

Authors: Karl Jones, PhD, MSW, and David D. Luxton, PhD, MS, with the RDA Team

Date: February 23, 2021

Key Findings

- Persons released to Pierce County between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2020 after an incarceration period of one year or more tended to release to neighborhoods from Tacoma south along State Route 7 to the Parkland-Spanaway-Midland area
- Patterns of relative density were highest in Tacoma's Central, New Tacoma, South End and Eastside communities.

Background

Executive Order 16-05, *Building Safe and Strong Communities through Successful Reentry* (2016) established a multi-agency collaborative framework for successful community transition in the population exiting prison. The Washington State Department of Corrections (WADOC) has since expanded or developed reentry-focused programs, including Work Release, Graduated Reentry (GRE), and the Community Parenting Alternative (CPA), to orient and equip individuals for community transition prior to releasing from full or partial confinement.

Mapping reentry is useful for providing information on how prison exits affect local communities, and the extent to which existing resources and services are available and accessible to returning populations (La Vigne, Cowan, & Brazzell, 2006). To assist needs-based planning for community transition, this brief report describes the distribution and density of release locations in Pierce County for individuals who released from inmate status between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2020. This report supports WADOC operational needs and is not intended as a contribution to generalizable knowledge in the field of corrections.

Methods

Population and Data Sources: Data representing all individuals released to Pierce County between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2020 after a term of confinement of at least one year ($n = 2,030$) were obtained from the WADOC's Offender Management Network Information (OMNI) system. Data excluded decedents and releases to homelessness and federal custody (e.g., Northwest Detention Center). Release locations were residential addresses active within 14 days of release. Of the individuals included in the preliminary data, 1,960 (96.6%) released with a verifiable address to 1,438 distinct locations across the county. Housing data were American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-year census tract estimates of housing units and structure types.

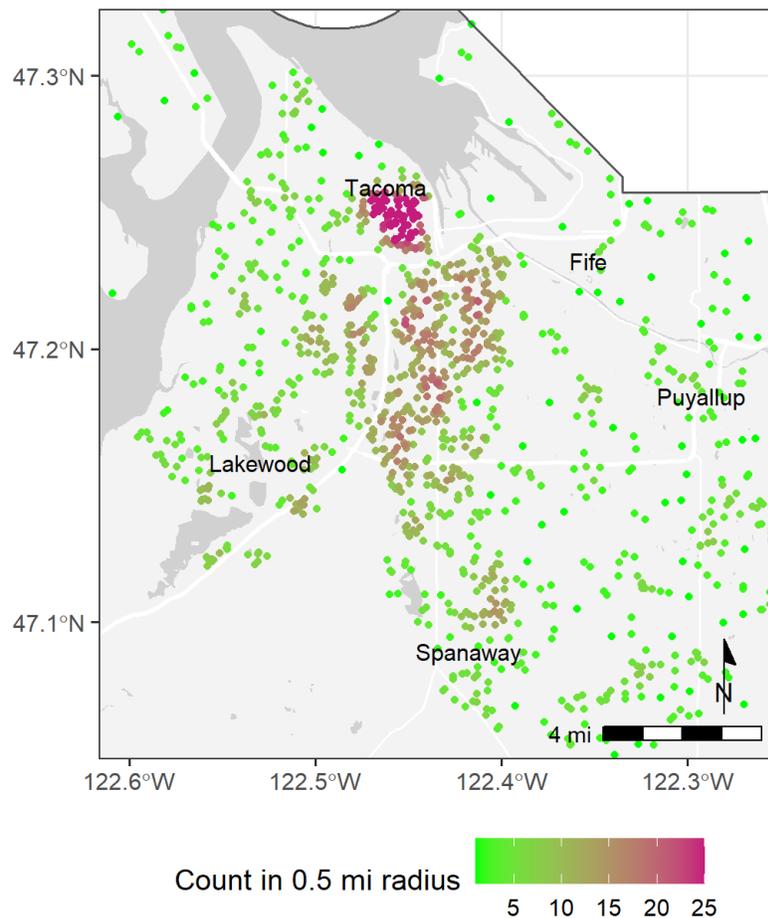
Analytic Approach: Following an earlier analysis of release locations in King County, distinct release locations in Pierce County were described as density counts, or the number of other release locations within a half-mile radius. Given that individuals release to various types of structures (e.g., single detached units, multiunit apartments, etc.), and that, over time, there may be more released individuals than units in a particular structure, relative density was calculated with the number of

people releasing to each structure truncated by the average number of units per structure by census tract. This estimated number of release units was then described as a proportion of the total number of housing units in an area. Using the county's overall proportion as a baseline expected value, a relative density map identified tracts with significantly more release locations than expected given housing stock.

