The 67-year-old El Cerrito Library does not currently meet earthquake safety standards and is too small to meet the needs of the community.

**Library Funding Measure on November Ballot**

**THE EL CERRITO** City Council recently approved placing a library funding measure on the November ballot to provide a safe, modern El Cerrito Library.

Built in 1948, the current El Cerrito Library is 67 years old and does not meet earthquake safety standards now in effect or the educational and technological needs of today’s El Cerrito residents. Recent community feedback indicated strong support for addressing conditions at the current library so it meets the needs of the community, now and in the future.

If adopted by voters, the measure will provide locally-controlled funds to build a fully-functioning twenty-first century library with a computer learning center; more space for children’s programs; group study and meeting areas; and more public access computers.

The measure includes tough fiscal accountability provisions such as mandatory audits, annual review by the Financial Advisory Board, and reports for public review to ensure that the funds are spent as promised.

The Measure for a Safe, Modern El Cerrito Library will be on the Tuesday, November 8 general election ballot. For more information about the measure, visit [www.el-cerrito.org/libraryneeds](http://www.el-cerrito.org/libraryneeds). For information about the election, visit [www.el-cerrito.org](http://www.el-cerrito.org) or see the story on page 4.
UPCOMING EVENTS!

NEW SCHOOL YEAR UNDERWAY
A new school year is underway! Download the academic year calendar from the West Contra Costa Unified School District website at [www.wccusd.net](http://www.wccusd.net). Do you have a child in elementary school? The City’s Recreation Department offers state-licensed childcare at Harding, Fairmont, and Madera Elementary Schools. For more information about after school programs, call 559-7000 or email [recreation@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:recreation@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us).

Saturdays: September 10, October 22, and December 3

CPR/FIRST AID CLASS
Do you want to get certified in CPR and Basic First Aid or do you need to renew your certification? The El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Department offers these classes to the general public. Advance registration required. To register, e-mail [fire@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:fire@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us) or call 215-4450. Classes also offered on October 22 and December 3.

When: 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
Where: TBD

Date to Be Announced

COMMUNITY MEETING ON MARIJUANA BUSINESSES
Hear information and give your input on possible changes to the City’s regulations on marijuana-related businesses. For more information on this topic, see page 6. To sign-up for meeting notifications via email, go to [www.el-cerrito.org/dispensaries](http://www.el-cerrito.org/dispensaries).

Friday, September 16

NATIONAL DRIVE ELECTRIC WEEK
Test drive and learn all about electric vehicles at this free event. Sponsored by the El Cerrito Environmental Quality Committee and the cities of Richmond and Albany. Lunch will be available for purchase. For more info, call 215-4350 or go to [driveelectricweek.org/event](http://driveelectricweek.org/event).

When: 11 a.m.–3 p.m.
Where: Richmond City Hall
440 Civic Center Plaza
Richmond

Saturday, September 17

TRI-CITY SAFETY DAY
Meet firefighters and police officers, watch demonstrations, and join in the hands-on activities at this annual event. Call the Fire Department at 215-4450 during business hours for details.

When: 11 a.m.–3 p.m.
Where: El Cerrito Plaza
(in front of Lucky supermarket)
San Pablo at Fairmount

Saturday, September 17

COASTAL CLEANUP DAY
Help El Cerrito Green Teams and Friends of Five Creeks to remove trash and invasive plants along Cerrito Creek. Tools, gloves, bags, snacks, and water supplied. All ages welcome.

For more information, call 215-4361, contact [green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us), or visit [www.coastal.ca.gov](http://www.coastal.ca.gov).

When: 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Where: Creekside Park
south end of Santa Clara Ave.
(3499 Santa Clara on Internet maps)

Saturday and Sunday September 24 and 25

FALL BOOK SALE FUNDRAISER
Friends of the El Cerrito Library presents its annual fall book sale, offering thousands of well-sorted books, CDs, and DVDs. The sale is a major source of funding for book purchases and library programs for children and adults by the Friends. For details, check their website at [friendselcerritolibrary.wordpress.com](http://friendselcerritolibrary.wordpress.com/).

When: Saturday, September 24
10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Sunday, September 25
11 a.m.–3 p.m.
Remaining items one-half off!

Where: El Cerrito Library
6510 Stockton Ave.

Tuesday, September 27

THE DROUGHT RESILIENT GARDEN
This free residential water conservation workshop will provide information on residential water conservation and re-use technologies, strategies, and rebates.

