

Alexandria Police Department

Basis Analysis of Traffic Citation Data for Years 2011-2016

with Updated Information from 2017

Influenced by the basic analysis completed by Dr. Cynthia Lum and Xiaoyun Wu of George Mason University in April of 2017.

Dr. Lum's report is published on the Alexandria Police Department's website at www.alexandriava.gov/police under Community Advisory Team & Traffic Citation Analysis.

Updated: August 2018

APD/CAS/EB & JB

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Introduction

In April of 2017, Dr. Cynthia Lum of George Mason University, Director & Associate Professor with the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy and the Department of Criminology, Law & Society, with the help of Xiaoyun Wu, presented her results of a basic analysis on the traffic citation data provided by the Alexandria Police Department. Dr. Lum's report is published on the APD Website under the Community Advisory Team and Traffic Citation Analysis page for review. This report is a modified continuation of that initial basic analysis, with the addition of the 2016 and 2017 traffic citation data. Although there are many similarities in the methods used to analyze the data, this basic analysis looks less at the finite details of ethnicity, and adds a basic look at the data from a temporal analysis. One additional difference between the studies is the charge data format. As explained in further detail in the next section of the report, an extensive effort was made to combine similar violations to make Figure 2, the top charge table, simplified.

Data for Analysis

The traffic citation data used in this analysis includes all records for the years 2011-2017, except for two charge categories removed prior to this analysis and described further below. The complete dataset includes a total of 105,137 traffic citations. However, the number of traffic citations does not directly reflect the number of traffic stops made by officers. If an individual is stopped and given two tickets, this will result in two separate entries in the dataset, one for each violation.

Following the methodology of the April 2017 study completed by Cynthia Lum and Xiaoyun WU of George Mason University (GMU), the traffic citation data will use eleven fields collected in the traffic citation database.

1. The Incident Number (INCINMBR) which identifies each unique traffic stop. If more than one citation is given during the traffic stop, this number will be repeated.
2. The date (DTCITA) the citation(s) was/were issued.
3. The time (TMCITA) the citation(s) was/were issued.
4. The address of the location (LOCATION) at which the traffic stop was made.
5. The method used to observe the violation (METHODUSEDLIT).
6. The description of the violation (CHARGELIT) in which the citation(s) was/were issued.
7. The specific Local or State Code (CODE) under which the citation(s) was/were issued.
8. The race of the individual (RACELIT). Options in this column will include the following: American Indian/Alaskan, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Unknown, White, or not filled out.
9. The gender of the individual (SEXLIT). Options in this column will include the following: Female, Male, Unknown or not filled out.

10. The ethnicity of the individual (ETHNICLIT). Options in this column will include the following: Hispanic, Non-Hispanic, Unknown, or not filled out.

11. The individuals age, which was calculated using the individuals date of birth and the date of the citation.

It should be noted that race and ethnicity (#8 and #10) are not required fields. This information is either offered voluntarily by the individual or it may be the best guess of the officer issuing the citation. The officer will not directly ask for this information, and it is not listed on the Virginia issued driver's license.

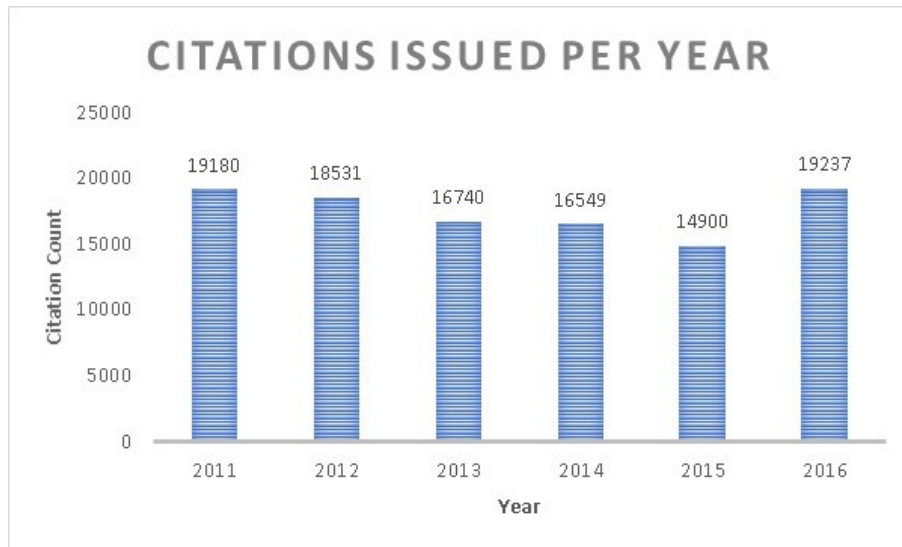
As indicated above, there were two charge categories removed from the dataset prior to this analysis. The charge category of "Criminal C--" is not a traffic violation, but rather a misdemeanor criminal arrest. The second charge category removed is "No Charge". The "No Charge" description is entered when the citation is voided. In the dataset used by GMU for the 2011-2015 study, there were 5,265 "Criminal C--" and 594 "No Charge" citations removed. In the dataset for 2016, 709 "Criminal C--" and 80 "No Charge" were removed. In the dataset for 2017, 979 "Criminal C--" and 405 "No Charge" were removed.

As described previously, there is a difference between traffic citations and traffic stops. In the 2011-2016 dataset, there were 105,137 citations issued and 92,993 unique traffic stops completed, which resulted in at least one citation. In the 2017 dataset, there were 25,807 citations issued and 23,163 unique traffic stops completed. As with the GMU study, this analysis will look at traffic citations and traffic stops separately. It should also be noted that unlike the GMU study, which referenced the sequence value ("SEQ=1" or the person who received the first citation), this dataset was queried by the primary individual. The overall values obtained in the GMU with the use of the sequence value were matched when the data was queried by the primary individual; therefore, the sequence value was not included in this analysis.

