

Geospatial Characteristics of Sex Trafficking of Juveniles and Young Adults in Milwaukee:

**Follow up to “Estimating the Magnitude of Sex
Trafficking Risk and Victimization of Juveniles and
Young Adults”**

– City of Milwaukee –

-January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2016-

A Supplemental Report by the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission,
Medical College of Wisconsin Institute for Health & Equity,
Milwaukee Sexual Assault Review, and Milwaukee Police Department –
Sensitive Crimes Division

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Executive Summary

This report is a supplement to the March 2018 report, *Estimating the Magnitude of Sex Trafficking Risk and Victimization of Juveniles and Young Adults in the City of Milwaukee*. The purpose of this report is to further understand the geographic characteristics and identify potential hot spots of sex trafficking of juveniles and young adults in Milwaukee.

Key statistics:

- 340 individuals ages 25 and under were identified in Milwaukee Police Department records as confirmed or believed to be victims of sex trafficking in Milwaukee between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2016.
 - The sample for this report included the 231 individuals with complete demographic and historical information
- **Individual's Last Known Residence:**
 - City-level residence location information available for 228 victims
 - 88% last resided in the city of Milwaukee
 - 9% last resided in a Wisconsin city outside of Milwaukee
 - 3% last resided in a city outside of Wisconsin
- **Trafficking Location:**
 - Trafficking location information available for 241 incidents (183 individuals)
 - Zip Code Hot Spots:
 - 53207 – 27 incidents
 - 53204 – 25 incidents
 - 53206 – 20 incidents
 - 53225 – 20 incidents
 - 53210 – 19 incidents
 - 53221 – 16 incidents
 - Additional trafficking locations outside of Milwaukee:
 - 71 individuals reported trafficking in 42 cities across 20 states
 - Chicago, IL – 19 incidents
 - Within Wisconsin, individuals reported trafficking in 30 other cities
 - Green Bay, WI – 5 incidents
- **Discussion**
 - Diverging Victim Residence and Trafficking Locations:
 - Trafficking hot spot in 53207
 - Overlapping Victim Residence and Trafficking Locations:
 - Areas with:
 - Higher rates of violence (homicides, nonfatal shootings) and poverty; lower rates of educational attainment

Introduction

In March 2018, a report was released estimating the magnitude of sex trafficking in Milwaukee using Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) data. The report was intended to serve as a baseline of understanding of sex trafficking in Milwaukee, acknowledging it is likely an underestimate given the limitations of using MPD data only to identify victims. Due to the volume of data collected, supplements to the original report will include additional data and analysis, as well as further analyses of the initial data, discussions, and recommendations. The purpose of this report is to further understand the geographic characteristics and identify potential hot spots of incidents of sex trafficking reported to MPD in Milwaukee.

Using the Data

The data presented in the original sex trafficking report, and this and other supplementary reports, can be used to inform new and existing sex trafficking prevention programs, policies and practices. Examples of ways the data can be useful by different stakeholders can be found below.

Stakeholder	Data Usage
Local Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to identify and appropriately respond to risk factors and indicators of sex trafficking • Connect residents with current initiatives focused on sex trafficking prevention efforts • Develop a social media awareness campaign • Create educational and awareness materials and activities
Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize spatial analysis to develop strategies for deployment of field staff • Use data to inform specialized trainings for various levels of law enforcement, improving law enforcement's understanding of sex trafficking • Develop protocols and best practices to identify, respond to, and investigate sex trafficking, ensuring more successful prosecutions
Medical Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the magnitude of sex trafficking in Milwaukee among medical providers for educational purposes • Support the need for additional resources, policies, and programs within medical institutions to address trafficking, especially those in high-risk areas • Identify risk factors and indicators of sex trafficking to inform prevention and identification efforts
Non-Profit and Social Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate problem severity and need when writing a grant proposal using Milwaukee-specific data • Assess intervention strategies for gaps and change or enhance existing efforts aimed at reducing sex trafficking and related crimes • Use Milwaukee-specific data to supplement internal and external evaluations

Criminal Justice Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use data to develop trainings for new assistant district attorneys (ADAs) to successfully prosecute trafficking cases• Understand characteristics of sex trafficking that may be visible in other justice-related settings (i.e. corrections)
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dispel myths and inaccurate perceptions about sex trafficking• Disseminate information to further awareness of sex trafficking-related issues

Methodology

This section outlines the methodology for this supplement, including research questions and definitions. A full description of the methods used in this project can be found in the original [sex trafficking report](#).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this supplementary report:

1. What is the demographic profile of individuals who were sex trafficked in Milwaukee?
2. Are there geographic trafficking hot spots in Milwaukee? If so, where?

Data Collection and Definitions

Incidents involving trafficking were identified through multiple narrative word searches of “trafficking,” “Backpage,” “prostitution,” and potential misspellings in MPD’s record management system. Inclusion criteria for victims were individuals 25 years of age and younger who were listed as a victim, missing person, or person of interest (POI) in a police report narrative that referred to trafficking, Backpage, or prostitution. Individuals with experiences that matched the Wisconsin statutory definition of trafficking were included in this report as victims of trafficking.

