

Drug Arrests in Rochester 2015 - 2019

Data Analysis for Project CLEAN

CLEAN-2020-04

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Introduction

This is the first paper in a series aimed at better understanding drug crime in Rochester. Using Rochester drug arrest data, we present information such as the type of drug offense, the location of drug crime, and additional charges in drug incidents. This information will be used to guide and track Project CLEAN interventions in the El Camino neighborhood, which is the location of the largest open-air drug market in Rochester.

Methods

The data used in this paper is from the Monroe Crime Analysis Center and is a compilation of Rochester drug incidents. This means that these are not *reports* of drug offenses (e.g., a concerned citizen calling 911 to report a drug sale), but, rather, these are actual arrests, which represent officer action.

When someone is arrested in Rochester, there is a unique crime report (CR) number associated with the *incident*. An incident can have one person with one charge associated with it, or multiple people with multiple charges. Individuals are identified by a MoRIS number (Monroe/Rochester Identification System), which are unique numbers assigned upon first arrest. For an example, see table 1 below.

To be included in the dataset, the incident must have had at least one arrest for a drug offense (defined as any offenses falling under NYS Penal laws 220 (non-marijuana drug offenses) or 221 (marijuana offenses), or Driving Under the Influence - Drugs). Because we were interested in the last five full years of drug incidents, we received data ranging from Jan 1, 2015- Dec 31, 2019. The date range requested was based on the date that the alleged crime occurred, not when it was reported to law enforcement; this was to more accurately reflect drug crime in the community and not simply reporting behavior.

Throughout this paper, *drug incident* refers to all charges and individuals associated with a unique incident (CR number) in which at least one charge was for a drug offense. *Charges* refer to the offenses that someone was arrested for. Because we were interested in all CR numbers that had at least one drug charge associated, there are also non-drug charges in the data. This helps to understand what types of additional charges are associated with drug incidents.

In the example below, there is one drug incident, in which two people were arrested, one person for three offenses and the second person for one offense.

Table 1. *Example of Drug Incident Data*

CR Number	MoRIS ID	Charge
18-1234567	111111	Controlled Substance Possession - Marijuana
	111111	DUI - Alcohol
	111111	Vehicle Traffic Law Violation (Tailgating)
	222222	Controlled Substance Possession - Marijuana

Data Overview

From January 1st, 2015 – December 31st, 2019, there were 5,121 crime incidents that involved at least one drug charge. These 5,121 unique drug incidents accounted for 18,856 total charges. In all, 4,993 unique individuals accounted for these incidents and charges¹.

During these five years, the number of incidents that involved at least one drug charge ranged from one individual that was arrested for 13 separate incidents for 23 total charges to another individual arrested for 10 different incidents, but a total of 29 charges to one person arrested for one incident and one charge. It was most common for an individual to be arrested for one incident and one charge for drugs. Half (49%; 2,446 individuals) of these 4,993 unique individuals were arrested for only one incident and one charge during these five years.

Offenses

Of the 18,856 total charges associated with these 5,121 drug crime incidents, the most common drug charge was for possession of marijuana. Table 2 below shows the breakdown of all charges. In total, there were 9,946 drug charges associated with these 5,121 drug crime incidents, the remaining were for non-drug charges.

Table 2. *Charges Associated with Rochester Drug Incidents 2015-2019*

Charge Type	Frequency	%
Marijuana (PL 221) Possession	3,724	20%
Non-Marijuana (PL 220) Sale/Intent to Sell	2,375	13%
Non-Marijuana (PL 220) Possession	2,027	11%
Non-Marijuana (PL 220) Drug Paraphernalia	1,567	8%
Marijuana (PL 221) Sale	150	1%
DUI – Drug-Related	103	1%
All Other Charges (not drug-related)	8,910	47%
Total	18,856	100%

