

CITY OF ROCKPORT

STATE OF COMMUNITY REPORT 2016



City of Rockport

State of Community Report 2016



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Special thanks to:



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*All photographs throughout this document were donated by Art Smith.

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CHAPTER 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Rockport State of Community report is presented by the Texas Sea Grant. Information in this report has been compiled from numerous sources, including but not limited to, several federal and state government agencies, local institutions, and the City of Rockport staff. The report is meant to showcase a variety of information about the city in one location, in hopes that further connections and potential opportunities may become apparent. It is important to recognize that the data contained in this report shows a snapshot in time; as such, local conditions may have, and will continue to, evolve.

Rockport is widely known as an intimate, friendly, coastal community with a wealth of outdoor activities such as birdwatching, fishing, and boating. The city also has a strong artistic and cultural identity with its art center, galleries, and downtown museums. For decades, many retirees have been making Rockport home, while “Winter Texans” and other vacationers call the city their second home. The city’s population and area are small, but its community facilities and infrastructure have support from Aransas County and the Coastal Bend Region.

Although historically, Rockport’s economy has been based on the bays, estuaries, and its access to the Gulf of Mexico, many of its current employees work in the school system, government agencies, and retail stores. Overall, its economic and demographic characteristics are almost identical to Aransas County, and comparable to Texas and the nation. Some areas to note are the number of residents not in the labor force, housing prices, the lack of mortgages, and the number of married couples without children living in the home. The difference between the city’s statistics and those of the state or nation are probably due to the number of retired, older, and affluent residents. Families with children are of concern, though, when it comes to income and poverty levels.

Being situated on a peninsula, surrounded by water and wetlands, gives Rockport many advantages; but also presents a few threats. Recreational and economic activities thrive on this environment, and access to water is known to have a positive impact on people’s physical and mental health. However, Rockport’s water quality and valuable wetlands have the potential of being degraded by communities upstream. All coastal communities share the risk of tropical storms and hurricanes; however, flooding due to heavy rains and extended periods of drought are also common challenges for Rockport. When looking at future growth and development scenarios, it will be important for Rockport to remain aware of these economic and environmental aspects.



CHAPTER 2

CITY PROFILE



The City of Rockport is located in Aransas County, which is part of the Coastal Bend region of Texas. It lies 182 miles southwest of Houston, 180 miles southeast of Austin, and 35 northeast of Corpus Christi. The county is made up of several bays and peninsulas. Live Oak Peninsula is surrounded by Copano Bay to the west and Aransas Bay to the east. Rockport and Fulton, sometimes called twin cities, are the largest incorporated cities on the peninsula, yet there are several unincorporated areas that add to the development of the peninsula and the county.

Rockport has a total area of 15.0 square miles, of which 10.7 square miles is land and 4.3 square miles is water. Like the rest of the county, the land is considered coastal prairie and is generally poorly drained. It has a humid, subtropical climate, with mild winters and warm summers. The coolest month is January with an average temperature of 54.9 degrees and the warmest month is July with an average temperature of 84.0 degrees. The ability to enjoy recreational activities throughout the year brings “Winter Texans” and retirees from more northern cities in the state. In fact, many RV parks and vacation homes are occupied during the winter months as well as the summer months. September on average gets the most rain; March on average gets the least rain; and 36.7 inches is the average amount of rainfall for the year.

Aransas County has a dynamic early history, with its settlements changing rapidly due to storms, war, and economic booms and busts. The development of the port of Corpus Christi and the railroads dramatically altered the economic and population growth within the county and the city of Rockport. Although once known for its cattle-raising and meat-packing companies, Rockport eventually became a hub for fishing, boat-building, and tourism. Today, Rockport is a widely known destination for bird-watchers, duck-hunting, and sport-fishing.

Rockport and its surrounding natural environment offer some unique attractions. In 1937, the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge was established in the northern wetlands of the county and became a protected haven for the endangered Whooping Crane and many other animal species. The refuge is managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve is a partnership program between federal and state agencies that conducts and communicates research regarding the coastal ecosystems. The reserve is based in Port Aransas; but does much of its research throughout Aransas County. The Reserve also operates the Bay Education Center in downtown Rockport. The education center is open to the public to learn about the importance of coastal bays and estuaries. Likewise, the Aquarium at Rockport Harbor teaches locals and visitors about marine species, environments, and resources. In 2015, the City of Rockport purchased a 8.86 acre plot of land that is known for its iconic windswept oaks. The trees serve as a rookery for herons and egrets, all of which are also represented in the city’s logo. The city is planning to develop the land as a park in the near future.

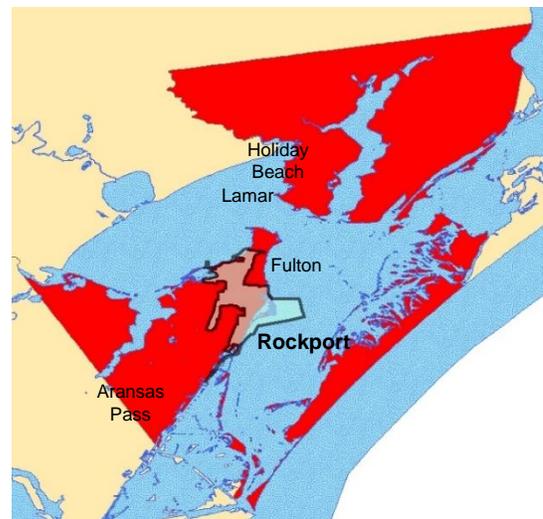
<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hca04>
<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hgr05>
<http://www.weatherbase.com/weather/weathersummary.php?s=407714&cityname=Rockport%2C+Texas%2C+United+States+of+America&units=>
<http://texashighways.com/travel/item/7432-come-around>
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/aransas/>
<http://missionaransas.org/about>
<https://utmsi.utexas.edu/visit/bay-education-center>
<http://www.rockportaquarium.com/about-the-aquarium>
<http://www.cityofrockport.com/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/1104>

In addition to Rockport's reputation for an abundance of outdoor recreational and educational activities, the city is also widely known for its cultural arts district. Downtown Rockport is host to numerous cultural institutions and art galleries. Proving that there is more to Texas' identity and commerce than cowboys and ranches, the Texas Maritime Museum tells the story of how the Gulf of Mexico and sea-faring folk played a role in early settlements and industries. The Fulton Mansion History Center manages a restored home originally built in 1877 by a prominent Rockport resident and business owner. The home was uncharacteristic of its time in architecture and in amenities, such as flushing toilets and gas lights.

The Rockport Center for the Arts exhibits local, regional, national, and internationally acclaimed artists in both solo and group exhibitions. The building also houses two visual arts classrooms and a pottery studio where a variety of workshops, classes, and seminars are held. The center is complete with a 10,000 square foot Sculpture Garden in the "backyard." The Center for the Arts is more than a building though. It is the basis for a community of artists that has existed since the 19th century and continues to grow. Today there are over 300 artists that reside in Aransas County and over 15 art galleries in downtown Rockport. The community hosts numerous events such as the annual Rockport Art Festival during the July 4th weekend, a Film Festival, and an new oral history project.

In July 2015, the President of the Center for the Arts led an initiative, with other citizens interested in the cultural development of the city, to apply for a Cultural Arts District designation from the Texas Commission on the Arts. In January 2016, the Rockport Heritage District Association submitted a Letter of Intent to the Texas Commission on the Arts to establish a cultural arts district in the Rockport Heritage District, the oldest part of the city.

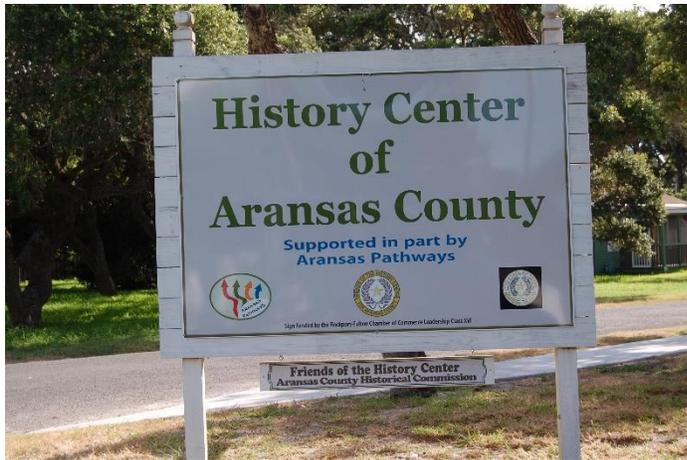
Rockport has many advantages, from its mild winters to its access to nature and recreational activities to its thriving artist community. These advantages result in the city appearing on many "Best of" and "Top Ten" lists, such as Best Places to Retire and Top Ten Coastal Art Colonies. The city's distinct identity also gives Rockport the nickname "Charm of the Texas Coast."



<http://www.rockport-fulton.org/51-Things-To-Do>
<http://texasmaritimemuseum.org/>
<http://www.thc.texas.gov/historic-sites/fulton-mansion-state-historic-site>
<http://www.rockportartcenter.com/whoware/are.php>
<http://txculturaltrust.org/programs/economic-development/rockport/>
City of Rockport. (2016). A Cultural Plan for the Rockport Culture Arts District.
<http://www.txcoastalbend.org/communities/rockport-fulton>
<http://texashighways.com/travel/item/7432-come-around>

Maps created using data from: US Census Bureau
TIGER Products.

CHAPTER 3 HISTORY



HISTORY

Rockport is the county seat for Aransas County, one of the smallest counties in Texas. The area is located on the east coast of Texas, and is separated from the Gulf of Mexico by San Jose Island, a barrier island, and the Intercoastal Waterway. The city is situated on Live Oak Plantation, a peninsula which extends between Copano and Aransas bays. The City is approximately 35 miles north of Corpus Christi, Texas.

The earliest known inhabitants were the Karankawa Indians, which were documented by Cabeza de Vaca in 1528. Spanish missions were established in the area in the 1700s. The area was originally settled as part of the United States in 1867, as a cattle slaughtering, packing and shipping port. Rockport was incorporated as a Town in 1870, and as a City on May 29, 1871.

The city is named for the rock ledge which underlies it shore. Rockport is a charming fishing village that has been a favorite coastal hideaway for wealthy Texans since the 1800s.

During the 1880s, boat building and fishing began to develop as important industries in Rockport. Tourism and the resort trade also blossomed, particularly after the railroad came into town in 1886.

The shrimping industry developed between 1925 and 1930 and became a major boon for the city in the 1940s. The population of Rockport has grown steadily over the years.

Vacationers swim, fish, watch birds, relax, visit the wildlife refuges, and enjoy many other area attractions.

Rockport, known for its endless recreational possibilities and mild weather, attracts many vacationers annually. Visitors can enjoy the Gulf waters and views, fishing, renowned bird watching, the plethora of parks and wildlife areas, other area museums and attractions. Texas Maritime Museum, Bay Education Center, Rockport Center for the Arts, Fulton Mansion, Aquarium at Rockport Harbor, Connie Hagar Wildlife Sanctuary, and local wildlife refuges draw tourists and "Winter Texans" alike.

Rockport is a wonderful place to live and visit.

CHAPTER 4 DEMOGRAPHICS



POPULATION

While the City of Rockport has distinct, older, well-established neighborhoods, its' boundaries continue to change over time. This is common with rural and coastal communities. These communities often annex new sub-divisions and also have an extraterritorial jurisdiction that extends beyond the technical city limits. The Rockport extraterritorial jurisdiction includes unincorporated areas adjacent to the cities corporate boundaries in which the city has limited authority "to promote and protect the general health, safety, and welfare" of the citizens⁽¹⁾.

The US Census Bureau uses the term "census county division" to define collections of data for communities like Rockport. The Census Bureau defines a census county division as: "a relatively permanent statistical area, established cooperatively by the Census Bureau and the state and local governments, used to present census and survey data in those states without well-defined and stable minor civil divisions." Table 4.1 shows the 2010 populations for Rockport, and nearby communities, according to city and census county division levels.

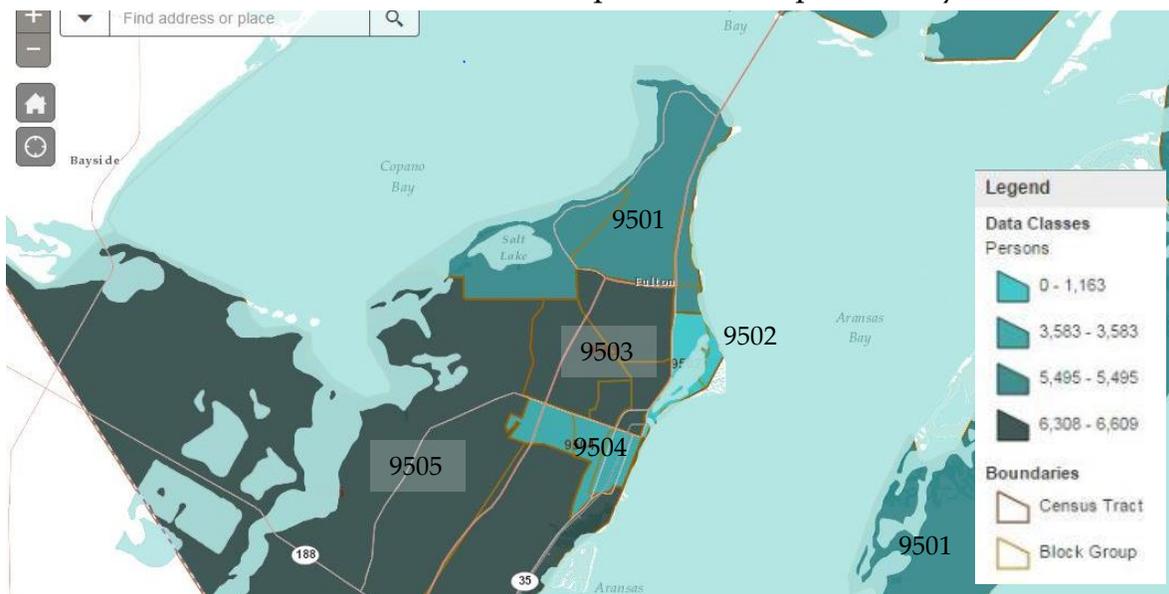
Map 4.1 shows the population of Rockport according to census tracts. Tracts 9502, 9503, and 9504 make up most of the City of Rockport. Tracts 9502 and 9504 are smaller, less populated tracts. Tract 9503 is larger and more populated.

Table 4.1: 2010 Population.

ROCKPORT CITY	8766
ROCKPORT CCD	17663
FULTON TOWN	1358
FULTON CCD	5495
ARANSAS PASS CITY	8204
INGLESIDE CITY	9387
ARANSAS PASS-INGLESIDE CCD	18877

Table created using data from:
<http://www.census.gov/2010census/>.

Map 4.1: 2010 Population by Census Tract.

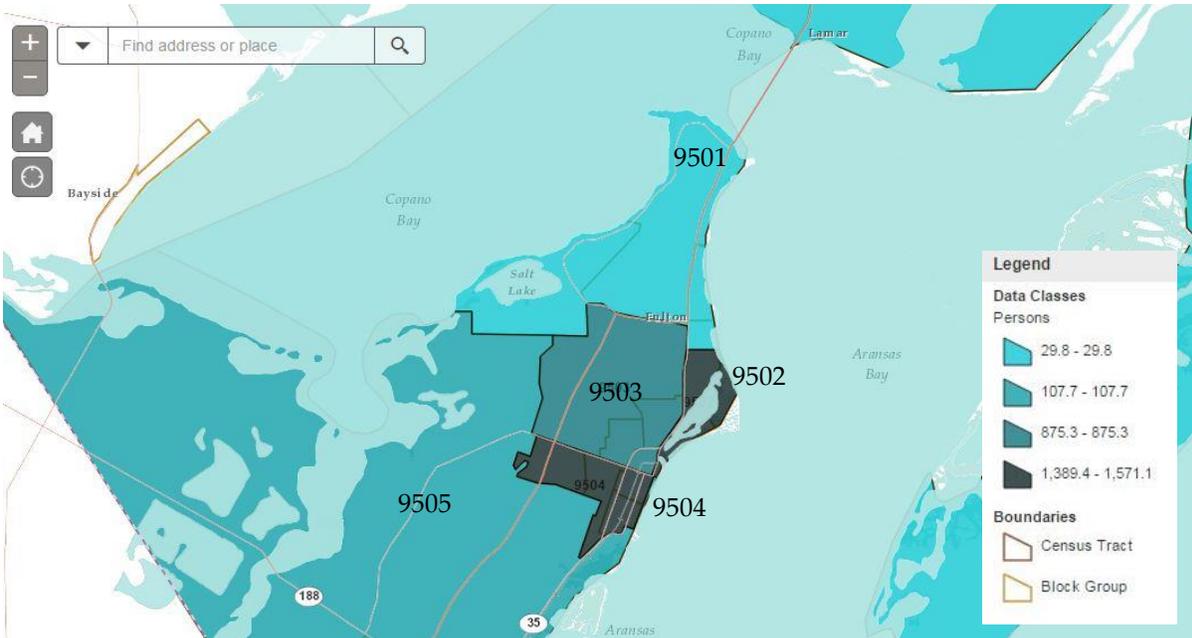


Map created on http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml# using data from: Using data from Census 2010 (4.1).

¹ Texas Local Government Code § 42.001

POPULATION DENSITY & GROWTH

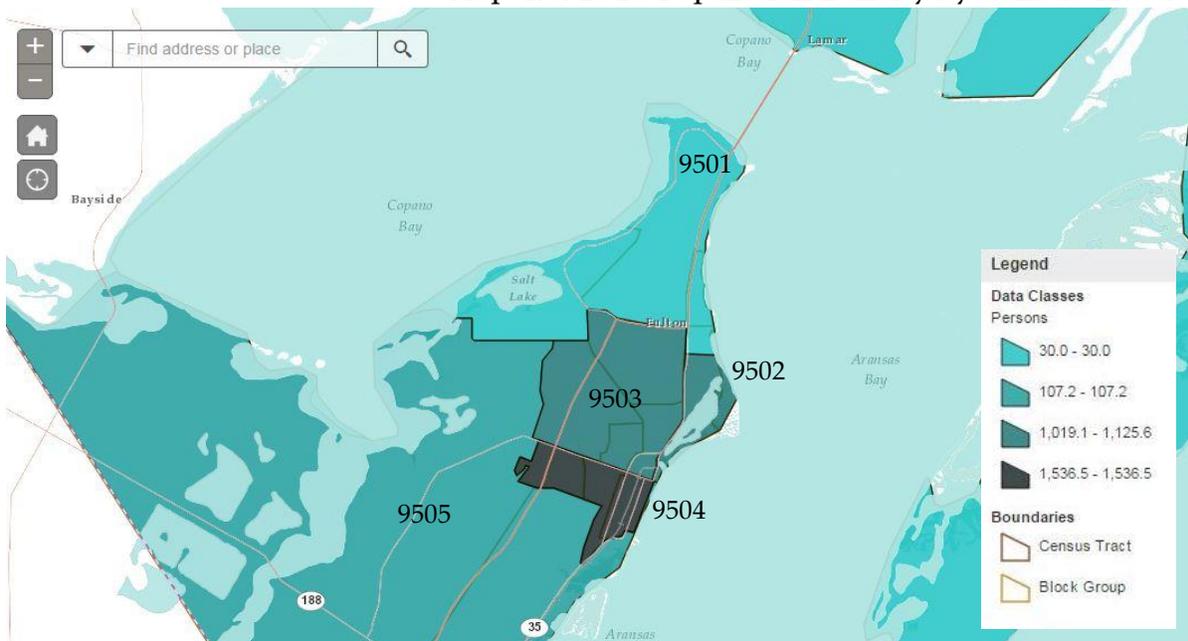
Map 4.2: 2000 Population Density by Census Tract.



Map created on http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml# using data from: Using data from Census 2000.

Maps 4.2 and 4.3 depict the population of Rockport in 2000 and 2010 by density. The maps show higher concentrations of people in the tracts that make up the majority of the City of Rockport (9502, 9503, 9504). When comparing the population density in 2000 to 2010, we can see that most tracts have experienced growth, with the exception of the smallest tract along the eastern waterfront (9502), where the density has decreased.

Map 4.3: 2010 Population Density by Census Tract.

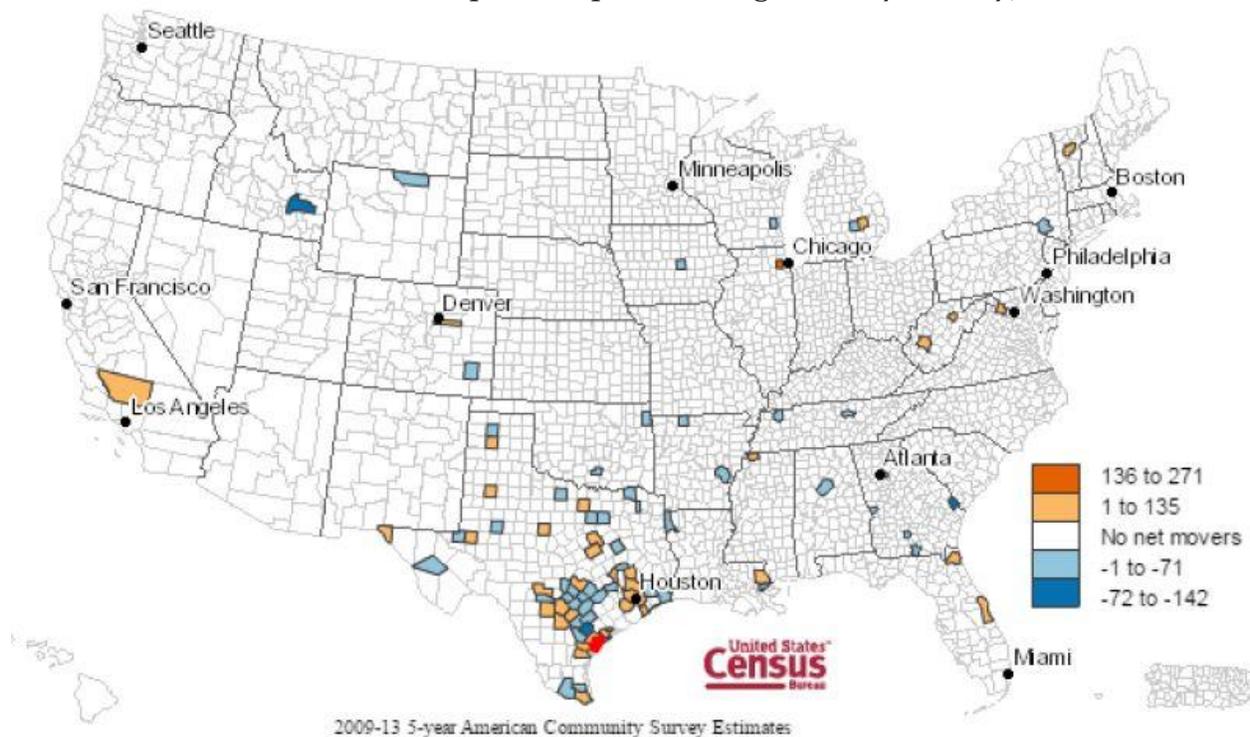


Map created on http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml# using data from: Using data from Census 2010.