Representatives from EBMUD and the non-profit group Greywater Action will be on hand to discuss: common irrigation mistakes; establishing a drought tolerant garden; water-saving devices and rebates; and how to set up a laundry-to-landscape greywater system. Sponsored by the Environmental Quality Committee.

When: 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m.
Where: City Hall
10890 San Pablo Ave.

First Saturdays: October 1 and November 5

BAXTER CREEK WORK PARTIES
The City hosts monthly work days at Baxter Creek Gateway Park. Lend a hand to help remove weeds and invasive plants or pick up litter. Help keep Baxter Creek habitat clean and enjoyable for everyone. Tools, gloves and a light snack provided.

For more details, call 559-7685 or visit [www.el-cerrito.org/BaxterCreek](http://www.el-cerrito.org/BaxterCreek).

Saturday, October 1

BOOK SALE GRAB BAG DAY
Fill a bag with any items remaining after the previous weekend’s sale—including books, CDs, and DVDs. Pay only $4 for the entire bag!

When: Saturday, October 1
10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Where: El Cerrito Library
6510 Stockton Ave.
October 1 through October 7
COMPOST GIVE-AWAY
El Cerrito residents and businesses can pick up free compost made from local yard waste and food scraps at the Recycling Center. Bring proof of residency and your own containers. Limit of 5 cubic feet per household, while supply lasts.

When:  Monday–Friday
8 a.m.–5:45 p.m.
Saturday–Sunday
9 a.m.–4:45 p.m.
Where:  Recycling Center
7501 Schmidt Lane

Wednesday, October 5
SENIORS RESOURCE FAIR
Seniors can get the information they need for life after retirement at the second annual Seniors Resource Fair. More details on page 4. The first 100 people to RSVP will receive a free lunch. To reserve your free lunch, call the Senior Center at 559-7677 by Friday, September 23.

When:  9 a.m.–1 p.m.
Where:  El Cerrito Community Center
7007 Moeser Lane

Saturday, October 8
FREE FOLK FESTIVAL
Listen, learn, dance, and play music at this annual festival. The lineup features performances and workshops from world renowned musicians and local favorites, an “open mic,” and jam sessions. The City’s Arts and Culture Commission is proud to co-sponsor this annual event with the San Francisco Folk Music Club. Details at www.elcerritolfest.org. Bring your instruments, your dancing shoes, or just your music-loving self!

When:  Noon–9:30 p.m.
Where:  El Cerrito High School
540 Ashbury Ave.

Friday, October 7 to Sunday, October 9
ECAA ART SHOW AND SALE
The El Cerrito Art Association’s annual Show and Sale returns to the El Cerrito Community Center. For more details, visit www.elcerritoart.org.

When:  Friday, 7–9 p.m. (Artist’s Reception)
Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Where:  El Cerrito Community Center
7007 Moeser Lane

Thursday, October 6 through Sunday, October 9
RESTAURANT WEEK
See the story on page 7 and make plans now to dine out in support of local business! More details are online at www.el-cerrito.org/restaurantweek.

Saturday, October 22
CITYWIDE GARAGE SALE
Keep waste out of landfill, shop for great deals, and get to know your El Cerrito community. For details and to register, call the Recycling Center at 215-4350 or visit www.el-cerrito.org/garagesale. Registration is due by September 22. Listings will be available about a week prior to the sale. Look for the self-serve literature boxes at the Recycling Center or Community Center, or go online to www.el-cerrito.org/garagesale.

When:  9 a.m.–3 p.m.
Where:  Citywide

Monday, October 24
DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE
In order to vote in the general election on November 8, registration must be postmarked or submitted electronically no later than October 24. El Cerrito residents can register online at www.cocovote.us. More information about the election is on page 4.

Saturday, October 29
HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL & HAUNTED HOUSE
Get spooked by goblins, witches, and vampires! Enjoy games and a bounce house! “Lights on” haunted experience for very young children from 1–2 p.m.; “scary version” haunted house from 2–4 p.m. Admission is $5 per person, with additional charges for snacks, cookie decorating, and face painting. Babies under 2 years old admitted free. Costumes encouraged but not required. For more details, visit www.el-cerrito.org/recreation or call the Recreation Department at 559-7000.

When:  1–4 p.m.
Where:  El Cerrito Community Center
7007 Moeser Lane

OCTOBER IS ARTS MONTH!
The City’s Arts and Culture Commission is planning some exciting ways to celebrate National Arts Month. For details, go to www.el-cerrito.org/artsday for a list of local events, performances, and exhibits, or call 215-4318. If you are a local artist or business and want to get involved, contact staff liaison Suzanne Iarla at siarla@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or call 215-4318.

