

Brenham | Washington County  
Economic Development

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**THREE-YEAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**  
October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2028

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# INTRODUCTION

The City of Brenham and Washington County are experiencing real and measurable growth. Positioned between three of the fastest-growing metro areas in Texas, the region is seeing increased interest from businesses, developers, and new residents alike. With this momentum comes a need for thoughtful planning. The catalyst of this plan was the desire to confirm whether the County's targeted industries remain the right fit and to determine what new industries could shape a stronger future. The economic landscape must be ready not only to support the businesses already here, but also to attract industries that will help the community thrive in the decades ahead.

Unlike most Texas cities, Brenham and Washington County bring a distinctive mix of scale, character, and community values to the table. That difference required a strategic plan designed with a unique approach, not a cookie-cutter model. This plan reflects a careful balance of quantitative data and qualitative insights, blending metrics with the perspectives of local stakeholders to create strategies that are practical, measurable, and true to the region's identity.

This Strategic Plan provides a focused, results-driven roadmap to guide Brenham and Washington County's continued growth. While many partners contribute to the region's economic success, this plan emphasizes the activities that fall specifically within the scope and responsibility of Brenham | Washington County Economic Development. It is also recognized that some of these activities are already being carried out by the organization. Those efforts should continue and, where applicable, be more formally structured and measured according to the metrics defined in this plan.

Brenham and Washington County have long taken a deliberate approach to growth... one that values stability, civic pride, and a deep connection to place. That identity is more than cultural; it's a competitive advantage. Employers and residents alike appreciate Brenham and Washington County's clarity of purpose and commitment to doing things the right way. The challenge moving forward is to protect those defining traits while positioning the region for long-term economic opportunity.

This three-year strategy lays out a clear set of priorities and actionable steps that will allow the county to grow competitively without compromising the quality of life that makes Brenham and Washington County truly distinctive. In addition to qualitative insights offered by stakeholders, this strategy is grounded in an analysis of regional and state-level data, benchmarking against peer communities, and alignment with the 2025-2029 Texas Economic Development Strategic Plan. It examines key factors such as labor force trends, site readiness, industry targets, infrastructure capacity, and marketing positioning to provide a comprehensive view of the region's current status and future potential.

The core of the plan is organized around five strategic priority areas:

1. Business Retention and Expansion
2. Targeted Business Recruitment
3. Marketing and Promotion
4. Workforce and Talent Development
5. Entrepreneurship and Innovation



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The economic trajectory of the City of Brenham and Washington County will be shaped by intentional decisions and a commitment to proven strategies. As the county navigates challenges related to site availability, infrastructure, workforce and housing, this plan serves as a practical framework for driving progress. Grounded in economic development best practices, it provides the guidance and structure needed to help the community pursue prosperity with clarity and confidence.

The strategies presented in this document are relevant to the current realities, resources and potential of the City of Brenham and Washington County. It builds on existing collaboration among public, private, and institutional partners... partnerships that must remain strong as the region moves forward. Rather than a checklist or aspirational vision, this is a practical, action-oriented roadmap to guide activities, investments, and decisions from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2028.

At the core of the plan are five strategic priority areas identified through best practices, stakeholder input and reinforced by data analysis. The first is **Business Retention and Expansion**, focused on strengthening relationships with existing employers and supporting their continued growth. The second is **Targeted Business Recruitment**, which aims to attract high-potential industries that align with the region's assets and long-term goals. A third area, **Marketing and Promotion**, includes efforts to elevate the visibility of the City of Brenham and Washington County among site selectors, business leaders, and other key audiences. **Workforce and Talent Development** serves as the fourth priority area, ensuring the region can supply the skilled labor needed to support current employers and future investment. Rounding out the framework is **Entrepreneurship and Innovation**, which emphasizes support for startups and small businesses, helping to cultivate a more dynamic, diverse, and resilient local economy.

Each of these areas includes a practical set of measurable actions that can be implemented, tracked, and refined over time. Together, they form a focused and intentional framework to guide economic growth in a way that aligns with the county's strengths and aspirations.

## Priority One: Business Retention and Expansion

Supporting existing businesses is one of the most effective and cost-efficient strategies for economic development. This priority centers on building strong relationships with local employers, proactively addressing challenges, and creating a supportive environment for long-term growth. Activities such as structured business visits, executive engagement, centralized resource development, and roundtables are aligned with national best practices in Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) and will be detailed further in the plan.

## Priority Two: Targeted Business Recruitment

Attracting the right companies to Brenham and Washington County requires a strategic approach inspired by and aligned with the Greater Brazos Partnership plan. This priority centers on identifying high-potential industry sectors that reflect both the region's collective strategy and Brenham's unique strengths in infrastructure, workforce, and logistics. A focused business attraction plan will guide recruitment efforts and ensure consistency with broader regional goals, supported by customized, professional marketing materials. Outreach will be carried out through targeted lead generation, site selector engagement, and curated familiarization tours (both in-person and virtual) to showcase the county's competitive assets to drive meaningful investment.

## Priority Three: Marketing and Promotion

Raising the visibility of Brenham and Washington County as a business destination requires clear, consistent messaging across digital, print, and in-person channels. This priority emphasizes the development of a unified marketing strategy, an optimized web presence, and professional marketing assets that reflect the county's strengths. It also includes expanded outreach through media and social platforms, while empowering local partners to serve as ambassadors. Together, these efforts will sharpen the region's voice, tell its story more effectively, and elevate its presence with site selectors, business leaders, and key stakeholders.

## Priority Four: Workforce and Talent Development

A skilled, adaptable workforce is essential to long-term economic success. This priority centers on aligning education and training efforts with employer needs,





strengthening partnerships with schools and training providers, and making workforce resources more accessible. Key initiatives include regularly assessing talent gaps, enhancing career and technical education pathways, promoting existing programs, and deepening industry-education collaboration. At the same time, marketing efforts will aim to attract and retain skilled talent by highlighting the county's quality of life and career opportunities.

### **Priority Five: Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

Fostering entrepreneurship and innovation will strengthen the local economy by supporting homegrown business growth, diversifying revenue sources, and positioning the region as a place where ideas and startups can thrive. Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can expand its impact by complementing existing SBDC services, filling gaps through new resources, visibility tools, and programming. Key efforts include developing a centralized small business resource hub, launching a business acceleration program for growth-stage and underserved entrepreneurs, encouraging co-working and innovation spaces, hosting high-visibility pitch events and showcases, and expanding access to capital through localized microgrant or loan programs. Together, these initiatives aim to build a more resilient and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### **Expected Results**

If a single economic development professional, supported by administrative resources and strong regional partners, is executing the five identified priority areas (Business Retention and Expansion, Targeted Business Recruitment, Marketing and Promotion, Workforce and Talent Development, and Entrepreneurship and Innovation), measurable progress can be achieved over the next three years.

In **Business Retention and Expansion (BRE)**, the team member could complete 20 to 25 visits with local employers

yearly, tracking insights in the current EDOiQ CRM system and identifying 5 to 6 priority challenges to address. These efforts could help retain or expand 3 to 5 businesses and strengthen long-term employer relationships.

For **Targeted Business Recruitment**, the city and county could build and begin executing a focused recruitment strategy aimed at 3 to 4 high-potential industry sectors. Yearly outreach efforts could include 30 to 40 contacts with prospects, site selectors, or partners, with the potential to land 1 to 2 significant project wins and develop a pipeline of interest for future years.

**Marketing and Promotion** efforts could include 1 to 2 major digital campaigns annually, refreshed marketing collateral, and more consistent storytelling across web, print, and social media. A key milestone would be the launch of a new, dynamic website that serves as a 24/7 marketing platform... equipped to tell the region's story, feature available sites, host data dashboards, and drive lead generation. This enhanced digital presence could improve SEO performance, elevate brand perception, and increase engagement with key audiences nationwide.

Within **Workforce and Talent Development**, the team member should continue to facilitate annual employer roundtables or surveys, coordinate with partners to support new or enhanced career pathways, and collaborate on efforts to promote the region's workforce advantages. As being done currently, continue to promote opportunities online at [www.washcotxjobs.com](http://www.washcotxjobs.com). Over three years, these efforts and partnerships could help connect 50 to 75 residents with new training or job placement opportunities.

In **Entrepreneurship and Innovation**, up to 5 startups or small business expansions could be supported yearly through events, curated resources, and access to capital or mentorship. A localized resource hub could reach hundreds of users annually, while pitch nights and showcases could help build momentum and visibility for local ventures.





# **STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## BRENHAM | WASHINGTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This internal analysis evaluates the organizational readiness of Brenham | Washington County Economic Development. It considers how current tools, systems, and staffing are supporting progress, and where additional improvements could strengthen project delivery, stakeholder alignment, and long-term capacity. The SWOT framework provides a clear structure for understanding internal strengths and weaknesses alongside external opportunities and threats. In this case, it draws on stakeholder feedback, data review, and benchmarking against peer organizations to assess how the team is positioned to deliver on its mission.

The following bullets highlight key organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, offering a focused view of the dynamics that shape Brenham | Washington County Economic Development's ability to succeed.

### Strengths

- » Brenham | Washington County Economic Development is more communicative than in years past. Increased transparency has helped rebuild trust and strengthen community confidence, creating a stronger foundation for collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and long-term support for key initiatives.
- » Experienced leadership with strong local support and networks. Long-standing trust among partners supports collaboration and quick problem-solving.
- » New staff have added technical expertise and private-sector experience, especially in data analysis and project tracking.
- » Regional research support from Greater Brazos Partnership helps extend local capacity without requiring new hires.
- » Dedicated incentive funds in City and County budgets support flexibility and responsiveness.
- » Reputation for consistency and professionalism with business decision makers and site consultants provides a competitive advantage.

### Weaknesses

- » Limited team capacity stretches internal resources across core functions like business retention, recruitment, marketing, and compliance... diluting focus, slowing strategic progress, and making it harder to pursue new opportunities or respond quickly to emerging needs.
- » Current marketing efforts lack the storytelling depth and creative execution needed to fully capture and communicate the unique strengths of the City of Brenham and Washington County. Compelling copy, smart design, video testimonials, and interactive maps can bring the community's story to life... engaging target audiences and elevating perception.

### Opportunities

- » Continue to provide an annual update, delivered as a presentation and as a formal report on the new Brenham | Washington County economic development website. This will enhance transparency, highlight measurable progress, and reinforce the community's commitment to sustained implementation and accountability.
- » Partnering more formally with Blinn, SBDC, and Greater Brazos Partnership can fill capacity gaps in workforce training, small business support, and grant development.
- » Recruit a network of local business leaders to act as ambassadors for the region. These champions could assist with business attraction efforts, provide peer input on retention challenges, and serve as credible voices in marketing materials or familiarization tours.
- » Expand the current, internal performance dashboard to regularly track KPIs across all five priority areas, helping staff focus efforts, demonstrate accountability, and support data-informed decision-making for future initiatives.



- » Develop a professional development program for the economic development team, including certifications, site selector engagement, and best practice exchanges with peer communities to stay current and increase team capacity.
- » Strengthen collaboration with utility partners and real estate professionals by formalizing their role in marketing, recruitment, and BRE efforts, ensuring their insights are regularly integrated into strategy and execution.

## Threats

- » Competing communities are increasing staff and marketing budgets, which could leave the City of Brenham and Washington County under-resourced in a fast-moving market.
- » Public skepticism toward incentives and development decisions can surface if transparency is not consistently reinforced. In Brenham and Washington County, incentive discussions and votes take place in open sessions with press present, and all agreements are filed in accordance with state requirements. Even with these safeguards, clear communication remains essential. Explaining how projects are evaluated, how incentives are awarded, and what the long-term community benefits will be helps ensure residents see the process as both fair and effective.
- » In a tight labor market, workforce development programs may struggle to keep pace with employer needs, especially if training resources or partner alignment are limited. Gaps in coordination could undermine talent pipelines and delay business expansion.
- » Entrepreneurship and small business efforts could stall without sufficient local champions or funding tools in place. If partners defer to one another without a lead convener, promising ventures may go unsupported, reducing overall business dynamism.



The background image is a high-angle, aerial photograph of a complex highway interchange. The interchange features several levels of elevated roads and ramps, with a significant amount of traffic visible. In the distance, a dense urban area with numerous buildings, including industrial and commercial structures, stretches across the horizon under a clear sky.

# TARGET INDUSTRIES

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## ADVANCED FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING

### Strategic Rationale

Advanced food and beverage processing is a well-established industry in the City of Brenham and Washington County and represents one of the most dependable and culturally-aligned targets for future growth. It builds upon the community's proven track record of success in the sector while offering a path to incremental expansion that supports infrastructure investments, skilled employment, and regional agriculture.

Blue Bell Creameries and Del Sol Foods stand as long-term examples of how food production can thrive in the City of Brenham and Washington County, supporting families, reinforcing local identity, and operating in a way that respects the community's expectations for quality and stability. These companies offer more than economic value. They provide a model of how industry and community can grow together.



Looking ahead, national trends point toward smaller, more agile processing facilities that prioritize regional logistics, food safety, and product innovation. The City of Brenham and Washington County's location, infrastructure, and workforce put it in a strong position to attract the next generation of companies in this evolving sector.

