



WALLA WALLA TRENDS NEWSLETTER

Q1 2019



WALLA WALLA TRENDS

PREPARED BY
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NEWS FROM THE PORT: RENEWAL PROJECT AT FORMER CROWN CORK & SEAL BUILDING

BY PAUL GEROLA, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

It's been two decades since the 194,000-square-foot warehouse at 13th and Dell avenues has seen as much business activity as it likely will this year. The behemoth building that for nearly six decades was a fixture in vegetable can manufacturing is in the midst of a revitalization by the Port of Walla Walla that finally begins the vision of urban renewal imagined when the agency bought the building 15 years ago.

The building opened in 1941 as Continental Can and became a staple in food processing as a manufacturer of vegetable cans. Crown Cork & Seal, which grew to become the largest container-making company in the world, bought the business and building in 1991, according to previous coverage. During its peak, it reportedly produced between 250 million and 350 million cans per year in Walla Walla. By 1998, however, a slow erosion of customers meant two rounds of layoffs in production and workforce. The plant closed the next year. The building was empty until the Port purchased it for \$625,000, plus another \$125,000 in the cleanup of asbestos and lead identified in an environmental assessment.

The Port is in the process of about \$1 million in improvements at the site in preparation for spaces to be occupied by four proposed major tenants: Key Technology, Refresco, Mainstem Malt and Walla Walla Foundry. Those companies are expected to join custom-crush operation Artifex Wine Company, the tenant that has occupied about 28,000 square feet of lower warehouse space for over 12 years.

"The Port believes this project represents an important urban renewal project for the Walla Walla community," the late Ken Jantz, then-Port Commission president, said at the time. "The Port looks forward to transforming an undesirable vacant building into a marketable asset."

In the meantime, the Port earnestly moves forward on the improvements: sprinkler heads, insulation, new LED lights, overhead doors, loading dock improvements, window replacement and masonry work. "You're going to see a transformation of the building," Port Economic Development Director Paul Gerola said.

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Some of the work, said Port Executive Director Patrick Reay, is deferred maintenance. The Port has made roofing and stormwater investments on what used to be Crown Cork & Seal since it bought the property. "But there really hasn't been improvements to the space itself," he said. The work is a huge step toward the Warehouse District revitalization the economic development agency first envisioned over 10 years ago. "That was the whole premise," Reay said.

Visit the Port of Walla Walla website:
<https://portwallawalla.com/>





TRENDS IN THE NEWS:

OUR WORLD IN DATA

By Jordan Stevenson, student employee

Although Walla Walla Trends is local in scale, the data we track are part of a larger global context. Local issues we are concerned about, such as health, population, food security, and education are also international issues. As such, there are also organizations and publications such as Our World in Data that track similar indicators on a larger scale.

As we ask vital questions about the Walla Walla region, such as air and water quality, Our World in Data allows us to examine air and water quality on a global level.

For example, we can see the urban and rural disparity regarding access to water sanitation. Connecting the dots, across the globe, rural areas suffer higher rates of poor hygiene in relation to water sanitation. Looking at data through a global lens can help explain and make better sense of local data.

Among many unique things about Our World in Data, perhaps the most unique is their inclusion of data explaining culture. Have you ever considered the global levels of optimism versus pessimism in our collective consciousness?



According to Our World in Data, we are locally optimistic and globally pessimistic, meaning as a collective of global citizens, we have more positive views of our individual and community outcomes, but more negative views of the world.

However, there are many indicators on Our World in Data that are both positive and trending upward. For example, global literacy has increased sharply since 1900, which coincides with increased in school enrollment across the globe, at all educational levels. Some things really are getting better! Perhaps delving further into the Our World in Data project will change our minds, giving us a more positive view of the world's future.

For more information, check out ourworldindata.org



TRENDS IN THE NEWS:

GETTING READY FOR THE 2020 CENSUS

By Scott Richter, Trends Staff

The decennial census, required by the U.S. Constitution, ultimately creates indispensable data at the national, state, county, municipal and sub-municipal levels.

According to census.gov, the census attempts to count every person in the U.S. where they “live and sleep.” More than just a simple population count, the census determines the number of U.S. House of Representative seats for each state, assists the redrawing of state legislative district boundaries, and is the basis for the distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funds annually to support states, counties and communities’ vital programs — impacting housing, education, transportation, employment, health care and public policy. Questions on the decennial census are to be submitted to the U.S. Congress no later than two-years before the census occurs. The 98-page document can be accessed on our website. In this document, each question includes interesting factoids, such as what year each question first appeared on the census, what specific data will be created from the response, and how



the results help communities.

Some questions once asked only through the decennial census are now asked annually through the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS), which compliments the decennial census. The ACS is the source for 21 indicators on Walla Walla Trends, or about 16% of the total. At the bottom of this article is a list of all 21 indicators - with convenient hyperlinks to view them on the Trends website.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, “The decennial census is the largest mobilization and operation conducted in the United States and requires years of research, planning, and development of methods and infrastructure to ensure an accurate and complete count.”

