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"RO" illustration by Laura Serra

Claremont Students Give BART Trash Cans a Mosaic Makeover



Artist Eileen Fitz-Faulker poses during the installation with students, from left: Gael Lizarraga, Mamdouh Ismael, Tyson Schultz, and Finn Weyers.

by Casey Farmer, Project Coordinator, former RCPC Chair

Thanks to the work of Claremont Middle School students in the art program, and a grant from the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), five trash cans in the Rockridge BART plaza now shine with mosaic tile artwork.

"I love how our work will be here for a long time. It will make our community more beautiful," said Zoe Jawara, a seventh-grade student at Claremont.

The trash cans are now adorned with creative artwork from the students, including the Rockridge peacock named "Kevin," pizza, and musical instruments. The designs come from a school-wide contest launched by the school's community schools manager, Edana Anderson. A total of 135 students participated.

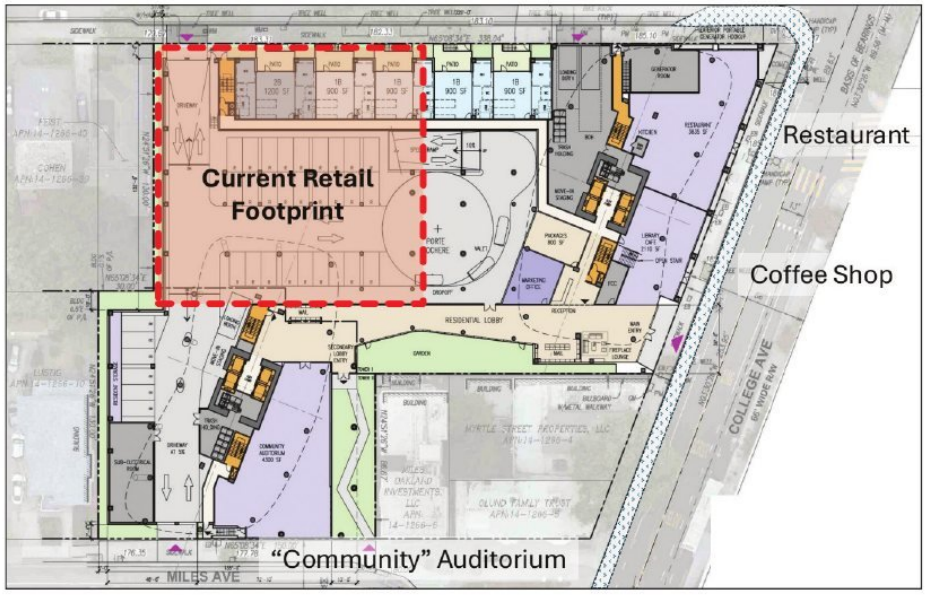
Aden Hamady, a seventh-grade student at Claremont, said she designed one of the trash cans with an image of flowers growing in a fist with the word 'Oakland.'

Mosaic, continued page 5

Neighbors Speak Out on Proposed Senior Housing Towers

by Ryan Phillips

Project Developers Ground Floor Plan edited to show footprint of current retail building.



Rockridge residents voiced serious concerns about the scale, traffic impact, and loss of a neighborhood grocery store during a Land Use Committee meeting hosted by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) on May 20.

Others, though fewer in numbers, argued that the 415-unit senior housing project is exactly the kind of transit-oriented development the State is demanding near BART.

The virtual meeting focused on an application to build two residential towers, standing roughly 300 feet and 352 feet, on the site currently occupied by Trader Joe's at 5727 College Avenue.

The project includes 390 standard apartments, 26 efficiency units for memory care, structured parking with 185 spaces, a 3,800-square-foot restaurant, a 2,100-square-foot cafe, and a "community" auditorium that may only be for residents of the project, but no public open space, and no plans to return a grocery store to the location.

Towers, continued page 8

More Coverage Inside

Go to Page 9 to read project details, feedback from the community and RCPC's analysis of feedback received.

INSIDE: ● E-Bike Rebate, page 3 ● Millennium Restaurant's Future, page 4 ● Why I Love Softball, page 10

Rockridge Kitchen Tour Date Announced

by Star Lightner, RCPC Board

Mark your calendars!
The 2026 Rockridge Kitchen Tour is scheduled for **Sunday, September 27**, from 12:30-5:30 p.m., and planning for the Tour is in full swing. We are excited to announce that we have selected all of our kitchens and ADUs. There will be eight kitchens, and two ADUs that are directly next door to one another, so they will count as one stop on the tour. It's been fascinating hearing all of the stories behind these remodels and seeing such variety. While a couple blew out walls and added space, many more than in prior years stuck with the same footprint, and in a couple of cases, even the same layout. We're also seeing a slight trend away from islands, though the majority still have them.

Whether you are planning your own remodel or just like checking out fabulous kitchens, be prepared to see both eclectic and traditional styles and layouts, colors and patterns, price-points, and even a few bonus features (Second "entertaining kitchen"? Check. White Lotus-vibe bathroom? Check. Layout designed around a mudroom? Check.) Rockridge may be associated with Craftsmans, but as you'll see if you attend the Tour, Rockridge kitchens are all over the stylistic map!

For those interested in volunteering, there is still one critical volunteer role that needs to be filled: Webmaster.We have a website from the 2024 Tour, so the structure is there. It needs to be updated with current tour information and photos from the 2026 Tour, and it also needs to be linked to Humantix, the website we use to sell tickets for the Tour. Although this is not a super time-consuming endeavor, it does require web skills and regular maintenance. But it's a truly critical role, so we're really hoping someone can help!

