

Brechin Hill Neighbourhood Safety Audit 2021



Nanaimo Community Policing

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Introduction

The Nanaimo Neighbourhood Safety Audit is a hands-on crime prevention initiative undertaken by the Nanaimo Community Policing program in collaboration with the RCMP, Neighbourhood Associations, Vancouver Island University, and many other people and organizations in Nanaimo. Safety audits are a useful tool which have been used in many cities throughout Canada and the U.S to help address safety challenges in neighbourhoods.

Safety Audits work to promote neighbourhood safety by identifying factors relating to safety and crime. Safety Audits allow neighbourhoods to work with residents, businesses, police and other agencies to find ways to reduce the opportunities for crime and incorporate relevant crime prevention programming. The findings of the Safety Audits are based on residents' and business owner's experiences and perceptions of crime and safety, crime statistics, social contexts of the local neighbourhood and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessments of problematic locations found in the neighbourhood.

Safety Audits have the potential to bring about a wide range of benefits, including:

- Reduction in opportunities for neighbourhood crime by working to address criminogenic factors.
- Identify a neighbourhood's strengths and weaknesses in regards to crime and safety, and work with neighbourhoods to incorporate community safety and crime prevention tools.
- Increase residents' awareness of neighbourhood crime and crime prevention, as well as reduce levels of fear of crime through the spread of information.
- Reduces isolation and creates opportunities for residents and businesses to share their experiences of crime and vulnerability.
- Strengthens connection between residents as they work together to build a strong and healthy neighbourhood.
- Creates a strong relationship between residents, RCMP, neighbourhood associations, and other organizations through collaboration and communication.

The Neighbourhood Safety Audit seeks to give residents an opportunity to have their voices be heard, and prioritizes effective collaboration between neighbourhoods and other aspects of the community. The recommendations presented in this report are based on the needs of neighbourhood residents, and are intended to work towards effective, long-term interventions to address issues of safety and crime. Safety Audits are a tool that can greatly contribute to safer and healthier neighbourhoods in Nanaimo.

Background

The Brechin Hill neighbourhood of Nanaimo was one of six neighbourhoods selected to be audited by the Nanaimo Community Policing Program project team. Brechin Hill represented a promising location for a Safety Audit for a variety of reasons.

Residents from Brechin Hill were highly receptive to initial inquiries about their interest in participating in such a project. Many residents were proactive in reaching out to the Community Policing Coordinator, to express their desire to contribute to improving neighbourhood safety. This high level of motivation among residents was important in deciding to conduct a Safety Audit in Brechin Hill, as it clearly demonstrated that the neighbourhood's inhabitants were invested in the outcome of the project, and would be effective partners to work with.

Brechin Hill also has a strong neighbourhood association, which connects many of the area's residents. The Brechin Hill Neighbourhood Association President, aided the project team in a variety of ways, which helped to ensure the Brechin Hill audit could be conducted effectively. This further demonstrated the investment that Brechin Hill residents have in the safety of their neighbourhood.

Pre-Audit Survey Results

The results of the pre-audit survey which was distributed to Brechin Hill residents directed efforts during the Safety Audit, and gave a more complete picture of the perceptions and experiences of Brechin Hill residents. A total of 126 individuals responded to the survey.

Brechin Hill respondents displayed a high level of investment in their neighbourhood, with 82% stating they felt a strong or very strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, and 89% saying they would recommend their neighbourhood to others. A large majority of respondents stated that they had people in the neighbourhood they could rely on, and felt satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their relationships with friends, family, and neighbours. They also demonstrated an overall high level of trust for neighbours, work colleagues, and businesses in the neighbourhood.

While almost 72% of respondents reported feeling satisfied or very satisfied with their general sense of safety in the neighbourhood, other data suggests a very high degree of fear of crime among some residents. 69% of survey respondents believed that rates of crime in Brechin Hill were increasing, and 32% believed that crime rates were higher in Brechin Hill than they are in other similar BC neighbourhoods. Moreover, 57% of the sample stated they would not feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood during the night. Roughly 48% of the survey respondents felt it was likely or very likely

that they would be the victim of a burglary within the next twelve months, and 46% felt it was likely they would be harassed in some way.

