



## Crime Free Multi-Housing: 5-Year Report

The Crime Free Multi- Housing program has been an initiative of the New Westminster Police Service since 1995. This program is the only one of its kind in Canada. Since its inception in 1992 by the Mesa Arizona Police Department, it has been introduced to police personnel, property owners, managers, and residents in nearly 1000 cities in North America. New Westminster was the first City in Canada to adopt the program, though other municipalities such as Surrey, Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam, Burnaby, Ridge Meadows, and

Abbotsford are also making progress in initiating the program in their communities. The program has had great success in the past 10 years and is demonstrated by the marked increase in the number of apartments buildings joining.

As of December 31, 2004, New Westminster has approximately 300 rental apartment communities. Fifty-seven of these complexes have successfully completed and maintained the vitality of the program within its rental community. The Crime Free Program does not mandate or suggest that buildings belonging to the program will never have crime, as this may be an onerous goal. However, the programs success is based on the premise that through a partnership between the members and the New Westminster Police Service calls for police service will substantially decrease. The main focus is not on policing, but rather on incorporating good management practices so as to decrease the number of tenants residing in New Westminster which practice illegal activities within their suites.

This report sets out to highlight the success of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program with an in-depth analysis of police calls for service over the past five years (2000-2004). The findings show that with the incorporation of the three phases of the Crime Free program, there is a substantial decrease in the type and volume of police calls for service. It also demonstrates that in comparison to buildings that do not employ Crime Free practices, calls for police service are very high in volume. High calls for service do not only decrease the wealth and productivity of an apartment community, but also increases fear among residents, and reduces the amount of police resources available for patrolling other problems in the city.

### **What is the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program?**

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is a North American initiative that plans to decrease crime in multi-family dwellings by encouraging management to use proper screening techniques, as well as utilizing crime prevention techniques such as CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) technique. The program is successful because of the many branches it encompasses, and the emergence of the Crime Free Lease Addendum. The Crime Free Lease addendum is a vital part of the Crime Free Program. The Addendum is used at the beginning of a tenancy agreement in order to ensure that those renting apartments, and their guests, do not permit or engage in any criminal activity. The addendum itself is supported by the Residential Tenancy Act, and is vital in teaching managers how to screen their potential residents and accomplishing the crime free goal. The addendum is only part of the success of the programs three-tiered system that functions to decrease crime in more ways than one.

The City of New Westminster has recognized the difference this program can make in successfully decreasing police calls for service, and thus, have enacted Bylaw 6926 in July 2004. The Bylaw itself functions as part of the Business Regulations and Licensing of Rental Units. The goal of Bylaw 6926 is to compel properties, which have chronic problems, to enforce owners to implement better management practices, such as those advocated in the Crime Free Multi-Housing program. The management team is directed to attend a Crime Free Workshop, and the building's progress is monitored through the reduction of nuisance related police calls as defined in the bylaw. The penalties for not abiding by the bylaw includes various fines and suspensions of business licenses that are necessary to operate a rental property.

The Crime Free program has three distinct phases for success. Firstly, managers are required to attend a Crime Free Workshop. This workshop allows managers, owners, and any others interested in property management, to learn to utilize various methods and techniques to decrease the occurrence of illegal activity within their dwellings. Some of the seminars offered include: Crime Prevention Concepts, Preparing and Maintaining the Property, Applicant Screening, Role of Police in Tenancy Disputes, Residential Tenancy Act, and Combating Illegal Activities.

Phase two of the program looks at ways in which managers can tailor the exteriors of their apartments in order to create an environment that decreases the accessibility and the opportunities of crime. All of the rental properties that wish to continue with the program must now enact the minimum standards and guidelines that the Crime Free Program wishes its apartments to have set out by the New Westminster Police Crime Free Multi-Housing Coordinator. The minimum

standards of the Crime Free Multi-housing program include: A good quality 1” deadbolt must be on all suite doors, strike plates secured with a 2-inch to 3-inch screw through the plate, eyeviewers (180-190 degrees, 65 inches from the floor), secondary locks on sliding doors and windows, proper lighting with day and evening visibility, good landscaping with low shrubs and pruned branches, and the removal of all graffiti. The minimum standards stated in the latter, allow managers to effectively reduce crime in a more constructive manner.

