
An Analysis of Austin, Texas Homicide: Offenses, Victims, and Suspects in 2016

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Crime Analysis Unit
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Introduction

The following data reflects all non-negligent murder cases reported to the Austin Police Department for 2016. 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 2015*, Texas Department of Public Safety's *2015 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 2016 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 2015 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 2016 homicide data as of March 7, 2017.

- There were 39 homicides in Austin in 2016 for a rate of 4.3 murders per 100,000 population.
- The most active months for murder were July with seven murders and then June, November, and December with five murders each.
- Nine (23%) homicides occurred in Edward sector and seven (18%) occurred in Charlie sector and seven (18%) occurred in Ida sector. These three sectors account for a total of 59% of 2016's homicides.
- Sixteen (41%) of the homicides occurred at a single-family residence or apartment.
- A gun was used in 28 of the 39 murders, accounting for 72% of the weapon types used in the 2016 murders.
- Nineteen (49%) of the 2016 murders involved issues stemming from an argument or were revenge for an earlier issue.
- Five (13%) of the cases met the technical requirements for family violence.
- A total of 39 victims and 49 suspects were documented for the 2016 murders.
- Twenty-five (64%) of the victims were between the ages of 20 and 39.
- Twenty-four (49%) of the known suspects were between the ages of 20 and 39.
- Nineteen (49%) of the homicide victims in 2016 were Hispanic, 10 (26%) were African American, seven (18%) were White, and three (8%) were Asian.
- In the cases in which the suspect's race/ethnicity was known, 22 (45%) of the homicide suspects were African American, 11 (22%) were Hispanic, eight (16%) were White, and one (2%) was Asian.
- In the 30 cases in which the suspect's relationship to the victim was established, at least one suspect was an acquaintance in 18 murders (46%). The suspect was a family member or significant other in five cases (13%).
- Seven of these 30 murders were considered stranger-on-stranger murders (18%).
 - 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 taco stand) or an activity (such as buying drugs, prostitution, or gambling.)
 - As of March 7, 2017, all of the stranger-on-stranger murders have been solved – and all have been cleared by arrest.
 - None are believed to be related or committed by the same suspect(s).
- One of the homicides was a murder/suicide.
- As of March 7, 2017, 29 of the 39 murders in 2016 have been cleared (by arrest or exceptionally), for a 74% clearance rate.
 - Of the 10 murders in 2016 that are considered "not cleared":
 - A warrant for the suspect in one of the cases has been issued, but the suspect has not been arrested yet.
 - In one murder, the suspect(s) is known but more investigation is required before a warrant can be issued.
 - Eight of the murders are not solved. The suspect(s) has not been identified.

Statistical Representation

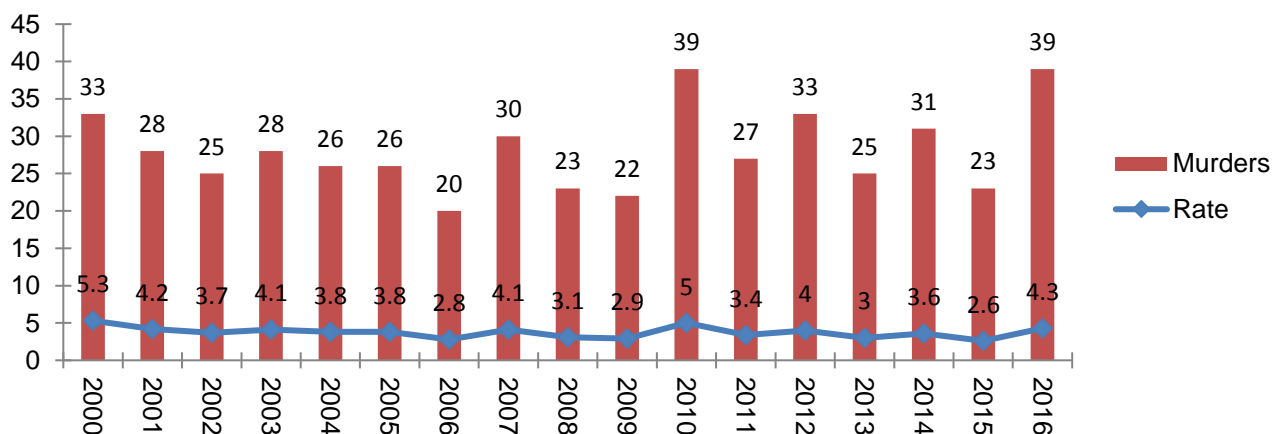
Homicide Data

- The analysis contained in this report was based on 2016 homicide data as of March 7, 2017. Only intentional homicides (non-negligent homicides) were included in the analysis.

Homicide Totals by Year

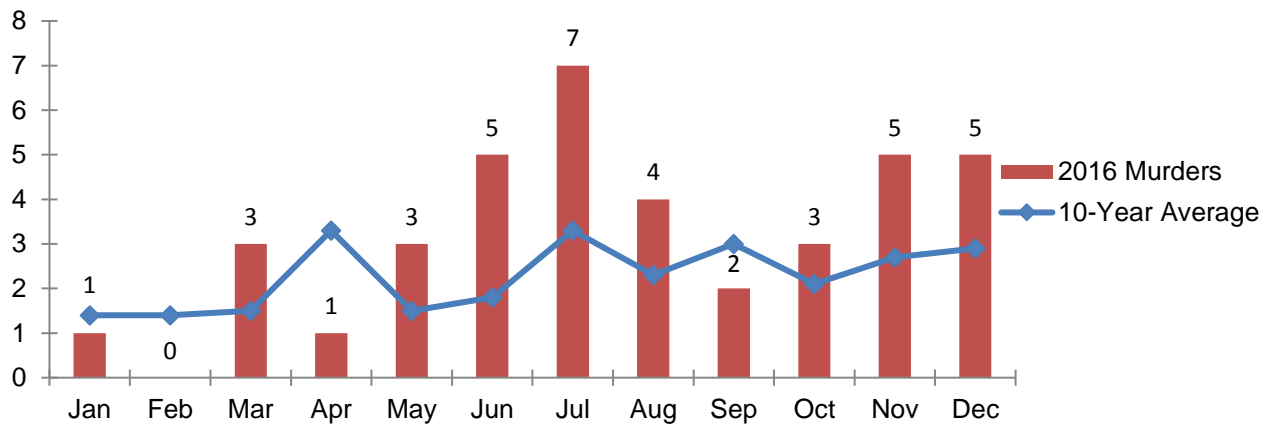
- There were 39 homicides documented in Austin, Texas in 2016. Using a population estimate of 913,917, this calculates to a rate of 4.3 murders per 100,000 population.
- In 2015, there were 23 homicides in Austin, 2.6 murders per 100,000 population.
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice's *Crime in the United States 2015* report:
 - The homicide rate for cities with populations between 500,000 and 999,999 was 12.5 per 100,000 population.
 - The rate for the South Region was 5.9 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 5.7 per 100,000 population.
 - The rate for all of the United States was 4.9 per 100,000 population.
- According to the Texas Department of Public Safety's *2015 Crime in Texas Report*, the homicide rate for all of Texas was 4.8 per 100,000 population.

Austin, TX Homicides and Rates by Year



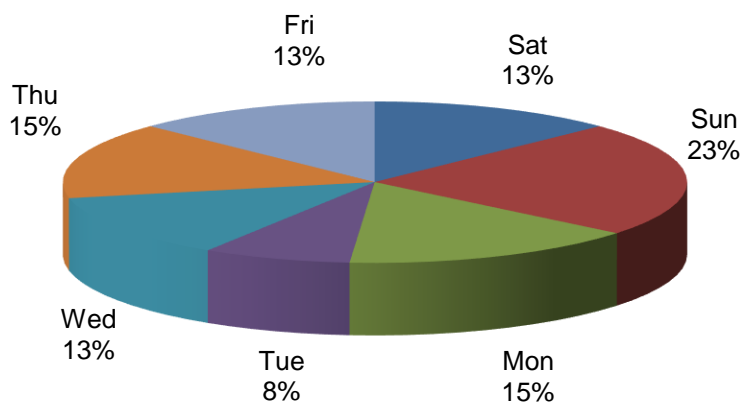
Homicide Totals by Month

- 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 July with seven murders and then June, November, and December with five murders each.
- The least active month was February with no murders and then January and April with one murder each.



Homicides by Day of the Week

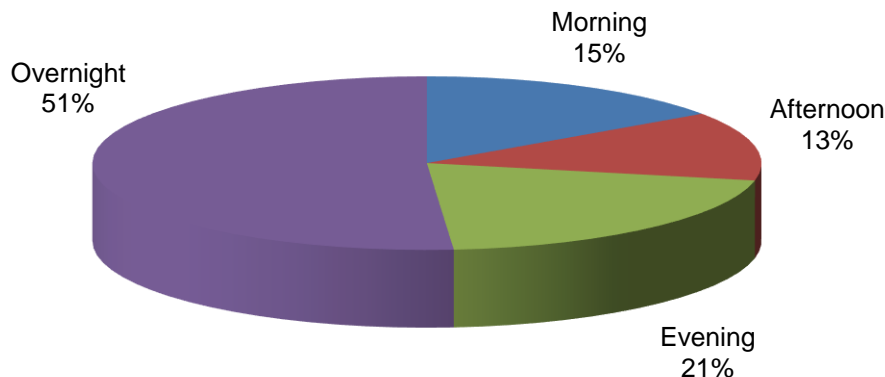
- Nine (23%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered on a Sunday.
- Six homicides occurred or were discovered on a Monday (15%) and on a Thursday (15%).



