
An Analysis of Austin, Texas Homicide: Offenses, Victims, and Suspects in 2017

Prepared by the Austin Police Department
Crime Analysis Unit
May 3, 2018

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
INTRODUCTION.....	3
UCR CRIMINAL HOMICIDE DEFINITIONS	3
ABOUT THE DATA	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
STATISTICAL REPRESENTATION.....	5
HOMICIDE DATA.....	5
HOMICIDE TOTALS BY YEAR	5
HOMICIDE TOTALS BY MONTH	6
HOMICIDES BY DAY OF THE WEEK	6
HOMICIDES BY TIME OF THE DAY	7
HOMICIDES BY AREA COMMAND	7
<i>Homicides by Location – Point Map.....</i>	<i>8</i>
HOMICIDES BY TYPE OF PREMISE	9
TYPES OF WEAPONS USED	9
<i>Homicides by Weapon – Point Map.....</i>	<i>10</i>
HOMICIDE MOTIVES	11
<i>Homicides by Motive – Point Map.....</i>	<i>12</i>
VICTIMS & SUSPECTS	13
HOMICIDES BY AGE.....	13
<i>Homicides by Victim Age – Point Map.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Homicides by Suspect Age – Point Map.....</i>	<i>15</i>
HOMICIDES BY GENDER	16
HOMICIDES BY RACE/ETHNICITY	16
<i>Homicides by Victim Gender – Point Map.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Homicides by Suspect Gender – Point Map.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Homicides by Victim Race/Ethnicity – Point Map.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Homicides by Suspect Race/Ethnicity – Point Map.....</i>	<i>20</i>
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VICTIM AND SUSPECT	21
MISCELLANEOUS VICTIM AND SUSPECT INFORMATION	21
<i>Homicides by Relationship – Point Map.....</i>	<i>22</i>
FAMILY VIOLENCE, CONTRIBUTING FACTORS, OFFENSE CLASSIFICATION	23
<i>Alcohol Related Homicides – Point Map.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Drug Related Homicides – Point Map.....</i>	<i>25</i>
HOMICIDE CLEARANCE RATE.....	26
<i>Homicides by Clearance Status – Point Map.....</i>	<i>27</i>

Introduction

The following data reflects all non-negligent murder cases reported to the Austin Police Department for 2017. Negligent homicides and officer involved shootings were not included. This report is meant as a descriptive summary of the homicide specifics and characteristics within Austin city limits. Data sources include U.S. Department of Justice's *Crime in the United States 2016*, Texas Department of Public Safety's *2016 Crime in Texas Report*, City of Austin demographic information, Versadex (APD's record management system), APD Homicide Unit's log, and case jacket information directly maintained by detectives assigned to each case.

Since the release of the 2017 versions of the U.S. Department of Justice's *Crime in the United States* and the Texas Department of Public Safety's *Crime in Texas* are typically not released until September, comparison to 2016 data was used for this report. These numbers are provided as a way to put Austin's murder numbers into a broader context. The Department of Justice discourages ranking agencies on the sole basis of UCR data, so further comparison between jurisdictions should include in-depth analysis of the many variables that affect crime.

UCR Criminal Homicide Definitions

According to the *Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook*, two categories of murder are included for UCR purposes. The first, Criminal Homicide – Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter, is defined as the willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another. Included in this category is any death resulting from a fight, argument, quarrel, assault or commission of a crime. The second category, Criminal Homicide – Manslaughter by Negligence, is defined as the killing of another person through gross negligence. Not included as criminal homicide are deaths resulting from suicides, fetal deaths, traffic fatalities, or justifiable homicides. Justifiable homicides include the killing of a felon by a peace officer in the line of duty and the killing of a felon, during the commission of a felony, by a private citizen. Attempts at murder and assault with intent to kill are recorded under Aggravated Assaults.

Police investigations are the sole basis for the offense classification. Any determinations made by courts, medical examiners, juries, or other judicial bodies are excluded for UCR purposes.

About the Data

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT DATA DISCLAIMER

Understanding the following conditions about crime information tallied from the Versadex mainframe database will allow you to get the most value out of the data provided:

- Due to methodological differences in data collection, different data sources or reports may produce different statistics.
- The data is continuously being updated. The data provided represents a particular point in time and does not reflect the dynamic nature of the Versadex mainframe database.
- The data here may not reflect official Texas DPS, FBI UCR or NIBRS numbers.
- If the information provided here is used outside the department, then the following disclaimer applies-
"The Austin Police Department cannot assume any liability for any decision made or action taken or not taken by the recipient in reliance upon any information or data provided."

Executive Summary

The following summation may be made from the 2017 homicide data as of May 3, 2018.

- There were 25 homicides in Austin in 2017 for a rate of 2.7 murders per 100,000 population.
- The most active months for murder were August with five murders and March with four murders.
- Six (24%) homicides occurred in Edward sector, five (20%) occurred in Ida sector, and four (16%) occurred in Henry sector. These three sectors account for a total of 60% of 2017's homicides.
- Ten (40%) of the homicides occurred at a single-family residence or apartment. Of those, five occurred inside the residence or apartment.
- A gun was used in 16 of the 25 murders, accounting for 64% of the weapon types used in the 2017 murders.
- Thirteen (52%) of the 2017 murders involved issues stemming from an argument or were revenge for an earlier issue.
- Four (16%) of the cases met the legal requirements for family violence.
- A total of 25 victims and 29 suspects were documented for the 2017 murders.
- Fifteen (60%) of the victims were between the ages of 20 and 39.
- Sixteen (55%) of the known suspects were between the ages of 20 and 39.
- Thirteen (52%) of the homicide victims in 2017 were Hispanic, six (24%) were White, five (20%) were African American, and one (4%) was Other.
- In all the cases, the suspect's race/ethnicity was known - 12 (41%) of the homicide suspects were Hispanic, 11 (38%) were African American, and six (21%) were White.
- In the 23 cases in which the suspect's relationship to the victim was established, at least one suspect was an acquaintance in 11 murders (44%). The suspect was a family member or significant other in two cases (8%) and the suspect was a roommate in two cases (8%).
- Eight murders of these 25 murders (32%) were considered stranger-on-stranger murders.
 - These murders include cases in which the victim was chosen at random as well as cases in which the victim and suspect were brought together by a location (such as a bar or parking lot) or an activity (such as buying drugs, prostitution, or gambling).
 - As of May 3, 2018, all of the stranger-on-stranger murders have been solved – seven have been cleared by arrest and one has a warrant issued.
 - None are believed to be related or committed by the same suspect(s).
- Two of the homicides were murder/suicides.
- Robbery was believed to be a contributing factor in five (20%) of the homicides.
- As of May 3, 2018, 20 of the 25 murders in 2017 have been cleared (by arrest or exceptionally), for an 80% clearance rate. However, 23 of these 25 murders (92%) have been solved.
 - Nineteen of the 25 cases were cleared during 2017. One was cleared in February 2018.
 - Of the five murders in 2017 that are considered “not cleared”:
 - A warrant for the suspect in three of the cases has been issued, but the suspect has not been arrested yet – all three are believed to have fled to Mexico.
 - Two of the murders are not solved. The suspect(s) have not been identified.

Statistical Representation

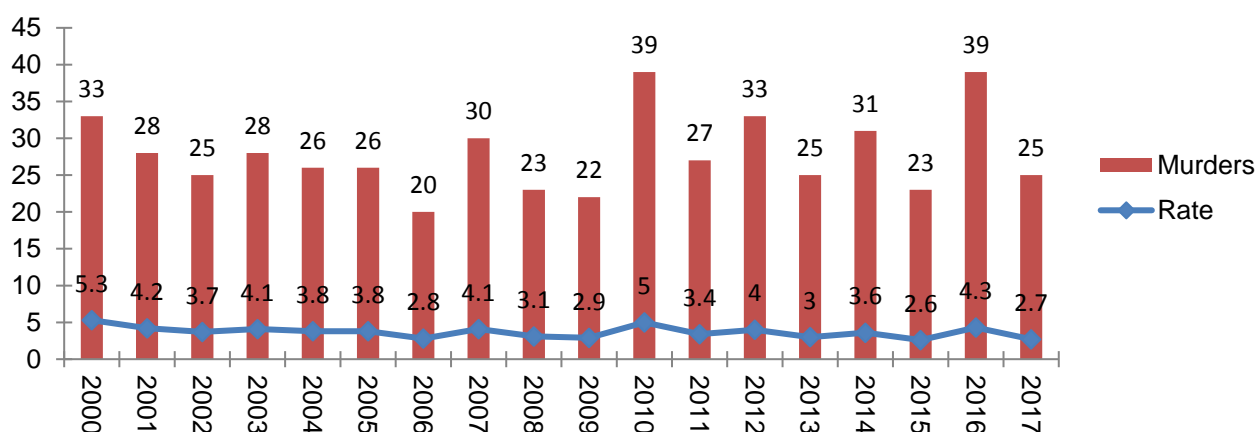
Homicide Data

- The analysis contained in this report was based on 2017 homicide data as of May 3, 2018. Only intentional homicides (non-negligent homicides) were included in the analysis.

