



# City of Cambridge

6.

IN CITY COUNCIL

May 2, 1994

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN  
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY  
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU  
COUNCILLOR WALSH  
VICE MAYOR RUSSELL

WHEREAS: This City has taken steps to encourage the use of bicycles by creating the Bicycle Commission and seeking to develop bike routes; and

WHEREAS: Recent article appeared in a local publication (a copy attached hereto) proclaiming, "WHERE BIKE THIEVES RIDE HIGH" --- "Cycles of Cambridge, a well-spoken city, are stolen the most"; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager is requested to confer with the Police Commissioner and report back to this City Council as to what steps are being taken to correct this situation; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager is hereby requested to confer with the Bicycle Commissioner to ensure that in the development of any bicycle routes include safe areas for riders to lock their bicycles; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager is hereby requested to confer with the Police Commissioner, Bicycle Commissioner and the Superintendent of Schools to develop a program to not only train school children in riding bicycles safely but also in the safe keeping of their bicycles.

In City Council May 2, 1994.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury  
City Clerk

# Metro Region

THE BOSTON GLOBE • WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 1994

## Where bike thieves ride high

By Matthew Brelis  
GLOBE STAFF

**CAMBRIDGE** - If misery loves company, then 13-year-old Cantabrigian Andrew Walters lives in the right city.

Last week his prized Christmas present and preferred method of transportation, a blue mountain bike, was stolen.

"It wasn't locked, but it was in my back yard. I was inside for five minutes and I came downstairs and it was gone," said Andrew.

Known as a hotbed of rent control and liberal politics, and the home of two universities, Cambridge last year became the bicycle theft capital of Massachu-

### Cycles of Cambridge, a well-spoken city, are stolen the most

setts. In 1993, bicycle theft soared 26 percent when 576 bikes were reported stolen.

Ask Melissa Wender about bicycle theft and she may reach behind the counter of the Broadway Bicycle School where she works and show you the remains of several \$40 to \$50 U-shaped bicycle locks that have been bent with crowbars by determined thieves.

Ask Cambridge Police Officer Sal Fusco, who is in charge of the dozens of recovered bicycles - virtually all of them stolen - that are locked up in the basement of the police building, and he will tell you with a laugh that his bicycle was stolen last year.

"I came from a weekend with two bikes locked on the back of the camper and parked in my driveway in Somerville," Fusco said. "I came out the next morning and mine was gone, the wife's was still there. I was shocked, but I should not have been."

While Boston has five times the population of Cambridge, it has only twice as

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many bicycle thefts, with 1,275 last year.

Law enforcement officials and bike enthusiasts say Cambridge has so many thefts because it has a large bike-riding population, and many people either choose not to purchase an expensive lock that is difficult to breach, or are careless about storing their bikes overnight.

According to figures reviewed by the Globe, Provincetown, Northampton, Marblehead, Cambridge, Westfield, Springfield and Barnstable had the top bike theft rates per capita in 1991, the last year for statewide figures.

Last year, the rate in most of those towns was either flat or had declined, while Cambridge experienced a significant increase.

