

TEXAS NEIGHBORHOODS TOGETHER

SUPPORT

County Authority: Thoroughfare Planning

Recommendation

Grant all urban/suburban counties the authority to establish minimum standards for roadway connectivity to neighborhoods. This change would apply only to a county that: has a population of more than 800,000 and in which more than 80 percent of the population lives in a single municipality; or is adjacent to such a county.

Background

Currently counties have little or no authority to oversee where new roadways are built. In some rapidly growing counties this has resulted in an unsafe situation in which many new neighborhoods have been built which are minimally connected to the existing road network. Often the only access to such a neighborhood is a single road that connects to a highway, and many neighborhoods with such limited accessibility may adjoin a single highway. When a large accident closes that highway there is no longer a way to access any of those neighborhoods until the accident is cleared. In the event that a second emergency occurs while the highway is closed because of an accident the ability of emergency vehicles to access neighborhoods that are on the other side of the accident is greatly reduced.

Impact

Adoption of minimum standards for roadway connectivity would improve the safety of residents of neighborhoods that are outside the territorial limits of a city by enhancing the ability of emergency vehicles to access those neighborhoods.