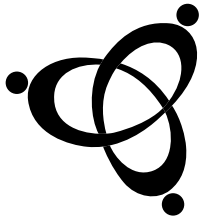


# Honest Elections Initiative Promotes Political Desegregation in Seattle

3 of 4 people of color in Seattle live in a neighborhood with the least amount of political contributions. I-122 would give communities of color significantly more political power.

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By Ben Henry, MPA



# **ALLIANCE FOR A JUST SOCIETY**

TAKING ACTION, MAKING CHANGE

The Alliance for a Just Society's mission is to execute regional and national campaigns and build strong state affiliate organizations and partnerships that address economic, racial, and social inequities.

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**P**olitical candidates are beholden to those who fund their campaigns. With the Honest Elections initiative, or I-122, heading to Seattle’s November ballot, the Alliance seeks to answer the question: Which races and ethnicities currently enjoy the greatest political influence from campaign giving, and would the passage of I-122 make campaign giving more equitable?

## Share of Seattle’s Race Populations Who Live in Neighborhoods that Give the Least in Political Contributions

Total number of a population group who live in a “Micro Money Zone” / Total number of a population group who live in Seattle

PEOPLE OF COLOR

**74%**

WHITE

**60%**

SEATTLE OVERALL

**64%**

## Biggest Giving Neighborhoods, Broken Down by Race

Total number of a population group who live in a “Big Money Zone” / Total number of all people who live in a Big Money Zone

WHITE

**80%**

PEOPLE OF COLOR

**20%**

BLACK

**5%**

LATINO

**4%**

ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDERS

**7%**

In this study, we find that the smallest neighborhoods in terms of per-capita political donations have disproportionately larger populations of people of color and that the largest giving neighborhoods are disproportionately white.

This is evidence of political racial segregation, in that those geographic areas that give the most political donations tend to be disproportionately comprised by a single racial group and those areas that give the least tend to be comprised of all other racial groups.

Racial segregation is defined as the “enforced separation of different racial groups in a country, community, or establishment.” In Seattle, we see evidence of de facto racial segregation, which results in a disproportionate share of political influence enjoyed by a single group largely delineated along geographic and racial lines.

We also see evidence that, through the passage of I-122, that dynamic would change dramatically.

### **Background**

I-122 seeks to give those who traditionally have been locked out of the political process the means to participate, giving ordinary people a stronger voice in government. The initiative would:

- ▶ Provide Seattle’s registered voters with four \$25 “democracy vouchers” that can be donated to city candidates of their choice.
- ▶ Restrict campaign donations from city contractors, regulated businesses, and their lobbyists.
- ▶ Speed up disclosure of campaign donations.
- ▶ Set strict lower contributions limits.

## Projected Increase of Seattleites in Neighborhoods Not Classified as a Micro Zone with Passage of I-122

Projected total number of a population group who would not live in a Micro Money Zone with I-122 passage / Total number of a population group who did not live in a Micro Money Zone in 2013

People of color	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander
<b>383%</b>	<b>332%</b>	<b>383%</b>	<b>461%</b>

- ▶ Make it illegal for city officials to take lobbying jobs immediately after leaving office.
- ▶ Tighten campaign reporting deadlines and establishes strict fines and penalties on those breaking election rules.

For the purposes of this study, we specifically examine the equity impacts of the voucher program.

### Methodology

In this study, we examine the demographics of who lives in Seattle neighborhoods broken down by the amount of campaign contributions given to political candidates.

A July 2015 study published by the Sightline Institute ("Who Funds Seattle's Political Candidates?") breaks down political giving per person and by neighborhood, or "Census block group." This is based on contributions data from the 2013 election for mayor, city council and city attorney. The Sightline study separates these neighborhoods into four zones:

- ▶ Micro Money Zones (\$0.00 – \$2.36 in political contributions per individual)
- ▶ Little Money Zones (\$2.37 – \$6.14)
- ▶ Middle Money Zones (\$6.15 – \$12.47)
- ▶ Big Money Zones (\$12.48 – \$31.03)

The Sightline study also projects what the 2013 map would have looked like if I-122 had been in place. (See Exhibits C and D for visual representations of current and projected maps.) In this analysis we utilize that projection to represent how I-122 could impact future elections. These projections are based on the following assumptions, as articulated in the Sightline study:

- ▶ Candidates collect two-thirds of their funds from vouchers and one-third the old-fashioned way.
- ▶ Slightly more than 10% of Seattle adults give at least one voucher to an Honest Elections-qualified candidate. On average, these adults assigned half of their vouchers, or \$50 each.
- ▶ Contributions of money diminish by two-thirds, and that the decrease is proportional across the city.

