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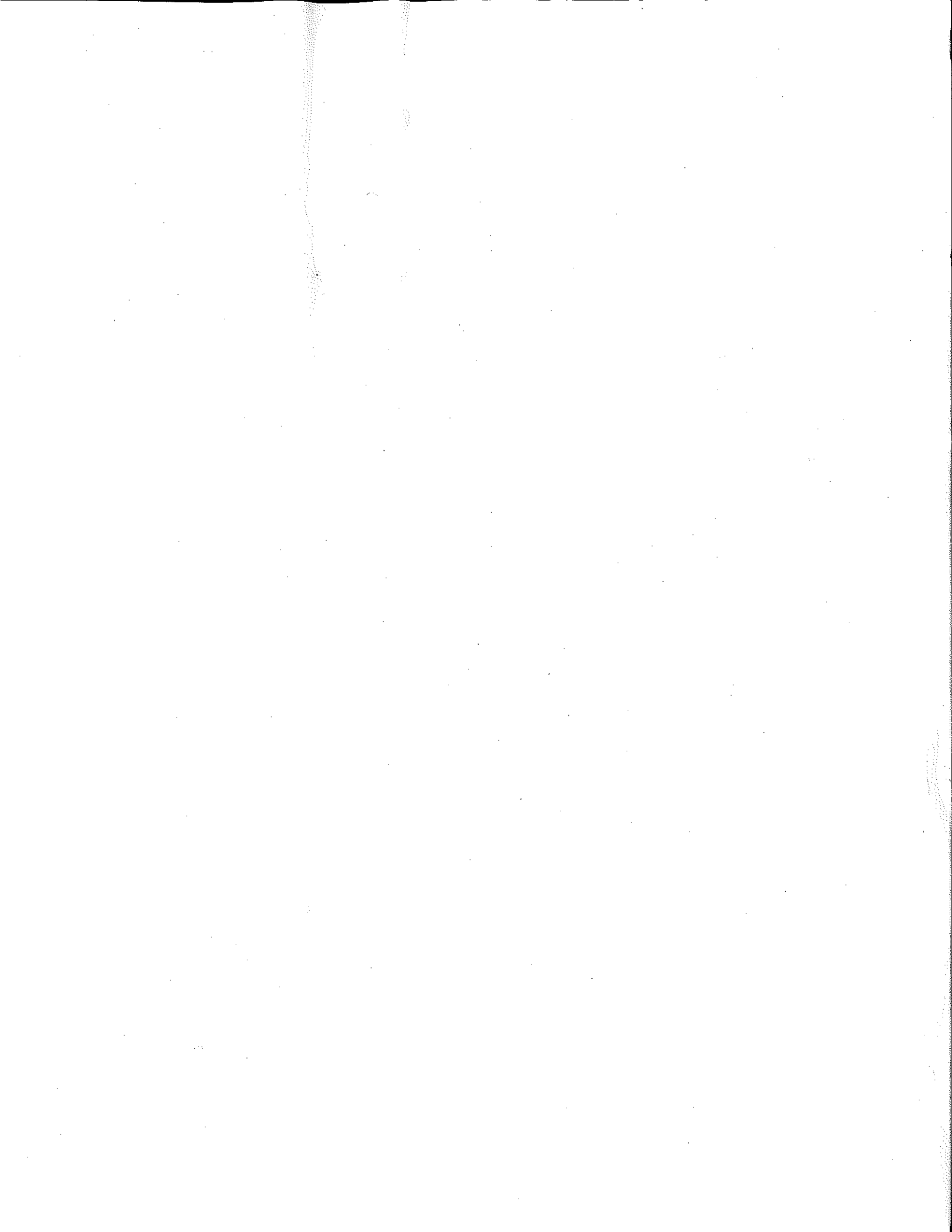
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The staff at Thurston Regional Planning Council wish to thank the public and private agencies that have provided source data and information used in Regional Benchmarks and Indicators. In addition, we wish to thank the citizens, organizations and agencies which generously contributed their time to provide input on this first edition.



DEAR READER:

We hope that you will find this report useful in helping you to see how our region is doing in implementing the goals and policies of our Comprehensive Plans. If you choose to complete the questionnaire on this and the following page, we would be most grateful. Your comments will be very helpful to us in preparing future reports and updates on Regional Benchmarks and Indicators.

Please mail to or drop off at the following address:

Thurston Regional Planning Council
2404 Heritage Court SW #B
Olympia, WA 98502-6031
ATTN: Holly Gilbert

1. BENCHMARKS

a. Which benchmarks were most important to you? Why?

b. What kind of benchmarks would you like to see added? Why?

c. What other changes regarding the benchmarks would you recommend?

2. INDICATORS

a. Which indicators were most important to you? Why?

b. What kind of indicators would you like to see added? Why?

c. What other changes regarding the indicators would you recommend?

3. APPENDIX DATA TABLES

a. Which data tables, in the Appendix, were most important to you?

b. Given your above recommendations on indicators and benchmarks, what kind of new data tables would you like to see added?

c. What other changes regarding the tables in the Appendix, would you recommend?

4. FORMAT

a. What did you like about the format of the report?

b. What changes would you recommend regarding the format of the report?

5. GENERAL COMMENTS

a. What did you like about the report overall?

b. What did you dislike about the report and how would you recommend improving it?

INTRODUCTION

This is the first report resulting from Thurston Regional Planning Council's (TRPC) Benchmark Indicators program. The intent of the TRPC Benchmarks program is to help jurisdictions measure results of their efforts in achieving the goals and policies in their comprehensive plans. In Thurston County, Benchmarks have the potential to play an important role in determining whether implementation of the comprehensive plans' goals and policies is occurring and is achieving the desired results. This is done by monitoring selected indicators over time.

BACKGROUND

Benchmarks are used in both the private and public sector. They can apply to any set of measures which track data over time in order to determine whether there is movement toward a specific goal or not. In other words, they are indicators of progress that tell us how well we are achieving our goals.

