

Areas of Disproportionate Impact and the Cannabis Industry

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Abstract

The cannabis Industry has come a long way since full criminalization in the 1970's , to decriminalization in 2009, Medicalization in 2012, to our current paradigm of legalization which began in 2016 However, the history of cannabis has a much darker past, the War on Drugs. Simply put, the War on Drugs was a government-led initiative that aims to stop illegal drug use, distribution and trade by dramatically increasing prison sentences for both drug dealers and users. In theory this sounds virtuous but in reality the practice was carried out callously for black and brown communities.

This project aims to explore areas of disproportionate impact as defined by the CCC(Cannabis Control Commission). Areas of disproportionate impact are towns and counties during the War on Drugs that faced disproportionate over policing, jailing's/imprisonment, and enforcement of mandatory minimums and the 3 strike rule.

I am aiming to explore the number and type of cannabis businesses developing in areas of disproportionate impact and areas with high total marijuana arrest rates. I want to look at the affect rising businesses within the cannabis industry within areas of disproportionate impact.

Also how accessible are these new businesses to areas of disproportionate impact?

Introduction

The Cannabis Control Commission has overseen the legal roll-out for the cannabis industry within Massachusetts. I want to highlight areas of disproportionate impact and see which types of cannabis business are popping up. I also want to look closer at the population and arrest rates for these areas. Out of the 322 different types of licensed companies 122 are within areas of disproportionate impact. The types of businesses being granted licenses to practice range from Retailers, Cultivators, Product manufactures, Transporter with Other Existing ME License, Third Party Transporter, MicroBusiness, Laboratory and some undefined locations.

I was also able to gather data from the CCC related to Marijuana arrest rates on the town and county level. Marijuana arrest rate was based on population within towns and counties. There was data gathered from the CCC referencing marijuana sales arrests and marijuana possession arrests. The Marijuana total arrest rates were calculated by adding the marijuana sales arrests and marijuana possession arrest together. $MJ_Sales = \text{total marijuana sales arrests rates}$, $MJ_Poesssion = \text{total marijuana possession arrests rates}$. $T_MJ_Arrest = \text{Total Marijuana arrests rate}$ - $MJ_Sales + MJ_Poesssion Arrest = T_MJ_Arrest$

Towns of disproportionate impact:

