
An Analysis of Austin, Texas Homicide: Offenses, Victims, and Suspects in 2015

Prepared by the Austin Police Department
Crime Analysis Unit
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Introduction

The following data reflects all non-negligent murder cases reported to the Austin Police Department for 2015. Negligent homicides 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 2014*, Texas Department of Public Safety's *2014 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 2015 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 2014 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 2015 homicide data as of March 25, 2016.

- There were 23 homicides in Austin in 2015 for a rate of 2.6 murders per 100,000 population.
- The most active months for murder were November with six murders and April and December with four murders each.
- Five (22%) homicides occurred in Edward sector and four (17%) occurred in Frank sector and four (17%) occurred in Ida sector. These three sectors account for a total of 56% of 2015's homicides.
- Twelve (52%) of the homicides occurred in or at a single-family residence or apartment.
- A gun was used in 11 cases (48%).
- Twelve (52%) of the murders involved issues stemming from an argument or were revenge for an earlier issue.
- Five (22%) of the cases met the requirements for family violence.
- A total of 23 victims and 24 suspects were documented for the 2015 murders.
- Twelve victims (52%) were between the ages of 20 and 39.
- Fourteen suspects (61%) were between the ages of 20 and 39.
- Ten (43%) of the homicide victims in 2015 were White, eight (35%) were African American, and five (22%) were Hispanic.
- Ten (42%) of the known homicide suspects were Hispanic, seven (29%) were White, and six (25%) suspects were African American.
- At least one suspect was an acquaintance or roommate in 13 of the 23 murders (56%). The suspect was a family member or significant other in five cases (22%).
- Three murders were considered stranger-on-stranger murders (13%).
 - 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 hotel) or an activity (such as buying drugs or gambling).
 - As of March 25, 2016, two of the three stranger-on-stranger murders have been cleared.
 - None are believed to be related or committed by the same suspect(s).
- One of the homicides was a murder/suicide.
- As of March 25, 2016, 17 of the 23 2015 murders have been cleared (by arrest or exceptionally), for a 74% clearance rate.
 - Of the 2015 cases that are considered "not cleared":
 - One of the murders is not solved. The suspect(s) has not been identified.
 - A warrant for the suspect in one of the 2015 cases has been issued, but the suspect has not been arrested yet.
 - In four murders, the suspect(s) are known but more investigation is required before a warrant can be issued.

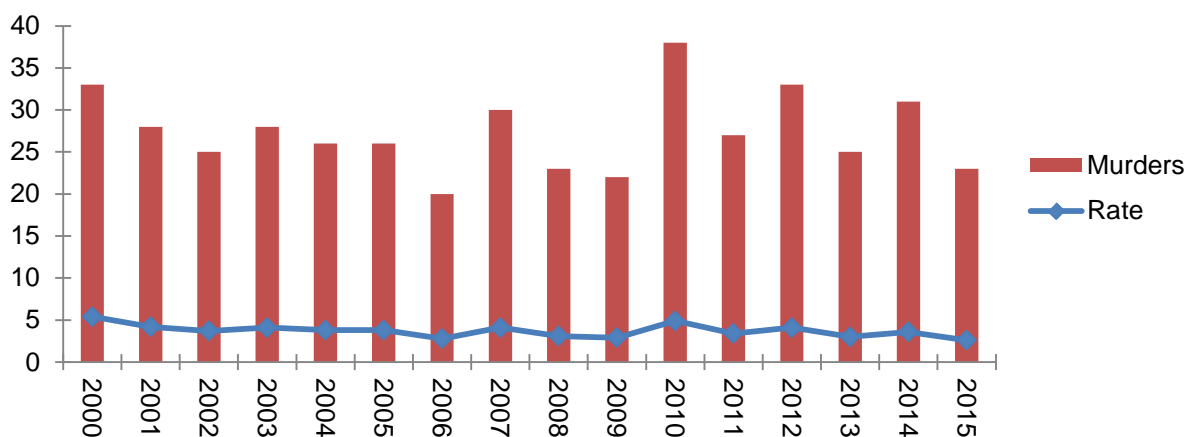
Statistical Representation

Homicide Data

- The analysis contained in this report was based on 2015 homicide data as of March 25, 2016. Only intentional homicides (non-negligent homicides) were included in the analysis.

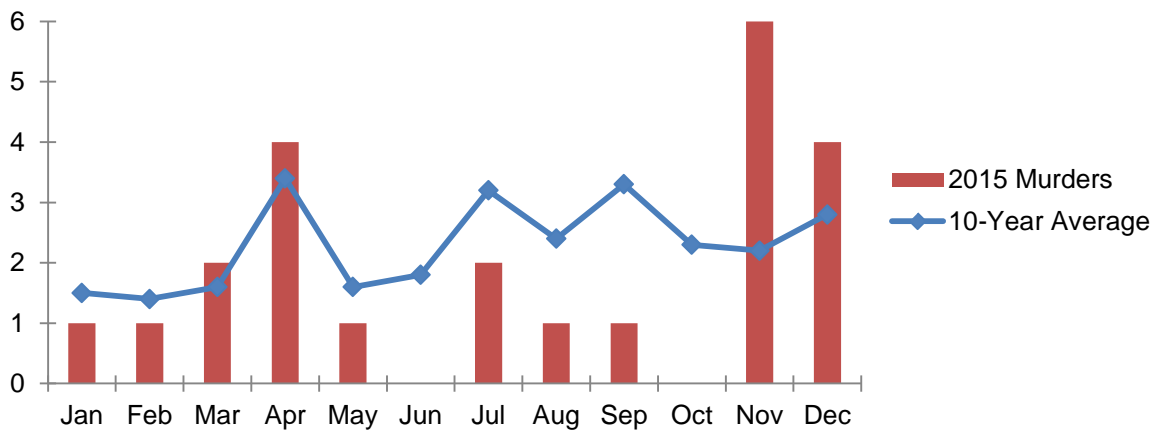
Homicide Totals by Year

- There were 23 homicides documented in Austin, Texas in 2015. Using a population estimate of 888,204, this calculates to a rate of 2.6 murders per 100,000 population.
- In 2014, there were 31 homicides in Austin, 3.6 murders per 100,000 population.
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice's *Crime in the United States 2014* report:
 - The homicide rate for cities with populations between 500,000 and 999,999 was 11.3 per 100,000 population.
 - The rate for the South Region was 5.5 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 5.2 per 100,000 population.
 - The rate for all of the United States was 4.5 per 100,000 population.
- According to the Texas Department of Public Safety's *2014 Crime in Texas Report*, the homicide rate for all of Texas was 4.4 per 100,000 population.



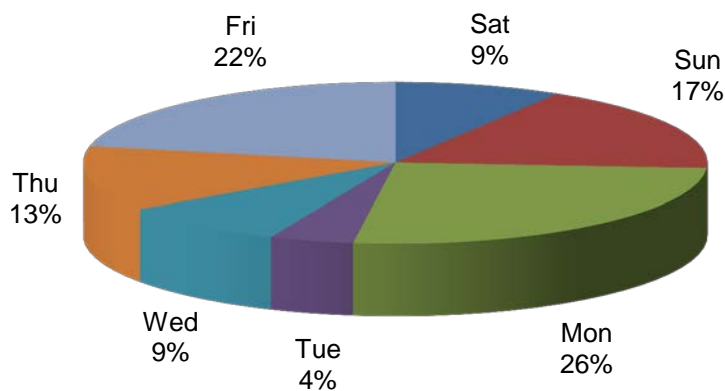
Homicide Totals by Month

- 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 November with six murders and April and December with four murders each.
- The least active months were June and October with zero murders each.



Homicides by Day of the Week

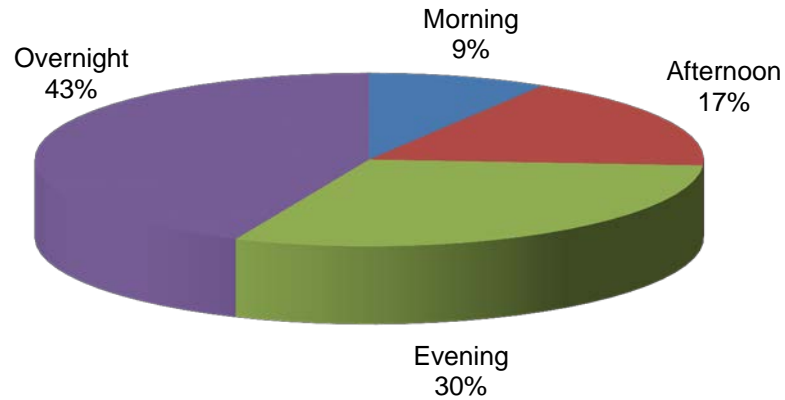
- Six (26%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered on a Monday and five homicides (22%) occurred or were discovered on a Friday.
- Four (17%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered on a Sunday.



