

II. The King County Benchmark Program

In 1990 the Washington State Legislature passed the Growth Management Act (GMA). For the first time in the state's history, all urban counties and their cities were required to develop and adopt comprehensive land use plans and regulations to implement the plans. To achieve a coordinated countywide plan across King County's jurisdictions, GMA further required that King County and its now 39 cities develop framework policies—the King County *Countywide Planning Policies*—to guide the development of the jurisdictions' plans.

In order to obtain interjurisdictional coordination, the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) was established to define and refine the policies in the *Countywide Planning Policies*. The original *Countywide Planning Policies* were adopted by the Metropolitan King County Council and ratified by the original 31 cities in 1994. Since then, they have been amended several times.

The GMA further required the establishment of a monitoring program to track the progress of the county's *Countywide Planning Policies*. As a result of this mandate, the King County Benchmark Program was adopted by the GMPC in 1995. It includes 45 indicators that collectively articulate the impact of land use and development policies/ practices on our natural, built and social environment. Rather than focusing on the jurisdictional programs of the county's 40 jurisdictions, the Benchmarks provide a high level analytical view of change within the geographic boundaries of King County.

The Eleventh Annual Benchmark Report Series

The King County Benchmark Program reports cover five policy areas: land use, economic development, transportation, affordable housing and the environment. This section summarizes the findings of the 11th Annual Benchmark Report Series, published from 2006 to 2008.

Employment in King County rose steadily from 1995 to 2000, but dipped through 2004 as a result of a regional recession. With over 1.15 million jobs in 2006, King County has gained over 50,000 jobs during the subsequent economic rebound. Wages have doubled since 1990 to an average of \$53,490 in 2006, with the most notable period of growth occurring between 1997 and 2000. When adjusted for inflation, wages have grown 25% since 1990, but have struggled to keep pace with inflation since peaking in 1999. At \$32,671 in 2006, real wages have not yet returned to their 1999 levels.

While incomes have increased over the last 10 years, growth has not been evenly distributed among King County households. In 1990, more than half of all households in King County earned between 50% and 150% of median income. By 2006, middle income households accounted for only 46% of the county's households.

As incomes struggled to keep pace with inflation, home prices continued to rise at a healthy clip leading to a housing market that is increasingly unaffordable for King County's households. In 1990, 27% of the county's households were spending more than 30% of their income for housing. By 2005, the percent of households paying more than they could afford for housing had increased to 38% (almost one-third of the county's home owners and one-half of the county's renters).

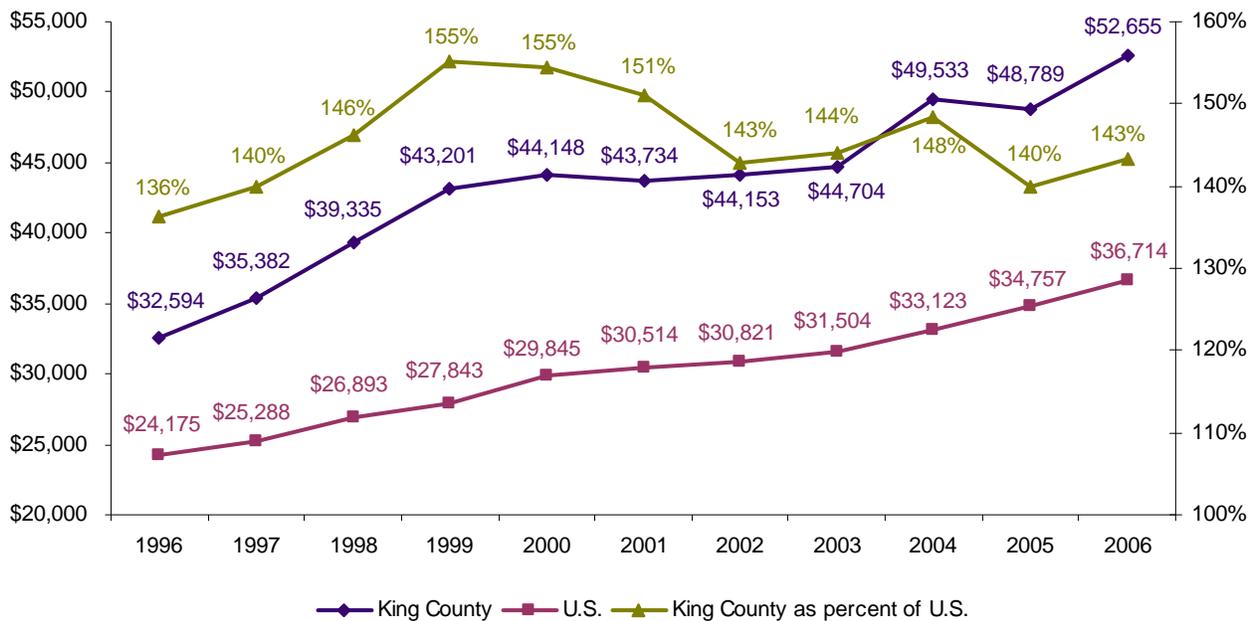
Since 1993, total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in King County have increased at a fairly steady pace. Commute times have also increased and even though more people are using public transportation, almost two out of three workers still use their personal vehicles to commute. While car traffic still accounts for the vast majority of vehicular traffic, the increase in truck traffic on King County roads has dwarfed the growth in car traffic. While indicative of economic growth, this increase in commercial truck traffic has also driven a 50% increase in diesel consumption in the last decade. This is particularly noteworthy as the transportation sector contributes one-half of the county's Greenhouse Gas emissions, which increased from 1999 to 2003.

