

Chapter 2

Demographics and Regional Trends

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO) consists of Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, and Wahkiakum counties. In total, these five counties make up an area of 6,641 square miles (4,250,240 acres) in Southwest Washington. The SWRTPO has a wide degree of variation in geography with boundaries extending from the Cascade Mountain Range to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the Columbia River to the south. The region is primarily marine west coast climate with mild temperatures and considerable precipitation during the winter months. The combination of seismic activity, considerable rainfall, and often steep topography makes mudslides and landslides frequent occurrences throughout the region. Unstable soils from volcanic activity also play an important part in geographic transformations, including subsidence on paved roads.

The region includes four tribal governments including the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Quinault Nation, Shoalwater Bay Tribe, and the Chehalis Confederated Tribes. The combined acreage for the reservations within the SWRTPO equals 213,253 acres, about 5% of the total SWRTPO acreage. This does not include the recent addition of one hundred fifty-two (152) acres to the Cowlitz Tribe reservation to the south of the SWRTPO boundary near La Center in Clark County. The Quinault Tribe reservation is the largest in area with 208,150 acres in the northwest corner of Grays Harbor County.



Figure 2-1: Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Source: CWCOG

This chapter of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) provides an overview of demographics and regional trends within the five-county region. The remainder of this section will discuss regionwide demographics, employment, and commuting patterns. Following these three subsections are separate sections for each county or the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Most tables or charts, with additional data, are in the appendix for this chapter (page 143) at the end of the plan.

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization Demographics

The U.S. Census Bureau data shows the state of Washington experienced a 14.1% growth in population and households between 2000 and 2010. It was the slowest rate of growth the state has experienced in five decades. The five-county SWRTPO region experienced a slower rate of growth (8.68%) than the state over the same period. Since 2010, the SWRTPO has grown 1.34% to reach an estimated population of 279,242. On an annual basis, counties (that are increasing in population) within the region are estimated to be increasing in population about 0.25% to 0.45% since 2010. Generally, the population growth in the five counties and the region as a whole should be characterized as stable, low growth, or slightly declining. Figure 2-2 shows population trends since 1980 and illustrates the general trend of growth to be leveling off.

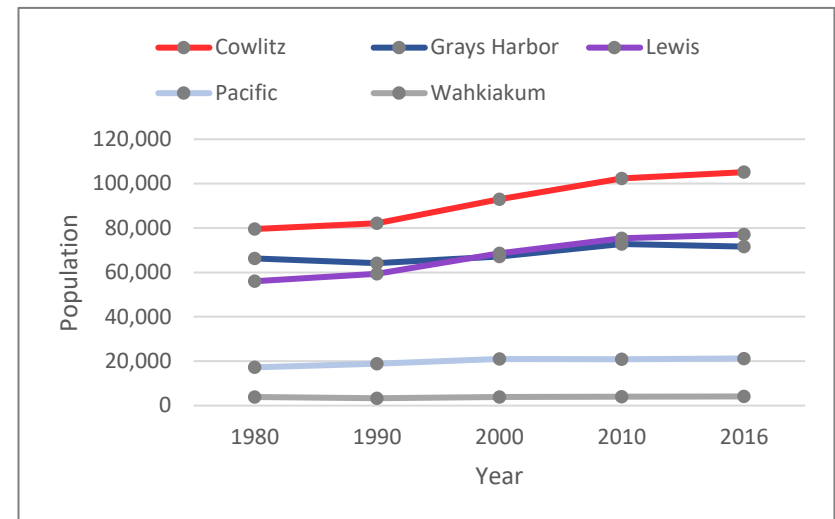
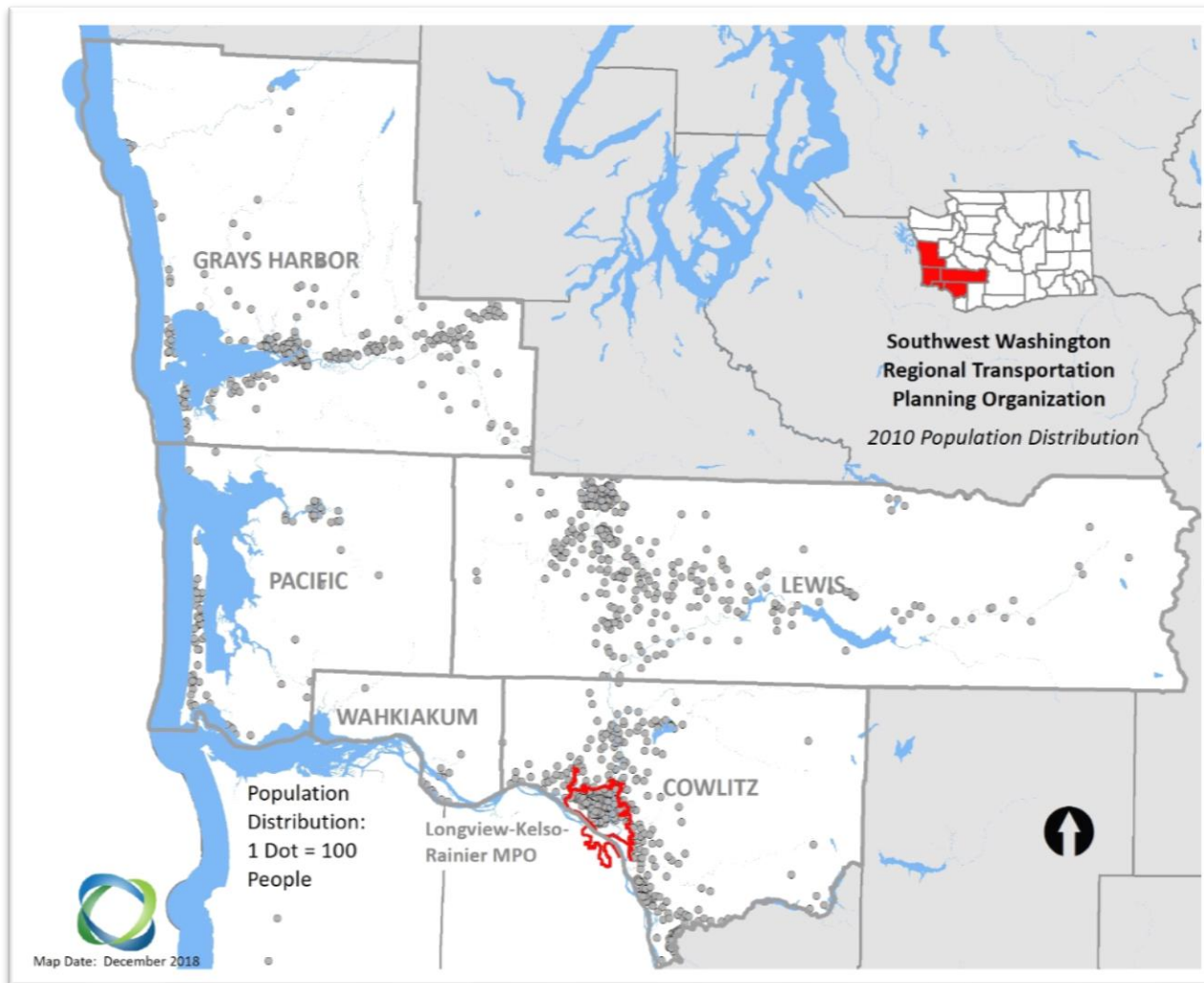


