

# Regional Centers System Monitoring

Regional TOD Committee

March 21, 2025



Puget Sound Regional Council



*We are leaders in the region to realize equity for all. Diversity, racial equity and inclusion are integrated into how we carry out all our work.*

[psrc.org/equity](https://psrc.org/equity)



# Overview

- Background
- Data by Regional Center Objectives
- Next Steps





# Regional Centers

Key part of VISION 2050 & the Regional Growth Strategy



Guide regional growth allocations



Protects rural and natural resource areas



Advance local planning



Priority areas for PSRC's federal transportation funding



Inform transit service planning



# Centers Monitoring and Redesignation Schedule

## 2025

- Applications & designation for new centers
- Criteria reports & redesignation of existing centers

## 2026

- Systems monitoring refresh
- Recommendations for Regional Center Framework update



# Centers System Monitoring Focus

## Key Questions:

- Is the region achieving desired outcomes from the system?
- Are any changes needed to the Regional Centers Framework or in future updates to VISION 2050 to better achieve the desired outcomes for centers?





# Types of Regional Centers

## Regional Growth Centers

### Metro Growth Center

- Largest and most dense jobs and housing centers
- Regional transit hub

### Urban Growth Center

- Dense existing jobs and housing
- High-quality transit service

## Manufacturing/Industrial Centers

### Industrial Employment Center

- Highly active industrial areas
- Preserve jobs and land use

### Industrial Growth Center

- Cluster of industrial lands
- Potential for future job growth







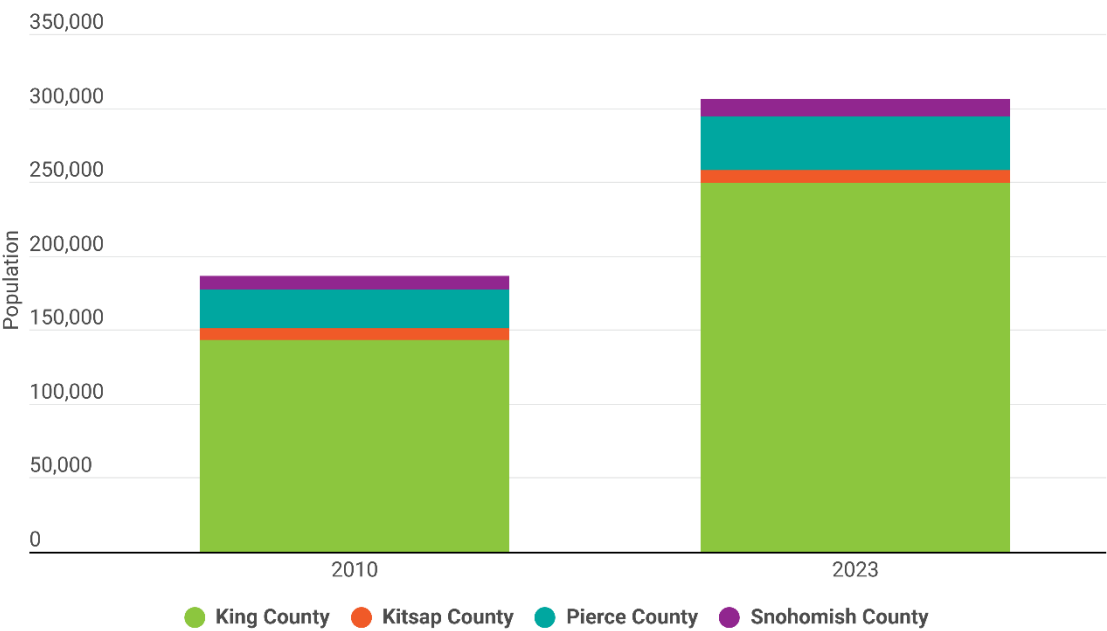
# Growth

Objective: Centers attract a significant and growing share of the region's overall growth

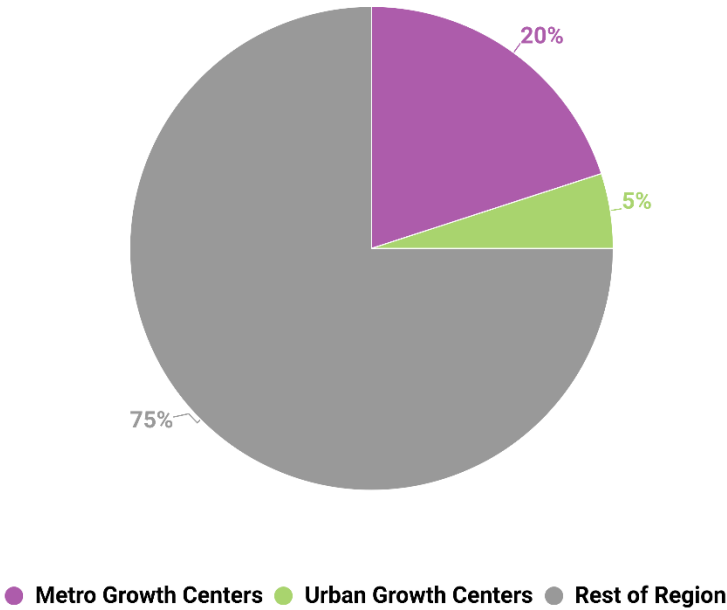
# Growth

25% of the region’s housing growth from 2010 to 2023 occurred in regional growth centers

Regional Growth Center Population by County



Regional Growth Center Share of Housing Unit Growth



Source: Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimates Program: 2010, 2023; PSRC Parcel Estimates Program: 2010, 2023