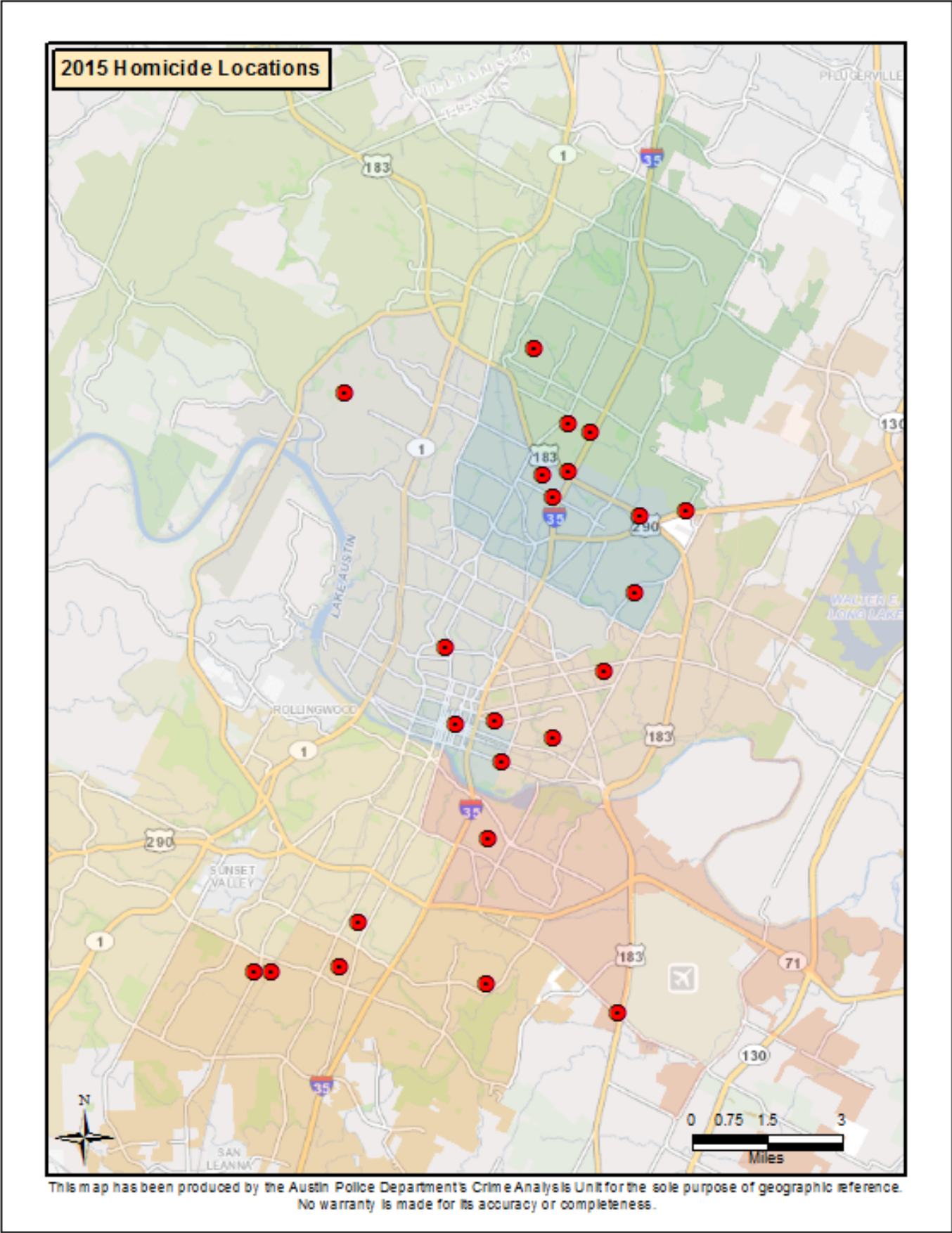
Homicides by Time of the Day

- Ten (43%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered during overnight hours.
- Seven (30%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered during evening 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.

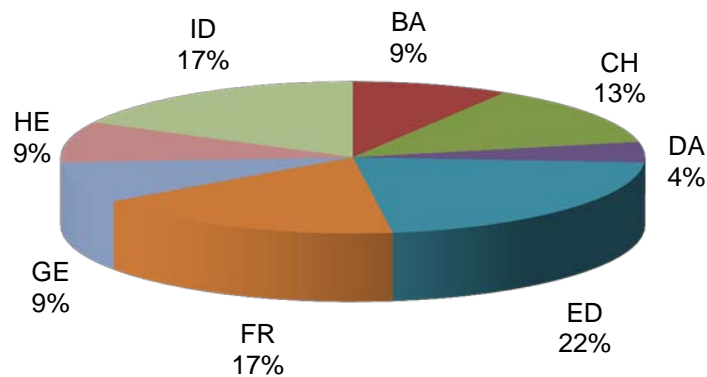


Homicides by Location – Point Map



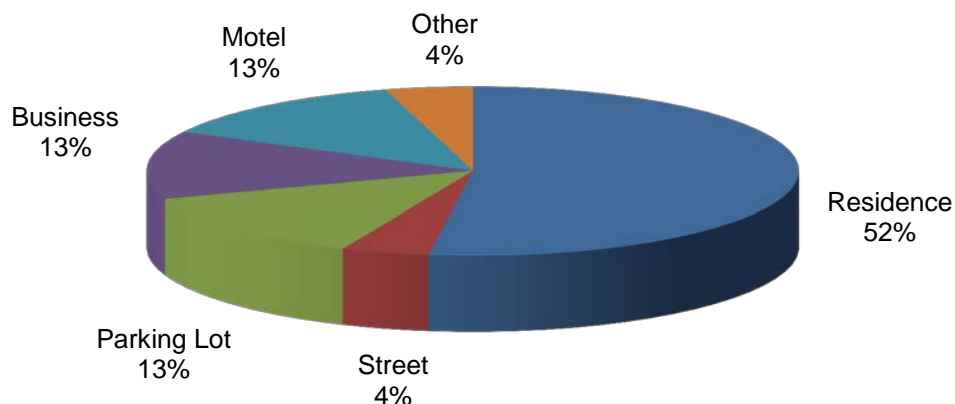
Homicides by Area Command

- Five (22%) homicides occurred in Edward sector and four (17%) occurred in Ida sector and four (17%) occurred in Frank sector. These three sectors account for a total of 56% of 2015's homicides.
- No murders occurred in Adam sector.



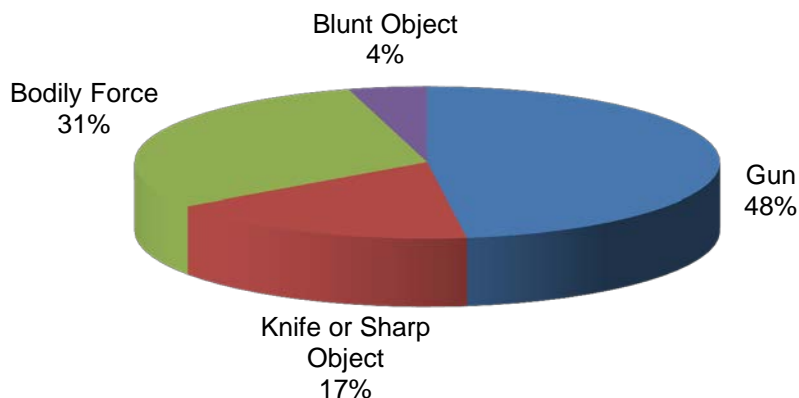
Homicides by Type of Premise

- Twelve (52%) of the homicides occurred in or at a single-family residence or apartment. Of those, ten occurred inside the residence or apartment.
- Three homicides (13%) occurred outside a business, three (13%) occurred at a motel, and three (13%) occurred in a parking lot.
- "Other" includes a field.



