CITY OF
Somerville

Police Department Staffing & Operations Analysis

Final Report / November 2023

RAFTELIS

November 30, 2023

Denise Molina Capers, Esq.
Director of Racial and Social Justice
City of Somerville
93 Highland Ave.
Somerville, MA 02143

Subject: Police Department Staffing & Operations Analysis

Dear Ms. Capers:

The City of Somerville (City) engaged Raftelis to conduct an analysis of staffing and operations in its Police Department. The City is to be commended for its commitment to ensuring that its Police Department operates as effectively as possible and that resources are allocated appropriately to protect the safety, health, and well-being of all members of the community.

The recommendations in this report are based on an analysis of police operational data, discussions with officers, City elected officials, and the public, and best practices for 21st century policing. They are intended to support the City in cultivating a police force that reflects the needs and priorities of the community it serves.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the City of Somerville.

Sincerely,

Michelle Ferguson
Vice President - Organizational Assessment

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Executive Summary

Police departments provide vital public safety services to communities across the country. Every day, victims of crimes and people in difficult situations rely on the police to provide support and help them resolve public safety and quality of life issues. At the same time, many have deep concerns about traditional models of policing in the United States, especially the impact of police on minority communities and those suffering from mental health and substance use issues. Police officers are given broad authority, including the authority to physically restrain people or use force when they deem it warranted. However, high profile cases of police violence and police misconduct, disproportionately applied against black and brown people in communities outside of the City Somerville, show that this power can be misused. This national context has led to a broad national movement to reform policing in America. However, there are substantial disagreements about how best to achieve that goal.

Communities around the country are grappling with the question of how to effectively balance the necessity of the Police Department with community concerns about its risk. There is no correct answer to this question; the balance is likely different in every community in America based on its specific public safety needs and priorities, the history of police-community relations, public trust in police, and available resources. The City of Somerville contracted with Raftelis to evaluate the Somerville Police Department's (SPD or Department) staffing levels and organizational structure within the framework of public safety workload drivers, crime trends, and community priorities.

To understand the most appropriate fit for a community like Somerville, its City leadership must be guided by community priorities, as well as policing and public health best practices. It is important to consider the diverse spectrum of community voices, including those who are concerned about the potential for police violence, as well as those who live in areas with gang activity and other risks whose safety depends on a quick response from Police officers. Raftelis was contracted to assess the staffing needs within the Department as well as potential organizational, process, or policy adjustments that may help connect Department operations with community priorities.

The first three sections of the report, Patrol Staffing, Investigations, and Civilianization, analyze potential staffing models for the Department moving forward. This analysis was completed by assessing law enforcement workload drivers in Somerville, such as Dispatched Calls for Service (DCFS), as well as best practices in policing. However, the targeted staffing levels and community policing priorities in a community are also a policy decision.

Some Somerville elected officials have advocated reductions in staffing. The Mayor and City Council could choose to reduce Police staffing to minimal levels, but this choice would come with tradeoffs. The fewer officers on duty, the slower the response in an emergency and the fewer officers available to control a dangerous situation. This could impact the safety of both the public and of the officers themselves. Vacancies are also an ongoing issue at the Department, and the heavier the workload on individual officers the more likely that turnover and recruitment will be impacted, potentially forcing the Department to reduce quality standards for its force in order to maintain an adequate size.

For that reason, it is important to consider public safety best practices when considering the appropriate staffing levels for a police department. The project team analyzed data on SPD's call volume to help understand the City's police response needs. Based on this analysis, there is an opportunity for a limited reduction in patrol staffing. Minimum staffing could be reduced from seven officers per shift to six without impacting the officers' ability to respond to reactive calls for service, as well as proactively address public safety issues and cultivate relationships with the community. This will require that the City eliminate the historic practice of assigning a patrol officer to each City Council ward. Wards, as a political boundary, have no bearing on police workload and the Department should be free to create patrol beats that align with workload-driven deployment needs. Patrol officers assigned to Ward One,

for example, respond to approximately twice as many calls for service as officers assigned to any other area. This report recommends eliminating the ward system as a means for assigning patrol staff, and instead creating patrol divisions based on call data. This will provide sufficient flexibility to meet workload demands and generate the ability to reassign patrol positions to other priority areas.

Reducing minimum staffing from seven officers per shift to six would allow the City to decrease its patrol staffing by approximately three positions. The report details several options for reallocating these positions based on the City's policy priorities. One of the positions is recommended to be reassigned as a Property Crimes Detective. The proportion of property crimes referred for investigation has been decreasing in recent years because of staffing constraints, and many property crimes receive little investigative attention as a result. These are the most common type of investigation and, by their nature, one of the most common quality of life issues that communities face. Assigning a Detective specifically to these cases will help address this downward trend. For the remaining positions, one option would be to re-staff the Community Outreach and Affairs unit, which is vacant at the time of this analysis, to create more intentional capacity for proactive policing and community engagement. A second option would be to reclassify these positions as non-sworn Community Service Officers (CSOs) to respond to low risk calls for service that are mental health, substance use, or homelessness related. Each of these options would add value in the community.

The report also offers several recommendations for potential civilianization of sworn positions, including:
- Replacing some sworn Desk Officer positions at the Police Station with clerical staff
- Considering moving to contracted security for the Mayor and reallocating the City Hall Liaison
- Civilianizing the Crossing Guard Supervisor/Safety Officer position

The final sections of this report address opportunities to strengthen community engagement and transparency at SPD, as well as opportunities for enhanced professional development and accountability. As of the time of this analysis, SPD only has limited formal engagement with the community. More regular, structured engagement opportunities can strengthen the relationship between SPD and the community and help ensure that the Department is shaped by community needs and priorities. Additionally, moving forward with the planned Civilian Review Board will further enhance transparency and accountability at the Department.

The rest of this report addresses these topics in further detail. The full list of recommendations is shown below.

Table 1: List of Report Recommendations

Number	Recommendation
Patrol Staffing	
1	Establish a proactive policing target for Patrol Officers.
2	Adjust the patrol staffing level to align with the proactive policing Service Level Target and community needs.
3	Evaluate options for reallocating officer positions.
4	Eliminate the ward-based patrol beat structure.
5	Consider establishing a non-sworn Community Services Officer program.
Investigations	
6	Convert one Patrol Officer position to Property Crimes Detective.
Civilianization	

Number	Recommendation
7	Replace four Desk Officer positions with clerical staff.
8	Consider reallocating the officer serving as City Hall Liaison.
9	Consider civilianizing the Crossing Guard Supervisor/Safety Officer position.
Engagement and Transparency	
10	Regularly engage the community both formally and informally in a variety of ways.
11	Define "proactive policing" based on community priorities.
12	Engage with the community to develop a policy on the use of body-worn cameras by SPD.
Professional Development and Accountability	
13	Enhance performance monitoring in the 911/Dispatch function.
14	Revise the bid system to create more flexibility for assigning staff.
15	Continue the process of establishing a Civilian Review Board.
16	Be intentional about cultivating diversity at the command level.

Introduction

Background and Methodology

In January 2022, the City of Somerville retained the services of Raftelis to conduct a staffing and operations assessment of its Police Department. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the City's police staffing and deployment approach within the context of workload patterns and trends, to determine what opportunities may exist to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the City's public safety services, and to align operations with best practices in 21ˢᵗ century policing.

To accomplish these tasks, Raftelis conducted extensive fieldwork that involved interviews with City elected officials and members of the Police Department. A total of 26 Police Department and City staff participated in individual interviews or focus group sessions. Additionally, the team interviewed the Mayor and seven City Councilmembers (all 11 Councilmembers were given the opportunity to participate).

Raftelis also analyzed background information provided by Police Department staff. A thorough review of its core functions and activities was accomplished by evaluating data on call volume and response time, Department policies, performance data, training data, and other relevant information about operations and administration. This data was evaluated using a multi-faceted analytical approach that takes into account community priorities, service expectations and goals, practical operational constraints, and data-derived issue analysis and validation. This process has resulted in a series of staffing, administrative, and operational recommendations that are unique to Somerville's specific operating environment.

About Somerville

The City of Somerville is located in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, bordering the City of Boston. It has a population of 81,045 as of the 2020 United States Census. At 4.12 square miles, Somerville has a population density of more than 18,400 residents per square mile, making it the most densely populated city in New England.[1] The City includes most of the campus of Tufts University, which had more than 13,000 students enrolled as of Fall 2021.[2]

Somerville is growing. The City's population increased by approximately 5,000 residents, or 6%, between the 2010 and 2020 Censuses. A 143-acre mixed-use development called Assembly Square first opened in 2012 and has attracted residents, businesses, and tourists to the City. A new mixed-use development in the City's historic Union Square neighborhood is also scheduled to open in early 2023, with the intention of cultivating a science and technology cluster to bring high-paying jobs to the area.[3] Additionally, a planned extension of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA's) Green Line will create five new transit stations in the City of Somerville, helping connect the City with Boston and the surrounding area.[4] These developments will attract people and businesses to the area, which will create economic opportunities, but also challenges as City services work to serve a growing population.

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[1] "Community Profile." *City of Somerville*, 2022, https://stories.opengov.com/somervillema/published/uuc1e807 .
[2] "Fall Enrollment Calculator." *Tufts University,* https://provost.tufts.edu/institutionalresearch/enrollment/.
[3] "10 Prospect." *USQ*, www.discoverusq.com/10prospect.
[4] "GLX Construction is Underway." *City of Somerville*, Dec. 9, 2022, www.somervillema.gov/departments/green-lineextension.

The population is 67% White, 11% Asian, 5% Black or African American, and 16% some other race or two or more races, as of the 2020 Census. The median annual household income is $102,311, nearly $20,000 higher than the median income for the State of Massachusetts ($84,385). However, a higher percentage of residents live in poverty (11.3%) than in the State as a whole (9.8%). The City also has a relatively high cost of living. The median housing value is $709,800, and the median renter pays $2,026 per month for housing. In comparison, median housing value in the State overall is $398,800 and median rent is $1,336 per month.

The City of Somerville operates under a Mayor-Council form of government, with a Mayor serving as the executive officer and an 11-member City Council serving as legislative body. The City is divided into seven wards, with one Council Member representing each ward and the remaining four Council Members elected at-large.

About the Somerville Police Department

The Somerville Police Department is responsible for enforcing the laws of the City of Somerville. Its functions include patrol, investigation, traffic enforcement, animal control, 911 dispatch, and support for individuals struggling with mental health, addiction, or other issues that bring them into contact with law enforcement. Additionally, the Department is supported by a number of administrative positions, training positions, and positions upholding professional standards.

STRUCTURE

The Department has a total of 166 authorized positions as of Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, plus approximately 51 part-time Crossing Guards that are hired based on need. However, as of January 2023, 20 of these positions are vacant. The following figure illustrates the Department's organizational structure as of January 2023, with 146 positions in total. A more detailed organizational chart showing specific positions is included as Appendix A.

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                         ┌─────────────────┐
                         │ Chief of Police │
                         │   1 Position    │
                         └─────────────────┘
            ┌───────────────────────┴───────────────────────┐
   ┌─────────────────┐                             ┌─────────────────┐
   │  Deputy Chief,  │                             │  Deputy Chief,  │
   │   Operations    │                             │     Support     │
   │   1 Position    │                             │   1 Position    │
   └─────────────────┘                             └─────────────────┘
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Captain, Patrol 1 Position	Captain, Administration 1 Position	Captain, Criminal Investigation 1 Position

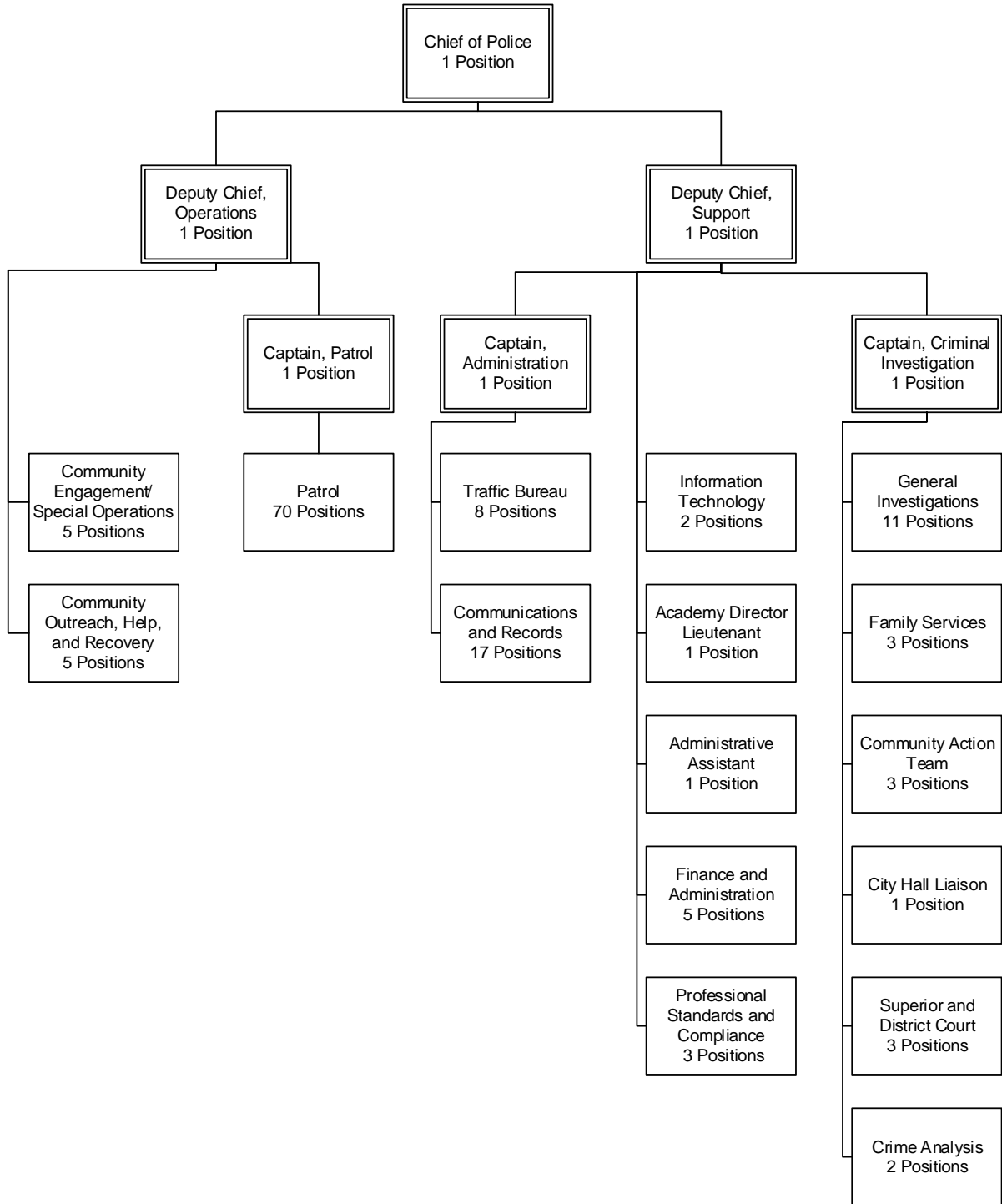| Community Engagement/ Special Operations 5 Positions	Patrol 70 Positions	Traffic Bureau 8 Positions	Information Technology 2 Positions	General Investigations 11 Positions
Community Outreach, Help, and Recovery 5 Positions		Communications and Records 17 Positions	Academy Director Lieutenant 1 Position	Family Services 3 Positions
			Administrative Assistant 1 Position	Community Action Team 3 Positions
			Finance and Administration 5 Positions	City Hall Liaison 1 Position
			Professional Standards and Compliance 3 Positions	Superior and District Court 3 Positions
				Crime Analysis 2 Positions

Figure 1: Somerville Police Department Organizational Chart, January 2023

The Department is overseen by the Police Chief, who is appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by the City Council. The Chief advises the Mayor and Council on public safety policy and oversees day-to-day operations of the Department. The Chief is supported by two Deputies: a Deputy Chief of Operations and a Deputy Chief of Support.

