

City of Rochester Non-Discretionary Calls for Service 2016-2018

CLEAN 2020 - 05



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Introduction

This paper presents data on non-discretionary calls for service in the City of Rochester from 2016 to 2018. The data were analyzed as part of the Center for Public Safety Initiatives ongoing work with Project CLEAN, a federally funded program run through Ibero-American Development Corporation to disrupt the open-air heroin market in Northeast Rochester.

Non-discretionary calls for service are initiated by community members dialing 911 for an emergency; discretionary calls for service are initiated by law enforcement (e.g., requesting back-up). Data on discretionary calls for service are not included in this paper. Most law enforcement activity is initiated by non-discretionary calls for service, as the 911 call starts the police response. These data allow for an understanding of patrol officer activities requested by the community.

This paper presents an overview of the calls for service (CFS), then a comparison by police section, and then shifts to focus on the Clinton Section which is the location of Project CLEAN efforts. CFS data relevant to Project CLEAN include Vice A calls, which are described and presented as well. The paper concludes with a discussion.

CFS Overview

Over three years (2016 – 2018), there were nearly 600,000 CFS in Rochester. On average the police respond to about 200,000 CFS annually. However, CFS did slightly decline by 6% from 2016 (204,387) to 2018 (192,148)¹. Once a call for service is received, the incident is labeled under its respective category. There are more than 30 categories, and the top ten most frequent are listed below. These top ten call types makeup nearly 60% of all the CFS across Rochester and are relatively consistent across each year (see the appendix for more detail by year).

City of Rochester Top 10 Non-Discretionary Calls 2016-2018 n=594,380

Call Type	Frequency	Percent
1. VIOLENT FAMILY PROBLEM	68,266	11.5%
2. SUSPICIOUS INCIDENT IN PROGRESS/JUST OCCURRED	65,100	11.0%
3. BURGLARY OR PANIC ALARM	38,723	6.5%
4. PARKING COMPLAINT	35,323	5.9%
5. ANNOYANCE CALL	29,964	5.0%
6. VICE ACTIVITY IN PROGRESS	25,968	4.4%
7. URGENT CHECK ON WELFARE	23,135	3.9%
8. FAMILY TROUBLE	21,689	3.6%
9. MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT REPORT-ROUTINE	20,428	3.4%
10. CUSTOMER TROUBLE IN PROGRESS/JUST OCCURRED	20,294	3.4%
ALL OTHER TYPES	245,490	41.3%

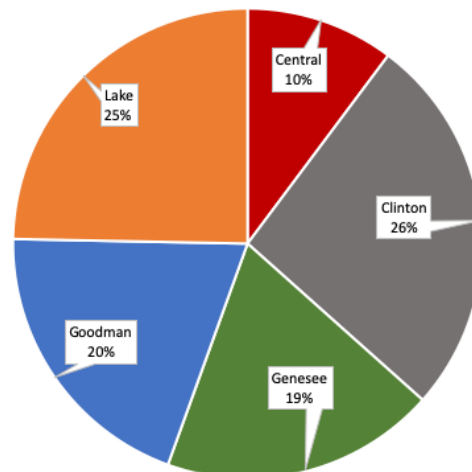
¹ There were 197,845 calls for service in 2017

In 2016-2018, the most frequent non-discretionary call for service was for a violent family problem which is defined as, “family trouble needing an immediate police response such as, fights, loud arguments, or violence threats.” The second most frequent call for service was to report a suspicious incident that is in progress or had just occurred, needing immediate police response. These incidents include suspicious vehicles, persons, and conditions. More than 1/5th of the 594,380 CFS were for one of these two incident types. The next most common was for the report of a burglary or an alarm setoff, followed by parking complaints. These top call types represent the problems that civilians in the city feel most warrant police response and are therefore reported most frequently.

Calls for Service 2016-2018 by City Section

Over these three years, the Clinton section had the highest number of CFS² followed by Lake section. Central section had the fewest number of calls for service.