### Industry Outlook

Food and beverage processing is shifting toward regionalization, traceability, and automation. These trends are creating opportunities for mid-sized communities with the ability to support specialized production and cold-chain logistics. Key factors driving the sector include:

- » Supply chain re-shoring: Companies are bringing operations closer to domestic markets to reduce delays and ensure resilience. Texas has been a major beneficiary of this shift.
- » Growth of mid-sized brands: Emerging food and beverage companies are seeking expansion sites outside major metros, where costs are lower and logistics remain strong.
- » Rising demand for clean-label and specialty foods: Consumers increasingly want minimally processed, health-oriented products. This has fueled growth in companies seeking smaller facilities with high food safety standards.
- » Cold-chain investment: National cold storage capacity has expanded significantly since 2021, reflecting the growing need for perishable logistics tied to regional production hubs.
- » Technology integration: Food manufacturers are investing in automation and digital controls, requiring more skilled labor and reducing reliance on high-volume, low-skill operations.

### Competitive Position

The City of Brenham and Washington County offers a highly competitive environment for food and beverage processing based on several key advantages:

- » Proven operational success: Nationally recognized employers like Blue Bell and Del Sol Foods demonstrate that large-scale food production can operate efficiently and responsibly in the City of Brenham and Washington County.
- » Existing cold-chain infrastructure: The community has refrigerated warehousing, logistics providers, and utility systems suited to food-grade operations, shortening ramp-up times for new employers.
- » Available industrial sites: Multiple shovel-ready properties are in development, including sites with potential rail access. These locations are being prepared to support advanced manufacturing with key infrastructure such as water, gas, and broadband utilities.
- » Workforce and training assets: Blinn College and Brenham ISD offer training in logistics, process technology, and industrial maintenance. Local employers benefit from a labor pool accustomed to quality standards and shift-based operations.
- » Market access: With close proximity to Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas, companies can serve over 10 million consumers while avoiding urban congestion, permitting delays, and high land costs.



- » Utility capacity: Needed and expected water and wastewater upgrades can ensure long-term availability for process-intensive operations. This will position the City of Brenham and Washington County ahead of many peer communities struggling with system constraints.
- » Cultural fit: Food manufacturers, especially those that are privately held or family-owned, value consistency, trust, and shared values. The City of Brenham and Washington County provides an environment where those expectations are met.

## Conclusion

Advanced food and beverage processing is a practical, proven, and high-fit industry. As the sector evolves, the community's longstanding reputation, available infrastructure, and commitment to workforce readiness make it a preferred location for companies that want to grow responsibly and stay for the long term.

## PRECISION METAL AND EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURING

### Strategic Rationale

Precision metal and equipment manufacturing is a natural extension of Washington County's industrial base. It complements existing businesses, leverages the region's skilled workforce, and offers scalable growth aligned with community values that emphasize steady, long-term investment.

This sector forms the backbone of American manufacturing, supporting industries such as energy, construction, agriculture, and logistics. These industries are all deeply rooted in Texas. These businesses typically invest significantly in equipment, value workforce expertise, and seek communities that provide stability, robust infrastructure, and room for expansion. Washington County meets these criteria.

Current employers in the region, including oilfield service providers, machine shops, and Bencor's circuit-board operation, demonstrate that advanced fabrication, precision assembly, and custom equipment work can thrive here. With strategic site development underway and a growing focus on workforce training, Brenham is well positioned to attract additional investment in this critical industry.

### Industry Outlook

Precision metal manufacturing is experiencing growth, driven by several key trends:

- » Reshoring of manufacturing: Companies are bringing operations back to the U.S. to mitigate supply chain



disruptions, increasing demand for domestic precision manufacturing facilities.

- » Technological advancements: Adoption of automation, robotics, and advanced CNC machines is enhancing production efficiency and precision, requiring a more skilled workforce.
- » Growth in key sectors: Industries such as aerospace, defense, and renewable energy are expanding, driving demand for precision metal components and equipment.
- » Emphasis on quality and customization: There is a growing need for high-quality, customized metal products, favoring manufacturers capable of small-batch, specialized production.

### Competitive Position

Washington County offers several advantages that make it a compelling location for metal and equipment manufacturers seeking expansion or relocation:

- » Established local capabilities: A network of small and mid-sized machine shops and service firms already exists in the county. These firms offer contract machining, welding, fabrication, and electronics assembly. This creates a foundation for supplier networks and contract manufacturing relationships.
- » Skilled workforce pipeline: With programs in industrial technology, welding, and mechatronics, Blinn College provides a direct path for developing the advanced skills required in modern fabrication environments. The region's emphasis on hands-on training aligns well with industry expectations.
- » Industrial site readiness: Pad-ready acreage with utility access is under active development. This is particularly attractive for firms shipping heavy or oversized goods.
- » Strategic logistics position: Located between Houston and Austin and served by U.S. 290 and State Highway 36, Brenham offers efficient access to ports, energy corridors, and OEMs across the state. The region is well suited for firms serving multiple metro markets without the regulatory friction of urban industrial zones.
- » Reliable power and infrastructure: Metal and equipment



manufacturing often relies on high electric loads and gas service. Brenham benefits from the support of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative and ongoing water and wastewater upgrades, ensuring that growth can occur without service disruptions.

- » Cultural alignment: Equipment and metalworking companies tend to value straightforward permitting, long-standing community relationships, and a skilled workforce that takes pride in quality work. These are areas where the City of Brenham and Washington County excel.

## Conclusion

Precision metal and equipment manufacturing fits Washington County in both scale and spirit. It rewards the kind of reliability, technical skill, and work ethic that already define the region's economy. As the industry continues to modernize, companies will seek out communities that can supply talent, sites, and long-term operational certainty. Brenham and Washington County's position is clear: it offers a stable base, room to grow, and a workforce built for precision. With targeted infrastructure and continued investment in technical education, the region is poised to welcome new employers that strengthen what the community already does well.

## BIOMEDICAL SUPPLIES AND PACKAGING

### Strategic Rationale

Biomedical supplies and packaging offers Washington County a pathway into a durable, high-value segment of the manufacturing economy. It is an industry that values operational cleanliness, workforce precision, and long-term facility investment. These attributes align well with the community's infrastructure, training systems, and development philosophy.



While the broader biomedical field often brings to mind research labs and hospitals, the packaging and supply side is fundamentally a manufacturing operation. It includes the production of sterile wraps, tubing, diagnostic containers, surgical kits, PPE, and medical-grade plastics. These are high-margin, regulated products consumed in volume by health systems across the country.

Washington County already supports advanced manufacturing in electronics, food-grade environments, and custom fabrication. These sectors share important overlaps with biomedical production: attention to cleanliness, repeatable processes, and supply chain reliability. With rising demand and increasing interest in near-shore facilities, the county has a clear opportunity to support the manufacturing side of healthcare in a way that matches its scale and capabilities.

### Industry Outlook

The biomedical supplies and packaging industry has seen sustained growth driven by demographic trends, expanded healthcare spending, and regulatory shifts that favor traceability and domestic sourcing. Key factors shaping the sector include:

- » Post-COVID supply chain reconfiguration: Health systems and suppliers are shifting production back to the U.S. after pandemic-era disruptions exposed risks in overseas sourcing.
- » Growth in outpatient and home healthcare: More procedures are taking place outside hospitals, increasing demand for single-use, pre-packaged, sterile supplies that can be shipped directly to providers and patients.
- » Emphasis on automation and clean environments: Modern facilities rely on automated systems for inspection, sealing, and traceability, creating demand for technicians, maintenance personnel, and quality control professionals.
- » Regulatory stability: Compliance with FDA and ISO standards encourages long-term investment in purpose-built facilities and stable communities with predictable permitting.
- » Texas is becoming increasingly competitive in attracting medical manufacturing, especially along the I-35 and I-45 corridors. Smaller communities with reliable infrastructure, a capable workforce, and proximity to regional distribution centers are seeing new investment. Many of these firms are seeking to decentralize while maintaining strict GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) compliance.



## Competitive Position

Washington County is well positioned to attract biomedical supplies and packaging firms based on several competitive advantages:

- » Proximity to major medical hubs: Located roughly 100 miles from the Texas Medical Center, the world's largest concentration of healthcare institutions, Brenham offers strategic access without the real estate costs and regulatory congestion of urban areas.
- » Clean-site industrial potential: Pad-ready sites can be configured to meet ISO-class cleanroom and food-grade standards. Utilities and high-speed fiber enhance site appeal for regulated manufacturers.
- » Workforce with transferable skills: The City of Brenham and Washington County's workforce includes food production operators, circuit-board assemblers, and logistics staff experienced in GMP and traceability protocols. Programs at Blinn College can be tailored to meet FDA and ISO training needs, especially in quality assurance and mechatronics.
- » Low seismic and climate risk: Compared to Gulf Coast counties or California, Brenham offers low exposure to hurricanes, earthquakes, and regulatory volatility. These conditions are attractive to insurers and compliance officers.
- » Cultural alignment: Biomedical manufacturing brings clean, technical jobs with minimal traffic or land use impacts. Firms in this sector tend to be privately held, quality-focused, and operationally conservative. These traits align well with local expectations.
- » Infrastructure capacity and readiness: Water and wastewater upgrades are underway, and the community benefits from stable electric service. These utilities support water-intensive processes such as sterilization, rinsing, and cooling.

## Conclusion

Biomedical supplies and packaging presents Washington County with a strategic opportunity to grow its industrial base without compromising its identity. The industry values the very strengths this community offers: stability, quality, and long-term thinking. As healthcare continues to evolve, Washington County is prepared to offer a reliable home for companies that make the products patients and providers count on every day.

## AG-TECH AND ANIMAL HEALTH

### Strategic Rationale

Ag-tech and animal health represent a future-focused sector that fits naturally within Washington County's agricultural roots. Rather than reshaping the local economy, this target builds on existing land uses, cultural identity, and practical strengths. It offers a path for Washington County to support innovation in livestock care, precision agriculture, and ag-manufacturing without straining infrastructure or disrupting the character of the community.

These industries are not centered on high-visibility campuses or large urban payrolls. Instead, they focus on applied science, equipment reliability, and measurable improvements in how farmers and ranchers produce food and care for animals. Most of the companies in this space are small to mid-sized, led by technical founders or rural entrepreneurs. They are seeking testbeds, modest-scale manufacturing sites, and access to real-world users. Washington County offers all three.

This is a long-term strategy and should be approached with realistic expectations. Firms in ag-tech and animal health are often capital-efficient but slow to scale. Recruitment tends to happen through relationships rather than broad marketing campaigns. Still, when the right company finds the right setting, the return is steady, values-aligned, and enduring.

### Industry Outlook

The agriculture and veterinary sectors are undergoing rapid transformation as technology continues to change how land and livestock are managed. Several national trends reinforce the strength of this target:

- » Precision agriculture as the new standard: Producers now expect tools for soil sensors, yield mapping, and remote irrigation systems. These technologies require testing environments on real farms to refine and validate their effectiveness.
- » Growth in veterinary diagnostics and pharmaceuticals: Smaller firms using lean models and contract manufacturing are driving innovation in this space. They need clean sites, utility-ready facilities, and trusted logistics, but do not require dense urban centers.
- » Rising investment in livestock and pet health: With global protein demand increasing, producers are focused on solutions related to genetics, nutrition, and disease management.
- » Public and private funding growth: Investment, particularly from land-grant universities such as Texas A&M, continues to rise in this sector. This supports



commercialization efforts and helps firms scale faster.

- » These trends favor communities that offer land access, workforce stability, and institutional proximity. Washington County is well-positioned across all three factors.

## Competitive Position

The region brings together multiple assets that strengthen its case as a destination for ag-tech and animal health operations:

- » Proximity to Texas A&M and the RELLIS Campus: Located less than 50 miles away from one of the world's leading institutions in veterinary medicine and agricultural research, Brenham provides access to institutional support without the costs and congestion of urban environments.
- » Agricultural landscape and ranching infrastructure: The county's farms and ranches serve as real-world testing environments for precision equipment, diagnostics, and feed technologies.
- » Workforce and training alignment: Blinn College offers programs in welding, electrical systems, and industrial maintenance that match the skill needs of ag-tech and light manufacturing firms.
- » Right-sized industrial land and utilities: Washington County offers 10 to 30-acre build-ready sites equipped with broadband, water, and gas service. These are well suited for companies in this sector, which rarely need massive campuses
- » Cultural alignment with founders and operators: Many entrepreneurs in this field have backgrounds in farming or veterinary sciences. They tend to choose communities that understand land stewardship and production cycles, which makes Brenham a natural fit.
- » Supportive ecosystem for early-stage firms: Some companies may require flexible space or shared services in the early stages. Local organizations such as the SBDC and Brazos Valley EDC can provide valuable support without placing demands on local budgets or staffing.

## Conclusion

Ag-tech and animal health offer Washington County a pathway to grow an innovative and resilient sector that is deeply aligned with the region's values and economy. This opportunity is not likely to bring overnight transformation, but it does bring steady, meaningful gains. With the right partnerships, sites, and support, Washington County can become a home for companies that improve the future of food and animal care while respecting the pace and integrity of rural life.

## VALUE-ADD WOOD PRODUCTS AND MODULAR HOUSING COMPONENTS

### Strategic Rationale

Value-add wood products and modular housing components represent a practical and community-aligned target industry for Washington County. These sectors directly address one of the region's most pressing challenges: the need for attainable, workforce-oriented housing for young professionals, families, and essential employees. By supporting the production of materials that enable faster, more affordable home construction, the county can respond to its housing shortage while also generating steady jobs, taxable value, and supply chain resilience.