These concerns about neighbourhood crime are further illustrated by the reasoning provided by survey respondents. The most common reason for residents feeling unsafe, or feeling that criminal activity is a major issue is the presence of homeless individuals and those with substance addictions. These concerns are demonstrated in quotes from respondents such as “We need to deal with homelessness and drug addicts” “Less Transient traffic/ removal of drug houses” and “There’s often people in the neighbourhood that don’t live here. Homeless seeming people or those appearing to be intoxicated/ under the influence of drugs”. Many residents associated homelessness with criminal activity, and are highly fearful as a consequence. Beyond this, many respondents reported incidents of property crime as being a major factor in feelings of a lack of safety. Many respondents stated their belief that this was a chronic issue in the neighbourhood, and linked these acts to the homeless population in the area. Others identified environmental factors in the neighbourhood as having a negative impact on their feelings of safety. This includes areas with poor lighting, traffic safety concerns, unsafe conditions for pedestrians, and locations that could be attracting criminal activity.

Roughly 68% of respondents believed that more policing would have a meaningful impact in their feelings of safety. An increased police presence was also a relatively common priority by respondents in a later question. A large majority stated their belief that more efforts have to be taken to reduce the homeless population the area, and reduce the prevalence of property crime and drug use. Some respondents believed that more effective community collaboration would have a positive impact on their feelings of safety, including the implementation of more comprehensive neighbourhood watch programs, and greater community participation in addressing identified problems.

Demographic characteristics of the sample group were also collected in the pre-audit survey. A majority of Brechin Hill respondents were above the age of 55, and roughly 40% were retired. 86% of the survey sample identified as Caucasian, a less than 4% identified as First Nations or a visible minority, and over 77% were born in Canada. 50% of the sample reported an annual income of \$75,000 or above.

The concerns of the Brechin Hill survey respondents offer a clear look into the perceptions and experiences of the neighbourhood’s residents. This was highly valuable in guiding how the Safety Audit was conducted, and the recommendations that were made in response to the findings.

Brechin Hill Safety Audit Summary

On April 29th, 2021 at 7 pm neighbourhood residents gathered to conduct a safety audit along a route that was identified through online survey and anecdotal sources as presenting community safety challenges. Due to COVID safety protocols, participation was limited to 10 participants.

The Brechin Hill Neighbourhood Safety Audit, had 6 neighbourhood residents participate including a resident that had physical disability. One business representative attended along with 1 criminology practicum student, the Community Policing Coordinator and the City of Nanaimo Social Planner. The residents that participated represented other key groups in the neighbourhood, specifically, the Brechin Hill Neighbourhood Association, and several Block Watches. The route chosen, as mentioned previously, was largely based on feedback from those living and working in the Brechin Hill Neighbourhood. The route included a commercial hub, a school, trails/pathways and many residential areas. (See Appendix A for specific route information)

Terminal Park Plaza (Location #1)

We started the audit out front of the old Save on Foods location which is now an empty building. There were comments of disappointment in Save On Foods shutting down their operations. The store brought a lot of positive activity to the area and now there is more opportunity to commit crime. In the evening the parking lot and abandoned building lacks any lighting making visibility tricky.

In this particular area, there were some concerns about homeless people who frequent the area. The residents noted that the majority of the activity happened during the evening rather than the day. They have noted that homeless people have been known to take shelter in the bank and frequent the parking lot after hours. This was evident during the evening of the audit where we had several encounters with homeless individuals when we were wrapping up the audit. One participant noted an encounter that had her concerned for the safety of an individual who was carting a large amount of goods across the highway. He had to make several trips and was nearly hit a few times. The participant was also concerned for her safety as this particular individual was yelling obscenities at her while she was leaving Terminal Park Plaza on her bike. However, most residents have not had any personal run-ins with homeless people but would not opt to walk around this area alone at night. Many attendees were considering if by helping the homeless people by giving them food would benefit, but were unsure if it was the right thing to do.

