

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY PROFILE

Where is Harlingen Today?

Harlingen is on a roll! Since the Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan (2002), Harlingen has grown dramatically both in size and in financial strength. Today, Harlingen is strongly positioned for even greater

growth. Harlingen has grown to a population of almost 67,000, with another 9,000+ residents in the city's extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) lands. In 2013, Harlingen's \$93 million in new construction commercial permits led the region, and the city's near \$3 billion in appraised property values is 53% higher than a decade ago in 2004. Sales tax revenues are likely to exceed \$15.5 million in 2014, and the city's fund balance is almost triple what it was a decade ago.

\$3 Billion
in appraised property value
in 2014

\$93 Million
in new construction
commercial permits in 2013

\$15.5 Million
in projected sales tax
revenue in 2014

So why does knowing where the city is today matter? In essence, this community profile, contained in this section, creates a "snapshot" of the city today and established a baseline that can be used to measure progress throughout the life of the plan.

It also helps to identify opportunities and challenges Harlingen must consider in shaping how it grows. We look back to see how the city has changed over the years, but also forward, projecting how Harlingen might grow in the next few decades and identifying key needs to address that future growth.

THIS CHAPTER INCLUDES:

1. **A LOOK AT TODAY**
2. **PAST HISTORY**
3. **REGIONAL CONTEXT**
4. **POPULATION STATISTICS**
5. **DEMOGRAPHICS**
6. **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**
7. **PHYSICAL SIZE & NATURAL**
8. **CHARACTERISTICS**



First canal, c. 1905. Source: City of Harlingen



Main Street, Harlingen, c. 1912. Source: City of Harlingen



Historic Reese Building. Source: City of Harlingen

Harlingen's Past

The City of Harlingen was officially established on April 15, 1910 with the swearing-in of Mayor Ike B. McFarland and Commissioners John D. Hill and Homer N. Morrow. However, prior to the formal establishment of the city, Harlingen was settled by pioneer Lon C. Hill who in 1902 purchased a 13,837 acre track where Harlingen is approximately located. Initially known as "Six-Shooter Junction," Harlingen was a settlement of Texas Rangers and Border Patrolmen until Hill realized the potential of the Arroyo Colorado.

It didn't take long for others to recognize the strategic location of Harlingen. The construction of the first irrigation canal in the Rio Grande Valley brought opportunity and growth to Harlingen. The town's center – the intersection of Van Buren and First Streets – was home to a hotel, two general stores, a hardware store, a drug store, a barbershop, four saloons, and the Hill house. The Texas Rangers moved their headquarters along the railroad with the job of making the Rio Grande Valley a safer place to live.

When Harlingen incorporated in 1910, the town had a population of 1,126. During the 1920s, Harlingen became a commercial hub for the Valley and was home to approximately 12,124 by 1930. Due to the construction of irrigation canals, agriculture thrived in the fertile lands of Harlingen. Not only was crop production growing, but agriculture processing and distribution industries grew as well. With a booming economy, families began moving to Harlingen, bringing with them more merchants and businesses as the city continued to grow.



First valley baptist hospital c. 1925 (Source: valley baptist.net)



Aerial view of Harlingen c. 1950 (Source: City of Harlingen)

In May 1941, the War Department developed a military airfield on 960 acres in Harlingen and established the Harlingen Army Gunnery School, helping pull Harlingen out of a lingering depression and resulting in immense population growth for the city. The city's population jumped to 13,306 in 1940 and 41,207 by 1960. However, the Air Force Base closed in 1962, and the population fell to approximately 33,500 in 1970.

While industry and population levels fluctuated after World War II, many of Harlingen's modern industries have historical roots. The former air field that opened in 1941 now serves as the Valley International Airport, home to almost 45% of air travel in the region.

The Valley Baptist Center that was established in 1925 has now grown to become the centerpiece for one of the largest and most important health centers in the region, and has also resulted in health care accounting for almost 40% of the 15,000+ jobs created by Harlingen's major employers. The medical area started by Valley Baptist now includes not only the 400+ bed Valley Baptist Medical Center, but also multiple other hospitals and health care facilities, including the 120+ bed Harlingen Medical Center, a major regional Veterans Administration Health Care Center, the University of Texas Regional Academic Health Center (a state of the art medical training facility), Su Clinica Familiar (a unique community clinic focusing on dentistry, internal medicine, women's health and pediatrics), and a new hospital (Strategic Behavioral Health) focusing on psychiatric treatment.

The growth of trade, manufacturing, and service industries has continued to broaden the city's economic base. In 2010, the reported population by the US Census Bureau was approaching 65,000, and with recent annexations in 2013 is projected to have exceeded 67,000 by the beginning of 2014.

Harlingen's Strategic Regional Context

Cities are influenced and shaped by regional physical, economic, and social forces. Therefore it is important to recognize Harlingen's geographic position in the region. What began as a small town off a branch of the Corpus Christi-Brownsville railroad line is now strategically located at the intersection of Interstates 2 and 69E, two major transportation routes for international and national trade (see the map on the following page). Since its founding, Harlingen's location has served as an important juncture between north, south and western routes in the region.

Harlingen is at a key central location for the more than 1.3+ million current residents of the greater Rio Grande Valley region.

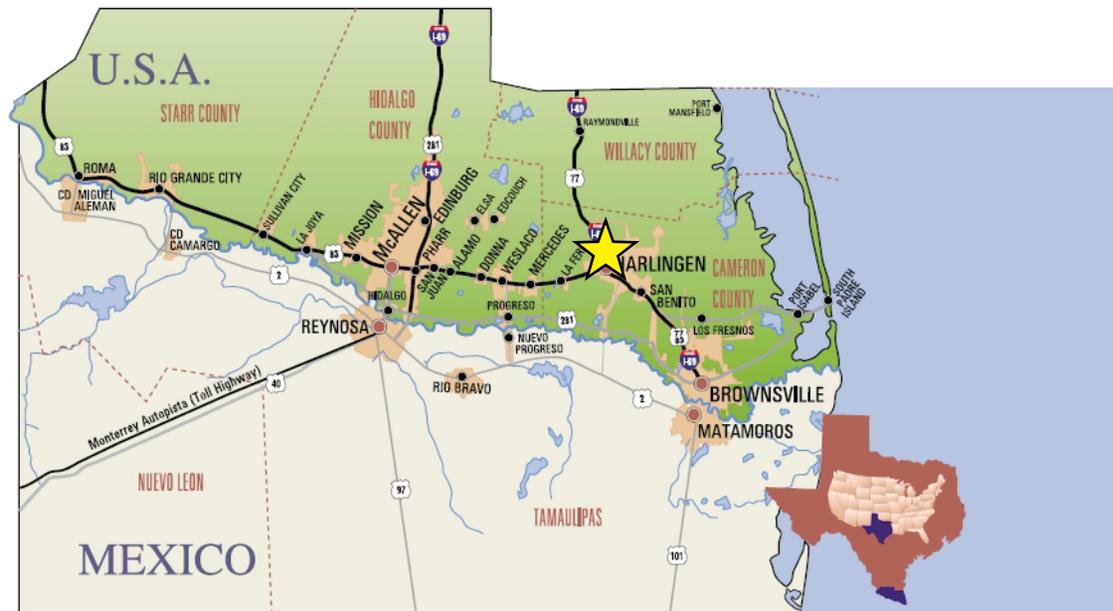
1.3+ Million
residents in the greater
Rio Grande Valley Region

The city is located in the heart of the Rio Grande Valley in Cameron County, situated approximately 25 miles northwest of Brownsville and 35 miles east of McAllen. The Rio Grande Valley region includes four counties: Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy. Cameron County is the southernmost county in Texas.

Harlingen is also strategically located with regards to international and national transportation routes. The Los Indios Free Trade Bridge, located eight miles south of Harlingen, provides a rapid border crossing for trade into Mexico.

