

**Report on  
Complaints Received by  
the Ombudsman's Office  
February 2022 - February 2023**

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March 27, 2023



CITY OF DETROIT

**OMBUDSMAN**

BRUCE SIMPSON, CITY OMBUDSMAN

*"Improving Your Quality of Life On a Daily Basis"*

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BRUCE SIMPSON  
CITY OF DETROIT  
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

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DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226-3437  
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March 27, 2023

The Honorable Detroit City Council  
City of Detroit  
1340 CAYMC  
Detroit, MI 48226

**RE: Ombudsman Budget Analysis for FY 2023-2024**

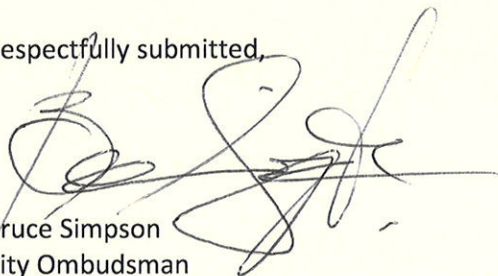
Dear Council Members:

I would like to thank your Honorable Body for giving me the opportunity to address the service delivery concerns and complaints of our citizens. This is the seventh report issued to your Honorable Body by this Ombudsman Office. This year we have processed 3,765 complaints. Of the 3,765 complaints, the majority of them have come from the Building and Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED) and the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA). We would like to note that there has been a significant decrease in DLBA complaints, which is in alignment with the reduction of properties within their inventory.

The recommendations that I have provided to you in this report address blight remediation and revenue generation. With these recommendations and analysis of the budget, we attempt to speak to the concerns of the masses throughout the City.

I submit this report on behalf of our residents, property owners, business owners and all persons who have contacted the Ombudsman Office during the time period of February 2022 through February, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Bruce Simpson  
City Ombudsman

*“Improving Your Quality of Life On a Daily Basis”*

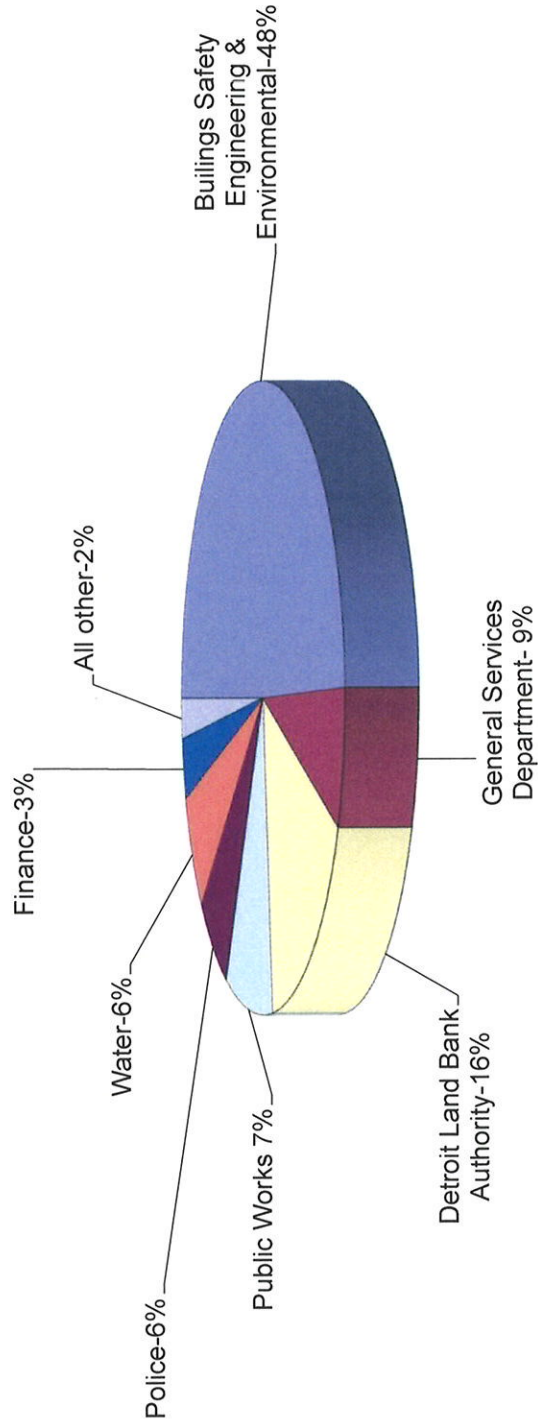


**Complaints by Department**  
**February 2022 - February 2023**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Complaints</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
BSEED	1797	48%
Elections	6	0%
Finance	95	3%
Fire	8	0%
General Services	330	9%
Health	23	1%
Human Resources	2	0%
Law	5	0%
Municipal Parking	13	0%
Non Departmental & Non Jurisdictional	67	2%
P&DD	3	0%
Police	213	6%
PLD	32	1%
Public Works	247	7%
Recreation	2	0%
DDOT (Transportation)	19	1%
DWSD (Water & Sewerage)	238	6%
DLBA	608	16%
Other	59	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,765</b>	

Buildings Safety Engineering & Environmental 48%  
 Public Works 7%  
 Detroit Land Bank Authority 16%  
 General Services 9%  
 Police 6%  
 Water 6%  
 Finance 3%  
 All other Departments 2%

### Ombudsman Complaints by Department



"All Other" represents several departments with less than two percent of the total complaints and as a result they were combined for chart clarity purposes.



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## Ombudsman Recommendations

- Identifying True Violators Behind Blight and Fraud Associated with an LLC
- Annual Performance Review for Trash Removal Services
- Amending the Vending Ordinance to Create Opportunities for Small Businesses
- GSD Forestry Quarterly Report

### Corporate Transparency Act /LLC Regulation

Quite often when we encounter a blighted property that appears to have been discarded and not maintained, there is a Limited Liability Company (LLC) associated with said property. Difficulty in unmasking and identifying the true ownership has become a challenge in relation to holding the perpetrators accountable. We have seen individuals hide behind the shield of an LLC, as it relates to mortgage and deed fraud. The Corporate Transparency Act will take effect in January of 2024. It will, “Ensure that persons who form corporations or limited liability companies in the United States will disclose the beneficial owners of those corporations or limited liability companies for criminal gain, to assist law enforcement in detecting, preventing and punishing terrorism, money laundering and other misconduct involving United States corporations and limited liability companies, and for other purposes”.

**Disclosure of information-** “Beneficial ownership information reported to the **Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FINCEN)** pursuant to this section shall be provided by FINCEN only upon receipt of a request, through appropriate protocols, by a local, Tribal, State, or Federal law enforcement agency.”

It can certainly be argued that the blighted properties and/or the fraud that we have referenced has caused a financial burden upon our great city to the extent that we have to pursue violators through our Blight to Beauty Program, as well as, civil and criminal court. We recommend, that the city explore the use of this law as a tool to hold some of these property owners accountable.

Please see the Corporate Transparency Act listed below:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/2513>

*“Improving Your Quality of Life On a Daily Basis”*



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### **Annual Performance Review for Trash Removal Contracts**

Residents will be returning to weekly bulk trash removal, which we believe is very necessary and a great win for the city! The administration negotiating those terms, on behalf of the residents will go a long way in helping to restore a sense of normalcy. In addition, we hope this will also reduce the amount of blight we find in our respective communities. In March of 2021, this Ombudsman Office, made a formal recommendation that spoke to the challenges of identifying consistency in the performance of trash removal services carried out by our contractors. We are recommending additional contractual language that will ensure accountability and the implementation of an Annual Performance Review Process. This will give both the residents and the City the ability to address any performance concerns they may have without being at the mercy of a lengthy contract.

### **Vending Ordinance/Creating Opportunities for Small Businesses**

Our citizens are resilient, creative and hard working! It is our belief the current Vending Ordinance needs to be amended and expanded to create more opportunities. This city is full of business owners that have an entrepreneurial spirit but are limited as to when and where their products can be purchased.

The following areas of the Vending Ordinance should be reviewed and amended:

Section 41-2-3: Stationary and street vendors; restrictions.

Section 41-2-4: Foot vendors prohibited in certain areas.

Section 41-2-4: Additional rules and guidelines for vending.

These changes will create more opportunities for vendors. It will increase revenue generation via income taxes, and fees associated with code enforcement through the Buildings Safety Engineering & Environmental Department (BSEED).

If, the ordinance is not amended, a permanent location for vending should be identified, established, and promoted.





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### **GSD Forestry Quarterly Report**

In March of 2016, this Ombudsman Office recommended additional financial resources for the General Services Department (GSD), Forestry Division. In the interest of safety for the public, we believe those resources were necessary to aid GSD in providing forestry related services. Historically, this is an issue that predates this administration. We have struggled to properly staff this division of the General Services Department and it has led to a backlog of dangerous trees that are not addressed in a timely manner. This issue should be monitored throughout the course of a calendar year. We are recommending that quarterly reports be issued to City Council, the Ombudsman, and the Auditor General. All matters concerning forestry should be addressed in the quarterly report. Including, but not limited to, data concerning tree removal, tree trimming, property damaged by City and/or Detroit Land Bank (DLBA) owned trees, and tree planting efforts by organizations affiliated with the City. Capacity to perform these services and related contracts should be a part of this report.

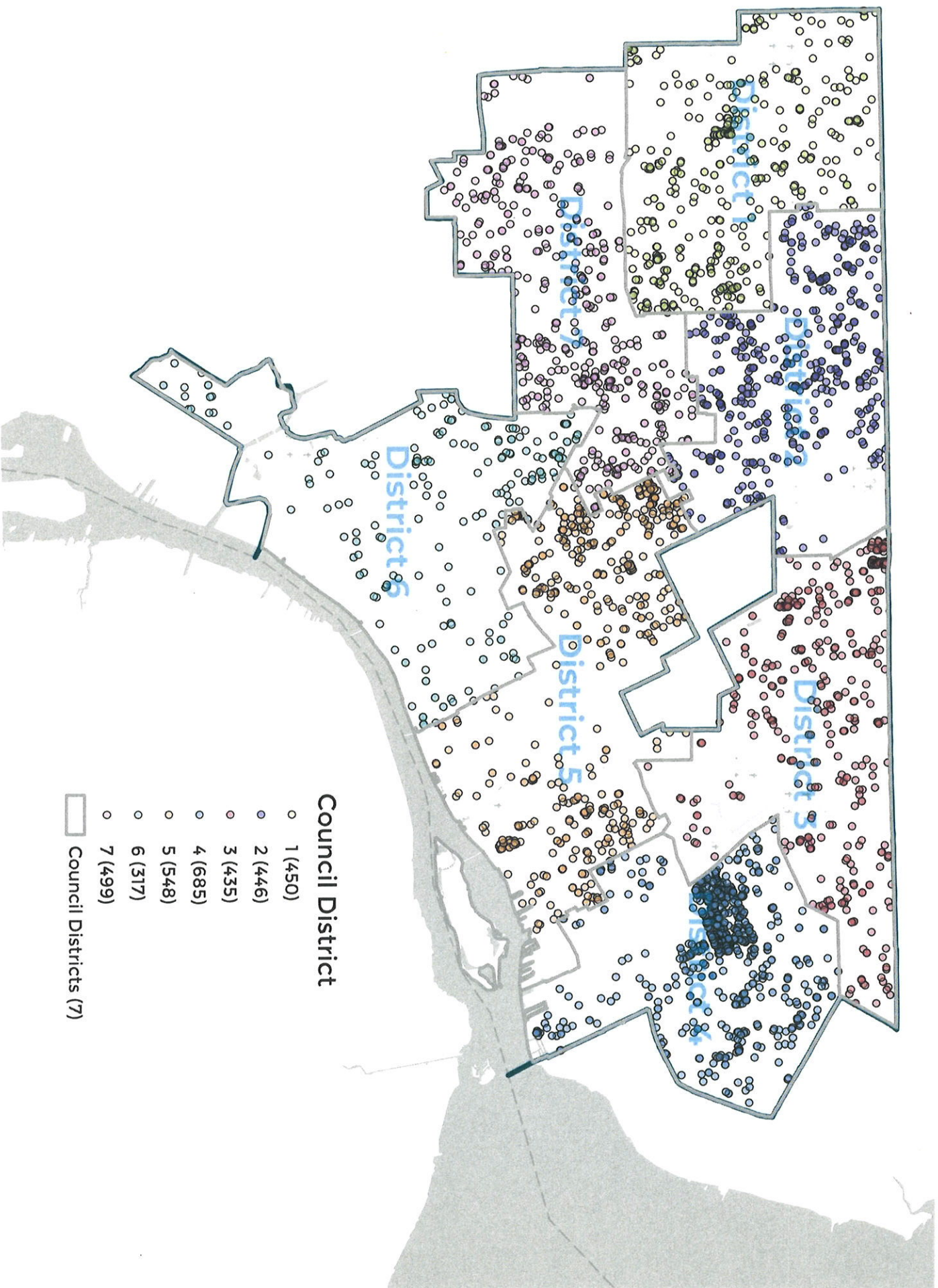
If a diseased tree falls on the home of a resident, in most cases, the City can rely on immunity. However, residents in most cases are left without recourse.



