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Introduction

The purpose of this study was to present information gathered in a questionnaire that was distributed to approximately 800 renters in the City of Long Beach. The task was to convert the survey data to a geospatial format so that it could be displayed cartographically for use by city and community leaders in making future decisions regarding renter issues in the city. This study provides an essential function to assist the renters of Long Beach and the issues they face; primarily focusing on problems with deteriorating buildings, infestations, and other substandard conditions, and issues with their landlords fixing the problems.

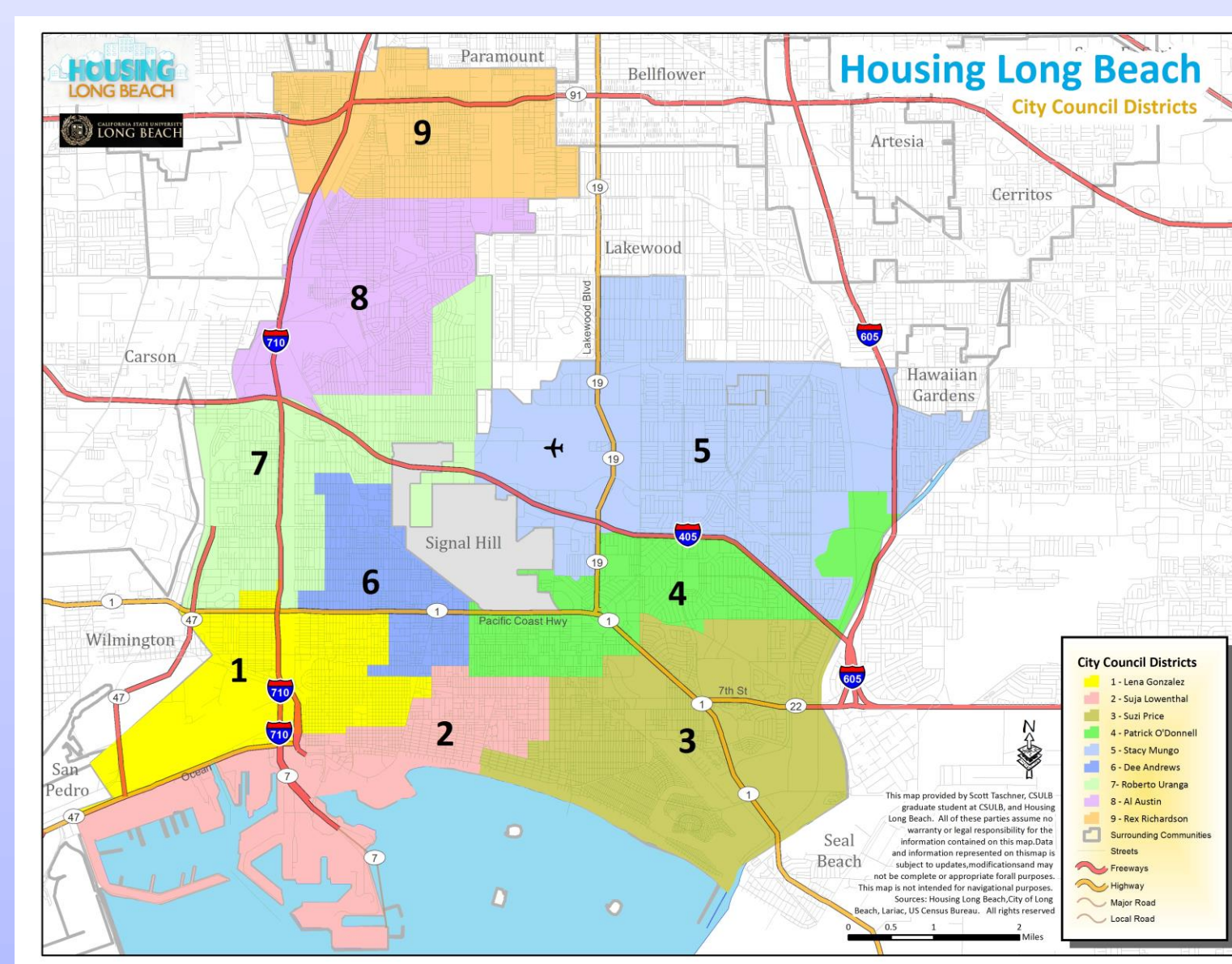


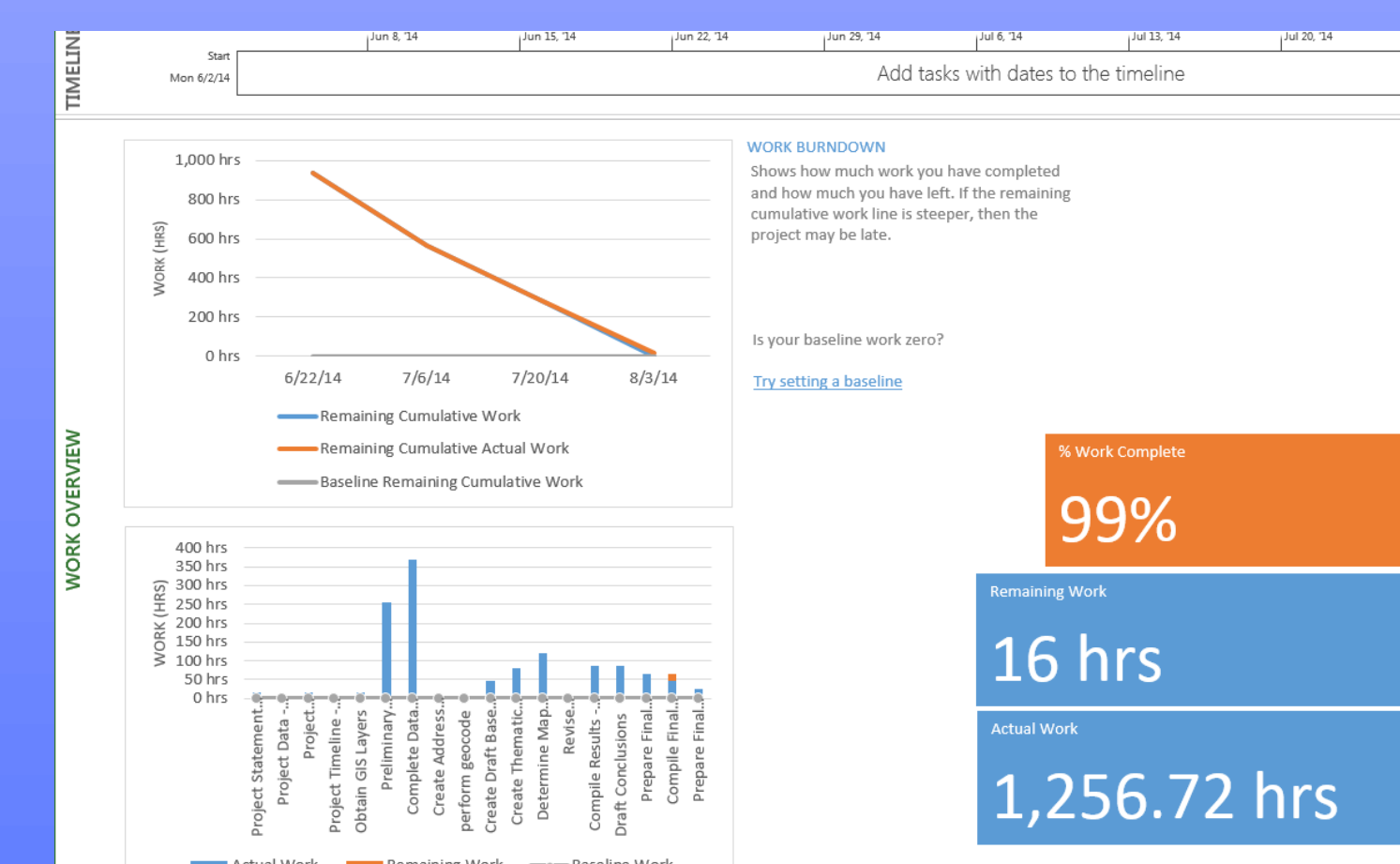
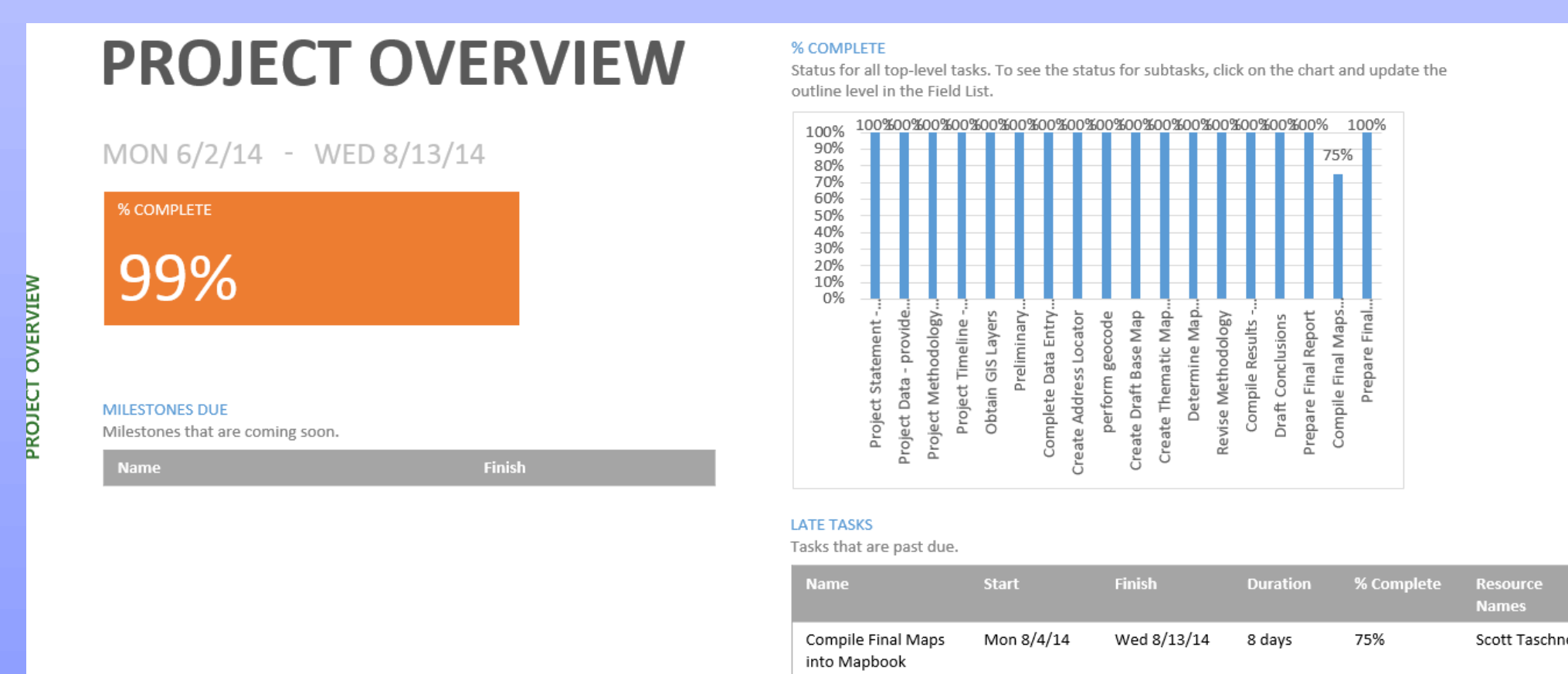
Figure 1. Basemap showing the City Council Districts

