

Old City 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, blockwatches 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 Old City neighbourhood was one of six areas selected for a safety audit by the project team. A variety of factors demonstrated that the Old City Quarter would be a good site for an audit, and it was concluded that the project could help promote positive change in several dimensions.

Old City Quarter residents showed a high degree of interest in participating in the Neighbourhood Safety Audit project. Many residents had expressed concerns over issues relating to increasing crime rates in the neighbourhood, the homelessness crisis, and overall neighbourhood safety. Addressing these issues, and residents' concerns about them, was a central goal of the safety audit project. The enthusiasm that Old City residents showed towards the project was also a major factor in the decision to conduct an audit in this neighbourhood, as active and effective collaboration between the project team and neighbourhood members was an essential element of the project.

The Nanaimo Old City Neighbourhood Association was a key collaborator in efforts to arrange the audit of this neighbourhood. The Association President worked with the project team to help illuminate specific issues, and areas of concern that were affecting Old City residents. In addition, the Old City Association helped to distribute informational and survey materials.

The Nanaimo Old City Association's October 2020 Reimagine Nanaimo report further illustrated the priorities of the neighbourhood (Reimagine Nanaimo, 2020). In this report, it was noted that addressing the opioid crisis was a top priority, as this issue affected all members of the neighbourhood. The report also stressed the need for more affordable housing options in the neighbourhood, as this was identified to be a major contributing factor to a range of other issues.

Pre-Audit Survey Results

The results of the pre-audit survey distributed to Old City Quarter residents shed a great deal of light on the concerns and priorities of this neighbourhood. A total of 74 Old City neighbourhood members responded to the pre-audit survey.

Old City residents generally held positive views about their neighbourhood as a whole. Over 83% of respondents stated they felt a strong or very strong sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, and over 85% stated they would recommend the area to others. Over 83% of residents stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their relationships with their neighbours, and 100% stated this about their relations with family and friends. Respondents also demonstrated a high overall level of trust for neighbours, work colleagues, and neighbourhood businesses.

Despite their high overall opinion of the Old City neighbourhood, a significant portion of respondents still expressed concerns about neighbourhood crime and safety. 39% of residents stated they felt dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their overall level of safety, 61% believed that crime had increased in recent years, and 35% stated that they thought crime rates were higher in their neighbourhood than in other areas. While 86% of residents stated they felt safe walking alone during the day, a majority did not feel safe walking alone during the night. 80% of respondents stated they, someone they know, or a business they frequent had been the victim of a break in within the past year, and half stated that they or someone they knew had been robbed, harassed or physically assaulted.

The most commonly stated reasons for the beliefs of these residents were related to the issues of homelessness, drug use, and property crime. Many residents expressed their belief that the homeless population and drug users were responsible for incidents of crime, and were decreasing overall levels of safety. In support of their belief that crime rates were disproportionately high, residents wrote "So many homeless and very poor people looking for anything that they can sell or eat" and "There is a

constant low level of petty and property crime. Not high profile, but the level takes a toll". Other respondents stated their belief that the efforts that have been taken to address these issues have been inadequate, advocating for "A government program to address the CAUSE of drug use instead of addressing the symptoms" and "A community police officer who we see and know making rounds through the neighbourhood" as an example of this.

In regards to responses to these issues, Old City respondents offered a variety of opinions. Many residents advocated for more supportive housing services for the homeless population, and treatment options for those struggling with addictions. Others emphasized the importance of effective community policing initiatives, including block watch programs and collaborative crime prevention.

Demographic data about the Old City neighbourhood was also collected through the pre-audit survey. 76% of the sample identified their gender as female, and over 70% reported being between the age of 55 and 74. 92% of the sample identified their ethnic identity as Caucasian, with only one respondent identifying as First Nations, and none as a visible minority. A diverse range of annual household incomes were reported, with 29% between \$35,000 and \$50,000, and 24% earning above \$100,000. 48% of respondents stated that they were retired.

These survey results clearly demonstrate the issues that are most important to the residents of Nanaimo's Old City Quarter. These findings played a key role in guiding the efforts of the project team and the Neighbourhood Safety Audit of this area.

