

Round Rock: The City of Choice

Dell Technologies Headquarters
in Round Rock

Image from staff files.



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information about
Historic Preservation in
Round Rock

Economic Development

Until the 1920s, Round Rock's economy was based in agriculture, especially cotton. Successful early industries included the Round Rock White Lime Company (est. 1896) and the Round Rock Cheese Factory (est. 1928). The completion of Interstate 35 in the mid-20th century brought the City within commuting distance of Austin, attracting residents and laying the foundation for economic development. The increased number of residents made it necessary to secure a stable water supply to support continued development. Once water was secured, the City began to strategically attract employers, streamline permitting, and invest in parks and other quality of life improvements. As a result, Round Rock experienced significant residential and commercial growth including new amenities and regional attractions. Round Rock anticipates continued growth and development as a result of its diverse and strong economy.

Dell Technologies Comes To Round Rock

Dell Technologies located its headquarters in Round Rock in 1993 and entered into a partnership with the City. The partnership was structured to incentivize job creation and business stimulation while providing financial benefits and operational support to Dell. Dell's presence has resulted in a significant increase to the City's tax base, with a portion of each sale generating revenue for Round Rock. Dell became the largest employer in Round Rock with 7,000 employees by 2000 and 12,000 employees by 2023. In 2024, Dell extended their economic development agreement with the City to ensure a continued partnership until at least 2100.



Dell
Technologies
Headquarters.
Photo from staff files.

Becoming the City of Choice (1980s-2000)

By the 1980s, Round Rock was an established bedroom community for commuters working in Austin. City officials began to organize a formal economic development program to recruit major employers to the City. Following the arrival of Dell Technologies in the early 1990s, the City became a hub for global headquarters including TECO-Westinghouse and Toppan Photomasks, Inc. Local technology start-up businesses also contributed to the diversification of Round Rock's economic base.

“Sports Capital of Texas”

Following the opening of Dell Diamond, a minor league baseball field completed in 2000, Round Rock launched a sports tourism program that focused on family-oriented sports opportunities. With a wide variety of indoor and outdoor sports facilities, the City became the premier destination for youth, amateur, and recreational sports. In 2003, Round Rock proclaimed itself as the “Sports Capital of Texas.”



Dell Diamond construction completed in 2000.
Photo from staff files.

New Industries & Tourism (2000-2010)

In 2000, the City adopted a comprehensive plan that included a goal to create greater employment opportunities and attract a wide range of businesses and corporations that further expanded its economic base. During the 2000s, the City saw the growth of healthcare, higher education, and renewable energy industries.

Key to Round Rock's continued economic growth was its investment in sports tourism which accelerated the development of retail, restaurants, and overnight lodging options across the City. Round Rock soon evolved into a major retail destination with the opening of IKEA and the Round Rock Premium Outlets. Policy decisions and investments made between 2000 and 2010 sparked Round Rock's transition from a suburb to a mid-sized city.



Texas State
University
Round Rock
Campus
Photo from staff files.



Kalahari
Resorts &
Conventions.
Photo from staff files.

Transition to a Mid-Sized City (2010s)

Round Rock's population grew to nearly 100,000 by 2010. City officials prioritized quality of life for residents and sought to revitalize downtown into a destination for the community and visitors. Guided by the City's comprehensive plan and the *2010 Downtown Master Plan*, Round Rock accelerated investment in downtown to create a thriving town center that would enhance Round Rock's economy, quality of life, and sense of place. The City's *2011 Arts and Culture Master Plan* encouraged arts and culture programming and the development of entertainment options.

Throughout the decade, the City continued to invest in citywide improvements that would shape Round Rock into the “City of Choice” for entrepreneurs and business leaders. The combination of public improvements and the promotion of family-oriented entertainment made Round Rock the ideal location for Kalahari, a national resort and convention center, projected to generate a net \$4.7 million in new tax revenue to the City and create at least 700 new jobs.

The Future of Round Rock (2020s-)

The City continues to invest in downtown and citywide public improvements to support Round Rock's growing population which increased to 119,468 in 2020, nearly 20% from 2010. In 2023, voters approved a General Obligation Bond to fund public projects including the Round Rock Sports Center expansion and improvements to Old Settlers Park, a 670-acre park that is a well-known destination for youth and amateur sports leagues. As a result of these projects and continued growth and diversification of an already strong economy, Round Rock's population is projected to grow throughout the 21st century. The City and the Round Rock Chamber work together to recruit and retain businesses and promote quality of life for those who live and work in the City.