The idea of monitoring performance has generated a lot of attention recently at all levels of government nationwide. A number of interrelated factors are probably responsible for this interest. Monitoring progress toward stated policies and goals has the potential to be a strong accountability tool. Benchmark programs can indicate which policies are working and which are not. This in turn can indicate the effectiveness of public spending and programs. Another factor is the realization that in many parts of the country, growth and land use changes are occurring at ever more rapid rates; performance monitoring can indicate that actions may need to be taken to protect a community's quality of life. Tracking indicators over time also provides local governments with a regional perspective of what's happening which can improve implementation of regional policies.

MONITORING AND THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT

The 1990 State Growth management Act (GMA), under which all Thurston County jurisdictions have recently updated their comprehensive plans, requires that the cities and county report to the state on progress made in implementing the Act. It also requires that the jurisdictions subject their comprehensive plans to "continuing evaluation and review" and that they determine the cumulative effect of any amendments. It also requires that counties review their urban growth areas and the densities permitted within them at least every ten years. Likewise any city also must "review the densities permitted within its boundaries, and the extent to which urban growth occurring within the county has located within...the urban growth areas."

The GMA has 13 goals which guided the cities and counties comprehensive plans. Since they were held in common by all the jurisdictions' comprehensive plans, they guided the selection of these initial indicators. The 13 goals are summarized below:

1. Focus growth within urban areas;
2. Reduce urban sprawl;
3. Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems;
4. Encourage the availability of affordable housing;
5. Encourage economic development throughout the state;
6. Protect property rights;
7. Process permits in a timely and fair manner;
8. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries;
9. Encourage retention of open space, habitat, and development of recreational opportunities;
10. Protect the environment;
11. Encourage citizen participation and coordination;
12. Ensure the availability of adequate public facilities and services; and
13. Encourage the identification and preservation of historical resources.

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

The data in the report has been grouped into the following five areas, each with a separate section:

1. Growth
2. Transportation
3. Economy
4. Environment
5. Housing

Included within each section are the State Growth Management Act (GMA) goals and County-Wide Planning Policies that will affect future activity within each area. Each area has associated indicators, data tables, and benchmarks as well. The benchmarks are directional in nature and focus on only one piece of data in the tables. For each benchmark the direction of the goal for a specific measure has been established.

This is a first report in what will be a process of updating the indicators and benchmarks on an annual basis. Over time additional indicators and benchmarks may be added. In the future the region may want to consider putting in place some specific numeric targets to achieve for each benchmark. In other words, this is a first step in what will likely be an evolving process of monitoring policy implementation in Thurston County.

GROWTH

GMA GOALS:

- Focus growth within urban areas.
- Reduce urban sprawl.
- Ensure the availability of adequate public facilities and services.

INDICATORS:

- Residential Density
- Buildable/Unbuildable Land Area
- Building Permit Activity

COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES:

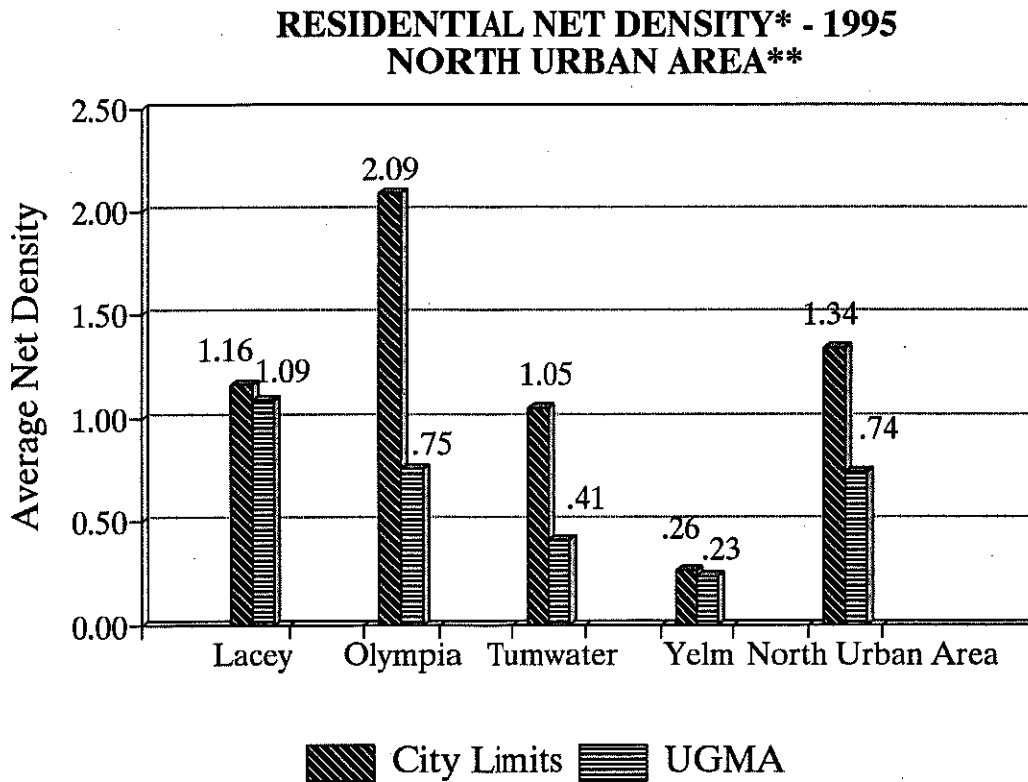
- Urban growth within Thurston County will occur only in designated Urban Growth Areas



BENCHMARK 1

AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL NET DENSITY FOR THE NORTH URBAN AREA*
INCREASES OVER TIME.

FIGURE 1



Density reflects housing units per acre. For example, Lacey has a net density of 1.16 housing units per acre.

