

# A Hill Country Road Strategy

**Bill Barker, AICP**

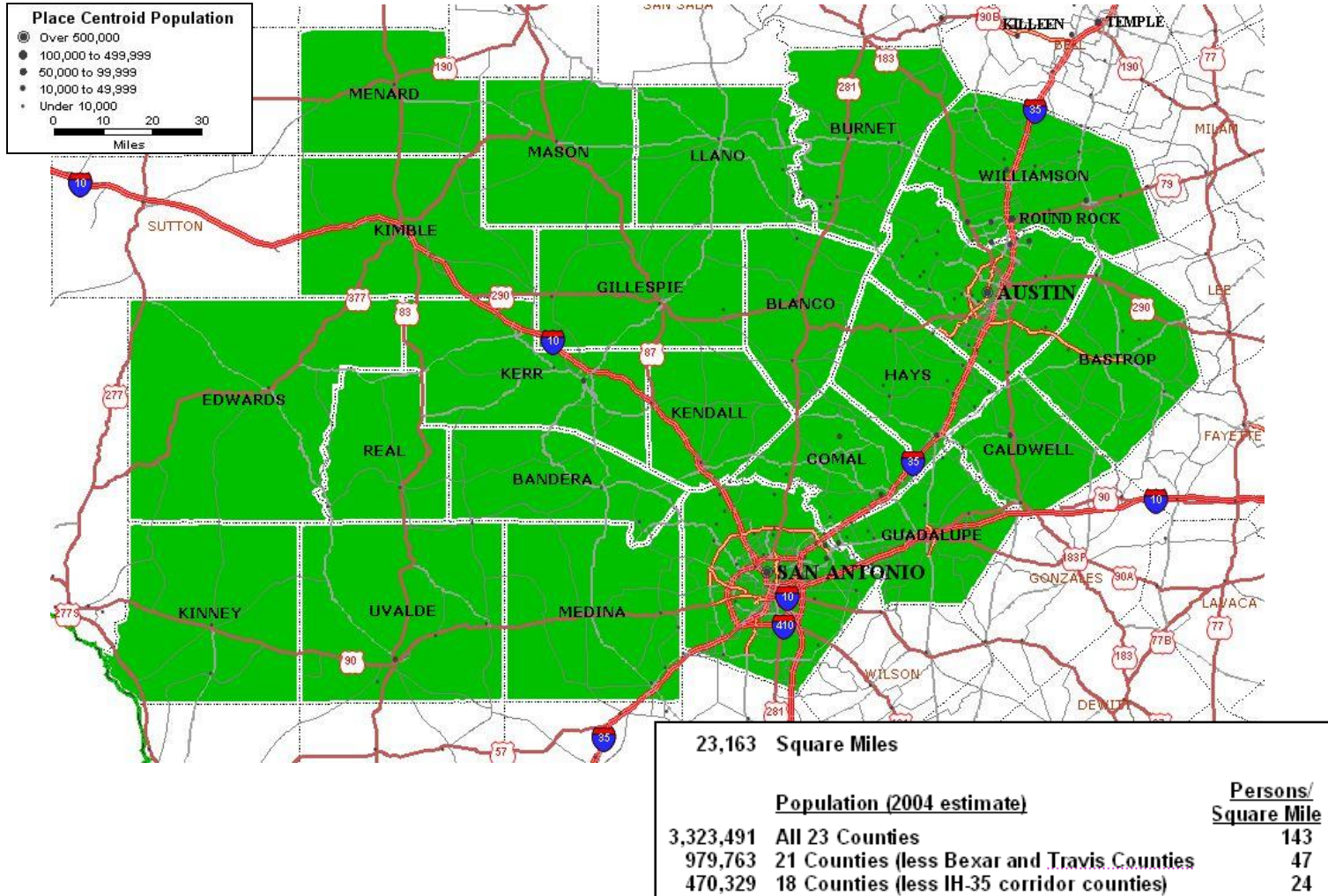
**Save the Heart of Texas! A  
Regional Summit on the  
Edwards Aquifer and the Hill  
Country**

**San Antonio, Texas**

*March 5, 2005*



# The Hill Country



# The Hill Country is a...

- Place to Live
  - Rural towns
  - Metro suburbs
  - Major retirement destination
- Place to Work
  - Agricultural
  - Business owners
  - Services Orientation
- Recreation asset
  - Parks and wildlife preserves
  - Historic and cultural assets
  - National destination for bicyclists
  - Scenic drives
- Collection of Special Ecosystems
  - 60 unique species
  - Several endangered species
  - Edwards Plateau unique at global scale
- Source of fresh water
  - San Antonio's source of drinking water
  - Water supply for area wildlife
  - "Great Springs"