Homicide Totals by Year

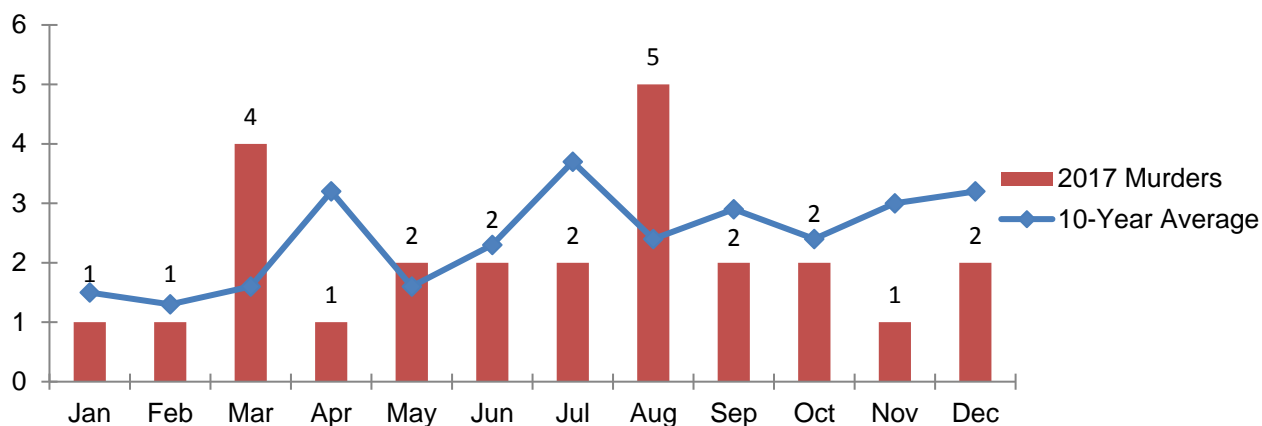
- There were 25 homicides documented in Austin, Texas in 2017. Using a population estimate of 937,065, this calculates to a rate of 2.7 murders per 100,000 population.
- In 2016, there were 39 homicides in Austin, 4.3 murders per 100,000 population.
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice's *Crime in the United States 2016* report:
 - The homicide rate for cities with populations between 500,000 and 999,999 was 12.9 per 100,000 population.
 - The rate for the South Region was 6.5 per 100,000 population. The South Region includes: the South Atlantic states of Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia; the East South Central states of Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee; and the West South Central states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.
 - The rate for the West South Central sub-region was 6.3 per 100,000 population.
 - The rate for all of the United States was 5.3 per 100,000 population.
- According to the Texas Department of Public Safety's *2016 Crime in Texas Report*, the homicide rate for all of Texas was 5.3 per 100,000 population.

Austin, TX Homicides and Rates by Year



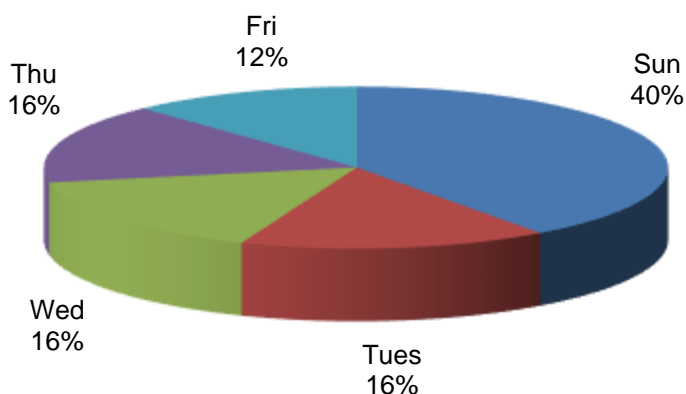
Homicide Totals by Month

- A few cases involved situations in which the victim was found hours, possibly days, after being killed. Since it is difficult to determine the exact date and time of death, the date and time of discovery was used for month/day/time analysis.
- The most active months for murder were August with five murders and March with four murders.
- The least active months were January, February, April, and November with one murder each.



Homicides by Day of the Week

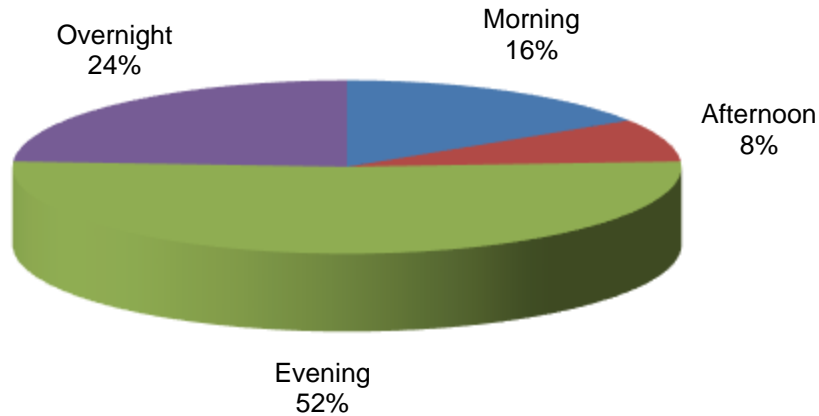
- Ten (40%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered on a Sunday.
- Four homicides occurred or were discovered on a Tuesday (16%), on a Wednesday (16%), and on a Thursday (16%).
- No homicides occurred or were discovered on a Monday or a Saturday.



Homicides by Time of the Day

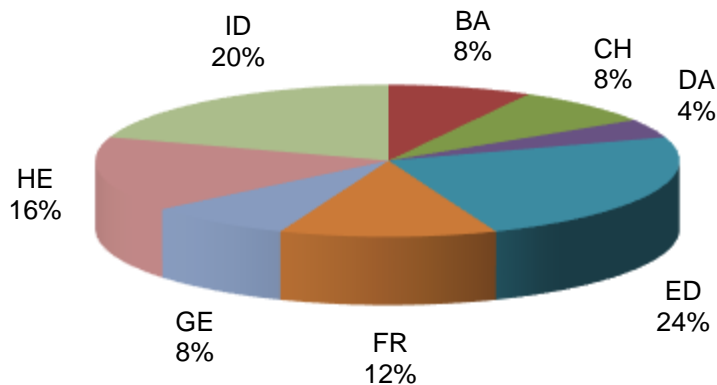
- Thirteen (52%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered during evening hours.
- Six (24%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered during overnight hours.

Time is broken into four intervals: Morning is 6:00 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.
Afternoon is 12 noon to 5:59 p.m.
Evening is 6:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.
Overnight is 12 midnight to 5:59 a.m.

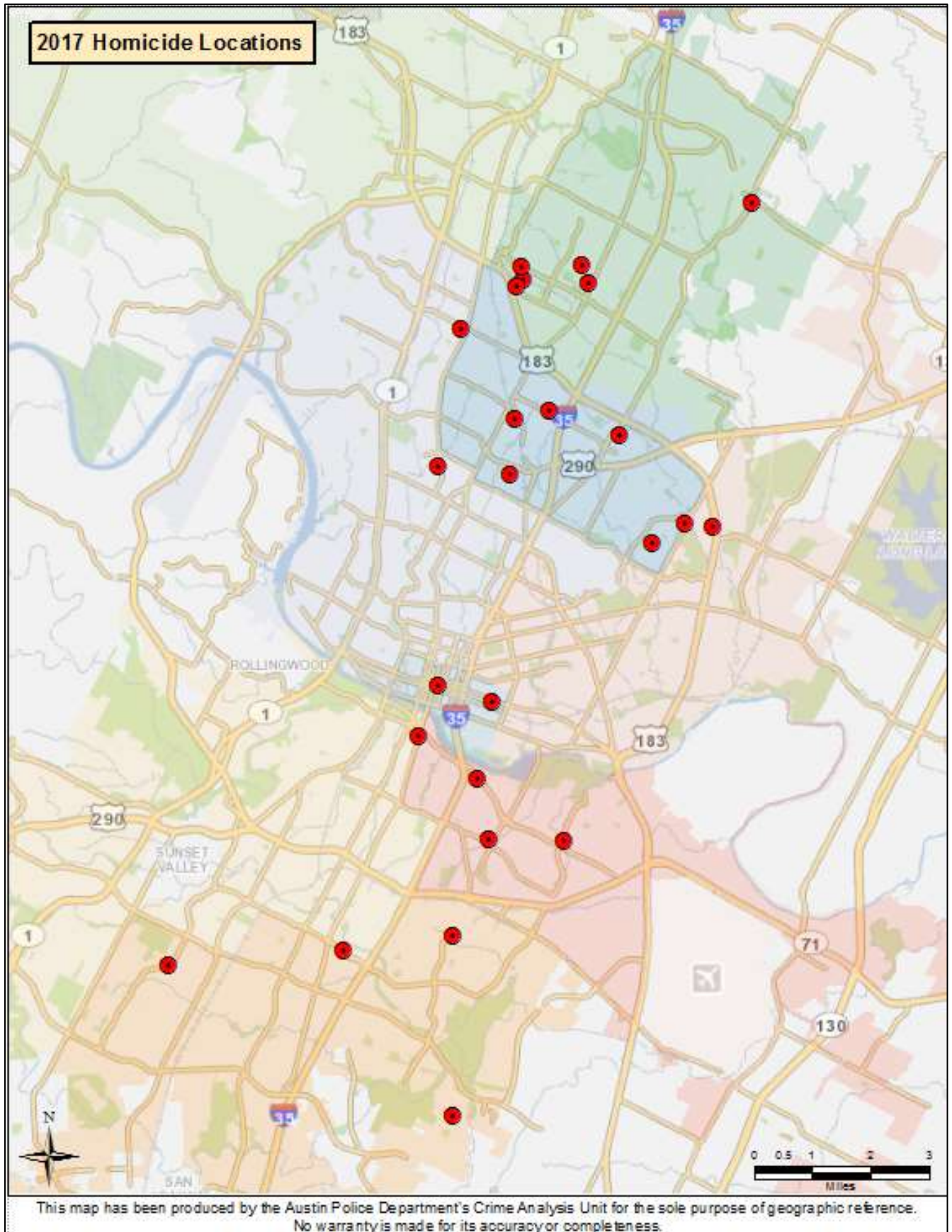


Homicides by Area Command

- Six (24%) homicides occurred in Edward sector, five (20%) occurred in Ida sector, and four (16%) occurred in Henry sector. These three sectors account for a total of 60% of 2017's homicides.
- The rest of the sectors had one to three homicides except Adam sector which had no homicides during 2017.