Merchants in the area did note that they did have to do regular needle clean up and ask individuals to refrain from loitering around their business. There were mentions of unpredictable behaviour by some individuals in the area who seemed to be under the influence of substances.

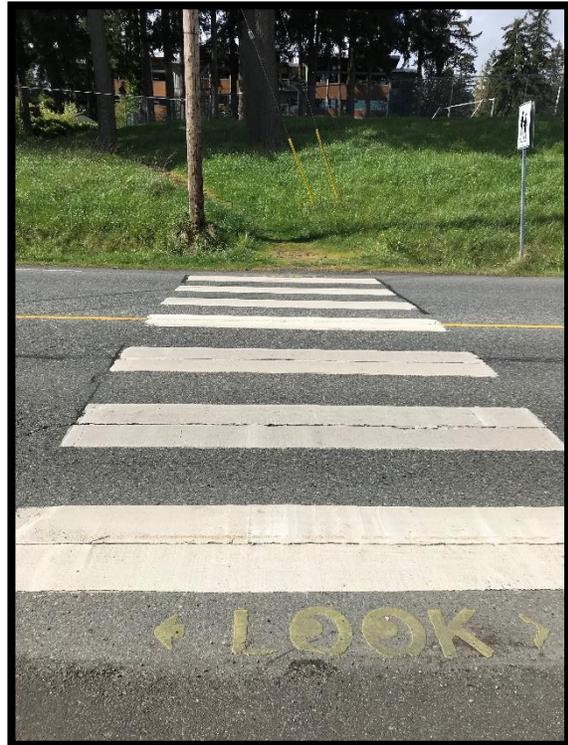
Poplar Street and Terminal Avenue North (Location #2)

The next location was near the Golden Sands Tanning business and the Nanaimo Bulletin, where attendees mentioned it was dark and felt very unsafe in this area. Not many people come to this part of the area during day light or evening hours. Due to COVID-19 there has been a creation of “dead zones” where many businesses who once had a high rate of customers and activity no longer have enough frequent visitors, allowing transient people to loiter. The lighting presented a challenge as there is not enough to see around the corner or what is in front of you. Another concern was due to the loud traffic creating a sense of anonymity for those who are frequenting this area.

Estevan Road – from Poplar Street to Brechin Road (Location #3)

The next location was on Estevan Road where the main concern centered on traffic safety. There is only once sidewalk on the east side of Estevan that continues down all the way to Brechin Road. Many mentioned it was sufficient at the time but now that the nearest grocery store is now located at Brooks Landing (just past the intersection of Brechin Road and Estevan Road) the amount of pedestrians travelling Estevan Road has increased. The coordination of crosswalks and sidewalks means that pedestrians will often find themselves walking where there is no sidewalk and no sufficient shoulder.

The crosswalks are problematic, many are fading, signage is lacking, and there are no general street lights anywhere near the crosswalk to help with visibility for oncoming traffic. The main concern by the residents was for the children who walk to school, as there is no sidewalk on the east side of Estevan nor a proper crosswalk, which ends in a ditch near the school. One participant emphasized that “there are lights all along the road but the crosswalk”. The bus stop is also in front of the school where children depart off the road as there is no pull out or sidewalk.



Ecole Oceane is located on Estevan Road just south of the Estevan Road and Brechin Road intersection and brings a lot of traffic before and after school times. The parking lot is troublesome for both staff and parents because the lot is small and limited. There is no official drop off area so many parents drop their kids off on the road.

