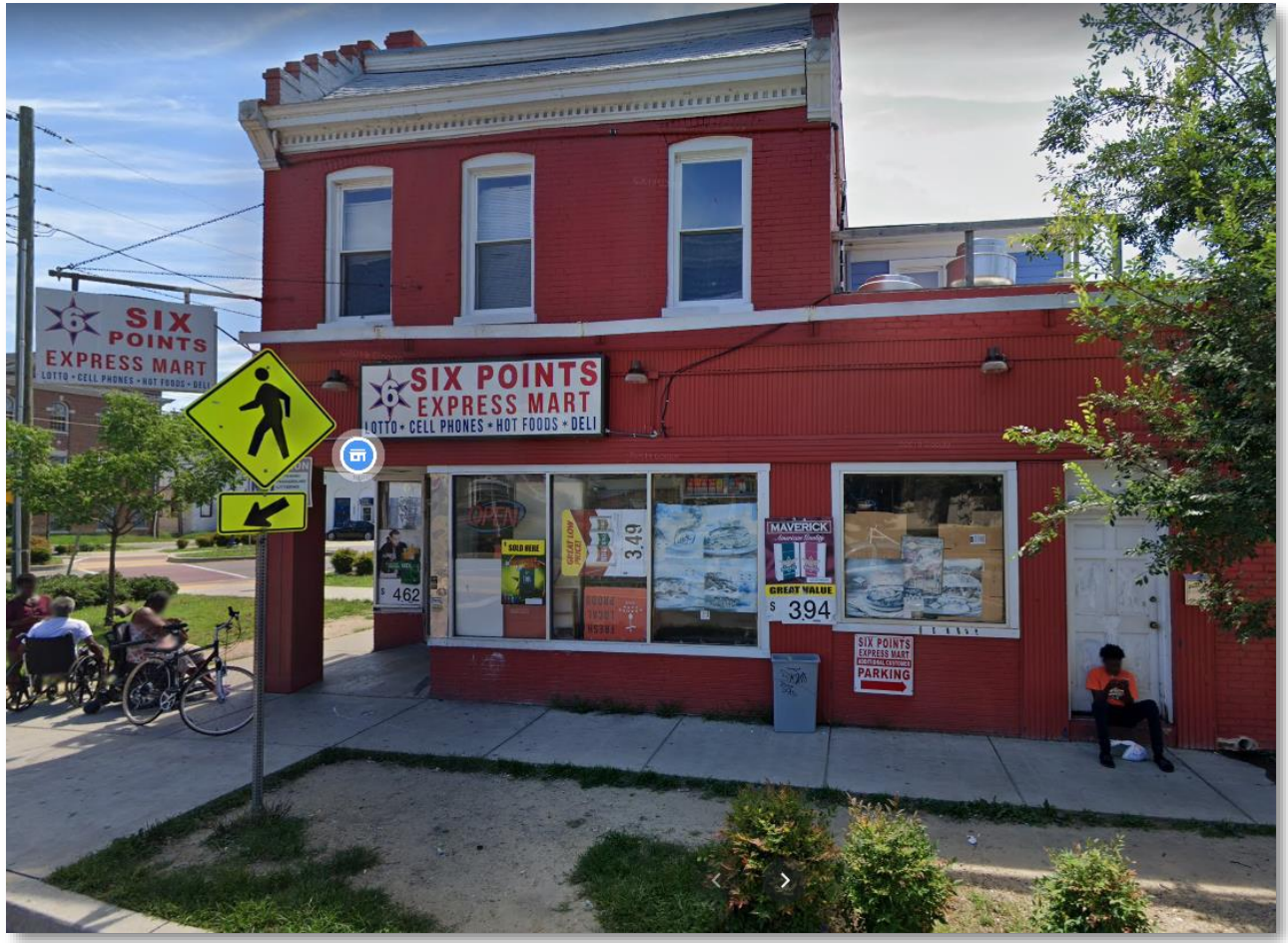
Food Accessibility: Data and Metrics



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Food Desert Characteristics

Grocery Store Density

- Fewer grocery supermarkets and sit-in restaurants
- More convenience stores and fast food restaurants / take-outs
- Corner stores mostly filled with non-perishable processed food
- Limited options of fresh vegetables and meat

Accessibility

- Walkshed ½ mile to 1 mile
- Low /no vehicle ownership
- Low / no access to public transit
- Age or health related mobility issues

Food Desert Characteristics

Community SES

- Concentrated poverty, high unemployment
- 30% less grocery supermarkets than high income neighborhoods
- Low income areas have 4 times as many convenience stores than other areas
- Food more expensive, yet mostly unhealthy options available
- Health of the community at risk

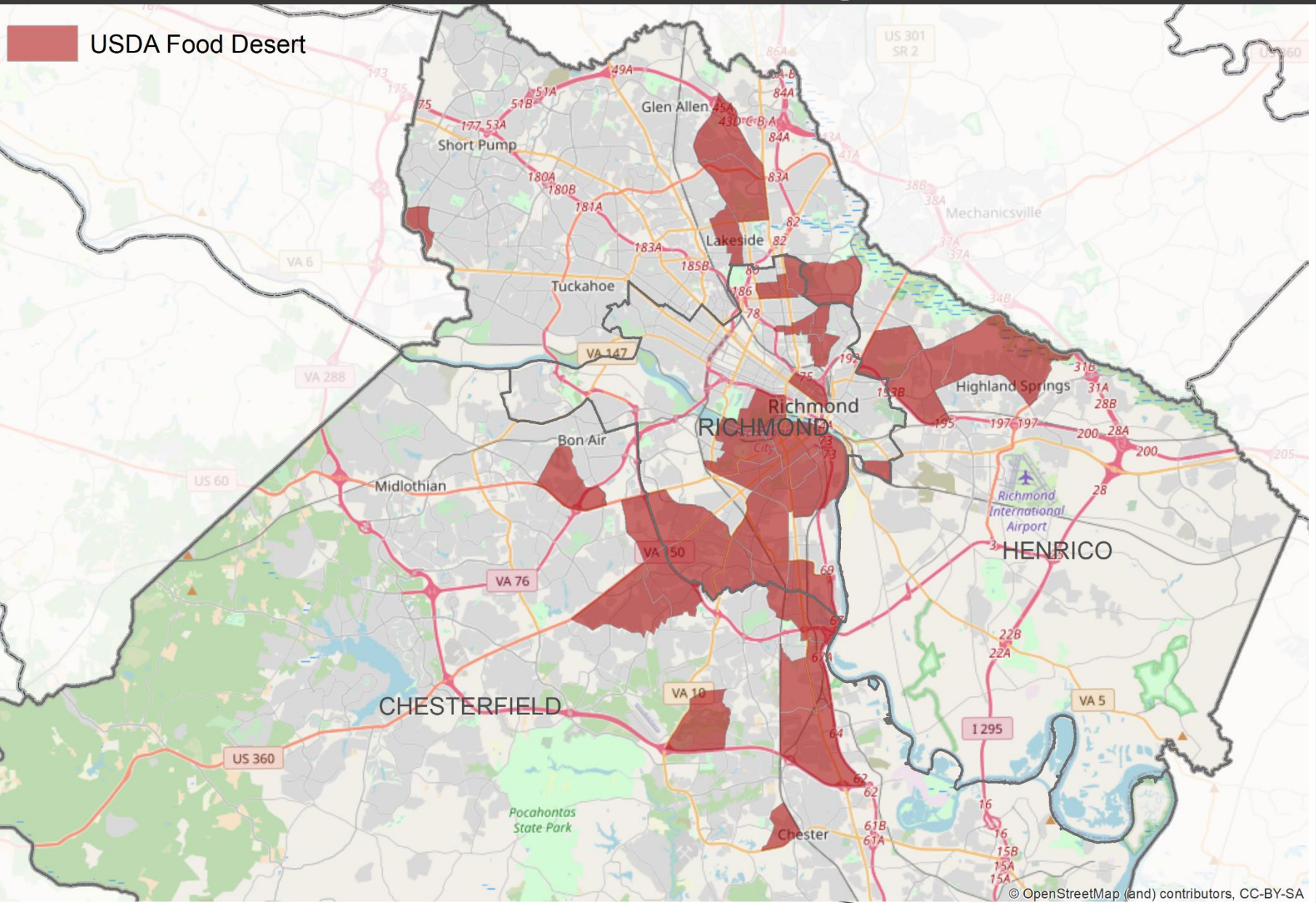
Built Environment

- High rate of foreclosures, boarded up units, low property value.
- Sidewalks not available, streetlights none or not working
- High crime rates - difficult to venture even a 1-mile hike to and from a grocery store

