Get Involved in El Cerrito’s Strategic Planning Efforts!

In order to create a shared vision of our future, the City is currently developing a long-term Strategic Plan. The plan will guide the Council in fulfilling the City’s mission and also serve as the foundation for developing the General Plan Update, implementing the City’s Climate Action Plan, and guiding economic development. Additionally, the Plan would shape the City’s priorities and desires with respect to ongoing improvement of public facilities and infrastructure.

The City wants to engage residents and stakeholders in the strategic planning process. Interested community members can complete a survey online or call and request a copy by mail. Community members are also invited to attend an open house at City Hall on Wednesday, August 29, to learn more about your local government and share your ideas about the City’s future. At this open house event, you can learn about the services and programs provided by each City department, hear about challenges and opportunities, and provide input to the City that will guide our vision for the future.

See Upcoming Events on page 2 for Open House date and times.

After receiving feedback from residents and stakeholders, the City Council will hold a workshop to develop vision, goals and strategies. A draft strategic plan will be shared with the community prior to City Council considering adoption of the plan.

With input from the community, the strategic planning process will:

- Create consensus about expectations
- Spark new thinking about what “success” looks like
- Help match community priorities with resources
- Identify strategies to pursue to achieve our goals
- Define essential outcomes and performance expectations

There are a number of ways in which you can participate, and we look forward to hearing from you! For more information, visit www.ElCerritoStrategicPlan.org or contact Karen Pinkos, Assistant City Manager at kpinkos@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or 510-215-4302.

2012 National Citizen Survey

The City of El Cerrito recently participated in the 2012 National Citizen Survey. Residents answered questions about their community, such as the level of local services like police, fire, street cleaning, and recreational services. On average, residents gave generally favorable ratings to most City services. In particular:

- Most residents experienced a good quality of life in the City of El Cerrito and believed the City was a good place to live.
- The overall quality of life in the City of El Cerrito was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 70% of respondents.

You can read the full report of survey results online at www.el-cerrito.org/ncs or review a paper copy at City Hall during business hours. For more information, please contact Suzanne Jarla, Community Outreach Specialist, at 215-4318.
**UPCOMING EVENTS!**

**Tuesday, August 7**  
**NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**
El Cerrito’s Night Out provides a unique opportunity for residents to connect with the Police Department and each other to learn about safety and crime prevention and build stronger communities. On Night Out, Police Officers and other City officials drop in on about 30 neighborhood block parties happening El Cerrito to talk with residents about safety and other topics. For more information, call Sergeant Scott Chatt at 215-4418.
When:  Night Out starts at dusk  
Where:  Your neighborhood

**Monday, August 20**  
**GORDON FRANKIE TALK ON CALIFORNIA NATIVE BEES**
Join the Environmental Quality Committee and hear an illuminating talk by UC Berkeley entomologist and native bee expert Dr. Gordon Frankie about the pollinating efficiency of these native species.
When:  7 to 9 p.m.  
Where:  Council Chambers, El Cerrito City Hall  
10890 San Pablo Avenue

**Wednesday, August 29**  
**OPEN HOUSE AT CITY HALL**
Get to know your City, and share your vision for El Cerrito’s future. See article on page 1 for more details about the strategic planning process. Light refreshments will be served. RSVP to comments@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or 215-4302.
When:  4 to 6 p.m.  
Event is repeated at 6 to 8 p.m.  
Where:  El Cerrito City Hall  
10890 San Pablo Avenue

**Monday, September 3**  
**LABOR DAY HOLIDAY**
City Hall and Recycling Center closed.

**Tuesday, September 4**  
**EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING**
Utilizing the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) curriculum, the Fire Department will lead El Cerrito & Kensington residents through a 20-hour program designed to teach residents how to be self-sufficient in the event of a disaster. The program is free but pre-registration is required. Classes in this session will be held Tuesday evenings through October. Contact the Fire Department at fire@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or call 215-4450 to register.
When:  Tuesday nights, 6:30 to 9 p.m.  
Where:  Arlington Community Church  
52 Arlington Avenue  
Kensington

