

Committee: N/A

Staff: Susan J. Farag, Legislative Analyst

Purpose: Receive briefing and have discussion – no vote expected

Keywords: #Police, #CountyExecutive, #CrimeStats, #ViolentCrime

AGENDA ITEM #14

January 18, 2022

Discussion

SUBJECT

Today the Council will receive a briefing on calendar 2021 crime statistics, including information on trends in violent crime.

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Chief Marcus Jones, Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD)

Assistant Chief Willie Parker-Loan, Patrol Services Bureau, MCPD

Assistant Chief Dinesh Patil, Investigative Services Bureau, MCPD

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

This is a briefing and no vote is expected. The Public Safety Committee was last briefed on these issues on December 6.¹ The staff report contains criminal statistics data. It also contains some evidence-based ways to address violent crime as well as possible funding sources. Topics to be discussed today include:

- The increase in violent crime;
- Crimes with firearms, including homicides, contact shootings, firearm discharges, and firearm recoveries;
- Carjackings;
- Drug arrests and overdoses; and
- Nonviolent crime trends.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

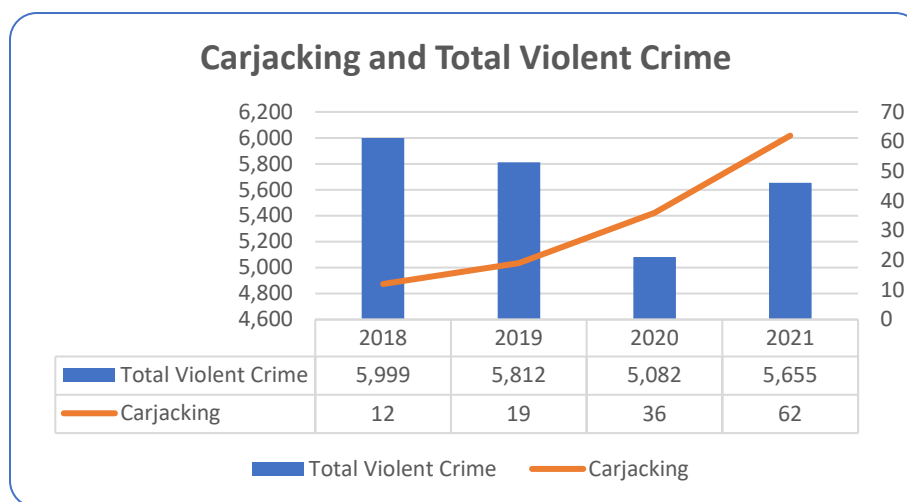
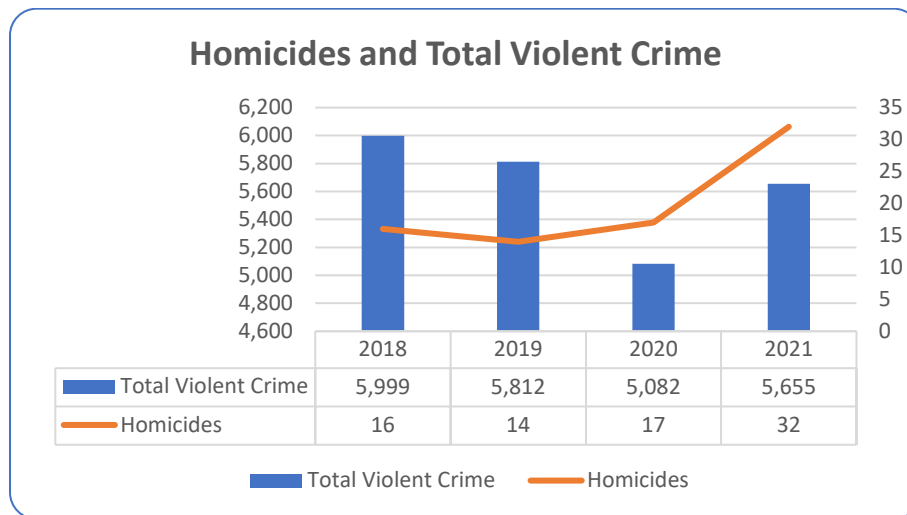
Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, crime rates – for both nonviolent and violent crime – have been unusually impacted.

2020 Trends: In 2020, COVID-related shutdowns and stay-at-home orders deeply impacted criminal activity, and most reported crime decreased. Total violent crime in the County, for example, decreased by almost 13%. Notable exceptions were carjackings (with an almost 90% increase) and homicides (a 21% increase). In both cases, firearms were often involved.

¹ [Staff Report](#) for December 6, 2021, Public Safety Committee Briefing on Crime Statistics and Violent Crime Trends

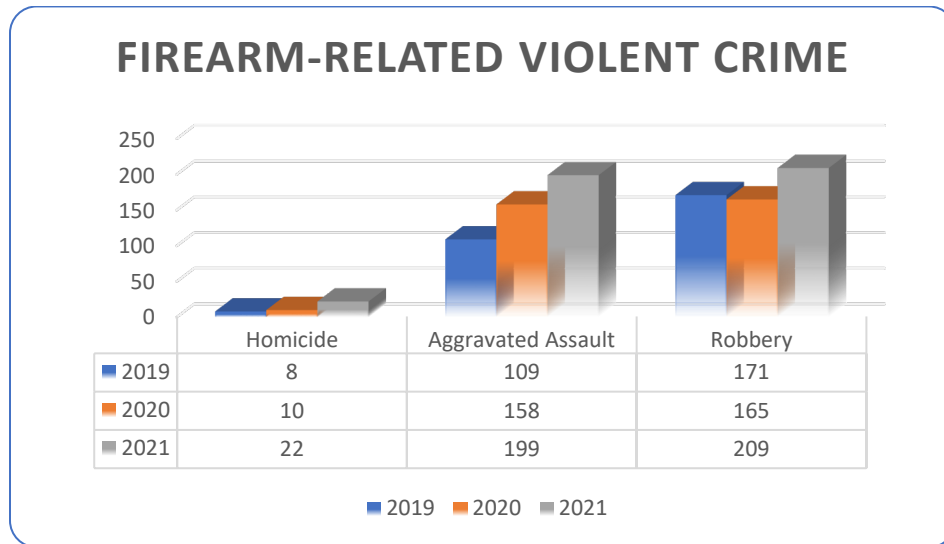
Total nonviolent crimes increased by 3%. That does not reflect the wide categorical variations within that subset. Auto thefts, for example, increased almost 28% in 2020, commercial burglaries by 10%, and theft from autos by 15%.

2021 Crime: As Covid-related closures eased, community activity began to normalize, and many crime rates returned closer to pre-pandemic totals. Unfortunately, certain violent crimes, such as homicide and carjackings, continued to escalate beyond pre-pandemic levels. Most disturbing, homicides have increased by 88% in 2021, from 17 in 2020 to 32 in 2021. Carjackings continued to increase as well, from 19 in 2019, to 36 in 2020, to 67 in 2021. For 2021 alone, this represents a 72.2% increase.