Complaints by District  
February 2022-February 2023

<b>Complaints by District</b>	<b># of Complaints by District</b>
DISTRICT 1	634
DISTRICT 2	517
DISTRICT 3	840
DISTRICT 4	277
DISTRICT 5	527
DISTRICT 6	479
DISTRICT 7	456
AT LARGE COMMUNITY MEETING	5
[Other]	4
	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>3765</b>

# Complaints by Council District



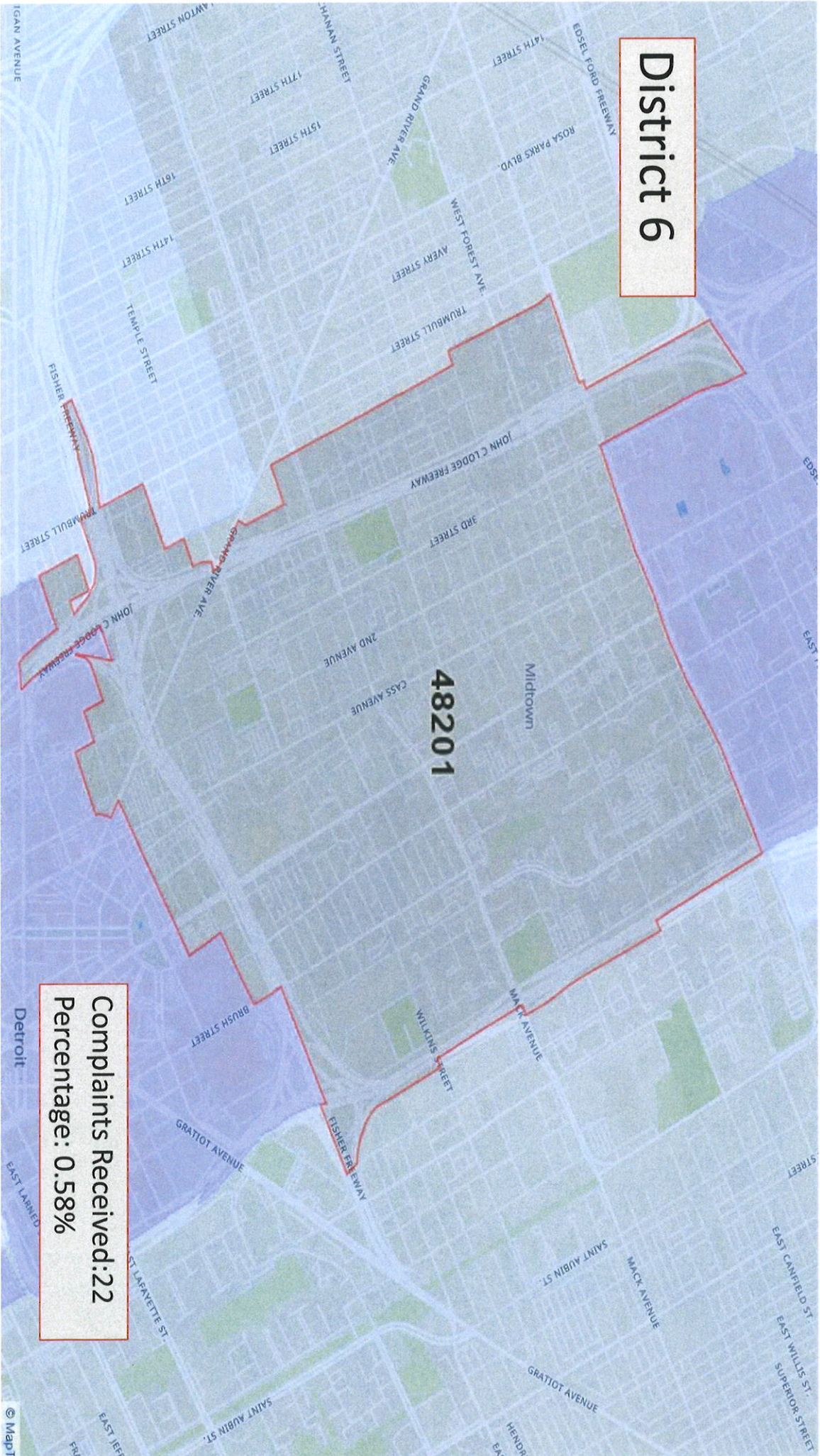


**Complaints by Zip Code**  
**February 2022 - February 2023**

<b>Zip Codes</b>	<b>Complaints Received</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
48201	22	0.58%
48202	68	1.81%
48203	154	4.09%
48204	222	5.90%
48205	162	4.30%
48206	160	4.25%
48207	84	2.23%
48208	44	1.17%
48209	38	1.01%
48210	91	2.42%
48211	26	0.69%
48212	84	2.23%
48213	477	12.67%
48214	146	3.88%
48215	53	1.41%
48216	17	0.45%
48217	19	0.50%
48219	170	4.52%
48221	169	4.49%
48223	162	4.30%
48224	193	5.13%
48226	112	2.97%
48227	296	7.86%
48228	230	6.11%
48234	139	3.69%
48235	191	5.07%
48236	4	0.11%
48238	207	5.50%
48239	15	0.40%
Other	10	0.27%