Homicides by Time of the Day

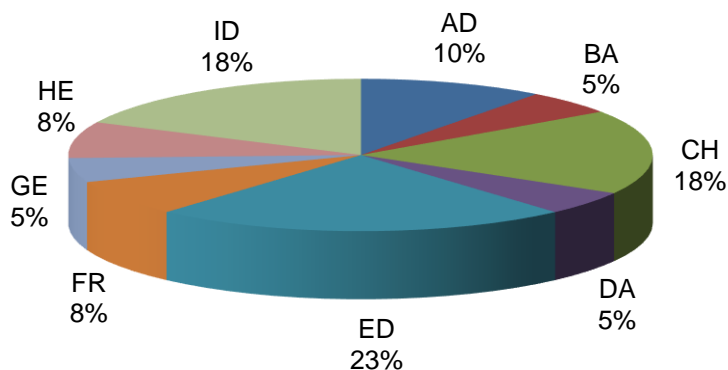
- Twenty (51%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered during overnight hours.
- Eight (21%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered during evening hours.

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.

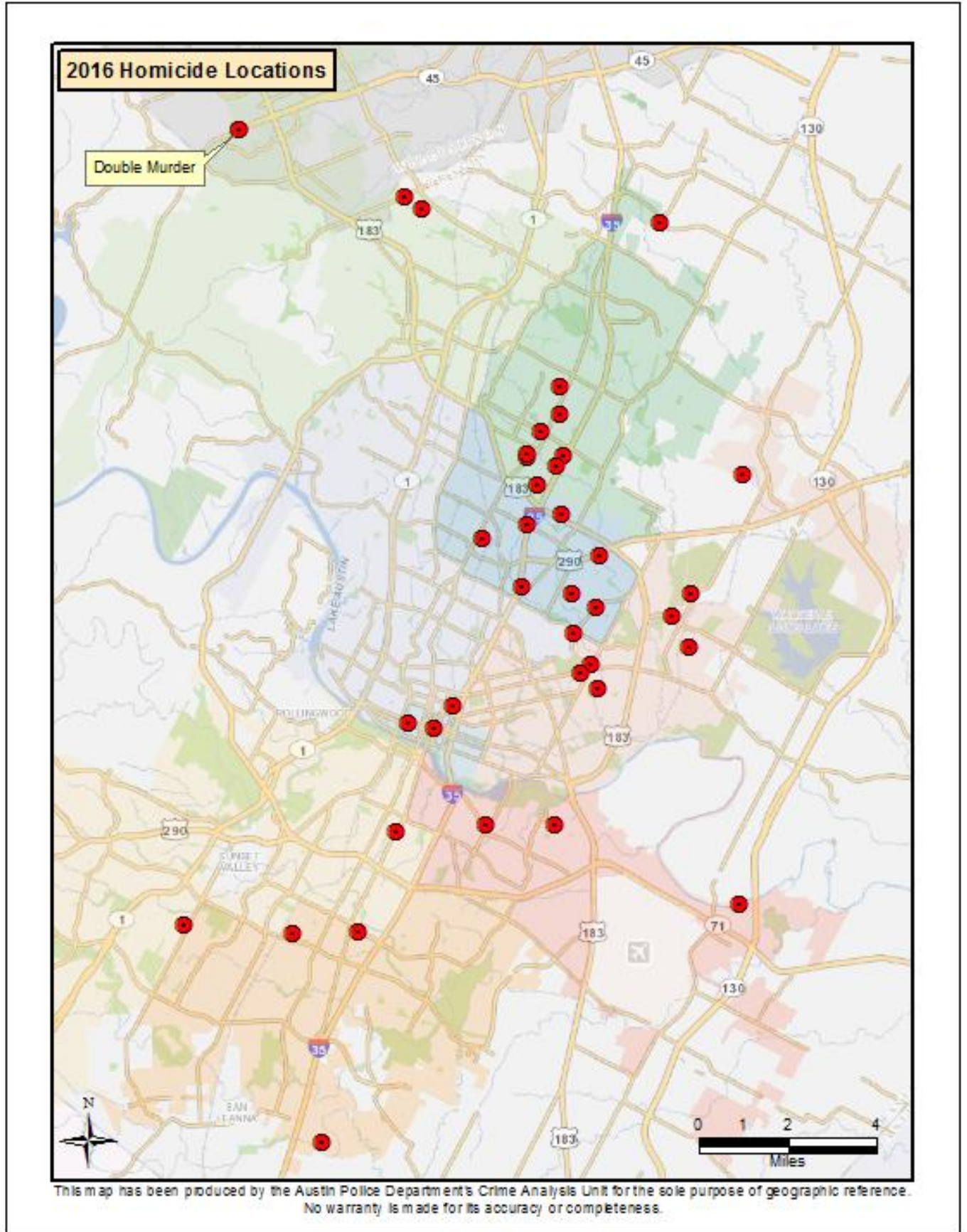


Homicides by Area Command

- Nine (23%) homicides occurred in Edward sector and seven (18%) occurred in Charlie sector and seven (18%) occurred in Ida sector. These three sectors account for a total of 59% of 2016's homicides.
- The rest of the sectors had two or three homicides except Adam sector with four homicides (10%).

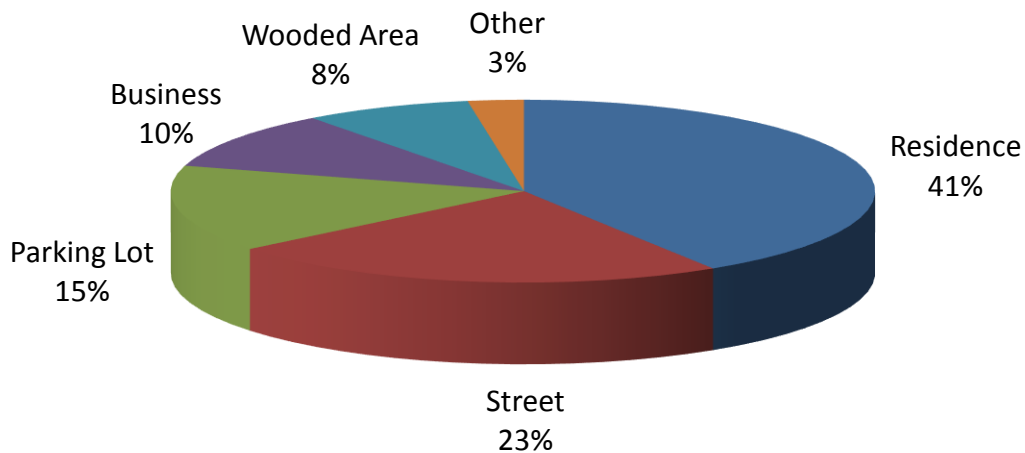


Homicides by Location – Point Map



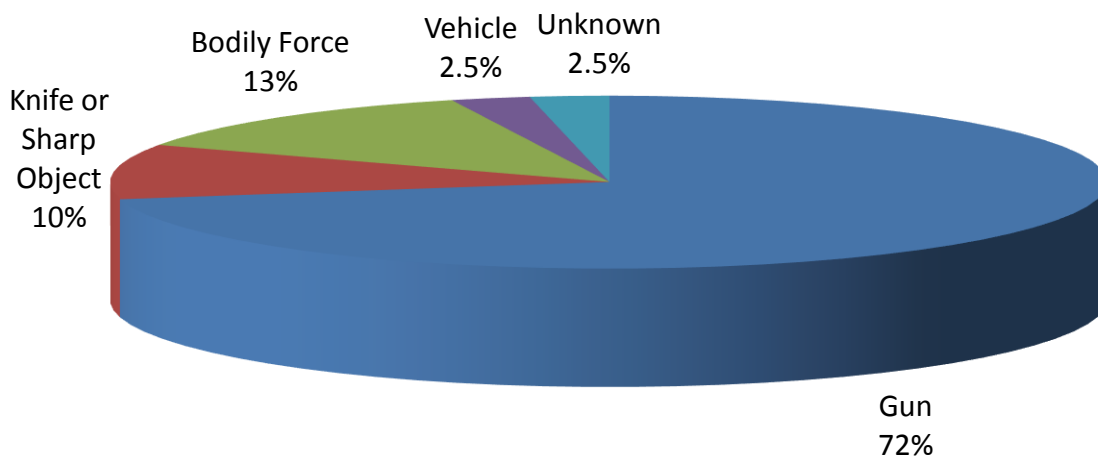
Homicides by Type of Premise

- Sixteen (41%) of the homicides occurred at a single-family residence or apartment. Of those, 10 occurred inside the residence or apartment.
- Nine homicides (23%) occurred on the street, six (15%) occurred in a parking lot, four (10%) occurred in or outside a business, and three (8%) occurred in a wooded area.
- “Other” includes inside a vehicle.