For this analysis, an extensive effort was given to cleaning the charge data. Citations can be issued referencing the local municipal traffic code or the state traffic code. This decision is at the discretion of the issuing officer. In the dataset used for this report, the same charge description (CHARGELIT) was used for both the municipal and state violations. In order to distinguish the difference, the specific code (CODE) is now listed in a separate column. For example, a "Counterfeit Inspection Sticker" in the charge description column can be associated with either Municipal Code 10-3-1173 or State Code 46.2-1173. One additional observation in the dataset was the use of a letter at the end of the charge code. This letter designator is used to identify the method used to aid the officer in determining the violation (METHODUSEDLIT). However, it was noticed that this designator was not used in every instance.

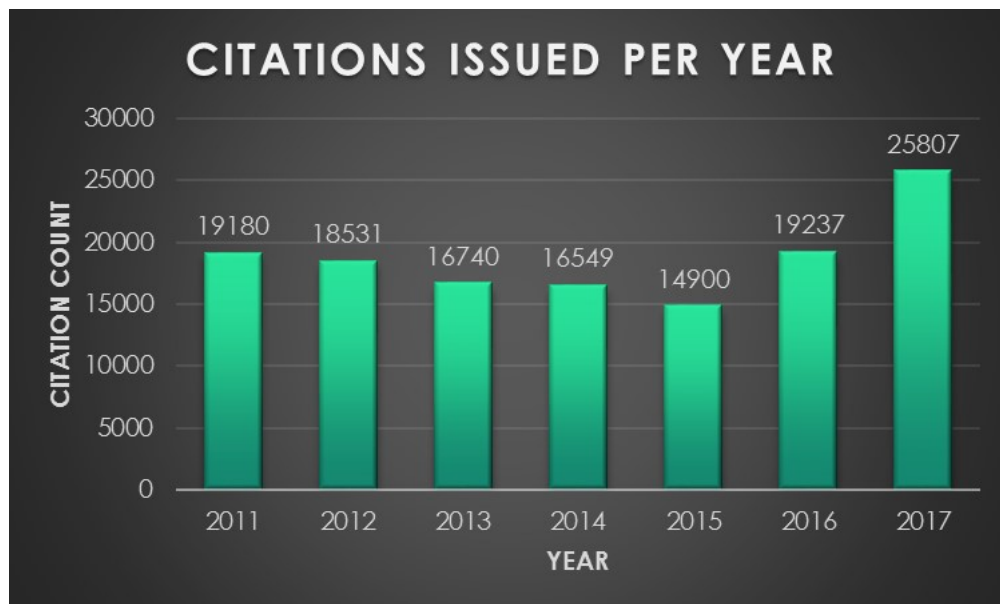
Results for All Citations

Figure 1A: Total traffic citations issued from 2011 to 2016 (N = 105,137)



The dataset includes 251 different charge descriptions. Many of these charges are entered using either the Municipal Code (MC) or the State Codes (SC). There were 297 unique codes utilized; however, some of the codes (the numeric portion) are repeated due to the use of the “Method Used” indicator of “R” for Radar or “P” for Pace. For example: the “Speeding 35 Zone” charge could be coded with 10-3-875 (Municipal Code), 46.2-875 (State Code), 10-3-875P (MC), 46.2-875P (SC), 10-3-875R (MC), or 46.2-875R (SC). Approximately 90% (94,786) of the citations were issued using 34 different charges (Table 1).

Figure 1B: Total traffic citations issued from 2011 to 2017 (N = 130,944)



Citations declined from 2011 to 2015, but have increased from 2015 to 2017 by 73.20%.

Table 1A: Most common violations cited in Alexandria from 2011-2016
(approximately 90% of the citations issued)

Charge Description	Count	% of Total	Cumulative %
OFFICIAL SIGN	17656	16.79	16.79
SPEEDING 25 ZONE RADAR	15303	14.56	31.35
SPEEDING 35 ZONE RADAR	7711	7.33	38.68
OFF. SIGN - STOP SIGN	7002	6.66	45.34
REG./LIC/TITLE/NAME/ADDR.	6071	5.77	51.11
FAIL TO PAY FULL TIME/ATTN	5142	4.89	56.00
NO INSPECTION	5109	4.86	60.86
HOV	4060	3.86	64.73
NO OPERATOR LICENSE	3738	3.56	68.28
SUSPENDED/REVOKED LICENSE	3543	3.37	71.65
DUI/DWI OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL	1953	1.86	73.51
IMPROPER LANE VIOLATION	1301	1.24	74.75
NO U TURN	1226	1.17	75.91
DEFECTIVE EQUIPMENT	1048	1.00	76.91
FOLLOWING TOO CLOSE	1033	0.98	77.89
OFF. SIGN - RED/YELLOW/FLASHING LIGHT	1007	0.96	78.85
FAILURE TO CARRY LICENSE/REGISTR.	1006	0.96	79.81
LEFT-TURN / YIELD RIGHT OF WAY	984	0.94	80.74
SPEEDING 35 ZONE	915	0.87	81.61
RECKLESS/DRIVE DANGEROUS IN P/LOT RADAR	907	0.86	82.47
RECKLESS/EXCEEDING SPEED LIMIT RADAR	907	0.86	83.34
HEADLIGHTS NOT TURNED ON	822	0.78	84.12
CROSS DOUBLE YELLOW LINE	814	0.77	84.89
IMPROPER LEFT/RIGHT TURN	669	0.64	85.53
SPEEDING 25 ZONE	635	0.60	86.13
RECKLESS/EXCEEDING SPEED LIMIT	573	0.55	86.68
SPEEDING 25 ZONE PACE	533	0.51	87.19
RECKLESS/SPEED LIMIT	512	0.49	87.67
NO CITY/EXPIRED TAG	478	0.45	88.13
NO BRAKE LIGHTS	466	0.44	88.57
STOPPING /YIELDING /RIGHT-WAY	450	0.43	89.00
NO SIGNAL /BACKING/STOPPING	427	0.41	89.40
F/T PAY UNINSURED INS.FEE	419	0.40	89.80
1-WAY ROADWAY/HIGHWAY	366	0.35	90.15

Table 1B: Most common violations cited in Alexandria in 2017
(approximately 90% of the citations issued)

