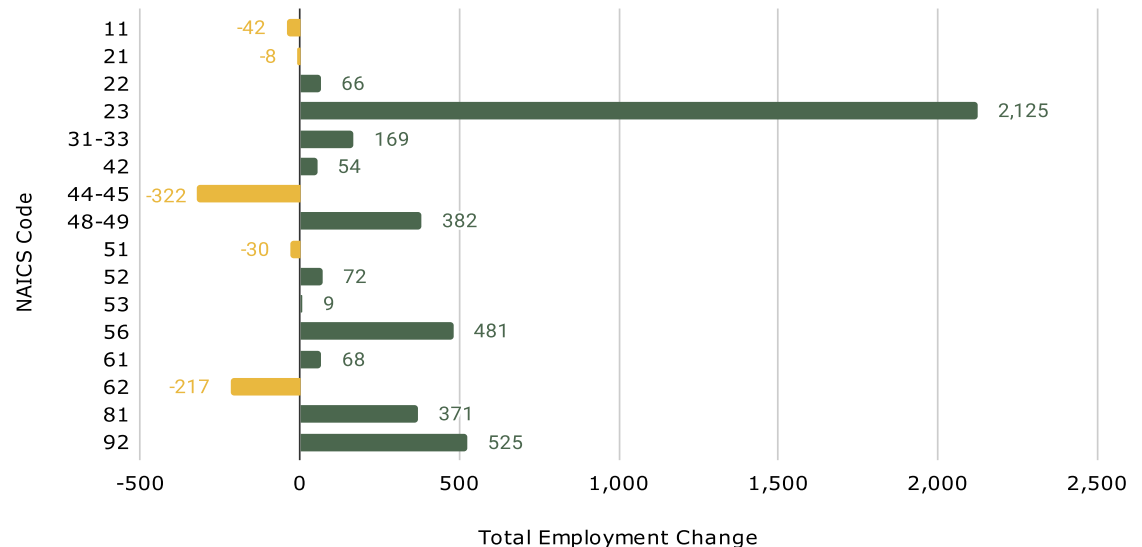
Figure 6.2 Liberty County Total Employment Change by Industry Sector
(Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2010-2020)

NAICS Code values (Total Employment Change):
- 11: -42
- 21: -8
- 22: 66
- 23: 2,125
- 31-33: 169
- 42: 54
- 44-45: -322
- 48-49: 382
- 51: -30
- 52: 72
- 53: 9
- 56: 481
- 61: 68
- 62: -217
- 81: 371
- 92: 525

EXISTING CONDITIONS
JOB DENSITY

The largest employers in Liberty County with over 250 employees each are the Henley State Jail, Plane State Jail, Texas Criminal Justice Department, and the Walmart supercenters in Liberty City and Cleveland City[7].

Employment in Liberty County is concentrated in the three most populous cities: Cleveland City, Dayton City, and Liberty City. Figure 6.3 visualizes job density per square mile. The highest job density with over 1,000 jobs per sq mile is found in Cleveland City and a small amount in Liberty City. There are areas along Texas Highway 321 where job density reaches 250 jobs per sq mile, particularly south of Dayton City. Job density at the intersection of Texas Highway 105 and North Highway 146 also exceeds 15 jobs per sq mile. The only places with a job density of less than 15 jobs per sq mile are Big Thicket Lake Estates, Dayton Lakes, and Plum Grove City[8].

A large number of workers are commuting into and out of Liberty County for employment. According to Census On the Map, about 8,450 workers are employed in Liberty County but live elsewhere; a little over 3,600 workers work and live in the County, and over 25,387 workers live in Liberty County but are employed elsewhere[9].
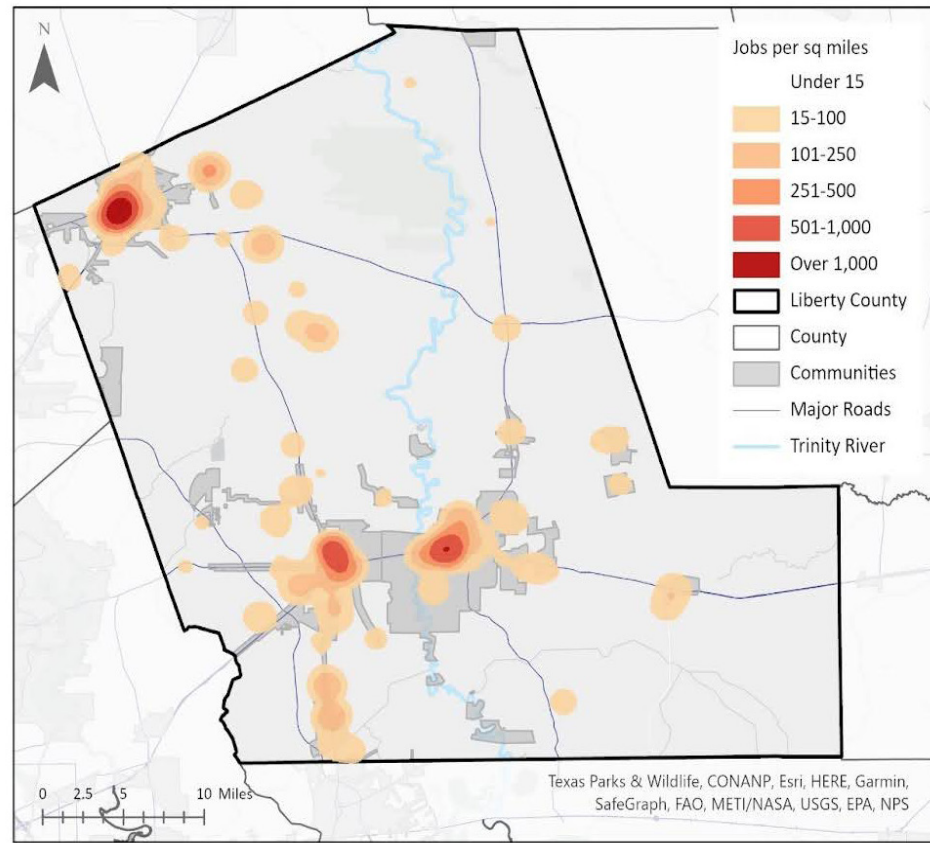
Figure 6.3 Liberty County Job Density Map

EXISTING CONDITIONS
LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

There are several local organizations involved with economic development. There are three local community development corporations: Cleveland Economic Development Corporation, Dayton Community Development Corporation, and Liberty Community Development Corporation. There are two local chambers of commerce: Dayton Chamber of Commerce, and Greater Cleveland Chamber of Commerce. The Liberty County Chamber of Commerce was closed in May 2022. Regional organizations include the Houston-Galveston Area Local Development Corporation.

Liberty County, along with Chamber County, make up Foreign Trade Zone 171. Companies can perform a number of activities such as importing, assembling, packaging, storing, and exporting goods duty-free within the zone. This promotes international competitiveness by reducing tax costs and streamlining company processes[17].

Local plans concerned with economic development include the Dayton Comprehensive Plan, Dayton Downtown Revitalization Plan, Liberty Comprehensive Plan. Regional Plans include the Our Great Region 2040 Plan by the Houston-Galveston Area Council.

Liberty Community Development Corporation

Dayton Community Development Corporation

Cleveland Economic Development Corporation

The HGAC "Our Great Region 2040" plan promotes economic diversification and a robust regional economy that supports a high quality of life.

The economic development goals for the region are:
- Diverse economy and skilled workforce that support businesses, innovation, and entrepreneurship
- Access to job opportunities that support a good quality of life and financial stability.
- Transportation infrastructure promotes effective goods movement and is well-connected to other global destinations.
- Embrace rich multicultural, historical, and natural assets
- Resilient and adaptive to economic downturns and environmental or natural disasters.
- Residents have access to education and training opportunities to allow them to realize their full potential.
- Choices for individuals and for local communities to fulfill their needs.

PUBLIC
FEEDBACK

Economic Development and Job Creation:
The need for higher-paying jobs within Liberty County was a significant concern for many residents. They emphasized the importance of attracting industries and businesses that offer competitive wages and contribute to the local economy. Alongside job creation, there is a strong demand for education and training programs that equip the workforce with the skills needed to support these industries.

Education and Local Workforce Development:
Residents are passionate about building and training the local community to meet the demands of growth, rather than relying on workers from outside the area. There is strong support for creating training programs in partnership with local colleges and organizations like Texas Parks and Wildlife, as well as offering courses tailored to the hospitality industry and other growing sectors.

Recreational Facilities and Community Amenities:
Many community members highlighted the need for more parks, walking paths, and recreational facilities that cater to all ages. They believe that enhancing these amenities will not only improve the quality of life for current residents but also attract visitors and potential new residents to Liberty County. Suggestions include developing a community center with activities for young people, improving access to natural features like the Trinity River Wildlife Refuge, and revitalizing historical sites to boost tourism.

Overview of Goals

6.1 Increase employment opportunities

This section provides recommendations to improve Liberty County's industrial sector. The proposed strategies aim to strengthen local warehousing, position the county as a regional freight hub, and support advanced manufacturing. These recommendations are based on current industry trends and local needs, focusing on creating high-quality jobs for the county's workforce. Liberty County can build a resilient and prosperous industrial landscape by addressing infrastructure needs and promoting collaboration.

6.2 Support existing economic assets

This goal presents plans for commercial areas with more shops, restaurants, inns, recreational facilities, and accessibility amenities to boost density and consumption/spending. This section provides recommendations to boost commerce in Liberty County. The goal is to support community service needs and increase local spending by providing more retail, food, entertainment options and improving accessibility. Stakeholders expressed that Liberty County needs more entertainment opportunities or attractions that are appealing to young people. Representatives pointed to their community's limited commercial tax base and lack of funding for public infrastructure and utilities.

6.3 Establish programs to support a competitive workforce

This section details strategies to enhance workforce skills in Liberty County. The focus is on delivering accessible job training, encouraging entrepreneurship, and cultivating young business leaders. Partnering with local institutions like Lee College and Lone Star College, the plan includes offering specialized certifications and apprenticeships in high-demand sectors. The goal is to create a flexible, skilled workforce ready to navigate the evolving economic environment.

GOAL 6.1: INCREASE EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES

Objective 6.1.1 Create a business-friendly environment that attracts industries (warehousing and manufacturing).

- **Action 6.1.1.1:** Prioritize infrastructure spending on power and electricity in industrial districts.
- **Action 6.1.1.2:** Advertise power and rail infrastructure, land, and untapped labor market.
- **Action 6.1.1.3:** Establish a county EDC and hire and deputize new ED director to develop a plan for manufacturing and economic development.
- **Action 6.1.1.4:** Connect with small businesses specializing in advanced manufacturing to see how the county can support.
- **Action 6.1.1.5:** Create a guidance and regulations for new businesses to make sure they align with community's vision and are environmentally sound in their business practices.

INDUSTRIES

Bringing in warehouses (low quality but accessible jobs) and advanced manufacturing (high-paying, secure, skilled, advanceable jobs)
With a large blue collar workforce and the need for local jobs, Liberty County should develop local warehousing jobs to capture a greater portion of its local workforce that currently commutes outside of the county. These jobs may be particularly suited to meet the needs of workers seeking temporary employment as they pursue adult education and vocational training opportunities.

To provide Liberty County residents with high paying, secure jobs that utilize skilled labor and provide opportunities for advancement, the city should attract and develop an advanced manufacturing industry. This will also allow Liberty County to be locally competitive, incentivizing local workers to remain within the county rather than having to seek work elsewhere.

Economic Development Tools for Counties in Texas

- Tax Abatements (Chapter 312 of the Texas Tax Code): Agreements with property owners to abate (reduce or eliminate) property taxes for a certain period in exchange for economic development activities, such as creating jobs or making significant capital investments.

- Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones: TIRZs create a mechanism for counties to reinvest tax increments (the increase in property taxes from new development) back into the area for infrastructure improvements. TIRZ uses the increase in property values to fund specific needs within the zone.

- Industrial Revenue Bonds (Chapter 501 of the Texas Local Government Code): Through Industrial Revenue Bonds, counties can help finance facilities for private companies, which might be exempt from property taxes. In some cases, the county could negotiate an arrangement as part of the bond issuance, where the company makes payments to the county in lieu of the taxes that would otherwise be due.

- Economic Development Agreements: Counties can engage in broader economic development agreements under Chapter 380 or 381 of the Texas Local Government Code, which can include various incentives like grants, loans, or infrastructure improvements in return for the development of a property. Sometimes, these agreements include contributions by the developer to the county to offset the cost of services.

- Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) and Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs): These districts can levy assessments or fees on properties within their boundaries to fund public improvements. Payments are made by property owners (often including tax-exempt entities) to fund services or infrastructure that benefit them.

- Negotiated Agreements with Nonprofits or Government: Counties can negotiate PILOTs with nonprofit organizations or other entities that are exempt from property taxes. These agreements are typically voluntary and could involve a payment to the county in lieu of taxes, intended to offset the cost of services that the county provides to the exempt property.

- Economic Development Corporations (EDCs) (§ 501): Under the Development Corporation Act, counties can create EDCs (Type A and Type B corporations) to promote economic development. These corporations can use sales tax revenue to finance infrastructure improvements, business incentives, and other economic development initiatives.

- Public-Private Partnerships (P3s): Counties can engage in public-private partnerships to fund and develop infrastructure and economic development projects. P3s can leverage private investment for public benefit, which is particularly useful in large-scale development projects.

Objective 6.1.2 Develop County as a regional freight hub.

- **Action 6.1.2.1:** Build on existing infrastructure and partnership to create a regional hub.
- **Action 6.1.2.2:** Connect all existing warehouses with railways.

Liberty County is positioned to serve as an Inland Intermodal Freight Exchange and will experience a significant amount of freight traffic. To capitalize on the county's proximity to the port of Houston, as well as to diversify industrial interests, Liberty County should invest in freight facilities and infrastructure, creating a regional freight hub. The county should build on its existing infrastructure and partnerships with rail and freight companies, connecting existing warehouses to local railways.

Gulf Inland Logistics Park
Gulf Inland Logistics Park in Dayton, Texas, is an upcoming central industrial hub offering manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution facilities across over 1,350 acres. It provides customizable spaces for businesses ranging from 100,000 to 1.5 million square feet. Established as railcar storage in the 1980s, it now connects directly with the Union Pacific and BNSF Railways and plans to expand its railcar capacity and services.

Interchange Industrial Park Railcar Storage Facility
The Rail Logix Dayton Interchange Industrial Park is designed to support over 1,060 rail cars, with potential expansion up to 2,400+, featuring 272 rail car spots for interchange. Situated on the UP/BNSF Mainline and the Baytown Industrial Branch Line, it ensures strategic access to the Port of Houston and local industrial complexes.

BNSF, Houston Cleveland Logistic Center
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway is developing a logistics center on a 1,200-acre site west of Cleveland, Texas. This new development, located along the BNSF rail line, is designed to accommodate 39 companies. This center targets industries like lumber and steel. Cleveland's strategic location near Interstate 69 and Texas 105 and the logistics center's direct rail access make it an attractive business hub.

Objective 6.1.3 Develop tourism centered around recreational hunting and fishing, rodeo, and agriculture

- **Action 6.1.3.1:** Deputize the new ED to develop a plan for tourism

- **Action 6.1.3.2:** Contract universities to conduct study on land and aquatic ecosystems

- **Action 6.1.3.4** Connect with TPWD for advice and support

- **Action 6.1.3.5** Identify agricultural products that appeal to hunters and fishermen

- **Action 6.1.3.5** Explore public water recreation to encourage more eco-tourism. When possible, incorporate access to the waterfront and related amenities, such as docks, paddle trail stations, fishing piers, birding stations, or other distinctive features.

- **Action 6.1.3.6** Create a robust physical and online marketing campaign that promotes the County's family-friendly outdoor recreational opportunities emphasizing health, community, and eco-tourism.

Tourism in Liberty County has increased since 2020, likely due to Covid travel favoring rural and eco-tourism. Previously, the tourism industry in Liberty County was relatively stable, averaging $49 million in total spending from 2012 to 2020. In 2022 it was over $65 million. The number of people that are employed by the tourism industry in Liberty County is less stable, and saw a significant decrease from 460 in 2016 which it has not yet returned to, with the current employment number at 430. In a similar way, the local tax revenue from travel expenses for Liberty County has risen steadily over the past 10 years, with a small decrease in 2020 that was immediately reversed in 2021.

Developing recreational opportunities around hunting, fishing, and agritourism could attract a wider range of visitors, capitalizing on the county's abundant wildlife, wetlands, and farmlands. Strategic investments in infrastructure for nature-based activities, such as birdwatching, hiking, and kayaking in areas like the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge and the Big Thicket National Preserve, could further enhance its appeal. Additionally, expanding rodeo events and promoting agricultural experiences through farm tours and local markets can draw interest in the county's ranching and farming traditions. By promoting these opportunities, Liberty County can diversify its economy and position itself as a destination for eco-tourism and outdoor recreation in the region.

GOAL 6.2: SUPPORT EXISTING
ECONOMIC ASSETS AND EXPAND BUSINESS

Objective 6.2.1 Support local business expansion and retention.

- **Action 6.2.1.1:** Institute a "buy local, make local, grow local" campaign to support local businesses.
- **Action 6.2.1.2:** Work with the cities, EDC, and Chambers to develop a business expansion and retention program.
- **Action 6.2.1.3:** Partner with local banks and financial institution to establish a revolving loans to support small businesses.

Objective 6.2.3 Attract sports-based (affordable) and entertainment services to address leakage and gaps.

- **Action 6.2.3.1:** Survey residents for what they enjoy in spare time.
- **Action 6.2.3.2:** Connect with chains offering low-price entertainment (axe throwing, rope course etc.).

Objective 6.2.2 Identify opportunities for opening local businesses, groceries, and other retail and food services.

- **Action 6.2.2.1:** Reach out to chains and let them know the accurate headcount based on school enrollment.
- **Action 6.2.2.2:** Create open-air markets near Cleveland center, and other high populations areas.
- **Action 6.2.2.3:** Connect immigrant entrepreneurs (and their native suppliers) with family farms to increase small business restaurants.
- **Action 6.2.2.4:** Survey family farms to identify challenges (branding, transport etc.) and assist.
- **Action 6.2.2.5:** Teach restauranteering through College and/or Food Bank.

