

## **The Oregonian**

# **Towers, terraces imagined at RiverPlace redevelopment in downtown Portland**

*October 10, 2019*

*By Elliot Njus*

A Portland development firm that has amassed eight acres of property south of downtown near city's waterfront plans a tower district with a striking public plaza designed by a star Japanese architect.

The details are included in NPB Capital's recently released master plan for the area, offering the first public look at the site's design after a City Council debate earlier this year on height limits.

The council voted to allow towers up to 325 feet on parts of the site — the same height as some of the tallest buildings in the nearby South Waterfront district.

RiverPlace lies along the Willamette River between Tom McCall Waterfront Park and the South Waterfront, separated from downtown by busy stretches of Harbor Drive and Naito Parkway.

The master plan as proposed could bring up to 2,500 new apartments in several buildings to the spot, along with an office tower. They would share a large underground parking garage.

Because any housing project would be subject to a 2017 city mandate that developers include rent-restricted units in any new housing, it would also add hundreds of affordable apartments.

Architects for NPB Capital presented the master plan last week to the Portland Design Commission. The briefing didn't address the towers and focused on public space, as well as how to make the site more accessible from downtown, which is separated from the site by a steep elevation change.

"I think right now the perception is that that district and the neighborhood is relatively difficult to get to, and that you drive by it, you don't drive to it," said Agustin Enriquez of GBD Architects. "A lot of this project is actually making it literally just accessible to the average Portlander or, say, visitor from out of town, or a student at Portland State University."

The architects proposed connecting the new development to downtown with a new pedestrian bridge over Southwest Harbor Drive, a divided four-lane road that provides access between downtown and Interstate 5.

But that plan also calls for building a five-story base that some of the tallest towers in the development would share, resulting in an unbroken 725-foot-long block face. City planners deemed that plan architecturally concerning, saying it's "critical" to break up the block for mobility and aesthetic reasons.

They also showed plans for a plaza concept called the Portland Steps, a stair-stepped plaza

leading down toward the Willamette River banks.

The design draws the eye, but city planners raised concerns. The steps don't provide for accessibility for people with disabilities and they could present safety concerns, they wrote. The terraces also could create "dead space" not easily reached by visitors, the planners wrote.

Neighborhood groups objected to the scale of development proposed, saying the area isn't accessible enough by road to accommodate more traffic from all the new homes.

"The stunning mass and scale have impacts on and consequences for the transportation system, the public parks, essential services, schools and congested streets," said Thomas Ray, who lives nearby and said he was speaking on behalf of the Downtown Neighborhood Association. "Pressure from this high density is likely to have unintended consequences for the entire neighborhood and the South Waterfront."

Speakers also raised concerns about the removal of nearly 300 existing apartments on the site, which they said would be more affordable than the tower apartments that would replace them.

While GBD Architects of Portland presented the plan, Tokyo architecture firm Kengo Kuma & Associates is also attached to the project. Kuma designed an addition to the Portland Japanese Garden that opened in 2017.

Representatives of Kuma's firm are expected to present at future hearings.

NBP Capital -- an investment firm led by siblings Lauren Noecker Robert and Spencer Noecker and backed by billionaire investor Nicolas Berggruen -- has been amassing property in RiverPlace over the last several years.

It acquired the RiverPlace Athletic Club in 2014, then evicted the operator of the gym in 2015 for failing to pay rent. It bought neighboring low- and mid-rise apartment complexes later that year, bringing its holdings to nearly 10 acres included in the redevelopment concept.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Prepping for the Big One**

*October 10, 2019*

*By Joseph Gallivan*

Scientists and contractors have found a way to prevent soil liquefaction during a quake, but who has time or money?

In a Magnitude 9.0 Cascadia earthquake, which is long overdue in western Oregon, one of the big fears is that the damp soil on the banks of the Willamette and Columbia rivers will liquefy and send homes and businesses tumbling.

Worst of all, the land under chemical tanks along U.S. Highway 30 in Northwest Portland could shake them off their concrete pads and split them open to create a toxic stew of gas and sludge.

