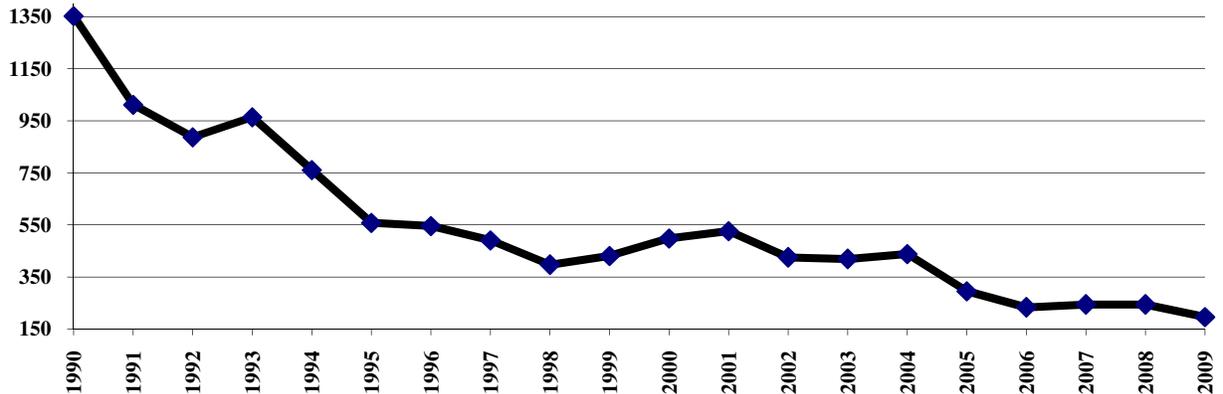


# AUTO THEFT

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, 1990 to 2009**



**244 reported in 2008 • 196 reported in 2009**

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. In 2009, Cambridge reported a 50-year low in auto thefts. This 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	2007*	2008	2009	CHANGE 08-09	% OF TOTAL
Cambridgeport	30	28	28	No Change	14%
West Cambridge	24	25	25	No Change	13%
East Cambridge	24	15	20	+33%	10%
Mid-Cambridge	31	31	20	-35%	10%
North Cambridge	24	21	20	-5%	10%
Peabody	18	24	20	-17%	10%
Area 4	35	30	17	-43%	9%
Inman/Harrington	18	24	13	-46%	7%
Agassiz	11	8	12	+50%	6%
Riverside	11	21	10	-52%	5%
Cambridge Highlands	6	3	4	+33%	2%
Strawberry Hill	5	9	4	-56%	2%
M.I.T. Area	5	5	3	-40%	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>-20%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

As mentioned, Cambridge reported a 50-year low in auto thefts in 2009 with only 196 incidents. The Cambridgeport neighborhood reported the city's highest number of thefts at 28. Multiple incidents in this neighborhood were reported on Pearl St, Granite St, Sidney St, and Albany St. The neighborhoods with the next highest numbers were West Cambridge, with 25 incidents, and a four-way tie between East Cambridge, Mid-Cambridge, Peabody, and North Cambridge, each with 20 incidents. Despite being the top ranking neighborhoods for auto thefts in Cambridge, four of these five areas either experienced decreases from the previous year or remained the same. The neighborhood that experienced the largest increase over 2008 was Agassiz, where auto thefts rose by four incidents, or 50%. Strawberry Hill experienced the largest decrease in auto thefts this year, showing a 56% drop from nine incidents in 2008 to four in 2009. However, auto thefts in this neighborhood represent only 2% of the total auto thefts for the city, so a more notable decrease would be the 52% drop that was experienced in Riverside.

Cambridge experienced 45 auto theft incidents in the first quarter of 2009. The second quarter (April, May, and June) resulted in a total of 54 incidents, and the third quarter (July, August, and September) reported the most auto thefts in 2009 with 61 incidents. Auto thefts dropped back down to 36 in the fourth quarter. The month of July reported the highest number of stolen vehicles in a single month with 32 incidents (16% of the total). Incidentally, June, the month that experienced the most auto thefts in 2008, had 48% fewer auto thefts in 2009, dropping from 33 incidents in 2008 to 17 in 2009.

