



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Scott Hanin, City Manager
DATE: May 17, 2018
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

Community Development Department **Homeowners Workshop Series**

El Cerrito's Development Services Division hosted another workshop in the Homeowners Workshop Series. The First 72 Workshop was held on Thursday, April 26th from 6:30pm to 8:30pm in the Council Chambers.

Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer, Jay Marlette, presented a workshop on the importance of being prepared for a disaster, such as an earthquake, and what to do in the first 72 hours after it happens. This workshop covered topics like what to pack in a "Go Bag", how to purify water to make it potable and how to properly devise an escape plan. Thirty-one people attended the workshop. Community Development staff has received positive feedback from the community about the content. The next in the series will be in July and will be for homeowners interested in developing an Accessory Dwelling Unit. ADUs can provide a much-needed housing option for family members and other community members and can provide a source of income for homeowners. The workshop will also provide information about Junior ADUs, which are bedrooms with exterior access that have small cooking facilities and access to a shared bathroom. For more information, visit www.el-cerrito.org/HomeownersWorkshops

Or contact Jennifer Peat in the Community Development Department at 510-215-4362 or email jpeat@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Bike to Work Day 2018

Thank you to all who participated in the San Francisco Bay Area's 24th annual Bike to Work Day on Thursday, May 10, 2018. The City of El Cerrito's Energizer Station was located on the Ohlone Greenway on the south side of Fairmount Avenue across from the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station from 7am to 9am. Our Energizer Station featured a photo arch, a bike mechanic provided by the Police Department and an informational table on the City's environmental efforts, new developments and upcoming events. Staff counted a total of 443 cyclists at the City's Energizer Station, which is an increase of 28 cyclists from last year! For more information and to see

photos from the City's Energizer Station, please visit www.el-cerrito.org/703/Bike-to-Work-Day.

Housing Update: Metro 510

Metro 510 (Creekside Walk) located at 510 El Cerrito Plaza is a 2-building rental project with 128 units of which 19 are dedicated to low and moderate-income households. Phase 1, completed in 2017, maintains a 95% occupancy rate. According to the property managers, the residents of this project are a mix of commuters, empty nesters and students. As Phase 2 nears completion, staff is making final inspections. Planning and Public Works staff walked the site on May 16th and determined that there were several corrections to be addressed prior to completion. The Certificate of Occupancy for Phase 2 is expected to be issued over the next couple of weeks. Once complete, Metro 510 will be the first new multifamily residential development built in El Cerrito since Village at Town Center, constructed in 2007.

El Cerrito Treasure Hunt, Saturday, June 9

On Saturday, June 9, the Economic Development Committee will host an El Cerrito Treasure Hunt. Participants will meet outside of the Community Center at 7007 Moeser Lane at 2:00 pm to register and obtain a list of clues that will take them on an adventure through the City and highlight just how walkable El Cerrito is. Prizes will be given to those who complete the hunt the fastest. (*Duration 1-2 hours*). To register for the Treasure Hunt visit the Economic Development Committee webpage at www.el-cerrito.org/103/Economic-Development-Committee.

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Zoning Interpretation

Pursuant to the Section 2.03.07.01 of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan (Specific Plan Interpretation), the Zoning Administrator issued a Zoning Interpretation on May 1, 2018. The Interpretation was necessary due to internal contradictions within the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Form Based Code regarding setback requirements. The Interpretation was distributed to the Community Development Director, City Attorney and City Clerk in accordance with the section, and was also included as an Attachment at the May 2, 2018 Design Review Board meeting to clarify Section 2.05.02.02.06 of the Specific Plan and assist with project review. (*See Attached May 1, 2018 Memo.*) Community Development plans to bring a recommended amendment to the Specific Plan as soon as practicable in order to address this issue and several other minor issues that have been encountered in implementing the Plan.

**Public Works
Department**

Recent Spring Green Events

In recent months, El Cerrito has hosted a series of very successful events related to environmental education and awareness. On March 10th, the EQC attracted over 100 people to attend a Film Showing, featuring “Tomorrow”, including a panel discussion on how to get involved. On March 27th, the EQC received similar attendance at their Butterfly Pollinator Workshop, engaging the community on how to support butterflies, moths, and other pollinators in their own backyards. Earth Day, on April 21st, was very successful with approximately 300 volunteers working to remove invasive plants, pick up litter, and plant trees in the City’s parks, natural areas, and schools. Finally, the 5th Annual Hillside Festival had nearly 350 attendees across all the events occurring from May 4-6. To learn more about upcoming “Green Happenings”, visit el-cerrito.org/newgreen or contact Will Provost, Management Analyst, at (510) 525-7622 or wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Castro Park Repair Work Coming Soon