**Wednesday, September 5th**  
**CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY**
Join the El Cerrito Police Department’s first Citizens Police Academy, a new nine-week program designed to provide El Cerrito residents with a firsthand experience of the Police Department. Residents must be 18 years or older and pass a background check before being accepted into the Citizens Police Academy. Space is limited. To apply, contact Lieutenant Steve Bonini at 215-4424.
When:  Wednesday nights  
6:30 to 9 p.m.  
Where:  Police Department  
10900 San Pablo Avenue

**Friday, September 7**  
**CINEMA IN THE PARK**
Free! Bring a picnic dinner and blanket or low-back chairs and come watch Ghostbusters (1989, PG) outdoors. The snack shack will be open. For more details, contact the Recreation Department at 559-7000.
When:  Movie starts at dusk  
Where:  Cerrito Vista Park  
950 Pomona Avenue

**Saturday, September 8**  
**TRI-CITY SAFETY DAY**
See a display of emergency vehicles and meet police officers and firefighters from El Cerrito, Kensington, Albany, Richmond, and beyond. There will be demonstrations and activities for the whole family. Call the Fire Department at 215-4450 during business hours for more information.
When:  11 a.m. to 3 p.m  
Where:  El Cerrito Plaza (near Lucky)  
at San Pablo and Fairmount Avenues

**September 8, 9 & 15**  
**EL CERRITO LIBRARY BOOK SALE**
The Friends of the El Cerrito Public Library features thousands of excellent used books, tapes, CD’s and videos at low prices. Sale hours and details at friendselcerritolibrary.wordpress.com
When:  Check website for sale hours.  
Where:  El Cerrito Public Library  
6510 Stockton Avenue

**Monday, Sept 10**  
**DYNAMO GOLF SCRAMBLE**
The 16th Annual Dynamo Golf Scramble is a Recreation Dept. fundraiser for the David Hunter Memorial Youth Scholarship Fund and the Open House Senior Center Trust Fund. All levels of play are welcome.
When:  Registration opens at 8 a.m.; play begins at 9:15 a.m.  
Where:  Mira Vista Country Club

**Saturday, September 22**  
**ALBERRITO STREET PLAY**
Joint Street Play event with the City of Albany. Details at www.el-cerrito.org/streetplay.  
When: Noon to 3 p.m.  
Where:  Portion of Key Route Boulevard and Ashbury Avenue
October ARTS MONTH
October is Arts Month! For more details and ways to get involved, see www.elcerrito.org/acc. For information on the annual El Cerrito Free Folk Festival, sponsored by San Francisco Folk Club and the City’s Arts and Culture Commission, please visit www.elcerritofolkfest.org.

Saturday, October 13
FALL CITYWIDE GARAGE SALE:
Shop dozens of garage sales all over El Cerrito. For more details, go to www.el-cerrito.org, call 215-4350, or email green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.
When: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Where: Garages throughout the City

October 20 & 21
ELECTRONIC WASTE DROP-OFF
Drive-through, drop-off event will collect all electronics and other e-waste. To find out exactly what items will be accepted at the event, call Universal Waste Management, 888-832-9839, or go to www.unwaste.com.
When: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., both days
Where: Recycling and Environmental Resource Center
7501 Schmidt Lane

Important Election Information for El Cerrito Voters

The next election is Tuesday, November 6, 2012. El Cerrito voters will have an opportunity to vote for U.S. President, other federal and state officials, several measures, and three City Council members. On Election Day, Polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

To cast your vote prior to Election Day, you must obtain a vote-by-mail ballot from the Registrar of Voters in Martinez. Please contact the Contra Costa Registrar of Voters at (925) 335-7800 or visit www.cocovote.us for complete details including the application for a vote-by-mail ballot.

