

Field Interview & Officer-Initiated Contact Cards Report (2015 – 2020)

City of Highland Park, IL
September 11, 2020

Introduction

The City of Highland Park and the members of the Highland Park Police Department are committed to providing the best in public safety services to residents, businesses, and visitors. As part of ongoing internal reviews related to the promotion of current and historical equitable policing practices and in response to interest from community members, the City of Highland Park has made available a five-year overview of information collected from its Field Interview (FI) and Gang Contact Cards. These contact cards have traditionally been used as one means of documenting officer interactions with individuals. However, this sample is not indicative of the full scope of the work of the Police Department. Its primary limitations are:

- The dataset is not randomly selected from all police interactions; it represents only one type of Police-constituent interaction. Over the 2015-2020 period as defined in this sample, the Highland Park Police Department responded to approximately 90,000 calls. The sample discussed in this report accounts for only 219 calls, which have not been randomly selected. To produce statistically significant results, a much larger random sample would be required.
- The dataset is significantly skewed towards 2015-2017. 85% of the interactions occurred in 2015-2017. There was one officer-initiated FI or Gang Contact Card reported in 2019, and none in 2020. This is due to changes in internal reporting, described in greater detail below under “Background.”

Observations

- Officer-initiated field interview contacts represent approximately 58% (128 of 219 total) of all contact cards generated during this time period.
- White individuals comprise the majority of all officer-initiated FI Contact Cards, at 54% of the total. This is lower than the relative proportion of White individuals residing in the City.
- Individuals of color are overrepresented in this sample of FI and Gang Contact Cards as compared to the proportion of Hispanic and Black individuals residing in the City.
- Most officer-initiated stops occur in the evening (6:00 PM – 5:59 AM,) and many occur along Rt. 41. Traffic stops along Rt. 41 account for half of all officer-initiated stops of Hispanic individuals and 41% of all officer-initiated stops of Black individuals.
- Most FI Contact Cards document incidents that occurred during the evening shift (6:00 PM – 5:59 AM). Stops made at night generally preclude an officer from knowing the identity of the driver/passenger prior to first meeting them after the stop is initiated.

Background

FI Contact Cards have traditionally been completed for both officer-initiated interviews, such as traffic stops, suspicious circumstances, etc., or as the result of a call or complaint from a member of the public, such as solicitor complaints, reports of suspicious persons, etc. Gang Contact Cards are completed when an officer has contact with a self-admitted gang member or where information supports their involvement in a gang, such as prior history with that individual or entry in the state database. In both instances, these contact cards document the incident and the identity of the person should further action or contact be warranted.

The statistics used in this analysis represent one portion of Highland Park police officers' encounters with members of the public. The members of the Highland Park Police Department respond to, on average, approximately 20,000 calls per year. The data presented in this analysis focuses on 128 officer-initiated interactions recorded between January 2015 and July 2020, but officers may complete FI or Gang Contact Cards in response to calls for service. Further details on the breakdown between requests for service and officer-initiated contacts are provided below.

Over time and with advances in technology, department staff recognized that the information contained within these cards was often, simultaneously and redundantly, captured on other reports such as a general case report or in the disposition notes officers typically enter into their mobile laptop computer when closing out a call, and therefore, their use over the years has declined.

Additionally, Illinois state law requires all police departments in Illinois to document certain demographic information, including race and sex, when conducting traffic or pedestrian stops. This data is reported on an annual basis as part of the Illinois Traffic and Pedestrian Stop Statistical Study. To avoid redundancy, most interactions that fall under these two categories are no longer documented with FI contact cards.

