



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee **Date:** March 23, 2015
From: Phyllis L. Carlyle **File:** 09-5000-01/2015-Vol
 General Manager, Law and Community Safety 01 (15.36)
Re: **Richmond RCMP Block Watch Program**

Staff Recommendation

That in 2016, staff prepare a further report on the progress of the Block Watch program.

Phyllis L. Carlyle
General Manager
(604-276-4104)

Att.: 5

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY GAO 	

Staff Report

Origin

This report responds to an enquiry made at the February 11, 2015 Community Safety Committee meeting. This report supports Council's Term Goal #1 Community Safety:

To ensure Richmond remains a safe and desirable community to live, work and play in, through the delivery of effective public safety services that are targeted to the City's specific needs and priorities.

1.4. A strategic review of the City's community policing needs, including community policing needs of the City Centre.

1.5. Improved perception of Community Safety by the community.

Background

Since 1992, the City of Richmond and the Richmond RCMP have supported the free, community-based, crime prevention program, Block Watch. Administered through the local police, Block Watch is a program aimed at assisting residents organize their neighbourhoods to help prevent crime in the community. The premise is that neighbours who know their neighbours, their vehicles, their children, and their daily habits are more apt to recognize suspicious activity and report it to the police.

City of Richmond staff assist neighbourhoods with the education, support, guidance, training and resource materials to develop and operate Block Watch groups. As part of the program, citizens learn how to:

- Make their homes less inviting as a target for thieves;
- Participate in an engraving program to mark valuables;
- Recognize and report suspicious activity in the neighbourhood;
- Increase personal safety; and
- Prevent auto crime.

Analysis

Currently, there are 9,291 Block Watch participants, 536 Block Watch Captains and Co-Captains serving 396 Block Watch groups. Of these 396 groups, four are looking for a replacement Captain in order to re-invigorate their group. In 2014, the Block Watch program recruited 247 participants, which totalled 14 new Block Watch groups.

Recruitment Strategies

There are numerous ways that City staff recruit new volunteers such as: door-to-door canvassing, information at community events; newspaper ads; information on the City's web pages; word of mouth from other participants; flyers at City Hall, Community Centres, Community Police Stations and the main RCMP Detachment; and, as a result of near-by residential break and enters.

For every residential break and enter that occurs in a non-Block Watch neighbourhood, a letter is sent to the victim and several neighbours informing them of the break and enter. In 2014, there were 3,121 letters mailed out. Each envelope has both English and Chinese letters. The letter suggests starting a Block Watch group and includes a Block Watch brochure (Attachment 1), Residential break and enter Prevention Tips (Attachment 2) and directs the homeowner to the City/RCMP's Home Safety web pages at: <http://www.richmond.ca/safety/police/prevention/blockwatch.htm> and recommends registering for email alerts. On that same web page, there is an email address and telephone number to call for Block Watch information and sign-up.

An email alert is also sent for every residential break and enter to all registered residents in the surrounding quadrant¹. The email alert provides information about the specific break and enter and suggests recipients start a Block Watch program, as well as directing the homeowner to the City and RCMP's Home Safety web pages.

Once a group has been established, the Captain typically will know if there has been a change in the neighbourhood and will introduce him/herself to the new neighbours to ask them to join the program. If the Captain has not been able to make contact with the new neighbours, the neighbours themselves can request to join the group by contacting the Detachment, either through the website and email or by telephone. The Community Policing Coordinator (Coordinator) does not release any personal information about the Captain to the new resident, once given permission; the Coordinator will contact the Captain and provide the new neighbours' contact information. The Captain will welcome the family into the group by providing them with an information package, including contact information for all members of the group.

Responsibilities of a Block Watch Captain

Each group requires a Captain; the Captain is the liaison between the City, RCMP and the group. Throughout the life of a Block Watch group, there may be one Captain and a Co-Captain or members of the group can rotate the responsibility. Each Captain and Co-Captain receives a basic Criminal Records Check before they are selected to be a neighbourhood Captain. During the inception of the group, the Captain will ask each resident to join the group and to come to a meeting place where representatives of the RCMP will speak to them regarding the program. The Captain will gather names and contact information to share with the rest of the group as well as the Coordinator who enters the information on the Block Watch data base for distribution of email alerts and other important information the RCMP share.

