

# Regional Centers System Monitoring

Regional Staff Committee

February 20, 2025



Puget Sound Regional Council



*We are leaders in the region to realize equity for all. Diversity, racial equity and inclusion are integrated into how we carry out all our work.*

[psrc.org/equity](https://psrc.org/equity)

# Overview

- Background
- Data by regional center objectives
- Next Steps



# Regional Centers

Key part of VISION 2050 & the Regional Growth Strategy



Guide regional growth allocations



Protects rural and natural resource areas



Advance local planning



Priority areas for PSRC's federal transportation funding



Inform transit service planning



# Centers Monitoring and Redesignation Schedule

**2024**

- Scope of work
- Systems monitoring data collection & reporting

**2025**

- Applications & designation for new centers
- Criteria reports & redesignation of existing centers

**2026**

- Systems monitoring refresh
- Recommendations for Regional Center Framework update

Local Comprehensive Plan Adoption & Certification



# Centers System Monitoring Focus

## Key Questions:

- Is the region achieving desired outcomes from the system?
- Are any changes needed to the Regional Centers Framework or in future updates to VISION 2050 to better achieve the desired outcomes for centers?



# Types of Regional Centers

## Regional Growth Centers

### Metro Growth Center

- Largest and most dense jobs and housing centers
- Regional transit hub

### Urban Growth Center

- Dense existing jobs and housing
- High-quality transit service

## Manufacturing Industrial Centers

### Industrial Employment Center

- Highly active industrial areas
- Preserve jobs and land use

### Industrial Growth Center

- Cluster of industrial lands
- Potential for future job growth



A nighttime photograph of a modern urban development. In the background, a multi-story building with a 'CRUX' sign and a 'HYATT' sign is illuminated. The foreground shows a public space with a concrete walkway, a staircase, and several glowing yellow cylindrical light fixtures. A person is walking on the path, and a child is holding a string of colorful lights. The scene is lit with a mix of warm yellow and cool blue tones.

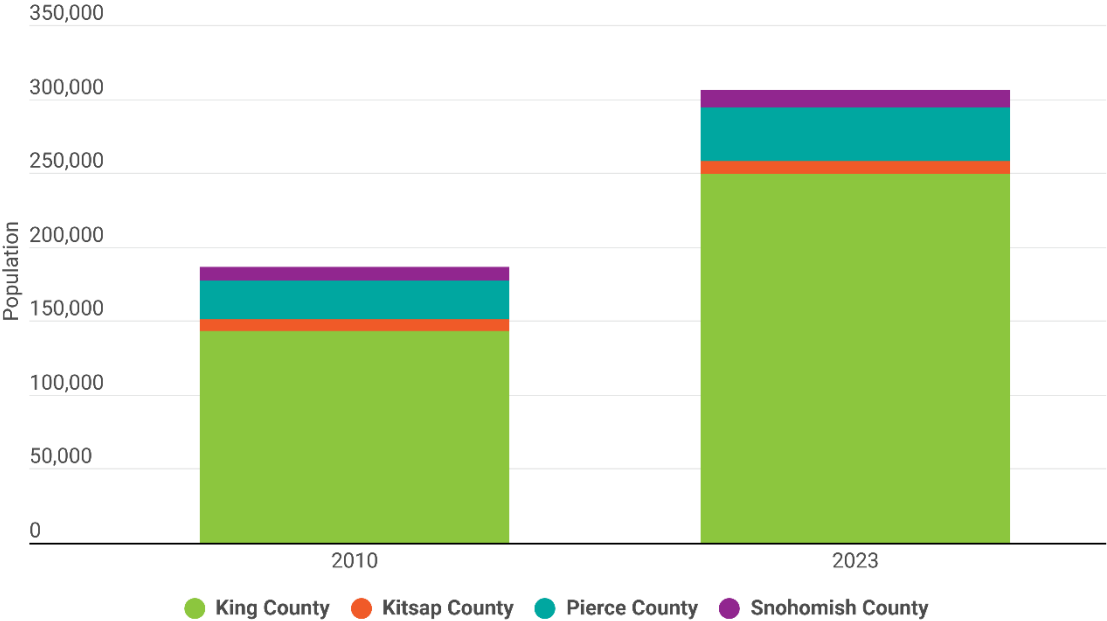
# Growth

Objective: Centers attract a significant and growing share of the region's overall growth

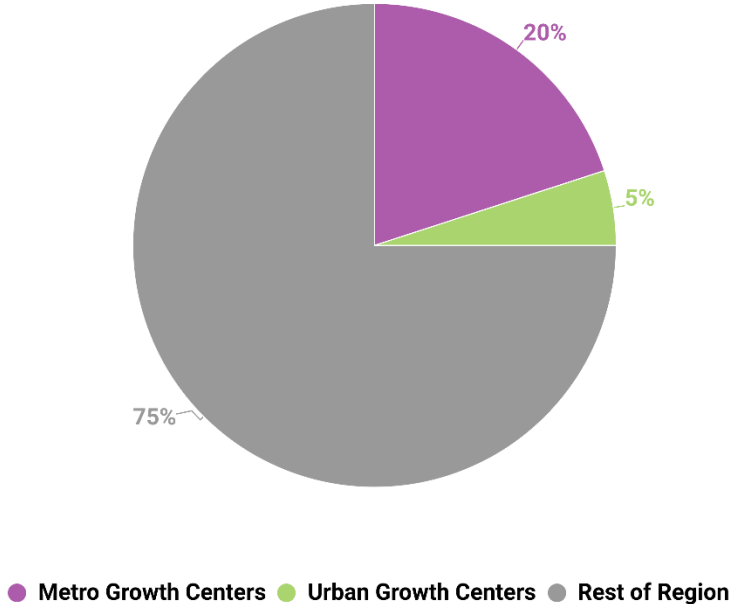
# Growth

## 25% of the region's housing growth from 2010 to 2023 occurred in regional growth centers

Regional Growth Center Population by County



Regional Growth Center Share of Housing Unit Growth



Source: Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimates Program: 2010, 2023; PSRC Parcel Estimates Program: 2010, 2023

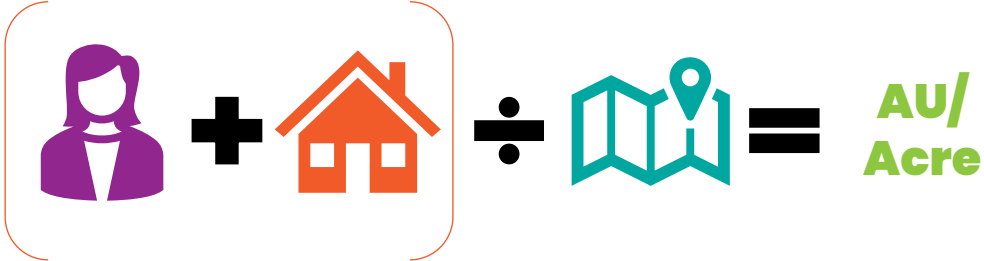
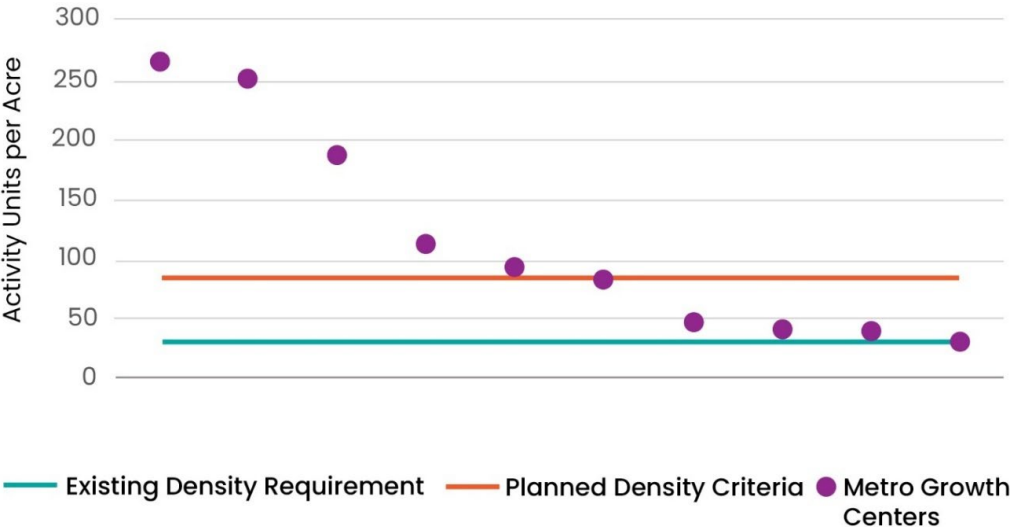