Considerations

It is important to note the following considerations when reviewing the analysis below:

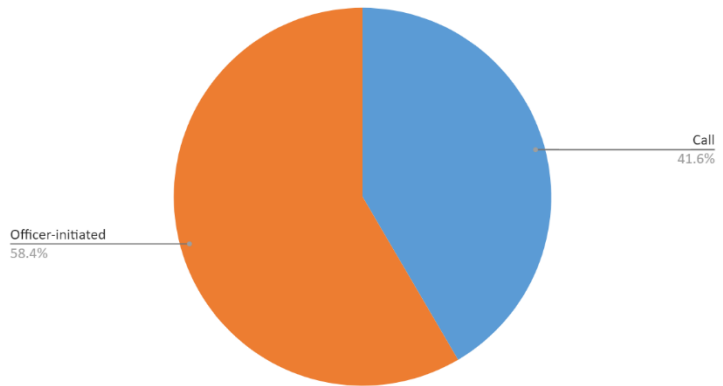
- As a result of changes to internal reporting practices, the data is disproportionately skewed towards 2015-2017. When more detailed analysis is expressed through percentages, this nuance is lost and the resulting charts may not necessarily accurately reflect the current climate.
- Demographic comparisons are provided for officer-initiated FI Contact Cards and the following: the population of Highland Park, the combined population of Highland Park and Highwood, and Lake County. Data for the City of Highwood is included as it is entirely surrounded by the City of Highland Park.
- Highway 41, which provides commuter access to Chicago, traverses the center of the City. This results in a significant number of traffic related issues and, ultimately, stops of motorists who do not reside in Highland Park.
- FI or Gang Contact Cards created due to traffic stops represent nearly 20% of the data in this sample (26 instances/128 total officer-initiated instances.) However, this is a very small fraction (approximately .06%) of all traffic stops initiated by City of Highland Park police officers during the same time period. Due to changes in reporting procedures (discussed above), not all traffic stops resulted in the creation of an FI or Gang Contact Card. Please see Traffic Detail (p. 11) for more information.

Call Origin

A total of 219 FI and Gang Contact Cards were recorded during this period. FI and Gang Contact Cards are first segmented by origin as either officer-initiated stops or requests for service. During this period, approximately 58% of contacts were officer-initiated and 42% were community-initiated. As this is an internal review, otherwise indicated, all subsequent charts focus on officer-initiated stops.

Call	Officer-Initiated	
91	128	219

All Field Interview Card Origin

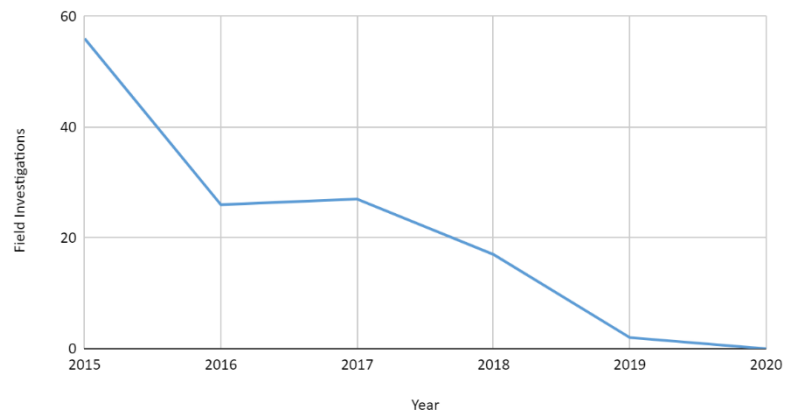


Officer-Initiated Field Interview Cards Over Time

As noted above, the decline in FI and Gang Contact Cards can be attributed to changes to internal practices as well as state reporting requirements. As indicated on the graph, the bulk of the contact cards discussed below cover the period from January 2015 through December 2017.

<u>Year</u>	<u>OI Field Interviews</u>
2015	56
2016	26
2017	27
2018	17
2019	2
2020	0
	128