The following pages further discuss these changes and their impact on our natural, built and social environments. For more information about these indicators and the King County Benchmark Program, reports are available on the Internet at <http://www.metrokc.gov/budget/benchmrk>.

Local Economy Shows Mixed Signs of Growth

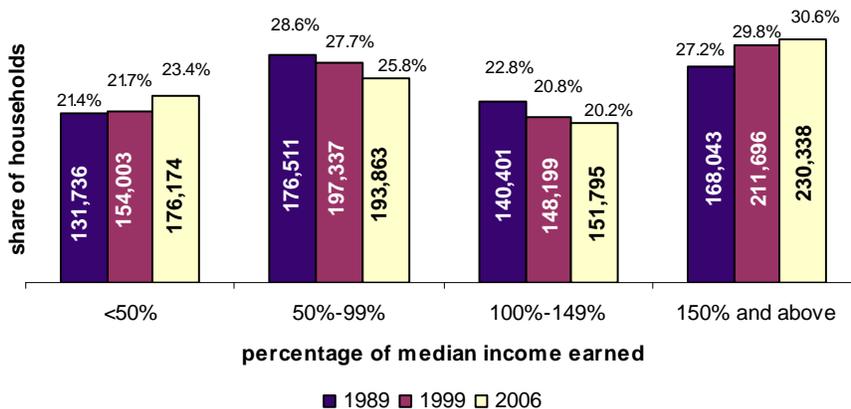
The mid-1990's brought exceptional economic growth to the Puget Sound region, buoyed by a strong national economy. Between 1995 and 2000, nearly 8,000 new businesses were established in King County. This business expansion was accompanied by strong gains in employment and wages, especially within the high-tech sector. With unprecedented growth in the 1990's, wages in the software publishing industry peaked in 1999. However, industry wages dropped just as precipitously as they had grown in the 1990's in the early years of this decade. This decrease accompanied other signs of economic downturn as the region faced a national recession, the results of which are shown in the 2008 Economic Bulletin.

King County and National Per Capita Personal Income



Since 1996, per capita personal income (PCPI) in King County has averaged almost 5% annual growth. However, the lion's share of this growth occurred in the late 1990's. Beginning in 2000, the rate of growth in per capita personal income decreased noticeably, with very small gains in the early years of this decade. When adjusted for inflation, King County's PCPI in 2006 had not yet returned to incomes recorded in 2000.

King County Household Income Distribution



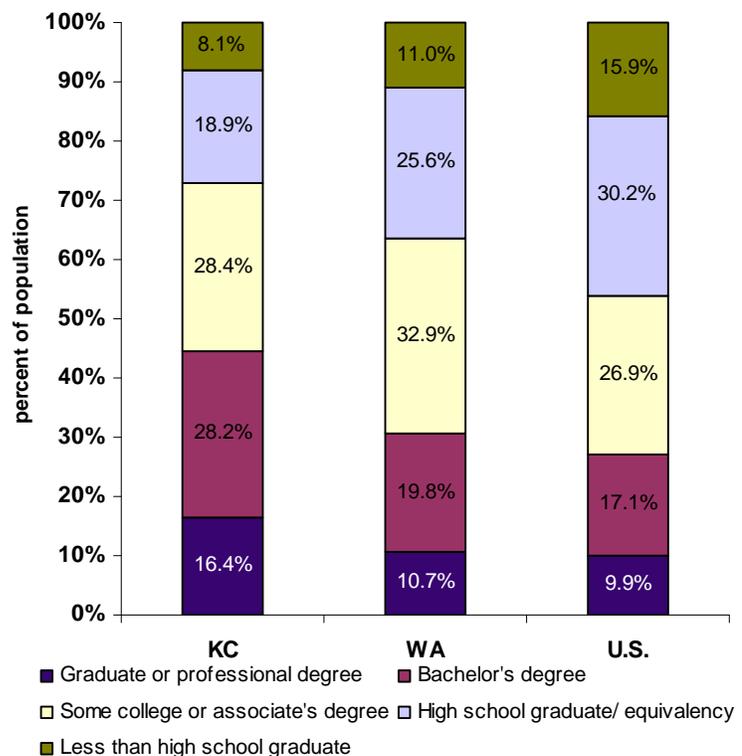
Both nationally and within King County, median household incomes have also struggled to keep pace with inflation and have yet to return to their 1989 levels, despite gains over the last two years. A trend seen nationally, but more pronounced in King County, is the shrinking of the middle class with middle income households accounting for an increasingly smaller share of the nation's (and county's) households. This trend is led by income gains for households earning more than 150% of median income.