# Growth

## Most metro growth centers already exceed the criteria for planned density

Metro Growth Centers: Activity Units per Acre



### What Are Activity Units?

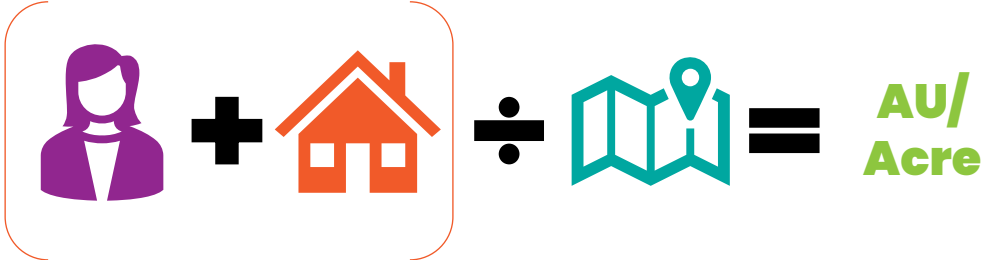
Regional growth centers are evaluated by existing and planned density. Activity unit (or people per acre) density combines the number of jobs and residents and divides by the gross acres in the center

Source: Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimates Program: 2023; PSRC Parcel Estimates Program: 2023; PSRC Covered Employment: 2022

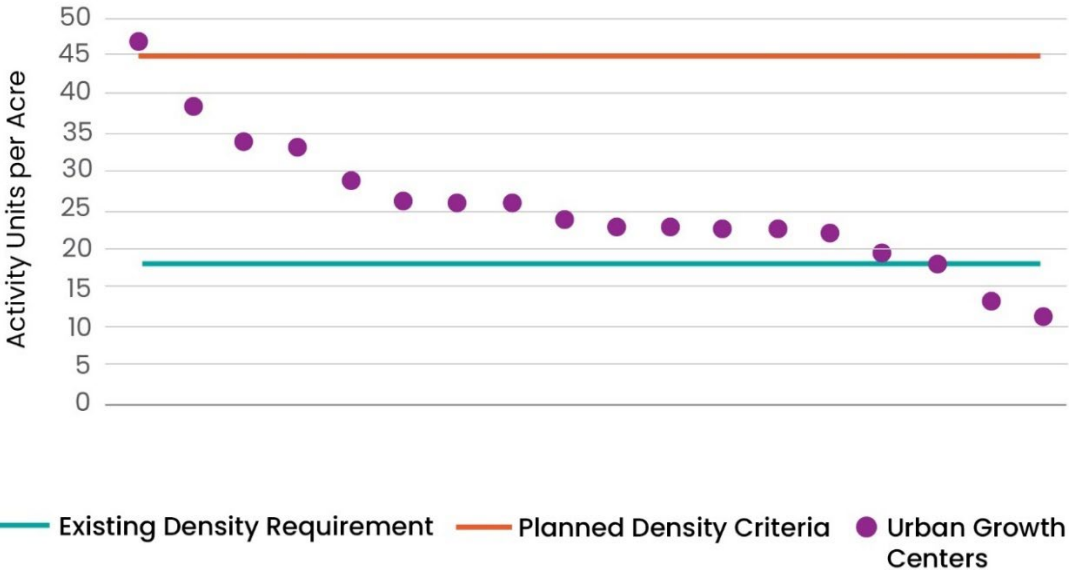


# Growth

## Three urban growth centers are still below the minimum density criteria



Urban Growth Centers: Activity Units per Acre



**What Are Activity Units?**

Regional growth centers are evaluated by existing and planned density. Activity unit (or people per acre) density combines the number of jobs and residents and divides by the gross acres in the center

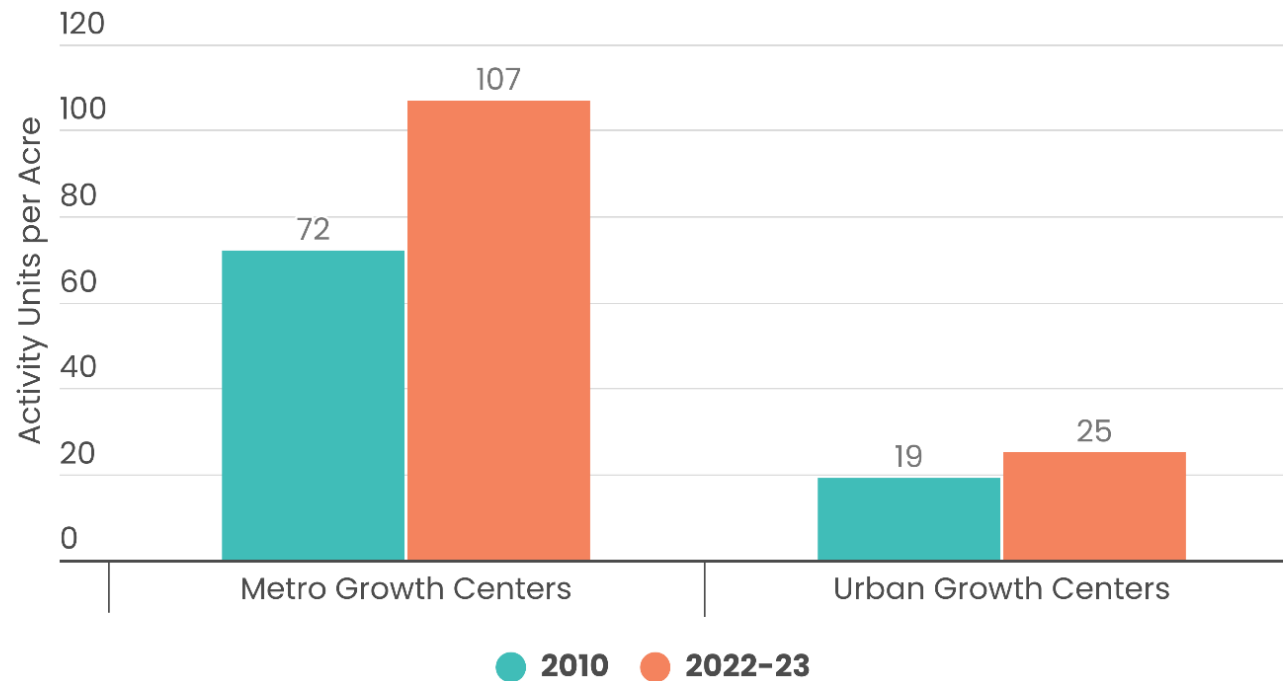
Source: Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimates Program: 2023; PSRC Parcel Estimates Program: 2023; PSRC Covered Employment: 2022



