



## **Transportation Needs**

### **Objective:**

Shape a built environment that allows communities to flourish

### **Strategy:**

Meet the transit needs of low income and other under-served populations

### **What is happening in King County?**

King County residents are spending an increasing proportion of their income on housing. Renters in King County spent an average of 45 percent of their income on housing in 2010, while owners spent an average of 36 percent of their income on housing. This means that many of our residents spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. When housing costs absorb a higher percentage of a household's income, it is likely that money will be diverted from other basic necessities such as food, clothing, and healthcare to pay the rent or mortgage.

The effects of high spending on housing are affecting some residents more than others. In addition to a larger effect on renters, residents with higher incomes are much less likely to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. African American/Black and Latino residents are more likely to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing than White residents.

Additionally, while approximately 66 percent of King County residents live within a 1/4 mile of a park, trail, or open space, 72 percent of those in white neighborhoods (< 13 percent people of color) live close to parks, while in non-white neighborhoods (>50 percent people of color), only 62 percent of residents are close to park resources.

### **What role does King County play?**

The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) coordinates the region's major funding systems for affordable housing outside the city of Seattle, and additionally works closely with Seattle to provide capital investment, treatment and supportive services, and rental assistance. Since 2005, King County has funded over 5,046 low-income housing units.

King County participates with all cities in the Regional Affordable Housing Program and the Growth Management Planning Council to address housing affordability.

The King County Comprehensive Plan addresses affordable housing by encouraging increased density within the urban growth area and provides some affordable housing incentives for developers in urban unincorporated areas. For example, the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) prioritizes permits for affordable housing projects. DCHS and DPER play active roles in developing the Comprehensive Plan and its periodic updates.

King County's Parks Division contributes to park improvement through direct investments, partnerships with community-based organizations, and through the King County Parks levy. King County Regional Trails System currently is 300 miles of paved and unpaved greenways. King County Parks Division considers several priorities when allocating resources towards trail projects. These priorities are applied to provide the most efficient use of taxpayer resources and reduce disparities across the County in access to trails and parks.

- Access and proximity to population
- Closing existing gaps in the network
- Redevelopment or upgrading older existing trails
- Ensuring safe trail bridges
- Working with recreation providers such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club to assess membership and identify recreational needs

### **What else influences these indicators?**

King County households have among the nation's highest average incomes. The combination of increasing incomes and low interest rates has placed a great deal of pressure on the housing market, driving up prices and increasing scarcity of housing, especially for low-income people. Even for middle income households, the challenges are significant. With home prices rising faster than incomes, it is difficult for many residents to qualify for a mortgage. The recent mortgage crisis has affected King County less than other areas of the country, but it has still driven up an increase in households paying more for housing and has also driven up prices for the rental market.

Additional issues influencing housing affordability include the cost of construction; availability of affordable property on which to build suitable housing; permitting and land use regulations; and coordination among multiple funders, agencies, communities and contractors.

### **Related Links**

[Committee to End Homelessness](#)

[King County Regional Trail System](#)

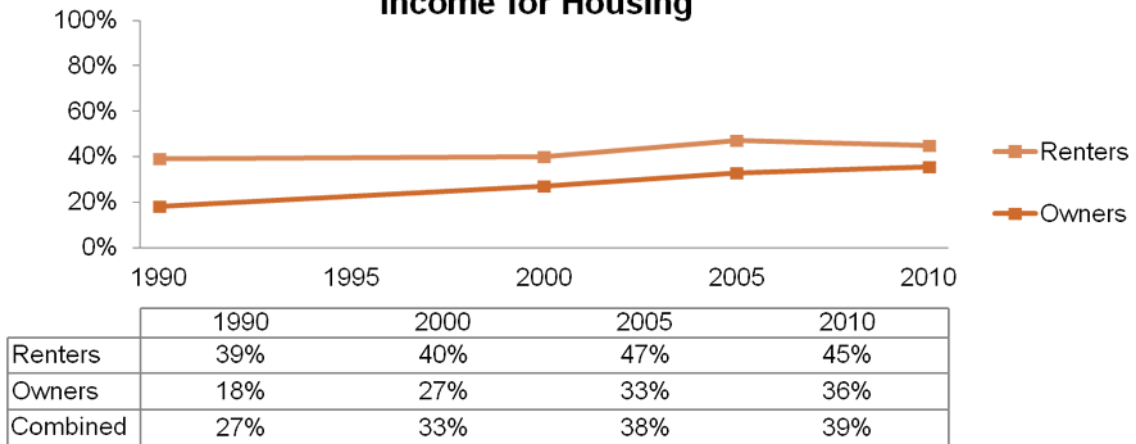
[Equity perspectives on King County Regional Trail network](#)

### **Technical Notes**

Households paying > 30% of Income on Housing: Ethnicity and income charts include renter households and owners with mortgages, but not the 15% of owners who own free & clear. Time series chart includes all owners.

