

A Reprint from *Tierra Grande*

Anyone looking for rapidly growing real estate markets need look no farther than Texas. Populations are swelling in communities statewide — from major metropolitan areas such as San Antonio, Houston and Dallas to mid-size markets including Brownsville, McAllen and Plano to smaller towns like Hutto, Little Elm and Fate.

In fact, U.S. Census Bureau data for April 1, 2000, through July 1, 2004, put many Texas cities among the fastest growing in the nation. In all, 38 Texas towns and cities added at least 10 percent to their populations during those four years. Another 55 places increased by 7.9 percent or more.

The Census Bureau has data from 1,191 Texas “places with census populations.” Among these, 856 or nearly 72 percent either maintained their existing population or increased. Most of the ones that lost population are in rural Texas.

Overall, new Texans added between 2000 and 2004 pushed the state’s population total from more than 20.8 million to nearly 22.5 million, a 7.9 percent gain. San Antonio led the dramatic changes posted in the major Texas cities.

As the nation’s eighth largest city, San Antonio, is poised to move even higher in the rankings. The Alamo City had a 2004 population of more than 1.2 million, a four-year jump of 8 percent. The only other big city nationwide to gain more than 5 percent was Phoenix

(Pop. 1.4 million). If San Antonio keeps growing at its current pace, it will pass San Diego, Calif., to become the seventh largest city by 2010.

Houston, the nation’s fourth largest city, added 3 percent to surpass two million residents by mid-2004. Meanwhile, the nation’s ninth most populous city, Dallas, added 1.8 percent and topped 1.2 million. Fort Worth’s population increased 11.5 percent to almost 603,350.

Medium-sized Texas cities followed in step with their big counterparts and grew rapidly in the four years ending in 2004. Brownsville added 15.4 percent and reached nearly 161,300. Other Rio Grande Valley neighbors grew almost as fast. Laredo added 14.6 percent (Pop. 203,200); and McAllen jumped 13.4 percent (Pop. 120,750).

Populations in Metroplex suburbs grew as well. Plano (Pop. 245,400) added 10.5 percent; Grand Prairie (Pop. 140,320) posted a 10.1 percent gain; and Arlington (Pop. 359,850) jumped 8 percent.

Of the 100 fastest growing U.S. cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants from 2000 to 2004, 14 were in Texas.

Three Texas cities that posted relatively slow 2000–2004 population growth began to show clear signs of a comeback near the end of that period. While Austin’s overall 2000–2004 population made it the 107<sup>th</sup> fastest growing U.S. city of 100,000 or more, in the last year of the

reporting period, its 681,300 residents made it the 70<sup>th</sup> fastest growing.

El Paso (Pop. 592,100) was the nation’s 79<sup>th</sup> fastest growing city from 2000 to 2004. However, from 2003–2004, it ranked 48<sup>th</sup>. Corpus Christi (Pop. 281,200) moved from 146<sup>th</sup> fastest growing from 2000 to 2004 to 93<sup>rd</sup> in 2003–2004.

And Texas’ population growth has been recorded in even smaller markets. For example, Hutto increased 81.6 percent to 5,590. Little Elm added 72.5 percent, growing to 14,880; Fate’s 1,540 residents were 49.7 percent higher from 2000–2004. Murphy grew by 49.3 percent to reach nearly 9,960.

Among other small Texas markets that added more than 30 percent to their populations were Selma at 41.8 percent (Pop. 2,200); Kyle at 38.7 percent (Pop. 14,000); and Venus at 32.2 percent (Pop. 2,157).

Not every Texas place posted a population gain. Abilene’s population fell to 114,800 after it lost more than 1,120 during the reporting period. Beaumont declined some 1,570 to a total of nearly 112,300. Wichita Falls’ population declined nearly 3,270; by mid-2004 the city officially had some 100,930 residents. ♣

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**Tierra Grande** (ISSN 1070-0234) is published quarterly by the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-2115. Subscriptions are free to Texas real estate licensees. Other subscribers, \$20 per year. Views expressed are those of the authors and do not imply endorsement by the Real Estate Center, Mays Business School or Texas A&M University. The Texas A&M University System serves people of all ages, regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. Photography/Illustrations: Whitney Martin/JP Beato III, p. 1.