



EQUITY IN ACTION: Tacoma Equity Index Case Studies

**Using Data to Operationalize Equity and Transition
into an Antiracist City**

City of Tacoma, April 2024



Foreword from the Mayor of Tacoma

My fellow Tacomans,

As the proud Mayor of our thriving city, I am committed to ensuring we are investing in all our communities equitably. As a city, we need to focus on enhancing their unique character and making them more livable. The Tacoma Equity Index ensures we are using data to make decisions to support that goal.

Tacoma is still feeling the effects of decades of intentional disinvestment that harmed communities of color at disproportional rates. Those challenges and inequities our communities continue to face did not happen overnight. They were created through a history of racist systems, policies, and practices that systematically prevented investment in communities of color and continue today. Systems like redlining, an explicitly racist policy utilizing mapping where we can see that many of the neighborhoods redlined in the 1930s continue to be in low opportunity areas today.

To meet our commitment to be an antiracist city and reverse the inequities caused by the negative impacts of racist systems, policies, and practices, we must be intentional in the way we invest in our communities and use the visual mapping of the index to directly combat and reverse the systemic inequities.

The Tacoma Equity Index is a tool not only for our elected leaders and City of Tacoma staff to improve equitable decision making, but one that every resident and partner can use to make more data-driven decisions and make Tacoma a community that provides every resident the resources and opportunities needed to succeed. I hope you will join us in this shared work and help us meet our commitment to a more equitable and anti-racist city for every resident.

Yours in Service,



Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional homelands of the Puyallup Tribe. The Puyallup people have lived on and stewarded these lands since the beginning of time and continue to do so today. We recognize that this land acknowledgement is one small step toward true allyship, and we commit to uplifting the voices, experiences, and histories of the Indigenous people of this land and beyond.

This collection of case studies would not be possible without the hard work and support of many.

We acknowledge and share deep gratitude to Alison Beason whose vision conceptualized the Equity Index and whose leadership created and implemented the tool.

We acknowledge the leadership of former Chief Communications Officer Tanisha Jumper, former Director of the Office of Equity and Human Rights Diane Powers, former Director of the Office of Equity and Human Rights Lisa Woods, Chief Strategy Officer Jacques Colon, and Director of Information Technology Daniel Key for their vision, expertise, and instrumental role in shaping this work. We also acknowledge the efforts of the members of the leadership team at the City of Tacoma for all their contributions and collaboration to support this work.

The dedication and exceptional work of staff, past and present, who created and supported the implementation of the Equity Index has been essential. We acknowledge Adriana Abramovich, Bucoda Warren, Chelsea Talbert, Christina Chelf, Alicia Bradshaw, Idalis Laboy Cintron, Klarissa Monteros, Nancy Shattuck, and many others for all their contributions.

This collection would not be possible without the generous contributions from staff and departments who not only work to lead with equity but also took time to share about their work, including successes and opportunities to advance Tacoma's transformation into an antiracist city. Thank you.

Thank you to staff, partners, and community members who are using the Equity Index in their work.

We extend gratitude to Tony Guidotti at the Harvard University, Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics and Justice, Health & Democracy Impact Initiative for their collaboration and support in creating this collection.

Thank you to The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University for their work in creating the methodology for the Equity Index. This has been foundational to creating a data-driven tool that is both defensible and repeatable.

Thank you to Community Attributes for developing and maintaining the public-facing Equity Index tool.

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Please note that each case study could be categorized in many ways and included in different categories. The categories and order below can be one helpful framework to begin to digest the ways the Equity Index is used. This collection does not encompass all utilizations of the Equity Index.

Preface

The City of Tacoma has committed to becoming an antiracist city by modeling equity and antiracism, and by taking tangible actions to make equity real through our programs, policies, and practices. One of the most important ways the City of Tacoma has shown that commitment has been the development and implementation of the Tacoma Equity Index. The Tacoma Equity Index is a Geographic Information System (GIS) tool that is used to map opportunity throughout Tacoma based on a number of different community indicators, and therefore show how (in)equitably opportunity exists throughout the city.

This collection of case studies showcases summaries and stories of how staff and community partners utilize Tacoma's Equity Index to make intentional, data-informed decisions that lead to more equitable outcomes in our community. Our hope is that this collection provides not just a learning resource, but a catalyst for generating ideas and taking action.

This collection is designed to highlight just some of the ways various departments utilize the Equity Index, although it doesn't cover every previous and possible use. It's also important to note that this isn't a deep technical analysis of the Equity Index methodology. For detailed information and FAQs, please visit the Tacoma Equity Index Website.

As we delve into these case studies, we want to anchor our analysis on the insights and perspectives that the Equity Index provides while also acknowledging that decision-making and outcomes are influenced by a multitude of factors, including community engagement, additional data, financial constraints, political dynamics, and more.

The Tacoma Equity Index emerged from a shared commitment to address disparities and inequities by dismantling racism in all forms, including analyzing how decisions are made. It stands as a testament to not just the dedication of policymakers and staff, but also the many residents who continue to push and lead the City of Tacoma towards the creation of a more equitable and inclusive Tacoma. Through rigorous research, analysis, and dialogue, the Equity Index serves as both a compass and a mirror, guiding us towards a future where every individual is afforded the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Within these case studies, we encounter a wide range of narratives that shed light on various aspects of equitable decision-making in Tacoma. From examining arts and culture accessibility to disrupting disparities in outreach and business support, each study provides a unique perspective on the complex factors influencing equitable decisions. By immersing ourselves in these stories, we gain valuable insights into some of the drivers of inequity and, more importantly, identify actionable strategies for driving meaningful change.

Our hope is that this collection serves not only as a valuable resource for staff and policymakers but also as a catalyst for fostering dialogue and collaboration within our community. As we navigate the challenges and uncertainties of our time, let us also draw inspiration from the resilience and determination demonstrated by those whose stories are not featured in these pages, those who shaped our city by fighting for just and equitable outcomes throughout Tacoma's storied history.

Together, let's use this tool and these case studies to continue to each play our part in our collective journey toward a more just and inclusive Tacoma.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed their time, expertise, and passion to the development of this collection. May it stand as a testament to the power of collective action and our enduring commitment to equity.

Introduction



History and Lasting Impacts of Redlining in Tacoma

Situated along Washington State’s Puget Sound and resting on the traditional lands of the Puyallup people, Tacoma is a bustling international port city in Pierce County, with sweeping mountain, city, and water views. Urbanites are drawn to downtown Tacoma for its competitively priced residential spaces, while families gravitate toward Tacoma’s charming neighborhoods with big city amenities.

Like many American cities, Tacoma is part of a long history of systemic racism including the perpetuation of inequitable legislation, policies, and investments. For Tacoma, this includes the [forced expulsion of Chinese residents](#) in 1885, [incarceration of Japanese residents](#) during WWII, and forced segregation of communities of color due to [redlining practices](#) from the 1930s through the 1960s.



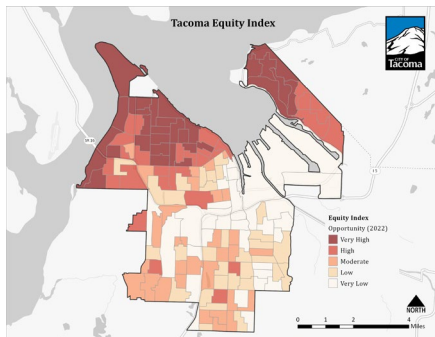
Redlining practices have disproportionately impacted historically marginalized communities and communities of color by limiting or removing access to quality education, health and human services, transportation and mobility, in addition to many other indicators of equity which are used to measure if community basic needs are met. These discriminatory practices, maps and policies have lasting impacts to this day; they have indelibly shaped the demographic and economic outcomes in communities.

In support of addressing and dismantling these inequities and barriers, [emerging research](#) shows that “historical redlining is linked to increased risk of diabetes, hypertension, and early mortality due to heart disease with evidence suggesting it impacts health through suppressing economic opportunity and human capital, or the knowledge, skills, and value one contributes to society.” Additionally, the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) conducted and published its 2018 [Home Owners’ Loan Corporation \(HOLC\) “Redlining Maps”: The Persistent Structure of Segregation and Economic Inequality Study](#) which includes the comparison of redlining maps from the 1930s to current economic and demographic information. The findings demonstrated “to a startling degree, the results reveal the persistent structure of segregation and economic inequality persistent pattern of both economic and racial residential exclusion.”

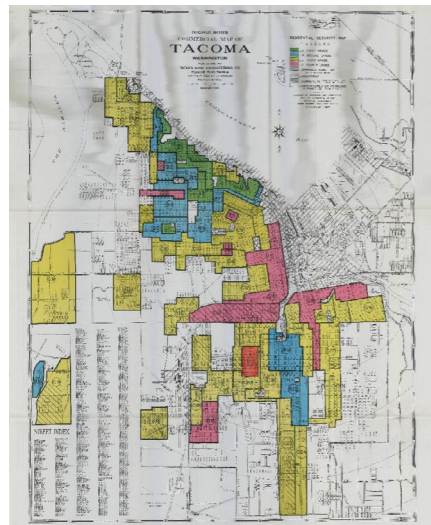
In Tacoma, the legacy of redlining has continued to be present. Areas labeled as “best” and “still desirable” in the 1930s are high opportunity areas today, meaning residents have, for example, greater access to quality education and greater access to parks, transit, and healthy food as compared to the rest of Tacoma. Conversely, areas that were labeled as “definitely declining” and “hazardous” are the same areas where barriers continue to be present and coexist. Thus, cyclically perpetuating historical and modern-day inequities to these same communities. These areas, which were historically segregated, industrial, and impoverished, are where the majority of historically marginalized and people of color reside today.

While this section focuses on parts of Tacoma's history and continued impacts of redlining and racism, Tacoma is also renowned for its diversity and resilience. Throughout history and continuing through present day, Tacomans have fought to change systems, confront racism, disrupt disparities, and hold government accountable. [The Tacoma Public Library](#) and [the Washington State Historical Society](#) highlight some of these important stories while local newspapers like the [Tacoma News Tribune](#) document the ongoing work that is happening today. While not a comprehensive list, below are a few resources to deepen understanding of Tacoma's History:

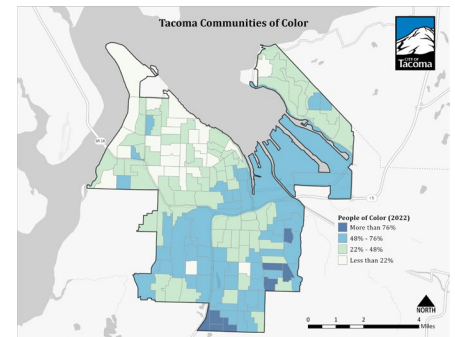
- [First 100 Years of Tacoma's Neighborhoods](#) (YouTube Video)
- [How We Got Here: A Reckoning with U.S. and Tacoma History](#) (YouTube Video)
- [Greg Tanbara's Interview on Tacoma's Japan Town](#), part of the [University of Washington Tacoma Oral History: Founding Stories](#) (Audio)
- [UW Tacoma Community History Projects Homepage](#) (Available at UW Tacoma Library)
- [Tacoma's Struggle for Civil Rights by Washington State Historical Society](#) (PDF)
- [African Americans Helped Shape Tacoma Since Before the City Itself](#) (Article by Steve Dunkelberger, South Sound Talk)
- [Tacoma Public Library Black History Research Guide](#)
- [Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room Collections](#) which include research guides and collections focused on the people, places, and events that have shaped Tacoma and the Puget Sound Region



Tacoma Equity Index



1930s Redlining Map



Tacoma Communities of Color

To learn more about redlining, watch Tacoma Public Library's video on [Redlining in Tacoma](#) or visit the University of Richmond's [Mapping Inequality](#) interactive map of Tacoma.

Key Terms for Understanding

The City of Tacoma's 2015-2025 Strategic Plan is called **Tacoma 2025** and focuses on creating **opportunity** for Tacoma residents to enjoy a high quality of life, earn a living wage, have access to education, and help shape their neighborhoods and city.

Equity is when everyone has access without barriers to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential. Equity is different from equality. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates resources and opportunities according to their need, so that identity can no longer predict life outcome to reach an equal outcome.

Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities, despite the history and current reality of their social location/circumstances/situation.

High Opportunity represents locations where community members have better access to opportunities to succeed and excel in life, and as a result often experience better outcomes. These better opportunities include things like higher performing schools, access to adequate transportation, safe neighborhoods, livable wage employment, good health outcomes such as higher life expectancies, and safe and healthy environmental conditions.

Low Opportunity areas represent locations where community members have less access to opportunities to succeed and excel in life, and as a result often experience worse outcomes. Residents in lower opportunity areas face more obstacles to opportunity, as these communities have been given limited access to institutional and societal investments, ultimately limiting quality of life.

Antiracism is a commitment to actively opposing and eliminating racism in all its forms, both individual and systemic. It involves recognizing the inherent value and dignity of all individuals regardless of their race or ethnicity and working to dismantle the structures and systems that perpetuate racial discrimination and inequality. Antiracism goes beyond simply being "not racist" and requires ongoing self-reflection, education, and advocacy to challenge biases, dismantle oppressive systems, and promote equity and justice for all people, regardless of their racial background.

Antiracist Transformation

Achieving equitable outcomes requires intentionally building equity and antiracism into everything we do, how we do it, and how we approach our collective vision. This means recognizing that the City of Tacoma’s historic and current policies and practices have intentionally invested in white communities and divested in communities of color. It means honoring those most impacted by the issues by centering their experiences. It means reflecting our community, as a workforce and in all spaces that have historically and continue to be disproportionately white. And it means the City of Tacoma should develop policies, programs, and services with equity and antiracism as an intentional, central component to have a positive impact on the communities where once we did not.



Highlighted by community members in the Tacoma 2025 strategic plan community engagement process, the City of Tacoma began its journey to transition to become an antiracist organization. Part of that work was casting the vision that all policies must be antiracist and part of that commitment includes [Resolution 40622](#) which formally acknowledges that the City of Tacoma’s institutions, systems, policies, practices, and contracts are impacted by systemic racism and have not adequately served the needs of everyone in our community and, in particular, the needs of Black community members and other community members of color. It affirms the City of Tacoma’s commitment to racial equity and improving existing systems for all community members.

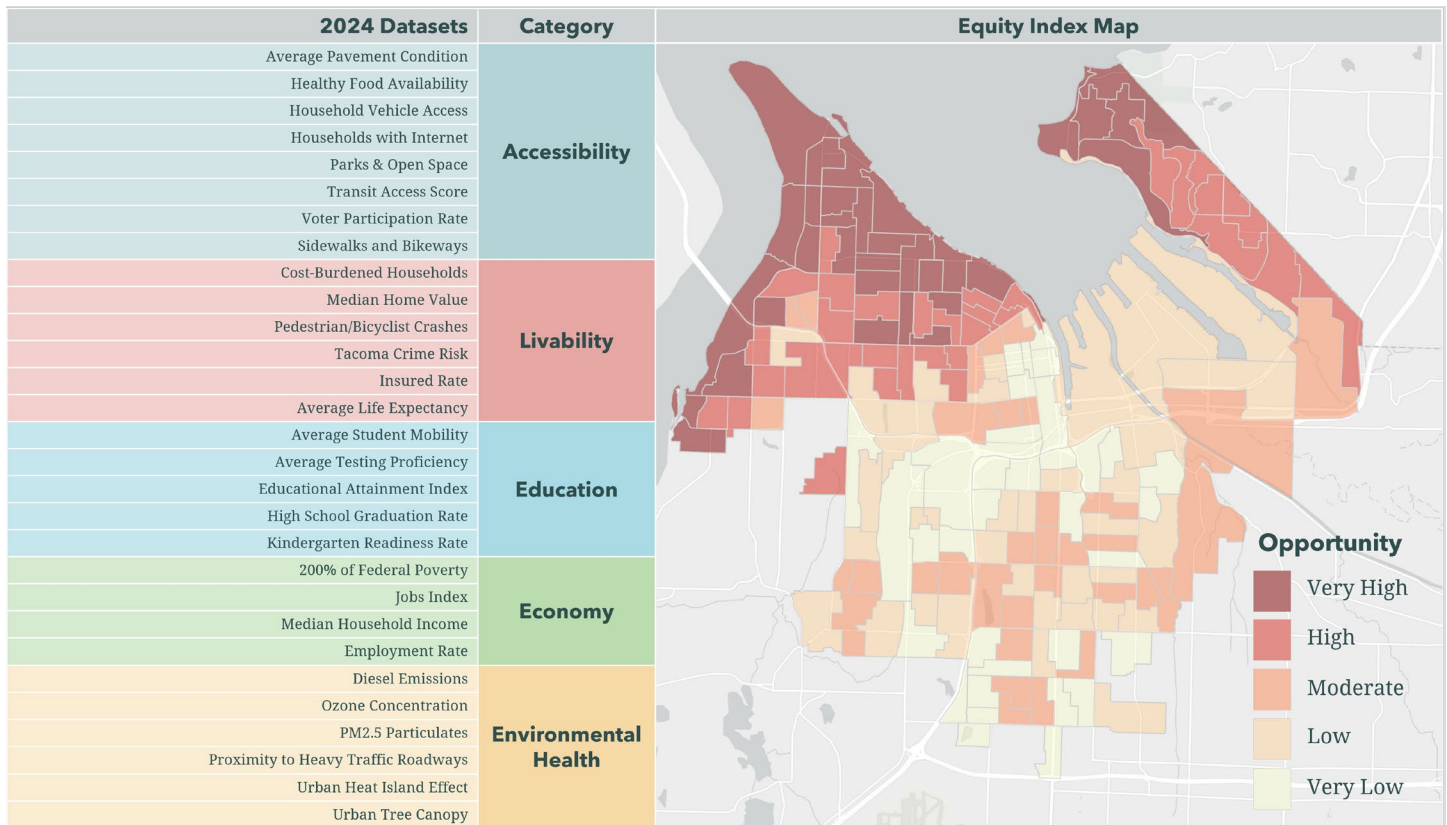
Building the Equity Index

Acknowledging this history of inequitable practices, the City of Tacoma’s Office of Equity and Human Rights worked with the Kirwan Institute out of Ohio State University to develop an opportunity index with three general goals:

Identify, Track, and Close Disparities	Support Data-Driven Decision-Making	Increase Transparency and Accountability
Identify, track, and close disparities in outcomes faced by those most likely to experience inequity	Guide decisions about the allocation of resources and policy development	Increase transparency and accountability and give communities tools to share in successes and advocate for change

The resulting Tacoma Equity Index contains 34 indicators, which are used to assess community and neighborhood strengths and disparities and help identify how the City of Tacoma can make investments that increase resources and interrupt inequity. The [interactive mapping tool](#) scores Tacoma’s 169 Census Block Groups by 34 different indicators placed in five equally weighted categories: **Livability, Accessibility, Economy, Education,** and **Environmental Health.**

The 34 indicators for each of the five determinant categories of the index are based on [Tacoma 2025](#) and were meticulously and collaboratively chosen. To create the calculations behind Tacoma Equity Index, City of Tacoma staff collaborated with the Kirwan Institute to select an array of community indicators of well-being, each of which has been shown in the social sciences literature to influence one’s ability to succeed in life. The data for these indicators were collected at or aggregated to the Census Block Group level – roughly the size of a small neighborhood – and combined in the overall Equity Index into a single measure based on several factors that can be compared across the city. This means if an area is low opportunity, it is low compared to the rest of Tacoma and if it is high opportunity, it is high compared to the rest of Tacoma. This is why Block Groups in Tacoma may have a different opportunity level when viewed on the Pierce County Equity Index, as that Block Group is being compared to all other Block Groups in the county rather than city.



Colors in the map have been **intentionally reversed** to counter historical and often current representations of low income or communities of color as “negative”. The “flipped” gradient also does not use green or “positive” colors when referring to historically white, high opportunity areas. Instead, **darker colors on the Index represent areas with more opportunity**. Meanwhile, **lighter colors call out the need for more investment and opportunity**. In other words, the 34 indicators add more and more data layers of opportunity so the color will become darker to represent all the opportunities in an area. Low opportunity areas have fewer opportunities layered on top of each other, so the color is lighter.

The Equity Index also has map overlay options to view demographic information. Many factors influence the kinds of opportunity people have, starting with unchangeable characteristics such as gender, race and ethnicity, and changeable characteristics such as a family’s income, individual health, environmental health, access to transportation, and more. Racism is real and the data shows that areas with higher opportunity have fewer residents of color and more white residents than areas of low opportunity which have more residents of color and fewer white residents.

The purpose of the Equity Index is to look for ways to add opportunities that address disparities by area and race. **Race is not calculated as an indicator because race is not the cause of low opportunity. Racism, especially systemic racism, like redlining, racist covenants, and racist policies have intentionally excluded people of color from opportunity.** It is essential that demographic information is included on the Equity Index, but it is not calculated in the opportunity score. The ability to view race, languages spoken at home, age, ability and more has improved the City of Tacoma’s language access work, community engagement, and empowered staff with the data to learn more about communities that are disproportionately impacted by indicators.

Operationalizing the Equity Index

The development and ongoing improvements to the Equity Index have taken time and regional collaboration. In 2022, Tacoma worked with Pierce County to launch a county-wide tool with similar methodology. An arguably larger challenge, however, has been learning to utilize the Equity Index as a tool in Tacoma's transformative journey. Since its inception, staff at the City of Tacoma have been using the Equity Index in innovative and exciting ways.

This collection of case studies is meant to be a tool to spark ideas and not a technical analysis. Please visit the Tacoma Equity Index website for additional information including methodology resources, presentations, and frequently asked questions. This collection includes some use cases and does not encompass every utilization of the Equity Index.

As you read these case studies, please note that equity is not the deciding factor in many decisions, but a component of a larger methodology based on relevant data, outreach, engagement, storytelling, and more. We caution against a shallow analysis of the data. The Equity Index is one tool in the toolbox to support equitable decision-making.

“There is no such thing as a nonracist or race-neutral policy. Every policy in every institution in every community in every nation is producing or sustaining either racial inequity or equity between racial groups”

-Ibram X. Kendi, “How to Be an Antiracist”

An aerial photograph of a city street, likely in a downtown area. The street is wide and has multiple lanes. On the left side, there are several large, modern buildings, including a prominent white building with many windows. On the right side, there are smaller buildings and parking lots. The street is lined with trees and has a clear sky above. A large red overlay box is positioned in the upper half of the image, containing the title text. The text is white and bold. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day.

Overlaying Data for an Early Analysis

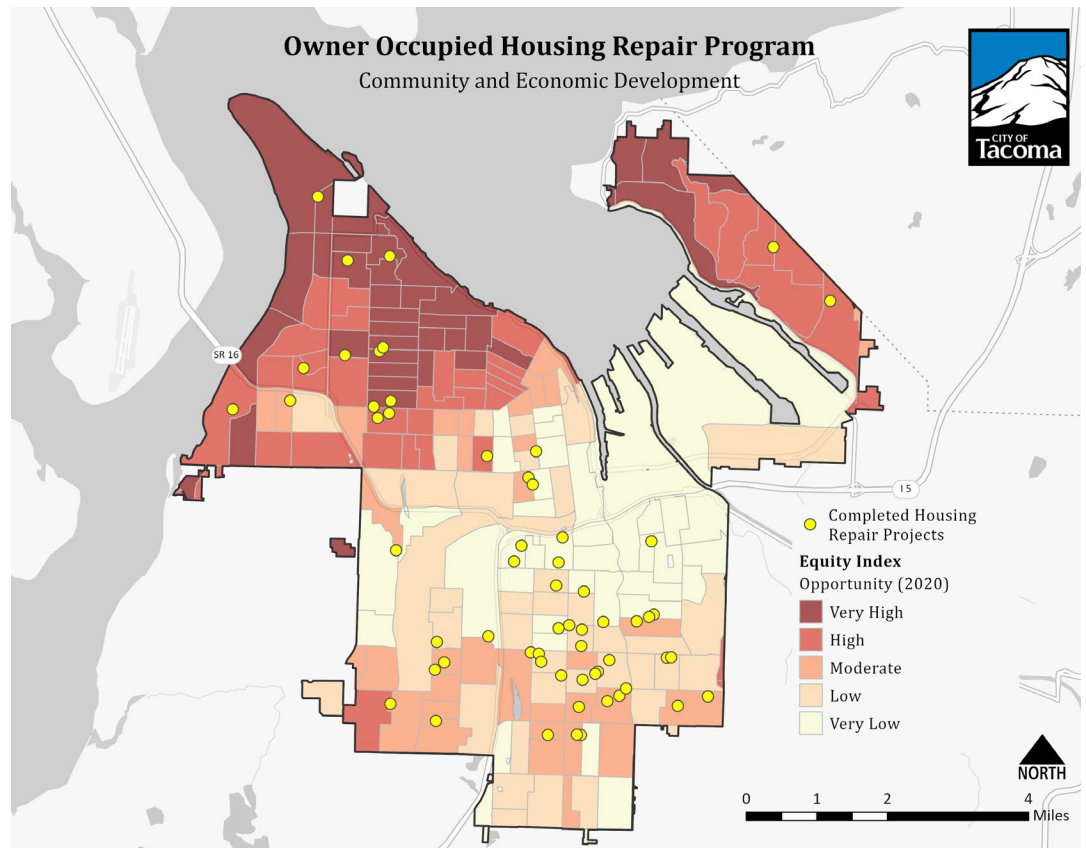
Owner Occupied Housing Repair Program

Use Category

Overlaying Data for an Early Analysis

Lead Department

Housing Division,
Community and Economic Development



Background

One of the objectives of Tacoma's Affordable Housing Action Strategy is to preserve 2,300 existing units of affordable housing by the end of 2028. One of the programs to support this is the Single-Family Home Rehabilitation Program which has completed 60 projects since 2019, totaling over \$3.5 million in health and safety repairs and upgrades to owner-occupied homes. These repairs and upgrades assist with housing preservation and keeping homeowners in their homes. Staff took the locations of the repair projects they had assisted with and put them on the Equity Index to gain insights into where projects have occurred and set goals for upcoming projects. Staff saw that many projects already occur in low opportunity areas and are actively working on a targeted marketing plan using the Equity Index to reach more homeowners in low opportunity areas.

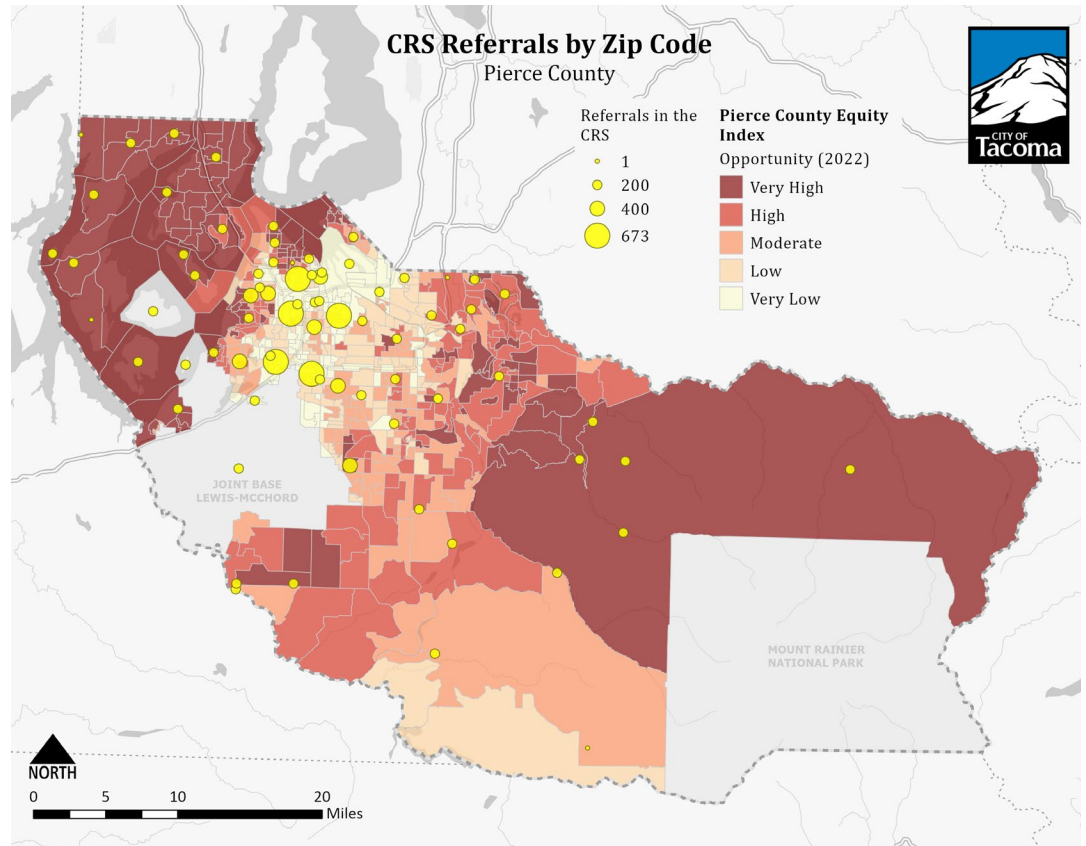
WorkForce Central Common Referral System

Use Category

Overlaying Data for an Early Analysis

Lead Organization

WorkForce Central



Background

WorkForce Central is a Pierce County organization that works to steward the Pierce County Workforce Development System by bridging the gap between job seekers, employers, and community organizations to build a robust workforce and ensure economic vitality across the region. It catalyzes system-wide collaboration and work in conjunction with partners to actively pursue investments in workforce development.

The Common Referral System is a system administered by South Sound 2-1-1 and is utilized by over 16 agencies across Pierce County to cooperatively collect information from customers who are looking for employment and refer them to the appropriate agencies. 2-1-1 Workforce Development specialists also work to remove any barriers and connect clients to any additional needs they may have like transportation, housing, and more.

With the expansion of the Equity Index to Pierce County, Workforce Central was able to use the Equity Index to overlay data from the Common Referral System on the Equity Index map. This step allowed staff to see where outreach and engagement was happening and identify any gaps and opportunities moving forward. This led staff members to do a deeper analysis with their data sources to identify additional areas to focus outreach and engagement, like South Tacoma, the Franklin Pierce area, and areas of the Key Peninsula. One WorkForce Central staff member shared “while this wasn’t directly using the Equity Map data, it was motivated by the gaps and data that the Equity Index helped us identify”.

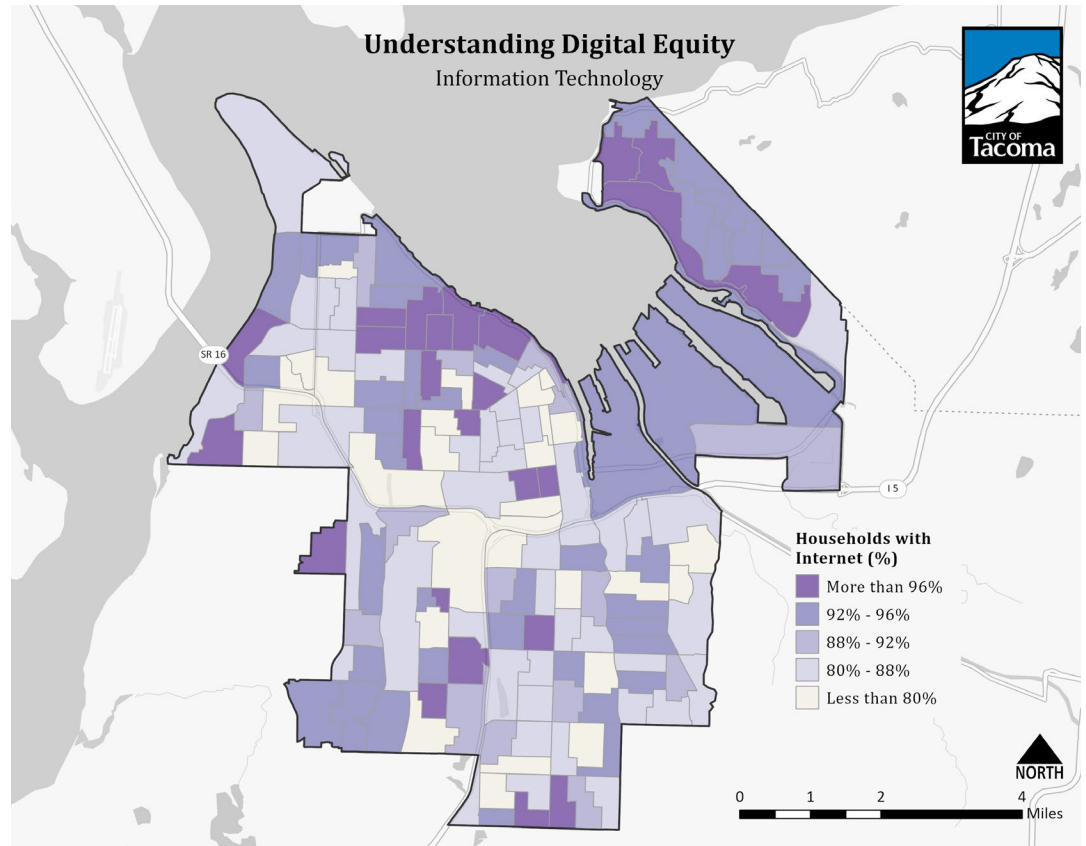
Understanding Gaps in Digital Equity

Use Category

Overlaying Data for an Early Analysis

Lead Department

Information Technology



Background

Internet access is important for many reasons and plays a crucial role in modern society for individuals, businesses, and governments. Internet access enables people to communicate, is a gateway to economic opportunity, a powerful tool in education, and so much more. Conversely, lack of internet access can limit education and job opportunities and exacerbate existing inequities. Efforts to bridge the digital divide and provide reliable internet access to communities can help mitigate these impacts. Governments, non-profit organizations, and private sector initiatives are working to expand internet access to ensure that all communities can benefit from the digital age. Closing the digital divide is not only a matter of equity, but also a step toward fostering economic development, education, and overall well-being in these communities.

The City of Tacoma has three broad goals to define digit equity in Tacoma:

- **Public Internet Access:** Residents of Tacoma have access to open Wi-Fi, kiosks, workstations, etc. in public places that are convenient and accessible.
- **Home Internet Access:** Residents of Tacoma have access to high-speed internet services in their place of residence at a price that is affordable for their level of income and have the hardware necessary to access the internet in the form of desktops, laptops, tablets, phones, etc.
- **Digital Literacy:** Residents of Tacoma have access to programs and information on how to use computers and the internet to achieve their goals, whether in workforce readiness, communication, access to information and services, safety and security online, or otherwise.

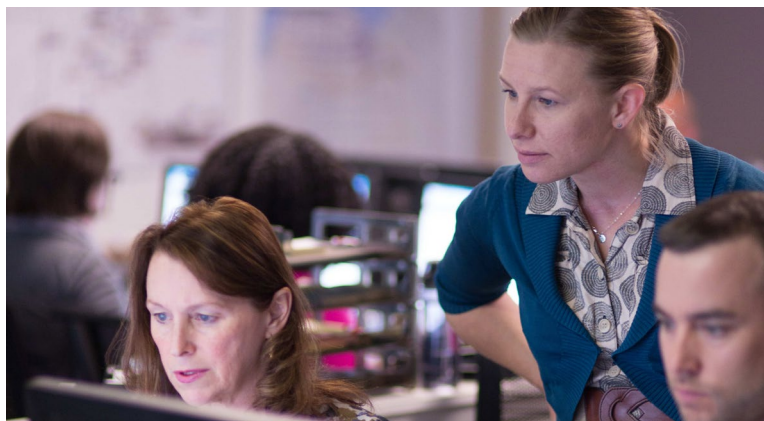
Lack of adequate home internet access in many, especially rural, communities can be attributed to a lack of infrastructure, or limited service providers. Tacoma is an urban city that has invested both publicly and privately in internet infrastructure and most premises are served by multiple providers. Tacoma's Department of Information Technology wanted to learn more about households that don't have internet to understand how to best approach solutions to increasing access to the internet.

Decision Point

Information Technology sought to understand what contributes to lack of home internet access in order to inform where to best focus time, resources, and efforts to achieve the City of Tacoma's goals.

Action

Staff used the Equity Index to compare the percentages of households with internet access against other indicators to identify disparities and patterns. Upon exploring the Equity Index, staff saw that low internet access is highly correlated to low opportunity areas. Areas with low internet access also have a high number of households spending 30% or more on housing. Low internet access is found in areas with low economic opportunities.



Outcome

The City of Tacoma decided to approach digital equity from an economic standpoint, rather than the usual infrastructure standpoint. This includes making sure libraries, which offer free and public internet access, are open and accessible. City of Tacoma staff also prioritize physical communications and in-person community engagement opportunities in low internet areas while using internet related-communications and engagement in high opportunity/high internet access areas.

In support of Tacoma's goal to remove economic barriers to internet access, Comcast announced in 2023, a \$400,000 investment in four Tacoma-based organizations to form a digital equity network in the South Sound Region, aimed at advancing digital and economic opportunity for local students, families, and small business owners. This partnership advances digital equity, creates a more prepared workforce, and provides critical resources to communities and residents to develop skills they need to succeed in a more digital world.

“Digital equity is a fundamental right, and local communities with equitable access to the internet are simply better positioned to fully engage in today's world,” said Tacoma Mayor Victoria Woodards. “It is essential for education and employment, business development, healthcare, government services, and community involvement. I am grateful to our private sector partners at Comcast for their ongoing commitment to this critical work.”



An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. The scene shows a mix of residential houses, some with swimming pools, and a large green lawn area. In the foreground, there is a circular parking lot and a body of water, possibly a lake or a large pond, surrounded by trees. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The image is overlaid with several semi-transparent purple rectangular shapes in the corners and along the edges.

Resource Prioritization

Equitably Prioritizing Streetlight Installations

Use Category

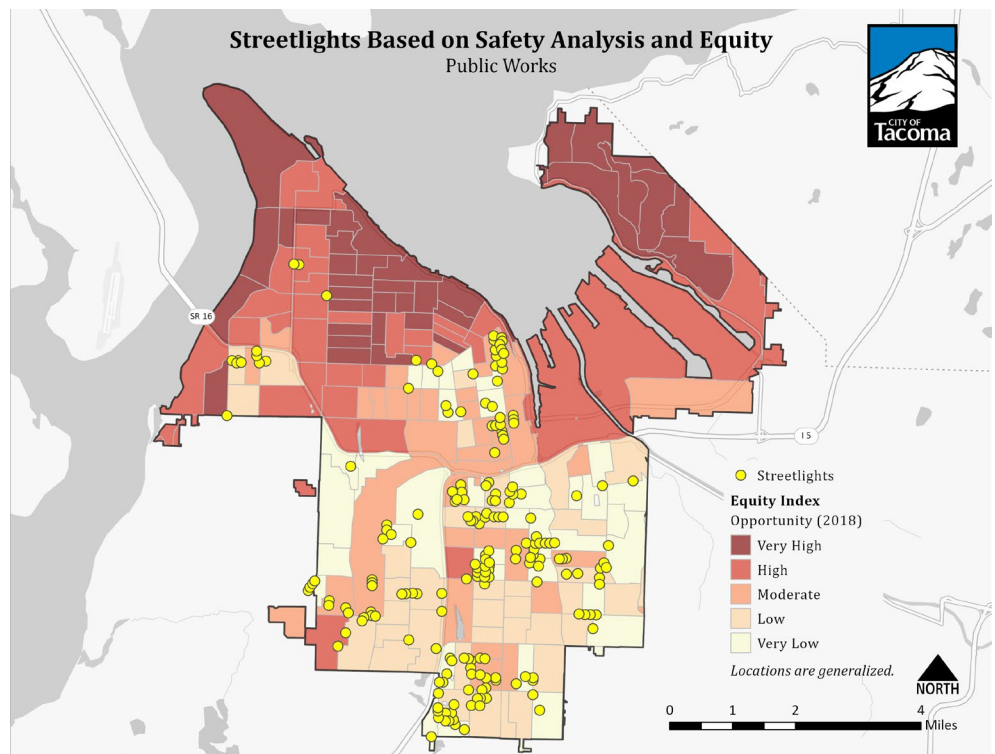
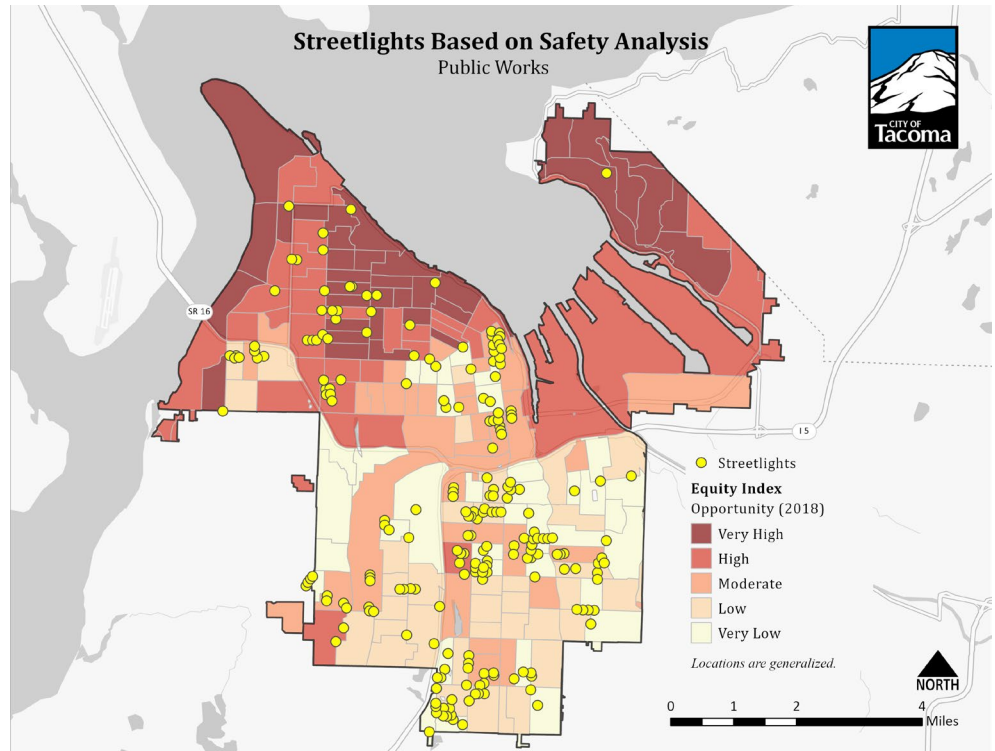
Resource Allocation

Lead Department

Public Works

Background

In 2019, Public Works was allocated \$200,000 in funding to add new streetlights across Tacoma. The primary factors that are considered when replacing street assets are safety-related. Traditionally, the analysis has focused on data representing high nighttime accident history, school safety, and high crime activity which is used to develop a ranked list of proposed locations for new streetlights.



Decision Point

As the City of Tacoma began its antiracist transformation, each department was directed to incorporate equity into its work. While some found clear pathways to use an equity lens, others shared that they struggled to conceptualize how to incorporate equity into projects that require a data-driven analysis, like with streetlights. With the creation of the Equity Index, staff were empowered with the data to include equity in their analysis.

Action

Installing streetlights on an existing pole typically ranges between \$800 - \$1,000 per light. In areas where there is a power pole nearby, a new pole would need to be installed which typically runs \$2,000 - \$3,000 per light. In areas where there is no existing overhead infrastructure, it can cost around \$10,000 to \$15,000 per light or more. Using mapping software, Public Works was able to identify 3,870 dark street segment (areas without streetlights) where there was already an existing power pole adjacent to the street.



The department prioritized and scored each dark segment based on nighttime crash history, school safety, and areas of high crime potentially affected by streetlighting. Finally, Public Works applied an equity analysis using the z-score, a statistical measurement that tells you how far away from the mean (or average) your data is, using the overall equity score on the Equity Index. A standard deviation of zero would result in no changes to the score. Areas of higher opportunity would result in a reduction in the overall score and areas of lower opportunity would result in an increase in the overall score.

By combining data related to nighttime accidents, school safety, high crime, and equity, Public Works employees were able to rank 3,870 dark street segments based on both safety and equity.

Outcome

Using this methodology, the City of Tacoma was able to equitably prioritize and install new streetlights. The two maps show the difference between the safety analysis and the weighted equity and safety analysis. For the most part, most of the locations stayed the same, but many in the North Tacoma area, a high opportunity area, shifted into lower opportunity areas in South Tacoma. It is important to note that the Equity Index is not the deciding factor in this and many other case uses but is a single component of a larger methodology based on a variety of relevant data that is both repeatable and data-driven. Public Works now uses this methodology for all streetlight allocations and has inspired several other data-driven equity analyses including selecting locations for public art.

This project assisted in the City of Tacoma's Information Technology Department receiving a Special Achievement in GIS Award from ESRI Inc. at its annual 2023 conference attended by nearly 20,000 business professionals from around the world. The project was one of three examples included in the award submission and was recognized by ESRI Inc. as one of the City's early adopters in the successful use of the City of Tacoma's Equity Index.

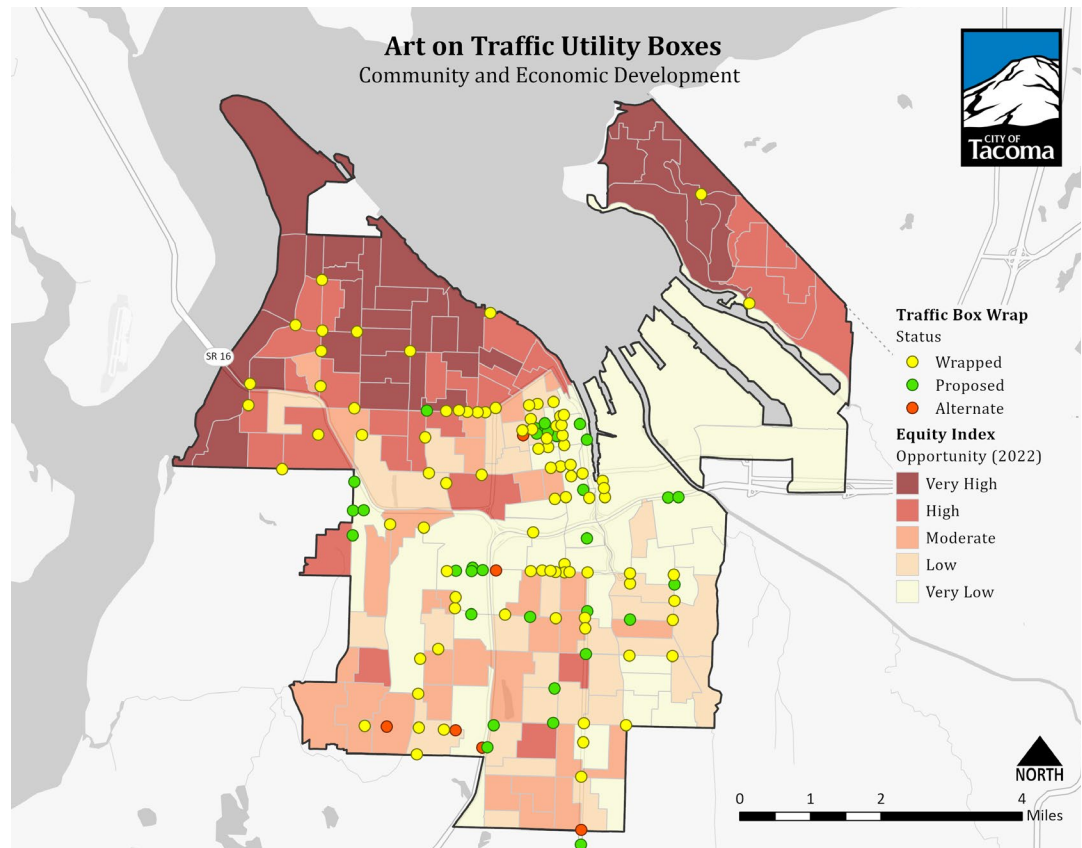
Selecting Locations for Public Art on Traffic Utility Boxes

Use Category

Resource Prioritization

Lead Department

Arts and Cultural Vitality Division, Community and Economic Development



Background

Launched in 2015, the Traffic Box Wrap project is designed to enhance the public realm by adding works of art by local artists to public infrastructure that is often targeted by vandalism. The wrapped boxes are intended to enhance neighborhood and community identity, turn ordinary spaces into community landmarks, and promote community dialogue. The City's Tacoma Arts Commission supports the ongoing development of arts programs and projects in Tacoma and several members of the Arts Commission served on the community panel that selected the artists for traffic box wraps.