The third and final phase of the Crime Free Program is called the Safety Social. The Safety Social is the final step in encouraging tenants to become a part of their rental communities, as well as increase their awareness of crime prevention initiatives and personal safety. These meetings address the specific needs of rental communities, and serve as a forum for tenants to ask questions, and look for guidance, keeping in mind the program’s overall goal of the peace, comfort, and security of everyone living in that space.

### **How the data was collected**

Data for this assessment was gathered through the New Westminster Crime Analysis Program. The samples were gathered by exporting police calls for service into a spreadsheet, and then sorted by priority sequence. Police calls for service are sorted into four call priorities when they are received by the communication centre (dispatch). The four priority calls are sorted as follows: Priority 1 calls are calls which possess characteristics that can be described as ‘dangerous to human life’, and are either in progress or have just occurred. An example of a priority 1 call would be armed robbery, or assault with a weapon. Priority 2 calls possess characteristics that are serious in nature and require a swift response, but are generally not life threatening. An example of a priority 2 call would be domestic disputes or fights where no weapon has been reported. The third priority call includes calls, which are routine, not in progress, but require police attendance. Some examples of priority 3 calls would be home or car break ins. Lastly, priority 4 calls do not require police attendance but do require some public service and record-keeping and thus take from police resource time.

The graphs below show the frequency of police calls for service. In addition, what can be noted is that there is a separate statistic included for Fire and Emergency Health Services (EHS) Calls. Since New Westminster is a Municipal Department, Fire and EHS Calls are included in the Crime Analysis Statistics, but are separate from Police Calls for Service and hence are removed from the total police calls for service. The calls, which were assessed, occurred between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2004, and were taken from 52 of the 57 properties that are certified. What are also being addressed are the causes and frequencies of police

attendance at the buildings, the nature of the calls for service, and assessing trends in rental availability and crime frequency.

Overall, these reports suggest that by implementing the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program and its standards for a rental community will result in a substantial decrease in crime along with a newfound respect for property by both the owners and the tenants. The program serves to increase the property's value and make the tenants and surrounding neighbourhood residents feel secure. The less opportunity given to people, the less likely they will have to target a property. Properties that employ crime prevention measures will benefit immensely from this program.