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Of course, the decennial census requires planning and mobilization at the federal level, but without the same planning and mobilization at the local level, it would be difficult or impossible to fulfill the U.S. Constitutional mandate of conducting a census every 10 years.

In Washington State, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) "serves as the liaison between the state and the U.S. Census Bureau, acts as an advocate on census-related issues for Washington and facilitates the bureau's mission of achieving a complete, accurate 2020 census count."

Under the OFM, Complete Count Committees are being created with the purpose of bringing "together community leaders to ensure a complete count of residents in the targeted area." Complete Count Committees seek to combine "the expertise and knowledge of a representative group of local community, business, philanthropic, and elected leaders to strategize about how to:

- Educate Washington state residents about the census
- Explain innovations...and dispel myths
- Engender trust in the process
- Encourage and ensure self-response and cooperation with census workers

Locally, the Walla Walla County 2020 Census Fund steering committee, comprised of Danielle Garbe Reser, Kari Isaacson, and Mayor Harvey Crowder, have already started coordinating this important work.

What's at stake? During Fiscal Year 2016 in Washington State, federal funds distributed based on census results were \$16.7 billion, with the top-5 programs: Medicaid, Federal Direct Student Loans, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicare - Part B, and Highway Planning & Construction. On a per capita basis in the state during FY 2016, federal funds distributed in Washington came to approximately \$2,321.



TRENDS IN THE NEWS:

LOCAL DATA: IT CAN EVEN TELL US HOW HUNGRY WE ARE

It wasn't too long ago estimating hunger relied mainly on Federal Poverty Level statistics. But the national estimates were inadequate when used to estimate hunger in smaller, more localized areas. This created a disparity of what statistically might qualify as food insecure in the national data to what is really happening. The Federal Poverty Level does not change from one place in the U.S. to the next.

Feeding America has developed an extensive methodology to create a different view of local hunger and food insecurity through data. As a result, local organizations and food banks have a much better understanding of what is happening, and how to best deal with the issues at hand.

The natural progression of the data work Feeding America has been involved with is to create data people can interact with. While we think you'll find much of this website interesting, we'd like to point you to The Economic Drivers of Food Insecurity interactive webpage.

Selecting any county in the U.S. in Box #2 shows connections between food insecurity



and the poverty rate, unemployment rate, and homeownership rate. Sliders under each category allow the user to adjust the rates in positive or negative directions (poverty, unemployment, and homeownership) to see how it can have a huge impact on estimations of food insecurity.

Locally, 2nd Harvest has partnered with Blue Mountain Action Council to provide "more healthy food for hungry people in southeastern Washington."

Hunger-related indicators on the Walla Walla Trends website include 1.6.4 Total and Share of the Population Who Participate in the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and 1.6.5 Total and Share of K-12 Students Enrolled in USDA Free & Reduced Price Lunch Program.

For more information, check out www.feedingamerica.org/research/interactive-data and public.tableau.com/profile/feeding.america.research#!/



TRENDS IN ACTION:

WALLA WALLA COUNTY IS GROWING, PRIMARILY DUE TO MIGRATION INFLOWS

by Brian Kennedy and Dr. Patrick Jones

Does it seem like there are a couple more out of state license plates cruising through downtown than in years past? Have you been seeing a few more unfamiliar faces at your local super market? Or perhaps your favorite Friday night spot isn't just the regulars anymore. If you are a Walla Walla County resident, then chances are you may have noticed these subtle changes because there has been an influx of out-of-county residents moving into town.

According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), the primary components of population change are births, deaths, and migration, where net migration is defined as the difference between the number of people moving into an area and the number of people moving out. When a community is growing, it is often attributed to natural increase, or the outcome of more live births than deaths.

However, examining the Residual Net Migration indicator on the Trends website, we see net migration has become the driving force behind growth in Walla Walla County.

Coming out of the early 2000s dot com recession, Walla Walla County has mirrored the state experience of net migration, with the exception of a few years. From 2000 to 2018, the county has seen a population increase of 6,620 people (see: Indicator 0.1.1). Over the same time period, net migration, shown in the graph above, has accounted for 4,288 of that increase. In other words, nearly two thirds of Walla Walla's population growth has been a result of in-migration.

Statewide, net migration has accounted for 57% of the population growth in Washington, so Walla Walla has seen a larger share of migration. However, since the state average is dominated by the effect of west side metro areas, how does Walla Walla compare to places like the Tri-Cities, Wenatchee, Spokane, or Yakima?

Similar indicators on the Benton-Franklin Trends website (see: Indicator 0.1.1 & Indicator 0.3.1) and the Chelan-Douglas Trends website (see: Indicator 0.1.1 & Indicator 0.2.1) show that while in absolute terms they had a larger number individuals migrating into their communities, their share of net migration in overall population growth was closer to the state, at 54.3% and 51.3% respectively.