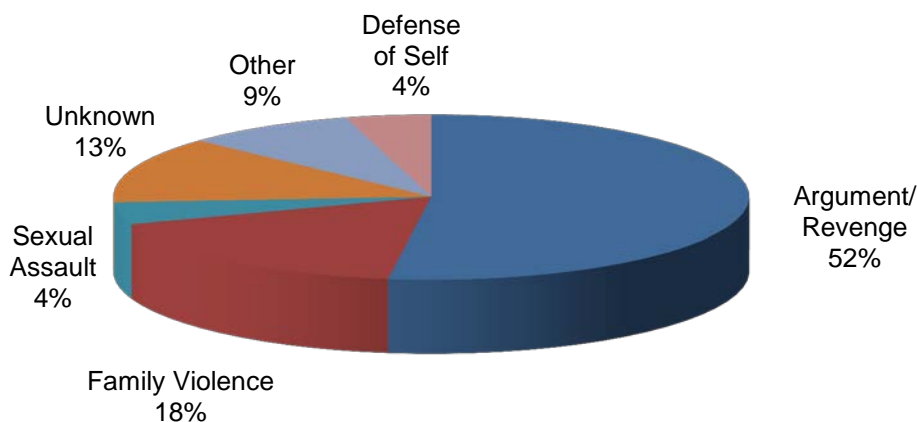
Types of Weapons Used

- A gun was used in 11 of the 23 murders, accounting for 48% of the weapon types used in the 2015 murders.
- A knife or a sharp object was used in four cases (17%).



Homicide Motives

- Twelve (52%) of the murders involved issues stemming from an argument or were revenge for an earlier issue.
- Five of the cases met the technical requirements for family violence.
 - Four (18%) of these five family violence murders were motivated by issues stemming from a close family, intimate partner, or ex-partner relationship but one of these cases was a murder-suicide involving an elderly married couple where the husband's motive was to end his wife's suffering.
 - Four of these cases involved intimate partners.
- One homicide (3%) was likely committed in defense of self or others.
- "Other" motives include the elderly couple murder-suicide and financial gain.

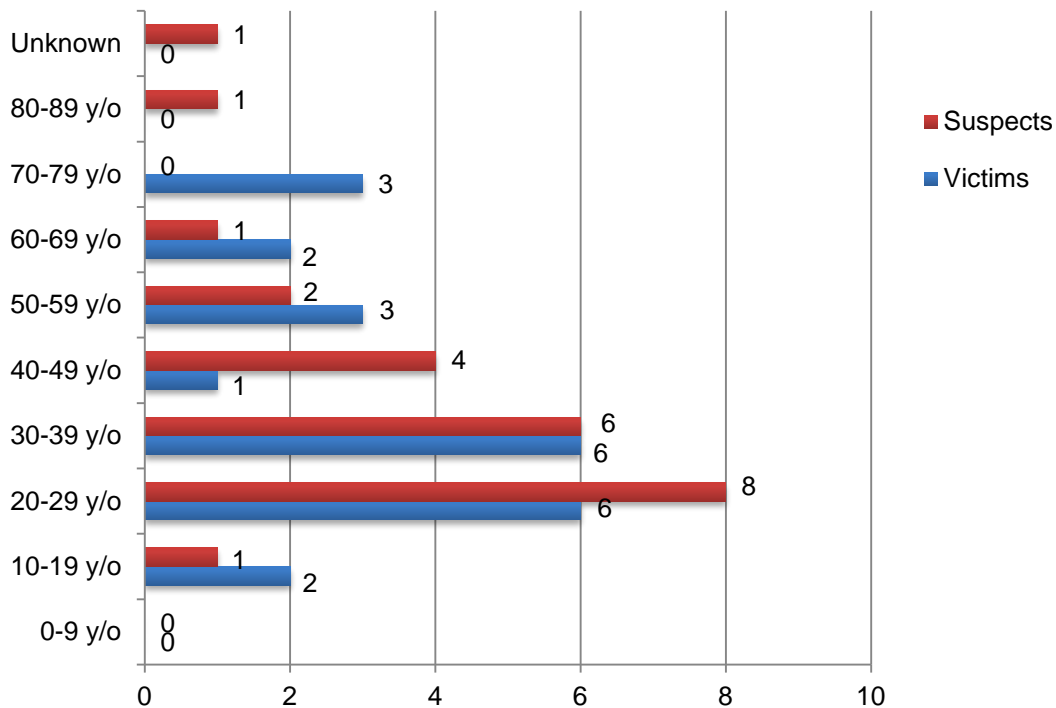


Victims & Suspects

- A total of 23 victims and 24 suspects were documented for the 2015 murders.

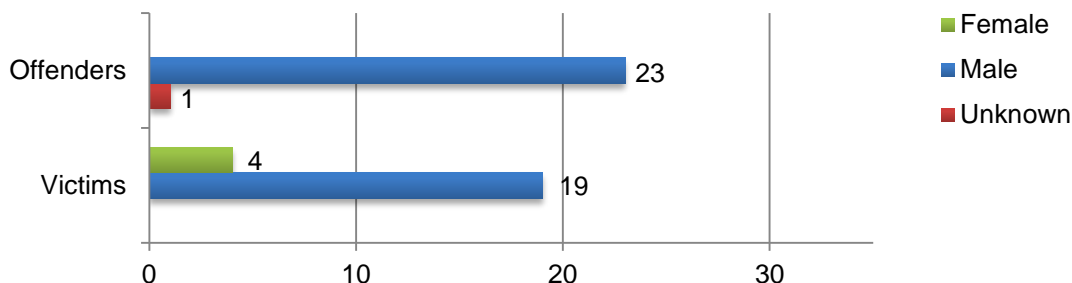
Homicides by Age

- The youngest victim was 16 years old and the oldest was 79 years old, with 12 of the victims (52%) falling between the ages of 20 and 39.
- In the cases in which the suspect's age was known, the youngest suspect was 18 years old and the oldest was 82 years old, with 14 of the suspects (61%) falling between the ages of 20 and 39.
- One case involved an assault in 2004 in which the victim was 21 years old at the time. The victim did not die until 2015 at the age of 32. The victim's age at the time of his death was used for analysis. The suspect was 17 at the time of the assault but 28 years old when the victim died in 2015. His age at the time of the victim's death was used for analysis.



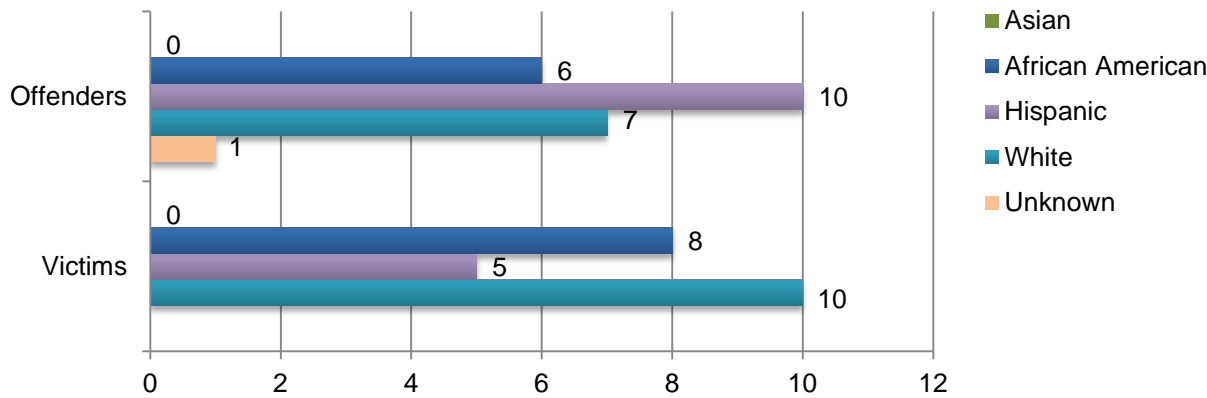
Homicides by Gender

- Nineteen males (83%) were victims in 2015.
- In the cases in which the suspect's gender was known, 23 of the 24 suspects were males (96%).



