



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director
DATE: March 3, 2020 
SUBJECT: Vancouver Counts - Census 2020 Report

INTRODUCTION

In April of 2020, the US Census Bureau will conduct a count of the population of all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five US territories. The count is mandated by the Constitution and has been conducted every 10 years since 1790. By April 1, 2020, every residence will receive an invitation to respond to the census questionnaire. This is the first time that households will have the opportunity to respond by mail, by phone or online. The results of the 2020 Census determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives and they are also used to draw congressional and state legislative districts. Additionally, the Census informs the allocation of many federal funding programs and provides critical data to decision-making processes for government and businesses alike.

CENSUS DATA

The once-a-decade census counts the number of people living at a residence, their name, age, date of birth, sex, ethnicity, race, and their relationship to the head of household. The census also collects information on housing type and ownership for each household.

Prior to the 2010 Census, about 1 in 6 households received a special census questionnaire, often referred to as the census long-form. This questionnaire collected the same data as the standard census along with more detailed demographic, socioeconomic and housing information. Beginning with the 2005, the long-form questionnaire was replaced by the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS asks the same questions as the long-form; however, the ACS is sent to a small percentage of the population annually. The ACS aims to provide a more frequent and up-to-date picture of changing demographic and socioeconomic conditions throughout the country.

Census versus American Community Survey: Data of Population and Housing

	Population	Housing
2020 Census	name, sex, age, relationship, Hispanic origin, race	type, ownership
Additional Data From The American Community Survey	marital status, birth place, citizenship, year of entry, school enrollment, educational attainment, ancestry, residence 5 years ago, language spoken at home, veteran status, disability, grandparents as caregivers, labor force status, place of work and journey to work, work status last year, industry and occupation of worker, income	units in structure, number of rooms, number of bedrooms, plumbing and kitchen facilities, year structure built, year moved into unit, housing heating fuel, telephone, vehicles available, farm residence, value of home, monthly rent, shelter costs

CENSUS DATA AND RTC

Data from the US Census and the American Community Survey are used by RTC directly and indirectly for a number of purposes. Federal and state funding formulas for grant funding and funding to RTC are often related to population of the state and its metropolitan areas. Additionally, Census population counts are used to define Federal-Aid Urban boundaries that establish urban and rural classifications for roadway functional class. Urban and rural roadways are eligible for different sources of funding, such as rural and urban Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG).

RTC and its members rely upon population forecasts produced by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). OFM's population forecasts rely heavily upon population counts, age data and migration data provided by the Census and the ACS. Information about our aging population and our forecasts of the changing age distribution of the population are founded on Census data.

RTC meets its federal civil rights and other related obligations using Census and ACS data regarding race, ethnicity, income, poverty, sex and language spoken at home. RTC's Environmental Justice Demographic Profile (<https://www.rtc.wa.gov/agency/docs/RTC-Title6EJDemoProfile2017.pdf>, see attached example map) provides the basis for RTC's equity and environmental justice analyses associated with RTC's plans and programs.

Finally, RTC's regional travel demand forecast modeling tools rely upon Census and ACS data for demographic inputs – such as household size, household income, age of head of household, automobile availability and etc. Journey to work data aids in model validation and calibration. The Census also provides an invaluable source of demographic data used to expand and weigh regional household travel behavior survey data used in the development of regional travel forecast and analysis tools.

SUMMARY

The decennial Census and annual ACS provide the nation, Washington State and the region with our best source of population and demographic data. RTC staff support the City of Vancouver and Clark County's Vancouver Counts 2020 effort (<https://www.cityofvancouver.us/cmo/page/vancouver-counts-2020>) and encourage all RTC members to support and promote the 2020 Census.

