POPULATION TRENDS

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Population growth in the central Puget Sound experienced an up-tick during 2004-05, as the region’s economy began to make its recovery from the recession and in-migration increased in response to the rise in job opportunities. The region’s population was estimated to have reached 3.46 million in April 2005, adding 43,800 persons at a rate of 1.3 percent over the previous year. In the five-year period following the 2000 Census, the region gained a total of 184,500 additional persons.

Table 1. Population of Central Puget Sound Counties

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>1,737,046*</td>
<td>1,788,300</td>
<td>1,808,300</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>71,300</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitsap</td>
<td>231,969</td>
<td>239,500</td>
<td>240,400</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>8,400</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce</td>
<td>700,818*</td>
<td>744,000</td>
<td>755,900</td>
<td>11,900</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>55,100</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snohomish</td>
<td>606,024</td>
<td>644,800</td>
<td>655,800</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>49,800</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>3,275,857*</td>
<td>3,416,600</td>
<td>3,460,400</td>
<td>43,800</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>184,500</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Bureau, Washington State Office of Financial Management
Note: * Indicates a correction to the federal 1990 census count and/or a revised state estimate

POPULATION TRENDS BY CENSUS TRACT

The Puget Sound Regional Council’s annual population estimates by census tract can be used to analyze the distribution of current population across the region and to identify areas that experienced high rates of growth since the 2000 Census. See Figure 1 for a map of 2005 average population densities by census tract, and Figure 2 for a map of census tracts showing significant population change since the last decennial census.

Figure 1 illustrates how the region’s major population centers are focused in the traditional central cities of Seattle, Tacoma, Everett and Bremerton, as well as along the region’s major interstate and state highway corridors.

Figure 2 illustrates that the population growth experienced by the central Puget Sound since the 2000 Census was accommodated through a combination of infill and redevelopment activity in the region’s existing population centers and new development along the edges of the region’s urbanized area.

The region’s metropolitan cities of Seattle, Bellevue, Tacoma and Everett all saw significant population growth occur in their downtown districts. Seattle, Tacoma and Everett also absorbed growth in various other neighborhoods within their jurisdictions. Major redevelopment activity is also occurring in downtown Bremerton, but the area shows an overall decline due to deployments of military personnel from the Bremerton naval base.
Figure 1. Average Population Density by Census Tract, 2005

<1 person/acre
1 - 4 persons/acre
4 - 10 persons/acre
10 - 20 persons/acre
20+ persons/acre

Major Highways
A number of cities within the region’s urban core also absorbed a share of the growth. These cities include Mukilteo in Snohomish County, Shoreline, Kenmore, Bothell, Redmond, Renton and Kent in King County, and University Place, Milton, Sumner and Puyallup in Pierce County.

The remainder of the growth occurred largely in the region’s unincorporated urban areas and in suburban cities along the periphery of the urban core. These places include significant portions of unincorporated southwest Snohomish County; areas in and around north Everett, Snohomish and Marysville; Redmond Ridge; Issaquah Highlands; the eastern edge along Renton, Kent and Auburn; Covington and Maple Valley; Auburn’s annex into Pierce County, Bonney Lake and DuPont; and throughout the unincorporated communities of Midland, Spanaway, Loveland, Frederickson and Graham in Pierce County.

Slight population losses in other census tracts are due to increased vacancy rates in otherwise stable communities.

Copies of this issue of *Puget Sound Trends* are available from the PSRC Information Center at (206) 464-7532 or info@psrc.org, and for download from our Web site at www.psrc.org/datapubs/trends/index.htm. Population estimates by census tract are also available from the PSRC Web site at www.psrc.org/datapubs/data/dem/pophsgdata.htm. For questions about the data presented in this article, contact Carol Naito at (206) 464-7535 or cnaito@psrc.org.