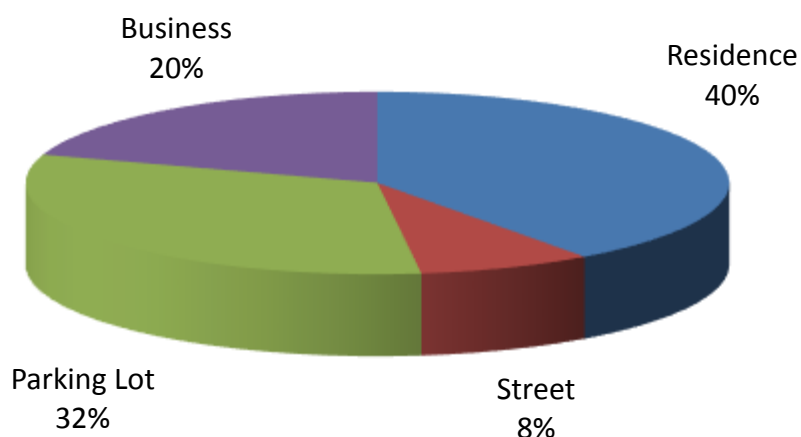


Homicides by Location – Point Map



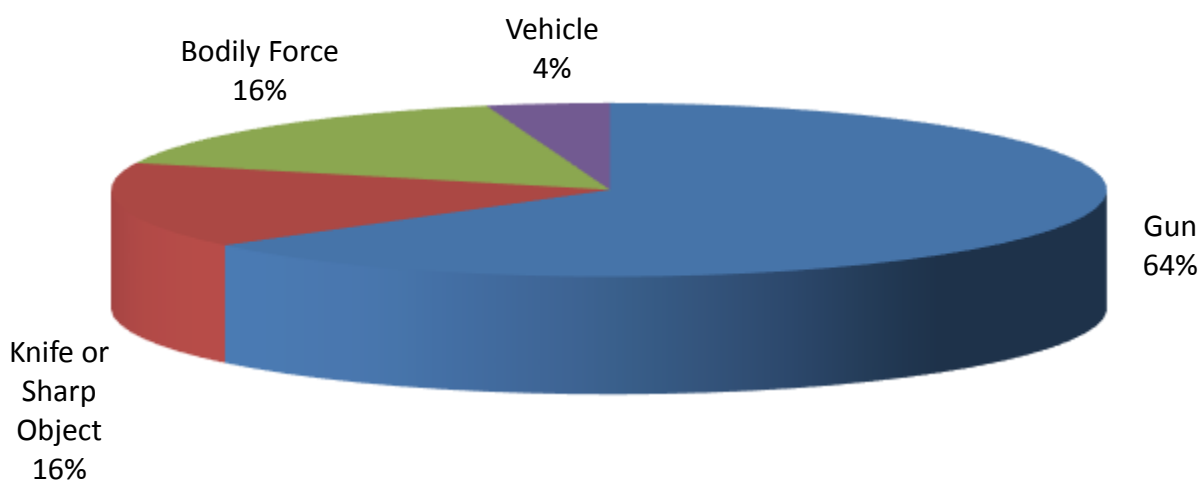
Homicides by Type of Premise

- Ten (40%) of the homicides occurred at a single-family residence or apartment. Of those, five occurred inside the residence or apartment.
- Eight homicides (32%) occurred in a parking lot (seven of those in apartment complex parking lots), five (20%) occurred in or outside a business and two (8%) occurred on the street.

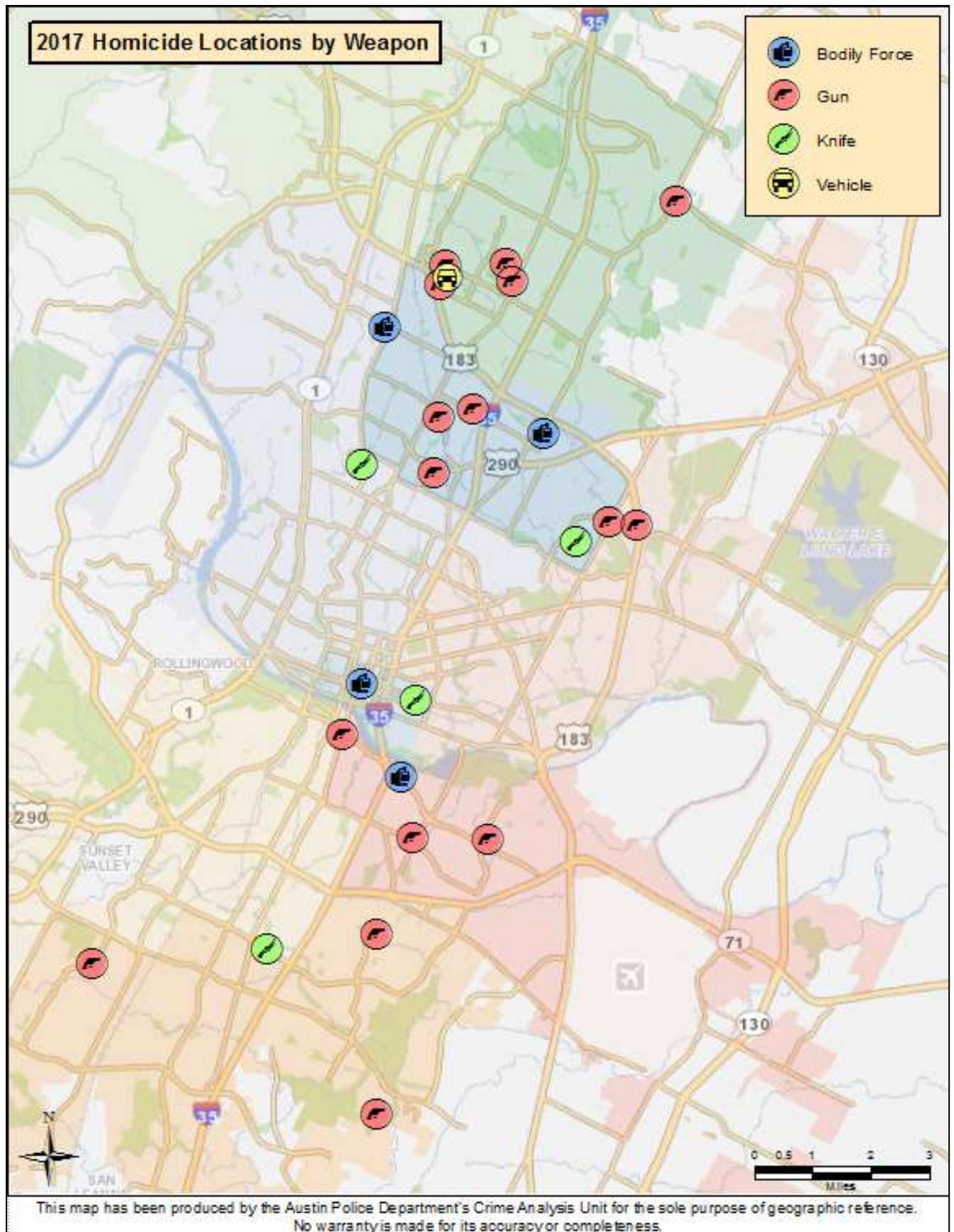


Types of Weapons Used

- A gun was used in 16 of the 25 murders, accounting for 64% of the weapon types used in the 2017 murders. A gun accounted for 72% of the weapon types used in 2016 murders.
- Bodily force was used in four cases (16%) and a knife or a sharp object was used in four cases (16%).

