

A Reprint from *Tierra Grande*

Big State, Big Cities, Big Growth

By Steve H. Murdock



San Antonio

Texas has some of the largest, fastest-growing cities in the nation. In fact, three of the top ten largest U.S. cities in 2005 were in Texas.

Texas Cities in Top Ten Most Populated U.S. Metros, 2005

- 4 Houston — more than two million
- 7 San Antonio — nearly 1.3 million and
- 9 Dallas — more than 1.2 million

San Antonio had been the eighth largest U.S. city a year earlier. But an additional 21,400 new residents coupled with San Diego's loss of nearly 8,300 moved the Alamo City up one spot.

No doubt about it. Populations in big Texas cities are burgeoning.

In the five years ending in 2005, Texas was the only state to have more than one city among the fastest-growing in America, and it had four.

Texas Cities Among Fastest-Growing in United States, 2000–05

- 4 San Antonio — up more than 105,000
- 5 Fort Worth — 82,700 more
- 7 Houston — nearly 60,000 more
- 10 El Paso — almost 35,000 more

Only Los Angeles (up some 150,300 to 3.8 million); Phoenix (up nearly 140,000 to 1.5 million) and New York (up more than 134,500 to 8.1 million) added more new residents than San Antonio and Fort Worth.

Looking at 2000–05 population growth by percentage makes little difference in the overall picture. Texas metros still dominate the nation.

U.S. Rankings by Percentage Growth, 2000–05

- 1 Fort Worth — up 15.3 percent
- 4 San Antonio — 9.1 percent higher
- 7 El Paso — 6.2 percent higher
- 10 Austin — up 4.6 percent



Houston

Las Vegas — billed as the fastest-growing city in America for many years — was second with a 13.6 percent gain. Arizona was the only other state with more than one city in the top ten fastest-growing cities by percentage (No. 3 Phoenix, 10.6 percent; No. 8 Tucson, 5.8 percent).

In the past year, Texas cities appear to have been growing even faster.

U.S. Big City Population Gains, 2004–05

- 2 San Antonio, up more than 21,400;
- 3 Fort Worth added 21,000;
- 7 Austin increased more than 9,500; and
- 10 El Paso welcomed more than 6,800.

Only Phoenix, which added nearly 44,500, could claim more new residents than the big Texas cities during the year.

In percentage growth for the last year, Texas once again dominated as the only state with more than one city on the list.

U.S. Population Gain by Percent, 2004–05

- 1 Fort Worth — up 3.5 percent,
- 5 San Antonio — up 1.7 percent,
- 6 Austin — up 1.4 percent and
- 7 El Paso — up 1.2 percent.

For the record, here are the ten largest Texas cities, ranked by population:

- 1 Houston — more than two million;
- 2 San Antonio — nearly 1.3 million;
- 3 Dallas — more than 1.2 million;
- 4 Austin — more than 690,000;
- 5 Fort Worth — more than 624,000;
- 6 El Paso — nearly 599,000;
- 7 Arlington — nearly 363,000;
- 8 Corpus Christi — more than 283,000;
- 9 Plano — more than 250,000; and
- 10 Lubbock — nearly 210,000.



Fort Worth

Of the 1,203 Texas “places” reported by the census in 2005, 70 percent had grown in the past five years. Another 3.5 percent remained the same, and 26.5 percent posted population declines.

Towns and cities in the Beaumont–Port Arthur area, those in rural areas and those in West Texas and the Panhandle in particular found it difficult to maintain their populations.



Dallas

- Other Fast-Growing Texas Metros, 2000–05**
- McKinney — up nearly 42,200
 - Frisco — plus 37,100
 - Laredo — up more than 31,100
 - Austin — up more than 30,400
 - Arlington — nearly 30,000 higher
 - Plano — almost 28,100 more

Almost hidden in the head count are some smaller Texas cities with percentage population increases that can only be described as phenomenal.

- Fast-Growing Small Texas Communities, 2000–05**
- 1 Hutto — 492 percent
 - 2 Fate — 406 percent
 - 3 Little Elm — 365 percent
 - 4 Murphy — 255 percent
 - 5 Kyle — 233 percent
 - 6 Selma — 175 percent
 - 7 Cibolo — 155 percent
 - 8 Bee Cave — 135 percent
 - 9 Roman Forest — 133 percent
 - 10 Leander — 129 percent
 - 11 Frisco — 110 percent

Any talk about population gains invariably raises questions about the other end of the spectrum — those cities that lost population.

- Largest Numerical Declines in Texas, 2000–05**
- 1 Wichita Falls — nearly 4,400
 - 2 Beaumont — almost 1,900
 - 3 Pecos — 1,250
 - 4 Abilene — nearly 1,200
 - 5 Pampa — more than 1,100
 - 6 Port Arthur — nearly 1,100
 - 7 Farmers Branch — more than 1,000
 - 8 Borger — almost 1,000.

In percentage terms, population growth in several small Texas communities is nothing short of remarkable.

- Fastest-Growing Texas Suburban Towns, Cities, 2004–05**
- 1 Fate — 63.4 percent
 - 2 Manor — 61.3 percent
 - 3 Westworth Village — 36.3 percent
 - 4 Cibolo — 33.8 percent
 - 5 Hutto — 21.6 percent

In percentage terms, some of the big population losers were among some of Texas’ smaller places. Aspermont lost most — 18.6 percent. Pecos was second with 13.2 percent. Morton, Throckmorton and Woodson all lost 12.8 percent. White Face declined by 12.5 percent.

There also were losers among small towns and cities. Kempner lost 4.9 percent, Lampa-



Austin

sas 4.8 percent, Lometa 4.7 percent, Texhoma 3.7 percent and Menard 3.5 percent.

Texas population patterns show the state’s large cities are not just growing rapidly, but even those such as Austin, which struggled during the post-2001 recession, have recovered.

While such large U.S. cities as Detroit, Philadelphia and Chicago lost population in the first five years of this decade, big Texas cities attracted new residents by the thousands and drove real estate markets to record levels. 🇹🇽

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THE TAKEAWAY

Texas has three cities among the nation’s ten largest. But it is the percentage growth among the state’s small cities and communities that elicits exclamations of “remarkable” or “phenomenal.”



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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: E. Joseph Deering, pp. 1, 2, 5.