Figure 2-2: SWRTPO Population Trends

Source: US Census Bureau, 1980-2010 Decennial Census and 2016 Population Estimate

An examination of recent US Census Bureau data shows three issues about the population of the SWRTPO region:

- Continues to lose close-in, family-wage jobs;
- Struggles with the ramifications of an aging population; and,
- Is experiencing loss of family households and the decline of two-income households.



These general trends impact transportation infrastructure in a variety of ways, but mostly on the roadway network. Automobile dependency continues to be significant in the SWRTPO region. The economic downturn experienced by the region has forced many workers to seek employment farther from home. The travel time to work throughout the region is longer than the state average and has continued to lengthen over the years.

Fig 2-3:
SWRTPO
Population
Distribution
 Source: CWCOG

In addition, transportation needs will be changing as a result of an aging population. The typical chart used to illustrate age and sex distributions for an area is called a population pyramid. A population pyramid was developed for the SWRTPO region based on 2015 American Community Survey data from the US Census Bureau and is included in the appendix section at the end of this plan (Figure 2A-1). The SWRTPO population pyramid illustrates a declining population because of larger numbers of people in the older age groups. Typically, a population pyramid shows that the population of an area is expanding, stable, or declining. An expanding population has large numbers of people in the younger age

groups. A stable population has roughly equal numbers of people in all age groups and a declining population has larger numbers of people in older age groups. The SWRTPO aging population will become more reliant on alternative modes of transportation. With a lower population density given the rural nature of the SWRTPO region (less than 100 persons per square mile), access to alternative modes of transportation for the aging population will be harder to deliver. This will create a significant barrier to households remaining in the region as they age. Figure 2-3 is a map that illustrates the distribution of people throughout the five-county region.

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization Employment

In 2015, the average annual unemployment rate for the SWRTPO region was 8.6% and this was higher than the same rate statewide of 5.6%. Unemployment is still higher in the region than statewide as of November 2016 with rates ranging from 6.8% in Cowlitz County to 8.9% in Wahkiakum County.

Area Name	Civilian Labor Force	Employed Population	Unemployed Population	Unemployment Rate (%)	Unemployment Rate (%) November 2016
Cowlitz County	44,276	40,917	3,359	7.6	6.8
Grays Harbor County	26,909	24,501	2,408	8.9	8.3
Lewis County	31,115	28,527	2,588	8.3	7.7
Pacific County	7,880	7,161	719	9.1	8.3
Wahkiakum County	1,268	1,153	115	9.1	8.9
SWRTPO	111,448	102,259	9,189	8.6	8.0
State of Washington	3,554,000	3,354,000	200,000	5.6	5.2

Table 2-1: Civilian Labor Force 2015 Estimates

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [2015 Annual Averages unless noted otherwise]

The primary industries in the region vary from county to county with manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and health care being important industry sectors throughout the region. However, each of the five counties has specific employment specializations. A location quotient is the accepted way of analyzing whether an area has specializations in certain industries. The location quotient takes either the state or national percent of employees in an industry sector and compares it to a specific region. A location quotient greater than one highlights a region’s specialization and indicates the sector is most likely producing for export to areas outside the region. Generally, a location quotient of 1.25 signifies a significant degree of specialization and exports. A location quotient of 1 would highlight that the two regions being compared have the exact same percentage of employees in a given industry sector. A location quotient of less than one indicates that employment in a particular economic sector is less common than found at the state or national level.

While manufacturing has decreased across the state and nation over the past 20 years, the SWRTPO region continues to have a relatively high percentage of employment in this sector with location quotients over 1.25 in all counties except Wahkiakum County. There are other industry strengths in the SWRTPO region as well. Natural Resources and Mining is a prominent industry especially in Wahkiakum County. High location quotients in natural resource industries are driven by the following sectors: 1) Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting and 2) Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction. Logging businesses coupled with sand and gravel extraction companies provide many of the resources that fuel the local manufacturing industry. Other industry strengths in the region are the leisure and hospitality industry sector particularly in Pacific County and Grays Harbor County. For more details on location quotients by industry and county see Table 2A-2 in the chapter 2 Appendix at the end of this plan.