This target is not focused on large-scale timber operations or raw material processing. Instead, it prioritizes smaller to mid-sized manufacturers that specialize in engineered products such as cabinetry, roof trusses, panelized floor and wall systems, and modular home components. These firms produce goods that streamline on-site construction and reduce labor intensity, making housing development more cost-effective and scalable.

Such operations are clean, land-efficient, and compatible with general industrial zoning. They also provide skilled and semi-skilled production roles that align with Brenham's existing workforce strengths in mechanics, materials handling, and equipment operation.

### Industry Outlook

The housing and construction materials sector is evolving rapidly as national demand for affordable homes continues to outpace supply. In response, builders are adopting new methods and materials to increase output while managing cost and labor constraints. Key industry trends include:

- » Expansion of off-site construction methods: National builders are embracing panelized and modular techniques to reduce labor needs, standardize quality, and speed up timelines.



- » Rising cost of traditional site-built construction: Labor shortages and rising wages are prompting builders to source pre-fabricated elements that reduce time and cost per home.
- » Increased urgency around housing affordability: Local governments, employers, and developers are under pressure to expand attainable housing options. Modular and panelized systems offer one of the few scalable ways to respond quickly.
- » Growth of workforce housing developers: A growing number of developers specialize in workforce and middle-income housing, creating demand for dependable, regional suppliers of modular components and materials.
- » Sustainability and material efficiency: Factory-built components often generate less waste and allow for better material control, aligning with evolving environmental standards and developer preferences.
- » Together, these trends point toward a growing opportunity for communities that can support regional housing demand by producing the components that make homes more accessible.

## Competitive Position

Washington County is well suited to attract companies in this sector and support their long-term success, based on several core advantages:

- » Clear and growing housing demand: Median home prices in Washington County have risen nearly 50 percent in the past five years. Local employers are increasingly concerned about housing affordability, particularly for entry-level and mid-career workers.
- » Proximity to growing regional housing markets: Brenham is within two hours of multiple high-growth exurban counties around Houston, Austin, and Bryan-College Station. This provides manufacturers with broad access to builders without the land costs or permitting burdens of urban locations.
- » Available industrial land with utility access: Current site development efforts include parcels with 5 to 20 acres, suitable for wood product and modular component firms. These sites include access to power, water, sewer, and broadband, as well as space for truck maneuvering and materials storage.
- » Logistical access to timber supply chains: While not a timber-producing county, Brenham sits close to East Texas lumber yards and distributors, enabling consistent inbound deliveries of dimensional wood and engineered products.

- » Workforce alignment with production needs: Brenham's labor pool includes welders, assemblers, and heavy equipment operators. These are transferable skills commonly required in modular assembly, cabinet manufacturing, and materials processing.
- » Business-friendly permitting and operations environment: Washington County offers a regulatory climate that supports practical investment. Unlike dense metros, where manufacturing projects may face opposition or delays, the region provides a clear, predictable path to occupancy.
- » Strong market fit for small to mid-sized firms: Companies in this space are often privately owned, regionally focused, and interested in locations that offer community support, reasonable overhead, and long-term operational consistency. Washington County matches these priorities closely.

## Conclusion

Value-add wood products and modular housing components offer a unique opportunity for Washington County to address a local need while growing its tax base and industrial sector. These firms supply critical materials to solve the region's housing challenge and generate jobs that reflect the area's existing workforce strengths. With suitable sites, transportation access, and a culture that supports steady investment, Brenham is in a strong position to attract companies that want to build the homes working families need while operating in a way that aligns with community values.



A high-angle, grayscale photograph of a complex highway interchange. The image shows multiple levels of overpasses and ramps, with several cars visible on the roads. In the background, a city skyline with various buildings is visible under a clear, light sky.

# PRIORITIES

# PRIORITY AREAS AND KEY INITIATIVES

## PRIORITY AREA 1: BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Supporting and strengthening existing businesses is one of the most effective strategies for economic growth. This priority area focuses on building strong relationships with local employers, understanding their challenges, and helping them grow in place. The following activities reflect national best practices in business retention and expansion (BRE):

### Key Initiatives:

#### » Establish a Structured Business Visitation Program

Develop a proactive and data-informed Business Retention and Expansion program focused on building relationships with employers who have the most significant impact on the local economy. This includes major tax contributors, top employers by workforce size, high-growth companies with expansion potential, and businesses showing early signs of risk (such as workforce challenges, leadership changes, or space constraints).

The program should prioritize a minimum of 20 targeted company visits per year, guided by a standardized outreach calendar. Each visit should be structured around a consistent set of questions that gather insights on workforce needs, capital investment plans, regulatory issues, and satisfaction with local services. The EDOiQ CRM system will be used to capture feedback, track follow-up actions, and ensure accountability across the team and partner organizations.

To maximize impact, visits should include both executive-level engagement and operational perspectives, where possible. By identifying business challenges early and aligning support resources effectively, the BRE program can help retain jobs, facilitate expansions, and build long-term loyalty with the region's most important employers.

#### » Launch an Executive Call Program for Key Employers

Each year, proactively engage C-suite and senior leadership from 15 to 18 of the county's most significant employers through a formal Executive Call Program. Focus efforts on companies in Washington County's key target industries, such as advanced manufacturing, logistics and distribution, agriculture and food processing, professional services, and healthcare, to ensure alignment with the sectors driving local economic growth.

These structured, high-level conversations will gather critical

insights on workforce, supply chain, infrastructure, and expansion needs. The program acts as both a relationship-building initiative and a business intelligence tool, helping to identify potential risks or opportunities before they surface publicly. Insights should be tracked in a shared CRM, with follow-up actions coordinated across local and regional partners as needed.

Executed consistently, this annual outreach will strengthen trust with anchor employers, inform strategy, and reinforce Brenham | Washington County Economic Development's role as a connector, problem solver, and advocate for business success.

#### » Create a Business Support Resource Hub

Develop an online Business Support Resource Hub as part of a new, dynamic economic development website. This hub should serve as a go-to destination for existing businesses seeking tools, contacts, and guidance related to workforce training, financing, expansion planning, permitting, and navigating local and state processes.

Given the small size of the economic development team, centralizing these resources digitally ensures broader reach, 24/7 accessibility, and operational efficiency. The site should be designed for easy navigation and include downloadable guides, relevant partner links, contact directories, and FAQ sections. It's also important to actively promote the resource hub through social media, newsletters, and partner organizations to ensure local employers know where to turn for support, without relying solely on team availability.

This investment not only expands capacity but reinforces Brenham | Washington County Economic Development's role as a responsive, modern connector for business growth.



#### » Host Semi-Annual Industry Roundtables

Continue to convene semi-annual roundtable events tailored to the region's target industries to foster dialogue between local employers, educators, and workforce partners. These sessions will create a structured space to recognize trends, discuss shared challenges, and identify collaborative opportunities that support retention, talent development, and supply chain resilience.

In line with economic development best practices, these roundtables will be intentionally designed to build trust, strengthen communication channels, and ensure local leaders feel heard and supported. Each event will include curated content, such as a guest speaker, panel, or facilitated discussion, on timely topics affecting that industry (e.g., automation, workforce retention, federal funding opportunities, regulatory shifts, etc.).

As the convener, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development will ensure the format is business-friendly (e.g., breakfast or lunch format, 90 minutes or less), with clear takeaways and opportunities for follow-up. Outcomes from these sessions can inform policy recommendations, program development, and public-private initiatives that keep Washington County competitive and responsive to business needs.

## PRIORITY AREA 2: TARGETED BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

Attracting the right companies to the region requires a data-driven approach, proactive outreach, and strong messaging. This priority focuses on aligning recruitment efforts with Brenham and Washington County's competitive advantages and positioning the region for high-impact investment.

### Key Initiatives:

#### » Define and Refine Target Industry Segments

Use recent data, peer benchmarking, and stakeholder feedback to refine the region's Target Industries, aligning



recruitment efforts with existing workforce, infrastructure, and site readiness advantages. Based on work related to this strategic plan, Brenham and Washington County's Target Industries include advanced food and beverage processing, precision metal and equipment manufacturing, biomedical supplies and packaging, ag-tech and animal health, and value-add wood products and modular housing components. Within these categories, focus should be placed on high-value sub-sectors that align with local capabilities and long-term growth goals. Industry targets should be reviewed annually to stay responsive to economic shifts and community priorities.

#### » Develop a Strategic Business Attraction Plan

Build a focused recruitment strategy with clearly defined goals, timelines, and outreach tactics tailored to Brenham and Washington County's target industries, while ensuring alignment with the Greater Brazos Partnership plan. This strategy should integrate national and regional market trends, site and building availability, and input from local stakeholders to shape realistic, high-impact recruitment targets. As part of this effort, leverage research, data tools, and best practice frameworks from the Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC) to inform industry targeting, messaging, and engagement strategies.

#### » Create Customized Marketing Collateral

To compete effectively for national and international projects, Brenham and Washington County should elevate the quality and consistency of their marketing materials. This includes developing industry-specific one-pagers, pitch decks, and digital landing pages that clearly communicate the region's value proposition for each Target Industry. Equally important is the launch of a new, modern, mobile-optimized economic development website that functions as a central platform for storytelling, property visibility, lead generation, and investor engagement.

The website should be built with strong search engine performance, seamless user navigation, and integration with virtual tour and GIS tools. To ensure this work is strategic and effective, the organization should engage a marketing partner with deep experience in economic development and a track record of producing materials that resonate with site selectors, brokers, and corporate executives.

#### » Conduct Proactive Outreach and Lead Generation

Effective business recruitment requires consistent, well-documented outreach to companies that align with the region's Target Industries. This includes identifying and contacting prospective firms through industry trade shows, curated lead lists, targeted site selector engagement, and warm introductions from state and regional partners.

Each outreach effort should be tracked in the EDOiQ CRM system to ensure continuity, enable follow-ups, and analyze conversion trends over time. Nurturing prospects through a disciplined cadence of communication, via email, calls, or personalized outreach, is essential for building trust and advancing opportunities.

This outreach should be closely aligned with the conference and trade show participation strategy outlined later as a Special Section in this Strategic Plan, ensuring the organization is showing up in the right rooms, with the right messaging, to generate leads and make meaningful industry connections.

#### » Host Familiarization Tours and Virtual Site Tours

FAM tours are a proven economic development tool to showcase a community's assets directly to decision-makers, influencers, and site consultants. For Brenham | Washington County, these tours present an opportunity to attract companies already exploring larger markets like Houston, Austin or Dallas but who may be unaware of the strategic, cost-effective advantages the region offers in terms of logistics, workforce, and quality of life.

To maximize impact, FAM tours should be thoughtfully curated and tightly scheduled, offering immersive experiences that highlight key industrial sites, workforce assets, infrastructure readiness, and community amenities. Engaging local employers, educational institutions, and civic leaders during the tour builds authenticity and trust, which are two critical factors in site selection decisions.

When in-person visits are not feasible, virtual experiences must rise to the same level of professionalism and

interactivity. Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can deploy high-quality virtual tours that integrate drone footage, facility walk-throughs, leadership testimonials, and interactive GIS-based site maps. These tools provide decision-makers with a clear and compelling understanding of the region, including its people, properties, and potential, before they ever step foot in the community.

Integrating both FAM and virtual tours into the broader recruitment strategy ensures that the region competes on equal footing with larger metros while distinguishing itself through accessibility, responsiveness, and a clear value proposition.

## PRIORITY AREA 3: MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Building awareness of Brenham and Washington County as a business destination requires intentional, consistent outreach across multiple channels. This priority focuses on sharpening the city and county's voice, telling the story, and elevating its visibility with site selectors, companies, and strategic partners.

#### Key Initiatives:

##### » Develop a Unified Regional Marketing Strategy

To elevate visibility and attract strategic investment, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development must lead with a clear, compelling, and consistent marketing approach. This starts with a unified regional marketing strategy that defines key audiences (such as site selectors, industry leaders, talent, and community stakeholders), core



messages, preferred communication channels, and success metrics. It's not enough to simply promote available sites. Messaging must convey the county's full value proposition: its workforce readiness, livability, location advantages, and forward-thinking leadership.

Equally important is understanding how the messaging strategy for Brenham and Washington County fits within the broader context of regional economic development narratives. This includes recognizing how the area is positioned within the Houston-Dallas-Austin triangle and coordinating messaging and branding with regional allies to avoid fragmentation or mixed signals in the market. A cohesive approach ensures that prospects see a clear and confident message about why this region is ideal for growth.

This strategy should extend beyond traditional marketing tactics to include brand storytelling, partner amplification, and regular audits to keep materials current and competitive. Investing in strong narrative alignment, across website content, social media, advertising, earned media, and pitch materials, builds the credibility and resonance needed to compete in a crowded national and international marketplace.

#### » **Create a New Online Destination for Economic Development**

To compete in today's economic development landscape, Brenham | Washington County must operate with a best-in-class digital foundation. A new, modernized economic development website is essential, not just as a source of information, but as a dynamic marketing platform that drives lead generation, increases engagement, and reinforces the region's competitiveness. This new website should be optimized for search performance, featuring a strategic

keyword strategy, interactive property maps, compelling visual content, and a seamless user experience that works across all devices.

#### » **Launch a Social Media and Digital Marketing Campaign**

Beyond the website, a strong digital presence also requires consistent, high-quality content distribution across social media, particularly LinkedIn, where engagement with site selectors, consultants, and business leaders is most effective. A professional, well-maintained LinkedIn presence can amplify success stories, share thought leadership, and boost credibility within key networks.

