

# LAS VEGAS METROPOLITAN

# POLICE DEPARTMENT

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# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

# PROGRAM EVALUATION

PHASE I

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#### LAS VEGAS METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM EVALUATION** PHASE I - QUESTIONNAVRE RESULTS

**U.S.** Department of Justice National Institute of Justice

85964

\_\_Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department

> Prepared by: Police Planning Bureau October 12, 1982

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Captain Survey Member Survey Meetings Held for Neighborhood Watch Program

#### INTRODUCTION

During June, 1980, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department implemented the Neighborhood Watch Program within the community. From July 1, 1981 to June 30, 1982, the program increased from 230 Neighborhood Watch groups to a total of 850 groups. The number of citizens involved increased during the same time period from 2,500 participants to 11,000 participants. The number of police officers assigned to the program increased from 1 part-time officer in June, 1980, to 4 full-time officers at the end of Fiscal Year 1981-82. In addition to the officers assigned to the program, 6 community volunteers called "Footprinters" also assist in providing programs to Neighborhood Watch groups.

Nationwide, neighborhood watch programs with various functions have been in existence since the early 1970's. Most projects stress active citizen involvement largely independent of government control, but working with local police agencies. An evaluation (1975) on the National Neighborhood Watch Program sponsored by the National Sheriffs' Association indicated that . . . "the mere presence of Neighborhood Watch stickers on windows and doors, along with the formation of neighborhood-action teams, will itself deter crime and lower the rate of criminal breaking-and-entering."

The Neighborhood Watch Program of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is basically a self-help program with neighbors looking out for each other. The Program has five primary functions:

1. a <u>scheduled watch</u> function in which residents go to their front yards at pre-determined times and survey the activities of the neighborhood. Reports are made to the Police Department based on their observation.

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2. a hardware change function in which participants, with the assistance of a police officer and upon request, conduct security surveys of their homes. Police personnel recommend security changes (deadbolt locks, pinned doors, etc.) which ensure that the residence is less vulnerable to criminal entry.

3. the <u>Social Security number</u> marking function provides an electric engraver to mark all property with the owner's social security number. This function aids in identifying the property if it is stolen.

4. the sign placement function requires the placement of Neighborhood Watch signs as a visual deterrent identifying the neighborhood as an organized watch group. Participating homeowners are given several neighborhood watch decals to place in windows, doors, and at entrances to rear yard areas.

5. the continual <u>police - citizen interaction</u> function is provided by the monthly contact that is made by a member of the police department with the block captain to gather information and discuss any crime problems in the neighborhood.

Based on the tremendous growth in the program which was straining Metro's resources devoted to the Neighborhood Watch Program, as well as the need to review the effectiveness of the existing program, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department undertook a two-phased approach to evaluate the program.

1. The first phase of the evaluation involved a survey of neighborhood watch groups. This phase was concerned with the citizen participants' perception of the effectiveness of the program.

2. The second phase of the program was a statistical review of police records to determine if an actual reduction of particular types of crimes had occurred. Sample areas would be determined by viewing concentrations of neighborhood watch groups which would be defined on a census block area. These areas would be reviewed with respect to actual crime statistics over a specified period of time. NOTE: By necessity this phase will take place over a longer period of time given the "newness" of most block groups.

The following evaluation reviews the first phase of the project, i.e., the questionnaires submitted to the neighborhood block group captains and members.

In June, 1982, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department developed a survey to send to neighborhood watch group captains and members. This survey was developed after a considerable review of other localities' Neighborhood Watch Program evaluations. Although questions were developed from these surveys, no survey was determined suitable for replication in the Las Vegas metropolitan area; thus, a survey form was developed within the Department.

In essence, the survey was concerned with citizens' perceptions of crime before and after the Neighborhood Watch group was formed, as well as citizens' perceptions of changes in the neighborhood based on the Neighborhood Watch Program. Changes in citizens' perceptions had been determined by other studies to be key areas in the success of Neighborhood Watch programs. For example, a U.S. Department of Justice study on Neighborhood Crime, Fear and Social Control, which looked at the Hartford, Connecticut program, concluded that "strengthening informal social control in a neighborhood can have a positive effect on the fear of and concerns about crime". In other words, perceptions concerning crime can be changed.

Other areas viewed in this study were attempts to determine the impact of minimal involvement in a watch program, i.e., what factors of the five points of the Neighborhood Watch Program have the most success in the program as well as policecitizen interaction in watch programs. Efforts were also made to view the findings of the National Coalition Against Crime. These findings were that neighborhood watch groups were affected by the transient nature or the stability of a neighborhood and that single family housing was likely to have more success than other housing types in neighborhood watch groups. Thus, the survey took into consideration the length of time that the members had been living at their present address as well as the type of housing structure.

After agreement had been reached on the survey within the Department, Dr. Ron Smith, Department of Sociology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas was asked to review the survey. To a large extent, changes were made based on his comments. The questionnaire was sent out to all block group captains in the middle of July, 1982, with the request for return date of July 30, 1982.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE METHODOLOGY

Based on Dr. Smith's comments that captains might have certain positive biases toward the program, two members from each block group were queried. While the best method would have been a direct mail questionnaire to the captains and a random selection of two members, it was determined that fiscal constraints would not allow such a cost. Therefore, the member questionnaires were mailed with the block captain's questionnaire. It then became the block captain's responsibility to have two of the block's members complete the questionnaire and return it to the captain. The captain would then return all three questionnaires in a stamped and addressed envelope provided by the Department. Members, however, were given the option of mailing their questionnaires back to the Department in a separate envelope (not provided) if they so desired.

In order to clearly indicate that the survey was being conducted by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, the following was done:

1. questionnaires were sent out in envelopes with the Neighborhood Watch emblem on the front as well as the return address for Metro

2. a letter signed by Sheriff John McCarthy on Department letterhead explaining the purpose of the survey was enclosed

3. a telephone number for the Department's Crime Prevention Bureau was provided on both captain and member questionnaires

4. Metro's Communications Bureau was advised that the questionnaires had been sent out to block group captains and members.

It soon became obvious based on the slow number of returns that the time limit of July 30th was not sufficient time. Based on requests from watch group captains who called in prior to the ending of the return date of the questionnaires, the time limit was extended. The return rate might have been higher at some other time period than the vacation month of June. Of the 771 questionnaires sent out, only two were returned undelivered, both for valid reasons. These were not counted in the return results, thus a total of 769 questionnaires were sent to neighborhood block captains with 1,538 member questionnaires (two per block group captain). Copies of both surveys are appended to this report. NOTE: Block croup captains may be captains of more than one block group.

