



Climate and Health

Objective:

Reduce climate pollution and prepare for the effects of climate change on the environment, human health, and the economy

Strategy:

Advance policies and programs that simultaneously reduce climate pollution and improve health

Why is this strategy important?

Transportation is the greatest source of greenhouse emissions within King County, representing approximately half of all emissions that occur locally. Cars and trucks are the largest source of transportation emissions at 4.7 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e) per person per year, but emissions from air travel are also significant at 1.2 MTCO₂e per person. Additionally, research indicates that commuting by car and other sedentary modes can lead to higher stress levels, increased risk of heart disease, and less exercise, which all can result in negative health outcomes.

While walking and biking have the biggest emission reductions and health benefits, taking transit can result in big gains too. Research from the Center for Disease Control quantifies that Americans using transit spend a median of 19 minutes daily walking to and from transit, and 29 percent achieve minimum recommended guidelines of 30 minutes of exercise daily solely by walking to and from transit.

At the same time, the Sightline Institute has documented that taking a $\frac{3}{4}$ full bus results in more than five times less emissions (per person) compared to driving a single occupancy vehicle.

Due to these dual benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving public health, King County is focused on supporting and promoting active transportation alternatives.

How is our performance?

The proportion of King County residents using active modes of transportation has increased from 24 percent in 2007 to 28 percent in 2011, according to the Washington State Commute Trip Reduction Survey. Active transportation promotes physical activity and includes biking, walking, and taking transit. King County's goal for 2015 is for 31 percent of commuters to use active modes of transportation. This is an important part of King County's Climate Action Plan Goal to reduce the need for driving and provide and encourage the use of sustainable transportation choices such as public transit, alternative technology vehicles, ridesharing, walking and bicycling.

King County supports active transportation alternatives including through the Regional Trail System, by helping employers implement Commute Trip Reduction programs, and by providing bus and van-pool service to more than 100 million passengers annually. Public Health Seattle and King County is

also proactively supporting efforts to improve biking and walking. For example, in 2011 it supported seven King County cities' efforts to adopt policies to improve biking and walking for more than 359,000 residents, and also partnered with school districts to implement "Safe Routes to School" programs now serving 124,000 King County students.

What can you do?

Walk or ride your bike -- Explore maps, resources, and related King County biking information.

Ride the bus - Instead of driving alone and you'll reduce greenhouse gases and the amount of green leaving your wallet. And don't forget that metro buses have bike racks!

Join or start a Metro vanpool-Metro's Vanpool Program has low monthly fares that include gas, insurance, maintenance and roadside service.

Try carpooling - Share the ride with neighbors and friends to save gas and other commute costs--and use the carpool lane to zip past traffic. It's easy to find a rideshare partner.

Moving forward

King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP), aligned with other County planning documents regarding land use, transit and energy, includes a goal to reduce the need for driving and provide and encourage the use of sustainable transportation choices such as public transit, alternative technology vehicles, ridesharing, walking, and bicycling.

Related Links

[King County Strategic Climate Action Plan](#)

[Center for Disease Control Transit Research](#)

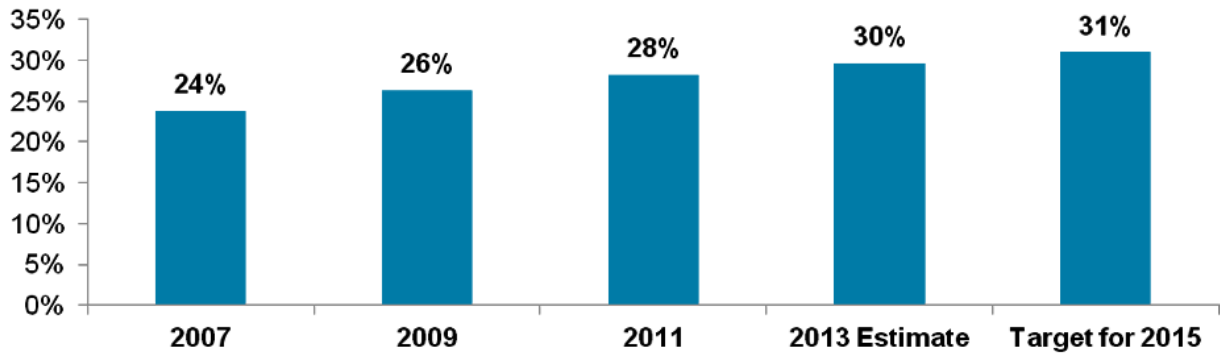
[Sightline Institute Climate Research](#)

Technical Notes

Data from the American Community Survey, US Census. Active commute types include using public transportation, biking, and walking.