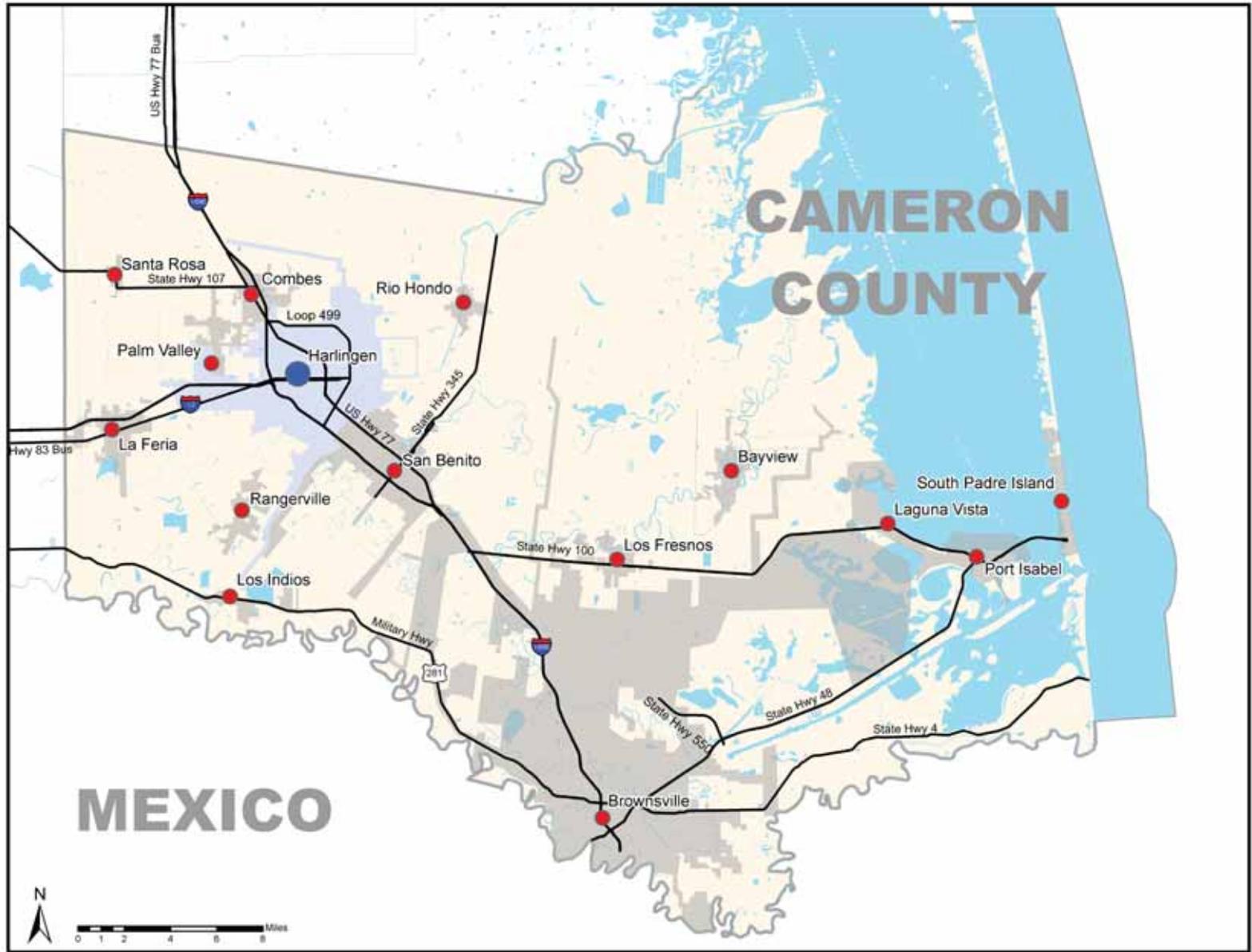
Harlingen also has excellent connections to Mexico via the new Mazatlan to the Gulf of Mexico "super highway" that significantly expedites trade between Pacific and Gulf of Mexico ports and rail and truck connections into the United States. Recently completed, this route is projected to be heavily used in the decades to come as an alternative to the more heavily used container ports in the Los Angeles area. The route will also serve as a conduit for produce and vegetables from Mexico to markets throughout the United States.

Harlingen also serves as the gateway to Cameron County and the beaches and natural areas of South Padre Island. Boca Chica Beach, located at the southernmost tip of Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, is being developed as a launch site for commercial spacecraft by SpaceX, and Harlingen is well poised to help service the launch site and also provide high quality housing opportunities with first class community amenities for SpaceX personnel.



Harlingen's location within the greater lower Rio grande valley of texas (Source: Rio Grande Partnership And Rio Grande Chamber Of Commerce)

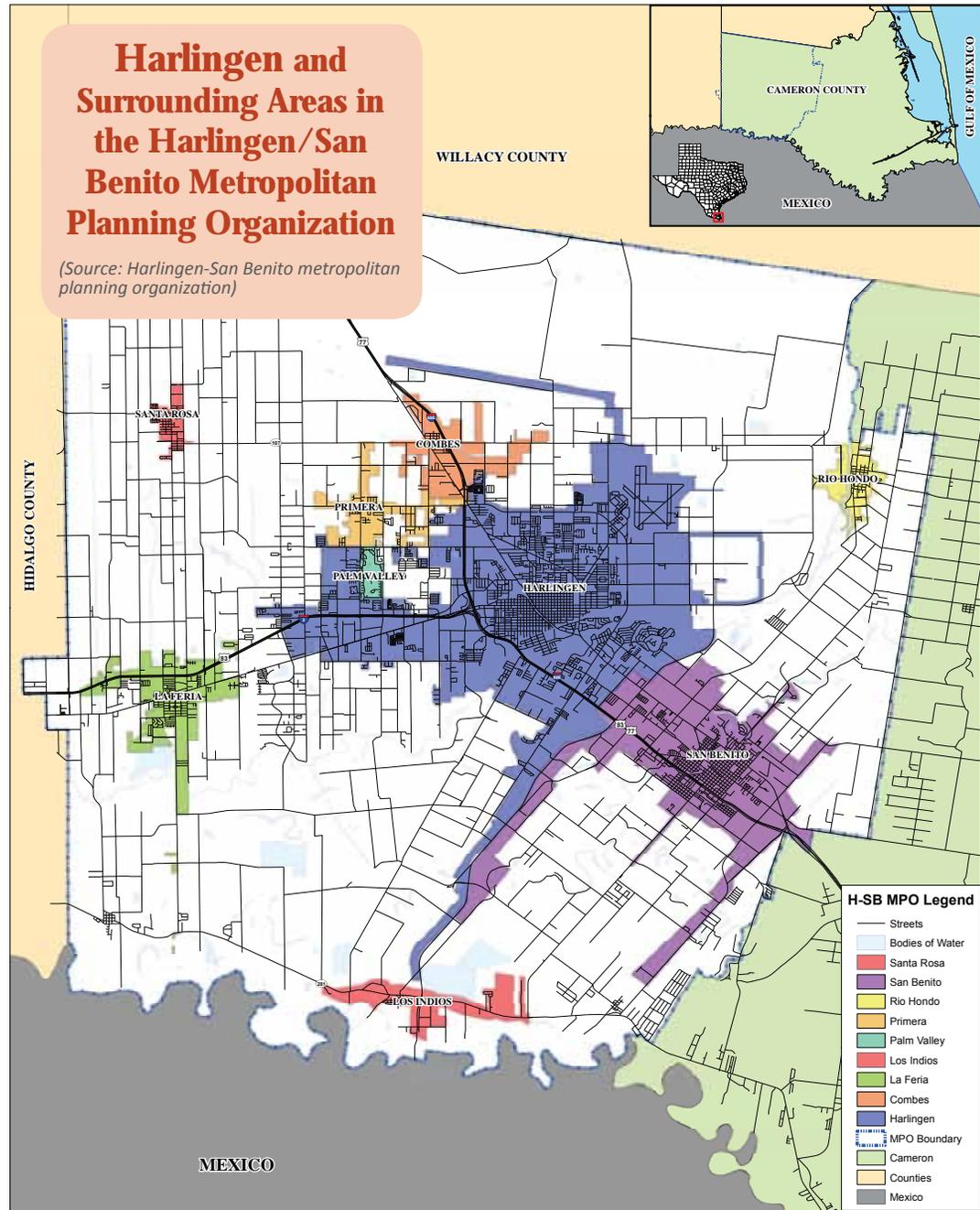
City of Harlingen within Cameron County



Harlingen is a member in regional planning areas. Cameron County is part of the Brownsville-Harlingen Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). An MSA is formed around a core urbanized area and includes counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration. These organizations seek to better understand regional population, economy and travel patterns.

Cameron County, Hidalgo County and Willacy County make up the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC). The LRGVDC is the region’s Council of Governments (COG), which is designed to address issues that benefit from a regional perspective such as emergency management planning or pollution. Since 1967 the LRGVDC has served as a link between federal and state programs, assisting communities in developing services and strategies.

A key regional organization that serves the City of Harlingen is the Harlingen-San Benito Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This regional transportation planning organization consists of ten municipalities including Harlingen, San Benito, Primera, Santa Rosa, Palm Valley, Rio Hondo, La Feria, Los Indios, Combes, parts of Mercedes and Precincts 3 & 4 of Cameron County. It works with local, state and federal governments, the private sector, and the region’s citizens to plan and coordinate transportation systems in the region. The main goal of the Harlingen-San Benito MPO is to streamline regional transportation planning in order to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of transportation for the area.



