Starting a Ferguson Digital Neighborhood Watch

We need to help keep an eye on our town and give our police more tools to keep our streets safe. Video captured by commercial and residential security systems has become an important tool in helping police solve crimes. Several police departments, including the Brentwood police department, have started voluntary registries for homeowners with video security systems so police can know where video might be available.

We are working to start a Digital Neighborhood Watch for Ferguson. We want the police to have access to video footage for every neighborhood in Ferguson. The video won't stop a crime when it's occurring, but if it captures a face or license plate it can give the police a far better chance of identifying the culprits during their investigation.

We are looking for volunteers to help with the project. There are lots of different ways that residents could participate:
- By registering your existing video security system and agreeing to provide footage
- Helping to research and evaluate different video camera options
- By purchasing and setting up a wifi video security camera pointed at your street
- Working with other people on your block to purchase and set up a wifi video camera
- Volunteering to review video
- Working on an eventual video storage solution

If you are interested in helping or learning more, email us at: KeepFergusonsafe@gmail.com

Our goal is to assemble a network of resident-owned video cameras pointing at every street and intersection in Ferguson. You can participate in several ways: with your existing video security system, helping to evaluate video cameras, buying a wifi video camera and pointing it at your street or working with several homeowners to buy.

> **With your existing video security system:** If you have a security system with exterior facing video and would be willing to share video with the police, we are asking you to **send us an email so we can add your system to the list for the Police.** We need your address, which street or streets are covered by your system and if you also have other views that might be useful, for instance your backyard.

> **Help evaluate different security camera options.** Video image quality, storage options and cost can vary greatly among different cameras. We would like to identify a camera that we can recommend to homeowners that want to participate. This will make it easier for homeowners to know what to buy and easier for volunteers to review video. If you have a camera that can capture license plates or would like to help research different options, **send us an email and we will add you to the working group**.

> **Buying a wifi video camera and pointing it at your street:** Any good, high resolution, wifi-enabled video camera with Cloud storage should work.   If we can get a group of homeowners to commit to purchasing camera we might be able to get a volume discount. We can possibly help with the installation.

Working with other homeowners to buy a camera for your street: Our goal is a wide distribution of video cameras at each street intersection. Several homeowners on a block could chip for a camera to be placed at one of their houses, pointed at the street or intersection. If you are interested in buying a camera, or possibly chipping in to buy a camera for your street, send us an email at KeepFergusonsafe@gmail.com.

We would like to assemble a group of volunteers to review video. Our police department is going to be short staffed for a while. Instead of having the police go through hours of video from different cameras, our hope is we can use volunteers to first review the video, identifying those parts that might be of interest and possibly even capturing video stills of people, cars or license plates. The more we can streamline the process for our police the more effective we will be. If you'd like to volunteer to screen video footage, let us know – we are building a list.

The Volunteers could also collect the initial video clips. If a homeowner buys a camera with Cloud (Internet) storage, the Digital Neighborhood Watch project can be given Internet access to that camera's video feed. If there is a request for video, volunteers could pull the video directly from the Internet storage, instead of asking the homeowner to do so.

Our goal is to eventually collect video to a central video storage location. Ideally video streams from the different cameras around the city can be collected onto a single secure video server (with permission of the camera owners, of course). This would greatly simplify the task of reviewing footage. It will take some time, but we would like to eventually begin exploring centralized video storage options.

How the Police would request and receive footage:
- We will give the police a list and map of video locations
- They identify the video locations that might have captured something
- The police can either request the footage directly from the homeowner or send the request through the Digital Neighborhood Watch group
- If the video is stored on the system in the home, the homeowner downloads the video clip for the requested date. It can either be sent in on a storage device or it can be uploaded to a file server.
- If the video is stored on the Internet, either the homeowner can provide the video clip or the homeowner can give the Digital Neighborhood Watch group Internet access to the video to save the video clip.

Security and Privacy. The list of video camera locations will be private and only made available to the Ferguson Police Department. Logins for any Internet storage will also be kept private, and only used to download video at the request of the police.

We can help keep Ferguson safe. Ferguson is going in the right direction, but it's going to take some time to rebuild our police force. A digital neighborhood watch can be an important tool for police, helping their efforts to keep Ferguson safe. Email us at KeepFergusonsafe@gmail.com if you would like to help.