Two types of geographic information were collected. The first, which seeks to further the understanding of the demographic characteristics of individuals who were trafficked, included the last known address of the victim reported at the time of the trafficking incident. Because only one address could be collected in the database, the most recent address was collected. For example, if a person was confirmed or believed to have been trafficked in both 2014 and 2016, the address the individual reported to police as their current address in 2016 was collected.

The second type of geographic information was collected to understand the spatial characteristics of sex trafficking itself. This included collecting the incident location as it was recorded in MPD’s records and the police district in which it was reported. An additional text box was created in the database to allow for documentation of other trafficking locations that were disclosed.

Inclusion Criteria

Based on the difference in availability of the two types of geographic information, two sample groups were created. For both groups, date of birth, race, sex, and tier classification (confirmed vs. believed victim) were required. Therefore, both sample groups were derived from the 231 individuals analyzed in the original sex trafficking report. For inclusion in the first sample group,

a last known residence was also required. A last known residence could be described as a state, city, or address.

The second analysis sought to understand the geospatial characteristics of sex trafficking incidents reported to MPD. Because some individuals were confirmed or believed to have been trafficked multiple times, some individuals were duplicated in this analysis. However, each incident of confirmed or suspected trafficking was counted only once. Incidents where the location was classified as unknown in MPD's records were excluded, as well as incidents that were identified through a missing person report. The incident location in a missing person report is recorded as the location where the person was last seen, not necessarily where they were trafficked, so missing reports were coded as if the trafficking location was unknown and were excluded from the analysis. However, if an individual who was identified as trafficked through a missing report was recovered in a different jurisdiction where they were also trafficked, this information was collected for the "other locations" map.