POPULATION MIGRATION

The US Census Bureau collects data on population migration throughout the country. This data looks at the patterns of how people move across borders, like county, or state, lines. Map 4.4 shows the migration data for individuals who moved into, or out of, Aransas County, TX, (American Community Survey, 2009-2013). The blue shades show where people who moved to Aransas County came from. The yellow and orange shades show where people relocated to, when leaving Aransas County. Texas shows a lot of cross-migration, with people moving within the state. The dark blue counties, show large numbers (72-142) of people moving to Aransas County; these include Goliad County, Texas, one county in Idaho, and one county in Georgia. (There was no migration to or from Alaskan counties.)

Map 4.4: Population Migration by County, 2009-2013.



Created on <http://flowmapper.geo.census.gov> using data from: 2009-2013 5-year American Community Survey Estimates.

POPULATION PROJECTION

The Texas State Demographer's Office produces population projections based on different scenarios. The Zero Migration Scenario "assumes that in-migration and out-migration are equal (no net migration)," resulting in growth only through natural causes (births and deaths). This scenario creates the lowest projection. The 100% Migration Scenario assumes the trends that occurred throughout the 2000-2010 decade will continue in future decades. The 2000-2010 decade "was characterized by rapid growth throughout many areas of the state... and is likely to be unsustainable over time." Therefore, this scenario is the highest projection estimated.

Figure 4.1 shows the population projections for Aransas County, the Coastal Bend Region, and the State of Texas based on the 2000-2010 decade. The slope of the projected growth rate with 100% migration is not nearly as steep for Aransas County or the Coastal Bend region, in comparison to Texas. In fact, Aransas County has the lowest projected growth rate at its' highest point in 2035 (1.19), compared to the region (1.24) and the state (2.16).

Figure 4.1: Future Population Projections.

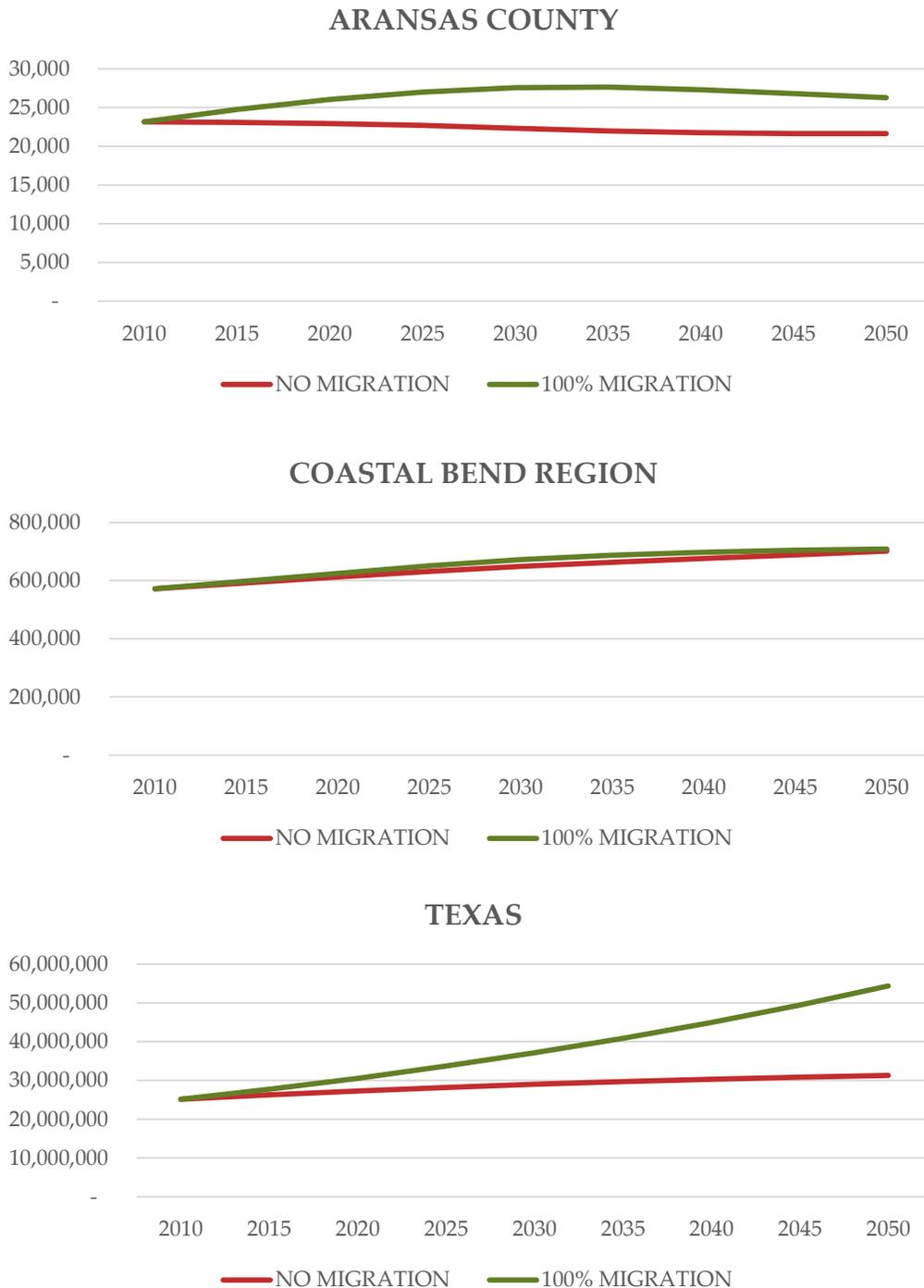


Figure created using data from the Texas State Demographers Office:
<http://osd.texas.gov/Data/TPEPP/Projections/Tool?fid=175CDFE490DB4F9EB732A1F522547B52>.

AGE & GENDER DISTRIBUTION

Gender is evenly distributed in Rockport, and its surrounding communities; however, age has a varied distribution. The age distribution in Rockport is similar to the neighboring town of Fulton, with greater numbers of individual 65 and older, and few numbers of children. In other nearby towns like Aransas Pass and Ingleside, this trend is reversed with fewer people 65 and older, and more children (see Table 4.2).

In Figure 4.2 the distribution of the population of Rockport, Aransas County, and the State of Texas are examined according to age. The City of Rockport is similar to the county in most age groups; but they differ from the distribution at the state level. In Texas, the highest percentage of the population fall between 25 and 54 years old. In the City of Rockport and Aransas County the highest percentage of the population fall between the ages of 45-54 and from 65-84. This may be associated with the popularity of RV parks and vacation-turned-permanent homes that are common in Rockport and the county.

Table 4.2: Gender and Age of Local Communities.

2010 CENSUS	ROCKPORT	FULTON	ARANSAS PASS	INGLESIDE	ARANSAS COUNTY
TOTAL	8766	1358	8204	9387	23,889
MALE	48.3%	47.1%	49.1%	50.0%	49.7%
FEMALE	51.7%	52.9%	50.9%	50.0%	50.3%
UNDER 18	17.9%	15.9%	24.1%	30.5%	19.5%
18 & OVER	82.1%	84.1%	75.9%	69.5%	80.5%
65 & OVER	28.3%	31.1%	17.1%	8.7%	24.2%

Table created using data from <http://www.census.gov/2010census/>.

Figure 4.2: 2014 Population by Age.

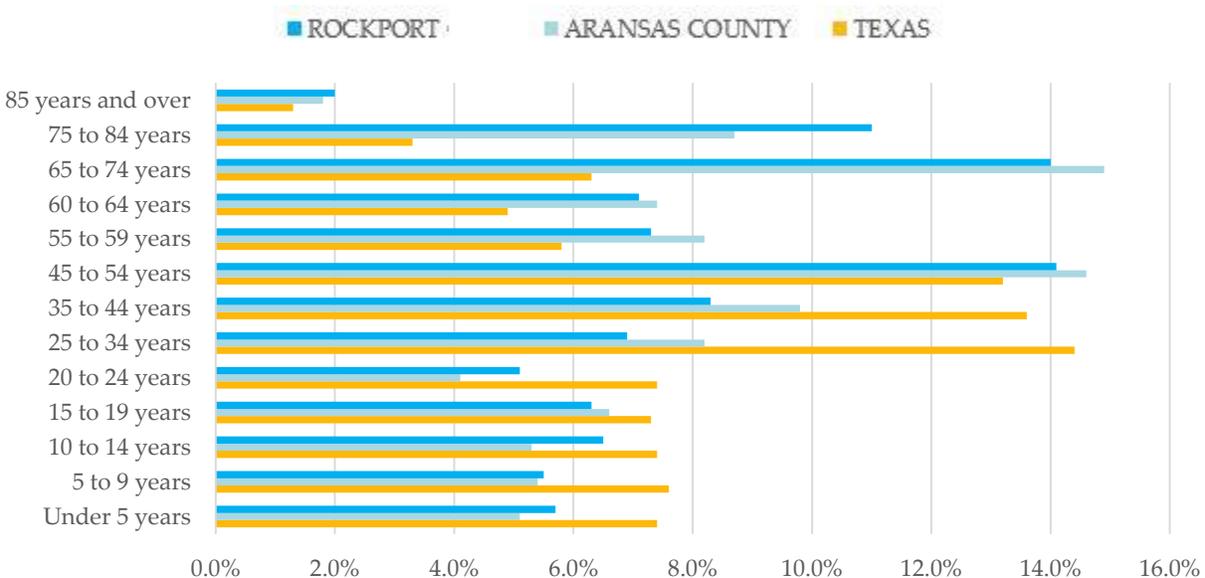


Figure created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

RACE & ETHNICITY DISTRIBUTION

Figure 4.3 shows that the majority of the population of the City of Rockport is White (71.6%). Almost 21% of Rockport's population identifies as Hispanic or Latino (20.8%). The percentages for the Black/African American and Asian groups are very small (2.3% for both). Two races, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, and American Indian and Alaska Native, do not register in the City of Rockport. (one individual is documented as American Indian and Alaska Native in the City.)

Figure 4.3 goes on to compare the racial and ethnic distribution of the City of Rockport to Aransas County, and the State of Texas. The distributions between Rockport and Aransas County are similar, while the State of Texas has a greater amount of racial and ethnic diversity.

Figure 4.3: 2014 Population by Race and Ethnicity.

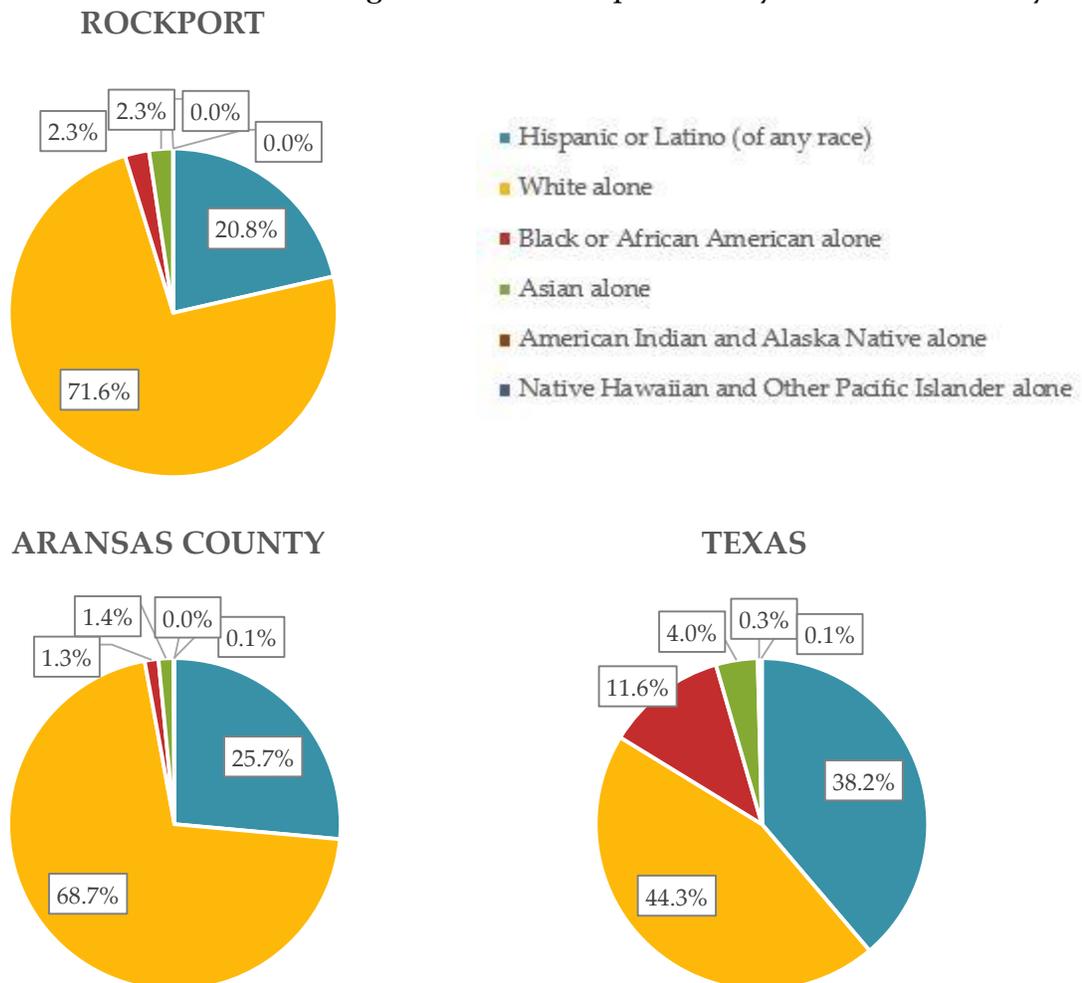


Figure created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

MARITAL STATUS

Figure 4.4 compares the marital status of males and females in the City of Rockport, Aransas County, the State of Texas, and the United States. The percentages for the city and the county are similar; likewise, the state and nation have comparable percentages. A comparison of the percentages of married and single males and females in the City of Rockport and Aransas County, to Texas and the nation shows that the city and county has higher percentages of married males and females. Aransas County shows the greatest difference from Rockport, let alone the state and nation in the percentages of divorced males. The city, county, state, and nation are the most similar in the percentages of divorced females.

Figure 4.4: 2014 Marital Status.

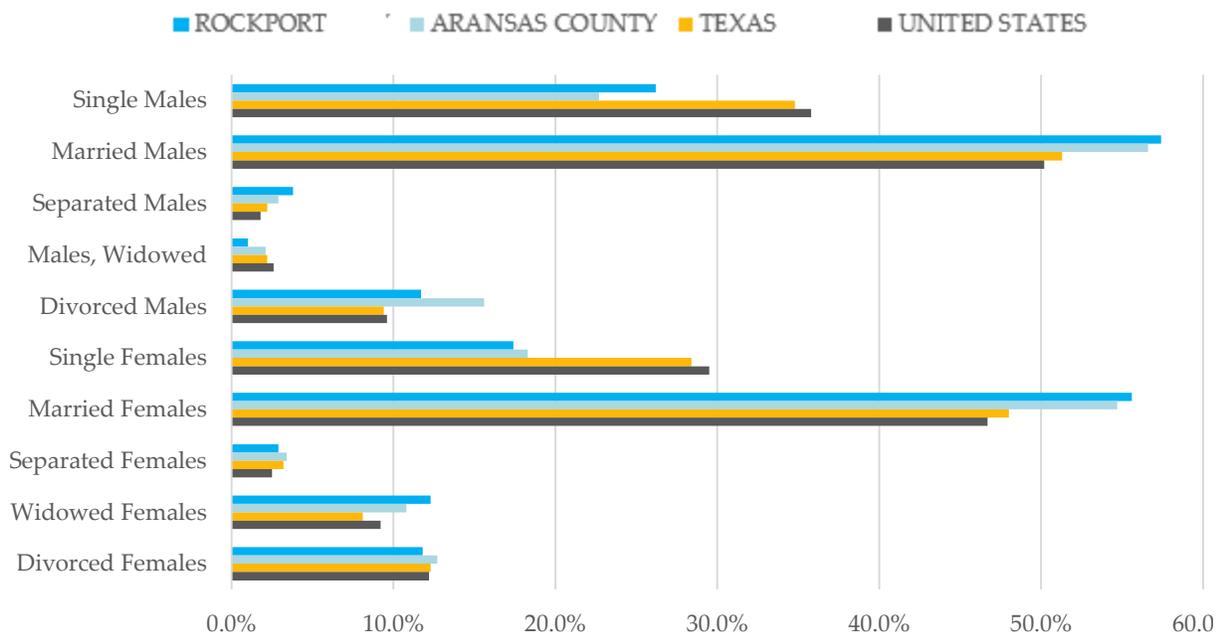


Figure created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.



EDUCATION LEVEL

In the City of Rockport, over 30% of residents, who are 25 years and older, have at least some college (see Figure 4.5). This percentage of individuals who have attended some amount of college is higher than is seen in the county, state, or country. Interestingly, there are less people with an Associate's degree in Rockport compared to the county, state, and nation. Interestingly, the Rockport percentages increases again, and are comparable to the state and nation on individuals with a Bachelor's degree, and are above Aransas County and the state for individuals with a Graduate or professional degree (see Figure 4.5).

The education levels can be seen in via geographical distribution according to US Census tracts in Map 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7. The tracts in Rockport show have lower percentage of high school graduates, compared to surrounding tracts (see Map 4.5). However, Maps 4.6 and 4.7 show the same tracts have higher percentages, than the surrounding tracts, for individuals with college degrees.

Figure 4.5: 2014 Education Level of Population 25 Years and Older.

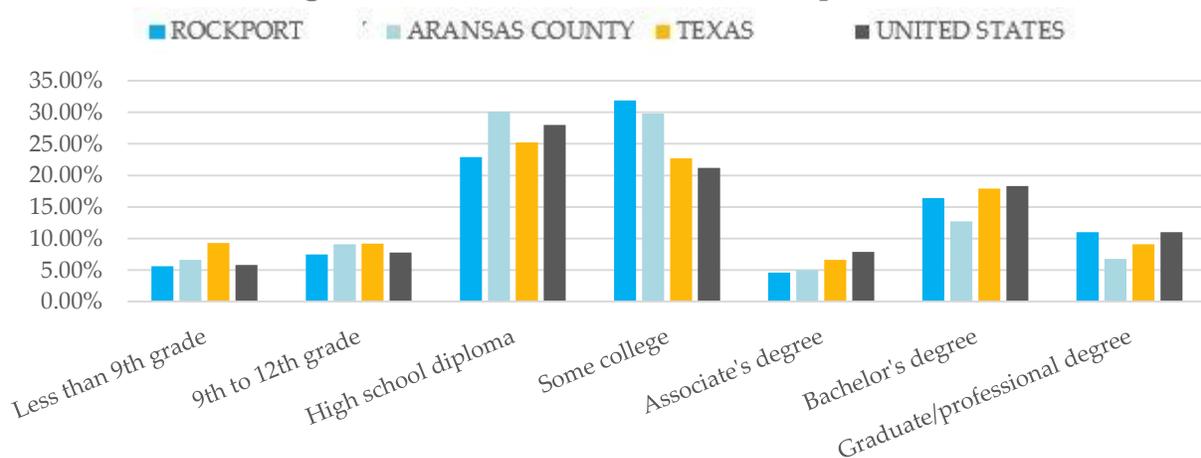
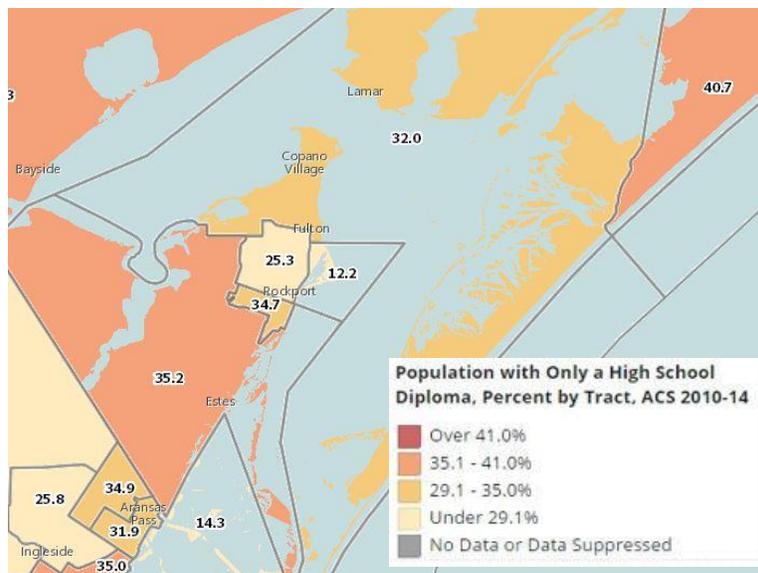


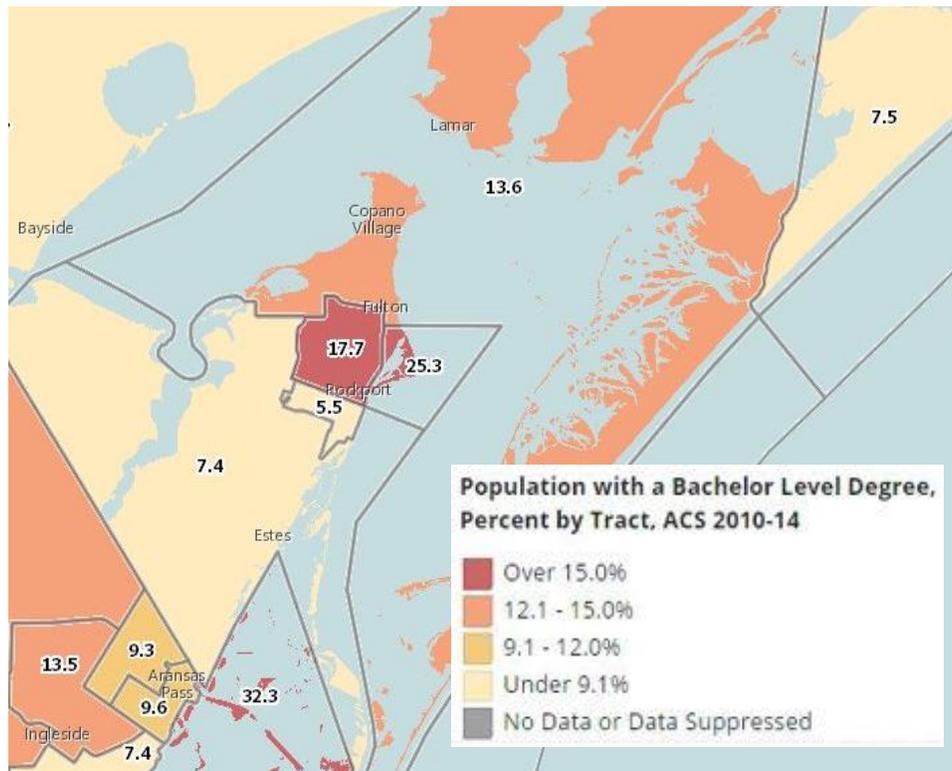
Figure created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

Map 4.5: 2010-2014 Population with High School Diploma.

