

2006

# Annual Report on Guns in the District of Columbia

WASHINGTON, DC



**Cathy L. Lanier**  
Chief of Police



**Adrian M. Fenty**  
Mayor, District of Columbia



**Linda Singer**  
Attorney General



## Message from the Mayor, Chief and Attorney General:

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Even though the District's 2006 homicide rate reached a 20-year low, eighty-one percent (137) of the homicides in the District of Columbia in 2006 were committed with a gun. In fact, since 2000 more than 1,200 people have been killed with guns in the Nation's Capital. Of those, over seventy were children.

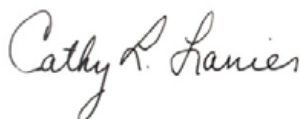
At the close of 2006, the District's firearm laws remained under attack. *Parker vs. District of Columbia*, a legal challenge to the District's law limiting ownership of handguns, was pending before the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit and Congress continued to threaten to repeal local laws limiting gun ownership. While fighting to preserve its existing laws, which are designed to protect public safety, the District also strengthened its laws by enacting a mandatory minimum for convicted felons in possession of a firearm.

Despite the District's strong gun laws, guns remain too accessible. We must do more to stop the flow of illegal guns into the District of Columbia. In 2006 the upward trend of gun recoveries continued, with more than 2600 firearms being recovered by the Metropolitan Police Department and other local and Federal law enforcement agencies operating in the District. This reflects a thirteen percent increase over the number of guns recovered in 2005. But, there remains much work to be done.

This report to the citizens of the District was designed to provide an overview of some of the pertinent data regarding guns and gun crimes in the District in 2006. We hope that you will join us in the fight to preserve and enforce District's gun laws and to put an end to the violence that already has claimed too many lives.



Adrian Fenty  
Mayor



Cathy Lanier  
Chief of Police



Linda Singer  
Attorney General

FIGURE 1.  
2006 vs. 2005 Firearms Received by the  
Metropolitan Police Department

	Year 2006	Year 2005	Net Difference
January	249	198	+51
February	198	340	-142
March	211	164	+47
April	159	171	-12
May	179	202	-23
June	184	156	+28
July	206	156	+50
August	240	226	+14
September	302	177	+124
October	425	199	+204
November	167	172	-5
December	136	182	-45
TOTAL	2,656	2,344	+312

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## COMBATING GUN VIOLENCE IN THE DISTRICT

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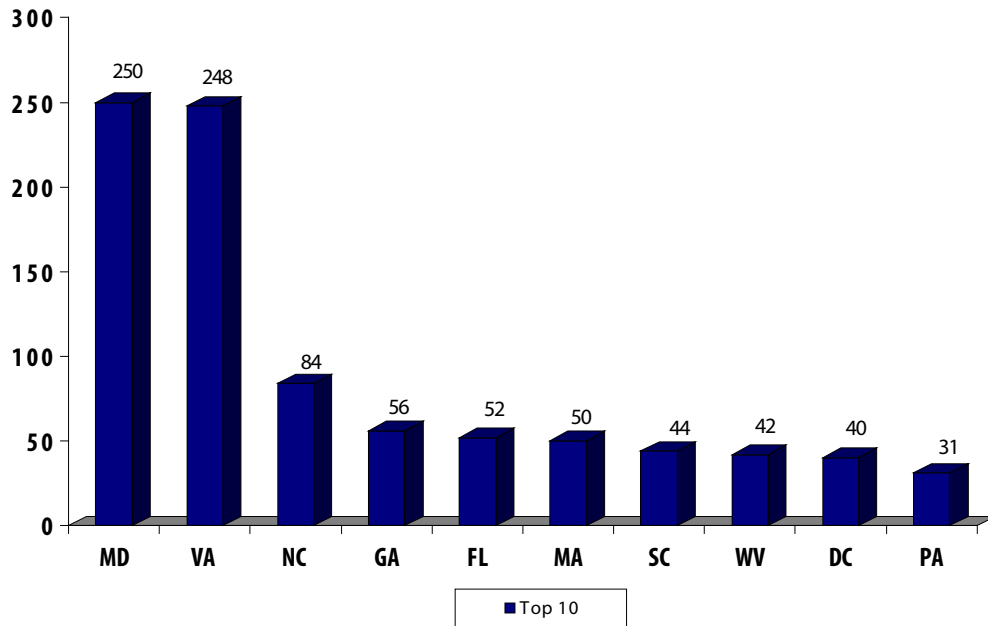
### *Guns Still Readily Accessible*

Despite the limitations on gun possession and use under District of Columbia law, in 2006, 2656 firearms were recovered by law enforcement agencies operating in the District of Columbia. This reflects a 13% increase over the

2344 guns recovered in 2005. Although a portion of this increase is due to an additional 85 guns recovered through the District's gun buy back program in 2006 over 2005, the majority of the increase reflects that more guns were used in

the commission of a crime in 2006 than in 2005.