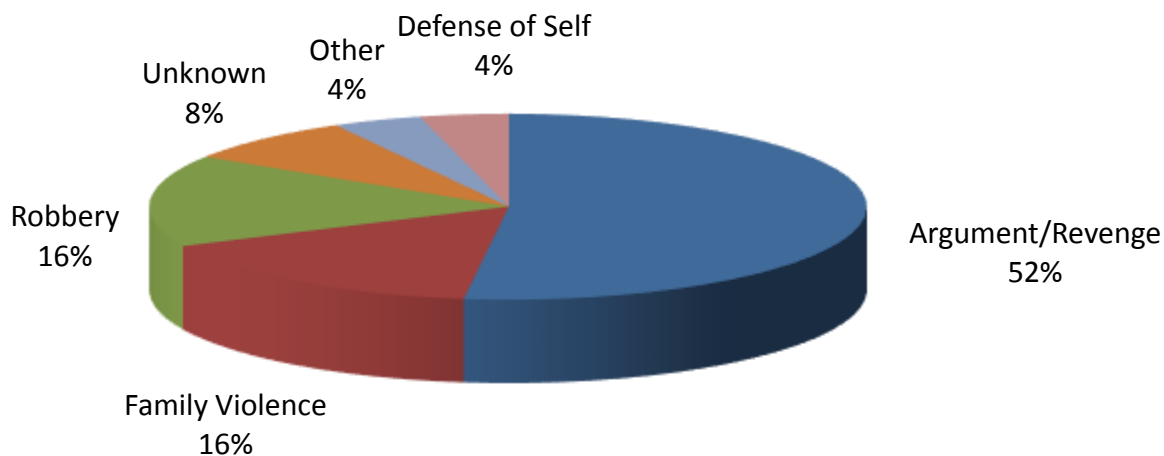


Homicides by Weapon – Point Map

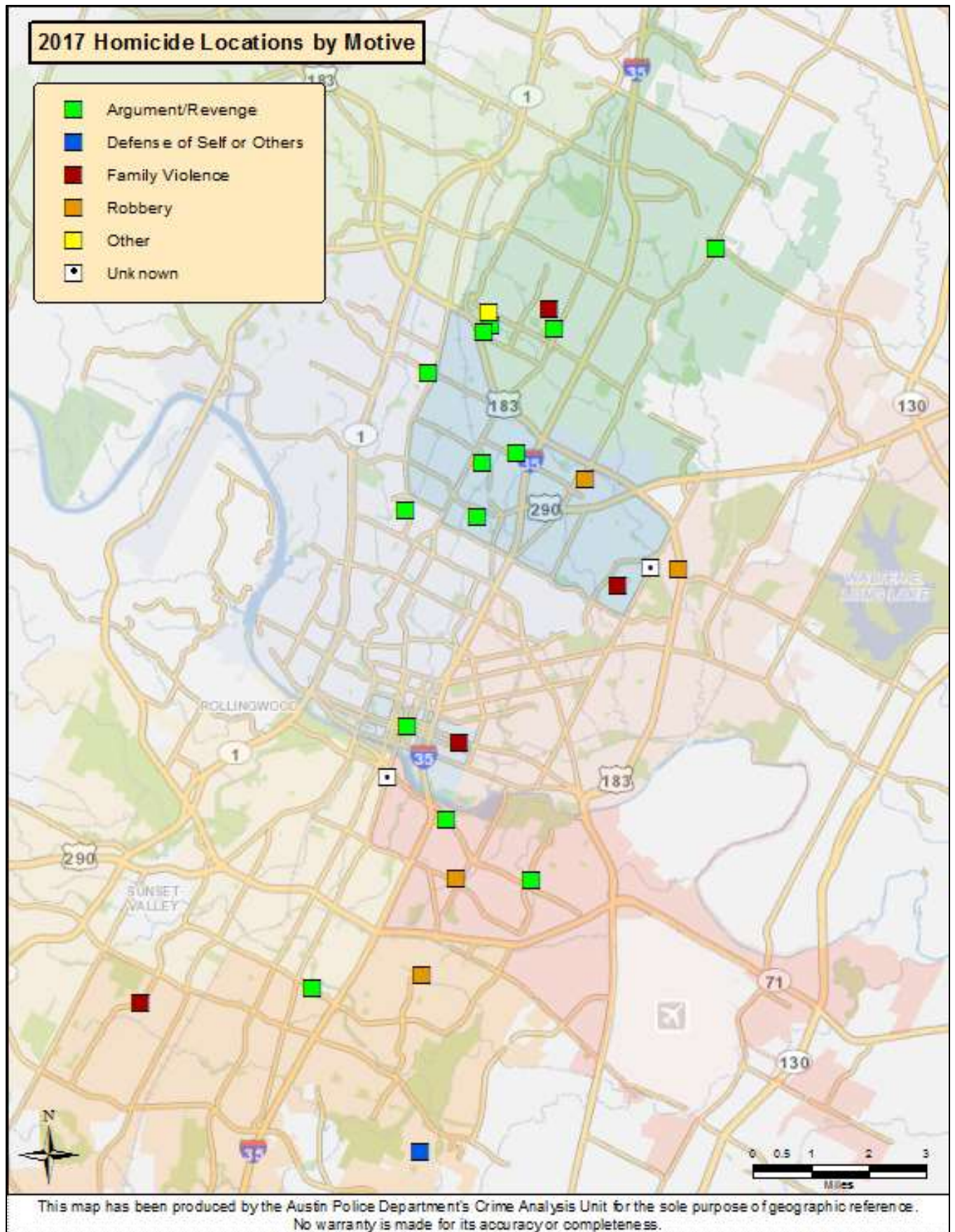


Homicide Motives

- Thirteen (52%) of the 2017 murders involved issues stemming from an argument or were revenge for an earlier issue.
- Four (16%) of the cases met the legal requirements for family violence.
 - Two of the four family violence murders were motivated by issues stemming from a close family, intimate partner, or ex-partner relationship. Both of these cases were murder-suicides. One case involved an adult son no longer being able to care for an aging parent and one case involved a husband and wife.
 - Two of the four family violence cases were arguments between roommates.
- One homicide (4%) was likely committed in defense of self or others.
- Robbery was the motive in four homicides (16%).
- “Other” motives include a case in which a gun was handled recklessly.



Homicides by Motive – Point Map

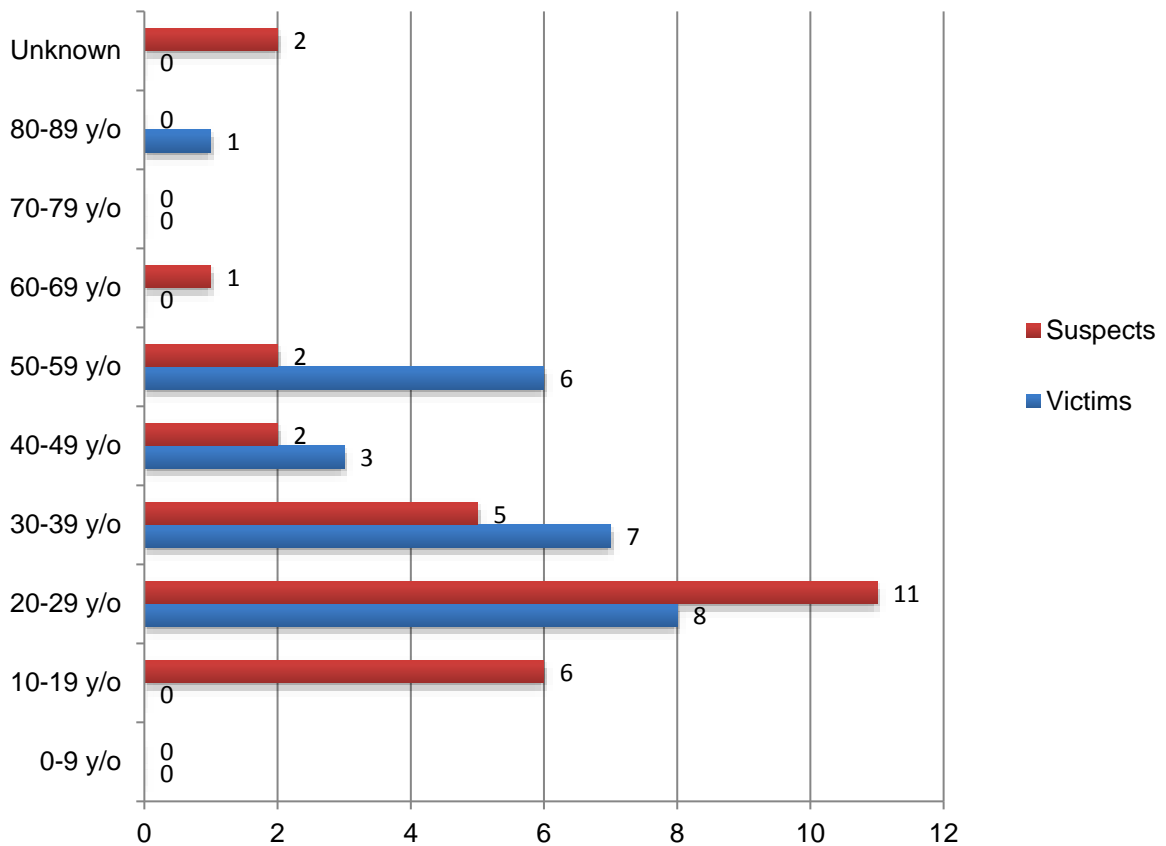


Victims & Suspects

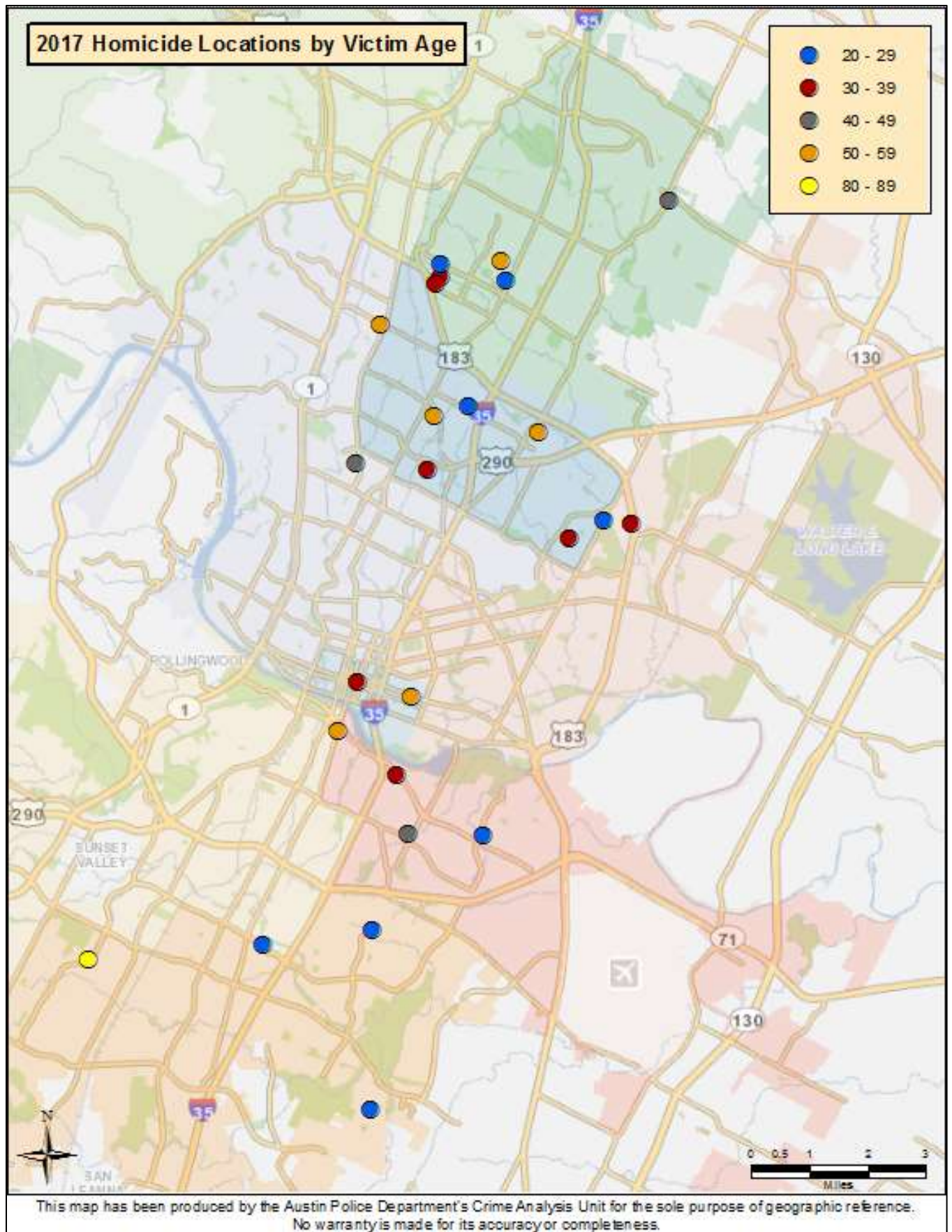
- A total of 25 victims and 29 suspects were documented for the 2017 murders.