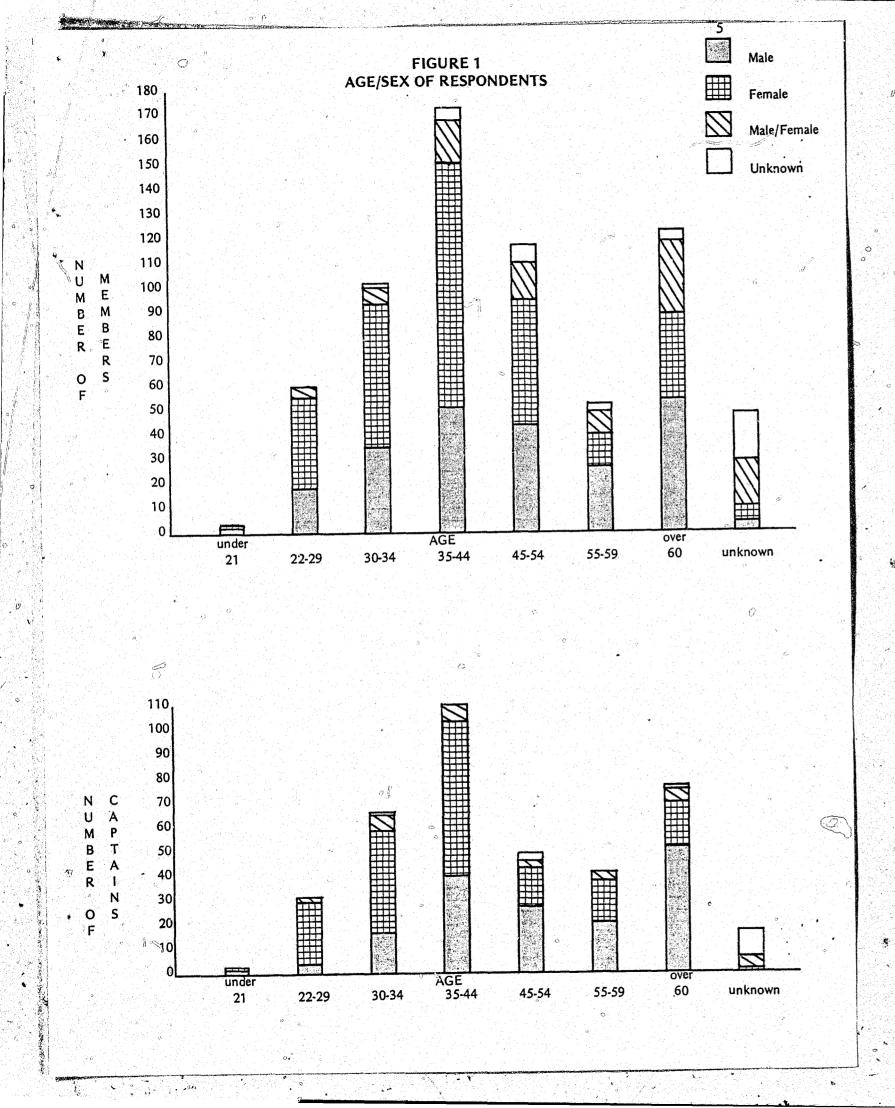
A total of 393 captains' surveys were returned for a return rate of 51 percent. Neighborhood member questionnaires had a return rate of 44 percent or 678 questionnaires.<sup>1</sup> NOTE: Some members did return their questionnaires individually. The total number questioned and returned to the Department was 1,071. This number when viewed against the 12,012 total number of participants in the Neighborhood Watch Program as of July 30, 1982, represents 9 percent of the total members in the Neighborhood Watch Program.

<sup>1</sup>While a 51 percent return is considered "good" on a mail-out survey, it seems somewhat low given experiences in other localities' block group programs of higher return rates. The 44 percent return can probably be attributed to the method of mailing with dependency on the block group captain for distribution. Return surveys were coded in order that answers could be tabulated through an automated system. Some problems were encountered through the incorrect answering of questions, particularly in the area of sex and age. In instances in which a husband and wife were co-captains, both frequently marked the survey to indicate two ages and both male and female. This created some problems in that ages for one or the other could not be differentiated. These surveys were first coded as "9" indicating an incorrect coding but were later manually retrieved and thus the male-female combinations were developed that may be seen in some parts of the survey. Questions with no "answer were marked as a "zero". However, tables showing "unknown" included both "9" and "0" answers, i.e., those incorrectly completed as well as those whose answers were not circled. Once coded, the data became information through the use of a standard statistical software package, specifically the SPSS package, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

### Respondent Characteristics - Captains

As previously indicated, 393 of the respondents were block group captains and 678 were block group members. A review of captain respondents by age and sex (see Figure 1 - bottom portion) indicates that overall there were more female respondents than male respondents, but this varies according to age. In the age groups less than 45 years old, there were more female captains than males; however, in the age groups above 45 years old, there were more males than females. The greatest disparities between male and female captains can be seen by the examples of the 22-29 years old age group in which there were 25 female captains compared to 4 male captains and 2 male-female co-captains versus the 51 males in the 60 years old and above age range compared to 18 females and 5 female/male co-captains. Almost half of the captain respondents were in the 30-44 years old age range.

#### SURVEY RESULTS



The 89 percent of the block group captains who lived in single family detached housing is very disproportionate to the housing situation in Metro's urban jurisdiction in which only 45 percent of the housing units are single family.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, mobile home occupants were under-represented in the neighborhood watch group since only 6 percent of the block group captains respondents were mobile home occupants as compared to 11 percent of the housing stock in the Valley (see Figure 2).<sup>3</sup>

In viewing length of time at present address, neighborhood watch captains were also atypical of the Valley resident who has an average tenure of 2.5 years.<sup>4</sup> Over half of the block group captains have been at their present address for over five years, with 84 percent of all captains living at their present address for at least two years or more.

Respondent Characteristics - Members

Member characteristics follow those characteristics detailed for captains above (see Figure 1 - upper portion). Some 41 percent of the members were in the 30-44 years old age group (compared to 49 percent for captain respondents). Not surprisingly, similar housing types were seen for members as for captains. Similar tenure rates were noted for members as for captains - more than half of the members have lived in their home for more than five years.

As will be detailed later, citizen involvement or lack of involvement in the various functions of the neighborhood watch program may impact the perception of the success or gon-success of the program.

The level of involvement in certain functions of the neighborhood watch group was determined by asking the block group captain to circle all activities and the extent to which the neighborhood watch group was involved based on the following activities: "scheduled watch (in which members check outside for suspicious activities)", "neighborhood patrols", "ensuring that all residents have a list of valuables with social security numbers engraved on the valuables", "making security hardware changes", and "other, specify".

