

APPENDIX 2

environmental justice

Since the 1995 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was adopted, a renewed emphasis on environmental justice has become a more integral part of the transportation planning process for urban regions in the United States. The concept of environmental justice includes the identification and assessment of disproportionately high and adverse effects of programs, policies or activities on minority and low-income population groups. Within the context of regional transportation planning, environmental justice considers the relative distribution of costs and benefits from transportation investment strategies and policies upon different segments of society.

President Clinton's 1994 executive order on environmental justice requires federal agencies to monitor programs, policies and activities for compliance with environmental justice provisions.¹ In response, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration have renewed their commitments to assure that environmental justice is carried out in the programs and strategies they fund, including the activities of metropolitan planning organizations.²

Specific guidance from federal agencies is not yet available concerning how regional transportation planning efforts should address environmental justice. Nevertheless, the process to develop Destination 2030 has included environmental justice considerations from the outset.³ The Regional Council set out to ensure that the burdens and benefits of implementing Destination 2030 are equitably distributed across groups based on race, income, age, or disability. The Council's analysis included (1) outreach and meaningful participation

¹ See Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. The executive order states that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations."

² See FHWA and FTA Action Implementing Title VI Requirements in Metropolitan and Statewide Planning (October 1999).

³ The *Metropolitan Transportation Plan Alternatives Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (August 2000) describes low-income and minority population groups in the four-county central Puget Sound region and provides a series of maps showing concentrations of poverty, distributions of low-income population, general concentrations of minority groups, and job location centers. The analysis then discusses the significance of transportation for minority and low-income population groups in terms of travel modes, infrastructure investments, congestion, accessibility, growth, and air quality.

from minority and low-income population groups in the development of the plan, and (2) an assessment to determine any discrimination of minority and low-income population groups in the distribution of impacts and benefits associated with the projects and programs advanced in Destination 2030.

GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE CENTRAL PUGET SOUND REGION

Guidance from the United States Department of Transportation on addressing environmental justice identifies low-income populations as those persons whose household incomes are at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.⁴ Since no current set of data was readily available for identifying persons meeting these guidelines within the four-county region, census low-income household measures based on regional median income were used as alternatives.

Low-Income Populations

Two separate approaches to measure and compare income levels within the region were used and are described below.

- The first is a measure of poverty status from the 1990 Census. This analysis examines census block group data to understand spatial patterns of poverty concentration. Within the central Puget Sound region, 9.3 percent of all persons were under the poverty threshold in 1989.
- The second measure is regional median household income – which was estimated to be \$52,335 in 1997, using a Regional Council model to update 1990 Census data. This analysis examines census tract level estimates of household median income when comparing income levels to the regional median. Low-income populations are identified as census tracts where the median household income is at or below 50 percent of the regional median.

When analyzing the spatial location of low-income households and persons below the poverty level both of the above measures reveal similar distributions.

Minority Populations

In 1998, the region's minority population was estimated by the Washington State Office of Financial Management to be 15 percent of the total population (5 percent Black/African American; 2 percent Indian/Eskimo/Aleut; and 8 percent Asian/ Pacific Islander).⁵ Minority populations are identified as census tracts where the percent of minority persons is one standard deviation above the regional percentage.

General Observations

Low-income populations are generally more concentrated in the three largest urban centers: Seattle, Tacoma, and Everett. Census tracts with the highest household incomes are primarily located on the east side of Lake Washington.

The largest concentrations of minority populations are found in census tracts in northern Pierce County and southwestern King County. King County and Pierce County each have a minority population larger than the

⁴ See, for example, *Environmental Procedures Manual*, Section 458 (November 2000).

⁵ Source data provided by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis. Original data estimates from Washington State Adjusted Population Estimates, based on estimates by Claritas Inc. and the Washington State Office of Financial Management (June 30, 1997).

overall regional average percentage. In Kitsap County, minority populations are generally found in census tracts near the City of Bremerton. Snohomish County has the lowest percentage of minorities among the counties in the central Puget Sound region, about one half the overall regional average.

Table 2-1 below displays the percent of minority persons by county within the central Puget Sound region. Maps 2-1 through 2-6 display concentrations of poverty, low income and minorities in the region.

TABLE 2-1. 1998 County Population by Race in the Central Puget Sound Region*

	TOTAL POPULATION	WHITE/CAUCASIAN POPULATION	%	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION	%	INDIAN, ESKIMO AND ALEUT POPULATION	%	ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER POPULATION	%	TOTAL % NON-WHITE
King	1,665,801	1,379,584	83	92,456	6	20,827	1	172,934	10	17.2
Kitsap	229,000	203,647	89	7,586	3	4,320	2	13,447	6	11.1
Pierce	686,801	574,286	84	53,928	7	10,640	2	47,947	7	16.4
Snohomish	568,100	524,398	92	7,102	1	8,336	2	28,264	5	7.7
Total	3,149,702	2681915	85	161072	5	44123	2	262592	8	14.9

Source: Office of Financial Management, 1999 Population Trends, pages 61 and 69, September 1999.

* Hispanic origin is not a separate racial category, but counted in other racial categories. Hispanics accounted for the following totals: King County 57,716; Kitsap County 8,631; Pierce County 28,901; Snohomish County 15,851; regional total 111,099.

Jobs are reasonably well distributed throughout the urban area of the central Puget Sound region (see *1999 Central Puget Sound Region Economic Report*, PSRC). Compared to many major U.S. metropolitan areas this region has seen a significant share of recent job growth locate within the central cities. This is especially true in downtown Seattle.

Table 2-2, based on 1998 employment data, summarizes analysis that identified all jobs located within one mile of census block groups with 20 percent, or more, of persons below the poverty level. The information on the table compares the number of jobs among employment classifications.