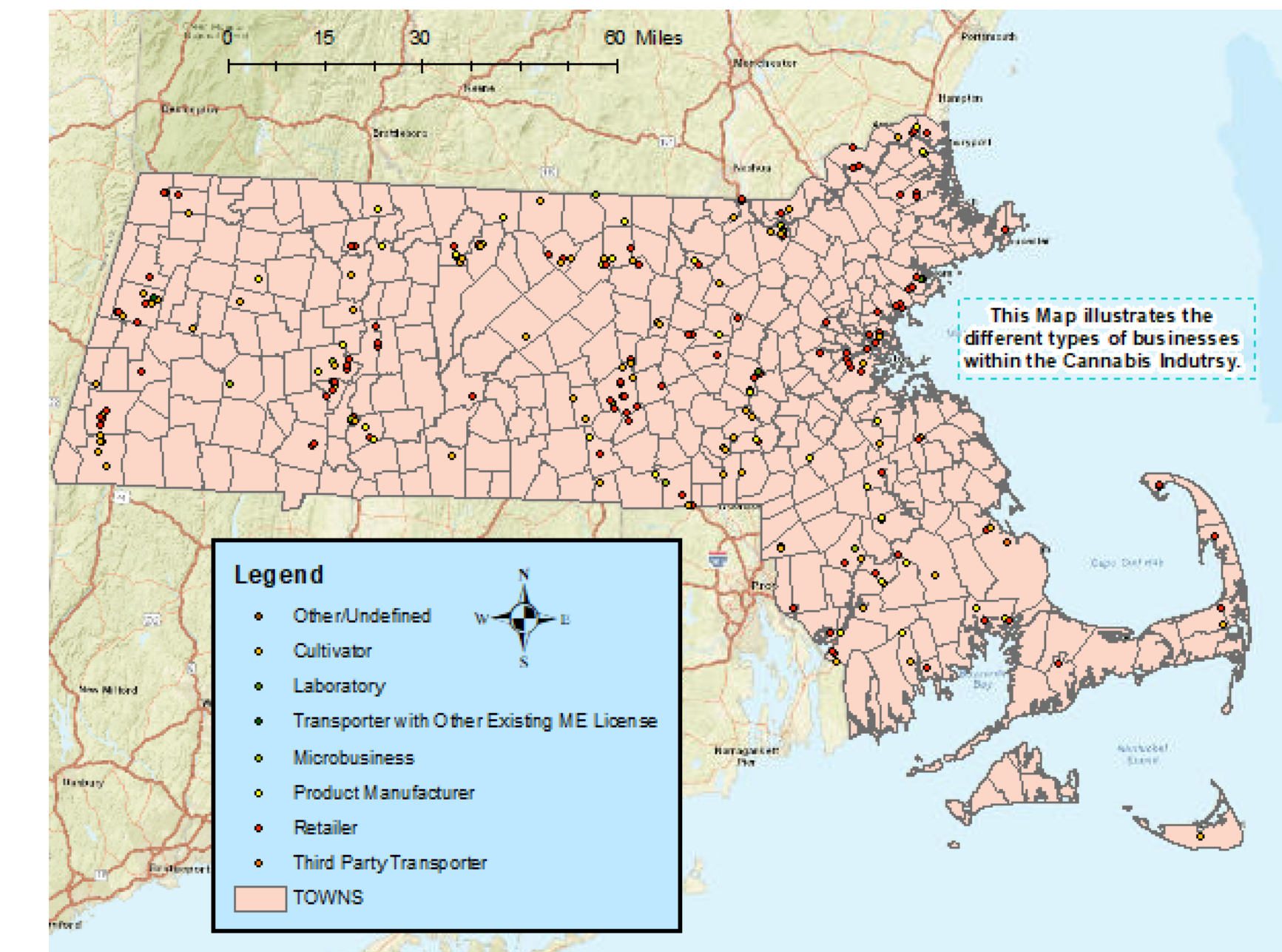
29 Communities of Disproportionate Impact			
Abington	Amherst	Boston	Braintree
Brockton	Chelsea	Fall River	Fitchburg
Greenfield	Haverhill	Holyoke	Lowell
Lynn	Mansfield	Monson	New Bedford
North Adams	Pittsfield	Quincy	Randolph
Revere	Southbridge	Spencer	Springfield
Taunton	Walpole	Wareham	West Springfield
Worcester			

*Boston, Worcester, Springfield, or Lowell
Boston, Worcester, Springfield, or Lowell have specific counties that qualify as disproportionate impact..

