



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Quinton Y. Zondervan
City Councillor

To: Cambridge City Council

From: Quinton Y. Zondervan, City Councillor

Date: June 3, 2021

Subject: FY22 police budget

Cambridge Police Department Spending

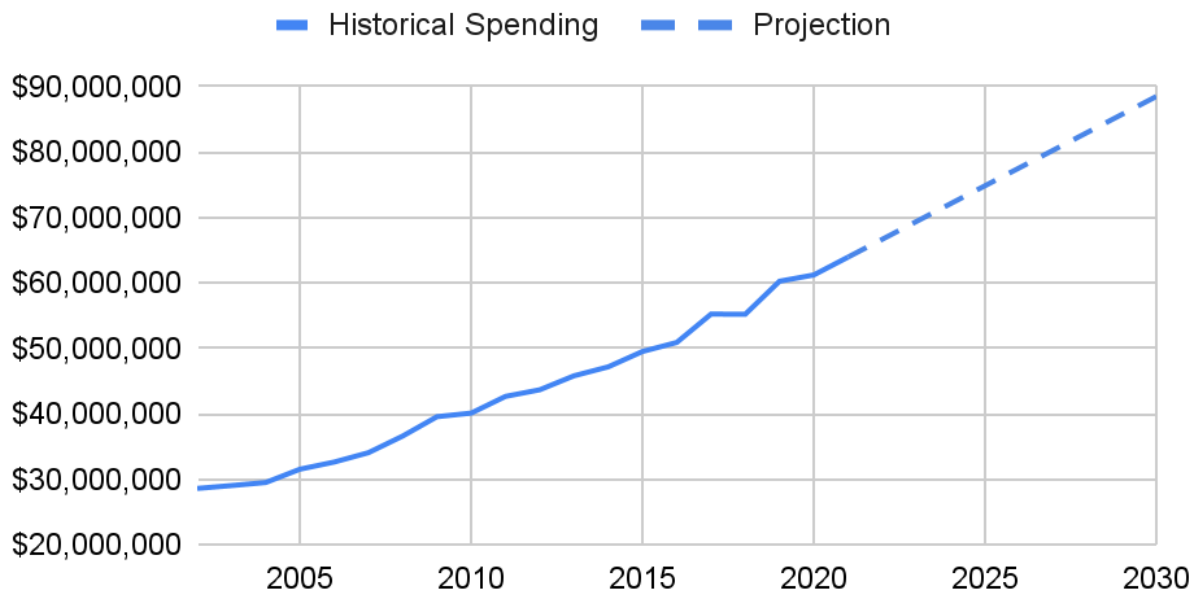


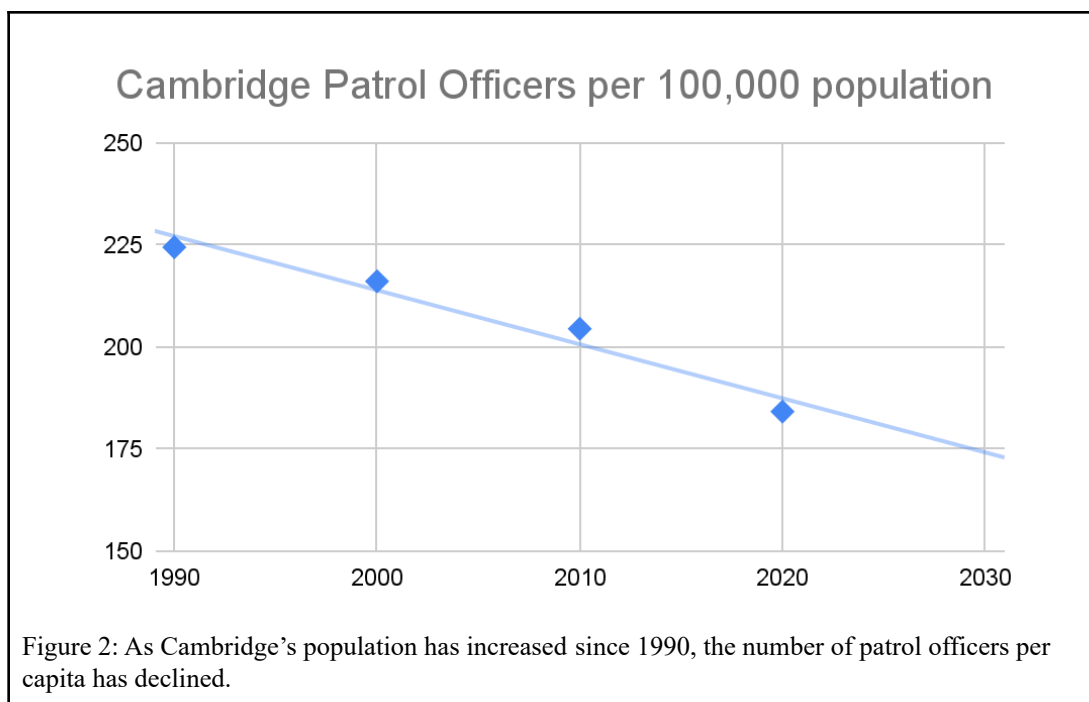
Figure 1: Annual police department operating expenses and forward projection based on recent trends.

The City Manager is proposing that we spend nearly \$69 million on policing in FY22, which is nearly double the \$29 million Cambridge spent in 2002, and also nearly quadruple what Somerville currently spends on policing.