King County Average Covered Employment and Wages by Sector						
SECTOR	2002			2006		
	Employment	Firms	Average Wages Paid per Employee	Employment	Firms	Average Wages Paid per Employee
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	3,057	458	\$51,067	2,651	367	\$65,648
Construction	55,665	7,029	\$45,618	66,644	6,560	\$50,546
Manufacturing	117,068	2,814	\$60,127	111,210	2,455	\$69,504
Wholesale trade	61,069	7,796	\$55,614	62,386	6,971	\$66,066
Retail trade	112,716	5,263	\$29,550	111,964	4,548	\$33,434
Transportation and warehousing	44,805	1,468	\$44,074	44,599	1,318	\$49,155
Information	68,739	1,626	\$124,305	72,201	1,496	\$107,509
Finance and insurance	51,594	2,652	\$62,039	51,320	2,725	\$82,409
Real estate and rental and leasing	23,689	2,484	\$35,104	25,238	2,578	\$43,660
Professional and technical services	77,900	8,753	\$60,988	83,533	8,278	\$71,204
Management of companies and enterprises	20,914	304	\$75,523	23,932	305	\$92,398
Administrative and waste services	59,423	3,703	\$34,542	71,250	3,490	\$38,798
Educational services	13,692	932	\$29,362	14,642	925	\$32,625
Health care and social assistance	92,474	4,470	\$36,242	102,900	4,654	\$42,353
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	18,732	840	\$30,429	20,563	842	\$38,471
Accommodation and food services	79,171	3,909	\$16,764	86,549	4,089	\$18,395
Other services, except public administration	48,447	24,367	\$23,347	45,115	17,425	\$27,972
Government	151,773	307	\$43,162	151,964	286	\$49,922
Not classified	1,751	72	\$62,040	1,429	53	\$73,273
TOTAL	1,102,678	79,242	\$47,917	1,150,083	69,360	\$53,490

King County gained nearly 50,000 net new jobs between 2002 and 2006, with strong gains in both construction and administrative/ waste services. These sectors also experienced strong growth in wages, each increasing about 12% during this time period. During this time, the information sector experienced decreases in firms and average wages. Despite these losses, the information sector continues to pay higher wages than any other sector in King County, with employees averaging \$108,000 annually.

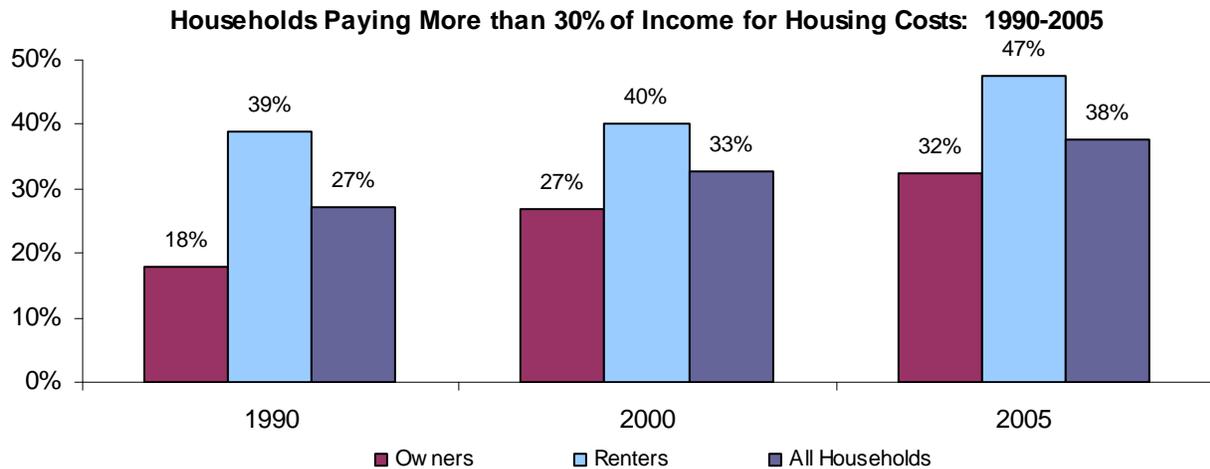
Other indicators of King County's economic footing will be addressed in the upcoming Transportation and Affordable Housing Bulletins, highlighting the changes in housing costs and availability in King County as well as the commuting practices of King County's residents.

Education Attainment of Adult Population (Age 25+):
King County, Washington, United States



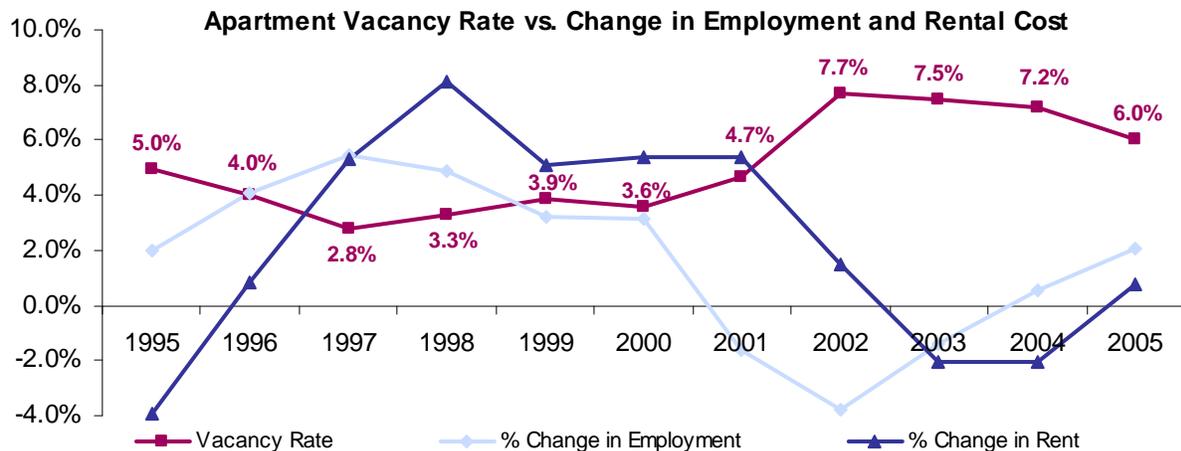
Affordable Housing Not Available for Many King County Households

The factors that influence affordable housing have aligned to produce a discouraging outlook for a significant number of the county's households. While the home ownership rate in King County has increased since 1990, the percent of owner households paying more than 30% of their income toward housing has also grown. Likewise, nearly one-half of renter households pay more than they can afford for housing, a notable increase since 1990. This signals a worrisome trend in housing and is the focus of the 2006 Affordable Housing Bulletin.

