



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Karen Pinkos, City Manager
DATE: April 4, 2019
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

One of the things that makes El Cerrito such a wonderful community is the high level of engagement that the City enjoys with our residents, businesses, and visitors. Our goal for any initiative the City considers, is to make sure that we gather as much input as possible and to be as responsive as we can to ideas, questions, and concerns. We also try to utilize as many tools as we can to inform and solicit feedback. The tools range from the more traditional community meetings and surveys to using social media and technology.

Currently our communications team, led by Assistant to the City Manager Maya Williams, is doing a deep dive into City communications strategies and platforms. We want to continue to explore new and innovative ways to communicate as well as improve what we are currently doing. Again, our goal is to encourage the public to be actively involved and understand how their City works. I'm looking forward to continuing our tradition of being an engaged, active community!

I'm grateful to ICMA for sponsoring my travel in my capacity as President, as it gives me an extraordinary chance to learn from others and share the great work our City is doing, both across the country and around the world. From April 17-23, I will have the honor of traveling to Timisoara, Romania for the ICMA International Regional Conference. We'll be discussing smart cities, technology, and transportation— a unique opportunity to learn from our international partners in Europe as well as showcase how El Cerrito is tackling these issues.

Finally, I want to thank the City Council, community, and our City team for the great discussion on the Park and Recreation Master Plan, resulting in its approval at Tuesday's City Council meeting. The Master Plan will provide us with a great basis from which we can move forward in addressing the capital needs of our Recreational facilities in El Cerrito. We want to ensure that our buildings and parks work better for all people, and maintain the gems that we have, such as the Swim Center, so that they continue to serve the public well. I look forward to the next phase of working on budget priorities and funding mechanisms to start implementing the Master Plan.

Have a great week!

Karen

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [CITY MANAGEMENT](#)
- [COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT](#) (New businesses, Development, Planning)
- [FIRE](#)
- [POLICE](#)
- [PUBLIC WORKS](#)
- [RECREATION](#)
- [UPCOMING EVENTS](#)
- [PERSONNEL UPDATES](#)
- [ATTACHMENT/FLYERS](#)

CITY MANAGEMENT

Arts and Culture Activities

The City's Arts and Culture Commission is currently undergoing a review of its Master Plan and starting development of its 2019-2020 Work Plan. The Commission meets every 4th Monday at 7:00 p.m. The public is invited to attend and provide input about what type of art and cultural activities they'd like to see in the future.

The Commission has also approved to extend the El Cerrito Creative Reuse (ECCRU) Artist-in-Residence from a six-month to a nine-month term. Please visit her, Erin McCluskey Wheeler, at the City's Earth Day event on Saturday, April 13 at the Community Center. She will also be hosting two community art workshops at the library during the month of April. Please see "Upcoming Events" below.

Staff Transition – Chery Mosby

After 32 years of service to the City, Cheryl Mosby retired as the City's Human Resources Specialist on April 1, 2019. Cheryl held many positions with the City during her tenure including: Administrative Clerk in the Building Division of Public Works, Administrative Secretary in the City Clerk's Office/Personnel, Deputy City Clerk, Management Assistant, Personnel Technician, Human Resources Technician and ultimately Human Resources Specialist. We will miss Cheryl as she transitions to new adventures including spending more time with her family and friends.

The Office of the City Clerk is actively recruiting for vacancies on several Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

Parks and Recreation Commission currently has one vacancy. This Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council on all matters pertaining to public recreation, including parks, playgrounds, landscaping, childcare, the arts, educational courses and entertainment. Current work has focused on the creation and implementation of El Cerrito Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan and monitoring the design and implementation of Parks & Recreation projects in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The Commission meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Urban Forest Committee currently has nine vacancies. This Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, other commissions, and the citizens of the City with regard to the growth, maintenance, and location of trees within the City; and promotes and fosters public awareness, education, interest and support for urban forestry efforts, fosters volunteer opportunities for tree planting and irrigation along

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

the city's streets and in residential front yards, and educates El Cerrito residents regarding selecting, planting and maintaining trees. The Committee meets on the 2nd Monday at 7:00 p.m.

