

NDSC Criminal Justice Data Initiative: GEOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES IN POLICE-INITIATED CONTACT

The [Neighborhood Data for Social Change](#) (NDSC) platform, a project of the [USC Price Center for Social Innovation](#), is a free, publicly available online resource for civic actors in Los Angeles County to learn about their neighborhoods. In the spring of 2019, the USC Price Center partnered with Microsoft and the [USC Safe Communities Institute](#) to launch the [NDSC Criminal Justice Data Initiative](#), a pilot project to collect, aggregate, and disseminate additional public safety indicators on the NDSC platform, including arrests, stops by police, and calls for service from community members. These indicators were chosen through a process of engaging law enforcement agencies, community residents, and local non-profits on their data needs and definitions of public safety through a series of convenings and listening sessions. A summary of the geographic disparities in police-initiated contact is shared below.

KEY FINDING: PUBLIC SAFETY IN SOUTH LOS ANGELES

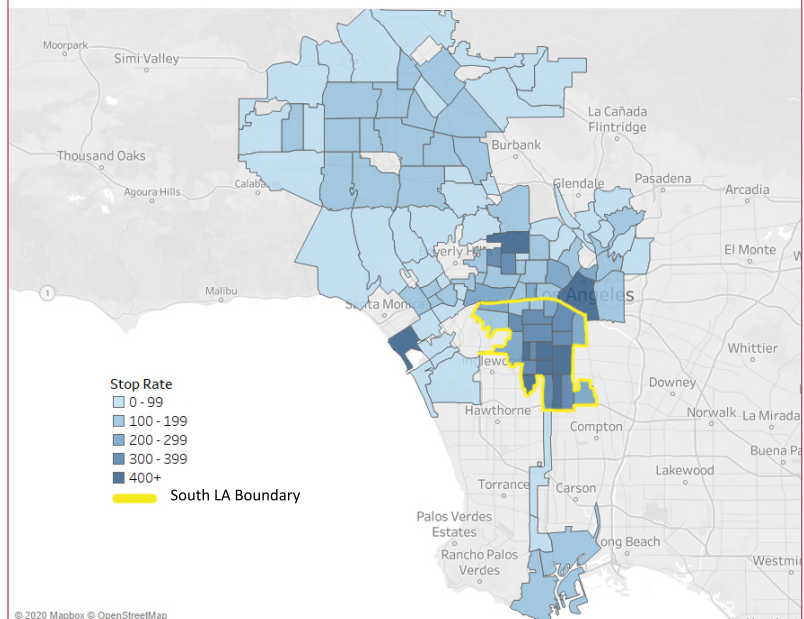
One way to measure community-police interactions is to consider who initiates contact and how often that contact occurs. Two variables detailing these interactions include:

Calls for service: defined as the number of 911 emergency calls made by community residents per 1,000 people in the resident population, which can be used as a proxy for civilian-initiated contact to the police.

Stops: defined as the number of police stops of a vehicle or pedestrian per 1,000 people in the resident population, which are the most common way that police directly initiate contact with civilians and can be used to measure police-initiated contact with the community.

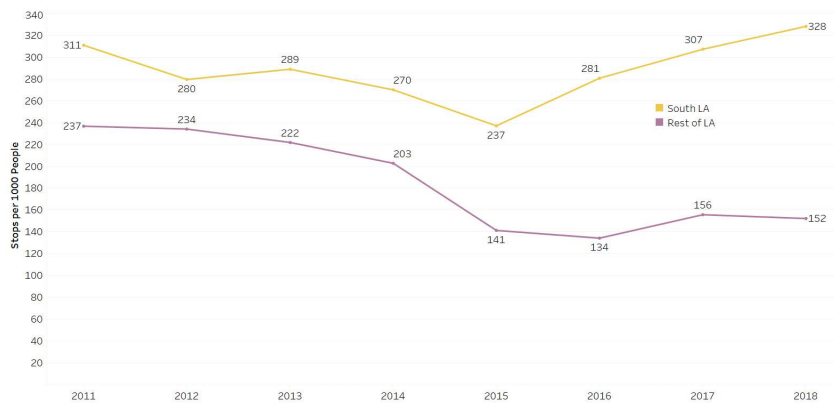
South Los Angeles, outlined in yellow in Map 1, has a history of tense relations with LAPD¹, including several historically significant community uprisings in protest of police mistreatment during the 1960s and 1990s. The area is home to just over 777,000 people, 66% of whom identified as Latino and 28% of whom identified as Black according to 2018 American Community Survey estimates.