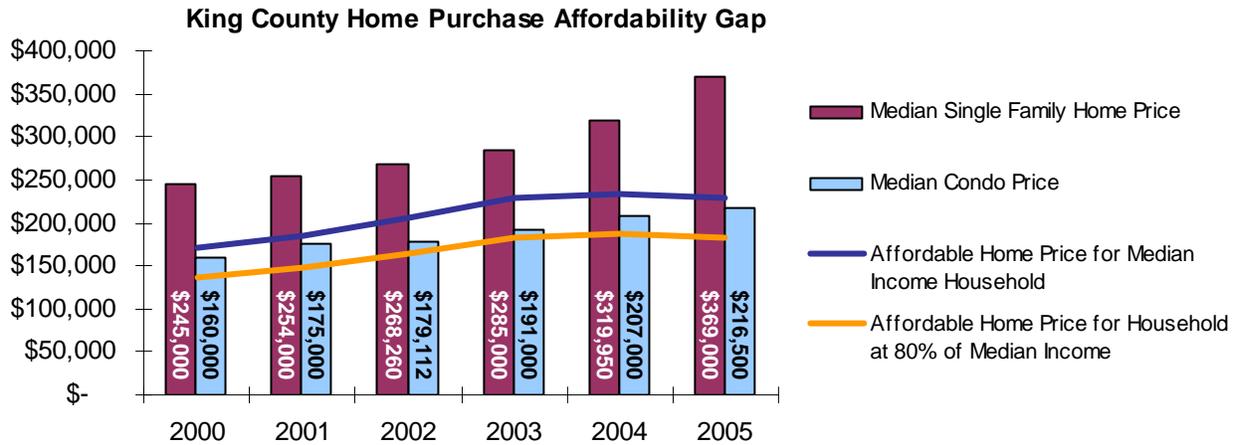


In 2005, more than four out of five rental households earning less than half of median income did not have affordable housing in King County, paying more than 30% of their income toward housing. Such households must divert their resources from other necessities such as food and healthcare, and are at greater risk of homelessness.

The proportion of King County households earning less than half of median income rose over the last decade, as highlighted in the 2006 Economic Development bulletin. Should this trend continue without a corresponding increase in low-income rental housing, even more households will be burdened by high housing costs. Changes in rental housing suggest that this is already happening. Apartment vacancy rates declined in 2005, signaling increased demand for rentals and portending higher rents. In fact, average rent did increase in 2005 after relative stability the previous three years.



Following several years of economic growth in the late 1990's, the early years of this decade saw a region wide recession that slowed income gains. Still, demand for houses remained strong, and although low interest rates provided homebuyers with greater purchasing power, the market responded with increased home prices. Consequently, the gap widened between what typical households could afford and what typical homes cost, making home ownership less affordable for many King County households.



In 2005, the home purchase affordability gap for a median-priced home more than doubled what it was only two years prior. Only one in 10 single-family home sales in the county were affordable to the median income household. However, homebuyers found more affordable alternatives in the condominium market; over half of all condo sales were affordable to the typical King County household in 2005. Condominiums also provided an affordable home ownership option for moderate income households with nearly one-third of the 2005 condo sales being affordable to those households.

King County Affordable Home Sales by Subarea: 2005						
	Sea-Shore	East	South	Rural Cities	Uninc. KC	KC Total
Single Family Home Sales	12,433	8,257	9,186	1,147	8,605	39,628
Percent Affordable to Median Income Household	7.2%	1.5%	21.2%	11.6%	11.3%	10.3%
Percent Affordable to 80% Median Income Household	2.7%	0.8%	5.9%	3.4%	3.9%	3.4%
Percent Affordable to 50% Median Income Household	0.4%	0.1%	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Condo/Townhome Sales	4,443	4,025	2,386	115	1,111	12,080
Percent Affordable to Median Income Household	36.6%	51.6%	87.3%	44.3%	67.1%	54.5%
Percent Affordable to 80% Median Income Household	18.3%	29.7%	67.4%	16.5%	47.3%	34.5%
Percent Affordable to 50% Median Income Household	0.6%	4.8%	18.4%	3.5%	13.1%	6.7%

Efficient Urban Land Use Anticipates Future Growth

The Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) direct growth and land use in King County by encouraging dense urban development within the Urban Growth Area (UGA) while preserving and protecting rural and resource lands from similar development patterns. As shown in the 2008 Land Use Bulletin, King County jurisdictions have successfully increased urban densities, preparing for continued growth while maintaining open spaces and resource lands in the urban and rural areas for recreational purposes and economic vitality.

The Puget Sound Region gained close to 300,000 jobs and 225,000 housing units between 1995 and 2006. King County accommodated about one-half of that growth, despite three consecutive years of job losses as the region experienced a recession in the early years of this decade. Of note, the rate of job and housing growth in both Pierce and Snohomish Counties in this 11-year period surpassed that in King County, yet King County continues to accommodate the lion's share of regional housing and employment.