POPULATION TRENDS & PROJECTIONS

Establishing a base population for today is a key component of a comprehensive plan. It is the foundation from which the projection of population growth extends and influences the demand and needs for future services that will be provided by Harlingen.

This section examines historical growth in Harlingen, reviews growth trends in recent years, and establishes a potential population projection range for this Comprehensive Plan. The US Census Bureau is a source of population data, but historically the Bureau’s counts in border areas are considered to have underestimated the actual population. The Texas State Data

Center is therefore considered to be the preferred source for current population estimates for Harlingen.

The population analysis also takes into account the current and potential future population in Harlingen’s ETJ. These areas can become part of Harlingen in the future, but more importantly,

many residents of those areas work in Harlingen and frequent Harlingen businesses and shops, and contribute significantly to the economic growth of the city.

67,000+
Harlingen’s estimated 2014 population



HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS CITY OF HARLINGEN (EXCLUDING ETJ) & CAMERON COUNTY, 1910-2014

	Harlingen		Cameron County		Harlingen Share of Total County Population
	Total Population	Growth Rate	Total Population	Annual Growth Rate	
1910	1,126	-	27,158		4.2%
1920	1,784	4.7%	36,662	3.0%	4.9%
1930	12,124	21.1%	77,540	7.8%	15.6%
1940	13,306	0.9%	83,202	0.7%	16.0%
1950	23,229	5.7%	125,170	4.2%	18.6%
1960	41,207	5.9%	151,098	1.9%	27.3%
1970	33,503	-2.0%	140,368	-0.7%	23.9%
1980	43,543	2.7%	209,727	4.1%	20.8%
1990	48,735	1.1%	260,120	2.2%	18.7%
2000	57,564	1.7%	335,227	2.6%	17.2%
2010	64,849	1.2%	406,220	1.9%	16.0%
2013	66,324	0.8%	419,119	1.0%	15.8%
2014*	67,000	1.0%	-	-	-

Source: 1910-1990 data from 2002 Comprehensive Plan; 2000-2011 data from U.S. Census Bureau; 2013 data from Texas State Data Center *2014 Estimated, includes recent annexation

Historic Population Trends

During the 1920s, new settlers came to the Rio Grande Valley and Harlingen experienced considerable growth. Significant growth occurred during the 1940s and 1950s when the US Military opened facilities in the city during WWII. During this period, the population of Harlingen grew from 13,306 in 1940 to 23,229 in 1950, and to 41,207 in 1960.

In 1962, Harlingen Air Force Base closed, and Harlingen lost a significant population base. The base closure forced Harlingen to identify new ways to attract growth and development to its community.

Since 1970, the city has continued to grow. Between 2000 and 2010, Harlingen grew at an average rate of 1% per year. Since 2010 new housing growth has resulted in a population growth of 2.3% by the beginning of 2013, and with the annexation of new areas in 2012 Harlingen’s current population is believed to have exceeded 67,000.

Harlingen's Effective Population

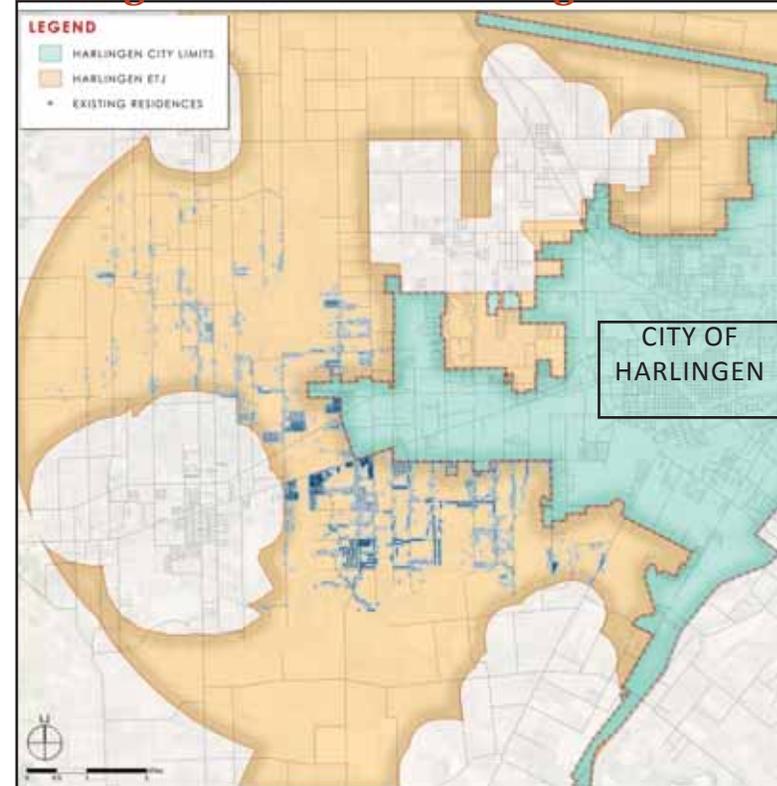
Significant growth has also occurred in areas near but outside of the city limits of Harlingen. Within the city's current 3.5 mile ETJ, a tally of existing residences indicates almost 3,000 residential units surrounding the city (shown on the map on this page). At an average household size of 3.04 persons per residence, those 3,000 homes indicate a potential current population of 9,000+ living within Harlingen's ETJ. If one considers the populations of smaller incorporated cities adjacent to Harlingen (including Palmview, Combes, Primera, Rangerville and Los Indios), another 10,000+ area residents actively participate in and contribute to Harlingen's economy.

The Region's Population Continues to Grow

It is important to look in more detail at growth in Cameron County and the surrounding region because it reinforces the opportunities for significant population growth in and near Harlingen.

The Rio Grande Valley has been identified as one of the fastest growing regions in both the State of Texas as well as the nation. Cameron County has experienced an overall annual growth rate of 1.9% over the past decade.

Existing Residences within Harlingen's West ETJ



GROWTH COMPARISON OF RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 2000-2013

	Population			Growth 2000-2013			Capture Rate of	
	2000	2010	2013	Actual	Period Rate	Annual Rate	County	Region
Harlingen	57,564	65,849	66,324	8,760	15.22%	1.43%	10.44%	2.54%
Rio Grande Valley	978,369	1,264,091	NA	344,464	35.21%	3.06%	-	-
Cameron County	335,227	406,220	419,119	83,892	25.03%	2.26%	-	24.35%
Hidalgo County	569,463	774,769	818,707	249,244	43.77%	3.70%	-	72.36%
Starr County	53,597	60,968	62,793	9,196	17.16%	1.60%	-	2.67%
Willacy County	20,082	22,134	22,214	2,132	10.62%	1.01%	-	0.62%

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000, 2010; Texas State Data Center, 2013

Future Growth Potential

As indicated, population growth in the Rio Grande Valley is high, and the opportunity exists for Harlingen to capture significant portions of that growth.

A variety of entities develop population forecasts. The two data sources used for these projections are the Texas State Data Center and the Texas Water Development Board, which regularly produce population projections. It is impossible to make a definite assumption for population growth, so a variety of scenarios are considered and a range of growth is provided.

