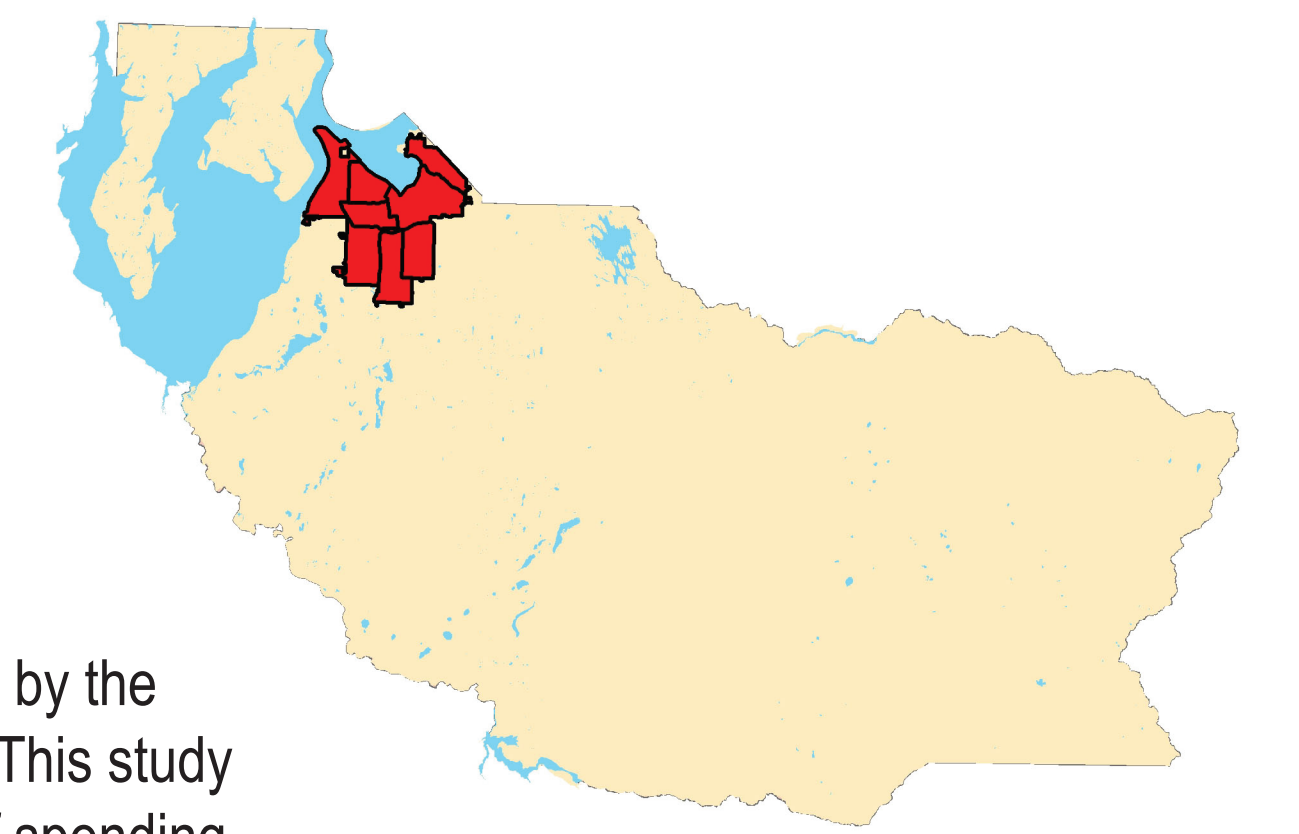


# THE STATE OF THE ARTS:

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC ARTS SPENDING IN TACOMA, WA IN THE 1999-2000 AND 2011-2012 FUNDING BIENNIUMS

Rebecca Solverson, GIS Certificate Program, University of Washington, Tacoma, Spring 2012