Grocery Store Accessibility in Richmond

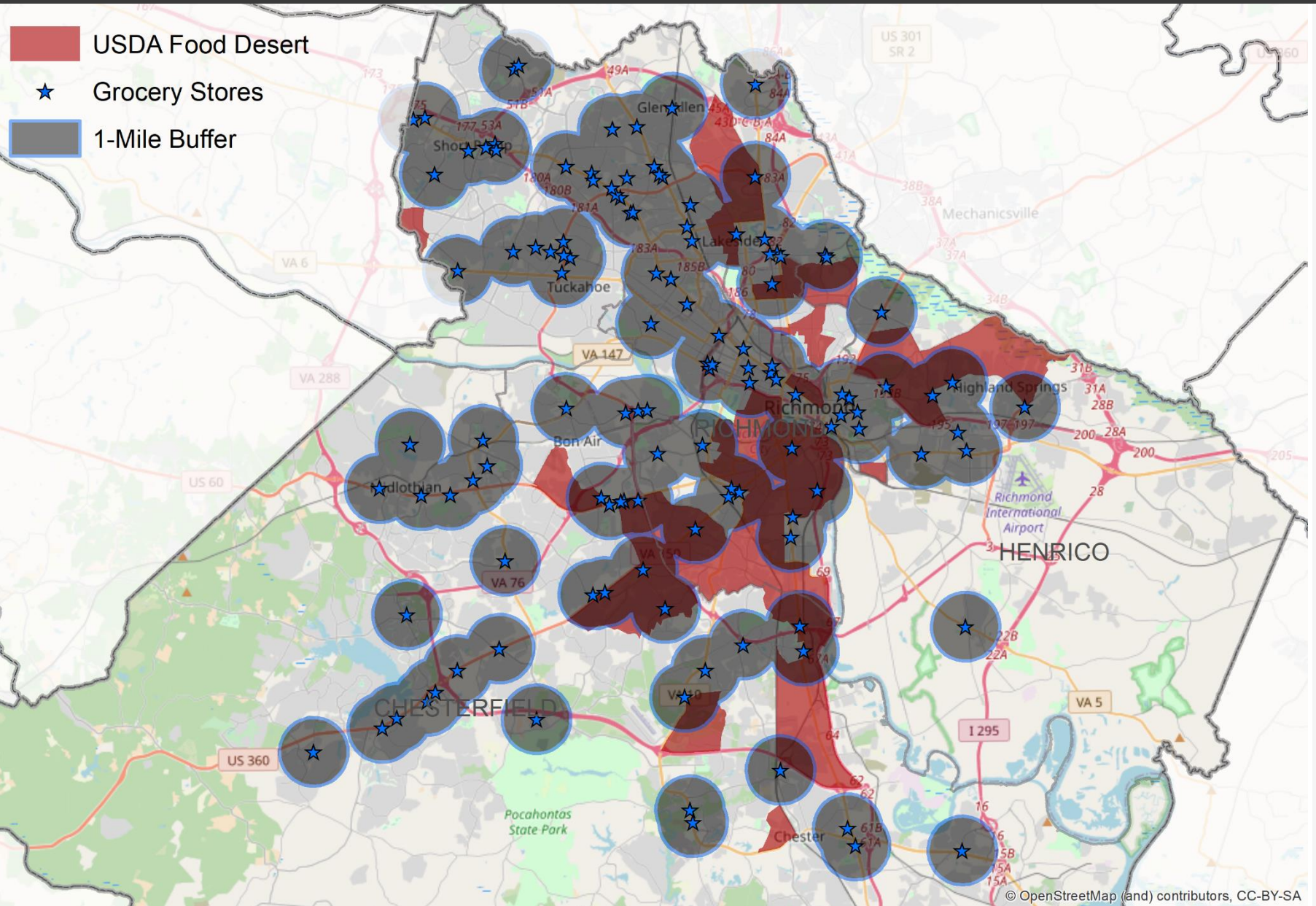
VCU L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

USDA Food Desert Designation



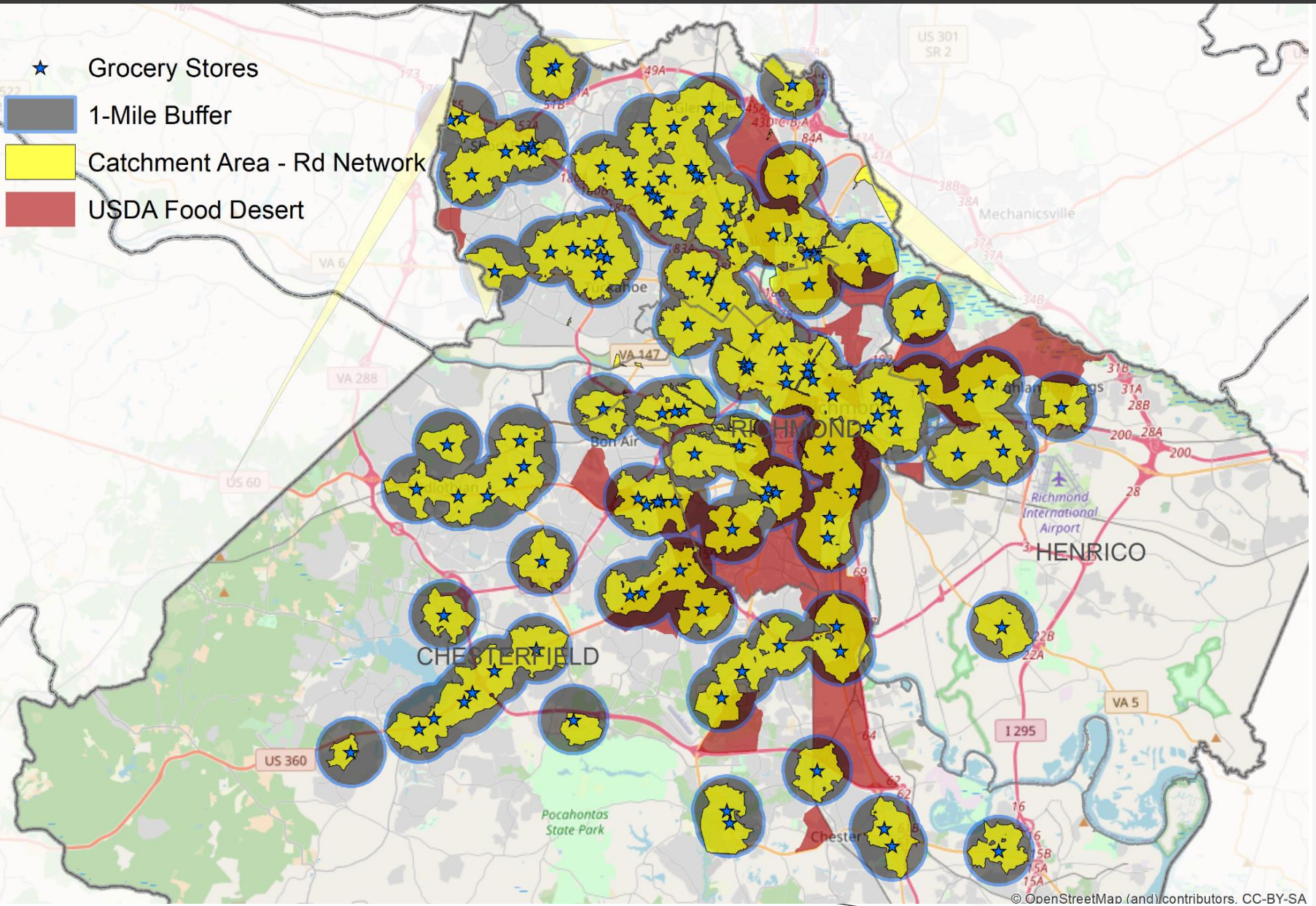
- Census Tract based
- Low Income Low Access (LILA)
- ½ - 1 mile in Urban Areas
- 10-20 miles in Rural Areas

