

Existing City

INTRODUCTION



PURPOSE

This report provides background and insights about Victoria as it is today. This information is presented in topic areas relevant to the City's long-range plan for Victoria's physical growth and development, which, in Texas, is technically referred to as a city's "Comprehensive Plan." The report also highlights key planning considerations for the years ahead, which will set the stage for updating the Comprehensive Plan in terms of community needs and desires for the next 20 years, through 2035. The report content is based on initial background studies to date by the City's community planning consultant, Kendig Keast Collaborative (of Sugar Land, Texas), as well as leadership and community input received to this point. The report also points readers to other sources for more detailed information to ensure the brevity of this document and to avoid duplication of available reports and profiles of Victoria.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOCUS AREAS

- Land Use and Development
- Mobility
- Growth Capacity and Management
- Economic Opportunity
- Recreation and Amenities

VICTORIA SETTING AND CONTEXT

Nestled along the meandering Guadalupe River, the City of Victoria is located at the convergence of U.S. Highways 59, 77, and 87. As illustrated by **Map 1, Regional Context**, the city is at the center of Victoria County, serving as its county seat. As the historical timeline in this section highlights, Victoria is one of the oldest and most historic cities in Texas.

Victoria is the largest city in the central coastal region known as the Golden Crescent, a group of seven Texas counties including Calhoun, Dewitt, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, and Lavaca. Victoria serves as a commercial center for its surrounding counties, and four major Texas metropolitan areas are within a two-hour drive (Houston at 124 miles, San Antonio at 114 miles, Austin at 122 miles, and Corpus Christi at 85 miles). In addition, Victoria is just 30 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico.

The community lies about 105 feet above sea level. Located on the South-Central Texas Coastal Plain, the area enjoys moderate

temperatures and mild weather conditions throughout the year. At a latitude of 28 degrees above the equator, the area climate is comparable to Orlando, Florida. Annual precipitation averages 36 inches per year with a mean annual temperature of 71 degrees. The surrounding countryside is flat with a majority of the land being utilized for grazing and cultivation.

Given its accessibility via three U.S. highways, rail, commercial air, and a barge canal connected to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, Victoria offers tremendous growth potential for manufacturing and distribution facilities as well as recreational and cultural opportunities. In fact, the City's municipal limits are only five miles from the Port of Victoria. Victoria is also located on the proposed I-69 corridor that covers much of the current U.S. Highway 59 route through Texas. Designated by Congress as a high priority corridor in the 1990s, Interstate 69, when completed, will be the most direct interstate linking industrial centers in Mexico, the United States, and Canada.