Decision Point

The first rounds of traffic box wraps were focused on traffic boxes that were often targeted by vandalism. Neighborhood and Community Services and Planning and Development Services and Public Works staff would identify locations for wraps. Once those locations were wrapped, staff sought to expand traffic box wraps across the city. Inspired by the work of Public Works with prioritizing streetlights, staff used a similar method to determine future locations for traffic box wraps.

Action

The main factor in deciding where to put traffic box wraps is now the Equity Index score. Staff start with a list of traffic boxes that are standard size and then look at which boxes are going to be replaced soon. They then organize by opportunity area, with low opportunity locations being the first locations selected for new wraps. Some locations are adjusted if there are several existing wraps in one area. Staff also consider where artists live so they can see their art reflected in their community.

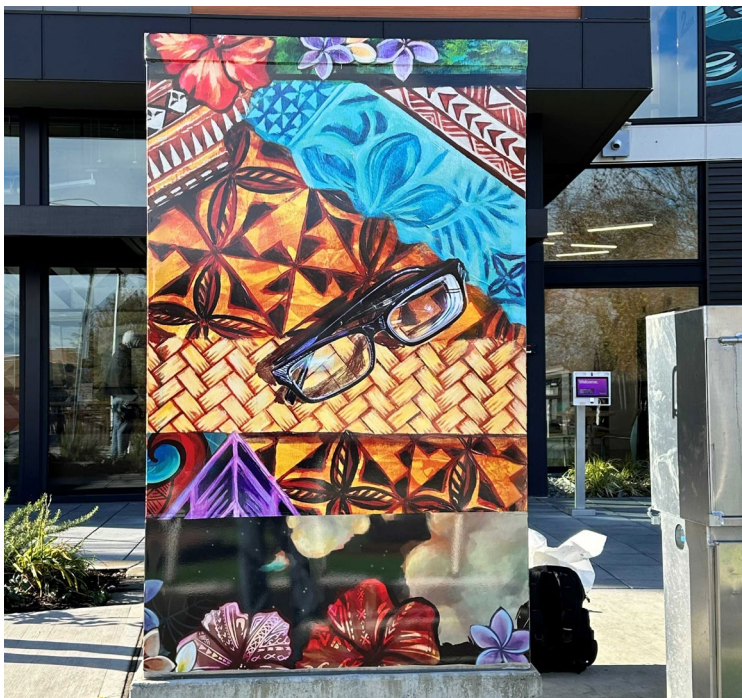


Rodney King, S 84th and Yakima Ave

Outcome

The 2022 round of funding saw 50 new wraps added across Tacoma based on the Equity Index score. With \$50,000 allocated in the 2023-2024 budget, the program will be able to add 25 new wraps and work with local artists to commission 17 new wrap designs. One staff member who supports the Public Art Program shared “The Equity Index makes our work easier because it is something intentional to organize around instead of guessing”. Kenya Shakoor who serves as Chair to the Tacoma Arts Commission shared “I live in South Tacoma, and while driving through my neighborhood, I saw Rodney King’s art by Fernhill Elementary. As a former Fernhill Elementary student and a member of the selection panel for the traffic wrap boxes, it was a joyful sight to see. I love walks through the community and am excited to see more traffic box art in the process!” Since 2015, 41 Tacoma artists have created custom artwork designs; 38 through a competitive process and 3 through a partnership with the Puyallup Tribe. Since the start of the program over 130 wraps have been added across Tacoma.

Traffic box wraps have also significantly reduced the need for Street Operations crews to routinely abate signal box graffiti. As such, Public Works again partnered with the Community and Economic Development Department’s Public Art’s program to continue installing traffic box art and murals throughout the city by contributing \$150,000 from its graffiti abatement program towards the installation of additional wraps.



Nofo Porter, S 21st and Fawcett Ave

Nofo Porter, whose traffic box contains many cultural references to her family, traditions, personal items, basket weaving and more shared “This one means a lot to me. My great grandma was the most beautiful woman I had ever met. The strongest. The best. I’m thankful for the life she lived, and the beauty and grace she passed down. This work is from me, and from my family.”

Rodney King shared “I call it Sunday Morning. This piece represents my sister getting her hair done before church on Sunday mornings. You see the little girl with the Colgate smile. It is right in front of Fern Hill Elementary. You can see the girl’s hair getting hot combed by her mom on Sunday morning. You see my mom’s hand that she’s combing through my sister’s hair and that goes all around the wrap box. Thank you for the opportunity, City of Tacoma”.

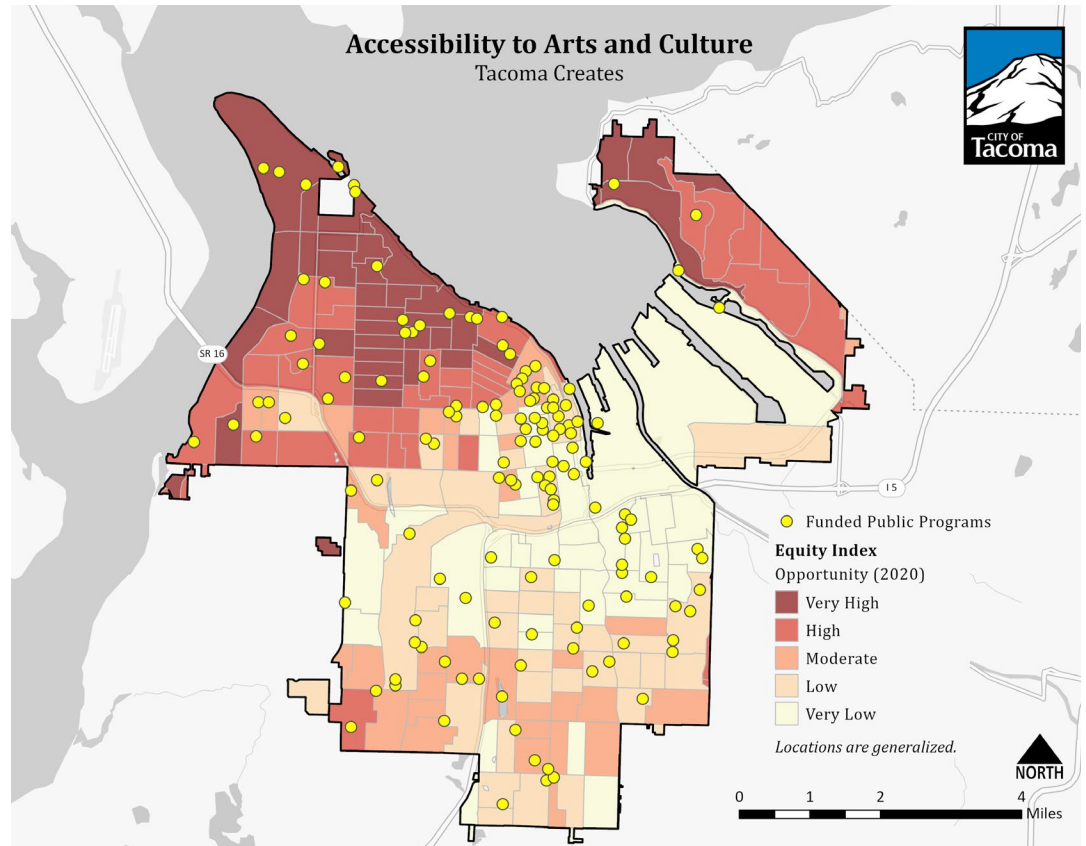
Expanding Access to Arts, Culture, Heritage and Science for Youth, Families, and Community

Use Category

Resource Prioritization

Lead Department

Arts and Cultural Vitality Division, Community and Economic Development



Background

Tacoma Creates is a voter-approved initiative to increase access to arts, culture, heritage, and science experiences throughout Tacoma by reducing barriers to access and expanding offerings, particularly for underserved youth. Eligible non-profit arts, culture, heritage, and science organizations can apply for funding that helps expand equitable access to public programs, increase opportunities in neighborhoods throughout Tacoma, expand educational options for youth, and build sustainability for ongoing cultural programs that provide value for people throughout the City of Tacoma.

Tacoma Creates has several goals:

- Support public programs in arts, culture, heritage, and/or science that engage community members in Tacoma
- Increase access to these programs, and reduce barriers to participation, especially for historically underserved populations, and within neighborhoods across Tacoma
- Support programming by and for culturally or ethnically specific communities, and/or other underrepresented groups
- Expand access to youth education programs in arts, culture, heritage, and science
- Support the sustainability of cultural sector organizations in Tacoma

Decision Point

Tacoma Creates staff asked, “how can we equitably increase access to arts, culture, heritage, and science experiences throughout Tacoma, especially for underserved youth?” *Tacoma Creates* uses the Equity Index to support decision making at multiple levels of the process: to inform decisions made by administrative staff, community programming partners, application review panels, and the *Tacoma Creates* Advisory Board, and to support organizations in making decisions in their proposals for *Tacoma Creates* funding.

Action

Tacoma Creates includes information about the Equity Index in the application materials that must be completed to apply for funding. The application also explicitly asks organizations to address equity and access in their work. Organizations are empowered with the data and information to tell the story of how they have and will work towards equitable outcomes.

Additionally, the *Tacoma Creates* Advisory Board serves in an advisory capacity to the *Tacoma Creates* administration on funding programs to support public benefit in arts, culture, heritage, and science programs throughout Tacoma. Advisory Board Members are provided with the Equity Index during orientation and encouraged to consider the Equity Index when making decisions about funding allocations.



The Equity Index isn’t used to give “points” during the review process, but instead informs the overall philosophy for where and how organizations are providing programming. It empowers funders and organizations with the information to make equitable decisions and in many cases, provides additional data to show the equitable work many of the organizations have already been doing.

The Equity Index is also included in the reporting requirements for programming and specifically asks organizations to track and report on their programming locations. The focus on programming locations allows staff to verify that the structural process for funding is working and ensures that *Tacoma Creates* is living up to the commitment to community; this information is shared publicly in the [Tacoma Creates Annual Report](#).

Based on the structure of the *Tacoma Creates* legislation, many of Tacoma’s largest cultural organizations are in the downtown area and tend to get most of the funding. Attracting both local residents and visitors to downtown is an important part of a healthy cultural sector; *Tacoma Creates* holds the concurrent goal of making sure that funding supports access to programming in neighborhoods across Tacoma. The Equity Index data informed the approach to this goal and led to developing partnerships with Tacoma Public Libraries and Tacoma Public Schools, as well as the focus on delivering and tracking programs that occur across the city.

Outcome

The 2022-2023 funding cycle distributed approximately \$4.5 million to 56 cultural organizations whose work includes a range of public programming for all ages, youth education programs, and a commitment to equitable and inclusive access for people throughout Tacoma. *Tacoma Creates* supported programs attended by 1,014,893 participants at 1,185 events and programs, of which 78% were completely free for all participants.

The Tacoma Creates Advisory Board approved funding contracts for the 2023-24 funding cycle totaling approximately \$5.6 million, which will go to 65 non-profit organizations whose primary purpose is to advance or preserve arts, culture, heritage, and/or science.

“This public funding supports such a wide range of programming across Tacoma,” said Tacoma Creates Advisory Board Chair Sheree Cooks. “From the smallest neighborhood-based organizations to our largest cultural institutions, *Tacoma Creates*-funded organizations are making a difference in our community. They are creating opportunities for local artists to develop work, bringing world-class performances and exhibitions to our community, and increasing access and building community engagement.”



“Tacoma Creates has allowed us to begin funding ASL interpreters for our performances. This has allowed for some of our families to access programming that would otherwise be unavailable to them. For the first time this summer, the parents of one of our students was able to enjoy their performance with an interpreter present”

- Tacoma Little Theatre

“Our greatest achievement this year was the partnership with Tacoma Public Schools. We welcomed over 1,940 6th grade students into the Museum as part of the Science of Art. Tacoma Creates funding allows us to connect with students at a formative time in their education, demonstrating real-world applications using art and science, challenging them to develop critical thinking skills, and inspiring them to see themselves as future scientists, innovators, and artists”

- Museum of Glass

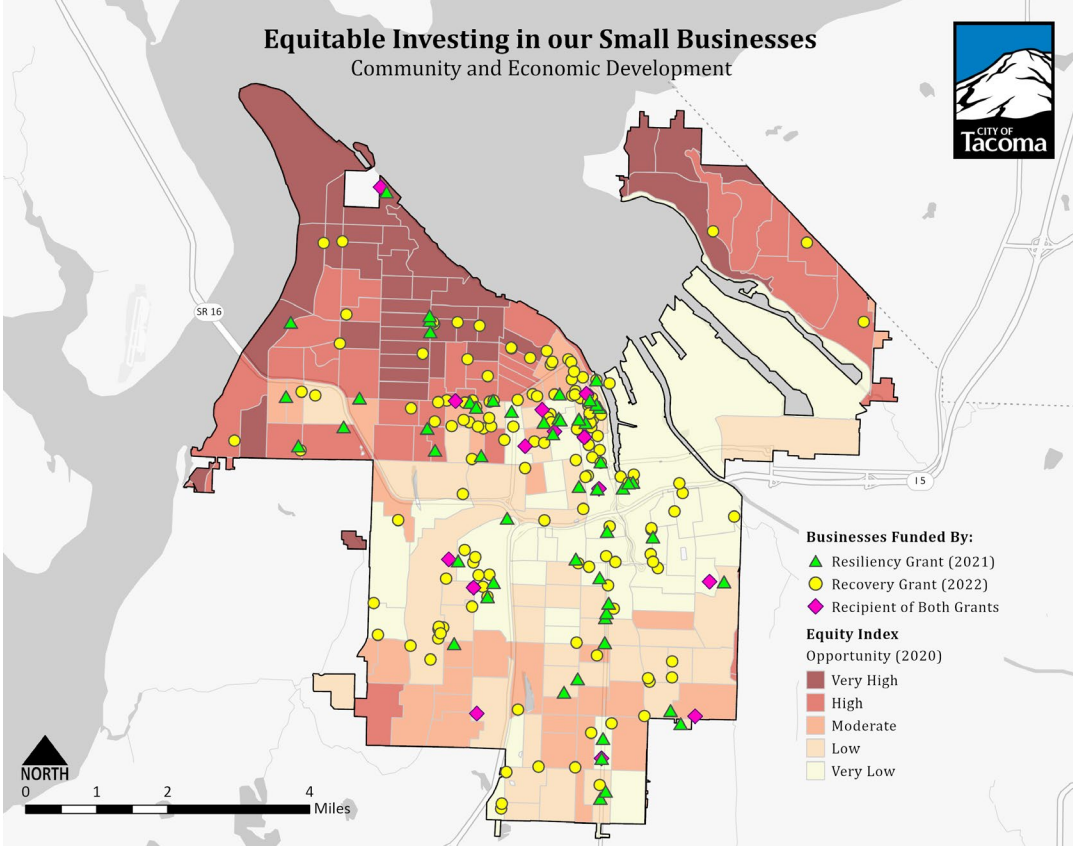
Equitable Investments in our Small Business Sector

Use Category

Resource Prioritization

Lead Department

Economic Development Services, Community and Economic Development



Background



The City of Tacoma’s Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program started in 1979 to assist small and moderately sized businesses located in or relocating to Tacoma. The Revolving Loan Fund can provide low-interest gap financing over \$25,000 and up to \$500,000 where private financing is unavailable. This program is designed as gap financing and the funds provided are available to fill a financing gap that exists between a project’s total cost and the sum of owner equity and a loan from a senior lender.

