

Takoma Park Police Department Traffic Data Presentation (2015-2020)



Overview

The City of Takoma Park Police Department maintains two datasets on traffic incidents involving the Police Department: a “Stops” dataset on police traffic stops between 2015 and 2020, and a “CAD” dataset on traffic incidents involving Computer-Aided Dispatcher (CAD) calls between 2018 and 2020. **We analyzed these datasets to identify total traffic stops, total stops by type, reasons for stops, stops by race, gender, age, and stop-locations, as well as officers who made stops.**

The City’s Police Department views the purpose of traffic enforcement as to promote public safety by stopping a violation, reducing crashes, and enhancing public safety and enjoyment. At the same time, it deters other drivers from committing an infraction and historically changes behavior of the ticketed driver and onlookers. Education and behavior change are the key components.

There are three major sections to this document:

- 1) *Overall findings on traffic stops*
- 2) *Traffic stop data broken out by race*
- 3) *Analysis and mapping of dispatcher-call data*

Data Highlights

Overall

- 1) Total traffic stops declined significantly between 2015 and 2020, from 8,074 stops in 2015 to 1,593 in 2020, with the biggest decrease coming in citations.
- 2) People outside of Montgomery County made up 50% of stops.
- 3) Men represented 64.7% of stops, and people aged 20-39 represented 50.8% of stops.
- 4) The most common reason for stops was “Special Stops Required” (e.g., failure to stop at a stop sign) at 22.1%, followed by “Title and Registration” at 14.8%.

By race

- 5) 47.2% of all traffic stops were of Black people, 25.5% of traffic stops were of Hispanic people, and 20.7% of traffic stops were of white people.
- 6) Stops of all races have declined with overall stops. Total stops of Black people declined from 3,911 in 2015 to 663 in 2020, and total stops of Hispanic people declined from 1,903 in 2015 to 511 in 2020.
- 7) Relative differences in stop-rates by race persisted. As a share of total yearly stops, stop-rates of Black people declined from 48.4% in 2015 to 41.6% in 2020. Stop-rates of Hispanic people increased from 23.6% in 2015 to 32.1% in 2020. Stop-rates of white people remained stable.
- 8) Black people pulled over by police between 2015 and 2020 were slightly more likely to have a stop result in a repair order, and in 2020 Hispanic people were more likely to have a stop result in a citation.

Background on TPPD Traffic Data/Data Methods

The first dataset, “Stops,” includes data from 2015 to 2020, and records all stops in which an officer issues a citation, repair order, or warning. Data comes from the statewide ticketing database E-tix, and there are instances in E-tix where a citation, warning, or SERO may be issued that are not related to traffic stops - per se - because they were issued for other various reasons, such as an accident investigation, investigatory stop based on criminal violations, or sobriety checkpoint.

