
MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 25, 2019
TO: City Council
FROM: Bryan P. Dyer, Community Development Director
RE: Residential code enforcement mapping and data for 2017 and 2018 calendar years

Attached to this memo are four maps illustrating residential code enforcement activity for the calendar years of 2017 and 2018. Additional statistics are included in the body of this memo.

Over the last two years, Community Development has implemented and utilized a new database management software, Citizenserve. As a result of this, staff now has access to reliable and useable code enforcement data. Two years of data does not allow for a robust trend analysis, but this memo does provide an overview of the data and a comparison between the two years.

To track the location of code violations, code enforcement divides the city into the same zones used by the Merriam Police Department. For ease of understanding and clarity, the attached maps consolidate the primarily residential police zones into four “Neighborhood Areas”.

Map 1 – Number of Residential Violations 2017

Map 1 – Number of Residential Violations 2018

These maps summarize the location and number of violations that occurred in the calendar years of 2017 and 2018. A violation is not a notice to appear in court (citation) for code infractions. Following an observation of a violation, code enforcement staff sends the offender a “Notice of Violation” letter detailing the violation or violations. The letter also provides city staff contact information and the date by when the violation must be abated. The vast majority of code violations are abated by the offender after they receive the Notice of Violation letter. Citations are typically issued to those individuals who, after multiple notifications, do not abate the violation within the specified time.

The maps also contain a table summarizing “Total Violations” and “Address w/Violation” by Neighborhood Area. Total Violations is the total number of residential code violations that have been sent to an offender. In some instances, one letter will contain a listing of multiple violations. Address w/Violation summarizes the total number of *unique* residential addresses to which Community Development has sent a violation letter.

The table contains statistics for “Dwelling Units 1 and 2 Family” and “% of Dwelling Units w/Violation”. The Dwelling Units 1 and 2 Family data is an estimation of the number of single family and duplex/townhome/triplex/quadplex units in each Neighborhood Area based on address points. By adjusting the number of violations for the number of dwelling units in each Neighborhood Area, the % of Dwelling Units w/Violation statistic provides a comparison of the amount of code violations that occur in each Neighborhood Area.

The maps provide a visual representation of the number of violations by address. The larger the dot, the greater the number of violations that have occurred at that address.

Map 2 – Multiple Violation Letters in 2017 – Residential

Map 2 – Multiple Violations Letters in 2018 – Residential

These maps provide a visual representation of the residential addresses that received multiple Notice of Violation letters. In the majority of these instances, each letter was for a different type of violation, i.e. – one letter for tall weeds and grass and the second letter for inoperable vehicle stored outside. The map legend summarizes the number of addresses by Neighborhood Area.

Top Five Violations

The following tables summarize the Top Five Violations in each Neighborhood Area by the number of violations observed in 2017 and 2018. The last table summarizes the most frequent code violations for the entire city.

2017

Area 1

Violation

Tall weeds and grass	74
Unauthorized storage of boats, trailers, campers	55
Unauthorized off-street parking or loading	49
Unauthorized outside storage	49
Outside storage of inoperable vehicles	45

Area 2

Violation

Unauthorized storage of boats, trailers, campers	16
Tall weeds and grass	10
Unauthorized outside storage	10
Improper storage of solid waste containment	10
Failure to remove dead trees	7
Unauthorized off-street parking or loading	7

2018

Area 1

Violation

Tall weeds and grass	85
Unauthorized storage of boats, trailers, campers	82
Unauthorized off-street parking or loading	59
Failure to remove dead trees and/or brush/limb pile	56
Outside storage of inoperable vehicles	46

Area 2

Violation

Unauthorized storage of boats, trailers, campers	20
Unauthorized outside storage	19
Failure to remove dead trees and/or brush/limb pile	16
Tall weeds and grass	12
Outside storage of inoperable vehicles	11

2017**Area 3****Violation**

Tall weeds and grass	29
Unauthorized outside storage	28
Unauthorized Storage of boats, trailers, campers	25
Unauthorized off-street parking or loading	22
Outside storage of inoperable vehicles	17

Area 4**Violation**

Unauthorized storage of boats, trailers, campers	9
Tall weeds and grass	7
Unauthorized off-street parking or loading	4
Outside storage of inoperable vehicles	4
Improper storage of solid waste containment	3
Unauthorized outside storage	3

Total Residential Violations**Violation**

Tall weeds and grass	120
Unauthorized storage of boats, trailers, campers	105
Unauthorized outside storage	90
Unauthorized off-street parking or loading	82
Outside storage of inoperable vehicles	72

