

A photograph of two construction workers on a road. One worker in the foreground is kneeling, wearing a red hard hat, a high-visibility yellow and orange vest, and blue jeans, painting a blue wavy pattern on the asphalt. Another worker in the background is standing, wearing a yellow hard hat and a high-visibility vest. The scene is outdoors with trees and parked cars in the background. The image has a blue overlay.

# Levy Equity Workplan

Levy Oversight Committee

December 5, 2023

Margo Iñiguez Dawes, SDOT



**Seattle**  
Department of  
Transportation



# Our Vision, Mission, Values, & Goals

Seattle is a thriving equitable community powered by dependable transportation. We're on a mission to deliver a transportation system that provides safe and affordable access to places and opportunities.

## Core Values & Goals:

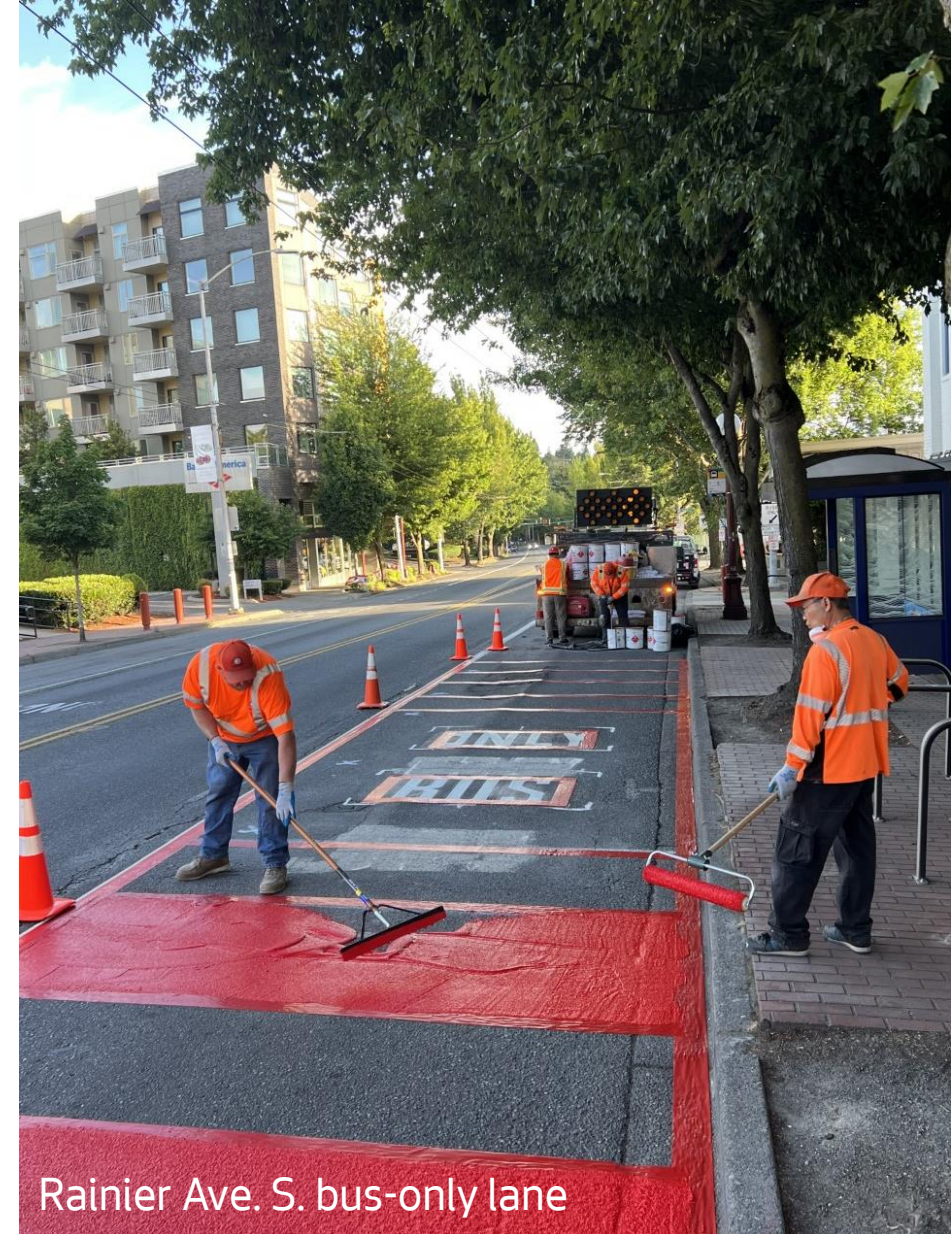
Equity, Safety, Mobility, Sustainability, Livability, and Excellence.