**Total** **3765**

# District 6

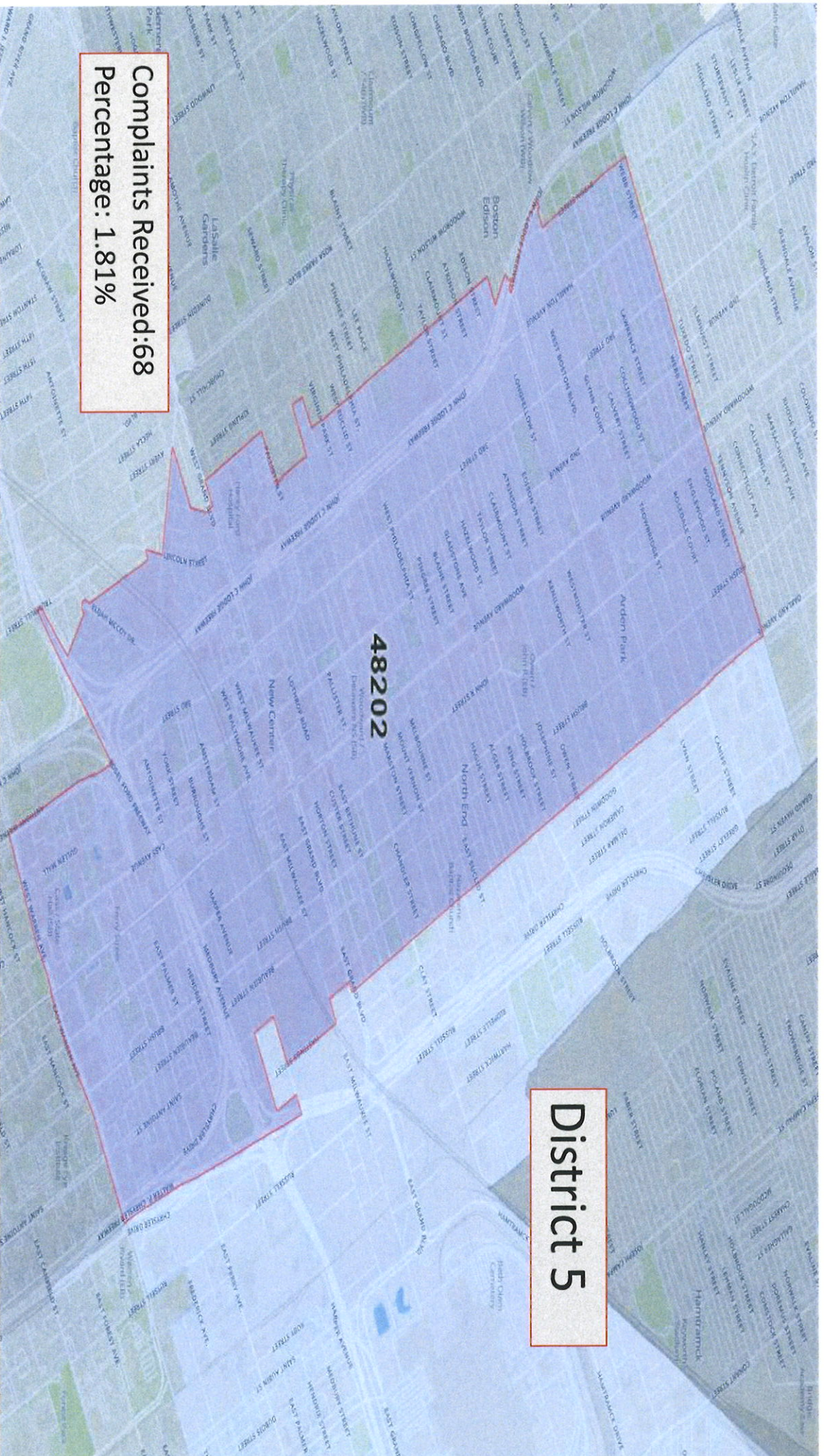


48201

Midtown

Complaints Received: 22  
Percentage: 0.58%

Detroit



**Complaints Received: 68**  
**Percentage: 1.81%**

**District 5**

**48202**

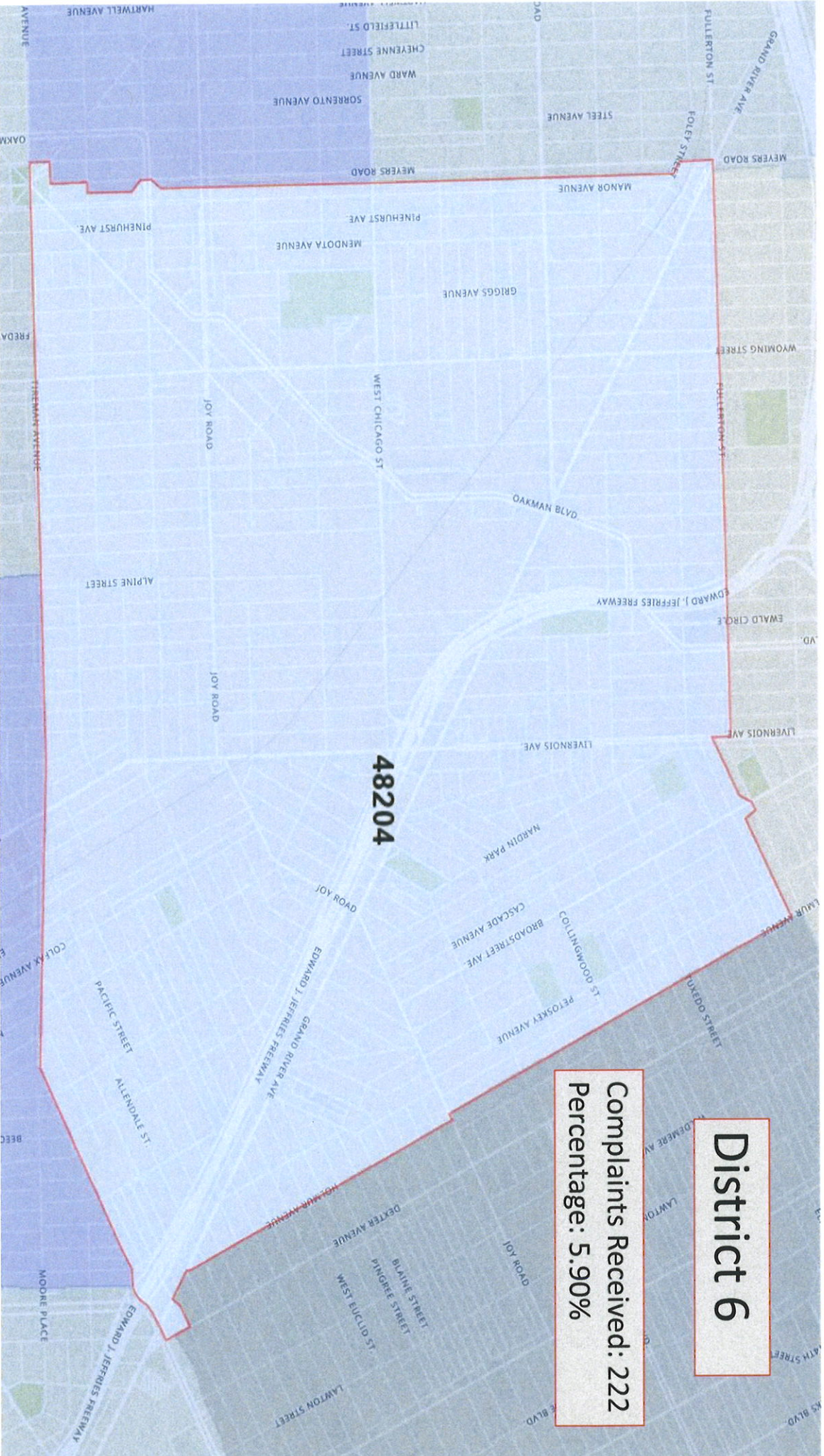




Complaints Received: 154  
Percentage: 4.09%

District 2

48203



48204

**District 6**

**Complaints Received: 222**  
**Percentage: 5.90%**

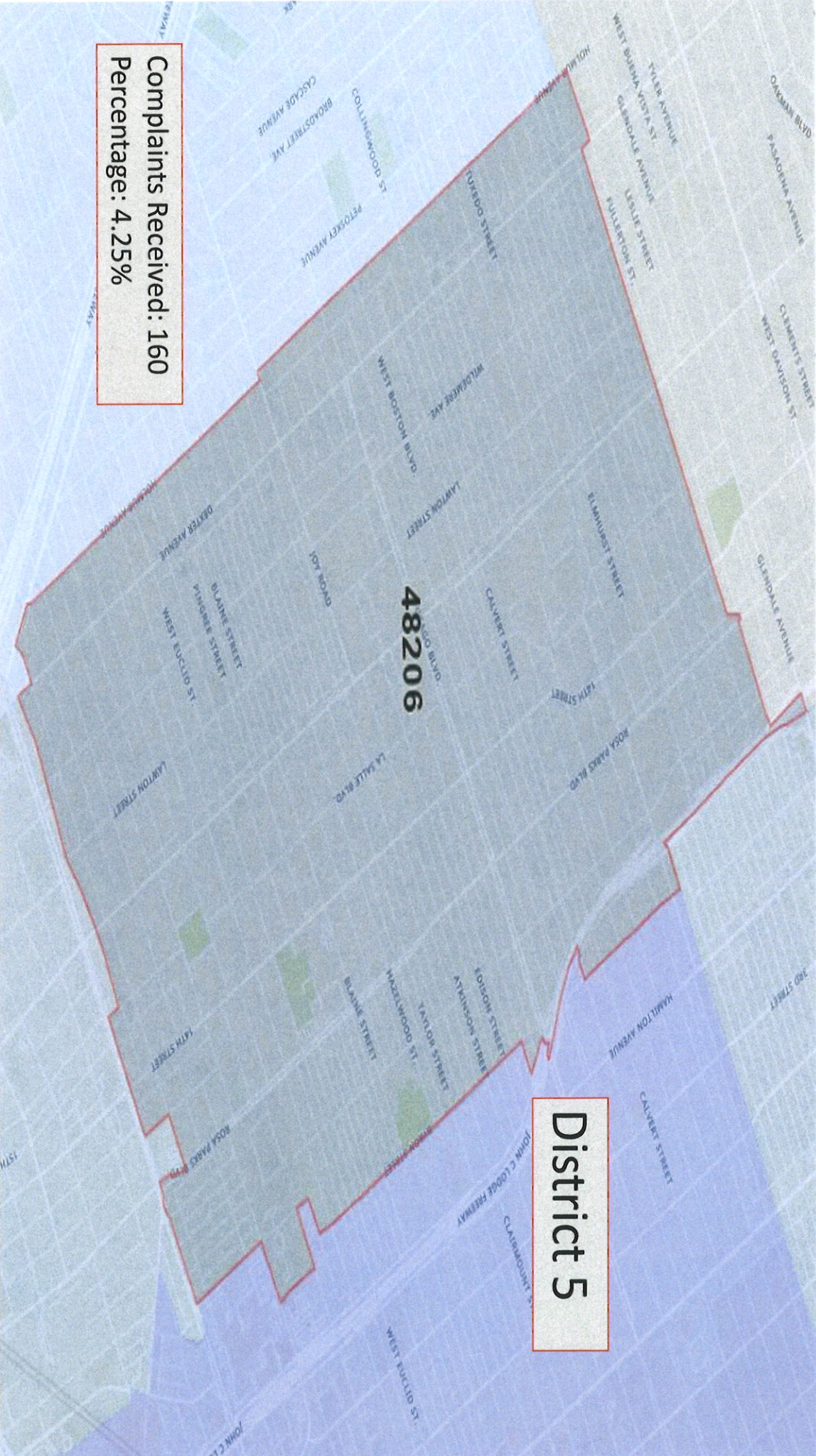
# District 3

48205

Complaints Received: 162  
Percentage: 4.30%



Complaints Received: 160  
Percentage: 4.25%

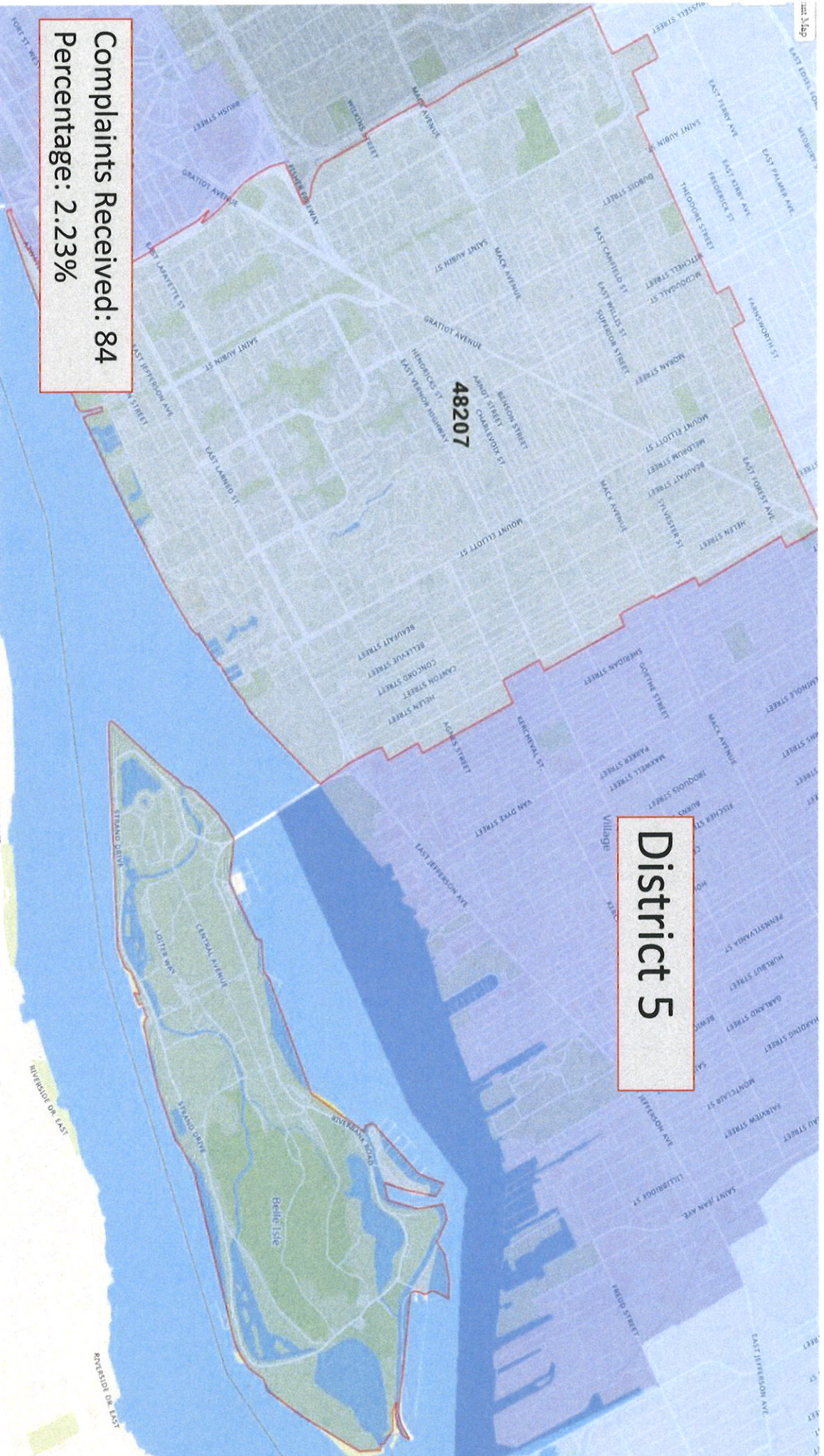


District 5

Complaints Received: 84  
Percentage: 2.23%

48207

District 5



**District 5**

**48208**

**Complaints Received: 44**  
**Percentage: 1.17%**





**District 6**

**Complaints Received: 38**  
**Percentage: 1.01%**

**48209**

DeLray Junction

