



Spokane Human Rights Commission  
c/- OPO 808 W Spokane Falls Blvd,  
Spokane, WA 99201

December 1, 2014

Dear Chief Straub,

On Tuesday November 25th the Spokane Human Rights Commission, after hearing a presentation on the militarization of policing across the USA, carried a motion that a letter be sent to you offering suggestions to further build community/police partnerships in Spokane, particularly in light of the events that have unfolded in Ferguson, Missouri.

While as a community and Commission we do appreciate the work, dedication and sacrifices Spokane police officers make in performing their duties, events such as those in Ferguson highlight the community's need to ask questions about what this incident and similar incidents across the USA and their aftermath means for all of us, particularly in Spokane. It seems the most often discussed developments is the militarization of police department and the transparency of the police issued equipment that may be used involving the community.

In Spokane, preliminary analysis suggests that people of color and low income residents have shouldered the brunt of this trend. While we understand the need for police to be prepared for the worst, we also see potential problems that can arise from funneling military equipment to local police departments. Most notably, research, that is included in this letter, has shown that increased militarization of police decreases the level of trust between the police and the community they are serving and can lead to a greater spiral of violence that disproportionately affects minority communities. Given the impact these consequences can have on civil and human rights, we believe the citizens of Spokane deserve to have an open and transparent discussion about this issue and the impacts it has on our community.

To further this goal, we recommend three steps be taken:

- 1) While we understand the need for police agencies not to publicly advertise the equipment and weapons available for their use in protecting the community, we recommend that the Spokane Police Department be more transparent in providing information on the type of military equipment, and its intended use, that it has received from federal programs, grants other means; and
- 2) We recommend that the Police Department reassess the point system in their risk analysis matrix, specifically as it pertains to persons with mental illnesses; and



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3) We recommend that the Police Department track the race of primary suspects in SWAT call outs so community groups can better understand community impacts of these events.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding our request or information contained in this letter.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Blain Stum

Incoming Chair, Spokane Human Rights Commission

cc: Mayor Condon  
Spokane City Council  
Office of the Police Ombudsman  
OPO Commission  
Office of Professional Accountability