## MAKES AND MODELS

Hondas were by far the most commonly stolen automobiles of 2009, constituting 33% of all reports, or 64 incidents. Toyotas came in second with 18 incidents and Fords came in third with 15 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, 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 Honda Accord and Acura Integra. 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.

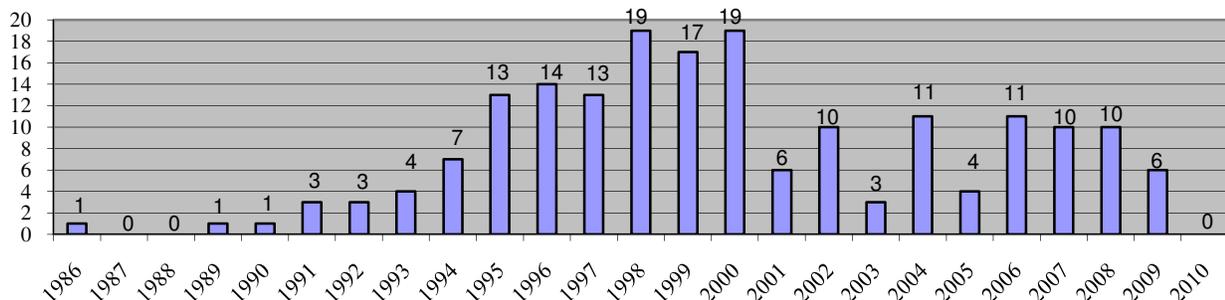
Analysis of the age of stolen vehicles shows that the highest demand is for cars that are nine to fourteen years old. Thieves looking for transportation steal these cars because they are inconspicuous. Thieves looking to make a profit target these years because parts for these cars are in higher demand. 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 (10 vehicles did not report the model year and therefore are not included in the bar graph).

**TOP FIVE STOLEN MAKES & MODELS**

Makes	Model type		
Honda	64	Honda Civic*+	41
Toyota	18	Honda Accord*+	17
Ford	15	Acura Integra+	10
Dodge	11	Dodge Caravan+	8
Acura	10	Toyota Camry*+	5

\*Also in the National Top Five (for 2008)  
 +Also in the Massachusetts Top Five (for 2008)  
 (2009 National/MA Top Five data is not yet available)

