

Evanston 311: Neighborhood Characteristics and Behavioral Science



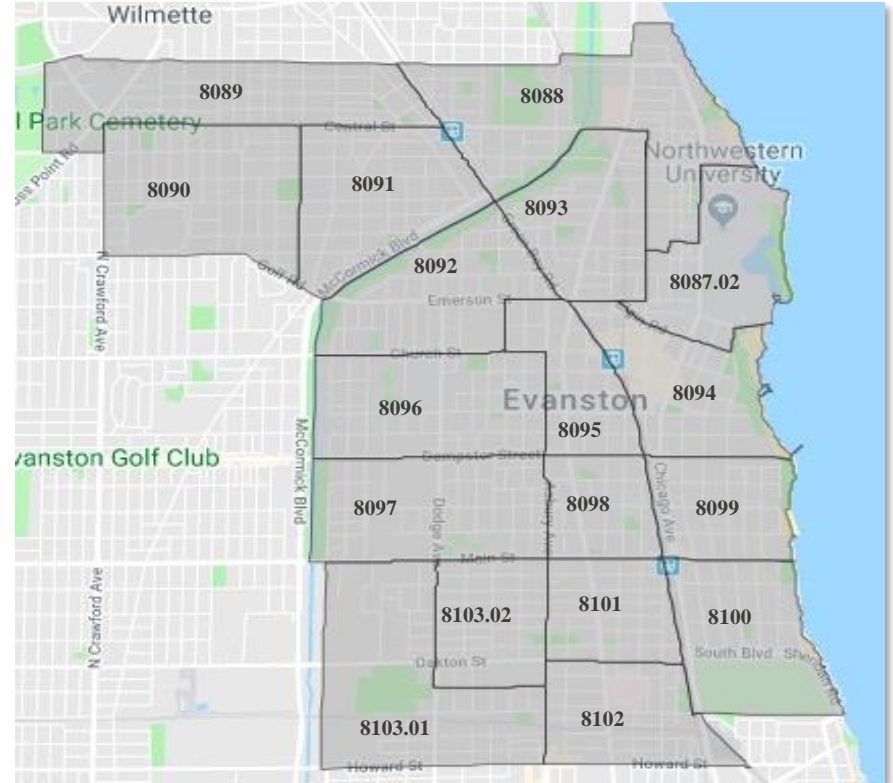
Maxwell X Lab

- Use behavioral science to create interventions to improve public service
- Conduct field experiments (RCTs) to confidently estimate the benefits
- Partner with nonprofits, states, and local governments
- Utilize deep bench of scholars at the Maxwell School