Results

Distinct release locations and density counts in Pierce County are shown in Figure 1. The county's highest density areas included Tacoma's Central, New Tacoma, South Tacoma, South End and East Side communities and Parkland-Spanaway-Midland communities.

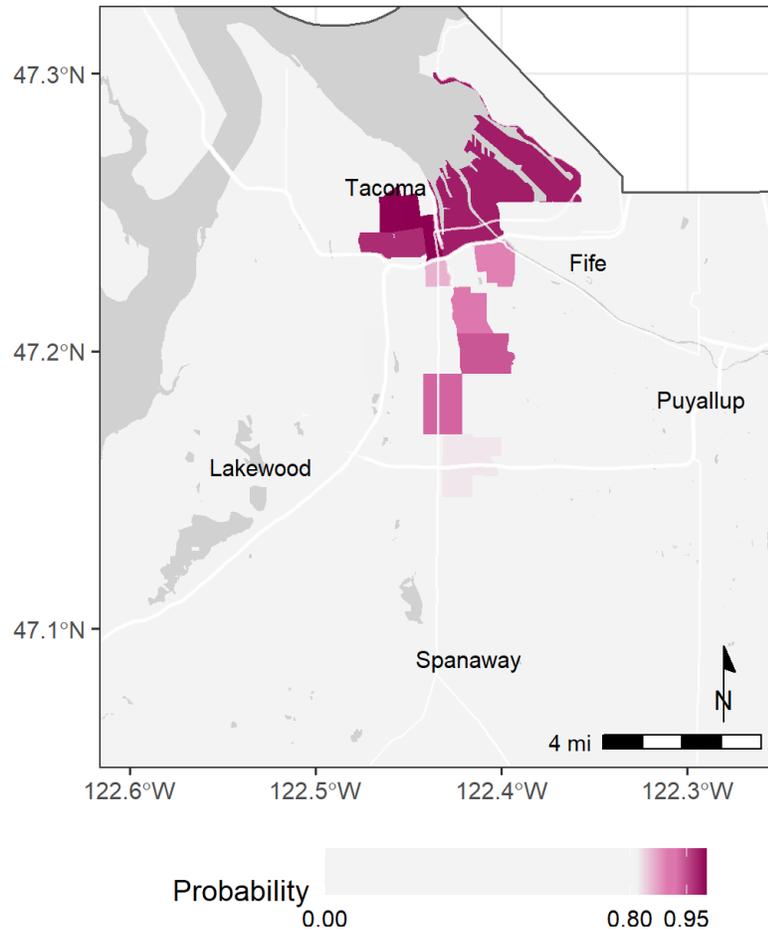
Figure 1. Locations and density counts of individuals released to Pierce County from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2020 by distinct location.



Areas with high relative density were in Tacoma's Central, New Tacoma, South End and Eastside communities. Tracts with a high probability of having at least two times more release locations than expected given their estimated number of housing units are shown in Figure 2.

Across Pierce County, the ratio of actual to expected release locations per tract ranged from 0 to 4 times more release locations than expected given area housing stock. There were three to four times more release locations than expected in Tacoma's Hilltop community.

Figure 2. Pierce County census tracts by probability of release locations being at least two times greater than expected given the estimated number of housing units.



Summary

Individuals releasing to Pierce County between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2020 after a term of confinement of at least one year tended to release to neighborhoods in Tacoma and the Parkland-Spanaway-Midland area. Patterns of relative density were highest in Tacoma's Central, New Tacoma, South End and Eastside communities.

The present data provides information to support needs-based planning for successful community transition in the target areas.

References

Executive Order 16-05, *Building Safe and Strong Communities through Successful Reentry* (2016).

La Vigne, N.G., Cowan, J., & Brazzell, D. (2006). *Mapping prisoner reentry: An action research guidebook*. Urban Institute Justice Policy Center, retrieved from <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/50971/411383-Mapping-Prisoner-Reentry-An-Action-Research-Guidebook.PDF>

For question about this report, email us at: DOCDLHQRESEARCH@DOC1.WA.GOV
VISIT US AT: <https://www.doc.wa.gov/information/data/default.htm>