Grocery Stores in Richmond – radial buffer



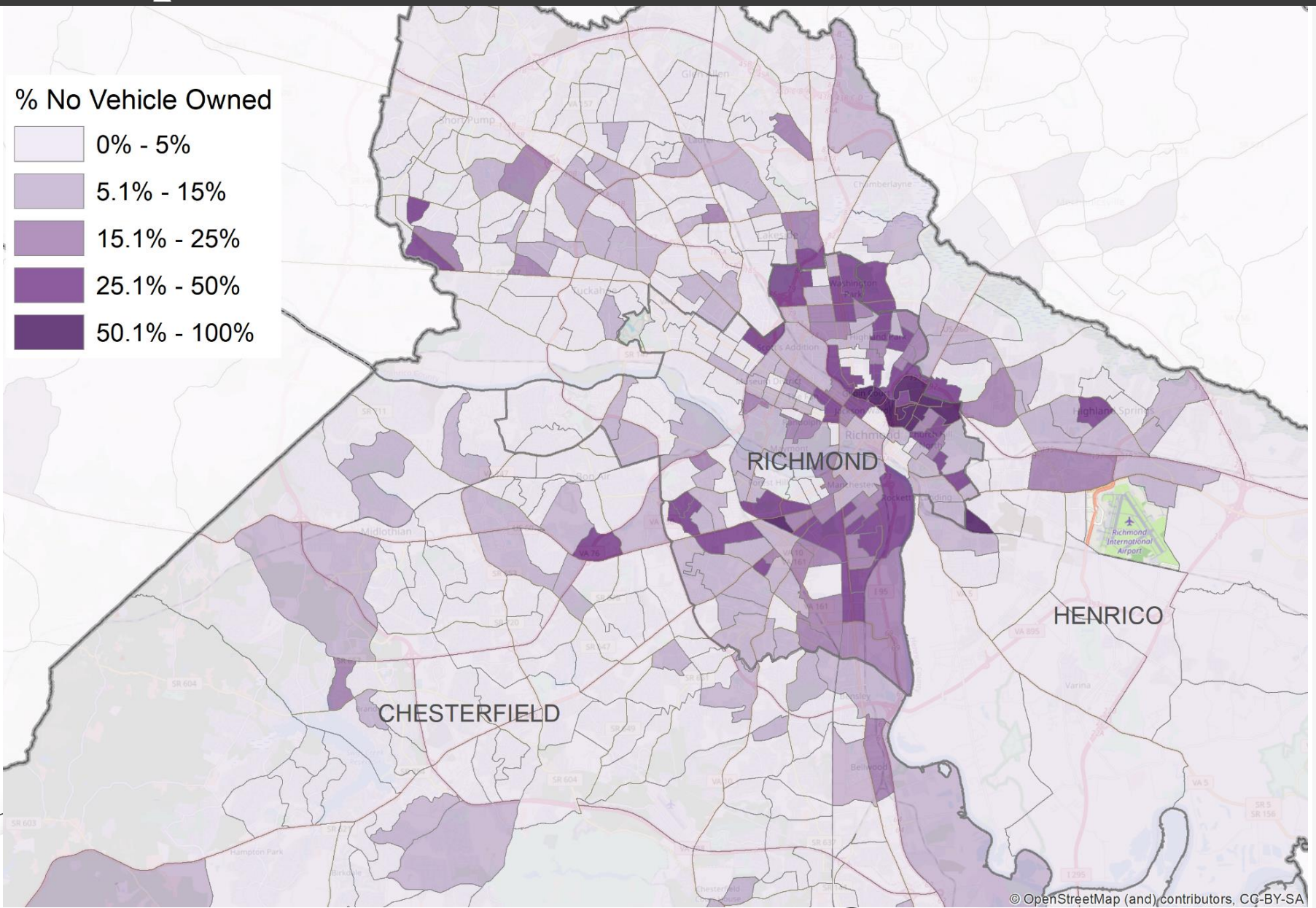
- NAICS 445110
- Grocery Supermarkets
- High density in West side
- Fewer locations in East and South sides

Grocery Stores in Richmond – network based catchment



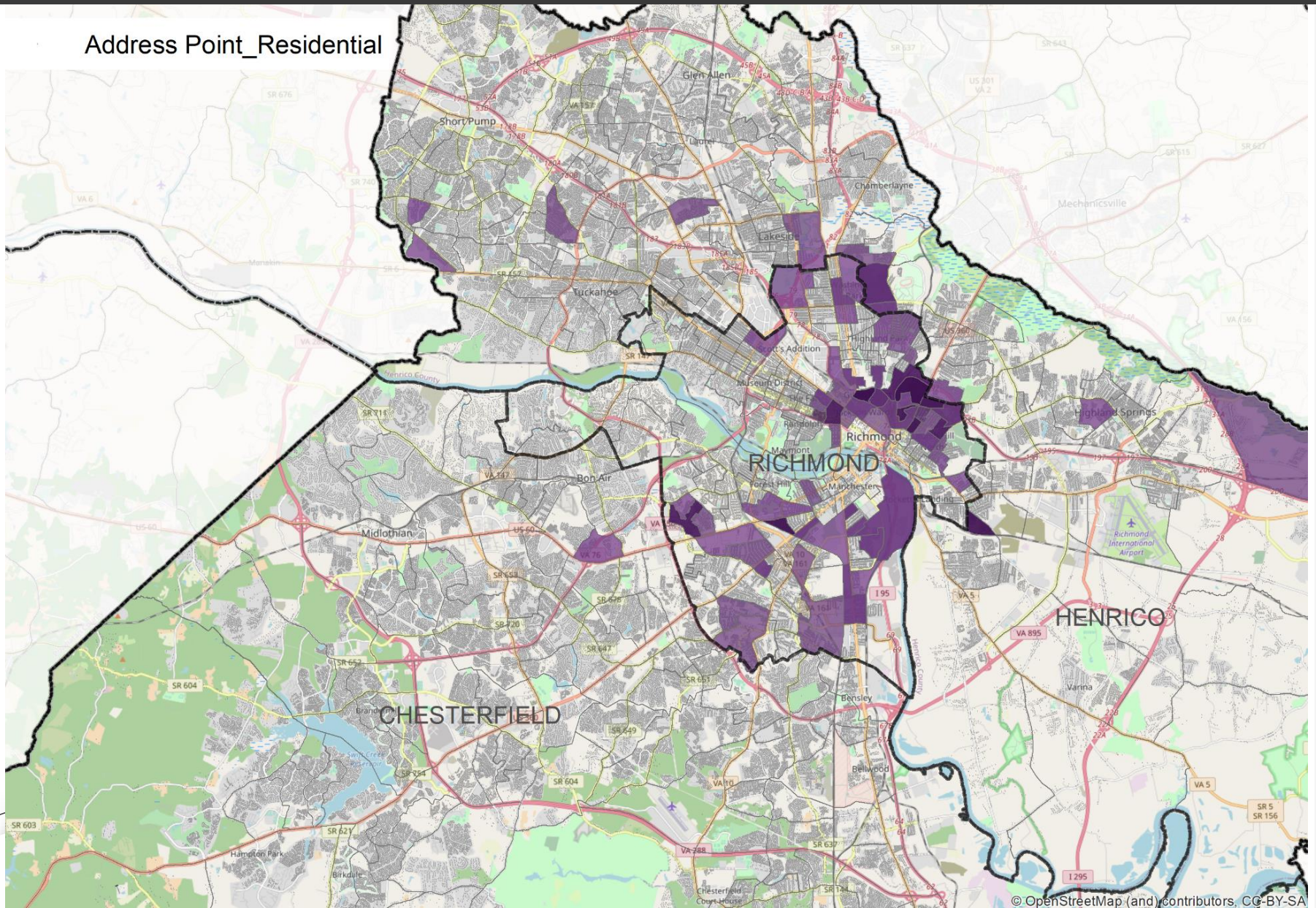
- Network catchment areas
- VITA street data
- Smaller than fly-by buffers – more realistic accessibility estimates

Population Without a Vehicle



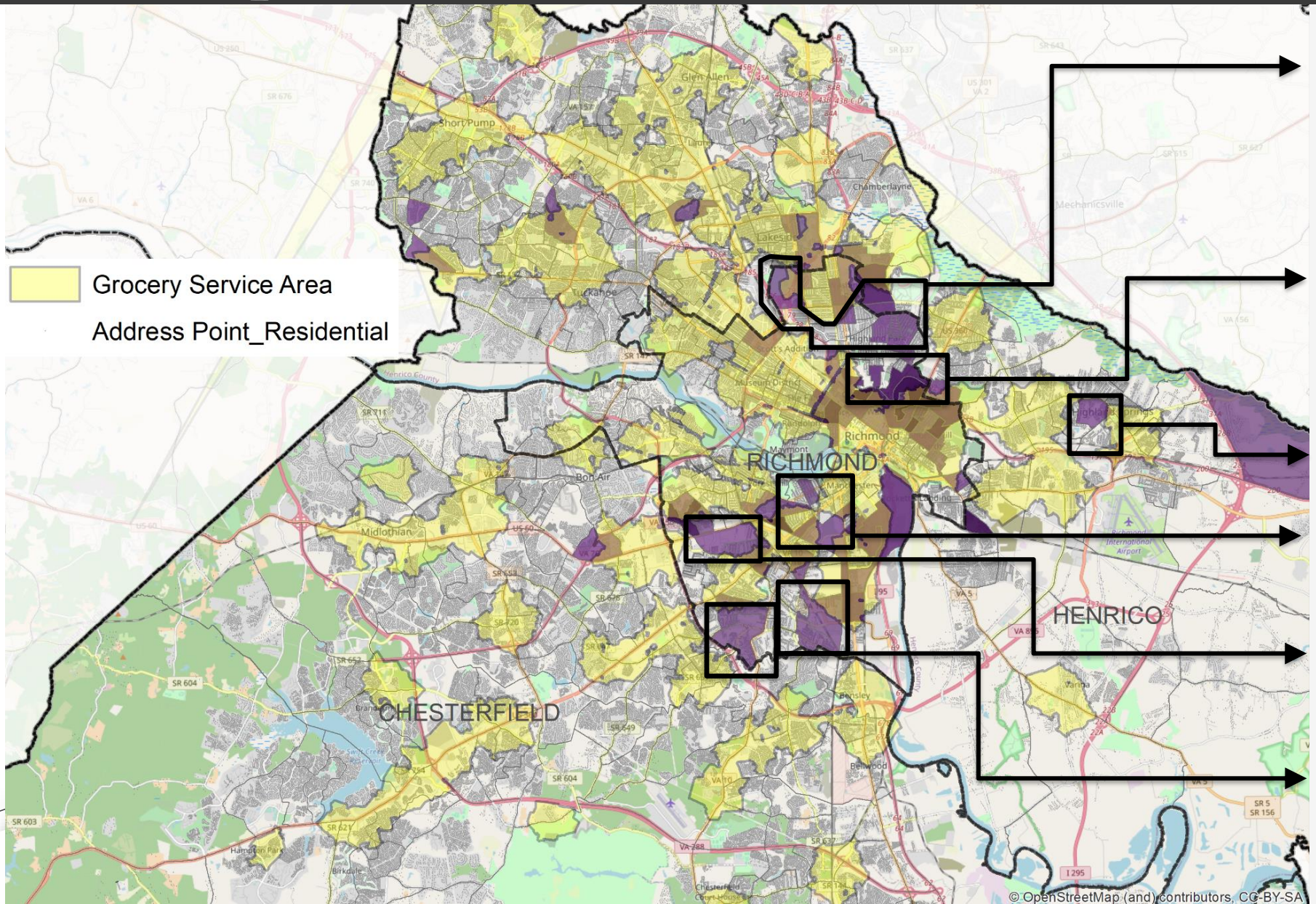
- Higher proportions in East end, South side, and Northside
- Public housing courts show lowest vehicle ownership