### **Crime Free Properties**

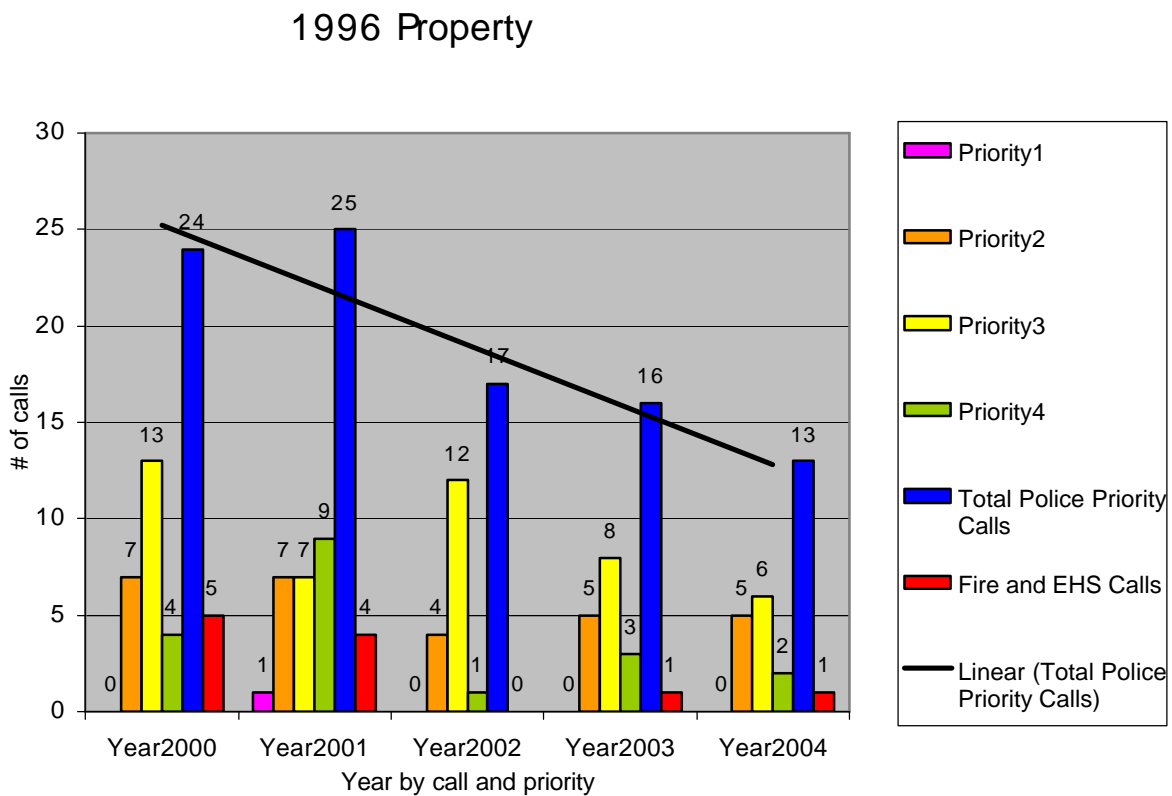
The New Westminster Police Service is highly committed to its various community driven programs, and in a particular, the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. Veronika Metchie, who is the coordinator for this program, has implemented necessary standards to achieve the outstanding results seen in the following statistics and graphs. The Crime Free Program currently carries 57 properties in New Westminster. The mandate these properties must follow in order to be certified, and to keep their certification, is to maintain the program's integrity by following and keeping up with the steps offered by the program. Statistics below show a change in the types and frequencies of calls, rather than a reduction in calls for service. In some cases, there also is a visible increase in calls for service. Many of these increases are due to the newfound awareness many property owners and tenants have about pro-actively taking care of their property. Crime Free Coordinators encourage reporting of illegal activity, so that the police department can track ongoing problems, and assign various departments to assist in the resolution process. Crime Free properties have

shown decreases in calls. Rates of calls for service were lower in 2000 than any other year coming in at 797 calls over the year. These rates seem very high but are substantially lower than the calls logged for non-Crime Free Properties. Overall, in the 5-year period CFMH properties have had a total of 4591 calls for service. The average amount of calls per year was 918.2 calls per year, which seem high per year but when looking at the statistics over 5 years, there are only



1.89 calls logged per unit in 5 years. One thing to be cautious of when looking into these statistics is that buildings included in the Crime Free Program have had various start dates. Some apartments have been part of the program since 1995, and others are new additions that have only been certified for 6 months.

Graph one shows an example of a building that was certified in 1998. As you can see, the trend shows that the building is consistently logging fewer calls for police service. The building which holds 49 units averages 19 calls per year, and has very low levels of calls per unit in 2004 coming in at 0.27 calls per unit. Calls for service decrease slowly because of the consistency, which has been introduced into the environment of the property.

