

# Brazos 2020 Vision

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# Agenda

- Profile of the Brazos Valley Council of Governments and Brazos 2020 Vision
- Regional Demographics
- Need for Affordable High-Capacity Broadband Services in the Brazos Valley
- Rural Health Care Facilities in the Brazos Valley and the Proposed 2020 Vision Network
- Rural Health Care NPRM Concerns



# Brazos Valley Council of Governments

- The Brazos Valley Council of Governments (BVCOG) is a multi-purpose organization of local governments originally designated in 1966.
- The BVCOG consists of seven counties in Central Texas: Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson, Washington
- BVCOG currently manages 70 Federal and State grants to deliver services throughout the region such as Regional 911, Housing Choice Voucher Program, Economic Development, Workforce Development, Homeland Security, Area Agency on Aging.



# Brazos Valley Council of Governments Organizational Structure



# Profile of Brazos 2020 Vision

- Brazos 2020 Vision, Inc. is a non-profit corporation with the goal of providing affordable connectivity to **rural health care facilities** in the Brazos Valley
- Brazos 2020 Vision will lay the foundation for a broadband network serving all community anchors in the Brazos Valley



# Regional Demographics

- Total Population 302,731
  - 147,568 (49%) underserved
- 5,105 Square Miles
- Population Density 59.3/sq.mi.
  - U.S. Population Density 85.7/sq.mi.
- 90% of the area has a per capita income less than the U.S average. (2000 Census)