Calls for Service by Section, 2016-2018
n = 587,429

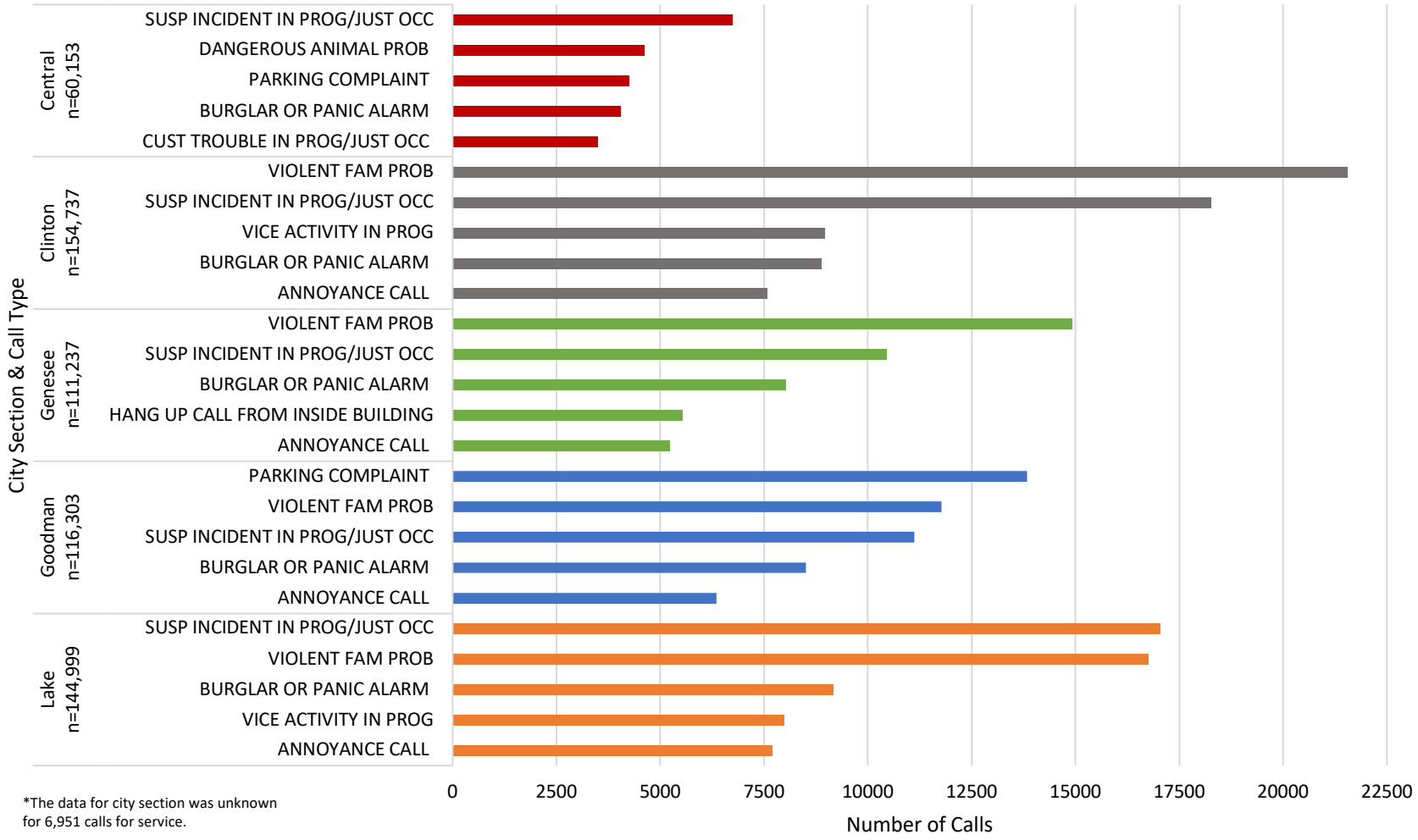


The chart on the next page displays the calls for service by city section from 2016-2018. The call types varied across the sections, with violent family problem the most frequent in two sections (Clinton and Genesee), suspicious incident in progress the most frequent in two other sections (Lake and Central), and parking complaints the most common in the Goodman section. The calls for service reveal interesting differences across the sections in terms of problems to be addressed. For example, dangerous animals is the second most frequent call in Central section, but is not a top five CFS in any of the other sections. The top call type in the Goodman section is for parking complaints such as vehicles that are blocking, abandoned, wrong side, disabled, etc. Central section has the least amount of calls for service which could be due to the fact that it is the business district of the city. Clinton and Lake sections are adjacent and have the same top five calls for service indicating similar activities occurring in these sections. Vice activity in progress made the top five in only two sections: Clinton and Lake. Vice activity is defined as drug dealing, gambling, or prostitution.

² There were 6,951 calls for service where the data for city section was unknown.

