

Minutes
Joint Meeting, Rockridge Community Planning Council and
Greater Rockridge NCPC (12Y/13X)
Thursday, November 15, 2012
Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

NCPC:

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

RCPC:

Stuart Flashman – Chair
 Laura Schlichtmann – Secretary

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting

Frank Castro opened the meeting at 7:04 PM, and explained the joint meeting with RCPC which the NCPC does once each year. Twenty-two people attended the meeting.

Joint OPD Report, beats 12Y and 13X

PSO Jo Balaoro, beat 13

13X crime statistics

Crime statistics for beat 13X are compared to beat 22Y and to the city as a whole.

<i>Crime</i>	<i>Beat 13X</i>	<i>Beat 22Y</i>	<i>Citywide</i>
Burglaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 residential (1 home unsecured, 1 attempted) • 4 auto 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 residential • 4 auto 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 924 burglaries (all kinds)
Robberies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 338
Stolen vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 555
Thefts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 428
Assaults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 (mainly domestic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 (all types) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 759 (all types)
Homicides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6

Officer Balaoro urged residents to be careful over the holidays. Opening the drapes to display a Christmas tree invites attention to items in the house. Turn Christmas tree lights off when away from home, to make the tree less noticeable.

Frank Castro asked about a massive burglary spike in beat 13, mentioned at a recent Community Policing Advisory Board (CPAB) meeting? Officer Balaoro said it hadn't happened since he came back on duty. The hills have plenty of burglaries, and an increase over previous years. Homeowners are taking individual actions.

Officer Balaoro reported that they have identified a person of interest in his major burglary investigation covering several beats.

PSO Donald Lane, 12Y

12Y Crime Statistics

<i>Crimes</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Robberies	8	All armed robberies, one strongarm robbery; last month there were 2

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<i>Crimes</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Burglaries	22	8 residential, same as last month 14 auto burglaries, well down from previous month's 27
Stolen vehicles	15	Big increase over last month's 4
Assaults	4	Previous month had 7 assaults

Officer Lane described a robbery on Colby early on the morning of the 12th: 2 men stole a woman's cell phone and purse at gunpoint. One robber beat her up; the other robber said, "What are you doing?" and asked the victim if she was OK. OPD tracked the cell to East Oakland, arrested both men, and found the phone.

The victim had the phone out. The vast majority of robberies lately are stolen cellphones, mostly visible. Most of the robberies happen between Telegraph and College, often around Rockridge BART. Don't walk around with your cellphone out; it advertises your phone to thieves. They can pawn cellphones within a couple of hours. There's even a kiosk in a Pleasanton mall where you can sell a phone to a vending machine! (But it takes photos of the transaction.) Thieves can get a couple of hundred dollars for an iPhone, probably more for an iPhone 5; it depends on the phone. Officer Lane strongly recommended smartphone users to put tracking software on your phone. iPhones come with a tracking app; he recommended *Lookout*, a very good free app for Android phones. Thefts aren't only phones. A couple leaving a restaurant one evening weren't flashing a phone but were robbed anyway.

The NCPC had reports of random gunfire near Ayala Park, almost daily during the week of Oct. 20. We reported this to Officer Lane by email at the time. He reported there's been no further activity since that week, and no particular evidence except that they found a shotgun shell. Officers do go by Ayala Park when they have time but nothing new has come up.

Don't leave gifts visible in your car when you shop; don't leave *anything* visible in your car. Many thefts are opportunistic, just people hanging out, looking for something that might be easy to steal. There's no reason to stop shopping but be careful.

Q: Do thefts happen any particular time of day? A: Not really, they mostly happen after 9 AM but it could be any time. Thieves tend to work in teams of 2-3.

Q: What good does tracking software do if the police won't go get the phone? There was a recent incident in San Francisco where the police refused to go after a trackable phone. A: Oakland does ask about tracking software and they will chase phones down. They go after phones because there are often other items with them. They tracked one phone to a car parked off 55th and found 4 phones and 2 guns. They also tracked one phone all the way to West Oakland and found the thief hiding under a bed.