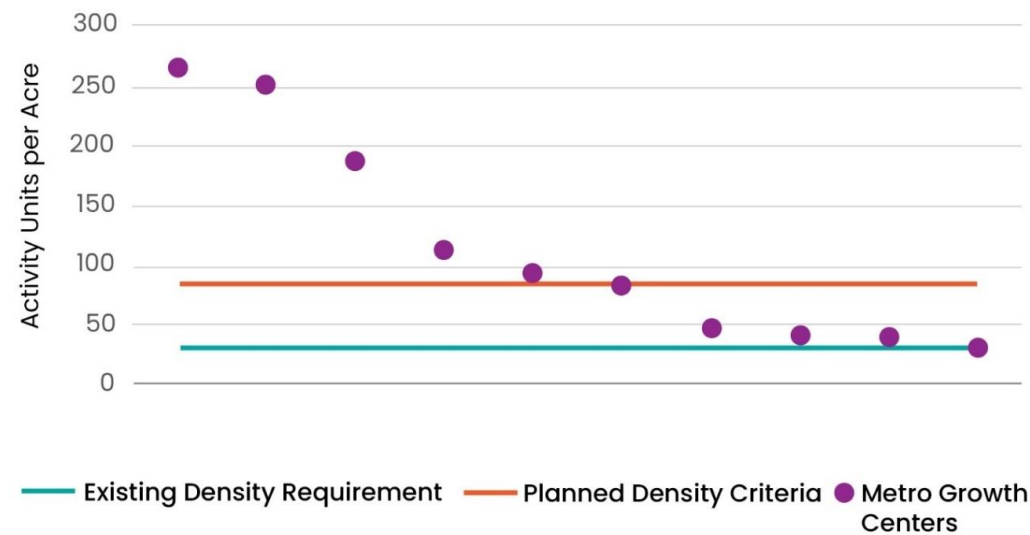







# Growth

Most metro growth centers already exceed the criteria for planned density

Metro Growth Centers: People per Acre



 +  ÷  = **People / Acre**

## People per acre



Regional growth centers are evaluated by existing and planned density. People per acre (or activity units) density combines the number of jobs and residents and divides by the gross acres in the center


Source: Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimates Program: 2023; PSRC Parcel Estimates Program: 2023; PSRC Covered Employment: 2022



# Growth

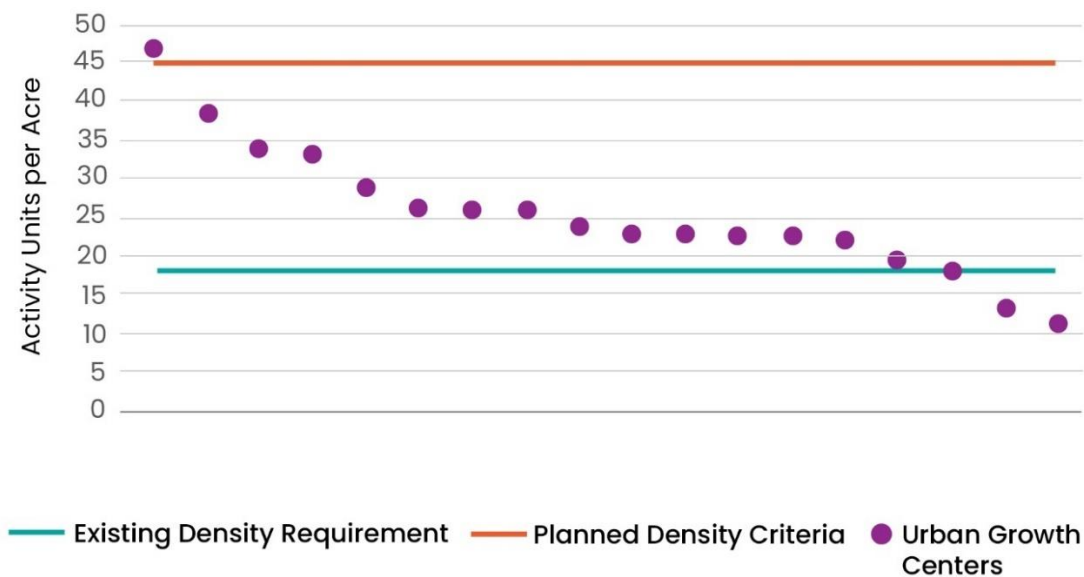
Three urban growth centers are still below the minimum density criteria

 $+$ 

$\div$ 

$=$  **People / Acre**

Urban Growth Centers: People per Acre



People per acre

Regional growth centers are evaluated by existing and planned density. People per acre (or activity units) density combines the number of jobs and residents and divides by the gross acres in the center

Source: Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimates Program: 2023; PSRC Parcel Estimates Program: 2023; PSRC Covered Employment: 2022

