



# **COMMUNITY PLAN**

**For**

**2007-2008**

NOVEMBER 2007

# Austin County Community Plan

## **What Is a Community Plan?**

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This plan is known as the Austin County Criminal Justice Community Plan, the purpose of which is to identify gaps in services regarding criminal justice issues. The Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office (CJD) requires that each county in Texas have a Criminal Justice Community Plan.

The document that is represented here reflects the efforts of many in Austin County that are concerned with assuring that any gaps in services that are identified are closed in a way that will both solve the problem and provide as great a benefit to the community as possible. It is with grateful acknowledgement that the names of those involved in the process of developing this plan are listed in the following page(s) under Part II (Community Planning Group).

This document will continue to be a work in progress. New criminal justice goals are identified, the Planning Group changes as a result of individual and agency circumstances, and requirements concerning the makeup of the Plan are subject to change from year to year. Thus, Austin County is interested in keeping up with these changes, and including such in updates that will be posted from time to time.

You are invited to join in this ongoing effort if you have not been involved in its development. Any questions you may have can be addressed to either Melissa Weiss, Community Plan Coordinator for Austin County, or to the Criminal Justice Program of the Houston-Galveston Area Council. Contact information is provided within this document.

The Austin County Commissioners Court supports the concept of community planning by providing staff support and resources for development and implementation of the Austin County Community Plan. Additionally, the Commissioners Court supports grant applications from county departments as well as community organizations that address gaps in services identified in the Community Plan.

## Areas Represented

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### Incorporated Communities:

|            |                |        |          |
|------------|----------------|--------|----------|
| Bellville  | Sealy          | Wallis | Industry |
| San Felipe | Brazos Country |        |          |

### Unincorporated Communities:

|             |            |          |              |
|-------------|------------|----------|--------------|
| Cat Spring  | New Ulm    | Kenney   | Bleiberville |
| Nelsonville | Frydek     | Burleigh | Raccoon Bend |
| Shelby      | Cochran    | Millheim | Buckhorn     |
| Peters      | New Wehdem | Welcome  | Oak Hill     |

### School Districts:

|               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| Bellville ISD | Sealy ISD |
| Brazos ISD    |           |

### Brief description and history of Austin County:

Austin County is located in East Central Texas. The County's estimated population is 25,800. Bellville is the county seat and other municipalities included are Sealy, Wallis, Brazos Country, Industry and San Felipe. Total area in square miles is 663. Austin County is rural in nature but is networked by two main thoroughfares, those being Interstate 10 and State Highway 36.

The manufacturing, trade, service, and local government sectors fuel the county's employment. Primary employers located in Austin County are Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Wal-Mart Super Center, BAE Systems plc, Acme Brick Co., Western International Gas, Weyerhaeuser Co., Bellville Tube Corp., Tesco Industries Inc., Systems Painters Inc., and the school districts of Bellville, Sealy and Brazos.