Officer-Initiated Field Interview Cards Over Time



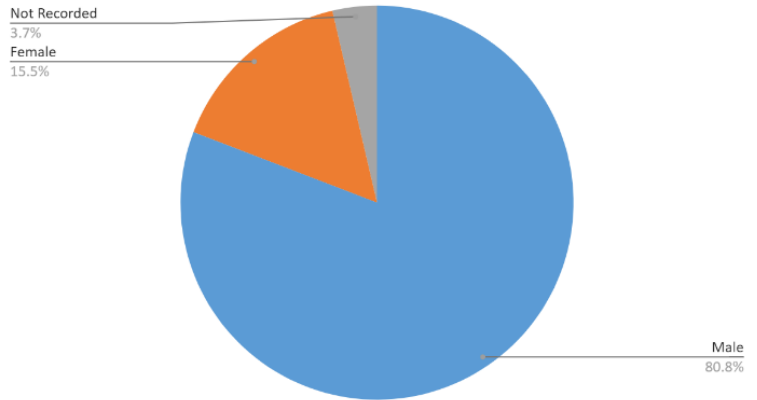
Overall Demographic Trends

Sex

81% of all field investigation interview subjects during this period were male, 16% were female. In less than 4% of cases, the subject's sex was not recorded. In officer-initiated instances, 80% of subjects were male and 20% were female.

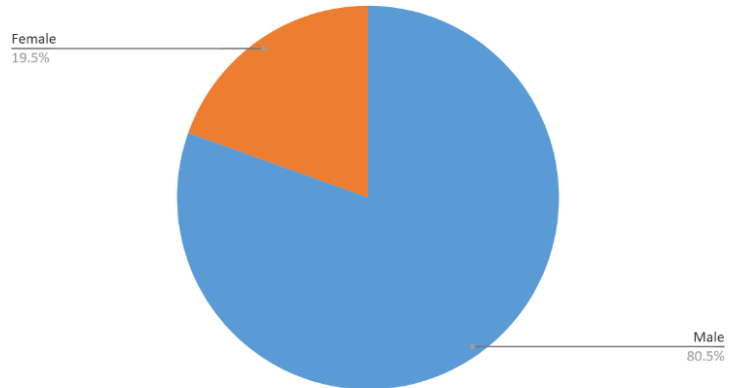
All FI Contact Cards	
<u>Sex</u>	<u>Field Interview Subjects</u>
Male	177
Female	34
Not Recorded	8
	219

All Field Interview Card Subject Sex



Officer-Initiated FI Contact Cards	
<u>Sex</u>	<u>Field Interview Subjects</u>
Male	103
Female	25
	128

Officer-Initiated Field Investigation Card Subject Sex



Overall Demographic Trends

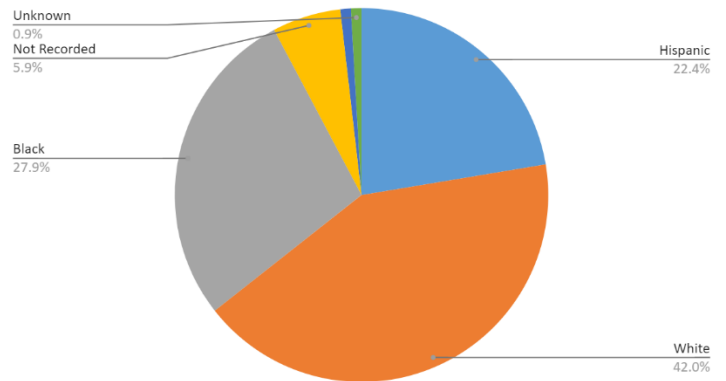
Race

White individuals represent 54% of officer-initiated field interview contacts, versus 42% of all field contacts. Hispanic individuals represent 23% of officer-initiated field interview contacts, versus 22% of all field contacts. Black individuals represent 21% of all officer-initiated field interview contacts, versus 28% of all field contacts.