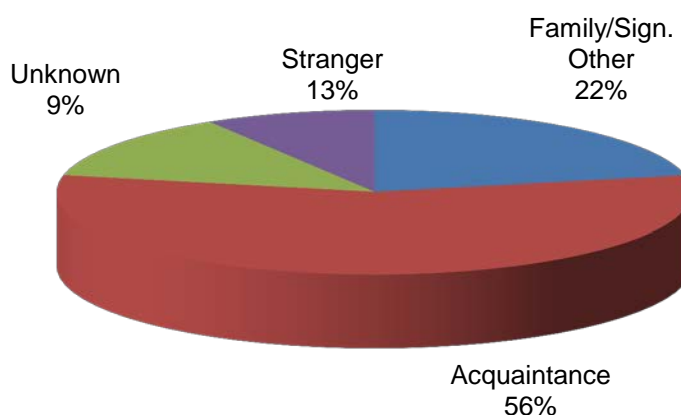
Homicides by Race/Ethnicity

- Ten (43%) of the homicide victims in 2015 were White, eight (35%) were African American, and five (22%) were Hispanic.
 - Two victims were Mexican Nationals.
- In the cases in which the suspect's race/ethnicity was known, ten (42%) of the homicide suspects were Hispanic, seven (29%) were White, and six (25%) were African American.
 - Two suspects were Mexican Nationals, one was from El Salvador, one was from Honduras, and one was from Nicaragua.
- Victim and suspect demographics indicate that for 2015 African Americans are over-represented as victims (35%) and as suspects (25%) 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 2015 Hispanics are under-represented as victims (22%) of homicides and are over-represented as suspects (42%) of homicides. According to 2010 census data, Hispanics account for 35.1% of the overall Austin population.



Relationship between Victim and Suspect

- The relationship between victim and suspect(s) was established in 21 murders, while the relationship was undetermined in two (9%) murders.
- At least one suspect was an acquaintance in 13 murders (56%).
 - In three of these murders the suspect was a roommate or recent ex-roommate in a boarding house type situation.
- The suspect was a family member or significant other in five cases (22%).
- Three murders were considered stranger-on-stranger murders (13%).
 - 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 hotel) or an activity (such as buying drugs or gambling.)
 - As of March 25, 2016, all of the stranger-on-stranger murders have been solved – two have been cleared and one has a suspect identified.
 - None are believed to be related or committed by the same suspect(s).



Miscellaneous Victim and Suspect Information

- Five victims were transients. Two of the known suspects were transients.
- Four victims were possibly gang members. At least three suspects were possibly gang members.
- Three of the murder victims were believed to be drug dealers and three suspects are believed to be drug dealers.
- One of the homicides was a murder/suicide.
- One homicide involved multiple suspects.
- One case involved a victim who was assaulted in 2004 and died in 2015.

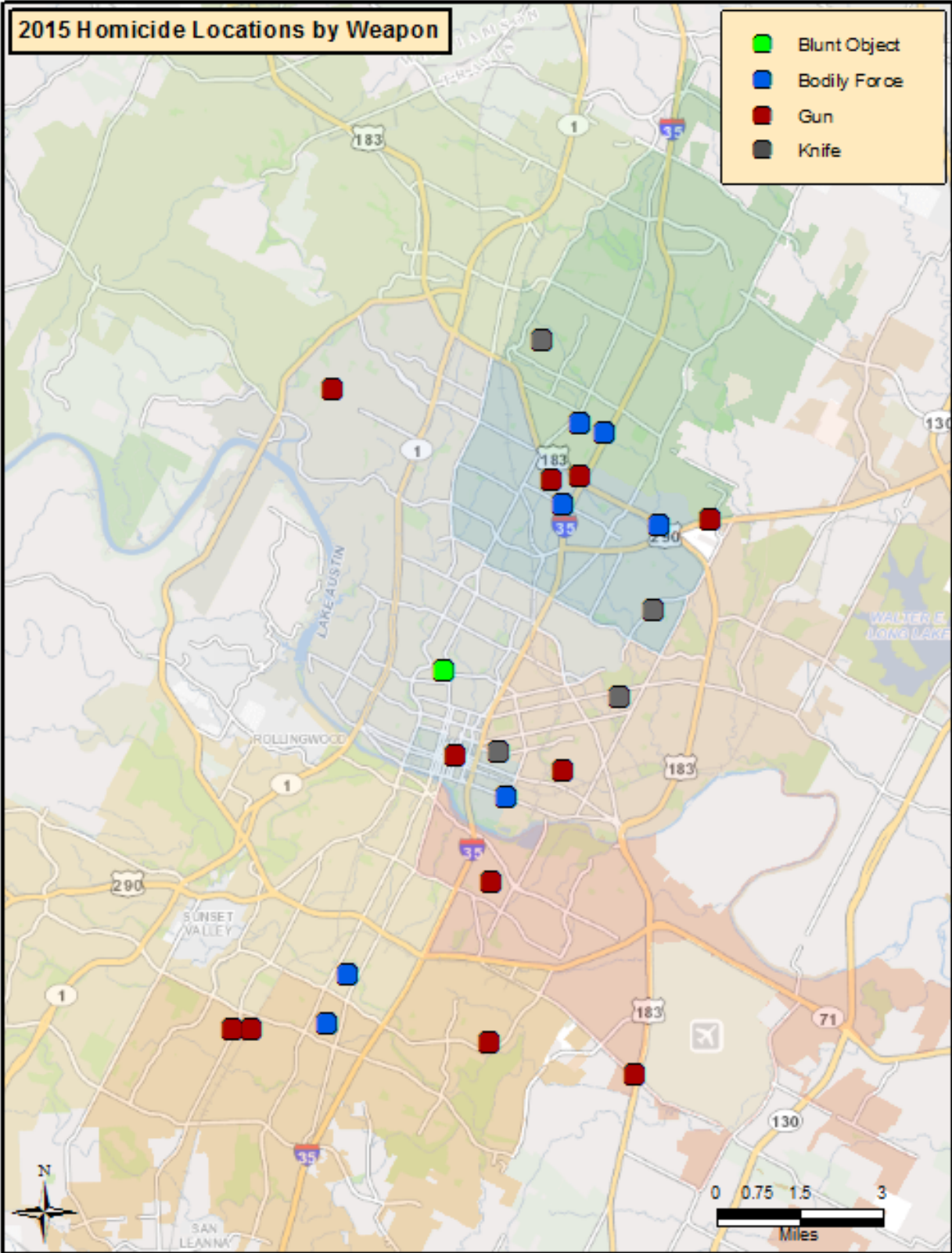
Family Violence, Contributing Factors, Offense Classification

- Five (22%) of the murders met the Texas Penal Code & Family Code definition for family violence.
 - Four were committed by intimate partners or ex-partners.
 - One was committed by a family member.
- Alcohol was believed to be a contributing factor in seven (30%) of the homicides.
- Drugs were believed to be a contributing factor in nine (39%) of the homicides.
- None of the homicides were documented as Capital Murder, which includes the commission of an additional felony at the time of the murder, 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.
- One (4%) of the homicides was documented as Manslaughter. A person commits Manslaughter if he/she recklessly causes the death of an individual.