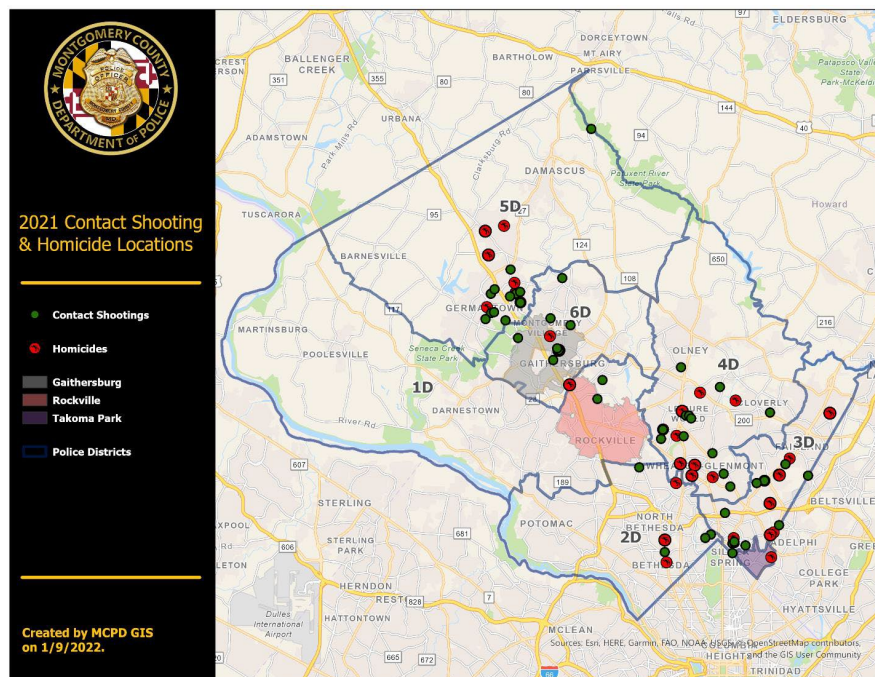


The Role of Firearms: Despite the wide fluctuations in other types of crime, violent crimes committed with firearms have continued to increase. From 2019 to 2020, firearm-related violent crime increased by 17%, with aggravated assaults being the primary driver. From 2020 to 2021, firearm-related violent crime increased another 27%. Last year, homicides committed with firearms more than doubled, robberies increased by 27%, and aggravated assaults increased by 26%.

MCPD advises there have been several incidents where 10 or more shots were fired.² Two recent events in October had inordinately large numbers of shots fired. On October 3rd in a Central Business District drive-by/jump out incident on Georgia Avenue, more than 50 shots were fired from both handguns and a rifle. Two victims were hit, and multiple storefronts and parked cars were struck. On October 16th in the Central Business District on Fenton Street, 45 casings were recovered from a running shoot-out along the street. Several cars and apartments were also struck.



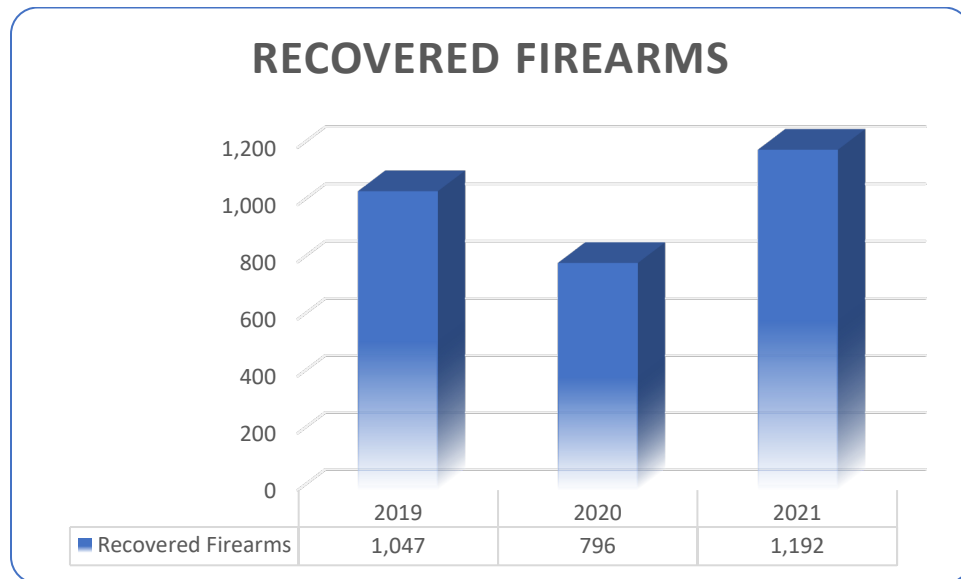
Contact Shootings: Contact shootings, or nonfatal gunshot injuries, have also been increasing. These types of assaults and injuries have increased by 66% over the past year, from 31 in 2020 to 50 last year. The following map illustrates the areas of the County with documented homicides and contact shootings.



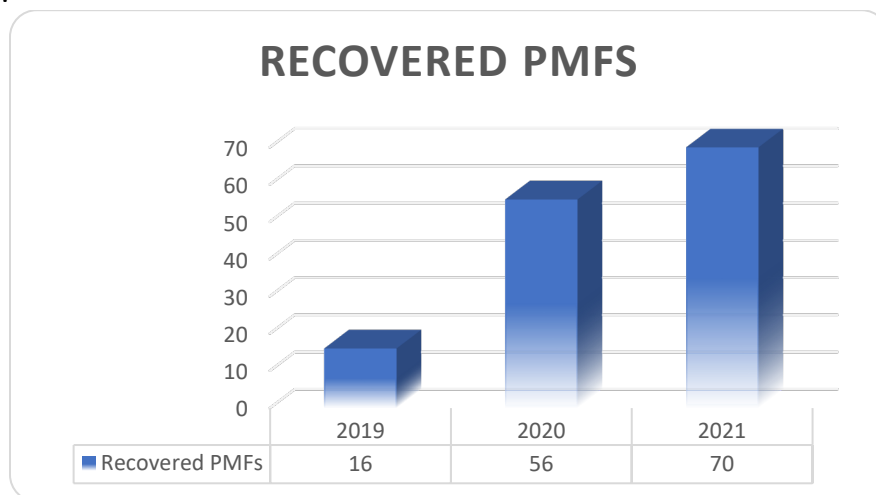
² A full list of incidents is provided on ©2 of the December 6, 2021, staff report.

Firearm Discharging Offenses: The County has also experienced an increase in firearms discharge incidents where there are no known victims. The number of incidents increased 97% from 31 to 62 between 2019 and 2020, and increased by 11% in 2021 to 69 total known firearms discharge incidents. It should be noted that the 3rd Police District (Silver Spring) has experienced the largest number of firearm discharging incidents.

Recovered Firearms: The number of recovered firearms increased by 50% from 2020 to 2021.