Food-Vulnerable Areas in Richmond



- Most vulnerable areas
- Overlay of poverty, transit dependency, and no vehicles owned

Examples of Food Deserts in Richmond



- Highland Park
- Washington Park

- Gilpin
- Whitcomb
- Fairfield
- Mosby
- Creighton

- Highland Spring

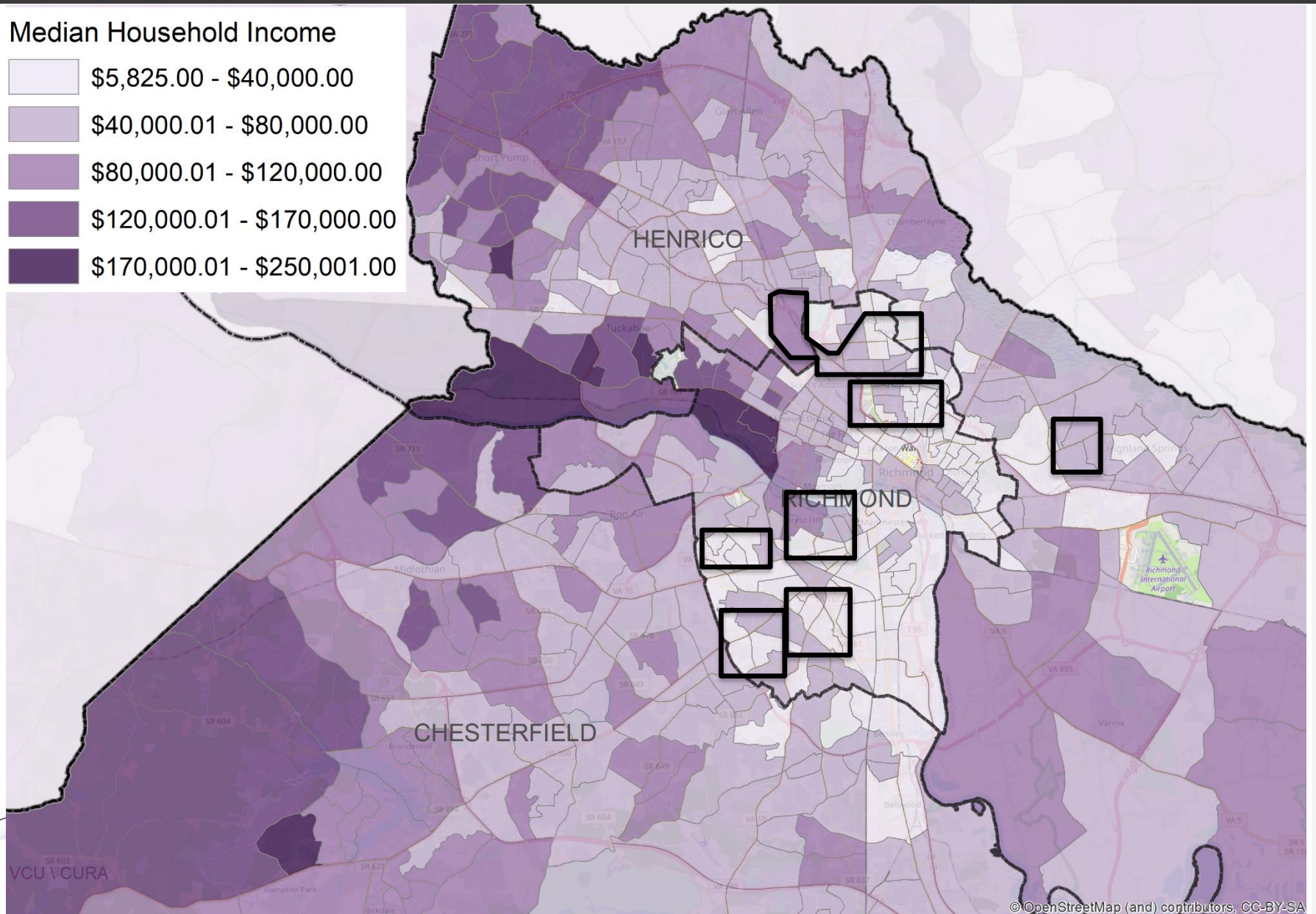
- Manchester (part)

- Woodhaven
- Warwick

- Brookbury
- Cottrell Farms

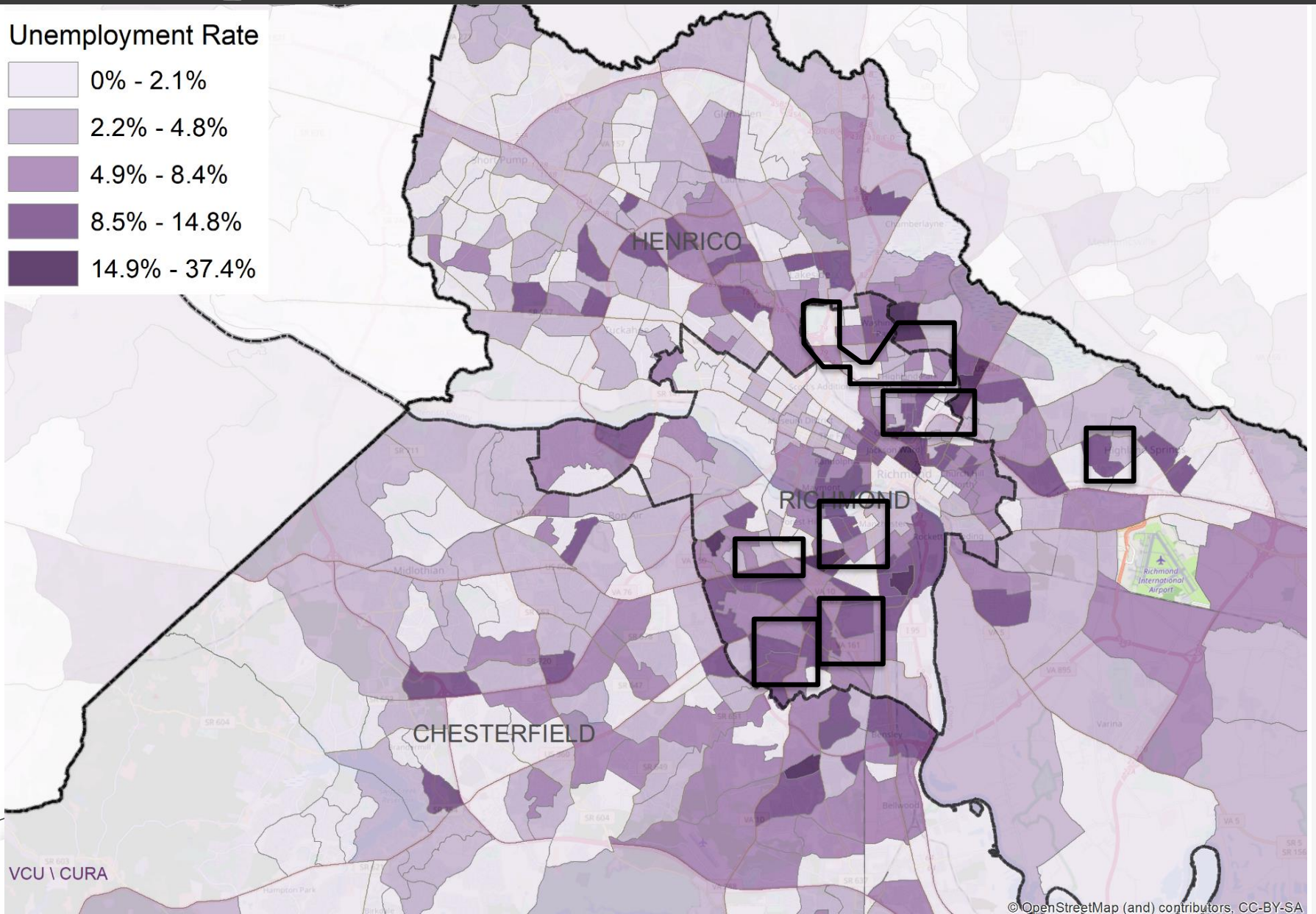
Socio-Economic and Neighborhood Characteristics