All Field Interview Contact Cards by Race

Race	Field Interview Subjects
Asian	2
Black	61
Hispanic	49
White	92
Not Recorded	2
Unknown	13
	219

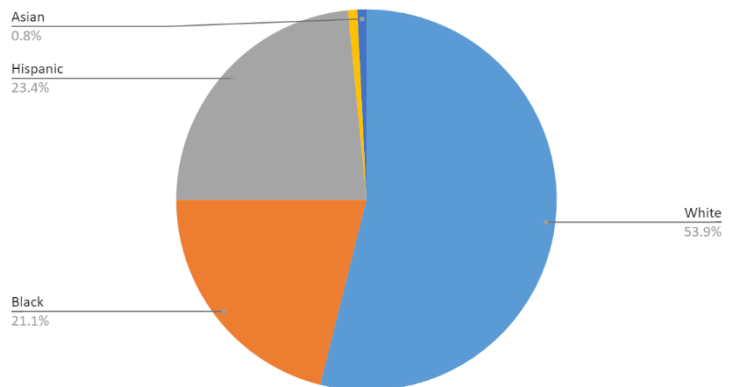
All Field Interview Card Subject Race



Officer-Initiated Field Interview Contact Cards by Race

Race	Field Interview Subjects
Asian	1
Black	27
Hispanic	30
White	69
Not Recorded	1
Unknown	0
	128

Officer-Initiated Field Investigation Card Subject Race



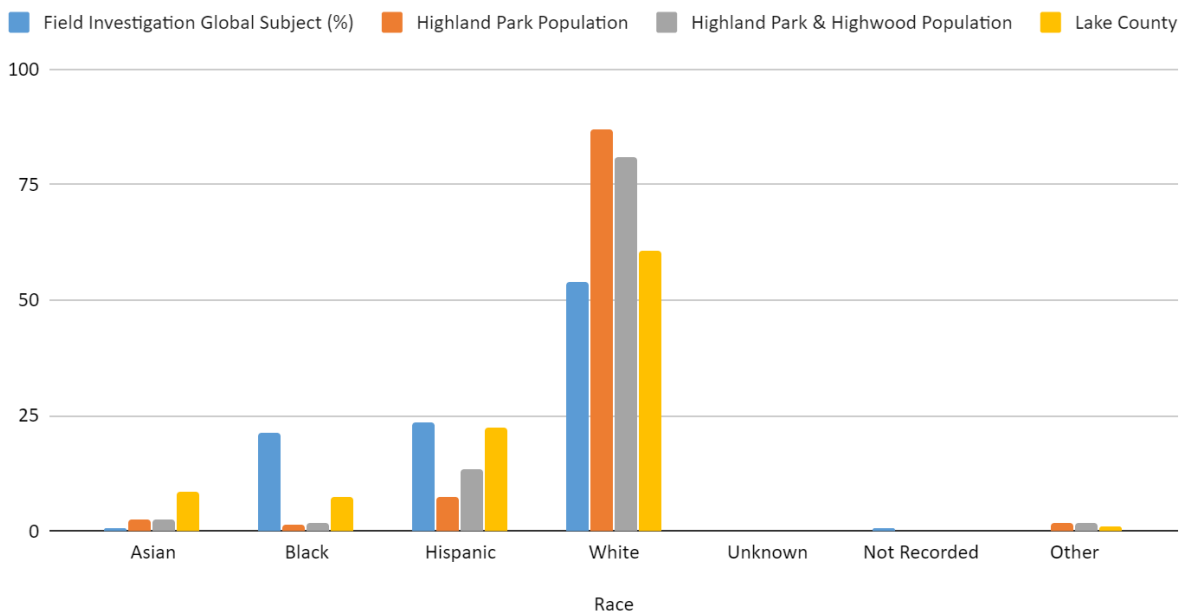
Demographic Comparisons

Demographic comparisons to the population of Highland Park, the combined population of Highland Park and Highwood, and Lake County are provided below. Data for the City of Highwood is included as it is entirely surrounded by the City of Highland Park.

Race	Field Interview Global Subject (%)	Highland Park Population (%)	Highland Park & Highwood Population (%)	Lake County (%)
Asian	0.78125	2.4	2.4	8.4
Black	21.09375	1.4	1.8	7.5
Hispanic	23.4375	7.3	13.4	22.4
White	53.90625	87.1	80.9	60.6
Unknown				
Not Recorded	0.78125			
Other		1.8	1.7	1.1

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 five-year estimates.)