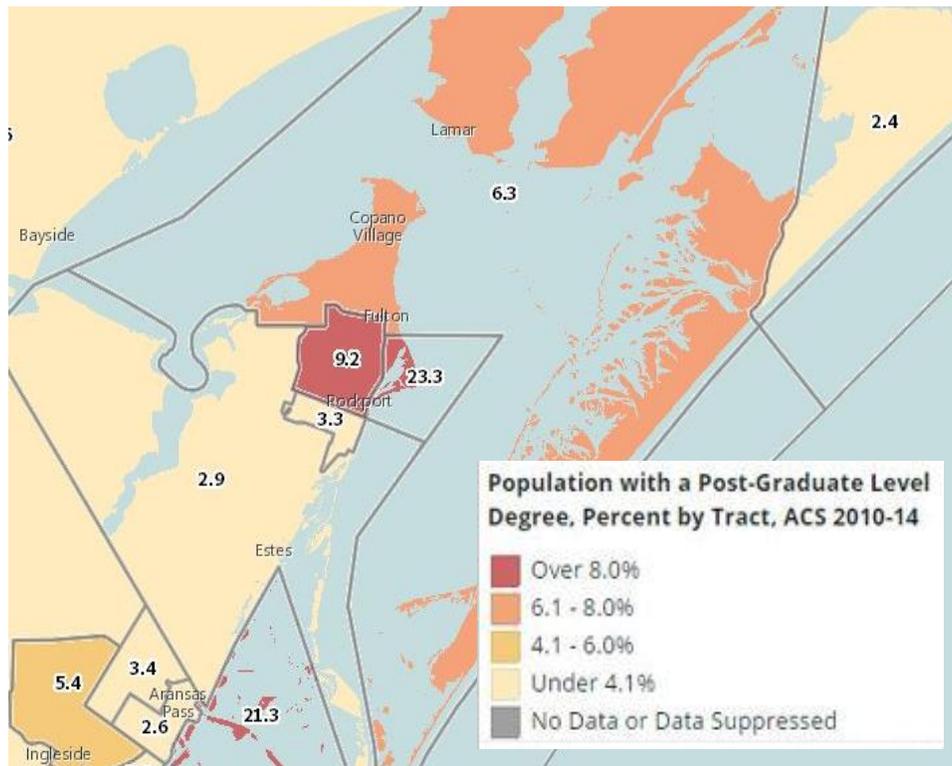


Map created on <http://maps.communitycommons.org/viewer/> using data from: 2010-2014 American Community Survey Estimates.

Map 4.6: 2010-2014 Population with Bachelor's Degree.



Map 4.7: 2010-2014 Population with Post Graduate Degree.



EMPLOYMENT

Table 4.3 shows the percentages of the population, 16 years and older, who are employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force in 2014. The US Census Bureau defines “not in labor force” as “mainly students, housewives, retired workers, seasonal workers interviewed in an off season who were not looking for work, institutionalized people, and people doing only incidental unpaid family work (less than 15 hours during the reference week).” The “not in labor force” category accounts for 50.5% of the population in Rockport, and 49.8% of the population in Aransas county. This group only represents 35.1% of the population in the State of Texas. The higher percentages of individuals who are considered “not in labor force” in the City of Rockport and Aransas County may be due to the fact that they are coastal areas, where much of the employment is seasonal, and many of the residents are retired from the work force. The employment rates are 46.6% for the City of Rockport, 46.9% for Aransas County, and 59.5% for the State of Texas. The unemployment rates are low for all three areas—2.9% for Rockport, 3.2% for Aransas County, and 4.9% for Texas.

Table 4.3: 2014 Employment Status.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS 2014	ROCKPORT TOTALS	ROCKPORT PERCENTAGE	ARANSAS COUNTY PERCENTAGE	TEXAS PERCENTAGE
Employed	3,709	46.6	46.9	59.5
Unemployed	228	2.9	3.2	4.9
Not in Labor Force	4,018	50.5	49.8	35.1

Table created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Health insurance coverage is critical to accessing health care, and maintaining a healthy and resilient population. Table 4.4 shows what percentages of the population have health insurance, and what types of health insurance, in the City of Rockport, Aransas County, and the State of Texas in 2014. The US Census defines private health insurance as “a plan provided through an employer or a union and coverage purchased directly by an individual from an insurance company or through an exchange.” Rockport has a higher portion of people covered by private insurance (59.7%) than in the county (51.2%) and in the state (58.4%). Public coverage includes federal programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, individual state health plans, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the military. The number of Rockport’s residents that have public coverage (43%) is similar to the county (44%), and both of these are higher than the state (27.9%). Overall, Rockport has the highest percentage (85.5%) of the three entities for residents who have health insurance, which means more of its population has access to health care.

Table 4.4: 2014 Health Insurance Coverage.

	ROCKPORT TOTALS	ROCKPORT PERCENTAGE	ARANSAS COUNTY PERCENTAGE	TEXAS PERCENTAGE
WITH HEALTH INSURANCE	8,022	85.5	80.3	78.1
Private Insurance	5,594	59.7	51.2	58.4
Public Coverage	4,028	43.0	44.1	27.9
NO HEALTH INSURANCE	1,356	14.5	19.7	21.9

Table created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

INCOME & POVERTY

Figure 4.6 shows the income levels for all households in Rockport, Aransas County, and Texas in 2014. All three entities have the highest percentage of households with an income in the \$50,000-\$74,999 range. Rockport has more households in the lowest range, less than \$10,000, compared to the county or the state. Texas has the highest percentage of households in the highest range, \$200,000 or more.

Figure 4.6: 2014 Household Incomes.

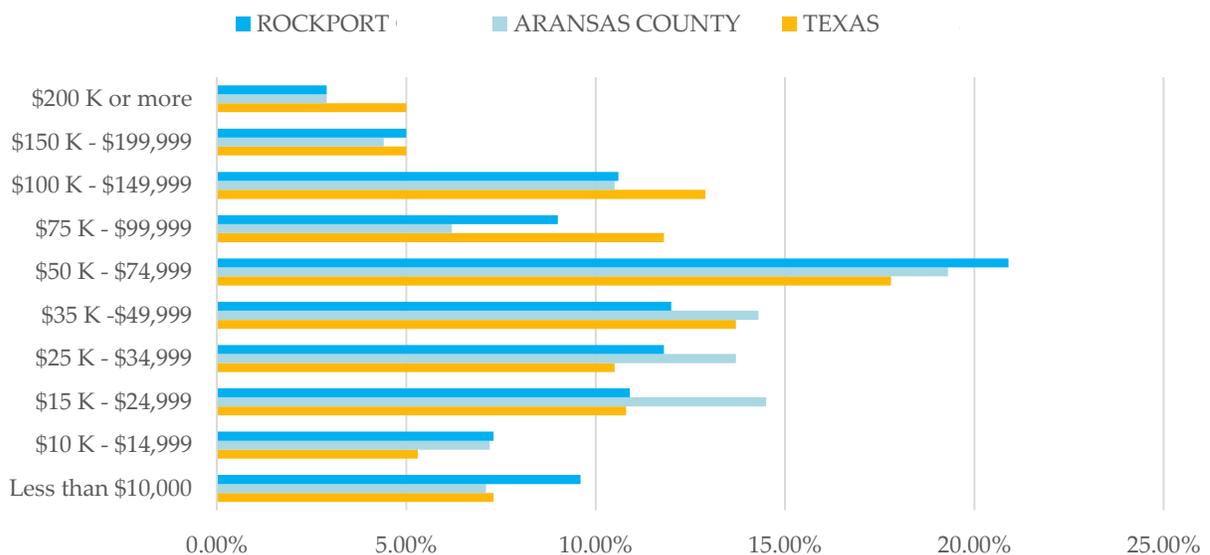


Figure created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

Another way to look at income is by using the median family income and the mean family income. Median income is the amount that divides the income distribution, represented in Figure 4.7, into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount. Mean income is the amount obtained by taking an average of all the incomes of all the households. Table 4.5 shows the median and mean family incomes for Rockport, Aransas County, and Texas, in 2014. The median income, shows a more accurate picture of the typical income of a middle class family. The number is more representative of middle class families because the data is not skewed by the incomes of the households that fall into the extreme upper and lower ranges of Figure 4.7. The median family income in Rockport is \$60,729. This number is similar to the median family income for Texas (\$61,958); but almost \$10k higher than Aransas County (\$50,257). Much of Aransas County is made up of small towns and unincorporated areas. The City of Rockport may provide a stronger economic base and more employment opportunities for middle class families.

Table 4.5: 2014 Family Income.

	ROCKPORT	ARANSAS COUNTY	TEXAS
Median Family Income	\$60,729	\$50,257	\$61,958
Mean Family Income	\$72,581	\$69,718	\$83,936

Figure 4.7 shows the percentages of households in Rockport, Aransas County, and Texas, that have incomes below the poverty level in 2014. The percentages are higher for Rockport and Aransas County than for Texas in almost all categories. Other items to note are that almost 60% of all families with children under the age of 5 in Rockport and Aransas County have incomes below the poverty level. Even more staggering is the fact that 100% of all the female householder families (women without a spouse who have children living with them), with children under the age of 5 in the City of Rockport have incomes below poverty level.

Figure 4.7: 2014 Household Incomes Below the Poverty Level.

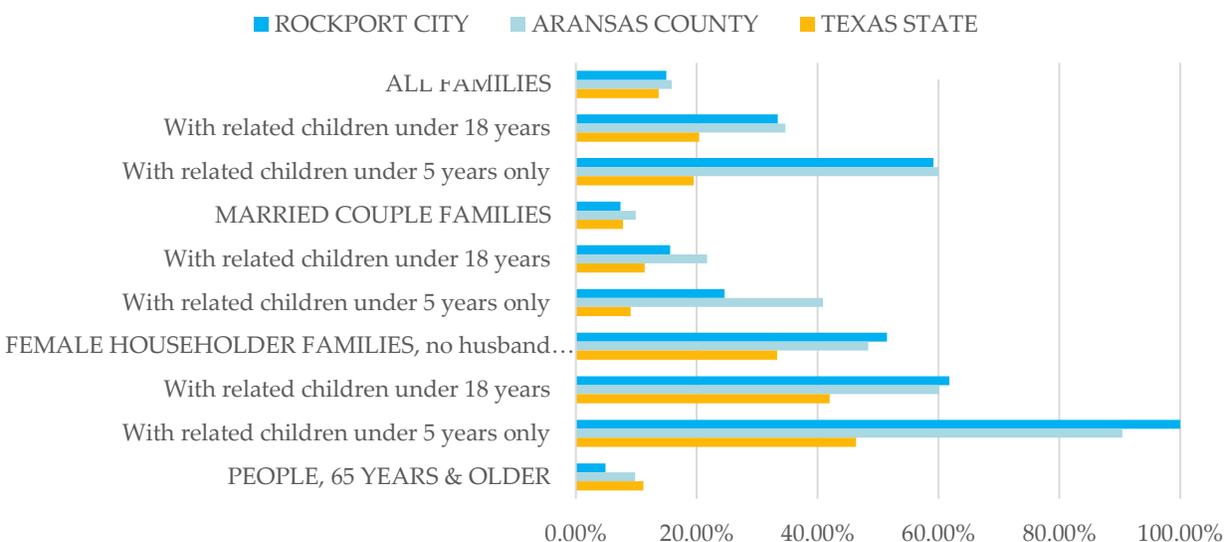


Table and Figure created using data from:
http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml

CHAPTER 5 HOUSING



HOUSEHOLD TYPES

The US Census Bureau collects data on household types (people) as well as housing types (structures). Household types are important in terms of community planning and housing stock because the various compositions of people require different types of housing structures, prices, neighborhood facilities and infrastructure. The Census divides households into two main categories, family households and nonfamily households. A family household “contains at least two persons – the householder and at least one other person related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.” Therefore, a non-family household contains either just one person, or a number of people not related by birth, marriage, or adoption. The family households are then classified according to whether the family is led by a married couple, a female householder without a spouse, or a male householder without a spouse.

Figure 5.1 shows that Rockport’s households are predominately made up of families (66.6%). This includes married couples (55.4%), female householder without a spouse (8.6), and male householder without a spouse (2.6%). The remaining households are nonfamily households (33.4%). As Figure 5.1 shows, the percentages of the population in each of these categories are fairly consistent between the City of Rockport, Aransas County, and the State of Texas.

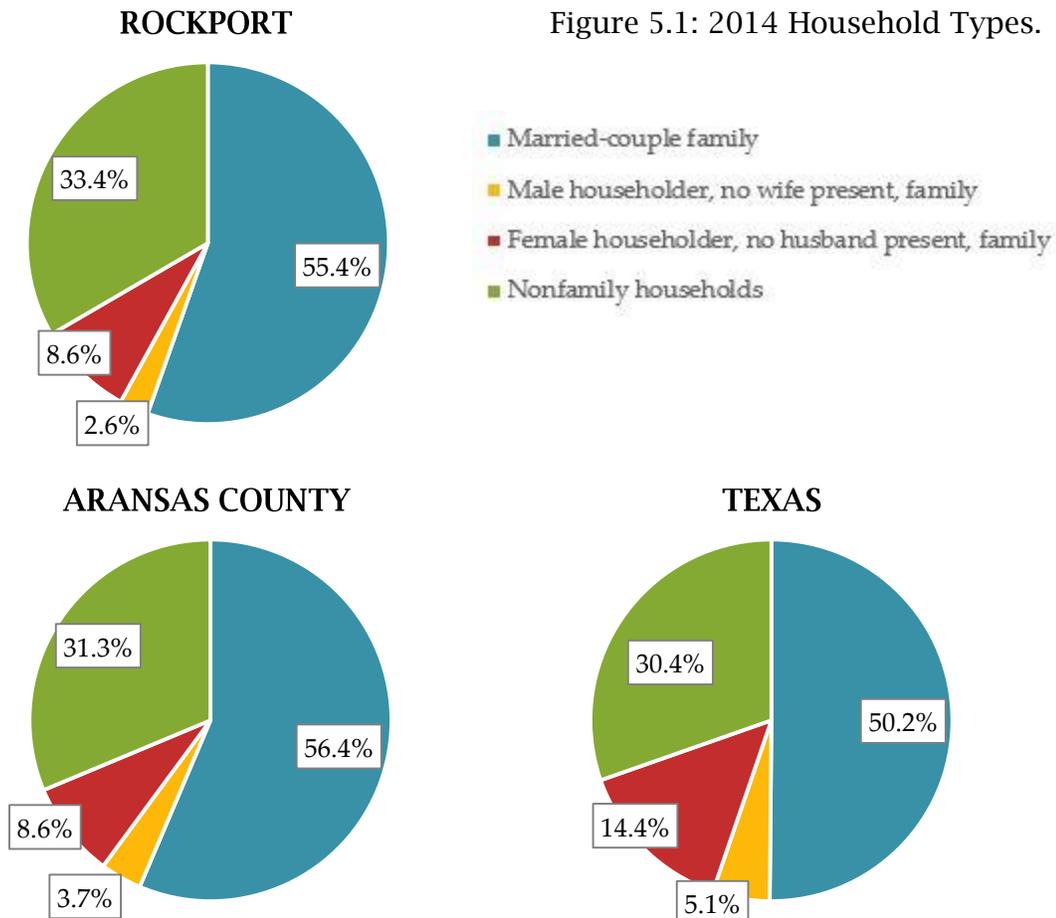
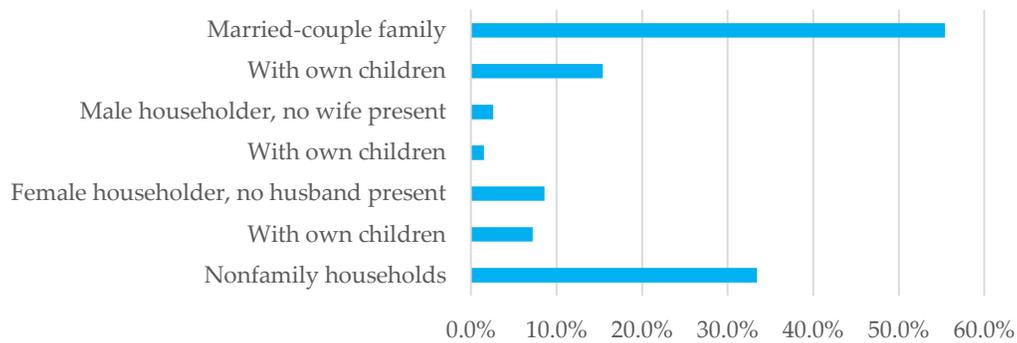


Figure created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

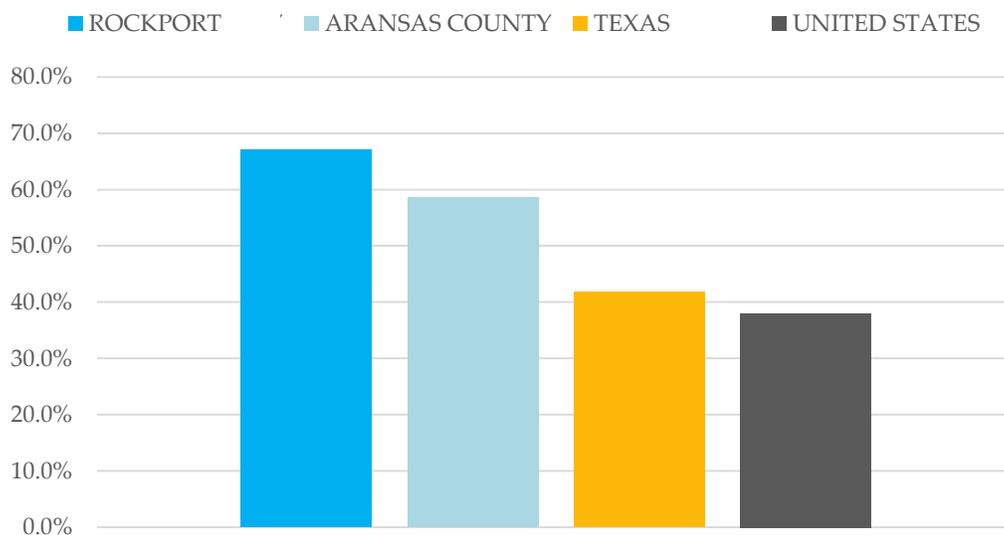
Figure 5.2: 2014 Household Types with Children.



Because the US Census defines a family household as containing two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption, there may not be any children in the household. Figure 5.2 shows the categories previously discussed; but further broken down according to what percentage of household families in Rockport include children. While 55.4% of households consist of married-couples, only 15.4% of the households contain married-couples with children. This indicates that the majority of married couples do not have children living at home. On the other hand, the percentages of households that are led by a man or a woman, without a spouse and without children, are only slightly higher than the corresponding percentages of the same gender, without a spouse, living in homes with children. This indicates that the majority of the family households, without a spouse, include children.

The US Census also provides data on the percentage of grandparents who are responsible for grandchildren. Figure 5.3 shows that 67.1% of the grandparents, in Rockport, are responsible for their grandchildren. This is higher than the percentages for Aransas County (58.6%), Texas (41.8), and the United States (38%).

Figure 5.3: 2014 Grandparents Responsible for Grandchildren.



HOUSING TYPES

Figure 5.4 depicts the categories and percentages of housing types for Rockport, Aransas County, and Texas in 2014. The majority of the homes in Rockport are detached single family homes (66.6%). The remaining homes fall into the following categories: 10.1% are mobile homes; 8.0% are in buildings with 5 to 9 units; 7.3% are in buildings with 10, or more, units; 4.6% are in buildings with 2 to 4 units; 1.9% are single units that are attached to another structure; and 1.3% are boats, RVs, or some other structure made to move regularly. The figure also shows the percentages for housing types in Texas, and the United States. Detached single family homes dominate in all three locations. Rockport is comparable to Aransas County and Texas when looking at 1-4 unit housing types. However, there is more variation among the three entities when looking at the other types of structures. In Rockport, Mobile homes make up 10% of all homes, structures with 5-9 units follows that with 8%, and structures with 10 or more units make up a little over 7%. On the county level, mobile homes make up 23% of all homes, and the three types of multi-unit structures each represent about 4% of homes. On the state level, the second largest category, with a little over 14%, is buildings with 10 or more units, while mobile homes represent 7.5% of homes.