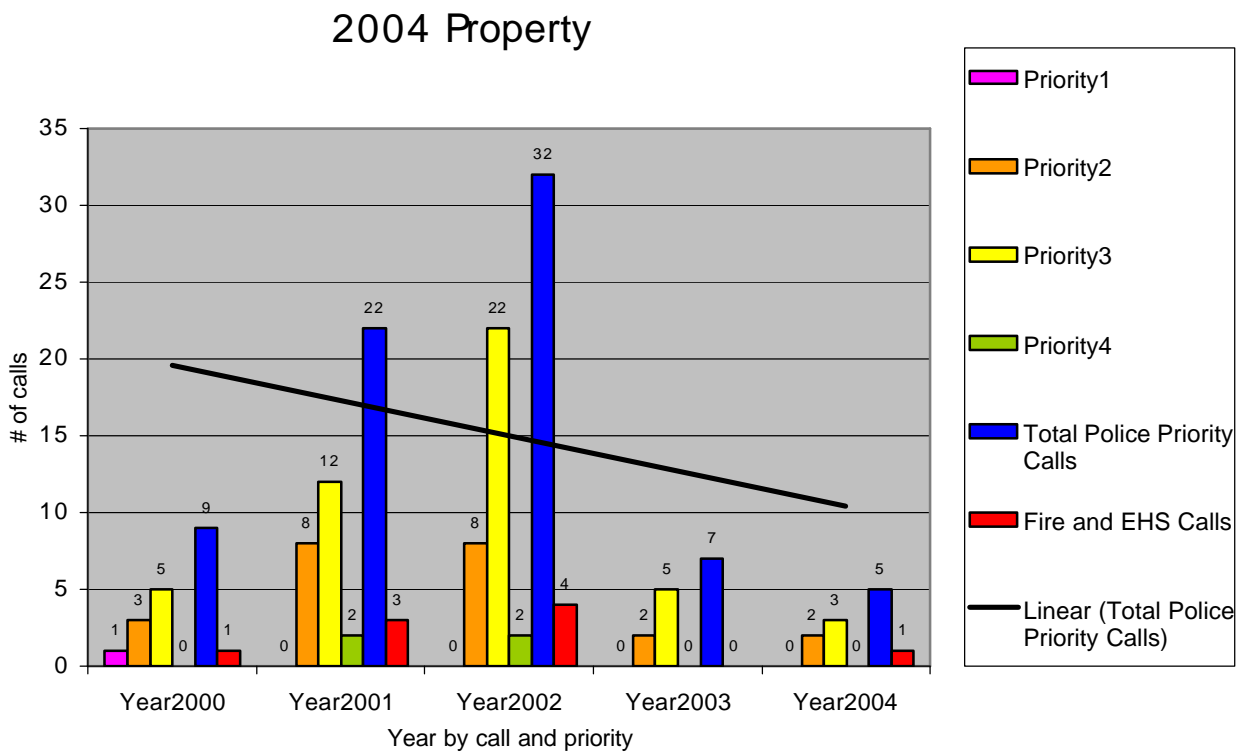


Graph 1: CFMH Member since  
December 9, 1996

The next graph will show how the programs implementation can drastically decrease the amounts of calls for service. Many managers are eager to implement change, and it shows when there are large decreases in calls for service.

Graph 2 shows a building that was certified as part of the Crime Free Program in 2004. The size of this building is smaller, containing 29 units. What is most apparent in looking into the calls for service with the newly added buildings,

is that many of them peak at a high number of calls for service usually a year or two before they join the program. Managers are taking the right steps in trying to find ways to decrease problems in their buildings, and many have shown drastic decreases in calls for service after joining the program. The 2004 building has had an average of 15 calls for service per year, and peaked at 32 calls for service in 2002. Now in 2004, it has the lowest rate of calls for service in its history with only 5 calls for service in 2004, which translates to 0.17 calls per unit in 2004.