Number of Jobs Per Housing Unit in the Four-County Region									
County	1995			2000			2006		
	Jobs	Housing Units	Jobs/Hsg Ratio	Jobs	Housing Units	Jobs/Hsg Ratio	Jobs	Housing Units	Jobs/Hsg Ratio
King	937,211	699,324	1.34	1,149,642	742,239	1.55	1,125,197	803,268	1.40
Kitsap	68,147	89,054	0.77	71,244	92,644	0.77	83,427	100,636	0.83
Pierce	209,890	260,309	0.81	235,258	277,060	0.85	261,792	312,521	0.84
Snohomish	182,540	211,162	0.86	208,695	236,205	0.88	228,518	267,676	0.85
Region Total	1,401,460	1,259,849	1.11	1,666,422	1,348,148	1.24	1,698,934	1,484,101	1.14

Within King County, job and housing growth has been unevenly distributed. Sea-Shore continues to accommodate the county's greatest share of both jobs and housing units, though its relative share has decreased as every other subarea experienced stronger growth over the last decade.

An important component of the CPPs is the encouragement of growth within the county's 17 Urban Centers, which are designed to concentrate employment and housing in dense urban communities. From 2001 to 2006, the Urban Centers accounted for 16% of the county's residential growth and now accommodate close to 10% of the county's total housing stock. Not surprisingly, high demand Urban Centers-- Bellevue, Downtown Seattle and Seattle's First Hill/ Capitol Hill-- experienced the greatest housing gains in this time period, contributing over 80% of the collective housing growth in Urban Centers.

Net New Housing Units Permitted in Urban Centers, 2001-2006							
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	total
Auburn*		NA	0	24	0	0	24
Bellevue	359	252	143	30	232	794	1,810
Burien*			NA	1	7	2	10
Federal Way	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kent	1	0	(2)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(6)
Kirkland/Totem Lake*		NA	0	0	0	0	0
Redmond	0	0	60	(1)	88	22	169
Redmond Overlake**						0	0
Renton	36	(2)	(4)	2	195	56	283
SeaTac	0	1	(4)	(9)	(15)	(6)	(33)
Tukwila	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seattle	2,408	1,708	849	405	809	1,445	7,624
First Hill/Cap. Hill	652	393	201	75	67	444	1,832
Downtown	1,492	1,060	355	214	443	749	4,313
Northgate	15	15	0	0	5	22	57
Seattle Center	230	96	133	111	8	212	790
South Lake Union*					151	0	151
Univ. District	19	144	160	5	135	18	481
New Housing Units in Urban Centers	2,804	1,959	1,042	450	1,315	2,311	9,881
New Housing Units in King County	10,597	10,836	10,666	10,278	10,939	9,426	62,742
Housing Growth Accommodated by Urban Centers	26%	18%	10%	4%	12%	25%	16%

*Auburn and Totem Lake were designated as Urban Centers in 2002. Burien and South Lake Union were designated in 2003 and 2005 respectively. **Redmond Overlake was originally designated as a Manufacturing and Industrial Center. Its designation was changed as an Urban Center in 2006.

While the county continued to experience housing growth, recession led to countywide job losses between 2001 and 2004; losses from which the county has not yet fully recovered. The Urban Centers were particularly affected by the recession. The original 12 Urban Centers lost 36,000 jobs, a greater decrease than the 30,000 jobs lost countywide. However, with the designation of five new Centers, the Urban Centers experienced collective job growth and now account for 37% of the county's total employment.

King County Employment in Urban Centers: 1995 - 2006									
	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Employment Change (since designation)
Auburn*				3,102	2,801	2,869	3,078	2,900	-202
Bellevue	23,088	31,221	31,945	27,914	27,341	26,062	28,341	32,947	9,859
Burien*					4,420	4,263	4,065	4,064	-356
Federal Way	3,186	3,870	3,869	3,886	3,816	3,473	3,469	3,374	188
Kent	3,100	3,085	3,364	3,302	4,052	3,746	3,776	4,313	1,213
Kirkland/Totem Lake*				12,634	12,035	11,117	11,016	11,852	-782
Redmond	4,025	10,417	13,275	12,845	13,576	14,173	13,516	8,171	4,146
Redmond Overlake**								40,746	0
Renton	14,006	16,452	16,423	14,327	11,498	10,860	11,741	12,919	-1,087
SeaTac	7,064	8,589	9,345	8,631	8,723	8,055	7,203	8,047	983
Tukwila	17,047	20,366	19,905	18,590	18,324	17,976	18,106	18,442	1,395
Seattle	226,913	271,674	268,724	254,016	244,116	241,746	262,567	263,073	16,498
First Hill/Cap. Hill	32,028	36,096	38,122	38,619	39,454	39,528	39,871	40,860	8,832
Downtown	139,954	174,028	168,503	156,473	147,937	144,474	143,364	142,644	2,690
Northgate	9,467	11,063	11,467	10,638	10,843	10,973	10,604	10,382	915
Seattle Center	16,726	16,890	16,241	15,536	12,450	12,704	14,574	14,244	-2,482
South Lake Union*							19,662	20,436	774
Univ. District	28,738	33,597	34,391	32,750	33,432	34,066	34,491	34,507	5,769
UC TOTAL	298,429	365,674	366,850	359,247	350,702	344,338	366,878	410,848	31,855

*Auburn and Totem Lake were designated as urban centers in 2002. Burien and South Lake Union were designated in 2003 and 2005 respectively. ** Redmond Overlake was originally designated as a Manufacturing and Industrial Center. It's designation was changed to an Urban Center in 2006.

