

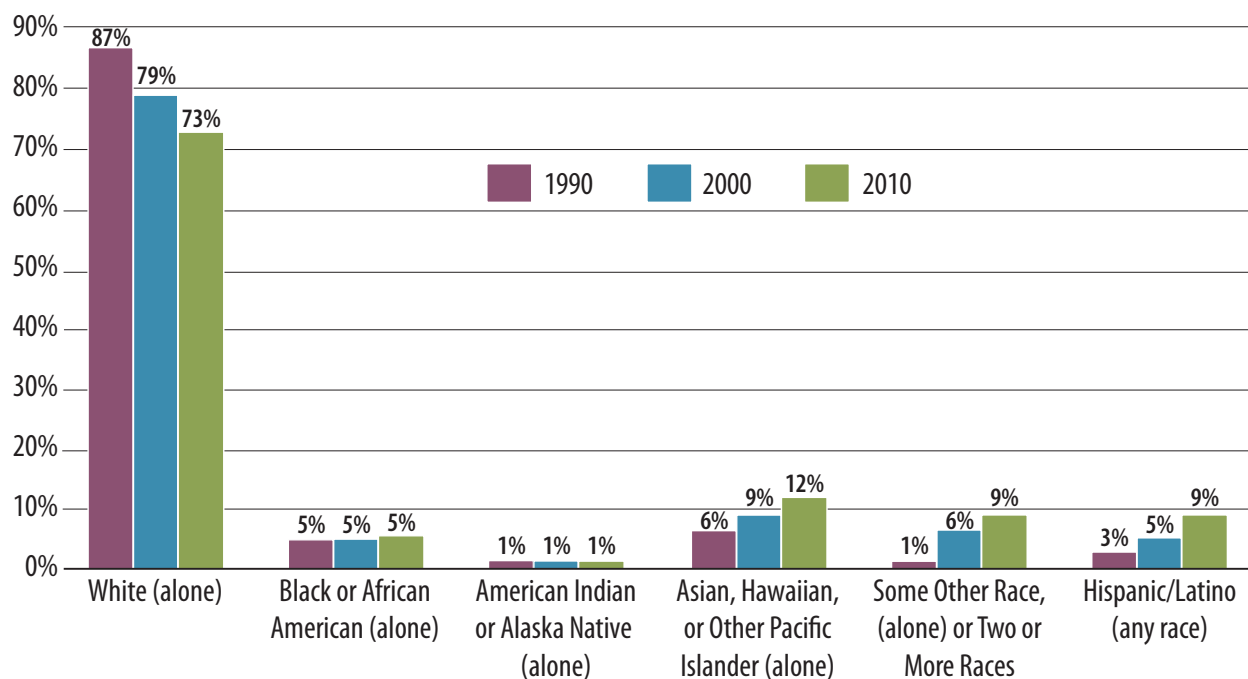
## Fair Housing in the Central Puget Sound Region

Through the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, PSRC partnered with the Fair Housing Center of Washington to produce a Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA) for the region. The FHEA, which was released in January 2014, advances the goals of VISION 2040 with analysis and recommendations aimed at ensuring equitable access to housing and opportunity for all residents of the region, especially people protected under the federal Fair Housing Act.

### An Increasingly Diverse Region

The central Puget Sound region mirrors the national trend of increased racial and ethnic diversity. Since 1990, the racial and ethnic composition of the region has changed significantly and diversification is projected to continue. The regional FHEA assesses the lingering effects of historical segregation as well as ongoing discriminatory conditions that create barriers to housing choice and access to opportunity.