For more information on all vacancies, and to access the application to serve, please visit el-cerrito.org/commissions. Contact the City Clerk at cityclerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or 215-4305 for more information.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Update

On March 21st, approximately 25 residents received an update and provided input on the Specific Plan. Most of the participants said they had not previously participated in public meetings about the Plan. The public had questions and concerns about urban design, parking, and about how to attract new businesses to San Pablo Avenue commercial spaces. City staff will put together a schedule for the next phase(s) of the update, which will include an additional community workshop, a joint study session with the Design Review Board and Planning Commission, and several stakeholder and technical meetings. To receive updates about the Plan, visit el-cerrito.org/SPASP.

Planning Commission Recap

On March 20, the El Cerrito Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow a day care center at **2603 Tassajara Avenue**, the former site of Tehiyah Day School. The day care center will include preschool programs for ages 1.5 to 6 years old and an afterschool program for ages 6 to 12 years old. Site improvements include additional parking spaces, trees, and landscaped areas. The Commission approved the project with modified conditions of approval that allow the daycare center more flexibility for use of the site during evenings and weekends.

The Commission also approved a CUP for a fence taller than 6 feet in the rear yard at 978 Arlington Boulevard, recommended approval for a Final Parcel Map at 10300 San Pablo Avenue, and recommended approval of a Tentative Parcel Map at 922 Clark Place. The 922 Clark Place Tentative Parcel Map requires an exception to the City's Subdivision Ordinance because one of the proposed lots does not have frontage on a public street. The exception to the Subdivision Ordinance requires City Council approval and is scheduled to be reviewed by the City Council on April 16th. For more information, contact planning@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Polaris Project Update

The Planning Division has received an appeal of the Design Review Board's Tier II Design Review approval of the Polaris project located at **11965 San Pablo Avenue**. The proposed project will contain 144 new housing units and is subject the State Affordable Housing Density Bonus. The appeal was filed by Sara Dudley of Adams Broadwell Joseph & Cardozo on behalf of El Cerrito Residents for Responsible Development. The appeal will be heard by the Planning Commission on April 17th.

FIRE

Firefighters help El Cerritans

On Monday, April 1, around 4 p.m., Bin Yan and his 5-month old baby got stuck in their apartment building elevator on their way out for a walk. His wife had already exited the elevator. After realizing the building manager was not there, she called 911. Captain Jeffrey Thomas and two engineers immediately went to assist and got them out. Mr. Yin said he felt safe and remained calm because he knew the firefighters were there. In his words, "I'm so grateful to these brave and kind firemen. I would like to say thank you to Captain Thomas and his engineer fellows...please tell them my thanks from my heart...You are the best!"



New Firefighters!

On March 11, the El Cerrito Fire Department's first new firefighter in almost two years started his career with the fire department. *Jeremy Janes* started his probationary training on A shift and is currently working on his first month orientation and training. Jeremy, whose uncle is our B shift Battalion Chief Kevin Janes, was previously working for the Bennett Valley Fire Department in Sonoma County. He has also been a volunteer with the Graton Fire Protection District and worked for an ambulance company in Santa Rosa.

On Wednesday, March 27, the Fire Department's 2nd new hire started his firefighter career. *Jarrett Nunes* started on B shift and is currently going through his 1st month orientation and training. For the past three years, he worked a seasonal firefighter with Marin County Fire Department. Jarrett's family has long ties to the fire service in Contra Costa County, where he also was a reserve firefighter.

Hillside Natural Area (HNA) Fuel Reduction

Fire crews this past week have been and will be conducting control burns in the HNA above the Recycling Center and Corporation Yard. So far this week, they have burned 26 piles with at least that many more to go. These brush piles are a result of the fuel reduction that has been utilizing the Cal Fire hand crews from Delta Camp.