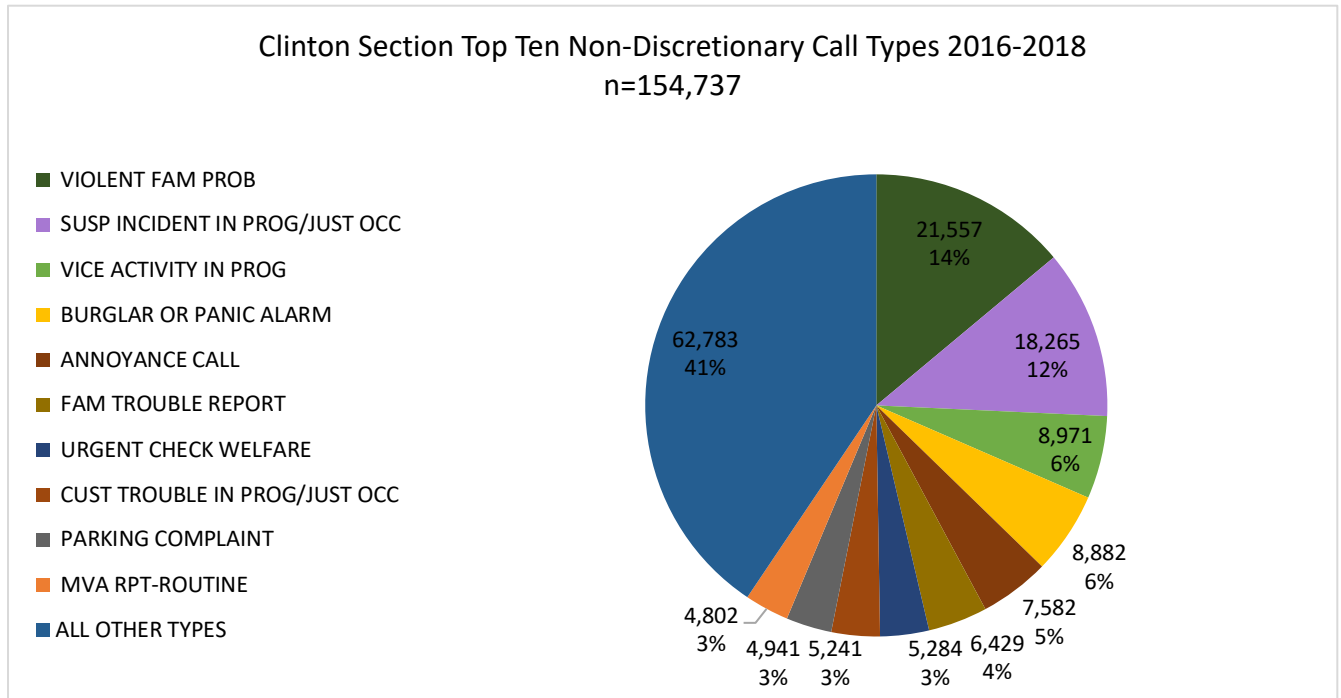
City of Rochester Non-Discretionary Calls for Service 2016-2018 by Section

n=587,429*



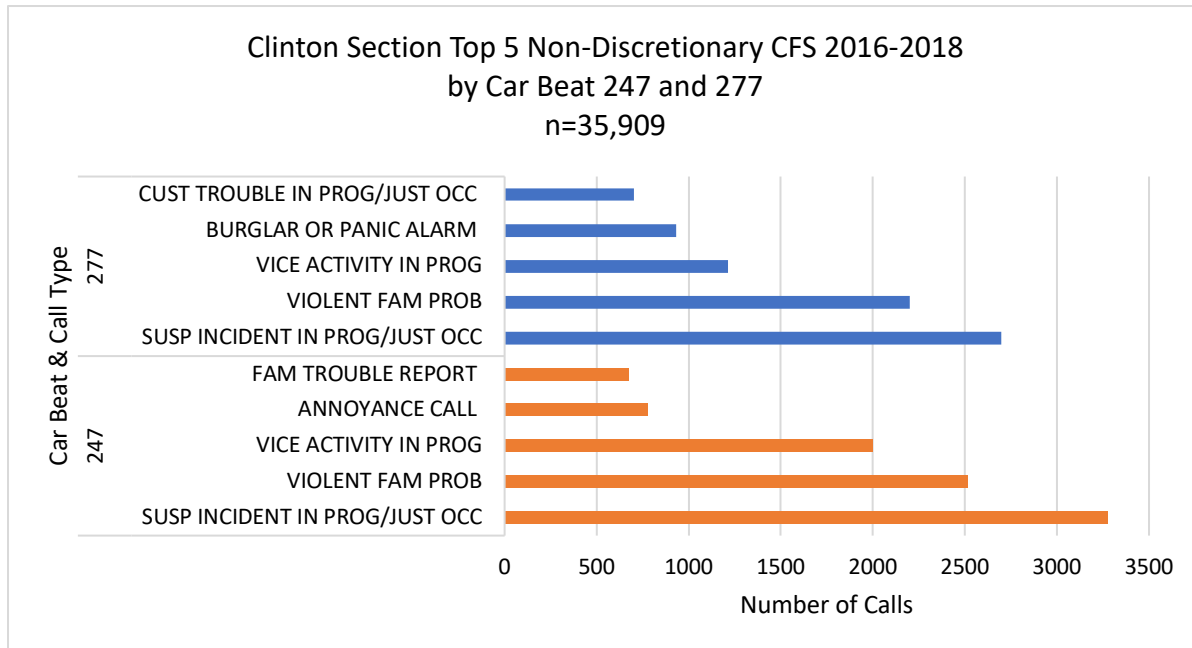
Clinton Section Calls for Service, 2016-2018

In the Clinton section, there were a total of 154,737 non-discretionary calls for service during 2016-2018. Vice activity, which includes drug sales, gambling, and prostitution, was the third most frequent CFS, indicating that these activities are a serious issue and concern for the community. The top two CFS are violent family problems and suspicious incident in progress; combined, these make up 25% of all the CFS in the Clinton section.