Charge Description	Count	% of Total	Cumulative %
SPEEDING 25 ZONE (RADAR)	5152	19.96%	19.96%
OFFICIAL SIGN	5023	19.46%	39.43%
FAIL TO PAY FULL TIME/ATTN	1959	7.59%	47.02%
REG/LIC/TITLE/NAME/ADDRESS	1438	5.57%	52.59%
OFF. SIGN - RED/YELLOW/FLASHING LIGHT	1088	4.22%	56.81%
SPEEDING 25 ZONE (PACE)	1050	4.07%	60.87%
NO OPERATOR LICENSE	897	3.48%	64.35%
SUSPENDED/REVOKED LICENSE	659	2.55%	66.90%
RECKLESS/EXCEEDING SPEED LIMIT	645	2.50%	69.40%
SPEEDING 35 ZONE (RADAR)	610	2.36%	71.77%
EXPIRED/NO INSPECTION STICKER	545	2.11%	73.88%
FAIL STOP/YIELD RT OF WAY	501	1.94%	75.82%
HOV	473	1.83%	77.65%
FAIL TO SUBMIT TO INSPECTION	464	1.80%	79.45%
DEFECTIVE EQUIPMENT	403	1.56%	81.01%
OFF. SIGN - STOP SIGN	395	1.53%	82.54%
SPEEDING 35 ZONE (PACE)	283	1.10%	83.64%
IMPROPER LANE VIOLATIONS	254	0.98%	84.62%
NO OPERATORS LICENSE IN POSSESSION	253	0.98%	85.60%
YEILD RT OF WAY/ ENTERING ROADWAY	247	0.96%	86.56%
DEFECT. BRK. LIGHT VEH	152	0.59%	87.15%
HEADLIGHTS NOT TURNED ON	148	0.57%	87.72%
FOLLOWING TOO CLOSE	130	0.50%	88.23%
DUI/DWI OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL	128	0.50%	88.72%
IMPROPER STOPPING ON HWY	125	0.48%	89.21%
LEFT-TURN / YIELD RIGHT OF WAY	122	0.47%	89.68%
SIGNS/TINT FILM ON GLASS	121	0.47%	90.15%

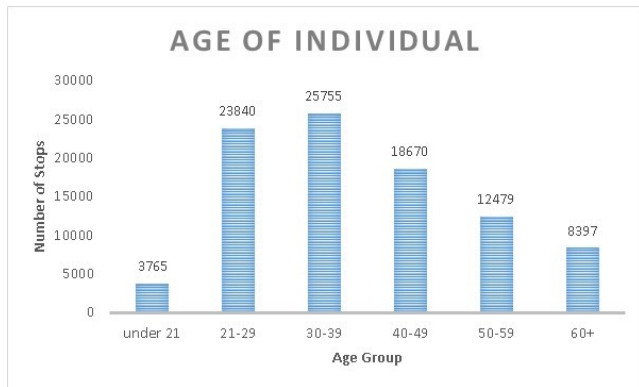
The major changes between the top five charges in 2017 include the removal of Speeding 35 Zone Radar & Official Sign– Stop Sign, and the addition of Fail to Pay Full Time/Attention & Official Sign-Red/Yellow/Flashing Light.

Demographic Results for Traffic Stops

The 105,137 citations issued from 2011-2016 were given during 92,993 unique traffic stops; therefore, in 88.4% of the traffic stops made by the Alexandria Police Department, the individual is cited for only one charge. Similar to the findings in the George Mason University (GMU) study (11.4%), only 11.5% of the traffic stops made resulted in multiple citations. Similar to the previous years, only 10.25% of traffic stops in 2017 involved the individual being cited for multiple charges.

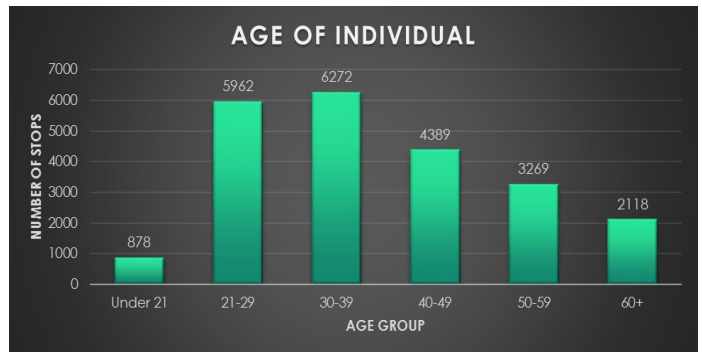
In the next section, the demographics of the traffic stops will be examined.

Figure 2A: Age of the individuals at the time of the traffic stop from 2011-2016 (N = 92,906)



Note: The sample size in the chart is 92,906 versus the traffic stop value of 92,993 due to 87 entries missing the individual's age.

Figure 2B: Age of the individuals at the time of the traffic stop in 2017 (N = 22,888)



Note: The sample size in the chart is 22,888 versus the traffic stop value of 23,162 due to 274 entries missing the individual's age. Blanks/Unknowns **are not** included.

Figure 3A: Gender of the individual in table and pie chart from 2011-2016 (N = 92,993)

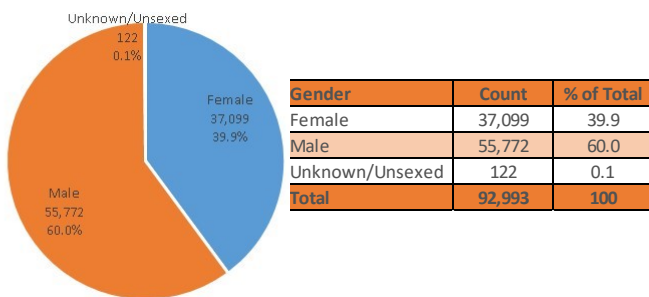
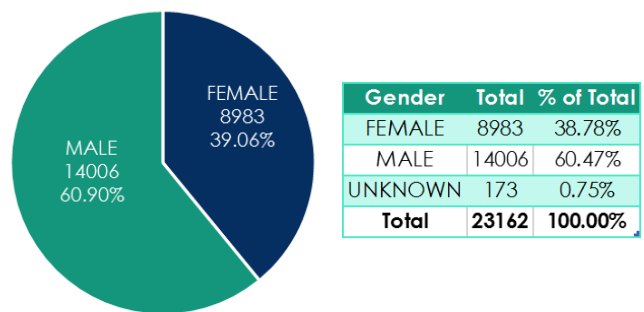


Figure 3B: Gender of the individual in table and pie chart from 2017 (N = 23,162)



Note: The sample size in the pie chart is 22,989 versus the traffic stop value of 23,162 due to 162 entries missing the individual's gender. Blanks/Unknowns **are not** included in the pie chart. Blanks/Unknowns **are** included in the table.