Arizona State University has developed technology for mitigating liquefaction that involves injecting nutrients down pipes into the soil. Micro-organisms feast on the nutrients and produce tiny bubbles of gas. These act like Styrofoam packing peanuts and prevent the pressure build-up that turns wet soil into a mobile soup.

According to a Portland City Club report, 90% of Oregon's liquid fuel supply is kept in fuel tanks in the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) hub in Northwest Portland. Those fuel tanks are sitting on the before-mentioned unstable soils.

An ongoing Portland State University study is testing the new microorganism treatment at two sites in Portland. The study is funded by the National Science Foundation and includes collaborators from Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Arizona State University and the University of Texas at Austin. The first site is a 62-acre habitat restoration area owned by Portland General Electric in Northwest Portland, known as Harborton. The study says the similarities of the soils at Harborton to the soils under the fuel tanks in the CEI hub provides an opportunity to test if the new treatment will provide a viable solution for one of Oregon's serious resiliency concerns in the aftermath of a significant earthquake.

The second site is a recycling site called Sunderland owned by Portland Bureau of Transportation, where PSU recently put on a demo. It is near the Portland International Airport and 100 yards from Dignity Village.

Big truck

University of Texas at Austin professor Ken Stokoe and his team demonstrated a machine that simulates an earthquake. The 64,000-pound mobile shaker is called T-Rex. It is a truck with a large metal disc attached to its underside. When T-Rex lowers the disc, it shivers and shakes to cause resonant frequencies in the soil below it. During a demonstration, when the T-Rex disc was finally turned on, it made a noise, and the grass shivered. A minute later, it was turned off.

The demonstration did not show much to the layperson, but during three hours of talking, scientists and academics made two things clear: Portland has a liquefaction problem, and the new treatment could be an affordable way to fix it.

Since 2008, when a tall building is built in Portland, the code states that the foundations must reach down below the liquefiable layer. The cost of digging below the foundations of the Burnside Bridge or some of the older brick buildings in downtown Portland is unthinkable. However, with this technique, it could be cost-effective to drill wells and feed the micro-organisms and have the bugs create the gas (nitrogen). The wells would be capped and tested every few years to see if the gas was still at the right levels.

PSU could save Portland

Arash Khosravifar and Diane Moug, assistant professors in the civil and environmental engineering department at Portland State University, are conducting the study with their graduate students. Khosravifar explained, "Liquefaction is triggered when the weight of soil grains is canceled out by the buoyant force from the high pressure from the fluid. And that only happens if the soil is fully saturated. If you manage to reduce the saturation percentage below the water table, you don't trigger liquefaction.

"What we wanted to showcase today is a new advancement in liquefaction mitigation that was developed by researchers at Arizona State University," Khosravifar said. "They've been working on it for a couple of decades, and now we've got to a point where we can apply it in the field to determine if it can be an effective choice to mitigate the liquefaction risk for Portland soils."

If it works, it can be done to existing structures.

"That would really be a game-changer because you can mitigate liquefaction at a fraction of a cost compared to existing methods," Khosravifar said.

### Sun Devil

Edward Kavazanjian, professor at Arizona State University, said this is the first field-scale application of this technology for saturated soils.

"We've done a lot of laboratory work. We had a similar project in Toronto with slightly different goals."

Asked how far away from being a viable commercial product that cities and ground improvement contractors can buy and use, Kavazanjian said, "A couple of years, there's still work that needs to be done. But this will provide a demonstration that it works under relatively adverse conditions. The soils here are perhaps not the most amenable to this kind of treatment because it's fine grain, and there's an interlayer of sands and silts. If we have clean strata, it'll work like a charm. But when you get the soils like silts, it's harder for the nutrients and the gas to penetrate the soil."

A local ground improvement contractor named Condon and Johnson provided help on the installation of the wells and the pumping system. "On their own dime because they realized the potential for the work."

### Cross your fingers, Portland

One issue is how do they verify to a regulatory agency or an owner that it's working? It's a wait-and-see process.

Kavazanjian said, "It's a combination of the technology being ready, and the market being ready when there's a critical need. I think there is a real critical need for liquefaction mitigation under existing structures, like in your critical energy infrastructure hub, that can accelerate the pace of which is adopted. There's really nothing else you can do there, except cross your fingers and hope the earthquake doesn't come back."