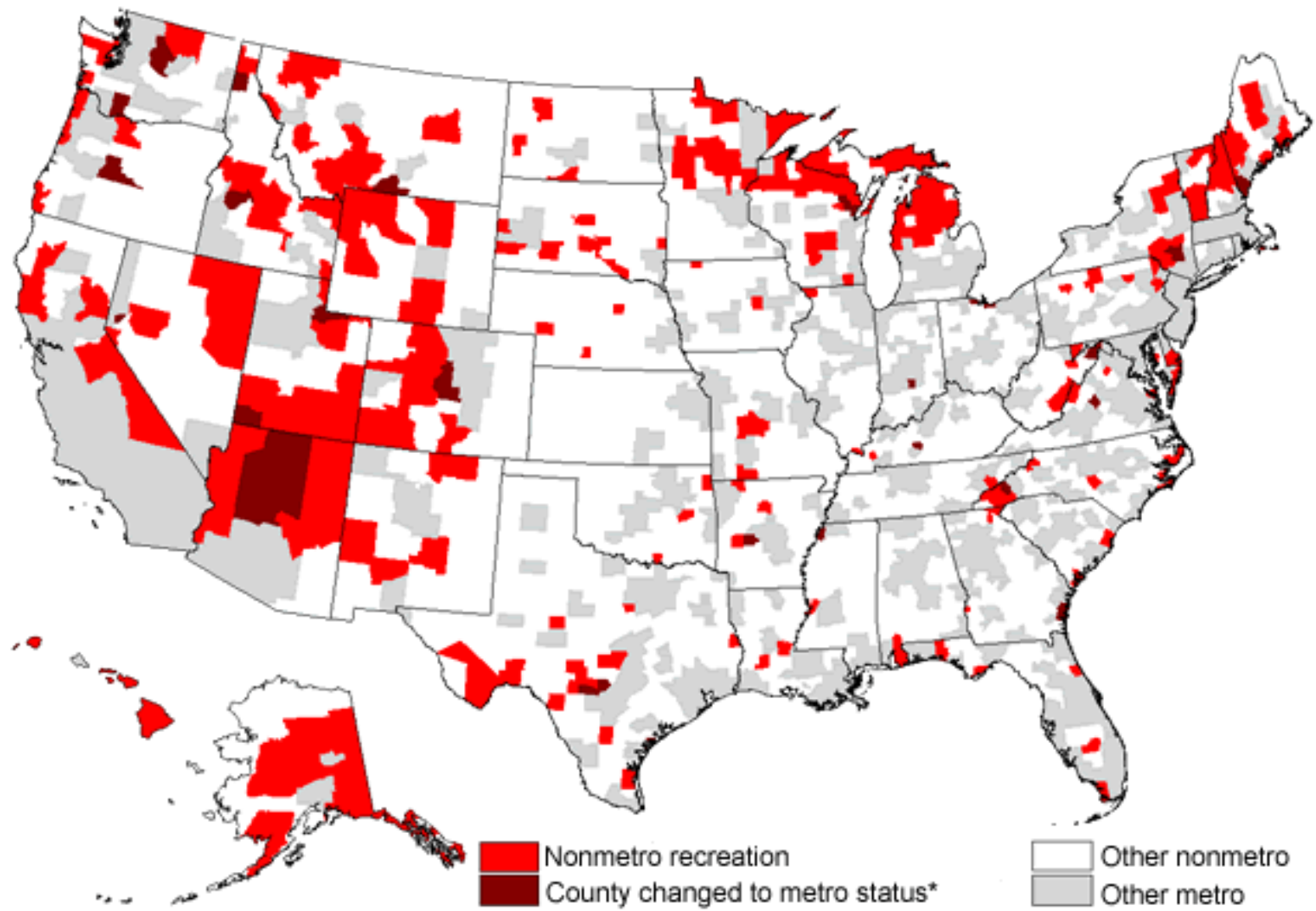


# Problems

- Road building and land development causing traffic congestion
- Benzene detected in Edwards Aquifer wells
- Increase in impervious cover over aquifer recharge
- Destruction of habitat and tree cover
- Potential destruction of scenic drives
- Traffic threatens vitality of main streets in small towns
- Bicycle/vehicle conflicts



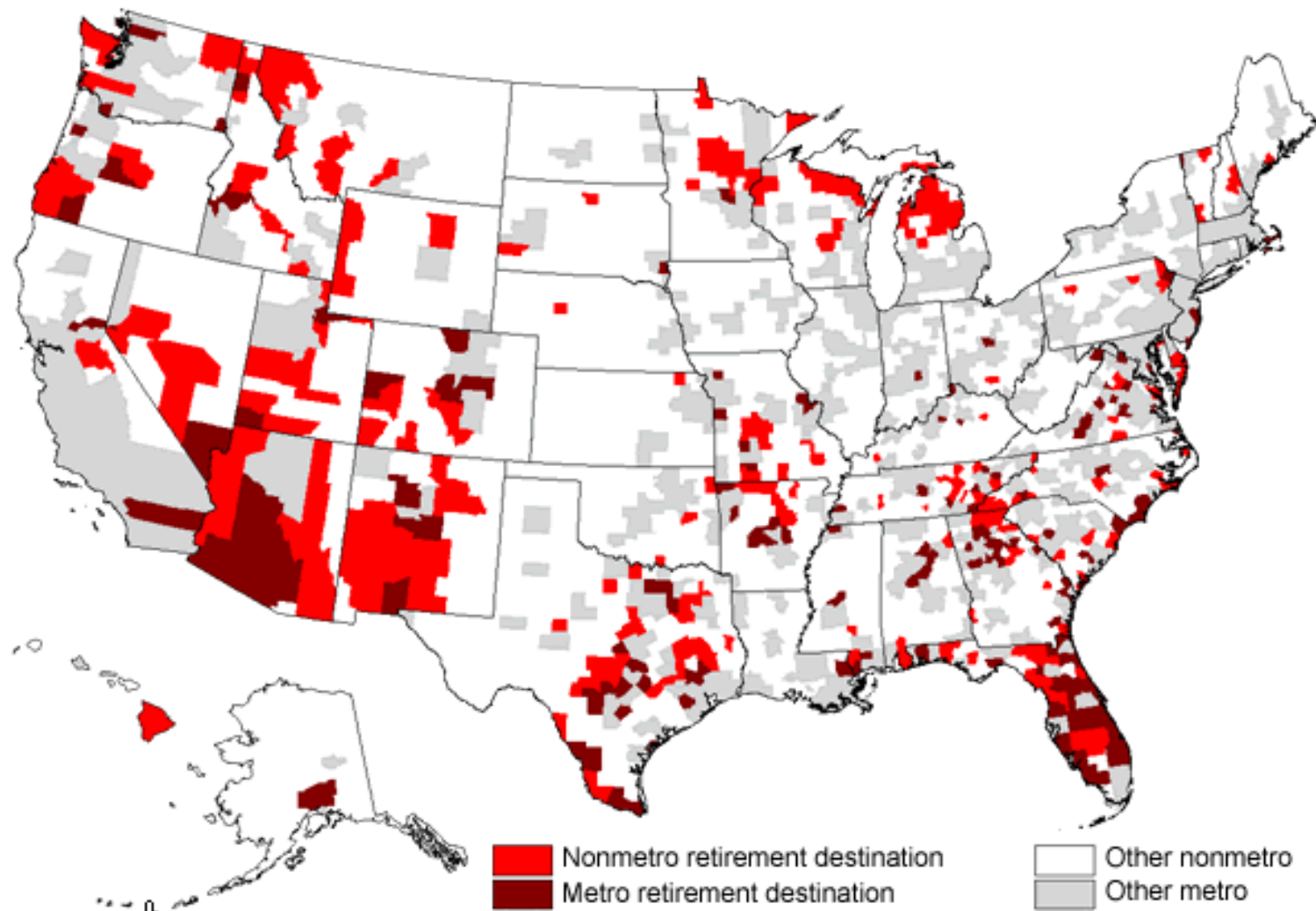
## Nonmetro recreation counties, 1999



\*Only counties that were classified as nonmetro in either 1993 or 2003 were analyzed. These metro recreation counties were nonmetro in 1993.

