

Preliminary Draft

Technical Report No. 1

COMMUNITY TRENDS
AND CHARACTERISTICS

in the

SeaTac Communities Plan Study Area

July, 1973

King County Office of Community and Environmental Development
Land Use Management Division

Reference to Case

Technical Report No. 1

COMMUNITY WORK
AND CHARACTERISTICS

1968

of the Community's Planning Area

1971

The County Office of Community and Developmental Services
and the Kansas State Office

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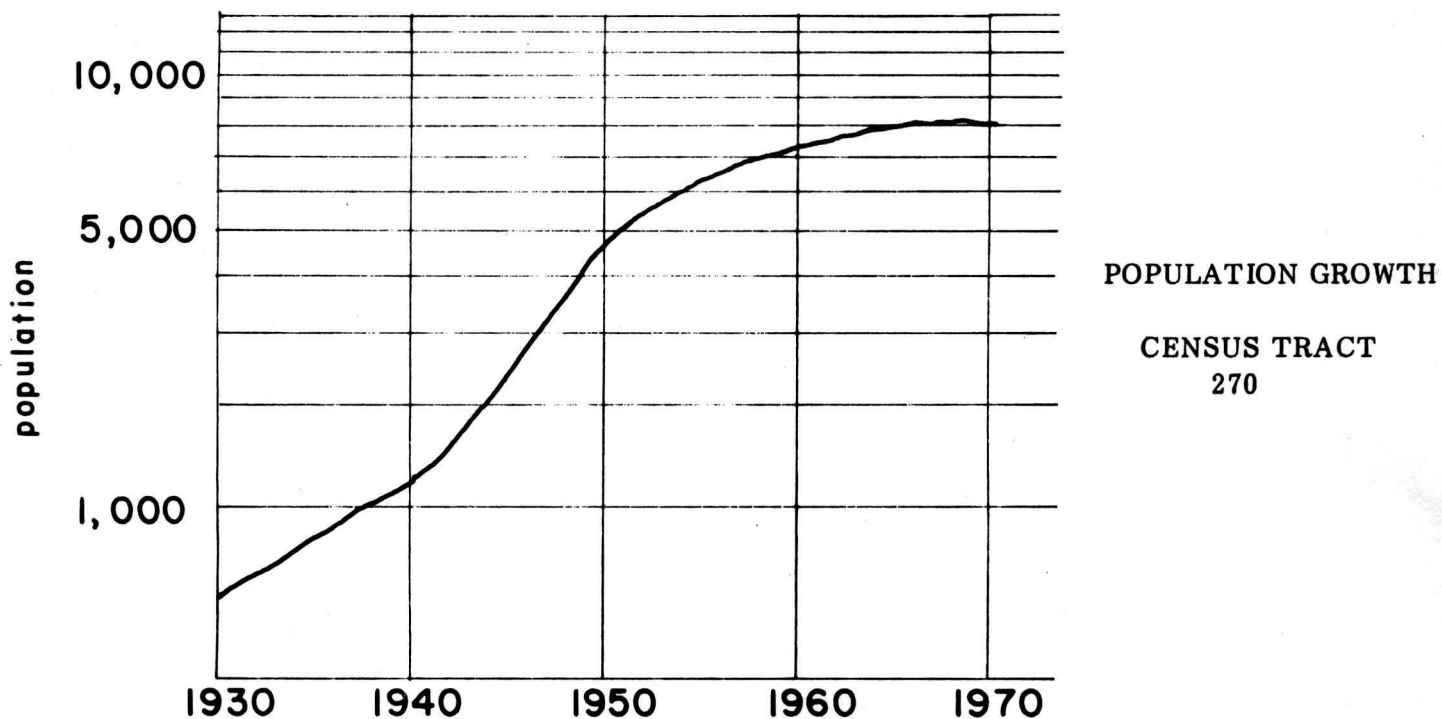
Chapter V