Results

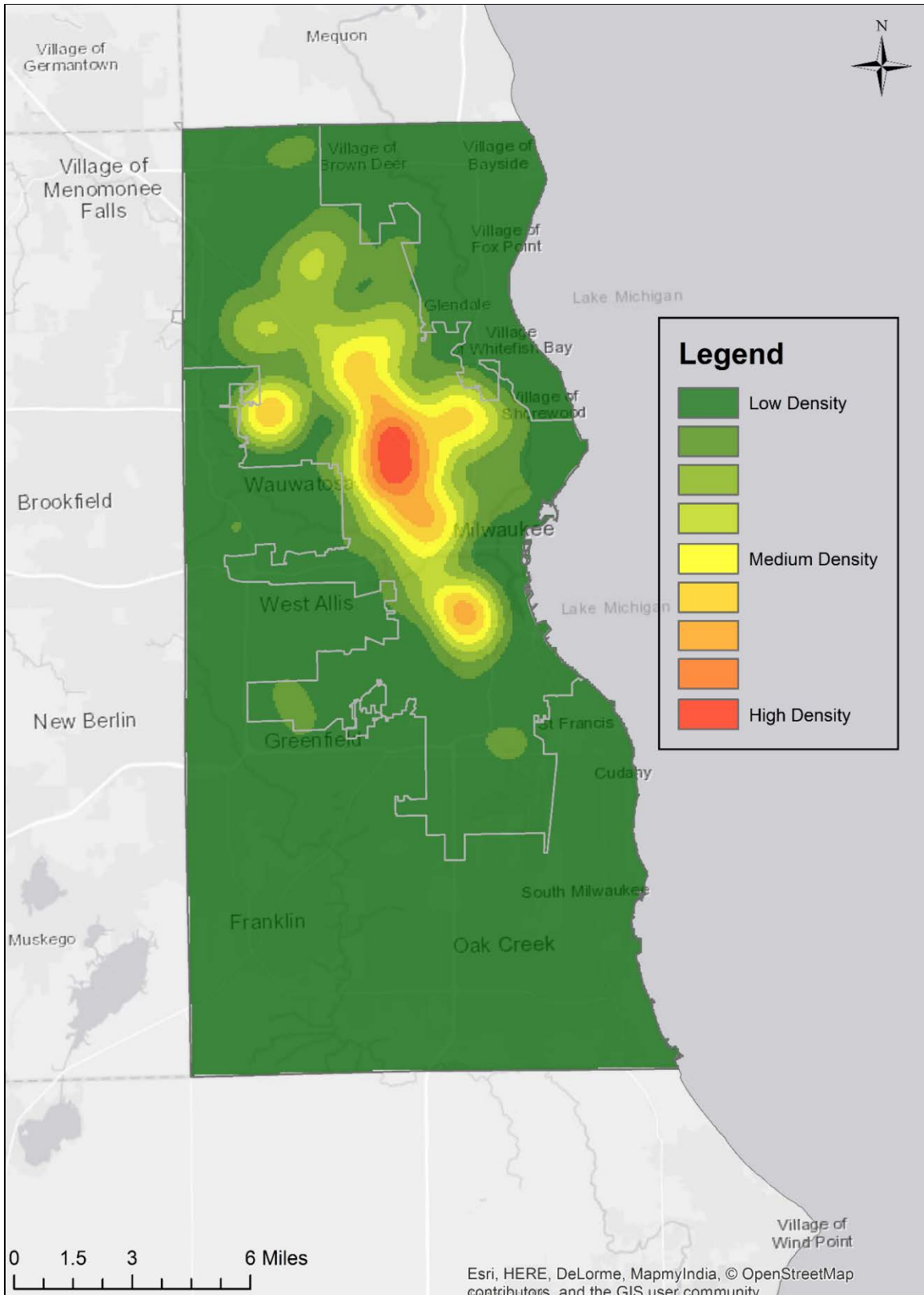
Individual's Last Known Residence

Of the original 231 individuals analyzed in the first sex trafficking report, state residential information was available for 228 individuals. Four individuals were reported as homeless at the time of the trafficking incident, but one provided a zip code of the area in which they lived. Of the 228 individuals, 221 (97%) were last known to reside in Wisconsin. The remaining seven individuals (3%) resided in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and South Dakota.

Information on the city in which individuals were last known to reside was available for 228 individuals. The majority of individuals who were trafficked in Milwaukee resided in the city of Milwaukee (200 individuals or 88%). Twenty-one individuals (9%) resided in a Wisconsin city other than Milwaukee. Seven individuals (3%) resided in a known city outside of Wisconsin.

Map 1 displays the population density of juveniles and young adults who were identified as victims of sex trafficking in MPD records in Milwaukee and lived in Milwaukee County based on their last known residence (N = 206).

Map 1: Last Known Residence of Individuals Identified as Victims of Sex Trafficking in MPD Records in Milwaukee, 2013 - 2016



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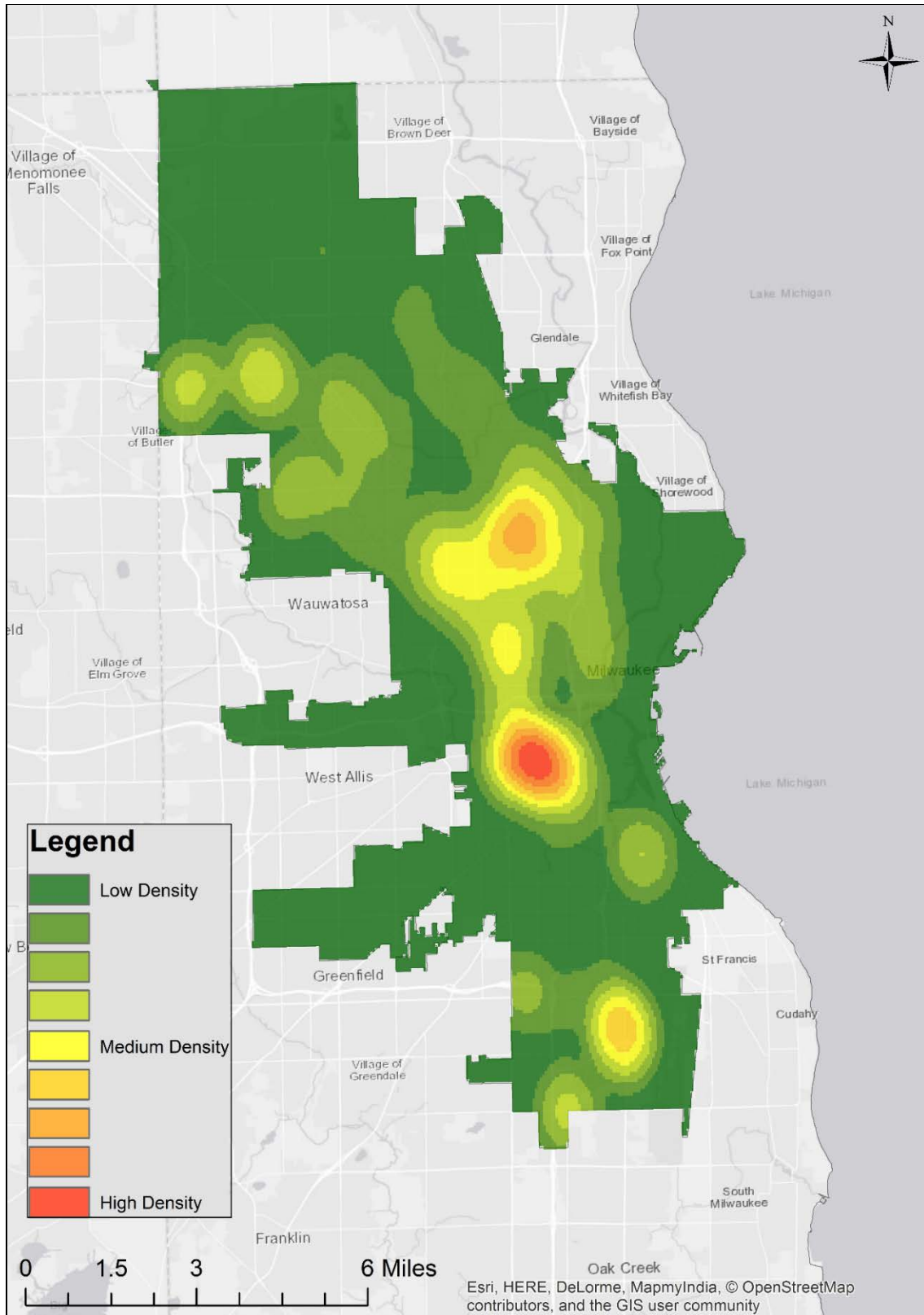
Trafficking Location