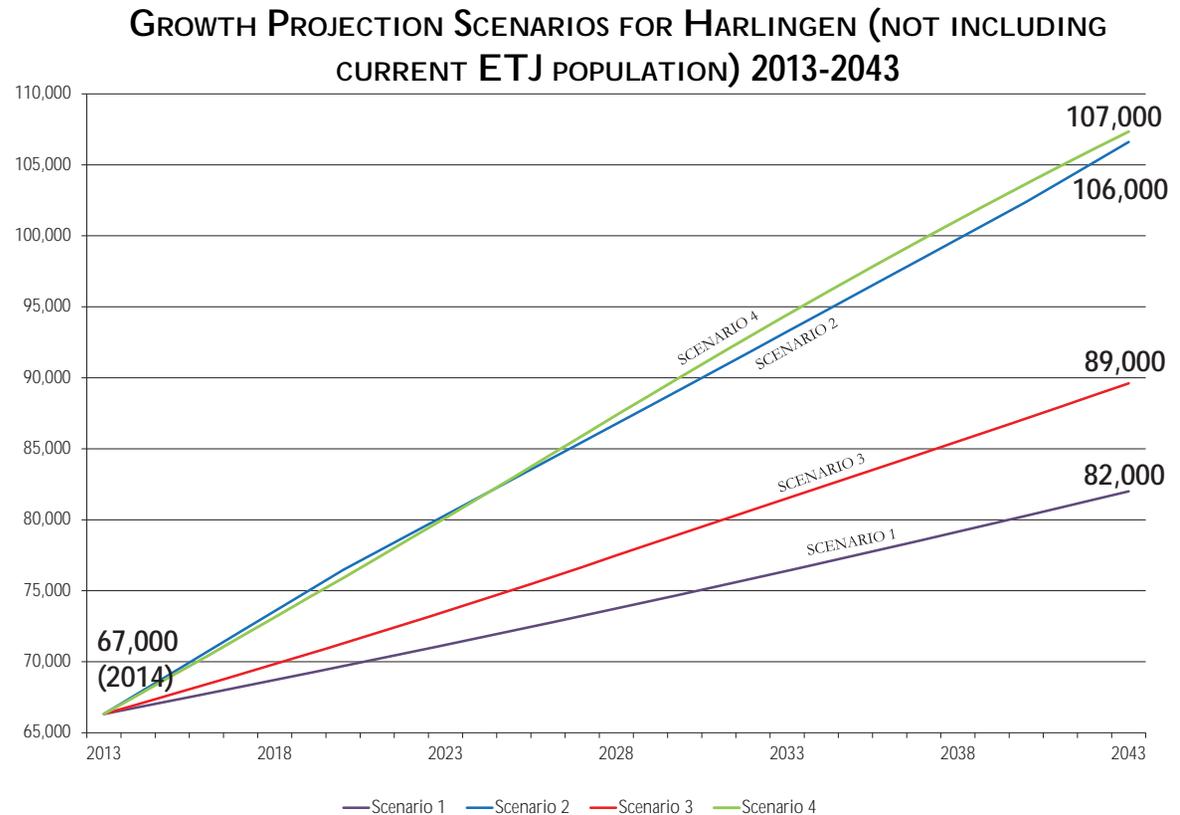
Scenario 1 is based on historical growth trends experienced in Harlingen. An annual growth rate of 0.71% is used to prepare this scenario (the average growth of the last five years). However, due to the potential for growth in areas adjacent to the city, as well as recent accelerated growth over the past two years, this scenario is deemed to be unlikely to occur.

Scenario 2 is based on the population projection prepared by the Texas Water Development Board for the City of Harlingen. This projects an annual growth rate of 1.5% over the next 30 years.

Scenario 3 is based on Harlingen’s historical capture rate of the county’s population growth of 9.9%. This results in an annual growth rate of 1.0% over the next 30 years.

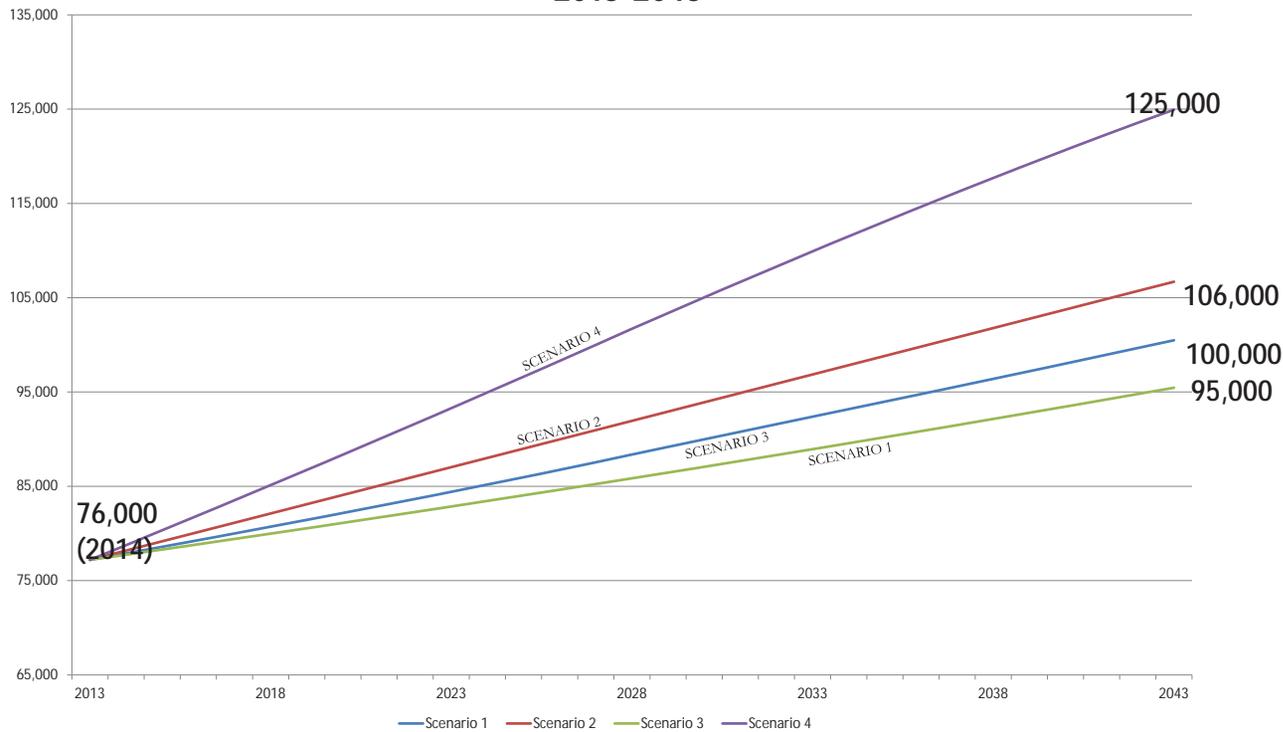
Scenario 4 is an extrapolation of the most aggressive growth projection prepared for Cameron County by the Texas State Data Center. This projection should typically be reserved for short-term planning purposes. This projection results in an annual growth rate of 1.62% over the next 30 years.

Scenarios 2 and 3 are deemed to be the most likely population growth trends for Harlingen. These project that the city’s population would approach and even exceed 100,000 before the year 2050.



Growth in the larger area included in Harlingen’s sphere of influence should also be considered, since the residents of those areas also contribute to Harlingen’s economic growth. The table on this page illustrates the potential larger population of both the current city limits and residents within the city’s ETJ, using the same growth rates shown on the previous page. This growth scenario is necessary, since agricultural lands near the city but in Cameron County are rapidly being converted to residential areas. This trend is expected to continue, and could result in a population approaching 120,000 residents by the year 2050.

GROWTH PROJECTION SCENARIOS FOR HARLINGEN (INCLUDING ETJ) 2013-2043



DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS



Downtown Coffee draws a crowd. Source: Harlingen San Benito MPO

The demographic information illustrated below represents the characteristics of the population, households, and workforce for the entire study area, which includes **both the City of Harlingen and its surrounding ETJ and smaller cities**. Because the U.S. Census Bureau does not have this detailed information for the entire study area, this data was obtained from ESRI Demographics, which prepares population and demographic estimates for user-defined geographic areas.

On the following pages, a variety of more specific demographic characteristics are evaluated. Each section of demographic information includes an evaluation of the trends of that characteristic over time within Harlingen as well as a comparison of Harlingen with other cities in Rio Grande Valley. Demographic characteristics examined include:

- Age and gender of the population
- Racial and ethnic characteristics of the population
- Household characteristics including household size, vacancy rate, own vs. rent, and income

Tapestry Segments

One way of evaluating demographics of a city is to study the demographic profile of Harlingen, or tapestries, which take into account not only age, but education level attainment, race, occupation type, income level, and retail expenditure habits. Analyzing the tapestry segments of Harlingen and classifying the population in this way can give insight into the characteristics and potentially the needs and demands of the residents of Harlingen. The statistics below represent the trends for that tapestry and not the statistics of Harlingen itself.

The top five tapestry segments in Harlingen are:

39.5%

Southwestern Families. Approximately 39.5% of the population in and around Harlingen (including its ETJ area) falls into this tapestry segment. This segment forms the foundation of Hispanic life in the southwest. It is composed primarily of married couples with children and single parents. The average family size is 3.97 people, the 4th largest of tapestry segments. It is 83% Hispanic, with 28% being foreign-born who immigrated before 1990. A relatively young segment, the median age is 29.5 years. Half of the population aged 25 years or older in this segment has graduated from high school and most of the people in this segment work in blue-collar service jobs. The median household income is \$27,483 and the population has very little ability to save. There is some degree of language isolation, especially among the older population and recent arrivals. Home ownership is important in this segment with 60% owning their home, but the median home value is among the lowest segments at \$80,152.

7.8%

Inner City Tenants. Approximately 7.8% of Harlingen’s population falls into the Inner City Tenants tapestry, a young, multicultural urban population.