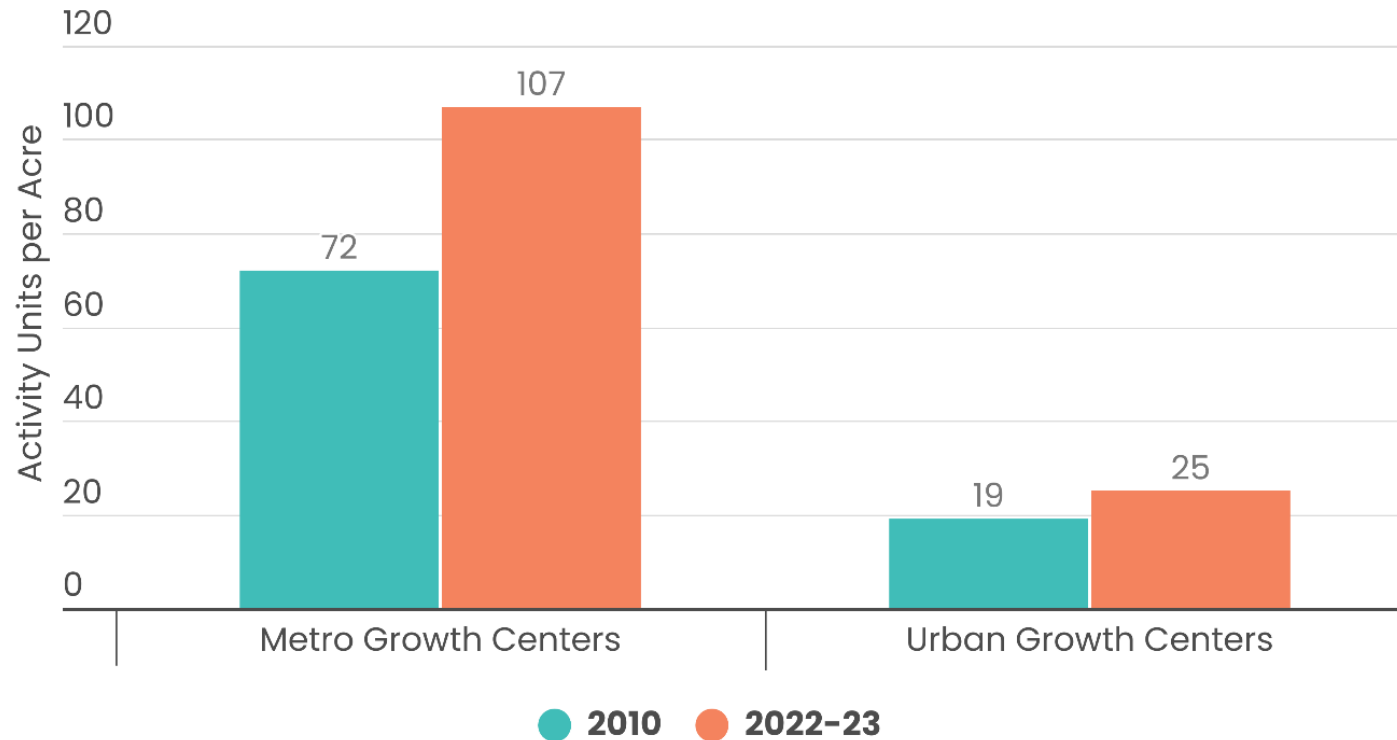




# Growth

## Metro growth centers have seen more rapid growth than urban growth centers

Change in Density by Regional Growth Center Type





A photograph of a Sound Transit Link light rail train traveling on an elevated track. The train is white with blue accents and features the 'Sound Transit' and 'Link' logos. The track is supported by a concrete structure. In the background, there are green trees and a clear blue sky. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Mobility' and 'Objective: Centers provide diverse mobility choices'.

# Mobility

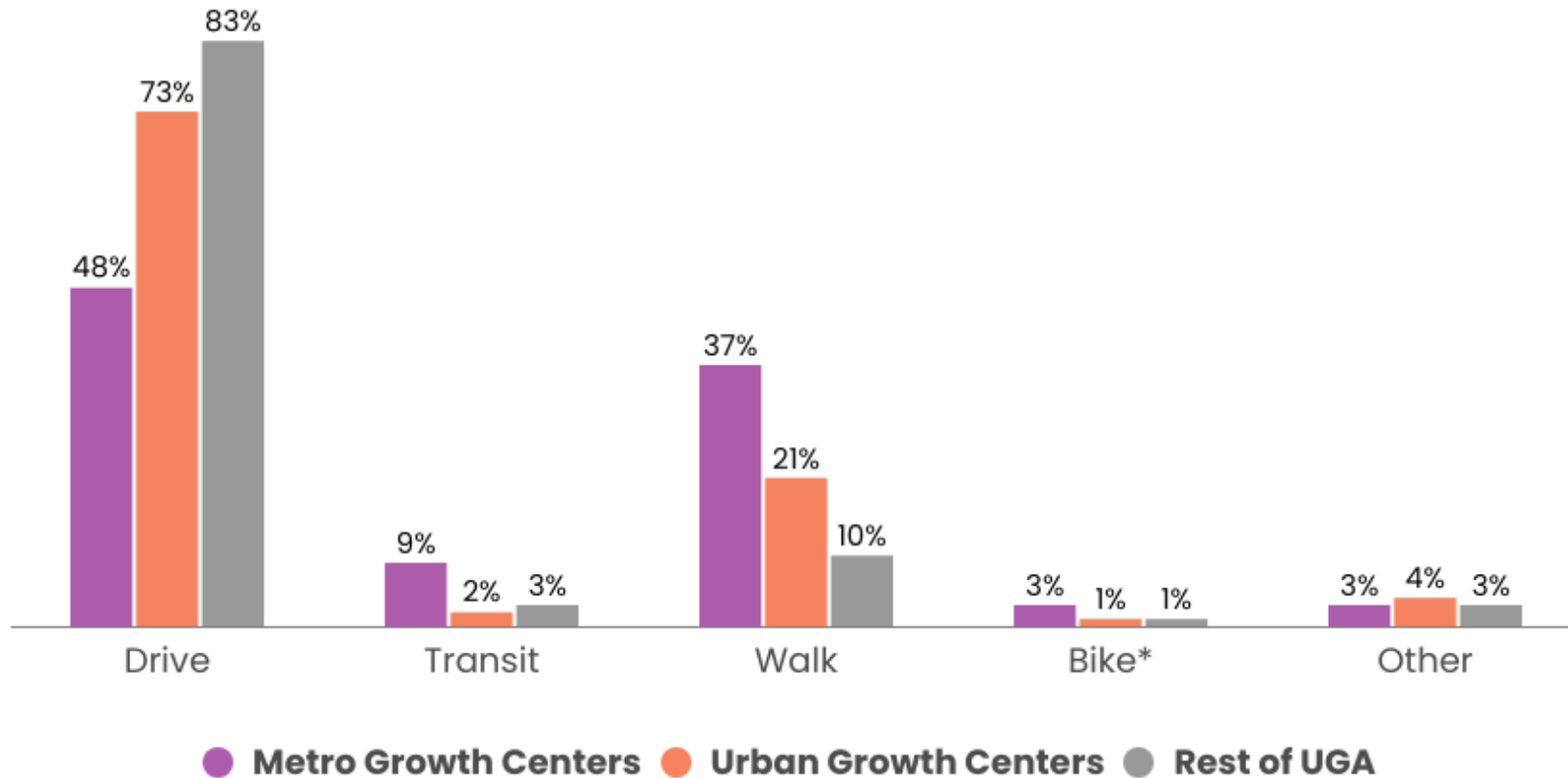
Objective: Centers provide diverse mobility choices



