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Faith Community Support of the Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative

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Abstract

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The issue of recidivism has become an increasingly detrimental problem in urban areas across the United States, and particularly in Atlanta. Various stakeholders affected by recidivism formed a taskforce in 2013 that later evolved into the Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative (PAD) in 2016. Pre-Arrest Diversion (PAD) is a pilot program by which individuals detained by police for certain nonviolent crimes can be diverted into services or treatment, rather than be processed into the criminal justice system. This project examines how clergy and congregations can be involved with pre-arrest diversion efforts by mobilizing churches in the pilot district to provide meaningful support, collaboration, and resources to the Atlanta PAD program. Saint Mark UMC collaborated with Lutheran Church of the Redeemer and PAD to form a Memorandum of Understanding outlining terms for our churches to create and maintain a space stocked with resources for use by the PAD social workers, referred to as "Care Navigators." The Care Navigators bring participants diverted from arrest to the church to take care of immediate basic needs such as food, shower, and rest and to begin the triage process for getting services and treatment. An analysis of the initial findings of this collaboration are offered along with considerations for expanding faith community collaboration with PAD if and when it moves from a pilot program to city and county-wide policy.

Faith Community Support of the Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative

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I. Introduction

The issue of recidivism has become an increasingly detrimental problem in urban areas across the United States, and particularly in Atlanta. A study produced by the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies showed that 80% of offenders in Fulton County who offended in 2011 reoffended sometime before spring 2014.¹ That is almost double the national recidivism rate of 43%.² Various stakeholders affected by recidivism formed a taskforce in 2013 that later evolved into the Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative (PAD) in 2016. Pre-Arrest Diversion (PAD) is a program by which individuals detained by police for certain crimes can be diverted into services or treatment, rather than be processed into the criminal justice system. For two years, the taskforce worked to involve additional partners in the conversation and to cultivate relationships with policy makers and enforcers to see whether recidivism around crimes of poverty might be addressed in a new way.

The taskforce evolved into a design team and continued to put together community workshops to gain allies and partners and to help community members envision and implement PAD in an effective way. The PAD design team specifically wanted clergy and faith communities involved in the organization and implementation of PAD, and reached out to a number of clergy for participation. My congregation, Saint Mark United Methodist Church, was identified as a potential

¹ Office of the Fulton County District Attorney, *Justice Reinvestment in Fulton County*, January 7, 2016, quoting R. Gage et al., "The Impact of Demographics and Sentencing on Recidivism: Non-Complex Division," 2014, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies (unpublished).

² Ibid.

partner because of its involvement in a number of social justice initiatives and I began attending the design team meetings to seek out how my congregation could be helpful. After attending several more meetings, as well as hosting a meeting on our campus, it was clear that the desire for clergy and congregations to be involved was present, but it was unclear to everyone specifically what that would look like. I met with Moki Macias, the newly hired PAD Executive Director, who had helped convene the first conversations about diversion practices in Atlanta. We further explored the question of faith community participation in PAD, and from those conversations, the focus of this research emerged.

The purpose of this project is to answer the question of how clergy and congregations can be involved with pre-arrest diversion efforts by mobilizing Saint Mark United Methodist Church and other churches in the pilot district to provide meaningful support, collaboration, and resources to the Atlanta PAD program. Saint Mark UMC collaborated with Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, our next door neighbor, and PAD to form a Memorandum of Understanding outlining terms for our churches to create and maintain a space stocked with resources for use by the PAD social workers, referred to as "Care Navigators." The Care Navigators bring participants diverted from arrest to the church to take care of immediate basic needs such as food, shower, and rest and to begin the triage process for getting services and treatment. The space was named Care PAD and is physically located at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, with Saint Mark collaborating on keeping the space stocked with clothing, towels, hygiene kits, food, and other items needed.

This paper will outline the background and scope of the problem of recidivism in Atlanta as well as the problems that the Saint Mark UMC Congregation has faced when dealing with crimes of poverty on our campus. It will then provide a theological framework for engaging this problem. Next, it will describe in detail how the Care PAD space emerged as a collaborative solution and report the initial findings and assessment of the project from use of the space. Finally, reflections will be offered on the process and future opportunities for growth as the program expands city and county-wide.

II. Background and Context of the Problem

The Pre-Arrest Diversion program came about as an idea in response to an ordinance proposed in February 2013 by Atlanta City Council and supported by Mayor Kasim Reed and Atlanta Police Chief George Turner. The proposed ordinance provided for the banishment of sex workers and consumers of prostitution, or “johns,” from the city of Atlanta upon their second conviction.³ Residents and business owners in high prostitution areas had been complaining about the open drug and prostitution trade happening and demanded that the city do more to put a stop to it. The Atlanta City Council Public Safety Committee, chaired by Michael Julian Bond, held a hearing on the legislation and was greeted by a packed room of stakeholders overwhelmingly opposed to it for a variety of legal, moral, and

³ Jeremiah McWilliams, "Atlanta proposes controversial crackdown on prostitution," Feb 11, 2013, accessed Feb 1, 2018, <https://www.ajc.com/news/atlanta-proposes-controversial-crackdown-prostitution/NW022P5o8v3pDmOHBBGSLP/>.

practical reasons.⁴ Members of the Midtown-Ponce Security Alliance (MPSA) were in the minority of people who were in favor of it. The Solutions Not Punishment Coalition (SNaP Co) led a grassroots organizing campaign to push back on the morality and legality of banishment of sex workers, and the legislation was eventually withdrawn.⁵ Mayor Reed convened the “City of Atlanta Working Group on Prostitution” in March 2013, which included stakeholders from communities where prostitution is frequent, former sex workers, formerly incarcerated persons, and members of the LGBTQ community. This working group developed a number of recommendations for the Mayor to consider, including investigating the implementation of a program that would allow persons being detained by the police for prostitution and other crimes of poverty to be diverted into services and treatment, rather than be processed into the criminal justice system. These community members obtained private funding to travel to Seattle to observe their Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program as a potential model solution for Atlanta in lieu of banishment.

By 2015, this working group had surveyed communities, gathered signatures and data, and facilitated a follow-up trip to Seattle with additional community leaders, elected officials, and legal system partners to further observe their LEAD program and envision how a similar program might be implemented in Atlanta.

⁴ Jeremiah McWilliams, “Proposal to banish convicted prostitutes runs into opposition in Atlanta,” Feb 11, 2013, accessed Feb 1, 2018, <https://www.myajc.com/news/local/proposal-banish-convicted-prostitutes-runs-into-opposition-atlanta/XBBqU3M8ltkjlc2QHHch4/>.

⁵ The Georgia Voice Editors, “Atlanta banishment legislation dropped; task force to study prostitution issues,” Feb 25, 2013, accessed Feb 1, 2018, <https://thegavoice.com/atlanta-banishment-legislation-dropped-task-force-to-study-prostitution-issues/>.

Later in December 2015, both the Atlanta City Council⁶ and the Fulton County Commission⁷ voted unanimously to establish the *Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative Design Team*. The Design Team launched at the beginning of 2016 with 52 stakeholder/members from law enforcement, city and county prosecutors and public defenders, community groups, neighborhood leaders, elected officials, and faith leaders. The focus had expanded from a taskforce on sex workers to a comprehensive program to tackle the issue of recidivism in non-violent offenses. The arrest information that the Design Team assembled and analyzed demonstrated an intersectionality between survival sex work and other crimes of poverty and needed a broader solution.

Recidivism is a particularly pronounced problem in the city of Atlanta. In a report generated by the office of Fulton County (Georgia) District Attorney Paul Howard, a study done by the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University was referenced that analyzed recidivism in Fulton County between the summer of 2011 and the spring of 2014. The study showed that 80% of offenders who offended in 2011 reoffended sometime before spring 2014.⁸ That is almost double the national recidivism rate of 43%.⁹ The report posits that the reason recidivism is higher in Atlanta/Fulton County is that “defendants do not perceive the

⁶ “A resolution to create and authorize a design team for a pilot pre-arrest diversion initiative in the city of Atlanta; and for other purposes,” atlantaga.gov, accessed Feb 1, 2018, <http://ditweb.atlantaga.gov/citycouncil/2015/images/adopted/1207/15R3920.pdf>.

⁷ “Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative Design Team,” fultoncountyga.gov, accessed Feb 1, 2018, http://www.fultoncountyga.gov/images/stories/PRE-ARREST_DIVERSION_INITIATIVE_DESIGN_TEAM_060716.pdf.

⁸ Gage, R. et al.

⁹ Ibid.

sanctions imposed by the Fulton Non-Complex Court as a ‘credible threat.’”¹⁰ In short, the punishment imposed by the court is not enough of a deterrent to prevent offenders from reoffending. The design team of the Pre-Arrest Diversion initiative (PAD) set out to collect additional data and information that could be used to clarify the scope and size of the problem of recidivism related to crimes of extreme poverty. An analysis of current trends related to service calls and arrests related to quality of life, prostitution, and narcotics charges was published by the primary investigators of PAD to gain specific data of the problem in Atlanta. The data for this report was provided by the Atlanta Police Department, the Fulton County District Attorney, and the Atlanta City Public Defender office and published in a document entitled “Diversion Eligibility Data Walk,”¹¹ which further demonstrated the need for pre-arrest diversion services. The data investigators analyzed all of the 83,298 calls for service (911 calls) made from July 1, 2015, through July 31, 2016. In the Data Walk document, it was determined that of those calls, 20% of them, or 16,659, were for PAD-related offenses having to do with quality of life, prostitution, and/or narcotics. The top three PAD-related complaints were Suspicious Person (6,772 calls), Criminal Trespass (3,994 calls), and Illegal Alcohol/Drugs (1,177 calls). Of those calls, the top five causes for arrest were: possession of a controlled substance (1,484 arrests made), drinking in public (731 arrests made), pedestrian violations (such as jay-walking) (570 arrests made), defecating/urinating in public (236

¹⁰ Office of the Fulton County District Attorney, *Justice Reinvestment in Fulton County*, January 7, 2016.

¹¹ Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative, *Diversion Eligibility Data Walk*. (See Appendix 1).

arrests made), and criminal trespass (221 arrests made). Of the possession of controlled substance arrests, 77% were for possession of less than one ounce of marijuana. The top three PAD-related arrest categories for Atlanta Police Department beat 505, which is the beat that Saint Mark UMC is physically located in, were drinking in public (29 %), possession of a controlled substance (34%), and pedestrian violations (37%). The identified race of the people in over 80% of arrests in all categories were African-American.¹²

This report was both illuminating and shocking. It gave a clearer sense of the closeness of the problem to the physical campus of Saint Mark UMC, what is going on in our own neighborhood, as well as insight into the crimes of poverty in which our homeless congregants were engaging. The statistics that were presented in the report and in subsequent organizational meetings also showed that most of the arrests for transgender prostitution activity that happens in the city of Atlanta occurs within a two block radius of Saint Mark's property. Many of the trans-women who get arrested for prostitution are homeless, jobless, and have been kicked out of their families.¹³ The prostitution they engage in is referred to by PAD as "survival sex" because it is the only thing they are able to do to make money to survive. Given the proximity of the problem to Saint Mark UMC, I encouraged the leadership of our congregation to be a part of the solution.

III. Context and Background of Saint Mark UMC

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Tavianna Rouse (Resource Coordinator, PAD), in discussion with the author, February 2018.

Saint Mark United Methodist Church is an urban ministry setting in Midtown Atlanta with a current membership of approximately 1500 and a weekly attendance of around 200-300 people between two services each Sunday. The church is comprised mostly of White progressive thinking (and voting) people and is also comprised of approximately 80% Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) people. The church experienced its most recent rebirth in 1992 when some members of the congregation decided to intentionally reach out to the LGBTQ community that made up a large part of the Midtown neighborhood in which the church is geographically located. The common story told is that Saint Mark was a graying inner-city congregation whose few but faithful members annually witnessed the joy and festivity of the Gay Pride Parade as it marched down Peachtree Street in front of the church, while simultaneously witnessing Saint Mark's across-the-street neighbor, Atlanta First Baptist, respond to the marchers with fear and exclusion. Atlanta First Baptist had a practice of dismissing church early and hiring off-duty police officers to guard the property line to prevent the participants from "defiling" their property. In 1992, a small intergenerational group from Saint Mark held up a welcome sign and passed out cups of water to the Pride Parade participants, which was in stark contrast to First Baptist's continued response of exclusion. Within a short period of time, Saint Mark went from a handful of mostly elderly members to attendance that peaked at around 1700 in the late 1990's. This moment in Saint Mark's history became known as the "Miracle at 5th and Peachtree." Some have attributed this rejuvenation to the leadership of Rev. Mike Cordle, the senior pastor at the time. Others attribute it

more to the congregation being at the right place at the right time. While the act of passing out cups of water to Pride Parade walkers starting in 1992 may have planted the seeds of welcome in the parade participants, it was an AIDS support group that demonstrated in concrete terms to members of the LGBTQ community (and in this case, mostly gay men) that they were welcome at Saint Mark. In fact, Saint Mark not only offered support groups for people affected by/infected by HIV/AIDS but also became one of the only churches in Atlanta at the time to do funerals for people who had died from complications due to HIV/AIDS. Modern day Saint Mark has deep social justice roots, beginning with “seeing”¹⁴ and honoring those affected by/infected with HIV/AIDS--especially during a time when those affected by/infected by HIV/AIDS were excluded and feared. The compassionate response to include, not exclude; to see, not ignore; and to seek justice, not accept inequity, is the fabric of Saint Mark and forms the foundation from which the clergy and congregants minister.

Saint Mark is a unique ministry setting in that it has historically been the only congregation that has openly affirmed and accepted people from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community in the metro Atlanta area since the early 1990’s. Now, more and more congregations are vocalizing inclusive policies and practices, and Saint Mark celebrates the courage and sense of justice that led to it being one of the pioneers in inclusive and welcoming ministry to the LGBTQ community. More often than not, sermons are typically preached from the gospel

¹⁴ Gregory C. Ellison II, *Fear+Less Dialogues: A New Movement for Justice* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017), 70-71. “Seeing” references taking the time to get to know, understand, and appreciate another person on a deeper level than is typical in American culture.

lesson in the lectionary where Jesus is making a point about solidarity with the outcast. This is a step in a long journey towards what Raphael Warnock and James Cone call “ontological blackness” in that:

the oppressor...repent(s) by becoming completely identified with the suffering and struggles of the oppressed. If the white church would become the true church of Jesus Christ, it too must become **ontologically black**. For by doing so, it will have identified itself fully with that which represents shame in the world but the revelation of God in human history.¹⁵

The value of inclusivity expressed during the “Miracle at 5th and Peachtree” which continued Saint Mark on its social justice-minded path to be a reconciling congregation¹⁶ has paralleled Saint Mark’s ministry with people who are homeless. A few years before the most recent rebirth, members of the church formed a weekly breakfast “club” on Saturday mornings and supper “club” on Tuesday evenings for our homeless congregants. A clothing closet was added as well as a foot care clinic, and weekly office hours were scheduled for direct assistance.

All of these elements in inclusion, LGBTQ members, homeless outreach, and a heart for social justice have made Saint Mark an ideal faith partner with PAD to develop a partnership that is mutually beneficial and that can be replicated with other congregations and faith communities across the city as the PAD program expands. With a clear and shared vision, PAD is able to help Saint Mark increase

¹⁵ Raphael Warnock, *The Divided Mind of the Black Church: Theology, Piety, and Public Witness* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 132 (emphasis mine).

¹⁶ The Reconciling Ministry Network (RMN) is the advocacy organization in the United Methodist Church working for the full inclusion of LGBTQ people both in policy and practice. Churches that officially affiliate with RMN are referred to as “Reconciling Congregations.”

involvement around homelessness in a new way and engage in practices that help people who are homeless transition back to lives where they can sustain themselves.