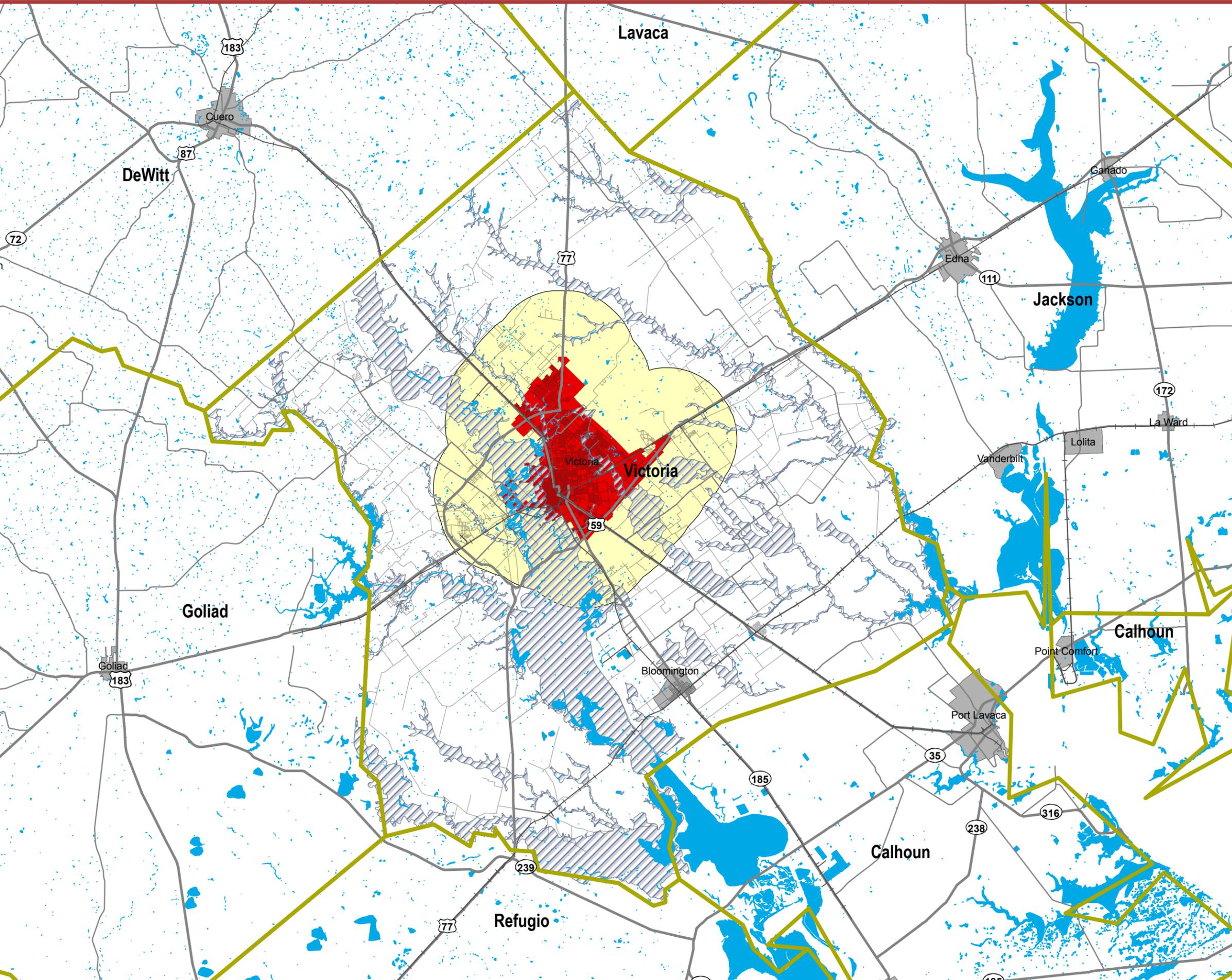
**MAP 1
 REGIONAL CONTEXT**

LEGEND

- Victoria City Limits
- Other Cities and Communities
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Counties
- Major Interstates and Highways
- Farm to Market Roads
- Railroad
- Creek/River/Lake
- 100 Year Floodplain



Disclaimer: This map is intended for general informational purposes only and does not represent a legal record. No warranty is made by the City of Victoria regarding specific accuracy or completeness, and the data may be subject to revision at any time without notification.





VICTORIA HISTORICAL TIMELINE

- 1824** Town of "Guadalupe Victoria" established as capital city of a large land grant approved by the Republic of Mexico at the request of Don Martín De León. Site along Guadalupe River was known earlier as Cypress Grove.
- 1828** Guadalupe Victoria governed by Council of Ten Friends from 1824 to 1828 and by four alcaldes from 1828 to 1836. The town had about 300 residents by 1834.
- 1836** Town occupied by the Mexican Army following early Texian defeats and until ultimate victory at San Jacinto. Once resettled by Anglos, became known as Victoria.
- 1837** Victoria incorporated under the Republic of Texas. First Mayor (John Linn) and five Aldermen established first City ordinances and assessed first property taxes in 1843.
- 1846** Post office established in Victoria.
- 1854** Casino Hall established as a center for local cultural events.
- 1860** Victoria had grown to nearly 2,000 residents (including just over 500 slaves), serving as a trade center, courthouse location, major junction point between coastal and inland locations as well as northern Mexico, and a destination for incoming immigrants through the port at Indianola.
- 1861** The San Antonio and Mexican Gulf Railroad reached Victoria (and, after the difficult Civil War era, became part of the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railway in 1871).
- 1865** Era of great cattle ranches began in area in post Civil War years. A variety of settlers – Americans, Germans, Italians, and Mexicans – had also transformed Victoria.
- 1869** One of the first meat-packing plants established in Victoria, reflecting the area's ranching success – along with its role as the birthplace of Longhorn cattle.
- 1880s** Local telephone service established, through the Citizens' Telephone Company, which Southwestern Bell acquired in 1894.
- The New York, Texas and Mexican Railway reached Victoria. Another railroad link between Victoria and Rosenberg was completed in 1882.
- Many area cattle ranchers shifted their interests to financial institutions and commerce given a statewide transition from pioneer ranching and trail driving to market production.
- Stone and brick structures began to replace cypress lumber construction, helping to reduce fire incidents.
- 1884** Construction of a 105-foot standpipe at De Leon Plaza (removed in 1923) began the conversion from river water to wells. An \$89,000 bond issue financed the standpipe plus a pumping station to push untreated river water into the reservoir tower.



