
https://pressofatlanticcity.com/news/local/runners-celebrate-return-of-atlantic-city-marathon/article_ed48e25e-2f84-11ec-8fcb-fbf0dcf4b968.html

THE 62ND ATLANTIC CITY MARATHON

Runners celebrate return of Atlantic City Marathon

Christopher Doyle

Oct 17, 2021



Runners hit the Boardwalk Sunday morning for the 2021 Atlantic City Marathon. The event wasn't held in-person last year due to COVID-19. For a gallery of photos from the race, go to [PressofAC.com](https://pressofatlanticcity.com).

Kristian Gonyea, For The Press

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For runners from South Jersey and beyond, this year's Atlantic City Marathon couldn't come fast enough.

Sunday morning's race marked the first time the event was run in-person since 2019 after the 2020 event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the race was set against a backdrop of sunny skies, runners and spectators were beaming to have one of South Jersey's premier races finally return.

The 26.2-mile race started and finished on the Atlantic City Boardwalk outside Bally's Casino Resort, and passed through Atlantic City, Ventnor, Margate and Longport. Hundreds of marathoners lined up according to their expected finish times and scores of spectators outside Bally's stood spaced apart to cheer on their friends and family members.

John Campagna was the overall winner in a time of 2 hours, 29 minutes, 22 seconds, while Savannah Carnahan was the women's champion in 2:50:37.



Campagna, Carnahan the winners of the Atlantic City Marathon

There was also a half marathon held Sunday, as well as 5K and 10K races held Saturday. There were about 2,200 people total racing in the two Sunday races, and 1,000 people total for the Saturday races. The races were organized by the Milton and Betty Katz Jewish Community Center, based in Margate.

While the marathon, which was established in 1958 and is the third oldest in the country, was not held in person in 2020, there was a virtual race alternative, where organizers mailed runners official shirts and competitors could upload results online.

For Jean Smith, of Vineland, the return of races like the marathon was the resumption of a tradition. At 74, Smith said she had run the Atlantic City Marathon “five or six times,” prior to Sunday and had run over 100 marathons total. Running the half marathon on Sunday, Smith said she was happy to see races finally starting to resume, and she felt safe from the coronavirus.

“No, not at all,” Smith said when asked if she was concerned about COVID-19. “I’m vaccinated, I don’t have any worries about it.”

Genia Bittner, the marathon’s director, said race organizers have taken some precautions due to COVID-19. The sports and fitness expo, which is usually hosted indoors and in tandem with the marathon, was moved outdoors to Bally’s Beach Bar.

Marathon volunteers didn’t hand out water directly to runners, instead leaving them on tables set up at different points along the course. And the start/finish area was cordoned off from spectators.

The amount of people allowed to race was capped at a lower level this year — although no runner had to be turned away, because the number of applications submitted were lower.

Terrence Pratt, of West New York, Hudson County, said he was eager to attend the half marathon this year. Having run one full marathon before, Pratt said he was not overly concerned with the coronavirus, noting that the limited number of runners at the event gives runners space for distancing.

“We did bring our masks with us just in case, but I think with the limited numbers that should spread out the field a bit,” said Pratt, who ran with his wife, Kari.

Bittner said hosting the marathon was important for the Atlantic City community, especially in light of the pandemic. She remarked on the role provided by local organizations and entertainment groups that volunteer to help run the event.

“It’s extremely impactful to the community, even outside of the tourism aspect of it, but from just the community aspect of it,” Bittner said.

Some groups were at the marathon to advance important community and international causes.

The Runners for Ayotzinapa 43 raced to bring attention to 43 students who disappeared in Iguala, Mexico, in 2014 — allegedly by local police in collusion with organized crime. Antonio Tizapa, whose son was among those disappeared, said he came to the marathon to call attention to what he describes is the inaction of the Mexican federal government.

“It’s one of the biggest marathons that they have here in New Jersey,” he said through a translator. “We’re here to represent our team over here so that our city and our country to know that we’re here.”

The Prolyfyck Run Creww, which started as community group, works to promote running and leadership in their home city of Charlottesville, Virginia. James Dowell a member of the group, said the group had three of its members racing in the marathon Sunday, including William Jones III, who Dowell said is an Atlantic City native.

“We always say it’s more than running with Prolyfyck Run Creww, it started as wanting to create this community and space of love, essentially, and run group ended up coming out of it,” Dowell said. “Typically with run groups in our community, there’s not a lot of Black run groups, there’s not a lot of Black people running, or Black-led run groups, so our crew, we wanted to build on that for our people, get people out there on their feet, keep them healthy, keep them moving, to promote an active and healthy lifestyle.”

And remarkably, Andrea Peet, of Rawley, North Carolina, completed the marathon with ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease. Running with racing partner Jilliane Baker, who lost her mother to ALS, Peet has been working to run a marathon in all 50 states, so she could inspire others. New Jersey was No. 44. New Mexico will be No. 45 in two weeks, and the last state will be Alaska in May.

“I felt good, it was a beautiful day, it is a beautiful course,” Peet said. “It was awesome.”

Peet said she was concerned about COVID-19, but the fact that she's vaccinated helped her feel comfortable.

Not all marathons in New Jersey are making their full return in 2021.

The New Jersey Marathon and Half Marathon, which were originally scheduled for this past weekend, were canceled when one of the involved towns that the course passes through banned large gatherings through the fall.

Bittner stressed that the Atlantic City Marathon was in full compliance with state and local COVID-19 regulations.

“Runners are eager to cooperate, they want to see the events take place, so they're ready and willing and able to do whatever is required to make sure that they can participate,” Bittner said.

Bittner said having the race return after such a difficult hiatus period was particularly important for runners.

“Having not had the opportunity (to participate in races) for over a year was very challenging for a lot of people,” Bittner said. “When you see each person cross the finish line and the emotion and the accomplishment after training and training for months for most people, to be able to culminate in running a marathon and finishing up on the Atlantic City Boardwalk is very meaningful.”

PHOTOS 2021 Atlantic City Marathon

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Runners pose for a picture before the start of the Atlantic City Marathon. Atlantic City, NJ. October 17, 2021 (Kristian Gonyea, For The Press Of Atlantic City)

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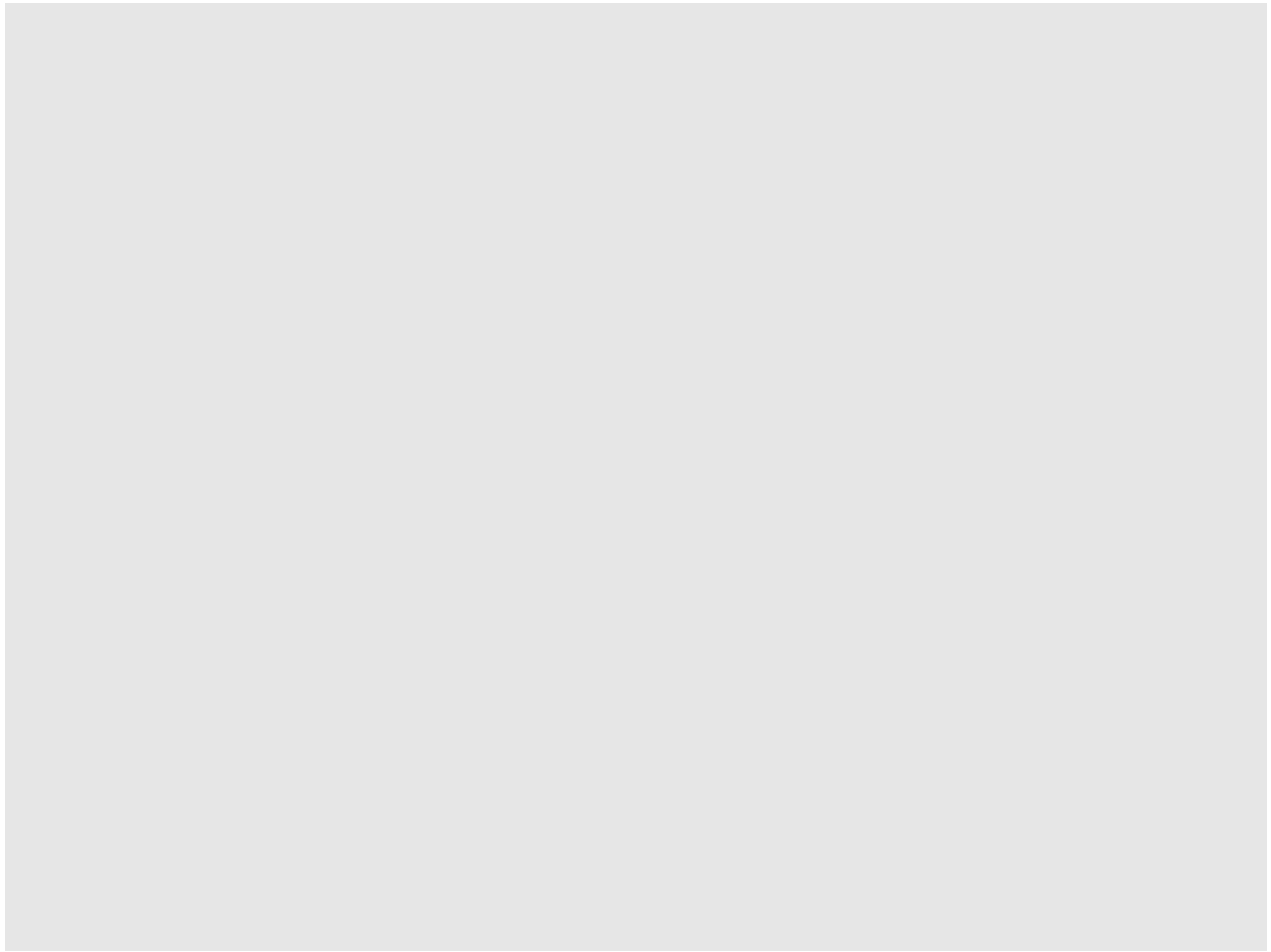
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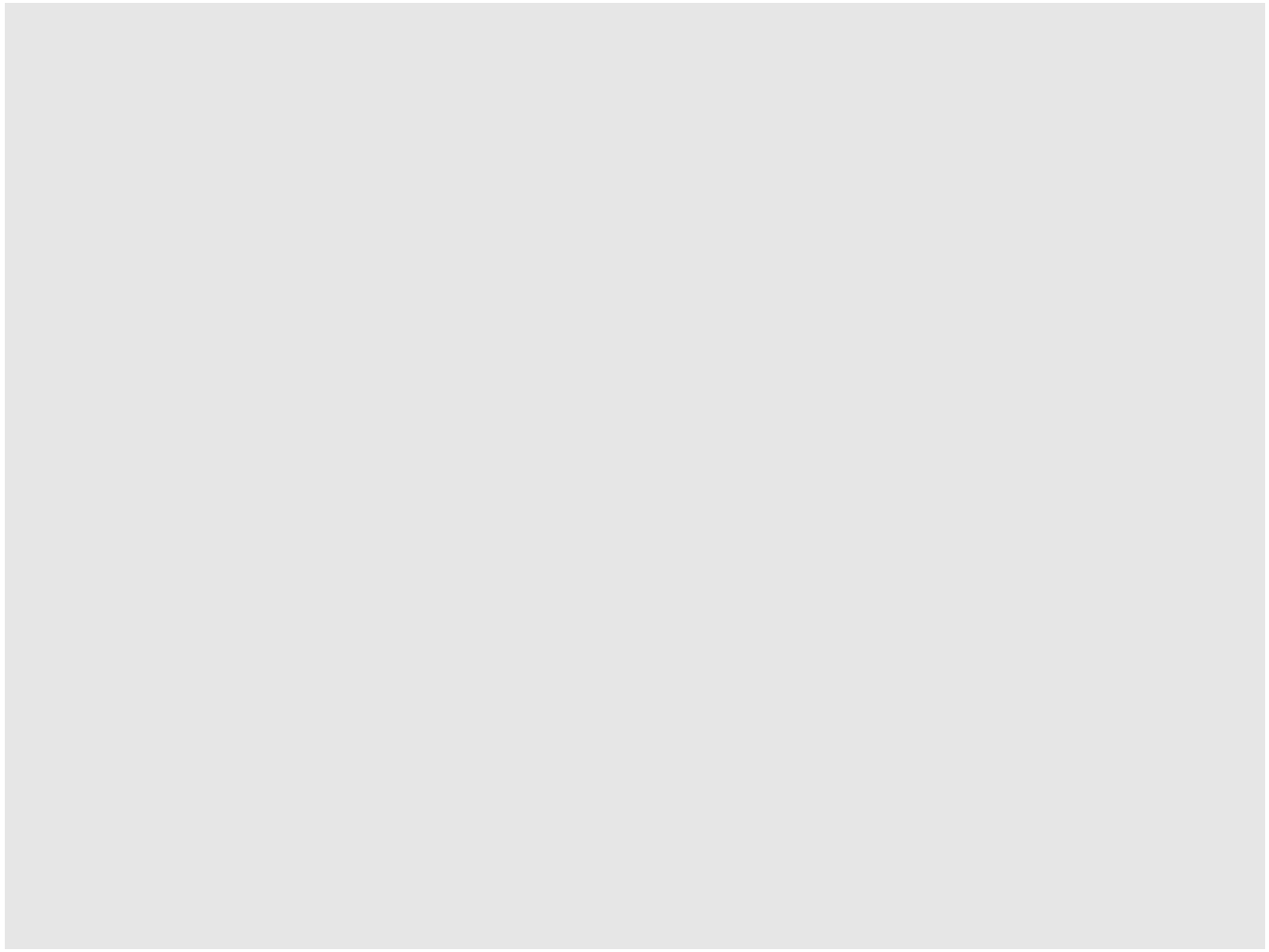
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Runners walk to the start of the Atlantic City Marathon. Atlantic City, NJ. October 17, 2021 (Kristian Gonyea, For The Press Of Atlantic City)

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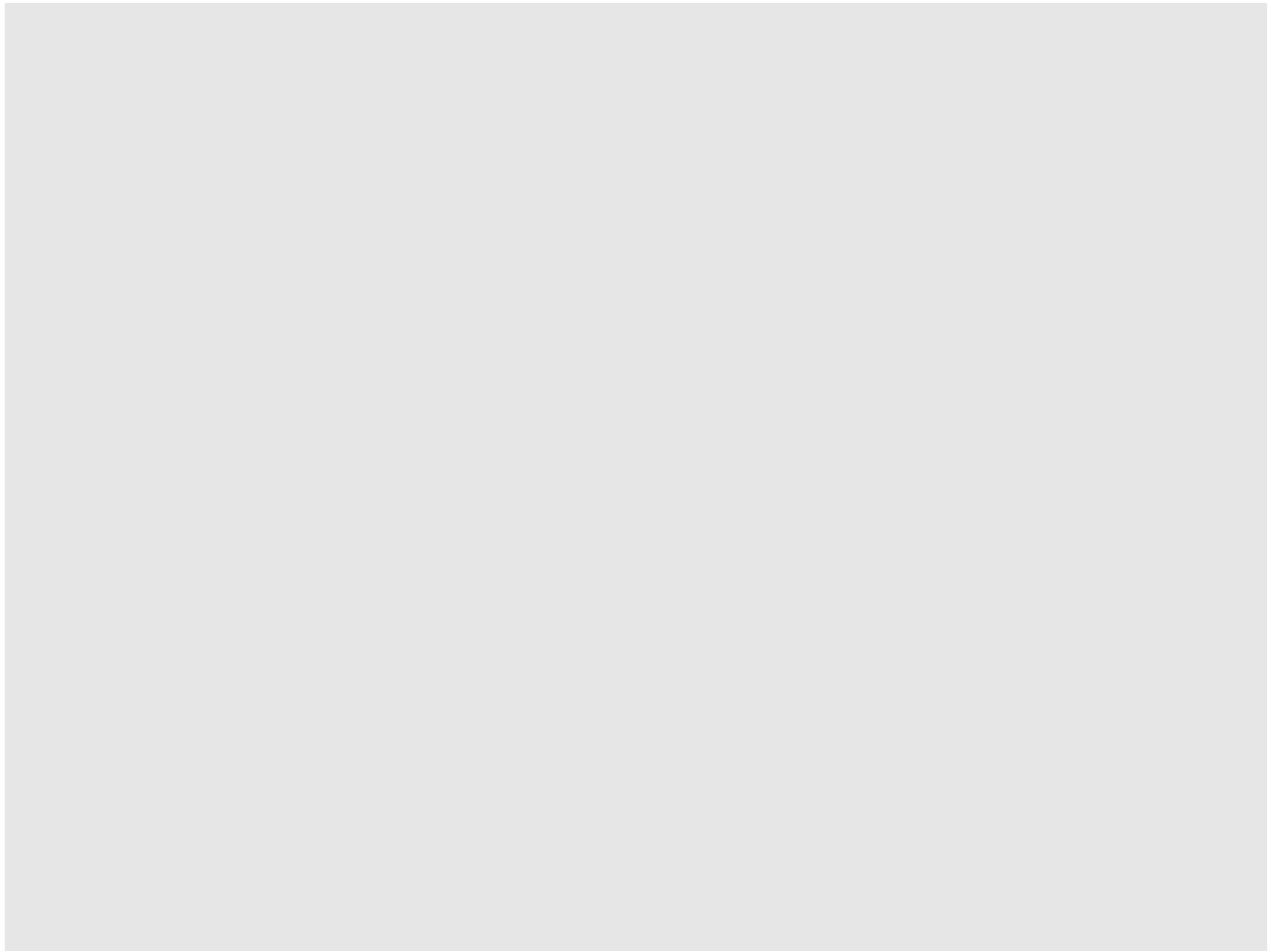
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Terry Fusco sings the National Anthem to start the beginning of the Atlantic City Marathon on the Boardwalk. Atlantic City, NJ. October 17, 2021 (Kristian Gonyea, For The Press Of Atlantic City)

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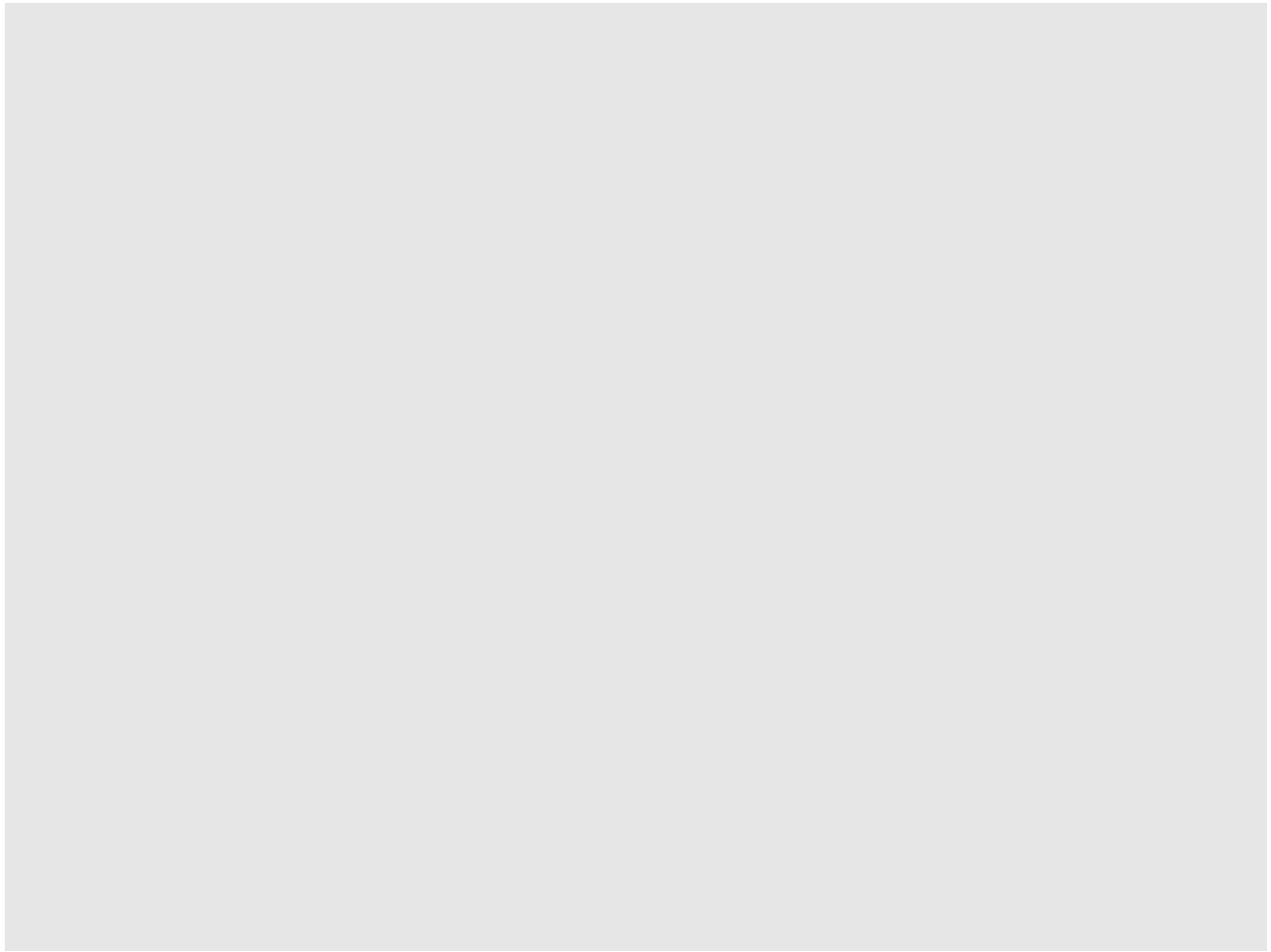
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David, 53, and Sue Goldstein, 51, both from Voorhees, Camden County, compete with their 26-year-old son Josh during the 62nd Atlantic City Marathon on Sunday morning. David Goldstein said he's been running marathons and triathlons with Josh for the last six years, and this was Josh's eighth marathon.