Homeless outreach does have its problems. The church property routinely has homeless people camping out at night. This is typically not a problem until trash and drug and sex paraphernalia start to accumulate where people are sleeping, and urination and defecation create an unbearable odor at all of the building entry points. This activity typically comes in waves and has intensified because of the recent closing of the largest homeless shelter in the city of Atlanta, the Atlanta Taskforce on the Homeless, located less than a mile south of Saint Mark UMC at the corner of Peachtree and Pine Street.¹⁷ The closure of this facility has resulted in a visible increase in the number of homeless people on the property of Saint Mark as well as the larger midtown community. The cycle begins when three or four people start sleeping on the church grounds at night and sometimes during the day. The office and clergy staff often gets to know many of them by name and sometimes even offer money in exchange for help with odd jobs around the facility. After a while, additional people join them at night and that is when trash, drug paraphernalia and bodily waste accumulate. The staff then asks the campers to leave the premises. Things escalate when the police have to be called to move people along, and eventually, an overnight security company gets hired for a period

¹⁷ Maria Saporta, "Settlement reached to close Peachtree-Pine homeless shelter – ending more than a decade of discord," June 22, 2017, accessed Feb 1, 2018, <https://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/news/2017/06/22/settlement-reached-to-close-peachtree-pine.html>.

of time to break the habit and keep the property clean. The words of Jesus, “I was hungry, did you feed me?; I was naked, did you cloth me?”¹⁸ linger uncomfortably when the police have to be called to remove homeless people for nonviolent crimes of poverty. Once the property is clean for a few weeks, the security service is discontinued, and eventually, the cycle starts over. This cycle is unavoidable in the current circumstances of the city, given the growing gap between rich and poor, as well as the competing demands of business owners, real estate development, and the lack of a centralized system to coordinate social services. It is also unavoidable at Saint Mark because of the budgetary and staffing constraints our congregation faces. We are not and cannot be a social service agency. Homelessness is a complex condition caused by a myriad of factors that converge in a unique way in the life of each person on the street.

This cycle/solution is referred to in Family Systems Theory as *first order change* and “involves a change in the system’s interactional patterns and occurs when the system itself remains unchanged.”¹⁹ *Second order change* “requires a change in the organization of the system and is characterized by a change in the client’s perspective and assumptions, a change in the system.”²⁰ Second order change is the fundamental shift in circumstances that address the root of the problem and result in permanent change to the system. Pre-Arrest Diversion has the potential to be a second-order change in the lives of the participants who get

¹⁸ Matthew 25:35-40.

¹⁹ Diane R. Gehart and Amy R. Tuttle, *Theory-Based Treatment Planning for Marriage and Family Therapists*, (Toronto: Thomson Brooks/Cole: 2003), 87.

²⁰ Ibid.

diverted into services or treatment, as well as a second order change agent in the way homeless people and others living in poverty are perceived and engaged with in the city of Atlanta. PAD addresses the root of the problems that force people into homelessness, such as mental health care, job training, safe shelter, and food insecurity, and provides opportunities to leave life on the street. All of these things are priorities in how Saint Mark UMC understands itself and its mission in the world, and are a natural fit for collaboration.

As the Minister of Social Justice at Saint Mark, I have been trying to frame our diversity around LGBTQ issues as our “entry point” into a much larger conversation and much larger work around social justice. Our experience as a largely LGBTQ congregation could help us be in solidarity with other groups of people who have been or are currently being oppressed, thus advancing our walk toward “ontological blackness.” While the cause of the oppression may be different, the feelings and experience of exclusion are shared among all who are oppressed. We know the sting of oppression, and we can show up in a powerful way for others who have been oppressed as well.

IV. Theological Framework

The church does not and never has existed outside the influence of and interaction with government, politics, policy, or worldly affairs. This is evident at the very founding of the Christian tradition with the Roman state sponsored prosecution, torture, and execution of the Lord Jesus. We further see evidence of this in the convening of the Council of Nicaea in 325CE at the command of Roman

Emperor Constantine in an effort to unite the empire and the Christian world through a common canon and creed. The church has navigated these waters with various levels of homage paid to the two greatest commandments that the Lord Jesus identified in Matthew 22,²¹ the fruit of which is either prosperity or deep human and environmental suffering.

With the Council on Nicaea as a unifying moment in our faith tradition and with Saint Mark's history, the collaboration and support of the Atlanta PAD Initiative was a call to amplify Saint Mark's commitment to social justice. Given whom Saint Mark serves formally and informally, a moral obligation existed to participate in interrupting the cycle of nonviolent crimes of poverty by advancing the work of pre-arrest diversion.

Pre-arrest Diversion offers a solid alternative to arrest, reducing recidivism, and potentially changing the lives of the people who are referred for services. The goals of the PAD program are:

REDUCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

Reduce the number of people unnecessarily entering and repeating the criminal justice system (including the jails) for behaviors related to drug use, mental health, sex work, and extreme poverty.

REORIENT ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES

Reorient our communities' and governments' attitudes and responses to safety, disorder, addiction, and mental illness – away from criminalization and toward public health responses.

IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY & PUBLIC HEALTH

Improve participant and community quality of life through research-based, health oriented, and harm reduction interventions.

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE

Improve the quality, raise the standards, and increase connection between social service

²¹ Matthew 22:34-40 describes Jesus responding to the question of what the greatest commandment is. Jesus responds by identifying the love of God as the greatest and most important commandment and the second commandment being as important as the first: love your neighbor as you love yourself.

providers in Atlanta/Fulton County to benefit program participants and all residents.

REINVEST CRIMINAL JUSTICE SAVINGS

Sustain funding for alternative approaches by capturing and reinvesting criminal justice system savings.

SHIFT CULTURE & HEAL RELATIONSHIPS

Shift the culture of the police department by giving line officers new tools, and heal tensions that exist between communities and law enforcement.²²

These goals of the PAD Initiative resonate deeply with how the Saint Mark congregation understands itself and the political mission of the church universal in the world. Interestingly, it appears in this case that the PAD Design Team has been acting as the church, and the congregations are late to the game. Having a clear framing of the political mission of the church is helpful in offering a theological grounding for recruiting congregations to participate. At its best functioning, the interaction of the church universal with the world carries with it a three-fold purpose, with guidance from Karl Barth and Augustine of Hippo.

First, the church discerns and holds up an image of God's Kingdom fulfilled on earth (Thy Kingdom Come),²³ based on the two greatest commandments, as an example of what the world should strive for. Second, the church interprets the present times through the lens of 'thy kingdom come' and gives a prophetic assessment and calls to direct action if necessary to lead the world toward God's Kingdom. Third, the church builds relationships with those in power so as to influence and guide their decision making in a way that safeguards the poor and vulnerable among us and leads the world towards God's Kingdom.

²² Diversion Eligibility Data Walk (see Appendix 1).

²³ Karl Barth, "§ 78 The Struggle for Human Righteousness." in *The Christian Life: Church Dogmatics IV. Lecture Fragments* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 234 <http://solomon.dkbl.alexanderstreet.com.proxy.library.emory.edu> (October 12, 2016).

Holding a vision of “Thy Kingdom Come” means not only pointing towards what God’s Kingdom might look like and inevitably will be but also identifying the things that serve as barriers to its implementation. Barth begins to conceptualize God’s Kingdom as something that “demands and creates freedom for human thought and volition in a new dimension. In this way, in this majesty, it is the limit of the disorder that is both the guilt and the pain of man.”²⁴ Martin Luther King, Jr. made an attempt to bring the image of the Kingdom of God into more practical terms and called it the Beloved Community. King’s Beloved Community:

is a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. In the Beloved Community, international disputes will be resolved by peaceful conflict-resolution and reconciliation of adversaries, instead of military power. Love and trust will triumph over fear and hatred. Peace with justice will prevail over war and military conflict.²⁵

In Atlanta, those who do not have a place to sleep, or a safe shelter to dwell in are among the most vulnerable citizens. Crimes of poverty are committed out of necessity for survival purposes. Congregational collaboration with PAD has the potential to raise local standards of human decency by creating alternative ways of responding to crimes of poverty other than incarceration, thus fulfilling part of their political mission. Holding up an image of what the Kingdom of God is and what it is

²⁴ Ibid. 235.

²⁵ The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, “The King Philosophy: The Beloved Community” accessed November 16, 2016, <http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy#sub4>.

not is a primary focus of the political mission of the church in order to cast a vision for the world on how things can and should be.

The second focus of the political mission of the church is to interpret the present times through the lens of the Kingdom of God and identify how it is being advanced and how it is receding. Rev. William Barber, founder of the North Carolina-based “Moral Monday” movement (also called “Repairers of the Breach”), epitomizes the role of prophetic interpretation of the present times and the call to action to protect the most vulnerable among us and advance policies that improve quality of life, expand freedom, and create a society where everybody is welcomed and affirmed. Their mission is to:

[e]ducate church and lay leaders who will pursue policies and organizing strategies for the good of the whole. Educate the public about the deep connections between shared religious faith traditions and public policy, deeply rooted in our Constitutions and the moral values of justice, fairness, and the general welfare. Challenge the version of the ultra-conservatives who have misinterpreted Christianity and other faith traditions as a faith that hates the poor. They call 47% of us “Takers,” and they want to shut down any government agency that tries to provide for the general welfare and just economic systems.²⁶

Martin Luther King, Jr. and hundreds of other Christian leaders interpreted the present time of their age and advocated specific changes to laws and customs that did not align with the Kingdom of God. They issued calls to action that motivated people from all backgrounds to force change and move the country towards the image of God’s Kingdom. The faith leaders and congregations that were a part of the design process for PAD interpreted the present time and determined that a better

²⁶ Repairers of the Breach, “Repairers of the Breach: About Us” accessed November 16, 2016, <http://www.breachrepairers.org/>.

way forward was necessary to address the root causes of crimes of poverty.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer also interpreted the times he was living in through the lens of God's Kingdom and was ultimately executed for his resistance to the Nazis.

Prophetic interpretation of the present time and advocacy for change is crucial to the political mission of the church.

The third focus of the political mission of the church is to build and maintain relationships with those in power in order to minister to their needs and to help align their decision making with the advancement of God's Kingdom. Augustine demonstrates relentless relationship building and leverage of those relationships to shape policy and decision making in his letters to the leaders of Mediterranean cities during his time. Specifically, in Letters 133, 134, and 139, Augustine engages with the proconsul of Africa, Apringius and his brother Marcellinus, advocating mercy for people who were captured and convicted of the murder of two Catholic priests.²⁷ Similarly, the design team for PAD relentlessly engaged in relationship building with judges, prosecutors, police, public defenders, faith leaders, neighborhood leaders, and others in order to have the maximum input possible and to strengthen the emerging PAD program. Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta similarly leveraged his relationships with civil authorities to create an "Expungment Day" at his church where people who were eligible to have their records expunged could come to the church and encounter in one day all of the various agencies needed for this to take place, rather than endure the typical 150

²⁷ E.M. Atkins and R.J. Dodaro, *Augustine: Political Writings*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 61.

days that such a process normally takes.²⁸ This allowed hundreds of people to be able to seek housing, employment, voting rights, and other benefits due to the leverage of relationships through the lens of and for the purpose of the Kingdom of God.

There are approximately 25 churches identified as potential partners located within the bounds of the pilot district for the pre-arrest diversion program, and dozens more who have yet to be identified. Exploring complex and seemingly intractable problems within a community requires a structure and a set of skills and tools with which to explore those problems. Churches have many resources that can be leveraged to support this initiative, such as physical space, clothing closets, food pantries, kitchens, volunteers, and funding. One of the goals of this research has been to help congregations in the pilot district learn about this important issue and become a vital support of it in whatever way resonates with their congregation, starting with my own church, Saint Mark.

This trifold representation of the political mission of the church acknowledges the reality of the church existing in the world and the need for it to engage the powers that be in creating a world that brings about God's Kingdom in a real and profound way. Supporting the mission of PAD offers churches an opportunity to live out the political mission of the church in a practical way that has direct impact on the lives of participants who are diverted into services and

²⁸ Raphael Warnock, "To Redeem the Soul of the Black Church." Lecture presented at the conference *Unfinished Worlds: Jurgen Moltmann at 90*, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, October 19, 2016.

treatment, and contributes to a culture shift around recidivism in the greater Atlanta area.

V. The Project: Saint Mark UMC/ Lutheran Church of the Redeemer/ PAD

Collaboration

I first attended a Pre-Arrest Diversion Design Team meeting on September 6, 2016, at the Center for Civic Innovation in downtown Atlanta. The Design Team hosted a delegation from Seattle, Washington, that they had formed a relationship with in observing their Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program and was actively recruiting members of the community to attend informational meetings for the purpose of educating and inspiring support. The Design Team gave a presentation on LEAD and answered questions from participants at the informational meeting. In attendance were representatives from law enforcement, the public defender office, the local prosecutor and solicitor, neighborhoods in the proposed pilot district, faith leaders, and other social justice organizations. Each group represented offered questions and reflections about how PAD could be implemented in Atlanta's unique criminal justice system and political climate. Questions were raised about a number of different aspects including caring for LGBTQ youth, the need for mental health providers to be involved, keeping the political will going after the election cycle, the benefits of a harm reduction philosophy²⁹, and the gap between the criminal justice system and the needs of the

²⁹ "Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs." Harm Reduction Coalition, "Principles of Harm

people in the system that contributes to recidivism. The meeting was very positive, and all participants in the meeting seemed to have a proactive attitude about seeing PAD be successful in Atlanta.

The next meeting that I attended was on November 2, 2016, at Mercy Care Center in Atlanta. This meeting built upon the last meeting but had in attendance at least twice the number of people. The purpose of each meeting was to build on the momentum from the last meeting as well as to incorporate input from all stakeholders in shaping the standard operating procedures for PAD. The Design Team reaffirmed a commitment to a harm reduction philosophy as well as a housing first³⁰ commitment to participants who come through PAD.

A number of other momentum generating meetings were held with similar turn out and discussion topics, all of which led to the creation of a pilot district in the city of Atlanta to test out PAD for a two-year period. The goal was set to achieve at least 200 diversions within that time to demonstrate the merits of this program.

The Design Team had actively recruited clergy and faith communities to get involved from the beginning. The first round of clergy that got involved early in the process were brought in to articulate a moral argument in favor of PAD and to

Reduction,” accessed Feb 14, 2018, <http://harmreduction.org/about-us/principles-of-harm-reduction/>.

³⁰ “Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing with out preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.” HUD Exchange, “Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing,” accessed Feb 14, 2018, <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Housing-First-Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Brief.pdf>.

generate some political and community momentum to move the process forward. As the Design Team moved closer to launching the pilot program, they continued to recruit clergy and faith communities to offer assistance and collaboration in the actual diversion process with participants. Once the map of the pilot district was made public, it included the section of Atlanta where my congregation, Saint Mark United Methodist Church is located.

The way the program is designed to work is at the point of arrest, Atlanta Police Officers in the pilot district assess whether a detained person is eligible for PAD. Eligibility criteria include not having active arrest warrants for certain violent crimes, the ability to make cohesive decisions (sober enough to give consent and not in an active psychotic state), being physically detained within the bounds of the pilot district, and willingness to participate in the PAD program. If all of these criteria are met, the officer calls a social worker known in the PAD organization as a “Case Navigator.” The Case Navigator will come to the location, and the detained person will be diverted into treatment or services rather than being arrested and processed into the criminal justice system. The Case Navigators are empowered to work with these individuals until they are plugged into the resources they need to stay off the street and to begin to get their lives back in order. Participants continue to take part in each step of the program of their own free will and must be able to legally give consent to be admitted. The PAD Design Team received permission to train officers in police Zones 5 and 6, where the pilot district was being established, on identifying potential candidates that could be referred to PAD prior to being arrested.

I remained in contact with the PAD Design Team about ways that congregations could partner with PAD, but after a few meetings, it was clear that PAD did not have a clear sense of specifically how faith communities could be helpful once PAD was launched. We brainstormed what the potential needs of the Care Navigators and the participants might be, because the PAD program had not yet officially begun receiving diversions. Some of the needs that were anticipated included having food available for participants, offering clothing, hygiene kits, and other items that participants may need. Saint Mark does a number of drives throughout the year for coats, canned goods, cleaning products for flood victims, and toys at Christmas. Most other congregations do similar drives for a variety of causes, and it is an easy, familiar, and practical thing for congregations to do.