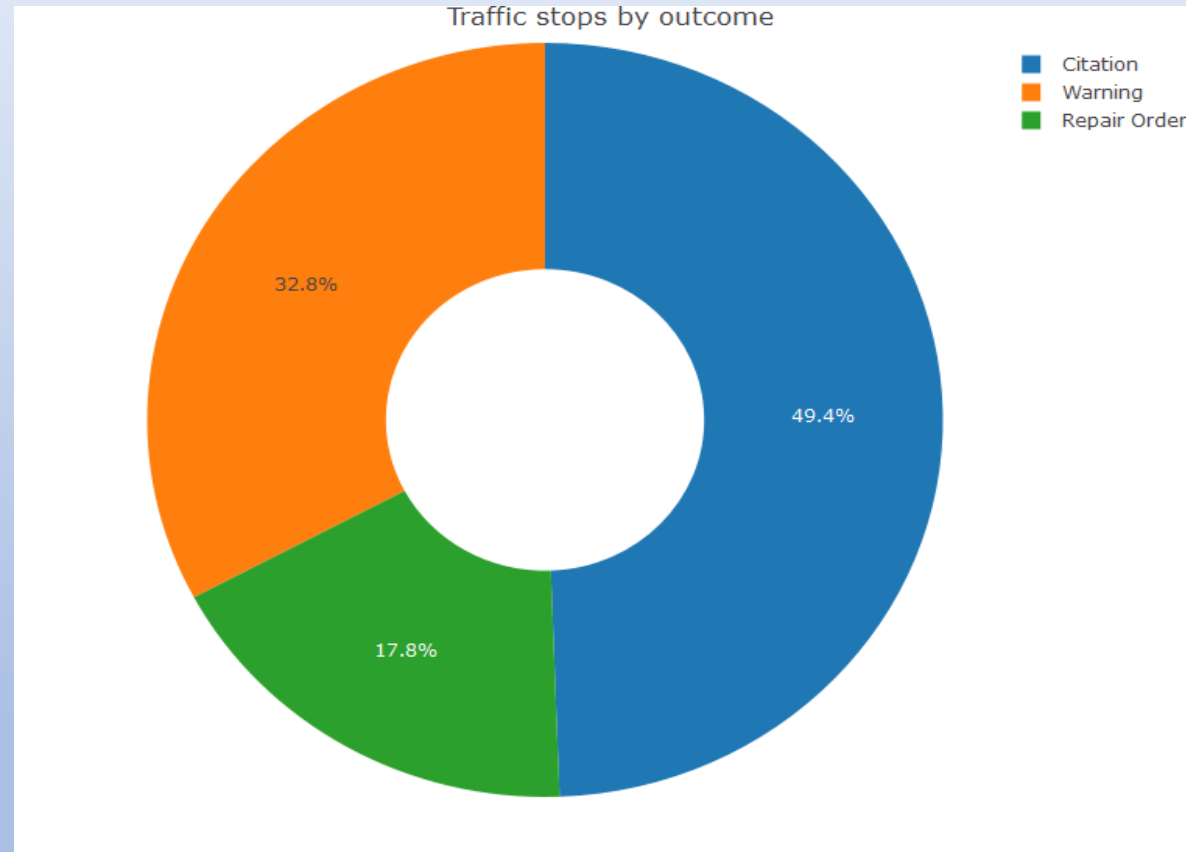
NOTE: All traffic stops recorded were the result of observable traffic violations, response to traffic accidents, or investigations



Stops Overall

Stops by Outcome and Over-Time

Between 2015 and 2020, the City of Takoma Park's Police Department made 22,392 traffic stops involving a warning, repair order, or citation. Citations made up a plurality of stops, representing 49.4% of stop outcomes, followed by warnings at 32.8% of stops. In some instances, there were multiple outcomes associated with one stop; we associated a stop with the most severe outcome (i.e., citations, then repair orders, then warnings) so that data in the table below represents unique stops.



Traffic stops consistently declined between 2015 and 2020, decreasing 80.3% over the five years of available data from 8,074 in 2015 to 1,593 in 2020.