*Net Density is calculated as Gross Acreage minus Public Lands & Critical Areas

** North Urban Area: Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, Yelm & their UGMAs

Source: TRPC

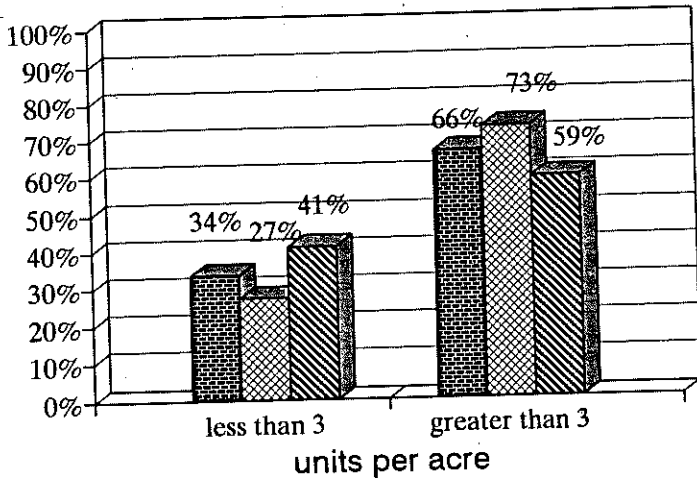
BENCHMARK 2

PERCENT OF SUBDIVISIONS CREATED AT A DENSITY OF GREATER THAN 3 UNITS PER ACRE INCREASES OVER TIME.

FIGURE 2

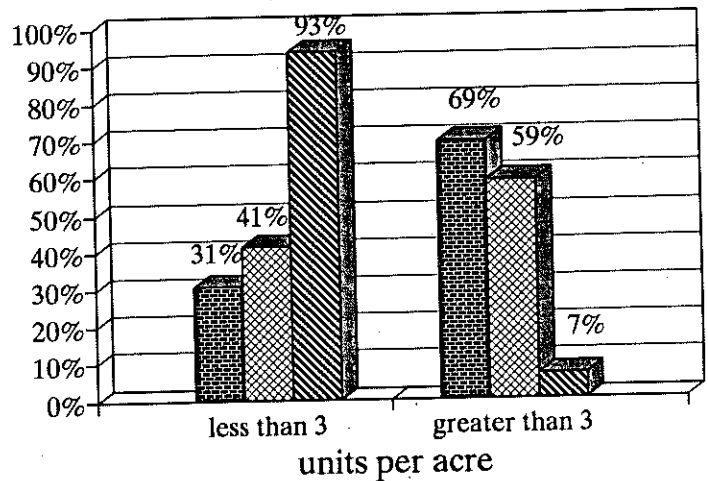
**DENSITY OF SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY
NORTH URBAN AREA* CITIES**

CITIES



**DENSITY OF SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY
SUBDIV. DEVELOPMENT-NORTH URBAN AREA**

UGMA



1970-1979
 1980-1989
 1990-1994

*North Urban Area: Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, Yelm and their UGMAs

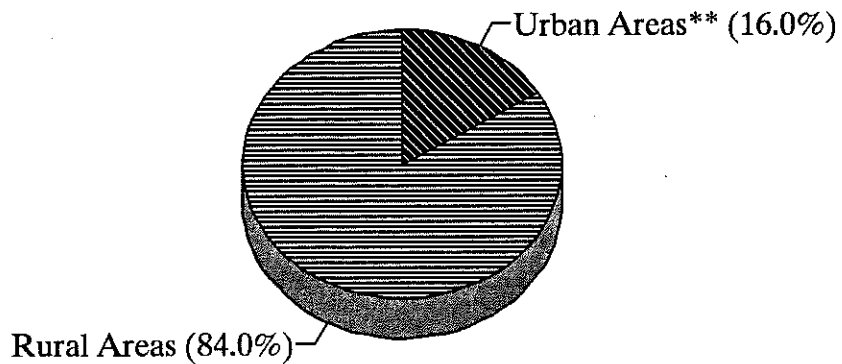
Source: TRPC, Thurston County Auditor's Office

BENCHMARK 3

**PERCENT OF UNBUILDABLE LAND INCREASES FASTER IN THE URBAN
AREA THAN IN THE RURAL AREA.**

FIGURE 3

**LOCATION OF UNBUILDABLE* LAND - 1995
Thurston County**



* Unbuildable Land consists of land already developed, government owned land and environmentally sensitive areas.

** Urban Area consists of all Cities and their UGMAs

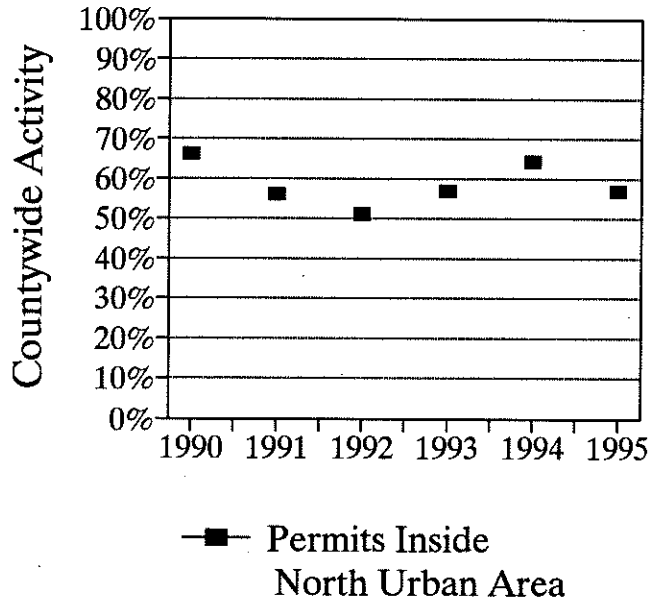
Source: TRPC

BENCHMARK 4

PERCENTAGE OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNITS LOCATED IN THE
NORTH URBAN AREA* INCREASES OVER TIME.

