The Rockridge News
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Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) • 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland, 94609

# Fast-Food Development Proposed for The Ridge Site

by Thomas Lollini, FAIA, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair, and Ryan Phillips

A conceptual proposal to develop a Chick-fil-A fast-food, drive-through restaurant on the south side of Broadway near Coronado is being circulated by the Oakland Office of Economic Development.

The site is the northwest corner of the roughly 4.5-acre vacant property known as The Ridge, where a Home Depot was proposed in 2021.

No planning application has been filed yet. The Oakland Office of Economic Development referred the proposal to the Rockridge District Association for comment.

The proposed use clashes with the site's designation as a housing opportunity site. The property is listed in the 2023 General Plan Housing Element as capable of supporting up to 788 units. That estimate may have been made before the zoning element raised the height limit to 95 feet, above the 65 feet assumed in the inventory.

"The Pleasant Valley lot is one of the best housing opportunity sites in all of Oakland, not just District 1," Oakland City Councilmember Zac Unger (District 1) said. "This space should be used for housing first and foremost, and I do not accept that a fast food drive-through is the best we can do."

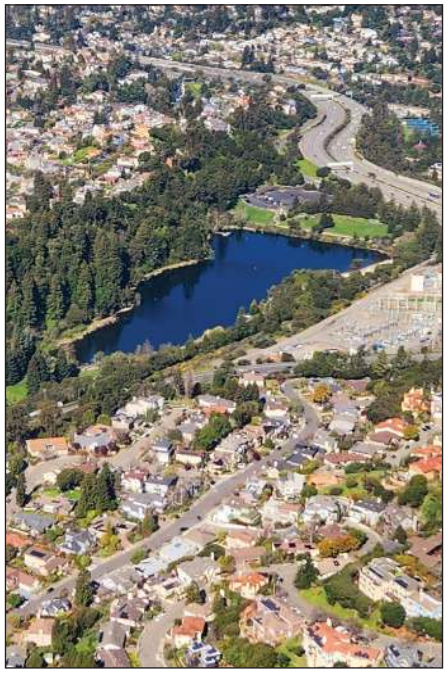
The Chick-fil-A would occupy

*Ridge, continued page 9*




***BART PROM:*** *A partygoer at Rockridge Station wears an AC Transit bus costume./ Robbie Tasker*
*Read our story on Page 3.*

# Park District, Local Volunteers Aim to Resuscitate Lake Temescal



*An aerial view of Lake Temescal. / East Bay Regional Parks District*

by Skip Fogarty

One of the three original East Bay Regional Parks, Lake Temescal is an urban oasis providing beauty and recreation on Oakland's northern edge. Opened in 1932, the park has long been known for its picnicking, hiking, and fishing — and especially for its swimming facilities and related programs.

But at various times over the past several summers, the approximately 13-acre lake has been closed to swimmers due to toxic blue-green algal blooms.

"I've been a Lake Temescal swimmer for 30 years," Rockridge neighbor Bradley Mart said. "Until a few years ago, the lake was usually open by Memorial Day and swimmable until

*Temescal, continued page 7*

**INSIDE:** ● JCC Campus, page 4 ● Illegal Dumping, page 8 ● City Violence Prevention Strategy, page 10

# 2026 Rockridge Kitchen Tour – Purchase Tickets Now, Become a Docent

by Star Lightner, RCPC Board

Planning for the 2026 Rockridge Kitchen Tour, scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 27, is in full swing. The Kitchen Tour committee has selected the 8 kitchens and 2 ADUs to be featured on this year's Tour, and is now recruiting another great group of Kitchen Tour docents. Docents fulfill a critical role on the Kitchen Tour: they are the people who welcome and guide guests at each house, answer questions about the kitchens, and make the Kitchen Tour fun for attendees and homeowners alike. Whether you've been a docent in the past, or are new to the Rockridge Kitchen Tour, being a docent is a fun and rewarding experience. It's also ideal for someone who wants to help the Rockridge community but has limited time. Many people volunteer year after year – it's that enjoyable!

Here's what the commitment looks like: sometime in the month before the Tour, all docents attend a 2-3 hour training session. On your training day, you will visit three kitchens and hear from the homeowner, architect, and perhaps the contractor about the unique features and the problem-solving that went into the design and construction of each. The session will also familiarize you with the house layout so you'll be able to guide the walk-through traffic, educate our Kitchen Tour guests about the house you will be assigned to, and answer questions. We hear that the behind-the-scenes look at the kitchens ahead of the Tour and the opportunity to hear about the kitchens directly from the owner/architect/contractor are among the best parts of being a docent. On the day of the Kitchen Tour, you will be assigned to one three-hour shift (12-3 pm or 3-6 pm) and will have the balance of the day to visit the other kitchens that you did not see in your training.

In addition to docents, we are seeking folks interested in helping put up posters and banners, as well as volunteers to help with tasks the week before the Tour and act as "runners" to troubleshoot on the day of. If you'd like to be part of it, contact kitchentour@rockridge.org.

