

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting Minutes (12Y/13X)
Thursday, October 13, 2011
Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila, Oakland
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

NCPC:

Frank Castro – Chair
Barbara Minton – Vice Chair
Denise Jorgensen – Treasurer
Karen Ivy – Secretary & Information Officer

Introductions

Frank Castro opened the meeting at 7:03 PM, and attendees briefly introduced themselves. 23 people attended, including several people from beat 13X and a couple of new attendees. Police officers in attendance included Officer Maureen Vergara, PSO for beat 12, and Officer Scott Hamilton, BART Police Department.

Crime Statistics, Frank Castro

Frank explained that he pulled the numbers for our beats from Oakland.crimespotting.org, by type of crime, for the dates Sept 1-30. Types of crimes followed include crimes against persons, crimes against property (non-auto), and crimes against property (auto). Beat 12Y had *twenty-six* non-auto crimes against property in September. Auto thefts and burglaries cluster around Colby – the area had 34 incidents, more than one a day.

Beat 13X had no crimes against persons. It had four non-auto crimes against property, *all* on major thoroughfares (none in the little wiggly streets). Officer Vergara noted that all these reports are citizen self-reports. A resident asked, what is a non-auto crime against property? It's mainly forms of burglary. A house burglary from an *unlocked site* is theft; forced entry into a house is burglary. Self-reporting of crimes makes it hard to be sure because the citizens may not understand how to classify the crimes. Frank Castro noted that Beat 13X had one grand theft, a stolen dog.

From August to September, beat 12Y went from 31 reported crimes to 66, more than double. Crime numbers in 13X actually went down.

Officer Vergara said that there's *much* more self-reporting going on than we've seen, so this may simply be more reporting. The biggest spike was in *self-reported crime*. Frank Castro repeated that we constantly emphasize that citizens *must report crimes*. Officer Vergara agreed that when commanders see the spike, even though it's all self-reporting, it gets their attention and they start assigning resources.

OPD is losing 20 officers and 5 sergeants off patrol to the new middle school patrol, 5 officers and 1 sergeant per middle school. They do need a lot of help, but that seems a lot given there is a school police force. The city got federal grant money to fund part of this for 3 years, it was Chief Batts' project. Kids are bringing guns to middle school – even to Montera, generally considered a pretty good school.

The city is working on a lateral academy (hiring officers from other cities) but they take time to set up.

Officer Vergara reported that Howard Jordan was sworn in today (Thursday 10/13) as interim chief.

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Beat 13X OPD Report

Officer Trent Thompson, PSO for beat 13, was unable to attend, so there was no beat 13 PSO report. Officer Vergara didn't have time to run the beat 13 statistics and suggested we ask the 4 people attending from 13X what their concerns are.

A resident from Alpine Terrace reported that his neighbors all know each other and have annual block parties. They're working on security issues, very proactive. He's new to the NCPC meeting, checking it out. Officer Vergara asked if the empty lots are still getting people hanging out? The resident reported not any more. The neighbors tackled the landlord and he put up chain-link fences, there are no more kids doing drugs. They were supposed to remove the foundations, but he doesn't know if they did. Alpine Terrace is a cul-de-sac, less vulnerable than a through street, but neighbors are keeping an eye on things. The resident saw a strange green pickup which made an odd u-turn; he followed it in his car for some time until the driver left the area. Fewer people are hanging out or loitering. The neighbors challenge strangers. He said it's the first place where he's lived since childhood where everyone knows everyone.

No other 13X issues were raised. Another resident commented, what a great attitude, an example for us all.

Beat 12Y OPD Report

Officer Vergara runs statistics 31 days back, so she's missing Labor Day but her numbers are close to Frank's. Major crimes included a robbery at the Shell gas station at 3 AM. Something went bad, the suspect shot at the clerk, no one was injured. The police are seeing a trend - robbery suspects feel more free to fire their guns. Criminals used to start with property crimes and work way up to where they could confront someone to rob them; there wasn't much shooting and robbing except for drug dealers. Robbery suspects are much younger now, they have no impulse control. They're all carrying guns and they use them, a very dangerous situation.