DeLray

Southwest Detroit

Zug Island

MATCHETTE ROAD

RUSSELL STREET

PETER STREET

WYANDOTTE S

RIVERSIDE DR. W

WEST LAFAYETTE BLVD  
FORT ST. W

AMBASSADOR BRIDGE

WEST JEFFERSON AVE

FORT ST. WEST

JUNCTION STREET

CLARK STREET

CAMPBELL STREET

WEST VERNOR HIGHWAY

JUNCTION STREET

LIVERNOIS AVE

JOHN KRONK ST

DIX STREET

WEST VERNOR HIGHWAY

PITT STREET

DIX AVENUE

LOWY STREET

WOODMERE STREET

FORT ST. WEST

FISHER FREEWAY

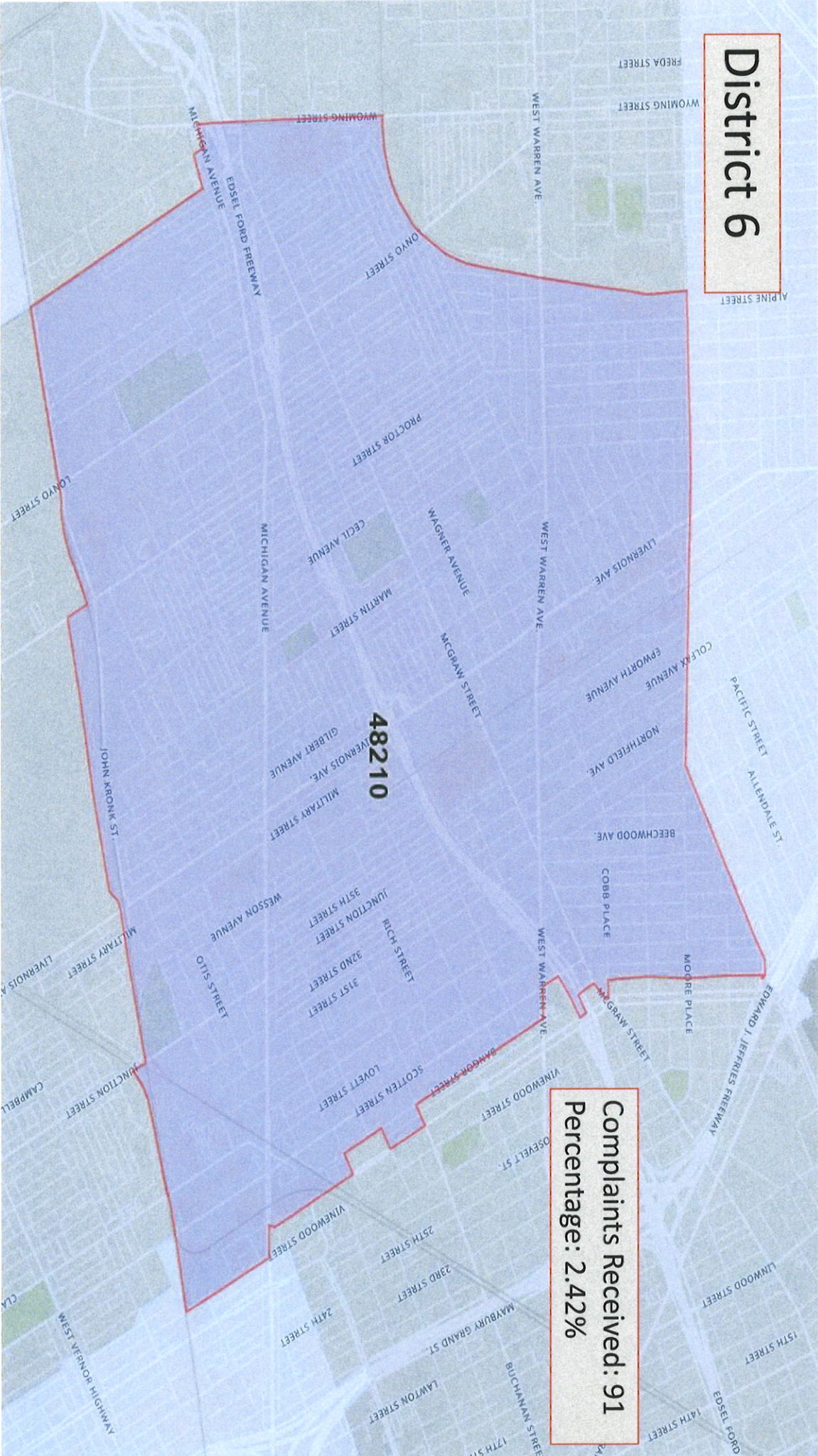
JEFFERSON AVE. WEST

DEARBORN STREET

FISHER FREEWAY

son  
nd

# District 6



48210

Complaints Received: 91  
Percentage: 2.42%



**District 5**



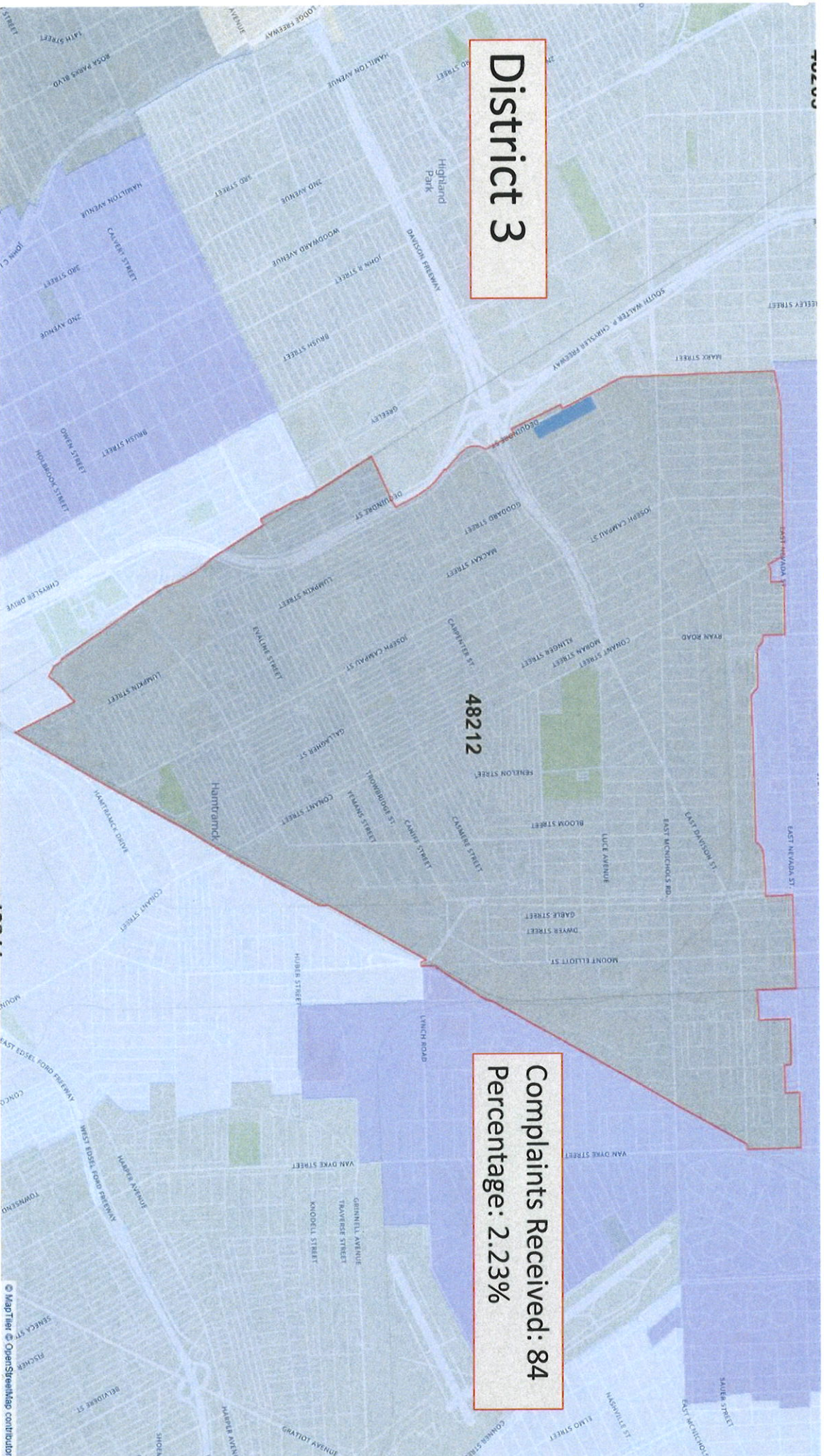
**48211**

**Complaints Received: 26**  
**Percentage: 0.69%**

# District 3

48212

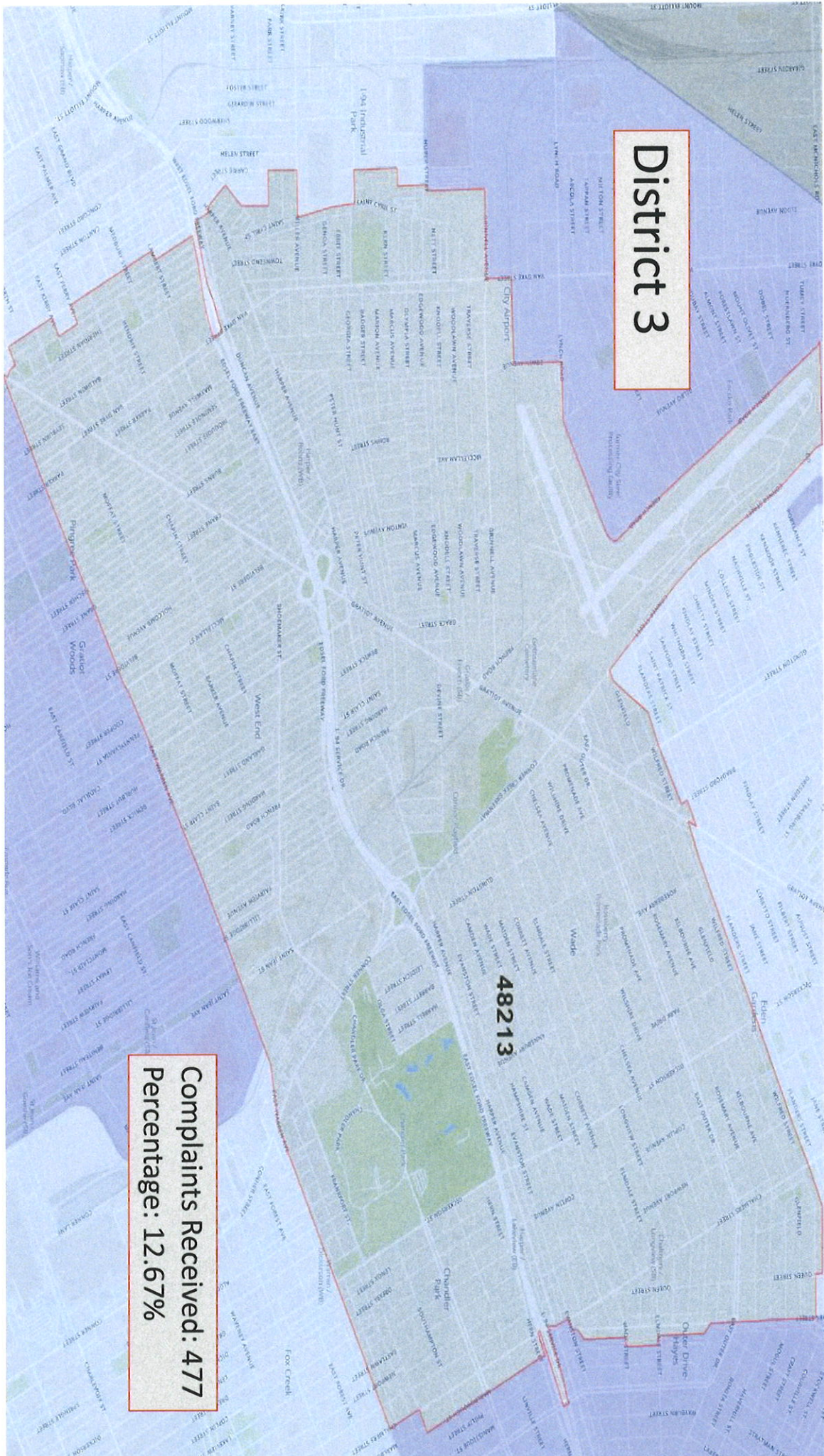
Complaints Received: 84  
Percentage: 2.23%