We are currently scheduling our first volunteer meeting, which will likely be in mid-June. If you haven't signed up yet, we still need people to help put up posters, contact advertisers, be available for week-of and day-of tasks, and, of course, docents. With nine properties on the tour, each will need morning and afternoon teams of two, meaning 36 docents in all. According to all our repeat docents, it's a very fun gig!

Please email kitchentour@rockridge.org to volunteer. ●

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The Rockridge News was founded in March 1986 by Don Kinkead and is published monthly (except August). It is sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), a nonprofit public benefit organization founded to: preserve and enhance the unique character of the Rockridge neighborhood; promote the health, safety and quality of life of its residents; furnish a forum for community involvement; and provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests.

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Car-Free in Rockridge? Rebate Makes E-Bikes More Affordable

by Robbie Tasker, RCPC Board



Illustration by Laura Serra

Here's a reason to rethink your commute: a local energy program is offering rebates of up to $1,500 for e-bikes. And it's available to everyone in Rockridge.

Until this September, Ava Community Energy is offering a raffle for an instant rebate of $400 to $1,500 off a new e-bike at participating local bike shops. The amount you receive depends on your income (there is no income limit) and the type of bike you choose.

Their list of eligible bikes includes regular e-bikes, cargo e-bikes, and adaptive e-bikes for those with mobility challenges. This program is open to all Alameda County residents.

I know because I used it myself. About six months ago, I bought an e-bike with help from Ava. It completely changed my commute. I travel all the way down to San Jose multiple times a week on BART, and anyone who knows BART's routes knows the last stop is North San Jose. The e-bike bridged the gap from that station to my university, helped me get comfortable cycling the East Bay's daunting hills, and transformed how I enjoy not only this neighborhood but the whole Bay Area.

Living in Rockridge, you could start to imagine what it's like to go completely car-free. We're lucky enough to make many necessary trips—to the grocery store, the doctor's and dentist's offices, the hardware store—on foot. Our BART and bus stops are right in the heart of the neighborhood. OakDOT continues to invest in and expand cycling infrastructure as part of the Oakland Planning Department's larger "City of Neighborhoods" goal.

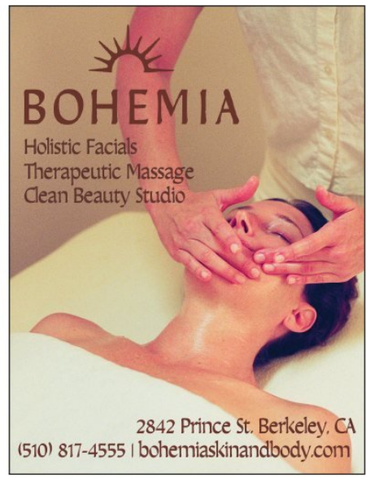
Recently, I spoke with Eli Kaplan, a former member of the RCPC board, who has lived car-free in the East Bay for eight years. While he uses East Bay transit frequently, he told me his e-bike helps him manage his responsibilities, such as getting his toddler to and from daycare and grocery shopping. "Being a cyclist is what enables me to be car-free," he said.

Transit planners call this the "first mile/last mile problem." A bike can help solve it. For me, the time saved from not circling the Trader Joe's parking lot alone has been worth the investment.

Eli added that cycling "really connects you and gives you a sense of place." I'd add that it's not just the slower speed, it's how accessible everything becomes. A cyclist veers off the road, locks up at the nearest stand or light post, and walks straight to their destination.

If a new e-bike still feels like a steep jump, try renting one from the Lyft rack next time you're walking College Avenue. Get your feet wet. See how different the city feels from the back of a bike. And if you're ready to buy, apply for the Ava rebate. It's real, it's local, and it won't last forever! ●

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Millennium Restaurant Pauses Operations, Plans to Reopen

by Ella Smith



Millennium Restaurant on its final night before temporarily closing to retool.| Ella Smith

Millennium Restaurant, the innovative vegan restaurant on College Avenue, paused operations on May 23 to reimagine its current model, with plans to reopen in mid-June.

Co-owner Alison Bagby announced via Instagram on April 3 that the restaurant would be closing in its current format. But, she added, "we are determined to find a way for Millennium to continue."

Millennium has operated for more than 30 years and relocated to Oakland in 2015 from its original San Francisco location. Since its founding, guests have praised it for a nuanced and expansive take on vegan cuisine that produces refined creative dishes suitable for fine dining.

"It's global ideas, but local produce and execution," said head chef Eric Tucker, who explained how he focuses on showcasing fresh produce rather than mimicking animal products.

Through innovative recipes, the restaurant has attracted diners far beyond the vegan community. Tucker said that most of the Millennium's customers aren't strictly vegan.

"I'd never tasted anything as upscale and high-quality as what they were doing, and the fact that there was so much creativity in every dish that Eric made, it was mind-blowing to me," said San Francisco resident Barbara Sokol, one of the restaurant's first guests when it opened decades ago.

The restaurant has earned numerous recognitions, including The Top 25 Vegetarian and Vegan Restaurants in the World by The Huffington Post and Food & Wine Magazine, along with #1 Vegetarian Restaurant in the World by The Daily Meal.

When the restaurant first moved to Rockridge, Tucker noted they had to adjust to the reality of running a business in the East Bay rather than in busy San Francisco, which included reduced weeknight business. Then the pandemic hit.

"The patterns in which people dine and how people dine have changed," Tucker said. "They dine earlier, don't stay out as late. I think a lot of folks, since the pandemic, who maybe had more disposable income, have less."

Millennium has particularly struggled to seat people on weeknights, Tucker said. Rising costs of produce and delivery services have also been challenging for the business.

