

Section 3: MULTNOMAH COUNTY MOBILITY AND POVERTY TRENDS

METHODOLOGY

This analysis explores residential mobility and income-related trends in Multnomah County over the past decade with an emphasis on East Portland.

Analysis relies heavily on the American Community Surveys¹ (ACS) for Multnomah County, and the 1990 Census data. Since current detailed information is only available for the 1996 ACS, this data set is used frequently and supplemented with 1997 and 1998 data where appropriate.

KEY FINDINGS

Shifting poverty: In Multnomah County, East Portland and East County are experiencing the sharpest increases in poverty and mobility. Areas which have higher than average increases in poverty and Mobility (people moving to the area within the last five years) include:

Southwest Portland:	Corbett, Multnomah and Hayhurst
Inner Southeast Portland:	Reed, Sellwood, Sunnyside
East Portland:	Madison South, Montavilla, Powellhurst-Gilbert, Parkrose, Cully
East County:	Wilkes East-Gresham, Hollybrook-Gresham, Rockwood-Gresham, North Central-Gresham, Gresham-Southwest, Gresham-Northeast, Wood Village, Troutdale (parts)

¹ The accuracy of ACS improves as the sample size increases. In 1996, about one in six households in Multnomah County (15%) were included in the sample size. This is a large sample size and the Census Bureau considers it to be comparable in accuracy to the 1990 Census. In 1997 and 1998 the sample size was 3 percent, in 1999 it was 5 percent, and in 2000 it will be 5 percent again. Beginning in 1998, ACS provides a three-year rolling average; this type of calculation is thought to enhance the reliability of the data over time. There will be a comparison study between the 2000 Census and the ACS. The Census Bureau predicts that the 2000 Census will be its last, and that ACS will replace the Census in the future.

- **Concentrations of Poverty:** Although a trend is emerging of poverty moving to the East Portland, East County and Southwest Portland, these are not the County's high poverty areas. The highest areas of poverty remain in Inner Northeast Portland, Downtown Portland and pockets in Portsmouth, Cully and Powellhurst-Gilbert. In Gresham, the Rockwood area stands out as a high poverty area relative to the rest of the county. Data also indicates there is a noticeable population living in poverty in the Corbett and Multnomah neighborhoods.

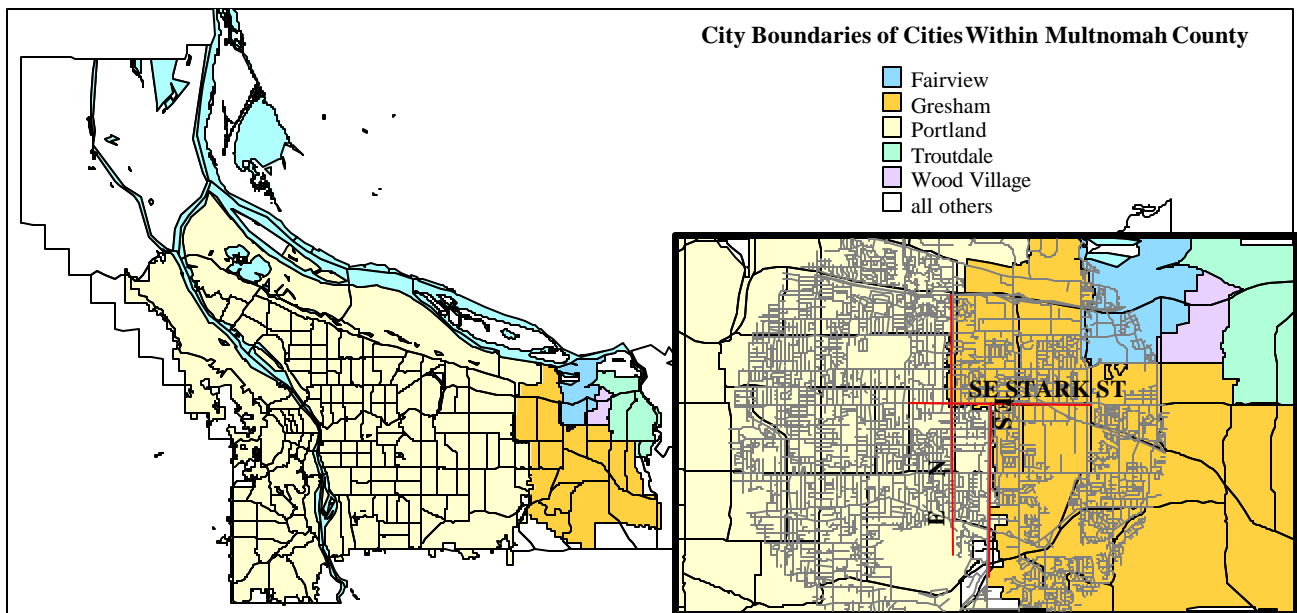
Between 1990 and 1996, inner city Portland neighborhoods have gained financial strength compared to the rest of the County, as measured by increases in median income.

- **Mobility Trends:** On average, about half the people living within a neighborhood have located there within the last five years ("Movers"). Out of all Movers, 64.2 percent moved within the metropolitan area from one neighborhood to another ("Local Movers"). About 30 percent of Movers were not from this area and a little over 6 percent were from outside the United States. Local Movers tended to move to Inner Northeast Portland, East Portland and East County, but Movers from outside of the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area tended to settle in Northwest, Southwest, the lower portion of Inner Northeast, and the upper portion of Inner Southeast, Portland. Remarkably, Local Movers and non-local Movers tended to locate in almost the exact opposite neighborhoods, with the exception of some neighborhoods in Inner Northeast.

GEOGRAPHY

Figure 3-1 orients the reader to the boundaries of Multnomah County and the various cities that comprise the region. The shaded areas are the city boundaries and the small block-like areas are census tracts. This analysis uses census tracts because that is the way the information is available. To assist readers more familiar with neighborhood boundaries than with tract boundaries, a neighborhood overlay is included in most parts of this analysis.

FIGURE 3-1. CITY BOUNDARIES OF CITIES IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

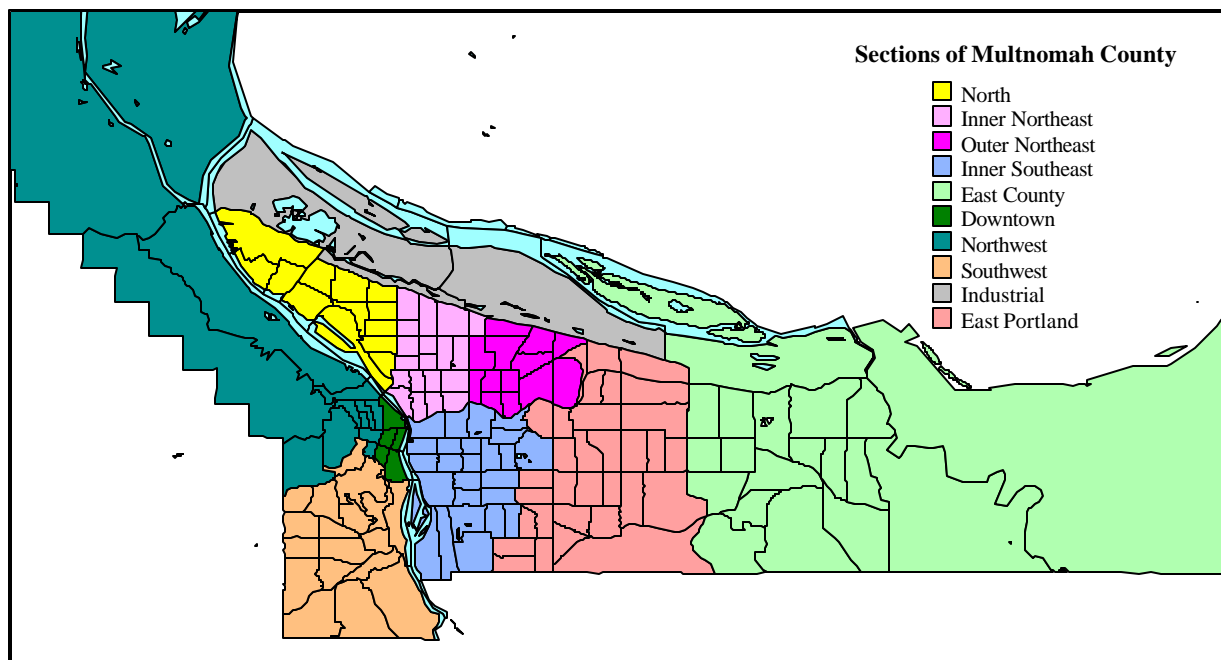


Source: Metro Data Resource Center, RLIS LITE, May 2000.

Map produced by: City of Portland, Bureau of Housing and Community Development.

Figure 3-2 more specifically addresses how sections of the County are defined in this analysis. East Portland ends at the Portland City limits, which is 162nd in northeast Portland and 175th in Southeast Portland. Tracts that fall right on the city limit line are allocated to Portland or East County based on how much of the tract is in each section. For example, if the majority of the tract is in Portland then it is included as a part of Portland. East County begins after the Portland City limits and includes Gresham, Fairview, Troutdale, Wood Village and the sparsely populated remains of Multnomah County.

FIGURE 3-2. SECTIONS OF MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 2000



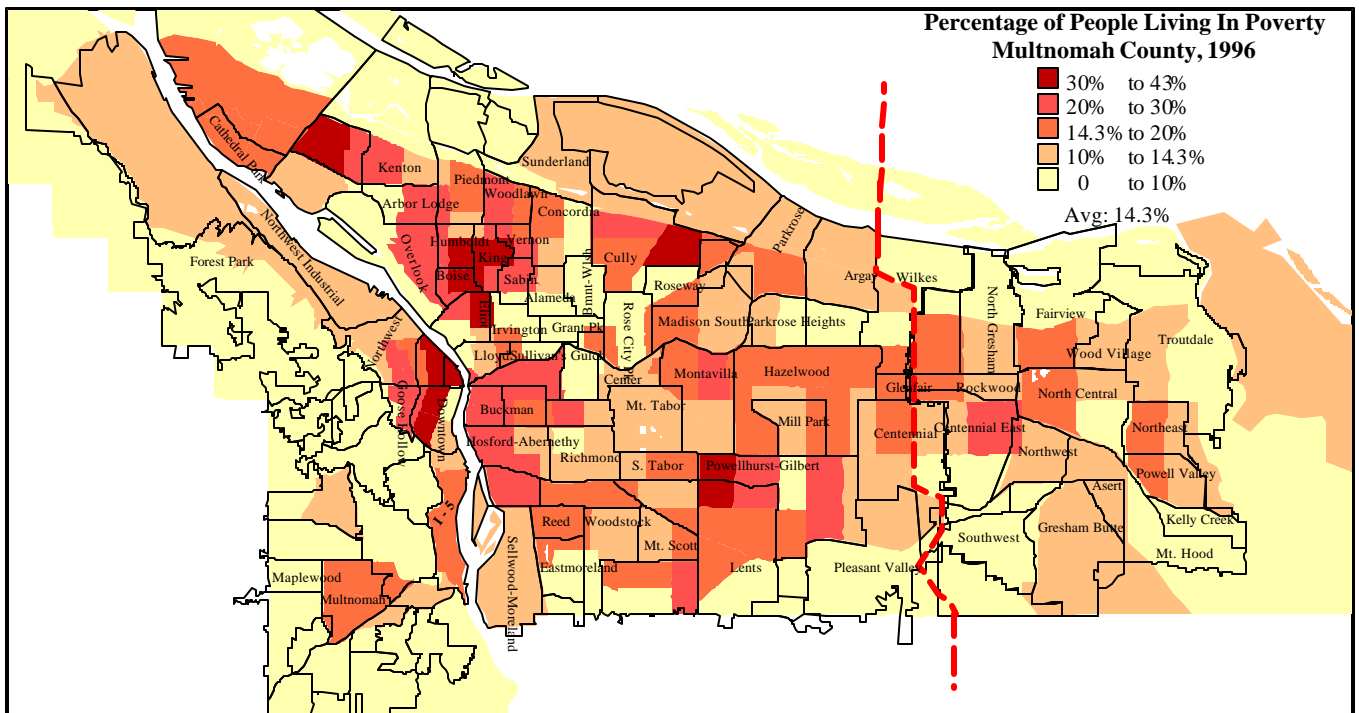
When comparing data about East County with data for other areas, keep in mind that East County is geographically larger than other sectors in Multnomah County.

POVERTY/INCOME TRENDS

Figure 3-3 provides a visual image of the percentage of people who were living in poverty in 1996 by tract. Data from 1997, 1998 or 1999 are not available on such a detailed level. The average for Multnomah County was 14.3 percent. Adjustments have been made to the data in tracts where there were only a few people in order to normalize the data. The "hot spots" where poverty is concentrated are indicated by red and orange shading. Clusters exist in Inner Northeast and Downtown Portland and pockets exist in Portsmouth, Cully and Powellhurst-Gilbert. In Gresham, the Rockwood area stands out as a high poverty area relative to the rest of the county.

Southwest Portland has traditionally attracted higher income people. The 1996 data shows that there is a noticeable population living in poverty in the Corbett and Multnomah neighborhoods. Neighborhoods that included tracts that had twice the average poverty rate for the County were Portsmouth, Humboldt, Boise, King, Elliot, Downtown, Old Town and Cully.

FIGURE 3-3. PERCENT OF PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY BY TRACT, MULTNOMAH CO., 1996

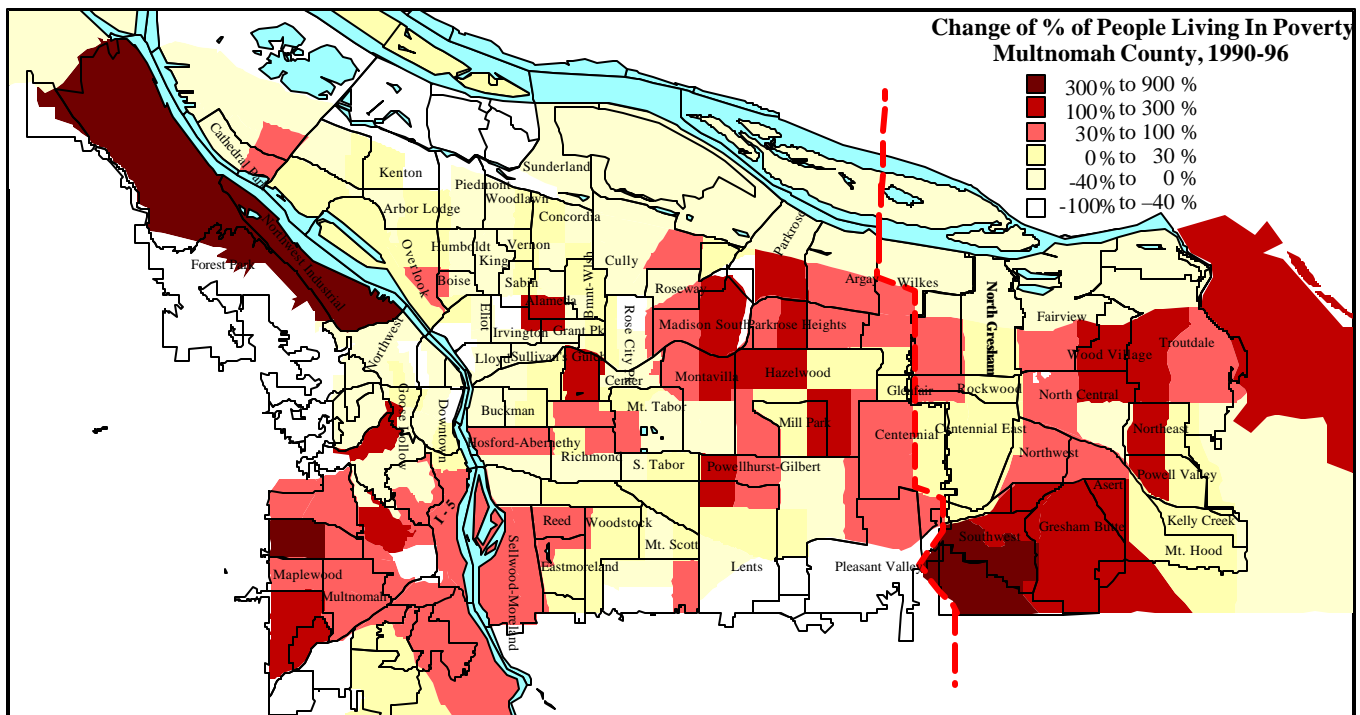


Source: 1996 American Community Survey.

Map produced by: City of Portland, Bureau of Housing and Community Development.

Figure 3-4 illustrates the change in that percentage between 1990 and 1996. On average, tracts have experienced about a 30 percent increase in the percentage of people who live in poverty. The areas that have experienced the highest change rate are shaded brown. Change in these areas ranged from 300 percent to 900 percent change in the percentage of people that live in poverty. These extreme changes are explained by the fact that these neighborhoods had very few people living in poverty to begin with, so any increase appears dramatic. For a truer analysis of changes in poverty, focus on the second tier, the red shaded areas.

FIGURE 3-4. CHANGE IN THE PERCENT OF PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY, MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 1990-96



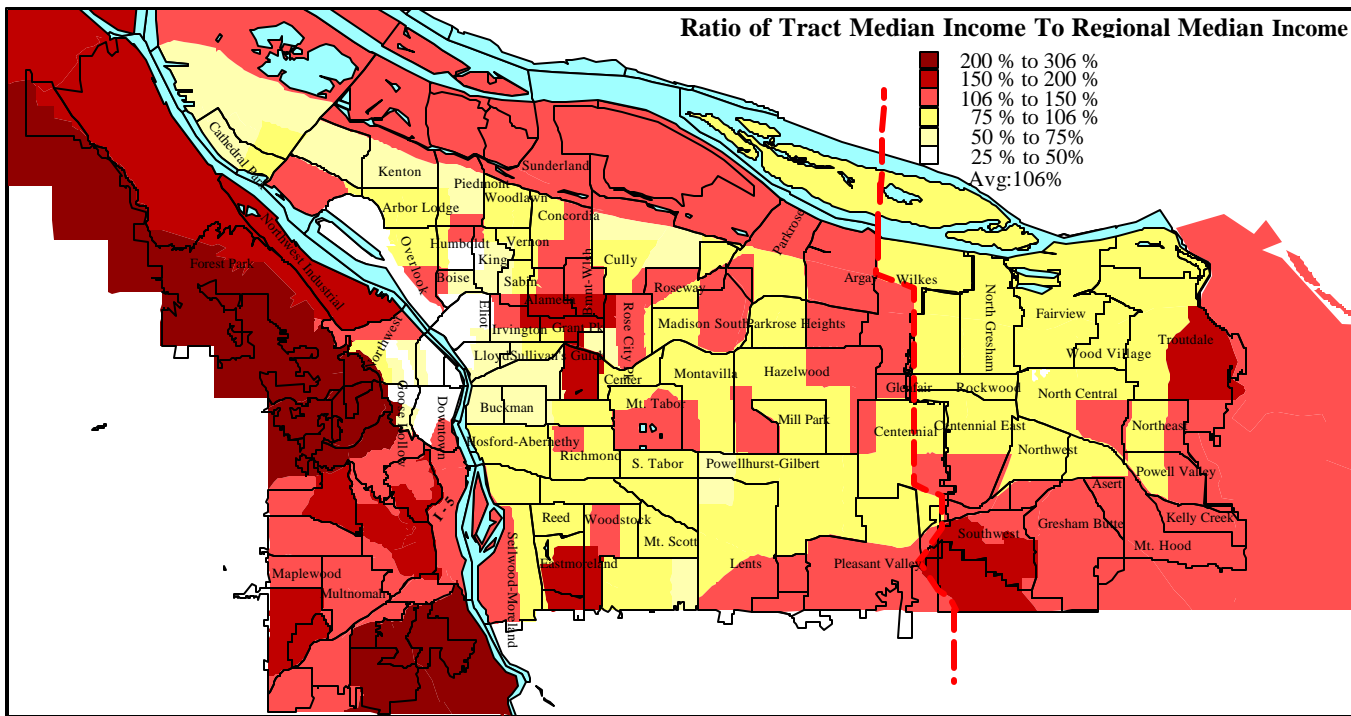
Source: 1996 American Community Survey and 1990 Census Data, STF 3a.
Map produced by: City of Portland, Bureau of Housing and Community Development.

There is a clear pattern of increase in East Portland, East County and Southwest Portland. There are declines in most other areas of Portland, including Inner and Outer Northeast, North and Inner and Outer Southeast Portland. These areas still have higher than average rates of poverty, as illustrated in Figure 3, but a pattern of poverty decentralization is occurring.

Another way to analyze income/poverty trends is to look at the income of a tract compared to that of the entire County, as shown in Figure 3-5. The data presented here gives the reader an understanding of the financial strength of a particular neighborhood relative to that of the County as a whole. The median income of the tract is divided by the median income of Multnomah County and multiplied by 100. This results in a ratio (or percent of regional income) that represents the relative financial strength of a tract. The higher the ratio, the wealthier (in terms of income) the tract as compared to the county as a whole.

Northwest, Southwest parts of Inner and Outer Northeast and Portland’s East County have the highest incomes relative to the region. Downtown, Eliot and Humbolt have the lowest ratios compared to the County. With the exception of the Alameda/Irvington area, most of the eastside neighborhoods don't compare well to the rest of the region.

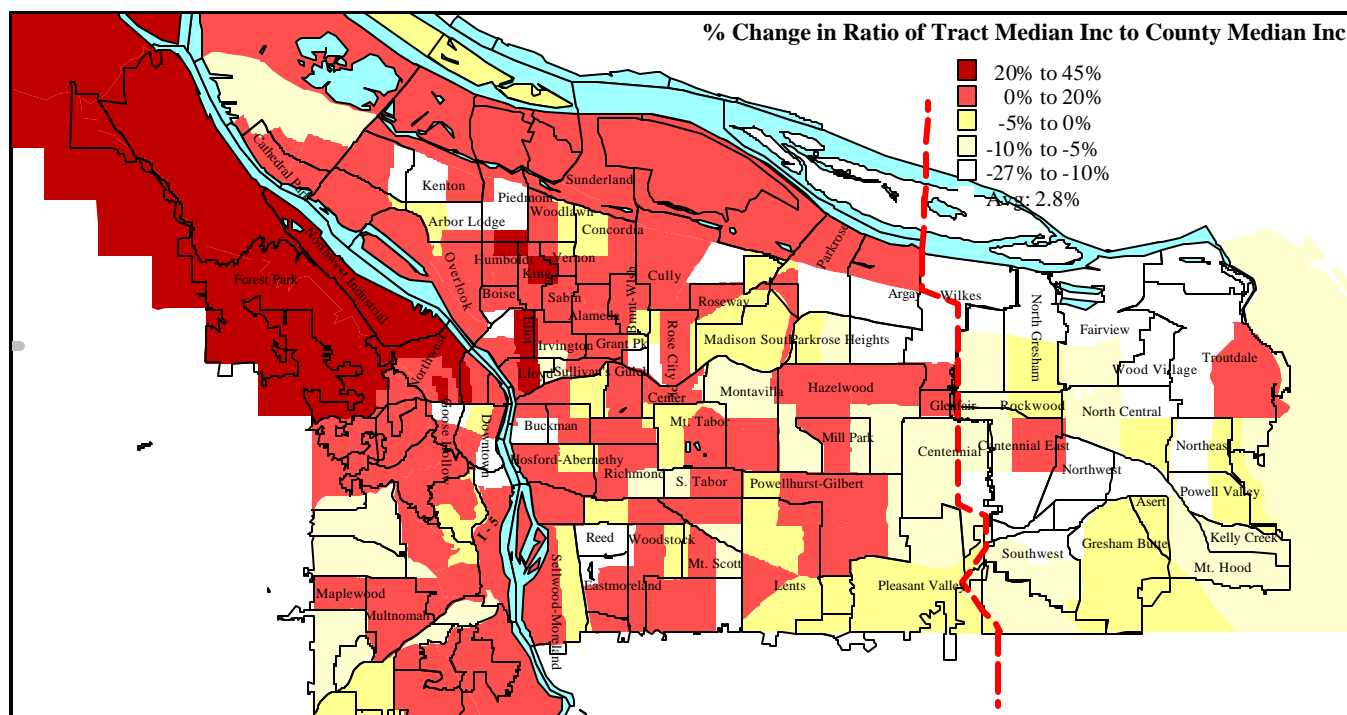
FIGURE 3-5. RATIO OF TRACT MEDIAN INCOME TO COUNTY MEDIAN INCOME, 1996



Source: 1996 American Community Survey and 1990 Census Data, STF 3a.
 Map produced by: City of Portland, Bureau of Housing and Community Development.

It is important to look at the change in the financial strength of neighborhoods over time. One way to do this is to examine the change between the tract to county income ratios for 1990 and 1996. Although this is a complex analysis, it gives the reader an insight into which neighborhoods show a trend of losing (or gaining) relative financial strength. Figure 3-6 shows a clear pattern: Inner Eastside neighborhoods and most of the Westside are gaining financial strength, as evidenced by the increasing median household income of those neighborhoods is increasing.

FIGURE 3-6. PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN THE TRACT MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND THE COUNTY MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 1990-1996



Source: 1996 American Community Survey and 1990 Census Data, STF 3a.
 Map Produced by: City of Portland, Bureau of Housing and Community Development.

MOBILITY TRENDS

A key objective of this analysis is to determine whether people are leaving the inner city of Portland and moving to East Portland and/or East County. One way to gauge this is to review residential mobility patterns that identify the percentage of people (over five years old) who have moved to an area within the past five years. This information is derived from responses to the Census question "Did you live in this house five years ago?" This number is called the mobility rate and it gives an idea of neighborhood change in terms of population turnover.

Figure 3-7 shows how much variation there is in population turnover among tracts in the County. Essentially, this variable shows the percentage of newcomers to an area as it stood in 1996. A review of 1997 and 1998 ACS data shows that this trend is continuing, in that each year more

and more people are settling in East County. Within Multnomah County, mobility rates range from 30.9 percent to 88.1 percent, with a mean of 49.9 percent (after adjustments for anomalous data). So, on average, about half the people who live within any given neighborhood in Multnomah County have moved there within the past five years. Old Town, the Pearl District, Northwest, and Goose Hollow have significantly higher mobility rates than the rest of the County. Old Town houses a high percentage of homeless people and formerly homeless, low-income people who reside in the neighborhood's transitional housing. The high turnover in Goose Hollow is most likely a result of a transient student population drawn to the neighborhood by Portland State University. The Pearl District and Northwest are very chic areas to live in Portland and they continue to attract people.

Inner Northeast, Southwest and areas of Powellhurst-Gilbert are clearly attracting people, as well as Northeast Gresham and Powell Valley in Gresham. East County, in general, is moderately above the mean for the County. Certainly East County has one of the highest mobility rates of any area in the County. Out of all Movers between 1991-96, 41 percent moved to East County and 16 percent moved to Outer Southeast Portland. This fact, along with the data presented in the two following maps, confirms that there is a pattern of population migration toward East County.

People who moved here from outside of the U.S.² seemed to have a preference for downtown and parts of Rose, Madison South, and Sumner. Another interesting side note is that Outer Southeast and East County have the highest levels of native Oregonians.

There is overwhelming quantitative and qualitative evidence of significant movement of new residents to East Portland and East County. Furthermore, a large portion of this movement is Local Movers, people moving from within the Portland metro area to the far East side. To a lesser degree, there is an influx of non-local Movers settling down in Outer Southeast and East County, particularly foreign newcomers settling down in Outer Southeast Portland.

² The ACS data available to us did not show where people who moved to this area from outside of the U.S. originated. We were unable to locate data on this point from other sources. Research into this question would be welcome.

COMBINATION OF MOBILITY AND POVERTY TRENDS

There are 19 tracts that have experienced higher than average changes in poverty and mobility. These tracts are included in the following neighborhoods:

Southwest Portland:	Corbett, Multnomah and Hayhurst
Inner Southeast Portland:	Reed, Sellwood, Sunnyside
East Portland:	Madison South, Montavilla, Powellhurst-Gilbert, Parkrose, Cully
East County:	Wilkes East-Gresham, Hollybrook-Gresham, Rockwood-Gresham, North Central-Gresham, Gresham-Southwest, Gresham-Northeast, Wood Village, Troutdale (parts)

The tracts that have experienced the highest increases in poverty and mobility are Tract 83.01 (the northwestern corner of Powellhurst-Gilbert and Lents), Tract 104.06 (the western portion of Gresham-Northeast and Powell Valley), and Tract 59 (Corbett in Southwest Portland)

There are nine tracts that have experienced a decline in poverty and significantly less than average mobility rates. These were:

Southwest:	Sylvan-Highlands, Arlington Heights and the Southwest Hills and parts of Hillsdale (Hillsdale is an interesting area because there are parts that have sharp increases in poverty juxtaposed against other parts that have declines.)
Inner Northeast:	Piedmont, Irvington
East Portland:	Rose City Park, southern section of Montavilla

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