

Fatal and Nonfatal Overdoses Known to Law Enforcement:  
2020 Project CLEAN Overdose Data

Data Analysis for Project CLEAN

**CLEAN-2021-01**

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## Introduction

This paper provides an analysis of overdoses known to law enforcement in 2020, with a focus on the Project CLEAN target area, located in the El Camino neighborhood. Project CLEAN is a federally funded project led by Ibero-American Development Corporation aimed at disrupting the open-air heroin market in Northeast Rochester.



This data includes only overdoses where law enforcement was notified. Therefore, this does not include all overdoses, such as overdoses that were only responded to in a medical facility or when 911 was not called. Correspondence with an Opioid Overdose Prevention Trainer indicated that in about 1 out of every 5 forms completed for a Naloxone refill indicated that 911 was contacted. This means that there could be five times more overdoses than presented below.

Further, the fatal overdose data help to give us a sense of the fatal overdoses, but note that the Monroe County Office of the Medical Examiner provides the official count, usually released in September of the following year. The report released in 2020 reported on 2019 data, and indicated that Latino fatal overdoses doubled in proportion, from 7.7% (n = 15) in 2018 to 15.5% (n = 28) in 2019. Fatal Black overdoses also increased from 13.3% (n = 26) to 21% (n = 38) in 2019.

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In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought NY state to a standstill. While the relationship between the pandemic and opioid overdoses is not yet clear, it is likely the pandemic impacted individuals addicted to opioids in many ways. Please see the working paper, [COVID-19 Pandemic and the Opioid Epidemic](#), on the [CPSI website](#) for more information.

### Findings

In 2020 there were 723 fatal and nonfatal overdoses known to law enforcement in Monroe County, this is a 14% decrease from the previous year. However, *fatal* overdoses increased from 128 in 2019 to 134 in 2020 (note that this is not the official data from the Office of the Medical Examiner). The table below shows the number of fatal and nonfatal overdoses from 2018 – 2020 by geographic region.

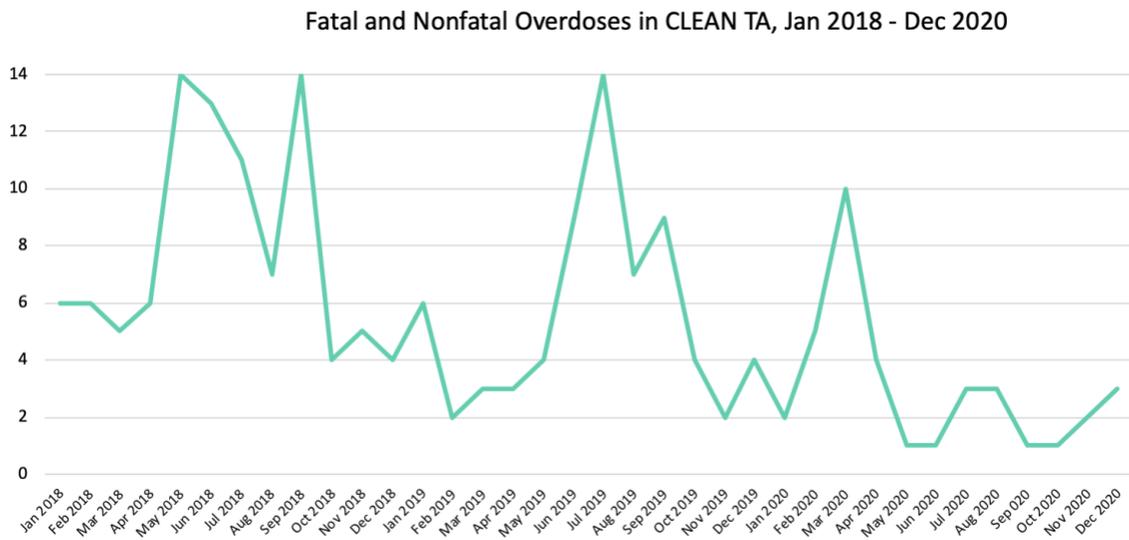
	2018				2019				2020			
	Fatal		Nonfatal		Fatal		Nonfatal		Fatal		Nonfatal	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Rochester (excluding CLEAN TA)	86	56%	548	63%	63	48%	340	403	75	47%	263	338
CLEAN Target Area	5	8%	90	95	8	8%	59	67	8	5%	28	36
Monroe county Towns and Villages	75	36%	329	404	57	44%	313	370	51	48%	298	349
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>1133</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>723</b>