Taking a deeper dive into the demographics of these money zones, we examine the racial and ethnic composition of these neighborhoods, and look at which political giving zones whites, people of color, blacks, Latinos and Asian/Pacific islanders reside.

To do this analysis we utilize 2010 Census data, as it is the best source to offer this level of analysis. Because this data is from a census and was taken from the American Fact Finder, the numbers represent a 100% sample of the population. When examining demographics of Census block groups, the dataset needs to be large enough for adequate sample sizes at the hyperlocal level.

### Findings

We examine the data in two ways: We look at the entire populations of different racial and ethnic groups in Seattle and determine in which money zones they lived, and we looked at each of the four money zones and broke those residents down by race/ethnicity.

See Exhibits A and B for a complete breakdown.

## Seattleites in Neighborhoods Not Classified as a Micro Zone

	2013	Projected with I-122	% Increase
Seattle total	216,072	608,506	282%
White	162,527	403,545	248%
People of color	53,545	204,961	383%
Black	14,181	47,068	332%
Latino	10,518	40,301	383%
API	18,599	85,742	461%

Source: 2010 Census

### WHERE DO DIFFERENT RACES LIVE?

We find that a disproportionately higher share of people of color live in Micro Money Zones when compared to white and total populations. Of the total Seattle population, 64% lived in a Micro Money Zone, meaning they lived in neighborhoods that spent \$2.35 or less per person on political contributions in the 2013 election. And 60% of white, non-Hispanic people lived in the Micro Zone. Meanwhile, about three-quarters (74%) of all people of color in Seattle lived in a Micro Zone. When broken down by individual group, 70% of the black population, 74% of Latino and 78% of Asian / Pacific islander lived in the Micro Zone.

Based on Sightline projections had I-122 been in effect, 100% of Seattleites would no longer be classified as living in a Micro Zone. We find that 93% of Seattle's people of color would have instead lived in a Little Money Zone, 7% in a Middle Money Zone, and 0.3% in a Big Money Zone.

### WHO LIVES IN WHICH MONEY ZONES?

Looking at the composition of the four money zones, we find that about four of five people who live in Middle (79%) and Big (80%) Zones are white, and that 39% of those who live in a Micro Zone are people of color.

This disproportionality compares to a citywide ratio of white (66%) to people of color (34%).

While bigger-giving neighborhoods are disproportionately white, they are also higher-income areas. The Sightline study finds a close overlap between high incomes and political giving. Neighborhoods with median household incomes greater than \$100,000 tend to be Big and Middle Money Zones, while almost no Big or Middle Money neighborhood has a median income below \$70,000.

### HOW WOULD I-122 INCREASE POLITICAL INFLUENCE FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR?

The overall effect of I-122, according to the Sightline projections, is to lift all neighborhoods out of the Micro Money Zone and to significantly reduce the amount of people living in Big Money Zones.

This would result in dramatic, across-the-board increases of the number of people who would no longer be classified as living in a Micro Zone. Citywide, the numbers of Seattleites not living in a Micro Zone would grow from 216,072 to 608,506, a 282% increase.

When broken down by race and ethnicity, we see significant differences in who would benefit from I-122. While the white group would still see a dramatic benefit, with a 2½-times (248%) increase in people who would no longer live in a Micro Zone, people of color overall would see almost a four-fold jump, with 383% more people not living in a Micro Zone.

By subgroup, the most dramatic increase is seen with the Asian/Pacific Islander community, which would see a 461% increase in population no longer living in a Micro Zone.

We also observe significant drops in representation across the board in the larger money zones. Through passage of I-122, the number of the white population living in a Big Zone drops from 17,791 to a projected 2,558.

This largely can be attributed to I-122's provision decreasing the maximum contribution for all donors from \$700 to \$500.

### Conclusion

The empirical evidence shows that passage of I-122 would have an exponential impact on the political power of communities of color that have traditionally been disenfranchised and left out of the conversation.

