Southeast Cities

Measure M Local Return:
Creating People Friendly Funding Priorities

Report by:
East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice + Urban Health Strategies

Support provided by:
Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition
Public Health Advocates

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Cover Image:
Bicycle rider forced onto sidewalk at the intersection of the I-5 Freeway, the mainline of the Union Pacific East Los Angeles Railyard, and three major freight truck corridors.
Provided by: East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice

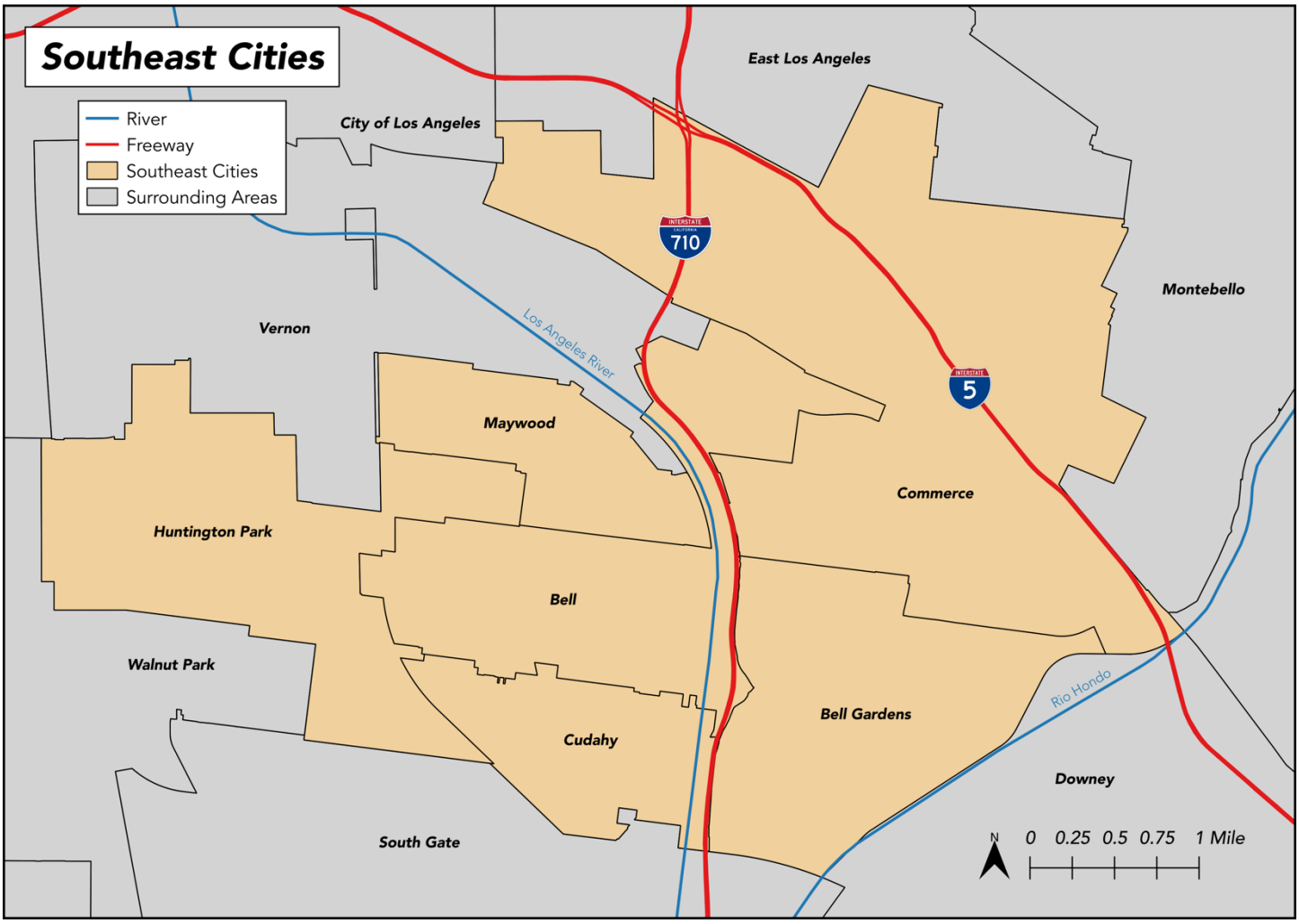
Purpose

On November 8, 2016, Los Angeles County voters overwhelmingly voted yes on Measure M. Yes on Measure M votes went well above 70% in all the Southeast Cities. This is due to many reasons, but ultimately it comes down to this: working-class, Latino communities want their cities to be more livable and people friendly.

While Measure M is majority transit and freeway projects, there is a local return portion that goes back to cities for use on transportation improvements. Local return is a huge opportunity for cities to create a sustainable funding source to plan and construct people friendly active transportation improvements such as: safe routes to school, sidewalk construction/expansion, and bike lanes.

In this report, we outline the need and importance of people friendly infrastructure improvements and call for Measure M Local Return funding priorities in the cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Commerce, Cudahy, Huntington Park, and Maywood.

Note: This report is based on the original allocation formula for Measure M Local Return. We strongly oppose any change to the formula that results in loss of funding to low-income cities throughout Los Angeles County.



Background

Demographics

The Southeast Cities are known to be some of the densest cities in the USA, as well as some of the most disadvantaged. The demographics from the United States Census Bureau demonstrate that, but looking at the high percentages of folks that voted in favor of Measure M we know that our people want to help build their communities through transit and people friendly improvements.

Southeast Cities Demographics					
City	Population	Population Density (mi²)	% Latino	% Below Poverty	% of Voters: Yes, on Measure M
Bell	35,998	14,399.2	92.2%	27.7%	81.86%
Bell Gardens	42,842	17,850.8	95.8%	28.1%	82.43%
Commerce	13,017	1,990.9	94%	16%	73.05%
Cudahy	24,138	19,688.4	96.2%	31.3%	85.65%
Huntington Park	59,003	19,563.3	97.3%	29.6%	81.96%
Maywood	27,739	23,547.5	98%	30.1%	82.65%

Table 1: Southeast Cities Demographics (Source: US Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey and LA County Registrar)

For reference, the city of Los Angeles has a population density of 7,755mi^2.

Commerce appears as an outlier, but it is a city with majority industrial and commercial land uses and its population concentrated in a few pockets.

