

Street racing present in Ottawa, but not a problem

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Despite the Thursday afternoon crash that carved a path of destruction in Orléans after an alleged street race, police do not believe street racing is a problem in Ottawa.

"It's not a problem per se, but it is present," said Ottawa police Sgt. Mark Gatien, who heads traffic in the force's east division.

That presence is not limited to

any one area of the city, he said.

So far this year, he estimates police have laid about 30 street-racing charges and 25 stunting charges. To date, Gatien estimates 1,100 drivers have been stopped, whether to be ticketed or just spoken to, under Project ERASE, Eliminate Racing Activities on Streets Everywhere. The annual blitz sees officers spend between 12 and 15 nights in the spring and summer targeting street

racing and stunting.

Councillor Bob Monette, whose Orléans ward neighbours the Innes ward in which Thursday's crash occurred, said street racing is not specific to Orléans and has not been identified as a red-flag issue in the city by police. He sits on the city's police services board.

Police and residents who live near the crash site have said it was luck that no one was seriously injured,

given that the crash happened in a busy area during a relatively busy time of day.

Monette echoed those sentiments and hoped the crash will send a message to young people that street racing could have serious consequences.

"If that's the type of thing you're into, go to a proper track and do it. Not on the roads of Orléans, or any other roads in the community."