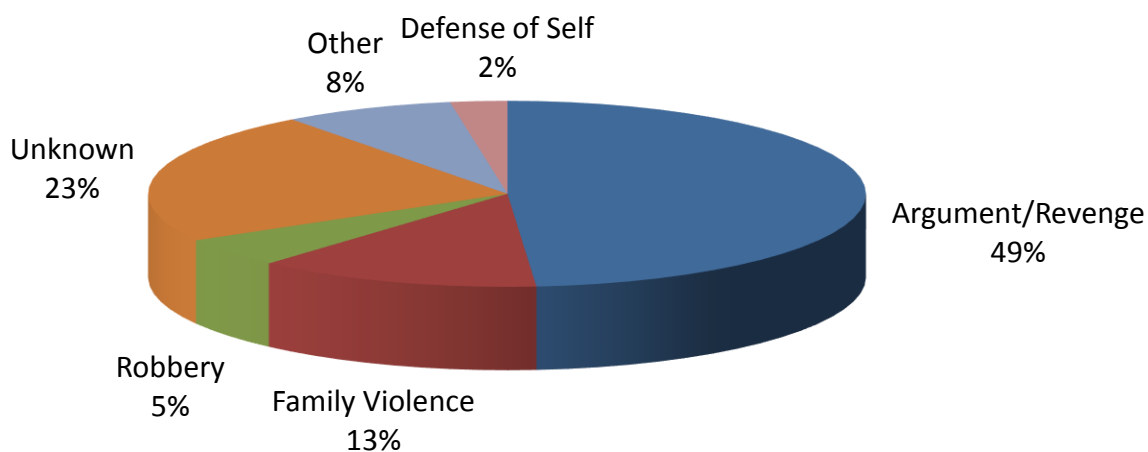
Types of Weapons Used

- A gun was used in 28 of the 39 murders, accounting for 72% of the weapon types used in the 2016 murders. A gun accounted for 48% of the weapon types used in 2015 murders.
- Bodily force was used in five cases (13%) and a knife or a sharp object was used in four cases (10%).

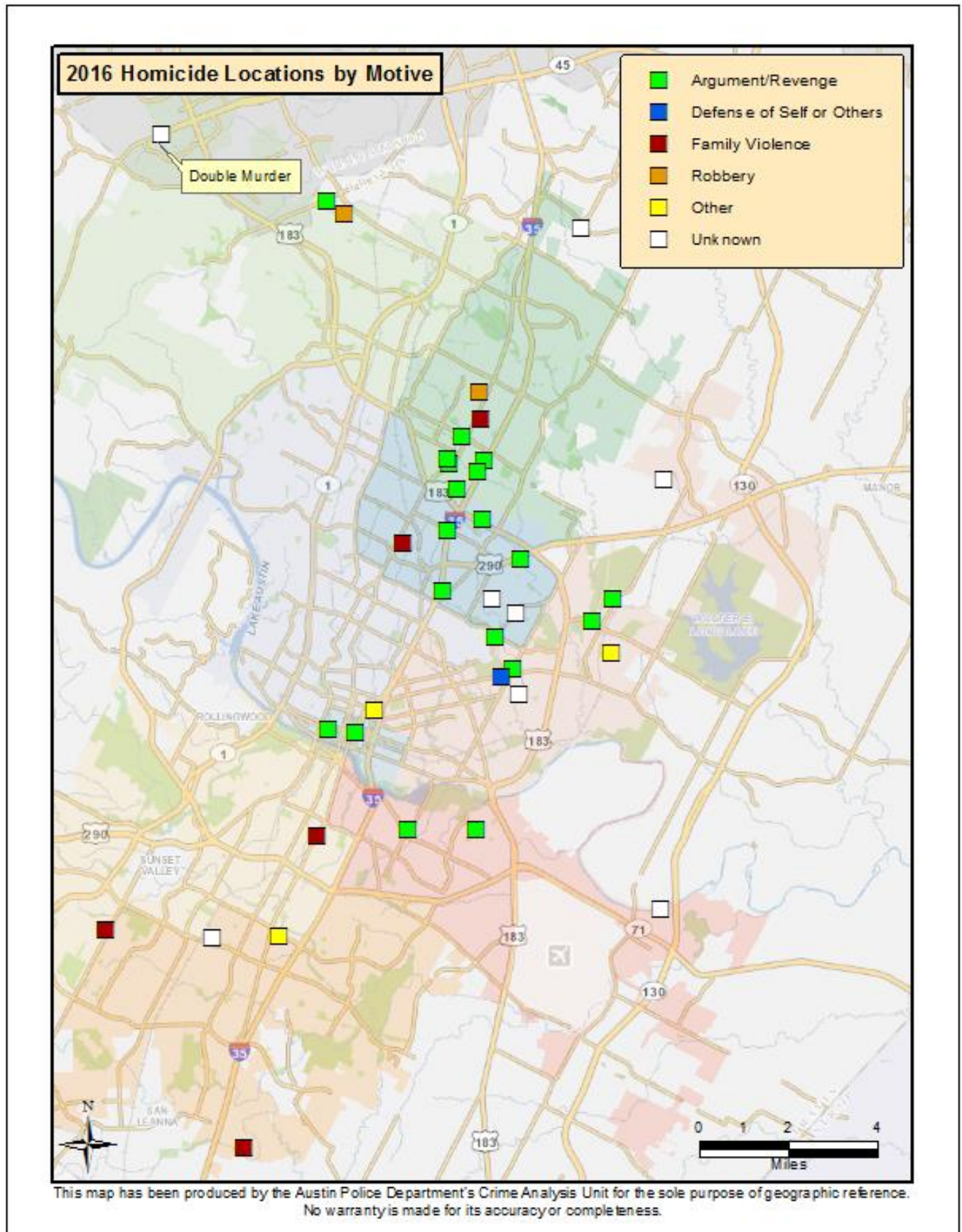


Homicide Motives

- Nineteen (49%) of the 2016 murders involved issues stemming from an argument or were revenge for an earlier issue.
- Five (13%) of the cases met the technical requirements for family violence.
 - Three 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. Two of these three cases involved intimate partners.
 - Two of these five family violence cases were the murders of small children committed by parents or parental figures.
- One homicide (2%) was likely committed in defense of self or others.
- Robbery was the motive in two homicides (5%).
- "Other" motives include three cases in which guns were handled recklessly or negligently.