**Auto Thefts in 2009 by Model Year**



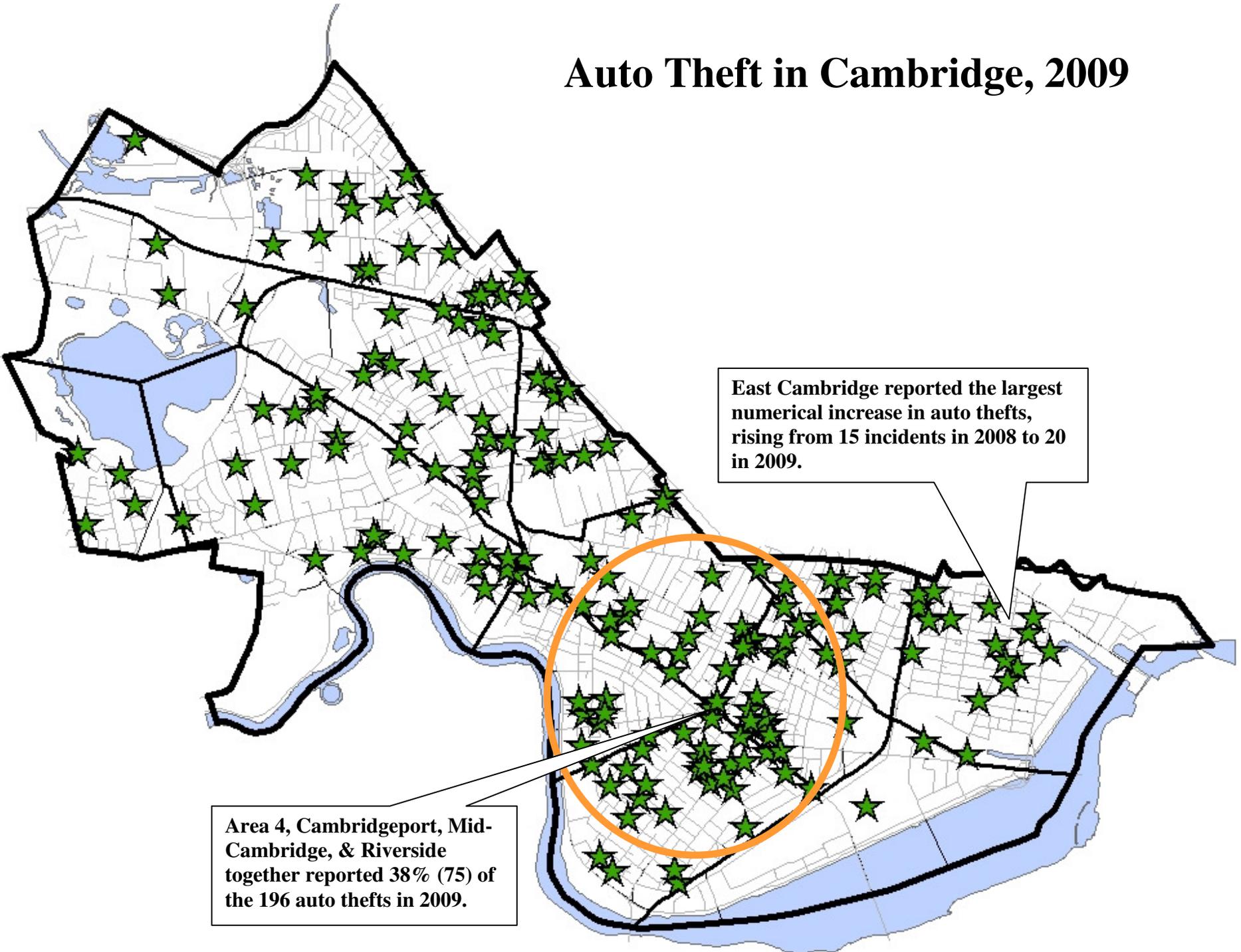
## **AUTO THEFT RECOVERIES**

Approximately 77% of the cars reported stolen in 2009 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 (59 vehicles) and body damage (32 vehicles). Radios were missing from twelve vehicles, tires were missing from four, and miscellaneous parts were missing from nine. Eighteen cars were found either partially or completely stripped. One vehicle was found totaled. 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.

<b>Boston</b>	
Downtown Boston	27
Dorchester	7
Jamaica Plain	2
Roxbury	2
Charlestown	1
East Boston	1
Hyde Park	1
<b>Cambridge</b>	
West Cambridge	10
Peabody	8
North Cambridge	7
Area 4	5
Mid-Cambridge	5
Cambridgeport	4
East Cambridge	4
Riverside	4
MIT Area	3
Inman/Harrington	2
Unknown	2
Agassiz	1
Cambridge Highlands	1
Strawberry Hill	1
<b>Other Cities</b>	
Somerville	15
Other/Unknown	9
Brockton	5
Revere	5
Chelsea	4
Malden	3
Medford	2
Milton	2
Everett	2
Watertown	2
Belmont	1
Lynn	1
Peabody	1

**Protect your car!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 128 for tips on how you can protect your car from auto theft.**

# Auto Theft in Cambridge, 2009



East Cambridge reported the largest numerical increase in auto thefts, rising from 15 incidents in 2008 to 20 in 2009.

Area 4, Cambridgeport, Mid-Cambridge, & Riverside together reported 38% (75) of the 196 auto thefts in 2009.