

A Reprint from *Tierra Grande*, the Real Estate Center Journal



**Texas may one day have a contiguous metropolitan area stretching from Longview-Marshall in the northeast, to Sherman-Denison to the north, to San Antonio on the south, to Beaumont-Port Arthur on the southeast.**

A recent paper from the Texas State Data Center suggests that Texas will eventually have a megalopolis similar to those on the East and West Coasts of the United States. It will be an area with an extremely large number of households requiring all forms of housing services.

The fact that Texas has a large urban population is well recognized. Texas had the 14th largest percentage of urban residents in 1990, currently has the largest number of metropolitan areas (27), and, according to the 1996 Census Bureau estimates, has three of the ten largest U.S. cities. Houston is fourth, San Antonio is eighth and Dallas is ninth.

According to data center estimates for 1997, Texas' 27 metropolitan areas' combined population was nearly 16.4 million, comprising 84.2 percent of the state's total estimated population of 19.4 million.

At the same time, because Texas also has vast open spaces and the nation's second largest rural population (after Pennsylvania) with 3.3 million residents, many fail to recognize the extent to

which Texas' large cities are beginning to merge.

Five Texas metropolitan areas are already contiguous (Dallas, Fort Worth-Arlington; Longview-Marshall; Sherman-Denison and Tyler). There are two sets of four metropolitan areas that

touch (Waco; Killeen-Temple; Austin-San Marcos and San Antonio; Beaumont-Port Arthur; Brazoria; and Houston).

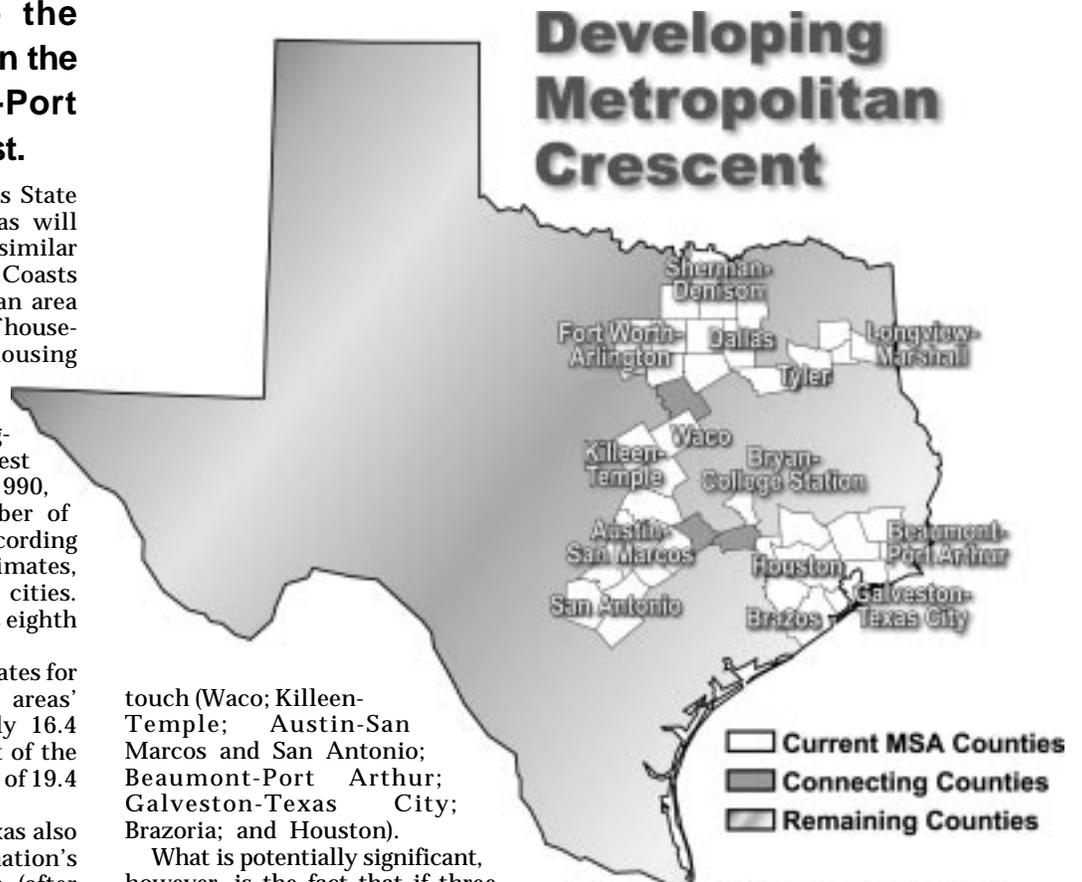
What is potentially significant, however, is the fact that if three counties were to become metropolitan, these already contiguous

areas would be linked into one large consolidated metropolitan statistical area (CMSA).

If Hill County in Central Texas (connecting Waco to Fort Worth-Arlington) and Lee and Washington Counties (linking Houston to Austin-San Marcos) were to become metropolitan, a 36,000-square-mile metropolitan crescent would be formed. The crescent's 1997 estimated population would have been 13.1 million.

This crescent would form a metropolitan area larger than the geographical area of any current consolidated metropolitan statistical area in the nation. The largest is the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County CMSA with nearly 34,000 square miles. Texas' megalopolis population would be larger than that of any other CMSA except New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island (19.9 million in 1996) and the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County CMSA (15.5 million in 1996).

The Texas metropolitan crescent represents one of the fastest growing parts of the nation. Data center projections



Source: Texas State Data Center, Department of Rural Sociology, Texas A&M University System

suggest this area could have 16.8 million persons by 2010 and 24.4 million by 2030.

Such an area would also form a huge contiguous housing market. By 2010, it could have nearly 6.5 million households and nearly 9.9 million households by 2030.

Whether the connecting counties come to be sufficiently populated to earn the distinction "metropolitan," it is obvious that large contiguous metropolitan centers will be more prevalent in the future. These areas should continue to provide increas-

ing opportunities for real estate professionals. 

---

*Dr. Murdock is a research fellow with the Real Estate Center and chief demographer of the Texas State Data Center, Department of Rural Sociology, at Texas A&M University.*

---

## REAL ESTATE CENTER

©1999, Real Estate Center. All rights reserved.

**Director**, Dr. R. Malcolm Richards; **Associate Director**, Gary Maler; **Chief Economist**, Dr. Mark G. Dotzour; **Senior Editor**, David S. Jones; **Associate Editor**, Wendell E. Fuqua; **Assistant Editor**, Jenifer V. Hofmann; **Assistant Editor**, Kammy Baumann; **Art Director**, Robert P. Beals II; **Circulation Manager**, Gary Earle; **Typography**, Real Estate Center; **Lithography**, Wetmore & Company, Houston.

**Advisory Committee:** Gloria Van Zandt, Arlington, chairman; Joseph A. Adame, Corpus Christi, vice chairman; Celia Goode-Haddock, College Station; Carlos Madrid, Jr., San Antonio; Catherine Miller, Fort Worth; Kay Moore, Big Spring; Angela S. Myres, Houston; Jerry L. Schaffner, Lubbock; John P. Schneider, Jr., Austin; and Pete Cantu, Sr., San Antonio, ex-officio representing the Texas Real Estate Commission.

**Tierra Grande** (ISSN 1070-0234), formerly *Real Estate Center Journal*, 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, \$30 per year, including 12 issues of *Trends*.

**Views expressed** are those of the authors and do not imply endorsement by the Real Estate Center, the Lowry Mays College & Graduate School of Business or Texas A&M University.