

Are we making progress?

2001

Where is our community going?

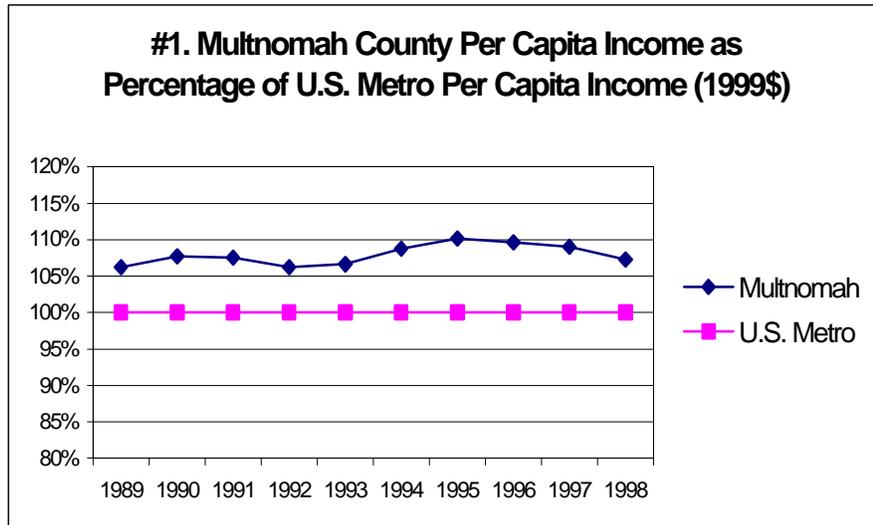
We want a thriving region that allows our citizens to lead fulfilling lives in safe and caring communities. The job of the Portland Multnomah Progress Board is to help achieve that vision.

How do we measure our progress?

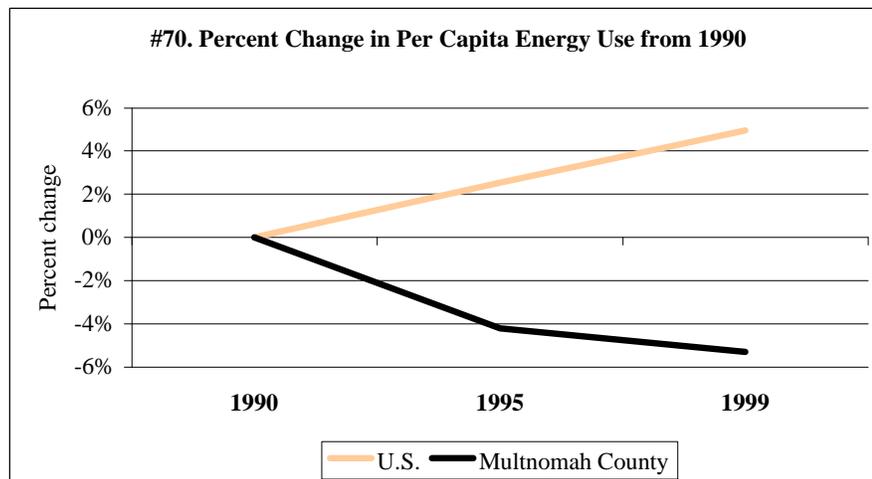
The Portland Multnomah Progress Board, established in 1993, created a set of indicators, or “benchmarks” that gauge the conditions in our community. We use the benchmarks to measure progress toward our community's vision.