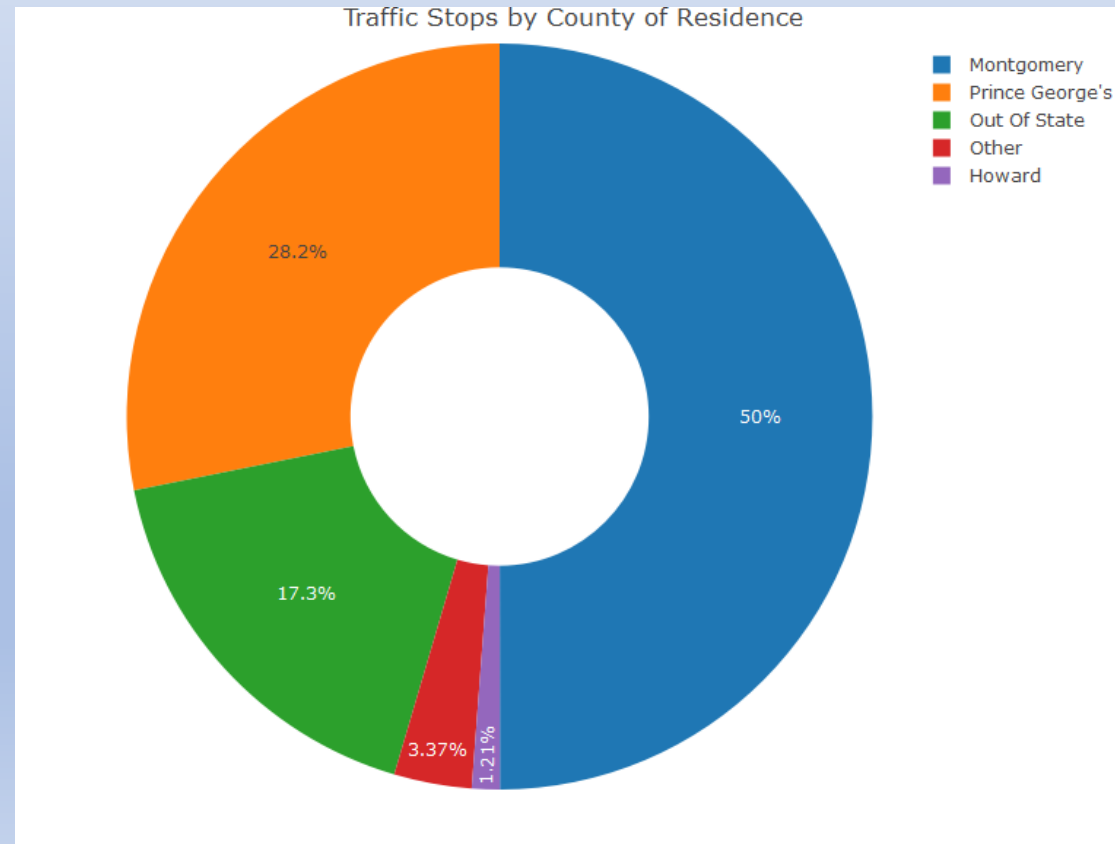
Stops Overall- Possible reasons for Decreases in Stops

The Police Department has provided the following possible reasons for potential decreases in stops over the last three years:

- 1. Refocus on traffic enforcement-** in 2018 the department moved away from random traffic enforcement to targeted enforcement. Utilizing traffic collision data and resident complaints, we focused departmental traffic enforcement in problem areas in the city. This led to quality traffic stops that helped address problem areas in the city. While the number of overall stops were reduced the quality and impact of the stops improved. Collision data over the three years, 2018-2020, shows a reduction in overall collisions in the city compared to 2015-2017.
- 2. Revamping of the Evaluation and Reward System-** in 2018 we changed our evaluation system to focus on community engagement and problem solving over traffic and criminal enforcement. This led to officers not feeling pressured to make non-impactful traffic stops and arrests. This was consistent with promoting quality targeted enforcement, not quantity enforcement.
- 3. Expanding the efficiency of the city's speed cameras -** in 2020 the police department renegotiated the safe speed contract with our service provider. Part of the new contract involved installing new equipment throughout the city. This increased the efficiency of the units and expanded coverage area for all cameras on our main roadway in the city, New Hampshire Avenue. Coverage area increased from one lane of traffic to cover all three lanes increasing coverage area and reducing our need for manned traffic enforcement in certain areas.