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization Commuting Patterns

Based on US Census Bureau data from 2014 there are more workers living within the SWRTPO region than there are available jobs. The 2014 data shows a deficit of a little over 28,800 jobs, resulting in a little more than 28,800 people having to leave the region for employment. More specifically, 51% of residents (54,722) also work within the region.

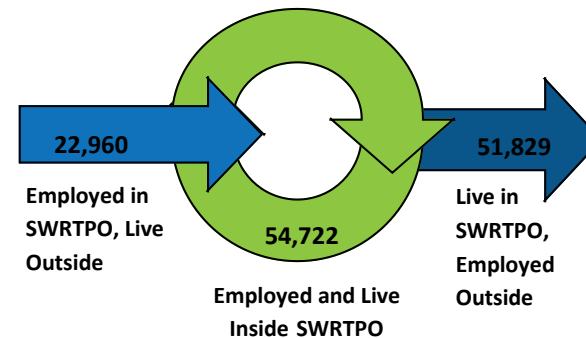


Figure 2-4: SWRTPO Inflow/Outflow

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 *OnTheMap* Application

These 54,722 residents are employed in 70% of the jobs in the region. The remaining 49% (51,829) of residents have to leave the region for employment. To compare to the 2040 RTP, the deficit between workers living here and the available jobs has dropped by about 2,000.

Forty-nine percent of residents have to commute from the region for employment, impacting the transportation network. The average length of commutes is also an important component to consider. Across the SWRTPO region, the percentage of people with commutes greater than 60 minutes is about the same with the exception of Pacific County. According to the US Census Bureau American Community Survey, Wahkiakum County commuters average the longest commute times (on average about 41% of commutes are longer than 30 minutes). Commuters in Cowlitz, Pacific, Grays Harbor, and Lewis Counties have

similar commuting patterns. In these counties between 65% and 77% of people commute less than 30 minutes. For a detailed breakdown of the top ten locations where residents are going for work and where workers live, please refer to the Chapter 2 Appendix at the end of the plan.

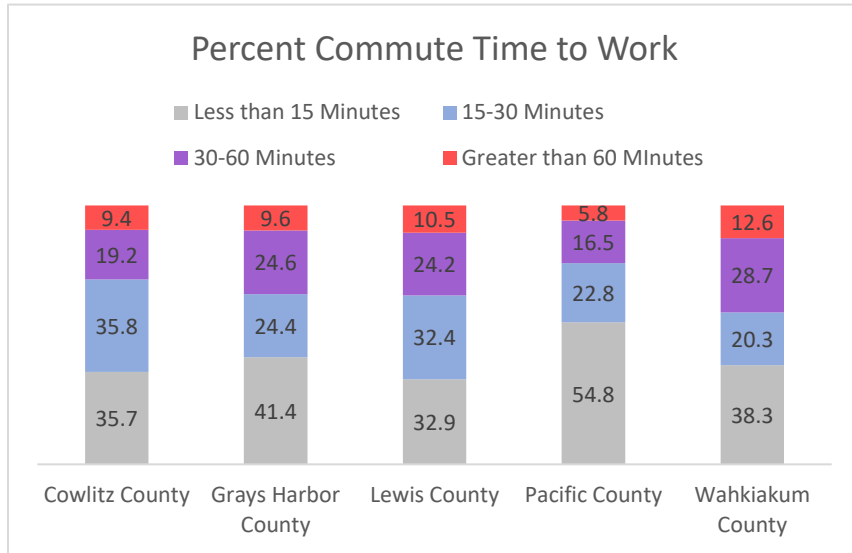


Figure 2-5: SWTRPO Percent Commute Time to Work
 Source: US Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Up to this point, the chapter has discussed demographics, employment, and commuting patterns for the SWTRPO region as a whole. For the remainder of this chapter, additional discussion concerning population projections, demographics, and commuting patterns will be presented for each of the five counties and the Longview-Kelso-Rainier MPO. As mentioned previously, at the end of the plan is an appendix that includes a collection of additional tables and charts.

Cowlitz County

Cowlitz County is located along the north side of the Columbia River in the southeast corner of the SWTRPO region. The county is bordered by Clark County to the south, Lewis County to the north, Wahkiakum County to the west, Skamania County to the east, and Columbia County, Oregon, including the City of Rainier, to the southwest (across the river). The major highways in the county are Interstate 5 (running north/south), State Route 4 (running east/west), State Route 432 (running west from Interstate 5 at Kelso), State Route 433 (connecting Longview and Kelso with Rainier, OR), State Route 411 (running north/south), State Route 503 (running east from Interstate 5 at Woodland), and State Route 504 (running east from Interstate 5 at Castle Rock).

Cowlitz Demographics

The US Census Bureau Annual Population Estimates program determined that the total population of Cowlitz County was 105,160 in 2016. Approximately 91% of the population is White, 5% is two or more races, 1.3% is Asian, 1.5% is some other race, and 1.1% is American Indian or Alaska Native. About 8.3% of the total population is Hispanic or Latino. Cowlitz County had a median household income of \$47,452 with 17.5% of the population living below the federal poverty line. The greatest distribution of the population is between the ages of 50 and 64 years of age. There is also a larger percentage in the 5-9 age group. The population data highlights a deficit in the economically active (buyers and workers) group between 20-24 years to 60-64 years. In Cowlitz County about 20.1% of the total population is also disabled and over 70% of people live in an urban area (Figure 2A-2).