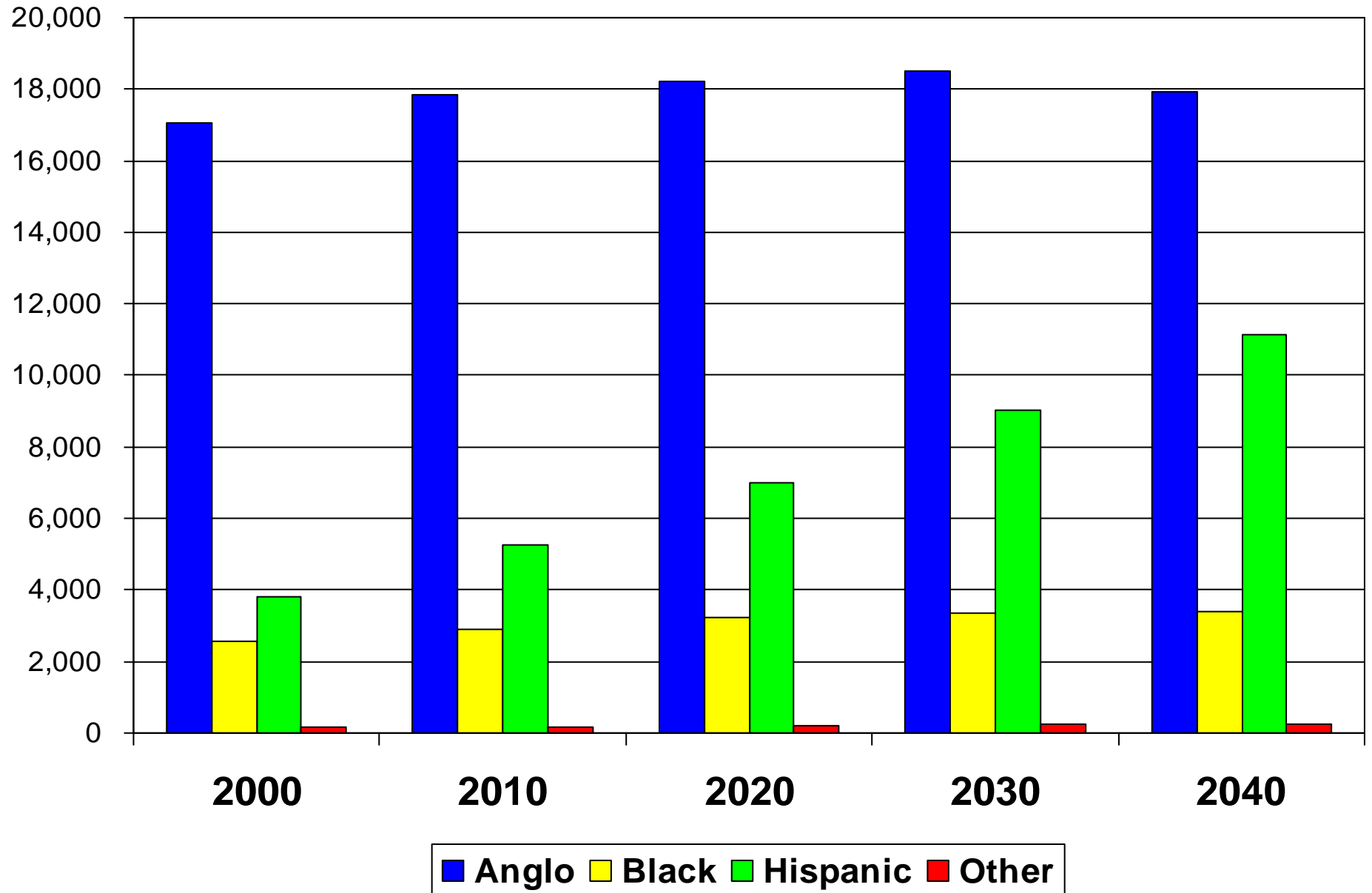
Countywide, the population continues to increase proportionately. The race/ethnicity of Austin County's population is changing with a significant increase in the Hispanic population (see attached).

Austin County is the home of Stephen F. Austin State Park and is named for Stephen Fuller Austin, also known as the “Father of Texas”. Austin County was selected by Stephen F. Austin in 1823 as the central site for his colony, the first Anglo-American settlement in Texas and is one of the oldest counties in Texas, organized in 1837 during the Republic of Texas. San Felipe was the County Seat of Austin County until 1848 when it was moved to Bellville. The first Capital of Texas was located in Austin County in the town of San Felipe and was the site for the first postal system. The first organized police force, which became the Texas Rangers, had its beginnings in San Felipe’s committees of public safety for protection against Indians.