Attracting local-serving activities with corrected population counts.

When seeking to attract dining destinations and entertainment opportunities, Liberty County should engage with residents, surveying them for what they enjoy doing in their free time. Not only will this allow the county to target chains and entertainment options that meet the desires of local residents in a way that is affordable, but providing food and entertainment businesses with accurate demographic information about county residents will increase the potential for local-serving activities to develop.

Cultivating local-owned businesses through loans and other forms of assistance

By providing county residents with accessible education opportunities, Liberty County can cultivate local-owned businesses through classes and training in fields like restauranteering and entrepreneurship. Local markets and family farms can work together to provide increased opportunities to local businesses and grocers, especially in Liberty County's sizable Hispanic community and the rural areas. The county may also provide local-owned businesses with financial assistance through the revolving loan program, providing short term assistance to entrepreneurs that wish to develop local businesses.

Table 6.2. Retail Volumes of Liberty and Surrounding Counties, 2022 Q2

County	Gross Sales
Liberty	$318,090,865
Montgomery	$3,994,846,891
San Jacinto	$19,959,527
Polk	$185,453,527
Hardin	$254,287,224
Jefferson	$1,225,067,613
Chambers	$246,695,741
Harris	$31,225,743,32

Source: https://comptroller.texas.gov/transparency/local/quarterly-report/stxqtr02.php

GOAL 6.3: ESTABLISH PROGRAMS
TO SUPPORT A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE

Objective 6.3.1 Improve collaboration with educational institutions and industry to align skills training with employers' needs.

- **Action 6.3.1.1:** Stay up-to-date on near-future industry needs and adjust program offerings accordingly working with ISDs, Lee College, and Lone Star.
- **Action 6.3.1.2:** Create flexible, affordable micro-certificate in data science, cyber security, autoshop, radiology and self-employable skills.
- **Action 6.3.1.3:** Work with businesses and institutions to develop training in warehousing, logistics, and electric construction.
- **Action 6.3.1.4:** Partner with businesses to pay for apprenticeships.
- **Action 6.3.1.5:** Expand youth agriculture and livestock programs in ISDs through 4-H and FFA.
- **Action 6.3.1.6:** Establish partnership between Lee College and Emergency Medical Services for EMT student training opportunity.

Objective 6.3.2 Improve adult education throughout the County.

- **Action 6.3.2.1:** Partner with ISDs and College to create night school and/or peer tutoring for adults.
- **Action 6.3.2.2:** Explore opportunities with higher education like Satellite MBA program on the weekends.
- **Action 6.3.2.3:** Work with Lamar University to start programs focusing on engineering in the county.
- **Action 6.3.2.4:** Create micro-courses that can completed online.
- **Action 6.3.2.5:** Get local employers on board to fit in 30-minute training into everyday work.

Objective 6.3.3 Cultivate entrepreneurs by expanding programs to improve financial skills and promote self sufficiency.

- **Action 6.3.3.1:** Offer free basic business 101 class through community centers or schools or websites.
- **Action 6.3.3.2:** Survey business 101 enrollees and high school graduates to follow up on their plans to start own businesses.
- **Action 6.3.3.3:** Select business class students that show promise for advanced training and financial and legal assistance.
- **Action 6.3.3.4:** Create a mentorship programs to pair experienced business owners with startups to help new entrepreneurs better understands the challenges and needs of running a businesses.
- **Action 6.3.3.5:** Establish a business incubator to support local entrepreneurs and startups.

Case Study: Workforce Development in Lee County, North Carolina

Lee County, located in central North Carolina, relies on manufacturing for 31 percent of local employment. To further develop the manufacturing industry workforce, the county engaged in a partnership with Central Carolina Community College to develop the Innovation Center, a workforce training facility, as well as a manufacturing incubator. Initially wishing to train more welders, the county purchased an existing manufacturing site and committed funding to new maintenance and utility costs, while the community college and private companies filled the facility with necessary equipment.

A partnership with Caterpillar, the construction and equipment manufacturer, allowed the Innovation Center to create an award-winning apprenticeship program, training high school students with welding certification as well as training suited to the specific needs of a career with Caterpillar after graduation. The success of this apprenticeship program led to the Central Carolina Works program, which places a counselor at local high schools to advise students as they seek career-relevant coursework. Through farsighted recognition of the need for workforce development, Lee County was able to retain existing businesses while training its young workforce to attract future businesses and industries.

Create more affordable, flexible specialized job training programs (apprenticeship, micro-cred)

To provide residents with the opportunity to join highly skilled professions, local education institutions like Lee College and Lone Star College should adjust their program offerings in a way that meets near-future industry needs. This includes the creation of flexible micro-certificate programs in fields such as data science, autoshop, radiology, and self-employable skills. These institutions should partner with local businesses to pay for apprenticeship programs that can provide younger residents with comprehensive, career-specific training.

Develop young business leaders in concert with schools

By expanding the business management and entrepreneurship related offerings available through local colleges and businesses, Liberty County can also engage students of local schools, to foster the development of business skills among local youth.

Provide assistance for entrepreneurship and retraining for older adults.

While programs offered by Lee College and Lone Star College allow for workforce education and vocational training for high school students and recent graduates, there are limited education opportunities available for older, working residents. The county should partner with the local colleges to create night school and peer tutoring for adults, providing adult residents with business entrepreneurship training that is made easily accessible through online options.
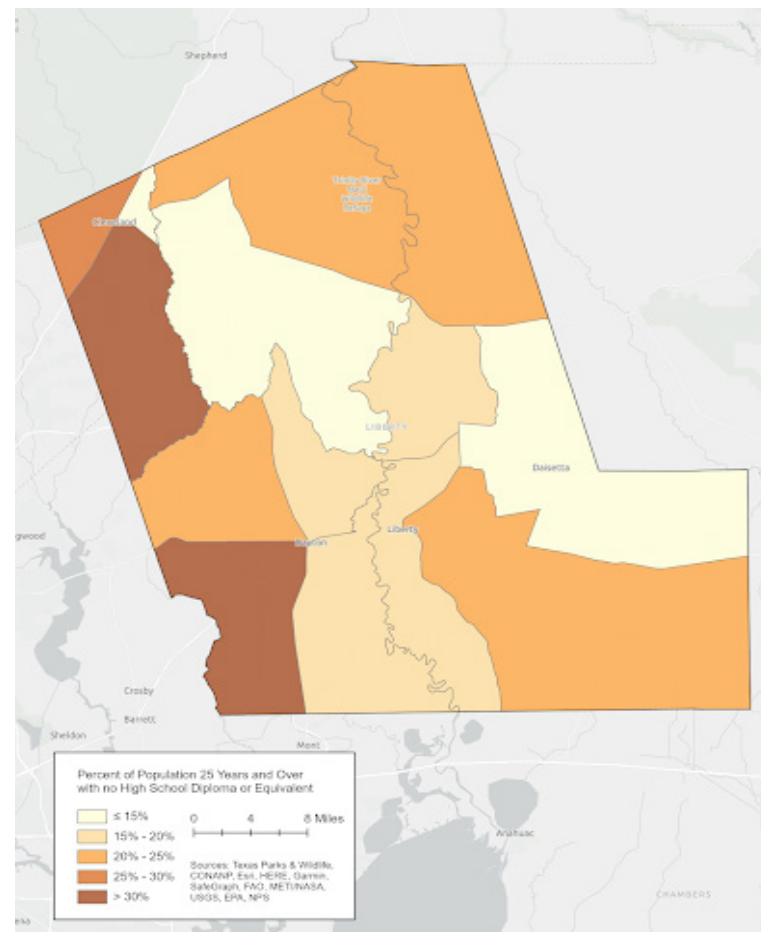
Figure 6.4 Liberty County Educational Attainment
Source: https://data.census.gov/table?t=Educational+Attainment&g=050XX00US48291$1400000

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CHAPTER 7
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

Well-sited and well-funded community facilities play a pivotal role in improving residents' quality of life. As Liberty County continues to grow, the need to expand and enhance community facilities and services becomes increasingly important. This chapter outlines a comprehensive approach to ensuring that the county's infrastructure and services are equipped to meet the evolving needs of its residents. By focusing on key areas such as education, public safety, environmental sustainability, and digital connectivity, Liberty County can foster a high quality of life for current and future generations.

QUICK LOOK
CHAPTER 7

Community Facilities
educational institutions, social services, county facilities

Public Safety
emergency services, police, fire, communication

Environmental Practices
waste management, water conservation, recycling, sustainability

Communication
broadband, internet access, digital literacy, civic engagement

EXISTING CONDITIONS
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Independent School Districts

There are seven independent school districts (ISDs) in Liberty County. As shown in Figure 7.1, part of Cleveland ISD extends north into the Sam Houston National Forest in San Jacinto County and into Montgomery County. A small part of Dayton ISD extends into Harris County. All other school districts stay within the County borders.

Cleveland ISD is the largest district in Liberty County with about 8,900 students and 11 school campuses including three that will be newly open for the 2022-23 school year. Dayton ISD is the second largest school district with about 5,700 students and six school campuses. All the other school districts in Liberty County have less than 2,500 students each. The smallest district is Devers ISD with just over 200 students and only two school campuses.
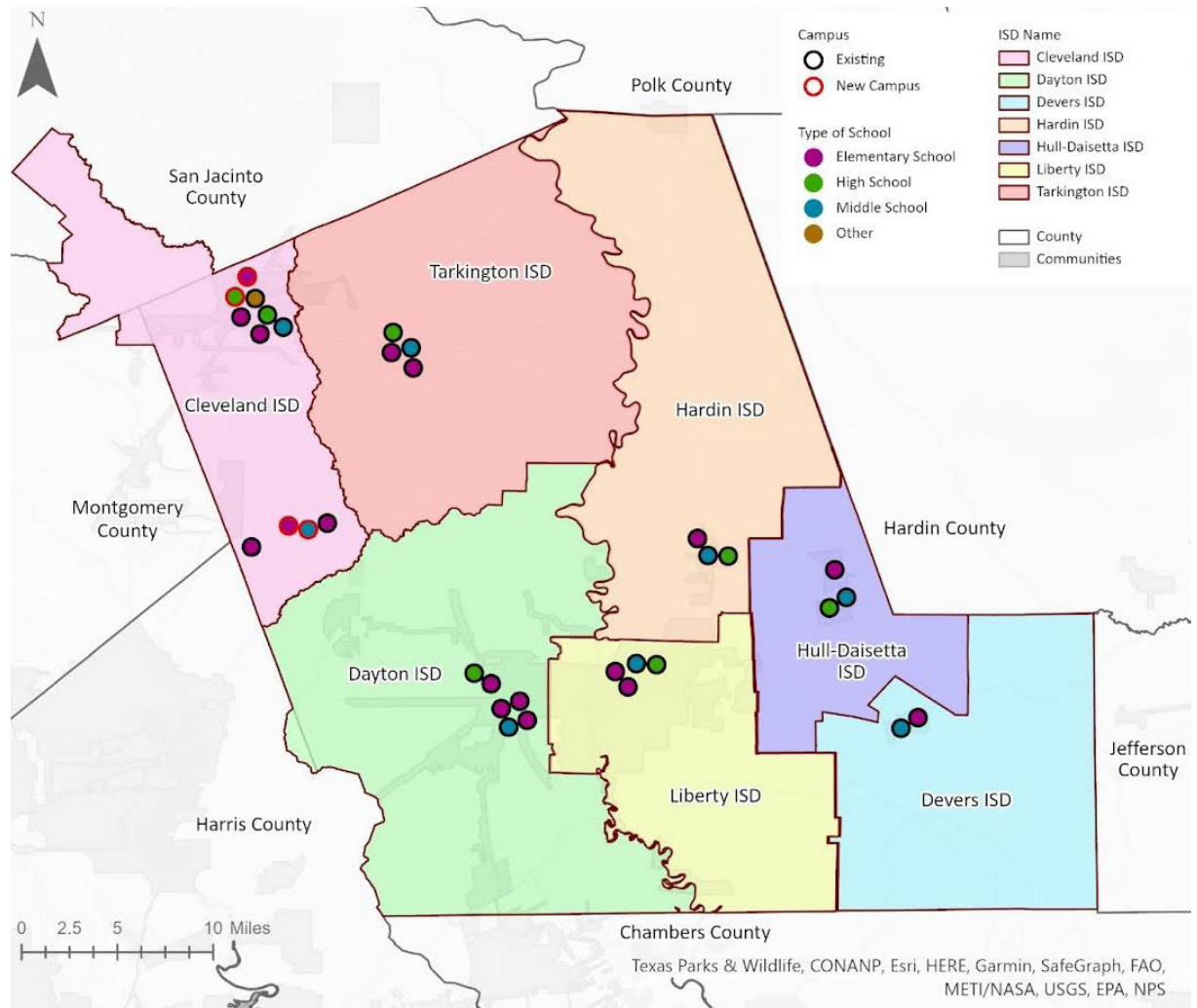
Figure 7.1 Independent School Districts in Liberty County
(Source: Texas Education Agency)

EXISTING CONDITIONS
POLICE SERVICES

Liberty County has its own sheriff office and six constable offices, one for each justice precinct. These positions are elected by County residents. Five cities have their own police departments: Cleveland City, Daisetta City, Dayton City, Kenefick City, and Liberty City. Police chiefs are appointed by the respective mayor or city council. Cleveland Independent School District also maintains its own police department. The Sheriff's department serves as a licensed peace officer and is responsible for enforcing the criminal laws of the state, manages and operates the county jail and provides security for the courts.

There are five correctional facilities in Liberty County that hold over 4,500 incarcerated people. The Oliver J. Bell Unit is a privately operated prison in Cleveland. In addition, there are two state-operated jails, Lucile Plane State Jail and Dempsie Henley State Jail, and one prison, L.V. Hightower Unit, located in Dayton. The District Parole Office is also in Dayton City. Liberty County Jail is in the City of Liberty.
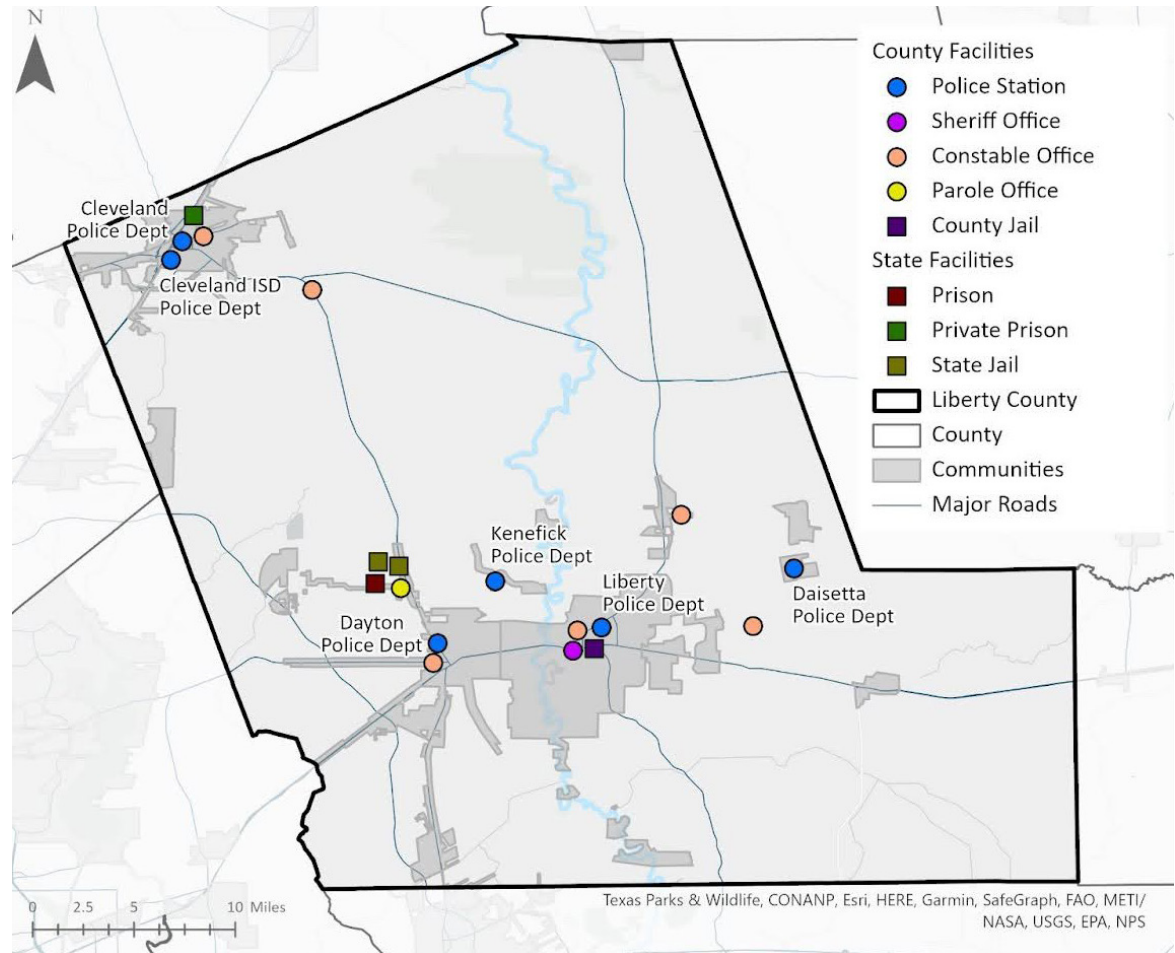
Figure 7.2 Liberty County Police Station and Correctional Facilities
(Source: Texas Department of Criminal Justice)

EXISTING CONDITIONS
FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

There are 15 fire departments in Liberty County. 13 departments are all volunteer personnel and two are a combination of paid and volunteer personnel: Liberty Fire Dept and Cleveland Fire Dept. Dayton VFD and Tarkington VFD each operate two stations, and all other fire departments operate one station each. Cleveland and Liberty are both building second fire stations. Liberty County ESD No.7 and Tarkington VFD are also looking into building additional fire stations.