MAP 1 Police-Initiated Contact by Neighborhood
 City of Los Angeles, 2018



¹ Reft, R. (2020, June 11). *A Tale of Two Commissions: Watts, Rodney King and the Politics of Policing*. Retrieved July 10, 2020, from <https://www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/a-tale-of-two-commissions-watts-rodney-king-and-the-politics-of-policing>

FIGURE 1 Police-Initiated Contact South LA vs. the Rest of LA, 2011-2018

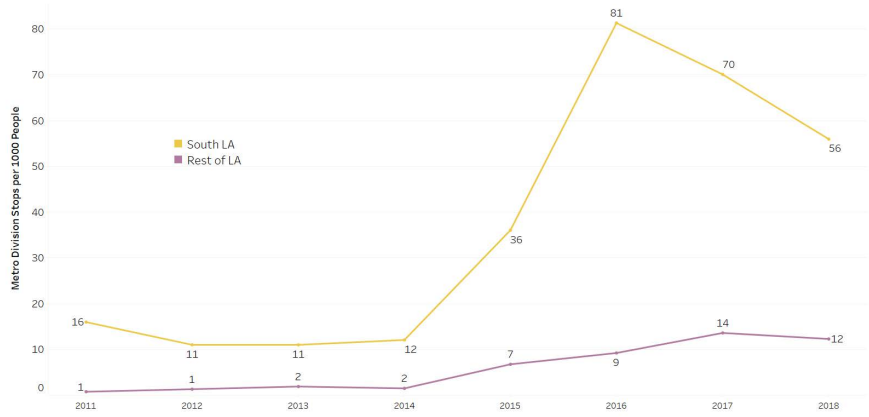


Community Coalition, the organization who co-facilitated a listening session focused on South Los Angeles for this project, has worked for decades to take a holistic approach to documenting and improving public safety outcomes in South Los Angeles, including the closing of liquor stores and implementation of summer programming for youth in the community.² The trends in stops and arrests add an important element to the existing public safety data and reform efforts in this community.

As shown in Figure 1, while LAPD has consistently stopped more people in South Los Angeles than other parts of the city, the rate of stops began to increase sharply in 2015 while remaining roughly the same across the rest of the city. South Los Angeles residents who participated in the third listening session noted the harmful psychological impact of disproportionately high police interactions in their community, and expressed the need for a proportional investment in education and health services to increase neighborhood safety.

In South Los Angeles, several different divisions within LAPD were making stops over the course of the decade. In early 2016, LAPD doubled the size of its Metropolitan (Metro) Division, the specialized crime fighting unit that includes the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, citing increases in crime.³ As shown in Figure 2, stops by Metro Division officers significantly and disproportionately increased in South Los Angeles as compared to the rest of the city following the division's expansion. The Metro Division was downsized in 2019 after Community Coalition and other local advocacy organizations highlighted racial disparities in the unit's practices.⁴

FIGURE 2 Police-Initiated Contact by the Metro Division South LA vs. the Rest of LA, 2011-2018



² Choi, J. H. (Ed.). (2011). *Leading Change From Within: 20 Years of Building Grassroots Power in South Los Angeles* [Pamphlet]. Los Angeles, CA: Community Coalition.

³ *History of the Metro Division*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 10, 2020, from http://www.lapdonline.org/metropolitan_division/content_basic_view/6359

⁴ Chang, C., & Poston, B. (2019, February 07). *Garcetti orders LAPD to scale back vehicle stops amid concerns over black drivers being targeted*. Retrieved July 10, 2020, from <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-garcetti-lapd-metro-20190206-story.html>