To further elevate visibility, the marketing plan should include a digital advertising campaign in leading economic development publications such as *Site Selection*, *Area Development*, *Business Facilities*, and *Expansion Solutions*. These platforms are widely read by corporate decision-makers and location advisors, offering a valuable opportunity to place Brenham and Washington County on the radar of those actively exploring new sites. Combining owned, earned, and paid digital strategies will ensure the region stands out in an increasingly competitive national and international market.

#### » **Produce Professional Marketing and Recruitment Materials**

A strong toolbox of print and digital collateral is essential for telling the county's story in a clear, compelling, and competitive way. Brenham | Washington County Economic Development should invest in producing modern, professional-grade materials, including brochures, industry-specific one-pagers, community profiles, and trade show handouts, that reflect the region's assets and target industries.



In parallel, refining and standardizing RFP and RFQ response templates will help present a polished, consistent message to prospects and site selectors evaluating the region. These materials should incorporate up-to-date visuals, local success stories, and clear data that align with the region's value proposition. Having a ready-to-deploy library of print-ready and digital resources ensures the organization can respond quickly and confidently to opportunities as they arise.

#### » **Expand Media and Public Relations Outreach**

Proactive media engagement can significantly elevate Brenham | Washington County's visibility with both regional and national audiences. The organization should build relationships with key journalists, editors, and media outlets in nearby metros such as Houston, Austin, and Dallas to help place earned media stories about business wins, development milestones, and community progress. These relationships can lead to increased coverage in influential business publications and regional news outlets.

Simultaneously, the team should cultivate connections with media partners in the economic development space, including *Site Selection*, *Area Development*, *Business Facilities*, and *Expansion Solutions*, to position Brenham | Washington County as a forward-thinking and competitive community. Thought leadership articles, feature stories, and guest commentary can all help reinforce the region's momentum and credibility with site selectors, consultants, and prospective companies.

#### » **Support Local Stakeholders, Creating Brand Ambassadors**

Empowering a broad network of local champions is critical to reinforcing a consistent, positive message about Brenham | Washington County's economic development strategy. In addition to employers and community partners, representatives from the EDF often serve as key ambassadors, alongside elected officials, city and county staff, and other government leaders. These individuals should be equipped with tools and messaging that enable them to speak confidently about the region's business climate, priorities, and long-term vision.

By providing ready-to-use materials, such as talking points, presentation slides, city/county/regional fact sheets, and narrative templates, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can ensure that all representatives are aligned when speaking to prospects, attending conferences, or engaging with the media. Briefings or periodic training sessions can also help refresh messaging and keep the broader team informed on recent wins, pipeline activity, and evolving goals. When everyone is promoting the same intentional and opportunity-driven narrative, the county's credibility and appeal are amplified significantly.

## **PRIORITY AREA 4: WORKFORCE AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

A competitive, well-prepared workforce is the foundation of sustainable economic growth, and while many organizations are already doing important work in this space, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development plays a unique role in convening employers, educators, and training partners to align efforts. This priority focuses on connecting



business needs with workforce strategies, strengthening cross-sector partnerships, and helping to identify and address talent gaps across all levels of the pipeline. By serving as a neutral connector and champion of shared goals, the organization can help drive results that benefit both companies and the broader community.

### Key Initiatives:

#### » Conduct an Ongoing Workforce Needs Assessment

Start by focusing on the employers in Brenham and Washington County that have the greatest impact on the local economy, particularly those in identified target industries. These core employers serve as the backbone of the region's workforce and provide critical insight into current and emerging talent needs.

Using a structured and repeatable process, conduct regular outreach through surveys, one-on-one interviews, and facilitated roundtables. Prioritize employers based on job numbers, growth potential, and alignment with the county's target industries. Insights gathered should help identify specific skills gaps, occupational shortages, technology shifts, and training needs that can inform curriculum development and program design by educational institutions and workforce partners.

In addition to collecting quantitative data, document anecdotal insights that point to emerging trends—such as automation-related upskilling needs, turnover concerns, or underutilized populations. Over time, this continuous feedback loop will help Brenham | Washington County Economic Development build a shared workforce intelligence base that guides local strategies and positions the organization as a central hub for aligning talent supply and demand.

#### » Support Career and Technical Education Pathways

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development plays a critical role in aligning Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with the evolving needs of the region's target industries. As a convener and connector, the organization is uniquely positioned to facilitate communication between employers and educational institutions to ensure training programs remain relevant and responsive.

This includes supporting employer involvement in advisory committees, curriculum development, and classroom engagement. The organization can help identify skill gaps and translate business needs into educational program improvements, ensuring local students and jobseekers are being prepared for real-world opportunities.

Additionally, stronger partnerships with postsecondary institutions can help accelerate the development of stackable credential programs, flexible scheduling options, and technical training pathways for both traditional students and adult learners. These efforts work collectively to strengthen the region's talent pipeline and support sustainable economic growth.

#### » Promote Existing Workforce Development Resources

While the region benefits from a variety of workforce development programs and partners, there is a clear opportunity to create a centralized, easy-to-navigate online portal housed on the new Brenham | Washington County Economic Development website. This digital hub would serve as a one-stop resource for job seekers, students, employers, and educators, connecting them to relevant opportunities, services, and programs in a single location.

Rather than simply promoting individual offerings, the portal would map out the entire local talent ecosystem. This could include links to training providers, career pathways, internship and apprenticeship opportunities, upskilling resources, employer incentives, job boards, adult education, dual-credit programs, resume help, and more. By integrating these resources under one cohesive platform, the site would strengthen regional coordination, reduce friction for users, and position the community as talent-forward to both residents and prospects.

## PRIORITY AREA 5: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

Fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation will strengthen the local economy by supporting homegrown business creation, diversifying revenue sources, and



positioning the region as a place where ideas can thrive. Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can play a vital role by expanding resources, enhancing visibility, and filling strategic gaps not currently served by partners like the SBDC.

### **Key Initiatives:**

#### **» Develop a Small Business Resource Hub**

As part of the new Brenham | Washington County Economic Development website, a centralized Small Business Resource Hub can serve as a one-stop destination for entrepreneurs and small business owners. This digital platform will offer streamlined access to key resources such as local mentorship connections, funding opportunities, and training programs.

Designed to complement, but not duplicate, the services of partners like the SBDC, the hub will focus on improving navigation, increasing visibility of available support, and bridging connections across the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. With an easy-to-use interface and regularly updated content, it will become an essential tool for both startups and growing small businesses in the region.

#### **» Launch a Business Acceleration Program**

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can strengthen the entrepreneurial pipeline by launching a Business Acceleration Program designed to support early-stage and growth-stage businesses in key local industries. The program would provide cohort-based learning opportunities featuring workshops, expert-led sessions, and peer networking to equip participants with the knowledge, tools, and connections needed to scale their ventures.

To add unique value and local authenticity, the program can engage experienced leaders from top Washington County employers, as well as respected business owners, civic leaders, and retired executives who bring deep institutional knowledge and industry insight. Their involvement could range from mentoring and panel discussions to curriculum co-design and investment pitch judging, creating a richer, more rooted experience for participants.

Ultimately, this program will serve as both a talent magnet and a catalyst for innovation, reinforcing Washington County's reputation as a place where entrepreneurs are supported, celebrated, and set up to succeed.

#### **» Host Pitch Events and Business Showcases**

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can help elevate the local business community by hosting pitch events and business showcases in collaboration with partners across the innovation ecosystem, including the

Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Blinn College, and other entrepreneurial support organizations. These high-visibility events would provide local startups and small businesses with the opportunity to present their ventures to potential investors, lenders, and community leaders, building confidence, visibility, and pathways to capital.

To make these events more impactful and rooted in the local business climate, primary employers such as Blue Bell Creameries, Germania Insurance, Valmont, and others can serve as judges, advisors, or sponsors. Their participation helps reinforce the connection between the established business community and the next generation of entrepreneurs, fostering a spirit of mentorship, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

By focusing on helping Washington County's existing mix of businesses become stronger, more visible, and better connected, these events will not only showcase local innovation but also build a more resilient and inclusive economy.

#### **» Enhance Access to Capital Through Localized Programs**

To strengthen Washington County's entrepreneurial ecosystem, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can work with a range of partners to improve access to capital, especially for early-stage companies and underserved founders. This includes collaborating with local banks, community foundations, credit unions, and public-sector entities to explore microgrant initiatives, low-interest loan programs, and revolving loan funds that help bridge common financing gaps. These tools can provide flexible capital for startups and small businesses that may not yet qualify for traditional financing.

In addition to institutional support, there is strong potential to engage private businesses, retired executives, and local angel investors in the creation of a community-based capital network. For example, local leaders from anchor employers may be willing to provide seed funding, mentorship, or sponsorship of local grant competitions or pitch awards. Their direct participation helps foster a culture of reinvestment and sends a powerful message about the community's support for entrepreneurship.

Together, these efforts can create more equitable pathways to capital, support local job creation, and increase the chances of long-term success for Washington County's next generation of business owners. A diversified capital strategy will also make the region more attractive to outside investors and regional innovation partners.



# SPECIAL SECTION: PRIORITIES EXECUTION AND BEST PRACTICES

## CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

To remain competitive in a fast-changing landscape, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development must take a consistent and strategic approach to attending professional conferences. These events provide invaluable opportunities for professional development, relationship-building, and visibility that can directly influence both perception and outcomes for the region.

For the Economic & Community Development Director and partners, active participation in these gatherings also ensures ongoing awareness of best practices in the industry. This knowledge that is critical to effectively executing the activities outlined in the priority areas of this strategy. The Economic & Community Development Director can use these opportunities not only to build experience and a strong professional network but also to share Brenham's economic growth story with influential decision-makers across the state and region.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

- » Strengthen internal knowledge of economic development best practices by attending sessions on site development, capital investment, broadband, housing finance, and workforce readiness. These experiences keep staff informed on emerging trends and allow replication of successful strategies from other communities. Provide the Economic & Community Development Director with critical exposure to policies, programs, and peer insights that accelerate her growth. Conferences serve as a real-time classroom for hands-on learning that builds confidence and sharpens instincts.
- » Expand professional relationships with site consultants, brokers, capital providers, and state and federal contacts. These connections often form the foundation for future projects and can be the difference in competing for high-value opportunities. Increase Brenham's visibility as a forward-moving, development-ready community. Strategic attendance signals seriousness about growth, proactivity, and readiness to do business.
- » Reinforce Brenham's strategy by benchmarking against national and regional trends to ensure the local approach stays relevant. Share Brenham's story through speaking, panels, or roundtables to build credibility, open doors, and position the community as a model for peer cities.

## GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING AND PARTICIPATING IN CONFERENCES

- » Choose conferences that offer a balance of technical sessions and networking opportunities. Look for agendas that include sessions on current issues facing Brenham, such as infrastructure funding, small city recruitment tools, or regional housing policy.
- » Prioritize events that allow time with site selectors, state economic development leaders, funders, and peer communities. These high-value interactions offer more than education; they create actionable leads and partnerships.
- » Set clear attendance goals for each conference. These may include meeting a specific number of new contacts, securing follow-up conversations with key influencers, or gathering useful takeaways to apply to a local initiative. Performance goals should be discussed during pre-conference planning.
- » Maintain a portable "conference kit" that includes updated one-pagers, business cards, a digital version of the strategic plan, a QR code linking to BrenhamED.com, and other materials that reinforce the county's momentum. If budget permits, professionally printed materials or lightweight promotional items can increase visibility.
- » Track ROI and outcomes from each event. Use post-conference debriefs to capture new leads, summarize takeaways, and identify any gaps in participation or preparation. Lessons learned should be used to refine the strategy over time.

## RECOMMENDED RECURRING CONFERENCES

- » Texas Economic Development Council (TEDC) Conferences
- » Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC)
  - » Annual Conference
  - » Meet the Consultants events
- » International Economic Development Council (IEDC)
  - » Annual Conference
- » Texas Rural Challenge
  - » Focused on rural innovation, funding opportunities, and business development tools
- » Texas Municipal League (TML) Annual Conference
  - » Useful when coordinating economic development with broader city governance
- » Local and Regional Workshops





# DATA INSIGHTS

# DATA SNAPSHOT: UNDERSTANDING BRENHAM'S ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

The City of Brenham and Washington County offer a stable foundation for future growth. As part of this plan, data is doing more than quantifying trends. It's telling a story of balance and discipline, but also of untapped opportunity. Rather than experience the instability of runaway growth, Brenham has steadily developed a durable economy built around manufacturing, education, healthcare, and civic collaboration. While many rural regions face challenges in retaining workforce or financing infrastructure, the City of Brenham and Washington County have quietly built the conditions for long-term success.

This section presents a concise but meaningful look at the region's key economic indicators. These figures are not just statistics. They reveal where the community stands, where attention is needed, and where strategic investment could yield the greatest return.

## POPULATION AND LABOR

Population and workforce metrics provide one of the clearest indicators of a community's current trajectory. In Brenham's case, growth has been steady, allowing the region to plan intentionally rather than react hastily.

- » Population: 36,337 (Washington County, 2025). Growth has remained manageable, helping preserve Brenham's small-town quality of life while supporting steady economic expansion.
- » Growth since 2010: 6.5 percent. A sustainable pace that keeps infrastructure, public services, and housing needs within reach.
- » Civilian labor force: Over 17,000. A solid figure for a micropolitan area, suggesting strong workforce participation and business demand.
- » Labor force participation rate: 60 percent (compared to 64 percent statewide). Slightly lower than the Texas average, which indicates opportunities to re-engage sidelined workers.
- » Unemployment rate: 3.2 percent. Reflects a tight labor market and strong economic health across sectors.