Source: Economic Research Service, USDA.

## Retirement destination counties, 2000

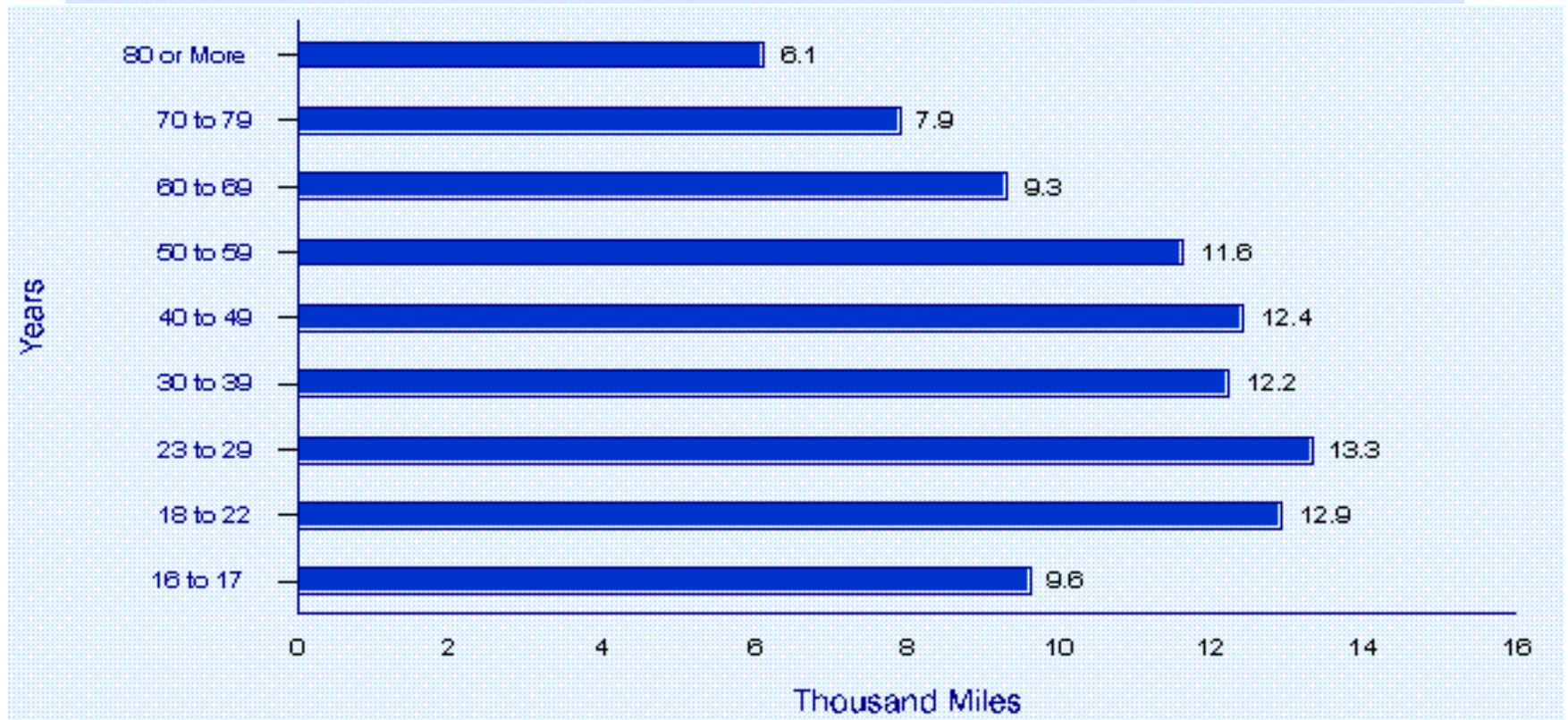


Retirement destination counties--number of residents 60 and older grew by 15 percent or more between 1990 and 2000 due to immigration.