# Mobility

## Residents of regional growth centers drive less than other residents in the region

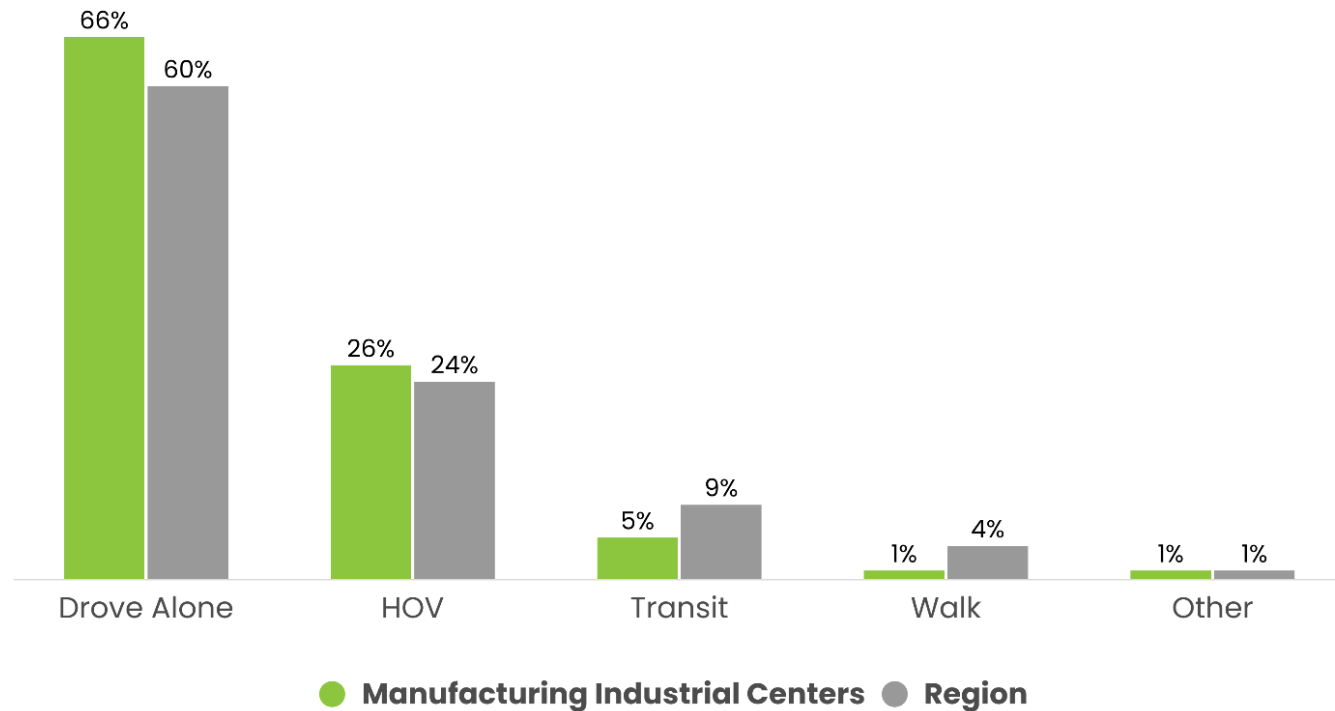
Mode of All Trips to Regional Growth Centers



# Mobility

## Workers in manufacturing/industrial centers drive alone to work at higher rates than other workers in the region

Mode Share for Workers in Manufacturing/Industrial Centers





A low-angle photograph of a modern, multi-story apartment building. The building features a mix of dark grey and light grey horizontal siding, large windows, and numerous balconies with glass railings. The sky is a clear, bright blue. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title and objective text.