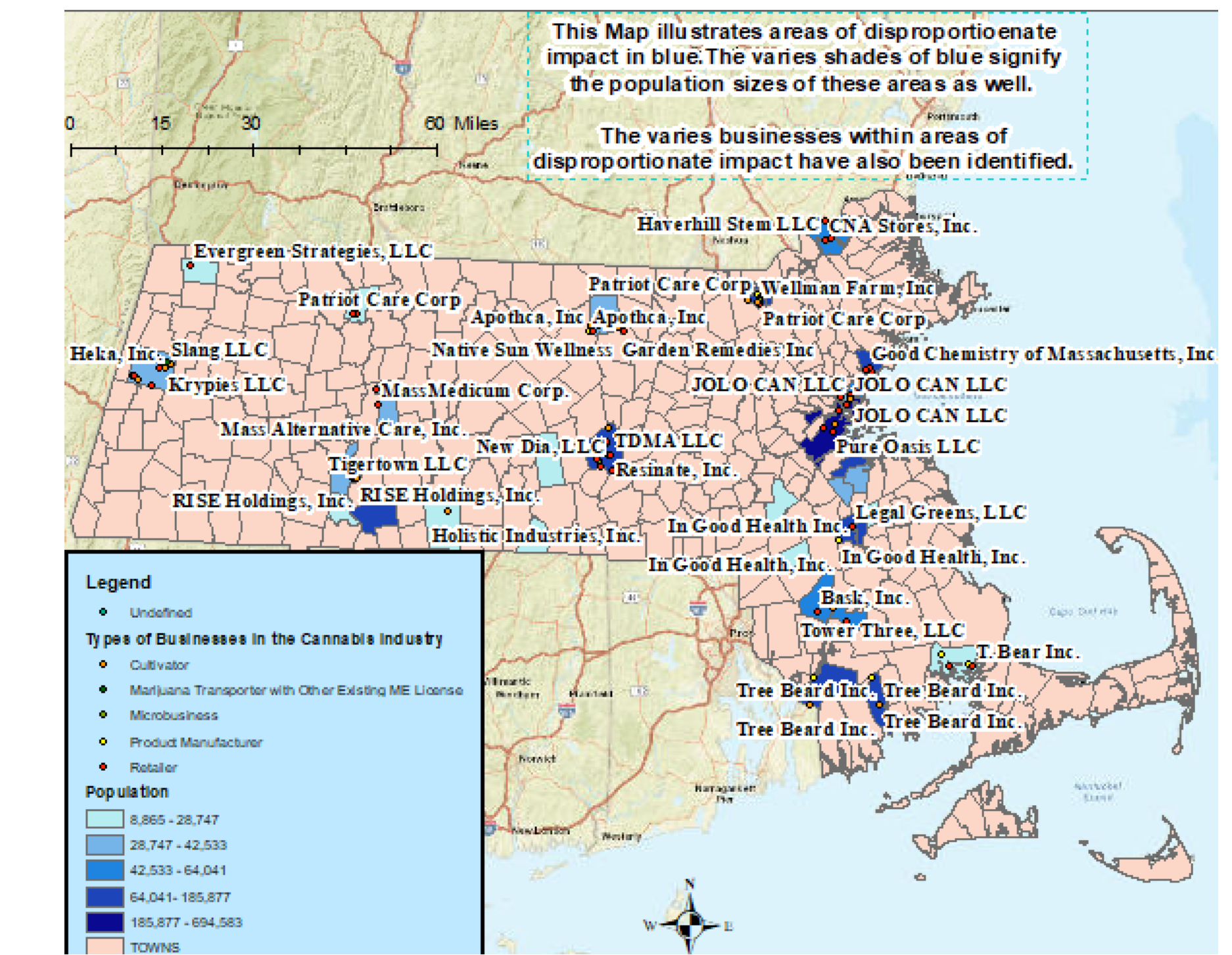
Visit this site - <https://bit.ly/2JCmR0B> and enter your address to see if your address qualifies as an area of disproportionate impact. County's within the aforementioned areas include: Suffolk, Worcester, Hampden County, and Middlesex.

Methods

I am planning to create a vector map with points representing the different locations of licensed businesses within the cannabis industry operating in Massachusetts. I will get this information from the CCC. Then I got the Census Tract and Town data from Massachusetts GIS (Bureau of Geographic Information) I spatially joined the business type points layer to the Towns poly to get a clear picture of the cannabis businesses throughout Massachusetts.