COMMUNITY TRENDS & CHARACTERISTICS IN THE
SEATAC COMMUNITIES PLAN STUDY AREA

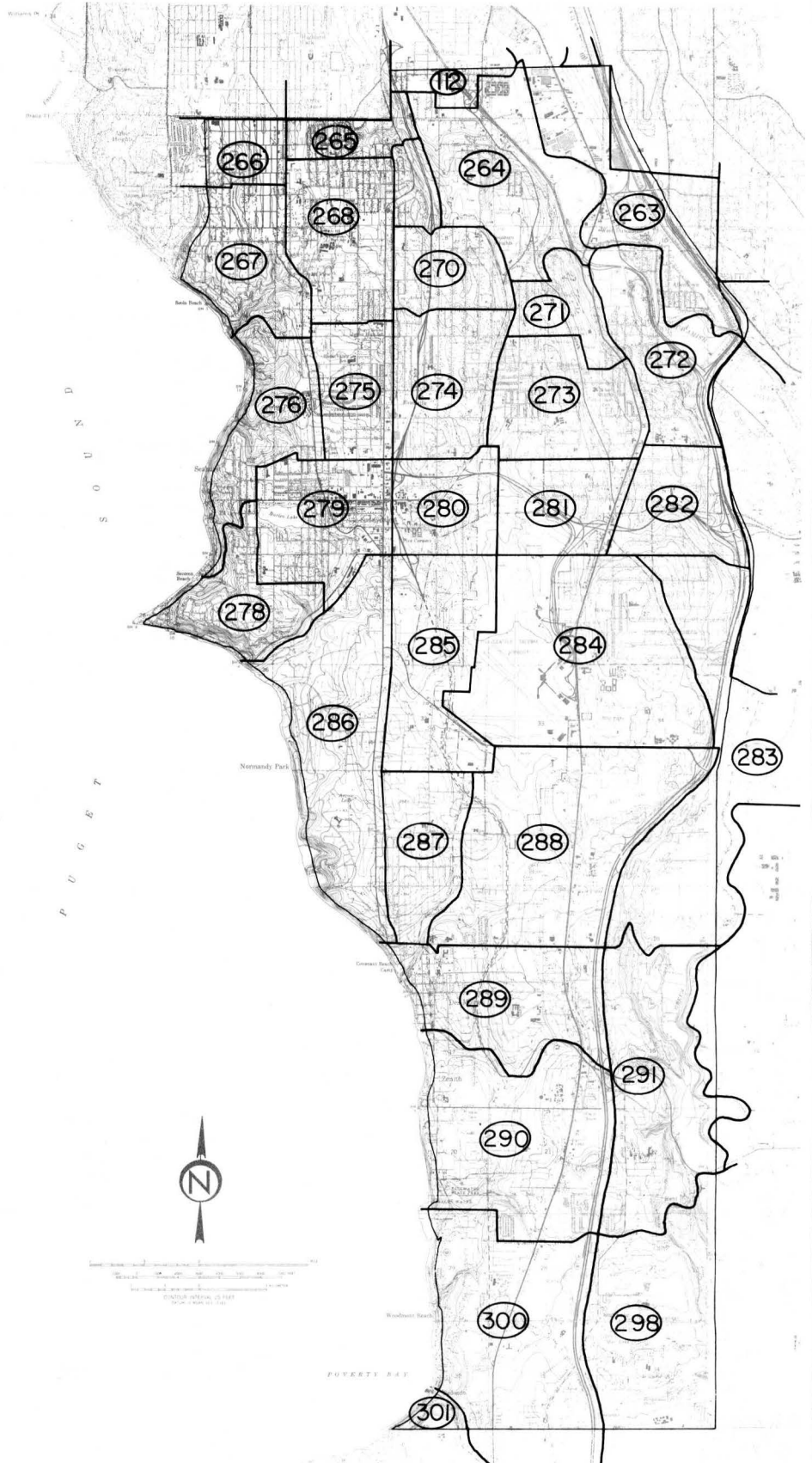
POPULATION & ENROLLMENT

Growth trends - In 1970, the study area contained 137,000 persons, over 110,000 of whom resided within the Highline School District. The cities of Normandy Park and Des Moines, which are wholly contained within the study area, had a 1970 population of 4,202 and 4,099, respectively. Although some additional people live within the small portions of the cities of Seattle, Tukwila and Kent that lie within the study area, the majority of the population is in unincorporated areas.

The portion of the study area north of the SeaTac Airport received its greatest spurt of growth during the 1940-50 decade, with a considerable levelling off in the rate of growth occurring thereafter. The growth curve for census tract 270, the Southern Heights neighborhood, shown below, is typical of growth trends in this northern area between 1930 and 1970.



