Seattle's Racial & Social Equity Index

A shared resource for prioritizing, plans, programs, and investments using geospatial data

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to the Seattle Planning Commission

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Seattle
Office of Planning &
Community Development

What we'll cover in our presentation

- Purpose and design of the Racial & Social Equity (RSE) Index

- How to access the index

- Examples of how City departments are using the index

Feedback we're seeking

- Thoughts on the RSE Index mapping app, how to enhance its usefulness for—and dissemination to—stakeholders

- What thoughts do you have about how we can best use this data at the City to guide policy and programs?
  - and specifically, how can best use the RSE Index in our work to update and implement the Comprehensive Plan?

Background on the RSE Index and How to Access It

Racial and Social Equity (RSE) Index

- First developed in 2017
  - By OPCD w/interdepartmental consultation (MO, OCR, OSE, SPR, SPU and others)

- Provides City departments w/common set of data identifying where RSJI priority populations make up relatively large shares of neighborhood residents

- Tool for informing design, prioritization, and evaluation of programs, plans, and investments

- Updated periodically
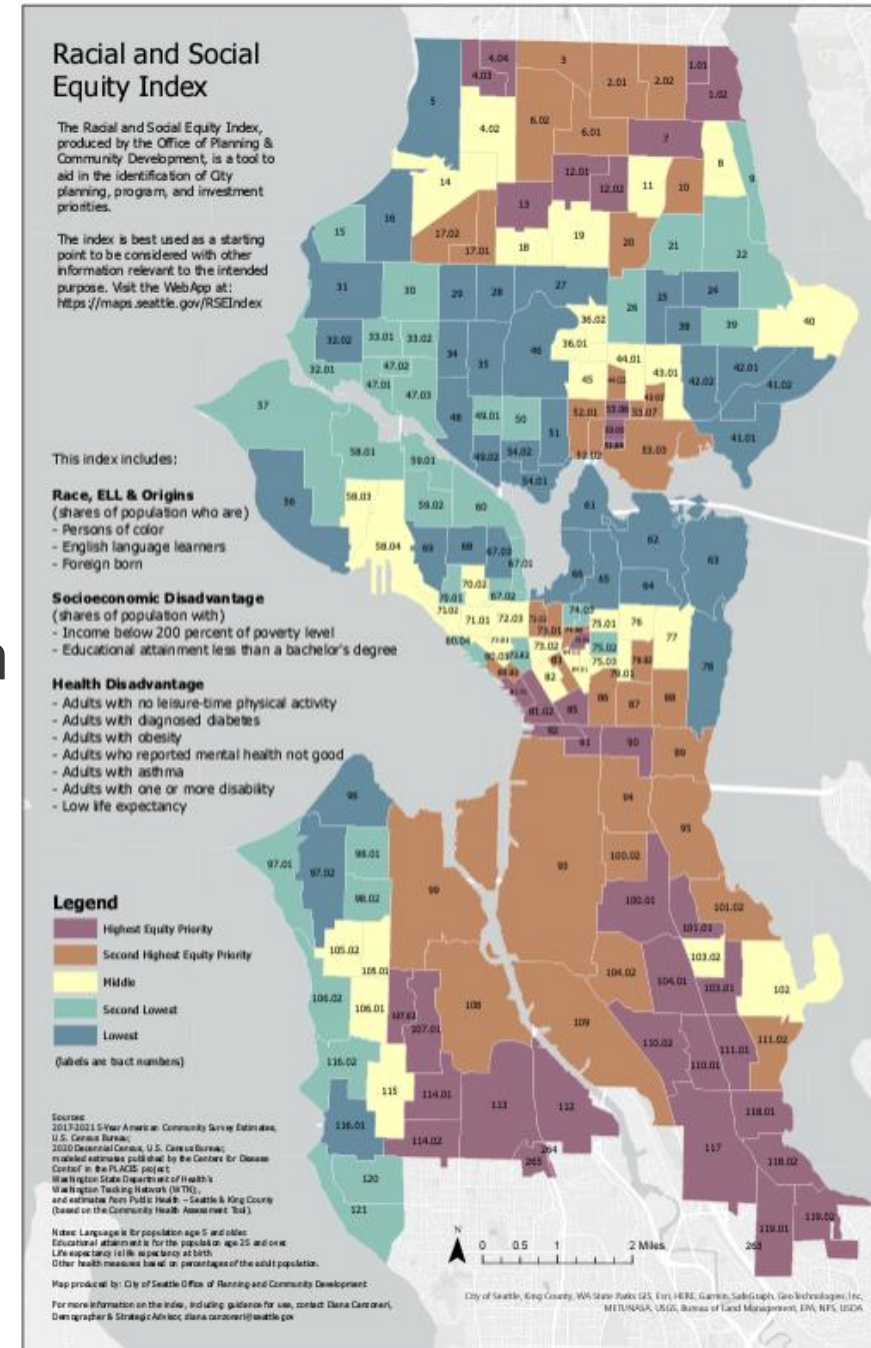
Racial and Social Equity (RSE) Index

Composite of three subindices

- **Race, ELL, and Origins Index**
  - Persons of color
  - English language learners (ELL)*
  - Foreign born*

  (*Weighted by 0.5 in subindex)

- **Socioeconomic Disadvantage Index**
  - Income below 200 percent of poverty
  - Educational attainment less than a bachelor's degree

- **Health Disadvantage Index**
  - Adults w/no leisure-time physical activity
  - Adults with diagnosed diabetes
  - Adults with obesity
  - Adults who report that their mental health is not good
  - Adults with asthma
  - Low life expectancy at birth
  - Adults with one or more disabilities

Racial & Social Equity (RSE) Index

Composite index of three basic indices:

Race/Ethnicity, ELL, and Foreign Born **Socioeconomic Disadvantage** **Health Disadvantage**
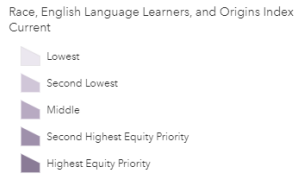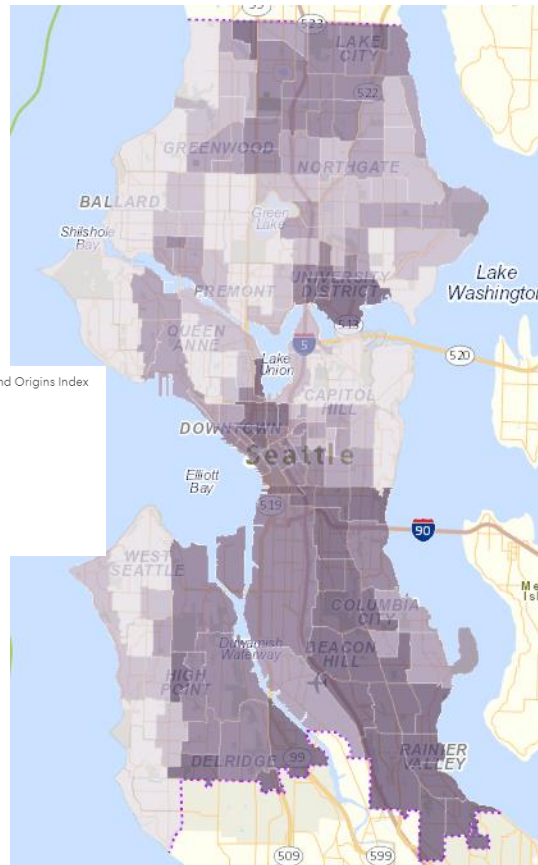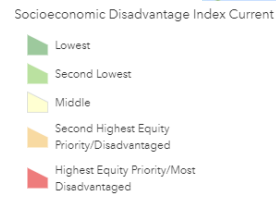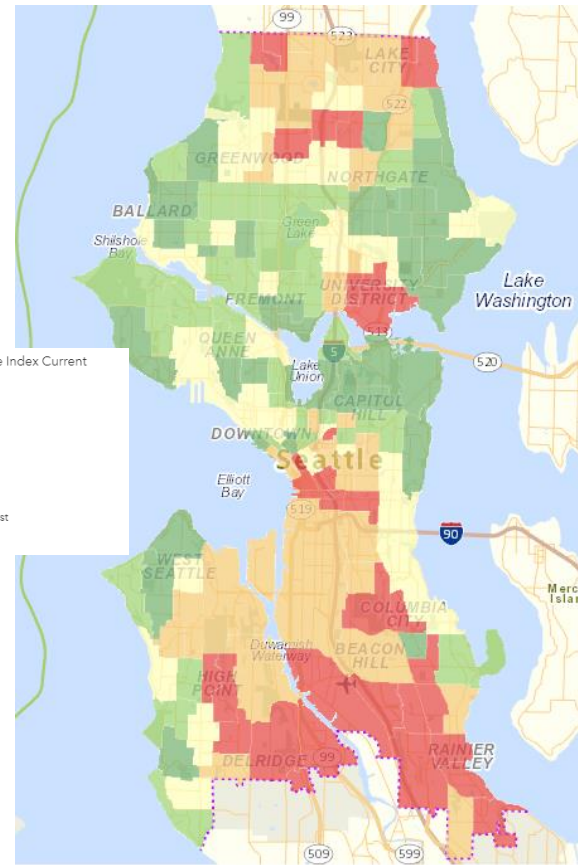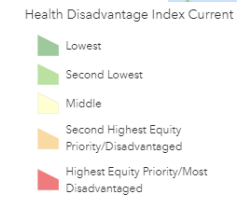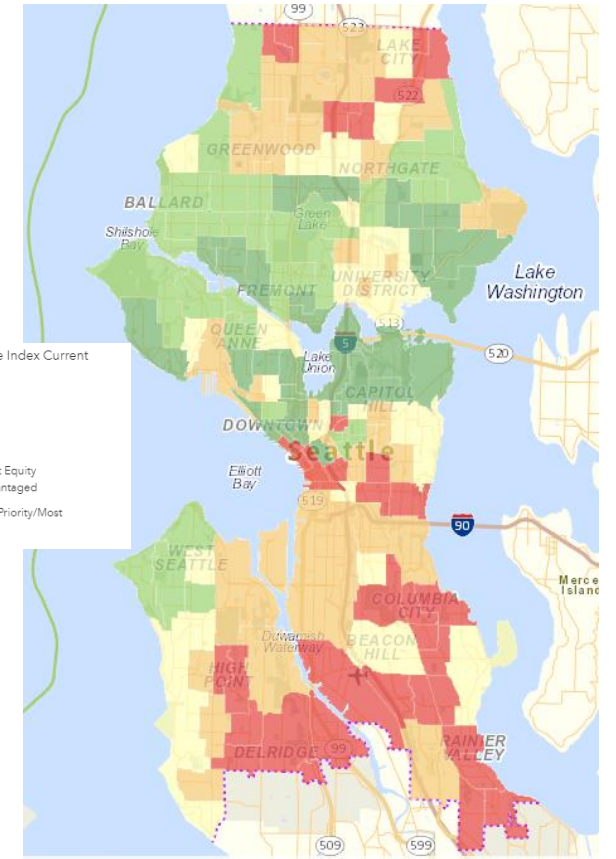
Racial and Social Equity Index

Available in a variety of forms:

- Detailed, print-friendly [PDF map](#)

- [ArcGIS Online](#) mapping app

- [SeattleGeoData](#) (open data)

- City's internal GIS Production server

Pairs well with our [Users' Guide](#)

RSE Index In Action

Examples of how City departments are using the index

RSE Index In Action: 2021 Tree Canopy Report

Figure 3. Tree canopy cover map and canopy cover change map overlaid with EJ priority areas

City of Seattle Tree Canopy Assessment 2021

RSE Index In Action: 2021 Tree Canopy Report

Figure 3. Tree canopy cover map and canopy cover change map overlaid with EJ priority areas

City of Seattle Tree Canopy Assessment 2021
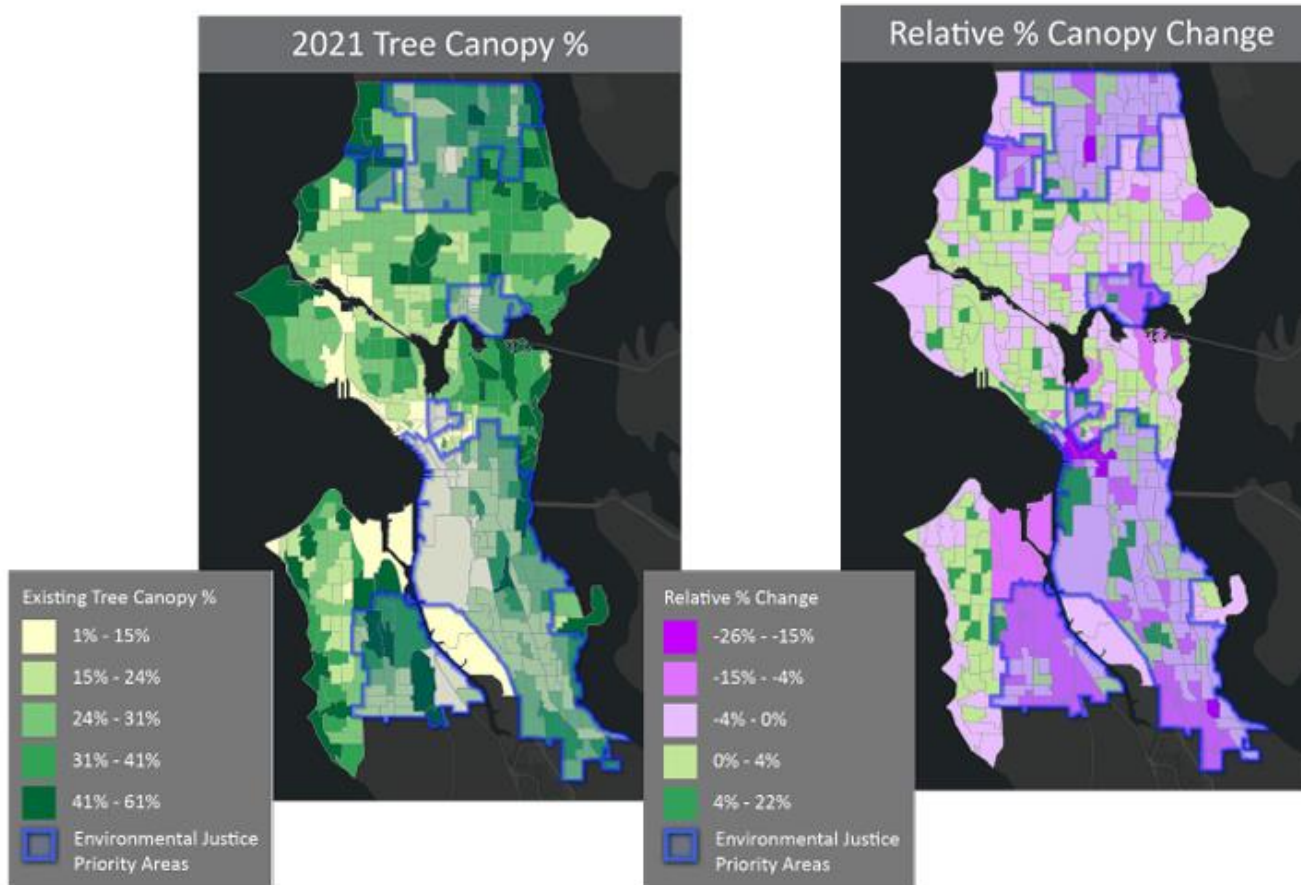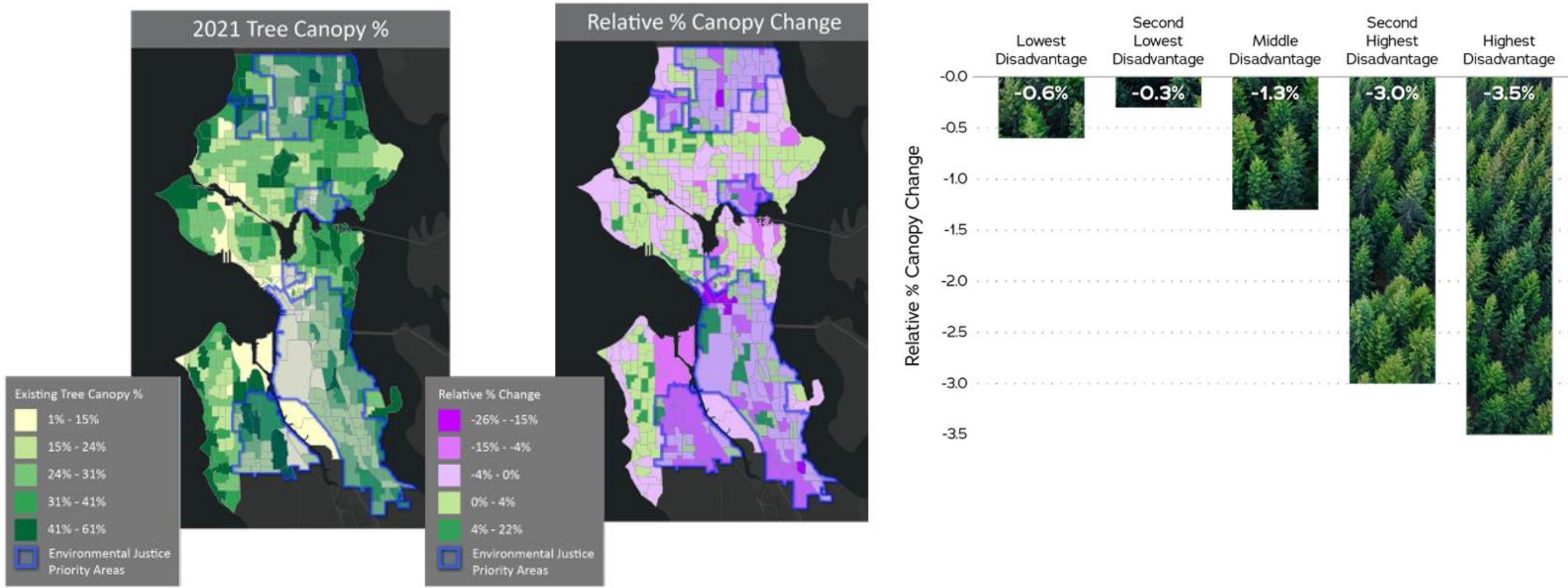
RSE Index In Action:
Equitable Development Monitoring Program (EDMP)

Place-based analysis of Equitable Development Community Indicators

Gold cross-hatching highlights the census tracts the RSE priority areas, which correspond with the two highest quintiles in the RSE Index:

Neighborhood-level analysis of community indicators focuses on how the RSE priority areas are faring.

Equitable Development Community Indicators Report

Equitable Development Monitoring Program
SEPTEMBER 2020

Seattle
Office of Planning &
Community Development

RSE Index In Action: EDMP

Proximity To Community Centers

Access to Frequent Transit

Community Center
- Within 1/2 Mile
- Within 1 Mile
- Within 2 Miles
- RSE Priority Areas

LINK Station
- Light Rail Walksheds
- Streetcar/Frequent Bus Service* Walksheds
- RSE Priority Areas

Bitter Lake
Lake City
Northgate
Meadowbrook
Loyal Heights
Green Lake
Ravenna-Eckstein
Magnuson
Ballard
Laurelhurst
Magnolia
Montlake
Queen Anne
Miller
Garfield
Yesler
International District
Jefferson Park
Rainier
Alki
Hiawatha
Delridge
High Point
Van Asselt
Southwest
South Park
Rainier Beach

Sources: SPR; analysis by OPCD
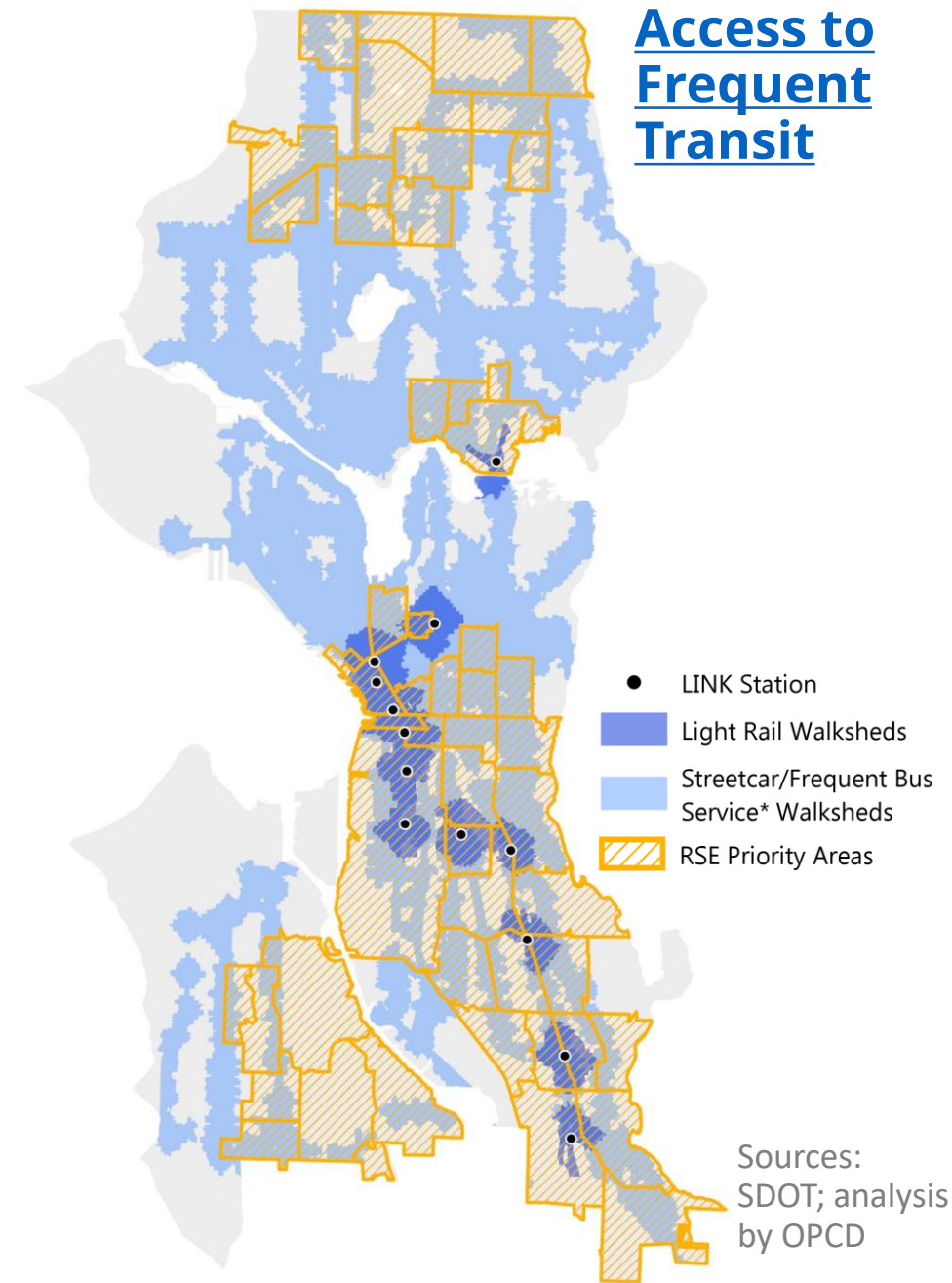
Sources: SDOT; analysis by OPCD

RSE Index In Action: EDMP

Homeownership Rates

- Homeownership rates are generally:
  - highest where single-family homes are prevalent
  - lower in RSE priority areas.
- However, homeownership rates among low-income households are relatively high in parts of Southeast Seattle.