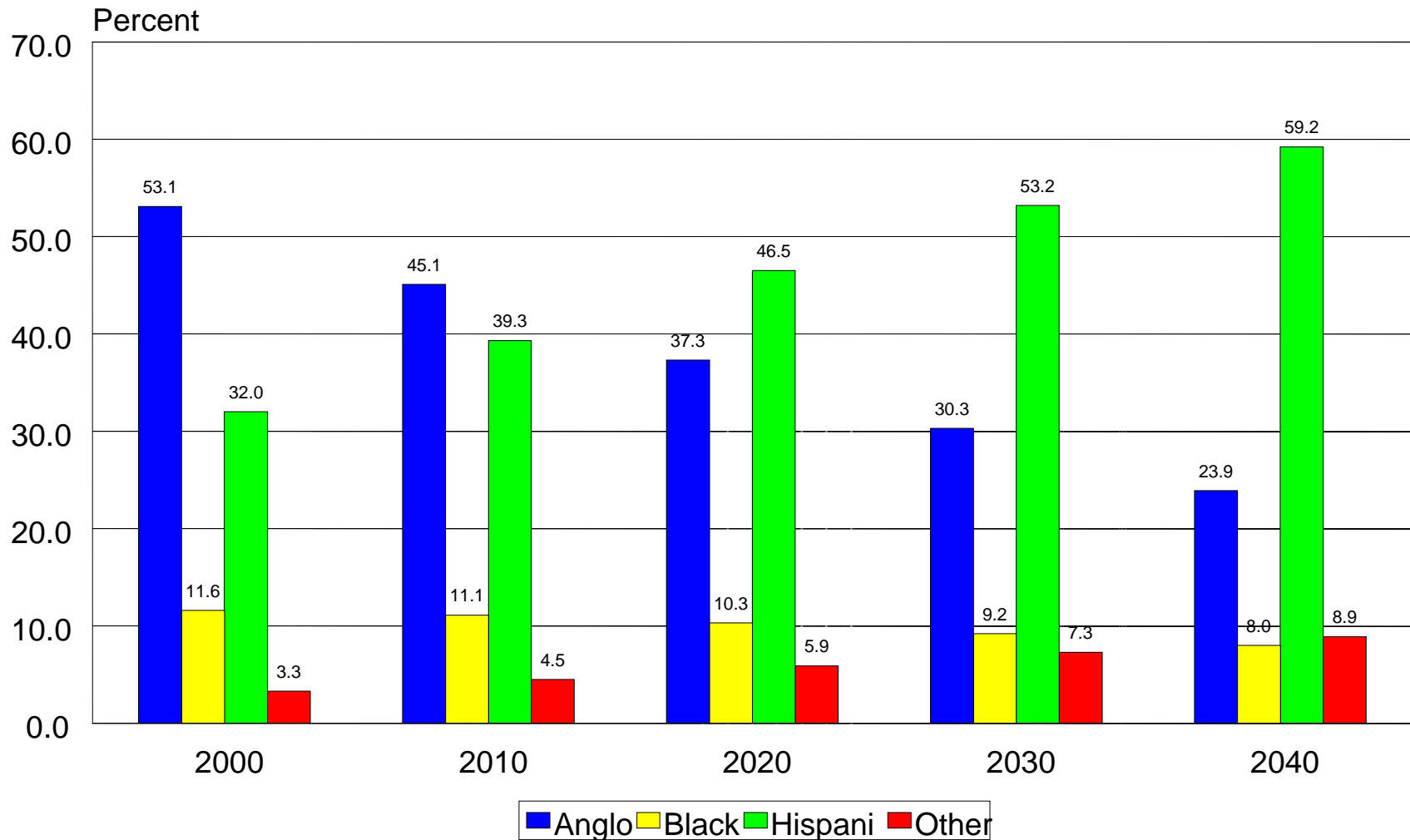
The Texas Legislature designated San Felipe, Austin County as the Colonial Capitol of Texas in the 2005 legislative session. There is continued research and effort to revitalize the Texas historical roots of San Felipe, Austin County, Texas!

HB12 will allow for expansion of state historical sites and the Stephen F. Austin Park Association is actively working to engage local effort.