Planning

The Southeast Cities are in various stages of bicycle, pedestrian, and safe routes to school master planning:

Southeast Cities Active Transportation Master Planning			
	Bicycle MP	**Pedestrian MP**	**SRTS MP**
Bell	In progress	No	In progress
Bell Gardens	Complete Streets Plan in progress		
Commerce	Active Transportation Master Plan in progress		
Cudahy	Yes: Part of SRTS MP	No	Yes
Huntington Park	Yes	No	No
Maywood	No	No	No
Vernon	In progress	No	N/A

Note: All plans that are completed/in-progress have been done with the help of state and regionally granted funds. None of the plans have been completed through funding of their own. This is important

to note because implementation of the plans should be done expediently and the only way to do that is for the cities to create a sustainable funding source without reliance on grants.

Current Conditions

Sidewalks

All the cities have a well-connected sidewalk network, but their central business districts (Gage Ave., Florence Ave., Atlantic Blvd., Slauson Ave., and Pacific Blvd.) do not have any extra pedestrian amenities to enhance the experience of walking and shopping there. Street trees, sidewalk bulb-outs, leading pedestrian intervals, are all examples of infrastructure that can completely change the experience of walking for the better.

On-street improvements coupled with sidewalk improvements increase the safety and walkability of neighborhoods, as Figure 1 shows.

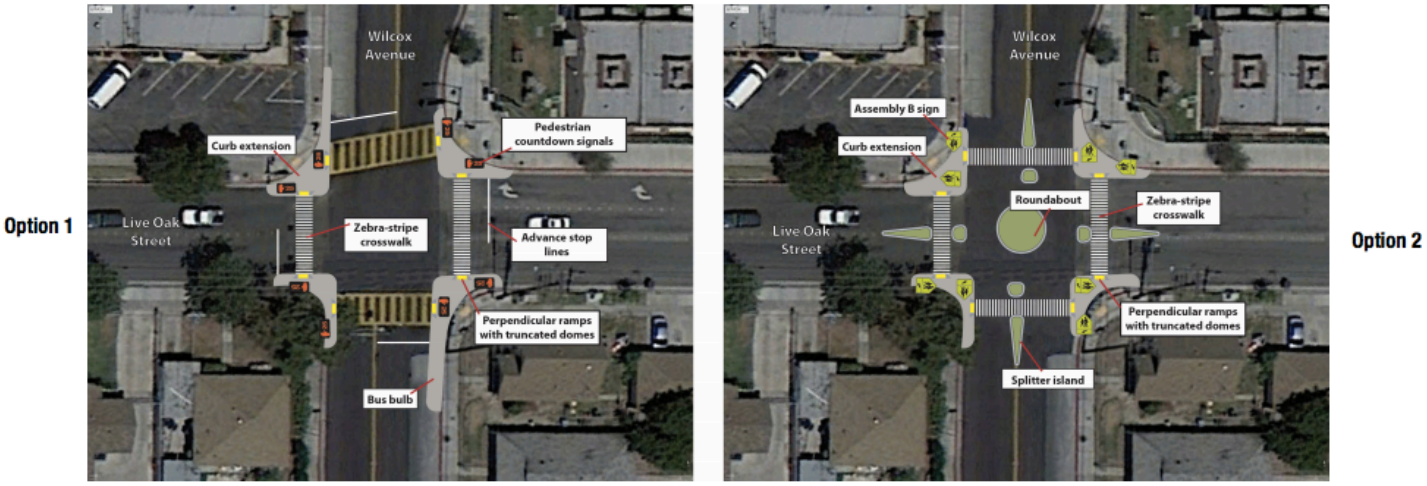


Figure 1: Options for sidewalk & on-street improvements (Source: Cudahy Safe Routes to School Master Plan)

Bicycle Lanes

None of the Southeast Cities have bicycle lanes.

The cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, and Maywood do have the Los Angeles River Bicycle Path cross them; the path can be considered a backbone for any potential improvements to connect across the cities, as well as to the Rio Hondo Bicycle Path in Bell Gardens.

The city of Cudahy has made significant strides in attaining grant funding for their infrastructure improvements. They have been able to fully fund complete streets improvements for the only major street in the city, Atlantic Blvd. The project is expected to break ground in 2019. This is a huge step in the right direction, but there is still an entire Mobility Element and a Safe Routes to School Master Plan to fund.

Collisions

Collisions are an important piece of current conditions because they speak to:

- The safety, or lack of safety, in the current street configuration.

- The ability to see which streets/intersections are most dangerous.
- The need to implement infrastructure to avoid further injuries and deaths.

Southeast Cities Collisions, 2012 - 2016				
City	# of Car-Pedestrian Collisions	# of Car-Bike Collisions	# of Deaths	Total
Bell	98	95	2	193
Bell Gardens	83	92	7	175
Commerce	35	21	11	56
Cudahy	13	17	0	30
Huntington Park	181	144	3	325
Maywood	29	21	4	50

Table 2: Southeast Cities Collisions, 2012 - 2016 (Source: CA Highway Patrol, Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System)

In the Southeast Cities, the number of collisions vary from a low of 30 in Cudahy to a high of 325 in Huntington Park. Cudahy only has one major thoroughfare running through it, while Huntington Park has various wide avenues. It should not be an excuse to say that because a city has more streets, it should have more collisions, but it should be a call to create a cohesive network of safe streets to provide residents the ability to walk and bike freely and safely.

Wide-streets being held aside, the numbers also speak to broader street conditions. The city of Commerce has considerably less population than Huntington Park (13,017 vs 59,003), but it sees twice the pedestrian/cyclist deaths. The city of Commerce experiences a high amount of day traffic from freight and industry operations. Again, this should not be an excuse to allow streets to continue to be as dangerous as they currently are. Current street-widening projects and the I-710 project expansion will only serve to increase current collision rates.

It is imperative to make our streets be as safe as possible for our residents, this means reducing deaths to zero and minimizing the amount of car-pedestrian and car-bike collisions. The only way to do this is to create people friendly streets through infrastructure improvements.

Note: Detailed maps of every city's collisions are in the Appendix of this report.

Commute Patterns

The commuting patterns of cities usually determine the street level amenities that are provided to residents. For example, a city with a high walking rate will have wide sidewalks and many trees, a city with a high bicycling rate will have a well-connected bicycle network, and a city with high automobile use will have few pedestrian and cyclist amenities. This creates a cycle, catering to automobile users further increases automobile usage because of the few amenities provided to other modes of travel.

As previously noted, the Southeast Cities do not provide a welcome environment for people who walk and bike, creating an immediate barrier to walking and biking and an incentive to drive. But as Table 3 shows, there is still a significant amount walking and biking happening in the Southeast Cities.

Public transit usage is being included in the walk/bike/transit percentage because to get to bus and rail people walk and bike.