Terminal Avenue North Tunnel at Waddington Road (Location #4)

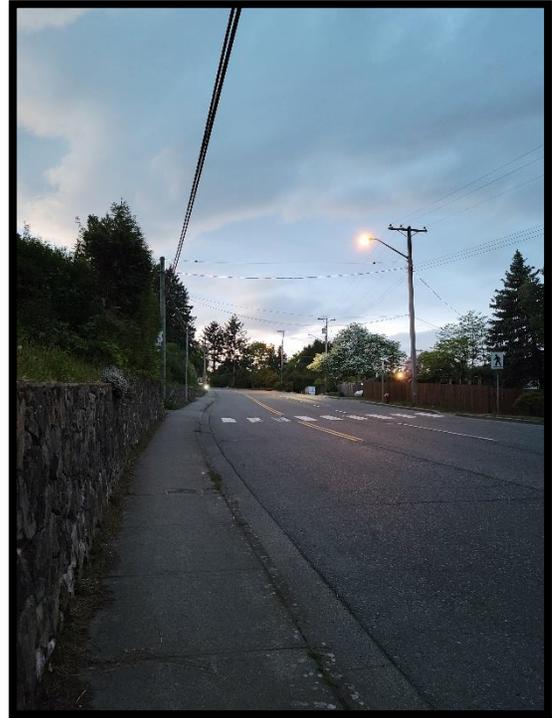
The next location that was identified as problematic was the tunnel leading to the back of Ecole Oceane School from the other side of Terminal Road North/Island Highway at Waddington Road. Most attendees voiced that they were scared to use this tunnel as it lacks visibility, smells of urine and feces, is filled with garbage and evidence of drug use, and is used frequently by homeless people. However, this is also a main route for many pedestrians travelling from the Waddington Road area to the Brechin Hill Neighbourhood. There is no other way to get to the Brechin Hill Neighbourhood area other than travelling further a considerable walk down the highway. There was evidence of broken fences and graffiti, leading up to the west side of the tunnel. The lighting in the tunnel and around the tunnel was problematic. The lighting during the evening was sufficient within in the tunnel however the lighting leading up to the tunnel was dark and visibility was limited. During the day the contrast between the daylight and the low lighting in the tunnel made it hard for vision to adjust entering the tunnel.

Additionally, during previous conversations with the administration staff at the school, they mentioned that they do a sweep of the tunnel and their playground (which directly lines up with the tunnel) for discarded needles. They find needles almost on a daily basis. There was some confusion from the residents on who was responsible for the cleanup of the tunnel and how often this was happening.



Brechin Road and Estevan Road (Location #5)

The next location was along Brechin Road where the main emphasis was on the lack of traffic safety. The intersection at Brechin Road and Estevan Road is unique as it is also an off loading road off the Island Highway. Many participants voiced that they refuse to stand on the crosswalk median at the intersection of Estevan Road and Brechin Road because of the tight roads and large vehicles travelling through the intersections. One particular resident participates in a crossing guard program at the nearby Ciliare Elementary School and she mentioned that there have been numerous times where large trucks and semis hit the medians with their tires as they turn into the intersection. Additionally, the construction at the corner of Brechin Road and Estevan is impeding on to the sidewalk and makes it hard for anybody with a physical or a visual disability to use the sidewalks around the construction site. At the intersections at Brechin Rd and Estevan and at the bottom of Brechin Rd there is no sound alerts alerting those with visual impairments when they can safely cross the intersection. The traffic along Brechin Road heading to and from the ferry terminal results in many tanker trucks, big vehicles and small vehicles at extreme speeds. There is one speed monitoring board along Brechin Road however one participant noted: "I sit on the bench and watch people slow down because they see their speed, and then speed back up after they've passed the reader".



Additionally, there are challenges around the placement of crosswalks along Brechin Road. There are 3 crosswalks along Brechin Road, one at Brechin and Beach Drive North, one at Brechin and Ocean Terrace and finally one at Brechin Road and Beach Drive South. There is no crosswalk on the north side of Brechin Road forcing pedestrians to have to cross Brechin Road twice sometimes up to 4 times if they are to access the main hubs at Brooks Landing and/or the Ferry Terminal. The cross walk at the Beach Drive South also presents a visibility challenge. Brechin Road is noted to have a challenge with motorists not obeying the speed limit. The crosswalk in question is placed directly after a curve in the road and makes pedestrians nervous crossing when they worry motorists won't see those crossing or won't be able to slow down in time. Instead the pedestrians opt to cross further east on Brechin Road where there is no crosswalk but better visibility as to vehicles travelling east on Brechin Road. Finally, there is lack of warning signs for motorists warning them of upcoming crosswalks.