There are four emergency service districts in Liberty County as shown in Figure 8.3. Emergency service districts are political subdivisions of the state of Texas that provide emergency medical and/or fire services. They can also levy taxes. In Liberty County, emergency service districts provide or contract out fire service to unincorporated areas.

Table 7.1 Description of Fire Departments in Liberty County

Fire Department	Type	Existing Stations	Future Stations
Cleveland Fire Dept	Combination	1	1
Cypress Lakes VFD	Volunteer	1	0
Dayton VFD	Volunteer	2	0
Devers VFD	Volunteer	1	0
Hull-Daisetta VFD	Volunteer	1	0
Hwy 321 VFD	Volunteer	1	0
Kenefick VFD	Volunteer	1	0
Liberty County ESD #3 Fire Dept	Volunteer	1	0
Liberty County ESD #7/ Hardin Fire and Rescue	Volunteer	1	1
Liberty Fire Dept	Combination	1	1
Moss Bluff VFD	Volunteer	1	0
North Liberty County VFD	Volunteer	1	0
Plum Grove VFD	Volunteer	1	0
Tarkington VFD	Volunteer	2	1
Woodpecker VFD	Volunteer	1	0

Figure 7.3 Liberty County Emergency Services District
(Source: Liberty County Central Appraisal District)

EXISTING CONDITIONS
SPECIAL DISTRICTS

There are several types of special districts in Liberty County.

Drainage Districts (DDs) construct water drainage infrastructure such as canals, ditches, drains, and levees. DDs can levy taxes. In Liberty County, there are two DDs located southeast of the city of Liberty. In August 2021, Liberty County commissioners approved the creation of a county-wide drainage district that would absorb current DDs. The new drainage district still needs to be approved by voters.

Freshwater Supply Districts (FWSDs) conserve, transport, and distribute fresh water. They can levy taxes and issue bonds. There are three FWSDs in Liberty County. Two are located south and east of the city of Plum Grove and the third FWSD serves Hull CDP.

Special Utility Districts (SUDs) provide water, wastewater, and firefighting services169. They cannot levy taxes. Tarkington SUD is the only SUD in the County.
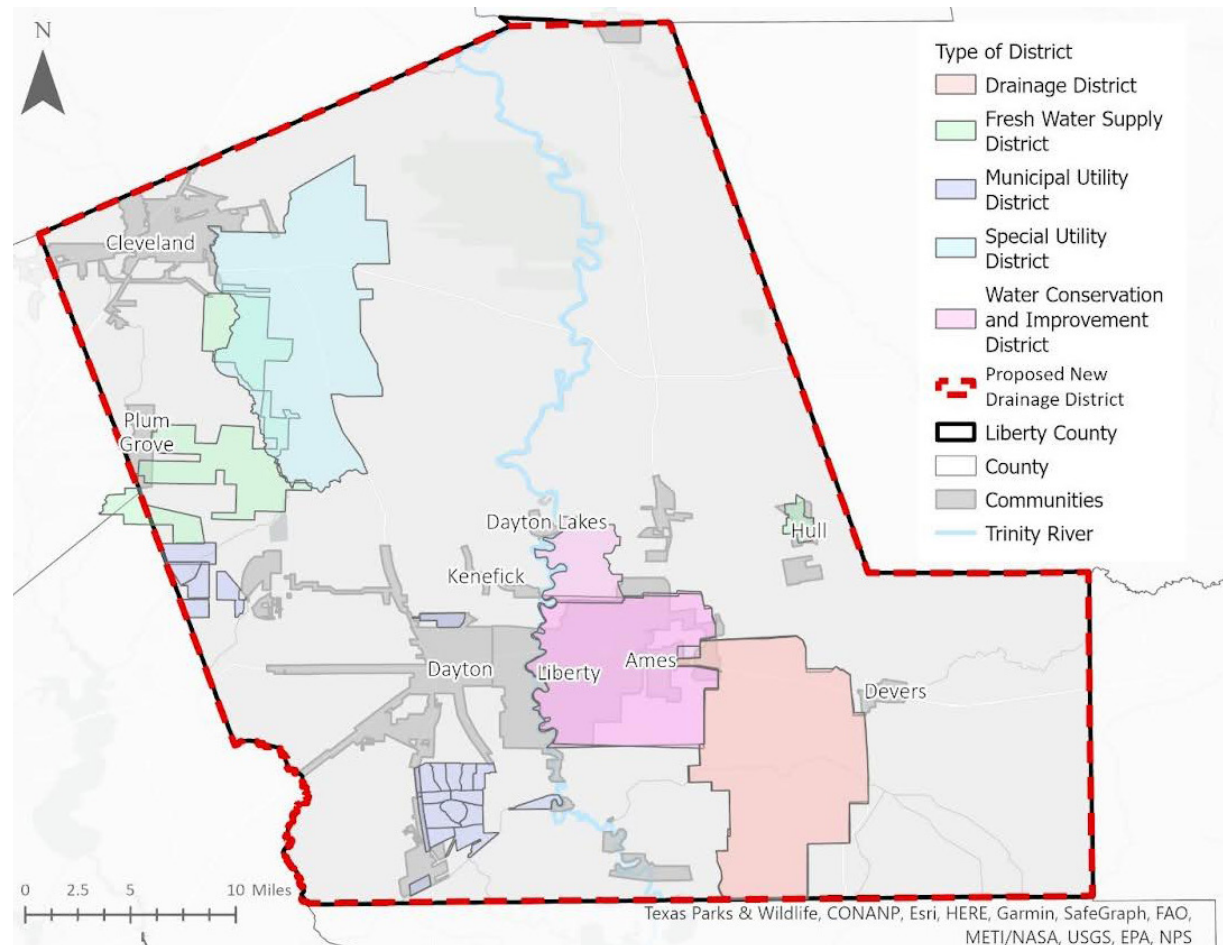
Figure 7.4 Water and Utility Districts in Liberty County *(Source: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality)*

EXISTING CONDITIONS
SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) provide water, wastewater, and drainage services. They can also provide other services such as solid waste management and recreational facilities. MUDs can set and charge user fees. There are 23 MUDs in Liberty County. One is located north of Dayton, another is located on Hwy 146 north of Mont Belvieu, and five MUDs are located on the west County border between Plum Grove and FM 1960. The remaining 16 MUDs are associated with the River Ranch development south of Dayton.

Water Control and Improvement Districts (WCIDs) supply and store water, operate wastewater systems; and provide irrigation, drainage, and water-quality services. There are three WCIDs in Liberty County that primarily work in and around Liberty.

River Authorities (RAs) sell untreated water, operate major reservoirs, and span entire river basins. A large portion of Liberty County falls within the Trinity River Authority include some or all of the cities of Ames, Dayton, Dayton Lakes, Devers, Hardin, Kenefick, Liberty, and Big Thicket Lake Estates CDP.
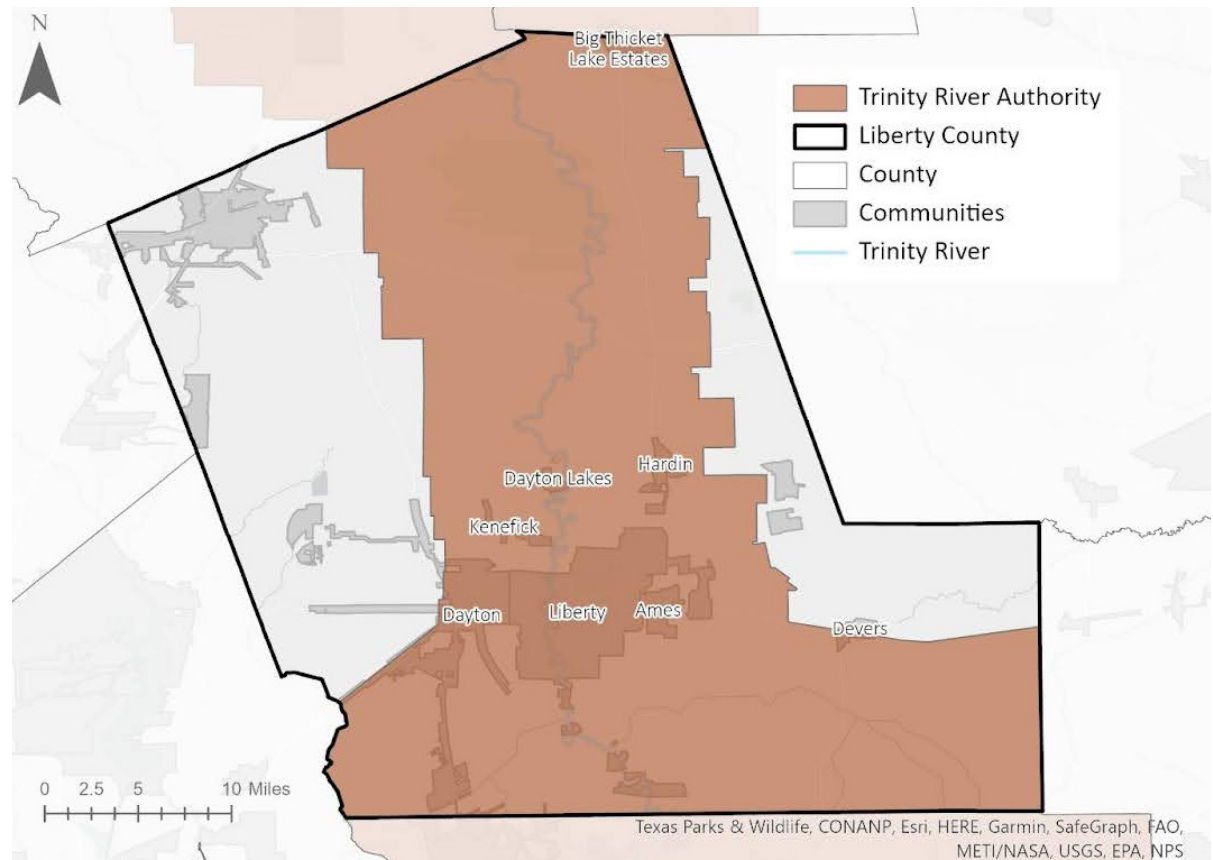
Figure 7.5 Trinity River Authority in Liberty County
(Source: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality)

EXISTING CONDITIONS
SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Improvement Districts (IDs), **Management Districts (MDs)**, and **Municipal Management Districts (MMDs)** have similar purposes and powers. Their purpose is to promote the economy, eliminate unemployment and underemployment, and develop transportation and commerce. There are seven of these types of districts located around Plum Grove and south of Dayton.
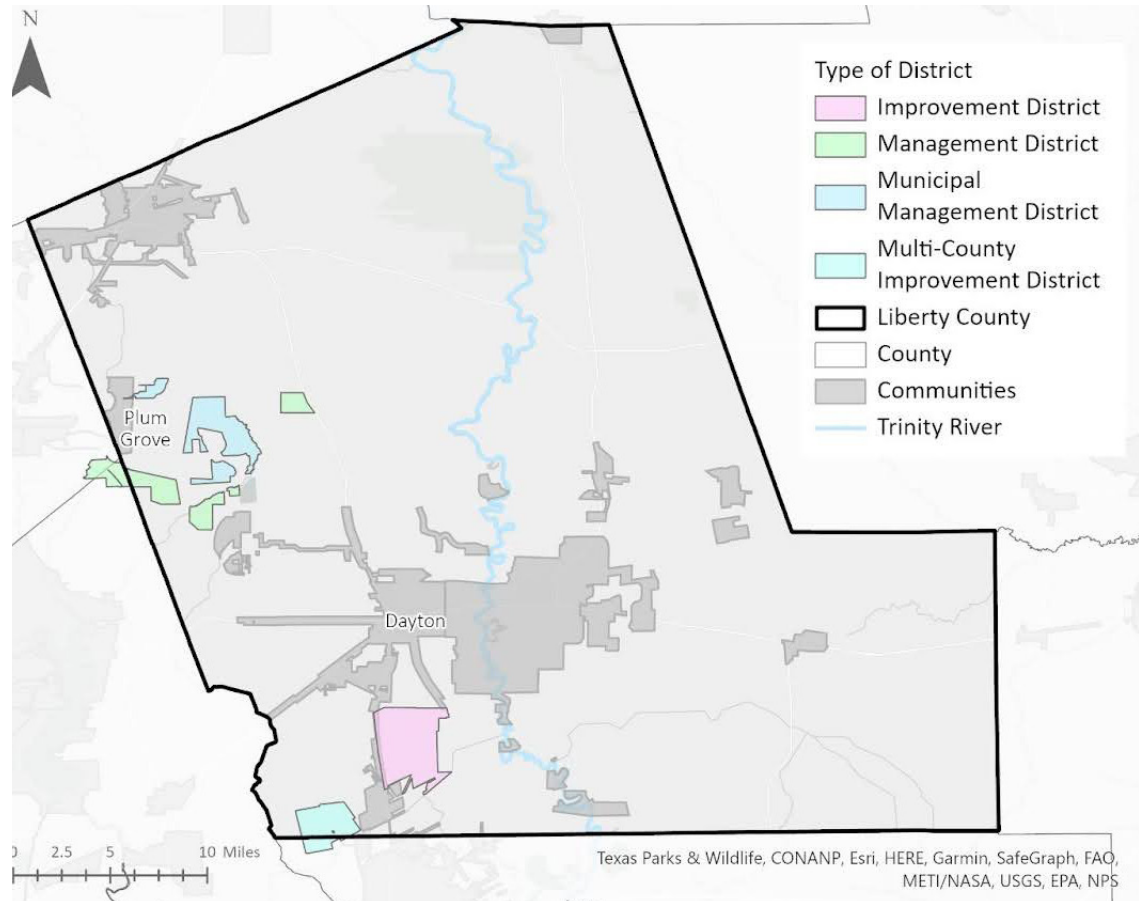
Figure 7.6 Improvement Districts in Liberty County
(Source: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality)

EXISTING CONDITIONS
PARKS & RECREATION

There are several different kinds of public and nonprofit parks and recreation facilities in Liberty County with most of them located in the three largest cities. There are 18 parks in Liberty County. The cities of Cleveland, Dayton, and Liberty each own several parks and Plum Grove owns one. Three parks are located on unincorporated land and are owned by other entities. There are three public/non-profit event centers located outside the three major cities; one in Hardin, one in Kenefick, and one east of Cleveland.

With the exception of one library east of Cleveland, all other types of recreational facilities such as rodeo arenas, museums, and golf courses are located in either the cities of Cleveland, Dayton, or Liberty.

There are four state and nationally owned recreational facilities:
- The Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center in Liberty is owned by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.
- Davis Hill State Park is owned by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, but it is not accessible to the public.
- The Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge is owned and maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and has several public access points.
- A small part of the Big Thicket National Preserve with a public access point is in the north part of Liberty County next to Big Thicket Lake Estates.

Table 7.2 Parks and Golf Courses *(Refer to Figure 7.7)*

No.	Name	Owner
1	Samuel Wiley Park	City of Cleveland
2	Old City Park	City of Cleveland
7	Campbell Park	City of Cleveland
8	Cleveland Municipal Sports Park	City of Cleveland
9	Bella Vista Park	Liberty County Municipal Management District #1
10	Plum Grove City Park	City of Plum Grove
11	Park Montebello	Liberty County Municipal Management District #1
14	Bar D Park	Private
15	Sawmill Park	City of Dayton
17	Parker Park	City of Dayton
18	Gov. Bill & Vara Daniel Park	City of Dayton
21	City Hall Pocket Park	City of Dayton
23	Henderson Day Family Memorial Park	City of Dayton
25	Neighborhood Park on Palmer St	City of Liberty
27	Neighborhood Park on Lamar St	City of Liberty
28	Neighborhood Park on Magnolia St	City of Liberty
29	Liberty Municipal Park	City of Liberty
30	Ruth Canfield Park	City of Liberty
36	Liberty Municipal Golf Course	City of Liberty

EXISTING CONDITIONS
PARKS & RECREATION
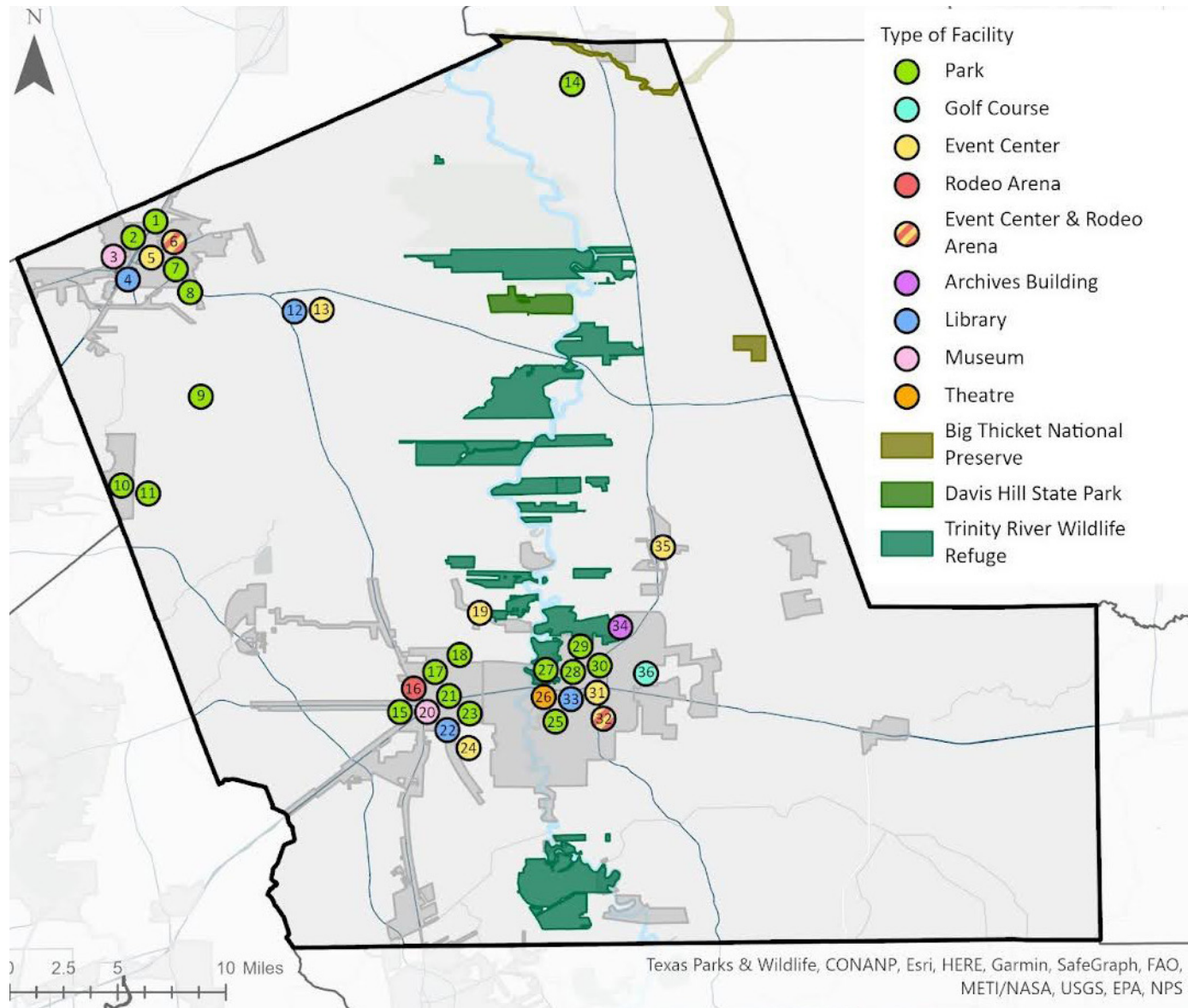
Figure 7.7 Liberty County Parks and Recreation Facilities Map