The West Contra Costa School District will begin construction in the next few weeks to repair pathways, drainage infrastructure, and plantings in Castro Park that were damaged during the construction of Korematsu Middle School. The City will follow later this summer with resurfacing of the Castro Park tennis courts, and repair and repaving of park pathways, particularly in the upper portion of the park. For more information, contact Maria Sanders, OESD Manager, at msanders@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Ohlone BART Station Area Access, Safety and Placemaking Improvements Project – Construction Update

Construction work began in April and is well underway on the Ohlone Greenway-BART Station Area Access, Safety and Placemaking Improvements Project (Ohlone ASP). The project will improve and widen the pedestrian and bicycle path next to the El Cerrito Plaza and Del Norte BART Stations and improve existing crosswalks on adjacent streets to create high visibility pedestrian zones with new striping, special pavement, improved signage, curb bulb-outs, upgraded curb ramps and flashing lights. The project also includes placemaking elements such as native landscaping, seating, lighting and other amenities to increase the sense of connectivity to the rest of the greenway and establish a strong sense of place at these transportation gateways to the community.

The construction schedule is approximately six months-long with completion anticipated this fall. The construction will proceed in several phases to minimize impacts to Ohlone path users, BART patrons and the public. The first phase of construction will be completed this month, with

the second to follow in mid to late May. These two first phases of work are described below.

Del Norte BART Station

- Complete Phase 1 Construction – Work includes sidewalk and path reconstruction along the north side of Cutting Blvd. at the Ohlone path crossing. Also, sidewalk reconstruction on the north side of Hill St. at the BART station.
- Begin Phase 2 Construction – Work includes path reconstruction between Cutting Blvd and Hill St on the east side of BART station.

El Cerrito Plaza BART Station

- Complete Phase 1 Construction – Work includes sidewalk and path reconstruction along the north and south sides of Central Ave. at the Ohlone path crossing and BART station.
- Begin Phase 2 Construction – Work includes path and sidewalk reconstruction east of the BART station, from Fairmount Ave. northerly. Also, median island reconstruction on Fairmount Ave. at Ohlone path.

Temporary traffic delays and temporary parking restrictions are likely on surrounding streets, as well as pedestrian and bicycle detours around the project site. The construction team (including the contractor - Vanguard Construction, City Staff, Consultant Construction Managers - Ghirardelli Associates, BART, and various Transit Agencies) are working together to minimize delays and other inconveniences. For additional information and updates, please visit the City's website at www.el-cerrito.org/OhloneASP.

Urban Forestry Program Update

During the current fiscal year, the Public Works Department has continued pruning of street trees, performed clearance pruning along creeks to prevent flooding, removed dead, dying, or risk-prone trees, responded to tree failures, and most notably planted 28 new street trees in residential neighborhoods and on San Pablo Avenue.

Department staff have also worked on a variety of volunteer events for planting and promoting a healthy urban forest in El Cerrito. The City celebrated Arbor Week, starting March 7 with the fifth annual Cerrito Vista Park tree planting event, in which the El Cerrito Garden Club, the El Cerrito Urban Forest Committee, and students from Prospect Sierra School planted native Oak and Buckeye species along the eastern slope of the park. These

new plantings are suited to site conditions and will replace existing dead, dying or diseased Monterey Pines. On March 14, students in the City's after school program at Harding Elementary School, were visited by the traveling Tree Circus™, an interactive, educational and captivating stage show that extols the value and benefits of trees and urban forests. On El Cerrito Earth Day, volunteers removed invasive ivy from tree trunks in Canyon Trail Park. Other volunteers participated in the Sudden Oak Death Survey sponsored by UC Berkeley in the Hillside Natural Areas on April 28. For more information, please contact Stephen Prée, Environmental Programs Manager/ City Arborist at spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

I-80/Central Avenue Interchange Improvement Project

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), in partnership with the Cities of Richmond and El Cerrito, has been constructing modifications to Central Avenue from I-80 to I-580 as part of the first phase of the I-80/Central Avenue Improvement Project. The first phase of this project is designed to smooth peak traffic flows on Central Avenue in the westbound direction during the peak weekend hours (the most congested period for this corridor). Construction began in September 2017 and is near completion with several milestones recently completed or soon to be.

In early May 2018, a new traffic signal was activated at the I-580 Eastbound Ramps (Rydin Road) and Central Avenue intersection. The newly configured intersection will help enhance the Bay Trail as it crosses both Rydin Road and Central Avenue. In early June 2018, a new traffic signal will be activated at I-580 Westbound Ramps and Central Avenue. Also, in early June, during the weekend hours of 11 AM to 3 PM, left-turns onto I-80 West will no longer be allowed. Instead, using electronic Message Boards, motorists will be directed to make a left-turn onto I-580 Eastbound on-ramp and will be able to access I-80 from I-580 approximately one mile south of the on-ramp. While the left-turn onto I-80 Westbound will no longer be allowed, vehicles will be able to make a left-turn onto Jacuzzi Street. Finally, as part of this first phase, CCTA is coordinating the repaving of Central Avenue between Jacuzzi Street and the I-80 Eastbound ramps and anticipates completing the repaving early this summer.