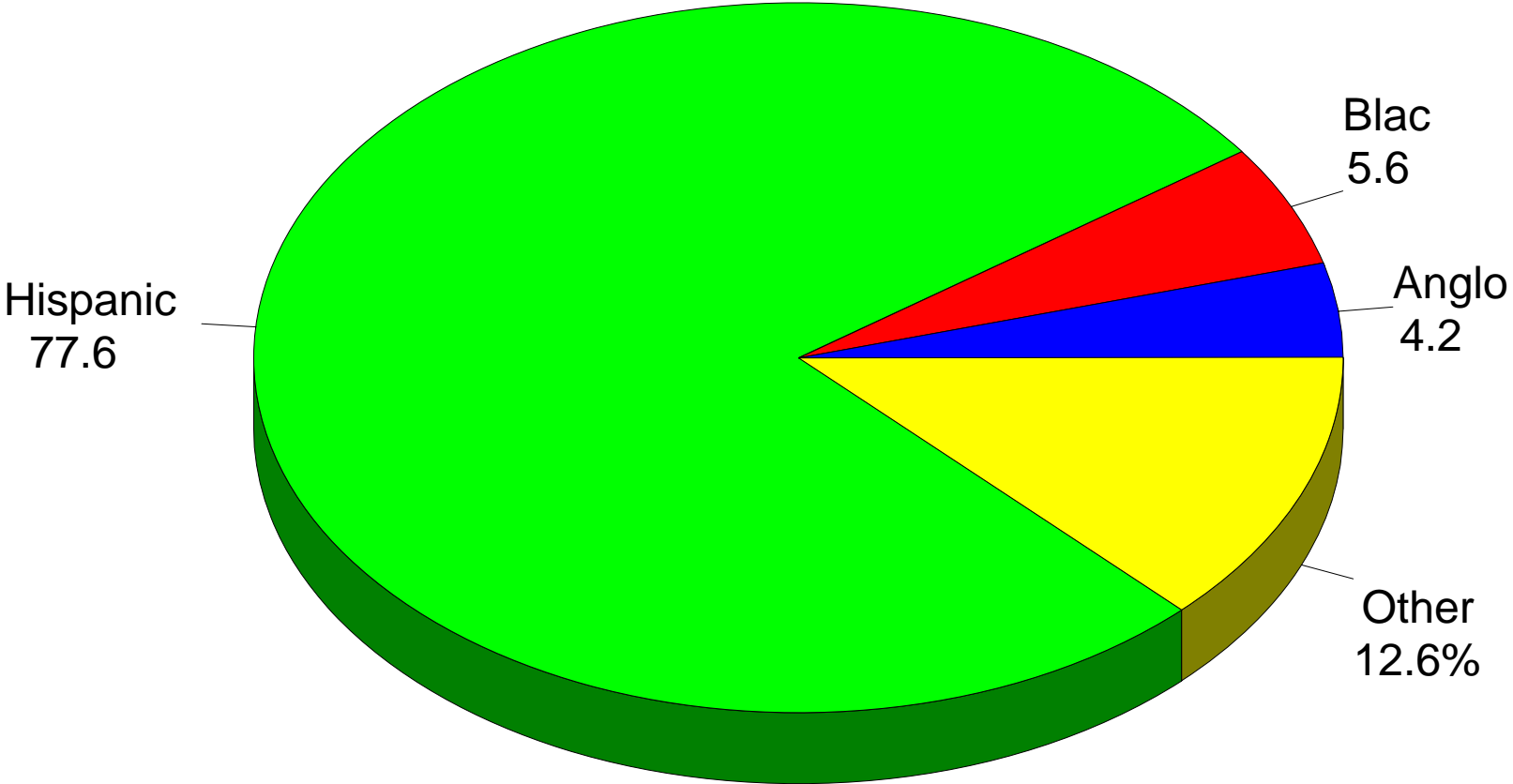
# Population Change Austin County 2000-2040



# Texas Projected Population Race/Ethnicity 2000-2040



# Projected Change in Ethnicity 2000-2040



# Community Planning Group

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Community Plan Coordinator for Austin County: **Melissa Weiss / Chief / Austin County Juvenile Probation.**

## **COMPOSITION** (Some members may serve in multiple capacities/categories.)

### **Criminal Justice:**

| <i>Name</i>   | <i>Agency</i>  |
|---------------|--|
| Melissa Weiss | Austin County Juvenile Probation                             |
| Greg Holt     | Austin County Community Supervision & Corrections Department |

### **Non-Profit Organizations:**

| <i>Name</i>     | <i>Agency</i>                      |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| David LaVassaur | Boys & Girls Club, Bellville       |
| Sandy Kunard    | Boys & Girls Club, Sealy           |
| Daniel Peevy    | Youth & Family Services            |
| Frank Vecera    | Raising Academic Performance - RAP |
| Yvonne Johnson  | Sealy Eastside Foundation          |
| Kim Mathis      | Focusing Families                  |
| Rhoda Gersch    | Combined Community Action          |
| Vastene Olier   | Colorado Valley Transit            |
| Jan Allen       | Lone Star Legal Aid                |

### **Law Enforcement:**

| <i>Name</i>            | <i>Agency</i>                      |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sheriff DeWayne Burger | Austin County Sheriff's Department |
| Captain Jerry Green    | Austin County Sheriff's Department |

**Education:**

| <i>Name</i>   | <i>Agency</i> |
|---------------|---------------|
| John Conley   | Bellville ISD |
| Jack Ellis    | Brazos ISD    |
| Rhonda Mieth  | Sealy ISD     |
| Linda Reichle | Sealy ISD     |

**State Agencies:**

| <i>Name</i>          | <i>Title</i>                        |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Don McCarn           | (CPS) Supervisor, Unit 14           |
| Gerie Darr           | Adult Protective Service            |
| Stephanie Liescheski | Department of State Health Services |
| Rachel Bentke        | Texana Center                       |

**County Government:**

| <i>Name</i>    | <i>Title</i> |
|----------------|--------------|
| Carolyn Bilski | County Judge |

**Identification of Community Problems****General Public Safety Needs and Issues**

Significant problems identified continue to be experienced by youth, adults and families in the areas of substance abuse, domestic violence and mental illness.