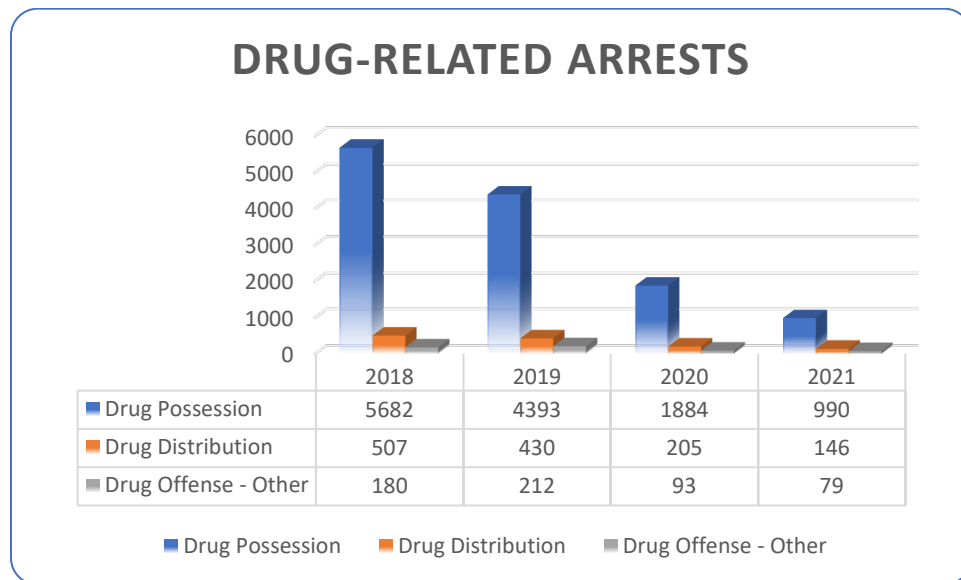
Ghost Guns, or Privately Manufactured Firearms (PMFs): PMFs are firearms that can be easily assembled from components bought online, have no serial numbers, and are untraceable. They are easily accessible to those who are otherwise prohibited from possessing guns. The New York Times reports that nationally more than 25,000 PMFs have been confiscated by law enforcement since 2016.³ Although PMFs are still a very small number of the total firearms recovered by MCPD, the numbers continue to grow.



³ [‘Ghost Guns’: Firearm Kits Bought Online Fuel Epidemic of Violence](#), *New York Times*, November 17, 2021

Nonviolent Crime: Many types of nonviolent crime have decreased significantly over the past two years. Commercial burglaries were down 22% in 2021, and residential burglaries were down almost 10%. Larceny from autos (including auto parts) decreased by 11%. Although most nonviolent crime has decreased, there are increases in two areas – auto thefts increased almost 19% and identity theft increased by 62% (comprehensive data provided on ©8).

Drug Offenses: Largely due to significant decreases in traffic and person stops over the past two years, arrests have declined significantly across all types of drug-related offenses. Simple possession charges fell 57% in 2020 and by another 48% in 2021. Drug distribution fell by 52% in 2020 and almost 29% in 2021. In total, drug offenses declined by 44% last year.



Current MCPD Crime Suppression Initiatives: MCPD has increased various evidence-based crime suppression efforts to target and prevent violent crime and other community concerns. While violent crime is up across many parts of the County, Silver Spring, in the 3rd District, has had multiple incidents of not just weapons-related assaults and homicides, but also firearm discharge incidents that have hit various buildings and cars.

Crime Suppression Efforts in Silver Spring: Increasingly, there have been both crime and quality of life issues in the Central Business District (CBD), particularly on Veterans Plaza. In early October, 3D implemented a multi-pronged approach that addresses community concerns. The 3D Commander created a Crime Task Force with a primary focus on crime suppression, high visibility, and overall quicker responses to crimes in progress. This team is comprised of a Sergeant and six officers. This supplements the existing CBD team of one Sergeant and four officers. The 3D Commander has also added four additional officers on an overtime status to work 9pm-2am on Friday and Saturdays. These officers are specifically placed at "static" high visibility locations that have been pre-determined in the CBD according to crime spikes/calls for service/and potential the suppression of crime. These new initiatives have interrupted several crimes in progress. 3D has also been working with other governmental entities and community partners to take a proactive approach to crime in the area. ***The Council may wish to ask if the Department has data on the effectiveness of increased patrols.***

Crime Suppression Efforts Across the County: While a significant amount of the elevated violent crime is occurring in the 3rd District, the rest of the County has not been immune. MCPD has increased several focused initiatives County-wide in an effort to deter and suppress crime.

Directed Patrol: The Department has implemented directed patrols county-wide. This is an intelligence-led policing initiative that analyzes crime data and “puts cops on dots” to prevent and interdict crime.

Carjackings: Carjackings are impacting the County and surrounding jurisdictions in the Metropolitan Washington, DC region. MCPD works on a regional carjacking task force that includes the FBI, Prince George’s Police Department, the Metropolitan Police Department, and other law enforcement entities⁴. Since this type of crime often crosses jurisdictional boundaries, information sharing among jurisdictional partners is crucial for solving and preventing crime.

MCPD has detailed staff resources from their Special Assignment Teams (SAT), District Community Action Teams (DCAT), and Fugitive Teams to assist with carjacking prevention and apprehension. A crime analyst works with these teams to provide data on carjacking locations, recovery locations, suspects involved in multiple incidents, and provides this information to both the MCPD team as well as partner jurisdictions to help apprehension efforts.

Coordinated evidence collection and analysis: This effort is particularly important to address gun crimes. The Department uses the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) to identify shell casings and match them to guns that may have been used in other crimes. This system facilitates coordinated efforts with neighboring jurisdictions if guns have been used in other crimes outside the County.

Expanded use of license plate readers: MCPD has expanded the use of license plate readers in areas where auto theft and carjackings are occurring. It is also using them to target major ingress/egress routes of the County as these crimes are regional.

COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS FOR MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACHES TO VIOLENT CRIME

Fortunately, there are several evidence-based best practices that help communities reduce violent crime. The most effective strategies depend on collaborative partnerships among different governmental agencies and community groups. Montgomery County is already doing many of them such as hot spot policing and supportive services like mediation through the Street Outreach Network (SON). Councilmembers may wish to further explore whether expansion of these current systems or augmentation with other initiatives is appropriate for addressing violent crime.

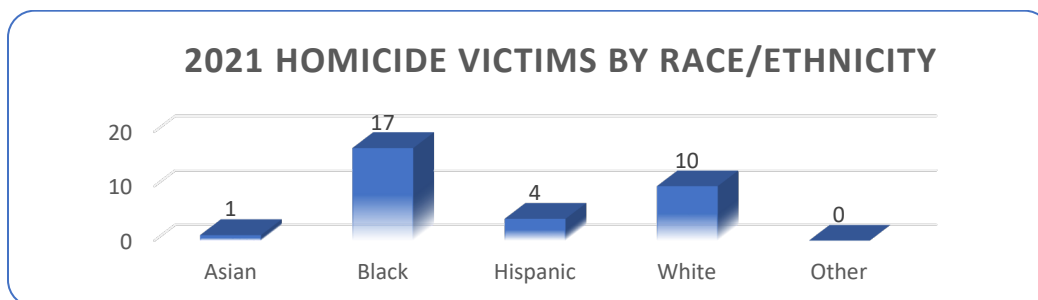
1) **Police Staffing:** A primary consideration is adequate staffing that affords MCPD with the flexibility to implement best crime suppression tactics.⁵ MCPD currently has an authorized complement

⁴ Please see [§32-34](#) of the Public Safety Committee *Update on Crime Statistics and Violent Crime Trends* (12/06/21)

⁵ The Public Safety Committee is tentatively scheduled to review Police Department Staffing on January 31.

of 1,271 officers, which is 1.3 officers per 1,000 residents. This is significantly lower than the average 2.8 officers per capita reported for counties, or the 2.5 officers per capita reported for suburban areas.⁶

Visible police presence or hot spot policing is strongly correlated with violent crime reduction.⁷ It does not necessarily result in more arrests since much of its impact is to deter crime from ever occurring. There is also no evidence of spill over into other neighborhoods. Additionally, there is a strong association between additional police officers and reducing homicides.⁸ This protective effect is even stronger for reducing homicides of African American residents -- “in per capita terms, effects are twice as large for Black versus white victims.”⁹ This is particularly important given the demographic break-down of homicide victims here in the County.