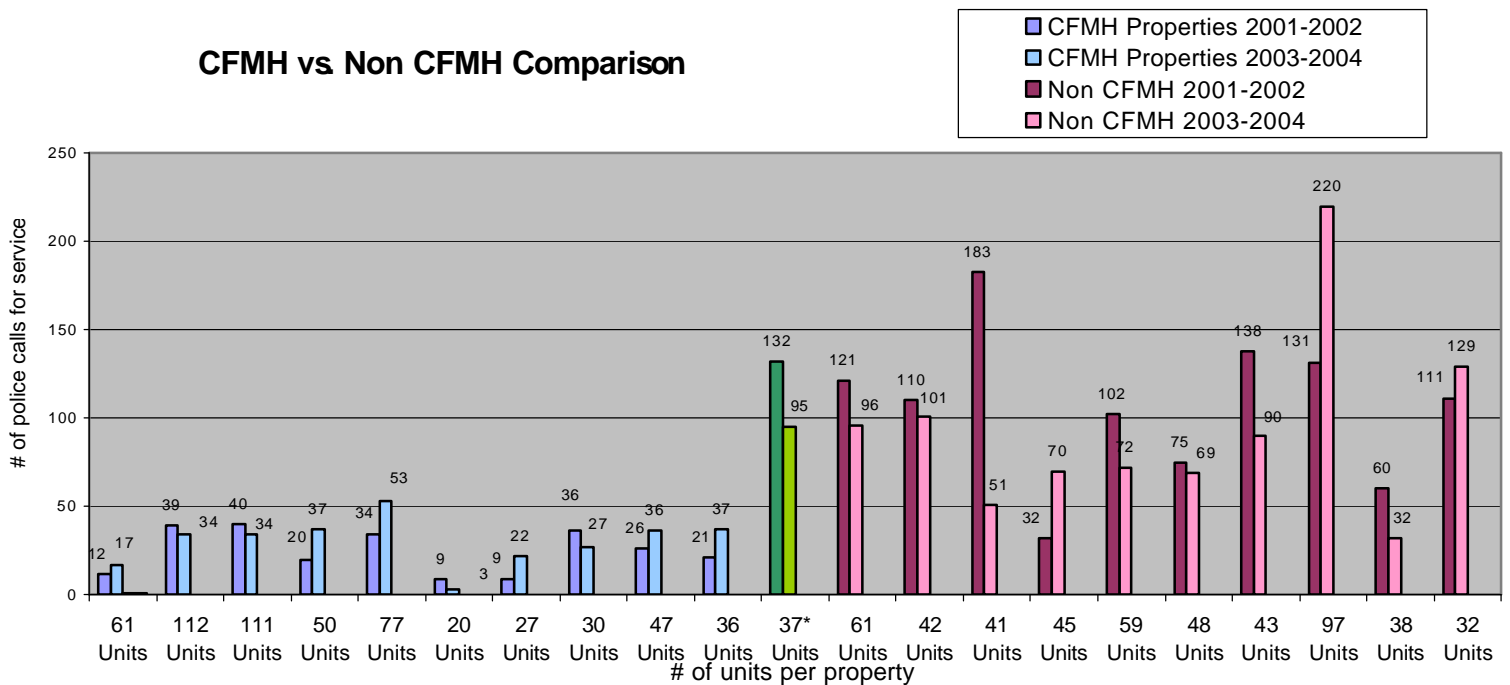
Graph 2: CFMH Property since:  
April 7, 2004

Most Properties do show consistent drops in calls for service, but there are also those properties which show increases due to other various circumstances. Of the 52 properties that have been studied, 25% have shown an increase in calls for service, 38% have shown a decrease in calls for service, and 37% have shown a consistency in calls for service. Buildings that show a consistent base of calls for service average at 15 calls for service per year on the high end, and 5 calls for service per year on the low end. Buildings most likely to show consistency in call volume are buildings which have been certified from the earlier stages of the program, and buildings which joined the program without previous problems in their apartments.

Buildings that have shown increases in call volume since their acceptance and completion of the program have had distinct causes of the increases. The most common cause for call volume increase is the issues that surround residents with Mental Health Problems (MH). It is not to suggest that apartment communities should not rent to people with MH issues, but rather that there exists an increase of calls for service that could be attributed to residents with these problems. Other causes for increases in police calls for service include motor vehicle break in, noise complaints, and domestic disputes. These problems do decrease, and problems are resolved, but only if the property management is aware of the problems and deals with them in a proactive way.

