

A NEW VEHICLE FOR “STOP AND FRISK”: UPDATE

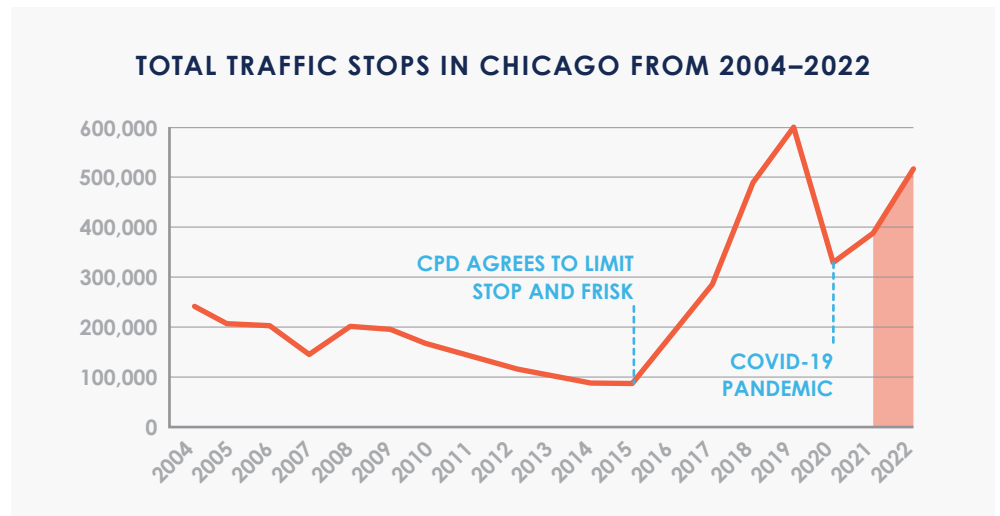
MAY 2023

In March 2023, BPI¹ and the Free2Move Coalition released a report entitled *A New Vehicle for “Stop and Frisk”: The Scope, Impact, and Inequities of Traffic Stops in Chicago*.² That report analyzed data regarding traffic stops by the Chicago Police Department (CPD) from 2004 to 2021.

This Update supplements that report with newly obtained 2022 traffic stop data and CPD documents that shed light on why the CPD makes so many traffic stops.³

TRAFFIC STOPS INCREASED DRASTICALLY IN 2022

New data shows that traffic stops by the CPD increased from 377,870 stops in 2021 to 511,796 in 2022, a 35% increase. This means, on average, CPD made more than 1,400 traffic stops each day of 2022. This spike may demonstrate a return to massive numbers of traffic stops after a dip in stops between 2020 and 2021 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.



¹ In April 2023, BPI rebranded as Impact for Equity.

² To read that report, visit: <https://www.impactforequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/A-New-Vehicle-for-Stop-and-Frisk-Report.pdf>.

³ The traffic stop data described here was obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request to the Chicago Police Department (CPD) asking for all 2022 traffic and pedestrian stop data submitted by CPD to the Illinois Department of Transportation for the 2022 Illinois Traffic and Pedestrian Stop Study. Traffic stops use of force data was sourced from the Tactical Response Report Dashboard maintained by the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General. See <https://informationportal.igchicago.org/dashboards/public-safety/tactical-response-reports/>.

