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## 5.4 Communities, Neighborhoods, and Businesses

Communities, neighborhoods, and businesses are the heart of a region's social identity and economic vitality. Studying and understanding the social and economic effects of the Renton to Bellevue Project is an important step to maintaining the area's unique characteristics, as well as nurturing its living and business environments.

### **What economic and social data did we evaluate for the Renton to Bellevue Project?**

WSDOT conducted analyses of regional and community growth, employment, housing, and the local business environment. In addition, we also evaluated potential project effects such as changes in travel patterns, accessibility to community facilities, and availability of affordable housing, on minority and low-income populations.

We used Census 2000 data to describe current socioeconomic characteristics of the population in the project area. Further, we tabulated information by the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) forecast analysis zones to characterize historical and projected characteristics. Since the size and shape of Census tracts and forecast analysis zones are irregular, the width of the study area on either side of I-405 varied to some extent in an effort to improve alignment with the data boundaries.

### **Who lives in the project area?**

The population within the Renton to Bellevue project area is becoming more diverse. Census 2000 data for the 78 block groups in the study area show that 73 percent of the population identified their race as "white alone" (Exhibit 5.4-1). While the population is predominantly white, more racial diversity is apparent today than in 1990. For comparison, Renton was approximately 17 percent non-white in 1990, while in 2000, that share rose to about 32 percent. Bellevue was approximately 13 percent non-white in 1990, compared with about 26 percent in 2000. This increased diversity provides the foundation for the interesting and healthy communities in the project area.



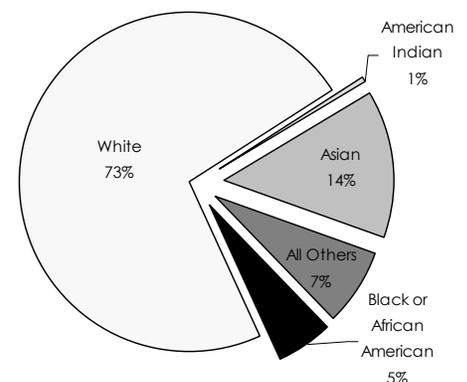
**Children playing in Cedar River Park**

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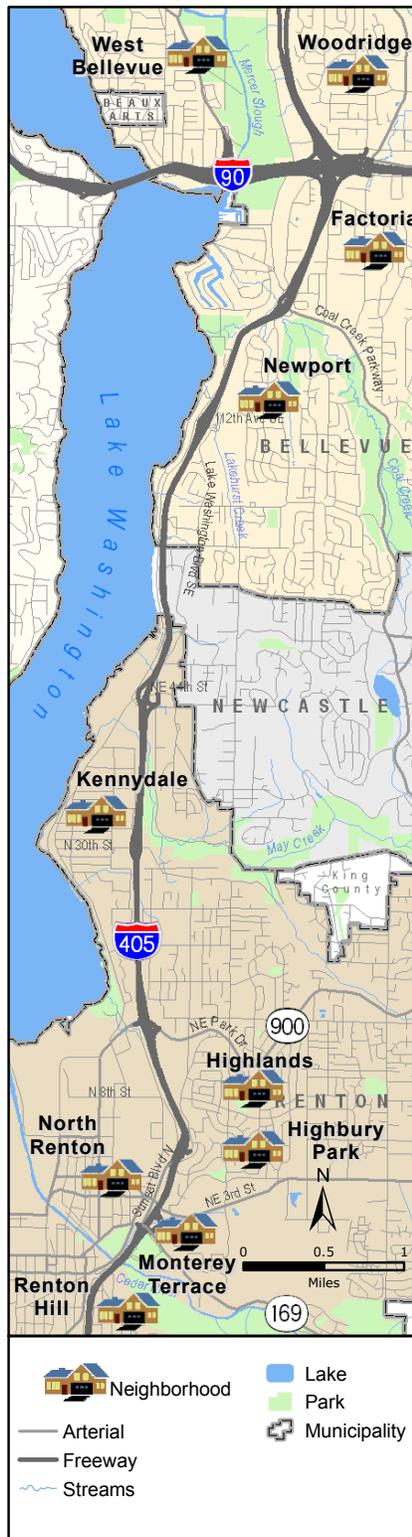
Please refer to the Renton to Bellevue Project Economic Elements, Environmental Justice, and Social Elements discipline reports in Appendices L, M, and N, respectively (on CD), for a complete discussion of these analyses.