The Deputy Chief of Operations supervises a Captain, a Lieutenant, and the Director of the Community Outreach, Help, and Recovery (COHR) team. The Captain manages the District Patrol team, which is staffed by five Lieutenants, eight Sergeants, and 55 Officers. Additionally, two civilian Substation Clerks staff two police substations, one in the east part of the City and one in the west. The Clerks assist with administrative work and also take police reports from any members of the public who come into the substations. Patrol Officers work in eight-hour shifts on a five day on, two day off schedule. A minimum of seven officers are on patrol at any given time. Each of the seven officers are assigned a single ward to patrol, with any additional officers being assigned as needed based on workload and crime patterns. Additionally, a minimum of two officers per shift are assigned to work at the Police Station. They are responsible for taking any walk-in complaints from members of the public, assisting in booking any arrestees, tending to the needs of any incarcerated people in the Station's jail cells, and transporting prisoners to and from the arrest location and to Court.[5]

The Captain has also historically overseen the Department's Community Outreach and Affairs unit, consisting of one Lieutenant, one Sergeant, and seven Officers. The team was responsible for proactive policing and for building relationships in the community, such as by patrolling areas on foot, visiting local businesses, and participating in community events. However, as of January 2023, all positions on the Community Outreach and Affairs team are vacant; the officers have been reallocated to cover vacancies in patrol staffing.

The Lieutenant supervised by the Deputy Chief of Operations oversees the Community Engagement/Special Operations unit, which consists of a Homeland Security Sergeant, a K-9 officer who works with a dog, and two Animal Control Officers responsible for responding to reports of dangerous animals and enforcing the City's animal ordinances. The team is also collectively responsible for managing licenses to sell alcohol, as well as enforcing fines in cases when an alarm at a business was triggered unnecessarily.

Finally, the COHR team consists of a Director, Co-Director, Jail Diversion Coordinator, Coordinator of Law Enforcement Partnership, and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Project Assistant. The team is responsible for providing behavioral health services and referrals to individuals who come into contact with the justice system. Team members do not respond to calls for service in the field, but help individuals involved in police interactions with support services.

The Deputy Chief for Support oversees two Captains: a Captain for Administration and a Captain for Criminal Investigation. The Captain for Administration oversees the following functions:
- The Traffic Bureau, which consists of a Lieutenant, Detail Supervisor Sergeant, Enforcement/Education/Hackney/Investigator, Hit and Run Investigator/Crossing Guard Supervisor, and five Crash Investigators, as well as approximately 51 part time Crossing Guards
- The Communications and Records Team, which includes a Lieutenant, fourteen 911/Dispatch Operators, and one full-time and one part-time Records Clerk
- A Lieutenant who serves as Academy Director and oversees departmental training
- A Senior Information Technology (IT) Specialist and an IT/Communications Specialist, responsible for supporting the Department's technology as well as for maintaining its social media pages
- An Administrative Assistant

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[5] Incarcerated people are held until they can be transported to the County Court for arraignment - generally overnight or over the weekend. The County holds incarcerated people for longer term.

The Captain for Investigation oversees the following functions:

- A General Investigations team consisting of a Lieutenant, a Sergeant, six General Detectives, a Fraud Investigator/Clerk, a Crime Scene Detective, and a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Liaison Detective
- A Family Services team consisting of a Sergeant, two Family Services Detectives, a Juvenile Detective, and a Victim-Witness Advocate, responsible for domestic violence and sexual violence investigation
- A Community Action Team (CAT) consisting of a Sergeant and three CAT Detectives responsible for investigating gang and narcotics issues, as well as other investigations as assigned
- A City Hall Liaison responsible for providing security services for the Mayor, acting as the Mayor's driver, coordinating security safeguards with other state and local agencies on behalf of the Mayor, providing security for City Hall personnel, and assisting the City's Inspectional Services Division investigate zoning and licensing violations
- A Superior and District Court team responsible for coordinating evidence and court appearances.
- A Senior Crime Analyst and Crime Analyst responsible for maintaining and analyzing crime data

Additionally, the Deputy Chief for Support directly oversees the Professional Standards and Accreditation team, the Compliance Sergeant, and the Director of Finance and Administration. The Professional Standards and Accreditation team consists of one Lieutenant and one Sergeant. They are responsible for internal investigations of complaints against officers and other allegations of misconduct, and for maintaining the Department's internal policies. Additionally, they are responsible for maintaining the Department's accreditation with the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC) by reapplying for reaccreditation every three years and ensuring that MPAC standards are continuously met. Finally, the team us responsible for compiling, maintaining, and transmitting data to the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission in order to comply with the mandatory certification of police officers.

The Compliance Sergeant is responsible for providing administrative support to the Chief of Police and Deputy Chief for Support. Specific duties include project management, serving as liaison to City payroll, maintaining vehicle records, and assisting the Professional Standards team with maintaining Department policies and procedures.

Finally, the Director of Finance & Administration oversees a team consisting of one Financial Analyst and one Payroll/Administrative Assistant. The team provides administrative support for the Department and supports the Chief in managing the Department's budget. Additionally, the Director oversees the Detail Supervisor, who, along with a Detail Administrator, is responsible for scheduling off-duty officers to provide safety support at construction sites that impact the public right-of-way.

STAFFING

The following table illustrates the history of staffing by Full Time Equivalent positions (FTE) for the Department for the last 10 fiscal years. Part-time positions are represented as 0.5 FTEs. Overall staffing decreased by 1.5 FTEs between FY2013 and FY2023, and the number of sworn staff decreased by 2.0 FTEs during this time. In comparison, the City's population increased by approximately 6% over the past 10 years.

It is important to note that authorized staffing does not reflect actual staffing levels. While there are 94 officer positions authorized, only 88 were funded in the FY2023 budget. As of January 2023, the Department reports that only 146 out of its 166 authorized positions are filled. The organizational chart included as Figure 1 reflects actual staffing allocations as of January 2023.

Table 2: Authorized Staffing Level by Position, FY2013-FY2023

Position	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	% Change
Animal Control												
Animal Control Officer	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0%
Animal Control Subtotal	*2.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*0%*
Other Sworn Staff												
Chief	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0%
Deputy Chief	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0%
Captain	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	-25%
Lieutenant	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	0%
Sergeant	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	17.0	17.0	19.0	19.0	18.0	19%
Officer	97.0	97.0	97.0	98.0	97.0	100.0	97.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	-3%
Sworn Subtotal	*131.0*	*131.0*	*131.0*	*132.0*	*131.0*	*134.0*	*132.0*	*129.0*	*130.0*	*130.0*	*129.0*	*-2%*
Dispatch												
911 Operator	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	0%
Dispatch Subtotal	*14.0*	*14.0*	*14.0*	*14.0*	*14.0*	*14.0*	*14.0*	*14.0*	*14.0*	*14.0*	*14.0*	*0%*
COHR												
COHR Director	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	100%
COHR Co-Director	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	100%
Coordinator of Law Enf. Partnership	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	100%
Jail Division Coordinator	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	100%
CIT Project Assistant	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	100%
COHR Subtotal	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*5.0*	*5.0*	*2.0*	*2.0*	*5.0*	*100%*
Other Non-Sworn Staff												
Director of Finance & Admin.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	N/A
Clerk	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	-50%
Crime Analyst	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0%
Detail Clerk	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0%
Financial Analyst	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0%

Position	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	% Change
Forensic Ident. Specialist	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-100%
IT Specialist	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	N/A
Mechanic	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-100%
Motor Equipment	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-100%
Payroll/ Admin. Assistant	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	N/A
Records Clerk	3.0	3.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	-50%
Substation Clerk	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0%
Victim/Witness Advocate	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	100%
Non-Sworn Subtotal	*16.0*	*16.0*	*15.5*	*14.5*	*15.5*	*13.5*	*13.5*	*13.5*	*13.5*	*14.5*	*14.5*	*-9%*
Total	163.0	163.0	162.5	162.5	164.5	165.5	166.5	163.5	161.5	162.5	165.5	-1%

BUDGET

The Department has a budget of approximately $19 million in FY2023, the vast majority of which is allocated for Personal Services such as salaries and benefits. This represents an increase of approximately $330,000, or 2%, from actual expenditures in FY2019. The largest increase is in Personal Services expenditures for Dispatch staff, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 3: Police Department Expenditures by Category, FY2019 – FY2023

| Category	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Actual	FY2022 Actual	FY2023 Budget	Percent Change FY2019 to FY2023
Animal Control						
Personal Services	$110,240	$124,151	$83,970	$117,503	$135,632	23%
Ordinary Maintenance	$10,128	$33,880	$8,732	$6,141	$15,100	49%
Animal Control Subtotal	*$120,368*	*$158,031*	*$92,702*	*$123,644*	*$150,732*	*25%*
Dispatch						
Personal Services	$815,325	$839,751	$952,046	$754,946	$1,297,215	59%
Dispatch Subtotal	*$815,325*	*$839,751*	*$952,046*	*$754,946*	*$1,297,215*	*59%*
Police						
Personal Services	$17,297,816	$14,931,200	$19,262,999	$14,937,561	$16,950,937	-2%
Ordinary Maintenance	$420,461	$447,666	$394,507	$263,370	$500,400	19%
Special Items	$52,442	$66,480	$53,212	$117,503	$135,632	159%
Police Subtotal	*$17,770,719*	*$15,445,346*	*$19,710,718*	*$15,318,434*	*$17,586,969*	*-1%*
Total	$18,706,412	$16,443,128	$20,755,466	$16,197,024	$19,034,916	2%

WORKLOAD

Calls for Service

The workload of police officers can generally be divided into three categories:

- Time spent on proactive tasks, such as community policing, patrol of a specific area, and engagement with residents and businesses
- Time spent on reactive tasks, such as responding to alarms, 911 calls, and other incidents
- Time spent on administrative tasks, such as writing reports

The following figure illustrates the number of unique proactive and reactive calls for service per year for the past five years. The number of both proactive and reactive calls has decreased somewhat since 2017, as illustrated below. The number of calls in 2022 is projected based on call patterns through August 31, 2022.
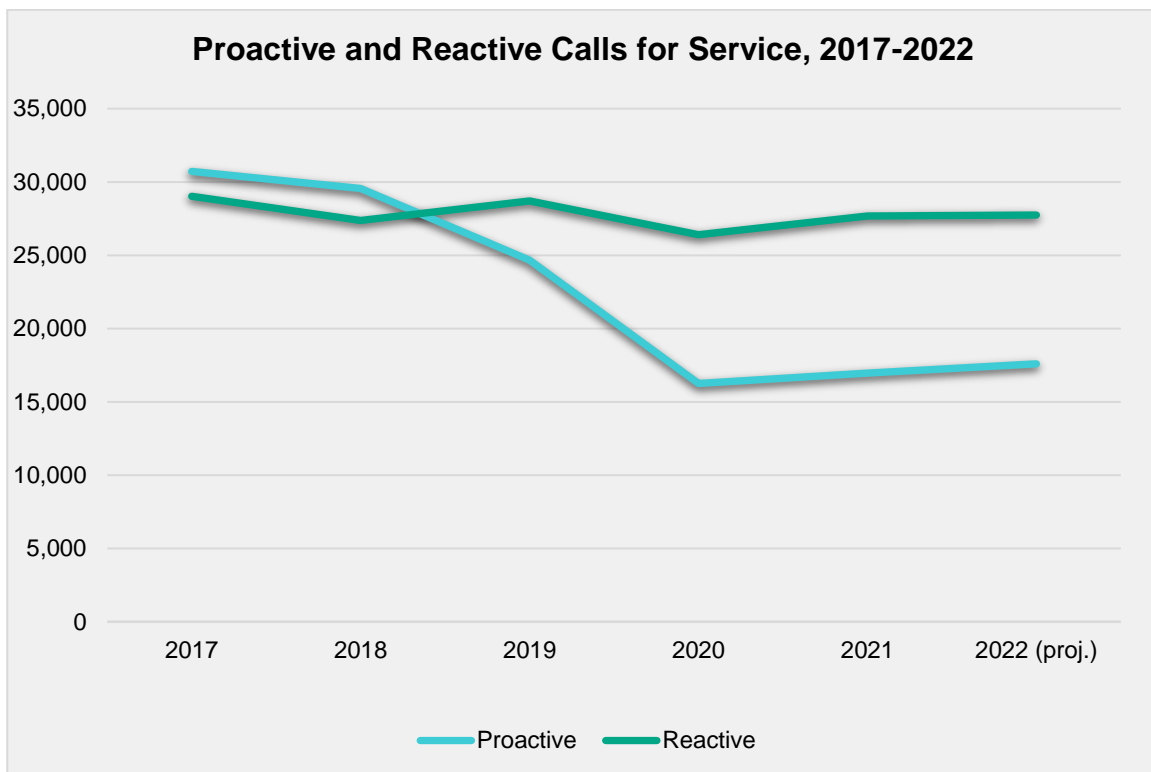
Figure 2: Number of Proactive and Reactive Calls for Service, 2017-2022

A number of different activities fall under proactive calls for service. One of the most common is directed patrols, when Patrol Officers are sent to provide extra police presence in high crime areas. This type of proactive policing has increased in Somerville in recent years, as shown in the following figure, while other proactive activities like engagements with schools and businesses have decreased.
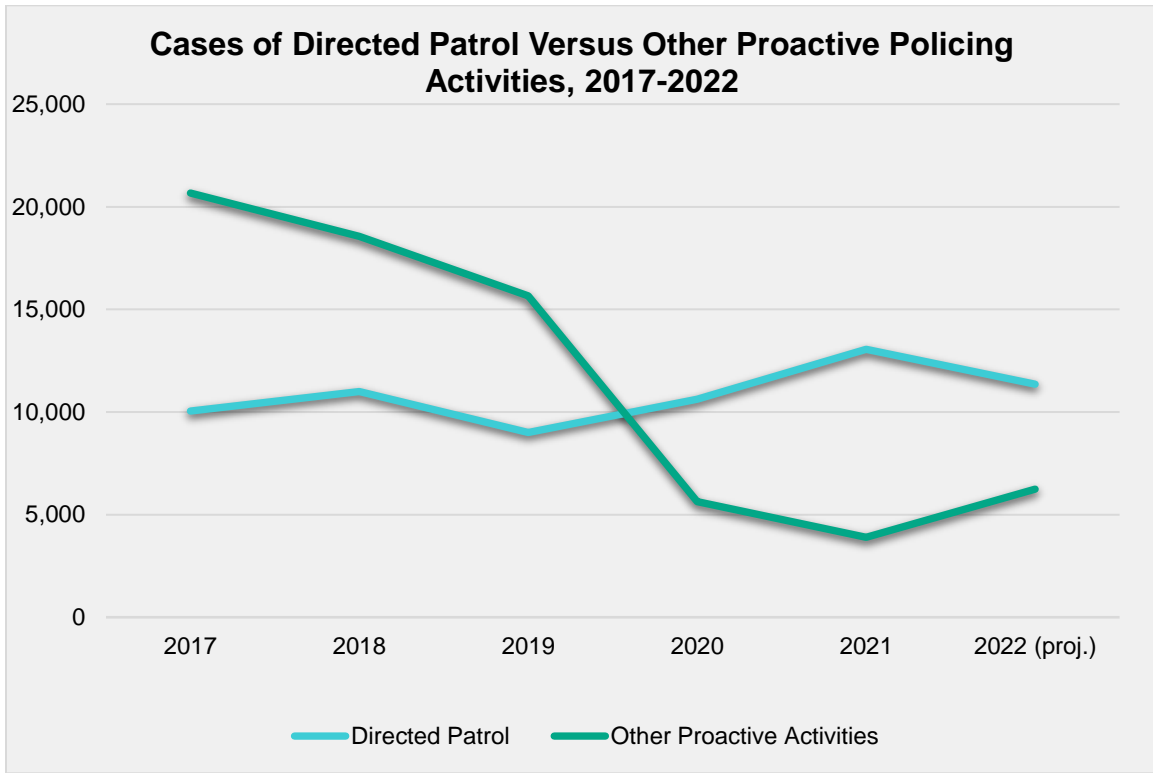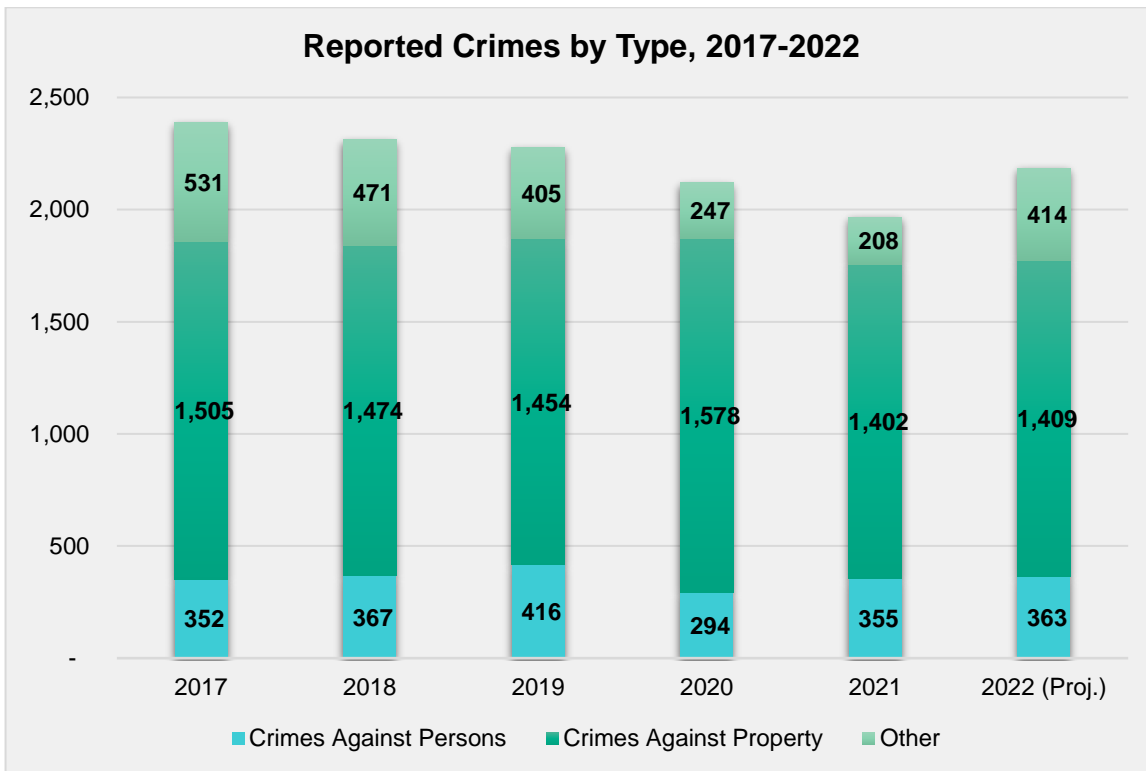
Figure 3: Number of Proactive Calls for Service by Type, 2017-2022