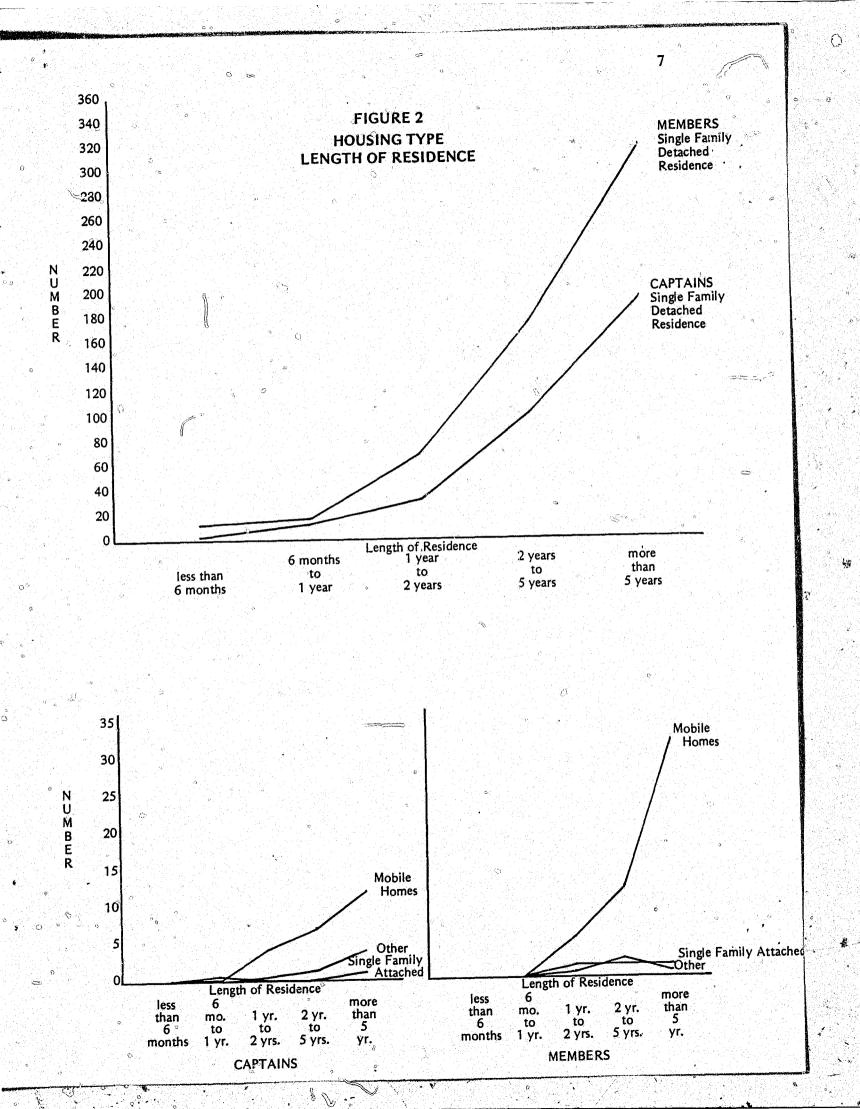
<sup>2</sup>1982 Housing Stock Information provided by Clark County Comprehensive Planning, October 4, 1982. Metro's "urban jurisdictions" delete Boulder City, North Las Vegas, Henderson, and the rural areas (staffed by resident officers) of the total Clark County housing stock.

<sup>3</sup>The Crime Prevention Bureau does not organize rental complexes into groups. Since many mobile home parks are rental, the under-representation is understandable.

p. 112.

#### Involvement in the Neighborhood Watch Program

<sup>4</sup>Tenure information provided by Clark County Comprehensive Planning based on migration information contained in Comprehensive Plan: Task One, August, 1981,



Not all block groups were involved in the three functions which serve as cornerstones for LVMPD's Neighborhood Watch Program: scheduled watch, social security number engraving, and hardware changes. Indeed, a manual tally of the surveys indicate that 11 block groups were not involved in any of the activities. An additional 17 were involved in only one activity with that activity for the most part being scheduled watch. Some 54 block group captain respondents indicated involvement in two activities with those two activities for the most part being scheduled watch and social security number engraving.

Only 79 percent or 311 of the total block group captain respondents indicated that their groups were involved in all three cornerstone functions of the program: scheduled watch, social security number engraving, and hardware changes. Some 130 block group captains of the 311 included participation in neighborhood patrols as well. In these latter groups, additional activities included the installation of better lighting, telephone number exchange, placing addresses on rooftops, a neighbor notification system when vacationing, periodic block parties and meetings, etc.

A review of the above by tabulated answers for each function indicated that overall scheduled watch and the engraving of social security numbers had the greatest participation within the block groups.<sup>5</sup> Neighborhood patrols, while a function of other block groups in some areas of the country, but not the LVMPD program, was answered by the least number of block group captain respondents.

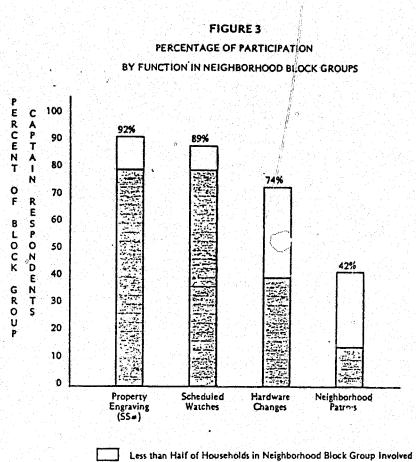
Even in situations in which there was involvement in specific functions, this involvement was frequently limited in the proportion of households in the block group participating. In viewing the activity, Captains were asked to include the level of participation of households in the block based on the following: —"not involved," "less than half of the households involved," and "more than half of the households involved."

In referring to Figure 3, schedule watch and social security number engraving had a high proportion of households involved. Some 302 out of the 393 captain respondents indicated that more than half of the households in the block groups were involved in scheduled watch (77 percent) and 310 out of the 393 captain respondents indicated the same for social security engraving (79 percent). On the other hand, only 40 percent or 158 block groups participating in "making hardware changes" had more than half of the households participating.

It did not appear that crime problems prior to the implementation of the block group affected the level of participation. As an example, block group captain respondents indicated that anywhere from 83 to 87 percent of the block groups with more than half of the households participating in social security number engraving, hardware changes, and scheduled watch had victims of burglary prior to the implementation of the block group program. Similar percentages (78 to 83 percent) for block groups with less than half of the households participating in social security engraving, hardware changes, and schedule watch also had victims of burglary prior to the implementation of the block group program.

<sup>5</sup> The Crime Prevention Bureau requires engraving to be accomplished before the groups are given their decals and signs.

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More than Half of Households in Neighborhood Block Group Involved

Citizen Perceptions — "Has your neighborhood watch group made you feel safer in your neighborhood"

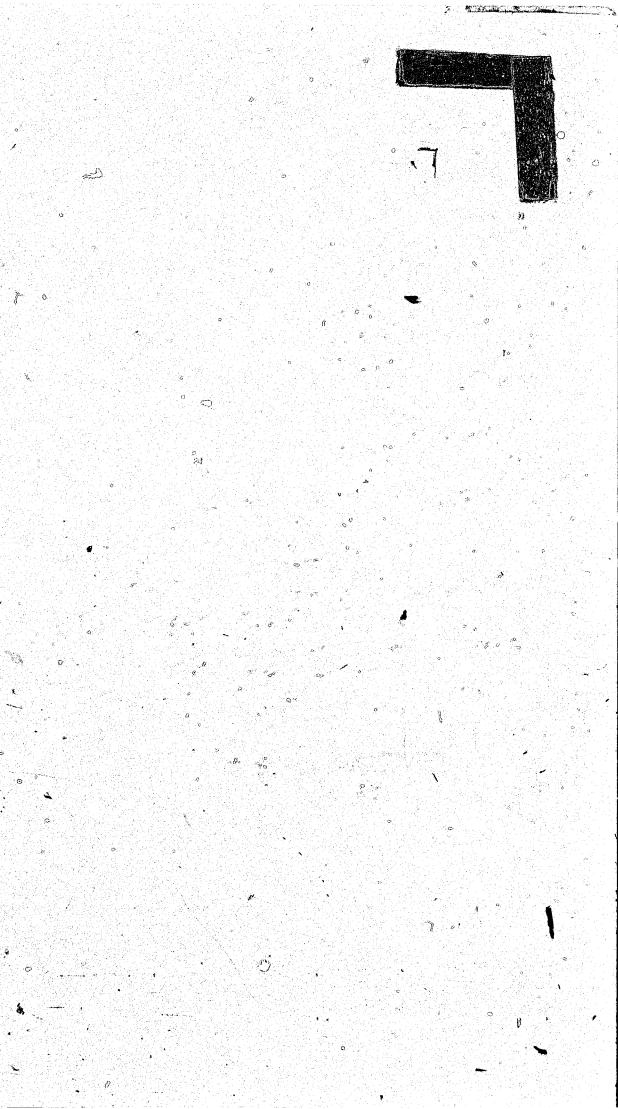
In response to the question, "In your opinion, has your neighborhood watch group made you feel safer in your neighborhood," Table I shows the answers that were derived for captains as opposed to members.