### Crime Free and Non-Crime Free

It is easy to talk about the success of the program when observing the vast changes many of these properties have undergone, but what would be more interesting is seeing how the Crime Free buildings compare to other buildings in New Westminster that are not Crime Free. In analyzing the 52 Crime Free properties, another sample of 32 Non-Crime Free samples were gathered in order to form a comparison model. The results assist in driving home the outstanding results achieved through membership in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program and its positive effects on the police and surrounding community.



Graph 3 : CFMH v. Non- CFMH (2001-2004)

Graph 3 is indicative of the differences between being the part of the program or not. Apartments that are not part of the program tend to have more than twice the calls service that CFMH member buildings do. The above graph also

shows that though calls for service for the Non-CFMH buildings were extremely high in the first year period of 2001, and 2002. The statistics illustrate consistent decreases in calls for service. One possible reason for this occurrence is that rental managers are becoming aware that people are more likely to rent from CFMH certified buildings, because of the benefits of a more peaceful lifestyle and a well maintained building, results in better tenants. Therefore, property managers and owners feel more compelled to become or maintain membership in the CFMH Program. Of the buildings assessed in this graph, we notice that one is in green. The green bars in Graph 3 represent a property that was highly problematic for the City and the Police Service. The frequency of calls has dropped substantially since its introduction into the Crime Free program in 2004. What is notable is that before joining the program, call for service was at the same level of frequency as the buildings that have not been introduced the program. Again, this highlights the success of the program in reducing calls for service, even in buildings that have a higher than normal rate of calls for service, and the ability of the program to assist with this change.

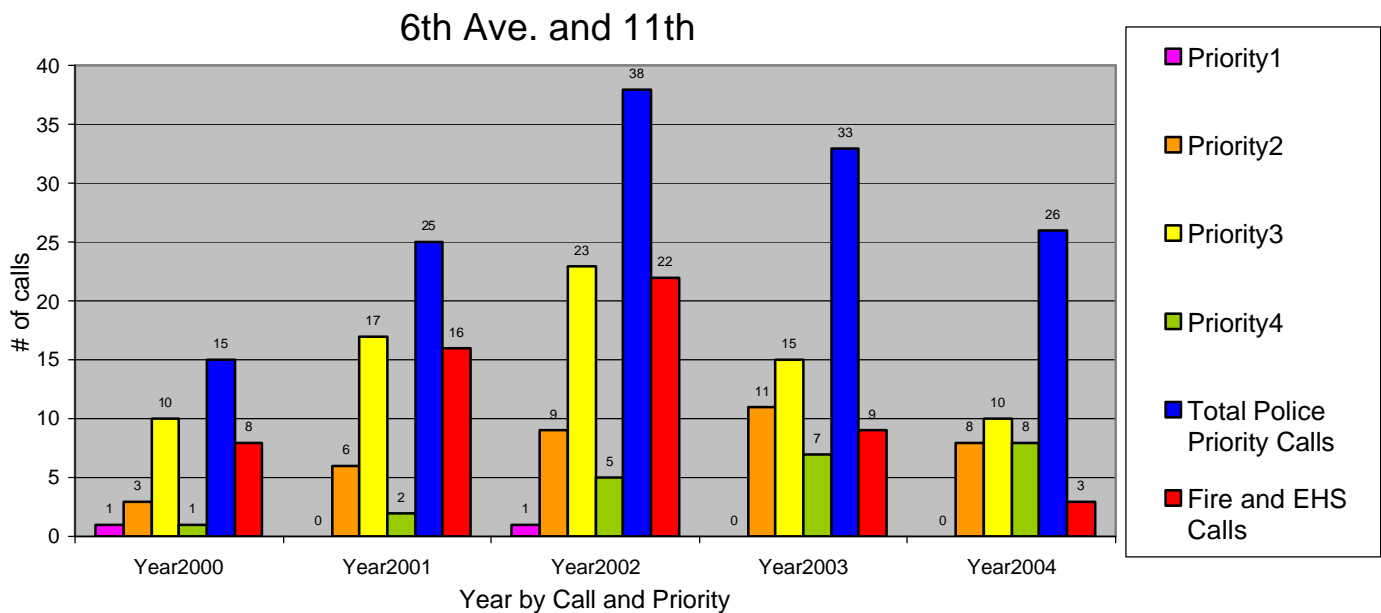
	Crime Free Properties	Non-Crime Free Properties
# Of properties studied	52	32
# Of total units	2433	1465
Total calls for Service for 5 years	4591	5561
Average Amount of Calls for service per year	918.2	1112
Amount of calls for service per day	2.5	3
# Of calls per single unit for 5 years	1.89	3.8
# Of calls per single unit per year average	0.38	0.76