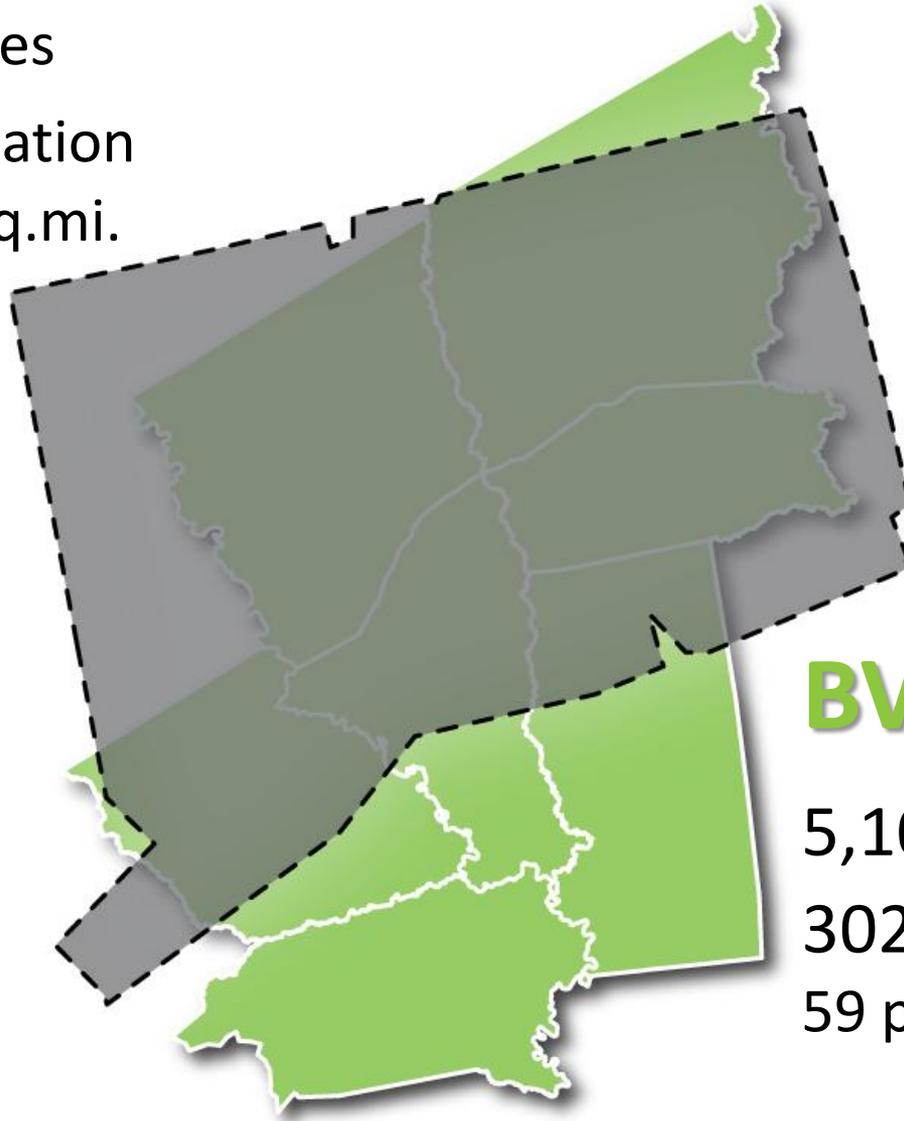


# Connecticut

5,543 square miles

3,574,097 population

645 persons per sq.mi.