EXISTING CONDITIONS
PARKS & RECREATION

Table 7.3 Event Centers and Rodeo Arenas in Liberty County *(Refer to Figure 7.7)*

No.	Name	Owner
5	Cleveland Civic Center	City of Cleveland
6	Stancil Exposition Center and Arena	City of Cleveland
13	Ruth Stetson Community Center	Nonprofit Organization
16	Anson Rigby Memorial Arena	Dayton Independent School District
19	Kenefick Civic Center	City of Kenefick
24	Dayton Community Center	City of Dayton
31	Liberty County Community Center	Liberty County
32	Trinity Valley Exposition	Nonprofit Organization
35	Hardin Community Center	City of Hardin

Table 7.4 Archives Building and Libraries in Liberty County *(Refer to Figure 7.7)*

No.	Name	Owner
4	Austin Memorial Library	City of Cleveland
12	Tarkington Community Library	Nonprofit Organization
22	Jones Public Library	City of Dayton
33	Liberty Municipal Library	City of Liberty
34	Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center	Texas State Library and Archives Commission

Table 7.5 Museums and Theatres in Liberty County *(Refer to Figure 7.7)*

No.	Name	Owner
3	Cleveland Historical Museum	City of Cleveland
20	Old School Museum	Nonprofit Organization
26	Humphreys-Burson Theatre	City of Liberty

PUBLIC
FEEDBACK

Based on the community comments received, several key themes and specific community needs and issues emerge:

Internet access:
- There are gaps in internet coverage and concerns for some students and residents not having access to the internet at home, especially in rural pockets.

Social services:
- Concerns about drug use in schools and alternative education programs for students involved in substance abuse. Stakeholders highlighted successful programs requiring students and parents to attend intervention programs and resources like COPS (Communities On Patrol in Schools). Suggestions for school-based clinics with certified nurses and more healthcare services, addiction, and rehabilitation services, particularly for teens.
- There is a need for more translation services and better communication with non-English-speaking parents at school and for equipping social-service providers.
- Need for shelters and support for people experiencing homelessness, including transitional housing options.

Community facilities:
- The community wants more places for recreation and social interaction, including senior centers, entertainment complexes, and parks with more diverse activities.
- Suggestions for building new high schools and expanding existing facilities to accommodate the population growth.
- Community members mentioned the demand for animal shelters and rescue, with multiple comments on the need for dedicated facilities, low-cost vet clinics, and animal control services to address the issue.
- A desire for more after-school programs, youth recreational activities, and facilities like community centers and sports complexes
- The public needs to be educated about the bond approval process to develop some of the required facilities.
- Limited trash pick up and disposal services available.

Public safety and emergency response:
- Need for better coordination between volunteer fire services and emergency response systems in neighboring communities like Plum Grove and Cleveland.
- Mention of churches and community facilities playing a more active role in disaster recovery leadership and preparedness and the need for coordinated efforts with local emergency services.

Overview of Goals

1. Community facilities and services that support Liberty County residents
Addressing the evolving needs of the growing Liberty County population necessitates prioritizing enhancing community facilities and services that support human capital. This goal focuses on strategies to upgrade the educational infrastructure, build resilient community facilities, and extend crucial social services to support the diverse needs of Liberty County residents.

2. Public safety infrastructure and services that meets needs
Improving safety and response requires assessment of existing facilities and upgrading infrastructure by expanding services in phases. Key initiatives include completing the Northwest County Annex, exploring cost-saving methods for constructing new fire stations, and upgrading communication technology. Strengthening community-police relations, as well as better establishing processes to collaborate between police, EMS, firefighters, volunteers, ISDs, and community organizations, will create a safer, more responsive, and inclusive emergency response system for Liberty County.

3. Environmentally friendly practices that keep pace population growth
In response to the challenges posed by population growth, Liberty County seeks to adopt environmentally friendly practices to ensure sustainable development and preservation of natural resources for future generations. There is a need to enhance the county's recycling and waste management systems and address the anticipated increase in solid waste and wastewater. Additionally, the county aims to develop initiatives focused on groundwater sustainability to safeguard water resources by coordinating with local and regional partners. Liberty County seeks to balance growth with environmental stewardship promoting a healthier, greener community aligned with the broader vision of sustainable living and resource conservation.

2. Local communication to connect with residents and communities
A strong communication infrastructure and effective communication are essential to building strong communities. To better connect with and serve residents, the County must enhance communication infrastructure and support digital literacy, particularly in underserved areas, to ensure all residents have equitable opportunities to engage with vital services and information. Additionally, this goal looks at ways to improve civic engagement through accessible communication channels to foster a sense of trust and collaboration. These efforts will pave the way for more inclusive, informed decision-making, leading to a more connected and engaged community.

GOAL 7.1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES THAT SUPPORT THE HUMAN CAPITAL OF LIBERTY COUNTY

Objective 7.1.1 Invest more in educational facilities to provide a higher level of educational services.

- **Action 7.1.1.1:** Encourage coordination between city governments and school districts to produce/update zoning maps, designating land in suitable locations for schools.

- **Action 7.1.1.2:** Work with developers and operators of post-secondary education facilities to identify desired site locations and collaborate to connect utilities and transit/transportation infrastructure connectivity.

- **Action 7.1.1.3:** Encourage ISDs to negotiate with developers for land as part of community benefit agreements.

- **Action 7.1.1.4:** Work with cities to get bonds approved for new schools near Cleveland and Dayton.

- **Action 7.1.1.5:** Recruit popular support for new bond proposals and establish function pro-bond groups.

- **Action 7.1.1.6:** Partner with school districts, Lone Star College, and Lee College to promote and expand the Early College High School (ECHS) and Pathways in Technology ECHS programs in the County.

- **Action 7.1.1.7:** Work with Cleveland ISD to evaluate a need for a new school district for Colony Ridge area.

Educational facilities

Liberty County aims to invest in facilities and services through collaboration between the County, city governments, and school districts. All public schools in each school district are clustered together and located in cities throughout the County. The two largest districts, Cleveland ISD and Dayton ISD are experiencing the most growth. Consequently, new public schools will be needed in these districts. Building schools within new subdivisions will support the creation of complete neighborhoods. Proactive partnerships with developers and operators of post-secondary education facilities will be essential to identify desired site locations serviced adequately by utilities, roads, and other infrastructure. Additionally, Lee College and Lone Star College are key partners supporting the preparation of future generations for success. The County aims to strengthen relationships with existing and future education programs.

Case study:
Hispanic Unity of Florida (HUF)

HUF is a community-based organization in South Florida with a client population that is primarily immigrants from Mexico, Central America, Haiti, and Cuba. HUF offers 12 programs that include civic education, economic development, job training and placement, as well as early childhood, afterschool, and summer programs for kids. Their youth programming alone engages over 600 youth and their parents with 2Gen services each year. HUF has a tradition of hiring current and former clients as part-time and full-time staff, which ensures staff is grounded in the culture and challenges of the communities they serve. HUF case managers have experience in housing, workforce training, and family social work, and they speak multiple languages. HUF invests in regular training to ensure all staff are oriented to work together to achieve strong family outcomes. HUF's single point of entry strategy, based on a "journey map," outlines all the teams and organizations that are part of families' progress to achieve their goals, making families feel like they are in only one program, not many, and they only fill out one application and are then given warm referrals to other staff members.

Objective 7.1.2 Increase access to social services that support the community.

- **Action 7.1.2.1:** Expand representation in the County Coalition to establish a social services support committee that can determine current assets and gaps, including abuse centers, drug abuse centers, senior centers, etc.

- **Action 7.1.2.2:** Work with the Liberty County Child Welfare Board to determine additional needs for supporting the staff, caregivers, foster parents, and volunteers involved with the protection and welfare of children.

- **Action 7.1.2.3:** Work with Brazos Valley Transit District to ensure availability of paratransit services connecting eligible residents across the county to facilities.

- **Action 7.1.2.4:** Encourage social service organizations to prioritize staff training and develop continuity plan to reduce employee turnover and loss of institutional knowledge.

- **Action 7.1.2.5:** Work with community partners like Texas Familias Council to distribute information on available resources and services by expanding the Navigating Community Resources Booklet.

Objective 7.1.3 Expand county facilities, incorporating strategic floodplain management, environmental conservation, and phased financial planning to enhance community services.

- **Action 7.1.3.1:** Assess current county facilities to develop a scope and estimate for infrastructure upgrades and development of future annex facilities to better serve county residents.

- **Action 7.1.3.2:** Expand county service and facilities in phases corresponding with incoming revenues.

- **Action 7.1.3.3:** Completely prohibit construction of government buildings and special needs facilities like medical facilities, nursing homes, schools, and daycares within the 100 year floodplain.

- **Action 7.1.3.4:** Prioritize stormwater management and environmental conservation in design for the future community facilities.

- **Action 7.1.3.5:** Develop partnerships with the cities, school districts, and other entities for joint use and maintenance of park facilities and athletic fields.

GOAL 7.2: ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY
INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Objective 7.2.1 Expand public safety and emergency services to ensure efficient, effective response capabilities across all regions of Liberty County.

- **Action 7.2.1.1:** Review current needs to increase police officers and facilities by coordinating with municipalities to ensure public safety is met

- **Action 7.2.1.2:** Complete the Northwest County Annex to house additional law enforcement and permitting offices in the Colony Ridge Subdivisions and adjacent to the Sante Fe Community Center.

- **Action 7.2.1.3:** Explore cost-saving ways for new fire station construction, such as repurposing equipment, rotating duties etc.

- **Action 7.2.1.4**: Explore low-cost upgrades to existing communication technology between dispatcher and field officers

- **Action 7.2.1.5:** Evaluate existing mass information system to allow geofencing.

- **Action 7.2.1.6**: Review Public Protection Classification (PPC) or Insurance Service Organization (ISO) ratings for Liberty County Fire Departments/ Volunteer Fire Departments.

- **Action 7.2.1.7**: Prioritize bilingual skills and diversity in hiring police officers and other emergency responders.

- **Action 7.2.1.8:** Equip officers with electronic translators that do not require network

- **Action 7.2.1.9:** Establish a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) as authorized by chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code, operated under the authority of a county juvenile board.

- **Action 7.2.1.10:** Assess current capacity of the jail and consider need for a juvenile holding facility for criminal cases.

- **Action 7.2.1.11:** Build a county animal shelter, capable of sheltering strays and allowing for pet adoption.

Objective 7.2.2 Strengthen collaborations for effective emergency response and disaster management.

- **Action 7.2.2.1:** Create a crisis prevention team consisting of police, EMS, firefighters, and volunteers.

- **Action 7.2.2.2:** Work with the Liberty Long Term Recovery Team to connect with local VOAD.

- **Action 7.2.2.3:** Re-establish the Local Emergency Planning Committee.

- **Action 7.2.2.4:** Maintain working relationship with TDEM, Red Cross, Houston Food Bank and other organization by establishing regular communication and MOUs.

- **Action 7.2.2.5:** Maintain MOUs with ISDs (Liberty, Cleveland, Dayton, Tarkington, and Daisetta) for bus service and as point of distribution sites during emergency.

Emergency Response

Police facilities are more prevalent in the southern part of Liberty County. With most of the county's population on unincorporated land, the county may want to expand its presence, particularly in the western part of the county where lots of growth is happening. Similarly, as the population grows, the demand for services may become too much for volunteer-only fire departments.

Liberty County counts public safety as the biggest expense with the section consuming approximately 35% of the budget. The Public Welfare Department funds emergency facilities such as ambulance services, state hospital cases, children protective services and other services to assist the community. The emergency management department funds the managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters. Liberty's Fire Marshal also funds volunteers as well.

Case Study: Bilingual Officers

Learning from the Houston Police Department's successful initiative to recruit bilingual officers to better serve its multilingual population, Liberty County can enhance its law enforcement effectiveness by integrating officers proficient in the predominant languages spoken within the community. Bilingual officers can break down language barriers, build trust, and foster open communication with residents who may feel more comfortable speaking in their native language. By strategically recruiting bilingual candidates and providing language and cultural training to current officers, the police departments in the county can improve community relations and facilitate better information sharing.

GOAL 7.3: ADOPT ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT GROWTH AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

Objective 7.3.1 Improve recycling and waste management practices in response to the anticipated growth in solid waste and wastewater.

- **Action 7.3.1.1:** Establish a solid waste plan by applying for grants provided by Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for municipal solid waste management, and to other grants provided by the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) for sanitary solid waste disposal. *(See 8.3.1)*

- **Action 7.3.1.2:** Establish a recycling program through collaboration with non-profit organizations, AgriLife, Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission and Texas Department of Agriculture.

- **Action 7.3.1.3:** Connect with Keep Texas Recycling (KTR) Program to promote waste reduction alternatives such as composting, commercial and residential waste exchanges, and recycling centers.

Objective 7.3.2 Develop initiatives to enhance groundwater sustainability and bolster irrigation and municipal water resources.

- **Action 7.3.2.1:** Work with the cities to provide education for farmers regarding new technologies to lessen the excessive use of irrigation water through partnership with agricultural programs at universities, AgriLife, Texas Department of Agriculture, or U.S Department of Agriculture.

- **Action 7.3.2.2:** Promote the use of drip systems which deliver water directly to plant roots, reducing evaporation.

- **Action 7.3.2.3:** Collaborate with municipalities to promote rainwater harvesting to organize workshops and demonstrations on building and maintaining rainwater catchment systems.

- **Action 7.3.2.4:** Connect with Texas Rural Water Association to develop a Source Water Protection Plan.

GOAL 7.4: FOSTER COMMUNICATION CHANNELS TO CONNECT WITH AND SERVE THE RESIDENTS

Objective 7.4.1 Expand the physical infrastructure to facilitate better connectivity through high-speed data connections and broadband Internet.

- **Action 7.4.1.1**: Identify service gaps in existing telecommunication infrastructure and current service areas.

- **Action 7.4.1.2:** Work with Texas Broadband Development Office to identify and document broadband accessibility gaps throughout the county.

- **Action 7.4.1.3:** Conduct cost inventory of Starlink and 5G connections.

- **Action 7.4.1.4:** Utilize broadband infrastructure funding opportunities such as the Texas Broadband Pole Replacement Program, Broadband e-Connectivity Pilot Program, and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

- **Action 7.4.1.5:** Partner with telecommunication providers and the municipalities to improve public Wifi spots in community centers, libraries, and parks.

Objective 7.4.2 Provide residents with the tools and knowledge to benefit from technology and digital connectivity.

- **Action 7.4.2.1:** Partner with local schools to integrate digital literacy into the curriculum, and organize community-based training sessions on the use of digital tools and internet safety.

- **Action 7.4.2.2:** Collaborate with ISDs to introduce programs like "Youth as Community Tech Ambassadors" to bridge generational gaps in tech use.

- **Action 7.4.2.3:** Offer digital literacy programs at libraries and community centers. Connect to Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) Digital Literacy Training Toolkit.

Objective 7.4.3 Improve communication with residents to foster civic engagement and strengthen community trust.

- **Action 7.4.3.1:** Regularly update county website to serve as a centralized hub for news, events, and resources.

- **Action 7.4.3.2:** Implement a bilingual communication approach, publishing official city communications in both English and Spanish.

- **Action 7.4.3.3:** Use social media platforms to regularly communicate updates and engage with residents.

- **Action 7.4.3.4:** Work with local churches and faith-based organizations to identify outreach ambassadors

- **Action 7.4.3.5:** Partner with schools and youth organizations to engage young people in local governance and projects.

- **Action 7.4.3.6:** Develop outreach programs to educate residents about the county's plans, resources, and how they can be involved.

- **Action 7.4.3.7:** Implement methods in place for residents to provide feedback, such as suggestion boxes, online forms, or designated email addresses.

Broadband Infrastructure

Fewer than half of Liberty County households access the internet through ground-based, high speed infrastructure. The southeast and northeast corners of the county have zero or only one provider that residents can choose from. Also, scattered throughout the county are areas where there are no ground-based broadband providers. Residents in Cleveland, Dayton, and Liberty have several providers to choose from as well as unincorporated areas east of Plum Grove and and along SH 146.