In the sample of 32 properties selected in this analysis, some properties, which were in the process of becoming Crime Free members and others, were still quite far from meeting the minimum standards necessary to be part of the program. There are 1465 units within these 32 buildings that are not members. The latter is 968 units less than the 52-property sample of the Crime Free buildings in membership. What is pronounced is that with 968 units less there were still 970 more calls in 5 years than the certified properties. Non-Crime Free properties

average 1112 calls per year which is equivalent to 3 calls for police service per day. There are twice as many calls per unit (3.8 calls per unit) in 5 years in a Non-Crime Free building as there were in the Crime Free buildings (1.89 calls per unit), and on average, each Non-Crime Free Unit logged 0.76 calls per year. Another interesting point to look into was the amount of properties that have one or less calls per unit in 5 years. Crime Free Properties had 11 properties out of 52 that had less then one call per unit in 5 years (21%), whereas non-Crime free buildings had only one out of 32 buildings with less then one call in 5 years (3%).

Furthermore, the benefits of joining the program are highlighted when comparing two properties of the same size and unit capacity. The comparison illustrates the decrease in calls caused by the success of the program in the last five years.

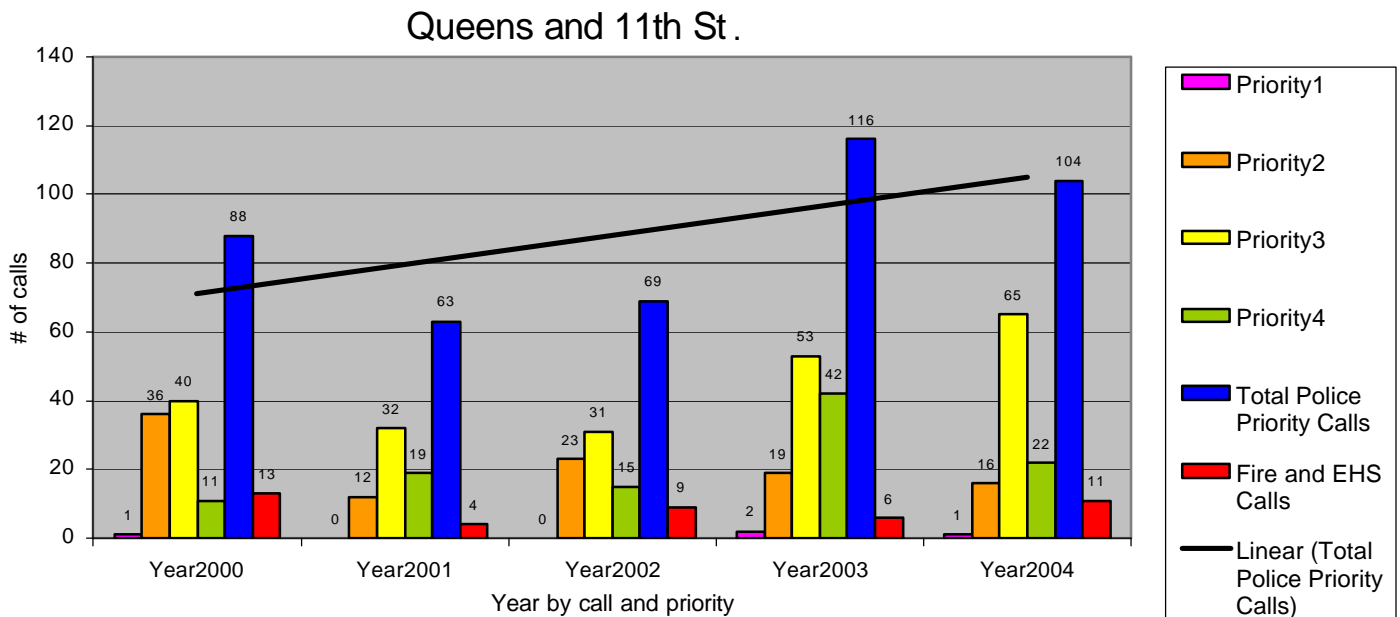
The properties used in the comparison below are located within the same area, and face the same sorts of issues, such as high pedestrian traffic, and is in close proximity to crime generators and hot spots. Graph 4 shows a building that has been part of the Crime Free Program since 2004 and contains 73 units. It has a high of 0.52 calls for police service in 2002, and a low of 0.36 in 2004. The apartment itself has had 137 calls in 5 years and averages 27.4 calls per year.