Homicides by Age

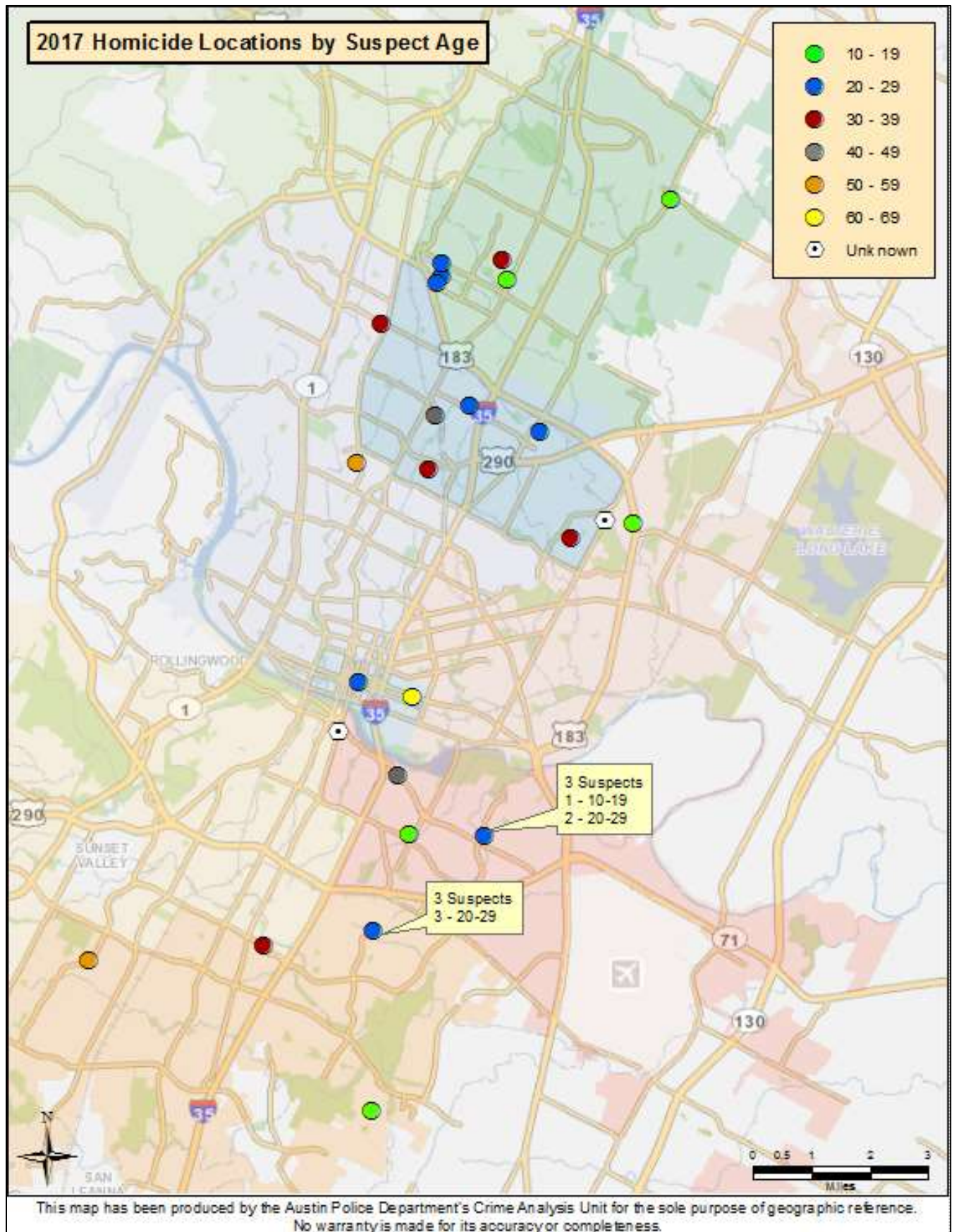
- The youngest victim was 20 years old and the oldest was 82 years old, with 15 of the victims (60%) falling between the ages of 20 and 39.
- In the cases in which the suspect's age was known, the youngest suspect was 16 years old and the oldest was 63 years old, with 16 of the suspects (55%) falling between the ages of 20 and 39.



Homicides by Victim Age – Point Map

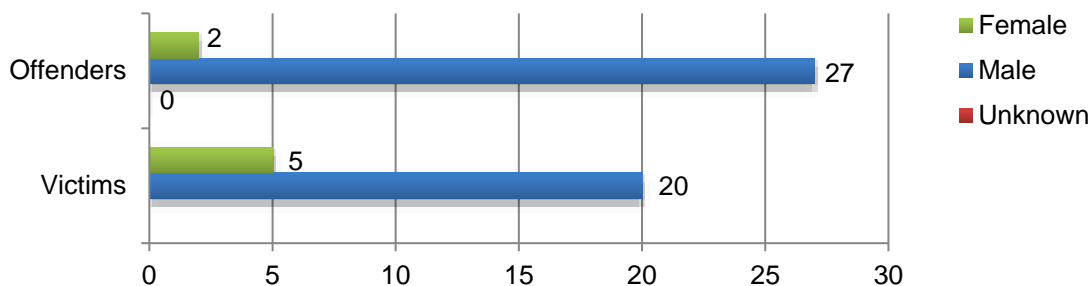


Homicides by Suspect Age – Point Map



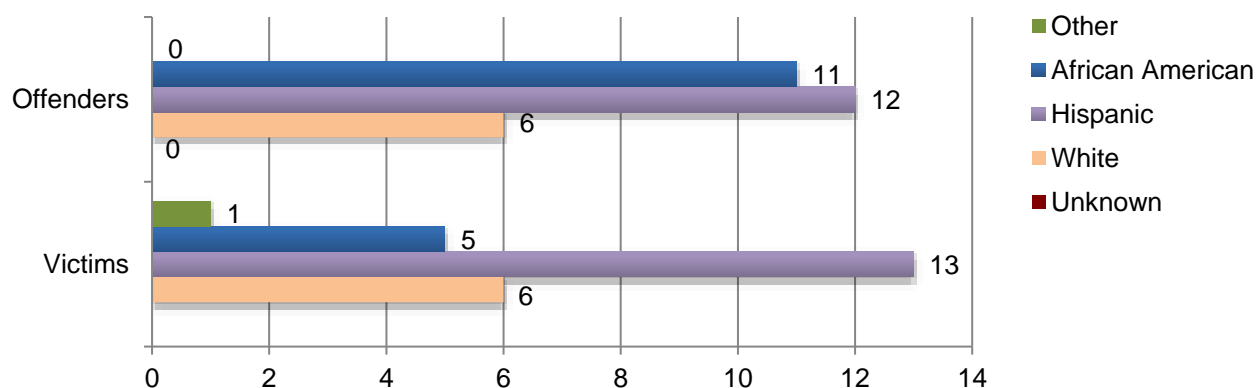
Homicides by Gender

- Twenty males (80%) were victims in 2017.
- In all the cases, the suspect's gender was known and 27 of the 29 suspects were males (93%).