Once the group has been formed, neighbours make their neighbourhood their business. They pay attention to what is going on, look for vehicles and people on the street that are usually not there and other unusual incidents that may catch their attention, calling the Richmond Detachment when appropriate.

Although the Captain is continually updating the Coordinator on a regular basis, once per year, the Coordinator sends a group list to each Captain asking them to ensure the list is current. Any

¹ Quadrant describes the major streets surrounding the victim's home

new participants are sent an information package that will assist them in understanding the program, encouraging them to work with the Captain and the neighbourhood to be the 'eyes and ears of police'.

Twice per year, the Captains are invited to a Block Watch meeting to learn about new crime trends and prevention strategies. This information is taken back and shared with the group either by a group meeting or 1-1 discussions.

Current Richmond Participant Statistics

Currently, the City of Richmond boasts 396 Block Watch groups, 536 Captains and Co-Captains and 9,291 participants, with the smallest group hosting 4 households while the largest has 95. Since January 1, 2015 there have been 8 new Block Watch groups registered with a total of 122 households.

Policing in Richmond is divided into 5 numeric zones (Attachment 3), with the total number of Block Watch groups as follows:

Zone 1 –	4
Zone 2 –	161
Zone 3 –	44
Zone 4 –	59
<u>Zone 5 –</u>	<u>128</u>
Total	396

In Attachment 4, Block Watch Neighbourhoods are identified.

A Block Watch Success Story

“Binder Johal’s instincts paid off, and he’s crediting Block Watch and his smart phone with helping him catch a teenage thief who snatched his laptop computer, hunting knife and a case of beer from his Steveston Highway home in late August”². (See Attachment 5 for full story.)

Philosophy for 2015 and Beyond

For 2015 and beyond, the Officer in Charge plans to conduct a full review to determine possible gaps in the Block Watch service delivery model. As indicated on the attached map, (Attachment 4) there are many areas within the City’s boundaries that are without a Block Watch group. As a priority for this year and beyond, the department has committed to increasing the Block Watch membership by 15%, or approximately 60 per year. As mentioned previously, for the month of January the increase was 8 groups, or almost 20%, so the Officer in Charge considers that a 15% increase is a realistic goal. In order to achieve the goal; community sessions, door-to-door canvassing by volunteers and a strong media strategy is scheduled for the near future.

In addition to an increase in membership, a focus will be placed on emergency preparedness and assistance to the neighbourhood for the Block Watch Captains and Co-captains. In the event of

² Martin van den Hemel, *The Richmond Review*, *Crime rings compiling list of homes for break-ins*, p1, October 10, 2014.

an emergency, able and willing participants should be prepared themselves and could potentially check on people in the neighbourhood; insofar as their health and medical needs (prescriptions etc); thus freeing up first responders - police, fire, ambulance, and emergency programs. The Detachment has the opportunity to draw upon the strengths of Richmond Fire Rescue (RFR) to partner with them for some training in relation to medications, first aid and assessment of people.

Incentives for Block Watch Participants

Included with the manual that Block Watch participants receive is a card that may be presented to the homeowner's insurance company. Many insurance companies offer a discount of up to 15% when renewing a policy of the homeowner if a member of a Block Watch group.

Financial Impact

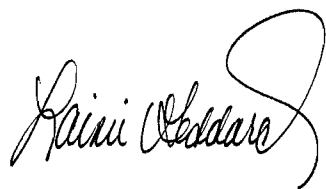
There are no costs resulting from this report.

There are two full time positions dedicated to this program at the cost of \$158,737. Other operating expenditures such as supplies and meeting expenses total at \$6,880. This brings the total cost of the program to \$165,617.

Conclusion

Since 1992, the City of Richmond and the Richmond RCMP has supported the free community-based, crime prevention program, Block Watch. Administered through the local police, Block Watch is a program aimed at assisting residents organize their neighbourhoods to help prevent crime in the community.