Saturday, October 1
Arts Month Kick-Off
Celebrate the first day of Arts Month with a free event featuring music, dance, and the opportunity to connect with local arts organizations! Sponsored by the El Cerrito Arts and Culture Commission. More details available shortly at www.el-cerrito.org/artsmonth.

When:  Afternoon
Where:  El Cerrito Community Center
7007 Moeser Lane

Saturday, October 9
ECAA ART SHOW AND SALE
The El Cerrito Art Association’s annual Show and Sale returns to the El Cerrito Community Center. For more details, visit www.elcerritoart.org.

When:  Friday, 7–9 p.m.
(Artist’s Reception)
Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Where:  El Cerrito Community Center
7007 Moeser Lane

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Tuesday, November 8 is the next election day in El Cerrito. Voters will have an opportunity to vote for federal and state officials, several state and county ballot measures, three City Council members, and a City measure to provide for the building of a safe, modern El Cerrito Library.

**VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 24**

The deadline to register to vote for any election in California is 15 days before election day. In order to vote in the general election on November 8, your registration must be postmarked or submitted electronically no later than October 24.

You can go online to register to vote at [www.cocovote.us](http://www.cocovote.us). Paper voter registration forms are available at El Cerrito City Hall, the county elections office in Martinez, and at most libraries, Department of Motor Vehicles offices, and U.S. post offices. It is important that the voter registration application be filled out completely and postmarked or hand-delivered to your county elections office at least 15 days before the election.

**ARE YOU CURRENTLY REGISTERED TO VOTE?**

To find out if you are currently registered to vote, visit [www.cocovote.us](http://www.cocovote.us). You need to re-register to vote when:

- You move to a new permanent residence.
- You change your name.
- You change your political party choice.

**VOTE-BY-MAIL BALLOTS**

To vote by mail—for only one election or ongoing—contact the Contra Costa Registrar of Voters at (925) 335-7800 or [www.cocovote.us/voting/vote-by-mail](http://www.cocovote.us/voting/vote-by-mail). Complete details are available on the website.

If you choose to vote-by-mail, you can return your ballot in a number of ways:

1. Mail it before election day. The ballot must be postmarked on or before election day and received no more than three days after election day to be considered timely.
2. Return it to a CoCo Vote-N-Go drop-off location.
3. Return it to any polling place within the county on election day.

Your vote-by-mail ballot needs to be sealed inside the return envelope. Be sure to sign and write your address on the return envelope. Without your signature the ballot cannot be counted.

**EL CERRITO CANDIDATES AND BALLOT MEASURE**

If you have questions about city candidates, running for office in El Cerrito, city measures, or election statistics, please contact the El Cerrito City Clerk at 215-4305 or cmorse@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

**ELECTION QUESTIONS?**

Election day polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m.

For more information, contact the County Elections Division at (925) 335-7800, voter.services@vote.cccounty.us, or online at [www.cocovote.us](http://www.cocovote.us). You can also reach the division online via twitter, YouTube, Facebook, or Instagram.

**WANT TO BE A POLL WORKER?**

All registered voters and non-citizens with permanent resident status are eligible to work as poll workers. Training and a stipend for services are provided. For requirements and an application, contact the County Elections Division at eo.recruitment@vote.cccounty.us, (925) 335-7873, or by visiting their website at [http://www.cocovote.us/get-involved/](http://www.cocovote.us/get-involved/).

Remember to vote on November 8!
Keeping Your Home Safe

IN JUNE, THE El Cerrito Police Department hosted “Barks and Bells”, a burglary prevention expo that featured alarm companies, locksmiths, and dog adoption agencies. The purpose of the event was to increase awareness about home safety and to find homes for animals in need. Officers spent time talking with residents about burglary prevention tips and matched animals with new owners.

TAKE THE HOME SECURITY CHALLENGE!

If you missed the expo, but want to learn how you can better safeguard your home, go online to the City’s neighborhood watch website at www.el-cerrito.org/nw. At the website, you can take a police department quiz to evaluate your home security and find police tips for making your home a safer place.

UPCOMING TRAVEL PLANS?

If you have travel plans, the police department encourages you to take advantage of the Vacation House Check Program. Submit the online vacation house notification form at www.el-cerrito.org/nw to request that the department conduct periodic checks of your residence while you are out of town.

Help Trees Recover from the Drought

DESpite the welcome rains of last winter, trees are still feeling the effects of California’s historic drought and will continue to do so for some time into the future. Help trees recover more quickly by taking the following steps.