# Purpose & Outline

**Purpose:** Share Levy Equity Workplan and initial outcomes with the Levy Oversight Committee and members of the Transportation Equity Workgroup

## Outline:

- **Grounding:** Equity at SDOT and the Transportation Equity Framework (TEF)
- **Overview:** Levy Equity Workplan and initial outcomes



Rainier Ave. S. bus-only lane



# Key Takeaways

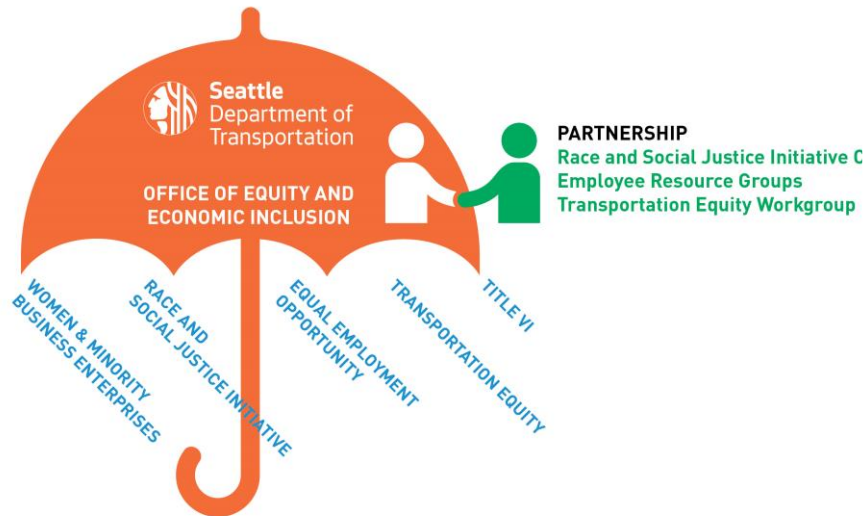
- Equity is everybody's work at SDOT, and the Transportation Equity Framework is our guiding document
- We have been incorporating equity into our decision-making for several years, and we've dedicated time and resources over the last year to standardizing and advancing how we do so - both currently and into the future
- We've mapped the distribution of deliverables this year with the Racial and Social Equity Index, providing a tool to inform any decisions remaining in the current levy and giving us insight into what is needed to continue strengthening the foundation of this work
- Geographic equity is one of many important inputs (alongside asset condition, safety impact, etc.) to our decisions about what work to prioritize