## BVCOG

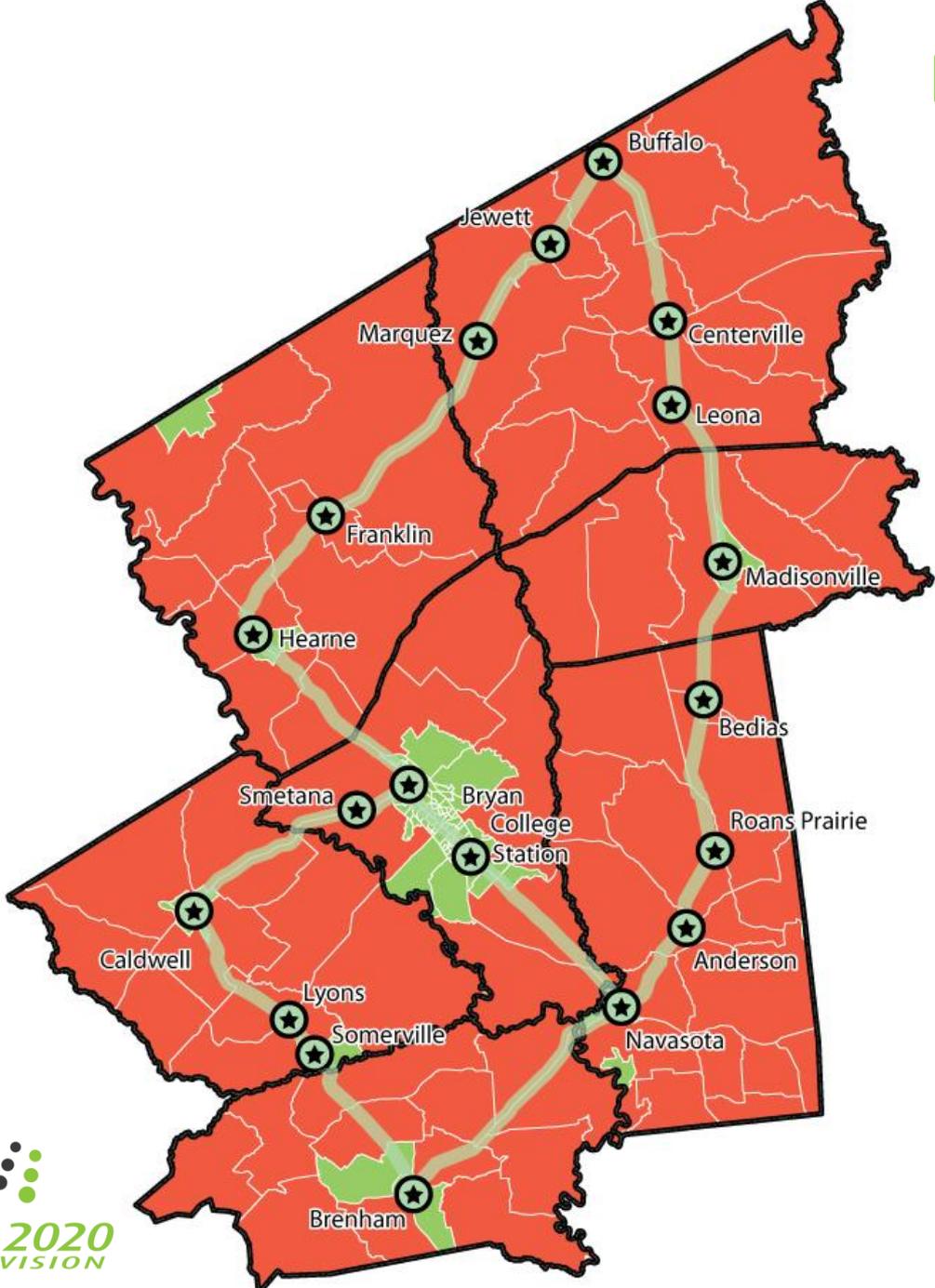
5,105 square miles

302,731 population

59 persons per sq.mi.