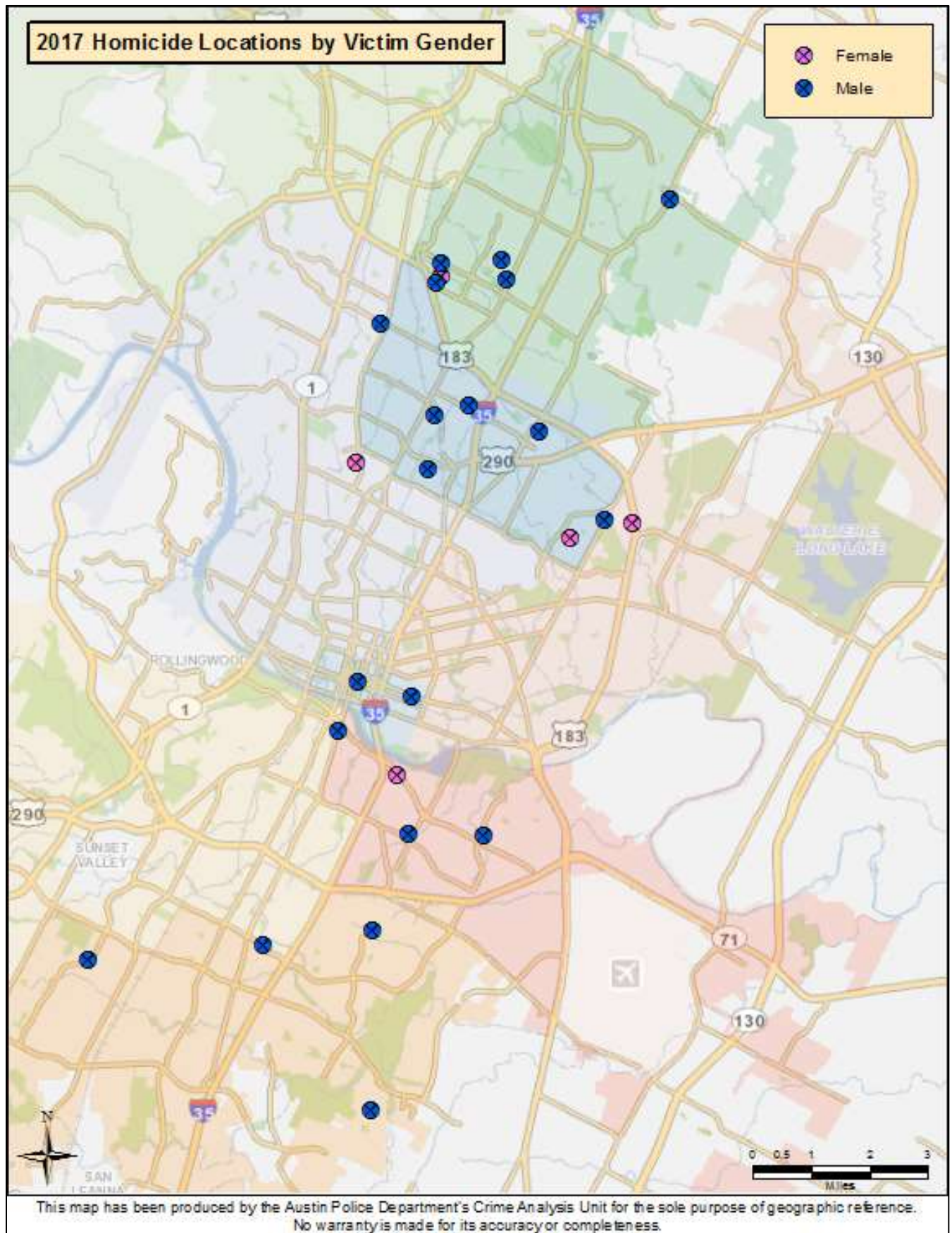


Homicides by Race/Ethnicity

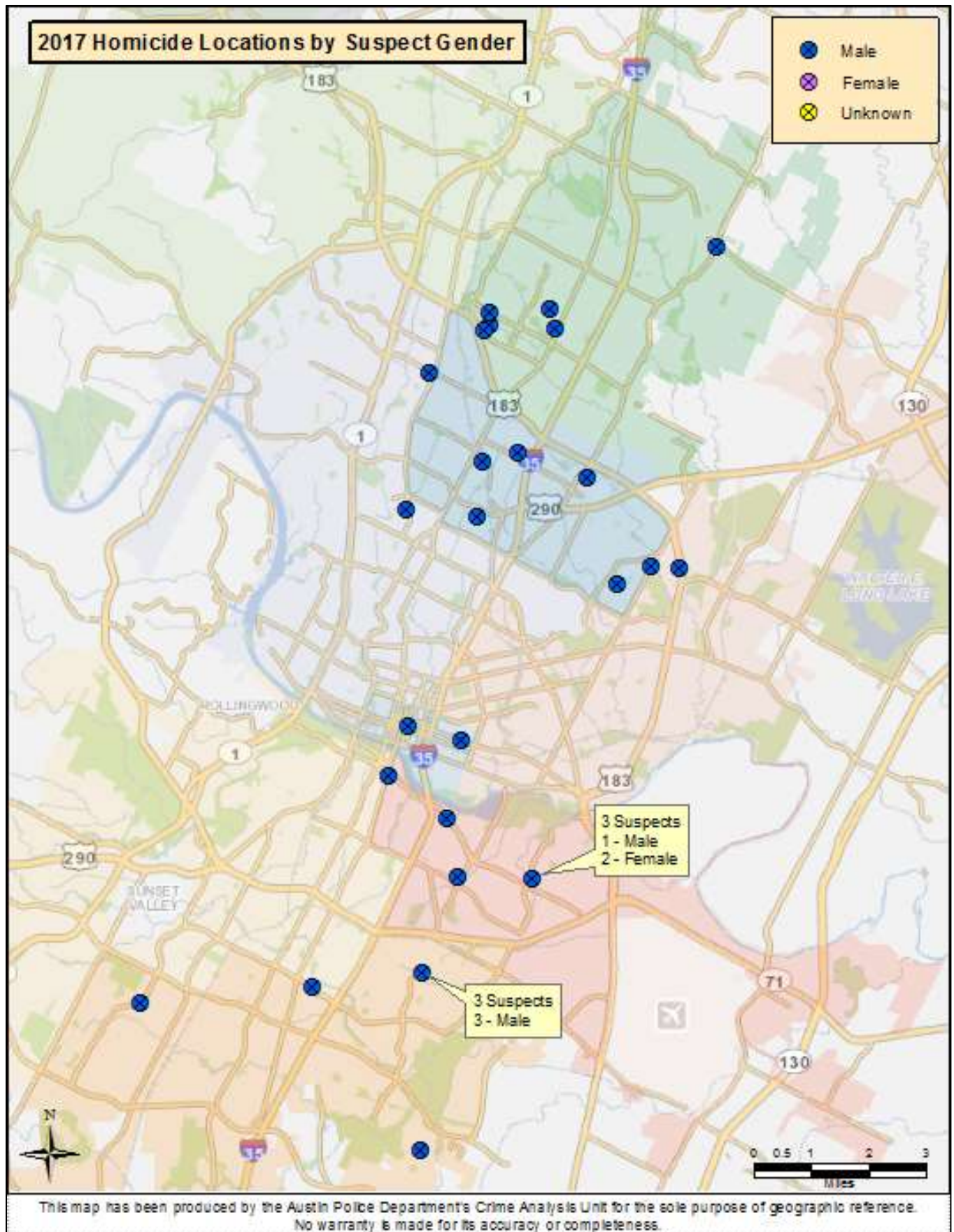
- Thirteen (52%) of the homicide victims in 2017 were Hispanic, six (24%) were White, five (20%) were African American, and one (4%) was Other.
 - Five victims were Mexican Nationals, one was from Cuba, and one was from Iran.
- In all the cases, the suspect's race/ethnicity was known - 12 (41%) of the homicide suspects were Hispanic, 11 (38%) were African American, and six (21%) were White.
 - Three suspects were Mexican Nationals, one was from Guatemala, and one was from Honduras.
- Victim and suspect demographics indicate that for 2017 African Americans are over-represented as victims (20%) and as suspects (38%) of homicides. According to 2010 census data, African Americans account for 8.1% of the overall Austin population.
- Victim and suspect demographics indicate that for 2017 Hispanics are over-represented as victims (52%) and as suspects (41%) of homicides. According to 2010 census data, Hispanics account for 35.1% of the overall Austin population.



