II. The Benchmark System for the *Countywide Planning Policies*

Background

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 plans and regulations to implement the plans. To achieve an interjurisdictional coordinated countywide plan, GMA further required that King County and its 35 cities first develop framework policies, the King County *Countywide Planning Policies*, to guide the development of the jurisdictions' plans.

The *Countywide Planning Policies* (CPPs) define the countywide vision for the county and cities' plans. The policies were developed by the Growth Management Planning Council, a group of 15 elected officials, representing all King County citizens, adopted by the Metropolitan King County Council and ratified by the cities in 1994.

Purpose

The *Countywide Planning Policies* are primarily goals that, if properly implemented, should improve the quality of life in King County during the next twenty years.

When the members of the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) approved the policies, they expressed an interest in creating a system that would tell future decision makers whether or not the policies are achieving their intended outcomes. The 2000 Benchmark Report is the fifth annual account to monitor the CPPs.

The purpose of creating a benchmark system is to provide the GMPC, other policy makers and the public with a method for evaluating jurisdictions' progress in implementing the *Countywide Planning Policies*. The system for the Benchmark Report was established by stating the desired outcomes of the CPPs; selecting relevant Indicators for each outcome, and then identifying quantifiable levels of achievement, or targets, for some of the Indicators.

Why a Benchmark Report for the Countywide Planning Policies?

Generally, the Indicators that the Benchmark Committee has produced should be used as the GMPC originally intended: to enable future decision makers to determine whether or not the *Countywide Planning Policies* are being implemented in a way which achieves their intended outcomes.

The Benchmark System, which includes these Indicators, should also provide early warning if the policies are not having their desired effects. In that case, the system should provide sufficient information to enable policy-makers to determine whether different actions to implement the policies are needed, or whether minor or major revisions to the policies are required. More specifically, the Benchmark System should be used to help the jurisdictions of King County establish priorities, take joint actions, and direct resources to solve problems identified in the *Countywide Planning Policies*.

Data Sources in the Benchmark Report

The Benchmark Committee strives to provide the best data available for the Indicators to track the *Countywide Planning Policies* as adopted in 1994. In order to ensure data reliability, the Benchmark Committee will revise and, if necessary, correct data on an annual basis, when new and better sources become available.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Outcomes	Indicators
PROMOTE FAMILY-WAGE JOBS	1. Real wages per worker
INCREASE INCOME AND REDUCE POVERTY	2. Personal and median household income: King County compared to the United States
	3. Percentage of population below the poverty level
INCREASE BUSINESS FORMATION, EXPANSION AND RETENTION	4. New businesses created
	5. New jobs created by employment sector
CREATE JOBS THAT ADD TO KING COUNTY'S ECONOMIC BASE	6. Employment in industries that export from the region
INCREASE EDUCATIONAL SKILL LEVELS	7. Educational background of adult population
	8. High school graduation rate

ENVIRONMENT

Outcomes	Indicators
PROTECT AND ENHANCE NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS	9. Land cover changes in urban and rural areas over time
IMPROVE AIR QUALITY	10. Air quality
	11. Energy consumption
	12. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per year
PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY	13. Surface water and groundwater quality
	14. Water consumption
	15. Change in groundwater levels*
PROTECT WETLANDS	16. Change in wetland acreage and functions.
PROTECT THE DIVERSITY OF PLANTS AND WILDLIFE	17. Continuity of terrestrial and aquatic habitat networks*
INCREASE SALMON STOCK	18. Change in number of salmon
DECREASE NOISE LEVELS	19. Rate of increase in noise from vehicles, planes and yard equipment
DECREASE WASTE DISPOSAL AND INCREASE RECYCLING	20. Pounds of waste disposed and recycled per capita

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Outcomes	Indicators
PROVIDE SUFFICIENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL KING COUNTY RESIDENTS	21. Supply and demand for affordable housing
	22. Percent of income paid for housing
	23. Homelessness
	26. Apartment vacancy rate
PROMOTE AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES	24. Home purchase affordability gap for buyers with (a) median renter household income and (b) median household income
	25. Home ownership rate
	27. Trend of housing costs vs. income
PROMOTE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF AFFORDABLE LOW-INCOME HOUSING THROUGHOUT KING COUNTY	28. Public dollars spent for low income housing
	29. Housing units affordable to low income households