*Scan this QR Code to purchase Kitchen Tour tickets.*

Lastly, our website is now live (www.rockridgekitchentour.com), and you can buy tickets! Prices remain the same as last time: $50 in advance, $55 beginning Sept. 20, and including the day of the Tour. As always, we have a very diverse assortment of kitchens, both aesthetically and in terms of budget, so there's something for everyone. ●




The Rockridge News

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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*Views expressed in published articles do not necessarily reflect those of the Rockridge News, its editor or the board of directors of RCPC.* ●

# Rockridge Station Transforms into '80s Party for BART Prom

by Robbie Tasker, RCPC Board




*The first-ever BART Prom drew 1,200 people to the Rockridge Station. / Robbie Tasker*

The screech of BART trains gave way to the beat of pop music on the evening of June 6, as more than 1,200 people packed into a transformed corner of the Rockridge station parking lot for the first-ever BART Prom.

BART administration enclosed a small part of the Rockridge station's parking lot to host this 1980s-themed prom night, and the event was completely sold out.

Among this sea of people were party-goers dressed in all sorts of era-appropriate attire, mullets and t-shirt tuxedos abounded, alongside neon tracksuits, and more baroque custom pieces.

Some of the biggest transit fans in the area made custom outfits themed around BART, AC Transit, and the legacy Key System. One person said that their custom AC Transit 'F' bus was their outfit for Bay to Breakers, before they paired it with a matching dress for the occasion.

The attendees came from all over. There were those from our own neighborhood, while some high school students rode BART all the way from San Jose to join in on the festivities.

Alicia Trost, BART's Chief Communications Officer, shared that some of the motivation for the event was to have a prom for those "never went to prom, or wanted to do a redo of prom," as well as to "bring the community together."

The event also helped to "(increase) revenue for BART at a time where we're facing a very large deficit," she added. Before the pandemic, BART covered nearly 70% of its operating costs through rider fares alone. Events like this illustrate how BART is encouraging ridership. For those who missed it, BART is making plans to hold the event again next year. ●

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# New East Bay Jewish Community Campus Set to Open in Rockridge

by Jana Good, RCPC Board Chair




*A rendering of the new Jewish Community Center of the East Bay, located off College Avenue.*

Starting in August, the Jewish Community Center of the East Bay (JCC) will move into its new home, the East Bay Jewish Community Campus, off College Avenue in Rockridge. The newly created campus will serve as a cultural hub for local, regional, and national Jewish organizations.

The campus aims to be an ecosystem where Jewish life thrives. By uniting many Jewish organizations in one central location, the Campus will enable collaboration and engagement across intellectual, cultural, spiritual, and social life.

"We believe our new Campus will become a central gathering place, not only for the Rockridge neighborhood, but for the entire East Bay Jewish community and the East Bay as a whole," said Susie Cohen Crumpler, JCC East Bay Chief Executive Officer. "We look forward to expanding our programs and working closely with partner organizations to meet the evolving needs of our community."

The Campus will be located at 5957 Chabot Road, between College Avenue and Claremont Avenue. The Campus site was previously the office headquarters of Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream on the College Avenue side and the original Oakland Yoshi's restaurant and jazz club on the Claremont Avenue side.

The expanded JCC East Bay, along with up to 20 other Jewish organizations, will be housed on the Campus. The Campus will feature a kosher café; an event center showcasing new arts and culture programs; a catering and teaching kitchen; a health and wellness studio; an intimate library; classrooms for adult learning; a spacious preschool with outdoor play areas and a sensory room; and a dedicated teen center.

The campus will be anchored by a central courtyard with a meadow, reflection garden, ball court, and seating areas, offering spaces for people of all ages to experience Jewish life together in an open, accessible environment.

A highlight of the new Campus will be the performance venue, with a capacity to entertain more than 200 patrons. The event center's collection of flexible, multi-use spaces—including an outdoor deck—will provide a setting for year-round programming. Events will center on arts, ideas, and Jewish culture, featuring local, national, and international artists and thinkers.

All told, the Campus spans more than 128,000 square feet, of which 84,000 square feet will be building space, activating a previously underutilized site in Rockridge.

The preschool will be among the first to move onto the Campus, with opening day slated for August 24. Initially, the preschool will house approximately 60 toddlers, up to age 5. Over the next year, the preschool will expand to accommodate an additional 60 children, including babies as young as 6 months.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony is slated for September, and grand opening events will take place in early 2027, when a full suite of programs and services will be open to the public.

Community members interested in Campus updates, program information, enrollment opportunities, or supporting the project can learn more and sign up for updates at www.jcceastbay.org. ●




**Frog Park**
**25th Anniversary Celebration**

**Saturday, September 19**

Cleanup: 9 a.m. - noon
Celebration: noon - 1 p.m.

**Frog Park, 5341 Miles Ave.**

# The Rockridge News Delivery Openings

by Susan Montauk

We are pleased to welcome a new block of Broadway Terrace to our distribution network, but we need a Block Captain (BC) to service it. We hope someone on or near the block will volunteer.

We also want to thank the McCune youngsters, Carmelle and Dylan, who, between them, have had three routes and have been delivering the newsletter since they were very young. The McCune family tells us that the kids loved being Block Captains and will miss the job when they move away. We will definitely miss the kids, and we thank the family for loaning them out all these years.

Routes That Need Block Captains:

BT+: Broadway Terrace, even-numbered units between 6306 and 6450.