FIGURE 4

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMIT ACTIVITY
Percent Located in North Urban Area***



*North Urban Area: Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, Yelm and their UGMAs

Source: TRPC, Building Depts. of the Cities of Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Bucoda, Rainier, Tenino and Thurston County

TRANSPORTATION

GMA GOAL:

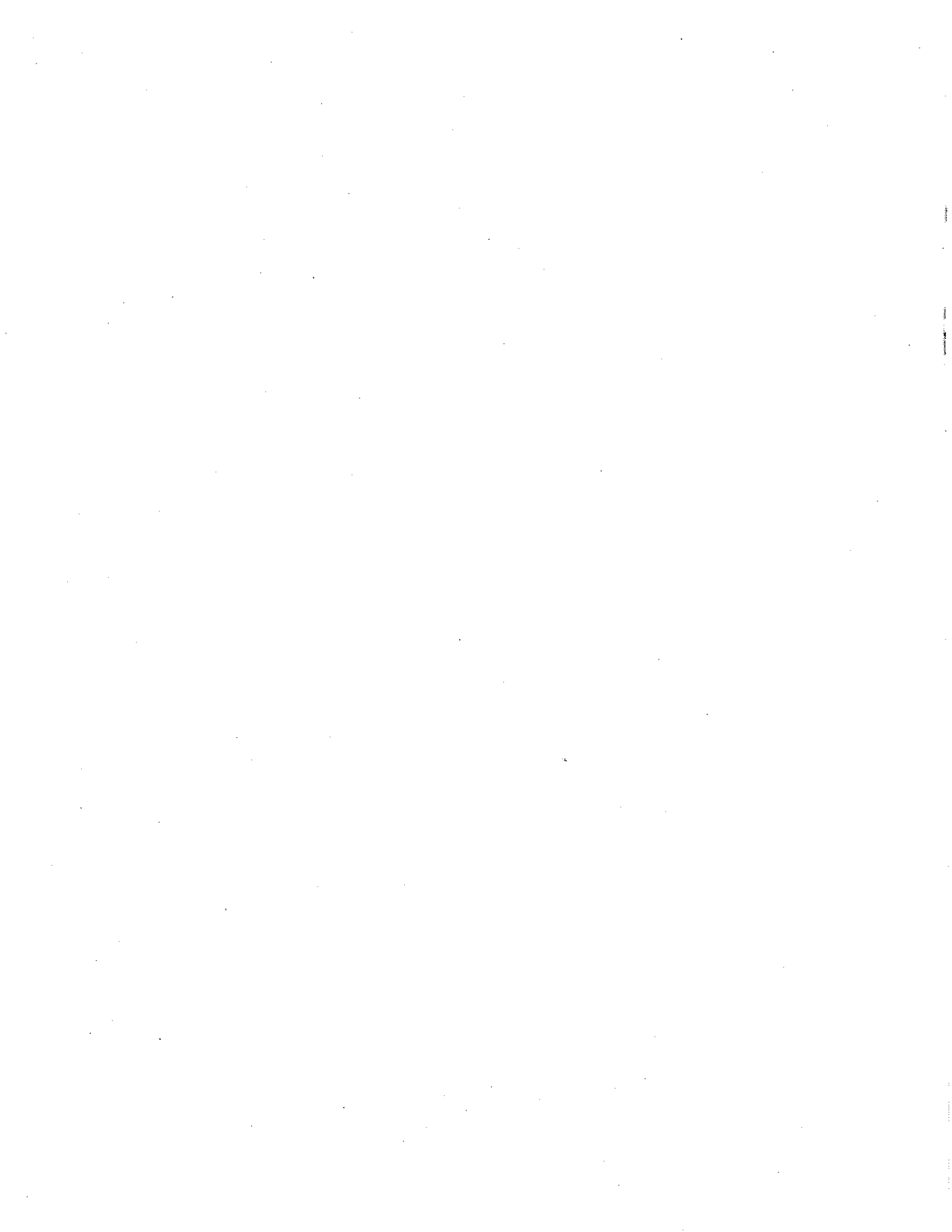
- Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems.

INDICATOR:

- Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) data from Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program

COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES:

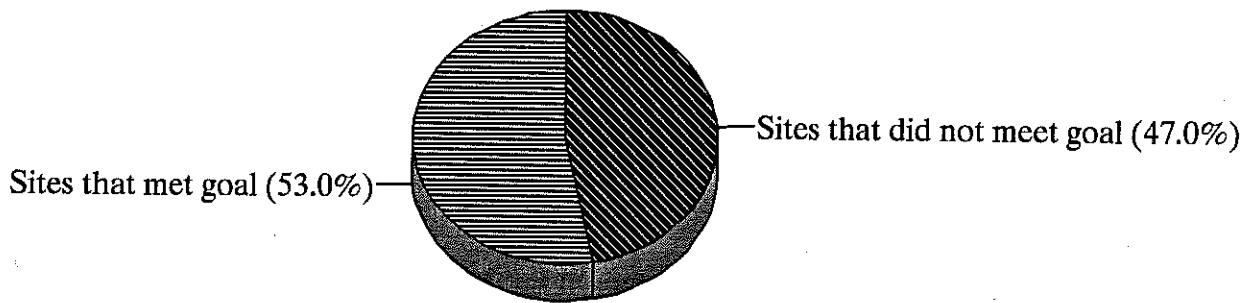
- Transportation Demand management plans and programs will be a key part of the region's transportation program