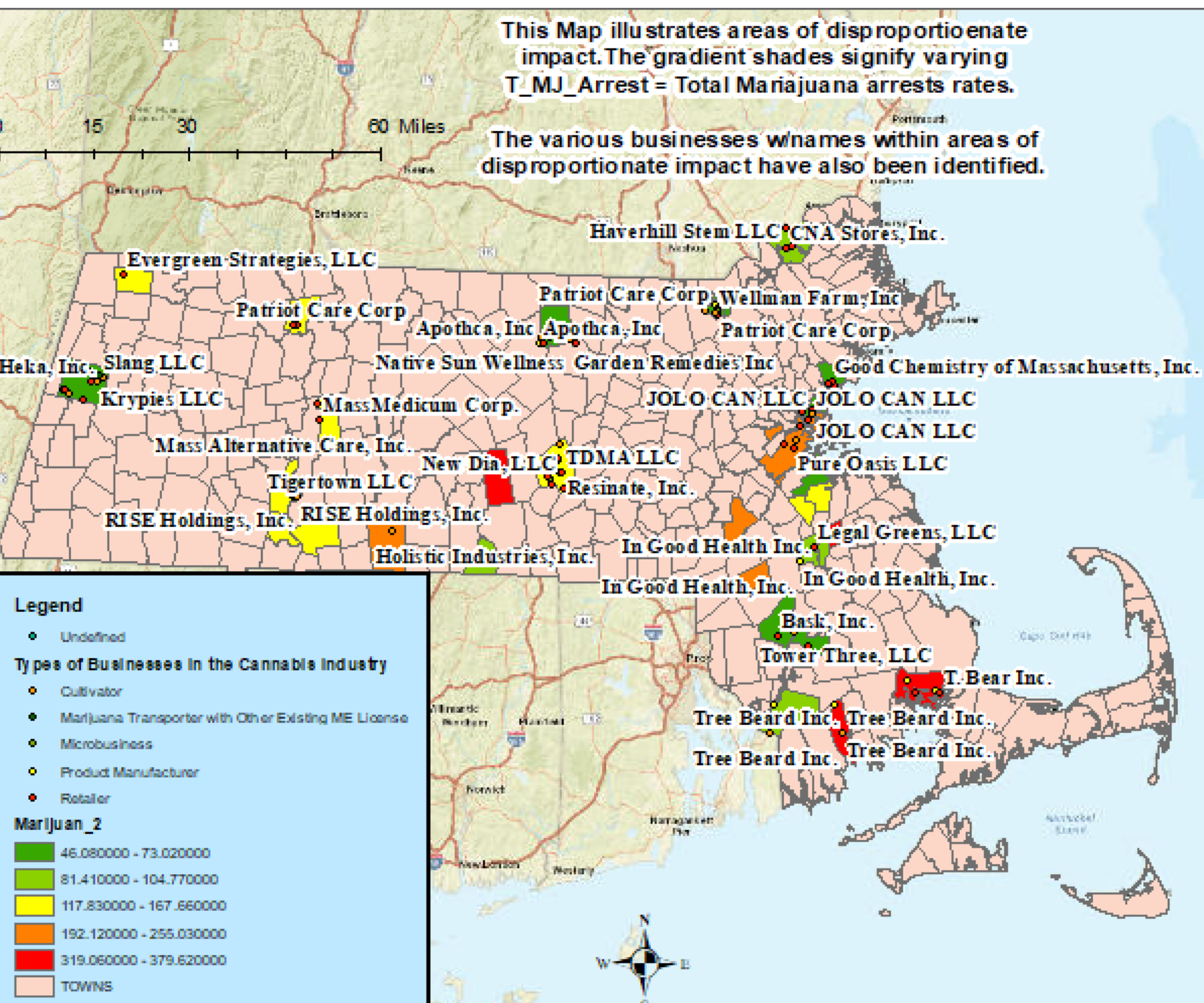


I then identified the areas of disproportionate impact using data from the CCC and also used population data to see if that affected the number of businesses located within the area. By counting there were more retailer businesses located within higher population towns , but this didn't reveal a trend within areas of disproportionate impact.

