

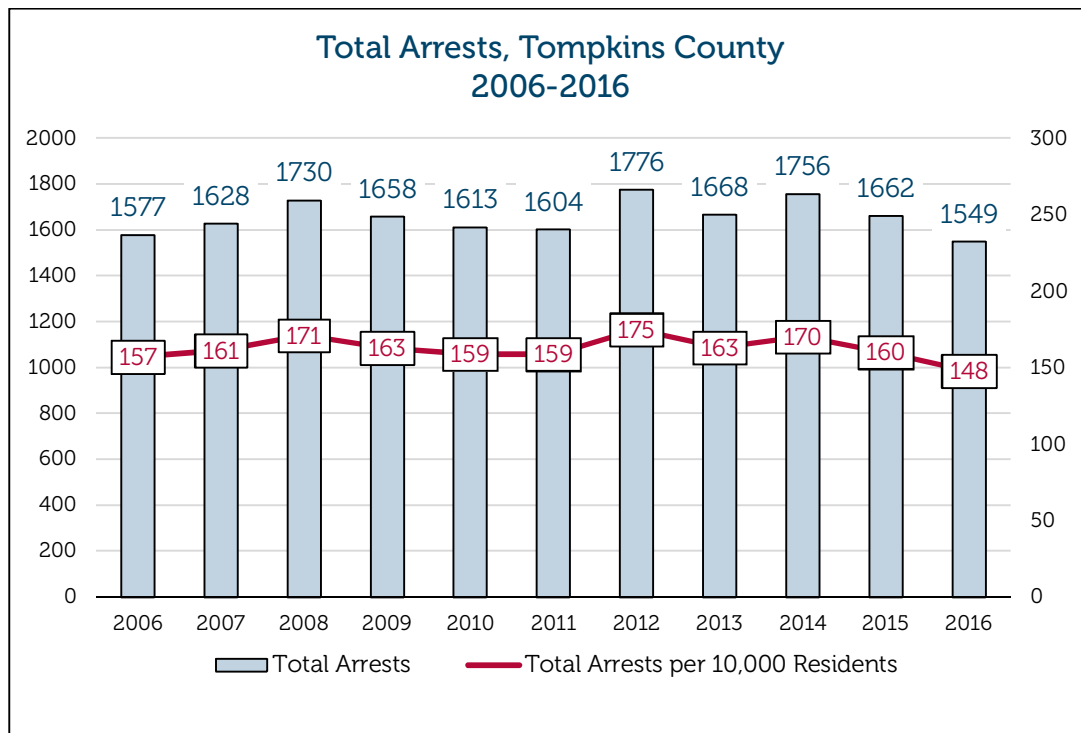
III. Relationship of Arrests to Jail Admissions

In order to put the rest of the report – including discussion of jail inmate characteristics and ATI and community-based programs – into perspective, it is important to first understand recent patterns of arrests in Tompkins County. Since arrests drive what happens in the rest of the criminal justice system, it is instructive to begin with an analysis of arrest totals in recent years.

County Arrest Trends and Rankings

Graph 5 tracks the total number of arrests made by law enforcement agencies across the county each year from 2006 through 2016.