A recent highway shutdown was caused by a robbery. An Asian lady was robbed of cash, and was shot when she tried to retrieve her purse from the robber's car. The average age of a robbery suspect is between 16 and 21.

Details of some recent robberies: one in the 6400 block of Benvenue (on 10/6) - the suspects were young black males on bicycles. Another robbery involved 2 young black males, one armed. There was a lot more action in beat 12X, along the Telegraph corridor, this last month - around the BART station in particular. The robbers move around in this "target-rich environment." They'll be back on College. Bike patrols seem to be helping - easier for the police to see the suspects first when on a bike, the Crown Vic patrol cars are very conspicuous and loud.

OPD is seeing shootings daily, there was another in beat 10 just before this meeting - but that's drug stuff. It's the robberies that are a problem for citizens. *Pay attention* when walking around: almost every victim Officer Vergara interviewed was hit while distracted in some way, texting, listening to an iPod, whatever. Robberies tend to cluster around the evening commute and restaurant hour, but also in early morning walking-to-BART time. There are lots of robberies on Forest, they wait for commuters, and look for *distracted* people with something easy to take. OPD expects to see robberies increase near the holidays.

Burglaries: There were two forced entries reported. Of the 33 burglaries listed, a lot were self-reports. Officer Vergara can't read those online, so she didn't have details. Nobody ever sees the suspect - houses just *aren't locked*. Beat 13X has escaped a lot of violent forced entry because the properties are fortified - they have walls and heavy gates. Robbers want it easy. Protect your private property.

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Thefts: There's been a big spike of thefts in the Canning/ColbyAlcatraz/Claremont area. Circumference crime statistics show beat 11 (west of Telegraph Ave.) also has a lot of theft. Barbara Minton reported that she lives on 63rd just off Colby. Her neighbors report seeing silhouetted people walking along the street at night, checking door handles on cars.

Vehicle theft: Vehicle theft is a felony – there were 7 in the last 31 days. People who park overnight on the streets near a BART station often come back to find the car stolen. Target cars seem to be older, '90s models – Hondas, Toyotas, Acuras, one Mercedes, all taken *from the street*. Those models are all very easy to steal, but there was no particular pattern. They've had no cases of cars stolen that were parked off the street (in a driveway).

A resident asked about catalytic converter thefts. Officer Vergara reported there are a lot, but mainly in beats 22 and 25 (Fruitvale and Macarthur). Beat 12 had a spike of catalytic converter thefts about 4 years ago. It's mainly for metal recycling. They think it's one guy doing all the thefts. 4 years ago they thought it was one guy too, he was arrested for something else and the thefts stopped.

12Y Beat Projects

The tenant of the **grow house at 5129 Manila** has moved out, he's now somewhere near the Oakland Zoo. The property owner admits he was very irresponsible, he rented the house on a handshake deal. The condition of house shook him – the tenant destroyed it. They got a felony arrest on the guy dealing pot out of the house. Once the property has had a felony citation, future incidents could cost him \$1000/day.

Nude Sushi is a blighted mess. OPD did a [CPTED analysis](#) to evaluate security issues and sources of crime. The building contains 2 different businesses run by different people; the Thai restaurant owner is a good guy, trying really hard. He has a very nice place; OPD is working with him, he's doing what he can. The Nude Sushi owner ignores everything, does maybe 10% of recommended actions. She's done *some* things, a small improvement. Officer Vergara has met with the property owner and done a walkthrough, the owner is very cooperative. The property owner needs to put money into the building, but the business has issues too. They've scheduled inspections by the Alameda County health inspector and vector control inspector. Officer Vergara will push this through. She thinks if they can clean up the businesses it will help the noise problem. A resident noted that the property owner seems kind of intimidated by the tenants.