Attachment

Map 1: Minority Population, 2015

Minority Population, 2015

Clark County, Washington

Census Block Group Percentages

30% or more

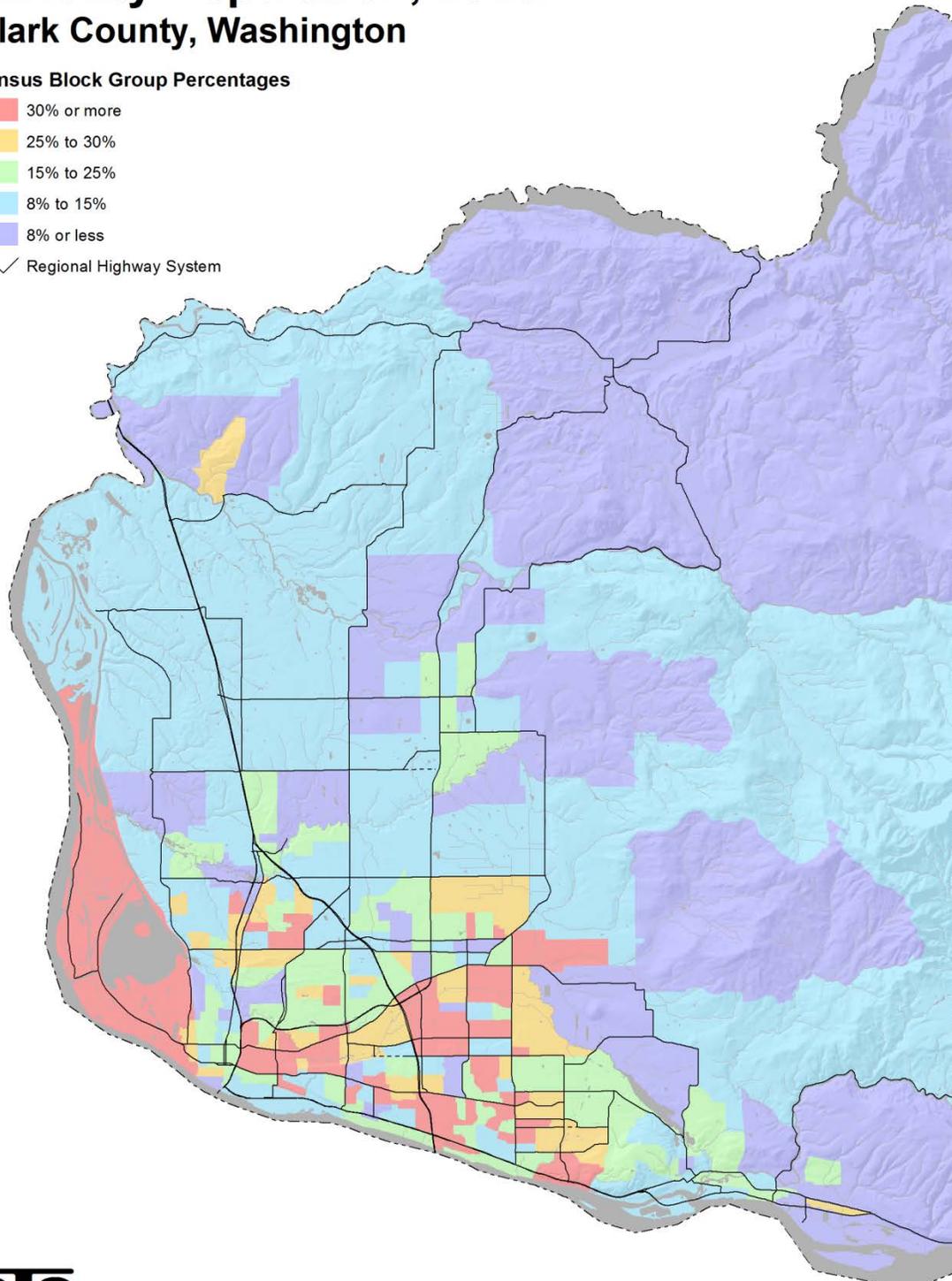
25% to 30%

15% to 25%

8% to 15%

8% or less

Regional Highway System



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate