

Commute Trip Reduction Program Equity Study



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Study Purpose, Objectives, and Scope

Study Purpose

Help WSDOT understand the extent to which the current Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program is equitable.

Objectives

Key objectives include:

- Defining what equity means in the context of the CTR program
- Identifying methods and metrics to assess equity
- Performing the assessment(s)

Defining Equity

Social: Who is the Program impacting? Who is it benefiting?

Vulnerable populations

Overburdened communities

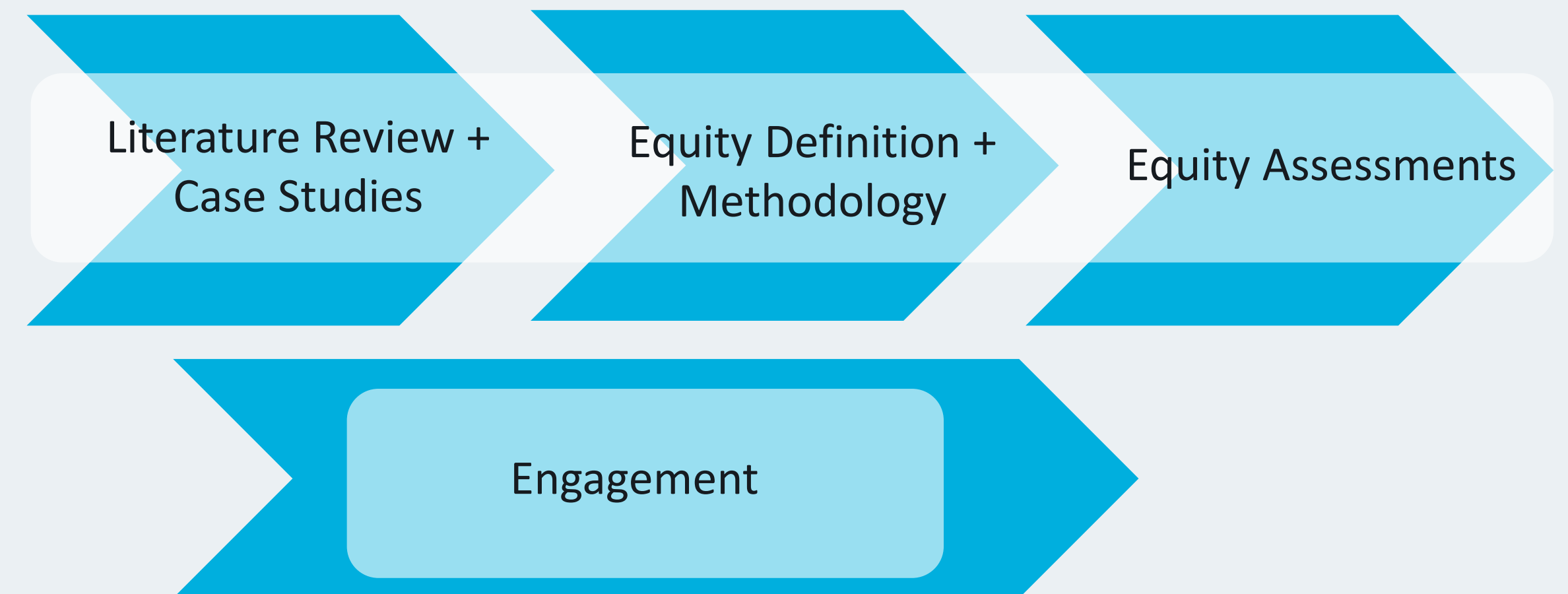
Tribes

Persons with special transportation needs

Spatial: Where is the Program being applied?

Procedural: How was it developed and how is it being used?

Commute Trip Reduction Program Equity Study



Literature Review and Case Studies

Literature review:



- Reviewed primarily Washington State-specific documents to understand CTR-related legislation, studies, and plans to date, as well as equity-focused literature for TDM programs and public transportation support for underserved groups.
- Review supported hypothesis that conventional CTR programs are unlikely to benefit low-income workers/the working poor. WSDOT's methodology for tracking success of programs in reducing and eliminating transportation-related burdens is evolving.

Case studies:



- Four case studies were selected to gain insight into how other jurisdictions are embedding equity into commute trip reduction components of their TDM programs.
 - **Oregon Metro Regional Travel Options (RTO) Program:** Commute Program Action Plan (2022) and 2023 RTO grant program provide examples for expanding TDM to underserved groups.
 - **Atlanta Regional Council 2023 Regional TDM Plan Report** conducted a socio-spatial equity analysis for their regional TDM plan but did not consider environmental justice factors directly.
 - **Southern California Association of Governments TDM Strategic Plan:** Provides a recommendation framework and TDM toolbox to coordinate best practices and lessons learned across 100+ cities.
 - **Future Cities Mexico:** Adopted a systems thinking approach that recognized actions needed to be taken in governance and infrastructure, not only transport service provision to improve outcome for women and girls.

Engagement

Task objectives:

- Inform Program equity definition;
- Understand how the Program serves or underserves equity priority groups;
- Inform equity performance assessment priorities; and,
- Identify engagement opportunities and challenges specific to equity priority groups.



- Every 3 weeks with WSDOT staff
- Support engagement task objectives

- Tribal Listening Session

- Survey (All Implementors > 50% Response Rate)
- Follow-up interviews (8 IJ's)

Engagement

Key Findings



Data limitations:

- **Lack of consistent data** (socio-demographic, environmental exposure, new worksites) makes it difficult to:
 - Identify and engage with **vulnerable populations**
 - Identify and engage with **new CTR-affected worksites**



Transportation access:

- Access to transportation alternatives varies based on **geography, size, and proximity to transit operators**
- **Long commutes, multiple transfers, misaligned schedules, and lack of off-peak service** pose significant barriers, especially for low-income workers and shift workers.



Program limitations:

- The current design of CTR is inadequate with respect to equity. Equity groups work in **retail, hospitality, manufacturing, and service jobs** that are exempt due to work hours, size, or location.
- Vulnerable population employers **unwilling/unable to offer transportation benefits beyond the bare minimum.**
- Grappling with **how to improve engagement** to understand needs, in particular equity priority groups.
 - Program **limits funding and flexibility** to serve and engage vulnerable populations outside worksites.
 - Most effort goes into **administering large employers / affected worksites.**



Engagement and Outreach:

- **Lack of standardized, culturally sensitive outreach materials/approaches** communicate with more diverse communities.
- Jurisdictions need **more state support and funding** to improve in this area.
- **Turnover of transportation resource coordinators** makes consistent engagement/education difficult.

Equity Definition and Assessments

What does equity mean within the CTR Program?

*An equitable CTR Program **provides all commuters at participating worksites the resources they need to choose more sustainable forms of travel to work.** This requires WSDOT, implementing jurisdictions, and employers to acknowledge that **different groups may require different things to make these choices.***

*An equitable CTR Program also **reduces the environmental and public health harms** that people in vulnerable populations experience as a result of single-occupancy vehicle travel.*

Assessment will include:

- Geospatial distribution of worksites/jurisdictions in relation to environmental health and social vulnerability
- Statistical relationship between drive alone rates and employment (e.g. full vs part-time)
- Industries that employ more vulnerable populations

Equity Assessments

Key Findings



Social Vulnerability:

- CTR affected cities generally have a higher proportion of socially vulnerable populations compared to unaffected areas
- CTR worksites are also more likely to be in block groups with a high prevalence of social vulnerability



Overburdened Communities:

- CTR affected cities generally have a significantly higher Environmental Health Disparities (EHD) ranking compared to unaffected areas
- CTR worksites are also more likely to be in block groups with a high EHD ranking



Drive Alone Rates:

- Part-time employees are more likely to drive alone than full time employees
- There are statistically significant differences in the drive alone rates of employees based on their origin zip code.

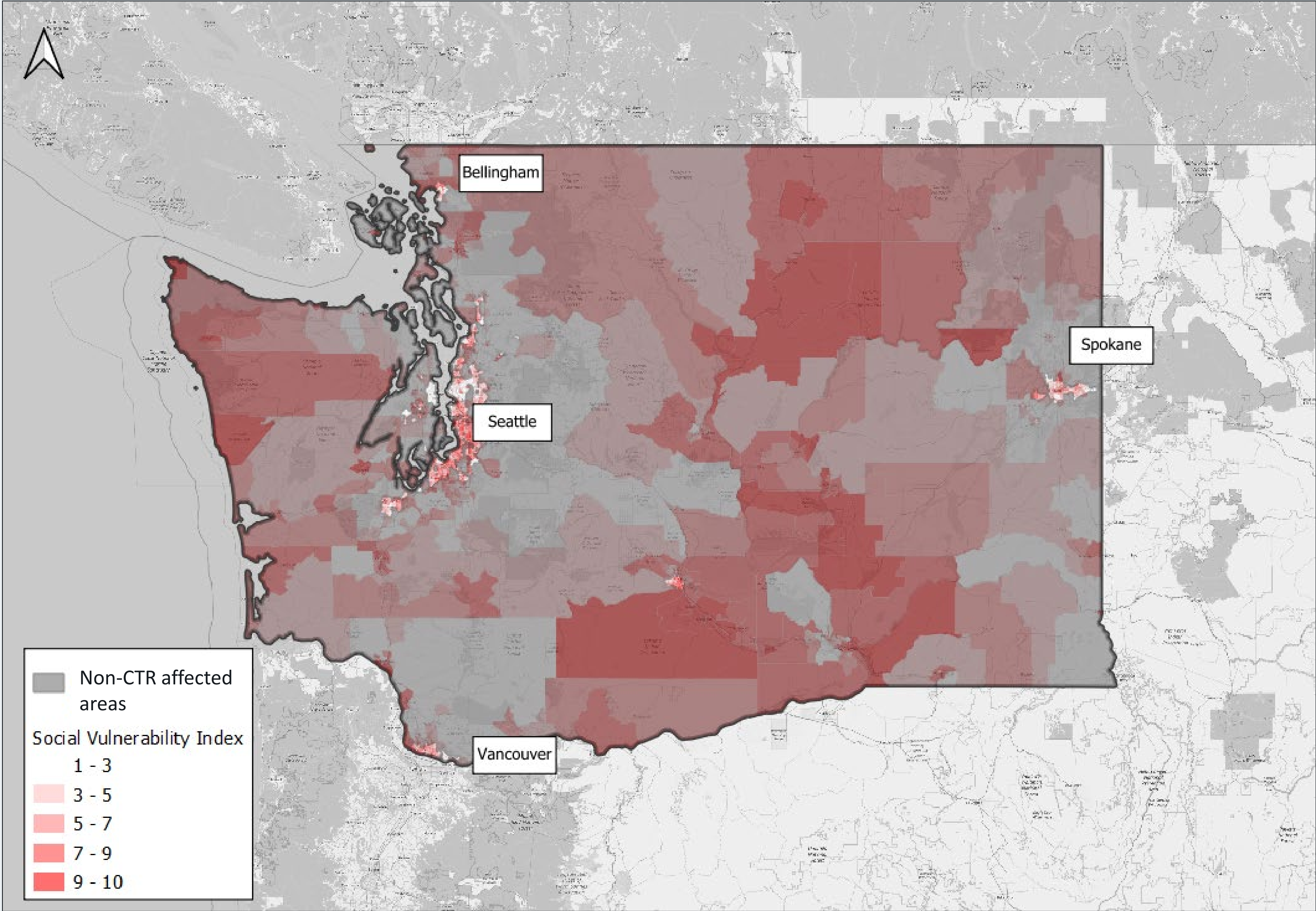


CTR and Equity Industries:

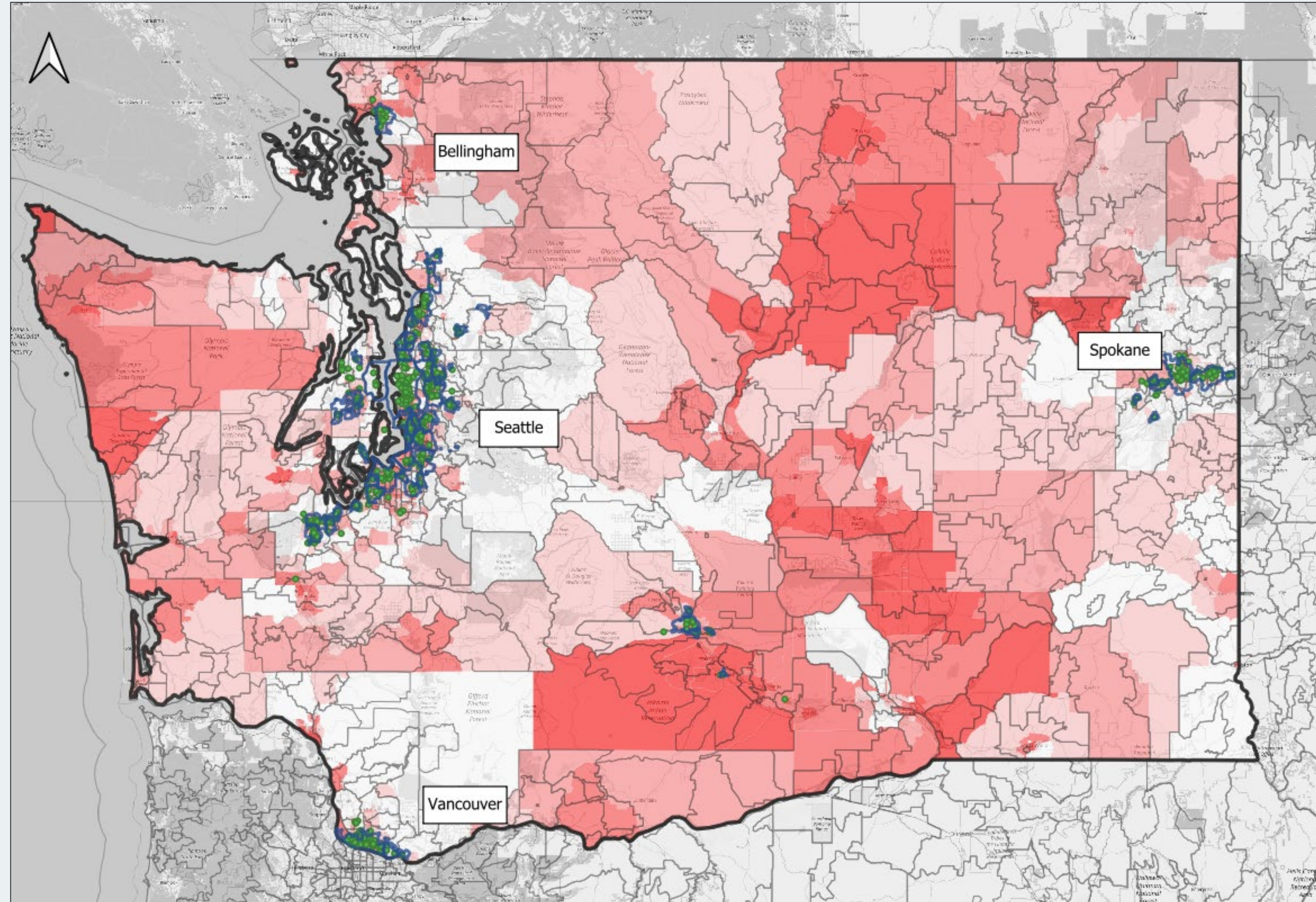
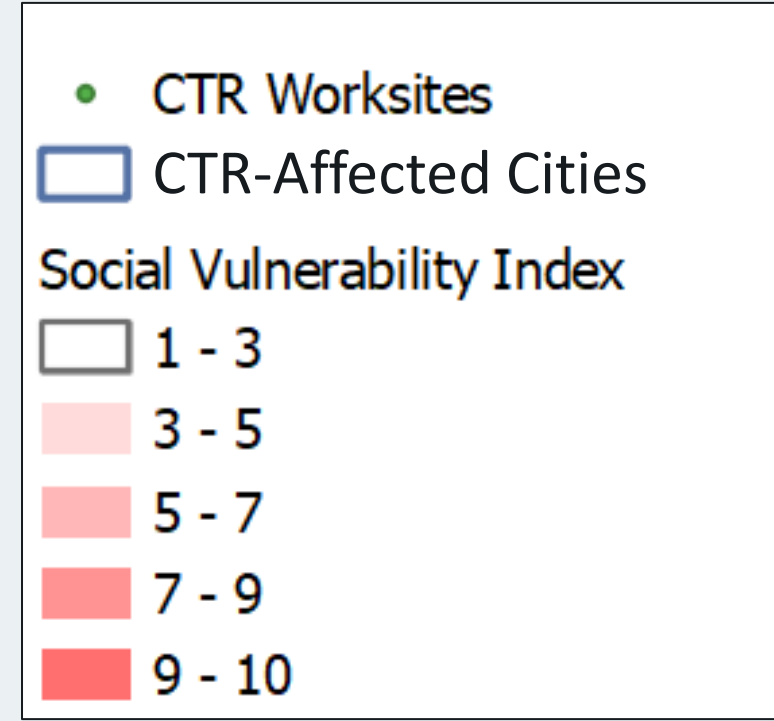
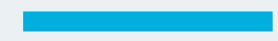
- Professional services, construction, and health care are the most common industries in CTR affected cities
 - Healthcare is considered an essential industry and frequently employs shift workers
 - Professional services is one of the industries that most commonly employs people with disabilities
- Other *equity industries* are present throughout the State

The CTR Program is currently being implemented in socially vulnerable areas, which should make it easier to provide benefits to these community members.

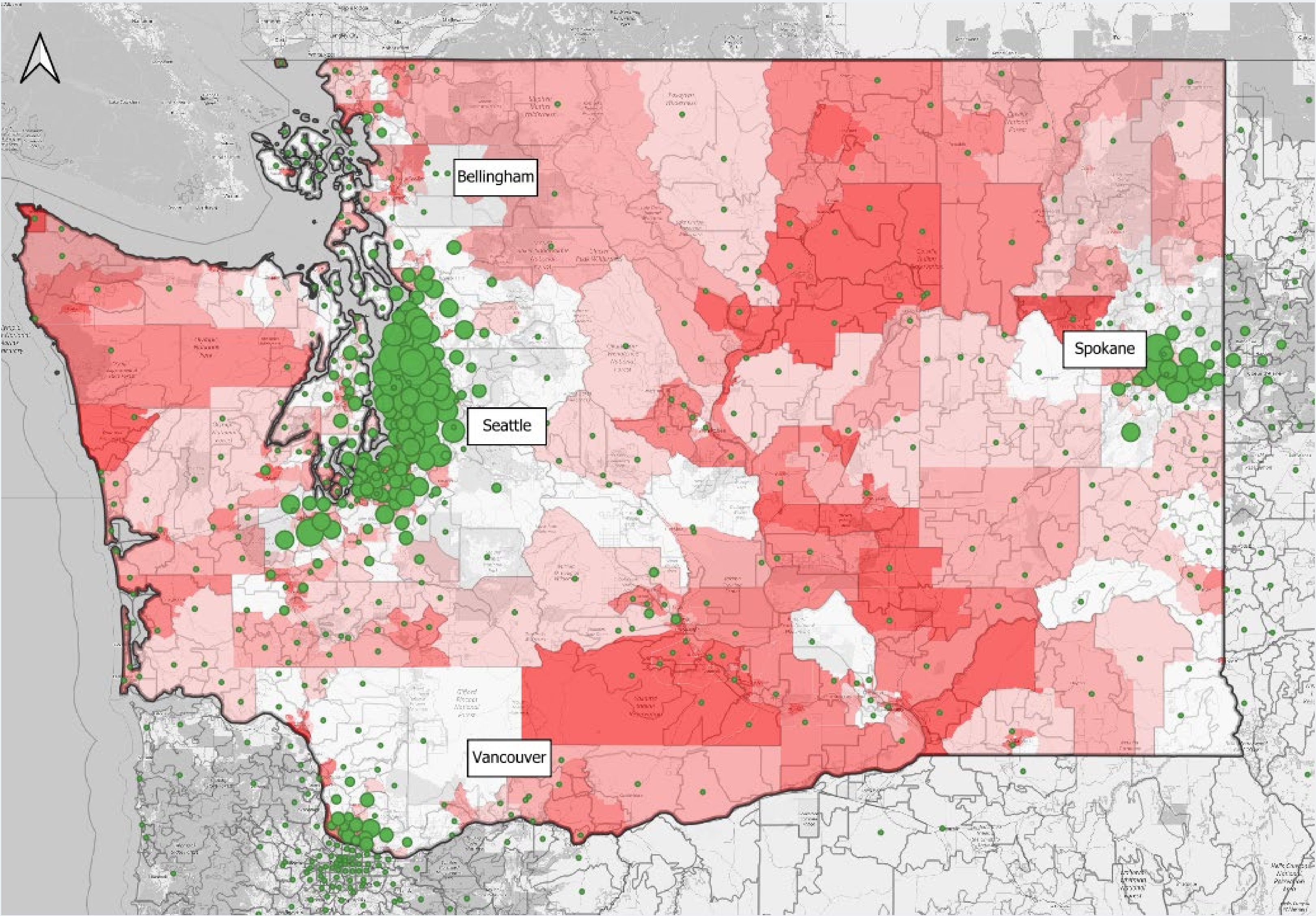
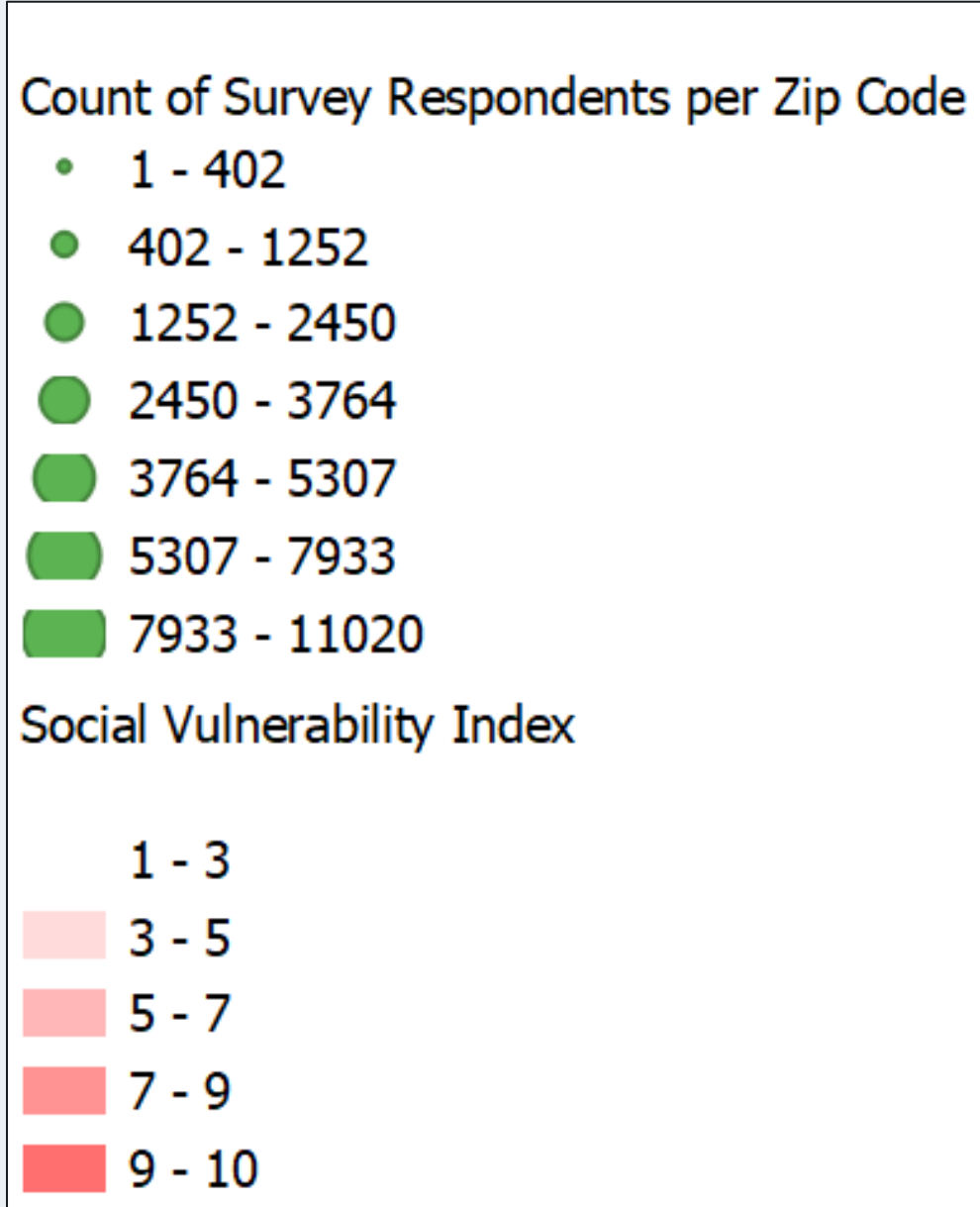
Prevalence of vulnerable populations in CTR affected cities



Prevalence of CTR worksites in socially vulnerable communities



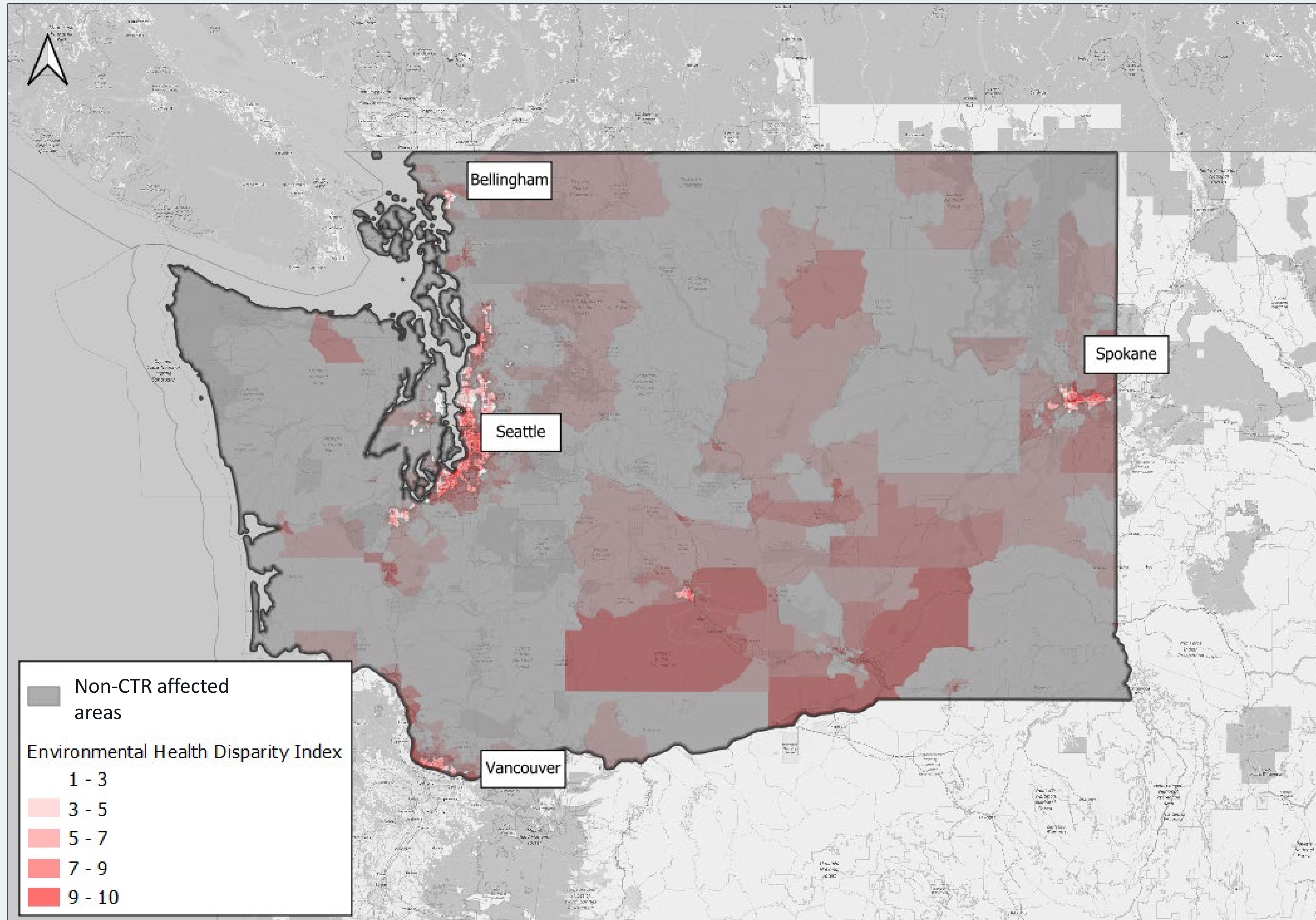
Employee origins and social vulnerability



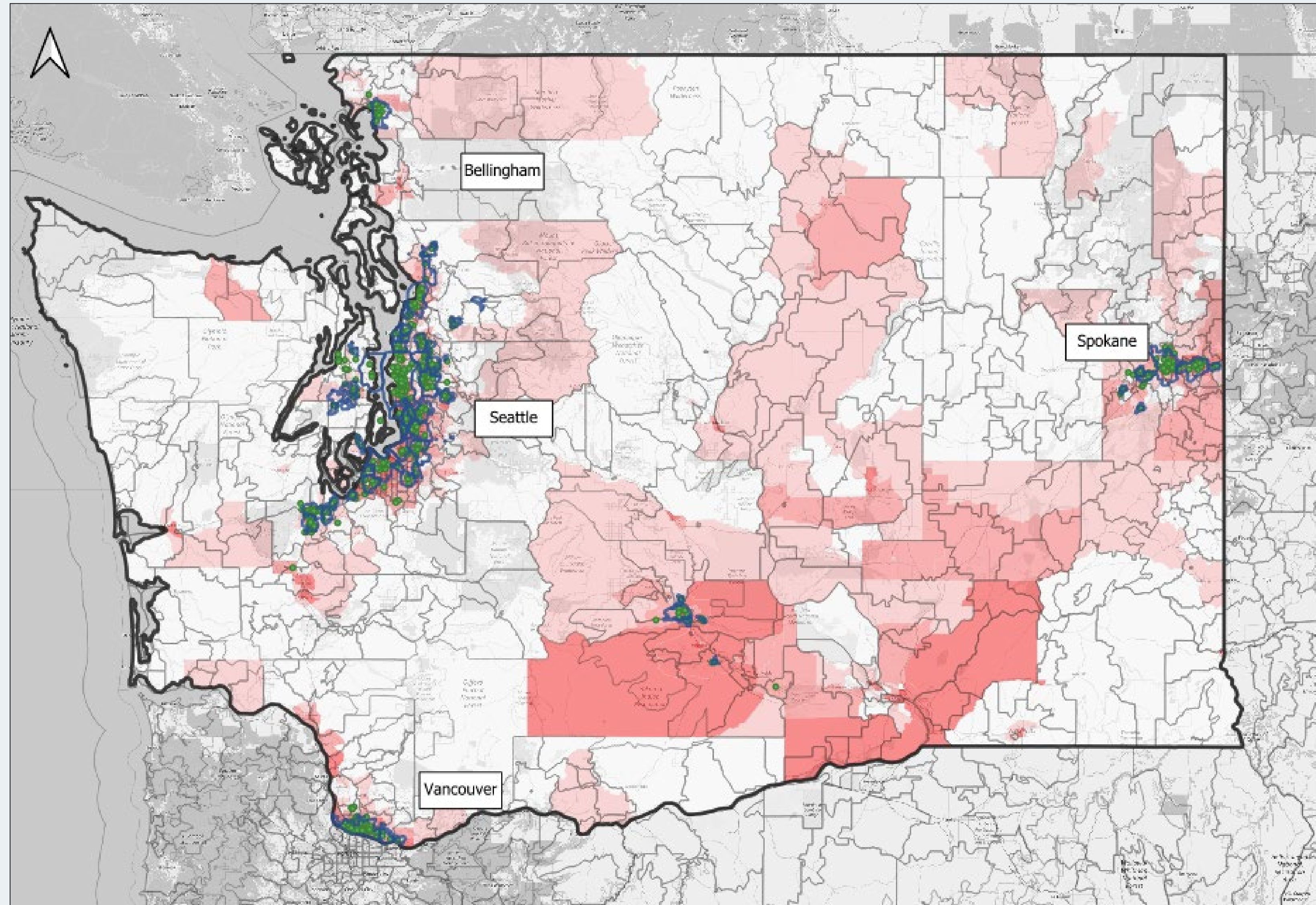
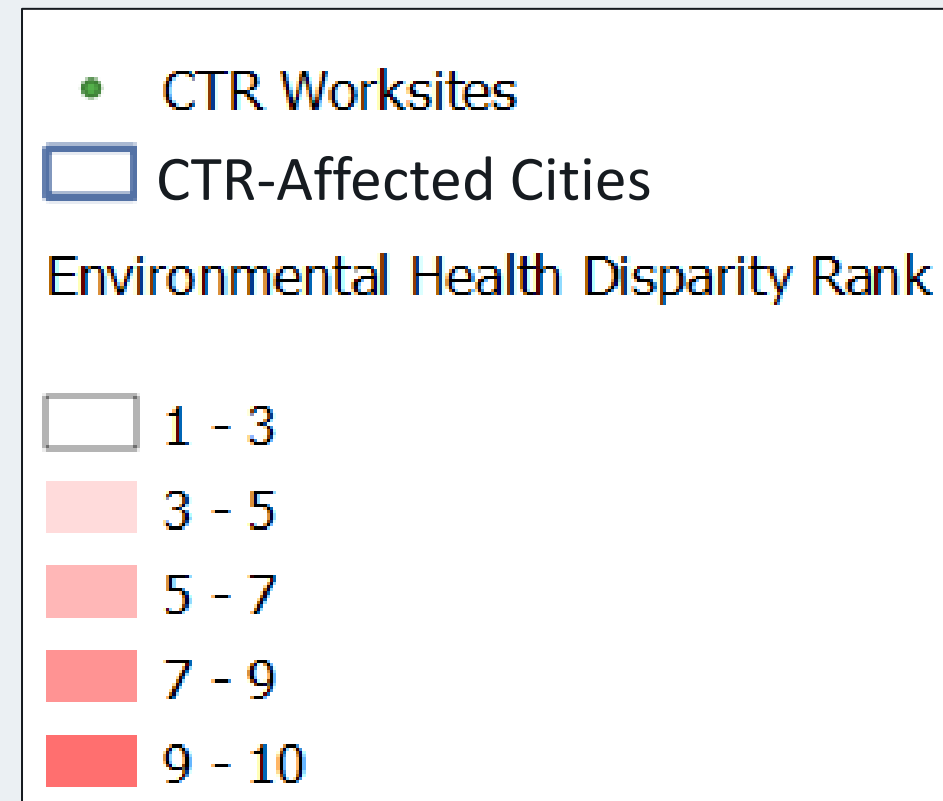
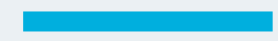
Overburdened Communities

The CTR Program is currently being implemented in overburdened communities, which should mean that the environmental benefits of the program are accruing in these communities.

