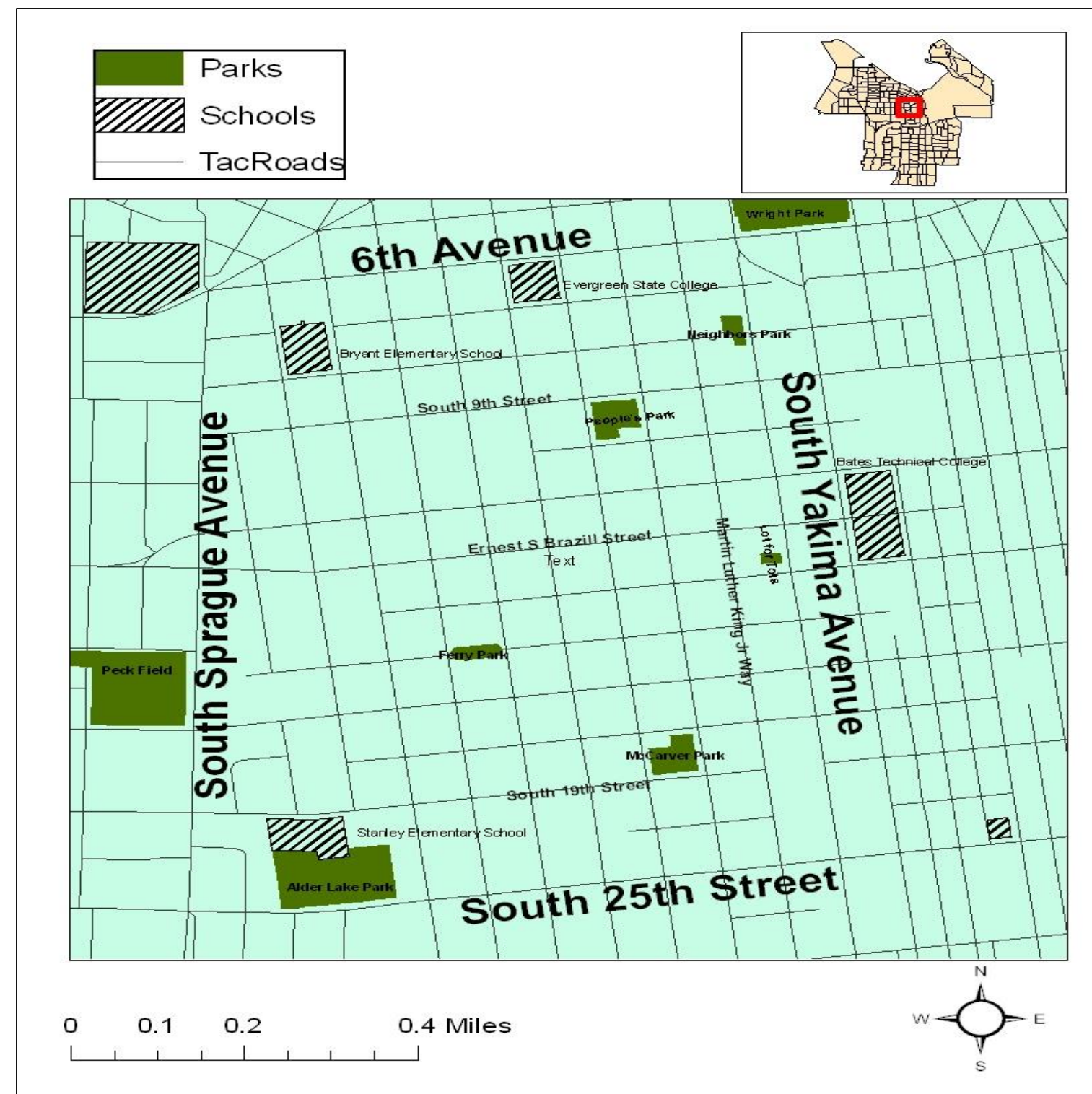


# Counter Mapping Tacoma's Hilltop: Illustrations of Identified Community Values and Assets

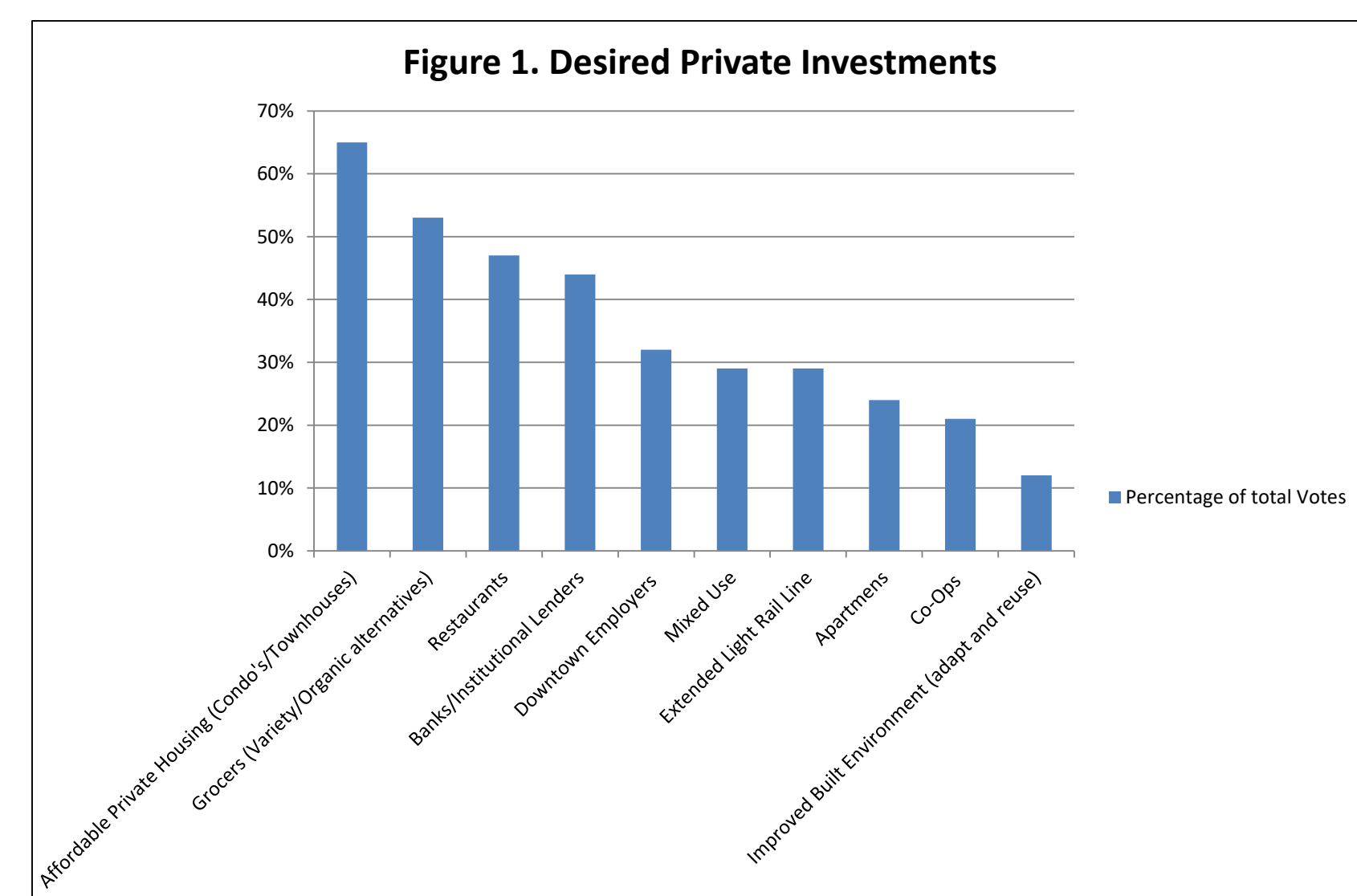
Claude Holmes GIS Certificate Program, University of Washington, Tacoma

## Hilltop's Geographic Boundaries



## Introduction

Tacoma's hilltop community has a rich history of community cohesion and social capital with several groups and councils involved in sustaining neighborhood viability. The area itself is a Mecca for cultural activity with various members of different ethnic, social and economic classes. After meeting with community council members and neighborhood leaders it was clear they have unique nodes, districts and landmarks that represent cohesion and residential fondness. Therefore the purpose of this project is to illustrate what residents of the neighborhood identify as community values and assets. This type of "counter mapping" is designed to highlight positive aspects of the community based on their general perception.