Kristian Gonyea, For The Press

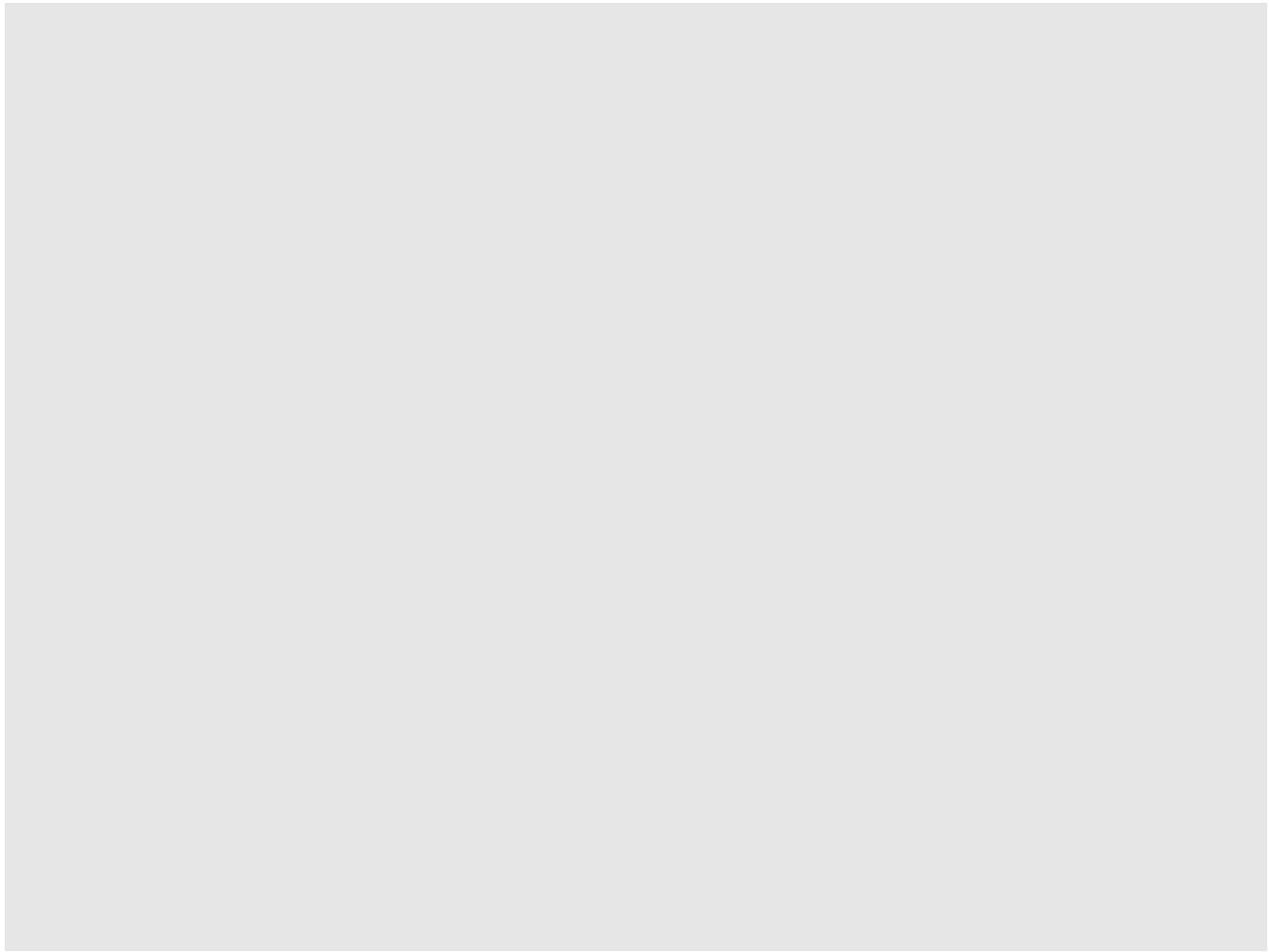
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Runners hit the boardwalk for the 26.2 miles marathon. Atlantic City, NJ. October 17, 2021 (Kristian Gonyea, For The Press Of Atlantic City)

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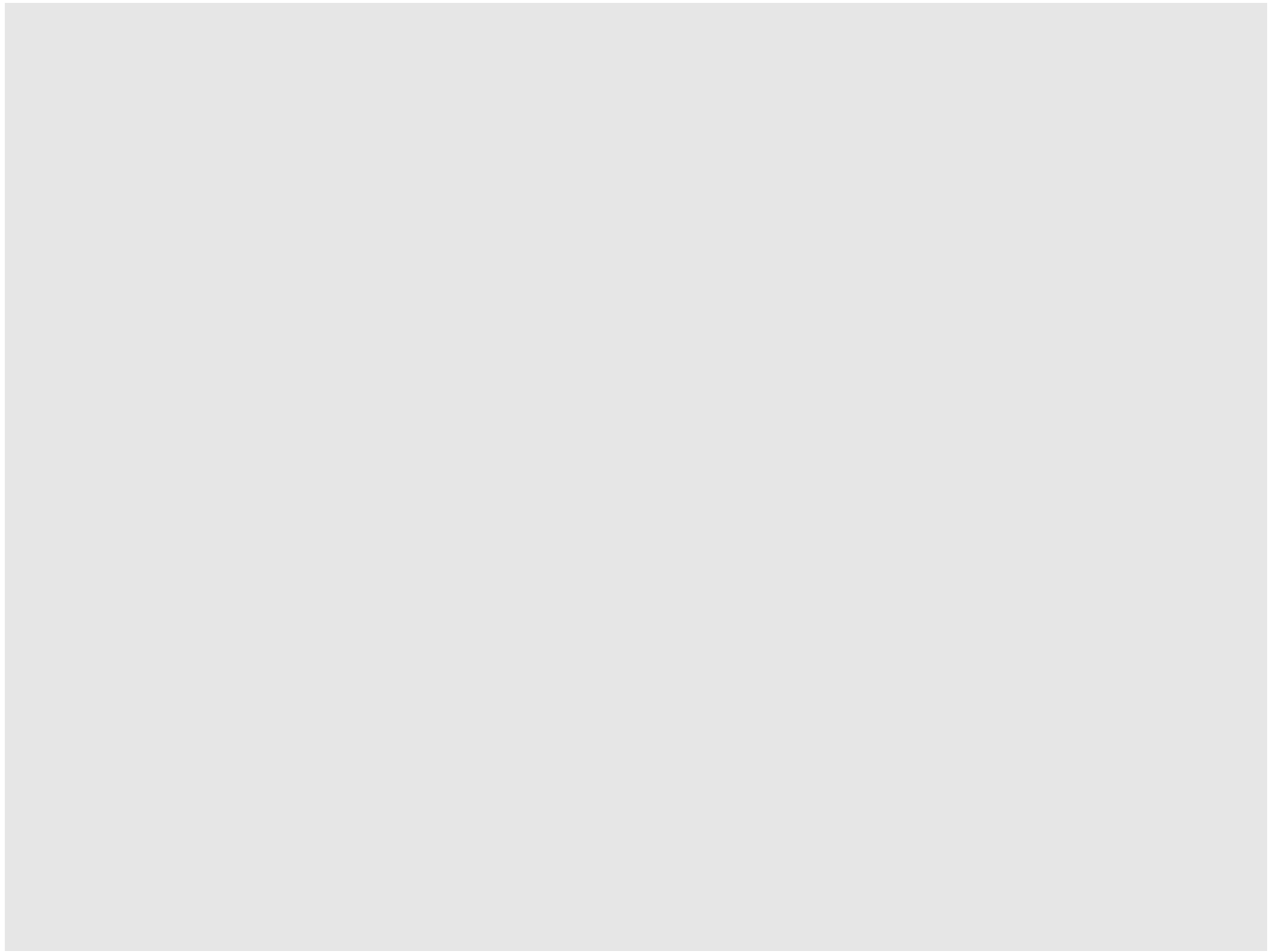
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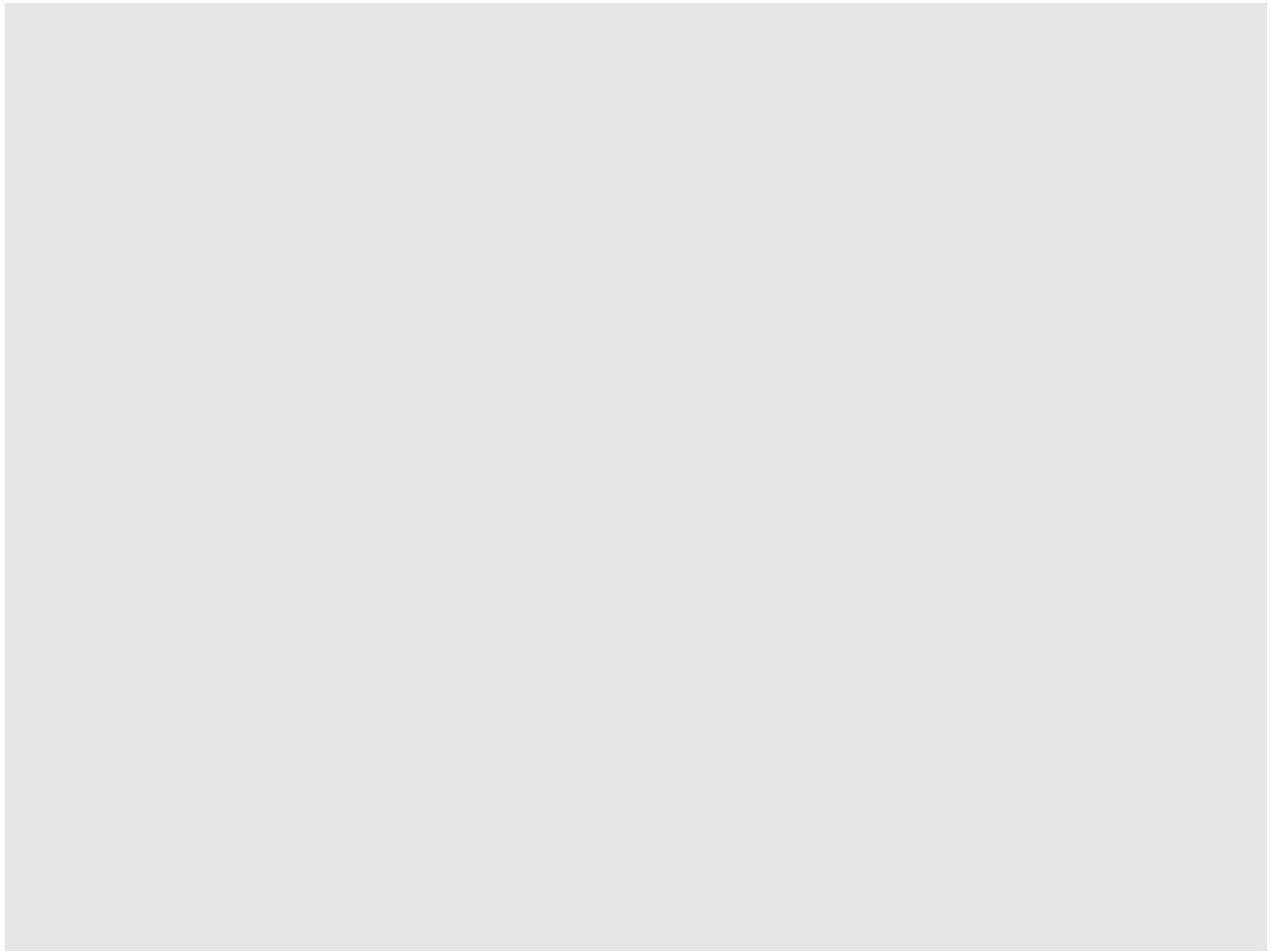
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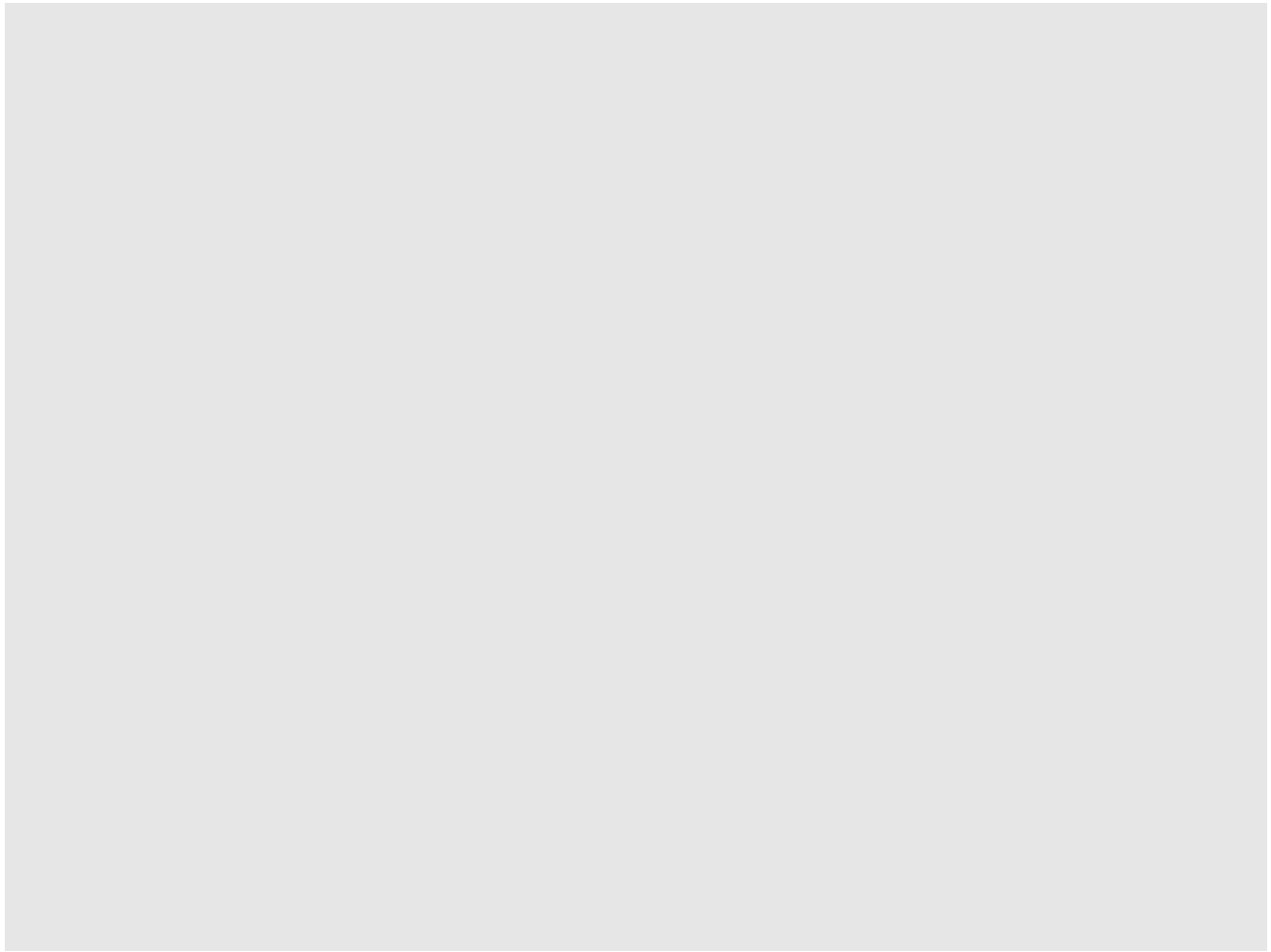
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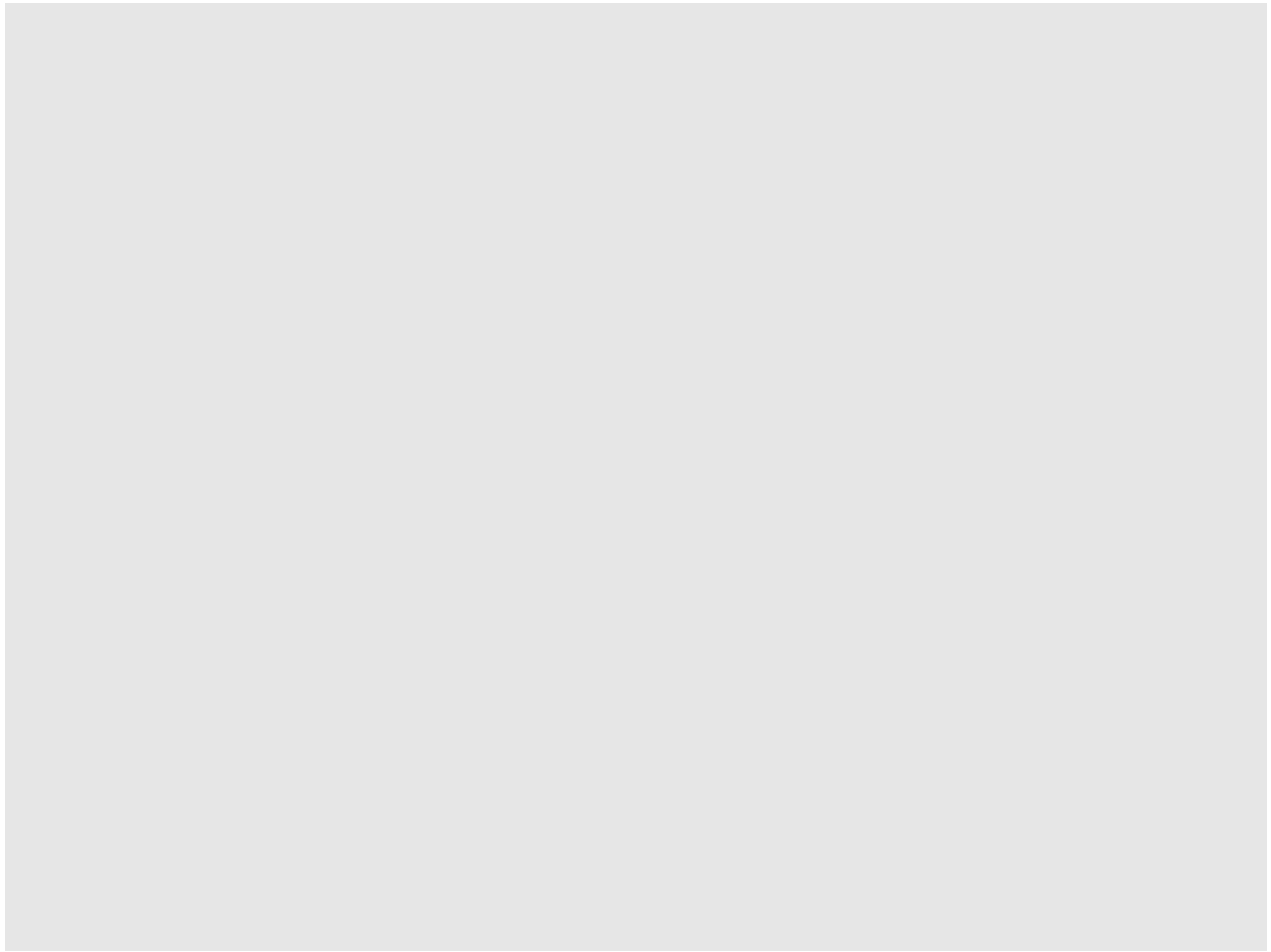
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Kristian Gonyea photos, For The Press