LAND USE

Outcomes	Indicators
ENCOURAGE A GREATER SHARE OF GROWTH IN URBAN AREAS AND URBAN CENTERS; LIMIT GROWTH IN RURAL/RESOURCE AREAS	30. New housing units in Urban Areas and Rural/Resource areas, and in Urban Centers. 31. Employment in Urban Areas, Rural/Resource Areas, Urban Centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers.
MAKE EFFICIENT USE OF URBAN LAND	32. New housing units built through redevelopment 33. Ratio of land consumption to population growth 34. Ratio of achieved density to allowed density of residential development
ACCOMMODATE RESIDENTIAL AND JOB GROWTH IN URBAN AREAS	35. Ratio of land capacity to 20 year household and job targets 36. Land with 6 years of infrastructure capacity *
ENCOURAGE LIVABLE, DIVERSE COMMUNITIES	37. Acres of urban parks and open space
BALANCE JOB AND HOUSEHOLD GROWTH	38. Ratio of jobs to housing in Central Puget Sound Counties, and King County sub-regions
MAINTAIN QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF NATURAL RESOURCE LANDS	39. Acres in forest land and farm land 40. Number and average size of farms

TRANSPORTATION

Outcomes	Indicators
TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE LINKAGE	41. Percent of residents who commute one-way within 30 minutes
AVAILABILITY OF MODES OTHER THAN SINGLE OCCUPANT VEHICLE	42. Metro transit ridership
MODE SPLIT	43. Percent of residents who walk or use transit, bicycles or carpools as alternatives to the single occupant vehicle.
REDUCE COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC CONGESTION	44. Ability of goods and services to move efficiently and cost effectively through the region.
PROTECT AND IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE	45. Number of lane miles of city, county, and state roads and bridges in need of repair and preservation.

* Data for these Indicators were not collected for the 1999 Benchmark Report.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I. Purpose of Economic Development Indicators

The key outcomes of the Countywide Planning Policies' (CPPs) economic development policies are to:

- Promote Family-Wage Jobs
- Increase Income and Reduce Poverty
- Increase Business Formation, Expansion and Retention
- Create Jobs that Add to King County's Economic Base
- Increase Educational Skills

II. Key Observations

Indicator #1 **Real wages per worker.**

- Real wages per worker rose 32% from 1994 to 1999, after largely stagnating between 1980 and 1994. A slight increase in 1995 was followed by more significant increases from 1996 - 1999, bringing real wages in King County well above their highest level during the past twenty years. Real wages rose 8.5% in 1999.

Indicator #2 **Personal and median household income: King County compared to the United States.**

- King County per capita personal income was 150% of the nationwide average in 1998. For the period from 1980 to 1998, the gap between King County personal income and nationwide income widened by 20 percentage points. This may reflect considerable local ownership and income from shares in high-performing Northwest companies.
- Total personal income in the Seattle-Bellevue-Everett metropolitan area with a 10.4% increase from 1997 - 1998, had the second fastest growth in personal income among all metropolitan areas in the U.S. that year.
- Household income in the region exceeded the nationwide average by 29% in 1999. At $53,200 in nominal dollars, it represents a modest 2% increase in real household income since 1998.

Indicator #3 **Percentage of population below the poverty level.**

- From 1980 to 1990 there was an increase in the percentage of people living in poverty for all ethnic groups, except non-hispanic whites. More recent data on poverty in King County will be available with the publication of the 2000 census.
- The highest rates of poverty are among Native Americans and Blacks, particularly among families with children. One-third of people in these ethnic groups live in poverty. Smaller percentages of Asian and Hispanic children are below the poverty level. Yet in terms of total numbers, over half of King County's poverty-level children are White.

Indicator #4 **New businesses created.**

- Business growth was particularly strong in 1998 with a 5.0% increase in new business, while in 1999 it rose just 2.5%. King County's average annual growth rate for new businesses during the 1990's was a modest, but healthy 2.3%.

Indicator #5 **New jobs created, by employment sector.**

- In the five years from 1994 - 1999 overall employment opportunity increased substantially with nearly 200,000 new jobs added.
- From 1990 to 1999, new job creation was approximately 22%, or an average of 2% percent per year, well above population growth.
- In the 1990s employment in the service sector comprise by far the largest share (59%) of new jobs created. Business Services, which includes the subsector of Computer Software and Services, accounted for 30% of all new jobs in the 1990s. Employment in Business Services grew by 113.5% during the 1990s.