Investigations

The following figure illustrates the number of reported crimes that were considered for potential investigation by SPD between 2017 and 2022. Numbers for 2022 are projected based on trends through August 31. Cases are shown in three categories:

- Crimes Against Persons, which includes reported incidents of assault, rape, murder, or other physical harm to a person or person.
- Crimes Against Property, which includes reported incidents of burglary, robbery, fraud, shoplifting, or other theft or destruction of property.
- Other, which includes anything not falling into those two categories, such as narcotics, driving under the influence, prostitution, and trespassing.

Reported Crimes by Type, 2017-2022

Year	Crimes Against Persons	Crimes Against Property	Other
2017	352	1,505	531
2018	367	1,474	471
2019	416	1,454	405
2020	294	1,578	247
2021	355	1,402	208
2022 (Proj.)	363	1,409	414

■ Crimes Against Persons ■ Crimes Against Property ■ Other

Figure 4: Number of Crimes Considered for Investigation, 2017-2022

Case Resolution Rates

The following figure illustrates the percent of cases by type that have been resolved, either by arrest or through some other means, between 2017 and 2021. The percentages do not include still-active cases, or cases that were determined to fall outside of SPD's jurisdiction. Overall, the clearance rate has increased over the past five years, as illustrated below.

SPD Overall Clearance Rate, 2017-2021
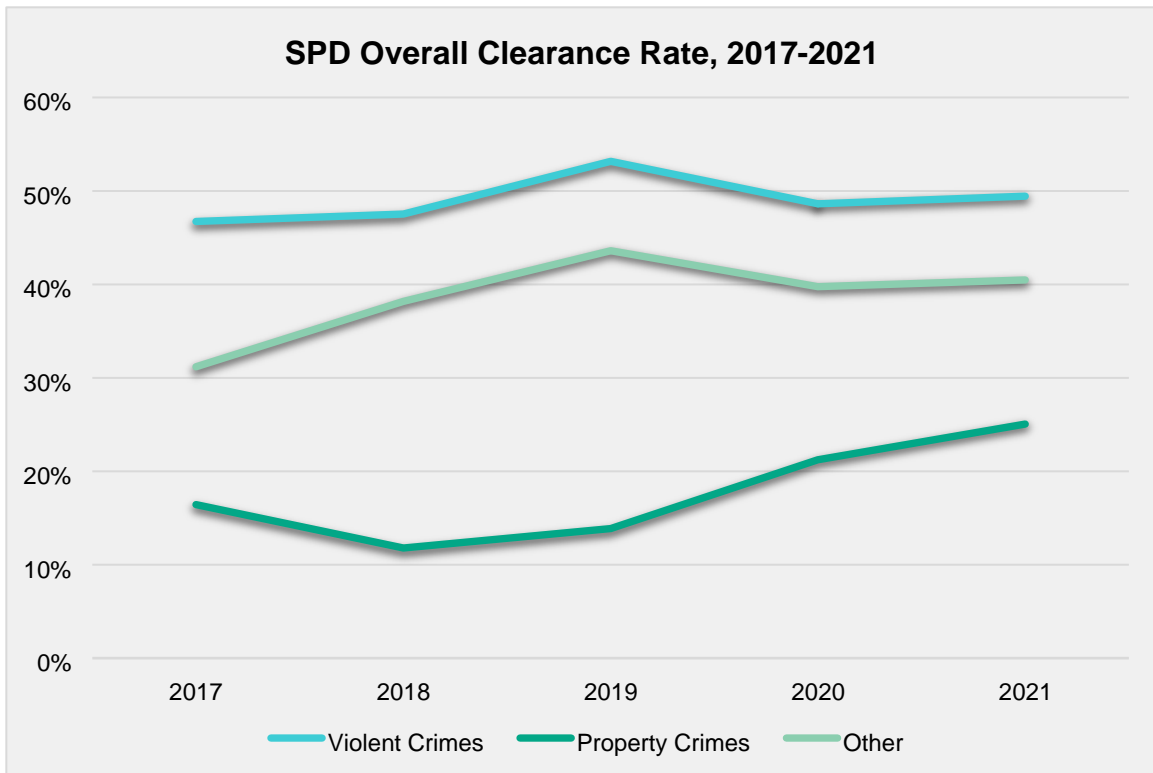
Figure 4: Clearance Rates by Type, 2017-2021

While the overall clearance rate has increased over the past five years, clearance rates for Part I violent crimes have remained relatively stable, while clearance rates for Part I property crimes have declined, as illustrated in the following figure. Part I was a designation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of serious crimes that occur regularly across the country.[6] Part I crimes include violent crimes (Aggravated Assault, Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter, Rape, and Robbery) as well as property crimes (Arson, Burglary, Larceny-Theft, and Motor Vehicle Theft).
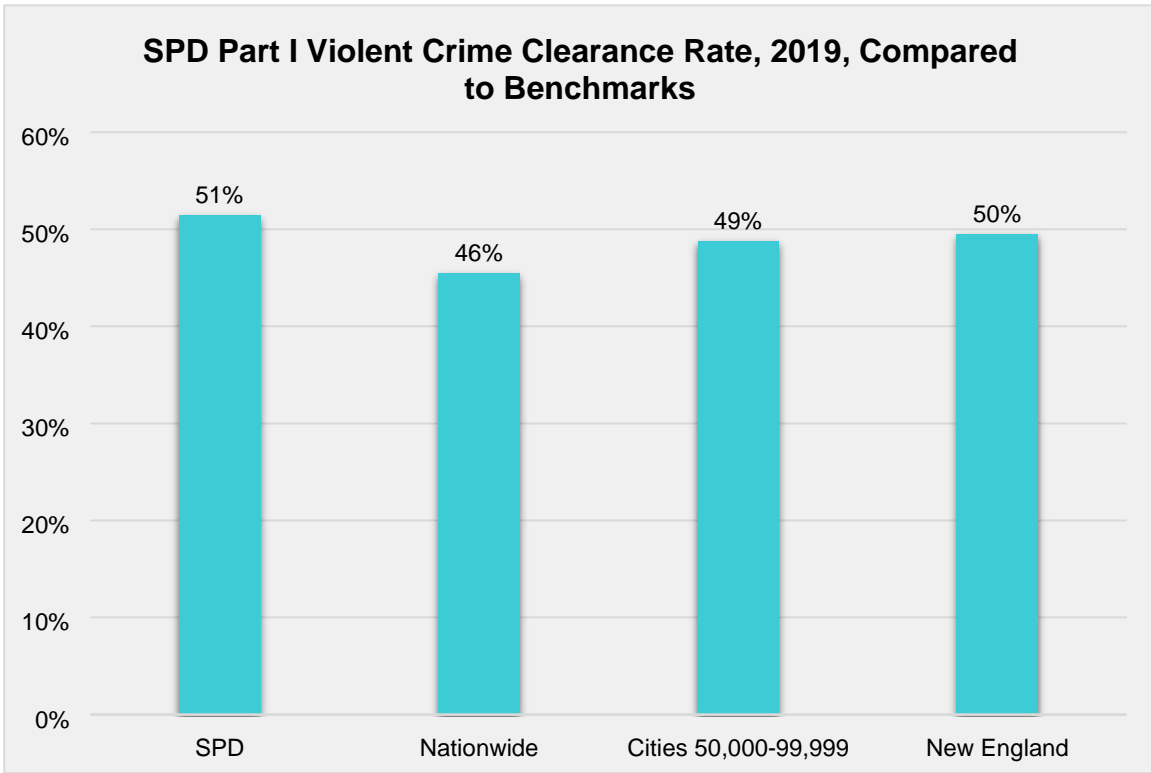
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[6] The Part I designation was defined in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting System. The system was retired in 2021, and agencies now report crimes to the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System. Crimes tracked remain the same.
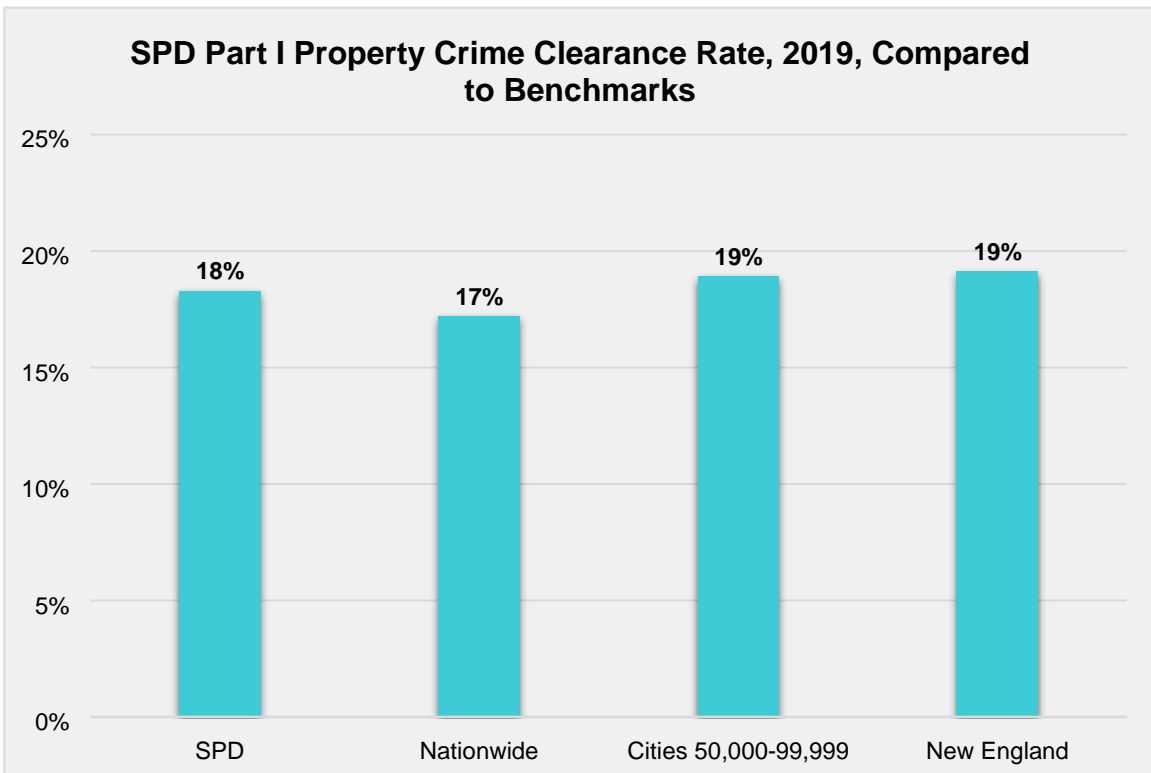
SPD Part I Crime Clearance Rate, 2017-2021
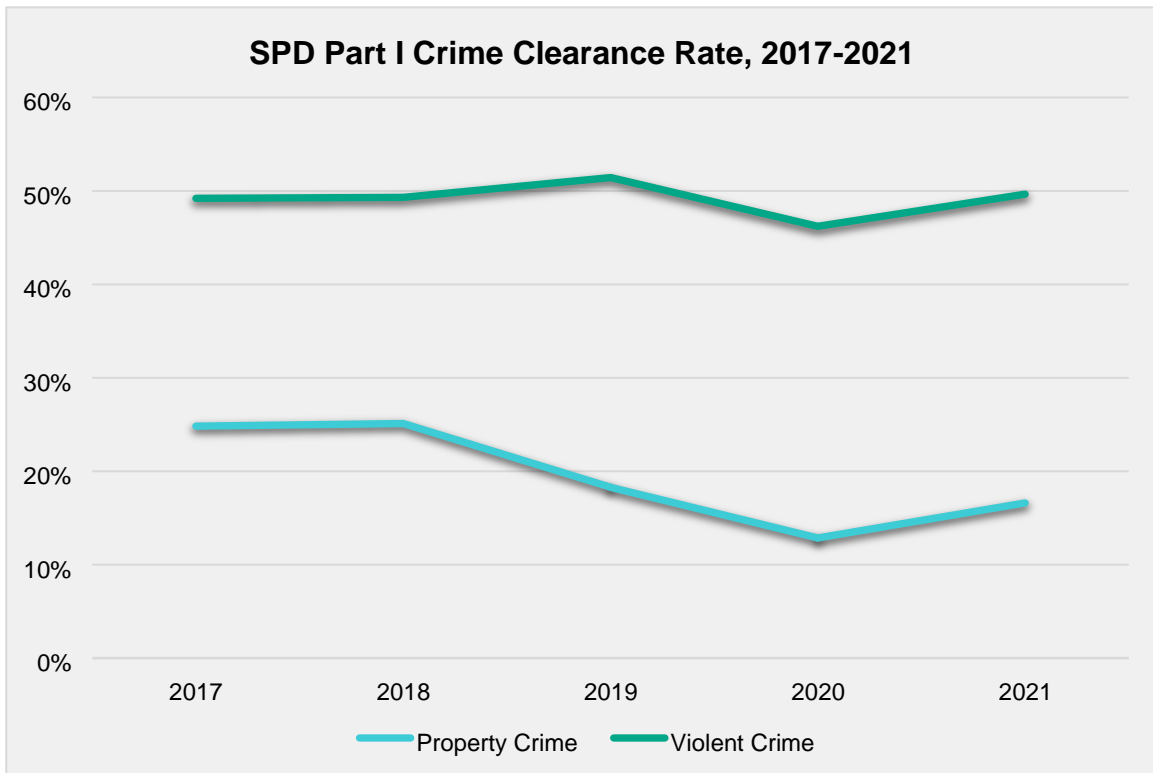
Figure 5: Part I Crime Clearance Rates by Type, 2017-2021

The following figures compare Part I clearance rates for SPD in 2019 to the national average, the average for cities with populations between 50,000 and 99,999, and the average for New England, as reported by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program.