In 2019, the City of Tacoma’s Community and Economic Development Department established a Microloan Program which provides low-interest collateral-free loans of \$25,000 or less. This was in response to the inaccessibility of gap funding for microenterprises, minority-owned companies, and women-owned businesses.

Decision Point

Community and Economic Development staff noticed there were a lot of barriers for loan recipients. For example, a lot of minority-owned businesses are sole-proprietors and often don't have some of the specific materials that are needed to underwrite a loan. This inspired staff to get creative and work to problem-solve around some observed barriers.

In 2021, the Revolving Loan Fund received additional funding through the CARES Act to support businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program quickly grew from a few active loans at any one time to receiving an extreme volume of loan requests.

Action

In 2021, staff members began to use the Equity Index as a metric in their scoring for those loans. They prioritized people who were in areas of low and very low economic opportunity. They focused on marketing in areas based on ethnic and racial demographic information and hired community navigators to help support businesses in applying for the loans.

They also began to use the Equity Index for their Resiliency (2021) and Recovery (2022) grants which are awarded by a lottery system. Resiliency grants award \$10,000-\$15,000 to microbusinesses to help offset the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and cover expenses for payroll, inventory, mortgage/rent, or utilities not covered by other funding sources for COVID-19 assistance. Small Business Recovery Grants awarded \$15,000 each to micro-businesses of 15 or fewer full time equivalent employees to businesses who have owner(s) with a household income that does not exceed 80 percent of the area median income.



Every grant applicant started with one entry into the lottery system. They received a bonus entry if they were in an area of low or very low economic opportunity and an additional entry if they had not previously received Covid-relief funding.

Outcome

With this focus on equity in 2021, there was a 333% increase in revolving loan funds awarded to Black-owned businesses (compared to 2020). The grant program has awarded over \$3.4 million in grants of up to \$15,000. 56% of grants were awarded to BIPOC-owned businesses. As of 2024, the Revolving Loan Fund has over 100 active borrowers.

One recipient of a Recovery Grant were the owners of Parable, a community space with a curated selection of plants, books, music and events. They said of the grants, "Our business would not have thrived without this critical grant. It allowed us to expand our inventory which goes to local authors, makers, artists, and so on. It also allowed us to host more events for the community and collaborate with folks and community organizations for free, where money would limit them otherwise."

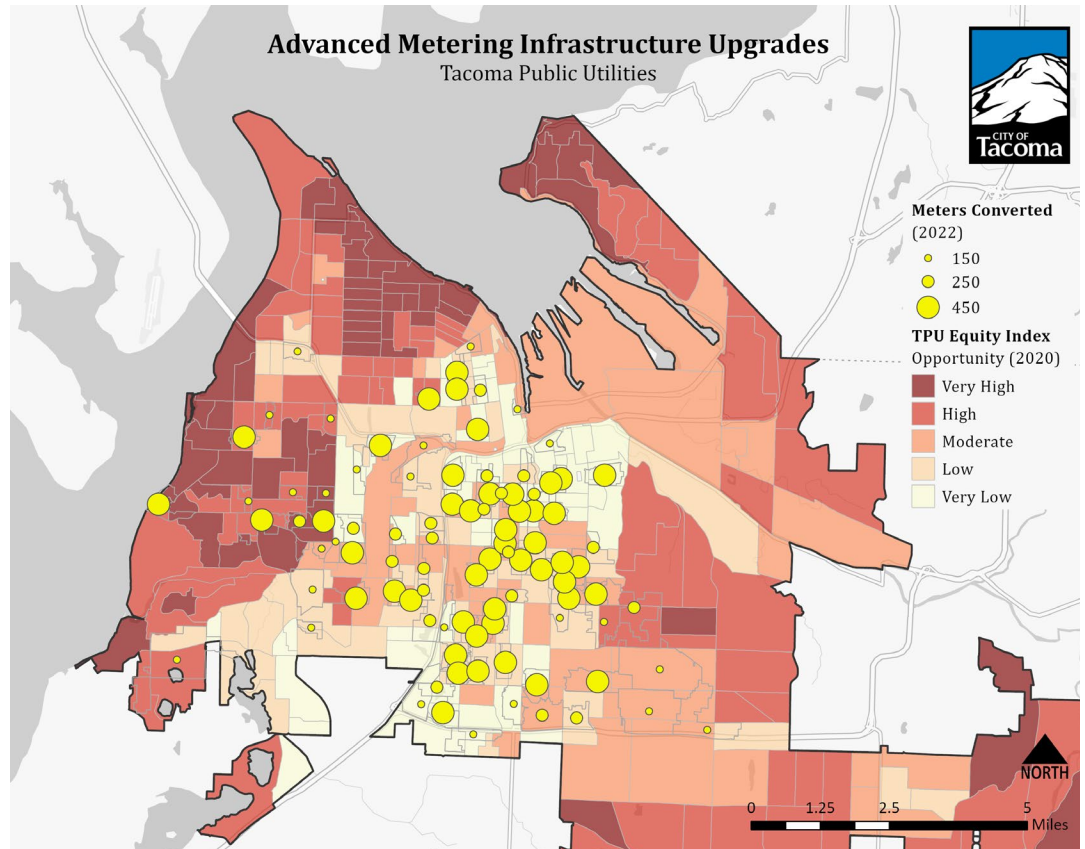
Equitable Infrastructure Investment through Advanced Metering

Use Category

Resource Prioritization

Lead Department

Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU)



Background

Advanced meters support a variety of benefits that allow customers more flexibility, the ability to control water and power costs, and help operate more efficiently. Many of the power and water meters in our system today use technology that hasn't changed much over the last 75 years. Old technology limits the services available. Most meters have reached the end of their lifespan and need to be updated to provide reliable service. Advanced meter technology also fulfills requests TPU has received for additional features, including monthly billing and access to usage data.

Modern digital technology brings many customer benefits over time including additional options to manage monthly budgets and billing, remote electric service reconnection, more options to control costs, improved reliability through faster outage and leak detection, and more flexible payment options.

Decision Point

Historically, infrastructure investments such as the Advanced Meter Infrastructure improvements have been made without geographic prioritization, or in some cases have prioritized high opportunity areas. TPU staff and the community have recognized how the benefits of the AMI improvements can have additional community benefits. Staff sought to use the Equity Index to help prioritize installation phasing.

Action

TPU staff utilized the overall opportunity area on the Equity Index to help identify low opportunity areas within its service area and prioritize those areas for improvements first. While some projects focus on a handful of specific indicators or a category like economy to prioritize projects, TPU found that using overall opportunity, all 34 indicators, would be most effective in determining equitable prioritization.

Since the project began, TPU has been able to see the impacts of these infrastructure investments within low equity areas. As of January 2023, nearly all of the low opportunity areas in TPU's service area have been upgraded.



Outcome



Customers in low opportunity areas are the first ones to receive flexible billing options, improved reliability, and faster leak and outage detection. One TPU customer shared “Monthly billing has improved my ability to budget and manage my bills. Rather than getting a several hundred dollar bill every couple of months, I know what to expect each month. I like that I can see how much water and electricity my household is using and adjust as needed instead of trying to guess where I can cut costs”.

A group of children and adults are gathered under a white tent at an outdoor event. The children are mostly seen from the back, looking towards the tent. One child in the foreground is wearing a grey tank top and blue jeans. Another child is wearing a black t-shirt and tan shorts. A woman in a blue shirt is visible in the background. The scene is outdoors with trees and a grassy area. There are green decorative squares in the corners of the image.

Outreach and Engagement

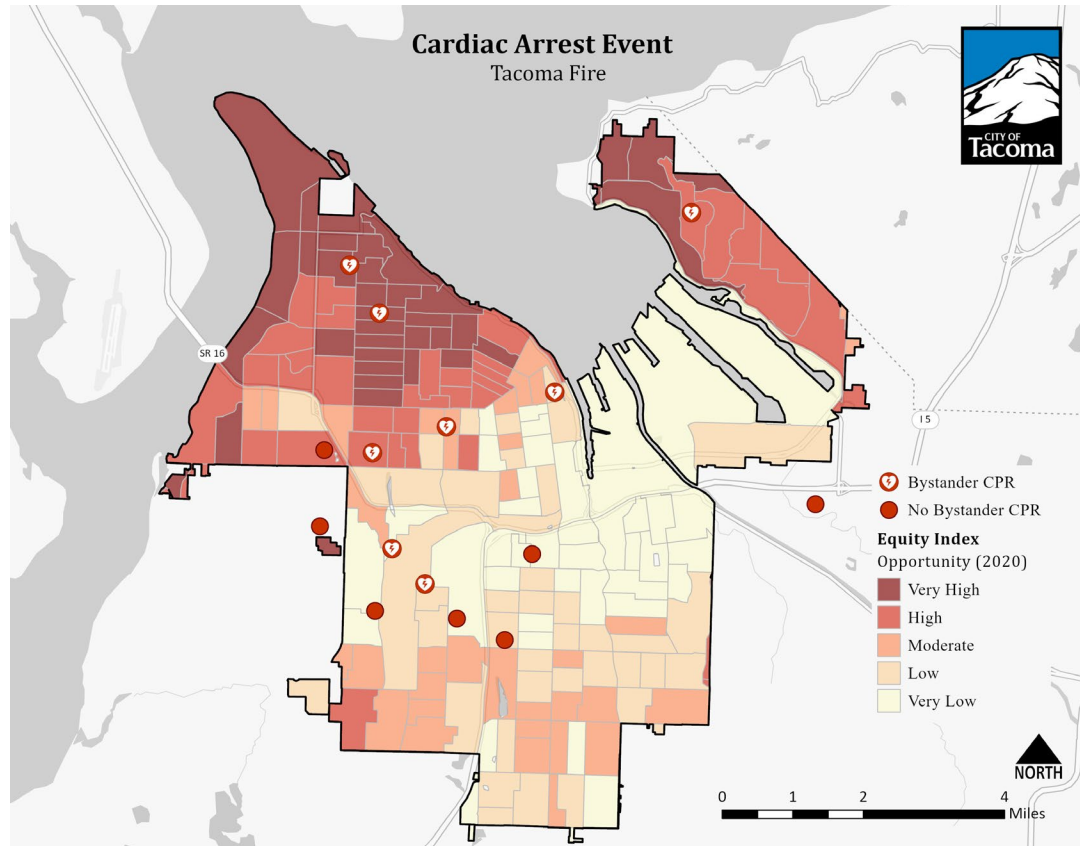
Increasing Access to Life-Saving CPR Trainings

Use Category

Outreach and Engagement

Lead Department

Tacoma Fire Department



Background

The Tacoma Fire Department offers CPR trainings across the City of Tacoma. The likelihood of surviving cardiac arrest greatly increases if you receive lifesaving CPR quickly. [The American Heart Association](#) shares that immediate CPR can double or triple chances of survival with brain functioning intact after cardiac arrest as keeping blood flow active extends the opportunity for resuscitation once trained medical staff arrive. [According to a 2022 nationwide study](#), Black and Hispanic individuals who experience a witnessed cardiac arrest at home or in public are substantially less likely than white individuals to receive CPR from a bystander. Data shows that bystanders give CPR significantly more often when the person suffering cardiac arrest is white. While specific factors behind CPR rates were not examined, the researchers said access to CPR training likely plays a role, since people are more likely to attempt CPR if they have been trained in it. The cost of CPR training, as well as when and where it is offered, may pose barriers for some communities.

Decision Point

Tacoma Fire staff wanted to see if there were correlations between survival rates and locations of a cardiac event. Staff also sought to understand if CPR trainings are offered in locations where they are most needed in the city.

Action

Tacoma Fire worked with GIS staff to put cardiac arrest data on the Equity Index map. They learned that the odds of surviving a cardiac arrest are ten times higher in high opportunity areas. They also found that people in South and East Tacoma were not receiving chest compressions before the Fire Department arrived. The data also showed that areas where Tacoma Fire delivered CPR trainings did see increased survival rates for cardiac arrests however those locations were NOT where CPR trainings are most needed in the city.



Outcome



Now, Tacoma Fire uses the Equity Index to select locations for CPR trainings. The department continues to use the Equity Index to learn more about communities with the goal to deliver CPR trainings in multiple languages and connect with community leaders to deliver trainings to populations that are less likely to receive CPR during a cardiac arrest. The Equity Index continues to guide TFD's decision making and advocate for future funding and investments.

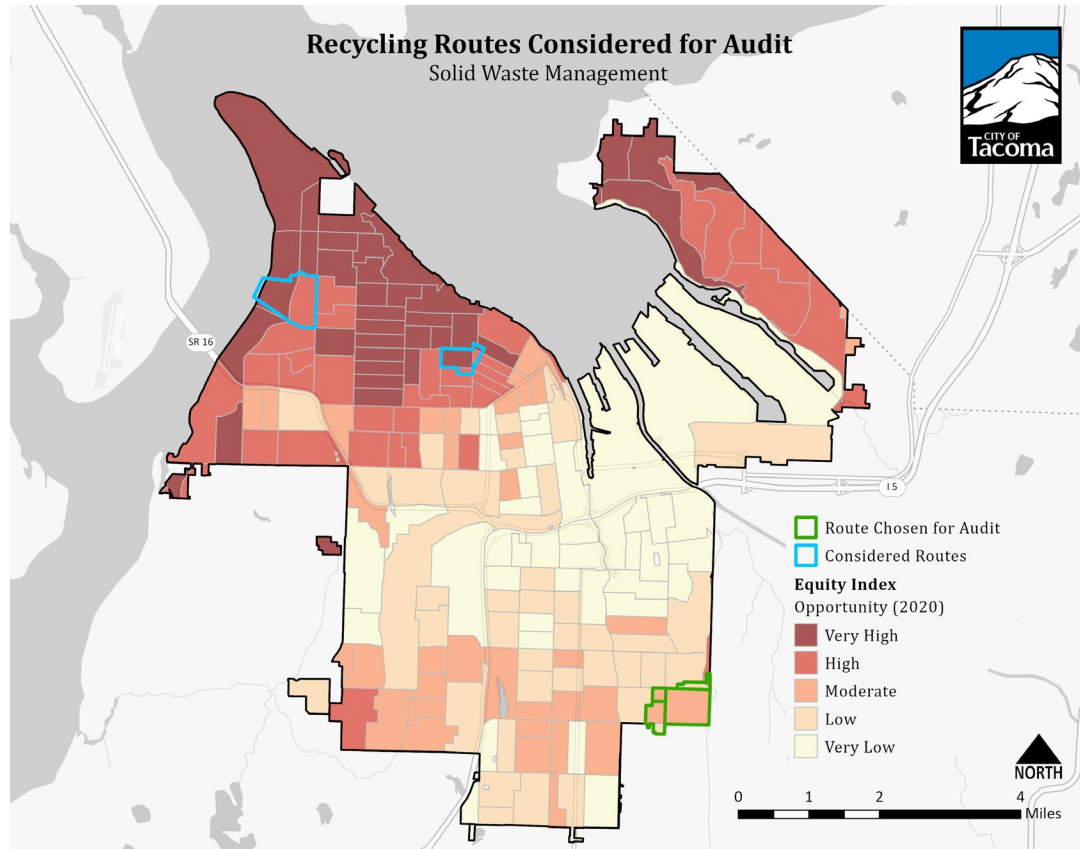
Recycling Contamination Reduction

Use Category

Outreach and Engagement

Lead Department

Solid Waste Management



Oops! We found a problem with your RECYCLING

Set-Out Guidelines

1. Set out your container for collection by 7 a.m.
2. Place containers at least 4 feet from obstructions such as other containers, vehicles, and buildings.
3. Place container clear of overhead obstructions (buildings, awnings, power lines, etc.), at a minimum of 16 feet clearance.
4. Do not overfill container. Close lid completely so it sits flat. Call to increase your service level at no-cost (residential only).
5. Do not place materials on top of or around your container.

