

Greater Rockridge NCPC (12Y/13X)
Thursday, April 24, 2008
Rockridge Library 5366 College Avenue
General Public: 7:00-9:30 PM
Minutes

Co-chair Chris Jackson opened the meeting at 7:02 PM and began introductions around the table. Twelve police officers were present including Captain Anthony Toribio, Sgt. Brad Young, and Officer Doug Chimpky, the College Ave. walking officer. Approximately 40 people attended in addition to the NCPC steering committee and the OPD.

Becki Gagnon of Zachary's Pizza represented the Merchant Watch group recently set up by the Rockridge Development Association. Other official attendees included David Chambliss, the principal of Claremont Middle School; Eric Johnson, the new deputy executive director of the Oakland Housing Authority, with an officer from the OHA's separate police force; and Nila Kim of Councilwoman Jane Brunner's office.

Introduction of our new Neighborhood Services Coordinator by Paul Brekke-Miesner.

Anna Chang Lai is the new Neighborhood Service Coordinator for beats 12X, 12Y, 13Y, 13X, and 13Z.

Presentation on crime statistics (Vivek Bhatia)

Vivek Bhatia presented the graphs he has compiled from the OPD's weekly crime reports, distributed on the OPD Yahoo group. He has been tracking reported crimes, for beats 12Y and 13X only, for about a year just to see what was there, and has collected data as far back as October 2005. His graphs display crimes in 3 broad categories: Penal Code violations, Vehicle Code violations, and Health & Safety, all of which are in the OPD spreadsheet. After graphing individual crimes, he concentrated on the *median*, secondarily the *average*. He stated that single occasional misclassified entries (i.e., crime assigned to wrong beat) are not significant. Crime reporting may be better now than it was 2 years ago.

Crimes in 2008:

- There was a significant drop in crime in mid-February
- Of the 18 weeks in the year so far, 6 had more than 20 crime reports

He then graphed the year over year trends: for whole year, and quarter by quarter.

- Median crime reports for 2006 - 11;
- Median crime reports for 2007 - 12.5;
- Median crime reports for 2008 to date - 17.5.

For 70% of 2008 to date, median number of crime reports per week is higher than median number of crime reports per week for all of 2007.

Beats 12Y and 13X don't have as many *specific* trouble spots, like drug houses, as some beats; they seem to get more roving crime. Vivek speculated that 1 or 2 major drops in crime may have correlated with a particular arrest or arrests. Officer Chimpky confirmed that in February, OPD caught a suspect who actually confessed to all the recent burglaries around College. That arrest was followed by a significant drop in crime reports. The RDA representative suggested that a drop in 3Q07 may be related to school being out, since many kids are bussed in to Rockridge to attend Claremont Middle School.

Vivek's next project: he's on his neighbors' case to report everything. He's talking to a criminal law specialist to identify armed events in the stats by the penal codes cited.

Vivek said his next project is to identify specific penal codes to break out crimes against the person from crimes against property, so as to graph the data that way.

Neighborhood Issues

59th and Canning

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

- RockridgeNCPC.com & OaklandPolice.com
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The OHA property at 59th and Canning has become a problem again. Neighbors report that the gate locks are broken; people are hanging out around the property; a neighbor saw a drug deal from a nearby property. The neighbors would like to see hangers out limited to residents of the property. A neighbor reported that he recently saw a high-speed car chase, the car was full of people he recognized from the property. There was a gunshot from property last Saturday night.

The OHA officer stated that OHA is no longer putting security gates on OHA properties, after cases in which they've been used to *block* police from accessing property. OHA now feels the best way to secure the property is to get the residents integrated into the neighborhood.

Geography is important in this case – the Washhouse is at one end of the block, the OHA property is at the other; the trouble happens between them. Chris Jackson commented that the OHA property is much improved since a recent rebuild, but it's getting cross traffic from Bushrod Park and drug traffic through from Ayala. Also, there is an adjacent 4 unit property that was a sore spot and may still be. Chris J. has talked to the OHA residents, they're afraid to let their kids play outside, and told him they would feel safer with gates. Eric Johnson of OHA said that they could consider that. A change in OHA policy has led to the removal of the former resident manager. Chris Jackson says the Canning property is much improved, but OHA needs to work with OPD on the drug dealing.

Eric Johnson will drive by and check out the property, and have a resident meeting. A neighbor asked if the property could be patrolled regularly. The OHA police are city-wide, they have 10 officers, who are not assigned to specific sites – they cover over 3,000 properties. The OHA officer says that she doesn't get calls for the property, and she works nights. OHA has its own police dispatcher at 535-3100, which is the correct number to call for problems on OHA properties.