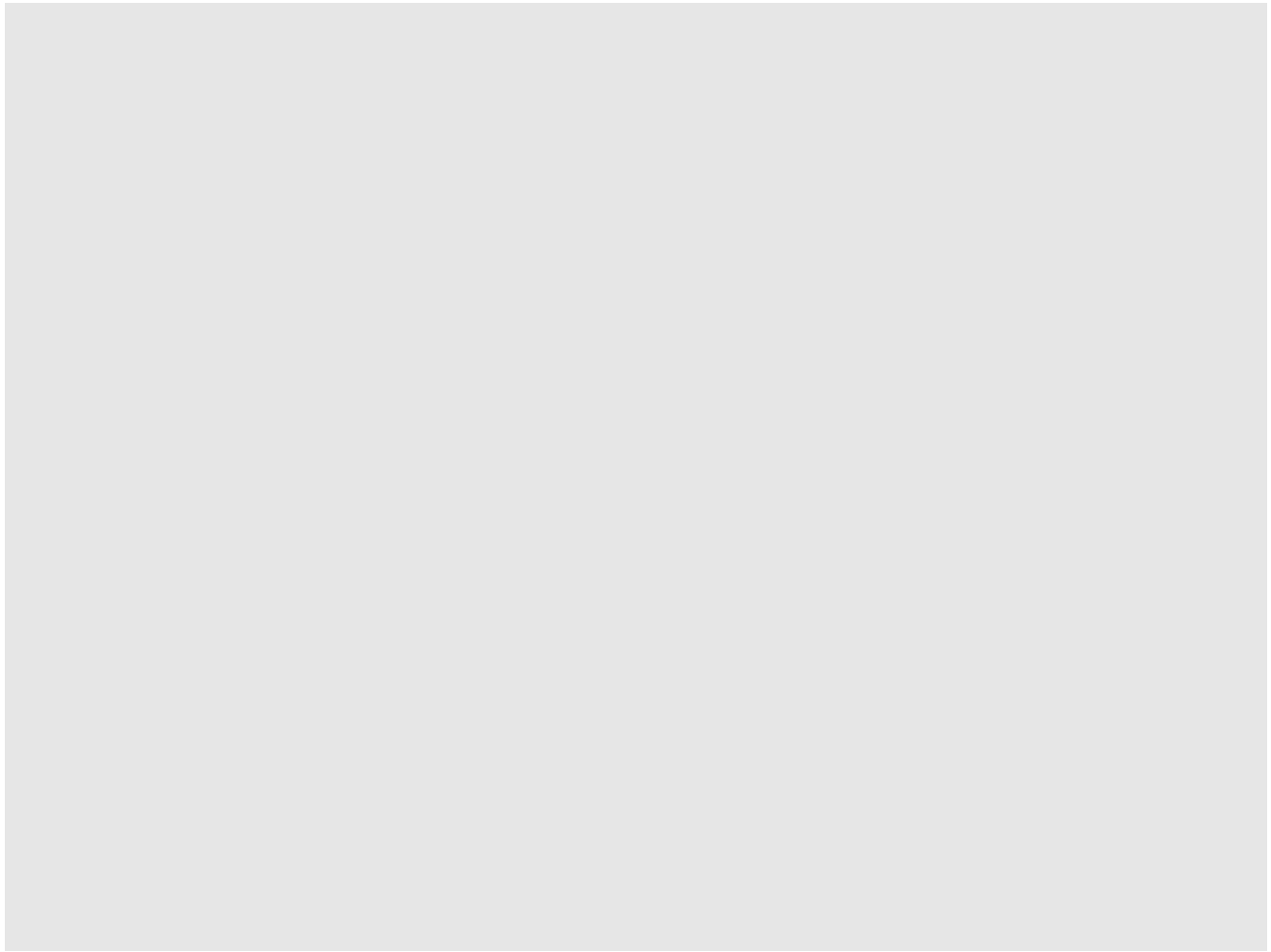
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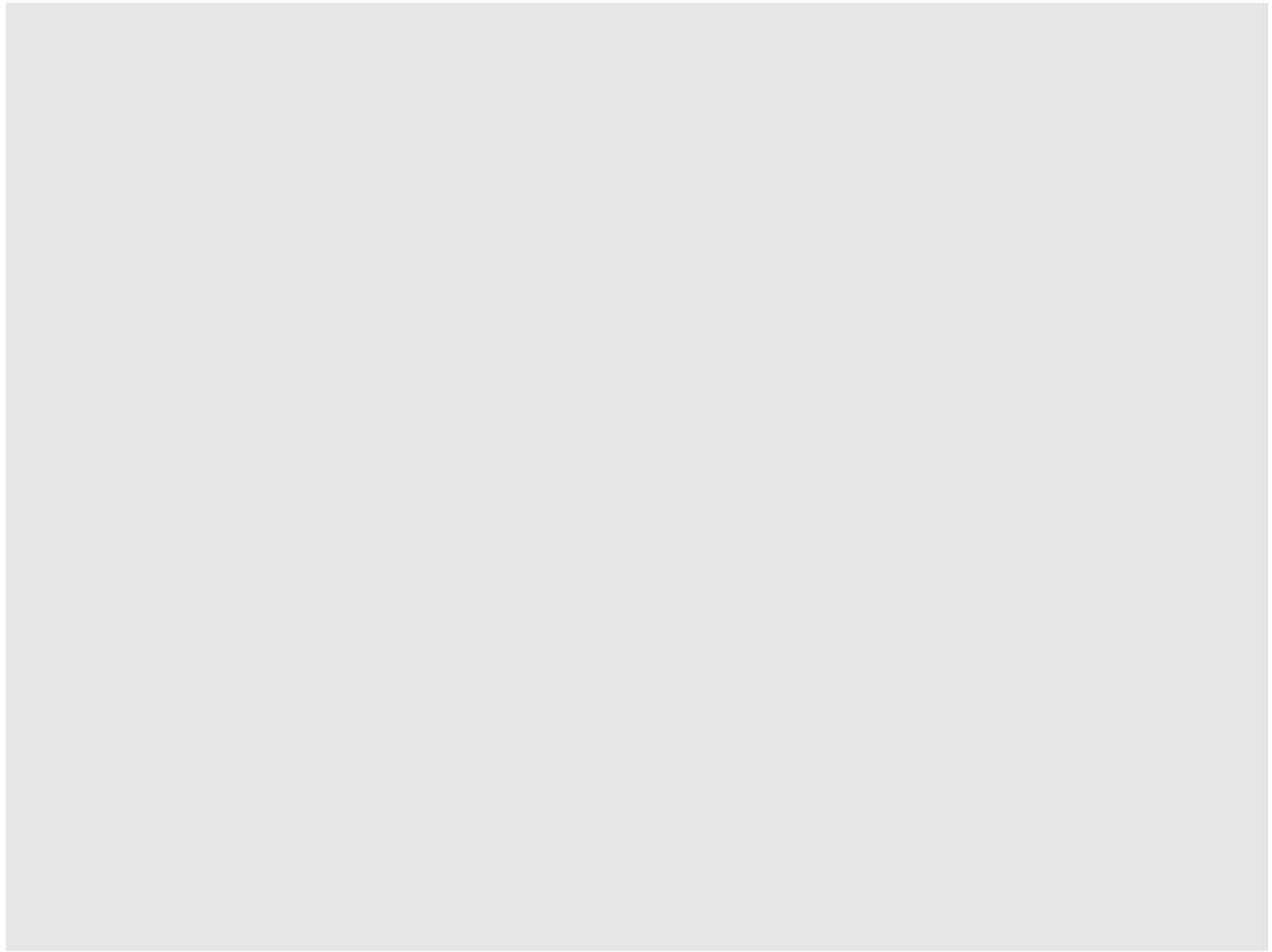
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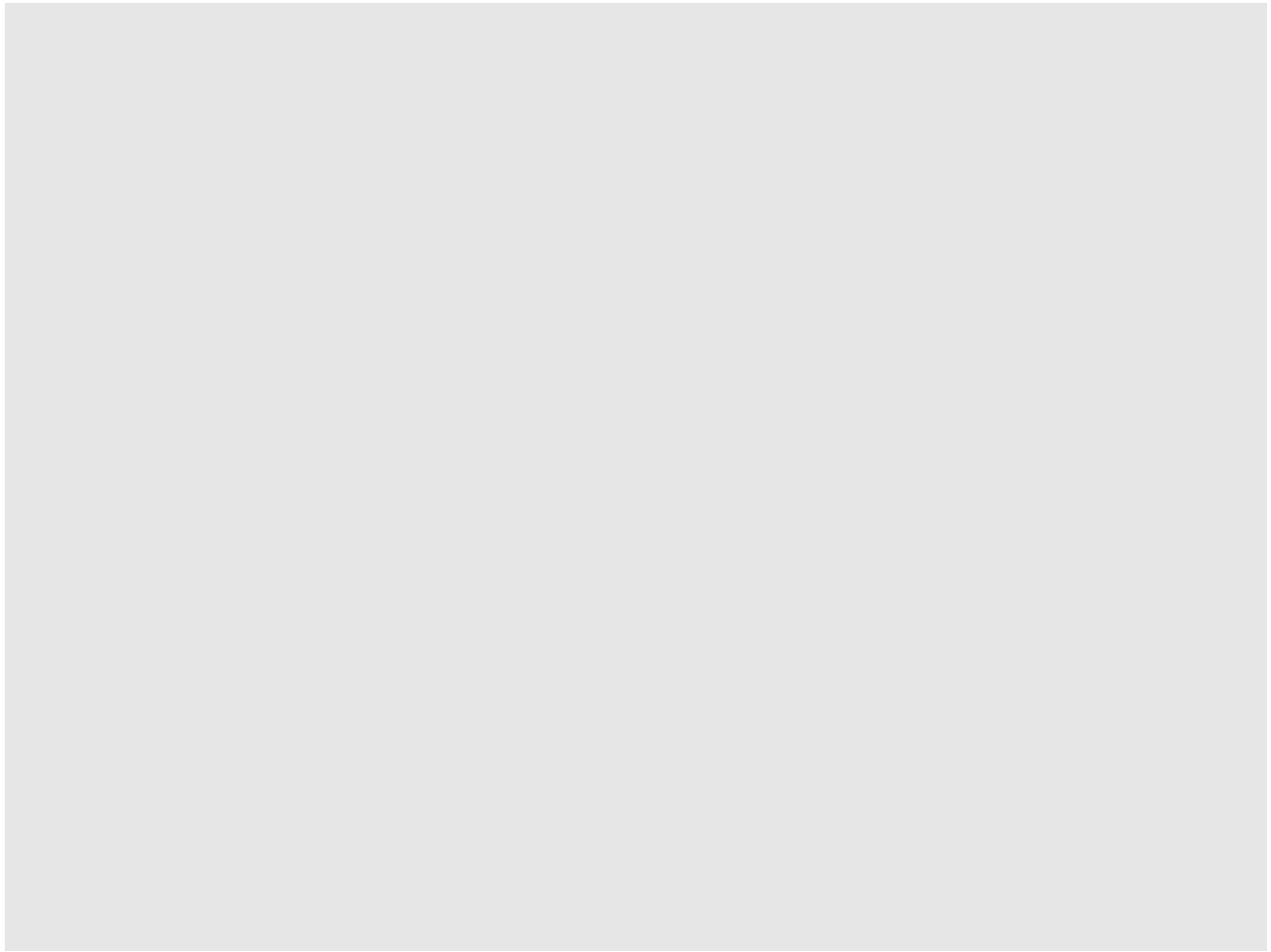
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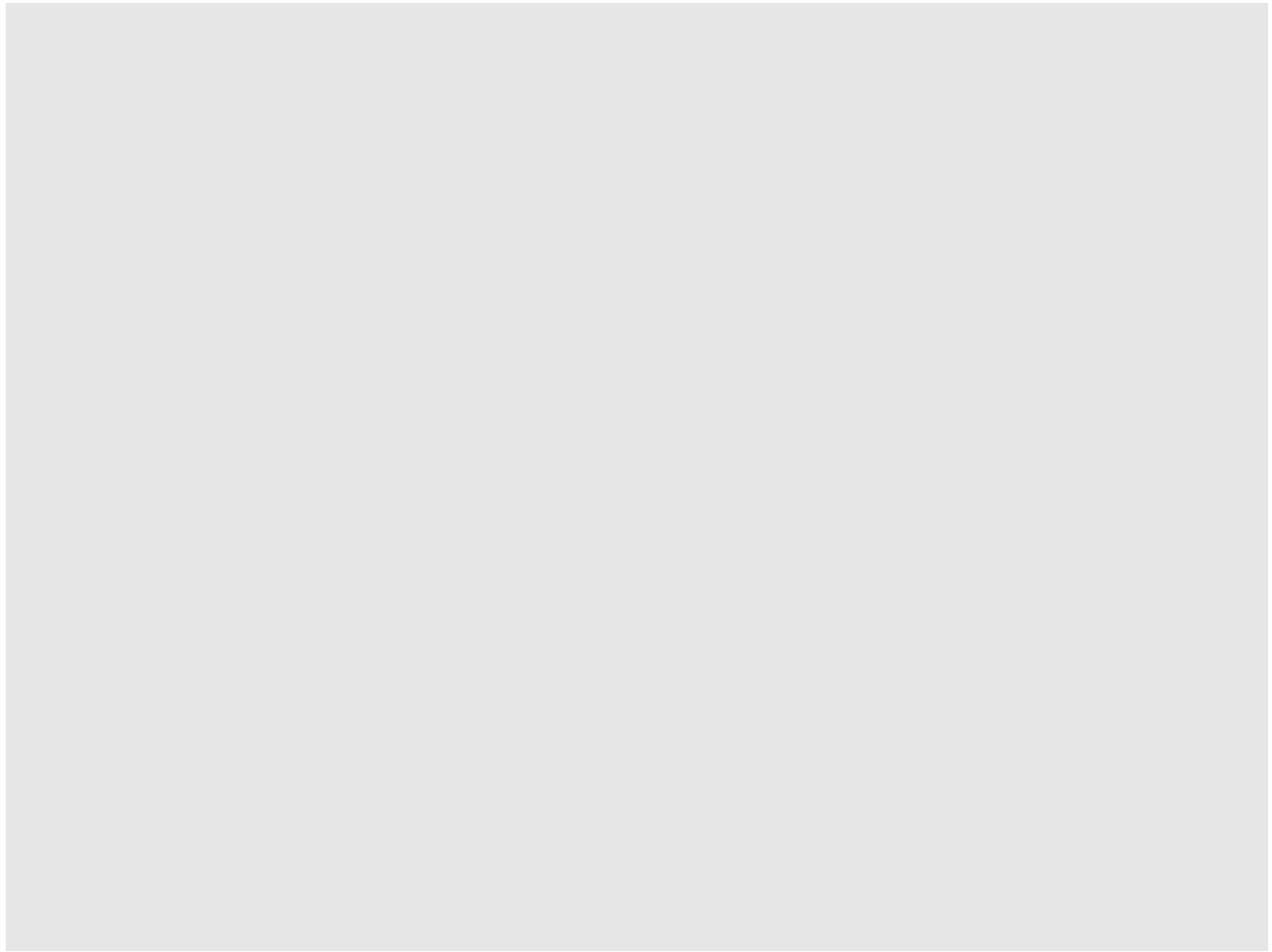
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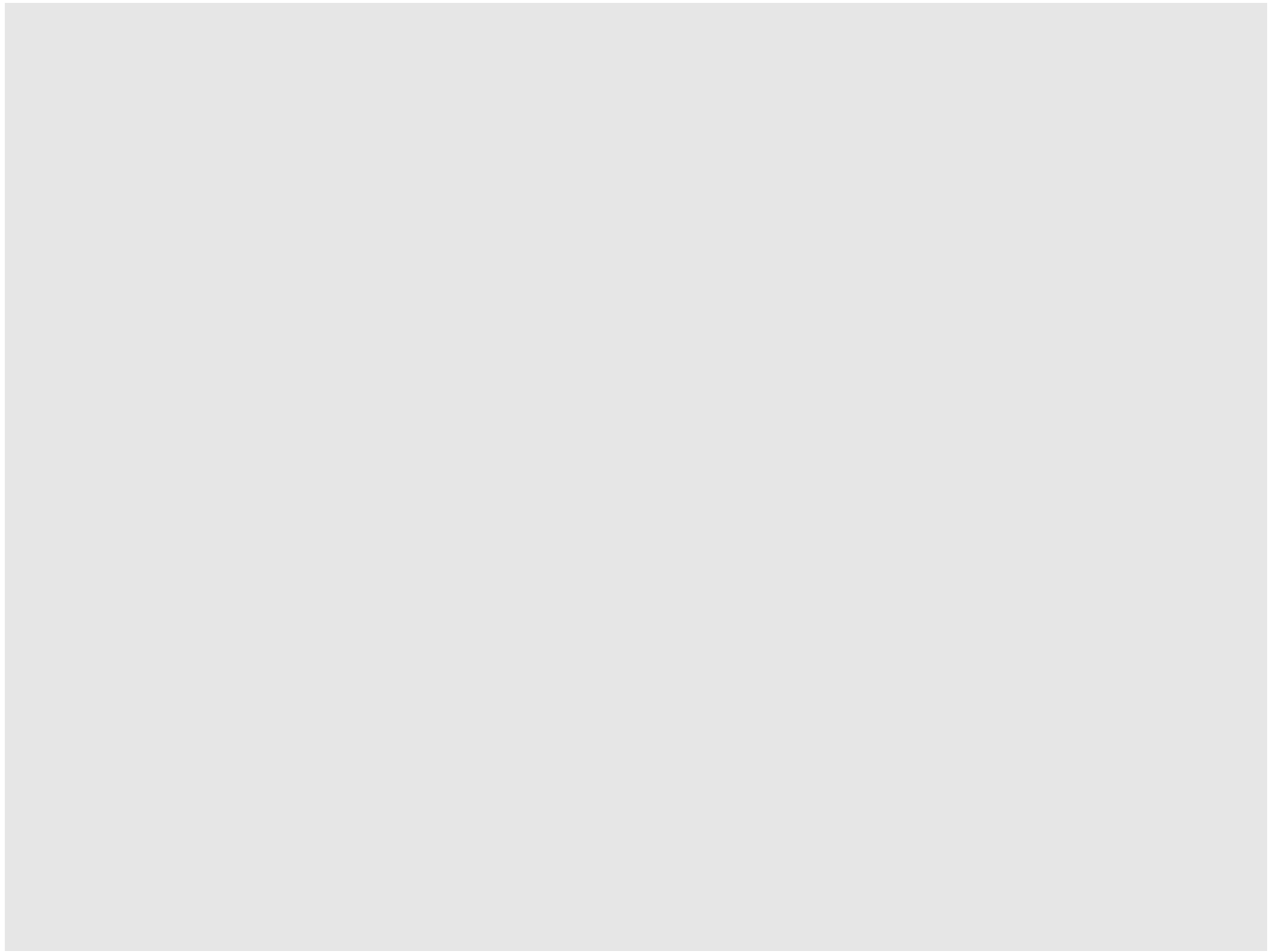
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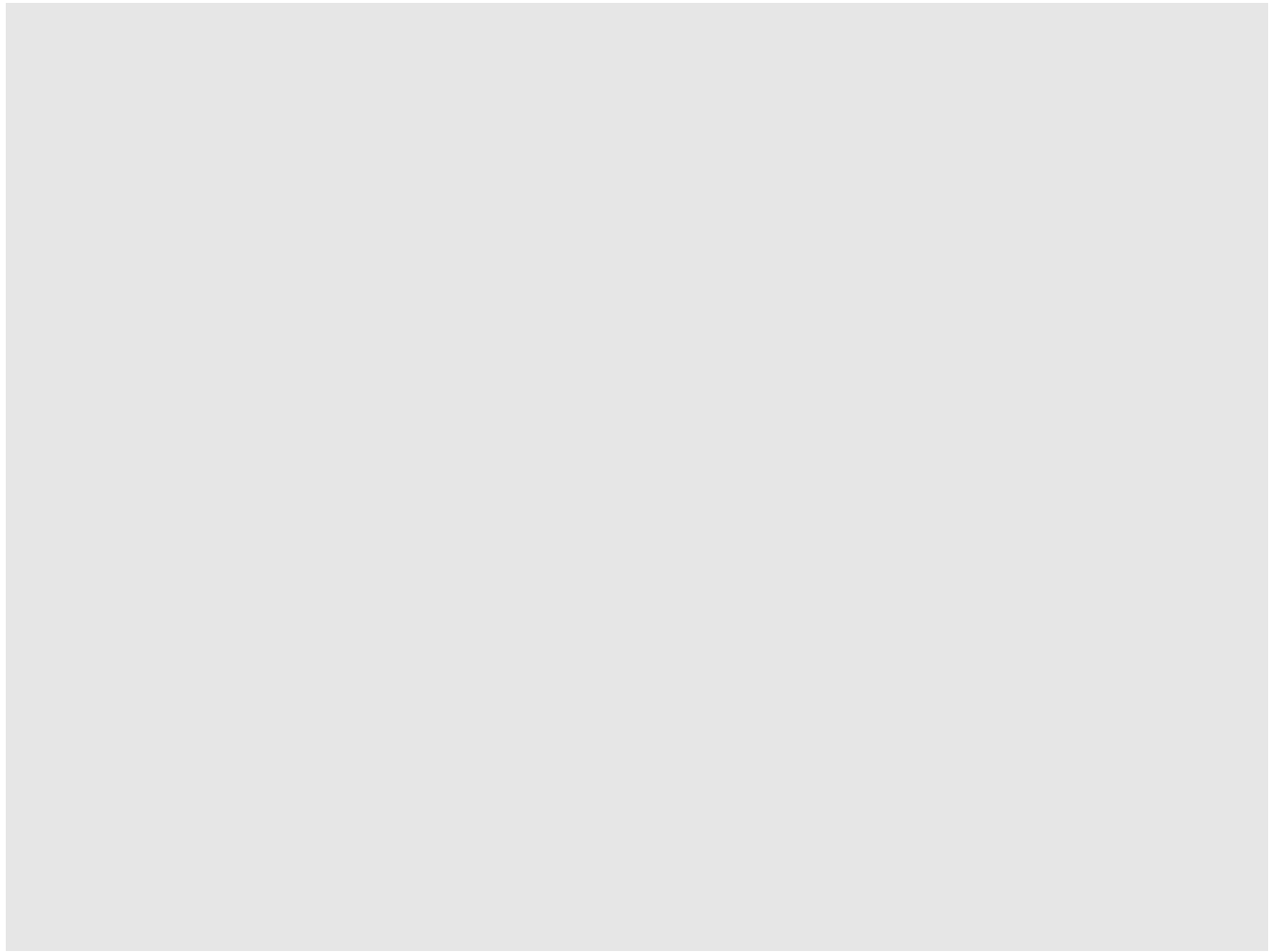
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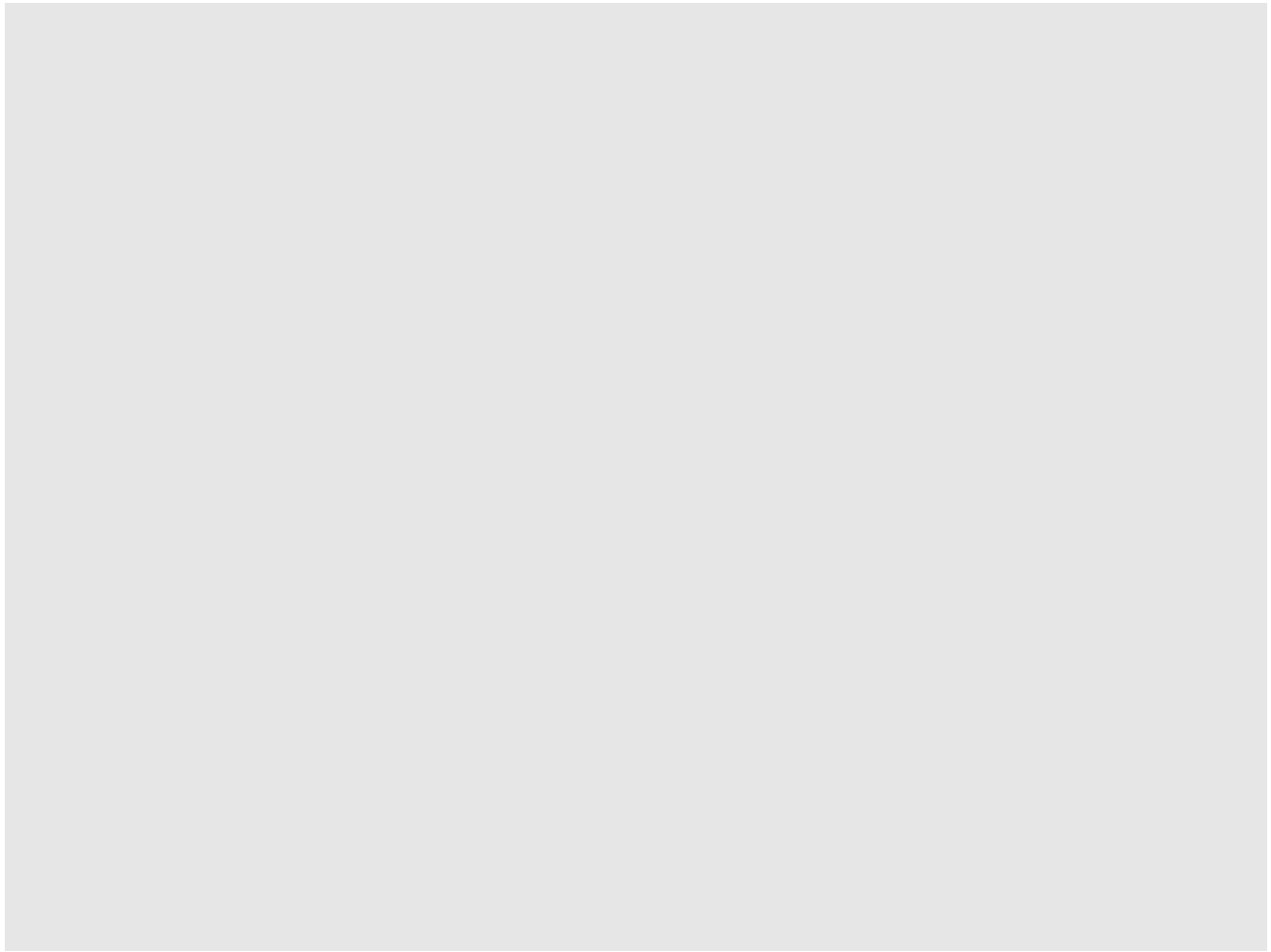
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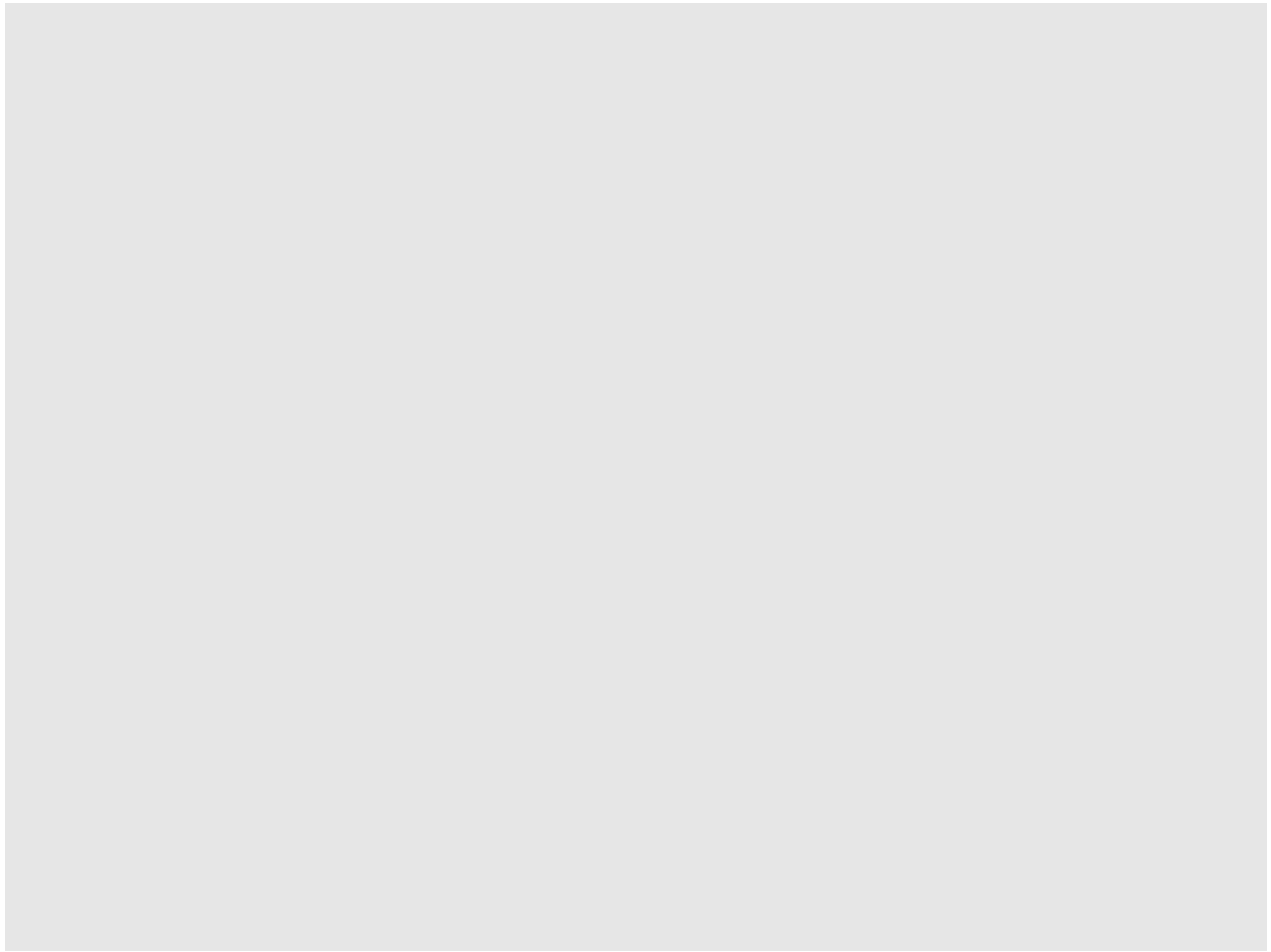