Efficient use of urban land has allowed the county to maintain urban open space while also protecting rural and resource lands from development, a fundamental goal of the CPPs. The *2007 Buildable Lands Report* found that the county recorded more plat activity and added more housing units in the 2001-2005 evaluation period than during the previous five-year period. However, because residential development occurred at a higher density, this contributed to an increase in land capacity to accommodate projected growth in the Urban Area through 2022.

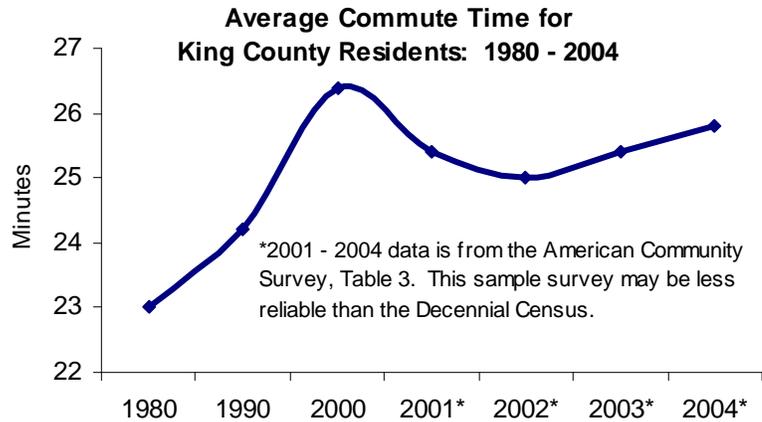
Single-Family Plats in King County Urban Growth Area						
	1996-2000			2001-2005		
	Net Acres	Lots	Lots/Acre	Net Acres	Lots	Lots/Acre
Sea-Shore	139	834	6.0	36	227	6.3
East County	1,391	5,461	3.9	1,547	9,331	6.0
South County	1,037	5,651	5.4	1,738	11,108	6.4
Rural Cities	419	1,849	4.4	278	1,594	5.7
Total UGA	2,986	13,795	4.6	3,599	22,260	6.2

Multifamily Permits in King County Urban Growth Area						
	1996-2000			2001-2005		
	Net Acres	Units	Units/Acre	Net Acres	Units	Units/Acre
Sea-Shore	156	8,115	52.0	184	13,485	73.3
East County	473	9,677	20.5	201	6,656	33.1
South County	455	7,938	17.4	260	4,971	19.1
Rural Cities	142	1,255	8.8	25	316	12.6
Total UGA	1,226	26,985	22.0	670	25,428	38.0

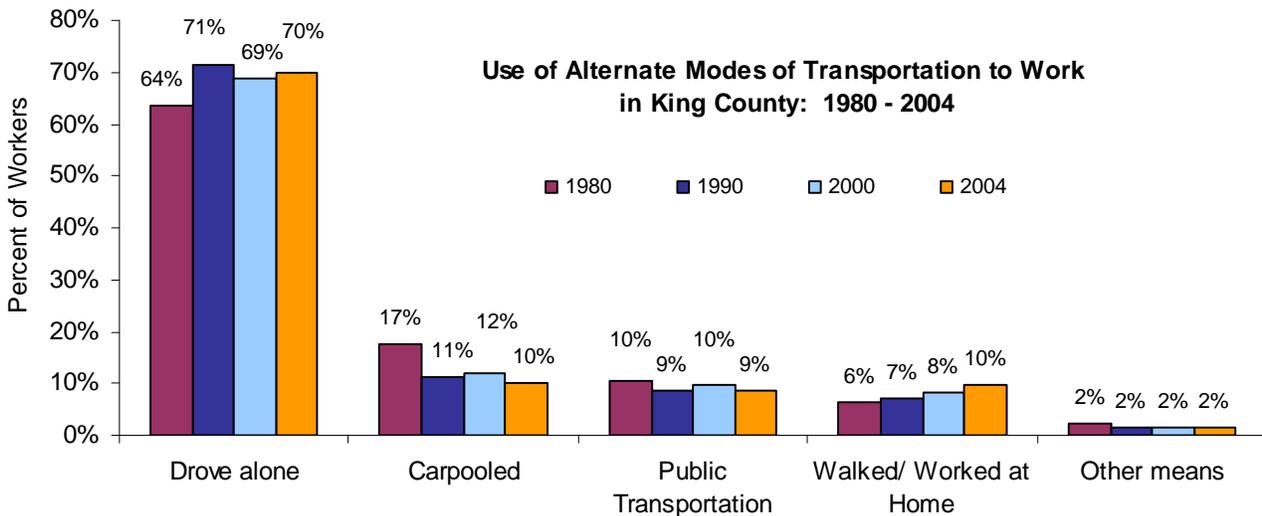
Transportation Key to Regional Growth

The central Puget Sound region is a growing and vibrant community but with that growth comes challenges, key among them transportation.