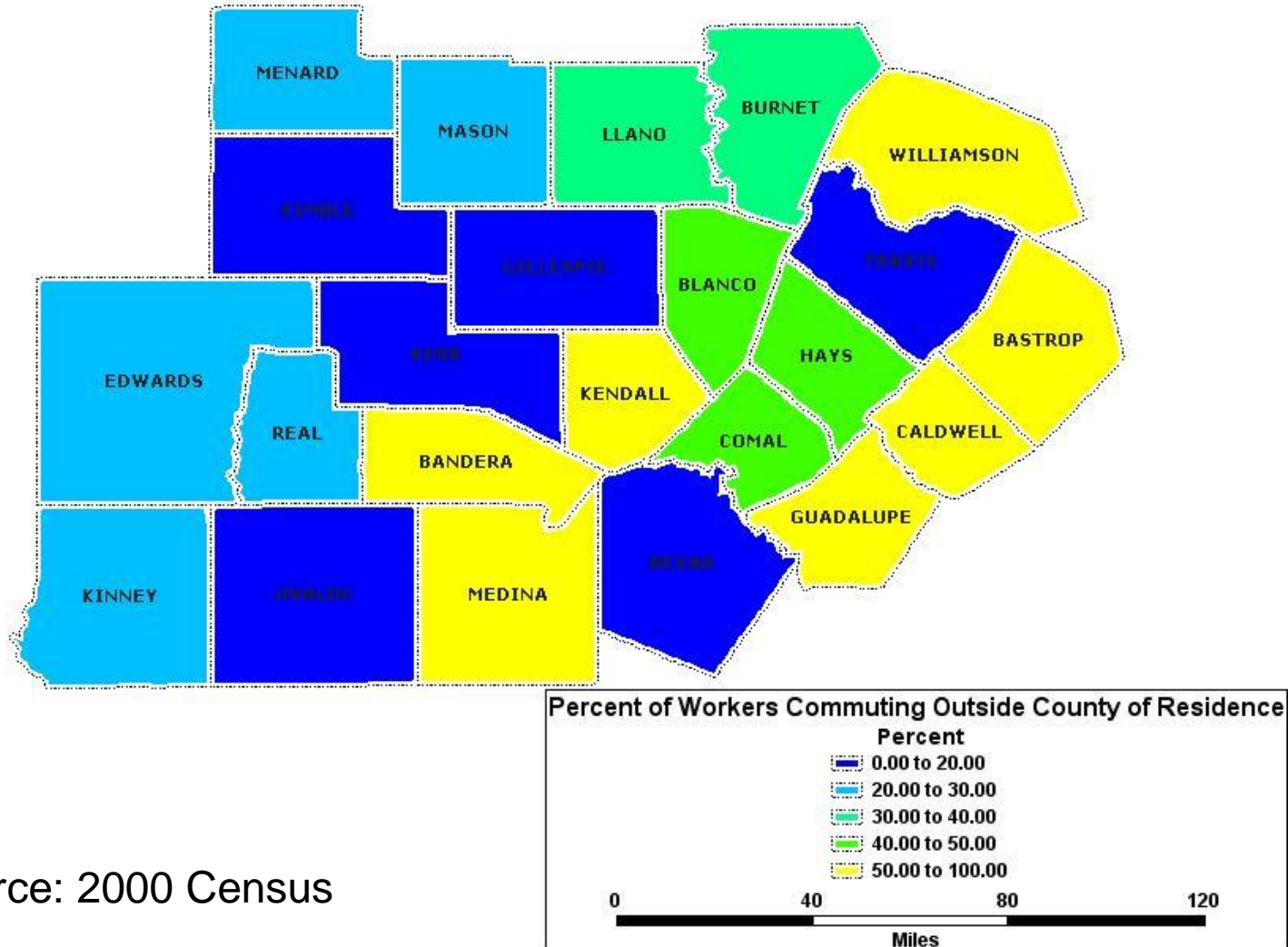
Source: Economic Research Service, USDA.

# Vehicle Use Drops Starting Age 50

Residential Vehicle-Miles Traveled per Vehicle by Age of Primary Driver



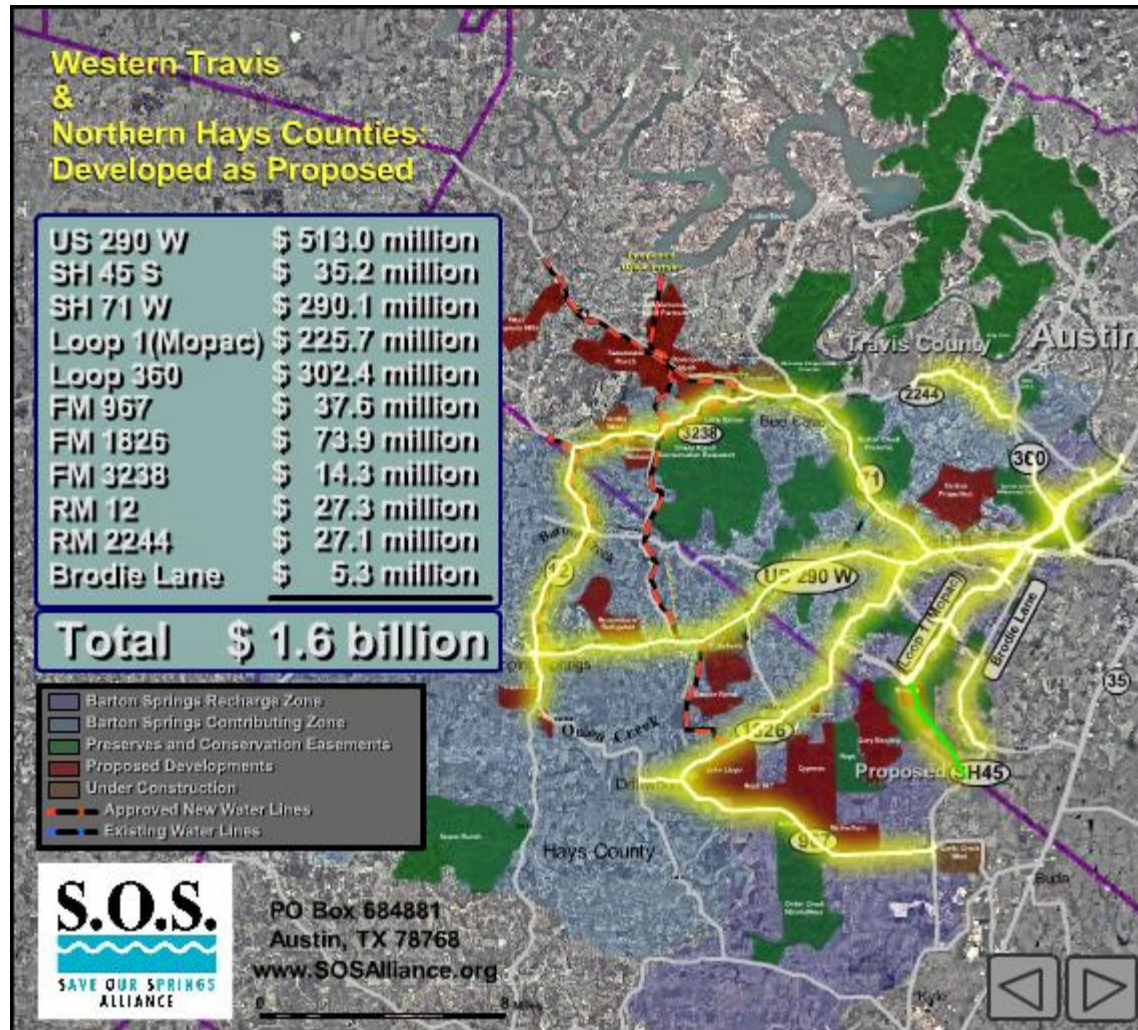
# Some Counties Becoming Populated with Commuters