LICENSE AND REGISTRATION VIOLATIONS WERE THE PRIMARY REASON FOR TRAFFIC STOPS IN 2022

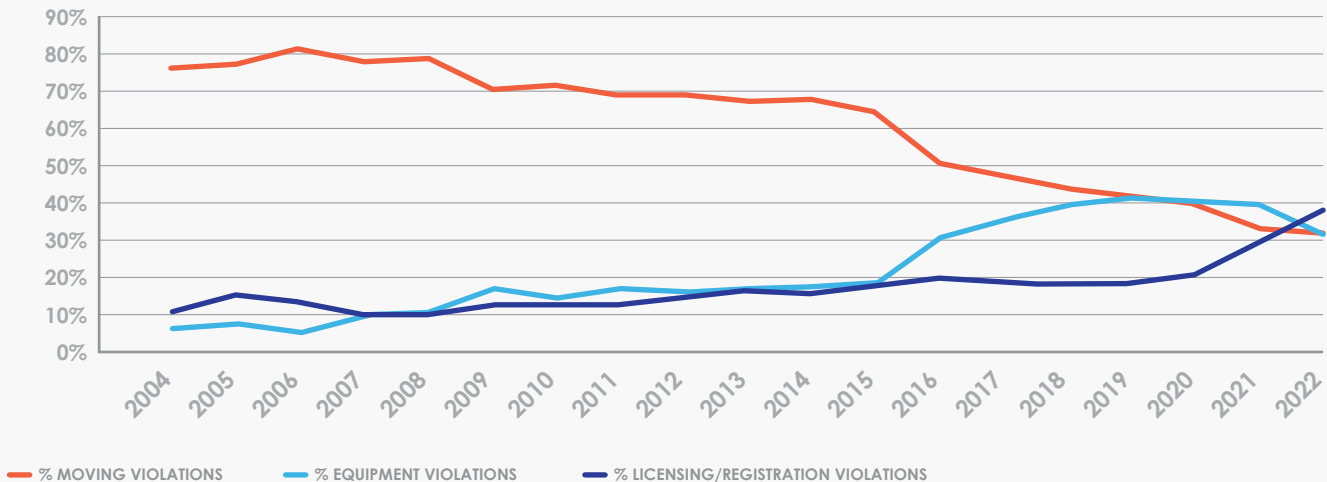
For the first time since the CPD began submitting traffic stop data to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) in 2004, the category of license and registration violations were the primary reason for traffic stops. Those reasons were given in 37.6% of traffic stops, a nearly 10% increase over 2021. Stops made for moving violations, which include everything from reckless driving and speeding to failure to stop at a stop sign, dropped from 32.6% to 31.5%. Traffic stops made for speeding, a clear risk to roadway safety, decreased from 1.8% in 2021 to

less than 1% of stops in 2022. Traffic stops made for equipment violations also dropped from 38.6% to 30.8%.

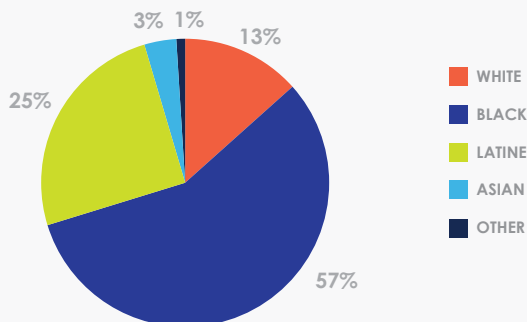
TRAFFIC STOPS CONTINUED TO DISPROPORTIONATELY TARGET BLACK AND LATINE DRIVERS

In 2022, the racial demographics of stops shifted slightly. The proportion of Latine drivers increased from 22% to 25% of all traffic stops compared to 2021. The proportion of Black drivers decreased from 63% to about 57% of stops. Despite this decrease, Black drivers were still stopped at a much higher rate than their share of the population – 29%.

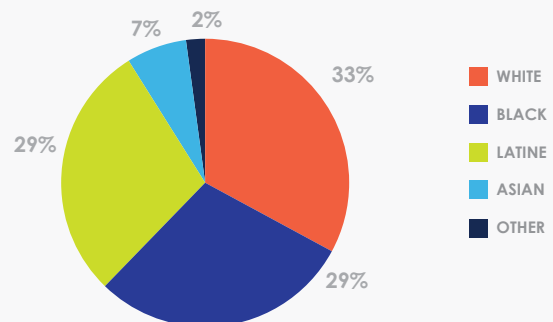
CATEGORY OF TRAFFIC STOP AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL STOPS, 2004–2022



RACIAL BREAKDOWN OF TRAFFIC STOPS IN CHICAGO—2022



RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS IN CHICAGO—2022



THE POLICE DISTRICTS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF TRAFFIC STOPS WERE BOTH LOCATED ON THE WEST SIDE

District 11 and District 10 had the highest number of stops, with 44,448 stops (8.7%) and 36,347 stops (7.1%) respectively. District 10 is located just south of District 11, and together they encompass the neighborhoods of Little Village, North Lawndale, Garfield Park, and Humboldt Park. These districts are over 96% Black and Latine and home to just 6.7% of the city's population. Yet this is where nearly 16% of all traffic stops were made in 2022.