FIGURE 2.  
Top Source States of Successfully Traced  
Firearms Recovered by MPD in 2006



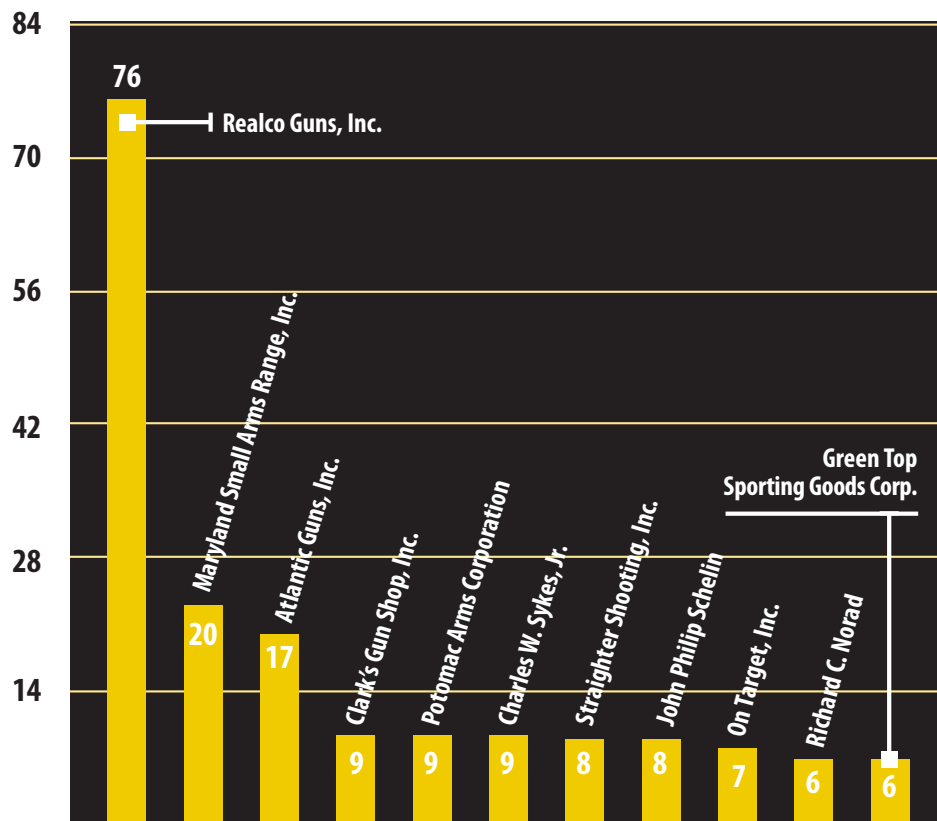
### *Tracing Firearms to Their Source*

All firearms recovered in the District of Columbia are submitted for a trace analysis to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). However, because there is no national firearms registry, not all handguns can be successfully traced to the originating dealer and the process of conducting gun traces, which is done manually by the ATF, is often cumbersome. Of the 2656 guns re-

covered in 2006, only 991 were successfully traced to the source gun dealer by the ATF. A successful trace does not mean that the dealer who sold the gun broke the law, nor does it mean that the original purchaser did either. Rather, a successful trace is merely a tool that assists law enforcement agencies in determining whether there are any patterns in the gun sale or purchase that

would be of use to law enforcement. It also allows law enforcement to try to ascertain how the gun made its way from the hands of a lawful purchaser to the hands of a criminal. In 2006, of the 991 successfully traced firearms, more than half originated in Maryland or Virginia and illegally made their way into the District.

