

PANIL General Meeting, May 11, 2022

35 people in attendance.

Chaired by Bill Manley

NCPC Portion,

Officer Gichki provided a summary of crime statistics over the past two months and compared them to the two same period (March 9 to May 9) of last year. He could not appear on camera as he was still on active patrol. Our beat has not experienced any shootings this year or last, in contrast to many other areas in Oakland. Only 5 robberies (including carjacking) were reported compared to 8 last year. Burglaries were up to 13, compared to 8 in 2021. Auto thefts were at 12 vs. 13, and there were 4 grand theft cases vs. 2 last year. Battery also increased from 4 to 9 instances. The officer stated that CRO (Community Resource Officer) staffing has changed from one per beat, to one per two beats this year because of continued shortages of officers. He also noted that he attended a meeting with Piedmont Ave. merchants.

There were no questions for the officer and no one raised any issues that required Police attention.

Neighborhood Services Coordinator (NSC) Brenda Ivy is on leave and will not return until August.

She did provide some information to PANIL. She announced a **new Homeless Director**, Daniel Cooper. He can be reached at [dcooper@oaklandca.gov](mailto:dcooper@oaklandca.gov).

She also provided a link to the [City Challenge Oakland](#). The **City Challenge Oakland** is being done in partnership with Mills College, Northeastern University's Government Lab and the Oakland Fund for Public Innovation. The project is about having Oaklanders from all over the city contribute innovative ideas on how to address some of our most pressing challenges: homelessness, blight, and gun violence.

Bill provided updates on **Mosswood Park**. They had a very successful Earth Day with over 150 participants. The funding for the new Community Center, which was supposed to break ground earlier this year, did not come through. So there is a effort underway to look for the additional \$8,000,000 that will be required to do Phase 1. A big musical event will come to the park, the **Mosswood Meltdown**, on July 2 and 3.

Bay Area Community Services (BACS), in a public zoom call on Wednesday April 27, unveiled the plans for **Piedmont Place**, the current motel that will be converted to a 44-unit SRO with wraparound care. There will be an article about it in the next issue of PANIL Notes.

Valerie provided an update on **Measure C**, the renewal of the library funding measure. She emphasized this is not a new tax. Without this funding, library hours likely would be reduced, and some smaller libraries, like ours, could risk closure. There will be a bake sale on Saturday May 14 in the plaza the support the Measure C effort.

Valerie also reported that there was movement on the old **CCA site**. New plans were unveiled in a meeting with the Developer 5212Broadway.com. The latest iteration of the plan is to have an 8-9 story tower instead of the earlier 13-story one. Mackie Hall, a grand Victorian house, will be preserved along with the Lodge Terrace Hall, but the latter could be relocated. Valerie stated that we could see the new application before the Planning Department in the next six months.

Also, formulation of the City's General Plan is underway. It hasn't been updated in 20 years. Once adopted in 2025, it will guide City development for the following twenty years, until 2045. For more information, one can look at the City's site on the process <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/general-plan-update>.

## **Ridge Phase II -- A Home Depot?**

On April 7, a day on which PANIL, RCPC, and UBA were meeting with Dan Kalb to talk about blight on the site, articles appeared on YIMBY and Silicon Valley Times websites, about development there.

The articles announced a preliminary application filed with the Planning Department for a Home Depot at the 15.41 acre site, 5050 Broadway. Some of the details of the plan from the pre-application:

“The total Home Depot project square footage is comprised of a 101,822-square foot main building and a 16,170-square foot Garden Center. The proposed building would be one story and approximately 24 feet in height with architectural features slightly taller; however, with grade differentials from the intersection the building will be as tall as 46 feet from intersection grade. The Home Depot project site plan will provide 3 driveways, two of the driveways will be located on Pleasant Valley Avenue and one located on the Broadway. The parking lot will provide a total of 421 stalls and the required stalls by City Code is 129 stalls.”

Broadway Rockridge LLC is the property owner (address appears to be in Hiller Highlands) and Developer Lars Anderson and Associates (Fresno-based) is the developer.

Reaction was swift

On YIMBY (a pro-growth “Yes in my back yard”) website, of 43 comments that appeared in the first three days, only 3 supported the proposal, The vast majority of the comments were negative. Some examples:

- Speechless
- A dorky design
- a horrific proposal
- Ugly
- horrible idea
- ABSOLUTELY NOT
- Stupid
- No no no no.
- Hideous and sad.

The proposal is not totally unexpected, the developer TRC floated proposals for big box retail or a car dealership last year. UBA and PANIL distributed surveys, and the response to these ideas was overwhelmingly negative. Neighbors were positive about housing and local shops.

Dan Kalb has echoed these sentiments in the press, but there were no representatives from his office in this meeting. He quoted as saying this development would be subject to “a lengthy review process”

Home Depot has not issued public statements on the project.

It was pointed out that another HD is 1.7 miles away in Emeryville and that Cole Hardware, Ace on Grand Ave. and Piedmont Lumber were much closer. The impact on those businesses could be a concern.

Bill spoke to Catherine Payne, manager of the Planning Department, and requested a City Planner for this meeting. She stated that, the application is only preliminary, and she has not yet been able to assign a planner, as the department is only at 1/3 of its designated staffing level. He also reached out to Lars Anderson Associates, but didn't get a response.

Bill brought up depictions of the store (from Lars Anderson LLC) that appeared in the news articles. They appeared to be looking northeast from the 51<sup>st</sup> and Broadway intersection, and south down Broadway from the corner near Coronado. Several commented that the drawings did not appear to be in synch. No signal lights, lanes or street names are identified, and the two driveways that are on Broadway were not visible.

Billy Hiebert asked the question, if people don't like the HD proposal, is there something better that could be proposed. Several people chimed in on this, including Janis Brewer from UBA and Valerie. They noted that when the early designs for the Phase II area were first presented by the developer, the area consisted of small retail stores. The developer TRC had difficulty finding tenants as all brick-and-mortar retail faced fierce competition from the internet, and then the pandemic hit, further exacerbating the problem. The owner – for some reason – has been against residential development on the property, even though the demand is very high, as evidenced by the substantial new residential building all around this area.

Erin Feeney, who lives near the CCA site, asked about the dual impact of these two new developments, and if they could be coordinated. Valerie pointed out that that has been hard to do, as timetables and interests of the owners and developers shift, and they don't want to be bound by competing projects.

Question arose about what could stop this proposal from moving forward. One audience member stated that the site is likely not approved for building materials sale, and that is a significant component of Home Depot's business. Another stumbling block could be the traffic situation, which is already at times at high levels without anything on the site. The development will go through a transportation review when the actual application is submitted.

Even if the Planning Commission approves this development. The decision can be appealed. That is why it's necessary to stay on top of the development and utilize political pressure appropriately.

UBA has already submitted letters of concern to the owner, developer and Dan Kalb's office. It is likely PANIL will join in that approach when our steering committee meets in a few weeks.

Bill stated that PANIL will continue to monitor the situation and alert the community through its mailings and meetings.