Old City Quarter Safety Audit Summary

On May 4th, 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 Old City Quarter Neighbourhood Safety Audit, had 8 neighbourhood residents participate along with 1 criminology practicum student, the Community Policing Coordinator and a City of Nanaimo Planner. The residents that participated represented other key groups in the neighbourhood, specifically, the Old City Quarter Neighbourhood Association, and local block watches in the area. The route chosen, as mentioned previously, was largely based on feedback from those living and working in the Old City Quarter Neighbourhood. The route included residential areas, trails/pathways including a commonly used railway pathway, and some commercial and government service locations. (See Appendix A for specific route information)

Machleary Street and Fitzwilliam Street (Location #1)

The Old City Quarter Neighbourhood Safety Audit walk began at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church at Machleary Street and Fitzwilliam Street. Residents' concerns for safety around this location involved problems with the homeless population while the church acts as a winter shelter. Although they did say that the recent year had been the best yet with the change of shelter operators. They have often faced issues with the homeless population fighting in their neighbourhood and need to call the police to resolve these issues. These issues were usually caused by drug use and mental health issues that some

homeless populations may suffer from. Residents felt that this was not an excellent location for the winter shelter as it is located at the top of a hill from the downtown location in which other services were located. This location was problematic for the elderly or disabled unsheltered individuals that need assistance making their way up the hill.

Machleary Street (Location #2)

Machleary Street offers wide roads and plenty of room to walk on the sidewalk with minimal litter in this area and no debris or obstructions. The first empty lot on Machleary Street (the old hospital location) did have some trash and overgrowth. Residents were concerned about the overgrowth and the opportunity for criminal activity, and they believed this encouraged the 'broken window¹' theory to the neighbourhood. However, the residents noted that they often saw police patrol the area including doing their paperwork in their cruisers. Their presence has helped with any issues that might creep up in the empty lot.

The Pawson Gyro Park is located along Machleary Street. This park is well maintained and during the time of the audit had many children playing at the park. The environment was welcoming and clean, and neighbours reported this location provided space to hold family-friendly activities for the neighbourhood and often the local neighbourhood association hosts movies in the park events for families pre covid.

Further down on Machleary Street, between Franklyn Street and Albert Street, was an empty lot and empty house that was seen as problematic to neighbours. These lots were overgrown and were reported to be used as a storage place for stolen goods. Illegal garbage dumping was raised as a concern as these lots were not maintained or guarded. The empty house was described as an 'absolute hazard' as the homeless population will break in and use the building for shelter. This engaged a discussion on what could be done for lots that were derelict or abandoned for many years. These types of lots put neighbourhoods at risk for increased criminal activity and nuisance issues since there is no management or maintenance on these types of properties.

Finally, at the end of Machleary Street, there is another area of overgrowth and a steep pathway that leads to Albert Street. The pathway appears right on the curve of Albert Street and there is no shoulder. There have been no recorded pedestrian crashes at this location on the ICBC Crash Maps however according to residents there has been some near misses. This was seen as a safety issue as children often use this path as a shortcut to school.

¹ The Broken Window Theory, defined by social scientists James Wilson and George Kelling in 1982, as any visible sign of disorder in a neighbourhood will encourage further disorder and misbehaviour leading to more serious community safety issues. The more the space is in disarray the more the message is sent that no one cares for the space and therefore the space is "free" for the taking. For instance, in high crime neighbourhoods in Philadelphia there was an initiative to repair abandoned properties and transform vacant lots into community parks which subsequently saw the reduction of gun violence by 39% (Psychology Today Canada, 2021)



MachLeary Street/Lane (Location #3)

This next area is labelled a street on google maps however the feel of the street is similar to travelling down a lane way or a back alley. Machleary Street continues on the south side of Albert Street. The street is lined with mostly fences and empty lots. Residents felt safe walking down this street during the day for the most part but indicated that they generally avoid this street. The street has no sidewalks and due to the confinement of the street there is no where for pedestrians to step out of the way if a car is travelling down the street. The street is also not labelled one way and could not fit two vehicles side by side yet there are no shoulders that allow for vehicles to make room for oncoming traffic. At night there is no visibility at all down this portion of Machleary Street. This area of Machleary Street is well known for homeless encampments and illegal dumping. During the audit there were piles of debris dumped in the empty lot behind 559 Machleary Street (one of the last known buildings from Nanaimo's



Old China Town). Residents also expressed fear for the recent fires in the Ravine at the intersection of Machleary Street and Albert Street.