# Population Density



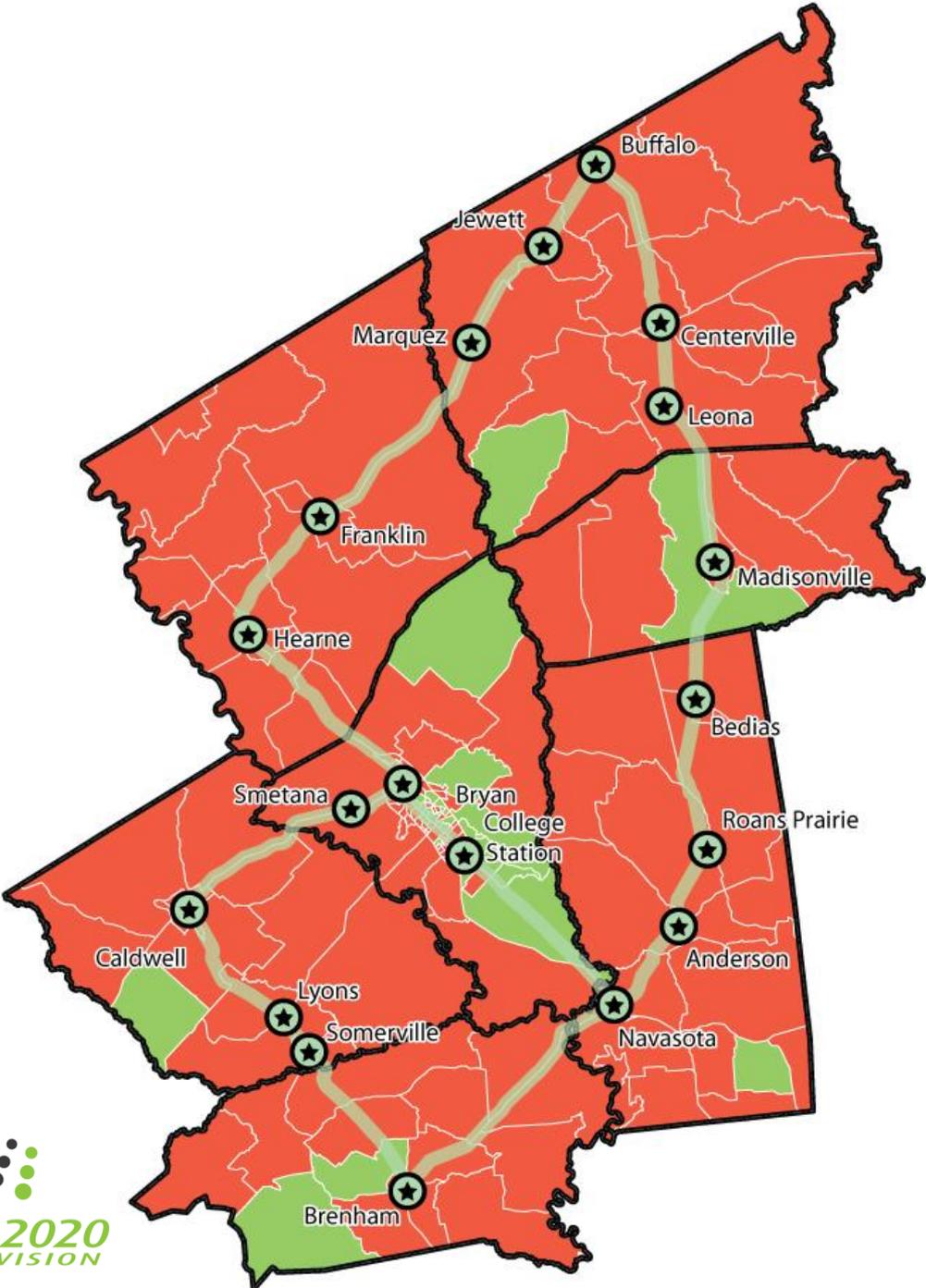
 Block Group with population density less than 79.6 per square mile