05C: 5800, 5700 Presley Way between Chabot and Miles

05D: 5800 and 5700 Ivanhoe between Miles and Chabot.

10A: 5500 block of Lawton

The job, dropping off a copy of The Rockridge News on neighbors' doorsteps, occurs once a month. The BC's bundle will be delivered to his/her doorstep the first weekend after the first Friday of each month, except in August. We ask that the BC deliver that same weekend or soon after to the houses on his/her route. To volunteer, call Susan at 510-547-3855 or email smontauk@gmail.com. Let us know if you can help out or if you might need more information. ●







# Temescal Masters Swimming, a Local Institution

by Ella Morgulis

For more than four decades, a swim club has quietly operated out of the public pool at 45th Street and Lawton, building a community of nearly 240 active members.

Temescal Aquatic Masters was founded in 1982 as a grassroots group of city lap swimmers, including construction workers, professors, artists, writers, and neighbors from all walks of life. One of the club's founding members still swims regularly with the team.

Despite the name, the club is not limited to elite competitors. Masters swimming is open to swimmers of all abilities. Some members train for competition, others focus on improving fitness, refining technique, or seeking camaraderie. The atmosphere is known for being supportive and inclusive.

Head coach Naji Ali and his staff lead daily workouts that are energetic and fun, helping swimmers reach their goals. The club offers practices every day of the week.

Beyond the pool, the organization functions as a community institution. An active volunteer board organizes social events, recruits new swimmers, and oversees California's largest Adult Learn to Swim program, which has helped countless adults gain confidence and life-saving skills in the water.

Membership is open to swimmers who can complete a few laps. The club offers affordable dues and drop-in workouts for newcomers to try before committing.

More information is available at www.temescalmasters.org. ●

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# Hundreds Turn Out to Weigh In on Senior Residence Proposals

by Mark Aaronson
and Paul McDonnell,
RCPC Board Members

Rockridge residents turned out in force for two community meetings in June to weigh in on two proposed senior housing proposals.

On June 13, more than 300 Rockridge residents attended a community meeting convened by Upper Broadway Advocates (UBA) and Rockridge Neighbors for Sensible Housing (RNSH) at Claremont Middle School.

Attendees included District 1 City Council Member Zac Unger and Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) board members.

The first of the two projects is a Residential Care Facility for the Elderly at 6230 Claremont Ave., which is 85 feet high and will have a mix of 203 independent living (IL), assisted living (AL), and memory care (MC) rental units.

The second project consists of two high-rise towers (one 31 stories, the other 25 stories) on the current Trader Joe's site on College Avenue, which will be a buy-in Continuing Care Retirement Community with 415 mostly IL units and some AL and MC units. Neither project has, or is required to have, affordable, below-market-rate units.

There were three main speakers at the June 13 community meeting. Jack Gerson, an RNSH member, explained how a series of State laws beginning in 1979 limit the discretion of local officials in reviewing housing projects: developers can request waivers for features such as height and step-backs, and these can be denied only if there are adverse health or safety impacts.

Javier Arizmendi, an architect and RNSH member, provided a critique of the proposed 6230 Claremont project, primarily regarding its height, bulk, and relationship to its surroundings.

Myrna Walton, a UBA member, stated that California Assembly Member Buffy Wicks, a Rockridge resident, sees the need for clarifying amendments to recent State housing legislation to deal with some of the unanticipated consequences that we now are seeing. Such legislation would not affect Oakland's review of the 6230 Claremont and Trader Joe's projects.

The 6230 Claremont project is entering its final stage of review by the Oakland Planning Department. On June 18, a public meeting initiated by the developers, Ellis Partners and Spirit Living Group, was held at the Rockridge Branch Library. Although this was not a formal "public hearing," members of the Planning staff were present to answer questions.

An overflow crowd packed the Community Meeting Room with project skeptics and supporters. The program included a brief overview of the project, including tree removal and replacement, and a question-and-answer period.

Patrick Flynn, Ellis Partners' community liaison, shared that the tree removal is intended to replace Eucalyptus trees to reduce fire danger and wind damage, and to remove other trees (many diseased) to accommodate the proposed layout. A total of 27 trees will be replaced by 35 mature trees.

City review is being conducted on the project as originally submitted in late fall. Changes reflecting community concerns and an updated architectural design will be made after the City completes its review.

Close to 20 participants asked questions and made comments. People questioned the project's demand, financial viability, impact on traffic and parking, and the scope of the environmental review. A number of participants also expressed support for the project, citing the need for additional housing.

The expectation is that Oakland Planning Director William Gilchrist will post a notice of decision on the 6230 Claremont project application in September.

Separately, Align, the developer of the project at the Trader Joe's site, filed a preliminary application with the Oakland Planning Bureau on April 16. The proposed design does not include retaining Trader Joe's.

Given the project's location, this filing initiates a consultation process with California Native American tribes, which must be completed within 75 days. Then, there is likely to be an expedited review of the project, as it has been filed as a by-right development. Under State law, a by-right project is subject to ministerial review, which means it can bypass lengthy discretionary review and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) processes. If that is the case, a final decision on the project will probably be made within a year. During this period, Align can revise its design plans. ●






*Temescal, continued from cover*

October. But the persistent algae has complicated things."