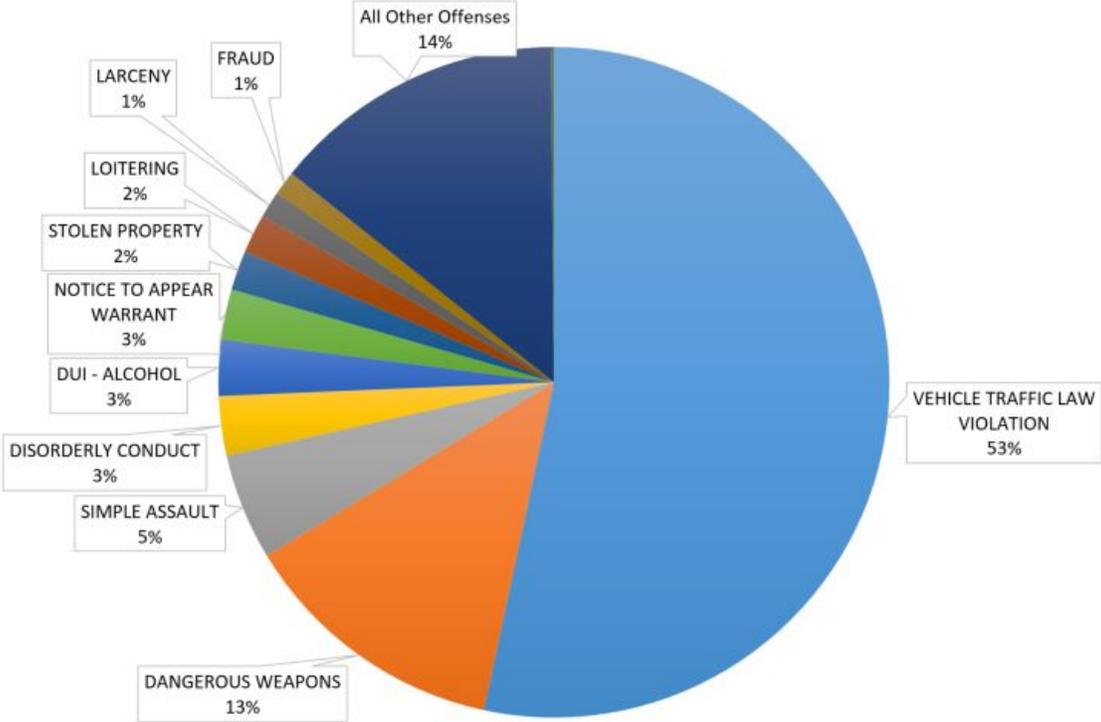
While there were 8,910 offenses that were not drug-related, it is important to remember that half of these drug incidents were arrests of one person for one drug charge. The pie chart below shows the distribution of the remaining 8,875 non-drug charges². Over half of these charges were for traffic-related offenses. This was followed by dangerous weapons charges. The most frequent dangerous weapons charge was for PL 265.03 (n = 543), indicating that the individual was in possession of a loaded firearm. The next most common charge was simple assault, followed by disorderly conduct. This provides important information about the types of

¹ There were 58 incidents (142 charges) with a missing MoRIS number, therefore it is unclear how many more additional unique individuals there are.

² Charge data was missing for 35 charges

additional offenses that individuals are arrested for during drug incidents. Appendix A includes a list of all the charges associated with these incidents.