The Registrar of Voters must receive your ballot by 8 p.m. on Election Day. Remember to allow enough time to get your ballot to the Registrar by the deadline. Drop off your completed vote-by-mail ballot at the Elections Office in Martinez or at any polling place in Contra Costa County on Election Day until 8:00 p.m.

For more information about voting, contact the County Elections Division by phone at (925) 335-7800, by email at Voter.Services@vote.cccounty or online at www.cocovote.us.

IMPORTANT ELECTION DEADLINES
OCTOBER 22: Last day to register to vote in the November 6 election.
OCTOBER 30: Last day for the County to receive your vote-by-mail ballot request.
NOVEMBER 6: Election Day! Polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

If you have questions about city candidates, nomination filing deadlines, measures and election statistics, call the City Clerk at (510) 215-4305 or email cmorse@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Please remember to vote!

New Council Meeting Day and Time

The El Cerrito City Council has moved its regular meeting times to the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 7 p.m. City Council meetings are held in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Regular meetings are broadcast live on FM radio, KECG 88.1 and 97.7, and on cable television, KCRT Channel 28. Broadcasts are repeated the following Thursdays and Mondays (except on holidays). Live and archived webcasts of City Council meetings can be found online at www.el-cerrito.org/councilmeetings. For more information about City Council meetings, contact City Clerk Cheryl Morse at cmorse@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or 215-4305.
City Prepares Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2012–13

The annual operating budget is the City’s plan for the upcoming fiscal year (FY). This planning tool matches the services desired by the community with the estimated resources available for those services. In developing the current FY12–13 operating budget, three basic goals were to maintain a high level of service (in both quality and quantity), avoid layoffs, and avoid using general fund reserves to balance the budget.

During the past decade, the high level of customer service provided by the City to residents and the business community was achieved through creativity, fiscal prudence, and living within our means. The task was made easier by the trust of our citizens who provided guidance on priorities and financial support to make improvements a reality. Revenues combined with employee concessions and ongoing vacancies enabled the City to avoid long-term budget deficits and layoffs; maintain hours at the Swim Center, Senior Center and library; maintain after-school programs for children and teens; retain staff levels for police and firefighters; continue park maintenance at the current level; and host the City’s annual July 4th celebration.

However, the slow economic recovery, as well as two key unanticipated changes in City revenues, have created an even greater challenge. City revenues were reduced by approximately $1M this year due to the State’s dissolution of all redevelopment agencies statewide and the County Assessor’s Office’s overall reduction in assessed property values in El Cerrito.

Despite the difficult economy and continued State efforts to limit local government funding and control, El Cerrito continues to maintain and even improve services to residents and businesses at a time when many cities have been forced to reduce or eliminate activities. Accomplishments of note for the prior fiscal year include:

- Overall reduction in serious crime throughout the City
- Completion of major street improvements, resulting in a street quality recently ranked second in the Bay Area (The City was in the bottom ten less than five years ago!)
- Opening of a new state-of-the-art Recycling and Environmental Resource Center
- Continued to improve many city services, as measured by the National Citizen Survey results
- Continued to search for and use grant funds to support activities, improve infrastructure, and increase services

TAX REVENUE

The largest components of tax revenues are property and sales taxes.

You might be surprised to learn what percentage of your tax dollar goes to the City. The City of El Cerrito receives only 22 cents of each property tax dollar collected. This means that the owner of a home with an assessed value of $500,000 pays the County $5,000, or one percent, but the City’s General fund receives only $1,100.

When you purchase items in El Cerrito, a portion of the sales tax you pay on those items comes back to the City to pay for streets; police and fire services; to maintain parks and other public facilities; and to provide other services and programs. The current sales tax rate in El Cerrito is 9.25%. For each dollar of taxable items sold, about 9.25 cents are collected, of which the City receives less than 3 cents.