Graph 5

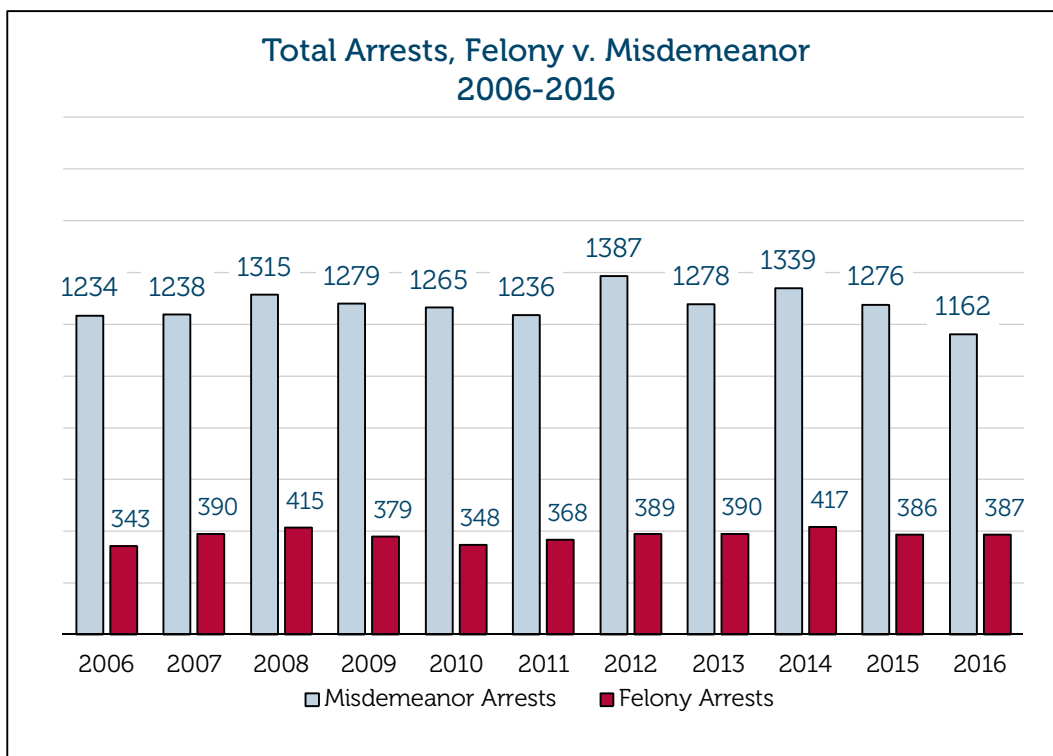


In most years over the past decade, annual arrests have fluctuated with relatively little variation within a narrow range between 1,604 and 1,668 (rates of 159 to 163 per 10,000 residents). Exceptions include three years when the total arrests topped 1,700, including two of the past five years. Arrests in the first half of the decade averaged about 1,635 per year, compared to 1,685 in the past five years. But since 2014, arrests

have declined in each of the past two years, to a decade low of 1,549 in 2016 – a 12 percent reduction since 2014.

As indicated in Graph 6, the pattern of misdemeanor and felony arrests has varied in recent years. Felony arrests have averaged 395 per year since 2012, compared to 374 between 2006 and 2011. But with the exception of 2014, felony arrests have stabilized since 2012, with arrests in the other four years hovering within a very narrow range of 386 to 390. Misdemeanor arrests, by contrast, have fluctuated more widely. Through 2011, there were an average of 1,261 such arrests per year, compared with 1,289 in the most recent five years. However, the past five years have shown the most variation, ranging from a decade high of 1,387 in 2012 to a decade low of 1,162 misdemeanor arrests last year – a 16 percent decline over those five years. Over the years, felonies have averaged about 23 percent of all arrests, ranging between 22 percent and a high of 25 percent of a smaller number of total arrests in 2016.

Graph 6

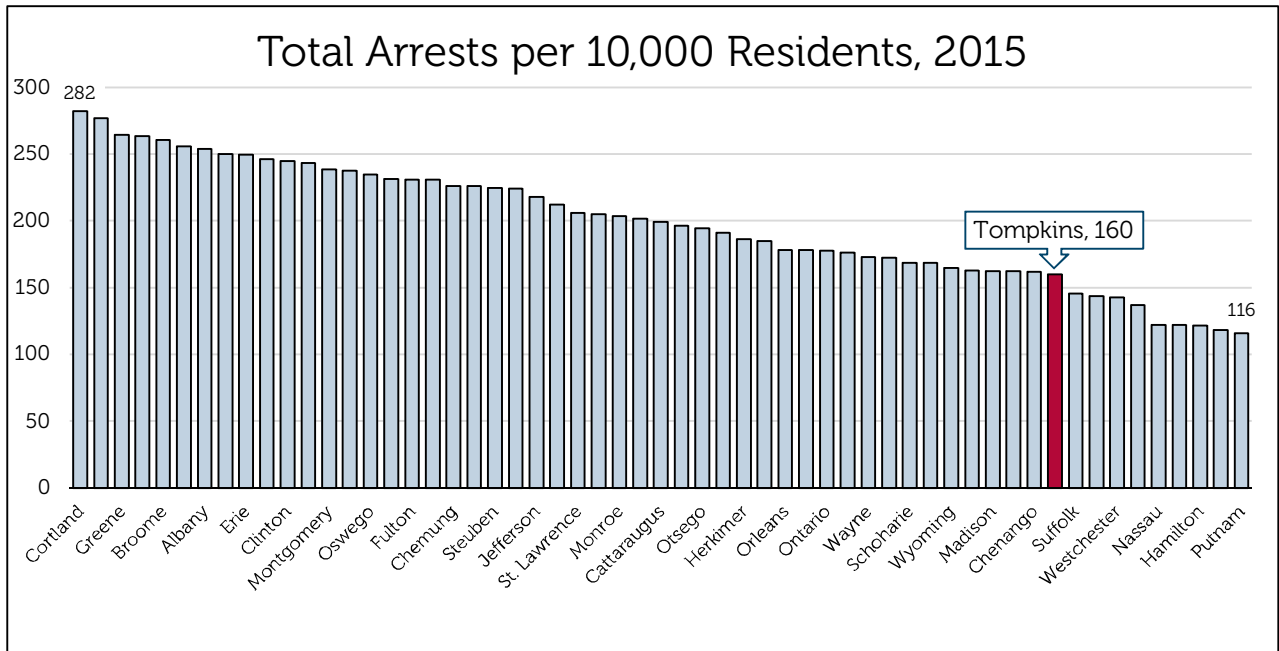


It is difficult to discern a clear pattern in these arrest data. Felony, misdemeanor and total arrests all have increased in the past five years compared to the first part of the past decade, but felony arrests appear to have stabilized in recent years, while misdemeanor rates have shown greater fluctuation, with decade-high and decade-low misdemeanor totals within the past five years. It is not clear whether the decline