In an effort to widen the conversation and recruit an additional partner, I contacted Rev. Karen Slappy, Minister of Outreach and Evangelism at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer (Redeemer) next door to Saint Mark. She had expressed interest in working together with Saint Mark on other social justice initiatives and agreed to meet about working together with PAD. Rev. Slappy and I met again several times with PAD to examine the assets that both of our congregations had and how those assets might align with the needs of PAD. We did a walking tour of both of our facilities. Saint Mark has a fully stocked clothing and hygiene kit closet as well as two transitional housing apartments in the basement of the church that was occupied by a family, but that would eventually be vacant and ready to be repurposed. The clergy staff was unified in wanting to leverage our outreach resources to PAD where helpful. Redeemer runs a lunchtime feeding program daily

Monday through Friday and also has a small building in the back parking lot called the Mission House that has multipurpose space with showers, a kitchen, couches, and other amenities. Rev. Slappy suggested that perhaps that space could be used to help meet some of the basic needs of participants immediately upon diversion, and that she had the support of the clergy staff to make the space available. This idea resonated with the PAD staff, and we made an inventory between Saint Mark and Redeemer of resources we could both supply the space with. This list included clothing, hygiene/toiletry kits, towels, washcloths, and nonperishable food items. Additional clarifying questions arose from the facility management and security staff at Redeemer such as: How many care navigators will be working per shift? How many PAD staff would be on site with participants and would participants ever be left alone on site? Could liability waivers for care navigators and participants be obtained? What form does our agreement need to take? With these questions in mind, we convened another meeting with representatives from PAD and our congregations at Redeemer in the space that had been suggested to make a closer inspection of the amenities that were available. PAD had not officially begun receiving diversions yet, so the group systematically worked through each question, with the understanding that flexibility would be needed once diversions started and unforeseen needs arose. Consensus emerged that this space would be a place where the Care Navigators, at their discretion, could bring newly diverted participants during PAD operating hours to get basic needs met and to begin the triage process to line up services or treatment for long term case work. The initial operating hours would be Tuesday through Thursday 3-9pm and Friday 7pm-5am. These operating

hours were projected based on the 911 call and arrest data that showed that the target offenses for PAD mostly happened during those times. Participants on the premises would be constantly supervised by at least two Care Navigators and were welcome to take a nap, eat some food, take a shower, get some clean clothes, and gain focus in order to participate fully in their own diversion. We drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)³¹ outlining the details for access and use of the space and Saint Mark's role in keeping it stocked with resources and decided to call the space "Care PAD." The MOU circulated among our respective approval processes and was finally signed on November 28, 2017. PAD began officially receiving diversion calls on October 3, 2017 and intentionally was only handling one or two diversions per week as they got acclimated to the logistics of the diversion process. This gave them time to get a better understanding of the needs of participants before accessing the Care PAD space. Once our MOU was signed, the Care Navigators had access to the space and slowly started incorporating it into the diversion process as needed. To date, there have been 15 diversions, four of which have accessed the Care PAD as part of the diversion process.

VI. Reflection and Future Opportunities

The hope of this project has been to see the successful launch and diversion of the first few clients, learn better what the specific needs of the program and clients are, and identify ways congregations can be useful in supporting this initiative with the goal of fulfilling the political mission of the church. Congregations

³¹ See appendix 2.

have been invited to the table since the beginning of this initiative, but the Design Team had not been able to articulate for themselves or for clergy/congregations what specifically they can do to help until this project. This research sought to bring about clarity in how new congregations can engage in helpful and supportive roles in the important work of the Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-arrest Diversion Initiative. Diversion practices are still in the infancy stage of implementation, so additional data needs to be gathered in order to refine the process and how faith communities can support the work of PAD in a meaningful and helpful way. One key to gathering further information is for PAD to receive more referrals from the Atlanta Police Department beat officers who initiate the call to PAD at the point of arrest. This is still in the beginning phase of a cultural shift within the police department because the officers have been used to simply making an arrest and processing the suspect into the criminal justice system. PAD did not get any calls from officers during the first couple of weeks after opening. When an inquiry was made, it became known that officers must track their time while on duty, and that there was no method of documenting PAD diversions in the Atlanta Police Department system so that officers are given credit for bringing resolution to a call they are assigned to. In negotiation with the APD command staff, a new code was implemented, so that officers could document that a call for service was resolved with a PAD diversion.³²

We will also continue to refine what is offered at the Care PAD based on feedback that we get from the PAD workers and the feedback they get from their clients. Additional information continues to be gathered about the needs presented

³² Moki Masias (PAD Leader), in discussion with the author, February 2018.

and what action, if any, was taken by the PAD Care Navigators. One modification that the PAD Care Navigators made was to use the space for general case management purposes after a person is enrolled in the diversion program, rather than transporting individuals directly to the Care PAD after being detained by police.³³ This modification was a shift from the originally envisioned purpose of the Care PAD space, but a modification based on practicality. They were concerned about word getting out in the homeless community about PAD and that folks may start showing up at Redeemer looking for PAD services without having entered the program through a diversion. The Care Navigators instead have been transporting participants directly to their office to begin triage and later access the Care PAD for resources to meet basic needs as they are identified. This modification was made to ensure that participants think of the PAD main office as a place to drop in, rather than the church.

Robert Lupton talks about well-intentioned faith communities doing short-term “mission” trips that ultimately create more of a burden for the very people these groups are seeking to help. “Critics of short term trips often point to the make-work nature of many of these service trips. They point to projects like the wall built on an orphanage soccer field in Brazil that had to be torn down after the visitors left. Or the church in Mexico that was painted six times during one summer by six different mission groups. Or the church in Ecuador built by volunteers that

³³ Shedra Jones (Social Service Network Coordinator, PAD), in discussion with the author, February 2018.

was never used as a church because the community had no need for it.”³⁴ The problems that these congregations created are similar to the problems that I am seeking to avoid in collaboration with the Pre-Arrest Diversion program. Ella Baker, during the civil rights movement, took a posture of servant leadership by listening intently, and affirming the leadership of others. “For her the most effective leaders were self-effacing people, more interested in developing leadership in others than in getting recognition for their individual achievements...you don’t start with what *you* think. You start with what *they* think.”³⁵ I have held this model of leadership close in my meetings and interactions with the PAD staff and with Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, and see this as a crucial part of the relationship building aspect of the political mission of the church.

Future opportunities for development involve continued refinement based on participant needs, Care Navigator feedback and also examining additional resources that other faith communities can offer to the work of PAD. Saint Mark has two newly vacated transitional housing apartments on campus that we are in discussion about making available to PAD for short term housing. Many of the transgender participants are the hardest to house because of discrimination they face in other shelters and housing options. One option under consideration is to make those two apartments available specifically to transgender people as part of the housing first model that has been adopted by PAD.

³⁴ Robert Lupton, *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (And How To Reverse It)*. (New York: Harper One, 2011), 14.

³⁵ Stephen Preskill and Stephen D. Brookfield, *Learning as a way of Leading: Lessons from the Struggle for Social Justice*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 96.

Beyond Saint Mark and Redeemer, the bulk of the work of engaging faith communities is still ahead.³⁶ The Memorandum of Understanding that was developed between Saint Mark, Redeemer, and PAD can serve as a model for other congregations to follow in partnering with PAD. The current pilot program is scheduled to run in its current form through the end of 2019 with the goal of obtaining 200 successful diversions. There are many other congregations in the pilot district that are untapped potential resources for PAD and need to be engaged. This congregational education component is being discussed for future implementation as additional diversions are made and resources are needed. After 2019, the goal is to make the program expand to include the entire city of Atlanta and potentially all of Fulton County. Our MOU will be helpful in engaging other congregations around the city to make space and resources available to diverted individuals and to ultimately make a second order change in the criminal justice system in the metro Atlanta area.

VII. Conclusion

The success of Saint Mark's collaboration with PAD and Lutheran Church of the Redeemer can be defined in three dimensions: results (the accomplishment of the task/goal), process (how the work was developed and monitored), and relationship (how people experienced each other while doing the work and their sense of connection to the work).³⁷ In the beginning, it was unclear to PAD

³⁶ Moki Masias (PAD Leader), in discussion with the author, February 2018.

³⁷ David Straus, *How to Make Collaboration Work: Powerful Ways to Build Consensus, Solve Problems, and Make Decisions*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., 2002, 116-117.

specifically how congregations could be helpful despite the articulated desire to have faith communities be a part of the work. The response that we collectively developed was the Care PAD space, which has been used in an effective way with diversion participants. This was the result of our process and relationships and is a functional success.

Our process involved taking the time to prioritize numerous meetings, phone calls, email exchanges, and brainstorming. The process was tedious at times, but the slow pace allowed all of the parties to ask thoughtful questions, receive accurate answers, and problem solve through the scenarios that had not been considered before. With clarity around the task of the churches, an action plan was created to realize the shared goal. This accomplished the process dimension of success.

Relationships began developing through my consistent presence at the organizational meetings, and from the openness that the PAD Design Team had in partnering with my congregation and any other congregations willing to help. Our conversations with PAD and Redeemer involved a shared sense of connection to the need for diversion practices in Atlanta because of the homeless populations that we all serve in some capacity. Our conversations with Redeemer had a sense of connection to the political mission of the church by holding up an image of what the kingdom of God in the world might look like through the work of PAD, calling for direct action in our congregations to address the problem of recidivism by collaborating with PAD, and cultivating strategic relationships with PAD and local leaders to make it happen. Consistently showing up to meetings and being fully present in the discussion process demonstrated trust, respect, commitment, and

dependability in our shared goals. This accomplished the relationship dimension of success.

Considerations for the long term will include whether other congregations can be easily added into the support network based on the template established by the collaboration between Saint Mark UMC, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, and PAD. Initial impressions based on conversations with other clergy and lay leaders at other churches located in the pilot district indicate an eagerness to join if there is a specific ask made.

The early church in the Acts of the Apostles describes exciting things happening among the people that was inspiring and encouraging.

⁴³ Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”³⁸

My hope and prayer throughout this project and the fruit that is borne from it is that the Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative will see many signs and wonders happen in the lives of the people diverted into services or treatment, and that all of the stakeholders will spend much time together in creative problem solving and in celebration of lives transformed. And day by day, may the Lord add to our numbers.

³⁸ Acts 2:43-47.



Diversion Eligibility Data Walk

The following information was compiled by consultants to the Atlanta Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative Design Process, with the purpose of supporting stakeholder decision-making on eligibility criteria for the Pre-Arrest Diversion Pilot program.

The information is intended to provide an “snapshot” of current trends related to quality of life, prostitution and narcotics in the pilot area between 2015-2016.

Thank you to the Atlanta Police Department, the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office, the City of Atlanta Public Defender’s Office, and members of the Design Team for providing data and information used in the compilation of this data walk. The analysis and conclusions herein do not represent any of these entities or individuals.

Questions related to the information provided may be directed to:

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Glossary of Key Terms and Data

Terms:

PAD-related (Pre-Arrest Diversion Related): refers to charges or other issues (e.g. service call descriptions) that may relate to mental health, substance addiction, and/or extreme poverty.

Calls for service: individual calls made to the police department to ask for service or provide information.

Charges include all of the criminal charges, or counts, a person is charged with at the time of arrest. Much of our analysis is on charges, rather than arrests.

Data Sets:

Calls for service and arrest data include all PAD-related calls for service and charges leading to arrests between July 1, 2015 and July 31, 2016. Data provided by the Atlanta Police Department (APD)

Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC) data referenced in analysis (graphs) are from a snapshot of the 427 inmates in the jail on June 22, 2015. Additional data found in the quick facts is from a data set of all repeat offenders in ACDC in 2014 from the Police Central system.

Fulton county data in the analysis are from a May 15, 2016 snapshot of the 2,475 total inmates in the county system (2,260 in the main jail) and from analysis of all bookings in 2015. Additional data referenced in the quick facts are also from a January 2016 Office of the Fulton County District Attorney Report, “Justice Re-investment in Fulton County.”



Calls for Service

Calls for service may help describe what activities occur in the pilot area as reported by individuals calling the police. Calls for service data were provided by the Atlanta Police Department, and only Pad-related calls were included in our analysis.

The following call types were analyzed for this 2015-2016 snapshot

(*note: terms used are the call description code used by the APD. Info/Meet Officer concerns that appear PAD-related are included.):

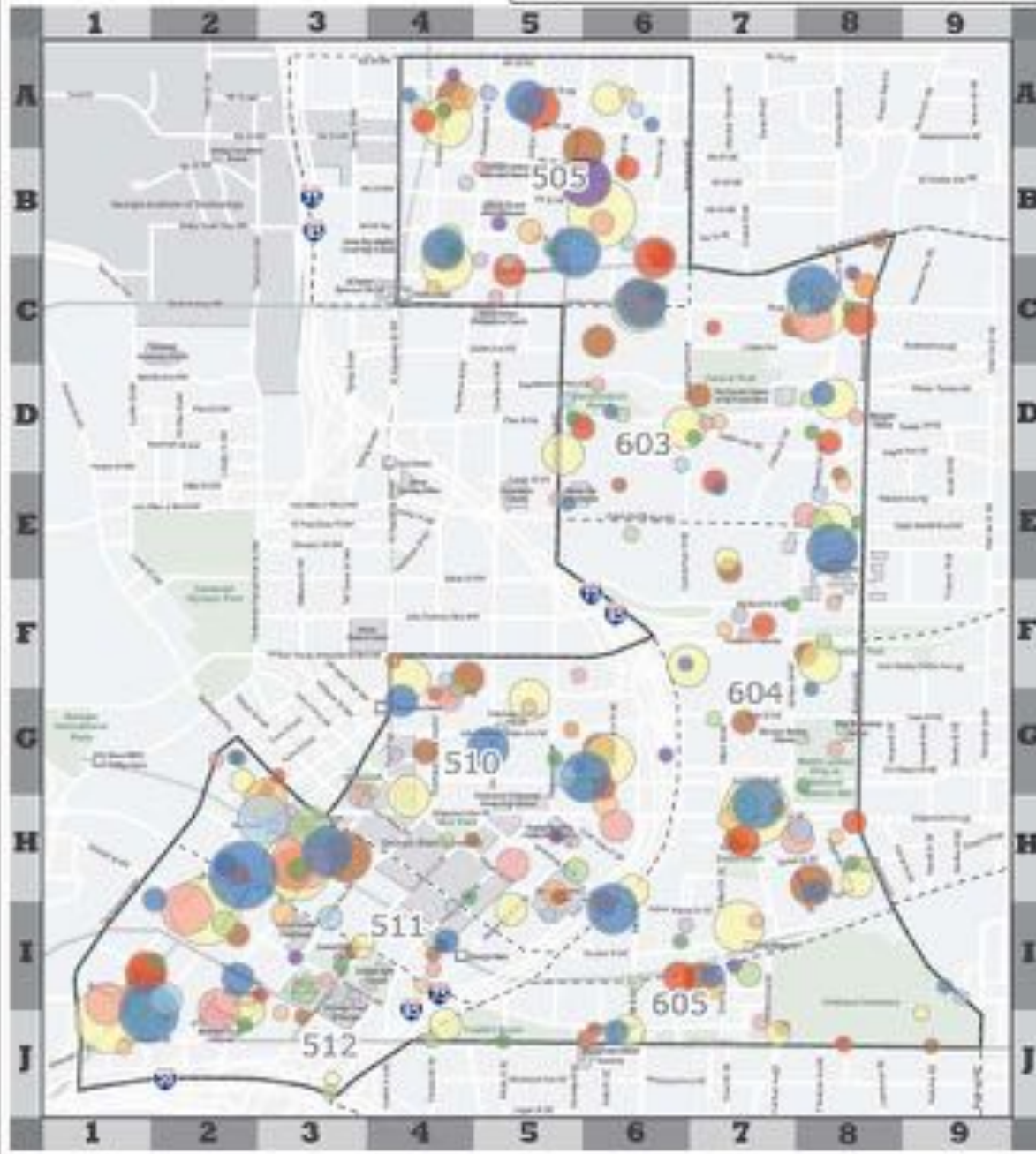
- Alcohol
- Criminal trespass
- Demented person
- Disorderly children
- Illegal alcohol/drug
- Illegal drug
- Info/[PAD-related] concern
- Vandalism
- Intox. Person-public place
- Meet Officer/[PAD-related] concern
- Noise complaint
- Odor of Smoke
- Pick Pocket
- Public indecency
- Shoplifting
- Snatch thief
- Soliciting sex
- Suspicious person
- Theft from auto