This segment is younger than average, with a median age of 29.0 years. Household types are mixed, with 34% being singles, 29% married-couple families, 21% single parents, and 10% shared housing. Many in this segment are earning their college degree. The median income for this segment is \$29,072 and few own their homes. The home ownership rate is 19%, and the median home value is \$124,732. About 45% of the population aged 25 years or older in this segment have attended college and about half work in white-collar service jobs.

6.4%

Midland Crowd. Approximately 6.4% of Harlingen’s population falls into the Midland Crowd tapestry segment. This segment includes primarily the middle-aged, middle-income, white population.

The population has a median age of 38.1 years, 62% are married couples and half of them have kids. The median household income of \$52,564 is slightly above the U.S. median. Half of the population are employed in white-collar jobs, however self-employment ventures are higher for this segment than national trends. Nearly half of the residents aged 25 years or older have attended college, and 18% have earned their bachelor’s or graduate degree. Home ownership rate is high (79%) and the median home value is \$149,897.

5.1%

Milk and Cookies. Approximately 5.1% of Harlingen’s population falls into this tapestry segment. Milk and Cookies households are composed mainly of young, affluent married-couples who are starting their families or have young children. Approximately half of the households include children. The median age for this market is 34.6 years. Residents prefer single-family homes in suburban areas, and housing units are generally 20-30 years old. The median home value for this tapestry is \$141,153 and the median household income is \$56,959. Of the population 25 years and older, 57% have attended college and more than 20% hold bachelor’s or graduate degrees.

5.1%

Senior Sun Seekers. Approximately 5.1% of Harlingen’s population falls into the Senior Sun Seekers tapestry segment. This segment is one of the

fastest growing in the nation. The third oldest tapestry segment, the median age is 52.8 years and 60% are aged 55 and older. Married couples without children and singles make up 70% of this predominantly white population. Many of the Senior Sun Seekers are retirees or seeking retirement. The median household income is \$35,751, with more than half of the households receiving Social Security benefits and approximately one-third also receiving retirement income. Many Senior Sun Seekers residents have permanently relocated to warmer areas and others are “Winter Texans” that move to the south temporarily during colder months of the year. This market has the third highest proportion of seasonal housing of all the tapestry segments. Home ownership is at 76% and the median home value is \$113,731.

Age and Gender Characteristics

Evaluating the population by age helps the city understand what the needs and lifestyles are of the residents of the city. Generally, the Harlingen population is dominated by Generation X (mid 20s to mid 50s) as well as the older portion of Generation Y (teens to mid 20s) and younger portion of the Baby Boomer generation. This population, which is roughly between the ages of 20 and 64, accounts for over half of the population in Harlingen. The largest population segment is between the ages of 25 and 34, accounting for 12.5% of the population.

Compared to other cities in the region, Harlingen has a relatively young population. The median age in 2010 of 32.8 years is slightly higher than other cities in the region but significantly younger than the State of Texas and the United States as a whole.

37.3% of the city's population in 2010 was between the ages of birth and 19 years, and almost two-thirds of the population is younger than 40.

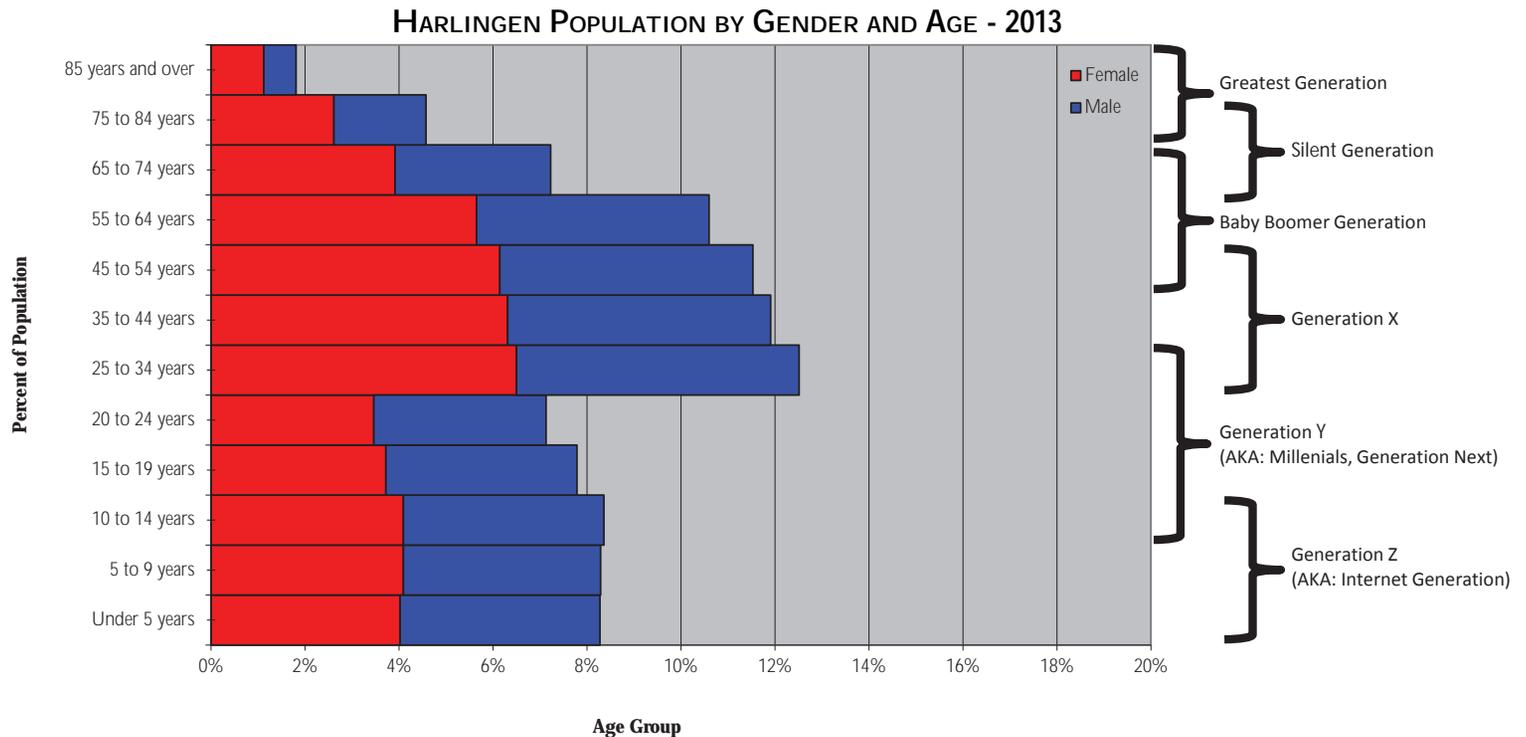
**HARLINGEN POPULATION BY AGE DISTRIBUTION TREND:
CITY OF HARLINGEN & GREATER ETJ, 1990-2013**

	1990	2000	2010	2013
Distribution by Age Group				
Age 0-19	35.5%	34.4%	33.6%	32.7%
Age 20-39	28.1%	26.2%	25.1%	25.5%
Age 40-64	22.3%	24.9%	28.1%	28.2%
Age 65+	14.1%	14.5%	13.2%	13.6%

Note: Data for incorporated area as well as extraterritorial jurisdiction

Source: ESRI Demographics, Comparison Profile, Age by Sex Profile, Harlingen City & ETJ

At 32.8 years, Harlingen's population is significantly younger than Texas as a whole.



Greatest Generation - Grew up during the Great Depression then went on to fight in World War II. They are known to have fought because it was the right thing to do.

Silent Generation - Born during the Great Depression and World War II era then went on to fight in the Korean War. They experienced the most stable family life of any generation and started the trend towards early retirement.

Baby Boomer Generation - Born during the post-World War II baby boom between 1946 and 1964. They were the first generation to reach peak levels of income, and benefit from abundant food, clothing, retirement, and lifestyle amenities.

Generation X - Born from the early 1960s to early 1980s. They tend to be highly educated, active, and embrace social diversity.

Generation Y/Millennials - Typically born between early 1980s and early 2000s. They tend to be confident, optimistic and tolerant, but with a sense of entitlement.

Generation Z - Typically born from the late 1990s to today. They have had access to personal technology and internet communication their entire lives.

Racial and Ethnic Characteristics

Harlingen’s racial and ethnic make up is similar to other communities in the Rio Grande Valley, being predominantly white and Hispanic, with very low black or Asian races, and a significant portion of the population not identifying with one of the specified races on the Census survey (Other), or identifying with more than one race.

POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY TRENDS:
CITY OF HARLINGEN & ETJ, 1990-2013

		1990	2000	2010	2013
Racial Distribution	% White	79.6%	79.2%	87.4%	86.4%
	% Black	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%	1.4%
	% American Indian	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
	% Asian	0.3%	0.7%	1.0%	1.1%
	% Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	% Other	17.7%	16.4%	8.4%	8.7%
	% Multiple Races	1.4%	2.4%	1.7%	1.8%
Ethnicity					
% Hispanic or Latino		69.6%	73.3%	80.1%	81.2%

Note: Data for incorporated area as well as extraterritorial jurisdiction

Source: ESRI Demographics, 1990-2000 Comparison Profile, Harlingen City & ETJ
ESRI Demographics, Age by Sex by Race Profile, Harlingen City & ETJ, 2010 & 2013

Household Characteristics

The tables to the right depict how housing characteristics in Harlingen have changed over the past 20 years. The median household size has remained just over 3 persons per household. There are more owner-occupied housing units than the city has had in the past, meaning more people are buying their home rather than renting. This can be a sign that both people’s personal finances and economic position is stronger.

Median household income has continued to increase, from \$20,669 in 1990 to an estimated \$32,477 in 2013. Median home value increased significantly between 2000 and 2010 from \$60,604 to \$117,597 in the city and ETJ region, a 94% increase over 2000. It should be noted that the median home value of the combined city and ETJ area is significantly higher than that of the incorporated area only (\$77,700), indicating the prevalence of larger estate type residences in the ETJ area.

The mix of housing types and patterns in occupancy has changed very little over the past decade. In 2012, 61.6% of the housing units are single-family units, while 15.5% are multifamily. The occupancy rate in 2012 for single-family housing units is 89.4% while it is 70.9% for multifamily housing. Most single-family homes are occupied by owners (77.1%) while nearly all multifamily units are occupied by renters (96.7%).

Compared to other cities in the region, Harlingen has the smallest household size, a high percentage of single-occupant households, and among the highest percentage of renters. Compared to the region, it has above average median home value, rents, and median households income, but, as is true for the entire region, these values are significantly lower compared to state and national trends.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS TRENDS:
CITY OF HARLINGEN & GREATER ETJ, 1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010
Median Household Size	3.09	3.02	3.04
Single-Person Home	18.9%	19.0%	19.8%
Occupied	20,976	26,015	29,633
% Vacant	16.3%	18.2%	15.2%
% Owner Occupied	65.3%	67.4%	66.3%
Median Home Value	\$42,951	\$60,604	\$117,597
% Renter Occupied	34.7%	32.6%	33.7%
Median Rent	\$256	\$368	-
Median Household Income	\$20,669	\$30,415	\$32,477*

**Note: Data not available in 2010 for Median Household Income for combined city and ETJ area. This number represents a 2013 estimate. Data for Median rent for combined area not available. Source: ESRI Demographics, 1990-2000 Comparison Profile, Harlingen City & ETJ; ESRI Demographics, Housing Profile, Harlingen City & ETJ, 2010*

HOUSING TYPE CHARACTERISTICS (INCORPORATED AREA ONLY)
2000 AND 2012

2000 Characteristics	Housing Unit Mix		Occupancy of Unit Type		
	No. of Units	Percent of Total	Occupancy Rate	Owner Occ	Renter Occ
Single Family Units	14,062	60.5%	92.3%	77.3%	22.7%
Duplex or Fourplex	1,926	8.3%	82.1%	5.1%	94.9%
Multifamily (5+)	3,567	15.3%	78.9%	5.6%	94.4%
Other housing type	3,690	15.9%	44.8%	83.1%	16.9%
2012 Characteristics	Housing Unit Mix		Occupancy by Unit Type		
	No. of Units	Percent of Total	Occupancy Rate	Owner Occ	Renter Occ
Single Family Units	15,943	61.6%	89.4%	77.1%	22.9%
Duplex or Fourplex	3,015	11.6%	78.6%	4.8%	95.2%
Multifamily (5+)	4,016	15.5%	70.9%	3.3%	96.7%
Other housing type	2,912	11.2%	55.7%	80.2%	19.8%

Note: Data for incorporated area only.

Data for incorporated area only. Source: US Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3)

Workforce & Employment Characteristics

MAJOR EMPLOYERS (2015)

Harlingen CISD	3,321
Valley Baptist Medical Center	3,234
Vicky Roy Home Health	975
Dish Network	883
Advanced Call Center Tech	618
HEB	607
City of Harlingen	605
Bee First Primary Home Health	600
VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System	575
Texas State Technical College	572
Rio Grande State Center	570
Harlingen Medical Center	559
United HealthCare Services, Inc.	455
Time Warner Cable	381
Wal-Mart Superstore	371

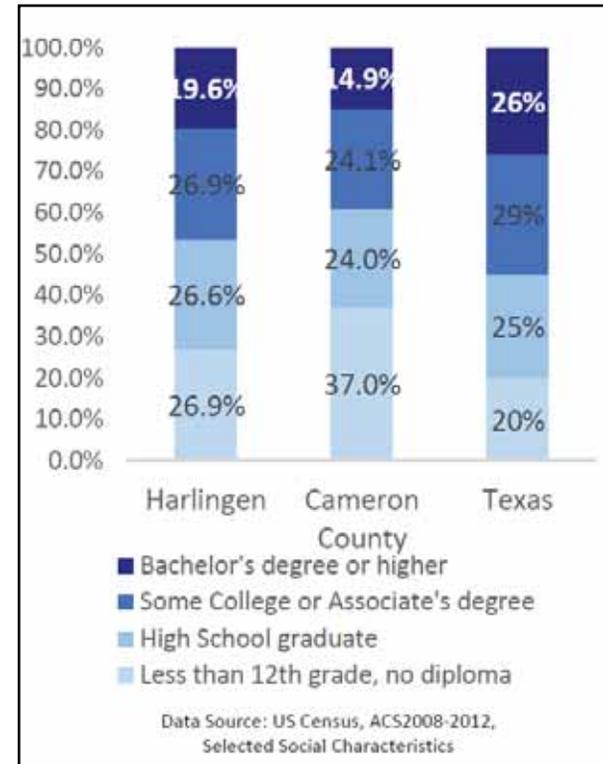
Source: Harlingen EDC

Harlingen’s workforce is more educated than the rest of Cameron County and has a higher participation rate in the workforce and lower unemployment rates than the surrounding area.

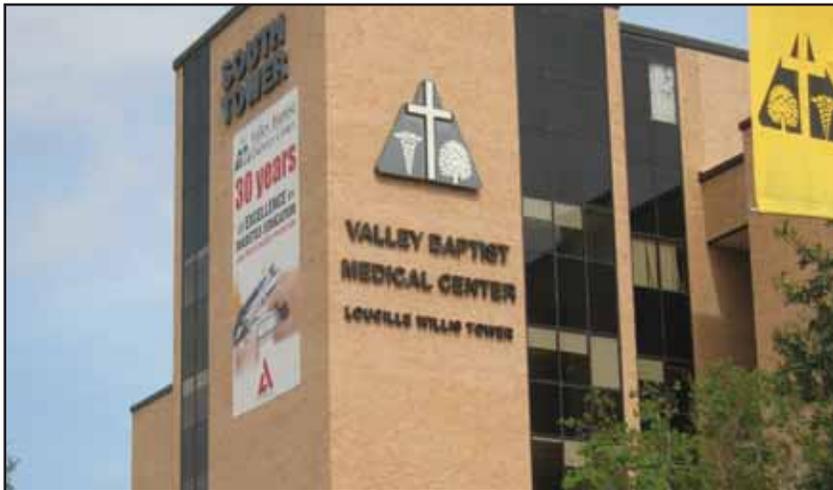
Harlingen’s largest employers are health institutions, health service providers, and public institutions. Retail, and food & entertainment also employ thousands of other workers in Harlingen.

According to an economic analysis conducted by Pegasus Planning for this comprehensive plan, Harlingen has a competitive advantage in education & health services; public administration; other services; and information. Professional, scientific and management services are growing, indicating that this service is beginning to be locally sourced.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



Source: 2014. Pegasus Planning & Development. Economic Analysis.



Valley Baptist Medical Center is the second largest non-governmental employer in Harlingen

The industry analysis for Cameron County supports the region’s strength in health care. Retail trade, accommodations, and food services are also strong industries in the county.

EXISTING REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Generally, land development is regulated based on use, site development, design standards, signs, landscaping requirements, parking requirements, environmental protection, and standards for public infrastructure such as streets and drainage. Development in the City of Harlingen is regulated by traditional documents, including zoning and subdivision ordinances.