Graph 4: CFMH Member since:  
September 28, 2004

The comparison graph for the above property has had perpetual problems over the last 5 years and contains 97 units. The results of this study show that this

building has a low volume of 0.65 calls per unit in 2001, and a high rate of 1.2 calls per unit in 2003. This apartment has averaged 440 calls in 5 years, which is equivalent to 88 calls per year. Many of the problems present in this location specifically deal with the lack of management that is offered for a building as large as this one. With averages if 0.91 calls per service per unit per year, many issues need to be dealt with for it to come up to standard as a potential candidate for the Crime Free Program.



Graph 5: Non-CFMH property

### Conclusions

Overall, from the comparisons above there are substantial decreases in the police calls for service in the Crime Free certified buildings than the Non-Crime Free buildings. There are many factors that may influence the increase or reduction of police calls for service, but what remains on top of the list of importance is bestowing good management practices upon all persons in charge of rental property. The study results show that with 1000 units less Non – Crime Free properties are still reporting 1000 more calls per year then their Crime Free counterparts. The amount of extra calls the police continue to receive (which is approximately 3 calls per day just for the Non- Crime Free properties) is undoubtedly reducing police and city resources, which could be better applied to assisting new membership in the Crime Free Multi-Hosing Program.

One of the major benefits of this program is not only to decrease police calls for service, but to also save managers, the city, and the police service, time,

resources, manpower, and most importantly money. If the citizens of New Westminster work together and are aware of their surroundings and their neighbors, they can enjoy a reduction in crime, and a peaceful neighbourhood. Recognizing what is around you and what needs to be changed is the first step in beginning to think about personal safety, and protecting property. There is no way to eliminate crime, but the Crime Free Multi- Housing Program is taking the steps to make people more proactive, in charge of their own well-being, and the well-being of others. Together with the co-operation of management personnel, every apartment in New Westminster can be part of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program, and feel comfortable and secure living in a rental community without fear and reservation.

Some of the disadvantages of this program do not lie in the program itself but rather in the expectations, many have of it. Many managers and tenants believe that once their property becomes a member of the CFMH Program it will result in the elimination of all crime. As mentioned previously, the cultivation of crime takes years of effort. As such, and at best, property manager and owners will experience a decrease in their calls for service rather than a complete elimination of calls. There are also buildings that have as little as three calls for service a year. These results are extraordinary, and as such, managers may see little benefit in joining, but as mentioned earlier, the CFMH program has become desirable attribute to tenants seeking a peaceful residence to rent. .

The Crime Free Multi - Housing Program has been successful during the past 5 years of service it has provided to New Westminster. The future goal for the program is to strive to expand the membership, continue to decrease calls for service, and to continue to educate and implement simple crime prevention strategies to owners, managers, and tenants for a safer community. With the co-operation of the New Westminster Police, the City of New Westminster, and the apartment community, the benefits of this program are enormous, and apartment living will flourish, at least for tenants living in building of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

**Study conducted and concluded by  
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**March 2005**