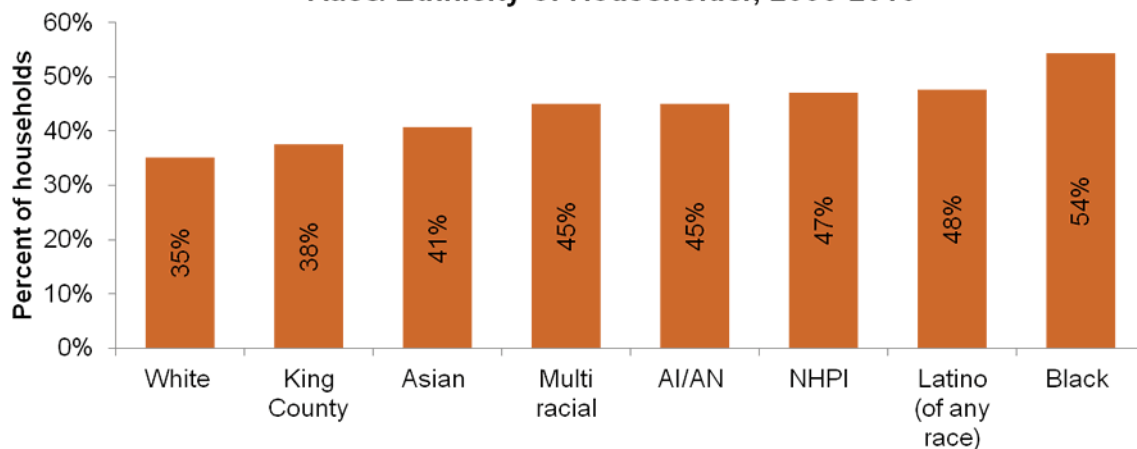
## Charts and Maps

**Percent of King County Households (All) Paying >30% of Income for Housing**



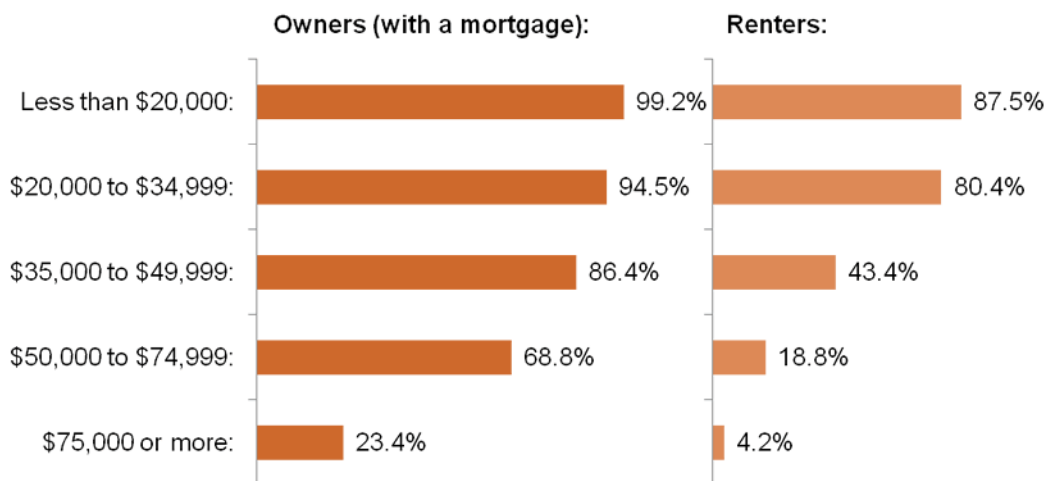
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, King County Comprehensive Plan 2012

**Percent of King County Households (Renters & Owners with Mortgages) Paying >30% of Income for Housing by Race/Ethnicity of Householder, 2006-2010**