Mission

The City’s mission statement and goals provide the overall policy framework for developing the budget: The City of El Cerrito serves, leads and supports our diverse community by providing exemplary and innovative services, public places and infrastructure, ensuring public safety and creating an economically and environmentally sustainable future.

GOALS:

- Financial Management (Fiscal Responsibility)
- Responsive Government
- Community Engagement and Partnership
- Public Safety
- Economic Development
- Environmental Stewardship
- Support of Multi-Modal Transportation

CITYWIDE REVENUES

Fiscal Year 2012–13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental revenues</td>
<td>$10.4M</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
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<td>Charges for services</td>
<td>$7.1M</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$1.2M</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>$21.4M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Licenses and permits</td>
<td>$670,000</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$1.2M</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE GENERAL FUND

The General Fund is the City’s primary operating fund. It provides funding for all City services including police, fire, recreation, economic development, environmental services, public works, and administrative services. El Cerrito’s General Fund budget is approximately $29 million.

The General Fund includes all City revenues and expenditures that are not legally restricted for specific uses. General Fund Revenues include certain taxes, revenue from charges for services, licenses, permits, fines, and other revenue such as interest from invested funds, rental revenue, and donations.

The City’s commitment to public safety is shown by the fact that 63.8% of the General Fund goes toward public safety services. This is the highest priority for City residents.

Almost 80% of the General Fund goes towards personnel. To help maintain current service levels and avoid layoffs, many employee groups agreed to waive a cost-of-living-adjustment (or “COLA”) again this year, and management employees agreed to contribute more towards retirement benefits. The City is also considering establishing a second tier retirement system to reduce future, long-term pension costs.

At the time of this writing, labor negotiations are still underway with SEIU Local 1021, the union that represents many city employees.

OTHER FUNDS

In addition to the General Fund, the City’s budget also includes special revenues, debt service, capital project, enterprise, and internal service funds. The City’s projected total expenditures (including general fund and restricted funds) are $42M for FY 12–13.

The budget book also discusses the activities of the Successor Agency to the Former Redevelopment Agency as it is a fiduciary fund of the City.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The City’s budget remains tight and few funds are available for continued re-investment in City infrastructure (with the exception of streets). Parks, play fields, and aging facilities such as the library, public safety buildings, and the senior center all need improvements, but funding has not yet been identified.

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a strategy for scheduling anticipated capital projects and capital financing anticipated to occur over the next 10 years. The City’s Ten-Year CIP is reviewed and updated annually. It provides a scope, a cost estimate and a timeline. Many

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The charts illustrate the distribution of expenditures and revenues across different departments and types. The General Fund expenditures by department and type are visualized, showing the allocation of funds in Fiscal Year 2012–13. Similarly, the General Fund revenues for the same fiscal year are also charted, highlighting the sources of revenue such as taxes, transfers, and charges for services.
projects are included in the City’s CIP for which funding has not yet been secured (or, at times, even identified).

The CIP Budget (CIPB) is a section within the City’s operating budget that includes appropriations of FY 12–13 expenditures. The CIPB includes expenditures related to the Street Improvement Capital Fund projects (Fund 211, Measure A 2008), which constitute the Annual Program of Maintenance and Improvement, pursuant to the Measure A Street Improvement Program approved by voters in 2008.

Current year Capital Improvement Program appropriations total $5.4 million. As in earlier years, the General Fund is making no contribution to the CIPB in FY 2012–13.

The CIP currently has 45 identified projects, including 22 already in planning, design, or construction. The largest projects (over $500,000) in the coming fiscal year include the Ohlone Nature Area and Rain Gardens, and four streets projects focusing on traffic safety and bicycle/pedestrian enhancements. All of these projects are funded through grants. There will be one additional, an annual street paving project funded by the Measure A Street Improvement Fund. A list of CIP projects is online at www.el-cerrito.org/cip.