Of these 723 overdoses, 36, or 5% of them occurred in the Project CLEAN Target Area (TA). The number of overdoses continues to decrease in the CLEAN TA, from 95 in 2018, to 67 in 2019, to 36 in 2020. This decrease is even more promising in that the proportion of overdoses that occurred in the CLEAN neighborhood decreased from 8% in 2018 and 2019 to 5% in 2020. This is a reduction in the *number* and *proportion* of overdoses that occurred in the CLEAN TA in 2019. This data indicates that overdoses are decreasing and less concentrated in the CLEAN neighborhood as compared to two years ago. However, the number of individuals who died from an overdose in the CLEAN Target Area remained consistent, with 8 overdose deaths in 2019 and 8 deaths in 2020. More than 20 people have lost their lives to an overdose in the Target Area since 2018. Each one of these deaths is an individual with family, friends, and communities impacted by their premature death.

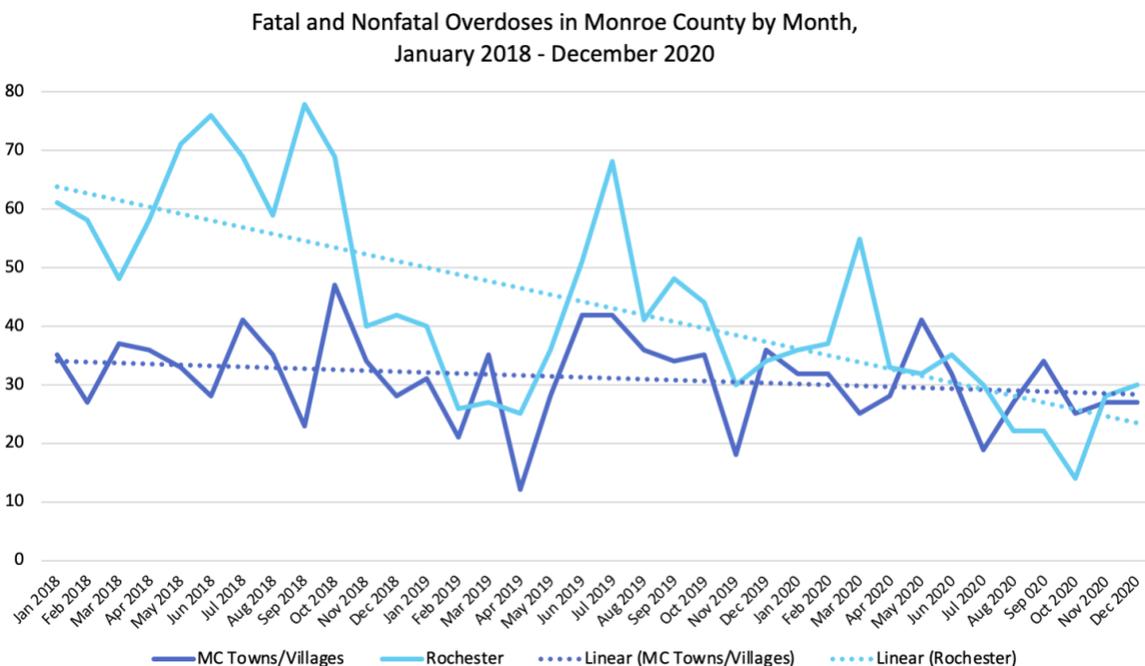
Meanwhile, the number of overdoses in the towns and villages decreased only slightly, leading to an increase in the proportion of overdoses that occurred in the towns and villages from the previous years, from 36% in 2018 to 44% in 2019 to 48% in 2020. Nearly half of the overdoses in Monroe County now occur in the towns and villages.

The charts below show the number of overdoses by month. The first chart shows overdoses in the CLEAN TA, illustrating the steep decrease in overdoses since January 2018. Between January 2018 and April 2020, there were no months where there was only one overdose, but in 2020, there were four months with only one recorded overdose per month.