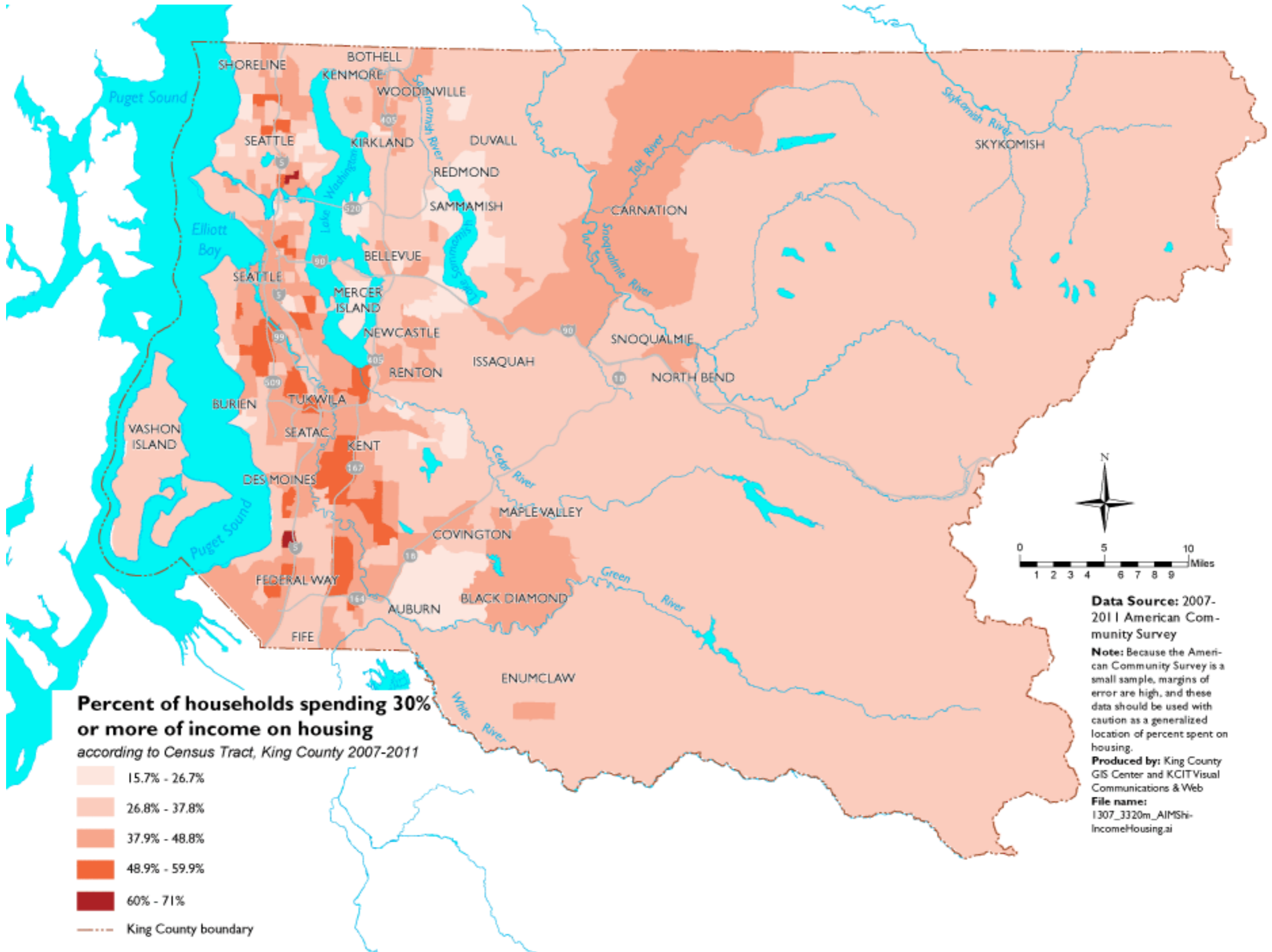
Data source: 2006-2010 ACS PUMS

**Percent of King County Households (Renters & Owners with Mortgages) Paying >30% of Income for Housing**



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2006-2010

# Percent of Households Spending 30% and More of Income on Housing





**Communities Inside Urban Growth Boundary within one Quarter Mile of Park, Open Space, or Trail**