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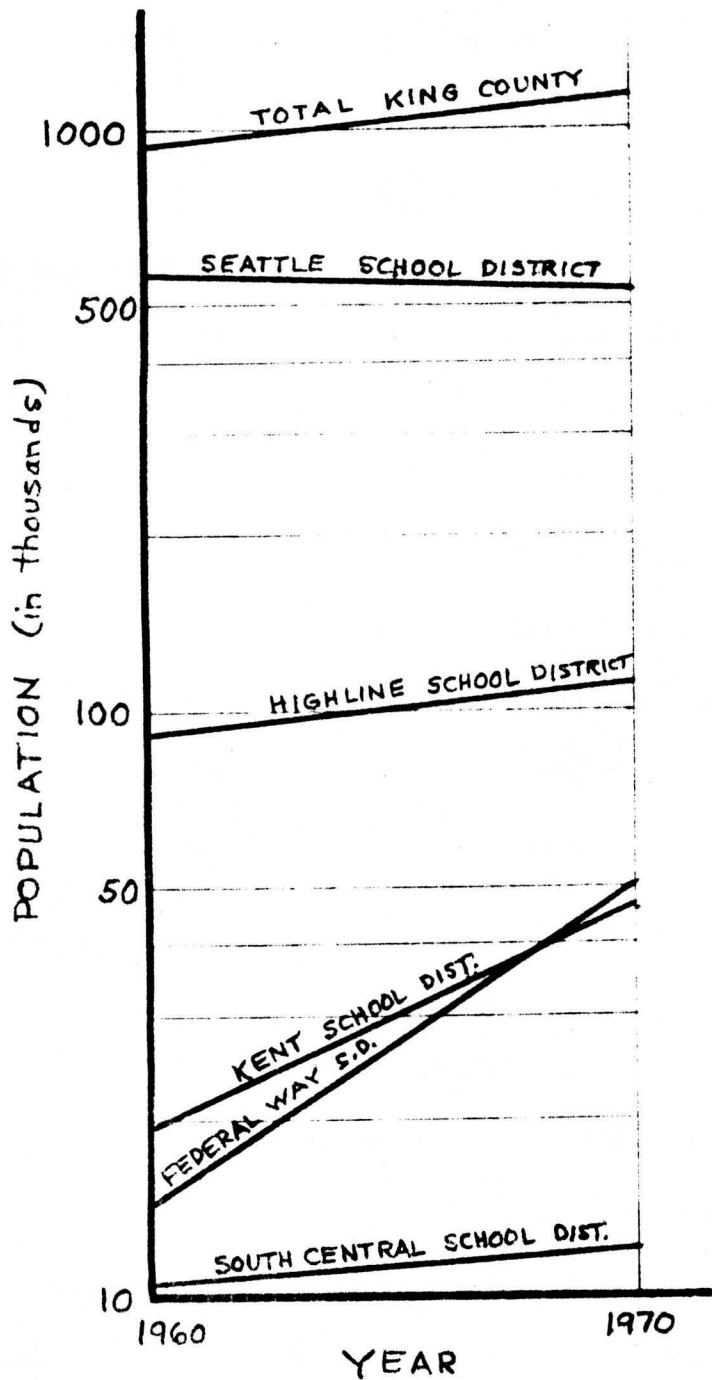


CHART I
POPULATION GROWTH
SELECTED SCHOOL DISTRICTS
1960-1970

The area to the south of SeaTac Airport, particularly that portion within the Federal Way and Kent School districts, has continued to grow at a rapid rate. Chart I shows the relative growth rates of the various school districts in and around the study area between 1960 and 1970.

Age groups - In the study area, the median age of the population is 25.2 years, relatively young when compared with the County-wide figure of 30.2 years. The population as a whole is aging and will continue to do so as this area follows the national trend in lower birth rates.

When one compares the 5-year breakdown of the younger age groups, we see that only 9% of the total population is less than 5 years of age as compared to 11%, 12% and 10% in the age groupings of 5 to 10, 10 to 15, and 15 to 20 respectively. In those areas where new homes are still being built and occupied by young families (predominantly the southern

portion of the study area) there is still a preponderance of people under 20 years of age (45% to 51% of total population). This is also true in census tract 265, to the north, occupied largely by the White Center public housing project, where over half of the total population is less than 20 years of age.

The largest numbers of elderly people (those 65 and over) live in those areas that have housing which serves their particular needs. These areas include the Lakewood public housing project and Kingston Village facilities designed for the elderly (in census tract 268), Bow Lake Trailer Town located east of the airport, and the Des Moines-Zenith area within which large retirement homes are located. Elderly people make up a high percentage of the population (over 15%) in the Riverton-Tukwila area which has many modest, long-established homes where older persons of limited means can still afford to live. Other areas attracting older people are those with large numbers of apartment units such as along Military Road (in census tract 270) and around Seahurst and Burien.

Population density - The highest population densities (9 persons per acre and above) occur in the area between 1st Avenue South and Ambaum Way-16th S. from the Seattle city limits south to Burien, and in the North Hill neighborhood north of the city limits of Des Moines. Although the study area is one of the most urbanized in King County, overall population density is still relatively low. This is due to a variety of reasons, including large areas in steep, unbuildable slopes, poor platting practices which have rendered much land inaccessible, lack of sewers and large areas occupied by non-residential land uses (such as the SeaTac Airport and business/commercial districts). Low population density in Normandy Park area is influenced by zoning which excludes small lots as well as multi-family residential units.

Mobility - Mobility of the population near the airport is somewhat higher than the King County average. While 58% of King County residents moved between 1965 and 1970, nearly two-thirds of the people living in the vicinity of the SeaTac Airport did so during the same period of time. The large number of multi-family and other rental units, in this area, which tend to have higher rates of turnover, undoubtedly contributed to this high rate. However, it is likely that the airport exerts some influence on the duration of stay for persons in the area, particularly when other tracts in the study area which are at a distance from the airport, yet have similar owner/renter ratios, exhibit lower turnover rates.

Ethnic characteristics - The study area is occupied predominantly by a white population. Only four census tracts (263, 265, 268 and 272 - all north of the airport) have higher than 4% non-white population. The following table shows ethnic enrollment as a percent of total enrollment for each of the school districts represented within the study area as compared to the Seattle School District. On the average, the ethnic enrollment (consisting of Negroes, Orientals, native American Indians, and Latin Americans) is less than one-fifth that of the Seattle School District. The largest group is the one with Latin American surnames.