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**Exhibit 5.4-1: Project area by race**



**Exhibit 5.4-2: Neighborhoods**



**What community and social services are found in the project area?**

Organizations such as neighborhood groups, youth service providers, business associations, social and recreational organizations, and service groups are all part of the community. Several public and private, non-profit health centers and clinics serve the community within the project area. Other agencies provide community assistance to persons in need.

**Neighborhoods**

Nine recognized neighborhoods, located within the jurisdictions of Renton and Bellevue, are adjacent to the I-405 mainline. Shown in Exhibit 5.4-2, these neighborhoods are: Woodridge, West Bellevue, Factoria, Newport, Kenndale, Highlands, Highbury Park, North Renton, and Monterey Terrace. These neighborhoods offer churches, schools, developed recreational facilities, parks, and undeveloped open space.

**Population**

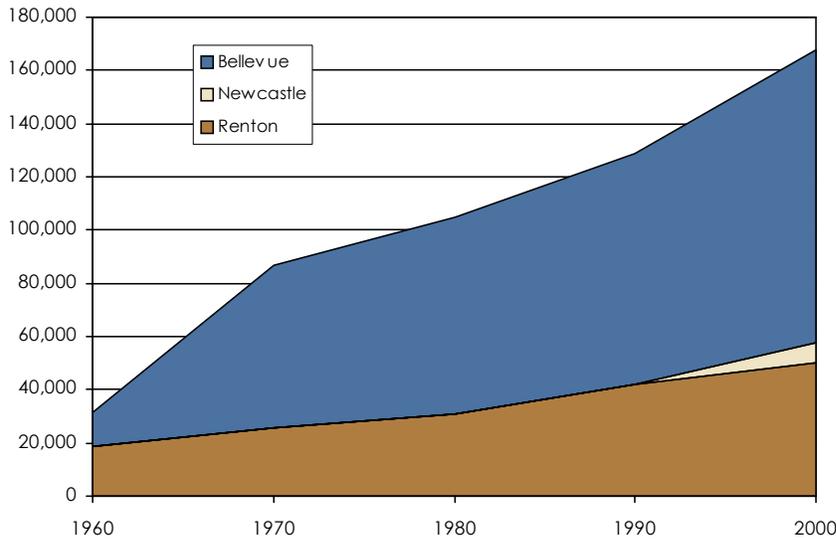
Rapid population growth in the past decade has increased development pressures throughout the greater Seattle area of King County. Bellevue saw its greatest population growth rate from 1960 to 1970 when it increased by 378 percent. Over half of Bellevue’s growth has resulted from annexation. With less area available for future annexation, the population growth rate is expected to decrease. Renton also saw its greatest population growth rate from 1960 to 1970 (a 40-percent increase). Exhibit 5.4-3 shows historical population growth in the project area.

**Housing**

The Puget Sound region, particularly the Eastside, has a critical shortage of affordable housing (A Regional Council for Housing [ARCH], 2003 and 2005a). Typically, housing is considered "affordable" when no more than 30 percent of a household's income is spent on housing expenses. In order to provide a range of affordable housing types not adequately provided by market rate housing, cities will often encourage housing that is affordable to moderate or lower-income households. An "affordable housing unit" typically refers to housing that is within the budget of households earning 80 percent or less of the area median income (ARCH 2005b). The

King County Housing Authority and ARCH, have goals to preserve and increase the supply of housing for low- and moderate-income households in the area.

**Exhibit 5.4-3: Historical population growth**



Note: The City of Newcastle did not incorporate until September of 1994.

In 2003, Renton had 12,588 single-family units and 12,213 multi-family units. Housing data for 1993 to 2000 indicate that during this eight-year period, 4,189 new residential units were permitted in the City of Renton. Given its current land supply and zoning, Renton has the capacity for 10,620 new housing units, zoned for single-family, multi-family, and multi-use residential.

In 2003, Newcastle had 2,528 single-family units and 893 multi-family units. During the 1993 to 2000 analysis period, 678 new units were permitted in the area that is now the City of Newcastle. Newcastle has capacity for 2,253 new housing units given its current land supply and zoning.