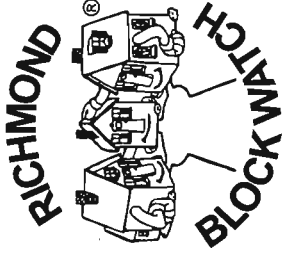
For 2015 and beyond, the Officer in Charge plans to conduct a full review to determine possible gaps in the Block Watch service delivery model. This plan will include, although, not limited to; an effort to increase the Block Watch participant membership and the possibility of an expansion of the program to provide emergency preparedness assistance to neighbours.



Lainie Goddard
Manager, RCMP Administration
(604-207-4767)

LG:jl

- Att. 1: Block Watch Brochure
- 2: Residential Break and Enter Prevention Tips
- 3: Zone Map
- 4: Block Watch Neighbourhoods
- 5: Block Watch Success Story



Block Watch is a free, community-based, crime prevention program aimed at helping residents organize their neighbourhoods to help prevent crime in the community. For more information, please visit www.richmond.ca/blockwatch.

How do I get involved?

To get involved in an existing Block Watch group or if you're interested in starting a new Block Watch group in your neighbourhood, contact the Richmond RCMP Block Watch program:

Phone: 604-713-2340
Fax: 604-713-2349
Email: blockwatch@richmond.ca

How does it work?

Your neighbours know who you are, what type of car you drive and may be the first to notice a suspicious person at your door or window. A police officer patrolling your neighbourhood may not recognize a stranger in your yard – but your neighbour will.

By simply getting to know your neighbours, you'll be able to recognize someone or something that's suspicious. When neighbours work together, they can combat crime the most effective way – before it starts.

Richmond RCMP Block Watch

For more information, please contact:

Richmond RCMP Crime Prevention
Phone: 604-713-2340
Fax: 604-713-2349
Email: blockwatch@richmond.ca

RCMP (Emergency) 9-1-1
RCMP (Non-emergency)..... 604-278-1212

- To report all non-emergency, criminal or suspicious activity

City of Richmond

Main Switchboard 604-276-4000
Public Works Requests—Works Yard 604-244-1262
For 24 hour service, call 604-270-8721

- To report street surface problems
- Missing, damaged or blocked traffic signs
- Burned out street lights or damaged light poles
- Watermain leaks or water quality (dirty water)
- Abandoned bikes

Traffic Operations 604-276-4032 or 604-276-4210

- To report an obstruction to motorists' sightlines (fences, trees, shrubs, etc.)

Community Bylaws..... 604-276-4345
Richmond Fire Department..... 604-278-5131 (non-emergency)

Richmond Emergency Programs 604-233-3333
Crimestoppers 604-669-8477
www.solvecrime.ca

Working together to prevent crime

City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1
Telephone: 604-276-4000
www.richmond.ca

Richmond RCMP
Crime Prevention Team
11411 No. 5 Road, Richmond, BC V7A 4E8
Telephone: 604-713-2340
www.richmond.ca
50 crime
October 30, 2013



**Richmond RCMP
Block Watch**



www.richmond.ca/blockwatch

Please visit:

www.richmond.ca/crime
for neighbourhood crime information

and

www.richmond.ca/homesafety
for home security tips

Working together to prevent crime



City of Richmond



Richmond RCMP

Richmond RCMP Block Watch

Getting Started

A volunteer from each neighbourhood is needed to be the Block Watch Captain. The Block Watch Captain goes door-to-door registering their neighbours and distributing Block Watch manuals.

Report all suspicious or criminal activity to the Police. If a suspect is present, call **9-1-1**. If no suspect is present, call the Police non-emergency number at **604-278-1212**.

Email Break and Enter Alerts

Email your name and street address to: blockwatch@richmond.ca to receive an email alert should a residential break and enter occur in your neighbourhood.



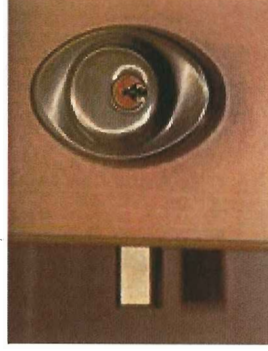
Richmond RCMP Criminal Activity Maps

Visit www.richmond.ca/crime for an interactive web page where you can view Richmond neighbourhood maps for current crime summaries and home security tips.