2018**Area 3****Violation**

Outside storage of inoperable vehicles	36
Failure to remove dead trees and/or brush/limb pile	25
Unauthorized storage of boats, trailers, campers	24
Tall weeds and grass	21
Unauthorized off-street parking or loading	12

Area 4**Violation**

Unauthorized outside storage	9
Tall weeds and grass	6
Outside storage of inoperable vehicles	3
Failure to remove dead trees and/or brush/limb pile	3
Maintaining a public nuisance	3
Substandard exterior building conditions	3

Total Residential Violations**Violation**

Unauthorized storage of boats, trailers, campers	128
Tall weeds and grass	124
Failure to remove dead trees and/or brush/limb pile	100
Outside storage of inoperable vehicles	96
Unauthorized off-street parking or loading	78

The final table below is for all properties in Merriam. This table shows the progression of code enforcement from the first step of sending a “Notice of Violation” letter, followed by a “Final Notice of Violation” letter, and ultimately a “Notice to Appear” (citation to appear in municipal court). As the table demonstrates, the vast majority of code violations are abated. Only a small percentage of violations are not abated and result in the violator being issued a notice to appear in court.

Notice of Violations All Properties

	2017	2018
Notice of Violation letters	516	573
Final Notice of Violation letters	212	252
Notice to Appear (Citation)	20	18

Summary

Except where noted, the above statistics do not include exterior violations for apartment complexes or commercial properties. In general, Merriam’s apartment complexes and commercial properties have very few exterior code violations. These statistics do not include the frequent personal contacts made by Community Development staff. Many times personal contact involves educating both the complainant and violator and informing residents of the need to modify their behaviors to avoid receiving a Notice of Violation. The data on the number of personal contacts made by Community Development staff is included in the monthly Code Enforcement Logs.

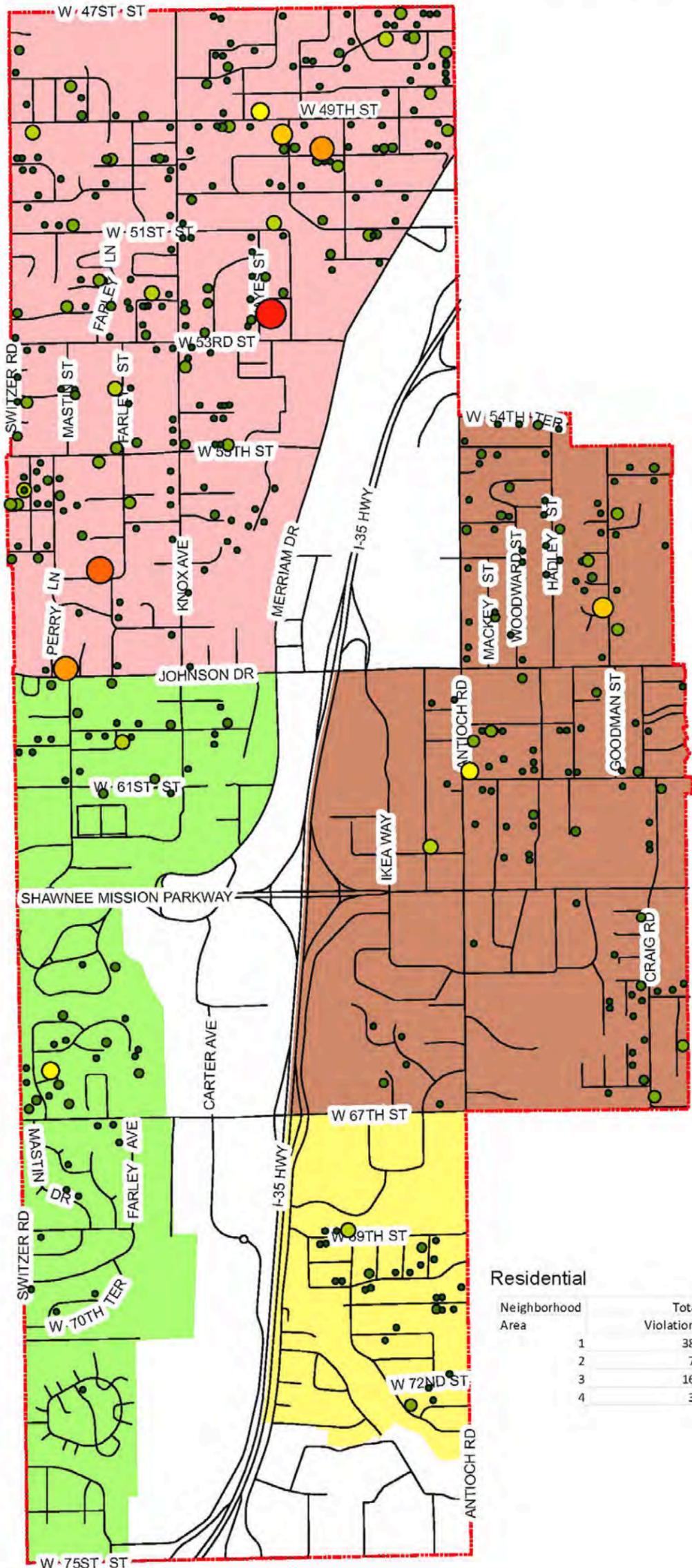
Comparing the data between the two years shows no significant changes between the years. The number of residential violations are similar with 665 in 2017 and 757 violations in 2018. The largest number of violations are in Neighborhood Area 1, which is the largest area in size, population, and number of residences.