Officer Balaoro said three big 3 helpful things for dealing with thefts and burglaries are:

1. Strategically placed surveillance cameras
2. Serial numbers
3. Photos of merchandise

Officer Lane mentioned the leadsonline.com web site – pawn shops use it. Citizens can create an account and upload serial numbers of items they own; check the *Civilians* tab. If you create an account and record your belongings, it's there and no one can access it: Laptops, desktops, TVs, cameras, phones, rings with certificates, other jewelry. A resident asked if you can upload photos but Officer Lane didn't know.

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He also recommended people buy or borrow an engraving tool and engrave your driver's license or some other identifier on each item, in an inconspicuous spot.

Q: What's the status of the laptop thefts along College? A: none have been reported for several weeks. Rockridge merchants plan to have 2 more unarmed guards on College during the holiday season, and Chad at Market Hall is always there. Be aware of your surroundings.

Don't walk around with earbuds in your ears; it tells the world that (a) you have electronics and (b) you aren't paying attention to your surroundings. Officer Lane also noted that you can't legally drive a car with earbuds in both ears, that's grounds for a ticket. You must have 1 ear open to hear traffic and emergency signals.

Q: Do we have a walking officer shared between College and Telegraph? A: there's an officer on loan who will be around, she's extra, temporary, and won't be walking that much.

Officer Lane noted that it's been a really weird year for robberies because of all the cellphone thefts. If you need to talk on the phone, go inside a café, or stand and talk against a wall. Be aware of area lighting away from College. Hudson is NOT well lighted and the big oaks block what light there is.

At this point Frank Castro's phone started to beep – he reported that the *FindMyPhone* app in his iPad had actually found his phone, it took about 3 minutes. *FindMyPhone* runs on apple-compatible systems. Android phone trackers could run from your PC. Oakland is #3 in the country for stolen phones.

Officer Balaoro suggested carrying a flashlight at night, not only to light your way but as a defensive tool, to flash in an assailant's eyes.

Q: Could BART put up warning signs to tell people to be aware, and don't talk on phone while walking? A: The NCPC has contacts at BART, we could discuss it with them.

Validate existing priorities

No one at the meeting had any new priorities to request. After discussion, the NCPC decided not to add the Ayala shootings, since they haven't continued. We asked OPD to continue to patrol Ayala Park when possible. We will also remove the laptop thefts, and convert the robberies around 58th and Telegraph and the burglaries on Shafter to general robberies and burglaries in the beats. Officer Lane said the robberies were currently happening around Forest and Claremont. The citizen who lives near the Hut reported that the problem continues, so we'll leave that.

Rockridge Community Planning Council Meeting

Stuart Flashman reported on the College Avenue Safeway project. There was a City Council meeting on the appeal of the Planning Commission approval on Tuesday night (Nov. 13), but before that several citizens groups met with various city council members to ask for support. There wasn't strong interest, but some council members were worried enough about traffic to talk to Safeway. With prodding from Libby Shaaf and Ignacio De La Fuente, Safeway agreed to a mediation by Council Member Jane Brunner. The appellants had 6.5 people at the mediation (one RCPC representative could only attend part time) plus a traffic consultant. Safeway had 5-6 people there pretty much at all times – 2 attorneys, a PR person, their local real estate person, an architect, and the Safeway VP of real estate. The City also had its traffic consultant in attendance, as well as an assistant to the City Administrator.

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The mediation session lasted 13 hours – from 9 AM to 10 PM. It was a tough session, but they came out with a good settlement – not perfect but acceptable. They got an 8,000 square foot reduction in the size of the project (6,000 off the Safeway itself and 2,000 off other stores in the complex). The store will be moved to ground level, with open rooftop parking with some visual and noise screening. A “pedestrian walkway” will now move further north, it will be a continuation of 63rd and almost a plaza, more than just a walkway. This will open up visual access to the hills from College Ave. The absence of a view of the hills from College was a major objection to the other design.

The appellants also got elimination of the project’s “parking deficit” - the original design had a calculated 40 car parking deficit in peak weekday hours and 60 cars on Saturday. The restaurant originally planned at Claremont & College is now gone, they will just have regular stores. This helps reduce the parking deficit as restaurants drive a lot of parking. At peak hours project employees will not be allowed to park in the lot. Safeway will also pay for resident permit parking in the 2 blocks around the store to keep employees from parking there. Safeway staff will have to park farther away on the street and walk back. All Safeway employees will get free AC Transit passes. They've promised the project will have no parking deficit.

You'll still be able to park in the Safeway lot and shop around the street, with a one hour time limit at peak hours.