Southeast Cities Commute Patterns				
City	Walk/Bike/Transit %	Walk %	Bike %	Public Transit %
Bell	13.0%	4.4%	1%	7.6%
Bell Gardens	10.8%	5.4%	0.8%	4.6%
Commerce	4.3%	0.8%	0.9%	2.6%
Cudahy	10.8%	3.5%	1%	6.3%
Huntington Park	19%	5%	1.5%	12.3%
Maywood	13.2%	3.9%	1.2%	8.1%

Table 3: Southeast Cities Commute Patterns (Source: US Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey)

The combined walk/bike/transit percentages show us that more than 1 out of every 10 people commuting to work walk/bike a part or all of their trip. In the city of Huntington Park, that number is closer to 2 out of every 10 people. Keeping in mind that there is currently no infrastructure to support walking and biking, these numbers are remarkable.

The city of Commerce's low walk/bike/transit rate cannot be blamed on the population when their streets result in over 2 pedestrians/bicyclists dying per year.

In the previous section, we outlined over 800 car-pedestrian and car-bicyclist collisions, getting to work should not be a life-threatening situation. We must provide the infrastructure for our residents to get to work and get back to their families safely.

Youth & Livable Communities

The importance of creating cities that allow for children and teenagers to play and recreate safely cannot be based solely on the commuting population of a city. Particularly in the Southeast Cities where almost 1/3rd of the population is a person under 18 years old.

Southeast Cities School-Age (Under-18) Population		
City	School-Age Population %	School-Age Population #
Bell	29.8%	10,740
Bell Gardens	33.8%	14,478
Commerce	25.9%	3,366
Cudahy	32.6%	7,878
Huntington Park	29.5%	17,425
Maywood	32.4%	8,987

Table 4: Southeast Cities School-Age Population (Source: US Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey)

The school-age population is a key indicator for how our cities should develop in terms of being people friendly because a city built around our youth ensures safe streets for families to walk to the park, teenagers to bike/skateboard, and older adults to go to the store.

A city built around the automobile swells up with traffic every morning and every afternoon as the school-age population is dropped off and picked up, this leads to increased pollution and an unsafe environment for those who choose to walk and bike to school.

Figure 2: Corona Ave. Elementary School in Bell, CA saw over 300 children go through a bicycle training program on a Saturday morning in 2016. (Source: Urban Health Strategies)

Attaining mode shift from driving to walking/bicycling to school might be tough at first, but a robust education program that teaches elementary-age children how to bicycle safely empowers them and instills knowledge that will be carried with them through their teenage and adult years. The same with teenagers, having dedicated bicycle parking at the school and encouraging them through education goes a long way. Education and encouragement campaigns must go together with infrastructure improvements to work, one without the other does not provide a full program for mode shift.

Public Health

The obesity epidemic in the USA has been well known for several years, we are #2, after Mexico, worldwide. In the Southeast Cities the obesity rate varies, but in every city, we see rates that are much higher than that of the state of California. While 1 in 4 people over the age of 18 are obese in California, the rate in the Southeast Cities is over 1 in 3.

We see the same with diabetes. The city of Commerce has close to twice the rate of diabetes than statewide, further underlining that the city's low walk/bike/public transit rate must be increased to have a healthier population.

Southeast Cities Public Health				
City	Overweight (Ages 2 -11)	Overweight/Obese (Ages 12 - 17)	Obesity % (18+)	Diabetes (18+)
Bell	14.4%	39.6%	35.6%	10.9%
Bell Gardens	15.4%	39.9%	34.7%	8.8%
Commerce	16.3%	40.5%	38.1%	15.1%
Cudahy	15.2%	40.6%	34.5%	8.6%
Huntington Park	18.3%	39.7%	35%	10.4%
Maywood	14.9%	40.2%	35.4%	9.9%
California (Comparison)	13.3%	33.1%	25.8%	8.8%

Table 5: Southeast Cities Public Health (Source: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research)

Physical activity combats being overweight/obese, the only way to increase physical activity in everyday life is by providing options in how our community members get to work, school, parks, and stores. People friendly infrastructure, like safe routes to school and bicycle lanes, is not only a way to get to work and school safely, but a way to create a healthier population.

Our Ask: Measure M Local Return Funding Priorities

The passage of Senate Bill 1, the Transportation Funding Bill, has created a separate local return fund for the cities to use to fund pothole filling and street repaving, freeing up Measure M Local Return funds for use in active transportation infrastructure improvements.

Southeast Cities Yearly Local Return for Transportation (estimate by formula)		
City	Measure M	Senate Bill 1: Transportation Funding Bill
Bell	$513,400	$1,243,070
Bell Gardens	$609,100	$1,474,930
Commerce	$185,500	$449,273
Cudahy	$344,800	$834,905
Huntington Park	$842,600	$2,040,375
Maywood	$396,100	$959,229

Table 6: Southeast Cities Yearly Local Return for Transportation (Source: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority & Gateway Cities Council of Governments)

At a yearly level, Measure M Local Return cannot fully implement active transportation infrastructure improvements, which is why **every city should commit to setting aside 100% of Measure M Local Return towards active transportation for the next 10 years**. This creates a sustainable funding source to create master plans, fund already completed master plans, and fund education/encouragement programs at local schools and citywide.

The Southeast Cities must collaborate with each other when creating master plans and when implementing them, boundaries are fluid to community members and are crossed multiple times a day. Amenities should be seen along entire corridors, not just contained in the boundaries of one city. For example, Cudahy is leading on an Atlantic Blvd. complete street, Bell and Maywood should ensure that they provide this continuous amenity for community members.

Partnerships with community based organizations (CBOs) needs to happen during and after the creation of master plans. The call for an included 10% set-aside for education/encouragement programs sets up funding to partner with CBOs to have hands-on bicycle safety rodeos at elementary schools, to site bicycle racks with community input, and for general campaigns to encourage residents to walk, bike, and take public transit.

The high numbers of pedestrian and bicyclist deaths; high rates of walking, biking, public transit usage; high school-age population; and high rates of obesity in the Southeast Cities should be alarming to elected officials. These reasons warrant a revamp of the way that the streets are configured in each of these cities. To provide for our commuters, our youth, increase our health, and stop senseless traffic deaths, we must begin to implement people friendly infrastructure in the form of pedestrian amenities and bicycle lanes. The transportation status quo is simply not cutting it anymore.

Outlined in the following pages are the asks of each city for Measure M Local Return.