How scared should Portlanders in small wooden homes be?

"This wasn't in the building code until 2006," Kavazanjian said, "and even now, it exempts single-family homes. A small earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2011, a magnitude 6.3, — well below the level of shaking you expect here — that damaged 15,000 modern single-family homes beyond repair."

The damage to structures and infrastructure was estimated at \$10 billion to \$15 billion.

"They could have done it in New Zealand in advance. It's the kind of thing where a drill rig comes up, and we put some wells in the ground. To remediate 15,000 homes would be a big challenge. It would take a decade or more."

Kavazanjian said there is data from Japan and from laboratory testing in the U.S., that suggests that the treatment will persist for decades. "But it needs to be monitored. If 10 or 15 years from now the gas started to dissipate, we would just feed some more nutrients."

Hurry up and wait

Khosravifar said the lack of urgency about preparing for an earthquake in Oregon doesn't frustrate him.

"But it's something that we have to do. The recent scientific discoveries indicate that a large magnitude earthquake is waiting to happen like a ticking bomb. Liquefaction mitigation techniques are expensive, and doing seismic upgrades to our structures is expensive," Khosravifar said. "As Oregonians, we have to decide how we want to spend our resources. Do we want to spend it on schools, fix the roads, or solve the housing problems? Or, do we want to spend it on liquefaction mitigation and reducing the risks of a catastrophe waiting to happen at the CEI hub? The price tag is huge. And hopefully, this new treatment, if proved effective, reduces the costs."

What about the building that Khosravifar works at Portland State University, a five-story building called the Fariborz Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science?

"That's a new building, built to code and sitting on pretty good soil," he said.

He feels safe.

## The Mercury

# How Does Community Policing Fit into a Changing Portland?

October 10, 2019

By Alex Zielinski

It's dusk on a sleepy Sunday in North Portland, and the afternoon rain has finally ceded to a blushing sunset. Outside a two-story apartment complex, the calm is interrupted by three sharp knocks on a wooden door and an authoritative yell: "Portland police!"

It's a jarring thing for anyone to hear—especially those living in this area, where a history of violent crime and over-policing has trampled residents' trust of police. But if the middle-aged woman who swings open her door is wary of the two uniformed officers on her porch, she hides it well.

"Oh, come inside! I appreciate you coming by," says Susan, who's dressed in pajamas and clutching a cell phone. (The Mercury is using a pseudonym for Susan to respect her privacy.)

Officer Joshua Silverman pulls out a notebook as he steps into her apartment. "I hear you've received a threat," he says, making space in the small foyer for his partner, Officer Joana Ortiz. "Is this the same guy as before?" Silverman asks, reading off a man's name from his notes.

"Yeah, he left me a message. He keeps giving me problems," says Susan, scrolling through her phone to find an audio recording. "I can't live like this."

In a voicemail message Susan plays for the officers, an angry man says he's going to kill her. Susan identifies him as a former boyfriend who, thanks to a restraining order, is legally barred from contacting her.

Silverman takes notes as he asks Susan questions for his report. He tucks his notebook in his front pocket and tells her that if she or anyone else sees the man, they should call 911 and tell the operator where he is.

"That's all you need to do. I'm so sorry this is happening to you," he says with a deep sigh. "It's awful."

Ortiz tells Susan to call if she has any other concerns. "We're always around," Ortiz says.

Susan hugs both officers before they leave, laughing with relief. "Thank you so much," she says. "I feel a little better now."

According to city leaders, this recent interaction is a snapshot of community policing at its best.

Ortiz and Silverman are half of the New Columbia Policing Team, a four-person task force assigned to respond to residents of New Columbia—an 82-acre community in Portland's

Portsmouth neighborhood, comprised of publicly subsidized apartments as well as market-rate homes. Of New Columbia's 1,847 residents, 47 percent are African American and 26 percent are Latinx, making white residents, at 23 percent, the minority.