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Rochester overdoses have consistently and sharply decreased since 2018, while overdoses in the towns and villages have remained relatively stable, with a slight downward trend. The data indicate that overdoses decreased 62% in the CLEAN TA from 2018 to 2020, while overdoses in Rochester (excluding the CLEAN TA) decreased 47% during that time period and overdoses in the towns and villages decreased 14%.



Across Monroe County, March had the highest number of overdoses (n = 80); this was also the peak month in the CLEAN TA, with 10 overdoses, or one individual overdosing every three days. In the previous two years, March tended to be low month for overdoses. March is also when NYS shut down due to COVID-19. On March 16<sup>th</sup>, Governor Cuomo shut down schools across

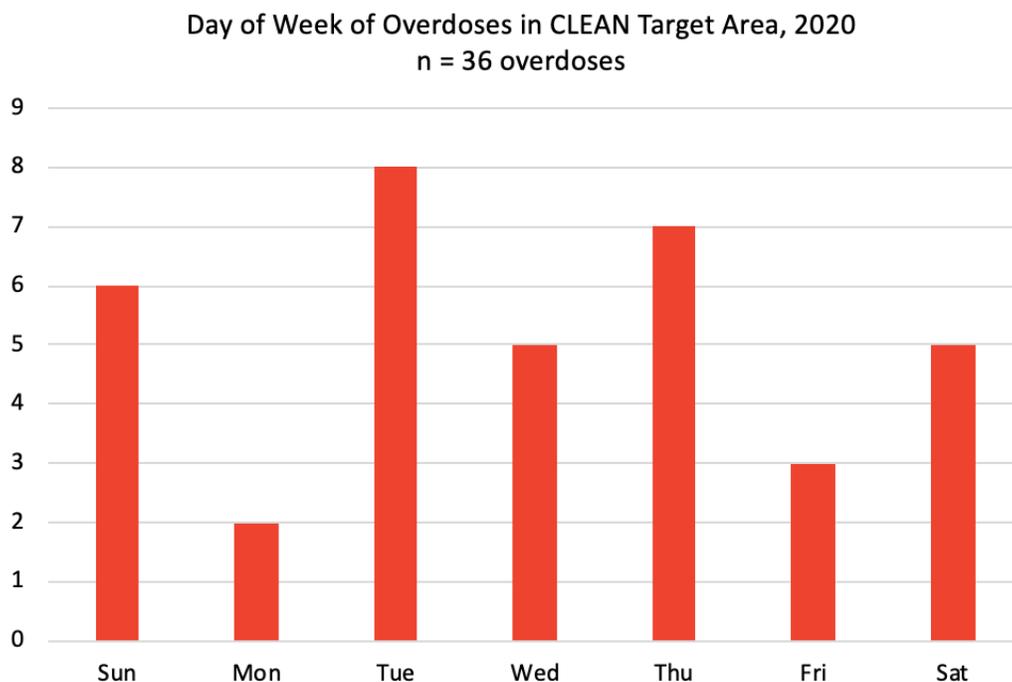
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NYS in response to the pandemic. There were 40 fatal and nonfatal overdoses between March 1 and March 15<sup>th</sup> (pre-shutdown) and 40 overdoses March 16-31 (post-shutdown). Of these 40 overdoses, 17 were fatal: there were 7 fatal overdoses March 1 – 15, and 10 fatal overdoses March 16 – 31. Further, when looking only in the CLEAN Target Area, there were 8 overdoses March 1- 15, and only 2 overdoses March 16 – 31. Of these 10 overdoses in March, 3 were fatal: two occurred between March 1 and March 15 and one was March 16 – 31. Based on this data, then, there is not a clear link between the shut down and overdoses in March.

In 2019, the peak month for the county (and the CLEAN TA) was July and in 2018 it was October (May and September for the CLEAN TA). The data show that there really is no pattern when looking at months and overdoses.