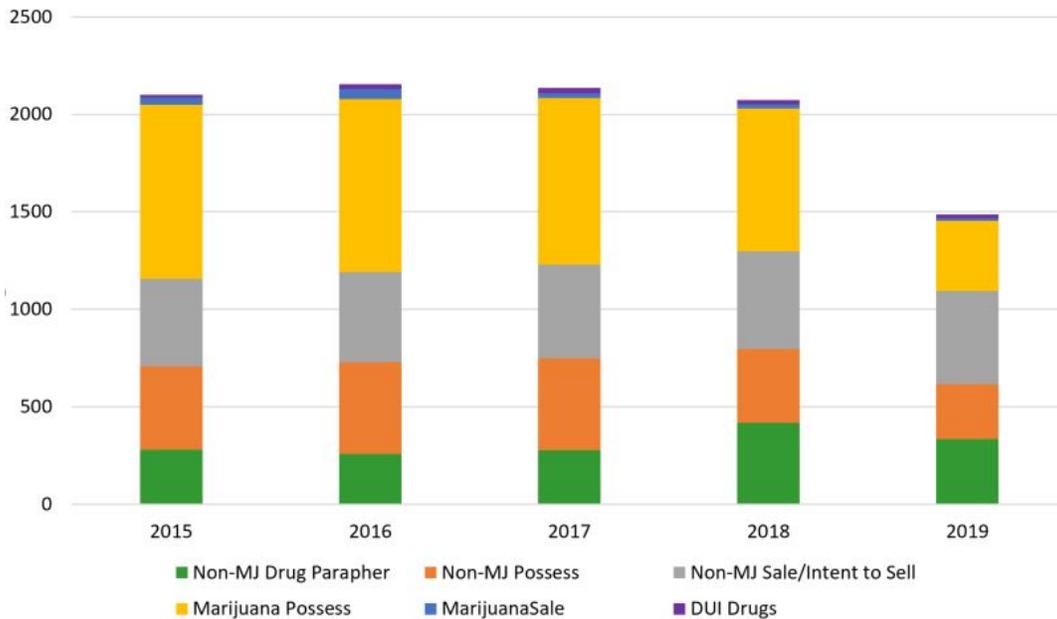
**Non-Drug Charges Associated with Drug Incidents in Rochester, 2015 - 2019,
n = 8,875 charges**



Drug Incidents by Year

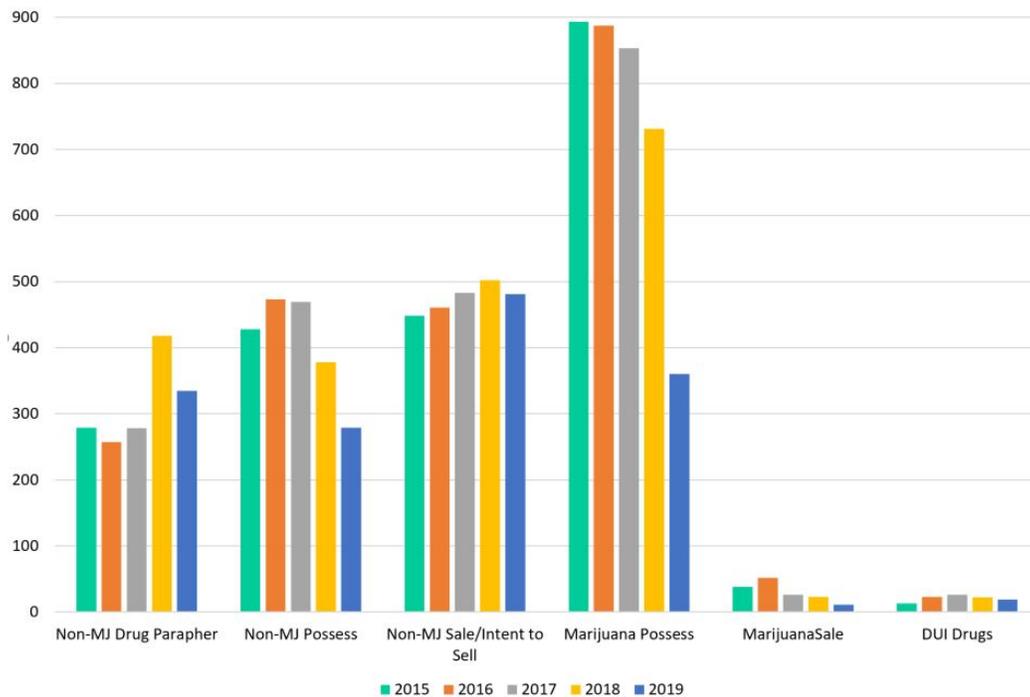
In this section, we present two different ways to look at the same data. We were interested in the types of drug charges by year to see if arrests for certain drug offenses are increasing, decreasing, or staying the same over time. The first chart shows that overall, for years 2015 – 2018, drug arrests remained pretty steady, with about 2,100 drug arrests each year. However, there was as steep drop in 2019 down to a little less than 1,500 drug arrests. It seems that this nearly 30% decrease in drug arrests from 2018 to 2019 is mostly due to a decrease in marijuana possession arrests. This make sense considering the national, state, and local movements to decriminalize marijuana possession, resulting in fewer arrests for possession of marijuana locally.