Rope Technician Class

In March, the Fire Department sent two more firefighters, Matthew Clarine and Brett Thatcher, to a Rope Technician Class in Chico. Rope Technician is one of the many technical rescue classes that our personnel are required to complete during their first two years with the Department. This training is imperative to provide the "All Risk" services that we provide. This class focuses on high angle and vertical rope rescue situations and is a continuation of the Low Angle Rope



CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

Rescue Operations. In the Rope Tech class, they were trained in setting up rope rappelling systems from roof tops as well as canyon walls and transverse riggings to transport patients across a ravine. It is a very rigorous class and provides a great experience as well as training. Below are a couple of pictures of Brett and Matt during their classes.



PUBLIC WORKS

Updates from the Recycling Markets

As previously reported to the City Council, the 2018 Chinese policy, which severely limits the import of recyclable materials, particularly mixed paper and scrap plastic, has created unprecedented disruptions in international recycling markets, especially for curbside programs in the United States. The policy has created a glut of recycling materials going to countries such as Vietnam and India, forcing some to also limit those countries' acceptance of material. In early March, India also passed a policy to stop receiving international loads of scrap plastic for recycling (resource-recycling.com/plastics/2019/03/06/india-to-end-plastic-scrap-imports).

The pressure 1) to find markets for curbside recyclables and 2) to provide high-quality, uncontaminated loads of material has sharply driven up the costs of processing curbside material in the United States.

While El Cerrito has been somewhat insulated from the worst effects of these market disruptions, El Cerrito's waste rates were increased in 2018 due, in part, to a steep decline in the amount of revenue received from the sale of curbside recyclables. With market disruptions continuing, the City has recently received notice from its recycling processor that the company will need to start charging a fee to cover its costs of processing recyclables from the City's curbside program.

Staff is currently investigating all available options and alternatives to maintain stable rates for customers, while ensuring the materials are diverted from the landfill. We anticipate bringing the results of this research, including any potential rate increases, to City Council in late Spring. Staff plans on also holding a community workshop beforehand on these issues for interested community members.

Staff will continue to provide ongoing education asking residents to ensure their recyclables are "Empty, Clean, and Dry" to reduce contamination of the recycling

stream; and asking residents to bring high-value recyclables to the Recycling + Environmental Resource Center, where they command higher prices in homogenous loads.

For more information, please contact the City's Operations + Environmental Services Division Manager, Maria Sanders, at 559-7684 or green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Clean Water Program Update

At the April 2 City Council Meeting, City Staff presented Council with a resolution to adopt the Annual Parcel Assessment for the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program and Drainage Maintenance Activities, establishing rates for Fiscal Year 2019-2020. Staff continue to focus on using these funds to implement all aspects and requirements of our Municipal Regional Permit (MRP) for stormwater, with a concerted effort this year to complete the following:

- Develop and submit an approved Green Infrastructure Plan, in September 2019, which outlines how the City will meet future pollutant load reduction milestones through the incorporation of Low Impact Design (LID) systems, such as rain gardens.
- Reducing trash entering the storm drain system, which is mandated to be at an 80% reduction by July 2019, and a 100% reduction by July 2022. El Cerrito is ahead of schedule in reaching these compliance goals, achieving an 84.5% trash load reduction rate as of July 2018.
- Meeting numeric weight reductions and tracking of Mercury and PCBs (Polychlorinated Biphenyls) through the management of building demolition activities.

To achieve reduction targets, the City is required to implement a new program outlining procedures to identify and control PCBs in the building demolition process. Staff will bring a resolution and related documents to City Council for consideration in Spring 2019. The program must be implemented by July 1, 2019.

For more information on these and other stormwater related activities, please contact the City's Clean Water Program Coordinator, Will Provost, at 525-7622 or green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

➤ **Earth Day El Cerrito is Saturday, April 13**

Work parties will occur at locations throughout the community on EC's Earth Day between 9 a.m. and noon. Planned work parties include ways to steward our natural and public places by removing invasive plants and trash, weeding and trimming landscapes, mulching, as well as other activities that will help to keep El Cerrito beautiful.