Cowlitz County	
Total Population	105,160
One Race	95.4%
White	90.7%
Black or African American	0.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.1%
Asian	1.3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.2%
Some other race	1.5%
Two or More Races	4.6%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	8.3%
Urban Population (based on 2010 Census)	71.3%
Rural Population (based on 2010 Census)	28.7%
People with Disabilities	20.1%
Median Household Income	\$47,452
Living in Poverty	17.5%

Table 2-2: Cowlitz County Demographics

Source: US Census Bureau; 2010 Census [Urban/Rural], 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates [All Others]

Cowlitz Population Forecasts and Employment

Cowlitz County is the 12th most populated county in the state of Washington based on April 1, 2016 population estimates released by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). Despite being the most metropolitan area of the region, the county has grown at a slower rate than both the state and the nation since 2010. The OFM has forecasted that Cowlitz County will grow at about 0.6% per year, but with slowing annual growth as 2040 approaches. It is anticipated that transportation demand, vehicle miles traveled, and number of commuters will be reduced over time based on the population forecasts. These impacts are also consistent with the

county’s aging population. Specific population projections from OFM are available in the appendix (Table 2A-3).

In 2015, about 20% of the county’s employment base was in manufacturing, including two paper mills, sawmills, a large chicken processor, as well as numerous smaller producers in machinery, fabricated metals, and chemical producers. Another approximately 20% of the employment base in the county is in education and health services. The largest share of the employment base however is trade, transportation, and utilities that accounts for about 24%. These three industries alone account for about 64% of Cowlitz County’s employment base. Projections from Workforce Washington anticipate growth of about 21,036 jobs by 2026. Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties are included in the Workforce Southwest Washington region. Growth sectors include construction, retail trade, and health care and social assistance.

Cowlitz Commuting Patterns

Similar to the SWRTPO region as a whole, there is a deficit between the number of workers living in the county versus the number of available jobs. The resulting deficit for Cowlitz County is 8,870 jobs. Below are key facts about Cowlitz County regarding commuting patterns:

- In 2014, there were 33,174 workers in Cowlitz County with about 63% of those jobs being filled by residents.
- Of the 42,044 workers living within Cowlitz County, 50.4% were employed outside the county, with 49.6% remaining within the county for their jobs.

- Around 39% of residents have a commute that is internal to Cowlitz County. There are more than double the number of workers commuting out of the county for work than those staying within the county. The largest employment destinations outside of Cowlitz County are Vancouver, Portland, and Seattle. For more details about where workers and residents are traveling to, please refer to the appendix (Table 2A-4).

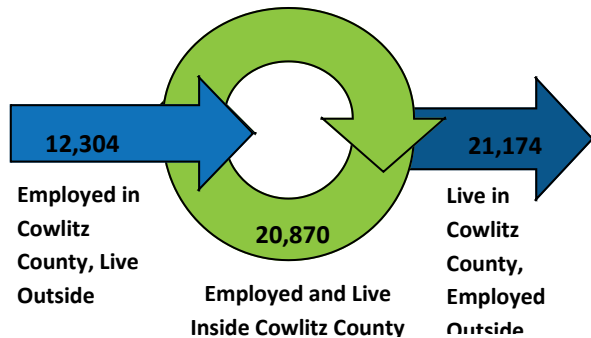


Figure 2-6: Cowlitz County Inflow/Outflow
Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 *OnTheMap* Application

Grays Harbor County

Grays Harbor County is situated midway along Washington’s Pacific coastline. It is bounded by Jefferson County to the north, Mason and Thurston counties to the east, and Lewis and Pacific counties to the south. Nearly 90% of the county is forested, about 3.5% is in agricultural uses, and about 3% is within one of the nine incorporated cities and towns. Major highways in Grays Harbor County include US 101 (running north/south along a coastal route), US 12 (running east/west with a connection to Interstate 5), and State Route 8 (running east/west with access to Interstate 5).

Grays Harbor Demographics

The US Census Bureau Annual Population Estimates program determined that the total population of Grays Harbor County was 71,628 in 2016. About 87.4% of the county population is White, 4.4% is American Indian or Alaska Native, 3.5% is two or more races, 1.6% is Asian, 1.5% is some other race, and 1.2% is Black or African American. Roughly 9.6% of the total population identifies as Hispanic or Latino. Grays Harbor County had a median household income of \$43,538, with 18.1% of the population living below the federal poverty line. The largest distribution by age in the county includes people between 55 to 59 years of age, with 50 to 54 and 65 to 69 years of age also representing a significant percentage of the total population. This population lives predominately (just under 60%) in urban areas and there are 18.1% who are disabled (Figure 2A-4).

Grays Harbor County	
Total Population	71,628
One Race	96.5%
White	87.4%
Black or African American	1.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4.4%
Asian	1.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.4%
Some other race	1.5%
Two or More Races	3.5%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	9.6%
Urban Population (based on 2010 Census)	59.9%
Rural Population (based on 2010 Census)	40.1%
People with Disability	19.5%
Median Household Income	\$43,538
Living in Poverty	18.1%

Table 2-3: Grays Harbor County Demographics

Source: US Census Bureau; 2010 Census [Urban/Rural], 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates [All Others]

Grays Harbor Population Forecasts and Employment

Population forecasts from the Washington State OFM estimate the average annual growth rate will be about 0.22% from 2010 to 2020 and decreasing thereafter to almost zero growth by 2040. Specific population forecast numbers are available in the appendix (Table 2A-5).

Grays Harbor historically has a natural resource-based economy, but has diversified into services and manufacturing in recent years. This diversification has created more demand on the transportation network, particularly multi-modal freight utilizing the county's rail and marine assets. In addition, Grays Harbor is home to the only marine port in Washington State located directly on the Pacific Ocean. The port and its surrounding cities form the employment hub of Grays Harbor County. Grays Harbor has experienced significant growth in rail traffic related to the port, which brings impacts to the surrounding street network.

Grays Harbor Commuting Patterns

Grays Harbor County has been faced with many challenges due to an aging and declining population and high unemployment rate. About 37.8% of the working population is employed within the county, but there is a significant proportion that commute to the greater Puget Sound region, some as far away as Skagit County.