As money became tight, the restaurant struggled to make it from week to week, according to Bagby. She mentioned there were nights before the announcement when they had to close due to a lack of guests because they would lose too much money otherwise.

However, Tucker and Bagby aren't planning to close the restaurant for good. What they have currently, said Tucker, is "not sustainable, it's not working. We're going to see what we can do with a more curated, smaller, fewer clients, less staff kind of thing."

Numerous local media outlets rushed to report on the restaurant's closing. "The media wants a good story, and so people really blew up the closing as if we're going away forever," Bagby said.

Bagby and Tucker plan to make numerous adjustments to keep Millennium open, including a smaller, prix-fixe weekday menu that changes each week, and more casual items served à la carte at the bar.

Millennium received an outpouring of support in the last few weeks. Tucker mentioned that the average number of customers per night had risen to 175 compared to 60 to 75 before the announcement.

"We're really overwhelmed and very thankful to our clientele who have been supporting us in these weird last six, seven weeks," Tucker said. "Having this outpouring of folks makes us want to strive to see if we can keep this thing going."●

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Mosaic, continued from cover

"It represents our city, which I love," he said. "We want peace and justice."

The RCPC Board dedicated funds from its Community Grant program, raised through its annual Kitchen Tour fundraiser, toward the mosaic tile artwork project.

"I love how this project enhances a central thoroughfare of our neighborhood and empowers young people to express themselves through art while caring for our community," said Star Lightner, RCPC's Kitchen Tour chair.

RCPC also expressed gratitude to BART and the Oakland Public Works Department for their partnership.

RCPC commissioned Eileen Fitz-Faulkner, a professional mosaic tile artist and co-founder of FROG Park, to work with the students on the designs. Eileen has designed hundreds of mosaics for individuals, museums, and public gardens around the country.

In 2022, RCPC commissioned Fitz-Faulkner to create mosaics for three trash cans in Rockridge (one near Ain't Normal Cafe, one near Hudson Bay Cafe, and one at Frog Park).

For this project, Fitz-Faulkner drew the student-inspired designs onto 3-by-4-foot panels, added a layer of fiberglass mesh, and procured dozens of tile colors. She taught the students to cut, saw, and file the tiles into shapes to represent the images.





(Left) Claremont student Ella Barsky stands next to a trash can with mosaic art she deisgned.

(Right) Mosiac tile art of neighborhood peackock 'Kevin.'

Over the course of two weeks, Fitz-Faulkner, students, and volunteers used mortar to set the mosaic panels on trash cans, then grouted them.

"I appreciate being a catalyst to engage students in public art," Fitz-Faulkner said. "It's inspiring to see the spark of creativity in a young person's eyes when they understand how to bring their creations to life."

CMS Art Teacher Jhunehl Fortaleza (known on campus as Ms. Forty) said she was thrilled to support this community partnership. She said the project was one of the most meaningful she's been a part of, adding that the students, even those who usually feel self conscious about sharing their art, were proud to have it displayed in public.

"The students are deeply invested because they see how their creativity and hard work will contribute to their neighborhood, and they especially loved working with Ms. Eileen," she said. "My classroom was abuzz with energy — and also a lot of dust — while the students crafted the panels."

Ruby Tran, an eighth-grade student at Claremont, said she enjoyed working with other students from her school.

For Jesaiah Gardea, a seventh grader, the project was about "bringing joy and happiness to the neighborhood."

Victor Flores, the elected BART Director who represents Rockridge, expressed his appreciation for the new artwork.

"The initiative from RCPC and the dedication from Claremont Middle School are remarkable," he said. "Thank you for your commitment to partnership and public art. We were glad to support this team effort."●

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Oakland Tech Posts Highest Graduation Rate in OUSD

by Madeleine Turner,
Senior at Oakland Tech

Oakland Technical High School has a 94% graduation rate in 2025, with 75% of graduating seniors completing their "A-G" requirements, making them eligible for UC and other prestigious schools nationwide.

That graduation rate is the highest of any high school in the Oakland Unified School District. Many Tech graduates have been accepted to top colleges around the country.

Students and administrators point to Tech's College & Career Center (CCC) as a key reason for the high graduation and college-going rates. The CCC is designed to make college education accessible and affordable for all Tech students. Students can schedule meetings with onsite college counselors and meet with alumni and current students at their prospective colleges.

The CCC also provides information for students interested in trade schools, helps students find jobs and internships, and helps students create resumes and LinkedIn profiles.

"What I love is providing resources that help students understand the process of college, trades, community colleges, and empowering our students through a holistic and realistic approach of learning about their identities, and what education can do for them," said Adrian Navarro (Mr. W), the college readiness specialist at Tech.

Beyond the CCC, a college essay mentor program has operated at Tech for more than 15 years. This past year, the program served 135 students through 317 individual mentoring sessions, both virtual and in-person. About 15 volunteers work with students on their personal statements. Mentors have helped Tech graduates gain admission to Berkeley, UCLA, Northeastern, and many other schools.

The CCC has since become the hub for students and parents to learn everything they need to know about the road to college. "I'm here almost every day," said Tech's 12th-grade class president, Dynast'i Paul. "Mr. W is my savior. He helps me with everything, especially when I'm confused about what's going on."

The CCC and school teams up to lead activities like HBCU tours, financial aid information sessions (with pizza), and college fairs to show every student that college is possible.

"Unfortunately, we do have to hold some kids' hands across the finish line, or some do cross the finish line on their knees, but most of our kids come across with their hands in the air," said Tech Principal Martel Price.