City of Bell

Measure M Local Return: Creating People Friendly Funding Priorities

Issues

Few pedestrian amenities

No bicycle lanes

193 collisions, 4 deaths, 2012 - 2016

- 98 car-pedestrian collisions
- 95 car-bicyclist collisions

39.6% overweight/obese teen rate

35.6% obese adult rate

Opportunities

Bicycle master plan completed

- Per plan, $3,000,000+ needed

13% walk/bike/transit commute rate

29.8% school-age population

$500,000+, Measure M Local Return

Our Ask: Prioritize Funding

In order to implement people friendly improvements expediently:

Dedicate 100% of Measure M Local Return to active transportation

- 10 years
- ~$5,000,000 for improvements
- Include 10% set-aside for education/encouragement programs
- Fully implement bicyle master plan
- Fully implement safe routes to school master plan, once complete

City of Bell Gardens

Measure M Local Return:
Creating People Friendly Funding Priorities

Issues

Few pedestrian amenities

No bicycle lanes

175 collisions, 7 deaths, 2012 - 2016

- 83 car-pedestrian collisions
- 92 car-bicyclist collisions

39.9% overweight/obese teen rate

34.7% obese adult rate

Opportunities

10.8% walk/bike/transit commute rate

33.8% school-age population

$600,000+, Measure M Local Return

Our Ask: Prioritize Funding

In order to implement people friendly improvements expediently:

Dedicate 100% of Measure M Local Return to active transportation

- 10 years
- ~$6,000,000 for improvements
- Include 10% set-aside for education/encouragement programs
  - Increased during complete streets plan creation to supplement & ensure robust community outreach
- Fully implement complete streets plan, once complete

City of Commerce

Measure M Local Return:
Creating People Friendly Funding Priorities

Issues

Few pedestrian amenities

No bicycle lanes

56 collisions, 11 deaths, 2012 - 2016

- 35 car-pedestrian collisions
- 21 car-bicyclist collisions

40.5% overweight/obese teen rate

38.1% obese adult rate

15.1% adult diabetes rate

Opportunities

10.8% walk/bike/transit commute rate

25.9% school-age population

$180,000+, Measure M Local Return

Our Ask: Prioritize Funding

In order to implement people friendly improvements expediently:

Dedicate 100% of Measure M Local Return to active transportation

- 10 years
- ~$1,800,000 for improvements
- Include 10% set-aside for education/encouragement programs
- Leverage funding as local-match for regional & state grants
- Fund complete streets along major corridors to reduce deaths:
  - Prioritize: Atlantic Blvd., Washington Blvd., Slauson Ave., Gage Ave, Eastern Ave.
- Fully fund safe routes to school improvements

City of Cudahy

Measure M Local Return: Creating People Friendly Funding Priorities

Issues

Few pedestrian amenities

No bicycle lanes

30 collisions, 2012 - 2016

- 13 car-pedestrian collisions
- 17 car-bicyclist collisions

40.6% overweight/obese teen rate

34.5% obese adult rate

Opportunities

Safe routes to school plan completed

- Per plan, $6,000,000+ needed

10.8% walk/bike/transit commute rate

32.6% school-age population

$340,000+, Measure M Local Return

Our Ask: Prioritize Funding

In order to implement people friendly improvements expediently:

Dedicate 100% of Measure M Local Return to active transportation

- 10 years
- ~$3,400,000 for improvements
- Include 10% set-aside for education/encouragement programs
- Fully implement safe routes to school master plan
- Leverage funding for Salt Lake Ave. bicycle path: ~$3,800,000

City of Huntington Park

Measure M Local Return:
Creating People Friendly Funding Priorities

Issues

Few pedestrian amenities

No bicycle lanes

325 collisions, 3 deaths, 2012 - 2016

- 181 car-pedestrian collisions
- 144 car-bicyclist collisions

39.7% overweight/obese teen rate

35% obese adult rate

Opportunities

Complete streets plan completed

- Per plan, $24,000,000+ needed

19% walk/bike/transit commute rate

29.5% school-age population

$840,000+, Measure M Local Return

Our Ask: Prioritize Funding

In order to implement people friendly improvements expediently:

Dedicate 100% of Measure M Local Return to active transportation

- 10 years
- ~$8,000,000 for improvements
- Include 10% set-aside for education/encouragement programs
- Fund safe routes to school master plan, implement once complete
- Fully implement complete streets plan
  - Implementing major Avenue and Boulevard components first

City of Maywood

Measure M Local Return: Creating People Friendly Funding Priorities

Issues

Few pedestrian amenities

No bicycle lanes

50 collisions, 4 deaths, 2012 - 2016

- 29 car-pedestrian collisions
- 21 car-bicyclist collisions

40.2% overweight/obese teen rate

35.4% obese adult rate

Opportunities

13.2% walk/bike/transit commute rate

32.4% school-age population

$390,000+, Measure M Local Return

Our Ask: Prioritize Funding

In order to implement people friendly improvements expediently:

Dedicate 100% of Measure M Local Return to active transportation

- 10 years
- ~$3,900,000 for improvements
- Include 10% set-aside for education/encouragement programs
- Fund active transportation master plan
  - Include robust community outreach, led by local nonprofits
- Fully implement active transportation master plan

Acknowledgements

Report by:

East Yard Communities For Environmental Justice

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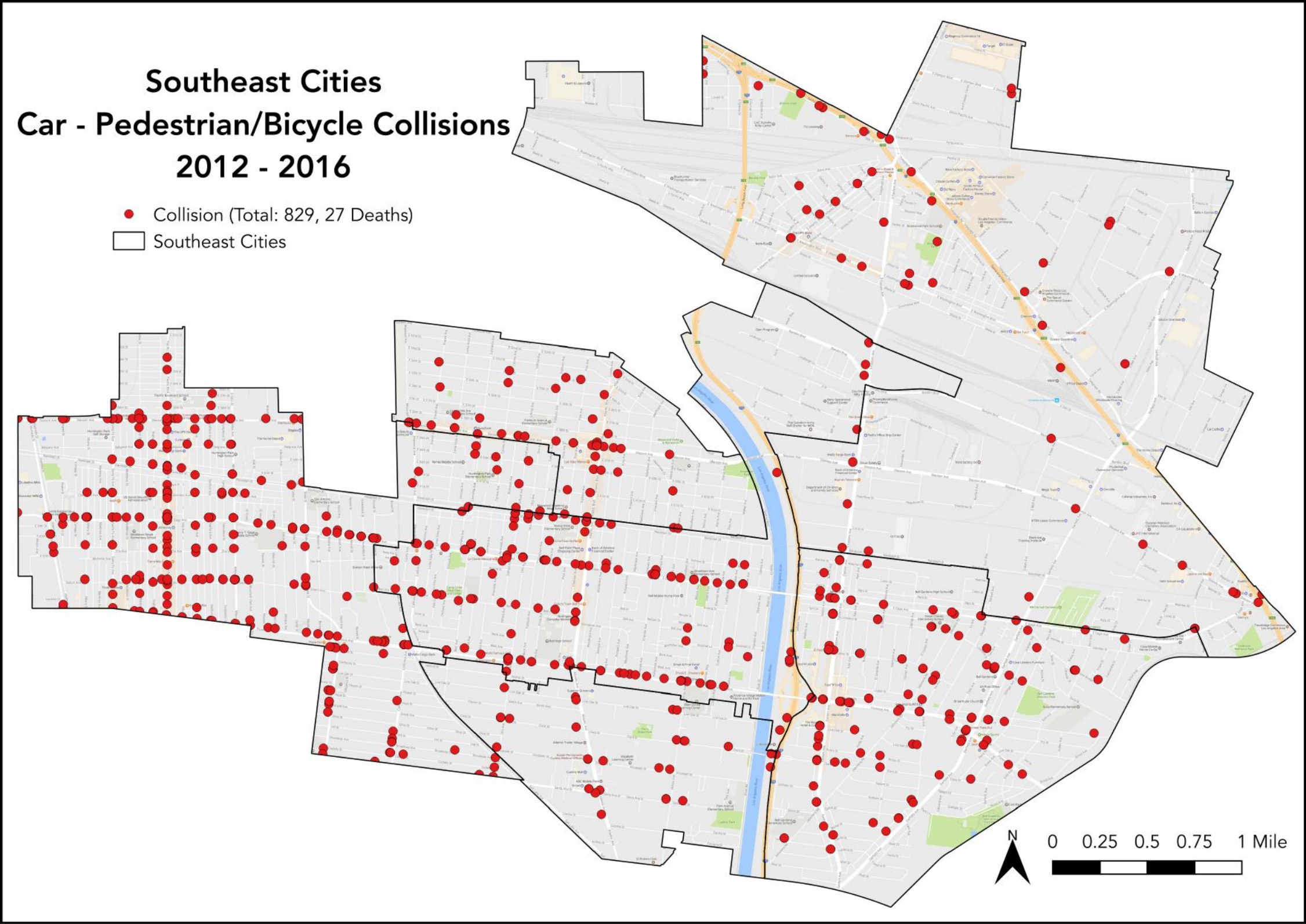
First gear support: Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BICYCLE COALITION
WWW.LA-BIKE.ORG

Second gear support: Public Health Advocates

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVOCATES
EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE HEALTHY

Appendix


Southeast Cities
Car - Pedestrian/Bicycle Collisions
2012 - 2016
Collision (Total: 829, 27 Deaths)
Southeast Cities
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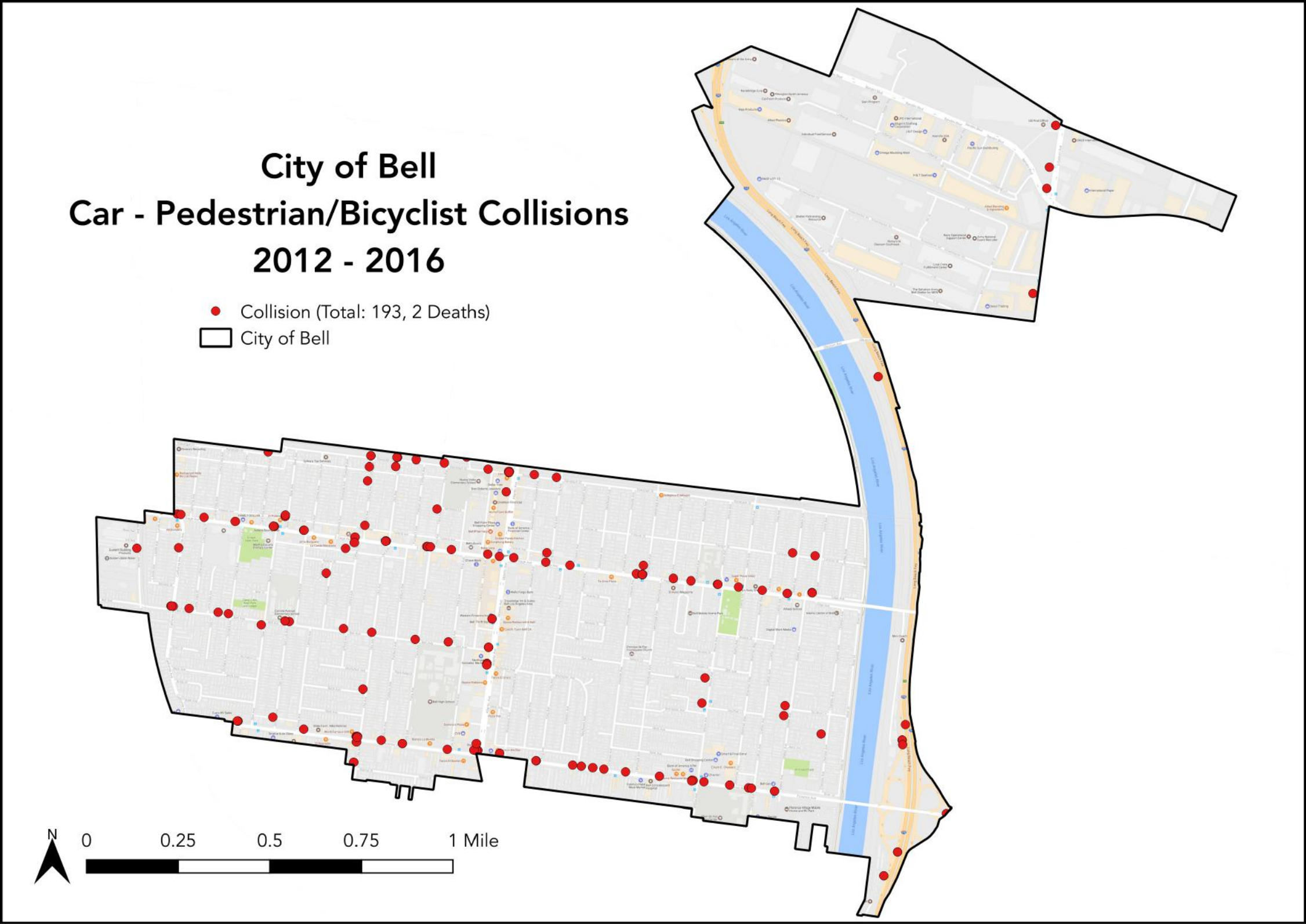
1 Mile