RSE Index In Wide Use by Depts (examples)

In evaluation, monitoring, and reporting

- **OPCD**: Monitoring how RSE priority areas are doing on **Equitable Development Community Indicators** of **housing**, **livability**, **transportation**, and **economic wellbeing**.

- **OPCD:** Comparing, environmental justice, transportation, and other impacts associated with land use alternatives in **Industrial & Maritime Strategy EIS**.

- **OSE: Climate Portal** overlays indicators of climate-impacting emissions with the RSE Index to help assess progress towards the One Seattle Climate Justice Agenda.

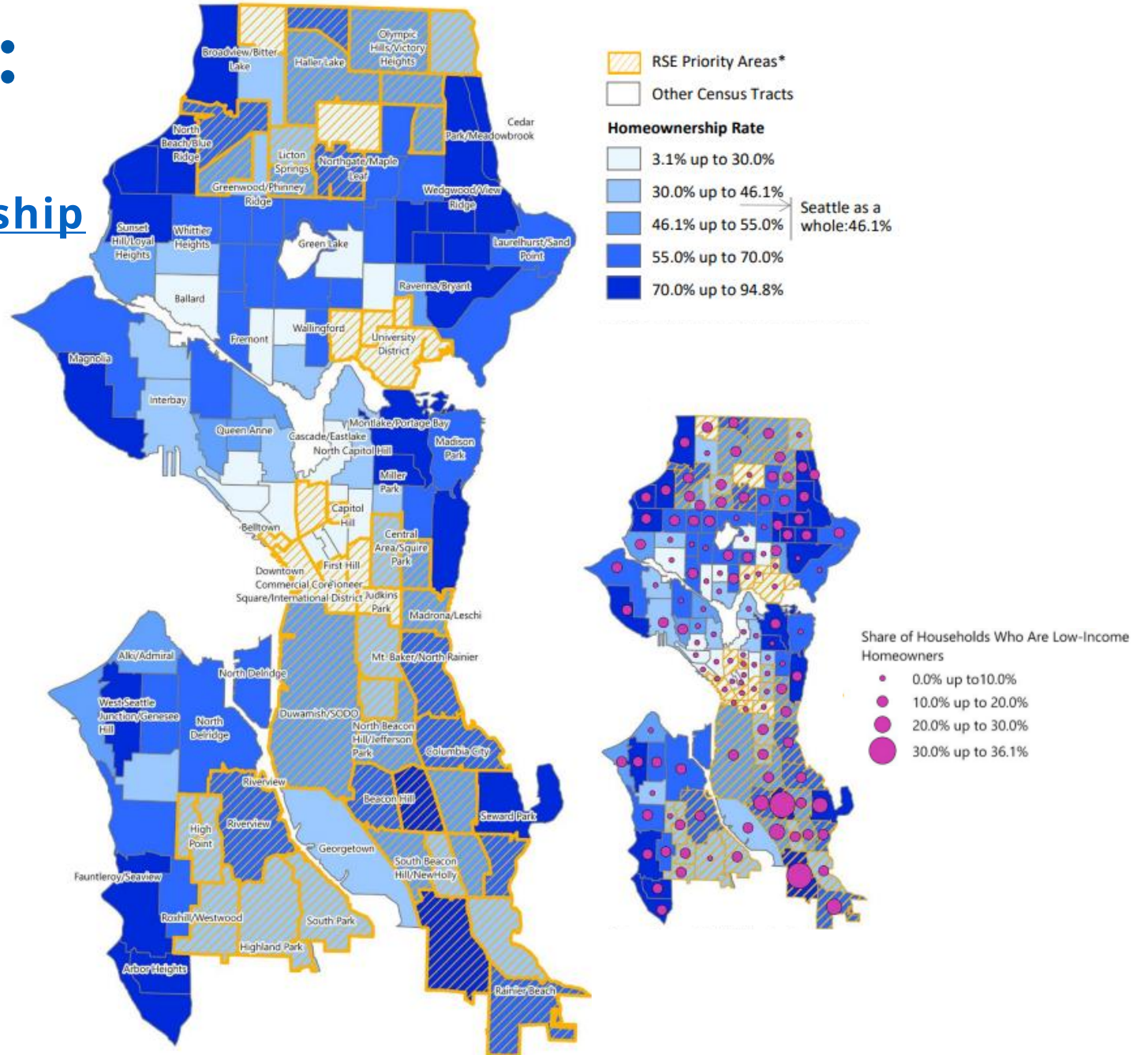- **CBO**: Evaluating how well **Seattle Rescue Plan** programs funded w/federal $s are reaching communities in high priority areas of the city.