The greatest number of violations were written for tall weeds and grass; unauthorized storage of boats, trailers, campers; outside storage of inoperable vehicles; and failure to remove dead trees and/or brush/limb piles are all “non-structural” violations that do not involve the residence. This suggests that, on the whole, Merriam’s housing stock is well maintained.

One of the interesting items that can be seen in the data is the sharp increase in the number of violations for failure to remove dead trees and/or brush/limb piles. In 2017, this violation was not a top five violation for any of the Neighborhood Areas or the entire city. However, in 2018, the violation was in the top five for each area and the entire city. Community Development staff will continue to monitor the situation.

Community Development’s code enforcement staff continues to take pride in their job of gaining resident compliance with the city’s property maintenance requirements. Staff will use this data to educate citizens on code enforcement activity in their neighborhoods and how to avoid receiving a “code violation” letter.

Map 1 Number of Residential Violations in 2017



Legend

Number of Violations

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 10

Neighborhood Area

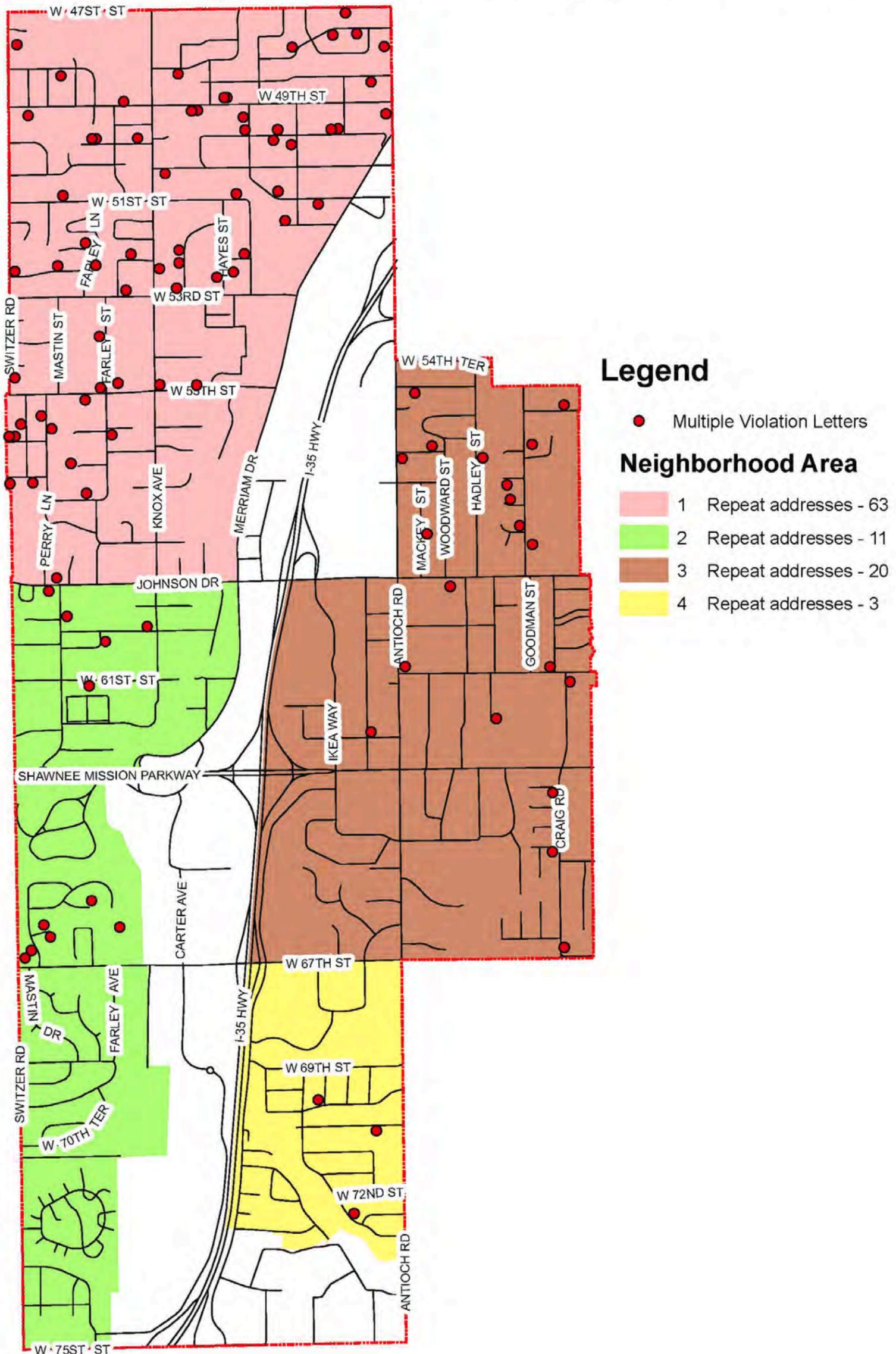
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Residential