### Day of Week

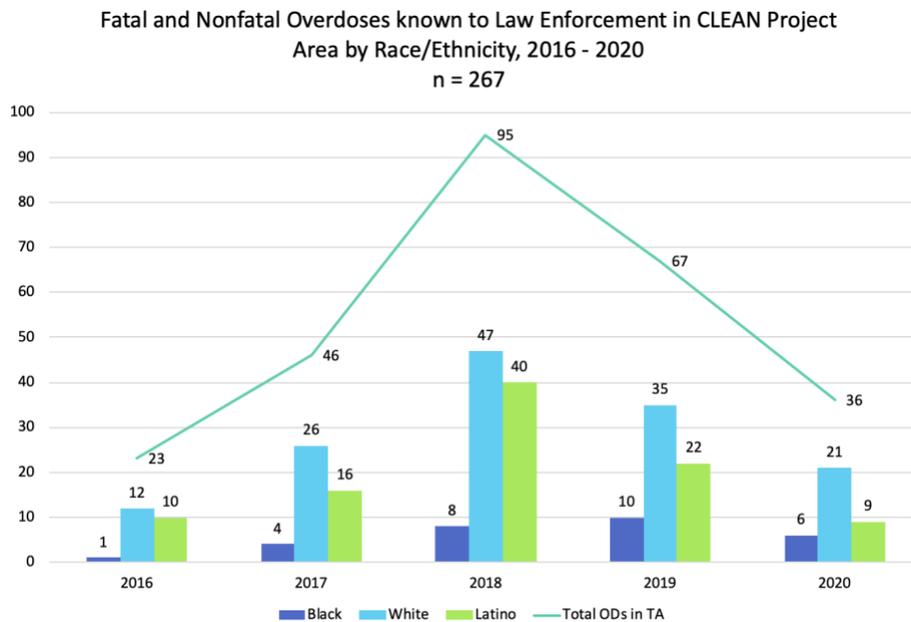
Overdoses across the county and Rochester continue to occur every day of the week. The chart below shows the overdoses by day of the week in the CLEAN Target Area. With the exception of Mondays and Fridays, on every other day there were at least five overdoses in the CLEAN target area in 2020.



### Characteristics of Overdose Victims in CLEAN Target Area

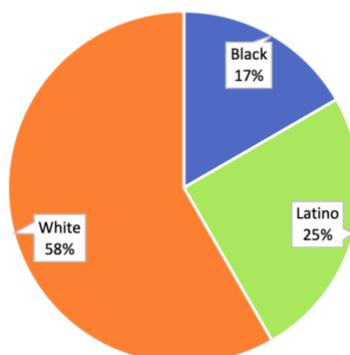
In the CLEAN neighborhood, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of overdose victims that are female, from 22% female in 2019 to 33% in 2020. Meanwhile, in the towns and villages, the proportion of females decreased from 33% in 2019 to 26% in 2020. Rochester (excluding CLEAN TA) has been relatively consistent, with 33% of the 2020 victims being female.

Regarding race/ethnicity, the chart below shows the total number of overdoses by the teal line, and then the race/ethnicity of the individuals is represented by the bars (purple, blue, green).



In 2020, more than half (58%) of the overdose victims in the CLEAN neighborhood were white, followed by a quarter Latino, and 17% Black. The proportion of white victims steadily increased from 50% in 2018 to 58% in 2020. The proportion of Latino victims has been falling, from 33% in 2018, 42% in 2019, to 25% in 2020. The proportion of Black overdose victims has been steadily increasing in terms of proportion, from 8% in 2018, 15% in 2019, to 17% in 2020. Of the five fatal overdose victims in the CLEAN TA in 2020, 4 victims were white, 3 were Black, and one was Latino. In the towns and villages, the victims continue to be predominantly white (94% in 2020).

Race/Ethnicity Fatal and Nonfatal Overdose Victims in CLEAN Target Area, 2020  
n = 36 overdoses



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The average age of overdose victims in Monroe County was nearly 38 years old in 2020. The towns and villages continue to have younger overdose victims than the city and the CLEAN target area; however, the average overdose age in the towns and villages increased from 32.7 years old in 2018 to 36.3 years in 2020. Fatal overdose victims, on average, are slightly older than the nonfatal overdose victims. See Appendix A for more detailed age data.

Average Age of Fatal and Nonfatal Overdose Victims, 2018 – 2020

	2018	2019	2020
<b>Monroe County</b>	36.1	37.7	37.9
<b>Rochester (excluding CLEAN TA)</b>	37.7	40.0	39.6
<b>CLEAN TA</b>	39.4	39.2	37.9
<b>Towns and Villages</b>	32.7	34.9	36.3

Further, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the individuals who overdosed in the CLEAN TA in 2020 resided in home towns outside of Rochester.