The neighbor has been calling Officer Jacobs for trouble at the OHA property; he should call the 535-3100 number instead, and have the OHA dispatcher send someone by.

A resident asked if there had been a rise in people just driving around shooting? He said he seems to hear pop-pop-pop every night, and not just in the neighborhood. Chris Jackson asked the OPD representatives if there is unusual activity around Shattuck/Dover? The officers said there was nothing special.

Claremont Middle School

Principal Chambliss from Claremont Middle School commented that the community wants to know what's been going on. A resident noted that the Yahoo email groups are getting reports of "bands of kids" acting in threatening ways, committing scattered crimes, terrorizing people. Someone was mugged; a neighbor reported the crime. The OPD took 50 min. to respond; the kids then came back to terrorize the neighbor, staring in windows, screaming profanities. People have seen fistfights, and kids jumping up and down on cars. Captain Toribio reported that on 4/22, OPD detained 4 juveniles. One has been arrested, and he's confident this will lead to more arrests.

Principal Chambliss said the man who was mugged identified the assailant in the principal's face book, and they reported it to OPD. The school wants to hold kids accountable for their actions, and will support neighbors. A resident asked if we could we have more OPD presence after school hours. David Chambliss reported that he has an offer from the neighbors on Oak Grove: they're taking up a collection to pay for overtime hours, after school is out, for people willing to walk around and talk to the kids. The head custodian has volunteered to do that (every day except Wed.); he knows all the kids and gets on well with them.

Someone asked what's being provided for the kids to do in the neighborhood, after school? Where's the PAL? Can't we find something for them to do instead of just breaking them up? There's nothing for them to do. Ofc. Chimpky noted that they can go to Bushrod Park; a church opened its doors for them last year, and no one showed up. Principal Chambliss said Claremont Middle School has a big, well-funded after-school program, they could serve more kids than they do, but a lot of the kids don't want to be on campus, they want to hang with their friends. The library is providing some space.

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A resident asked why don't we have an "after-school fee" - he suggested \$1 tacked on every restaurant tab for the next year, or possibly a collection jar in restaurants and stores, to pay for people to be around from 3 PM to midnight; essentially to fund our own community officer or liaison to work with the kids. Chris Jackson responded that the NCPC and business community are exploring ways of doing that but aren't ready to announce a solution yet.

A person who identified himself as a case manager commented that most of these kids are being traumatized at home: drugs, abuse, etc. Not an excuse but explanation. He's also a consultant, would like to meet and make a proposal for things for the kids to do: internships, landscaping, get them a work ethic. It's a very small group starting the trouble, the others follow. Get the larger group involved in something useful, the police can pick off the troublemakers.

Merchants' Issues – Becki Gagnon, Rockridge District Association

The RDA has heard that in other schools the teachers have to get the kids on the bus, and at Claremont this isn't so, because they'd have to cross the street: is that true? Is it also true that there's no school security after school (after 3 PM) because school starts so early?

Principal Chambliss responded that teachers are asked to do "PM supervision" for 15-20 minutes after school. They also have security officers who work until 4 PM. There's no issue crossing the street (although technically there could be contract issues), all his staff are willing to do that. There's no real way to insist that they *have* to leave the school area – the kids may well feel safer in Rockridge than at home. Beyond the immediate school perimeter is outside his range, although he'll see what can be done. The school has a conflict resolution coordinator who comes in, who has worked with local merchants.

The merchants' number one issue is the Claremont kids. There was an incident south of the BART station where 15-20 students took over the street, jumping on cars; merchants had to close their doors, and OPD took 40 min. to respond. Recently kids got on a merchant's roof and were throwing potted plants into College Ave.; OPD was called but never came. Merchants agree this is not just an OPD problem, we need a task force, working with the NCPC to see what we can do without any more money. The merchants pay high taxes, they have expenses; they can't always pass things on in higher prices. The merchants fully support OPD going where the worst trouble is; Market Hall has hired its own private security. Some businesses are contributing to the after-school person (the "street monitor" for Oak Grove). The merchants are very concerned about the negative press for Oakland, for College Ave., and for Rockridge. They'd like a consistent relationship with neighborhood.

Chris Jackson has been talking with Jane Brunner's office about getting funds for security.