The location of incidents of sex trafficking identified in MPD records was available for 241 incidents of 183 individuals. There were slightly more adults than juveniles within this population. Of the 183 individuals for whom confirmed trafficking incident location information was available, 89 individuals (49%) were under 18 at the first recorded incident of trafficking between 2013 and 2016, and 94 individuals (51%) were over 18. In the initial report where 231 individuals were analyzed, 55% (126 individuals) were juveniles at the first reported incident of confirmed or potential trafficking between 2013 and 2016, and the remaining 45% (105 individuals) were adults.

The number of trafficking incidents identified in MPD records in Milwaukee was broken down by address (Map 2), zip code (Map 3), and police district (Map 4). The density map (Map 2) clearly shows multiple hot spots of trafficking throughout the city, with the highest density cluster on the south side of Milwaukee. The north side hot spots overlap with victims' last known residence and other violence in Milwaukee. A further examination of these hot spots can be found in the discussion section of this report.

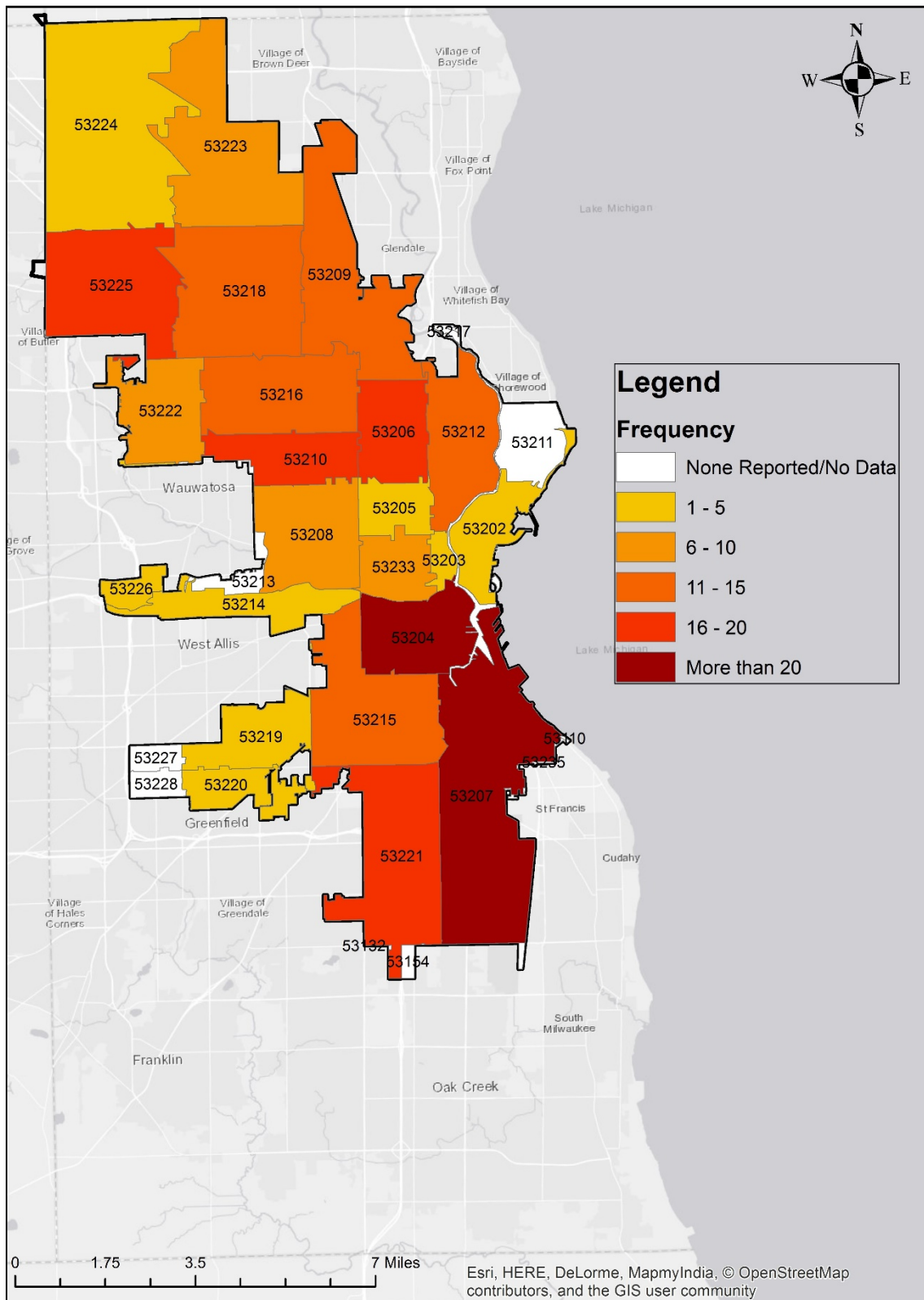
On the south side of Milwaukee, the largest hot spots of trafficking incidents were in the zip codes 53207 (27 incidents) and 53204 (25 incidents) (Map 3). These were also the largest hot spots in the city overall. On the north side of Milwaukee, 20 incidents were identified in both 53206 and 53225. Additional hot spots were identified at various points in the city. In the zip code 53210, 19 incidents of trafficking were identified and in the zip code 53221 (near General Mitchell International Airport), 16 incidents of trafficking were identified. High frequencies of trafficking occurred in every police district except for District 1 (Map 4), which consists primarily of the downtown business area and Upper East Side.