Median Household Income



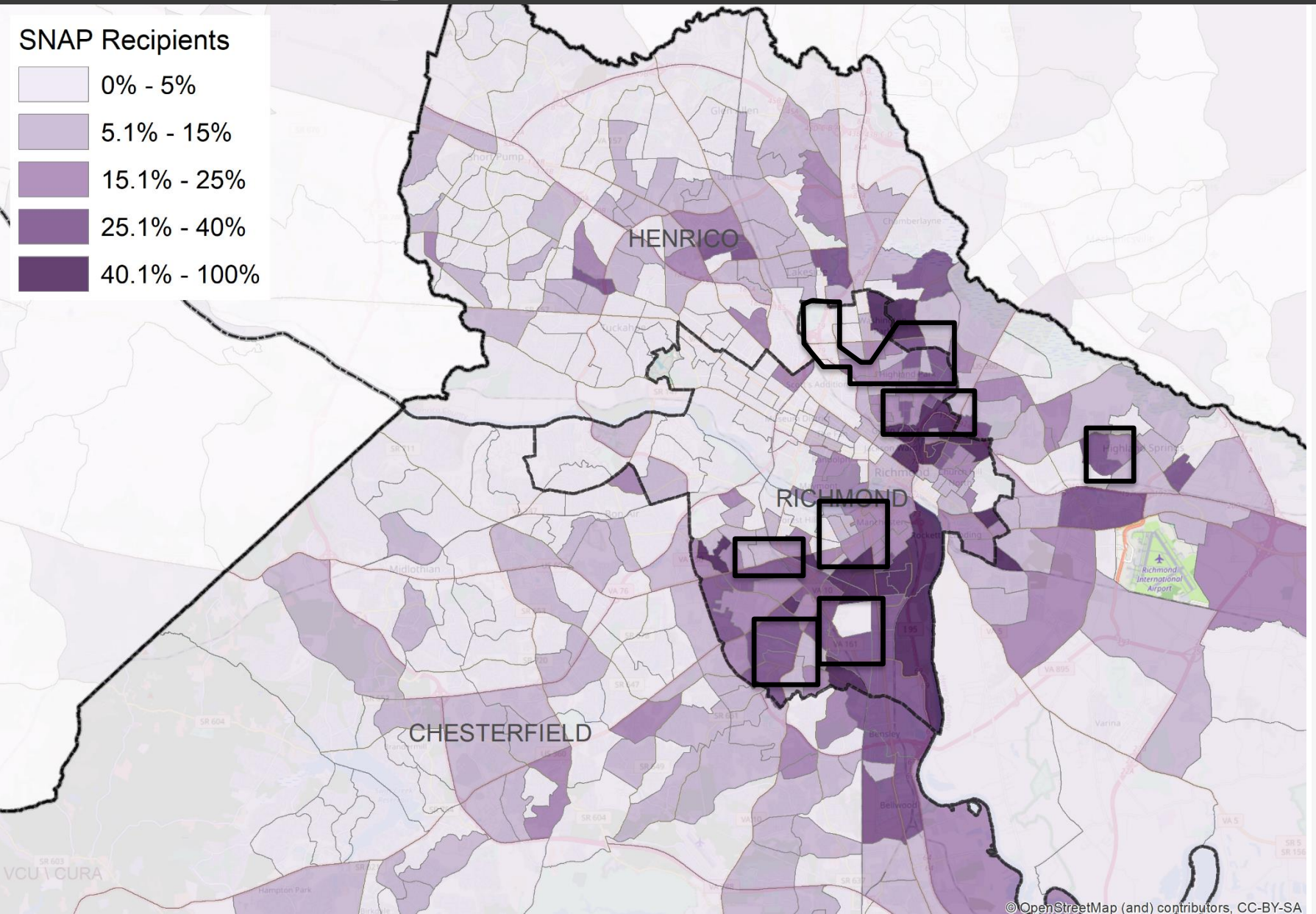
- Median Household Income is among the lowest in the areas identified as Food Deserts

Unemployment Rate



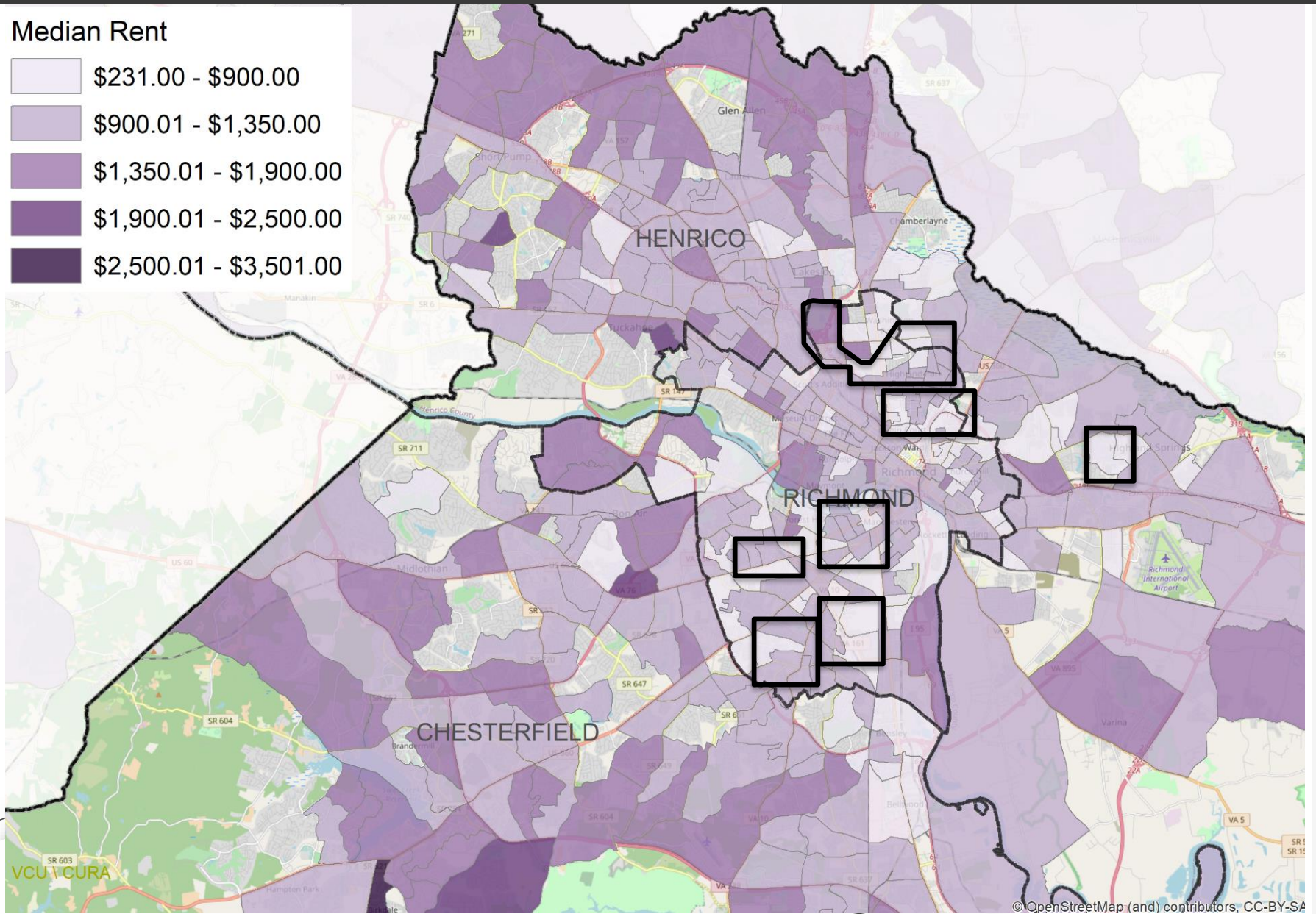
- Unemployment rates are very high in the areas identified as Food Deserts