## Exhibit A: Seattle Race & Ethnicities, By Political Giving Zone

	2013		Projected with I-122	
	Count	%	Count	%
<b>ALL SEATTLE</b>				
Micro Money Zone (\$0.00 – \$2.36 per person)	392,434	64%	0	0
Little Money Zone (\$2.37 – \$6.14 per person)	139,804	23%	536,188	88%
Middle Money Zone (\$6.15 – \$12.47 per person)	54,030	9%	69,190	11%
Big Money Zone (\$12.48 – \$31.03 per person)	22,238	4%	3,128	0.5%
<b>WHITE</b>				
Micro Money Zone (\$0.00 – \$2.36 per person)	241,018	60%	0	0
Little Money Zone (\$2.37 – \$6.14 per person)	101,828	25%	346,014	86%
Middle Money Zone (\$6.15 – \$12.47 per person)	42,908	11%	54,973	14%
Big Money Zone (\$12.48 – \$31.03 per person)	17,791	4%	2,558	0.6%
<b>PEOPLE OF COLOR</b>				
Micro Money Zone (\$0.00 – \$2.36 per person)	151,416	74%	0	0
Little Money Zone (\$2.37 – \$6.14 per person)	37,976	19%	190,174	93%
Middle Money Zone (\$6.15 – \$12.47 per person)	11,122	5%	14,217	7%
Big Money Zone (\$12.48 – \$31.03 per person)	4,447	2%	570	0.3%
<b>BLACK</b>				
Micro Money Zone (\$0.00 – \$2.36 per person)	32,887	70%	0	0
Little Money Zone (\$2.37 – \$6.14 per person)	10,491	22%	43,578	93%
Middle Money Zone (\$6.15 – \$12.47 per person)	2,469	5%	3,363	7%
Big Money Zone (\$12.48 – \$31.03 per person)	1,221	3%	127	0.3%
<b>LATINO</b>				
Micro Money Zone (\$0.00 – \$2.36 per person)	29,783	74%	0	0
Little Money Zone (\$2.37 – \$6.14 per person)	7,285	18%	37,212	92%
Middle Money Zone (\$6.15 – \$12.47 per person)	2,447	6%	2,982	7%
Big Money Zone (\$12.48 – \$31.03 per person)	786	2%	107	0.3%
<b>ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER</b>				
Micro Money Zone (\$0.00 – \$2.36 per person)	67,143	78%	0	0
Little Money Zone (\$2.37 – \$6.14 per person)	13,445	16%	80,829	94%
Middle Money Zone (\$6.15 – \$12.47 per person)	3,676	4%	4,695	5%
Big Money Zone (\$12.48 – \$31.03 per person)	1,478	2%	218	0.3%

Source: Alliance for a Just Society analysis of Sightline Institute contributions report and 2010 Census

## Exhibit B: Seattle Political Giving Zones, By Race & Ethnicity

	2013		Projected with I-122	
	Count	%	Count	%
<b>MICRO MONEY ZONE (\$0.00 – \$2.36 PER PERSON)</b>				
White	241,018	61%	0	-
People of Color	151,416	39%	0	-
Black	32,887	8%	0	-
Latino	29,783	8%	0	-
API	67,143	17%	0	-
Total	392,434		0	
<b>LITTLE MONEY ZONE (\$2.37 – \$6.14 PER PERSON)</b>				
White	101,828	73%	346,014	65%
People of Color	37,976	27%	190,174	35%
Black	10,491	8%	43,578	8%
Latino	7,285	5%	37,212	7%
API	13,445	10%	80,829	15%
Total	139,804		536,188	
<b>MIDDLE MONEY ZONE (\$6.15 – \$12.47 PER PERSON)</b>				
White	42,908	79%	54,973	79%
People of Color	11,122	21%	14,217	21%
Black	2,469	5%	3,363	5%
Latino	2,447	5%	2,982	4%
API	3,676	7%	4,695	7%
Total	54,030		69,190	
<b>BIG MONEY ZONE (\$12.48 – \$31.03 PER PERSON)</b>				
White	17,791	80%	2,558	82%
People of Color	4,447	20%	570	18%
Black	1,221	5%	127	4%
Latino	786	4%	107	3%
API	1,478	7%	218	7%
Total	22,238		3,128	