The subdivision regulations include minimal design standards for the street network. While streets are a public infrastructure and are typically maintained by the city or other public entity, many of them are built as part of developments. This is especially true of the local street network and collectors. Arterials are typically built by the city or other entity such as Cameron County or Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT).

In this section, we will discuss three of the main components of the city's development regulations: zoning, subdivision, and street design standards. There are other components such as signs, landscaping, parking, and other design standards; however, those elements are typically sub-elements to these broader categories.

Zoning

Harlingen utilizes a Euclidean form of zoning, a format that regulates land uses and building standards based on geographical areas. This style of zoning deals primarily with regulating the nuisances between non-compatible uses. This is done, first, by identifying zoning districts based on use, as well as establishing lot standards, such as front, side, and rear yard setbacks, that create a "buffer" between uses.

While traditional zoning districts such as the categories Harlingen uses have accomplished separation of incompatible uses, this type of zoning typically falls short when addressing issues of design and character, such as building materials, because it falls outside the normal land use concerns of density, height, parking,

etc. They fail to address how buildings relate to one another and so traditional zoning can be a barrier to more sustainable types of smart growth development, such as mixed use and cluster developments.

Many of the zoning districts established by ordinance are typical of traditional zoning, including the various levels of residential, commercial, and industrial zones that reflect the intensity of the use.

History of Harlingen's Zoning Ordinance

The original Zoning Ordinance of the City of Harlingen was adopted on March 12, 1940. That ordinance was repealed by the adoption of a new Zoning Ordinance #74-36 on November 20, 1974.

Major modifications were undertaken in 1996-97 in an effort to streamline existing ordinances and incorporate changes identified during the Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan process.

Applicability of Zoning Authority

Zoning is only applicable within the city limits, which means areas within Harlingen's ETJ are not regulated by zoning requirements. This limitation of authority is established by the Texas Local Government Code, Chapters 211 and 212, which outlines general police powers of municipalities. Certain property development regulations that pertain to protecting the public health, safety, and welfare may be extended to the ETJ, such as the building code and subdivision regulations. However, the city may not regulate use; bulk, height, or number of buildings on a site; the size of buildings; or the density of development (e.g., the number of residential units per acre of land).

Zoning Districts

The Zoning Ordinance establishes thirteen (13) zoning districts that vary depending on the type of use and the intensity of that use. The following section is a general discussion of these zoning districts and regulations.

Residential Districts

There are six (6) residential districts, varying based on the density of the housing development. Residential developments in these districts are primarily regulated based on lot size (total area and lot width and depth), percent impervious cover, and building setbacks, among other requirements. Residential districts are also regulated based on the “intensity” of the housing development (e.g.: single-family, duplex, multifamily, etc). Generally, a less-intense housing development can be permitted in a higher district, but a more intense housing type could not be permitted in a lower district (e.g.: a single-family could be permitted in a duplex district, but not vice versa).

While the limited number of districts does simplify the zoning ordinance, it also results in a disconnect between housing types and lot dimension standards. For example, the least dense residential district is the R-1 single-family district, yet its standards result in a relatively dense lot configuration. This, coupled with an impervious coverage of up to 60%, has resulted in large homes constructed on small lots, also known as “McMansions”. There are a number of regulatory techniques and incentives that can encourage a greater variety of residential development that should be considered.

Non-Residential Districts

There are five (5) non-residential districts. These vary based on both use as well as intensity of the development. For example, there are different zoning districts for office and retail, but within retail and industrial, there are different districts based on the intensity of the retail or industrial use.

Non-residential districts do not have minimum lot size standards (except for residential uses), but they are regulated based on impervious coverage, and building setbacks. Non-residential uses tend to vary significantly, so there is more regulation on what specific uses are allowed in each district and what the standards are for different uses. For example, the building setback is different based on not only the use of the lot itself, but also the use of the neighboring lot. Also, the Use Chart in Section 5 of the Zoning Ordinance includes an extensive list of non-residential uses and indicates what district they are allowed in by right or with specific use permits.

Planned Development District

This district is a special district intended to provide flexibility in planning for medium and large-scale developments that want to incorporate a variety of related uses. It is reserved for properties that are 5 acres or larger.

Not Designated

This category gets applied to properties where there is an unresolved issue as to whether or how a parcel of property is zoned. While the zoning is “not designated,” there are a limited number of permitted uses including airport, agriculture uses, park, some utility services, and temporary field offices. Newly annexed areas are zoned upon annexation.

Overlay Districts

There are two overlay districts that impose different or additional regulations of the overlay district to those of the underlying (base) zoning. Overlay districts recognize that there are areas that have special circumstances and adjustments need to be made for certain areas, but not necessarily to the entire zoning code.

The **Harlingen Downtown Overlay District** is established to achieve specific goals related to historic preservation and other issues as identified in several city plans including the Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan, Harlingen First! Blueprint for Economic Vitality, and The Downtown Improvement Service Plan. The regulations of the overlay address maintenance and upkeep of the properties; design standards for new developments and redevelopments; alcohol regulations; guides historic preservation; and uses along sidewalks.

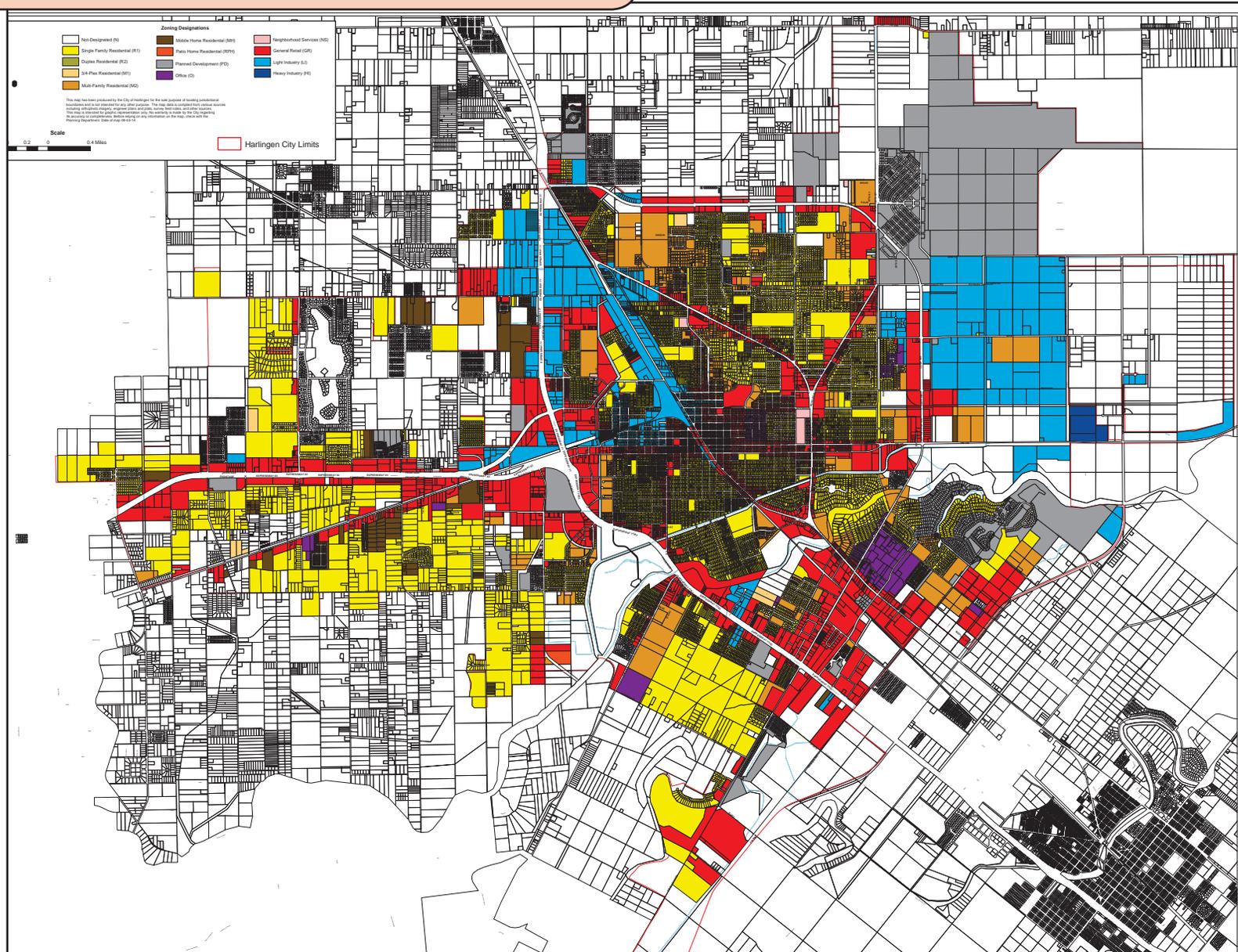
The **Airport Overlay District** is established for the purpose of regulating the development of noise sensitive land uses to promote compatibility between the airport and the surrounding land uses, to protect the airport from incompatible development and to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of property users. The area of this district includes the areas of land use within the controlled area of the airport and within the 65 and greater land contours of the airport as established in the FAA.