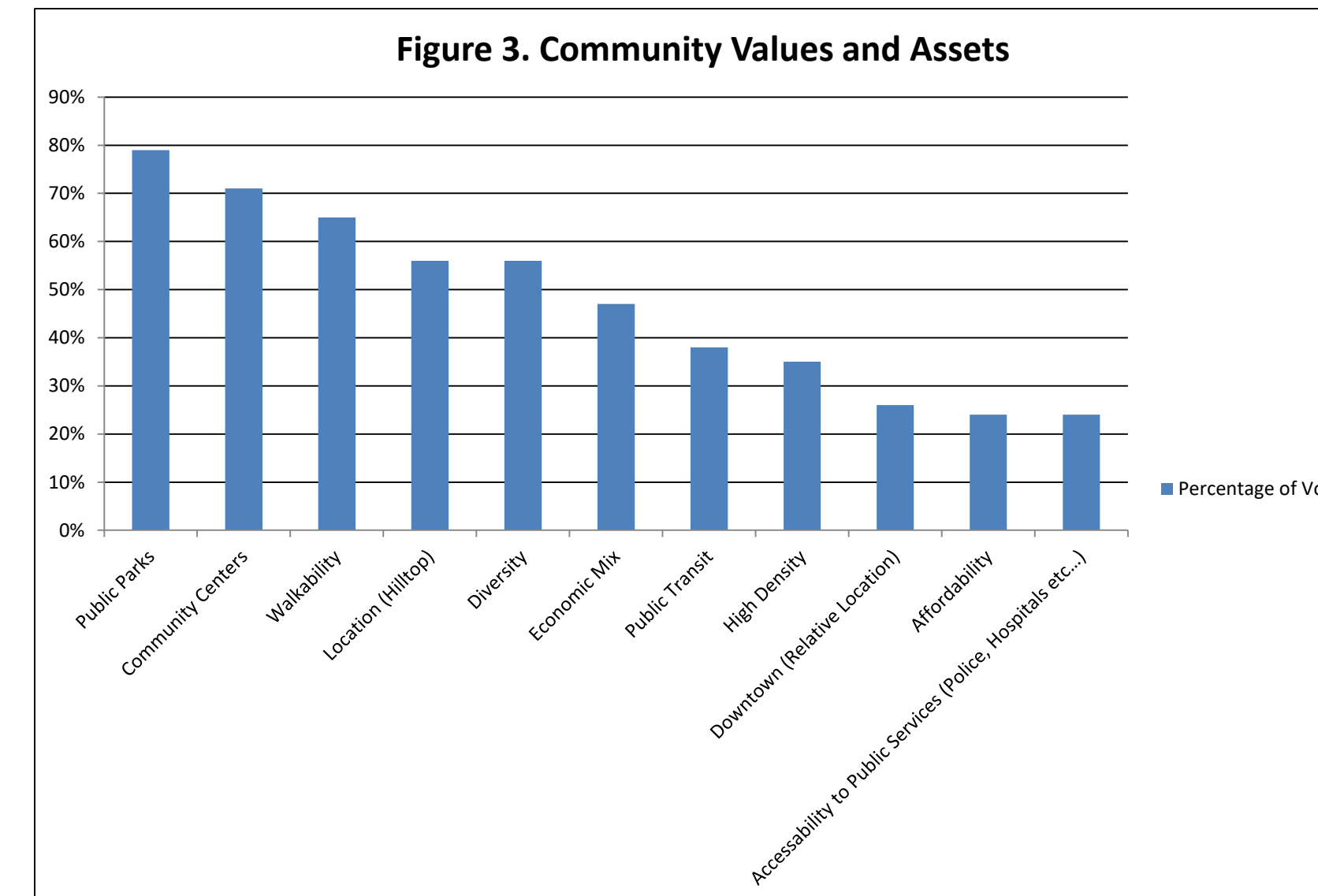