Home Town of Overdose Victims in CLEAN TA, 2020	
Rochester	23
Greece	2
Fairport	1
Gates	1
Irondequoit	1
Chili	1
Rush	1
Outside of Monroe County	6
Total	36

Note that while 23 of the individuals have a home town listed as Rochester, this is based on mailing address zip code, so there are likely instances where the individual may actually reside in a town other than Rochester when zip codes cross over jurisdictions (e.g., Greece, Penfield).

Across the county in 2020, 31% of overdose victims had a known prior overdose history (identified through the Heroin Task Force Database or from information gathered in the police report). However, only 19% of overdose victims in the CLEAN TA had this known history. Further, 78% of overdose victims in the CLEAN TA had an arrest history while 69% of the overdose victims across the county had an arrest history. The data indicate that these individuals are known by law enforcement. However, what is less clear is how recent their arrest history is. It is also unknown what the outcomes of the arrests were and whether they received any treatment in jail or as part of their sentence.

### **Concentration of Overdoses**

In the CLEAN Project Area in 2020, there were only three addresses that had more than one overdose occur: 275 Upper Falls Blvd (3 ODs), 886 N Clinton (2 ODs), and 1000 N Clinton (2 ODs). These locations (McDonald's, Chester's, and Rite-Aid) continue to be hot spots, but with fewer overdoses than in previous years.

Across all of Monroe County in 2020, there were 62 addresses that had more than one overdose occur (2-8 overdoses). Of these 62 addresses, 10 locations had 3 or more overdoses. The location with the highest number of overdoses in 2020 was the Gates Motel (995 Buffalo Rd), with 8 overdoses in 2020 (each of the 8 overdoses occurred on a different day, so not multiple overdoses in one day). The locations with the second highest number of overdoses in 2020 were both private residences (one in Brighton, 4 overdoses; one in Rochester, 4 overdoses). Finally, the locations with 3 overdoses in 2020 (n = 8) were a combination of private residences and business/commercial locations. The businesses were: RTS Transit Center, Comfort Inn on 104 in Greece, McDonald's on Upper Falls Blvd in Rochester, and Red Roof Inn in Gates.

Appendix B includes a table listing the locations that had the highest number of repeat overdose locations across all three years, 2018 – 2020. While Chester's ranks as the number one when combining all three years, in the most recent year (2020), there were only two overdoses at that location.

The table below dives a little deeper to get a sense of the concentration of overdoses in the CLEAN neighborhood and how the overdoses have become less concentrated. At the peak of overdoses in Rochester (and across the country), in 2018, there were 11 overdoses at Chester's followed by 6 overdoses at the former Brooklyn Market. Notice the number of repeat locations and the number of overdoses occurring at repeat locations. Since 2018, both of these numbers have significantly decreased in the CLEAN project area. From almost half (49%) of all overdoses in 2018 occurring at a repeat location, to 19% in 2020. This is more evidence of overdoses decreasing and diffusing in the CLEAN neighborhood. RITE-AID, Chester's, and McDonald's are the remaining and longstanding repeat locations for overdoses in the CLEAN neighborhood.

While 2016 and 2017 data are presented here, note that this data was not systematically captured by every law enforcement agency. However, including this data provides important information about where the overdoses occurred, even if it is only a sample of the total number of overdoses.

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CLEAN Project Area Repeat Locations, 2016 – 2020, n = 267 Overdoses