Call for Service by Category*

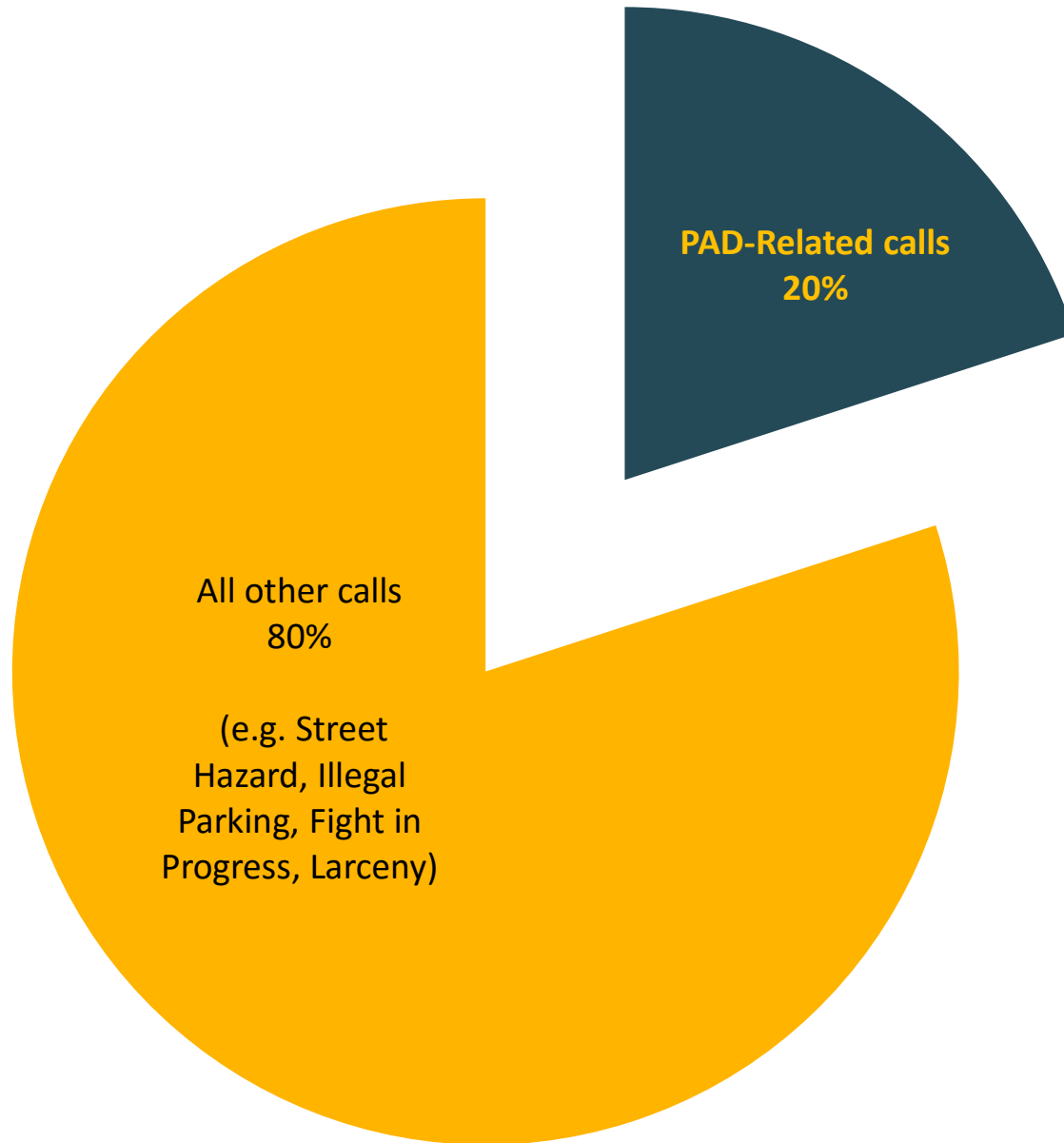
July 2015 to July 2016

Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative

*Top Select Call Codes
 Data points have been aggregated by combining
 the points within a 2 block by 2 block radius.

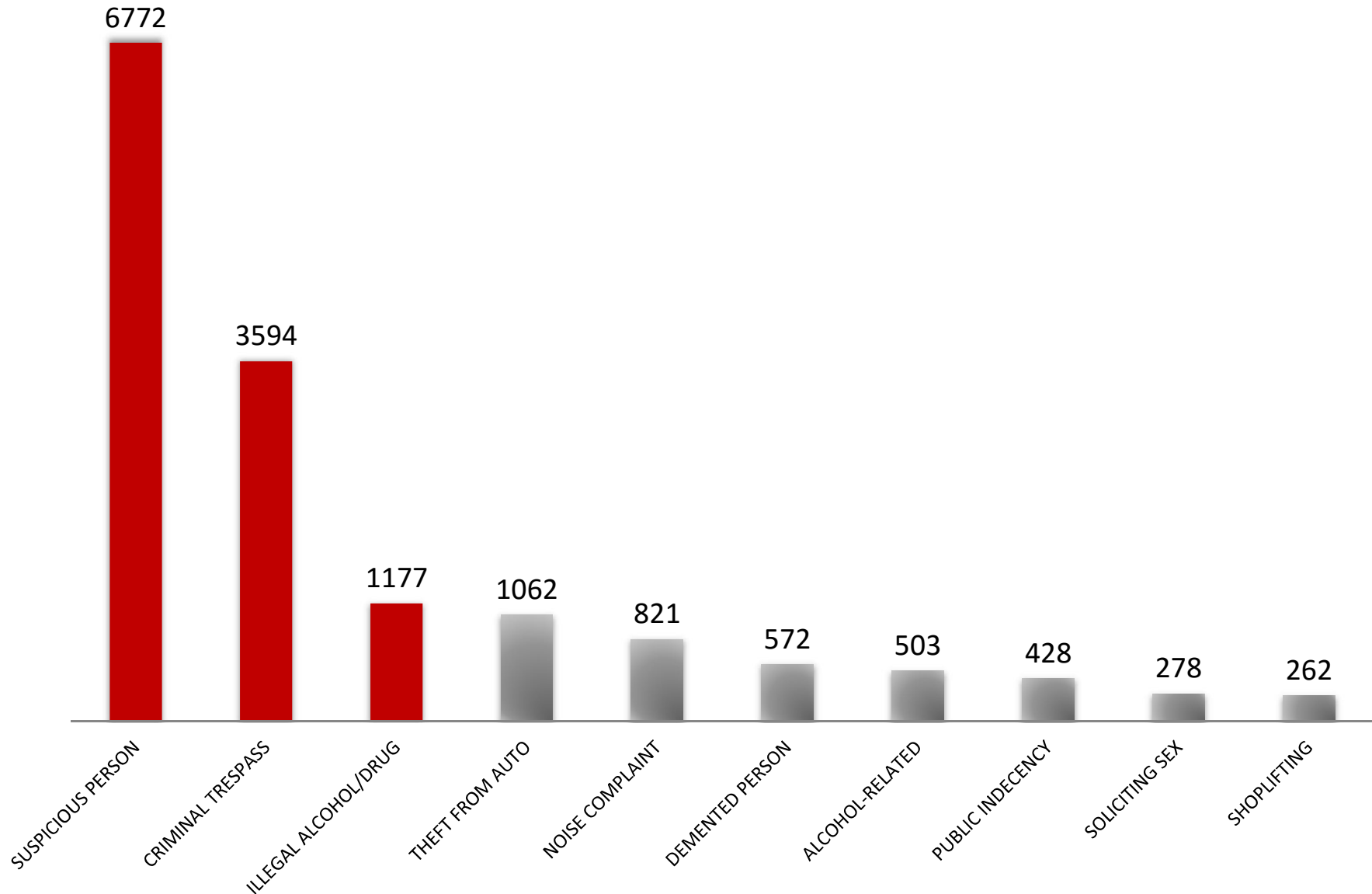


16,659 (20%) of the 83,298 service calls were about PAD-related issues

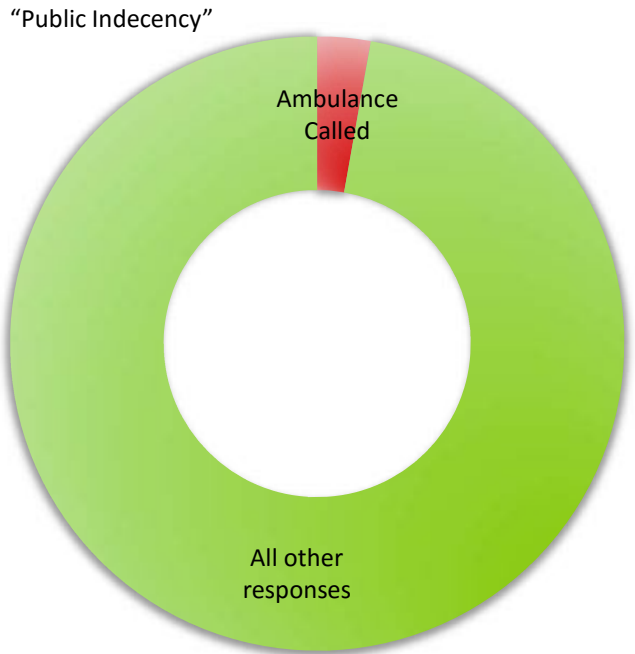
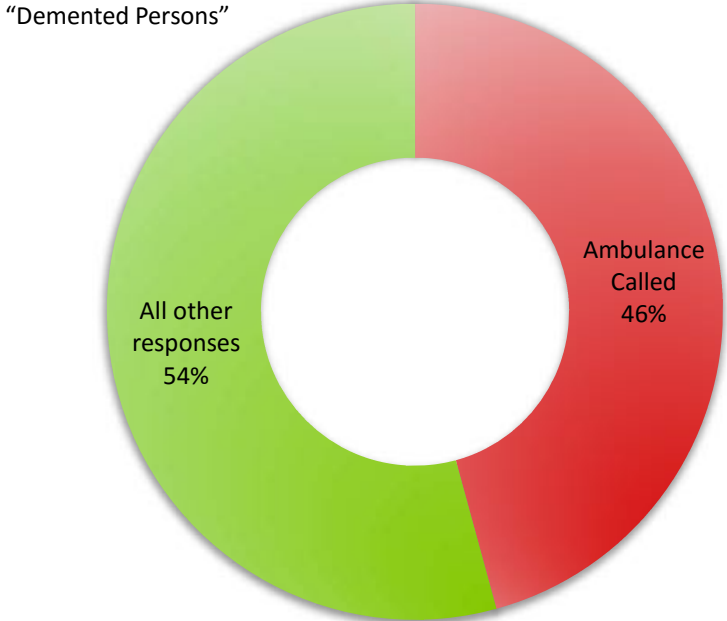
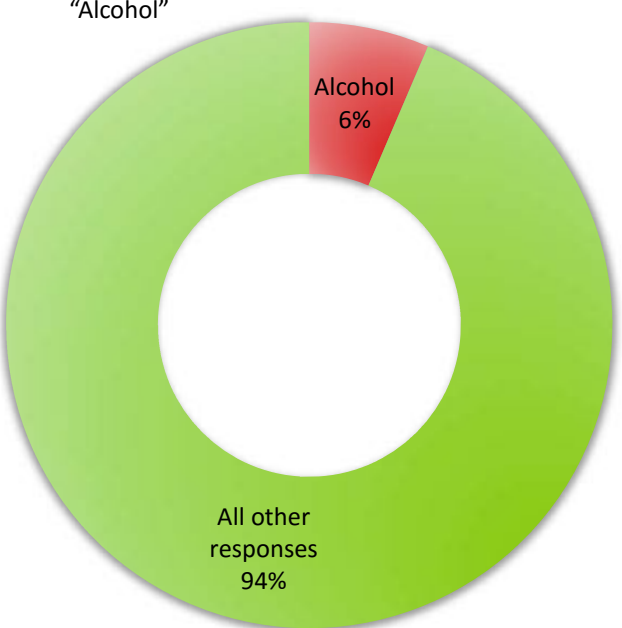
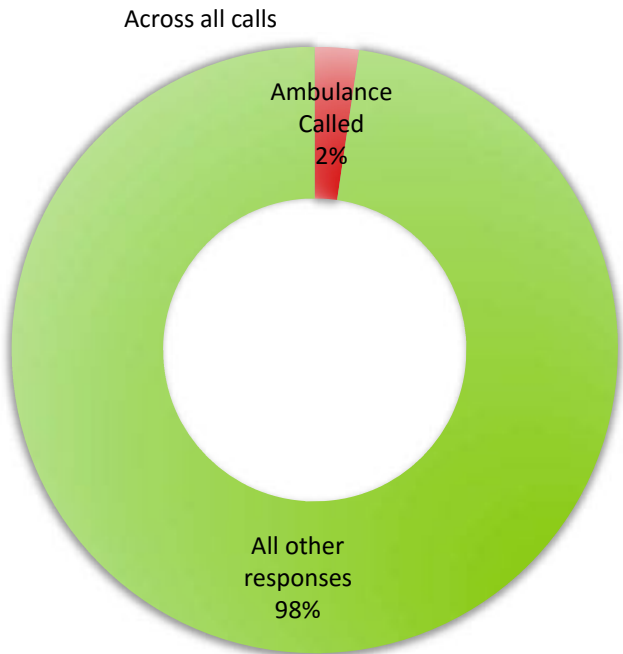


Top ten PAD-Related Service Call Descriptions

Of the top ten most common PAD-related calls, “suspicious persons,” “criminal trespass,” and “illegal alcohol drug” calls represented 74% of all PAD-related calls.



Certain PAD-related calls included an emergency medical response at a higher rate than the average ³⁸