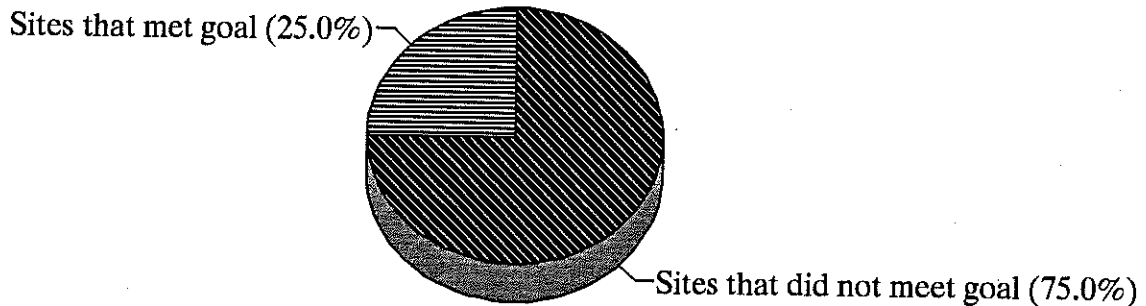
BENCHMARK 5

**PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYER SITES THAT MEET THEIR CTR* GOAL
INCREASES.**

**FIGURE 5
PERCENT OF SITES THAT MET CTR* GOAL
THURSTON COUNTY RESULTS - 1992**



**FIGURE 6
PERCENT OF SITES THAT MET CTR* GOAL
THURSTON COUNTY RESULTS - 1995**



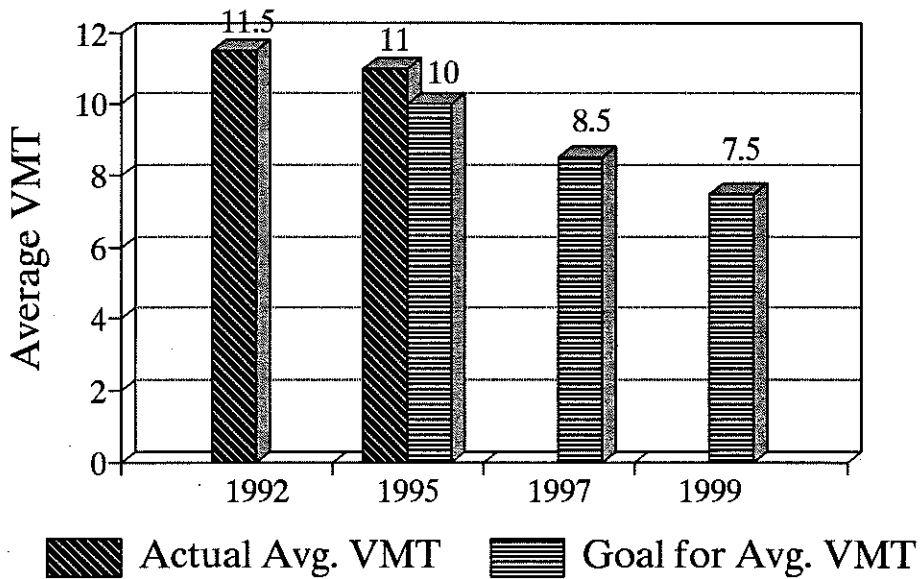
*CTR: State's Commute Trip Reduction program which requires that employers with more than 100 employees reduce the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by their employees commuting to work.

BENCHMARK 6

ACTUAL AVERAGE VMT EQUALS THE GOAL FOR AVERAGE VMT.

FIGURE 7

ACTUAL VMT* COMPARED TO GOALS FOR VMT
THURSTON COUNTY**



* VMT: Vehicle Miles Traveled

** The State has set goals for average VMT as a part of its Commute Trip Reduction program.

Source: Intercity Transit

ECONOMY

GMA GOALS:

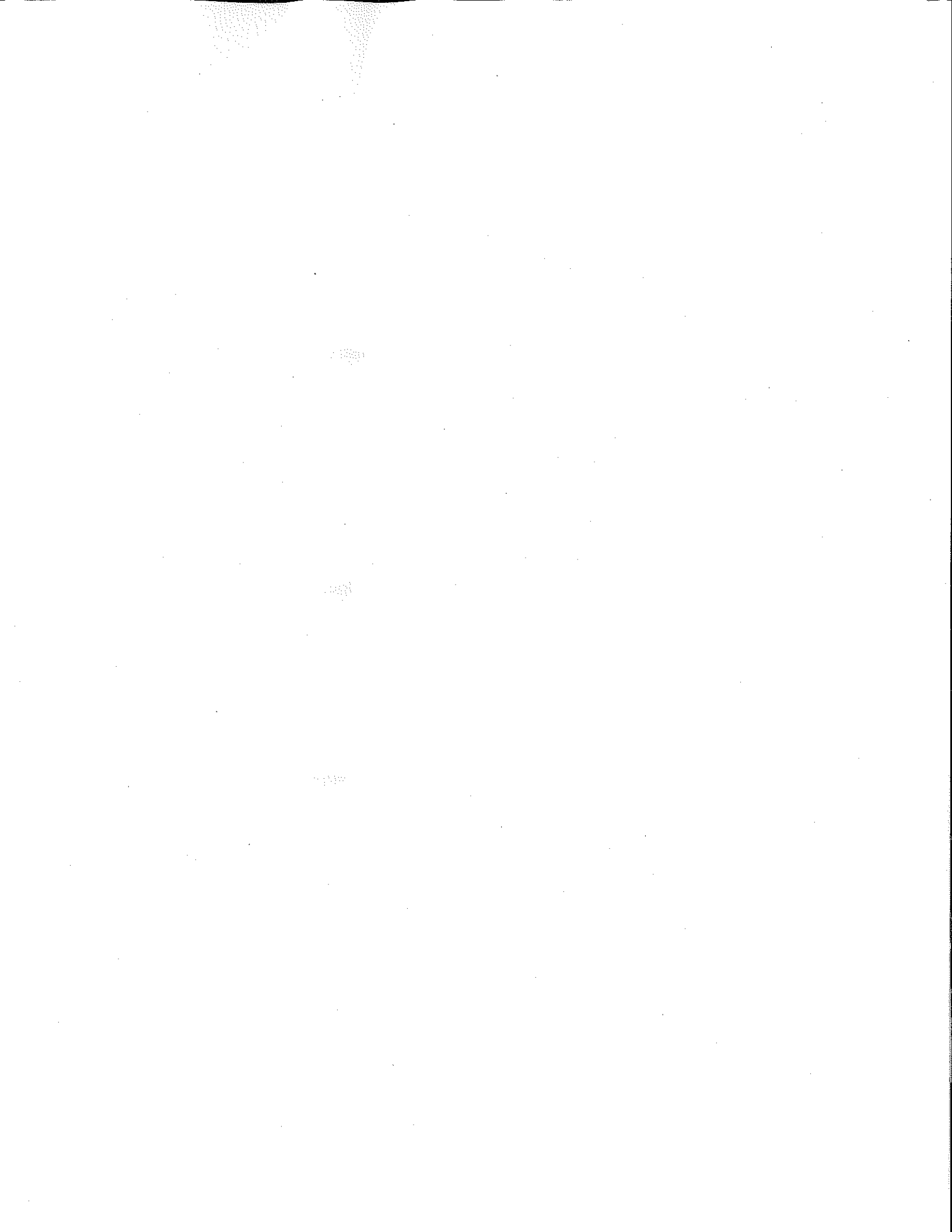
- Encourage economic development.
- Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries.