TABLE 2-2. Jobs Located within One Mile of High Poverty Census Block Groups

EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION	JOBS LOCATED NEAR CONCENTRATED POVERTY	TOTAL REGION JOBS	% OF JOBS NEAR CONCENTRATED POVERTY
Agriculture and Mining	5,512	15,525	36%
Construction	35,596	76,987	46%
Manufacturing	147,187	253,974	58%
Wholesale, Communication, Transport, Utilities	117,428	186,124	63%
Retail Trade	155,297	270,689	57%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	60,342	92,164	65%
Personal Services	17,904	30,055	60%
Business Services	65,268	123,947	53%
Health Services	80,238	107,298	75%
Legal Services	11,167	12,541	89%
Education Services	9,604	15,886	60%
Social Services	22,682	36,658	62%
Other Services	75,461	126,665	60%
Total	803,686	1,348,513	60%

The significant percentage of regional jobs within close proximity of high concentrations of poverty suggests that proximity and access to employment is not the only factor that leads to greater economic opportunities.

Transportation Services Available in Destination 2030

The Preferred *Destination 2030* Plan is most closely related to Alternative III presented in the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan Alternatives Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (August 2000 – hereafter, the *Draft EIS*). With an emphasis on maintaining and further developing various modes of travel throughout the region, including transit, this alternative is consistent with the goals and objectives of environmental justice.

The other alternatives analyzed in the *Draft EIS* tend to demonstrate increased burdens and impacts on the region in general. Alternative I primarily carries out the existing 1995 Metropolitan Transportation Plan to the year 2030 with only minor changes. Alternative II cuts back from many of the provisions and improvements identified in the 1995 Metropolitan Transportation Plan in response to a lack of adequate revenues. Many of the impacts of these two alternatives are economic; they advance a transportation system that nearly necessitates travel exclusively by automobile, and burden population groups that can least afford it with the expenses of owning and operating vehicles. (The same burdens are also placed on individuals unable to drive a car, such as the young, many of the elderly, and disabled population groups.)

The preferred *Destination 2030* plan includes transit improvements that provide links between many of the region's major job centers and low-income and minority neighborhoods. Roadway improvements will also provide improved connections for all population groups – including low income and minority populations – without unduly burdening these groups with impacts.

Public Outreach

Throughout the development of *Destination 2030*, the process has included public outreach efforts to ensure that all members of the public have had the opportunity to participate meaningfully in shaping the preferred *Destination 2030* plan. The outreach efforts included opportunities to hear and address the concerns of minority and low-income communities throughout the region.

A 30-day public comment period to develop the scope of the environmental review to produce *Destination 2030* took place between September 15 and October 15, 1999. An announcement of the scoping process was published in local newspapers and in the Regional Council's newsletter, *Regional VIEW*. The scoping documents were mailed to local jurisdictions, agencies with jurisdiction and expertise, tribal governments, interest and community groups, and individual citizens who have asked to be placed on the mailing list.⁶ Four public meetings – one in each of the four counties in the region – were held during the comment period.⁷

With the release of the *Draft EIS* (August 2000), intensive public review and outreach were conducted in September and October 2000. Public meetings were geographically distributed throughout the region, and a series of targeted "brown bag" meetings aimed at special interest and special needs groups – groups traditionally underserved.⁸ Meeting sites were selected based on transit availability and Americans with Disabilities

⁶ See the *2001 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Alternative Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Appendix 1, Scope of the Environmental Review for the 2001 Update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan* (December 1999).

⁷ For dates and locations of these meetings, see *Scope of the Environmental Review for the 2001 Update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan* (December 1999), page 3.

⁸ See *DEIS* (August 2000), page 202.

Act accessibility, as well as taking into account the income and ethnic diversity of the community. A public hearing was held on *Destination 2030* on April 10, 2001. See Map 2-7 for meeting locations. Direct mail, telephone calls, display advertisements in newspapers, news releases to all news media in the region, feature articles in *Regional VIEW* (more than 8,000 circulation), website access, and special news media efforts – including public service announcements and cable-TV broadcasts of many Regional Council meetings – provided information on the *Draft EIS*, the public review process, and outreach opportunities.⁹

Requests were made to all jurisdictions, as well as to all community and interest groups the Regional Council could identify, for formal presentations by Regional Council staff. At least two presentations were requested by and given to transit user groups where low-income and transit-dependent individuals were represented.

The Regional Council accepted public comment on the Draft EIS in Autumn 2000. Only two of the 1378 comments received during the public review period address environmental justice directly. These two comments questioned the relevance of considering environmental justice as part of the work in developing *Destination 2030*. See Map 2-8 for the identified locations from which the Regional Council received comments from groups and individuals who provided addresses.

Infrastructure and Service Investments

Investments in the transportation systems advanced by *Destination 2030* typically provide mobility and access benefits to a broad range of transportation users in the region – especially since many projects and programs are designed to accommodate different modes of travel along the same corridor.

ACCESSIBILITY

Local transit service in *Destination 2030* has increased over the levels described in the *1995 Metropolitan Transportation Plan*. Such service provides greater local access and better serves the needs of many of the identified population groups. Expanded transit service supports a more intense land use pattern in designated urban centers and other compact communities throughout the region. More compact development patterns will lead to greater local access to needed activities for a greater portion of the region's urban population – including minority and low-income population groups.

Destination 2030 identifies a number of transit centers throughout the region. These facilities provide transit access to individuals from the immediate vicinity and from adjacent neighborhoods. In addition, *Destination 2030* places a stronger emphasis on nonmotorized travel, providing improved pedestrian and bicycle access to transit. Such improvements are targeted throughout the region, including low-income and minority neighborhoods.

Destination 2030 works with the understanding that local transit providers now meet and will continue to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition, the transit agencies in the four-county area have a regional reduced fare permit for disabled individuals and the elderly. Transit agencies have also developed partnerships and programs with social service agencies to provide for client access to social and medical services, as well as employment and job training opportunities.

⁹ The following newspapers serving minority or low-income communities in the central Puget Sound region were contacted to provide information on the Destination 2030 planning process to their readers: (1) *The Facts*, (2) *Northwest Asian Weekly*, and (3) *Real Change*.