OPD Report – special guest, Captain Anthony Toribio of OPD Area 1

The officers present are the ones who cover this area: they are interested in the neighborhood concerns. Sgt. Ortez, supervisor, was introduced. Officer Chimpky, the College Ave. walking officer: he's been working on the pedestrian way between Oak Grove and Claremont. A resident agreed to put up a camera and a "you are on camera" sign, and he's seen no problem since. He encouraged people who see a bunch of kids acting off, to *snap a picture* and send it to him. Otherwise it's hard to identify them. Ofcr. Cunnie (beat 13) said that his squad addresses issues as a squad, not as individuals. They bring the squad into an area to cover it. Officer Gerans (beat 12, 5 PM -5 AM) said that he's been working on the Telegraph robberies, Dana/Colby, to identify transients and normal residents of area. They've been stopping and talking to people, taking photos; there are no good photo files on juveniles. Ofcr. Moore (beat 13X) reported arresting a female armed with an automatic weapon and bulletproof vest, who was robbing kids in the 500 block of 43rd street, just off Telegraph.

A resident said he was told "you can't take pictures of a juvenile" - it's illegal. Captain Toribio responded that they take photos during truancy sweeps. The consensus of the police and a couple of lawyers present was that it's *OK* to take photos of juveniles in *public areas* where there's no expectation of privacy.

Captain Toribio then spoke for some time:

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He found the crime stats depressing, they make the area look like it's filled with crime. He wants to reduce not only the reality but the *perception* of crime. He'd also like to see Vivek's statistics broken out to separate violent crime from property crime. He wants to focus on crimes against the person, and offered to help Vivek figure out how to break crimes down in more detail.

In beats 12Y and 13X the most serious crimes are robberies. North Oakland has 4 "hot spots":

- 4500-6500 Shattuck
- 4500-6500 Telegraph
- Areas around BART stations (Rockridge and Ashby, MacArthur, W. Oakland)
- All adult bookstores (the same robber has hit them 5-6 times, he's known, they're working on a plan to get him)

The Telegraph corridor has more commercial robberies than street robberies. Officers work with businesses to reduce likelihood of being a target. There are 2 types of street robberies:

- Rat packs, 3-4 juveniles loiter in an area waiting for passers-by, pull their hoodies up and strike. They take cell phones and money, sometimes assault victims.
- Cases where a suspect parks around a corner, waits for victim to come by and either approaches directly or comes up behind, assaults and robs victim, then gets away in car. The getaway vehicle can also be a bicycle.

Crime in beat 13X is spread out: burglaries, auto thefts, no clear focuses, lots of scattered offenses.

What is OPD doing:

- Truancy sweeps. They've picked up 75-100 truants or more, have collected some wanted juveniles, gotten good intelligence for investigations division, connected kids to Measure Y outreach workers. Some of the kids sent to the truancy center now have jobs due to Measure Y intervention.
- Quality of life sweeps. The Crime Response Team goes in with undercover officers to drug or other crime areas, identify suspects, cite, and arrest.
- Beat officers will walk their beats, during lunchtime, dinnertime, and commute hours. Be on foot, be seen, be a deterrent. Park police cars in doubtful areas. He's hoping for big dividends from a relatively small effort.
- OPD is buying 4 new bicycles; a bicycle school in May will train 4 patrol officers to patrol in teams on bikes for Rockridge, Montclair, Shattuck, W. Oakland. They're mobile, it's good exercise, they're out of their cars and available.
- OPD is buying 2 dual-purpose motorcycles, to make PSOs more mobile in congested areas.
- Training several officers on SEPTAD (? get details). Crimes need 3 things: victim, suspect, location. SEPTAD is meant to eliminate the *location*. Unobstructed views, improved lighting, merchant alerts. After PSOs trained, will train officers to advise homeowners, remove "target areas."

OPD considers delayed response to 911 calls a big challenge. Captain Toribio is very concerned about staffing levels, he's got 11 officers out on sick or disability leave. Command vacancies have pulled officers off the beat into acting sergeant and lieutenant roles. Having officers walk beats will impact response times, but he thinks walking is important enough to warrant it. He wants them to walk up to half an hour. The 911 center is training 11 new dispatchers, and there are 4 more waiting to train because they're short of trainers. But even so the dispatcher may not be able to reach an officer to dispatch. OPD needs to improve radio management. Someone called an officer because a turkey was running in the street; that should have waited for animal control. He wants *area supervisors* to manage what calls the officers will respond to, identify repeat callers, look for patterns. But a big shooting or whatever will tie up a lot of officers and prevent other callers from getting quick response. The number of officers tied up at any one crime depends on size and chaos at the crime scene, and may need officers from other areas. Last year OPD got >750,000 calls to 911 center.

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A resident asked if we are working on formal procedures for calling neighboring agencies for help on problems in the border areas, such as BPD, BART PD, Emeryville PD, Alameda Sheriff, etc.

Captain Toribio said yes, BPD PSOs meet with OPD PSOs; BPD officers on the border carry OPD radios in their cars; both departments are working on ways to coordinate radio calls near border. They're also working on procedures for Oakland dispatchers to call Berkeley and Emeryville on border issues.