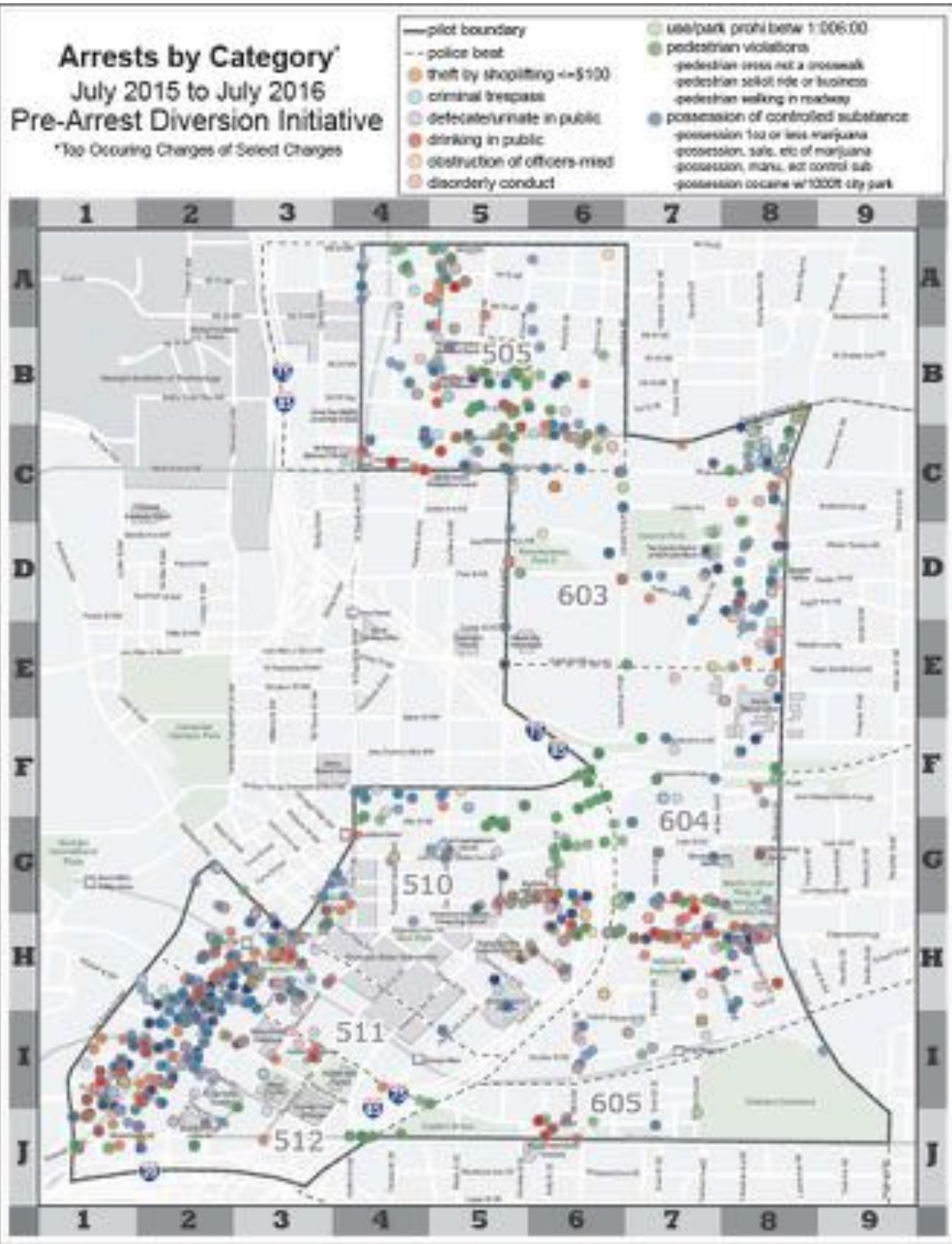




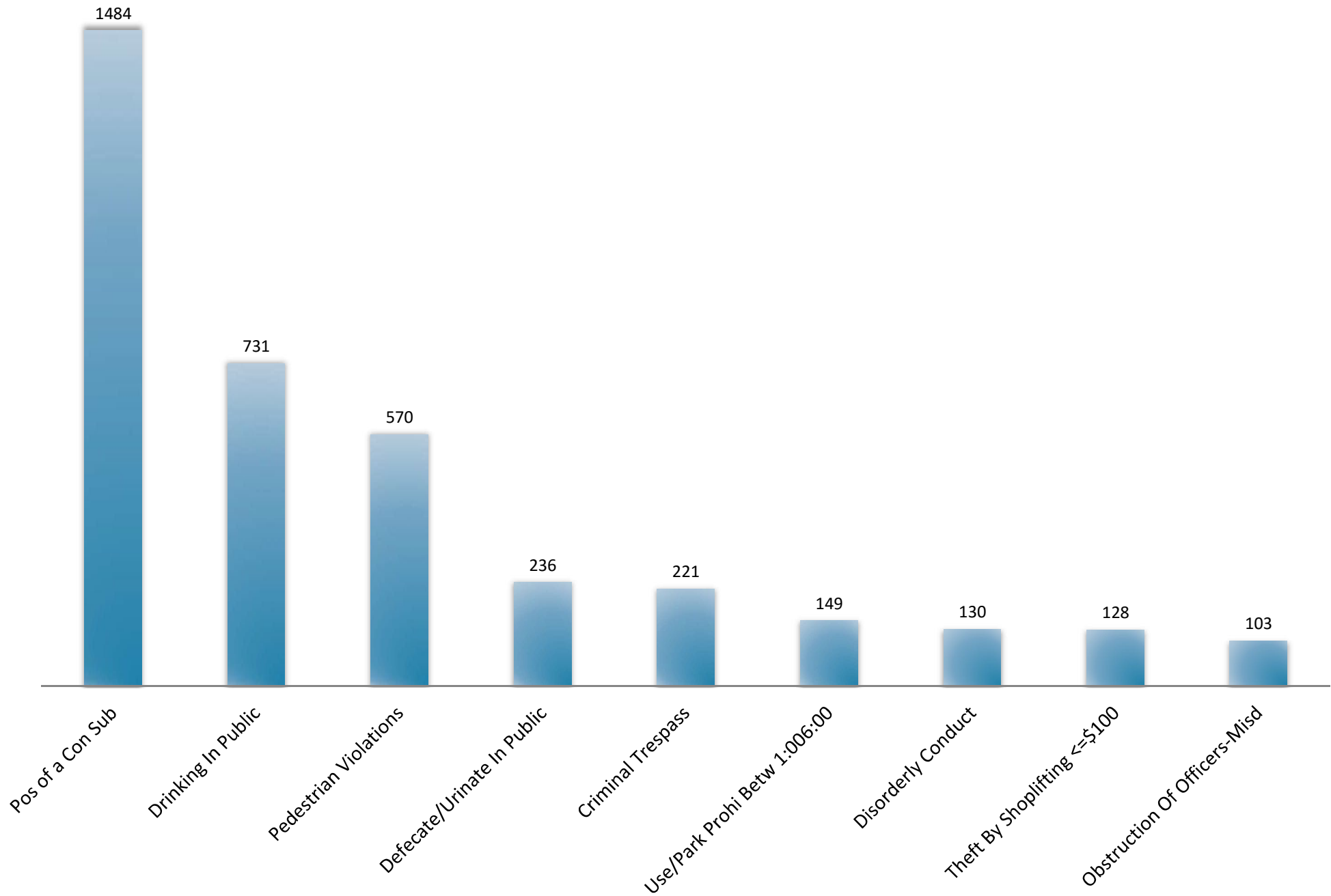
Arrests

Arrests related to quality of life, prostitution, and/or narcotics were provided by the Atlanta Police Department. The charges below were analyzed for this 2015-2016 snapshot. We analyzed all charges in our total arrest data set as opposed to arrests (arrests often include multiple charges) in order to get the most accurate sense of which charges contribute to arrests.

- Abandon Control Sub, Drugs
- Beg/Solicit By Accosting/Force
- Crim Damage To Prop 1st Deg
- Crim Damage To Prop 2nd Deg
- Criminal Trespass
- Defecate/Urinate In Public
- Disorderly Conduct
- Distrib Contl Sub Near School
- Distrib Contl Sub/Housing Proj
- Drinking In Public
- Drug activity near schools
- Drug Related Objects
- Drugs Kept In Original Contain
- Dschrg For Pos Of Con Sub
- Entering Automobile
- Fail/Pharmacist Label Drugs
- Furnishing Inf Terroristic Act
- Idle & Loiter For Illicit Sex
- Loitering Or Prowling
- Obstructing Of Officers - Fel
- Obstruction Of Officers-Misd
- Pasng Stopped Veh Yldng To Ped
- Ped Cross Not A Crosswalk
- Ped Solic Ride Or Business
- Ped To Obey Traff Signals
- Pedestrian To Cross Safety
- Pedestrian Walking In Roadway
- Poss 1 Oz Or Less Marijuana
- Poss Intent Distrib Cocaine
- Poss Intent Distrib Heroin
- Poss, Purchase Controlled Sub
- Poss, Sale, Etc Of Marijuana
- Poss. Cocaine W/1000 Ft Ci.Pk.
- Poss/Manu/Etc. Control Sub
- Possession Of Cocaine
- Possession Of Heroin
- Possession Of Marijuana
- Possession Of Methamphetamine
- Possession Of Other Cntl Sub
- Prostitution
- Public Drunkenness
- Public Indecency
- Sale Of Cocaine
- Sale Of Heroin
- Sale Of Other Cntl Sub
- Sale/Dist Of Dangerous Drugs
- Sell, Make, Dist Control Sub
- Shoplifting (Felony)
- Terror Threats And Acts
- Theft By Rec Stolen Prop, Auto
- Theft By Rec Stolen Prop, Misd
- Theft By Rec Stolen Prop,>\$500
- Theft By Rec Stoln Prop, Gun
- Theft By Shoplifting <=\$100
- Theft By Taking, Auto
- Theft By Taking, Misdemeanor
- Theft By Taking, Over \$500
- Trafficking In Cocaine
- Trafficking In Marijuana
- Trafficking Morphin/Opium, Etc
- Use/Park Prohi Betw 1:006:00

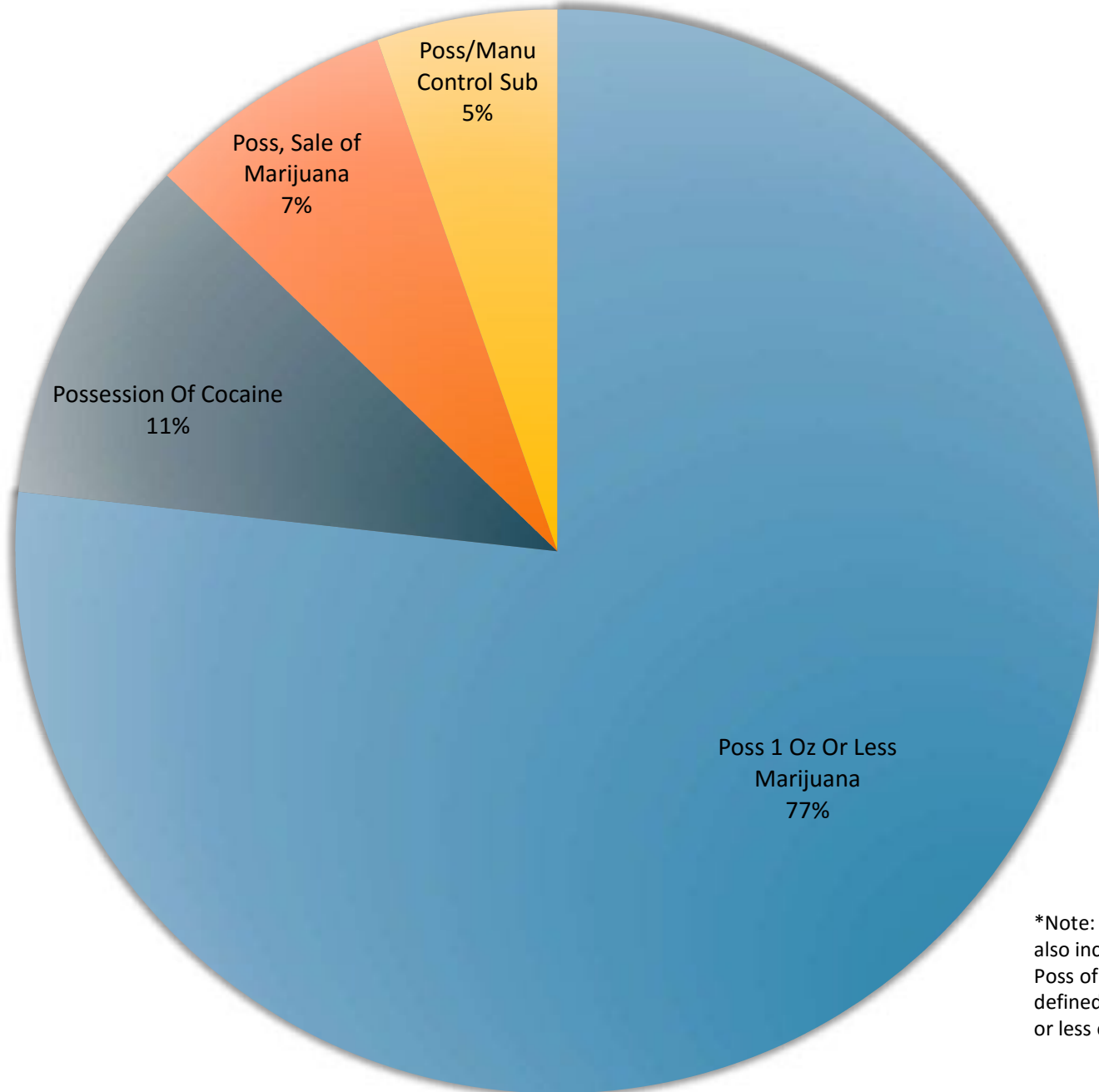


Most Frequent PAD-related Charges



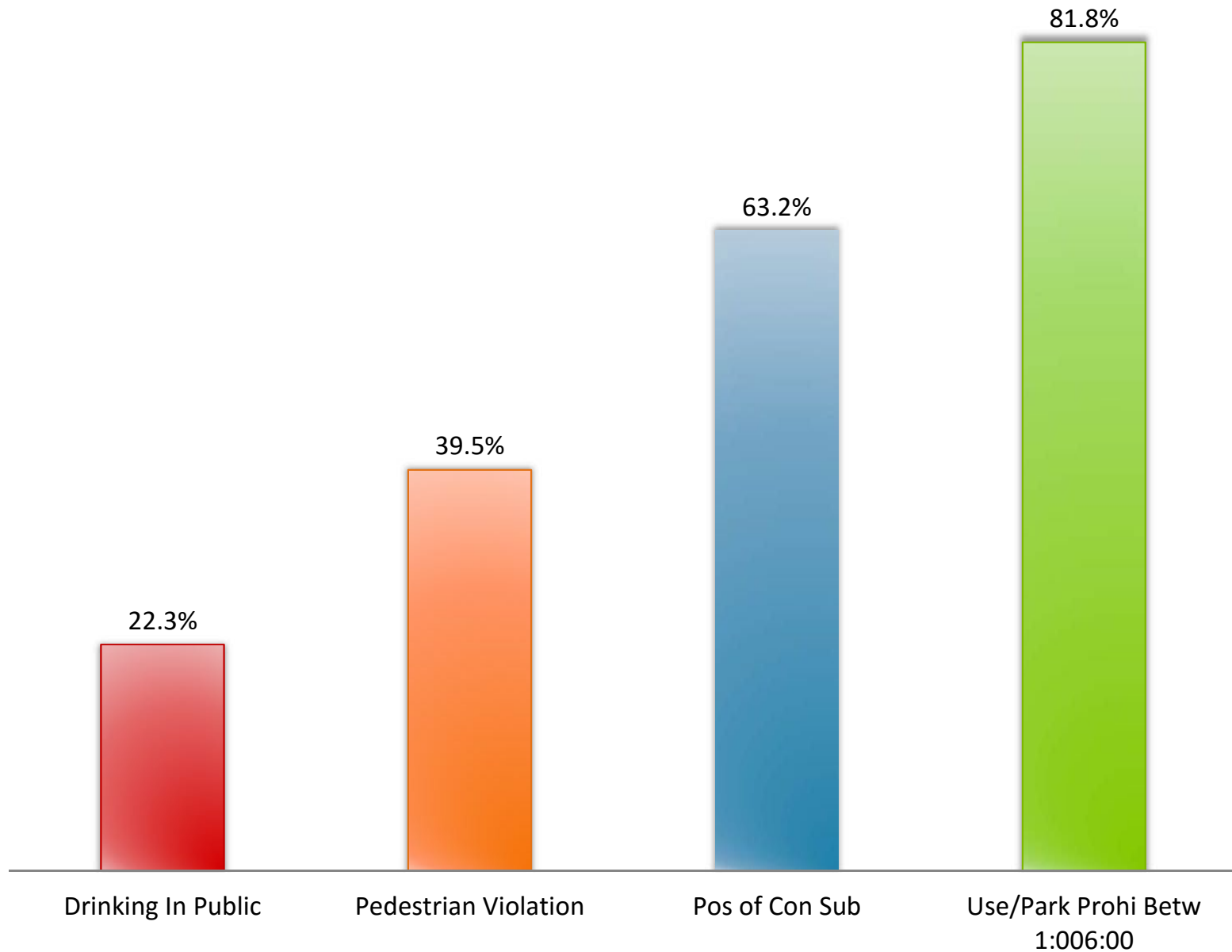
*Note: "Pos of a Con Sub" and "Pedestrian Violations" are categories of charges, includes 5 and 3 individual charges, respectively (see next slide for details)

Possession of controlled substance category broken down by charge



*Note: Poss 1 Oz or less of Marijuana also includes the charge "Discharge for Poss of Controlled Substance," which is defined as charge of possession of 1 oz. or less of Marijuana

More than 40 percent of all PAD-related arrests analyzed included multiple charges



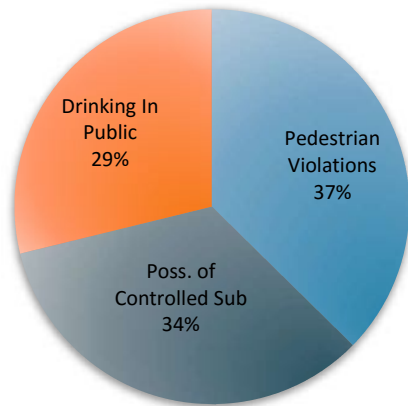
(*Note: this data point has a 10-15 percent margin of error resulting from incident numbers under which multiple people were arrested)

"The girls out here doing [sex work] are just trying to get by. I got stopped four times in a month once and the charge they told me was I was in the street, not prostitution. I was charged for being in the street."