Despite the past year's nationwide call for transformative changes to policing after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, we are faced with approving an unthinkable \$3 million increase in the Police Department (CPD) budget from last year, which would represent a \$5 million increase in spending overall. This increase is alarming and projects out to an annual police expenditure of nearly \$90 million by 2030 were it to continue.

Last year, thousands of residents took to the streets and hundreds spoke at public comment in favor of reducing our police budget, and the City Manager agreed to a \$2.5 million re-allocation within the budget by not filling certain police vacancies. This was a step in the right direction, but this year's budget hearings have made it clear that it was a one-time concession, not the beginning of a fundamental rethinking of police spending in Cambridge, as many had hoped.

It's interesting that as the population has steadily increased in the 30 years since the end of rent control, the number of patrol officers per capita has actually decreased. Crime rates have also come down over that same period, following national trends, but we are still failing too many of our Black and Brown youth in Cambridge and nationally. Continuing to increase police headcount would exacerbate this harm while doing nothing to reduce crime. In fact we should be decreasing the number of patrol officers, especially as we reimagine public safety and an emergency alternative crisis response program, as so many in the community have called for.



The council needs to start holding the line on unchecked increases to our police budget by eliminating vacant positions. Doing so would save millions of dollars that can immediately be reallocated to other priorities including (but not limited to) extending and expanding non-congregate housing options for the unhoused community, expanding our after school programming, moving ahead with universal preschool, workforce development programs and support for non-college bound young adults, and the multi-service center.

Cambridge Police Department Historical Budgets

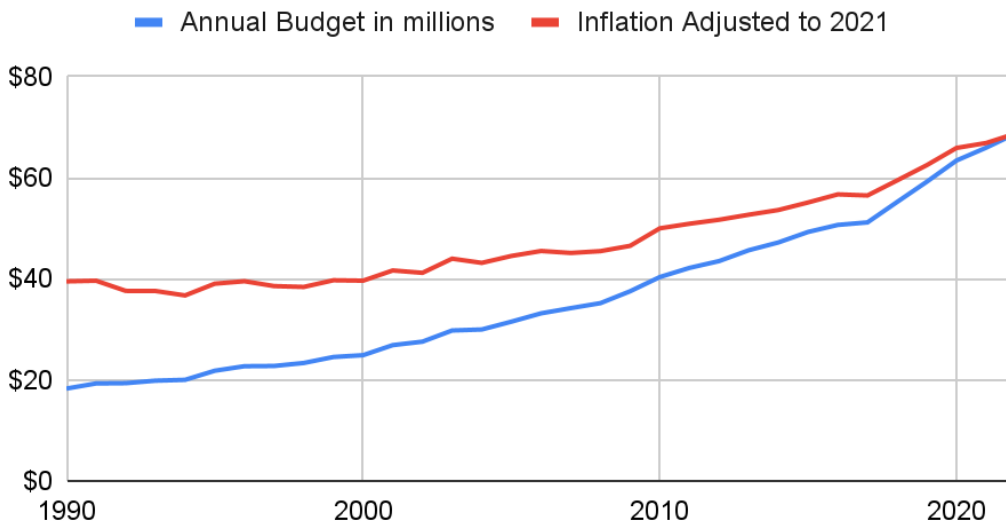


Figure 3: Adjusted for inflation, Cambridge's police department budget did not start increasing until 2001, and started dramatically increasing in 2010.

Cambridge Police average cost per employee

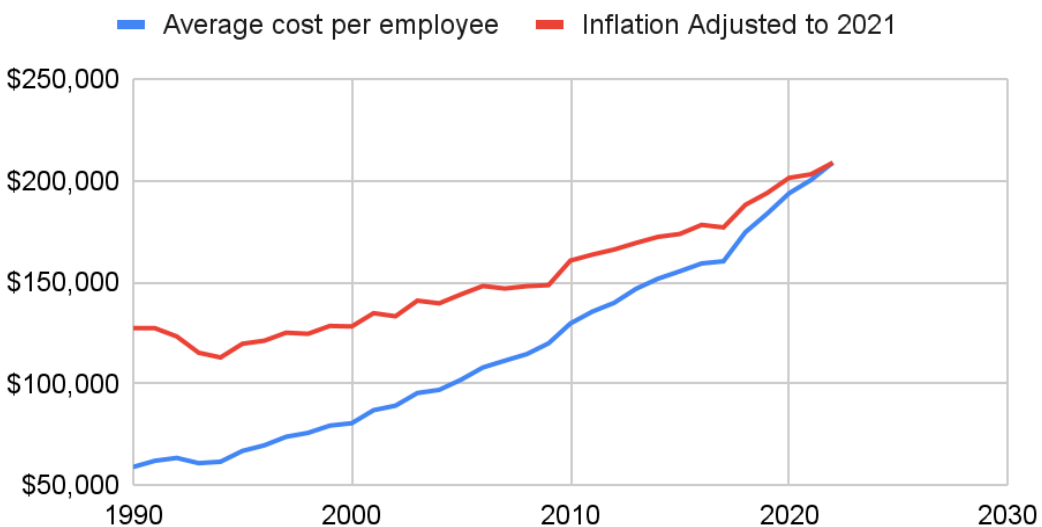


Figure 4: The average cost per police department employee has essentially doubled in the last 30 years, when adjusted for inflation.