2016	Number of ODs	2017	Number of ODs	2018	Number of ODs	2019	Number of ODs	2020	Number of ODs		
285 Upper Falls Blvd, Tops Plaza	4	275 Upper Falls Blvd, McDonald's	5	886/882 N Clinton Ave, Chester's	11	Private Residence E	4	275 Upper Falls Blvd, McDonald's	3		
1000 N Clinton Ave, RITE-AID	2	892 N Clinton Ave, A-1 Liquor	3	759 N Clinton Ave, Bkln Mkt	6	Private Residence F	3	886 N Clinton Ave, Chester's	2		
Non-Repeat Locations	17	886 N Clinton Ave, Chester's	2	547 Joseph Ave, CFC Housing	4	886 N Clinton Ave, Chester's	3	1000 N Clinton Ave, RITE-AID	2		
<b>Total Overdoses</b>	<b>23</b>	8 Sullivan St, Vacant	2	20 Hoeltzer St, Vacant	4	100 Borinquen Plaza	3	Non-Repeat Locations	29		
26% of all CLEAN Project Area overdoses occurred at repeat locations		547 Joseph Ave, CFC Housing	2	275 Upper Falls Blvd, McDonald's	4	Private Residence G	2	<b>Total Overdoses</b>	<b>36</b>		
		285 Upperfalls Blvd, Tops Plaza	2	1000 N Clinton Ave, RITE-AID	3	547 Joseph Ave, CFC Housing	2	19% of all CLEAN Project Area overdoses occurred at repeat locations			
		Non-Repeat Locations	30	100 Borinquen Plz	3	1000 N Clinton Ave, RITE-AID	2				
		<b>Total Overdoses</b>	<b>46</b>	455 Clifford Ave, Vacant Lot	2	285 Upper Falls Blvd, Tops Plaza	2				
		35% of all CLEAN Project Area overdoses occurred at repeat locations				Private Residence A	2			Non-Repeat Locations	46
						Private Residence B	2			<b>Total Overdoses</b>	<b>67</b>
						Private Residence C	2			31% of all CLEAN Project Area overdoses occurred at repeat locations	
						Private Residence D	2				
						285 Upper Falls Blvd, Tops Plaza	2				
		Non-Repeat Locations	48	49% of all CLEAN Project Area overdoses occurred at repeat locations							
<b>Total Overdoses</b>	<b>95</b>										

Comparatively, in the Towns and Villages, the proportion of overdoses occurring at a repeat location has remained relatively stable, at around 20% from 2018 – 2020, as indicated in the table below. In 2020, the CLEAN target area had a lower percentage of overdoses occurring at a repeat location (19%) than the towns and villages did (21%).

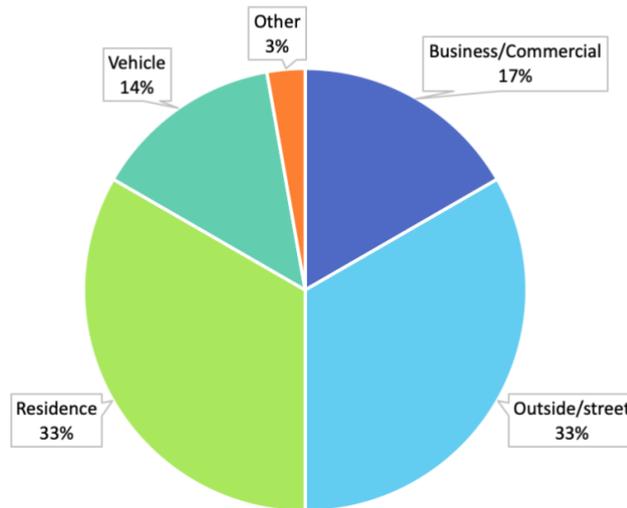
% of Total Overdoses that occurred at Repeat Locations

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
MC Towns and Villages	10%	16%	23%	17%	21%
Rochester (excluding CLEAN TA)	6%	17%	31%	19%	18%
CLEAN TA	26%	35%	49%	31%	19%

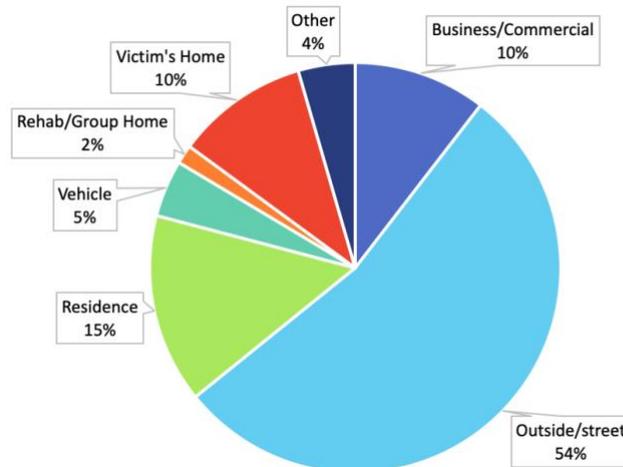
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While overdoses in the CLEAN Target Area continued to occur outside in 2020, the number and proportion of open-air overdoses decreased from 2019 (54%) to 2020 (33%). The proportion of overdoses that occurred in a vehicle increased from 5% in 2019 to 14% in 2020. This could be related to fewer places to openly use and/or the COVID-19 pandemic.