City of Bell
Car - Pedestrian/Bicyclist Collisions
2012 - 2016
Collision (Total: 193, 2 Deaths)
City of Bell
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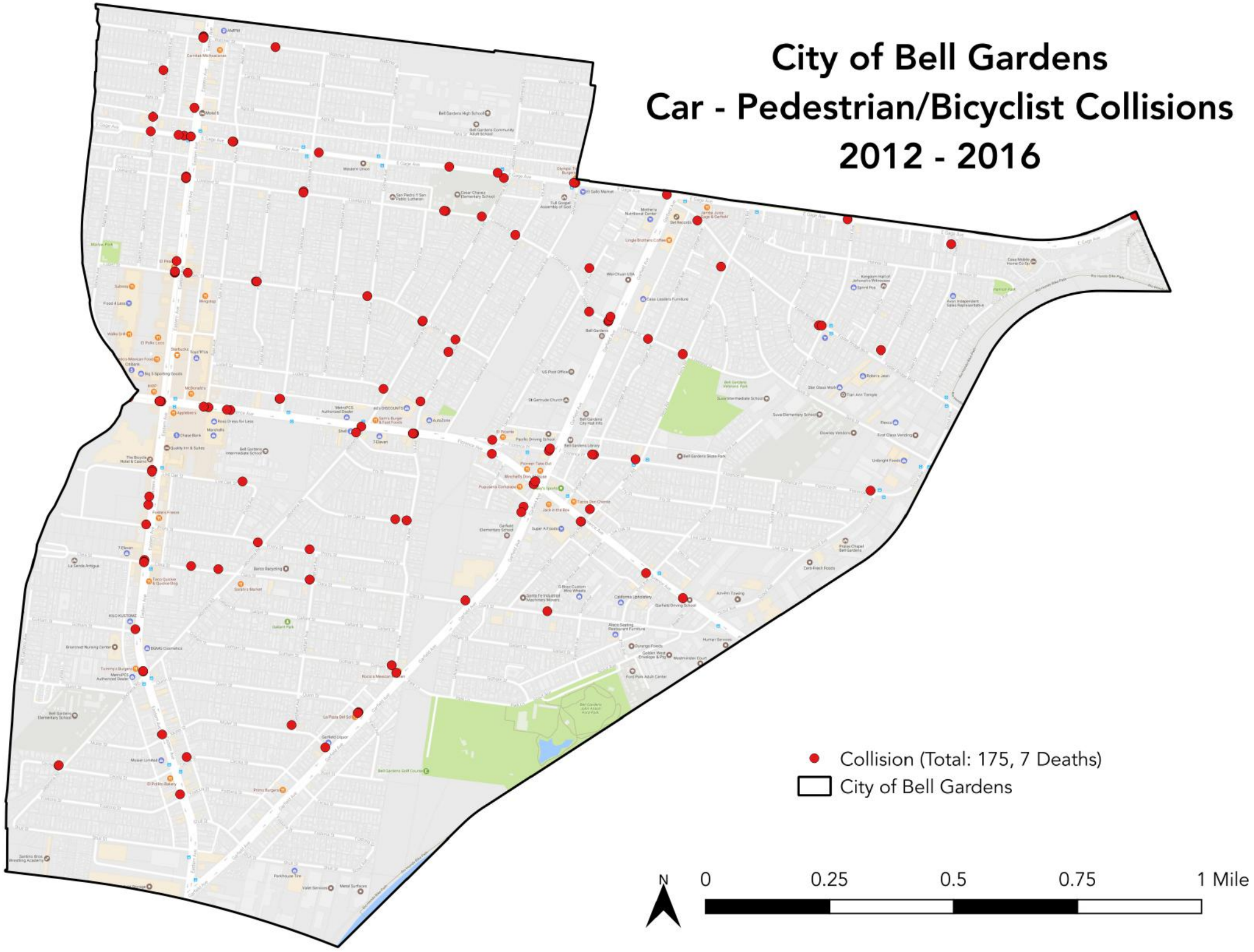
1 Mile


City of Bell Gardens
Car - Pedestrian/Bicyclist Collisions
2012 - 2016
Collision (Total: 175, 7 Deaths)
City of Bell Gardens
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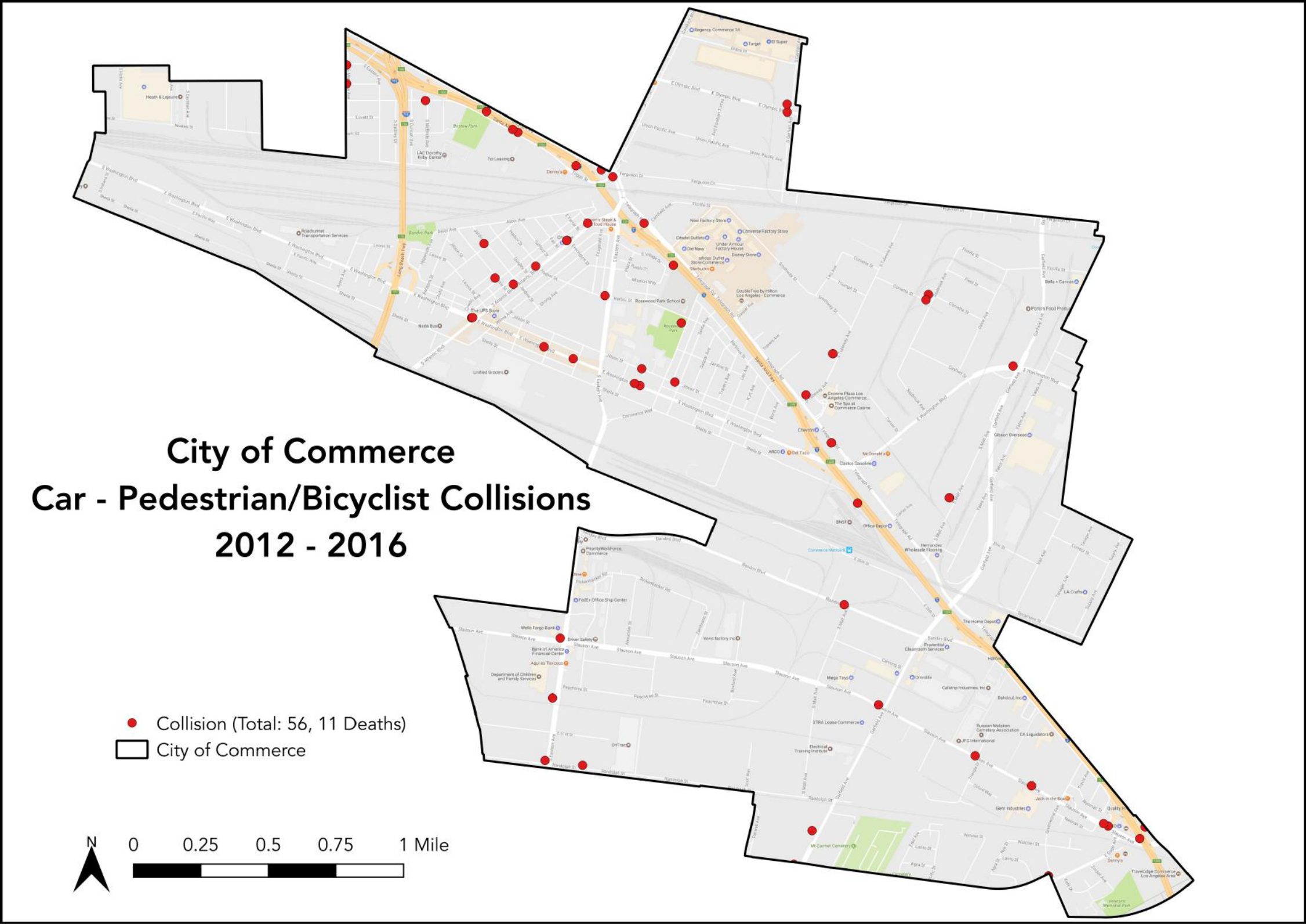
1 Mile