Evanston 311

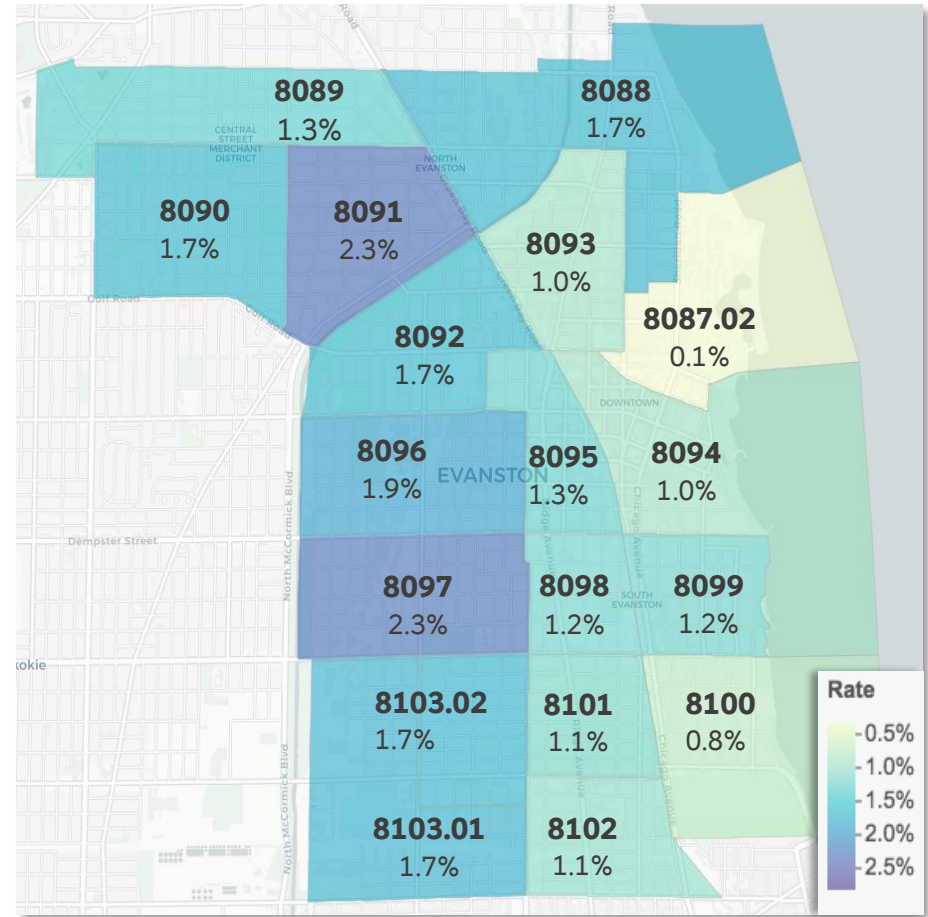
Approach

- Used resident history data from 25% of all 311 requests since 2014
- Assigned residents to Census tract neighborhood (18 in Evanston)
- Analyzed differences in use across neighborhoods



Participation Rates

- Average rate = 1.3%
- Range 0.8% to 2.3%
- East/Southeast sections have lower participation rates
- Neighborhoods west of Chicago Ave have higher rates



Demographics and Participation Rates

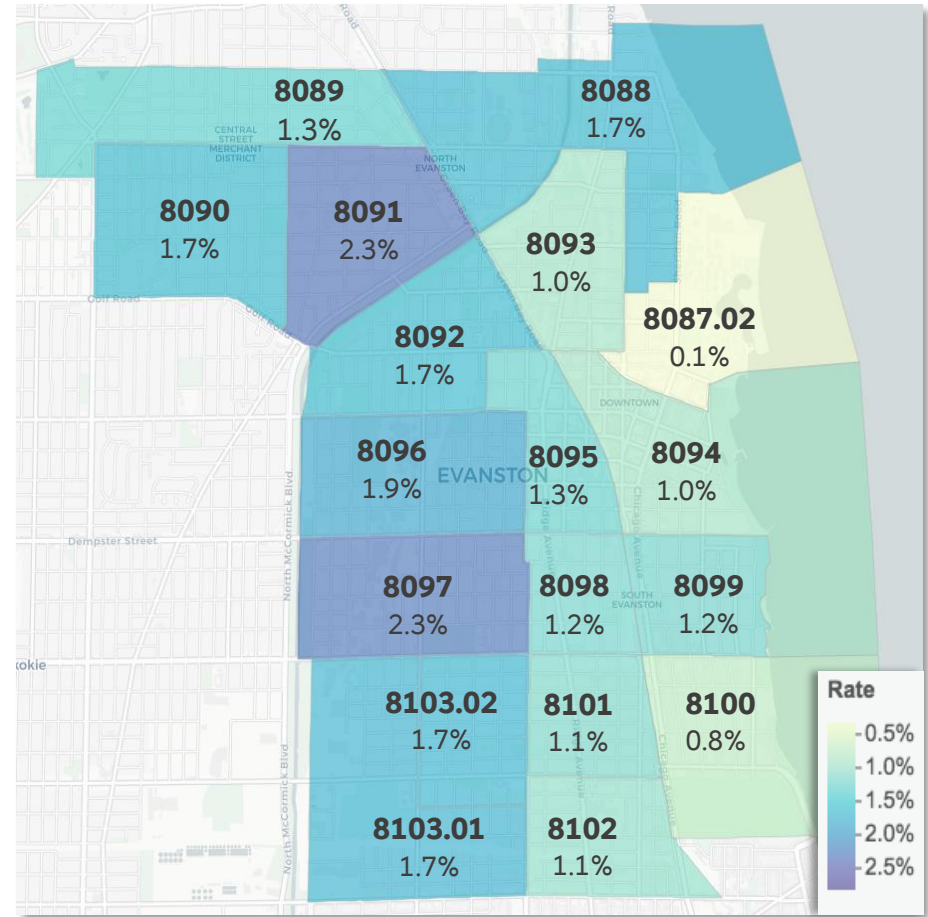
-Higher poverty tracts participate less (correlation = $-.47$)