INDICATORS:

- Employment and wages by sector
- Acreage of timberlands and agricultural lands in Open Space tax program.

COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES:

- Encourage sustainable economic development and support job opportunities and economic diversification.

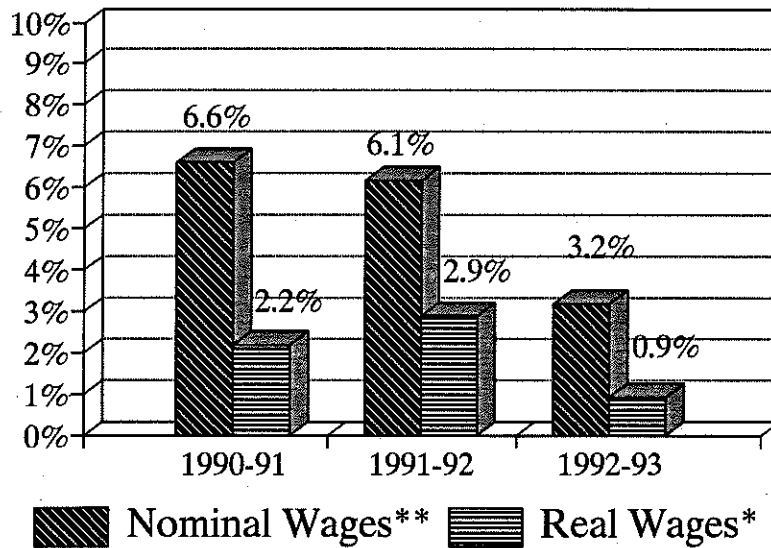


BENCHMARK 7

REAL WAGES*, AS COMPARED TO NOMINAL WAGES, INCREASE OVER TIME.**

FIGURE 8

**Change in Nominal & Real Wages
1990 - 1993**



* "Real Wages" reflects average monthly wages adjusted for inflation, in constant dollars.

** "Nominal Wages" reflects average monthly wages without compensation for the effects of inflation.

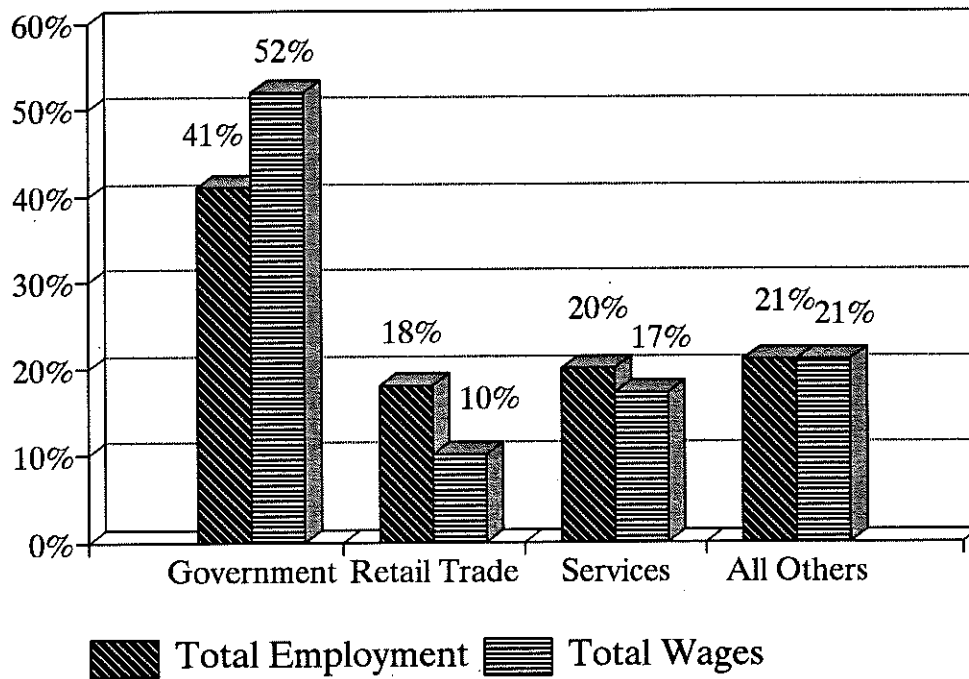
Source: Washington State Dept., of Employment Security, Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch

BENCHMARK 8

PERCENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES PAID DECREASES FOR RETAIL
TRADE AND SERVICES AS ECONOMY DIVERSIFIES.

FIGURE 9

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES FOR 1993



Source: Washington State Dept. of Employment Security, Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch

BENCHMARK 9

**MAINTAIN 1995 LEVELS OF TIMBERLANDS AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS
ACREAGE IN THE OPEN SPACE TAX PROGRAM.**

**TIMBERLANDS
AND
AGRICULTURAL LANDS ACREAGE
IN
OPEN SPACE TAX PROGRAM**

**1995 - 136,787 acres - Timberlands
390,010 acres - Agricultural**

ENVIRONMENT

GMA GOALS:

- Encourage retention of Open Space, habitat, and development of recreational opportunities.
- Protect the environment.

INDICATORS:

- Water Quality
- Air Quality

COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES:

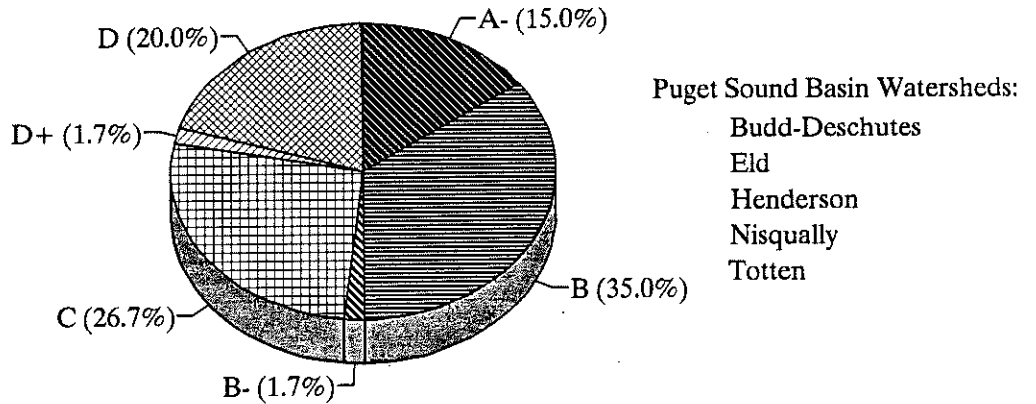
- Assure a safe, healthful, and productive environment for local residents.