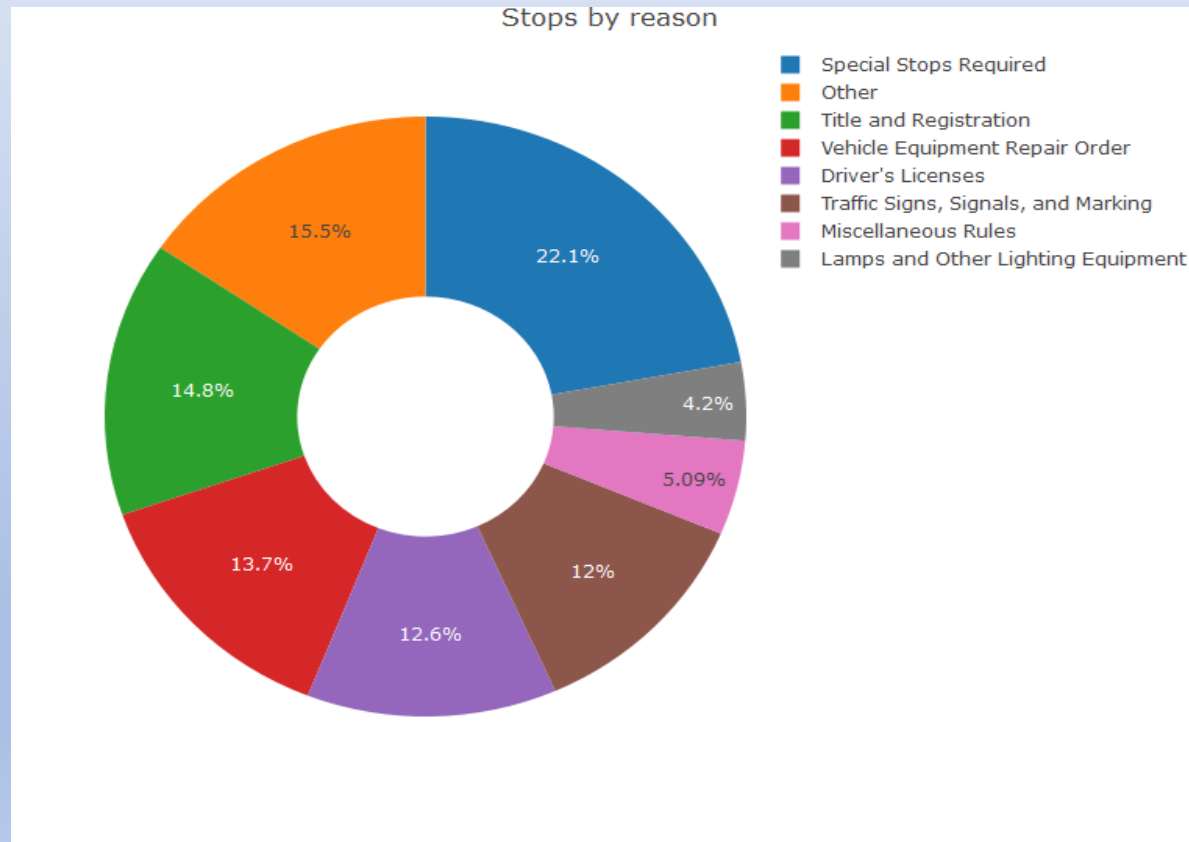
Stops by Residence

The City only has partial residency information for people stopped by Takoma Park police, with state, county, and zip-code information (Note: Zip-code information is currently omitted due to challenges the Department encountered pulling the data, but will be included in a later download). **Half of residents stopped are from Montgomery County (50%), with the second-most residents stopped from Prince George's County at 28.2%, and third most from Howard County at 1.2%.** The remaining stops were either other counties in Maryland (3.4%) or out-of-state residents (17.3%).



Stops by Reason

The most common reason police cited for pulling someone over was “special stops required” (e.g., failure to stop at a stop sign)–representing 22.1% of reasons cited–followed by “title and registration,” representing 14.8%. Officers can cite multiple reasons for a stop, so the data below shows the percentage of times a reason was cited among all reasons, not that a stop was made.



Note: The “Other” category above includes all reasons that represented below 4% of uses.

Officer-level Stops

Consistent with the city's overall decline in traffic stops since 2015, the median officer in 2020 stopped 202 people in 2015 compared to 21 in 2020, a difference of 181.



Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Data

Between 2018-2020, there were 11,551 calls to CAD dispatchers about traffic incidents. As discussed in the introduction, it should be noted there is a mismatch between the number of stops in the traffic stops data, and the number of incidents with the type “traffic stop” in the CAD data.