WALLA WALLA COUNTY IS GROWING, PRIMARILY DUE TO MIGRATION INFLOWS

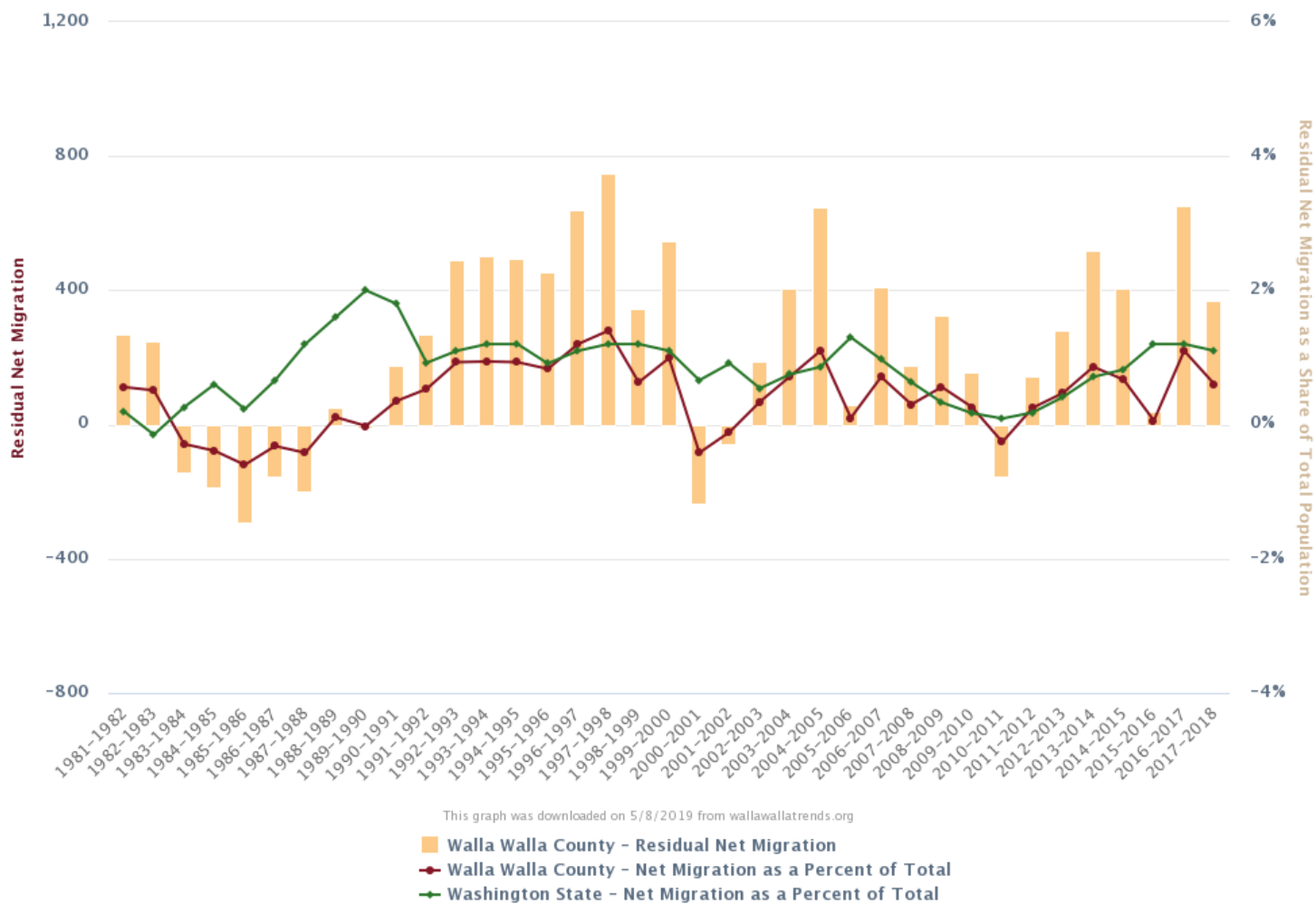
by Brian Kennedy and Dr. Patrick Jones

Yakima, too, has experienced population growth but net migration has been a hinder more than a help. That community has seen a decline of 10,290, as more people have been leaving the county than moving in! However, their natural rate of population increase has offset that loss.

Only Spokane County provides a match, with migration accounting for 63% of the population growth. On a percentage basis, then, migration into Walla Walla County is holding its own against an Eastern Washington county that is over eight times as large.

So why are these people moving into the community and from where are they coming from? As it turns out, the U.S. Census tracks county-to-county migration flows through the American Community Survey. They ask all respondents whether they lived in the same location one year ago, those who responded they had moved are then asked about the location of their prior residence.

0.2.1 Residual Net Migration



WALLA WALLA COUNTY IS GROWING, PRIMARILY DUE TO MIGRATION INFLOWS

by Brian Kennedy and Dr. Patrick Jones

The most recent data comes in the form of a five year rolling average from 2012-2016 and shows that the top five counties Walla Walla receives a positive net migration from are King, Umatilla (Oregon), Mason, Spokane, and Riverside (California). These five counties account for 42% of all the positive net migration flowing into Walla Walla County over that five year period.

