



March 27, 2018

We know that car break-ins have been a serious concern for much of the neighborhood, and recently they have escalated to being a major problem. There are many contributing factors, chief of which is the very nature of the crime: “Smash-and-Grab” types of crime, like car break-ins, are notoriously difficult to protect against. These crimes happen in a matter of seconds, are near impossible to predict, and are classified as minor crimes which result in limited penalties in the event that someone is caught.

At Ohio City Inc., we are using all known tools to address the issue. This includes partnering with the Second District police, property managers, and the Councilman’s office, continuing to grow the Ohio City Community Safety Camera network, and encouraging residents and victims to file a police report anytime they are a victim of a crime. Each of these tools has a different role in addressing the issue. The police reports help us by telling the story of where the incidents are most common, therefore, making the incidents a little easier to predict. This allows us to assist the police by helping direct police resources to those areas guiding them where to patrol and investigate. Camera footage can be used to identify suspects and link incidents together. However, catching suspects, as hard as it is, is not the end of the challenges. Our final-and most important-resource is you, the residents most affected by the crimes.

Through the Court Watch program, we can collect letters and statistics about the number of victims and the damages they have incurred, and provide these to the judge of a case during sentencing to hopefully influence their sentencing decision. Often, judges may not understand the full extent of the damage caused to a neighborhood by a particular crime, even typically minor crimes like criminal damaging and theft from motor vehicles. It is quite difficult to say that a single suspect is responsible for specific car break-ins, but we can demonstrate the extent of this problem in the neighborhood as a whole, and thus assign at least partial responsibility for the problem for everyone that is convicted.

In order to do this, OCI is collecting information from victims about the number of times their cars have been broken into, the cost of repairing the damages, and the value of the items that have been stolen. If you have been a victim of a vehicle break-in within the last 12 months (since March of 2017) in Ohio City, regardless of whether you filed a police report, please fill out our form at <http://bit.ly/Breakin18>. If you have not been a victim, but someone you know has, please encourage them to fill out the form as well, even if they do not live in Ohio City. The information collected will be used to demonstrate the seriousness of these crimes in Ohio City, and you will only be contacted if you indicate that you are willing to participate in the Court Watch effort.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please reach out to Chad Biggers, Community Safety Organizer at cbiggers@nearwestsafety.org or (216) 375-4840.

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