Similar to the SWRTPO region as a whole, there is a deficit between the number of workers living in the county versus the number of available jobs. The resulting deficit for Grays Harbor County is 8,380 jobs. Below are key facts about Grays Harbor County regarding commuting patterns:

- In 2014, there were 18,513 workers in Grays Harbor County. A total of 69.5% of these jobs were filled by people who live in the county.
- Of the 26,893 workers living within Grays Harbor County, 52.2% are employed outside the county.

- There are at least 35% of residents whose commute is internal to Grays Harbor County. However, the largest job destinations outside the county are Olympia, Seattle, and Tacoma. For more details about where workers and residents are traveling to, please refer to the appendix (Table 2A-6).

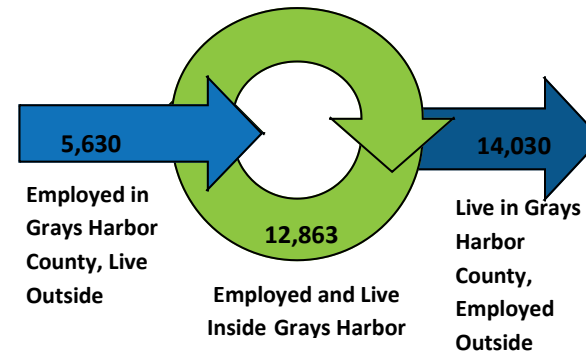


Figure 2-7: Grays Harbor County Inflow/Outflow

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 *OnTheMap* Application

Lewis County

Lewis County is the largest county (by land area) in western Washington at 1,559,040 acres. The County is located along Interstate 5, midway between the Seattle and Portland metropolitan areas, and thus has been very attractive for recruiting and siting distribution facilities for regional and national retailers. These economic development activities have resulted in heavier truck volumes that will continue to impact I-5 interchanges, county roads, and city streets. To the south of Lewis County is Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, and Skamania Counties and to the north is Grays Harbor, Thurston, and Pierce Counties. To the west is Pacific County and to the east is Yakima County. The major highways in the county are Interstate 5 (running north/south), US 12 (running east from Interstate 5 near Napavine), and State Route 6 (running west from Interstate 5 in Chehalis).

Lewis Demographics

The US Census Bureau Annual Population Estimates program determined that the total population was 77,066 in 2016. Approximately 91.7% of the population is White, 4.3% is two or more races, 1.4% is some other race, and 1.2% is Asian. There are about 9.5% of people who identify as being Hispanic or Latino. Lewis County had a median household income of \$44,100, with 16.3% of families living below the federal poverty line. The largest distribution of the population is between 50 and 64 years of age with a significant, but somewhat smaller distribution in the 10-19 years of age group (Figure 2A-4). About 60% of the county population resides in a rural area and there are about 20.5% who are disabled.

Lewis County	
Total Population	77,066
One Race	95.7%
White	91.7%
Black or African American	0.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.6%
Asian	1.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%
Some other race	1.4%
Two or More Races	4.3%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	9.5%
Urban Population (based on 2010 Census)	39.3%
Rural Population (based on 2010 Census)	60.7%
People with Disability	20.5%
Median Household Income	\$44,100
Living in Poverty	16.3%

Table 2-4: Lewis County Demographics

Source: US Census Bureau; 2010 Census [Urban/Rural], 2016 Population Estimates [Population], 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates [All Others]

Lewis Population Forecasts and Employment

The Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) 2012 projections forecast about a 0.65% average annual growth rate until 2020. OFM population forecasts estimate there to be a slight slowing in the average annual growth rate after 2020 until it reaches 0.43% between 2035 and 2040. Lewis County is expected to have the highest average annual growth rates of any of the five SWRTPO counties between 2020 and 2040 according to the OFM (refer to Table 2A-7 in the Chapter 2 Appendix). Lewis County is one of two fully planning counties under the Growth Management Act (GMA) in the SWRTPO region. As required by the GMA, Lewis County has adopted their own population allocations for the county and incorporated cities. In 2040,

Lewis County’s own projections forecast 104,722 people living in their county.

The Great Recession was particularly hard on Lewis County. Unemployment rates have remained among the highest in the state for the better part of the downturn. Lewis County is part of the Pacific Mountain Workforce Region along with Grays Harbor County, Pacific County, Mason County, and Thurston County. According to Washington State Employment Security Department projections from May 2016, the Pacific Mountain region, as a whole, is estimated to have 187,600 jobs in 2019 and 199,200 jobs in 2024. These employment projections would mean an average annual employment growth rate of 1.61% for the period of 2014 to 2019 and 1.21% for 2019 to 2024.

Based on the same May 2016 employment projections from the Washington State Employment Security Department, no sectors are estimated to have negative average annual growth rates. All sectors except natural resources/mining and non-durable goods manufacturing are estimated to have positive growth. The sectors where average annual growth is forecast by more than 1.5% are information, professional and business services, education and health services, and leisure and hospitality. While durable goods manufacturing was under 1.5% growth overall, the specific sector of computer and electronic product manufacturing is forecast to grow by 14.87%.

Lewis Commuting Patterns

Similar to the SWRTPO region as a whole, there is a deficit between the number of workers living in the county versus the number of available jobs. The resulting deficit for Lewis County is 8,943 jobs. Below are key facts about Lewis County regarding commuting patterns:

- In 2014, there were 19,927 workers in Lewis County; only 56.2% were also residents of Lewis County.
- Of the 28,870 residents within Lewis County, about 61% commute to work outside of the county.
- Lewis County has one of the lowest rates of in-county workers within the SWRTPO, with less than 30% of all commute trips being intra-county. The largest job destinations outside the county are Seattle, Olympia, and Tacoma. For more details about where workers and residents are traveling to, please refer to the appendix (Figure 2A-8).

