

# PANIL *Notes*

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July 2013

## Alert: Rockridge Shopping Center Redevelopment Project

by Gail Cooper

As many of you may know, Safeway Development, as master leaseholder for the Rockridge Shopping Center at Pleasant Valley and Broadway, plans to tear down the existing center and replace it with a new and expanded shopping complex. Developing more retail, especially at this site, is a City priority and we have every reason to believe the project will be approved. As these changes will have a substantial impact on our neighborhood, now is the time to get up to speed and get involved, either with PANIL or as an individual. Please plan to attend PANIL's July 10 meeting on this topic.

Traffic is the major concern. We anticipate that traffic calming measures will be necessary on many local streets. There's a lot to read here but if you live anywhere close to the shopping center, your life will definitely be impacted!

### I. BACKGROUND

Safeway's original plans in 2009 resembled the current shopping center. The major difference then was that an expanded Safeway would occupy the current CVS site and smaller stores would be at the current Safeway site. That proposal met with universal opposition; the current plan attempts to address many of the comments from a coalition of neighborhoods urging Safeway to develop a denser, less suburban project, to include housing, to improve the aesthetics of the buildings and layout, and to make the area more pedestrian and bike friendly. In response, Safeway did make significant improvements. However, building housing is prohibited by Safeway's



lease, and even attempts by our Councilmember Dan Kalb to open conversations with the owners have met with resistance from both Safeway and the owners.

Under the revised plan, the retail square footage will grow from 185,500 square feet to 322,500 sq. ft. A larger Safeway will go where CVS is now. One to four story buildings will go in the general areas of the existing stores and Chase Bank. There will be several plazas, an internal street with wider sidewalks for outdoor cafes and public seating, and landscaped plazas overlooking the quarry pond. There will be both surface parking and parking over the retail space. Pedestrian and bike access will be from separate lanes at vehicle entry points. Pedestrians will also be able to enter the center at ground level where Pleasant Valley and Broadway intersect.

Construction is expected to start early next year and go through 2015. Street redesign would be in the second phase.

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**PANIL monthly Meeting: Wed., July 10, 2013 — 7:30 p.m.**  
**Piedmont Gardens, 110 41st Street, 11th Floor Sky Room**

### Agenda

#### **7:30 p.m. Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council**

Patricia Rose, our neighborhood Services Coordinator

Officer Steve Toribio, our Problem Solving Officer

and special guest, Captain Anthony Toribio, Area 1 commander

#### **8:15 p.m. General Meeting**

#### **Organizing our response to impacts of the Rockridge Shopping Center redevelopment**

Learn about potential impacts and give input on what traffic calming measures you want to see recommended when the Final EIR comes out.



## II. THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND PROJECT SUMMARY

State law requires the City to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for major projects. The DEIR examines potentially significant impacts in numerous categories, assesses ways to minimize (mitigate) potential adverse impacts, and examines project alternatives. Here, the City found significant environmental impacts related to transportation, circulation, and parking, all related to an increase in automobile trips resulting from a 75% expansion of the retail space. Given the existing use of the property, no adverse impacts were identified in other areas, such as air quality, land use, aesthetics, etc.

To reduce the car-related impacts and to facilitate pedestrian and bike access, numerous changes are planned to the intersections in the area: physical changes to the current lanes and entrances/exits on Broadway and Pleasant Valley, the addition of a traffic light and throughway at Coronado, and improvements to the timing of many traffic light signals. However, the report concludes that impacts at Howe and Pleasant Valley are "significant and unavoidable," i.e., cannot be adequately mitigated. More details follow below.

### Vehicle access

- Pleasant Valley access would remain the same.
- Broadway would change. The two current access points from Broadway will be eliminated. Instead, there will be new access and a signal at Coronado.

### Off-site roadway modifications

Proposed roadway changes are as follows:

- Broadway would be reduced from 3 to 2 through lanes in each direction between College and 49th St.
- Class 2 bike lanes would be provided on both sides of Broadway between College and 51/Pleasant Valley.
- The new Coronado intersection would provide an exclusive left-turn lane south into the Center and a protected pedestrian crossing.
- The existing median by Wendy's would be eliminated. The northbound left-turn lane on Broadway would be modified to provide left turn access to Wendy's.