Location Type of Overdoses in CLEAN Target Area, 2020  
n = 36 overdoses



Location Type of Overdoses in CLEAN Target Area, 2019  
n = 67 overdoses



In Rochester (excluding the TA), the majority of overdoses were at a residence (64%) followed by outside/street (13%). In the towns and villages, 68% of the overdoses continue to occur inside a residence.

## Conclusion

In 2020, overdoses in the CLEAN neighborhood continued to decrease and became less concentrated. Further, a smaller proportion of the overdoses occurred outside in the open-air. These findings are not the same as in the other geographic regions. For example, nearly half of all overdoses now occur in the towns and villages, a 12% increase from only two years ago.

These findings are promising for CLEAN as they indicate that in this neighborhood:

- Overdoses decreased at a higher rate than in the towns/villages and in Rochester
- Overdoses are less concentrated, as evidenced by fewer repeat locations and a smaller proportion of the County's overdoses occurring in the CLEAN TA
- Open-air overdoses decreased, as evidenced by fewer overdoses occurring in the street/outside

While these findings are promising, there are still persistent issues in the neighborhood. For example, drug dealers continue to stand along the avenue or side streets selling throughout the day, making it uncomfortable and a hassle for people in the neighborhood to do simple things like walk to the store. These groups continue to disrupt the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Further, each of these overdoses is a person. Overdoses are taking more lives than suicides, homicides, and motor vehicle accidents, *combined*. Interventions like street outreach, Narcan, and accessible, effective treatment options continue to be integral to building relationships with these individuals.

*What may have contributed to overdoses decreasing and becoming less concentrated in the CLEAN neighborhood?*

It is likely that there is no one thing that led to the decrease, but, rather, that it is a combination of things. The first data to reconcile is the number of community members who have died from overdoses. At least 134 people died in 2020 from an overdose in Monroe County. It is less clear how many new people are being introduced to opioids every year, potentially leading to addiction and overdose.

As mentioned in the beginning of the paper, the COVID-19 pandemic likely has impacted drug use, overdoses, and deaths, but it is not yet clear in what ways specifically. For example, did individuals who previously used together shift to using alone (due to NYS isolation, quarantine, and "Pause" guidelines), leading to an increase in fatal overdoses? Did pushing people into isolation increase instances of relapse? Specific to the CLEAN Target Area: Did fewer people from outside of the neighborhood travel into the neighborhood due to the pandemic?

In addition to the cumulative number of people who have died from overdoses and the impact of COVID-19 on drug use and the drug market, Project CLEAN interventions continued to be implemented in the neighborhood throughout 2020. These interventions include the development of the vacant lot that now is home to La Marketa at International Plaza and the

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renovations at Don Samuel Torres Park. These efforts have led to a fewer vacant lots and structures in the CLEAN Target Area, in turn, leading to fewer places to use drugs.

The Rochester Police Department began their Post Car details which were focused on high-visibility and market disruption in March and the Community Engagement Patrols which were focused on high visibility and community engagement began in April. These interventions continued through the end of the year and likely disrupted some of this activity. There were also a number of targeted arrests in the CLEAN neighborhood and along its boundaries focused on larger quantities of drugs and weapons.

Trillium adapted some of their practices as well, including implementing a 2:1 syringe exchange program and hiring workers to do syringe patrol, trying to keep the neighborhood clean of drug litter. While Trillium suspended the 2:1 syringe exchange during the pandemic, it still may have had an impact.

The Father Tracy Advocacy Center remained open throughout the pandemic and officially rolled out their street outreach in October 2020. Their outreach workers canvas the neighborhood every Thursday and Friday, providing food, clothing, masks, information pamphlets, and Narcan, among other tangible items to those that they encounter. This work continues to build relationships with the hardest-to-reach population.