MODAL CHOICE

Destination 2030 includes a multimodal investment strategy with increased local transit service. These investments provide expanded mobility choices for minority and low-income populations, as well as for other groups that are transit-dependent, including the elderly and disabled.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Destination 2030 conforms with regulations that expand safety requirements to all federally-funded projects. Improvements in safety due to *Destination 2030* projects and programs should be enjoyed by members of all income and ethnic groups throughout the region at a level *at least* commensurate with their numbers in the region. Extensive expenditures to improve the region's transit service, as well as substantial investments in pedestrian and bicycling facilities, should reduce the toll on pedestrians. Additional design steps are encouraged at the local level, which have the additional effect of calming traffic. See the Physical Design Guidelines, *Destination 2030* Chapter 4.

CONGESTION

A major focus of the infrastructure investments in *Destination 2030* is to control the growth of delay in the region due to congestion. At a regional level, congestion is held relatively constant, while the region absorbs an addition 1.5 million residents over the next 30 years. Ongoing efforts to monitor congestion levels in subareas and corridors throughout the region will continue to be carried out after the adoption of *Destination 2030*. Attention must be given to what is happening with congestion levels in areas where minority and low-income groups live.

Growth Management and Community

Destination 2030 actively supports the growth management planning goals and objectives of the region's various communities. The growth patterns assumed in regional and local plans support the viability of transit and other publicly-supported forms of mobility. Such growth patterns foster additional opportunities to create a greater variety of housing including additional affordable housing – in centers, compact communities, and neighborhoods in which low-income and minority populations reside.

Mitigation measures based on *VISION 2020* policies provide for the siting of transportation facilities and improvements to avoid destruction or alteration of historic properties or cultural resources. New facilities, such as transit stations, are encouraged to be designed in a manner that enhances existing neighborhoods and communities. Design features should be attentive to height, scale, landscaping, built form, street furniture, and materials that either blend with or enhance existing commercial and residential structures. Facility improvements in all communities, including low-income and minority neighborhoods, should be of the highest aesthetic quality.

Noise

The character and level of noise impacts locally depend on proximity to and design of facilities. New lanes and access points for high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes may bring traffic closer to abutting land uses, although the overall change in noise would be slight. Nevertheless mitigation measures, including the construction of barriers, can reduce noise by eight to 10 decibels (dBAs). Such measures are typically determined by project level planning. Where such remedies are not adequate, property acquisition may be an alternative.

In the case of airport noise, sound insulation programs are commonly used to reduce the impacts of airport noise in residential units and other noise sensitive land uses. At larger airports, sound insulation is usually part of a more comprehensive noise compatibility program. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac), King County International Airport/Boeing Field, and Snohomish County Airport/Paine Field have developed FAR Part 150 Noise Compatibility Programs to mitigate noise impacts in nearby communities, and McChord Air Force Base has developed an Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) study with similar goals. These programs contain a wide range of actions to address airport noise, including land acquisition, sound insulation, airport compatible land use, aircraft operational measures to reduce noise at the source, and others. All these programs are designed to address the impacts of airport activity and growth, which are most significant in the immediate vicinity of the airports. Therefore, those residents most impacted by airport noise are also those who receive the most benefit from the noise mitigation programs. Regional aircraft flight tracks have the potential to affect low income and minority populations. Decisions on flight tracks should be evaluated relative to environmental justice requirements.

The other general aviation facilities in the region serve lower volumes of aircraft activity, are used by smaller, quieter aircraft, and generally do not create significant noise impacts on surrounding communities. While many of these airports perform noise analysis as part of their airport master plans to assist in adjacent area land use planning, they do not have specific noise mitigation programs.

Air Quality

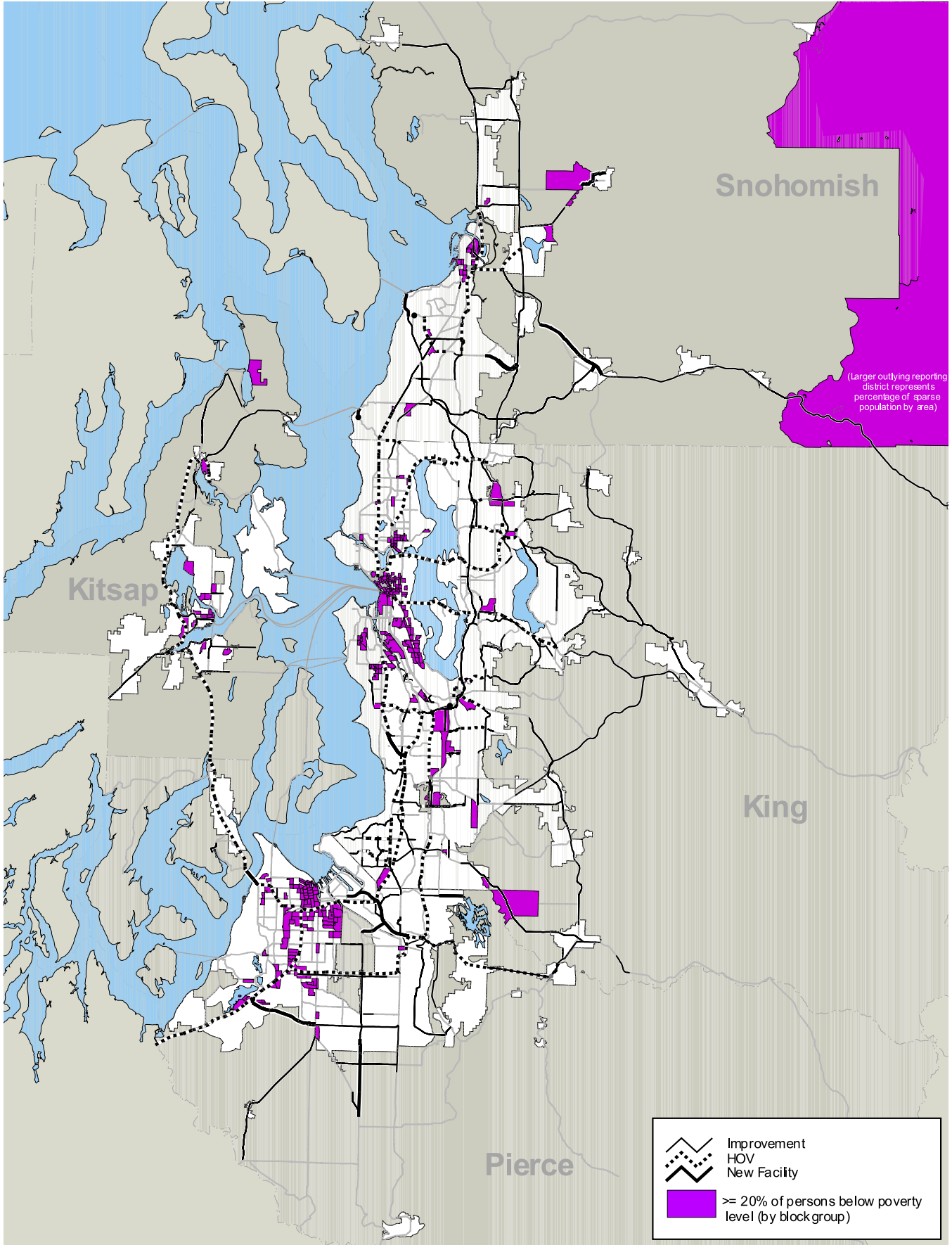
The *Destination 2030* plan conforms with federal and state air quality standards. In fact, even though population and highway travel are expected to increase by 50 percent over the next 30 years, air quality analysis based on the most recent methodology developed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency demonstrates that total emissions of carbon monoxide, ozone precursors, and particulates from on-road mobile sources will remain at levels below those of the late 1990s. The entire population of the region, including low-income and minority groups, will benefit from the continuing improvements in vehicle and fuel technologies.