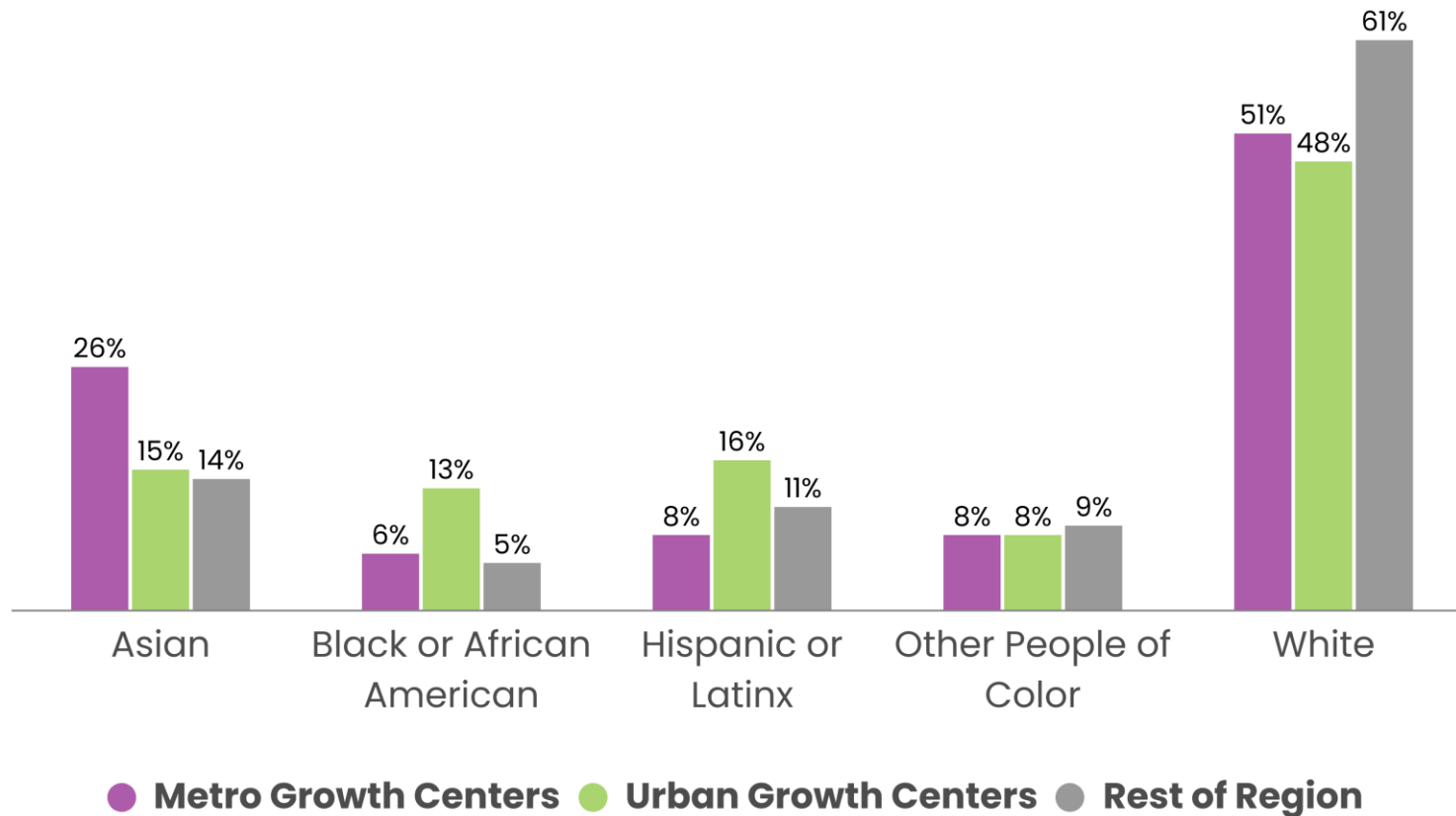
# Housing, Equity & Opportunity

Objective: Regional growth centers offer high access to opportunity for a diverse population

# Housing, Equity and Opportunity

## Regional growth centers are more racially diverse than the rest of the region

Regional Growth Center Population by Race and Hispanic/Latinx Origin

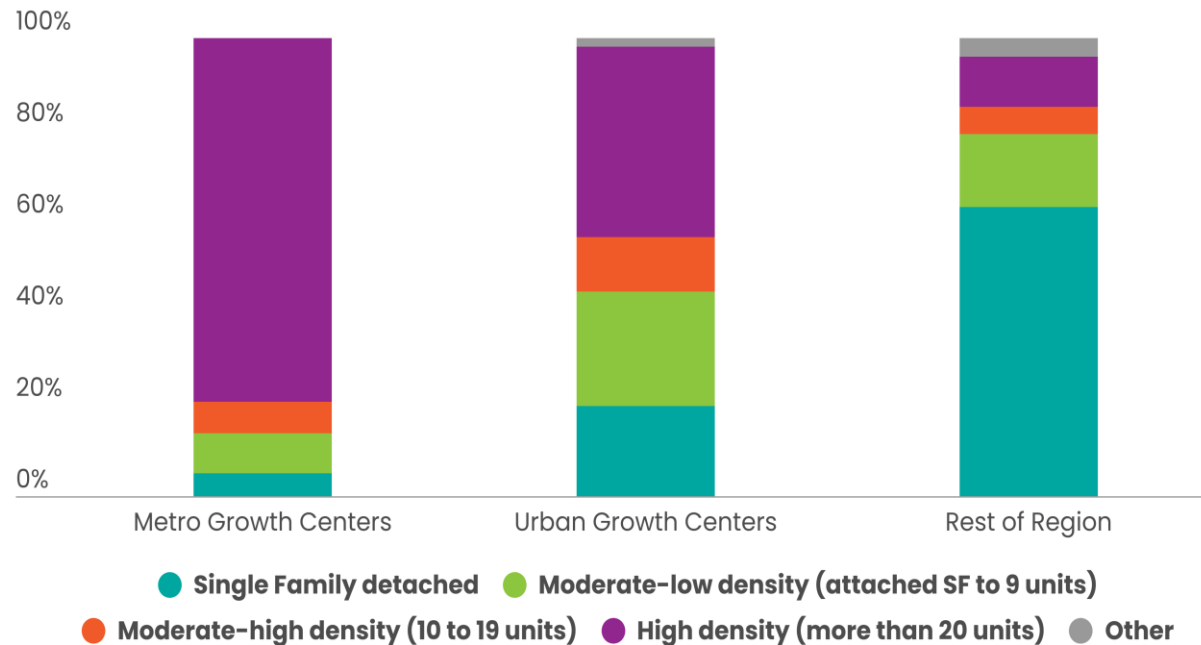




# Housing, Equity and Opportunity

Housing in regional growth centers is primarily rental units in large multifamily buildings