When building back staffing after the great recession, former Chief Manger prioritized the creation of District Community Action Teams (DCAT), highly proactive and flexible teams that conduct targeted enforcement operations in response to identified crime increases and crime trends. These teams engage residents and businesses in community policing efforts to sustain improvements achieved through joint partnership efforts. The Department formed one DCAT team for each of the six police districts. During last year’s budget cuts and departmental reorganization, the DCAT teams in 1D (Rockville) and 2D (Bethesda) were abolished. ***The Council may wish to ask how the loss of these two DCAT teams has impacted violent crime suppression.***

2) Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): CPTED efforts looks for ways to change the physical environment of a community to help deter crime. Efforts can include better lighting, additional cameras, assessment of building entryways such as windows, and activity support (bringing appropriate patrons and activities to places to discourage criminal misuse of the area). CPTED can also be used when designing new public spaces to minimize areas that may attract crime.

3) Focused Deterrence: This strategy identifies violent offenders and offers a carrot and stick approach to suppress violence. Stakeholders identify violent offenders and provide various support services such as drug treatment, job training, education, etc. to help stop violent behavior while also making it explicitly clear that future violent behavior will be addressed swiftly with specified

⁶ [FBI UCR Data: Full-time Law Enforcement Officers by Region and Geographic Division by Population Group](#), Number and Rate per 1,000 Inhabitants, 2019

⁷ [Hot spots policing of small geographic areas effects on crime](#), Anthony A. Braga (September 8, 2019)

⁸ [When You Add More Police to a City, What Happens?](#), NPR (April 20, 2021)

⁹ [Working Paper: Police Force Size and Civilian Race](#) (December 2020)

consequences. One such program, Operation Peacemaker in California, provided conflict mediation, intensive mentorship, case management and life skills training to reach people at the highest risk for violence and was associated with reductions in firearm violence (annually, 55% fewer deaths and hospital visits, 43% fewer crimes).¹⁰ ***The Council may wish to explore formalizing agreements and approaches among stakeholders such as HHS, MPCD, the State’s Attorney’s Office, and private partners to provide coordinated efforts.***

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Council staff is exploring the possibility of accessing federal or state funding to strengthen County’s violent crime prevention efforts. Some potential funding sources include:

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds may be used, under certain circumstances, to restore law enforcement staffing to pre-pandemic levels.
- The Department of Justice has announced \$1.6 billion in grant funding to reduce violence.
- Governor Hogan just announced a three-year, \$500 million initiative to increase crime control and victim protection services across the State.

This Staff Report Contains:

MCPD Response to Questions

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¹⁰ [Firearm and Nonfirearm Violence After Operation Peacemaker Fellowship in Richmond, California, 1996–2016](#)

Compliance Manager can also be reached at 240-777-6197 (TTY 240-777-6196) or at adacompliance@montgomerycountymd.gov

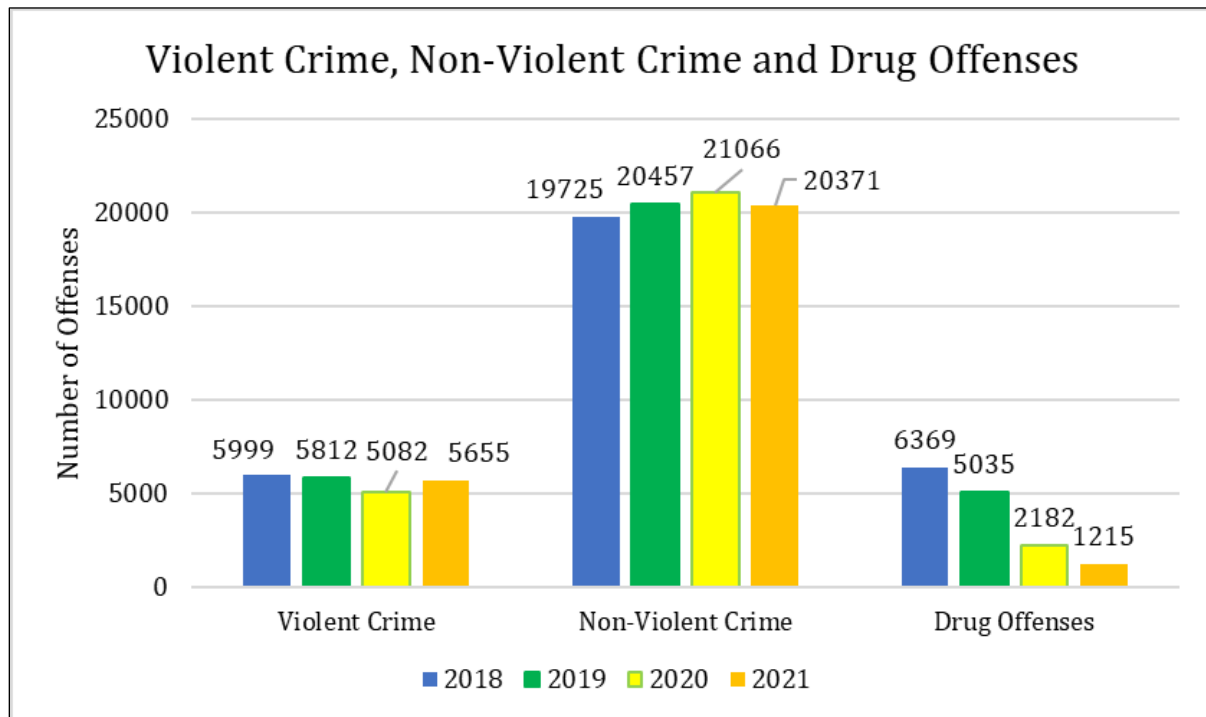


VIOLENT VS NON-VIOLENT CRIME COMPARISON

1/10/2022

Contributing Authors: CAS Manager M Iezzi, SID Supervisor K Akinyanju, CAS Senior Analyst P Margelis, SID Analyst T Atkins

Request: Violent Crime vs Non-Violent Crime comparison, 2018 - 2021



Violent Crime

Data:

- Compiled from WebFOCUS Dashboard
- Based on approved reports in EJustice
- Based on recorded EJustice start date
- All categories based on number of incidents, not number of victims **except for homicides**
- Violent and non-violent crime types of note were selected at the discretion of the authors
- Homicide data does not include justifiable homicides

Filters:

- Takoma Park data is not included
- Unfounded reports and reports that were referred to another jurisdiction are not included
- Only includes incidents with a start date between 1/1/2018 and 12/31/2021

Homicides were up 88% in 2021 as compared to 2020. There were 31 incidents and 32 victims in 2021 and there was a total of 17 homicide events in all of 2020. Of the 32 incidents in 2021, at least 5 are confirmed to be domestic-related and 14 were the result of disputes between the persons involved. Arrests have been made or arrest warrants have been issued in 18 of the 32 homicides.

