

KGO-TV San Francisco

Oakland Mayor Fights Crime on the Streets

Walks Along International Boulevard

Jun.8 - KGO - The mayor of Oakland is putting his shoe leather where his mouth is; walking and talking along one of his city's toughest streets, International Boulevard, to try to get a better handle on fighting crime there.

Oakland mayor Ron Dellums got an earful about prostitution and violent crime on International Boulevard as he and an entourage, walked a dozen blocks hearing from neighborhood activists and Latino merchants.

Rosa Espinoza, store owner: "We need more police enforcement around here."

Rosa Espinoza was knocked down and battered in front of her floral shop a few months ago, by a robber who wanted her purse.

Rosa Espinoza: "It was very scary because he could just stab or shoot me there, while I was on the floor."

Rosa shared that experience with the mayor, who says he wants to see first-hand what people here are dealing with, and come up with solutions.

Ron Dellums, Oakland Mayor: There's no band-aid solution going to solve this problem, no silver bullet."

The mayor says it's not just more police, but better policing, not just more money, but money spent on steering people in better directions.

Ron Dellums: "The day you get up and say you can't solve the problem, is the day you don't solve the problem, so we've got to try."

Along the boulevard, there was some skepticism about the mayor's visit, as observers pointed out police had cleared the hookers and homeless out, before he arrived.

Juana Barrajas, Oakland Resident: Drive by on your own without your, real picture is, they have prostitutes all over this street."

Also part of the mix, the guardian angels, recruiting volunteers for an Oakland chapter, they've already patrolled the Lake Meritt area, and came to Fruitvale to get the mayor's endorsement.

Ron Dellums: "We've got to be able to work very strongly, we need total collaboration."

Erick Wong, CA Regional Director, Guardian Angels: "I think people just need to start taking ownership of their community and the problems.

Ending his tour with a two hour community meeting, the mayor pledged after walking the walk, he's willing to do much more than talk about crime.