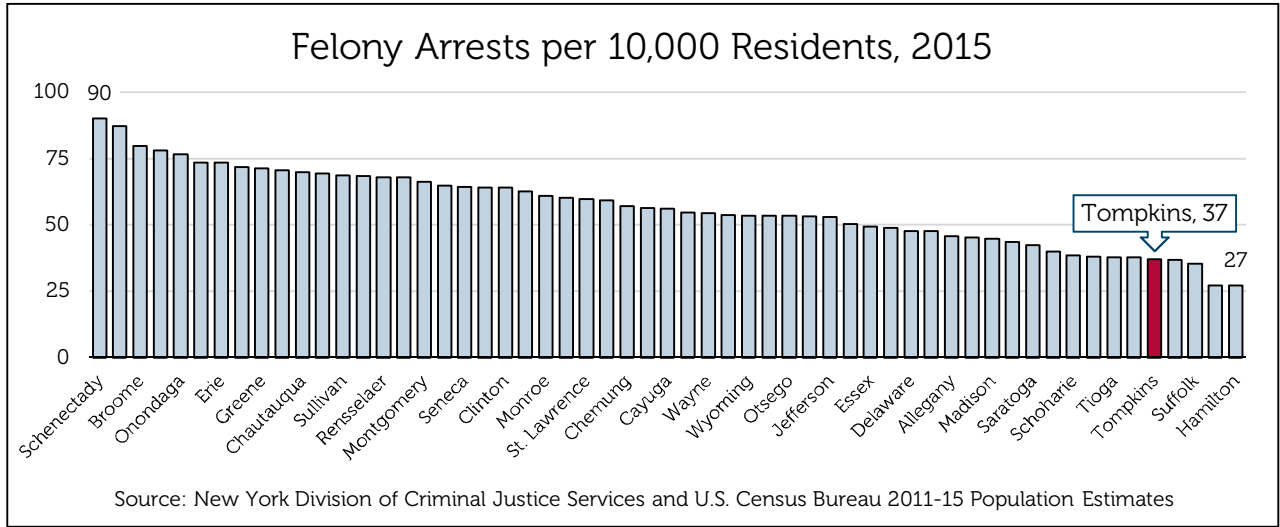
in misdemeanors over the past two years is simply a blip in the data, or is reflective of a trend.

Regardless of recent trends in crime rates, Tompkins County has consistently maintained overall arrest rates that rank among the lowest of all counties in the state: as shown in Graphs 7-9, only nine counties had lower overall rates in 2015; only four had lower felony rates; and 17 had lower rates of misdemeanor arrests.