Overall, SPD has somewhat higher clearance rates for Part I violent crimes than benchmarks, as shown in the first figure below. However, while the clearance rate for Part I property crimes was higher than the nationwide average, it was slightly lower than the average for both similarly sized cities and for New England, as illustrated in the second figure. The year 2019 is used because it is the most recent year available for benchmark data.

SPD Part I Violent Crime Clearance Rate, 2019, Compared to Benchmarks

Bar chart:
- SPD: 51%
- Nationwide: 46%
- Cities 50,000-99,999: 49%
- New England: 50%

Figure 6: Part I Violent Crime Clearance Rates Compared to Benchmarks, 2019

SPD Part I Property Crime Clearance Rate, 2019, Compared to Benchmarks

Bar chart:
- SPD: 18%
- Nationwide: 17%
- Cities 50,000-99,999: 19%
- New England: 19%

Figure 7: Part I Property Crime Clearance Rates Compared to Benchmarks, 2019

Analysis and Recommendations

The appropriate role of police in the community is an ongoing conversation in America, especially in the aftermath of incidents of police violence or misconduct. In recent years, the public actions of police have become more documented. The prevalence of recording devices like smartphones, smart watches, and dash cameras mean that virtually anyone at the scene of an incident can record what is going on. Additionally, an increasing number of police departments have adopted the use of body-worn cameras, the footage from which is generally made available to the public. These factors have contributed to the recording of a number of incidents of police violence against individuals.

These incidents have spurred a renewed national discussion about the appropriate role of law enforcement in the community, as well as a movement to help ensure that all individuals, regardless of race or ethnicity, are treated fairly by police. Most notably, the 2020 murder of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer incited calls for reform. After that murder, many activists called for communities to defund the police by transferring funds out of the department where possible, instead using the money to fund programs to help marginalized communities and address systemic causes of crime. Many communities reduced funding for police in the following years, although more recently that trend has reversed in many places due to rising concerns about crime and difficulties in recruitment and retention of officers.[7]

The impact of these events has been felt across the country, including in the City of Somerville. In 2020, members of the community organized several protests in response to the George Floyd murder.[8] A community group called "Defund Somerville Police" was also formed in 2020, with a mission "to build collective power around a vision of abolition, and harness that power to defund - and ultimately abolish - police and prisons."[9] The group maintains an active presence in the community and on social media. As of January 2023, the group has nearly 1,000 followers on Twitter.[10] There have also been pro-Police demonstrations in the City. In 2016, for example, some members of the Somerville Police Officers union lead a "Blue Lives Matter" demonstration to protest against a "Black Lives Matter" sign hung at City Hall.[11]

City leadership has also shown significant support for police reform. In June 2020, the then-Mayor declared systemic racism to be a public health and public safety emergency and called for reforms to the Police Department.[12] The City Council has also voted several times to divert funding from the Police Department to other areas. The Department's actual expenditures for FY2022 were approximately $4 million less than actual expenditures in FY2021, as illustrated

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[7] Goodman, David J. "A Year After 'Defund," Police departments Get their Money Back." *The New York Times*, Oct. 10, 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/10/10/us/dallas-police-defund.html.

[8] Falls, Clay. "Protesters Gather in Somerville for Police Reform." *KBTX*, Jun. 27, 2020, www.kbtx.com/2020/06/28/protesters-gather-in-somerville-for-police-reform/.

[9] "Defund Somerville Police Department." *Defund Somerville Police,* www.defundsomervillepd.org/.

[10] "Defund Somerville Police." *Twitter,* twitter.com/Defund_SPD.

[11] Marcelo, Philip. "Police Rally as Somerville Mayor Says Black Lives Matter Banner Stays." *WBUR*, Jul. 29, 2016, www.wbur.org/news/2016/07/29/police-rally-somerville.

[12] Cho, Diane, and Mary Markos. "Somerville Declares Systemic Racism a Public Safety, Health Emergency." *NBC 10 Boston*, 4 June 2020, www.nbcboston.com/racial-justice-protests/somerville-declares-systemic-racism-a-public-safetyhealth-emergency/2136969/.

in the "Budget" section of this report. Additionally, at least four of the Council members serving at the time of this analysis ran on platforms of reducing funding for police in the 2021 election.[13]

This political climate creates both challenges and opportunities. Public support for reform has made it easier for SPD to develop innovative programs like COHR, and to pursue and maintain accreditation. However, this sentiment has also had a significant effect on officer morale. During interviews, officers near-universally reported feeling demoralized, underappreciated, and unsupported by a significant portion of the public and their elected representatives. Morale issues can impact operations and public safety by increasing officer turnover, making it more difficult to hire qualified people, and increasing the perceived divide between SPD and the community that it serves.

The purpose of the recommendations in this report is to balance this appetite for reform with the need to maintain the essential day-to-day police functions required to support a basic level of public safety. The recommendations identify opportunities to better align SPD staffing with the community's goals, such as by civilianizing positions when feasible, as well as opportunities for SPD to continue to engage and partner with the community to identify and address shared challenges.

Patrol Staffing

A police department's patrol staffing is the backbone of department operations. Patrol officers serve as the face of the department; they are the officers who have the most direct contact with the public and they are the officers who respond first to calls for service. Their role is vital to maintaining public safety. At the same time, they are often the largest cost driver for a department. It is important that the function be staffed effectively to balance officer presence in the community and efficient and effective officer responses with the many other important priorities that an organization wishes to fund. It is also important that a police department's staffing and structure consider community concerns and priorities. This section details options for staffing SPD's patrol function that take all of these factors into account.

Recommendation 1: Establish a proactive policing target for Patrol Officers.

The goal in analyzing patrol staffing is to identify staffing levels and deployment practices that provide adequate coverage for response to calls for service while also enabling officers to engage in the level of proactive policing desired by the community – that is, to be proactive as well as responsive. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has established a general best practices guideline that calls for a Patrol Officer's time to be balanced equally between proactive policing, reactive policing, and administrative tasks. In other words, the best practices target is for an average of 33% of a Patrol Officer's time to be available for proactive policing.

Proactive policing allows an agency to strategically deploy personnel to focus on identified trends and high crime areas, supporting opportunities to prevent and reduce crime. Whether it is referred to as Community Policing, Problem Solving Policing, Data-Driven Policing, or by some other term, the goal is largely the same: to allow Patrol Officers to identify problem areas or conditions, develop and implement strategies to address those issues, establish relationships with members of the community and partner with them in developing long-term solutions, gather intelligence, and show police presence through interaction with residents and businesses as well as team-led enforcement initiatives.

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[13] "2021 Municipal Endorsements." *Our Revolution Somerville*,
https://sites.google.com/view/orsomerville/endorsementsand-elections/2021-municipal-endorsements?link_id=1&can_id=6a3d649a0162d90df34cabfb29f775a6&so.

SPD does not have a formally adopted proactive policing Service Level Target. The City should define a proactive policing Service Level Target and should make structure, deployment, and staffing decisions to align with this target.

It is important to note that while proactive policing is generally accepted as a best practice in the law enforcement community, some members of the Somerville community, as well as members of the City Council, have expressed reservations about proactive policing. Some have expressed concerns that more interaction between officers and the public could lead to more police violence, the escalation of incidents that could have been handled without law enforcement intervention, and more arrests for minor infractions. These worries are important but can be mitigated by establishing policies and training for Patrol Officers that align with the community's values, by maintaining a culture of accountability and transparency, and by building mutual relationships between Patrol Officers and the community they serve. Recommendation 11 further in this report also discusses the importance of defining the scope and priorities for proactive policing in Somerville based on public safety needs and community input.

Alternatively, the City does have the option of limiting proactive policing as much as possible and focusing on responding to reactive calls for service only. While this model would limit interactions between officers and the public, which is the goal of some members of the community, it also comes with significant drawbacks. If officers are only responding to reactive calls, this means that virtually the only interactions between police and residents would be during especially fraught moments. This has the potential to worsen police/community relations on both sides. There would also be limited opportunity for officers and the community to cultivate relationships and build shared trust. Police who only respond to reactive calls are missing the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the community they are serving, which could impact their ability to de-escalate issues or identify ongoing patterns of concern. Additionally, reducing proactive policing to the minimum could impact recruitment and retention. Officers who value developing a relationship with the community may leave the Department for other opportunities, meaning that the officers who are left are less likely to prioritize getting to know the community that they are serving. Finally, a low proactive policing Service Level Target would reduce the overall number of officers on patrol, which could mean that response times increase, and would also mean fewer officers available in the case of a serious incident.

The rest of this section analyzes SPD patrol staffing using the IACP's 33% proactive policing Service Level Target. However, if the City chooses to adopt a higher or lower proactive policing target, the recommended staffing levels may change.

Recommendation 2: Adjust the patrol staffing level to align with the proactive policing Service Level Target and community needs.

SPD employs 57 Patrol Officers, of whom nine serve as Desk Officers at the Police Station, leaving 48 officers who respond to calls for service. Officers work eight-hour shifts in a five day on, two day off rotation. Officers patrol by City Council wards, with one officer assigned to each ward. The officers' shift schedule is as follows:

- Day Shift: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm
- Evening Shift: 4:00 pm to 12:00 am
- Night Shift: 12:00 am to 8:00 am

The minimum staffing is seven Patrol Officers per shift for all three shifts, along with two Desk Officers. The project team analyzed whether this staffing level is the most appropriate use of resources, based on SPD call data, the 33% proactive Service Level Target, and policing best practices.

Staffing Requirements Under the Schedule at the Time of Analysis

SPD provided detailed Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) data to the project team, allowing for a thorough analysis of average call volume and response time by day of the week and by hour of the day. The year 2019 is used throughout

this analysis because it is the last year before the Department was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and by the murder of George Floyd. For this reason, 2019 is assumed to represent a more typical year for SPD than the years following. The use of 2019 data is also conservative: calls for service were higher in 2019 than in 2020, 2021, or 2022, as discussed in the Workload section earlier in this report.

The first thing that the project team analyzed was patterns in calls for service. The following graphic shows the average number of minutes Patrol Officers spent responding to calls for service by hour of the day for weekdays and weekends in 2019.
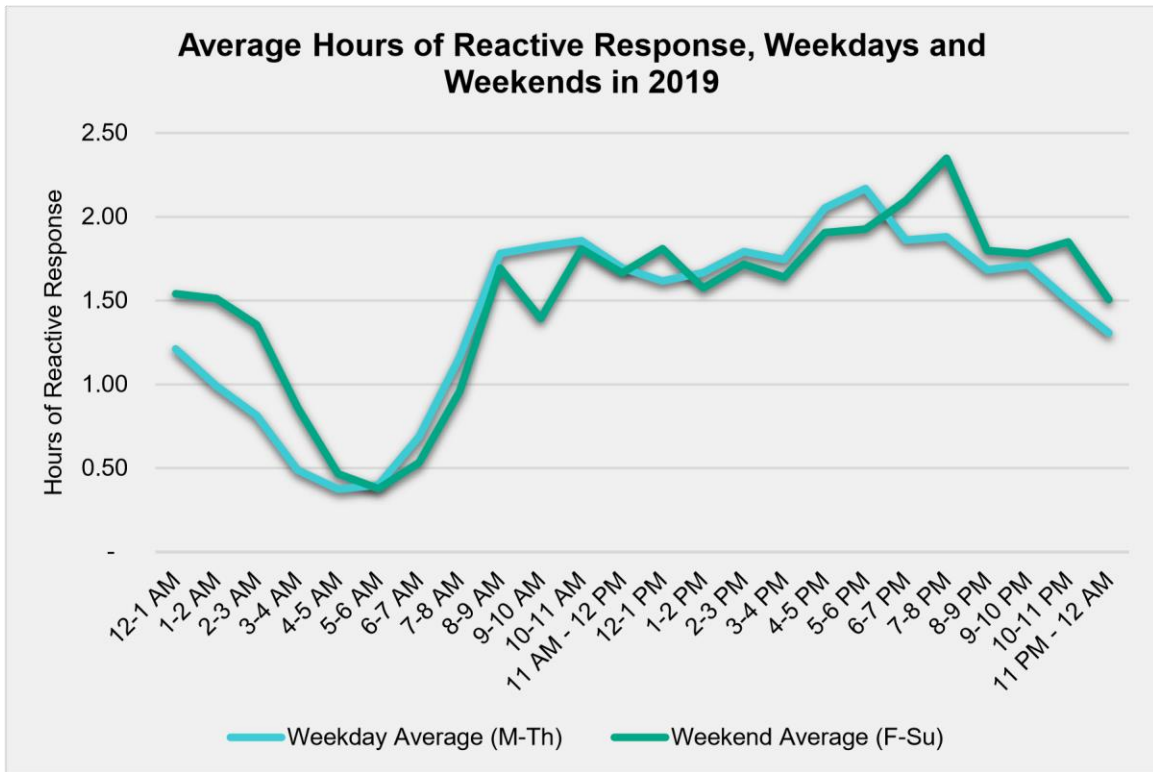
Figure 8: Average Minutes Between Call and Incident Close Time by Hour

The data indicates that patterns of response time are relatively similar on both weekends and weekdays, with slightly more time spent on late-night calls on weekends and slightly more time spent on rush hour calls on weekdays. In both cases, the busiest time is early evening, and the least busy time is in the early morning.

Based on this data, the project team calculated how many officers would have to be deployed at any given hour to meet the 33% proactive Service Level Target. To meet the target, each officer should be spending a maximum of one-third of their time, or 20 minutes per hour, on reactive response, leaving the other 40 minutes available for proactive and administrative work. For example, if officers spend an average of 60 minutes on reactive calls in a given hour, three officers must be on duty if the 33% Service Level Target is to be met, so that each officer can devote an average of 20 minutes toward reactive calls.

The following table summarizes the total number of officers that would be required at each hour of the day and each day of the week to meet the 33% Service Level Target.

Table 4: Staffing Required to Meet 33% Proactive Policing Service Level Target

Hour	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
12AM-1AM	1.7	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.5	2.0
1AM-2AM	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.7	1.8
2AM-3AM	1.2	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.9	1.4	1.7
3AM-4AM	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.8	1.0	0.8
4AM-5AM	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.6
5AM-6AM	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.5
6AM-7AM	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.6
7AM-8AM	0.9	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.0	0.8	1.0
8AM-9AM	2.0	1.9	1.4	1.8	1.6	1.4	2.0
9AM-10AM	1.5	1.5	2.4	1.9	1.6	1.7	0.9
10AM-11AM	2.0	1.7	1.7	2.0	2.0	2.2	1.3
11AM-12PM	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.6
12PM-1PM	1.5	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.6	2.0	1.9
1PM-2PM	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.4
2PM-3PM	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.4	1.9	1.8
3PM-4PM	1.5	1.8	2.0	1.6	1.9	1.5	1.4
4PM-5PM	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.3	2.5	1.7	1.5
5PM-6PM	2.2	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.8
6PM-7PM	1.9	1.8	2.1	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.0
7PM-8PM	1.8	1.9	2.1	1.7	2.7	2.4	2.0
8PM-9PM	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.8	2.0	1.6
9PM-10PM	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.9	1.9	1.5
10PM-11PM	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.6	2.1	1.8
11PM-12AM	1.6	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.2

The number of officers required to meet that 33% threshold can vary over time. For example, the average number of officers required to meet the 33% Service Level Target is twice as high on Sundays at 2:00 am than at 3:00 am. It would not be feasible for actual staffing levels to fluctuate so dramatically. The goal of this analysis is to determine the appropriate staffing and shift configuration to allow adequate response during periods of heavy workload while avoiding overstaffing during slower periods.