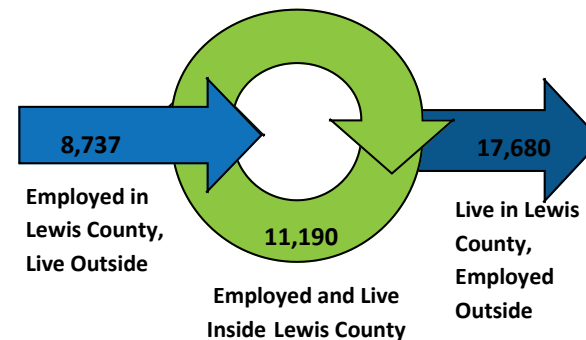


Figure 2-8: Lewis County Inflow/Outflow

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 *OnTheMap* Application

Pacific County

Pacific County is located in the southwestern corner of the state with the Pacific Ocean as its western border. To the north is Grays Harbor County and to the south is Wahkiakum County. To the east is Lewis County. The major highways in the county are US 101 (running north/south), State Route 4 (running east from US 101 near Naselle), and State Route 6 (running east from US 101 in Raymond). Pacific County is the nation’s largest farmed shellfish producer. Cranberry bogs, forest products, manufacturing, dairy farms, and recreational fishing are important to the county’s industrial mix. Tourism is also a critical feature of Pacific County’s economy.

Pacific Demographics

The US Census Bureau Annual Population Estimates program determined that the total population was 21,249 in 2016. Approximately 89.4% of the population is White, 4.3% is two or more races, and 2.3% is some other race. Pacific County had a median household income of \$37,684 with 19.2% of families living below the federal poverty line. Most people in the county fall within the 60 to 64 age range with the 65 to 69 age range being a close second. The population decreases with each age group that is older or younger than the 60 to 69 age range. Based on the September 2016 State Population Trends publication released by the OFM, Pacific and Wahkiakum Counties are among the top five counties in the state projected to have the highest ratio of people over the age of 65. Pacific County currently has 28.35% of its population over age 65, while Wahkiakum County has 31.53% of residents over age 65. Additionally, in Pacific County over 64% of the total population lives in a rural area and 27.6% of people are living with a disability (Figure 2A-5).

Pacific County	
Total Population	21,249
One Race	95.7%
White	89.4%
Black or African American	0.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.6%
Asian	1.9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.2%
Some other race	2.3%
Two or More Races	4.3%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	8.8%
Urban Population (based on 2010 Census)	35.2%
Rural Population (based on 2010 Census)	64.8%
People with Disability	27.6%
Median Household Income	\$37,684
Living in Poverty	19.2%

Table 2-5: Pacific County Demographics

Source: US Census Bureau; 2010 Census [Urban/Rural], 2016 Population Estimates [Population], 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates [All Others]

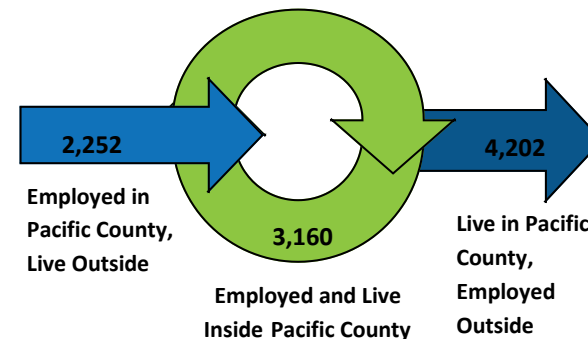


Figure 2-9: Pacific County Inflow/Outflow

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 *OnTheMap* Application

Pacific Population Forecasts and Employment

Pacific County's population decreased slightly between 2000 and 2010, but has rebounded since 2010. However, growth in the county has still not kept up with the rate of overall growth for the State of Washington. Based on OFM population forecasts, the county will grow by only 0.03% between 2010 and 2020. By 2035 to 2040, Pacific County is forecasted to have an annual growth rate of about 0.28%. These low annual growth rates are consistent with an aging population in Pacific County. For more specific numbers on forecasted population, please refer to the appendix (Table 2A-9).

Climbing out of the recession has been a slow process for many of the rural counties in the region and Pacific County has been no exception. The Great Recession has greatly hurt Pacific County's reliance on tourism and has impacted travel and consumer spending.

Pacific Commuting Patterns

Similar to the SWRTPO region as a whole, there is a deficit between the number of workers living in the county versus the number of available jobs. The resulting deficit for Pacific County is 1,950 jobs. Below are key facts about Pacific County regarding commuting patterns:

- There were 5,412 workers employed in Pacific County and 58.4% of these workers are also residents.
- Of the 7,362 workers living in Pacific County, a total of 57.1% commute to work outside the county.
- Pacific County has a relatively healthy share of intra-county commuters at over 28%. The largest job destinations outside the county are Seattle, Aberdeen, Vancouver, Olympia, and Astoria, Oregon. For more details about where workers and residents are traveling to, please refer to the appendix (Table 2A-10).

Wahkiakum County

Wahkiakum County is the smallest county (by total area) in the state. It is relatively isolated in terms of transportation infrastructure, linked east-to-west to Cowlitz and Pacific counties via State Route 4. The county operates a ferry from Cathlamet to Westport, Oregon. The ferry was replaced in early 2015 with the new Oscar B. The new ship allows greater numbers to utilize the ferry for employment, trade, and emergency access. To the west and north of Wahkiakum County is Pacific County and Cowlitz County is to the east. Also, to the north is Lewis County. To the south (across the river) is Columbia County, Oregon. State Route 4 (running east/west) is the one major highway in the county.