For Mart, Lake Anza in Tilden Park has often become the better choice, or he opts to swim in the Bay. Still, he said, "We love the lake and hope to see it brought back to its prime."

On Nextdoor, neighbor Pam L. posted: "(The lake) needs to be dredged and brought back to life. I have so many memories swimming as a kid and bringing my own kids there. It's still beautiful, but I'm not eager to swim in it."

The Park District has been studying potential solutions for several years.

District spokesperson Jen Vanya pointed to recent progress in improving the water quality. "In June 2025, the Park District installed an oxygen saturation technology system in the lake," she said. "Before the installation, the low level of dissolved oxygen at the bottom would negatively impact fish and other aquatic organisms."

Vanya noted that although the system is designed for deeper, more stratified lakes than Temescal, "the installation has made a big difference for the lake's water quality."

The oxygenation equipment is mostly unseen at the bottom of the lake, but the oxygen generator itself is located near the New Deal-era beach house, in a small shed that includes an interesting diagram of how the system works.

Ultimately, though, it's decades of sediment from the surrounding watershed, housing construction, fertilizer runoff, and highway development that's reduced the lake's average depth to just 15 feet.

When Anthony Chabot built the earthen dam that created the reservoir in 1868, the depth reached 80 feet. But today's shallower water is warmer, and nutrient-rich sediment feeds dangerous bacterial blooms, which render the lake off-limits for swimming.

District Board Member Lynda Deschambault offered more encouraging news. "We've recently budgeted $800,000 for a feasibility study on identifying long-term options…



*Lake Temescal is currently open for swimming and free to park this summer./ Skip Forgarty*

and I'm happy to report that recent changes in aeration and treatment have been successful at lowering the algal blooms," she said.

Timelines indicate that the District will review engineering proposals this summer and identify the preferred project approach this fall. Preliminary design and further financial analysis would extend to December 2027.

Deschambault also credited support from elected officials, including Zac Unger (City Council District 1) and Nikki Fortunato Bas (Alameda County Board of Supervisors District 5), and Mayor Barbara Lee, as well as volunteer groups in the community like Friends of Lake Temescal.

Garbage left around the lake by fishermen is also an environmental issue for the park. Hooks, lures, and monofilament fishing line endanger and often entangle birds, turtles, and pets. In response, local Eagle Scouts and school groups have worked on shoreline clean-ups and installed receptacles for discarded fishing line.

Friends of Lake Temescal volunteer Jeff Kahn maintained that dredging is the key to restoring safe swimming. He noted that the "loose-knit, but passionate group" has been advocating for environmental improvements for 7 years.

More recently, the Friends group was instrumental in getting the City Council to shelve, for the time being, a proposal for two massive illuminated billboards that would have overlooked the park.

In the meantime, a recent check of the park's water quality dashboard indicates the lake is open for swimming. At present, it's free to park and swim at the park. Automated ticketing kiosks are in the works, according to the district spokesperson, but the 2026 swim season will remain free of charge.

To learn more about the Temescal water quality project, visit the EBRPD website: www.ebparks.org/projects/parkland-improvements/lake-temescal-water-quality-and-sediment-management-project. ●




# Does Rockridge Play a Role in Oakland's Illegal Dumping Problem?

by Jack Leal



*Trash dumped by the side of Golf Links Road in East Oakland.| Jack Leal*

While Rockridge sees less illegal dumping than many other Oakland neighborhoods, the city's growing crisis has prompted a new action plan that could change how the problem is addressed citywide.

A 56-page audit by Michael C. Houston and his team found that city expenditures rose from approximately $3 million in 2007 to $14 million in 2025, while service requests and the total tonnage of illegally dumped material also increased during the same period.

Approved on March 19, the Illegal Dumping Expenditures Action Plan (IDEA), advanced by Mayor Barbara Lee and Councilmember Zac Unger, is a set of proposed expenditures to address the issue.

Unger, who represents Rockridge as part of District 1, explained why the plan is necessary.

"The trash itself is unsightly and unsanitary, but it also contributes to a feeling of municipal dysfunction and drives down business investment," Unger said in an interview with The Rockridge News.

The IDEA plan focuses on three key areas: eradication, enforcement, and education. Proposed initiatives include increasing fines for illegal dumping, requiring license plates on vehicles transporting waste, and expanding public education to prevent illegal dumping.

Unger noted that while Rockridge "has less dumping than a lot of neighborhoods in Oakland," he argued that the impacts extend beyond the neighborhoods where dumping is more visible.

"Illegal dumping drives down investment in the city overall," he said. "We lose taxpayers and businesses, we lose the resources needed to provide services in Rockridge and other neighborhoods."

Star Lightner, an RCPC board member, asked how Rockridge may itself be indirectly contributing to dumping outside the community. The type of waste being dumped suggests it does not all come from lower-income neighborhoods.

"People in this neighborhood do a lot of remodeling and landscaping, which requires stuff to be hauled off to the dump," she said. "How sure are we that it's really going to the dump?"

Unger said enforcement and education are key to addressing the issue.

"Every home and apartment is entitled to two bulky pickup days a year, but as a city, we are only using 15 to 20 percent of those," he said. "All of that unused capacity should be used, so we need to educate people to use bulky

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*Dumping, contiued from page 8*

pickups more often."