Based on the shift schedule at the time of this analysis, the Department could meet the 33% Service Level Target with a minimum of six officers on patrol during the Day and Evening shifts and a minimum of three officers on patrol during the Night shift. However, only three officers serving at night would seriously limit capacity to respond to a severe incident. The area is also dense, and three officers would likely not be able to cover the City sufficiently for timely response, especially during critical incidents. For these reasons, the project team recommends at least six officers on patrol at night, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 5: Shift Staffing Required to Meet the 33% Service Level Target

Shift	Shift Minimum Based on CAD Data	Recommended Shift Minimum
Day	6	6
Evening	6	6
Night	3	6

Recommended Staffing Levels Under the 33% Proactive Model

Analysis of CAD data can help inform the minimum staffing requirements for SPD, but it is also important to understand how this would translate to actual staffing needs. To understand the number of personnel required to consistently meet minimum staffing, it is necessary to calculate the staffing factor. A staffing factor is the number of FTEs that must be hired to fill each daily position, considering leave and training. Per the officers' collective bargaining agreement, the average SPD officer is entitled to approximately 88 hours of holiday time per year as of 2023. Additionally, between 2019 and 2021 police officers took an average of 117 hours of vacation and 116 hours off per year in other types of leave, spent 147 hours per year in training, and spent one hour per year in court. This means that on average, in any given year there are approximately 464 hours when an officer is unavailable for patrol, approximately 29% of an officer's total work schedule. In other words, an individual shift officer is available for an average of 1,622 hours of work per year. However, SPD must staff that shift position for eight hours a day, 365 days per year, or 2,920 hours in total. This means that to fill one shift position per year, the Department must have 1.80 FTE available to cover for leave.

Once the staffing factor is calculated, it can be used to analyze the total number of positions required to meet shift minimums while still allowing officers the flexibility to use their accrued leave. The following table shows the number of officers required to meet proposed minimums under the schedule at the time of this analysis.

Table 6: Daily Staffing Required to Meet Shift Minimums

Shift	Shift Minimum	Staffing Factor	Total Personnel Required
Day	6	1.80	11
Evening	6	1.80	11
Night	6	1.80	11
Total	18	N/A	33

Based on these assumptions, SPD would need approximately 33 Patrol Officers in total to staff all shifts. The table in Appendix B presents a sample schedule for what this staffing could look like over a seven-day period.

The project team also recommends allocating 10 additional positions to Patrol in order to minimize operational disruptions due to vacancies and turnover. This figure is intended to be conservative, in order to help ensure the Patrol function remains fully staffed even in periods of high vacancy.

Based on these assumptions, SPD should allocate 43 Patrol Officer positions in total, three fewer than there are now. Call data indicates that this staffing level would allow the Department to meet the 33% proactive Service Level Target at all times of day, even taking into account officer leave and vacancies. However, it is important to note the potential impacts of such a reduction. Potential impacts include:

- **Fewer Officers on Shift to Respond to Significant Incidents.** The fewer officers on a shift, the fewer available to respond quickly in the case of a serious incident. This is an important consideration, because it can affect

the safety of both officers and the public, as well as officers' perceptions of how safe they are when they go on patrol. However, it is also important to evaluate how frequently these events are occurring. Serious incidents in Somerville are relatively rare. For example, between 2017 and 2021, officers responded to only four homicides. They also responded to an average of four incidents of shots fired and ShotSpotter alerts per month. It is vital that officers be able to respond effectively to such incidents, but basing regular staffing levels on these relatively infrequent incidents is not the most effective use of staffing resources. It is important, however, if Somerville reduces its patrol staffing levels, to evaluate capacity to respond to these incidents. Mutual aid offers an option for supporting serious incidents, but in practice it is not used frequently.

- **Larger Geographic Areas to Patrol.** The fewer officers on shift, the larger the area they must each cover individually. This could impact their response time on calls, especially during heavy traffic periods like rush hour. For this reason, it is important for SPD to track its response time and regularly evaluate whether it is effective to meet Somerville's public safety needs.

- **Fewer Officers to Support City Events.** Large City events, like Summerstreets and Porch Fest, often require a significant Patrol Officer presence in order to ensure that the event is safe and orderly. Reducing the number of Patrol Officers reduces the capacity to support these events.

These considerations are important, and the City must weigh them when determining the appropriate allocation of its Police personnel. However, there are also opportunities to reallocate some Patrol positions to other functions which may ultimately be of greater value to the City. The next recommendation discusses these opportunities.

Recommendation 3: Evaluate options for reallocating officer positions.

Under the assumptions in Recommendation 2, SPD could reallocate three Patrol Officer positions to other areas, while retaining the capacity for proactive policing. Additionally, further in this report, Recommendation 7 advocates for reallocating four officers away from Desk Officer positions, and Recommendation 8 encourages the City to reallocate one officer away from the City Hall Liaison role. This means that there are as many as eight officer positions that could be assigned to other roles.

This report recommends reallocating one position to be a Property Crimes Detective, as described in the Investigations section further in this report. There are several options for reallocating the remaining positions, and the decision for the appropriate model should be made based on the City's priorities for its police force. This section evaluates the pros and cons of two possible models. These options should be evaluated based on the Mayor and Council's priorities, with strong consideration given to best practices in policing and public safety, as well as the opinions of the community. It is important to note that any reallocation would also require labor union negotiations.

Sworn Officers in Other Areas Model

A second model would be to reallocate these sworn officers to re-staff the Community Outreach and Affairs unit. As discussed in Recommendation 1, proactive interactions with the community should be the responsibility of every Patrol Officer. However, there are also benefits to a dedicated Community Outreach and Affairs unit. Community officers do not have to worry about responding to urgent calls, for the most part, allowing them to dedicate more time to establishing deeper relationships with the residential and business communities. These relationships can help SPD to better understand the community's priorities and to identify trends and risks early on so they can be addressed proactively to help prevent crime and further victimization. It is important, however, that a Community Outreach and Affairs unit align with community priorities and expectations for what "proactive policing" means in Somerville, as discussed in Recommendation 11 further in this report.

This model would allow SPD to increase its capacity to engage with the community. It would also be the easiest model to transition to logistically since no positions would have to be reclassified and individuals currently serving as Patrol Officers could transition into the new roles. However, the positions would still be sworn, and this

reallocation would not directly address community concerns about minimizing the number of armed officers responding to cases. Re-establishing the unit would also require the SPD to invest in training so that members of the unit were equipped with the skills and tools they need to interact with the community most effectively.

Non-Sworn Model

A second option would be to reallocate these positions as non-sworn, unarmed CSOs who could respond to certain low risk calls for service. This approach is discussed in greater detail in Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 4: Eliminate the ward-based patrol beat structure.

At the time of the analysis, SPD patrolled by City Council wards. There are seven wards, and one Patrol Officer was assigned to each ward for each shift. However, the division of wards does not align well with the division of reactive calls, as illustrated in the figure below.
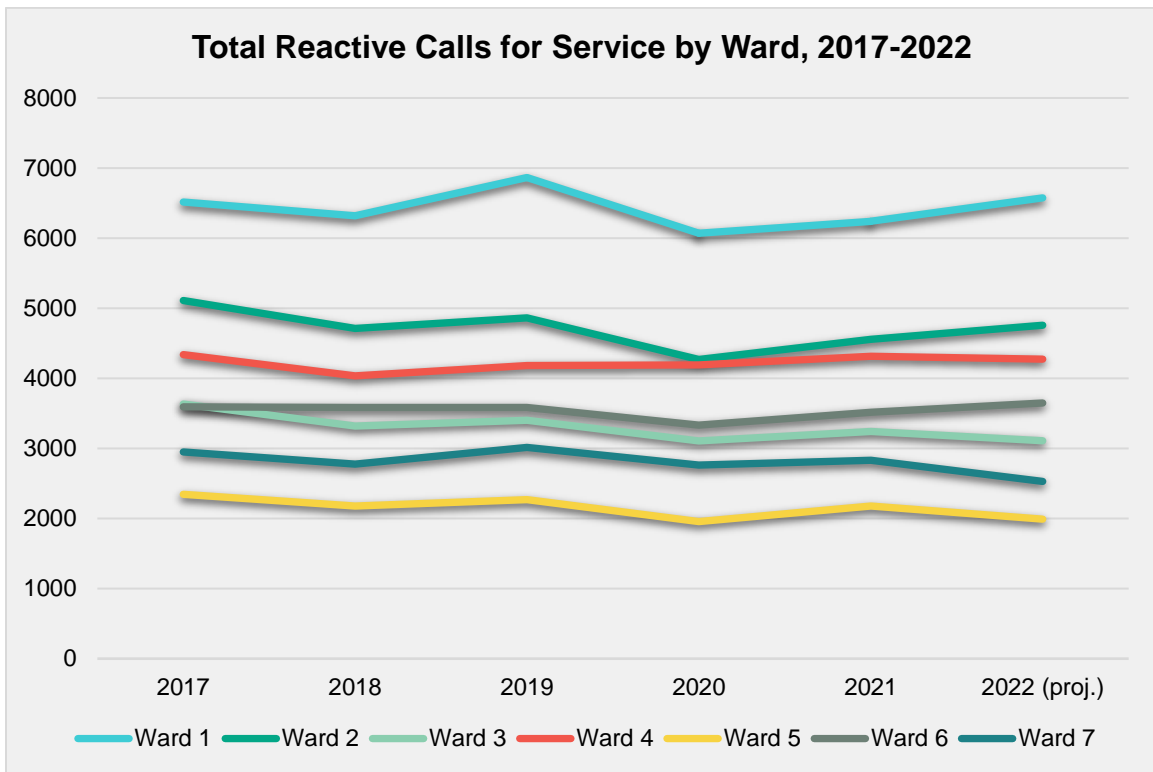

Figure 9: Reactive Calls for Service by Ward, 2017-2022[14]

Ward 1 includes Assembly Row, a large mixed-use complex that includes a transit center allowing the public to easily travel to the area from Boston. It has significantly more calls for service than any other ward, as illustrated above. Between 2017 and 2022, SPD fielded an average of 6,881 calls per year in Ward 1, nearly double the average per year for the other wards (3,638 calls per ward). Ward 5 had an average of only 2,266 reactive calls per year, more than 5,000 calls per year less than Ward 1.

The following figure illustrates the average daily Patrol Officer time spent on reactive calls per ward in 2019. An average of 7.9 hours per day were spent on reactive calls in Ward 1, compared to an average of 4.1 hours for the other wards.

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[14] 2022 data is projected based on trends as of August 31, 2022.
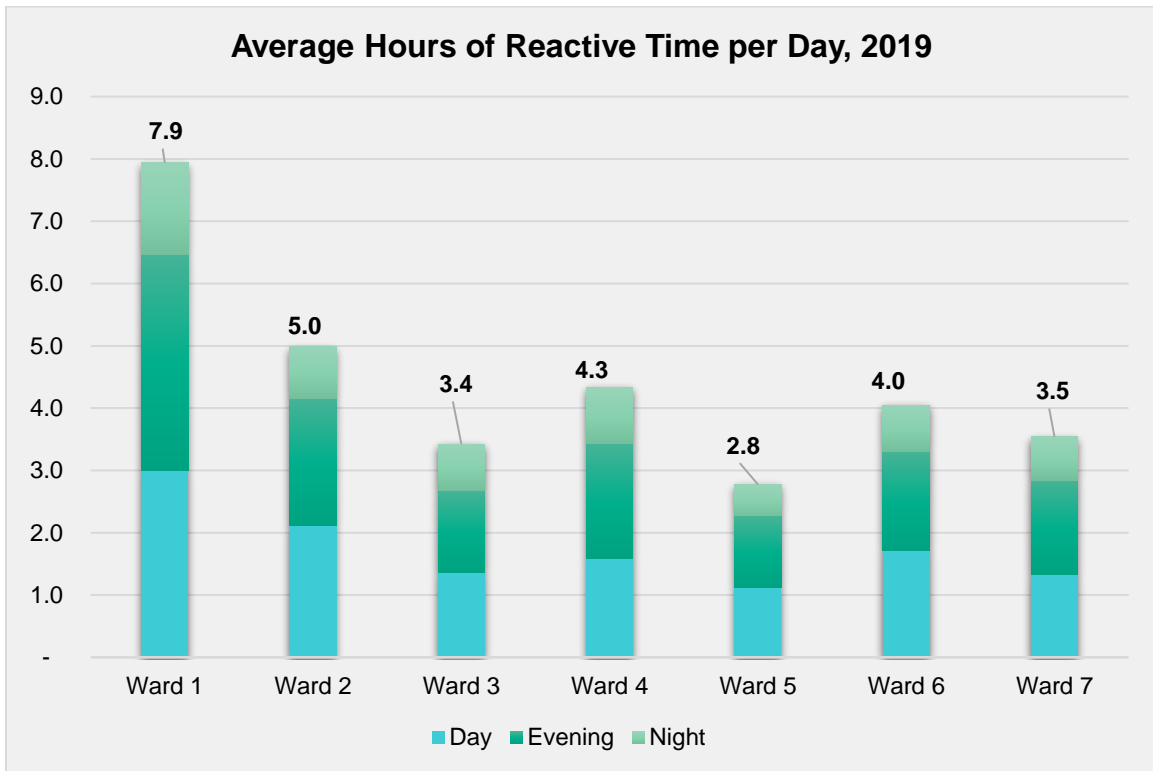
Figure 10: Average Daily Reactive Time by Shift and Ward, 2019

The data shows that Ward 1 generates, on average, twice as much reactive work as the other wards. This suggests that the system of allocating officers evenly by ward is not the most effective structure to match workload. Officer patrol areas should be allocated as equitably as possible to ensure that all areas of the City receive the appropriate level of protection compared to their level of activity.

The following table illustrates how many officers would be required to be assigned to each ward for each of the three shifts deployed at the time of this analysis to meet the 33% proactive threshold, based on 2019 workload data.

Table 7: Minimum Officers Required to Meet 33% Reactive Time per Shift

Ward	Day Shift	Evening Shift	Night Shift
Ward 1	1.1	1.3	0.6
Ward 2	0.8	0.8	0.3
Ward 3	0.5	0.5	0.3
Ward 4	0.6	0.7	0.3
Ward 5	0.4	0.4	0.2
Ward 6	0.6	0.6	0.3
Ward 7	0.5	0.6	0.3

The specific allocation of staff should depend on how the City decides to staff its Patrol function. Best practice is to develop entirely new patrol areas separate from the wards. Wards are political subdivisions, and, as illustrated in the

graphs above, have limited relation to workload. Alternatively, if the City chooses to maintain the ward system, it could combine wards with lower staffing needs into a single patrol area.

Recommendation 5: Consider establishing a non-sworn Community Services Officer program.

The previous recommendations analyzed the appropriate staffing levels and deployment of the patrol function. It is also appropriate to consider whether Somerville has an opportunity to incorporate additional use of non-sworn CSOs in responding to certain types of calls, such as low-risk calls involving mental health or substance use.

Numerous police departments across the country have launched successful unarmed response programs for low-risk cases involving substance use, mental health, and other issues. One of the longest running is the Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) program in the City of Eugene, Oregon. The program, which has been in place since 1989, dispatches one medic and one crisis worker, both unarmed, to mental health, addiction, and homelessness-related calls. The program responded to a total 16,479 calls for service in 2021, and generally responds to between 3-8% of calls per year.[15]

There are potential public safety advantages to creating a CSO unit. Some community members may be more comfortable reaching out for assistance if they know there will be an unarmed response, which means that there may be more opportunities for SPD to intervene in a situation before it becomes dangerous. SPD may also be able to connect more individuals with the support they need to manage mental health or substance issues.

The use of non-sworn officers does carry risk, however. Individuals in crisis, for example, may display unpredictable behavior, and it is possible that CSOs may be placed in unsafe situations. CSOs also have less flexibility in how they can be deployed than sworn officers. Sworn staff can respond to both sworn and non-sworn calls for service, but not vice versa.