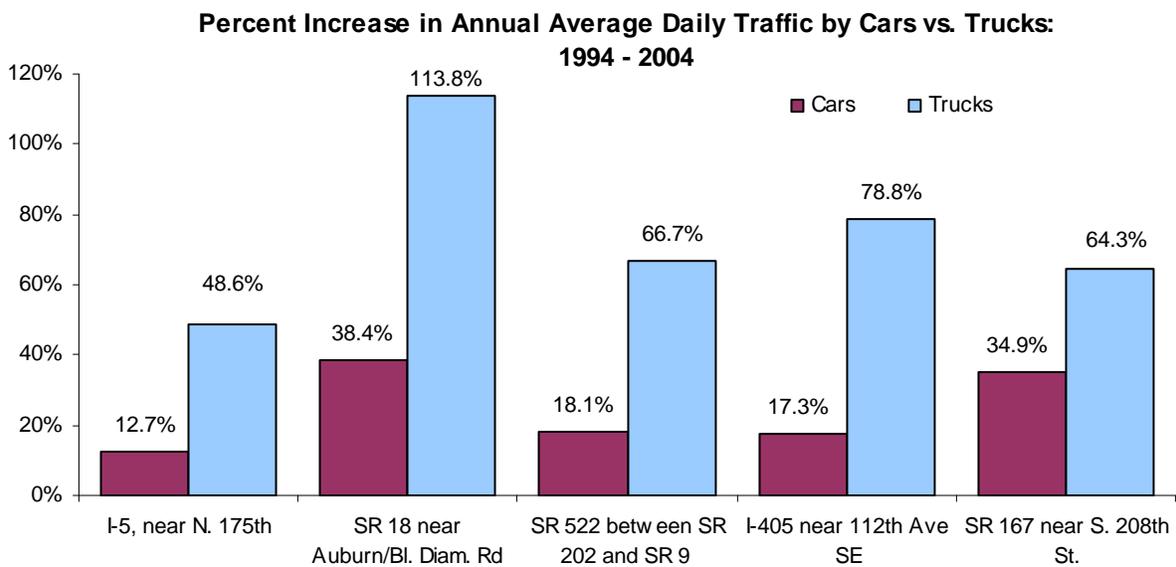
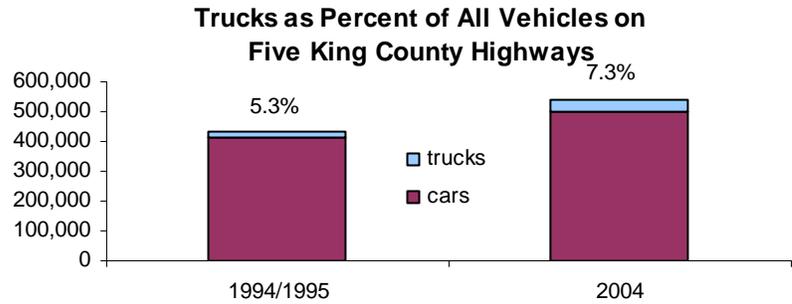
Following the national trend, commute times in King County have increased over the last two decades. From 2001 to 2004, several commute times increased substantially. The work commute on SR 520 between Bellevue and Seattle saw the greatest increase in travel time per mile, followed closely by the commutes on SR 520 between Redmond and Seattle and I-405 between Tukwila and Bellevue. However, following highway improvements on SR 167, the work commute between Renton and Auburn improved since 2002.



Several factors contributed to increasing commute times in King County. Commercial traffic grew, employment rebounded since the recession of 2001 to 2003, and the majority of King County's workers continued to commute alone. Combined, these factors created additional economic and environmental costs as goods, services, and people were unable to move efficiently through our region.



Responding to growth in activity at the Port of Seattle, commercial traffic grew faster than automobile traffic. While a rise in commercial traffic suggests economic growth in the region, it also adds stress to an already congested highway system.



Recovery from recession has had another impact on our transportation system. With growth in King County's population and workforce, more workers are commuting on our highways. As the percent of workers who commute by single occupancy vehicle has not declined appreciably, our roads remain congested and commute times increase.

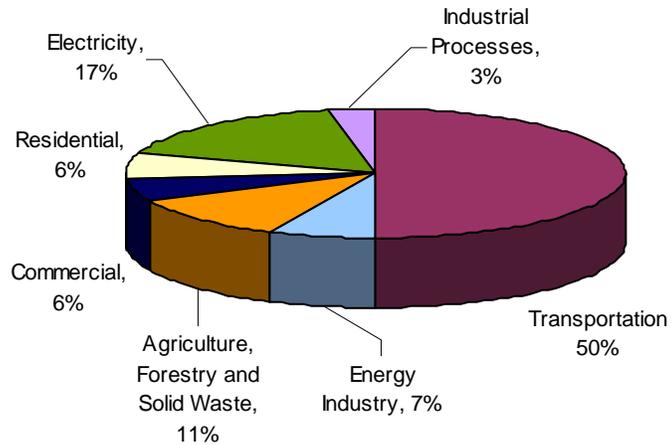
Facing increasing demands on our transportation infrastructure, local and state governments recognize the need for regional and long-term transportation investments. According to the Washington State Department of Transportation, statewide congestion—more prevalent in urban areas within the Central Puget Sound area—is estimated to be over 365,000 hours per weekday and represents about \$1.6 billion annually in lost time. Transportation planning must link economic development and lifestyle preferences with infrastructure capacity. Public transportation should provide reliable, convenient, and frequent service. Land use planning should prioritize dense, pedestrian and bike friendly communities to encourage people to use alternatives to cars. The physical transportation infrastructure should be protected and improved to support our region's increasing demands.