 Block Group with population density 79.6 per square mile or greater

*\*95.4% of the Brazos Valley has a **lower** population density than the national average of 79.6 people per square mile.*



# Per Capita Income



 Block Group with PCI less than \$21,587.

 Block Group with PCI \$21,587 or higher.

*\*90% of the Brazos Valley has a per capita income **lower** than the national average of \$21,587.*



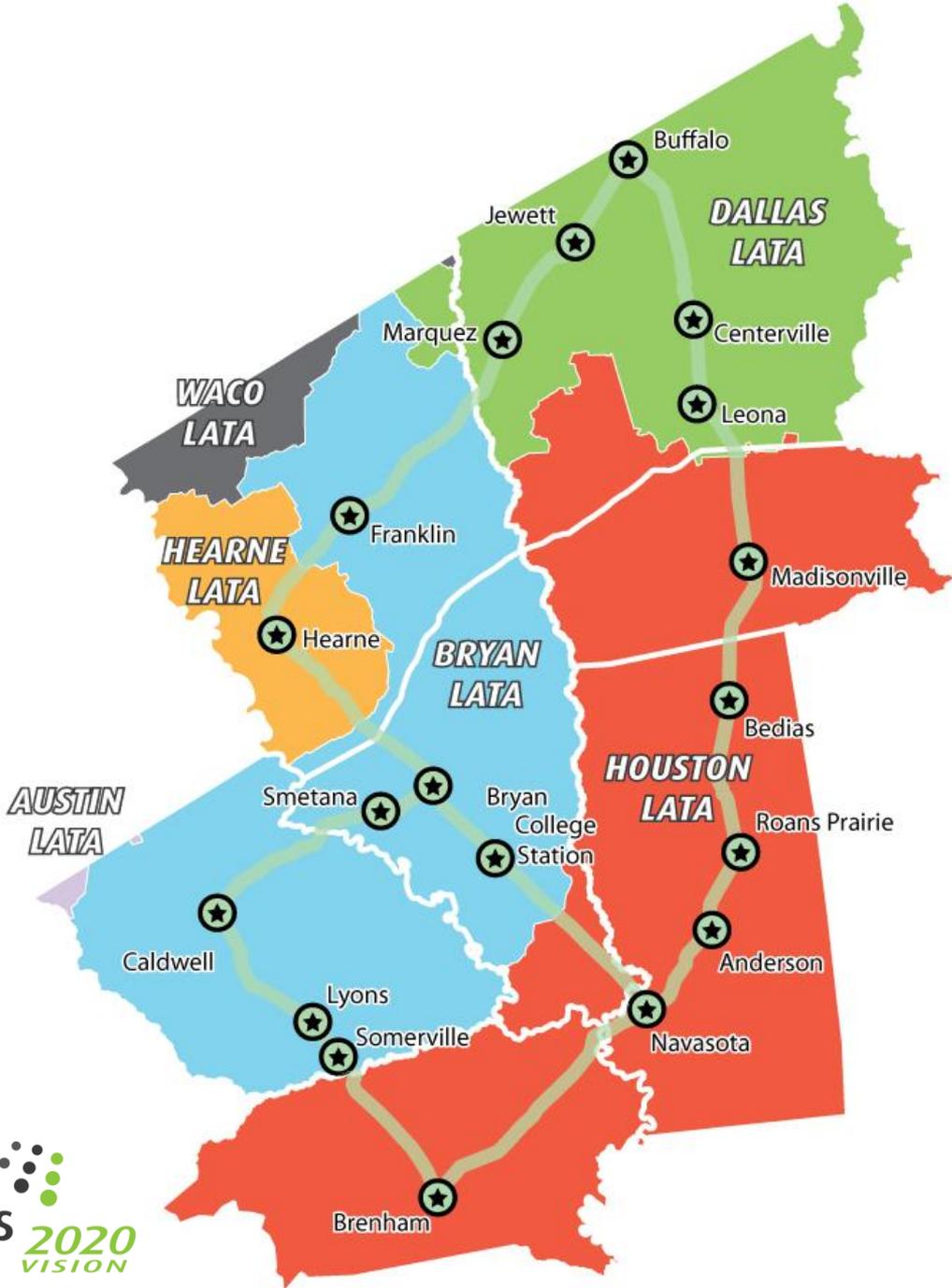
# Need for Affordable High-Capacity Broadband Services in Brazos Valley