TRAFFIC STOPS CONTINUED TO BE AN INEFFECTIVE STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING BOTH PUBLIC AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

Rates of contraband recovery, searches, and citations all decreased from 2021 to 2022. The number of uses of force associated with traffic stops increased, and the rate at which Black and Latine drivers were the subjects of use of force remained high.

Fewer Citations

The percentage of stops that resulted in citation decreased from 4.3% in 2021 to less than 3.4% of traffic stops in 2022.

Decreased Contraband Recovery

In 2022, only 0.43% of the traffic stops resulted in recovery of contraband such as drugs, alcohol, or weapons. In 2021, approximately 0.5% of stops resulted in contraband recovery.⁴

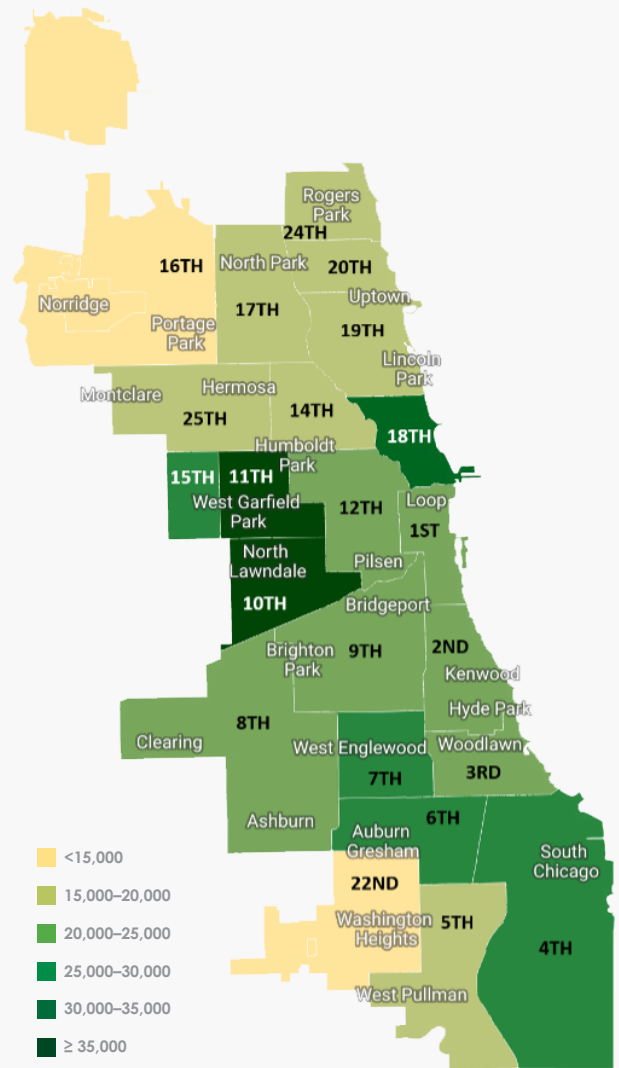
Fewer Searches

While the number of stops increased, the proportion of traffic stops that resulted in a search decreased from 1.5% in 2021 to about 1.1% in 2022.

Increase in Uses of Force

In 2022, there were 212 uses of force that resulted from a traffic stop, an increase over the 200 times CPD reported a use of force in 2021. Each year, almost 97% of those uses of force were against Black or Latine people.

2022 CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT TRAFFIC STOPS BY POLICE DISTRICTS



Created with Datawrapper

⁴ See our report *A New Vehicle For "Stop And Frisk": The Scope, Impact, And Inequities Of Traffic Stops In Chicago* to learn more about data discrepancies across CPD's reported traffic stop data, including reported numbers of contraband recovery. <https://www.impactforequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/A-New-Vehicle-for-Stop-and-Frisk-Report.pdf>.