# Growth

## Metro growth centers have seen more rapid growth than urban growth centers

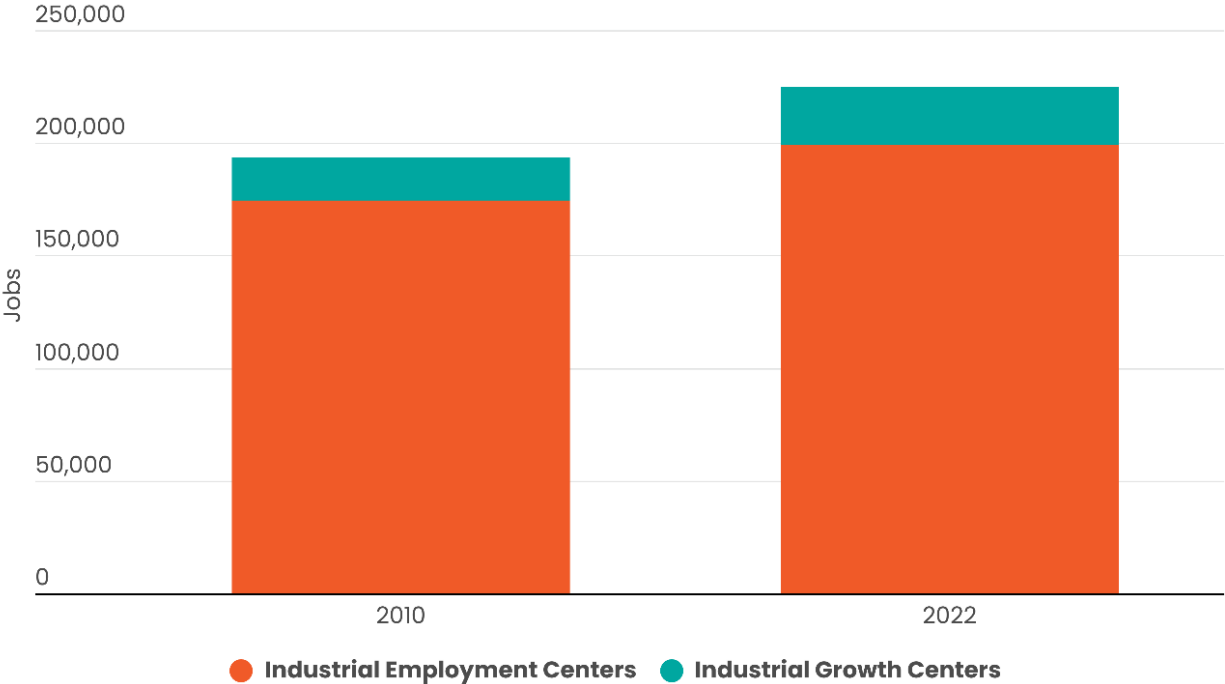
Change in Activity Density by Regional Growth Center Type



# Growth

**In 2022, there were nearly 225,000 jobs in manufacturing/industrial centers, and 11% of all jobs in the region were in MICs**

Total Employment in Manufacturing/Industrial Centers



Source: PSRC Covered Employment: 2010, 2022





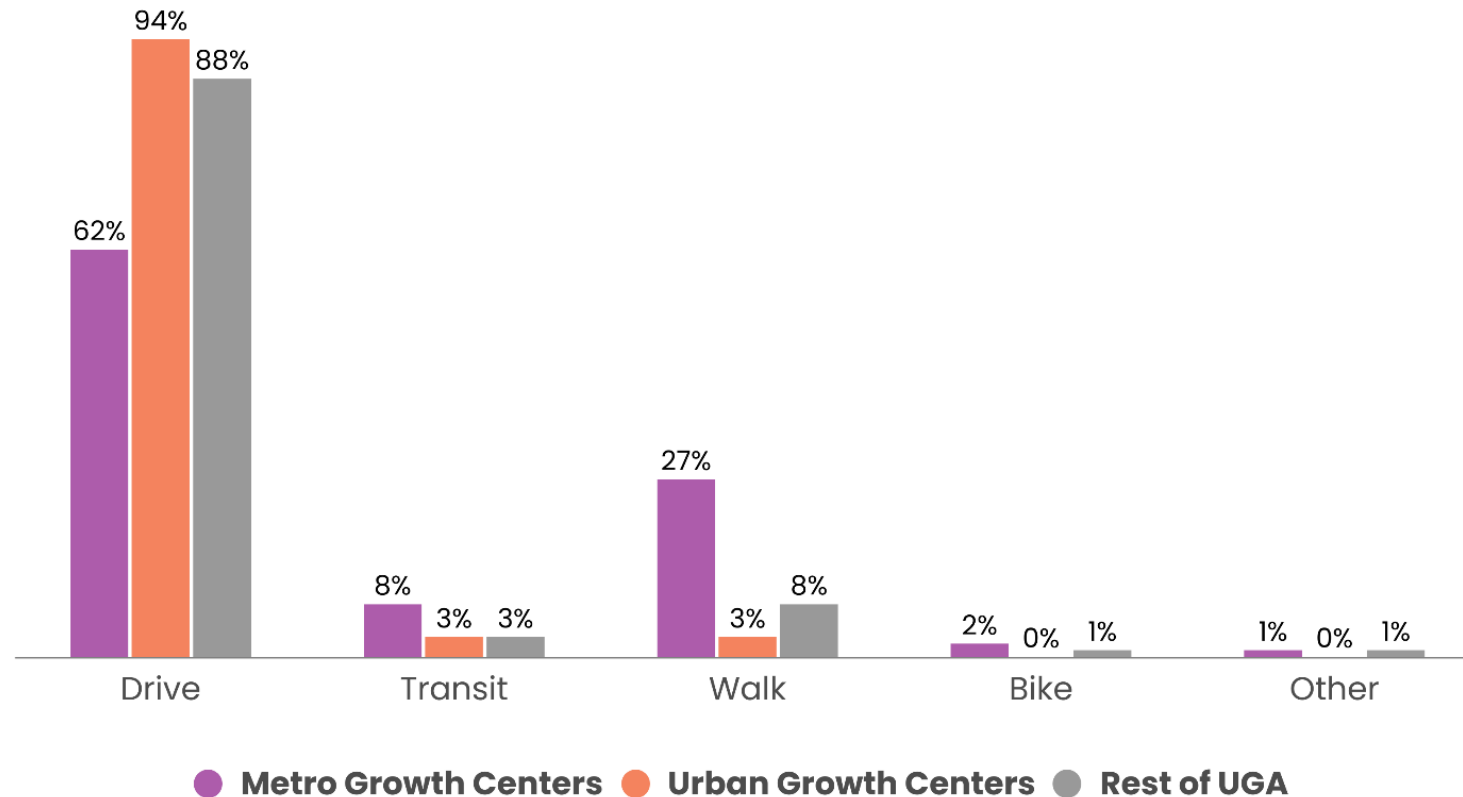
# Mobility

Objective: Centers provide diverse mobility choices

# Mobility

## Residents of regional growth centers drive less than other residents in the region

Mode of All Trips to Regional Growth Centers



● Metro Growth Centers ● Urban Growth Centers ● Rest of UGA

Source: PSRC Household Travel Survey, 2023

Note: includes all trips starting within and outside of centers, despite where trip takers live.



# Mobility

## Manufacturing/industrial centers are freight hubs

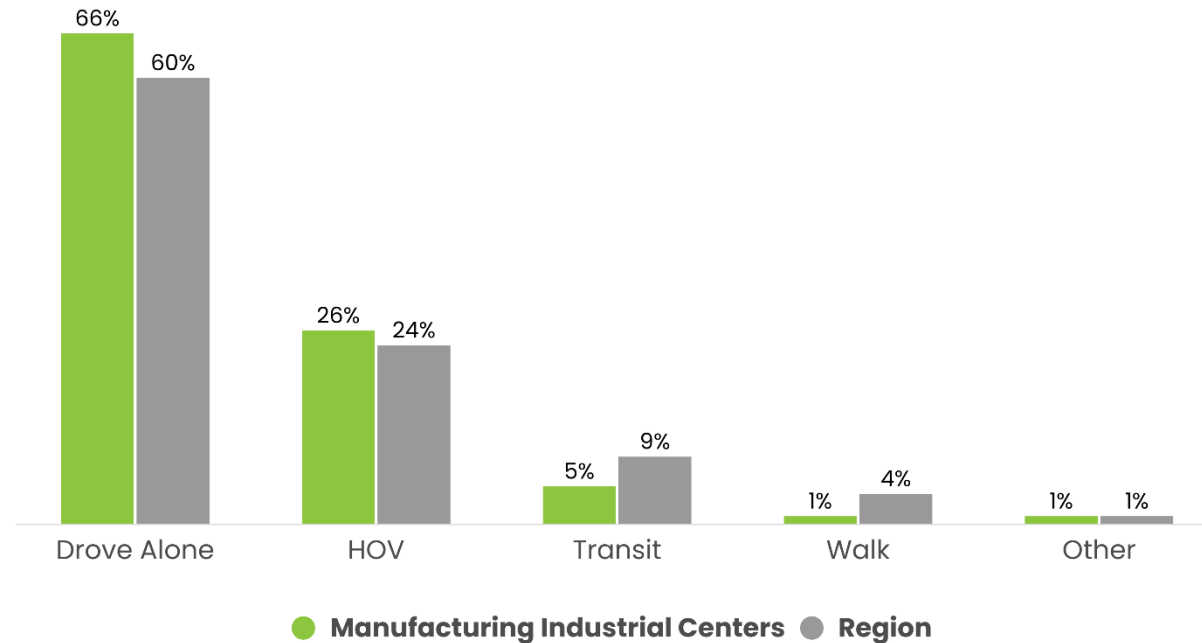
MICs account for only 1% of the region's land area but served as a destination for 17% of all the region's truck trips