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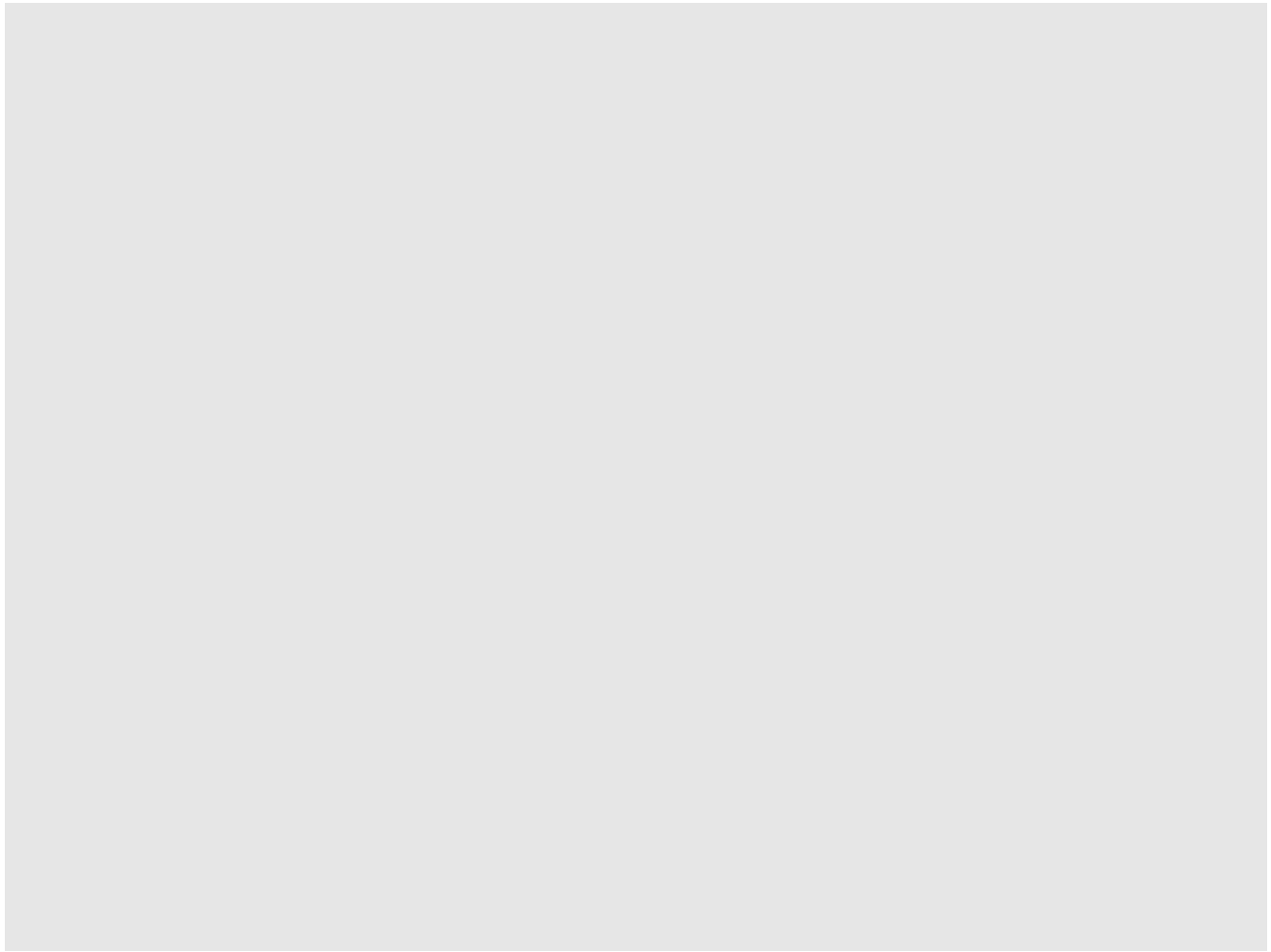
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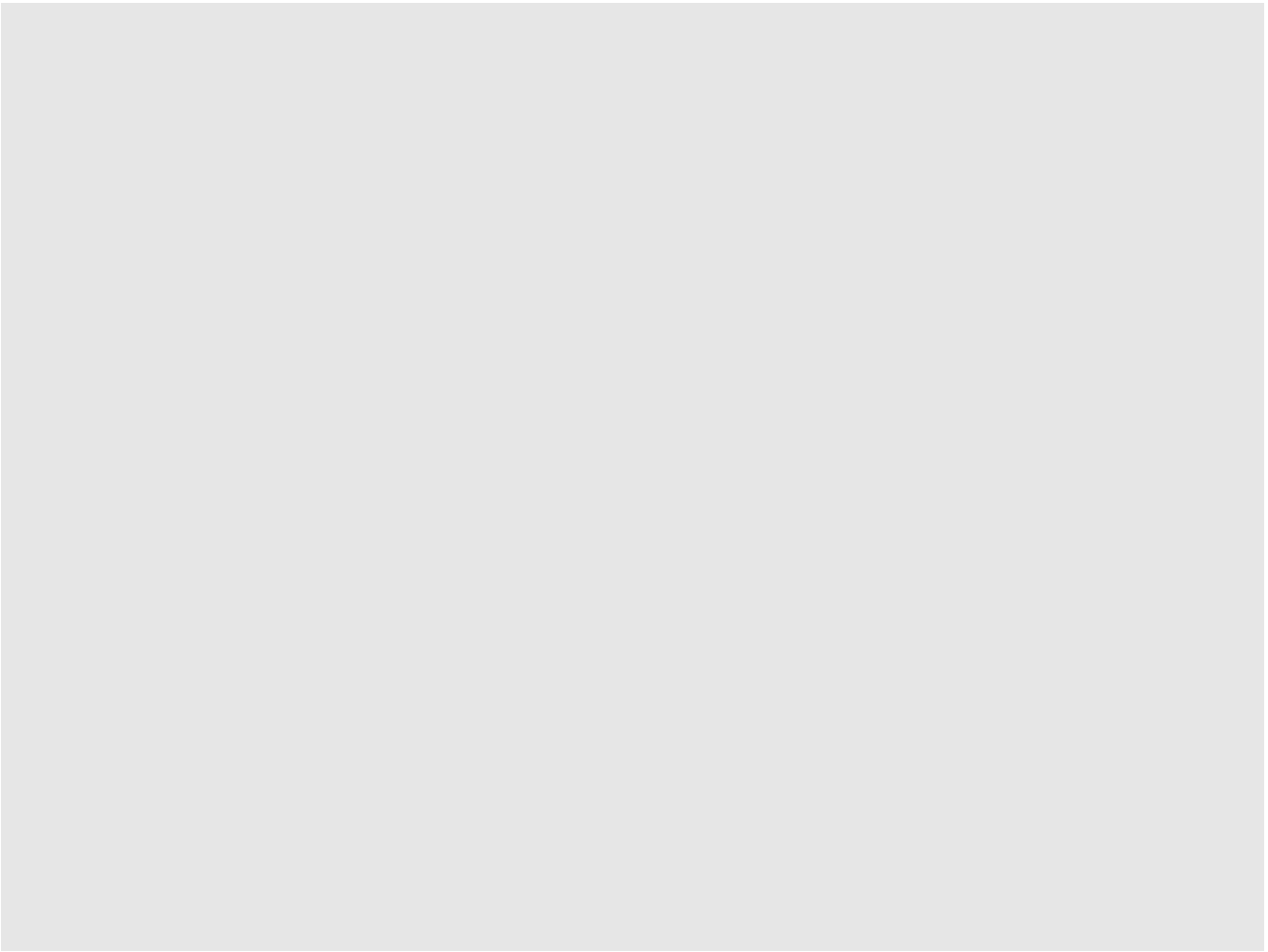
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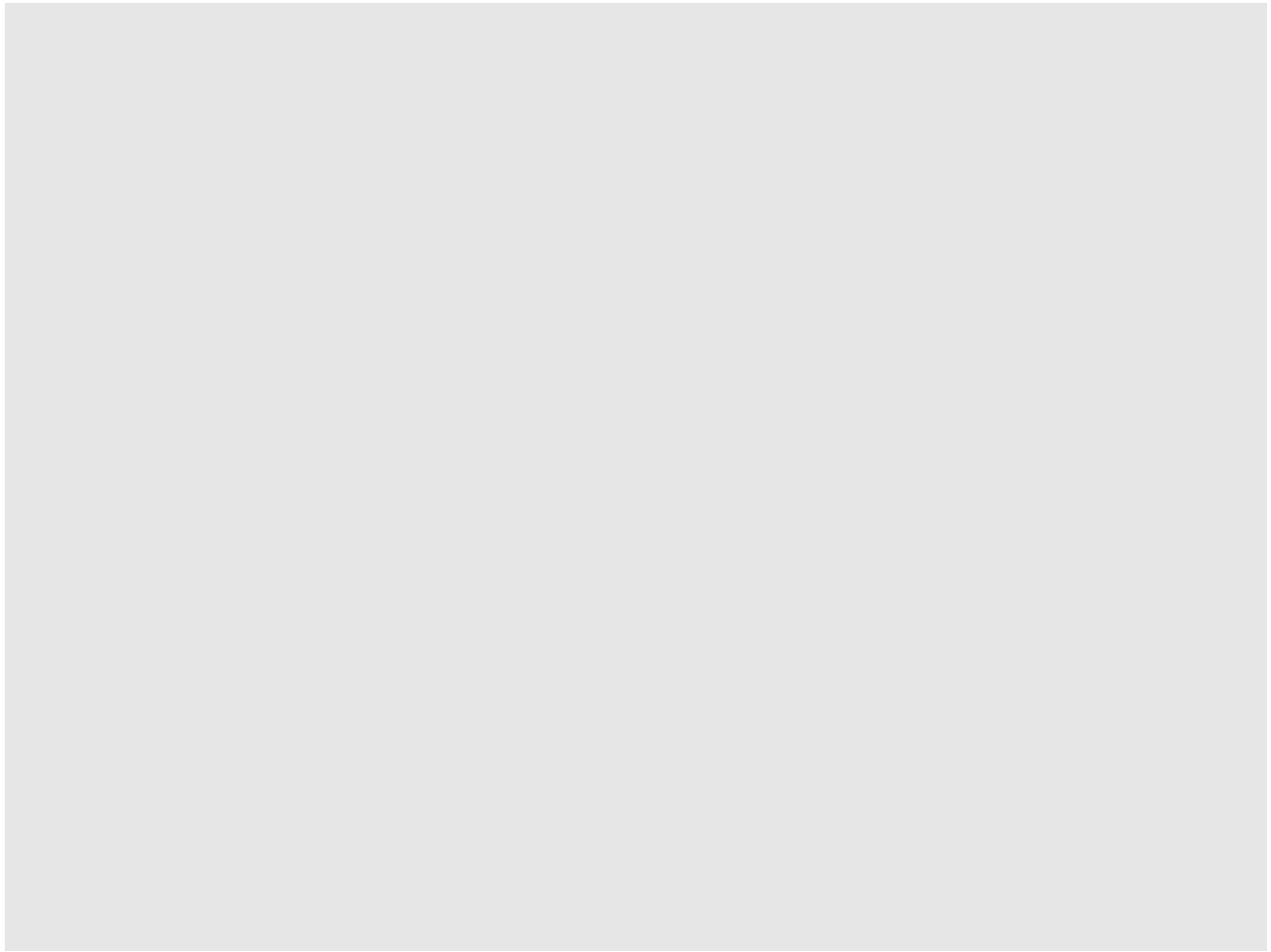
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A spectator films the race with his phone during Sunday's race. There was no marathon last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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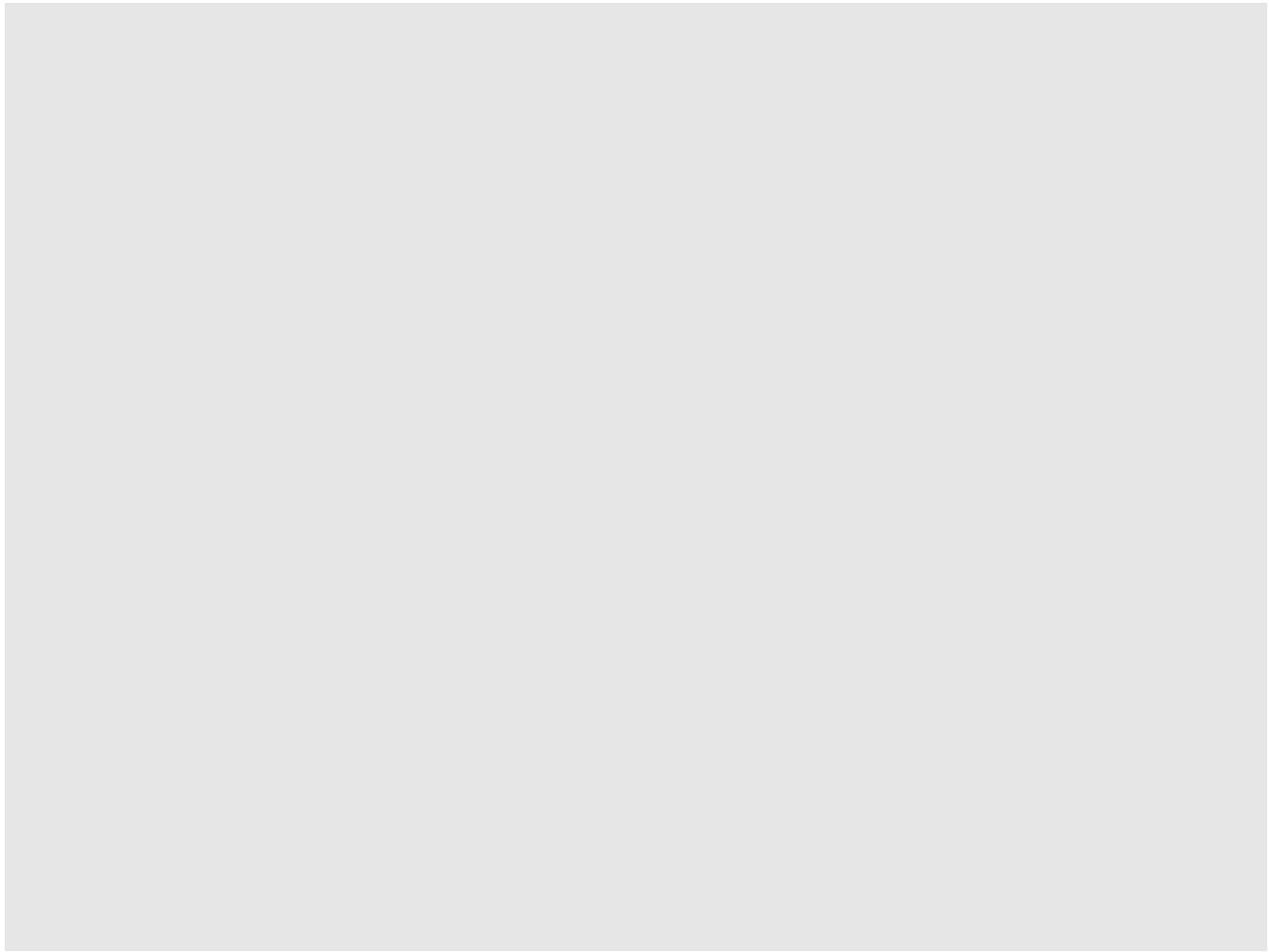
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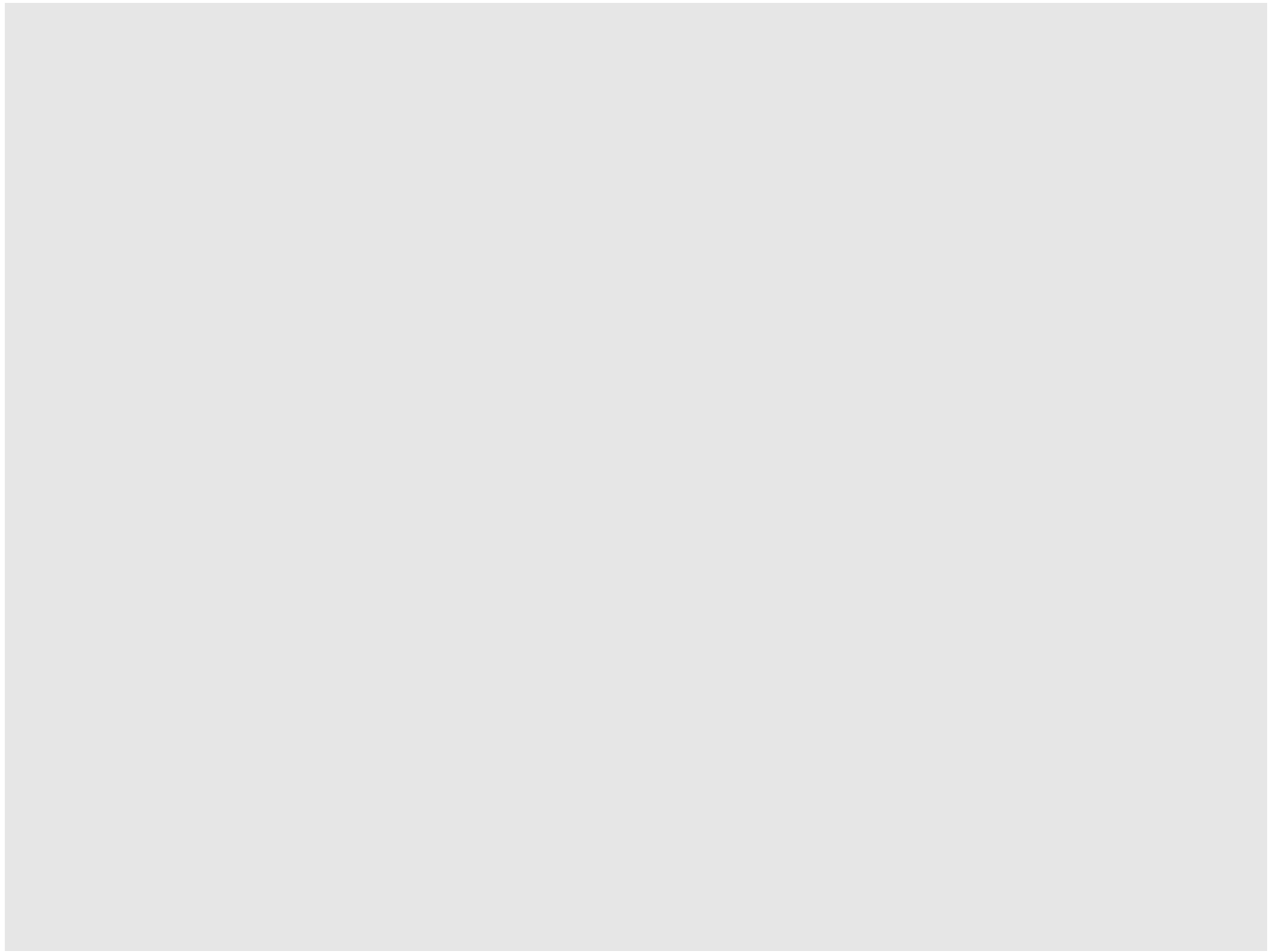