Price also cited dual-enrollment classes as an important reason for the high graduation and college acceptance rates. "They get a GPA boost to share with colleges, and then they're already getting ahead of the game," he said.

"So they're saving money for college by taking a class right here, right now."

Price said his strong focus on college comes from his own experience as a student.

"I told my counselor in high school I wanted to apply (to college), and he was like, ' You're not ready.' He basically told me not to apply," he said. "But here I am 30 years later, right?"

Today, Price makes sure no Tech student hears the same words he did. For Tech students, college isn't a dream. It's the next stop. ●



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No Major Design Changes for 6230 Claremont Project

by Mark Aaronson, RCPC Board

A plan to build an 85-foot-tall senior residence facility with 203 rental units on Claremont Avenue across from Safeway is moving forward without major design changes, sparking continued debate among Rockridge neighbors who want a less high and bulky building.

The developers of the proposed facility, which will have independent, assisted, and memory care units, will hold a public meeting about the project on Thursday, June 18, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., at the Rockridge Branch of the Oakland Public Library. Although not a formal "public hearing," Oakland planning staff will be in attendance to answer questions.

At a meeting with the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) Consultation Committee on May 13, the developers–Ellis Partners and Spirit Living Group–indicated that they are not considering any changes to their current plan regarding the number of units and height.

They are considering introducing step-backs along Auburn Avenue by increasing the units on the mezzanine floor. They are also considering changes to setbacks, access to the underground garage, and the placement of utility and underground auto exhaust machinery, all to minimize impacts on adjacent neighbors.

The developers will not submit revised plans until Planning staff have completed their zoning compliance review. The deadline to complete this review is June 22.

In their application, the developers claim that the project complies with Oakland's CN-I Mixed Use zoning category. A crucial issue for this residential housing project is whether this zoning requires ground-floor public retail space.

This determination sets the basis for calculating the maximum number of residential units allowable on the site. If the project complies with the zoning, the developers will be in a strong position to request and obtain waivers from local zoning requirements for physical features such as height, step-backs, and setbacks. If the project is not in compliance, they will likely revise their design plans and waiver requests accordingly.

Additionally, the project is presently undergoing environmental review. Planning staff have an Administrative Draft of a CEQA Exemption Memorandum, by Environmental Science Associates, which evaluates the project's eligibility for exemption as a Project Consistent with a Community Plan, General Plan or Zoning and for Streamlining Review as an Infill Project. Staff review is likely to take until the end of August. It is unclear whether the public will have access to any environmental review documents before then.

For this project, the Planning Director decides whether to approve or deny the project application. He must provide public notice of his decision 17 days before it becomes final. His decision is appealable to the Planning Commission. A best guess is that the decision will be forthcoming in September.

The principal purposes of the RCPC Consultation Committee are to be responsive to the range of neighborhood views on the project's impact and to seek modifications to the project design through direct discussions with the developers.

The seven-member Committee includes individuals associated with Rockridge Neighbors for Sensible Housing (RNSH), which is a separate organization led by residents whose homes are very near the project site. Other Committee members have backgrounds in architecture, low-income housing, and law. RNSH has retained a lawyer to assist in its advocacy efforts.

RCPC has not yet taken a position on the project and is awaiting further talks with the developers. ●





Towers, continued from cover

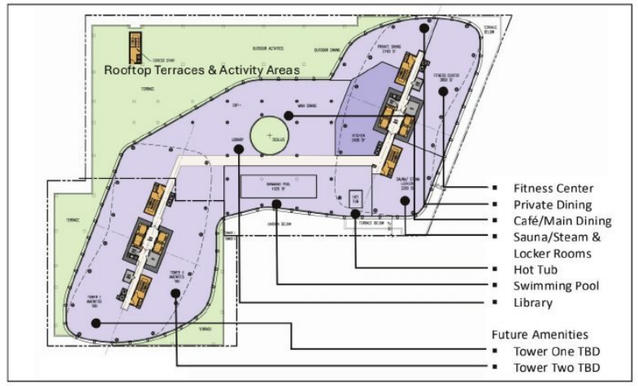
RCPC has received 45 letters to date regarding the project, with the most frequent concerns being the loss of Trader Joe's, the height of the towers, insufficient parking, and the project's size relative to the low-rise commercial and adjacent residential neighborhood.

The existing zoning for the site allows a height of 95 feet. The proposed towers would rise approximately 2 to 2.5 times that limit. One resident told the council that, no matter the zoning rules, he found the design repulsive and asked whether aesthetics would be addressed at any point in the approval process.

Several attendees focused on the fate of Trader Joe's, which has a lease that runs through 2027. The property is owned by a different national grocery chain, which reportedly placed a deed restriction on the site prohibiting any future grocery store after the current lease ends. A bill making its way through the State legislature would ban such restrictions on former grocery store sites.

An aide to City Councilmember Zac Unger (District 1) attended the forum and told the group that the City's hands are highly limited by State law on several key points, including unity density bonus allowances for senior housing that can result in heights significantly greater than existing zoning limitations.

Density and affordability requirements within a half-mile of the Rockridge BART Station, mandated by a recent State housing law (SB 79), do not apply to this project, as they do not take effect until July 1, 2026. The developer's filing of a pre-application for this project locked in State and local law as of mid-April. SB 79 provisions require all projects using the law to have some affordable housing.



An image from the developers listing the amenity plan for the fourth floor of the proposed senior towers at the current Trader Joe's site on College Avenue.| Align Real Estate

One resident questioned whether the project's senior housing designation is being used to get around affordability requirements that would otherwise apply to large multifamily developments. Because the project is listed as senior housing under existing State law, it does not have to include affordable units as would be the case under SB 79.