ETHNIC ENROLLMENT OF SELECTED SCHOOL DISTRICTS, OCT. 1972

School Dist.	Total Enroll.	Ethnic Enroll.	Ethnic Enroll. as % of Total
Seattle	75,962	17,398	22.9
Federal Way	16,050	485	3.0
Highline	26,496	1,236	4.7
Kent	14,496	521	3.6
South Central	2,243	135	6.0

Source: Intermediate School District No. 110
100 Crockett St., Seattle, Washington Release No. 7-EE-73

Educational attainment - Median Number of school years completed as of 1970 ranged from a low of 11.65 years in census tract 265 (location of the White Center public housing project) to a high of 12.98 years in Normandy Park. Although the range is not very great, it is significant to note that, of the thirty census tracts lying wholly or partially within the study area, 19, or nearly two-thirds had a median figure lower than the 12.53 median for the County.

A related factor is the percent of total persons age 16-21 who were high school dropouts (that is, not in school and not graduated). In 1970, this varied from a low of 1.4% in the Gregory Heights area (census tract 278) to a high of nearly 50% in the White Center Heights public housing area (tract 265). Here again, nearly two-thirds of the census tracts represented within the study area had a high school dropout rate higher than the County average of 9.2%.

In general, the tracts with higher median family income levels have higher median number of school years completed as well as lower dropout rates although there are exceptions to this correlation.

Enrollment change - Changes in enrollment in the various school districts within the study area have presented a continuing problem to school administrators. Initially, rapidly increasing enrollments created a need for buying sites and building new schools or adding on to old ones. In the Highline School District, for example, enrollment increased from approximately 9900 pupils in 1950 to over 22,000 in 1960. The 1960-1970 decade showed a more moderate overall increase, to slightly over 29,000 pupils; however, peak enrollment in excess of 31,000 pupils was reached

in 1967. Between 1970 and 1972, enrollment in the Highline District has declined at every school age level with the greatest decline of 14.4% at the elementary level. This decline has been distributed between all except three of the 49 schools within the district.

It is difficult to establish a decisive pattern to the areas of greatest enrollment decline. While three schools that are reported by the Highline School District to be impacted by airport noise (Angle Lake, Riverton Heights and Boulevard Park) have percentage declines of more than 20%, so also do other schools that are not impacted by airport noise. In case of Angle Lake and Riverton Heights, airport and highway expansion could have affected enrollments.

The South Central School District, with a more stable population and enrollment in recent decades, also experienced an enrollment decline in the 1970-72 period; an additional loss of 5.4% for this district is projected for the fall of 1973. For the Highline District, an enrollment loss of 3.2% is projected, whereas the Federal Way and Kent School Districts are expected to have a slight enrollment increase of about 2%.¹ However, this increase is most likely to occur in those portions of the districts located outside the study area where development potential is greater.

Some enrollment loss will be caused by the additional acquisition of homes by the Port of Seattle in the immediate vicinity of the airport and by State Highway Department acquisition for the extension of Sign Route 509.

The Highline School District administration has examined in considerable detail enrollment trends and factors that will affect future enrollment for each school attendance area within the district. On the basis of these studies, enrollment projections for each school have been prepared.² The extent to which these projections are accurate will depend to a considerable degree on public policy decisions regard-