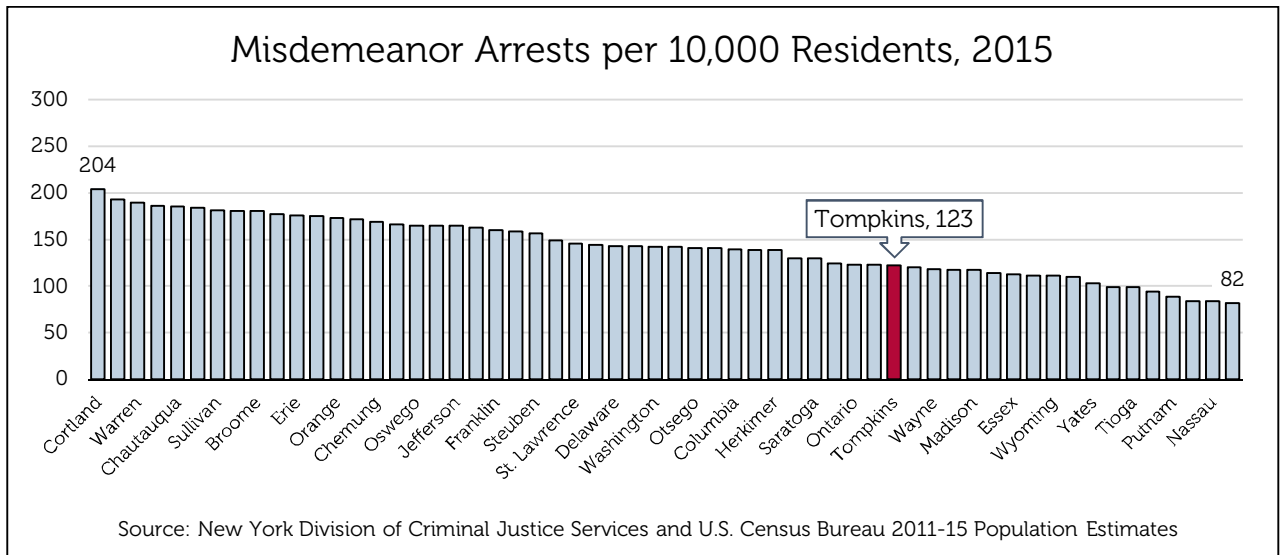
Graph 7



Graph 8

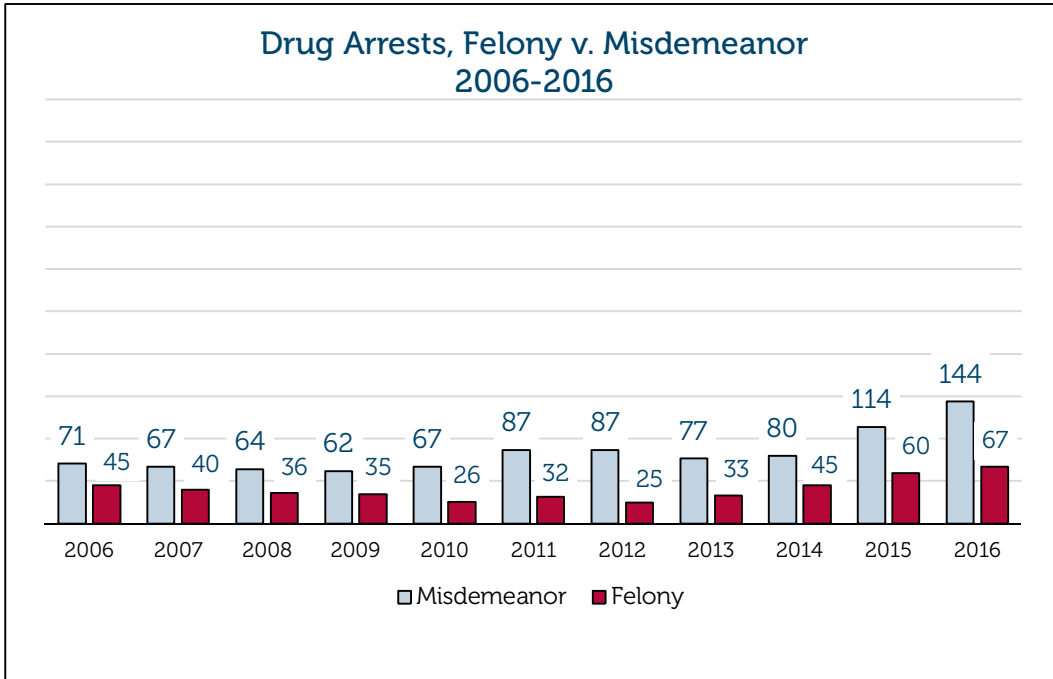


Graph 9



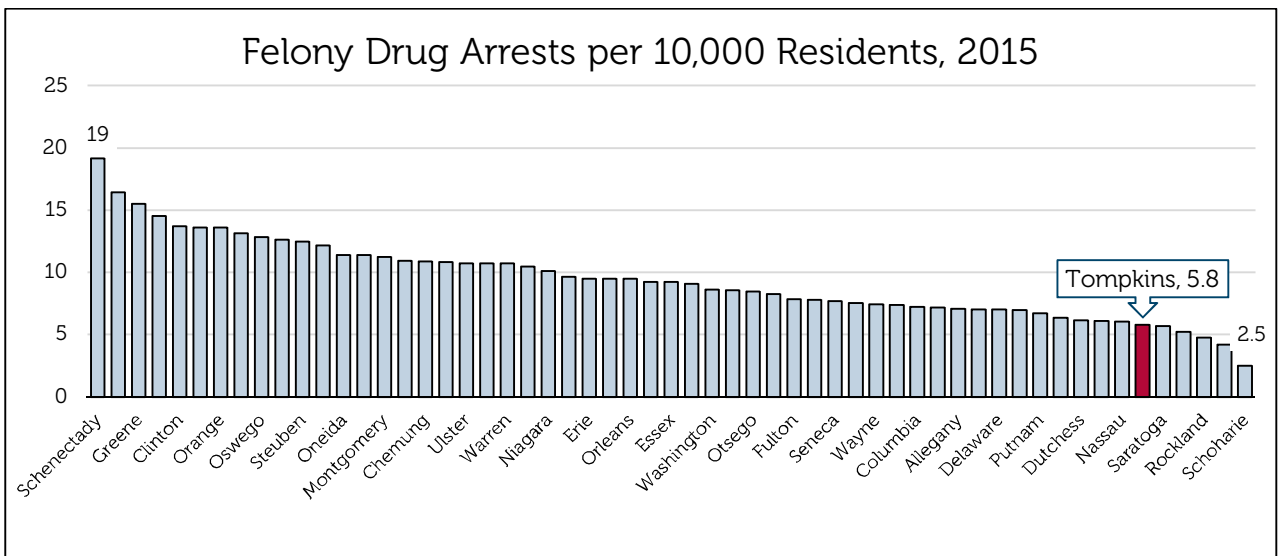
Among major categories of crime, only drug arrests have exhibited clear consistent patterns of increases in recent years, at both the felony and misdemeanor levels. As shown in Graph 10, misdemeanor drug arrests in 2016 had increased by 87 percent since 2013, and felonies by 168 percent since 2012. In 2012, drug felonies represented 6 percent of all felony arrests; by 2016, that proportion had increased to 17 percent.