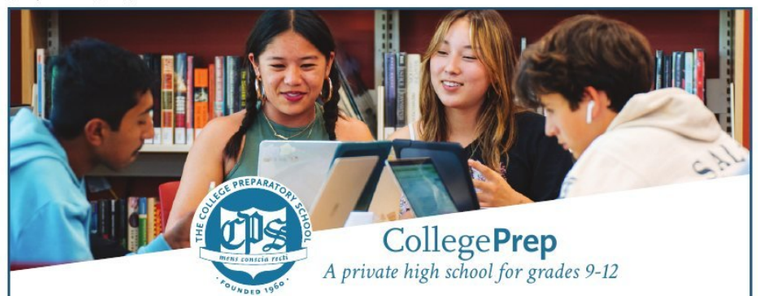
One resident spoke in support of the project's scale, saying he opposes the loss of Trader Joe's but, given the severity of the housing crisis in California, he supports the height and density. He urged RCPC to fight to keep a grocery store on the site while accepting the rest of the project as proposed.

Other attendees pushed back against the proposed project. One resident raised concerns about fire safety, noting that a building of this height would require specialized equipment that the nearest fire station is too small to house.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of next steps. RCPC will seek discussions with the developer regarding project design modifications and retaining Trader Joe's on the site. Shortly, RCPC will designate a liaison committee, comprised of board members and other neighborhood residents, to take a leading role in ongoing interactions with the developer and the City to obtain project changes that support a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood and sustain the commercial and social vitality of College Avenue.

Project review is at a preliminary stage, and no official decisions or public hearings are on the immediate horizon.●

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Proposal at a Glance

Tom Lollini, FAIA, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

Total: 415 senior housing units.

- 390 standard apartments (95% independent living, 5% assisted living)
- 25 studio or small apartments

Apartment Sizes (varies by type)

- Memory care: 360 sq ft
- Assisted living: 650 sq ft
- 1-bedroom: 750 – 1,050 sq ft
- 2-bedroom: 1,200 – 1,800 sq ft

By the Numbers (Site Stats)

- Site area: 67,201 sq ft
- Building footprint: 57,630 sq ft
- Total proposed gross square footage: 782,053 sq ft
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 11.64 (building area ÷ property area)

Building Design: Height & Layout

- Base building: 40 feet tall along the street walls.
- Two towers on top of the base:
  - Tower One: 225 units | 352 feet high
  - Tower Two: 164 units | 294 feet high
- Current height limit for the site: 95 feet (this proposal asks for much taller towers).

Oak Grove Avenue Frontage:

- Parking entrance & exit
- 5 walk-up apartments + 12 balcony apartments
- 2 loading berths and a generator room
- A restaurant on the corner

College Avenue Frontage:

- A 3,835 sq ft restaurant
- A 2,110 sq ft library café
- Main entrance to the building

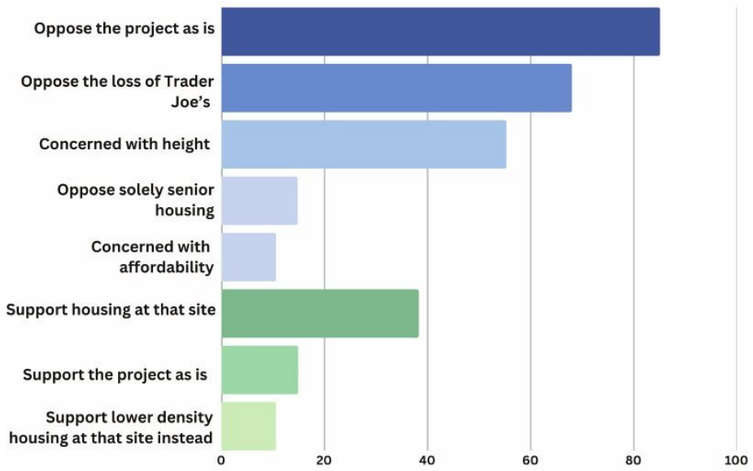
Miles Avenue Frontage:

- Community auditorium
- Parking entrance & exit
- 6 balcony apartments

Parking & Logistics

- Parking spaces: 185
- Bike spaces: 59
- Loading berths (for deliveries, etc.): 3

Community Feedback Received by RCPC



**Feedback from the Rockridge community as of May 20th, 2026 (%)*

> While senior housing is important, restricting housing to seniors in such a prime location for commuters does not make sense. Housing near BART must be made available to all. — Perrin E.

> We are a community that pays high taxes and deserves to give community input on a project like this. I feel that in all seriousness, allowing this project to proceed would ruin our neighborhood. — Tammy M.

> I'm writing in support of the proposed project at the Trader Joe's location. It will be great for local shops to have several hundred more customers right here. I always see articles about their struggles, and this should help. — Adam M.

> From an architectural standpoint, the towers are way above and beyond the scale of the neighborhood. It would be a travesty and an eyesore for the neighborhood. — Helen F.

> Our family has lived in Rockridge more than 15 years, and we are frequent shoppers at Trader Joe's, on average two to three times a week. While the idea of having more living units is a desirable goal, losing that close-by neighborhood shopping site would be a huge inconvenience, not just to us, but to many. — Will H.

> The best chances of good-faith engagement with the developer would be for residents to welcome the additional housing, respect the developer's interest in executing commercially-viable projects, and to narrow the discussion to the single, actionable request to accommodate the preservation of Trader Joe's. — Jonathan G.