Materials and Other Issues

****these non-accepted items were found in your container:**

- 6. Garbage
- 7. Bagged recyclables or loose plastic bags
- 8. Glass bottles or jars (bring to a drop-off location)
- 9. Yard waste, wood, or scrap metal
- 10. Styrofoam or shredded paper (take to Recycle Center)
- 11. Clothing, fabrics, shoes, or toys
- 12. Pizza boxes or food-contaminated items
- 13. Hazardous or medical waste, automotive container, diapers, hygiene products

14. Your container is damaged. Please continue to use your container, and the City will replace it in 5-10 business days.
15. Other:

Questions about this notice? Scan here, or call (253) 502-2100 solidwaste@cityoftacoma.org

*These tags contain personally identifiable information that is exempt as additional fee and/or may be removed in accordance with City of Tacoma Municipal Code 22.09.020.

Background

Improper recycling of materials can ruin large amounts of other recyclables and can cause recyclables to be landfilled instead of becoming new products. Problem items are materials that cause problems for the recycling processing facilities. Flat, plastic lids (ex: dairy tub lids) can be difficult to sort from paper and cardboard materials and end up as contamination. Materials like plastic bags can jam equipment causing dangerous conditions for workers and increased labor costs for employers.

In early 2020, recycling collections drivers tagged any residential recycling bin in the Solid Waste service area that contained plastic bags or recyclables that were in plastic bags. Bins that consistently contained plastic bags or bagged recyclables were retagged with individualized feedback identifying the issue or material that caused the contamination. After initial tagging and retagging, it was observed that several routes consistently did not change recycling practices to reduce contamination.

Quyền tái chế rác thải
Trống, Sạch và Khô

Tái chế Chỉ bỏ những món đồ sau đây vào thùng tái chế màu xanh dương. Để biết thêm thông tin, truy cập trang tacomarecycles.org

NHỰA

CHAI/LO (KHÔNG NÁP)

BÌNH CỎ QUẠI (KHÔNG NÁP)

BỘN/CHẬU (KHÔNG NÁP)

GIẤY

GIẤY CÁC LOẠI

GIẤY BÌA CỨNG VÀ THÙNG/HỘP

GIẤY BÌA CỨNG ĐÃ XÉP PHẪNG

KIM LOẠI

LON NHÔM

LON KIM LOẠI (KHÔNG CÓ NÁP RỜI)

KHÔNG KIỂNG
CÁC MÓN ĐỒ ĐÓNG GỖ
CÁC TÚI NHỰA
MŨT/XÓP
BỘC NHỰA
RÁC THẢI TỪ THỰC PHẨM

tacomarecycles.org
@tacomaes
(253) 502-2100

Muốn biết bỏ món nào ở đâu?
Tải ứng dụng "Recycle Coach"

Decision Point

Solid Waste Management overlaid the route information with the Equity Index to try to understand the shared traits of routes with consistent recycling contamination. They found that one route was near a university and another route had one in ten residents who did not speak English as their primary language. Given the transient nature of students and the impact of language and communication, the team decided to focus on language access and community engagement to reduce contamination.

Action

Solid Waste Management created the Recycle Reset Community Ambassador Program which aimed to train residents on proper recycling and waste reduction techniques through partnerships with community-based organizations such as Asia Pacific Cultural Center, the Salishan Association, Safe Streets, Voice Tacoma Creative Media, and Pierce Conservation District. The trainings were offered in six languages and co-designed with residents and partner organizations to meet the needs of the intended audiences.

Solid Waste Management also developed new multifamily recycling education materials through a grant from The Recycling Partnership. Working directly with diverse communities in Tacoma, Solid Waste staff and their partner, InterEthnica, created materials with more accurate language translations and culturally relevant images. The “[Sort the Sound](#)” waste sorting game was designed in partnership with ReCollect as an interactive online game to educate residents on how to properly dispose of various materials in Tacoma. This game was also used as a resource for educating students in Tacoma Public Schools on proper recycling techniques.

Outcome

After a focus on language access and intentional outreach, bins with no contamination increased by 10% and there was a decrease in intensity of contamination in other bins. “The real outcome of the lid-lift is that it showed us the power of individualized education” shared one staff member. Solid Waste Management is continuing to use the Equity Index to determine routes to prioritize for individualized education campaigns and recently received a grant from the EPA to scale up the individualized feedback using AI cameras. The Equity Index will again be used as this project scales up.

Prioritizing Neighborhoods for Planning and Investments

Use Category

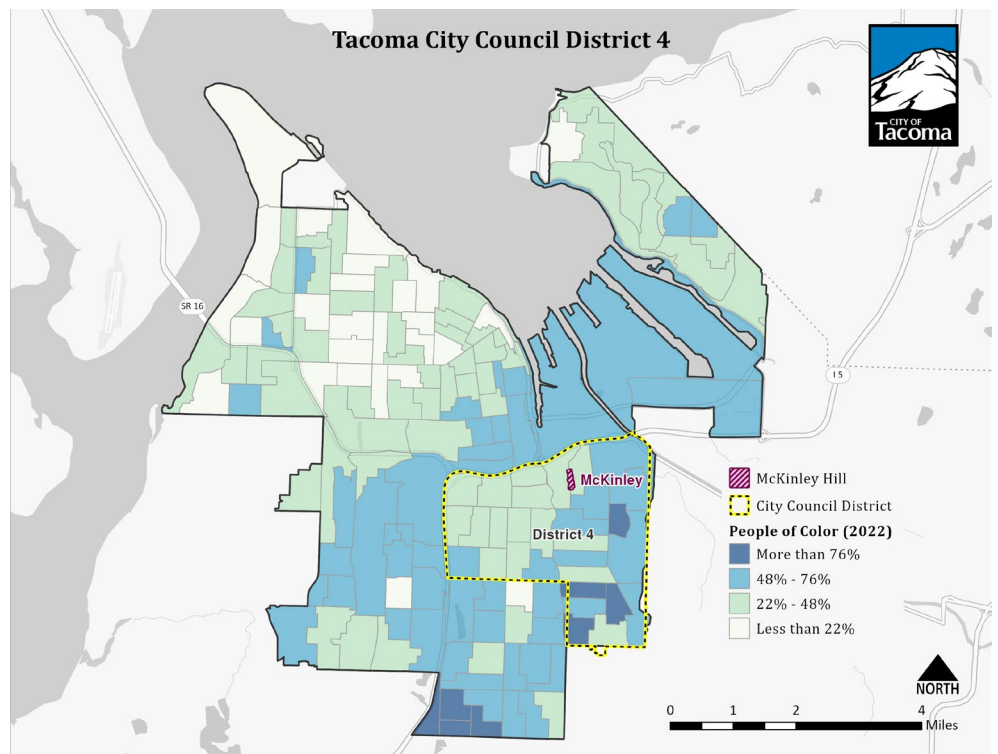
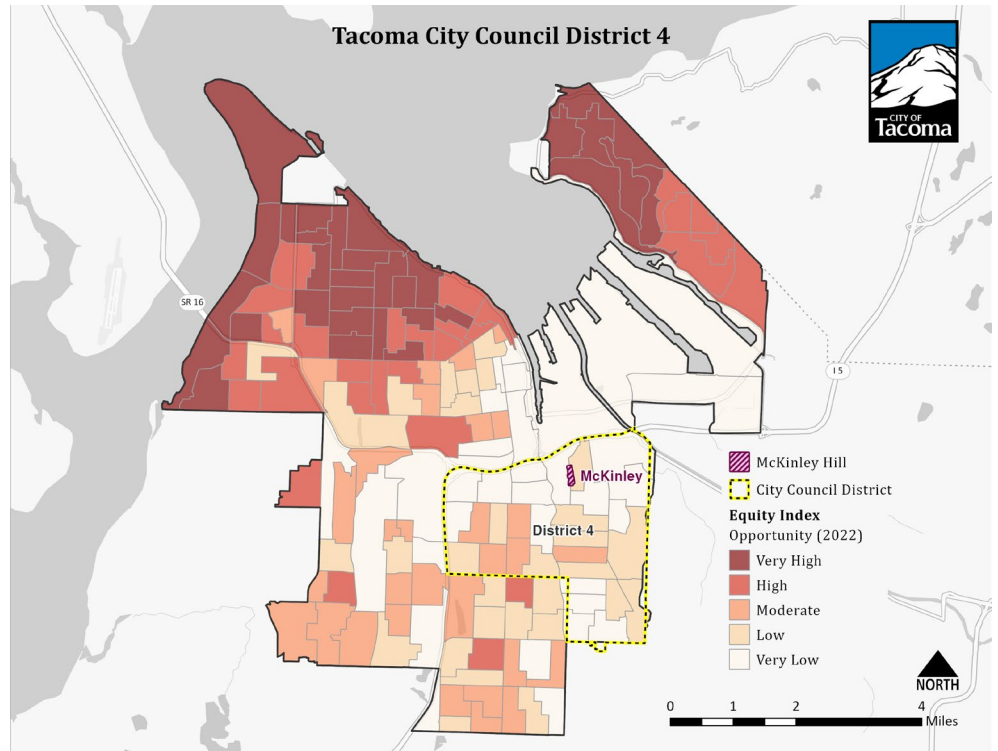
Outreach and Engagement

Lead Department

Planning and Development Services

Background

In response to a desire for more equitable delivery of services and to provide a grassroots response to neighborhood concerns, the Tacoma City Council provided funding for a pilot Neighborhood Planning Program (NPP) in 2022. The goal of the NPP is to support neighborhood identity and vitality. The program relies on co-creation with residents, businesses and service providers, City departments, nonprofit and community partners, and elected officials to build community capacity and relationships while creating implementable, impactful projects.



Decision Point

Planning and Development Services used the Equity Index as a factor in decision-making when recommending which neighborhoods to prioritize for the Neighborhood Planning Program. For the first year, City of Tacoma staff and Council Members identified McKinley Hill and Proctor as the pilot neighborhoods representing different locations on the spectrum of neighborhood development between growth creation and growth management. Staff used the Equity Index, in addition to other data and sources, to understand more about the people who live in McKinley Hill to best tailor outreach and engagement efforts.

Action



Why McKinley?

City Council selected McKinley as one of the first pilot neighborhoods for the Neighborhood Planning Program for the following reasons:

- The *One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan* guides Tacoma to support livable neighborhood centers, transit-oriented development, and equitable distribution of resources.
- McKinley is already a designated neighborhood business district and zoned as one of Tacoma's Mixed-Use Centers.
- The neighborhood's proximity to other existing and planned investments mean it is likely to experience change in the short- and medium-term, and there is a demonstrated need for physical and infrastructure improvements to the neighborhood.
- Tacoma's equity index demonstrated that improving amenities, resources, and livability in McKinley would promote racial and social equity in Tacoma.
- McKinley had not yet received targeted planning support (e.g., no subarea planning completed in McKinley).

The City Council selected McKinley as one of the first neighborhoods to pilot the Neighborhood Planning Program. The McKinley Neighborhood is rated as a low opportunity area and 23.5% of the population identify as Hispanic or Latino, which is higher than the 12.2% in Tacoma as a whole. The median income for the neighborhood is \$50,769 as compared to \$69,956, the median for Tacoma. Other factors in the decision for where to pilot include comprehensive plan guidance, land use designation, proximity to future projects, and previous support.

Recognizing the diversity of the McKinley Neighborhood and to ensure that the program reached wide audiences, especially historically marginalized people and people who will be directly impacted by the Neighborhood Plan, the McKinley Hill Neighborhood Planning Program hosted focus groups in partnership with community-based organizations, Community Language Ambassadors, and cultural events. The program worked with Community Language Ambassadors on transcreation of materials and hosted conversations about the Neighborhood Plan in languages other than English. This partnership meant Community Language Ambassadors could anticipate how different formats, phrases, and questions will be perceived, helping to inform an approach that was more responsive to the specific language, cultural group, and/or event.

Outcome

There were four main action areas identified by this process:

- Improve the vibrant business district
- Increase walkability and connections to key destinations
- Activate open spaces
- Enhance McKinley's center with new amenities



Several projects have already been funded and/or are in progress, thanks to the help of internal and external partners. Many of these internal partners already use the Equity Index to prioritize their projects, so it was an easy way to match funding opportunities and resources with community-identified projects in McKinley. In addition, implementation is being coordinated and co-created with the support of community-led project committees. The City of Tacoma is dedicated to ensuring these are implemented over the next few years, and the Neighborhood Planning Program will actively support and track this progress. In November 2023, the Washington State Department of Commerce announced the winners of this year's [Governor's Smart Communities Awards](#) which recognized the McKinley Neighborhood Plan for centering equity in planning and community engagement in the "Smart Equity Strategies" category.

Staff in Planning and Development Services shared "It's important to understand areas that have had less investment and what that means for the lives of those residents." The Equity Index provided data to make equitable decisions with program resources and defend those decisions. This also helped address concerns that the most vocal neighborhoods, rather than the neighborhoods with the highest needs, would disproportionately influence the conversation. Now, the neighborhoods which the data shows are farthest away from opportunity are prioritized for neighborhood planning instead of relying on neighbors to be proactive and reach out. Through the 2023-2024 Biennium Budget Adoption, the City Council made the Neighborhood Planning Program permanent, and is continuing to use the Equity Index to prioritize neighborhoods that will be the focus of future neighborhood plans.