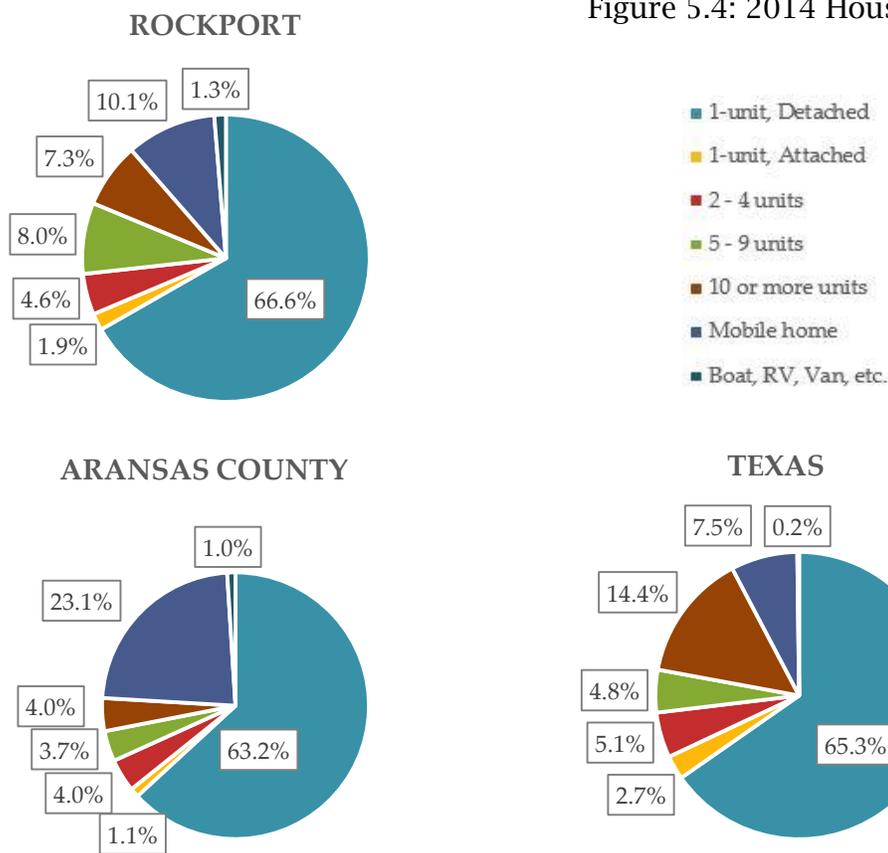


Figure 5.4: 2014 Housing Types.

Figure created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

Rockport and the surrounding coastal area are known for secondary/vacation homes, mobile homes, and RV parks due to the availability of year-round recreational activities. However, it is important to note the distinction between mobile homes and RVs. The US Census Bureau states a “Manufactured (mobile) Home is defined as a movable dwelling, 8 feet or more wide and 40 feet or more long... with transportation gear integral to the unit when it leaves the factory... These homes are built in accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development building code.” Whereas “people at transitory locations such as recreational vehicle (RV) parks [and] marinas... [are] counted at the residence where they live and sleep most of the time.” Therefore, although there are a noticeable amount of RV parks in the Rockport area, the RV owners are not considered Rockport residents according to the US Census.



HOUSING AVAILABILITY & AFFORDABILITY

Figure 5.5 shows that in the City of Rockport, 61.5% of the available housing units are occupied, leaving 38.5% unoccupied. These numbers are identical for Aransas County. However, 88.5% of all housing units in the State of Texas are occupied. Figure 5.5 also shows the percentages of owner occupied housing units versus those units which are inhabited by renters. In the City of Rockport 71.4% of housing units are occupied by the owners. This percentage is slightly more for Aransas County (72.3%), and about 10 percentage points less for the State of Texas (62.7%). When looking at housing types in Figure 5.4, Texas has a greater percentage of structures with 10 or more units than the city and the county, which correlates with a greater percentage of tenant-occupied units.

The final section of Figure 5.5 shows the percentage of owner-occupied units with and without mortgages. In the City of Rockport and Aransas County, 62% of the owner occupied housing units do not have mortgages. This is contradictory to what we find in the State of Texas, where 60% of the owner occupied units have a mortgage.

Figure 5.5: 2014 Housing Stock.

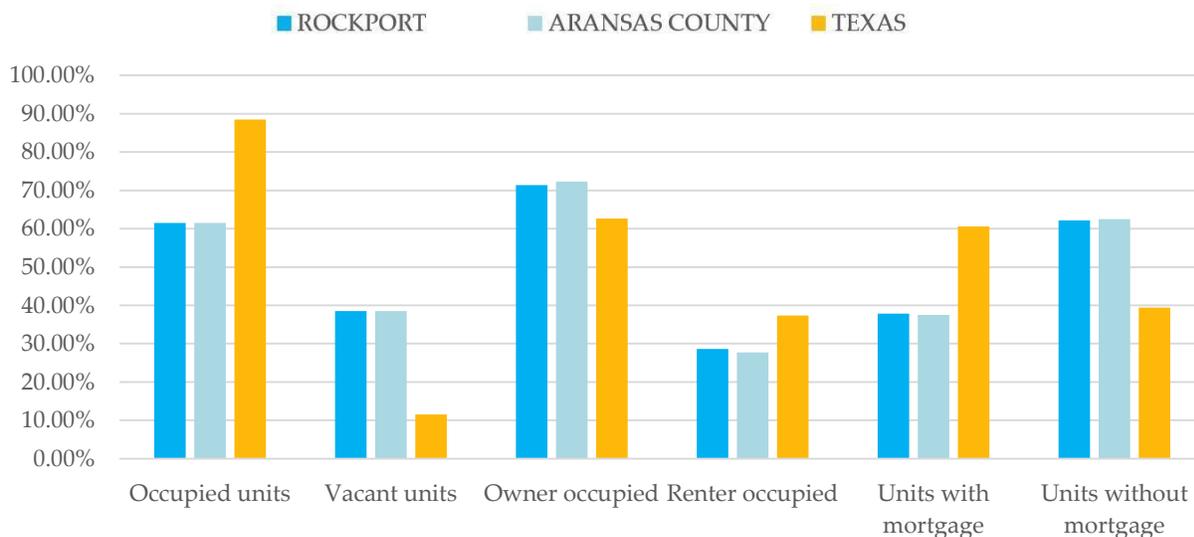


Figure created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

Figure 5.6 shows the values of owner-occupied housing in the City of Rockport, Aransas County, and the State of Texas for 2014. The city has the highest percentages of homes in the \$300K to \$1m range. This would seem to support the idea that there are a lot of vacation homes, and retirees, in Rockport.

Figure 5.6 2014 Value of Owner-Occupied Housing.

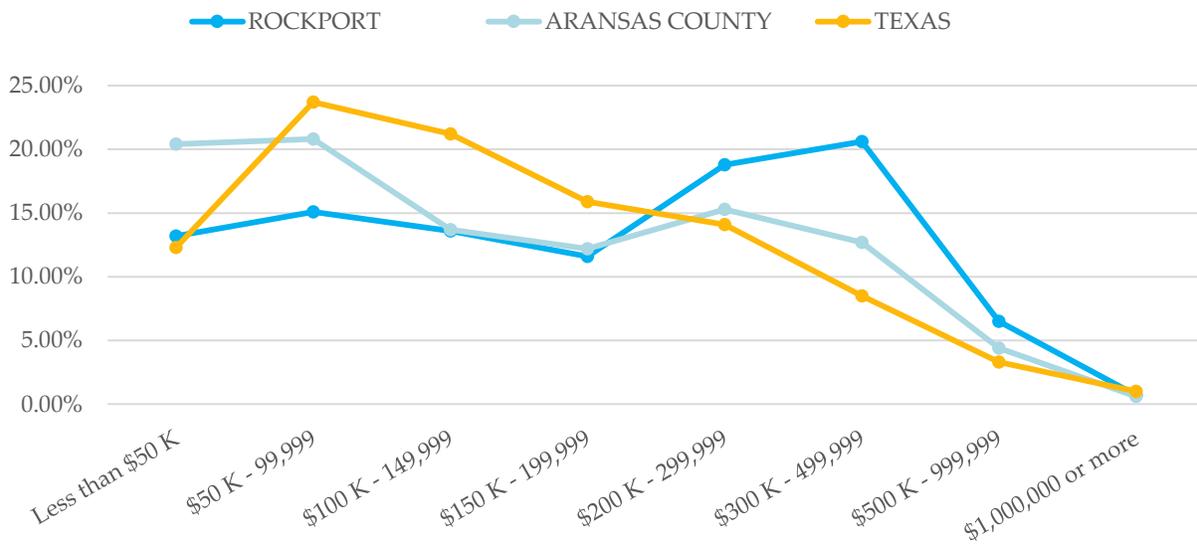
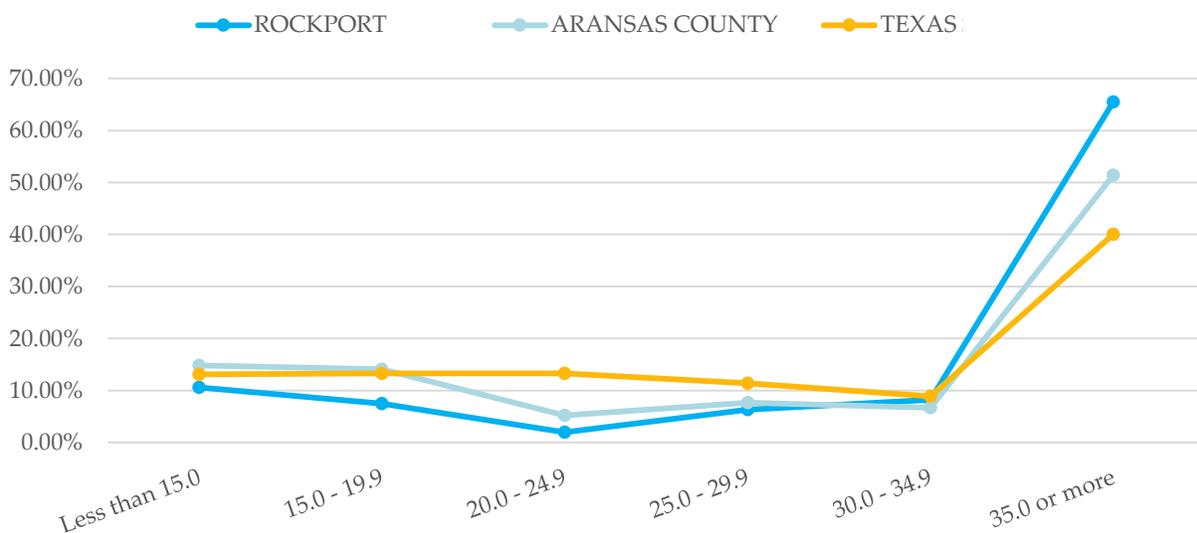


Figure 5.7 shows what percentage of income renters are paying in rent for the City of Rockport, Aransas County, and the State of Texas. These numbers are fairly consistent (below 15%) for renters who pay less than 15% to approximately 35% of their income towards rent. However, when looking at the percentages of individuals who pay more than 35% of their income towards rent, Rockport (65.5%) is higher than Aransas County (51.4%), which is higher than the State of Texas (40%).

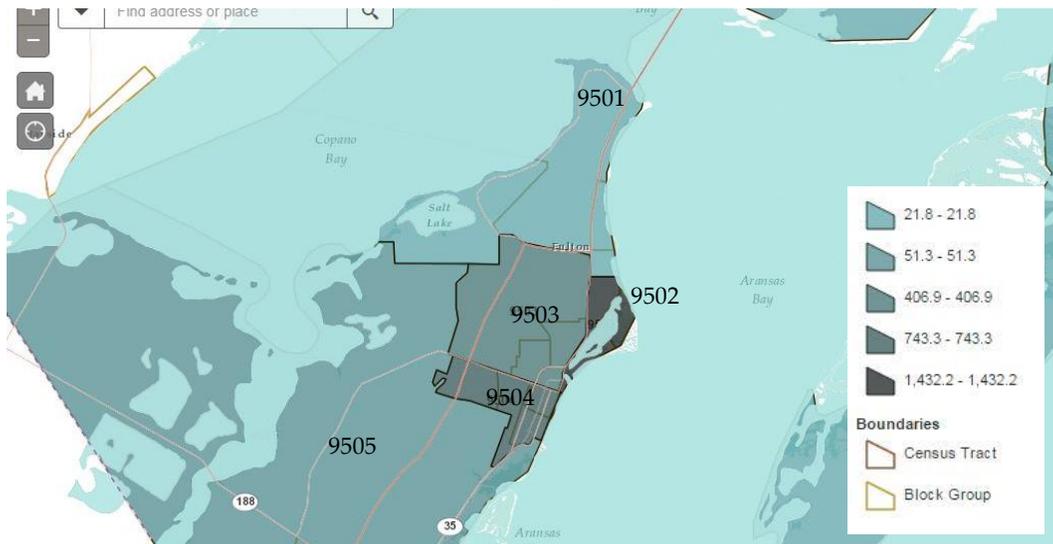
Figure 5.7: 2014 Rent as Percentage of Income.



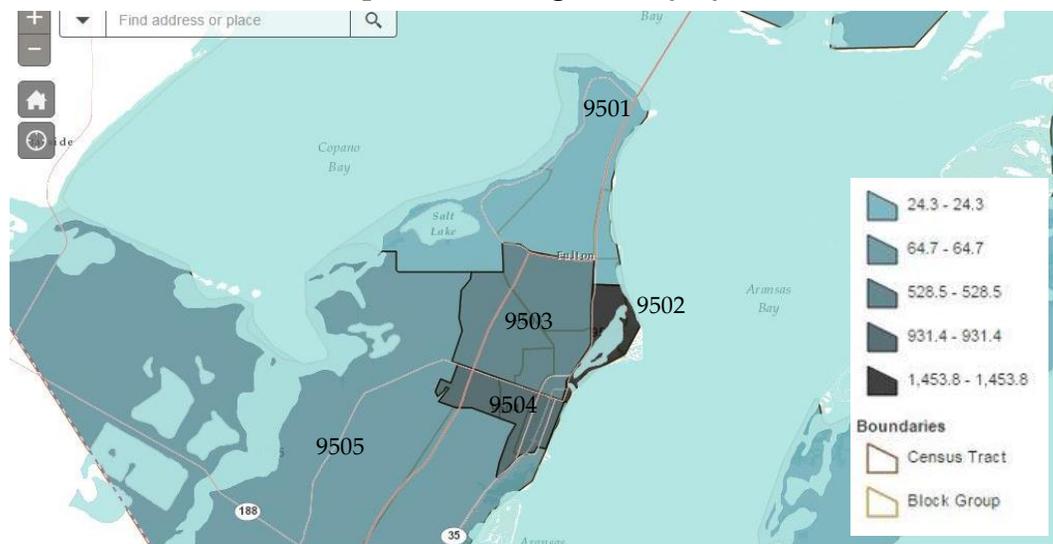
HOUSING DENSITY & GROWTH

Maps 5.1 and 5.2 show housing unit density for Aransas County, according to 2000 and 2010 census tracts. Tracts 9502, 9503, and 9504 make up most of the City of Rockport. Tract 9502 is the smallest tract, along the eastern coast of the peninsula, and has the highest density. This area is primarily zoned for single family dwellings, has some of the smallest lot sizes in the city, and most of the lots are fully developed. Tract 9504, which has the second highest density, is zoned for a variety of uses, the area is more developed along the coast, and also has small lot sizes. In tract 9503, the lot sizes become larger as you move away from the coast; as such, the land is less developed and less dense. Tracts 9501 and 9505 are largely undeveloped and unincorporated areas of the county, and as a result, have the lowest housing density. Tract 9503 has the highest housing growth rate (30%) and tract 9502, which is already mostly developed, has the lowest housing growth rate (2%).

Map 5.1: Housing Density by Census Tract in 2000.



Map 5.2: Housing Density by Census Tract in 2010.



Maps created on: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml# using data from: Census 2000 (map 5.1) and Census 2010 (5.2).

CHAPTER 6 ECONOMY



MAJOR EMPLOYERS

As of 2014 there were 3,709 people employed in Rockport earning an average of \$26,513 annually⁽²⁾. According to the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce, the ten major employers in the area are identified in Table 6.1. The largest employer is the Aransas County School District (521 employees). Retail stores (Walmart and H.E.B.) employ 706 people. Three government entities (the City of Rockport, Aransas County, and the State of Texas) employ another 412 individuals. The medical services industry (Care Regional Medical Center, Gulf Pointe Plaza, and Rockport Coastal Care) employ 378 people. The list is rounded out by Wood Group, which is an oilfield/industrial company that employs 181 individuals⁽³⁾.

Table 6.1: Major Employers in Rockport-Fulton Area.

Employer	Product	Number of Employees in Rockport/Fulton
Aransas County Independent School District	Education	521
Walmart	Retail/Grocery	250
Care Regional Medical Center	Medical Services	210
H.E.B.	Retail/Grocery	185
Wood Group Product Services	Oilfield/Industrial	181
Aransas County	Government	175
City of Rockport	Government	130
State of Texas	Government	107
Gulf Pointe Plaza	Medical Services	93
Rockport Coastal Care Center	Medical Services	75

Table created using data from: <http://www.rockport-fulton.org/Top-10-Employers>.

² United States Census Bureau. (2014). American Community Survey. Retrieved from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml

³ Retrieved from: <http://www.rockport-fulton.org/Top-10-Employers>

INDUSTRY SPECIALIZATION

Due to the relatively small size of Rockport, some economic data is not available through the US Census. Some industries have only one employer and thus the individualized data cannot be disclosed. Therefore, data for Aransas County was analyzed to determine what industries contribute most to the economic base. US Census Bureau used data gathered by the American Community Survey in 2005 and 2014, to determine that Aransas County specialized in three categories: accommodation and food services, retail trade, and construction (these categories have the highest percentage of employees (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2). It is interesting to note that the county employed 17.3% of its workers in the accommodation and food services industry in 2014; during this same year the State of Texas only employed 9.1% of its workers in the same industry. This is likely due to tourism. Industries that provided the lowest percentages of jobs in Aransas County, in 2005 or 2014, were utilities, education, and management companies (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2).



Figure 6.1: 2005 Industry Specialization.

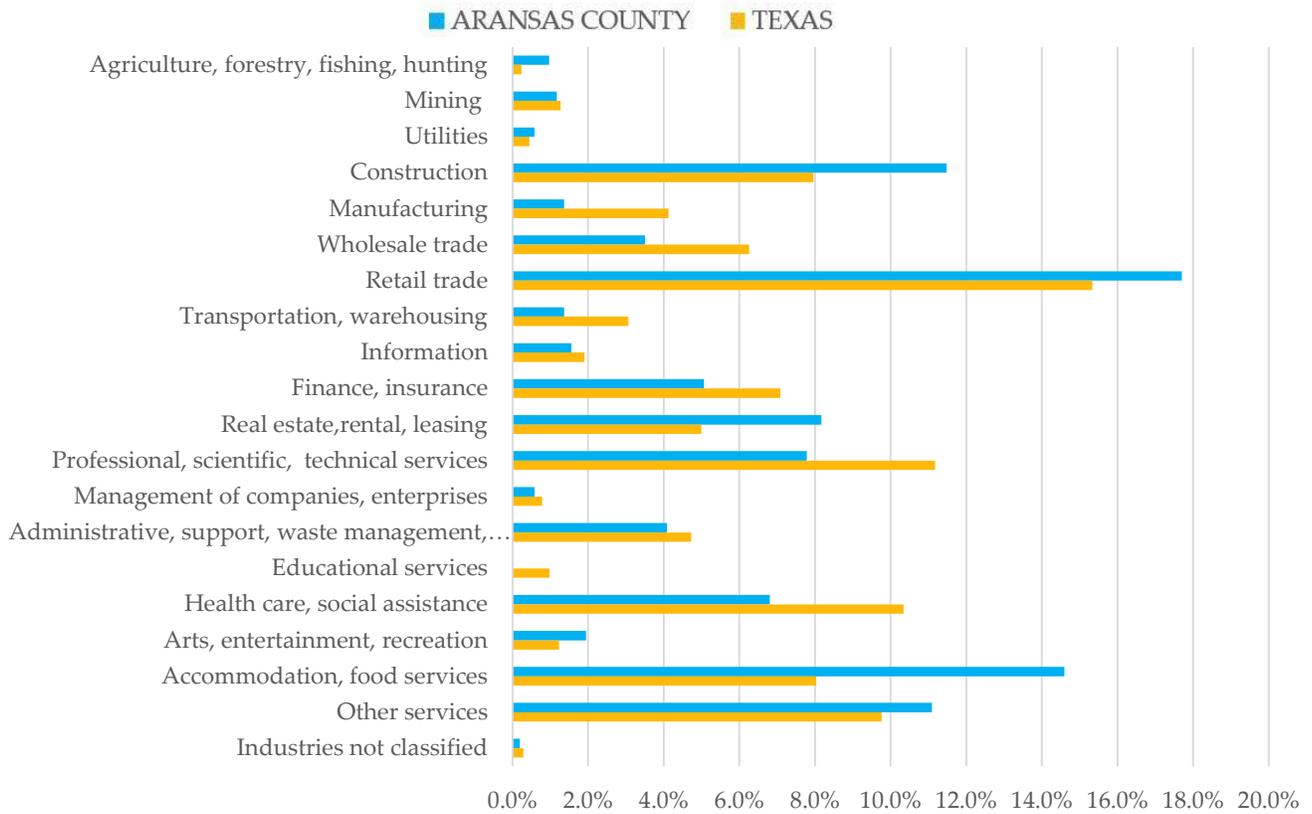
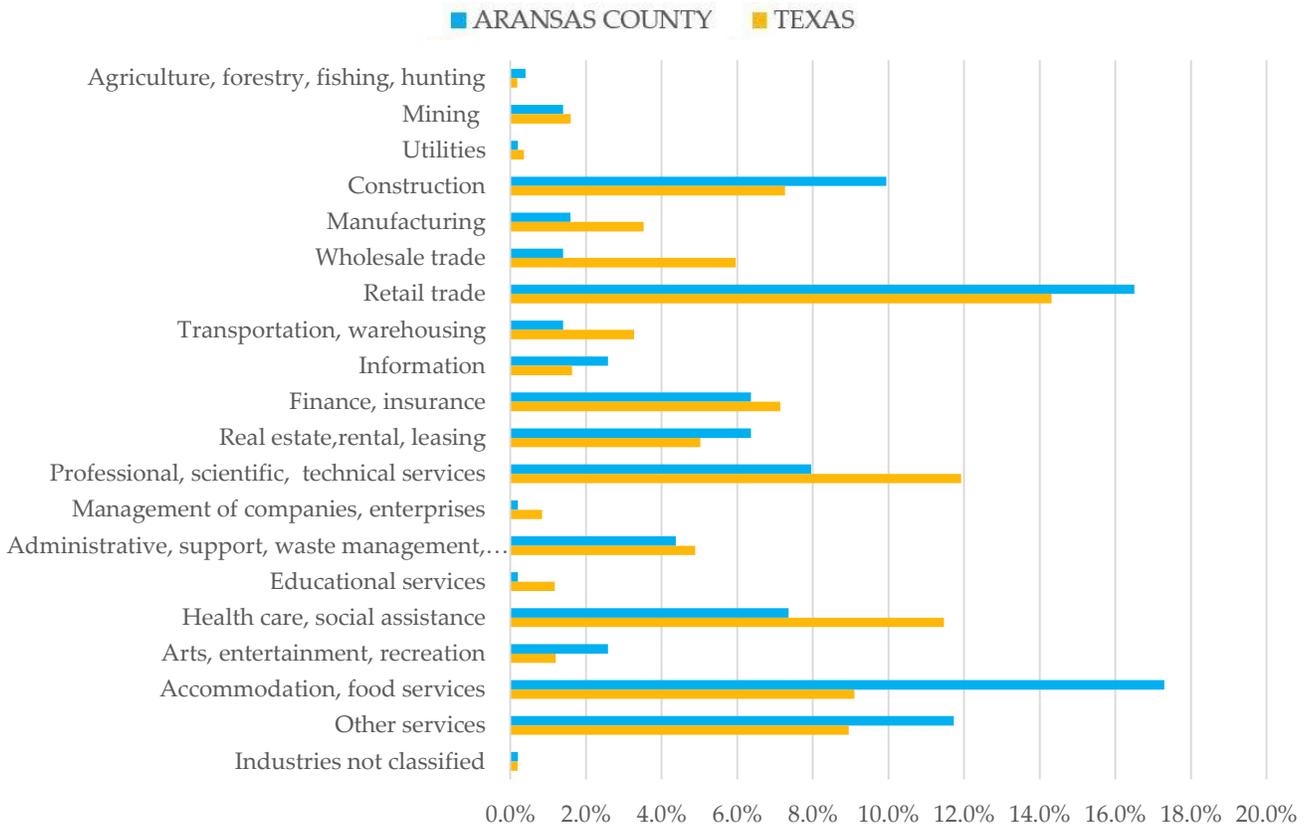


Figure 6.2: 2014 Industry Specialization.