Figure 1. Race/Ethnicity as Share of Regional Population, 1990–2010

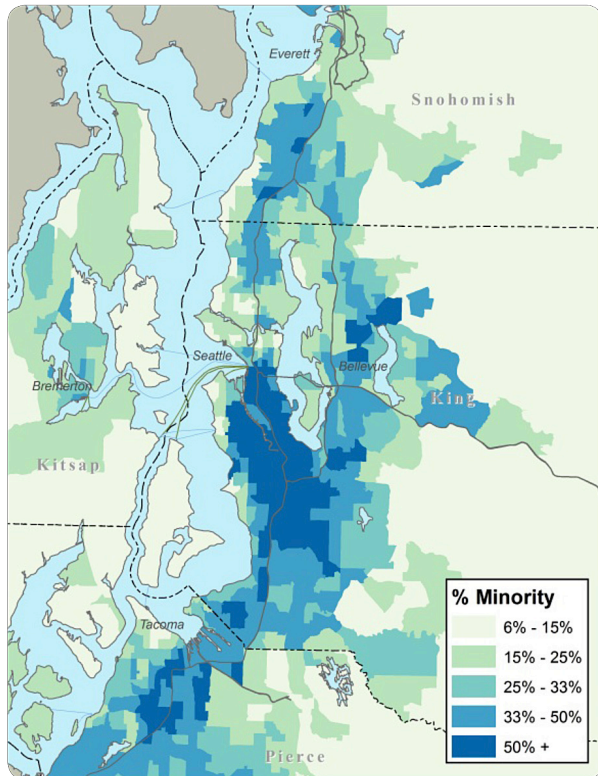


Source: U.S. Census

### Regional Patterns: Demographics, Income, and Housing Cost

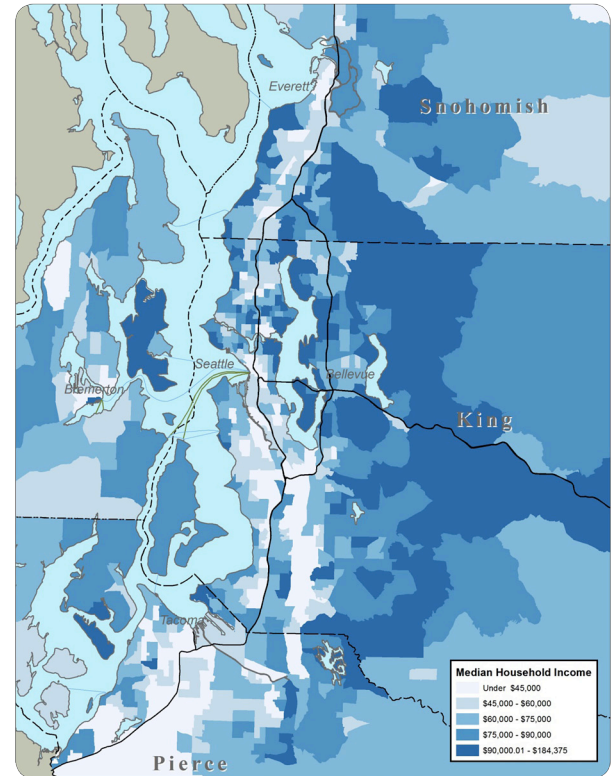
Demographic and income patterns are closely related across the region. Minority households are more likely to reside in census tracts where median household income falls below \$45,000. Figure 2 illustrates that census tracts in South King County and North Pierce County accommodate a greater share of communities of color than the rest of the region. Figure 3 demonstrates that median household incomes in South King County, North Pierce County, and generally along the I-5 corridor are significantly lower than other parts of the region.

