

Community Focus Statement H: Improve public safety.

Action Statement H.1: Establish a neighborhood watch program that can be implemented throughout the communities.



Benchmarks: Neighborhood watch programs are established in at least 50 percent of the Hilltop communities' residential areas.

Champion: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community

Estimated Cost: \$200–\$1,500



Example of a neighborhood watch sign that can be posted within a neighborhood.

Photo source: Ellin Beltz

A neighborhood watch program is a way to help keep the Hilltop communities safe by allowing local residents to become involved in crime prevention efforts. Participating residents keep watch on the neighbors and the neighborhood, reducing crime by decreasing the situations where people are able to commit a crime without being observed. Participating residents are also asked to promptly report suspicious activities to law enforcement officials, who can intervene and potentially stop a crime from occurring. The goal of a neighborhood watch program is not to catch criminals or to change their behavior, but to reduce the number of situations where a crime could happen. Some neighborhood watch programs in the mountains. A program is more likely to succeed if it is started by community members. Petty theft, breaking and entering, and illegal parking are some crimes and concerns voiced by residents of the Hilltop communities.

There are many strategies to aid in a more effective neighborhood watch program in the Hilltop communities in the future. The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department can assist the Hilltop communities in starting and maintaining neighborhood watch programs by providing critical resources and training for program participants, both when the programs are starting and as a way of maintaining them. Existing community groups such as homeowners associations or community service organizations offer a framework for neighbors to get together and communicate to organize and grow a neighborhood watch program. Neighborhood watch program signs posted around the communities can enhance public awareness of the program and may deter potential lawbreakers and transients. Participants can host events such as cleanups, making areas nicer and more attractive and less likely to be used for criminal purposes. Neighborhood watch programs in the Hilltop communities can also act with a unified voice to encourage residents and businesses to take action and make communities safer, such as installing better outdoor lighting.

Studies have shown the effectiveness of neighborhood watch programs, but the studies emphasize that the programs must be representative of the community and that participants must be willing to make a long-term dedication to the program to keep it stable. Effective neighborhood watch programs must involve a wide variety of residents, including residents with different incomes, ages, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. To improve the neighborhood

watch program’s reach and communication with a wider range of residents, the program should be diverse and offer language translation for the program’s materials for members speaking languages other than English.

Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Conduct outreach activities and recruit residents to serve on a neighborhood watch committee. Conduct a kickoff, informational meeting to determine interest, assign volunteers, identify areas of concern in the community, and other appropriate start-up activities.	Champion	Months 1–3	National Crime Prevention Council: Starting a Neighborhood Watch http://www.ncpc.org/resources/files/pdf/neighborhood-safety/nwstart.pdf
2. For each neighborhood where a program will be established, select a resident to serve as the neighborhood watch chair.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 4	US Department of Justice: Neighborhood Watch Manual https://www.bja.gov/Publications/NSA_NW_Manual.pdf
3. Establish lines of communication between all neighborhood watch committees in the Hilltop communities	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 5	San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department http://cms.sbcounty.gov/sheriff/Home.aspx
4. Solicit volunteers from the community to support neighborhood watch activities.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 5	San Bernardino County Public Works (for sign installation) http://cms.sbcounty.gov/dpw/home.aspx
5. Establish partnerships with the Sheriff’s Department for training, information sharing, and resources.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 6	
6. Post signs notifying people of a neighborhood watch program.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 6	
7. Conduct regular trainings, information sharing, and meetings.	Neighborhood watch committees	On-going	
8. Monitor the effectiveness of neighborhood watch programs, and make revisions to program operations as needed.	Neighborhood watch committees	On-going	