Graph 10

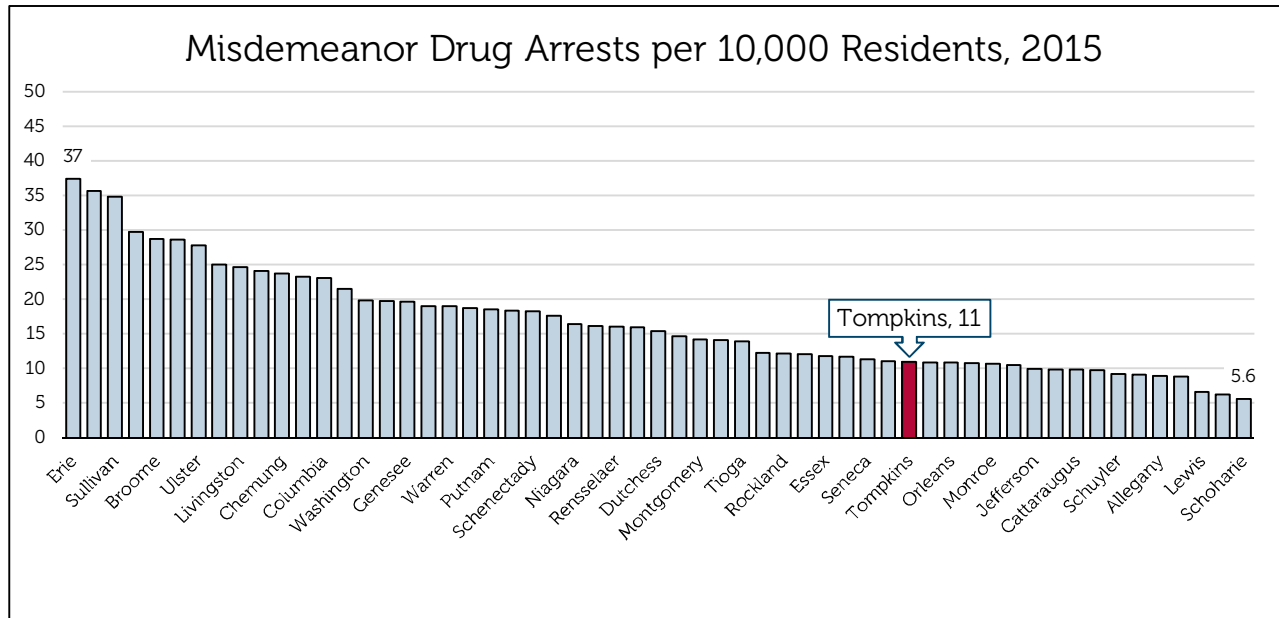


Even with these rapidly increasing rates of local drug arrests, the County rates for both felony and misdemeanor drug arrests remain among the lowest county rates in the state, especially among felonies, as indicated in Graphs 11 and 12.