¹Release dated May 2, 1973, by Intermediate School District #110

²A Master Plan for Highline Public Schools, October, 1972

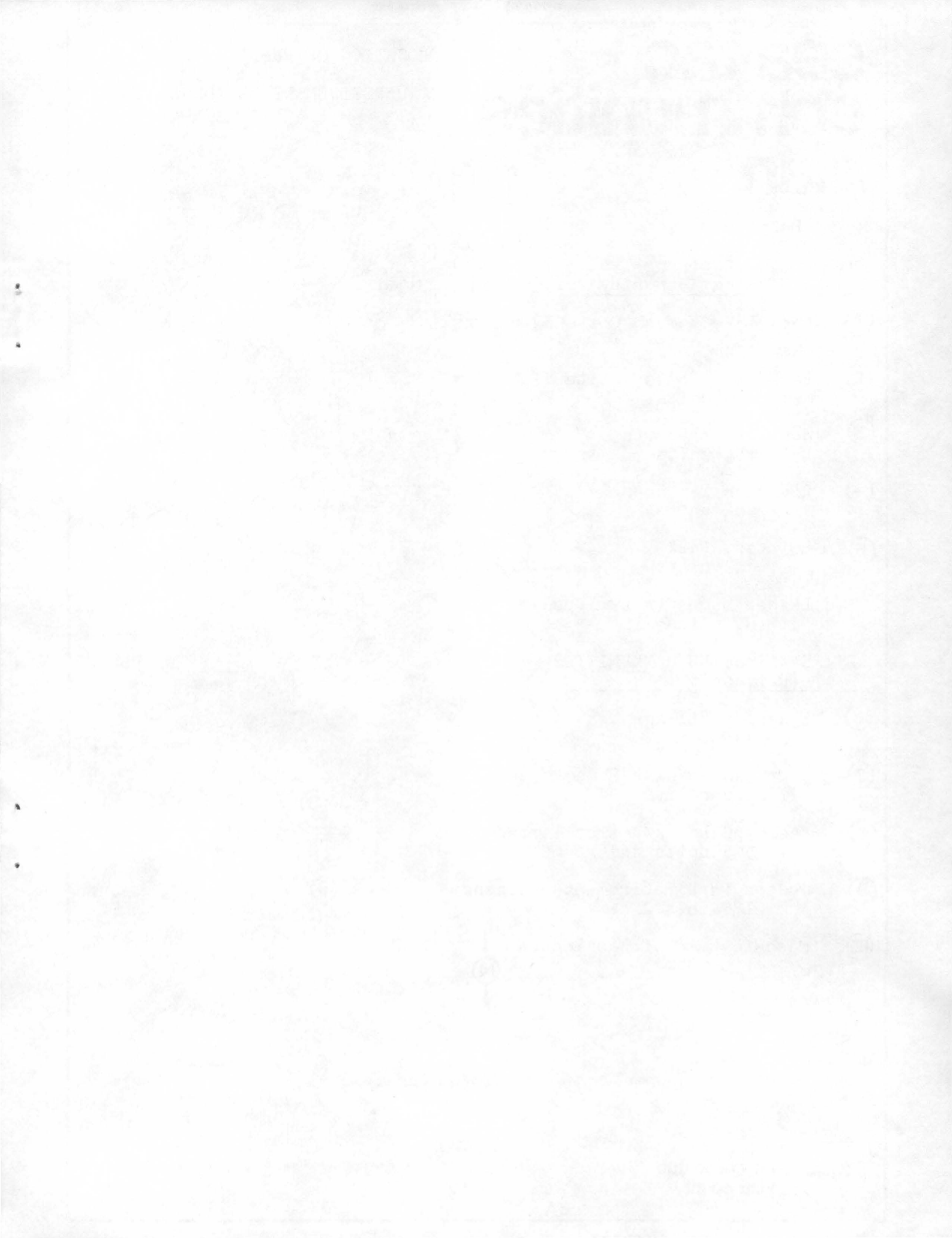
ing land use changes in the area and how fast any such changes actually take effect.

HOUSING

Type and location - Single-family homes predominate within the study area as in the County, representing nearly two-thirds the total housing supply. Nearly two-thirds of all housing units are owner-occupied with probably a majority of owner-occupancy occurring in the single-family units. Apartments (multi-family units) have been built at an increasing rate during the past decade and represent an ever-increasing portion of the housing supply. Those areas which have a significant number of multi-family units are located primarily along the major arterials (frequently as buffers between business and single-family residential areas) and in and around Burien. New apartment construction has been particularly heavy in the Glendale-Hilltop neighborhoods (census tract 264), in the Sunnydale neighborhood east of Burien, and in the neighborhoods east of the airport.

Mobile homes represent another significant form of housing. Nearly 2000 units, over 4% of the total housing supply as compared to 1.9% for the County, are located within the study area. Mobile home courts are located in appropriately zoned areas primarily along Pacific Highway South, although some locations may be found along other arterials such as Ambaum Way S. The single largest mobile home court in the area is Bow Lake Trailer Town located east of the airport next to Bow Lake; this court has a capacity of 445 units.

Most mobile home courts cater to permanent residents; some have limited facilities for overnight transients, and only a few are entirely transient-oriented. Characteristically, most mobile home courts have fewer children than found in a comparable number of single family homes. Some courts simply do not allow child-