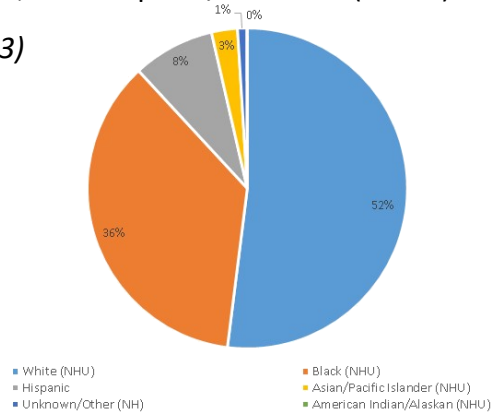
As indicated in Figures 2A and 3A, the majority of traffic stops are performed on those between the age of 21-39 (53.4%); the Age Group of 30-39 was the single highest group for traffic stops at 27.7%. The subject of the traffic stop was also more likely to be male in gender (60.0%). Data from 2017 remained consistent with the previous findings.

Figure 4A indicates that the majority of the individuals involved in traffic stops with the Alexandria Police Department are White, Non-Hispanic/Unknown (52.0%), followed by Black, Non-Hispanic/Unknown (36.1%).

Figure 4A: Race/Ethnicity of individual in table and pie chart (N = 92,993)

Race/Ethnicity	Count	% of Total
White (NHU)	48348	52.0
Black (NHU)	33591	36.1
Hispanic	7703	8.3
Asian/Pacific Islander (NHU)	2436	2.6
Unknown/Other (NH)	880	0.9
American Indian/Alaskan (NHU)	35	0.0
Total	92993	100.0

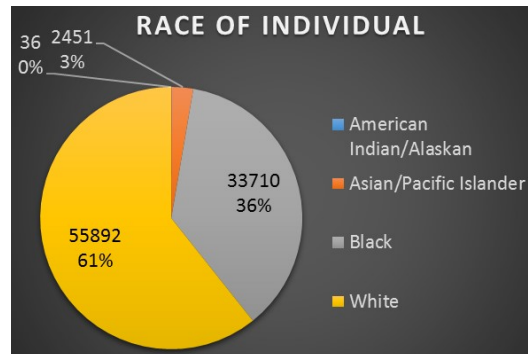
Note: NHU = Non-Hispanic/Unknown & NH = Non-Hispanic



The information listed above was updated to reflect Race and Ethnicity separately:

Figure 4B: Race of the individual in table and pie chart from 2011-2016 (N = 92,993)

Race	Total	% of Total
American Indian/Alaskan	36	0.04%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2451	2.64%
Black	33710	36.25%
Blank/Unknown	904	0.97%
White	55892	60.10%
Total	92993	100.00%



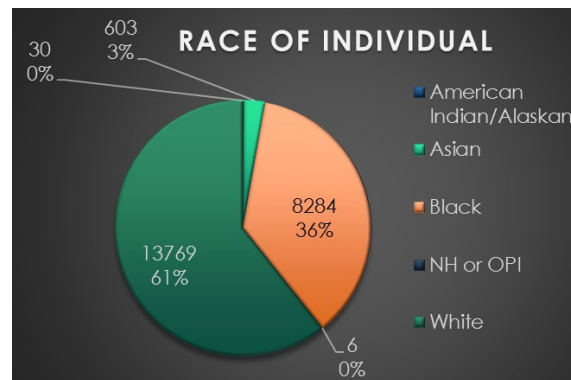
From 2011-2016, the majority of the individuals involved in traffic stops with the Alexandria Police Department were White (60.10%), followed by Black (36.25%).

Note: The sample size in the pie chart is 92,089 versus the traffic stop value of 92,993 due to 904 entries missing the individual's race.

Blanks/Unknowns **are not** included in the pie chart. Blanks/Unknowns **are** included in the table.

Figure 4C: Race of the individual in table and pie chart in 2017 (N = 23,162)

Race	Total	% of Total
Blank/Unknown	470	2.03%
American Indian/Alaskan	30	0.13%
Asian	603	2.60%
Black	8284	35.77%
NH or OPI	6	0.03%
White	13769	59.45%
Grand Total	23162	100.00%



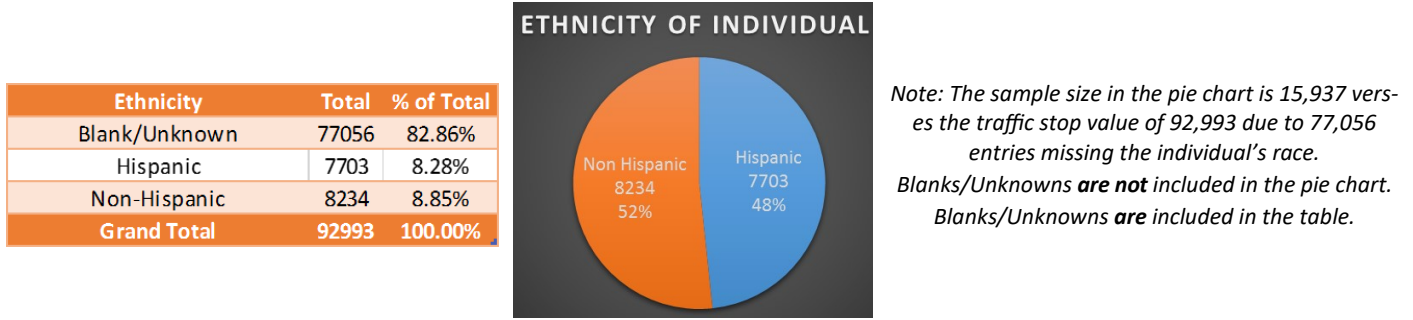
Similar to the previous years, the majority of the individuals involved in traffic stops with the Alexandria Police Department in 2017 were White (59.45%), followed by Black (35.77%).