FIGURE 3.  
Top Source Dealers of Crime Firearms  
Recovered By MPD In Year 2006



### Tracing Firearms to Their Source

Successful traces allow District and Federal law enforcement agencies to observe whether any unusual patterns exist. In the case of successfully traced MPD recovered firearms, for example, Realco, Inc., a gun dealer in Prince George's County Maryland, stands out as selling more than three times the number of traced guns as the next most frequent dealer. Successfully traced guns recov-

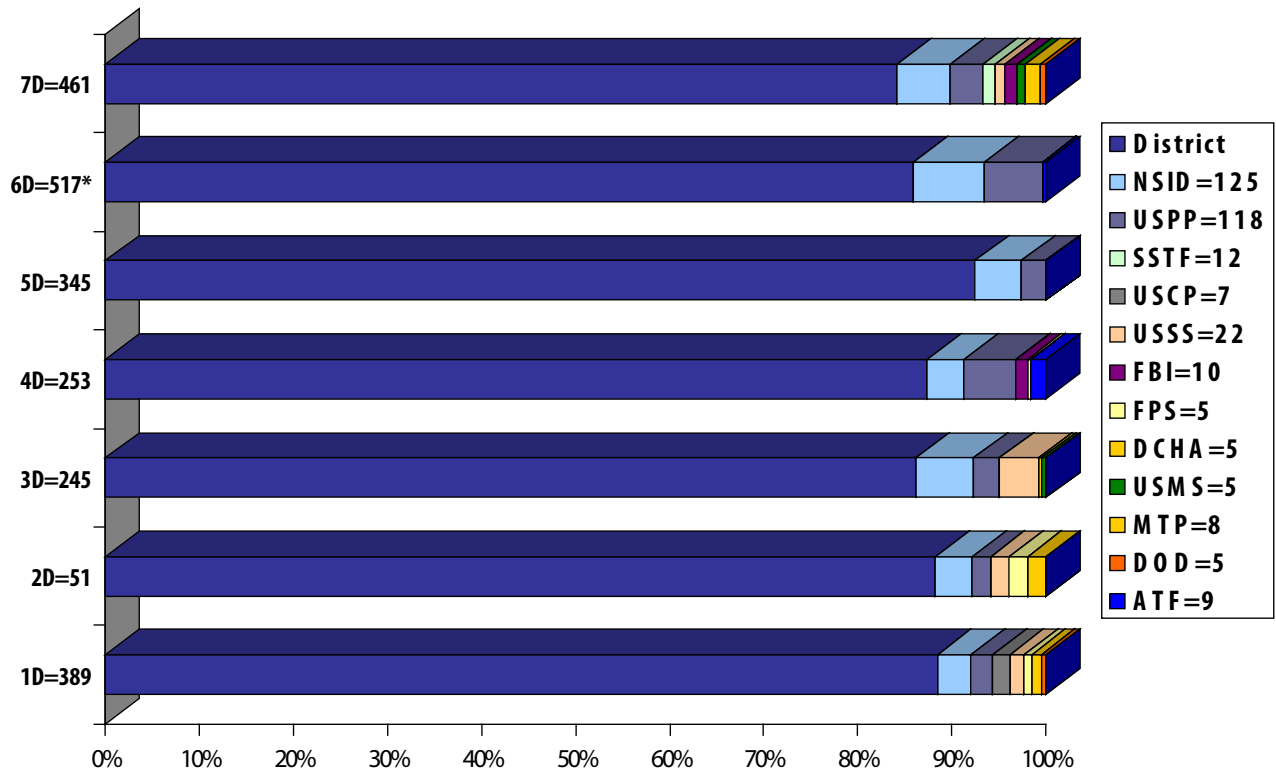
ered by the Prince George's County Police Department in 2006 showed a similar pattern. Trace analysis allows law enforcement to share these observations and investigate whether a gun dealer is engaging in any practices that may make it easier for criminals to obtain a gun from them versus other dealers, such as allowing straw purchases, where the actual buyer is not lawfully eligible to buy

a gun and illegally purchases weapons through an intermediary.

In 2006, Congress continued to limit law enforcement's ability to access and share this data, as well as to restrict its use and public release, by including restrictions — commonly called the "Tiahrt Amendments" — in the ATF appropriations bill.