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LOCATION OF PUBLIC HOUSING
AND RETIREMENT RESIDENCES

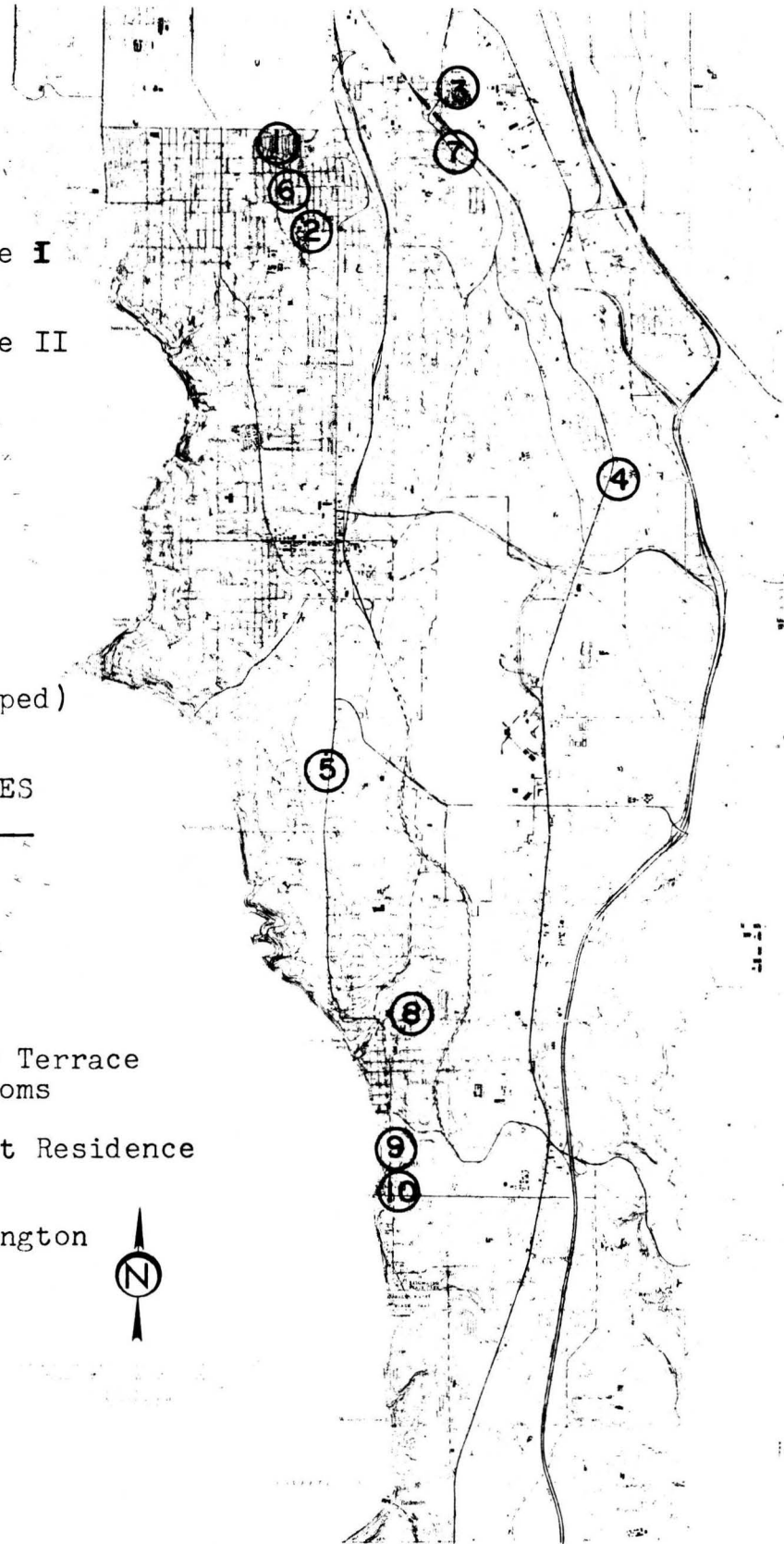
LEGEND

PUBLIC HOUSING (King County Housing Authority)

- ① Park Lake Homes - Site I
545 units
- ② Park Lake Homes - Site II
165 units
- ③ South Park Courts
254 units
- ④ Riverton Terrace
60 units
- ⑤ Brittany Park
43 units
- Leased homes (not mapped)
67 units

RETIREMENT HOMES/COMMUNITIES (Private)

- ⑥ Kingston Village
335 units
- ⑦ Northwest Danish Home
46 rooms
- ⑧ Wesley Gardens/Wesley Terrace
515 units and rooms
- ⑨ Judson Park Retirement Residence
187 units
- ⑩ Masonic Home of Washington
200 rooms



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ren, and space limitations within both dwellings and yards make mobile home courts less attractive to families with children.

Housing to serve particular groups or income levels includes both public housing projects and homes owned or leased by the King County Housing Authority as well as private retirement residences and communities. The Housing Authority has five housing projects as well as 67 leased homes under its jurisdiction within the area. Total units within the projects numbers 1,067. Some are designed for and available only to low-income elderly persons. The greatest supply of housing specifically for the elderly, however, is in retirement homes and communities, many of which have been constructed by quasi-public organizations. There are a total of approximately 1300 of these units or rooms within the study area, the locations of which can be seen on the accompanying map.

Convalescent or nursing homes, usually considered as medical rather than residential facilities, actually supply relatively permanent housing for those individuals (again usually the elderly) who can no longer be cared for at home or have no place else to go. There are a number of these facilities within the study area; some of the largest include the South Haven Nursing Home with 88 beds, the Olympic Crest Convalescent Center with 60 beds, the Setoma Convalescent Home with 119 beds and the Burien Terrace Nursing Home with 44 beds.

Housing value and rents - The lowest housing values (of owner-occupied units) occur in the Duwamish valley areas - the neighborhoods of South Park, Riverton and Allentown. Generally, values are lowest in the northern portion of the study area; the highest value homes are to be found in the high-amenity view areas along Puget Sound and towards the south where there is the greatest supply of newer housing. Near the airport, values on the west side are generally higher than on the east. Housing values tend to correlate closely with median family income,

particularly in those areas with a predominance of single-family homes. In general, there is a close correlation also with age of structure, with older homes being of lower value. This is not true, however, in the Gregory Heights neighborhood, Tract 278, which has many older homes and still one of the highest median housing value figures in the study area.