Although commercial robberies are showing an increase in 2021 as compared to 2020, totals are within normal ranges for pre-pandemic totals. Carjackings, however, are up significantly compared to both 2019 and 2020. Of the 62 in 2021, arrests have been made in 29 which accounts for an arrest rate of 47%. More than half of the carjackings in 2021 occurred in the 3rd District.

Kidnapping reports are at their highest total since 2018. Five of the 16 in 2021 were either parental abductions or domestic-related and all victims have been located. Eight of the 16 involved strangers, but three were attempts only and five were the result of other crimes like auto thefts with children in the vehicle or robberies where victims were forced to drive to other locations.

There was a large increase in sex offense reports in 2021, but that total is within normal ranges for pre-pandemic totals.

Violent Crime Type	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percentage Change 2018 to 2019	Percentage Change 2019 to 2020	Percentage Change 2020 to 2021
Abduction	2		1		-100.0%	Not Calculable	-100.0%
Arson	57	47	48	50	-17.5%	2.1%	4.2%
Assault - Aggravated	629	646	677	808	2.7%	4.8%	19.4%
Assault - Simple	3623	3522	3028	3330	-2.8%	-14.0%	10.0%
Homicide	16	14	17	32	-12.5%	21.4%	88.2%
Human Trafficking	9	8	5	2	-11.1%	-37.5%	-60.0%
Kidnapping	14	9	4	16	-35.7%	-55.6%	300.0%
Rape	403	404	381	361	0.2%	-5.7%	-5.2%
Robbery - Commercial	67	67	57	73	0.0%	-14.9%	28.1%
Robbery - Carjacking	12	19	36	62	58.3%	89.5%	72.2%
Robbery - Individual	491	462	347	324	-5.9%	-24.9%	-6.6%
Sex Offenses	245	248	173	274	1.2%	-30.2%	58.4%
Weapon Offense	431	366	308	328	-15.1%	-15.8%	6.5%
Grand Total	5999	5812	5082	5655	-3.1%	-12.6%	11.3%

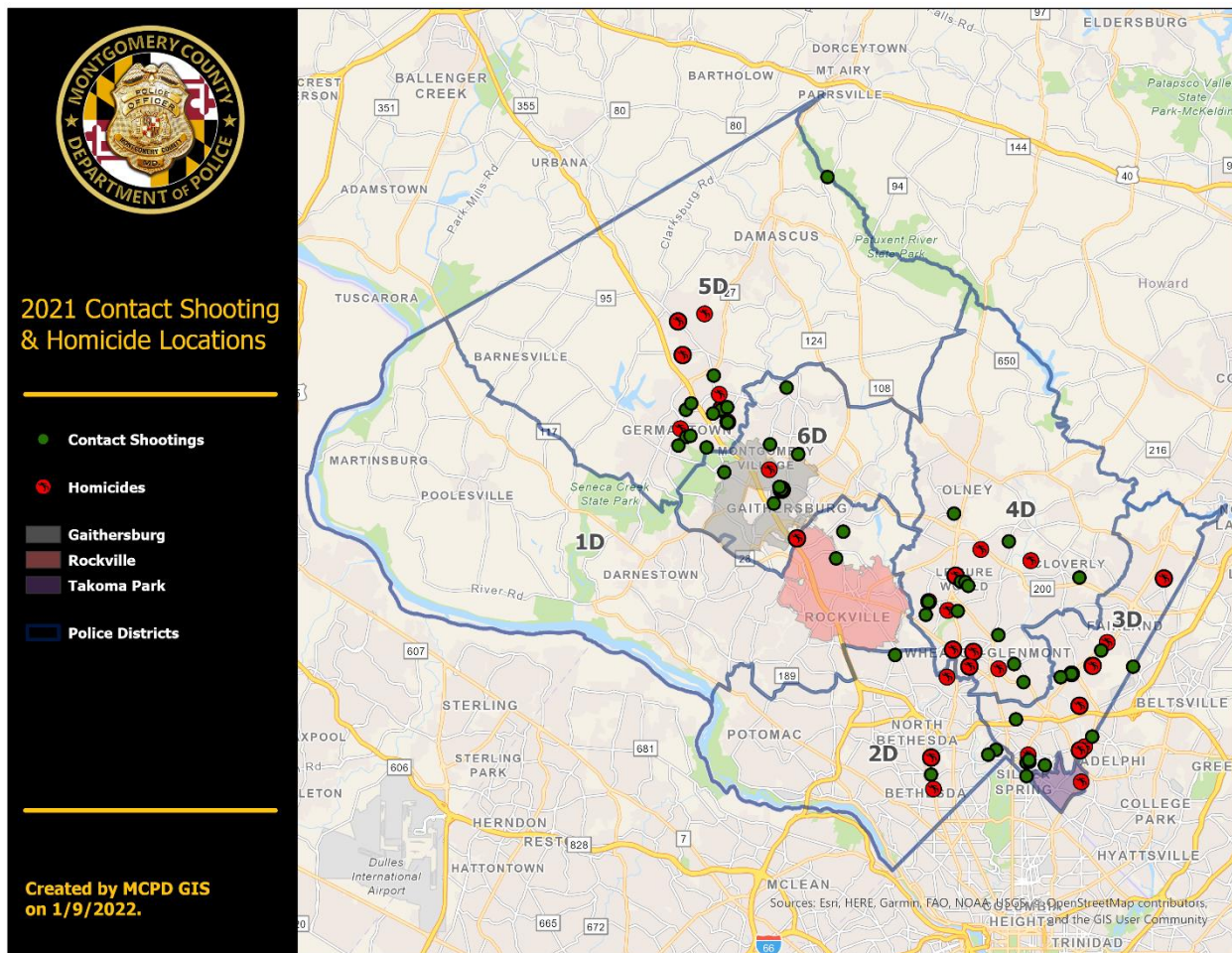
Firearm-Related Violent Crime YTD

Data:

- Compiled from WebFOCUS Dashboard
- Based on approved reports in EJustice
- Based on recorded EJustice start date

Firearm-related violent crime in the county has increased over the last three (3) years. From 2019 – 2020, this type of crime increased nearly 17%. Aggravated assaults were primarily responsible for this increase. Violent crime in which a firearm was used continued to increase from 2020 – 2021. More specifically, there was an increase of 27%. Homicides more than doubled, robberies increased by 27%, and aggravated assaults increased by 26% during this timeframe.