The Portland Police Bureau (PPB) created the New Columbia Policing Team in 2012 in an effort to chip away at the years of distrust built between New Columbia residents and law enforcement. By following up with crime victims like Susan, resolving small problems for residents, or just sitting and listening to people's concerns, the four officers have incrementally started to shift the community's perspective on police.

In the process, the team has become a model for PPB administrators and city leaders when considering the future of Portland policing.

"This is the way we should be doing policing all the way across the city," said Mayor Ted Wheeler at an August 28 meeting, where City Council voted to extend the New Columbia Policing Team contract until 2022.

The program even won the praise of council's most vociferous PPB critic, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty.

"It feels really hard for me to say really great things about the police," Hardesty said at the August meeting. "But when you do good things, I want to applaud good things that you do."

In a city with a long history of police misconduct, New Columbia's community policing program exemplifies the kind of law enforcement the city wants to invest in.

But according to PPB, budget constraints—some of them tied to the public's resistance to funding the police bureau—have kept this kind of hands-on work from becoming more common.

At the same time, the city is reevaluating the role of police officers in Portland. Some see programs like New Columbia as merely another way for law enforcement to keep tabs on low-income communities of color, by allowing police to maintain positions of power in a community that's working to de-emphasize its reliance on cops.

Local groups like Care Not Cops, Don't Shoot PDX, and Portland Copwatch have remained critical of community policing, arguing that it's merely a friendly façade that enables profiling and discrimination.

Others, including members of City Council, have suggested sending professional mediators, social workers, or health providers to respond to the kind of low-level issues that New Columbia officers focus on.

As the city reconsiders the responsibilities of a Portland police officer, it's unclear what the future holds for projects like the New Columbia Policing Team.

"Community policing" emerged as a buzzword in the 1980s and '90s, after decades of heavy-handed policing of minority populations left some of the country's most crime-addled

neighborhoods deeply distrustful of law enforcement. The idea—encouraged through a well-financed Clinton Administration grant program—was for police officers to build relationships with the communities they patrolled, gaining local perspectives on how to prevent crime rather than react to it.

It was during this era that PPB Assistant Chief Chris Davis began his career in law enforcement.

“Before that point, our job was to go out and identify the problem for the community, impose our own solution for it, and then congratulate ourselves and leave,” says Davis, who joined PPB in 1998. “That left the sort of collateral damage that you’re still seeing today.”

Davis, who now oversees PPB’s day-to-day operations, says community policing is often used to describe “crime control without the collateral damage.”

“It’s engaging people who actually live in a neighborhood about what they see being a problem, and how they think we could best solve the problem,” he says. “It’s getting to the root causes of issues.”

This kind of law-enforcement mentality has taken many forms in Portland. At first, community policing mostly meant hiring more officers of color. More recently, it’s been used to describe a temporary program where officers patrolled Southeast Hawthorne on foot, building relationships with homeless people, business owners, and residents. This summer, the phrase was associated with a program in which PPB paired with Lloyd District organizations to hold frequent community events in Holladay Park in an effort to deter crime.

After a 2012 investigation by the Department of Justice found PPB officers had a “pattern and practice” of disproportionately using force against people with a perceived mental illness, the city was ordered to create a civilian oversight group that would propose ways to improve PPB’s community engagement. But after several false starts, the Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing (PCCEP) has yet to produce substantive ideas.

So far, the city’s most enduring community policing program is the one focused on New Columbia, Oregon’s largest public housing development.

Before New Columbia, there was Columbia Villa. Built in 1942 as white-only housing for World War II shipyard workers, Columbia Villa gained national attention for its unique suburban layout and charm. By the early ’80s, however, government neglect and poverty had turned the sprawling complex into a magnet for drug sales and violent crime. In 1988, Portland’s first gang-related killing took place on Columbia Villa’s streets, kicking off the first attempt at a community policing program, led by the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office (MSCO). Columbia Villa’s crime rate began to level off.

In 2001, Portland’s housing authority, Home Forward, was awarded a \$35 million federal grant to revitalize Columbia Villa by razing dilapidated apartments, building community centers, improving parks, and integrating low-income residents with those owning and renting market-rate homes and apartments. MSCO’s community policing program ended, and the redeveloped

housing project, which opened its doors in 2005, was given a new name: New Columbia.