Housing Types in Regional Growth Centers

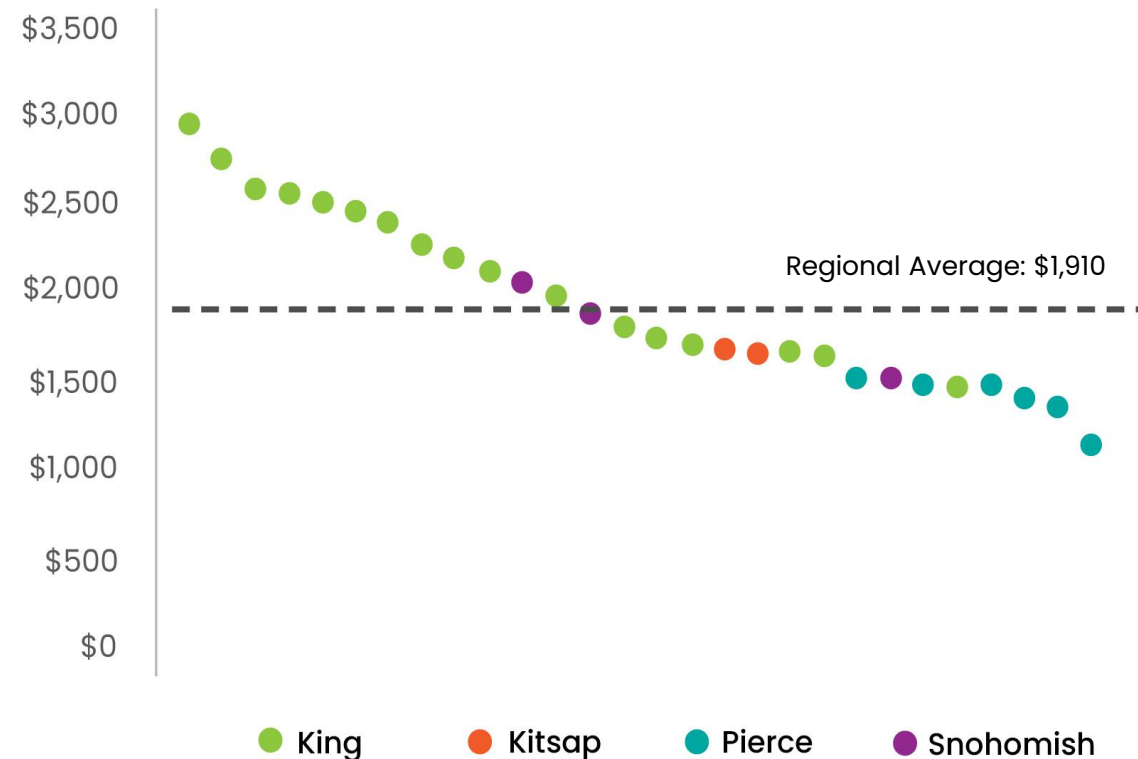




# Housing, Equity and Opportunity

**The average 1 bedroom apartment in regional growth centers is more expensive than regional average**

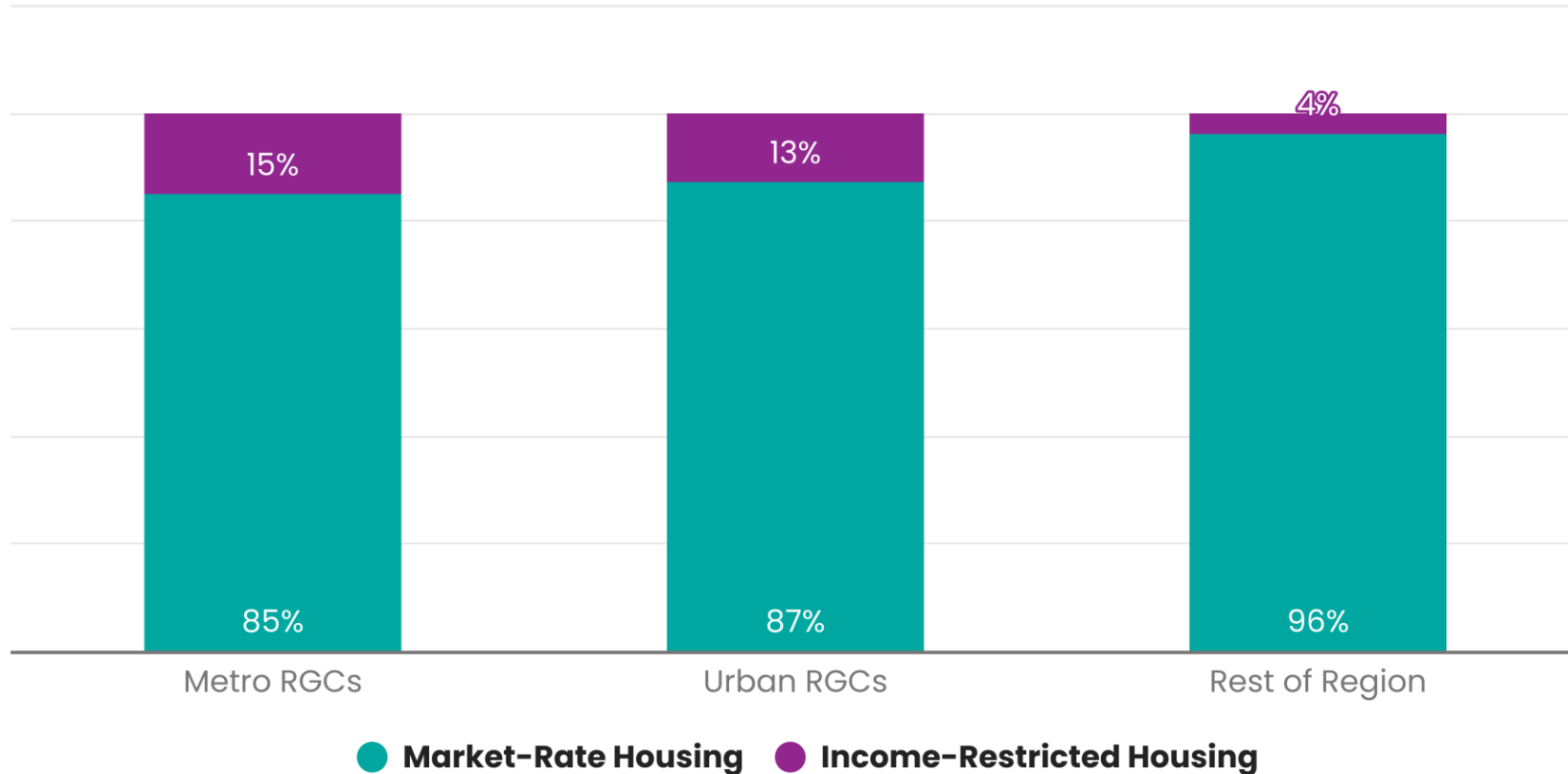
Average Rent in Regional Growth Centers, One Bedroom Units