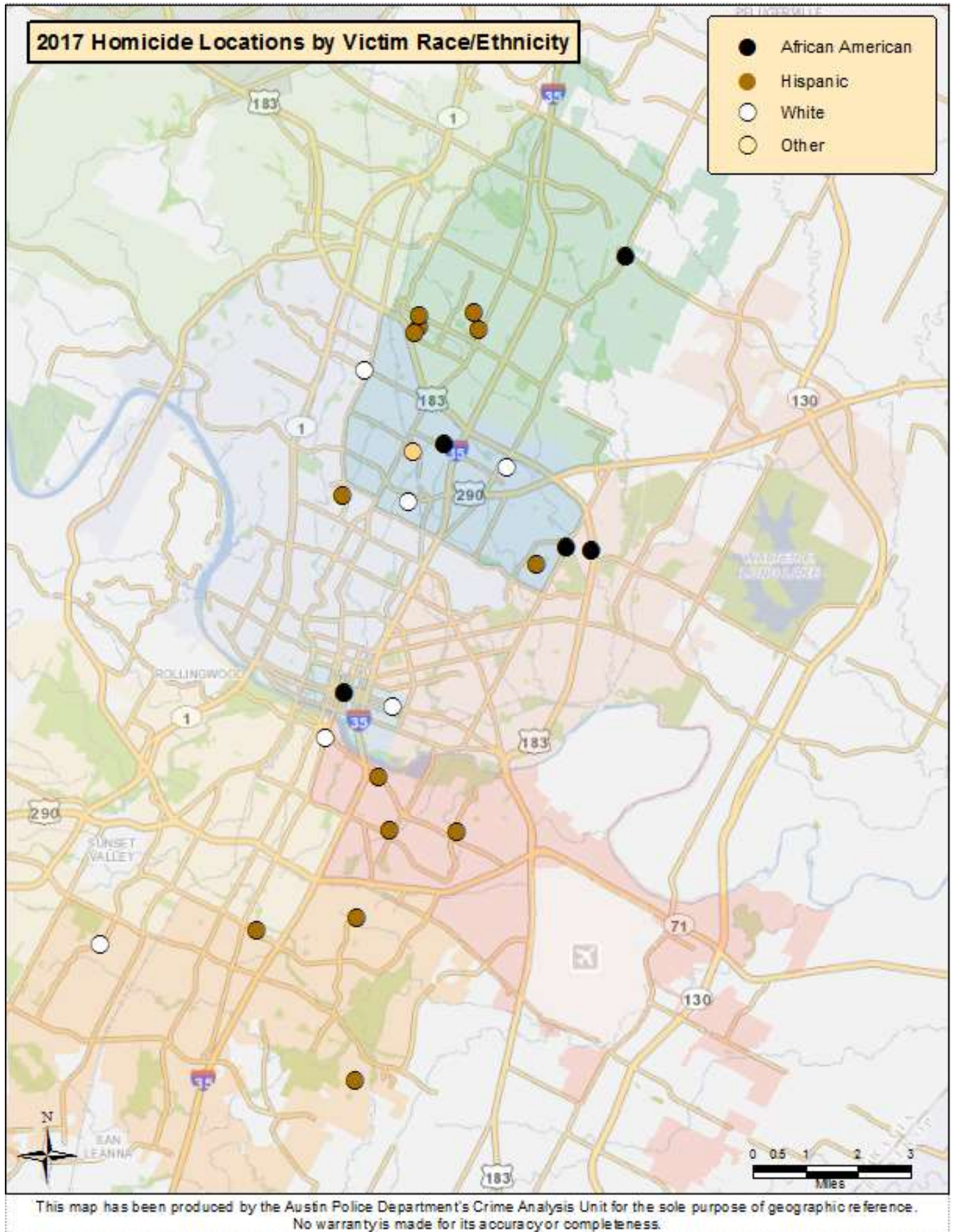
Homicides by Victim Gender – Point Map



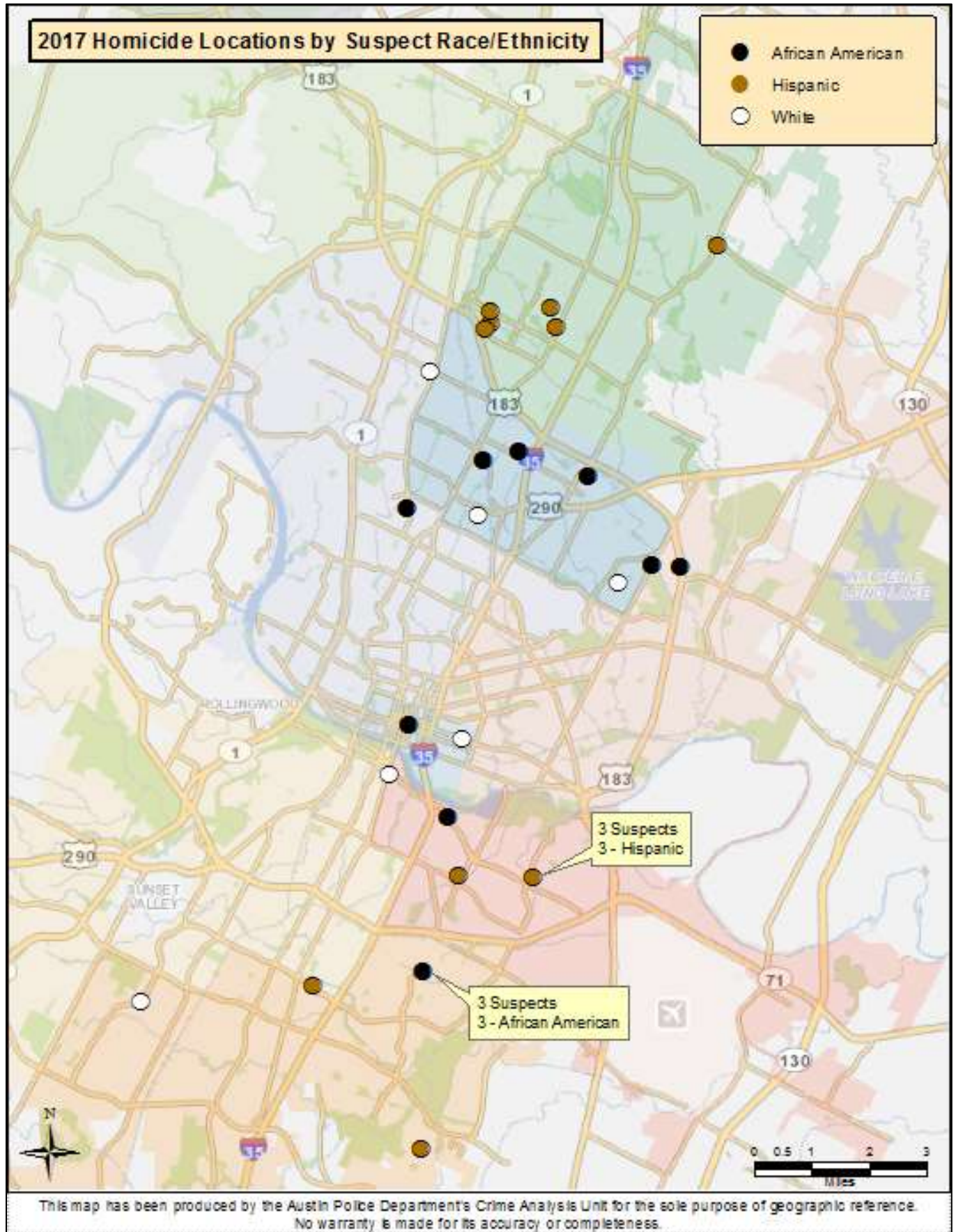
Homicides by Suspect Gender – Point Map



Homicides by Victim Race/Ethnicity – Point Map

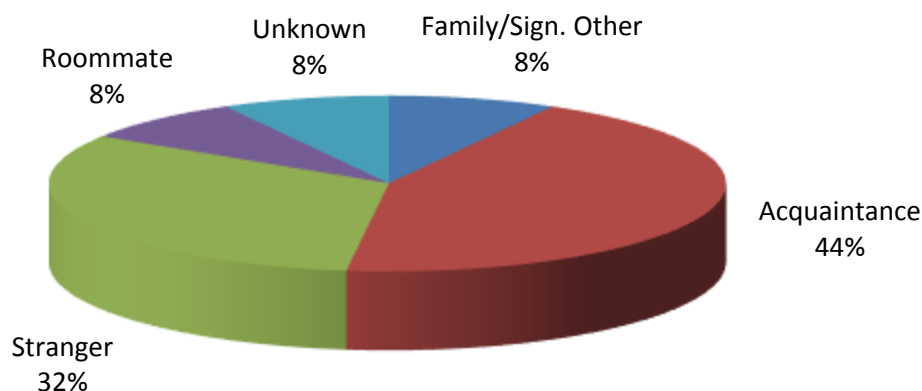


Homicides by Suspect Race/Ethnicity – Point Map



Relationship between Victim and Suspect

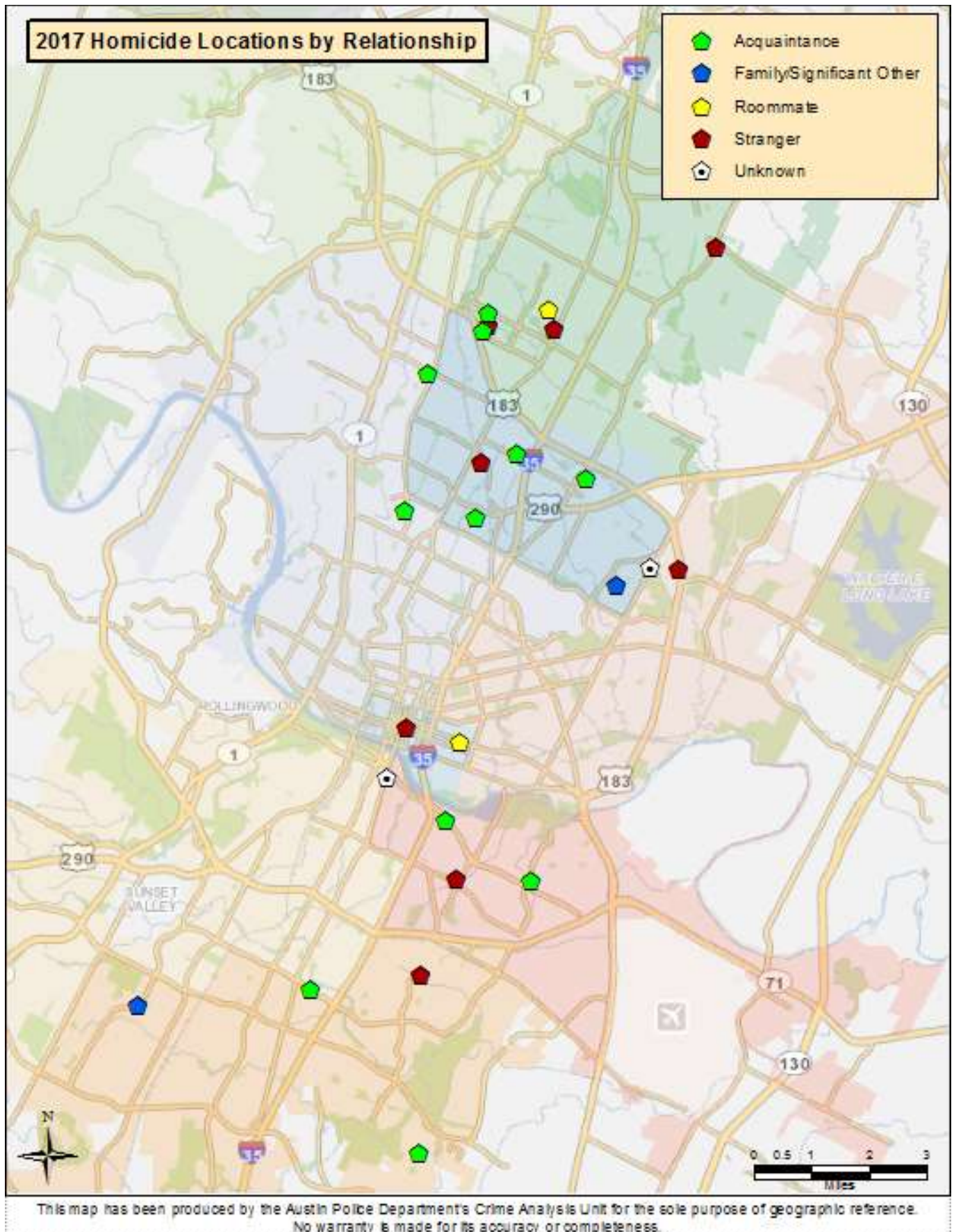
- The relationship between victim and suspect(s) was established in 23 of the 25 murders in 2017, while the relationship was undetermined in two (8%) murders.
- At least one suspect was an acquaintance in 11 murders (44%).
- The suspect was a family member or significant other in two cases (8%).
- The suspect was a roommate in two cases (8%).
- Eight murders of these 25 murders (32%) were considered stranger-on-stranger murders.
 - These murders include cases in which the victim was chosen at random as well as cases in which the victim and suspect were brought together by a location (such as a bar or parking lot) or an activity (such as buying drugs, prostitution, or gambling).
 - As of May 3, 2018, all of the stranger-on-stranger murders have been solved – seven have been cleared by arrest and one has a warrant issued.
 - None are believed to be related or committed by the same suspect(s).



Miscellaneous Victim and Suspect Information

- At least four victims were transients. At least four of the known suspects were transients.
- At least two victims were possibly gang members. At least three suspects were possibly gang members.
- Five of the murder victims were believed to be drug dealers and at least three suspects are believed to be drug dealers.
- Two of the homicides were murder/suicides.
- Two of the homicides involved multiple suspects.
- One case was a result of road rage.
- One case is believed to be a murder for hire.

