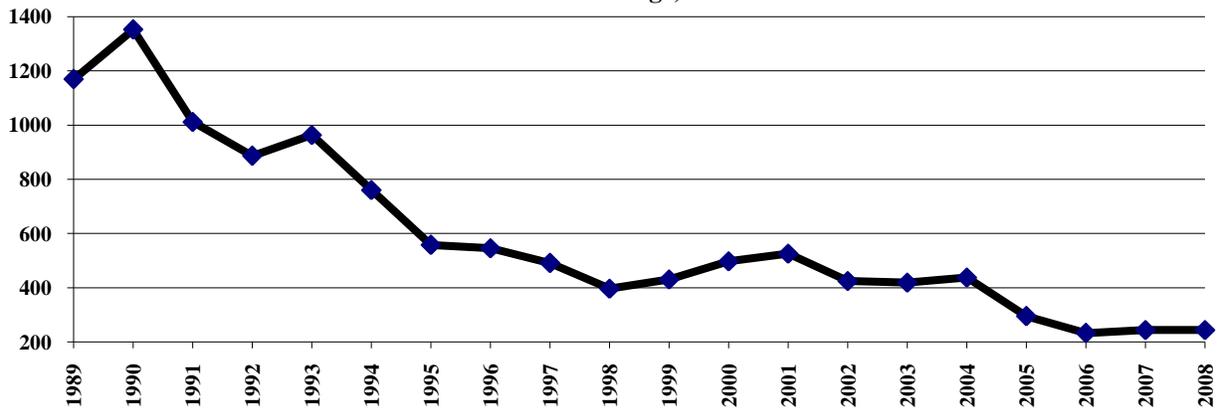


AUTO THEFT

Auto theft is defined as the theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle. This offense category includes the theft of automobiles, trucks, buses, motorcycles, motor scooters, and snowmobiles. This definition excludes the taking of a motor vehicle for temporary use by persons having lawful access.

**Twenty Year Review:
Auto Theft in Cambridge, 1989 to 2008**



244 reported in 2007 • 244 reported in 2008

In the mid-1970's there were nearly 3,000 cars reported stolen yearly in Cambridge. These figures declined to approximately 1,700 thefts in the 1980's, and to less than 1,000 thefts yearly in the 1990's. Today's figures represent one of the most dramatic reported decreases in a single crime type. The decline can be attributed to the virtual elimination of "chop shops" and interstate auto theft rings, crackdowns on insurance fraud, advances in automobile security, and new technology that enables patrol officers to quickly check a vehicle's registry listing and determine if it is stolen.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF AUTO THEFT

Neighborhood	2006	2007*	2008	CHANGE 07-08	% OF TOTAL
Mid-Cambridge	27	31	31	No Change	13%
Area 4	26	35	30	-14%	12%
Cambridgeport	25	30	28	-7%	11%
West Cambridge	13	24	25	+4%	10%
Inman/Harrington	23	18	24	+33%	10%
Peabody	38	18	24	+33%	10%
Riverside	12	11	21	+91%	9%
North Cambridge	21	24	21	-13%	9%
East Cambridge	21	24	15	-38%	6%
Strawberry Hill	6	5	9	+80%	4%
Agassiz	11	11	8	-27%	3%
M.I.T. Area	7	5	5	No Change	2%
Cambridge Highlands	3	6	3	-50%	1%
Total	233	242	244	No Change	100%

*Please note that two incidents in 2007 took place at unknown locations, therefore they are not included in this breakdown.

The number of vehicles stolen in the City of Cambridge has remained the same for the past two years. Both 2007 and 2008 registered 244 auto thefts citywide. In 2008, the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood reported the city's highest number of thefts at 31. Multiple incidents in this neighborhood were reported on Broadway, Cambridge St, Dana St, Ellery St, Mass Ave, Prospect St, and Ware St. The neighborhoods with the next highest numbers were Area 4 (30) and Cambridgeport (28). Despite being the top ranking neighborhoods for auto thefts in Cambridge, all three of these areas either experienced decreases from the previous year or remained the same; auto thefts in Mid-Cambridge did not change from 2007 to 2008, and Area 4 and Cambridgeport saw decreases of 14% and 7%, respectively. The neighborhood that experienced the largest increase over 2007 was Riverside, where auto thefts rose by 10 incidents, or 91%. The Cambridge Highlands experienced the largest decrease in auto thefts this year, showing a 50% drop from 6 incidents in 2007 to 3 in 2008. However, auto thefts in this neighborhood represent only 1% of the total auto thefts for the city, so a more notable decrease would be the drop of 38% that was experienced in East Cambridge.

Cambridge experienced 41 auto theft incidents in the first quarter of 2008. The second quarter (April, May, and June) resulted in the most auto thefts in 2008 with a total of 78 incidents, and the third quarter (July, August, and September) followed close behind with 75 incidents. Auto thefts dropped back down to 50 in the fourth quarter. The month of June reported the highest number of stolen vehicles in a single month with 33 incidents (14% of the total). Incidentally, January, the month that experienced the most auto thefts in 2007, had over 50% fewer auto thefts in 2008, dropping from 33 incidents in 2007 to 16 in 2008.

MAKES AND MODELS

Hondas were by far the most commonly stolen automobiles of 2008, constituting 30% of all reports, or 73 incidents. Toyotas came in second with 35 incidents and Dodges came in third with 17 incidents. This information is consistent with historical and national trends, as Hondas are typically the most commonly stolen vehicles nationwide. As is clear in the table below, most of the top five vehicle model types stolen in Cambridge mirror the top five stolen statewide in Massachusetts.