City of Commerce
Car - Pedestrian/Bicyclist Collisions
2012 - 2016
Collision (Total: 56, 11 Deaths)
City of Commerce
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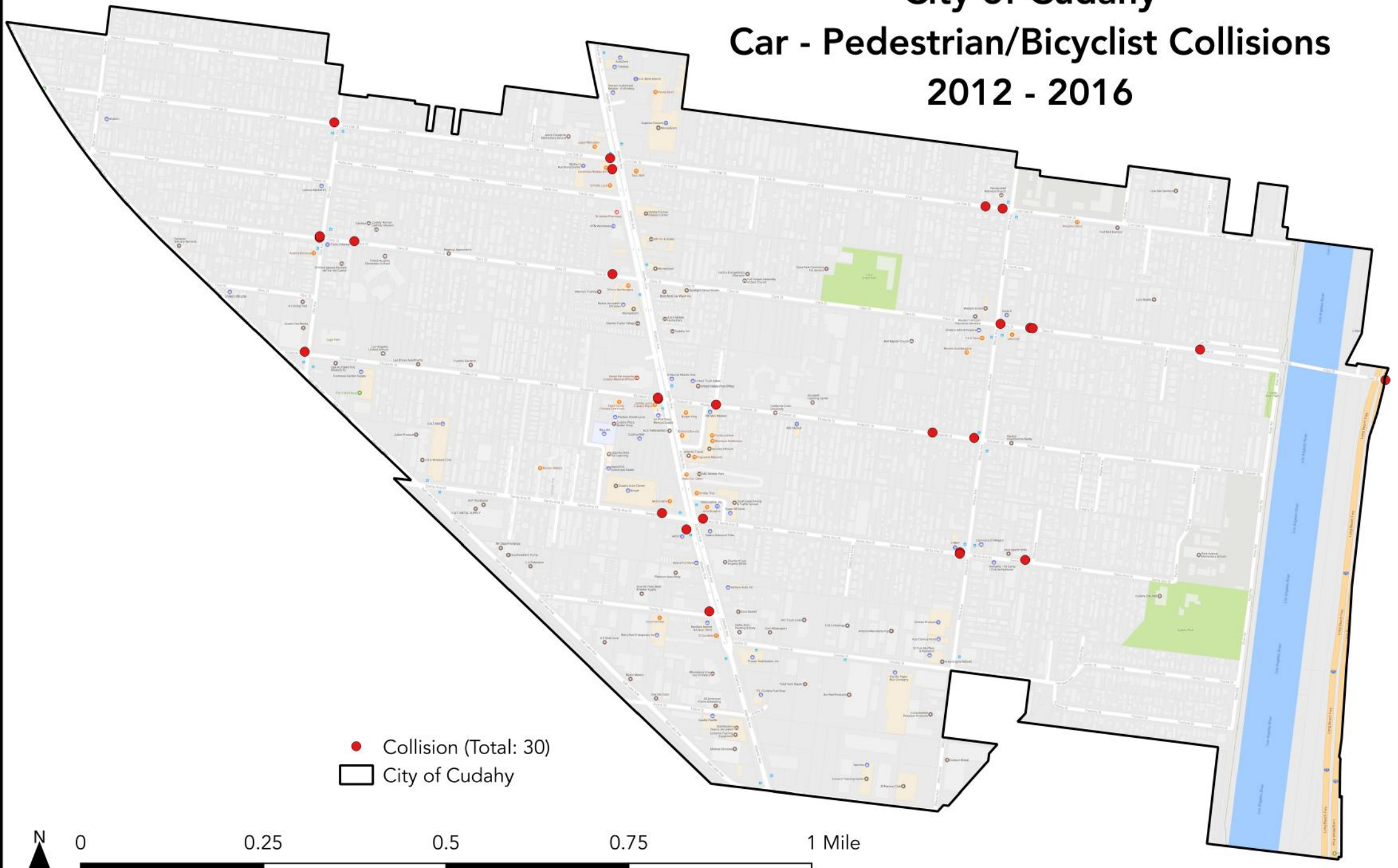
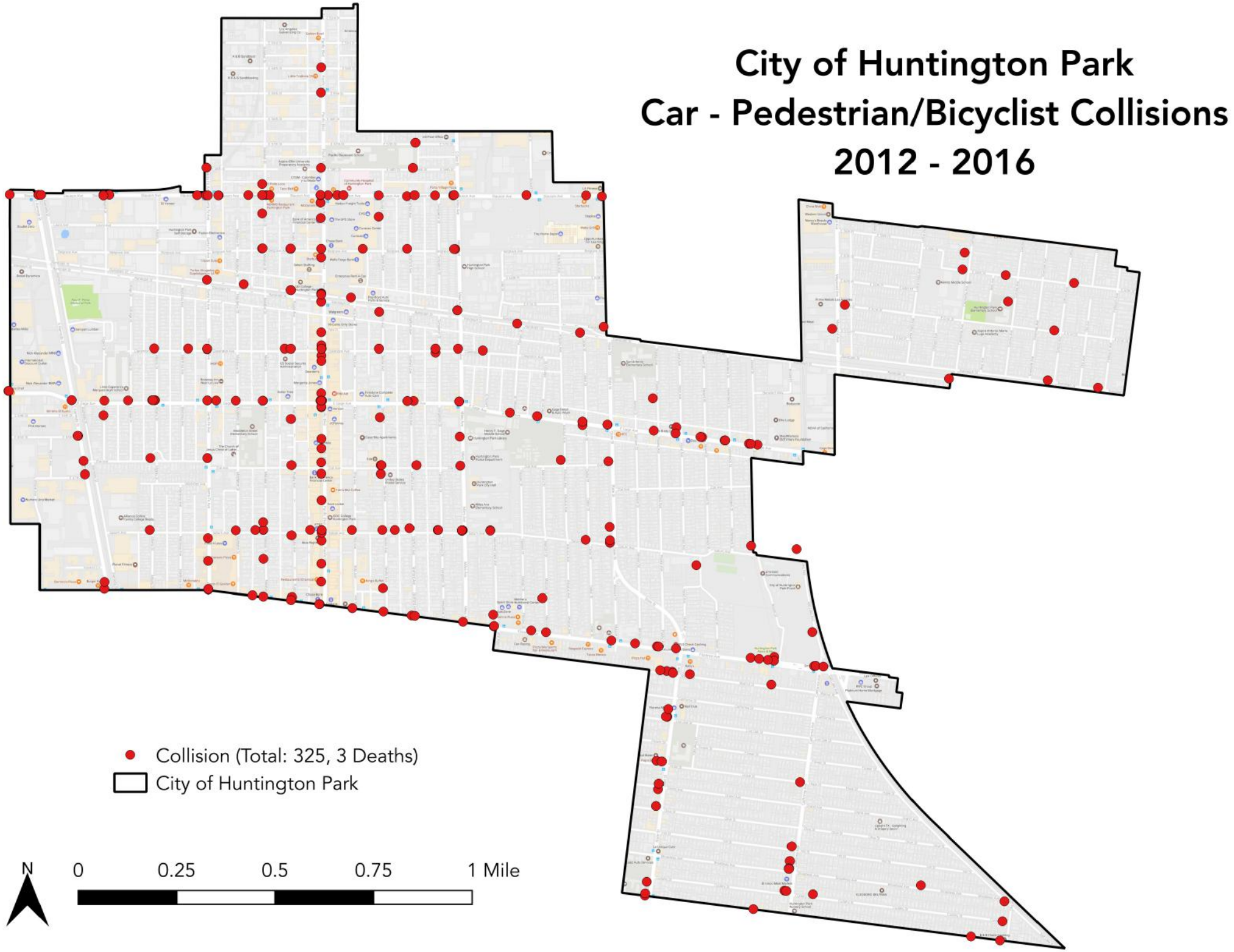
1 Mile