#### TABLE I

#### "DO YOU FEEL SAFER"

	MEMBERS				
No.	Percent of Total Captains	Percent of No. Total Members			
Yes 357	91	639 94			
Can't Tell 20 No 2	<b>5</b>	24 4 9 1			
No Answer 14	3	9 6 1			

Thus, the answer to the question from both the captains and member respondents was a resounding "yes". When the sex and age of the captain respondents was viewed (see Table II, page 10), certain differences in perception appeared. While all age



## TABLE II DO YOU FEEL SAFER IN NEIGHBORHOOD?

	CAPTAINS									
	FEMALE		MALE			MALE & FEMALE*		UNKNO		
AGE CATEGORIES	yes	no	cannot tell	yes	no	cannot tell	yes no	cannot tell	yes no	
under 21	1			2		<u> </u>				
22 - 29	21	1	3	3		1 -				
30 - 34	40		1	17			6	1	1	
35 - 44	59		4	39		1	7			
45 - 54	15		-	25		2	3		3	
55 - 59	15			20		1	4			
over 60	18			44	1	6	5		1	
unknown	1					· · ·	5	·		
TOTAL	170	1	8	150	1	11	32	1	5	

MISSING 14 CASES

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						MEMBI	ERS				
AGE CATEGORIES		FEMA	LE		MALE		MALE & FEMALE*			UNKNOW	
	yes	no	cannot tell	yes	no	cannot tell	yes	no	cannot tell	yes	ca no
under 21	1			2							
22 - 29	33	1	3	18			4				
30 - 34	54	1	2	31	2	2	7			1	
35 - 44	94	3	2	50		1	15		1	5	
45 - 54		48	2	43		1	13	1	1	7	
55 - 59	14		2	25		1	9			3	
over 60	33		1	51	1	1	29		- 1	5	
unknown	5	•	1	4			17		2	18	
TOTAL	282	5	11	224	3	6	94	1	5	39	

MISSING 6 CASES

\*HUSBAND & WIFE COMBINATION COMPLETED THESE QUESTIONNAIRES.

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cannot tell	Total
	3
	31
2	66
	110
	48
	40
	75
	6
	379

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cannot tell	Total
	3
	59
1	101
	171
1	117
	52
	122
	47
2	672

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groups' perception was one of being "safer" (based on the 91 percent "yes" answer), the 22-29 years old age group and the 60 year and older age group were less likely to answer "yes" as compared to all captain respondents based on their 84 percent and 89 percent respective "yes" responses of all responses for the age group. Females in the 22-29 years old age group and males in the 60 years and older age group were less likely to answer "yes". On the other hand, captains in the 30 to 34 years old age group had the highest percentage of "yes" answers at 97 percent of the total responses for that age group.

Interestingly enough, member respondents had a higher total percentage of "yes" responses than did the captain responses, although for the most part, in the other responses by age group, percentages were similar.

Citizen Perception - "Has the neighborhood watch group reduced crime in your area"

As can be seen from Table III, a positive response was obtained from both captain and member respondents, although less positive than the "do you feel safer" question.

#### TABLE III

#### "HAS CRIME BEEN REDUCED"

		CAPTAINS	MEMBERS			
	No.	Percent of Total Captains	No.	Percent of Total Members		
Yes	259	66	465	69		
Can't Tell	113	29	193	28		
No	5	1996 - 19 <b>1</b> 9 - 1997 - 19	7	1		
No Answer	16	4	13	2		
Total Respondents	393	100	678	100		

It should be noted that the difference occurred in the "cannot tell" category which jumped from 4 and 5 percent on the "do you feel safer" question to 28 and 29 percent in the question "has crime been reduced." "No" answers remained at 1 percent in both questions for both captain and member respondents.

As can be seen by the table on "has crime been reduced by sex and age", (Table IV), compared to the table on "Do you feel safer in the neighborhood by Sex and Age" (Table II), captain respondents in all age and sex groups switched from "yes" on the "do you feel safer" question to "cannot tell" on the question "has crime been reduced". Once again, while the majority of respondents in the 22-29 years old age range indicated that crime had been reduced, they are less likely than other age groups to answer "yes". Compared to all captains who answered "yes" 66 percent of the time, respondents in this age range answered "yes" only 54 percent of the time. The 55-59 years old age group was also less likely to answer "yes" (a 61 percent "yes" response). However, once again captain respondents in the 30-34 years old age group were more likely than all other captain respondents to believe that crime had been reduced with a 76 percent "yes" response.

Similiarly, members also switched from "yes" on the "do you feel safer" question to "cannot tell" on the "has crime been reduced" question and in some instances to "no."

## Factors Affecting the Change from "Yes" to "Cannot Tell" on the Questions "Do you Feel Safer" and "Has Crime Been Reduced"

The increase in "cannot tell" responses from the question "do you feel safer" to the question "has crime been reduced" can be understood by reviewing the short existence of most block groups. It had previously been indicated that the majority of growth in the Neighborhood Watch Program occurred from July 1, 1981 to June 30, 1982. Thus, it was not surprising that over 4 out of every 10 respondents were block group captains whose blocks had been in existence for less than six months. Less than 3 out of 10 captains responding had block groups that had been in existence from six months to less than 1 year, and only 3 out of every 10 captain respondents had blocks which had been in existence for longer than one year.

# TABLE IV HAS WATCH GROUP REDUCED CRIME IN AREA BY MEMBERS?

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	CAPTAINS							
	F	EMALE		MALE	MALE & I	EMALE*	UNKNOV	
AGE CATEGORIES	yes	cannot no tell	yes	cannot no tell	yes n	cannot o tell	yes no	
under 21		1	2					
22 - 29	14	1 10	2	2	1	1		
30 - 34	32	1 8	13	4	4	3	1	
35 - 44	41	22	28	12	5	2		
45 - 54	12	4	15	12	2	1	2	
55 - 59	10	5	13	1 7	2 1	1		
over 60	14	4	36	1 11	4	1		
unknown	1				5			
TOTAL	124	2 54	109	2 48	23 1	9	3	
MISSING 16 CASES								

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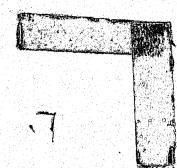
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		МЕМВЕ	RS		
	FEMALE	MALE	MALE & FEMALE*	UNKNOWN	
AGE CATEGORIES	cannot yes no tell	cannot yes no tell	cannot yes no tell	cannot yes no tell	Total
under 21	1	1 1			3
22 - 29	27 9	12 6	4 1		59
30 - 34	42 15	22 1 12	6 1	1 1	101
35 - 44	66 3 31	34 17	9 1 3	5	169
45 - 54	37 12	24 20	9 1 5	6 1 1	116
55 - 59	12 2	23 3	6 3	2	51
over 60	25 9	33 19	23 5	4	118
unknown	5 1	3 1	13 6	11 8	48
TOTAL	214 3 80	152 1 79	70 2 24	29 1 10	665

MISSING 13 CASES

\*HUSBAND & WIFE COMBINATION COMPLETED THESE QUESTIONNAIRES.



