



OCTOBER 2013

MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

Over the past several weeks and months, armed robberies and other serious crimes have become all too common in a number of North Oakland neighborhoods. While some serious crimes are trending down this year, armed robberies are up. And even if some crimes are down compared to last year, they are still too high. Clearly, more needs to be done to stem the problem and make our neighborhoods safer. Everyone has a right to feel safe—and actually *be* safe—in their own neighborhood.

I have been meeting frequently with senior police officials, my colleagues in City Hall, and numerous residents and community leaders from throughout North Oakland about the crime problem. I am acutely aware of the serious problem we have with armed robberies and other serious crimes in our neighborhoods.

Here are some of the things that I, my colleagues, and your police force have been doing to reduce armed robberies and bring all serious crime under control throughout all parts of North Oakland.

Police Academies

First and foremost, we are **hiring additional sworn police officers** in Oakland. We need to make sure we have sufficient sworn personnel to (a) adequately patrol our neighborhoods and commercial business districts, (b) respond to priority 911 calls, and (c) conduct thorough investigations of serious crimes. In our City of Oakland FYs 13-15 adopted **budget**—written by Councilmembers Gibson-McElhaney, Kaplan and myself—we fund multiple police academies over the next two years. Our most recent Academy graduated three dozen officers on September 20th. A new Academy began at the beginning of October, and will be followed by another Academy starting at the end of the calendar year. I voted for and fully support having multiple police academies each year. These academies are the primary way we increase the number of sworn officers on our police force.

I am advocating for supplementing the standard police academies with a so-called **lateral academy**, where we recruit and hire trained officers from other jurisdictions. I'm building support for a lateral academy and will work hard to get that into a supplemental budget as soon as possible. I was happy to see recently that our court-appointed Compliance Director agrees with my goal of running a lateral academy as soon as practical. Additionally, I'm pleased to report that congresswoman Lee and Mayor Quan recently announced a federal grant that will add an *additional* 10 officers for at least three years.

Background checks: We also put into our budget additional funds to reduce the backlog in hiring of sworn and civilian personnel at the Oakland Police Department (OPD). All OPD employees require substantial background checks. By putting more funds into the budget for this purpose, we are

speeding up the hiring timeline as well as more quickly freeing up some sworn officers to get back to field duty.

OPD Area 2 – Captain Anthony Toribio

As you may already know, in July we were assigned a new police captain, Anthony Toribio. He knows North Oakland well and has in recent weeks shaken things up to better deploy officers in our neighborhoods. For example, he has re-deployed officers and instituted bike and walking patrols to enhance visibility. I meet with Captain Toribio on a regular basis to discuss recent crimes and safety issues in District One. We will be organizing an informal quarterly gathering for North Oakland residents to meet and exchange information with the captain.

You can follow Captain Toribio on twitter (@area2opd).

Investigations of Serious Crimes

It has been my top public safety priority to improve the investigative capacity at OPD. I was successful in getting into the city budget 10 new civilian positions at OPD assigned to help with investigations including the processing of evidence in our Crime Lab. These trained civilian positions, such as new police evidence technicians, are key to helping conduct investigations of serious crimes. Thoroughly investigating all serious crimes is particularly important when a police department is understaffed. I have also urged the Chief to move more quickly on hiring the civilian positions--crime lab analysts, evidence technicians, criminalists, fingerprint specialists—that have been vacant for several months. Fortunately, that hiring process is moving forward.

Additionally, I fully support the Wasserman-Bratton consulting team set of recommendations that urge us to improve data collection, our investigations of serious crimes, and assign Area-level investigative teams. I'm pleased to report that our OPD Area 2 (which includes all of North Oakland) has been assigned a dedicated investigator for armed robberies and a dedicated investigator for burglaries. We will also be assigned a dedicated investigator for assaults. Furthermore, our sworn Problem Solving Officers (PSOs), which are a key element of community policing, are being trained in investigations.

California Highway Patrol (CHP)

Our adopted budget also funds the regular use of teams of officers at key times each week. While this cannot be a permanent solution, it does help provide additional presence on the streets to deter crime. This is an expensive stopgap measure, but it is necessary for the near future. I intend examine the costs of our CHP contract and see if we can work with the state to bring those costs down.