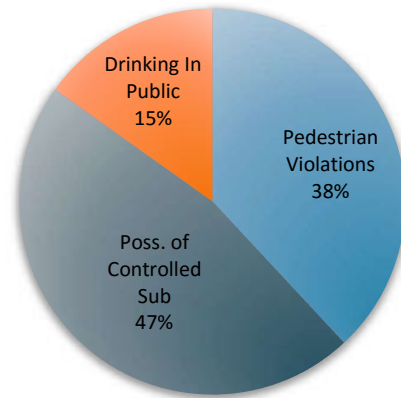
–Potential PAD Participant

Most Frequent PAD-related Charges by Beat

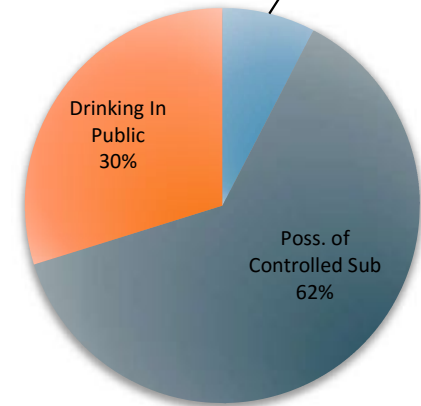
Beat 505



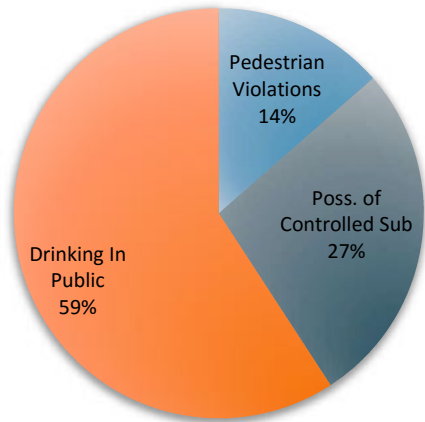
Beat 510



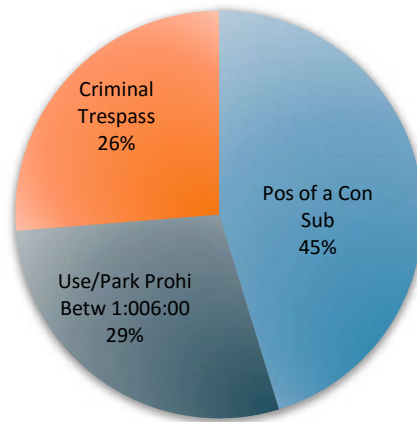
Beat 511



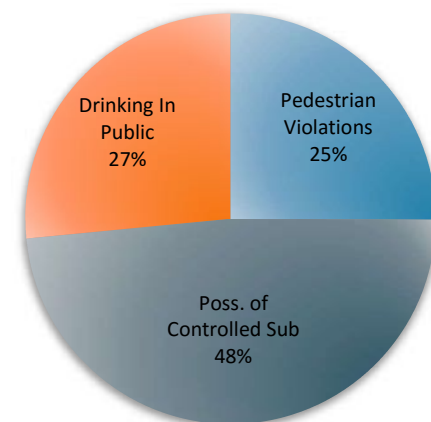
Beat 512



Beat 603



Beat 604

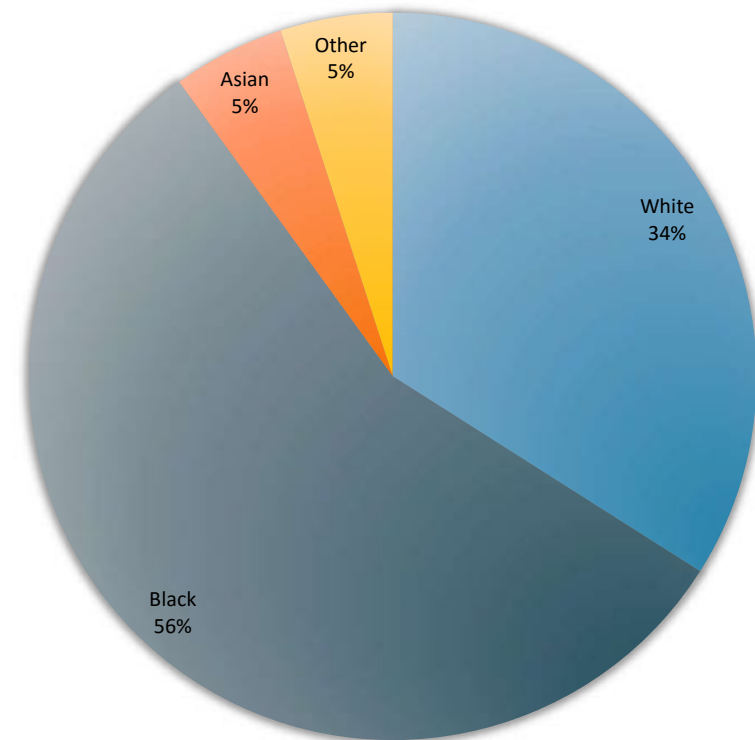




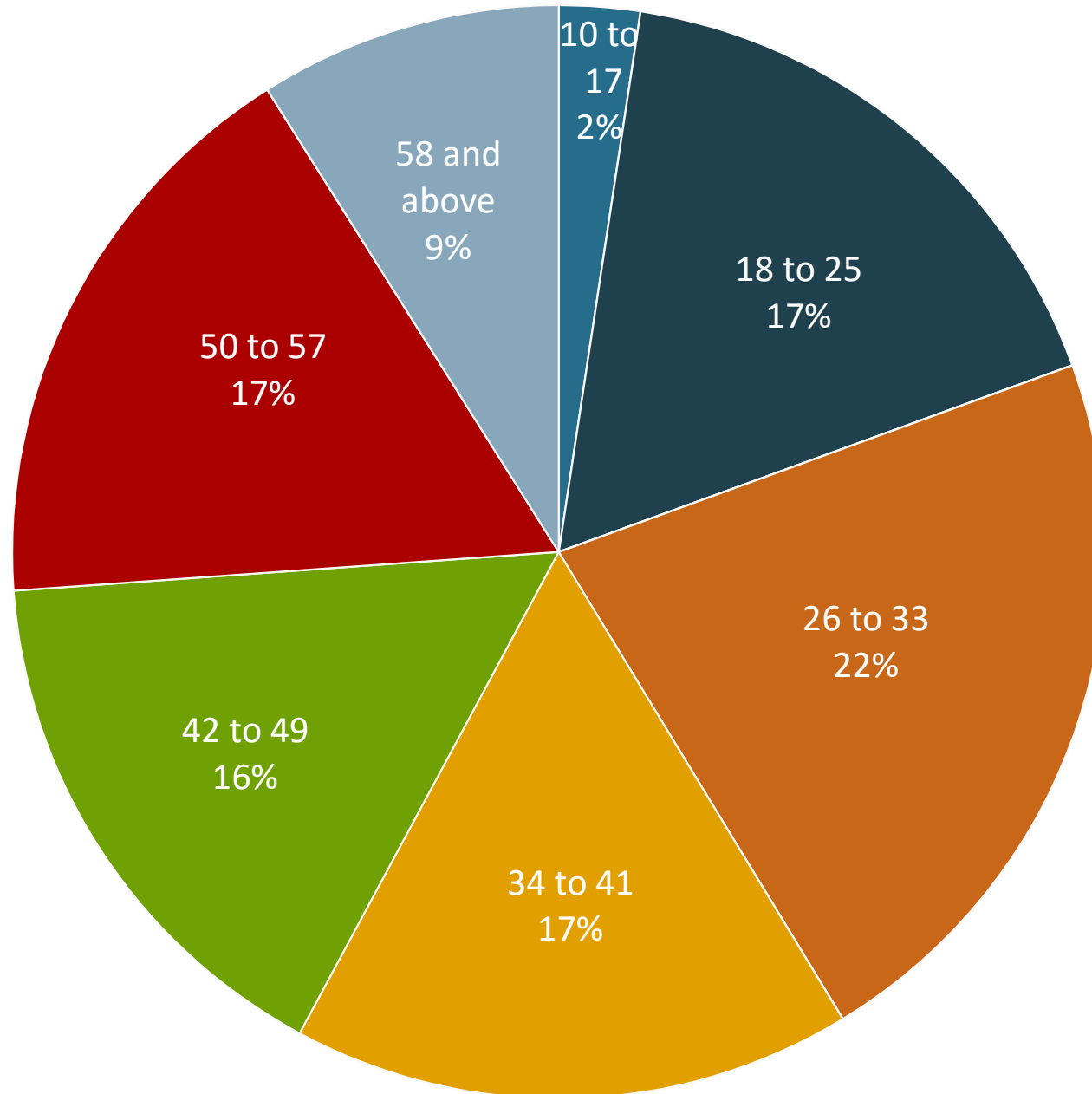
Demographics

- Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) M is 56 percent Black, 34 percent White, and 5 percent Asian;
- The median age is 30, with 49 percent of the population between 20 and 39 years old;
- 16-18 percent of the population is living below the poverty line.

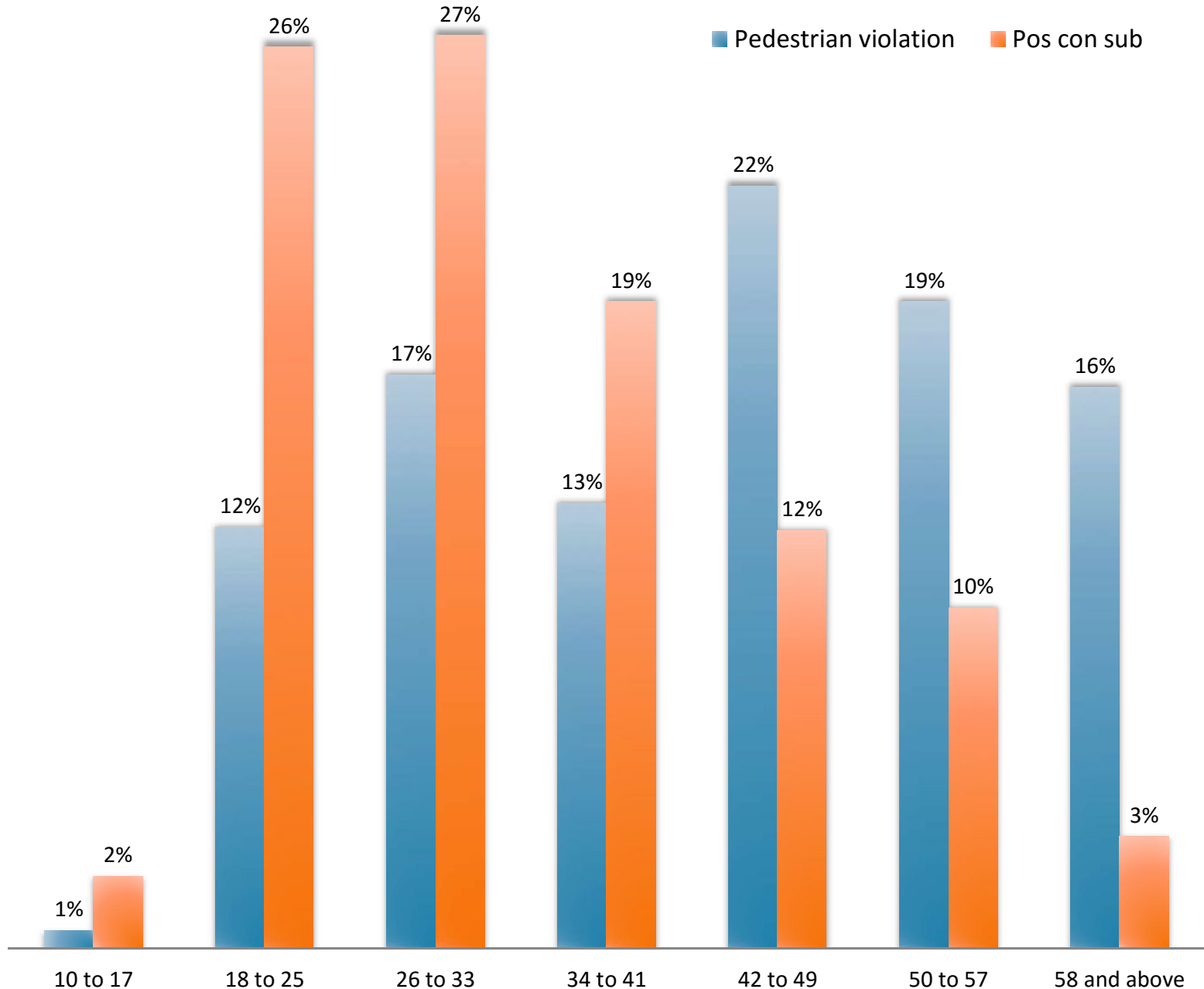
NPU-M Residents by Race



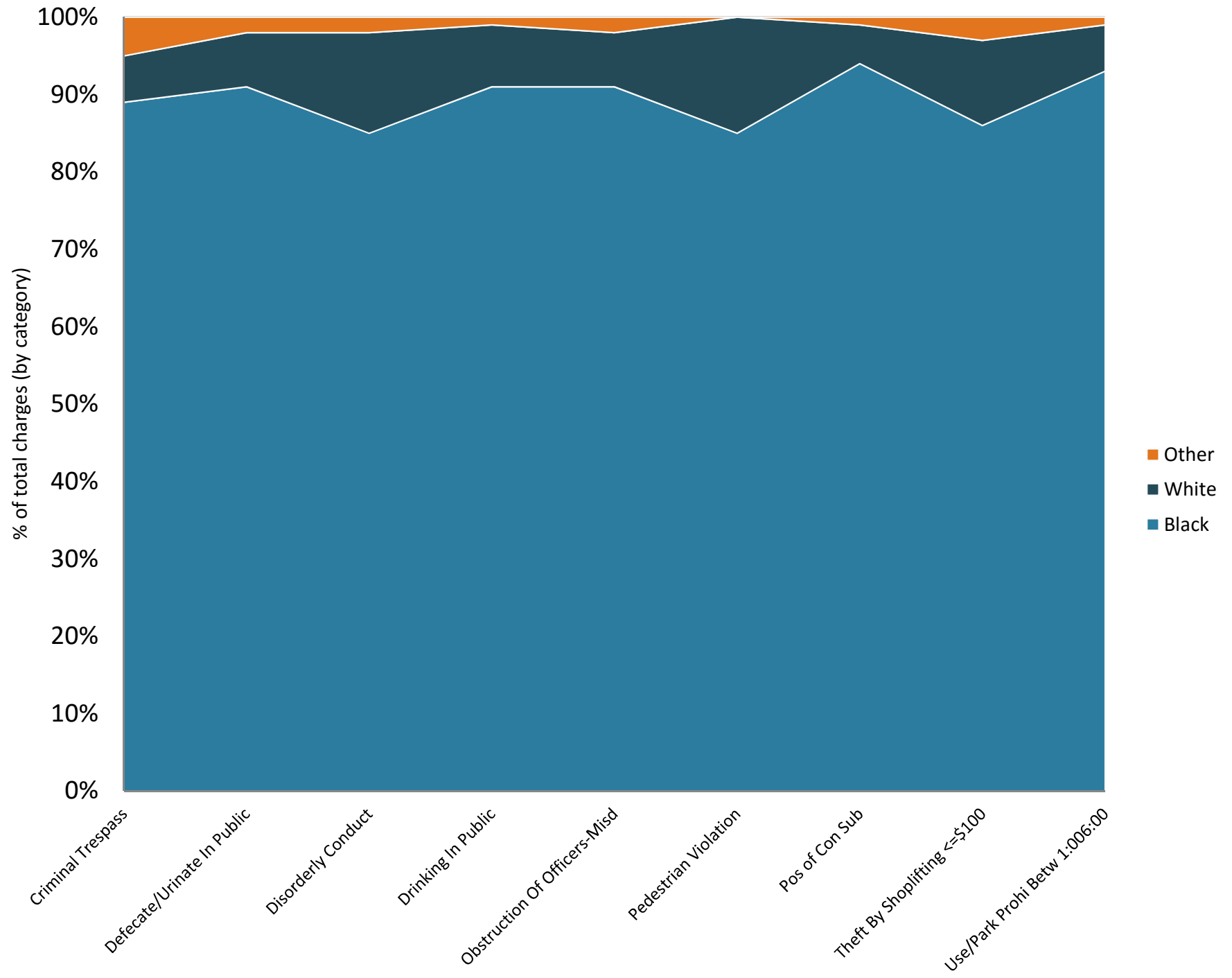
Age Breakdown of PAD-Related Charges



Overall, controlled substance violations were concentrated among younger populations, while pedestrian violations were more common for middle-aged to older people



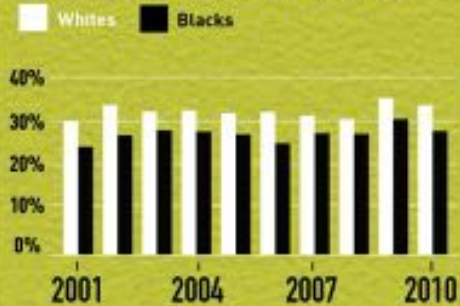
Racial Disparity in Arrest for Top PAD-Related Charges



WHO SMOKES MORE POT?