Understanding the “why” is more difficult. Census doesn’t ask that question, nor does anyone else. According to Tom Glover, director of the community development department in Walla Walla County, there are two parts to this answer. There is the economic side, encompassing a strong entrepreneurial spirit here and new small businesses, many of which are connected the wineries and tourism, alongside some new tech firms. This can definitely be seen in the wine and tourism sector, which has seen a bit of growth in the recent past. There has also been an increase in wine production per capita (see: Indicator 1.4.6) and lodging tax redistributions per capita (see: Indicator 1.4.2), both by about 8% and well outpacing the benchmarks.

Then there is the social and cultural side of things. Where Glover contends that people are coming to Walla Walla for the quality of life, such as spending more time with family and friends and/or enjoying the outdoors.

In his view, a larger, more mobile retiree community, many of whom are transplants from other urban centers, are starting to take up residence in the community. There is some support given to this within the data from OFM. Their county projects show that the retired population is on the rise, and expected to continue growing through 2040. By that year, the office projects 20% of the population in Walla Walla County will be over the age of 65, up five percentage points from where it stands today.

So whether or not people are moving to Walla Walla for an improved quality of life, away from the hustle and bustle of the major urban centers, retiring into a community with a thriving art and wine scene, or simply relocating for a new job, the county is growing. That’s mostly due to transplants.





TRENDS IN ACTION:

CITIZENS VALUE QUALITY ROADS IN WALLA WALLA COUNTY

by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

All communities depend on safe, effective road systems to move goods and people. Nearly of the roads in Walla Walla County are financed and maintained with public funding. Public funding levels can be a reflection of the quality and safety of local road systems.

Public funding also reflects priorities within government. This indicator is not only an accounting of the dollars spent locally on roads but on the importance that Walla Walla, through its elected officials, places on roads. Data are compiled annually by the Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO).

The SAO includes within the "Roads" category: "curbs, gutters, ditches, related storm drainage facilities, railroad crossings, retaining walls that are less than four feet high, and culverts less than four feet in diameter." Bridges must be at least 20 feet long and be part of the public transportation system.

Robert McAndrews, Chief, Road Operations & Maintenance - Walla Walla County Public Works, says "Maintenance is what we use to preserve the County's infrastructure.

Maintenance consists of various kinds of upkeep and repairs on County roads, bridges, equipment, facilities, etc. Operations is how we manage staff, equipment, and resources by constantly seeking more efficient processes and procedures.

This indicator measures only local expenditures for road operations and maintenance, both in per capita and per \$1,000 total personal income (TPI), by local governments in the county.

The Washington State expenditure benchmarks, both per capita and \$1,000 of TPI, consist of funds generated and spent at the local level. They do not include expenditures with funding sources outside of local government, such as those from the \$0.49 per gallon Washington State gas tax, or any federal funding source.

While this indicator reflects Walla Walla County as a whole, it only includes local government expenditures by Walla Walla County, and the Cities of Walla Walla and College Place. Further, while the two cities show expenditures for road maintenance, they do not for operations.

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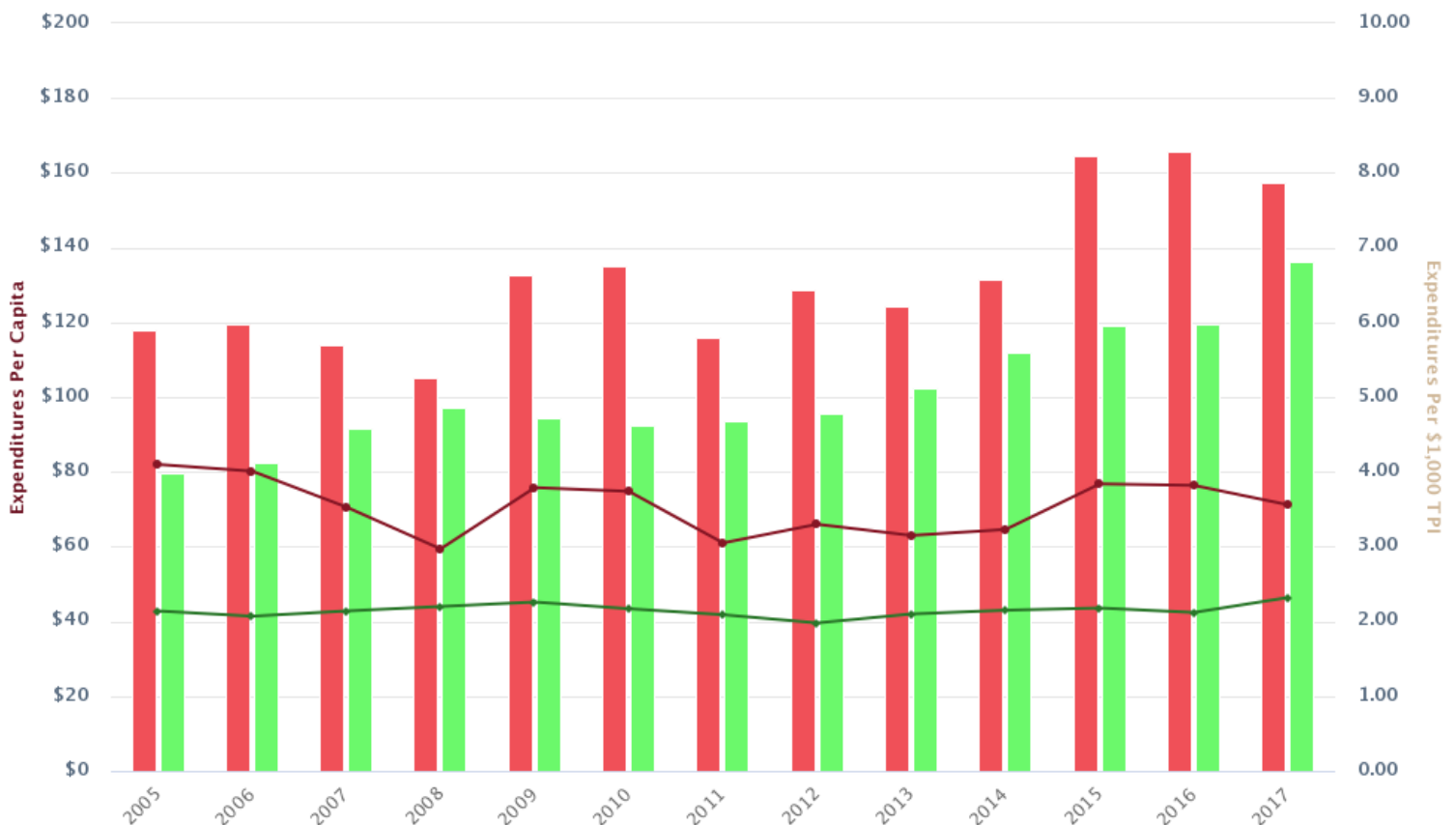
Operations consist of just Walla Walla County government expenditures.