Rochester Drug Charges 2015-2019, by Type and Year

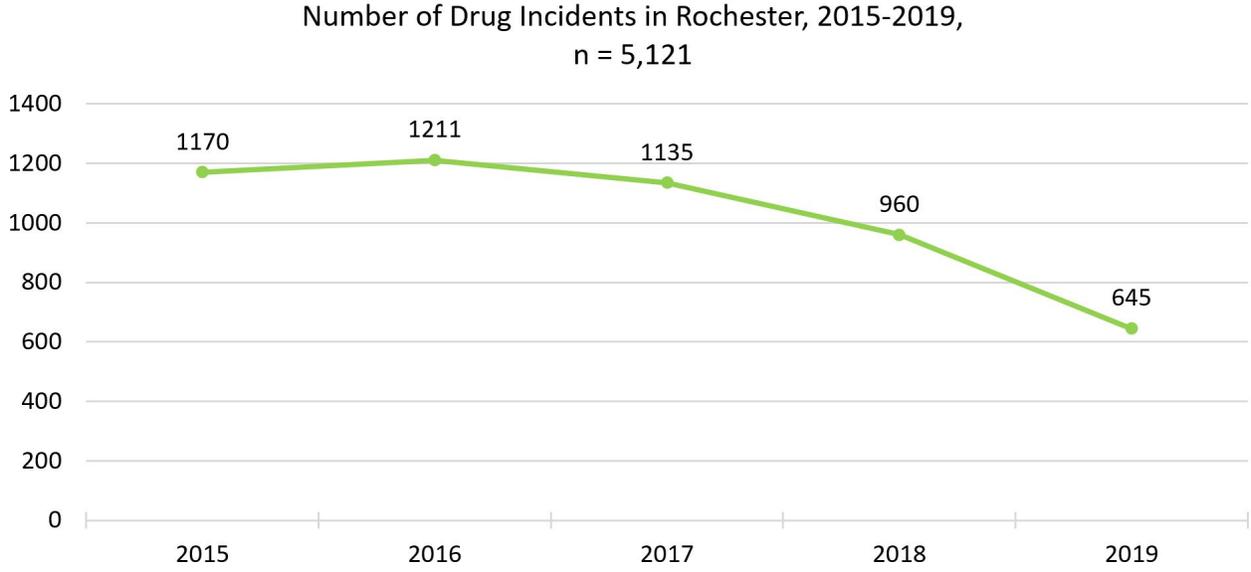


The next chart uses the same data as in the chart above, but instead compares drug offense type over time. The data indicate that non-marijuana arrests in 2019 were also lower than 2018 non-marijuana arrests. Further, non-marijuana possession arrests have steadily decreased from a peak of 473 in 2016, to a low of 279 in 2019. This may be related to RPD’s effort to refer to treatment instead of arresting individuals for drug use. However, non-marijuana sales/intent to sell steadily increased every year from 2015-2018, but then slightly decreased in 2019.

Rochester Drug Charges 2015-2019, by Type and Year



As expected (based on the decrease in arrests for marijuana in 2019), the number of unique drug incidents in Rochester also decreased in 2019. However, an interesting pattern emerges, indicating that unique drug incidents have been steadily declining since 2017. So, while the number of drug charges was relatively stable 2015 – 2018, the number of drug incidents decreased, as shown in the chart below. There were 1,211 unique drug incidents in 2016 and this decreased by nearly 50% to 645 in 2019.