CPD PRIORITIZES HIGH NUMBERS OF TRAFFIC STOPS AS A STRATEGY

In recent years, Chicago police have increasingly relied on traffic stops as a primary policing strategy, not to improve roadway safety, but in an attempt at widespread criminal investigation and violence prevention. The data shows these stops are not an effective tool to uncover criminal activity and have harmful impacts, particularly on Black and Latine communities.

To better understand CPD's traffic stop strategy, we made a Freedom of Information Act request for any correspondence that mentioned traffic stops

in Police Area 4, an area with some of the highest traffic stop numbers, during late summer 2020, a period when the number of stops spiked citywide.⁵

While the CPD has spoken generally about their use of traffic stops in the past,⁶ these emails detail how CPD uses traffic stops as an ill-informed measure to reduce crime and pushes officers to increase traffic stop numbers.

During this time, police district leadership repeatedly encouraged aggressive use of traffic stops with the justification that they would reduce shootings or violence:

Subject: Fw: Daily Traffic Summary Report
Attachments: 2020.09.08 1 Day.pdf; 2020.09.08 7 Day.pdf; 2020.09.08 28 Day.pdf; 2020.09.08 28 Day.pdf

Thank you for your perfect efforts. The higher the traffic stops creates the less likely for shootings using firearms.

Subject: FW: Daily Traffic Stop Summary
Attachments: 2020.08.09 1 Day.pdf; 2020.08.09 7 Day.pdf; 2020.08.09 28 Day.pdf; 2020.08.09 Traffic Stop Summary.pdf

Cmdrs,

Please give your WOLs daily reminders of the importance of traffic stops. The traffic stops are needed to assist with the combat against violence. The present traffic stops are not not sufficient.

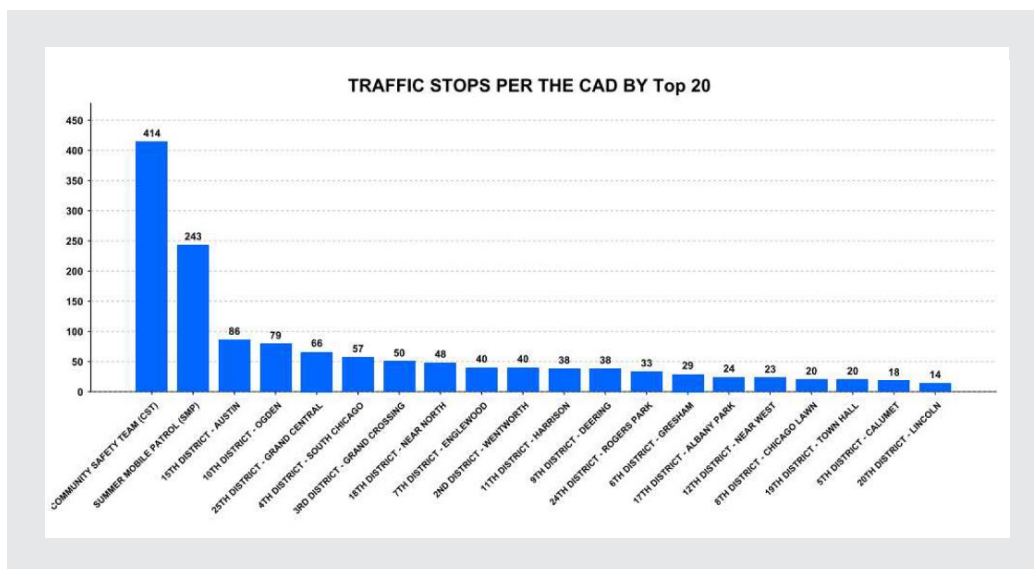
⁵ A Freedom of Information Act request for this and additional information was first made on March 2, 2022. It specifically asked for: all reports submitted in preparation for regular internal CPD CompStat meetings describing traffic stops; all presentations made during regular internal CPD CompStat meetings describing traffic stops; all meeting minutes documenting internal CPD CompStat meetings describing traffic stops; all communications between the Superintendent of Police, the Deputy Chiefs, and the District Commanders regarding traffic stops; and all CPD District Strategic Plans from the years 2018, 2019, and 2020. That request was denied as "unduly burdensome." On April 5, 2022, a narrowed request was submitted for: (1) all reports submitted in preparation for regular internal CPD CompStat meetings describing traffic stops and all presentations made during regular internal CPD CompStat meetings describing traffic stops for the period of August – October 2020; and (2) all email communications between the Superintendent of Police, the Bureau of Patrol Chief, the Area 4 Deputy Chief, the District 10 Commander, the District 11 Commander, and the District 15 Commander regarding traffic stops for the time period of August, September, and October 2020. The request was again denied. On September 23, 2022, a further narrowed request for only the email communications regarding traffic stops between the enumerated officials was submitted and, after an initial denial and a subsequent appeal to the Public Access Counselor, ultimately fulfilled.