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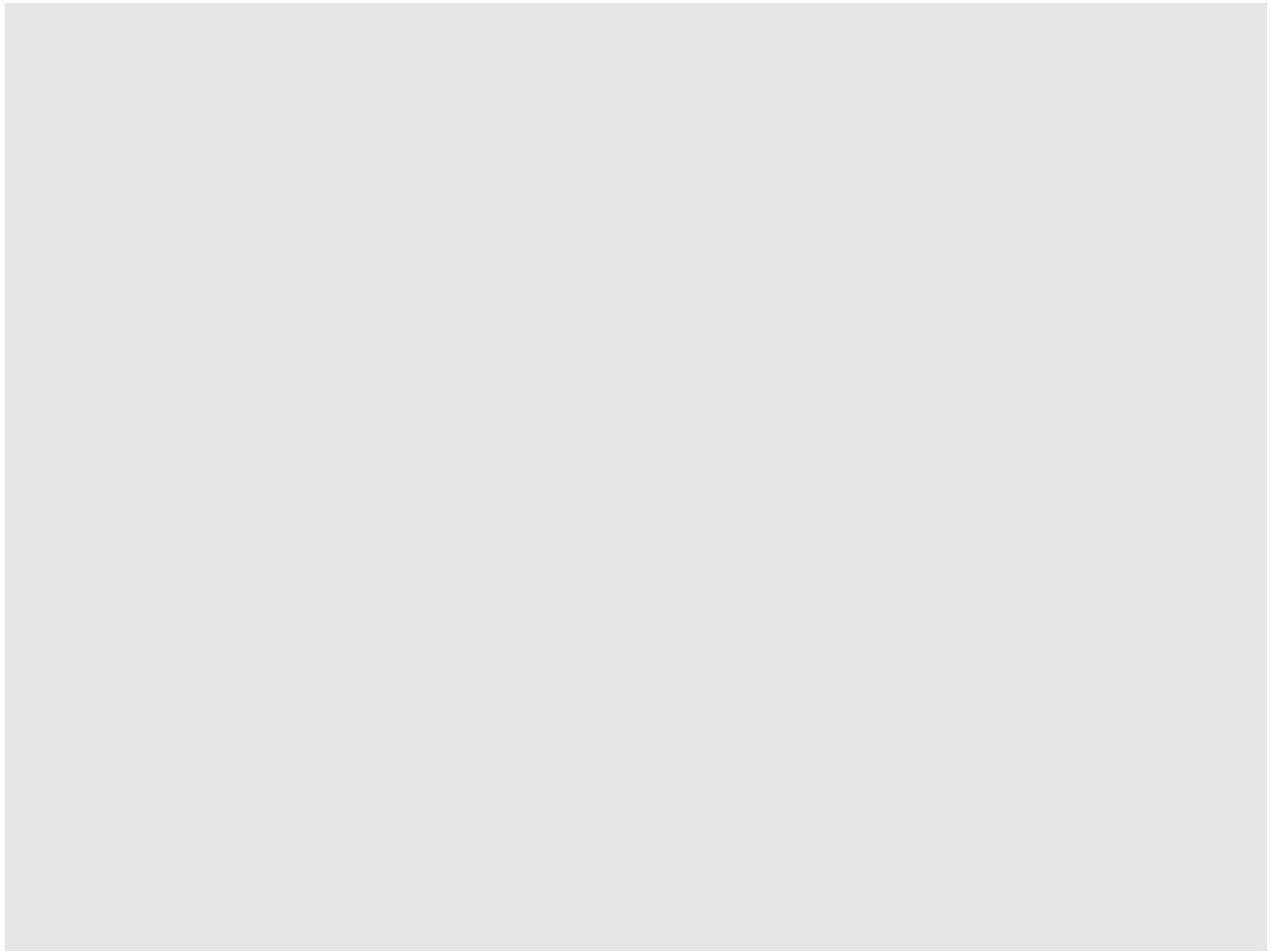
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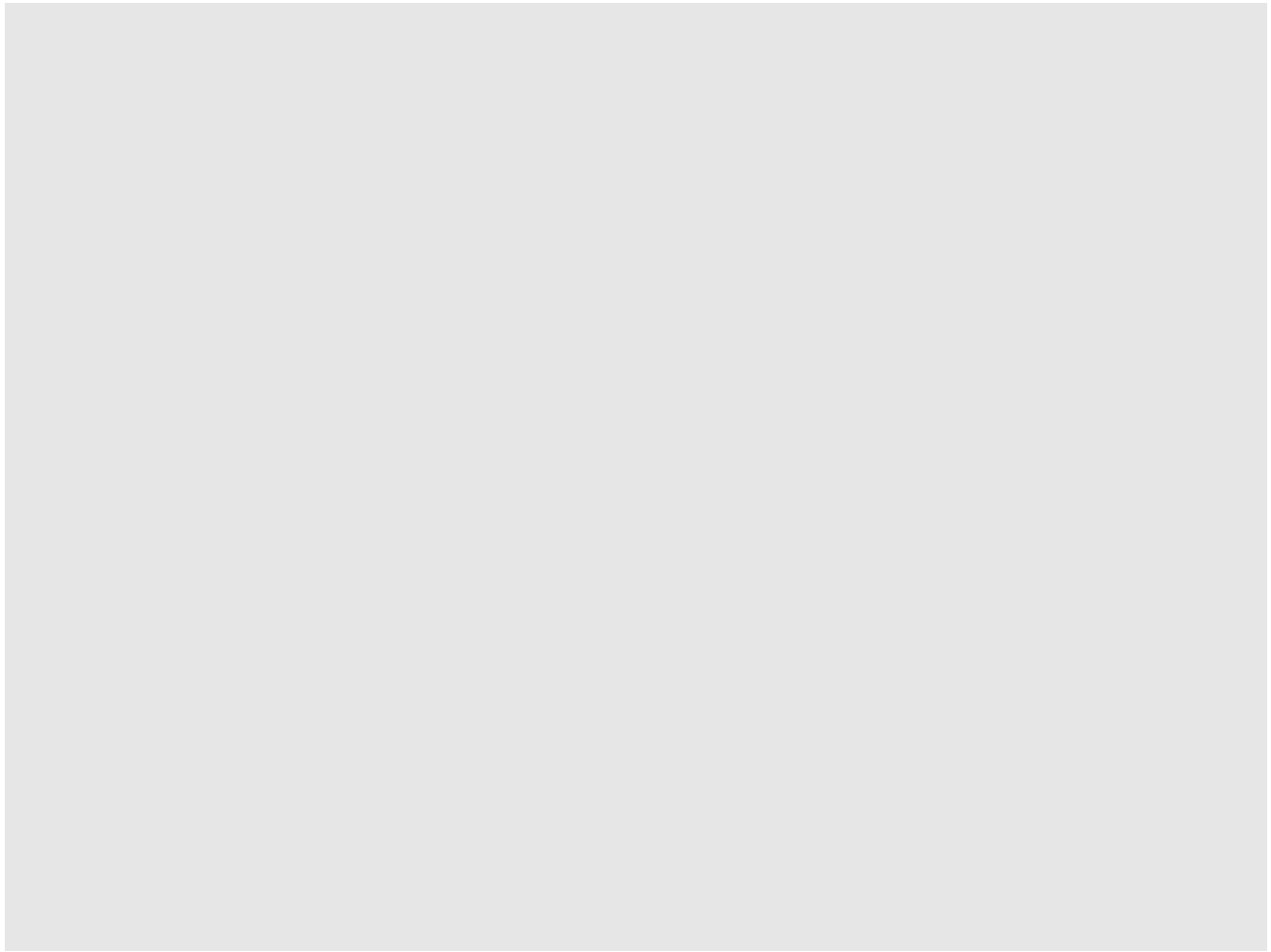
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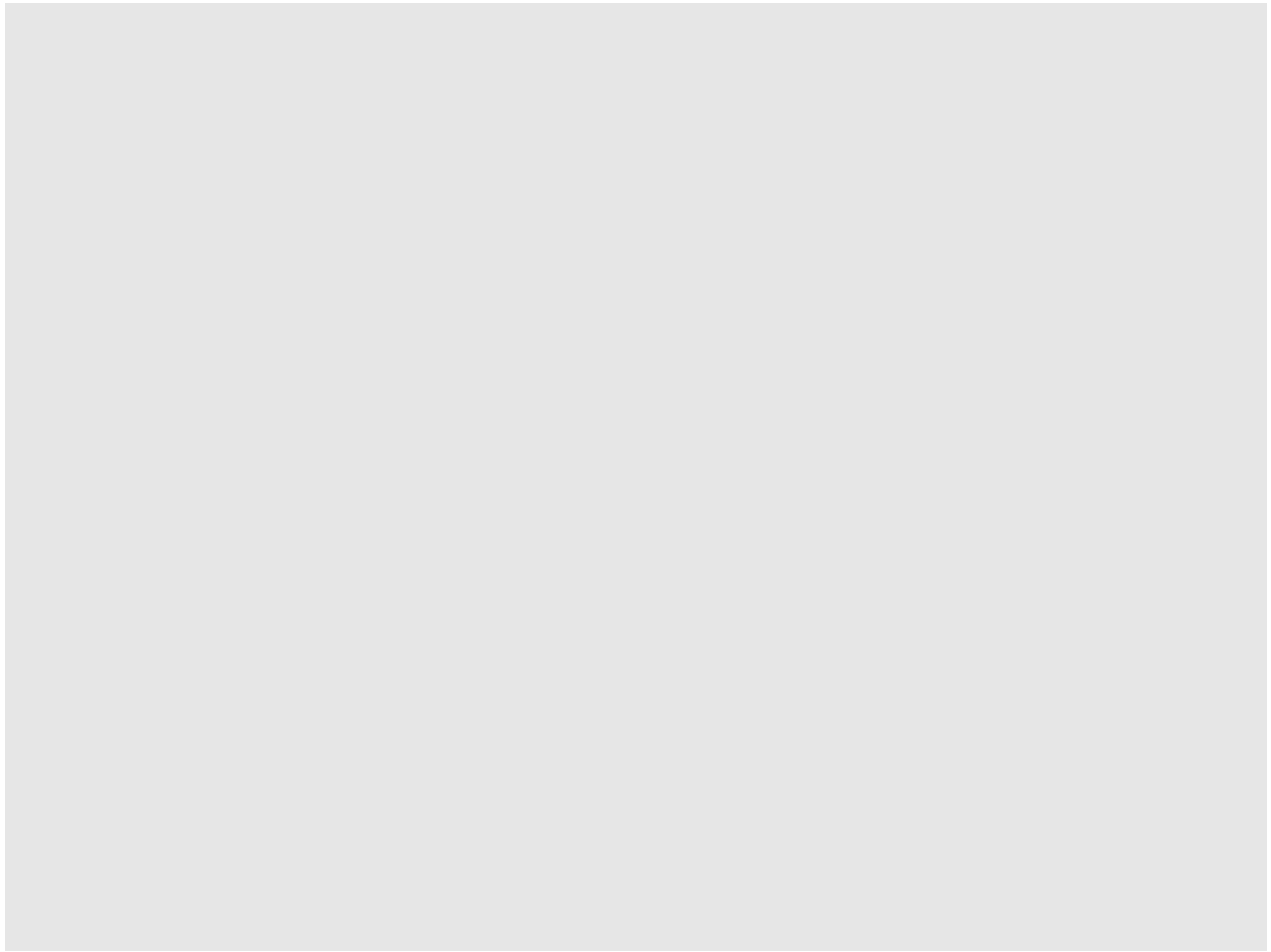
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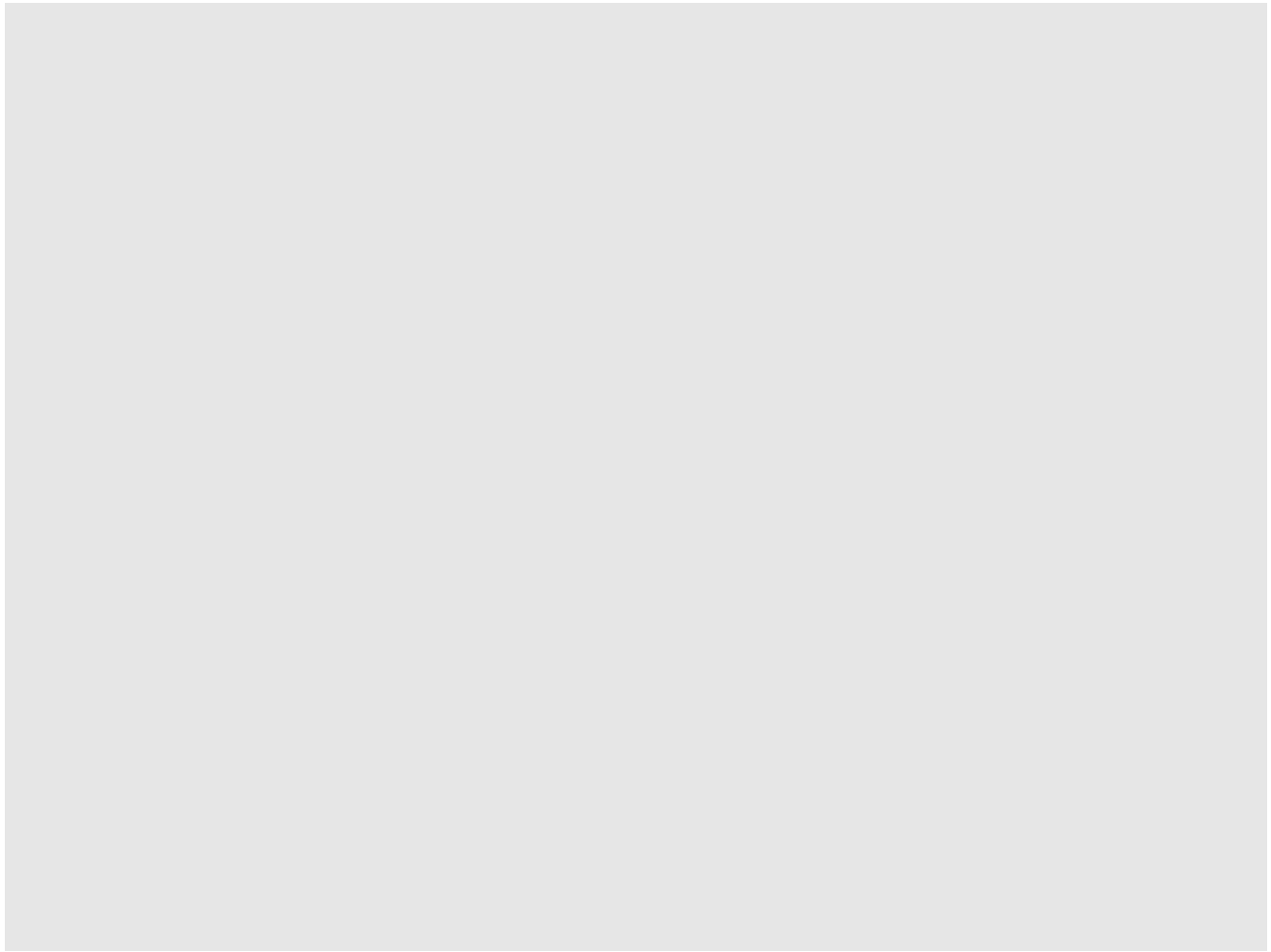
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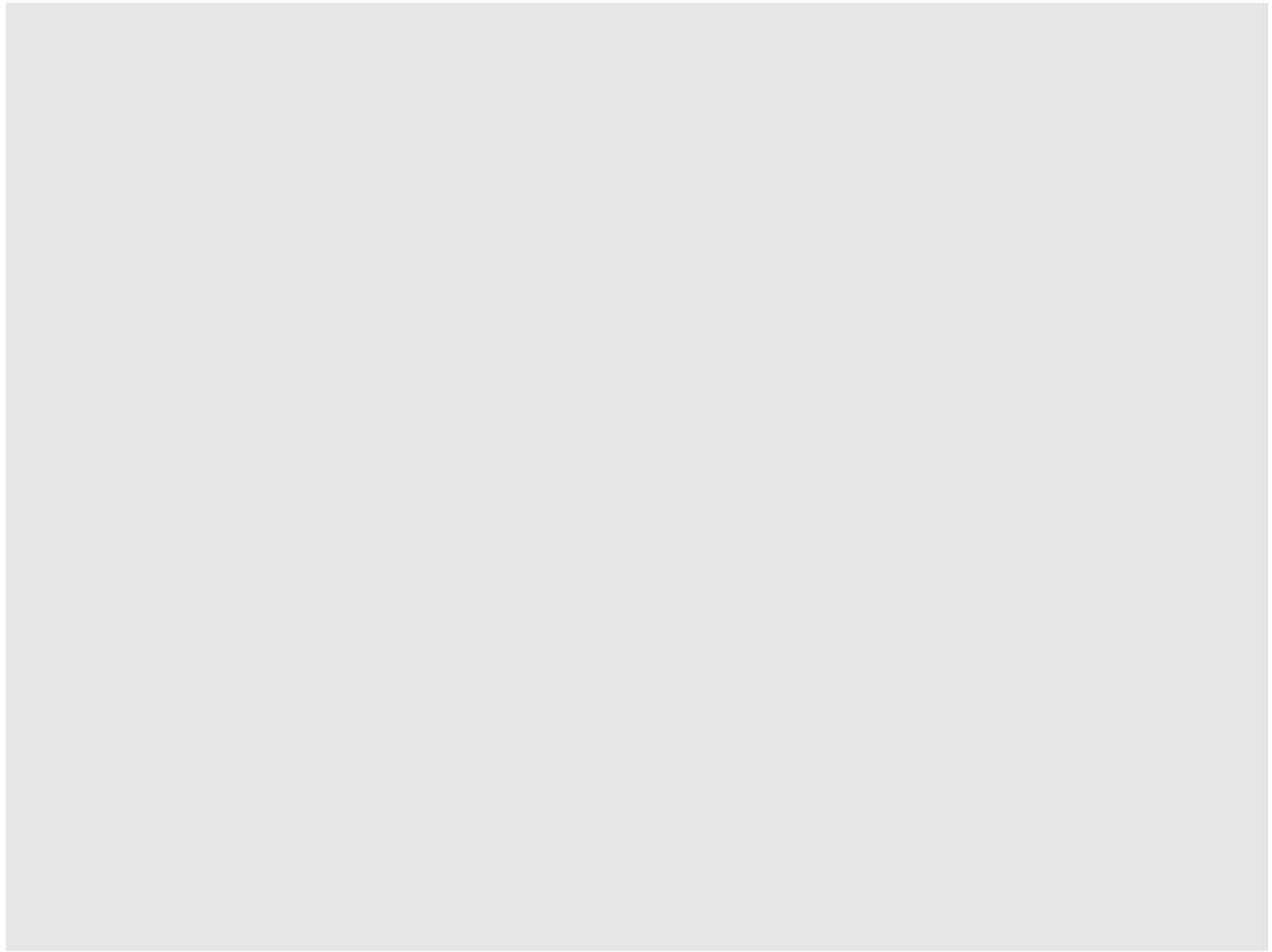
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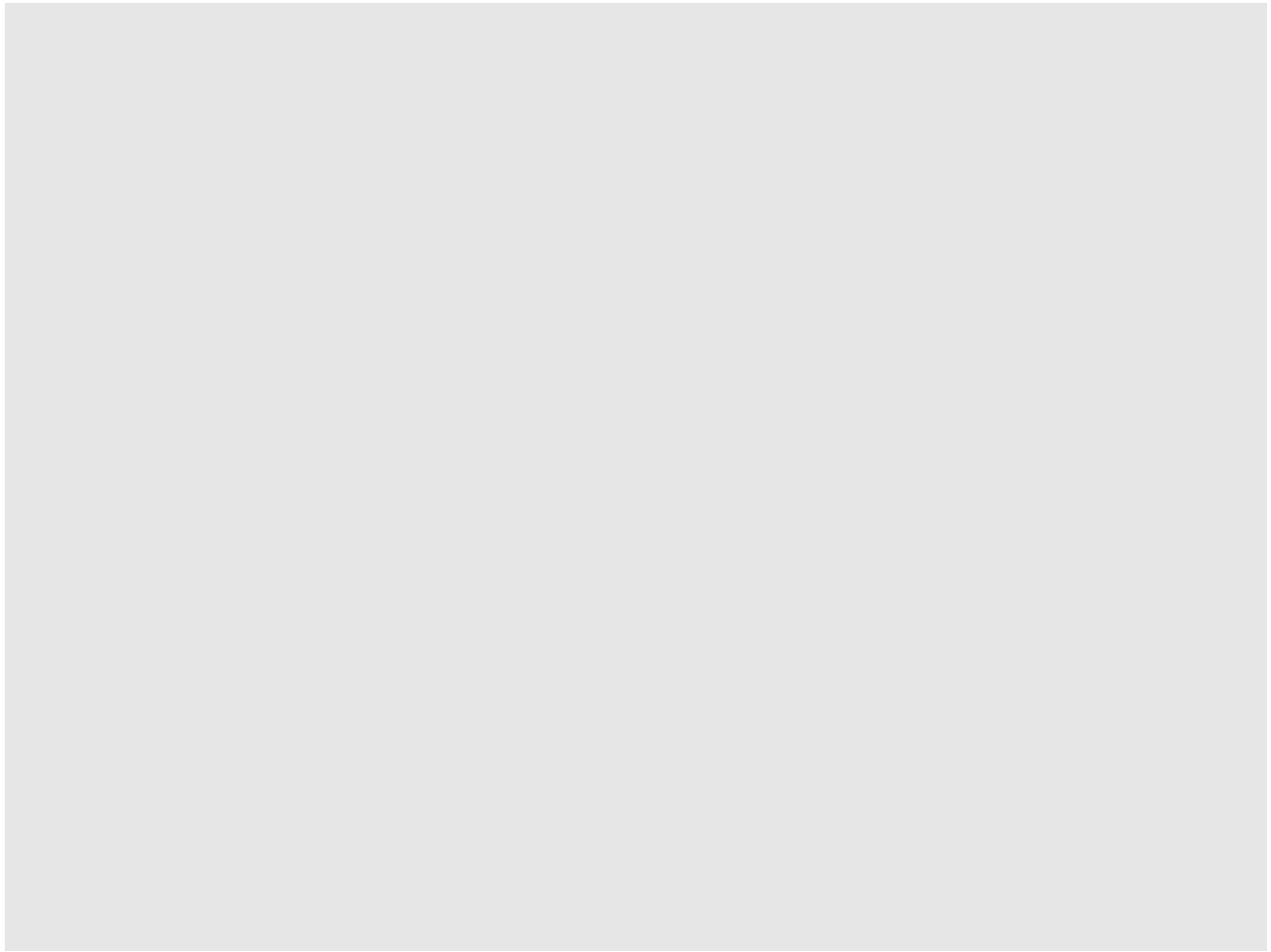
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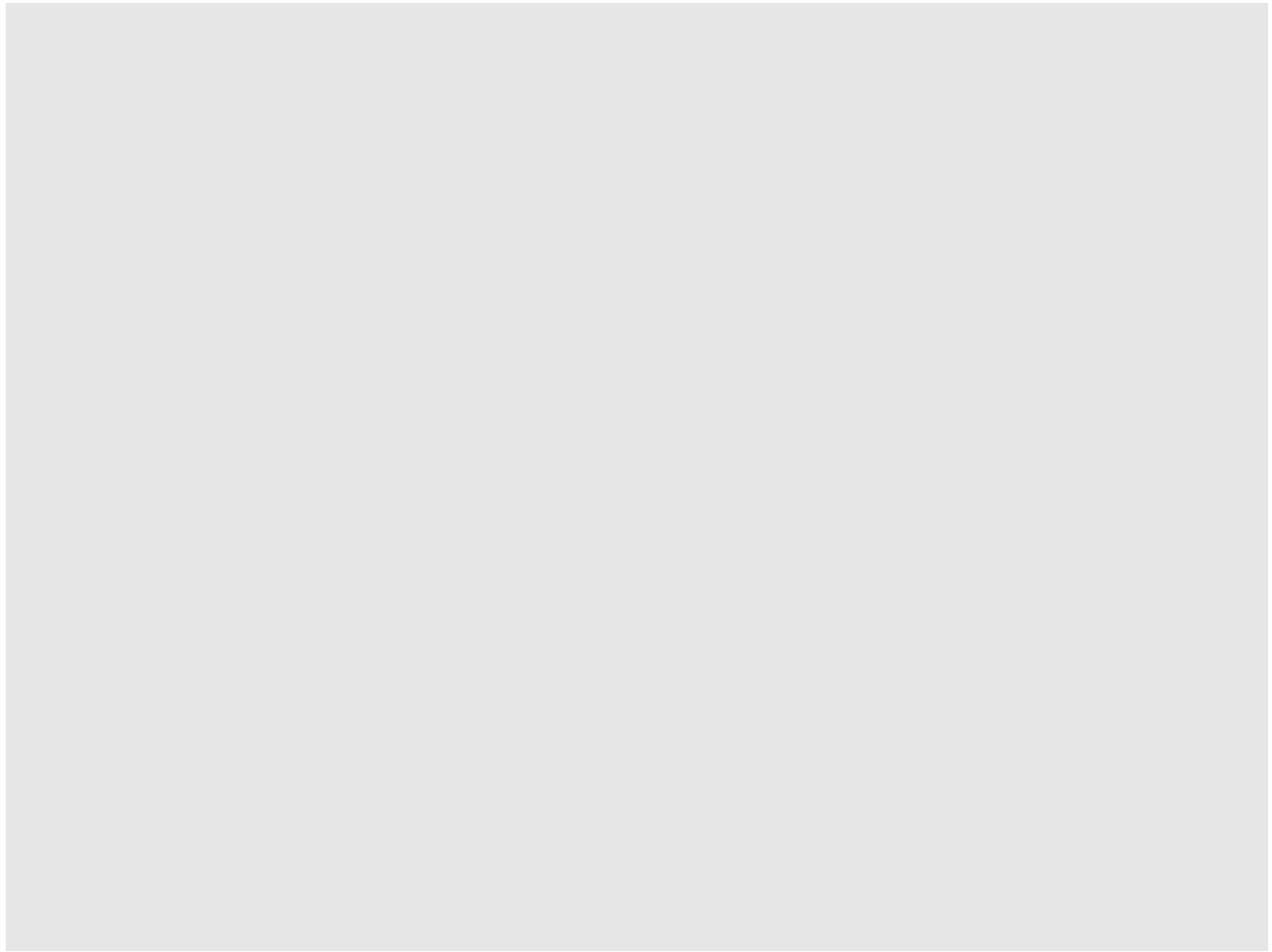
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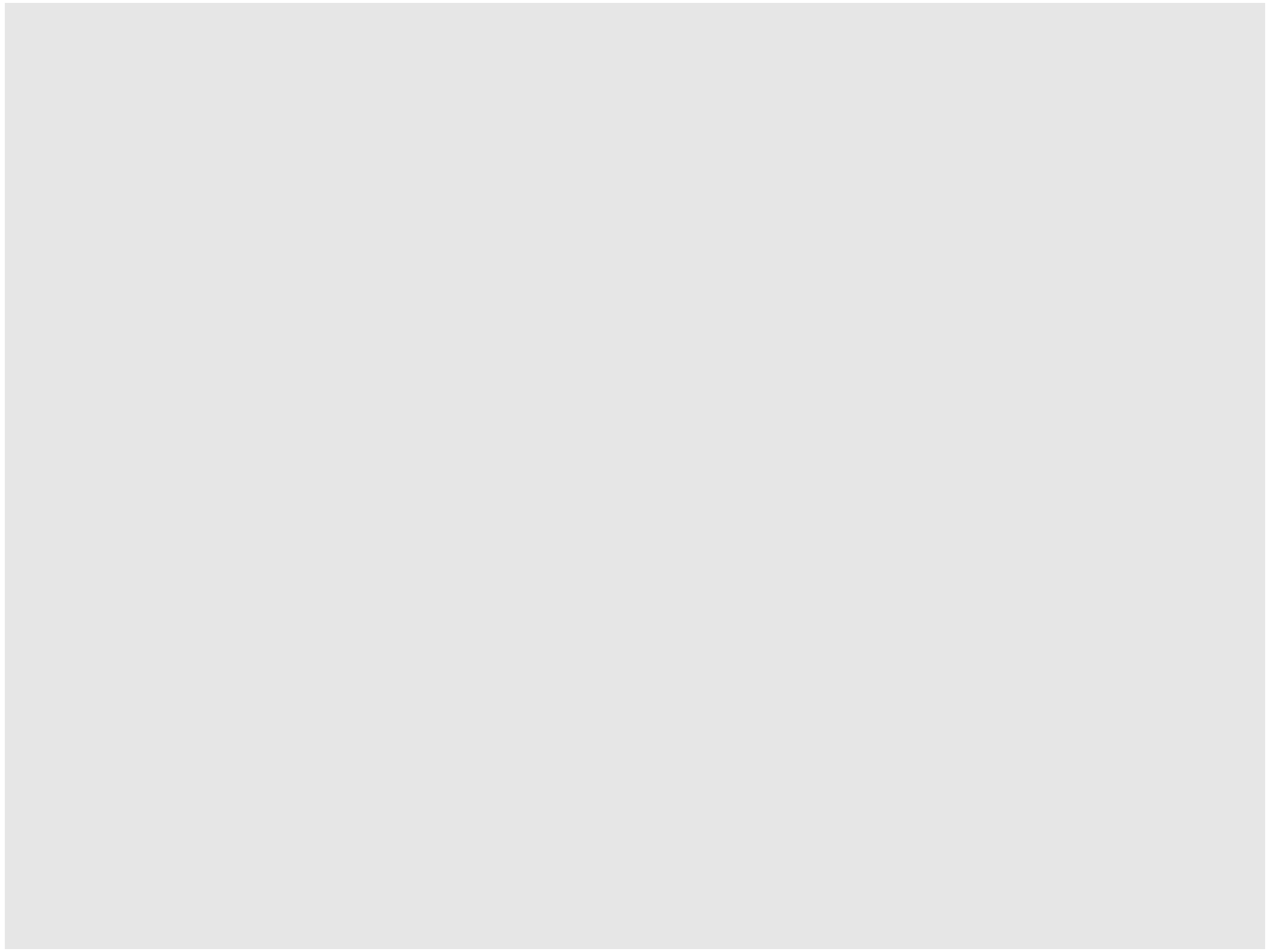