# SWAT Raids and the African American Community






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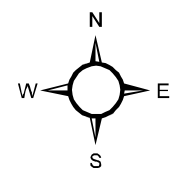
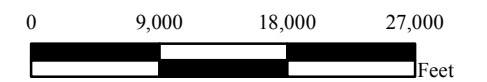
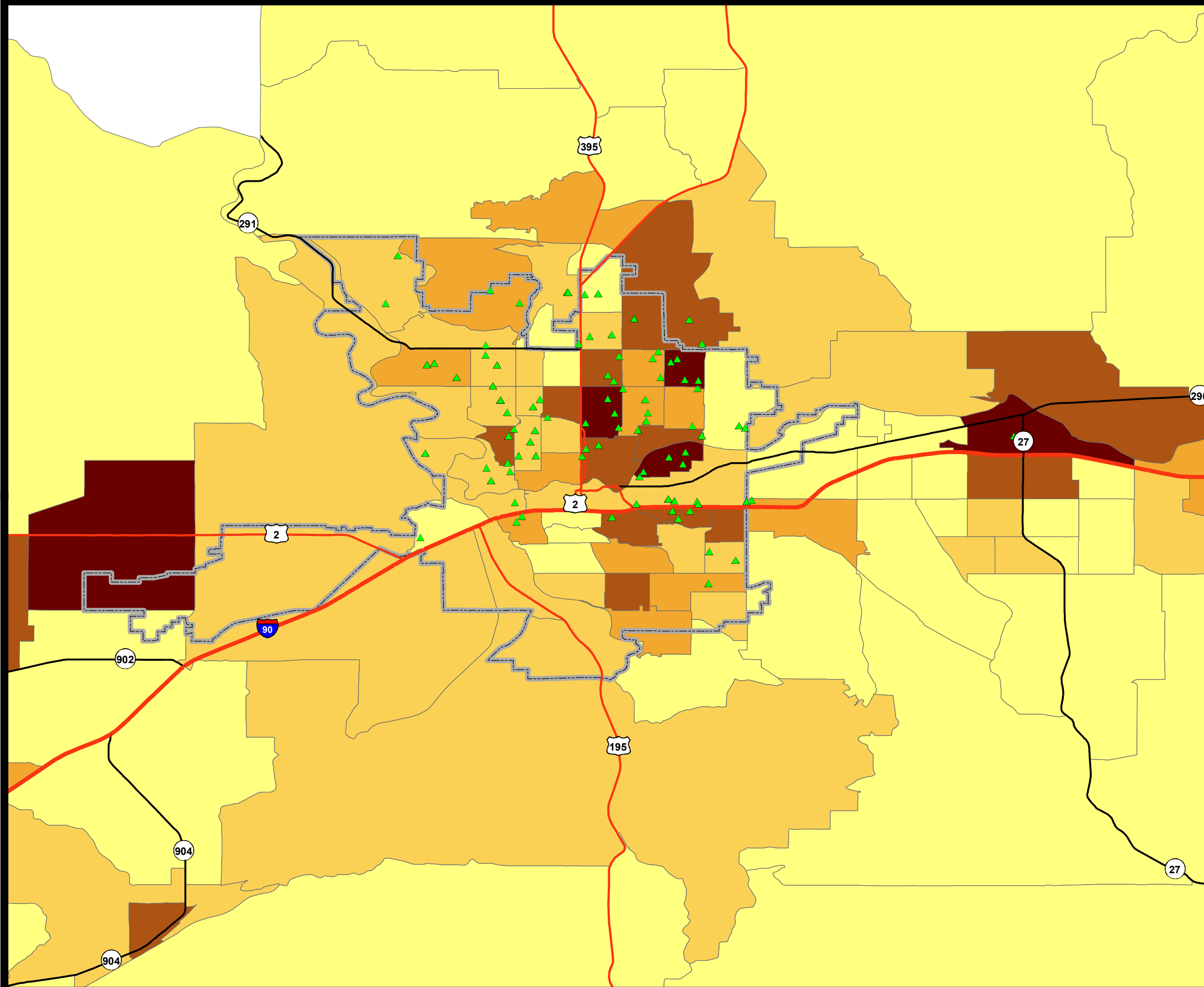
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## Legend

▲ SWAT Raids

## 2012 Census Tracts # of African Americans

	0 - 48
	49 - 137
	138 - 255
	256 - 404
	405 - 669



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# SWAT Raids and the Hispanic/Latino Community

