

TO: Human Rights Commission members  
FROM: Christine Root  
DATE: February 2, 2021  
SUBJECT: New data about racial disparities in ELPD officer-initiated stops and priorities

The data about officer-initiated stops by racial category in Chief Johnson's memo to City Manager Lahanas dated Feb. 1, 2021 is the first reporting of this data that I have seen that breaks out the numbers by East Lansing residents and non-residents.

This more detailed reporting matters a great deal. It allows for meaningful analysis of racial disparities in officer-initiated stops. Information about stops by race of East Lansing residents can now be accurately compared to population data for East Lansing from the U.S. Census.

For this reason, I hope that the ELPD will be able to do the work necessary to obtain reports from its records management system for both arrests and use of force that are disaggregated by racial categories. These practices by the police are at least as important as traffic and pedestrian stops.

I have attached two pages of analysis of these data about stops; the first considers disproportionate stops of Black people among all people who were stopped, and the second focuses specifically on East Lansing residents.

I do not want to suggest that having useful data about East Lansing residents solves all our problems of paying attention to racial disparity in police-initiated stops. This report also reveals that twice as many non-residents of East Lansing were stopped by ELPD officers compared to residents of the City. How policing impacts non-residents is no less important than its impacts on residents.

It is more complicated to estimate a benchmark for the racial makeup of non-residents with whom the ELPD comes into contact. The third page that is attached provides background racial demographics data about East Lansing, Lansing, Ingham County, and MSU students. One can see immediately that Blacks are stopped way out of proportionate to their likely presence in the city. Indeed, the proportion of stops of Black people during this period would still be higher than their presence in the population if ELPD was policing our neighbors in Lansing instead of East Lansing!

I hope the City will not spend its resources and time on a third-party study to obtain benchmarks for a "fair" proportion of Blacks to stop, arrest, and use force against without a thorough debate about the purpose, scope, and methods of a study that will help us achieve our goals.

As Chief Johnson suggests, we already know from the data we have that the trend of over-policing African-Americans needs to go significantly down. Figuring out how to reduce this policing and monitoring the trend in the future need to be our focus. The City Council and the police department have already made some changes that we hope will go in the right direction. More work is needed.

## ELPD Officer-Initiated Contacts (or Stops), September - December 2020

*D R A F T Chris Root, Feb. 2, 2021*

*Based on data provided by East Lansing Police Department (ELPD) in memo dated Feb. 1, 2021.*

*This two-page memo looks first at the overall number of stops, by race. Then it analyzes stops of East Lansing residents only, by race.*

Race	All Contacts / Stops	% all stops by race	Stops of EL Residents	% of EL Stops by race	% EL Census by race	Stops of Non-EL residents	% of Non-resident Stops by race
White	627	62.8%	210	68.2%	72.3%	417	60.4%
African American	240	24.0%	54	17.5%	6.8%	186	27.0%
Asian	34	3.4%	18	5.8%	10.6%	16	2.3%
American Indian/ Native Alaskan	5	0.5%	1	0.3%	0.3%	4	0.6%
Pacific Islander	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	2	0.3%
Unknown	90	9.0%	25	8.1%		65	9.4%
Other					8.2%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>998</b>		<b>308</b>			<b>690</b>	

These officer-initiated contacts include traffic stops as well as stops of people not traveling in vehicles.

ELPD impacts many non-residents who are sometimes present in our city. Oversight of policing includes everyone who is affected, not just residents. Of 998 stops in the last four months of 2020, 308 stops are of East Lansing residents. More than two-thirds of those who were stopped are people who do not live in East Lansing. 690 is 69% of 998).

ELPD began collecting racial demographic data about officer-initiated stops in February 2020. Data broken down by residence was provided beginning in April 2020. There were very few stops from April-August 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic - only from 9 to 50 stops per month. Officer-initiated stops picked up again somewhat in September 2020.

Four months is a short time period for analysis, but it is the data that are available that (a) include a breakdown of people stopped by residents and non-residents of East Lansing and (b) exclude April-August when very few people were stopped due to the pandemic.

We do not know whether, or how, the much-reduced number of stops made in 2020 might have affected the racial breakdown of stops. We will learn more from tracking future trends.