Map 2: Incidents of Sex Trafficking Identified in MPD Records in the City of Milwaukee, 2013-2016

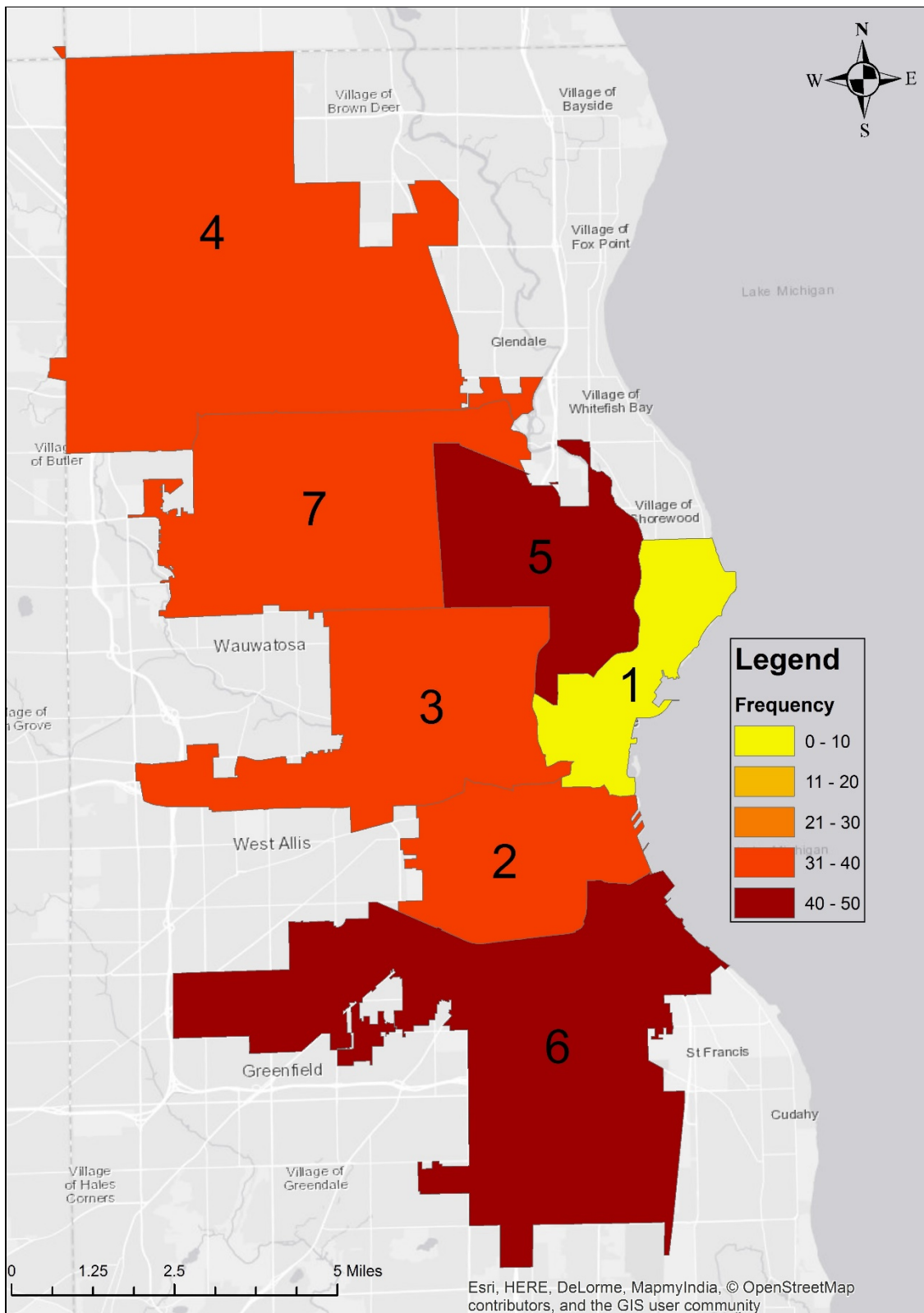


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Map 3: Incidents of Sex Trafficking Identified in MPD Records in the City of Milwaukee by Zip Code, 2013-2016