- Job losses in the 1990s have been primarily in the Transportation Equipment Manufacturing sector (which includes aerospace manufacturing). Jobs declined by 28% in that sector, amounting to a loss of nearly 27,000 jobs. However, the 1990s have seen a net gain of nearly 7,000 jobs (a 9% increase) in the manufacturing sector outside of the aerospace industry.
- Overall, the loss of 20,000 jobs in manufacturing since 1990 have been more than offset by the 123,000 new jobs created in the services sector, and 34,500 new jobs in retail from 1990 to 1999.

Indicator #6 **Employment in industries that export from the region.**

- Current indications are that the region's traditional export employment base in the aerospace industry has peaked, and its dominance of the County's economy will decline over time. Planned cuts in employment have been particularly sharp in 1999. Therefore, the contribution of other manufacturing industries and of the service sector to basic employment is becoming critical for the economic health of the region.
- Manufacturing still accounts for about 27% of King County's jobs in the export sectors. The number of jobs declined in both the transportation equipment sector and in other manufacturing sectors during 1999. During this past decade, there has been a loss of nearly 27,000 jobs in the aerospace and other transportation equipment industries. However, the other manufacturing sectors gained nearly 7,000 jobs. This has resulted in a net loss of about 20,000 jobs in manufacturing over the past 10 years.
- 48% of employment in King County's export industries involve the export of services rather than of raw materials or manufactured goods. After manufacturing, Business Services is the second highest contributor to the basic sector, with 18% of all jobs in the export industries. Another 30% of jobs in the export sector are in legal, engineering/management, health care, and financial/real estate services. Computer software and services, a subsector of Business Services, employs about 3% of all workers in King County and contributes significantly to export activity.

Indicator #7 **Educational background of adult population.**

- A full 33% of King County adults have a college degree compared with 21% nationally. Nevertheless, research indicates that we are importing college graduates to meet our highly-skilled labor force needs.
- Educational level is a predictor of future income. In 1997, adults in the U.S. with only a high school education earned roughly half of what those with a Bachelor's degree or more earned. Those who dropped out of high school earned about 43% of the earnings of those with a college degree.

Indicator #8 **High school graduation rate.**

- The graduation rate in King County school districts dropped 6 percentage points between 1994 and 1997. In 1997/98 it rebounded by nearly 3 percentage points. However, there were still 3,127 students (18.4% of all public high school seniors) who failed to graduate with their class.
- 7.5% of all King County high school students were recorded as dropouts, or as having left school with no record of enrollment elsewhere, during 1997/98. This represents a total of 5,481 students.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

I. Purpose of Environmental Indicators

The key outcomes of the Countywide Planning Policies' (CPPs) environmental policies are to:

- Protect and Enhance Natural Ecosystems
- Improve Air Quality
- Protect Water Quality and Quantity
- Protect Wetlands
- Increase Salmon Stock
- Decrease Waste Disposal and Increase Recycling

II. Key Observations

Indicator #9 **Land cover changes in urban and rural areas over time.**

- King County has 13.2% of its land area in developed uses compared to 11.6% in 1991. A high proportion of its development remains within the Urban Growth Area.

Indicator #10 **Air quality**

- Air quality has improved significantly since 1980. The number of good air quality days increased steadily from 73 in 1980 to 343 in 1998. The decline to 272 good days in 1999 reflects the higher federal standard for particulate matter adopted by the Seattle area beginning last year. This also accounts for the rise in the number of "moderate" days, and for the 5 days designated as unhealthy for sensitive groups. Before the change in standards only 1 day had been designated as "unhealthy" since 1980.
- Motor vehicles, with 55% of the total air pollutants, are by far the largest contributors to overall air pollution. New rules for the automobile industry, which will be phased-in starting with 2004 models, will assure that the "light truck" category (including sport utility vehicles, minivans and pickup trucks) will have to meet the same fleetwide average pollution level as standard cars. The allowable pollution for all vehicles will be more stringent than current standards. A related rule requiring cleaner gasoline will help car manufacturers to meet the new standards.
- Industry contributes 21% of pollutants, outdoor burning contributes 12%, and wood stoves and fireplaces contribute another 12%.