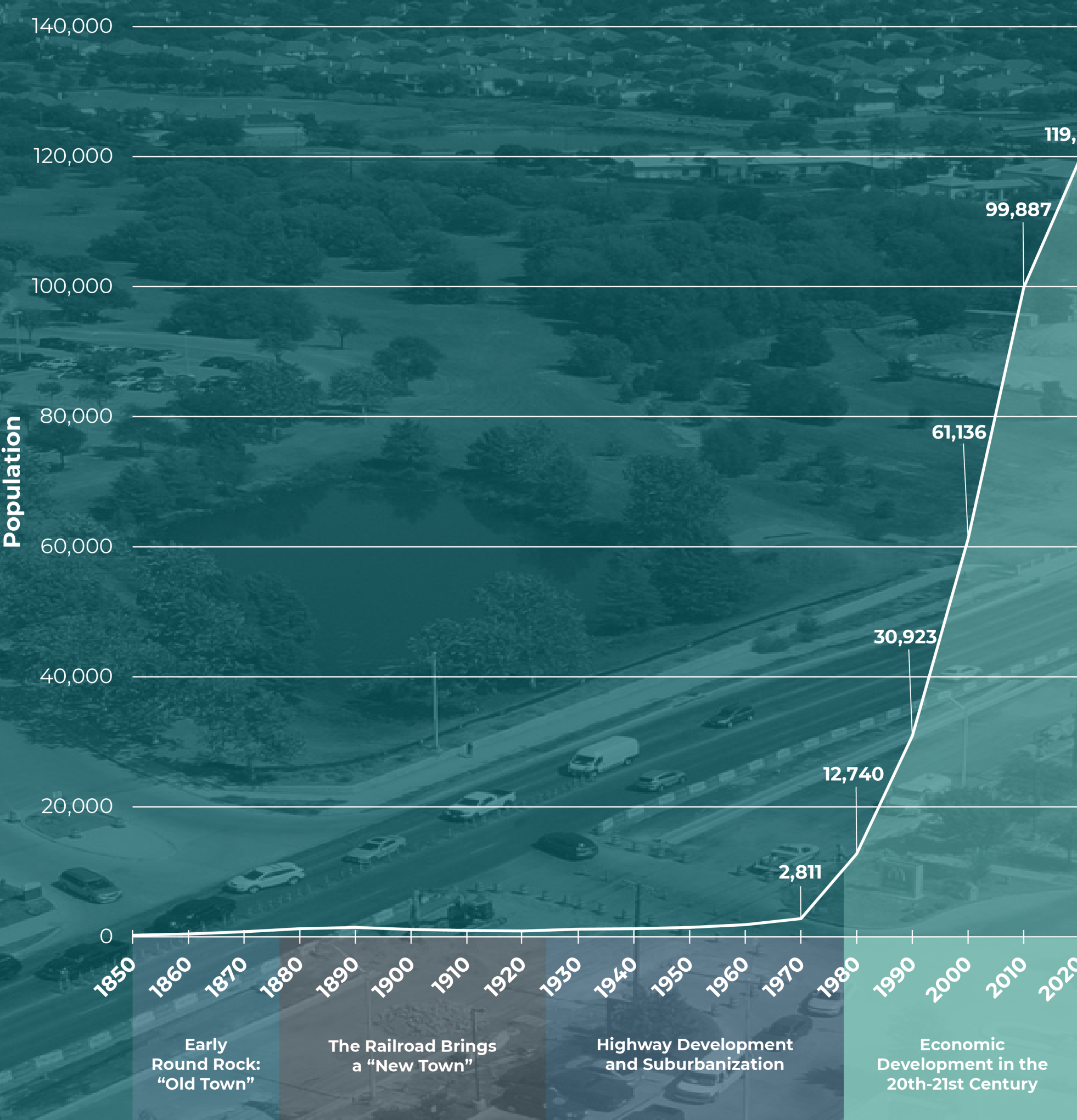


Downtown
Round Rock
looking east
from Round
Rock Avenue
and South Blair
Street.
Photo from staff files.

Photograph looking
northeast along University
Boulevard from Interstate
Highway 35

Photo from staff files.

Population, 1970-2020 Census



This is the fifth in a series of five banners about Round Rock's history.