Homicide Clearance Rate

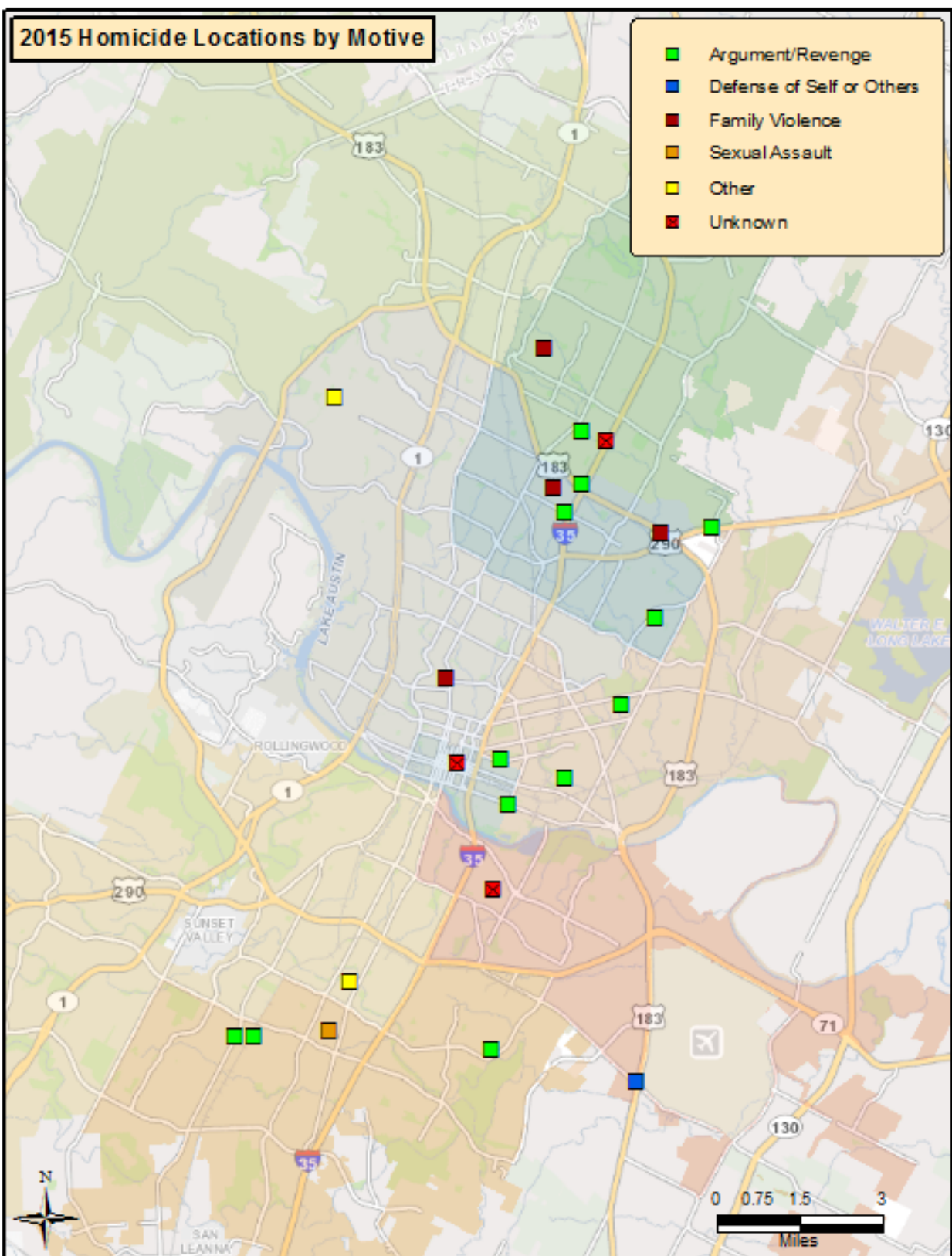
- As of March 25, 2016, 17 of the 23 2015 murders have been cleared (by arrest or exceptionally), for a 74% clearance rate.
 - Fifteen of the 23 cases were cleared during 2015. One was cleared in January 2016 and one in February 2016.
 - Of the six 2015 cases that are considered “not cleared”:
 - One of the murders is not solved. The suspect(s) has not been identified.
 - A warrant for the suspect in one of the 2015 cases has been issued, but the suspect has not been arrested yet.
 - In four murders, the suspect(s) is known but more investigation is required before a warrant can be issued.
 - Five 2014 murder cases were cleared during 2015
 - Four were cleared by the arrest of the suspect(s).
 - One was cleared exceptionally which involved a victim who died in 2014 from injuries he sustained from a 1990 arson.
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice’s *Crime in the United States 2014*:
 - The clearance rate for cities with populations between 500,000 and 999,999 was 56.2%. This includes all homicide cases that were cleared during 2014 regardless of when the murder occurred.
 - The rate for the South Region was 66.5%.
 - The rate for the West South Central sub-region was 67.1%.
 - The rate for all of the United States was 64.5%.
- According to the Texas Department of Public Safety’s *2014 Crime in Texas Report*, the clearance rate for all of Texas was 71.2%.

Other Geographical Views of the Data



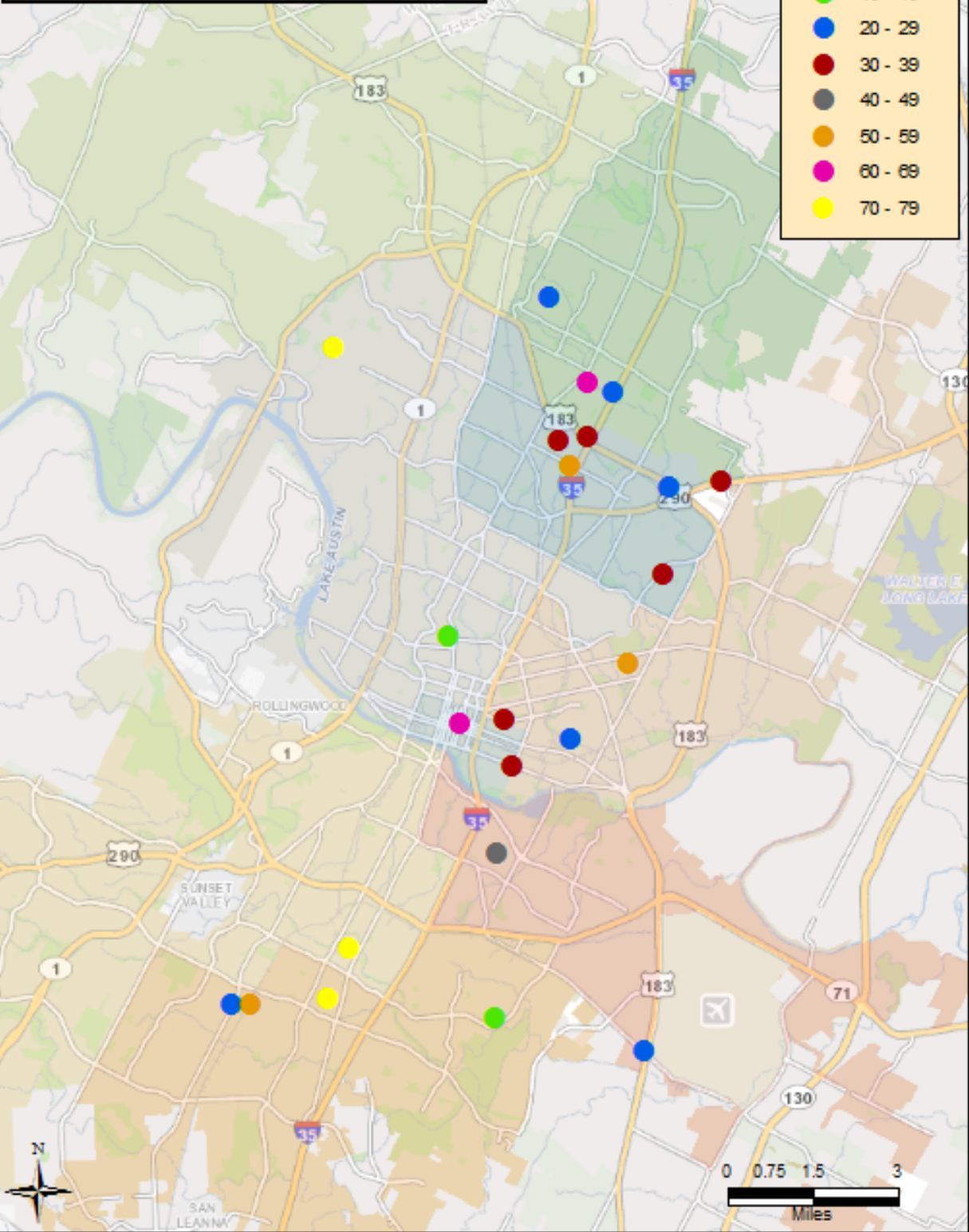
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2015 Homicide Locations by Motive