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and the second	1
cannot tell	Total
	3
	31
	66
	110
1	49
	40
1	72
	6
2	377

As can be seen by Figure 4, there was, not surprisingly, a high level of "cannot tell" respondents in both the captain and member responses prior to the 6 months of existence -a level which decreased substantially after the first 6 months of existence.

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The above indicates that it is not that captain or member respondents were less positive about the reduction in crime than their greater feelings of safety in the neighborhood, but simply that it was "too soon to tell" whether or not crime had been reduced. The key is that two out of three captain and member respondents believed that "yes, crime had been reduced".

Has Crime Been Reduced Based on Respondent's Accounts of Problems Before and Reported Incidents After the Implementation of the Neighborhood Watch Program

While a positive response was obtained on the reduction of crime with the Neighborhood Watch Program, the questionnaire also sought to view what kind of reduction in what types of crimes had been accomplished based on information provided in the questionnaire. It was not the intention of this survey to compare citizen information contained in the questionnaire with actual reported incidents, based on the confidentiality of the survey. Reductions or increases in neighborhood block groups in reported criminal activity to the police will be viewed in phase two of this evaluation through the use of sample neighborhood watch and non-neighborhood watch areas after the programs have been in existence for a longer period of time.

Problem areas prior to the implementation of the Neighborhood Watch Program were determined by two questions as follows:

- 1. "Would you say that there was a significant crime problem in your neighborhood block area before the neighborhood watch program was instituted?"
  - 1) yes, several of my neighbors had been victimized
  - 2) no, none of my neighbors had been victimized

3) am not sure

- 4) did not live here when the neighborhood watch program started
- 2. "If you indicated "yes" or number 1 to question "e" above, circle all problem areas that existed before the neighborhood watch program started"
  - 1) someone breaking into homes or other structures on the premises (burglary)
  - 2) people taking items left out in the yard, patio or breaking into vehicles (larceny)
  - 3) physical assaults by another person not known to the victim

4) vandalism

5) other: specify

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EMBER

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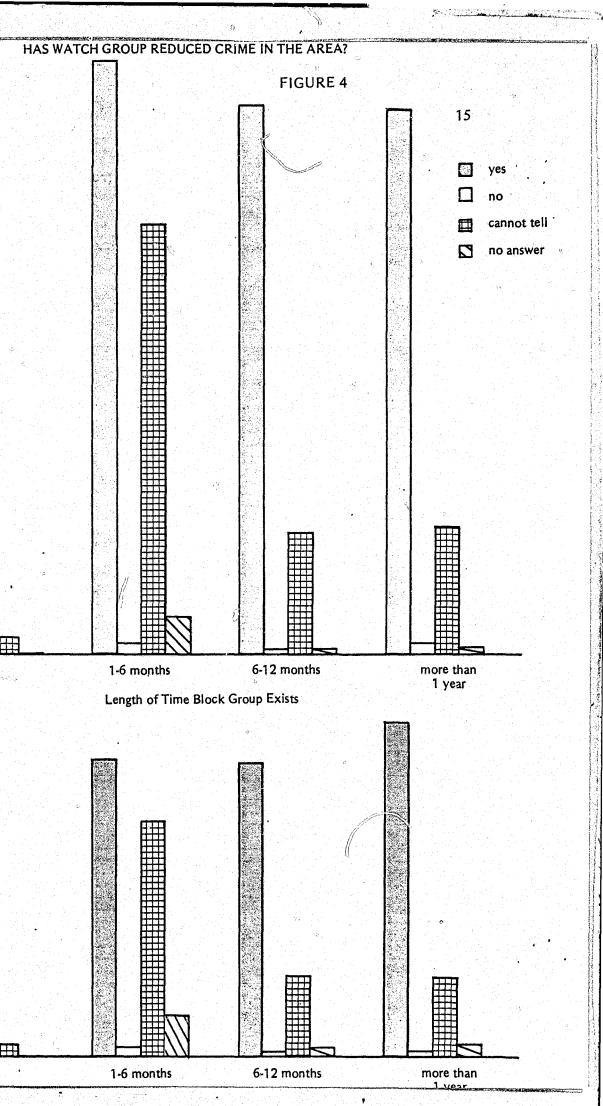
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Problem areas subsequent to the implementation of the Neighborhood Watch Program were determined by the following question: "Based on your knowledge, how many of the following crimes have occurred in your watch area since your neighborhood watch block group was formed? (Insert the actual number for each crime that has occurred, i.e. 0, 1, 2, etc.)". The same types of incidents indicated in the second question above were then provided again. It was the purpose of these questions to view criminal incidents before and after. While both captains and members were asked this question, the answers of the captains were determined to be the best source of information, particularly as there was not the redundancy that might be found in two members from the same block.

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Information provided by the captain respondents indicated the following:

#### TABLE V NO. AND TYPE OF PROBLEMS BEFORE

Type of Incident That was a Problem Before Neighborhood Watch	No. of Captains Responding
Burglary	325
Larceny	193
Vandalism	103
Assault	26
NOTE: Survey allowed multiple resp	onses

In order to avoid any biases, all captain questionnaires were reviewed on a "before" and "after" basis with the following results:

#### Burglary

As seen by the table below, over 8 out of every 10 block captains reported a prior burglary problem in their block group. After the implementation of the block group, only 2.5 out of every 10 block captains with prior problems reported at least one incident occurring. This amounted to a 70 percent decrease in burglaries based on block group captain accounting. On the other hand, 12 block captains reported incidents of burglaries after the implementation of the watch group although there had been no prior problem.

#### TABLE VI

WAS BURGLARY A PROBLEM BEFORE WATCH GROUP? BY NUMBER OF BURGLARY INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED AFTER WATCH GROUP

	NUMB	ER OF CAPI	TAINS CITING	<b>G BURGLAR</b>	Y INCIDENTS	
BEFORE	NO INCIDENTS	1 INCIDENT	2 INCIDENTS	3 INCIDENTS	4 INCIDENTS	ROW TOTAL
NO, BURGLARY WAS NOT A PROBLEM BEFORE	56	9		C	0	68
YES, THERE WAS A BUR- GLARY PROBLEM BEFORE	226	62	23	8	6	325

#### Larceny

As seen by the table below, almost 5 out of every 10 block group captains reported a prior problem with larcenies. After the implementation of the neighborhood watch group, only 1.8 out of every 10 block captains with prior problems reported at least one incident of larceny. This amounted to a 64 percent decrease in larcenies based on block group captain accounting. On the other hand, 27 block group captains experienced incidents of larceny after the block group program when they had not had a prior problem.

#### WAS LARCENY A PROBLEM BEFORE WATCH GROUP? BY NUMBER OF LARCENY INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED AFTER WATCH GROUP

		NUMBER	OF CAPTAINS	CITING LARCI	ENY INCIDEN	TS AFTER		
BEFORE	NO INCIDENTS	1 Incident	2 INCIDENTS	3 Incidents	4 Incidents	6 INCIDENTS	9 INCIDENTS	ROW Total
NO, LARCENY WAS NOT A PROBLEM BEFORE	173	18	5	3	7X 1	0	0	200
YES, THERE WAS A LARCENY PROBLEM BEFORE	123	51	14	2	0	1	2	193

#### Vandalism

4.9

As seen by the table below, 2.6 out of every 10 block group captains reported a problem with vandalism prior to the implementation of the neighborhood watch pro- $\sim$ gram. After implementation, less than 1 out of every 10 block group captains with prior problems had at least one incident of vandalism occur in their block group. On the other hand, 19 block captains reported incidents of vandalism after the implementation of the watch group although there had been no prior problem.