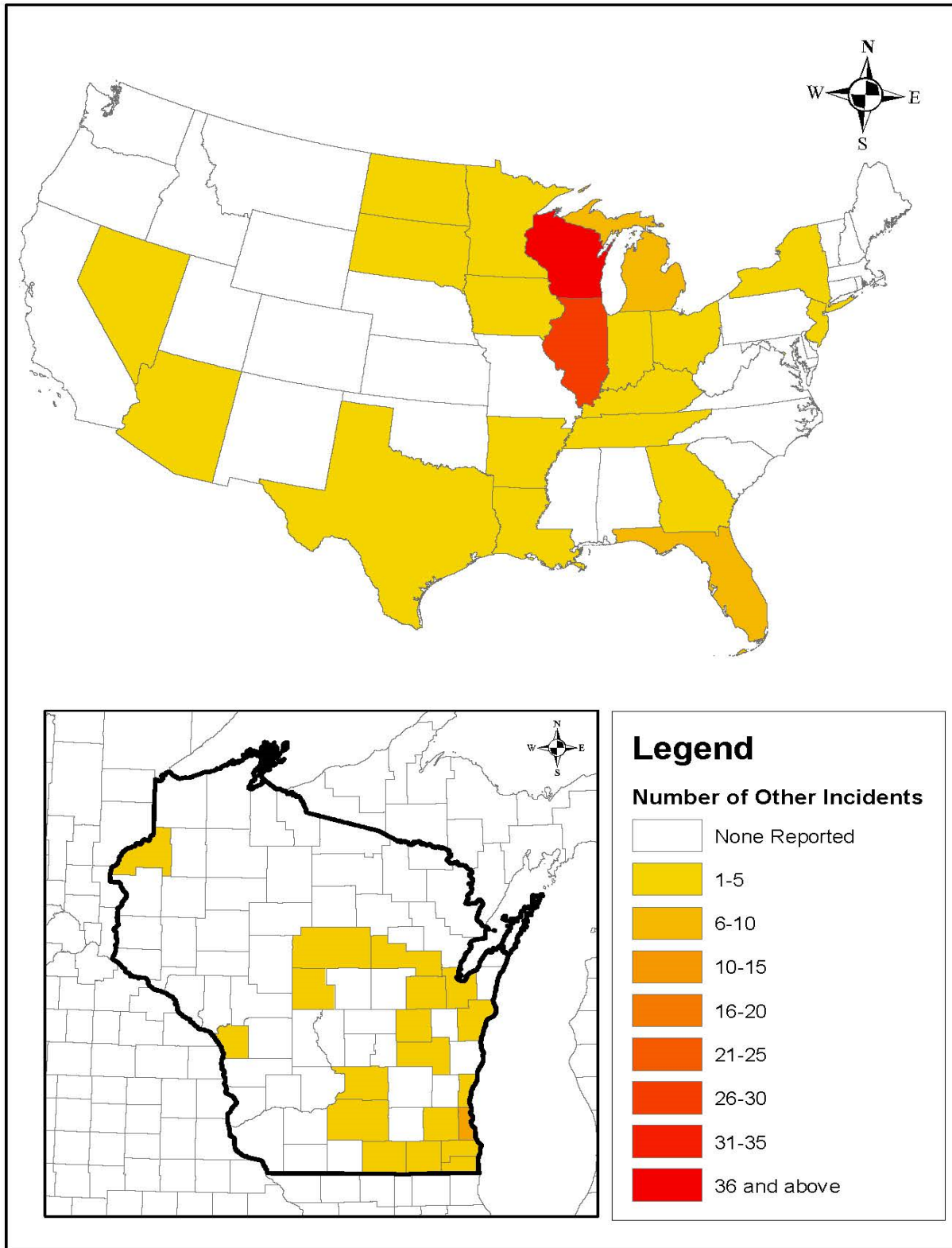
Map 4: Incidents of Sex Trafficking Identified in MPD Records in the City of Milwaukee by Milwaukee Police District, 2013-2016



Statewide and National Implications – Other locations

A narrative variable was included in the database to account for other locations individuals may have been trafficked in addition to being trafficked in the city of Milwaukee. The information is based on the individual's disclosure of other trafficking locations as well as recorded trafficking-related contacts with other law enforcement agencies. Additional incident locations that were disclosed to MPD were limited in that the trafficking incident could not always be independently verified by law enforcement. Seventy-one individuals within the overall population (n=231) reported being trafficked in at least 42 cities across 20 states including Washington DC (Map 5). Within Wisconsin, individuals reported being trafficked in at least 30 other cities outside of Milwaukee. The most frequent other locations reported were Chicago, IL (disclosed in 19 incidents) and Green Bay, WI (disclosed in 5 incidents). In some narrative reports, individuals disclosed being trafficked in "other states" or in "various locations in Milwaukee" (7 incidents). These incidents were not included in the maps because they were too vague, though we thought it was important to note regardless.