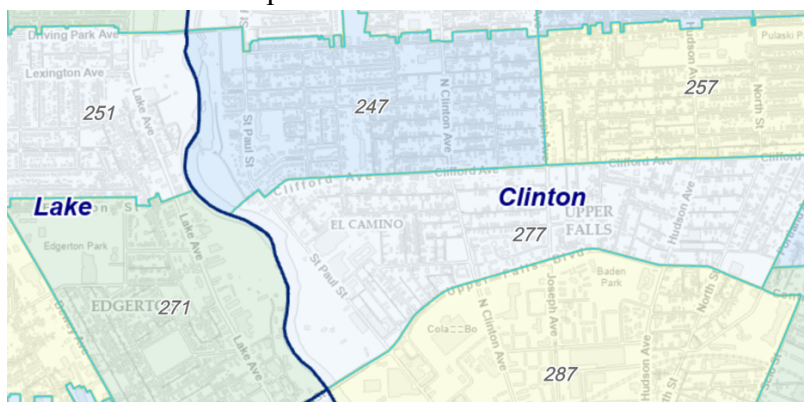


Calls for Service by Car Beat

Each police section has ten car beats, and the Clinton section is no different. Two of the Clinton section car beats (247 and 277), when combined, account for 24% of all the Clinton section calls for service and 37% of all the Vice calls for service in this section. If there are 10 car beats in the section and calls were distributed equally across all of them, this would mean that each car should respond to 10% of the calls. However, in car beats 247 and 277, this is elevated, meaning that these officers are responding to a higher number of Vice activity than in other car beats. The table below shows the top call types in these two car beats.

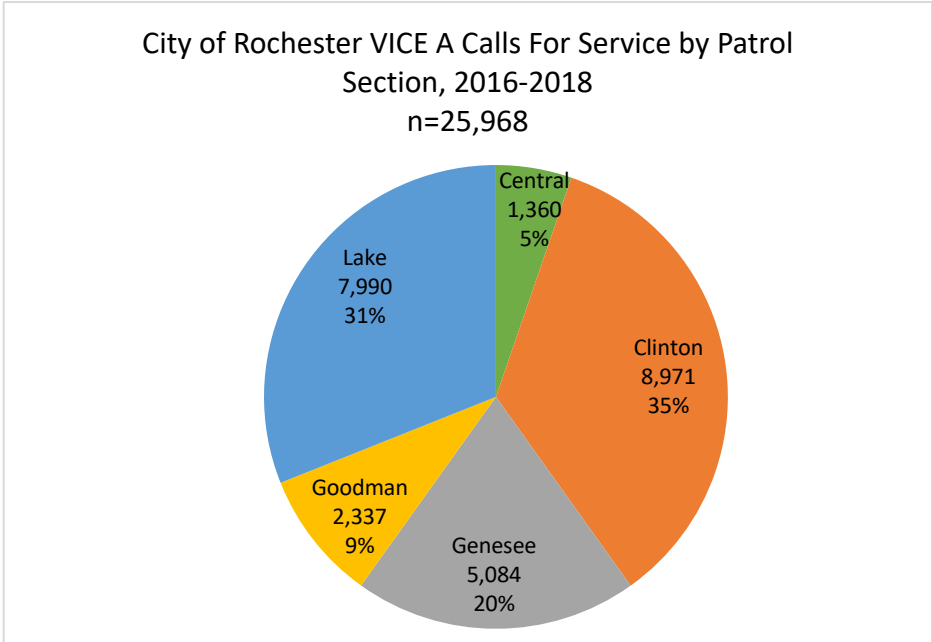


Over three years, there were 35,909 non-discretionary calls for service responded to by car beats 247 and 277, or 32 CFS each day, 16 in each of these car beats. The majority of these calls are for a suspicious incident in progress, closely followed by violent family problems. In both car beats, Vice activity is the third most common CFS. Car Beat 277 responds to more Vice activity calls than car beat 247. Car beat 247 responds to more CFS regarding annoyances and family trouble reports while car beat 277 responds to more burglar or panic alarms and reports for customer trouble. See the car beat map below.