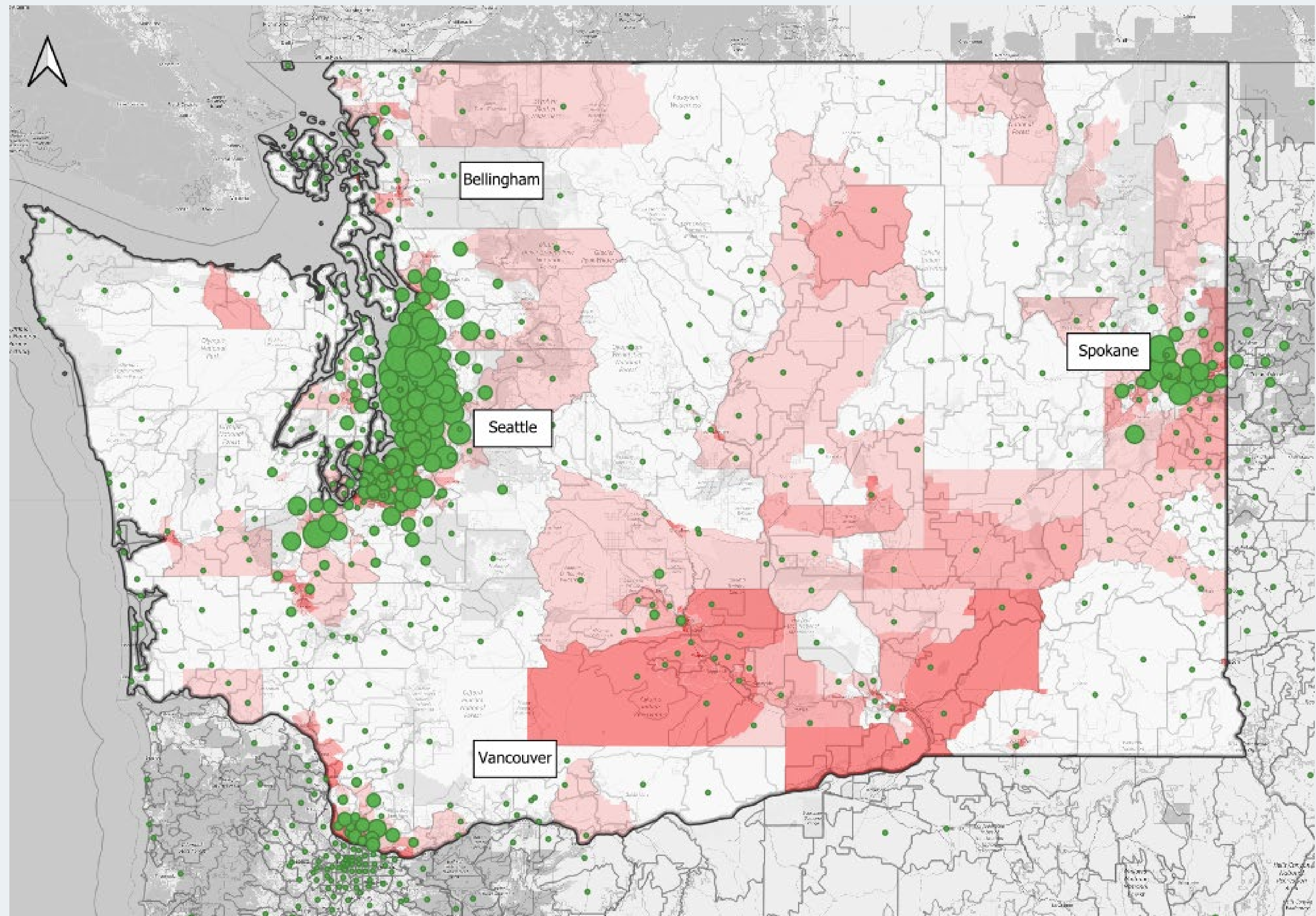
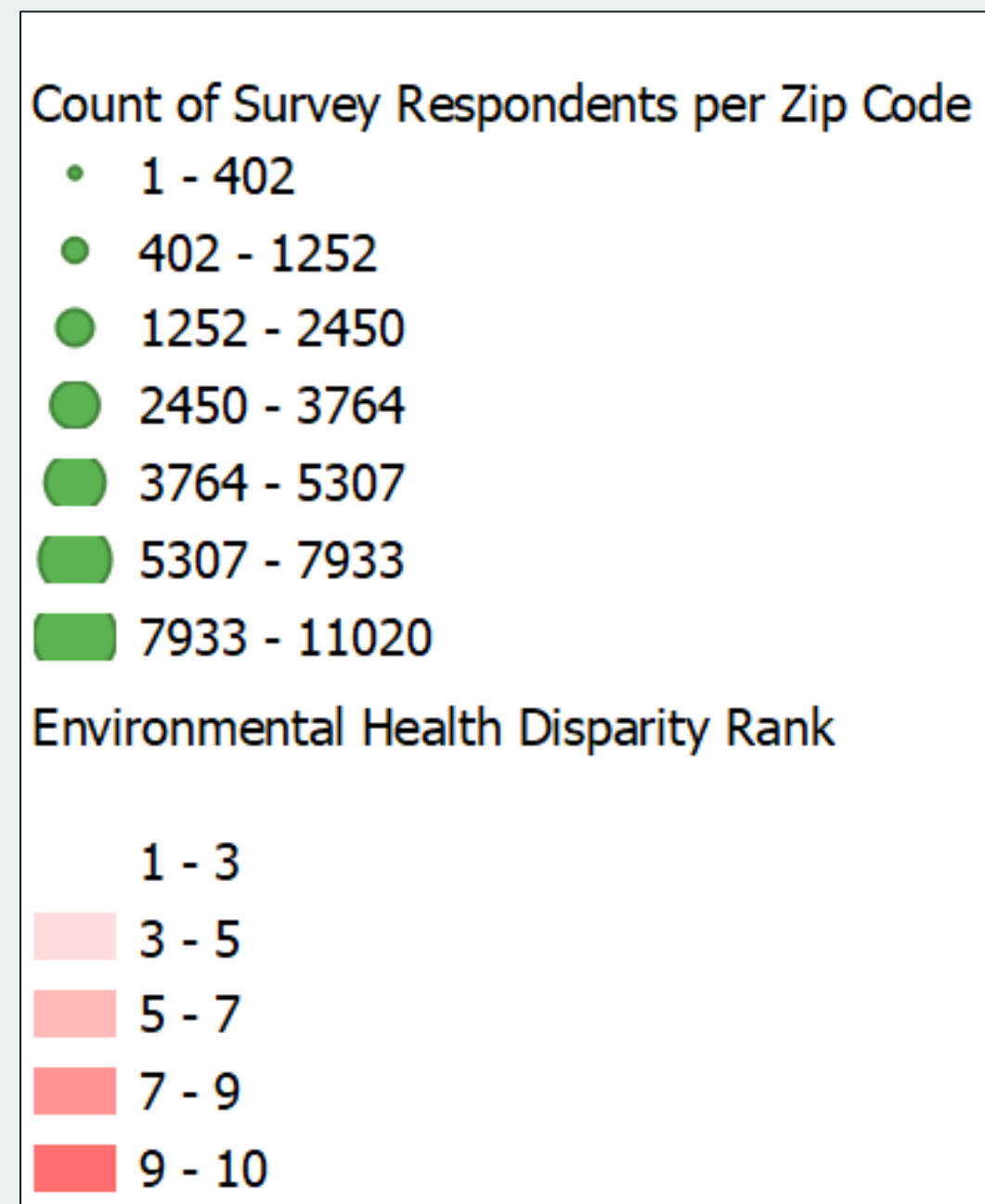
Prevalence of overburdened communities in CTR affected cities