Not everyone is convinced the IDEA plan goes far enough. Councilmembers Noel Gallo (District 5) and Ken Houston (District 7) expressed their frustrations during the Public Works and Transportation Committee on May 12.

Gallo's concern was that the policy did not accurately reflect practice, especially given Oakland's contract with Waste Management, which he said "can't deliver the service."

"We can do a lot of writing, a lot of talking, but I want to see those who wrote it come on the street and help do it," Gallo said.

Unger also said the city's contract with Waste Management "is not a good contract."

"I was not here when it was negotiated, but we are paying more fees for less service with Waste Management," he told The Rockridge News.

At the May 12 committee meeting, Houston framed the issue as more than just a cleanup effort. "We have to deter this crime," he said.

Although the Waste Management contract runs through June 2030, Unger said the city has experimented with other approaches addressing the root causes of illegal dumping.

"We did a quiet experiment in another neighborhood outside of Rockridge where we just gave them much larger garbage cans, and we saw dumping go down in the neighborhood by 80 percent," he said. "People don't want to dump illegally, but because it's so expensive to buy a residential trash can here in Oakland, people buy the smallest one they can, and the rest of the garbage finds its way somewhere else."

Unger made it clear that he believes the City's first priority should be making disposal easier and more affordable.

"We need to make it easier and cheaper to dump legally," he said. "That's our first priority." ●

**Recent RCPC Boundary Expansion**

**In June, the RCPC Board of Directors approved an enlargement of RCPC's boundary within Upper Rockridge to include the following streets and blocks:**

- **Buena Vista Avenue, between Acacia Avenue and Broadway Terrace**
- **Ocean View Drive between Brookside Avenue and Acacia**
- **All of Hill Road**
- **The North side of Broadway Terrace, between Buena Vista and the Temescal Regional Recreation Area.**

**Persons age 18 or over, who have a principal residence in the above area, are now eligible to vote in RCPC board elections and to run for the board. The Rockridge News distribution network has been expanded to allow delivery of the paper to residences within the newly included area. Thanks to Skip Fogarty, Charles Feltman, Rhite Williams and the other community volunteers who have helped to make this expansion possible.**

*Ridge, contiued from cover*

1.5 acres, or roughly one-third, of the vacant parcel. Development would be primarily asphalt paving, with a 4,893-square-foot structure. By comparison, the Trader Joe's site is one-third this size. If the larger vacant parcel were developed at the same density as proposed by Align Real Estate for the Trader Joe's site, it could yield up to 1,221 units, even with retail, a parking garage, and street-front units within its base.

A commercial-only development on this site would run counter to the current zoning designations (S-13 and S-14), which require that the Ridge site be used primarily for housing; and to the City's agreements with the State regarding planning requirements for housing.

The Chick-fil-A proposal would also require a conditional use permit. To consider approving this project, the City would need to revise its housing element site inventory to comply with State housing laws by adding a replacement site. However, there are no suitable replacement sites for the prescribed number of housing units available in North Oakland.

The current development agreement between TRC, an Albertsons subsidiary, and the Chan family, who own the property, requires that the development of this full 4.53-acre site be primarily commercial.

Given the community's strong support for housing at that site, as expressed during the Home Depot protests, and RCPC's year long Community Vision Plan process, RCPC is likely to oppose a project that uses any part of the site for a fast-food drive-through, as such a use would preclude needed housing.

RCPC land use committee continues to research the project and the Ridge site. ●



# Rockridge NCPC Learns About City Violence Prevention Strategy

by Michele Himmelberg

Rockridge residents concerned about crime heard some welcome statistics at the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) meeting on June 11.

Residents also learned about an innovative strategy being led by Holly Joshi, chief of Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention (DVP), a government entity that works closely with the Oakland Police Department (OPD) and community-based organizations to make meaningful change that improves public safety.

The Rockridge NCPC serves as a liaison to the Oakland Police Department to address community concerns about public safety.

Joshi shared statistics released in May: Oakland has seen more than a 50% reduction in homicides and shootings over the past two years. She noted that such numbers are among the best in the state, and they've gained recognition nationally and from California's attorney general, Rob Bonta. The reductions also helped secure $1 million in federal funding to expand services associated with DVP's Operation Ceasefire, which focuses on those at the highest risk for gun violence.

The encouraging statistics reflect changes made in 2024, Joshi said, when Oakland pivoted to a focused deterrence strategy, a violence-reduction approach that combines police intelligence with intensive social services.

The city used this model from 2012 to 2019, achieving about a 46% reduction in homicides and shootings, but the effort was later deprioritized. A 2023 audit found that both the police department (OPD) and DVP were not effectively targeting the individuals most likely to drive violence.



*Holly Joshi*

That led to a turning point in 2024. Oakland reimplemented the deterrence strategy with major changes. Instead of focusing only on people who could be arrested, OPD now shares intelligence on high-risk individuals involved in violence who do not yet have probable cause for arrest. DVP then pursues those individuals, offering support and alternatives before violence occurs. This work is carried out by "credible messengers" – staff with lived experience who have strong community relationships.