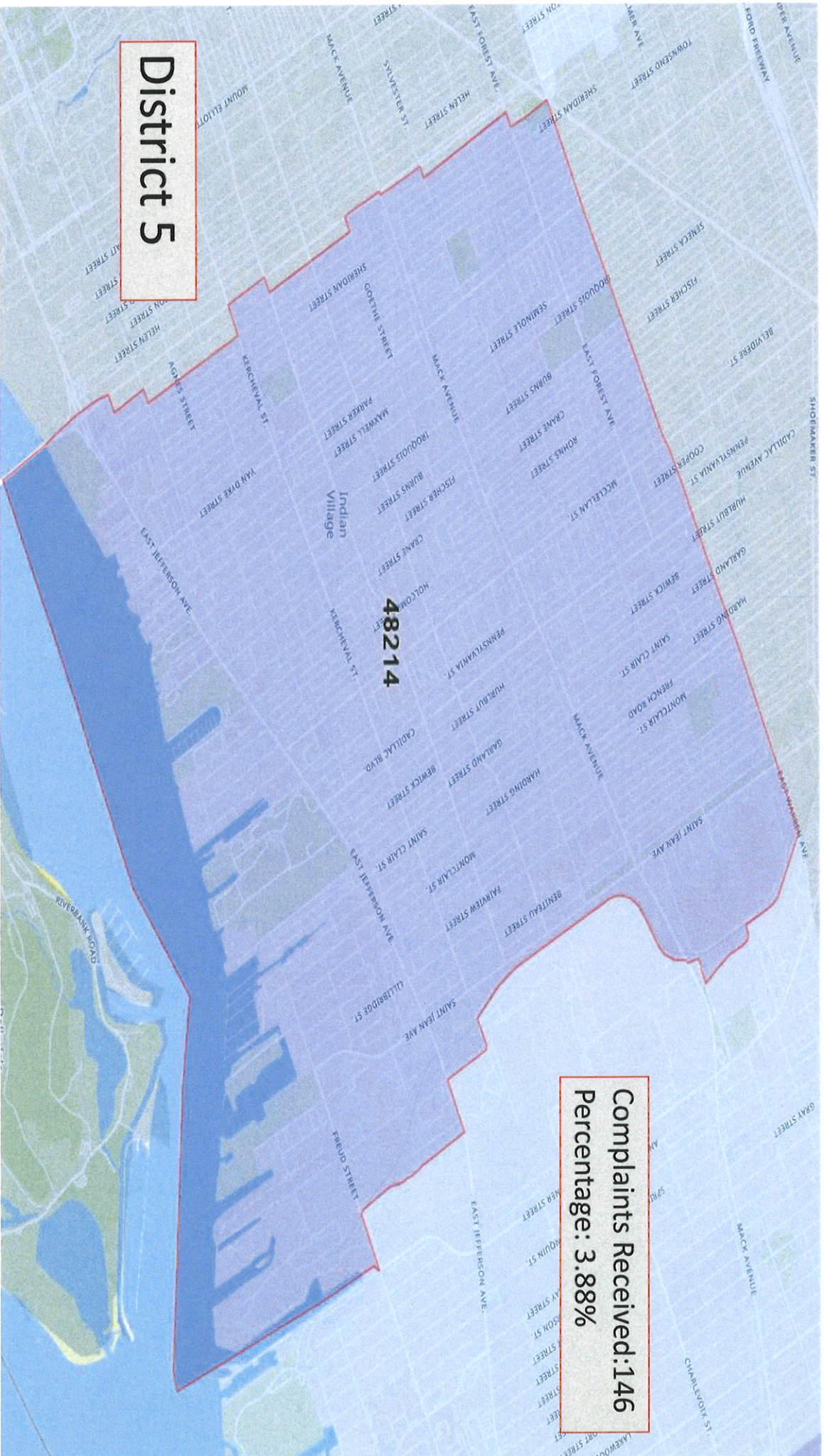
# District 3

48213

Complaints Received: 477  
Percentage: 12.67%



# District 5



48214

Complaints Received: 146  
Percentage: 3.88%



**District 4**

**48215**

**Complaints Received: 53**  
**Percentage: 1.41%**

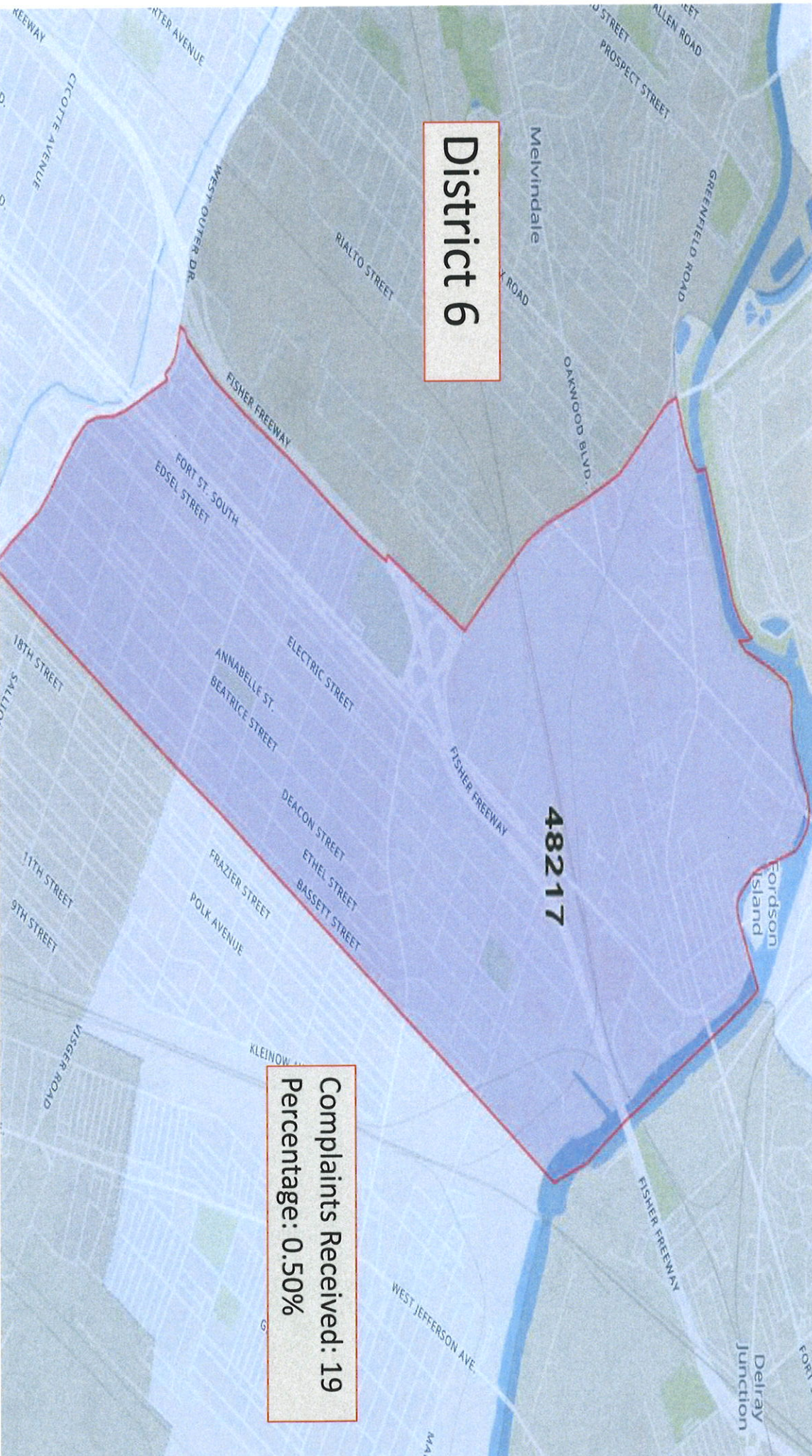
# District 6



48216

Complaints Received: 17  
Percentage: 0.45%

**District 6**



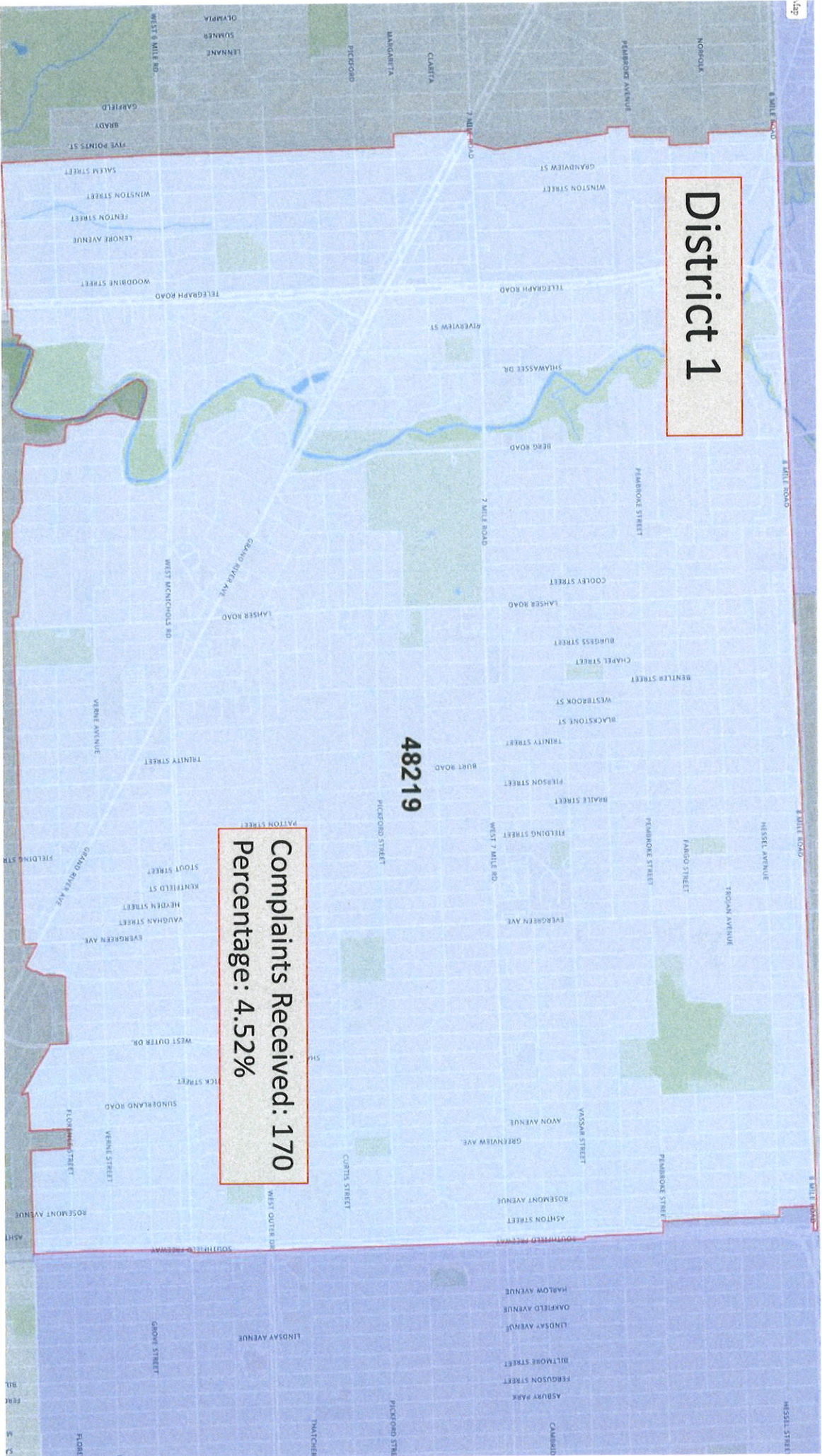