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) generates economic reports for coastal counties throughout the United States. The data focuses on six economic sectors that are dependent upon the oceans (and the Great Lakes). NOAA calls this “Ocean Economy,” and the six economic sectors are: living resources, marine construction, ship and boat building, marine transportation, offshore mineral extraction, and tourism and recreation. The ocean economy of Aransas County represents 26% of the total economy of the county. Table 6.2 shows how much the two largest economic sectors contributes to the ocean economy of Aransas County. Please note that the “suppressed data” represents data that are protected by laws in order to protect the privacy of individuals and business. In general, either the number of business, or the number of employers, in these areas are so few, that it is foreseeable that data could be tracked back to specific people or companies. As such, this data has been “suppressed.” With this in mind, it is important to note that while data for four of the six economic categories are suppressed, these categories only represent 8.2% of the total ocean economy for Aransas County.

Table 6.2: 2013 Sector Contributions to the Aransas County Ocean

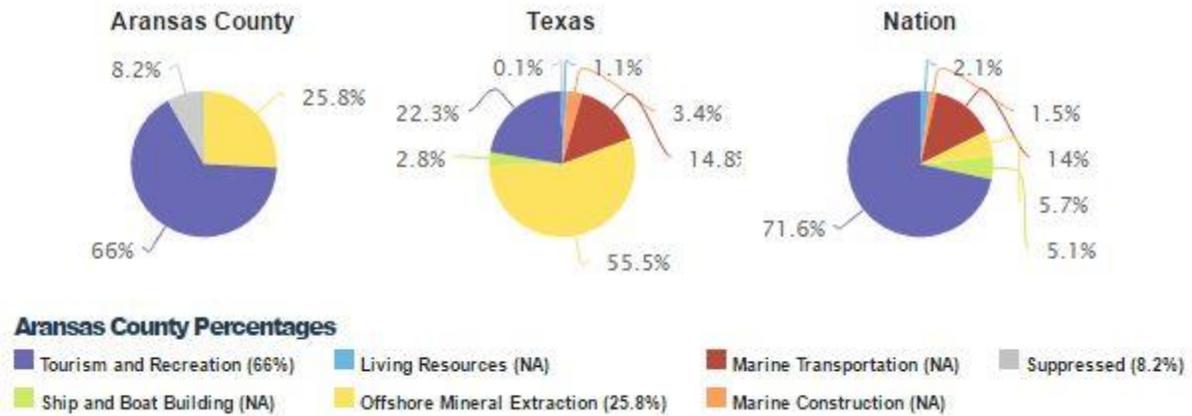
	% of Total Economy	% of Total Ocean Economy	Number Self Employed	Total Employment	Wages % of Total Economy	Total Wages	Economy Wages per Employee
Total Ocean Economy	26	N/A	274	1932	23.8	\$50.5 Million	30,500
Living Resources	0	Suppressed	115	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed
Marine Construction	0	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed
Ship & Boat Building	0	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed
Marine Transportation	0	Suppressed	14	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed
Offshore Mineral Extraction	0	25.8	92	520	47.7	\$24 Million	\$56,000
Tourism & Recreation	0	66	49	1143	39	\$19.7 Million	\$18,000

Table created using data from:
<https://coast.noaa.gov/snapshots/#/process?action=ocean&state=48&county=007&bounds=null>

The NOAA report also compares the contributions of each of the economic sectors to the total ocean economy for Aransas County, the State of Texas, and the US. The first graph in Figure 6.3 shows that 91.8% of the ocean economy for Aransas County is provided by the tourism and recreation sector (66%) and the offshore mineral extraction sector (25.8%). The second graph shows that these numbers are almost reversed for Texas with the major contributing sector being offshore mineral extraction (55.5%) and then the tourism and recreation sector following by contributing 22.3% of the ocean economy.

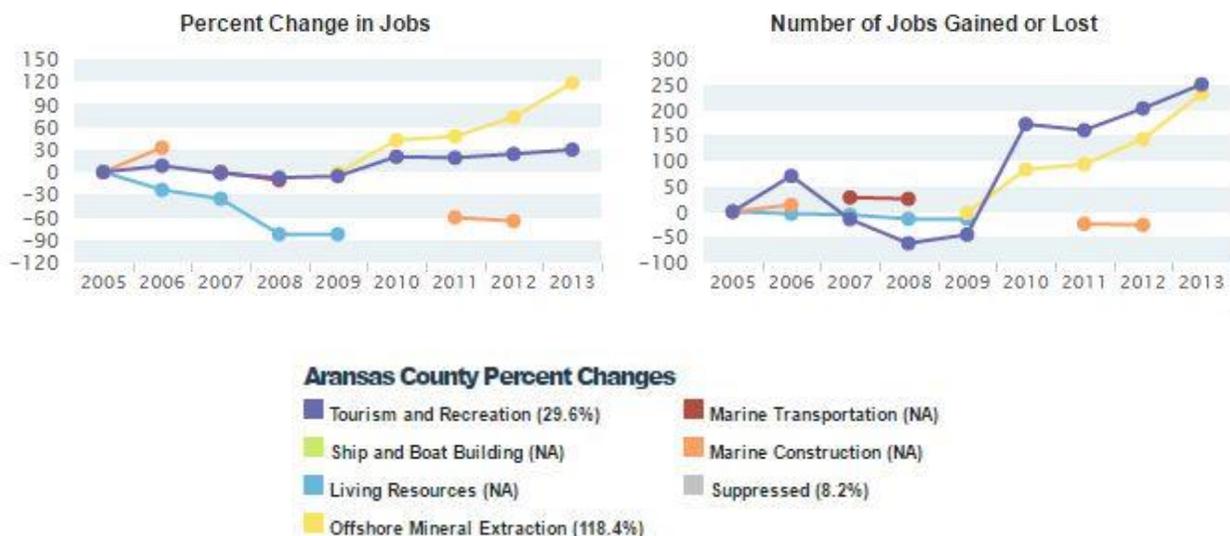
The final graph shows that the majority of the national ocean economy comes from the tourism and recreation sector (71.6%), with the remaining 5 sectors splitting the rest of the contributions to the nation's ocean economy. Considering that Aransas County is a small coastal town, without large industry, it makes sense that tourism and recreation would dominate its ocean economy.

Figure 6.3: 2013 Percentages of Industries within the Ocean Economy.



Finally, NOAA analyzes job growth within the ocean economy and individual sectors from 2005 to 2013. Figure 6.4 shows steady or growing trends, in the later years, in the tourism and recreation, and offshore mineral extraction sectors for Aransas County. The downturn from 2007 to 2009 in the tourism and recreation sector could be attributed to destructive hurricane seasons, and storms such as Hurricanes Ike and Dolly in 2008.

Figure 6.4: Growth in the Aransas County Ocean Economy from 2005 to 2014.



LOCATION QUOTIENT

Another way to assess specialization is to look at the location quotient, which quantifies how concentrated an industry is in the local area compared to another larger area. In this case the industry statistics for Aransas County are compared to the State of Texas for the years 2005 and 2014 (see Table 6.3). A location quotient larger than one indicates that an area (Aransas County) has some level of specialization in that category, over the benchmark area (Texas). The highest location quotients indicate strong industries. This data suggests that Agriculture (including forestry, fishing, and hunting) was the most specialized industry in Aransas County in 2005; unfortunately, this industry also appeared to decline significantly by 2014. Also of note is the jump that the “arts, entertainment, and recreation” category made from 2005 (LQ of 1.58) to 2014 (LQ of 2.15).

Coincidentally, during this time the City of Rockport dedicated resources to the development of an Arts District. The city also finalized a Cultural Arts Plan in early 2016. Finally, the information industry also grew in prominence from 2005 (LQ of .82) to 2014 (LQ of 1.58). This growth is a trend that is being seen globally. *(Note: This data is only as good as the information the Census Bureau was able to obtain in the years specified. We strongly recommend extensive ground truthing prior to making any substantial policy changes.)*

Table 6.3: Location Quotient for Aransas County, compared to the State of Texas for 2005 and 2014.

Industry	2005 Location Quotient	2014 Location Quotient
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting	4.08	2.17
Accommodation, food services	1.82	1.90
Real estate, rental, leasing	1.64	1.27
Arts, entertainment, recreation	1.58	2.15
Construction	1.44	1.37
Utilities	1.32	0.56
Retail trade	1.15	1.15
Other services	1.14	1.31
Mining	0.92	0.87
Administrative, support, waste management, remediation services	0.86	0.89
Information	0.82	1.58
Management of companies, enterprises	0.74	0.24
Finance, insurance	0.71	0.89
Professional, scientific, technical services	0.70	0.67
Industries not classified	0.69	1.05
Health care, social assistance	0.66	0.64
Wholesale trade	0.56	0.23
Transportation, warehousing	0.44	0.43
Manufacturing	0.33	0.45
Educational services	0.00	0.17

Figures created using data from: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

EMPLOYMENT INFLOW & OUTFLOW

Figures 6.5 and 6.6 demonstrate the inflow and outflow of workers in 2005 and 2014. Rockport is one of many smaller coastal communities in the Coastal Bend region of Texas. These communities have boundaries that are often in flux, as development occurs, and areas are annexed. Since these boundaries are ever changing, it is often difficult for citizens to stay informed. As such, this data may not be as reliable as possible. Further, because the small coastal counties sit so close together, the movement of jobs from one small community to another (e.g. from the City of Rockport to Aransas Pass, or from Fulton to Rockport) may not have as much of an economic impact on the individual communities as the loss of a major coastal employer (providing hundreds of jobs) to an area like Houston.

Figure 6.5: 2005 Inflow/Outflow of Jobs.



Figure 6.6: 2005 Inflow/Outflow of Jobs.

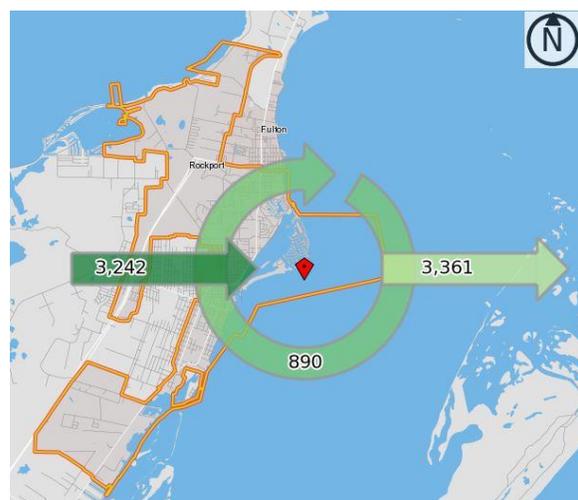


Table 6.4 details what we know about the workers who work in Rockport but live elsewhere, and those who live in Rockport but work elsewhere. The number of individuals who come into the City of Rockport to work went up from 2005 to 2014 (from 72.2% to 78.2% of the workforce). The number of people who live in Rockport and work elsewhere also went up (from 70.3% to 79% of the people). It is impossible to know where people are traveling to or from for these jobs; but, because of the cluster of local communities it is likely not far. However, it is worth noting that the trend to commute for work is growing in this area.

Table 6.4: Commuting Workers.

INFLOW/OUTFLOW	2005	2014
Workers Coming In	2059	3242
Percentage of Rockport Jobs	72.2	78.5
Workers Going Out	1883	3361
Percentage of Rockport Residents	70.3	79

CHAPTER 7

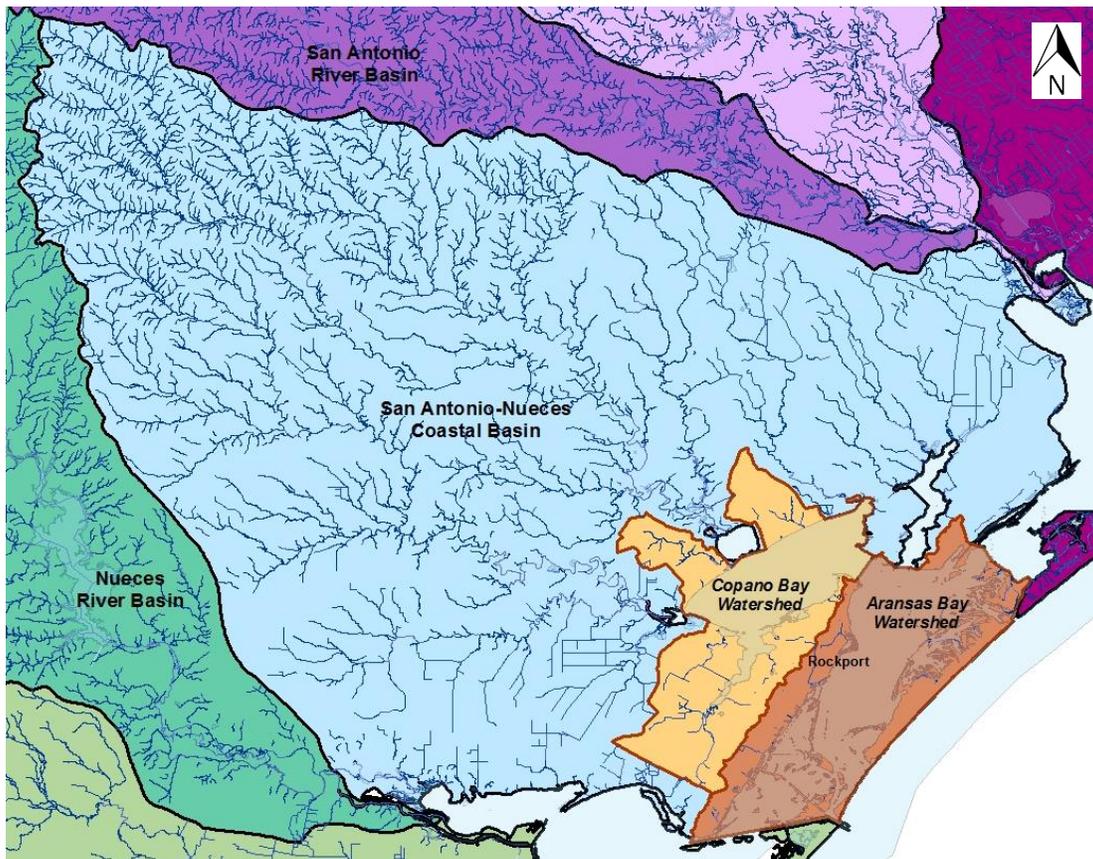
ENVIRONMENT



WATERSHEDS & AQUIFERS

The quality and amount of water available to the City of Rockport is dependent on several factors. There are two naturally occurring water systems in our environment: aquifers and watersheds (or basins). Aquifers are like reservoirs because they store water; but they are located underground. The water stored in an aquifer is called groundwater. Aquifers are recharged by surface water (lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, and wetlands) which enable water to slowly seep through the ground back into the aquifer. A watershed is an area of land in which all bodies of surface water (including runoff) converge and drain to one outlet. In Texas, there are numerous watersheds; but eventually they all drain into the Gulf of Mexico. Along the coast, rivers converge into coastal basins, which are made up of bays and estuaries. Map 7.1 depicts the major basins and watersheds that surround Rockport. Since so many systems drain into the water that surrounds Live Oak Peninsula and the city, it is important that Rockport be aware of the quality of the water, and the type of pollutants within those systems. Much of Rockport's economy, recreation, and health depends on good water quality.

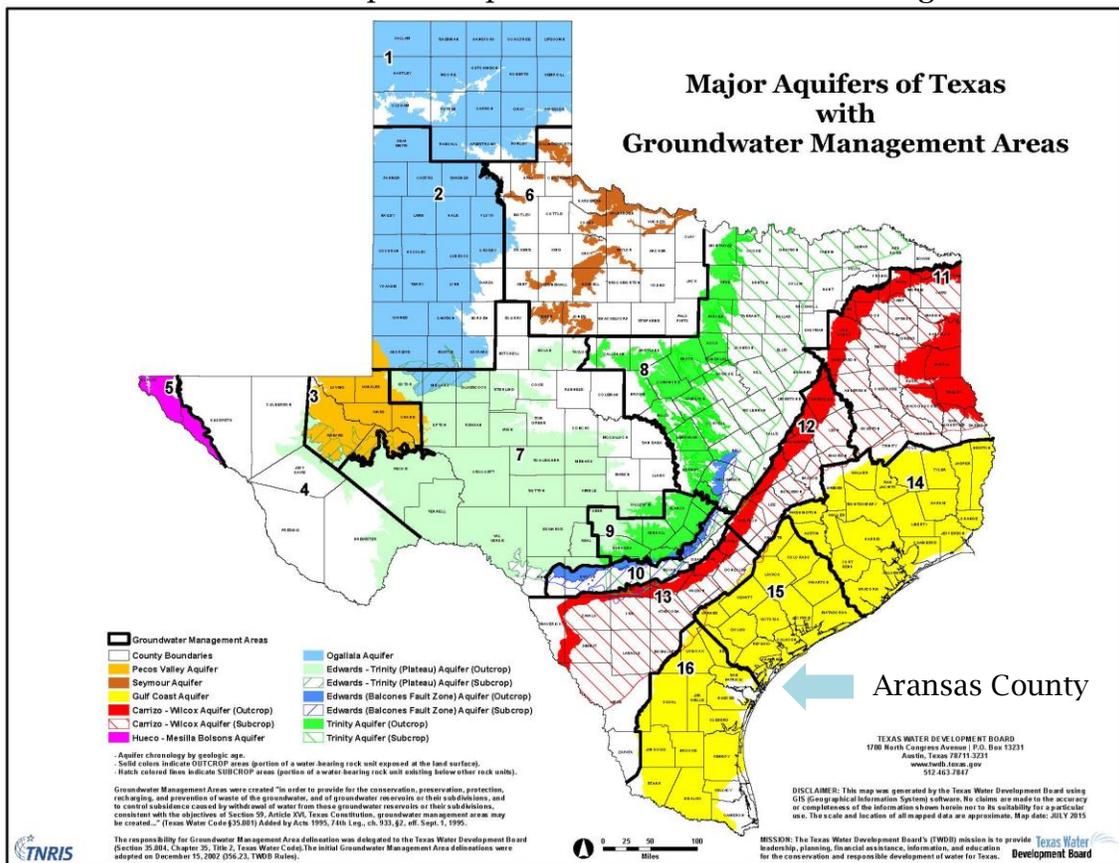
Map 7.1: Major Watersheds and Basins Affecting Rockport.



Map created using data from: USDA/NRCS - National Geospatial Management Center - 12 Digit Watershed Boundary Dataset; National Hydrography Dataset; Texas Parks And Wildlife Department Basins; US Census Bureau TIGER Products.

When the amount of groundwater in an aquifer is very low, a region can experience a period of drought. This is usually brought on by an extended period of time with low precipitation, and thus the inability to recharge the aquifers. Many communities implement regulations regarding how and when water can be used for non-essential activities (e.g. watering lawns and washing cars) during droughts. These regulations help to prolong the availability of water to the entire community, and reduce the potentially costly need to purchase additional water from other areas. Some homes utilize wells and pumps which access water directly from the aquifer, and are not part of the municipal water system. Due to their impact on the aquifer, a community may consider regulations based on the spacing or usage of wells and pumps. Some communities have their own Groundwater Conservation District, in addition to a regional Groundwater Management Area that involves numerous counties. Aransas County had a temporary volunteer Groundwater Conservation District for less than a year. The Groundwater Conservation District was voted down in an election on May 7, 2016, and subsequently disbanded. The community can revisit the need for this group in the future. Rockport is included in Groundwater Management Area 15, which includes 13 counties (Aransas, Bee, Calhoun, Colorado, Dewitt, Fayette, Goliad, Jackson, Karnes, Lavaca, Matagorda, Victoria, and Wharton). Map 7.2 shows the Gulf Coast Aquifer in yellow, and Groundwater Management Area 15 in the middle of the aquifer's region.

Map 7.2: Aquifers and Groundwater Management Areas.



Map from : http://www.twdb.texas.gov/mapping/doc/maps/GMAs_Major_Aquifers_8x11.pdf.