The indicator clearly reveals that Walla Walla County residents spend more than their counterparts across the state on road maintenance and operations, and have consistently done so, according to the Local Government Expenditures On Road Maintenance & Operations: per Capita & per \$1,000 Total Personal Income (TPI).

During 2017, Walla Walla County residents spent \$157.30 per capita on road maintenance and operations, increasing from \$117.80 in 2005. Residents also spent \$3.56 per \$1,000 TPI in that year, decreasing from \$4.10 since 2005. In other words, the financing burden on incomes lessened over the 13 years tracked

Across the state, comparative local government expenditures were \$136.40 and \$2.32 during 2017, increasing from \$79.80 and \$2.14, respectively, since 2005.

5.2.3 Local Government Expenditures On Road Maintenance & Operations: per Capita & per \$1,000 Total Personal Income (TPI)



This graph was downloaded on 5/8/2019 from wallawallatrends.org

- Walla Walla County - Expenditures per Capita
- Washington State - Expenditures per Capita
- Walla Walla County - Expenditures per \$1,000 TPI
- Washington State - Expenditures per \$1,000 TPI

CITIZENS VALUE QUALITY ROADS IN WALLA WALLA COUNTY

by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

In short, Walla Walla County residents place a high value on the quality roads and are willing to pay more than their counterparts across the state.

According to McAndrews, "Walla Walla County roads are frequently used for farming activities which provide significant economic value to the region. We realize that Walla Walla County's roads are important not only to our local residents, but also to farmers, truckers, and consumers everywhere. Thus, we place a significant emphasis on road O&M so we can make the most of our tax dollars and so we can continue to provide quality roads now and into the future."

It's not just a growing county population, increasing by nearly 30% over the last 30-years, but an increasing market value of agricultural products sold, wine production, and number of wineries that take advantage of this infrastructure.

McAndrews points out "wheat has always been important to the area, the local wine industry continues to grow, and apples, onions, and other crops are all important to the area as well.

There is a significant amount of County road infrastructure which is utilized year round to provide these various commodities to buyers not only statewide, but around the world.

Investing in the maintenance of existing roads extends their life, which is a priority. McAndrews says "One thing that sets Walla Walla County apart is our chip seal program. We have divided Walla Walla County into nine areas that each include roughly equal amounts of paved roads."

"Every year we devote a significant amount of time and money to preserving our roads by chip sealing one of the nine chip seal areas. This process typically includes between 50-70 miles of road each year" said McAndrews. "Thus, we place a significant emphasis on road O&M so we can make the most of our tax dollars and so we can continue to provide quality roads now and into the future."



TRENDS IN ACTION:

HOUSING IN WALLA WALLA IS MORE AFFORDABLE THAN THE STATE, YET DECREASING

by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

To rent or buy - that is the question. As the housing market becomes tighter, inevitably some people will be squeezed out of homeownership. While the estimated homeownership levels in the Walla Walla area have increased by 1% from 2013 to 2017, the traditional benefits of home ownership, such as building equity and establishing long-term stable housing costs on a fixed-rate mortgage, are becoming harder to achieve.

Affordability plays a large part, but first-time homebuyers typically don't have the financial resources to purchase a home compared to people who have equity from a previously purchased home. With both home prices and rents increasing faster than wages, it's harder for renters to save for their first home.

While a lack of suitable land to build and the cost of new home construction affect overall home prices, traditional supply and demand forces have perhaps had the largest impact. What has the market been showing?