Indicator #11 **BTU consumption per capita**

- Per capita consumption of all energy sources has increased 6.2% since 1986. In 1999, total energy consumption per capita was the highest it has been since 1990. This total does not include diesel fuel, which has only been tracked since 1996.
- In the past year per capita natural gas, electricity, and diesel consumption have all risen sharply while per capita automotive gas usage has fallen.
- Total energy consumption has increased 31.1% since 1986 due to population growth, economic growth, and higher per capita usage.
- Per capita diesel fuel usage rose nearly 12% during the four years (1996 – 1999) it has been tracked. Total diesel usage rose 15%. Most of the increase took place between 1998 and 1999. According to the Washington State Dept. of Transportation, this rise is due to an increase in commercial traffic.

Indicator #12 **Vehicle miles traveled per year.**

- VMT includes travel by commercial and public vehicles as well as private automobiles. The increase in per capita VMT is caused by a combination of factors, including growth in County employment (at a rate considerably higher than population growth), increased travel to King County job centers by residents of adjacent counties, increased propensity to travel, and more commercial traffic. The result has been more vehicles on the road, traveling more miles per capita.
- While per capita VMT continues to increase modestly, total VMT has risen a rapid 19% from 1990 - 1999.
- Fuel consumption and gas tax collection are only partially correlated with VMT. Fuel efficiency on some vehicles has increased over the 1985 to 1999 time period, meaning that it is possible to drive more miles with no more fuel being consumed. With this greater fuel efficiency, the increase in tax revenues has been less than the increase in miles traveled. It is still unclear whether the recent popularity of larger, less fuel-efficient vehicles is affecting fuel consumption per mile and per capita.
- Commercial, pass-through, and non-resident commuters may account for the increase in VMT in King County while per capita gas consumption has remained steady or even dropped. Drivers of these vehicles may not purchase gas in King County in the same proportion as they drive within the County.

Indicator #13 **Surface water and groundwater quality**

- Water clarity, as measured by the *trophic state index (TSI)* in the major King County Lakes is generally high. Lake Union, however, shows some signs of declining clarity.
- Among the 42 monitored small lakes in the region, about one-third have the lowered water clarity, more algae, and higher total phosphorus values typical of aging lakes. This is a natural process, typical of aging lakes. However, deterioration over a short period of time may indicate that human activity is hastening the decline in a lake's water quality.
- Based on 1998 data, over half of King County's monitored streams are considered seriously or moderately degraded, based on the Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (B-IBI) score. No new data on streams is available for 1999.

Indicator #14 **Water consumption**

- In 1999 per capita water consumption, at 104 gallons per day, reached its lowest level since 1993. The 1992 drought brought about a dramatic drop in water consumption. Only 101 gallons per capita were used in 1992, and 103 gallons per capita per day were used in 1993.
- Although per capita consumption rose to 112 gallons per day in 1994, it has shown a declining trend over the past six years. Overall, water consumption per capita is notably lower this decade than in the 1980's when it showed an upward trend.
- Total residential consumption has declined slightly in relation to commercial consumption. Residential uses represented about 44% of direct billed consumption in 1975 and about 40% in 1999.

Indicator #16 **Change in wetland acreage and functions.**

- Based on 1998 Landsat data, King County has approximately 35,000 acres of moderate to large wetlands of various types.
- Landsat data will be available about every two years in the future to allow for consistent monitoring of wetland acreage. However, this data needs to be complemented with on the ground wetland inventories.

Indicator #17 **Continuity of terrestrial and aquatic habitat networks.**

- Out of the 3,655 parcels within or adjacent to the wildlife habitat, 27% have had some type of permit activity recorded since 1994. 17% had permit activity that is covered by King County Code relating to the network.
- As habitats become more fragmented by development much of their function is lost. If habitats are fragmented, there may actually be less usable habitat available than a simple count of acreage would indicate. Many of our threatened and endangered species in King County require relatively large connected blocks of habitat. The designation of the wildlife habitat network by the King County Comprehensive Plan is a first step in helping to preserve that continuity. By tracking and limiting development within and adjacent to the network, fragmentation of the habitat can be prevented before it occurs.

Indicator #18 **Change in number of wild stock salmon.**

Chinook

- In 1998 the listing of Puget Sound Chinook salmon as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act was announced. In response to this listing, a Tri-County initiative has been underway to plan for improved Chinook survival, and for the restoration and preservation of salmon habitat throughout the Puget Sound region.
- The total number of natural adult Chinook in the Lake Washington System reached a new low of 240 in 1999. The number fluctuated between a low of about 450 and a high of over 2,000 through the 1970s and 1980s. Overall, the average of runs in the 1990s are about one-half the average during the 1980s.
- The number of Chinook in the Snohomish/Snoqualmie Watershed has shown a declining trend since the late 1970s, and wild Chinook is classified as depressed in the Snohomish basin. In 1998, however, adult

Chinook returned to this watershed in their highest numbers – over 6,000 - since 1980. This trend has continued into 1999, with 6,374 adults returning to spawn last year.