Methodology

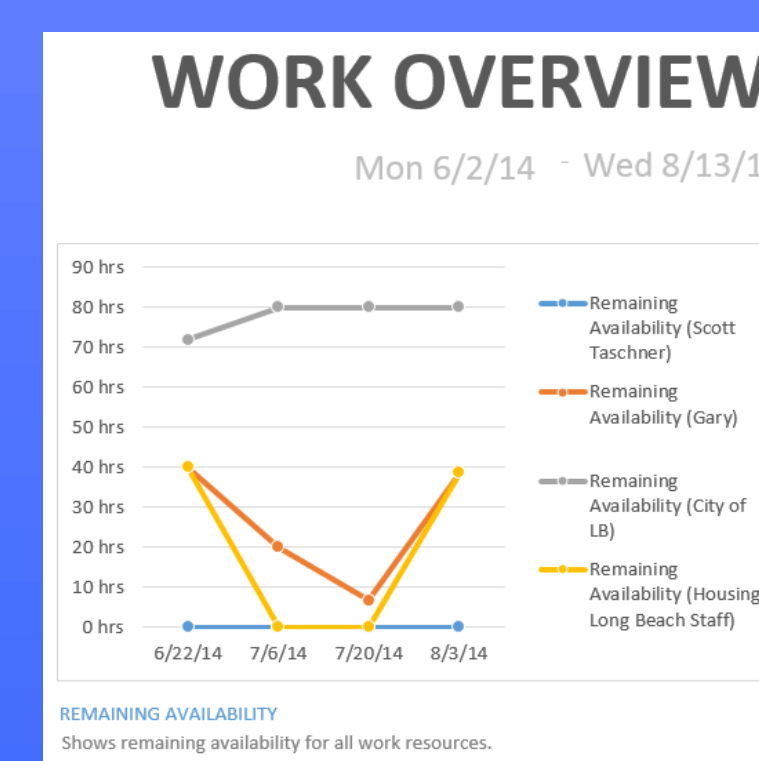
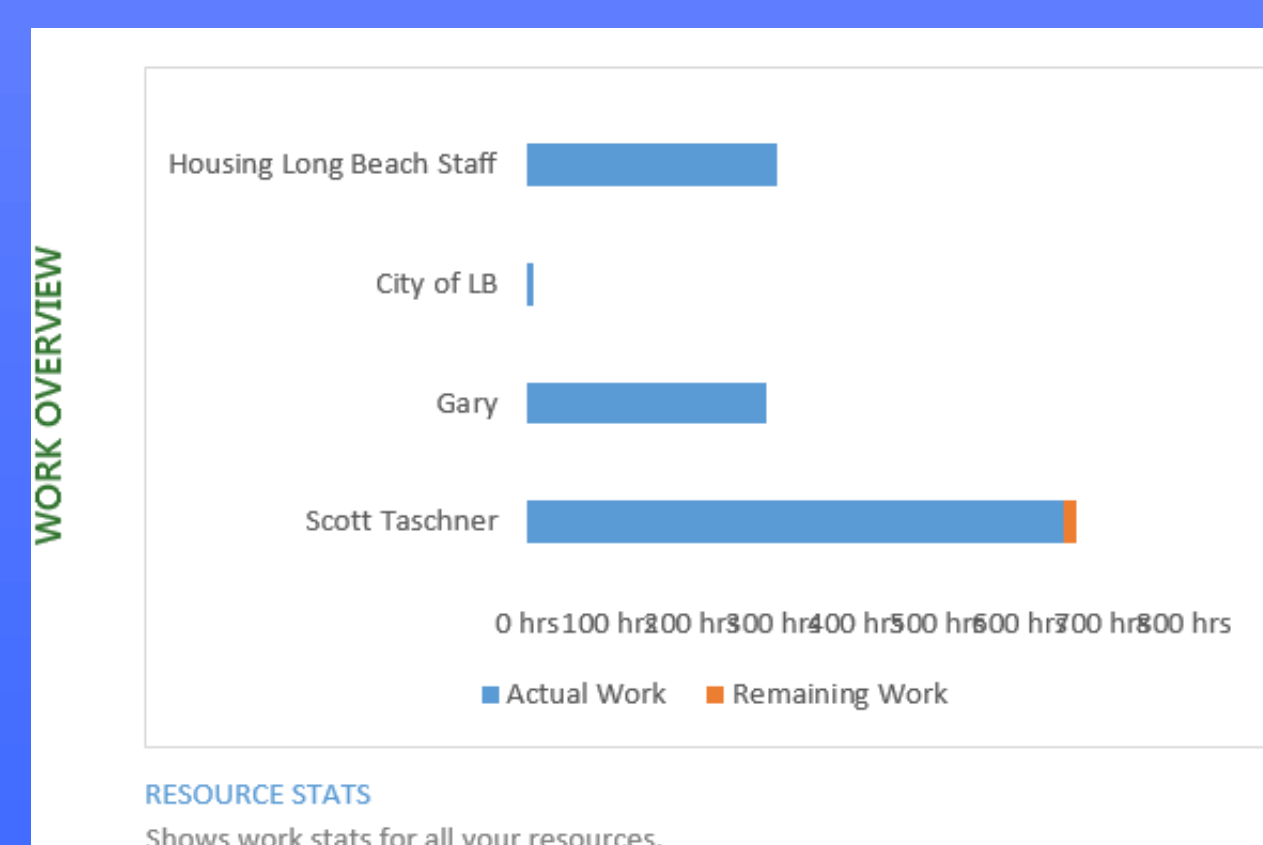
The methodology described here relates to the GIS portion of the project. Housing Long Beach prepared, distributed and captured the survey data using their own methods regarding who participated, where they captured the information, what questions were asked, etc. I was recruited to perform the GIS analysis component of this work. This applied project describes the development of the GIS data and layers and the presentation of the results.