Brazos Valley health care facilities and other community anchors do NOT currently have access to affordable high-speed broadband services

- Lack of competitive pricing
- Shortage of high capacity services
- Arbitrary LATA boundaries inhibit investment



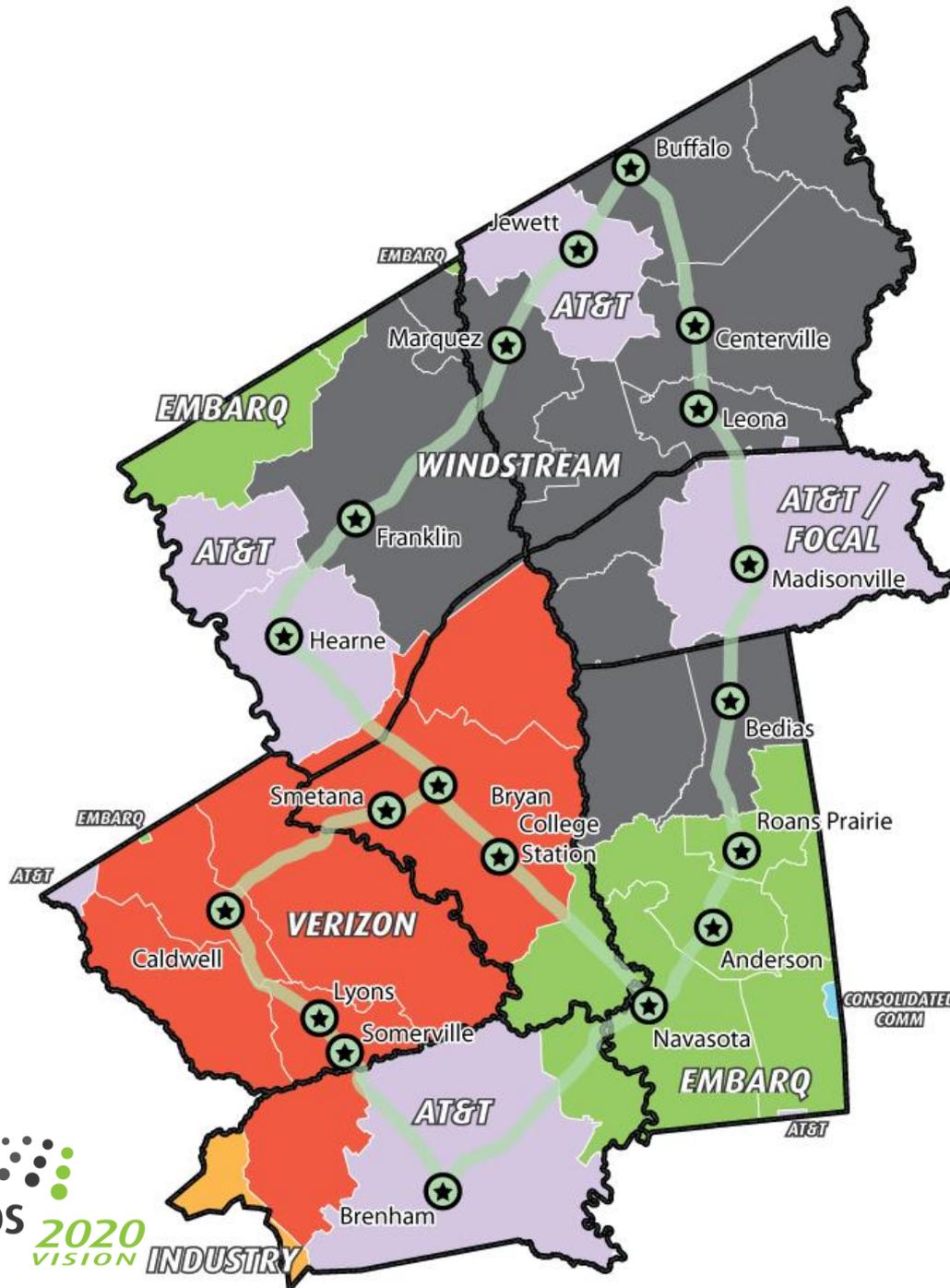
# LATA Distribution



-  Austin LATA
-  Bryan LATA
-  Dallas LATA
-  Hearne LATA
-  Houston LATA
-  Waco LATA