Coho

- Thirty years ago, in 1970, a high of 30,000 natural Coho was recorded in the Lake Washington System. A low of 200 was recorded in 1994. After three years of relatively good returns, there were less than 500 adult Coho that returned to the Lake Washington Watershed in 1998, and just 733 in 1999.
- Coho in the Green River Watershed show similar fluctuation. After fairly health returns in 1994 – 1996, the numbers have again fallen off in 1997 – 1999. With the exception of a severe low in 1991, the past three years have had the lowest returns since 1973.

Sockeye

- A very high rate of return to Lake Washington in the summer of 2000 illustrates the volatility of the Sockeye population in this watershed. The combination of ideal spawning conditions in 1996 and a favorable marine climate during the next few years, favored the survival of that year's cohort. These conditions made it possible for hundreds of thousands of adult sockeye to re-enter Lake Washington during the 2000 season, on their way to spawning grounds throughout the Cedar River/Lake Washington watershed. However, historically, a good year such as this, often alternates with very poor years. True trends can only be identified over the long term.
- In contrast to the current season, in 1998 there were only about 60,000 natural adult Sockeye returns in the Lake Washington/ Cedar River watershed. This total was about 50% of the previous year's total. In 1999 there were only about 24,500 adult returns in the watershed. Even accounting for "good years" there appears to be a long-term trend toward a lower Sockeye population in the Lake Washington/ Cedar River Watershed.

Indicator #19 **Rate of increase in noise from vehicles, planes, and yard equipment.**

SeaTac International Airport

- Based on its Noise Monitoring System, the Day-Night Sound Level (DNL) values at SeaTac have decreased from an average of 71 – 74 since the early 1990's (when a mediation agreement was developed to reduce overall noise) to 68 – 69 in 1999. By comparing the DNL values, it appears that the noise energy has decreased even though the number of departures and arrivals has increased. This decrease can be attributed to the increase in the number of quieter Stage 3 aircraft at the airport, and the phased elimination of noisier Stage 2 aircraft.

King County International Airport (KCIA)

- Day-Night Sound Level values at KCIA have decreased slightly from the 4th quarter of 1997 to the 4th quarter of 1999, dropping from 70 to 69 at one monitoring location, and from 68 to 66 at a second location.

Indicator #20 **Pounds of waste disposed and recycled per capita.**

- While King County continues to do well in its recycling efforts, it has been less successful in reducing the total amount of waste generated.
- King County is now recycling close to twice as much per person as it was in 1990. After a leveling off from 1997 – 1998, waste recycled per capita rose substantially between 1998 and 1999. The per capita amount recycled has increased 86% from 1990 – 1999, an annualized growth rate of 6.4%.
- Although solid waste disposal per capita has declined about 4.5% over the past ten years, there has been a trend toward increased waste disposal since 1996. The amount of solid waste rose precipitously between 1998 and 1999, bringing it to its highest level since 1991.
- Total waste generated per capita (the sum of disposal per capita and recycling per capita) has increased by over 450 lbs. per person during the past ten years, or approximately 1.8% per year. It increased by over 100 lbs. during the single year from 1998 to 1999. Seattle and King County serve as employment and population centers for the region. The relatively high level of economic activity and the large number of individuals working in the region may be responsible for this increase in waste generation per capita.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

I. Purpose of Affordable Housing Indicators

The key outcomes of the Countywide Planning Policies' affordable housing policies are to:

- Provide Sufficient Affordable Housing for all King County Residents
- Promote Affordable Home Ownership Opportunities
- Promote Equitable Distribution of Affordable Low-Income Housing throughout King County

II. Key Observations

Indicator #21 **Supply and demand for affordable housing.**

- There are approximately 101,000 renters in King County who earn less than 50% of median income, including 54,020 renter households who earn less than 30% of median .
- For the 54,020 renter households who earn less than 30% of median income income ($15,960 for a family of three), there are less than 400 market-rate rental units available. Approximately 30,000 of these households are currently living in assisted rental housing, but the other 24,000 households will either be housed in higher cost units than they can afford or will be homeless. An estimated 6,000 individuals in the County are without permanent shelter.
- Although there are about 84,300 market rate units affordable to renters between 30 and 50% of median income, all low income renters must compete with each other and with higher income renters for the limited number of available low-cost units.
- Only 9.3% of single-family rental units (rental houses) are affordable to households with incomes below 50% of the median ($22,000 - $31,000).