Homicides by Motive – Point Map

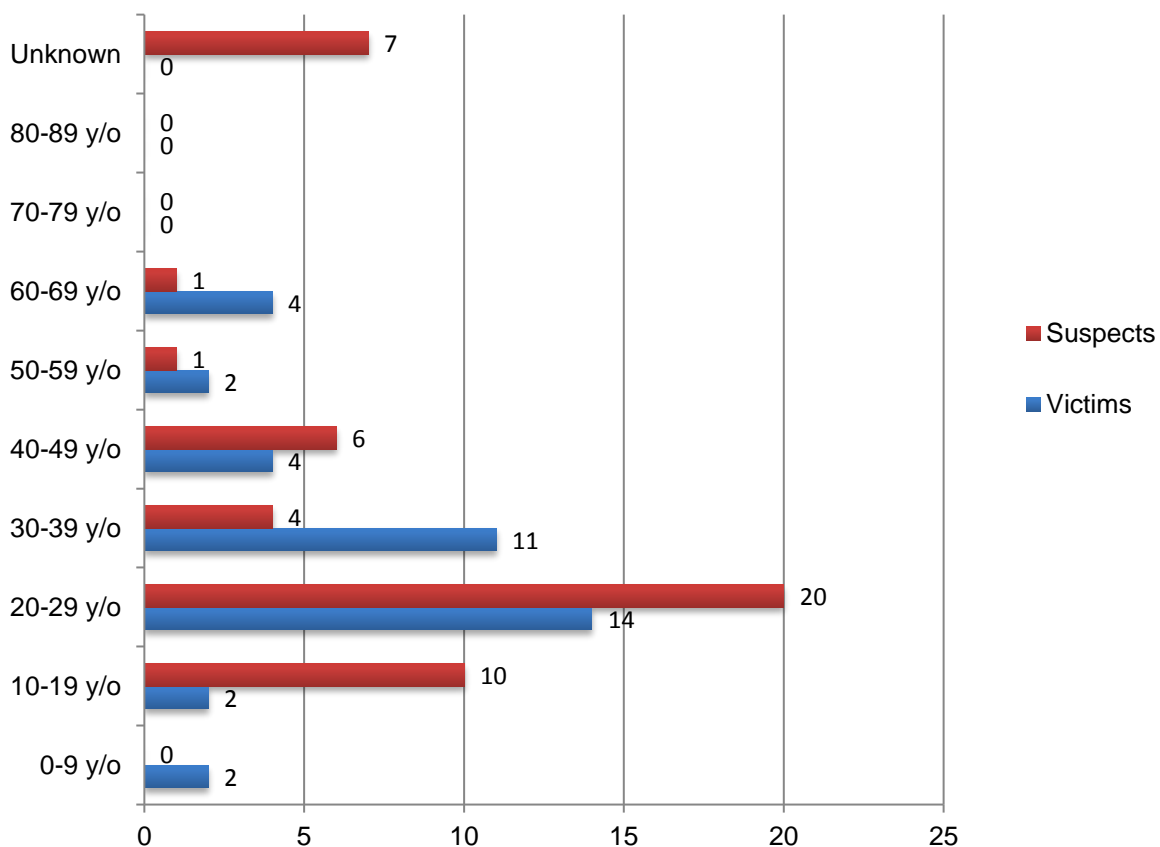


Victims & Suspects

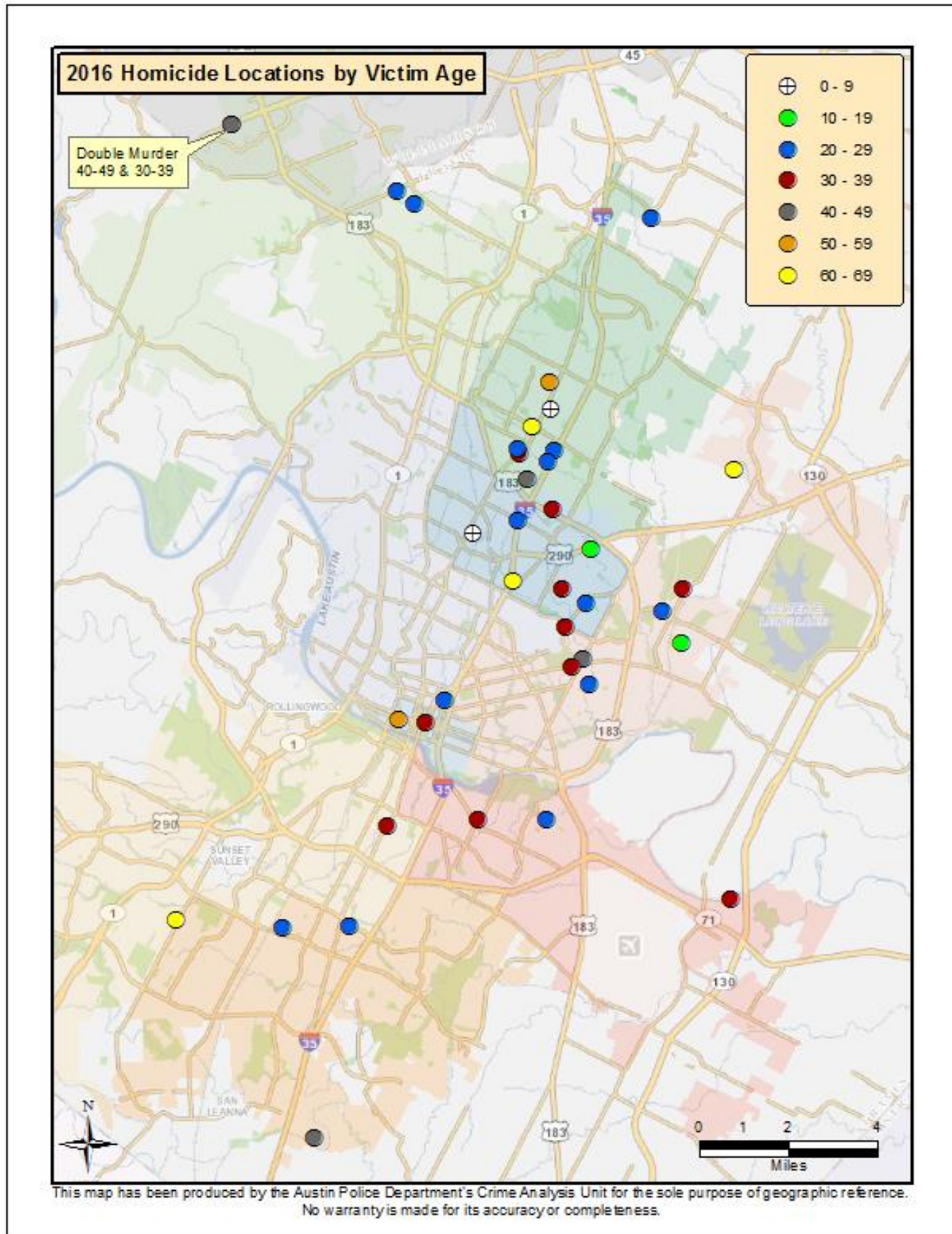
- A total of 39 victims and 49 suspects were documented for the 2016 murders.

Homicides by Age

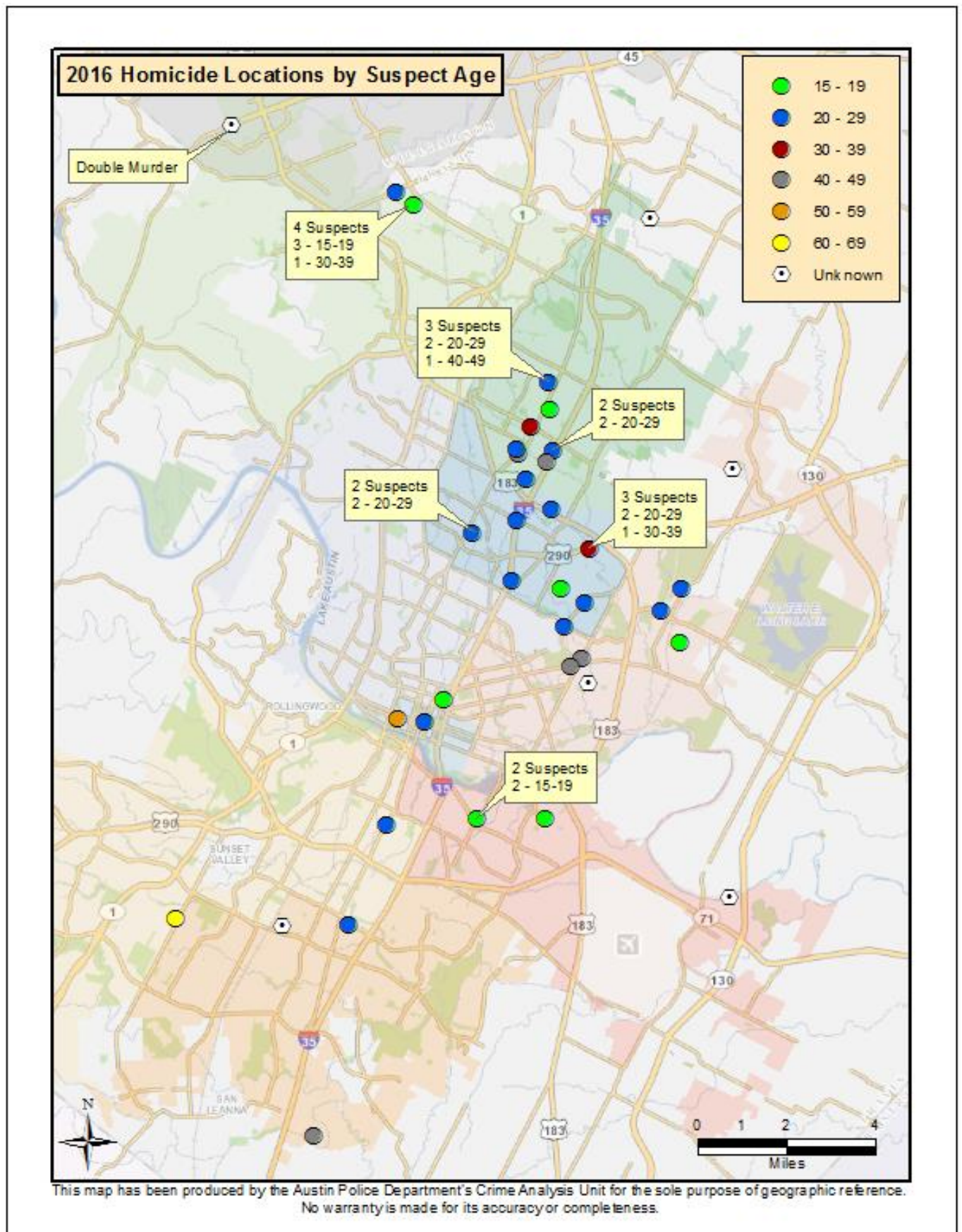
- The youngest victim was 6 weeks old and the oldest was 65 years old, with 25 of the victims (64%) falling between the ages of 20 and 39.
- There were two cases in 2016 in which the victims were 2 years old or younger.
- In the cases in which the suspect's age was known, the youngest suspect was 15 years old and the oldest was 68 years old, with 24 of the suspects (49%) falling between the ages of 20 and 39.



