Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	25-2209	**Version:**	1	**Name:**	12/15/25 Resolution to Direct Removal of Neighborhood Watch Signs
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File created:	12/15/2025			**In control:**	City Council
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Title: Resolution Directing the Removal of Neighborhood Watch Signs and Affirming the City's Commitment to Inclusive and Evidence-Based Public Safety

Sponsors: Jen Eyer, Cynthia Harrison, Christopher Taylor, Lisa Disch, Ayesha Ghazi Edwin

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
12/15/2025	1	City Council	Approved	Pass

Resolution Directing the Removal of Neighborhood Watch Signs and Affirming the City's Commitment to Inclusive and Evidence-Based Public Safety

Reviewed by: Milton Dohoney Jr., City Administrator
Atleen Kaur, City Attorney

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor is committed to fostering neighborhoods that are welcoming, inclusive, and grounded in public safety practices that build trust rather than suspicion;

Whereas, Neighborhood Watch programs emerged in the 1970s during a period of national anxiety about crime and social change;

Whereas, These programs were often rooted in assumptions about who did and did not "belong" in a neighborhood, reinforcing race-based hyper-vigilance and suspicion particularly toward Black, Brown, and other marginalized residents and visitors;

Whereas, This dynamic encouraged informal surveillance practices that disproportionately targeted people of color and contributed to patterns of exclusion under the guise of public safety;

Whereas, More than 600 Neighborhood Watch signs remain installed throughout the city, despite the program being defunct;

Whereas, Research shows that Neighborhood Watch programs do not reduce crime, and in fact often reinforce racialized suspicion, encourage biased reporting, and contribute to surveillance cultures that disproportionately target people of color;

Whereas, These signs, by continuing to convey messages associated with surveillance and exclusion, do not reflect Ann Arbor's current public safety values or its commitment to non-discriminatory enforcement, community trust, and safe spaces for all residents and visitors;

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Whereas, The Ann Arbor Police Department has reviewed this issue and has affirmed its support for removing all remaining Neighborhood Watch signage, noting that these signs are no longer linked to any operational function of the department;

Whereas, The City Administration has directed the Signs and Signals team to begin scheduling the removal of all Neighborhood Watch signs citywide, with the Police Department coordinating as needed;

Whereas, Public concern helped bring needed attention to the discrepancy between the city's current public safety philosophy and the continued presence of these legacy signs; and

Whereas, Removing these signs will help align the city's physical environment with its values and with evidence-based public safety practices that emphasize connection over suspicion;

RESOLVED, That the Ann Arbor City Council directs the City Administrator to complete the removal of all Neighborhood Watch signs throughout the City of Ann Arbor no later than July 15, 2026, and to ensure that this work is appropriately coordinated between Transportation, Signs and Signals, and the Ann Arbor Police Department;

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator will provide Council with a progress update by April 15, 2026, identifying the number of signs removed to date, remaining work, and any budgetary needs associated with completion; and

RESOLVED, That City Council affirms its commitment to community-centered, evidence-based public safety practices and to maintaining a built environment that communicates safety, belonging, and inclusion for all who live in or visit Ann Arbor.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Eyer, Harrison, Disch, Ghazi Edwin, and Mayor Taylor

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