HARLINGEN ZONING DISTRICTS

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS		GENERAL DESCRIPTION*
Single-Family	R-1	Area for development primarily of single family units but with specific uses
Duplex	R-2	Area for development primarily of duplex family units on lots no smaller than 6000 square feet
Patio Home	R-PH	Area for development of single-family and duplex family units on lots no smaller than 4,000 square feet
Triplex or Quadruplex	M-1	Area for development primarily of multifamily units of four or less
Multi-Family	M-2	Area for development primarily of multi-unit apartment buildings in excess of four units, condominiums, and connected townhouses
Mobile Home	MH	Districts for permanent location and use of mobile homes as single family dwelling units
NON-RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS		
Offices - Professional & Business	O	Area designed primarily for use as administrative offices and professional offices
Neighborhood Services	NS	Area designed to serve the domestic needs of the immediate neighborhood
General Retail	GR	Area designated for the primary purpose of retail sales
Light Industrial	LI	Light manufacturing processes which do not emit detectable dust, odor, smoke, gas or fumes or generate noise or vibration beyond or at the boundary of the LI District
Heavy Industrial	HI	Area used primarily for industry that does not fall into Light Industry District
SPECIAL DISTRICTS		
Planned Development	PD	Area of a designated and approved size with an all-inclusive plan for development which may include any two (2) or more classes of uses
Not Designated	N	Areas not yet zoned and/or newly annexed (subdivided)
Downtown Overlay		Established to help achieve specific goals as laid out in several city plans
Airport Overlay		Established for the prevention of incompatible land use on properties adjacent to the Airport

**Note: In all zoning districts, other uses may be permitted than described in this table. Refer to Section 5: Use Chart of the Harlingen Zoning Ordinance
Source: City of Harlingen Zoning Ordinance*

Figure B.1 City of Harlingen Zoning Map



Source: City of Harlingen, Zoning Map September 2014

Subdivision

The Subdivision Ordinance regulates the subdivision or platting of land, which is the division of land into smaller legal lots that will either transfer ownership or be developed. The City of Harlingen has the authority to enforce subdivision regulations within the city limits, as well as in the ETJ.

There are two phases of the subdivision process. First, the preparation and approval of a preliminary plat will allow for the construction and/or financing of the required public improvements with construction plans approved by the City Engineer. The second phase is the approval of a final plat, which is the recording instrument with the county. Approval of the final plat is required before a subdivided parcel can be sold or construction can commence (except public improvements as allowed by the preliminary plan).

A Planned Development has additional subdivision requirements, including the approval of a comprehensive site plan of the proposed development. This site plan shows the concept of the development including proposed building locations, uses, heights, the street network, utilities, drainage, parking for non-residential uses, and other elements.

PAVEMENT WIDTHS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY WITHIN SUBDIVISIONS

Street Type	Minimum ROW	Pavement Width	Minimum Spacing Between Each
Major Arterial	120'	104'	1 mile
Minor Arterial	100'	84'	1/2 mile
Major Collector	80'	64'	1/4 to 1/2 mile
Minor Collector	80'	52'	1/4 to 1/2 mile
Local	50' to 60'	24' to 37'	As needed

Source: Harlingen Subdivision Ordinance (2011) and Future Land Use Plan (May 2013)

Street Design Standards

The design of streets and the street network are regulated by the Subdivision Ordinance. Where applicable, streets must conform to the standards of the Major Thoroughfare Plan and the Transportation Chapter of the comprehensive plan.

Generally, network standards aim to achieve a connected network. For example, the standards require subdivisions to connect to adjacent neighborhoods to promote connectivity. Also, establishing a desired spacing of cross streets helps develop a network that gives drivers options. However, there are some standards that contradict this goal. For example, the standard that “local streets shall be laid out so as to discourage their use by through traffic” might result in streets that often end in cul-de-sacs or do not connect to neighboring subdivisions.



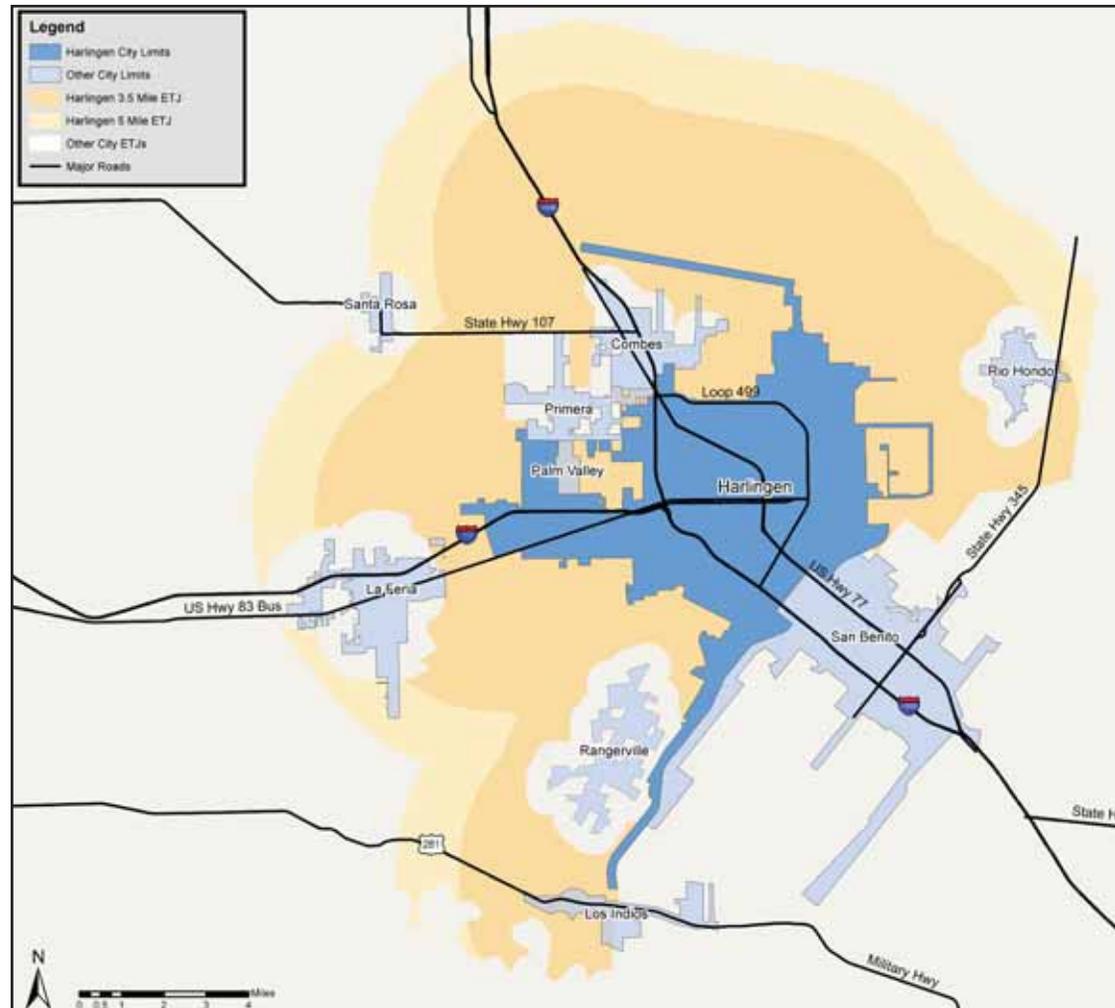
Shifting right-of-way. Source: City of Harlingen

PHYSICAL SIZE AND NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The city limits of Harlingen encompass 40.3 square miles. The 3.5-mile ETJ limit is an additional 128.8 square miles, while the 5-mile ETJ limit is 53.6 square miles.

The soils in Harlingen range from fine sandy loam to clay. The fine sandy loam soils typically have better drainage and infiltration of water and air. They contain more nutrients and are easier to till, making them ideal for agriculture.

Harlingen is located in a region that is considered to have a subtropical climate. The temperature is warm most of the year with an average high of 95 in the summer and an average low of 49 in the winter. The summers are typically hot and humid with the wettest months of the year being April, May, September and October.





“The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious.”

- John Sculley
Former CEO of Pepsi and Apple Computer