The latest annual data available for this indicator, from the Washington Center for Real Estate Research (WCRER) at the University of Washington, shows there were 870 homes sold in Walla Walla County during 2018, an increase from 560 since 2012, or by 55% (see: page). This is down 30 sales from 2016 when 900 homes in Walla Walla County were sold - the highest number between 2012 and 2018.

On the supply side, WCRER also shows the number of homes listed for sale in Walla Walla County has dropped since 2011. Comparing fourth quarter figures, there were 244 homes listed for sale during 2018, the lowest number since the fourth quarter of 2011 when there were 597 homes listed for sale (see: page 21). This represents a decrease of 59%. Everything else equal, a diminished supply will raise housing prices.

Demand for housing is largely driven by population growth and income increases. Since 2011, the estimated population of Walla Walla County has grown by 3,000, or by 5.1% (see: . From 2013 to 2017, the estimated median household income in the Walla Walla

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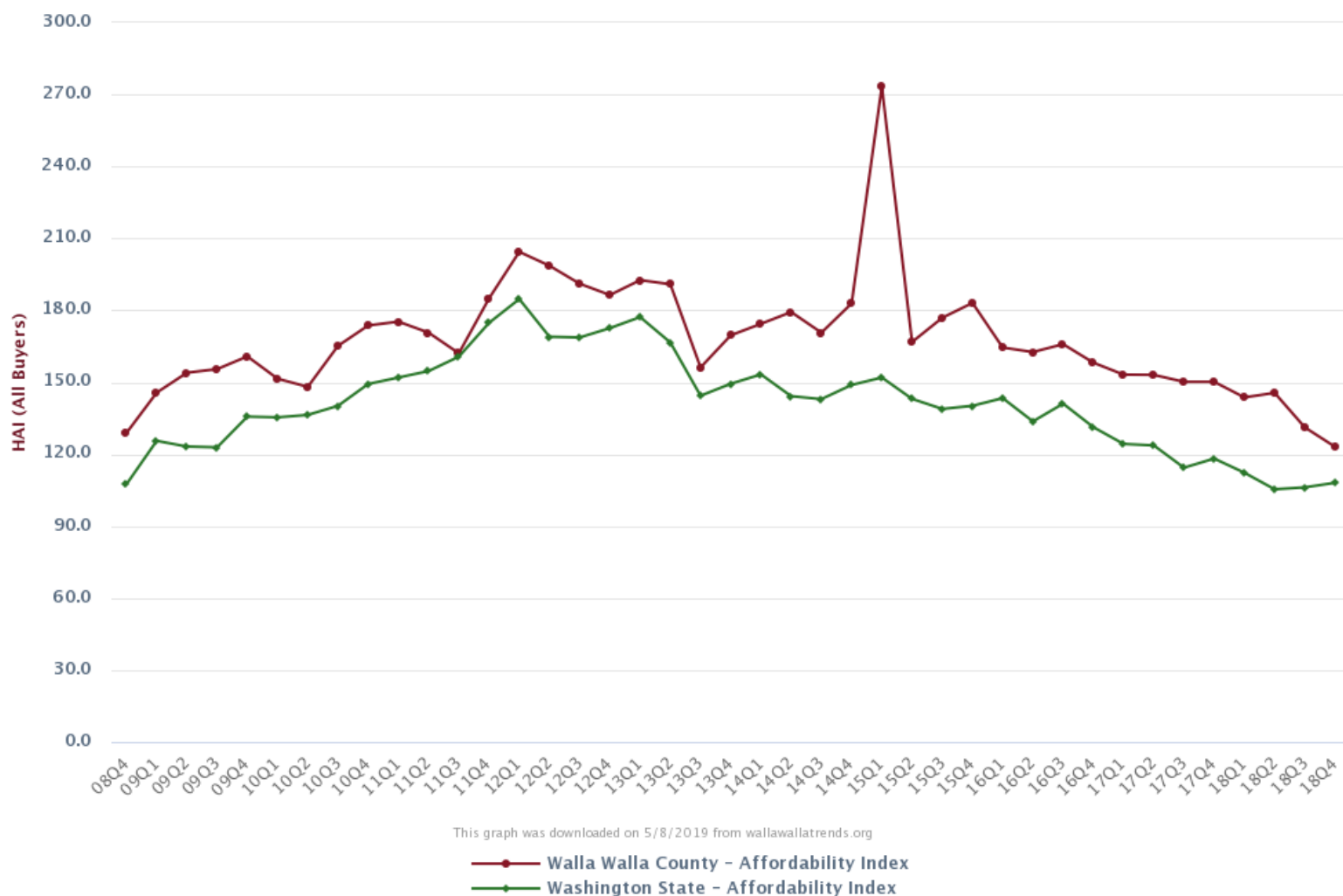
metro area, consisting of Walla Walla and Columbia Counties combined, has climbed by over \$10,000, or by 23.5% (see: Indicator 1.1.2). These are healthy forces for the market, leading to higher median housing prices. A question the follows: have incomes increased faster than housing prices, or the reverse?