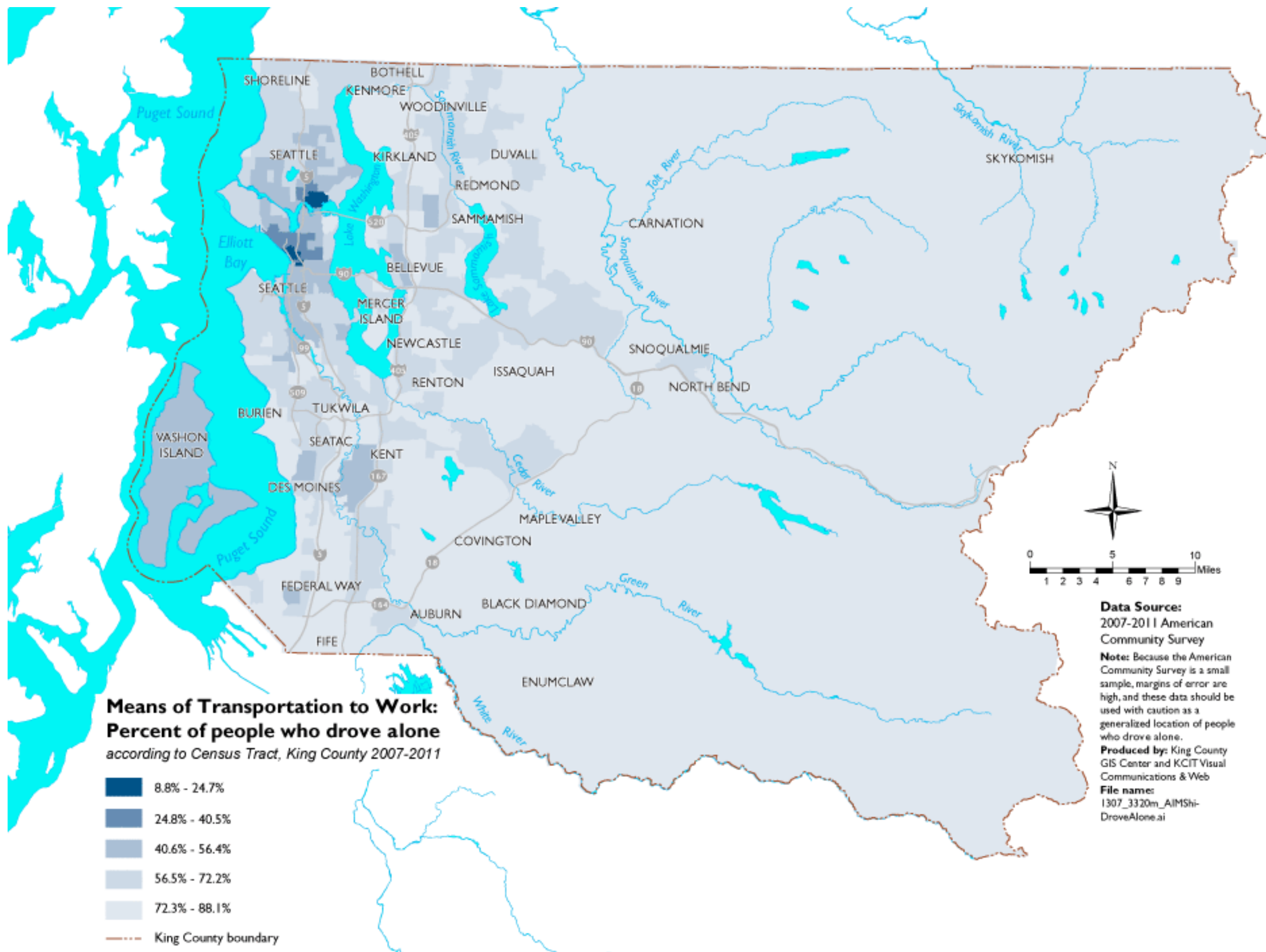
Charts and Maps

King County Commuters with Active Commutes