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Oakland Girls Softball League Opens Fall Registration Soon

by Amanda Wentworth,
OGSL President

The Oakland Girls Softball League (OGSL) is a special community. OGSL is a volunteer-run nonprofit providing fast-pitch softball for Oakland youth (ages 5–14) since 1993.

OGSL offers three seasons: Spring, Summer, and Fall. Spring is the longest recreation season, with weekly practices and weekend games running from February through May. In the summer, the league transitions to competitive travel ball for players interested in a higher level of play. Fall (technically the off-season) is focused on clinics practicing fundamental skills from September through October.

OGSL is committed to making the sport welcoming and accessible. The league offers reduced registration fees, provides gloves when needed, and hosts an annual gear swap. Alumni serve as umpires during the spring season, as clinic coaches in the fall, and as coaches for travel ball teams over the summer.

I am OGSL's president. I love softball because through both community and playing, we learn how to lean on each other, uplift our teammates, and step into leadership.

As we practice and build new skills, we create a culture where it's okay to try something new, to challenge ourselves, and even to fail. What matters is that we always have our team and dedicated coaches behind us offering support, encouragement, and the push to try again.

Now 34, I joined the league as a 10-year-old player after a couple of years of baseball, and I haven't left since. Over the years, I have been a player, a coach, a board member, and am now serving in my third year as president.

Sports teach us to trust ourselves and build confidence in the idea that our commitment and effort will carry us forward. What we invest in ourselves, our teams, and our community is exactly what we get back.

If your child is interested in exploring whether softball is the right fit, you can join OGSL for the fall season. The league offers six weeks of skills clinics, allowing new players to get a feel for the game and for returning players to stay sharp.

Registration for Fall Ball will open on the OGSL website later this summer and will close at the end of August. Find out more information and join the league's email list at ogsl.org.●

Why I Love Softball

by Iyla Newman, Age 8



Iyla Newman swings and makes contact. *Sheela Subramanian*

The sound of the leather ball whizzing into the outfield sounds to me like the cackling of a witch.

I just hit a double, and two of my teammates scored runs. My team, the Oakland Smashers, cheers because we are now winning by two. I pitch, play first base, and am an outfielder.

I love softball because one hit, one play, or one pitch can change the whole game.

In the dugout, we sing fun chants to support our teammates at bat. It's so fun to watch my teammates get hits and score runs. I like cheering for them.

I recommend OGSL. It was a great season playing softball and working with my team.

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Claremont Middle School PTA Raises $1,500 at Plant Sale

by Gigi Gimble and Finn Pestal,
CMS Seventh Grade Students

On May 3, the Claremont Middle School PTA hosted a plant sale featuring heirloom tomatoes, accompanied by Bakesale Betty's Scones and Ain't Normal Coffee. The sale raised funds for the school through the PTA, while fostering a welcoming environment that builds unity across the school community. Over 50 people attended and chose from 10 varieties of tomatoes.

The plant sale showcased some of the great things CMS supports and offers to current and incoming families. The CMS garden is not generally open to the public. For neighbors who regularly walk past, it was a unique opportunity to experience the gardens. Shan Hoekman, a nearby resident, said she came to support our community and check out the garden. "Even though our kids don't go to the school, we love having it in our neighborhood," she said.



Claremont students Gigi Gimble, left, and Finn Pestal.

The CMS plant sale was a tremendous success for the PTA, raising $1,500. "The PTA supports teachers with classroom stipends, fills in gaps where OUSD funding has been reduced, and provides additional learning opportunities for all students at CMS," said Shaudi Bazzaz, a CMS parent and the event organizer.

The plant sale was completely volunteer-run. Student and parent volunteers prepared the tomato starts, weeded the garden, and sold items.

One of the volunteers was Frances Pestal, a fourth-grade student at Chabot Elementary. Her role was to help set up and sell items. She said her favorite part of the event was "learning about the many different types of tomato plants and how nice our community is." She added, "My favorite plant was the chocolate cherry because it has chocolate and cherries, and I like chocolate and cherries!"●

Peralta Girl Scouts Design Loop-De-Loops at the Library

by Maggie Pickavance

Roller coaster design came to life for 24 first-graders at the Oakland Library Main Branch, thanks to a workshop for Girl Scout Troop 31304.

The troop, based at Peralta Elementary, organized the event to earn its Junior Aide Award. The Junior Aide Award requires Junior-level Girl Scouts to first observe younger kids in an instructional setting, then develop a plan to lead an activity, and finally execute that plan. Girl Scouts offers a progression of leadership skill building, beginning with the Junior Aide Award and culminating in the Gold Award for Girl Scouts in high school.

The fourth-grade Junior troop members and a few adult volunteers led the younger Girl Scouts through the Daisy Roller Coaster Design badge.

"I had fun making roller coasters out of pool noodles," first-grader Tess Goodman said. "My marble even went upside down."

Before starting, the older Girl Scouts explained and demonstrated a few physics principles needed for roller coaster design. But the real learning came from hands-on experience.

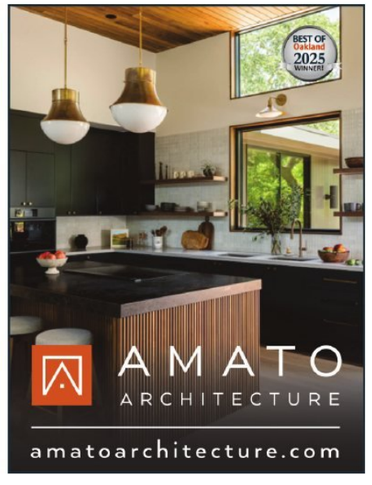


Peralta Girl Scouts building a roller coaster.