City of Cudahy
Car - Pedestrian/Bicyclist Collisions
2012 - 2016




City of Huntington Park
Car - Pedestrian/Bicyclist Collisions
2012 - 2016
Collision (Total: 325, 3 Deaths)
City of Huntington Park
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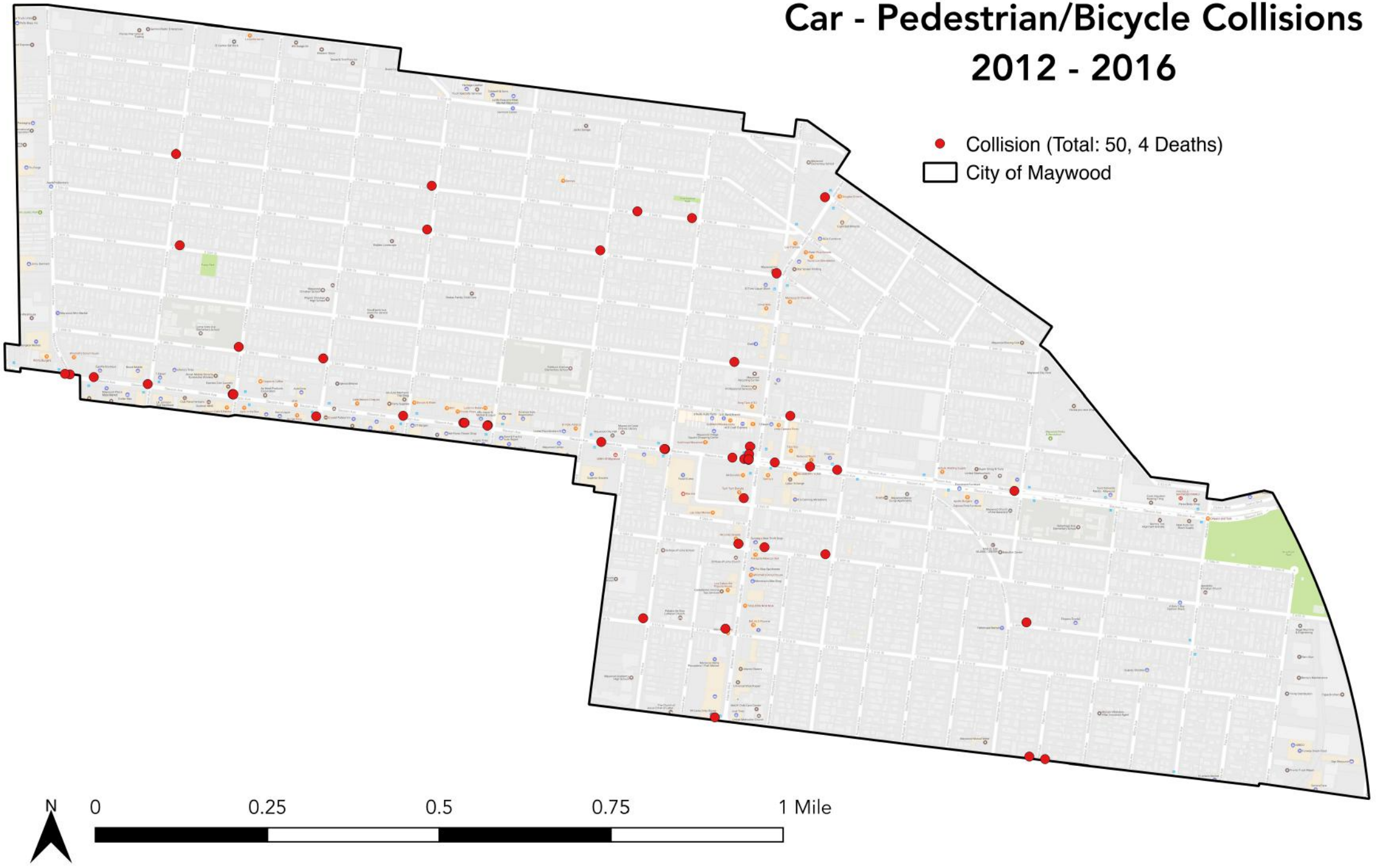
0.75
1 Mile

City of Maywood
Car - Pedestrian/Bicycle Collisions
2012 - 2016