

## Southampton Safety Plan

# SOUTHAMPTON SAFETY PLAN

Developed February to April 2017

Presented to Southampton Neighborhood Association Board April 2017

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## INTRODUCTION

Southampton has a safe neighborhood, but one with a property crime rate that has not broken in a downward direction and has stayed flat. In February 2017, neighbors from various points in Southampton formed a Safety Plan Committee to develop a plan specific to Southampton under the auspices of the Southampton Neighborhood Association. This committee agreed to create a plan under the Neighborhood Ownership Model (NOM) developed by the St Louis City Circuit Attorney's Office.

The following agreed to serve on this committee: Richard Pierce, Pat Arnold, Scott Krejci, Didi Brady, Holly Collins, Nancy Reichman, and Donna Agah. Meetings were held in person with communication and editing through various social media platforms. Thanks to Captain Michael Deeba, Emily Blackburn in the Crime Analysis Unit, and Officer Vince Stehlin for their assistance.

## NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME ASSESSMENT

### Part 1 - The Data

The per capita crime rate was detailed from 2008 to 2016 and compared to surrounding neighborhoods. Although surrounding neighborhoods were experiencing a drop in crime when comparing the per capita rate in 2008 to the per capita rate in 2016 (with drops ranging from -29% to -45%), the reduction in Southampton was a very modest -3%. Southampton was the outlier compared to the surrounding neighborhoods. See Attachment 1.

The good news is that Southampton is not suffering a high per capita crime rate against the person (examples, homicide, rape, etc.). Instead, property crime is remaining stubbornly flat. See Attachment 2. The majority of the property crimes in Southampton are vehicle crimes (broadly defined as crimes involving ransacking the interior (clouting), removal of parts (tires, hubcaps, etc.) and vehicle theft.

### Part 2 - Reducing Crime

Reaching lower crime levels means that a sustained, long-term approach must be taken to reduce crime, defined as a "support style" approach. Although the areas most impacted in Southampton were in District 1, the committee agreed that plans to reduce these crimes just in this section of the neighborhood may simply cause the crimes to show up elsewhere in Southampton. The committee recommends crime reduction throughout the neighborhood.

The largest component of the Southampton per capita crime involved motor vehicles in three ways--ransacking the interior (known as clouting), removing parts (tires, hubcaps, etc.), or outright theft. Incident reports were examined from 2008 through mid-March

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2017 focusing only on the residential addresses and including attempts as well as auto vehicles that were subsequently recovered. See Attachment 3.

Based on the geographical locations of the motor vehicle crimes, it was agreed that smaller neighborhood units could be organized using the Neighborhood Association structure with separate meeting dates for more detailed discussion of crime reduction.

After discussion, it was agreed to develop and notify all Southampton households of safety tips involving motor vehicles and to combine this with planned distribution from the Neighborhood Association. D. Agah will develop a half-page information flier for this.

### **Part 3 - Programs to Reduce Southampton Crime**

The committee took a general approach with the programs recommended for Southampton to preserve flexibility for changes as the programs are implemented and time passes. Only general outlines are provided.

**(1) Block Watch/Block Contact.** The Block Watch/Block Contact program is modeled on the older Neighborhood Watch/Block Captain program with additional clarity for the role of the Block Contacts. Identification of Block Contacts is to be undertaken for each 100 block in Southampton--even for double block streets--for a total of 57 blocks. This provides a small unit so neighbors can develop strong social ties. This small social unit is a critical component of an effective neighborhood safety program.

Block Watch/Block Contact groups are not vigilantes and do not assume the role of the police. With this program, neighbors are asked to be alert, observant, and caring--and to report suspicious activity or crimes immediately to the police. The purpose of the program is to deter crime and report incidents and problems, rather than sit back and hope that someone else will take care of any crime or livability problems. The Block Watch group will be actively and directly involved in their block in solving problems using a community-based, non-confrontational manner. Also available to the group are members of the Neighborhood Association's Safety Committee as well as Neighborhood Stabilization Officers (NSO's) to assist in problem resolution.

The goals of the Block Contact program are threefold and are identified below:

#### ***Educate Neighbors***

- Prevention and safety information for home, vehicle, garage, and person
- Safety Products
- Suspicious activity--how to recognize it and where to report it
- Report to the right place with the right information
- Vacant property "care"
- Abandoned vehicle "care"
- Zoning advocacy (Ex. new business approval/no approval)

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### ***Get involved in the Block and in the Neighborhood***

- Introduce yourself
- Welcome and include new neighbors
- Know your neighbors
- Organize Alley/Street cleanup
- Provide fun activities like closed street block parties, potlucks, etc.
- Enjoy neighborhood activities (Ex. National Night Out)
- Use Nextdoor to organize each block as a private group for information exchanges
- Join and encourage your block to join the Southampton Neighborhood Association.
- Identify neighbors needing volunteer assistance.

### ***Perform Block Alert functions***

- Know how to recognize suspicious activity and where to report it
- Identify nuisance property, vacant property, abandoned vehicles, illegal dumping, etc. for handling by the Neighborhood Association Safety Committee and/or the Neighborhood Improvement Specialist.
- Advocate for help as needed from the Police Department, from other City Departments, and from the Neighborhood Association Safety Committee.

### ***(2) Quarterly Safety/Livability Meeting Schedule***

Safety/Livability Meetings are to be held quarterly in months when an Association General Meeting is not scheduled. Due to time constraints in the General Meetings, a separate meeting structure allows for detailed discussions of crime and livability issues as well as public awareness and education. Block Watch/Block Contacts are encouraged to attend this detailed meeting. This separate meeting also allows for flexibility in dealing with faster response to changes in the crime pattern. Representatives from the Police Department, City staff and City elected officials involved with safety and livability issues are encouraged to attend these meetings. These meetings will be held in February, June, August (National Night Out may be substituted), and December. Preferred dates will be during daylight hours on the weekend.

### ***(3) Educational Safety Meetings***

If required, brief (30 minute) educational safety meetings are scheduled by the Safety Committee when incident reports in Southampton and/or in surrounding neighborhoods show a need. These are to be designed around one safety issue--for example, reducing your risk of robbery, reducing your risk of burglary, etc. These meetings may be multi-neighborhood and not restricted to Southampton.

### ***(4) Rapid Crime Analysis and Safety Alerts***

A review of crime data from various sources--Block Contacts, Police incident reports, social media, etc.--will be made and a decision made if developing trends demand urgency. Safety alerts can be quickly developed and distributed throughout the neighborhood using Block Contacts and the Nextdoor social media platform.

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### ***(5) Safety Committee***

Leadership for safety efforts will be through the Southampton Safety Committee with the Chair appointed by the President and approved by the Board of the Southampton Neighborhood Association. This Chair will be a voting member of the Association Board. Authorization and coordination of any safety fundraisers require Board approval. Partnerships exist at the Association with the Police Department, various City agencies as well as with elected Alders. These partnerships provide a strong foundation for the Safety Committee and any issues identified by the Block Contacts

### ***Functions of the Committee:***

Use police incident reports to identify emerging issues and to monitor flat or improving trends.

Communicate directly with Block Contacts.

Schedule presenters for educational safety meetings.

Submit and obtain an approved community impact letter and collect signatures to submit to the Circuit Attorney's Office.

Develop and distribute timely and informative safety tips and educational material.

Identify unsafe sidewalk sections and advocate for correction.

Advocate for implementation of the traffic study recommendations

Develop an annual budget for each calendar year by November.