Officer-Initiated Field Interview Card Subjects, Highland Park Population, Highland Park & Highwood Population and Lake County Population



Contact Reasons

Officers completing a Field Interview or Gang Contact Card indicate a reason for the stop as part of their report. There are seven standard contact reasons, defined below. Use of the starred categories is subjective, and there are no specific guidelines for their use. Officers use their best judgment when describing the reason for an incident. For example, one officer may refer to a suspicious incident as an Investigation, in that he or she *investigated* the issue, whereas another officer may categorize a similar event as Suspicious Activity.

- **Complainant***: An individual has reported unlawful or suspicious activity and a police officer responds to investigate (ie a crime is in progress, soliciting complaint, suspicious person etc.)
- **Crime Stoppers**: A crime tip is provided through the Crime Stoppers Program.
- **Investigation***: A situation that warrants investigation by the police has either been observed by an officer or was reported to an officer by a member of the public (ie someone checking car doors late at night, subject emerging from behind a closed business, subject in the train station after closing etc.)
- **Pedestrian Stop**: Generally an officer-initiated stop for suspicious circumstances (ie someone in the park after closing, potential curfew violations etc.)
- **Suspicious activity***: Suspicious circumstances that has been reported to the police by a member of the public or observed by an officer (ie Someone in a home under construction at night, an individual hiding in the bushes near a residence, subject walking around a closed gas station with a flashlight in the early morning hours etc.)
- **Traffic**: Generally officer observed traffic violations, however, officers often respond to dangerous (suspected DUI) driving complaints from other motorists.
- **Other***: This category includes events that could have fallen into either the Complainant, Investigation, or Suspicious Activity categories (ie, Subject sitting in a running car called in by resident, contact made on a medical call, individual observed taking tires out of a storage shed late at night, etc.)
- **Not Recorded**: A completed card in which the officer neglected to enter a category for the stop.

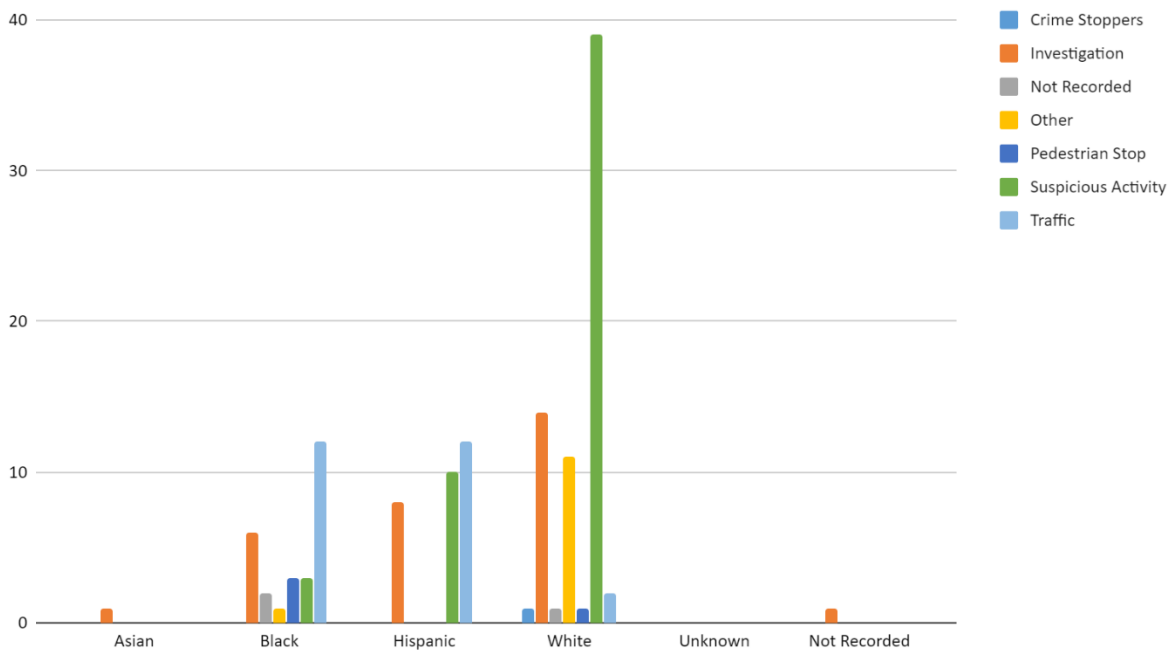
Contact Reasons and Race

Information regarding the reasons for stopping individuals is provided below, with additional detail describing the subjects' race. The spread of contact reasons is generally consistent between all FI and Gang Contact Cards and Officer-Initiated Contact Cards.