They'll probably have about 5 shops and they insisted on reserving 40% of space for national chains. RCPC asked for and got a promise of no fast food. One store may end up being a Wells Fargo branch. RCPC will submit a list of types of things they don't want in the small shops. If you have opinions, tell the RCPC. All shops will be on the 1st floor.

What mitigation will there be for impacts on the small stores across College? Reduced store size and lesser traffic impact will help them, that's what they were mainly worried about. They're generally not worried about Safeway competing with them. With Safeway on the ground floor and parking upstairs, Safeway has lost the “captive audience” the original design gave them.

What about traffic lights? The entrance ramp to the parking lot will move to the north end of the store, right at the Berkeley line, not right at 63rd. There will still be a 10 foot buffer zone between Safeway and the houses on College, also visual and noise buffers. Loading docks will be entirely enclosed, at the back off Claremont.

How will cars turn onto the ramp? Driving north, you just make a right turn in. For southbound traffic, they want a 2 car left turn lane just south of Alcatraz. We will lose the diagonal parking on College at Alcatraz, up to the Berkeley line. Someone asked why all the entrances weren't on Claremont. The answer is, if you put all the entrances on Claremont, you funnel traffic up the Alcatraz residential area.

The traffic lights at College and Claremont and College and Alcatraz will be synchronized; they are not synchronized now.

On Tuesday (Nov. 13), Jane Brunner presented the new proposal to the City Council, the RCPC, BPOD (Berkeleyans for Pedestrian Oriented Development), the other appellant, and FANS (Friends and Neighbors of College Avenue) supported it, Safeway said they accepted it. About 30 speaker cards came in, only 7 or 8 had actual concerns. The hearing was continued, it will be on the agenda Dec. 18. Further details will be considered then. The RCPC hopes that will be the final meeting. They are also working on a formal settlement agreement between Safeway, RCPC, FANS, and BPOD to lock in everything they agreed on during mediation.

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How does this coordinate with the other Safeway project at 51st and Broadway? The other Safeway project seems stalled. They won't publish an EIR till December at the earliest, then that process starts. They can't even consider project approval till late spring or early summer 2013. Safeway may be putting that project aside for now for budgetary reasons. The CVS store will continue as living dead, "at least" until June if not longer.

Why was the original planning commission approval unanimous? It's a union store, and the planning commission has several pro-union members. The commission staff said it was all fine and the commissioners didn't challenge the staff evaluation. And we need the jobs, here in Oakland – According to the Oakland Chamber of Commerce (who supported Safeway) if this gets turned down flat, other businesses will not come to Oakland. Some commissioners just liked the project. It won't add much sales tax revenue to Oakland, much of what they sell doesn't pay sales tax.

Other Issues – Sound Walls

The city is still working on the petition for sound walls (from mitigation for the Caldecott 4th bore). The petition will probably be available in January or so for people to take around for signatures. This is similar to the process requesting speed bumps and paid permit parking – 2/3 of property owners on a block have to sign for that segment to clear. Also the property has to get a 5 dB benefit from sound wall for the owners to be eligible to sign. A resident asked, won't it make things worse for people 2-3 blocks away?? Ronnie Spitzer responded that the most extreme measurements they've taken don't show more than a 2 dB difference with sound wall. And what if the walls are ugly?? The elevated sections of Highway 24 can't support a full concrete sound wall, so they'll have a clear plastic wall if they get anything. There are examples on 580 in some places (down by 238).

The petitions will determine whether to do the next round of detailed studies to decide where to put sound walls. Actual sound wall design is months or years away. If we don't get sound walls in Rockridge, the next possibility is sound walls in Temescal. Other potential uses for the money include lighting in Temescal, some intersection mitigations, etc. Most people seem to want the sound walls.

What about dirt and detritus falling off the elevated freeway onto Hardy Park? A sound wall probably will help; the edge will be higher, so it will be harder for stuff to fall over.

Priorities for November 2012:

12Y:

1. Late night noise from The Hut
2. Robberies in the area generally
3. Burglaries in the area generally

13X:

1. No priorities requested for 13X

Meetings are the SECOND Thursday of the month.
There will be no Greater Rockridge NCPC meeting in December 2012.
*Next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, January 10, 2013** at 7:00 PM*
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See you there and stay safe over the holidays!

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