Aurora Ave. sidewalk construction

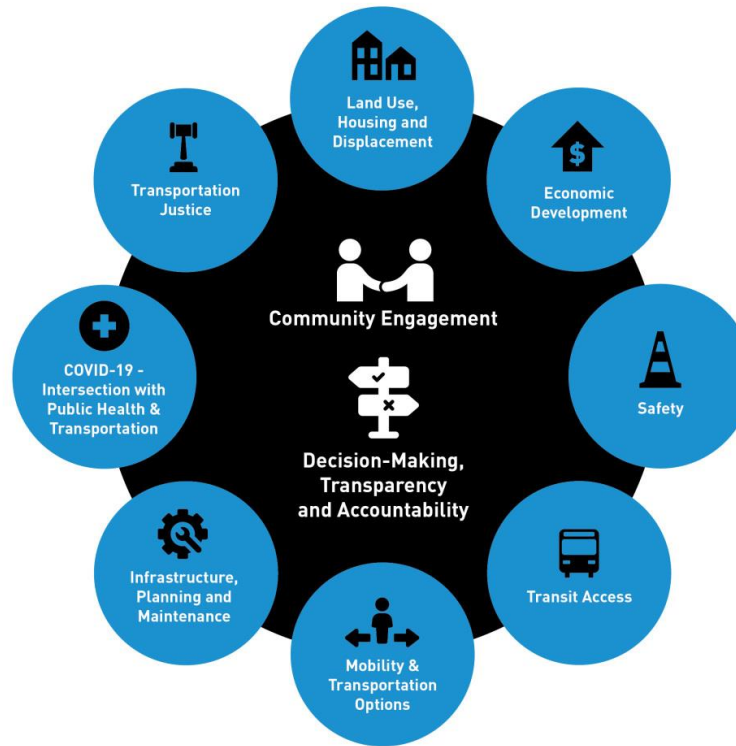
# Equity at SDOT

## Office of Equity and Economic Inclusion Organizational Structure

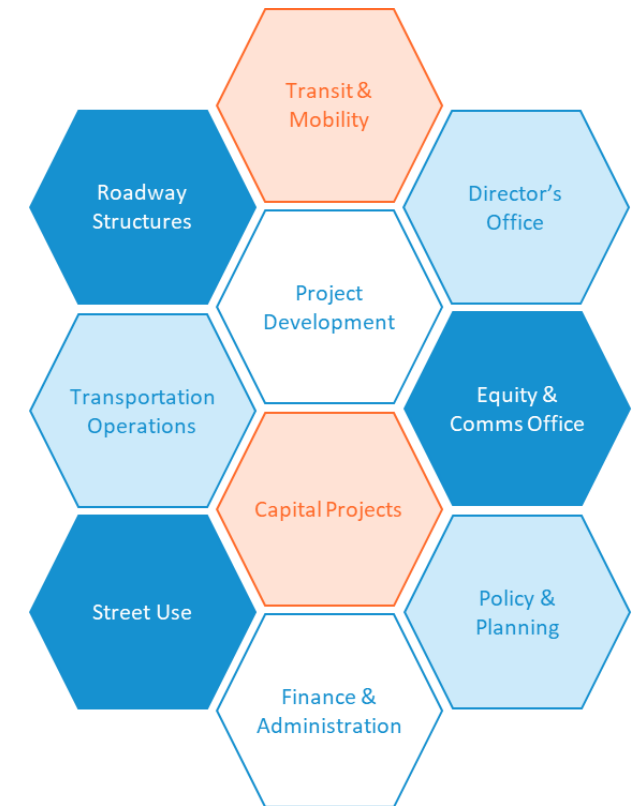


Leadership & strategic direction

## TRANSPORTATION EQUITY FRAMEWORK



Guiding document



Divisions implementing the TEF

**Key Takeaway:** Equity is everybody's work at SDOT.

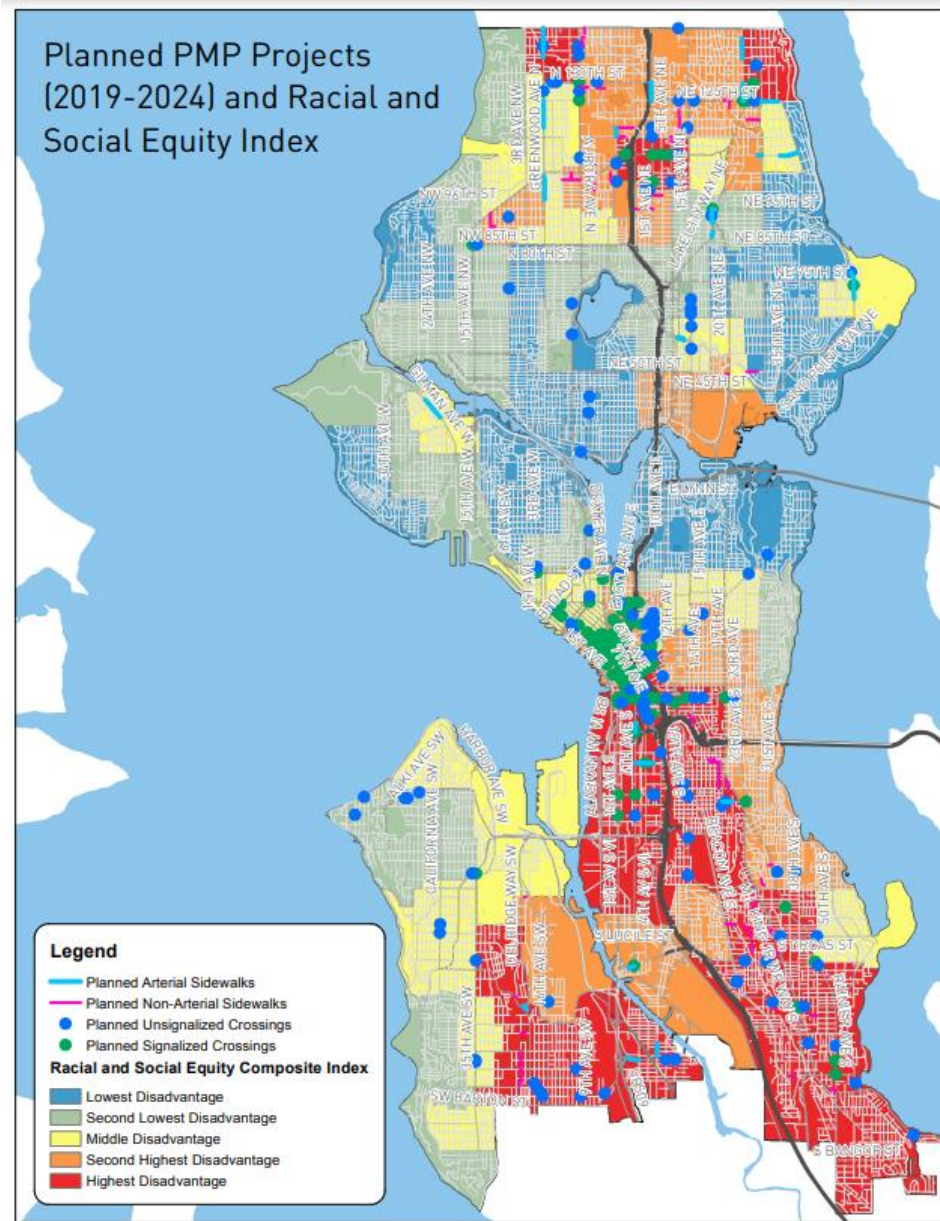


# Levy Equity Workplan

**Goal:** Improve the equitable distribution of Levy deliverables



**Intent:**

- Centralize and standardize existing equitable practices, improve our understanding of our distribution of investments
- Influence any remaining work plan decisions between now and the end of the Levy
- Strengthen the foundation of equity for future prioritization and decision-making (e.g., for next funding package)