Child abuse and neglect figures continue in increasing numbers and the problem is compounded by the decrease in number of foster care homes. There is a continued need for local victim assistance programs and after-school and summer programs and activities for youth. For 2008, the Victim's Liaison Officer will be partially funded by grant funds. In addition, a Boys & Girls Club is being formed in Sealy. Transportation continues to be an issue faced by the agencies involved. Lack of transportation impedes those in need of services. However, Colorado Valley Transit has begun a regular route for public transportation needs and should be of tremendous assistance to the community.

Limited resources and lack of funds experienced at the local level demonstrate the need to increase funding and for the continued emphasis in providing solutions for all of the problems identified for effective change to occur.

In each of the areas below, problems are identified that support the existence and severity of the problems as they are found in Austin County. Many needs have been given consideration with solutions presented. Below is a discussion of the problems and the needs to be addressed.

**Juvenile Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)**

*Identified Problem*

|  |
|--|
| Need for Drug and Alcohol Prevention, Intervention and Counseling Services         |
| Need for juvenile detention/holding facilities for juvenile offenders              |
| Need for community service programs for juvenile offenders                         |
| Need for adequate counseling facilities for youth/families                         |
| Need for Emergency Shelters/Foster Care Homes                                      |
| Need for aftercare services when released from residential placement               |
| Need for alternatives to residential placement i.e. short-term transitional living |
| Need to expand after-school, evening, and summer programs for at-risk youth        |
| Need for anti-bullying programs  |
| Need for teenage pregnancy prevention programs                                     |

**Community Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)**

*Identified Problem*

|  |
|--|
| Need for transportation for MH services, court order requirements, job opportunities |
| Need for organized after school, evening, and summer programs for youth              |
| Need for alcohol/drug treatment programs for adolescents/adults                      |
| Need for alcohol/substance abuse awareness, education and counseling programs        |
| Need for substance abuse counseling centers  |
| Need for juvenile/adult crime prevention education                                   |
| Need for ESL Classes (English as a Second Language)                                  |
| Need for financial management education programs                                     |
| Need for D.W.I. Classes  |
| Need for bilingual services  |
| Need for basic adult education classes/G.E.D. Programs                               |
| Need for cultural diversity education  |
| Need for emergency shelters and access   |
| Need for community transportation for all services                                   |

**Victim Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)**

*Identified Problem*

|   |
|---|
| Need for a Victim’s Assistance program for victims of Domestic Violence |
| Need for a Victim’s Assistance program for victims of Sexual Assault    |
| Need for Victim Impact Panel for offenders                              |
| Need for basic shelter services for victims and families                |

**School Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)**

*Identified Problem*

|  |
|--|
| Need for additional I.S.D./School Resource Officers  |
| Need for Mentors for at-risk students/drop out prevention  |
| Need for all school districts to provide opportunities for classes on computers to receive diploma |
| Need for programs for Alternative Education Program (AEP) students and parents                     |
| Need to establish a county-wide JJAEP (Juvenile Justice Alternative Ed Program)                    |
| Need for school-to-work programs   |
| Need for certification programs  |

**Law Enforcement Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)**

*Identified Problem*

|   |
|---|
| Screening of mental health clients within reasonable amount of time to minimize time in law enforcement custody |
| Transportation of mental health clients, juvenile detainees, and adult prisoners to appropriate facilities      |
| Need for law enforcement officers located in the schools  |
| Need for law enforcement assistance in investigations of victims  |
| Need for law enforcement equipment  |
| Need for affordable Regional Law Enforcement Training   |
| Need for Regional Criminal Justice Coordination and Communication   |

**Mental Health Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)**

*Identified Problem*

|  |
|--|
| Need for long-term care for mentally ill and mentally challenged with disabilities |
| Need for augment mental health services for youth in school environment            |

## **Juvenile Issues - 2006**

### **1. Delinquency -**

- # of juveniles referred to Austin County Juvenile Probation: **111**
- # of juveniles referred to Austin County Juvenile Probation for Misdemeanors: **32**
- # of juveniles referred to Austin County Juvenile Probation for Felony Offenses: **12**
- # of juveniles adjudicated to Probation: **5**
- # of juveniles placed on Deferred Prosecution: **19**

### **2. Children in need of supervision -**

- # of juveniles referred to Austin County Juvenile Probation for CINS behavior: **67**

### **3. Services -**

- # of juveniles needing substance abuse services: **15**
- # of juveniles needing mental health services: **5**
- # of juveniles performing community service: **29** for **1,016 hours**

## **Community Issues - 2006**

### **1. Substance abuse -**

- # of adolescents referred to Youth and Family Service in Austin County: **2**
- # of adults referred to Youth and Family Service in Austin County: **23**

### **2. Family issues -**

- # of families referred to Focusing Families in Austin County area: **31**

### **3. Lack of transportation –**

- No means for individuals to get to required services.