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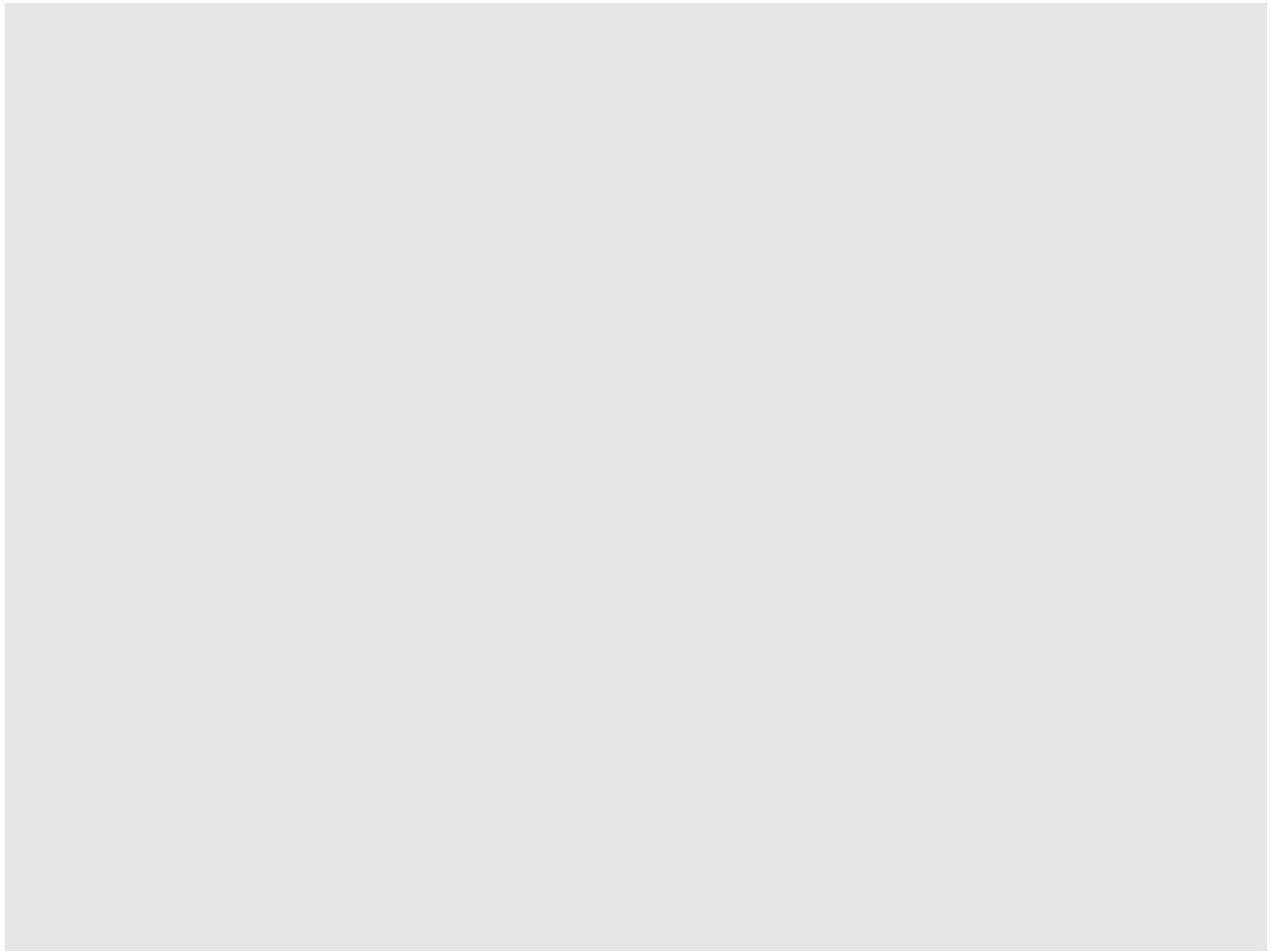
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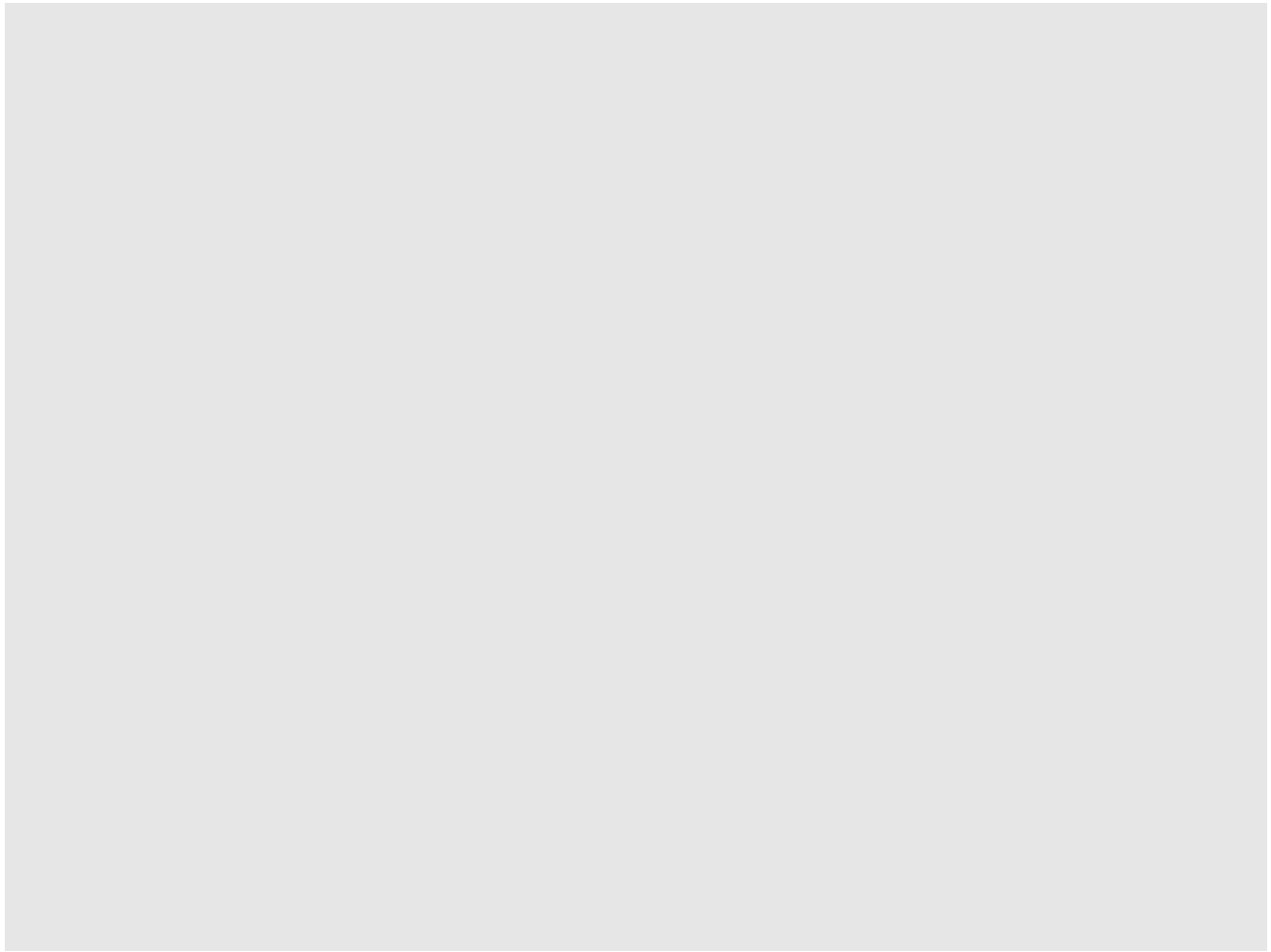
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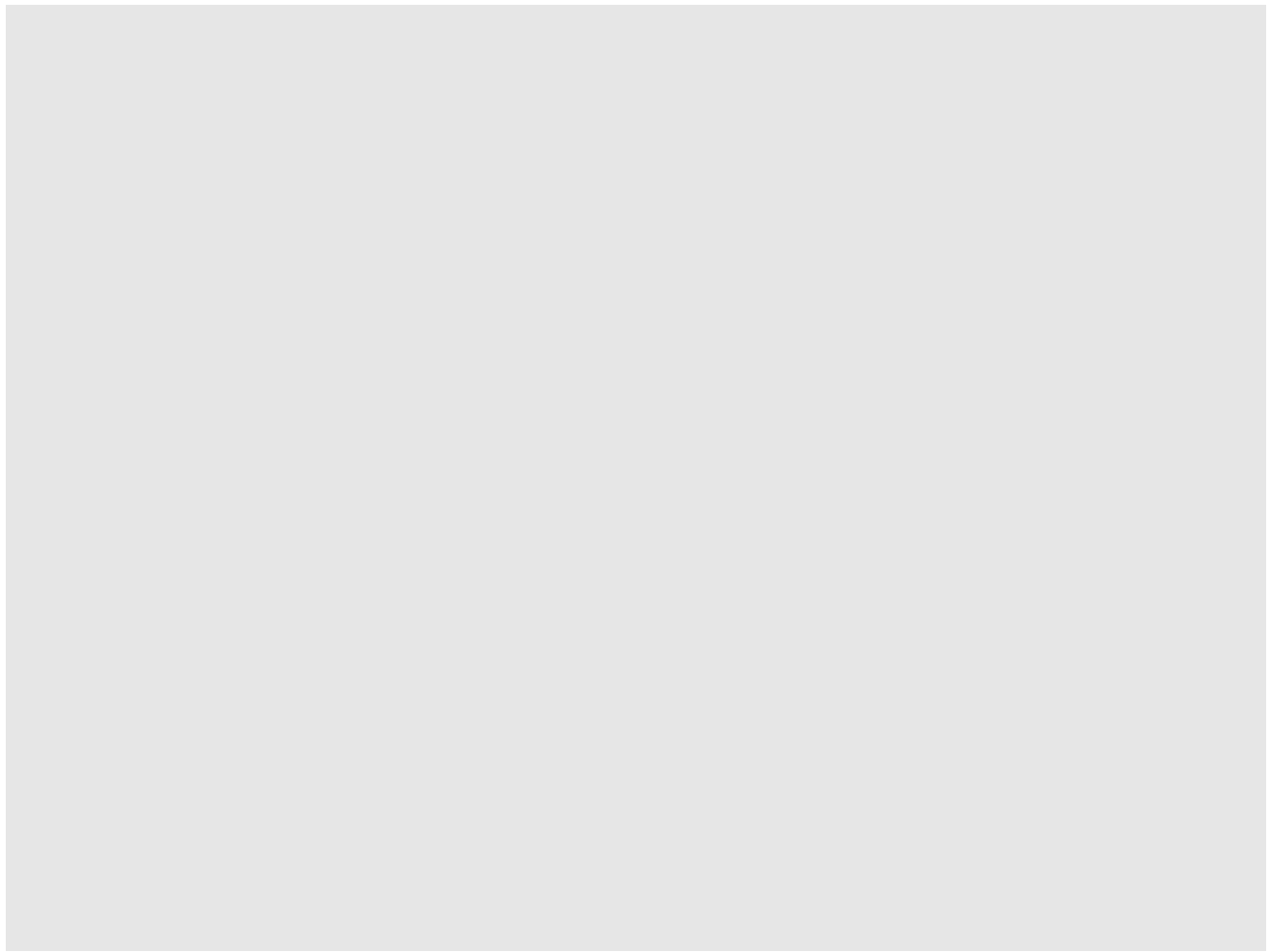
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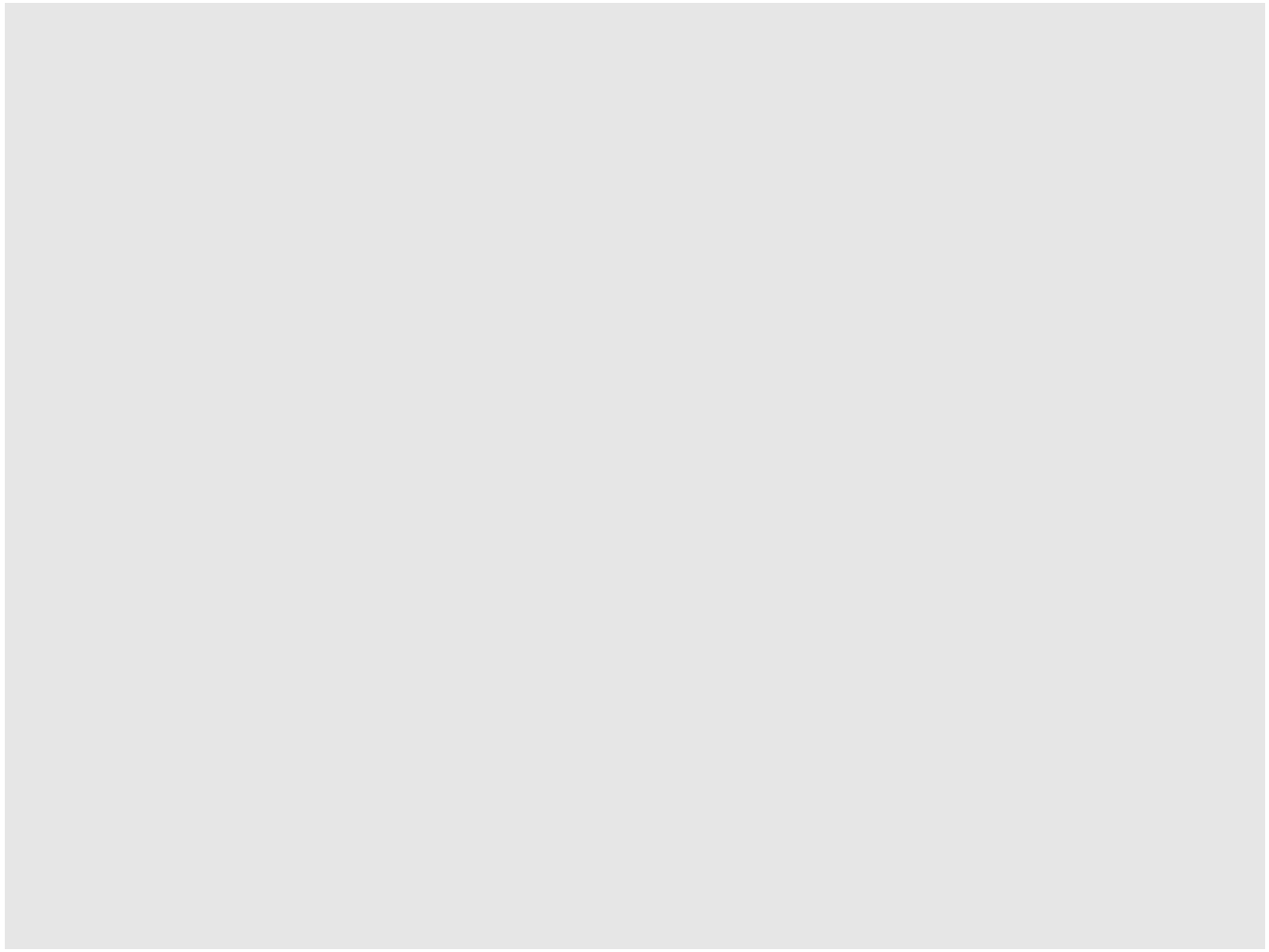
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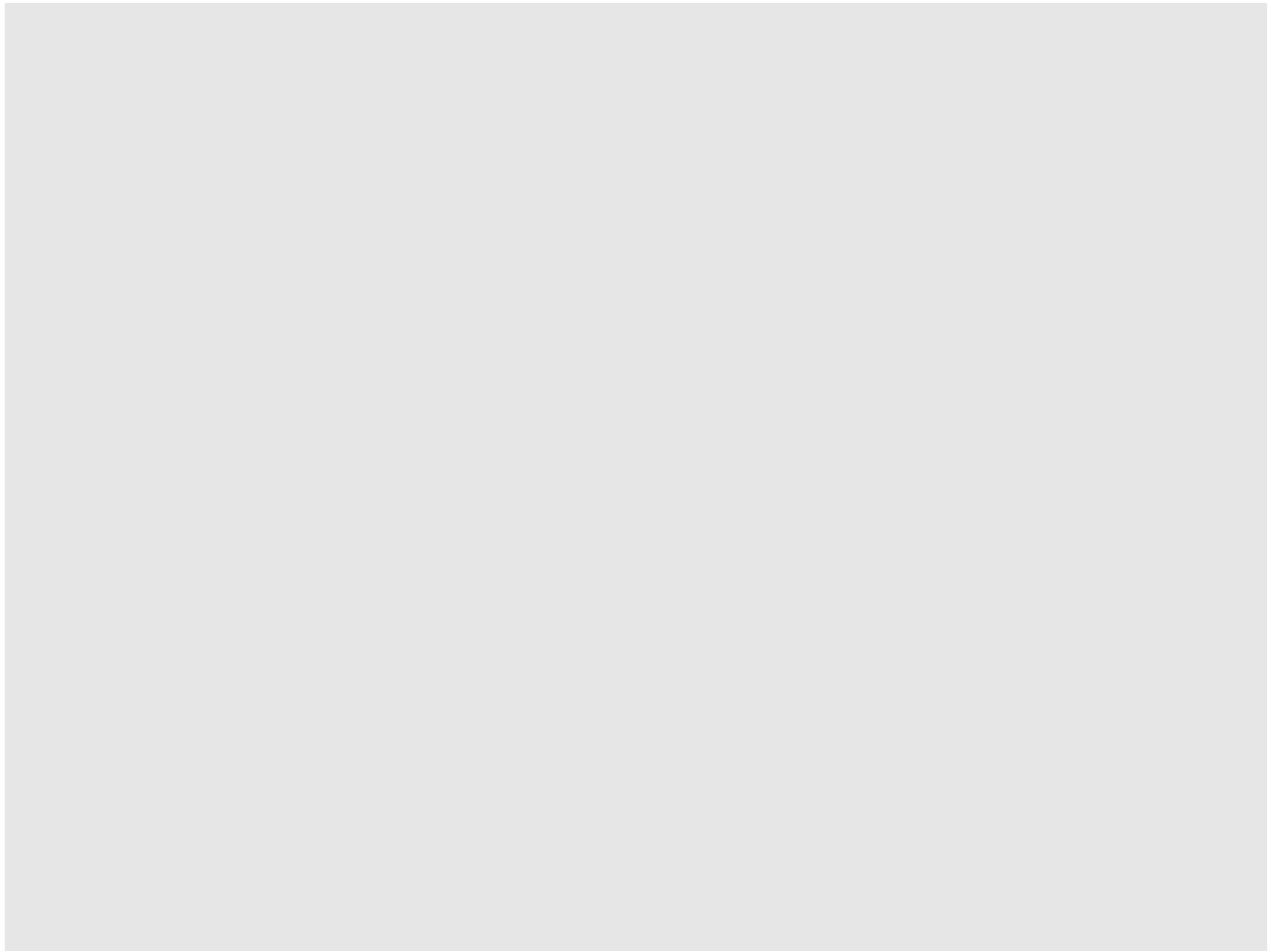
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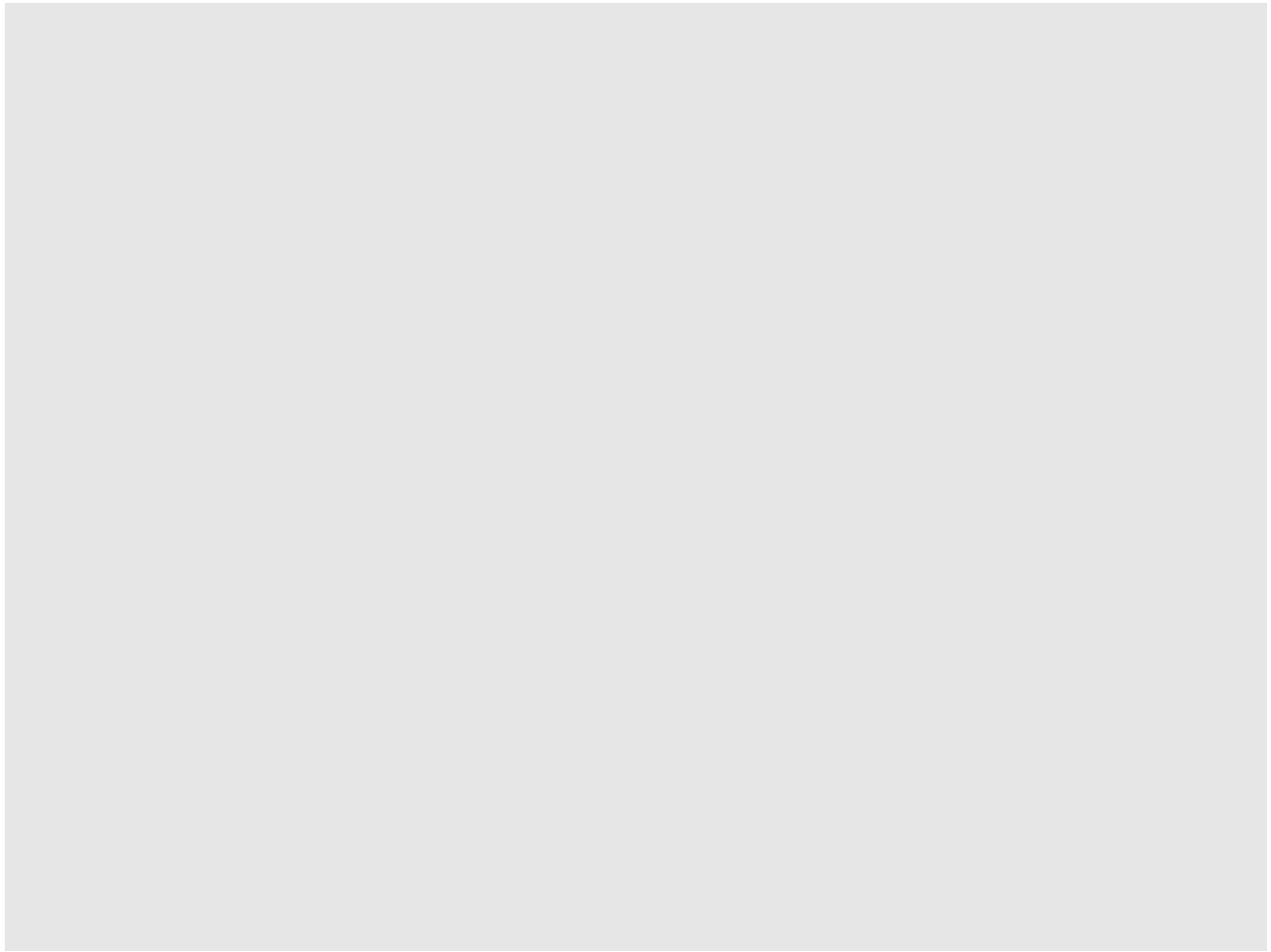
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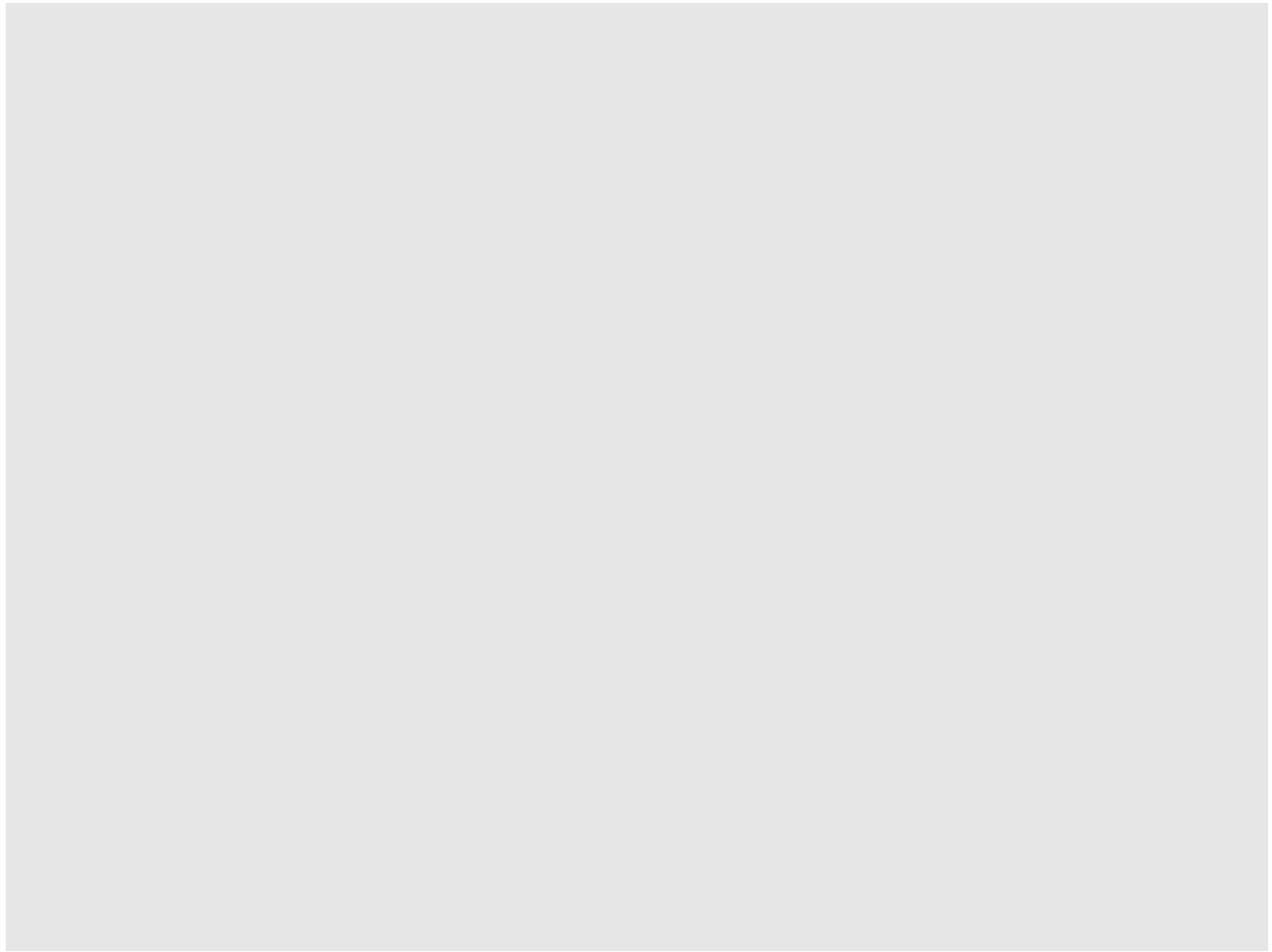