Indicator #22 **Percent of income paid for housing.**

- The lower a household's income is, the more likely they are to pay a higher percentage of their income for housing costs. This is true for renters as well as homeowners.
- When low income families pay more than 30% of their income for housing, resources are often diverted from other essentials -- clothing, food and utilities. These households may also be at greater risk of homelessness.
- Nearly 80% of *renter* households in the two lowest income categories, paid more than a third of their income to housing costs in 1990. Low income renters have no protection from rising monthly rents and build no equity in their homes.
- Of *homeowner* households making less than 50% of median income, approximately 45% paid more than a third of their income to housing costs in 1990.

Indicator #23 **Homelessness.**

- Existing estimates of total persons homeless in King County are in the range of 6,000; this number includes the count of shelter beds (ordinarily fully occupied), and an educated guess of the unsheltered population both within and outside of Seattle. The unsheltered population that is dispersed outside Seattle is the least documented segment of the homeless.
- A major obstacle for homeless people becoming housed is the high cost of moving into a rental unit. A $782 apartment (average rent of all units in the county) typically requires the first and last month's rent plus a security deposit to move in. Without financial assistance, a homeless person or family would need to save roughly $2,000 to move into this apartment.

Indicator #24 **Home purchase affordability gap for buyers with (a) median renter household income and (b) median household income.**

- Although the median income of King County households is rising, the price of homes has continued to increase at a much more rapid rate. The median home price in 1999 was 68% higher than in 1990 (see

Indicator #27), and 9.3% higher than in 1998. A rise of nearly a full percentage point in interest rates has also made the same-priced home less affordable than in 1998.

- Despite relatively low interest rates and rising incomes, home ownership in King County is an affordable option for only a small percentage of moderate income households.
- In 1999, the median renter household had an income of less than $36,000 and could afford to purchase a home for $106,700. Only about 1.5% of single family homes sold for this amount or less in 1999.
- At 80% of median income, a household could afford a home at $127,200. Only about 4.7% of single family homes were priced at or below this amount. The median price for a conventional single family home was $235,000.
- Currently the median renter can afford to pay only about 45% of the median home price.
- The fast-paced housing market in King County shows signs of slowing in 2000 due to several factors: the local economic boom was tempered in early 2000 by declining values of technology stocks and stock options, and by layoffs in the aerospace industry. At the same time a generous supply of recently-permitted units are coming onto the market.

Indicator #25 **Home ownership rate.**

- King County's home ownership rate of 59.6% has risen just .8% since 1990. The average for Washington State was 65%. However, since King County is a highly urbanized area, it is more appropriate to compare it to other urbanized counties. The average home ownership rate within the 75 largest metropolitan areas was 64% in 1997.
- Nationwide, the federal policy goal of 67% home ownership was finally achieved during 1999. King County's rate is substantially lower than this national average.
- The rising cost of home ownership in King County was somewhat offset by higher incomes and the availability of low interest rates during the past few years. However, both interest rates and prices rose in 1999, so that affordable home ownership opportunities continue to be more abundant in the neighboring counties than in King County.

Indicator #26 **Apartment vacancy rate.**

- After showing a marked downward trend from 1994 – 1997, King County's overall average vacancy rate rose slightly to 3.3% in 1998 and to 3.9% in 1999. A vacancy rate of 5% is generally regarded as normal. Vacancy rates vary widely across King County sub-regions.
- A generous supply of new multifamily units coming onto the market should raise the vacancy rate during 2000. Population growth has slowed in King County as well, reducing demand.
- Low vacancy rates suggest high demand for new units and upward pressure on rents. High vacancy rates suggest excess capacity and downward pressure on rents.

Indicator #27 **Trend of housing costs vs. income.**

- The median price for a single family home was $235,000 in 1999. The median price for condos was $148,000.
- Single family home prices have increased 68% since 1990, for an annualized average of nearly 6%. Median household income has increased 47%, for a yearly average of 4.4%. Thus, the rise in home prices has significantly outpaced the rise in income. Increases in average rent have correlated more closely with changes in median income.
- Home prices in the Puget Sound region rank among the highest in the nation. King County has the highest home prices within the region. In the third quarter of 1999, the average home price in King County was 68% higher than in Pierce County and 31% higher than in Snohomish County.
- Average rent for a two bedroom, one bathroom apartment in King County was $755 in 1999, up 6.6% from $708 in 1998. At an average of $1,050 - $1,200 per month, the rent for a three bedroom unit or a single family home was unaffordable for a household of three earning the median renter's income.