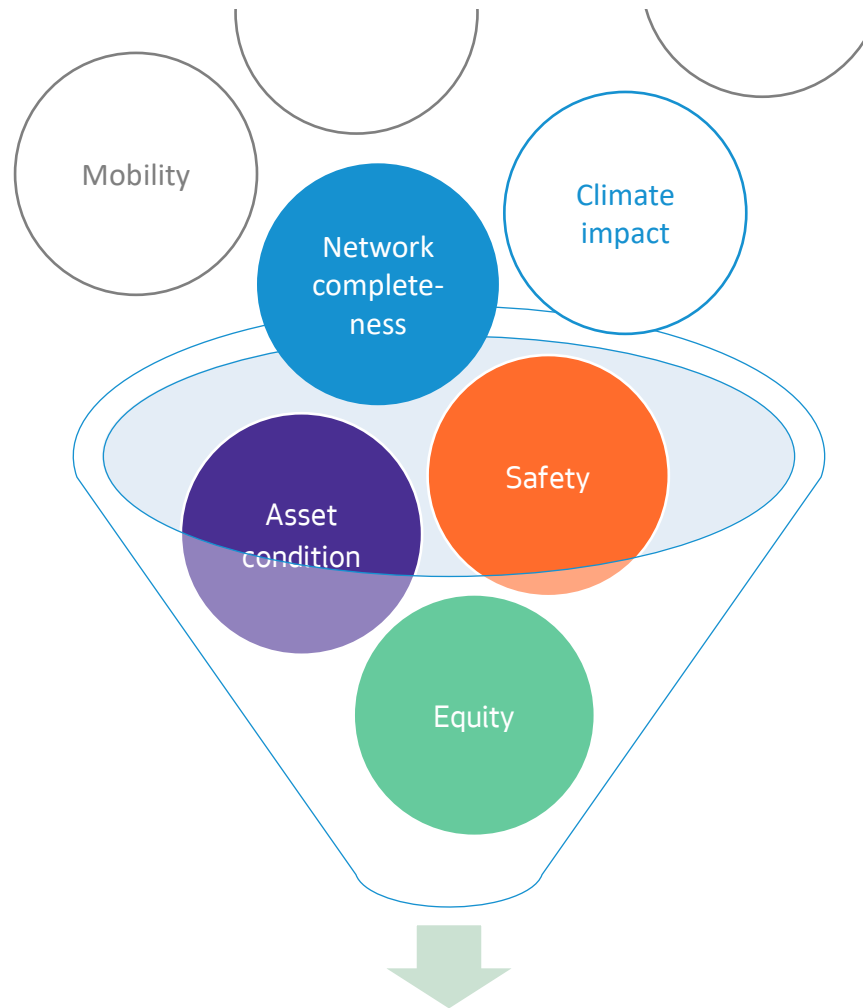


# What kind of equity are we talking about?

Many types of equity in infrastructure context:

- **Geographic distribution of investments** (e.g., ensuring improvements are prioritized in areas of greatest need/historical disinvestment, not just equal distribution)  Focus of this project
- **Contracting equity** (e.g., WMBE utilization goal)
- **Workforce equity** (e.g., Priority Hire)
- **Community engagement** (e.g., in project selection, design, and construction)
- **Construction impacts and mitigations** (e.g., strategies to ensure impacts don't disproportionately impact disinvested communities)  **Not** the focus of this project