Wahkiakum Demographics

The US Census Bureau Annual Population Estimates program determined that the total population was 4,139 in 2016. Approximately 93% of this population is White, 3.8% are two or more races, 1.9% are American Indian or Alaska Native, and 1.1% are Asian. A total of 4.3% of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino. Wahkiakum County had a median household income of \$44,485 with 17.1% of the population living below the federal poverty line. Similar to Pacific County, Wahkiakum County has a significant percentage of residents over the age of 65. The number of people over the age of 65 is expected to grow significantly over the next 20 years. Many retirees are drawn to the county for its bucolic qualities, rural lifestyle, and relatively low real estate prices for view property. Substantial barriers to providing accessible transportation opportunities for the aging population exist in the county. Wahkiakum County's population is entirely comprised of people who live in rural areas. Further, there are 24.6% of people in the county who have a disability (Figure 2A-6).

Wahkiakum County	
Total Population	4,139
One Race	96.2%
White	93.0%
Black or African American	0.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.9%
Asian	1.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%
Some other race	0.0%
Two or More Races	3.8%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	4.3%
Urban Population (based on 2010 Census)	0.0%
Rural Population (based on 2010 Census)	100.0%
People with Disability	24.6%
Median Household Income	\$44,485
Living in Poverty	17.1%

Table 2-6: Wahkiakum County Demographics

Source: US Census Bureau; 2010 Census [Urban/Rural], 2016 Population Estimates [Population], 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates [All Others]

Wahkiakum Population Forecasts and Employment

According to Washington State OFM forecasts, Wahkiakum County has the second lowest population of any county in Washington State. Forecasts issued by OFM show a fairly consistent, declining rate of annual growth between -0.24% and -0.30% from 2020 until 2040. For more specific population forecast numbers please refer to the appendix (Table 2A-11).

The county suffered the largest percentage drop in employment of any county in the state during the Great Recession. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 2015 annual average labor force statistics reported previously in this chapter show slightly more people unemployed in Wahkiakum County than the same data set did in 2014. The employment picture is still not improving in Wahkiakum County post-recession. It has an economy dominated by its natural resource base, particularly logging, farming, and to a lesser extent today, fishing.

Wahkiakum Commuting Patterns

Similar to the SWRTPO region as a whole, there is a deficit between the number of workers living in the county versus the number of available jobs. The resulting deficit for Wahkiakum County is 686 jobs. Below are key facts about Wahkiakum County regarding commuting patterns:

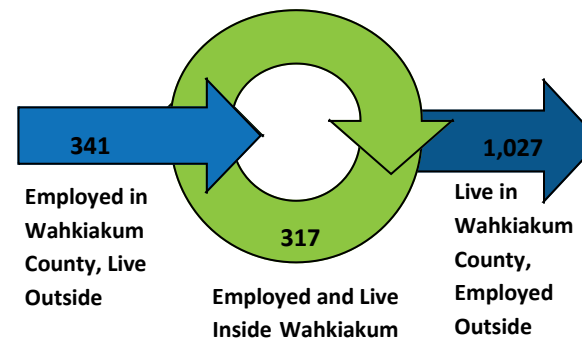


Figure 2-10: Wahkiakum County Inflow/Outflow

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 *OnTheMap* Application

- In 2014, there were 658 workers in Wahkiakum County and only 48.2% also lived in the county.
- Of the 1,344 workers who live in the county, 76.4% commute to work outside the county.
- Wahkiakum County has the fewest intra-county work trips of any county in the RTPO at less than 24% of work trips. The largest job destinations outside the county are Longview, Portland, Vancouver, Seattle, Olympia, and Astoria, Oregon. For more details about where workers and residents are traveling to, please refer to the appendix (Table 2A-12).

Metropolitan Planning Organization

CWCOG is the lead agency for a bi-state Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO is comprised of the urbanized area of Longview and Kelso, Washington and (crossing over the Columbia River) the city of Rainier, Oregon. The urbanized area, originally designated as an MPO in 1982 by federal and state governments, currently covers an area of over 45 square miles with an estimated population of 64,269 people according to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey (ACS). In 2015, the MPO area boundary was amended to reflect existing urbanized areas and current municipal boundaries. Recent boundary updates shrunk the total area by approximately 5 square miles.