Compliance Director and Constitutional Policing

In regard to the mandate of our court-appointed Compliance Director, I have talked with OPD brass and urged them to take corrective action to comply with federal requirements vis-à-vis constitutional policing. Lack of adequate compliance has led to having a lot of officers working behind desks (in Internal Affairs). Once we are in full compliance, we will be better able to deploy our sworn officers out in the field. It should not be taking 10 years to comply with these appropriate requirements—most of which are routine procedures in other big city police departments. Nevertheless, I am glad that the current administration has made substantial progress in this area.

The Compliance Director has been given broad authority by the federal judge to not only comply with the negotiated settlement agreement, but to also take broader action to reform and modernize the operations of OPD to more effectively and efficiently serve our residents. I am very optimistic that this will lead to positive outcomes in reducing crime.

Oakland Unite Crime Prevention services

The City of Oakland funds several crime prevention services to meet the needs of our youth who are at risk of falling into criminal behavior, as well as the re-entry population who need selected services in order to greatly reduce the likelihood of recidivism. While many of these programs are effective on an individual-by-individual basis, they are grossly underfunded vis-à-vis the overall need. Oakland and Alameda County need to make a much bigger commitment. While paying for more peace officers is the immediate priority, increasing funding for effective crime prevention efforts must also be part of our longer-term solution.

For more information, click on the following link: <http://oaklandunite.org/>

CeaseFire

You may have heard about our CeaseFire program modeled after successful anti-gang violence reduction programs in other cities. I fully support the CeaseFire program as a key element of reducing violent crime in our city. For more information, go to:

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/Mayor/i/Ceasefire/index.htm>

Cameras

Some people are installing security cameras on their private property to deter and potentially record criminal behavior. Here is a link to information about that:

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/cityadministrator/documents/form/oak031867.pdf>

Community Engagement

I have held well-attended **community meetings** in District One that focused exclusively on the current crime problem. We organized emergency community meetings in early May that was attended by 250 residents in police beats 10X, 10Y, and 11, and in late July that was attended by over 200 residents in police beats 12Y, 13X, 12X, 9, and 13Y. More recently, a community meeting for the Rockridge neighborhood attended by nearly 300 residents.

Additionally, when invited, I accept invitations to listen to and talk with small groups (usually about 20-25 residents) of neighbors in people's homes. I also attend Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) meetings throughout the district, and my staff attends these meetings when I'm not available. If you are not already involved in your neighborhood's NCPC, I recommend attending one of their upcoming meetings. [Click here for more information.](#)

Additionally, after a serious shooting in District One, I follow-up with the officers who are investigating the crime to get a status report. And I generally walk the immediate neighborhood where the crime occurred and talk with some of the neighbors about what happened and what should happen going forward.

Getting Guns Off the Street

This is another tremendous challenge. **Gun violence** and the proliferation of illegal guns is a huge problem. I wholeheartedly supported several of the key gun and ammunition regulation bills in Sacramento this year.

One of my colleagues has put forth the idea, which I strongly support, of asking parents of at-risk youth to give OPD permission to search their homes for illegal guns in the possession of minor children living

in that house. All the guns would be confiscated, but there would be no follow-up prosecution for illegal gun possession. I also support additional gun buy-back efforts in Oakland.

What you can do – Here are a few links that you should find useful. While common sense tips for personal safety are important, they are not meant to be a substitute for effective policing. Nevertheless, I recommend taking every reasonable precaution.

Plan for Personal Safety

Home Burglary Prevention

Neighborhood Services Coordinators and NCPCs

Neighborhoods Services Division

I and my colleagues on the Council know that the crime situation in many neighborhoods is serious and that people are rightfully demanding action immediately. Citizen patrols and high-definition security cameras at freeway on-ramps and just a couple of the ideas that are in the works.

There is more that needs to be done, and I will not give up on the effort to reduce crime and create a living environment where people feel safe walking to and from their own home.

-Dan

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