# TELCOM Distribution



- AT&T
- Consolidated
- Embarq
- Industry
- Verizon
- Windstream

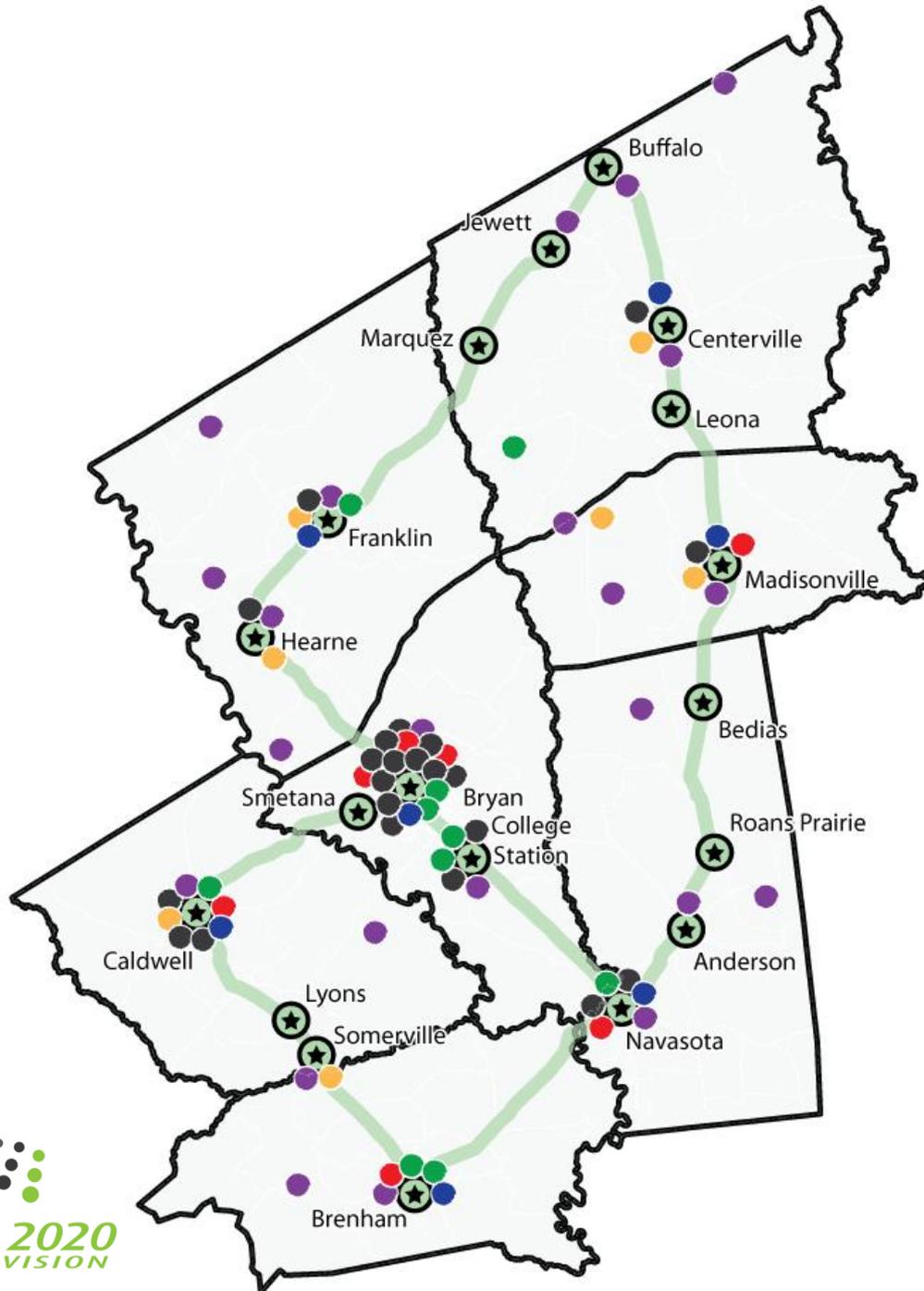


# Rural Health Care Facilities in the Brazos Valley

- 7 Hospitals
- 7 Clinics
- 10 Emergency Medical Service (EMS)
- 7 Jails or Prisons
- 23 ISDs (School Nurses)
- 22 Other Medical Facilities