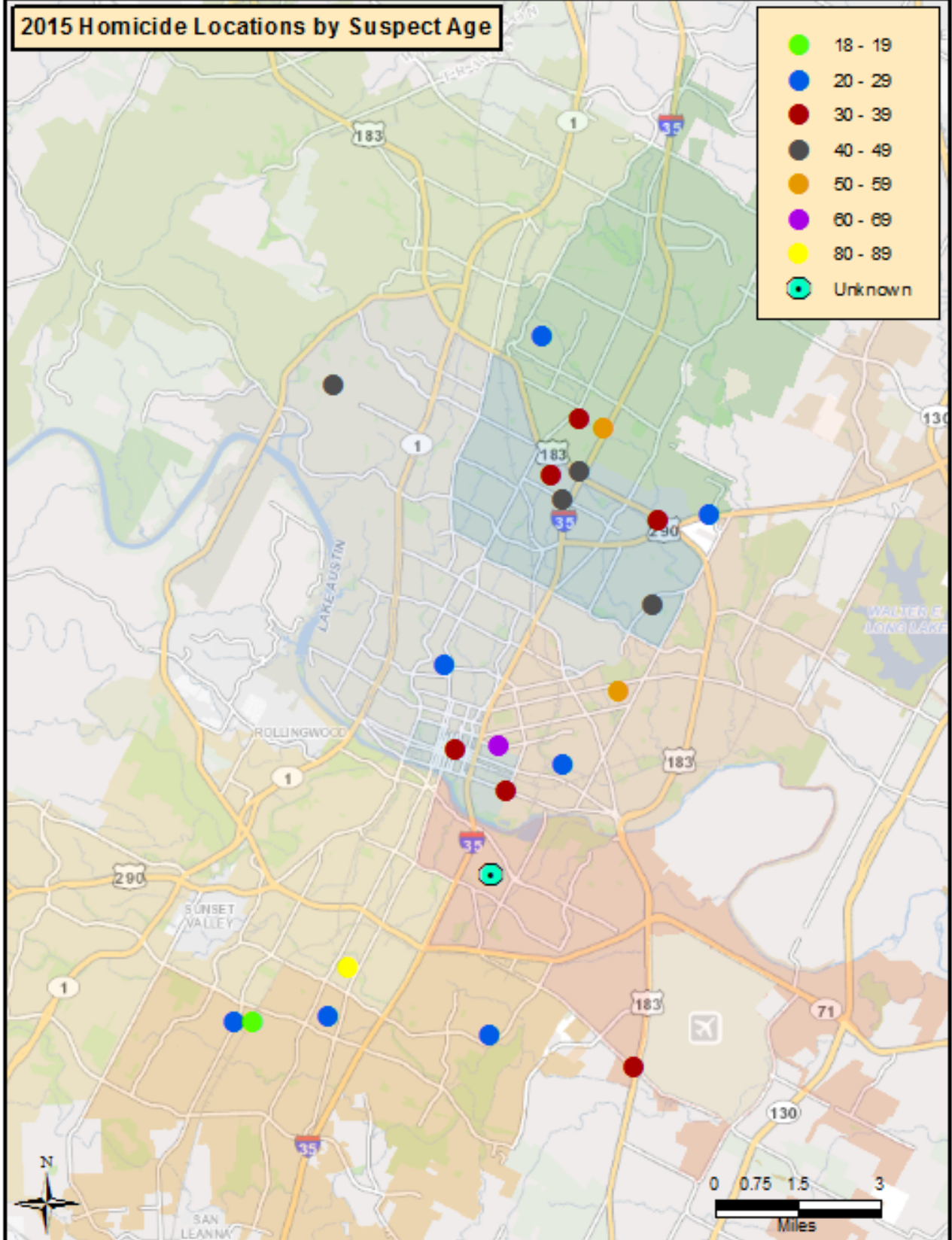
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2015 Homicide Locations by Victim Age



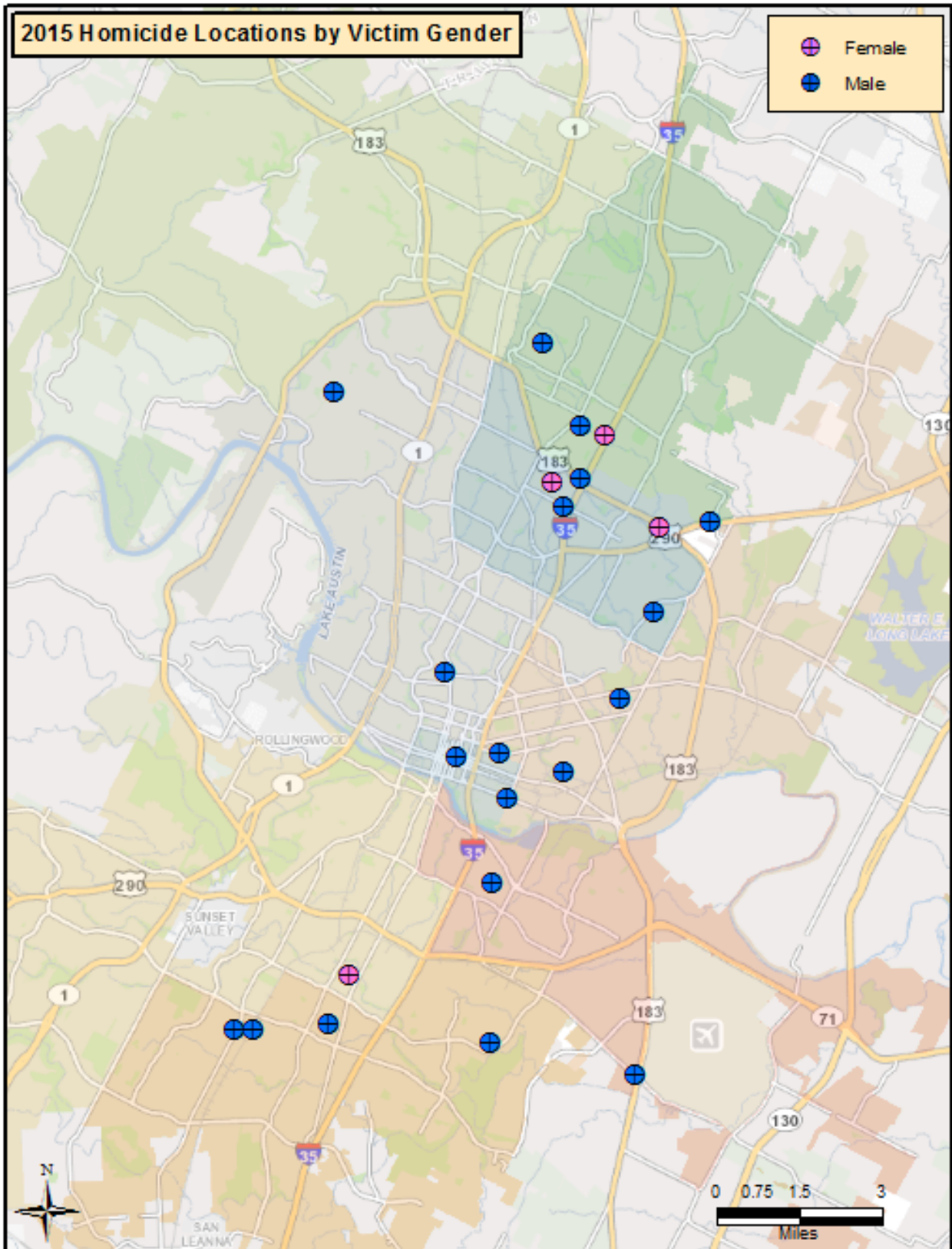
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2015 Homicide Locations by Suspect Age



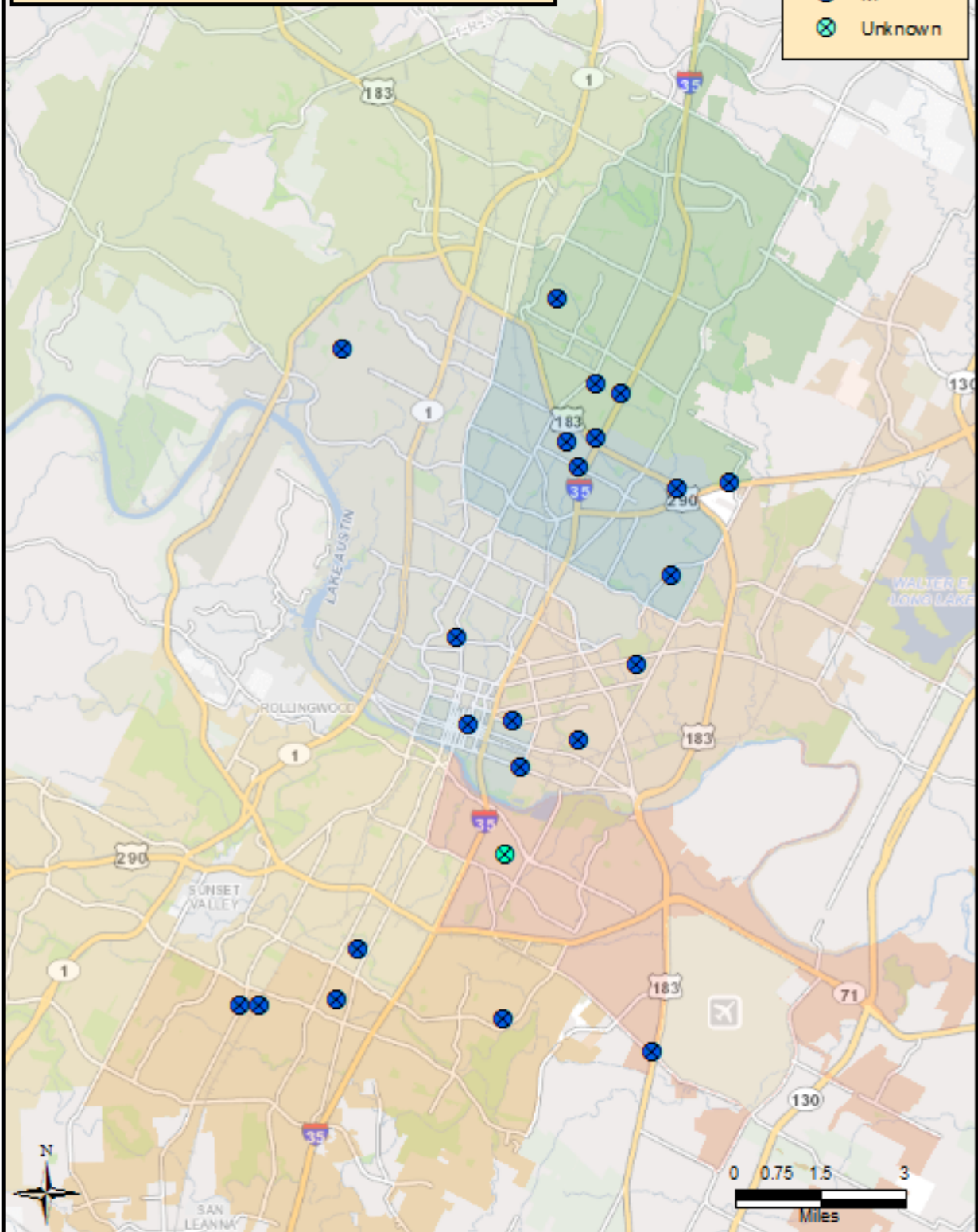
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2015 Homicide Locations by Victim Gender