Strategic Marketing for Fair Housing Outreach

Use Category

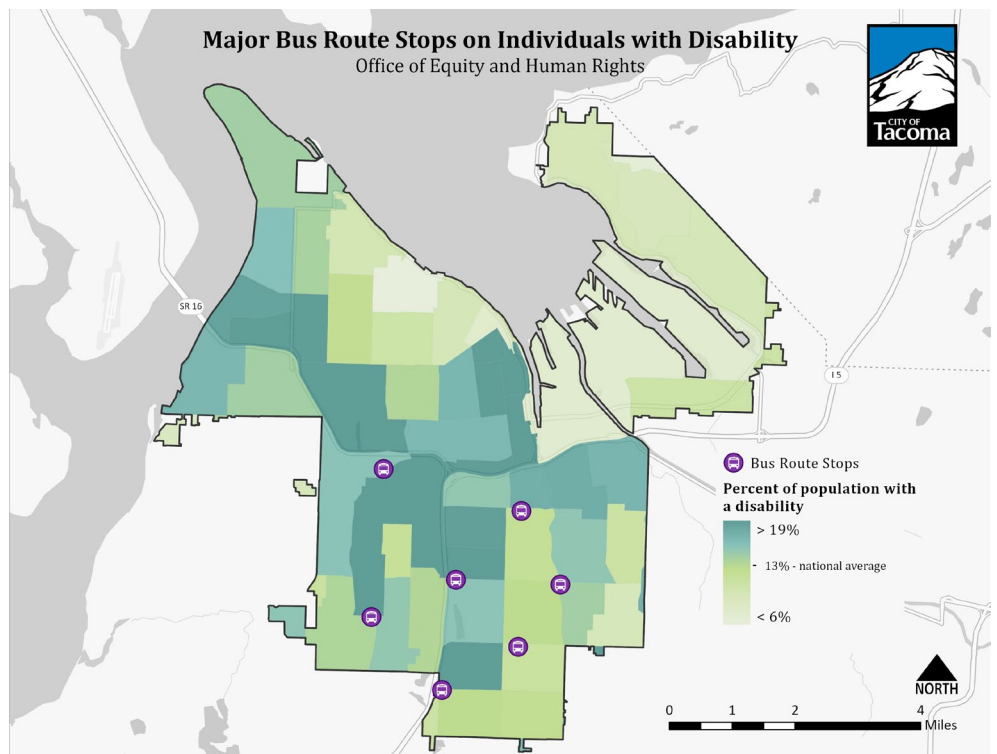
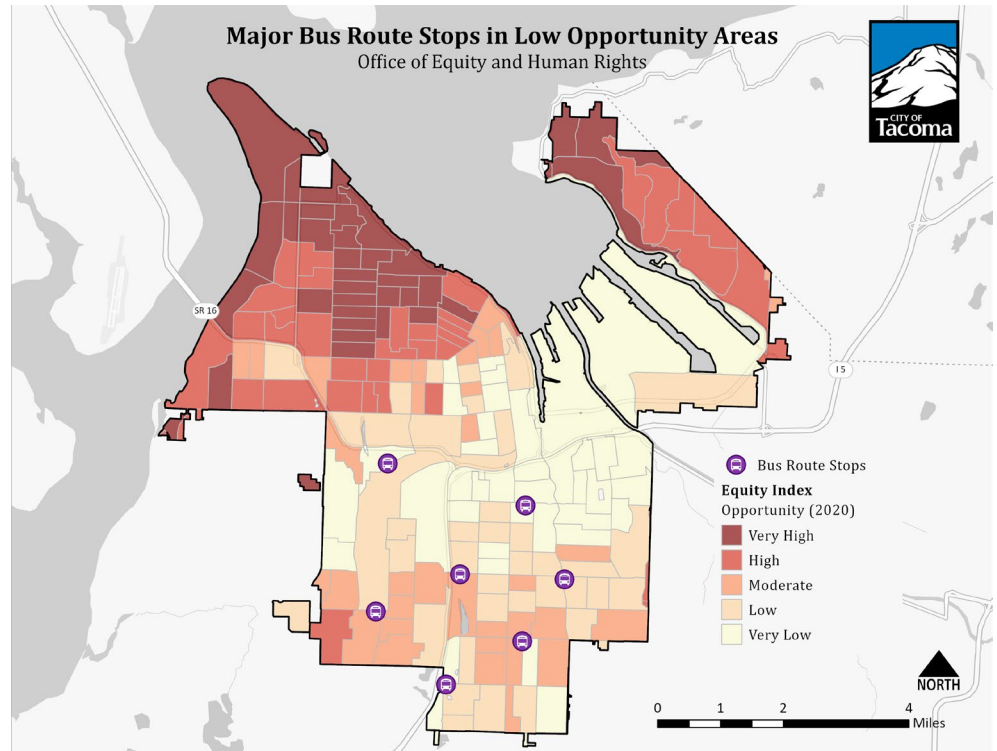
Outreach and Engagement

Lead Department

Office of Equity and Human Rights

Background

The City of Tacoma's fair housing law makes it illegal to discriminate in the rental, sale, financing, insurance, or advertising of housing because of the protected categories like race, disability, familial status, sexual orientation and more. One of the roles of the Office of Equity and Human Rights is to raise awareness about Tacoma's fair housing law and what to do if you experience housing discrimination. A majority of fair housing discrimination complaints are related to disability including residents not receiving reasonable accommodations like accessible parking or the ability to have service animals.



Decision Point

The Office of Equity and Human Rights wanted to explore using bus shelter wraps, advertisements that are placed on bus shelters at bus stop locations, as a method to raise awareness about fair housing rights. Staff had to decide what kind of fair housing information would be most impactful to advertise and decide on physical locations for the shelter wrap to maximize outreach.

Action

First, staff overlaid all bus routes on the Equity Index and decided to focus on low opportunity areas. Then major bus route intersections, where several different bus routes stop, were identified as potential locations for fair housing advertising. Using this information, staff began exploring this area on the Equity Index to see what more could be learned and what kind of advertising may be helpful. Populations with disabilities were particularly high in this area so information about disability-related housing discrimination was determined to be the most beneficial type of outreach.



Outcome

Implementation of this project was delayed however the Office of Equity and Human Rights continues to explore pathways for implementing this method of outreach. The bus shelter wraps will share information about what to do if you experience disability-related housing discrimination in areas of Tacoma where a higher percentage of public transportation users with a disability are able to see the advertisements. This information raises awareness about fair housing and empowers community members with the information to advocate for themselves.



Policy Development

Council Action Memorandums

Use Category

Policy Development

Lead Department

City Manager's Office

Background

For decades, the City of Tacoma has required staff to complete various documents which convey relevant information to decision makers. Today, this document is called a City Council Action Memorandum (CAM) and is intended to communicate important information and recommendations to the City Council on a proposal, policy, service, program, project, or purchase, which requires City Council action. CAMs have historically asked for a variety of information including sponsors, fiscal impact, and background on the decision, but had not asked for an analysis of how equitable the action would be.

Decision Point

In December 2017, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 39893, a resolution adopting a “Health and Equity in All Policies” policy and directing the City Manager to analyze all proposed policies using a “Health and Equity in All Policies” framework. As staff began to operationalize this work, it was identified that updating the Council Action Memorandum could be a helpful way to ensure staff consider health and equity impacts.

Action

In 2018, City of Tacoma staff began exploring the most effective way to update the Council Action Memorandum to meet the intention of the “Health and Equity in All Policies” legislation. In order to ensure that all potential actions were data-informed, the updates to the CAM incorporated the use of the Equity Index. Additionally, the staff group working on the CAM update determined that in order to meet the objectives of the Health and Equity in All Policies Resolution, the CAM should also include a community engagement section to communicate who had been engaged in the policy-making process, with an emphasis on input from historically underrepresented communities.

In addition to asking for a summary, purpose, sponsors, background, alternatives, performance measures, fiscal impact, and staff recommendations, the CAM now has a mandatory “Equity and Accessibility” section. This means every CAM must have a completed section that speaks to how legislation will reduce racial and other inequities, disparities, or discrimination to under-represented communities. Staff must state what positive impacts on equity, equality, diversity or inclusion, if any, would result from enacting the proposed legislation.

Ultimately, the CAM helps support implementation of Tacoma’s community vision and strategic plan, Tacoma 2025. Staff are asked to identify which Tacoma 2025 strategic goals the legislation most relates to and identify the Equity Index Score for those goals in the geography the proposal will affect. Staff then select the indicator(s) the legislation is most related to and explain how legislation will impact the selected indicator(s) and/or improve the Equity Index Score.

Between 2019 and 2020, workshops were held to develop and pilot using the new CAM. The updated CAM was introduced to staff through a series of workshops and an accompanying guidance sheet which can be used as a reference when developing a CAM.

CAM Guidance for Community Engagement

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/CUSTOMER RESEARCH

Community engagement and customer research are critical to the policy-making, program development and service delivery process. In this section, please state who may potentially benefit and who may be negatively affected if the legislation is enacted. Provide a brief overview of the engagement and research you did to inform your conclusion and recommendation. Intentional considerations should be made for underrepresented communities.

If your legislation is a service or program that involves customers (e.g. City employees, venue customers, rate payers) please include information about how you conducted your customer research to inform your final decision.

For guidance, below is a short list of historically underrepresented populations to consider. (This list is not comprehensive)

- People of Color
- LGBTQ Residents
- Low-Income Households
- Low-Opportunity Neighborhoods
- Non-English Speakers
- People in Subsidized Housing
- People Who are Experiencing Homelessness
- People who are Undocumented
- People with a GED, High School Diploma or Less Schooling
- People with Disabilities
- Renters
- Elders/ Seniors
- Youth

CAM Guidance for 2025 Strategic Priorities

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Tacoma 2025 represents our community's vision for the future with defined indicators that guide the City of Tacoma. All department proposals and legislation should work towards affecting these strategic goals. This helps ensure that we align the City's work towards making Tacoma an inclusive and equitable place to **Live, Learn, Work, and Play**.

- Review the indicators and identify the main goal area(s) in 2025 that your proposal addresses (Livability, Economy/Workforce, Education, Civic Engagement).
- Use the dropdown menus to choose (up to five) indicators that the proposal will likely impact. You can choose multiple indicators within the same goal area.
- Using the Equity Index, state the Opportunity Score (Very High, High, Moderate, Low, or Very Low) for each goal area your proposal is affecting.
 - a. Go to the Equity Index and review the geographic area your legislation will affect (if it is Citywide, then use the Citywide scores).
 - b. This is one of the primary tools to help ensure we are making equitable, data-informed decisions. (There is a user guide available on the Office of Equity and Human Rights website.)
- Finally, provide a brief statement (2-3 sentences) about how your legislation will improve the listed indicators and/or Equity Index Score.

The community made **Equity and Accessibility** a priority goal within the Strategic plan, underlying each of the other four goal areas. As such, the Equity and Accessibility section **must be completed**. (*Exemptions include Union negotiations and CBAs, Hearing Examiner, CBC Council Appointments, and others. Please consult with CMO if you believe your proposal should be exempt from this requirement.*)

Outcome

As of 2020, every piece of legislation including proposals, policies, services, programs, projects, and purchases that goes before the City Council now has a mandatory section which asks staff to address how it will reduce racial and other inequities, disparities, or discrimination to under-represented communities as well as positive impacts on equity, equality, diversity or inclusion.

Staff have identified that one of the greatest benefits of the updated CAM process is that it facilitates conversation in a targeted way and makes values and goals visible. Every person, department, or stakeholder who goes before Council knows that they must speak to equity impacts because it is mandatory. This helps facilitate early dialogue about equity and community engagement from the very beginning of an idea or action. Staff have also shared that the narrative component of the Equity and Accessibility section helps support implementation of the work as it provides a clear understanding of the intent and desired impact.

It is important to note that staff have identified several potential improvements to the CAM process moving forward. First, because the Equity Index is a comparative tool, if a proposal, policy, service, program, project, or purchase is city-wide, the score will always be moderate, which is not as helpful to decision-makers. Second, describing how legislation will impact selected indicators may not always include the complex and nuanced information necessary for the best-informed decision. While it is important to have a mandatory section focused on equity included in the process, rarely will a paragraph or one document fully capture the potential impact. Thankfully, CAMs are a part of a larger legislative process and are often accompanied by presentations during council meetings, committee meetings, and study sessions where councilmembers can ask questions, flag concerns, and ask staff to conduct more engagement or provide more information relevant to equitable decision-making.

Just as the Equity Index is one tool in the toolbox to support equitable decision-making, the Council Action Memorandum is one tool to support staff and decision-makers. This process makes equity and accessibility a mandatory component of every legislative action and helps support Tacoma's transition into an antiracist city while working towards the community's vision as laid out in Tacoma 2025.

Portion of Council Action Memorandum

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

Within this section, please state who will potentially be affected by this proposal and give a brief overview of the engagement and research you did with the community/customers to shape your recommendation. Also, emphasize how your legislation has included underrepresented communities' input.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility: (Mandatory)

Please state how this legislation will reduce racial and other inequities, disparities, or discrimination to underrepresented communities. Please state what positive impacts on equity, equality, diversity or inclusion, if any, would result from enacting this legislation.

Identify which Tacoma 2025 strategic goals your legislation most relates to, then identify the [Equity Index Score](#) for those goals in the geography your proposal will affect. Select the indicator(s) this legislation is most related to, then briefly explain how this legislation will impact the selected indicator(s) and/or improve the Equity Index Score. **Use the dropdowns below and refer to guide for more information.**

Economy/Workforce: *Equity Index Score:* Select Index Score.
Select an indicator.

Education: *Equity Index Score:* Select Index Score.
Select an indicator.
Select an indicator.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score:* Select Index Score.
Select an indicator.
Select an indicator.

Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Select Index Score.
Select an indicator.
Select an indicator.

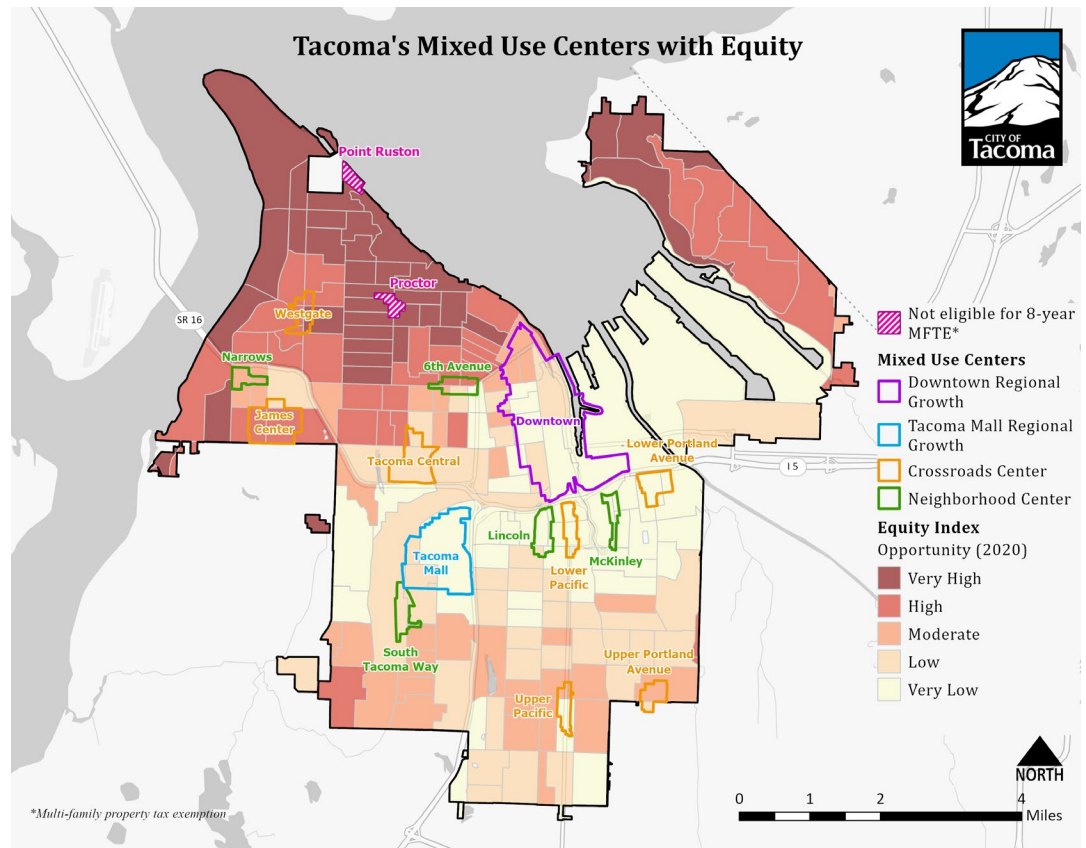
Addressing Affordable Housing through Equity-Informed Policy

Use Category

Policy Development

Lead Department

City Manager's Office



Background

Many residents in the City of Tacoma have significant unmet housing needs. One measure of housing need is “cost-burden”—or when a household pays more than 30% of its gross income on housing, including utilities. If a household pays more than one-half (50%) of its gross income on housing, that household is “severely cost-burdened.” Cost-burdened households have less money for other essentials, like food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. Currently, more than 18,600 renters and 14,000 owners in the City of Tacoma experience cost-burdens. Everyone benefits from affordable housing. People with the greatest need for it, though, are often working lower-wage occupations or living on fixed incomes, like seniors and persons living with disabilities.