SNAP Recipients



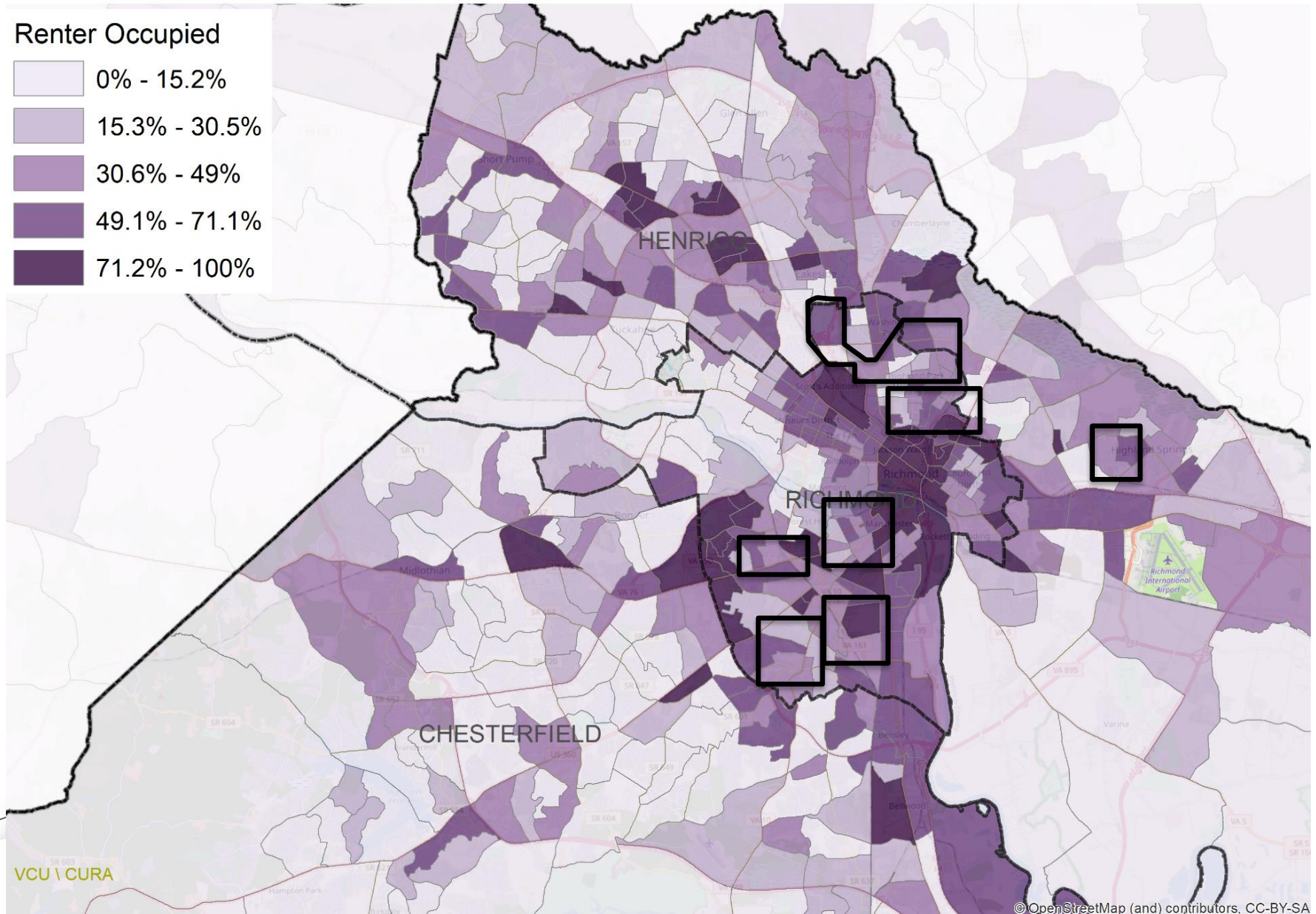
- A majority of households in the focus area received SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance)

Median Rent



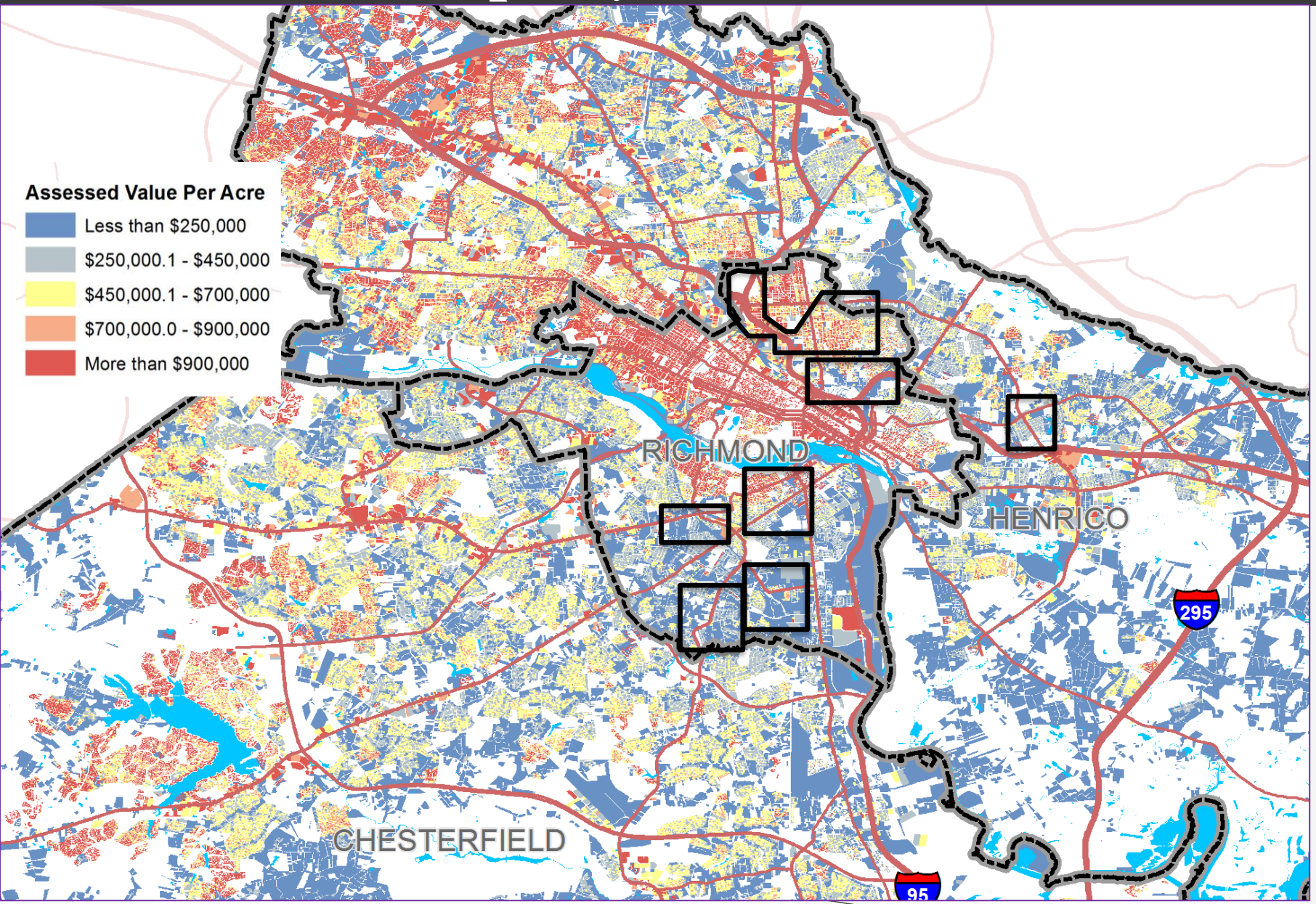
- Lowest median rent
- An indicator of blight
- Abundant vacant industrial land and low rent – opportunity in disguise

Renter Occupied Housing Units



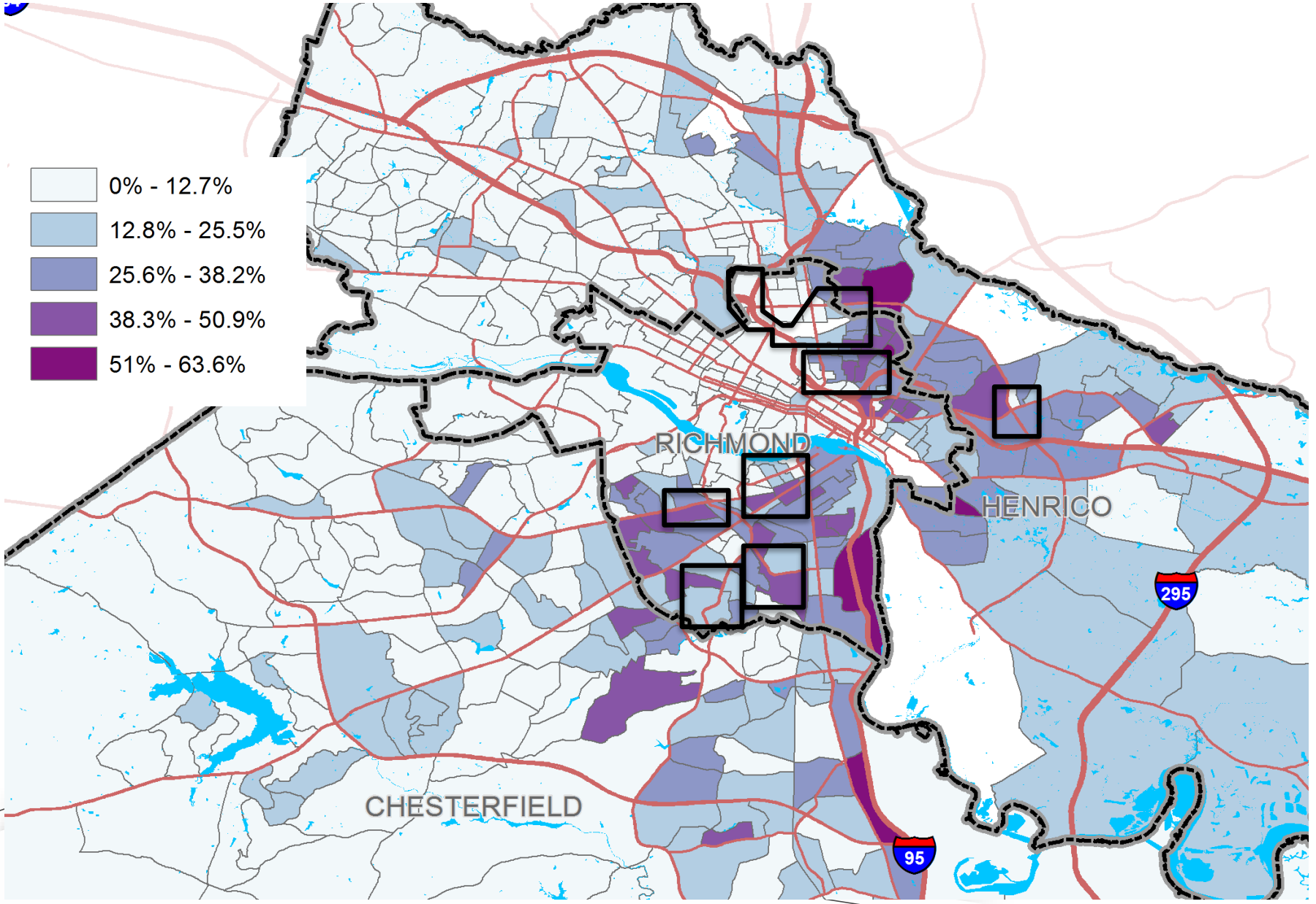
- Homeownership is low in the focus area
- Impact on community participation and ownership of new initiatives