The troop members were tasked with figuring out how to get a marble to go up a hill, around a curve, and through a loop-de-loop on a track made of cut-in-half foam pipe insulation. They had plenty of time to build, test, and tweak their designs.

By the end of the hour-long workshop, all teams had successfully completed the challenge with help from their team leads and earned their Junior Aide Award.

"Getting things wrong and then figuring out ways to fix and improve your design is how we learn," 10-year-old Indiana Habegger said.●



BART Prom, World Cup Watching This Month in Rockridge

by Jody Colley,
Rockridge District Association

Summer is arriving in full force in Rockridge, and the neighborhood's June calendar contains a mix of music, community gatherings, workshops, and tasting events.

One of the most anticipated events this month is the inaugural "BART Prom: Enchantment Under the C Line," scheduled for June 6 (6-10 p.m.) at the **Rockridge BART** station parking lot (5660 College Ave). The all-ages celebration, hosted by Bay Area Rapid Transit, transforms the transit hub into an 1980s-themed dance party with music, DJs, photo booths, and themed décor.

As the World Cup kicks off, **McNally's** (5352 College Ave) will be showing every game on its screens. Beginning June 11, it will be the premier spot for soccer this summer. Team USA is playing on June 12, 19, and 25. If high-energy, rock 'n' roll cover bands are your thing, head there on June 6 to catch Las Brujas performing live.

Want to learn how to embroider? **Bella Vita** (5511 College Ave) is offering a class on June 6, all supplies included. Use those new skills to embellish your favorite jacket. And if that fails, take it over to **Mercy Vintage** (5505 College Ave) for Swag Patching, conveniently happening that same day. Do you have dusty, old clothes you want to spruce up? This is your chance to add some locally-sourced patches.

On June 13, **SLATE Contemporary Gallery** (5510 College Ave) will host an opening reception for a new solo exhibition by Jen Garrido called (UN) TETHERED. Featuring an entirely new body of work, this exhibition reflects the artist's continued exploration of abstract painting through layered compositions, shifting forms, and an evolving visual language.

The Monk's Kettle (5484 College Ave) invites those who love (or are curious about) sour beers to a June 25 pouring of both draft and bottle. Chef Raiden will be creating delicious food pairings to accompany them. Meanwhile, **Preserved** (5540 College Ave) is offering hands-on classes for making sourdough bread, kimchi, bagels, ravioli, miso, and more.

Between June 15-21, **Vita** (6034 College Ave) celebrates its 10-year anniversary with $10 yoga, barre, and pilates classes followed by a variety of special bites and refreshments. **Holistic Strength** (5858 College Ave) continues to host free community workouts, including Power Hour on June 17, a full-body strength training designed to improve muscular endurance, sharpen technique, and build total-body power. For a unique experience, **Future Ink** is hosting a high-intensity, music-driven, breathwork workshop on June 28 inside a tattoo studio.

East Bay Booksellers (6022 College Ave.) and **Local Economy** (6028 College Ave) partner again to bring authors to our community. This month, Walter Riley will visit on June 7. RSVP on the Local Economy website. Riley's new book, "Civil Rights and Structural Attacks," is co-authored with Oakland organizer Jesse Strauss, who will join him in conversation along with East Bay Yesterday host Liam O'Donoghue.

You can find more details for each of the events in this article, as well as over 100 others, at www.RockridgeDistrict.com/calendar. ●

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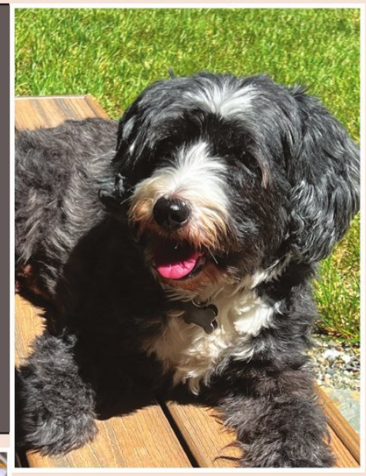
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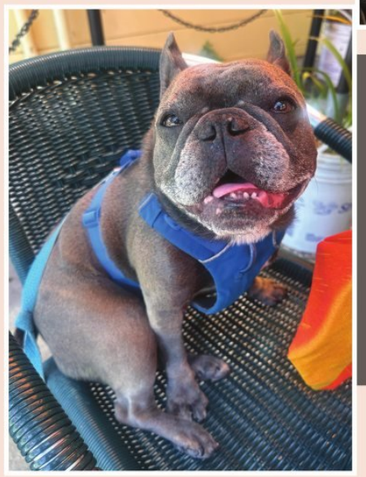
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Dogs of Rockridge

illustration by Laura Serra

Lady (9) is a Tibetan Terrier who has lived in Rockridge for the past 5 years. She is a sweet, funny, lazy pup who loves her neighbors. She hates bath time, but loves all the cookies she gets afterwards. She can be shy, but loves exploring new parts of the neighborhood with her owners.





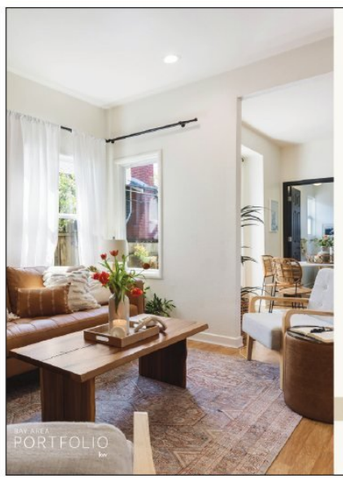
Pobi (9) is a French Bulldog, originally from the East Coast, but has spent seven years living in and loving Oakland. Pobi loves collecting treats from favorite College Avenue shops, restaurants and bars. Pobi loves to look out the window, making sure all is well in the neighborhood. Pobi loves both humans and pets. ●

Does your furry friend live in Rockridge? If so, send a photo of your four-legged companion and short commentary to: editor@rockridge.org


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

The proposed development at 6230 Claremont should move forward as proposed.