# Mobility

## Workers in manufacturing/industrial centers drive alone to work at higher rates than other workers in the region

Mode Share for Workers in Manufacturing/Industrial Centers







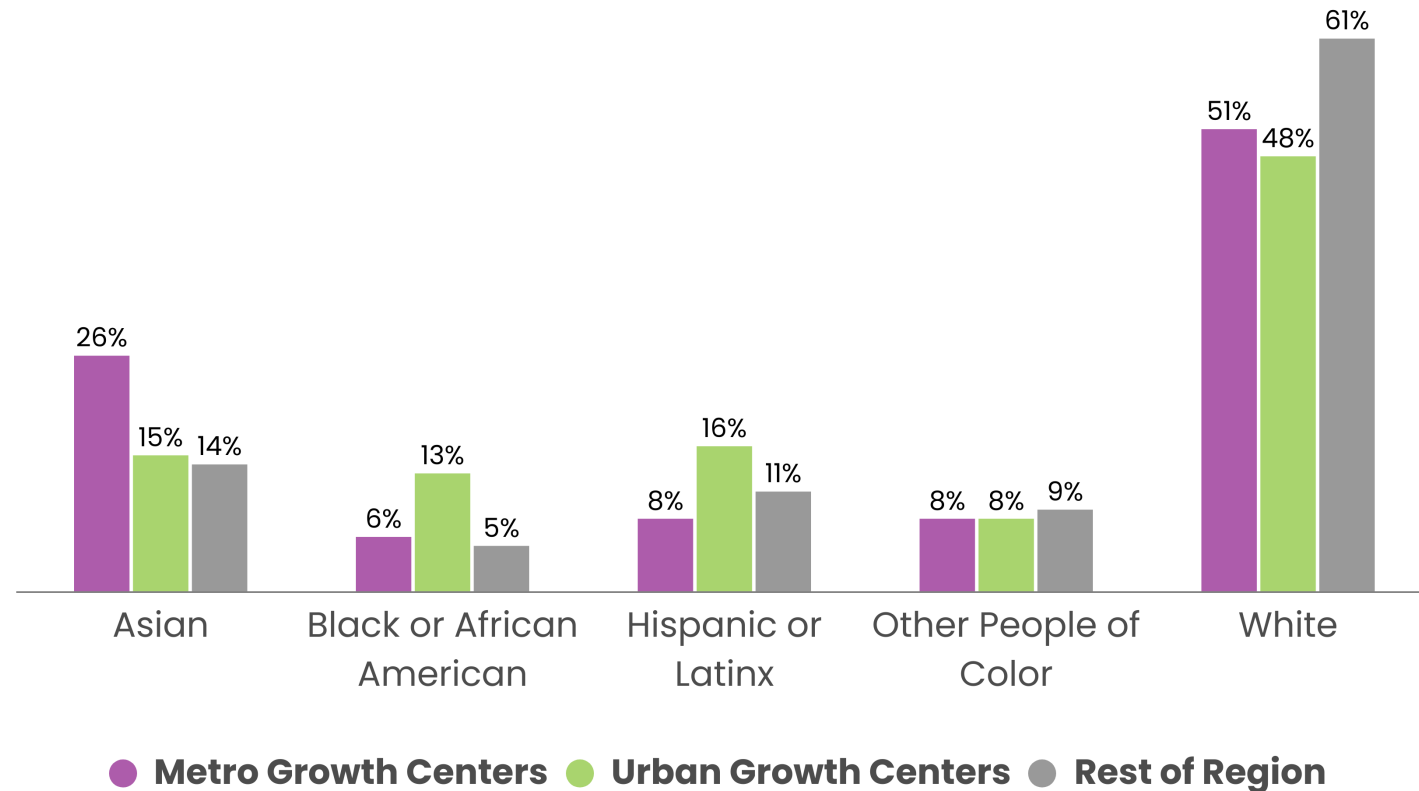
# Housing, Equity & Opportunity

Objective: Regional growth centers offer high access to opportunity for a diverse population

# Housing, Equity and Opportunity

## Regional growth centers are more racially diverse than the rest of the region

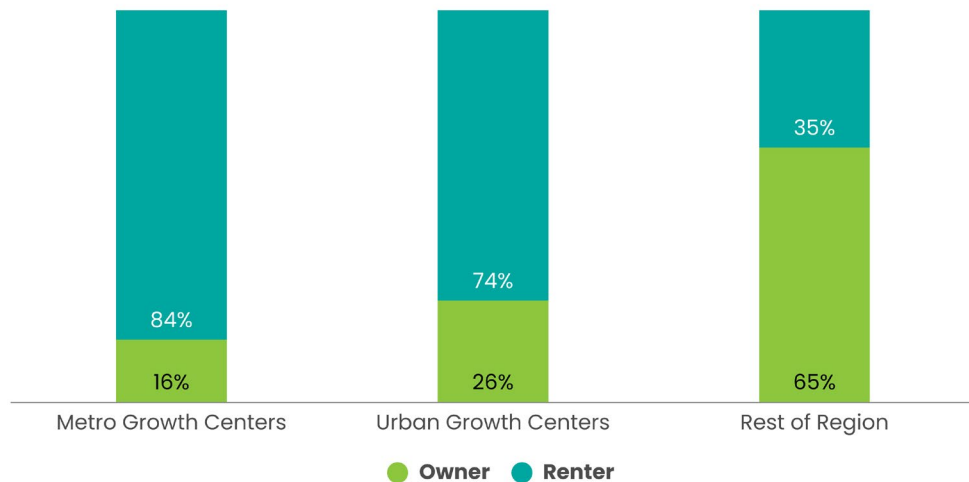
Regional Growth Center Population by Race and Hispanic/Latinx Origin