<https://www.aransascountytx.gov/groundwatercomm/>
<http://www.wnrockport.com/2016/05/letter-to-editor-re-groundwater.html>
<http://www.wnrockport.com/2016/05/re-aransas-county-groundwater.html>

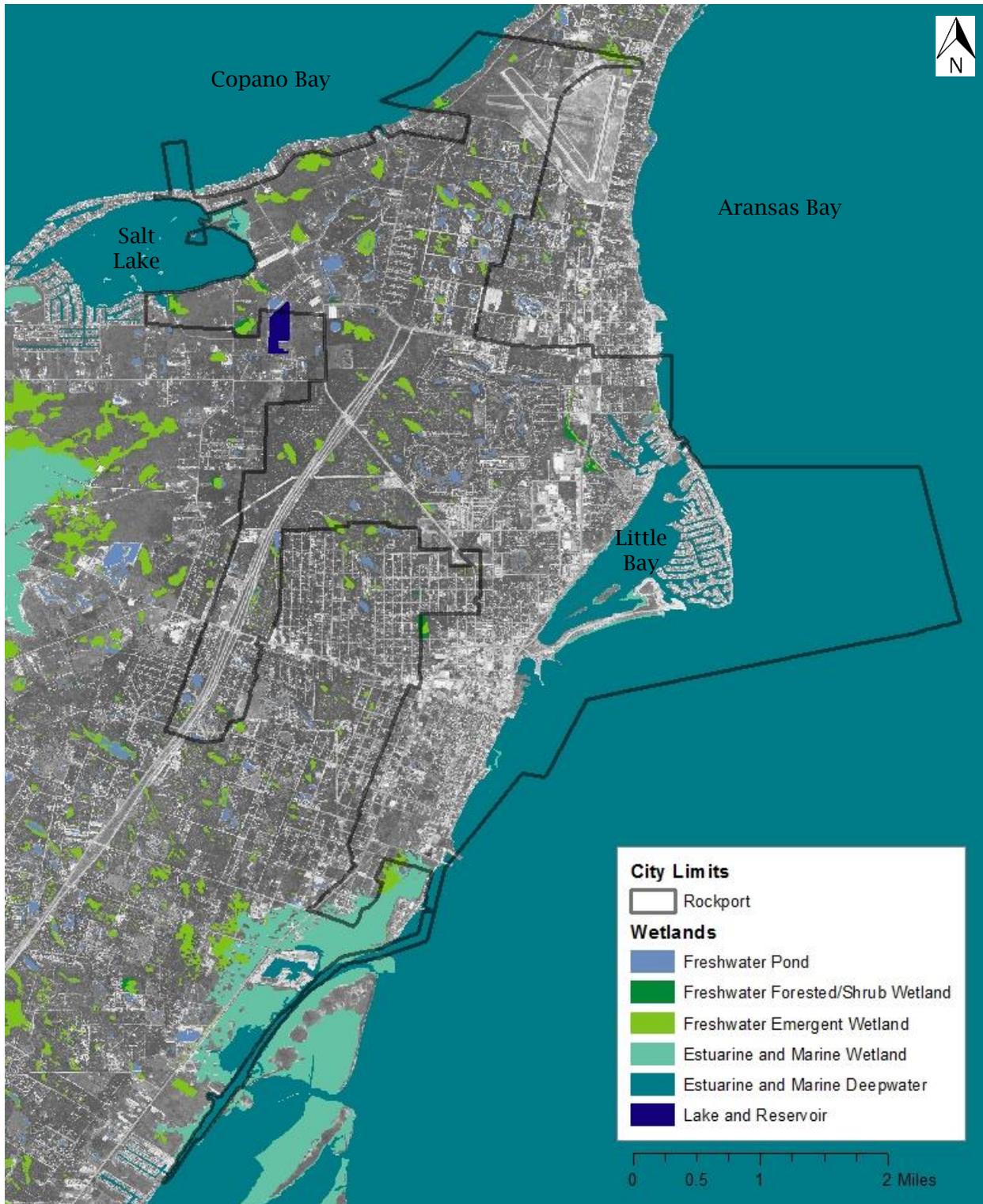
WETLANDS

The City of Rockport is located on a peninsula surrounded by two bays, Copano Bay and Aransas Bay. There are also two bodies of water that create nooks along the city's coastline, Little Bay and Salt Lake. Within the city limits, there are numerous pockets of freshwater emergent wetlands, freshwater forested/shrub wetlands, and freshwater ponds (see Map 7.3). These wetlands create habitats for many species of birds, fish, and amphibians. The coastal area of the city also includes estuarine wetlands (see Map 7.3). Wetlands are known as “the cradle of life” because they offer critical breeding, resting, feeding, and nursery grounds for a large variety of waterfowl, fisheries, endangered species, birds, and mammals⁽⁴⁾. The economy of Rockport thrives on activities related to its wetlands; such as commercial fishing, shrimping, birdwatching, sport fishing, kayaking, and boating. These activities provide an economic base for the city, and treasured recreational opportunities. Wetlands within and surrounding the city also offer protective benefits. They can store water from heavy rains, allowing it to slowly dissipate back into the soil and groundwater systems, rather than being flushed to other areas. They dissipate wave energy from storms and minimize the inland effects and erosion experienced during storms. Furthermore, as water slowly moves through wetlands the organisms that live there help to filter and break down impurities, excess nutrients, and sediments contained in the runoff from developed and agricultural lands⁽⁴⁾. As Rockport continues to grow and develop, it is important to remember the advantages of its wetlands, and maintain a balance between the built and natural environments.



⁴ Randolph, J. (2004). Environmental land use planning and management. Island Press: Washington, D.C.

Map 7.3: Wetlands in and around Rockport.



Map created using data from: US Fish and Wildlife Service - National Wetlands Inventory ; US Census Bureau TIGER Products.

LANDCOVER

Landcover maps use detailed satellite imagery to identify vegetation and habitat types across the United States. This data is important because it can help to identify the distribution of natural habitats. This can in turn be used to develop models which help in long-term planning for habitat conservation and diversity, hydrology, and fire. Land cover maps also allow us to identify agricultural lands, and the location and intensity of current development. This data could be used by the city to help identifies areas they may want to conserve, and areas prime for further development.

Map 7.4 shows that the city is least developed along State Highway 35, where the land is covered with deciduous forest and scrub/shrub vegetation. On the northwest side of the city, there is a mix of palustrine and estuarine wetlands, grasslands, and herbaceous lands. These habitats surround Salt Lake, and are zoned for large lot, single family housing.

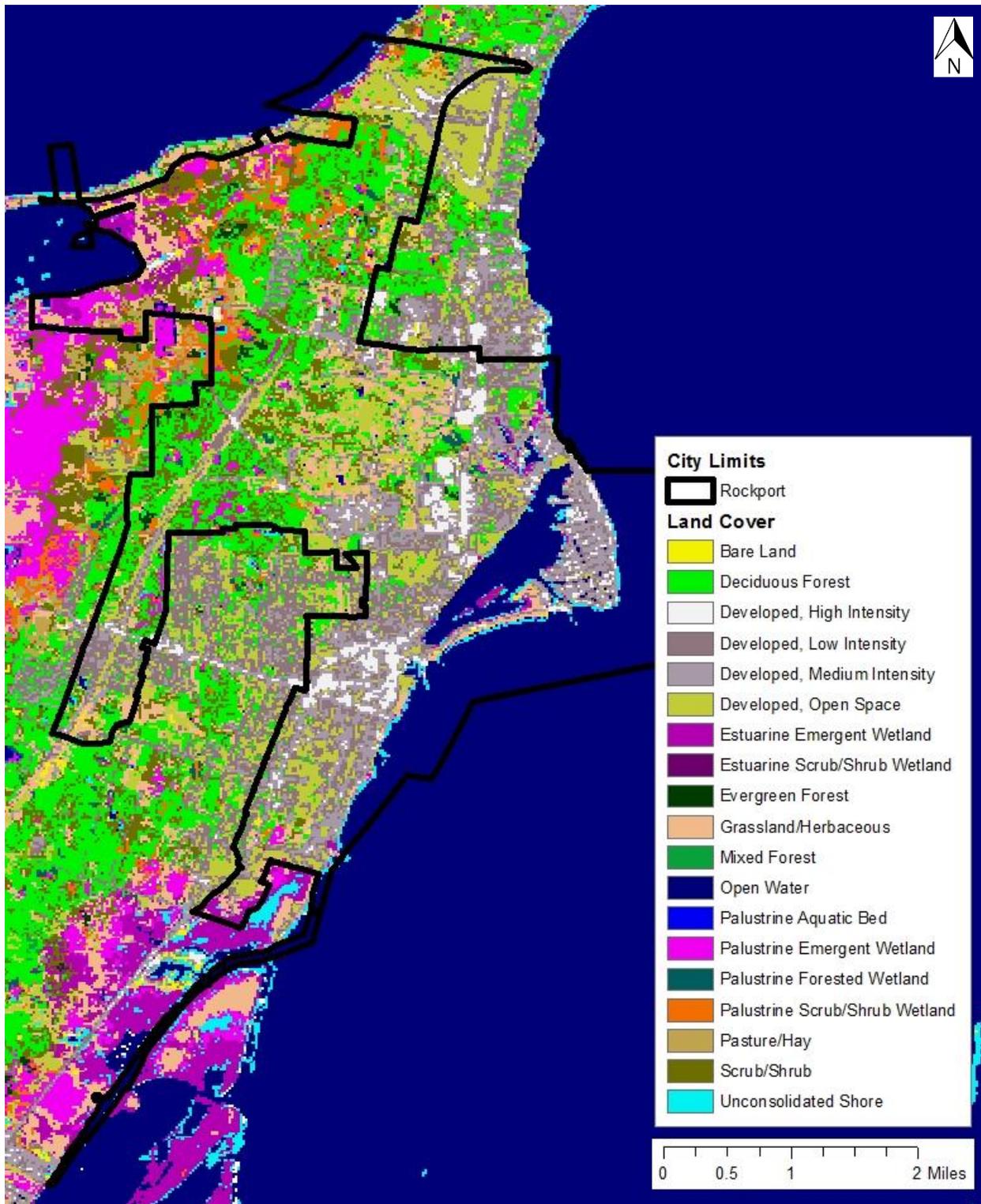
The central region of the city is developed open space, which includes some herbaceous grasslands. A few small palustrine and estuarine wetlands dot this region. The area includes the country club, and is zoned for single family residences. This is not a densely developed region. The northern expanse of the city is also developed open space, which is predominately occupied by the Aransas County Airport.

There are three areas of the city that include high intensity development. One region is located on the north side of the city, where the City of Rockport borders the Town of Fulton. This area includes several hotels, restaurants, a movie theater, and other buildings. South of that area is another patch of high density development that includes several school buildings and a Walmart. Continuing south, the third patch of highly developed land is downtown Rockport. This area contains many public facilities and institutions. Medium and low intensity development spreads out from these three areas of high intensity development.

(This landcover analysis uses a comparison between the 2006 landcover map (Map 7.4), the 2014 zoning map (Map 11.1), and the current 2016 online Google Earth map. There may be some limitations to the analysis due to the different time periods.)



Map 7.4: Rockport Landcover.



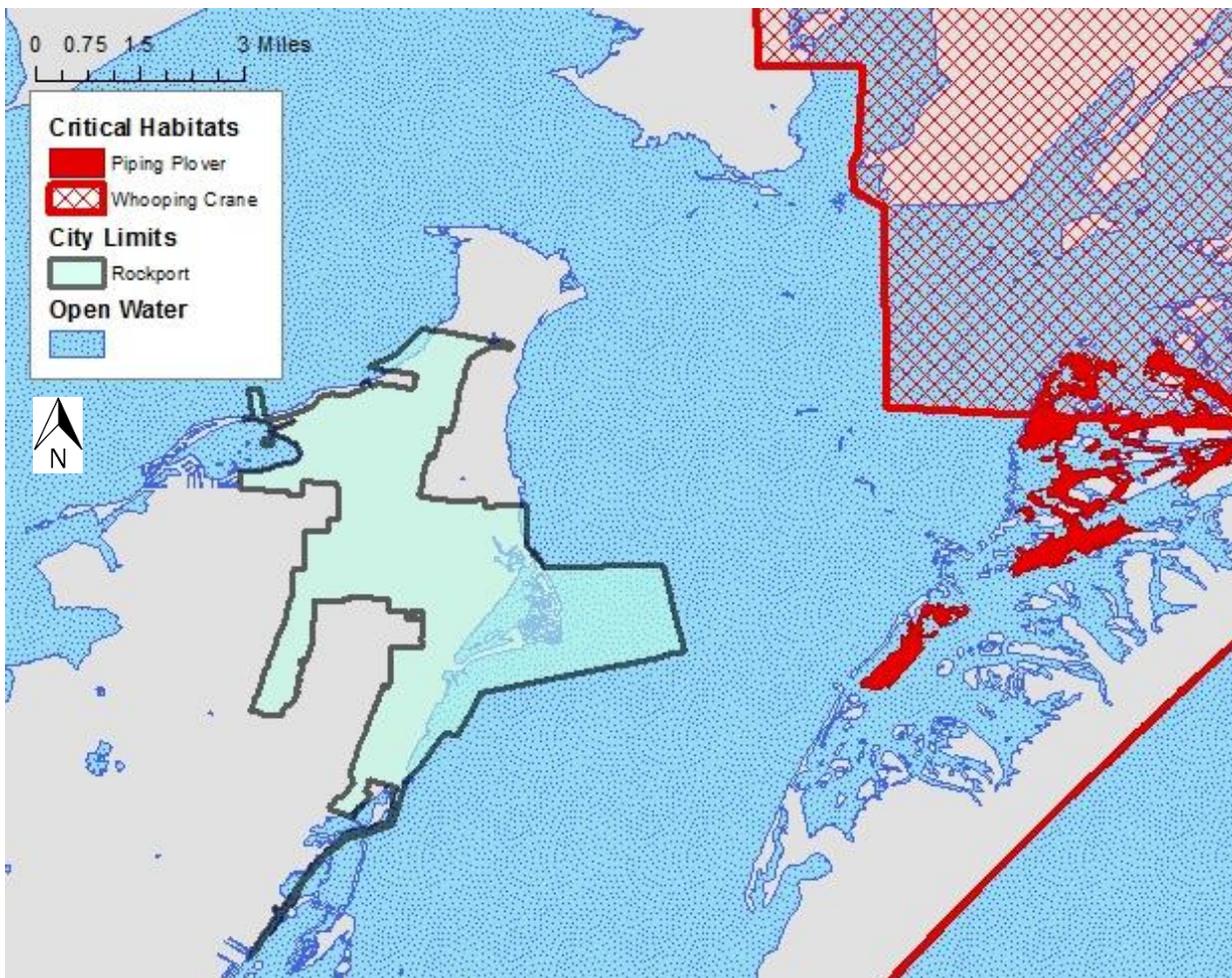
Map created using data from: NOAA's Ocean Service - Coastal Services Center; US Census Bureau TIGER Products.

LISTED SPECIES & CRITICAL HABITATS

Appendix 1 includes a list of the state and federally “listed species” that have been observed in Aransas County. Some of these species are not known to exist in the county any longer; however, if their habitats were restored, it is possible they could return. This list was provided by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Critical Habitats are defined in the Endangered Species Act as “a specific geographic area(s) that contains features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection. Critical habitat may include an area that is not currently occupied by the species but that will be needed for its recovery”⁽⁵⁾. The city of Rockport does not contain any designated critical habitats; however, some critical habitats for whooping cranes and piping plovers have been designated in areas northwest of Rockport, and on the barrier island seaward the city (see Map 7.5).

Map 7.5: Critical Habitats Near Rockport.



Map created using data from: US Fish and Wildlife Service - Critical Habitat; US Census Bureau TIGER Products.

WILDLIFE

The Rockport area has sustained population of small mammals, reptiles and amphibians, mid-sized predators (e.g. raccoons, opossums, skunks, bobcats, and coyotes) and white-tailed deer. The deer are concentrated along the Highway 35 Bypass, west of the bypass, around the Rockport Country Club, and around Holiday Beach. These concentrations of deer often draw mid-size predators in the spring (fawning season), and in the fall (as the predators prepare for winter). During these times, humans see more of these predators. Occasionally, the incidental take of domestic pets, by the mid-sized predators occurs (usually only during times of prolonged, colder winters, or extreme drought)⁽⁶⁾.



⁶ Personal communication, Dustin Windsor, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Aransas County Biologist

CHAPTER 8

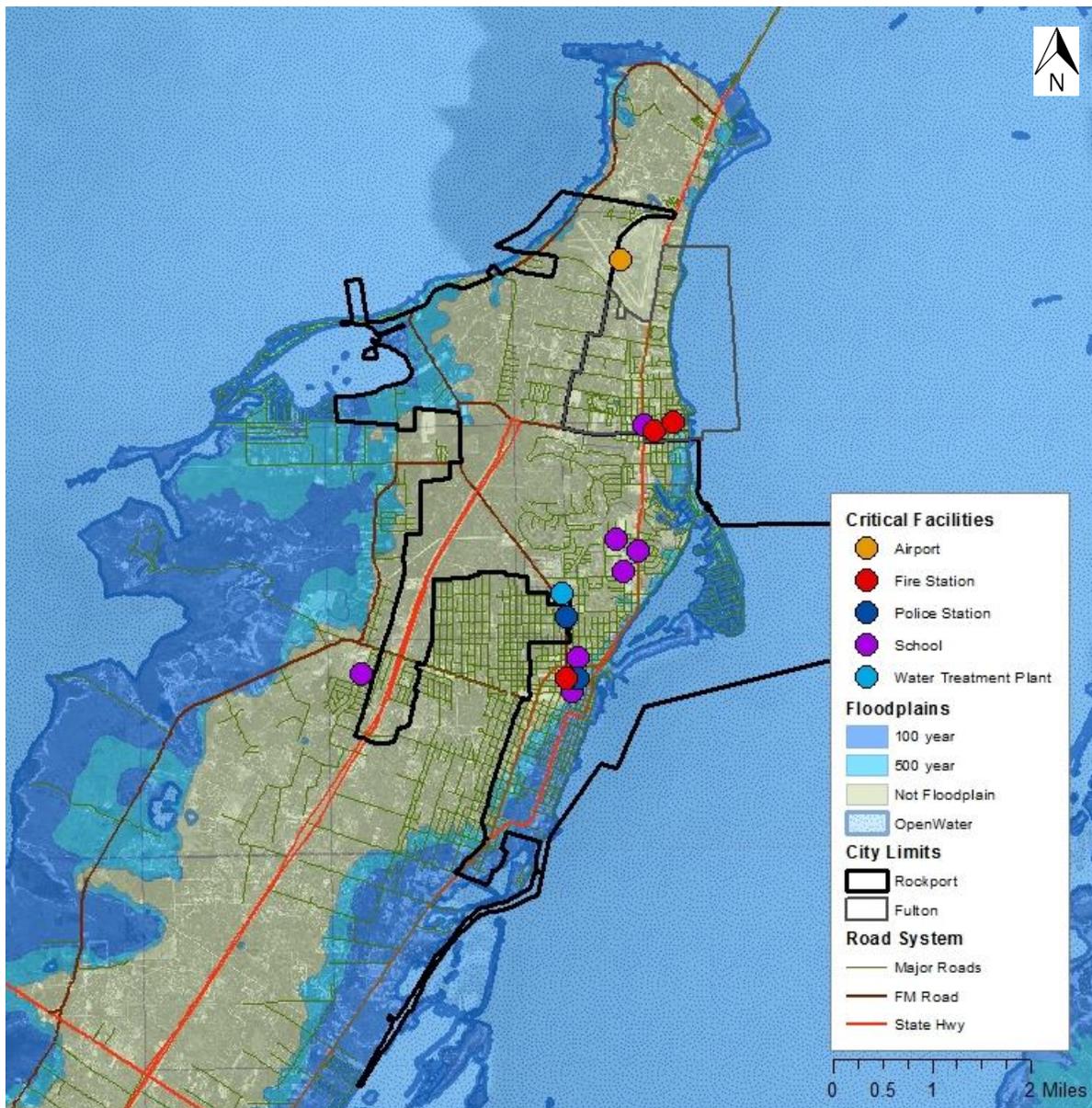
HAZARD VULNERABILITY



FLOODPLAINS

Located on a peninsula, the City of Rockport is surrounded by water on three sides, and sits seven feet above sea level. Map 8.1 shows the 100 and 500 year floodplains, along with the community's critical facilities and roads. Community facilities, such as schools, hospitals, fire, and police stations are critical during times of disasters because they provide shelter and response services. These facilities should be located outside the floodplains whenever possible. None of Rockport's critical facilities are within the floodplains; however, several facilities are in close proximity. Likewise, utility providers, such as electric companies and water treatment plants, should be protected from the floodplain in order to prevent service disruption during disasters.

Map 8.1: Floodplains and Critical Facilities.



Map created using data from: Federal Emergency Management Agency HAZUS; US Census Bureau TIGER Products; USDA-FSA-APFO Aerial Photography Field Office.

Much of the downtown area and Business Route 35 lie in either the 100 year or 500 year floodplain. This includes Key Allegro, an affluent neighborhood that sits on an island between Aransas Bay and Little Bay, which is entirely in the floodplain. Figure 8.1 utilizes data provided by NOAA to show how much of the area population lives in the floodplain (24%). The figure also shows what percentages of two vulnerable segments of the population live in the floodplain. While three quarters of the population do not live in a floodplain, it is important to consider those that do, especially vulnerable populations, when planning for potential flooding events.

Figure 8.2 shows how much land within the floodplain was developed between 1996 and 2010. The figure also identifies whether that land was natural habitat, or used for agriculture prior to being developed. Development in the floodplain should be scrutinized. Natural habitats provide buffers against flooding. Removing those habitats can cause changes to the hydrological cycle that increase the likelihood of flooding events. These changes can increase damages and put people in harm's way.

Figure 8.1: Population Living in the Floodplain in Rockport 2009-2013.

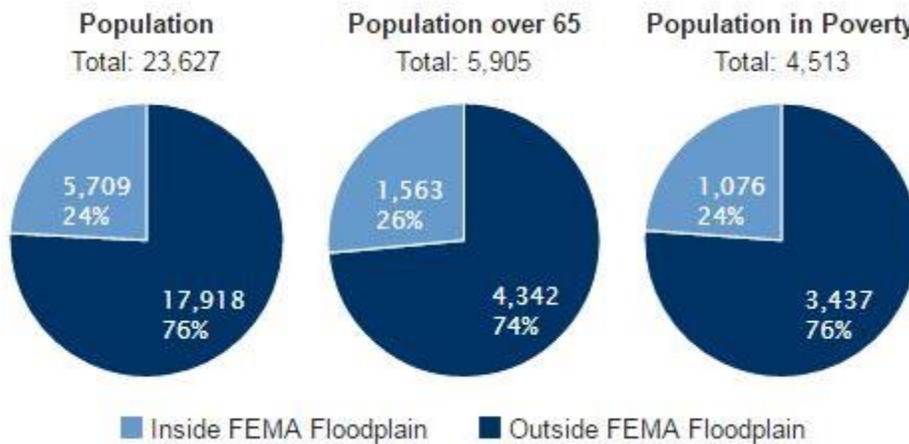
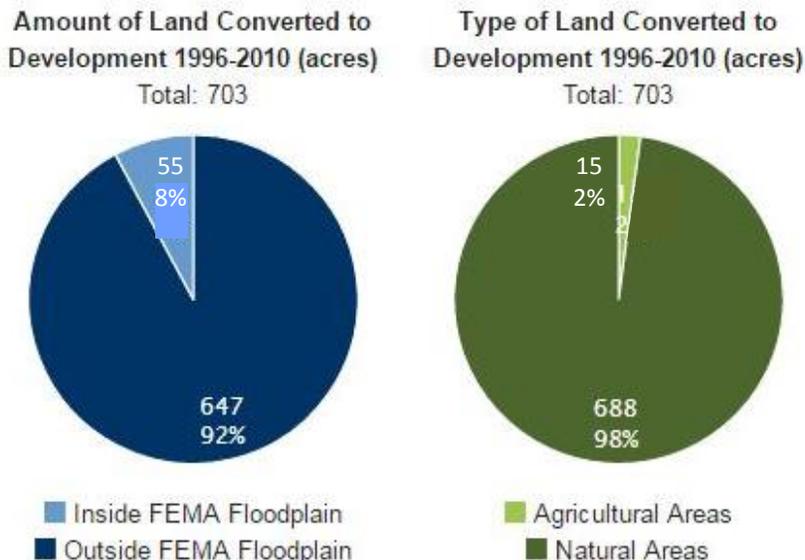


Figure 8.2: Development in the Floodplain in Rockport.

