

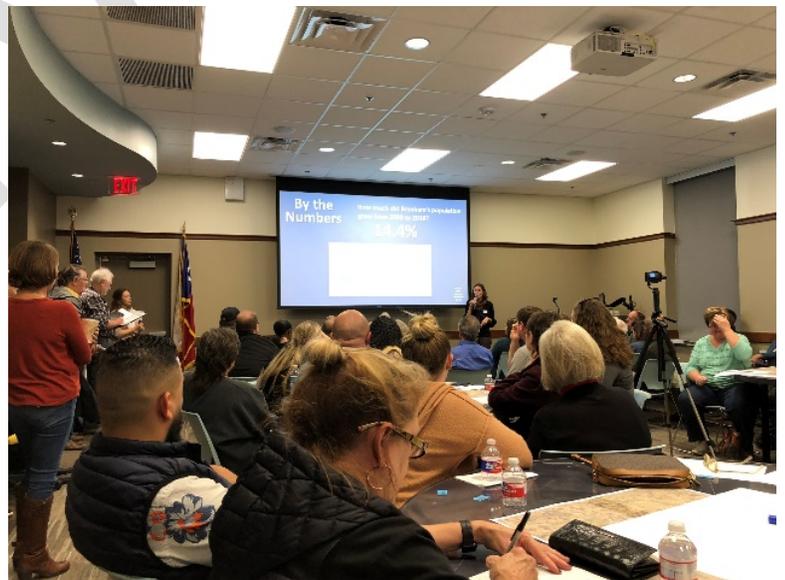
Direction and Outline Brenham Comprehensive Plan

The purpose of this briefing paper is to frame the discussion for a second joint workshop with City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustments, and Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee members (on February 28, 2019). We are at the point of transitioning from background study and considerations about Brenham as it is today – the Existing City – to what it can and will be in the decades ahead – the Future City. This paper highlights: (1) leadership and community input; (2) related information and key assumptions for the Future City phase, especially with regard to Brenham’s population outlook; and (3) a working outline of the Future City portion of the Comprehensive Plan document to guide the remaining plan development process.

Leadership and Community Input

Community and leadership engagement activities during the Existing City phase included:

- Initial joint workshop with City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission (December 2018)
- Background surveys with City departments (October/November).
- Informal listening sessions with four 10-15 person groups from the community (December, January, and February).
- Town Hall Meeting on Brenham’s Future (January). See photos below from event, which drew overflow attendance at the Brenham Public Library.
- A survey administered at the Town Hall Meeting on Brenham’s Future received 84 responses. The input from the survey is summarized in the Town Hall Input Highlights paper.
- Initial meeting with a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (December).



Top Strategic Priorities

Proposed List of Top Strategic Items

The list below was compiled, in no particular priority order, based on the Existing City findings, input from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, joint workshop with City elected and appointed officials, results of varied public engagement activities to date, and the consultant team's own input.

1. Growth and Revitalization Strategies

- Focus on implications of growth for the City, including identifying logical areas for growth (based on land and infrastructure availability, financial implications for City, etc.).
- Ways to make in-city living more appealing and manage the extent of growth in Brenham's extraterritorial jurisdiction.
- Revitalization of older housing stock and preservation of historic homes/neighborhoods.
- Strategies for revitalization of aged commercial corridors.
- Potential for a wider variety of housing and commercial types, including mixed-use, in appropriate locations.
- Growth that is orderly, well-managed, and maintains the identity and characteristics that make Brenham unique.

2. Focusing on Economic Essentials and a Strong Tax Base

- Ability to attract professionals to live and work in Brenham, and for youth to stay in Brenham, by having a wide range of employment opportunities as well as housing and lifestyle amenities.
- Ongoing focus on drawing more and higher-level retail investment to address resident desires and bolster the City's tax base.
- Higher utilization of industrial land, especially areas that are already "shovel-ready".
- Workforce supply and skills to meet the needs of current and prospective employers and area industries.
- Desire for continued strong medical and hospital presence, including specialists.
- Potential for unique Brenham elements including Blinn College and the Brenham Municipal Airport to act as economic drivers.
- Continue to strengthen Brenham's tourism industry and support preservation of Brenham's history.
- Reinforcing Brenham's small-town identity while also highlighting its proximity and links to other nearby cities and major Texas metropolitan areas.

3. Housing Costs and Options Inside the City

- Affordability at various levels of buyer and renter income.
- New, quality home construction to support workforce attraction/retention needs.
- More in-city residential rooftops to support greater retail investment.
- Housing quantity at various price points to provide more supply and options for those aiming to buy or rent.
- Diversity of dwelling types/sizes for buyers and renters at various life-cycle stages.

- Appropriate supply and quality of off-campus housing intended primarily for Blinn students.
- Managing the potential effects of greater rental activity in neighborhoods.