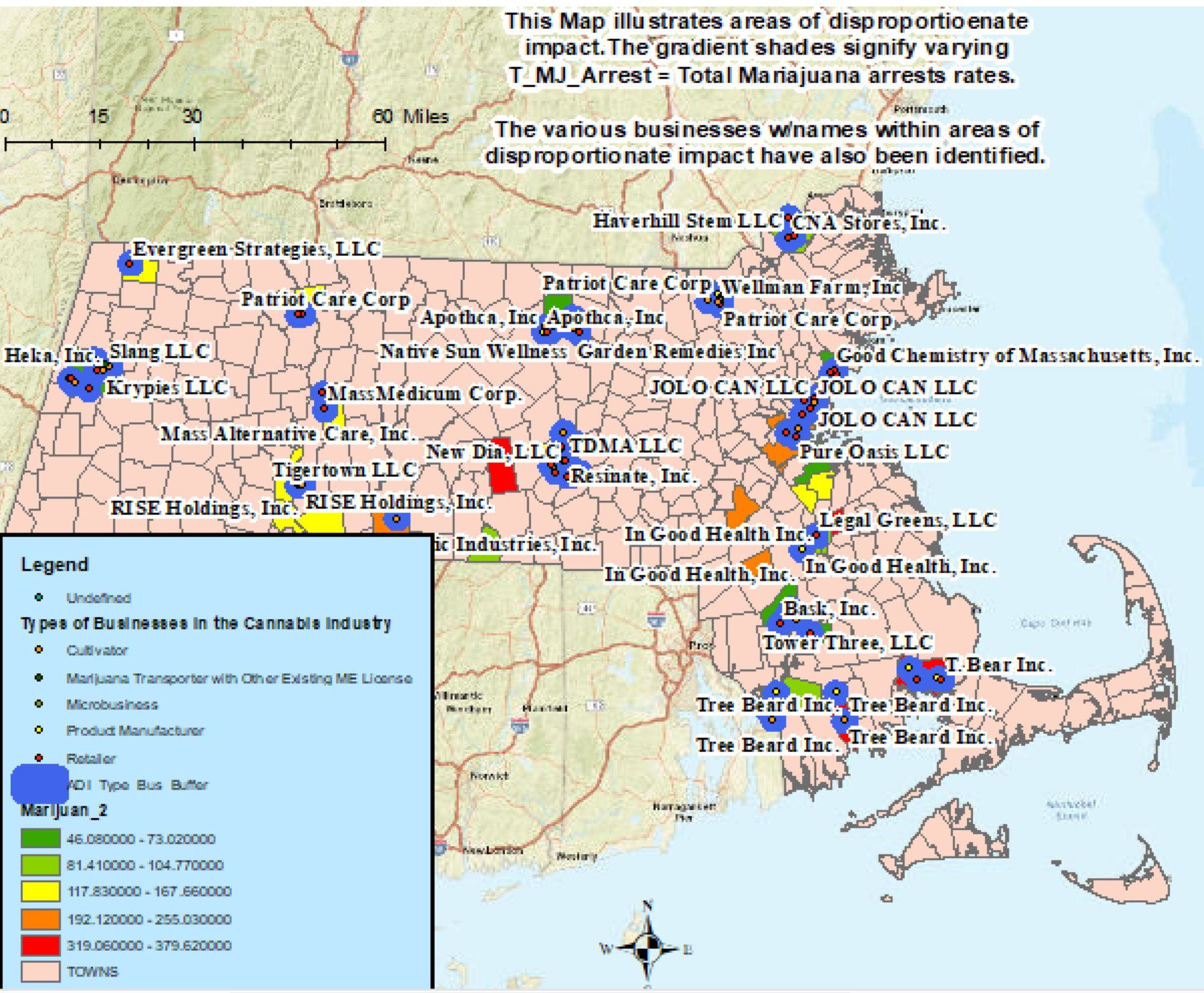


Methods

I wanted to take a closer look at the arrest rate data I received from the CCC and decided to use a gradient to identify areas of disproportionate impact and their $T_MJ_Arrest = \text{Total Marijuana arrests rates}$.



I then wanted to look at the Geographical accessibility for the areas of disproportionate impact. I create a half mile buffer around the different businesses within areas of disproportionate impact.



Conclusion

While exploring the number and type of cannabis businesses developing in areas of disproportionate impact and areas with high total marijuana arrest rates their seems to be less innovative businesses such as microbusinesses. The trend at the moment is traditional capitalistic practices with retailers out numbering other types of businesses dramatically.

Within the areas od disproportionate impact with higher average Total Marijuana arrests rates seem to be dominated by retailers. These communities seem to be viewed only as consumers and not as communities that could own some of the factors of production for the Cannabis Industry. Accessibility for areas classified as having disproportionate impact is more about access into the different types of business practices and economics. With the current snapshot of the cannabis industry it is difficult to tell the effect it will have on areas of disproportionate impact and more time is needed. Boston (Suffolk County) just had its first Social Equity Licensed business to begin operation.(Pure Oasis LLC).

Overall there is accessibility geographically for areas of disproportionate impact. There are also applications being approved constantly and some through the Social Equity program as well. Even though there is geographical accessibility, the accessibility to different types of businesses is lacking. However, it is too early to draw any concrete conclusions based on the industry being in its infancy.

Acknowledgements

<https://www.aclu.org/report/report-war-marijuana-black-and-white>