- 1888 Local businessmen established a mule-drawn streetcar system (operated until 1894).
- 1889 Aldermen divided City into wards. County Judge J. L. Dupree sponsored area's first highway, which ran about three miles from the Guadalupe River bridge to Goldman Hill, southwest of town, where Refugio, Goliad, and Mission Valley traffic merged.
- 1890 The Victoria Light, Power, and Ice Company contracted with the City to provide 40 bulbs of 32 candlepower, after an earlier lighting network consisting of oil lamps. Central Power and Light became the primary electrical supplier after 1925.
- 1893 Aldermen began codifying City ordinances. Also, Opera House opened, drawing large audiences to see local and nationally renowned musicians, politicians, and orators through the 1920s.
- 1897 The Victoria Advocate, the state's second oldest existing newspaper (given its first publication in 1846), began publishing a daily edition.
- 1901 A portion of City revenue dedicated to Valley View Hospital, a precursor to several hospitals still operating in Victoria.
- 1906 Guadalupe River Navigation Company organized to operate barges and dredges in conjunction with the federal government (after earlier steamer service on the river up to Victoria had ceased by the mid-1880s).
- 1907-08 A bond issue financed conversion of the City water system to artesian wells. Other community health measures occurred in this period.
- 1910s Victoria County population surpassed 18,000, and City population increased by 62 percent to nearly 6,000, reflecting a shift to more urban versus rural living.
- 1914 City Fire Department acquired first pumper and hose truck, replacing earlier fire horse teams.
- 1916 Fire Department moved into new Central Fire Station.



- 1917 A \$100,000 bond began era of “hard-top” streets (53 downtown blocks improved).
- 1925 Central Power & Light began supplying electricity.
- 1940 Land for Riverside Park and Golf Course acquired, and park development continues through early 1970s.
- 1942-46 Aloe and Foster Army Air Fields built for World War II. Foster Field later becomes Victoria Regional Airport in 1958.
- 1949 DuPont plant near Victoria established.
- 1960 Victoria’s U.S. Census population more than doubled since 1950, from roughly 16,000 to 33,000, making Victoria among the fastest-growing Texas cities.
- 1967 Victoria Barge Canal opened. Also, Victoria Community Center opened following public/private funding effort.
- 1973 Community leaders succeeded in establishing a University of Houston Victoria Center (away from Houston campus), which opened with 100 students enrolled.
- 1981 Victoria Mall opened after breaking ground in 1977.
- 1983 Victoria County classified as a Metropolitan Statistical Area by the federal government based on further population growth recorded by the 1980 U.S. Census. Also, State legislation renamed the University of Houston Victoria Center to the University of Houston-Victoria (UH-V) and granted the institution permanent degree-granting status as the fourth university in the University of Houston system.
- 1991 U.S. 59 in Texas designated a High Priority Corridor on the National Highway System through the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), enabling portions to be posted as Interstate 69 or when upgraded to that standard.
- 2000 Successful bond election enabled \$50.5 million worth of street and drainage improvement projects from 2000-2005. The largest projects included improvements to Ben Jordan Street (\$10.22 million), Sam Houston Drive (\$3 million), West Outfall drainage (\$13.26 million), and Northcrest area drainage (\$9.28 million).
- 2001 City water plant completed to finalize conversion from ground to surface water.
- 2002 Port of Victoria deepened the canal to 12 feet to reach the same depth as the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and better facilitate traffic between the two.
- 2007 Voters approved a \$159 million bond to construct two new high schools (replacing existing facilities), a new middle school, two new elementary schools, a District Event Center, and many capital projects to existing campuses across Victoria ISD.
- 2012 Development of oil and natural gas in the Eagle Ford Shale showed a direct impact of more than \$18 million and an indirect impact of more than \$130 million. The economic impact directly influenced the creation of 823 jobs in 2012.
- 2015 UH-V enrollment reaches 4,400, with 1,062 degrees awarded annually (Victoria College enrollment passed 4,200 in 2012). UH-V has more than 16,000 alumni.