Our Thriving Region

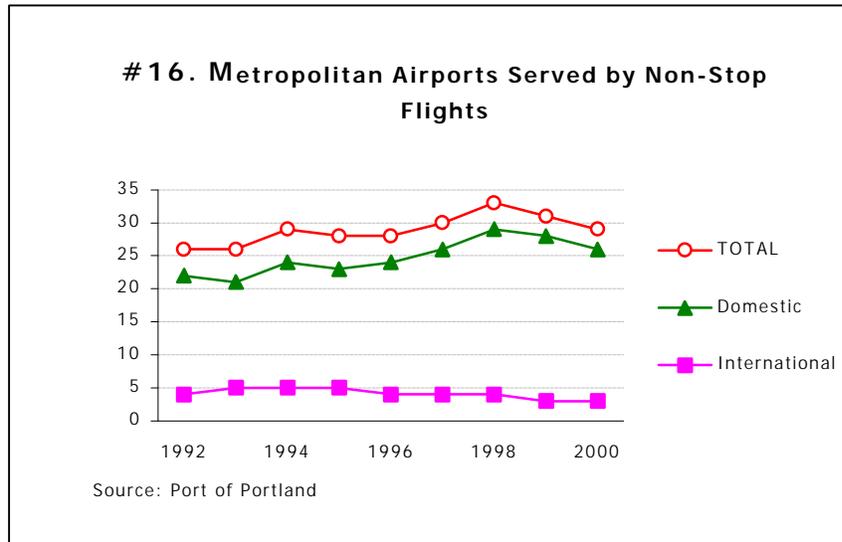
Multnomah County's per capita income continues to increase steadily, but at a slower rate than the U.S. Metro average. Early last decade Multnomah's per capita income increased faster than average, peaking at 110% of the U.S. Metro in 1995. With the slowing regional economy we have lost ground relative to other urban areas, reaching 107% in 1998. This downturn may reflect the troubled economic times of our Asian trading partners.



In the past decade, per capita energy use in Multnomah County declined by 5%. Reductions in transportation and residential energy use accounted for the majority of the decline. During the same period, per capita energy use in the U.S. increased by 5%.

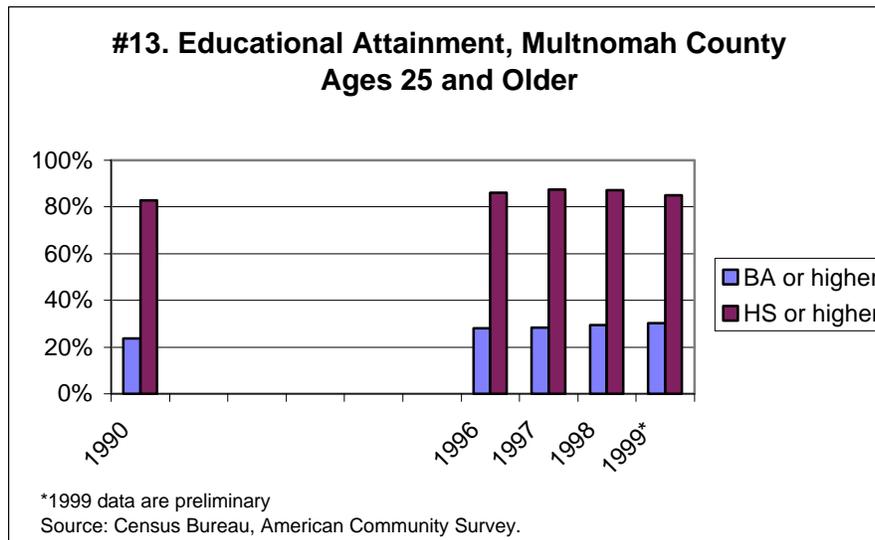


Portland has recently seen a 12% decline in the number of metropolitan airports served by direct, non-stop service. This trend may continue to decline as Delta ended non-stop service between Portland and Japan on April 1st, 2001. In the past year air freight also declined by 7%. The number of passengers using PDX, however, continued to climb to a high of nearly 14 million in 2000. In addition, Portland-Vancouver was one of seven major metro areas which expanded exports by \$1 billion or more between 1998 and 1999 (Benchmark #10).