In 2003, Bellevue had 29,948 single-family units and 21,120 multi-family units. During the 1993 to 2000 analysis period, 4,727 new units were permitted in Bellevue. Bellevue has capacity for 15,753 new housing units given its current land supply and zoning. Total residential housing units permitted in the project area by year is shown in Exhibit 5.4-4.



**Mules and drivers, Renton Mine, circa 1910**

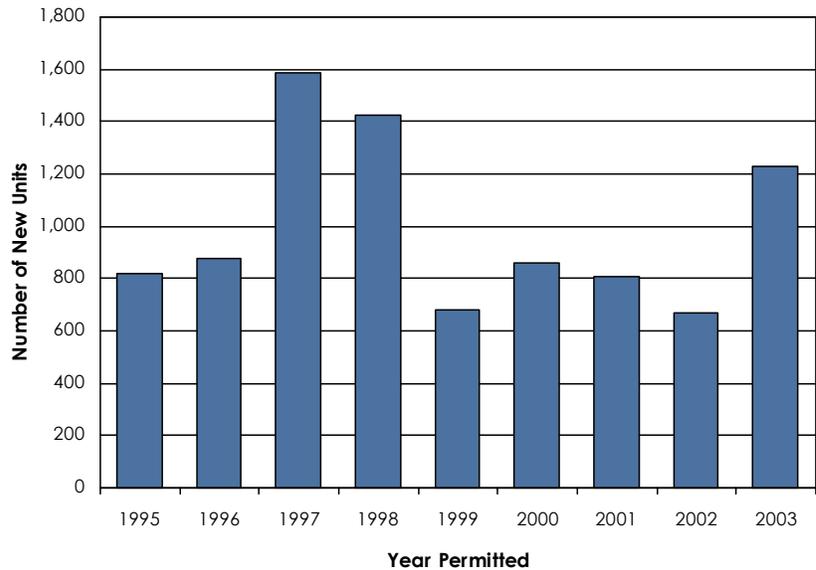
Courtesy of the Museum of History and Industry – Seattle, Washington



**Boeing’s Renton plant introduces the 707 jet, 1954**

Courtesy of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer Collection, Museum of History and Industry – Seattle, Washington

**Exhibit 5.4-4: Housing units authorized by permit in the project area**



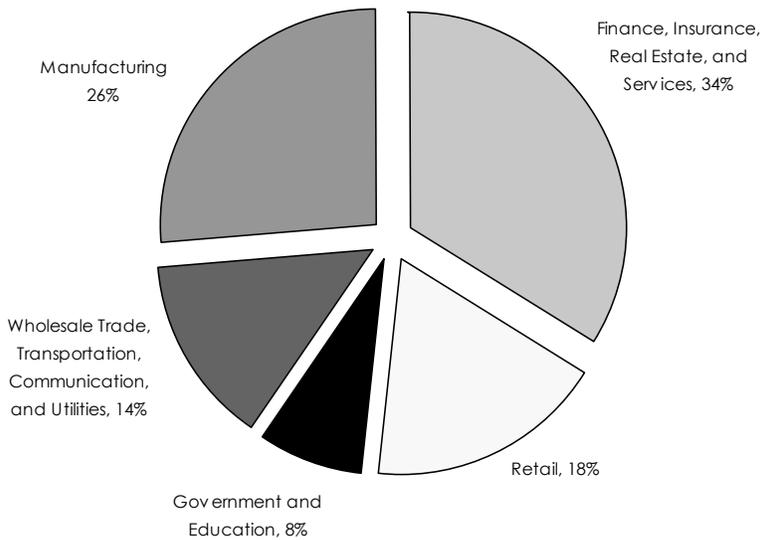
### **Business and Employment**

Employment in the region is divided among several sectors that include: Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Services (FIRES); Manufacturing; Retail; Wholesale Trade, Transportation, Communication, and Utilities (WTCU); and Government and Education (Exhibit 5.4-5).

Renton is a well-established city with a diversified economy, yet it still depends highly on Boeing, the largest employer in the city, for jobs. Other major employers include PACCAR, Multiple Zones, Wizards of the Coast, and K&L Distributors. Data on employment changes from 1995 to 2000 indicate a 29-percent increase in the number of jobs (King County Buildable Lands Report [BLR], 2002).