Graph 11



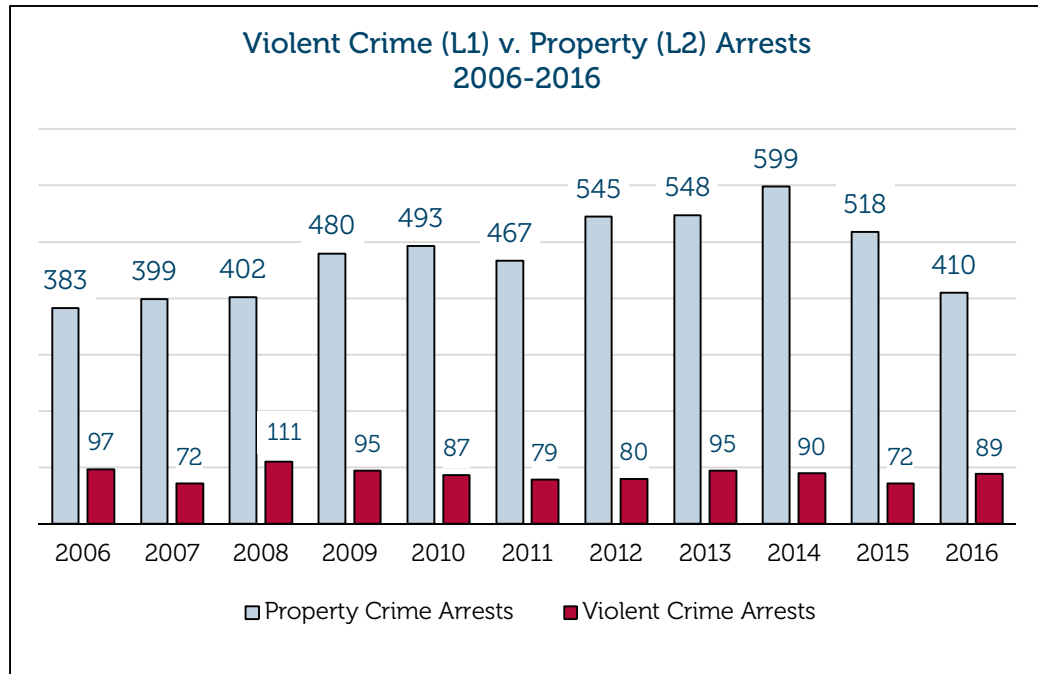
Graph 12



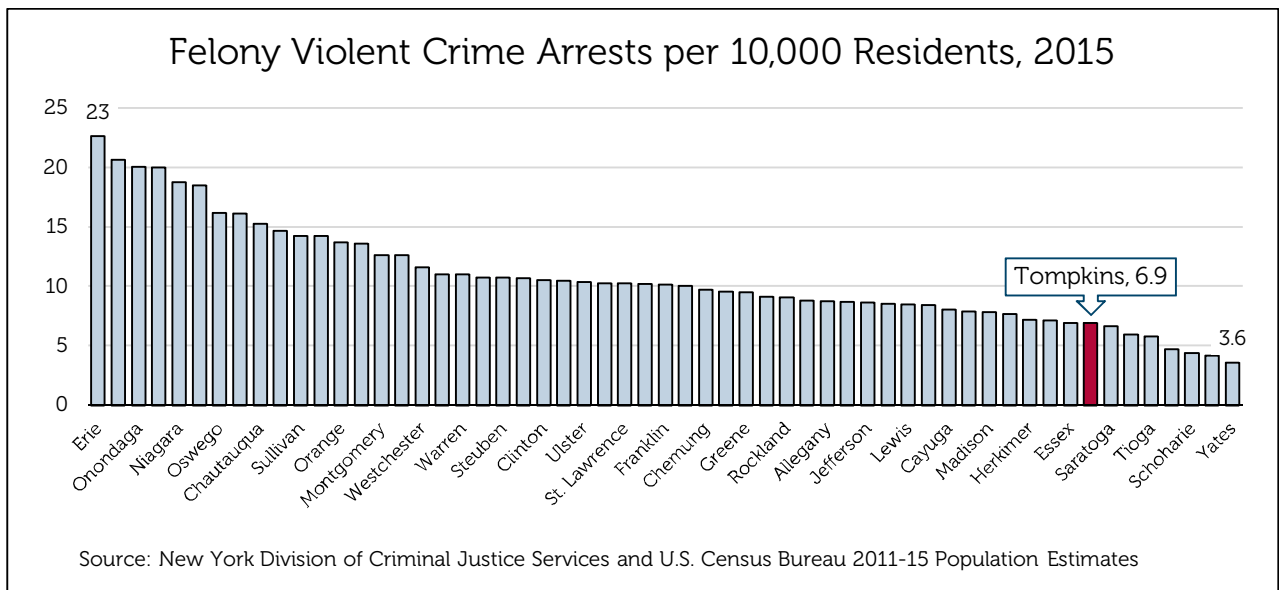
Two other categories of crime appear to have elicited concern among local residents: violent crime and property crimes. As shown in Graph 13, violent crimes have typically generated fewer than 90 arrests throughout the county per year, and the numbers have declined slightly over the past five years, compared to the first half of the past decade. As with other types of crime, Tompkins has among the lowest violent crime arrest rates in the state, with only seven counties reporting lower rates in 2015, as indicated in Graph 14.

By contrast, extensively fueled in the eyes of local law enforcement officials by individuals seeking to support their drug habits, property crime rates had been on an overall upward trend, with arrests increasing nearly every year since 2006, peaking at 599 in 2014, a 56 percent increase since 2006 – before then declining dramatically over the next two years to 410 last year, a 32 percent decline since the 2014 peak (see Graph 13). In 2015, one of those decline years, Tompkins County was in the upper half of all counties in terms of its rate of property crimes – about the only exception of note to the County’s low crime rankings compared to fellow counties (see Graph 15 below).

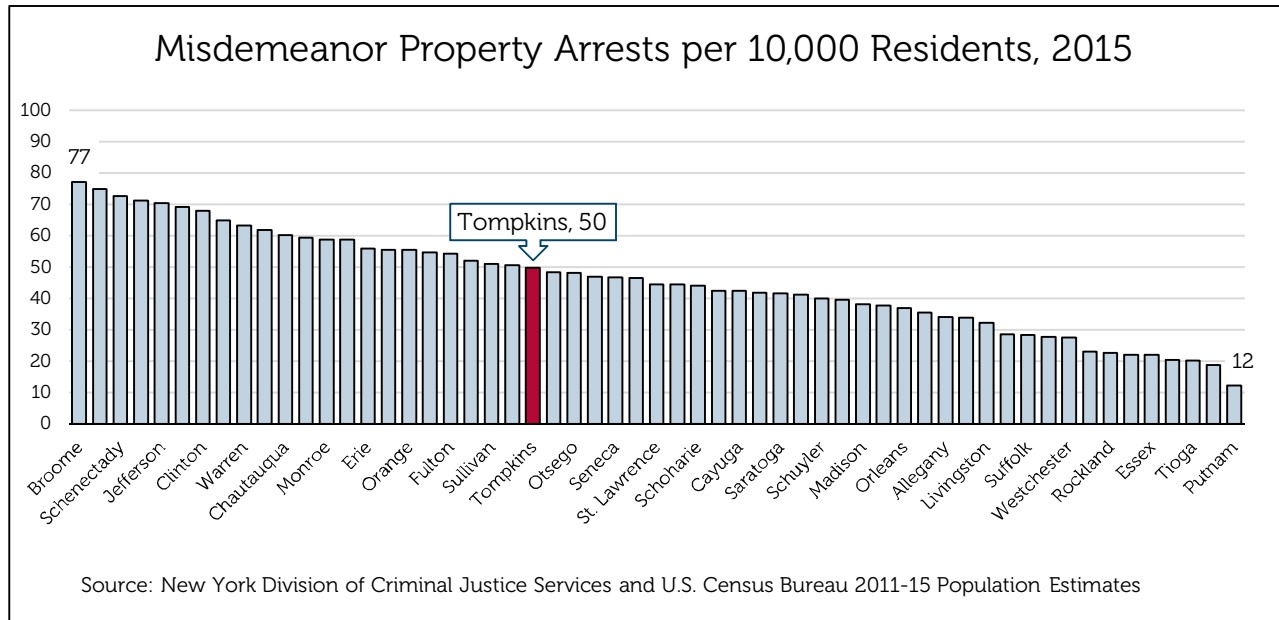
Graph 13



Graph 14



Graph 15



Impact of Arrests on Jail Admissions

Following some years of increases in the size of the jail population, the number of jail admissions has generally trended downwards since 2012, with the exception of a single upwards blip in 2015. The number of admissions in 2016 was 18 percent lower than in 2012, as shown in Table 11.