Note: The sample size in the pie chart is 22,692 versus the traffic stop value of 23,162 due to 470 entries missing the individual's race.

Blanks/Unknowns **are not** included in the pie chart. Blanks/Unknowns **are** included in the table.

Information from 2011-2016 was updated to reflect Ethnicity separately:

Figure 4D: Ethnicity of the individuals in table and pie chart from 2011-2016 (N = 92,993)



In 2011-2016, the Ethnicity of individuals involved in traffic stops with the Alexandria Police Department are almost equal, with 51.67% Non Hispanic and 48.33% Hispanic.

In 2017, there were considerable more Non Hispanic (76.55%) than Hispanic (23.45%) individuals.

In all years, a very large amount of individuals did not have an Ethnicity listed.

Figure 4E: Ethnicity of the individuals in table and pie chart from 2017 (N = 23,162)

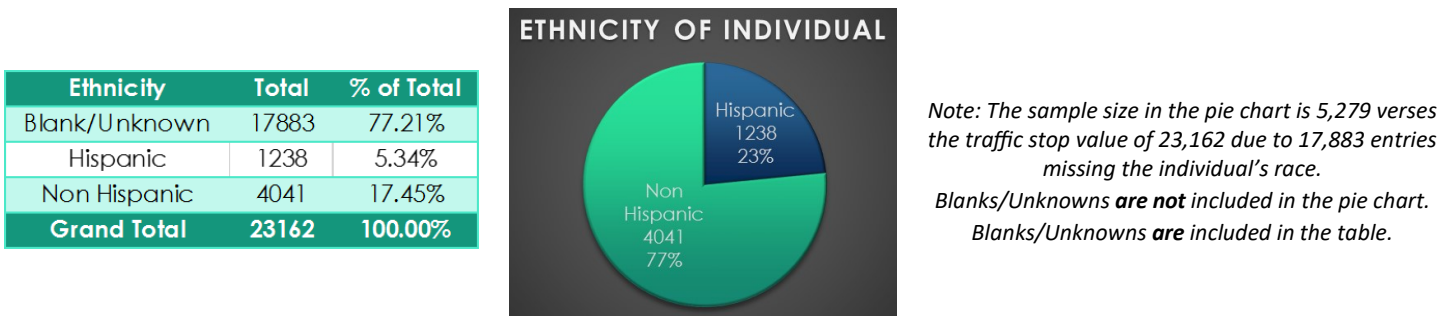
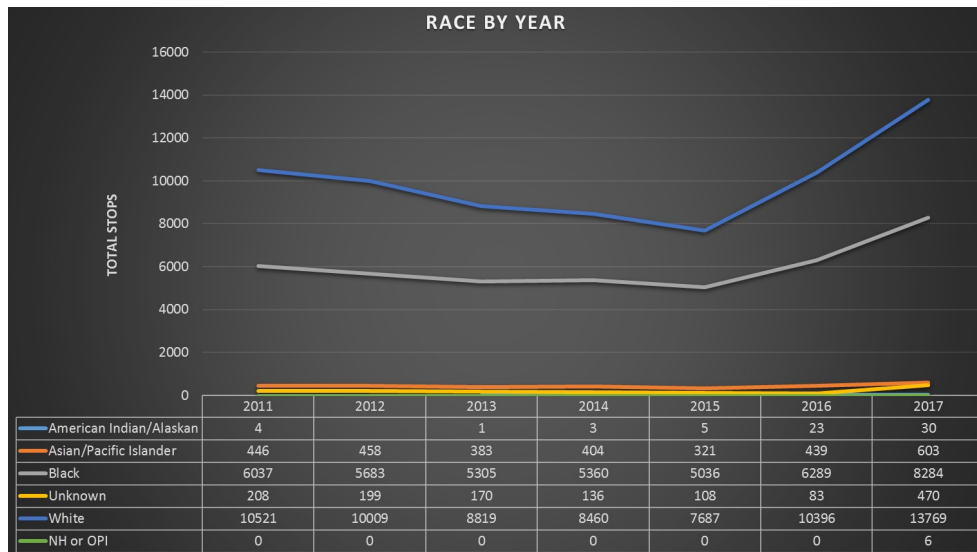


Figure 5A: Race/Ethnicity of individual by Year (N = 116,155): this has been updated to display Race and Ethnicity separately.

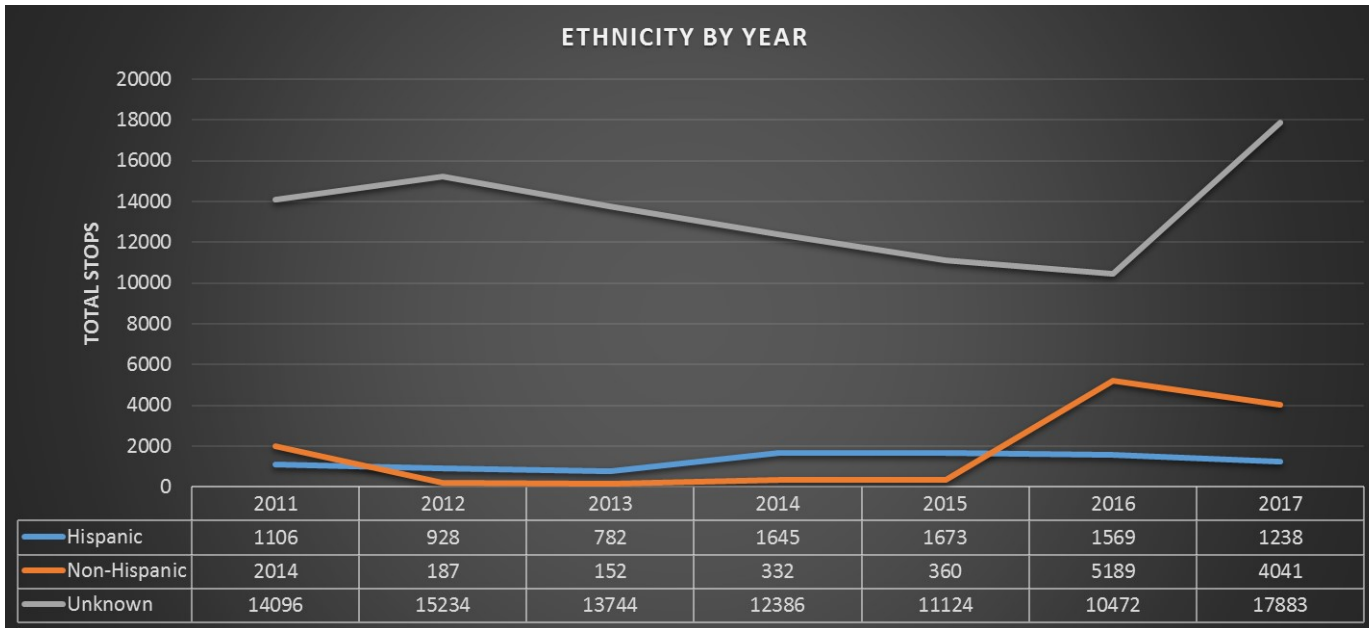
Figure 5A shows that citations issued to White and Black individuals began to decrease in 2013, reaching a 5-year low in 2015, and then increased from 2015 to 2017. Asian/Pacific Islander individuals also increased from 2015 to 2017.