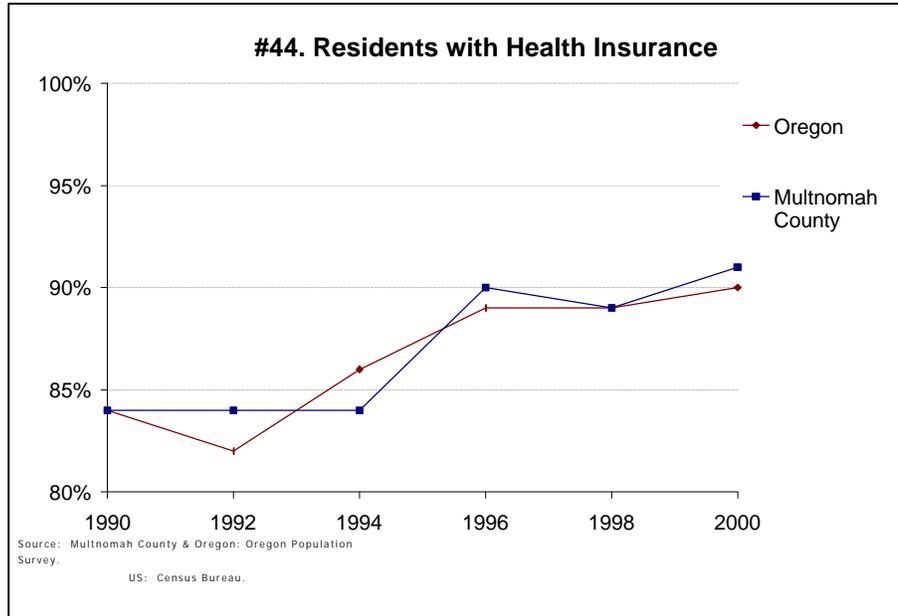


Fulfilling Lives

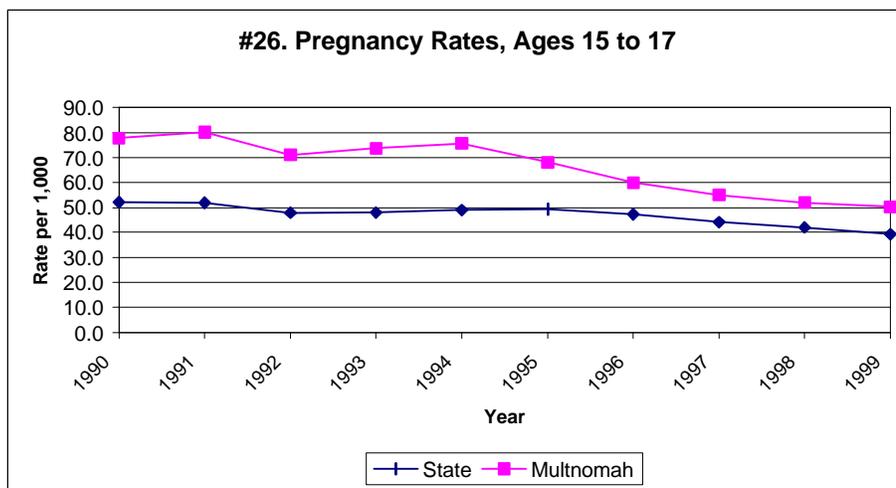
Multnomah County residents with college degrees improved to 30% in 1999. In-migration has played a role in the increase. In the late 1990's people moving to Oregon were about 50% more likely to have a college degree than long-term residents, and nearly 40% of these new residents moved to Multnomah or Washington county. County residents with high school degrees remained steady at about 86%.



Health Insurance coverage has improved throughout Oregon. This is due in large part to the Oregon Health Plan, which extended coverage to 300,000 of the State's poverty-level families. Since the Plan's inception in 1994 Multnomah County's insured percentage has risen seven points to 91% in 2000. The County's low unemployment rate and the presence of larger employers likely contributed to the increase.

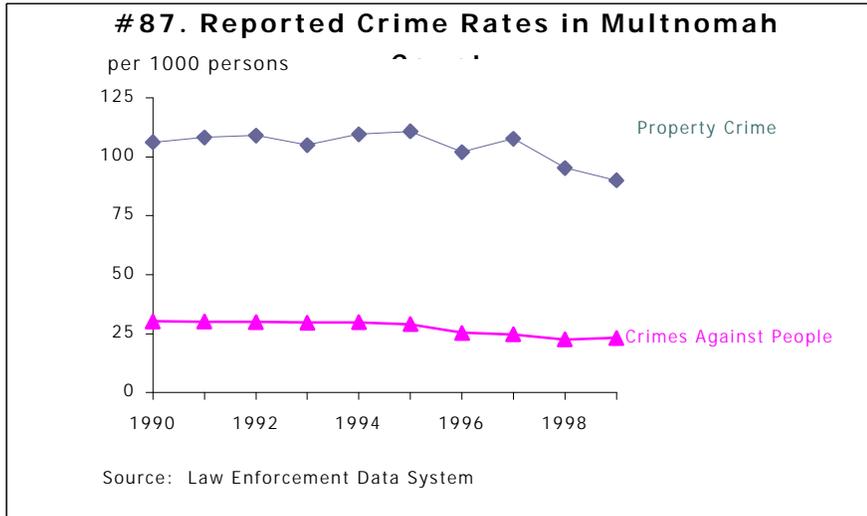


Multnomah County's pregnancy rate for females ages 15 to 17 has been steadily declining in the past decade, mirroring both state and national trends. Even though the County's rate remains higher than Oregon's, in the 1990's it declined faster than the State by ten percentage points.