TIPS TO HELP TREES RECOVER

1. Do not plant or cultivate other plants under a tree canopy. They remove nutrients from the tree’s root zone.

2. Mulch, Mulch, Mulch! Apply 4 to 6 inches of mulch in this zone to help retain moisture, build soil, and protect trees. Place the mulch at least 4 inches away from the trunk.

3. Water slowly and deeply, 1 to 2 times a month, using a simple soaker hose or a drip system around the edge of the tree canopy. You can use a hose faucet timer from the hardware store to prevent overwatering. Apply water no faster than the soil can absorb it.

4. Water newly planted trees near the base of the tree trunk where it is more likely to reach the roots.

Investing in healthy trees provides many benefits:

- Trees improve air and water quality.
- Trees provide shade to the landscape and reduce water needs.
- Trees help keep your home cooler on hot days.
- Trees slow storm water runoff and help recharge groundwater.
- Trees prevent soil erosion.
- Trees add value to your home and neighborhood.

If we don’t help trees recover from the drought, we risk losing these benefits.

For more specific tips on tree care, visit www.el-cerrito.org/trees.
Regulating Marijuana-related Businesses

THE EL CERRITO City Council is considering lifting its ban on marijuana-related businesses in El Cerrito.

Although marijuana use and cultivation remains illegal under federal law, California’s 2003 Medical Marijuana Program Act established possession limits for medical marijuana, a voluntary medical marijuana ID card program at the county level, and the right of patients to cultivate marijuana collectively. The act resulted in the establishment of medical marijuana dispensaries throughout the state. In November of this year, California voters will decide whether or not to legalize all marijuana and hemp use by adults in California and to charge sales and cultivation taxes.

In 2006, the El Cerrito City Council prohibited medical marijuana dispensaries in El Cerrito. Licensed medical marijuana dispensaries currently operate in the nearby cities of Richmond and Berkeley, as well as elsewhere in the east bay area.

The El Cerrito City Council is currently considering whether or not to end the ban on marijuana-related businesses in El Cerrito and enact land use and business standards to regulate marijuana dispensaries. City staff will be hosting a community meeting where you can give input on this issue in September.

For more information or to sign up for meeting notifications, go online to www.el-cerrito.org/dispensaries. You can also sign up for meeting notifications at marijuana@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, or call Suzanne Iarla, Assistant to the City Manager, at 215-4318.

Building Inspections

DURING THE SUMMERTIME, many people take on home improvement projects. During this busy time, be sure to allow plenty of lead time when scheduling an inspection of the work performed as there may be times when it will not be possible to get an inspector out to a project until two or three business days after request has been received.

Also, please ensure that you are ready for inspection. The work to be inspected should be completed, and the permit and approved plans must be available on site. Ideally, the contractor would attend the inspection to answer questions about the work performed. There is no penalty for canceling and rescheduling an inspection.

To schedule, cancel or re-schedule an inspection, call 215-4360 or submit your inspection request online at www.el-cerrito.org/BuildingPermits.

BUILDING PERMITS

Building Permits are required whenever a building or structure is to be altered, repaired, enlarged, improved, or converted, or when any electrical or plumbing work is done. The best way to find out if you need a permit for a project is to contact the Building Division. By following code guidelines and the building permit process, the completed project will meet minimum standards of safety, and be less likely to cause injury to construction workers; you, your family, and friends; or future owners of the property.

Visit the Building Division at the “one-stop” counter in City Hall or call 215-4360 for an appointment. You can also email questions to bldg@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS REQUIRING BUILDING PERMITS

- Room Additions
- Driveways
- Interior Remodel
- Termite Repair
- Solar Electrical Systems
- Roof Replacement
- Water Heater Install
- Windows/Doors
- Electrical Upgrades
- Drainage
- Spa/Pool
- Decks
- Foundation Repair

Volunteer to Become a Writer Coach

Volunteer today to be a writer coach at El Cerrito High School or Korematsu Middle School!

Writer coaches work with students one-on-one on their writing skills and build caring relationships along the way. Coaches support students to think critically and to express their ideas in writing clearly and confidently. To develop these skills, crucial to college and workplace success, most students need more support than their schools can provide. Coaching is a way to engage with young people in our public schools and to be an integral part of the community.

WriterCoach Connection is seeking adults to work with students two to four class periods a month. Currently, the program has over 650 trained volunteer coaches in nine schools in Richmond, El Cerrito, Albany, and Berkeley. Volunteers include parents, college students, and working and retired people of all ages and backgrounds.