Assessed Property Value



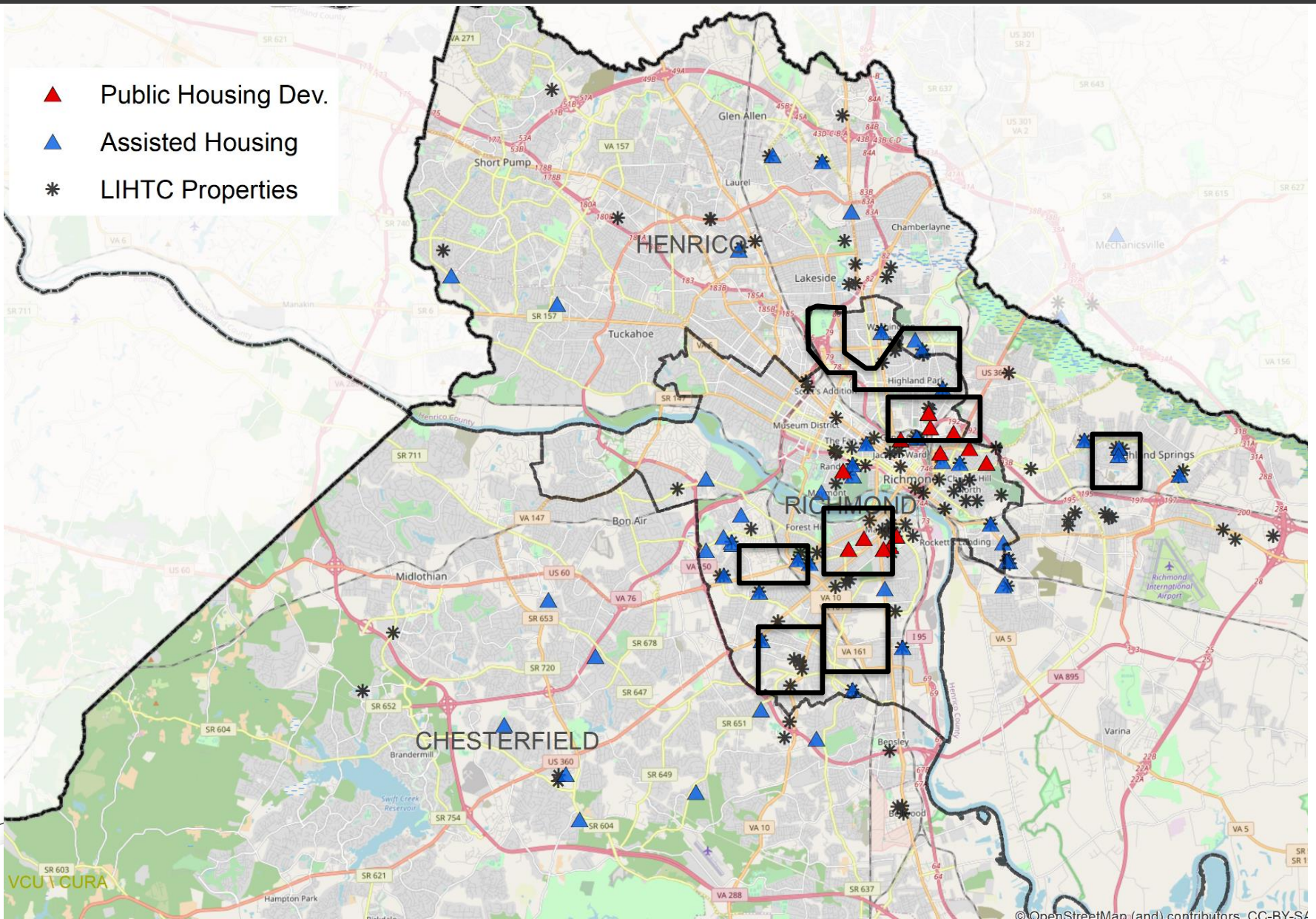
- Among the lowest property values in the region
- An indication of blighted conditions

Bank sales



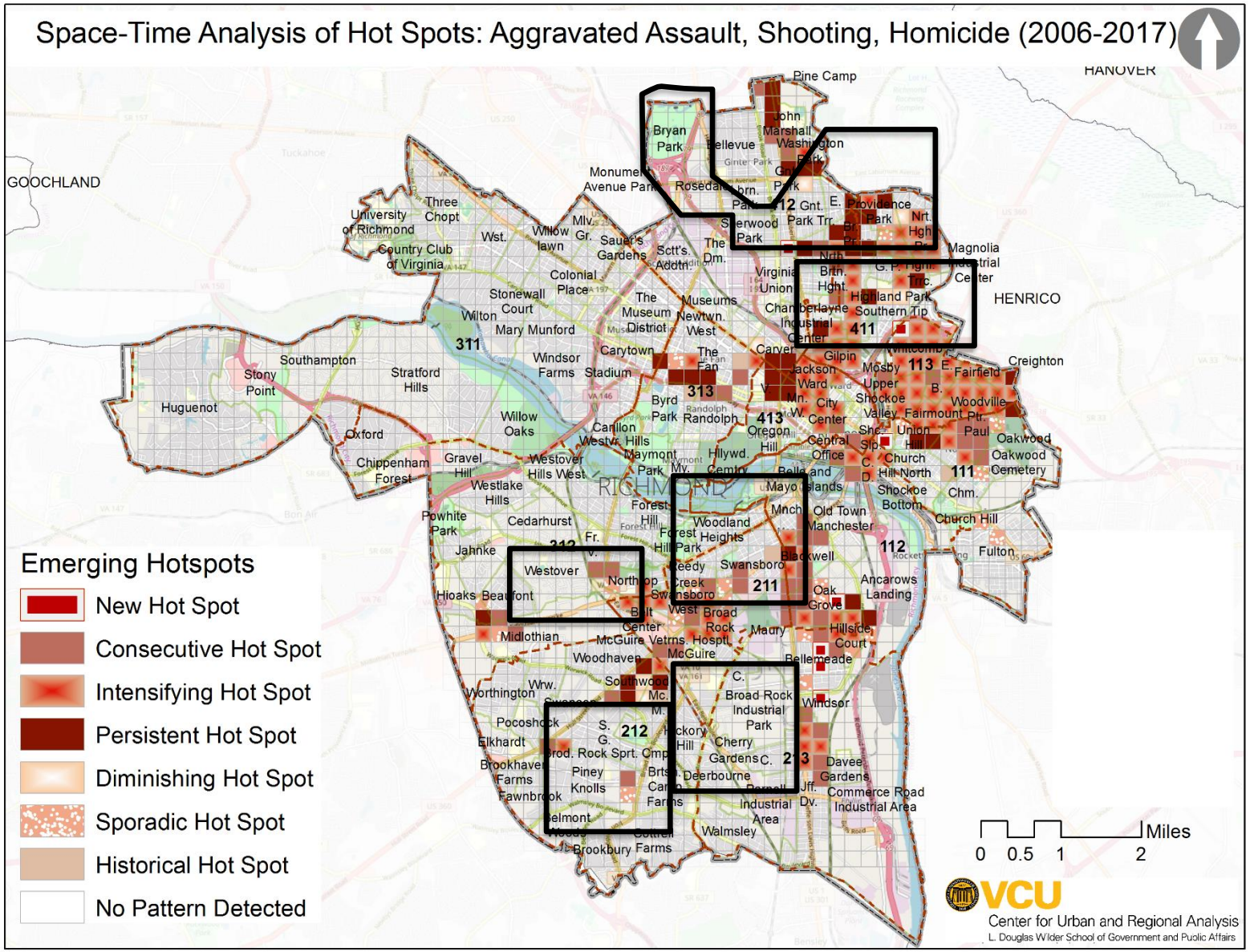
- Among the highest foreclosures and bank sales in the region
- Another indication of blight