Neighborhood Area	Total Violations	Address w/Violation	Dwelling Units 1 and 2 Family	% of Dwelling Units w/Violation
1	386	248	1,480	17%
2	79	55	1,345	4%
3	163	119	1,177	10%
4	37	28	951	3%

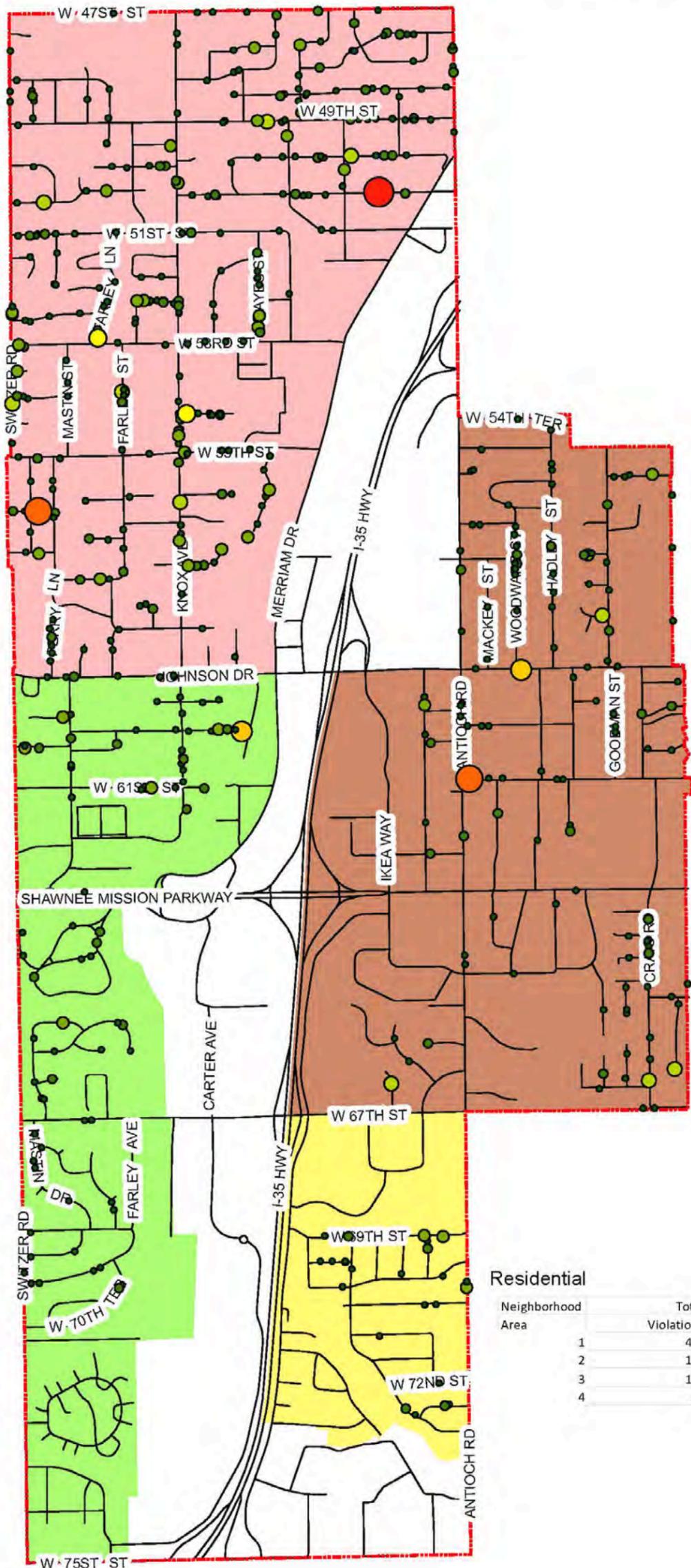
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Map 2 Multiple Violation Letters in 2017 - Residential