<b>U</b>	NL	JMBER OF CAP	TAINS CITING	VANDALISM IN	CIDENTS AFTE	R	
BEFORE	NO INCIDENTS	1 Incident	2 Incidents	3 Incidents	4 INCIDENTS	9 Incidents	ROW Total
NO, VANDALISM WAS NOT A PROBLEM BEFORE	271	18		0	o ()	0	290
YES, THERE WAS A VAN- DALISM PROBLEM BEFORE	66	22 22	12			1	103

#### TABLE VII

#### TABLE VIII

WAS VANDALISM A PROBLEM BEFORE WATCH GROUP? BY NUMBER OF VANDALISM INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED AFTER WATCH GROUP

Assault

For the most part, few watch captains experienced problems with assault before or after the implementation of the neighborhood watch program. For less than one out of every 10 block captains who did have a problem prior to the implementation of the watch group, only 3 block group captains (or less than 1/10 of a block captain out of every 10 block group captains) experienced at least one incident of assault after implementation of the program. However, 4 captains with no prior problems did report incidents after implementation of the program.

58 18

#### TABLE IX

#### WAS ASSAULT A PROBLEM BEFORE WATCH GROUP? BY NUMBER OF ASSAULT INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED AFTER WATCH GROUP

	NUMBER OF CA	PTAINS CITING ASSAULT INC	IDENTS AFTER	
BEFORE	NO INCIDENTS	1 Incident	3 Incidents	ROW TOTAL
NO, ASSAULT WAS NOT A PROBLEM BEFORE	363	4	0	367
YES, THERE WAS AN ASSAULT PROBLEM BEFORE	23	2		26

In reviewing the "before" and "after" affects in the various areas above, it appeared that the Neighborhood Watch Program most readily affected incidents of burglary. However, based on the incidents of burglary which continued to occur, in which there were prior problems and burglaries which occur in watch groups in which there had been no prior problem, the question must be asked, "Did the level of involvement of households in a watch group affect the reduction in burglaries?"

#### Level of Involvement of Neighborhood Watch Households Versus Reduction in Burglaries

When comparing before and after burglary problems with the level of involvement in the Watch Program, reductions in the level of burglaries appeared to increase with the level of participation based on captain respondents. Since the greatest number of captain respondents indicated participation in scheduled watch and social security engraving, these two activities were viewed with respect to captains who indicated that they had a burglary problem before the implementation of the program and their view of the number of burglaries occurring after the watch group implementation.

#### Scheduled Watch

Some 302 of the 349 watch captains involved in scheduled watch had a burglary problem before Neighborhood Watch was implemented. In addition, 8 of those not involved in scheduled watch also had a burglary problem before the block group concept was implemented (although they are not involved in the scheduled watch activity). NOTE: The remaining 15 watch captains with prior burglary problems did not indicate whether or not they were involved in scheduled watch with the assumption being made that they were not.

As can be seen by Table X, burglary problem reduction was similar for block captains who indicated they were not involved in scheduled watch (caution should be used given the small number) and for groups which only had less than half of the households in the block group involved in scheduled watch. However, the reduction increased significantly for households with more than half of their households involved in scheduled watch - to 73 percent from 45 to 50 percent for no involvement and less than half of the households participating:

Groups Not Involved

Groups With Less Than Half of Households Participating in Watch Group

**Captains Indicating** 

Groups With More Than Half of Households Participating in Watch Group

Note: 15 Captains did not report level of participation

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Based on the above and without a statistical correlation, block group captains whose groups had more than half of their households involved in scheduled watch programs appeared to have a greater decrease in the level of burglaries occurring before and after the program than those captains who were either not involved in the scheduled watch program or captains who had less than half of the households in their block group involved in scheduled watch.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Logically, this would appear valid. However, no effort was made to prove or disprove the assumption statistically based on other intervening variables.

#### TABLE X

#### No. of These Capt.(s) Indicating Percentage No Problem Problem No. Capt.(s) Indicating Decrease After After **Prior Burglary Problem** 50 45 21 38 17 73 92 192 264

#### SCHEDULED WATCH BY LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

### Social Security No. Engraving

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A similar decrease in burglaries can be seen in block groups compared to those groups with social security number engraving programs. Some 297 of the 306 block captains indicating involvement in a social security number engraving program had a burglary problem prior to the implementation of the neighborhood watch group. In this program activity, it would appear that the percent of decrease in burglaries became larger as more involvement occurred.

#### TABLE XI

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### SOCIAL SECURITY NO. ENGRAVING BY LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

Captains Indicating	No. Capt.(s) Indicating Prior Burglary Problem	No. of These Capt.(s) In No Problem Pro	blen, Perce	entage rease
Groups Not Involved	9	5 /	4 4	4
Groups With Less Than Ha Households Participating in Watch Group		22 /	17 5	56
Groups With More Than Ha of Households Participatin Watch Group		185 /	73 7	72

In reviewing the above information, only the level of involvement has been measured against reductions in burglaries as reported by neighborhood watch captains. What has not been discussed is the affect of high participation in more than one activity. This may or may not have an impact on burglary reduction rates as reported by watch captains.

### Citizen Perception of the LVMPD Role

Over all, the majority of captains indicated that there was a better relationship with LVMPD since the inception of the block group when questioned as to whether the relationship with LVMPD had improved. As can be seen by Figure 5, the percentage of "yes" responses increased from 71 percent for respondents who had been a block captain less than a month to 72 percent for captains who had held that position for one to six months to 82 percent for captains with a tenure of 6 months to 1 year. The highest percentage of "yes" responses were received from captains who had held their position for a year or more -- 90 percent.

In viewing the areas in which Metro suggested assistance, block captains indicated the following: 154 captains or 39 percent did not circle either "more assistance" or "stop by more often"; 169 captains or 43 percent requested that police officers stop by more, but no additional assistance was needed at block meetings; 25 captains or 6 percent requested that more assistance be provided at meetings; and, 45 or 11 percent requested both more assistance at meetings and that officers stop by more. Overall, 214 captains requested that officers stop by more and 70 captains requested additional assistance at meetings.

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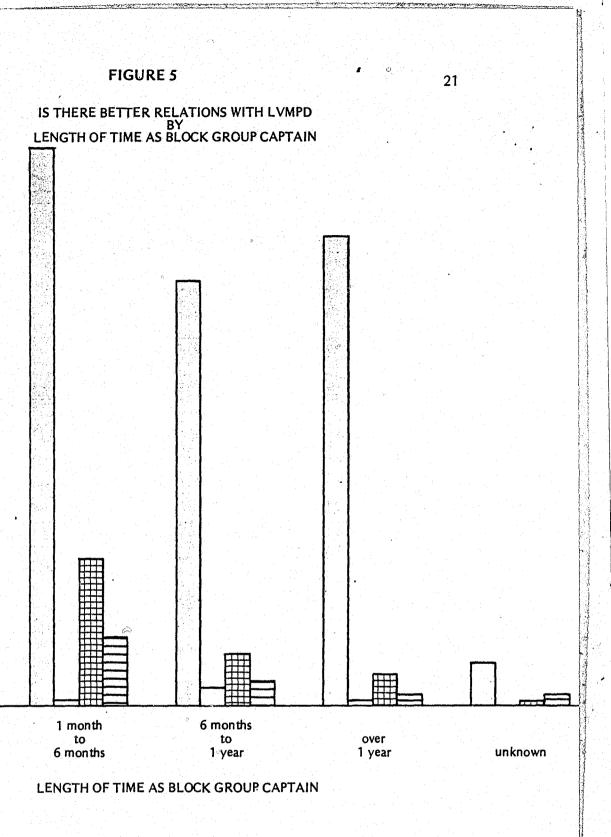
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1.5





no change
not sure

On the other hand, 202 members requested no additional services, whereas 69 members requested additional assistance at meetings, and 441 members requested that the officers stop by more.