Using the years 2010 through 2016 for which comparable reliable data existed for both arrests and jail admissions, Table 11 reflects the relationship in recent years between arrests and admissions to the jail.

Table 11

Arrests and Jail Inmate Population 2010-2016							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Arrests	1613	1604	1776	1669	1756	1669	1549
Felony Arrests	348	368	389	391	417	390	387
Jail Admissions	843	884	980	936	838	919	800
Sentenced Admissions	122	146	135	156	168	154	154
Unsentenced Admissions	693	691	791	729	626	725	592
Avg. Daily Jail Population	82	86	90	91	87	92	80

NOTE: Jail admissions reflect all admissions, including sentenced, unsentenced, and others including parole violators, which are not broken out separately in this table. Thus total jail admissions are greater than the sum of sentenced + unsentenced admissions.

In general, the data on jail admissions suggest that Tompkins County in most years incarcerates a little over one inmate for every two arrests. These data suggest that the use of appearance tickets and having defense attorneys present at off-hours arraignments have an effect in reducing the numbers of arrestees who are being incarcerated. While we were not able to access data directly tracking appearance tickets, we can estimate their usage by subtracting the number of unsentenced jail admissions from the total arrests. This analysis suggests that over the last seven years, appearance tickets were issued to an estimated 58 percent of those arrested. In 2014 and 2016, that number was higher than the average with 64 and 62 percent respectively.

The decision to issue an appearance ticket falls primarily to the arresting law enforcement officer. They consider a variety of factors including flight risk, threat to the community or themselves, and severity of crime. All felonies require an arraignment hearing as well as any cases of domestic violence. Arresting officers will also consult with the District Attorney's office on some cases regarding the desired disposition.

In most recent years, the ratio of total jail admissions to arrests in Tompkins has been just over 0.55, irrespective of whether the number of arrests went up or down that year. In the two most recent years in which the ratio was closer to 0.5 or even below 0.5 in 2014, in one case there was an increase in arrests that year, and in the other a decrease. In about half the years, the change from the previous year in number of arrests (up or down) was met by the opposite direction of change in number of jail admissions. The same was true for felony arrests. It would be reasonable to hypothesize that increases in the number or proportion of felony arrests might lead to an increase in the number of jail admissions, either unsentenced or sentenced or both.

Or vice versa, with decreases leading to decreases. In most year-to-year comparisons, however, the directions were just the opposite of what might reasonably have been expected, although there was a consistent ratio of about 0.4 between sentenced admissions and felony arrests.

It is also worth noting that despite the substantial increases in the past few years in arrests on drug charges, those increases have not been accompanied by any corresponding consistent increases in jail admissions, and in fact during the last three years when drug arrests have increased at the greatest rates, the overall jail admission trend, though not a straight line, has been on a downward trajectory. The number of drug arrests, even though increasing dramatically, remains too small to have, by itself, any major impact on jail admissions. However, as discussed in more detail later in the report, this is not to say that substance abuse does not have a major impact on the jail population. Evidence suggests strongly that it does, but that impact is exhibited to a great extent in substance abuse and mental illness prevalence among those in the jail – health, addiction and behavioral issues that may be directly contributing to criminal behavior, but not necessarily drug-specific crimes and resulting arrests.

CGR's overall conclusion is that increases or decreases in arrests across the county almost appear to operate independently of corresponding changes in jail admissions. That is, there appears to be no clear consistent relationship between the two, except in the ratio of felony arrests to sentenced admissions⁷.