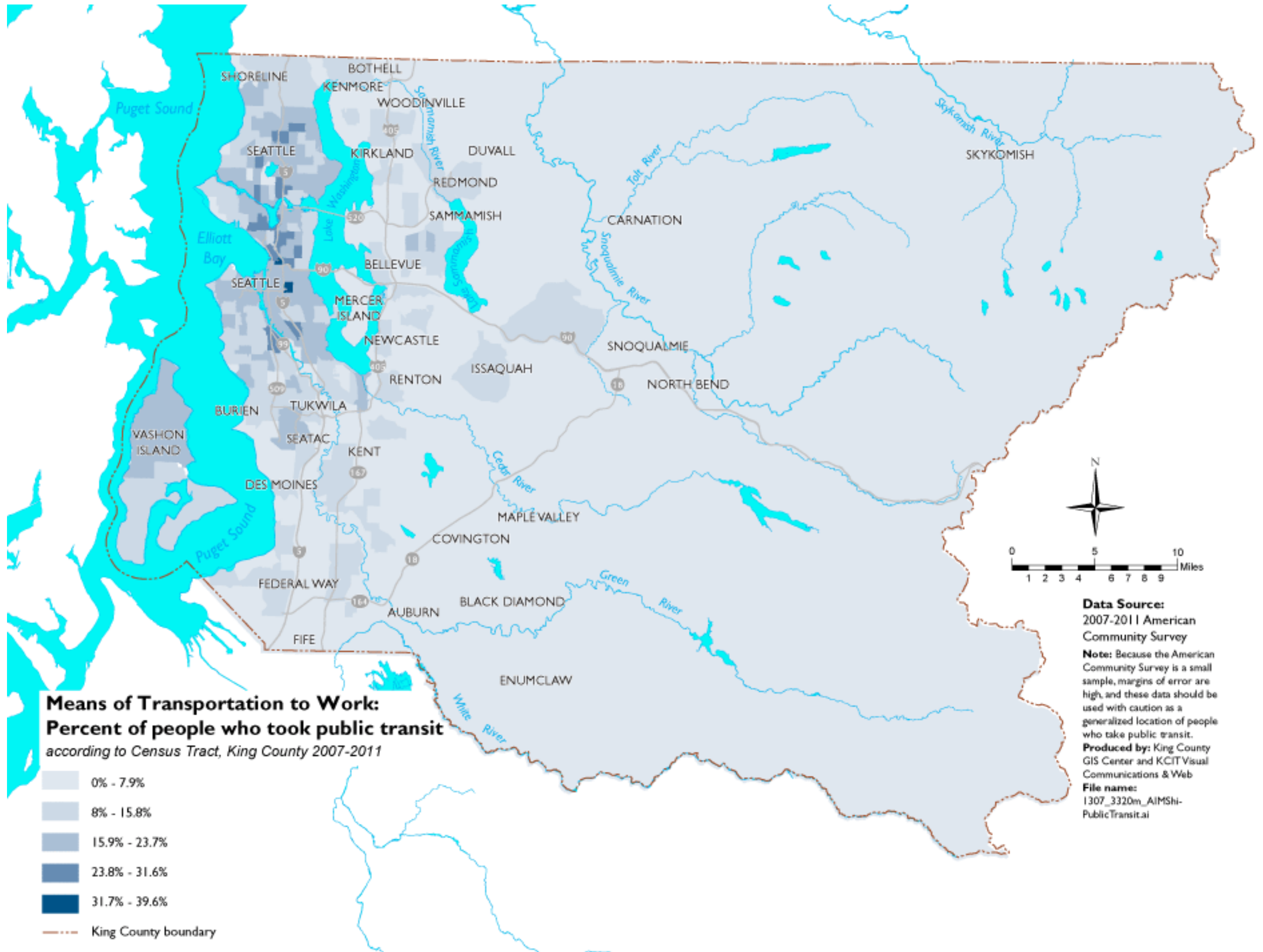


Data Source: Washington State Commute Trip Reduction Survey, includes bike, walking, and transit