# Housing, Equity and Opportunity

**Centers are home to a larger proportion of income restricted housing than the rest of the region**

Share of Income-Restricted Housing by Regional Growth Center Type



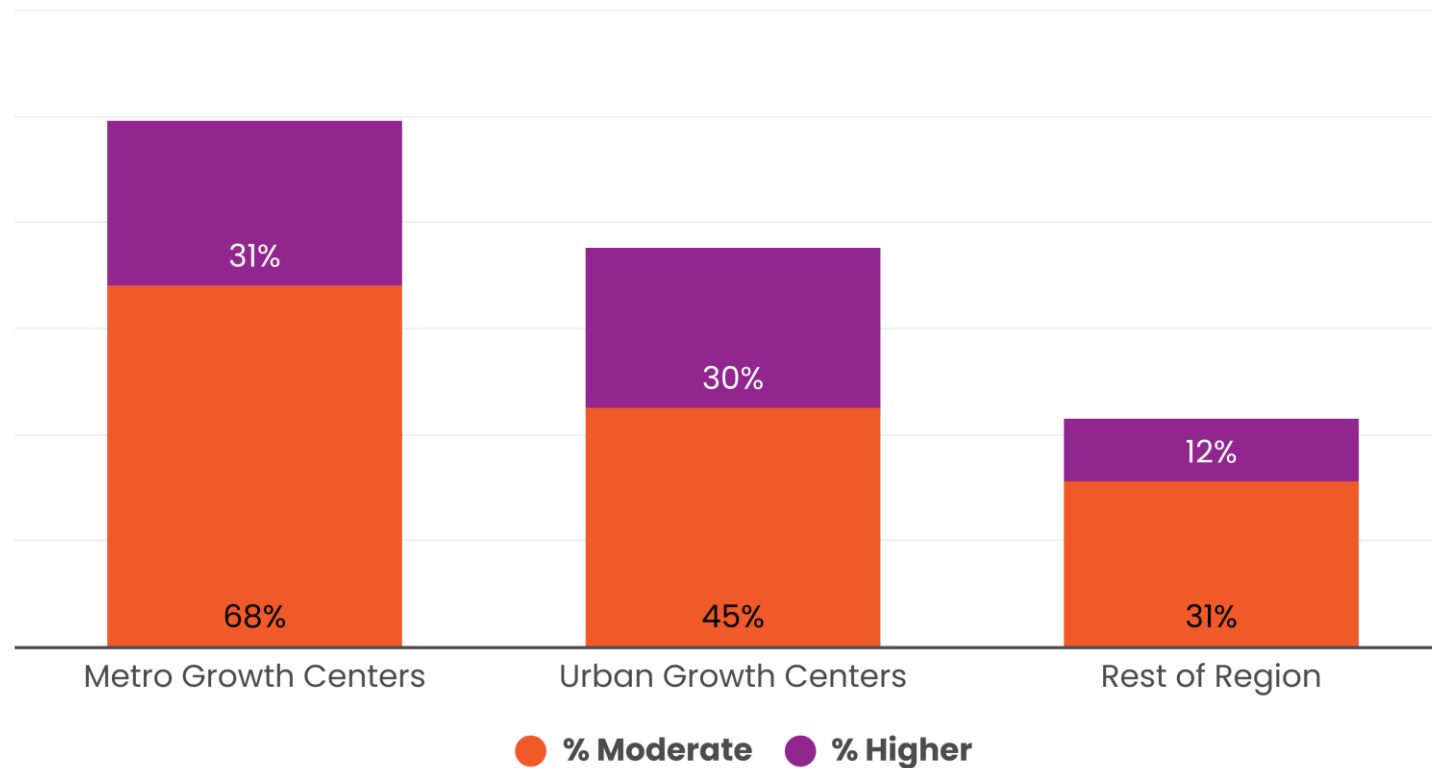
Source: PSRC Income Restricted Housing Database: 2021;  
King County Income-Restricted Housing Database: 2021



# Housing, Equity and Opportunity

**Residents of regional growth centers live in neighborhoods with a higher risk of displacement than the rest of the region**

Share of Regional Growth Center Residents Living in Displacement Risk Areas





A photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, there is a large tree with green and yellowing leaves. A paved path leads from the bottom left towards the center. A wooden bench is visible on the right side of the path. In the background, there is a large green lawn and more trees under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# Environment & Public Health

Objectives: Centers create complete and healthy communities

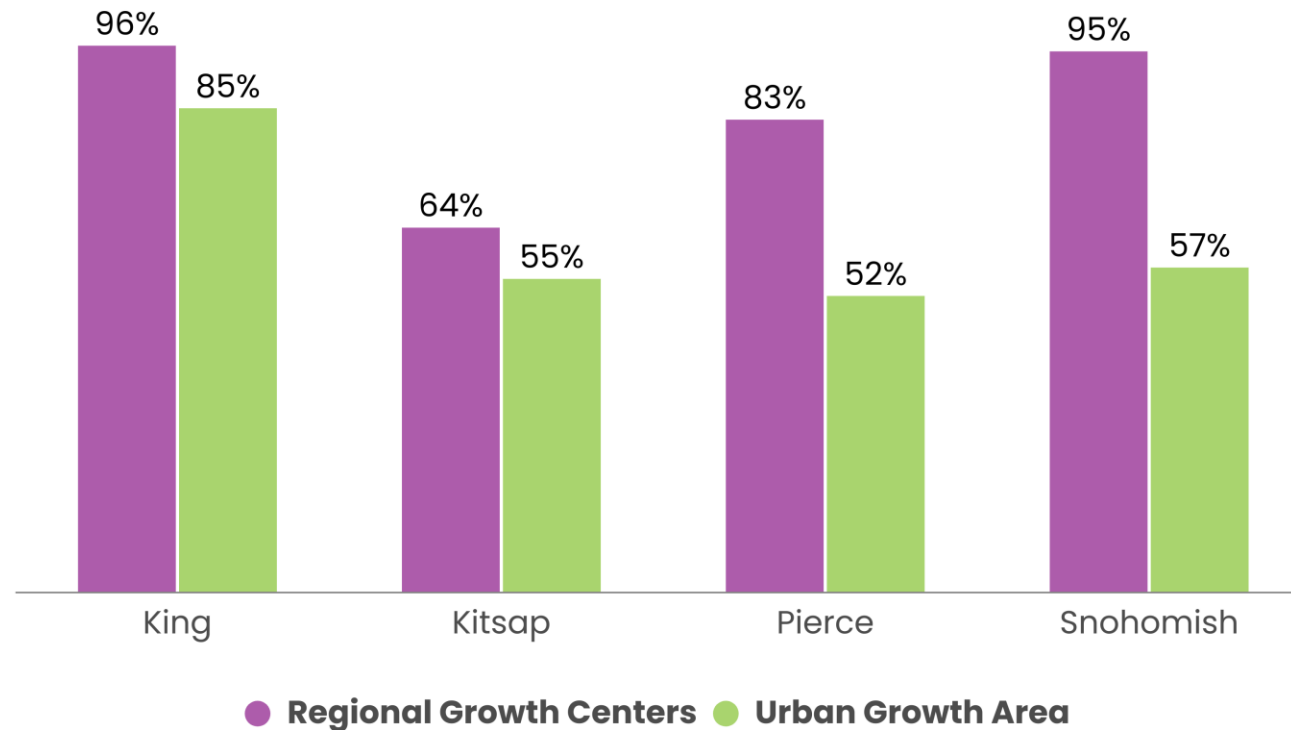
Centers provide access to urban open spaces and mitigate climate change impacts