Looking at the Housing Affordability Index (HAI) for All-Buyers on the Trends website, we see the measure in Walla Walla County has been consistently above the state benchmark.

This means purchasing a home in Walla Walla County has consistently been more affordable than in Washington State as a whole.

Yet, housing affordability has been decreasing. More specifically, during the fourth quarter of 2018 (18Q4), the All-Buyers HAI in Walla Walla County was 123.1, This represents a sharp decline from the fourth quarter of 2011, when it stood at 185. The most recent result for Walla Walla still sheds favorable light versus the state: its affordability measure, was 108.1.

5.1.2 Housing Affordability Index for All Homebuyers



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How do we interpret these numbers? The Index is essentially a ratio of income to housing costs. To calculate, the Washington Center for Real Estate Research(WCRER) assumes:

- a median price home;
- 20% down payment;
- 30-year mortgage;
- median family income (family here is defined as “two or more individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption”);
- no mortgage insurance;
- a mortgage rate based on the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) estimate of effective rate loans closed for existing homes.

A central assumption of both the All-Buyers HAI (and an analog, the 1st Time Buyers HAI) is that the household doesn’t spend more than 25% of its income on principal and interest payments. A HAI value of 100 indicates a household just meets the requirement and pays exactly this share of its income to principal and interest. Any value above 100 indicates greater affordability, while any value below 100 indicates less affordability. In essence, the average household purchasing a home in Walla Walla County had 123% of income required for housing to be considered affordable in the last quarter of 2018. In Washington State, the average household purchasing a home had 108% of income required for housing to be considered affordable.

While housing affordability measures in both Walla Walla County and Washington State have been decreasing, each has decreased from substantially high marks during the first quarter of

2012 (204.4 and 184.7, respectively).

What might lie behind the decline in affordability here? Riley Clubb, Walla Walla City Council Member, believes housing affordability “has been getting worse in Walla Walla recently, and that it's primarily driven by the fact that supply has been choked by local regulations and a general attitude against growth.”

While the HAI uses a methodology allowing a direct comparison for each county in Washington State, it has weaknesses.

Clubb said, “By focusing entirely on the 50th percentile (ie. the median), the HAI fails to provide any information about the 10th or the 30th or the 90th percentiles, etc. The assumption may be that the relationship at the 50th percentile is representative of the relationship at the others, however this assumption is false.”

“Housing supply in Walla Walla has also grown over the last several decades in a way that does not accommodate a diversity of housing types and, therefore, prices”, said Clubb.

Addressing the problem, the Walla Walla City Council unanimously voted to restructure all residential zones “into ‘neighborhood residential’ which allows for a variety and diversity of housing types, including duplex/triplex rentals and smaller homes which are more affordable to a larger number of households”, said Clubb.



TRENDS IN ACTION:

AT ALL PRICE LEVELS, HOUSING SUPPLY IS SHRINKING IN WALLA WALLA COUNTY

by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

Americans love to talk about their homes. And the state of their local housing market. The housing market doesn't only affect people those looking to buy or sell a home, but it can have a huge impact on the overall economy. If we didn't realize the interaction before, the pop of the housing bubble a decade ago made it clear.

According to the National Association of Realtors, a single home sale (not including the value of the home) in Washington State during 2017 had a total economic impact of \$119,027.

Price, of course, is a key measure of the housing market. But behind the prices lies demand for and supply of homes. This indicator homes in on the latter factor. The month's supply of housing by price range calculates approximately how many months it would take for the current inventory of homes for sale in Walla Walla County to be exhausted, if no new homes were listed.

Aside from offering insight into the balance of supply and demand of homes listed for sale at different price points, this indicator provides a signal to local builders where opportunities

may lie. They also give government officials a sense of where the local housing market may be heading, providing critical insight into the future of real estate excise tax streams.

The source for this indicator, Washington Center for Real Estate Research (WCER), says a "normal or balanced" inventory would yield a five to seven month supply of homes.

WCER's methodology to calculate the month's supply of homes for sale by price range compares "the number of total [Multiple Listing Service] MLS listings at the end of the quarter to the seasonally-adjusted annual rate sales [SAAR] for that county $[(\text{Listings}/\text{SAAR}) \times 12 = \text{month's supply}]$."

For this indicator, four home price levels are offered:

- Less than \$80,000;
- \$80,000 to \$159,999;
- \$160,000 to \$249,000;
- \$250,000 to \$500,000.

As we look at the graph for the Monthly Supply of Homes Listed by Price Level, two aspects are prominent.

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First, both Walla Walla County and Washington State have experienced substantial decreases in the monthly supply of homes in each of the four price levels over the course of the past few years.

Second, in each of the four price levels, Walla Walla County has consistently had a greater monthly supply of homes than in the state. Currently, nearly all price categories show supply below the equilibrium mark. The exception (for the fourth quarter of 2018), covers homes listed at less than \$80,000.

Tim Sullivan, a member the Associated

Appraisers of Walla Walla, specializes in residential and small income real estate, says homes in the less than \$80,000 category are typically in poor condition. Sullivan said these properties are often in a “barely livable condition requiring a significant amount of work. They are true fixer-uppers.”