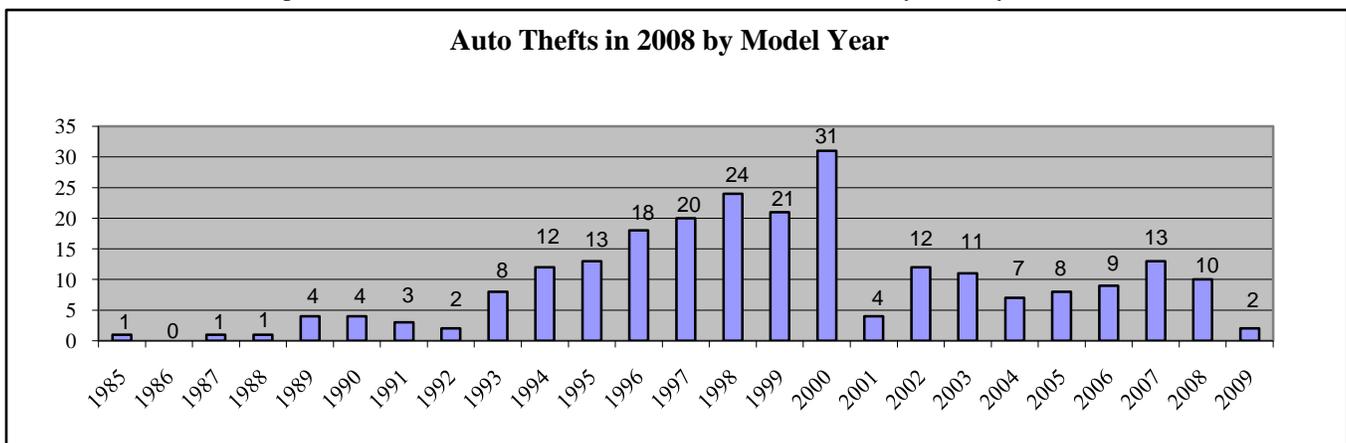
By far the most targeted model this year was the Honda Civic, followed by the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord. The Acura Integra was also highly targeted. These particular models are stolen more than any other due to several factors. These cars are some of the most commonly *owned* models in the nation, making them more widely available. Statistical probability alone would place them near the top of the theft list. Car thieves tend to look for average-cost, commonly owned, inconspicuous cars. High-priced luxury cars are not stolen very often because they are too easy for someone to spot and are more likely to be equipped with expensive alarm systems.

TOP FIVE STOLEN MAKES & MODELS			
Makes	Model type		
Honda	73	Honda Civic*+	55
Toyota	35	Toyota Camry*+	14
Dodge	17	Honda Accord*+	13
Acura	16	Acura Integra+	11
Chevrolet	12	Dodge Caravan	10

*Also in the National Top Five (for 2007)
 +Also in the Massachusetts Top Five (for 2007)
 (2008 National/MA Top Five data is not yet available)

During the summer of 2008, there was a series of auto thefts in which Hondas were being stolen from Cambridge streets and then recovered elsewhere in Cambridge, stripped of their parts. Two arrests were made.

Analysis of the age of stolen vehicles shows that the highest demand is for cars that are eight to twelve years old. Thieves looking for transportation steal these cars because they are inconspicuous. Thieves looking to make a profit target these years because parts for these cars are in higher demand. The other high cluster, with 2006-2008 cars, represents "joyriders," looking for newer models to increase their sense of status, and thieves intending to sell the entire car for profit. The table below shows the incidence of auto theft by model year.



AUTO THEFT RECOVERIES

Approximately 77% of the cars reported stolen in 2008 have been recovered to date. The majority of the recovered cars were located throughout Cambridge and Boston. When damage was reported on recovered vehicles, it was most commonly ignition and body damage. Radios were missing from eleven vehicles, tires were missing from ten, seats were missing from nine, bumpers were missing from four, and headlights were missing from two. Nineteen cars were found either partially or completely stripped. One vehicle was found burned. Note that additional information regarding parts stolen from vehicles where the vehicles themselves were not stolen can be found in the Larceny section of this report. The following table shows a breakdown of recovery locations.

Boston	
Downtown Boston	35
Dorchester	5
Jamaica Plain	4
Allston/Brighton	4
Roxbury	3
East Boston	2
Charlestown	1
Cambridge	
Peabody	14
West Cambridge	11
Inman/Harrington	10
Area 4	9
North Cambridge	8
Cambridgeport	5
Riverside	3
Agassiz	3
Cambridge Highlands	3
East Cambridge	2
Mid-Cambridge	2
Unknown	2
MIT Area	1
Strawberry Hill	0
Other Cities	
Somerville	14
Chelsea	8
Medford	5
Lynn	3
Saugus	3
Woburn	3
Brockton	2
Everett	2
Watertown	2
Belmont	2
Revere	2
Peabody	2
Waltham	2
Malden	1
Melrose	1
Other/Unknown	7

Protect your car!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 151 for tips on how you can protect your car from auto theft.

Auto Theft in Cambridge, 2008

The Cambridge Highlands experienced the fewest auto thefts this year with only 3 reported incidents.

Area 4, Cambridgeport, Mid-Cambridge, & Riverside together reported 45% (110) of the 244 auto thefts in 2008.

Riverside reported the largest increase in auto thefts, rising from 11 incidents in 2007 to 21 in 2008.