There were many other suggestions for assistance indicated under "other," with the major portion of these being "to drive through the neighborhood more," "respond when a suspicious situation is called in", "have more emergency telephone lines", "change block group captains", "more utilization of the helicopter", and "assistance in various crime problems". NOTE: Comments made on questionnaires related to specific problems at specific locations were sent to either the Investigative Services Division or the area stations.

#### CONCLUSIONS

As has been previously indicated, the Neighborhood Watch Program has grown considerably since it was first implemented with more than 850 block groups now in existence. Unfortunately, the program which was originally designed has not been able to keep up with the fast rate of growth. Based on the results of the study, the following comments are made:

1. The quality of Neighborhood Watch block groups should be stressed as opposed to quantity. There were some complaints that no contacts had been made since the inception of the program. The Crime Prevention Bureau has indicated that they do not have sufficient personnel to make a second meeting of a newly formed block group to see how things are going. Their primary effort has been toward establishing new groups. This emphasis toward establishing new groups as opposed to maintaining old groups has created a situation in which some block groups have done nothing more than establish themselves as a block group. As examples of this, the following should be noted:

- a) Questionnaires returned indicating that interest had waned and the block group never went beyond the first meeting.
- b) Limited participation by block group captains in responding to the survey-some 49 percent of the surveys were not returned.
- c) Information provided by the questionnaires which indicated that some block groups were not involved in any activities or only one activity of the LVMPD Neighborhood Watch Program.
- d) Comments made on the questionnaires which indicated block groups were suffering from deteriorating interest (thus, the request for the police officer to attend the meeting because then "people would turn out"), changes in block group captains needed to be made (by both members and captains), and the responsibilities were being placed on too few members of the block group.
- e) Comments made by police officers that some neighborhood watch captains resented the intrusion by police officers making the monthly contact. Problems, and particularly the one cited above, were mentioned on several day shift ride-alongs taken by Police Planning Bureau personnel.

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2. The commitment by LVMPD to the program has been hampered by the

following:

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a) The expectation generated by the fifth function of the Neighborhood Watch Program - - that of continual contact with the police - - has generated disappointment based on questionnaire comments. Monthly contacts with 250 block groups were difficult to achieve at best. With 850 block groups it becomes a tremendous usage of patrol manpower hours - - hours which might be more effectively devoted to more patrolling of the block group neighborhoods. Given a 10 minute session per captain on a monthly basis and not considering travel time to and from the area or the time spent in recontacts when captains are not home, total manhours for this activity in a year's time amounts to 1,538 manhours or the random patrol time of two officers on the day shift in a year's time. In actuality, given the concentrated nature of block groups in some patrol areas as opposed to some in other areas, contacts may fall more heavily on some officers than on others. Since contacts are made during the normal times that the officer is patrolling, the contact time cuts down on time that the officers would spend patrolling through neighborhoods. The impact of patrolling through the neighborhood can easily be seen in questionnaire comments which requested that officers patrol the areas more. While this answer was not provided under the question, "What assistance would you like to see Metro provide to improve your neighborhood watch program," it was written in by 77 members and 52 captains.

Problems are also created as block captains may expect the patrol officer to spend more than 10 minutes in the contact (time periods as long as an hour have been indicated). When there are only two officers assigned to a district (a frequent occurrence in some districts on day shift), officers are reluctant to make watch contacts on the theory that they will not be available as a primary or back-up unit for dispatched events.

In addition, LVMPD may have inadvertently increased expectations too much in the area of providing monthly contacts. As previously indicated, 441 members out of the 678 members responding requested that police officers should stop by members' houses. Contacts with members has never been a function of the Neighborhood Watch Program.

b) Lack of a co-ordinated effort by various Metro bureaus toward the Neighborhood Watch Program. Some 28 respondents cited problems in having cars dispatched when they did call in crimes in progress even to the point that units were not sent. This conflicts directly with Crime Prevention programs which stress calling the police immediately in such an event. The Crime Prevention Bureau and the Communications Bureau should attempt to resolve problems occurring in this area so that block group members may be assured of assistance when a police unit is requested.

By the same token, problems being experienced by Communications in which citizens from block groups continually call in during their scheduled watches should be brought to the attention of the Crime Prevention Bureau so that additional educational training can be given to the block group.

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- c) Too little emphasis placed on the Neighborhood Watch Program being one of "self-help," In many areas, Neighborhood Watch programs are totally removed from the local police department and are set up by community groups. While there is no intention on the part of this study to recommend removal of the program from LVMPD, it must be stressed continually that the success or failure of the program rests with the individual block groups, not with Metro. Indicative of the attitude that the program is Metro's responsibility are comments such as "add something interesting to the program to attract participants," "encourage different areas to meet and compare crimes and occurrences," "select a more enthused captain," "keep an eye on empty houses," "youth information sessions," "help with trash on yards and street cleaning," "encourage more people to participate with the program, "more meetings by metro officers for motivation," etc.
- d) The level of involvement in some activities of the present crime prevention officers assigned to the program should be reduced so that officers have more time to spend in contacting their assigned block group captains. One example is the home security survey conducted by the Crime Prevention Officers. Reserve Police Officers or "Footprinter" volunteers could be trained to provide this type of survey. Such surveys by other than commissioned personnel are not unusual for many police departments.

Based on the above, the following changes are suggested for Metro's Neighborhood Watch Program given the existing manpower resources:

1. Increase required participation to begin a block group from 70 to 90 percent of the households. It is apparent from the number of less than half of the households participating in activities that some loss may be expected after the program has been in existence.

2. Require the watch group to participate in all four functions - specifically scheduled watch, social security number engraving, hardware changes (to the point that security surveys are conducted) and sign posting.

3. Limit the number of new block groups being established so that a maintenance program can be started for existing block groups. Most nationwide Neighborhood Watch Programs recommend a series of three meetings held by Crime Prevention to establish block groups; in the past Metro has been unable to meet this schedule based on the number of new groups being formed.

# block groups.

a) Inactive groups would be those with 70 to less than 90 percent participation. The organizational meeting only would be conducted by the volunteer "Footprinters," These groups would have the availability of the social security number engravers and security check forms to indicate needed hardware changes. They would not be provided signs nor would they be assigned to a Crime Prevention officer (see 5a below).

b) Active groups as indicated in No. 1 and No. 2 above. These blocks would be assigned to a Crime Prevention officer with the initial three meetings handled by the Crime Prevention officer or "Footprinter". Captains of active groups would be provided with the information indicated in No. 5e.

following:

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4. As an alternative to No. 1 through No. 3 above, establish two classes of

5. Change the emphasis of the fifth function - continual police contact to the

a) Assign each block group captain to a Crime Prevention Officer who would be the contact if organizational problems do arise. Continuing criminal incidents would also be reported to this officer if undetected by Crime Analysis.

b) Improve the handling of calls for service from neighborhood watch block groups so that units are dispatched.

c) improve contact between Crime Prevention personnel and patrol personnel so that officers are aware of problems in particular areas. Crime Prevention officers should contact area stations in situations in which it appears that a continuing problem of a neighborhood block group needs to be addressed by the patrol officer. Stress should be placed on patrolling residential areas as preventive patrol time allows. Increased emphasis should be placed on providing area stations with updated listings of watch groups and locations (possibly detailed in maps). Follow-ups on burglaries occurring in block areas should include contacting the block captains for reports of suspicious situations. Recurring incidents determined by Crime Analysis should be forwarded to the concerned area station.

d) Expand the program presentation to include patrol officers assigned to the area. It is not suggested that patrol officers conduct numerous programs - only that they be advised of block group meetings so that they can "stop by" as time permits. This would require little more than a notice of meetings from Crime Prevention to the various area stations.

e) Create a "feed-back" report which provides captains with information on burglaries occurring in their areas based on the "new watch group block" check-off on the incident report.