Railway Line (Location #4)

Residents reported that the empty lot at Milton Street and Hecate Street was an “eye sore” although they mentioned things had improved since the removal of a known drug house/nuisance property across the street from the empty lot. Residents mentioned that they were quite pleased with the Nuisance Property Bylaw developed by the City of Nanaimo.

The railway is used as a pathway for a diverse group of pedestrians. Residents generally were positive about the railway being used as a pathway however they mentioned that there were parts of the railway that could incorporate more safety elements. They really liked the concrete pathway beside the railway between Franklyn Street and Fitzwilliam Street (labelled the E & N Trail) and wished this could be continued on throughout the railway. This would make walking along or on the railway physically safer. A couple of residents remarked that the most problematic area of the railway was behind the Superette Foods. The area was visibility hidden and seems to be a targeted area for drug use.

Many parts of the railway had no lighting in the evening hours and residents felt that it was during evening hours that homeless people seemed to be more visible and present during these hours.

One resident who lived along the railway tracks in condos at Prideaux Street and Franklyn Street mentioned that property crime was a big problem in her building. They have had several break ins in the parkade and offenders were accessing the parkade by hopping a fence into a court yard and then having easy access. The parkade does not require a key or fob to have access from the courtyard. Finally, the residents were pleased with how the Nanaimo Affordable Housing Society were operating their property on Prideaux Street and Franklyn Street. They mentioned that they have never had any



issues with the property and that it was always well maintained and managed. One Resident said, “they are really good neighbours”.

Fitzwilliam Street (Location #5)

Residents loved having access to the Old City Quarter and one direct route to the waterfront and downtown. The residents mentioned that they are frustrated with the homeless/transient population. Concerns were of a compassionate nature and residents did not understand why homeless people were not getting the help they needed. They mentioned how they knew that getting homeless people off the street would drastically reduce the theft and crime happening in their neighbourhood especially with their proximity to the 7-10 Club and the Unitarian Winter Shelter. Many residents will not walk on the north side of Fitzwilliam Street, in front of the Fire Administration Building or the Community Services Building where the 7-10 Club is located. They understand that many have mental health complexities but because of the unpredictability of mental health disorders they are fearful to be too close. The residents also made special note of the litter and debris often found around the 7-10 club.

Other Observations and Comments

Residents who had lived in the neighbourhood a long time and were more familiar with the area felt safer than residents who were newer to the neighbourhood. One resident mentioned that they would not take guests for walks in their neighbourhood because the guests just wouldn't understand the complexities. Many residents felt safe in their neighbourhood but the area feels less safe than 5 years ago. The group felt that police were very responsive in their neighbourhood and were grateful for their service.

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 Old City Neighbourhood is affected by neighbourhood crime. This data outlines the rate at which a wide range of crimes and other incidents occurred in the Old City neighbourhood between January of 2017 to March of 2021.

Over the 5-year period covered by the UCR data, it can be seen that the total number of incidents reported in the Old City Quarter rose dramatically. Less than 100 annual incidents were reported in 2016 and 2017, however that number rose to 173 total incidents in 2018, 352 in 2019, and 409 in 2020. While these numbers clearly demonstrate an upwards trend in the total number of incidents, it should be noted that they do not necessarily mean that all crime rose with that frequency. 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. Another factor in play with the increase in total numbers of reported incidents could, for example, be the result of changes in the reporting

habits of businesses and residents in the Old City Neighbourhood. 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 rise can be seen in the frequency of Other General Occurrences (Other GO²) and Suspicious Occurrences (SO) across the 5 year reporting period. Only a total of 8 Other GO incidents occurred in the Old City neighbourhood between 2016 and 2017. This number jumped to 24 in 2018, 75 in 2019, and 100 in 2020. Only 12 SO incidents were reported between 2016 and 2018, but 79 were reported in 2019 and 118 were reported in 2020. These dramatic increases are likely attributable in part to the changes made to UCR categorization of incidents, as well as changes in the reporting habits of neighbourhood residents. There was also a strong increase in the frequency of reported municipal bylaw violations across the reporting period. This could also be the result of increased reporting efforts by the Old City’s Block Watches and Neighbourhood Associations.