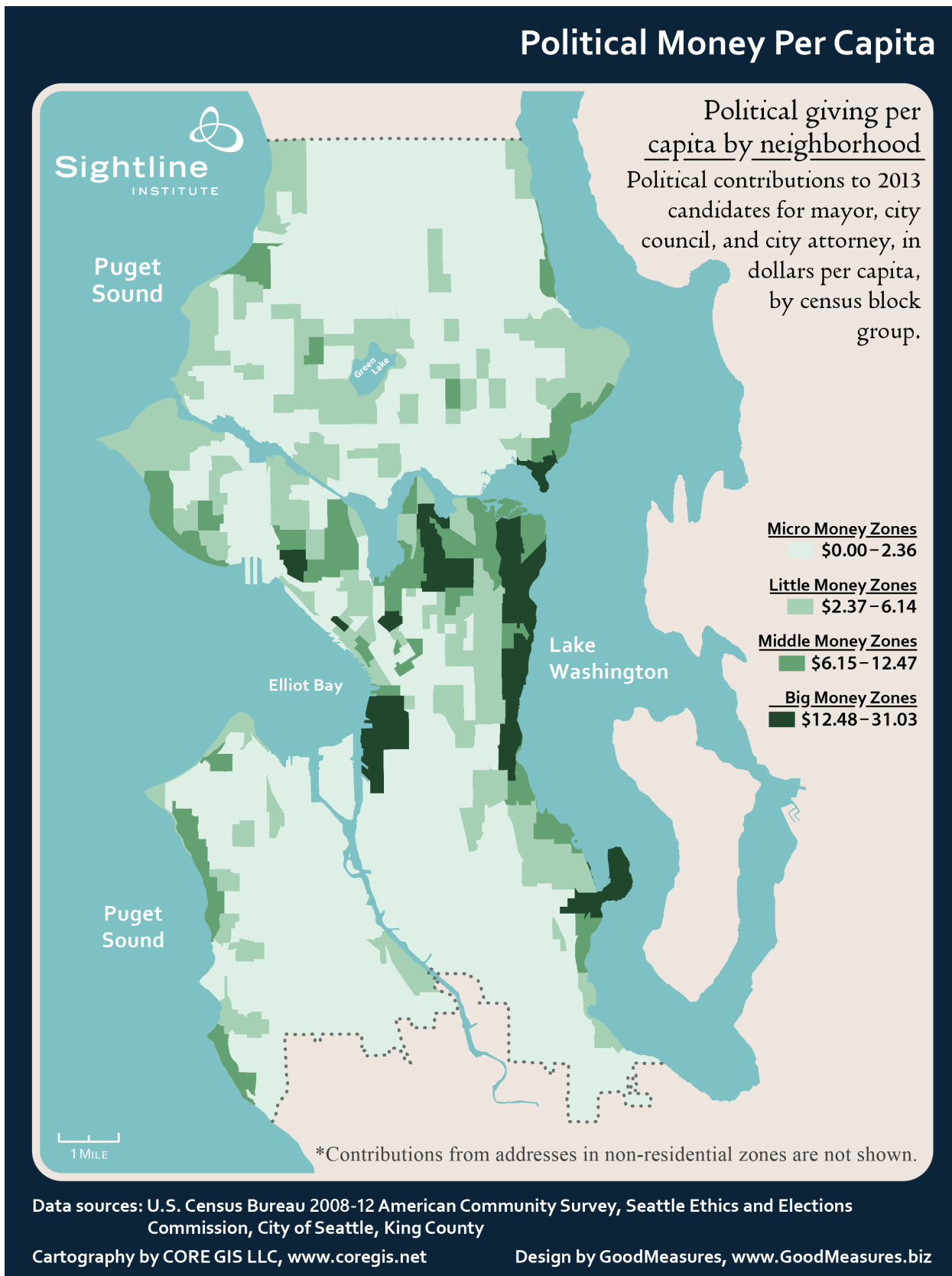
Source: Alliance for a Just Society analysis of Sightline Institute contributions report and 2010 Census

## Seattle Citywide Demographics

White Non Hispanic	66%	Hispanic	7%
People of Color	34%	Two or more races	4%
API Non Hispanic	14%	Native Non Hispanic	1%
Black Non Hispanic	8%	Some other race alone	0.2%