ACLU

MARIJUANA USE 18- TO 25-YEAR-OLDS



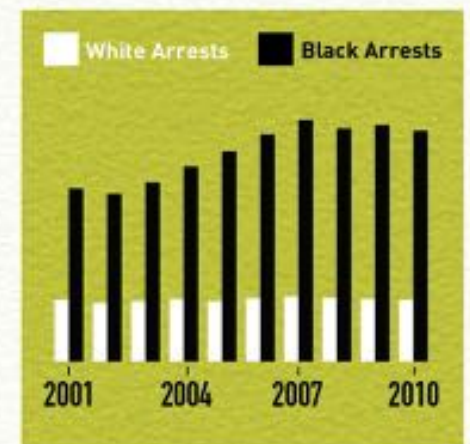
BLACKS AND WHITES USE POT AT
ABOUT THE SAME RATE.

BUT THESE BUSTS AREN'T
HAPPENING ON EVERY BLOCK...

TARGETING COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

ACLU

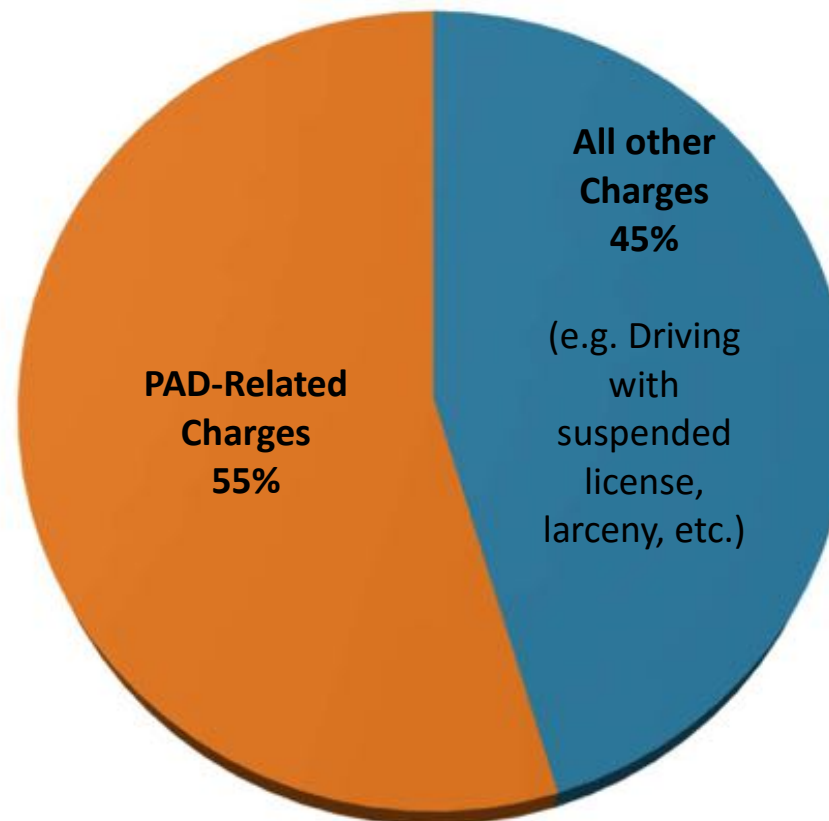
BLACKS HAVE BEEN NEARLY
FOUR TIMES
MORE LIKELY THAN WHITES
TO BE ARRESTED FOR
MARIJUANA POSSESSION





Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC)

PAD-related charges made up 55% of all of charges represented in the jail at the time of the June 22, 2016 snapshot.





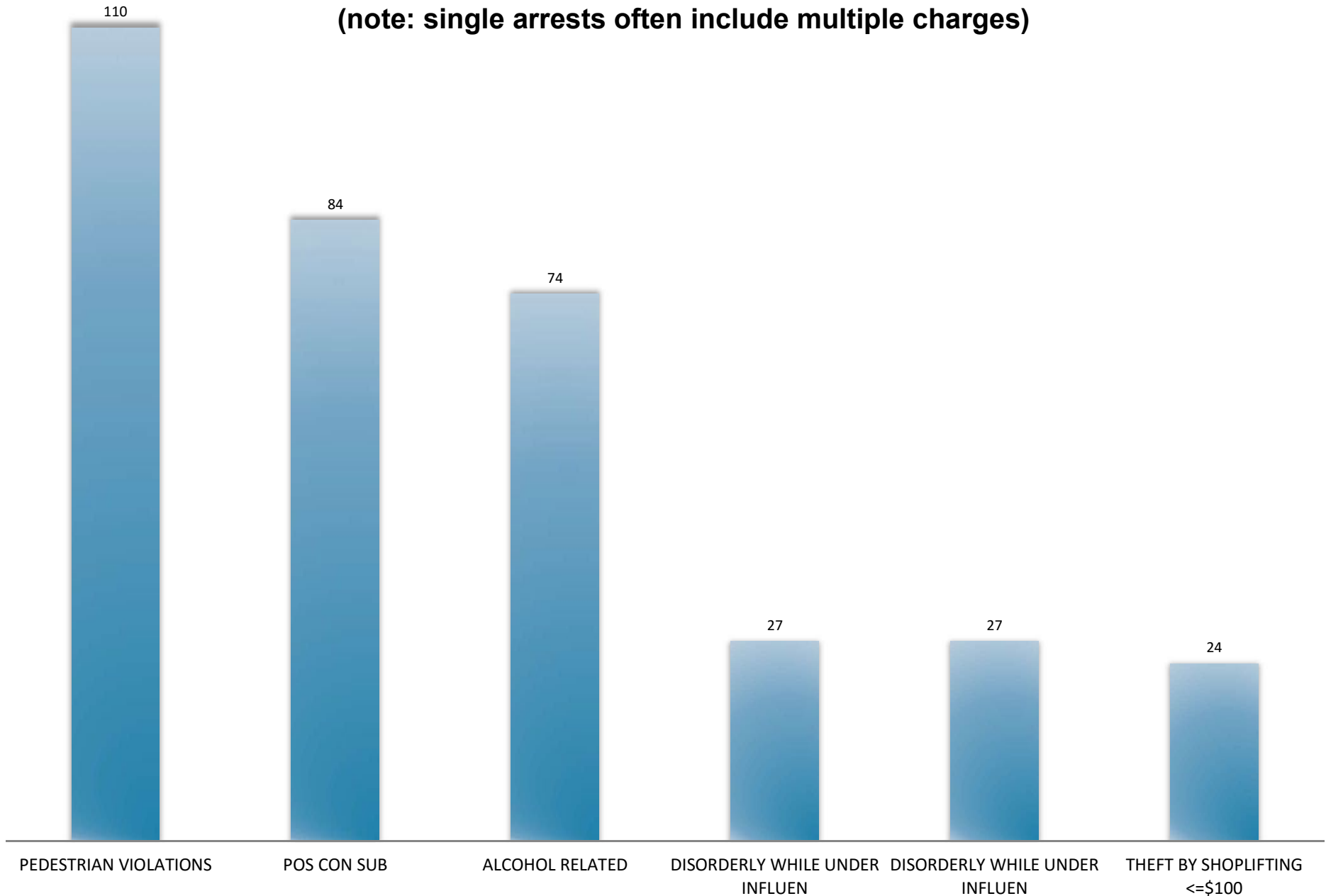
Quick Facts: ACDC

- 479: daily population at time of June 22, 2016 snapshot
- 17.7 days: average length of stay at time of snapshot
- 30,949: total 2014 incarcerations
- ACDC inmates are held on traffic violations, other driving charges, and City of Atlanta ordinance charges and sentences
- 61 percent of 2014 inmates were repeat offenders, having been arrested at least one additional time between 2006 and 2014

*Note: ACDC also houses Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainees. Due to limitations of our access to the data, ICE detainees are not included in any of the numbers here but are a part of the ACDC population

Pedestrian Violations and Possession Charges Were Among the Most Frequent ACDC Charges at the Time of the Snapshot

(note: single arrests often include multiple charges)



“Even though those charged often avoid formal jail sentences, many spend a significant amount of time incarcerated waiting for their case to be resolved. The average jailed arrestee can expect to spend between one and two months behind bars before his case is resolved.”

–Alexandra Natapoff, “Why Misdemeanors Aren’t so Minor,” *Slate*, April 27, 2012

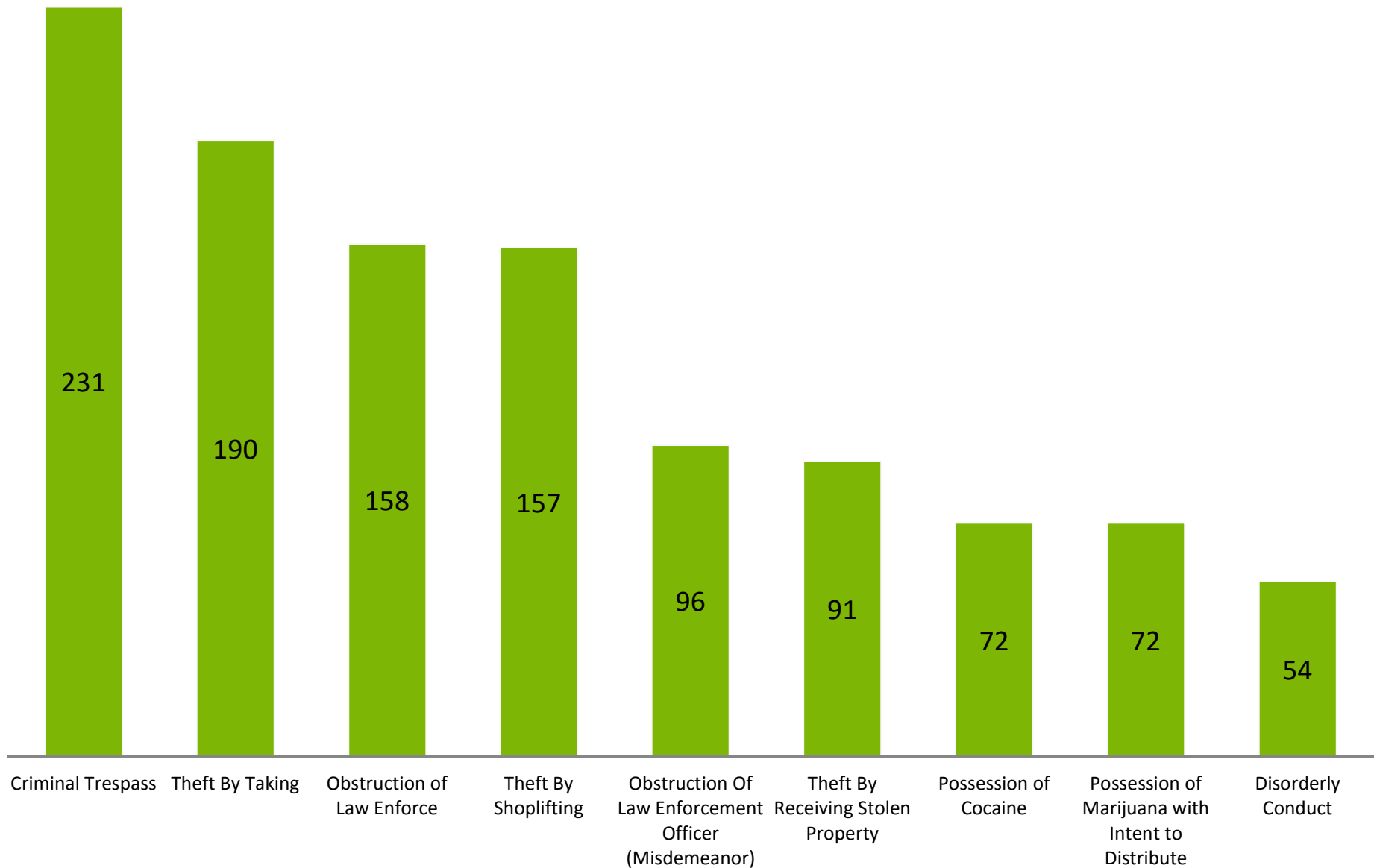


Quick Facts: Fulton County System

- 2,539: 2015 average daily population
- 24,481: total 2015 population
- 46 days: average length of stay in 2015 for all inmates (including those on felony & misdemeanor charges)
- 2.33 charges: average number of misdemeanor charges per booking
- 80 percent of inmates were “re-offenders” —arrested two or more times between 2011 and 2014*

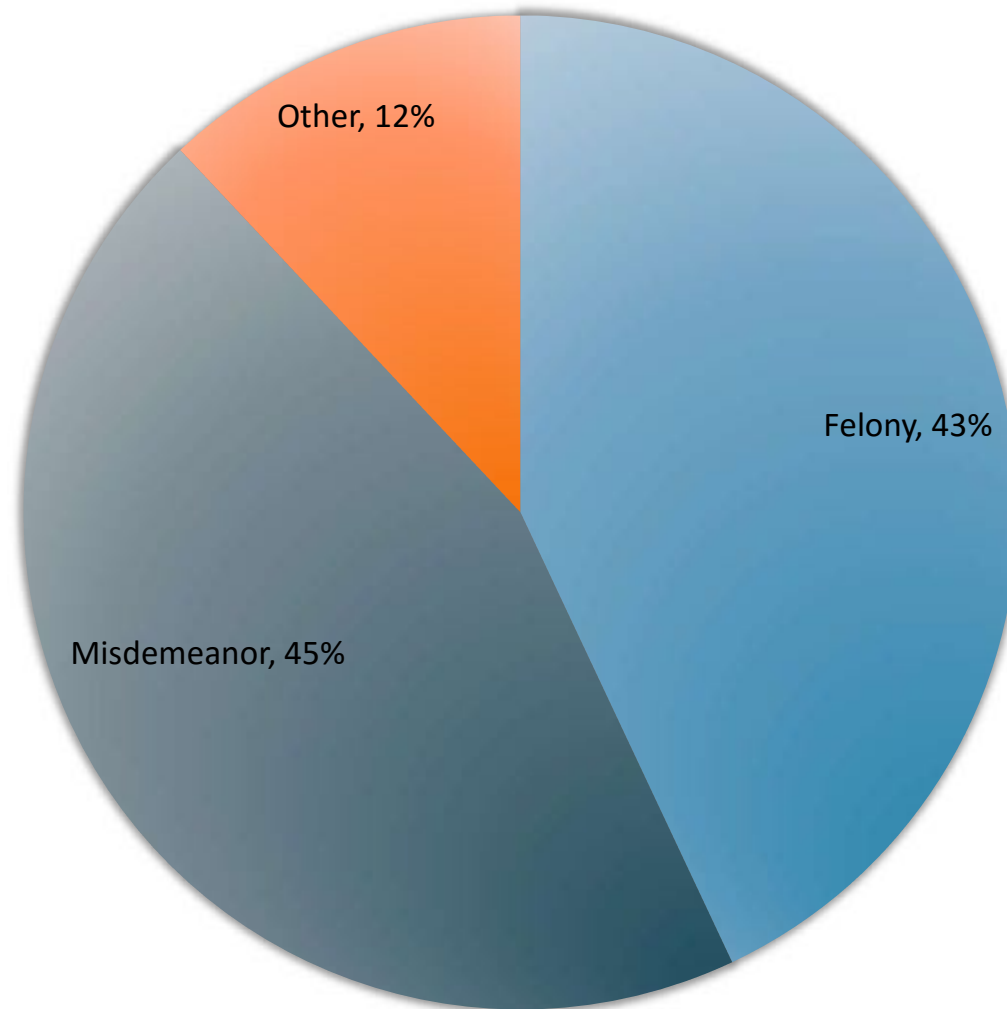
*Repeat offender rate is from Gage, R. et al. 2014 “The Impact of Demographics and Sentencing on Recidivism: Non-Complex Division,” Summer 2011. Andrew Young School of Policy Studies.