FIGURE 4.  
Firearms Recoveries in the District of Columbia,  
by Law Enforcement Agencies and  
MPD Police Districts

(Excludes Buyback Firearms)



#### Firearms Recoveries by Agency

The District of Columbia is somewhat unique in that more than 40 distinct police agencies — both local and Federal — operate concurrently. In 2006, thirteen of these agencies, including the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), recovered illegal guns, although only 7% of the guns recovered were recovered by an agency other than MPD. As

the graph shows, the largest recovery by MPD occurred in the Sixth Police District.

FIGURE 5.  
Homicide and Firearm Recovery Locations  
January 1–July 25, 2007

(Geocoded FES and ASAP Data, Queried July 26, 2007)

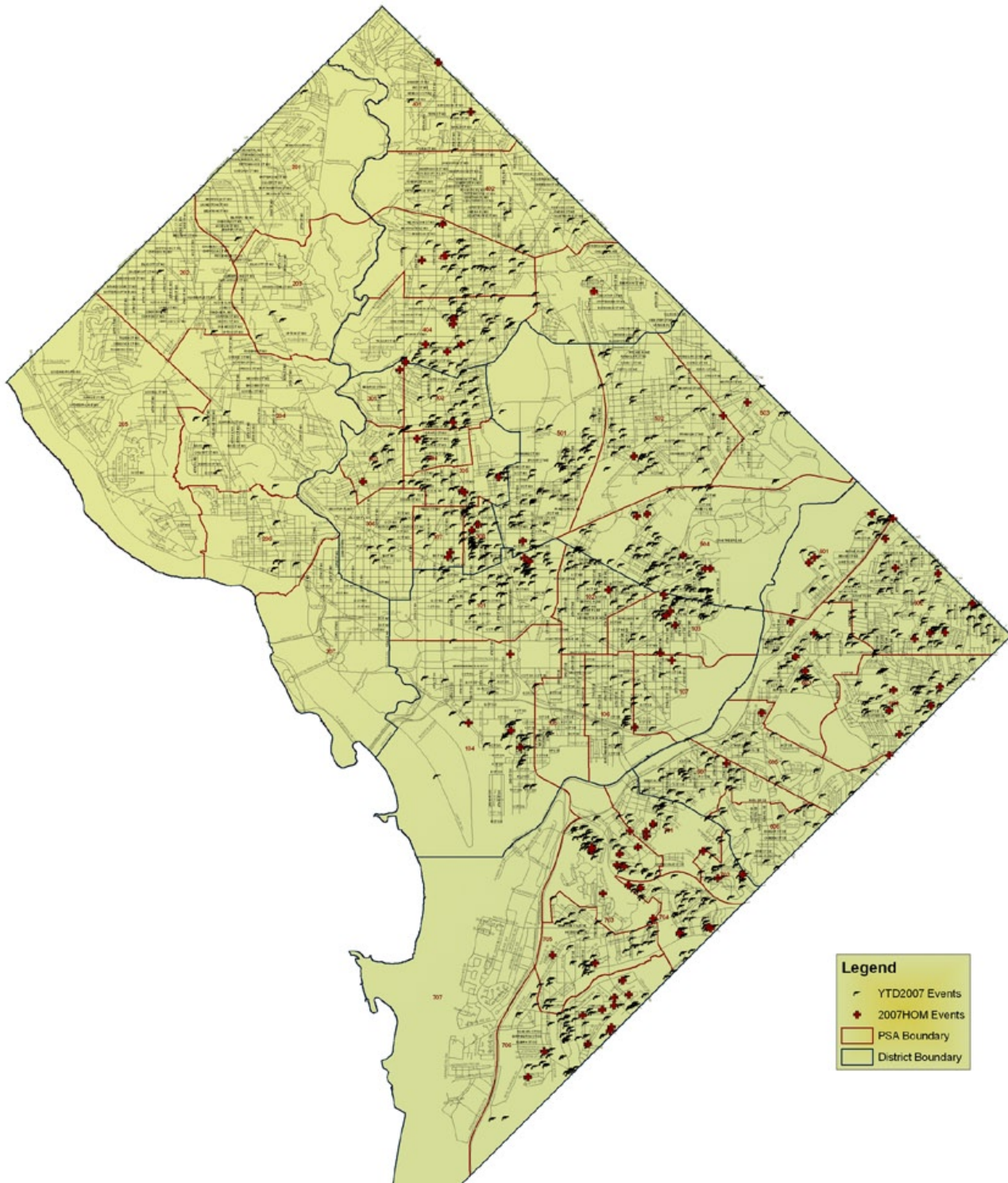
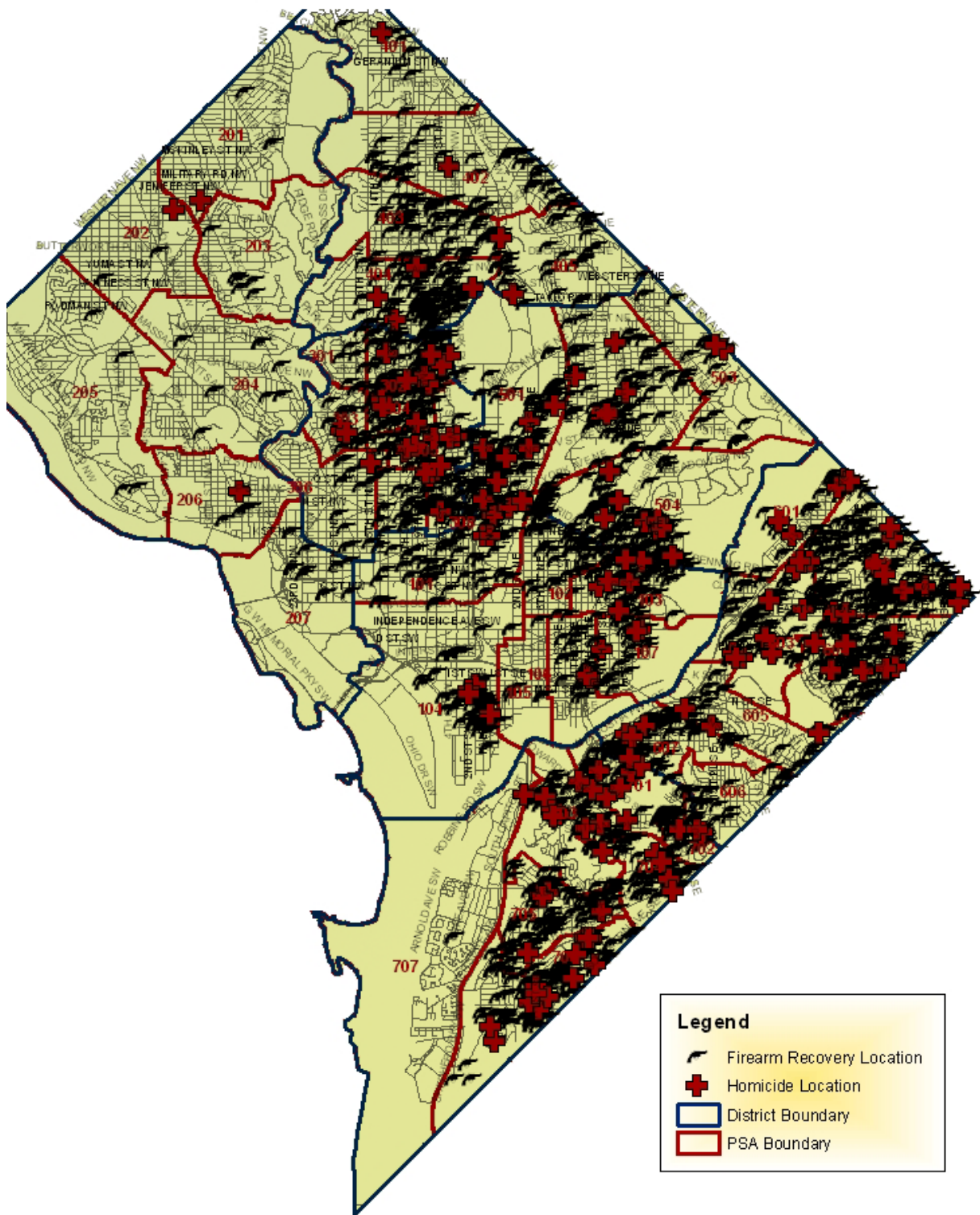


FIGURE 6.  
Homicide and Firearm Recovery Locations  
Calendar Year 2006

(Geocoded FES and ASAP Data, Queried July 26, 2007)



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Our thanks to our local and federal law enforcement  
partners for helping to combat gun violence  
in the DC Metropolitan region.





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