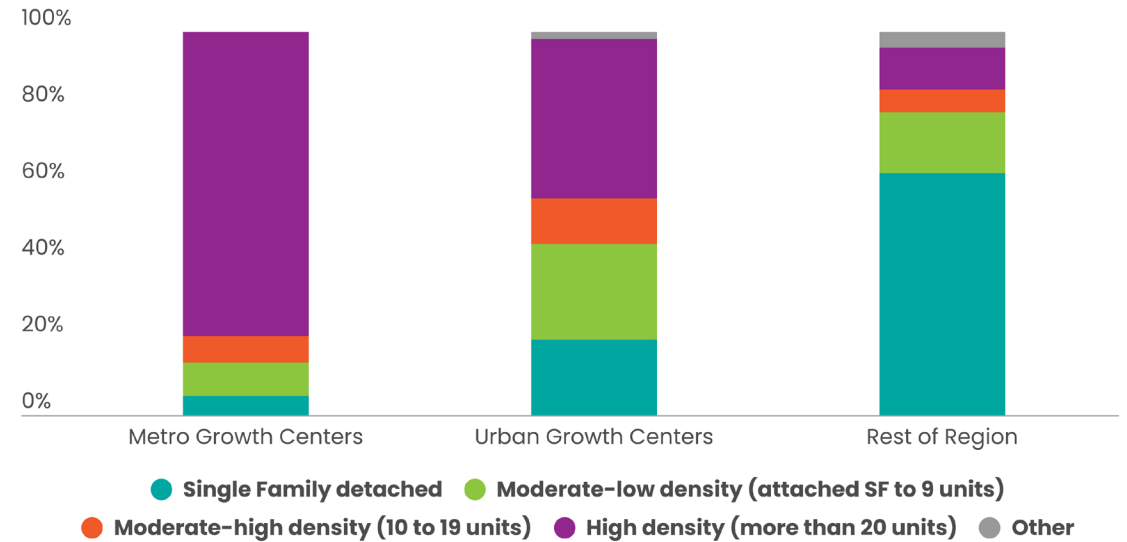
# Housing, Equity and Opportunity

## Housing in regional growth centers is primarily rental units in large multifamily buildings

### Housing Tenure in Regional Growth Centers



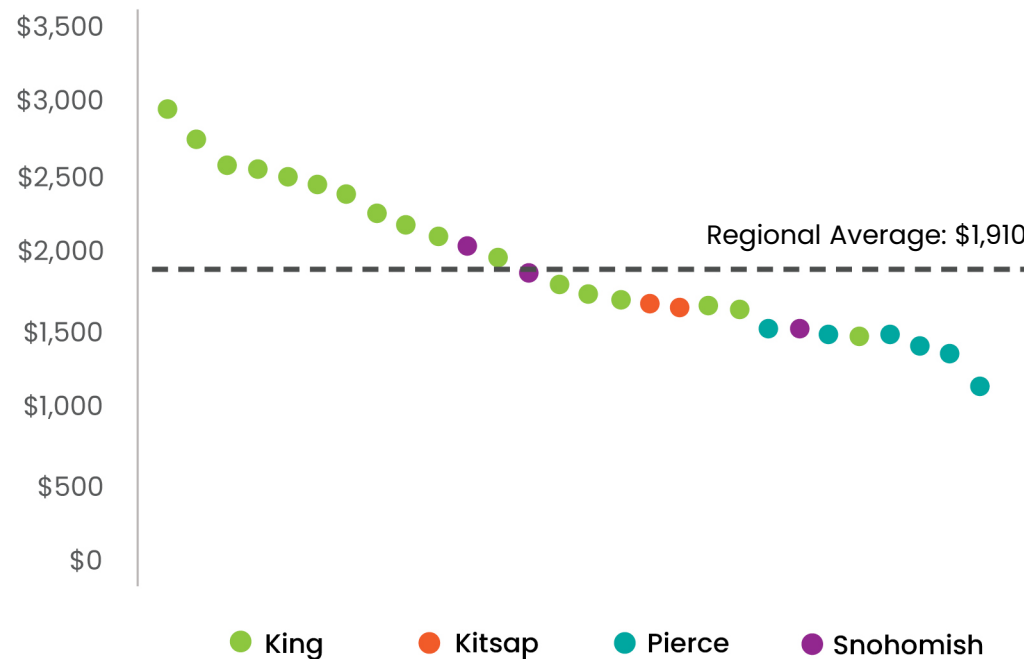
### Housing Types in Regional Growth Centers



# Housing, Equity and Opportunity

The average 1 bedroom apartment in regional growth centers is more expensive than regional average

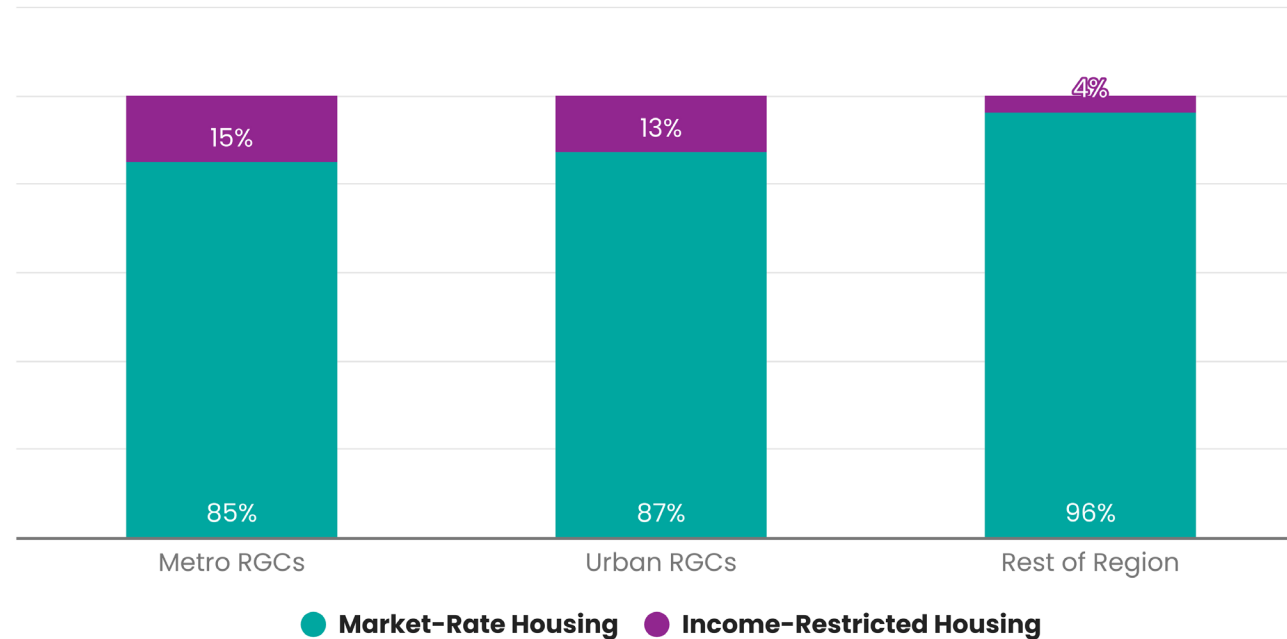
Average Rent in Regional Growth Centers, One Bedroom Units



# Housing, Equity and Opportunity

**Centers are home to a larger proportion of income restricted housing than the rest of the region**

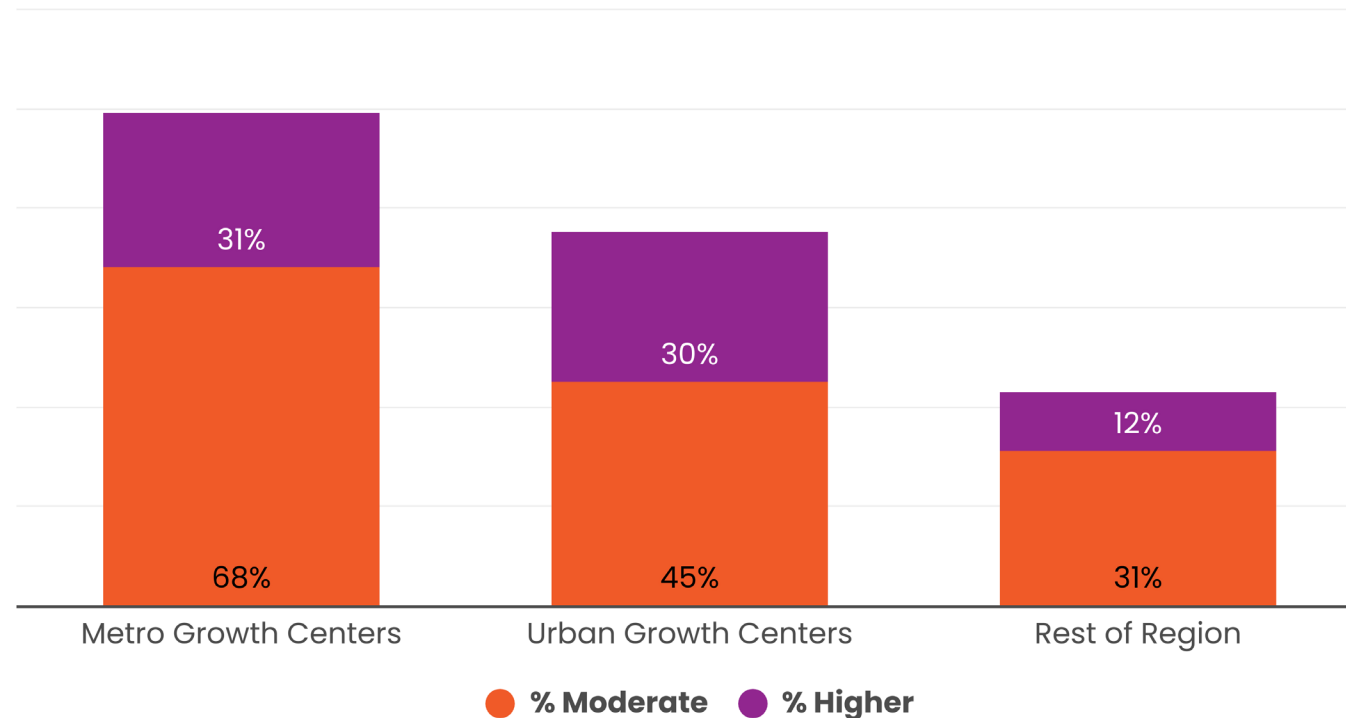
Share of Income-Restricted Housing by Regional Growth Center Type