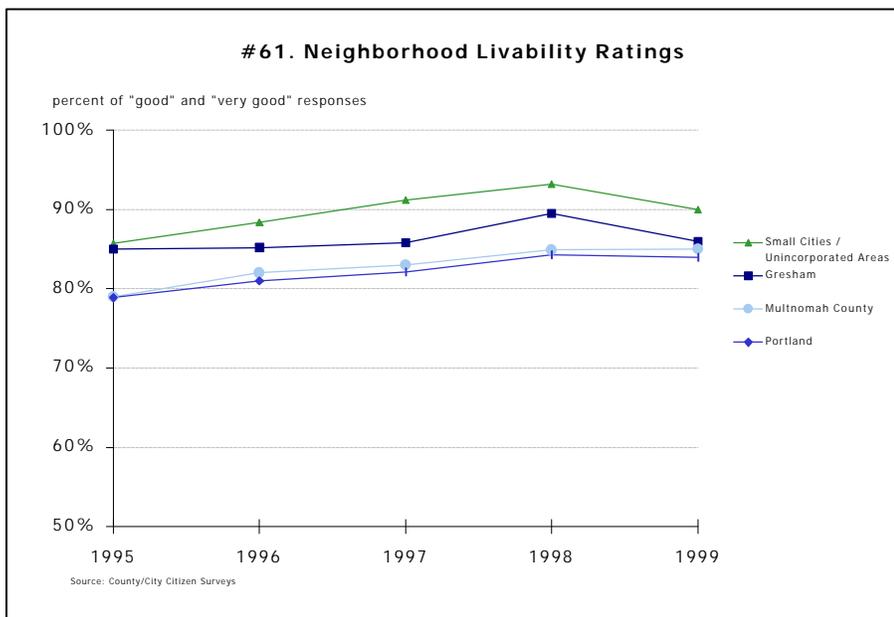


Safe and Caring Communities

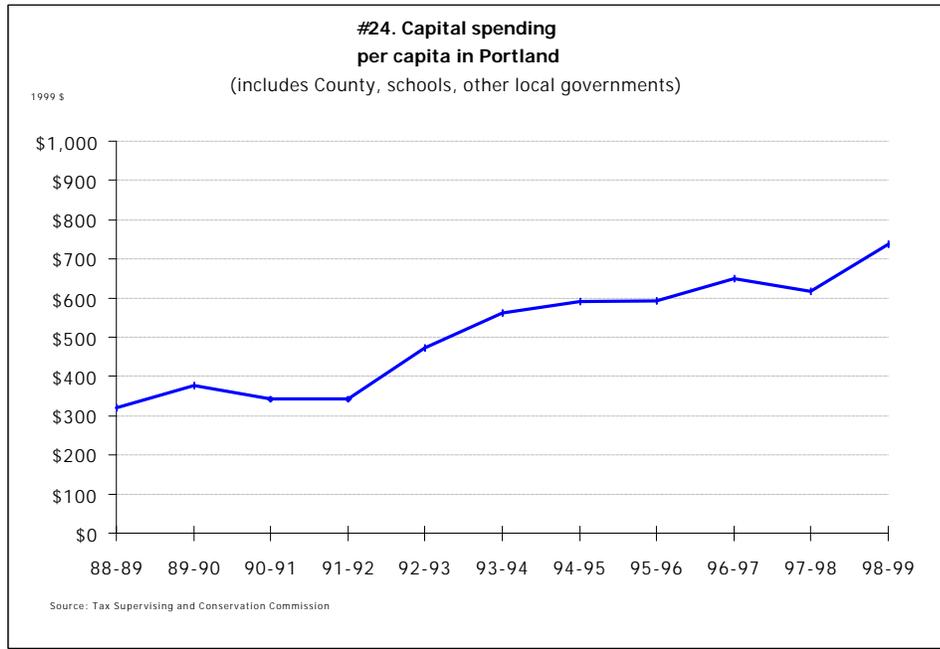
Citizens are generally safer, and they feel safer, in our community. Over the last five years both property crimes and crimes against people have declined by at least 18%. During the same time, citizens have felt increasingly safe walking alone on downtown and neighborhood streets day or night (Benchmark 84).