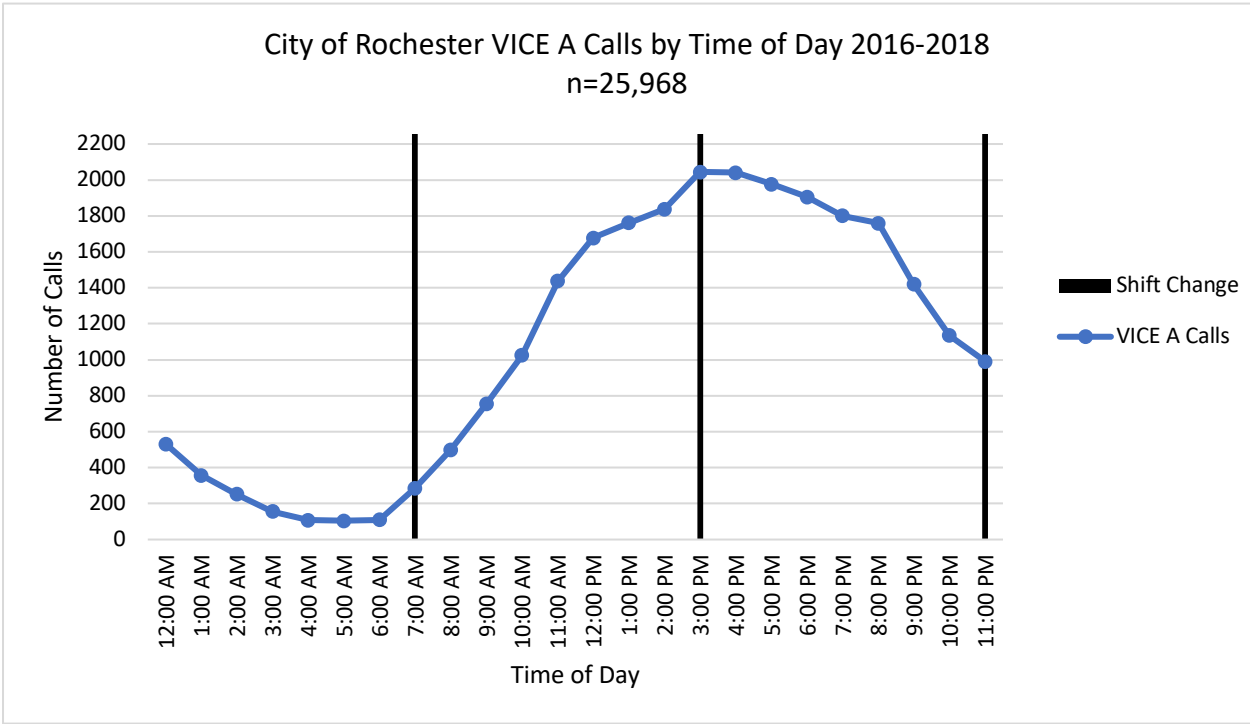


All Vice Calls for Service

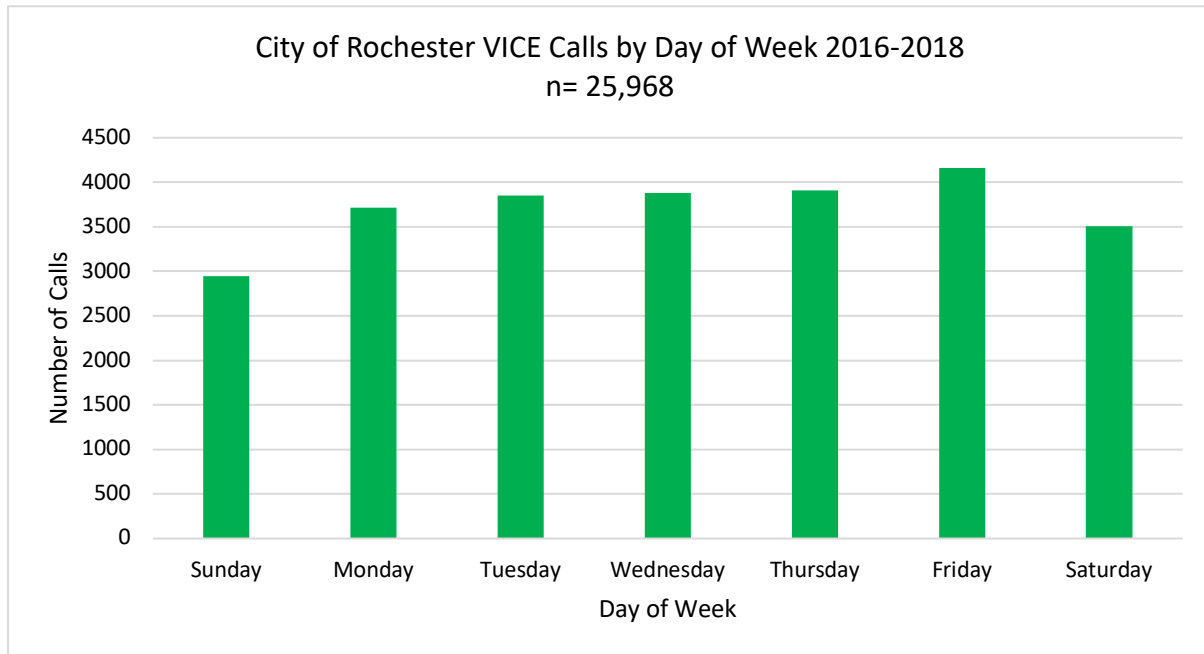
Project CLEAN is focused on disrupting the open-air drug market located in Northeast Rochester. For that reason, we were particularly interested in CFS related to drug activity. The only CFS category that most closely represents this, is Vice (drug sales, gambling, prostitution). We recognize a limitation in that this does not include drug use (which may fall under suspicious activity or welfare check or even annoyance call), but it at least provides one CFS data point relative to the drug market. For this reason, in this section we look closer at Vice calls for service.



There were 25,968 Vice calls for service across the City of Rochester from 2016-2018. Clinton section received the majority of Vice calls, 35%, with Lake section receiving the second highest at 31% of the calls. Central received the lowest number of Vice calls for service. However, it is evident that vice activity occurs across the city, with a concentration in the upper northern sections.