Crime Type	2019	2020	2021
Aggravated Assault	109	158	199
Homicide	8	10	22
Rape	1	4	1
Robbery	171	165	209
Total	289	338	431



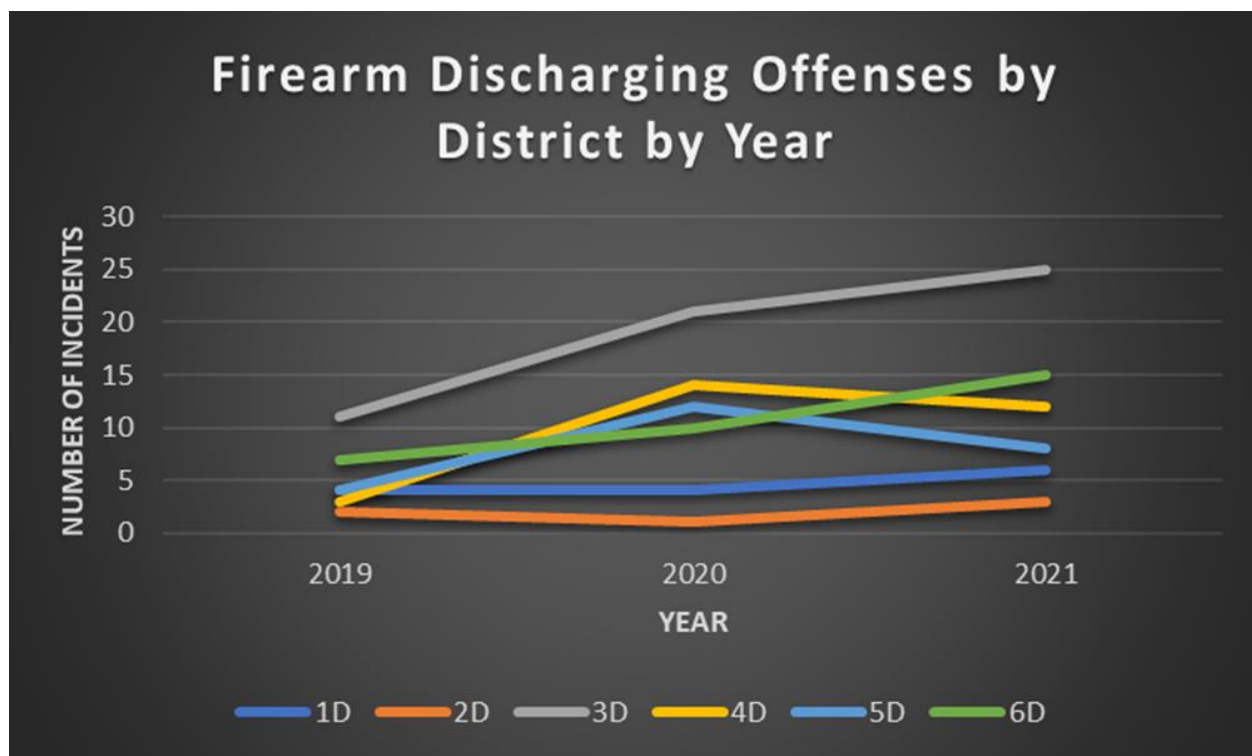
A contact shooting is defined as an incident where a person was struck with gunfire but did not suffer fatal injuries.

Firearm Discharging Offenses

Data:

- Compiled from WebFOCUS Dashboard
- Based on approved reports in EJustice
- Based on recorded EJustice start date

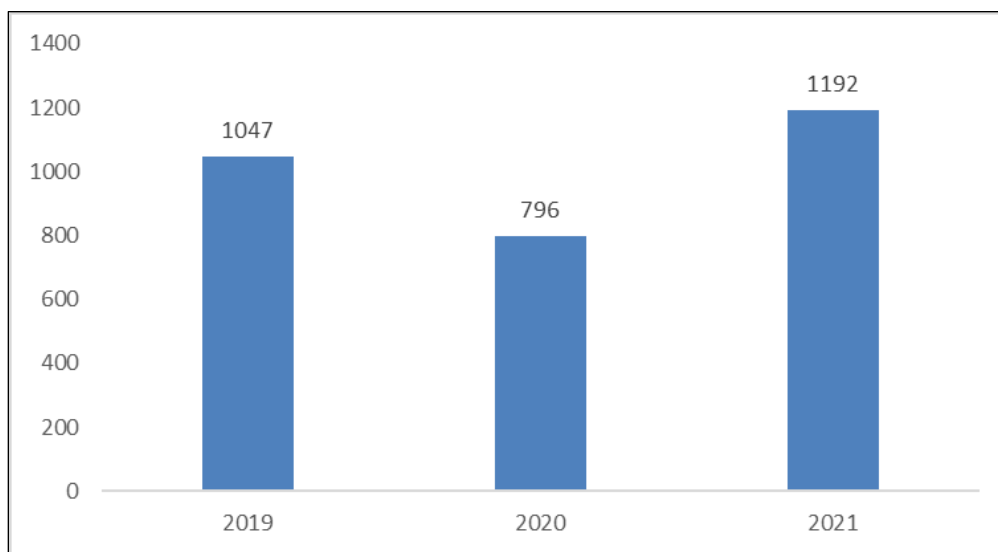
Weapons offenses where a firearm was discharged have increased from 2019 - 2021. Firearm discharging offenses more than doubled from 2019 to 2020 (31 incidents < 62 incidents). This offense type continued to show an increase from 2020 - 2021 - although, it was on a smaller scale (11%). It should be noted that the 3rd District has been responsible for the largest number of firearm discharging incidents during the reporting timeframe.



A firearm discharging offense is defined as an incident where a firearm was discharged, however no individual was known to be struck.

Recovered Firearms

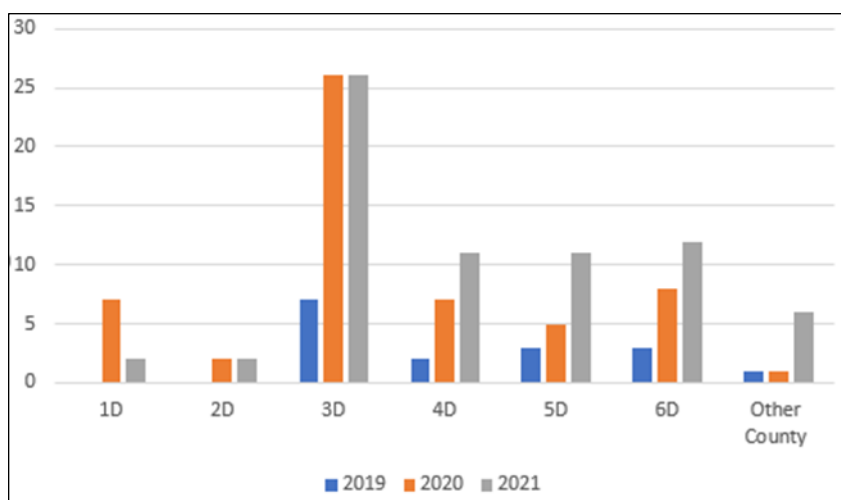
The number of recovered firearms (all types) increased by 50% from 2020 to 2021.



Privately Made Firearms (PMFs) “Ghost Guns” Recovered by District

The number of recovered PMFs increased by 25% from 2020 to 2021.