-Education: diverse tracts participate more (correlation with at least college degree = $-.39$)

-Race/Ethnicity:

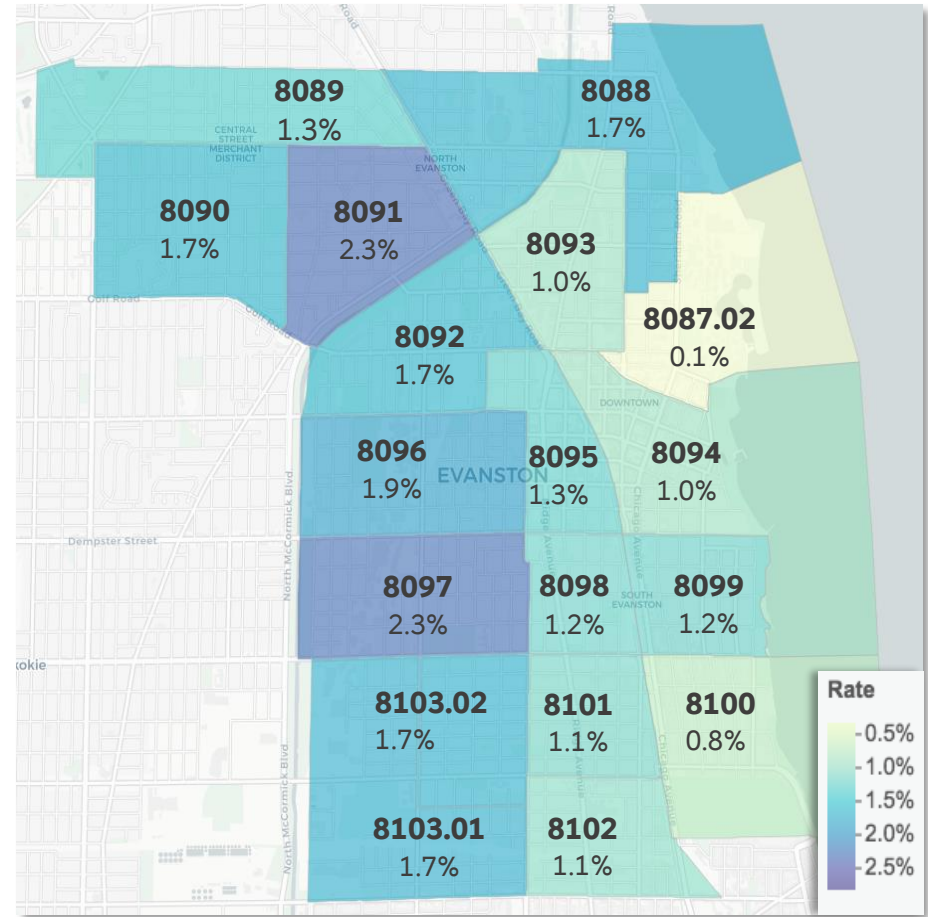
-Asian pop correlation = $-.53$

-Hispanic pop correlation = $+.34$



Other Findings

- Across various categories, calls vary significantly
- For example, trash or infrastructure calls are similar in higher poverty and higher participation tracts
- Suggests either overutilization, underutilization, or both



Next Steps and Behavioral Interventions

Increasing 311 Participation

- Leverage existing communication
- Social norming around participation
- Share timely information on usual requests and response times
- Experiment in Denver, CO doubled online platform use with social norm letter

Proactively Addressing Requests

- Using prior data, notify residents about potential future issues:
- Text residents about schedule change or weather related issues
- Experiment in San Jose, CA increased bulky item requests 146% with targeted outreach