**48217**

**Complaints Received: 19**  
**Percentage: 0.50%**

# District 1

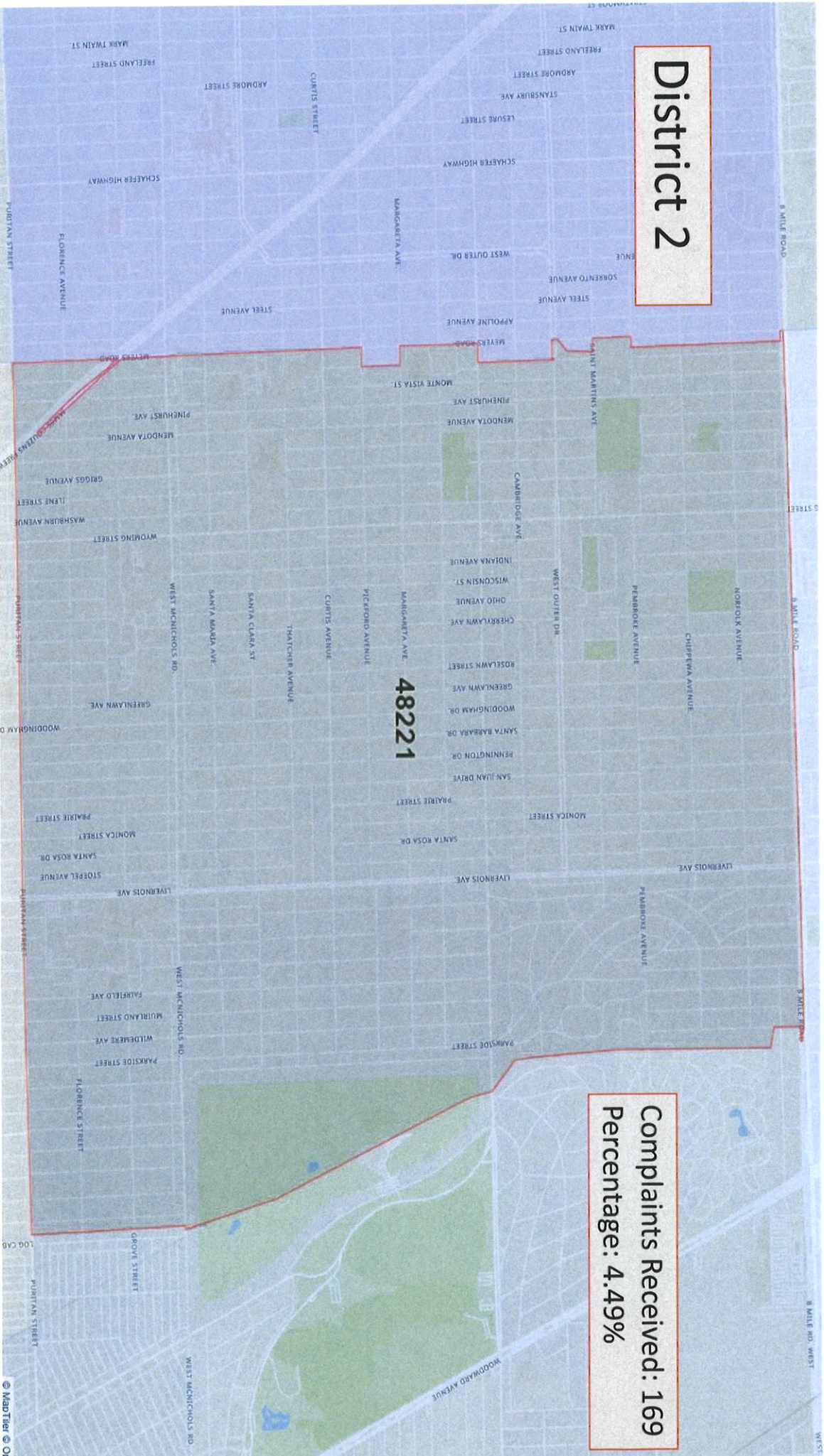
48219

Complaints Received: 170  
Percentage: 4.52%





# District 2



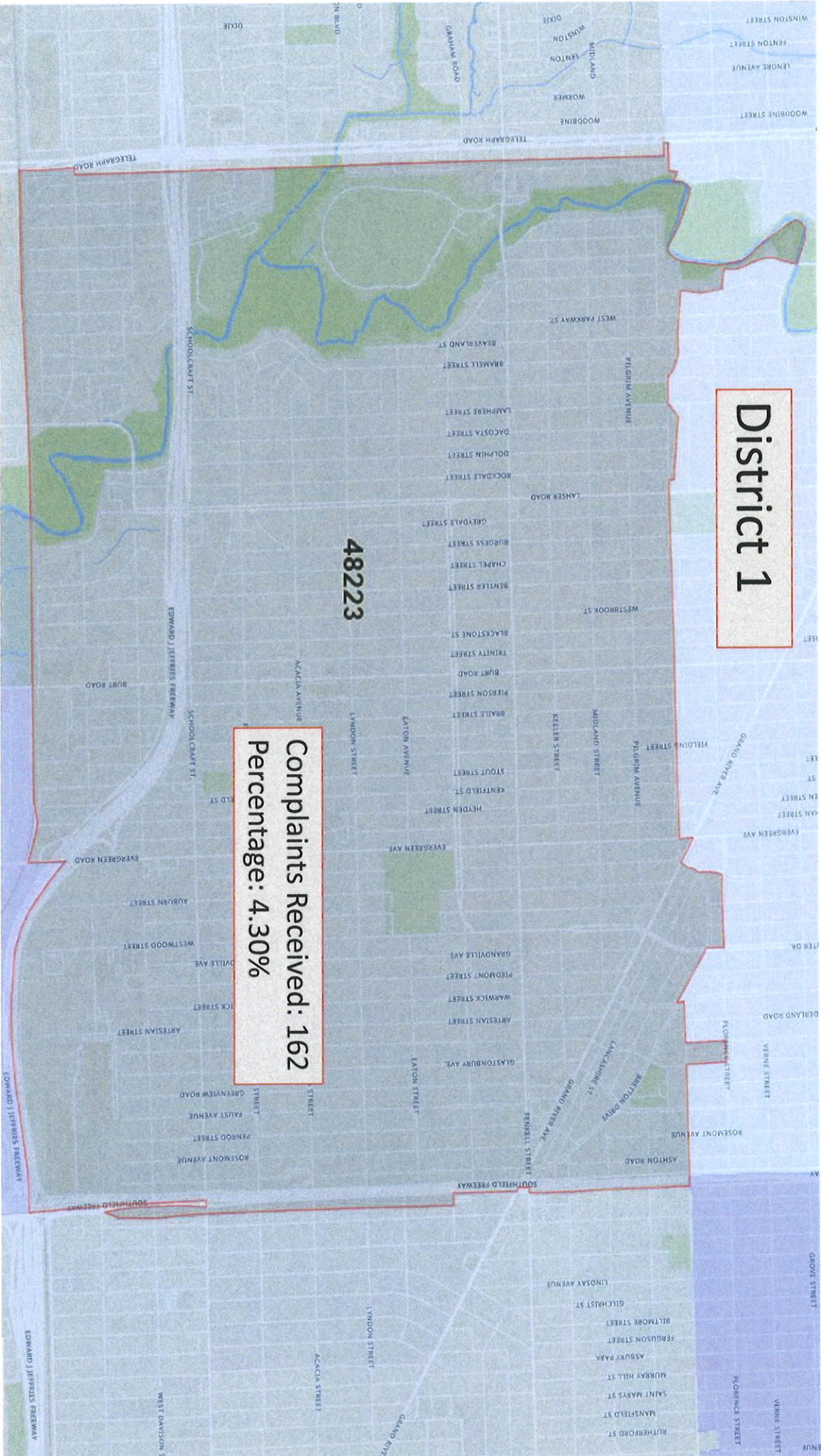
48221

Complaints Received: 169  
Percentage: 4.49%

# District 1

48223

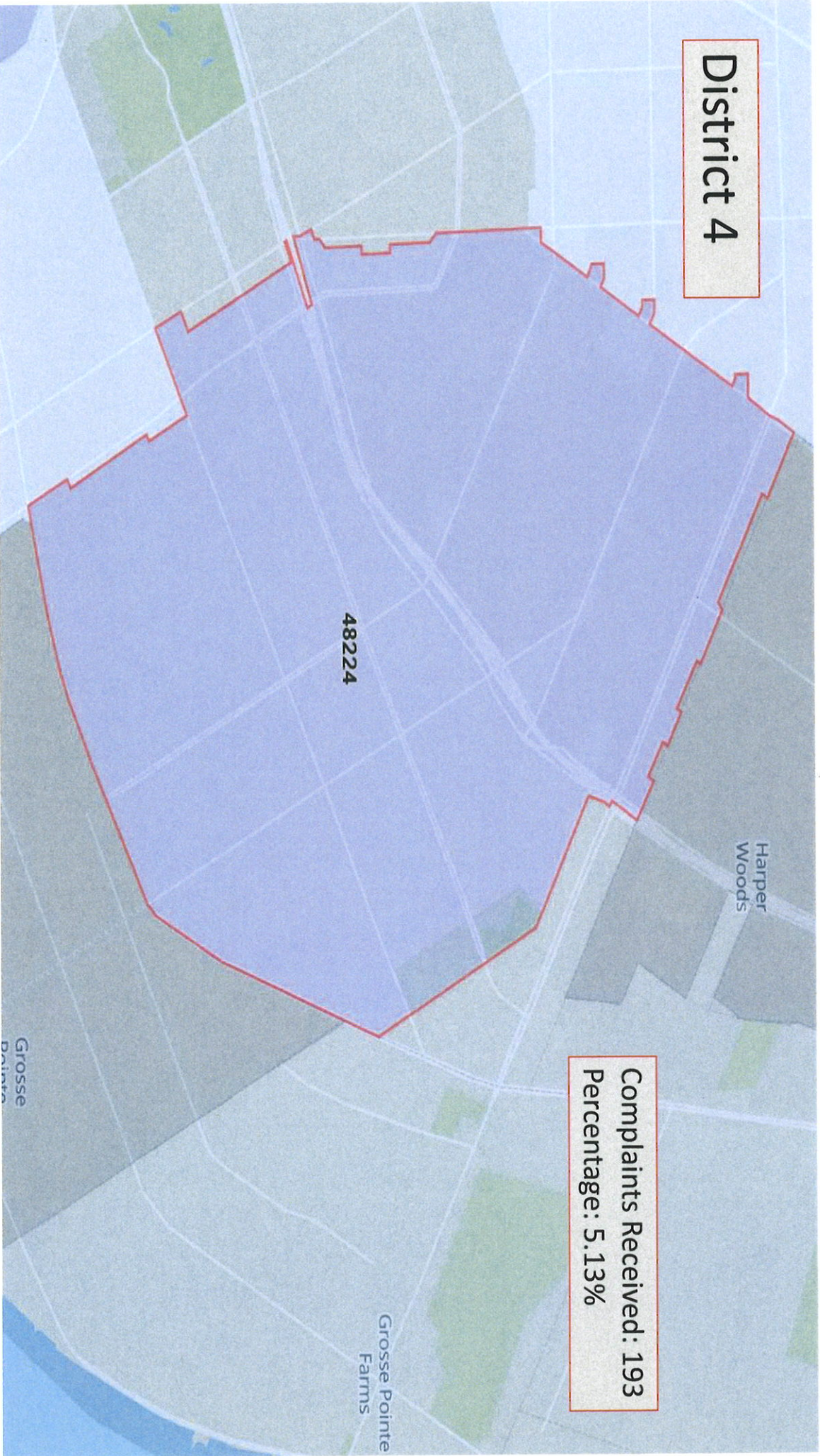
Complaints Received: 162  
Percentage: 4.30%