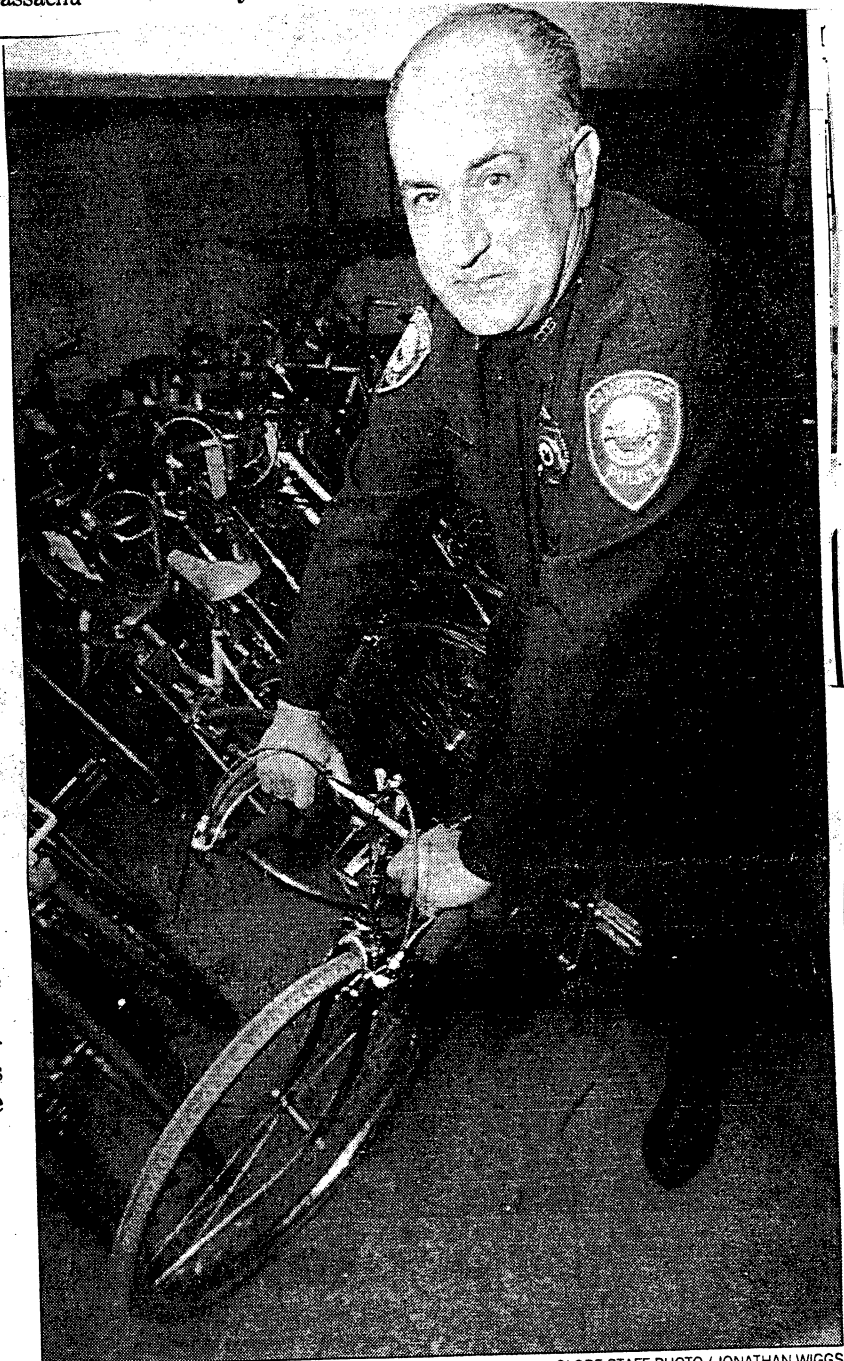
Based on year-round population, bicycle theft in Provincetown is higher than in Cambridge, on a per capita basis. But it shrinks to less than half the Cambridge average using the summertime population of the Cape Cod town.

Most bicycle thefts occur in the summer, police said.

Dick Powers, owner of the Bicycle Exchange at Porter Square, says it is not surprising that Cambridge

**'It was in my back yard. I was inside for five minutes ...and it was gone.'**

ANDREW WALTERS



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / JONATHAN WIGGS

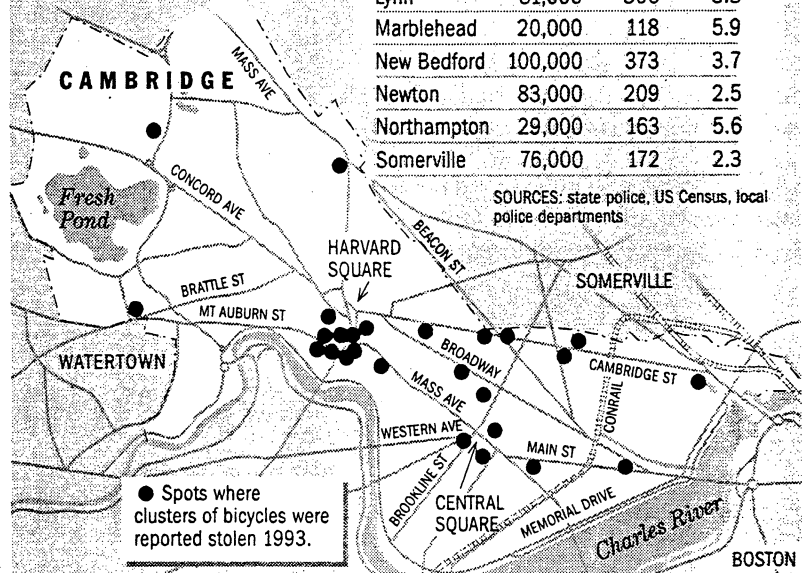
Cambridge Police Officer Sal Fusco says his department will distribute many of the recovered bicycles to school children.