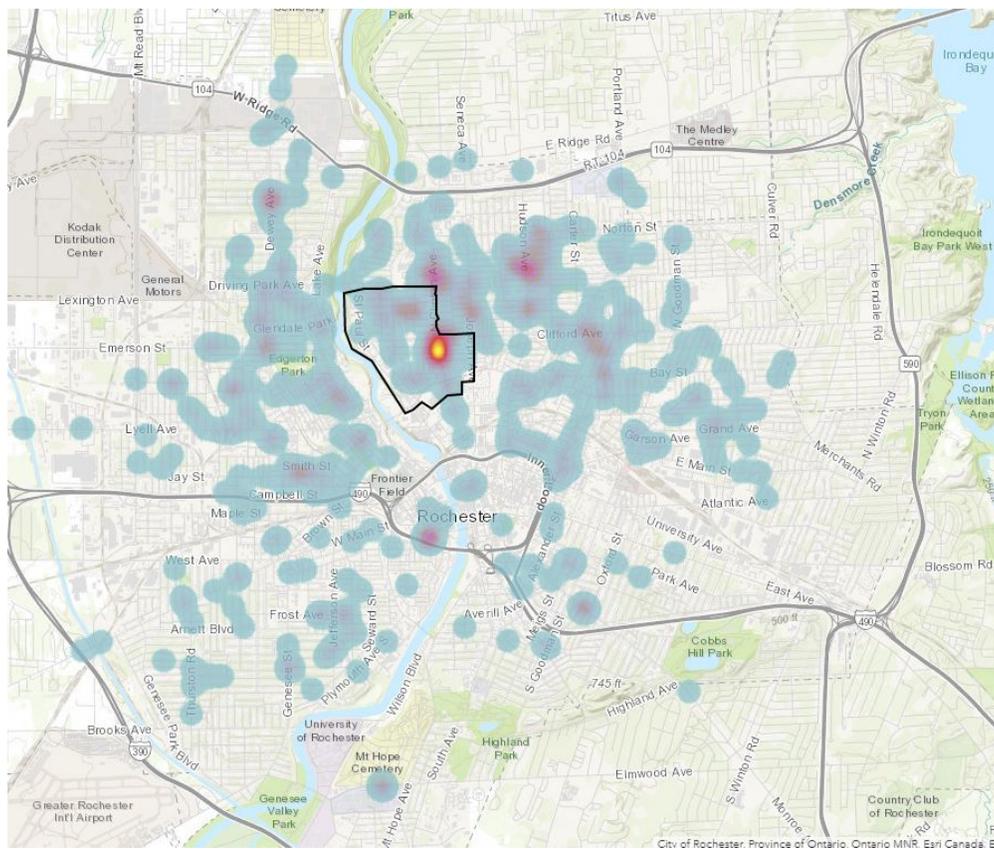
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Location

One/fifth of the arrests occurred at the location of the offense. Further, 11% (2,090) of the offenses occurred at the individuals' actual home addresses; the remaining 89% of offenses were committed somewhere other than the individual's home.

Map 1 below shows the location of 575 mappable drug arrests across Rochester in 2019. Drug arrests continue to be concentrated in the Project CLEAN TA³ (outlined in the map below). The highest concentration of these incidents is identified below by the yellow dot, at the Clifford/ N. Clinton intersection. However, drug incidents do continue to occur across the city of Rochester.