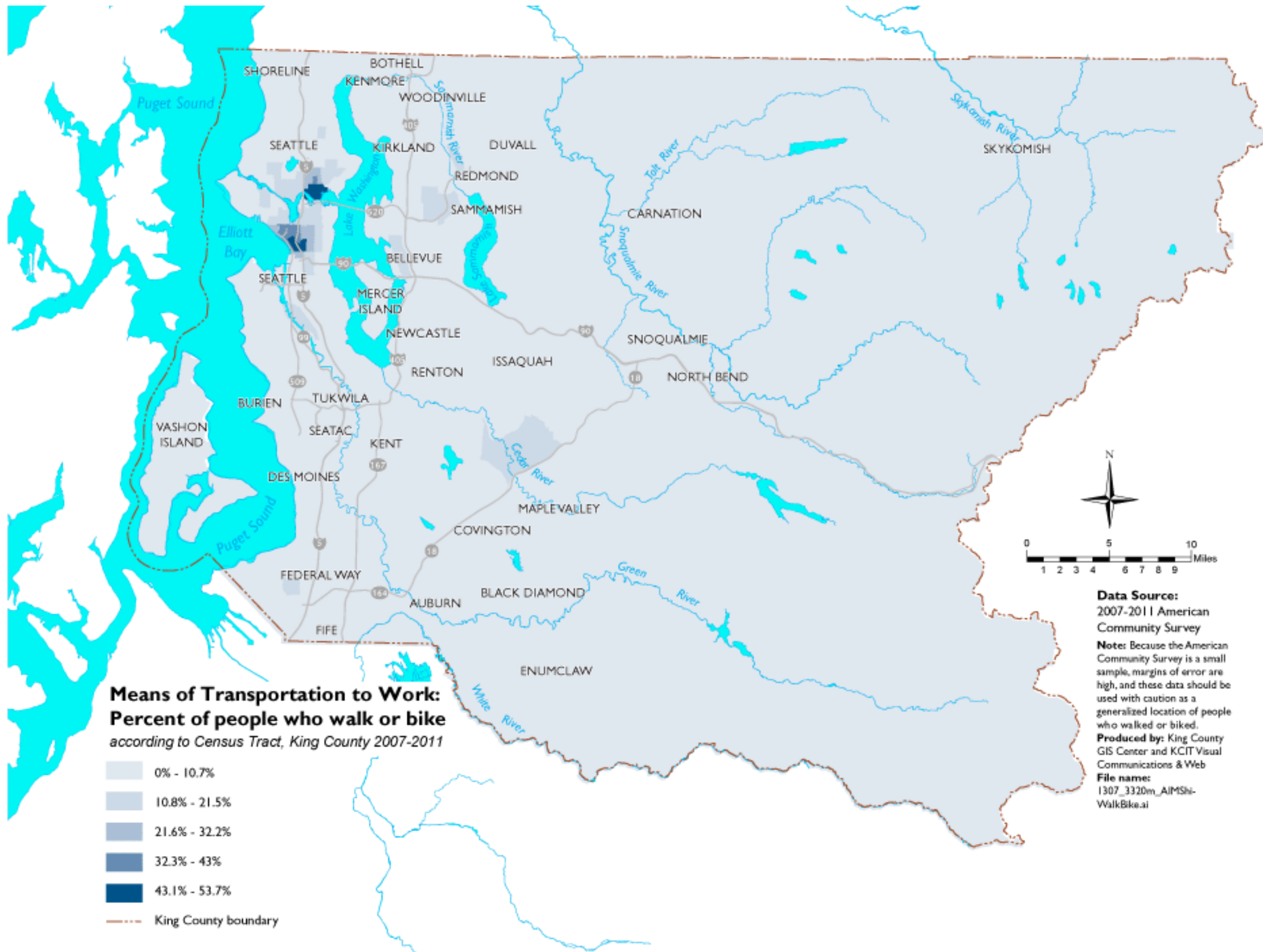
Means of Transportation to Work: Percent Drove Alone