### Bicycle larceny

Cambridge has one of the highest rates of bicycle theft in the area. Police say most bicycles disappear from the area between Harvard Square and the Conrail railroad line.

Municipality	Population	1993 Bicycle thefts	Rate per 1,000 population
Boston	574,000	1,275	2.2
Brookline	55,000	203	3.7
<b>Cambridge</b>	<b>96,000</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>6.0</b>
Framingham	65,000	158	2.4
Lynn	81,000	306	3.8
Marblehead	20,000	118	5.9
New Bedford	100,000	373	3.7
Newton	83,000	209	2.5
Northampton	29,000	163	5.6
Somerville	76,000	172	2.3

SOURCES: state police, US Census, local police departments



BOSTON  
GLOBE STAFF MAP

has so many bicycle thefts.

"There are a lot of bikes in this city. It is a really easy way to get around campus or the town. Everybody at Harvard rides a bike," he said.

According to figures from the State Police, more than \$2.2 million worth of bicycles were stolen in 1991.

Police in Cambridge, Newton and Marblehead - which consistently have a high number of bicycle larcenies - say that thieves are more sophisticated, and bicycle parts, not just bicycles, are being fenced.

"Only recently have pieces become important where the bikes are being taken apart and sold piece-by-piece," said Marblehead Police Sgt. Brian Hitchcock.

"We have executed search warrants in Lynn and Salem in the last few years where we found pieces of bikes being taken apart."

Hitchcock said most of the bikes stolen in Marblehead are owned by youths in their teens who did not lock their bikes. "Their mom or dad bought them locks and they are there and very attractive, but in most cases are just not being used."

The annual crime report in Cambridge noted that bicycle theft is "becoming professionalized."

Last year, police arrested a group of people they suspected of working out of a van, cruising the Harvard Square area and stealing four to eight bikes a night.

For the most part, however, prosecution of bicycle theft is a rarity. "We have not seen that many cases brought to us," said Jill Reilly, spokeswoman for the Middlesex

County district attorney.

Whether stripped for parts, sold for cash, or used as a quick ride home from Harvard Square, bicycles in Cambridge have been a favorite of thieves for more than 20 years.

Cambridge was where the first Kryptonite bicycle lock was designed more than 20 years ago, said the Canton-based company's founder, Michael Zane. Kryptonite, which offers a guarantee of up to \$1,000, said Boston and Cambridge had the third highest number of claims in the world in 1991, the most recent figures available.

Bike buyers in Cambridge have been known to deliberately scrape, muddy or paint their purchase to make it less attractive to thieves.

Most of the bicycles recovered by Cambridge police cannot be returned to their owners, since very few Cantabrigians register their bicycles with the Police Department, Fusco said. Even if they identify their bicycle, unless they have registered it or can provide a sale receipt with its serial number, it cannot be returned to them. Next month, the Police Department will give 40 bikes to school children.

Perhaps Walters, a 7th grader, will get another bike. Now, however, he is left pondering what a homebound spring will be like.

"I can't go anywhere now," he said, "unless I ride on the back of my friend's bike."

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Russell, Toomey, T Mantafillon

Consent Order #6

CM-118

Walsh

Councillor Sullivan re: Program  
to train school children in riding  
bicycles safely and in safe keeping  
their bicycles.

Order Adopted

In City Council,

May 2, 1994