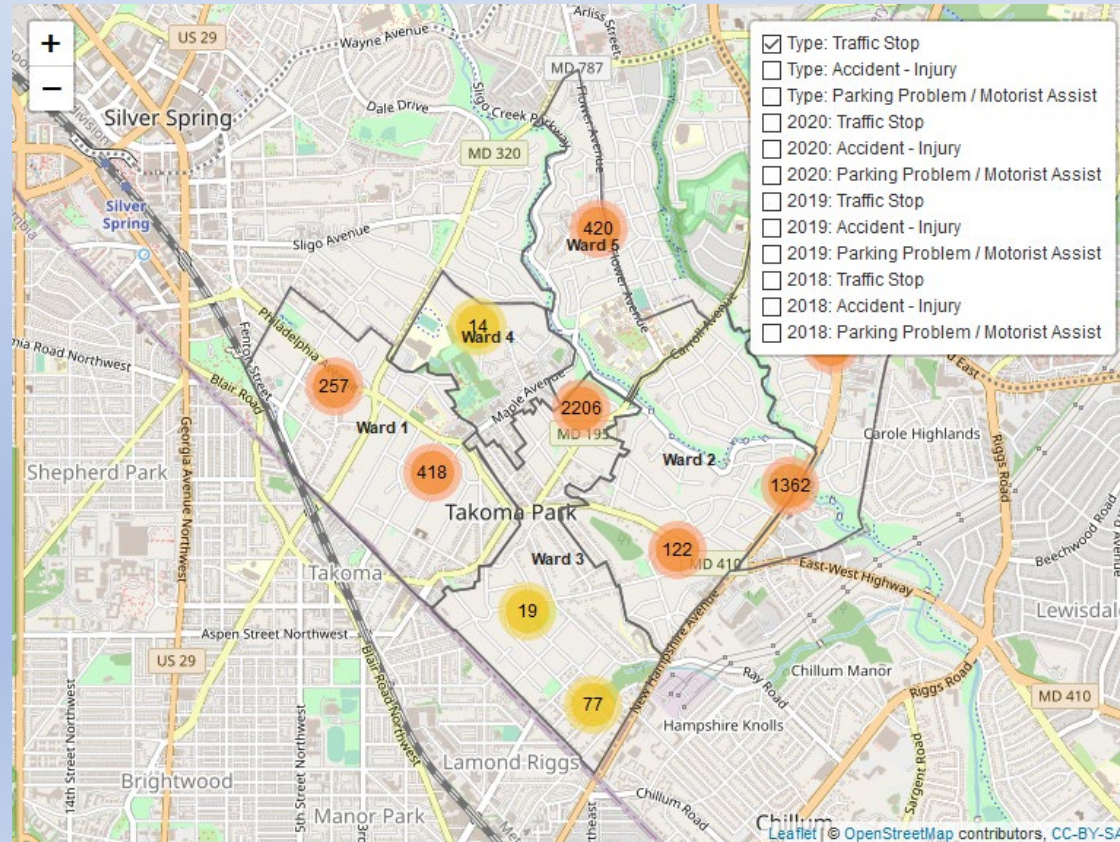
Across the three years of available data, traffic stops were the most frequent incident dispatchers coded at 7,301 incidents—representing 63.2% of incidents—followed by parking problems/motorist assistance incidents at 4,205 incidents. There were only 45 accident incidents in the dispatcher-call system across the three years of data, representing 36.4% of incidents.

Both traffic stop and parking problem/motorist assist incidents declined in the dispatcher-assist system since 2018; traffic stops from 3,216 incidents in 2018 to 1,741 in 2020, and parking problem/motorist assist incidents declined from 1,717 incidents in 2018 to 1,005 incidents in 2020.

Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Data- interactive map of incidents

Below, we provide an interactive map of all incidents appearing in the CAD system, broken out by type and year. Incidents are automatically clustered by the frequency of incidents as you zoom in and out. Mousing over a cluster will show the geography covered by the cluster. You can also click on clusters to automatically break them up and zoom in. When you get to the smallest cluster (e.g., multiple stops at the same spot), clicking on the cluster will break it up into each incident. Mousing over an incident will provide a set of descriptive information about the incident, including the date, and an anonymized identifier for the officer involved. You can turn layers on and off by clicking the box next to them.

In 295 cases, multiple officers were involved in an incident, but we only associate one officer with the incident to avoid duplicating incidents.



Additional Data to be provided to the Task force

- **Officer Stops by Race**

The department has broken down stops by individual officer by the race of the individual stopped.

- **Stops by zip Code**

Zip-code information is currently omitted due to challenges the Department encountered pulling the data, but will be included in a later download. This will help carve out exactly where individuals stopped by the police department reside.

Complaints received involving traffic stops initiated by the TPPD between 2015-2020

Of the 22,392 traffic stops initiated by the Takoma Park Police Department between 2015-2020 only seven (7) complaints were received (4-2015 and 3-2017), none within the last three years (2018-2020).