For White individuals (69 FI Cards), the most frequent reason for stops is "Suspicious Activity," followed by "Investigation" and "Other." For Hispanic individuals (30 FI Cards), the most frequent reason for stops is "Traffic," followed by "Investigation" and "Suspicious Activity." For Black Individuals (27 FI Cards), the most frequent reason for stops is "Traffic," followed by "Investigation" and "Suspicious Activity." For Black Individuals (27 FI Cards), the most frequent reason for stops is "Traffic," followed by "Investigation" and equal numbers of reports for "Pedestrian Stop" / "Suspicious Activity."

Race	Complainant	Crime Stoppers	Investigation	Not Recorded	Other	Pedestrian Stop	Suspicious Activity	Traffic	
Asian			1						1
Black			6	2	1	3	3	12	27
Hispanic			8				10	12	30
White		1	14	1	11	1	39	2	69
Unknown									
Not Recorded			1						1
									128

Officer-Initiated Field Interview Card Contact Reason By Race



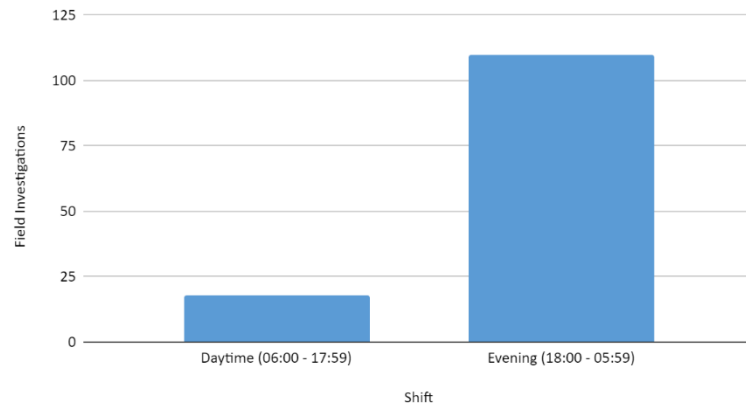
Individuals of color are overrepresented in the Traffic category. Traffic stops account for 44% of FI or Gang Contact Cards referencing Black individuals, and 40% of FI or Gang Contact Cards referencing Hispanic individuals. Please see "Traffic Detail" (p. 11) for further information.

Time of Field Interviews

Field investigations are divided into twelve-hour shifts, daytime (6:00 AM – 5:59 PM) and evening (6:00 PM – 5:59 AM), aligning with personnel shifts. The majority (75%) of all field interviews during this period occurred during the evening shift. For officer-initiated field interviews, 86% of field interviews occurred during the evening shift, as indicated below.

Shift	Field Interviews
Daytime (06:00 - 17:59)	18
Evening (18:00 - 05:59)	110
	128

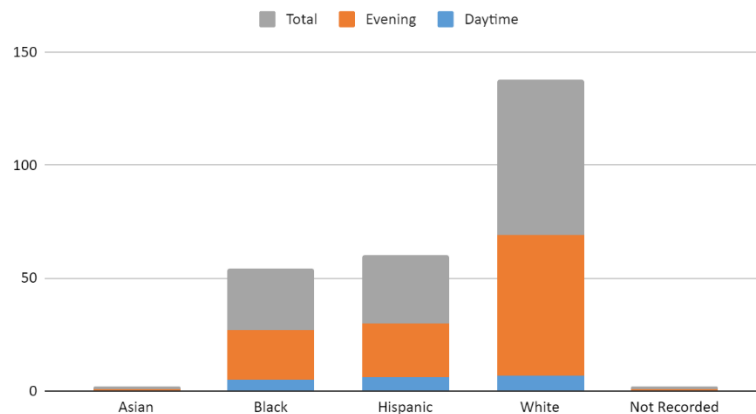
Officer-Initiated Field Interviews vs. Shift



As a result, 90% of officer-initiated stops of White individuals occurred at night. 80% of officer-initiated stops of Hispanic individuals occurred at night. 81% of officer-initiated stops of Black individuals occurred at night.