Figure 2. Geographic Distribution of Communities of Color, 2010



Source: U.S. Census

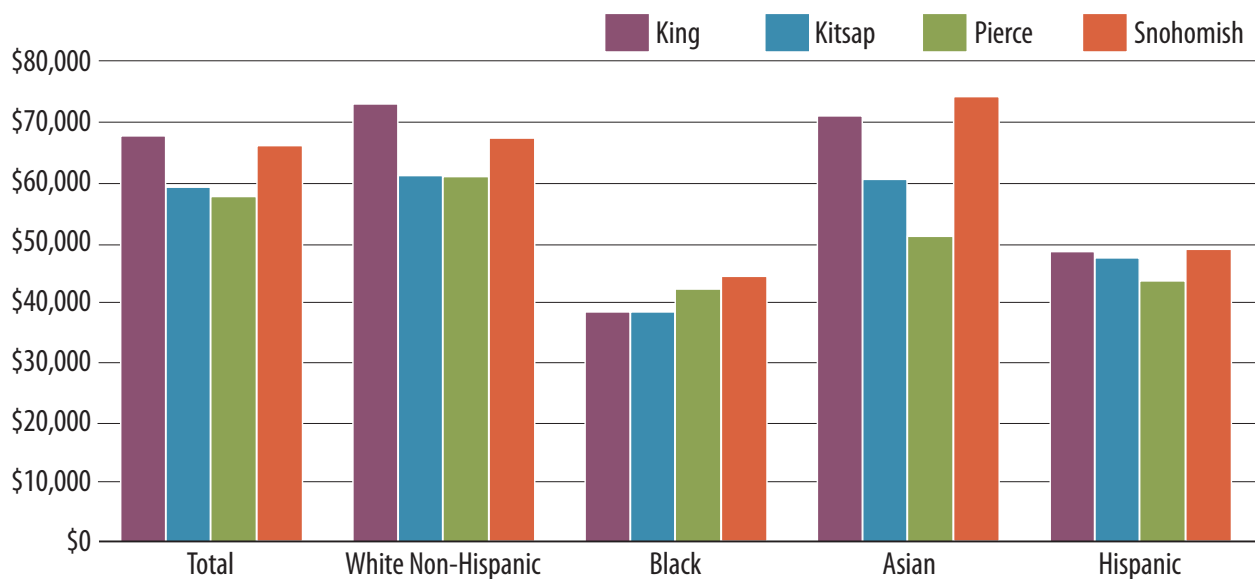
Figure 3. Geographic Distribution of Median Household Income, 2007–2011



Source: American Community Survey (2007–2011 Estimates)

Figure 4 further illustrates the relationship between race and income for racial and ethnic groups in each county. In general, median incomes for black and Hispanic communities are lower than non-Hispanic white and Asian populations.

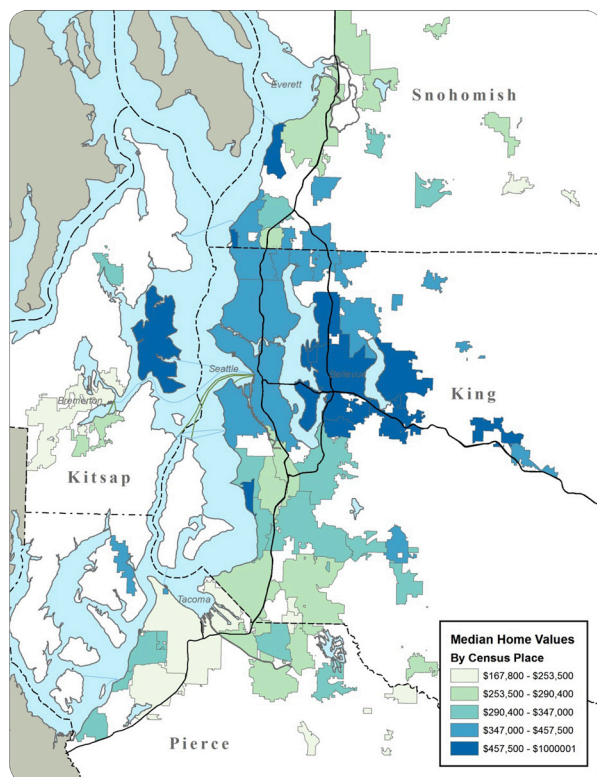
Figure 4. Median Income and Race/Ethnicity by County, 2006–2010



Source: American Community Survey (2006–2010 Estimates)