- **SPU:** Evaluating reach of **Adopt-A-Street** volunteer program

- **SDOT:** **Title VI Environmental Justice Accomplishment Reporting** cited use of RSE Index to show how SDOT is engaging EJ communities.

RSE Index: Use Examples

Focusing programs, plans, and investments

- **SPR: AMWO System Equity Project** mapping app to inform allocation of maintenance hours and prioritize service in historically disadvantaged areas

- **SPR:** Prioritizing where to focus:
  - **Rec'N the Streets** programming
  - **Training on outdoor learning** for afterschool program leaders.

- **DON & SDOT**—Targeting solicitation and selection of **Neighborhood Street Fund Program** project ideas

- **SCL**: Analyzing **Utility Discount Program participation** by neighborhood to identify where penetration is lower than expected and should be more heavily promoted.

RSE Index: Use Examples

Focusing programs, plans, and investments (continued):

- **SCL:** Part of analysis for the **Equity Plan** identifying vulnerable communities who must benefit from implementing WA **Clean Energy Transformation Act**.

- **OSE:** Focusing analysis in 2021 **Tree Canopy Report** to inform **Tree Canopy Equity and Resilience Plan** for planting and maintaining trees.

- **OSE:** Prioritizing **Energy Benchmarking technical support** to under-resourced neighborhoods.

- **SPU:** Integrating equity considerations into the **Shape Our Water Plan**.

RSE Index Use Examples

Focusing programs, plans, and investments (continued):

- **SDOT:** Helping prioritize **Vision Zero** efforts based on disproportionately high fatal and serious pedestrian crash rates in RSE priority areas.

- **COVID-19 Response, Reopening, and Recovery**

  - **SDOT**

    - **ReSET focus geographies:** COVID-19 case rates (50%), Race and Social Equity Index (25%), Displacement Risk Index (25%)

    - Applying the RSE Index as a one of several criteria for prioritizing levy-funded projects in the **Move Seattle COVID-19 Impact Assessment**

  - **OED:** RSE index used—along with displacement risk, COVID case rates, and business impacts—to allocate **Neighborhood Economic Recovery Fund** grants.

Considerations for Using the Index

Considerations for Using the RSE Index*

- Best used as a *starting point* to be considered along with

  - additional data relevant to the purpose at hand

  - community voices and input

- The RSE index only shows characteristics and conditions of people living in an area; view population density alongside.

- There can be variation within, and not just across, census tracts.

- Consider ways to prioritize based on place and people; persons in RSJI priority groups also live outside RSE Priority Areas.

- Limitations in neighborhood level data for some RSJI populations.

*See the RSE Index Users' Guide for more information.

Discussion and Feedback

Topics for feedback

- Thoughts on how to enhance usefulness and awareness of the RSE mapping app for community stakeholders

- What thoughts do you have about how we can best use this data at the City to guide policy and programs?

  - Specifically, how can best use the index in our work to update and implement the Comprehensive Plan?