Crime prevention techniques: robbers look for people who are talking on the cell phone, looking down, not paying attention. Pay attention to your surroundings; don't walk and talk on the phone. If you see someone suspicious, call OPD. Know your neighbors, tell them when you'll be away. Lock your car, don't leave stuff out. Self-help is the first line of defense.

Chris Jackson suggested that when you call the OPD non-emergency number, press 1 for English and then 0 to bypass the recording. One resident commented he gets something that sounds like a fax; this is probably the TDI handshake for hearing-impaired. Wait and it goes away.

The captain reported on personnel changes: Debi Mack, the PSO for 12Y / 13X, is going back to patrol; she's off injured now, and will go to patrol when she returns to duty. He has 1 or 2 candidates for PSO who may move in. New officer will be very enthusiastic. He can't replace the 12Y / 13X PSO until Debi returns to duty. He expects to know more about the time frame next week, and will try to have other PSOs look at the priorities in the interval. We may have a part-time PSO for a while.

Questions from the audience:

A resident asked how many hours does Ofc. Chimpky put in on street, and is he ever going to use the bicycle the NCPC bought for him?

Captain Toribio responded that they're short of FTOs, and Officer Chimpky is training new officers, he's a very good officer. A majority of his time, Chimpky should be out on foot; he's seen Chimpky on the bike, but he doesn't know how much time.

What is turnover like? Captain Toribio said it's currently around 4 per month; has been higher, 5-6. We lose officers to retirement, to injury, to other agencies (but some of those come back). We have attrition in the academy (20-40%) - lack of aptitude, family hardship.

How many total officers does OPD have? Captain Toribio said it's mid-750s, target is 803, but we have to go higher than 803 to cover attrition.

Jim Dexter, beat chair of 13Y NCPC, commented that the FTO shortage is so bad the entire crime gain unit will be disbanded for 7 months, investigations cut in half, to put investigators on as FTOs. This will significantly impact service, with the assumption that it will eventually improve service. Captain Toribio agreed that we need a lot of FTOs. OPD plans to take some of the officers from specialized units, CRTs, traffic, gang, parole & corrections, foot patrol, to act as FTOs for about an 8 month period. But this will improve the patrol division, allowing for the learning curve. It'll be a challenge.

911 doesn't operate on a radio system, they operate on a trunk system which runs on OPD procedures. They're moving to the new federal radio system and that will have some federal regs. Mostly the OPD develops its own oversight.

Sgt. Brad Young reported on PSO priorities:

Priorities from last meeting: he's a skateboarder, has resources for kids, there's a new skateboard park going in at deFremery Park.

Aggressive solicitors on Canning and Telegraph – PSO went out, did security checks. Going door-to-door is against the law without a permit which they have to display when they go to the door. And the city almost never issues permits.

Rockridge/Margarido/Ocean View – cruised the area several times, found nothing but provided a big police presence.

Traffic problems – lots of work on that.

55th street – Debi Mack did some work on that complex, he can't read her files. Problem is still open. Debi is doing well and will be back soon.

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Review of Previous Month's Priorities and Setting of New Ones (10 minutes)

Beat 12Y

1. 5700-5900 Telegraph – 5900 Block Canning

Monitor area for suspicious people/vehicles and juveniles loitering in relation to the adult bookstore and the Washhouse. Drug activity reported as returning to 59th & Canning area (possibly same subjects who loiter on the 5900 block of Telegraph).

There has been at least one more murder in this area and a robber shot by an armed homeowner.

The bookstore not only makes itself a target (it has been robbed a few times now) but due to the element of people it attracts to the area, it also endangers many folks who walk from Rockridge BART to Shattuck via Forest to Ayala then 57th & over.

2. Claremont Middle School

Monitor students after school hours for unruly behavior on College Ave from Claremont Middle to College Point (College & Broadway) with attention paid to bus stops from BART to the Rockridge Library and rear of Trader Joe's parking lot. Also Forest to Ayala & Hermann.

3. Cluster of armed robberies in the very early morning (6-7 AM) reported in the Chabot Road / Ross Ave. neighborhood.

Beat 13X

1. Thomas Ave. just above Broadway, Manila, Broadway Terrace

Issues with truants, students from Far West High School, coming into the neighborhood, aggressive behavior, discharging firearms, smoking dope.

2. Thomas Ave. just above Broadway, Manila, Broadway Terrace

Burglary problems generally, especially car break-ins and auto theft.

Traffic Priorities

12Y – traffic on College Ave., pedestrian and bicycle violations.

13X – congestion on Broadway Terrace, traffic backs up onto Thomas.

Next Meeting will be Thursday, May 22nd at the Rockridge Library. Stay safe and see you then!

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