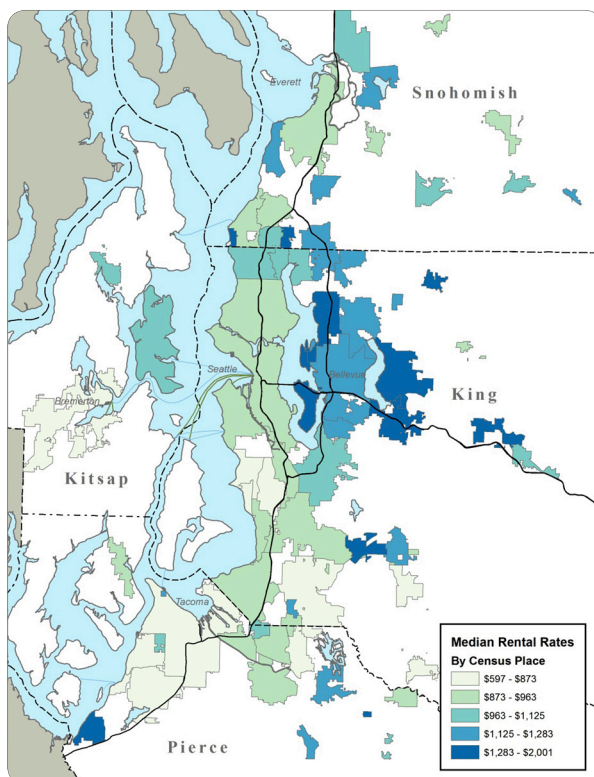
Because of the strong relationship between race and income, housing affordability in the region is a major factor affecting equity and access to fair housing. As shown in figures 5 and 6, housing costs are lowest in South King County and Pierce County and housing is least affordable in Seattle and East King County. Persistent unaffordable housing costs, along with current and historic discrimination, have geographically separated lower-income households and households of color from higher income, white communities.

Figure 5. Median Home Values, 2007–2011



Source: American Community Survey (2007–2011 Estimates)

Figure 6. Median Rental Rates, 2007–2011



Source: American Community Survey (2007–2011 Estimates)

## Measures of Segregation

A “dissimilarity index” is one measure recommended by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assess the degree of segregation present in a community or region. The index measures segregation as the relationship between the pattern of residence of any two demographic groups. Applying this measure to the region reveals low segregation between white communities and communities of color overall with a modest trend toward lower segregation over time. A more fine-grained analysis shows that black communities are moderately segregated from white communities.

Table 1. Dissimilarity Index for Central Puget Sound Region, 2000 and 2010

	2000	2010	Segregation Level
White — Minority	0.34	0.32	Low (<0.40)
White — Black	0.54	0.50	<b>Moderate (0.41–0.54)</b>
White — Hispanic	0.33	0.34	Low (<0.40)
White — Asian/Pacific Islander	0.40	0.39	Low (<0.40)
White — Native American	0.35	0.36	Low (<0.40)

Note: The calculated value of the dissimilarity index can fall between zero (0), complete integration, and one (1) complete segregation.

Source: U.S. Census, HUD, and Puget Sound Regional Council

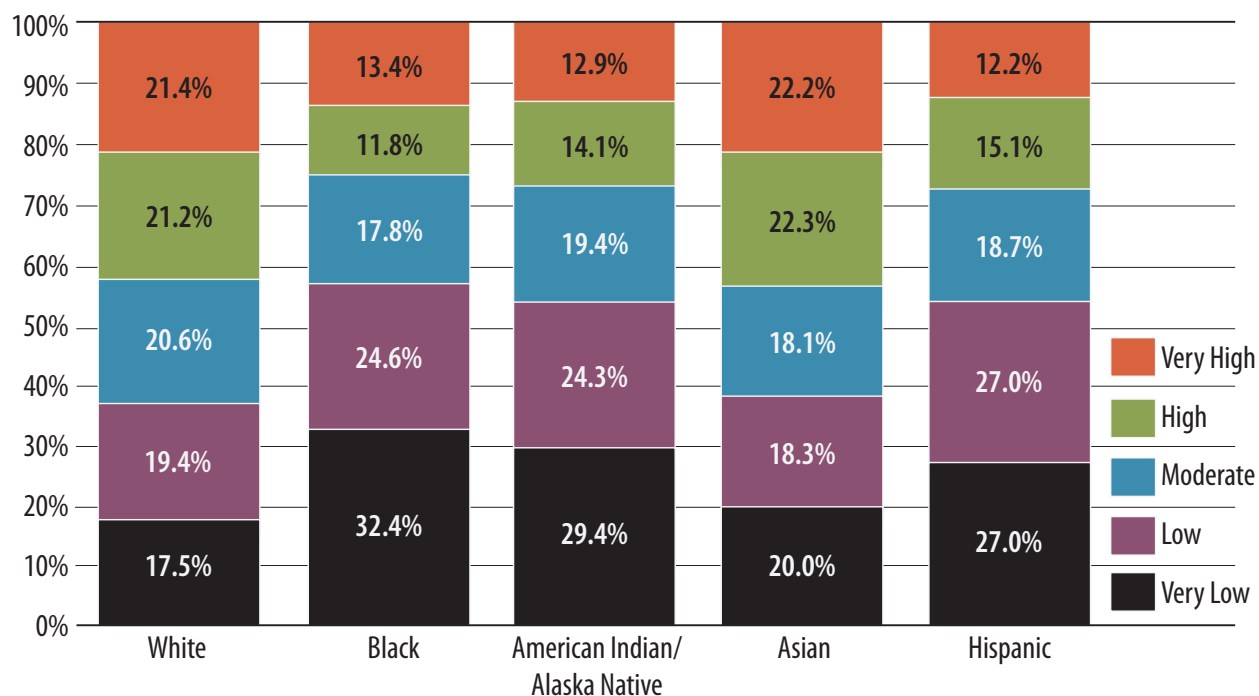
An additional tool from HUD comparing projected versus actual racial composition in communities throughout the region shows that minorities are “overrepresented”—in greater proportion than expected based on income—in centralized locations and “underrepresented” at the periphery of the urban area, indicating that factors other than income have shaped racial composition.