Although Newcastle is primarily a residential community, it also offers employment and business opportunities. These include retail and business services, industrial and warehousing establishments, and regional recreation attractions. Data on employment changes from 1995 to 2000 indicate that Newcastle has achieved about 39 percent of its current 20-year target of 502 additional jobs.

**Exhibit 5.4-5: Employment by sector**



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council

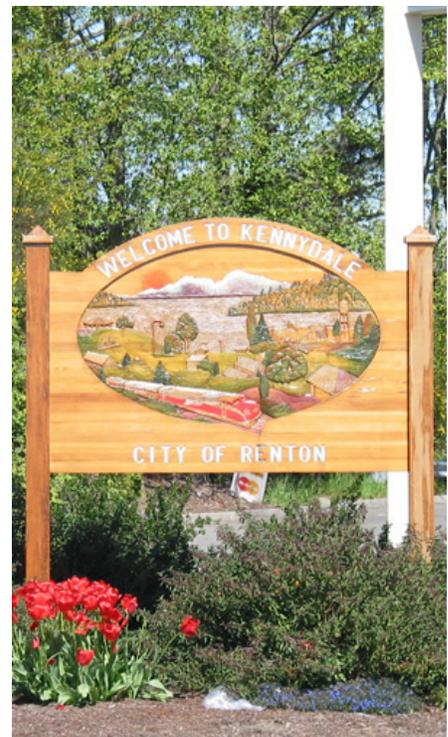
Bellevue is the financial, retail, and office center of the Eastside, home to many businesses. The largest employers include Microsoft, Overlake Hospital, and Puget Sound Energy. The Bellevue Central Business District is a compact, mixed-use hub with places to live, shop, play, and work. Bellevue allows high-density residential development in the downtown area to facilitate its desire for a convenient, livable urban environment.

**How will the project affect communities, neighborhoods, businesses, and minority and low-income populations?**

The Renton to Bellevue Project will have minor effects on communities, neighborhoods, and businesses within the project area, and most of these effects will be beneficial. Context Sensitive Solutions design principles have been incorporated to help make the project fit aesthetically with the community. Periods of congestion will be shortened in the project area and the reconfiguration of the interchanges will make them operate more efficiently.

**Communities and neighborhoods**

WSDOT expects that community integrity will remain intact during both construction and operation of the Renton to Bellevue Project because neighborhoods in the vicinity of I-405 are already well established. Most effects to community cohesion will be widely dispersed across the 8-mile study area.



**Kennydale, a longstanding Renton neighborhood**

The Renton to Bellevue Project will require the full acquisition of 62 residential parcels. These effects will be permanent, but will not have long-term adverse effects on the character of the community.

### **Businesses**

While several commercial parcels will be affected by the Renton to Bellevue Project in the form of full or partial acquisitions, we expect no long-term adverse effects on the community. Businesses will benefit from reduced congestion and improved accessibility, both of which will reduce the overall cost of doing business.

### **Minority and low-income populations**

WSDOT conducted numerous outreach efforts to reach minority, low-income, and other special groups to convey information about the Renton to Bellevue Project. WSDOT analysts also examined the demographics of the study area. We concluded that the Renton to Bellevue Project will not have disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations, or resources and services that are especially important to them. The details of WSDOT's analysis can be found in the Renton to Bellevue Project Environmental Justice Discipline Report in Appendix M.

In the Renton to Bellevue project area, one of the primary concerns is the effects of construction. Most of these minority and low-income populations rely on transit facilities for daily needs. For them, I-405 is an essential piece of travel infrastructure. Because of this reliance, these individuals must deal with delays and other challenges from the current inefficiencies of I-405.

### ***How will construction activities affect communities, neighborhoods, and businesses?***

Construction of the Renton to Bellevue Project is expected to last up to five years; however, construction activity in any one location will take substantially less time. Construction will pose some minor inconveniences because of localized travel delays, changes in some business access, possible parking reductions, and traffic re-routing. Some travelers may choose alternate routes to avoid construction activity. These detours and delays will be of short duration and highly localized; they will not affect social interaction or the economic vitality within local neighborhoods or the project area.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The term **environmental justice** is relatively new; however, the issues related to the concept of fairness have been in public discussion for decades. Essentially, environmental justice is the simple, common sense notion that the negative environmental effects of projects should not disproportionately burden low income or minority communities. **Executive Order 12898**, issued by President Clinton in 1994, provides that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations."