⁶ See Pascal Sabino, *West Side Drivers Are Stopped by Cops The Most In Chicago. But 94% Of Stops Don't Lead To Tickets*, BLOCK CLUB CHICAGO (Nov. 18, 2021), <https://blockclubchicago.org/2021/11/18/west-side-drivers-are-stopped-by-cops-the-most-in-chicago-but-94-of-stops-dontlead-to-tickets/>; Christian Belanger, *Police Detail Plans for More Patrols, Traffic stops After November Gun Violence*, HYDE PARK HERALD (Dec. 2, 2021), https://www.hpherald.com/evening_digest/police-detail-plans-for-more-patrols-traffic-stops-after-november-gun-violence/article_dcfea5a4-53bb-11ec-ad9d-9382c8654add3.html.

Both the large number of stops made and correspondence among CPD leadership suggest that the Department regularly pushed officers to increase traffic stop numbers. The correspondence also suggests that the number of traffic stops (rather than the outcome of those stops) was seen as a critical metric for performance.

Additional documents produced in response to the Freedom of Information Act request suggest that

CPD Area and District briefings routinely included a ranking of police units in order of highest to lowest numbers of traffic stops. These traffic stops briefings, sometimes sent as often as daily, do not appear to include an analysis of the outcomes of traffic stops, suggesting that the quantity of stops, rather than any measurable public safety outcomes, is driving the uptick in traffic enforcement.



TRAFFIC STOP COUNT DISCREPANCIES

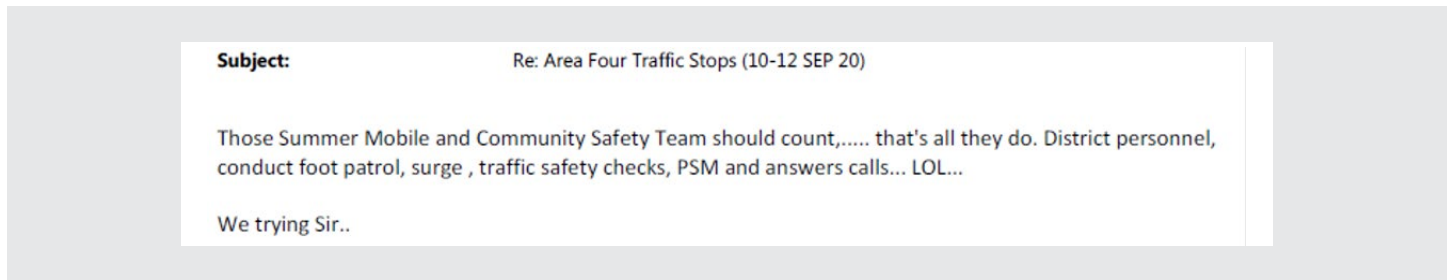
These emails confirm that CPD relies on the number of traffic stops reported by officers to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) within the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) rather than stop totals reported to IDOT. In prior years, OEMC records showed a significantly higher number of traffic stops than the numbers reported to IDOT.⁷

If this is true for 2022, the over 511,000 traffic stops reported to IDOT may be an undercount of the number of traffic stops that are actually occurring.