# Housing, Equity and Opportunity

**Residents of regional growth centers live in neighborhoods with a higher risk of displacement than the rest of the region**

Share of Regional Growth Center Residents Living in Displacement Risk Areas



# Environment & Public Health

Objectives: Centers create complete and healthy communities

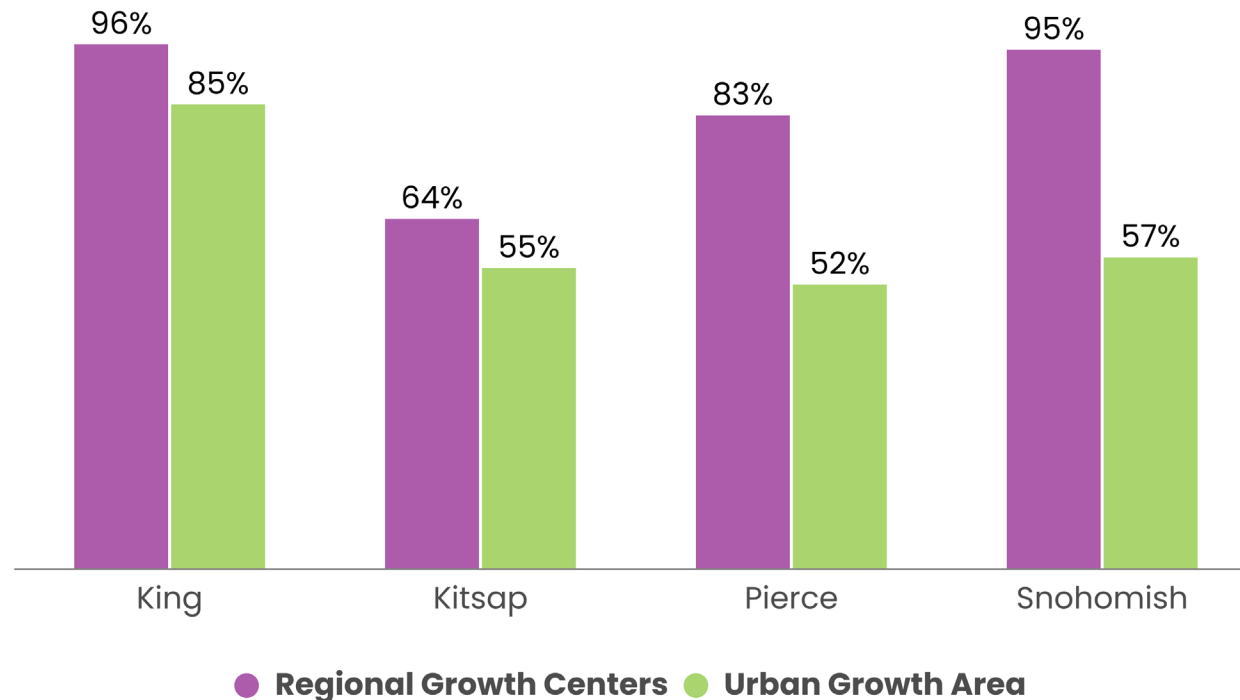
Centers provide access to urban open spaces and mitigate climate change impacts



# Environment and Public Health

**Residents of regional growth centers are significantly more likely to have access to a park than other residents in the urban area**

Percentage of Regional Growth Center Residents Living Within ½ Mile of a Park

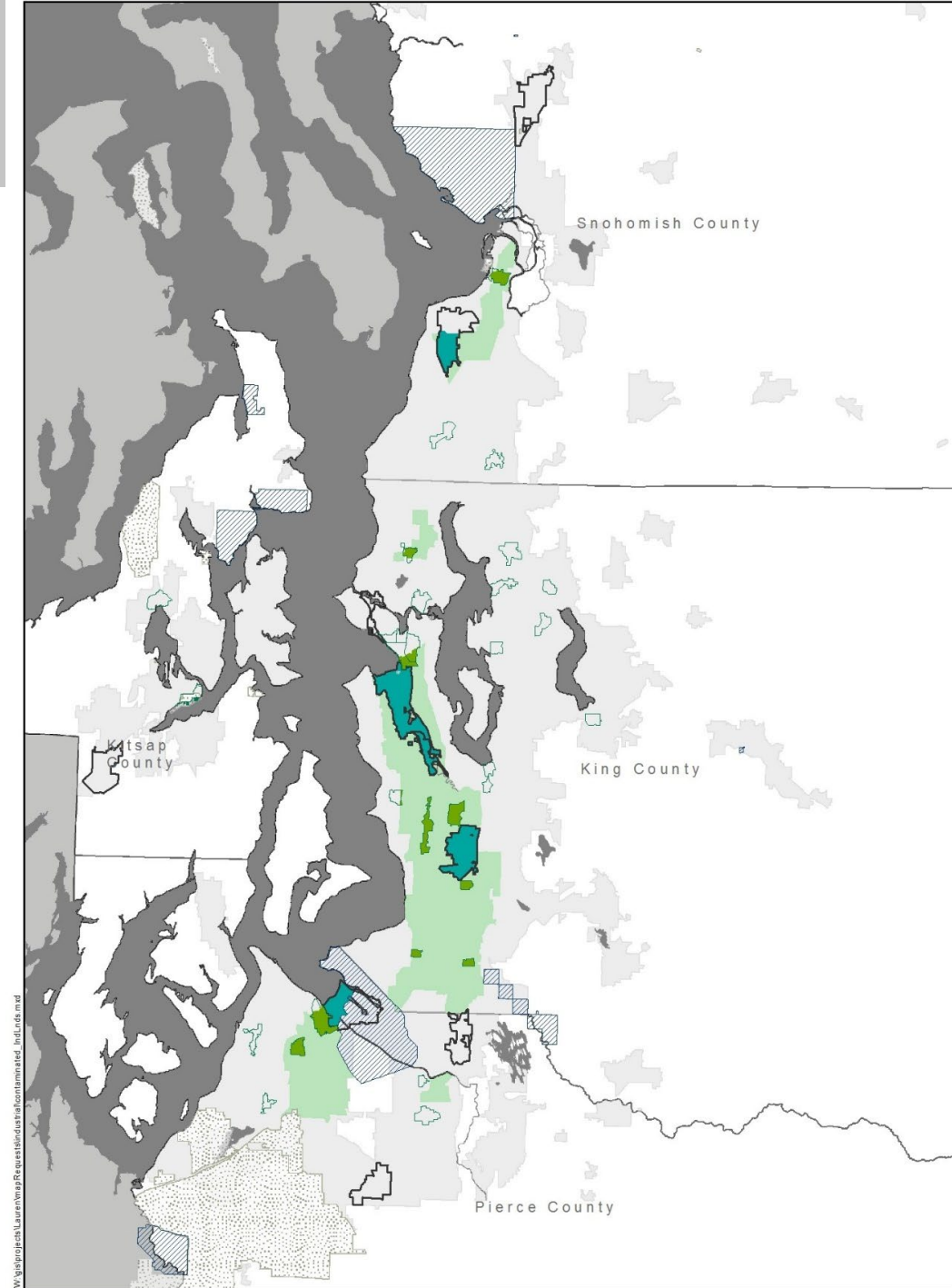




# Environment & Public Health

The Washington Department of Ecology identified 16 areas in the state that are considered overburdened and highly impacted by criteria air pollutants.