Frequent PAD-related charges in Fulton County System at time of Snapshot (note: single arrests may include multiple charges)



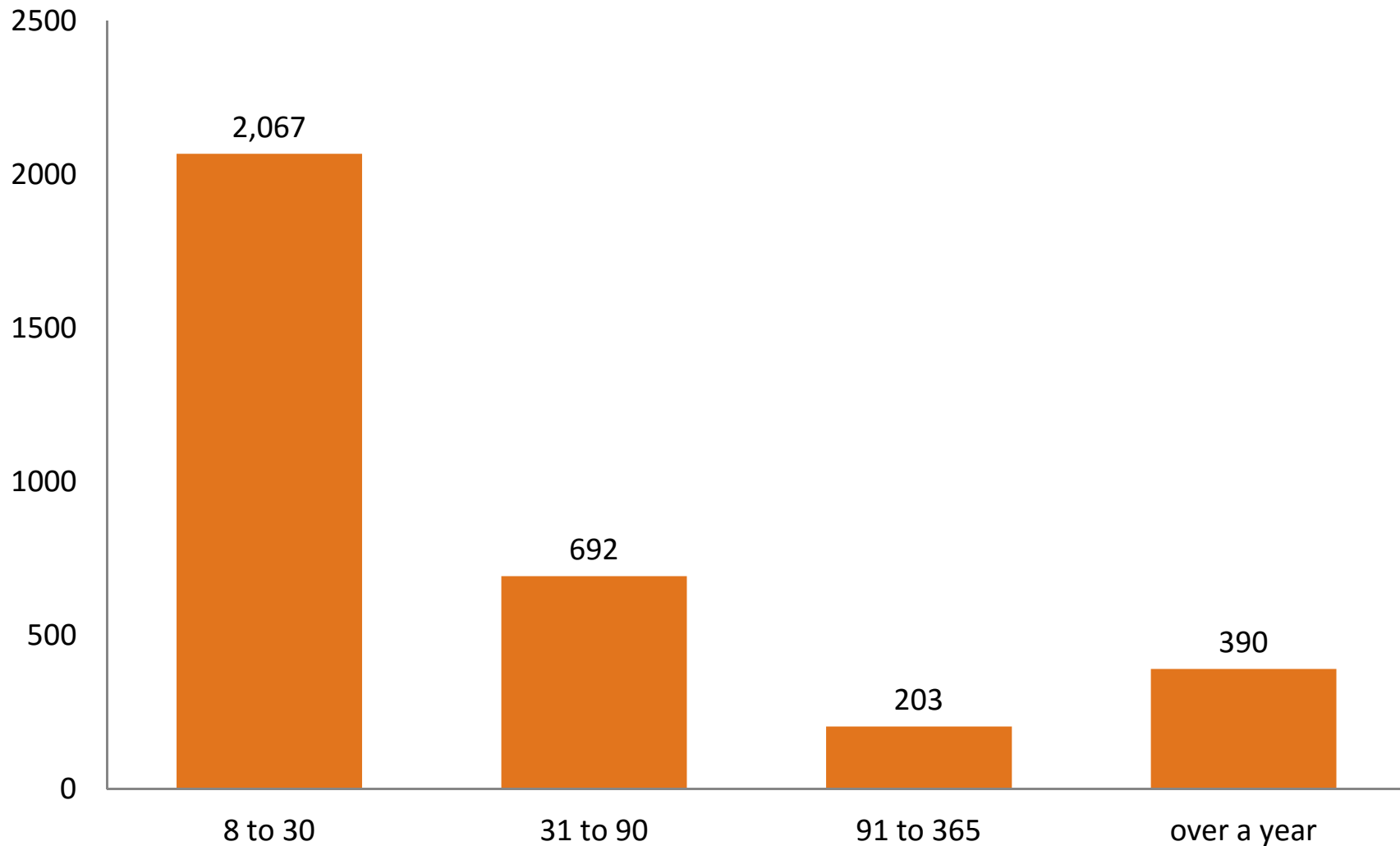
2015 Bookings: Offense Level

There were 23,803 total bookings in 2015 in Fulton County Jail. Of those, felonies made up 43% of all bookings, while misdemeanors made up 45%.



41% of inmates charged with misdemeanors in 2015 were held for 8 days or longer, with a significant number held more than 90 days

2015 Fulton County Misdemeanor Bookings, Days Before Release



“Research shows the majority of people who find themselves in criminal courts are facing charges for minor crimes...Misdemeanor convictions can trigger the same legal hindrances, known as collateral consequences, as felonies. And there are fewer routes to expunging them from criminal records...Convictions can affect housing rights, access to loans, family rights and a whole realm of things. It’s often called the secret sentence or the silent punishment.”

—Maya Rhodan, “A Misdemeanor Conviction is Not a Big Deal, Right? Think Again,” *Time*, April 24, 2014



Diversion & Alternatives

There are currently no *pre-arrest* diversion programs available in Atlanta/Fulton County.

Pre-Trial Intervention, alternative courts and sentencing options are available to some individuals. Currently, services are available only after an individual has been arrested, booked, and most likely spent time in jail. Individuals are eligible for a range of diversion and alternate courts and sentencing at the discretion of the prosecutor/judge.

Programs typically exclude:

- Individuals with prior convictions, especially felony convictions
- Individuals with pending cases or warrants
- Individuals who have already gone through a diversion program
- Individuals who cannot pay for the cost of the diversion
- Individuals who are homeless
- Individuals who do not pass random drug screens



Goals of Pre-Arrest Diversion

REDUCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

Reduce the number of people unnecessarily entering and repeating the criminal justice system (including the jails) for behaviors related to drug use, mental health, sex work, and extreme poverty.

REORIENT ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES

Reorient our communities' and governments' attitudes and responses to safety, disorder, addiction, and mental illness – away from criminalization and toward public health responses.

IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY & PUBLIC HEALTH

Improve participant and community quality of life through research-based, health oriented, and harm reduction interventions.

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE

Improve the quality, raise the standards, and increase connection between social service providers in Atlanta/Fulton County to benefit program participants and all residents.

REINVEST CRIMINAL JUSTICE SAVINGS

Sustain funding for alternative approaches by capturing and reinvesting criminal justice system savings.

SHIFT CULTURE & HEAL RELATIONSHIPS

Shift the culture of the police department by giving line officers new tools, and heal tensions that exist between communities and law enforcement.



Harm Reduction

INTENSIVE CARE NAVIGATION

Intensive care navigation services will be provided to PAD participants within a harm reduction model. At the center of the approach is building a strong relationship between the participant and the care navigator. Core to building this relationship is meeting participants “where they are.” This requires a non-judgmental and client centered approach. Motivational interviewing and continual assessment of where the participant is in regards to the stages of change are key to this model.

HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction has many and varied definitions but in general refers to a range of policies and activities designed to reduce the harmful consequences associated with various human behaviors, both legal and illegal. Harm reduction approaches emphasize wellness over abstinence and recognize that recovery is not a short term goal, but a long term (often life long) process and journey and that relapse is a part of that journey for many. Harm reduction approaches generally do not rely on punitive sanctions for clients. Harm reductions models do not, for example, kick you out of drug treatment for confirming your diagnosis through relapse. Harm reduction allows people to define wellness for themselves and works to remove ineffective moralistic or judgmental program requirements.

Locking people up for non-violent crimes related to drug and alcohol issues is overcrowding our jails and prisons and failing to reduce addiction.

Smart investments in health and social services through a "pre-arrest diversion" program are a more cost-effective way to help people achieve healthier lives.

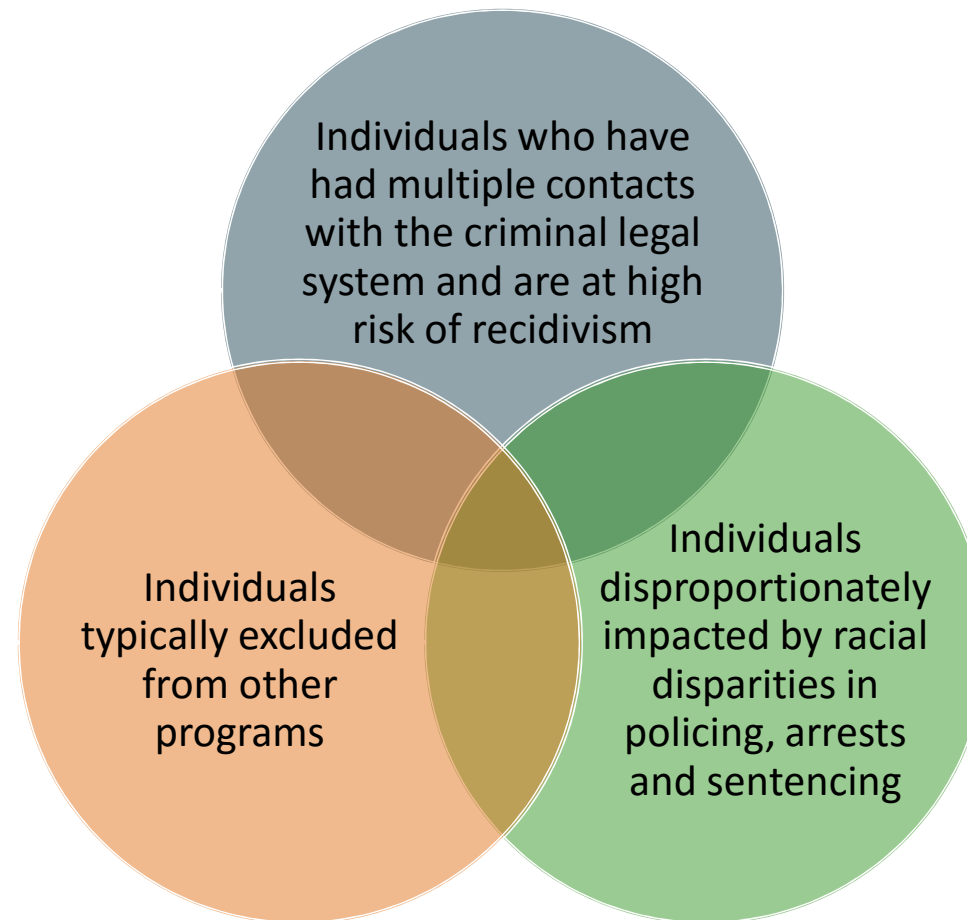
This continuum explains the services most needed to meet the health and social service needs of people with drug and alcohol problems to divert them from entering the criminal justice system for low-level nonviolent offenses.

Sample Continuum of Care





Pre-Arrest Diversion Priority Participants





Partnership Agreement
Memorandum of Understanding

Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative

236 Forsyth Street SW, Suite 200, Atlanta GA 30303

AND

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer at 731 Peachtree St NE, Atlanta, GA 30308

AND

Saint Mark United Methodist Church at 781 Peachtree St NE, Atlanta, GA 30308

This Memorandum of Understanding is entered into between ***Lutheran Church of the Redeemer/Saint Mark United Methodist Church*** ("Partner Agencies") and ***Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative, Inc.*** ("PAD") in order for Partner Agency to participate as a service network provider for PAD.

The goal of the Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative is to:

- Reduce arrests for activities related to mental illness, drug addiction homelessness and/or extreme poverty.
- Improve community safety and quality of life.
- Provide coordinated, high quality services that treat people with respect, understanding and compassion.
- Foster and implement Housing First and Harm Reduction models of service delivery.

Responsibilities and Expectations

Coordinating Agency

PAD serves as Coordinating Agency for this initiative. As the Coordinating Agency, PAD is responsible for the following:

- Managing and directing the implementation of the goals and objectives of the PreArrest Diversion Initiative
- Selecting and referring participants to Partner Agency for appropriate services.
- Monitoring and evaluating the sufficiency and quality of services to referred participant(s).
- Coordinating participant services with other appropriate service providers.
- Assisting in identifying or providing resources necessary to ensure Partner Agency can adequately assist referred participant(s).
- Provide Care Navigator responsible for the case management of referred participant(s).
- Convening periodic meetings of Agency Partners and provide training specific to the guiding principles of PAD, including housing first and harm reduction concepts.

Partner Agency

Partner agencies are social service organizations that provide a range of social services or coordinate the accessibility thereof; including but not limited to housing, counseling, medical services, substance abuse services, mental health services, and workforce development services. It is agreed and understood that Partner Agency may not necessarily be a provider all of the services required of referred participants. Partner Agencies are responsible for the following:

- Securing waivers from referral participant(s) agreeing to provide PAD access to all records of referral participant(s) of whatever nature in possession of Partner Agency, as well as providing similar access to other PAD agencies or individuals associated with the pre-arrest initiative.
- Developing and maintaining thorough current and historical records of services provided to referral participant(s); and to make these records available to PAD in a timely manner.
- Attending periodic meetings and training sessions coordinated or sponsored by PAD.
- Cooperating fully in PAD evaluation and assessment processes, including assisting external or PAD associated evaluators by providing relevant data as requested from time to time.
- Providing participant centered high quality services to referral participant(s).
- Aligning delivery of services (to the extent possible) and committing to use best efforts consistent with PAD guiding principles.
- Maintaining any required professional certifications associated with Partner Agency services.

Specific Commitments

Mission House space will be available during the following hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 3-11pm and Friday 7pm to Saturday, 6am. Additional hours may be available upon request and availability.

Redeemer provides access* to the lower floor in Mission House which includes:

- keys for access
- 2 restrooms (can be made gender-neutral)
- showers,
- kitchen,
- multi-purpose space,
- couple of couches
- Wifi (PAD provides their own computers)

* In the rare event that Redeemer has a conflicting event in the lower floor of the Mission House space, Redeemer will provide a minimum advanced notice of 1 week, and will provide an alternative space on site to accommodate the commitments outlined in this agreement.

With direction from PAD based on needs of clients, Redeemer and Saint Mark will provide:

- hygiene kits (including feminine hygiene and condoms)
- basic clothing options (socks, underwear, scarves, coats)
- towels/washcloths for shower (Redeemer will keep them washed/dried/available)
- snacks (non perishable)
- extra food items in fridge for clients to heat up when available

Compensation

Partner Agency agrees to use existing resources, to which a referral participant is otherwise eligible, prior to seeking payment from PAD for such services.

No financial obligations exist for the purpose of this agreement. Provider Agencies agree to provide the items listed above. If the program requires additional items or services, compensation will be negotiated on a case by case basis.

Timeline

This agreement shall replace all other agreements, if any, and shall be in effect from signing date to June 30, 2019. Please remit the signed MOU and verification of your tax identification number:

Via Email: shedra@prearrestdiversion.org
(preferred submission method)

Via US Mail: Atlanta/Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative
Attn: Shedra Jones
236 Forsyth Street SW., Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

TERMINATION

This Agreement may be terminated in whole or in part by either party without cause. Seven days written or emailed notice of termination shall be given to both PAD and **Lutheran Church of the Redeemer/Saint Mark United Methodist Church**. In the event of termination of this agreement, the Parties agree to cooperate for a smooth and orderly transition so as not to unduly burden referred participant(s) or otherwise unreasonably disrupt services participant(s) may be receiving from other providers.

Failure to honor any of the obligations stated above may also result in the termination of this Agreement.

In Witness Whereof, parties have executed this Memorandum of Understanding as of the date first written above.

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

By: [Signature]
Title: Minister for Community Engagement
Date: 11/28/17

SAINT MARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

By: [Signature]
Title: MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
Date: 11/28/17

ATLANTA/FULTON COUNTY PRE-ARREST DIVERSION INITIATIVE

By: [Signature]
Title: Social Services Director
Date: 11/19/2017

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