

## Redirecting Funds from Police to Alternatives

### Recommendation Proposed by Elliott Young June 2, 2020

Overview: The budget for the Portland Police Bureau has continued to rise in recent years even though violent crimes rates have dramatically declined since the mid-1980s. The police have requested more money each year because of a growing militarization of the force and because they are being asked to address an increasing list of social problems in our city. The police have not been trained for these social service tasks and they are ill-equipped to handle them. Even [Daryl Turner](#), head of the Portland Police Association (PPA), has stated that “It’s a recipe for failure to put the burden of the homelessness solution on the Police Bureau’s shoulders.” Furthermore, [most of the 226,000 calls](#) to the PPB in 2018 did not result from serious crimes. At least [half of the arrests](#) and [use-of-force](#) incidents in the city involve the houseless population.

PCCEP recommends that the city defund the police and refund our communities. We furthermore ask that the city develop culturally specific alternative services that can address the needs of the houseless and those suffering from mental health crises and drug and alcohol addiction. This narrowing of the purview of the PPB will enable them to do what they are trained to do at the same time as freeing up funds to address the tremendous social needs in Portland.

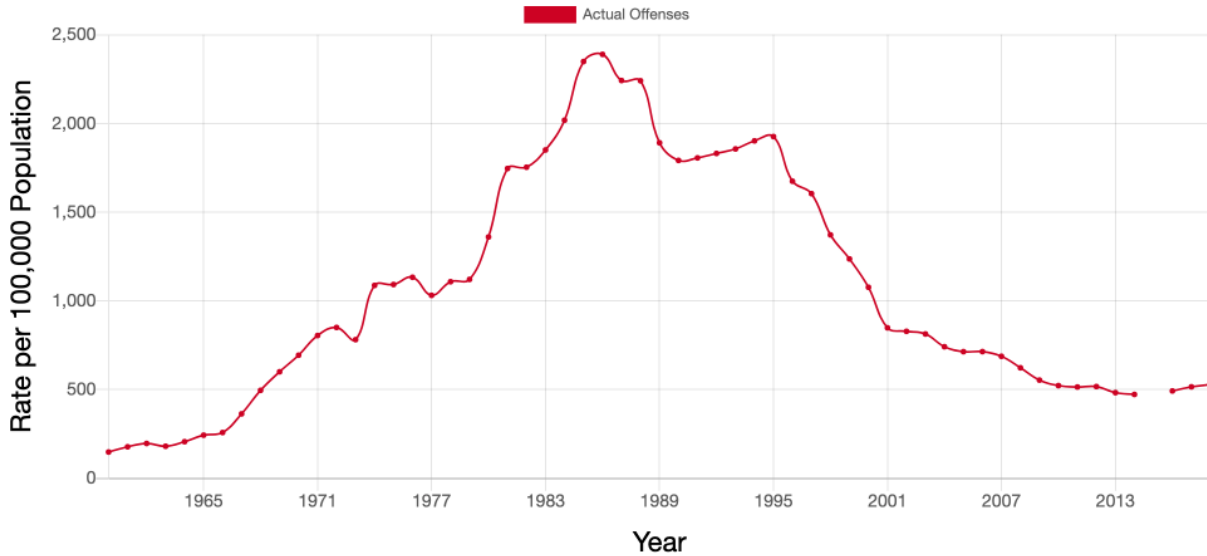
This recommendation stems out of the work of the [Portland Metro People’s Coalition](#).

### Analysis

The [Mayor’s Proposed Budget](#) for 2020-21 for the Police Bureau totals \$246.2 million or 34% of the 2020-2021 Portland General Fund of \$719,489,440. Portland spends a [higher percentage](#) of its general funds on police than Atlanta, Baltimore, Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York City. This budget reflects increasing investments in policing while other areas of the budget, including parks are being cut. [Since 2002](#), the portion of the city’s general fund dollars going to public safety has increased from 37 to 53 percent.

Violent crime is at a record low in the city, having declined dramatically since 1985, at a time when the [city’s population](#) grew by more than a third.