Citations issued to both Hispanic and Non Hispanic individuals appear to have declined between 2011-2013; however, there was a considerable increase of “Unknown” individuals so the significance is unable to be determined. It also appears that both Hispanic and Non Hispanic individuals increased from 2015 to 2016, then both declined significantly in 2017.

Due to the large quantity of “Unknowns” present in the data, the validity of this measure is unknown.

Figure 5B: Ethnicity of individual by Year (N = 116,155)



Ethnicity	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Hispanic	6.42%	5.68%	5.33%	11.45%	12.72%	14.98%	5.34%
Non-Hispanic	11.70%	1.14%	1.04%	2.31%	2.74%	30.12%	17.45%
Unknown	14096	15234	13744	12386	11124	10472	17883
Grand Total	17216	16349	14678	14363	13157	17230	23162

Temporal Results for Traffic Stops

In the last section of the analysis, temporal elements will be examined as they pertain to unique traffic stops.

Figure 6A: Traffic Stops by Day of Week from 2011-2016 (N = 92,993)

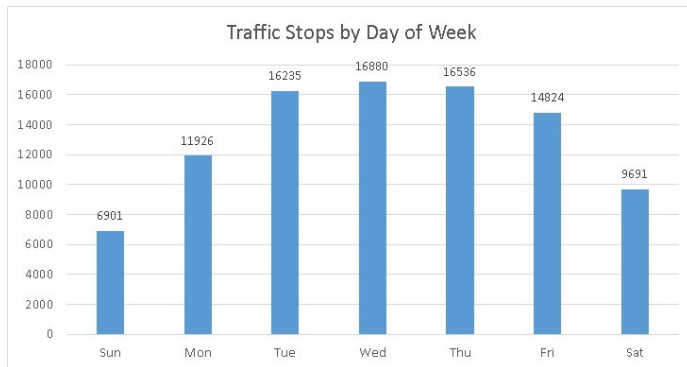
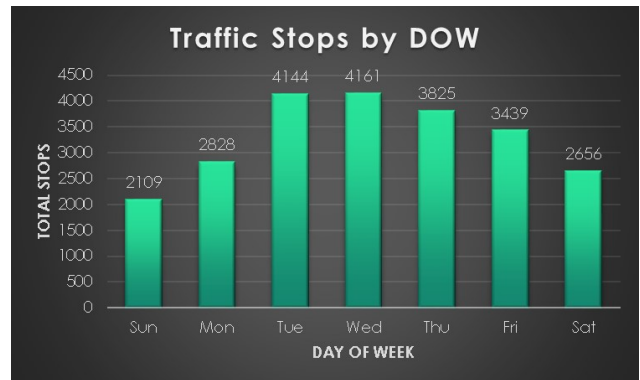
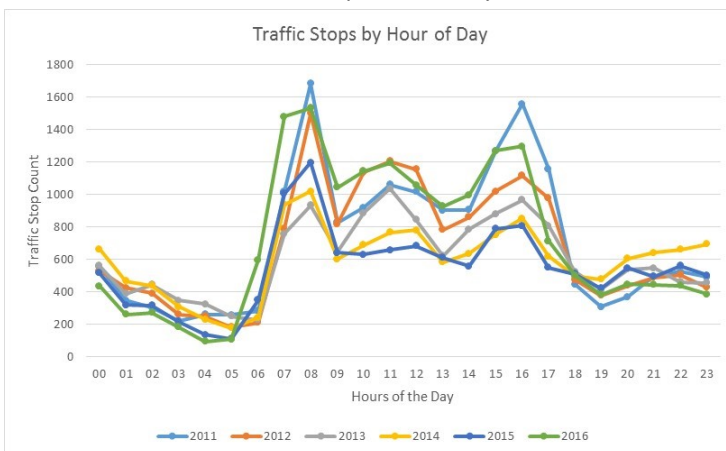


Figure 6B: Traffic Stops by Day of Week in 2017 (N = 23,162)



The majority of the traffic stops are completed on weekdays, with Wednesday (18.2%), Thursday (17.8%), and Tuesday (17.5%) being the highest for 2011-2016. The weekend days (Saturday & Sunday) combined account for 17.8% of all traffic stops. Data from 2017 remained consistent with previous findings. The majority of traffic stops were completed on weekdays, with Wednesday (17.96%), Tuesday (17.89%), and Thursday (16.51%) being the highest. The weekend days (Saturday & Sunday) combined account for 20.57% of all traffic stops.

