



San Francisco Bicycle Coalition  
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PROMOTING THE BICYCLE FOR EVERYDAY TRANSPORTATION

September 28, 2017

San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**Re: File No. 170095 – Neighborhood Automobile Break-Ins, Bicycle Theft, and Property Crime Units in the Police Department**

To Chair Ronen and Supervisors:

The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition has repeatedly called for effective solutions to the epidemic of bicycle theft in our city, and we believe that your proposed legislation creating property crime units at each district police station can be an important step towards that end.

Bicycle theft remains a serious and growing problem in San Francisco. It is the second most-commonly cited reason for not riding a bicycle in our city after safety concerns. We have heard countless stories from our 10,000-plus members and others about how the theft of a bicycle has negatively impacted their lives, in some cases threatening their ability to remain in the city amid the rising cost of living.

Prevention of theft remains the most cost-effective way to combat bicycle theft. People who bike in San Francisco need more sidewalk racks as well as attended bike parking at transit stations and City-owned garages. While prevention is important, resources must also be dedicated to the investigation and recovery of stolen bicycles.

In a 2013 memo to then-Supervisor Eric Mar, the City Budget and Legislative Analyst wrote “there is no central SFPD approach to bicycle theft. While individual SFPD stations devote staff and resources to investigating bicycle theft as well as attempting to reconnect recovered bicycles with their owner, other stations devote little to no time investigating such cases.” With Police Chief Scott announcing recently that SFPD is dissolving its centralized unit dedicated to property crimes, it is clear that a new approach and additional resources are still needed four years later.

Through anecdote, we know that the market for stolen bicycles functions differently in different parts of our city. In SoMa and the Mission, vans and trucks park at night to buy stolen bicycles off the street and then re-sell them online or at flea markets in other counties. Bicycles stolen from garages in other neighborhoods may end up directly in a vehicle headed north, east or south. If the city can take a different approach to investigating and prosecuting those responsible for buying and re-selling stolen bicycles, our hope is that we can reduce theft by diminishing the market. At a minimum, we should have more data to understand the problem and allocate scarce policing resources more effectively.

It is clear that if we wish to continue growing the number of trips made by bicycle in our city, we must address the issue of theft. The SF Bicycle Coalition remains dedicated to educating thousands every year on proper locking technique and theft prevention, as well as advocating for increased secure parking. We look to City leaders to smartly use our investigative resources to help decrease the market for stolen bicycles and increase the number of bicycles recovered and reunited with their owners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Wiedenmeier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brian Wiedenmeier  
Executive Director