The methods used to assemble the data included processes both on and off the computer. Some of the methodology dealt with the gathering information, team meetings, project task structuring, assessing resources, project timing, and other factors that had to do with the people involved and information that was gathered. The computer methodology applied in this study dealt mainly with collecting and structuring data and information, processing data, using ArcGIS Desktop and associated software applications to perform various procedures (such as geocoding survey responses).

Timeline



Figures 2A – 2D: Representation of the project timeline



Results

The results of this study include a series of maps showing the renter's survey information that was collected, as well as an accompanying report document that will be available on the internet. Figures 3 and 4 represent examples of a series of maps that will be presented to individual City Council members this fall as part of a discussion about the upcoming hearing on the proposed Rental Escrow Account Program (REAP) Ordinance, slated for a December 2014 City Council meeting. One important note is that some of the information presented in these maps is personal information for use by City Council members and other community leaders and organizations only. Privacy and confidentiality issues have to be considered when both displaying and distributing these maps.

Figure 3. Map of Survey Respondents, Language Spoken at Home

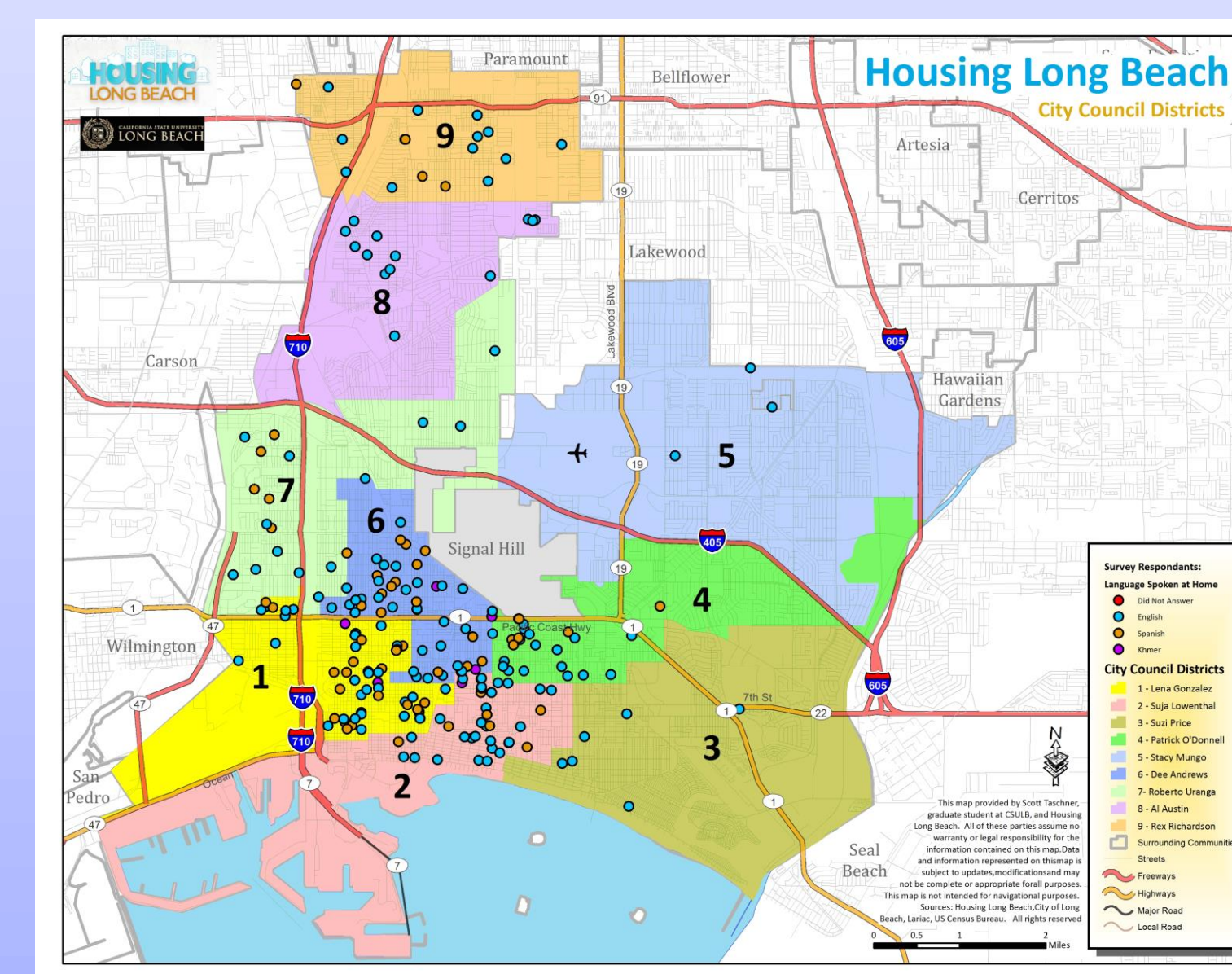
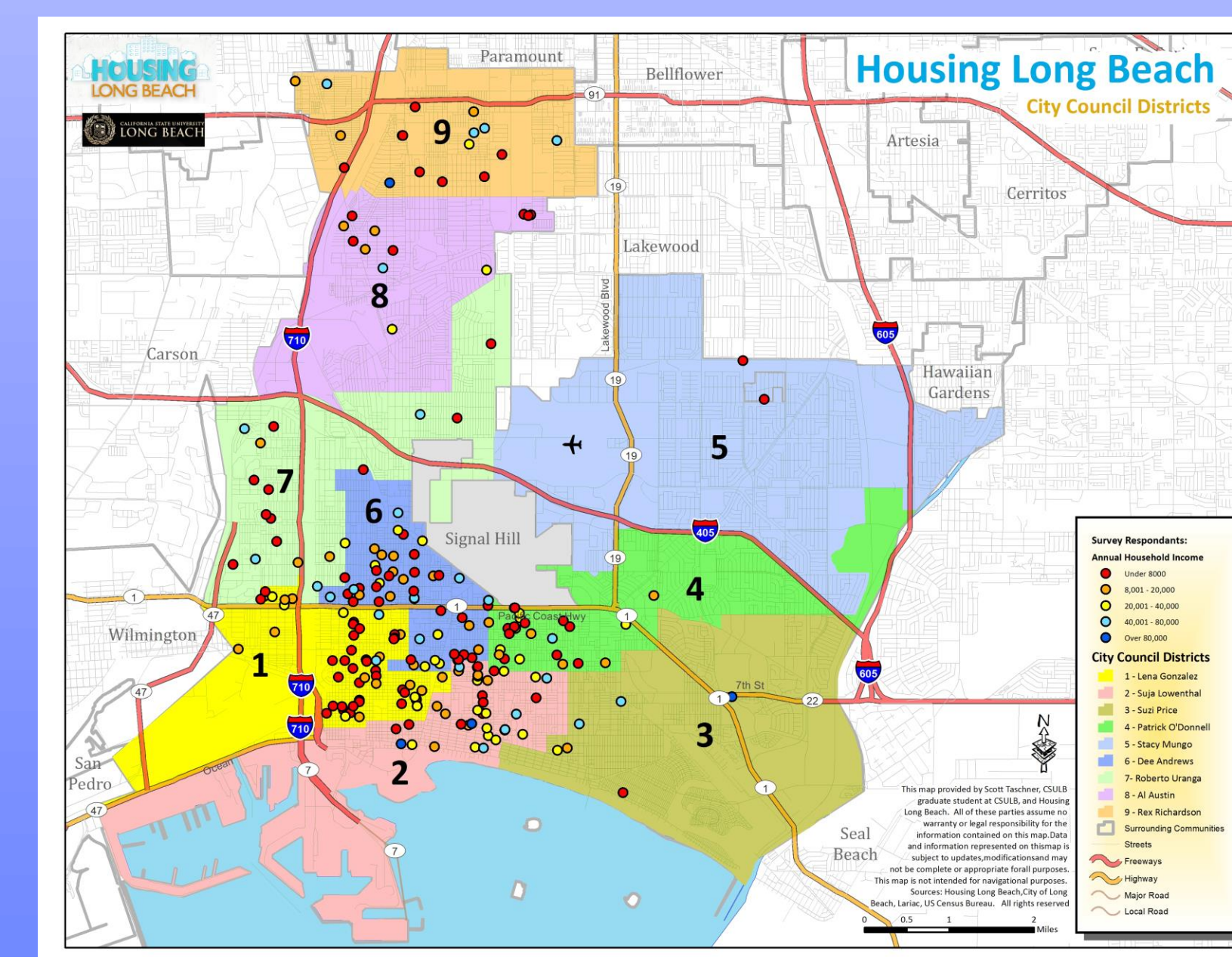