BENCHMARK 10

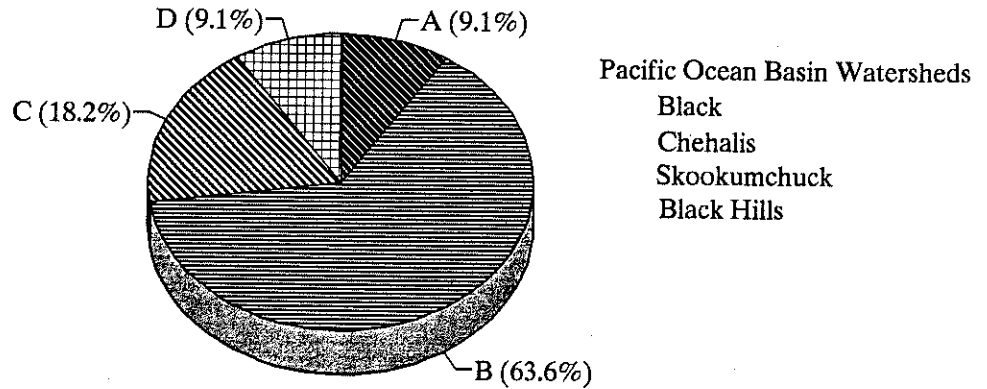
MAINTAIN THE PERCENT OF WATERSHEDS RECEIVING AN "A" OR "B" WATER QUALITY GRADE*.

FIGURE 10

**PUGET SOUND BASINS
WATER QUALITY GRADES - 1995**



**PACIFIC OCEAN BASINS
WATER QUALITY GRADES - 1995**



Notes:

Grades are based on a numeric scoring formula with point values between one and four with 4 points being the best and 1 point being the worst.

Source of grades: Thurston County Water Resources Profile 1985 - 1995 prepared by Thurston County Advance Planning and Historic Preservation and Thurston County Water and Waste Management Dept., Storm and Surface Water Program. Data was collected on water resource projects or programs which Thurston County has paid for within the last ten years or was the recipient of a grant.

BENCHMARK 11

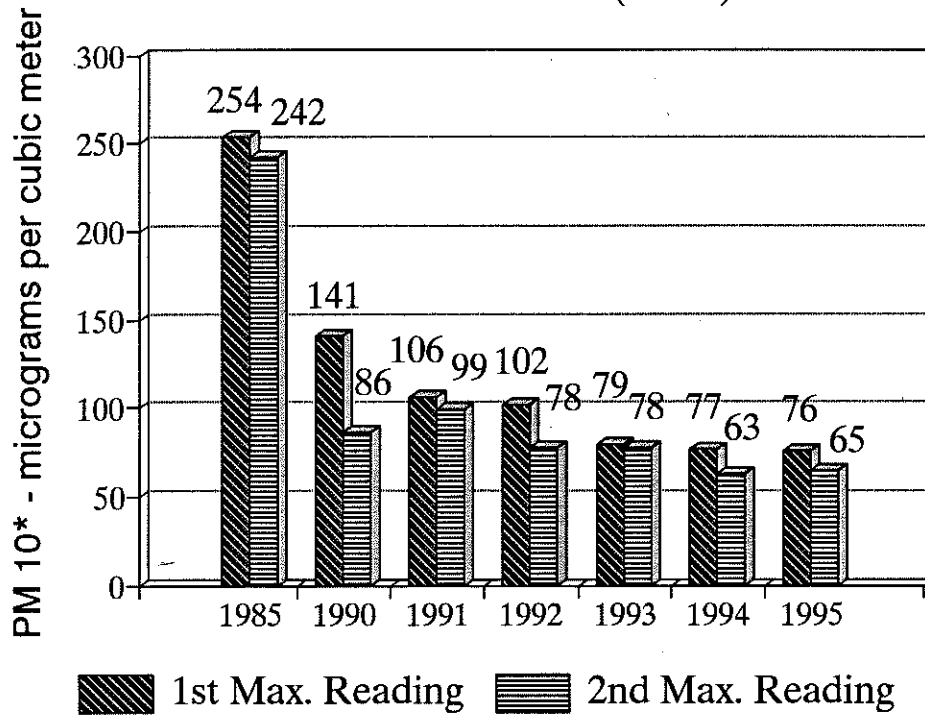
HIGHEST ANNUAL READINGS FOR PARTICULATE MATTER (PM10)