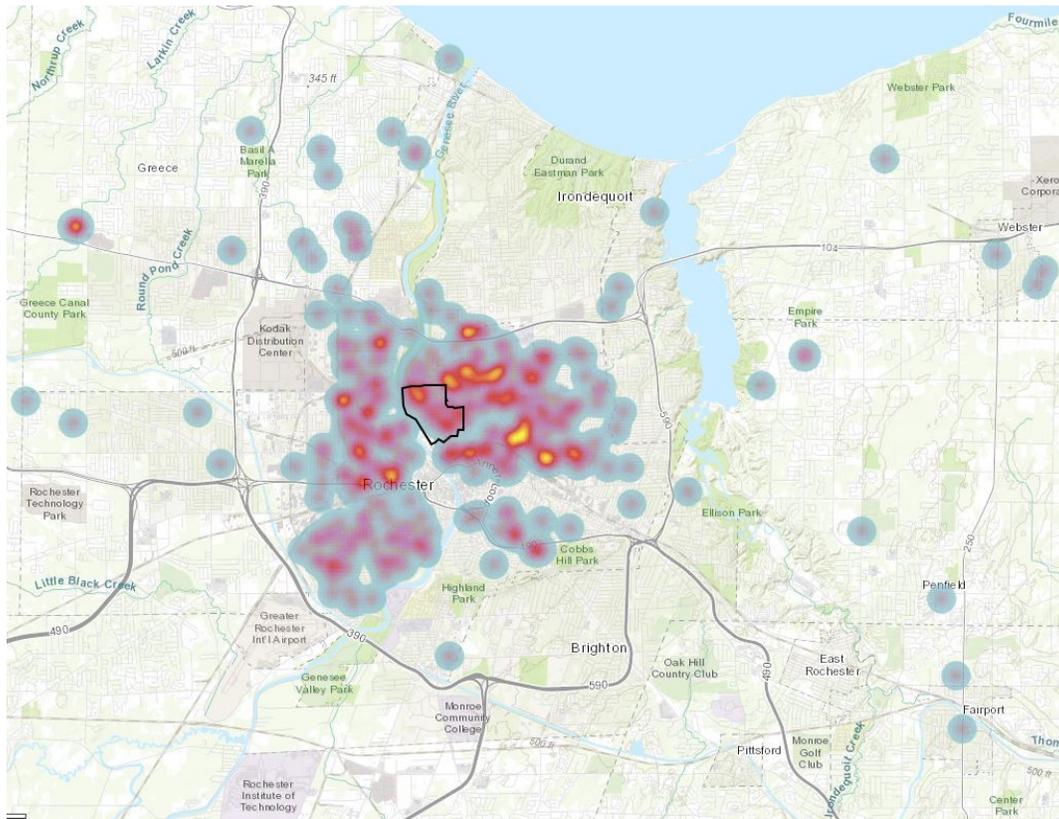
Map 1. 2019 Rochester Drug Incidents (*n* = 575 mappable crime incidents involving a drug charge)



³ Note that there were 645 unique incidents involving drugs in 2019, but 70 had incomplete incident address information, therefore 575 of these cases were mapped.

Of these 575 arrests in 2019, 388 were for a non-marijuana drug offense⁴. The home address of these 388 suspects was mapped in order to understand where the individuals live. Map 2 below indicates the home address of individuals arrested for a non-marijuana offenses in 2019. The results present a very different picture than where the drug incidents occur. The home addresses are spread out across Rochester and into the county. A number of hot spots emerge across Rochester, most of which are outside of the CLEAN Target Area, where the open-air drug market is located.

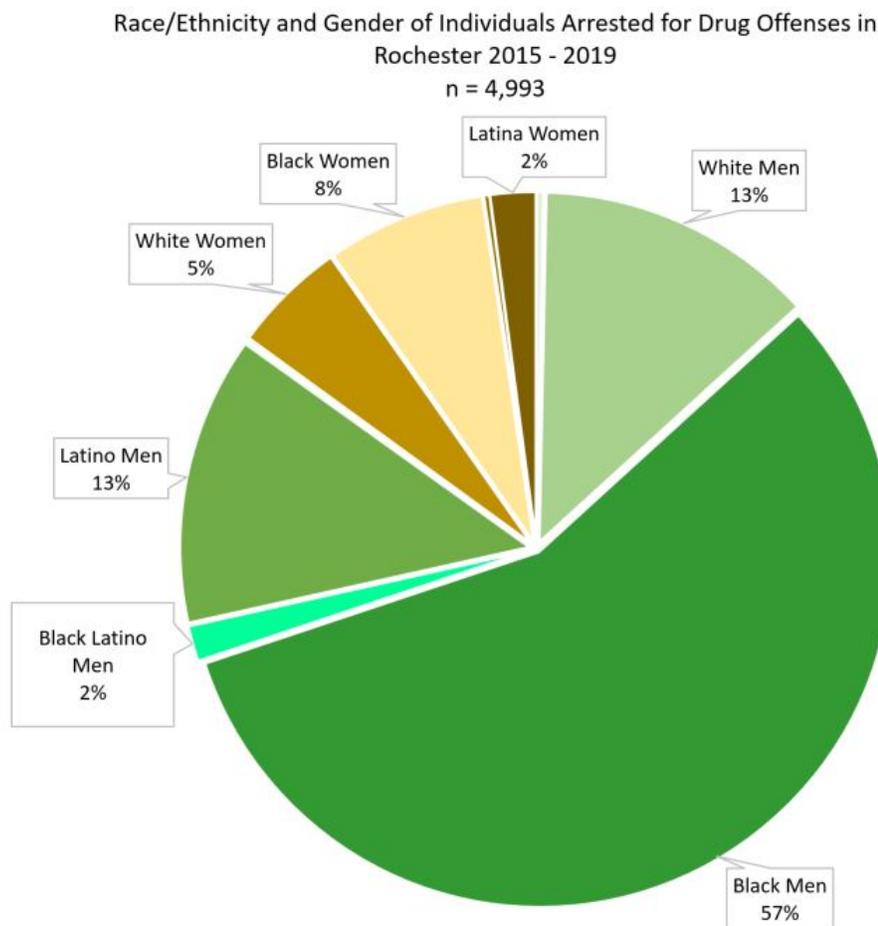
Map 2. Home Address of 2019 Rochester Drug Incidents for Drugs other than Marijuana (n = 388 mappable home addresses)