CCTA and the City of Richmond have also begun work on the second phase of the project, which will improve traffic flow along Central Avenue by increasing the spacing between the signalized intersections and reduce the blockage of through traffic along Central Avenue by eliminating left turns onto Pierce Street. The traffic signal on Central Avenue at Pierce Street will be removed and access at this intersection will be restricted to "right-in/right-out" so that no left turns will be allowed. Left turns into and out of

Pierce Street will be accommodated by realigning San Mateo Street to connect with Pierce Street, and San Mateo Street will be signalized and widened to better accommodate traffic flows. The second phase is currently in the conceptual design and environmental clearance phase. CCTA will be conducting public outreach in the next couple of months to present the concept design and solicit comments.

For more information, please contact the Public Works Department at street@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 215-4382.

Caltrans I-80 Central Avenue Undercrossing Improvements

Caltrans District 4 is developing a concept for bicycle and pedestrian improvements at the I-80 Central Avenue undercrossing in anticipation of applying for design and construction funding from the State Active Transportation Program later this summer. The general concept is to provide a Class I path under I-80 freeway using space adjacent to the roadway like Powell Street in Emeryville and is builds from recent plans prepared by the Cities of Richmond, El Cerrito, and Albany, as well as Caltrans. The project is described in the Caltrans District 4 Bike Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area, available for review at www.dot.ca.gov/d4/bikeplan. This Plan – the first of its kind in the State – evaluates bicycle needs on and across the State transportation network in the Bay Area and identifies priority improvements for an integrated bicycle network.

For El Cerrito, improvements in the area would build a key segment of the BART to Bay Trail Access Improvements Project identified in the El Cerrito Active Transportation Plan (ATP), adopted by the City Council in 2016. The El Cerrito ATP is available for review at www.el-cerrito.org/atp.

Caltrans will be conducting public outreach in June to present the initial comments and solicit comments. For more information, please contact the Public Works Department at street@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 215-4382.

Recycling Markets

For many years China has been a leading importer of recycled plastics and paper from across the globe. However, the Chinese government recently imposed stricter standards for the quality of imported recycled materials. Historically, Chinese recycling facilities have accepted materials with “impurities” or waste contamination of up to 5%. The new Chinese standards lower that threshold to only 1%. In short, recycling programs in the United States and elsewhere will have to do a better job at sorting and

cleaning recycled materials or they will be forced to send materials to other markets, which will increase costs, or reroute the materials to landfills.

Since the City of El Cerrito operates both the curbside recycling program and the El Cerrito Recycling and Environmental Resource Center, the changes in the international recycling markets also have an impact on the economics of our operations and recyclers across the country. The Operations + Environmental Services Division is making a concerted effort to respond to these market changes by increasing customer education around proper sorting and recycling habits, while also working with new material brokers to find the best pricing for clean, sorted material received at the Recycling Center.

For more information, contact Operations + Environmental Services Manager, Maria Sanders, at msanders@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 559-7684.

Transportation Impact Fee Development

In mid-2017, City staff contracted with Fehr & Peers Transportation Consultants and Urban Economics to conduct a nexus analysis to evaluate the potential establishment of a transportation impact fee (TIF) that would help fund multimodal capital improvements identified in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan/Complete Streets Plan and the City's Active Transportation Plan. This effort is being undertaken with funding from a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Priority Development Area Implementation Grant and in coordination with the Inclusionary Policy Analysis, including financial feasibility analysis for residential development economics, which was presented to City Council at its May 1, 2018 meeting. The main components of the nexus study are to define the City's current transportation network, to establish a list of capital improvement projects eligible for funding through an impact fee program, to confirm the cost estimates for those projects, to assemble information about available project funding, to confirm development growth projections, and to estimate an initial fee schedule. City staff anticipates the study will be completed in June and will be presenting it for City Council consideration this summer.

Storm Drain Master Plan Update

An evaluation of the 2017 Storm Drain Master Plan Update and Integrated Asset Management Strategy is well underway. The City's consultant for this project is Schaaf & Wheeler. The consultant has completed a review of City storm drain documents and plans, performed surveys and conditions assessments of several existing storm drain facilities, and simulated hydraulic and hydrology models for the prioritization of infrastructure

repairs and capital improvements. Staff will be scheduling a public meeting for a presentation from the consultant on history, findings, and to discuss proposed improvements in early Summer 2018. Adoption of the Storm Drain Master Plan Update and Integrated Asset Management Strategy is anticipated in the Fall.

Attachment (not included in online version):

1. Interpretation of San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Section of 2.05.02.02.06, Front and Upper Floor Setback along Neighborhood Street and Abutting Residential Districts.