Oakland is seeing the results of this cohesive strategy, which unifies proactive conflict mediation and life coaching. This field of practice is fairly new in policing, Joshi said, and it's growing with implementation in Chicago, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and other cities.

"It's a relationship-centered model based on the belief that most individuals who are involved in violence want to change," Joshi said. "We believe the reasons they're involved are rooted in survival instincts and trauma. By identifying and addressing each individual's primary driver of violence, we believe we can change behavior."

The model relies on two key roles. The first is Violence Interrupters (VIs), who build relationships, identify conflicts early, mediate disputes, prevent retaliation, and relentlessly pursue high-risk individuals to connect them with services. The other is Life Coaches, who provide intensive case management for 12–18 months, maintaining frequent contact and helping clients achieve personally-defined goals while avoiding violence, victimization, and re-arrest.

DVP also works through a network of 21 community-based organizations. These organizations can act more quickly and flexibly than government agencies, providing services such as housing support, workforce development, counseling, and crisis response.

DVP's cohesive strategy also includes: Group and Gun Violence Prevention; School Violence Intervention (in partnership with Oakland schools); and Gender-Based Violence Intervention, with support for domestic violence and human trafficking survivors.

DVP's next steps include strengthening housing and workforce development programs for high-risk individuals and launching a Peace Academy in 2027 to train future violence prevention professionals.

Joshi emphasized that violence prevention should complement – not replace – policing, noting that both enforcement and community-based intervention are necessary for lasting public safety. ●

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# Claremont Country Club Pesticide Concerns Update

by Casey Farmer, Morgan Molvig, and Sarah Raifman

Rockridge neighbors continue to seek answers from the Claremont Country Club about its pesticide use, citing a recent medical study linking the chemicals used on the golf course to Parkinson's disease.

In December 2025, RCPC and a coalition of neighbors sent a joint letter to the leadership of the Claremont Country Club requesting a meeting to discuss the club's pesticide use. The group's concerns originated from a recent medical study linking the types of pesticides used at Claremont's golf course with Parkinson's disease.

Through additional research, the coalition learned about alternative golf course management approaches to improve public health and reduce the ecological footprint of greens and fairways.

Many neighbors responded to a February article in The Rockridge News about the issue. The group hopes to gather online and in person to discuss strategies to promote health and safety.

Claremont's General Manager and three Board members met with the group on March 10, listened to concerns, and committed to responding to specific questions.

Below are the questions we presented at the March 10th meeting:

**Best Practices**

Does the club follow established best practices for pest management, and if so, which specific guidelines does it follow?

**Safety Protocols & Oversight**

Regulatory Guidance: Who is responsible for deciding or informing the club's safety protocols regarding pesticide use?

Re-evaluation Cycle: How frequently does the club re-evaluate these safety protocols to align with new data or regulations?

Integrated Pest Management (IPM): Does the club maintain a formal IPM program? If so, would the club be willing to share the current plan with the community for transparency?

Safety Oversight: Is there a specific individual or officer at the club responsible for tracking chemical safety profiles and the efficacy of current protocols?

**Protection of Vulnerable Populations**

Immediate Buffer Zones: Given that infants and children are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of pesticide exposure, will the club commit to implementing immediate 1/4-mile "No-Spray" buffer zones around all neighboring daycares, preschools, and schools?

Alignment with State Standards: Recognizing that California law (e.g., AB 1864 and existing school-zone regulations) mandates 1/4-mile buffer zones for schools in agricultural areas—often involving the same chemicals used in golf course management—will the club adopt these same protections as a precautionary measure to help ensure the safety of local students?

**Exposure & Environmental Mitigation**

Advance Public Notification: Will the club commit to posting clear, visible signage around the entire perimeter of the golf course 72 hours before and after any chemical spraying?

Prop 65 Compliance: In order to abide by Proposition 65, how are members and employees currently informed of potential chemical exposure while on the grounds?

Wildlife & Ecosystem Protection: Given the high aquatic and avian toxicity warnings of certain pesticides, what active monitoring and mitigation protocols are in place to protect wildlife?

Runoff Management: Specifically, how does the club measure and prevent chemical runoff into stormwater drains and the surrounding ecosystem?

**Future Transitions & Innovation**

Transition: Is the club open to transitioning away from a heavy reliance on synthetics and moving toward a more organic turf management approach?

Expert Consultation: Is the club open to a meeting with experts who have assisted prestigious courses in implementing soil biology-based management

To join the conversation or offer your professional expertise, please sign up here. ●




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# Composting, Bastille Day Festivities, Art, and More This Month

by Jody Colley,
Rockridge District Association

Turn your kitchen waste into a rich plant resource, meet some composting worms, and learn how to make compost tea from common weeds at the Small-Scale Home Composting community demo event hosted by **Preserved** (5540 College Ave) on July 10 from 6-7 p.m. Composting locally—whether at home, in a community garden, or on a larger scale—is a practical and engaging way to connect with our food system while taking meaningful local climate action. Sign up on their website for this free workshop and learn how you can make a difference.

One of Rockridge's crown-jewel events is the Annual Bastille Day Celebration at **Market Hall** (5655 College Ave), now in its ninth year, honoring French cuisine and culture with specials and tastings. Aptly named Bastille Day Fête du Marché, this event leads you on a culinary journey around the market to explore French wine, cheese and charcuterie, pastries and desserts, and much more. Admission is free. The celebratiion takes place on Saturday, July 11, from 12.-3 p.m.