Source: 2010 Census

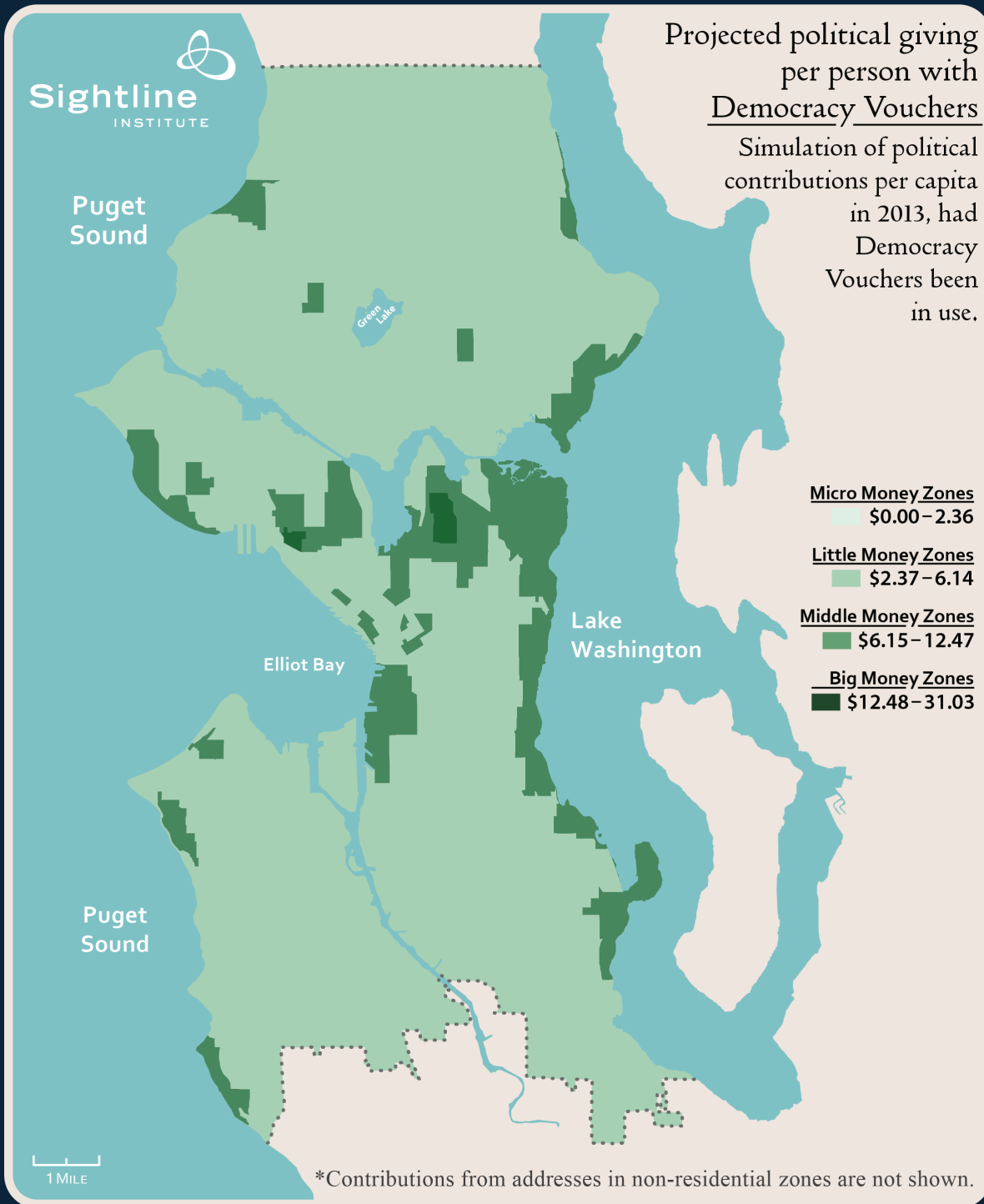
## Exhibit C: Sightline Map of Political Money Per Capita





# Exhibit D: Sightline Map of Giving Under Honest Elections Seattle

## What if? Political Giving under Honest Elections Seattle



Data sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census SF1 and 2008-12 American Community Survey, Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission, City of Seattle, King County

Cartography by CORE GIS LLC, [www.coregis.net](http://www.coregis.net)

Design by GoodMeasures, [www.GoodMeasures.biz](http://www.GoodMeasures.biz)



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