Vice calls for service are lowest during the early morning hours (2-6AM) and then begin to increase starting at 7AM. These calls remain relatively high throughout the day but peak in the afternoon hours from 3-6PM. After these peak hours, calls for this activity begin to decline but remain high, never dropping below 900 calls before the day is over.

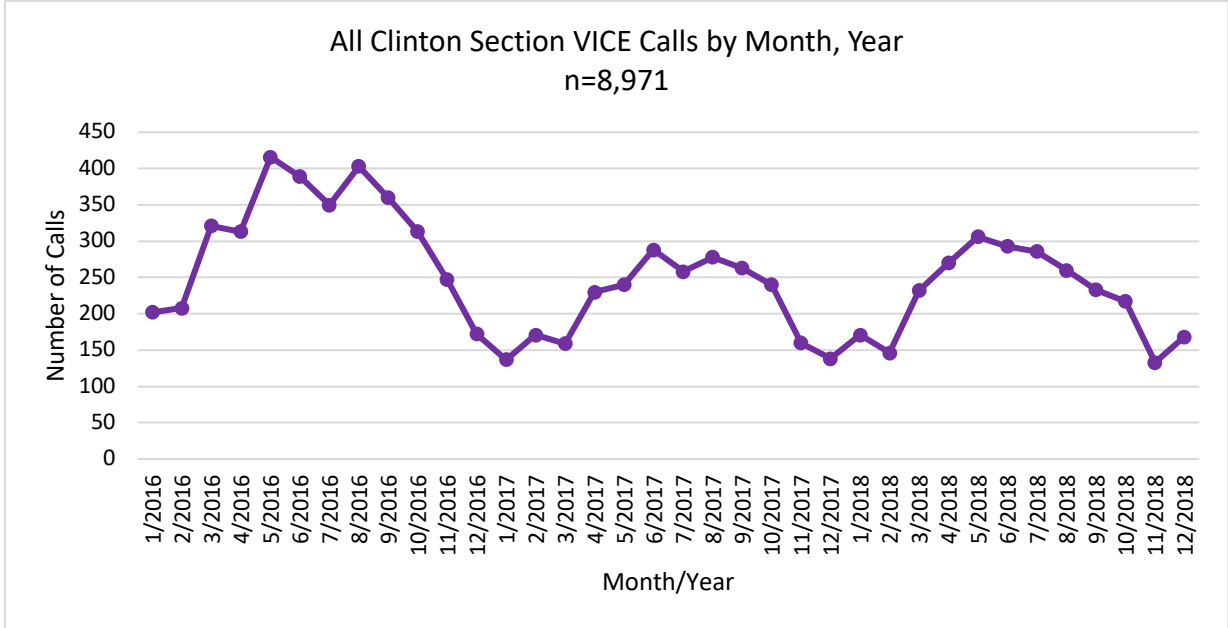


The distribution of Vice calls from 2016-2018 for the entire City over the course of a week are shown above. Sunday received the fewest Vice CFS, while the most were received on Friday. However, there were more than 3,500 daily CFS Monday through Friday over these three years, indicating the relative stability of these calls throughout the week.

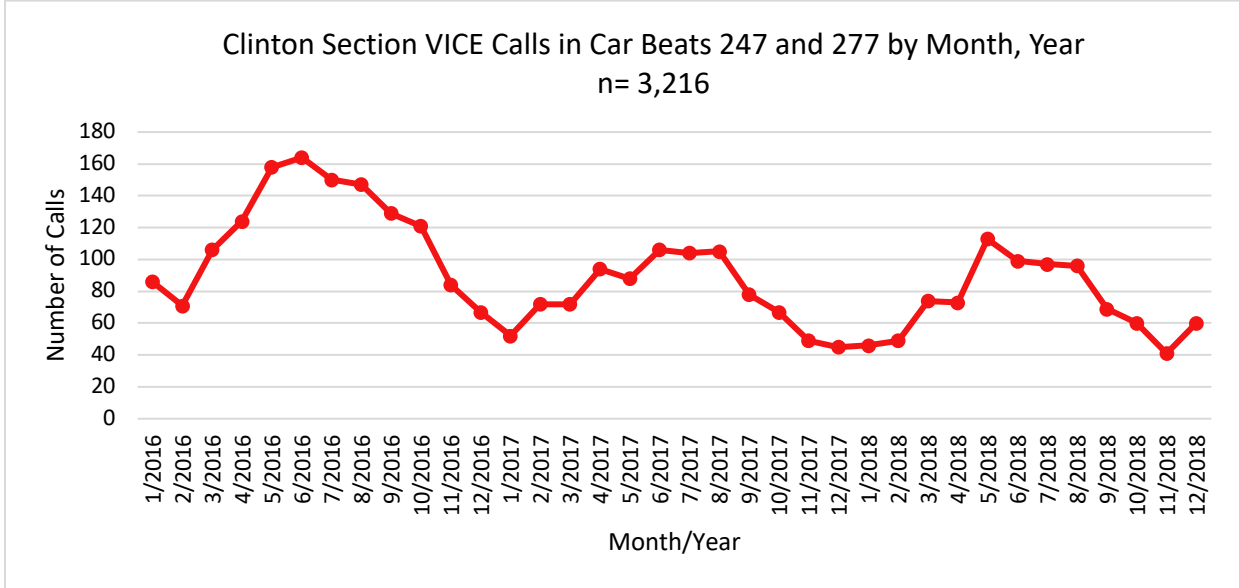
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Clinton Section VICE Calls

