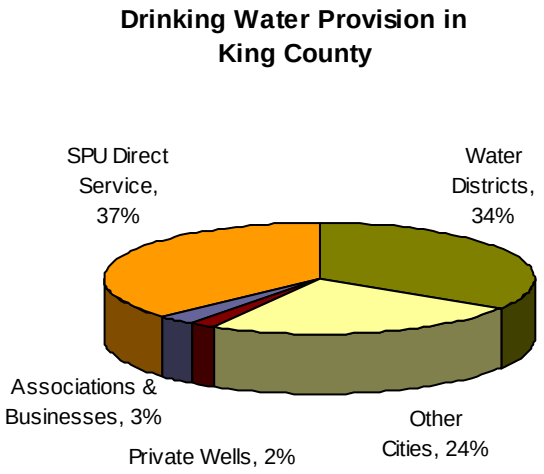
WATER CONSUMPTION
Outcome: Protect Water Quality and Quantity

Countywide Planning Policy Rationale

"Water supply shall be regionally coordinated to provide a reliable economic source of water and to provide mutual aid to and between all agencies and purveyors. The region should work toward a mechanism to address the long-term regional water demand needs of all agencies and water purveyors." (CO-5) "Aggressive conservation efforts shall be implemented to address the need for adequate supply for...water resources....Efforts shall include...public education, water reuse and reclamation, landscaping which uses native and drought-resistant plans and other strategies to reduce water consumption..."(CO-6) "Water reuse and reclamation shall be encouraged, especially for large commercial and residential developments, and for high water users such as parks, schools, golf courses, and locks." (CO-7)

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) provides potable water for approximately 70% of King County's population, either through direct service or through wholesale provision by 27 other water utilities. Almost one-half of SPU's customers are direct, retail customers, with the remainder being wholesale customers. Nearly all of this water is supplied by the Cedar River Watershed and the South Fork Tolt River Watershed in eastern King County. The remaining King County population obtains their potable water from approximately 2,000 other public systems and 12,000 private wells.

Figure 14.1



SPU's Retail Customers Figure 14.2 illustrates a distinct downward trend in water consumption by SPU's retail customers, despite the occurrance of annual fluctuations due partly to summer weather patterns in the region. Accounting for population, SPU's retail customers decreased water consumption more than 40% over the last 18 years. Per capita, SPU retail customers used nearly 87 gallons of water per day in 2008.

The largest annual change in consumption occurred in 1992 as a result of severe drought conditions and mandatory water use restrictions. Since then, a number of factors have kept water demand down including higher water rates, conservation efforts and improved system operations.

Figure 14.2