Summary

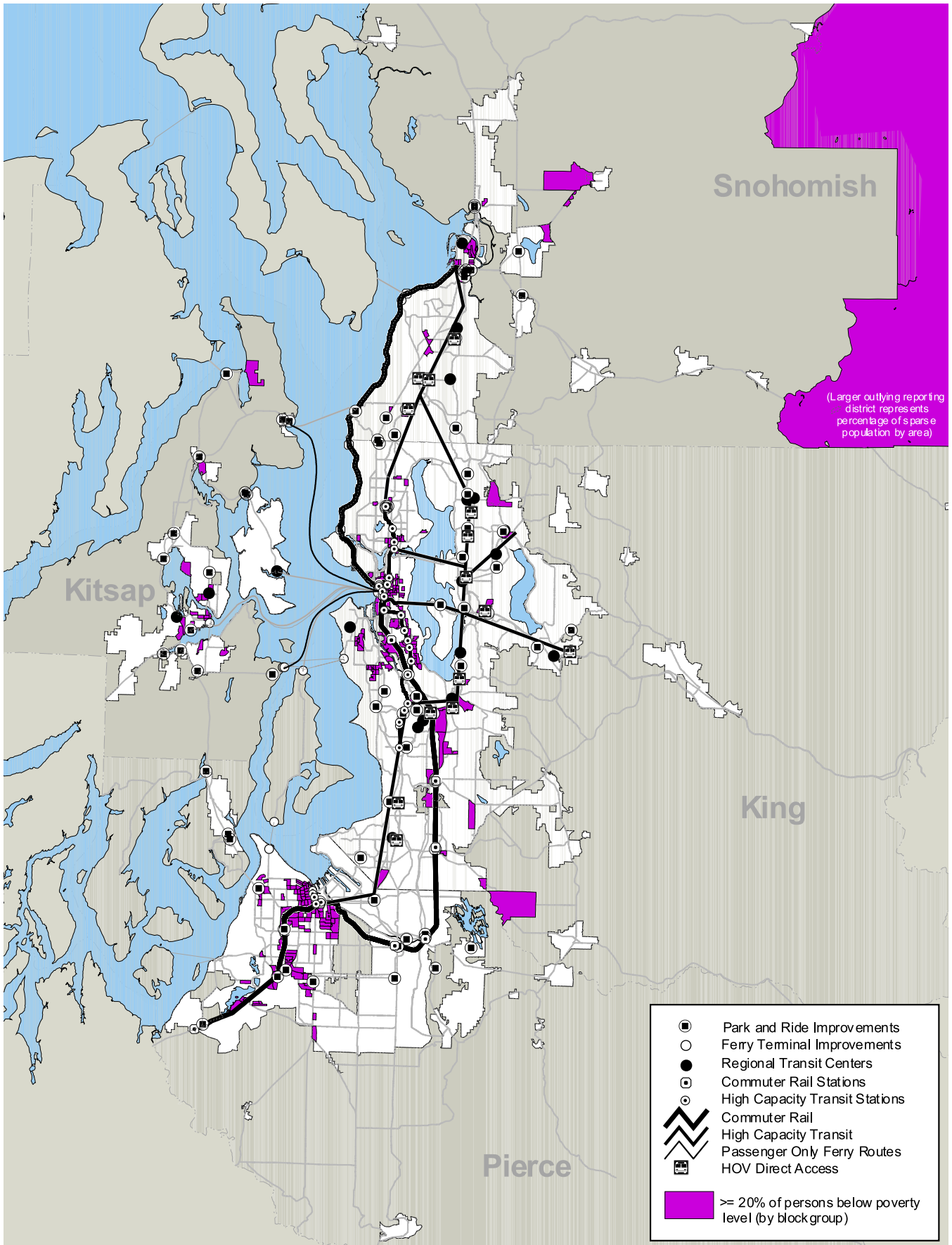
After reviewing the broad distribution of projects and programs identified in *Destination 2030*, coupled with the wide distribution of minority and low-income population groups in the central Puget Sound region, it can be concluded that any adverse effects and benefits associated with implementing *Destination 2030* are not distributed to minority and low income populations in a significantly different manner than to the region's population as a whole. This is not to say that individual projects and programs would have no adverse effects on these population groups. A determination of no adverse effects – or identification of mitigation for adverse effects – must be made on a project by project basis. Such a determination would need to be evaluated during project level environmental analysis.