Register today to become a volunteer coach and attend the upcoming training on two Wednesdays, August 31 and September 7, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the El Cerrito High School Library. Go to www.writercoachconnection.org/volunteer-registration to register online.

If you have questions, or to volunteer by email or phone, contact June Pangelinan at june@writercoachconnection.org or 685-7054.

Writer coaches Nenelle Bunnin, June Pangelinan, and Terri Lynn Sullivan at the July 4th WorldOne Festival reaching out to the community about becoming writer coaches.
2nd Annual El Cerrito Restaurant Week

The City of El Cerrito Economic Development Committee and the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce are excited to bring you the second annual Restaurant Week from October 6th through October 9th!

Invite your friends to join you at your favorite restaurant or try something new! The purpose of the event is to support local restaurants and highlight the variety of cuisine offered in El Cerrito. We hope to build community, restaurant visibility, and a customer base for El Cerrito’s increasing foot traffic. Last year, 18 restaurants participated in the first annual Restaurant Week. This year, there will be a contest and prizes given to those who dine at the most participating restaurants!

The event is offered at no cost to participating restaurants. If you are a restaurant owner hoping to spread the word about your business, attract new customers, and celebrate your part in our community, please visit www.el-cerrito.org/restaurantweek and fill out the participation form or contact Community Development Analyst Katherine Ahlquist at 215-4361 or kahlquist@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

For more details on prizes and participating restaurants, go online to www.el-cerrito.org/restaurantweek. Please check back periodically for updates.

Creekside Walk Development

Construction continues on the Creekside Walk apartments at the southeast corner of the El Cerrito Plaza shopping center. When finished, the development will feature 128 apartment units in two separate buildings, including 6 units affordable by low income households and thirteen units affordable by moderate income households (as defined by the State’s annual income limits).

As part of the project, approximately 180 feet of Cerrito Creek that currently runs under the parking lot will be brought back into view and restored to a natural condition. An adjacent public pathway will connect the creek to the Ohlone Greenway. The restored channel will be designed to support a native riparian plant corridor, provide habitat, and stabilize the banks.

This project is currently under construction and developers expect to have a Certificate of Occupancy by November. The management company should begin marketing both market rate and affordable housing units in the fall.

If you have any questions, or would like to get on the interest list for the affordable units, please contact Community Development Analyst, Katherine Ahlquist at 215-4361 or kahlquist@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us. For more information on the Creekside Walk development, please visit www.el-cerrito.org/creeksidewalk.

Protect Local Creeks and the Bay: Only Rain Down the Drain

The gutters that line our City streets are part of a storm drain system that also includes local creeks and the San Francisco Bay. Because the rain water in the storm drain system is not treated to remove impurities, anything other than rainwater in the storm drains presents a serious threat to the health of the Bay. For more information, visit www.el-cerrito.org/cleanwater.

How to report illegal discharges or accidental releases to a storm drain, drainage ditch, or culvert in the City of El Cerrito

- Potentially Hazardous Material Spill or Dumping: To report potentially hazardous materials dumped or spilled into a storm drain, contact the County Hazardous Materials Division at 925-646-2286 (during business hours) or 925-646-1112 (24-hour hotline for emergencies only).

- Debris in Creeks or Other Local Incidents: To report debris dumped into a creek or other conditions that may pollute local creeks or storm drains, contact El Cerrito Public Works at maintenance@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or 215-4369, or after-hours police dispatch at 237-3233.

- Sanitary Sewer Discharges: To report sanitary sewer back-ups, spills, or leaks in the public right of way, call Stege Sanitary Service at 524-4668.
The El Cerrito Police Department now provides a new online police reporting option for many types of incidents, such as harassing phone calls, theft, lost property, and vandalism.

To file an electronic report, go online to www.el-cerrito.org/citizenreporting. If your incident type appears in the category selection list and you can answer yes to all of the following statements about the incident, you can file a report online. Here are the statements:

- This incident is not an Emergency.
- This incident occurred within the El Cerrito Police Department city limits.
- There are no known suspects.
- This incident did not occur on a state freeway.
- This incident did not occur at a BART Station.

If your incident is not listed in the category selection list, or if you answered no to any of the above statements about the incident, please call the El Cerrito Police Department at 9-1-1 (emergency) or 237-3233 (non-emergency) to file your report.

The El Cerrito Police Department expects this internet-based reporting service to be very popular among residents because it will be a convenient way to take immediate action.