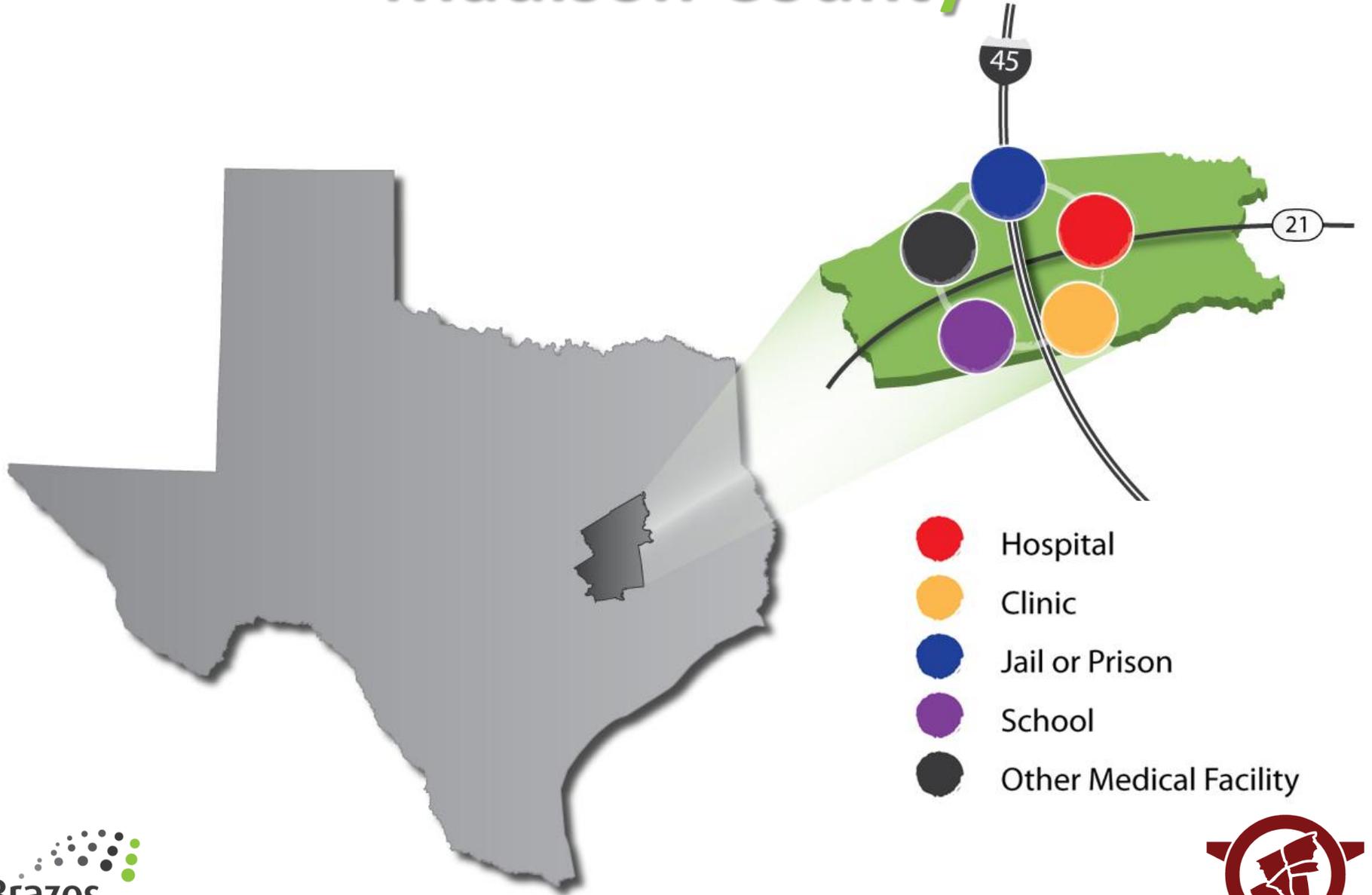
# Healthcare Providers



-  Hospital
-  Clinic
-  Emergency Medical (EMS)
-  Jail or Prison
-  School
-  Other Medical Facility

*\*65 of 76 medical facilities are on the Brazos 2020 Vision proposed fiber optic path.*

# Madison County



# FCC RHC NPRM

- The benefits of increased health infrastructure in the Brazos Valley:
  - Facilitating compliance with federal Electronic Health Records mandates (meaningful use)
  - Necessary to fully implement Next Generation 911 and other IP-based emergency response technologies
  - Increasing value of existing telemedicine programs (e.g., \$400K State HIV Grant)
  - Broadband for health care will drive increased availability of broadband for broader community



# NPRM Top Concerns

- Proposals to delay or eliminate the Health Infrastructure Program should be disregarded:
  - Texas is currently the fastest growing state;
  - Data demands are growing exponentially;
  - T1s are all that is available throughout most of Brazos Valley.

- HHS:

*“Lacking access to the same resources as their urban and sub-urban counterparts, rural health care providers face challenges adopting EHR technology. Without targeted support, rural communities could be set back by . . . meaningful use requirements, rather than assisted by them. Rural health care providers could incur penalties for not achieving meaningful use in time without ever having had a reasonable chance at getting the incentives.”*



# NPRM Top Concerns (Cont'd)

- Creating a burdensome or adversarial process to determine the need for infrastructure will undermine the goals of the program.
  - Broadband maps tend to be self-serving and are of limited use in establishing *availability* (vs. mere proximity);
  - Competitive bidding process can effectively establish the availability of facilities.



# NPRM Top Concerns (Cont'd)

- A dedicated rural health network in Brazos Valley cannot self-sustain without ongoing support *or* the ability to install and lease out excess capacity.
- Leasing excess capacity at market rates:
  - Is a reliable way to raise the required cash match;
  - Ensures long-term viability by providing funding for network operations, maintenance, and upgrades;
  - Avoids the need for ongoing RHC subsidies.



# NPRM Top Concerns (Cont'd)

- Leasing excess capacity at market rates:
  - Avoids wasteful silos thereby maximizing the value of the federal investment;
  - Offers potential for collaboration with telephone companies and other holders of fiber or broadband assets;
  - Supports network redundancies critical to emergency response.
- Rural health networks will not be able to afford excess capacity at greater than incremental cost.



# NPRM Top Concerns (Cont'd)

- Further broadening FCC eligibility categories can support emergency first responders and Next Generation 911 implementation.
  - HHS:

*“The health care industry provides services that are necessary to all Americans. . . . FCC's exclusion of private health care providers may arbitrarily limit access to the benefits of EHRs by rural Americans. This would be contradictory to FCC's overall objective to make available to all Americans, without discrimination, a rapid, efficient, nationwide communications service with adequate facilities at reasonable charges, for the purpose of promoting, among other things, safety of life.”*