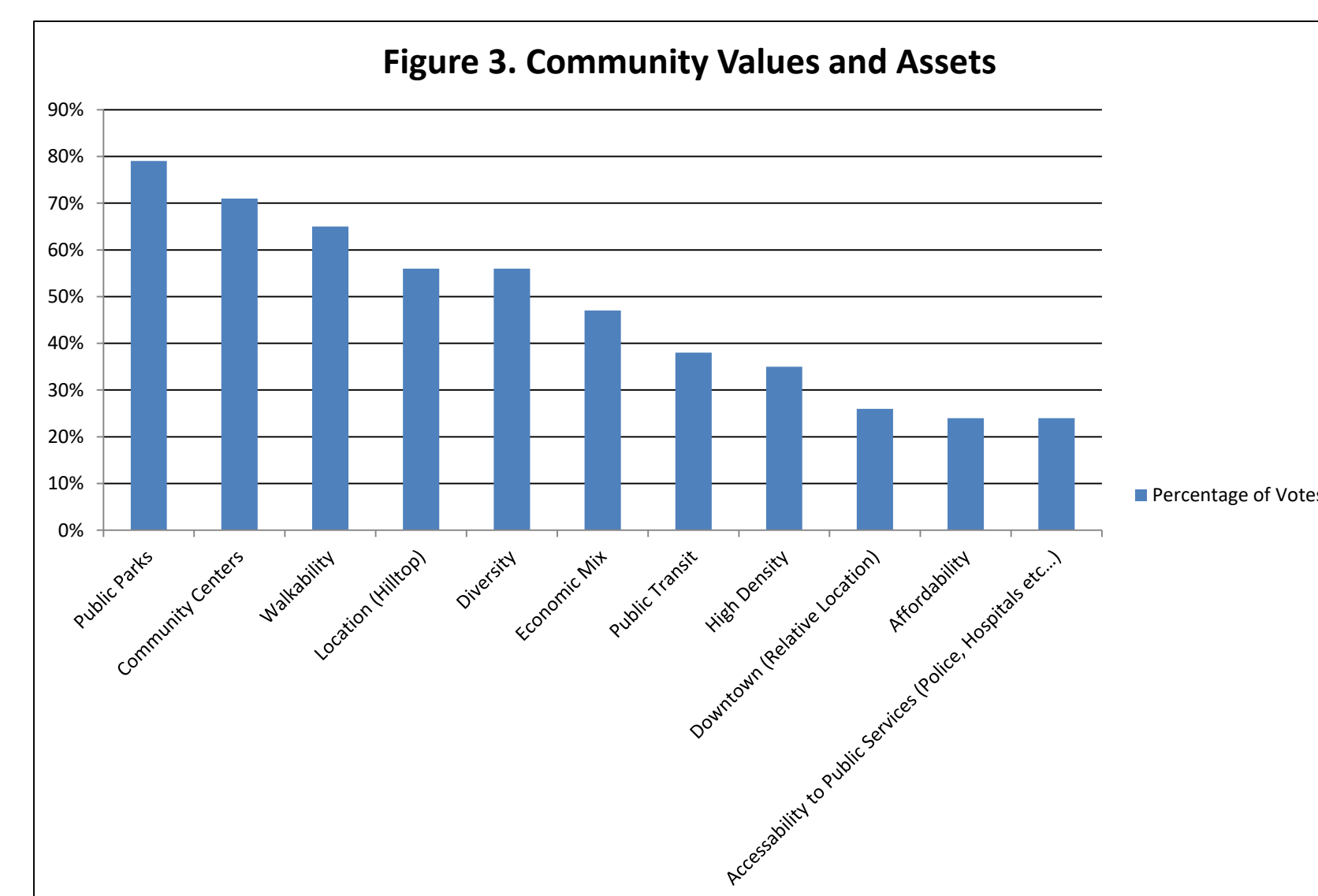