Public and Subsidized Housing



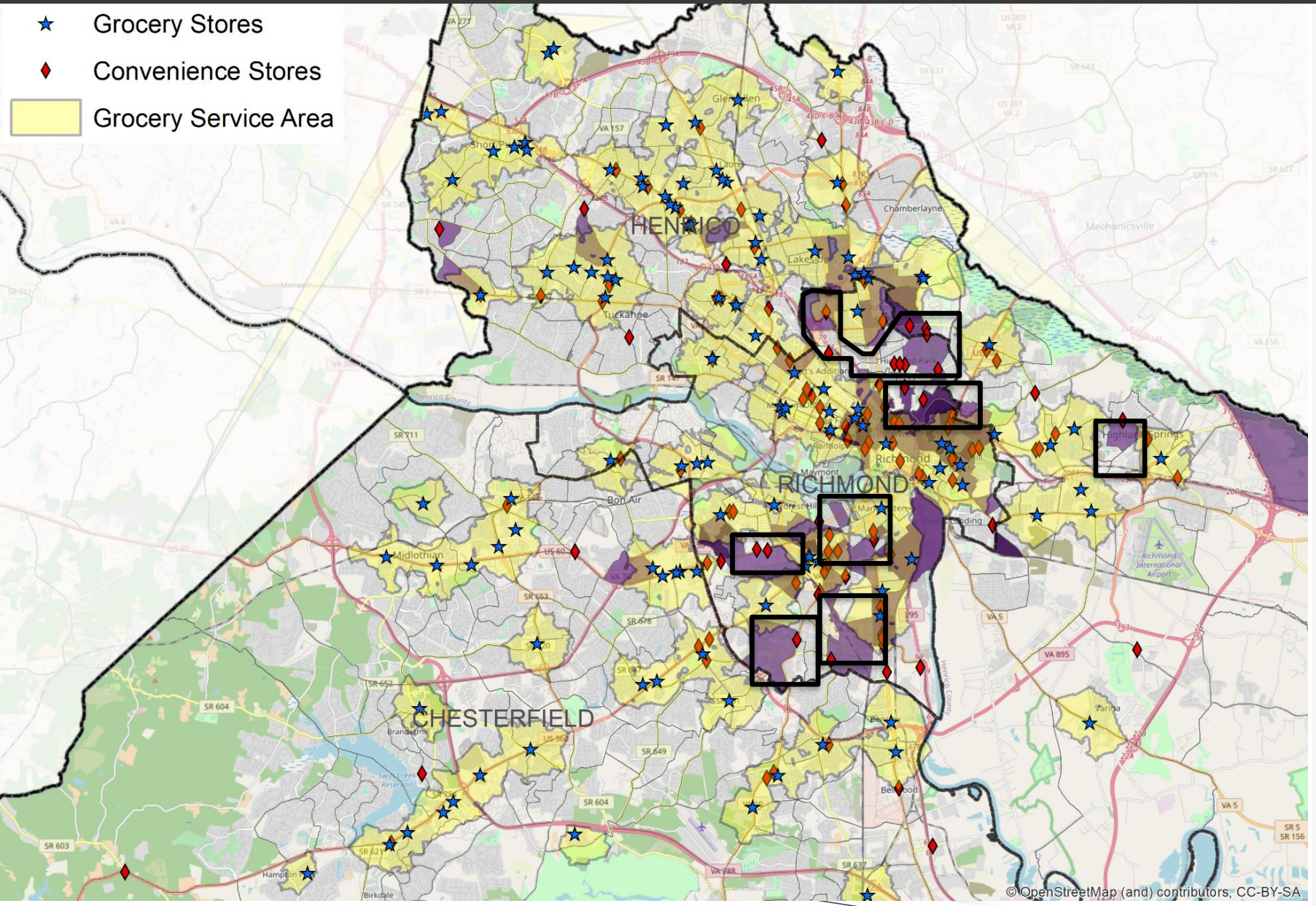
- Concentration of public or subsidized housing
- Negative stereotypes attached with public housing keeps businesses away

Crime and Perception of Insecurity



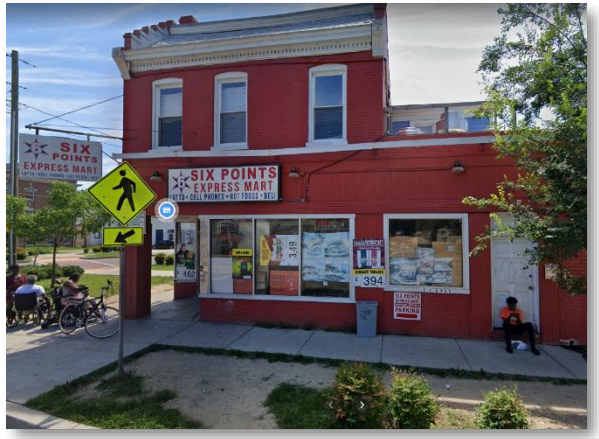
- High crime rates in some of the identified areas.
- People's mobility / walkability further reduced due to insecurity perceived by the residents.
- Discourages new businesses

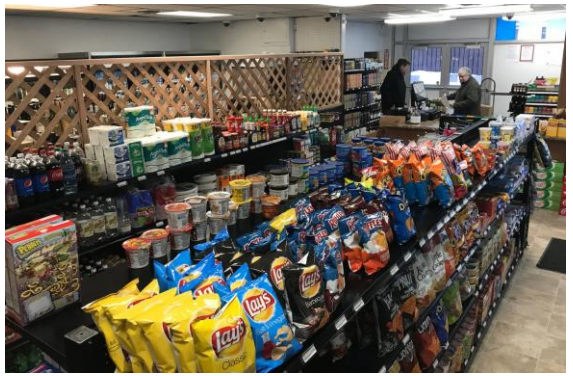
The 'Reign' of Convenience Stores

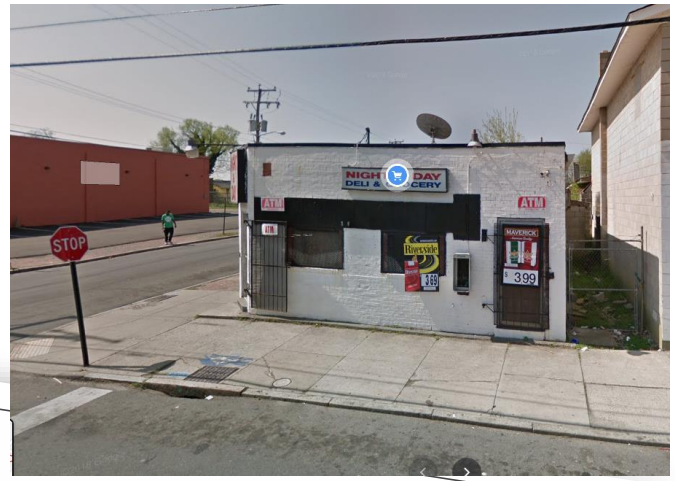


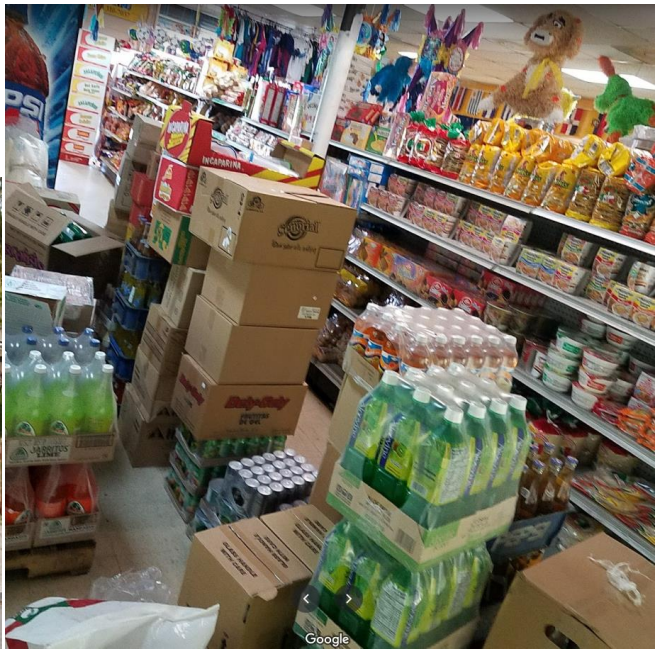
- NAICS 445120
- Better than nothing
- Few sell fresh vegetables or meat
- Mostly non-perishable processed food
- Expensive

The 'Reign' of Convenience Stores









Breakout Discussion Topics [Including, but not limited to]

Ongoing and Past Efforts

- Local/regional initiatives
- Locations and service areas of:
  - Community Gardens
  - Urban Farms
  - Food banks / shuttles, etc.

Lessons learnt / Suggestions

- Success stories
- Pitfalls to avoid
- Why something did not work
- Solutions that are feasible
- Appropriate metrics for measuring input and outcome