Environmental justice will continue to be a major consideration as work is carried out to implement *Destination 2030*. As capabilities for analysis improve, the region will also be able to improve the ways in which it addresses environmental justice issues. Specifically, project level environmental analysis will provide additional site-specific information that will examine in greater detail impacts on low-income and minority population groups in the central Puget Sound region. Monitoring efforts related to environmental justice will also be further developed as part of the region's ongoing work to implement *Destination 2030*.

MAP 2-1. Concentrations of Poverty and Roadway Projects

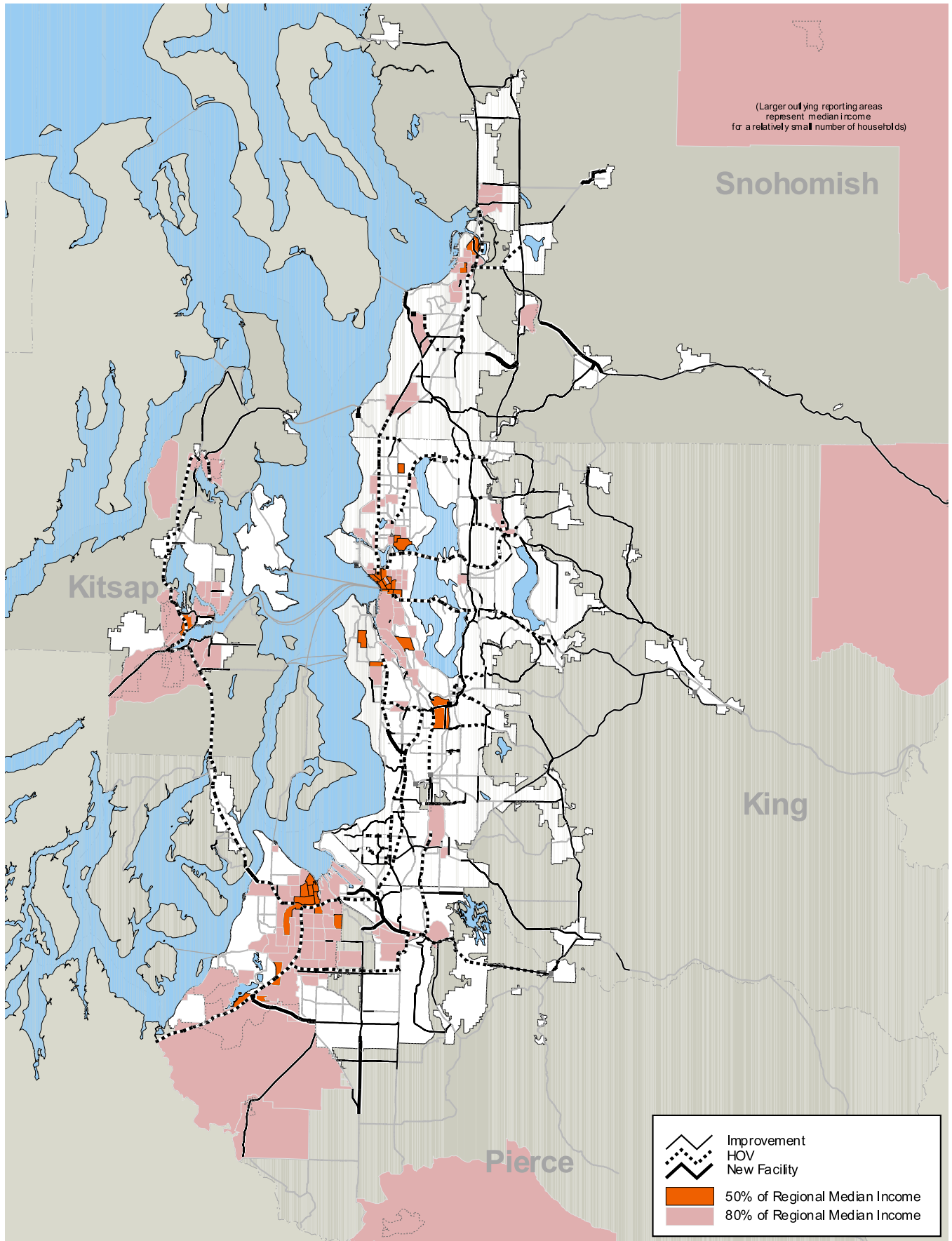