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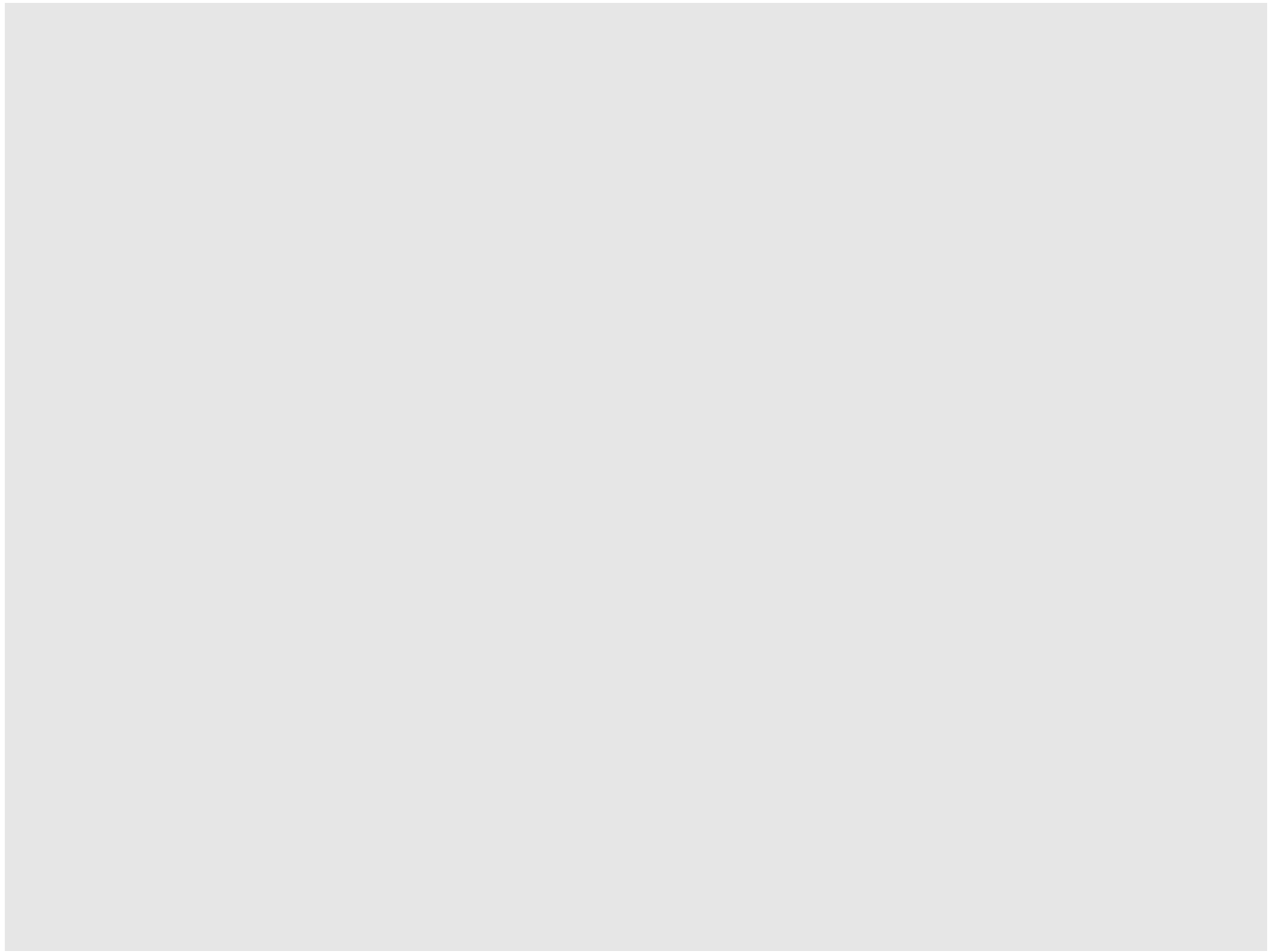
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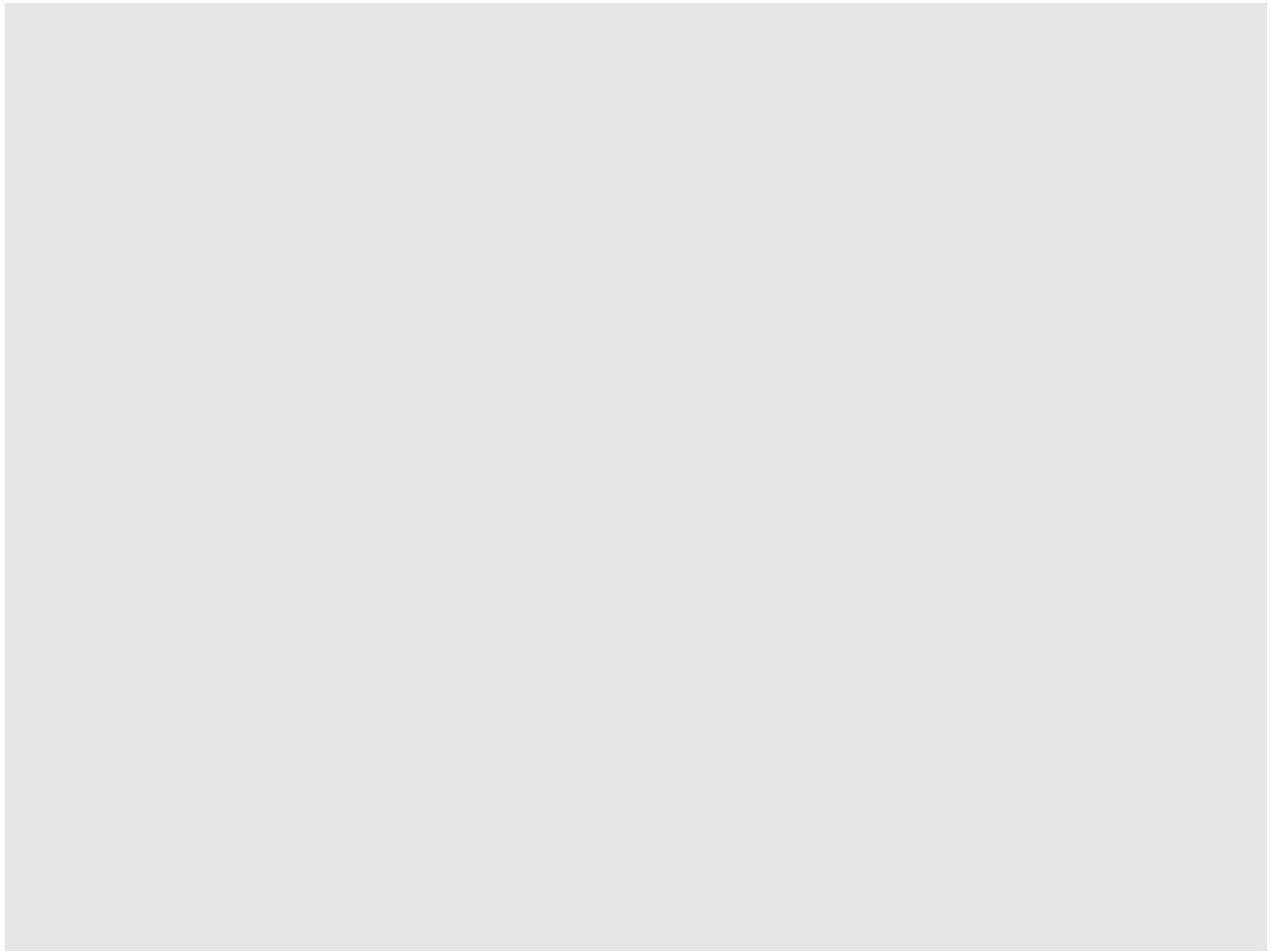
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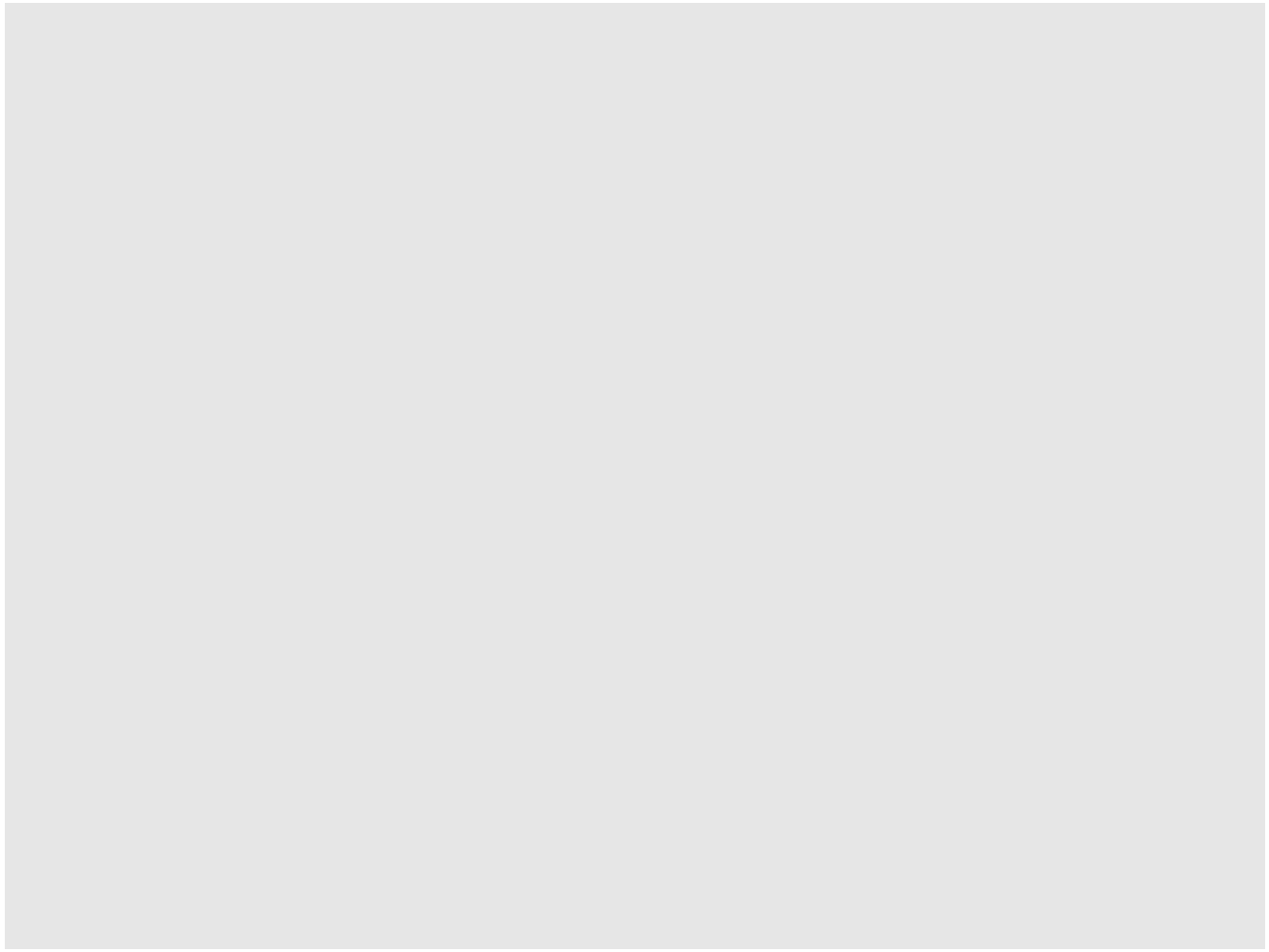
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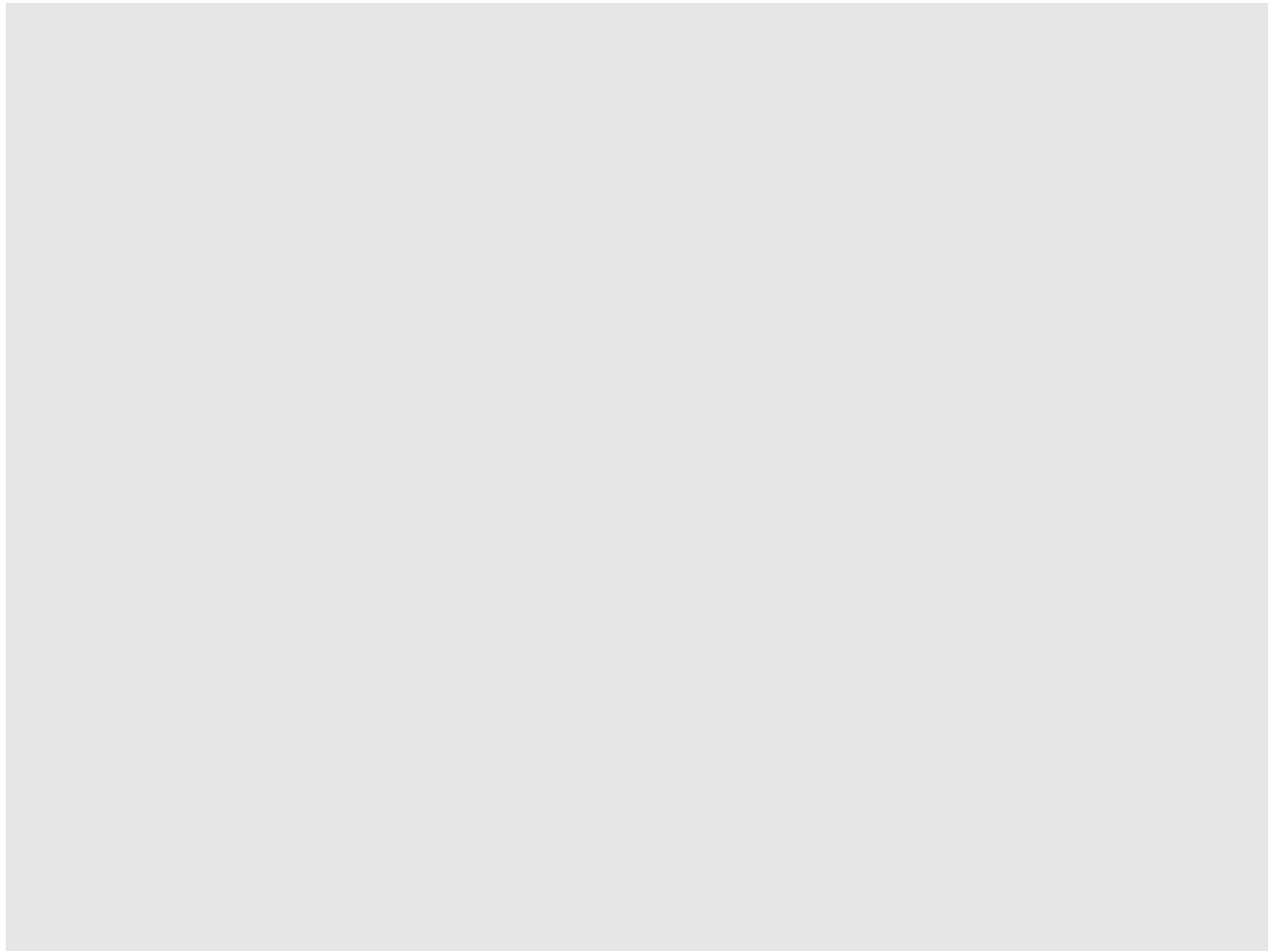
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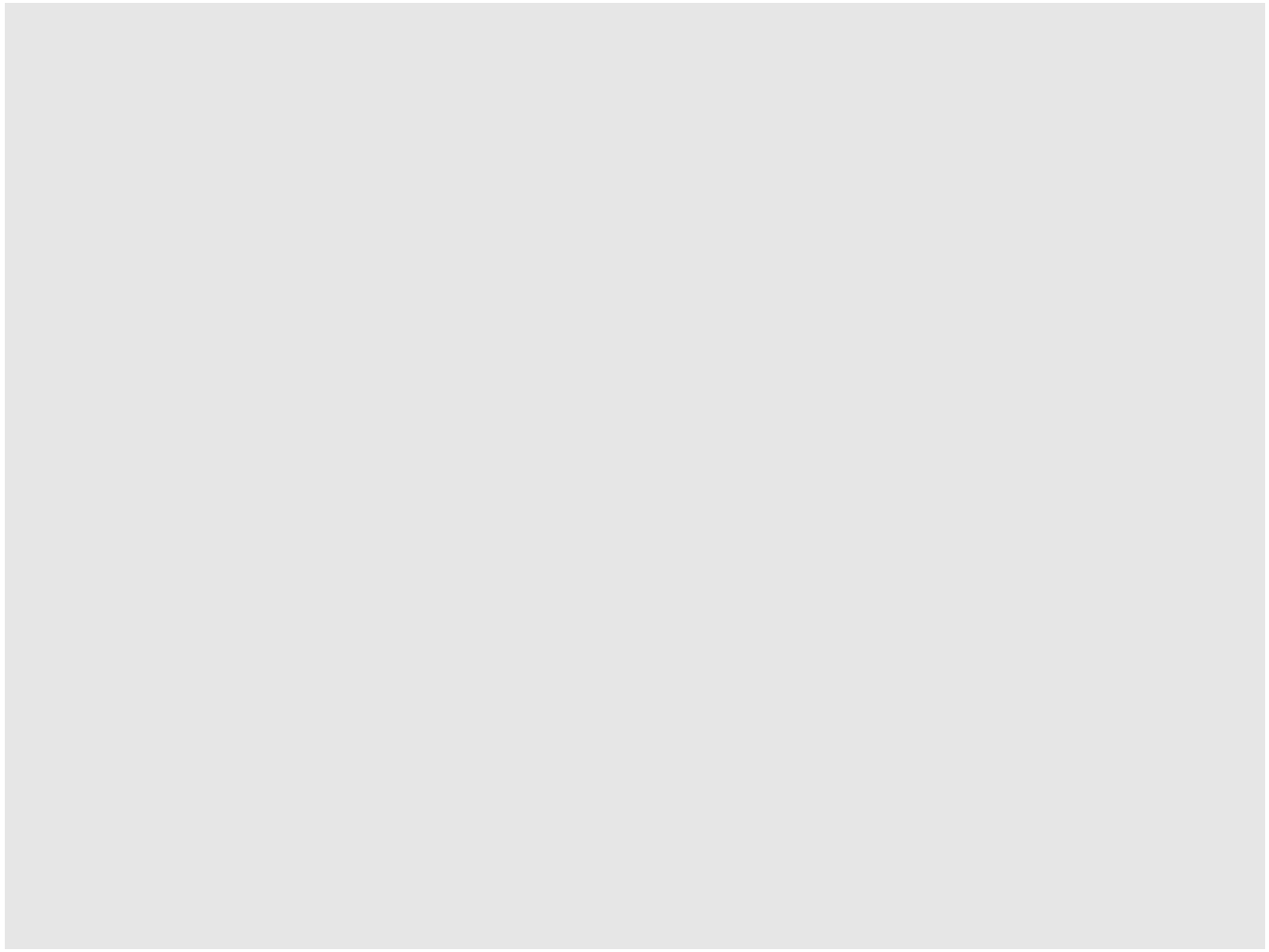
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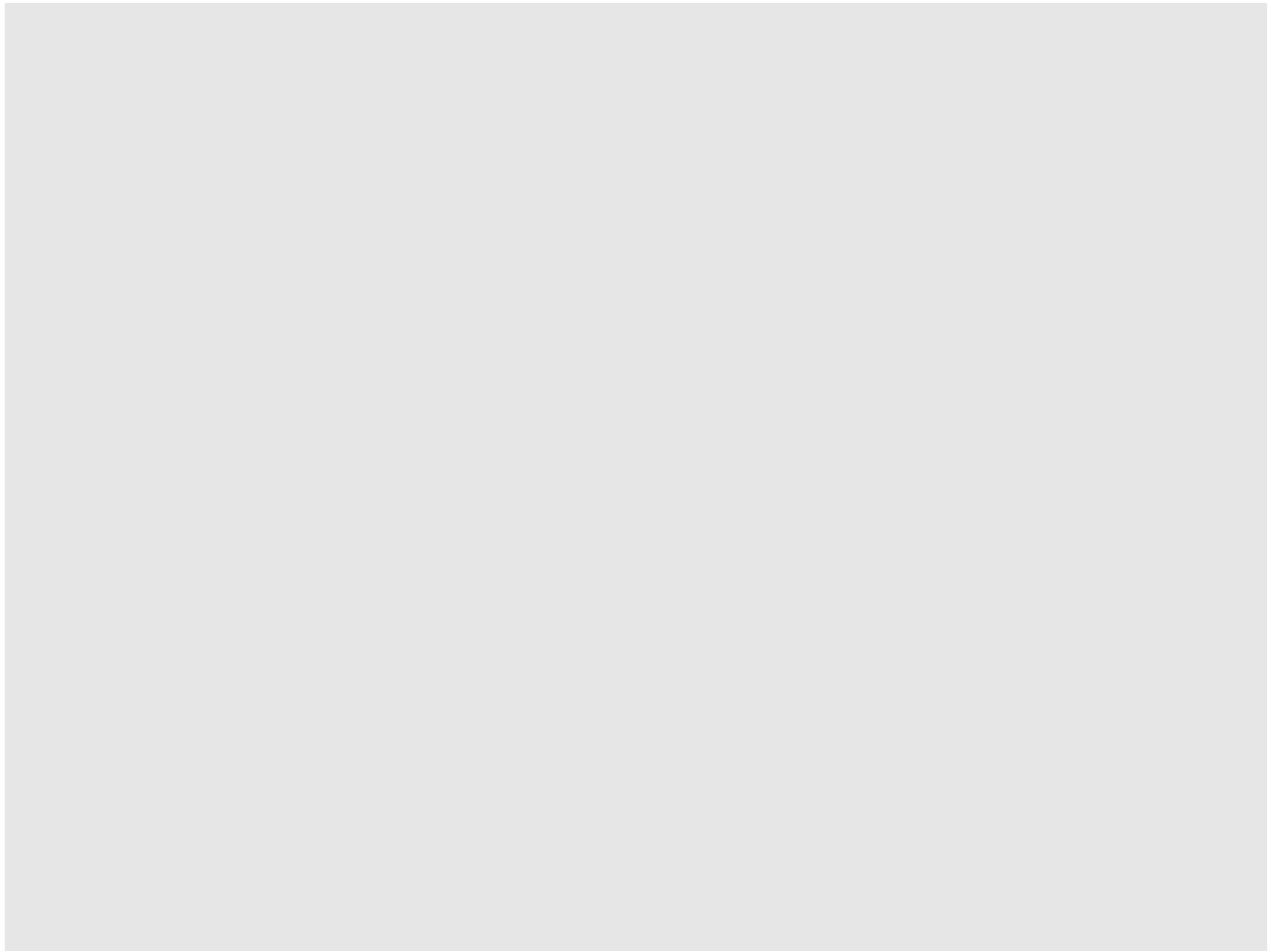
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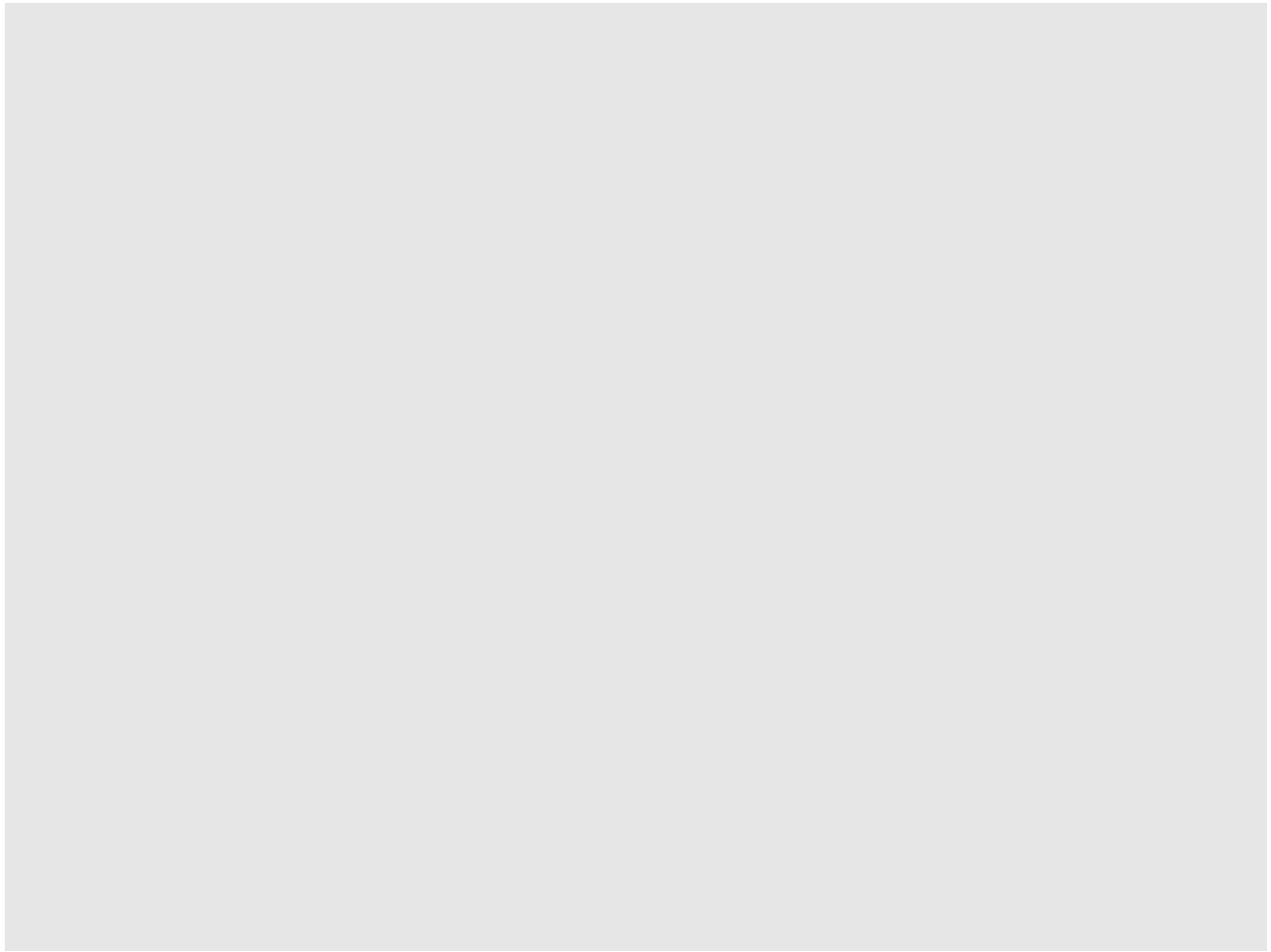
101821-pac-spt-marathon