# District 4

48224

Complaints Received: 193  
Percentage: 5.13%





**Complaints Received: 112**  
**Percentage: 2.97%**

**District 6**

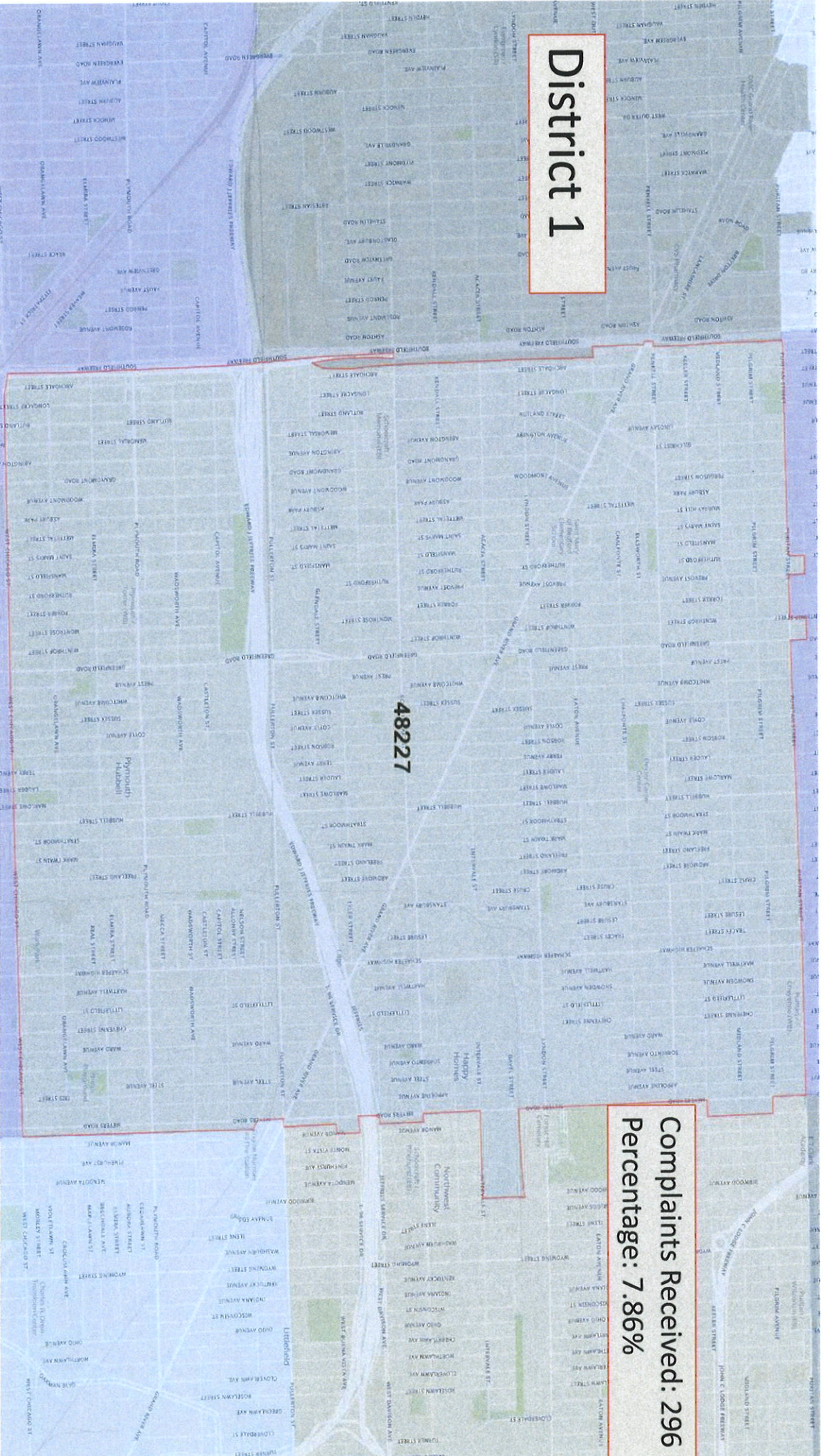
**48226**

**Detroit**

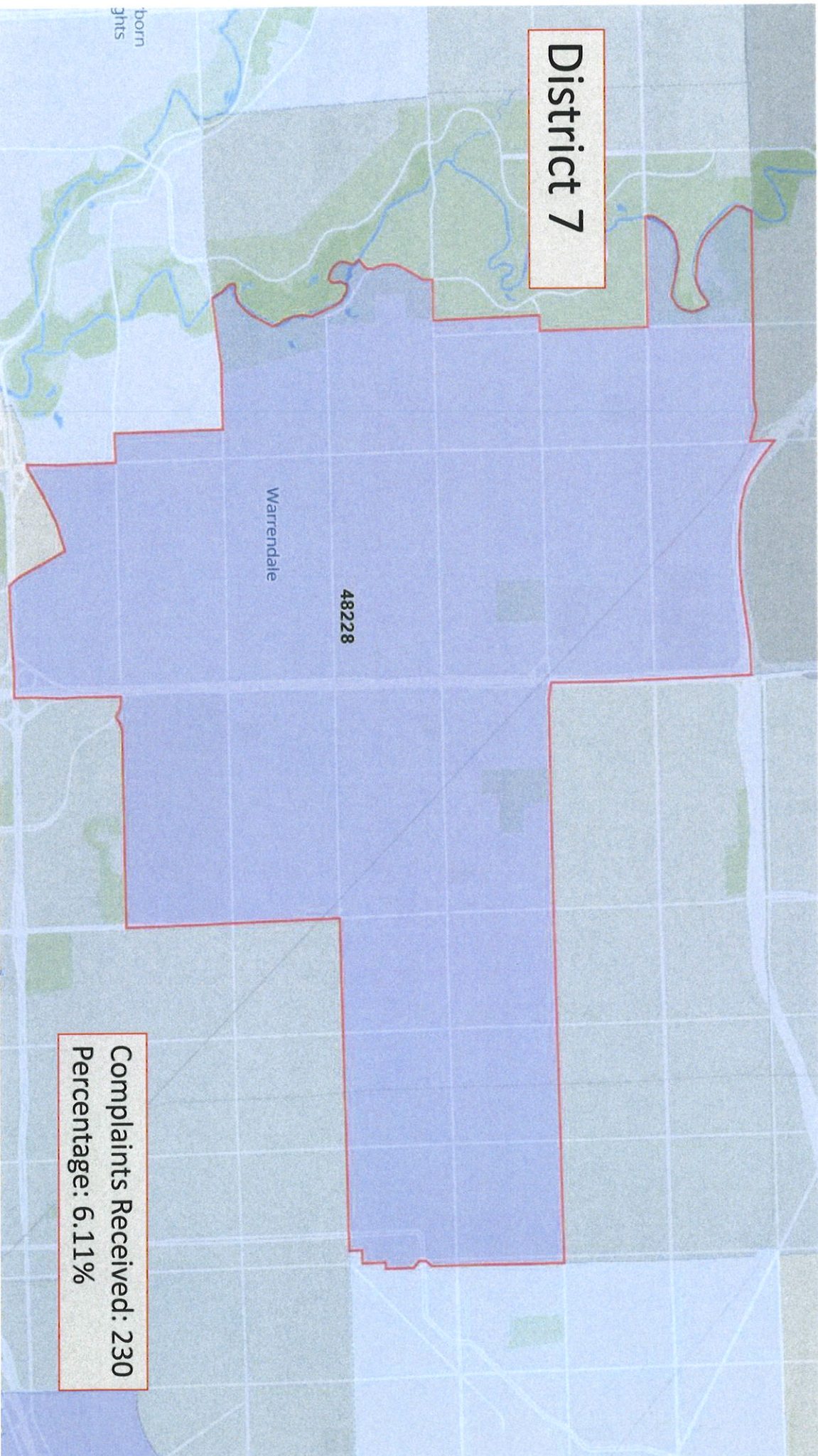
# District 1

48227

Complaints Received: 296  
Percentage: 7.86%



**District 7**

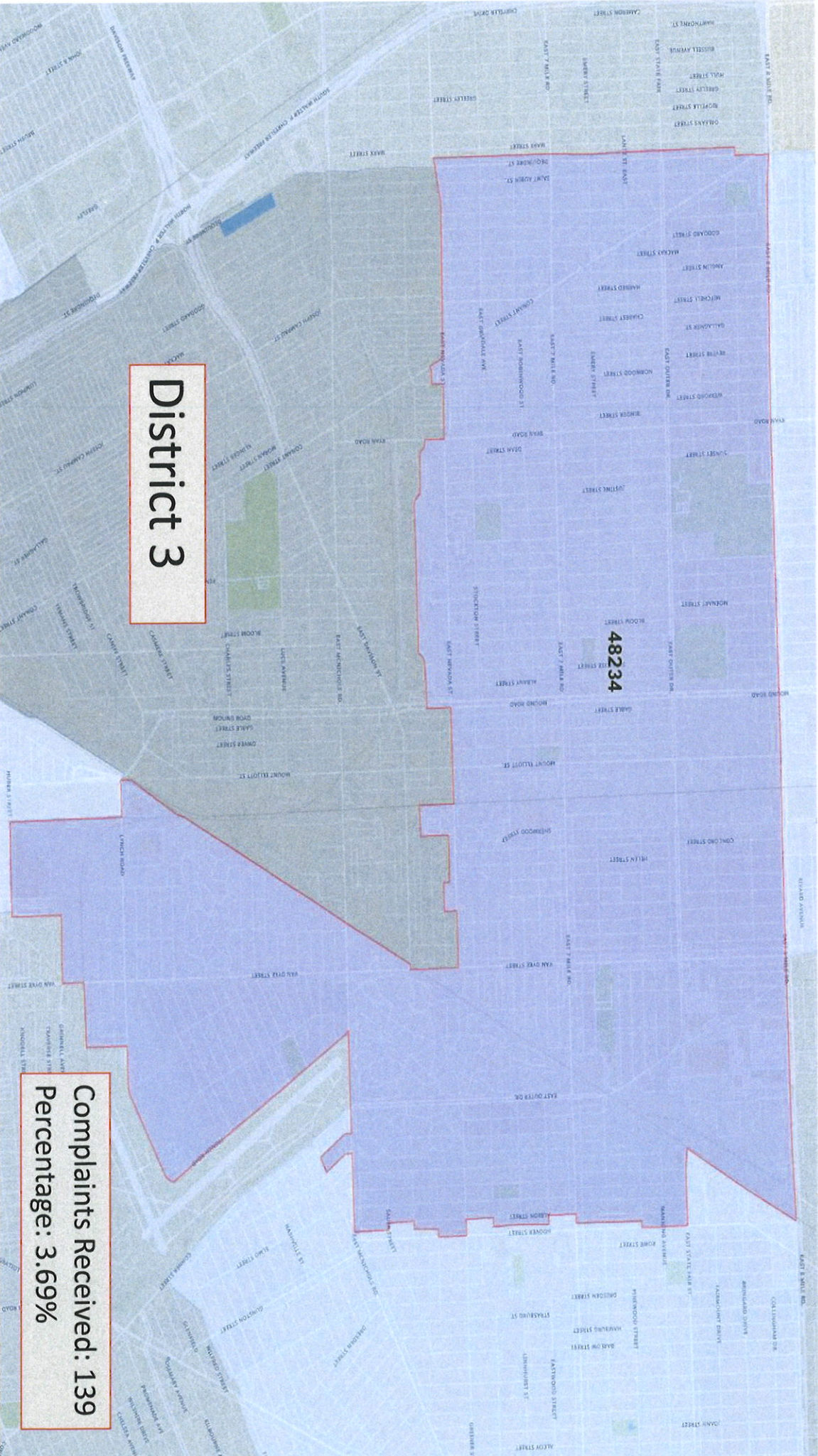


Warrendale

48228

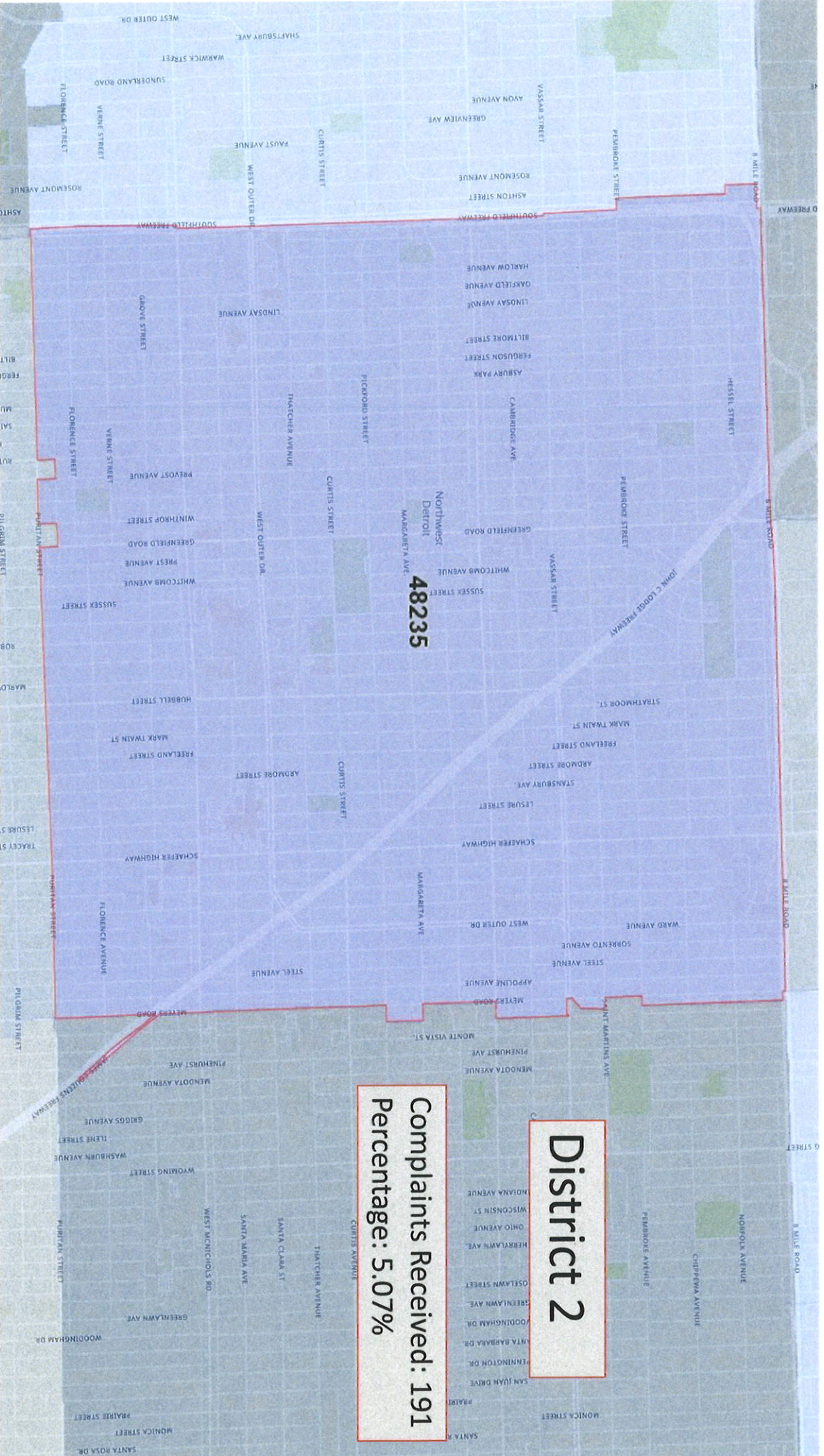
**Complaints Received: 230**  
**Percentage: 6.11%**

