

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME PREVENTION COUNCILS (NCPCs)

What is an NCPC?

- A Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) is made up of you and your neighbors working together and in partnership with the Oakland Police Department (OPD) and other city agencies to address ongoing problems in your neighborhood.
- Each NCPC is organized and run by the neighbors who attend the meetings. Every household in the beat is notified of a beat-wide NCPC meeting once a year, where officers are elected.
- Meetings are generally held monthly, but some are held bi-monthly or quarterly depending on the level of interest, and the problems that need addressing.
- OPD works with the NCPC to develop strategies and allocate resources to address the problems. OPD also reports back to the NCPC about progress on the issue.

How Are NCPCs Organized?

- NCPCs are inclusive, transparent, independent democratic institutions, run by neighbors, and open to the public. They are not controlled by the police department, only supported by OPD.
- The NCPCs define their own structure, as long as it is open, democratic, inclusive and transparent.
- The NCPC officers and members set up standing and project committees to work on issues.
- The NCPC also must have written rules, but rules are individually determined by each NCPC.

What Are the Top Three Priorities?

- Each NCPC chooses three priorities they want to have addressed by OPD and/or other City agencies each time they meet.
- The NSC, PSO, beat Officer, Sergeant's, Lieutenant, OPD special units, SDS group and other City agencies work together and with the NCPC to develop and implement a strategy for addressing the priorities.
- Regular updates about the priorities are shared with NCPCs and the OPD until the problems are resolved, or changed by the NCPC.
- There is a system of accountability up and down the chain of command to assure that the problems which are defined by the NCPCs are addressed.

What Are Beats and Police Service Areas (PSAs)?

- The City of Oakland is divided into 57 beats of approximately 5000 people each. Each beat has an NCPC. Eight to ten beats are combined into 6 police Service Area (PSA) numbered 1-6.

What are NSCs, PSOs, Beat Officers, and the SDS?

- Each NCPC is staffed by a Neighborhood Services Coordinator (NSC). The role of the NSC is to bring resources to address problems and to help develop the capacity of residents to work together and in partnership with the Police and other City departments, to solve problems.
- The NSC plays a critical role vis a vis the NCPCs. Often, there is a misconception that the role of the NSC is to work to solve problems for the NCPC once they have been identified. That is not exactly the case. Rather, their role is to work in partnership with the leaders of the NCPC to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities so they can learn how to strategically solve problems. When this happens, the problem-solving ability is embedded in the neighborhood and the residents' capacity to solve problems is localized and enhanced. NSCs do, however, solve problems and take on cases when the problem is complex, or it involves multiple agencies or jurisdictions.
- The NSC also acts as a liaison for the NCPC to another group called the Service Delivery System (SDS), which is an internal City of Oakland group which works on non-police related problems with other city agencies.

- Many NCPCs have a Problem Solving Officer (PSO) trained in the philosophy and practice of community policing to work with the NCPC to address the 3 priorities chosen by the NCPC that month.
- Each NCPC is supported by a PSA lieutenant, who answers to a Captain who oversees all the PSAs.
- The Captain reports to the Deputy Chief, the Deputy Chief reports to the Chief, and the Chief reports to the City Administrator who reports to the Mayor.
- The beat officers answer calls-for-service to OPD on a daily basis. They are in the Patrol Division of OPD and are supervised by a sergeant and a lieutenant, both responsible for that specific beat.

What is City Council Resolution 72727 and Community Policing?

- Resolution 72727 outlines the City's community policing strategy. It was originally adopted by the City Council in June, 1996 and revised in May, 2004.
- Community policing "creates a working partnership between the community and the police...to analyze neighborhood problems, set priorities, develop strategies, and work together to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods".
- Oakland's community policing strategy consists of a three-pronged approach. The Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils are the second prong in this strategy.
 - Its foundation is the Neighborhood Watch program which seeks to organize residents block-by-block by helping them get to know each other and work together to keep their neighborhood safe. The Merchant Watch program is the business equivalent of the Neighborhood Watch program.
 - The second prong is at the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council program. This program seeks to organize resident by neighborhood or beat to work together and in partnership with the police department to solve chronic problems.
 - The third prong is at the city-wide level, where residents involved in the first two level come together at the annual Community Summit to network, celebrate success, and discuss city-wide issue.
- Community policing "employs a comprehensive.....approach" by all city departments "to solving problems" and "empowers neighborhoods by relying on the organization of people in our communities to identify problems, prioritize concerns and develop solutions."

What is the Underlying Philosophy of the NCPCs?

- The NCPCs are part of a redefinition of the relationship between the city and the police department known as Community Policing.
- The NCPCs identify the top priorities that the neighborhood wants the police to take action on.
- The NCPCs provide a place for citizens to participate with the police department to solve their own problems. Together they develop strategies to resolve public safety, health, and other concerns.
- The NCPCs provide a forum, a big tent, and a large table for all neighborhood groups (including block clubs, neighborhood watch programs, community based organizations, merchant associations, citizen associations, houses of worship of any faith), and all individuals to participate in making their communities, better, safer, and stronger, and creating the kind of nurturing, supportive communities that we all want to live in.

How Can I Get Involved?

- Come to an NCPC meeting in your neighborhood, sign up on the mailing list. Your NSC can tell you when your next meeting is, put you on a mailing list, and give you any public contact info (such as e-mails, Yahoo groups, or websites). You can find out which beat you live in and therefore who your NSC is by going to <http://www.oaklandpolice.com/youroff/contoff.html> or call 238-6372.
- Many NCPCs send out meeting notices, agendas, minutes, alerts, newsletters, and all kinds of useful information.