## **Will existing properties be acquired or displaced?**

### **Right of Way and Easements**

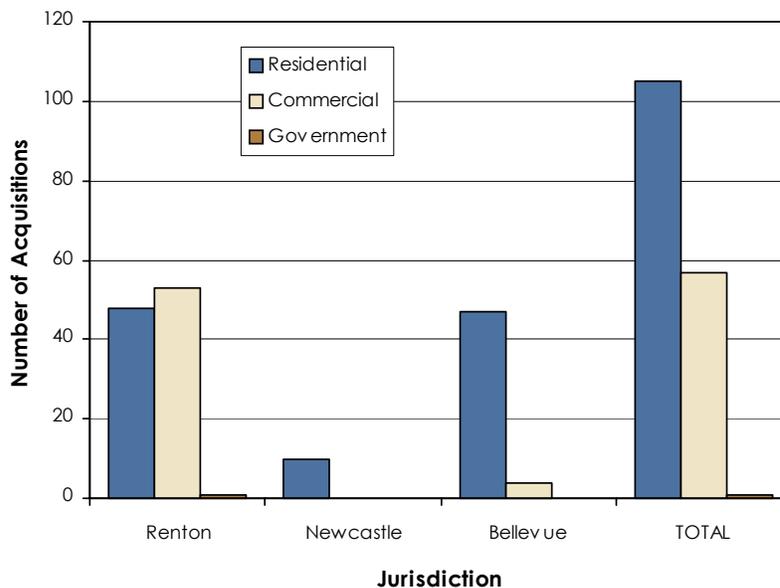
WSDOT will acquire approximately 44 acres of land for right of way. Most of this new right of way will be used to construct additional lanes on the I-405 mainline, reconstruct the interchanges, construct the transit/HOV direct access ramps, and realign local roadways. Additional properties will be acquired for environmental enhancements and stormwater facilities.

WSDOT estimates that the Renton to Bellevue Project will directly affect approximately 163 parcels (see Exhibit 5.4-6): 102 properties within the City of Renton (48 residential, 53 commercial, and 1 publicly-owned); 10 in Newcastle (all residential); 51 in Bellevue (47 residential and 4 commercial). The project will require the full acquisition of 62 residential and 19 commercial parcels.

### **What measures are proposed to avoid or minimize effects on communities, neighborhoods, and businesses during construction?**

To reduce the effects of construction activities on neighborhoods and businesses, the following measures will be incorporated into construction plans and specifications.

**Exhibit 5.4-6: Property acquisitions by type and jurisdiction**



### Communities and neighborhoods

- WSDOT will prepare and implement a traffic management plan (TMP). If local streets must be temporarily closed during construction, detour routes will be provided and clearly marked with signs.
- WSDOT will coordinate with the school districts before construction. The TMP will be implemented and coordinated with all emergency services organizations prior to any construction activity.
- WSDOT will coordinate with utility providers prior to construction to identify conflicts and resolve the conflicts before or during construction.

### Businesses

- WSDOT will maintain access to businesses throughout the construction period.
- Because it can be difficult to determine whether a business is open, WSDOT will make provisions for posting appropriate signs to communicate the necessary information to potential customers.
- WSDOT will keep daytime street closures to a minimum.

### Property Acquisition/Displacements

- In those situations where it is necessary to acquire property, WSDOT will conform to the requirements set forth in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended and implemented by FHWA under 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 24, and according to Chapter 468-100 Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Uniform Relocation and Assistance and Real Property Acquisition. This will ensure just compensation for all properties and minimize any adverse effect on the current owners and residents. Relocation resources are available, without discrimination, to all eligible residents and businesses.
- WSDOT will prepare a relocation plan in advance of displacements. Additional information will be collected, possibly through property owner interviews, to identify the specific needs of any business that will be relocated.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

On January 2, 1971, Public Law 91-646, the **Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970**, (Uniform Act) was signed into law. The Uniform Relocation Act provides important protections and assistance for people affected by federally-funded projects. This law was enacted by Congress to ensure that people whose real property is acquired, or who move as a result of projects receiving federal funds, will be treated fairly and equitably and will receive assistance in moving from the property they occupy.