Homicides by Victim Age – Point Map

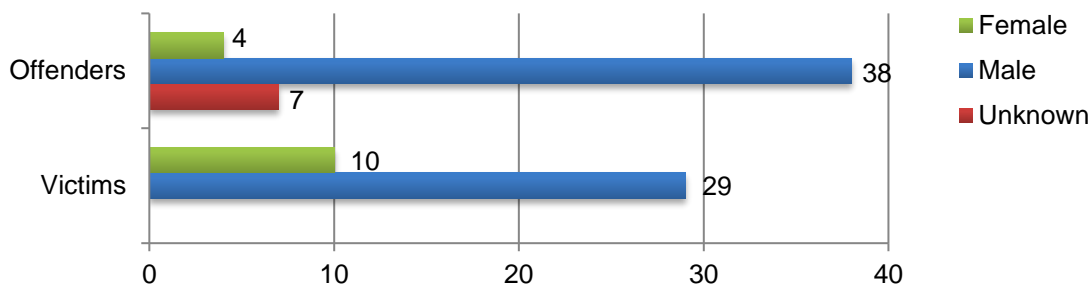


Homicides by Suspect Age – Point Map



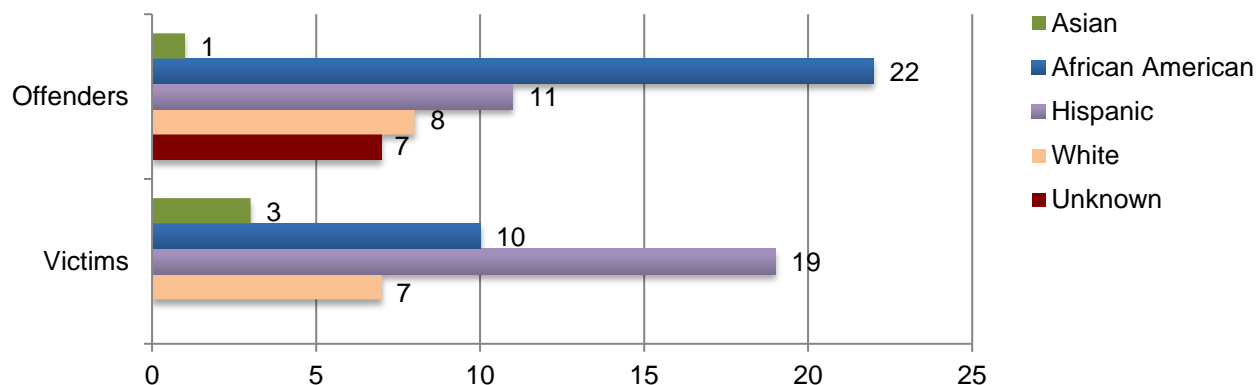
Homicides by Gender

- Twenty-nine males (74%) were victims in 2016.
- In the cases in which the suspect's gender was known, 38 of the 49 suspects were males (78%).

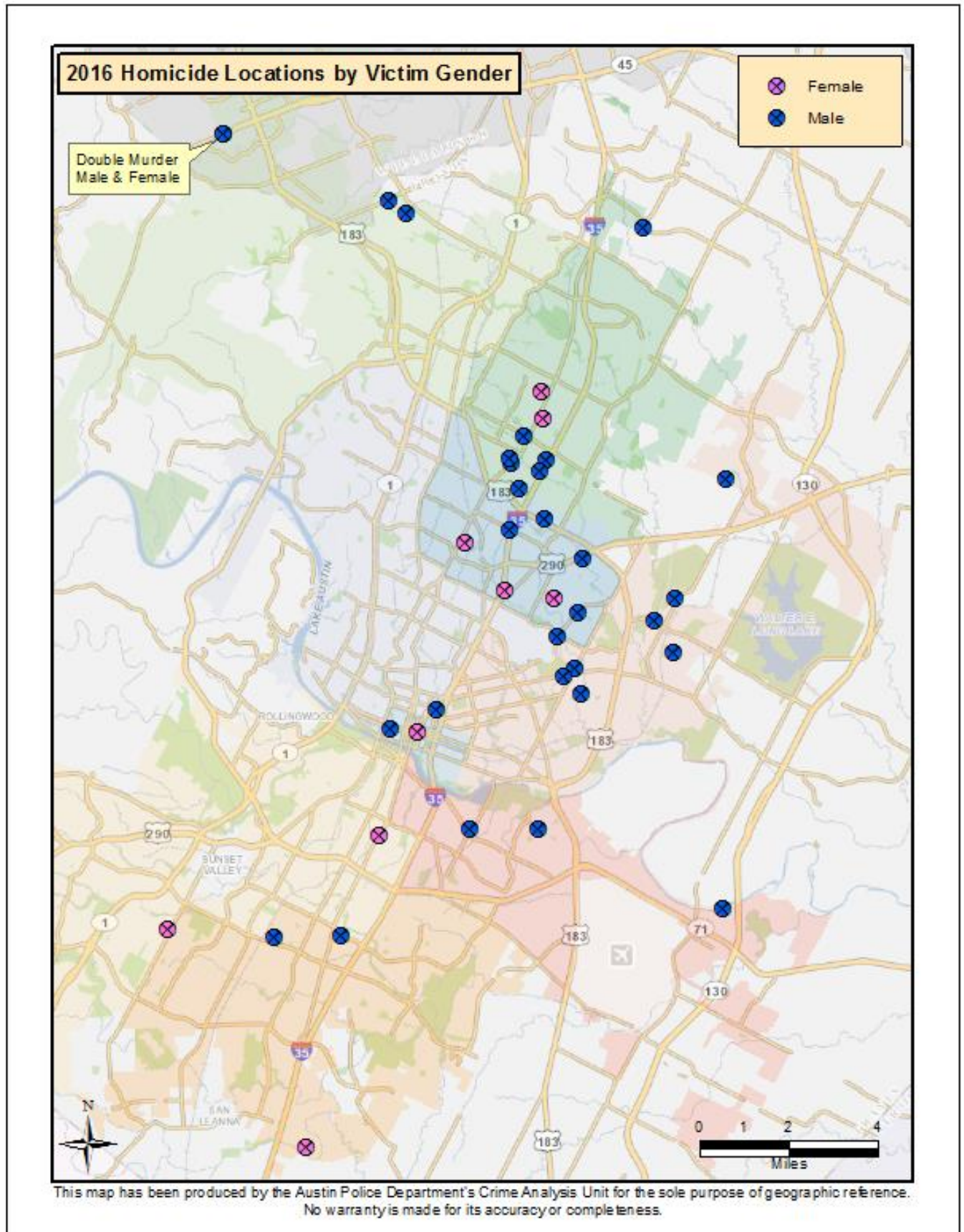


Homicides by Race/Ethnicity

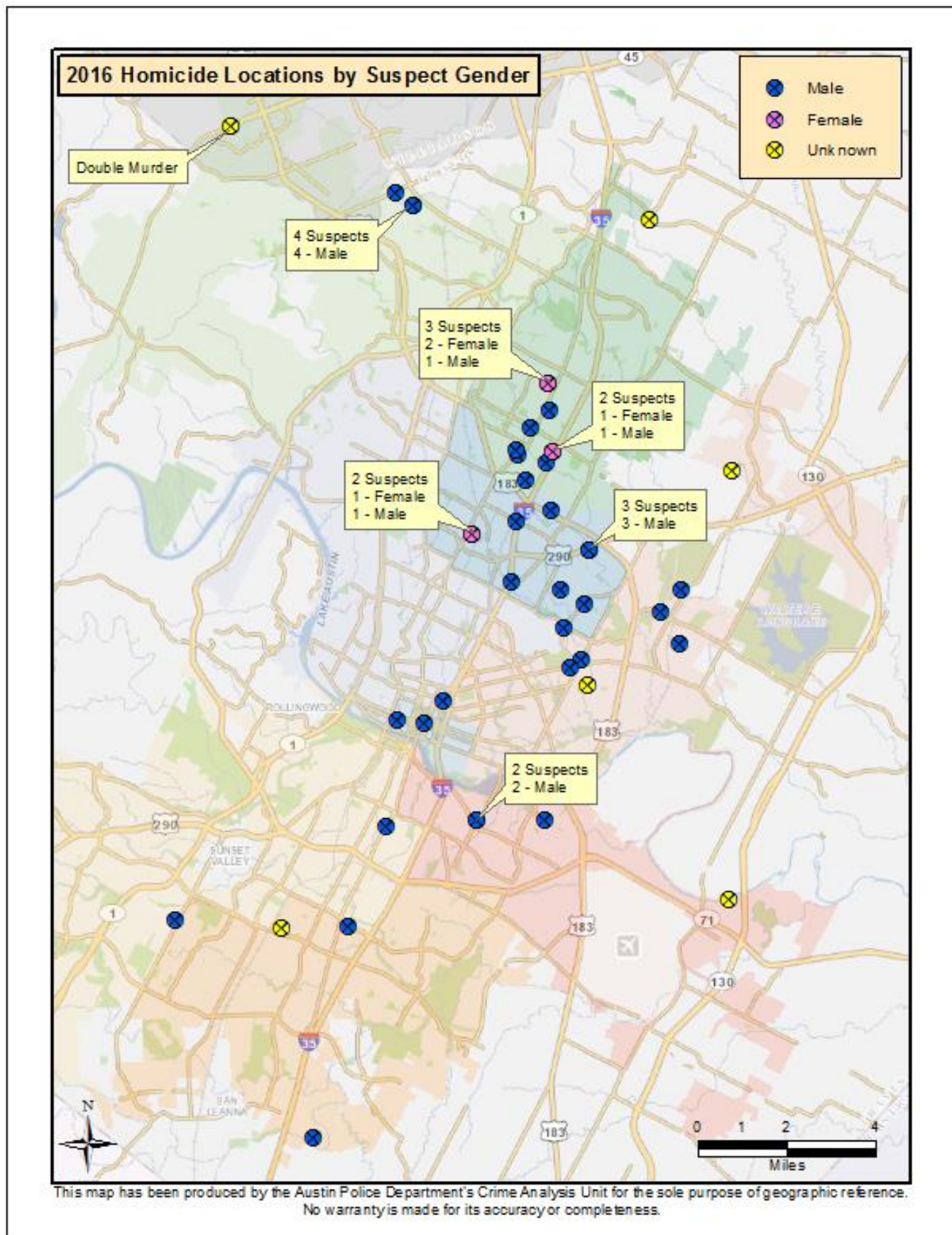
- Nineteen (49%) of the homicide victims in 2016 were Hispanic, 10 (26%) were African American, seven (18%) were White, and three (8%) were Asian.
 - Two victims were Mexican Nationals, one was from Guatemala, one was from Honduras, one was from India, and one was from Trinidad/Tobago.
- In the cases in which the suspect's race/ethnicity was known, 22 (45%) of the homicide suspects were African American, 11 (22%) were Hispanic, eight (16%) were White, and one (2%) was Asian.
 - Two suspects were Mexican Nationals and one was from India.
- Victim and suspect demographics indicate that for 2016 African Americans are over-represented as victims (26%) and as suspects (45%) 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 2016 Hispanics are over-represented as victims (49%) of homicides and are under-represented as suspects (22%) of homicides. According to 2010 census data, Hispanics account for 35.1% of the overall Austin population.
- Victim and suspect demographics indicate that for 2016 Asians are over-represented as victims (8%) of homicides and are under-represented as suspects (2%) of homicides. According to 2010 census data, Asians account for 6.3% of the overall Austin population.