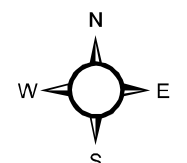
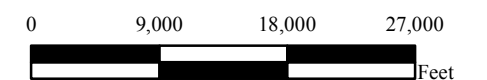
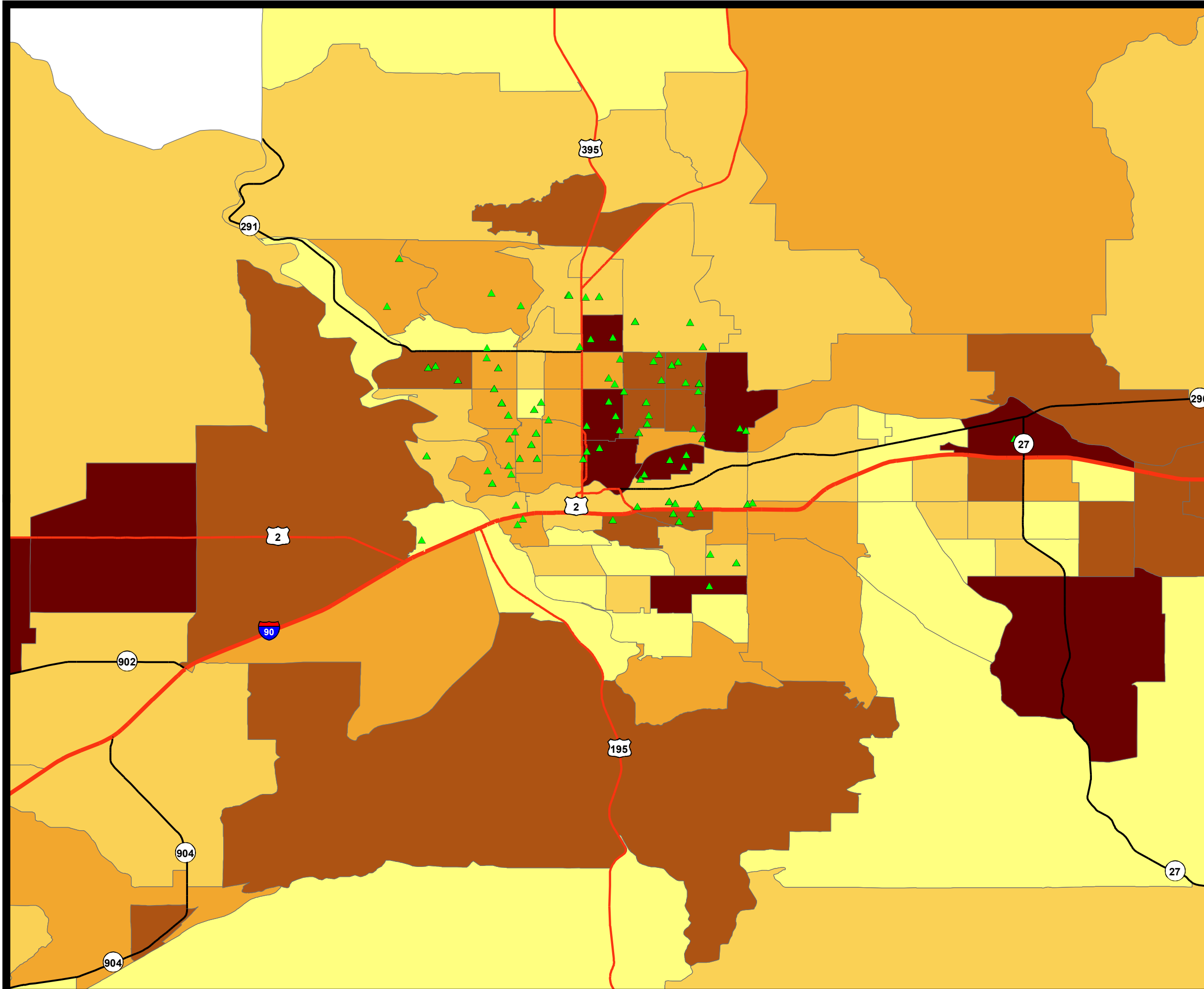
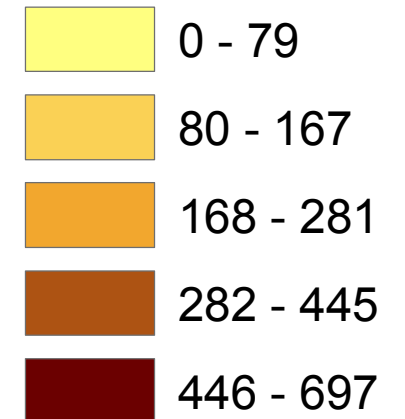
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## Legend