SOURCES:

1. Victoria 2025 Comprehensive Plan (as updated through 2007), City of Victoria.
2. Robert W. Shook, "VICTORIA, TX (VICTORIA COUNTY)," Handbook of Texas Online (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdv01>). Accessed April 29, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
3. Thomas Tunstall, "Economic Impact of the Eagle Ford Shale." Accessed October 1, 2015. Uploaded March 2013. Published by University of Texas at San Antonio.
4. Other local sources (City of Victoria, Victoria Advocate archive articles, organization/institution websites, etc.).

DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS

This section highlights some key indicators about Victoria as it is today or up to this point in the community's historical growth and evolution. Other data points relevant to planning topics such as housing, transportation, and the area economy are cited later in this report.

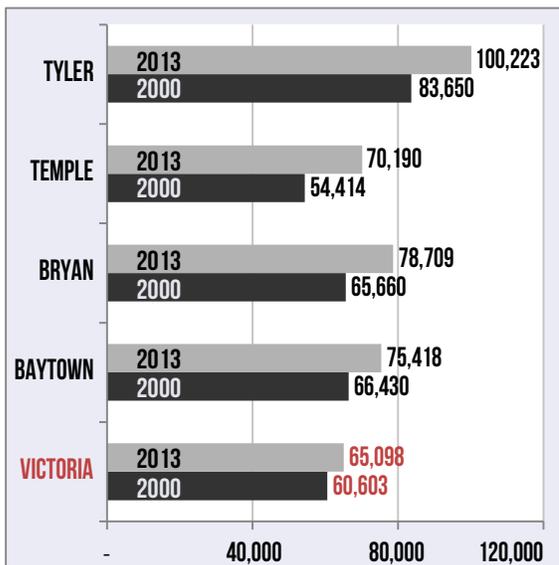
POPULATION TRENDS TO DATE

The figures in Table 1, Population Change, 1900-2010, illustrate the relative trends in population change over time within the City relative to the balance of Victoria County. A nationwide movement of population from rural into urban areas is reflected in the City accounting for 72.1 percent of the County-wide population in 2010 compared to less than 30 percent 100

TABLE 1, POPULATION CHANGE 1900-2010

YEAR	CITY OF VICTORIA			VICTORIA COUNTY	
	POPULATION	PERCENT CHANGE	PERCENT OF COUNTY	POPULATION OUTSIDE CITY	PERCENT CHANGE
1900	4,010	--	29.3%	9,668	--
1910	3,673	-8.4%	24.5%	11,317	17.1%
1920	5,957	62.2%	32.6%	12,314	8.8%
1930	7,421	24.6%	31.6%	16,050	30.3%
1940	11,566	55.9%	48.7%	12,175	-24.1%
1950	16,126	39.4%	51.6%	15,115	24.1%
1960	33,047	104.9%	71.1%	13,420	-11.2%
1970	41,349	25.1%	76.9%	12,417	-7.5%
1980	50,695	22.6%	73.7%	18,112	45.9%
1990	55,076	8.6%	74.1%	19,285	6.5%
2000	60,603	10.0%	72.1%	23,485	21.8%
2010	62,592	3.3%	72.1%	24,201	3.2%