### Portland Police Bureau, Oregon: Index - Violent

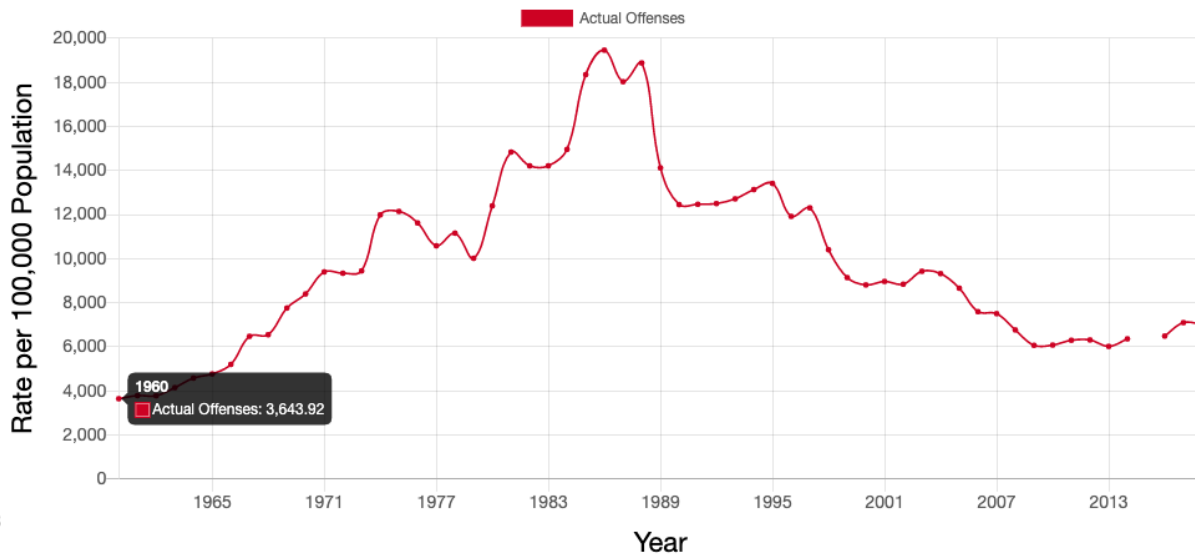


18

Violent Crime in Portland, 1960-2018 per 100,000 in population. UCR FBI data available at [jacobdkaplan.com](http://jacobdkaplan.com).

Similarly, all crimes have declined dramatically since the mid-1980s. Currently the level of crime in Portland is as low as it has been for the past fifty years.