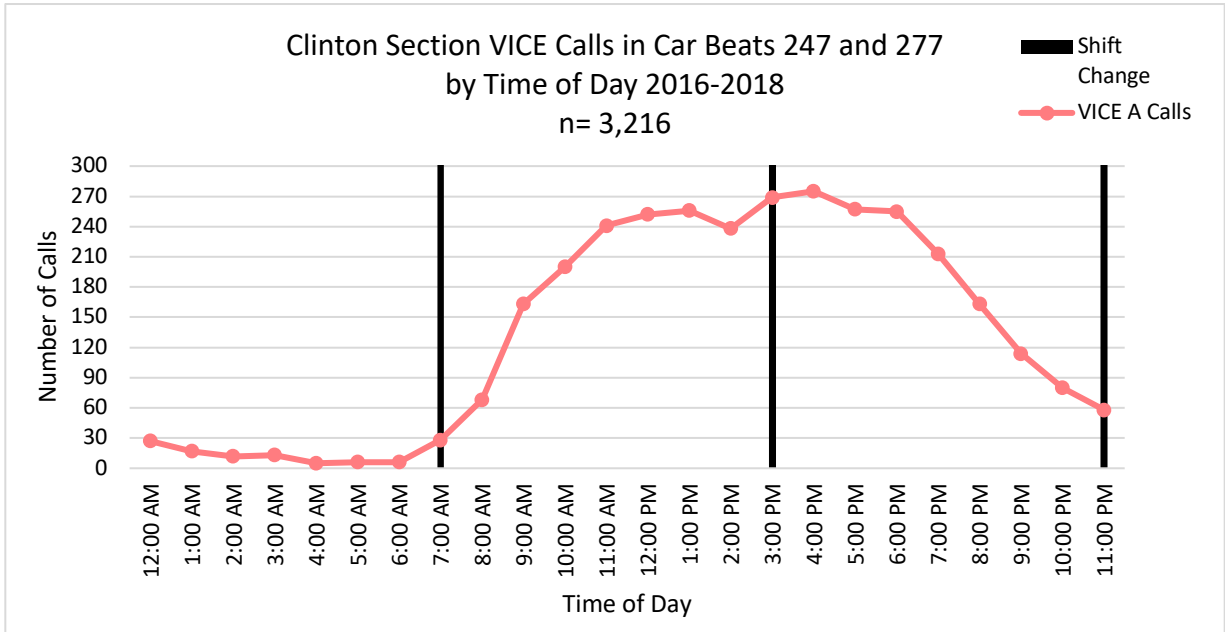
In this section we look specifically at the 8,971 Vice calls for service in the Clinton section over the last three years.



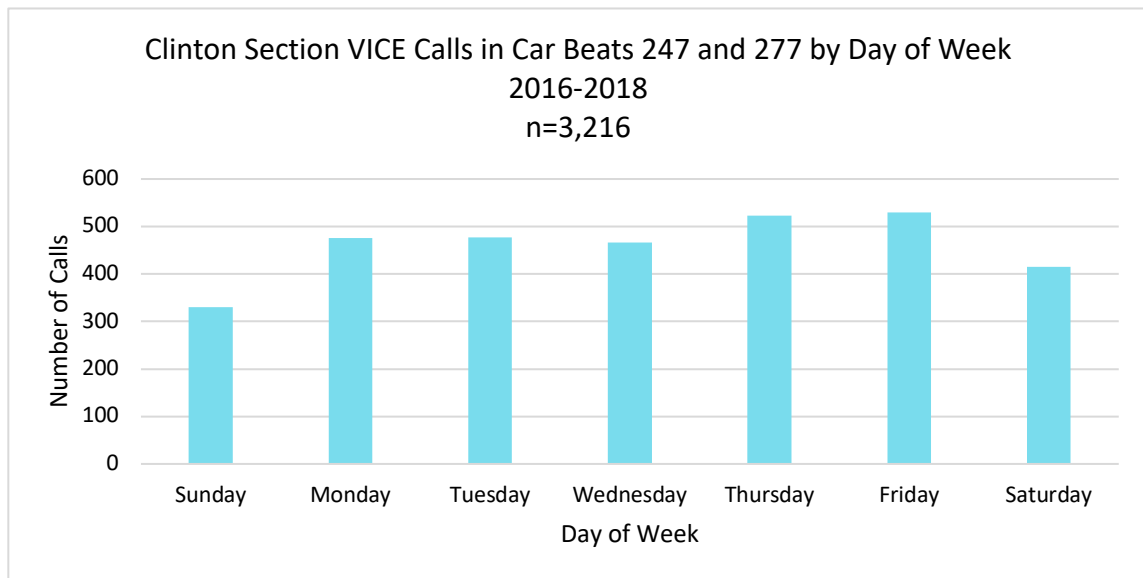
The above chart shows the distribution of these calls by month and year. Vice CFS were highest in 2016, followed by a noticeable drop in 2017 that lasted through 2018. Calls peaked in warmer months and dropped off in the colder months. There was a peak of 416 Vice CFS in May 2016 and 306 in May of 2018.