Whether you're a retro arcade enthusiast, a fierce competitor, or just looking for a fun way to kick off the week, Arcade Mondays at **The RIC** (5515 College Ave.) delivers. Enjoy half-off games, drink specials, and an atmosphere that invites you to unleash your inner child and play the night away. The fun doesn't stop after Monday. The RIC keeps the energy going all week long with trivia nights on Wednesdays, drag shows on Thursdays, and karaoke on the weekends. If that's not enough playtime, head to **Ben 'N Nick's Bar & Grill** (5612 College Ave) for Trivia Tuesdays from 8-10 p.m.

Discover the energy and movement of abstract painting at "Gestural Expressions," a new exhibition at **SLATE Contemporary Gallery and Art Consulting** (5510 College Ave.). Featuring works by Maria Burtis, Amy Donaldson, Nicole Mueller, Karen Silve, and Joanne Fox, the show celebrates the expressive power of gestural abstraction. Join the artists and gallery for an opening reception on July 18 from 4-6 p.m.; the exhibition runs through August 29.

**Bella Vita** (5511 College Ave.) is a favorite destination for stylish gifts, apparel, and accessories for women and children, but also a venue for special events throughout the year. One of its most popular experiences is the return of Karl Johnson of CutArts on July 23. He creates stunning hand-cut silhouette portraits in just minutes for $45 each. Guests are welcome to also bring their pets for a custom silhouette. Then, on July 30, head back to Bella Vita to learn embroidery techniques for clothing to personalize your style ($65, ages 14+). Choose from stick-on wash-off templates or design your own pattern. All you need to bring is the item of clothing you'd like embroidered. Advance reservations for both events are required through Bella Vita's website.

Stay active and energized this summer with free community classes at **Holistic Strength** (5858 College Ave.). Expectant parents can join a workshop on July 26 focused on preparing for birth through hip-opening movements, pelvic floor relaxation, and breathing techniques designed to support a smoother delivery. On July 31, build strength and confidence with a dynamic class featuring strength training, cardio boxing, and mobility exercises. Visit their website to reserve your spot.

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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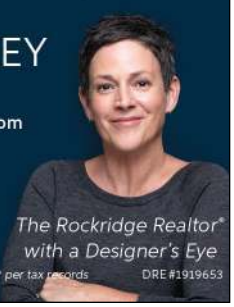
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# Dogs of Rockridge

*illustration by Laura Serra*



Max is an affectionate little noodle who thinks he's the king of the castle. He's a quirky guy who has a personality that's larger than life—whether he's trying to climb into our laps or relentlessly barking at shadows, he keeps his family entertained every day. He's convinced he's the one in charge, turning every command into a game of, "Let's see how stubborn I can be!"



Ford (4) is a Golden Retriever and Cocker Spaniel mix. He takes his job protecting the neighborhood from squirrels very seriously. His hobbies include fetch, naps and showing puppy eyes until you give him human food. He spends his days in the window keeping an eye on Keith Ave. ●

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


Holy Names High School

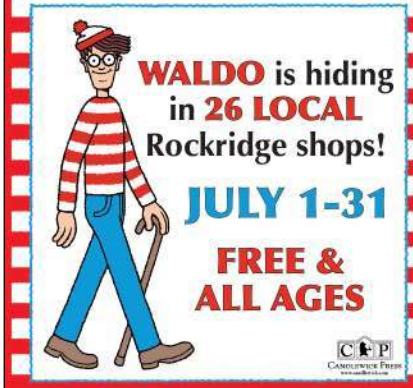


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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I live in Rockridge, and I 100% support the proposed housing developments on the Trader Joe's site and the Claremont site, and I'd encourage my neighbors to do the same.

We're sitting on top of a BART station. It means anyone living in our neighborhood can be in downtown SF, one of the most lucrative job markets in the world, in under 20 minutes without owning a car. Pretending that College Avenue, a major thoroughfare minutes from BART and two freeways, should stay a neighborhood of single-family homes is, frankly, insane: in terms of driving affordability, and in terms of building a sustainable planet.

Would I prefer three- or four-story buildings instead of these proposals? Yes. But two things are true.

1. Opposition would arrive at any density. The same neighbors writing letters against 10 stories would write letters against 4. The "modest massing" alternative isn't really on the table. The alternative is nothing.

2. We've failed to add meaningful housing here for 50 years. Catching up costs more now than it would have then. Building taller now is the price of decades of saying no. If we want developers to actually build, we have to make it pencil for them.

Yes, I'll miss Trader Joe's. Yes, I'd love more modest massing. Yes, this is genuinely hard on neighbors closest to the sites. None of that changes the math. Our homes are worth what they're worth because of proximity to BART and to the job market across the Bay. Pocketing that appreciation while blocking new housing and then complaining about affordability is hypocrisy.

Look at Austin, Texas. Years of aggressive construction stabilized rents and, in many cases, brought them down. That's what works. 100% affordable housing built by the government isn't coming. It rarely pencils, and waiting for it has been our excuse for half a century.

Approve them both.