Indicator #28 **Public dollars spent for low income housing**

- In 1999, local governments in King County spent $21,839,360 of local public dollars for low income housing. The City of Seattle spent $13,695,952, and jurisdictions outside of Seattle spent a total of $8,143,408. These local public dollars also leverage a significant amount of federal and state funds.
- These public monies preserved or created about 960 additional low-income units. Other funding sources such as the Federal Housing Authorities added further new housing, for a total of about 1400 new units in the County. At least 1,700 more units were rehabilitated with public funds.

Indicator #29 **Housing affordable to low-income households.**

- Overall, South King County and Skykomish have the highest proportion of existing affordable housing.
- Cities east of Lake Washington, including the eastside rural cities, have the lowest proportion of affordable housing. Most cities in the north end of the County also have a lower than average proportion of affordable housing.

Approximately 21% of the population earns less than 50% of the median income, and another 17% earns 50 to 79% of median income. To meet demand, and to satisfy the goal of equitable distribution of affordable housing, at least 37% of a jurisdiction's total housing stock would need to be affordable. 13 King County cities met this criteria in 1999, up from 10 cities in 1998. Only two other cities have 20% - 35% of their housing stock at affordable levels. Nine cities have 10 – 19% affordable housing, while 16 more cities have less than 10% of their units affordable to either rent or buy.

LAND USE

I. Purpose of Land Use Indicators

The intended outcomes of the Countywide Planning Policies' (CPPs) land use policies are to direct the majority of growth into the Urban Areas of the County, particularly in Urban Centers, and to limit growth in Rural and Resource Areas.

The Land Use Indicators will monitor land development trends in King County that support or undermine these outcomes. Over time, the trends established will help the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) evaluate the success of the Countywide Planning Policies in achieving their desired outcomes.

II. Key Observations

Indicator #30 **New housing units in Urban Areas and Rural/Resource Areas, and in Urban Centers.**

- An estimated 13,614 new residential units were added in King County in 1999. The number of new units normally varies widely from year to year. In order to accommodate the County's 20-year target of 172,000 to 223,000 new households, an average of 8,600 to 11,150 units should be permitted to be built each year.
- 95% of King County's new housing units were permitted in Urban Areas in 1999. 5%, or 735 units, were permitted in Rural and Resource Areas. This is part of a declining rural trend since 1997. In order to achieve the 20-year target growth of only 6,000 to 8,000 new units in rural areas, the annual growth rate would need to fall further, to an average of approximately 350 units per year.
- Eight Cities have designated a total of 12 Urban Centers. The Countywide Planning Policy household targets call for 25% of new housing units to be in Urban Centers over the 20-year planning period. This translates to an average of between 2,200 and 2,800 new units in the Centers per year.
- Of the approximately 725,000 existing housing units in the County as a whole, 95% are in Urban Areas.

Indicator #31 **Employment in Urban Areas, Rural/Resource Areas, Urban Centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers.**

- 98.4% of King County's jobs were located in Urban Areas, and 1.6% were located in Rural or Resource Areas in 1999.
- In 1999, 30% of jobs countywide were located within the designated Urban Centers.

Indicator #32 **New housing units permitted to be built through redevelopment.**

- In 1999, the cities' redevelopment rate was 51%.
- Over 17% of new units were built through redevelopment in Unincorporated King County. The overall redevelopment rate, which includes Unincorporated King County and all the cities was 37%.
- Redevelopment is defined as the development of new residential units or new employment opportunities on land that already had significant improvements, as opposed to development on vacant land. The Benchmark Report measures only residential units in redevelopment, not employment opportunities.
- This Indicator is important because up to half of King County's remaining land capacity is expected to come from redevelopment. In less urbanized portions of the County, where more vacant land is currently available, it is likely that vacant land will be used before new development occurs on already developed land.

Indicator #33 **Ratio of land consumption to population growth.**

- Puget Sound Regional Council's analysis found that a 19% increase in population between 1980 and 1990 was accompanied by a 37% increase in developed land.

