preface

In 2013, the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) developed Our Great Region 2040, a regional plan for sustainable development. The plan lays out a long-range vision to ensure that the 13-county region is one of the world’s greatest places to live, work, and succeed by 2040.

The 2017 profiles for all 13 counties in the region provide a demographic snapshot and build a baseline understanding from which local communities and H-GAC can gauge how the region has advanced the tenets of the Our Great Region 2040 plan.

The contents of this report have been gathered from a variety of sources referenced on the last two pages. All maps were produced by H-GAC.

To read the Our Great Region 2040 plan and all 13 county profiles, visit ourregion.org/county-profiles.html or h-gac.com/go/apps.
big ideas

Strategies in the Our Great Region 2040 plan are grouped into Big Ideas for six different topics highlighting areas of opportunity within the region. The Big Ideas serve as high-level guides when considering new projects or policies. This 2017 county profile includes a range of demographic data points that correspond with one or multiple Big Ideas.

- **Economic Development**
  Strengthening our economic competitiveness through an educated and skilled workforce

- **Environment**
  Securing a clean and ample water supply

- **Healthy Communities**
  Cultivating places where people can lead active, healthy lives

- **Housing**
  Providing balanced housing choices near jobs, services, and transportation options

- **Resiliency**
  Increasing our resiliency to disaster and a changing environment

- **Transportation**
  Achieving a world-class transportation network
Population Growth Forecast
Wharton County grew by 3% from 1980 to 2015 and is expected to reach 45,000 residents by 2040.

Residents Per Square Mile
Wharton County is less dense than the region as a whole.
**Race and Ethnicity**
Wharton County has a higher percentage of White and Hispanic residents than the region and the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As defined by the Office of Management and Budget as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.*

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**Median Household Income**
Wharton County has one of the lowest median household incomes in the region.

- **Wharton**: $45,200
- **Region**: $53,200
- **Texas**: $55,200

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**Age**
Wharton County has a higher portion of residents over 65 than the region.

- **Wharton**:
  - Ages 0-17: 27%
  - Ages 18-34: 25%
  - Ages 35-64: 39%
  - Over 65: 10%

- **Region**:
  - Ages 0-17: 26%
  - Ages 18-34: 21%
  - Ages 35-64: 37%
  - Over 65: 15%

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**Poverty Rate**
Wharton County has a higher rate of poverty than the region, particularly for children.

- **Overall**:
  - County: 18%
  - Region: 16%
  - Texas: 17%

- **Children (under 18)**:
  - County: 28%
  - Region: 23%
  - Texas: 25%

- **Seniors (65 and over)**:
  - County: 13%
  - Region: 10%
  - Texas: 11%
Wharton County
Land Use

- Forest, shrubs, pasture, grasslands, barren lands and cultivated crops: 90%
- Wetlands: 3%
- Open water: 1%
- Developed Land: 7%
- Other counties: 1%

Building Permits Issued
Single-family construction is high, but volatile in comparison with previous years, while multi-family permits remain low.
Housing Tenure
Wharton County has a higher rate of homeownership than the region or the state.

### Vacant Housing Units
Around 15% of Wharton County's housing units are vacant.

![Pie chart showing vacancy rates](chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Housing Type
Wharton County’s homes are mostly single-family residences.

### Housing Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Family</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Family</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV, boat, &amp; mobile home</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Living Costs
Wharton County households spend 66% of their income on transportation and housing.

### Living Costs

- **Transportation**: 35%
- **Housing**: 31%

Median Home Value
Wharton County has the third lowest median home value in the region.

### Median Home Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Median Home Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>$102,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Bend</td>
<td>$136,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazoria</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galveston</td>
<td>$135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambers</td>
<td>$140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>$145,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wharton</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Housing Units Built Since 2000
One-tenth of Wharton County’s housing units were built since 2000.

### Housing Units Built Since 2000

- Wharton: 25%
- Colorado: 11%
- Liberty: 25%
- Austin: 25%
- Walker: 25%
- Harris: 25%
- Galveston: 25%
- Waller: 25%
- Brazoria: 25%
- Chambers: 25%
ECONOMY & WORKFORCE

Top Industries by Percent of Overall Jobs
Employment in Wharton County between 2002 and 2014 stayed largely in four major industries: Health Care & Social Assistance, Educational Services, Retail Trade, and Manufacturing.

![Chart showing Top Industries by Percent of Overall Jobs]

Top Employers in Wharton County
Cardell Cabinets
El Campo ISD
Greenleaf Nursery Co, Inc.
Leedo Mfg. Company, Inc.
Nan Ya Plastics Corp.
Signature Gulf Coast Hospital
Texas Home Health of America, Inc.
Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
Wharton County Junior College
Wharton ISD

*This reflects the most up-to-date publicly available data and may not represent the current mix of major employers in the county.

Employment & Education (16-19 Year Olds)
Fewer than 10% of Wharton County’s working-age teens are both unemployed and out of school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrolled in School</th>
<th>Employed, Not in School</th>
<th>Not in School or Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

County
Region
Workers’ Job & Home Destinations
Only 34% of Wharton County residents work in the county, and only 44% of the workers in the county live there.