Figure 4. Map of Survey Respondents, Annual Income



Data and Data Sources

Data for this project came primarily from the renter's survey that Housing Long Beach, geospatial data provided by the City of Long Beach, LARIAC data, and the U.S. Census Bureau data. Most of the data was available for download over the internet, through Housing Long Beach and the City of Long Beach (Table 1).

Table 1. List of the major data and data sources used in this project

Dataset	Source
Survey Responses: Language At Home, Landlord Responsiveness,	Housing Long Beach
Council Districts, Streets, City Limits, Water Features, etc.	City of Long Beach
Income, Percent Renters/Owners, Poverty Level, Unemployment,	U.S. Census Bureau
Freeways/Highways	Lariac

Discussion

Ethical Considerations:

There have been some ethical issues while conducting this study. This biggest issue being that not every renter in the city is represented in the data. The survey focused on renters on the west side of Long Beach. This is an area with older buildings and low-income residents. However, the REAP ordinance, if passed, will affect all renters and landlords in the city.

In addition as a researcher and GIS practitioner I have to consider how the information will be presented, what information is being presented in the map, what the purpose of the map is, and any intended or unintended consequence that may result from it. Please refer to the Applied Project Report for more in depth discussion on these matters.

Suggestions for Future Studies:

- The survey could be expanded include renter's from all council districts
- Survey could include a broader demographic profile of the city's residents
- To map the current (and past) city code violations that are relevant to this study
- Community outreach to landlords/property owners to get their input
- Continued analysis and mapping of Census information

Conclusion

This study assisted in providing much needed information about some of the more important issues facing renters in the city of Long Beach. Some of the major issues have to do with maintaining the health, safety, and basic quality of life of the city's residential renters and correcting problems that they face. This series of maps will provide community organizations, community leaders, and city staff and council members with essential information to help determine the primary issues that renters face and to address some of the issues they are having in getting these issues resolved.

- Most (84.0%) of renters experienced at least one housing problem in the last year, and a third had five or more problems.
- Livability and health hazards including roaches (reported by 64.2% of renters), mold and water damage (42.5%), and rats or mice (35.8%) were the most common problems.
- Landlords are not always responsive to tenants' needs—44.3% of renters who told their landlords or managers about problems said they only sometimes got fixed, and 8.6% said they were never fixed.
- People from lower-income households were particularly affected. Respondents with annual household incomes under \$20,000 experienced more problems, on average, and were more likely to say their landlords didn't get them fixed, than those with incomes of \$20,000 or more.
- 58.1% of renters didn't know they could report housing problems to the city, and those renters experienced more problems and lower landlord responsiveness than those who were aware of city code enforcement.

Figure 5. Findings from the initial survey conducted in 2013. The 2014 survey information is still being collected. Findings from this years survey will be presented in the Fall of 2014.

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