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CHAPTER 8
HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

More and more agencies are prioritizing health and wellness in community planning. The Health chapter is a new addition to the Liberty County Strategic Plan, reflecting the growing recognition that health is a key priority for the community. This chapter covers three key areas: Food and Nutrition, which examines the availability and quality of food resources to promote healthy eating habits; Public Health and Services, which addresses the accessibility and effectiveness of health services and preventive care; and Active Living and a Healthy Environment, which focuses on creating spaces and opportunities that encourage physical activity and support overall environmental health. Addressing these areas is crucial for improving overall health outcomes, enhancing access to necessary services, and creating environments that support healthy living and a better quality of life for all residents.

Food and Nutrition
food system, access, outreach and education

Public Health and Services
coordination, specialty services, community health services and trauma care

Active Living and Healthy Environment
environmental quality, emergencies, recreational facilities and green spaces, active living

EXISTING
CONDITIONS

Food and Nutrition

Food insecurity, as defined by the USDA, is the lack of access to sufficient food for an active, healthy life due to limited financial resources. It is closely linked to adverse social and health outcomes and is recognized as a significant public health issue. In Liberty County, food insecurity affects 18.4% of residents or approximately 17,230 individuals. According to Feeding America, this reflects the number of people, including children, living in households without consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Among those facing food insecurity, 65% are eligible for federal assistance through programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), while 35% fall above the eligibility threshold, indicating a gap in support for many residents. Currently, local faith-based organizations and nonprofits are supporting food access by partnering with the Houston Food Bank. These organizations help distribute food to those in need, supplement federal programs, and provide additional resources. Additionally, ISDs and Lee Community College

participate in federal nutrition programs, providing free or reduced-cost meals to students.

The Food Access Research Atlas (FARA) provides information about how easily people in a neighborhood or community can access stores that sell a variety of healthy and affordable food. USDA ERS uses the term "low-income and low-access" to describe areas with limited access to healthy food. FARA looks at three types of food stores: supercenters, supermarkets, and large grocery stores.

Estimated Program Eligibility Among Food Insecure People In Liberty County, Texas

Above SNAP threshold 35%

Below SNAP threshold 65%
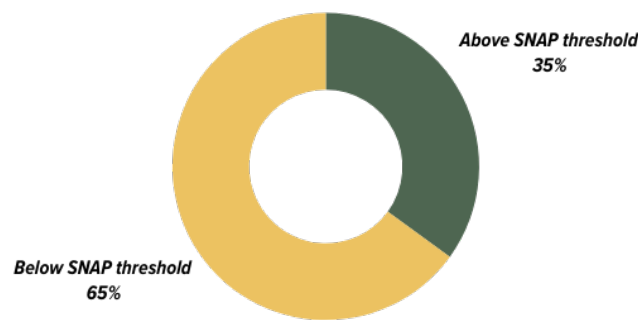
2022 Food Insecurity In Liberty County, Texas

Food Insecure Population In Liberty County, Texas: 17,230

Food Insecurity Rate In Liberty County, Texas: *18.4%*

Household receiving food stamps/SNAP: 4428 *15.3%*
U.S. Census Bureau. (2022)

The Food Access Research Atlas (FARA) shows a neighborhood or community's access to food stores that offer a variety of healthy and affordable food. Since 2013, USDA ERS has used the term "low-income and low-access" to designate areas with limited access to healthy food as it more accurately reflects what is statistically measured in FARA. FARA uses three store types: supercenters, supermarkets, and large grocery stores.
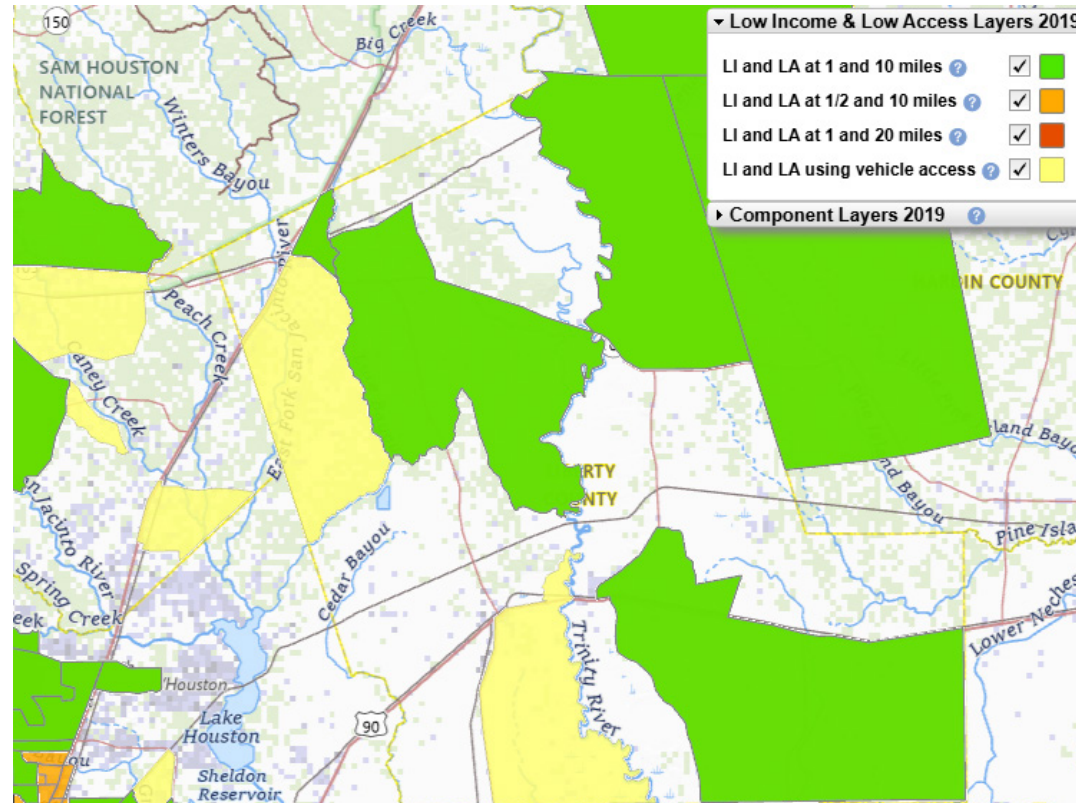
Figure 8.1: "Low-income" and "low-access" designated areas
Source: Food Access Research Atlas (FARA)

EXISTING
CONDITIONS

Facilities and Services

Healthcare services in Liberty County are primarily concentrated in the cities of Cleveland, Liberty, and Dayton, with limited options available in other areas. The Liberty Dayton Regional Medical Center serves as the main hospital in the county, providing emergency care, inpatient services, and a range of specialty care. The Health Center of Southeast Texas, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), supports the Cleveland, Liberty, and Dayton areas with a new clinic in the Plum Grove area.

Mental health services are provided by Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare, which offers counseling, psychiatric care, and substance abuse treatment. To address the growing need for mental health services, Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare is expanding with a new facility under construction in Cleveland, scheduled to open in December 2024.

For residents who do not qualify for other state or federal health care assistance programs, the county offers an indigent health care program, providing essential medical services to those in need.

Health insurance coverage remains a challenge in Liberty County, with 26.9% of residents lacking health care coverage, compared to 16.6% statewide, according to the 2022 American Community Survey. In addition to these services, the Liberty County AgriLife Extension's Family and Community Health (FCH) program offers a variety of resources to help residents maintain healthy lifestyles. Programs focus on raising children, housing and environment, nutrition, financial management, and overall health. The FCH also provides Better Living for Texans (BLT) programming, which is part of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education program, aimed at improving the health and well-being of residents through education and support.

Health Insurance U.S. Census Bureau. (2022)

26.9% Without Health Care Coverage in Liberty County, Texas

16.6% Without Health Care Coverage in Texas

PUBLIC
FEEDBACK

Based on the community comments received, several key themes and specific community needs and issues emerge:

Increased demand for health services:
- The rapid growth in Liberty County is driving higher demand for health services, including the need for more clinics, a dialysis center, and a hospital.
- There is a gap in specialty medical services, such as OB-GYNs, mental health facilities, and bilingual psychological services.
- The aging population requires more specialized health facilities and transit options tailored to senior citizens, ensuring they have access to the care they need.

Mental health and substance abuse:
- The community expressed a strong need for more mental health education, resources, and facilities, particularly in response to recent spikes in substance abuse and over-doses.
- The idea of creating a centralized repository for mental health services and resources, potentially as an online database, was proposed to improve access and coordina-tion of care.
- Some services, such as bilingual psychological services, are underutilized, potentially due to lack of awareness or cultural or communication barriers.

Cultural competence and awareness:
- There is a recognized need for culturally competent healthcare services, including more accurate and timely translation services. Outreach efforts must better reso-nate with the county's diverse populations to ensure that all community members can access the care they need.
- Low community awareness of existing health-related resources may contribute to the underutilization of available services, indicating a need for enhanced public education and outreach.

PUBLIC
FEEDBACK

Active living and healthy environment:
- Residents often seek active living opportunities outside the county due to a lack of local options. There is a strong desire for more green spaces, trails, and community gardens within Liberty County to promote active living and community engagement.
- The community also expressed interest in more activities for children, which could help improve overall community health and well-being.
- Pollution due to trash burning and inadequate waste management services are significant concerns.

Food security and nutrition:
- Limited healthy food options and a need for more food banks suggest food insecurity within the community. There is strong support for introducing nutrition and cooking classes and community gardens in schools to promote healthier eating habits. Suggestions for partnerships with local organizations, including schools, to enhance food access were also prominent.
- Several schools in the county participate in federal nutrition programs, providing free or reduced-cost meals to students. There is interest in expanding these programs.
- Many residents rely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and Medicaid to meet their nutritional and healthcare needs.

Transportation barriers:
- Non-drivers face considerable challenges in accessing medical services. Long waits for ambulances further exacerbate this issue, highlighting the need for improved healthcare-related transit solutions.

Overview of Goals

1. Enhance food security and strengthen the local food network to provide a variety of healthy and affordable options

Expanding healthy food options in underserved neighborhoods is essential for improving public health. Food security ensures consistent access to nutritious food and is critical for preventing chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. This section outlines strategies to support building a regional infrastructure that supports local agriculture, farmers' markets, and food-related businesses. By collaborating with stakeholders like the Houston Food Bank, ISDs, local colleges, churches, and community organizations, the community can address food deserts, expand food delivery programs, and improve access to nutritious meals. Additionally, targeted education and outreach programs will raise awareness about nutrition and healthy eating habits, focusing on the needs of low-income families, children, and seniors.

2. Improve public health outcomes and increase access to health services

This section addresses challenges in healthcare provision and builds on the community facilities chapter regarding broadband access for telehealth options. It focuses on enhancing public health by improving collaboration among healthcare providers, expanding access to specialty and community health services, and increasing outreach in low-income and rural areas. A coordinated network of local organizations, healthcare providers, and social services is essential for assessing and meeting community health needs including needs of children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency, and those who are transportation disadvantaged. Increasing outreach to raise awareness of available services will enable residents to utilize local healthcare resources better, leading to improved health outcomes across Liberty County.

3. Promote active living and create a healthy environment

Promoting active living and creating a healthy environment are essential for improving public health. Access to clean, safe environments and opportunities for physical activity directly influences the well-being of individuals and communities. This section outlines strategies that connect environmental quality and public health through waste management, reducing hazard exposure, emergency preparedness, recreational access, and community fitness programs. Enhancing environmental quality and access to recreational facilities and green spaces encourage active living and can lower rates of chronic diseases, contributing to a healthier Liberty County.

GOAL 8.1: ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY
STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL NETWORK

Objective 8.1.1 Establish a locally sourced regional food system to provide a healthy and affordable options.

- **Action 8.1.1.1:** Work with HGAC to establish regional infrastructure and distribution mechanisms to support farmers markets, local agriculture, and other means to provide fresh, healthy food to residents.

- **Action 8.1.1.2:** Partner with cities and local community groups to identify opportunities and locations for community gardens, mobile food vendor areas, and farmers markets.

- **Action 8.1.1.3:** Encourage the establishment of food-related businesses such as small-scale food processing units, local grocery store, and local food stalls that source products from local farmers.

- **Action 8.1.1.4:** Work with ISDs, colleges, and senior centers to increase participation in existing lunch and breakfast programs, the summer school food services, and Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Objective 8.1.2 Address access to nutritious food and extend deliveries in food deserts.

- **Action 8.1.2.1:** Form a coalition with key stakeholders such as Houston Food Bank, other food pantries, meal-providers, faith based communities, ISDs, and senior citizen centers to coordinate food distribution and educational efforts.

- **Action 8.1.2.2:** Identify areas with issues with access to food and gaps in the food distribution infrastructure.

- **Action 8.1.2.3:** Create produce rescue programs through existing stores; use proceeds to fund grocery delivery to underserved areas.

- **Action 8.1.2.4:** Partner with churches and Food Banks on unprocessed frozen food drives.

- **Action 8.1.2.5:** Expand home-delivery strategies for federal nutrition programs, charitable meals, and other local food programs.

Objective 8.1.3 Promote outreach and education on nutrition and healthy eating habits.

- **Action 8.1.3.1:** Request that Food Banks collect food habit data using anonymized surveys.

- **Action 8.1.3.2:** Offer free classes through ISDs, Lee College, Lone Star College, Food Bank, community centers, senior centers, and churches on nutrition education and cooking demonstrations.

- **Action 8.1.3.3:** Partner with AgriLife Extension and Food Banks to develop a county nutrition plan.

- **Action 8.1.3.4:** Develop outreach materials and sessions specifically tailored to the needs of diverse community groups, including seniors, low-income families, and immigrant communities.

- **Action 8.1.3.5:** Conduct annual food fairs and agriculture shows that not only promote local products but also educate the public on the importance of supporting local agriculture.

- **Action 8.1.3.6:** Set up registration drives for SNAP and other state benefits at community events, churches, and other local gatherings.

- **Action 8.1.3.7:** Collaborate with organizations working closely with non-English speaking communities to identify needs and ensure information is available in multiple languages.

Case Study:
Harris County Food and Nutrition Program

Food insecurity and limited access to nutritious food are pressing issues that affect the health and well-being of communities. The Harris County Food and Nutrition Program, under the Community Health and Wellness Division focuses on:
- Through partnerships, the program enhances access to fresh produce in underserved areas via community connections, mobile markets, and school programs.
- Acting as an umbrella organization, it offers small grants to local food providers to build capacity and improve distribution infrastructure.
- By targeting neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and known food deserts, the program ensures that aid reaches those most in need.
- Offering nutrition education and cooking demonstrations to encourage healthy eating habits.
- Increasing visibility and enrollment in state benefits.

Drawing inspiration from Harris County's Food & Nutrition program, Liberty County can implement similar initiatives to enhance food security, strengthen the local food network, and improve health outcomes for its residents.

Source: Harris County Food and Nutrition Program

GOAL 8.2: IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH OUTCOMES AND INCREASE ACCESS

Objective 8.2.1 Improve coordination among healthcare providers in Liberty County.

- **Action 8.2.1.1:** Expand the working group of local community organizations, social service providers, and health care providers in the area to assess community health needs.

- **Action 8.2.1.2:** Support HGAC's Our Great Region 2040 goal to create a regional task force that works across multiple disciplines (health departments, public safety) to address mental health issues.

- **Action 8.2.1.3:** Create a county health department to assess need and direct residents to the appropriate providers.

- **Action 8.2.1.4:** Extend healthcare services to the broader community through public schools and expand the pilot in-school psychiatric services.

- **Action 8.2.1.5:** Strengthen relationships between behavioral health systems, health-care providers, law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

- **Action 8.2.1.6:** Continue supporting and expanding mental health focused law enforcement staff in the County.

- **Action 8.2.1.7:** Work collaboratively with cities, hospital district, ISDs, and health care providers to apply for grants that fund integrated health projects, such as those focusing on community wellness, mental health, and chronic disease management.

- **Action 8.2.1.8:** Organize joint training sessions for staff and volunteers across organizations for a unified approach to health service delivery and emergency responsiveness.

Objective 8.2.2 Promote outreach and education on nutrition and healthy eating habits.

- **Action 8.2.2.1:** Attract specialty providers (cardio, ob-gyn, etc.) to County for multiple weekly visits by working with health care providers like Liberty Dayton Regional Medical Center and Health Center of Southeast Texas.

- **Action 8.2.2.2:** Coordinate specialist appointments with outside hospitals and work with BTD to provide monthly transportation for residents to these hospitals.

- **Action 8.2.2.3:** Work with Tri-County Behavioral Health and Health Center of Southeast Texas to identify mental needs, promote existing services, and support expanding community resources for mental health services.

- **Action 8.2.2.4:** Collaborate with healthcare providers and the Liberty County Long Term Recovery Committee to develop and implement plans for emergency healthcare services during disasters.

- **Action 8.2.2.5:** Work with developers, private institutions and non-profit organizations to invest in health services by providing attractive tax incentives and discounted land rates. (2015 PLAN)

Objective 8.2.3 Expand availability of community health services and trauma care, particularly in low-income and rural areas.

- **Action 8.2.3.1:** Establish telemedicine and online health education service through USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants and FCC's Rural Health Care Program.

- **Action 8.2.3.2:** Partner with education institutions for a program to have medical students and EMS-in-training conduct organized rounds and house calls as part of their degree/certification.

- **Action 8.2.3.3:** Consider health facilities in adjacent counties and collaborate with counties to expand Liberty County Indigent Health Care Program (CIHCP) transportation services, and other health facilities. (2015 PLAN)

- **Action 8.2.3.4:** Encourage cities to identify suitable locations for future health care and senior centers and zone them appropriately to ensure facilitated development of such facilities when market demand spurs private development of such facilities. (2015 PLAN)

- **Action 8.2.3.5:** Host community health fairs that feature demonstrations, health screenings, and information sessions on nutrition and physical activity.

Case Study: Transportation Solutions for Healthcare Access

West County Health Centers (WCHC) in Sonoma County, California, serves a largely low-income and rural population, with many patients lacking reliable transportation to attend medical appointments. To address this issue, WCHC partnered with Hitch Health, a service that integrates clinic electronic health records with the rideshare platform Lyft to provide transportation for patients.