The Multifamily Property Tax Exemption Program is one way to encourage the development of multifamily units located in designated Residential Target Areas in Tacoma. Residential target areas are areas of Tacoma that have been designated by the City Council as lacking sufficient, available, desirable, and convenient residential housing to meet the needs of the public. The affordable units must be rented to households making 70 percent or less of the Pierce County Area Median Income (AMI). The incentive exempts qualifying projects from property taxes for 8, 12, or 20 years based on the level of affordability provided.

The 8-year property tax exemption can be granted to any projects in an eligible area where four new units are being constructed, rehabilitated or created through conversion of a commercial structure, or added to existing occupied multifamily housing. There is no affordability requirement.

The 12-year property tax exemption is only granted to projects in which 20% of the newly created units are designated as affordable housing. These projects must also meet the same criteria as the 8-year MFTE projects (4 units, eligible area).

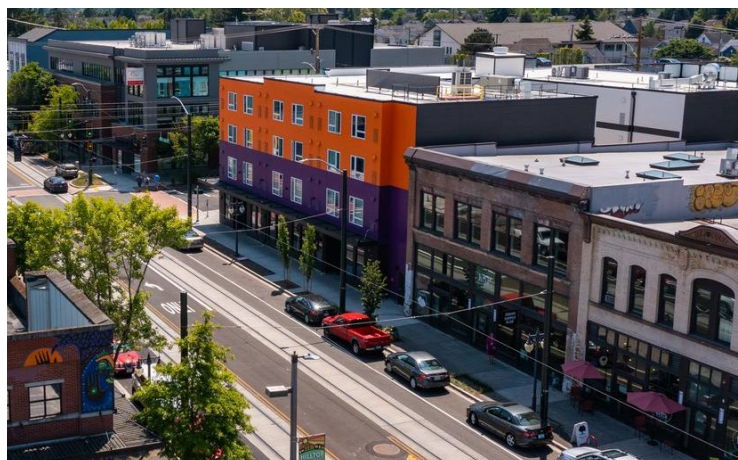
The 20-year property tax exemption must provide permanent affordability for 25% of the units.

Decision Point

Staff members wondered how they could preserve tax exemption options while increasing affordable units in high opportunity areas. One councilmember noted that “development will happen in high opportunity areas no matter what, so high opportunity areas do not need an incentive to build housing, but they do need an incentive to build affordable housing.” However, 8, 12, and 20-year MFTE options are necessary to maintain the level of development needed to address Tacoma’s housing shortage.

Action

While there is a need for affordable housing across Tacoma, staff recognize that prioritizing affordable housing in areas with existing infrastructure and plentiful amenities is a great place to start while investments are being made in infrastructure to support growth across the city. Mixed-use centers are designed to be areas that provide a range of housing choices, employment opportunities, transit-supportive development, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and a mix of shops, services, and public spaces. Policy staff looked at locations of mixed-used centers that are eligible for MFTE on the Equity Index to understand opportunity levels.



Outcome

City code was amended to eliminate the eight-year Multifamily Property Tax Exemption in mixed-use centers designated “very high” opportunity based on the Equity Index. This means that only projects with affordability requirements are eligible for tax exemptions in high opportunity areas.

Additionally, expansion areas are midscale residentially zoned areas which allow the use of the MFTE. Further recognizing the need to incentivize affordable housing units across Tacoma, the City Council also voted to change the code to allow only the 12 year and 20-year exemption in expansion areas.

While many forms of development and housing can and continue to be built, incentivizing affordable housing in high opportunity areas with tax exemptions helps create more housing providing long-term stability to those who are most likely to experience evictions and homelessness. This is one tool the City of Tacoma can use to address unmet housing needs.

Equity Index Use Beyond the City of Tacoma - Partner Spotlight

Economic Security for All*

**Most of the information for this case study was authored by Megan Hansen at Workforce Central and originally published on Workforce Central's blog. You can find the original articles here: [Economic Security For All Grant Success Brings Additional Funding Through March 2023 - WorkForce Central \(workforce-central.org\)](#) and [State Funds Third Round of Economic Security For All - WorkForce Central \(workforce-central.org\)](#). We extend our deepest gratitude to Workforce Central for its permission to share its content here.*

Background

Workforce Central stewards the Pierce County Workforce Development System by bridging the gap between job seekers, employers, and community organizations to build a robust workforce and ensure economic vitality across the region. Workforce Central uses the Equity Index to understand where to best focus resources and local investments to have the greatest impact. One example is the Economic Security for All Grant. In 2019, Workforce Central and its partners won a \$1.75 million federal grant with a goal to lift 250 families out of poverty.

Decision Point



Workforce Central used the Equity Index to explore where to focus the Economic Security for All Program. First, it used the Equity Index to identify low economic opportunity areas in Tacoma. Workforce Central also used the Equity Index to understand where there are the highest concentrations of communities of color and utilized additional data to identify the highest concentrations of generational poverty in the city. With this data, the 98404 zip code in East Tacoma was selected. Since then, the program has expanded to serve five zip codes in communities experiencing a high rate of poverty in Tacoma, Lakewood, Parkland, and Spanaway.

Action

While enrolled in the Economic Security for All Program (EcSA), customers are provided with career guidance, labor market information, career research assistance, short-term training, job search and job placement assistance, interview preparation, resume building, personal branding and networking assistance, resource and partner referrals, paid internships, and on the job training.

Outcome

By the end of 2021, the program helped nearly 300 people connect to jobs, training, financial literacy coaching, education, and resources to build a better future. In 2022, Workforce Central was awarded a third round of funding from the state for \$700,000 which will allow program operators to enhance the supportive service side of the program including utilities assistance, rental assistance, food assistance, supplies, and daycare.

One of program participants was Rodney who, when he enrolled in the program in December 2020, was homeless. He was hoping to begin electrical training, but his school of choice was not open at the time due to COVID. Rodney enrolled into EcSA and another workforce program in January 2021 and began working with his Career Advisor to develop an employment plan. Through the program, he received navigation of labor market information, training research, and job search strategies. During his time in the EcSA program, he was referred to Clover Park for career mapping, Goodwill for financial literacy, and 211 for basic needs.

He also attended an EcSA Workshop hosted by the Department of Social and Health Services regarding soft skill development. In May 2021, he obtained sustainable employment in maintenance at an apartment complex located in Lakewood, earning \$25 an hour.

Low Income Housing Institute, Career Team, and Goodwill have partnered under EcSA to help those experiencing homelessness navigate employment obstacles by offering Career Readiness modules on site, basic digital literacy, and financial education through the Economic Security for All program. These modules last 6 weeks and offer 40 hours of instruction. Co-enrollment with the Basic Food Employment and Training program (BFET) and Workforce programs assists participants in additional funding education, training and wrap around services to guide individuals into career pathways.



In the first pilot beginning in February 2022, as a collaborative, 27 students all currently experiencing homelessness enrolled in the program. Twenty-two students graduated 6 weeks later with all 22 meeting BFET eligibility, 15 enrolling into WIOA. Utilizing both funding streams has allowed for access to technology, wi-fi and wrap around services such as transportation, work clothing and in several cases working toward secondary education. Graduation was held on March 17, 2022 for the 22 students. Of those students, 6 went into full-time employment, 2 were able to find housing and all were provided with laptops through Indeed funding. WorkForce Central will continue to work with each student to secure employment.

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood, showing a mix of single-story and two-story houses, many with green lawns and mature trees. A main road with several cars is visible in the lower half of the image. The sky is clear and blue. Overlaid on the image are several semi-transparent blue geometric shapes, including squares and rectangles, primarily in the top-left and bottom-left corners, and a large dark blue horizontal banner across the middle. The banner contains the title text in white.

Continuous Uses of the Equity Index

Continuous Uses of the Equity Index

This section highlights some of the ways staff use the Equity Index in day-to-day work that may not follow a clear decision point, action, or outcome format. Many staff reference the Equity Index frequently during ongoing efforts and processes.

Criteria in Facilities Scoring

The City of Tacoma’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provides fiscal planning, analysis, and management services to enable the entire City of Tacoma organization to deliver effective and efficient services. This includes managing the development of the proposed and adopted capital budget as well as coordinating the City of Tacoma’s Capital Facilities Program. OMB helps to facilitate the process of prioritizing facility needs across the City of Tacoma’s many buildings for investment decisions. How do you prioritize and compare a Library to a Fire Station to City Hall? OMB created a quantitative and qualitative scoring criteria which includes the building location’s opportunity score from the Equity Index as well as a narrative component for how the project proposal will advance equity and antiracism. This has helped support budget requests for the Fire Station Facility Master Plan, the Street Operations Master Plan, and other planning efforts to ensure that equity and antiracism are incorporated into decisions before significant investment decisions are requested or made.

Step 1 - Quantitative Scoring (Basic Proposal Information)				
Category	Description	Max Pts	Weight	Score
Project Info				
Project Type	Is the project creating a new asset or addressing existing asset deficiencies? New=1, Repair=2, Renovation=3, Replacement=4	4	0.15	0.60
Safety & Security	Does the project address a safety concern? No=0, Enhancement=1, Mandate/Critical Need=2, Emergency/Life Safety=3	3	0.15	0.45
Operational Risks	Project impacts to continued operations or service to the community? None=0, Moderate=1, High=2, Critical=3	3	0.10	0.30
Factors of Use	Does the project enhance building appearance, function &/or utilization? Deficient=1, Fair=2, Good=3, Excellent=4	4	0.05	0.20
Project Elements	What building elements does this project impact? 1 Pt Each: Exterior, Interior, Systems, Site, Code Req, ADA, Sustainability	7	0.05	0.35
Building Info				
Equity Index	Equity Index of building location? Very High=1, High=2, Moderate=3, Low=4, Very Low=5	5	0.15	0.75
Location & Capacity	Is the building properly located and does it meet growth needs? Deficient=1, Fair=2, Good=3, Excellent=4	4	0.15	0.60
Condition	Facility Condition Index (FCI) from most recent assessment? Excellent/Good=1, Fair=2, Poor=3, Critical=4	4	0.10	0.40
Historical	Is the building officially listed on an historical register? No=0, Tacoma=1, Tac/State=2, Tac/St/National=3	3	0.05	0.15
Age	Current age of facility based on original construction year? <15yrs=1, 16-25yrs=2, 26-40yrs=3, >40yrs=4	4	0.05	0.20
TOTAL		41	1.00	4.00
Step 2 - Qualitative Scoring (SME Review of Proposal Narratives)				
Category	Description	Score		
City Goals	SME review of proposals alignment with City’s strategic goals. (MCO)	Weak, Fair, Good, Excellent		
Equity & Anti-Racism	SME review of proposals advancement of Equity & Anti-Racism. (OEHR)	Weak, Fair, Good, Excellent		
Sustainability	SME review of proposals impacts to Sustainability goals. (OEPS)	Weak, Fair, Good, Excellent		

Section of scoring sheet

Eligibility for Assistance

In accordance with Tacoma Municipal Code, maintenance of trees and vegetation in the public right-of-way (ROW) is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. However, in recognition of the need to encourage tree planting and proactive tree maintenance in the ROW, as well as the need to address public safety without placing undue financial burden on community members, the City Council passed a dedicated budget for a Hazardous Tree Assistance Program. Applicants can qualify for assistance in two ways: the adjacent property owner must be currently enrolled, or eligible to participate, in a Tacoma Public Utilities Payment Assistance program or the property must be located in a “Moderate” “Low” or “Very Low” opportunity area according to the Tacoma Equity Index.

Historic Preservation

In the past, historic preservation efforts in the United States have focused on architectural merit and often missed capturing places related to cultural significance. Tacoma is joining a national conversation about how to better serve underrepresented communities with regard to historic preservation and celebrating lesser-known stories and sites. When new nominations to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places are submitted to the City of Tacoma, staff use the Equity Index to review locations of the proposed historic designations to evaluate how the historic listing could contribute to filling in those gaps. This information is part of the analysis in related Council Action Memorandums. The Equity Index helps to focus efforts to better understand potentially underrepresented historical narratives.

Applying for Grants



Public Works staff members use the Equity Index as a data source when applying for grant applications. One project manager shared “Having access to reliable data all in one place helps save staff time while also making grant applications more thoughtful and competitive.” For example, the City of Tacoma, in partnership with the City of Bellevue, was awarded the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) federal grant. The application notes “75% of the High Risk Network (intersections and corridors with the highest risk of fatal and severe injury crashes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorist) in Tacoma is located within an area with an Equity Index of low or very low which indicates that disadvantaged populations are disproportionately impacted by traffic incidents.” This grant will support deploying and operationalizing safety-driven technologies to foster a positive safety environment that will address racial, socioeconomic and disability-related disparities experienced for road safety in Tacoma.

Beyond the City of Tacoma, other organizations are also using the Equity Index. One example is Metro Parks Tacoma, an independent park district that offers a variety of experiences on its 2,905 acres, including parks, trails, sport courts and fields, community centers, pools, and two zoos. In 2024, Metro Parks used the Equity Index to help demonstrate the need, potential project impact, and public benefit for two legislative grant funding requests.

- One 2024 legislative grant application sought funding for a study of options for replacing a 46-year-old community center. The application noted that funding investments in that neighborhood are important because “People’s Community Center is located in a ‘very low’ opportunity area according to the Tacoma Equity Index, which means there are few resources for residents. Only 43% of people who live in the area earn more than \$75,000 per year.”
- The other application sought funding to “support a feasibility and design study that evaluates potential sites and designs for a new community center serving the Southeast Tacoma area, a neighborhood that faces significant challenges as evidenced by Tacoma Equity Index data and our own experiences.”

Especially when word count and time are limited, many have found that referencing the Equity Index is a powerful way to convey many data points succinctly. Metro Parks received funding for both projects.

Specialized Review of Permits

Permit and Plan Review staff in Planning and Development Services use the Equity Index to evaluate and respond to the unique needs of projects. For example, this can include requiring extra block, curb, and sidewalk to increase livability and accessibility or requirements around tree planting for projects in areas with a low tree canopy and high urban heat island to improve livability and environmental health.

Planning and Development staff and Public Works staff, on a limited basis, have also been able to ensure the accessibility needs of our community have been planned as part of the Council-approved Housing Equity – Accessibility budget proposal. In the 2023-2024 budget, the City Council approved a \$1 million budget proposal to partner with developments in low opportunity areas as well as low, very low, and moderate accessibility areas to build new accessible infrastructure, such as curb ramps and sidewalks. Accessibility improvements potentially represent a significant cost to small building projects. Developers now have the option to pay a mitigation fee to fund the required curb ramp(s) adjacent to their frontage with the City of Tacoma funding other connecting curb ramps and constructing the entire curb ramp project. This lowers developer costs and improves the accessibility of pedestrian facilities throughout Tacoma.



Language Access

With the 2023 update to the Equity Index, additional demographic information was included like “languages spoken at home”. The ability to explore languages spoken at home has supported language access efforts including helping staff identify areas where interpreter services may be needed as well as translation needs for community engagement. This also helps the City of Tacoma be compliant with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires recipients of Federal financial assistance to ensure meaningful access by people with limited English proficiency to programs, services, and activities. Knowing who is in the community and how to best communicate not only helps the City of Tacoma meet legal language access requirements but also helps to improve outreach, budget for language access needs, provide staff with information to help develop equitable community engagement plans, and so much more.