Anticipating and Responding to Global Climate Change

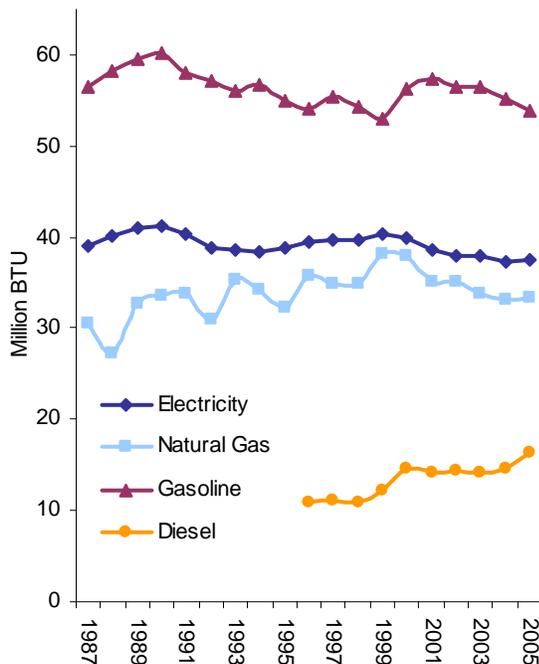
Global climate change has become a defining issue of this century. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) identified 2006 as the second warmest year on record in the United States. U.S. and global annual temperatures are now warmer than at the start of the 20th century. Over the past 30 years, temperatures have accelerated at a rate that is approximately three times faster than the rate of warming over the last century. In fact, the past nine years have been among the 25 warmest years on record for the contiguous U.S., an unprecedented warming trend in this country.

The degree to which these worldwide weather patterns are due to human activity and the means by which these effects can be mitigated is the subject of a large body of analysis occurring throughout the scientific community.

Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2002)



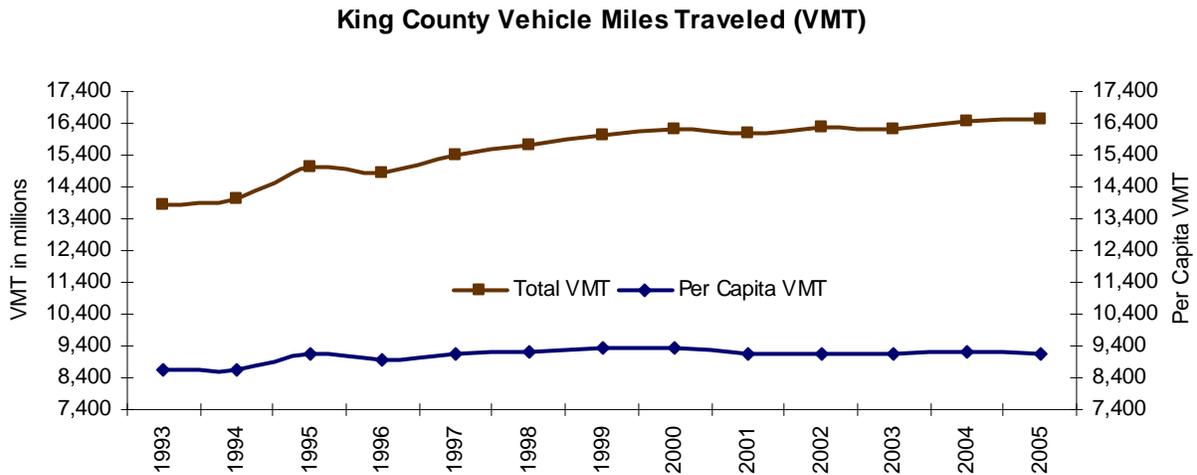
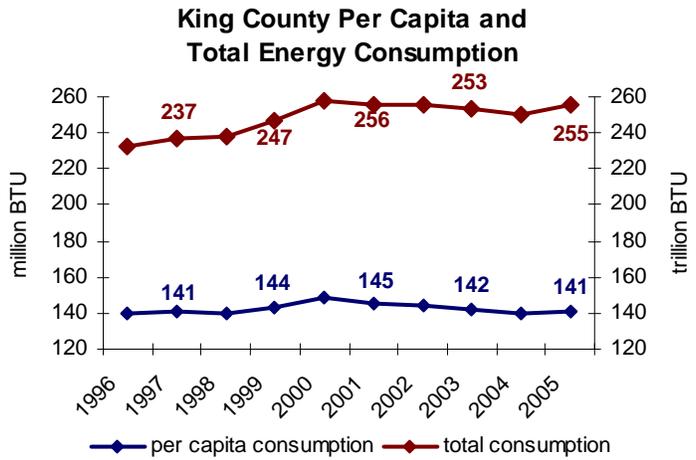
Per Capita Energy Consumption by Type: King County 1986-2005



While greenhouse gases do occur naturally, disproportionate amounts are caused by human activity, most notably as carbon dioxide emissions from transportation. Total petroleum consumption in King County increased almost 20% over the last 10 years, driven by almost 50% growth in the consumption of diesel fuel. As a result, diesel fuel steadily contributes to a larger share of total petroleum consumption in King County.

This is consistent with the increase in activity at the Port of Seattle, which has contributed to the increase in commercial traffic as shown in the 2006 Transportation Bulletin. Indeed, the number of commercial trucks on King County's major highways has increased almost 70% since 1994.

With an increase in commercial traffic, total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) has crept ahead slightly since 1995. Per capita VMT rose during the late 1990's but has actually been on a nominal downward trend since 1999, even though almost two-thirds of workers in King County continue to use their personal vehicle for work commutes.



This per capita decrease may be attributed to the combined effect of two factors over the last seven years: a recession that resulted in job losses throughout the region through 2003, followed by an increase in public transit ridership as the county regained jobs in 2004. However, despite the growing number of King County residents using public transportation, the increased use of light- and heavy-duty trucks, as well as thriving port activity, have contributed to increased VMT and elevated greenhouse gas emissions.