- The Broadway/51st/Pleasant Valley intersection would be modified to increase vehicle capacity, provide a median pedestrian refuge island, and to provide better signal operations. The small islands on the NW and SE sides would be eliminated.
- The Gilbert/Pleasant Valley intersection would be modified to provide more turn lanes and better signal operations. Pleasant Valley would be widened 1–4 feet along the project frontage for the second left turn lane into the center.
- Bus stops on Pleasant Valley would be moved.

### Significant and unavoidable traffic impacts

Traffic impact is measured under existing conditions, for 2015, and for 2035. Traffic will increase through the entire area but only these intersections met the criteria for severe impacts above the permissible thresholds:

- Howe/Pleasant Valley: Increased traffic would warrant a signal now. However, the City advises against that because of concern that a signal would allow easier car access to Howe and encourage cut-through cars to use Howe instead of Piedmont or Broadway. The City also rejected the idea of prohibiting left turns westward from Howe because of concern that traffic would be diverted to Piedmont or Montgomery. Hence, the Howe impact cannot be mitigated.
- Intersection operations at the Broadway/51st/Pleasant Valley intersection will be degraded. The worst delay—of more than six seconds eastbound—would be Saturday midday peak hours. The effects can be mitigated for several years but, as of 2015, will be significant and unavoidable.
- Piedmont Ave/Pleasant Valley: The increased traffic will become significant and unavoidable in 2035.

The other most impacted intersections are those at Montgomery/Pleasant Valley; Shattuck/52nd; and Telegraph/51st. The City states that the adverse impact on the latter two intersections would not be significant because the signal systems there will be upgraded/optimized. The impacts on Montgomery do not require mitigation. (The intersections that were studied encompassed the area south of Broadway/ Broadway Terrace

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**Chow** (from p. 4)

Kaiser Medical Center and Pill Hill, stating that those two institutions alone generate more foot traffic than the entire population of Lafayette.

They know about ongoing problems with patrons of Egbert Sousé Bar, and are willing to hire a security guard to “walk the block and engage loiterers in conversation.” Gulisano states that when they did this at the Church St location, the block’s drug dealing problems ended.

Below is a partial list of questions for neighbors to consider. Can you think of other impacts or solutions? Send your thoughts to PANIL at [contact@panil.org](mailto:contact@panil.org) or Valerie at 653-4552.

- What is your reaction to the proposed hours?

**Rockridge Redevelopment** (from p. 2)

to 40th & Broadway; Hudson & College to College & Broadway; MLK/52nd St to Pleasant Valley & Moraga; Piedmont Ave from Pleasant Valley to 41st. Except for the intersections with Pleasant Valley, there was no study of Gilbert, Montgomery, or Howe.)

**III. PANIL’s COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EIR**

PANIL, other neighborhood groups and others recently commented on the DEIR, attended a public hearing before the City Planning Commission, met with our new city council representative Dan Kalb, and met with City planning staff and Safeway’s traffic consultants.

Our major comments focused on:

- The failure to address the substantial increase in traffic we can expect on the neighborhood streets south of Pleasant Valley, particularly Gilbert, Mather, Montgomery, Howe, John and Ridgeway;
- The need to assess the feasibility and efficacy of traffic calming measures on those streets;
- Issues relating to the intersections at Gilbert and Pleasant Valley; Broadway and Coronado; Broadway/51st/ Pleasant Valley, and the east entrance to the mall on Pleasant Valley;
- Pedestrian safety at Montgomery and Pleasant Valley;
- Pedestrian and bicyclist safety at the site;
- The need for shuttle service around the site and to BART; and
- Concerns about impacts on residential parking.

- How do you feel about the bakery operation at this location?
- What about outside seating noise?
- There have not been a lot of problems with restaurants serving beer and wine with meals, but given the history of problems with Egbert’s, do you support sales from a market for “off-site consumption?”
- Studies show that each carshare car gets nine other vehicles off the road. Should Chow be required to keep the carshare parking spaces and/or help arrange alternate nearby pod sites?
- Can valet parking and/or a redesigned driveway help reduce potential traffic bottlenecks as cars queue up to enter?
- Other concerns or solutions?

**IV. NEXT STEPS**

We expect the final EIR to come out in September. It will be especially critical to see the City’s response to all the concerns relating to the transportation issues, including assessment of the efficacy of traffic calming measures such as speed bumps on side streets. We anticipate that it will be necessary to institute such measures, most likely on Gilbert, Mather, Montgomery, and Howe, but perhaps John and Ridgeway as well. PANIL urges that residents on these streets, especially the 42–4300 blocks and Mather, begin to focus on these issues. A majority of the residents on a street must support such measures to install speed bumps.