FIGURE 1, POPULATION GROWTH COMPARISON

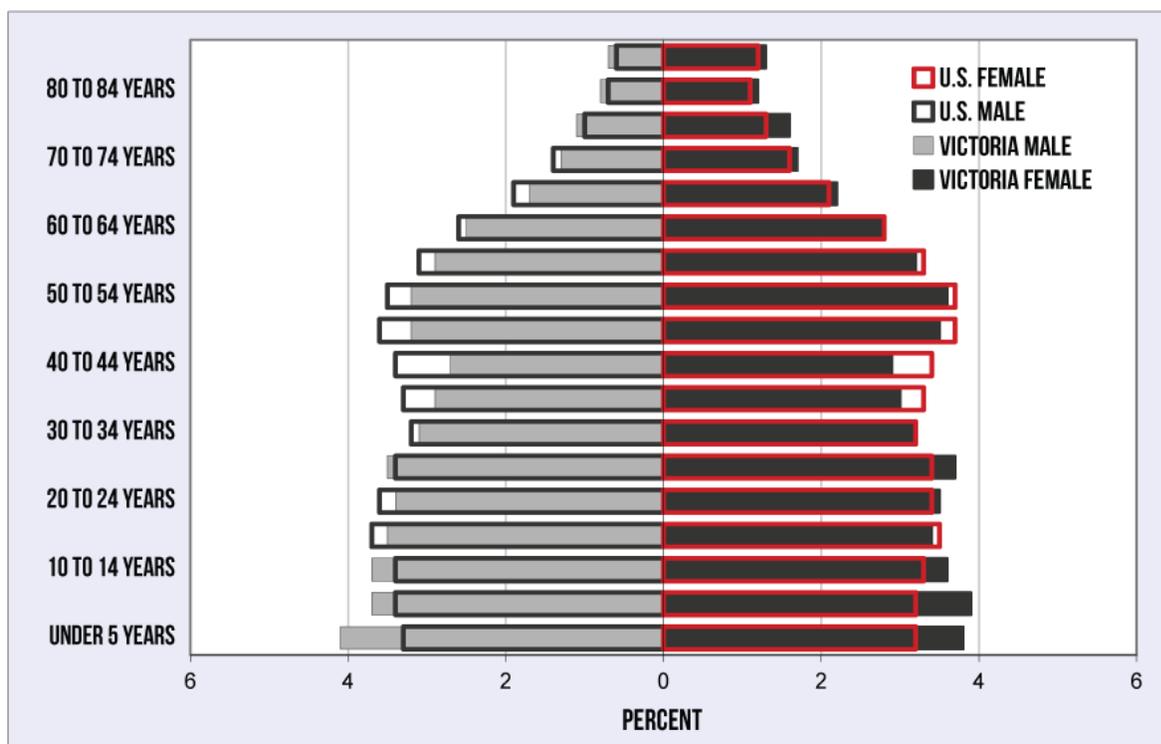


SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey (and Census 2000 data)

years earlier. Shaded rows in the table highlight three distinct economic boom eras for Victoria, driven by cattle and agribusiness in the 1910s (62.2 percent growth in population), then oil in the 1930s (55.9 percent), and the military, petrochemicals and banking in the 1950s (104.9 percent). Since 1960 the City's share of overall County population has remained in the 70th percentile, peaking at 76.9 percent in 1970, and holding steady at 72.1 percent in both Census 2000 and Census 2010.

Victoria added approximately 4,500 residents between Census 2000 and the newest U.S. Census Bureau estimate in mid-2013, for an estimated 2013 population of 65,098. Provided in **Figure 1, Population Growth Comparison**, is perspective on how Victoria's population increased (by 7.4 percent over this period) compared to several other peer cities in Texas. In general, Victoria has seen lower growth rates in recent years than across Texas as a whole.

FIGURE 2, AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION

The age distribution in Victoria as of Census 2010 ranged somewhat older than in all of Texas, with a local median age of 34.9 years relative to 33.6 years statewide. However, when compared to the national age distribution, most evident from **Figure 2, Age and Gender Distribution**, are the higher percentages in Victoria of children in the three youngest age cohorts from under five years through 10-14 years. On the other hand, Victoria has lower shares of its population in the prime earning years between ages 35 and 64. The 2010 population in the City was 52 percent female and 48 percent male.

After Census 2000, the City’s Comprehensive Plan had noted an increase in the age 65+ cohorts from 8.7 percent in 1980 to 12.6 percent in 2000. As of Census 2010, the nationwide trend of a generally aging population, especially involving the “Baby Boom” generation, was also continuing in Victoria with the age 65+ cohort having increased further to 13.5 percent in 2010.