⁴Note that there were 470 unique incidents involving drugs other than marijuana in 2019, but 82 had incomplete home address information, therefore 388 of these cases were mapped.

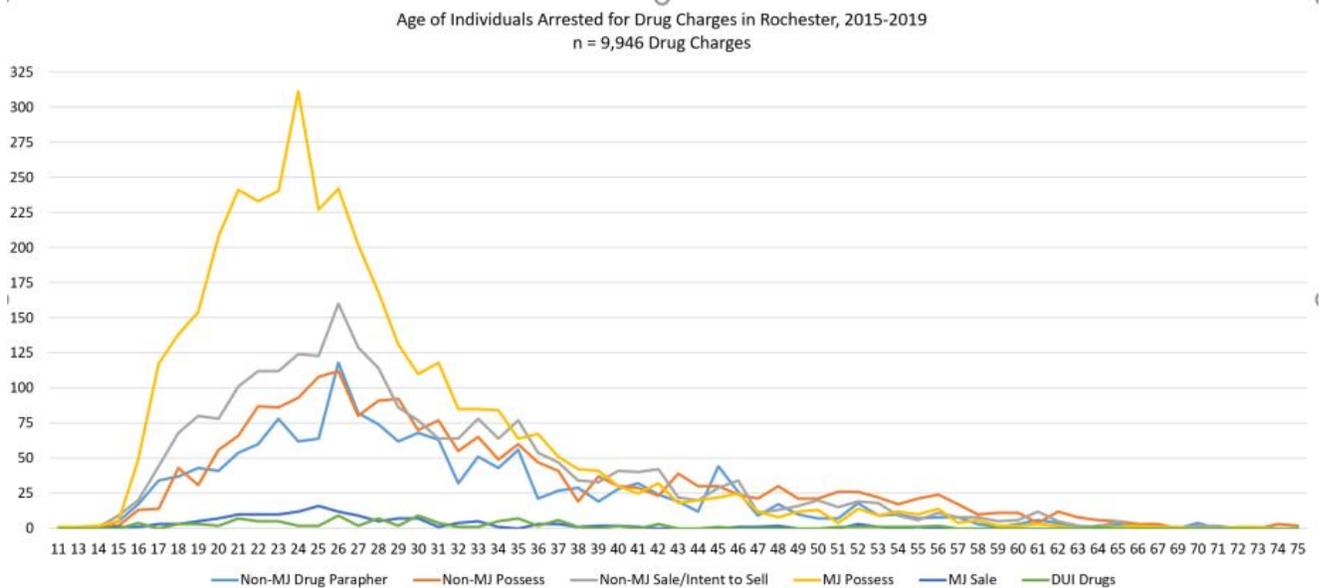
Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Of the 4,993 individuals where race/ethnicity and gender were known, the overwhelming majority are men (85%, n = 4,241 men). The pie chart below shows the distribution of the 4,993 unique individuals arrested during a drug incident over the last five years. Men are represented by the green shades and women are represented by the brown shades. Over half (57%) of those arrested were black men, with 13% white men and 13% Latino men. With the exception of Asian individuals, Latina women were the smallest group arrested for drug incidents. The data do not represent the demographic breakdown of Rochester as a whole, as 52% are women; 39% are Black, 37% are white, 17% Latino, 3% are Asian, and 5% are more than one race and/or a different race/ethnicity.