The question of whether to establish a non-sworn CSO unit is a policy decision for elected officials and the SPD. If SPD does move forward with the creation of a CSO unit, it can build on the foundation of its COHR team. COHR has already created the infrastructure to assist people experiencing issues with mental health and substance use, among other challenges, although they do not respond in the field. A new CSO unit could interface with COHR to help ensure that community members in crisis get both short-term and ongoing support.

The project team analyzed the potential workload for these CSOs, if the City opts to establish a program. The team allocated reactive patrol calls into categories based on the likelihood of a sworn response being required. In some cases, sworn personnel are required to respond by state law, or because there is the potential for an arrest or for the situation to be dangerous. In other cases, sworn response may not be needed. Categories in which non-sworn CSOs could potentially respond in some cases include:

- Abandoned motor vehicle
- Bike, pedestrian, or auto accident
- Confused person
- Disable motor vehicle
- Home or car alarm going off
- Injured or sick person
- Intoxicated person
- Mental health concern

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[15] "CAHOOTS." *Eugene Police Department*, www.eugene-or.gov/4508/CAHOOTS.

- Traffic complaint
- Welfare check[16]

Between FY2017 and 2022 an average of approximately 12 officer hours per day were spent responding to calls for service that could potentially have been handled by CSOs, based on the categories listed above. The following table illustrates how this would translate to staffing needs, based on a 33% proactive target discussed in Recommendation 1, and based on the staffing factor discussed in Recommendation 2.

Table 8: CSO Staffing Required to Address Non-Sworn Workload Under a 33% Proactive Target

Shift	Average Daily Hours Spent on Non-Sworn Response	CSO Shift Minimum Based on 33% Target	With Staffing Factor
Day	6.1	2[17]	4
Evening	2.4	2[18]	4
Night	3.9	2	4

Based on these assumptions, the City would need 12 CSOs in total in order to respond to non-sworn cases. It is important to state that the addition of CSO positions should not translate to an automatic reduction in the number of sworn staff in the Department. CSOs cannot respond to certain calls for service, as previously discussed, so reducing the number of patrol officers would impact SPD's capacity to respond to a crisis. Additionally, reducing the number of sworn patrol officers would likely increase response time. The faster officers are on the scene, the quicker they can offer assistance. Somerville already faces response time challenges because of the heavy traffic in the City, and reducing the number of patrol officers on shift would further compound this issue.

The following table illustrates the potential impacts of patrol staff reduction on staff time, assuming that response time would increase proportional to staffing decreases.

Table 9: CSO Staffing Required to Address Non-Sworn Workload Under a 33% Proactive Target

Patrol Officers on Shift	Projected Average Response Time (minutes)
Six officers on duty for all shifts	11.5
Five officers on duty for all shifts	13.8
Four officers on duty for all shifts	17.2

For these reasons it is not appropriate to reduce patrol staffing to create a CSO program, although the Department may be able to reallocate some positions, as discussed in Recommendation 3, as well as the upcoming Civilianization section of this report.

If the City opts to develop a CSO program, a key element will be to determine the service level that CSOs will provide. The CAHOOTS program, for example, is full-service, coordinating medical and social services for the

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[16] It is important to note that staff report that the "Check Condition" code in the CAD system is, as of the time of this analysis, being used for a wide variety of incidents, including cases involving fights, sexual assaults, and domestic violence that should be responded to by a sworn officer.

[17] There are three CSO needed under the 33% target, but it is assumed that COHR team members working day shifts could assist with some of the proactive duties.

[18] There is one needed under the 33% target, but the number is increased to two for safety reasons, so that CSOs could respond in pairs.

individuals whom the program supports. Other programs offer less comprehensive support. The level of support provided helps determine the resources that the CSO program needs, as well as the skills that CSOs are required to possess. It is important for SPD to engage with hospitals, nonprofits, and other service providers in the region to understand how a CSO program could fit most effectively in the landscape of care.

The establishment of a CSO program would also create the need for additional capacity in the Dispatch office. The 911 Dispatchers are the first point of contact for many calls for service, and if a CSO program were implemented, it would be up to the Dispatchers to gather appropriate information about a situation in order to make an informed decision about whether to deploy sworn or non-sworn personnel. This means additional staffing capacity would likely be required, as these information-gathering calls may take longer than they do currently. Dispatchers would also require extensive training to ensure they have the skills to triage calls appropriately. A position with mental health and crisis response expertise should also be created within the Dispatch office to monitor calls, provide quality assurance, and ongoing training.

The implementation of a full-scale CSO program would be an investment, but there would likely be opportunities for grant funding that could cover a significant portion of the costs. For example, the City of Denver's Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program, which is similar to the CAHOOTS model, is funded equally by the City and by the nonprofit Caring for Denver.[19]

It is recommended that SPD establish a pilot CSO program, either by creating new positions or reclassifying existing positions, such as those described in Recommendation 3, as well as in the Civilianization section further in the report. The pilot should start with one or two teams of CSOs during the Day shift. These CSOs should initially respond to potential non-sworn calls along with a sworn officer until the Department gains greater understanding of the types of scenarios into which CSOs should be deployed. Simultaneously, Dispatchers should be trained in best practices for how to route calls. After at least six months to one year of this pilot, the SPD can determine whether to move forward with establishing a more extensive CSO program. This time period will also give the City time to estimate what the total costs of full implementation would be, and to seek out potential funding partners. After the program has been established, SPD should track metrics for both the CSO and Patrol functions and use them to inform any future staffing changes.

It is important to note that there are many models for providing this CSO service in a community. For example, the CAHOOTS program was established to serve only the City of Eugene, but it has since expanded to the neighboring community of Springfield.[20] This regional model not only helps both communities take advantage of economy of scale but helps promote a culture of safety and mental health support across a larger area. Other communities have opted for a co-response model, where clinicians respond to cases alongside sworn officers. For example, the City of Providence, Rhode Island, has established a Law Enforcement Behavioral Health Response Program, in which an officer and a qualified mental health professional are dispatched to cases involving behavioral health or substance use. In 2020, these teams responded to more than 12,000 calls, 15% of all dispatches, and diverted 95% of individuals from arrest to treatment.[21] The implementation of the pilot program described above is an opportunity to evaluate different approaches and determine what is most appropriate for the City of Somerville.

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[19] "Adopted Budget 2021." *City of Denver*, https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/finance/documents/budget/2021-budget-v1_2_3.pdf.

[20] "CAHOOTS." *White Bird Clinic,* https://whitebirdclinic.org/cahoots/.

[21] "Providence Law Enforcement Behavioral Health Response Program." *United States Department of Justice*, September 29, 2022, https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/awards/15pbja-22-gg-02987-ment.

Investigations

Recommendation 6: Convert one Patrol Officer position to Property Crimes Detective.

When a crime is reported to or discovered by SPD, the Department makes the determination whether to investigate the crime or not, based on the availability of evidence, seriousness of the incident, and availability of resources. The patterns of which cases are assigned have shifted significantly in recent years, as illustrated in the figure below. The percent of crime against person cases assigned to investigators has increased from a low of 45% in 2019 to a high of 77% as of August 31, 2022. Conversely, the percent of crime against property cases has decreased from a high of 61% in 2019 to a low of 34% in 2022.
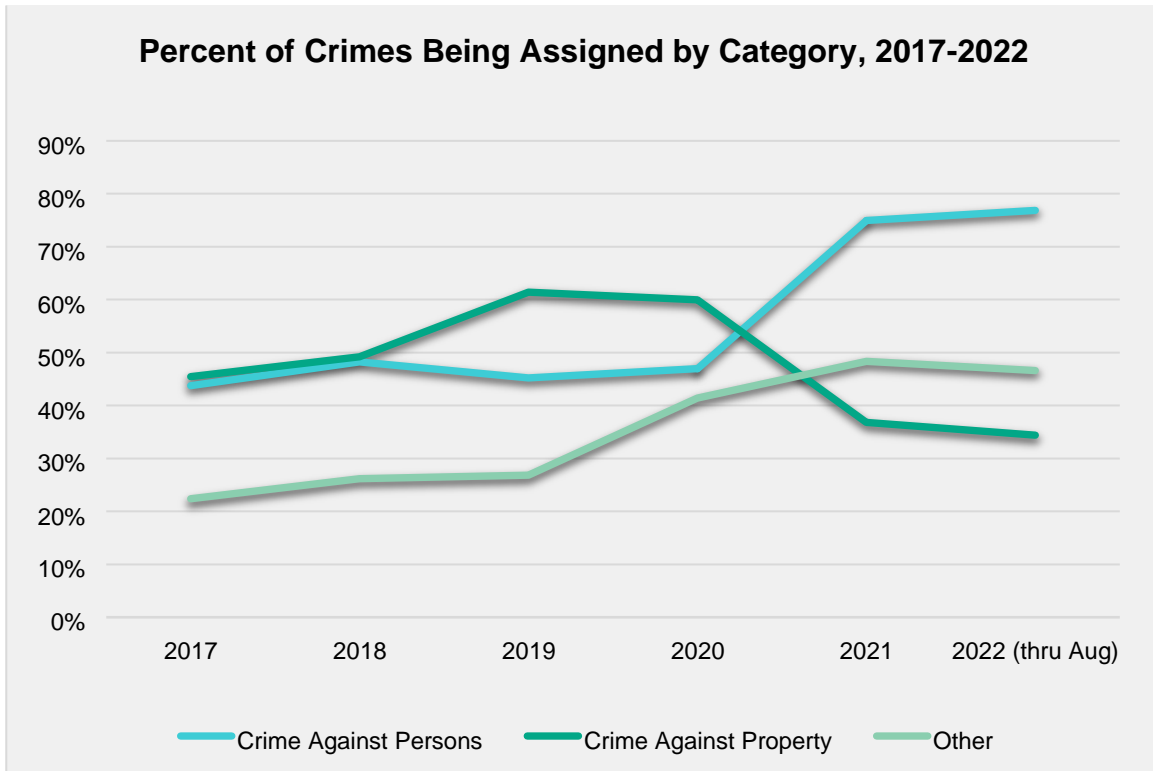

Figure 11: Percent of Cases Referred for Investigation, 2017-2022[22]

These figures suggest that SPD has shifted its resources to focus more extensively on crimes against persons. Focusing adequate resources on the investigation of violent crimes is important because they have the greatest impact on the public's physical safety. However, property crimes can also have a significant impact on quality of life. Resolving more property crimes could also help proactively address public safety issues by bringing a perpetrator with escalating offenses to justice before they commit violence. Additionally, the way a police department handles property crimes can have a significant impact on its relationship with the public. Property crimes are much more common than violent crimes, meaning that, in many cases, one of a person's only experiences interacting with the police is when they have been a victim of a property crime. The department's ability to resolve that one crime can impact the victim's perception of the department's efficacy overall.

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[22] Note: cases that are not referred for investigation included cases when no investigation was needed, for example, when the perpetrator was detained at the scene.

For these reasons, it is recommended that SPD devote additional resources to investigating property crimes. Reassigning one of the Patrol Officer positions to be a Property Crimes Detective will ensure that there is dedicated capacity to investigate these cases. This will help stop the decline in the number of property crime cases that are assigned and increase the number of property crime cases that are resolved.

The project team's analysis suggests that investigative capacity is adequate in other areas of the Department. Case closure rates are similar to national standards, as described in the Workload section above, and staff did not express significant workload concerns in interviews. The Family Services team also appears to be staffed adequately, based on interviews and data analysis. Between 2016 and 2022, the team had a 32% case closure rate for sex assaults and sex crimes. In comparison, the Federal Bureau of investigation reports that only 21% of rape cases were cleared in 2021. However, it is important to carefully track investigation and clearance rates by type to ensure that all investigative functions remain adequately staffed to effectively meet the community's needs.

Civilianization

Recommendation 7: Replace four Desk Officer positions with clerical staff.

As of the time of this analysis, two Desk Officers are on duty at the Somerville Police Station 24 hours a day. Their purpose is to help any member of the public who calls or visits the Station for assistance. They also monitor the jail when there are incarcerated people, conduct suicide checks, and provide the incarcerated people food and other essentials. They also may assist the Commander in charge in booking arrestees, preparing paperwork related to arrested, inventorying prisoner property, and transporting prisoners.

It is important for at least one sworn position to be in the Station at all times to assist with any security situations that may arise. However, many of the duties of the Desk Officer positions, such as answering phones and assisting the public with questions, could be carried out by non-sworn clerical personnel. Reassigning these duties to clerical staff would help ensure that sworn officers' time is directly focused on public safety and crime prevention, rather than administrative and customer service tasks. Additionally, the planned body camera program will likely require SPD to increase its clerical capacity. For these reasons, the Department should add four clerical positions, and reallocate four of the nine Desk Officer positions to another function, such as the options discussed in Recommendation 3. This change would require union negotiation.

The four new clerical personnel should be responsible for assisting members of the public calling or visiting the building, as well as providing clerical support for Department functions like scheduling details, managing records, and managing the planned body camera program. The positions should staff the desk during day and evening hours. During the night, when fewer calls come in, the desk should be filled by a single Desk Officer, along with the Watch Commander on duty.

Recommendation 8: Consider reallocating the officer serving as City Hall Liaison.

As of the time of this analysis, one officer is assigned as City Hall Liaison. The position's primary responsibilities are to provide security for the Mayor, as well as to serve as the Mayor's driver when they are on official business. The position also assists with security in the local school district, as well as other policing duties.

While it is important for the Police Department to have a close relationship with the Mayor's Office and City Hall, this relationship should primarily be fostered at the management level. Additionally, in a relatively small community like Somerville, the highest and best use of a police officer position is to safeguard the public at large, rather than focusing on security for a specific individual who generally does not face the same potential security threat as a public official in a large city.

It is appropriate for the Mayor to have security, but the City should consider contracting for separate security services through City Hall, rather than the Police Department. A separate City Hall security detail reporting directly to the Mayor would allow the Mayor more direct control over the level and type of security that best fits their needs. The sworn position could then be reallocated to a more direct public safety role addressing community safety priorities. It should be noted, however, that the City Hall Liaison coordinates with other law enforcement agencies on travel and security measures for the Mayor, and a private security service may not be able to coordinate as effectively.

Recommendation 9: Consider civilianizing the Crossing Guard Supervisor/Safety Officer position.

As of this time of this analysis, one sworn officer serves as Crossing Guard Supervisor/Safety Officer. The officer is responsible for investigating hit-and-runs as well as for overseeing the safety of pedestrians, especially students as they go to and come from school. As part of that role, the position supervises approximately 51 part-time Crossing Guards.

The Crossing Guards are not sworn positions, which is appropriate. They are not responsible for enforcement, but instead are there as a protective measure to make sure drivers are aware of pedestrians to help maximize pedestrian safety. The same is true of the Crossing Guard Supervisor/Safety Officer. The position is responsible for pedestrian safety, not traffic law enforcement. For that reason, the position does not need to be sworn.

SPD should consider reclassifying the Safety Officer to Safety Manager or a similar title indicating that the position is non-sworn. Duties should remain the same, although certain criminal investigation duties related to hit-and-runs may be reallocated to sworn personnel.

Engagement and Transparency

Recommendation 10: Regularly engage the community both formally and informally.

SPD is to be commended for its historic commitment to community policing, which dedicates officers to engaging with the public and developing relationships. As of March 2023, SPD is in the process of working with the Department of Racial and Social Justice (RSJ) to gather broad community feedback through a survey and focus groups. RSJ has also partnered with the Department on a number of other engagement initiatives, such as Coffee with the Chief events, community safety meetings, webinars, and partnerships with community groups. The Department also regularly conducts informal police walk and talk events in all wards. However, historically the Department has not had a regular practice of engaging with the community in any formal way to understand their public safety priorities and opinions on policing.

A Police Department's strategies for protecting public safety should rely on crime reports and policing best practices, but it is also vital that it reflects the opinions and priorities of the community that it serves. Community priorities should help inform important decisions like how to best allocate resources, when to deploy sworn versus non-sworn staff, and how to partner with other organizations to address crime and public health trends.