The previous Comprehensive Plan also pointed out that, “It will be important to see if the 2010 Census indicates a continuing downward trend for [the age 20-29 cohorts],” which had decreased steadily from 19.4 percent in 1980 to 13.2 percent by 2000. In fact, by Census 2010 the share of Victoria’s population in the age 20-29 cohorts had recovered somewhat to 14.1 percent in 2010.

TABLE 2, TREND IN AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE, 1950-2010

YEAR	CITY OF VICTORIA	VICTORIA COUNTY	TEXAS	U.S.
1950	3.30	3.50	3.40	3.37
1960	3.52	3.59	3.46	3.33
1970	3.38	3.42	3.17	3.14
1980	2.91	3.11	2.81	2.76
1990	2.78	2.99	2.73	2.63
2000	2.68	2.75	2.74	2.59
2010	2.62	2.65	2.75	2.58

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 1950-2010

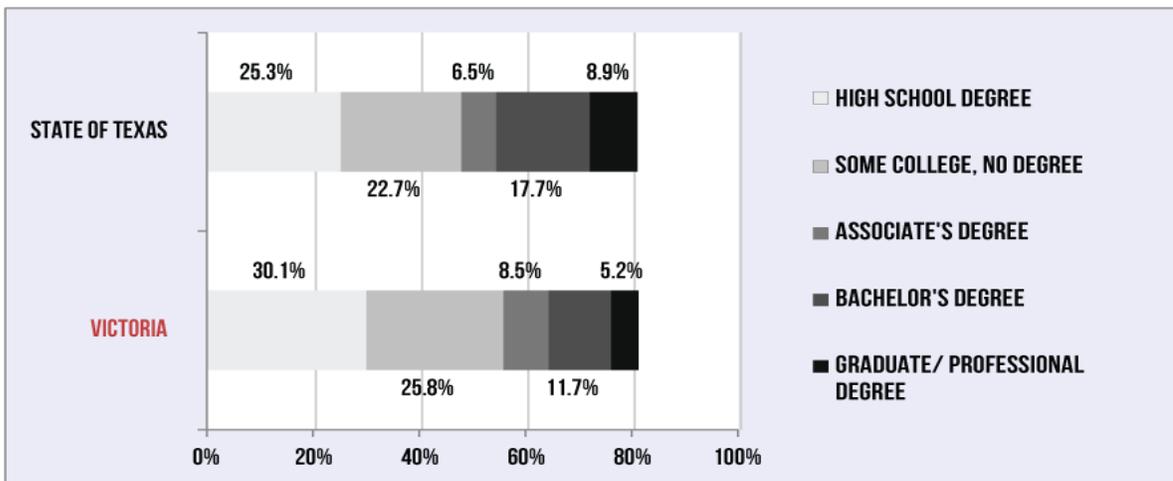
HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Among the most consistent of demographic trends in recent decades, across various levels of geography, is the continuing decrease in average persons per household. The trend is detailed for the the City, County, State of Texas, and entire nation in **Table 2, Trend in Average Household Size, 1950-2010**. The only deviation from this broad trend is the slight uptick in Texas in Census 2010 relative to Census 2000 (2.75 versus 2.74 persons per household). As of Census 2010, among the geographies shown, the City of Victoria had the next lowest average household size after the nation as a whole (2.62 versus 2.58 persons per household).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The most recent U.S. Census Bureau figures for Victoria, through 2013, show that 81.3 percent of all City residents age 25 or older had at least a high school diploma, which was in line with the statewide figure of 81.2 percent. The local versus state comparisons in **Figure 3, Educational Attainment for Persons Age 25+**, shows the different composition in Victoria, where the age 25+ population had 16.9 percent of its members with a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 26.7 percent across Texas. Victoria also has a slightly higher share of adults (8.5 percent) with an Associate's degree as their highest level of educational attainment. The proportion who have completed a graduate or professional degree is 5.2 percent in Victoria relative to 8.9 percent statewide. Finally, 17.6 percent of Victoria residents were enrolled in college relative to just under one-quarter (24.6 percent) statewide.

FIGURE 3, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR PERSONS AGE 25+



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey

