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Kitsap County: By the numbers since 2000

In light of the upcoming election, this article takes a 100,000-foot view of Kitsap County and its growth, revenue and expenditures over the last two decades. There are taxing district budgets not included in the following table, including all the schools, the cities of Bainbridge Island, Bremerton, Port Orchard, and Poulsbo. Each city has a city budget supported by all the same revenue categories as the County, including property taxes, sales/business taxes, etc., and the same expense categories. The schools, of course, also have large budgets supported in part by the State school tax, any local levies, and any federal grant and related funds. Kitsap County collects property tax revenues from all other taxing districts in the County, and those revenues are not reflected below. All to say, the following table walks through only some of the property taxes paid by property owners in the County and shows only in the most broad terms how they are used on our behalf.

There are a few striking things to note about these numbers over the last two decades. Our population has grown 18.8% since 2000. Our registered voters have increased by 43.5% over the same period and our k12 student population has dropped by 26.4%. If we subtract all school age children from our population in 2000, we can estimate that approximately 72% of County adults registered to vote. Using the same approximation, roughly 79% of County adults registered to vote in 2020.

Comparing the value of a dollar in 2000 to 2020, \$1 then had the same purchasing power as \$1.50 had in 2020. By contrast, our collective assessed property values in those two decades have increased by a multiple of 3.28, County revenues and expenses have each increased by a multiple of 1.69.

Yet, Kitsap County mirrors many other counties in Washington by not spending revenues on public safety. Washington state bears the distinction of lagging behind all other states and the District of Columbia on the number of commissioned officers per 1,000 capita. The force strength shown below does not include six other local law enforcement agencies in the County: Bainbridge Island (21), Bremerton (54), Port Gamble (12), Port Orchard (21), Poulsbo (19), and Suquamish (14). What it does show is

that, even with an increase in positions for commissioned officers from 2000 to 2020, Kitsap County Commissioners have placed a very low priority on providing for public safety: at a rate of 98 officers per 100,000 residents, Kitsap County falls well behind even our poor Washington State record of 313 officers per 100,000. Older data suggested a downward trend to 2018 in both violent and property crimes; as of last year, however, many local law enforcement agencies reported sharp increases in both violent and property crimes County wide.

The data show that the military employs historically and over time the largest single number of residents in our County. As renters and property owners, military families support a large part of our property tax base. Other large employers County-wide include school districts and the hospital, while key property tax payers include many apartment complexes (which surely pass these expenses through to renters through rental rates). Puget Sound Energy has been the single largest property taxpayer in the County for decades, but the aggregation of each of us as property owners would outstrip PSE as the largest contributor to County property tax revenues. Our local businesses support the County through taxes, and sales taxes from our online and local purchases provide the County with sales tax receipts — all paid by consumer. Kitsap County is not the tourism destination that Seattle is, nor will it be the fulcrum for tourism that Seattle's airport and docks afford — and that offer Seattle a tax base Kitsap is unlikely to enjoy to support efforts that address crime, addiction, and homelessness, let alone county infrastructure. This historical picture of our County may help you as you consider how you frame issues and vote in November.

	2000	2010	2020
Population	231,969	251,133	275,611
Registered Voters	132,837	143,796	190,644
Law Enforcement Officers (not jail)	102	116	128
k-12 Students	47,346	39,280	34,826
Unemployment Rate	6%	7.30%	5.60%
Aggregate Gov't Revenues	\$141,138,355	\$192,245,000	\$238,627,721
from Prop Taxes	\$68,240,565	\$54,472,000	\$66,218,981
Personal, other taxes	(incl above)	\$36,637,000	\$68,497,028

From licenses	\$1,733,018	\$2,597,000	\$5,862,784
Intergovernmental	\$50,594,213	\$73,717,000	\$71,342,269
Charges for services	\$10,773,792	\$15,463,000	\$18,742,719
Fines forfeitures	\$1,823,383	\$2,452,000	\$1,582,123
Misc.	\$7,973,384	\$4,724,000	\$3,464,081
Investment Earnings	(incl above)	\$2,183,000	\$2,917,736
Assessed Val. Real Property	\$12,622,683,221	\$29,476,028,000	\$41,351,385,000
Expenditures	\$138,028,685	\$198,325,000	\$233,326,077
General gov't	\$31,940,793	\$27,173,000	\$45,622,691
Judicial Services	(incl above)	\$13,486,000	\$17,256,728
Security of Persons/Property	\$23,251,785	\$45,942,000	\$58,413,866
Physical Environment	\$399,688	\$4,588,000	\$3,792,693
Transportation	\$18,802,589	\$23,744,000	\$30,393,113
Econ Environment	\$10,604,852	\$7,684,000	\$10,178,532
Mental Physical Health	\$26,364,491	\$46,854,000	\$35,590,130
		(Health & Human Svc)	
Culture & Rec	\$3,744,324	\$5,165,000	\$5,001,370
Debt Service	\$13,754,871	\$15,651,000	\$9,416,760
Capital Outlay	\$9,166,292	\$8,038,000	\$17,660,194
Top Employers			
	PSNS	Naval Base Kitsap	Naval Base Kitsap

	Naval Base Bangor	PSNS	St. Michael
	Naval Undersea Warfare Keyport	Naval Base Bangor	WA State (1700)
	CKSD (1400)	Naval Undersea Warfare Keyport	Olympic College
	Harrison Memorial	Kitsap County (1204)	CKSD (1550)
	Kitsap County (1139)	CKSD (1201)	SKSD (1306)
	SKSD (1100)	SKSD (1002)	Kitsap County (1151)
	Naval Station Bremerton	Harrison Memorial	NKSD (879)
	Bremerton SD (752)	NKSD (795)	Bremerton SD (682)
	NKSD (713)	Walmart	Port Madison Enterprises
Top Property Taxpayers			
	PSE	PSE	PSE
	Kitsap Mall	Kitsap Mall	Harrison Memorial Hospital
	US West Communications	Fred Meyers	Walmart
	Cascade Natural Gas	Wal Mart	Kitsap Mall
	Sprint	New Albertsons	Fairgrounds Rds Apts

	FSF Outlook Apts	Kitsap Credit Union	Mariners Glen Apts
	Wal Mart	PK1 Silverdale Shopping Ctr	Silverdale Center
	Tim Ryan Enterprises	Cascade Natural Gas	Qwest Corp
	Fairgrounds Rds Apts	Lowes	CG Silverdale
	Mentor	Mentor	Fred Meyer
	Port Blakely Tree Farms	Mariners Glen Apts	Sante Fe Ridge
	Mariners Glen Apts	Qwest Corp	Trillium Hts Apts
	Telephone Utilities	G&Z Enterprises	Brixton NSE Port Orchard
	Tavitac	Tim Ryan Enterprises	Highland Ridgetop LLC
	Arbor Terrace Apts	Ohava Assoc	Compass Sign. Apts
	Albertsons	Tavitac Bethel	Comcast Cable
	Roundup Co	Sante Fe Ridge	PK1 Silverdale Shopping Center
	Harrison Memorial	Treetops	Diplomat Inverness Cliffs
	Pope Resources	GFS Wellington	Bethel LLC

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Editor

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Sinkholes

County, property taxes, vote