## ELPD Officer-Initiated Contacts (or Stops) of East Lansing Residents, September - December 2020

*D R A F T Chris Root, Feb. 3, 2021*

Data about stops provided by ELPD in memo dated Feb. 1, 2021.

Race	Stops of EL Residents	% of EL Stops by race	East Lansing (EL) Population	% EL population, by race	% of EL population stopped, by race
White	210	74.2%	35,232	72.3%	0.6%
<b>African American</b>	54	<b>19.1%</b>	3,196	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
Asian	18	6.4%	6,082	10.6%	0.3%
American Indian/ Native Alaskan	1	0.4%	122	0.3%	
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	9	0.0%	
Hispanic			2,459	5.1%	
Two or more races			1,527	3.1%	
Other			102		
Unknown	25	8.8%	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>		<b>48,729</b>		

Whereas only 6.8% of the East Lansing population is African-American, 17.5% of the police-initiated stops of residents of East Lansing were African American. This is 2.5 times the percentage of African-Americans in the city's population.

The percentage of African-American East Lansing residents who were stopped by ELPD was 2.5 times higher than their percentage of the city's residents.

Dividing the number of stops of East Lansing residents of a specific racial category by the total number of East Lansing residents of that racial category is shown in the last column - "% of EL population stopped, by race."

This shows that 1.7% of East Lansing residents who are Black (or African-American) were stopped during this four-month period, while 0.6% of East Lansing residents who are White were stopped during this period. So, Black residents of East Lansing were almost three times more likely than White East Lansing residents to be stopped by East Lansing Police Department officers during this four-month period.

The racial category of people who were stopped is identified by the officer who made the stop. The racial identification of residents is self-reported data included in the U.S. Census. They are not an exact match, but they are very good estimates to use for measuring trends, evaluation, and policy-making.

	East Lansing		MSU students, Fall 2020		Lansing		Ingham County	
<b>ETHNIC ORIGIN</b>								
White (non-Hispanic)	35,232	<b>78.4%</b>	33,051	<b>66.5%</b>	63,428	<b>54.1%</b>	201,927	<b>69.1%</b>
Black or African American (non-Hispanic)	3,196	<b>6.8%</b>	3,572	<b>7.2%</b>	26,036	<b>22.2%</b>	33,810	<b>11.6%</b>
Asian (non-Hispanic)	6,082	<b>10.6%</b>	3,244	<b>6.5%</b>	5,167	<b>4.4%</b>	20,568	<b>7.0%</b>
Hispanic Ethnicity	2,459	<b>3.4%</b>	2,783	<b>5.6%</b>	14,557	<b>12.4%</b>	23,381	<b>8.0%</b>
Two or more races (non-Hispanic)	1,527	<b>2.9%</b>	1,662	<b>3.3%</b>	7,231	<b>6.2%</b>	10,536	<b>4.0%</b>
American Indian/Alaskan Native (non-Hispanic)	122	<b>0.3%</b>	125	<b>0.3%</b>	523	<b>8.0%</b>	1,933	<b>0.7%</b>
Hawaiian / Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)	9		28	<b>0.1%</b>	13		0	<b>0.0%</b>
Other	102	<b>1.0%</b>			204	<b>0.2%</b>	251	<b>3.6%</b>
International			4,540	<b>9.1%</b>				
Not Reported			690	<b>1.4%</b>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,729</b>		<b>49,695</b>		<b>117,159</b>		<b>292,406</b>	

East Lansing Police Department interact with people who are present in the City of East Lansing. This includes residents of the city and others who work, study, visit, recreate, shop, or drive through the city.

It is not possible to know exactly who is in East Lansing at a particular time. These populations groups provide some reference information.

Some Michigan State University students live in East Lansing - on campus or off-campus. Other students live outside of East Lansing.

Most of East Lansing is located in Ingham County, as is much of Lansing.

**Sources:**

**Michigan State University student enrollment, Office of the Registrar**

<https://reg.msu.edu/RoInfo/ReportView.aspx?Report=UE-ComparisonEthnicOrigin>

**East Lansing, Lansing, and Ingham County**

Data for these areas are from the U.S. Census - American Community Survey 2019 data.