Race	Daytime	Evening	Total
Asian	0	1	1
Black	5	22	27
Hispanic	6	24	30
White	7	62	69
Not Recorded	0	1	1
			128

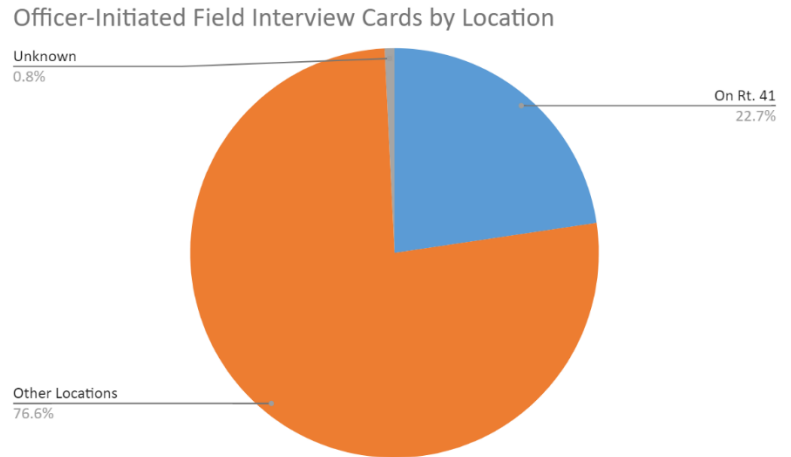
Officer-Initiated Field Interview Cards by Race and Time



Locations of Field Investigations

The City of Highland Park is located along Rt. 41, which is highly traveled and provides commuter access to Chicago. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation, in excess of 45,000 vehicles travel along Rt. 41 through Highland Park. 25% of all field investigations during this period occurred along Rt. 41. The remaining contacts took place elsewhere in the City. 23% of officer-initiated field interviews during this period occurred along Rt. 41.

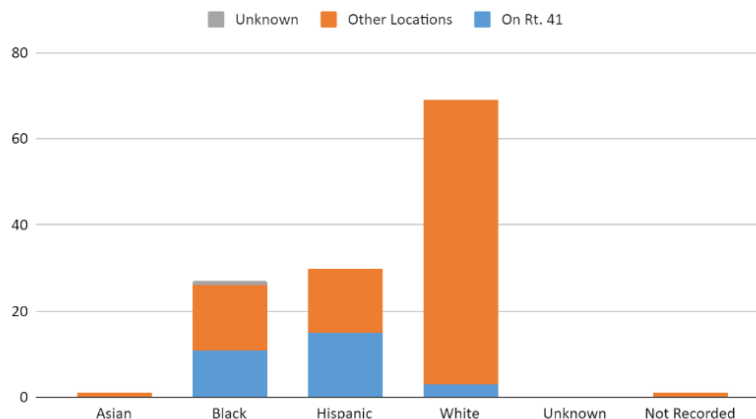
Location	Interactions
Along Rt. 41	29
Other Locations	98
Unknown	1
	128



Stops along Rt. 41 account for half of all officer-initiated stops of Hispanic individuals, 41% of all officer-initiated stops of Black individuals, and 4% of all officer-initiated stops of White individuals.

	On Rt. 41	Other Locations	Unknown	Total	Total %
Asian		1		1	0.78125
Black	11	15	1	27	21.09375
Hispanic	15	15		30	23.4375
White	3	66		69	53.90625
Unknown					0
Not Recorded		1		1	0.78125
Total	29	98	1	128	100%

Officer-Initiated Field Investigation Card Locations by Race



Traffic Detail

In this sample, individuals of color are overrepresented as compared to the proportion of Hispanic and Black individuals residing in the City. This appears to be due to the overrepresentation of individuals of color in the Traffic category.

