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South Station saw most reported crime in MBTA system last year

Posted by Matt Rocheleau February 4, 2011 09:58 AM

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(Barry Chin/Globe file photo)

South Station is a busy hub for commuter rail, city, and private bus routes and the Red and Silver lines.

By Sara Brown, Jeremy C. Fox and Matt Rocheleau

A surge in larcenies at South Station pushed the busy transit hub to reclaim an undesirable title for 2010: It received the most reported serious crimes among all MBTA subway stops.

SEARCH

The MBTA has compiled its 2010 tally of serious crimes, including arson, assault, homicide, rape and various forms of theft. Overall, reported crime on the MBTA rose 19 percent last year to 986. Search a breakdown of crime by line and station. Our search does not include data on bus routes.

Station

The 74 reported serious crimes at South Station for last year represented an 85 percent jump from the 40 in 2009, according to recently released data from the T. A stop for commuter rail, city, and private bus routes and the Red and Silver lines, South Station also was tops in total crime during 2008, Transit Police records show.

Overall, reported serious, or "Part I,"

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averaged 942 serious crimes per year, and we have seen a little uptick in 2010 from that number,” Transit Police Chief Paul MacMillan said. “But when you put that in perspective to the number of passengers we have per day, which is 1.3 million, the number of incidences occurring based on the number of passengers is very low.”

Nonetheless, he said one crime is too many. “We continue to work to drive all these numbers down.”

Various forms of theft – burglaries, larcenies and robberies – rose in the past year. Larcenies in particular, which roughly doubled from 34 two years ago to a system-wide high of 60 last year, are attributed to South Station’s high crime figures.

“We have seen an increase at South Station of the numbers of larcenies, so that has been an area that we want to target going into 2011,” said MacMillan, adding “that is one of our busiest stations, as well.”

Larcenies increased system-wide by 11 percent from two years ago to 581 in 2010. Robberies jumped 24 percent to 233 and burglaries were up from eight in 2009 ago to 13 last year.

The T distinguishes between three types of thefts. Burglary is breaking and entering with intent to commit a felony, often to steal something. Larceny is stealing that involves no force or violence, robbery is stealing that does.

Transit law enforcement officials say they have noticed a rise in cell phone thefts as more commuters carry more expensive cellular devices. Officials have been running awareness campaigns to reduce such occurrences.

“This is a problem not only for us but many agencies,” MacMillan said of mobile phone thefts. “These are a very popular item ... People have their cell phones out; it can be easily stolen; it can be grabbed from the hands when the doors open. Or they’re not paying attention because they’ve got their

crimes on the T rose 19 percent last year to 987. Still, that number was the fourth-lowest in the **past three decades**. Only 2006, 2008 and 2009, **the lowest total on record** since the the data collecting began in 1980, saw fewer serious crimes reported.

Part I crimes are those deemed most serious, consisting of arson, assault, homicide, rape and various forms of theft. A online database, searchable by station, of that crime type can be found [here](#). Part II crimes consist of fare evasion, simple assault, vandalism, loitering, drug and alcohol violations, disorderly conduct, trespassing and others. That less-serious crime type saw a 5 percent increase last year to 5,218 reports.

“Over the last five years, we’ve averaged 942 serious crimes per year, and we have seen a little uptick in 2010 from that number,” Transit Police Chief Paul MacMillan said. “But when you put that in perspective to the number of passengers we have per day, which is 1.3 million, the number of incidences occurring based on the number of passengers is very low.”

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headphones in, and it can be easily stolen that way.”

Alewife, a fellow Red Line destination, had the second highest serious crime total among T subway stops in 2010, with 42 reports. Alewife had the most reported crime in two years ago with 47 and the second most in 2008, also 47.

The Orange Line terminus Forest Hills was next with 31 reported serious crimes and JFK/UMass on the Red Line with 30.

While Forest Hills saw a slight dip in serious crime from 2009, figures at JFK/UMass nearly doubled. Likewise, the Wonderland stop, which had the fifth highest crime frequency overall in 2010 and accounted for roughly three in every four Blue Line serious crimes, saw a three-fold jump in crime reports from 9 to 29 the past two years.

Andrew Station saw the **most dramatic change** in reported serious crime as figures quadrupled last year compared to the year prior. Forest Hills Station saw the **most reported assaults**. Downtown Crossing **saw the most robberies**.

Across all stops, assaults rose 39 percent to 124; auto thefts rose from 17 to 32. There was one homicide last year compared to none the year before and three rapes compared to two in 2009. There were no arsons reported in 2010 compared to one two years ago.

In the same order as 2009, the Red Line led its subway counterparts in total serious crime with 261 reports, followed by Orange with 202, Green with 72 and Blue with 54. Except for the Red, all lines saw crime increase, including the commuter rail, which reported the largest increase, up 65 percent to 238. Buses, transit yards and surface activity accounted for 157 serious crimes, a 19 percent climb.

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