The neighborhood facelift, meant to strengthen and empower the long-neglected population, instead destabilized the community, prompting a resurgence of gang violence. In 2011, after an 18-year-old was shot and killed in McCoy Park, which is located in the center of New Columbia, Home Forward met with PPB to reinstate a community policing unit.

From its start, the New Columbia Policing Team has been an evenly split private-public partnership, with the city and Home Forward both contributing around \$254,000 each year. Home Forward's portion comes from funds collected from New Columbia rental fees and the New Columbia homeowner association, while the city dips into the PPB budget to pay its share.

Instead of chasing 911 calls, New Columbia cops spend most of their time following up on problems raised by tenants, connecting them to social services, or helping resolve issues between neighbors or family members. Instead of writing up tickets for petty nuisances or looking for excuses to pat down teens cutting class, officers try to leave residents with a game plan, whether it's a list of resources for rent assistance, an appointment with a mediator, or a ride to a clinic to address a long-ignored health problem.

Every Wednesday, the officers meet with staff from Home Forward and New Columbia's management company, Income Property Management, to review the past week's police calls. The main purpose of these meetings is for officers to share information on residents who may need extra support, like victims of domestic violence, kids who might be skipping school, or tenants at risk of eviction.

Silverman compares his job to that of a switchboard operator. "So much of our work is just connecting people to the right resources," he says.

Ortiz describes a case involving an older woman with a seizure disorder who lived with her family in the apartment complex. New Columbia officers kept finding the woman sleeping outside, often with bruises all over her body. The officers weren't sure if the marks came from seizures or if her family had been abusing her, so they alerted a social worker at Home Forward.

In cases like these—cases that rely on knowing a resident and their family, recognizing a pattern of behavior, and knowing what next steps are most appropriate—New Columbia officers demonstrate a unique awareness that can't be replicated with the PPB's prevailing policing model.

"That kind of work takes weeks, if not months," Ortiz says. "It takes hours on the phone, connecting people. It's not easy."

Some of the officers' time is spent doing what Silverman calls "PR work," like handing out stickers to kids or joining a community dodgeball tournament. While he believes that kind of relationship-building is effective for New Columbia's younger residents, Silverman says it's far from the most important community work.

He pointed to one New Columbia resident, a woman who had been “dragged through the court system” after recently recanting a sexual abuse allegation.

“She’s traumatized. I’m going to check in with her soon to see how she’s doing, make sure she’s getting the support she needs,” Silverman says. “That kind of stuff is so much more meaningful for the community than hopping into a three-on-three boys’ basketball game and posing for a photo.”

New Columbia residents are cautiously optimistic about the uncharacteristically focused police team.

Sam Johnson, an African American man who’s lived in the same New Columbia apartment for 11 years, remembers when the development felt more like “a war zone” than a neighborhood.

“There’d be shootings once or twice a week,” Johnson says. “And the police, they would just throw up their hands.... They didn’t know what to do. No one living here felt safe at that time.”

Now, he says, shootings have slowed down, and he’s been impressed with the officers’ conduct, even in unpredictable, intense situations. He recalls an incident when officers showed up at his apartment complex because his neighbor was having a seizure. Based on how Johnson had seen police act in the past, he was worried the New Columbia officers were going to tase his neighbor. They didn’t.

“They were using a lot of composure and tact. They weren’t just going into the situation head first,” says Johnson. “They were really cool about it.”

Alescia Blakely, a Home Forward employee who oversees New Columbia’s resident services, says that if the community were having problems with the officers, she’d know about it.

“This is not a private community,” says Blakely with a laugh. “If there were more concerns, we’d hear something.”

Blakely’s office is usually the first stop for New Columbia tenants who need an issue addressed—whether that’s help with utility bills, complaints about a barking dog, or interpersonal conflicts. Sometimes residents who aren’t comfortable talking to law enforcement bring her crime-related problems, which she ends up sharing with police. But, Blakely says, those conversations are happening far less often.

“What’s changed over the past years is that people are going straight to the police and not coming to us first,” she says. “They’re realizing, ‘I don’t have to be fearful, I don’t have to be concerned about how an officer will treat me.’”