Key Outcomes:
- Out of 2,096 eligible patients, 56 (3%) accepted a ride invitation, and 35 of those patients (62%) used the service to attend their appointments.
- The service helped reduce missed appointments.
- Patients who used the service indicated that without it, they might have canceled or rescheduled their appointments or relied on less convenient alternatives like buses or taxis.

Lessons Learned:
- Ride acceptance rates increased as patients became more familiar with the service, highlighting the importance of allowing for a natural "ramping up" period when introducing new solutions.
- Addressing transportation barriers can improve healthcare access, particularly for underserved populations
- Technology and partnerships can assist in addressing barriers.

Source: Center for Care Innovations.

GOAL 8.3: PROMOTE ACTIVE LIFE
CREATE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Objective 8.3.1 Enhance environmental quality by advancing waste management practices and reducing hazard exposure.

- **Action 8.3.1.1:** Explore PPPs for collection/disposal of trash and hazardous wastes.

- **Action 8.3.1.2:** Consider incentives and rewards to encourage the proper disposal of wastes by residents and businesses.

- **Action 8.3.1.3:** Identify all federal and state programs that incentivize remediation, restoration, and cleanup of water and soil.

- **Action 8.3.1.4:** Promote built and natural infrastructure to mitigate air, water and noise pollution for residents living in close proximity to pollutant.

Objective 8.3.2 Prepare the community for emergencies.

- **Action 8.3.2.1:** Prepare and regularly update emergency response plans for public health emergencies, including the stockpiling of necessary medical supplies and the training of emergency response teams.

- **Action 8.3.2.2:** Create online and printed guides on emergency preparedness for residents (build a kit, tips for safety and rebuilding).

Objective 8.3.3 Increase public access to recreational facilities and green spaces.

- **Action 8.3.3.1:** Work with municipalities and developers to identify potential sites for new parks and upgrade existing facilities with modern equipment, amenities, and natural elements.

- **Action 8.3.3.2:** Create trails/greenways to connect neighborhoods, major natural areas, parks, and recreation facilities, and education centers to enhance and extend the recreational experience.

- **Action 8.3.3.3:** Encourage municipalities to pass complete streets ordinances.

Objective 8.3.4 Promote community-based active living programs.

- **Action 8.3.4.1:** Work with ISDs to incorporate more school field trips and activities in the County's natural reserves and parks.

- **Action 8.3.4.2:** Launch fitness challenges, walking clubs, and cycling events to encourage regular physical activity.

- **Action 8.3.4.3:** Partner with local gyms, health clubs, and other local businesses to provide resources, participate in community events, and sponsor public health community programs.

- **Action 8.3.4.4:** Collaborate with senior centers to offer recreational programs tailored to seniors, which could include activities like low-impact aerobics, gardening clubs, and book clubs.

- **Action 8.3.4.5:** Utilize facilities like the Cleveland Civic Center and Dayton Community Center to host regular social events, community gatherings, or themed community days, such as "Family Fitness Day" or "Senior Health Fair."

Biophilic Design

Biophilic design integrates natural elements into buildings and public spaces, connecting people with nature to enhance well-being. This approach includes using natural materials, maximizing natural light, and incorporating green spaces like parks and gardens. Biophilic design can improve mental and physical health, increase productivity, and support biodiversity.

Small investments involving very low or no up-front cost, such as providing users access to plants, natural views, daylight, and other biophilic design elements, can lead to hospitals that allow patients to heal more quickly, offices that boost productivity, schools that improve test scores, and retail outlets with higher sales. Providing adequate daylighting can help reduce student absenteeism, while exposure to nature could be used as a way to minimize symptoms of ADD and ADHD in children.

The county can promote biophilic design by incorporating natural elements like plants, natural lighting, and green spaces into public buildings, schools, and community facilities to enhance residents' connection with nature. This initiative can improve community well-being.

CHAPTER 9
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

MOVING TO ACTION

Liberty County Strategic Plan 2025 - 2024 should be used to make decisions in the County and in collaboration with the cities within the County. Moving to action from the plan will require various community leaders to coordinate and work together to achieve the goals and objectives desired. This chapter includes an implementation table that lists all action steps, which are broken down by chapter and associated with the goals and objectives identified in each chapter. The table provides guidance on the tasks which should be accomplished in the short-term or long-term, as well as the type of action it is. Actions cannot be achieved without 'action leaders', or groups that will be responsible for seeing the implementation of each task. To ease the financial burden of some actions, a list of funding sources and grant opportunities is also provided.

The County Commissioners Court should work closely with the Strategic Planning Team to set up subcommittees based on the various action leaders responsible for tasks. The Commissioners Court, with assistance from the Strategic Planning Team, should prepare an annual progress report. This ensures there is accountability and a consistent compass toward achieving the goals set out in the plan. The Annual Progress Report should include:

- Accomplished actions over the last year, as well as the status of each action item
- Obstacles and problems in implementing the actions
- Proposed amendments to the action items
- Proposed additional action items

Liberty County Strategic Plan 2024 is a 'living document' that should be regularly visited.

INITIATE

The Action Tasks table contains information regarding the suggested time frame for each of the Action Steps, separated into four categories:
1. Short-term: 0 - 5 years
2. Medium-term: 5 - 10 years
3. Long-term: 10 - 20 years
4. Continuous ("ON-GOING")

ACTION TYPE

Capital Project
The Capital Project Action Type means there will be a significant investment in order to achieve the action item. Capital projects should be included in the capital improvement program (CIP) for the County and/or cities and can include infrastructure, drainage improvements, parks facilities, public buildings, etc.

Program
The Program Action Type refers to routine activities, special projects, or initiatives taken on by the County, cities, or other organization. This can include community outreach efforts, special training, etc.

Regulation or Standard
The Regulation or Standard Action Type refers to the local government policies that can be adopted as a part of development regulations, ordinances, and other County and City standards. There are typically little to no costs associated with this action type and really are the 'low hanging fruit' for long-term success.

Partnership or Collaboration
The Partnership or Collaboration Action Type refers to action steps that require additional partners or coordination with other agencies, organizations, or companies. In many ways this is the most critical action type and developing relationships with other partners will yield a connected and resilient community.

More Targeted Planning
The More Targeted Planning Action Type refers to actions that are related to additional studies, plans, reports, etc. Typically these studies are needed for a more detailed analysis of conditions or more specific solutions.

ACTION
LEADERS

Because each of Liberty County's cities has a different department nomenclature, codes have been created to identify responsible organizations and departments. Entities are classified as follows:

ADM: County Judge, Commissioner Court, administration, secretary, human resources, and finance
PLAN: Cities, Planning, Floodplain Management
ENG: County Engineering
EM: Emergency Management
PI: Permit and Inspections
FD: Fire Departments
PD: Police Departments
EDU: School Districts, Colleges
EDC: Economic Development Corporations
COC: Chambers' of Commerce
BUS: Businesses and stakeholders
SRV: Services
FCL: Facilities
HS: Housing Authority and Services
DEV: Developers
AGEX: AgriLife Extension Service
SUD: Special Utility District
MUD: Municipal Utility District
RAIL: Union Pacific/BNSF
HP: Health Providers
SSP: Social Service Providers
COM: Community Groups

FUNDING

Many funding sources, both internal and external, are available to assist Liberty County in accomplishing goals. Internal resources refer to taxes and fees to support the action item. External resources are numerous, and may also include public-private partnerships with external partners such as developers. The Funding column in the Action Tasks table provides some suggestions for funding sources or grants.

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
Goal 3.1: Unite our communities and actively coordinate our regional efforts.											
3.1.1 *3.1.1.1* Expand the inter-organizational council with membership open to all cities, unincorporated communities, special districts, and a broader range of stakeholders for regional planning and land management.	X							X		ADM, PLAN, MUD, SUD	*- Sustainable Communities Investment Planning Grants*
3.1.1.2 Implement an annual program to facilitate active collaboration among all members, focusing on growth management, conservation efforts, and sustainable land use practices.		X						X		ADM, PLAN	*- Capacity Building for Sustainable Communities*
3.1.1.3 Develop a process to discuss and approve all future amendments and changes of development codes by the County Commissioners Court, with consultation by the inter-organizations referenced above.		X					X			ADM, PLAN	
3.1.1.4 Regularly participate in the Houston-Galveston Area Council meetings to connect regional goals, initiatives, and funding to the County.	X							X		ADM, PLAN, HGAC	
3.1.1.5 Continue to work with HGAC, the County Emergency Manager, and cities to monitor, evaluate and update hazard mitigation plan, based on the new and changing conditions in each jurisdiction.	X								X	ADM, PLAN	
3.1.2 *3.1.2.1* Regularly communicate with cities to stay informed on new development, annexation plans, and encourage alignment with the county plan for regional growth and land management.	X							X		ADM, PLAN	*- Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities*
3.1.2.2 Discuss the future land use with all the municipalities to encourage future growth in the transition development areas to support efficient provision of community services and infrastructure.		X						X		ADM, PLAN	
3.1.2.3 Work with cities to identify and market areas for infill development and redevelopment based on infrastructure availability.		X						X		ADM, PLAN	

Chapter 3: Development Considerations

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
3.1.2.4 Enhance cooperation with cities within the County, particularly in the high growth areas, to encourage adoption of stricter regulations with two feet base flood elevation, and higher drainage standards.		X					X			ADM, PLAN, PI, EM, ENG	
3.1.2.5 Develop interlocal agreements to share resources related to development reviews, platting, and code enforcement between the County and the cities.		X					X			ADM, PLAN	
Goal 3.2: Build community resilience by reducing hazard exposure within the County.											
3.2.1.1 Adjust permitting process to coordinate with water, electricity, phone/internet providers, emergency management office, school districts, and Liberty County Central Appraisal District before development occurs.		X					X			ADM, PLAN, PI, EM, EDU, SRV, FD, PD	
3.2.1.2 Continue including Fire Marshal and County Engineer in the permitting process before the commissioners court approval.	X							X		ADM, PLAN, PI, EM, FD, PD	
3.2.1.3 Require hazard risk assessment studies for large development applications in the vicinity of hazard prone areas.		X					X			ADM, PLAN, ENG	
3.2.1.4 Adopt stronger building codes, such as the latest SmartHome America's FORTIFIED Standard and the latest International Building Codes.		X					X			ADM, PLAN, ENG	
3.2.1.5 Work with County Commissioners and the Engineering Department to update the roads and drainage standards for subdivisions and developments in the county.		X					X			ADM, PLAN, ENG	
3.2.1.6 Develop and implement a regularly updated digital GIS-based inventory for all SFHAs structures, substantial damaged properties and repetitive loss properties regardless of the cause.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, PI, ENG, EM	
3.2.1.7 Apply to the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, EM	

3.2.1

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
3.2.1.8 Create a central repository of information and a coordination mechanism among all entities involved in development regulation and drainage management (e.g., small drainage districts, water control and improvement districts, special utility districts).	X					X				ADM, PLAN, EM	
3.2.1.9 Complete county-wide drainage study and create a county-wide drainage district to implement impact fees for drainage infrastructure.	X								X	ADM, PLAN, ENG, EM, MUD, SUD	
3.2.2 *3.2.2.1* Evaluate staff capacity and consider adding designated staff for development oversight in each precinct.	X					X				ADM, PLAN, EM, PI, ENG, FD, PD	
3.2.2.2 Hire additional building inspectors to enforce the updated floodplain damage ordinance through Sheriff's Office and Floodplain Administrator, ensuring constructions are elevated two feet above the base flood elevation and incorporate ATLAS 14 data for rainfall determinations.	X				X					ADM, PLAN, EM, PI, PD, ENG	
3.2.2.3 Adopt permitting and inspections fees.	X						X			ADM, PLAN, EM	
3.2.2.4 Develop a succession and training plan for the Floodplain Administrator role to ensure there is continuity for the role.	X					X				ADM, PLAN, EM	
3.2.2.5 Conduct staff training sessions on the new digital inventory system to ensure effective use and maintenance.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, EM, PI, PD, ENG	
3.2.3 *3.2.3.1* Establish partnerships with professional organizations for damage assessment support in line with state and NFIP protocols, incorporating advanced risk reduction strategies.		X						X		ADM, PLAN, PI, EM, ENG	
3.2.3.2 Forge partnerships with nonprofits, and universities for quick spatial data analysis and support in mapping and planning efforts.	X							X		ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.3.3 Utilize GIS tools and collect essential early damage assessment information, including high-water marks and aerial disaster impact pictures.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
3.2.3.4 Use and regularly update the Substantial Damage Estimator (SDE) software with information on all structures in SF HAs and improve software flexibility.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.3.5 Implement consistent training programs for local officials to maintain equitable and defendable records throughout the substantial damage evaluation process.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.3.6 Enhance internal capacity by training staff in substantial damage estimations to expedite the evaluation process without over-reliance on external assistance.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.3.7 Train staff on the Individual State of Texas Assessment Tool(iSTAT) Damage Survey process and distribute the survey and instructions to residents through the County website and flyers in community centers.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.3.8 Include GIS staff, tax assessors, and floodplain management administrators in emergency operations planning for efficient data sharing and recovery efforts.		X						X		ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.3.9 Provide training for elected officials to communicate effectively about post-disaster mitigation options, ensuring clarity and support for substantial damage activities.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.4 *3.2.4.1* Consider the impacts outside SFHAs and update flood risk information to reflect current realities.		X							X	ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	*- Conservation Reserve Program*
3.2.4.2 Implement a communication strategy to inform and engage homeowners in targeted areas on the benefits and process of voluntary buyouts, ensuring fair and transparent dealings.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.4.3 Partner with local and state conservation agencies like TWPD to plan the repurposing of acquired lands into green spaces, flood mitigation areas, or recreational parks to benefit the broader community.			X					X		ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.5 *3.2.5.1* Create brochures to educate landowners and developers on the newly adopted floodplain regulations, other existing regulations, and information on what local governments can and cannot do.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	

Chapter 3: Development Considerations

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
3.2.5.2 Regularly update the County website with hazard risk information, adopted regulations, and newly updated hazard mitigation plan.	X					X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.5.3 Provide targeted assistance to property owners in the 100-year floodplain for retrofitting existing structures to meet new flood-proofing and elevation standards.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.5.4 Develop resources to educate potential homebuyers on the flood risk and the ongoing buyout programs in targeted areas along the Trinity River.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.5.5 Implement educational programs about the benefits of flood insurance, regardless of SFHA status, targeting misinformation and communicating changing flood risks.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	
3.2.5.6 Connect real estate agents to FEMA resource to train them to accurately convey flood risks and insurance needs to clients.		X						X		ADM, PLAN, EM, ENG	

Goal 3.3 Protect and preserve the natural environment.

	Actions	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
3.3.1	*3.3.1.1* Coordinate with federal, state, and local governments, community groups, and private landowners to promote long-term preservation of farmlands.	X							X		ADM, PLAN, AGEX	*- Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)*
	3.3.1.2 Promote easement for agricultural land to ensure protecting working farmlands through *USDA's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)*.		X				X				ADM, PLAN	
	3.3.1.3 Develop incentives for continued rural and resource uses, like tax breaks or rural agriculture development districts.		X				X				ADM, PLAN	
	3.3.1.4 Connect landowners to conservation partners like *Texas Land Conservancy* for education on ways to conserve their land and maintain the rural landscape.		X						X		ADM, PLAN, AGEX	
3.3.2	*3.3.2.1* Align with HGAC Our Region 2040's initiative to conserve natural assets and look for opportunities for multi-benefit green infrastructure projects and designing with nature, and expanding the region's network of open space and trails along waterways and floodplain.		X			X			X		ADM, PLAN	

Chapter 3: Development Considerations

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
3.3.2.2 Identify and preserve key natural areas like wetlands and other critical areas through partnerships with TPWD, land trusts, TWDB, and other organizations.		X			X				X	ADM, PLAN	
3.3.2.3 Work with HGAC to create watershed protection plans to protect regional recharge zones, water sources, waterways, and wetland buffer areas.			X					X	X	ADM, PLAN	*- Outdoor Recreation Grants* *- Recreational Trail Grants* *- Community Outdoor Outreach Program (CO-OP) Grants*
3.3.2.4 Explore funding opportunities to acquire high risk flood prone land for open space and stormwater management practices, such as detention areas.			X			X				ADM, PLAN	
3.3.2.5 Incorporate parks and open spaces into new subdivision regulations to requiring developers to build parks and green spaces within new developments		X					X			ADM, PLAN	
3.3.2.6 Require developers to establish maintenance of parks and open space within new developments through HOAs.		X					X			ADM, PLAN	
3.3.2.7 Require trails/greenways to connect neighborhoods, major natural areas, parks, and recreation facilities, and education centers to enhance and extend the recreational experience.			X				X			ADM, PLAN	
3.3.3 *3.3.3.1* Determine suitable areas for renewable energy including assessing impacts to natural and cultural resources and environment.		X							X	ADM, PLAN	
3.3.3.2 Consider strategies and regulations to assess and minimize the impacts of renewable energy development (e.g roadway maintenance, decommissioning).			X			X				ADM, PLAN	
3.3.3.3 Implement holistic oil and gas regulations so that oil extraction is contained within a certain areas, making it less hazardous for habitats and visitors.			x			X				ADM, PLAN	
3.3.3.4 Explore opportunities for brownfield identification and remediation.			X						X	ADM, PLAN	