A Short List of El Cerrito’s Recent Accomplishments

BECAUSE THE BUDGET is a planning tool that balances the resources and needs of the City, it is worthwhile to note some of the City’s recent accomplishments (not in priority order):

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- Completed construction and reopening of the new Recycling and Environmental Resource Center
- Drafted a Climate Action Plan that will help the City to meet Greenhouse Gas Emission reduction goals
- Increased community involvement and education in environmental issues
- Supported eight Green Team events and 30 Earth Day work parties
- Awarded a CalFire Urban and Community Forestry grant to conduct a citywide tree inventory
- Awarded a Proposition 84/Urban Greening grant to develop a Citywide Urban Greening Plan
- Retro-fitted lights along the Ohlone Greenway with LEDs to save energy consumption
- Adopted new Animal Ordinance allowing expanded types of domestic animals to be kept by residents
- Led Small Cities Climate Action Partnership and Joint Solar Procurement process
- Implemented energy efficiency projects at City facilities and instituted a municipal energy and water monitoring system
- Provided rebates (through EPA funding) for residential energy efficiency assessments for 50 homes as part of the Energy Upgrade California program

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Completed the Transit-Oriented Development Feasibility and Parking Study, including the Del Norte Transit Oriented Development Strategy Technical Assistance Award from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, designed to further efforts to complete the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan
- Produced the Third Annual Entrepreneur Training Series for El Cerrito small businesses
- Selected Eden Housing, Inc. as developer for a mixed-use affordable housing project on San Pablo Avenue
- Worked with Eden on development of the San Pablo Avenue site

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

- Completed Creekside Lighting Project
- Completed Fairmount & Ashbury Avenues Intersection Safety Improvements Project
- Completed design work for numerous road safety improvement projects

Thousands of people attended the 2012 City of El Cerrito worldOne July 4th festival, one of many annual events popular with El Cerrito residents.
Began design of the Ohlone Natural Area and Rain Gardens Project

Awarded Transportation Development Act, Article 3 Funds to develop an update to the Circulation Plan for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

Replaced lockers at the Swim Center locker rooms

SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY

Received a Department of Homeland Security Assistance to Firefighters Grant in the amount of $2.6 million for the purchase of portable radios for all participating agencies in Contra Costa County

Redesigned City website to offer more online tools for the public

Held three neighborhood meetings as part of the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program

Launched the Neighborhood Pledge Program

Implemented a new Recreation software program, “Rec Trac,” including some online registration

Approved San Pablo Avenue Public Art project to be installed later in 2012

Started offering passport services at City Hall

Established portal for city legislative history archive research at City Hall

Received certification of the updated Housing Element by the State Department of Housing and Community Development

Continued to actively participate in One Bay Area: Sustainable Community Strategy for the San Francisco Bay Area; worked with ABAG/MTC to develop appropriate 20 year housing production projections based on City size and available land

Completed the local hazard mitigation plan (Fire Dept)

Fire Department responded to about 2,800 calls for service in calendar year 2011.

Police Department responded to almost 11,000 calls for service in calendar year 2011.

Reduced “Part One” crimes in the City (1,106 in 2011).

Implemented a new Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) program for residents

After the death of K-9 King, purchased and trained a new Police K-9, Kato

Fire Department served 9,500 people with public education messages and services.

Held special events including the July 4th Festival, Annual Egg Hunt, Golf Tournament, Halloween Haunted House and Carnival, and Cinema in The Park, Street Play, National Night Out, Tri-City Safety Day, D.I.Y. Arts Fair, and other community events

Received Parent’s Press “Best Of” Award in Contra Costa County for El Cerrito’s Fourth of July Festival

Expanded after school enrichment programs and band programs at all elementary schools

Provided childcare to almost 500 children and served over 4,000 children/teens at various summer camp programs.

Coordinated 637 tennis court rentals, over 300 facility rentals and 250 picnic rentals.