Vice calls in car beats 247 and 277 are shown above. Since car beats 247 and 277 receive a lot of the Vice activity calls, it is not surprising that the distribution across the years is similar to the entire Clinton Section, with calls peaking in 2016, and declining in 2017 and 2018. Calls increase in the warmer months of the year, May and June, and decrease in the colder months.



The chart above shows Vice calls in car beats 247 and 277 by time of day over three years. Vice calls start to increase at 7AM and the most calls are received between 3 and 6PM. Similar to the distribution across the entire city, there are very few calls in the early morning hours.



The distribution of 2016-2018 Vice calls in car beats 247 and 277 is shown above. Vice calls are lowest on Sunday and highest on Friday. Vice calls remain relatively high and stable throughout the middle of the week, indicating that Vice activity occurs throughout the week, but is less frequent during the weekend.

Conclusion

Calls for service as a whole have been on the decline from 2016 - 2018. This may be related to the national and local trends indicating that crime is on a decline. Therefore, one would expect fewer calls for service. The data also indicated that vice CFS significantly declined from 2016 to 2017 and then remained at the 2017 level in 2018. The Vice drop in calls for service was more glaring than the overall CFS drop, but it is unclear why there was such a drop this type of CFS from 2016 to 2017. One possibility, based on interviews with residents, is that some residents became apathetic towards the drug activity and so stopped calling 911 to report it; alternatively, some residents also expressed that they did not have confidence in the police responding effectively to the problem, and so stopped reporting this activity.

The CFS data indicate that problems vary across the city and may be dependent on location. Different areas of the city warrant different police resources and responses as well. For example, Central section has different issues, mostly relating to being a business district than other sections, like Genesee, which are more residential. Nonetheless, it was interesting to see that parking complaints was fourth most common CFS requested of the police.

Project CLEAN is an initiative aimed at disrupting the open-air heroin market in Rochester, NY. This calls for service data can help identify peak times that vice activity such as drug sales occur in view of others. Vice calls for service have declined over three years but still remain relatively high. Based on the volume of Vice CFS, it seems that the majority of observed drug sales occur in the Clinton and Lake sections. Peak times for this activity occur in the late afternoon/early evening hours and it is most frequent during the weekdays, with fewer calls on the weekend. One limitation is that these are community member-initiated calls; that means that this activity could be occurring out of view during other days/times. Therefore, while this data helps to understand police activity and what community members are reporting, there are still pieces missing, like observed crime by the police (not warranting a CFS from the community).

Appendix

Top 10 Non-Discretionary Calls for Service by Year

2016		2017		2018	
Call Type	Total	Call Type	Total	Call Type	Total
1. VIOLENT FAM PROB	23,507	1. SUSP INCIDENT IN PROG/JUST OCC	22,771	1. VIOLENT FAM PROB	22,253
2. SUSP INCIDENT IN PROG/JUST OCC	22,860	2. VIOLENT FAM PROB	22,506	2. SUSP INCIDENT IN PROG/JUST OCC	19,469
3. BURGLAR OR PANIC ALARM	13,375	3. BURGLAR OR PANIC ALARM	12,895	3. BURGLAR OR PANIC ALARM	12,453
4. PARKING COMPLAINT	11,455	4. PARKING COMPLAINT	11,763	4. PARKING COMPLAINT	12,105
5. ANNOYANCE CALL	10,634	5. ANNOYANCE CALL	10,149	5. ANNOYANCE CALL	9,181
6. VICE ACTIVITY IN PROG	10,169	6. VICE ACTIVITY IN PROG	7,953	6. URGENT CHECK WELFARE	7,911
7. URGENT CHECK WELFARE	7,605	7. URGENT CHECK WELFARE	7,619	7. VICE ACTIVITY IN PROG	7,846
8. FAM TROUBLE REPORT	7,344	8. FAM TROUBLE REPORT	7,150	8. FAM TROUBLE REPORT	7,195
9. DANGEROUS ANIMAL PROB	6,962	9. DANGEROUS ANIMAL PROB	6,879	9. CUST TROUBLE IN PROG/JUST OCC	6,829
10. MVA RPT-ROUTINE	6,789	10. MVA RPT-ROUTINE	6,836	10. MVA RPT-ROUTINE	6,803
All Other Calls	83,687	All Other Calls	81,324	All Other Calls	80,103
Total	204,387	Total	197,845	Total	192,148