### Introduction

The impact of the arts on a community is an exceptionally difficult thing to measure; the return on investment can be economic, social, emotional, and highly personal for each individual. The maps below consider the distribution of cultural spending in Tacoma by the Tacoma Arts Commission (TAC) in terms of geographic distribution, amount spent, and programmatic focus. For context, spending is presented against backdrops of average income, population density, and average educational attainment for adults over 25. This study exclusively considered data in two funding bienniums, 1999-2000 and 2011-2012, and data is classified into four categories: Operational Funds, Permanent Artworks, Temporary Events and Temporary Projects. Rather than provide a comprehensive picture of spending, these maps create a snapshot of one funder's shift in focus, geographically and programmatically, over a decade. Understood alongside anecdotal information and personal perspectives, the results can be used to inform both grantmakers and grantseekers of areas where cultural spending could be better leveraged, areas where there is a current lack of investment, areas where the currently funded activity is unsuccessful, and areas where the currently funded activity is making a difference. Together, they compose just one interpretation of the impact of the City's arts spending in Tacoma.

### OBJECTIVES

This project attempts to uncover spatial patterns relating to the following questions:

- Where is cultural spending most concentrated in the City of Tacoma?
- How has spending changed over the last 10 years?
- How are types of arts activations (temporary vs. permanent) distributed throughout the city and what affect (if any) does that have on perceived vitality?
- How might cultural spending be better distributed throughout the city to ensure more equal access?
- What is the correlation between cultural spending and perceptions of cultural vibrancy throughout the city?
- How is cultural access distributed among different groups in the city?
- How does cultural spending match up with other policy efforts?
- What types of organizations have the greatest economic impact compared to the amount that they're granted?

### RESULTS

Several interesting patterns emerged with the visualization of these maps. Perhaps most striking is the absence of any activity funded by TAC in Northeast Tacoma in either biennium. Despite relatively high average income and education levels, Northeast is a cultural wasteland as far as these measures are concerned. Most spending in both bienniums is predictably focused on New Tacoma, which is home to the downtown core and most of the city's large arts organizations. In the current biennium, spending has increased in amount, as well as occurrences.

### METHODS

As much as possible, the data should speak for itself. Using information embedded in contracts with artists and arts organizations, data was extracted into a usable format, preserving information about the amount spent and the type of activity supported (see "definitions"). Each expenditure was extruded in ArcScene according to the amount spent, and symbolized according to the type of expenditure. As appropriate, expenditures were divided between multiple locations. Spending layers were placed atop landscapes of average income, population density, and educational attainment, interpolated for the entire Pierce County to avoid distortion and then clipped to Tacoma's city limits.

### BASIC NUMBERS

	1999-2000	2010-2011
<b>Total Amount Spent</b>	\$271,600	\$758,255
<b>Number of Locations</b>	75	171
<b>Average Amount Spent</b>	\$3,621	\$4,434
<b>Spending Range</b>	\$300-\$15,000	\$100-\$50,000