## Methodology

To develop how the map was to be constructed and what features it would have a case study involving a sample size of 34 residents was conducted. The questions initially asked for residents to rank local privatized institutions and rank their services and perceived availability. The second series of questions asked residents to list their top five desired types of private investment (figure 1), community improvement (figure 2) types and what they value or perceive and community assets (figure 3).

The qualitative data was then categorized and ranked by top ten answer.

The data was then spatially organized and added to City of Tacoma Basemap in the following manner: Clipped: Parks, Schools and Public Services, Joined: U.S. Census Income and Diversity Block groups, geo-coded and Clipped: Non-profit community centers and Churches, 1 mile buffer representing service zoning for centers and churches.

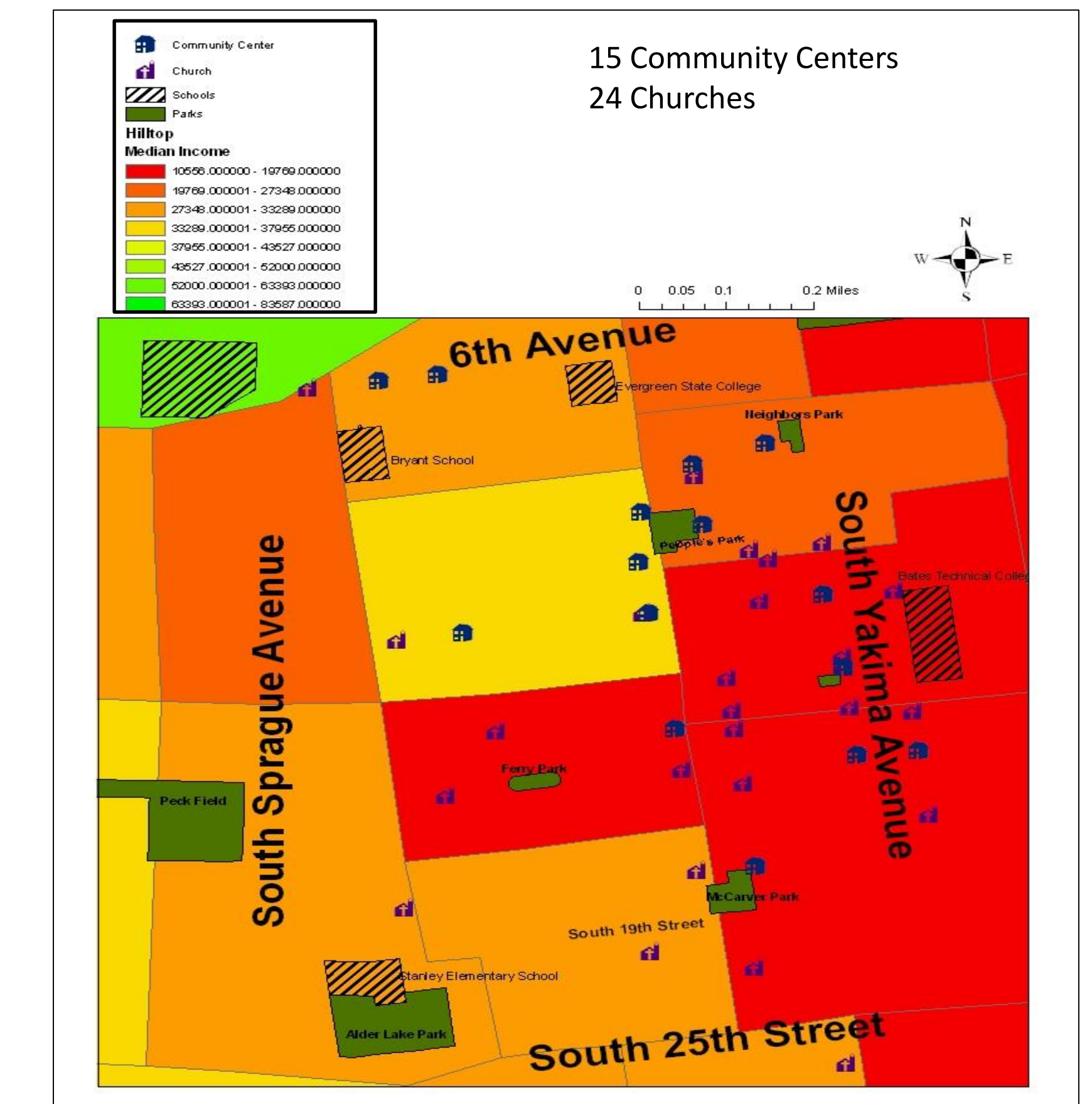


## Results

Findings from the community questionnaire illustrate the qualitative assessment of community perception. It suggests that public services (i.e. parks and recreation centers, fire and police precincts) and community centers are where members engage in building social capital and cohesions. In addition, with walkability ranking highly also it should be noted that each location is in 1/2 miles in distance.

The spatial analysis concluded with a total 15 communities centers and 24 churches within the Hilltop neighborhood. Moreover, after activating 1/2 mile buffers around the social centers confirmed the original theory that social capital in Hilltop is a result of center accessibility.

## Hilltop's Economic Diversity & Social Capital Centers



## Conclusion

The findings from the spatial analysis demonstrate an alternative way to illustrate a community's perceived value and assets. Furthermore, by intersecting perceived values and assets with the community development theory of social, human and political capital by identifying detailed locations for community organization within Tacoma's hilltop neighborhood enables group-organization and perhaps a restructuring or influence regarding political power by reducing marginalization through community empowerment.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Matt Kelley for his guidance, patience, GIS wisdom and convincing me that "spatial analysis does not always result in a dynamic map, instead focus on what your data is telling you." Moreover, I would like to thank the residents of Hilltop whom the spatial analysis was conducted with.