## Inequitable Access to Opportunity

*Access to Opportunity* is a situation or condition that places individuals in a position to be more likely to succeed and is defined by five factors that research shows are associated with positive outcomes: education, economic health, housing and neighborhood quality, transportation/mobility, and health and environment. The analysis highlights a strong association between geography and access to opportunity.

Inequities in *Access to Opportunity* affect racial groups unevenly; income alone cannot explain disparities in access to opportunity. Figure 7 demonstrates that, looking at households below the poverty line, a greater percentage of black households experience “very low” and “low” access to opportunity in their neighborhood (57%) compared with white households (40%).

Figure 7. Opportunity Distribution by Race and Poverty, 2012



Source: Equity, Opportunity, and Sustainability in the Central Puget Sound Region. Kirwan Institute and Puget Sound Regional Council Report, May 2012.

## Fair Housing: Differential Treatment for Protected Classes

A Fair Housing Testing Audit determines the frequency of differences in treatment of persons in protected classes when attempting to lease housing. The Fair Housing Center of Washington tested 90 properties near transit in Snohomish, King, and Pierce counties for discriminatory treatment.

Across the region, 70% of individuals protected by national origin and race were treated differently when seeking housing, followed by 39% of individuals protected by disability.

Table 2. Testing Audit Results, 2012–2013

% Tests Showing Differences in Treatment due to:	National Origin	Race	Disability	Total Differences in Treatment
Snohomish County	54%	57%	33%	50%
King County	79%	79%	43%	65%
Pierce County	50%	100%	0%	50%
Region	70%	69%	39%	60%

Source: FHCW, 2013

In the audit, testers identified several different types of difference in treatment. Most commonly, control testers were shown or told about more units, were presented lower prices and better specials, had fewer requirements to rent, received an earlier date of availability, and were treated with more courtesy.

## Recommendations and Next Steps

Overall, findings from the FHEA highlight two significant trends in fair housing for the Puget Sound region.

- Because black and Hispanic households earn significantly less than white and Asian households, and affordable housing is unevenly distributed in the region, low-income minorities are largely shut out of many communities.
- Overt discrimination in housing, both historical and ongoing, has also shaped segregation within the region, especially for black households, and unequal access to opportunity among racial and ethnic groups.

In response, the FHEA highlights strategies and recommendations for fair housing and equity within the region (see pages 83-85). The report also provides data and a regional analysis template that can support planning for fair housing at both the local and regional scales.

Copies of this *Puget Sound Trend* are available from the Information Center at 206-464-7532 or [info@psrc.org](mailto:info@psrc.org), or from the PSRC website, [psrc.org](http://psrc.org). For questions regarding the data presented in this *Trend*, contact Giulia Pasciuto at 206-971-3278, [gpasciuto@psrc.org](mailto:gpasciuto@psrc.org).

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