▲ SWAT Raids

### # of Hispanic/Latino



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# SWAT Raids and Poverty

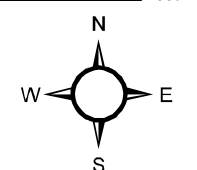
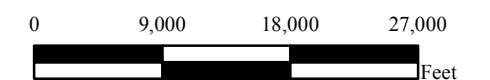
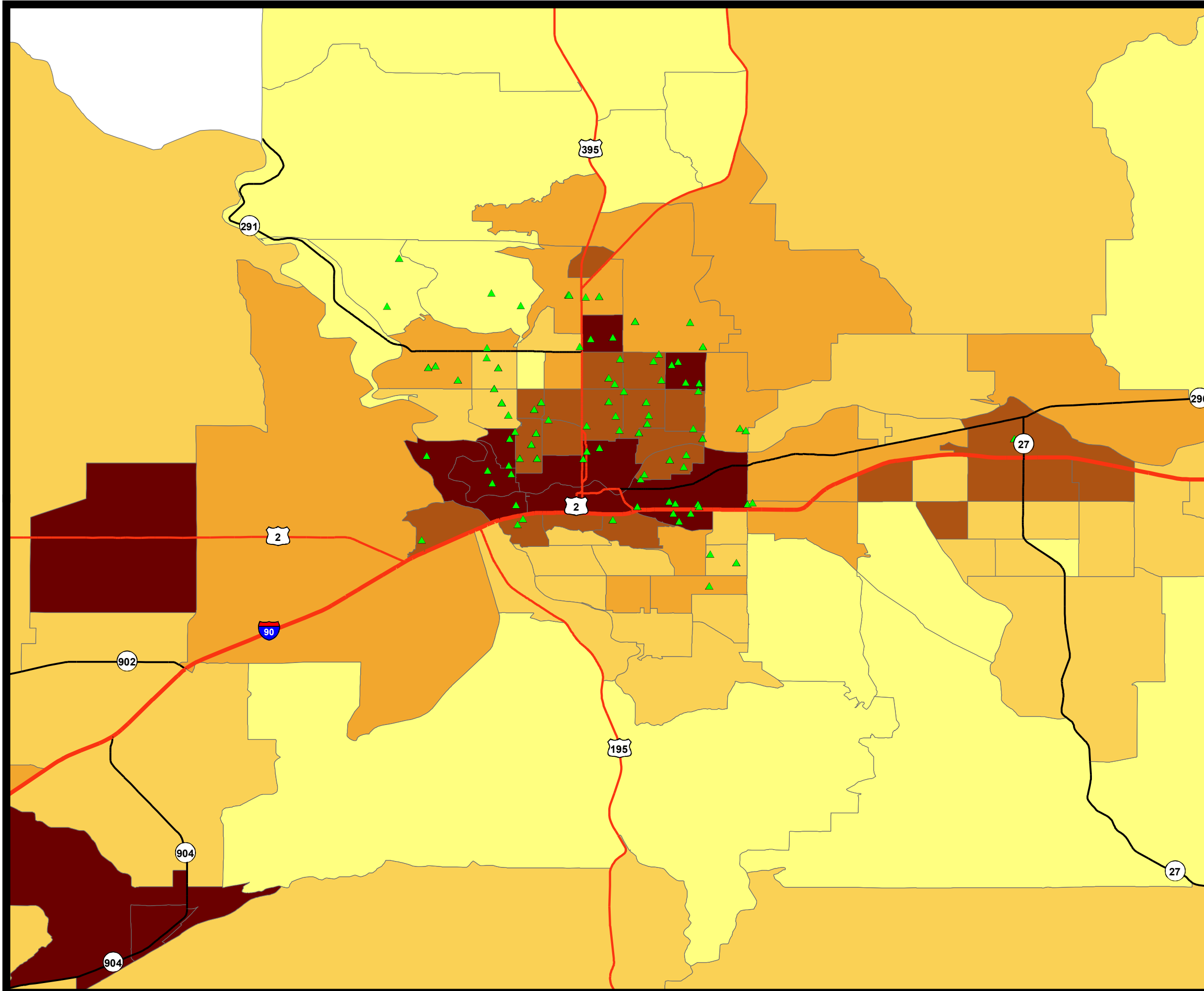
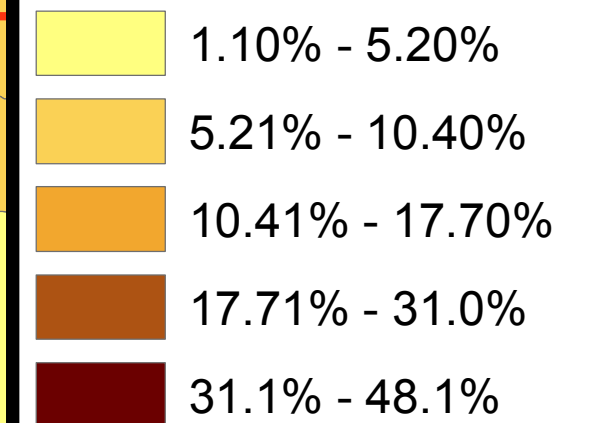
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## Legend

▲ SWAT Raids

### % Below Poverty Level



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