Earnings of Residents
Around 40% of Wharton County residents earn more than $40,000 annually, a lower percentage than the region.

Unemployment Rate
Wharton County’s unemployment mirrors national trends, and was higher than the nation in 2016.
**Educational Attainment**

A lower percentage of Wharton County residents have completed a bachelor’s degree or more than the region and state.

- **Less than High School**
  - County: 23%
  - Region: 18%
  - Texas: 18%

- **High School or Equivalent**
  - County: 34%
  - Region: 24%
  - Texas: 25%

- **Some College or Associate’s**
  - County: 29%
  - Region: 28%
  - Texas: 29%

- **Bachelor’s Degree or More**
  - County: 14%
  - Region: 30%
  - Texas: 28%

**Local Schools**

Public Secondary Schools
- Boling ISD
- East Bernard ISD
- El Campo ISD
- Hallettsville ISD
- Louise ISD
- Wharton ISD

Post-Secondary Schools
- Wharton County Junior College

**Class of 2015 Graduation Rate**

Wharton County students graduated at a higher rate in 2015 than the students of most counties in the region.

**Median Earnings by Educational Attainment**

A Wharton County resident with a graduate or professional degree makes, on average, $34,400 more than a resident with less than a high school education annually.
Population without Health Insurance
A lower percentage of Wharton County residents lack health insurance than the region or state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Children (under 18)</th>
<th>Total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top Causes of Death
Per 100,000 Wharton County residents

198 Heart disease
156 Cancer (all types)
58 Stroke
55 Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease

Adult Obesity Rate
Wharton County has one of the highest obesity rates in the state.

Dentists Per Capita
Texas 53 per 100,000
County 41 per 100,000

Doctors Per Capita
Texas 74 per 100,000
County 49 per 100,000

Wharton
Walker
Matagorda
Brazoria
Texas
Waller
Colorado
Chambers
Liberty
Galveston
Harris
Austin
Fort Bend
Montgomery
Residents in 100-year Floodplain
A larger percentage of Wharton County residents live in a 100-year floodplain than the region.

Residents in Hurricane Evacuation Zone
No Wharton County residents live in a hurricane evacuation zone, as opposed to 25% of the region’s residents.
Mean Commute to Work (minutes)
Wharton County workers have a shorter average commute than the region as a whole.

Commute Mode to Work
A higher percentage of Wharton County workers drive to work compared to the region as a whole.

Vehicle Miles Traveled per Person
Wharton County drivers travel more annually than drivers in the region as a whole.

Traffic Fatalities per 100,000 Residents
Wharton County has a higher rate of traffic fatalities than the rest of the region.
Overview

**Wharton County Boundaries (map)**
Houston-Galveston Area Council, 2017

**Population Growth Forecast**
Houston-Galveston Area Council, 2017

**Residents per Square Mile**
Houston-Galveston Area Council, 2017

**Age**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table B01001

**Median Household Income**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table S2503

**Poverty Rate**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701

**Race and Ethnicity**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table B03002

Housing & Land Use

**Wharton County Land Use (map)**
Houston-Galveston Area Council, 2017

**Building Permits Issued**
U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey, 1990-2015

**Housing Tenure**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

**Housing Type**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

**Vacant Housing Units**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

**Living Costs**
Center for Neighborhood Technology 2013 H+T® Index

**Median Home Value**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

**Housing Units Built Since 2000**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

Economy & Workforce

**Top Industries by Percent of Overall Jobs**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2002-2014, OnTheMap Application, Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program

**Major Employers in Wharton County**
2016 Workforce Solutions, County Economic Profiles

**Employment & Education (16-19 Year Olds)**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table B14005

**Unemployment Rate**

**Earnings of Residents**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2014, OnTheMap Application, Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program

**Workers’ Job & Home Destinations**
U.S. Census Bureau, 2014, OnTheMap Application, Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program
**Education & Health**

**Educational Attainment**  
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table S1501

**Local Schools**  
Texas Education Agency and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

**Class of 2015 Graduation Rate**  
Texas Education Agency, Four-Year Graduation and Dropout Data, Class of 2015

**Median Earnings by Educational Attainment**  
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table B20004

**Population without Health Insurance**  
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table S2701

**Top Causes of Death**  
Texas Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Health Statistics, 2013 County Health Facts Profiles

**Adult Obesity Rate**  
Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013 County Data Indicators

**Dentists per Capita**  
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources & Services Administration, Area Health Resources Files

**Doctors per Capita**  
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources & Services Administration, Area Health Resources Files

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**Environment & Transportation**

**Wharton County EcoRegions & Conservation Districts (map)**  
Houston-Galveston Area Council, 2017

**Residents in 100-year Floodplain**  
Houston-Galveston Area Council, 2017

**Residents in Hurricane Evacuation Zone**  
Houston-Galveston Area Council, 2017

**Mean Commute to Work (minutes)**  
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table S0802

**Vehicle Miles Traveled per Person**  
Texas Department of Transportation, 2015 Roadway Inventory

**Commute Mode to Work**  
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table S0802

**Traffic Fatalities per 100,000 Residents**  
Texas Department of Transportation, 2010-2015, Crash Records Information System