Indicator #34 **Ratio of achieved density to allowed density of residential development.**

- Depending on the zone type, in 1998, cities achieved from 75% to 85% of maximum allowed density (based on aggregated data).
- Since high-density development helps cities to achieve their housing targets without using up all available land, reaching maximum density in the zones with higher allowed density is particularly desirable.

Indicator #37 **Acres of urban parks and open space.**

- Together, there are over 22,987 acres of City and County-owned urban parks and open space or over 15 acres per thousand urban residents. This exceeds the national norm of 10.5 acres per person of "close to home" open space.
- In addition to City and County-owned Urban parks and open space, King County residents have access to an estimated 110 miles of County-owned trails, over 550 acres of rural local parks, and over 8,000 acres of rural regional parks and open space, including some city-owned parks and watersheds.
- King County also contains thousands of acres of state parks and forestland, and hundreds of thousands of acres of federally owned National Forest and Wilderness Areas. Policymaking on the city or county level can do little to affect the management of state and federal lands.

Indicator #38 **Ratio of jobs to housing in Central Puget Sound counties, and King County subregions.**

- A balance of jobs and housing within a community has been associated with shorter and faster commutes and more use of alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle.
- In 1999, the ratio of jobs to housing ratio was 1.5.

Indicator #39 **Acres in forestland and farm land.**

- King County has over 824,000 acres in the Forest Production District (FPD) and over 41,000 acres in the Agricultural Production District (APD).
- Acres in forestland and farmland have not changed substantially since 1995.

- Future work for this Indicator will focus on those lands deemed most vulnerable to development pressure and will measure acres leaving and acres coming into forest and farm use.

Indicator #40 **Number and average size of farms.**

- The total number of farms in King County declined between 1982 and 1992 from 1,719 to 1,221, a loss of nearly 30%. Total acres in farms also declined 30% from 59,813 to 42,290.
- The average size farm in King County is small: 35 to 36 acres, compared with a statewide average farm size of over 500 acres. Forty-two percent of King County farms are nine acres or less.

TRANSPORTATION

I. Purpose of Transportation Indicators

The key outcomes of the CPPs transportation policies are to:

- Enhance Transportation and Land Use Linkages
- Increase the Availability of Modes other than Single Occupant Vehicle
- Reduce Commercial Traffic Congestion
- Protect and Improve the Transportation Infrastructure

II. Key Observations

Indicator #41 **Percent of residents who commute one-way within 30 minutes.**

- In 1999, about 78% of King County commuters traveled less than thirty minutes to or from work.

Indicator #42 **Metro Transit Ridership**

- Metro transit passenger boardings for 1999 were 96,605,000, an increase of 2,349,000 from the previous year.
- Metro transit ridership, measured in passenger boardings, has increased from 1995 from 50.1 rides per capita to 1999 with 57.6 rides per capita.

Indicator #43 **Percent of residents who walk or use transit, bicycles or carpools as alternatives to the single occupant vehicle.**

- In 1999 the split in the mode of transportation for all day travel was Transit: 5.9%; High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)/ Carpool: 35.3%; Non-Motorized/Other: 6.9%; Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV): 51.9%.
- The high proportion of trips using the HOV mode (35% in 1999) is characteristic of daily travel, when family members frequently accompany the adult driver on shopping, recreation, and other trip types.
- The U.S. 1990 Census reports the county's mode split for work trips as 74% SOV, 12% HOV, 9% transit, and 5% by non-motorized modes. These figures apply to peak hour travel, and cannot be compared to the all day data reported in the table for this Indicator.

Indicator #44 **Ability of goods and services to move efficiently and cost effectively through the region.**

- At all three King County sites investigated: SR 18 at Auburn, I-5 at 185th St., and SR 522 at Woodinville, truck traffic has increased substantially between 1993 and 1999. Traffic along I-5 has seen the most increase in congestion from 1995 to 1999, particular by southbound morning travel and afternoon northbound travel with a volume-capacity (v/c) ratio at or above 1.25. At a v/c ratio of .5, travel speeds begin to decline with increasing traffic flow.
- Yet at SR 18 and SR 522, traffic congestion at peak hour has decreased due to a number of factors including road improvement, lane construction and decreases in peak-hour traffic.
- The growth rate of truck traffic in 1999 has far outpaced that of autos, from double the growth rate of auto traffic on SR 18 to five times the growth rate of autos on SR 522.

Indicator #45 **Number of lane miles of city, county, and state roads and bridges in need of repair and preservation**.

- In 1999, the total countywide lane miles in need of repair and preservation was 4,503.