The residents expressed concerns around the increase of traffic, vehicles and pedestrians that will be frequenting the area once the new development is complete at Brechin Road and the South side of

Beach Drive. With the current stresses they feel that the development will be a tipping point threatening traffic safety if changes aren't made to the crosswalks, speed limits and visibility.

Brierly Hill Road (Location #6)

The final location was Brierly Hill Road and the empty lot located between Brierly Hill Road and Brechin Road. The main concern is around some of the homeless encampment activity on the privately owned empty lot. Residents report a frequency of abandoned or parked cars at the “no dumping” area at the south end of the empty lot. Drake Road runs parallel to this lot and borders it on the south side. The city has implemented parking regulations on this street due to its proximity to the Ferry Terminal however this land is private property, so the City of Nanaimo has no authority to enforce a no parking rule. As previously mentioned, this neighbourhood is located next to the Ferry Terminal and is susceptible for ferry parking, which allows for greater opportunities for crime. Due to the high rate of transient people in this area, from ferry users and transient folks passing by there have been reports of individuals walking right into houses/carports and breaking into parked cars along Brierly Hill. Brierly Hill Road is often used as a thoroughfare from Terminal Park down to the waterfront.



Other Observations and Comments

Final comments from the residents included how they really appreciated the walkway along the waterway on the east side of the neighbourhood (along Stewart Avenue). Many appreciated the work that businesses were doing to make their areas safer. Several of those on the walk reported having their garage or shed broken into and witnessing what they noted to be individuals casing out properties to perhaps return to steal valuable objects.

While there were many concerns around homelessness and transient people, traffic safety seems to be the bigger issue in this neighbourhood. Many enjoy their neighbourhood, the scenery, the businesses in the area, the neighbours, and the fact that many are ten minutes to either side of town.

Crime Statistics Summary

The Uniformed Crime Reporting Survey (UCR) was developed and designed as a tool for communities to measure the incidence of crime. This information taken with other indicators can be used by federal and provincial policy makers as well as other agencies. Official UCR statistics provided by the Nanaimo RCMP offer some insight to the extent to which the Brechin Hill Neighbourhood is affected by neighbourhood crime. This data outlines the rate at which a wide range of crimes and other incidents occurred in the Brechin Hill neighbourhood between January of 2017 to March of 2021.

Overall, there has been a notable increase in the total number of incidents reported in the Brechin Hill neighbourhood in recent years. In both 2016 and 2017, less than 100 total annual incidents were reported. This number rose to 161 in 2018, 217 in 2019, and 194 in 2020. In addition, there were a total of 62 incidents reported between January and March of 2021. While these numbers are clearly illustrative of an upwards trend, they do not necessarily demonstrate an increase in the actual number of crimes occurring in the Brechin Hill neighbourhood. These totals include not only actual incidents of criminal activity, but also incidents in which police were notified of a suspected or possible crime, that may or may not have actually happened. Because of this, the increase in total numbers of reported incidents could, for example, be the result of changes in the reporting habits of Brechin Hill residents. In addition, in January 2019 the coding methodology of incidents in the UCR changed during this time period. The scoring in the UCR takes a more victim - centred approach. All incidents are “founded” and therefore scored in the UCR unless the incident has been determined through police investigation that the offence reported did not occur, nor was it attempted. This was not the case prior to 2019; this doesn’t mean these types of activities weren’t happening prior to 2019 but rather they were not scored because of the evidence required to make them founded. It is estimated that due to this, General Occurrences, unspecified assistance and Suspicious Occurrence files will automatically increase due to this change.