# Equity is one of many inputs



**Prioritization Frameworks**

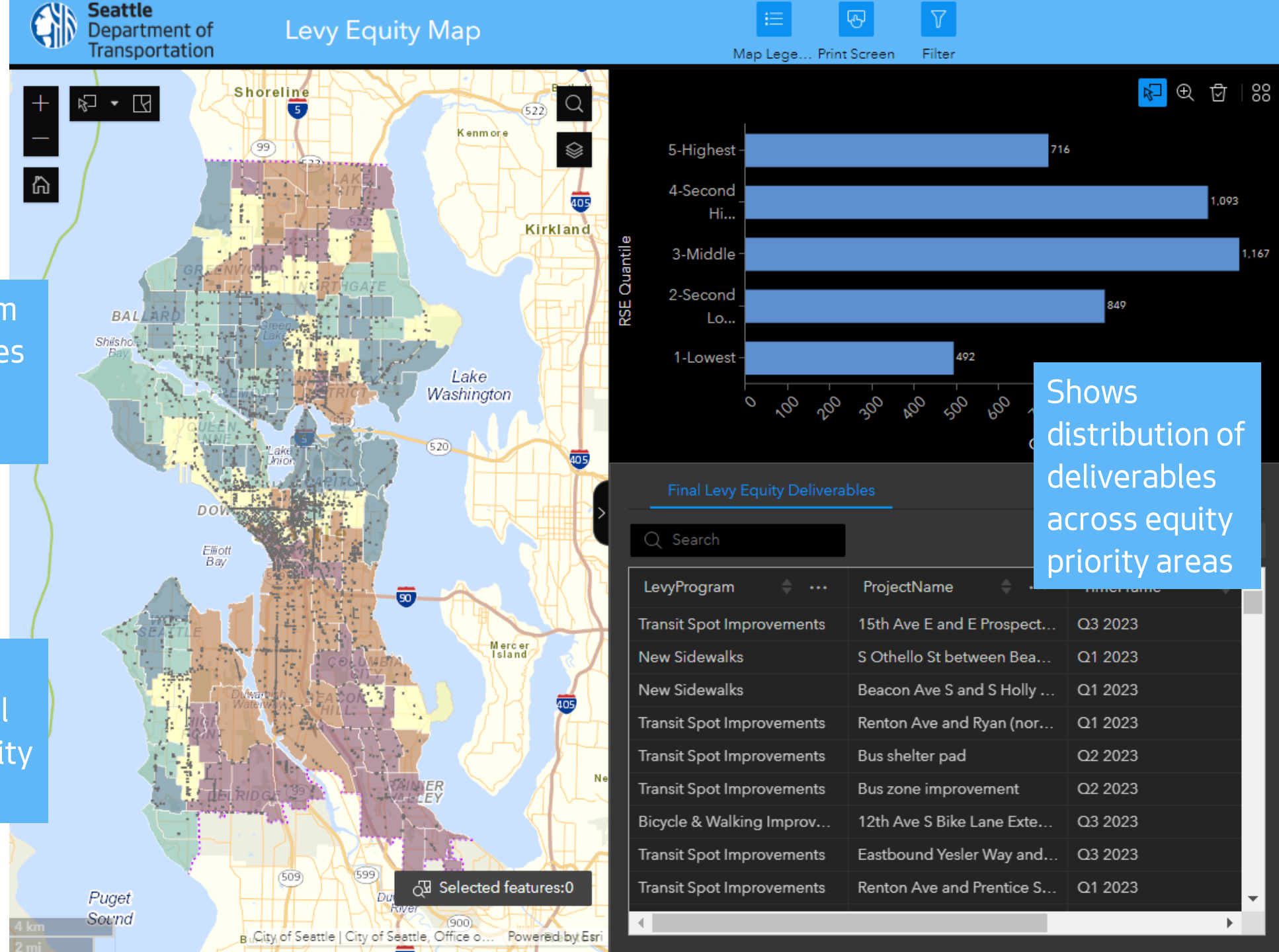


# Transportation Equity Framework (TEF) tactics we're implementing through the Levy Equity Workplan

- Develop SDOT work plans that **equitably allocate resources for capital projects and maintenance efforts** in communities hit hardest by COVID.  
([8.2](#) – COVID-19 Intersection with Public Health & Transportation)
- **Focus maintenance resources in communities and neighborhoods currently underserved by government** that have significant maintenance needs; use findings from the racial equity assessment.  
([19.4](#) – Infrastructure, Planning, and Maintenance)
- **Add equity-related data layers into all SDOT-produced web maps** and ensure that staff are trained and use this as part of their research, decision-making, project outline, etc.  
([20.2](#) – Infrastructure, Planning, and Maintenance)

# PRELIMINARY

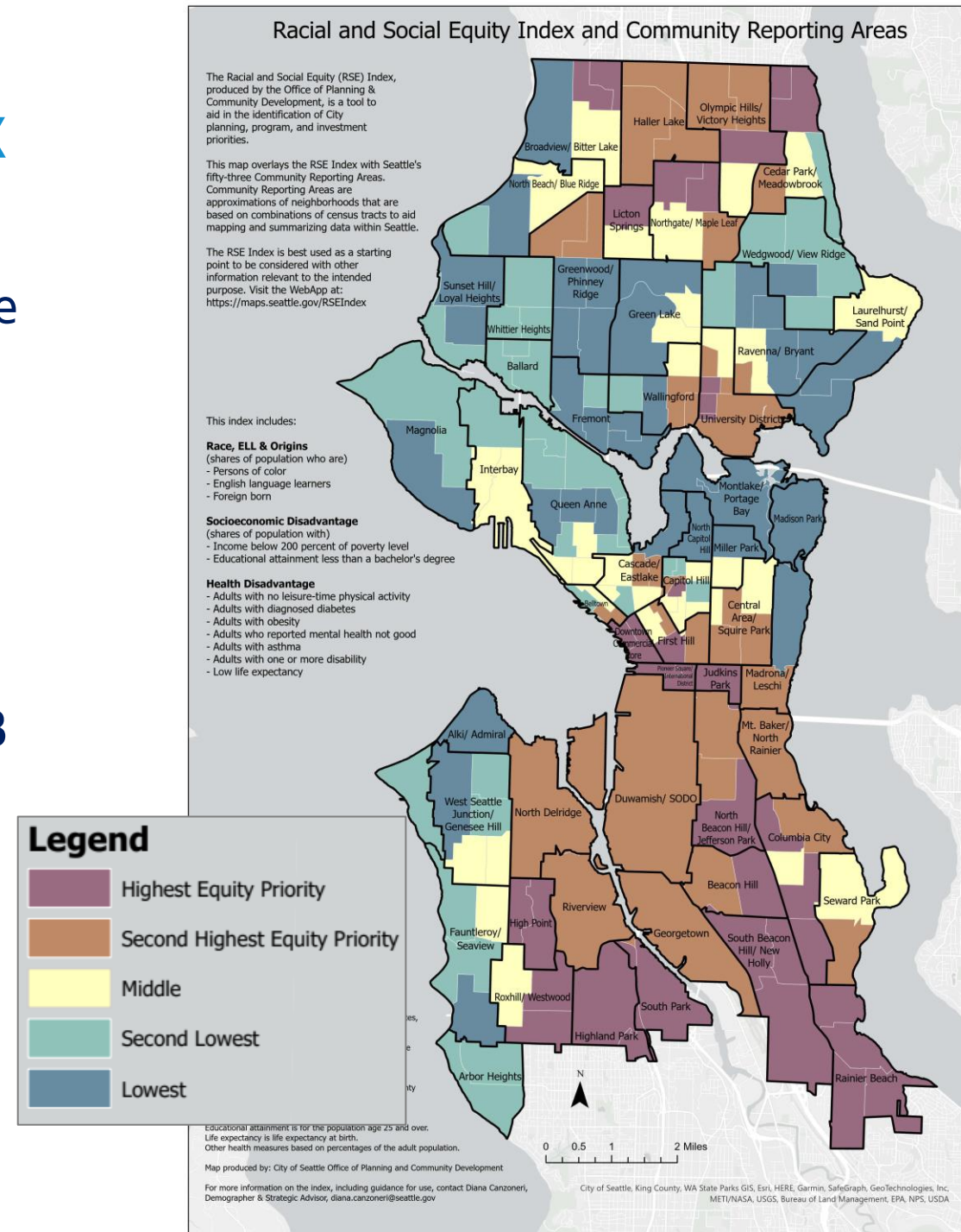
## Overlaid with Seattle's Racial and Social Equity (RSE) Index