Map 5: Additional Trafficking Locations Reported to MPD Beyond the City of Milwaukee, 2013-2016



Discussion

Limitations

The limitations of this study and the data collected have implications for the findings presented and the interpretation of these findings. Most notably, this report only describes sex trafficking of juveniles and young adults who had contact with MPD between 2013 – 2016. Therefore, the findings should not be represented as the totality of sex trafficking in Milwaukee. Where possible, efforts were made to minimize the limitations. A comprehensive list of study limitations can be found in the [original report](#).

Diverging locations

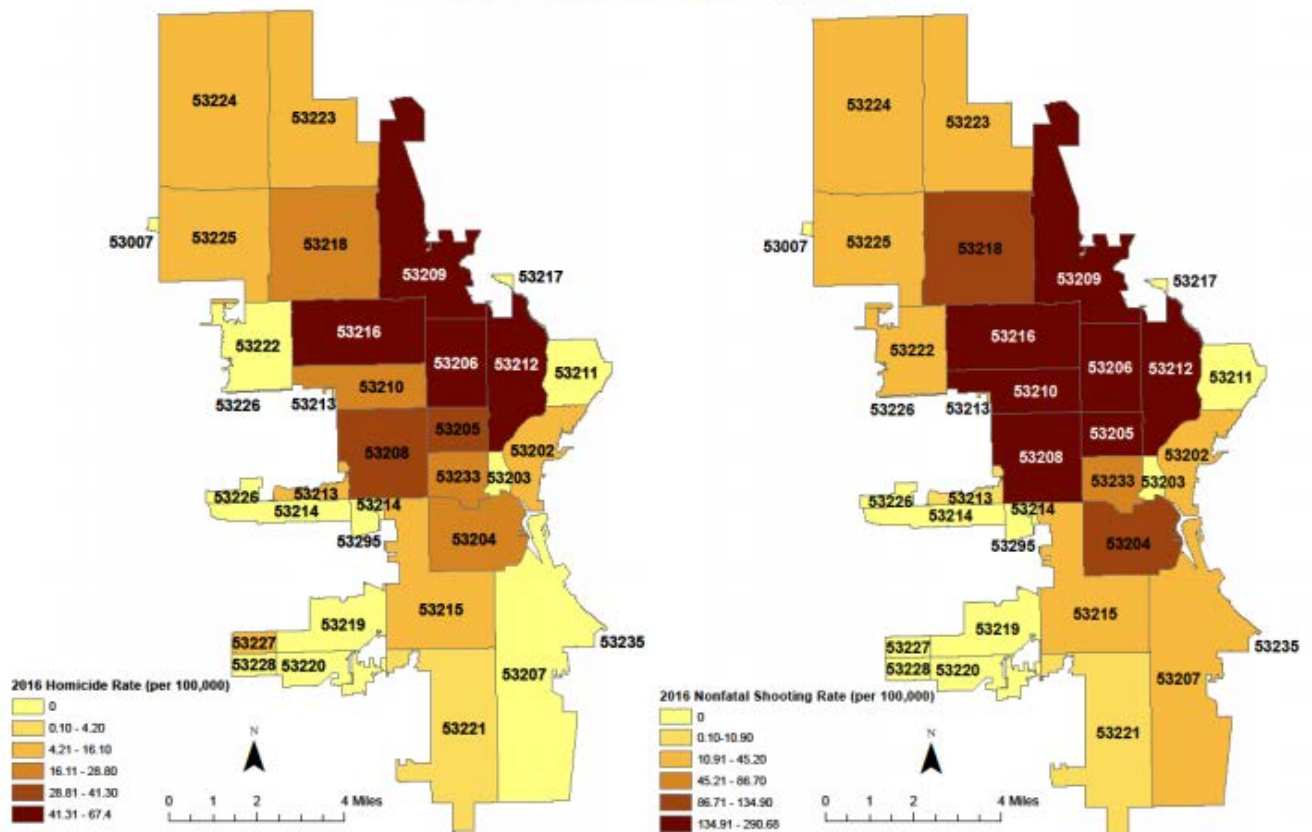
We identified one trafficking incident hot spot that did not overlap with victim residence location in zip code 53207 on the city's south side. There were over 20 incidents identified in this zip code, but these incidents were not evenly distributed throughout the area. Almost one third of the incidents that occurred in 53207 were associated with one specific residence and one trafficker, while the remainder were associated with hotels/motels located near I-94 and General Mitchell International Airport. This indicates that there are certain areas and establishments that have characteristics that allow trafficking to flourish. In this example, proximity to the airport and I-94 make it easy to get in and out of these neighborhoods. Furthermore, there are low rates of poverty and violence, which may give purchasers the perception that they are engaging in criminal activity in a "safe" neighborhood where they are less likely to get caught or to experience violence themselves. Unfortunately, a dearth of research remains on purchasers of commercial sex, especially regarding why they choose to purchase sex and why they choose the locations they do; therefore, we can only speculate their reasoning. Because there are clusters of trafficking by location type, as in this example where most trafficking incidents occurred in hotels whereas elsewhere victims were more frequently trafficked out of private residences or in the context of street prostitution, it is possible that the dynamics of trafficking vary throughout the city.