A sharp increase can be seen in the number of reported incidents of what is classified as Suspicious Occurrences, and Other General Occurrences (Other GO¹) In 2016 and 2017, a total of just 6 Other GO incidents were reported. This number jumped to 26 in 2018, 38 in 2019, and 48 in 2020. Similarly, no incidents of suspicious occurrences were reported in 2015 or 2017, and only 7 in 2018, but 51 were reported in 2019, and 65 were reported in 2020. These spikes can partly be contributed to changes in the ways that incidents are classified in the UCR, as well as Brechin Hill residents being more willing to report suspected criminal incidents to police. An increase was also visible in the number of Municipal

¹ Other General Occurrences include reports that pertain to Well-Being Checks, the Trespass Act, the Quarantine Act, Lost Property, the Safe Streets Act, etc.

Bylaw violations reported to police. This trend can possibly be attributed to more frequent calls to police and/or bylaws from Brechin Hill's Block Watch and Neighbourhood Association.

Other criminal incidents such as Break and Enters to businesses and residences, incidents causing disturbances, theft under \$500, mischief to property, and theft from vehicles have remained relatively constant throughout the years covered in the UCR data, with no obvious trends being present in the report. Incidents of shoplifting saw a significant spike between 2017 and 2019. There were 9 reported shoplifting incidents in 2016, 24 in 2017, 38 in 2018, 21 in 2019, and only 6 in 2020. This drop in 2020 could possibly be influenced by the closures and restrictions placed on businesses by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in less opportunities for shoplifting offences to occur. Serious crimes are especially rare in the Brechin Hill neighbourhood. Only 1 incident of Arson, 1 incident of robbery, and 1 incident of theft over \$5000 occurred during the five-year period covered in the report.

BRECHIN HILL	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	5year Trend	5year Average	Jan-Mar 2021
TOTAL	94	82	161	217	194		150	62
ARSON	0	0	0	1	0		0	0
AUTO THEFT	3	2	2	0	1		2	2
BIKE THEFT	1	0	0	0	1		0	0
BREAK & ENTER - BUS	2	0	6	6	1		3	0
BREAK & ENTER - OTH	4	0	3	1	2		2	1
BREAK & ENTER - RES	8	4	2	2	0		3	1
CAUSE DISTURBANCE	15	17	6	10	8		11	2
COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY	0	0	1	2	0		1	0
FRAUDS	5	2	6	8	6		5	1
MISCHIEF TO PROPERTY	12	11	21	25	17		17	4
MUNICIPAL BYLAW	0	0	9	15	12		7	9
OTHER GO	4	2	26	38	48		24	18
OTHER THEFT O/5000	1	0	0	0	0		0	0
OTHER THEFT U/5000	6	9	10	9	7		8	0
POSSESS STOLEN PROPERTY	0	1	2	0	1		1	1
PUBLIC MISCHIEF	0	0	1	6	0		1	0
ROBBERY	0	0	0	1	0		0	0
SHOPLIFTING	9	24	38	21	6		20	2
SUSPICIOUS OCCURRENCES	0	0	7	51	65		25	20
THEFT FROM MAIL	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2		-	0
THEFT FROM VEHICLE	24	10	21	19	17		18	1

Crime Prevention and Community Safety Recommendations

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Safety Audits is to support local neighbourhoods in building resiliency and increase safety. Work is done by activating the neighbourhood by capturing their real lived experiences through tools such as the pre audit survey, the group audits and/or self-directed audits. Engagement of the neighbourhood is important to help co create safety and connect agencies that can provide support in developing and carrying out community safety initiatives or appropriate crime prevention activities.

Crime and community safety issues are complex and are often a symptom of a lack of access to the social determinants of health for not only individuals but neighbourhoods and communities. The root causes of crime are often the results of adverse social, economic, cultural and family conditions (Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council, 1996). The recommendations made here are suggestions on activities that neighbourhoods can do to contribute to the overall safety and security of the neighbourhood. They do not guarantee that crime will never happen as a result of implementing these recommendations nor will the following recommendations solve complex problems such as homelessness, the opioid crisis or the lack of resources around mental health services.