Home Security Tips

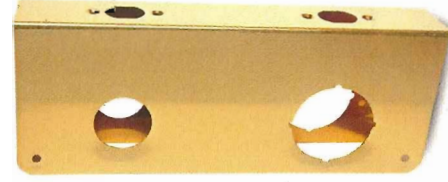
Doors:

Install a deadbolt with a 1 inch throw (the part that extends into the door frame) on all exterior doors (including the door from the garage).



Install a 6–8 inch long strike plate (the metal plate that fits onto the door frame and accepts the deadbolt throw when locked). Install using 3 inch screws for maximum support.

Install a door reinforcer (a U-shaped metal sleeve that fits under the door handle and deadbolt) for additional support.



CS - 51

Sliding Windows:

Install a sliding window lock or use a piece of wood cut to fit snugly into the bottom track to prevent the window from being forced open. To increase the usefulness of the sliding window lock, close the window, screw the sliding window lock tight enough to leave a mark on the frame. Remove the lock and drill a small hole in the mark. Replace the sliding window lock using the new hole.



Sliding Glass Doors:

If your door opens on the outside, install anti-lift guards (small L-shaped brackets) in the frame above and below the closed sliding patio door to prevent the door from being lifted out of the frame.

If your sliding patio door opens on the inside of the frame, install a wooden stick in the bottom of the frame to prevent prying.

Install a patio locking bar at waist level to prevent prying.





Residential Break and Enter Prevention Tips

The Richmond RCMP and City of Richmond work together to help prevent crime and make Richmond a safe community. You can do your part too! Secure your home properly to deter thieves. Thieves often look for an easy target. The following tips and checklist focus on safety measures to help you improve the security of your home.

For more information please visit www.homesecurity.com or call 604-207-4829.

Richmond RCMP Criminal Activity Map

Email your name and street address to: blockwatch@richmond.ca to receive an email alert should a residential break and enter occur in your neighbourhood.

Visit www.richmond.ca/crime for an interactive web page where you can view Richmond neighbourhood maps for current crime summaries and home security tips.

Join Block Watch

Richmond RCMP Block Watch is a free community-based, crime prevention program aimed at helping residents organize their neighbourhoods to help prevent crime in the community.

For more information, please visit: www.richmond.ca/blockwatch or call 604-207-4829

For more information, please contact:
Richmond RCMP Crime Prevention
Phone: 604-207-4829
Fax: 604-270-9372
Email: Blockwatch@richmond.ca
RCMP (emergency) 9-1-1
RCMP (non-emergency) 604-278-1212

City of Richmond
Main Switchboard 604-276-4000
Public Works Requests—Works Yard 604-244-1262

- To report street surface problems
- Missing, damaged or blocked traffic signs
- Burned out street lights or damaged light poles
- Watermain leaks or water quality (dirty water)
- Abandoned bikes

For 24 hour service, call 604-270-8721
Traffic Operations 604-276-4032 or 604-276-4210
• To report an obstruction to motorists' sightlines (fences, trees, shrubs, etc.)

Traffic Signal Outage 604-247-4616
Community Bylaws 604-276-4345
Richmond Fire Department 604-278-5131 (non-emergency)

Richmond Emergency Programs 604-233-3333
Crimestoppers 604-669-3477
www.socyclecrime.ca

Working together to prevent crime

City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1
Telephone: 604-276-4000
www.richmond.ca

Richmond RCMP
Crime Prevention Team
11411 No. 5 Road, Richmond, BC V7A 4E8
Telephone: 604-207-4829
www.richmond.ca/crime
December 18, 2013

Residential Break and Enter Prevention Tips



Please visit: www.richmond.ca/crime for neighbourhood crime information and www.richmond.ca/homesafety for home security tips

Working together to prevent crime

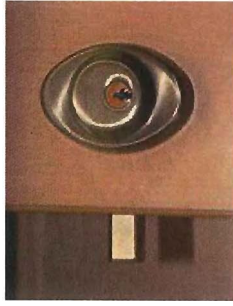


Richmond RCMP

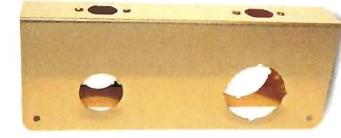
City of Richmond

Please review the following checklist to improve the security of your home:

Doors



- Install a deadbolt with a 1 inch throw (the part that extends into the door frame) on all exterior doors.
- Install a strike plate (the flat metal plate that fits onto the door frame) using 3 inch screws for maximum support.