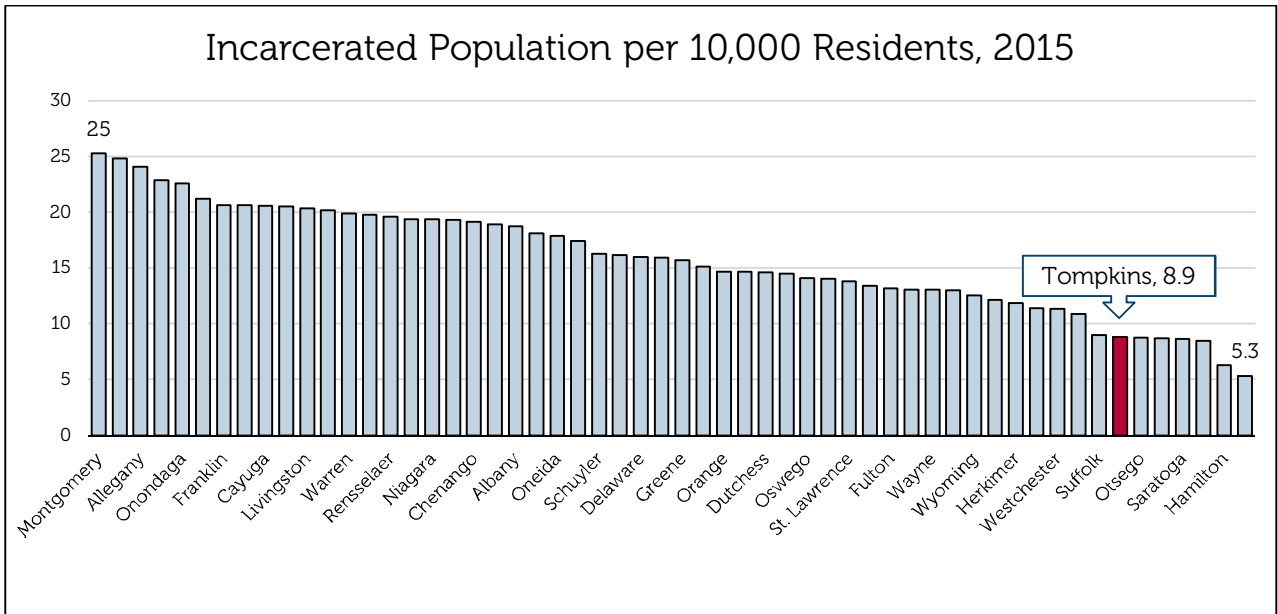
One final note about the relationship between arrests and jail admissions: just as Tompkins County has among the lowest rates of arrests of all the upstate counties in the state, so it also is among the counties with the lowest rates of incarceration in the state, as shown in Graphs 16-18. Even though there does not appear to be a direct relationship between year-to-year fluctuations in arrests and jail admissions, it does appear fair to say from a systemic perspective that Tompkins County, compared to other counties throughout the state, has historically had both low arrest rates and low rates of incarceration. The latter is presumably underscored and strengthened by the contributions of ATI and other community-based programs discussed later in the report, and by community leadership advocating for new policies and practices consistent with reducing the numbers of people in jail.

As of 2015, only six counties in the state had lower overall rates of incarceration per day in their local jail than did Tompkins (see Graph 16). The County had low rates for both sentenced and unsentenced populations, with only four counties having lower unsentenced rates (Graph 17), and 10 with lower sentenced incarceration rates (Graph

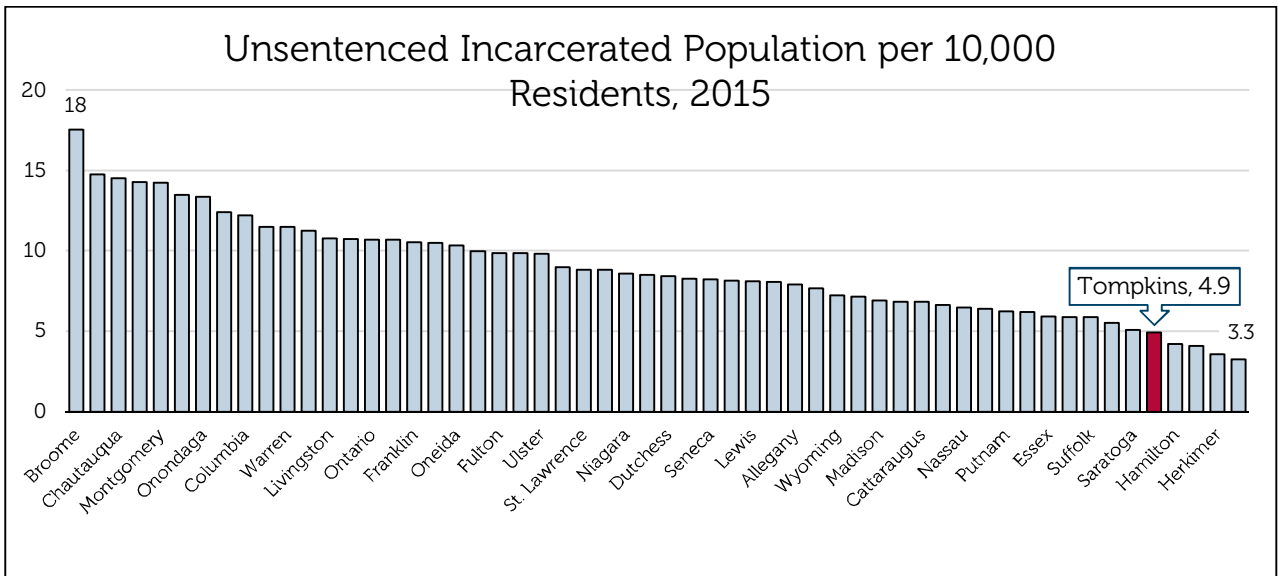
⁷ As noted elsewhere in the report, many charged with felonies serve time in the jail either under the original charge or as a reduced charge.

18). (Note that sentenced plus unsentenced rates do not sum to the total incarcerated population rate, as these sentenced versus unsentenced comparisons with other counties do not include those held on parole violations, state-ready prisoners, or boarded-out inmates for any of the counties. Each of those categories, however, are included in the total incarcerated rates for each county.)

Graph 16



Graph 17



Graph 18