The availability of Narcan may also be related to the reduction in overdoses. This could be that people are no longer calling 911 or that Narcan is widely available, so individuals who do overdose are not fatally overdosing.

### **Other Considerations**

While the news is promising regarding the number and concentration of overdoses in the CLEAN target area, it is worth noting that violence surged in the city in 2020. While the CLEAN TA historically has not been a hot spot for violence, violence did creep into the neighborhood this year. In 2018 there were 9 shooting victims, 14 shooting victims in 2019, and 29 shooting victims in 2020. There was one homicide in the CLEAN TA in 2018, zero in 2019, and four homicides in 2020. The increased violence could result in fewer customers coming to the neighborhood to purchase drugs. It is also unknown what the motives were for the shootings and homicides, so better understanding as to whether the drug market is underlying the violence is important.

Further, less is known about how businesses along the avenue have impacted the drug market. For example, Brooklyn Market (759 N. Clinton Ave), underwent new ownership and has been closed for a large portion of 2020. This was a former drug hot spot.

While the data is promising, it is not yet known how this translates to the neighborhood. Do the residents feel this change? Do they notice the decrease in the number of overdoses and the decrease in the concentration of overdoses? What more would residents like to see?

*Data Note Regarding the Overdose Data:* As the country and local jurisdictions were being hit with the sharply increasing opioid problem, new ways of tracking these overdoses were developed and refined over time. Because of the nature of overdoses, it is difficult to confidently identify what type of drug led to the overdose based on the 911 response. Initially the Monroe County Heroin Task Force collected data on what type of drug they reasonably thought had led to the overdose; over 90% of the overdoses were categorized as opioid overdoses. The Heroin Task Force stopped tracking this variable in 2019. While we will present the data as opioid overdoses, it is possible that for some overdoses, the main contributor is another drug, such as cocaine.

Appendix A

Average Age of Fatal and Nonfatal Overdose Victims, 2018 – 2020

<b>Fatal Overdoses</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Monroe County	37.9	39.8	40.3
Rochester (excluding TA)	40.7	42.7	40.4
TA	38.8	45.4	35.8
Towns and Villages	34.6	35.7	40.8

<b>Nonfatal Overdoses</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Monroe County	35.8	37.3	37.4
Rochester (excluding TA)	37.2	39.5	39.4
TA	39.5	38.3	38.5
Towns and Villages	32.3	34.8	35.5

Average Age, by Race/Ethnicity

<b>Average Age All Fatal and Nonfatal Overdoses Known to Law Enforcement</b>			
	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latinx</b>
2016	32	45.4	37.4
2017	33.7	46.5	38.8
2018	34.3	44.8	40.7
2019	36.7	44.6	37.6
2020	36.9	43.6	36.7
<b>Average Age All Fatal Overdoses</b>			
	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latinx</b>
2016	34.1	46.8	42.9
2017	37.3	42.8	38.9
2018	37.2	42.5	43.2
2019	38.4	47.3	40.7
2020	39.2	45.2	39
<b>Average Age All Nonfatal Overdoses</b>			
	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latinx</b>
2016	31.4	44.8	35.4
2017	33	47.3	38.8
2018	33.7	45.2	40.6
2019	36.4	44	37.1
2020	36.5	43	36.2

Appendix B

**Monroe County Repeat Locations for Overdoses, 2018 -  
2020**

Location	Number of Overdoses
Chester's, N. Clinton Ave	14
Gates Motel	13
RTS Transit Station	11
Wal-Mart, Hudson	9
McDonald's Upper Falls	8
House of Mercy	7
Red Roof Inn Gates	7
Rite-Aid, 1000 N. Clinton Ave	7
Brooklyn Market	6
McDonald's Lake Ave	6
High Rise Apt. Building, South Ave	6
CFC Shelter, Joseph Ave	6
490 Motel	6
Private Residence, Rochester	6
Private Residence, Rochester	6
Private Residence, Rochester	6
Comfort Inn, Greece	6
Strong, URM	5
Private Residence, Rochester	5
490 Motel, Gates	5
Private Residence, Brighton	5
Private Residence, Irondequoit	5
Private Residence, Webster	5
Private Residence, Rochester	5
Private Residence, Rochester	5
Private Residence, Churchville	5