- Individuals of color represent 93% of officer-initiated FI or Gang Contact Cards categorized as Traffic (officer-observed traffic violations.)
- Traffic stops account for 40% of officer-initiated FI or Gang Contact Cards referencing Hispanic subjects.
- Traffic stops account for 44% of officer-initiated FI or Gang Contact Cards referencing Black subjects.

As noted in the Introduction (p. 1), the sample used in this report is not representative of the full scope or volume of Police-community interactions. The conclusions drawn from this sample are likewise not reflective of the true distribution of all traffic stops.

All police departments statewide are required to participate in the State of Illinois’s Traffic Stop Statistical Survey. Departments report the total number of traffic stops completed each year as well as the total number of traffic stops of minority subjects. This is compared against Census demographic data. From this comparison, the State generates a ratio of stops of minority subjects to expected population distribution (reflecting minority:white drivers). Departments strive for a ratio of 1:1 to ensure that minority subjects are not being stopped at an inequitable or disproportionate rate. This analysis is completed by an outside consultant, not by the reporting agencies.

The City of Highland Park’s results for this time period appear below:

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Minority Population	30.58%	30.58%	30.58%	30.58%	34.20%
Minorities Stopped	25.73%	25.21%	23.91%	27.06%	18.07%
Ratio	0.84	0.82	0.78	0.88	0.53

* Indicates change to a new consultant.

As indicated in the table, City of Highland Park officers stop minority subjects for traffic violations at a lower rate than is targeted. The City is well under State of Illinois guidelines.

Most traffic stops do not result in a citation:

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Total Stops	5,864	5,284	4,074	4,327	3,916
Citations	1,361	1,135	679	911	1,478
% Cited	23.21%	21.48%	16.67%	21.05%	37.74%

Most of these traffic stops do not result in an FI Contact Card or Gang Contact Card:

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Total Traffic Stops	5,864	5,284	4,074	4,327	3,916
FI or Gang Contact Cards	10	10	7	7	2

As a result, although traffic stops are responsible for the overrepresentation of minority subjects in this report, this is not an accurate depiction of the true proportion of traffic stops of minority subjects made by the Police Department during this time period. The disproportionate overrepresentation is due to the small sample size and the fact that an FI or Gang Contact Card is not completed for every traffic stop.

Next Steps

The City of Highland Park continues to evaluate and improve its internal processes to ensure that the Highland Park community receives the highest standard of services.

The Highland Park Police Department prioritizes community engagement and is committed to ensuring that all residents and visitors of color feel safe and respected in Highland Park. The Police Department have taken a number of steps in recent years in support of fair and equitable community-based policing. The implementation of the Police Beat Coordinator (PBC) system is designed to facilitate community partnerships and respond to issues through communication and relationship building. PBCs organize beat meetings throughout the year to actively engage their residents and business owners.

The Police Department sponsors or attends a wide variety of engagement events throughout the year, from outreach to families to meeting with students, to share information about policing, listen to feedback, and encourage positive, two-way dialogue with the community. Ongoing programs such as the Citizens' Police Academy and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program provide opportunities for interested residents to learn about and support the work of the Police Department.

In 2018, the Highland Park Police Department became the first agency in the State to officially endorse the 10 Shared Principles of Law Enforcement, a joint initiative of the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police (IALCP) and the Illinois NAACP. The City of Highland Park also endorses the six pillars of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing: building trust and legitimacy, policy and oversight, technology and social media, community policing and crime reduction, training and education, and officer wellness and safety. To that end, the Police Department has increased community engagement events and pursued additional training. Highland Park officers receive a significant amount of training, both mandatory and elective, around issues of diversity and inclusion. In 2019, the Police Department invested in procedural justice training for all officers.

More information about the City's initiatives to promote a fair and equitable work environment and community can be found at cityhpil.com/diversity.