Prevalence of CTR worksites in overburdened communities



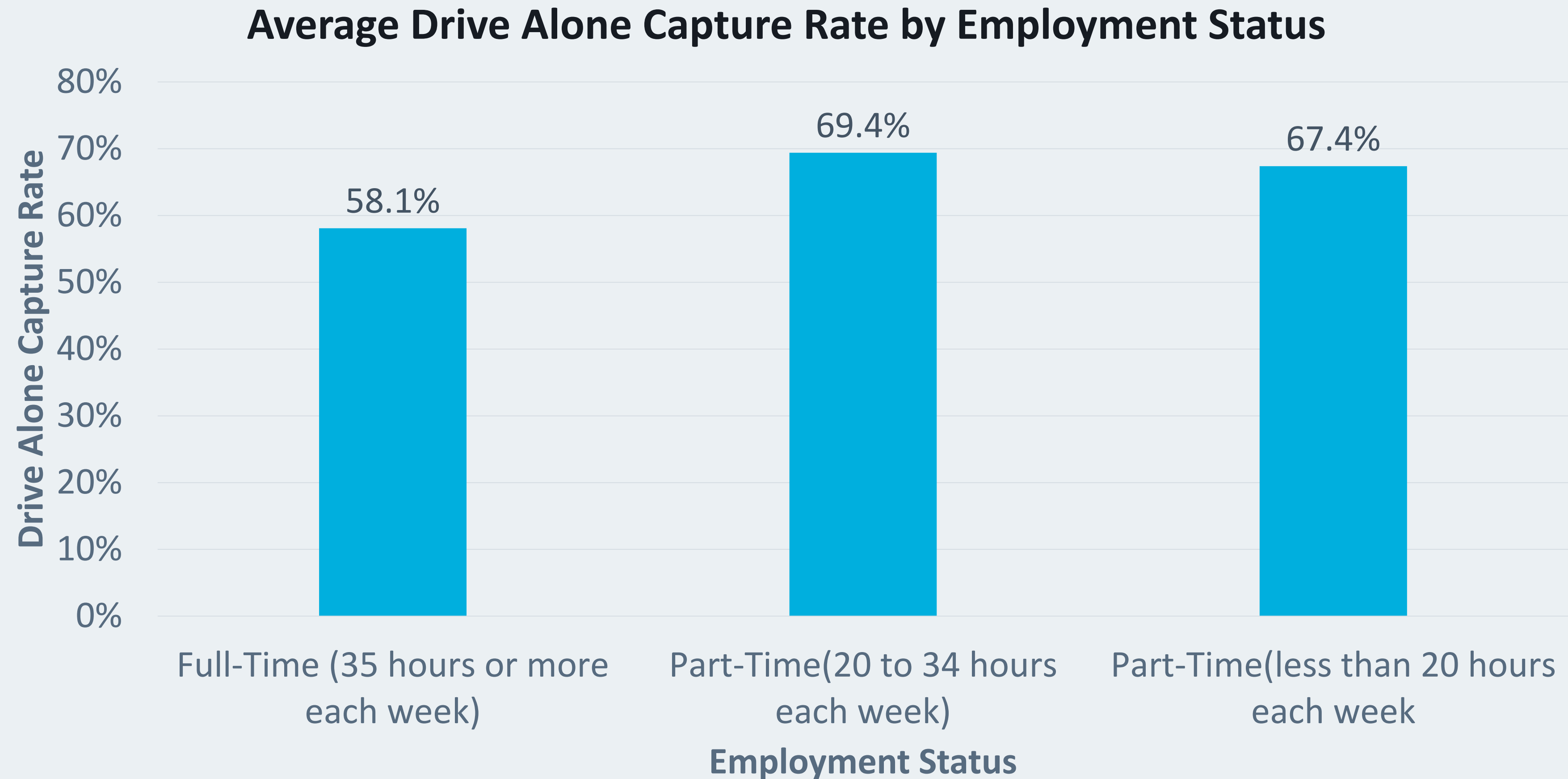
Employee origins and overburdened communities



Drive Alone Rates

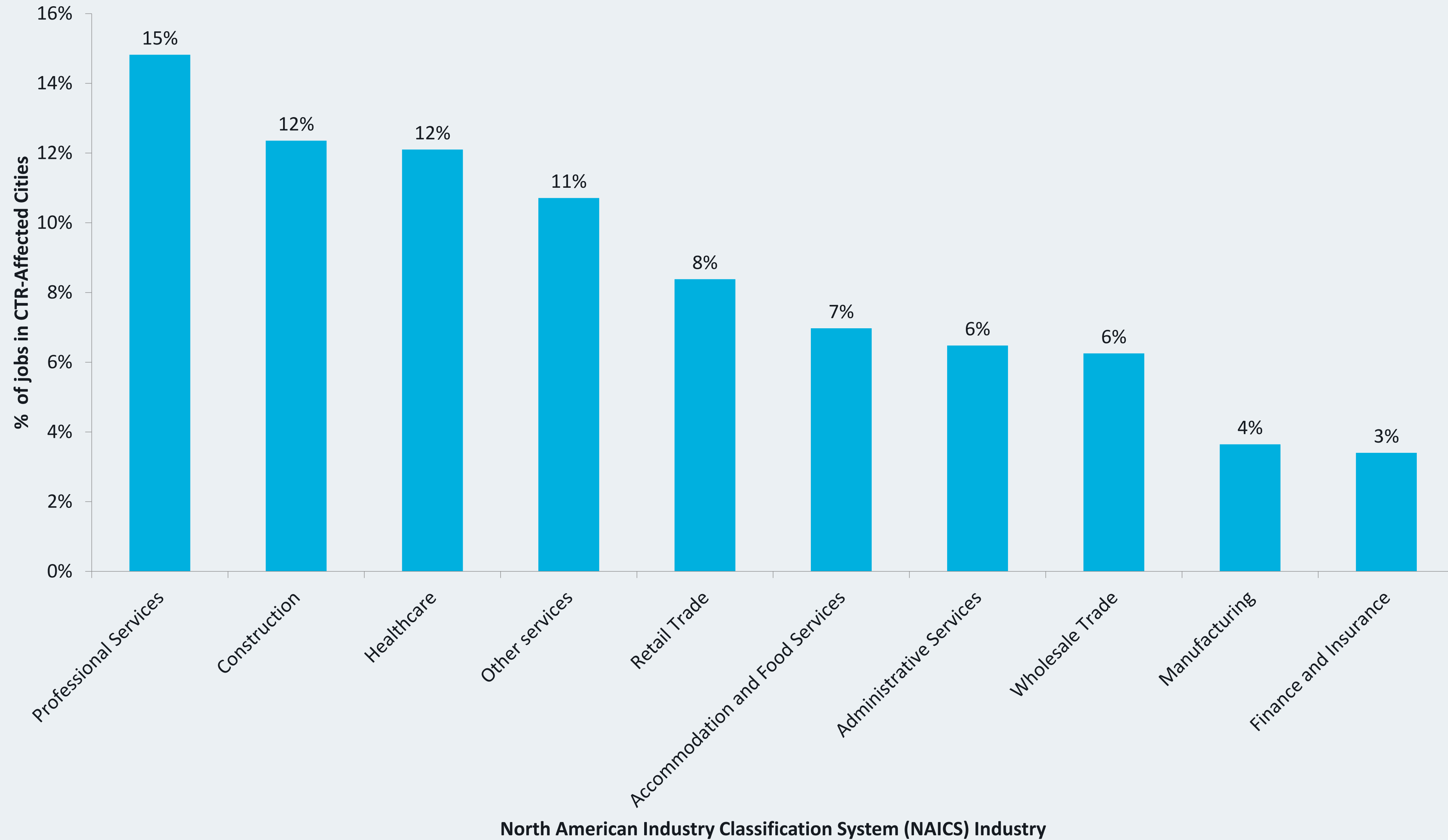
Drive alone rates vary by employment status and employee origin zip code, implying that there may be compounding factors that contribute to a person's decision to drive alone to work.

CTR survey respondents who drive alone based on employment status



Certain industries are more prevalent in CTR affected cities. These industries generally differ from *equity industries* that are more likely to employ essential workers, employees with disabilities, or shift workers.