MAP 2-2. Concentrations of Poverty and Transit Projects



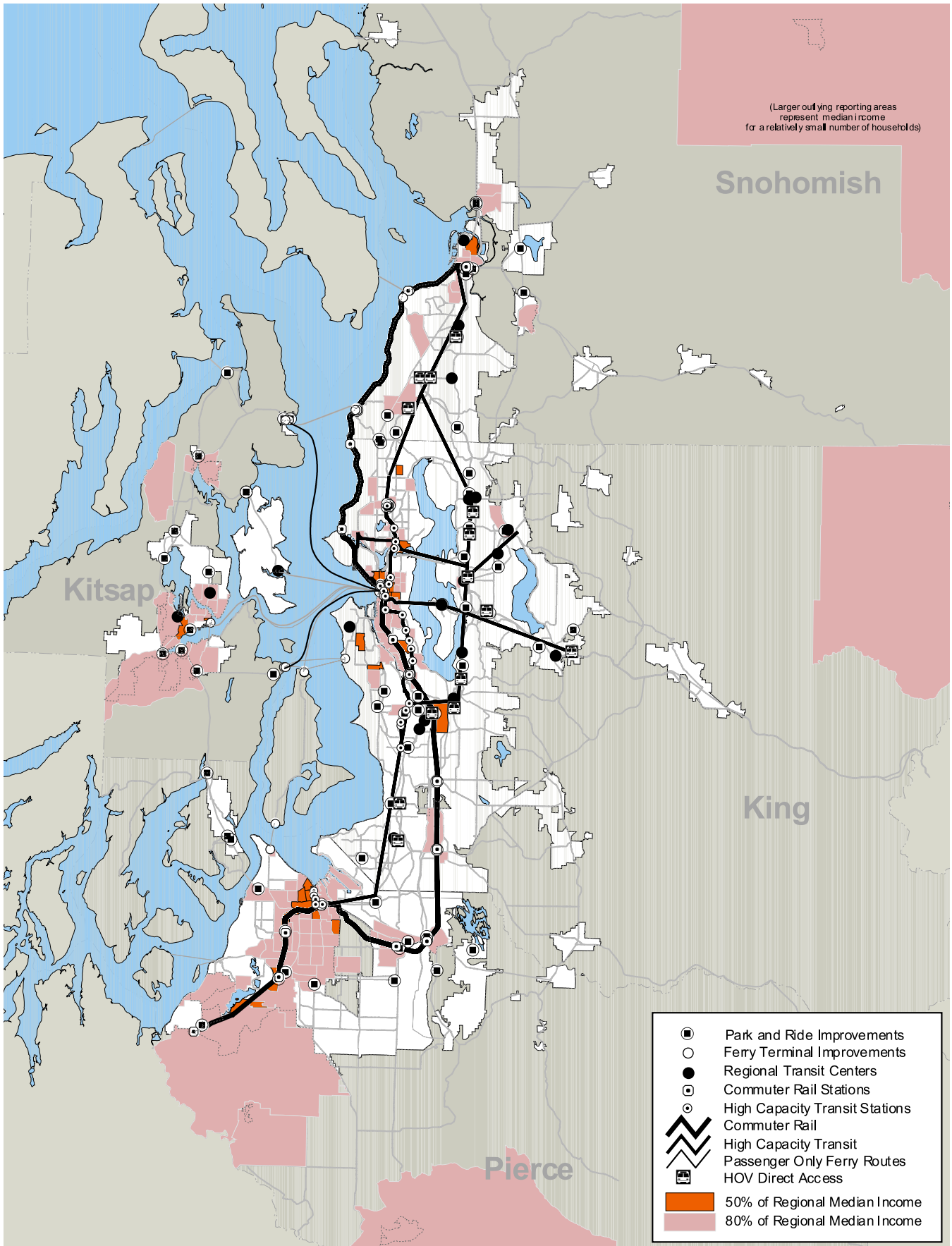
Adoption Date: May 24, 2001

MAP 2-3. Low Income Population and Roadway Projects



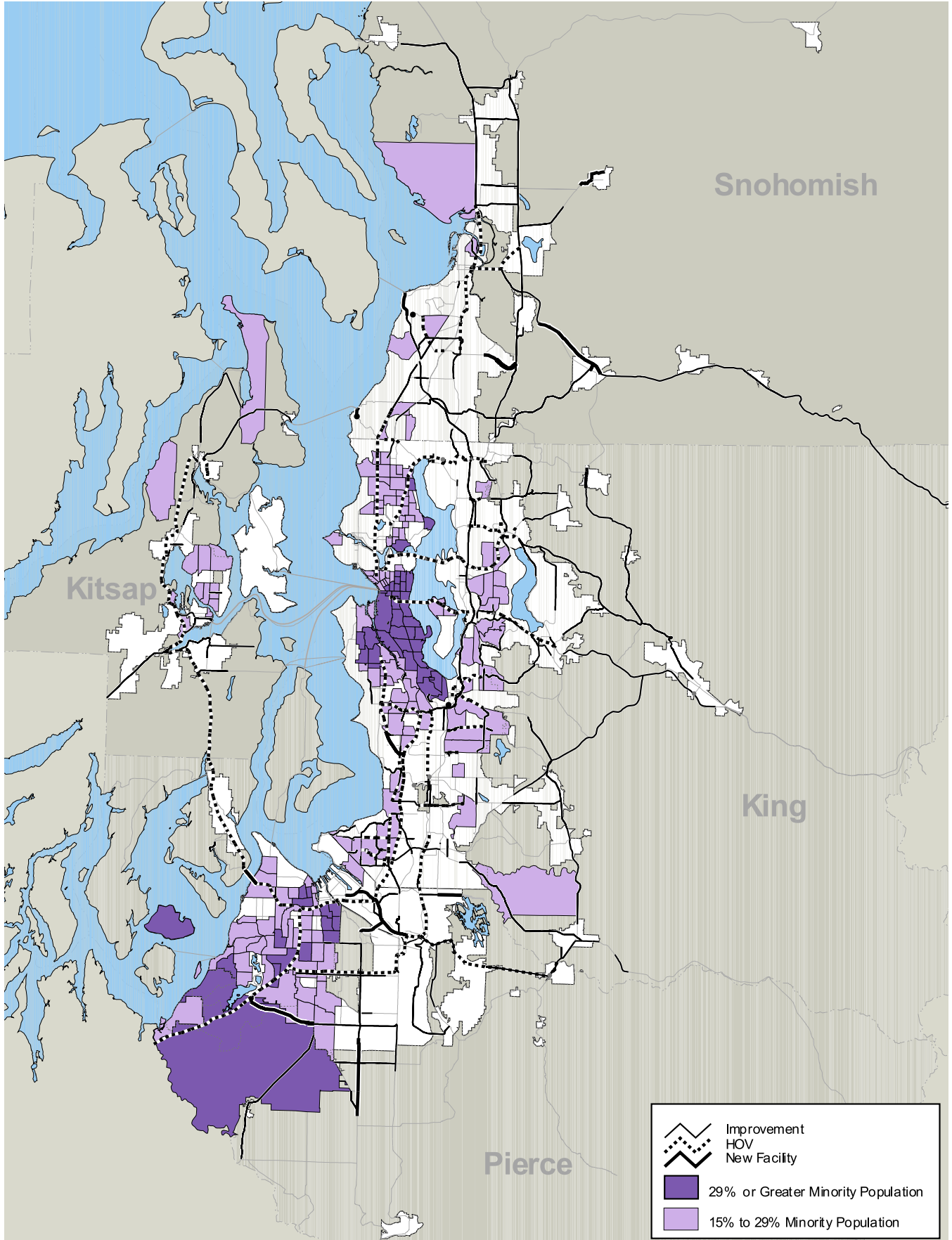
Adoption Date: May 24, 2001

MAP 2-4. Low Income Population and Transit Projects

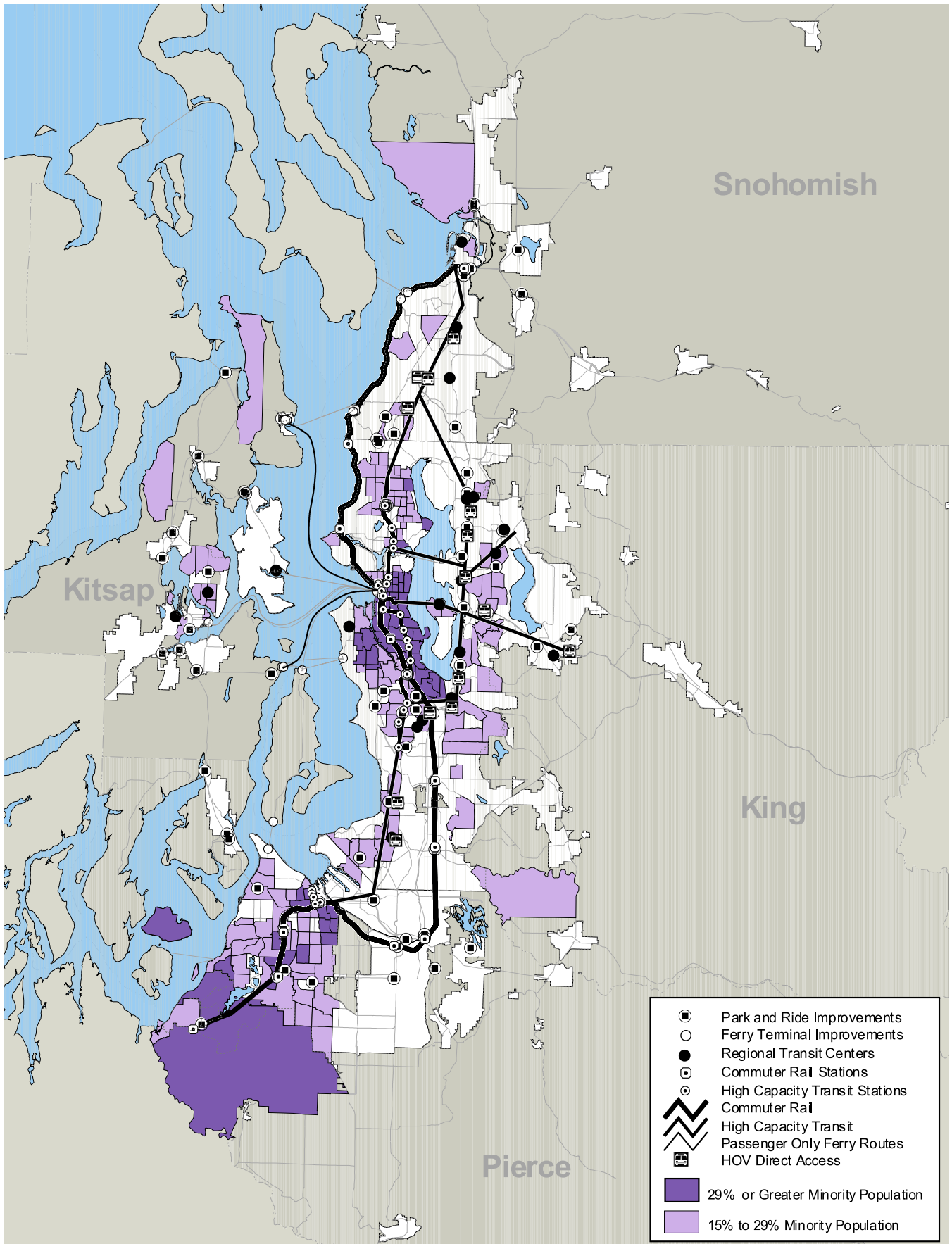


Adoption Date: May 24, 2001

MAP 2-5. Minority Population and Roadway Projects