6. Increase emphasis on the Neighborhood Watch Program being one of "selfhelp." While the Crime Prevention Bureau presently does this, other bureaus of the department should share this as well. The success or failure of the program is up to the participants. In addition, the program is not a cure all for the problems besetting a neighborhood. Its impact is greatest in the area of burglaries. LVMPD and the community must be realistic about what the program can and cannot do.

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7. The Neighborhood Watch Program cannot be the sole responsibility of the Crime Prevention Bureau. All department members should recognize the benefits of the block groups and cooperate in every way possible to work with these groups.

Suggestions for changing the program are based on current levels of personnel in the Crime Prevention Bureau and the area patrol stations. The success of the program based on the citizens' perceptions cannot be understated. The LVMPD Neighborhood Watch Program is a highly effective method of citizens joining together to combat crime. Every effort should be made to continue that success. The suggestions proposed above are made in an attempt to maintain the high level of participation and reduce the loss of block groups as new ones are gained. Changes must be made as patrol officers are now being forced to make significant trade offs between being available to respond to dispatched calls and patrolling the neighborhoods or making contacts. Crime Prevention Bureau personnel are faced with continuing to add substantial numbers of new block groups and losing existing groups or adding new groups at a slower rate and maintaining existing groups. All LVMPD members should make every effort they can to be of assistance to block group captains, but they should not assume primary responsibility -- that is up to the block groups themselves.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is in the process of reviewing the neighborhood watch program to determine its effectiveness and make any added improvements. As a neighborhood watch block captain with a substantial knowledge about your watch group, you can assist Metro considerably in its effort to properly evaluate the program. Therefore, we are requesting that you complete the following questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope as quickly as possible, but no later than Friday, July 30, 1982. Please circle the appropriate answer, Unless indicated there should be only one answer to each question. You should direct any questions to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department's Crime Prevention Bureau at 386-3501. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

- a. How many households are (1) less than five
- (2) five to less than ten
- b. How long has your block g (1) less than a month
  - (2) a month to less than 6
- c. How long have you been a (1) less than a month (2) a month to less than 6 months
- (Circle all that apply)

Activity

Scheduled watch Neighborhood patrols Ensuring that all residents ha valuables with social security engraved on the valuables Making security hardware chi Other, Specify

· watch program was instituted? (1) yes, several of my neighbors had been victimized (2) no, none of my neighbors had been victimized

- (3) am not sure
- hood watch program started:
- (4) vandalism
- (5) Other: Specify
- group was established? (1) yes (2) no

#### APPENDIX I

#### SURVEY OF NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH CAPTAINS

involved in your block grou	p pro	ogram?
	(3)	ten to less than 15 15 or more
roup been in existence? months	(3) (4)	six months to less than a year a year or more
block group captain?	(3)	six months to less than a year

(4) a year or more

d. Circle the activities and the extent to which your neighborhood watch group is involved in the following activities:

	No. Of Ho	useholds Involved	
ave a list of y numbers	<ol> <li>not involved</li> <li>not involved</li> </ol>	(2) less than half (2) less than half	<ul><li>(3) more than half</li><li>(3) more than half</li></ul>
hanges	<ol> <li>(1) not involved</li> <li>(1) not involved</li> </ol>	(2) less than half (2) less than half	<ul><li>(3) more than half</li><li>(3) more than half</li></ul>
		(2) less than half	(3) more than half

e. Would you say that there was a significant crime problem in your neighborhood block area before the neighborhood

(4) did not live here when the neighborhood watch program started

f. If you indicated "yes" or number 1 to question "e" above, circle all problem areas that existed before the neighbor-

(1) someone breaking into homes or other structures on the premises (burglary) (2) people taking items left out in the yard, patio or breaking into vehicles (larcenies) (3) physical assaults by another person not known to the victim

g. In your opinion, is there a better relationship with the Metropolitan Police Department since your neighborhood watch

(3) no change in the relationship

(4) not sure

PPENDIX II
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#### SURVEY OF NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEMBERS

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is in the process of reviewing the neighborhood watch program to determine its effectiveness and make any added improvements. As a member of a neighborhood watch group, you can assist Metro considerably in its efforts to propelly evaluate the program. Therefore, we are requesting that you complete the following questionnaire and return it to your block group captain as quickly as possible, but no later than Wednesday, July 28, 1982. If you prefer, you may mail it to the Crime Prevention Unit, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, 400 East Stewart Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101. Please circle the appropriate answer. Unless indicated there should be only one answer to each question. You should direct any questions to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department's Crime Prevention Bureau at 386-3501. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

. 1	low long have you been a member of your neighbo	prhood block group program?
. (	1) less than a month	(3) six months to less than a year
) (	2) a month to less than 6 months	(4) a year or more
	low long has your block group been in existence?	· 사람은 이 관계적인 사람은 가장 관계적 가장 가장 가지는 것같이 하는 것이다. 이 같은 사람이 있는 것이 아파 가장
	1) less than a month	(3) six months to less than a year
	2) a month to less than 6 months	(4) a year or more
	Vould you say that there was a significant crime provatch program was instituted? 1) yes, several of my neighbors had been victimize 2) no, none of my neighbors had been victimized 3) am not sure	oblem in your neighborhood block area before the neighborhood ed
	<ul><li>am not sure</li><li>did not live here when the neighborhood watch</li></ul>	program started
,   	f you indicated "yes" or number 1 to question "c" vatch program started: 1) someone breaking into homes or other structur 2) people taking items left out in the yard, patio c	
(   	<ul> <li>a) physical assaults by another person not known</li> <li>vandalism</li> <li>other: specify</li> </ul>	
( ( (	<ol> <li>physical assaults by another person not known</li> <li>vandalism</li> <li>other: specify</li> </ol>	to the victim
	<ol> <li>a) physical assaults by another person not known</li> <li>4) vandalism</li> <li>5) other: specify</li></ol>	to the victim — ng your neighbors since the neighborhood watch program was begun (3) cannot tell
	<ul> <li>3) physical assaults by another person not known</li> <li>4) vandalism</li> <li>5) other: specify</li></ul>	to the victim 
	<ul> <li>3) physical assaults by another person not known</li> <li>4) vandalism</li> <li>5) other: specify</li></ul>	to the victim 
	<ul> <li>3) physical assaults by another person not known</li> <li>4) vandalism</li> <li>5) other: specify</li></ul>	to the victim 
	<ul> <li>3) physical assaults by another person not known</li> <li>4) vandalism</li> <li>5) other: specify</li></ul>	to the victim 

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