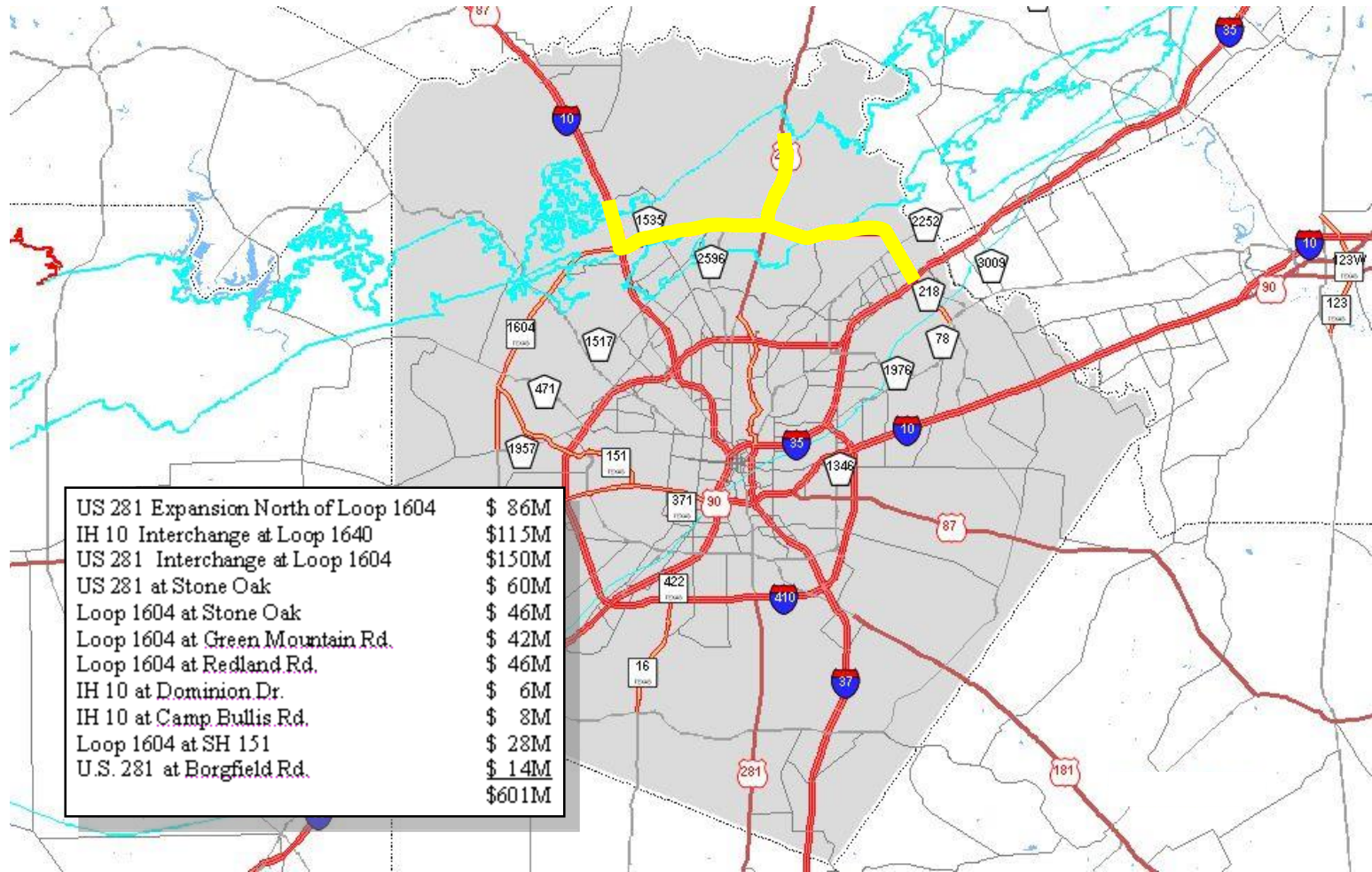
Source: 2000 Census



# Barton Springs Recharge

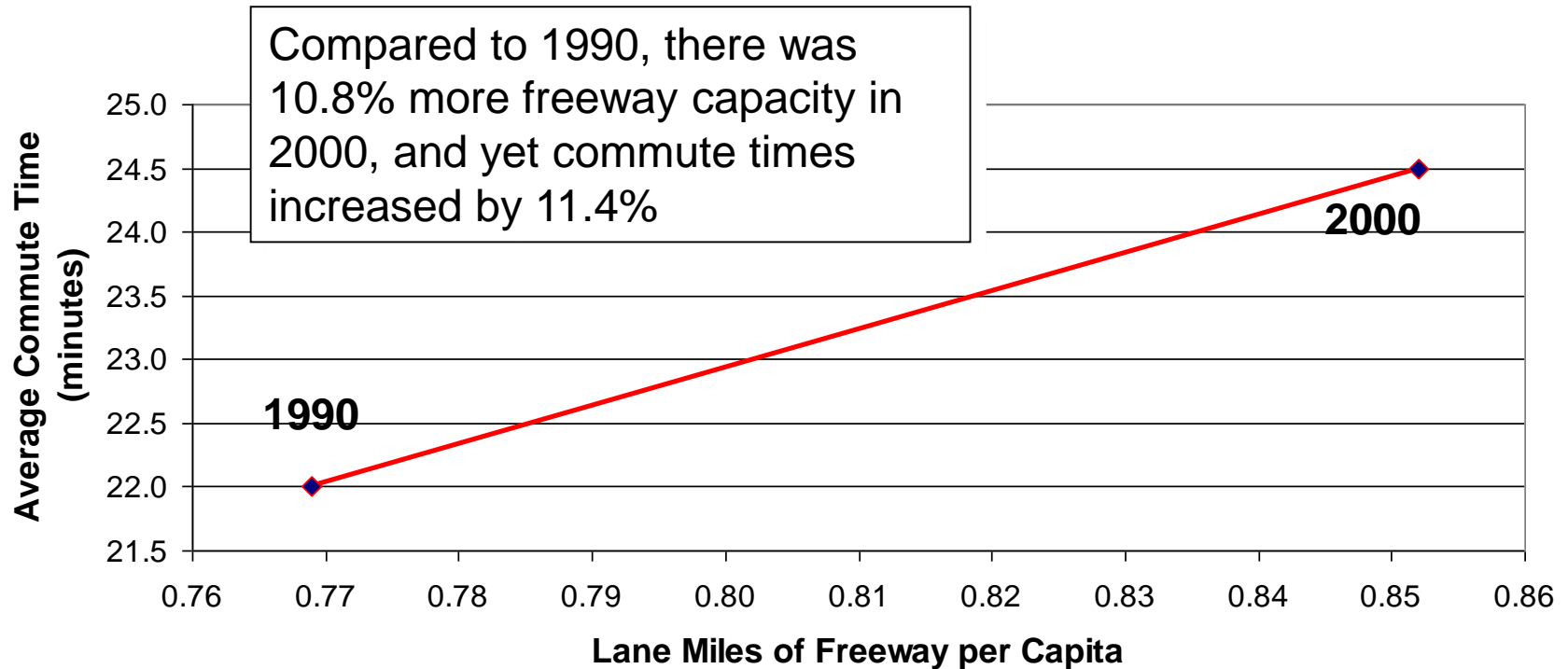


# Road Projects on Recharge Zone

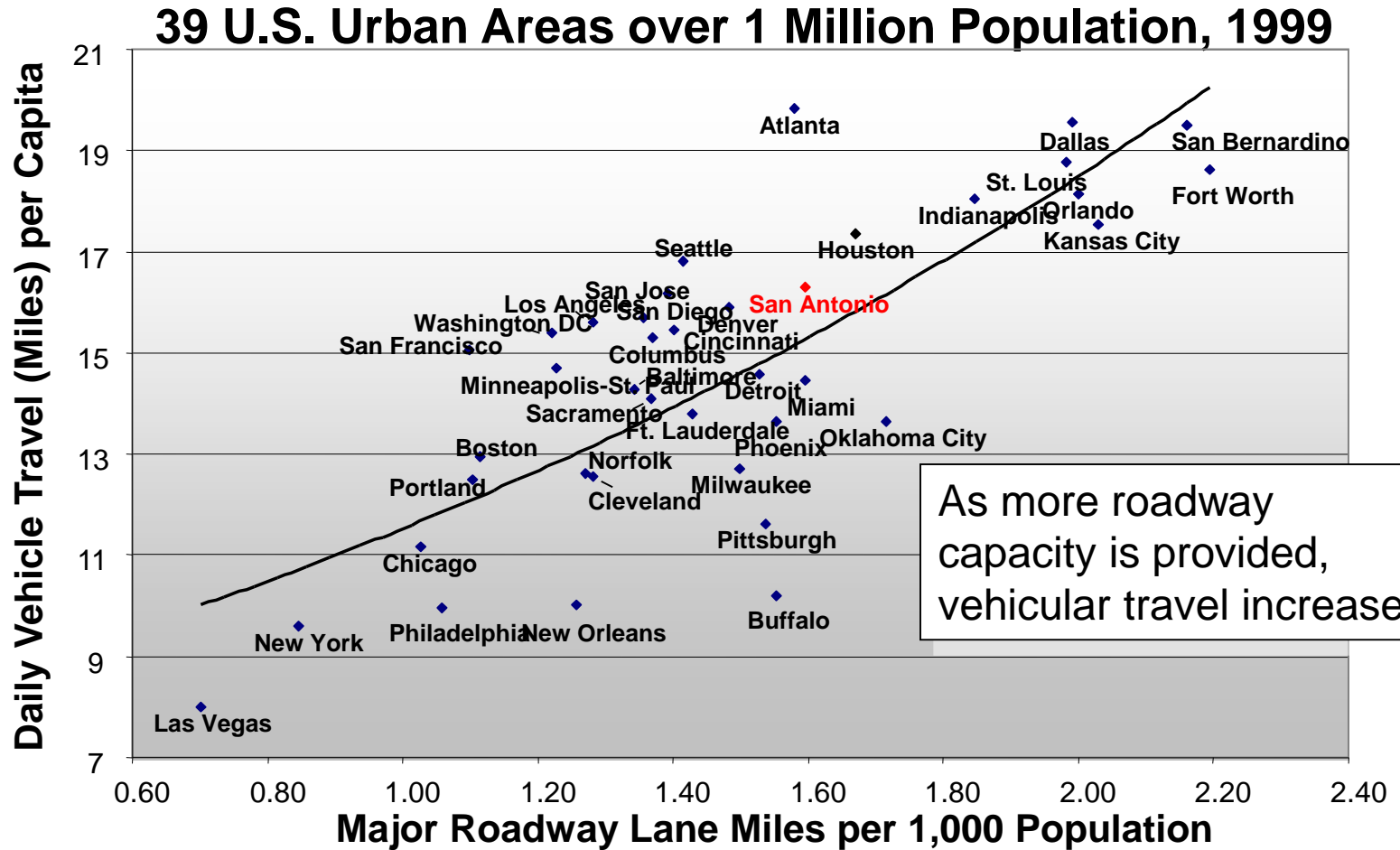


# Freeway Supply and Commute Times

San Antonio, 1990 and 2000

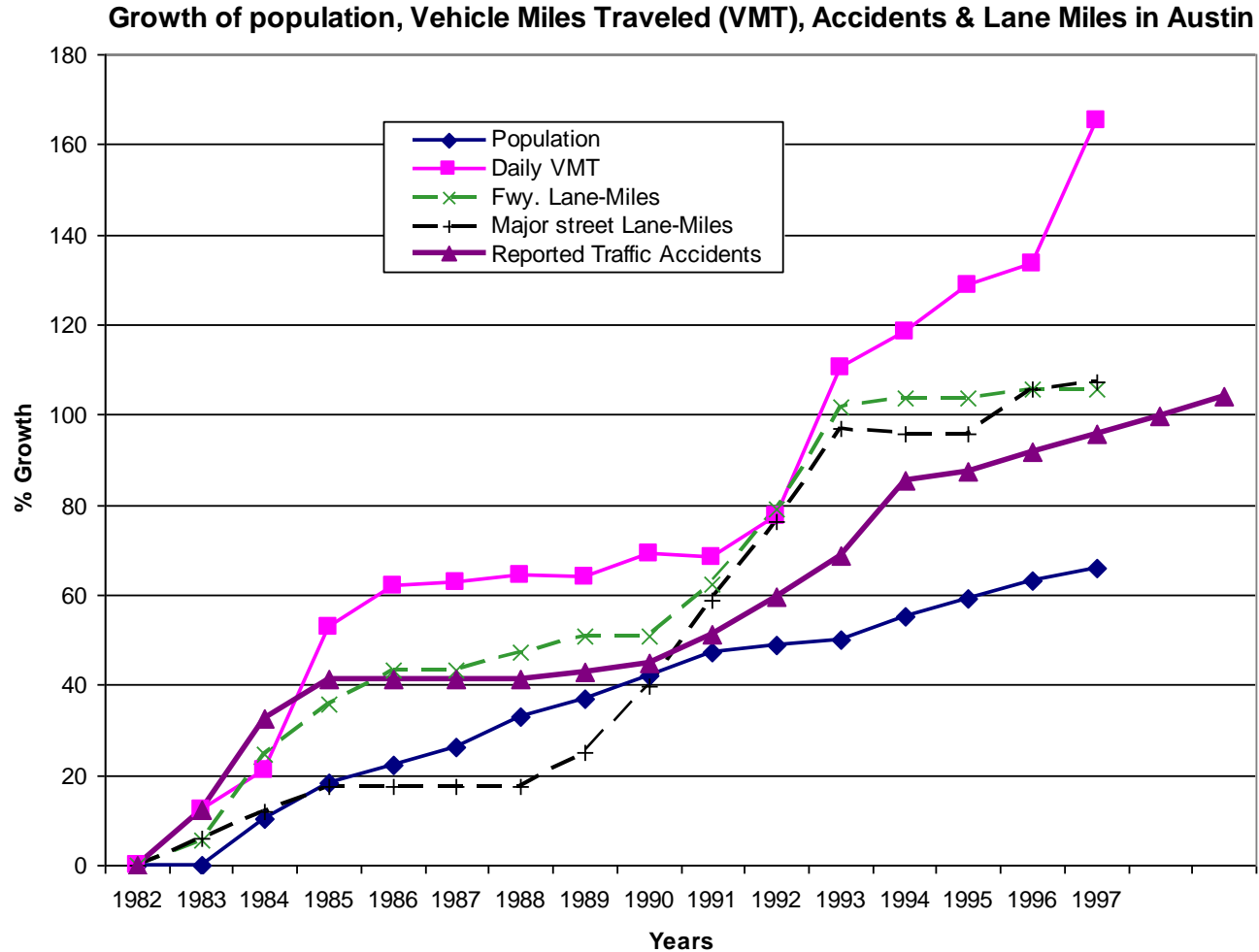