- Install a door reinforcer (a U-shaped metal sleeve that fits under the door handle and deadbolt) for additional support.
- Install a 180° peephole.
- Doors should be well lit or lit by motion detector lights. Install anti-tampering cages over outdoor light fixtures to protect the light bulb.

- Are your doors kept closed and locked?
- Are 1 inch deadbolts installed on all exterior doors (including the door from the garage)?
- Are strike plates installed using 3" screws?
- Are door reinforcers installed on all exterior doors?
- Is a 180° peephole installed?
- Are your doors well lit?
- Do you have exterior lighting installed with anti-tampering cages?

Sliding Windows

- A small screw should be drilled into the top and bottom tracks to prevent the window from being lifted out of the frame.

- Install a sliding window lock or use a piece of wood cut to fit snugly into the bottom track to prevent the window from being forced open.



- To increase the usefulness of the sliding window lock, close the window, screw the sliding window lock tight enough to leave a mark in the frame. Remove the lock and drill a small hole in the mark. Replace the sliding window lock into the new hole.

- Do not use a sliding window lock that has a separate key, as the key could be misplaced which is dangerous in an emergency.

- If you have window bars installed, they must be equipped with quick release devices so people can get out quickly in an emergency.

- Are your sliding windows kept closed and locked?



CS - 53

Sliding Glass Doors

- If your door opens on the outside of the frame, install anti-lift guards (small L-shaped brackets) in the frame above and below the closed sliding patio door to prevent the door from being lifted out of the frame.
- Install a patio locking bar at waist level to prevent prying.
- If your door opens on the inside of the frame, install a wooden stick in the bottom of the frame to prevent prying.



All supplies can be purchased from your local hardware store.

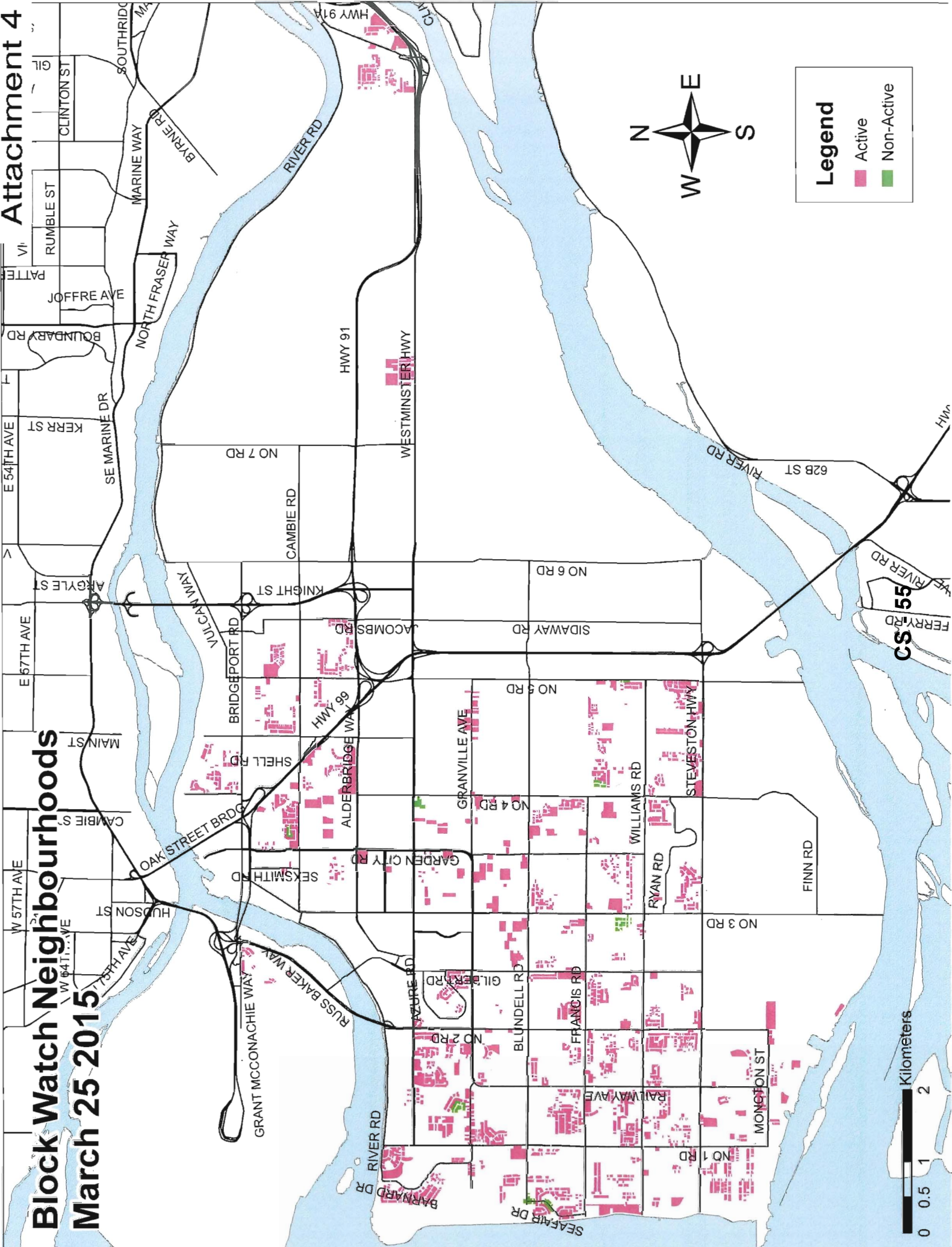
- Are anti-lift guards installed?
- Is a patio locking bar installed?