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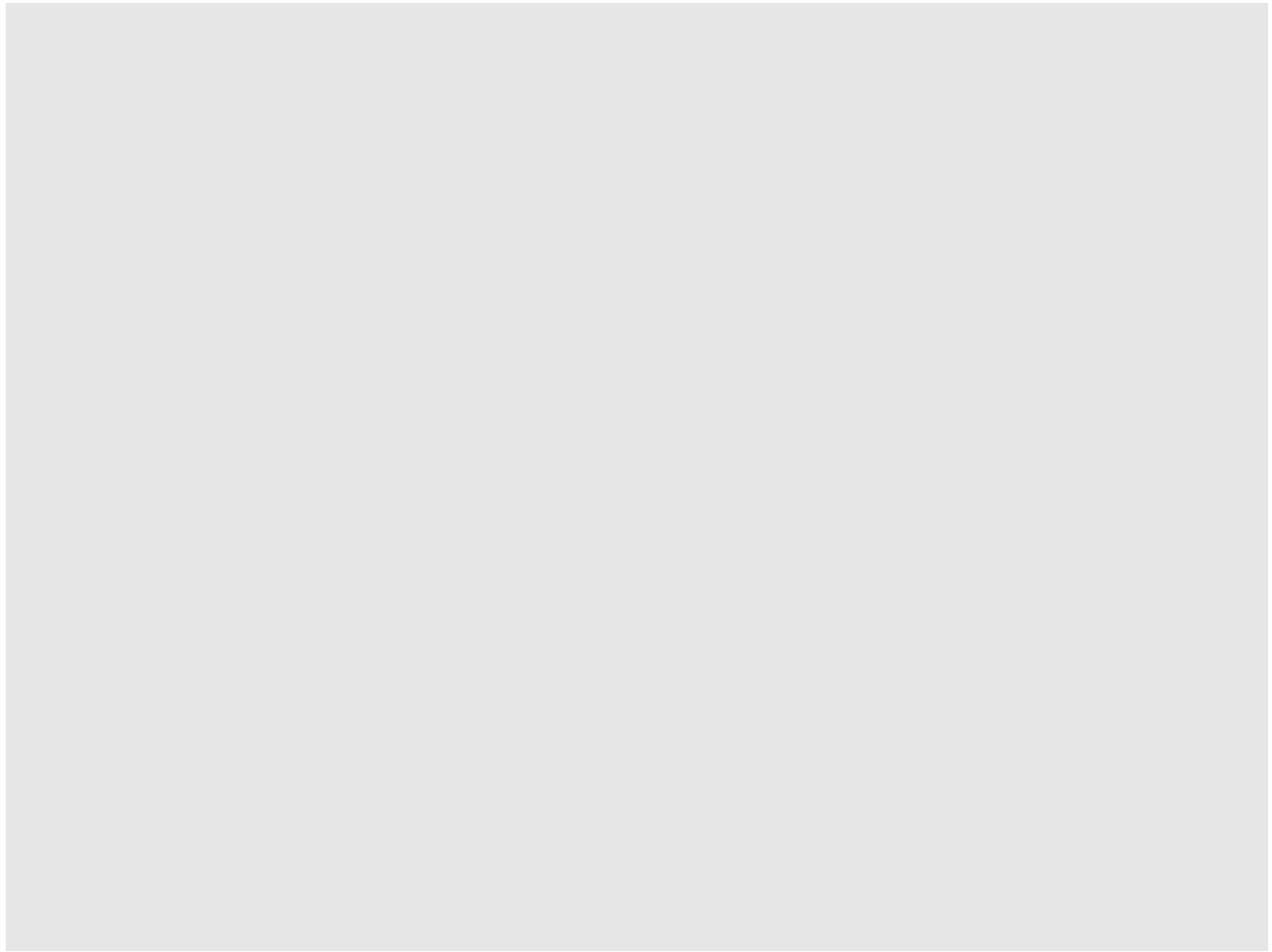
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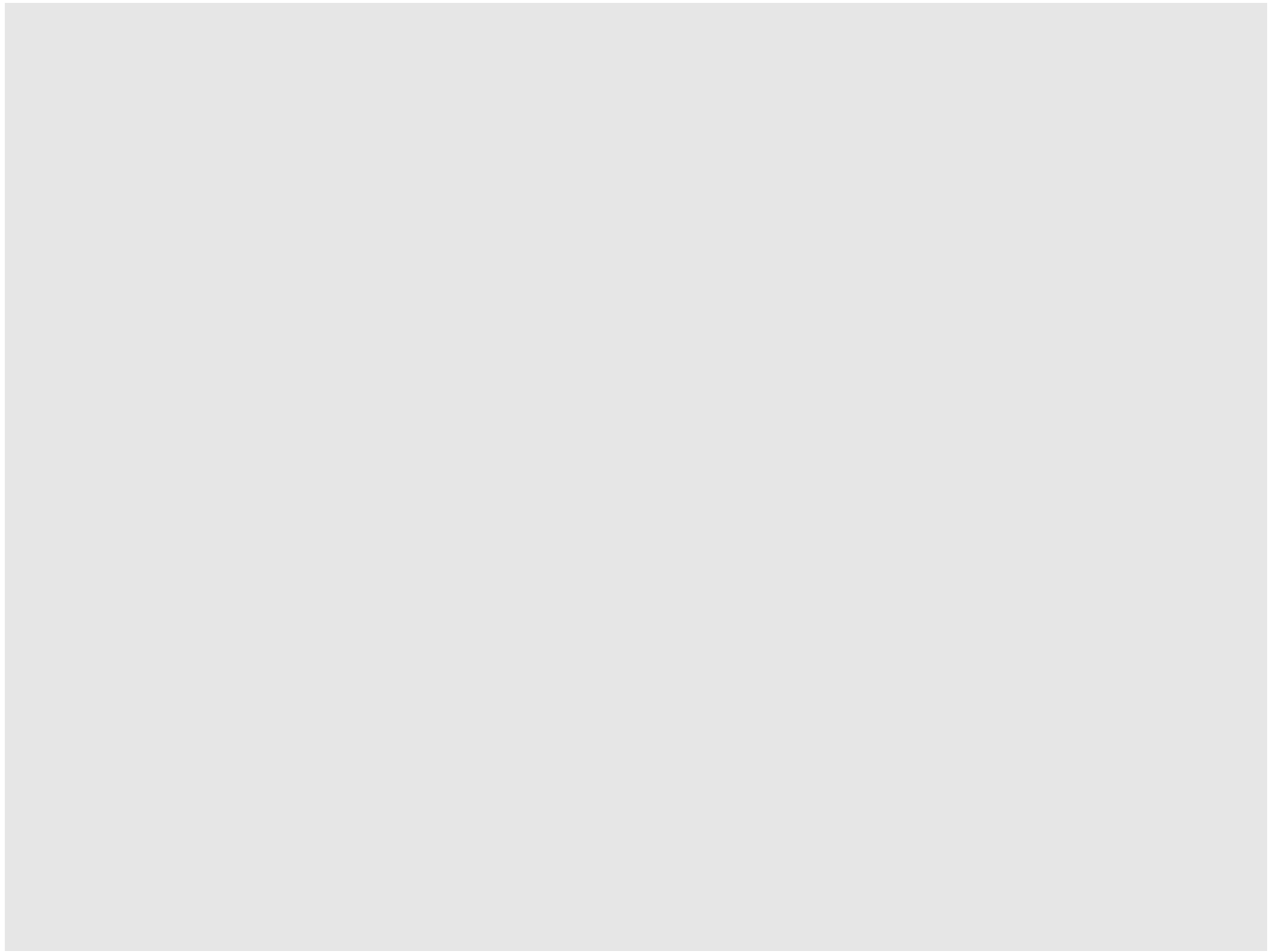
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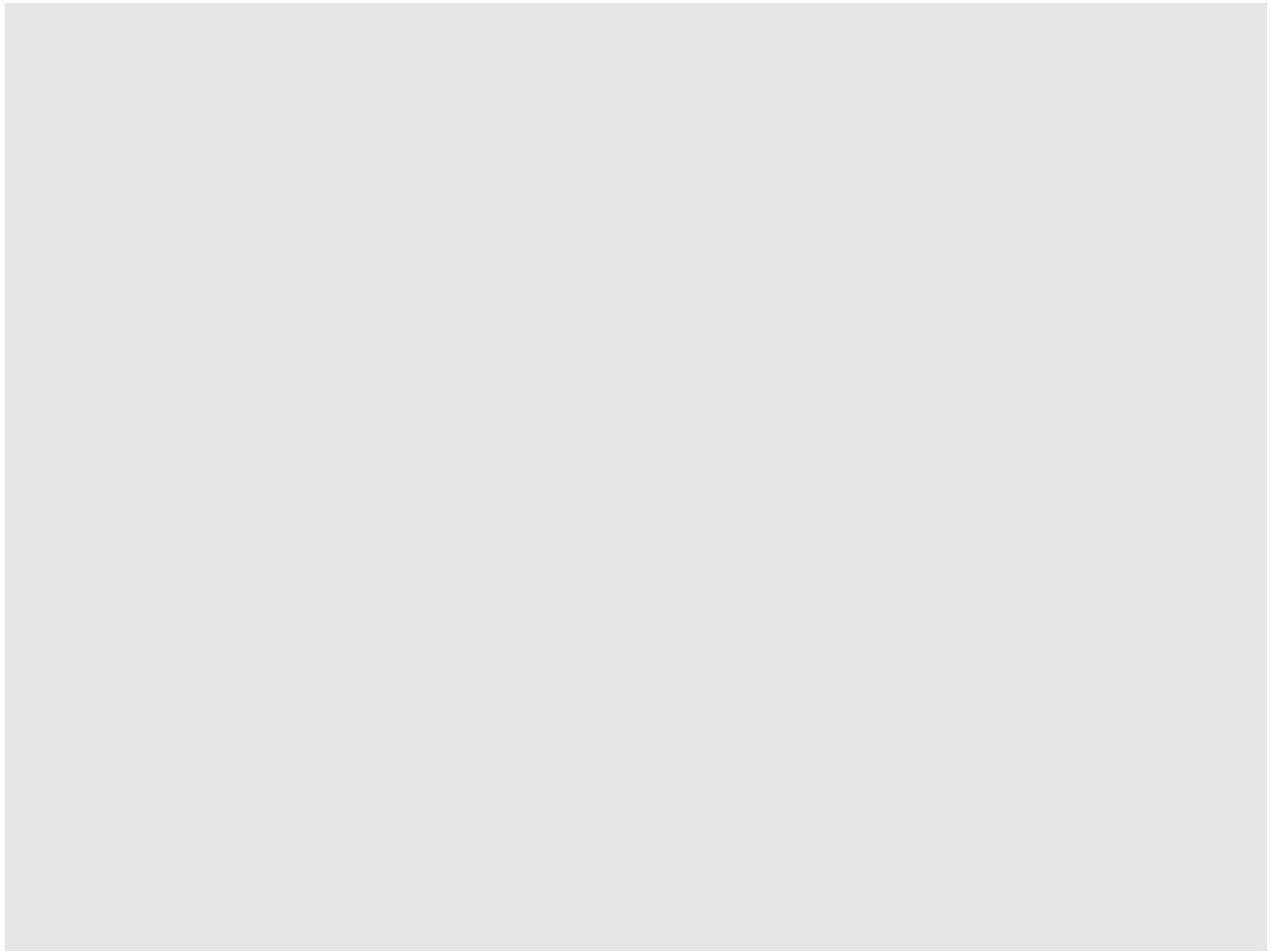
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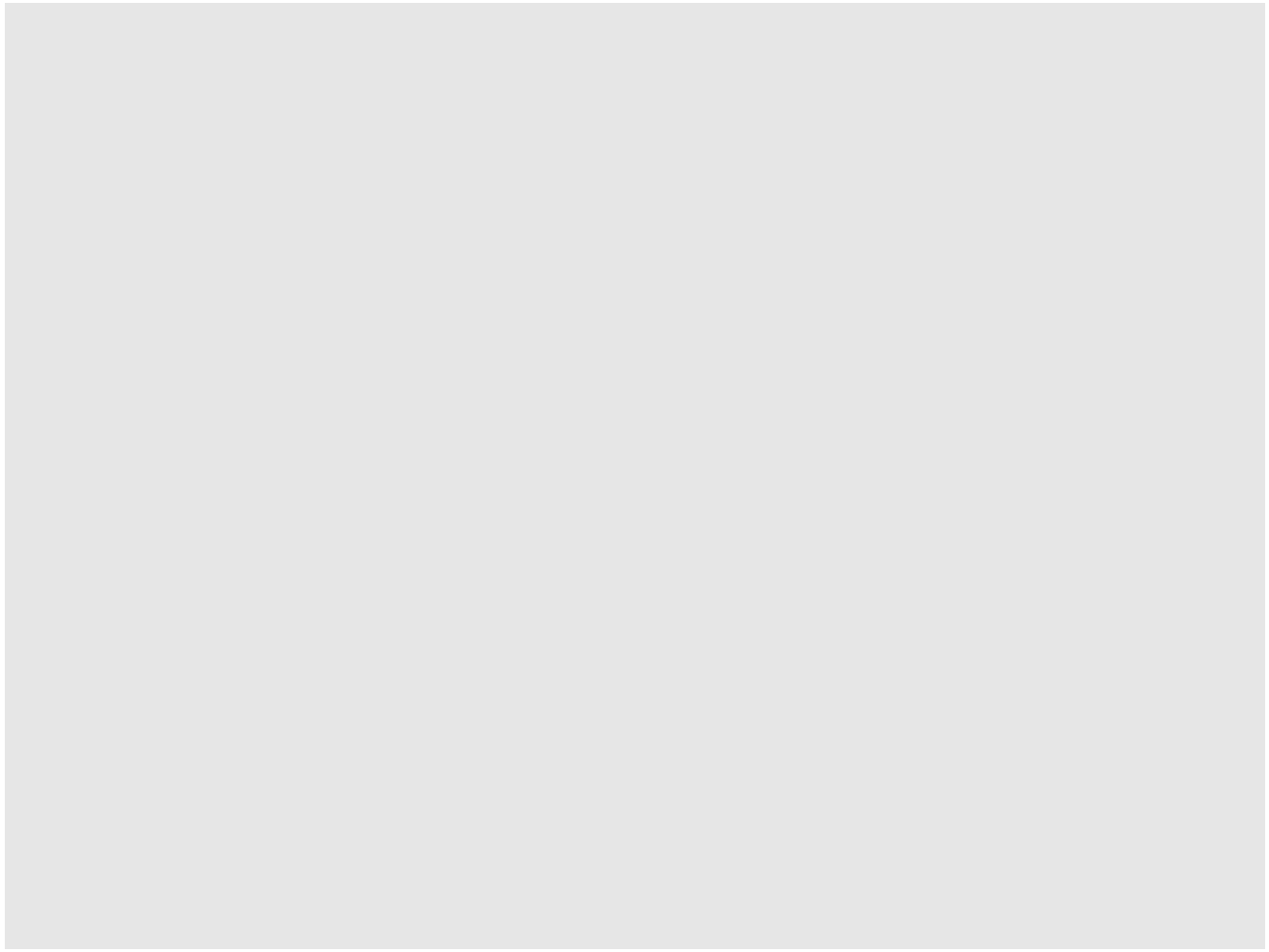
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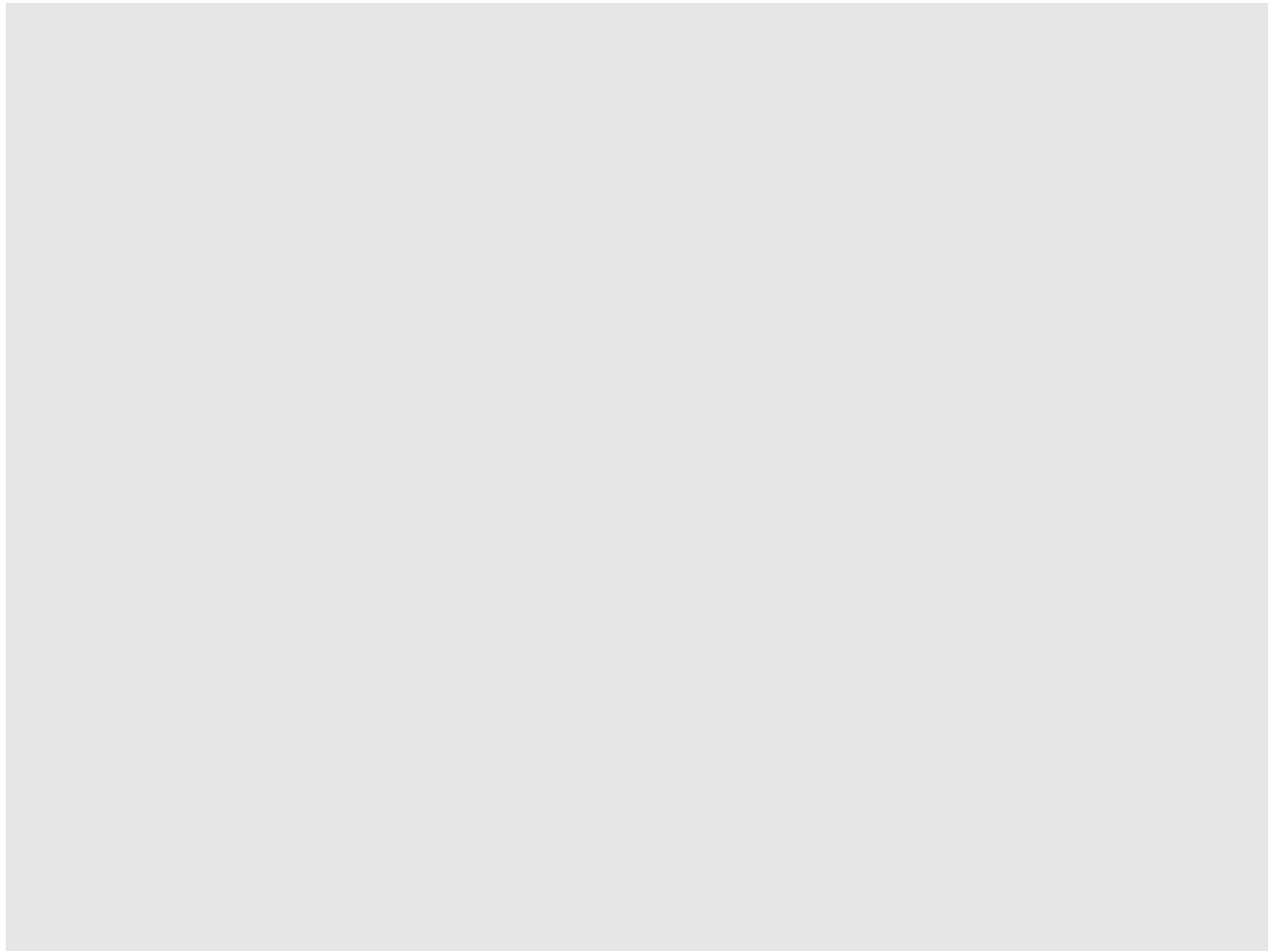
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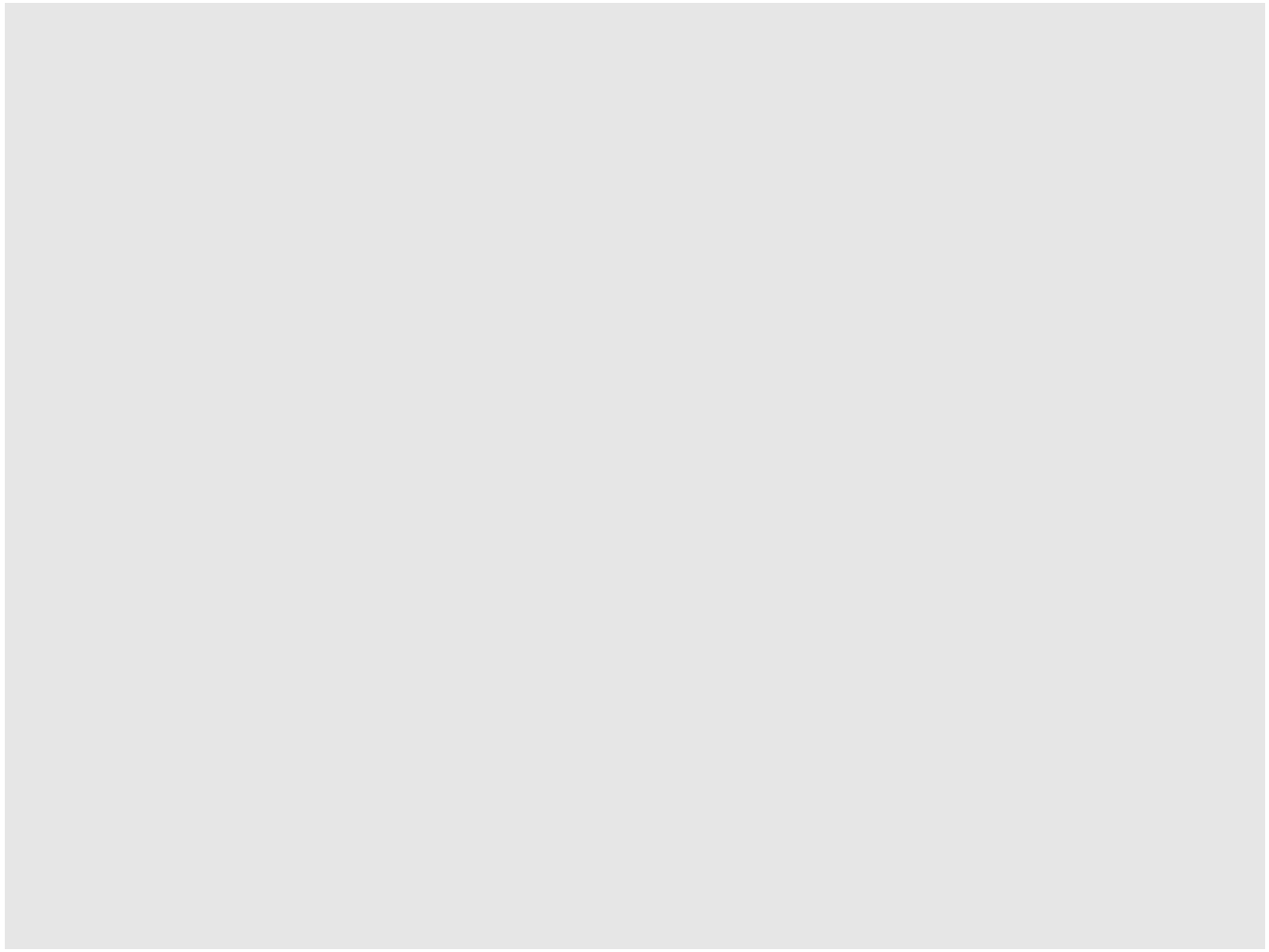
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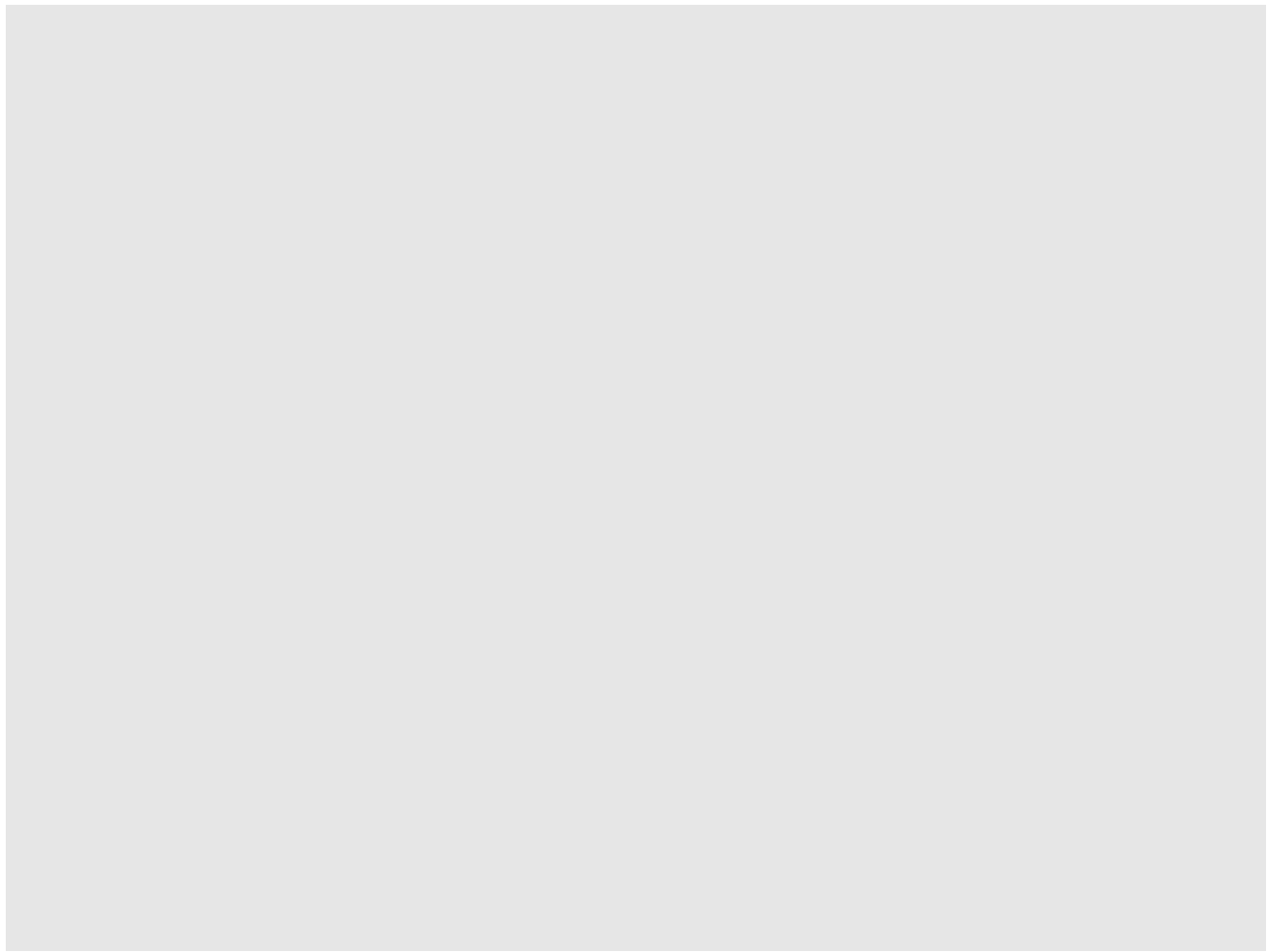
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Contact Chris Doyle

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INSIDE

For more on who won the Atlantic City Marathon, see **B1**.

Christopher Doyle