# Roadway Supply and Use

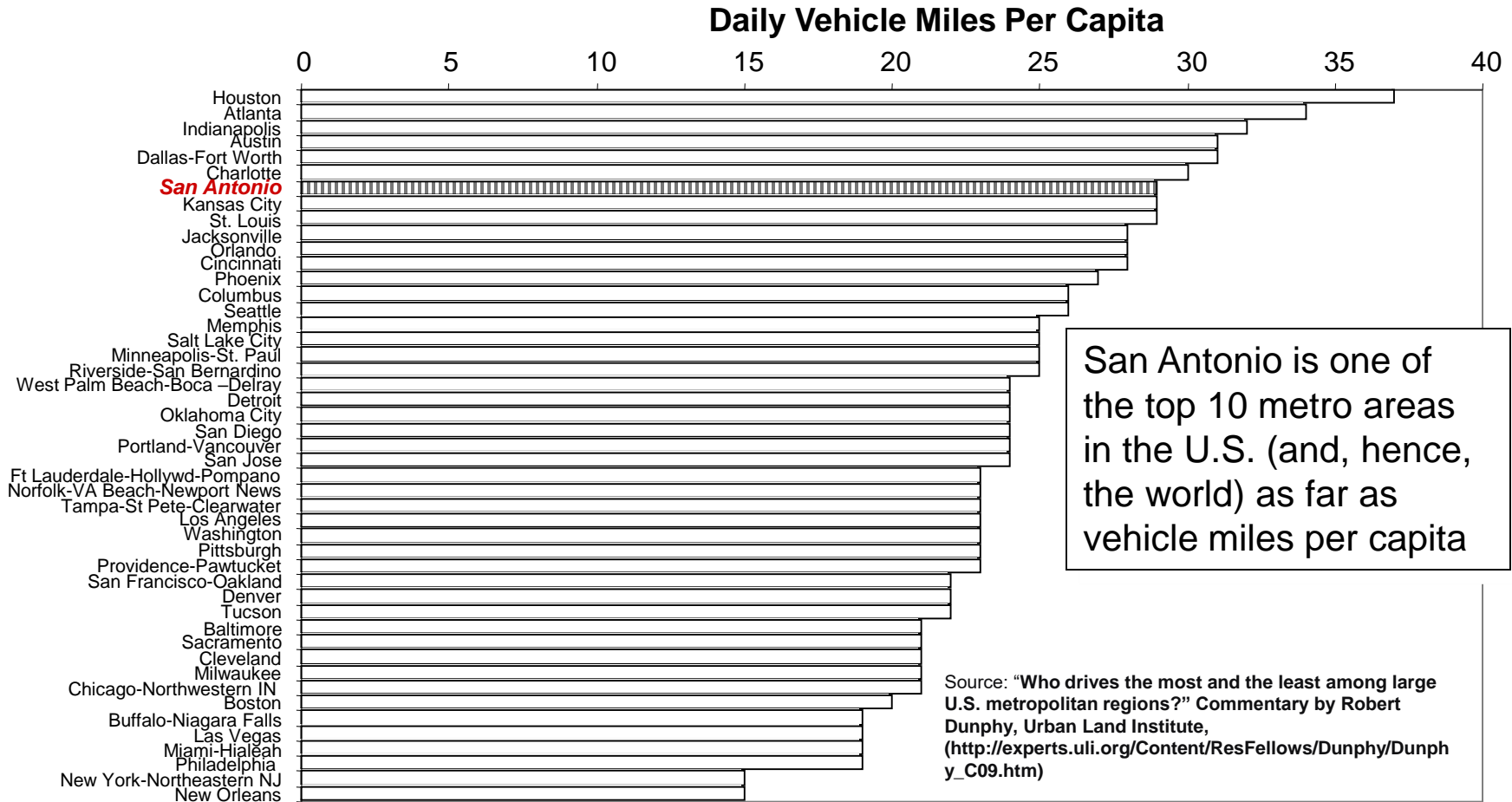


Source: Texas Transportation Institute

# Trends in Austin



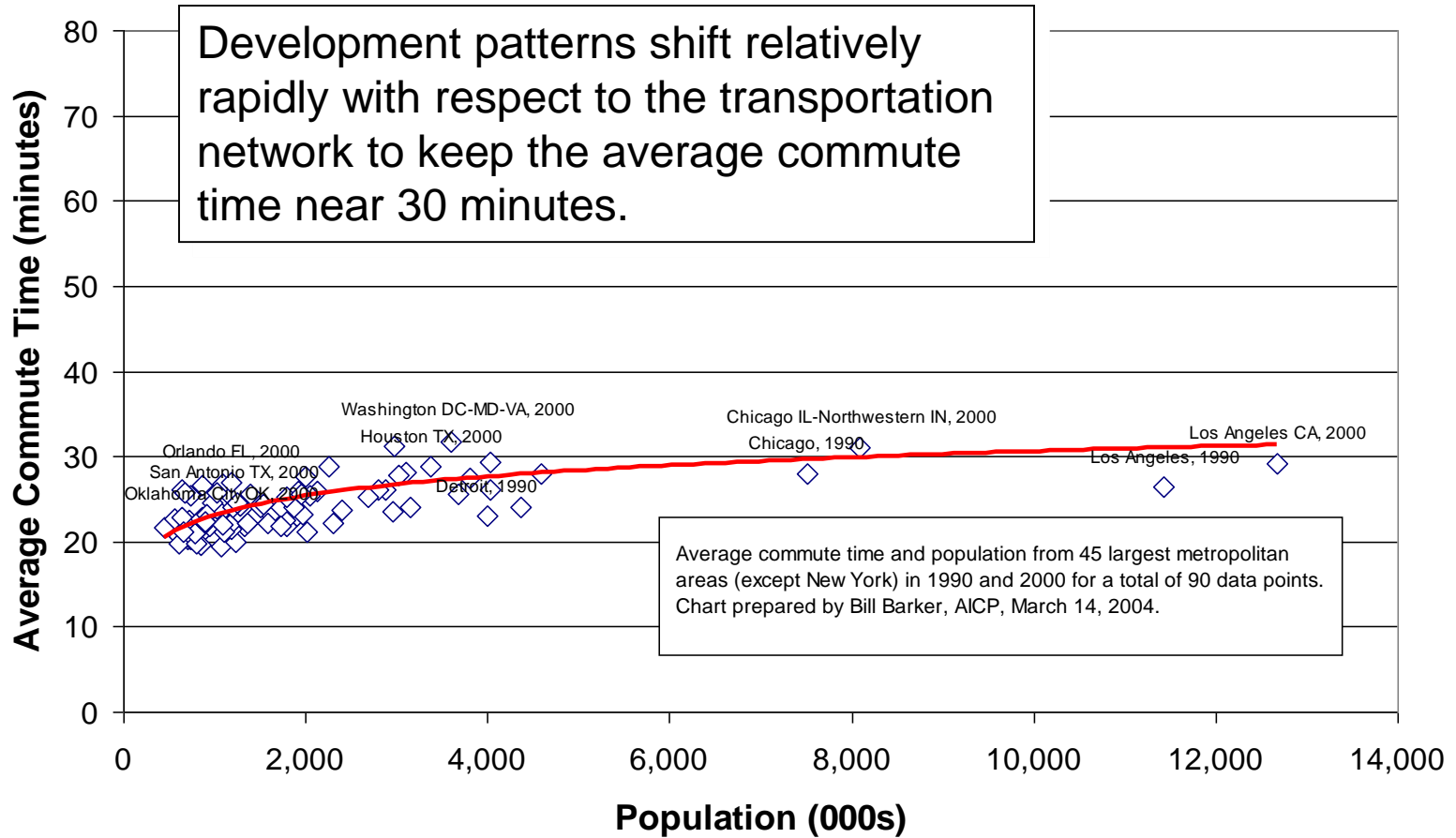
# Who Drives the Most?



**At 37¢ per mile, SA's transportation system costs us \$3/4B more than average city's system each year.**

# Average Commute Time and Population

## U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000



# Recommendations

- Avoid road building over aquifer watersheds
- Manage Hill Country roadways for safety and scenic beauty, including purchase of access rights
- Continue programs to purchase land and conservation easements
- Support efforts to give counties land use controls
- Support Austin-San Antonio commuter rail project and station-oriented growth plans
- Take advantage of SH 130 as an opportunity for quality growth
- Bring together stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for Hill Country including legislative support