# Racial & Social Equity (RSE) Index

- Identifies **high equity priority areas** based on census tracts where disadvantaged/priority populations make up a relatively large share of residents
- Used by City of Seattle Departments as a **tool for informing design and prioritization** of programs and investments
- First developed in 2017, updated periodically (every ~3 years), most recent **update released in 2023**
- Composite index:
  - Race, Origins, and English Language Learners
  - Socioeconomic Disadvantage
  - Health Disadvantage



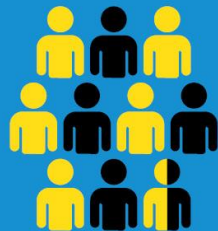
# Using the RSE Index

The census tracts in the top two quintiles of the Racial & Social Equity Index (highest and second-highest equity priority areas) account for **40%** of Seattle's population, but:



**50%**

of the citywide population  
of adults with one or  
more disability



**55%**

of the citywide population  
of people of color



**58%**

of the citywide total  
households under 200% of  
the Federal Poverty Level



**62%**

of the citywide  
foreign-born population



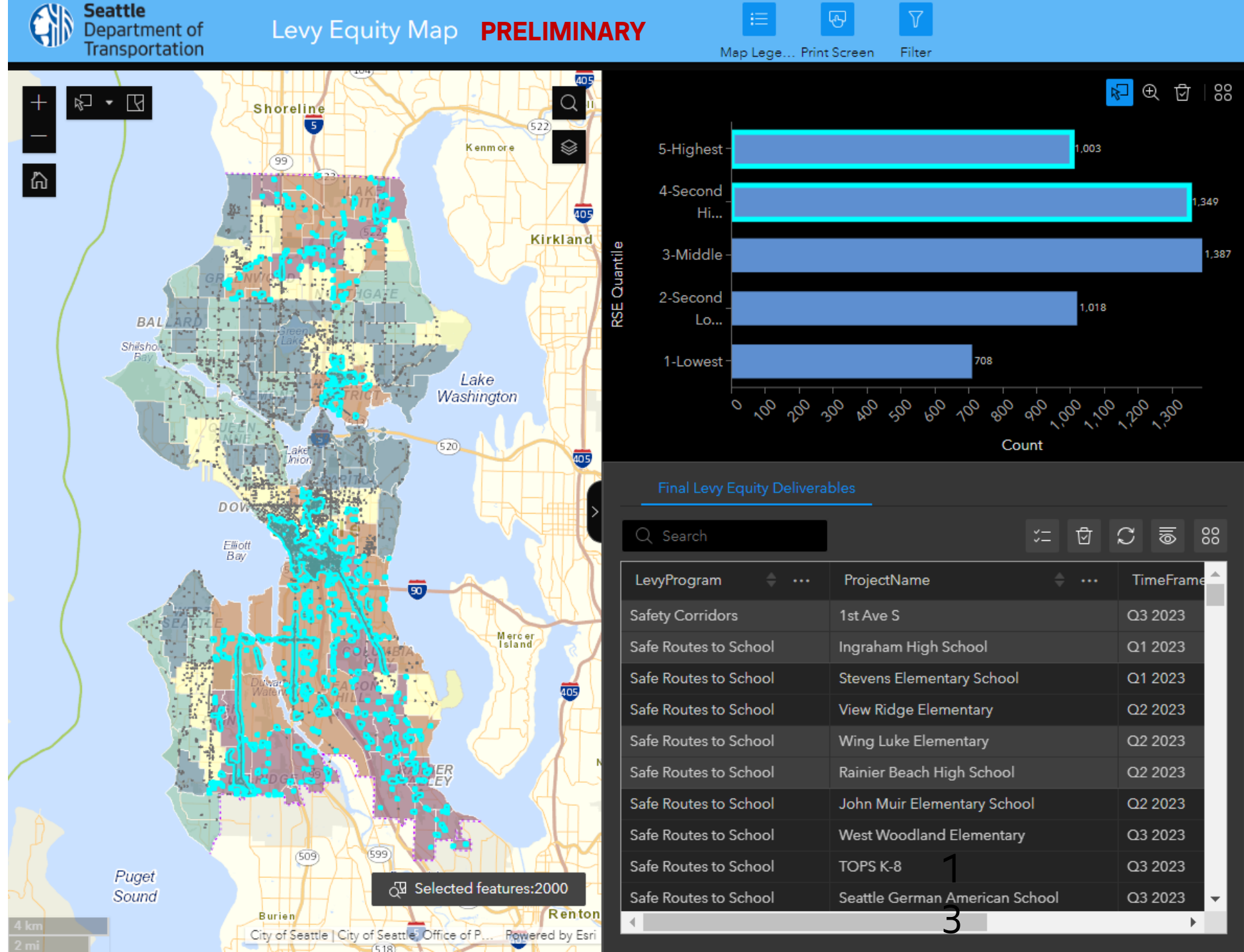
**77%**

of the citywide population  
of English Language  
Learners

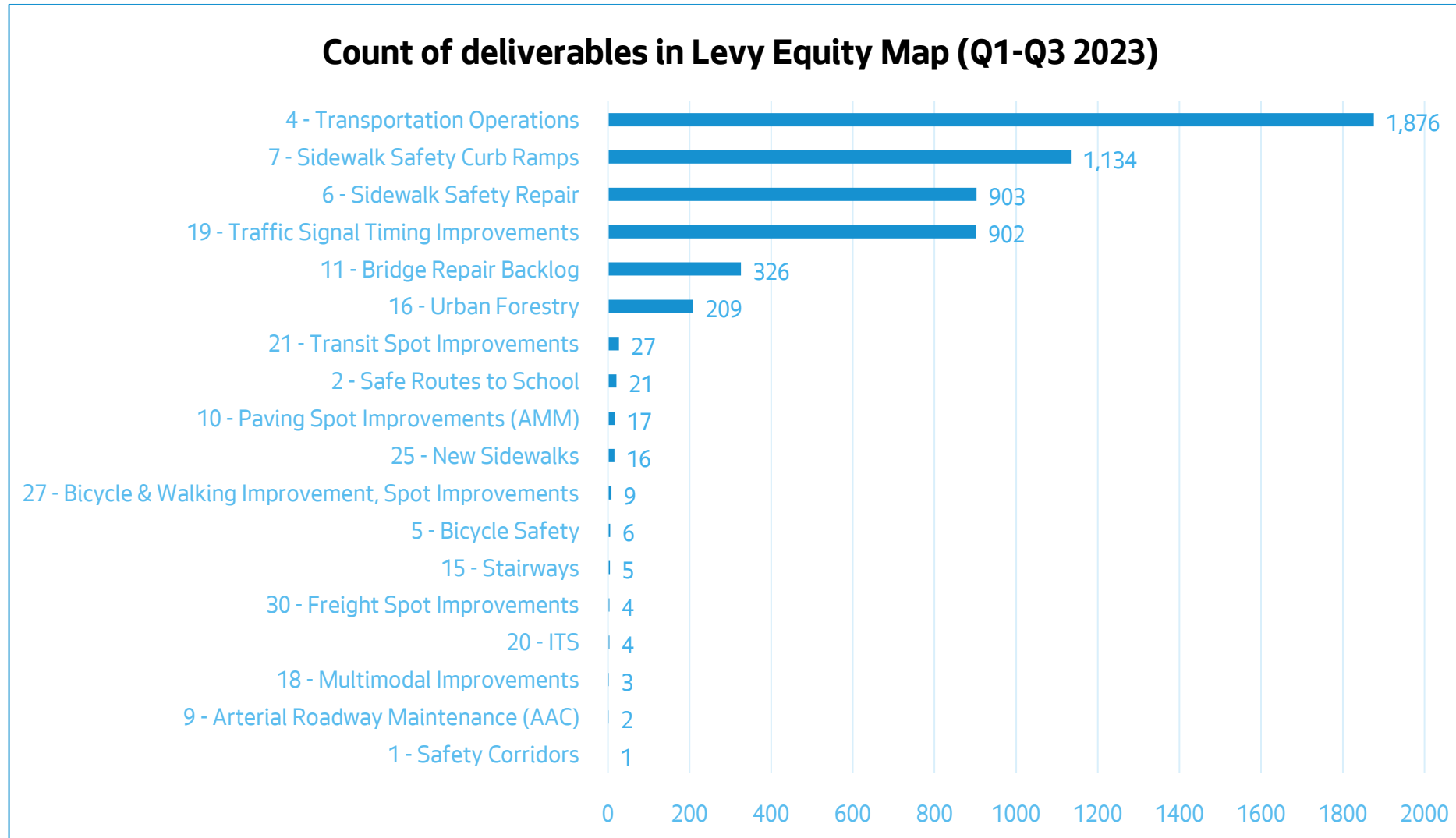


## Key Takeaways:

- We now know how many deliverables in the past year occurred in the highest and second-highest equity priority areas
- This data can inform our distribution of deliverables in the future (alongside other key inputs)