In most tracts, median contract monthly rent was higher than the \$118 median figure for the County. The lower rent areas again are in the north, correlating to a considerable extent with those census tracts having the highest incidence of units built prior to 1940. In 1970 most of the study area commanded rentals in the range of \$120-\$130 per month. This was true in the area surrounding the airport as well as around Burien and south along Pacific Highway South. Highest rentals were in those areas with a high percentage of single-family homes (such as Gregory Heights and Normandy Park, tracts 278 and 286, respectively) or where a large number of apartment units with views have been built in recent years (tract 264 overlooking the Duwamish valley).

Housing quality - In 1968, the King County Department of Planning conducted a field "windshield" survey of housing quality in the unincorporated Highline-South Central school district areas south as far as the city of Des Moines. This was part of a total neighborhood analysis survey. Housing quality was rated on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 representing "Sound" housing units, 2 being "Basically Sound", 3 the "Deteriorated" units, and 4 th "Dilapidated" units. (See Appendix A for definitions of these ratings). The purpose of the survey was to establish a priority base for housing inspections and enforcement under the provisions of the County's Minimum Housing Code.

The results of the housing quality survey described above have been spot-checked in the field by County staff during the spring of 1973. It was determined that these results are still generally valid for overall neighborhood ratings on a percentage basis even though some individual units may have been removed or changed from one rating category to another.

In this survey, fewer than 5% of the total housing units were rated as deteriorated or dilapidated for the greater part of the SeaTac Communities study area included. It is assumed that the area not surveyed, from the city of Des Moines south, is in this same category of under 5%, since other indices of housing quality, such as age of housing and median housing value, indicate no particular housing problems in this area. Those neighborhoods which had 5% or more housing units rated deteriorated or dilapidated are all located along the north and northeast fringe of the study area and are listed in the following table:

Neighborhoods with 5% or more Housing
Units Rated as Deteriorated or Dilapidated
(ranked in order from worst to best)

Census Tract (see page)	Neighborhoods	% of Total Housing Units
263	Boeing Field, Duwamish	31.2
264	Glendale, Valley View	18.8
272	Riverton, Foster	14.1
282	Thorndyke	11.4
266	North Shorewood	8.6
281	Riverton Heights	7.3
283	Crestview	5.2
265	White Center Heights	5.1

Source: Neighborhood Analysis Survey, King County Department of Planning, 1968

The validity of this data is confirmed by the fact that, in the 1970 census, these areas also tended to have high percentages of older housing as well as low median family income and housing values.

Changing housing demand - The peak year for apartment construction in the area was 1967 when nearly 3000 units, about three-fourths of the total authorized, were of this type. The impact of rapidly increasing Boeing Company employment from 1965 through early 1969 created a demand for apartments, particularly to serve people newly arriving in the County who were single, without their families, or seeking a temporary place to live until they could find or decide upon permanent housing. This impact is illustrated by data which shows that, in 1960, only 9% of total residential units authorized were multi-family; by 1969, multi-family units represented 77% of those authorized. In 1969, however, the total number of authorized units was only one-third that of the 1967 peak year, reflecting some degree of overbuilding and the start of the employment decline at Boeing that was a major contributor to the subsequent economic recession in the region. Housing construction activity tends to reflect the economic well-being of an area; this is clearly observable in the SeaTac Communities area by comparing the peaks and dips of housing activity with the employment picture.

(Note: A discussion of housing activity from 1970-73 will be added later).

Current market for housing - With unemployment beginning to taper off in the region, the housing market has generally improved. More dwelling units were authorized for construction in King County in 1972 than in 1971, although the total was still only about one-fourth the peak year of 1967. The first quarter of 1973 also had an increase in residential construction activity over the same period for the previous year.

According to a report of the Seattle Real Estate Research Committee published in the spring of 1973, the overall vacancy rate for multi-family units in the Burien-Federal Way area (based on a sample survey) was 5.3% of total units. Although no comparable figure for previous years was given in this report for the same area, there has been a drop in the vacancy rate in the total Seattle housing market survey area from a high of 11.4% in October, 1970, to 3.9% in April, 1973.

For single-family homes and public housing projects, however, the same report states that vacancies increased between April, 1972, and April, 1973; the rate for single-family homes went from 3.12% to 3.88% in this period, a continuation of a steady increase from the low of 0.43% reported for April of 1968. The 9.8% vacancy rate for units in public housing projects represents a 3% increase over the previous year.

The number of homes repossessed by the FHA and VA in the Seattle housing market area has increased steadily since 1970, but the local office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that the rate of repossession is beginning to taper off. Of 5,000 of these homes currently under government jurisdiction, 600 or fewer are within the SeaTac Communities study area. Realtors responsible for handling these homes for resale within the study area report that most are in average condition, as compared with others in the County, with a few in poor condition. However, after rehabilitation, the homes are in demand and are being readily sold. It should be noted, though, that probably few, if any, of these homes are located within the noise-impacted areas surrounding the airport, since FHA has tended not to insure homes in such areas.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Income levels - Median family income varies from a low of \$3,600 in census tract 265 (White Center public housing) to \$18,700 in tract 286 (Normandy Park). In general, highest income levels prevail in the bank of residential development overlooking or close to Puget Sound, where view amenities are abundant, and in the more recently developed areas located south of the airport. Lowest income levels are in the vicinity of White Center and in the northeast portion of the study area, along the slopes facing the Duwamish Valley and on the floor of the valley itself.