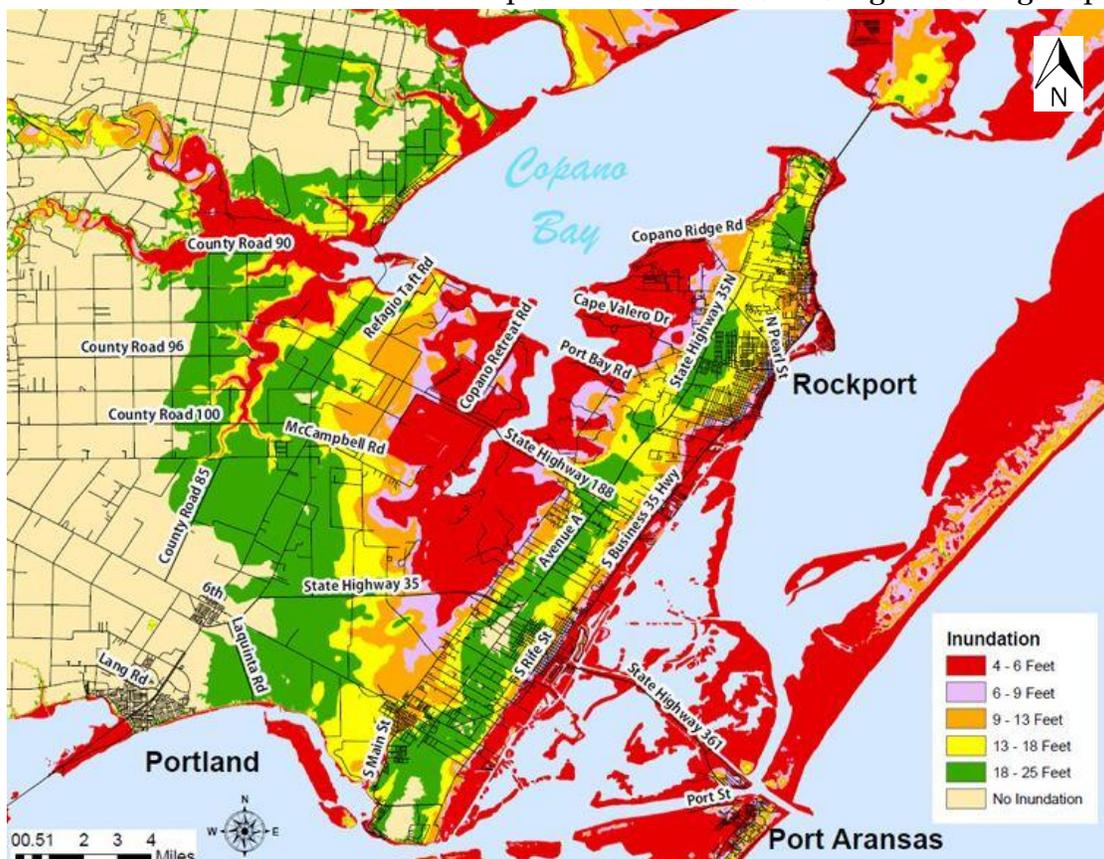


STORM SURGE

Storm surge is often the greatest threat to life and property from a hurricane. “Storm surge is the abnormal rise of water generated by a storm, over and above the astronomical tides. Storm surge should not be confused with storm tide, which is defined as the water level rise due to the combination of storm surge and the astronomical tide”⁽⁷⁾. The degree of destruction brought on by Hurricanes Katrina and Ike was largely due to storm surge. Hurricane Sandy was more destructive than many imagined it would be, because of its storm tide.

Storm surge inundation refers to storm surge heights above ground level. For example, if the National Hurricane Center forecasts a storm surge of 20 feet, that means 20 feet above ground. In 2014, the National Hurricane Center started issuing “Experimental Potential Storm Surge Flooding Maps.” These maps are based on the forecasted track, intensity, and size of a potential tropical storm or hurricane, while trying to account for the inherent uncertainty of a hurricane track. The maps are meant to show a reasonable upper bound of potential flooding, of normally dry land, for particular storms. These maps can be used by a community to help prepare for storms in advance of landfall. Map 8.2 is a simplified map which shows what local areas are likely to be inundated during events with 4 to 6 feet of storm surge, up to 18-25 feet of storm surge.

Map 8.2: Potential Storm Surge Flooding Map.



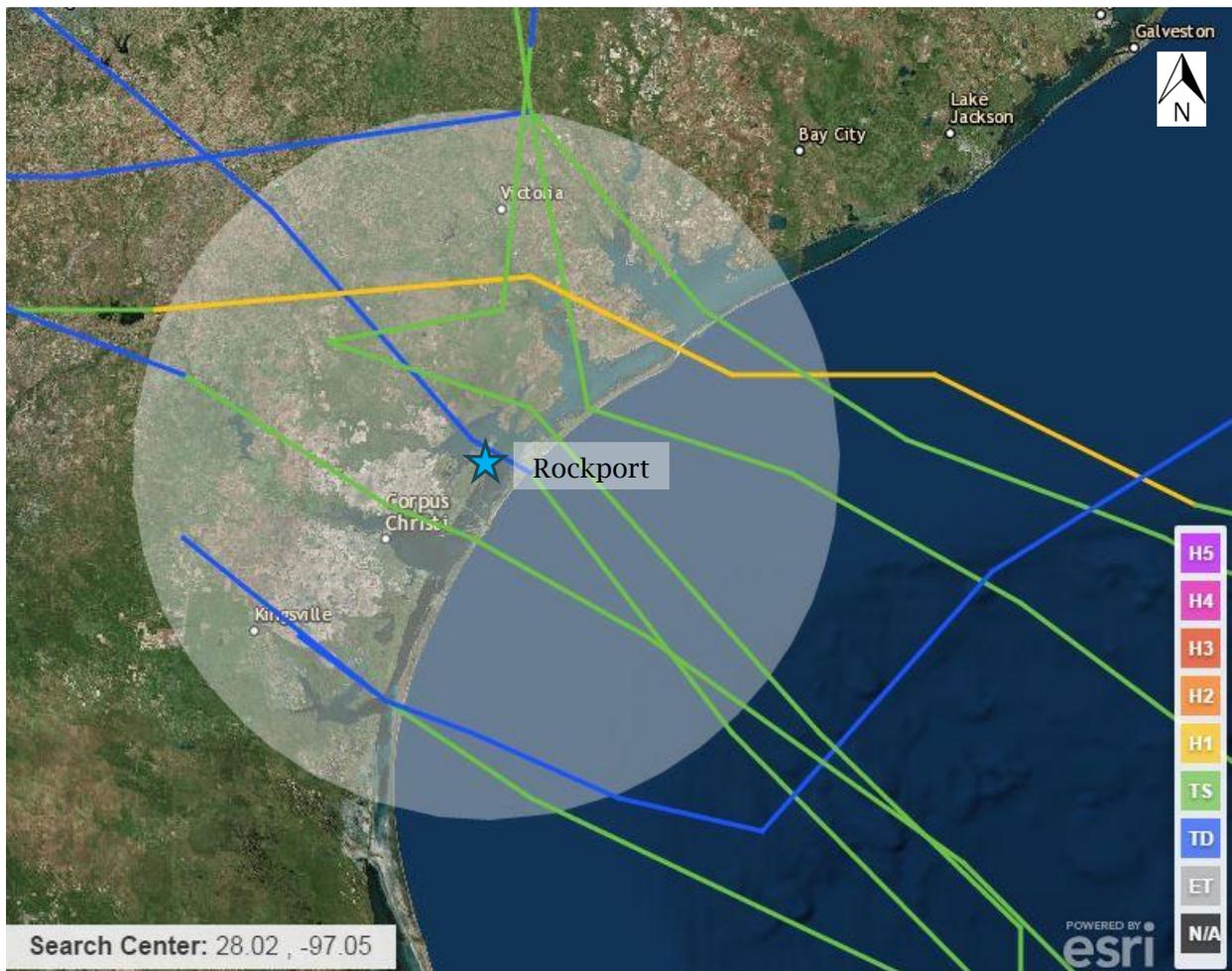
Map from: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/crp/?n=stormsurge>.

⁷ <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/surge>
<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/surge/slosh.php#INUNDATION>

STORM HISTORY

Map 8.3 depicts the storm history, within a 65 nautical mile radius around Rockport, from 1998-2015. The only storm to hit the Live Oak Peninsula in that time period was Tropical Storm Erin in 2007. Erin hit the barrier island of San Jose and turned into a Tropical Depression as its center moved directly over Fulton. Hurricane Claudette (2003) was the strongest storm to hit the area. Claudette is depicted by the yellow line in Map 8.3, which indicates it was a Category 1 storm. Its track took it approximately 30 miles north of Rockport. Tropical Storm Bill (2015) was the most recent storm to hit the area. Bill's track is represented by the green line just south of Claudette's yellow line in Map 8.3.

Map 8.3: NOAA Storm History 1998-2015.



Map from: <http://coast.noaa.gov/hurricanes>.

The only hurricane to make a direct hit on Rockport occurred in 1882—before they began naming storms—and was a Category 1 storm. Hurricane Celia (1970), a Category 3 storm, was the strongest storm to ever occur within a 65 nautical mile radius of Rockport. Celia made landfall in Port Aransas. The storm damage was primarily due to wind, which caused \$453.8 million in damages, 15 deaths, and 466 injuries in south Texas.

Data collected on storms depicted in Map 8.3:

- August 22, 1998, Tropical Storm Charley, 60 mph sustained winds, 11 inches of rain, \$5 million in damages, 12 deaths in Texas
- September 10, 1998, Tropical Storm Frances, 90 mph sustained winds, 17 inches of rain, \$10 million in damages
- August 4, 2002, Tropical Depression Bertha, landfall Griffins Point, 20 mph sustained winds, lasted only 12 hours
- September 7, 2002, Tropical Storm Fay, landfall Port O'Connor, no significant data
- July 15, 2003, Hurricane Claudette, Category 1, landfall Port O'Connor, 75 mph sustained winds, 3-6 feet storm surge, 3-6 inches of rain, \$180 million in damages, 1 death
- August 2007, Tropical Storm Erin, 80 mph sustained winds, minimal damages, 9 deaths in Texas
- July 30, 2011, Tropical Storm Don, landfall Bay City, 30 mph sustained winds, 1-2.5 feet storm surge, 2.56 inches of rain, no deaths or damage reported
- June 2015, Tropical Storm Bill, landfall Port O'Connor, 40 mph sustained winds, 1-1.5 feet storm surge, 2-4 inches of rain

In addition to the Tropical Storm and Hurricane events, Rockport and the Coastal Bend region have witnessed significant heavy rain and flooding events in the past decade. Between May 28 and June 2, 2006, the Rockport airport reported 6.77 inches of rain, causing some downtown shops to be flooded. In addition to the flooding, wind gusts up to 55 mph were recorded and produced damage in Rockport. Between September 17 and 21, 2010, heavy rains caused street flooding and road closures in Aransas, San Patricio, Nueces, and Kleberg Counties. The City of Rockport reported 10.95 inches of rain during this time. Very recently, between May 15 and 16, 2016, the region experienced a significant heavy rain event that produced as much as 15 inches of rainfall in some locations. The rainfall caused widespread flooding, and numerous roads and highways were closed due to the high water. Several hundred homes were flooded in Ingleside and Aransas Pass and water rescues occurred in San Patricio and Nueces counties.

CHAPTER 9

TRANSPORTATION



HIGHWAYS

State Highway 35 is the main highway in the Rockport area. It joins 181 south of Gregory, TX, and leads to Corpus Christi and Interstate Highway 37, which leads to San Antonio, TX. Business 35 starts south of Rockport, in Aransas Pass, and runs to Fulton, just north of Rockport. Loop 70, also known as Church Street, is the main road through downtown Rockport

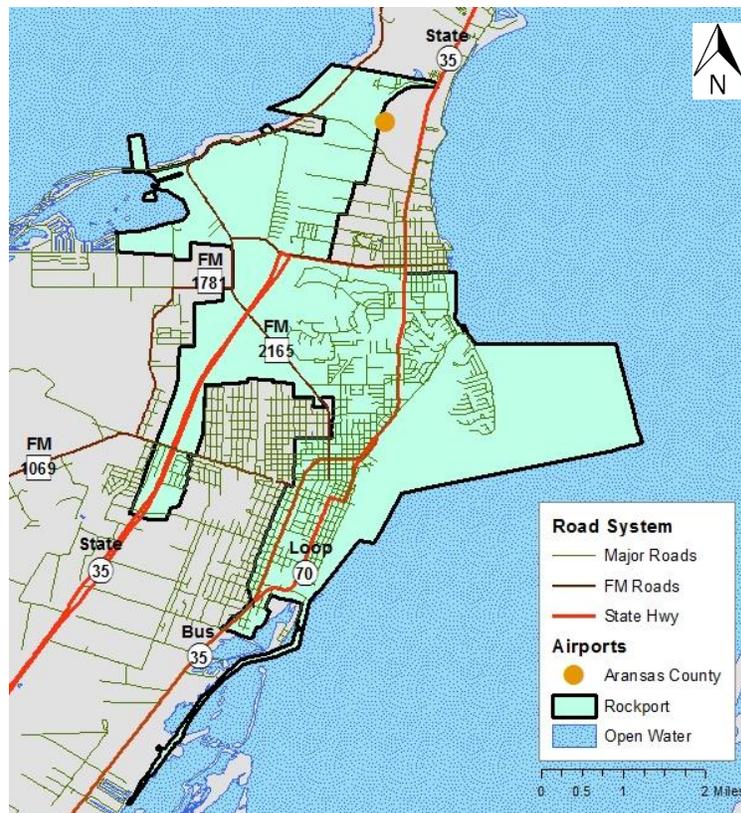
RAILROADS

There is no railroad that runs through the City of Rockport. However, a branch of the Union Pacific freight line goes through Aransas Pass and ends just south of the Rockport city limits.

AIRPORTS

Corpus Christi International Airport is the closest airport that supports major airlines (American, Delta, Southwest, and Continental). The Aransas County Airport is located on the north side of Rockport, and provides general aviation services. According to the Federal Aviation Administration, general aviation is mostly associated with flying clubs, flying training, and agriculture. The Aransas County airport is also utilized by the military, air-taxis, and in emergency situations.

Map 9.1: Transportation.



Map created using data from: US Census Bureau TIGER Products;
Federal Emergency Management Agency HAZUS.

HARBORS & WATERWAYS

Harbors: the City of Rockport has two harbors; Rockport Harbor and Cove Harbor. Each harbor provides a variety of services such as docks, boat slips, fish cleaning stations, restrooms, laundry, mailboxes, and access to land transportation. Rockport Harbor is located downtown, while Cove Harbor is located on the south side of the city.

The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway: is a 1,300-mile man-made canal that extends from Brownsville, Texas, to St. Marks, Florida, along the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf Intercostal Waterway is part of the larger Intracoastal Waterway that continues along the Atlantic seaboard from Key West, Florida, to Boston, Massachusetts. The Texas section of the Gulf Intercostal Waterway is 423 miles long (see Map 9.2). Cargo carried on the waterway reduces congestion on highways and rail lines, and extends the life of those systems. The main products transported on the waterway are crude petroleum, petroleum products, iron and steel, building materials, fertilizers, liquid sulfur, and other bulk products. Commercial fishing fleets can access the Gulf of Mexico via the Gulf Intercostal Waterway. Finally, recreational boating is allowed in the Gulf Intercostal Waterway.

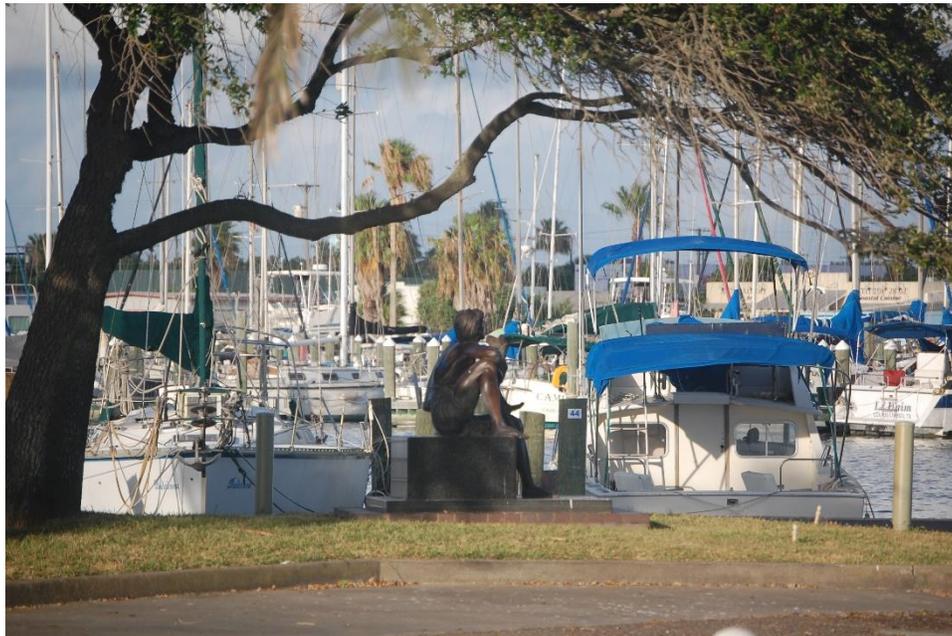
Map 9.2: Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.



Map created from: <http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/library/reports/gov/tpp/giww05.pdf>.

<http://www.acnd.org/facilities/harbors-rates/2-uncategorised/13-rkpt-hbr-rates>
<http://www.acnd.org/facilities/harbors-rates/2-uncategorised/26-cove-harbor-amenities>
<http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/transportation-planning/waterway.html>
<http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/maritime/gulf-intracoastal-waterway.html>
<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/rrg04>

The Aransas County Navigation District: is responsible for maintaining, and improving, public waterways and public waterfront facilities, such as harbors, boat ramps, fishing piers in the county. The Navigation District has five main facilities under its purview: Rockport Harbor, Fulton Harbor, Cove Harbor, Copano Bay Fishing Pier, and the Rockport Beach.



RURAL PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Rural Economic Assistance League (REAL, Inc.): provides 11 counties in south Texas with a variety of services that focus on the elderly and the disabled. The transportation service is available for medical related office visits, day care, shopping, and job interviews; but, riders must call one day in advance to schedule their trips.

Valley Transit: is a full-service bus company which offers services throughout South Central Texas and Northern Mexico.

Jordan & Jordan: is a charter bus company, based in Rockport.

Two taxi companies: (City Cab and Gulf Coast Taxi) provide service to Rockport and other cities in the area.

The limitations of the public transit system have been acknowledged by the City of Rockport. During the development of a Cultural Arts District Plan (2016), survey results and public meetings showed that the members of the community desire improvements to the public transit system⁽⁸⁾.

<http://www.acnd.org/>
<http://www.rockport-fulton.org/Transportation>
<http://www.realinc.org/>
<http://www.realinc.org/transportation.php>
<http://www.valleytransitcompany.com/>

⁸ City of Rockport. (2016). A Cultural Plan for the Rockport Culture Arts District.

CHAPTER 10

COMMUNITY FACILITIES



COASTAL BEND COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

The Coastal Bend Council of Governments (CBCOG) is a volunteer association of local governments and public and private entities. There are 24 Councils of Government in Texas, which were designed to assist local governments deal with problems and planning needs that are better addressed at a regional level. The Coastal Bend Council of Governments provides information and services in eight program divisions: Administration, Area Agency on Aging, Cities and Counties, Criminal Justice, Economic Development, Emergency Management, Solid Waste and Water Quality, and 9-1-1-Network.

The Coastal Bend Council of Governments is made up of 11 counties (Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Live Oak, Nueces, Refugio, and San Patricio), and 32 cities. Map 10.1 shows all of the Texas Council of Governments, and points out the Coastal Bend Council of Governments in the southern tip of the state.

Map 10.1: Texas Association of Regional Councils of Government.



Map from: https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=regions_map.php.

PARKS & RECREATION

The City of Rockport Parks: (see Map 10.2)

Aquatic Park is open year-round. The park contains an 8-lane, heated, 25-yard pool and diving area, a whale shaped zero-depth children's pool with slides and sprays, and a bathhouse. Adjacent to the Aquatic Park is a picnic area with a playground, and two nature trails. The Skate Park is also contained next to this facility.

Skate Park is a 6,000 foot modular park for skateboarders.

Memorial Park is a 100+ acre community park with recreational trails, sporting fields, exercise stations, birding sites and picnic facilities. The park also contains the Rockport Dog Park.

Dog Park is almost two acres of land devoted to off-leash fun for local dogs. It has separate areas for large and small dogs; and provides water, disposal stations, and benches.

Rockport Beach Park offers a pristine shoreline with playgrounds, fishing pier, boat ramp, picnic areas, and a cold water pool. This park is operated by the Aransas County Navigational District.