We have to go back to the first quarter of 2016 to find a category of homes other than the less than \$80,000 category with more than seven months of inventory. Also during this quarter, homes less than \$80,000 are the only category without having the seven month inventory WCRER considers normal.

5.1.4 Monthly Supply of Homes Listed by Price Level



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by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

Sullivan says land value itself has increased, with a typical residential lot now being worth as much as \$40,000 - \$50,000 alone. He also said much of the raw land is purchased by developers who will produce the typical subdivisions and restrictive zoning has helped contribute to the shortage of available land to build new homes on.

Looking at a few other housing indicators on the Trends website can help provide additional perspective and insight into the housing market in Walla Walla County. The median home resale value in Walla Walla County has increased by 35% since the fourth quarter of 2008 (see: Indicator 5.1.1) while the total number of residential building permits has decreased by 28% since 2000. At the same time, the estimated share of homeowners in the county has grown by 1% from 2013 to 2017 (see: Indicator 5.1.5), closely following state and national homeownership trends during the same time period.

A further factor is distressed supply. According to RealtyTrac, which offers “comprehensive foreclosure and housing data for home buyers and investors”, during February, 2019, in Washington State

approximately 1 in 7,020 homes were foreclosed. Here in Walla Walla? 1 in 24,354, one of the lowest rates in the state.

So even with housing prices increasing and buildable, residential zoned land becoming scarce, the housing crunch, as measured by affordability and foreclosures, is still greater in many places outside of the county.

INDICATOR HIGHLIGHT

WALLA WALLA COUNTY

LOWEST ANNUAL RIVER FLOW

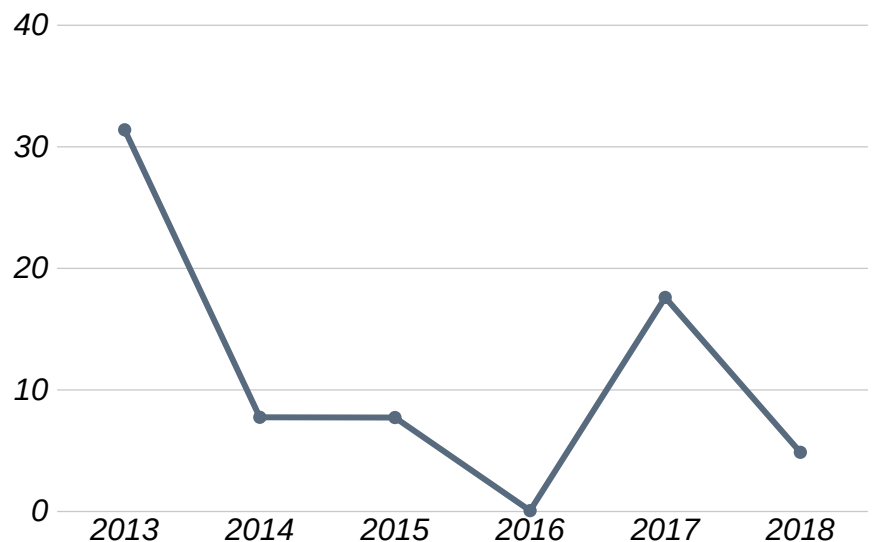
WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

For over a hundred years, stretches of the main stem of the Walla Walla River ran dry in summer months due to agricultural diversion of the river water. Salmon runs and several native fish populations became threatened and, as a result, were listed under the Endangered Species Act. Because of actions taken by local and state agencies concerned with the health of the river, it no longer runs dry in the summers and the fish populations are improving.

Change in flow is a key determinant of a river's health. Changes in flow are caused by human and natural actions. These include rainfall, snowfall, temperature and draws for potable, industrial and agricultural use. Without adequate flows, fish do not have enough water to live, the water becomes too warm to support a healthy fish population, and pollution from municipalities, industries, residential fertilizers and pesticides is concentrated in a smaller amount of water.

WHERE ARE WE?

During 2018, the lowest seven-day average flow for the Walla Walla River at Touchet was 4.87 cubic feet per second (CFS), decreasing from the measurement of 8.1 CFS in 1980.



The flow change most critical to a river's health is the level occurring during the lowest flow days of the year. During these periods, biological systems are put under the greatest stress.

This indicator measures the lowest seven day average river flow per year of the Walla Walla River. Specifically, the Walla Walla River is measured near Touchet (approximately three river miles upstream from U.S. Hwy. 12).

FOR MORE:

[HTTP://WALLAWALLATRENDS.ORG/GRAPH.CFM?
CAT_ID=3&SUB_CAT_ID=1&IND_ID=7](http://wallawallatrends.org/graph.cfm?CAT_ID=3&SUB_CAT_ID=1&IND_ID=7)

THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AT EWU

The EWU Institute for Public Policy & Economic Analysis was created in 2002 to provide data and analysis about a variety of factors in the region that will be useful for businesses, communities and others as they plan for the future. The Community Indicators Initiatives seek to improve local, private and public decision-making by providing relevant data in an easily navigable website. The data is neutral information for all parties involved.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Port of Walla Walla



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