Ned Dwyer

## RCPC Welcomes New Board Member

David Hatfield, the Rockridge Community Planning Council's newest board member, is filling the merchant representative seat, a one-year board-appointed term. David has been a Rockridge resident since 1999 and a Rockridge homeowner since 2004.



*David Hatfield*

David hopes to contribute to the RCPC Board through his experience in public-private partnerships and nonprofit expertise.

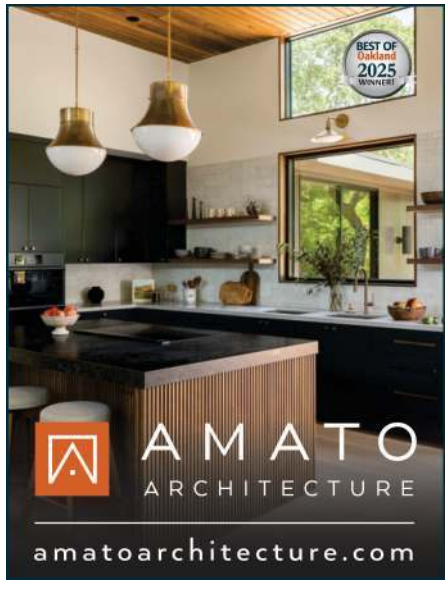
David is the Chief of Opportunities at the arts nonprofit Illuminate, which creates large-scale, public art projects in San Francisco. Illuminate's best-known projects are The Bay Lights (on the side of the Bay Bridge), The Golden Mile in Golden Park, and laser installations on iconic structures like the Transamerica Pyramid, Coit Tower, and Sutro Tower.

David and his wife, Stacia, raised two daughters in the area. The oldest recently graduated from college, while the youngest just completed her first year. ●










## For Children (Red = July/August-only events)

**Tuesday Evening Special Events:** Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. in July. Kamishibai Paper Theater: July 14; Magician Brian Scott: July 21; Duncan Playful Circus: July 28.
**Mr. Elephant Music & Puppets:** Thursday, July 16, 10:30 a.m.
**End-of-Summer Afternoon Tea Party:** Wednesday, August 5, 3:30 p.m. Children of all ages, bring your favorite adult to Tea. Best for ages 4+. Please RSVP at the Children's Desk, or email Erica at esiskind@oaklandlibrary.org
**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. A new craft each week for ages 3 to 12.
**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:**
We still have openings for teen volunteers. Please see our website or contact us for more info.
**Summer Program:** Every Wednesday at 2 p.m., July 15: PomPom Garlands; July 22: Mini Shrines; July 29: Needle Point

## For Adults

**Meet the Author – Nancy Kurshan:** Levitating the Pentagon. Kurshan willl be in conversation with Laura Gonzalez. Book signing. Wednesday, August 19, 6:30-7:45 p.m.
**Marigold Growing Contest (All Ages):** Patrons who picked up a marigold starter will submit their measurements to the library to see who has grown the tallest marigold in Rockridge. August 22 to 29.
**Adopt-A-Dog Pup Up Event:** Meet adoptable pets and Oakland Animal Services will share information. Saturday, August 8, 10-noon.
**Mindset Workshop:** Living With Brain Injury: Every Tuesday, 4-5 p.m., from July 7 to Aug. 11. Registration required. For more information, please email: abowen@oaklandlibrary.org
**Graphic Novel Group:** Every fourth Tuesday, 6:30-7:30 p.m., starting July 28.
**Hemming & Mending Clothes by Hand:** Tuesday Aug. 11, 6-7:30 p.m. Bring clothes that need mending. Registration required. Registration opens July 21 by phone, 510-597-5017.
**Chair Yoga:** Every first and third Monday, 10:30-11:30 a.m., August 3 to December 21.
**Ask Your Area Home Experts:** Every second Friday, noon–2 p.m. Get answers, tips and connections.
**California Writers' Club 5-Page Critique:** Every fourth Saturday, 1–5 p.m. Bring 6–8 copies of your work 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:**

**Mon., Thurs., & Sat.:** 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
**Tues. & Weds.:** 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
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**See calendar for events:** oaklandlibrary.org/events

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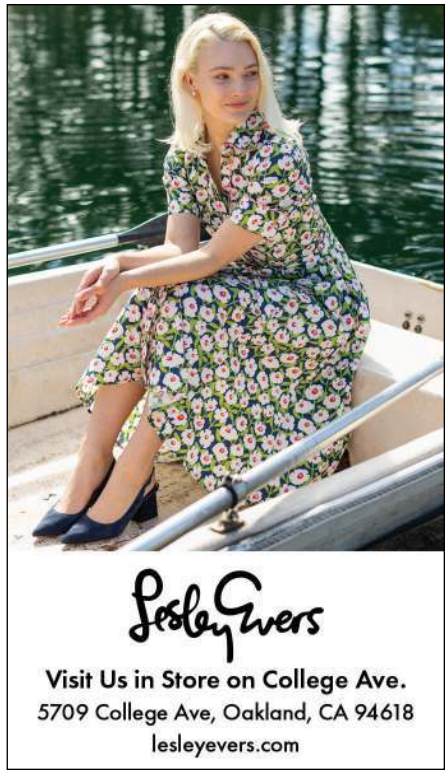
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