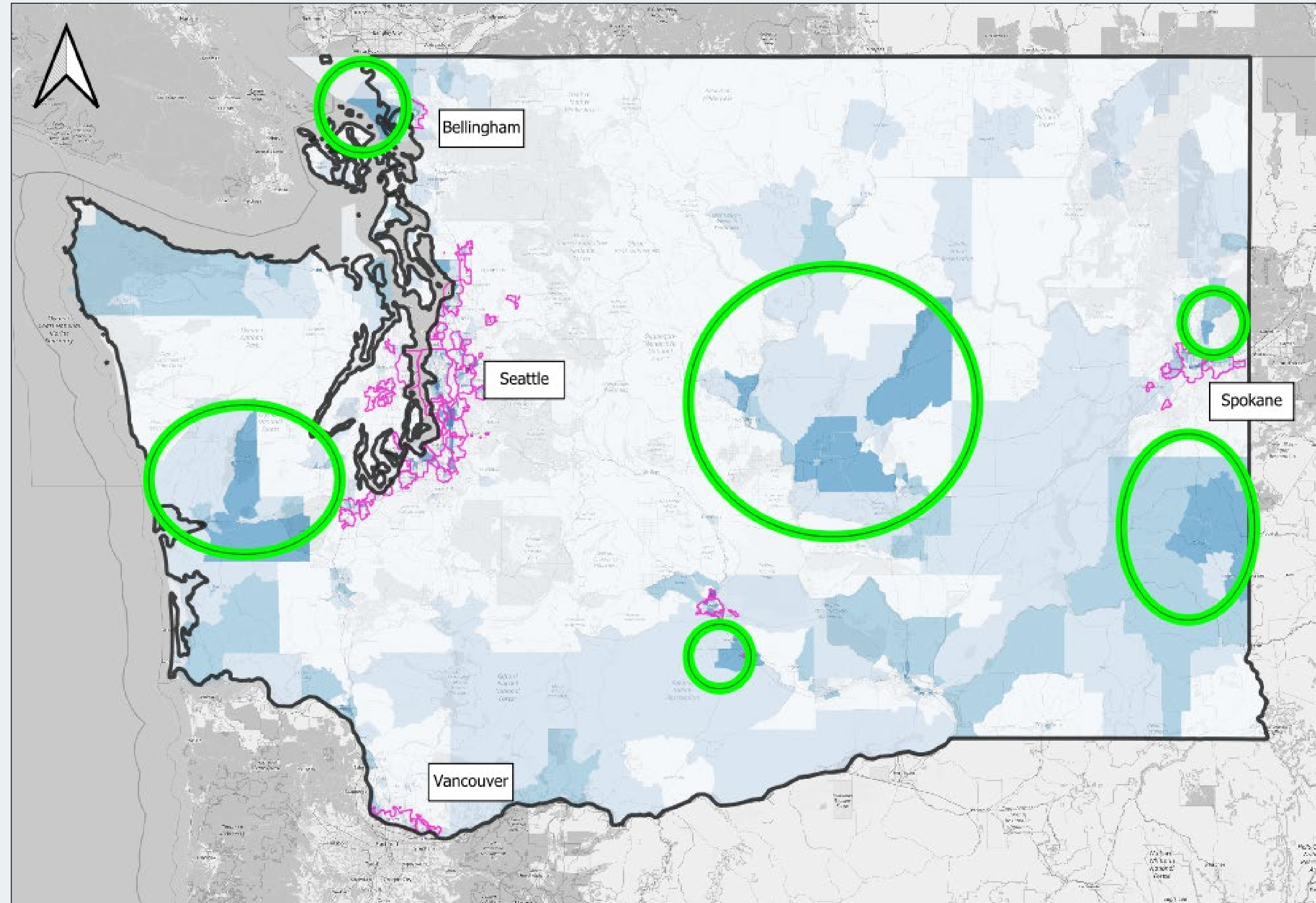
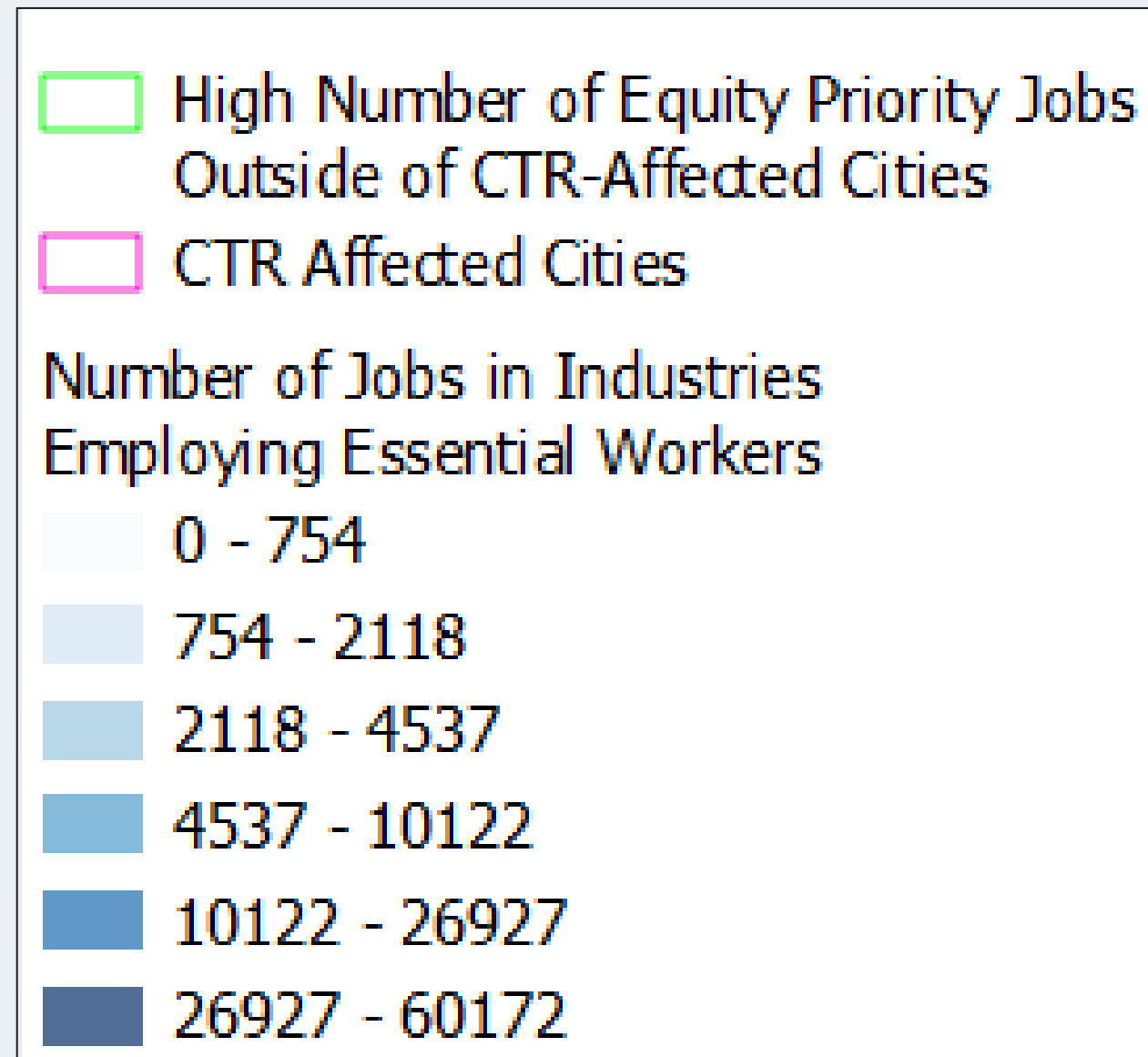
CTR Correlated Industries



The prevalence of *Equity Industries* in the State

<p>Essential workers</p>	<p>Employees who provide goods or services that are considered vital, in some way, to life and welfare.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting • Utilities • Manufacturing • Transportation and Warehousing • Information Finance and Insurance • Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services • Health Care and Social Assistance
<p>People with disabilities</p>	<p>Top five industries that employ workers with disabilities (employs at least 9% of the entire U.S. disability workforce).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational services, and health care and social assistance • Retail trade • Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services • Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services • Manufacturing
<p>Shift workers</p>	<p>Industries where 10%+ of the workforce work a non-regular daytime schedule (including evening, nighttime, rotating, irregular hours, split shift, and other).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure and hospitality • Transportation and utilities • Wholesale and retail trade • Manufacturing • Public administration • Education and health services • Other services • Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting

CTR Affected Cities and Industries that Employ Essential Workers



Thank you

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Complex questions
Powerful answers