4. Attention to Brenham's Infrastructure

- Priority focus on identifying additional long-term water supply opportunities.
- Continued investment in City-owned utility infrastructure maintenance and upgrades, balanced with the infrastructure needs posed by new development.
- Emphasis on improving safety at high-crash locations and improving cross-town connectivity.
- Greater focus on pedestrian/cyclist circulation and safety, especially for crossing major streets.
- Fiber and other technology upgrades to ensure the area's economic competitiveness.
- Strategies for reducing flooding risk, including regional storm water management, low-impact development, and multi-purpose open space, including greenways and trails.

5. An Even More Livable Brenham

- Build upon success of Downtown revitalization with continued focus on Downtown enhancement.
- Seek to maintain Brenham's cherished "small town feel" even while growing and evolving.
- Support a healthy and active community through continued support for existing and new park and recreation amenities, including potential for new pedestrian and cycling opportunities.
- Ongoing focus on public safety services and maintaining a low crime rate.
- Desire for sidewalk installation in strategic locations to make neighborhoods and key destinations more walkable.
- Desire for more and better-quality shopping and leisure/entertainment options, especially for Brenham's youth.
- Enhance Brenham's physical appearance, including at gateways to the City and along major corridors.

6. New and Improved Implementation Tools to Advance Plan Priorities

- Formal multi-year Capital Improvements Program and process for project definition/prioritization.
- Updated development regulations and standards, including the potential for residential design and compatibility standards and a better framework for accommodating residential and mixed-use development in and around downtown.
- Updated Thoroughfare Plan to provide a long-range roadway network outlook that addresses cross-town mobility while also providing parcel-level clarity.
- Mechanisms for promoting economic development and facilitating redevelopment.
- Continued emphasis on partnerships (public/public, public/private, public/non-profit).
- Special area and neighborhood planning in follow-up to city-wide planning.

Population Outlook for Brenham

Population projections are an important component of a long-range planning process. They help determine and quantify the demands that will be placed on public facilities and services based on the potential pace and scale of the community's physical growth. Projections reflect local, regional, national and international trends and offer a basis to prepare for the future. However, forecasting population changes can be challenging, particularly for the long term, because it is often difficult to account for all circumstances that may arise. Therefore, it will be important for the City to monitor population and economic growth continually to account for both short- and longer-term shifts that can influence development activity and trends in the community and larger region.

Alternative Growth Scenarios

Demographers caution that population projections become trickier as the geographic area gets smaller, making city-level population the most difficult to forecast. This is because local population change is strongly influenced by less predictable factors such as housing prices, availability of vacant land to develop, and annexation of additional territory, which may already have existing residents and results in an instant increase in the citywide total.

Given this context, the chart in this section provides a comparison of several potential scenarios for future population change in Brenham. The projections build on the latest U.S. Census figure of 16,968 for 2018 and identify potential population levels in five-year increments out to 2040.

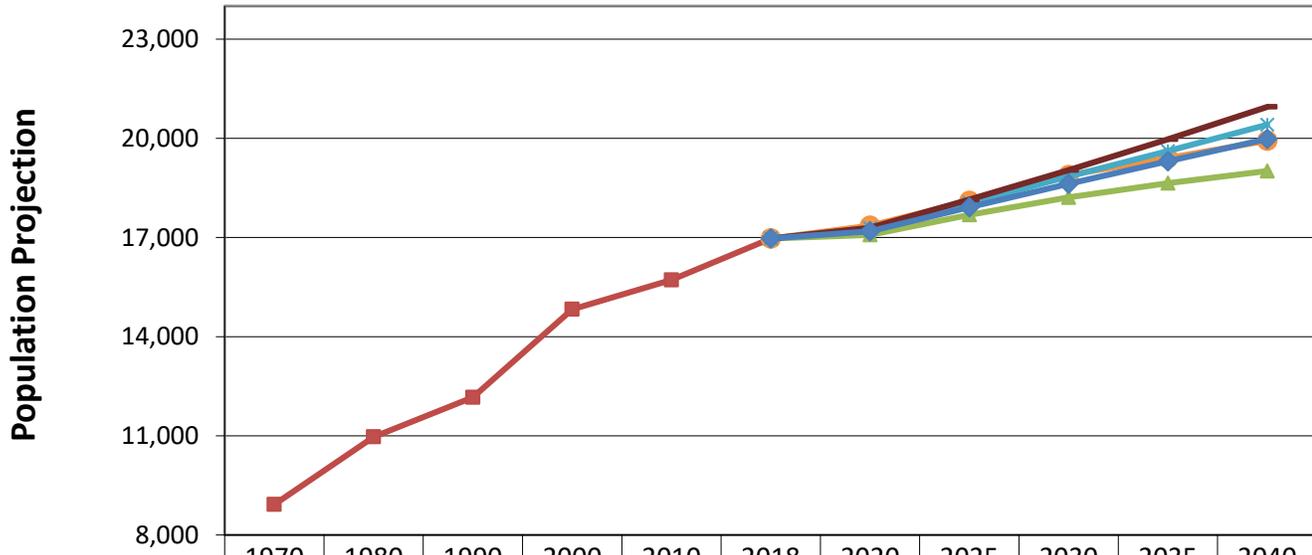
Projections Based on Varying Quantities and Rates of Growth