### Portland Police Bureau, Oregon: All Crimes

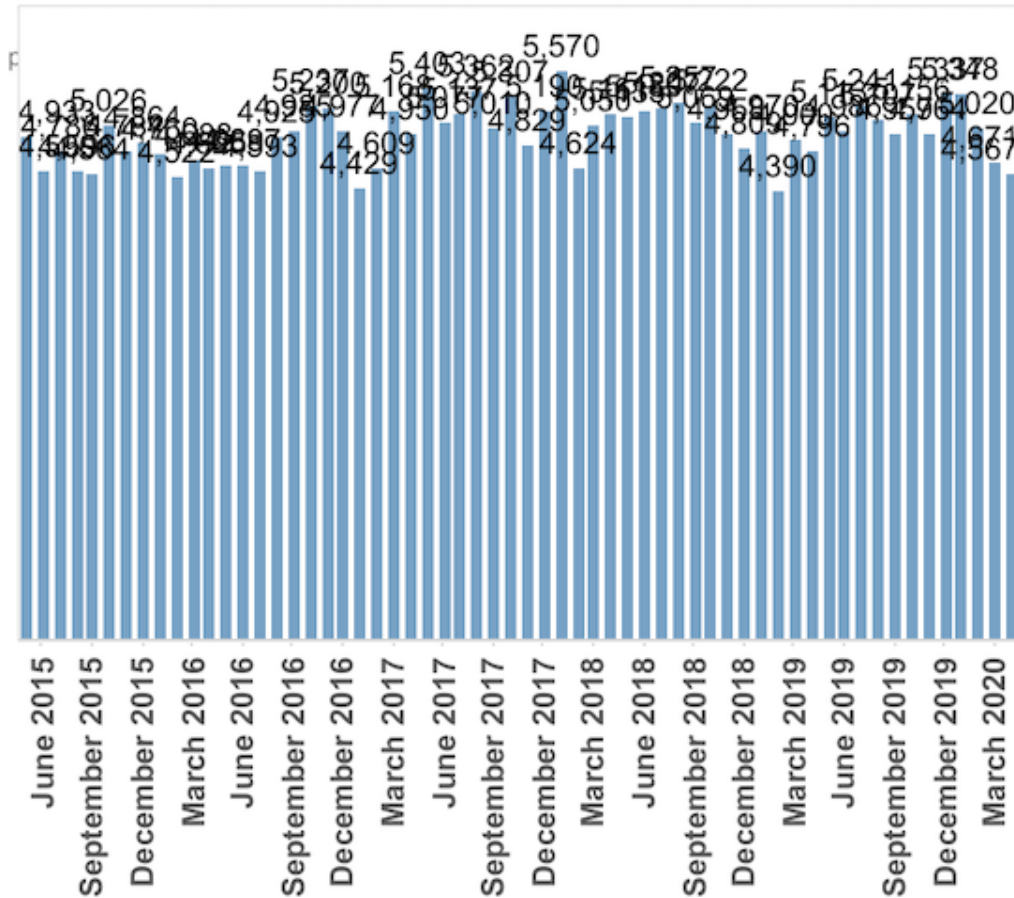


18

All Crime in Portland, 1960-2018 per 100,000 in population. UCR FBI data available at [jacobdkaplan.com](http://jacobdkaplan.com).

In the last five years, [PPB data](#) reveals that the total number of criminal offenses has remained flat.

## Offense Count by Month



[PPB Data Dashboard](#), Monthly Neighborhood Offense Statistics, May 2015-April 2020.

### Alternatives

The [Portland Street Response](#) pilot project was an effort to address the needs of homeless people by trained social workers rather than policing. Unfortunately this pilot program was [delayed indefinitely](#) due to COVID-19. We need much bolder efforts to address the social needs of our community with social programs rather than increased policing.

There is a [nationwide movement](#) that has reckoned with the reality that [criminal justice reform](#) efforts over the past two decades have [failed to reduce police violence](#) or the disproportionate policing of communities of color. Rather than continue to propose reforms that we already know do not work, we believe that redirecting resources from the police to helping solve the root causes of social problems will be more effective and will ultimately create better relations between the police and the community.

## Sources:

[https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2018/07/portland\\_police\\_union\\_leader\\_s.html](https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2018/07/portland_police_union_leader_s.html)

<https://www.wweek.com/news/city/2019/11/27/he-city-of-portland-wants-to-change-the-way-it-responds-to-911-calls-public-safety-unions-are-hopping-mad/>

[https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2018/07/portland\\_mayor\\_ted\\_wheeler.html#:~:text=Half%20the%20arrests%20in%20Portland%20last%20year%20were%20of%20homeless,says%20that%E2%80%99s%20a%20problem&text=But%20last%20year%2C%20one%20in,The%20Oregonian%2FOregonLive%20has%20found.](https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2018/07/portland_mayor_ted_wheeler.html#:~:text=Half%20the%20arrests%20in%20Portland%20last%20year%20were%20of%20homeless,says%20that%E2%80%99s%20a%20problem&text=But%20last%20year%2C%20one%20in,The%20Oregonian%2FOregonLive%20has%20found.)

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/695167>

<https://www.portlandpeoplescoalition.org/>

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo/article/760527>

[https://populardemocracy.org/news/publications/freedom-thrive-reimagining-safety-security-our-communities?fbclid=IwAR1qJx2J\\_A8fBoigjdlgBQo4kk5gGqDERZmYO9MtW0xOcgBK71H6g05M3b8](https://populardemocracy.org/news/publications/freedom-thrive-reimagining-safety-security-our-communities?fbclid=IwAR1qJx2J_A8fBoigjdlgBQo4kk5gGqDERZmYO9MtW0xOcgBK71H6g05M3b8)

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/omf/article/336104>

[https://jacobdkaplan.com/crime.html#state=Oregon&agency=Portland%20Police%20Bureau&category=all\\_crimes&rate=true&monthly=false&checkbox\\_1=true&checkbox\\_2=false&checkbox\\_3=false&checkbox\\_4=false](https://jacobdkaplan.com/crime.html#state=Oregon&agency=Portland%20Police%20Bureau&category=all_crimes&rate=true&monthly=false&checkbox_1=true&checkbox_2=false&checkbox_3=false&checkbox_4=false)

<https://www.oregonlive.com/news/2019/11/portland-street-response-homeless-first-responders-to-start-in-2020-after-council-oks-proposal.html>

<https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2020/05/portlands-homeless-first-responder-pilot-delayed-indefinitely-by-coronavirus.html>

<https://theintercept.com/2020/05/29/george-floyd-minneapolis-police-reform/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/31/the-answer-to-police-violence-is-not-reform-its-defunding-heres-why>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/opinion/george-floyd-police-funding.html?smid=fb-share&fbclid=IwAR1rkFrizj3GrZtIBMm92gu86kH14z3kbS1vncu2UjoZOD7FaSk1Ax6VbcY>