First, we need more housing of all kinds. Affordability requires supply. This is Economics 101: more supply, lower cost. Any housing helps, whether low-income or market rate.

Second, we should densify existing areas. Building along commercial corridors supports local businesses and reduces environmental impact. Most buildings on College Avenue are one to two stories, which is ridiculous. We need housing above shops so people can live within walking distance to bookstores, restaurants, and bakeries.

Third, older people need a place to go that keeps them in the neighborhood and frees up housing for families. On my block alone, 16 houses have three or more bedrooms. Only four contain children. The rest are single people or couples, all 60 and up. If this development existed, many of us would relocate and free up our homes for families.

I sympathize with homeowners on the adjacent streets. But the interests of a few do not overrule the broader community. Concerns about height, traffic, and noise are frankly driven by personal interest from those living closest.

I hope the RCPC will not capitulate to the NIMBY charge to downscale this project. Downscaling makes it less affordable for the developer, who could pull out. Then we are left with no housing, an eyesore, and years before another developer touches the space. Rockridge already missed out on 20-plus units at the former Levant Rug building because of anti-development saber rattling supported by the RCPC.

I encourage supporters to show up to meetings and speak out. We need this housing.

Cameron Jones



Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council

Next NCPC Meeting: Thurs, June 11, 7 p.m.

Dr. Holly Joshi, Chief of Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention, will be the guest.

Rockridge Library upstairs conference room and on Zoom: rockridgencpc.com

District 1 Town Hall With Councilmember Zac Unger

Join District 1 Councilmember Zac Unger to discuss preliminary plans for the Rockridge Trader Joe's site at a Town Hall in July.

The meeting will begin with a short presentation, followed by Q&A.

Time permitting, other topics of discussion may include plans for the old Red Cross site, the City budget, public safety, and more.

The Town Hall is Monday, July 13 from 6:30 - 8 p.m. at Saint Augustine Church, 400 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland. ●





Rockridge Library

For Children (Red = June-only events)

Tuesday Evening Special Events: Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. in June and July. Ventriloquist Marc Griffiths: June 2; Mariela's Music Time: June 9; Cascada de Flores Music & Stories: June 16; Soul 4 Kidz Music: June 30; Ricky Roo Puppets: July 7; Kamishibai Paper Theater: July 14; Magician Brian Scott: July 21; Duncan Playful Circus: July 28.
Farm Animal Petting Zoo: Saturday, June 27, 10 a.m.
Mr. Elephant Music & Puppets: Thursday, July 16, 10:30 a.m.
Summer Reading Program: All ages read to get prizes this summer!
Storytime: Thursdays and Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.
Chess Club: Wednesdays, 4 p.m.
All ages & skill-levels welcome.
Build.Make.Play Crafts: Thursdays, 4 p.m.
Read to a Dog: Thursdays, 4 p.m.
Practice reading aloud with Gladys the dog.

For Teens, ages 12 – 18

We are looking for teen volunteers: Orientations will take place on June 2, and June 6. Please see our website or contact us for more info.
Summer Program: Every Wednesday at 2 p.m., June 3: Henna; June 10: Rubber Stamps; June 17: DIY Candle Making; June 24: Picture Holder; June 31: Intention Candle

For Adults

Meet the Author – Lisa Soloman, Art, Craft, Color: Brighten Your Life with Projects in Every Color of the Rainbow: Wednesday, June 17, 6:30 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.. Artist Lisa Soloman will share craft ideas from her latest book. Mrs. Dalloway's will sell copies of the book to be signed.
Rockridge Library Summer Marigold Contest: Try your hand at growing the tallest marigold in Rockridge this summer. We provide the seedlings/supplies at sign-up. Sign Ups will be Saturday, June 6 – June 13.
Gallery Show+ Event: Hilando Resistencia/Threading Resistance, now until June 25. Artist talk and celebration, June 20, 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Ask Your Area Home Experts: Every 2nd Friday, noon–2 p.m. Get answers, tips and connections from a Senior Loan Advisor and a Realtor, both Rockridge locals. Have questions answered about home ownership, maintenance, finance, investing, ADUs, downsizing, moving, and more.
Rockridge Book Club: Every 2nd Saturday, 3:30–4:30 p.m. Please call 510-597-5017 for more info and to get a copy of the book. June's book is The River is Waiting by Wally Lamb.
California Writers' Club 5-Page Critique: Every 4th Saturday, 1–5 p.m. Bring 6–8 copies of your work, five pages long, double-spaced, Times New Roman font for review & critique in half-hour sessions.
Needlework Circle: Thursdays, 1–3 p.m. Bring yarn and fiber arts projects to Rockridge Library. Build community, share your passion, learn & have fun!
1-on-1 Technology Help: Every Saturday, 10 a.m.–noon and 1-3 p.m., Tuesdays 5:30–7:30 p.m.
Come with your devices & technology questions & our volunteer tech guru will help you get sorted. Signup recommended.●

Rockridge Library Hours:
Holiday Closure: Juneteenth: Friday, June 19
Mon., Thurs., & Sat.: 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Tues. & Weds.: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Fri.: 12 noon to 5:30 p.m.
See calendar for events: oaklandlibrary.org/events
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