A population projection method extends historical trends to future years. Linear growth forecasts are "straight line" projections that result in the same absolute number of new persons being added to the population in each period. This produces a declining rate of growth over time as the same amount is being added to an ever-expanding base (in the case of Brenham, adding 1,565 residents per decade). Exponential growth projections produce higher numbers than linear by assuming a constant rate of growth over time. This is similar to the power of compound growth in a savings account over time; the interest (i.e., growth) rate may not change, but it is being applied to an ever-expanding balance, resulting in larger and larger interest earnings over time. In the case of Brenham, the Exponential and Linear Growth scenarios result in a population difference of 539. The Exponential Growth line, labeled as "Steady Growth Rate" in the Brenham scenarios chart, is based on the 1.0 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) the city had from 2010 to 2018. The Exponential Growth line leads to a 2040 population of 20,950 while the Linear Growth line, labeled as "Steady Numeric Growth" on the chart, leads to a 2040 population of 20,411.

County Step-Down

This method considers the trend in city share of the countywide population in past decades and prospects for its future share. It also draws upon population estimates and projections produced for all counties statewide by the Texas State Data Center. The City of Brenham's share of Washington County's population was 47.3 percent in 1970, when the city had 8,922 residents relative to 18,846 in the entire county (including the city). By 2010, Brenham's share had decreased slightly to 46.6 percent of 33,718 persons county-wide and then increased slightly to 46.8 percent in 2018.

The County Step-Down line shows where the City of Brenham’s population would be through 2040 (19,011) if it continued the trend of accounting for a slightly increased share of the county’s population (48.1 percent by 2040, up from current 46.8 percent in 2018). Projections by the Texas Water Development Board for cities and counties statewide provide another basis for comparison, with Brenham shown at just under 20,000 residents in 2040.



	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2018	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Historical Data	8,922	10,966	12,163	14,828	15,716	16,968					
County Step Down						16,968	17,078	17,685	18,213	18,643	19,011
Texas Water Development Board						16,968	17,355	18,104	18,886	19,400	19,929
Steady Numeric Growth (1,565 per decade)						16,968	17,281	18,047	18,846	19,613	20,411
Steady Growth Rate (1.0%)						16,968	17,296	18,145	19,035	19,970	20,950
Midpoint						16,968	17,187	17,915	18,624	19,306	19,980

Bottom Line

It is wise for cities to think in terms of a range of potential growth rather than an absolute number given the uncertainty of any small-area forecast that extends beyond a few years. **It is assumed for this Comprehensive Plan that Brenham’s 2040 population will fall within a forecast range of 19,011 to 20,950 persons, which yields a midpoint of 19,980.**

As illustrated by the Midpoint Projection line in the scenarios chart, the midpoint of a potential growth range to assume for this Comprehensive Plan – between the lower County Step-Down projection and the higher Steady Growth Rate projection – would put Brenham’s population at approximately **17,187 in 2020; 18,624 in 2030; and 19,980 in 2040.** This would mean an **additional 3,012 residents from 2018** and implies that Brenham could add the equivalent of 17.7 percent of its current population by 2040. For perspective, Census 2010 reported an average household size in Brenham of 2.37 persons, meaning that **1,271 additional housing units would be needed to accommodate 3,012 added residents.**

The above projections are based on past population growth trends. If Brenham were to break from these trends and achieve a higher compound annual growth rate (CAGR), the future population would be higher than the above projections. The table below illustrates the population levels that would be achieved at various higher CAGRs than the recent 1.0 percent rate in Brenham from 2010 to 2018.

CAGR	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
1.25%	17,394	18,509	19,695	20,957	22,300
1.50%	17,481	18,832	20,287	21,855	23,544
2.0%	17,654	19,491	21,520	23,760	26,233

In the end, all of the information presented here is just a numbers exercise on paper at this point. The next essential step in the Future City phase of the comprehensive planning process will involve:

- More in-depth consideration of available, developable land in and around Brenham where such growth may occur – and the extent and timing of development activity that is already anticipated;
- The projected capacity of the City’s infrastructure and public services to accommodate this growth in future years; and
- Community values and preferences as to where growth occurs, which would ultimately translate into capital projects and public services planning.

Guiding Principles

This section identifies an initial set of guiding principles for the Comprehensive Plan that will be refined in conjunction with each of the major planning topics considered through the remainder of the plan development process (Land Use and Development, Transportation, Growth Capacity, Economic Development, and Recreation and Amenities).