Brechin Hill Neighbourhood Recommendations:

1. Brechin Hill Neighbourhood has a very robust Neighbourhood Association and several block watches set up. This has allowed a network of neighbours to evolve into an intricate network. This has supported the creation of a Facebook Group page that allows for the communication of neighbourhood events and alerts that relate to safety. Having relationships with neighbours is a positive indicator for increasing neighbourhood safety. This tightly knit network can be used as a resource to improve conditions in neighbourhood. It will be important to sustain this work especially as people move in and out of the neighbourhood. Consider hosting block or work parties several times a year in areas of the neighbourhood that might need some clean up or beautification. These types of events also support relationship building between residents. For instance, neighbourhood residents could target the tunnel under the Island Highway that is problematic and organize a graffiti removal party. There are several options that may cover the costs, for instance, the City of Nanaimo often provides social planning grants that support projects that build resiliency and social connectivity. The Nanaimo Foundation also provides Neighbourhood grants to help build safer communities. These grants can cover supplies and food for event. Community Policing can provide the support of additional volunteers to help with painting and/or garbage pickup. Always ensure you have the permission of the property owner prior to conducting any clean up events or block parties. It's always a good idea to reach

out to the municipality to let them know about your plan and if there is any protocols or regulations that might apply to the area you are looking to clean up or host your block party at.

2. Actively encourage new block watches in the neighbourhood. Host Cst. Gary O'Brien to annual Neighbourhood Association meetings to promote and support the implementations of new block watches within the neighbourhood.
3. Reach out to the new lease holder of the old Save On Foods location at Terminal Park prior to operation to inform them of the community safety context of the neighbourhood and encourage a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessment prior to opening their business. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) incorporates a set of strategies that help to reduce the opportunities to commit crimes, reduce the fear of crime, and prevents negative activity by replacing it with generators of positive activity (International CPTED Association, 2020). CPTED is grounded in practical and theoretical knowledge primarily from the fields of criminology, sociology, psychology, and architectural design. Community Policing can provide this assessment free of charge.
4. Knowledge around who to call and when to call to report criminal or nuisance activity is very helpful in proactively addressing safety issues. Reporting all incidents of suspicious, criminal or nuisance activity help to bring awareness to the problems happening in the neighbourhood and can directly protect family, neighbours and business owners. Many individuals hesitate to call the police or the local municipality out of fear of getting involved, sounding overly suspicious, taking up scarce resources or they may fear being identified. Only residents in a neighbourhood know who or what doesn't belong in your neighbourhood so this is a critical part of crime prevention. There are several ways and points of contacts to make reports so this can be confusing to residents. It is encouraged that all residents in the Brechin Hill Neighbourhood receive the appropriate information via digital or physical resources. Community Policing Services can work with the City of Nanaimo to deliver the "Who to Call and When to Call" pamphlets to residents. Information can also be shared around what types of details are needed to share with departments such as police, bylaw, sanitation, at Neighbourhood Association meetings.
5. Feedback collected online, during the Audit and through review of the crime statistics, findings indicate that much of the crime happening in the area are crimes of opportunities. Often offenders will choose easy targets that offer rewards with little risk. This has a higher tendency to happen on thoroughfares that people use to get from point A to point B. Brechin Hill Neighbourhood is in between major commercial and transportation hubs. It is recommended that residents learn ways to reducing these opportunities for offenders by implementing CPTED Strategies on their property. Community Policing Services can provide resources to conduct Home Security Checks to improve safety and security. It is also recommended to do some Auto Theft Awareness in the neighbourhood since there is a steady trend of theft from vehicles over the last 5 years.

6. Traffic Safety is a big concern along Brechin Road and one of the initiatives that can support the reduction of speed is to deploy Speed Watch programming. Speed Watch is a program that is delivered by Nanaimo RCMP Community Policing Services with the support of ICBC. Trained Nanaimo Community Policing volunteers set up speed monitoring equipment that help to educate drivers on the local speed limit and provides a general deterrent to speeding for most motorists. Statistics are also collected and passed along to ICBC and our local Traffic Unit to help bring forth problematic areas and provide focus for enforcement strategies especially where excessive speeding is a problem.