As might be expected, the lower-income areas also have the highest incidence of persons and families receiving public assistance as well as those with a below-poverty level income as reported in the 1970 census. According to the Highline School District, nearly one-fourth of its entire student body who were eating school lunches in the 1972-73 school year received free or reduced-price lunches under a program subsidized by the federal government. So, in spite of the fact that, overall, the study area can be rated as a middle-income area as compared with the County as a whole, there are a significant number of low-income families.

Where people work - Although the Boeing Company and other valley industries and businesses provide the principal source of employment for persons living within the SeaTac communities area, jobs generated by the SeaTac Airport, numbering between six and seven thousand, provide the chief employment opportunities within the study area itself. These jobs include those provided by the Port of Seattle (approximately 250) and by the airlines and concessions operating at the airport. If one considers airport-related activities, such as the motels, car

rental agencies, and other airport-generated businesses in the immediate area, this total is even greater.

1970 census data reveals that, in all except two tracts, persons employed in the transportation industry (as a % of total employment) is higher than the County figure of 7.9%. In eight census tracts within the study area, over 11% of total employment is in this industry; of these, six tracts are immediately adjacent or close to the airport. This seems to indicate that many people working at or out of the airport wish to live nearby, a fact confirmed by the demand for apartment construction in this area within the last decade.

Other major employers are the school districts, with the Highline District alone hiring nearly 2,000 persons in both teaching and non-teaching positions. Highline Community College accounts for another approximately 250 full-time and 200 part-time jobs not including job opportunities for students. Since relatively few industries are located within the study area boundary, other local employment is limited primarily to local business and service activities.

Unemployment - Without evidence to the contrary, it seems reasonable to assume that the rate of unemployment in the study area follows that of the Seattle metropolitan area (see table to follow). From a low of 2.9% in 1968, the unemployment rate (unemployment as a percent of total labor force) increased to a high of 13.0% in 1971; it has been dropping since that time and is expected to continue to decline as the business climate in the region continues to improve.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE SEATTLE METROPOLITAN AREA

WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS a/

(Not adjusted for seasonal variation)

Month and Year	Total		Unemployment	Rate of Unemployment	
	Labor Force	Total Employment			
1963	495,200	401,900	29,700	6.0	
1964	489,200	394,700	32,300	6.0	
1965	506,000	416,900	24,500	4.8	
1966	566,600	481,000	16,900	3.0	
1967	609,100	520,500	18,800	3.1	
1968	644,200	553,300	18,900	2.9	
1969	655,400	559,800	26,500	4.0	
1970	640,400	516,200	61,000	9.5	
1971	633,900	489,800	82,100	13.0	
1972	624,900	502,100	62,200	10.0	
1973	January	614,200	506,100	53,800	8.8
	February	612,700	508,700	49,100	8.0
	March	617,600	513,900	47,000	7.6

a/ Excludes domestic service and agriculture; also excludes workers involved in labor disputes. Data are for King and Snohomish Counties.

Source: State Employment Security Department

References

Sources of population and enrollment information -

Bureau of the Census, U. S. Dept. of Commerce
King County School Population & Enrollment, King County
Dept. of Planning, June, 1972
Intermediate School District No. 110
A Master Plan for Highline Public Schools, Master Plan
Committee of Highline School District, Oct., 1972 (preliminary)

Sources of housing information -

Bureau of the Census, U.S. Dept. of Commerce
Telephone calls to public housing projects and private retirement
homes/communities
Real Estate Research Report, Spring of 1973 - Vol. 24, No. 1,
Seattle Real Estate Research Committee
Department of Housing & Urban Development - Local office
and Area Management Brokers

Sources of economic & employment information -

Port and airport related -
Telephone call to Ed Parks, Port of Seattle, May 31, 1973
Highline Community College -
Telephone call to Public Information office, Highline College
May 31, 1973
Highline School District -
"A Master Plan for Highline Public Schools", October, 1972,
p. 5
Total employment and unemployment -
State Employment Security Department
Bureau of the Census, U.S. Dept. of Commerce

Principal report responsibility -

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D assisted by

Michael Smith, Long Range Planning Division
King County Office of Budget and Program Planning

APPENDIX "A"

Housing Condition Definitions

Sound and

Basically Sound:

This housing requires no substantial improvement or removal of houses but does require conservation measures and maintenance to keep the houses in good condition.

Deteriorated¹:

Housing needs more repair than would be provided in the course of regular maintenance. Such housing has one or more defects of an intermediate nature that must be corrected if the unit is to continue to provide safe and adequate shelter.

Dilapidated¹:

Housing does not provide safe and adequate shelter and in its present condition endangers the health, safety, or well-being of its occupants. Such housing has one or more critical defects; or has a combination of intermediate defects in sufficient number or extent to require considerable repair or rebuilding; or is of inadequate original construction.

¹These definitions are identical to those used in the 1960 U.S. Census of Housing.