Sold over 30,000 Swim Center passes

Served over 11,000 nutritious lunches to Seniors at the Senior Center, and home-delivered 9,538 meals to seniors.

Expanded Easy Ride Paratransit Service to 5 days per week

We hope this Budget in Brief and list of accomplishments helps you to better understand how the City puts your valuable resources to work to meet the needs of residents and businesses. You can review the Budget Book at City Hall during normal business hours or read it online at www.el-cerrito.org/budget. If you have questions, you can also contact Mary Dodge, Administrative Services Director at 215-4312 or mdodge@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Melanie Mintz, Environmental Services Manager, and architect Chris Noll speak to a group at the opening of the new Recycling and Environmental Services Center in April, 2012.
The City of El Cerrito serves, leads and supports our diverse community by providing exemplary and innovative services, public places and infrastructure, ensuring public safety and creating an economically and environmentally sustainable future.

EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL
Mayor William C. Jones, III
Mayor Pro Tem Greg Lyman
Councilmember Janet Abelson
Councilmember Rebecca Benassini
Councilmember Ann Cheng

CITY WEBSITE  www.el-cerrito.org
CITY HALL  (All area codes 510)
10890 San Pablo Ave.

City Management
City Clerk  215-4305
City Council  215-4305
City Manager  215-4300

Administrative Services
Employee Services  215-4315
Finance  215-4310

Economic Development
Economic Development  215-4362
Housing  215-4358
Redevelopment  215-4380

Environmental & Development Services
Building  215-4360
Code Enforcement  215-4374
Planning  215-4330
Environmental Services  215-4350

Recycling Center
7501 Schmidt Lane  215-4350

Public Works
Corporation Yard  215-4369
Engineering  215-4382
Maintenance  215-4369
After-Hours Emergency  237-3233

Community Center
7007 Moeser Lane
Recreation Department  559-7000
Park/Facility Rentals  559-7000
Swim Center  559-7011

The Open House Senior Center
6500 Stockton Ave.
Senior Services  559-7677

Public Safety Building,
10900 San Pablo Ave.
Emergency  911
Police/Fire/Medical Dispatch  237-3233
Fire Administration  215-4450
Police Administration  215-4400

City Hall Holidays (office closed):
Labor Day—September 5

City Council regular meetings:
August 21
September 18
October 2 and 16

Regular Council meetings are now held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Meetings are held at City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Ave. Regular Council meetings are broadcast live on Comcast Cable channel 28 and KECG, 88.1 FM radio. To watch the meeting online, go to www.el-cerrito.org and click on the “Streaming Media” link. Schedules are subject to change; please check the website for updates. The City Council meeting agenda packet is available at least three days prior to each meeting at: http://www.el-cerrito.org/archive.

July 4th Sponsors

The City of El Cerrito & worldOne/KECG FM 88.1 and 97.7 would like to thank everyone who attended the 4th of July Festival this year and all of the performers, vendors, volunteers and Cerrito Vista Park neighbors, including the Contra Costa Civic Theatre.

This annual tradition would not be possible without the generous support of businesses and individuals, especially:

GOLD SPARKLER
★ Honda of El Cerrito

FIREWORKS AND SILVER SPARKLERS
★ Natural Grocery Company
★ Contra Costa College
★ WCCUSD
★ Tehiyah Day School
★ Safeway
★ Sierra Nevada Brewing Company
★ Recyclemore
★ East Bay Sanitary Company
★ Mechanics Bank
★ Clover Organic Farms

BLUE LEVEL
★ Pastime Hardware
★ Prospect Sierra School

WHITE LEVEL
★ Olivero Plumbing
★ Sunset View Cemetery

RED LEVEL
★ Gary C. Hale, D.D.S.
★ Plaza Auto Service
★ Michael Woldemar & Associates
★ Hillyard

To see photos from the festival, go online to www.el-cerrito.org/july4festival.