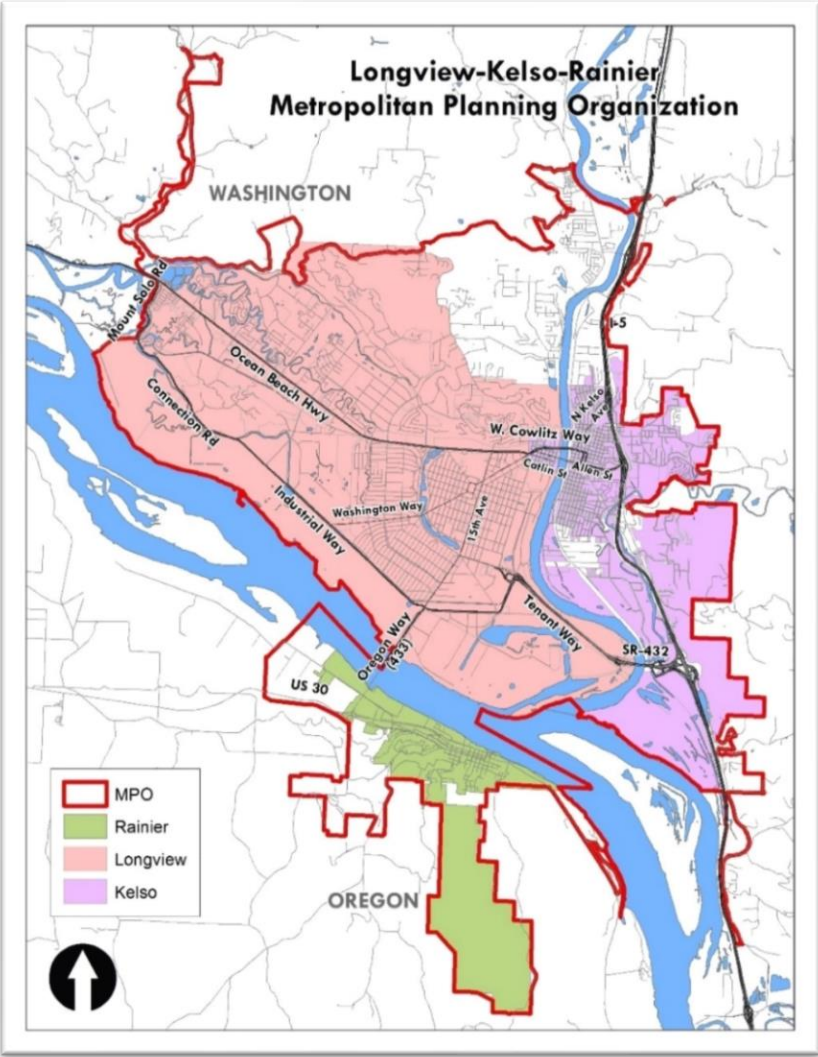


Figure 2-11: Longview-Kelso-Rainier MPO Boundary
Source: CWCOG

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Demographics

The current MPO boundary includes the majority of incorporated areas, planning area boundaries, and the census designated urbanized area. According to the 2010 Census, approximately 87% of the population is White, 1.8% is Asian, 1.7% is American Indian, 0.8% is Black or African American, 4.2% identifies as some other race, and 4.3% is two or more races. About 9.1% of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino and approximately 15.5% of the total population is over 65 years of age. There are significant clusters of people in the 45 to 49, the 50 to 54, and the 55 to 59 age ranges. However, the MPO area also has a significant number of people in the under 5 and 15 to 19 age groups. Within the total population, about 20.8% of the MPO population is living below the federal poverty level according to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey (Figure 2A-7). Below are the median household incomes from the 2010-2014 American Community Survey for the three incorporated cities within the MPO.

- Longview – \$37,827
- Kelso – \$33,492
- Rainer, OR – \$46,750

Most people within the MPO area live within an urban area (95.5%). For a 2010 population distribution map of the MPO area please refer to the appendix (Figure 2A-8).

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Employment

Compared to Washington State as a whole, Cowlitz County, which has its largest population density in the Longview-Kelso area, has a substantially higher percentage of workers in the paper, chemical, and machinery manufacturing industries. Additionally, the paper mill and port's reliance on rail, road, and water transportation routes is highlighted in the high percentage of employees in the *Support Activities for Transportation* industry subsector.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Commuting Patterns

Unlike the entire SWRTPO region, there is not a deficit between the number of workers living in the area versus the number of available jobs. In the MPO, there are 482 more jobs available than workers living within the area. Below are key facts about the MPO regarding commuting patterns:

- In the Longview-Kelso-Rainier MPO, 46.8% of people over the age of 16 have a commute of 15 minutes or less and 33% have a commute between 15 and 30 minutes. A total of 8% has a commute time greater than 60 minutes.
- The largest share of job destinations outside the MPO area for workers who leave the area for employment are Portland, Vancouver, and Seattle for a total of 11.6% of the commuting trips leaving the area. For a detailed list of where workers and residents are traveling to, please refer to the appendix (Table 2A-13).
- For 2014, 46.7% (12,206) of workers living within the MPO boundary also worked within the area as well. The remaining 53.3% (13,910) leave the region for employment. However, 54.1% (14,392) of workers live outside the MPO area and commute to the area for work (Table 2A-13).

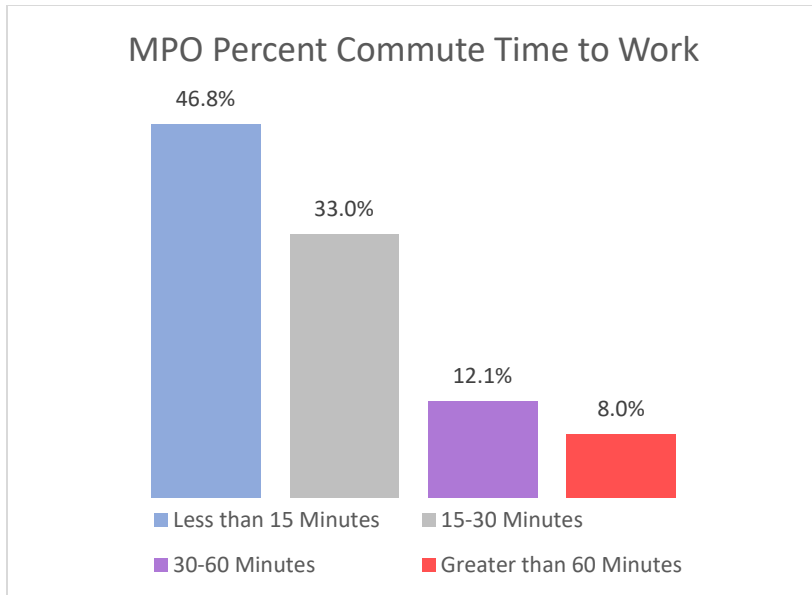


Figure 2-12: MPO Percent Commute Time to Work
 Source: US Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey
 5-Year Estimates

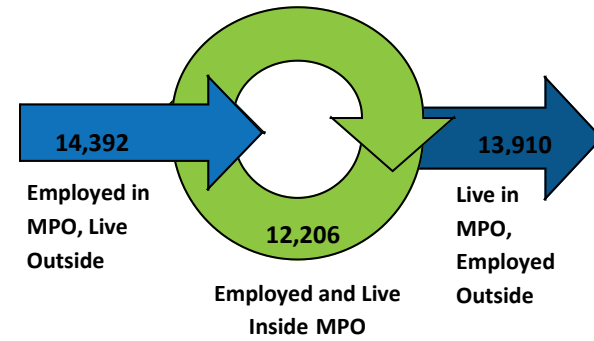


Figure 2-13: MPO Inflow/Outflow
 Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 *OnTheMap* Application