## INCOME AND WAGES

Income data helps gauge household stability and the attractiveness of the region for current and prospective workers.

- » Median household income: \$57,207. This figure falls

below the state average, reinforcing the need for affordable housing, accessible childcare, and other services that support working families.

- » Average manufacturing wage: \$57,800. A competitive number that highlights the importance of advanced manufacturing as a core target industry.
- » Personal income growth from 2020 to 2024: 11 percent. Reflects real gains in household earnings and continued economic momentum.

## COMMUTING AND CONNECTIVITY

Commuting trends show how Brenham fits into the regional economy and where housing or transportation challenges might emerge.



- » Inbound commuters: 41 percent. Nearly half of the workforce lives outside Washington County, pointing to housing gaps and reinforcing the need for new supply.
- » Average commute: 34 minutes. A long commute creates burdens for families and employers and contributes to workforce turnover.
- » Top sources of commuters: Cypress, College Station, Waller, and Northwest Harris County. These connections indicate opportunities for collaboration but also signal that Brenham competes with larger regional markets for talent.

## HOUSING MARKET

Rising housing costs and limited inventory are among Brenham's most pressing challenges.

- » Median home listing price: \$336,000. While more affordable than metro areas like Houston or Austin, this is still high relative to local wages.
- » Price growth since 2019: 46 percent. A sharp increase that suggests demand is far outpacing new supply.
- » Rental vacancy rate: 5.4 percent. A tight rental market that limits flexibility for residents and employers.
- » Pipeline activity: 280 single-family lots and 120



multifamily units. These projects offer momentum but still fall short of the long-term need.

## EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE TRAINING

The strength of local education and training systems is one of the clearest predictors of future economic success.

- » Brenham ISD enrollment: Approximately 5,200 students. Current TEA rating is a C, indicating room for improvement in academic outcomes and school facilities.
- » Blinn College enrollment: 22,000 students across all campuses, with 1,600 residential students in Brenham. The college provides a strong pipeline for local talent and a major asset for workforce development.
- » Texas A&M Engineering Academy seats in Brenham: 175. A unique regional advantage that helps retain top academic talent.

## MAJOR EMPLOYERS (LOCAL ESTIMATE)

These primary-industry employers help define the local job market and provide a reliable tax base and reputation for economic stability. (These employee counts are estimates.)

- » Blue Bell Creameries: 580 employees
- » Blinn College: 520 employees
- » Germania Insurance: 450 employees
- » Baylor, Scott & White: 361 employees
- » Valmont: 335 employees
- » Tempur Sealy Mattress Corp.: 184 employees
- » Emerson: 120 employees
- » Stan Pac: 100 employees
- » MIC Group: 83 employees
- » Brianna's (Del Sol Food Company): 66 employees
- » Bencor: 45 employees

## SITES AND BUILDINGS

A lack of available industrial space is one of the limiting factors on growth and business recruitment.

- » Industrial vacancy rate: 1.9 percent. This low figure suggests demand far exceeds current supply and emphasizes the need for additional space.
- » Average lease rate: \$7.10 per square foot (triple-net). Competitive by regional standards, especially for companies relocating from higher-cost metros.

## INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY & UPGRADES

Water and wastewater systems are approaching critical thresholds, but both areas have already been identified for

upgrades and expansion. Projects are currently underway to ensure these essential services can meet future demand.

- » Water treatment: Current usage is at 78 percent and was projected to exceed 90 percent by 2028. Recognizing this need in advance, the community has already initiated capital improvements to expand capacity and avoid future constraints.
- » Wastewater treatment: Usage is currently at 83 percent. Similarly, upgrades are in progress to address capacity challenges and ensure that new development can continue without interruption.
- » Broadband access: 92 percent of city residents and 61 percent of county residents have access to speeds of 100 Mbps or greater. City service is strong, but rural gaps continue to pose challenges for remote workers and site development outside Brenham's core.

## FISCAL HEALTH

Strong public revenue growth allows communities to invest in infrastructure, public services, and quality of life.

- » Sales tax collections reported at the full 8.25% reflect the total taxes on retail sales (state and local combined). The City's local share (1.5%) is a subset of that total and is budgeted separately in the City's adopted budget documents. (Sources: Texas Comptroller; City of Brenham FY2025 Adopted Budget)
- » Year-over-year sales tax growth: 9.6 percent. Growth exceeds inflation and reflects a healthy business climate and visitor economy.
- » Countywide market value certified by the Washington County Appraisal District in 2025 totals approximately \$16.69 billion (market value); taxable values for individual jurisdictions are subsets of this total. (Source: Washington County Appraisal District certified roll, 2025)
- » Five-year property tax base growth: 12 percent. Demonstrates consistent upward momentum in real estate value and development activity.

## CONCLUSION

The data reveals a region that is stable, growing, and capable of guiding its own future. There are no immediate signs of crisis, but pressure points in housing, infrastructure, and education are becoming more visible. Strategic action in these areas will prevent bottlenecks and protect the community's identity as it grows.

Brenham continues to attract employers, grow household income, and deliver a strong quality of life. The region is well positioned for what comes next. The question is whether local and regional partners can align around these signals and move forward together. The opportunity is here, and the data makes the case.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM

The City of Brenham and Washington County benefit from strong communication and coordination among regional, educational, workforce, and business development partners. These relationships have laid a valuable foundation for collaboration and collective progress. As the community continues to grow, there is an opportunity to deepen this alignment by increasing the exchange of data, sharing information more proactively, and working toward clearly defined, mutual goals.

Success in areas such as site development, talent pipelines, infrastructure investment, and business recruitment depends on shared priorities and unified action. By aligning efforts across key organizations, the region can maximize its impact, eliminate duplication, and respond more effectively to emerging opportunities.

The partners listed in this section represent the broader ecosystem supporting economic development in Brenham and Washington County. Each plays a vital role in advancing job creation, business retention, workforce development, and long-term economic resilience.

## GREATER BRAZOS PARTNERSHIP

The Greater Brazos Partnership (GBP) is a regional economic development initiative focused on building prosperity across the Brazos Valley. Anchored by strategic institutions such as Texas A&M University and major employers in Bryan-College Station, the GBP helps foster high-value job growth and innovation across the surrounding counties, including Washington County. The Partnership plays a catalytic role in branding the region, building coalitions, supporting industry clusters, and aligning state-level resources to local efforts.

Although based in Brazos County, the Greater Brazos Partnership has a vested interest in broader regional performance, and Washington County's workforce and land availability are assets that contribute to the region's competitiveness. Brenham | Washington County Economic Development should partner with GBP on collaborative marketing efforts, workforce development initiatives, and site-readiness strategies that serve regional targets like advanced manufacturing, logistics, and biosciences. Additionally, GBP can offer introductions to site selectors and private-sector executives interested in locating or expanding in the Brazos Valley area.

## BLINN COLLEGE

Blinn College is a respected community college system with a strong campus presence in Brenham. It serves as a key workforce pipeline for the region, offering associate degrees, technical training, and partnerships with four-year institutions like Texas A&M through programs such as the Engineering Academy. With disciplines in nursing, agriculture, HVAC, machining, and the arts, Blinn is central to developing homegrown talent that meets the evolving needs of local and regional employers.

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can deepen its partnership with Blinn by jointly planning industry-informed curriculum, expanding dual-credit and apprenticeship opportunities, and co-hosting events that showcase graduate capabilities to local employers. Blinn can be a lead partner in workforce development initiatives tied to strategic target industries like precision metal manufacturing and ag-tech. Additionally, working with Blinn's workforce training and corporate services team can ensure that incumbent workers and new hires have access to rapid upskilling options aligned with local business needs.

## SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SBDC)

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) serving Washington County is part of the University of Houston's Gulf Coast network. It provides expert guidance to both startups and existing businesses on a wide range of needs such as business planning, loan packaging, marketing, succession planning, and expansion strategies. Their office in Brenham is small but effective, with a team that emphasizes long-term client relationships and tailored support.

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development regularly collaborates with the SBDC to ensure entrepreneurs and small business owners have access to critical resources at every stage of their development. The SBDC's one-on-one support complements the county's goals for business retention, especially for legacy or family-owned businesses considering growth, transition, or modernization. Going forward, the SBDC can also play a stronger role in advancing entrepreneurship in underrepresented segments and tracking success metrics aligned with the strategic plan.

## WASHINGTON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Washington County Chamber of Commerce is a central organization for supporting and promoting local businesses across the county. It serves as a key networking hub, hosts



community events, and advocates on behalf of business-friendly policies. With deep ties to legacy industries and small businesses in the region, the Chamber also plays an important role in fostering community engagement and maintaining the small-town character that defines Washington County.

The Chamber is a natural partner in advancing many of the shared goals outlined in this strategic plan. While Brenham | Washington County Economic Development focuses on business attraction, retention, and long-term development planning, the Chamber is uniquely positioned to support these efforts by strengthening the community's small business ecosystem, supporting local talent pipelines, and amplifying quality-of-life messaging to prospective companies. Greater coordination on events, business climate surveys, and shared messaging can help ensure a unified voice when promoting the region.

## WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS BRAZOS VALLEY

Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley is the regional workforce board serving Washington County and surrounding areas. It connects employers with job seekers and administers workforce funding and support programs through local offices. The organization provides job placement assistance, customized training support, labor market data, and access to funding sources such as the Skills Development Fund and the High Demand Job Training grant program.

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can work closely with Workforce Solutions to identify skill gaps, co-develop training programs for target industries, and align business recruitment efforts with available workforce support. For example, the two organizations can collaborate on joint applications for state grants to fund technical training aligned with new business investment. Additionally, Workforce Solutions can be a key player in helping local employers access upskilling resources and navigate labor market challenges, especially in sectors like healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and skilled trades.

## TEXAS A&M ENGINEERING EXTENSION SERVICE (TEEX)

TEEX is one of the leading workforce training and emergency response institutions in the nation, affiliated with the Texas A&M University System. It provides hands-on, customized training programs across a range of fields including manufacturing, infrastructure, cybersecurity, and public safety. TEEX also offers business continuity planning, OSHA safety certifications, and technical assistance for industry compliance.



Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can collaborate with TEEX to deliver high-impact training for local employers, particularly in support of expansion or new company onboarding. TEEX programs can be brought into the county through Blinn College partnerships or directly through industry-specific engagements. As the region grows its industrial base, TEEX can help ensure that local workforce and public safety entities are prepared to support complex infrastructure and business needs. This relationship also opens the door for applying to TEEX-administered grant programs and leveraging their technical expertise in workforce strategy.

## TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM OFFICE (EDT)

The Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office, housed within the Office of the Governor, leads statewide economic development efforts. It provides a variety of business incentives, site selection assistance, export support, and grants for business retention and expansion. Programs such as the Texas Enterprise Fund, Governor's University Research Initiative, and the Skills Development Fund are administered through EDT.

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can work with EDT to identify and pursue state-level incentives that align with local business attraction efforts. EDT can also serve as a strategic partner in promoting Washington County as a competitive location for new investment by helping Brenham's team participate in inbound prospect visits, national site selector events, and international trade opportunities. Coordination with EDT will be especially important in pursuing funding for job creation, workforce training, and infrastructure improvements tied to target industries identified in this strategic plan.

## BLUEBONNET ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative is a member-owned utility serving over 120,000 meters across 14 Central Texas counties, including Washington County. As a key



infrastructure provider, Bluebonnet plays a critical role in ensuring the region has reliable, scalable electric service to support both residential and industrial growth. The cooperative is known for its customer-focused approach and proactive investment in system upgrades to meet growing demand.

As Washington County positions itself to attract new industry and support expansions of existing businesses, close collaboration with Bluebonnet is essential. The cooperative can offer load forecasting, infrastructure planning, and site readiness support that align with the county's business recruitment goals. In partnership, both organizations can identify strategic sites for industrial development, coordinate timelines for utility installation, and ensure marketing materials reflect the region's energy readiness. Joint site visits, regular infrastructure briefings, and mutual involvement in strategic planning sessions will help ensure that economic development and utility infrastructure grow in tandem.

## **BRAZOS VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (BVCOG)**

The Brazos Valley Council of Governments (BVCOG) is a regional planning organization serving the seven-county Brazos Valley region, including Washington County. BVCOG supports economic and community development through grant administration, regional planning, aging and workforce services, transportation planning, and disaster recovery programs. It also administers Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley and serves as a critical conduit for state and federal resources entering the region.

Brenham I Washington County Economic Development can collaborate closely with BVCOG to align local strategic goals with broader regional initiatives. BVCOG can assist in securing grants for infrastructure, broadband, transportation, and resiliency projects that support long-term competitiveness. In addition, by coordinating workforce and transportation planning with BVCOG, the community can position itself as a well-integrated part of the regional growth engine. Leveraging BVCOG's expertise in grant writing, program implementation, and data analysis can enhance Brenham's capacity to deliver on many of the plan's long-term goals.

## **TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (TxDOT)**

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is the statewide agency responsible for maintaining and expanding Texas's transportation network, including

highways, bridges, and transit infrastructure. TxDOT's projects directly impact community accessibility, mobility, and economic competitiveness, especially in fast-growing regions like Central Texas.