Patrol and Community Outreach and Affairs Officers can gather some community feedback as part of their regular interaction with the public, but this should be supplemented with formal strategies for gathering community input. A formal structure for gathering input helps ensure that the Department is taking into account all diverse voices in the community, rather than just those who are interacting with officers on a day-to-day basis. It also helps to ensure that the Department is gathering feedback on a comprehensive range of issues. Finally, a formal structure helps ensure that communication within the Department is consistent, and that staff in all areas are aware of community feedback.

For these reasons, it is recommended that SPD develop a formal plan for communication and engagement with the public. The plan should include specific events and actions that will occur throughout the year, such as community summits, online surveys, or meetings with specific community groups. The goal of this plan should be to gather feedback from as broad a cross-section of the community as possible, both by removing barriers to participation as much as possible and by specifically targeting groups who may be less likely to engage with the Department using traditional methods.

Some members of the public may want to engage with the Department, but may be limited due to their work schedule, their lack of transportation to attend a community meeting, or other factors. Others may not be reached with traditional methods of engagement. For example, if the Department reaches out to the public for feedback via social media and in the community newspaper, they are only reaching the narrow group of people who follow the Department on social media and/or subscribe to the newspaper.

For these reasons, it is important that the plan be intentional about removing barriers to participation and in reaching as many members of the community as possible. Elected officials should encourage their constituencies to participate in the process, especially among communities that may be less likely to engage with SPD otherwise. Additionally, the IACP recommends a number of strategies to achieve these goals, including:[23]

- Offering sessions in different languages and formats
- Rotating meetings at different times, days, and locations
- Offering both virtual and in-person options
- Coming to where the people are (e.g., attending community events)
- Being intentional about soliciting information from diverse communities
- Partnering with community organizations

The plan should also define what topics should be covered in these engagements. The IACP recommends the following topics be part of the engagement plan: [24]

- General listening to understand how communities can best be served
- Discussion of residents' safety concerns
- Overview of new or proposed new policies
- Information and discussion on high-profile community incidents, such as crimes, protests, or controversial events
- Discussion of new or proposed technology, such as body-worn cameras
- Feedback on how people view their interactions with the Department, including both sworn and non-sworn personnel

These engagements should also be an opportunity to understand community priorities for what the Department should be focusing on, and what strategies it should be using to address systemic challenges.

Recommendation 11: Define "proactive policing" based on community priorities.

The Patrol Staffing section of this report discussed the importance of setting a Service Level Target for the amount of time that SPD should be devoting to proactive policing. Whatever target the SPD eventually settles on, proactive policing will probably always be a part of SPD operations. There will likely always be times when the officers on

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[23] "Community Engagement and Dialogue." *IACP,*
www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/243806_IACP_CommPol_CED_1.pdf.
[24] *Ibid.*

duty are not occupied by responding to a call or filling out paperwork, and instead engage in proactive police work. For that reason, even if proactive work is minimal, it is appropriate to consider what that work should entail.

Proactive policing can encompass a wide variety of behaviors, from patrolling a neighborhood by car or on foot to meeting with local community groups to visiting local businesses to understand their security concerns. Proactive policing has also been a source of controversy in Somerville, with some community members, activists, and Council members expressing concerns that it could lead to a higher risk of negative interactions between the police and the public. For these, it is important for SPD to define the scope of proactive policing to ensure that this officer time aligns with the community's goals, as well as public safety best practices.

This definition must be created in close collaboration with the community. It is important to recognize the wide variety of backgrounds and experiences of Somerville residents, and that priorities for proactive policing may vary from place to place depending on the residents' needs. For example, residents and business owners in high crime areas may welcome a visible police presence, while in other areas, the community may prefer less regular contact with officers. Due to these circumstances, it is important to engage in an extensive engagement process, as described in Recommendation 10, to ensure that these diverse voices are heard. It is also vital that the process of engagement be continuous, and that SPD regularly review its proactive policing priorities based on community feedback.

In order to define the parameters surrounding proactive policing, SPD must answer two basic questions:
- What kind of proactive policing does the community want us to do?
- What kind of proactive policing does the community not want us to do?

While it is important to understand what kind of police services the community wants, it is equally important to define what is outside the parameters of proactive policing, depending on community feedback and policing best practices. After the parameters of proactive policing are defined, they should be communicated extensively both internally and externally, and all officers should be trained in what these parameters mean for their day-to-day operation. Adhering to these parameters should also be part of officers' performance expectations, with specific, defined, and enforced consequences for not aligning with the community priorities.

The City of Greenville, South Carolina, provides one example of what the final result of this analysis could be like. Its Community Problem-Oriented Policing Plan prioritizes extensive community engagement, rigorous analysis, and creative problem-solving in its police force. The Plan sets specific goals for all positions across the organization to advance these priorities, including a goal that 40% of patrol officers' time be spent on reactive work.[25] Another example is the City of Vernon Hills, Illinois' Engagement Strategies Improvement Plan. The Plan introduces a spectrum of prioritization, from Protection of Life, which requires a high level of responses, to Rules and Public Peace, which has significant more capacity for creative thinking, and for flexibility not to respond if it would not be in the best interests of the community.[26]

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[25] "Community Problem-Oriented Policing Plan." *City of Greenville*, 2017, https://www.greenvillesc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7581/2017-CPOP-GPD?bidId=.
[26] "PD Engagement Strategies Improvement Plan." *City of Vernon Hills*, https://www.scribd.com/document/556163935/Vernon-Hills-PD-Engagement-Strategies-Improvement-Plan-ESIP#.

Recommendation 12: Engage with the community to develop a policy on the use of body-worn cameras by SPD.

In March of 2021, the City of Somerville reached an agreement with the Somerville Police Employees Association to implement body-worn cameras for officers.[27] The City Council has not yet moved forward with implementation as of January 2023. In interviews conducted as part of this project, SPD staff supported the move, believing that it would help protect them from false complaints. However, some members of the community oppose the project. One member of the Defund SPD organization, for example, published an opinion piece arguing against the use of cameras. The article makes the case that the focus of police reform should be on making systemic changes, and that "body cameras allow politicians to get credit for 'police reform' without implementing any real changes to reduce police violence."[28]

There is evidence that body-worn cameras can have a significant impact on accountability and transparency. Footage from body cameras has helped bring to light a number of high-profile incidents of police violence in recent years and has helped clarify how officers responded in chaotic situations like protests and active shootings. Randomized studies in large police departments also show an impact. For example, a 2017 study of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department found that body cameras were associated with a 25% reduction in use of force complaints.[29] Additionally, a 2018 study of the New York Police Department found that body cameras were correlated with an approximately 20% decrease in the number of complaints against officers as well as a 16% decrease in the number of traffic stops that resulted in an arrest.[30]

However, there are risks and challenges associated with body cameras as well. One concern is privacy. Officers' interactions with the public often take place on private property, and the cameras can often record individuals in their most vulnerable moments. Additionally, the cameras represent a significant cost, both to purchase and maintain the cameras and to accurately maintain the tremendous amount of data that they produce.

The studies on the impact of body cameras show that they can be effective, but these costs and risks must also be carefully managed. Before the cameras are implemented, SPD should develop and adopt a comprehensive policy dictating how the cameras will be used, how the data from the cameras will be managed, retained, and disposed of, as well as how members of the public can access the data. The policy should be consistent with any statewide regulations adopted based on the Law Enforcement Body Camera Task Force recommendations published in August 2022.[31] Additionally, because the cameras are a tool for transparency, and because their use involves recording members of the public as well as court personnel and officials, it is also vital that a robust public engagement process be undertaken, and that this policy be shaped by community input. The engagement should be varied, including opportunities for individuals to submit comments online, listening sessions open to the public, and direct engagement with community groups.

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[27] "City of Somerville and Police Union Reach Agreement to Deploy Patrol Officer Body Cameras." *City of Somerville*, March 23, 2021, https://www.somervillema.gov/policebodycameras.

[28] Laucharoen, Shira. "Opinion: The Case Against Body Cameras for Somerville Police." *Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism*, June 8, 2021, https://binjonline.com/2021/06/08/opinion-the-case-against-body-cameras-for-somervillepolice/.

[29] Braga, Anthony, et. al. "The Benefits of Body-Worn Cameras. New Findings from a Randomized Controlled Trial at the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department." *National Criminal Justice Reference Service*, December 2017, www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/251416.pdf

[30] Kessler, Benjamin. "New Study Finds NYPD Body Cameras Decrease Citizen Complaints and Arrests." *George Mason University*, November 29, 2021, www.gmu.edu/news/2021-11/new-study-finds-nypd-body-cameras-decrease-citizencomplaints-and-arrests.

[31] "Law Enforcement Body Camera Task Force." *State of Massachusetts*, www.mass.gov/law-enforcement-body-cameratask-force.

Other best practices for a body-worn camera policy, per the American Bar Association's Coalition on Racial and Ethnic Justice, include:[32]

- Publishing the body camera policy, as well as the process for developing the policy, where it can be viewed by the public
- Specifying when and under what conditions officers should record, as well as what they may and may not record
- Implementing privacy protections, including:
  - Requiring officers provide notice to the public that they are being recorded, when feasible
  - Specifying when and how individuals can opt-out of being recorded
  - Limiting the disclosure of footage of certain individuals, such as minors and those in a mental health crisis
  - Not using face recognition, voice recognition, or other biometric technologies in conjunction with the cameras
- Ensuring that footage can be accessed in a timely manner upon request
- Barring unauthorized disclosure or use of footage
- Prohibiting law enforcement from viewing footage before preparing their initial reports
- Designating civilian agencies or boards (such as the Civilian Review Board discussed in Recommendation 15 further in this report) as responsible for retaining and controlling access to footage
- Specifying the length of time when recordings are retained
- Specifying adequate training for all individuals involved, including officers, defense counsel, prosecutors, court personnel, and administrative staff
- Detailing specific, meaningful consequences for non-compliance with the policy, as well as processes for monitoring compliance

It is important to note that body-worn cameras are a collective bargaining issue, and although the union has agreed to them in principle, specific aspects of the propped body-worn camera policy may require negotiation. However, it is important to first develop a proposed policy based on community priorities and best practices before entering into the negotiation process.

As part of developing the policy, the City should also consider what resources will be required to enact the policy, such as additional funding for data storage, additional administrative support, and additional funding for training, and ensure that these resources are in place before the program is implemented. The clerical positions discussed in Recommendation 7 are one resource to help provide additional administrative support and data management.

The body camera program will also require significant attention after the policy has been adopted and the cameras have been implemented. Careful data management and the practice of data transparency are vital to the effectiveness of a body camera program. As referenced in the op-ed by the Defund the Police member, body cameras alone are a surface-level change, and if they are not part of a larger commitment to transparency and accountability, their effectiveness is limited. If body camera footage is recorded, but it is made difficult for the public to access, it cannot effectively serve as a tool for transparency and accountability. The case of the Washington D.C. Police Department may be evidence of this. Between 2015 and 2017, the City of Washington D.C. conducted a randomized trial of the impact of body cameras, similar to the studies conducted in Las Vegas and New York. Unlike in those cases, the

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[32] "Principles on Law Enforcement Body-Worn Camera Policies." *American Bar Association*, www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2021/08/annual-meeting-resolutions/604.pdf.

Washington D.C. study found virtually no impact from the cameras.[33] However, during the same period many members of the public lodged complaints that they were unable to access footage from those cameras, even after making Freedom of Information Act requests.[34] If officers in the DC Police knew that it was unlikely footage from their cameras would ever come to light, the cameras may not have been effective at changing their behavior.

Professional Development and Accountability

Recommendation 13: Enhance performance monitoring in the 911/Dispatch function.

SPD employs 14 Dispatch Operators who are responsible for fielding all 911 calls in the City, as well as calls to 617-625-1212, an alternative emergency police line that is a carryover from before 911 was in place, and to 617-625-1600, a non-emergency help line. The Operators are responsible for dispatching Police as necessary, as well as routing any calls requiring a Fire Department response to Fire Operators in the Fire Department.

Until recently, all Dispatch Operators were supervised by the Captain overseeing Administration, along with informal supervision from the Watch Commander on duty. However, in 2022, SPD assigned a specific Administrative Lieutenant/Communications Manager to supervise the Dispatchers. The Department is to be commended for this reorganization. Due to their wide range of responsibilities, the Captain and Watch Commander may have been limited in their ability to provide close supervision of Dispatch operations. The assignment of a specific supervisor allows for the in-depth, deliberate, and focused oversight needed to manage and direct Dispatch Operators as effectively as possible.

One important role for this newly created Administrative Lieutenant/Communications Manager position should be to implement a robust performance management program for the Dispatch function, including tracking the performance of individual Dispatchers and the performance of the unit overall. While no concerns have been raised about the Dispatch Operators' efficacy and reliability, there are no specific metrics tracked to verify that the function meets performance expectations. For example, there is no random sampling of 911 calls that may help identify opportunities to enhance Dispatch Operators' customer interaction skills or identify gaps in their knowledge base. Additionally, there are no metrics tracked surrounding the time it takes to answer a call. This is a concern because it is essential that calls are answered quickly in emergencies, and without monitoring this metric, SPD cannot track whether calls are answered in a timely manner. Again, there is no evidence of performance issues, but the lack of metrics creates the risk that any issues will either not be discovered or will not be addressed proactively, potentially impacting public safety, and creating liability for the City.

SPD can address these issues by establishing key performance standards for the Dispatch function and tracking metrics that gauge how effectively the function, as well as individual Dispatch Operators, are able to meet those standards. The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) has identified a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) that are best practices for emergency communications centers to track. Mission-critical KPIs identified by APCO include:[35]

- The percentage of 911 calls answered within X seconds ("X" to be determined by the organization based on its resources and priorities)

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[33] Yokum, David, Anita Ravishankar, and Alexander Coppock. "Evaluating the Effects of Police Body-Worn Cameras." *The Lab at DC*, October 20, 2017, bwc.thelab.dc.gov/TheLabDC_MPD_BWC_Working_Paper_10.20.17.pdf.

[34] "Body Cameras Meant to Improve Accountability, but D.C. Police Won't Release Images, Panelists Say." *Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press*, September 30, 2015, www.rcfp.org/body-cameras-meant-improve-accountability-dcpolice-wont-release-ima/.

[35] "Public Safety Communications Center Key Performance Indicators." *APCO*, 2020, www.apcointl.org/~documents/standard/11171-2019-kpi-comm-centert.

- The percentage of non-911 calls answered within X seconds
- The percentage of calls dispatched within X seconds
- The percentage of calls for service with accurate location data
- The percentage of calls reviewed for performance
- The percentage of calls reviewed that meet compliance standards

SPD should define specific performance standards in each of these areas, along with any other relevant areas based on Somerville's priorities. The Administrative Lieutenant/Communications Manager should then define protocols for how compliance on these performance standards will be tracked, and regularly track and report results to both Dispatch Operators and Management. This data can be used to manage the performance of individual Dispatch Operators as well as to guide operational decisions and the allocation of resources.

The establishment of specific performance expectations is also an opportunity to review the Dispatch Operators' role and to ensure pay equity across departments. Fire Alarm Operators in the Fire Department have very similar responsibilities to Dispatch Operators but are paid significantly different wages. In FY2025 the base salary for Fire Alarm Operators is $78,903 per year, according to City budget records. In contrast, 911 Operators have base salaries of between $65,665 and $69,694 in FY2023, a difference of approximately $8,000 to $13,000 per year. There is also no room for advancement for SPD Dispatch Operators, but there are Senior Fire Alarm positions in the Fire Department with salaries of approximately $10,000 more per year. The City should address this disparity by carefully reviewing the scope of responsibility for both positions and either revising the pay scale to eliminate the disparity or clearly articulating the difference in the two positions that warrants the higher pay for Fire Operators.