### NEIGHBORHOOD

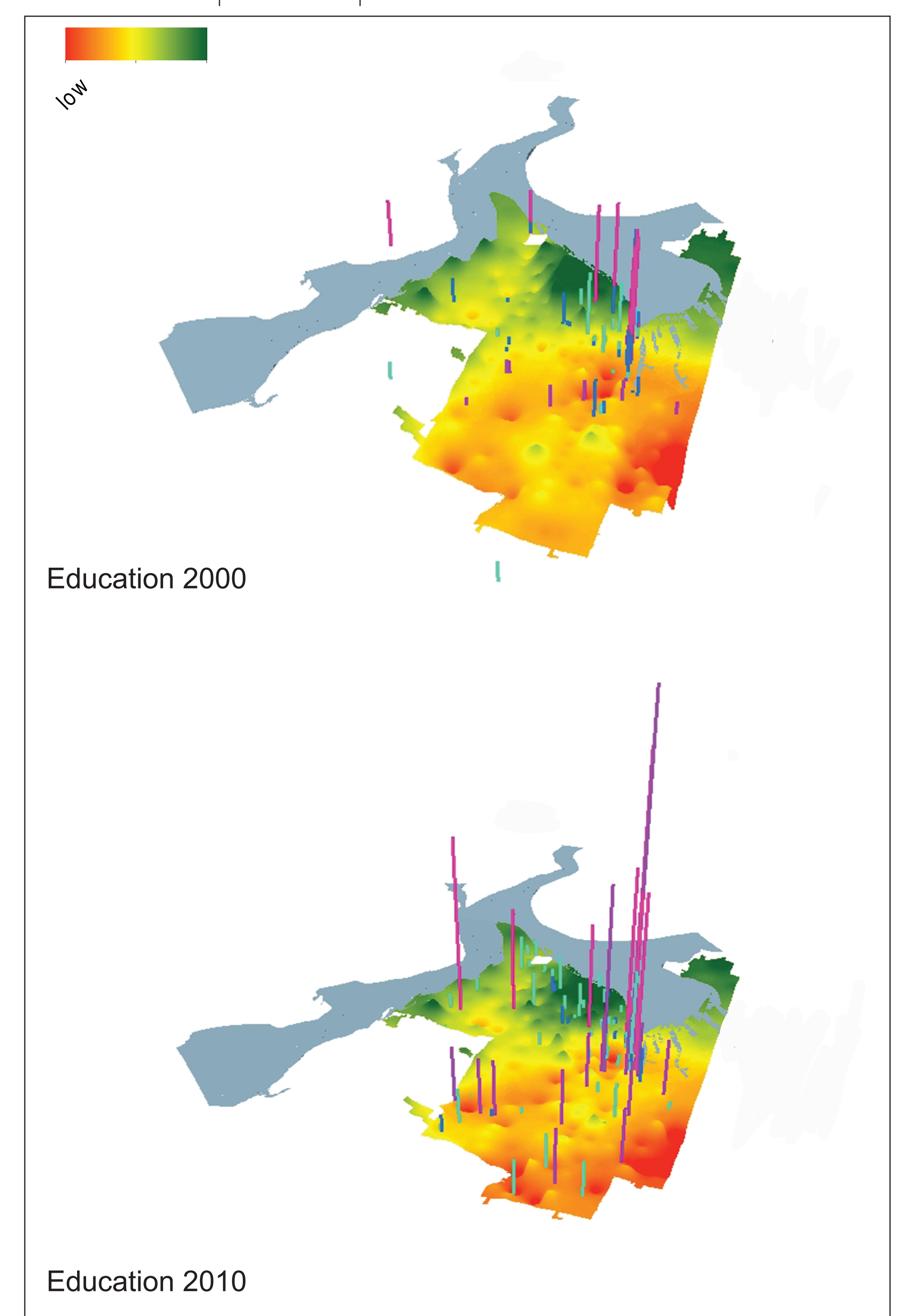
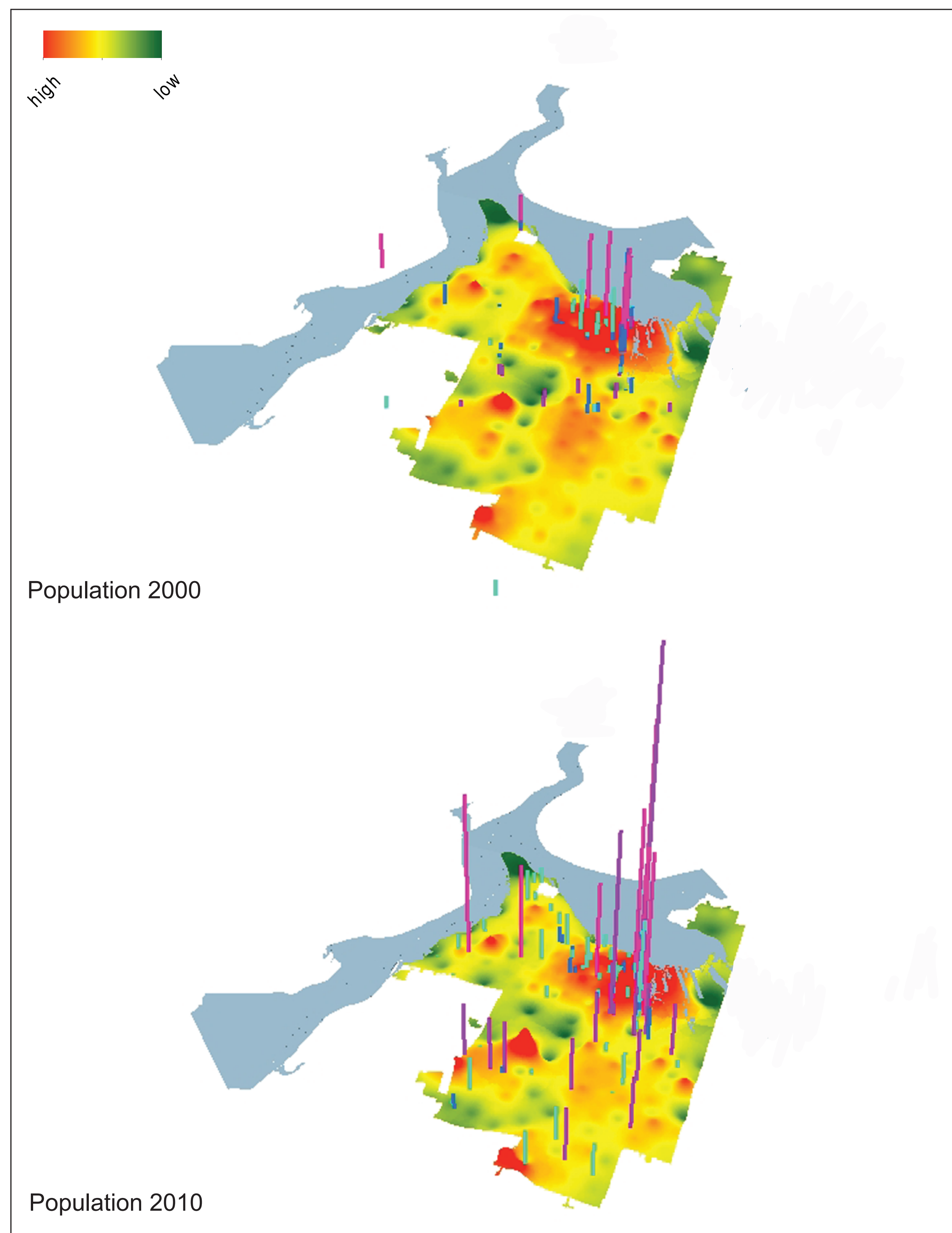
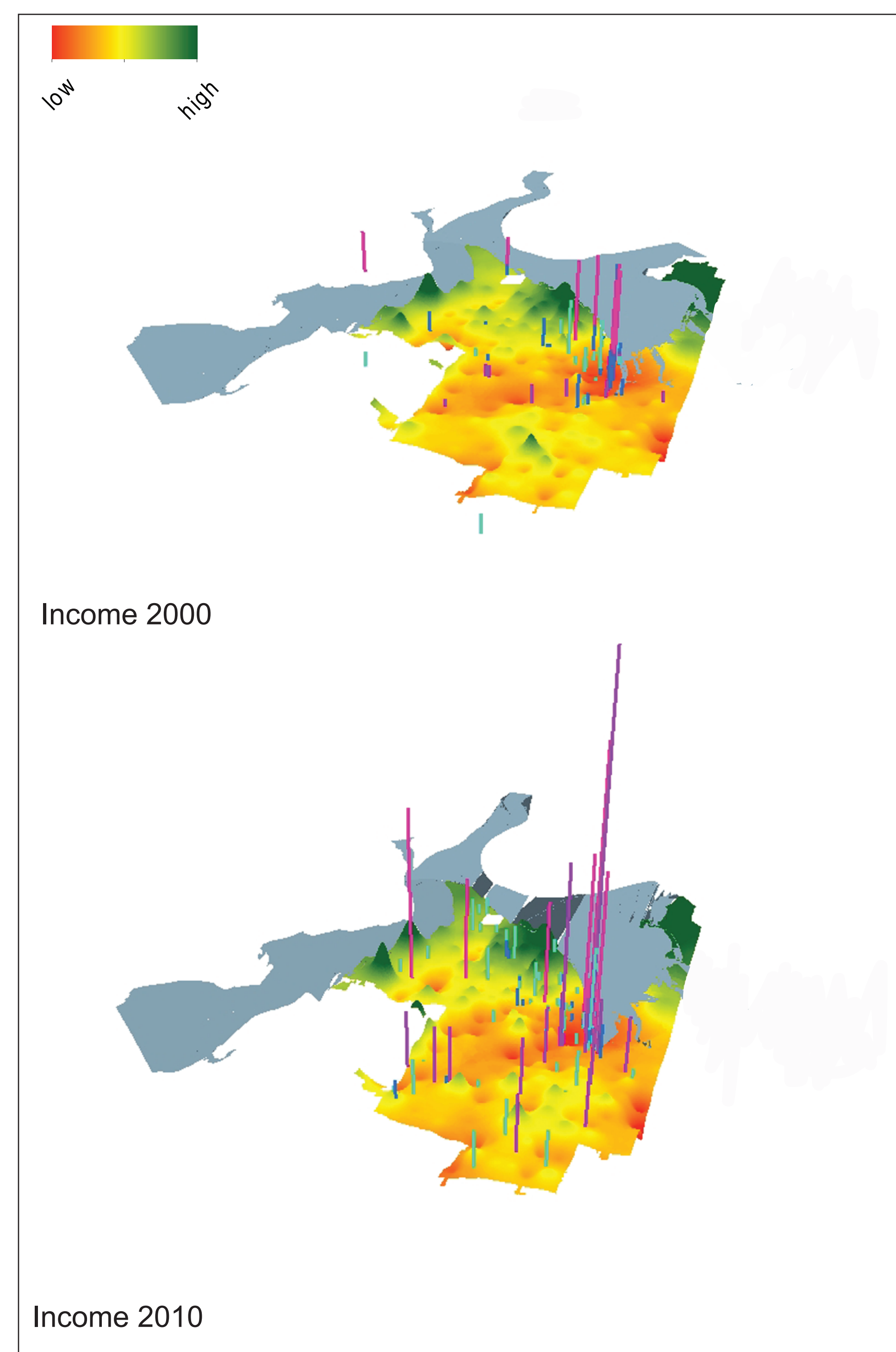
	1999-2000	2010-2011
Northeast	\$0	\$0
South End	\$19,200	\$40,500
West End	\$13,750	\$55,738
South Tacoma	\$4,375	\$34,845
North End	\$19,000	\$47,346
Central	\$12,200	\$34,388
New Tacoma	\$191,425	\$498,102
Eastside	\$1,500	\$47,335
Other Areas	\$10,150	\$0

### DATA SOURCES

City of Tacoma Public Art Program, US Census, Washington State Geospatial Data Archive

### PROJECTION

NAD\_1983\_HARN\_StatePlane\_Washington\_South\_FIPS\_4602\_Fee



- Operational Funds
- Permanent Artwork
- Temporary Event
- Temporary Project

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** Many thanks to Amy McBride and Naomi Strom-Avila for help accessing and interpreting data sources, and Professor Matthew Kelley and my fellow classmates (especially my groupmates) for support developing this project.

**DEFINITIONS:** Public artwork is so much more than the bronze statue sitting in the middle of the park. Here are definitions of the different types of funding represented in this project.



**Operational Funds** can be spent on anything from staffing to programming to physical maintenance to office supplies - things that won't necessarily inspire a donor's passion. In the case of TAC, it is an investment in the long term health of local cultural institutions with large budgets (over \$200,000 annual budget).

**Permanent Artworks** include statues, murals, and any artwork that is a physical object meant to stand for a long period of time.



**Temporary Projects** are temporary artworks, performances, or projects that are ongoing but ephemeral in nature.

**Temporary Events** are festivals, parades, performances, and happenings tied to one specific, continuous event.