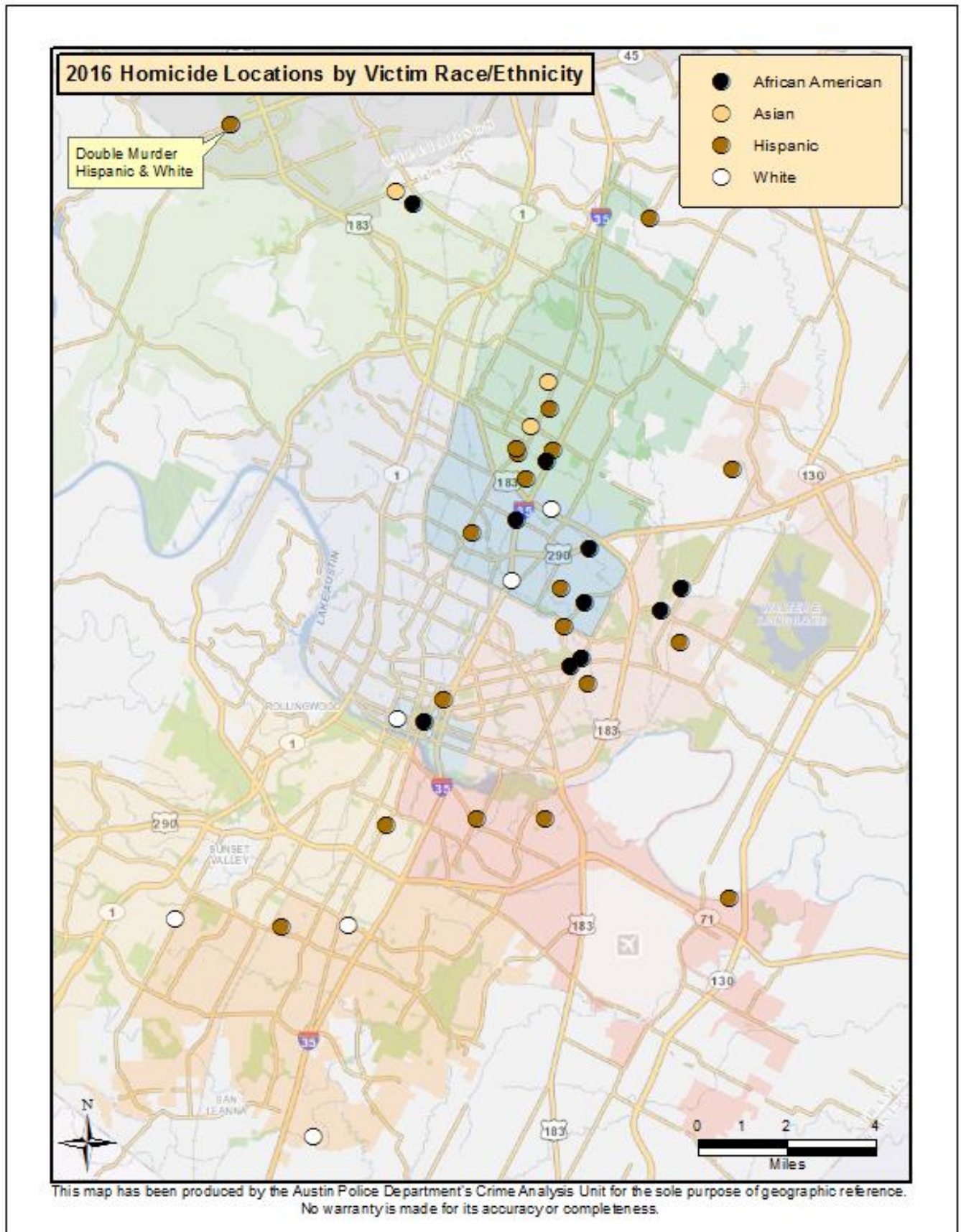
Homicides by Victim Gender – Point Map



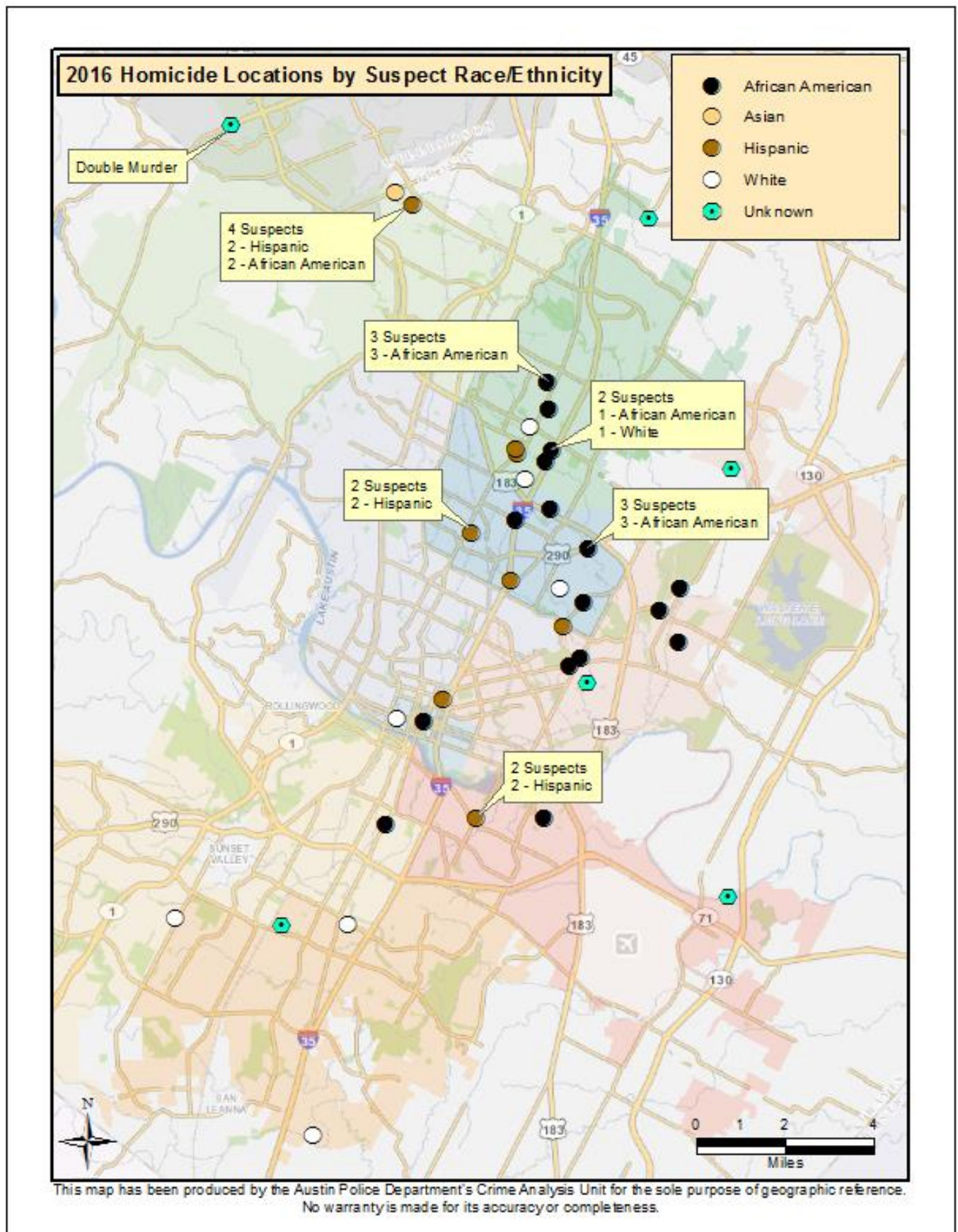
Homicides by Suspect Gender – Point Map



Homicides by Victim Race/Ethnicity – Point Map

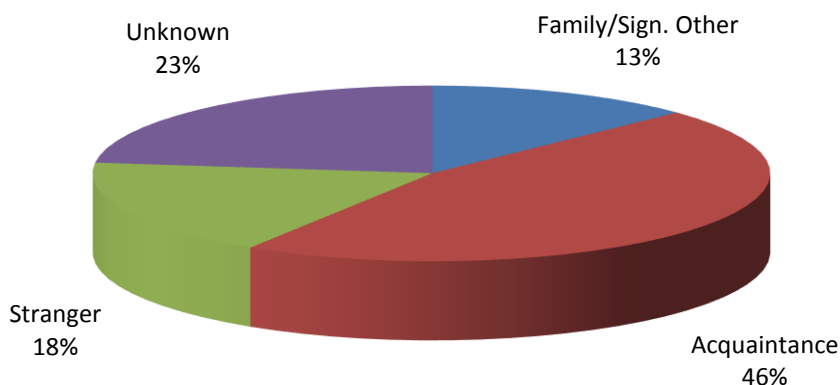


Homicides by Suspect Race/Ethnicity – Point Map



Relationship between Victim and Suspect

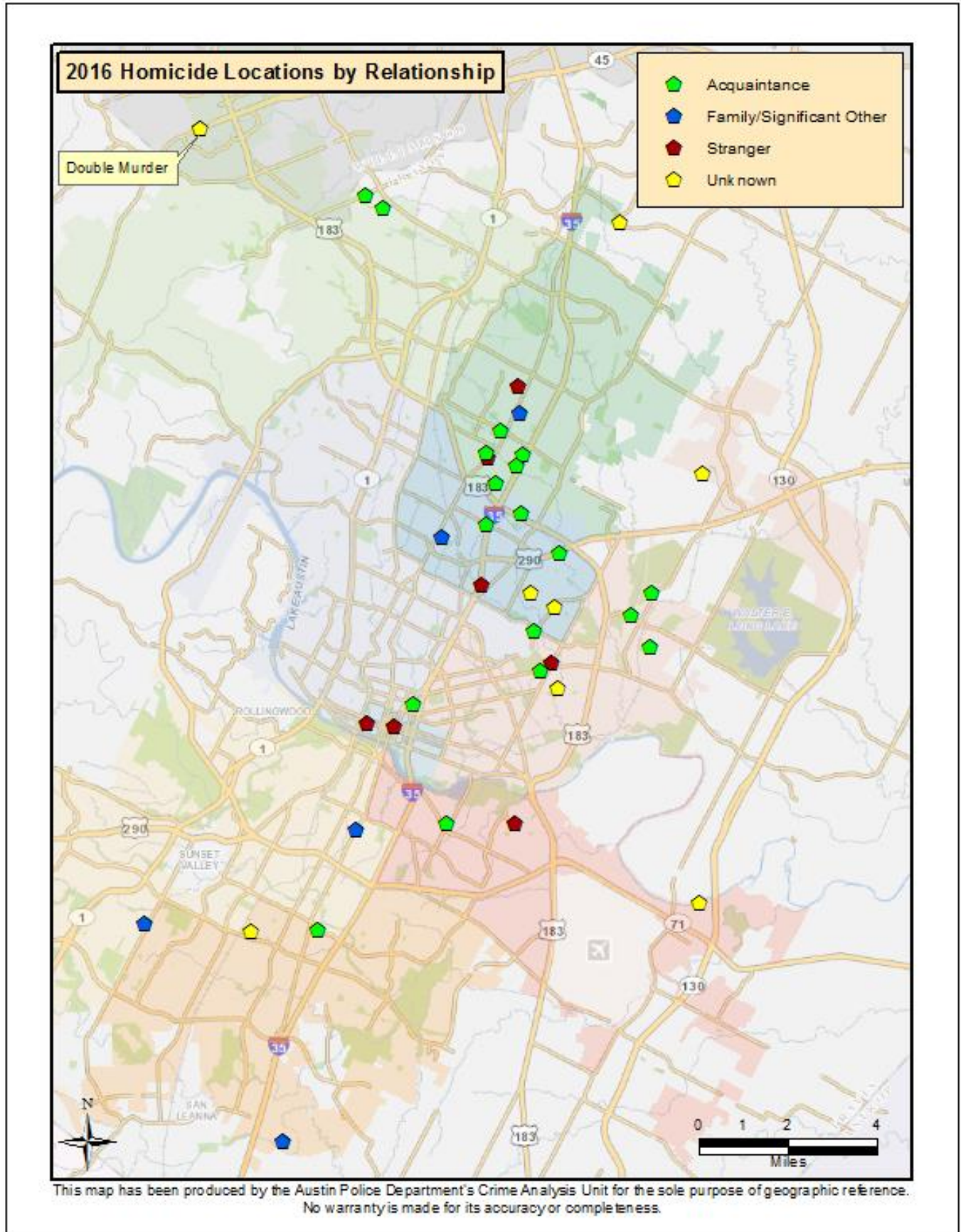
- The relationship between victim and suspect(s) was established in 30 of the 39 murders in 2016, while the relationship was undetermined in nine (23%) murders.
- At least one suspect was an acquaintance in 18 murders (46%).
- The suspect was a family member or significant other in five cases (13%).
- Seven murders of these 30 murders were considered stranger-on-stranger murders (18%).
 - 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 taco stand) or an activity (such as buying drugs, prostitution, or gambling.)
 - As of March 7, 2017, all of the stranger-on-stranger murders have been solved – and all have been cleared by arrest.
 - None are believed to be related or committed by the same suspect(s).



Miscellaneous Victim and Suspect Information

- At least six victims were transients. At least six of the known suspects were transients.
- Three victims were possibly gang members. At least eight suspects were possibly gang members.
- Seven of the murder victims were believed to be drug dealers and at least two suspects are believed to be drug dealers.
- One of the homicides was a murder/suicide.
- Six of the homicides involved multiple suspects.
- One case was a double homicide.