Brenham I Washington County Economic Development can work closely with TxDOT to advocate for transportation improvements that enhance site readiness and long-term business attraction. Coordinated planning around road expansions, intersection improvements, and freight access will be vital as the community seeks to recruit industry and grow its workforce. Proactively aligning local priorities with TxDOT's Unified Transportation Program (UTP) and regional planning schedules can accelerate project timelines and open access to additional state and federal transportation funding. Ensuring the local voice is well-represented in TxDOT's planning cycles will help sustain infrastructure investments that support the community's growth goals.

## **BRENHAM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (BRENHAM ISD)**

Brenham Independent School District (Brenham ISD) is the primary K-12 public education provider in the community, serving students across Washington County. The district is central to workforce development, community identity, and quality of life. With a strong tradition in academics, athletics, and Career and Technical Education (CTE), Brenham ISD plays a critical role in preparing local youth for future careers and continued learning.

Brenham I Washington County Economic Development can deepen collaboration with Brenham ISD by aligning long-term business attraction efforts with talent pipeline development. CTE programs offer a particularly promising opportunity for partnership, helping students connect classroom learning with real-world industry pathways. Greater coordination can also help ensure that future school facility needs and population projections are incorporated into economic planning efforts. By supporting efforts to increase public trust in bond initiatives and identifying private sector partners for mentorship or training programs, the economic development team can help Brenham ISD grow alongside the community's economic base.

## **BNSF RAILWAY**

BNSF Railway is one of the largest freight railroad networks in North America and a key infrastructure partner for economic development in Washington County. With its extensive rail network and logistics capabilities, BNSF offers critical support for the movement of goods, making it a vital player in the recruitment and expansion of manufacturing,



warehousing, and distribution businesses. The company's certified site program and economic development resources also support communities in preparing sites for rail-served industries.

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can work closely with BNSF to identify and prepare sites in the county that are ideal for rail-served businesses. As demand increases for industrial sites with rail access, aligning local land-use planning, infrastructure improvements, and workforce readiness with BNSF's criteria can give Brenham a competitive edge. Coordination with BNSF's economic development team can also support direct outreach to targeted industries, assist with site certification, and help promote Washington County as a logically advantageous location.

### **TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (TWC)**

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is the state agency responsible for overseeing workforce development in Texas, including administering programs that support job training, employment services, labor market information, and unemployment benefits. TWC partners with local workforce development boards, educational institutions, and employers to equip Texans with skills that match regional and statewide economic priorities.

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can leverage TWC's extensive resources and programs to strengthen the local talent pipeline. By coordinating with TWC to access workforce training grants such as the Skills Development Fund or Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program, the EDO can help existing employers upskill their workforce or prepare new workers for in-demand roles. TWC can also be a source of valuable labor market data, helping inform recruitment strategies and workforce readiness initiatives aligned with the region's target industries.

### **BRENHAM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (BCDC)**

The Brenham Community Development Corporation (BCDC) is a Type B corporation dedicated to enhancing quality of life and supporting community-focused capital projects within the City of Brenham. Funded by a portion of local sales tax, BCDC invests in amenities such as parks, recreation, and infrastructure that make the community more attractive to residents and businesses alike.

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development works closely with the BCDC Board to align these efforts with broader economic development goals. Together, the

organizations focus on projects that increase the area's desirability for prospective job creators and strengthen the community's competitive position. One example of this collaboration is the availability of shovel-ready property in both of Brenham's business parks, offered at a competitive price structure to attract new employers.

Through joint planning and coordinated investments, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development and BCDC ensure that quality-of-life improvements also support business recruitment, workforce housing, and entrepreneurship, creating a more livable and business-friendly environment.

### **BRENHAM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (EDF)**

The Brenham Economic Development Foundation is a private, nonprofit organization focused on advancing economic growth in Brenham and Washington County through business recruitment, retention, and community development. It serves as a collaborative force among local business leaders, institutions, and public agencies, often playing a behind-the-scenes role in facilitating growth and investment.

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can continue to leverage the EDF's relationships, insight, and leadership to support larger economic initiatives. The EDF is especially valuable in confidential prospect discussions and in rallying private-sector support for major projects. Coordinated efforts between the two entities can improve communication with stakeholders, help align incentives and infrastructure plans, and ensure that local employers are connected to workforce resources, permitting support, and long-term growth strategies.

### **CONCLUSION**

Together, these organizations form the foundation of a resilient and dynamic economic development ecosystem in Brenham and Washington County. Each plays a distinct but complementary role in supporting business growth, workforce development, infrastructure improvements, and community vitality. By maintaining strong communication and collaboration with these partners, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can amplify its impact, avoid duplication of effort, and accelerate progress toward the goals outlined in this strategic plan.



# ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2025 STATE OF TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The 2025-2029 Bigger Better Texas Economic Development Strategic Plan provides a clear roadmap for maintaining Texas' position as a national and global leader in economic growth. Brenham's strategic plan aligns closely with the state's priorities, allowing for stronger partnerships, shared messaging, and access to statewide initiatives. This section outlines where Brenham's approach matches the state's direction and identifies specific opportunities for collaboration.

## SHARED TARGET INDUSTRIES

Several of the state's priority sectors mirror The City of Brenham and Washington County's local focus areas:

### Advanced Manufacturing

The state emphasizes reshoring, automation, and high-tech fabrication. Brenham is already investing in industrial infrastructure and talent development to support precision metalwork, equipment assembly, and automated systems.

### Food and Beverage Production

The county's legacy and ongoing investment in food manufacturing aligns with state priorities in logistics, cold storage, and agricultural innovation. The community is well equipped to attract growth-oriented firms seeking affordable land and proximity to major markets.

### Biomedical and Life Sciences Manufacturing

The state aims to expand domestic capacity in medical supplies and biotech-related production. The county's available land, workforce readiness, and infrastructure capacity provide an ideal location for mid-sized life sciences companies.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYNERGIES

The state plan places a strong emphasis on connecting education and industry. Brenham is already responding through partnerships and programs that can plug directly into state-supported initiatives:

- » Brenham's support for new CTE facilities and career credentialing aligns with the state's emphasis on stackable credentials and technical education.

- » Local partnerships with Blinn College and proximity to Texas A&M's RELLIS campus strengthen the bridge between rural workforce training and research-based learning
- » Brenham can pursue participation in state-funded programs such as Upskill Texas, High Demand Job Training grants, and workforce readiness pilots managed by the Texas Workforce Commission

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SITE READINESS

Both the state and local plans identify infrastructure as a make-or-break factor in project recruitment:

Brenham's investment in an expanded water and wastewater systems, improved broadband access, and rail-served sites aligns directly with the state's focus on rural infrastructure improvements

- » Coordination with TxDOT on highway signage, freight access, and mobility improvements supports the state's transportation goals
- » State funding opportunities can be pursued through the Texas Broadband Development Office, Economic Development and Tourism Office, and Rural Infrastructure Grants

## RURAL COMPETITIVENESS AND BALANCED GROWTH

The state plan calls for rural communities to play a larger role in Texas' economic future. Brenham is well positioned to lead by example:

- » The community offers a mix of quality sites, cost advantages, and livability that reflects the kind of balance the state is promoting
- » Brenham can engage directly with the state through rural advisory councils, inclusion in site marketing platforms, and participation in regional growth strategies
- » State-led recruitment trips and industry-specific marketing campaigns offer shared promotion opportunities that can elevate Brenham's profile

## GAPS OR DIVERGENCES AND LOCAL FIXES

Despite strong alignment, a few areas reveal gaps between the state's macroeconomic agenda and the county's local conditions:

- » Semiconductor and Aerospace Emphasis: The state plan prioritizes major-scale investment in chip fabrication, space systems, and advanced defense manufacturing. Brenham and Washington County can compete for component manufacturing opportunities that feed into



the broader supply chain, such as back-end assembly or precision part fabrication, particularly through its rail-served industrial sites.

- » **Broadband Coverage Lag:** State economic development assumes baseline broadband access, yet current countywide connectivity in Washington County remains inconsistent. To close this gap, Washington County will lead a street-level coverage mapping study and prepare a grant application through the Texas Broadband Development Office that consolidates multiple underserved areas into one regional project.
- » **Low Visibility of Entrepreneur Resources:** While new state-level initiatives are emerging to support small businesses, many local entrepreneurs remain unaware of the full range of tools and partners available to them. Brenham | Washington County Economic Development can address this gap by establishing a centralized small business and entrepreneurship resource hub on its new economic development website. This online platform would make it easy for entrepreneurs to access licensing information, funding sources, training programs, mentorship opportunities, and connections to partners like the SBDC. By pursuing the Small Business Friendly Texas designation and clearly organizing available services in one accessible location, the community can

boost visibility, improve navigation, and align with state expectations for small business support.

By understanding these gaps and addressing them directly, Brenham can ensure it is not only aligned with the state's goals, but also well-positioned to capitalize on future grant programs, technical assistance initiatives, and recruitment partnerships. The community's size, location, and momentum make it an ideal testbed for scalable economic development solutions across rural Texas.

## CONCLUSION

The Brenham | Washington County Economic Development strategy complements and supports the priorities outlined in the 2025-2029 Texas Economic Development Strategic Plan. The alignment between these two frameworks creates a strong foundation for future partnerships, shared funding opportunities, and enhanced visibility. By staying connected to state-level initiatives and continuing to build on this alignment, the City of Brenham and Washington County can position themselves as a key contributor to Texas' long-term success.



# ALIGNMENT WITH THE BRENHAM PLAN 2040

This strategic plan for economic development is designed to be an extension of the community's broader vision, not a separate or competing agenda. It builds on the foundation set by the Brenham Plan 2040, the City of Brenham's official comprehensive plan adopted in 2020. While the Comprehensive Plan establishes a citywide framework for growth, infrastructure, housing, and quality of life, this economic strategy focuses on how to activate that vision through jobs, investment, and coordination across institutions.

Rather than operating in parallel, the two plans are mutually reinforcing. The strategic priorities and initiatives outlined in this document were developed with direct reference to the goals and land use policies laid out in the Brenham Plan 2040. The following key areas illustrate where the plans align and how this strategy supports the implementation of the broader vision:

## DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND INFILL DEVELOPMENT

The Brenham Plan 2040 calls for revitalizing the downtown core, supporting mixed-use development, and encouraging infill on underutilized parcels. This economic strategy includes specific actions to help advance those goals, including streamlining the approvals for upper-floor residential units and small-scale commercial activity. The recommended marketing efforts are designed to protect downtown's identity while increasing foot traffic and business activity, especially in light of upcoming changes to traffic patterns from new highway infrastructure.

## HOUSING DIVERSITY AND AFFORDABILITY

The Comprehensive Plan identifies the need for a greater mix of housing types to accommodate a diverse population, including young professionals, families, and seniors. This economic development strategy emphasizes the department's role in supporting carefully vetted housing projects that address workforce and community needs.

## INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The Brenham Plan 2040 emphasizes the importance of infrastructure planning that supports controlled, sustainable growth. Building on that guidance, this strategy recognizes that infrastructure is a key driver of economic development

opportunities. The economic development department supports smart, well-aligned infrastructure investment decisions, such as those related to utilities, broadband, and site readiness, that ensure job growth and tax base expansion move in step with the community's capacity to serve new development.

## TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Traffic circulation, multi-modal access, and regional mobility are all addressed in the comprehensive plan. This strategy complements those goals with a focus on access to industrial sites, coordination with TxDOT for signage improvements, and downtown connectivity enhancements such as regional trails that link employers, housing, and public amenities. These infrastructure improvements help maintain accessibility while supporting business retention and workforce attraction.

## GOVERNANCE AND INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

The Brenham Plan 2040 highlights the need for long-term coordination among public entities, educational institutions, and private partners. This strategy responds with an implementation framework centered on a shared CRM system and public progress-to-goal tracking on the new economic development website. These tools strengthen collaboration and help ensure that growth reflects community values while earning public trust. By aligning land use, infrastructure, housing, and governance, this plan operationalizes the Brenham Plan 2040 and ensures long-term growth is supported through targeted investments and coordinated action. It serves not only as an economic roadmap but also as a key mechanism for delivering on the promises of the city's broader plan.



# IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

This strategy builds on the strong foundation of collaboration already taking place in the City of Brenham and Washington County. With active communication and trusted partnerships already in motion, the next phase is to align around clear roles, track measurable outcomes, and maintain momentum through shared accountability. This implementation framework offers a practical structure to guide day-to-day activities, coordinate long-term priorities, and ensure all stakeholders stay informed and connected as progress is made.

## TOOLS TO SUPPORT EXECUTION

Three key tools will serve as the operational backbone of the plan:

- » **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System** – The current EDOiQ CRM platform can track business retention visits, recruitment prospects, follow-ups, and engagement across partner organizations. This ensures institutional knowledge is preserved even with staff transitions and keeps projects from stalling due to communication gaps. A well-maintained CRM can also support reporting, performance evaluation, and stronger continuity between initiatives.
- » **Online Economic Scorecard on the New Website** – A public-facing Economic Scorecard can be integrated into the new Brenham | Washington County Economic Development website. This tool can clearly communicate priority areas, key performance indicators, and real-time progress updates. Updated annually, the scorecard can reinforce transparency, show community impact, and keep elected officials, partners, and residents informed of outcomes and milestones.
- » **Work and Activities** – To drive consistent execution, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development should outline tactics and partner roles for each strategic priority. Doing so will help coordinate internal focus and external collaboration and assistance from stakeholders.