DISTRICT	# PMFS RECOVERED		
	2021	2020	2019
1D	2	7	0
2D	2	2	0
3D	26	26	7
4D	11	7	2
5D	11	5	3
6D	12	8	3
OTHER COUNTY	6	1	1
TOTAL	70	56	16



Weapons Offense Charges YTD

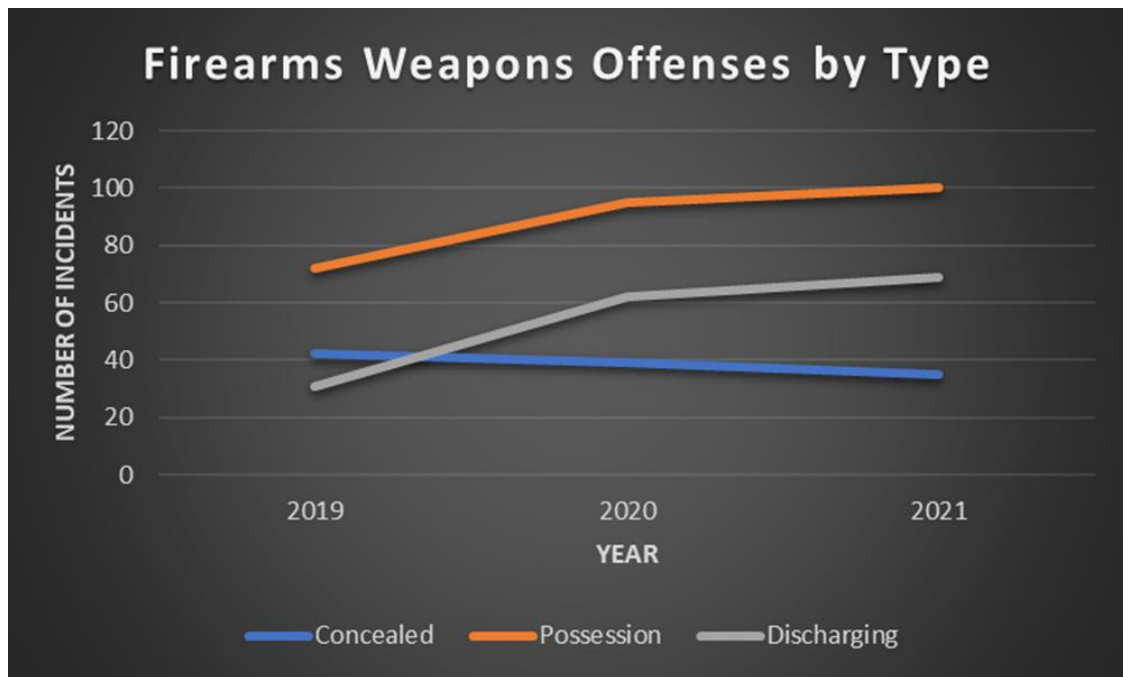
Data:

- Compiled from WebFOCUS Dashboard
- Based on approved reports in EJustice
- Based on recorded EJustice start date

Weapons offenses involving a firearm increased by 35% from 2019 – 2020. During that timeframe, firearm possession and discharging incidents were the types of incidents responsible for the rise in this category of offenses. Weapons offenses in which a firearm was used having continued to increase, while at a much smaller margin, from 2020 – 2021 (4% or 8 incidents).

It should be noted that weapons offenses in which a firearm was concealed have declined each year from 2019 – 2021.

Offense Type	2019	2020	2021
Concealed	42	39	35
Possession	72	95	100
Discharging	31	62	69
Total	145	196	204

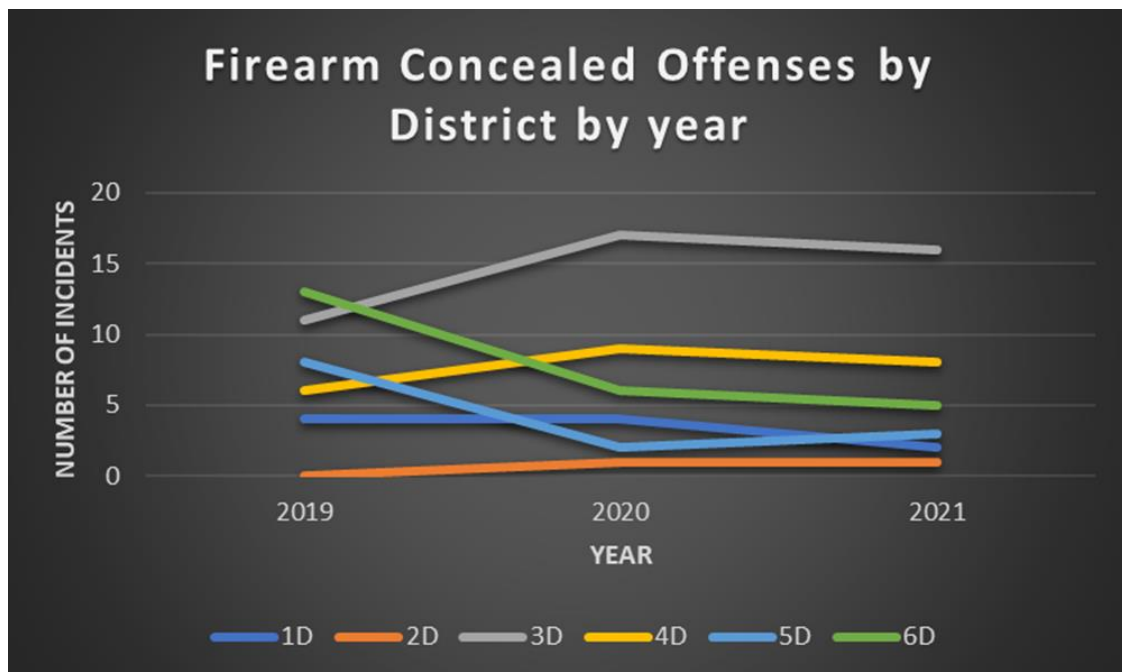


Firearm Concealed Offenses

Data:

- Compiled from WebFOCUS Dashboard
- Based on approved reports in EJustice
- Based on recorded EJustice start date

Weapons offenses in which a firearm was concealed have decreased over the last three (3) years. This offense type decreased by 7% from 2019 – 2020. This downward trend continued from 2020 – 2021, with a decrease of 10%. Apart from the 2019 calendar year, the 3rd District has been responsible for the largest number of reported concealed firearms offenses.