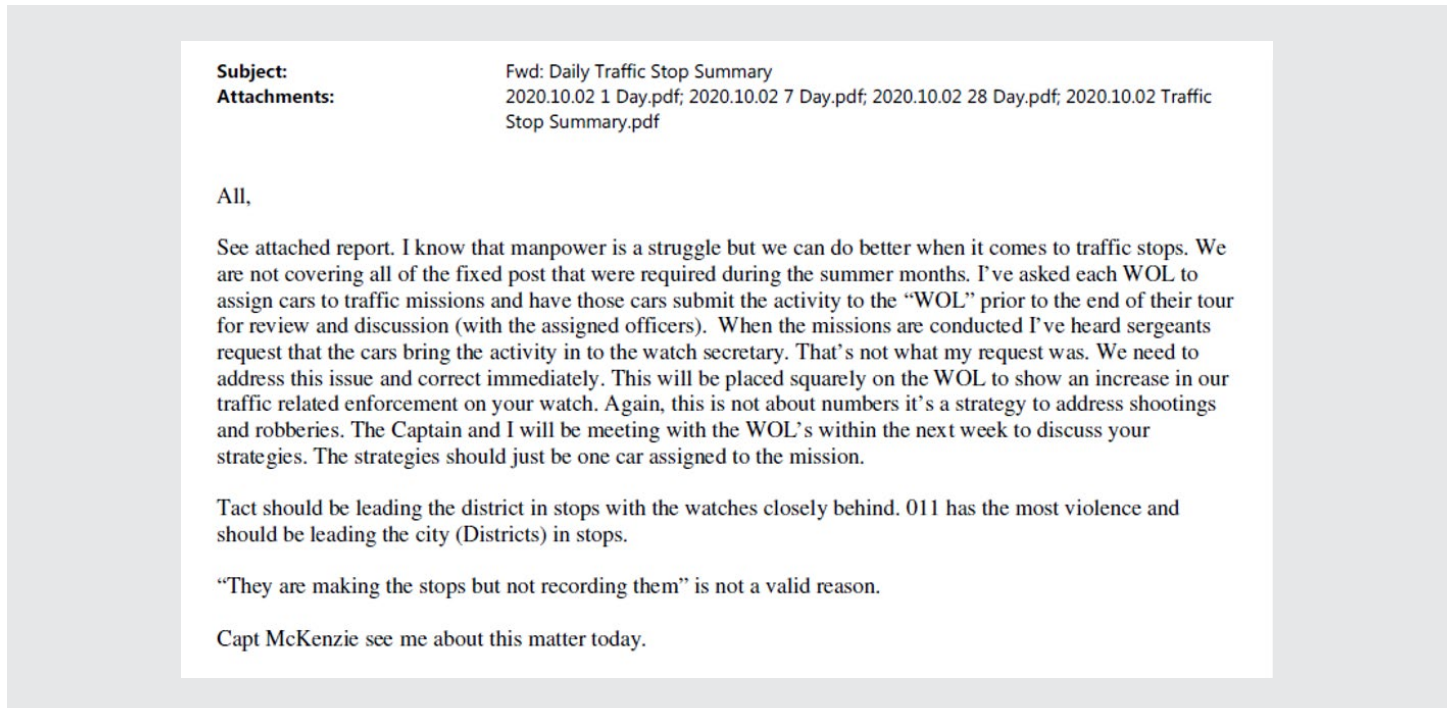
⁷ For example, in 2020 the total traffic stops reported to IDOT was around 327,000, while the total stops recorded with OEMC were around 493,000 stops. Compare Illinois Department of Transportation, *Illinois Traffic and Pedestrian Stop Study 2020 Annual Report: Detailed Tables*, p. 203 <https://tinyurl.com/5b3ctx3r>, with Chicago Police Department, Force Review Division, 2020 Year-End Summary, p. 46 <https://home.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/FRD-2020-Year-End-Report.pdf> ("OEMC recorded 492,659 traffic stops citywide during 2020.").

During this period in late summer 2020, these reports also show the citywide Community Safety Team was consistently responsible for the greatest share of traffic stops across units by a large margin. The Community Safety Team was created by the Chicago Police Department with the explanation that it would “partner with Chicago’s communities to address violence, neighborhood concerns and ongoing conflicts.”⁸

As shown elsewhere in this Update and the earlier Report, however, the deployment of a Community Safety Team to conduct high numbers of traffic stops is plainly inconsistent with the goal of building community-based safety. One email responding to data on traffic stop numbers made by various units, including the Police Districts, Community Safety Team, Summer Mobile Patrol, and others, emphasizes these teams’ focus on stops:



The push to increase the numbers of traffic stops led to a prioritization of traffic missions and competition between departmental units for numbers of stops. The units that increased their use of traffic stops were praised and those that fell behind were criticized:



⁸ “CPD Announces Launch of Two New Citywide Teams with Focus on Strengthening Community Partnerships” Chicago Police Department Office of News Affairs (July 27, 2020) [https://home.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/27-Jul-20-CPD%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CAnnounces%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CLaunch%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8Cof%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CTwo%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CN-ew%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CCitywide%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CTeams%E2%80%8C.pdf#:~:text=The%20Community%20Safety%20Team%20\(CST\)%20and%20the%20Critical.Gang%2C%20Gun%2C%20Saturation%20and%20Community%20Area%20Response%20teams.](https://home.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/27-Jul-20-CPD%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CAnnounces%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CLaunch%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8Cof%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CTwo%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CN-ew%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CCitywide%E2%80%8C-%E2%80%8CTeams%E2%80%8C.pdf#:~:text=The%20Community%20Safety%20Team%20(CST)%20and%20the%20Critical.Gang%2C%20Gun%2C%20Saturation%20and%20Community%20Area%20Response%20teams.)

Subject: RE: Area Four Traffic Stops (24-26 SEP 20)

Thank you and your teams for your perfect efforts. I do believe we can consistently maintain the 3,4 and 5th spots. Excellence first.

The entirety of the excerpted e-mails and attachments previewed in this Update can be found in an Appendix at impactforequity.org.

CPD allocates countless resources to a strategy of widespread traffic stops despite evidence that they are ineffective at addressing traffic or public safety. In fact, the data shows that traffic stops rarely result in recovery of a firearm, other illegal contraband, or arrest. **Instead of keeping roadways or communities safer, traffic stops target Black and Latine drivers, which can result in violent interactions, widespread distrust, psychological harm, and increased entry into the criminal legal system.**





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A NEW VEHICLE FOR “STOP AND FRISK”: UPDATE

APPENDIX

This is the Appendix to the report, *A New Vehicle for “Stop and Frisk”: Update*. The Update contains excerpts of emails exchanged among CPD leadership regarding traffic stops during late summer 2020. This Appendix provides the source material for those excerpts as well as other emails produced that reflect CPD strategy, as described below.

On April 5, 2022, Impact for Equity submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to Chicago Police Department for: (1) all reports submitted in preparation for regular internal CPD CompStat meetings describing traffic stops and all presentations made during regular internal CPD CompStat meetings describing traffic stops for the period of August – October 2020; and (2) all email communications between the Superintendent of Police, the Bureau of Patrol Chief, the Area 4 Deputy Chief, the District 10 Commander, the District 11 Commander, and the District 15 Commander regarding traffic stops for the time period of August, September, and October 2020. The request was denied as “unduly burdensome.”

On September 23, 2022, a narrowed request for only the email communications regarding traffic stops between the enumerated officials was submitted and, after an initial denial and a subsequent appeal to the Public Access Counselor, ultimately fulfilled.

Impact for Equity received the responsive emails from CPD on March 31, 2023. The response contained over 550 emails. The majority of these emails were sent among CPD leadership circulating regular briefings of traffic stop numbers and contained no commentary and many were duplicates. However, a number of emails exchanged within this period did include commentary regarding CPD’s strategy around traffic stops during this three-month time frame.

The email records provided did not contain the attachments referred to therein, and on April 7, 2023, Impact for Equity submitted another Freedom of Information Act request for a small sample of the traffic stop data reports attached to the emails. Impact for Equity received this response on April 24, 2023.

This Appendix includes all emails received in response to our Freedom of Information Act request that include commentary on traffic stops strategy and any corresponding attachments that we received. These emails and attachments represent communications that: were limited to the three-month period of August – October 2020; were limited to the email communications among the Superintendent of Police, the Bureau of Patrol Chief, the Area 4 Deputy Chief, the District 10 Commander, the District 11 Commander, and the District 15 Commander; and were limited to communications regarding traffic stops. Therefore, this Appendix likely represents only a snapshot of the communications regarding traffic stops among CPD leadership at that time.