# Environment and Public Health

**Residents of regional growth centers are significantly more likely to have access to a park than other residents in the urban area**

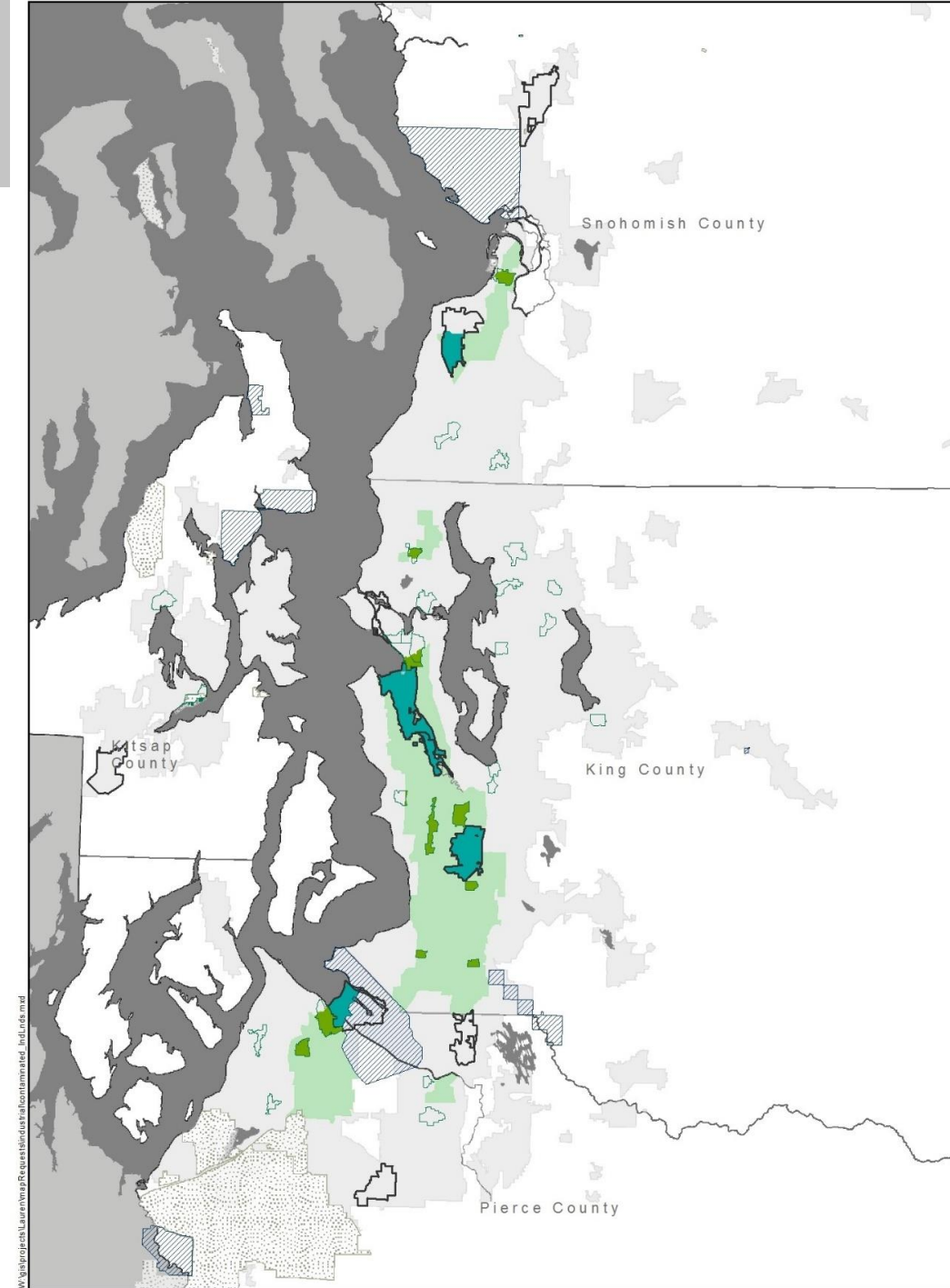
Percentage of Regional Growth Center Residents  
Living Within ½ Mile of a Park



# Environment & Public Health

The Washington Department of Ecology identified 16 areas in the state that are considered overburdened and highly impacted by criteria air pollutants.

Among regional centers, six MICs and fifteen RGCs are located in overburdened communities.





# Next Steps





# Policy Considerations

Growth, mobility, and urban form in urban growth centers

Density requirements

Housing and displacement in regional growth centers





# Next Steps

Release draft Regional Centers System Monitoring report in early spring

Regional centers redesignation process in summer/fall 2025

Update System Monitoring report and consider updates to the Centers Framework in 2026







# Thank You!

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