### **4. Youth programs -**

- # of youth participated in Boys and Girls Club, Bellville: **378**
- Sealy established a Boys & Girls Club for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade-
- Need to expand to additional grades.

## **School Issues - 2006**

### **1. School Resource/I.S.D. Officers -**

- # of student infractions requiring officer involvement in Sealy I.S.D.: **516**
- # of contacts made to parents and students regarding Truancy Tickets and Court action citations in Sealy I.S.D.: **182**
- Truancy and behavioral issues remain a problem faced by the entire district.

## **Law Enforcement Issues - 2006**

### **1. Mental Health issues -**

- # of adolescents referred to Texana in Austin County: **70**
- # of adults referred to Texana in Austin County: **138**
- 3+** manpower hours by law enforcement agencies are usually involved in screening of mental health clients. Transportation of clients then becomes time-consuming for agencies.
- Meeting with Texana to review opportunities to improve treatment and services for mentally challenged with disabilities and the mentally ill.

## Resources Available

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Included below are resources identified by the Austin County Community Planning Group that are available to provide services as it relates to the issues noted.

### **Criminal Justice:**

*Name of Agency*

Austin County Juvenile Probation

Austin County Community Supervision and Corrections Department

Austin County Criminal District Attorney

Austin County Justice of the Peace Courts

Juvenile Courts

County and District Courts

Municipal Courts

### **Law Enforcement:**

*Name of Agency*

Austin County Sheriff's Department

Bellville Police Department

Sealy Police Department

Wallis Police Department

San Felipe Police Department

### **Social / Mental / Health State Agencies:**

*Name of Agency*

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (CPS)

Texas Health and Human Services (DHS)

Texana Center

Texas Department of State Health Services

**Prevention / Intervention/Assistance:**

*Name of Agency*

Youth and Family Services

Boys and Girls Club, Bellville

RAP (Raising Academic Performance)

Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG)

United Way

The Council on Alcohol and Drugs - Houston

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

Austin County Outreach

Combined Community Assistance

Lone Star Legal Aid

The Work Source

Faith Mission, Brenham

Meals on Wheels

Protective Day Care Centers

Texas Agricultural Extension Agency

Family Service Center

Focusing Families

Salvation Army

**Local Agencies/Entities:**

*Name of Agency*

Bellville I.S.D.

Sealy I.S.D.

Brazos I.S.D.

Ministerial Alliance

Bellville General Hospital

County Governments

Municipal Governments

Churches

Businesses/Industry

The East Side Foundation

**Others:**

*Name of Agency*

Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC)

## **Long-Range Plan Development, Monitoring and Evaluation**

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The Austin County Community Planning Group works in conjunction with other planning groups in the county to ensure a regular exchange of ideas. Individuals active in the planning process generally serve on many of these committees and share mutual concerns.

The Austin County Community Planning Group strives to meet periodically to review the plan and make necessary additions and deletions. At least one formal meeting of the entire group is held each fall, but agency and community representatives typically submit suggestions and changes via telephone and e-mail throughout the year to the Community Planning Coordinator.

Drafts and annual updates of the Community Plan are circulated by e-mail with requests for comments, changes, etc. Wherever possible, e-mail is used to reduce the need for meetings, printing, postage, and etc.

It is the intent of the Community Planning Group to improve outcomes for Austin County families struggling with problems described in the plan's focus areas. Efforts are being made by many Austin County agencies and organizations to address problems with local funds as well as grant funds from multiple state and federal sources. To the extent that these funds are available, the Community Planning Group will continue to urge agencies to provide programming that addresses the outlined focus areas.

## **Contact Information**

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### **Austin County Community Planning Coordinator**

Melissa Weiss, One East Main, Bellville, 979-865-5911, [weiss@austincounty.com](mailto:weiss@austincounty.com)

### **Austin County Community Planning Liaison from Houston-Galveston Area Council**

Jim Mahood, 3555 Timmons, Houston, 832-681-2511, [james.mahood@h-gac.com](mailto:james.mahood@h-gac.com)

This Plan is available on-line at [www.austincounty.com](http://www.austincounty.com)