# Limitations to counting individual deliverables



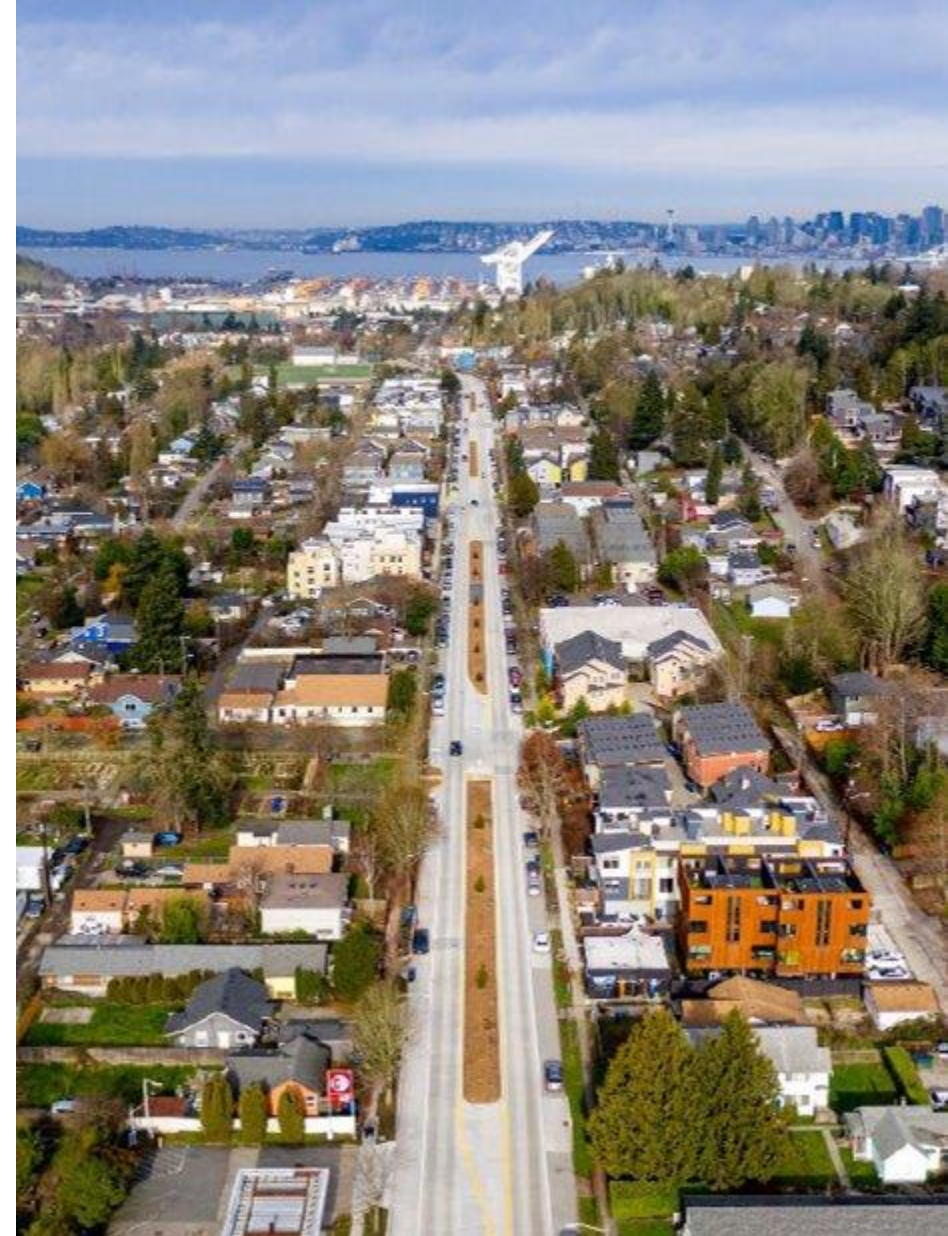
Distribution dominated by high-volume programs



# Continuous improvement

## Next steps:

- Start adding financial data so we can understand the distribution of our spending (not just individual projects)
- Expand use of RSE Index in prioritization for programs with deliverables distributed across the city
- Start defining what an “equitable distribution” of investments looks like, so we know when we are on track for success
- Work with other City departments to research displacement mitigation strategies that could accompany future investments



*Levy-funded corridor improvements for Delridge RapidRide H*

# Questions?

**Margo Iñiguez Dawes**

Levy Equity Coordinator

[margo.iniguez-dawes@seattle.gov](mailto:margo.iniguez-dawes@seattle.gov)

425-282-7772