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A well-defined set of key performance indicators (KPIs) provides a clear, transparent, and measurable framework for

tracking success across the economic development strategy. These metrics reflect both regional priorities and industry-standard benchmarks, enabling continuous improvement and accountability.

### Business Retention & Expansion

- » Number of existing employer visits completed annually
- » Number of follow-up actions resolved or supported
- » Number of at-risk employers successfully retained or stabilized
- » Level of satisfaction among existing employers with support efforts

### Target Industry Business Recruitment

- » Number of qualified business prospects generated annually
- » Number of active projects in the recruitment pipeline
- » Number of successful business recruitment wins
- » Total new jobs announced and capital investment secured
- » Acres of certified or “shovel-ready” industrial land available

### Marketing and Promotion

- » Growth in economic development website traffic and engagement
- » Number of earned media placements and social media impressions
- » Quantity and quality of new or updated marketing materials
- » Number of marketing campaigns deployed annually

### Workforce & Talent Development

- » Number of employer workforce surveys or roundtables conducted annually
- » Number of jobseekers or students connected to training pathways
- » Number of employers engaged in CTE curriculum development or internships
- » Number of visitors to workforce/talent portal on new website

### Entrepreneurship & Innovation

- » Number of entrepreneurs or small businesses assisted annually
- » Number of startups completing business acceleration





programming

- » Number of pitch event participants and funding connections made
- » Amount of capital accessed through local microgrant/loan programs
- » Traffic and engagement metrics on small business resource portal

#### Overall Impact & Visibility

- » Number of primary jobs created or retained
- » Average wage of jobs created through projects
- » Number of speaking engagements or presentations delivered by staff
- » Annual progress updates presented in-person and published on the Economic Development Scorecard

#### WORK AND ACTIVITIES

Once this Strategic Plan is formally adopted, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development should regularly communicate progress made on strategic priorities. This ensures clarity, accountability, and alignment among staff, leadership, and community partners. It also allows for timely adjustments based on evolving priorities, partner capacity, and real-world outcomes.

Communication should serve as a dynamic management tool that defines how the five strategic priority areas including Business Retention and Expansion, Targeted Business Recruitment, Marketing and Promotion, Workforce and Talent Development, and Entrepreneurship and Innovation will be advanced over the coming year. In line with economic development best practices, this communication should:

- » **Outline Specific Activities and Tactics** – Clearly define initiatives tied to each priority area, including new programs, outreach efforts, marketing campaigns, or partnership projects.
- » **Assign Responsible Parties** – Identify which staff members, consultants, or partner organizations are leading or supporting each activity.
- » **Establish Timelines** – Set quarterly or monthly timelines for the launch and completion of specific initiatives, allowing for steady progress tracking.
- » **Allocate Budgets** – Include cost estimates or confirmed funding for each initiative to ensure appropriate resourcing and financial oversight.
- » **Define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** – Link each activity to measurable outcomes... such as number of BRE visits, prospects contacted, site tours hosted, or entrepreneurs supported... to reinforce accountability.
- » **Enable Coordination and Buy-In** – Share efforts with City leadership for review and approval, encouraging shared ownership and stronger collaboration.
- » **Provide a Basis for Progress Reporting** – Use all elements of work conducted and activities for quarterly updates and the public-facing Economic Scorecard, reinforcing transparency and responsiveness.

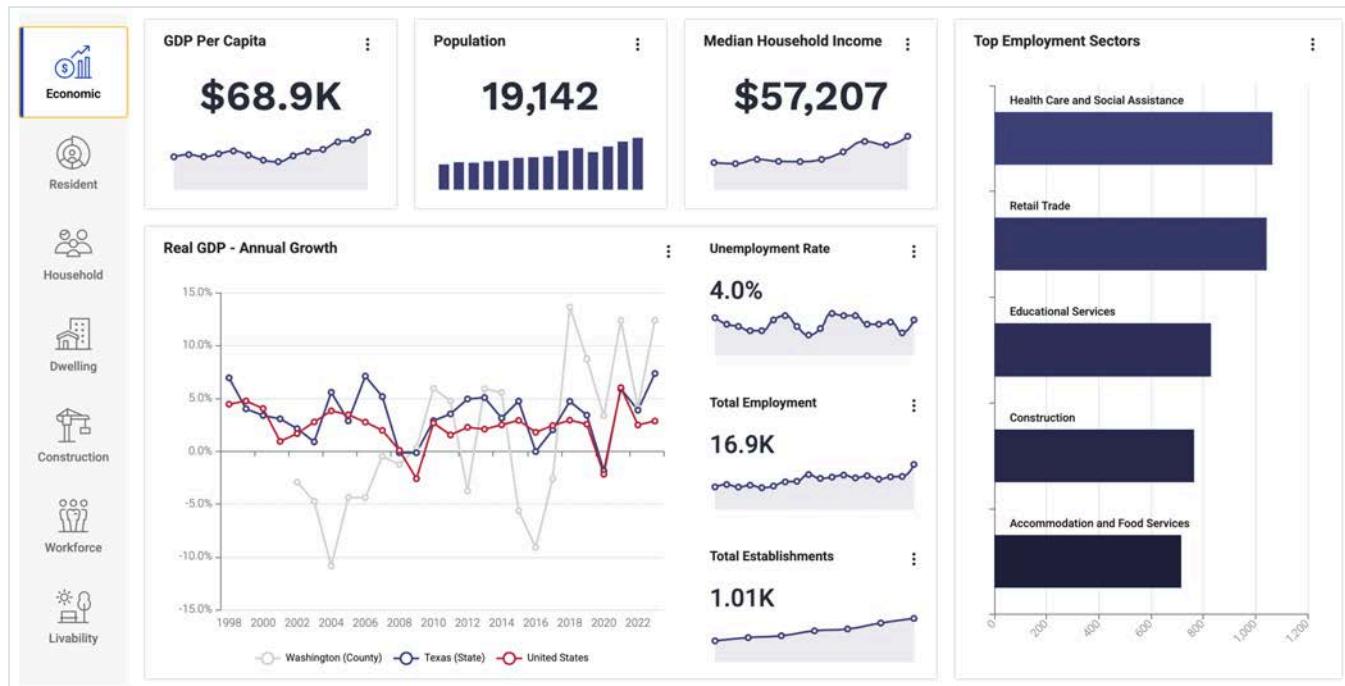


# APPENDICES

(UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DATA WAS PROVIDED BY  
BRENHAM | WASHINGTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.)

## APPENDIX A – SELECTED DATA TABLES

### ECONOMIC



## INSIGHTS

Brenham's economy is efficient, resilient, and growing at a pace that strengthens its long-term competitiveness.

Steady, sustainable growth defines the Brenham economy, driven by strong business productivity, moderate population increases, and competitive household incomes. High GDP per capita reflects robust output relative to community size. Population growth has remained manageable, avoiding strain on infrastructure, while income levels point to a stable workforce and reliable consumer spending. Together, these indicators reinforce Brenham's long-term economic resilience and its readiness for strategic expansion.

### GDP per Capita

Brenham's high per capita output reflects a productive economy supported by a diverse industry base, including manufacturing, healthcare, education, and tourism. This foundation supports future investment and continued business development.

### Population

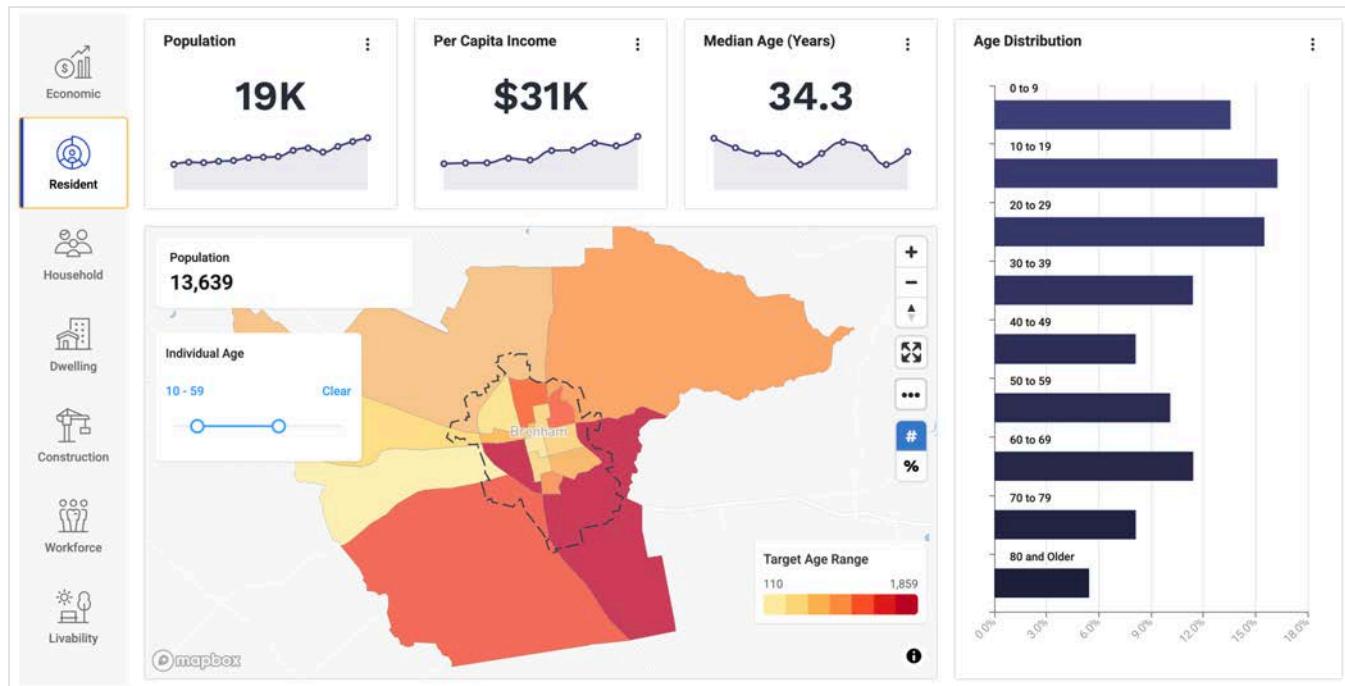
Washington County's population stands at 36,337, with steady growth over the past decade. This gradual increase supports workforce and market expansion without creating the service and infrastructure challenges common in faster-growing metros.

### Median Household Income

With a median income of \$57,207, residents have the spending power to sustain local businesses, while employers benefit from cost-effective labor. These income levels help attract and retain workforce talent and support Brenham's housing, retail, and service markets.



## RESIDENT



## INSIGHTS

Brenham's residents form a stable, skilled, and diverse workforce foundation that supports long-term economic growth.

A strong concentration of working-age individuals, rising educational attainment, and steady population growth provide a reliable and adaptable labor base. Demographic diversity and a significant veteran presence further enhance leadership capacity and cultural strength, positioning Brenham to meet the evolving workforce needs of employers.

### Population by Age Group

Most residents are between 18 and 64, with the largest group aged 35 to 54. This age mix supports a seasoned, career-established workforce and a strong pipeline of leadership and technical talent.

### Educational Attainment

Over 85% of residents have a high school diploma or higher, and around 30% hold a college or advanced degree. This aligns with workforce needs in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, education, and business services.

### Population Growth Rate

Steady growth over the past decade has enabled proactive planning for workforce, infrastructure, and community services, ensuring growth strengthens rather than strains resources.

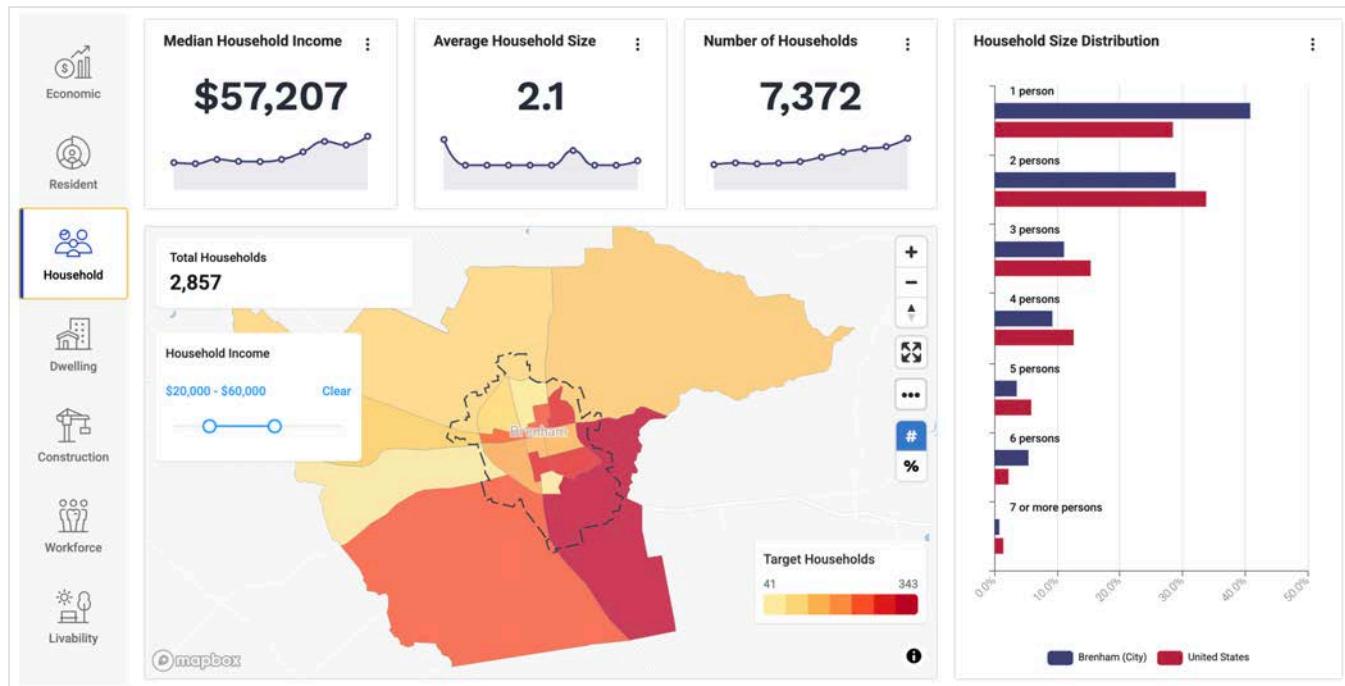
### Race and Ethnicity

Brenham is home to a racially and ethnically diverse population, enhancing cultural vitality and supporting businesses that serve broad and dynamic markets.