Other Park Facilities:

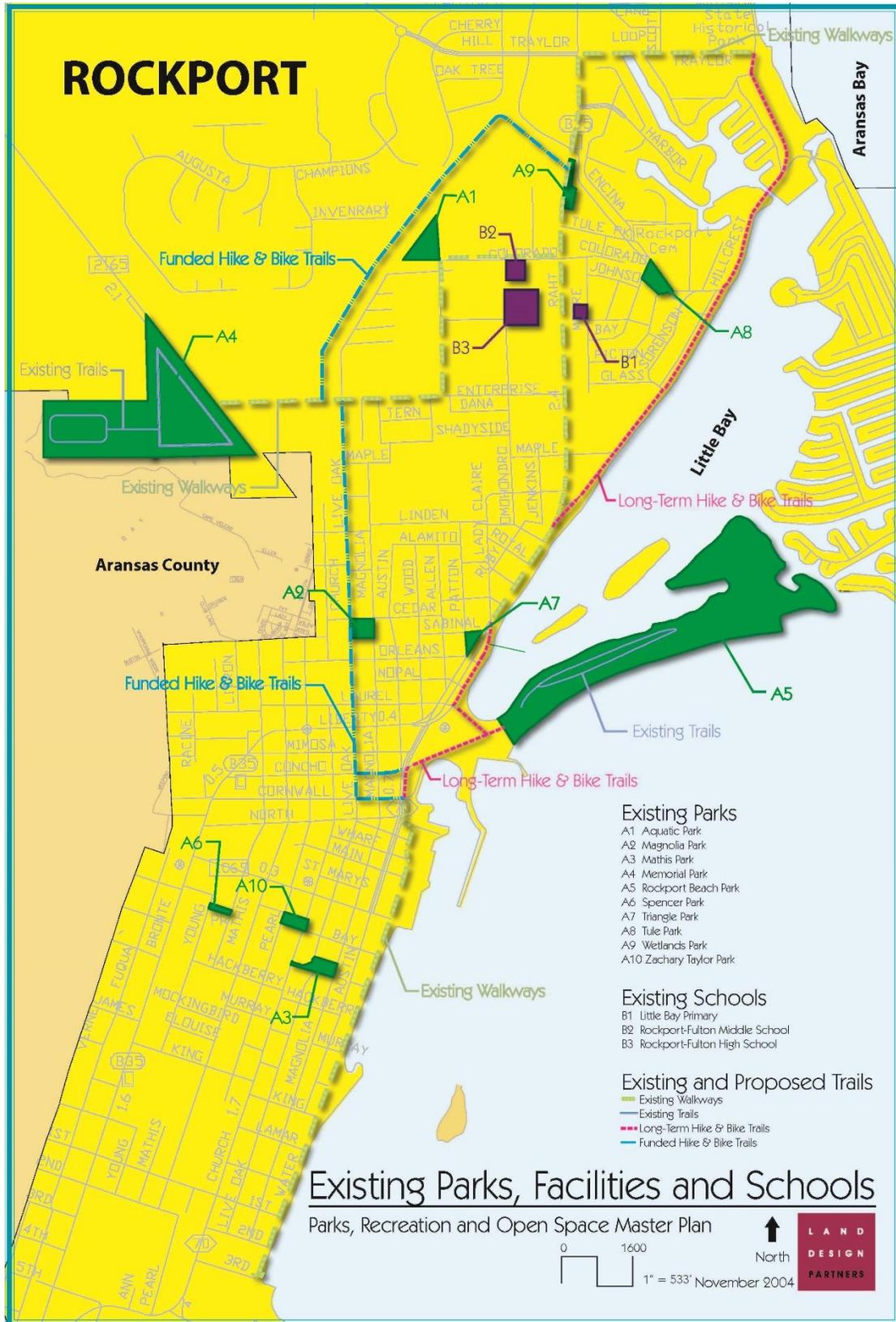
Rockport is continually expanding its' Hiking and Biking Trails (see Map 10.2). There are several neighborhood parks with recreational and picnic facilities; as well as, ornamental and natural resource parks, located throughout the city.

Goose Island State Park, a 321.4 acre island park, is located north of the City of Rockport. Texas Parks and Wildlife maintains the park, and refers to it as "within Rockport." Swimming is not recommended at the park, due to the terrain and concrete bulkheads along the shoreline. However, hiking, camping, fishing, boating, wildlife observation and photography are all encouraged. There are 101 campsites with water and electricity; 25 walk-in tent sites, without electricity; and a group camping area. There are also restroom facilities with showers. The park also has a 1,620-foot long fishing pier, a regular boat launch, a kayak/canoe launch, and a fish cleaning station.

For additional information about recreational activities in, and around Rockport, please see the Aransas Pathways website (aransaspathways.com).



Map 10.2 Rockport Parks.



Map from: <http://www.cityofrockport.com/122/Open-Space-Plans-and-Trails>.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE

The City of Rockport Water Storage and Distribution Department maintains and services over 9000 water connections, over 100 miles of waterlines, three elevated water towers, and two in-ground water tanks. The Wastewater Collection and Treatment Department also maintains and services over 4000 sanitary sewer connections and over 60 miles of sanitary sewer lines. Both departments follow guidelines provided by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and run routine inspections on all systems.

For years, large portions of the state of Texas have suffered off and on from drought. Rockport, like most communities, institutes mandatory restrictions on water usage during droughts in order to conserve water, and reduce demands from shared water sources. The mandatory restrictions included a schedule for watering lawns and landscaping. However, property owners with private water wells, or using gray water for these uses, are exempt from restrictions. Rockport's water comes from the San Patricio Municipal Water District. San Patricio purchases untreated water from the City of Corpus Christi; then treats it, and sells it to the city.

The City of Rockport has a Master Drainage Plan which includes a prioritized list of drainage improvement projects. Funds are allocated to the plan annually. The city received \$2 million in disaster relief funding from hurricanes Ike and Dolly. These funds were dedicated to the completion of two Master Drainage Plan projects which helped to ensure that water is flushed offshore rather than being allowed to stand in developed areas. Any future disaster relief funding will also be allocated towards the completion of the prioritized projects in the Master Drainage Plan.



SCHOOLS & LIBRARIES

The City of Rockport is one of five communities included in the Aransas County Independent School District. The school district is an independent county-wide school system serving a 486 square mile area, and 3,316 students. Other communities in the district are Holiday Beach, Lamar, Fulton, and the northern part of Aransas Pass.

Five schools make up the district: Little Bay Primary School (grades Pre-Kindergarten through Kindergarten), Live Oak 1-3 Learning Center (grades 1-3), Fulton 4-5 Learning Center (grades 4-5), Rockport-Fulton Middle School (grades 6-8), and Rockport-Fulton High School (grades 9-12).

Each school within the district has a library, and all libraries are open during school hours. Aransas County also maintains a Public Library, located in downtown Rockport. The Public Library was established 1956, with the assistance of the Women's Club of Aransas County.

The Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization, founded in August 2001, by an independent group of community, business, and educational leaders. The Education Foundation encourages community support in providing private funds to Aransas County Independent School District staff and students for creative, innovative programs that enhance career and academic education and promote staff excellence.

Sacred Heart is a private, catholic school located in Rockport. It has Montessori classes for 3 to 5 year olds, and traditional classes for Kindergarten to 5th grades.



FIRE & POLICE SERVICES

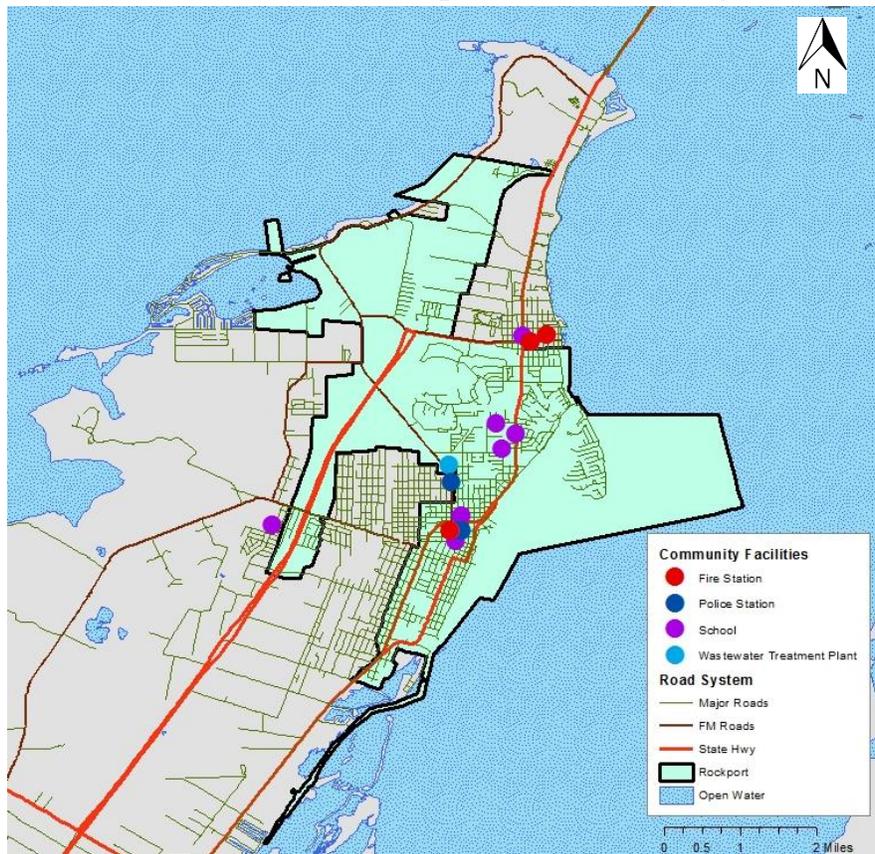
The Rockport Volunteer Fire Department: is a nonprofit organization, independent of the City of Rockport. Regardless, the department receives annual funding through the city's "General Fund." Additional funds are allocated through a monthly surcharge on each utility bill, by Aransas County, and by the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assessment Program. Like other first responders, the Volunteer Fire Department remains on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The department also works with neighboring cities and towns to provide mutual aid when it is needed.

The City of Rockport has adopted the International Fire Code, 2006 edition; as such, the burning of brush, trash, or other rubbish is prohibited within the city limits without the express permission of the Fire Marshall.

The Rockport Police Department: conducts preventative motor patrols, tactical bike patrols, and seasonal water safety patrols. The department has a "Criminal Investigation Division" which reviews and investigates reports of felony and misdemeanor criminal acts; identifies suspects, both adult and juvenile; and prepares cases for prosecution with the U.S., District, County, and City Attorneys' offices. The Criminal Investigation Division also offers support to victims of crimes.

Map. 10.3 identifies the location of key community facilities.

Map 10.3: Community Facilities.



Map created using data from: Federal Emergency Management Agency HAZUS; US Census Bureau TIGER Products.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Regional Medical Services:

Christus Spohn Health System provides medical services throughout the Coastal Bend. The system consists of six hospital campuses and six family health centers; as well as a variety of other services. Christus Spohn does not have any facilities in Rockport; however, a few services are located in nearby Aransas Pass.

Care Regional Medical Center is located in Aransas Pass and provides a variety of emergency to specialty services. It has 75 beds, 80 physicians, and 200 employees.

Rockport Urgent Care is managed by Twin Fountains Medical Center. In addition to urgent care, it offers basic services such as physicals, x-rays, pediatrics, and vaccinations/immunizations.

Allegiance Ambulance provides three vehicles for EMS and 911 calls in Aransas County.

Rockport Medical Services:

Rockport has three facilities that serve as nursing homes, adult day care centers, and rehabilitation units: Gulf Pointe Plaza; Rockport Coastal Care Center Inc.; and Oak Crest Nursing Center.

Four companies provide hospice and home health services: AIM Hospice; Cornerstone Home Health; Harbor Hospice; and Sea Crest Home Health.



EVACUATION PROCEDURES

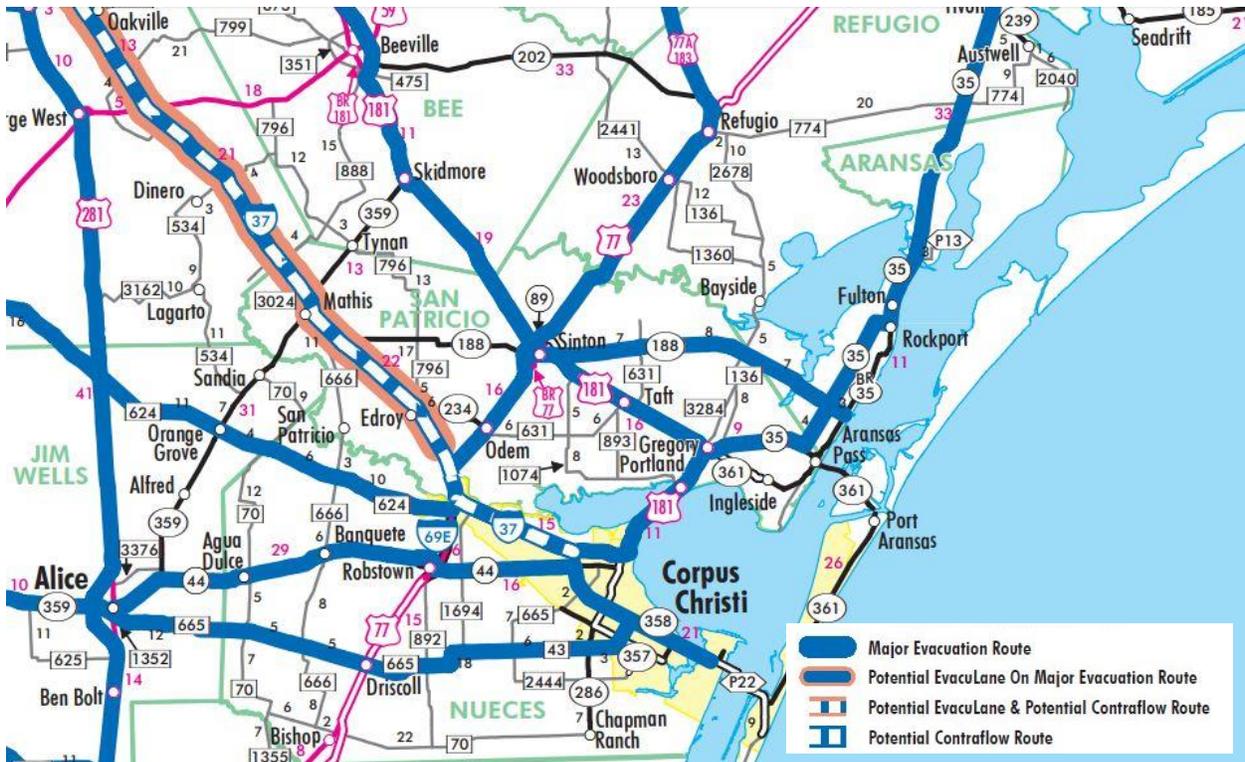
During an emergency, the City of Rockport and Aransas County will implement the “FirstCall Emergency Notification System.” The system enables the rapid distribution of information to the community. The information can be delivered as a short voice message via telephone, a text message via cell phones, or an email. Residents must register with the system in order to receive notifications.

The City of Rockport operates a low-power emergency advisory radio station. The station broadcasts 24 hours a day. In the event of an emergency, the 1610 AM emergency advisory radio station will provide public safety information, advisories, and announcements.

The City of Rockport's website will also report information during tropical storm events. The website is based outside of Texas, allowing it to remain operational regardless of the conditions in Rockport. In the event of a mandatory evacuation, selected city staff will relocate to the Austin area and update the website with information.

Map 10.4 shows the evacuation routes to be utilized in the event of an imminent storm.

Map 10.4: Hurricane Evacuation Routes.

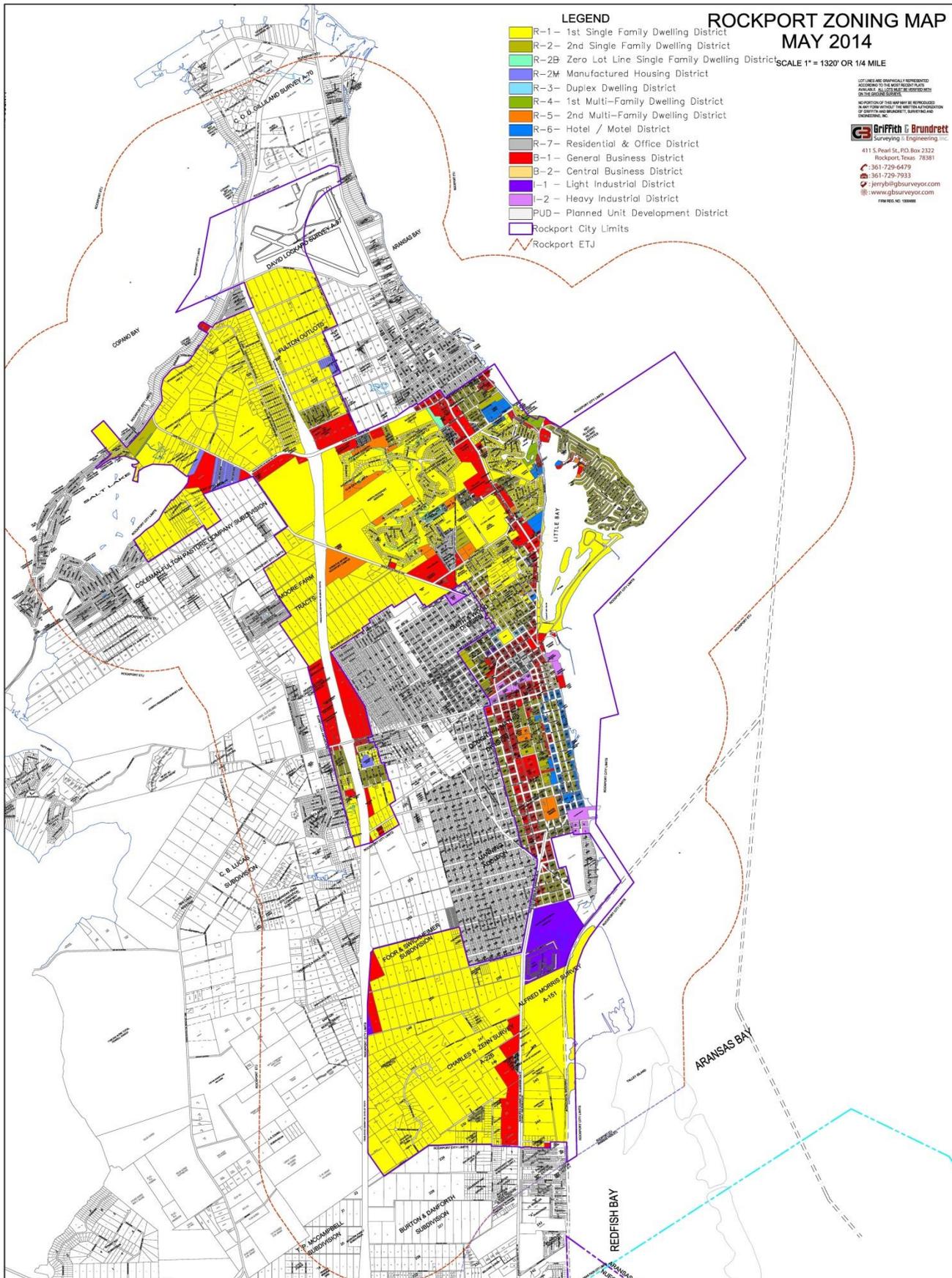


Map from: <http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/trv/evacuation/corpus.pdf>.

CHAPTER 11

LAND USE





APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: Listed Species Observed in Aransas County.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	FEDERAL LISTING	STATE LISTING
AMPHIBIANS			
Black-spotted newt	<i>Notophthalmus meridionalis</i>		Threatened
Sheep frog	<i>Hypopachus variolosus</i>		Threatened
BIRDS			
American Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	Delisted	Threatened
Arctic Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus tundrius</i>	Delisted	
Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	Delisted	
Eskimo Curlew	<i>Numenius borealis</i>	Endangered	Endangered
Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>		
Mountain Plover	<i>Charadrius montanus</i>		
Northern Aplomado Falcon	<i>Falco femoralis septentrionalis</i>	Endangered	Endangered
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Delisted	Threatened
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Threatened	Threatened
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus rufa</i>		
Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>		Threatened
Snowy Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>		
Sooty Tern	<i>Sterna fuscata</i>		Threatened
Sprague's Pipit	<i>Anthus spragueii</i>		
Western Snowy Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i>		
White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>		Threatened
White-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albicaudatus</i>		Threatened
Whooping Crane	<i>Grus americana</i>	Endangered	Endangered
Wood Stork	<i>Mycteria americana</i>		Threatened
FISHES			
American eel	<i>Anquilla rostrata</i>		
Opossum pipefish	<i>Micropis brachyurus</i>		Threatened
Smalltooth sawfish	<i>Pristis pectinata</i>	Endangered	Endangered
MAMMALS			
Aransas short-tailed shrew	<i>Blarina hylophaga plumbea</i>		
Black bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>		Threatened
Jaguarundi	<i>Herpailurus yaquarondi</i>	Endangered	Endangered
Louisiana black bear	<i>Ursus americanus luteolus</i>	Delisted	Threatened
Ocelot	<i>Leopardus pardalis</i>	Endangered	Endangered
Plains spotted skunk	<i>Spilogale putorius interrupta</i>		
Red wolf	<i>Canis rufus</i>	Endangered	Endangered
West Indian manatee	<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	Endangered	Endangered
White-nosed coati	<i>Nasua narica</i>		Threatened

Table created using data from: <http://tpwd.texas.gov/gis/rtest/>.

APPENDIX 1: Listed Species Once Recorded in Aransas County (continued).

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	FEDERAL LISTING	STATE LISTING
REPTILES			
Atlantic hawksbill sea turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	Endangered	Endangered
Green sea turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Threatened	Threatened
Kemp's Ridley sea turtle	<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>	Endangered	Endangered
Leatherback sea turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	Endangered	Endangered
Loggerhead sea turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Threatened	Threatened
Texas diamondback terrapin	<i>Malaclemys terrapin littoralis</i>		
Texas horned lizard	<i>Phrynosoma cornutum</i>		Threatened
Texas scarlet snake	<i>Cemophora coccinea lineri</i>		Threatened
Texas tortoise	<i>Gopherus berlandieri</i>		Threatened
Timber rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>		Threatened
PLANTS			
Awnless bluestem	<i>Bothriochloa exaristata</i>		
Coastal gay-feather	<i>Liatris bracteata</i>		
Elmendorf's onion	<i>Allium elmendorfii</i>		
Indianola beakrush	<i>Rhynchospora indianolensis</i>		
Sand Brazos mint	<i>Brazoria arenaria</i>		
Texas peachbush	<i>Prunus texana</i>		
Tharp's rhododon	<i>Rhododon angulatus</i>		
Threeflower broomweed	<i>Thurovia triflora</i>		
Tree dodder	<i>Cuscuta exaltata</i>		
Velvet spurge	<i>Euphorbia innocua</i>		
Wright's trichocoronis	<i>Trichocoronis wrightii</i> var. <i>wrightii</i>		

Table created using data from: <http://tpwd.texas.gov/gis/rtest/>.