In 1999, neighborhood livability ratings of either “good” or “very good” by Multnomah County citizens remained constant at 85%. The percentage of citizens rating the cleanliness of their neighborhood streets as either “good” or “very good” has also held steady around 65% (Benchmark 104).



Capital spending is a community's long-term investment in projects like sewers, jails, libraries, school buildings, airport expansion and mass transit. Total per capita spending by all local governments doubled for Portland residents in the 1990's. Among the larger projects was sewer construction aimed toward improvement of Willamette River water quality. Another was the extension of light rail through Portland's West Side.



Major Challenges for our Community

Economy

The local economy expanded steadily in the last decade, led by robust job growth in newer industry clusters like creative services and high tech manufacturing. Although still high, Multnomah County's poverty rate responded, moving from 14% in 1996 down to 12% in 1999. However, local income growth recently slowed relative to other U.S metro areas, after quickly gaining ground upon them earlier in the decade (see Benchmark #1). This is likely the result of the area's greater dependence on Asian markets which still have not returned to their earlier strength.

Education

Our education system must become the best at preparing students to become caring citizens who participate fully in our community. The Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century sets standards of student achievement and goals for what we teach our children. Yet we face grave concerns in our community about the funding to achieve this vision. Sustaining adequate and stable funding is essential for local schools to succeed. However, local school districts have suffered significant cuts in their funding over the past decade. In addition, families with school-age children are migrating out of Multnomah County, further reducing available school funds. Post-secondary education funding must also be sufficient to provide for the changing skills and research needed in today's increasingly knowledge-based economy.

Urban Vitality

The livability of our region attracts many new residents who contribute to the richness and diversity of our community. This population growth puts demands on our transportation, energy, housing, water, and other services that are reaching the limits of their capacity. Healthy growth ensures that all residents can live in affordable housing, in caring communities, with efficient transportation and parks and open spaces nearby. Residents rating neighborhood livability as good or very good increased from 78% in 1994 to 85% in 1999. However, a growing percentage of homeowners and renters are reporting problems with housing affordability, and commuters driving 30 minutes or less to work decreased through the 1990's.

Environment

Our region is endowed with a wealth of natural resources – rivers, ocean, clean air, forests, mountains, desert. The city of Portland was the first city in the United States to adopt a carbon dioxide reduction strategy to protect and preserve this endowment. Our community is also the first major urban area in the nation directly affected by the Endangered Species Act. The decline in salmon and steelhead populations here, and throughout the Pacific Northwest, is the result of many activities that are part of our daily lives – electricity from dams, forestry, agriculture, roads, industry, and urban development. This is a challenge for all of us to share in solutions to preserve our natural riches.

About the Progress Board

The Portland Multnomah Progress Board was established in 1993 to develop a vision for our community and establish benchmarks that measure our progress toward that vision. The board tracks benchmarks representing issues such as:

- Economy
- Education
- Environment
- Families
- Governance
- Health
- Participation
- Safety
- Special Needs, and
- Urban Vitality

In addition to regular updates on benchmark trends, the Progress Board conducts more in-depth analyses of particular benchmarks. These studies are intended to provide a deeper understanding of the forces affecting our community. By identifying the best strategies for improving benchmarks we can achieve a better community.

Previous reports include:

Children's Readiness to Learn: Strategies for Improvement. October, 1998

Salmon Restoration in an Urban Watershed: Johnson Creek, Oregon. April, 2000

Educational Success for Youth: Aligning School, Family, and Community. May, 2000

The Portland Multnomah Progress Board

The Portland Multnomah Progress Board is comprised of community leaders from local government, business, education, and non-profit organizations. It is co-chaired by the Mayor of Portland and the Chair of the Multnomah County Commission.

Co-Chairs

Vera Katz, Mayor, City of Portland

Chair, Multnomah County Commission (vacant)

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Lawrence J. Norvell, President, United Way of Columbia-Willamette

Benjamin Canada, Superintendent, Portland Public Schools

Nina Regor, Assistant City Manager, City of Gresham

Sho Dozono, President, Azumano Travel

Charles Rosenthal, Principal, Sensible Solutions-Engineering Consultants

Marilyn Holstrom, City Administrator, City of Fairview

Luther Sturtevant, Pastor, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

David Lohman, Director of Policy and Planning, Port of Portland

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Dan Moriarty, President, Portland Community College

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Further information about our benchmarks, our organization, and our community can be found on our website:

<http://www.p-m-benchmarks.org>

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