When a block identifies a leader, please contact Gail Cooper at [12bloop-er@gmail.com](mailto:12bloop-er@gmail.com). She has agreed to organize and coordinate PANIL’s efforts for this project. We will be much more effective if we advocate as a group.

**V. FOR MORE INFORMATION**

We will post on PANIL’s website when the final EIR comes out.

<http://www.panil.org/>

You can find PANIL’s comments on the DEIR on the website as well. The DEIR itself is available on line at <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/report/oak039283.pdf>. The most useful parts are:

- Executive Summary, pp. 2-1 to p 2-7;
- Project Description, major text starts at Chapter 3-9;
- Diagrams/drawings, Figures 3-9 through 3-16;
- Chapter 4.11, Transportation, Circulation, and Parking;
- Alternatives, Chapter 5; and
- Conclusions, Chapter 6

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[www.panil.org](http://www.panil.org)



*Dear neighbors,*

*This is PANIL's first newsletter in over a year, but we have not been sleeping.*

- *When BevMo proposed to take over the Blockbuster location, nearly 3,000 neighbors signed petitions and wrote letters of protest. Because of the participation of large numbers of neighbors, the City Planning Commission signaled its intent to deny the permits and BevMo withdrew its application. Petfood Express will be going into the vacant space instead.*
- *Neighbors and the Oakland Heritage Alliance have been*

*meeting with Mountain View Cemetery to review and comment on their revised plans for new buildings inside the cemetery, and a new funeral home just outside the gates.*

- *Neighbors and PANIL are working with the city to review plans and monitor impacts of a new preschool at 4420 Piedmont Ave (next to J. Miller Flowers) and of expanded hours at Capoiera Mandinga, 4137 Piedmont Ave.*

*Go to [www.panil.org](http://www.panil.org) for further info on these and other issues. Get involved in PANIL to help us protect and enhance what we love about the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood!*

## **Restaurant proposal for 3770 Piedmont Ave**

### **NEIGHBORS ARE ASKED TO WEIGH IN**

A restaurant has an option to buy the vacant building at 3770 Piedmont Ave. and the adjoining parking lot on the corner of Yosemite Ave. Plans are in the early stages and there are no drawings yet. Owner Tony Gulisano and financial advisor Harry Eisenberg met recently with Valerie Winemiller and Ronile Lahti, representing PANIL and PAMA respectively, and have asked that neighbors weigh in with any concerns regarding their expected application for permits to operate at this site.

This business will need several permits from the city which require formal public notification and public comment. The permits all give neighbors opportunities for support, for opposition, or for requesting that certain conditions be put on the permit that would help mitigate anticipated impacts.

Conditional Use Permits (C.U.P.s) are needed to sell alcohol and to convert a property to a "food use" that has previously not been a restaurant or market. Permits from the State Alcohol Beverage Control Board are also required for both on-site consumption and to-go sales.

Chow Food-Bar describes itself as "serving healthy, high-quality comfort food at affordable prices," using a number of organic ingredients in their dishes. They serve breakfast, lunch and dinner, and want to be open 7 days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Chow has four other locations: Church and Market Sts and on 9th Ave near Irving in San Francisco, as well as locations in



Danville and Lafayette. Photos and menus are on their website [www.chowfoodbar.com](http://www.chowfoodbar.com).

At this location, Chow proposes to have a sit-down restaurant, as well as a market where they will sell "a lot of 'grab and go'" prepared foods, and also ingredients used in their menus: meats, fish, and poultry, fresh produce and a very limited selection of dairy products. Beer and wine would be available in the restaurant, and they want to sell it to go in the market. The restaurant would seat 120 to 140 diners; by comparison, Holly's Mandarin Cuisine at Piedmont and 41st seats 108. There may be some outside seating. The street facade of the building would be opened up to allow more traditional shop display windows. Chow produces all its own bakery items; they propose to relocate the central bakery from Danville to this site. New zoning codes allow this otherwise industrial use as an "auxilliary activity" to other permitted businesses. Bakery operations would certainly start earlier than the 7:00 a.m. opening.

Gulisano says they chose the Piedmont Avenue site for its proximity to the high traffic associated with both  
(See **Chow**, on p. 3)