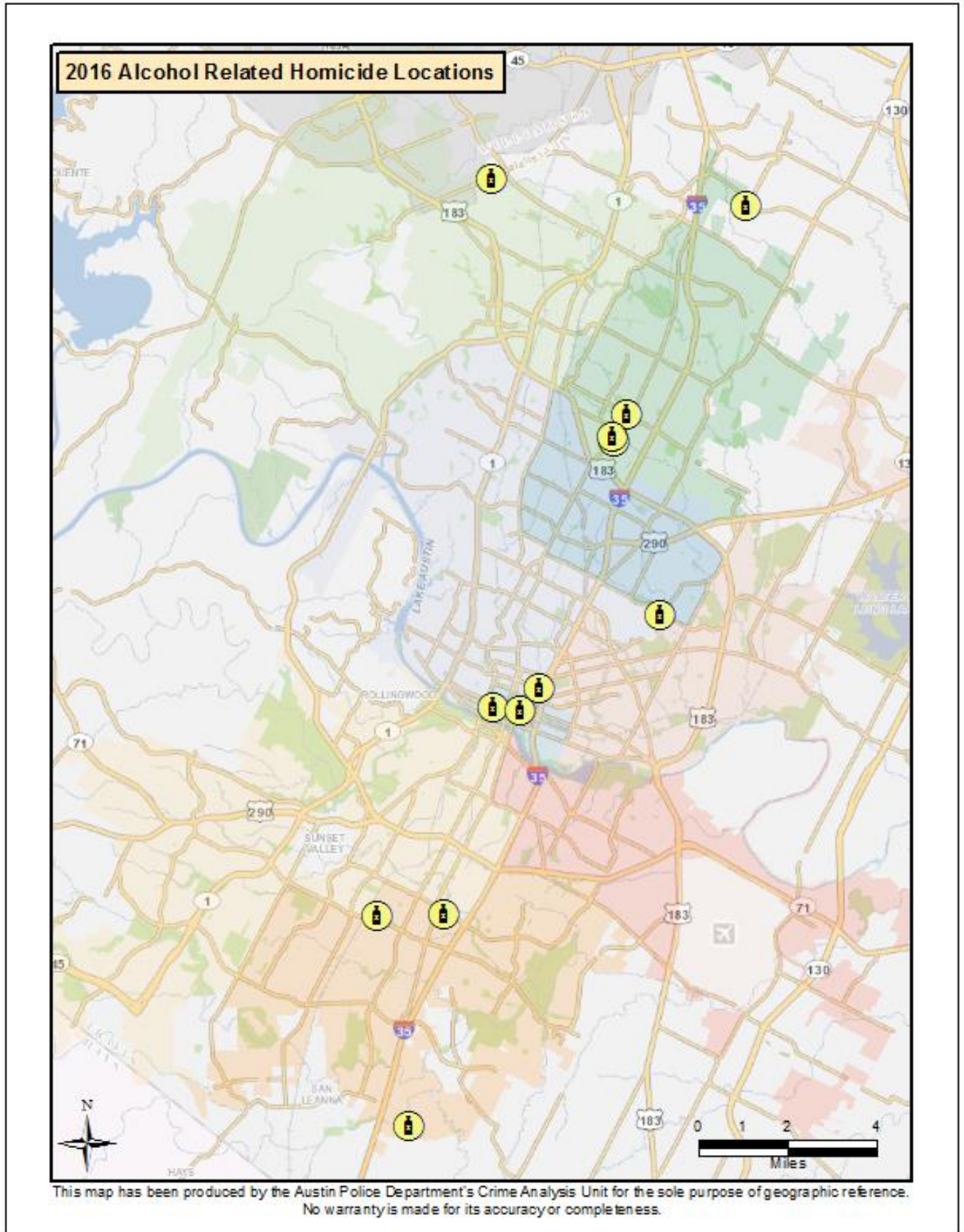
Homicides by Relationship – Point Map



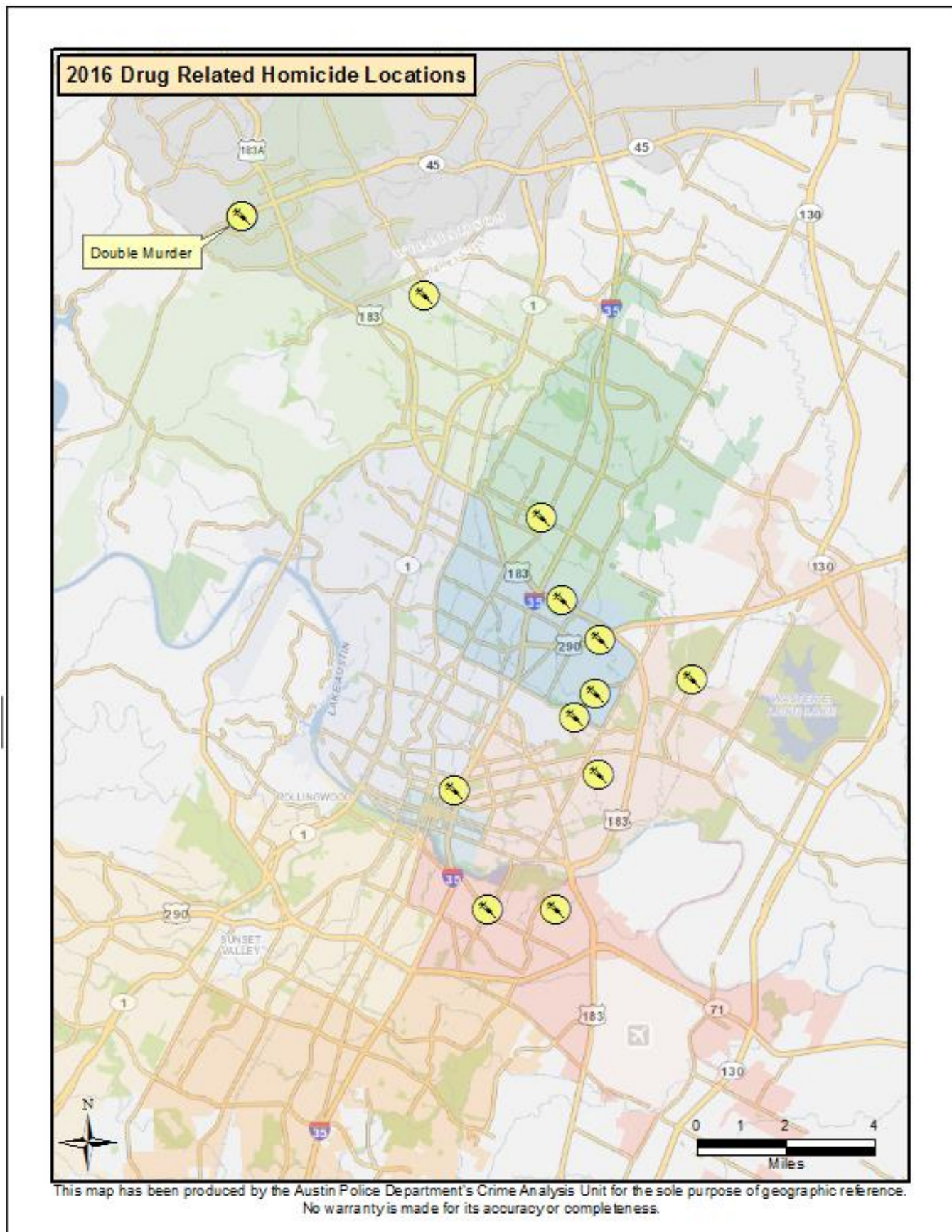
Family Violence, Contributing Factors, Offense Classification

- Five (13%) of the murders met the Texas Penal Code & Family Code definition for family violence.
 - Two were committed by intimate partners or ex-partners.
 - Three were committed by a family member.
- Alcohol was believed to be a contributing factor in 12 (31%) of the homicides.
- Drugs were believed to be a contributing factor in 13 (33%) of the homicides.
- Robbery was believed to be a contributing factor in five (13%) of the homicides.
- Gambling was believed to be a contributing factor in two (5%) of the homicides.
- Prostitution was believed to be a contributing factor in one (3%) of the homicides.
- Four (10%) of the homicides were documented as Capital Murder, which includes the commission of an additional felony at the time of the murder (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 cases).
- Four (10%) of the homicides was documented as Manslaughter. A person commits Manslaughter if he/she recklessly causes the death of an individual. Three of these four cases involved guns that were handled recklessly or negligently.

Alcohol Related Homicides – Point Map



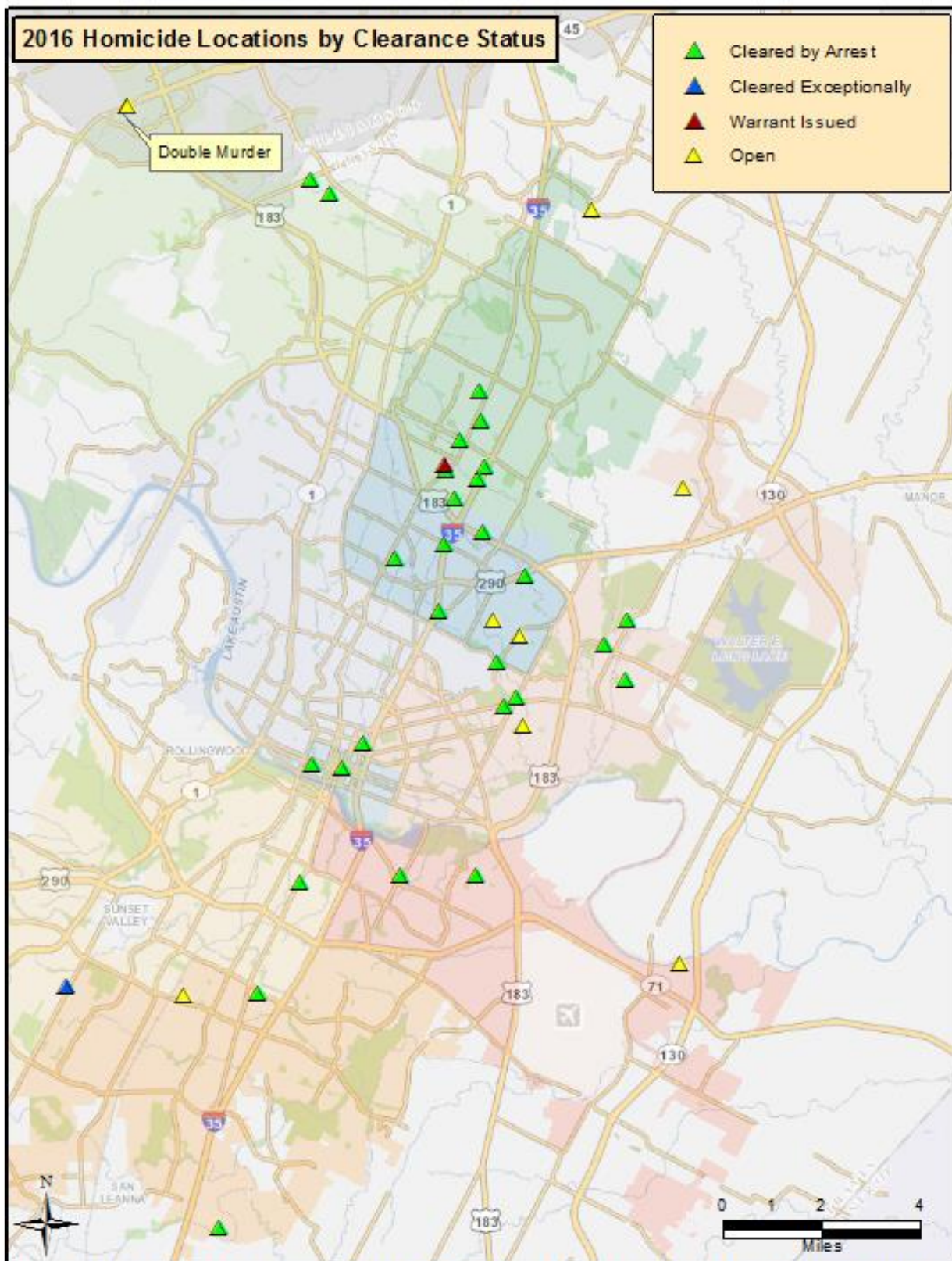
Drug Related Homicides – Point Map



Homicide Clearance Rate

- As of March 7, 2017, 29 of the 39 murders in 2016 have been cleared (by arrest or exceptionally), for a 74% clearance rate.
 - Twenty-eight of the 39 cases were cleared during 2016. One was cleared in January 2017.
 - Of the 10 murders in 2016 that are considered “not cleared”:
 - A warrant for the suspect in one of the cases has been issued, but the suspect has not been arrested yet.
 - In one murder, the suspect(s) is known but more investigation is required before a warrant can be issued.
 - Eight of the murders are not solved. The suspect(s) has not been identified.
 - Three 2015 murder cases were cleared during 2016:
 - Two were cleared by the arrest of the suspect(s).
 - One was cleared exceptionally 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.
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice’s *Crime in the United States 2015*:
 - The clearance rate for cities with populations between 500,000 and 999,999 was 50.2%. This includes all homicide cases that were cleared during 2015 regardless of when the murder occurred.
 - The rate for the South Region was 62.5%.
 - The rate for the West South Central sub-region was 65.2%.
 - The rate for all of the United States was 61.5%.
- According to the Texas Department of Public Safety’s *2015 Crime in Texas Report*, the clearance rate for all of Texas was 70.9%.

Homicides by Clearance Status – Point Map



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