While PPB’s Davis says the New Columbia unit is an exemplary model of community police work, he adds that community policing was never meant to be the responsibility of a single department.

“Every employee in this organization is responsible for community engagement, from the chief of police to the officer on the street to the records clerk,” he says. “That’s our business.”

It’s the kind of business many younger officers are interested in. Ortiz says her childhood in South Los Angeles taught her to dislike the police. She was initially interested in a career counseling at-risk youth, informed by her own background in a crime-heavy neighborhood.

“I wanted to be that mentor for kids, and be like, ‘Hey, I was in your shoes, I completely understand what your frustrations are and why you’re doing what you’re doing,’” Ortiz says.

Only after going on a police ride-along in college did Ortiz realize she could do that work within a police department.

“I want to help people, and this job lets me do that,” she says.

Ortiz is one of the few PPB officers who is fluent in Spanish, a skill that’s especially helpful in New Columbia.

“Sometimes me walking into a household of Spanish speakers... they kind of light up and they’re relieved that I’m there,” says Ortiz. She’s spoken with Latinx residents who’ve been victims of a crime but never reported it to the police, out of fear they’d be interrogated about their immigration status. “They believe me when I say, ‘We’re here to help you guys, we’re not immigration,’” she says.

Officer Elise Temple, another cop assigned to the New Columbia detail, put it bluntly in the August City Council meeting: “It’s the only position I want in the bureau right now.”

Few officers can squeeze community policing into their work schedules. Before joining the New Columbia team, Silverman worked as a self-described “traffic warning machine” in PPB’s East Precinct, where he’d spend hours pulling over drivers at the intersection of Southeast 167th and Stark for minor violations. To Silverman, it’s a prime example of half-baked community policing.

“I would give out a bunch of warning tickets, but they were just excuses to get out of the car and talk to people,” he said. “I think the idea was that people would see the cops out and think, ‘I feel kind of safe here.’ Or, ‘Maybe I won’t do my crimes here.’ I don’t know how long-term effective that was.”

There’s little reward in standard PPB patrol work, says Silverman, because officers rarely get to see the conclusion of any specific investigation or explore the underlying issues beneath a conflict—something he believes benefits both officers and citizens.

Traditional police work, Silverman says, is “just putting the fire out for tonight. And moving on.”

Silverman says older officers jokingly call his generation of cops “social workers with a gun.”

It's not a label he's offended by.

"I think we should embrace that responsibility," he says.

Davis agrees, and says the bureau's seen an influx of sharp, self-motivated officers who want to be engaged in "meaningful work." But due to low staffing levels—thanks to both city budget cuts and PPB's consistent problems with recruiting and retaining officers—the bureau hasn't been able to offer that kind of work to new cops.

"What's frustrating today is... we're taking these people and putting them out and sending them from call to call to call," Davis says. "How long are they going to keep doing that kind of work? And what opportunity are we losing?"

During Davis' early years at PPB, Portland was a city of roughly 530,000 residents, with five precinct offices and around 1,000 sworn officers. Twenty years later, the city has an estimated 123,000 more residents, but only three precincts and 1,001 sworn officers.

Mayor Wheeler, who serves as the city's police commissioner, shares Davis' interest in expanding PPB to grow its community policing work.

"As staffing grows, so too will the opportunities to develop more new programs that enhance collaboration and partnerships between the bureau and community," Wheeler wrote in an email to the Mercury.

Yet Davis believes the city won't increase staff sizes without public support of the police bureau. Which, in Portland, is limited.

"The community policing effort has been a detriment to Portland," says Teresa Raiford, a police accountability activist and 2020 Portland mayoral candidate. "We don't need it."

Raiford grew up in Northeast Portland, where her interactions with racist officers and neglected crime victims of color formed her perception of PPB. In 2010, Raiford's nephew was shot and killed in Old Town; disappointed with the bureau's work to deter gun violence, she founded Don't Shoot PDX, a group that advocates for police accountability and gun violence reduction.

Through her work, Raiford says she's seen PPB's community policing operate as a tool to oppress low-income and non-white communities, rather than empower them.