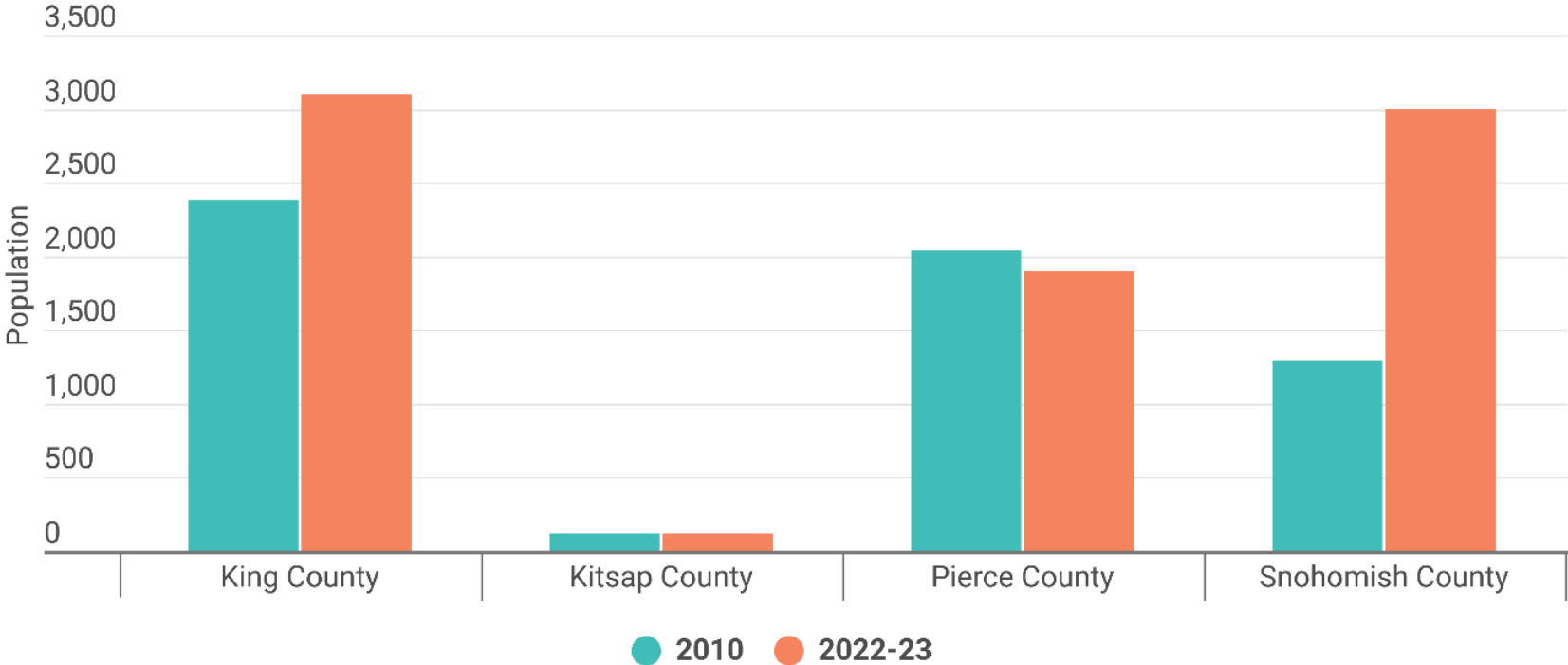
Among regional centers, six MICs and fifteen RGCs are located in overburdened communities.



# Environment & Public Health

Although less than 1% of the region’s population lives in MICs, these areas have seen a 39% increase in population since 2010

Population Growth in Manufacturing/Industrial Centers



Source: Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimates Program: 2010, 2023; PSRC Parcel Estimates Program: 2010, 2023



# Economic Development

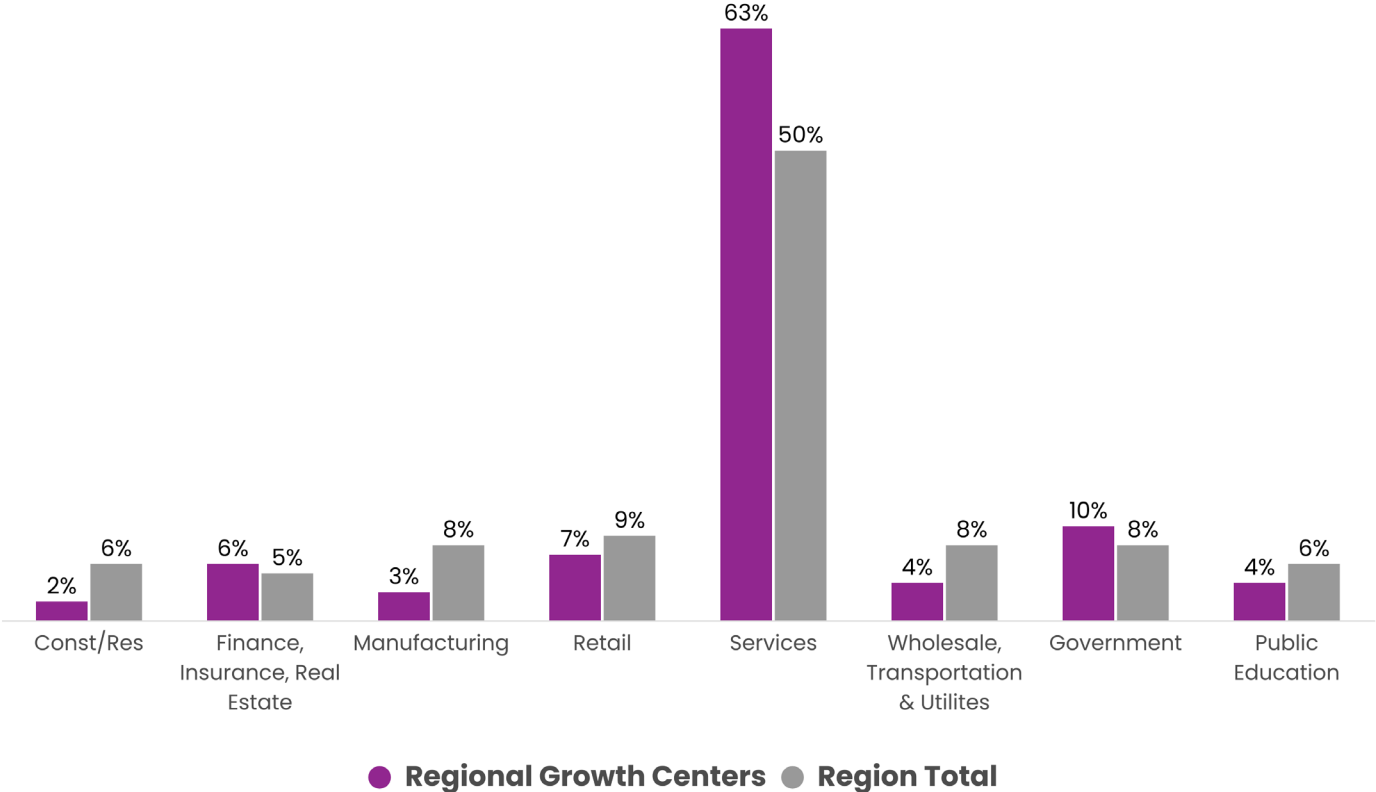
Objective: Centers help the region maintain a competitive economic edge