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
Goal 4.1: Improve the safety of the transportation system.											
4.1.1 *4.1.1.1* Provide more efficient signage in intersections, roundabout, and freeway exits in Cleveland and Plum Grove, and throughout the County.		X			X					ADM, PLAN, TxDOT	
4.1.1.2 Work with Cities to ensure safe connectivity through the County by reducing high speed traffic.			X					X		ADM, PLAN, TxDOT	
4.1.1.3 Widen SH 99 to reduce crashes due to overtaking maneuvers.				X	X					ADM, PLAN	
4.1.2 *4.1.2.1* Complete a walk audit and rate overall conditions, accessibility, safety and comfort.	X	X							X	ADM, PLAN	*- National Complete Streets Coalition*
4.1.2.2 Work with Cities to repair and replace current sidewalks within Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland city boundaries.			X		X			X		ADM, PLAN	*- TxDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program*
4.1.2.3 Encourage municipalities to adopt Complete Streets policies and increase sidewalks, which improve access for pedestrians of all abilities.				X			X	X		ADM, PLAN	*- Hazard Elimination and Railway-Highway Crossing Program*
4.1.3 *4.1.3.1* Assist Cleveland ISD in increasing the safety of pedestrians in crosswalks in Plum Grove by providing better lighting and signage improvements.		X			X			X		ADM, PLAN, EDU	*- Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program*
4.1.3.2 Adopt high-visibility crosswalk and pedestrian shelter design guidelines for roads within county jurisdiction.			X				X			ADM, PLAN	
4.1.3.3 Implement a county-wide Safe Routes to Schools Program.	X	X				X				ADM, PLAN, EDU	
Goal 2: Provide travelers with sustainable transportation options.											
4.2.1 *4.2.1.1* Work with city agencies and BTD to promote cycling and walking to public transportation stations by making these connecting trips easier, faster, and safer.	X				X	X		X		ADM, PLAN, BTD	
4.2.1.2 Work with BTD to survey residents about the riding experiences to improve the quality of services.			X					X		ADM, PLAN, BTD	*- Transit Cooperative Research Program (5313)*
4.2.1.3 Coordinate with TxDOT and BTD to establish a county-wide public transit plan to increase the accessibility of public transportation for residents.				X				X	X	ADM, PLAN, BTD, TxDOT	
4.2.1.4 Work with HGAC Transportation Policy Council to include Liberty County in any mass transit plans going forward.			X					X		ADM, PLAN, H-GAC	

Chapter 4: Transportation

	Actions	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	4.2.1.5 Establish the park and ride lots to connect Houston METRO stations.			X		X			X		ADM, PLAN, H-GAC	
	4.2.1.6 Cooperate with Houston METRO to coordinate express bus service in the City of Dayton within 5 – 10 years.				X				X		ADM, PLAN, H-GAC	
4.2.2	*4.2.2.1* Adhere to the H-GAC Bikeway Viewer and TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trails Example Network to propose the new bikeways county-wide.		X							X	ADM, PLAN, H-GAC	*- Safe Routes to School*
	4.2.2.2 Encourage Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland to develop city bicycle plans.		X						X	X	ADM, PLAN	
	4.2.2.3 Work with Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland to create new bikeways as outlined in the Bike/Pedestrian Plan section.			X		X			X		ADM, PLAN	
	4.2.2.4 Coordinate with the bikeway improvement from Liberty County Mobility Study (H-GAC) by following the standards for sidewalk development.		X						X		ADM, PLAN, H-GAC	
	4.2.2.5 Conduct a Pedestrian and Bicycle Road Safety Audit in Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland to determine areas with the greatest need for sidewalks.		X						X	X	ADM, PLAN	
	4.2.2.6 Encourage cities to improve thermal comfort for pedestrians by providing shade trees and man-made shade structures along sidewalks.			X		X	X		X		ADM, PLAN	
	Goal 3: Provide a high-quality road system.											
4.3.1	*4.3.1.1* Create a realistic and thorough maintenance schedule.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, ENG	
	4.3.1.2 Update maintenance schedule on a semi-annual basis.	X					X				ADM, PLAN, ENG	
	4.3.1.3 Develop an easy-to-use system for reporting, prioritizing, and updating safety/quality issues.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, ENG	*- Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program (TPCB)*
	4.3.1.4 Prioritize regular road and bridges inspections, monitoring, and maintenance of roads and bridges that frequently flood or at risk of damages, especially prior to hurricane season.		X					X			ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT, FD, PD	
	4.3.1.5 Include storm sewer, ditch, and vegetation maintenance tasks in the maintenance schedule for safety considerations and drainage functionality		X					X			ADM, PLAN, ENG	

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
4.3.1.6 Train staff and create a process for prompt and safe damage assessments and repairs of roads and bridges after flooding events.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, ENG	
4.3.2 *4.3.2.1* Provide better drainage along SH 321 to prevent flooding in the rail underpass in north Dayton. Upgrade/replace water pump to permanent backup power (generator) through HGAC		X				X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.2.2 Provide extension of bypass FM 1413 loop to bypass the the intersection of US 90, SH 146, FM 1409, FM 1008, and SH 321 in Dayton (Table 6, No. 5).			X			X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.2.3 Widen principal arterial roads SH 321, SH 105, SH 99 ramp, and US 90 from 2 to 4 lanes and create an addition left turn lane at SH 146 and US 90 (Table 6, No. 2-4, 9, 11).				X		X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.2.4 Winden Hwy 146N from Loop 227 (Main Street) and the Hwy 146 Bypass to North of Hardin.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.2.5 Widen FM 563 from Hwy 90 south to the Liberty County Line.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.2.6 Implement grade separations at SH 321 and SH 105; US 90 at UPRR; and SH 573 at UPRR (Table 6, No. 1, 8,10).			X			X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.2.7 Extend SH 105 loop and proposed roadway at FM 787 (Table 6, No. 6-7).				X		X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.2.8 Raise and extend the Trinity River Bridge on FM 787 to match ATLAS 14 standards.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	*- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)*
4.3.2.8 Work with TxDOT to relocate the Trinity River Bridge to a safer area.		X				X		X		ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.2.9 Widen and improve drainage on FM 2025 at US 59 in Cleveland area.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.2.10 Inspect road quality and upgrade frequently flooded roads including CR 388 (Low Water Bridge Rd.) and FM 1725 in Cleveland area.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.2.11 Widen FM 1010 from two lanes to four lanes and replace Plum grove Bridge on FM 1010 and 3550.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	

Chapter 4: Transportation

	Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
		On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
	4.3.2.12 Re-route County Road 2331 in Dayton Lakes Estates to area not prone to flooding.			X		X					ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
	4.3.2.13 Inspect road quality and upgrade frequently flooded roads in South Liberty County including FM 563.		X			X					ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
	4.3.2.14 Collaborate with TxDOT and HGAC for the Southeast Texas Truck Parking Plan to explore developing truck parking areas along IH-69 N and SH 105 near Cleveland and along SH 99 corridor near Dayton using new Category 10 Carbon Reduction			X		X			X	X	ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
	4.3.2.15 Work with TxDOT to get SH 99 Heavy Truck Route Pilot Program extended to the new segment of SH 99 all the way to			X		X			X		ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
	4.3.2.16 Adopt a County Thoroughfare Plan and connect with Chambers County, Harris County, and Montgomery County for regional coordination of thoroughfare plans.			X					X	X	ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
4.3.3	*4.3.3.1* Encourage cities to adapt and adopt established road development and safety standards. Create high road development and safety standards.		X					X	X		ADM, PLAN, ENG	
	4.3.3.2 Plan and improve the road network in Plum Grove, keeping in mind the rapid growth of this area.			X		X				X	ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
	4.3.3.3 Facilitate coordination between TxDOT and rapidly-growing developments early in the development process.		X						X		ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	
	4.3.3.4 Develop County Corridor Agreement Program through TxDOT to identify future transportation corridors within the County.			X			X		X		ADM, PLAN, ENG, TxDOT	

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
Goal 5.1 Increase the range of housing options, particularly senior and multi-family homes											
5.1.1 *5.1.1.1* Incentivize senior home construction via universal design principles in existing neighborhoods to create accessible, age-mixed communities. Incentives may include waiving permit and development fees.	X					X	X			ADM, PLAN	
5.1.1.2 Require/build communal neighborhood amenities for senior housing.			X				X			ADM, PLAN	
5.1.1.3 Proactively reach out to affordable housing developers to reduce housing cost burden for low income residents of Liberty County, particularly those with an annual income of $35,000 or less.	X							X		ADM, PLAN, HA	
5.1.2 *5.1.2.1* Incentivize new construction, conversion, and upcycle to apartments by removing any regulatory barriers to conversion to middle density housing.			X			X				ADM, PLAN	*- HOME American Rescue Plan*
5.1.2.3 Encourage cities to zone for multifamily housing.	X							X		ADM, PLAN	
5.1.3 *5.1.3.1* Subsidize upgrades to uninhabitable and/or vacant homes via grants and loans (e.g. Community Development Block Grants and Single Family Housing Repair Grants).	X					X				ADM, PLAN	*- Single Family Repair Loans and Grants*
5.1.3.2 Allow sub-lease of ADUs for owner-occupied single-family homes.	X					X	X			ADM, PLAN	
5.1.4 *5.1.4.1* Create more complete neighborhoods of manufactured homes by planning for recreation, retail, educational facilities, public safety and fire, etc.			X			X		X		ADM, PLAN	*- Neighborhood Stabilization Program*
5.1.4.2 Work with cities to allow for tiny home construction in designated residential areas.			X				X	X		ADM, PLAN	

Chapter 5: Housing

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
Goal 5.2 Encourage high quality housing through enforcement of building standards and flood protection											
5.2.1 *5.2.1.1* Broaden the range of responders that can carry out inspections by hiring and training additional staff.	X				X	X				ADM, PLAN, ENG, PI, EM, FD, PD	*- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program*
5.2.1.2 Publish homeowner guide on the harms of living in substandard units and methods to improve and repair a home.	X					X		X		ADM, PLAN	
5.2.1.3 Create higher development standards specifically regarding updated building codes and subdivision regulations.			X				X			ADM, PLAN	
5.2.1.4 Enforce building codes to ensure new construction meets minimum standards for safety and habitability.	X						X			ADM, PLAN, ENG, EM	
5.2.2 *5.2.2.1* Require disaster-proofing (structural reinforcement, rapid rebuild, etc.) for buildings within the 100 year floodplain.	X						X			ADM, PLAN, ENG, EM	*- Sustainable Communities Initiative*
5.2.2.2 Subsidize upgrades to occupied housing units.		X				X				ADM, PLAN	
5.2.2.3 Increase education & outreach of disaster recovery process by working with County Long Term Recovery Group.	X					X				ADM, PLAN	
Goal 5.3 Reduce housing cost burden for low income residents of Liberty County											
5.3.1 *5.3.1.1* Advertise federal and state affordable housing programs to developers.	X					X		X		ADM, PLAN, HA	
5.3.1.2 Review and update regulatory barriers to affordable housing construction while maintaining regulations that pertain to safety and public health.	X						X			ADM, PLAN, HA	
5.3.1.3 Provide additional county incentives to creation of affordable units.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, HA	
5.3.2 *5.3.2.1* Publish guide on resources and pathways to homeownership.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, HA	
5.3.2.2 Establish community land trusts to assist in purchasing homes.			X			X		X		ADM, PLAN, HA	

Chapter 5: Housing

Actions	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
5.3.2.3 Create a first-time homebuyers program focusing on young teachers, police officers, other workforce, and young families.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, HA	
5.3.3 *5.3.3.1* Create a countywide security deposit assistance program.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, HA	*- Public Housing Agency's Housing Choice Voucher program*
5.3.3.2 Publish guide on rental assistance programs.		X				X				ADM, PLAN, HA	

Goal 5.4 Effectively manage housing growth to ensure resilient and productive communities

Actions	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
5.4.1 *5.4.1.1* Partner with cities and developers on in-fill opportunities.	X							X		ADM, PLAN	
5.4.1.2 Encourage cities to work with developers to encourage construction in areas with existing infrastructure capacity, such as an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.	X							X		ADM, PLAN	
5.4.2 *5.4.2.2* Provide financial and regulatory incentives for building in safe areas.			X			X				ADM, PLAN	*- Texas Bootstrap Loan Program*
5.4.2.3 Expand the buyout program for repetitively flooding areas.				X		X				ADM, PLAN	

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parites and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
Goal 6.1 Industry: Increase employment opportunities by promoting a diverse mix of industries.											
6.1.1 6.1.1.1 Prioritize infrastructure spending on power and electricity in industrial districts		X			X					ADM, ENG, EDC, BUS	*- Community Development Fund (Rural)*
6.1.1.2 Advertise Liberty County as a business friendly location with power and rail infrastructure, land, and untapped labor market		X				X				ADM, EDC, COC, BUS, RAIL	
6.1.1.3 Establish a county EDC and hire and deputize new ED director to develop a plan for manufacturing and economic development		X				X				ADM, EDC	
6.1.1.4 Connect with small businesses specializing in advanced manufacturing to see how the county can support.	X							X		EDC, COC, BUS	
6.1.1.5 Create a guidance and regulations for new businesses to make sure they align with community's vision and are environmentally sound in their business practices.		X					X			ADM, PLAN, EDC	
6.1.2 6.1.2.1 Build on existing infrastructure and partnership to create a regional hub.			X					X		ADM, ENG, EDC, RAIL, TxDOT	
6.1.2.2 Connect all existing warehouses with railways.			X		X					ADM, ENG, RAIL, DEV, BUS	
6.1.3 6.1.3.1 Deputize the new ED to develop a plan for tourism.		X				X				ADM, EDC, COC	
6.1.3.2 Contract universities to conduct study on land and aquatic ecosystems.		X						X	X	ADM, PLAN	
6.1.3.3 Connect with TPWD for advice and support to expand conservation of natural assets for recreational tourism.			X					X		EDC, TPWD	
6.1.3.4 Identify agricultural products that appeal to hunters and fishermen.			X			X				AGEX, EDC, COC	
6.1.3.5 Explore public water recreation to encourage more eco-tourism. When possible, incorporate access to the waterfront and related amenities, such as docks, paddle trail stations, fishing piers, birding stations, or other distinctive features.			X		X				X	PLAN, EDC, TPWD	

Chapter 6: Economic Development

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parites and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
6.1.3. 6 Create a robust physical and online marketing campaign that promotes the County's family-friendly outdoor recreational opportunities emphasizing health, community, and eco-tourism.			X			X				COC, EDC, BUS	
6.2 Commerce: Support existing economic assets and expand opportunities for new businesses.											
6.2.1 6.2.1 .1 Institute a "buy local, make local, grow local" campaign to support local businesses.		X				X				COC, EDC, BUS	- *USDA Rural Business Development Grants*
6.2.1.2 Work with the cities, EDC, and Chambers to develop a business expansion and retention program.		X				X		X		ADM, EDC, COC	
6.2.1.3 Partner with local banks and financial institution to establish a revolving loans to support small businesses.			X			X		X		ADM, EDC, COC, BUS	
6.2.2 6.2.2.1 Reach out to chains and let them know the accurate headcount based on school enrollment.			X			X		X		EDC, COC, BUS	
6.2.2.2 Create open-air markets near Cleveland center, and other high populations areas.			X		X					ADM, PLAN, EDC	
6.2.2.3 Connect immigrant entrepreneurs (and their native suppliers) with family farms to increase small business restaurants.			X			X		X		EDC, COC, BUS, SSP, AGEX	- *Rural Opportunity Catalyst for East Texas (ROC-ET) Initiative*
6.2.2.4 Survey family farms to identify challenges (branding, transport etc.) and assist.			X			X				EDC, COC, BUS, AGEX	
6.2.2.5 Teach restauranteering through College and/or Food Bank.				X		X				EDC, EDU, SSP, HP	
6.2.3 6.2.3.1 Survey residents for what they enjoy in spare time and identify gaps in recreational services in the County.			X			X				EDC, COC, BUS	- *Texas Capital Fund (Rural)*
6.2.3.2 Connect with chains offering low-price entertainment (axe throwing, rope course etc.)				X				X		EDC, COC	
6.3 Workforce: Establish programs to support a robustly skilled and competitive workforce.											
6.3.1 6.3.1.1 Stay up-to-date on near-future industry needs and adjust program offerings accordingly working with ISDs, Lee College, and Lone Star.	X	X				X		X		EDU, EDC, PLAN	

	Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parites and Partners	Funding
		On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
	6.3.1.2 Create flexible, affordable micro-certificate in data science, cyber security, autoshop, radiology and self-employable skills.			X			X				EDU, EDC, HP	
	6.3.1.3 Work with businesses and institutions to develop training in warehousing, logistics, and electric construction.			X			X				PLAN, EDC, BUS, EDU	
	6.3.1.4 Partner with businesses to pay for apprenticeships.			X			X		X		EDC, EDU, BUS	
	6.3.1.5 Expand youth agriculture and livestock programs in ISDs through 4-H and FFA.			X			X		X		EDU, EDC, AGEX	
	6.3.1.6 Establish partnership between Lee College and Emergency Medical Services for EMT student training opportunity.			X			X		X		EDU, EDC, EM, HP	
6.3.2	6.3.2.1 Partner with ISDs and College to create night school and/or peer tutoring for adults.			X			X		X		EDU, EDC	
	6.3.2.2 Explore opportunities with higher education like Satellite MBA program on the weekends.				X		X		X		ADM, EDC, EDU	
	6.3.2.3 Work with Lamar University to start programs focusing on engineering in the county.				X		X		X		ADM, EDC, EDU	
	6.3.2.4 Create micro-courses that can completed online.	X					X				EDU, SSP	
	6.3.2.5 Get local employers on board to fit in 30-min training into everyday work.	X					X				EDC, BUS, ADM	
6.3.3	6.3.3.1 Offer free basic business 101 class through community centers or schools or websites.	X					X				EDu, EDC, SSP	
	6.3.3.2 Survey business 101 enrollees and high school graduates to follow up on their plans to start own businesses.	X					X				EDU, SSP, COC	
	6.3.3.3 Select business class students that show promise for advanced training and financial and legal assistance.			X			X				COC, SSP, BUS	
	6.3.3.4 Create a mentorship programs to pair experienced business owners with startups to help new entrepreneurs better understands the challenges and needs of running a businesses.			X			X		X		COC, BUS	
	6.3.3.5 Establish a business incubator to support local entrepreneurs and startups.				X	X					EDC, COC, BUS	