It can be seen that incidents causing disturbance and incidents of Mischief to Property spiked in 2019 and 2020. Crimes such as Break and Enters, Theft under \$5000, Theft from a Vehicle, and Auto Theft have remained mostly constant across the 5 year reporting period, with no visible trends being present. Serious crimes such as Arson, Robbery, and Theft over \$5000 are very rare in the Old City Neighbourhood, and have occurred at most once or twice a year. Finally, a notable increase is found around Cause Disturbance Incidents, the yearly average over 5 years being 31 yet in the first 3 months of 2021 we have seen half of that average in the first quarter.

² Other General Occurrences include reports that pertain to Well-Being Checks, the Trespass Act, the Quarantine Act, Lost Property, the Safe Streets Act, etc.

OLD CITY QUARTER	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	5yr Trend	5yr Average	Jan-Mar 2021
TOTAL	98	97	173	352	409		226	85
ARSON	0	0	0	1	0		0	0
AUTO THEFT	7	3	6	3	3		4	1
BIKE THEFT	5	4	3	6	3		4	1
BREAK & ENTER - BUS	2	3	3	3	0		2	0
BREAK & ENTER - OTH	1	3	4	5	0		3	3
BREAK & ENTER - RES	2	3	8	5	6		5	0
CAUSE DISTURBANCE	16	15	28	36	60		31	16
COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY	1	0	0	0	0		0	0
FRAUDS	6	1	2	3	2		3	0
MISCHIEF TO PROPERTY	18	21	11	26	36		22	5
MUNICIPAL BYLAW	0	0	21	37	38		19	6
OTHER GO	3	5	24	75	100		41	32
OTHER THEFT O/5000	1	1	1	1	0		1	0
OTHER THEFT U/5000	8	6	14	24	15		13	1
POSSESS STOLEN PROPERTY	2	2	1	8	3		3	0
PUBLIC MISCHIEF	0	0	1	0	0		0	1
ROBBERY	2	0	1	1	0		1	0
SHOPLIFTING	0	1	2	1	0		1	0
SUSPICIOUS OCCURRENCES	0	1	11	79	118		42	16
THEFT FROM MAIL	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1		-	0
THEFT FROM VEHICLE	23	28	32	37	24		29	3
THEFT UTILITIES	1	0	0	0	0		0	0

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 and 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 to 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. 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.

Old City Quarter Recommendations:

1. The Old City Quarter 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. The Neighbourhood Association has set up a webpage for the neighbourhood and has regular events posted such as tree planting parties, clean up days, etc. 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. 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, garbage pickup or support with refreshments and cooking. Always ensure you have the permission of the property owner prior to conducting any clean up events or block parties. It is 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. Invite Cst. Gary O'Brien to annual Neighbourhood Association meetings to promote and support the implementations of new block watches within the neighbourhood.
3. Many nonprofit organizations offering services to our most marginalized individuals are very interested in building relationships with residents and businesses. After all they are providing service in the neighbourhood and many of the clients they serve are residents of the neighbourhood. Relationship building between groups in the neighbourhood such as neighbourhood associations, block watches, shelter organizations and businesses are important, first knowing what challenges people are facing in their neighbourhood and second are able to better address challenges collaboratively thus increasing safety for everyone. Consider regular meetings by inviting nonprofit agencies to neighbourhood association meetings or inviting them to block parties or other neighbourhood events. Best practices show that when marginalized individuals living in a neighbourhood have a sense of belonging they are more likely to contribute to the neighbourhood in positive ways. Community Policing or the Social Planners from the City of Nanaimo can help provide linkages between nonprofit agencies and neighbourhoods where support is needed.
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 does not 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 Old City Neighbourhood receive the appropriate information via digital or physical resources. Community Policing 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. Community Policing will implement regular Crime Watch patrols throughout the Old City Neighbourhood to increase their presence and provide additional “eyes” and “ears” for the neighbourhood. Crime Watch Patrols will focus on the areas noted most problematic, along Machleary Street, Albert Street and along railway tracks visible to vehicle traffic. The Community Policing Volunteer Program hosts almost 50 dedicated and caring volunteers. They report all suspicious, criminal and nuisance behaviour they observe. Patrol teams are trained to keep notes and maintain contact with RCMP dispatch, City Bylaws and City Sanitation as needed via cell phone.
6. Consider engaging private property owners who might be having challenges with criminal activity on their property and see if they might be interested in having a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Assessment. 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. **Note this is currently in progress with 1 apartment block along the route in the Old City Neighbourhood.*