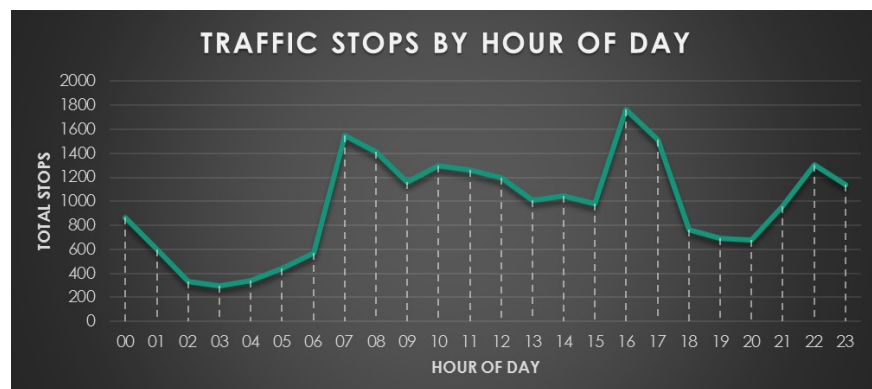
Figure 7A: Traffic Stops by Hour and Year from 2011-2016 (N= 92,993)



In this report, the Hour of Day was looked at under two different criteria. The first was by Year, and the second was by the Day of the Week.

When the Hour of Day was looked at by the Year (2011-2016) in Figure 7A, there are variations over the years; however, the majority of traffic stops fall between the hours of 07:00—17:00. This also remained consistent in 2017, as most traffic stops fell between the hours of 07:00-17:59 (Figure 7B).

Figure 7B: Traffic Stops by Hour in 2017 (N= 23,162)



However, the most prominent Hour of Day for traffic stops is in the 08:00 hour across all years except 2013, which saw the highest number of traffic stops in the 11:00 Hour (Table 2). This differed in 2017, as the most prominent Hour of Day for traffic stops is the 16:00 hour, followed by the 07:00 hour.

Table 2: Most prominent Hour of Day for each Year (2011-2017) and the percentage of the Year's Total

Year	Prominent Hour	TS Count for Hour	TS Total for Year	% for Hour of Total TS
2011	08:00- 8:59	1683	17216	9.8%
2012	08:00-08:59	1500	16349	9.2%
2013	11:00-11:59	1037	14678	7.1%
2014	08:00-08:59	1019	14363	7.1%
2015	08:00-08:59	1197	13157	9.1%
2016	08:00-08:59	1533	17230	8.9%
2017	16:00-16:59	1762	23162	13.15%

Figure 8A: Traffic Stops by Hour during weekdays from 2011-2016

When looking at the Hour of Day by the Day of Week, there is a similar distribution as that displayed in the yearly comparisons; however, this similarity is seen only when looking at the weekdays, Monday—Friday (Figure 8A).

Information from 2017 slightly differed in peak hours by Day of Week, with Monday's peak moving from the morning to the afternoon (Figure 8B).

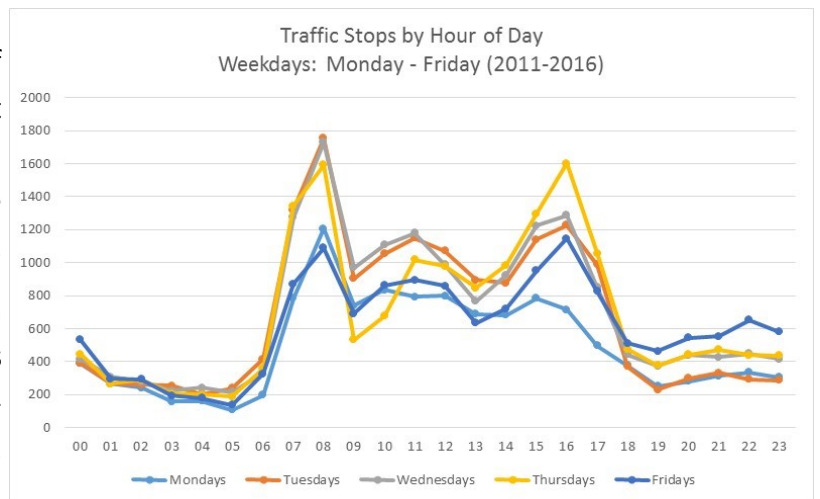
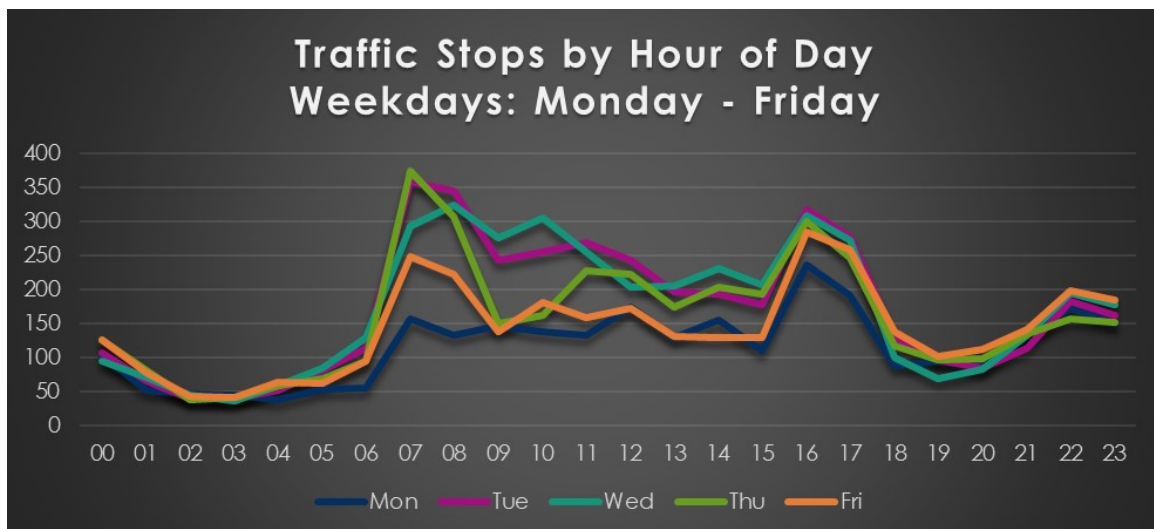


Figure 8B: Traffic Stops by Hour during weekdays in 2017



There is a different pattern of traffic stops seen on the weekend days (Figure 9A), with the majority of the traffic stops happening from 18:00 - 02:00.