# Economic Development

## More than half of all jobs in regional growth centers are classified as service-sector jobs

Employment Distribution in Regional Growth Centers



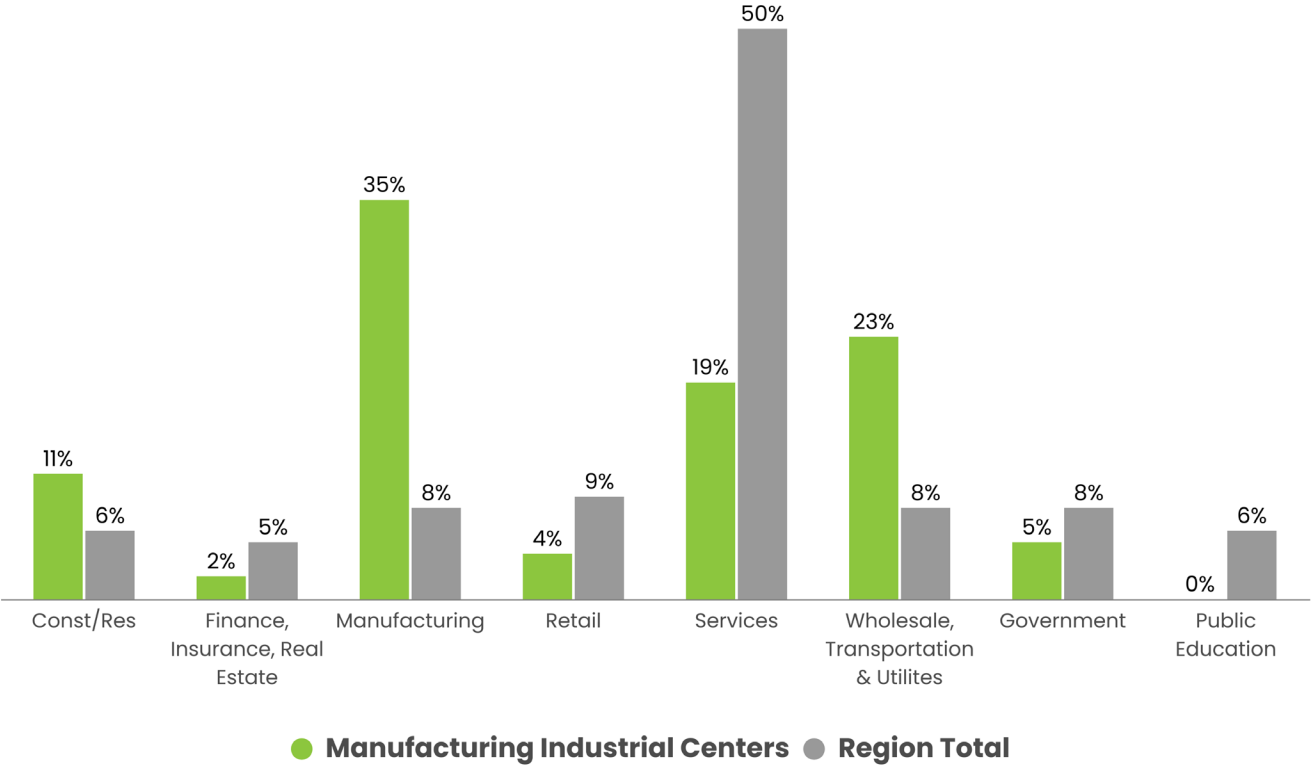
Source: PSRC Covered Employment: 2022



# Economic Development

## Manufacturing/industrial centers provide significant concentrations of employment in manufacturing

Employment Distribution in Manufacturing/Industrial Centers



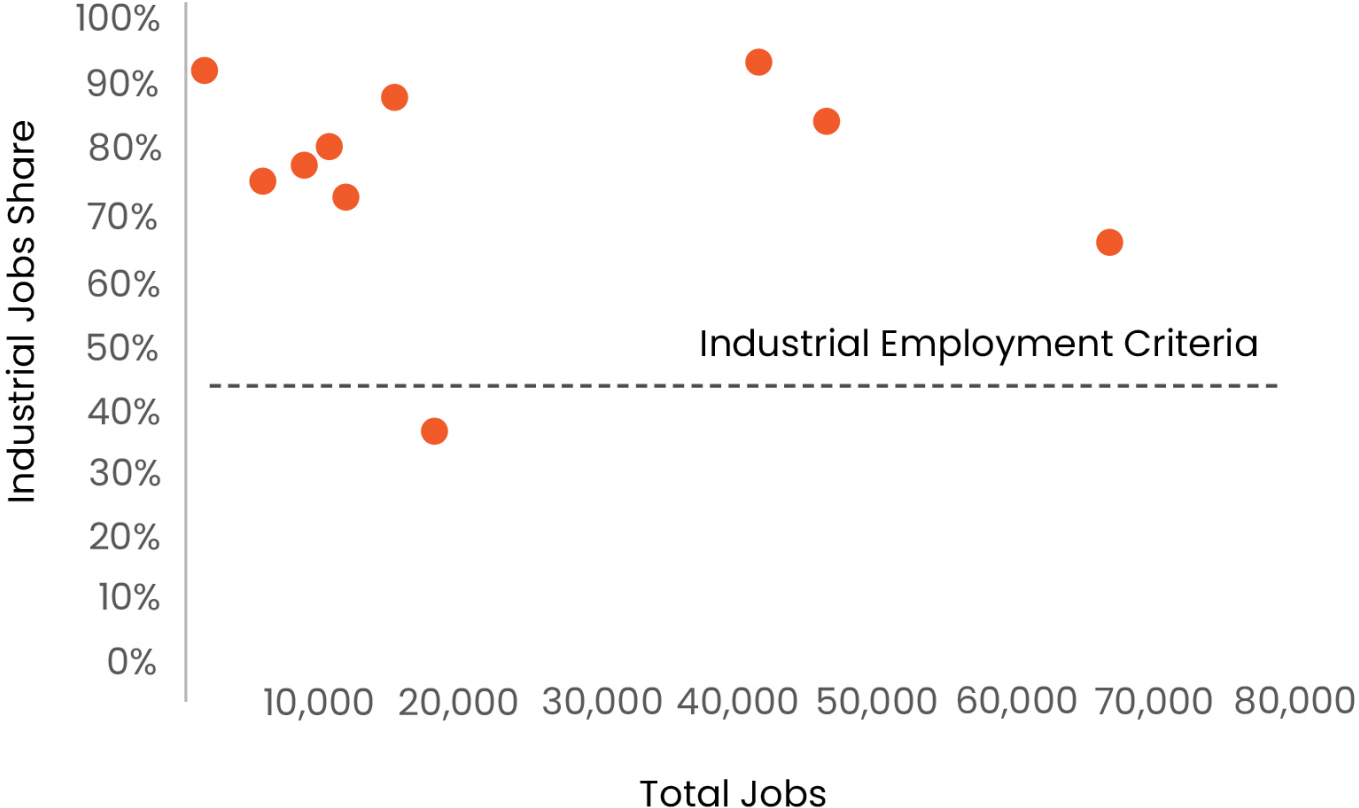
Source: PSRC Covered Employment: 2022



# Economic Development

**On average, 76% of all jobs in MICs are categorized as industrial, significantly above the 50% criteria threshold.**

Share of Region's Industrial Jobs in Manufacturing/Industrial Centers



Source: PSRC Covered Employment, 2022; PSRC Industrial Lands Inventory, 2023



# Next Steps



# Policy Considerations

Growth, mobility, and urban form in urban growth centers

Density requirements

Housing and displacement in regional growth centers

Population growth in manufacturing/industrial centers

Role of countywide centers





# Next Steps

Present early findings to GMPB in March 2025

Release draft Regional Centers System Monitoring report in early spring

Regional centers redesignation process in summer/fall 2025

Update System Monitoring report and consider updates to the Centers Framework in 2026





# Thank You!

**David Dixon**

Associate Planner

[DDixon@psrc.org](mailto:DDixon@psrc.org)

**Liz Underwood-Bultmann, AICP**

Principal Planner

[LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org](mailto:LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org)