- GP1:** Brenham will emphasize **QUALITY** as it grows, ensuring growth is managed in a way that adds value to the City, while also strengthening existing neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- GP2:** Brenham will be **ADAPTABLE** by focusing on developing and sustaining a diverse economy that attracts and retains individuals and families to put down roots in the community, while providing a robust range of housing to accommodate people in all stages of life.
- GP3:** Brenham will be **AUTHENTIC** by continuing to focus on those elements that differentiate Brenham such as its historic downtown, natural assets, Blinn College, and its “small town feel” as a benefit for both current and future residents to enjoy.
- GP4:** Brenham will be **ACTIVE** by enabling healthy living through offering quality and safe City parks and recreational opportunities, by prioritizing the ability to walk and bicycle safely, and by committing to maintain high levels of public safety services.

GP5: Brenham will be **COLLABORATIVE** by pursuing and maintaining partnerships in all arenas, including housing, transportation, infrastructure, economic development, emergency response, and arts and culture.

Working Outline for Future City Portion of Comprehensive Plan

This section provides a working outline of the Future City portion of the eventual Comprehensive Plan document to guide work efforts during the upcoming Future City phase of the planning process.

Standard Elements in All Sections

After an Introduction section that summarizes the purpose of the plan, how it is used, the authority under which the City prepares and adopts it, and an overview of its content, each of the topical plan sections that follow will include these standard elements:

- Introduction:
 - › Focus of section.
 - › Links to other plan sections.
- By the Numbers:
 - › Significant statistics that illustrate or reflect key issues related to this plan section.
- Legacy of Past Planning:
 - › Previous relevant plans/studies.
 - › Accomplishments.
 - › Ongoing issues/items still needing attention.
- Key Issues and Considerations.
- Framework for Action:
 - › Guiding Principles specific to this topic.
 - › Goals for this topic.
 - › Strategic Action Priorities for this topic.
 - › Other Actions, presented in five categories that are the main ways these plans are implemented:
 - 1) Capital investments.
 - 2) Programs and initiatives.
 - 3) Regulations and standards.
 - 4) Partnerships and coordination.
 - 5) More targeted planning/study.
 - › Itemization of routine practices and tools the City already uses, along with new or highlighted items in the plan.

Land Use and Development

Considerations in this section for completing the standard elements above, along with a Future Land Use Map, will include:

- Development opportunities and redevelopment/infill needs.
- Barriers to desired local housing development.
- Land use compatibility.

- Site and building design practices that contribute to quality development and other community objectives.
- Urban design and beautification considerations primarily involving the “public realm” (i.e., key roadway corridors, community entries/gateways, other public lands/facilities, etc.).

Transportation

Considerations in this section for completing the standard elements above will include:

- Projected traffic concerns based on growth and land use assumptions.
- Major trip generators.
- Vehicular and bicycle/pedestrian circulation needs.
- Street design considerations related to safety, bicycle/pedestrian accommodation, street network and sidewalk system connectivity, etc.
- Transportation planning of other entities (Washington County, Brazos Valley Council of Governments, Texas Department of Transportation, Brazos Transit District, etc.).
- Development of new, stand-alone Thoroughfare Plan and supporting documents.

Growth Capacity

Considerations in this section for completing the standard elements above will include:

- Suitable and preferred growth and reinvestment areas.
- City intentions for accommodating and guiding projected growth and redevelopment.
- Implications for utility infrastructure, public safety services, and community facilities of the growth projections assumed for the plan.

Economic Development

Considerations in this section for completing the standard elements above will include:

- Areas where Brenham can differentiate itself from the competition and leverage local advantages, such as Downtown and Brenham’s established tourism focus.
- Linkages to other plan sections in areas that influence or support economic development objectives (e.g., infrastructure and public services, mobility, housing, land use, recreation and amenities, community appearance, etc.).
- Decision guidance for the use of available economic development tools.
- Ways to measure progress on economic development objectives.

Recreation and Amenities

Considerations in this section for completing the standard elements above will include:

- Ongoing and new park and recreation needs (including parkland acreage needs and location considerations, park/facility rehabilitation, recreational programming, etc.).
- Resource protection (natural, historic/cultural, scenic).
- Community best practices to promote healthy living opportunities for residents.

Implementation

The Implementation section will address:

- Prioritization of actions as:
 - › Immediate (6 months to 1 year).
 - › Short Term (2-5 years).
 - › Medium Term (6-10 years).
 - › Long Term (10+ years).
- Implementation roles of City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustments, and City staff.
- Opportunities for the City to coordinate implementation efforts with other key agencies and entities, with other jurisdictions as appropriate, and with other private and non-profit partners.
- Procedures for annual plan review and progress reporting and periodic plan updates.

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