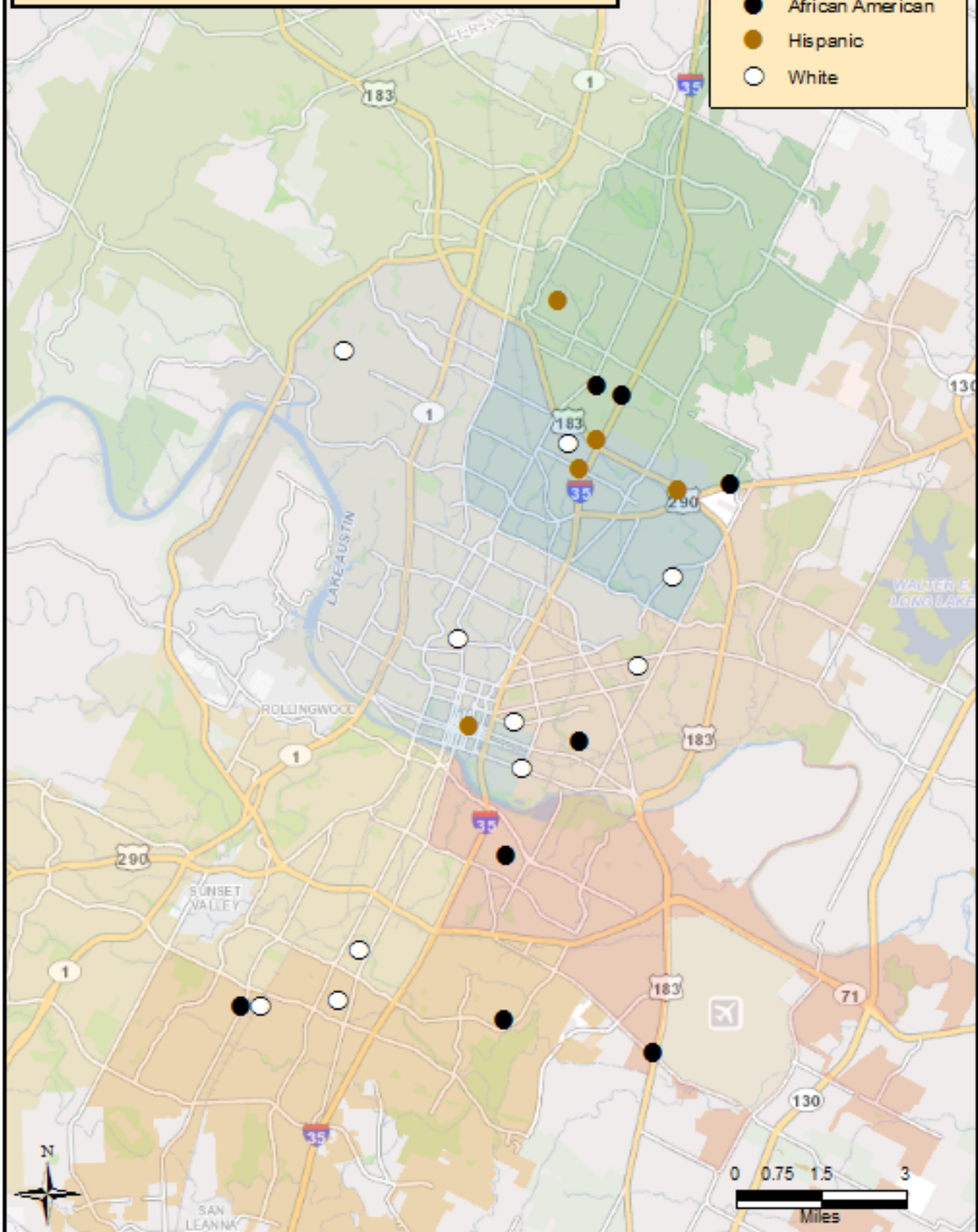
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2015 Homicide Locations by Suspect Gender



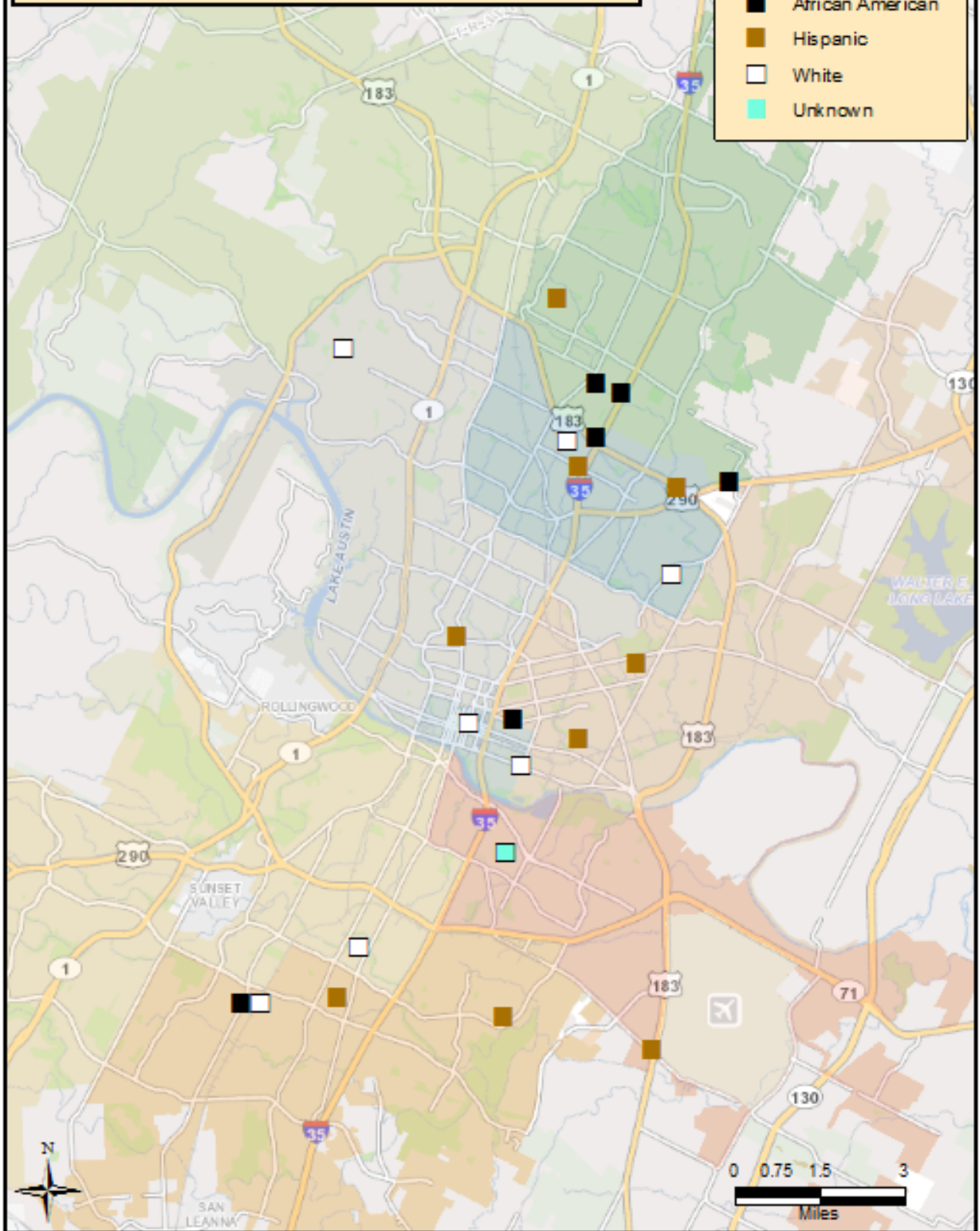
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2015 Homicide Locations by Victim Race/Ethnicity