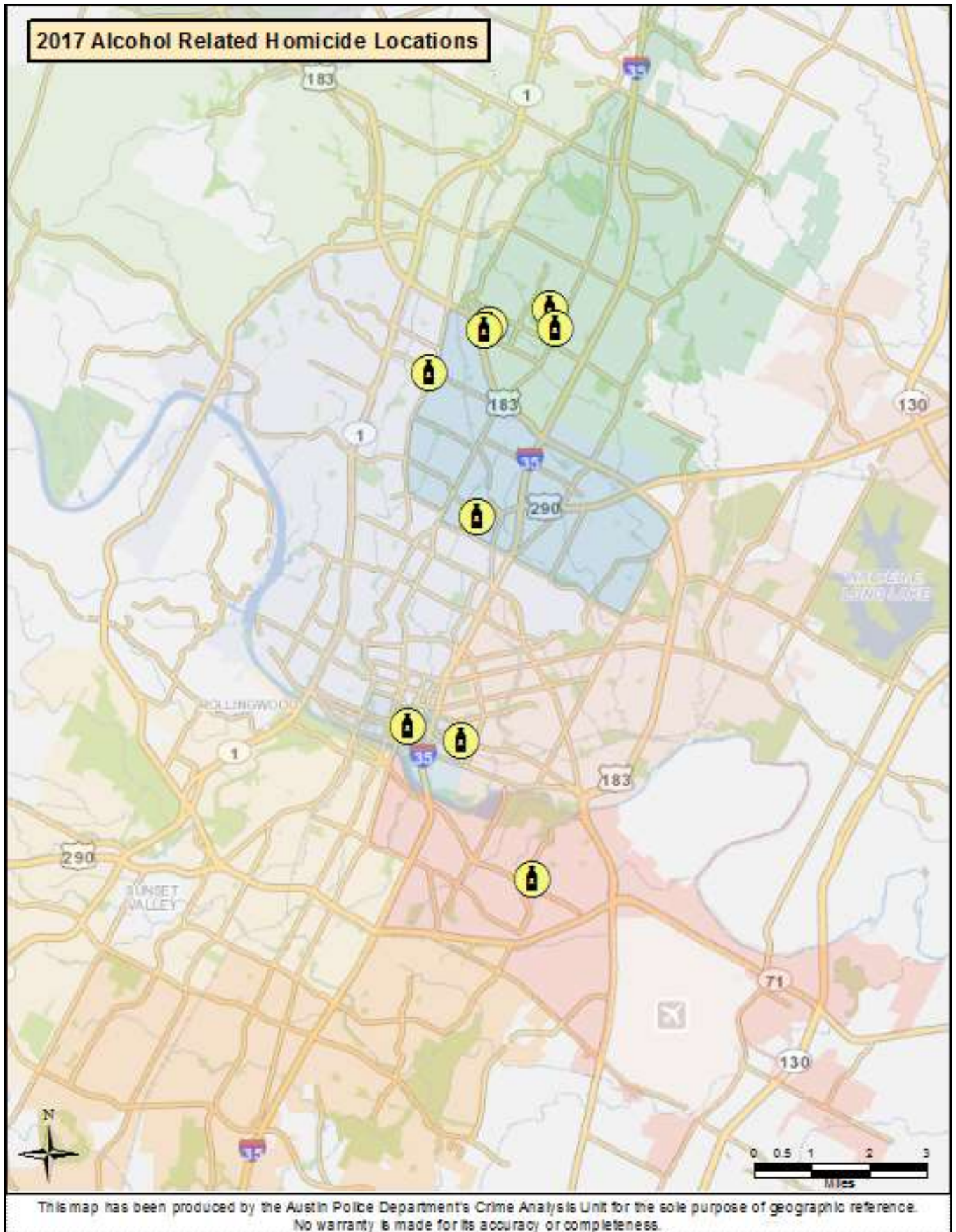
Homicides by Relationship – Point Map



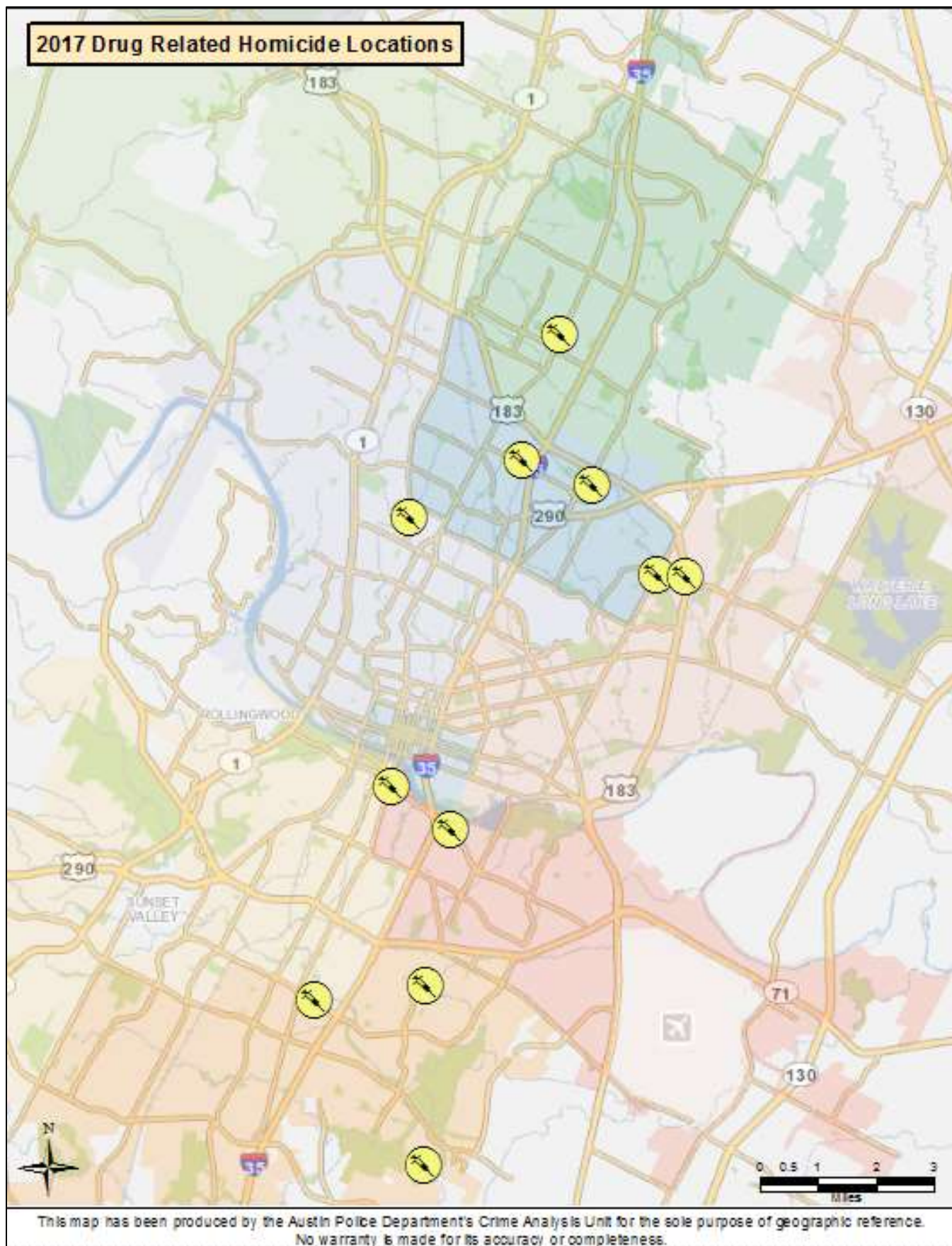
Family Violence, Contributing Factors, Offense Classification

- Four (16%) of the murders met the Texas Penal Code & Family Code definition for family violence.
 - One was committed by an intimate partner or ex-partner.
 - One was committed by a family member.
 - Two were committed by roommates.
- Alcohol was believed to be a contributing factor in 9 (36%) of the homicides.
- Drugs were believed to be a contributing factor in 11 (44%) of the homicides.
- Robbery was believed to be a contributing factor in five (20%) of the homicides.
- Prostitution was believed to be a contributing factor in one (4%) of the homicides.
- Road rage was believed to be a contributing factor in one (4%) of the homicides.
- Two (8%) of the homicides were documented as Capital Murder. A homicide is designated as Capital Murder if it includes the commission of an additional felony at the time of the murder (these two cases involved robbery), the murder of a law enforcement officer, the murder of more than one victim, or the murder of an individual under six years of age.
- Two (8%) of the homicides were documented as Manslaughter. A person commits Manslaughter if he/she recklessly causes the death of an individual. One of these two cases involved a gun that was handled recklessly. The other case involved a victim being punched so hard he fell and hit his head.

Alcohol Related Homicides – Point Map



Drug Related Homicides – Point Map



Homicide Clearance Rate

- As of May 3, 2018, 20 of the 25 murders in 2017 have been cleared (by arrest or exceptionally), for an 80% clearance rate. However, 23 of these 25 murders (92%) have been solved.
 - Nineteen of the 25 cases were cleared during 2017. One was cleared in February 2018.
 - Of the five murders in 2017 that are considered “not cleared”:
 - A warrant for the suspect in three of the cases has been issued, but the suspect has not been arrested yet – all three are believed to have fled to Mexico.
 - Two of the murders are not solved. The suspect(s) have not been identified.
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice’s *Crime in the United States 2016*:
 - The clearance rate for cities with populations between 500,000 and 999,999 was 49.3%. **This includes all homicide cases that were cleared during 2016 regardless of when the murder occurred.**
 - The rate for all of the United States was 59.4%.
- According to the Texas Department of Public Safety’s *2016 Crime in Texas Report*, the clearance rate for all of Texas was 66.7%.
- As of May 3, 2018 (in addition to the nineteen 2017 murders that were cleared during 2017), seven cases from previous years were also cleared - for a total of 26 murder cases cleared during 2017. Based on 25 murders occurring in 2017 and 26 murder cases being cleared during 2017 – 104% is the total UCR clearance rate for homicide cases for Austin in 2017.
 - One 2016 murder case was cleared by arrest in January of 2017.
 - Three 2015 murder cases were cleared during 2017:
 - Two were cleared by the arrest of the suspect(s) – one case in March and one case in November.
 - One case was cleared exceptionally in June which involved a victim who died in 2015 from injuries he sustained from a 2004 shooting. The suspect was already in custody on other charges.
 - One 2014 murder case was cleared by arrest in November of 2017.
 - One 2013 murder case was cleared by arrest in October of 2017.
 - One 1983 murder case was cleared by arrest in January of 2017.

Homicides by Clearance Status – Point Map