Finally, in the longer term, the Department should consider replacing the sworn Administrative Lieutenant/Communications Manager with a non-sworn 911 Manager position. This would require union negotiations but would have several benefits. If the position was non-sworn, a former 911 Dispatcher could be hired. A former Dispatcher would have a deep understanding of the day-to-day operations of the unit, which a sworn Lieutenant may lack. Additionally, the structure limits professional development opportunities for Dispatch Operators. As of the time of this analysis, all 14 Dispatch Operators are at the same level in the organization. They have virtually no ability to advance into a position with higher responsibility at SPD because they are non-sworn positions, while their immediate supervisors are sworn. This lack of mobility has the potential to affect employee morale as well as recruitment and retention. Lack of mobility also limits employees' incentive to continue to develop their skills over time, ultimately potentially making them less effective in their role.

Recommendation 14: Revise the bid system to create more flexibility for assigning staff.

The majority of sworn assignments in the Department are chosen by the sworn staff themselves, per union agreement. Each year, officers, sergeants, and lieutenants bid on the positions they are interested in, with higher-seniority individuals getting priority for assignment. Most positions are assigned based on this methodology, although the Chief of Police does have the prerogative to assign staff to certain positions, known as "Chief's Picks." In 2022, per Personnel Orders 2022-01 and 2022-02, Chief's Picks included a Traffic Safety Officer, a Family Services Detective, a Family Services Sergeant, a Community Action Team Sergeant, a Compliance Sergeant, a Professional Standards/Accreditation Sergeant, a Professional Standards/Accreditation Lieutenant, and a Special Operations Lieutenant.

The bid system has the advantage of rewarding seniority, helping incentivize employees to remain with SPD. However, the system also has drawbacks. Because more senior officers have the first pick of roles, they can choose the more "desirable" roles, as judged by them and their colleagues, meaning that newer officers have limited options for where they can serve. In interviews, several officers complained of a perception that they are stuck where they

are, without significant options for lateral moves. This can impact morale and has the risk of increasing turnover by causing officers to look for roles elsewhere where they would be exposed to more variety and upward mobility. Additionally, lack of lateral mobility limits opportunities for officers to learn new skills that would enhance their value to the Department.

Another concern with this system is that assignments are based on seniority and an individual officer's desires more than skills and qualifications, although Detective candidates must be approved by a Specialist Board appointed by the Chief before their bids are accepted. This issue is partially addressed with the use of the Chief's Picks, as the Chief's Pick positions tend to be those requiring a specific sensitivity. It is important, for example, that officers assigned to Family Services be particularly skilled at handling complex, emotionally fraught situations, which is why it is appropriate that a Family Services Detective and Sergeant are among the Chief's Picks. However, there are other positions which also require specific skills in order to be filled successfully. For example, there is a Juvenile/Family Services Officer position which requires similar sensitivities as the Family Services positions, but it is selected based on the bid system and Specialist Board approval process. Although the Specialist Board system helps ensure that officers in these roles can meet the positions' requirements, they only review the qualifications of officers who have put in for the role, meaning that individuals in these roles are partially determined by seniority and officer desire.

SPD should address these issues by revising the bid system to allow for more lateral movements and more flexibility to align jobs with skills. The system should include built-in limits for how long a single individual can serve in a specific position (or classification of position, such as generalist Detective) before they must rotate to another assignment. This will allow for greater opportunity for others to take those spots and expand the breadth of their experience as well as add to the collective skillset of the organization.

Making these changes will require negotiation of the labor agreements for both officers and Sergeants but will help ensure that all officers have an opportunity to develop a robust set of skills and maximize the effectiveness of the Department overall.

Recommendation 15: Continue the process of establishing a Civilian Review Board.

As of the time of this analysis, responsibility for overseeing the Police Department falls to the Mayor and City Council, with the Mayor responsible for directly supervising the Chief. However, in recent years there have been discussions of changing that structure to involve more direct oversight from members of the community.

City leadership has also expressed support for the creation of a Civilian Review Board: in 2020 the Mayor and Council both pledged to establish an "independent civilian oversight structure" of SPD.[36] (It should be noted that the Mayor and some Council Members in office at the time of this analysis were not yet serving at this time.) Since then, the City has conducted outreach and analysis to determine options for what this structure may look like, with no concrete next steps yet established. A Civilian Review Task Force consisting of subject matter experts and members of the community was convened in the spring of 2023 to develop recommendations on the eventual Review Board's scope and priorities.

There are a number of benefits to establishing a level of resident oversight of a police department. One common complaint about police departments is that they are a "black box," with all disciplinary matters handled internally. The result is that it can appear to outsiders that there is limited accountability for police who behave improperly. A civilian board allows outsiders to have a window into that process to help verify that disciplinary procedures are fair and comprehensive. This not only helps ensure that officers are being held appropriately accountable for their actions but promotes community trust in police by enhancing transparency.

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[36] "Establishing Civilian Oversight of Police." *City of Somerville*, www.somervillema.gov/civilianoversight.

A civilian board can also be an effective tool for engagement with the public. With a sitting board, the police department has an opportunity to educate a group of engaged community members on police operations, priorities, and accomplishments. The members of the board can then serve as unofficial ambassadors, passing on this information to other members of the community. Additionally, these board members can help convey the community's views to the police department, helping the department stay engaged with the community's priorities.

For these reasons, and because of demonstrated public support, the City should move forward with the establishment of a Civilian Review Board. However, it is important to note that the establishment of the Board is not without risk. It is likely that the decision will be unpopular with some officers who feel that they would be subject to undue scrutiny. This impact on morale could increase attrition. Additionally, some community members have strong views on policing, and a civilian board has the potential to be dominated by those with the loudest voices, which may impact its effectiveness. One strategy to mitigate these risks would be to establish the Board as an advisory body only, without any specific decision-making abilities. This may help assuage potential concerns from officers and allow the City to gauge the effectiveness of the structure. After this body has been established, the City can evaluate the potential for allowing the body to have other responsibilities, or decision-making authority. The City should also consider the appropriate scope of the body. It is important to determine what issues the body will weigh in on, and what level of information they will be provided. Some boards, for example, focus narrowly on disciplinary issues, while others review police operations more broadly.

Another strategy for mitigating these risks is to ensure that the body's members represent the diverse opinions of the City. The membership should include geographic diversity, with representatives from each ward or patrol area. It should also include racial and ethnic diversity, with intentional representation from historically under-represented groups. The City should also consider appointing members from certain groups with significant interaction with police. For example, potential members could include individuals who live in public housing or Tufts University students.

Recommendation 16: Be intentional about cultivating diversity at the command level.

The Department has been working to increase diversity; between 2023 and 2023 four of eight promotions to supervisory rank went to individuals who are either women or officers of color. However, as of May 2022, all members of the SPD command staff appear to be white males, based on the project team's observation. This raises a number of potential concerns including:

- **Limited Diversity of Experience.** While the members of the command staff may have a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and opinions, their narrow demographics means that they are not able to directly embody the perspectives of women, racial or ethnic minorities, or other marginalized groups. This could have unintended impacts on the decisions made.
- **Impact on Internal Perceptions.** The lack of diversity on the command team may have an adverse impact on the perceptions of existing officers or of potential candidates for officer or leadership positions. It may create the perception, for example, that anyone who is not a white man is less likely to advance in their career at SPD. It also may create concerns among female and non-white officers of potential bias.
- **Impact on External Perceptions.** Many in the Somerville community have expressed concerns about the potential for racial bias among SPD officers, and a lack of diversity in public-facing SPD positions could help reinforce these concerns.

For these reasons, it is important for SPD to be intentional about cultivating a command staff that resembles the Somerville community as closely as possible. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) offers the following recommendations for cultivating a diverse police force:[37]

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[37] "Advancing Diversity in Law Enforcement." *EEOC*, www.eeoc.gov/advancing-diversity-law-enforcement.

- **Intentionally cultivate the talent of SPD staff from diverse backgrounds.** While professional development is important for all SPD officers, the Department should recognize the unique challenges experienced by those who do not fit the traditional look or background of a police officer. It is essential that SPD provide these individuals with additional support. For example, one strategy to enhance support may be to create a mentorship program pairing female and non-white SPD officers with leadership potential with command staff.
- **Maintain strong community partnerships.** Cultivating partnerships with diverse groups in the community helps demonstrate to nontraditional officers that the organization is committed to understanding the perspective of those from different backgrounds and to ensuring that these perspectives are represented in the work that the Department does.
- **Offer incentives for retention.** The EEOC recommends tailoring incentives to help retain officers from diverse backgrounds, such as offering additional financial compensation for those that speak languages other than English.

SPD should develop a plan to cultivate diversity based on these guidelines. It should also regularly track diversity metrics across all levels of the organization and report these metrics both internally and externally as a way to encourage accountability.

Conclusion

This study was undertaken to assess opportunities to enhance efficiency and effectiveness at SPD and to develop a foundation for a strong relationship between the Department and the diverse Somerville community. The recommendations were developed to build on the Department's commitment to policing best practices, while also acknowledging the concerns that some members of the City Council and the community have expressed.

In the process of implementing the recommendations in this report, and in the process of making future operational and policy decisions, it will be important for the Department to be guided by both policing best practices and by the priorities and concerns of the Somerville community. Regular formal and informal engagement with residents and businesses is vital to ensuring that the Department embodies the needs and desires of the community that it serves.

The report identifies specific positions that could be reallocated to provide better value for the City. The following table identifies those positions.

Table 10: Potential Positions to be Reallocated

Position	FTEs	Estimated Annual Salary	Estimated Annual Benefits	Total Estimated Cost
Patrol Officer	3	$90,000 to $100,000	$30,000	$360,000 to $390,000
Desk Officer	4	$90,000 to $100,000	$30,000	$480,000 to $520,000
City Hall Liaison	1	$90,000 to $100,000	$30,000	$120,000 to $130,000
Total	8	N/A	N/A	$960,000 to $1,040,000

The report recommends reallocating the positions, rather than eliminating them, so that the City maintains adequate resources to meet public safety needs. The following table identifies potential new positions into which the positions in Table 10 could be reallocated.

Table 11: Potential Positions to be Added

Position	FTEs	Estimated Annual Salary	Estimated Annual Benefits	Total Estimated Cost
Property Crimes Detective	1	$90,000 to $100,000	$30,000	$120,000 to $130,000
Records Clerk	4	$45,000 to $55,000	$20,000	$260,000 to $300,000
CSO Pilot Program (optional)	2 to 4	$90,000 to $100,000	$30,000	$240,000 to $520,000
Community Outreach and Affairs Unit (optional)	2 to 7	$90,000 to $100,000	$30,000	$240,000 to $910,000
Total	7 to 16	N/A	N/A	$380,000 to $1,860,000

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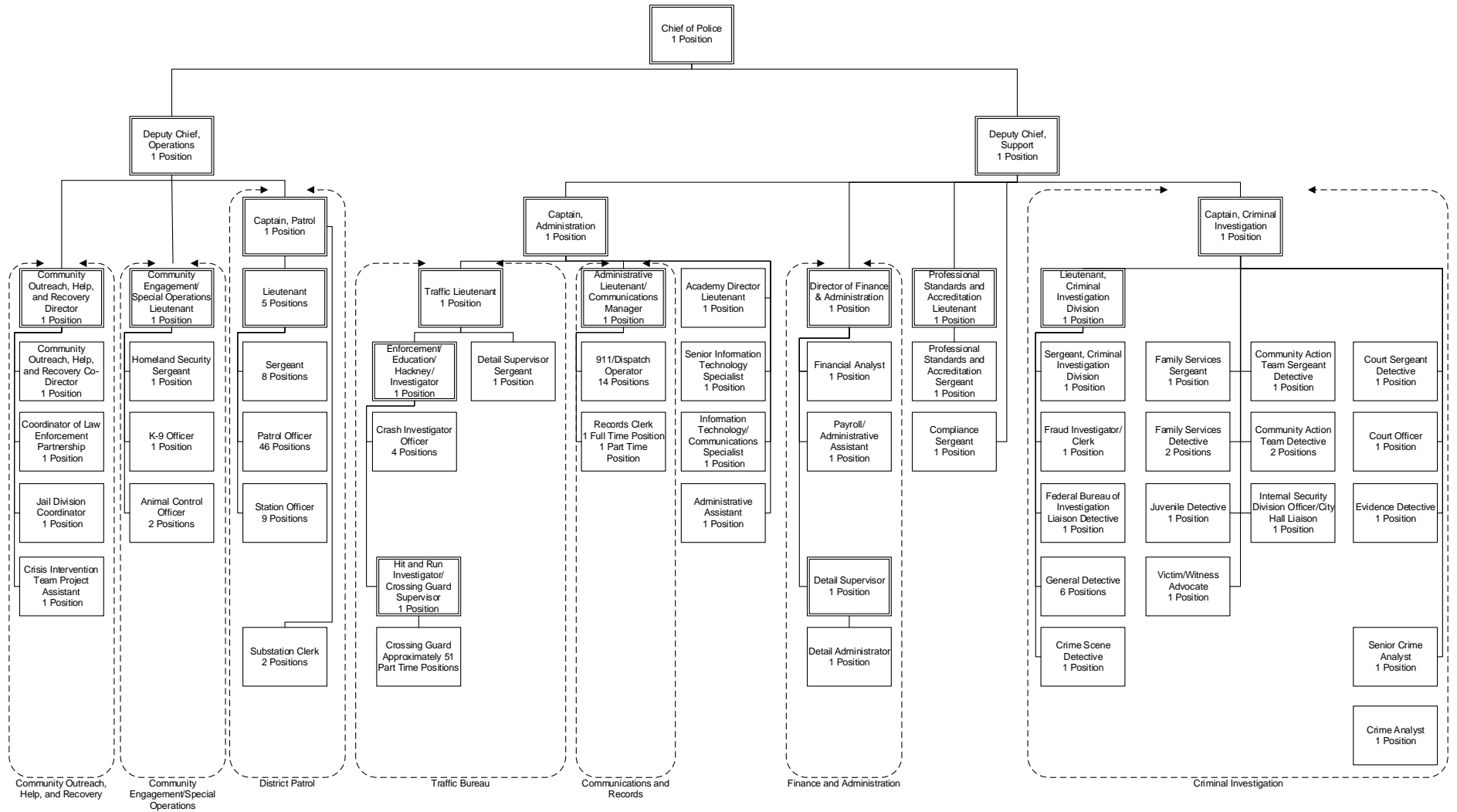
APPENDIX A:

DETAILED ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Figure 12: Somerville Police Department Organizational Chart by Position as of January 2023

APPENDIX B:
SAMPLE PATROL SCHEDULE

Table 12: Sample Schedule

Officer	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
1	Day	Day	Day	Day	Day	Off	Off
2	Off	Day	Day	Day	Day	Day	Off
3	Off	Off	Day	Day	Day	Day	Day
4	Day	Off	Off	Day	Day	Day	Day
5	Day	Day	Off	Off	Day	Day	Day
6	Day	Day	Day	Off	Off	Day	Day
7	Day	Day	Day	Day	Off	Off	Day
8	Day	Day	Day	Day	Day	Off	Off
9	Off	Off	Day	Day	Day	Day	Day
10	Day	Day	Off	Off	Day	Day	Day
11	Day	Day	Day	Off	Off	Day	Day
12	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening	Off	Off	Evening
13	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening	Off	Off
14	Off	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening	Off
15	Off	Off	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening
16	Evening	Off	Off	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening
17	Evening	Evening	Off	Off	Evening	Evening	Evening
18	Evening	Evening	Evening	Off	Off	Evening	Evening
19	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening	Off	Off	Evening
20	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening	Off	Off
21	Off	Off	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening
22	Evening	Evening	Off	Off	Evening	Evening	Evening
23	Night	Night	Night	Off	Off	Night	Night
24	Night	Night	Night	Night	Off	Off	Night
25	Night	Night	Night	Night	Night	Off	Off
26	Off	Night	Night	Night	Night	Night	Off
27	Off	Off	Night	Night	Night	Night	Night
28	Night	Off	Off	Night	Night	Night	Night
29	Night	Night	Off	Off	Night	Night	Night
30	Night	Night	Night	Off	Off	Night	Night
31	Night	Night	Night	Night	Off	Off	Night
32	Night	Night	Night	Night	Night	Off	Off
33	Off	Night	Night	Night	Night	Night	Off