Overlapping locations

Sex trafficking appears to intersect with other forms of violence in the city. The zip codes 53206 on the north side and 53204 on the south side have higher rates of homicides, nonfatal shootings, and frequency of sex trafficking incidents. Census tracts that fall within the boundaries of these zip codes have higher rates of poverty and lower rates of educational attainment (as measured by percent of high school graduates age 25 and older). These neighborhoods also have the highest number of victims residing in them. Furthermore,

incidents of trafficking were identified through a multitude of other types of interpersonal violence-related incidents, including kidnapping, battery, domestic violence, strangulation and suffocation, and false imprisonment. This indicates that the victims identified in this report encounter many challenges in their lives, both at the individual and neighborhood level. As a result they may become more vulnerable to sex trafficking victimization. In addition, some of the areas where victim residence and trafficking incident location overlap have a high density of group homes that may be known to traffickers as locations where there are vulnerable children.

Figure 29. Homicide (left) and Nonfatal Shooting (right) Rate per 100,000 in the City of Milwaukee, 2016



Data Source: MPD, 2016

Data Source: MPD, 2016

Recommendations

Updates to recommendations from the original sex trafficking report

Develop a clear training protocol for distinguishing between prostitution and sex trafficking of adults—

Deploy the training protocol to all MPD officers: The data in this report clearly shows that trafficking happens in every police district in the city. This highlights the need for training for officers in all districts in Milwaukee. Street-level officers are those most likely to first come in contact with victims of sex trafficking, as opposed to a sensitive crimes officer or detective. These officers are in a unique position to identify trafficking early and initiate an appropriate response. Therefore, specialized training should be provided to these officers to identify victims of trafficking, establish contact, connect the victim with community-based services (if applicable), and refer the case to MPD's Sensitive Crimes Division.

Implement additional training for criminal justice, medical, and social service systems to identify and respond to sex trafficking and continue trauma-informed training across all sectors—

Deploy trauma-informed training to providers to address distrust of authority and improve identification of victims: Practitioners who work with victims of trafficking report victims are more likely to disclose and accept services if the practitioners seem to be genuinely caring and focused on the needs of the individual (Ahern, Sadler et al., 2017). It is therefore important that all interactions with victims of trafficking are trauma-informed.

Improve identification of and interventions for individuals at risk for sex trafficking victimization—

Focus awareness and prevention efforts on areas identified as hot spots for trafficking incidents: A baseline understanding of where trafficking occurs and where victims reside throughout the city afford the opportunity for law enforcement and advocacy services to identify targeted areas for intervention. This data could also be used to improve identification of and interventions for individuals at risk for sex trafficking victimization.

New Recommendations

Expand and deploy evidence-based programming to areas throughout Milwaukee: Programs such as [The Benedict Center Sisters Program](#) seek to help women who are sex trafficked or involved in prostitution to safely exit “the life” and lead safer, healthier lives. The Sisters Program provides case management, crisis management and safety planning, educational and support groups, and a warming room in the winter. Women are connected to the Sisters

Program through street outreach or as a diversion alternative to incarceration following a prostitution arrest by MPD. Initially the Sisters Program only had a single north side location, though they recently opened a south side location to also address prostitution and trafficking that occurs in that area. Programs such as this should be supported and expanded through funding, research, and further multidisciplinary collaboration.

Further research to identify why trafficking is occurring in certain areas—identify and address some of the environmental factors that enable trafficking to flourish: Research on sex trafficking is still relatively new and there are many topics related to trafficking that merit further examination. While our findings are not conclusive (trafficking may be occurring in areas that we did not identify), future research should examine the environmental factors that enable trafficking to flourish in certain areas, including what drives trafficking to other areas throughout the city, state and nation. By understanding these factors, prevention and intervention initiatives can be developed to prevent trafficking hot spots.

Develop alternative strategies for identifying locations where juveniles are trafficked: Many juveniles who were trafficked were excluded from this analysis because the location of the trafficking was unknown. Strategies for identifying where juveniles are trafficked should be developed to better understand the geospatial characteristics of sex trafficking of minors in Milwaukee. These strategies should be developed and deployed through collaboration between the community, criminal justice system, local healthcare systems, and social service and advocacy agencies.

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