Chapter 7: Facilities

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
Goal 7.1 Maintain and add community facilities and services that support the human capital of Liberty County residents.											
7.1.1 *7.1.1.1* Encourage coordination between city governments and school districts to produce/update zoning maps, designating land in suitable locations for schools.	X							X		PLAN, EDU, ADM	
7.1.1.2 Work with developers and operators of post-secondary education facilities to identify desired site locations and collaborate to connect utilities and transit/transportation infrastructure connectivity.		X			X			X		ADM, PLAN, DEV, ENG	
7.1.1.3 Encourage ISDs to negotiate with developers for land as part of community benefit agreements.		X					X	X		PLAN, EDU, DEV	
7.1.1.4 Work with cities to get bonds approved for new schools near Cleveland and Dayton.			X			X		X		ADM, PLAN, EDU	*- Public Works and Assistance Program*
7.1.1.5 Recruit popular support for new bond proposals and establish function pro-bond groups.			X			X				ADM, PLAN, EDU	
7.1.1.6 Partner with school districts, Lone Star College, and Lee College to promote and expand the Early College High School (ECHS) and Pathways in Technology ECHS programs in the County.	X	X				X		X		ADM, PLAN, EDU, EDC	
7.1.1.7 Work with Cleveland ISD to evaluate a need for a new school district for Colony Ridge area.			X					X	X	ADM, PLAN, EDU	
7.1.2 *7.1.2.1* Expand representation in the County Coalition to establish a social services support committee that can determine current assets and gaps, including abuse centers, drug abuse centers, senior centers, etc.	X					X				ADM, SSP	
7.1.2.2 Work with the Liberty County Child Welfare Board to determine additional needs for supporting the staff, caregivers, foster parents, and volunteers involved with the protection and welfare of children.		X				X		X		ADM, SSP	

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
7.1.2.3 Work with Brazos Valley Transit District to ensure availability of paratransit services connecting eligible residents across the county to facilities.		X				X				SRV, SSP, HP	
7.1.2.4 Encourage social service organizations to prioritize staff training and develop continuity plan to reduce employee turnover and loss of institutional knowledge.	X					X		X		ADM, SSP, HP	
7.1.2.5 Work with community partners like Texas Familias Council to distribute information on available resources and services by expanding the Navigating Community Resources Booklet.			X			X		X		ADM, SSP, HP	
7.1.3 *7.1.3.1* Assess current county facilities to develop a scope and estimate for infrastructure upgrades and development of future annex facilities to better serve county residents.			X			X				ADM, ENG, FCL	
7.1.3.2 Expand county service and facilities in phases corresponding with incoming revenues.			X		X					ADM, ENG, FCL	
7.1.3.3 Completely prohibit construction of government buildings and special needs facilities like medical facilities, nursing homes, schools, and daycares within the 100 year floodplain.	X	X					X			ADM, PLAN	
7.1.3.4 Prioritize stormwater management and environmental conservation in design for the future community facilities.	X	X				X				ADM, PLAN, ENG	
7.1.3.5 Develop partnerships with the cities, school districts, and other entities for joint use and maintenance of park facilities and athletic fields.			X							ADM, PLAN, EDU	

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
Goal 7.2 Enhance public safety infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the growing population.											
7.2.1 7.2.1.1 Review current needs to increase police officers and facilities by coordinating with municipalities to ensure public safety is met.		X						X		ADM, PD, FCL	
7.2.1.2 Complete the Northwest County Annex to house additional law enforcement and permitting offices in the Colony Ridge Subdivisions and adjacent to the Sante Fe Community Center.		X			X					ADM, PD, FCL	
7.2.1.3 Explore cost-saving ways for new fire station construction, such as repurposing equipment, rotating duties etc.		X			X	X				ADM, FD, FCL	
7.2.1.4 Explore low-cost upgrades to existing communication technology between dispatcher and field officers.		X			X					ADM, FD, FCL	
7.2.1.5 Evaluate existing mass information system to allow geofencing.		X							X	ADM, EM, PD, FD	
7.2.1.6 Review Public Protection Classification (PPC) or Insurance Service Organization (ISO) ratings for Liberty County Fire Departments/ Volunteer Fire Departments.		X				X			X	ADM, FD	
7.2.1.7 Prioritize bilingual skills and diversity in hiring police officers and other emergency responders.		X				X				ADM, PD, EM, SSP	
7.2.1.8 Equip officers with electronic translators that do not require network.		X			X					ADM, PD	
7.2.1.9 Establish a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) as authorized by chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code, operated under the authority of a county juvenile board.		X				X				ADM, PD, SSP	
7.2.1.10 Assess current capacity of the jail and consider need for a juvenile holding facility for criminal cases.		X							X	ADM, FCL, PD	

Chapter 7: Facilities

	Actions	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
		Timeframe				**Action Type**						
	7.2.1.11 Build a county animal shelter, capable of sheltering strays and allowing for pet adoption.				X	X					ADM, FCL	
7.2.2	*7.2.2.1* Create a crisis prevention team consisting of police, EMS, firefighters, local hospitals, health providers, and volunteers.		X				X				PD, FD, SSP, HP, EM	
	7.2.2.2 Work with the Liberty Long Term Recovery Team and connect with local VOAD to identify issues and ways to coordinate.	X	X				X		X		EM, ADM	
	7.2.2.3 Re-establish the Local Emergency Planning Committee.		X				X				EM, ADM	
	7.2.2.4 Maintain working relationship with TDEM, Red Cross, Houston Food Bank and other organization by establishing regular communication and MOUs.	X	X				X		X		EM, ADM, SSP	
	7.2.2.5 Continue maintaining MOUs with ISDs (Liberty, Cleveland, Dayton, Tarkington, and Daisetta) for bus service and as point of distribution sites during emergency.	X					X		X		EM, ADM, EDU	
**Goal 7.3 Adopt environmentally friendly practices that keeps pace with the population growth.**											
7.3.1	*7.3.1.1* Establish a solid waste plan by applying for grants provided by Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for municipal solid waste management, and to other grants provided by the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) for sanitary solid waste disposal.		X							X	ADM, PLAN	*- Water & Waste Disposal Predevelopment Planning Grants*
	7.3.1.2 Establish a recycling program through collaboration with non-profit organizations, AgriLife, Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission and Texas Department of Agriculture.		X				X		X		ADM, AGEX, SSP	
	7.3.1.3 Connect with Keep Texas Recycling (KTR) Program to promote waste reduction alternatives such as composting, commercial and residential waste exchanges, and recycling centers.		X				X		X		ADM, AGEX, SSP	

	Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
		On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
7.3.2	*7.3.2.1* Work with the cities to provide education for farmers regarding new technologies to lessen the excessive use of irrigation water through partnership with agricultural programs at universities, AgriLife, Texas Department of Agriculture, or U.S Department of Agriculture			X			X		X		AGEX, SSP	*- SEARCH - Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Households*
	7.3.2.2 Promote the use of drip systems which deliver water directly to plant roots, reducing evaporation.			X			X				ADM, AGEX, SSP	
	7.3.2.3 Collaborate with municipalities to promote rainwater harvesting to organize workshops and demonstrations on building and maintaining rainwater catchment systems.	X					X				PLAN, AGEX, SSP	
	7.3.2.4 Connect with Texas Rural Water Association to develop a Source Water Protection Plan			X					X	X	ADM, PLAN	

Goal 7.4 Foster robust communication channels across Liberty County to better connect with and serve the residents across the county.

	Actions	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
7.4.1	*7.4.1.1* Identify service gaps in existing telecommunication infrastructure and current service areas.	X					X			X	ADM, EDC, BUS	
	7.4.1.2 Work with Texas Broadband Development Office to identify and document broadband accessibility gaps throughout the county.	X							X	X	ADM, EDC, BUS	
	7.4.1.3 Conduct cost inventory of Starlink and 5G connections	X								X	ADM, EDC, BUS	
	7.4.1.4 Apply to broadband infrastructure funding opportunities such as the Texas Broadband Pole Replacement Program, Broadband e-Connectivity Pilot Program, and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.	X					X				ADM, EDC, BUS	

Chapter 7: Facilities

	Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
		On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
	7.4.1.5 Partner with telecommunication providers and the municipalities to improve public Wifi spots in community centers, libraries, and parks.			X					X		ADM, PLAN, EDC, FCL	
7.4.2	7.4.2.1 Partner with local schools to integrate digital literacy into the curriculum, and organize community-based training sessions on the use of digital tools and internet safety.		X				X		X		EDU, ADM, SSP	
	7.4.2.2 Collaborate with ISDs to introduce programs like "Youth as Community Tech Ambassadors" to bridge generational gaps in tech use.			X			X		X		EDU, ADM, SSP	
	7.4.2.3 Offer digital literacy programs at libraries and community centers. Connect to Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) Digital Literacy Training Toolkit			X			X				EDU, ADM, SSP	
7.4.3	7.4.3.1 Regularly update the county website to serve as a centralized hub for news, events, and resources.	X					X				ADM	
	7.4.3.2 Implement a bilingual communication approach, publishing official city communications in both English and Spanish.	X	X				X				ADM, SSP	
	7.4.3.3 Use social media platforms to regularly communicate updates and engage with residents.	X					X				ADM, PLAN	
	7.4.3.4 Work with local churches and faith-based organizations to identify community outreach ambassadors.		X				X		X		ADM, SSP, COM	
	7.4.3.5 Partner with schools and youth organizations to engage young people in local governance and projects.		X				X		X		EDU, ADM, SSP, COM	
	7.4.3.6 Develop outreach programs to educate residents about the county's plans, resources, and how they can be involved.	X		X			X				ADM, SSP, COC	
	7.4.3.7 Implement methods in place for residents to provide feedback, such as suggestion boxes, online forms, or designated email addresses.	X		X			X				ADM	

Chapter 8: Health

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		

Goal 8.1 Enhance food security and strengthen the local food network to provide a variety of healthy and affordable options.

	Actions	On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
8.1.1	8.1.1.1 Work with HGAC to establish regional infrastructure and distribution mechanisms to support farmers markets, local agriculture, and other means to provide fresh, healthy foods.			X					X		PLAN, AGEX, SSP	
	8.1.1.2 Partner with cities and local community groups to identify opportunities and locations for community gardens, mobile food vendor areas, and farmers market.	X	X				X				PLAN, COC, SSP	
	8.1.1.3 Encourage the establishment of food-related businesses such as small-scale food processing units, local grocery store, and local food stalls that source products from local farmers			X			X				COC, EDC, BUS	
	8.1.1.4 Work with ISDs, colleges, and senior centers to increase participation in existing lunch and breakfast programs, the summer school food services, and Child and Adult Care Food Program.			X			X				EDU, SSP, HP	
8.1.2	8.1.2.1 Form a coalition with key stakeholders such as Houston Food Bank, other food pantries, meal-providers, faith based communities, ISDs, and senior citizen centers to coordinate food distribution and educational efforts.	X							X		ADM, EDU, SSP, HP	
	8.1.2.2 Identify areas with issues with access to food and gaps in the food distribution infrastructure.			X					X	X	ADM, EDU, SSP, HP, PLAN	
	8.1.2.3 Create produce rescue programs through existing stores; use proceeds to fund grocery delivery to underserved areas			X			X				ADM, SSP, COC, BUS	
	8.1.2.4 Partner with churches and Food Banks on unprocessed frozen food drives			X					X		ADM, SSP	
	8.1.2.5 Expand home-delivery strategies for federal nutrition programs, charitable meals, and other local food programs.			X			X				ADM, SSP	
8.1.3	8.1.3.1 Request that Food Banks collect food habit data using anonymized surveys.			X			X				ADM, SSP	

Chapter 8: Health

Actions	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
8.1.3.2 Offer free classes through ISDs, Lee College, Lone Star College, Food Bank, community centers, senior centers, and churches on nutrition education and cooking demonstrations			X			X				EDU, SSP, AGEX	
8.1.3.3 Partner with AgriLife Extension and Food Banks to develop a county nutrition plan.			X					X	X	ADM, SSP, EDU, AGEX	
8.1.3.4 Develop outreach materials and sessions specifically tailored to the needs of diverse community groups, including seniors, low-income families, and immigrant communities.		X				X				ADM, SSP, EDU, AGEX	
8.1.3.5 Conduct annual food fairs and agriculture shows that not only promote local products but also educate the public on the importance of supporting local agriculture.	X	X				X				ADM, EDU, AGEX	
8.1.3.6 Set up registration drives for SNAP and other state benefits at community events, churches, and other gatherings.		X				X				ADM, SSP, EDU, AGEX, COC	
8.1.3.7 Collaborate with organizations working closely with non-English speaking communities to identify needs and ensure information is available in multiple languages		X				X		X		SSP, EDU, AGEX, COC	

Goal 8.2 Improve public health outcomes and increase access to health services

	Actions	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
8.2.1	*8.2.1.1* Expand the working group of local community organizations, social service providers, and health care providers in the area to assess community health needs.	X	X				X		X		ADM, SSP, HP, COM	
	8.2.1.2 Support HGAC's Our Great Region 2040 goal to create a regional task force that works across multiple disciplines (health departments, public safety) to address mental health issues.		X				X		X		ADM, SSP, HP, COM	
	8.2.1.3 Create a county health department to assess need and direct residents to the appropriate providers.			X			X				ADM	
	8.2.1.4 Extend healthcare services to the broader community through public schools and expand the pilot in-school psychiatric services.			X							ADM, EDU, SSP, HP	

Chapter 8: Health

Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
8.2.1.5 Strengthen relationships between behavioral health systems, health-care providers, law enforcement and the criminal justice system.		X				X		X		ADM, PD, SSP, HP	
8.2.1.6 Continue supporting and expanding mental health focused law enforcement staff in the County.	X		X			X		X		ADM, PD, SSP, HP	
8.2.1.7 Work collaboratively with cities, hospital district, ISDs, and health care providers to apply for grants that fund integrated health projects, such as those focusing on community wellness, mental health, and chronic disease management.	X	X				X		X		ADM, PLAN, EDU, SSP, HP	
8.2.1.8 Organize joint training sessions for staff and volunteers across organizations for a unified approach to health service delivery and emergency responsiveness.	X		X			X		X		ADM, SSP, HP, EM	
8.2.2 *8.2.2.1* Attract specialty providers (cardio, ob-gyn, etc.) to County for multiple weekly visits by working with health care providers like Liberty Dayton Regional Medical Center and Health Center of Southeast Texas.		X				X		X		ADM, HP, EDC	
8.2.2.2 Coordinate specialist appointments with outside hospitals and work with BTD to provide monthly transportation for residents to these hospitals.		X						X		ADM, HP, SSP	
8.2.2.3 Work with Tri-County Behavioral Health and Health Center of Southeast Texas to identify mental needs, promote existing services, and support expanding community resources for mental health services.		X				X		X		ADM, HP, SSP	
8.2.2.4 Collaborate with healthcare providers and the Liberty County Long Term Recovery Committee to develop and implement plans for emergency healthcare services during disasters.		X				X		X		ADM, HP, SSP, LTRT	
8.2.2.5 Work with developers, private institutions and non-profit organizations to invest in health services by providing attractive tax incentives and discounted land rates. (2015 PLAN)			X			X		X		ADM, PLAN, EDC, HP	

Chapter 8: Health

	Actions	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
		On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning		
8.2.3	*8.2.3.1* Establish telemedicine and online health education service through USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants and FCC's Rural Health Care Program.			X			X		X		ADM, PLAN, EDC, HP	
	8.2.3.2 Partner with education institutions for a program to have medical students and EMS-in-training conduct organized rounds and house calls as part of their degree/certification.	X		X			X		X		ADM, PLAN, EDU, EDC, HP	
	8.2.3.3 Consider health facilities in adjacent counties and collaborate with counties to expand Liberty County Indigent Health Care Program (CIHCP) transportation services, and other health facilities. (2015 PLAN)			X			X		X		ADM, PLAN, EDC, HP	
	8.2.3.4 Encourage cities to identify suitable locations for future health care and senior centers and zone them appropriately to ensure facilitated development of such facilities when market demand spurs private development of such facilities. (2015 PLAN)			X				X		X	ADM, PLAN	
	8.2.3.5 Host community health fairs that feature demonstrations, health screenings, and information sessions on nutrition and physical activity.	X	X				X				ADM, PLAN, EDU, SSP, HP, COM	
Goal 8.3 Promote active living and create a healthy environment												
8.3.1	*8.3.1.1* Explore PPPs for collection/disposal of trash and hazardous wastes.	X							X		ADM, FCL	
	8.3.1.2 Consider incentives and rewards to encourage the proper disposal of wastes by residents and businesses.	X					X				ADM	
	8.3.1.3 Identify all federal and state programs that incentivize remediation, restoration, and cleanup of water and soil.			X						X	ADM, ENG	

Chapter 8: Health

Actions	On - Going	Short - Term	Mid - Term	Long - Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties and Partners	Funding
8.3.2 *8.3.2.1* Prepare and regularly update emergency response plans for public health emergencies, including the stockpiling of necessary medical supplies and the training of emergency response teams.	X	X							X	ADM, EM	
8.3.2.2 Create online and printed guides on emergency preparedness for residents (build a kit, tips for safety and rebuilding)		X								ADM, EM	
8.3.3 *8.3.3.1* Work with municipalities and developers to identify potential sites for new parks and upgrade existing facilities with modern equipment and amenities.		X				X		X		ADM, PLAN, FCL	
8.3.3.2 Create trails/greenways to connect neighborhoods, major natural areas, parks, and recreation facilities, and education centers to enhance and extend the recreational experience.			X		X					ADM, PLAN	
8.3.3.3 Encourage municipalities to pass complete streets ordinances.			X				X			ADM, PLAN	
8.3.4 *8.3.4.1* Work with ISDs to incorporate more school field trips and activities in County's natural reserves and parks.		X				X		X		ADM, EDU	
8.3.4.2 Launch fitness challenges, walking clubs, and cycling events to encourage regular physical activity.		X				X				HP, SSP, COC, BUS, COM	
8.3.4.3 Partner with local gyms, health clubs, and other local businesses to provide resources, participate in community events, and sponsor public health community programs.		X				X		X		HP, SSP, COC, BUS, COM	
8.3.4.4 Collaborate with senior centers to offer recreational programs tailored to seniors, which could include activities like low-impact aerobics, gardening clubs, and book clubs.		X				X		X		SSP, HP, COM	
8.3.4.5 Utilize facilities like the Cleveland Civic Center and Dayton Community Center to host regular social events, community gatherings, or themed community days, such as "Family Fitness Day" or "Senior Health Fair."		X				X				ADM, SSP, FCL, COM	