Age

Ages ranged from 11 to 75 years old for the 9,946 drug charges. There was one 11-year old and one 13-year old charged with marijuana possession, but most individuals were between 16 and 65 years old. Individuals arrested for marijuana possession tended to be younger than individuals arrested for other drug offenses. The chart below shows the breakdown of age by drug charge type. The peak age for marijuana possession was 24 (n = 311 individuals), while 26 was the peak age for all non-marijuana drug charges. While the number of people arrested then steadily declined after age 26, there does seem to be slight increase again at age 35 for all non-marijuana drug charges.



Conclusion

In conclusion, both drug incidents and drug charges have decreased from 2015 – 2019, with the most drastic decrease occurring from 2018 to 2019. Marijuana arrests have significantly decreased, while non-marijuana offenses slightly decreased. The El Camino neighborhood continues to have the highest concentration of drug-related offenses in all of Rochester. However, the data indicate that many of the people arrested for drug crimes do not live in the El Camino neighborhood. Instead, these individuals seem to be spread across the community. This is no surprise because addiction has no economic or geographic boundaries. However, all the problems associated with an open-air drug market (e.g., litter, open drug use, traffic issues, noise, overdoses) are concentrated in this neighborhood. Further, the second most common non-drug offense associated with drug incidents was dangerous weapons, indicating that violence may be more closely related to the open-air drug market than initially thought.

This is the first paper in a series devoted to drug arrests in Rochester. Future papers will include additional demographic analyses such as drug charge by age, gender, race/ethnicity, as well as time and day of the drug incidents.

Data Note

Unlike previous drug offense data presented for Project CLEAN, the data in this paper includes ALL incidents where someone was arrested for a drug charge, not only incidents where the drug charge was the top charge (most serious).

Appendix A

Charge Description		Frequency
1	VEHICLE TRAFFIC LAW VIOLATION	4,735
2	CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE POSSESSION: OTHER	4,119
3	CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE POSSESSION: MARIJUANA	3,724
4	DANGEROUS WEAPONS	1,152
5	SIMPLE ASSAULT	457
6	CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE SALE: OTHER	285
7	DISORDERLY CONDUCT	254
8	DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE - ALCOHOL	240
9	NOTICE TO APPEAR WARRANT	215
10	STOLEN PROPERTY	169
11	LOITERING (VAGRANCY)	168
12	CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE SALE: MARIJUANA	150
13	LARCENY	113
14	FRAUD	104
15	DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE - DRUGS	103
16	LIQUOR LAW VIOLATIONS	66
17	AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	66
18	GAMBLING - OTHER	56
19	MV THEFT	51
20	PUBLIC HEALTH LAW	49
21	CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	47
22	ROC CITY VIOLATION	39
23	ROBBERY	28
24	BURGLARY	25
25	PROSTITUTION	16
26	UNKNOWN	14
27	FORGERY&COUNTERFEITING	12
28	SEX OFFENSE (EXCEPT FORCIBLE RAPE OR PROSTITUTION)	10
29	UNAUTHORIZED USE OF VEHICLE	6
30	POSSESSION OF BURGLARS TOOLS	5
31	MURDER	5
32	KIDNAPPING	5
33	PATRONIZING PROSTITUTES	3
34	OFFENSES AGAINST THE FAMILY	3
35	OFFENSES AGAINST PUBLIC ORDER	2
36	BRIBERY	1
37	EXTORTION	1
38	ALL OTHER OFFENSES (EXCEPT TRAFFIC)	2,358
39	UNKNOWN	14
Total		18,856