Outside Your Home

- Keep your shrubs and trees trimmed to avoid blocking your doors and windows.
- Make sure your address numbers can be clearly seen from the road, day and night.

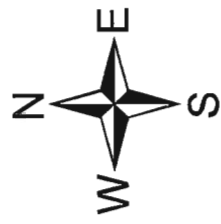


Block Watch Neighbourhoods March 25 2015



Legend

- Active
- Non-Active



Crime rings compiling list of homes prime for break-ins

By Richmond Review

Published: **October 09, 2014 04:00 PM**Updated: **October 09, 2014 04:564 PM**

Brinder Johal's instincts paid off, and he's crediting BlockWatch and his smartphone with helping him catch a teenage thief who snatched his laptop computer, hunting knife and a case of beer from his Steveston Highway home in late August.

After reading Wednesday's The Richmond Review, about a rash of break-ins in Steveston in recent weeks, he thought he'd share with the broader community the alarming intelligence he gathered after questioning the young man.

It was late on Monday, Aug. 25, shortly before midnight, when Johal heard his garage door open.

Already aware that somebody had broken into nearby homes, Johal was on alert, he said Thursday. So when he investigated, he found the red-handed thief in his garage, but the teen bolted.

Johal managed to tackle the youngster a few houses away, and with the help of a neighbour who works in security, they handcuffed the suspect.

According to the tearful 17-year-old, who was later taken into custody by Richmond Mounties, there's at least one crime ring that canvasses neighbourhoods, looking for darkened homes, unlocked doors and windows and signs of neglect, and is compiling a list of prime targets.

These addresses are then passed on to teens and young adults, who subsequently break in.

"I thought he was lying," Johal said of the thief's story.

He recalls the teen saying: "I was told that your house was an easy house."

The teen claimed he'd been instructed to target Johal's house, and even urged Johal to call the person using the teen's cell phone.

Johal is a member of BlockWatch, and said he receives alerts on his smartphone whenever a nearby home is struck by crime.

"That was the only reason I had my guard up," Johal said.

Considering how ubiquitous smartphones are these days, he's encouraging everybody to sign up and protect themselves from possibly being victimized.

"I'm telling everybody with smartphones."

To organize a BlockWatch program in your neighbourhood, or to find out if one already exists, call 604-207-4829, visit www.richmond.ca/blockwatch, or e-mail them at blockwatch@richmond.ca

Here are some basics to make your home safer:

- install motion sensor lights on the exterior of your home, both the front and the back
- leave a light on when you leave your house
- refrain from storing large amounts of cash or jewelry in your house

Find this article at:

<http://www.richmondreview.com/news/278734261.html>