REMAIN AT OR BELOW THE NATIONAL STANDARD OF

150 MICROGRAMS PER CUBIC METER

FIGURE 11

AIR QUALITY 1985 - 1994
Particulate Matter (PM10)*



National Standards: 150 micrograms per cubic meter

* Particulate Matter 10 micrometers or smaller in diameter

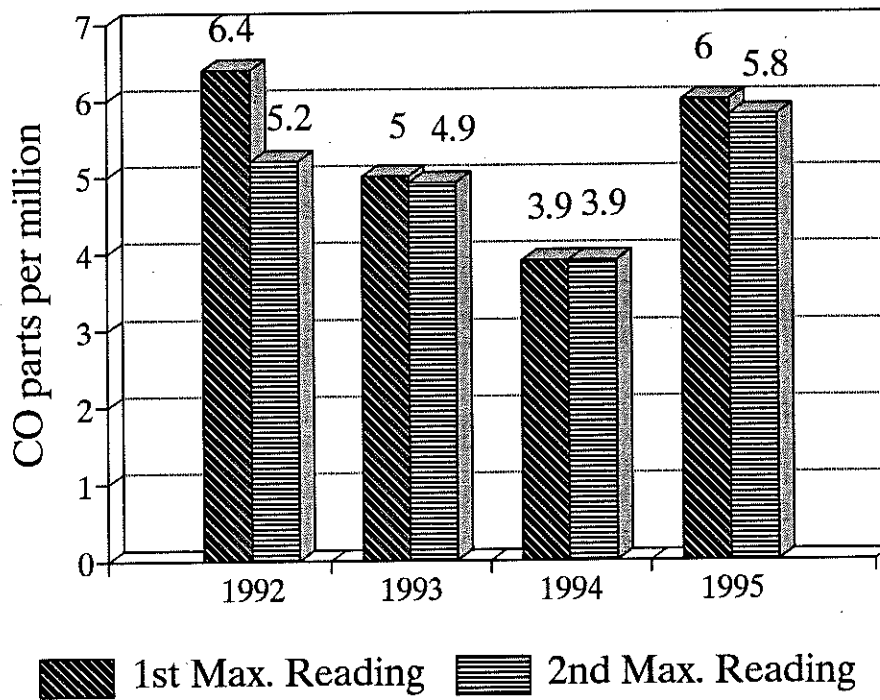
Source: Olympia Air Pollution Control Authority

BENCHMARK 12

HIGHEST ANNUAL READINGS FOR CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) REMAIN AT OR BELOW THE NATIONAL STANDARD OF 9 PARTS PER MILLION.

FIGURE 12

AIR QUALITY 1992 - 1994
Carbon Monoxide (CO)



National Standards: 9 parts per million

Source: Olympia Air Pollution Control Authority

HOUSING

GMA GOAL:

- Encourage the availability of affordable housing.

INDICATOR:

- Cost of Housing

COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES:

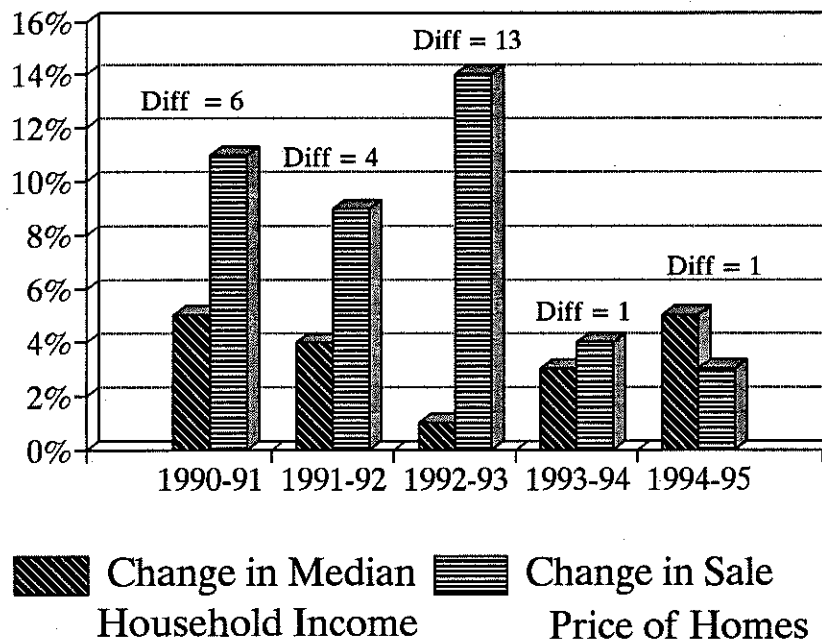
- Encourage the availability of affordable housing

BENCHMARK 13

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RATE OF CHANGE IN THE AVERAGE SALE PRICE OF HOMES, COMPARED TO THE RATE OF CHANGE IN MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME REMAINS NO HIGHER THAN 1.

FIGURE 13

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARED TO AVERAGE SALE PRICE OF HOMES THURSTON COUNTY



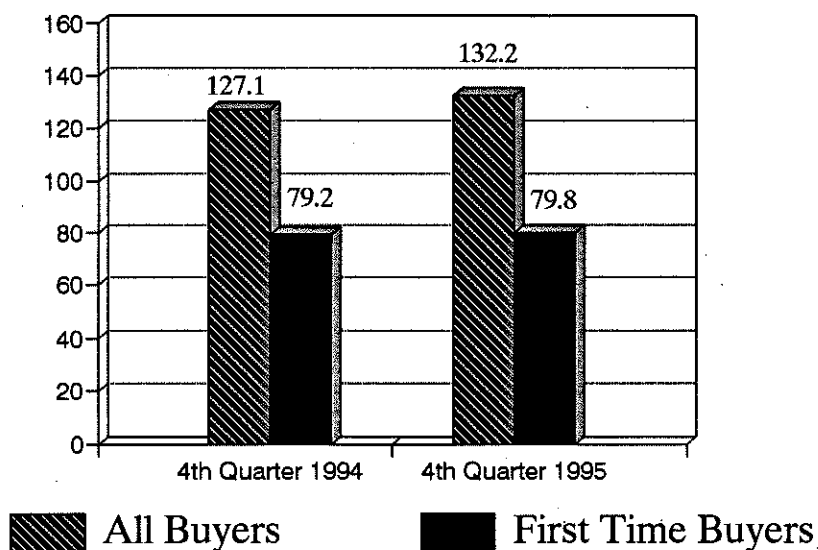
Source: Multiple Listing Service
Washington State Office of Financial Management

BENCHMARK 14

**THE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY INDEX FOR FIRST TIME BUYERS
INCREASES AND THE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY INDEX FOR ALL BUYERS
REMAIN ABOVE 100.**

FIGURE 14

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY INDEX ALL BUYERS & FIRST TIME BUYERS



Notes: The Housing Affordability Index measures the ability of a middle income family to carry the mortgage payments on a median price home. When the index is 100 there is a balance between the family's ability to pay and the cost. Higher indexes indicate housing is more affordable. The first time buyer index assumes the purchaser has an income of 70% of the median household income.

Home purchased by first time buyers is 85% of area's median price.

All loans are assumed to be 30 year loans.

The All buyer index assumes 20% downpayment. The First-time buyer index assumes 10% down. It is assumed 25% of income can be used for principal and interest payments.

Source: Washington Center for Real Estate Research