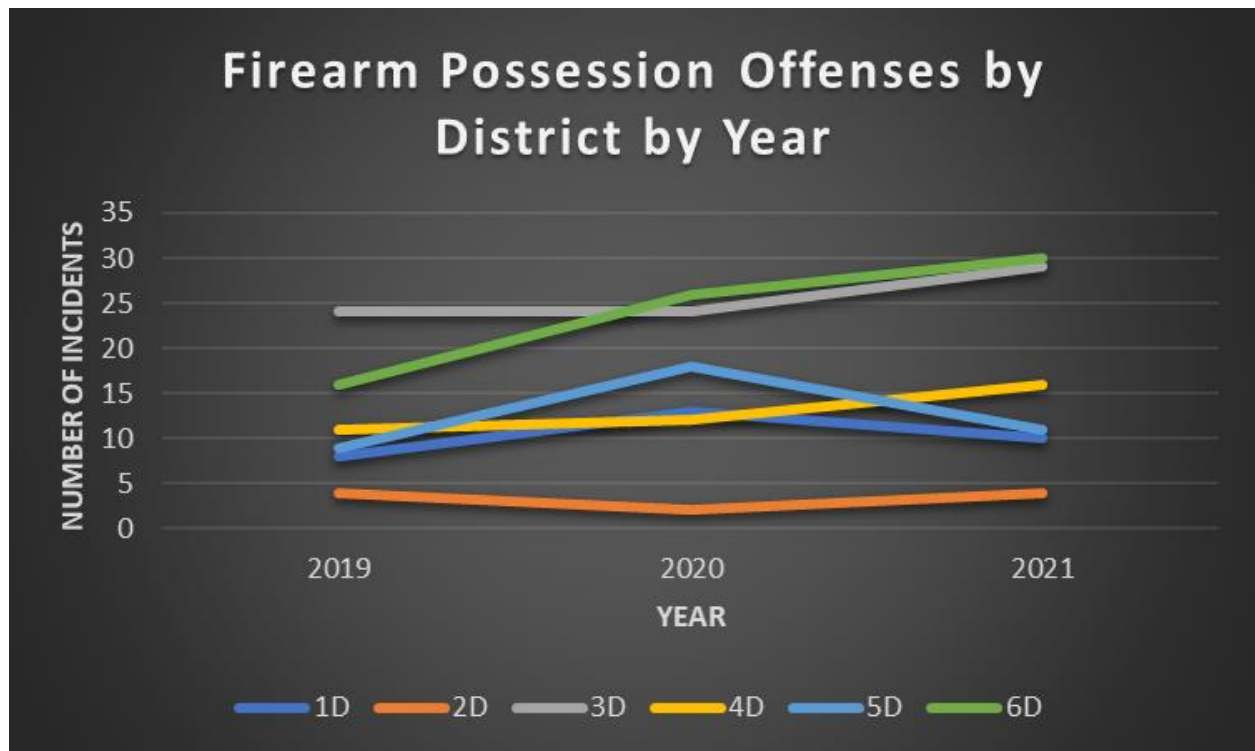
Firearm Possession Offenses

Data:

- Compiled from WebFOCUS Dashboard
- Based on approved reports in EJustice
- Based on recorded EJustice start date

Firearm possession offenses increased from 2019 – 2020 by almost 32%. This increase in firearm possessions continued from 2020 – 2021. However, this increase was by a much smaller percentage (5%). There were 95 incidents in 2020 compared to 100 incidents in 2021.

The 6th District accounts for the highest number of firearm possession offenses in the County in 2020 and 2021. The 3rd District ranks second during the same time period (2020 – 2021).



Non-Violent Crime

Data:

- Compiled from WebFOCUS Dashboard
- Based on approved reports in EJustice
- Based on recorded EJustice start date
- All categories based on number of incidents, not number of victims
- Violent and non-violent crime types of note were selected at the discretion of the authors

Filters:

- Takoma Park data is not included
- Unfounded reports and reports that were referred to another jurisdiction are not included
- Only includes incidents with a start date between 1/1/2018 and 12/31/2021

Non-Violent Crime Type	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percentage Change 2018 to 2019	Percentage Change 2019 to 2020	Percentage Change 2020 to 2021
Auto Theft	830	887	1134	1344	6.9%	27.8%	18.5%
Burglary - Commercial	324	417	459	357	28.7%	10.1%	-22.2%
Burglary - Residential	1065	945	800	723	-11.3%	-15.3%	-9.6%
Damage Property	2857	2756	3033	2826	-3.5%	10.1%	-6.8%
Fraud	1703	1711	2210	1854	0.5%	29.2%	-16.1%
Identity Theft	1243	1393	1421	2300	12.1%	2.0%	61.9%
Larceny - From Auto/Auto Parts	4526	5095	5881	5229	12.6%	15.4%	-11.1%
Larceny - Shoplifting	2814	3075	2253	2292	9.3%	-26.7%	1.7%
Larceny - All Other	4363	4178	3875	3446	-4.2%	-7.3%	-11.1%
Grand Total	19725	20457	21066	20371	3.7%	3.0%	-3.3%

Totals for auto thefts remain higher than pre-pandemic totals. A high percentage of the vehicles targeted for thefts are targeted because they were left unlocked or unsecured.

Identity theft reports are significantly higher than pre-pandemic totals. The 2021 total (2300) has already exceeded the total per year since 2018. Many of the reported incidents are false unemployment claims, and it is estimated that these types of claims account for 50% of the identity theft reports for 2021.

Drug-Related Arrests and Opioid Overdoses

Drug-Related Arrests/Citations

A significant decrease in traffic stops and person stops during the COVID-19 pandemic directly impacted the number of drug-related arrests. There have been decreases in possession, distribution and other drug related offenses in 2020 and in 2021.

Drug Crime Type	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percentage Change 2018 to 2019	Percentage Change 2019 to 2020	Percentage Change 2020 to 2021
Drug Possession	5682	4393	1884	990	-22.7%	-57.1%	-47.5%
Drug Distribution	507	430	205	146	-15.2%	-52.3%	-28.8%
Drug Offense - Other	180	212	93	79	17.8%	-56.1%	-15.1%
Grand Total	6369	5035	2182	1215	-20.9%	-56.7%	-44.3%

Opioid Overdoses

The county continues to see increases in both non-fatal and fatal overdoses. Continued spikes are attributed to increased distribution of pressed fentanyl/counterfeit pills containing fentanyl or fentanyl related compounds.

Unsuspecting drug users who are abusing cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, or other synthetic drugs may be at risk of fatally overdosing due to the increase of fentanyl laced drugs.

Year End

- Please note opioid overdose year-end data only includes fatal and non-fatal overdoses for which MCPD personnel were notified
- 2021 fatal overdoses may include suspected incidents with toxicology reports pending confirmation

Overdoses Year-End	2018	2019	2020	2021	Annual Percent Change 2018-2019	Annual Percent Change 2019-2020	Annual Percent Change 2020-2021
Fatal	46	65	90	109	41%	38%	21%
Non-Fatal	131	125	171	240	-5%	37%	40%
Grand Total	177	190	261	345	7%	37%	32%

Domestic Violence Comparison

Data:

- Compiled from MCPD Internal EJustice database copy
- Based on recorded EJustice start date
- Based on approved reports in EJustice
- Based on report type in EJustice
 - Aggravated Assaults: 0413, 0414, 0415, 0423, 0424, 0425, 0433, 0434, 0435, 0443, 0444, 0445
 - Simple Assaults: 0813, 0814, 0815, 0823, 0824, 0824
 - Domestic abuse/neglect: 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016
 - Family Trouble: 2951
 - Homicides/Rapes – filtered on selected relationship code

Filters:

- Takoma Park data is not included

YTD Comparisons

Category (Report Type)	1/1/2020 to 1/10/2020	1/1/2021 to 1/10/2021	1/1/2022 to 1/10/2022	2020 to 2021 % Change	2021 to 2022 % Change
Aggravated Assaults	5	15	7	200.000 %	-53.333%
Domestic Abuse/Neglect	4	3	1	-25.000 %	-66.667%
Family Trouble	0	1	0	∞	-100.000%
Homicide (Filtered)	0	1	0	∞	-100.000%
Rape (Filtered)	3	4	1	33.333 %	-75.000%
Simple Assaults	33	34	41	3.030 %	20.588%
	45	58	50	28.889 %	-13.793%

