Traffic Volumes Mixed While Regional Employment Rises

PSRC collects screenline data to determine traffic volumes on regionally significant arterials and minor roads connecting geographic sectors. The map shows the screenlines recorded by PSRC from 2004 to 2006, the change in average weekday traffic volume on the screenline, and the percent of change the new volume represents. Slightly more than half of the screenlines increased in traffic volumes from 2004 to 2006.

The four county region has also seen an increase in covered employment for the period from 2004 to 2006, a net increase of 91,000 jobs according to the Employment Security Department estimate. Variations in employment levels are more apparent by county. King County employment increased by 4.44 percent, and Pierce, Kitsap and Snohomish increased by 7.15, 5.61 and 10.21 percent respectively. Changes in employment may be related to changes in traffic volumes.

Snohomish County screenlines for the most part mimicked the increase in employment with an increase in traffic levels. Southeast Snohomish experienced an increase of 8.39 percent and East/West traffic volume in south Snohomish County increased by 6.16 percent. Central Snohomish had a smaller increase of 2.34 percent and only north Snohomish showed a decrease in traffic of 2.33 percent.

Results were mixed in King County, with declines in some areas despite increased employment. Declines in traffic volumes were seen west of Lake Washington at the Snohomish County border, at the Ship Canal in Seattle, north of Bellevue, and east King County. Traffic volumes did increase in several places including south of Seattle’s downtown, south of Lake Washington, east of Lake Washington, and south of Bellevue.

Pierce County also experienced some traffic volume increases with its elevated employment, especially in south Pierce County, while traffic volumes declined in Kitsap County despite increased employment.

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