Opportunities for Change

1. A common challenge plaguing urban centres and mid-size cities like Nanaimo are the number of vacant properties popping up. Vacant properties in neighbourhoods can create financial strain through a variety of ways, decreased tax revenue, maintenance costs, and costs through increased safety and crime issues (Mallach, 2018). Vacant lots also create a blight in a neighbourhood often lowering the value of properties nearby. This phenomenon now coined Hyper-Vacancy³ correlates in neighbourhoods with concentrated poverty, unemployment and health problems. Vacant lands or buildings are often associated with physical disorder, and ties true to the previously mentioned Broken Window Theory, vacant lots indicate a lack of control within neighbourhoods and these types of environments are subject to criminal activity, prostitution, drug use and the sale of drugs. There are several vacant lots that have posed problems in the Old City Neighbourhood. Specifically, there are several vacant lots on Machleary between Fitzwilliam Street and Hecate Street. There are several cities across Canada and in the United States where municipalities are looking for ways to address these vacant lots. Municipalities and neighbourhoods have created pocket parks, food forests, or created affordable housing and shelter options through expropriation and Use It or Lose It type bylaws (Mallach, 2018). A closer look needs to be taken at vacant lots and how policy and planning can help revitalize neighbourhoods and move them away from a tipping point.

³ Defined in a submission by Alan Mallach where neighbourhoods have vacant buildings or lots comprising more than 20% of the building stock. (Mallach, 2018)

2. Another large concern of the Old City 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 Old City Neighbourhood would argue that they are at they are one of the neighbourhoods at ground zero. 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’.
3. One of the positive things residents mentioned about living in the Old City Neighbourhood is the proximity to the downtown and that everything is within walking distance. Many residents in the neighbourhood used the railway tracks as a pathway. It allows for travel off roadways and sometimes more direct routing. Extending the parallel E & N path between Franklyn and Fitzwilliam along the railway is something the neighbourhood would support and would make travel safer and more inclusive for pedestrians. The neighbourhood association with their relationship to the City could advocate for future considerations in an Active Transportation plan.

Summary

The Old City Neighbourhood is a desired area with many homes dating from the late 1800s to early 1900s. The feel of the neighbourhood is one of welcoming and belonging. Residents here show care for their neighbourhood and property. Properties are generally well maintained and add to the character and beautification of the neighbourhood. Residents here are also passionate about where they live by participating in annual clean ups, tree planting and hosting events in their local neighbourhood parks. The residents’ commitment and dedication to safety and wellbeing for their neighbourhood is apparent through the networks they have built with one another and their willingness to get involved. Nanaimo Community Policing is looking forward to supporting them in their efforts with the crime prevention programming recommended. It would be very beneficial to revisit the Old City 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.

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Appendix A

Old City Quarter Neighbourhood Route Map

~Start and Finish at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church

- 1) Head South on Machleary Street until you reach the end. (Stop 1)
- 2) Turn back and head North on Machleary Street until Franklyn and turn Right. Turn immediately at the next lane way and walk south until Albert Street.
- 3) Cross at Albert Street if safe to do so otherwise cross at the nearest crosswalk.
- 4) Continue down Machleary Street until Hecate Street. (Stop 2)
- 5) Follow the rail road tracks all the way to Albert Street. (Stop 3)
- 6) Cross Albert Street and continue to follow the rail road tracks until Fitzwilliam Street being careful to look both ways at all street and railroad crossings.
- 7) Turn West (Left) on Fitzwilliam. (Stop 4)
- 8) Walk up Fitzwilliam Street until St Peter's Roman Catholic Church.