born  
ghts



**District 3**

**Complaints Received: 139**  
**Percentage: 3.69%**



Northwest  
Detroit  
48235

# District 2

Complaints Received: 191  
Percentage: 5.07%

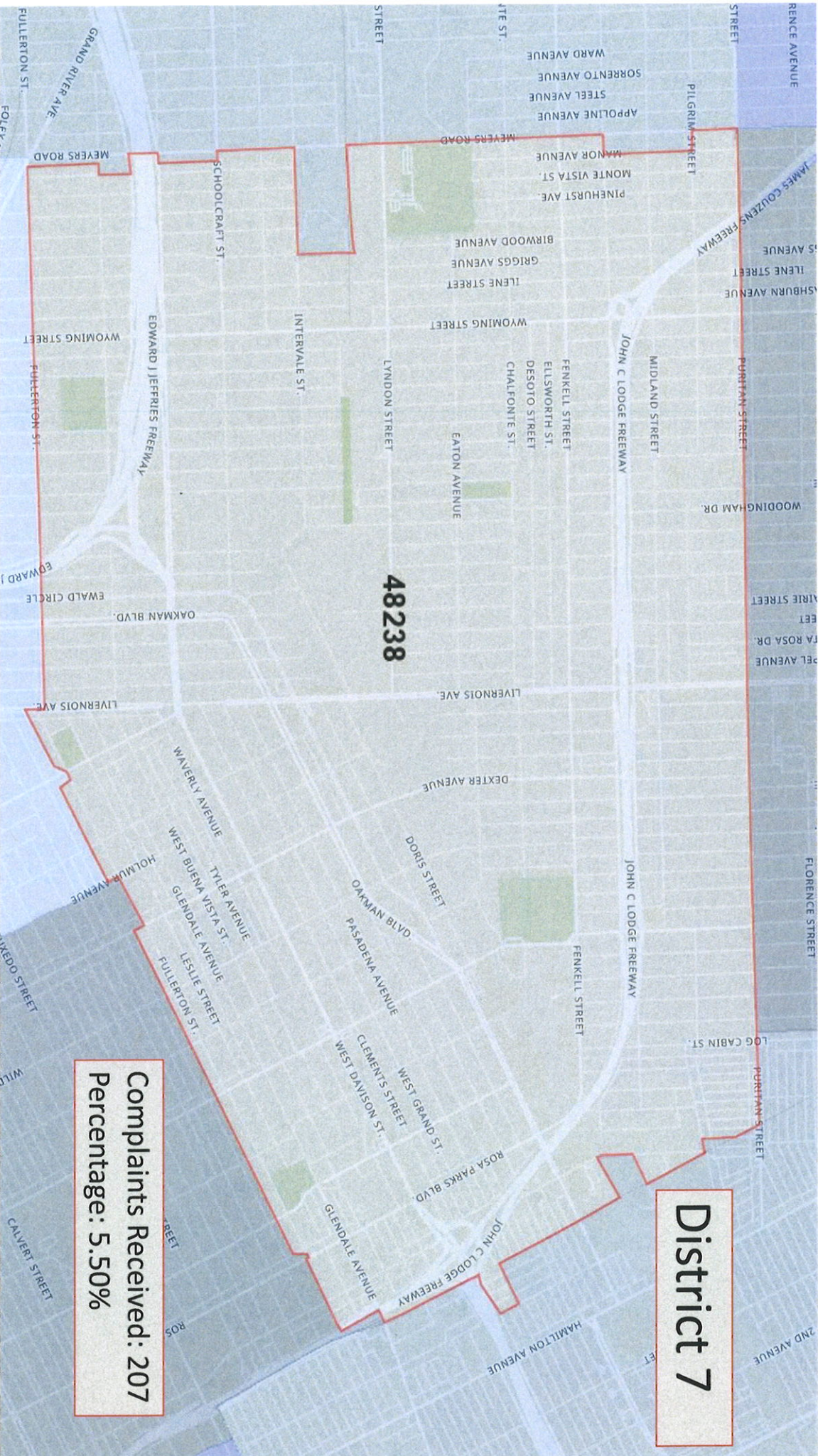




48236

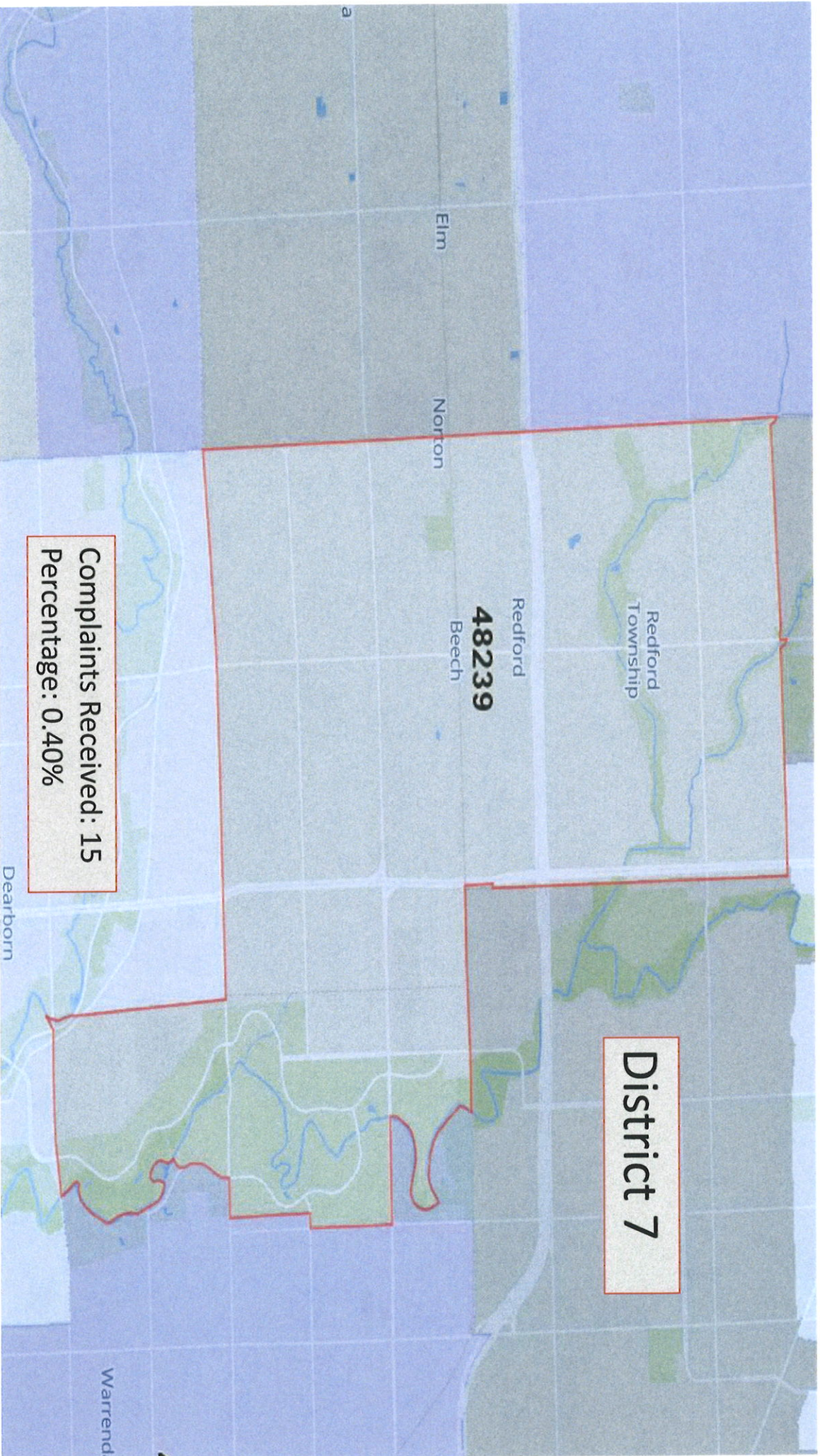
# District 4

Complaints Received: 4  
Percentage: 0.11%



**District 7**

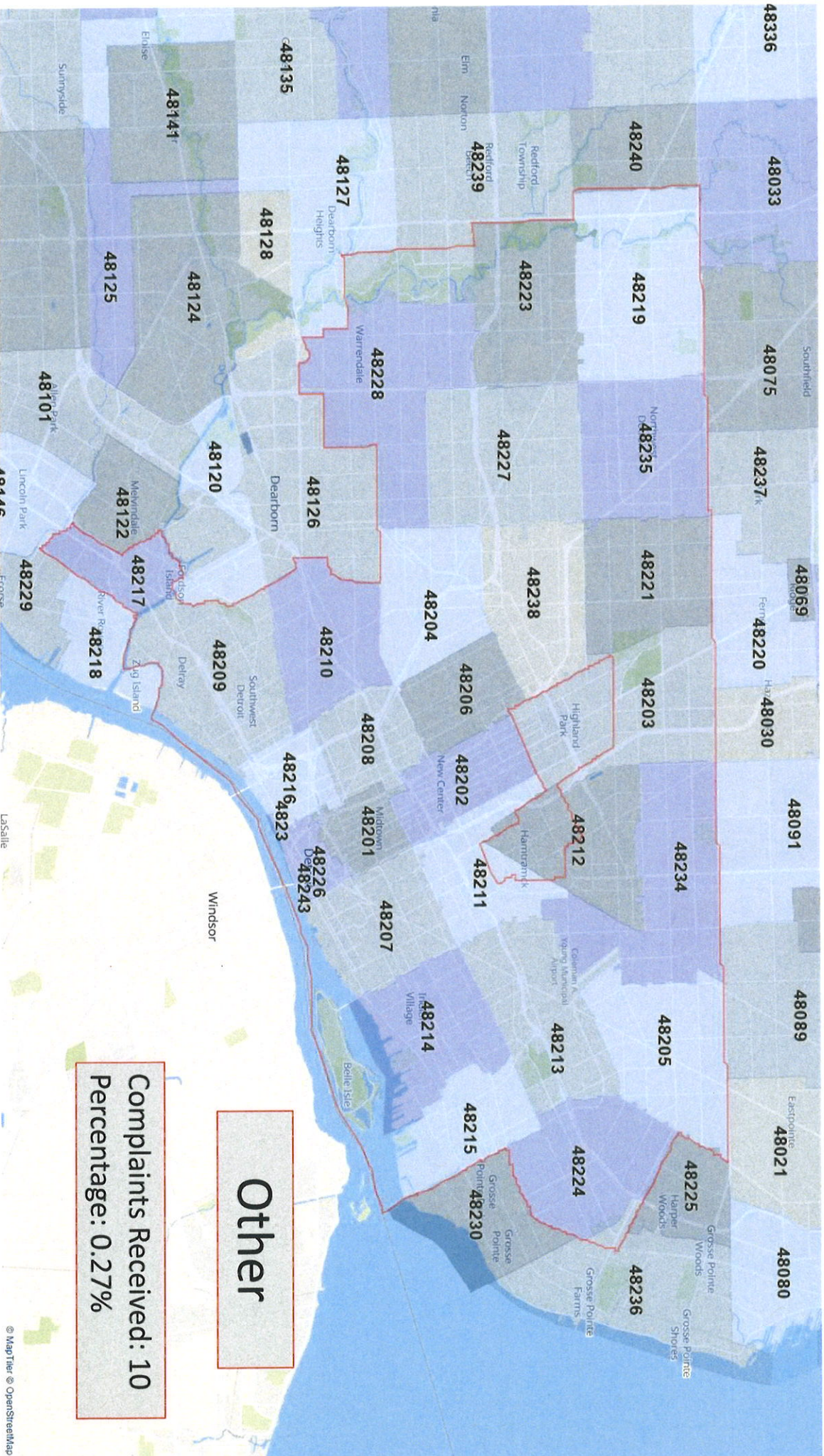
**Complaints Received: 207**  
**Percentage: 5.50%**



District 7

Complaints Received: 15  
Percentage: 0.40%

48239



Complaints Received: 10  
 Percentage: 0.27%

other



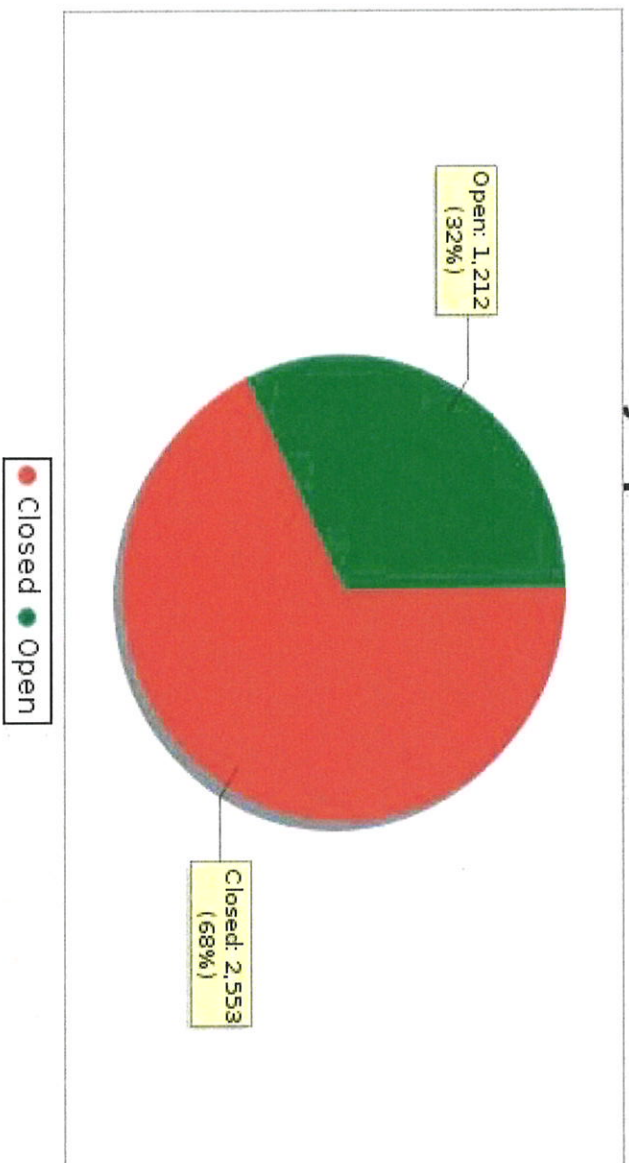
## Top Complaints by Zip Code

Zip Code	Number of Complaints	Complaint Type 1	Complaint Type 2
48213	381	Demolition Request	Illegal Dumping
48227	136	Demolition Request	Illegal Dumping
48228	106	Demolition Request	Illegal Dumping
48238	95	Demolition Request	Illegal Dumping
48203	90	Illegal Dumping	Remove Dead Trees
48210	118	Demolition Request	Illegal Dumping
48206	92	Demolition Request	Illegal Dumping
48203	137	Demolition Request	Illegal Dumping
48219	87	Demolition Request	Illegal Dumping

### Cases by Opened and Closed

Start Range: Feb-22  
End Range: Feb-23

#### By Open vs Closed



**THE CITY OF DETROIT OMBUDSMAN BRUCE SIMPSON AND THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN  
2022 REPORTING PERIOD (FEB. 2022 – FEB. 2023) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**  
**“IMPROVING YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE ON A DAILY BASIS”**

**MONTHLY VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS FROM 6/2022 - 2-2023,  
EVERY 3<sup>RD</sup> THURSDAY FROM 1 PM – 3 PM. (80 ATTENDEES)**

**2-2022 VIRTUAL COMMUNITY LEADERS’ MEETING  
(35 ATTENDEES)**

**AUGUST 2022 VIRTUAL COMMUNITY LEADERS’ MEETING,  
HIGHLIGHTING ATTORNEY KATRINA CRAWLEY AND THE  
BLIGHT TO BEAUTY PROJECT (72 ATTENDEES)**

**FEBRUARY 2023 VIRTUAL COMMUNITY LEADERS’ MEETING  
HIGHLIGHTING DWSL LIFELINE PROGRAM (175 ATTENDEES)**

**OHIO ST. COMMUNITY TEAM UP (BSEED, GSD &  
VOLUNTEERS) TO CLEAN UP FROM W. CHICAGO TO ELMIRA  
WITH COUNCIL MEMBER FRED DURHAL III**

**OMBUDSMAN THANKSGIVING TURKEY GIVEAWAY  
(750 GIVEN AWAY TO FAMILIES IN NEED)**

**PARTICIPATED IN MARCH READING MONTH -  
60 SECOND AND THIRD GRADERS**

**ENGAGED IN TWO MALE MENTORING PROGRAMS IN  
GRADES 8 – 12**

**STAFFED A RESOURCE TABLE AT THE BOARD OF REVIEW  
HEALTHY HOMES RESOURCE DAY IN SPIRIT PLAZA**

**ATTENDED 25 VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETINGS CITYWIDE**

**INVITED TO SPEAK AT 35 IN-PERSON COMMUNITY  
MEETINGS CITY WIDE**

**VISITED 15 SENIOR CITIZEN BUILDINGS CITY WIDE**

**ENGAGED IN THREE NEWSPAPER AD INTERVIEWS AND  
MONTHLY RADIO CHAT ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE  
OMBUDSMAN**



**TOTAL NUMBER OF  
COMMUNITY MEETINGS  
ATTENDED INCLUDING  
VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON**

**85**

**HELD THREE VIRTUAL  
COMMUNITY LEADERS’  
MEETINGS WITH THE  
OMBUDSMAN**

**OVERALL TOTAL OF**

**282 COMMUNITY**

**LEADERS PARTICIPATED**

**70 GOV DELIVERY DISTRIBUTIONS WERE DISBURSED DURING THE  
REPORTING PERIOD FROM OUR OFFICE, NOT INCLUDING OTHER  
COMMUNICATIONS DISBURSED VIA COMPLIMENTS OF THE OFFICE OF  
THE OMBUDSMAN, REACHING OVER 10,000 CONSTITUENTS.  
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HANDOUTS HANDED OUT OF THE  
OMBUDSMAN OFFICE: 1,800.**