House at 494 63rd, with the auto repair business in the garage. This is not a legal business, there's no license. The same property was cited 10 years ago for the same thing. A resident said that the previous owner had a taxi business. Barbara Minton said she quit calling the police non-emergency line after getting a threatening letter from the resident and his wife. She will email a scan of the letter to Officer Vergara. She has kept a log of vehicles in the area, it has 51 cars with license numbers; she handed it to Officer Vergara. Officer Vergara has an inspection scheduled for the location. The business isn't the issue, it's the noisy motorbikes revving the engines with no muffler, and creepy looking people lurking around. Officer Vergara said, the guy has a really cool shop. Eliminate the attraction and the creeps may go away.

A resident asked if the officer needs other testimony? She will ask her friend to call. Officer Vergara said YES, please, and she keeps it all totally anonymous. Email information to mvergara@oaklandnet.com.

Problem house on Canning near 64th has been getting a lot of patrols, and it's been *really* quiet. Especially after they parked the police cars there.

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A resident reported that she lives right behind McNally's on College, and noise from patio is an issue. They've called it in, sent a letter to ABAT (Alcohol Beverage Action Team), and worked with the city administrator's office – is there a history of noise in the place? Officer Vergara said McNally hasn't been on their radar recently, she will look into it.

Frank Castro reported a simple assault near Desmond and Clifton in September. They've had some burglaries, the neighbors are setting up Neighborhood Watch. Someone built laminated cards with the "there's been an increase in crime, be alert" text from the OPD site. They posted these on phone poles, etc., but the signs began to vanish. They put them up again, replaced the tape with plastic tie-wraps. A man putting signs up saw another man tearing the signs down, asked him to stop, and the other man jumped him. A criminal case against the neighbor (who was defending himself) was thrown out. The sign-haters seem to be from the other side of 51st and they think there are at least 2 of them. They have a photo of one – Frank will email a copy to Officer Vergara, and send the report number.

BART Police Department report (if in attendance)

Officer Hamilton regretted that he had no crime statistics! On the issue of stolen catalytic converters, he reports that some dealers in Contra Costa County will make it harder to steal catalytic converters (bolt them in more), and put a serial number on the part, to make it trackable. They're trying to get this going in Alameda County, but the dealers don't want to do it for free. They hope to show that Concord Toyota's business has increased.

In the middle of this month (after October 17th), they're closing more than half the parking lot at *MacArthur BART station* for new construction – low income housing, shops, new streets, high-rises, big parking structures. We may see more traffic at Rockridge station. Officer Vergara has been working with Lauren LaPlante. BART PD is doing huge CPTED analysis on the new structures; the police departments are cooperating, persuading the architects to improve safety.

BART has decreased iPhone thefts by posting officers at either end of the transbay tube; the thefts haven't moved anywhere else. There's an app to track stolen iPhones (*Find My iPhone*, free), they used it to find one thief at Bayfair Mall, and got the phone back. A resident added that the new version of *Find My iPhone* lets you wipe phone remotely, and can force a phone to make loud noises even if it's set on vibrate.

Officer Hamilton reported seeing a man in Rockridge BART that he knows from Lafayette, a habitual drunk; he's angry, and carries toy guns. He has caused merchant problems in Rockridge; moved here for a while but now seems to have gone elsewhere.

The resident from Alpine Terrace asked for the names of the beat police who deal with their area. Officer Vergara gave him Trent Thompson's email, tthompson@oaklandnet.com. Officer Thompson is a PSO not a beat officer.

Setting of Priorities

Establish priorities for upcoming month based on OPD reports, and new issues brought to the NCPC's attention, and Crime Stats observations.

We will remove the drug house on Manila, the tenant is gone! We'll also remove the problem house on Canning near 62nd, and add the rash of car burglaries along Colby, and noise from McNally's.

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Priorities for October 2011:

12Y:

1. Rash of car burglaries along Colby between 60th and Alcatraz, and generally from Claremont toward Berkeley.
2. Noise from McNally's, complaint from resident behind the bar

13X:

1. No priorities for October.

Meetings are the SECOND Thursday of the month.

*Next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, November 10, 2011** at 7:00 PM in Room P1 at the College Preparatory School, 6100 Broadway (near the entrance to Route 24).*

See you there and stay safe!

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