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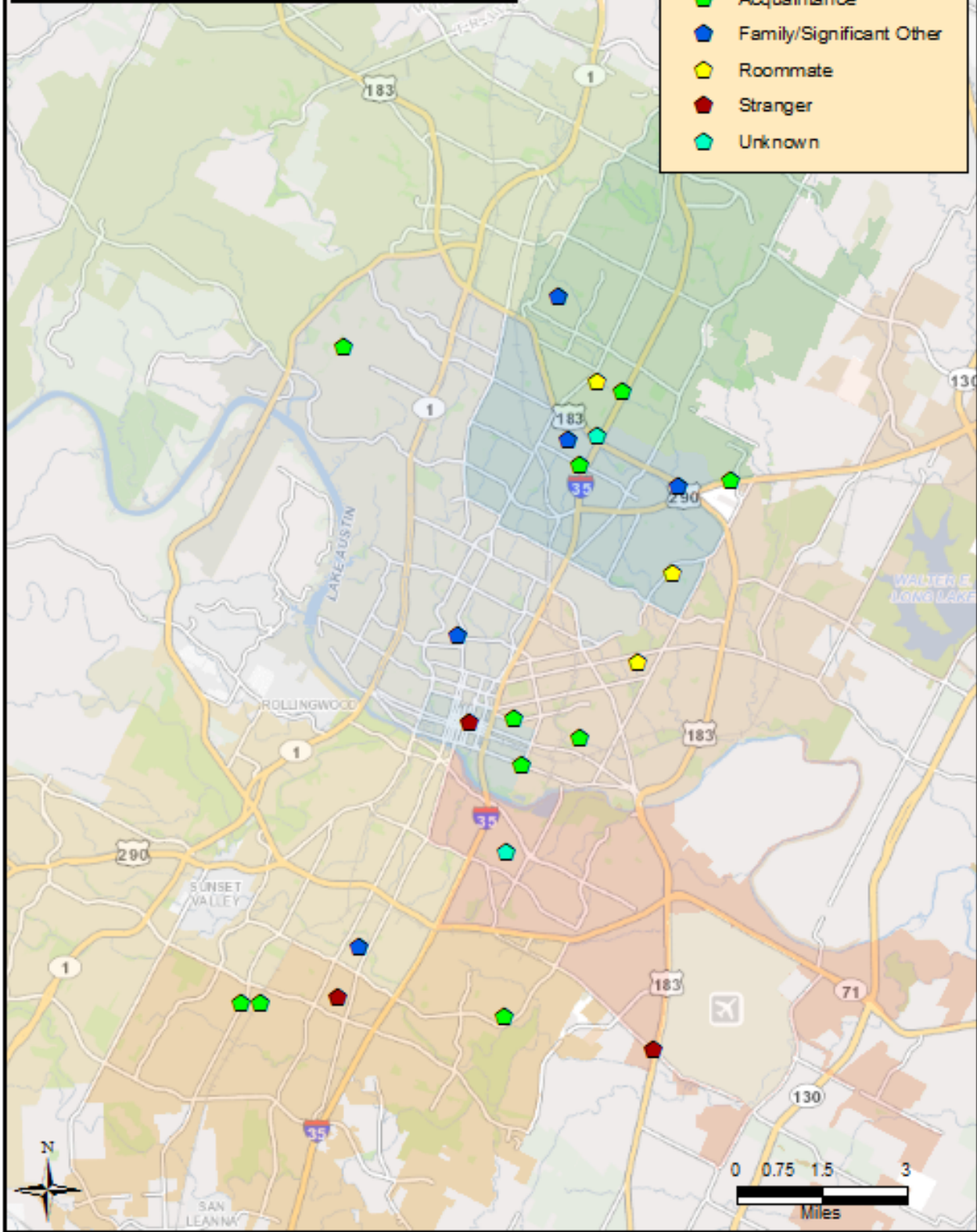
2015 Homicide Locations by Suspect Race/Ethnicity



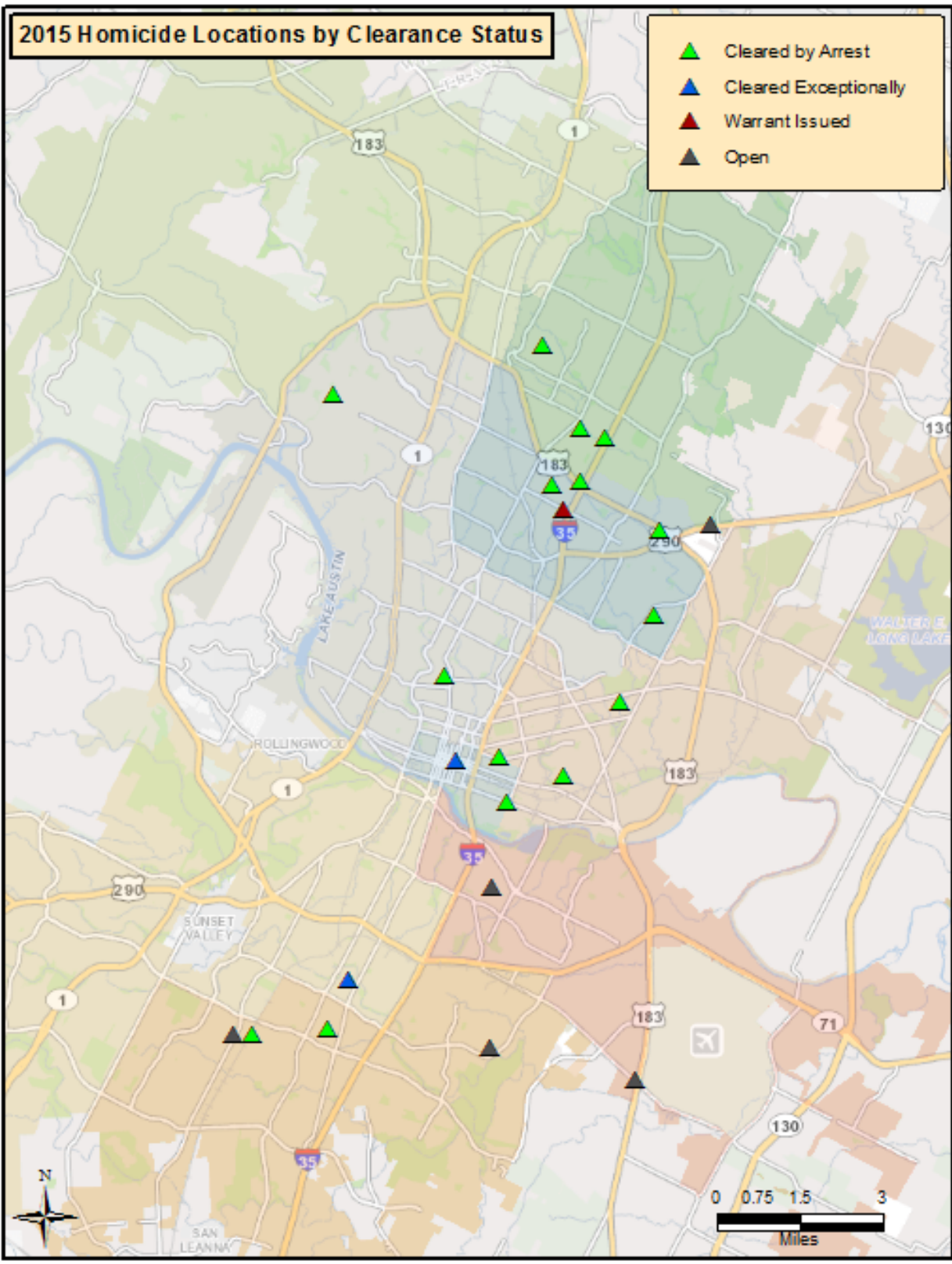
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2015 Homicide Locations by Relationship

- Acquaintance
- Family/Significant Other
- Roommate
- Stranger
- Unknown



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