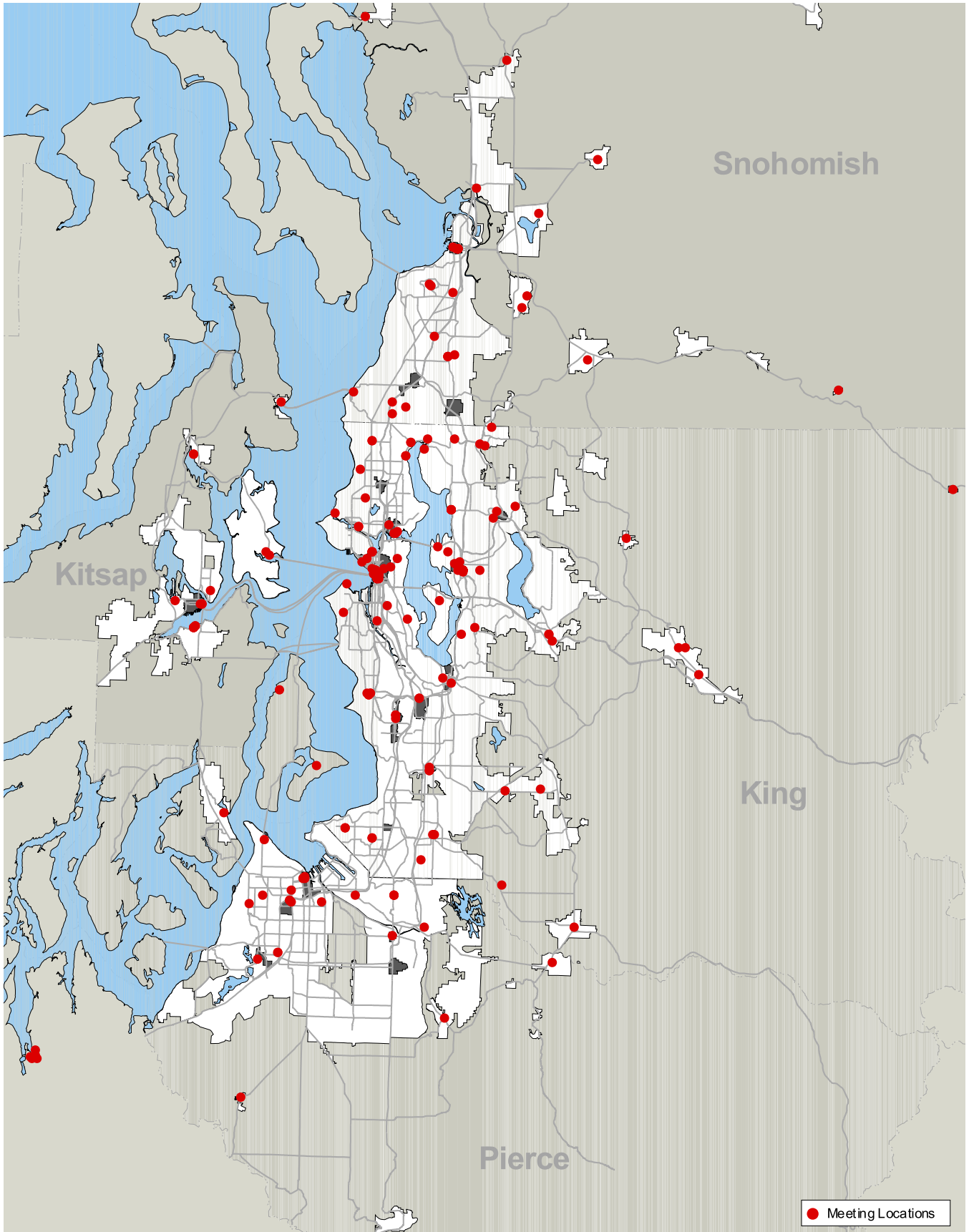


MAP 2-6. Minority Population and Transit Projects



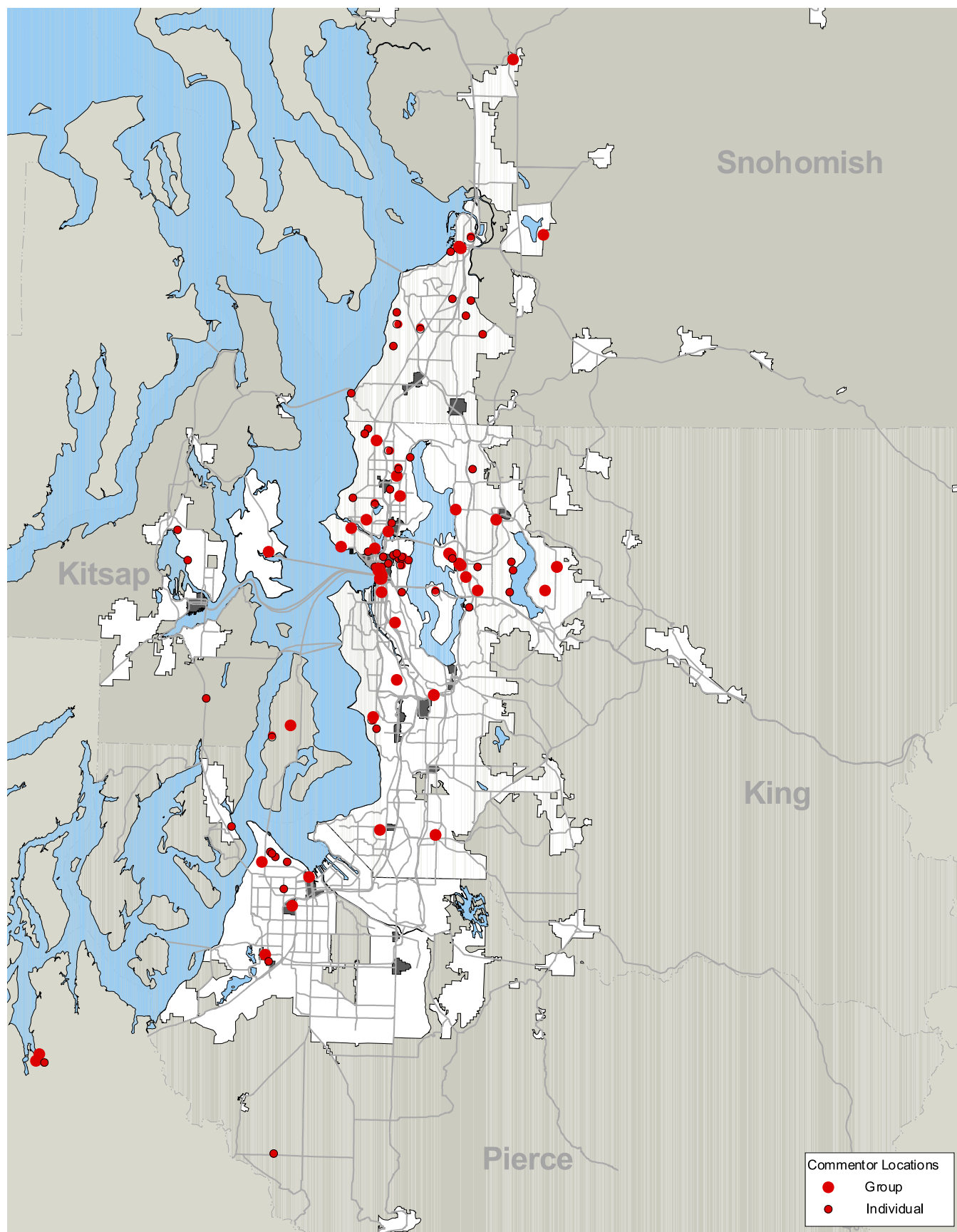
Adoption Date: May 24, 2001

MAP 2-7. Locations of Meetings and Presentations on Destination 2030



Adoption Date: May 24, 2001

MAP 2-8. Locations of DEIS Respondents who Provided Addresses



Adoption Date: May 24, 2001