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Map 1 Number of Residential Violations in 2018



Legend

Number of Violations

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 10

Neighborhood Area

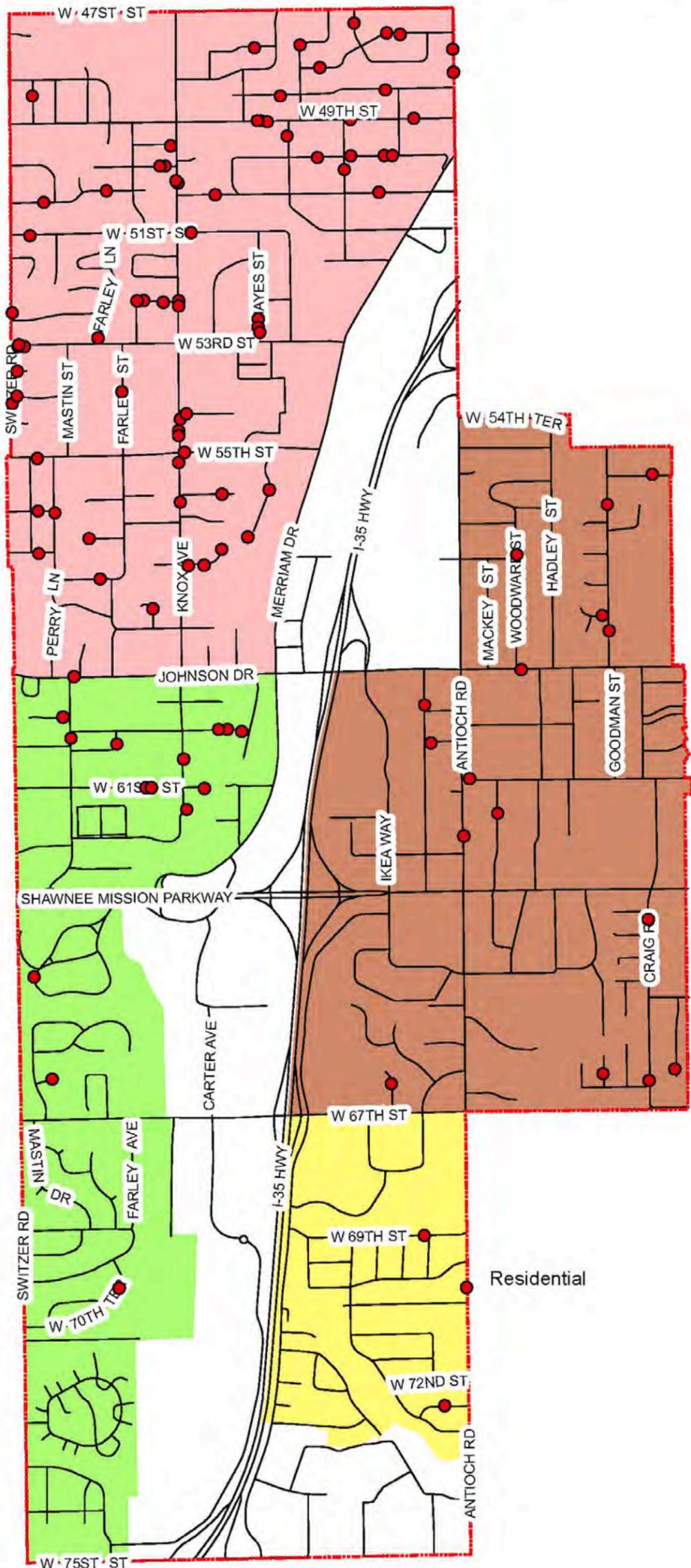
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Residential

Neighborhood Area	Total Violations	Address w/Violation	Dwelling Units 1 and 2 Family	% of Dwelling Units w/Violation
1	449	302	1,480	20%
2	106	22	1,345	2%
3	168	122	1,177	10%
4	34	27	951	3%

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Map 2 Multiple Violation Letters in 2018 - Residential



Legend

● Multiple Violation Letters

Neighborhood Area

- 1 Repeat addresses - 69
- 2 Repeat addresses - 14
- 3 Repeat addresses - 17
- 4 Repeat addresses - 4

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