Opportunities for Change:

1. As mentioned, traffic safety is one of the biggest concerns in this neighbourhood. Speed monitoring and traffic enforcement is just one approach to traffic safety. Linkages to the City of Nanaimo and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will be important to create proactive structural change along Estevan Road, Brechin Road and at the intersection where the two latter roads meet. This Neighbourhood Safety Audit Report will be shared at the Nanaimo Road Safety Committee where local and provincial agencies are involved in traffic safety are represented to help inform any initiatives they may be working on.
2. Another large concern of the Brechin Hill Neighbourhood is the public disorder correlated with the drug, mental health and homelessness crisis. Police statistics show an increase in public disorder type events, for instance, there is an increase in General Occurrence type events which includes infringements on the Trespass Act, Quarantine Act, lost property events, Safe Street Act, etc. It is important to note that as mentioned previously the coding and reporting of police statistics changed in January 2019 which accounts for some of the increase however the sheer number of General Occurrence events warrants mention. This can also be said with the number of Suspicious Occurrence events. Many residents are concerned with the lack of housing, and support services for individuals with mental health and addictions issues. The public disorder causes fear among the residents and many are worried that the lack of housing and the pressures of moving homeless individuals from one location to another in the downtown area will put additional pressures on the surrounding neighbourhoods. Linkages and collaboration between neighbourhoods and the Health and Housing Task Force will be key to get the community support and resources the Task Force may need to carry out their Action Plan. Partnerships such as these also help to tackle stigma and correct any harmful myths with evidence based research on what is working to address homelessness and our current drug and mental health crisis'.

Summary

The Brechin Hill Neighbourhood is one of the older neighbourhoods in Nanaimo with lovely historical character. The neighbourhood is situated between many vital hubs in the city which allows for easy access to vital services for most of the neighbourhood's residents. There are recreational parks, walkways and beaches within walking distance. Brechin Hill Neighbourhood's proximity also can make it an easy target for opportunistic and transient criminals as they travel between hubs. The Neighbourhood has done an amazing job in making Brechin Hill a really great place to live. The residents' commitment and dedication to safety and wellbeing to their neighbourhood is apparent through the networks they have built with one another and their willingness to get involved. Nanaimo Community Policing Program is honoured to have such a valuable working partnership with the Brechin Hill Neighbourhood. It would be very beneficial to revisit the Brechin Hill Neighbourhood again in 2 to 3 years to see what crime prevention programs have been implemented and what positive impacts have been made in the neighbourhood.

References

International CPTED Association. (2020, October 19). *ICA Home Page*. Retrieved from ICA:
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Appendix A

Brechin Hill Safety Audit Route Map

 **Start and Finish @**
Terminal Park by the old
Save on Foods

- 1) Walk along the plaza parallel to the highway towards the Nanaimo News Bulletin and Poplar Street. Head down Poplar Street.
- 2) Turn left onto Estevan Rd and continue on to the pathway/trail right before Ecole Oceane. Turn left on the trail.
- 3) Walk along the trail until you come to the pedestrian tunnel right behind the school.
- 4) Walk through the tunnel to the other side to get a feel for walking through the tunnel. Return back through the tunnel to the school.
- 5) Walk along the pathway towards the Ecole Oceane parking lot. Then walk south on Estevan Rd until you reach the cross walk. Safely cross Estevan Rd and then head north on Estevan Rd.
- 6) Take a right on Brechin Road. Walk towards the Ferry Terminal but stay on the South side.
- 7) Turn right on the pathway that leads to Briarly Hill. The pathway trail head is on Brechin Road and is directly across the street from Beach Drive at the bottom of the Hill.
- 8) Walk up Briarly Hill until Larch Street.
- 9) Turn Right on Larch Street.
- 10) Cross Estevan Rd at the cross walk and walk down Estevan Rd to Terminal Park where you will finish at the starting point.