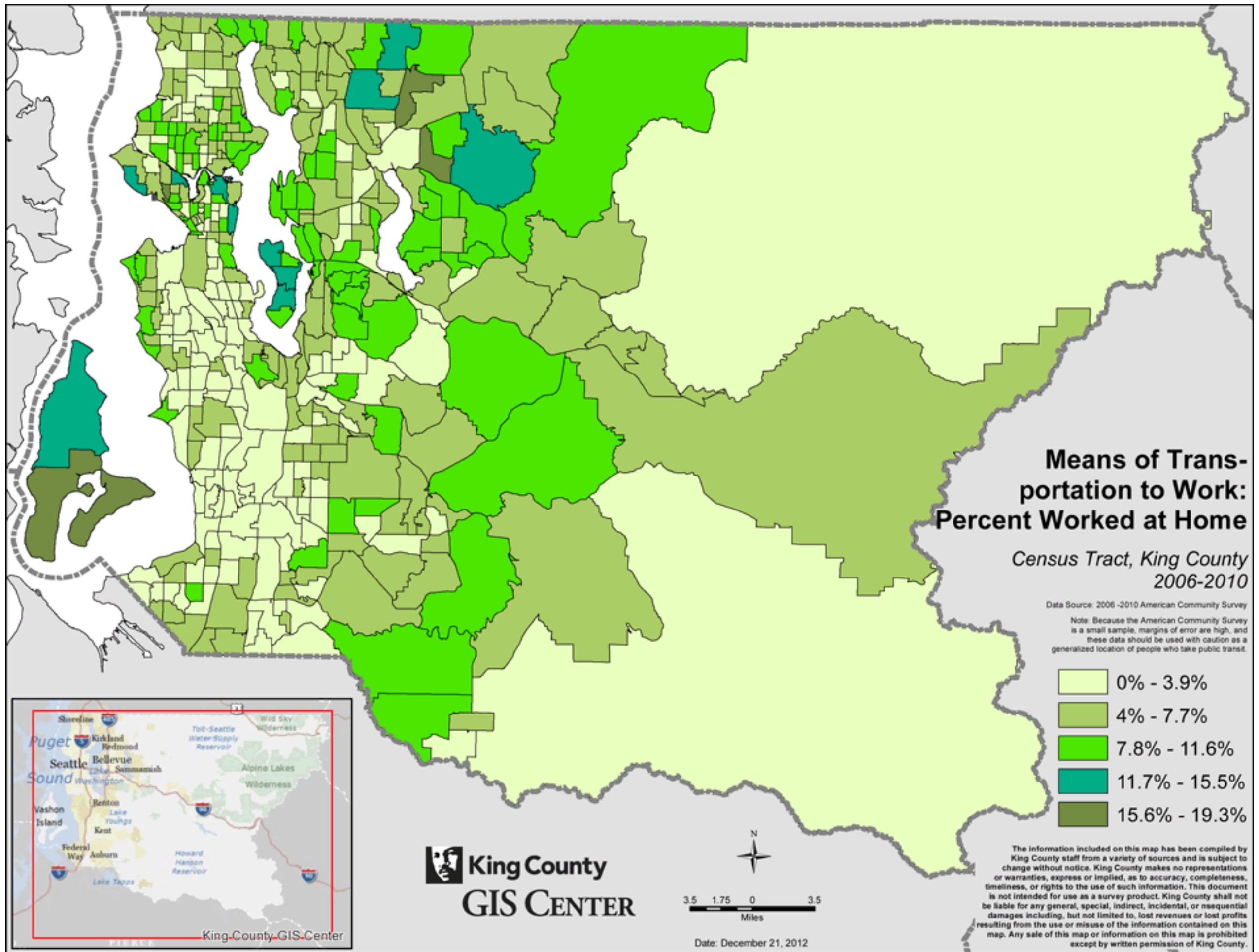
Means of Transportation to Work: Percent Public Transit



Means of Transportation to Work: Percent Walk & Bike



Means of Transportation to Work: Percent Worked at Home



Means of Transportation to Work: Percent Carpool