Figure 9A: Traffic Stops by Hour during weekend days from 2011-2016

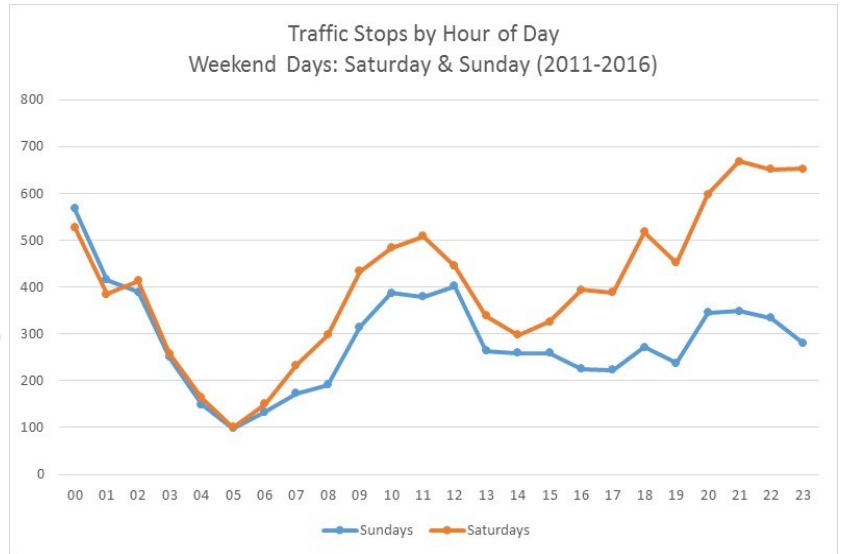
Most prominent Hour of Day by Day of Week:

Sunday: 00:00-00:59

Monday -Thursday: 08:00-08:59

Friday: 16:00-16:59, followed by 08:00-08:59

Saturday: 21:00-21:59



In 2017, the majority of traffic stops on weekend days occurred between 16:00-02:00 hours. This expands the previous years timeframe (18:00-02:00) to include two hours earlier.

Most prominent Hour of Day by Day of Week:

Sunday: 00:00-00:59 (163), 22:00-22:59 (160)

Monday: 16:00-16:59 (236)

Tuesday: 07:00-07:59 (359)

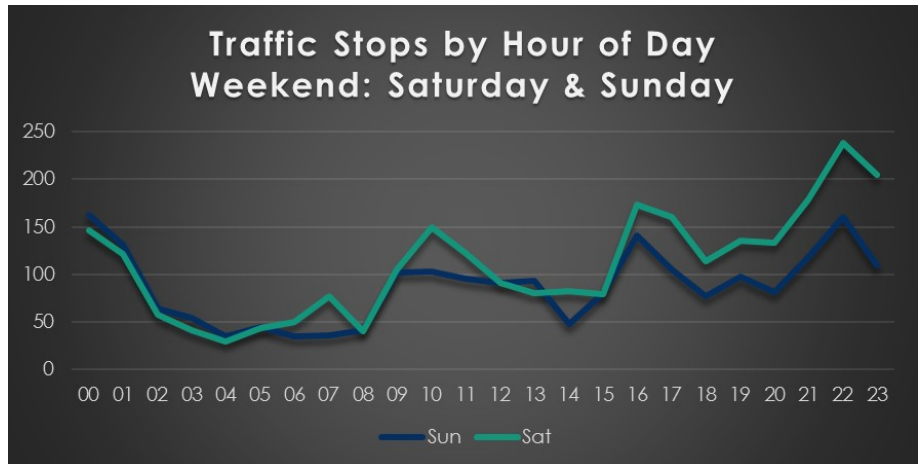
Wednesday: 08:00-08:59 (324)

Thursday: 07:00-07:59 (375)

Friday: 16:00-16:59 (285)

Saturday: 22:00-22:59 (238)

Figure 9B: Traffic Stops by Hour during weekend days in 2017



The 22:00 hour for Sunday was added due to how close the totals were (only a difference of three).

Monday's peak hour in 2017 was 16:00-16:59. In previous years, the peak hour was 08:00-08:59.

Tuesday's and Thursday's hours moved one hour earlier, from 08:00-08:59 in the previous years to 07:00-07:59 in 2017.

Saturday's peak hour moved one hour later, from 21:00-21:59 in the previous years to 22:00-22:59 in 2017.

Conclusion

This basic analysis of the Alexandria Police Department's traffic stops and citations was conducted on data from the years of 2011-2016. The analysis in this report was influenced by the study completed by Dr. Cynthia Lum of George Mason University in April of 2017, which used data from the years of 2011-2015. This report was meant to continue analyzing the Police Department's traffic stops and issuance of traffic citations. Two major differences between the initial study and this continued study is a less finite analysis of ethnicity, but the addition of temporal analysis. Below are summarizing points taken from the review of the data for all six years.

Summarizing Information from 2011-2016 Analysis:

- ◇ Year 2016 had the highest number of citations issued in the six year period - 19,237
- ◇ In 2016, White Non-Hispanic continue to be the largest population of subjects in traffic stops - 8,867 of the 19,237 (46.1% of the total in 2016), followed by the Black Non-Hispanic population - 6,255 of the 19,237 (32.5% of the total in 2016).
- ◇ The Age Group of 30-39 continues to be the largest group involved in traffic stops.
- ◇ The Gender ratio remains very similar between the reports, with Males being the most frequent subjects of traffic stops.
- ◇ Over the six year period, mid-week, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, had the highest number of traffic stops.

Summarizing Information from 2017 Analysis:

- ◇ Year 2017 had the highest number of citations issued in the seven year period - 25,807
- ◇ In 2017, White individuals continue to be the largest population of subjects in traffic stops - 13,769 of the 23,162 (59.45% of the total in 2017), followed by Black - 8,284 of the 23,162 (35.77% of the total in 2017).
- ◇ The Age Group of 30-39 continues to be the largest group involved in traffic stops.
- ◇ The Gender ratio remains very similar between the reports, with Males being the most frequent subjects of traffic stops.
- ◇ Over the seven year period, mid-week, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, had the highest number of traffic stops.