"Officers don't use community policing to investigate crime. They use it to investigate and profile people," she says.

Raiford points to PPB's recently terminated "gang list," a database of people who officers suspected might be affiliated with convicted gang members. Many on the list had no conviction or arrest history, but their alleged association with gangs still made them frequent PPB targets. A 2016 investigation by the Oregonian found that 81 percent of people listed were part of a racial or ethnic minority. PPB dismantled the list shortly after the Oregonian published its

findings.

Raiford says she's seen how community policing has weakened tight-knit communities of color, making people less likely to ask their neighbors for help out of fear those neighbors might have a close relationship with the police.

"In places like New Columbia, you see officers coming up to kids and asking their names and about their families... then share that information with other officers," Raiford says. "That violates civil liberties. And these are poor communities that don't have access to legal help. There's a reason there aren't community policing teams in Hillsboro and Lake Oswego."

PPB says it doesn't collect this type of information unless it's related to a criminal investigation.

Instead of tasking officers with community engagement, Raiford says the city should prioritize sharing resources with low-income communities—like funds for community events—to allow for peer-led community building.

At the August City Council meeting, Portland Copwatch's Dan Handelman argued that appointing armed police officers to act as arbiters of community safety seemed contradictory.

"You have to think about the power dynamic there," he said. "I find it really disturbing that we're having officers work mediation [and] play dodgeball games with children while wearing guns on their hips."

"What happens if there's an officer-involved shooting?" Handelman continued. "They build this great relationship with the community and then something happens... and the trust just goes away. Then what?"

In the lead-up to the city's 2018-2019 budget vote, a new community activism group emerged: Care Not Cops. The organization's message was simple: Take budget dollars reserved for PPB and distribute them among non-police programs that could better support people who are the frequent subjects of 911 calls, like those in a mental health crisis or homeless individuals.

Kaitlyn Dey, a member of Care Not Cops, says this idea would replace community policing, which she calls a "PR stunt."

"We believe real community care comes from within our community and not an outside force," says Dey. "Especially not an outside force that has a history of surveilling communities."

The final city budget didn't include the sweeping cuts proposed by the group, but it did contain funding for a pilot program to explore alternatives to the city's current police response. Mayor Wheeler and Commissioner Hardesty are expected to present a proposal for that pilot program to City Council in November.

One of the city's tentative ideas is having social workers, mediators, or mental health experts respond to low-level 911 calls, like reports about a noisy neighbor, a person sleeping on a sidewalk, or a suspicious-looking stranger.

These are the kinds of calls the New Columbia Policing Team spend most of their time on.

While the New Columbia program's mission isn't meant to replace community policing—a practice both Hardesty and Wheeler endorse—it could redirect officers to focus more on high-level crime than relationship-building. The city's Office of Community and Civic Life (OCCL) has also begun questioning if neighborhoods have become too reliant on cops to solve non-criminal community problems.

“In Civic Life, we're reorienting crime prevention towards... equipping community members to deal with their own challenges instead of involving law enforcement,” said Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who oversees OCCL, at a recent City Council meeting.

Since the creation of New Columbia's small police team in 2012, the number of yearly 911 calls for service in the area has dropped from 1,530 down to 953 in 2018. The City of Portland, meanwhile, has watched its total 911 calls steadily rise over the same period of time.

There's still crime in New Columbia. The four-person team regularly responds to reports of car theft, break-ins, domestic abuse, and assaults. The officers don't know every resident by name, and many of those who live in New Columbia intend to keep it that way. Silverman says there are always going to be people who—understandably—have no interest in engaging with them.

“If you've had negative interactions with the police, it's going to take dozens of positive interactions to change that,” Silverman says. “There's no amount of community policing that's going to fix the fact that they saw their uncle being beaten by a police officer.”

After visiting Susan during their recent shift, Ortiz and Silverman retreat to their patrol car, where they look up their next assignment on the car's computer screen. A man watches them from his apartment door, scowling as they pull out of the parking lot.

“At its most basic, I just want people we interact with to say, ‘I called the police and my life got better, not worse,’” says Silverman. “If I can just do that, already I'm defying the expectations people have of us.”