### Veterans Population

Veterans bring leadership, technical skills, and discipline, contributing across key sectors including logistics, manufacturing, public safety, and healthcare.

## HOUSEHOLD



## INSIGHTS

Brenham's household trends reflect economic stability, rising prosperity, and strong support for workforce attraction and long-term community growth.

Growing household incomes, steady housing expansion, and a balanced mix of household sizes support both local consumer demand and resident quality of life. These trends strengthen Brenham's appeal to families, professionals, and retirees.

### Household Income

The median household income of \$57,207 provides a strong foundation for local spending and workforce retention. It supports a stable market for retail, healthcare, education, and services, while helping residents maintain a high quality of life.

### Household Size and Composition

With an average of 2.1 people per household, Brenham mirrors national family-oriented trends. A mix of family, single-person, and multi-generational households supports broad housing and service needs.

### Housing Growth Trends

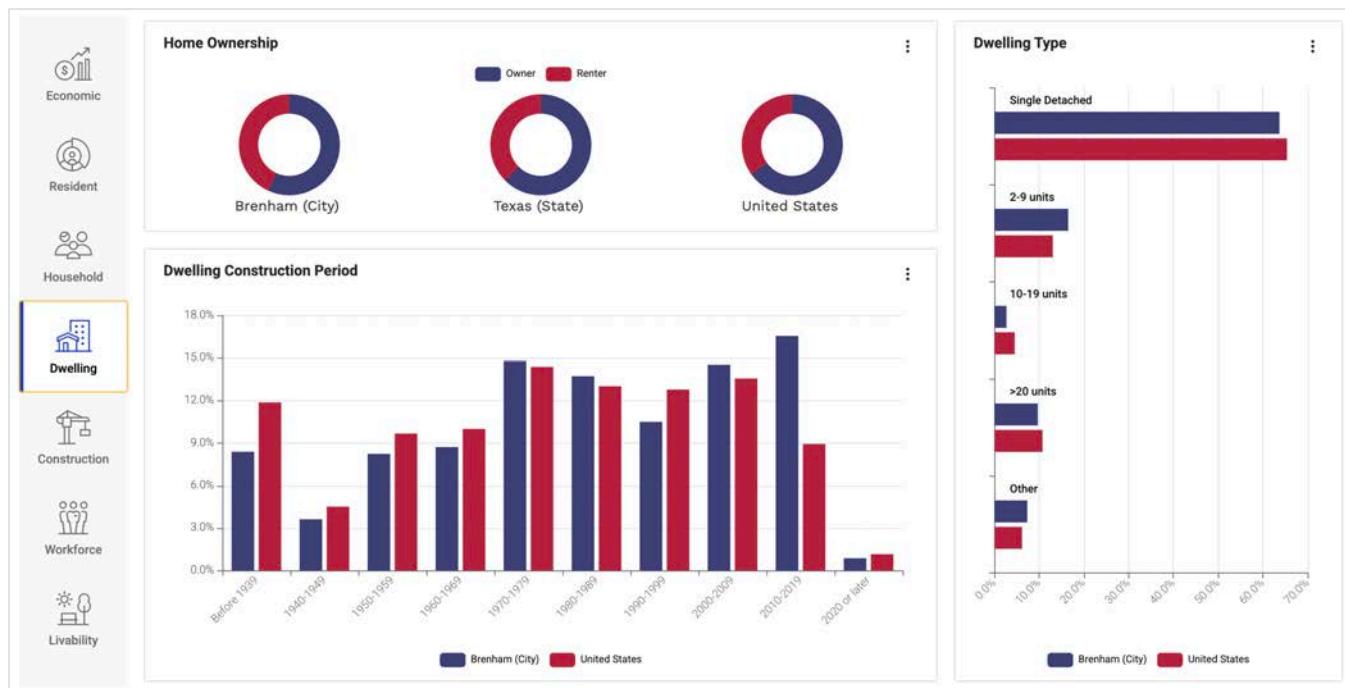
Household counts have grown steadily over the past decade, reflecting overall population and economic stability. This trend supports continued residential development, infrastructure expansion, and real estate investment.

### Housing Tenure

Approximately 65% of occupied housing units are owner-occupied, signaling strong community investment and neighborhood stability. A healthy rental market provides flexibility for students, young professionals, and new residents.



## DWELLING/HOUSING



## INSIGHTS

Brenham's housing market is growing at a sustainable pace, with strong homeownership, diverse options, and affordability that supports workforce and population growth.

Homeownership remains high, new construction is adding inventory, and home prices remain competitive with the broader region. These trends ensure Brenham can continue to support workforce expansion and community stability as demand rises.

### Housing Units

Washington County has seen steady growth in housing units, supporting both population and household increases. The range of options, including single-family homes, apartments, and senior living, meets the needs of varied income levels and lifestyles.

### Homeownership Rates

About 65% of occupied housing units are owner-occupied, reflecting long-term community investment

and neighborhood stability. High ownership levels support civic engagement and residential quality of life.

### Rental Market

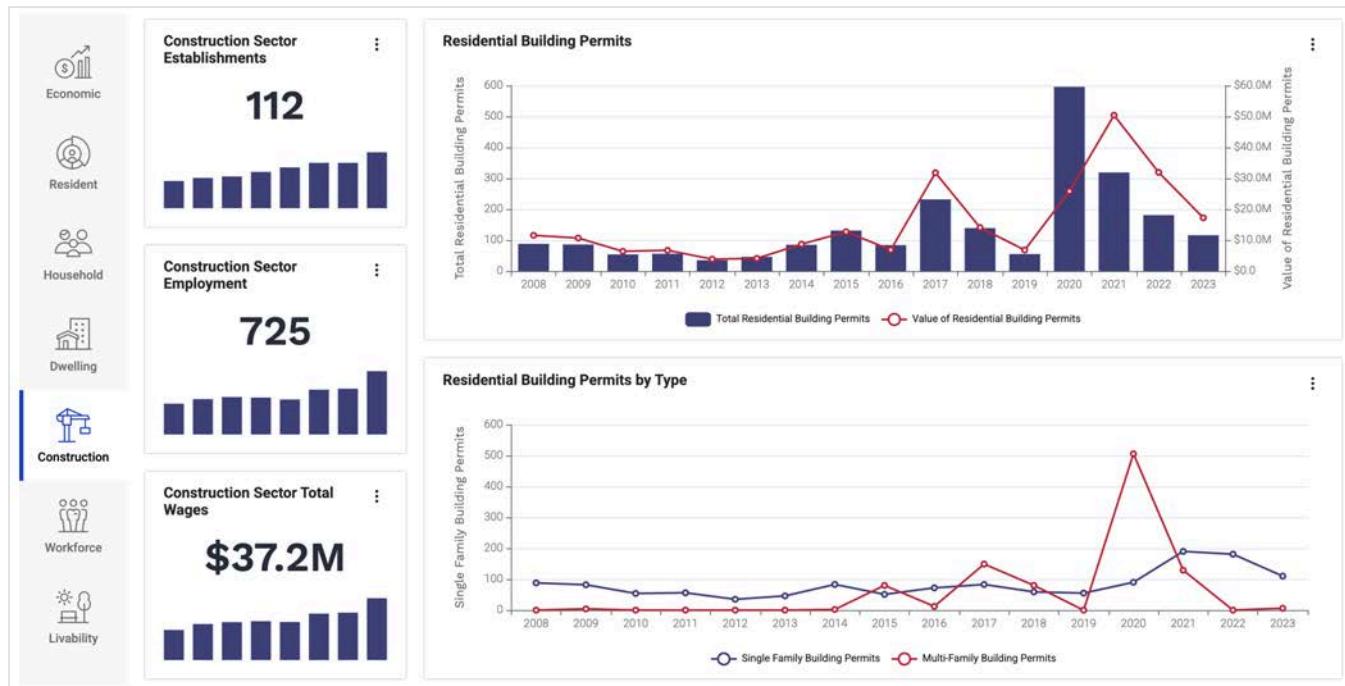
Brenham offers accessible rental options for students, young professionals, and transitioning families. A strong rental market provides flexibility for new residents and supports workforce housing needs.

### Housing Affordability

Brenham's housing costs remain favorable compared to major metros, helping attract first-time buyers, young families, and retirees. Competitive pricing supports workforce retention and broad residential appeal.



## CONSTRUCTION



## INSIGHTS

Construction trends in Brenham reflect a responsive, balanced economy, actively preparing for growth in housing, business, and infrastructure.

Residential development has kept pace with population growth, while commercial and industrial projects are expanding Brenham's economic base. Infrastructure investments continue to strengthen long-term sustainability, positioning the community to meet future workforce and business needs.

### Residential Construction

Residential construction has remained consistent over the past decade, adding needed supply through new single-family homes, townhomes, and multifamily projects. This diversified inventory supports the needs of young professionals, families, and retirees.

### Commercial and Industrial Construction

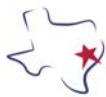
Driven by demand from manufacturing, healthcare, education, and retail, commercial and industrial construction supports business recruitment, job creation, and expansion of the local tax base.

### Infrastructure Investment

Ongoing improvements in water, sewer, roadways, and broadband support new development and improve quality of life. Infrastructure readiness is a key competitive advantage in business attraction.

### Building Permit Trends

Steady growth in permit activity reflects developer confidence and a well-managed approach to residential and commercial expansion.



## WORKFORCE



## INSIGHTS

Brenham's workforce is stable, skilled, and well-aligned with the needs of local industries, providing a dependable foundation for future business growth.

A balanced distribution of employment across key industries, such as manufacturing, healthcare, education, retail, and tourism provides Brenham with economic resilience and flexibility. Workforce development efforts, including strong partnerships with Blinn College and other regional institutions, help keep local talent aligned with evolving business needs.

### Labor Force

Washington County's civilian labor force exceeds 17,000 individuals, reflecting a high participation rate for a community of its size. A stable, career-established workforce helps reduce turnover and offers employers a reliable talent base across a wide range of skills and roles.

### Employment by Industry

Brenham's employment base is well-diversified, with manufacturing, healthcare, education, retail, and

tourism providing the largest shares of jobs. This broad industry mix reduces vulnerability to economic swings and supports career pathways at multiple education and skill levels.

### Workforce Development and Training

Blinn College and other regional partners offer industry-aligned training in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, business, and technology. These programs ensure a steady pipeline of skilled workers for both current employers and future industry needs.

### Regional Workforce Access

Strategically located between Houston and Austin, Brenham benefits from access to a broader regional labor market. This geographic advantage enhances recruitment efforts for employers seeking specialized skills or large-scale workforce capacity.



## LIVABILITY



## INSIGHTS

Brenham offers a high quality of life with affordability, strong amenities, and access to education and healthcare, critical factors for talent attraction and retention.

The region's mix of small-town charm and access to major metro areas appeals to residents of all ages. These livability strengths help employers recruit and retain talent, while reinforcing Brenham's appeal as a place to live, work, and invest.

### Cost of Living

Brenham's cost of living remains below both state and national averages, with affordable housing, transportation, and healthcare. This supports workforce stability, household satisfaction, and local consumer activity.

### Educational Opportunities

Brenham is served by strong public schools and Blinn College, one of Texas's leading two-year institutions. Proximity to Houston and Austin expands access to advanced degrees and specialized training.

### Healthcare Access

Local healthcare providers offer a full range of services, including emergency, preventive, and specialized care, helping meet resident needs and supporting business recruitment.

### Recreation and Culture

Parks, trails, festivals, and a vibrant downtown provide diverse recreational and cultural options. Brenham's arts, music, and historic character contribute to a strong sense of place that sets it apart.



## APPENDIX B – METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The plan draws on a wide range of reliable and public-facing data sources, as well as original research. These sources include:

- » U.S. Census American Community Survey five-year estimates (population, housing, educational attainment)
- » Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics (labor force participation, unemployment rate)
- » Realtor.com and Texas Real Estate Research Center (housing price trends and market data)
- » City of Brenham (building permit activity and capital improvement records)
- » Texas Water Development Board (infrastructure capacity reports for water and wastewater)
- » Seventeen stakeholder interviews conducted March through April, 2025
- » Peer community benchmarking drawn from public plans for Bastrop, Seguin, and Nacogdoches
- » Texas Economic Development Strategic Plan (Bigger Better Texas), Office of the Governor, 2025