Volunteers can sign-up in advance by emailing earthday@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us. On the morning of April 13, walk-ins are also welcome to join by reporting to the Community Center. Volunteers should wear closed-toe shoes and a hat, and bring a reusable water bottle, a light jacket, and sunscreen. The City provides gloves, bags, and tools

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

to borrow for the day.

Everyone's hard work will be appreciated with a warm, healthy, and delicious lunch at the Community Center Main Hall from noon to 1:30 p.m. Lunchtime activities include: information tables; a demonstration from our El Cerrito Creative ReUse artist-in-residence Erin McCluskey Wheeler; an art activity hosted by the Arts & Culture Commission; an upcycling event for kids; a complimentary seedling giveaway provided by the El Cerrito Community Garden Network; and short enviro-educational movies displayed by the City's Environmental Quality Committee. For questions, additional information, or to register a work party, please contact Laureteen Brazil, Waste Prevention Specialist at lbrazil@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or 559-7686.

Annual El Cerrito Arbor Week Celebration

On Sunday, March 24, the Urban Forest Committee hosted a ceremonial tree planting with community members in Poinsett Park. Chair Steve Price provided a history of Arbor Day, Vice Chair Mary Torrusio read a poem, and Councilmembers Paul Fadelli and Gabe Quinto each spoke of the value of trees and offered their appreciation of UFC members for their sustained good works.



Due to heavy rains, another Arbor Week work day in the Hillside Natural Area has been rescheduled as an Earth Day event on April 13th. This work party will meet at the base of King Court to remove Eucalyptus duff, fuels, and invasive plants from the Quarry Hill eucalyptus grove. For more information or to join the work party, please contact Stephen Prée, Environmental Programs Manager, at spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

RECREATION

2019 Summer Activity rECguide

The 2019 Summer Activity rECguide and early bird registration went live online March 25. Customers can enroll for summer classes and programs in person at the Community Center, Swim Center and Midtown Activity Center starting on April 1. Highlights of this edition includes five new adult classes, the Summer Splash Pool Party announcement and listing of summer swim lessons.



Camp Ravencloff Teen Leadership Opportunities

El Cerrito Camp Ravencloff has two leadership programs for high school students this summer: 1) Counselors-In-Training Program (CIT) and 2) Teens-In-Leadership-Training (TILT) Program. Applications are still being accepted and the program is open to sophomore, junior or senior high school students. This is a fun and unique opportunity to get in volunteer hours, learn valuable job skills, and have an impact on younger campers. More information can be found at el-cerrito.org/1316/El-Cerrito-Camp-Ravencloff.

2019-2020 Childcare Registration

It looks like we are going to have another year of great enrollment in our Before & After School programs. 2019-2020 School Year Childcare registration opened on March 25 and the Community Center processed registration for 150 participants on opening day alone!

Spring Break Lifeguard Classes

The Swim Center offers two spring break classes: Lifeguard Class and Junior Lifeguard Camp from April 1 – April 5. The Junior Lifeguard Camp is an accelerated camp to certify participants in Lifeguarding, CPR/AED and First Aid. Successful participants can volunteer at the Swim Center over the summer. There are currently nine participants enrolled.



Midtown Activity Center 50+ Shopping Trips

Door-to-door shuttle service to the El Cerrito Plaza, Pacific East Mall and Costco is available on the first Wednesday of each month. Riders will be picked up from their homes and dropped off at the store location of their choice. Riders will be given an hour and a half to complete their shopping before their return trip. Advance reservations are required email midtown@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or call 559-7677.

Subscribe & Follow

For up-to-date information on all the happenings brought to you by the El Cerrito Recreation Department, please subscribe to our email newsletter **rECnews** at www.el-cerrito.org/recreation. Follow us: Instagram - @ecrecreation | Facebook - @ecrecreation | Twitter - @ElCerritoREC

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 5 (Friday) – Hiking Trip: Point Bonita Lighthouse in Sausalito, leave at 8:30 a.m.

Location: Leaving from Contra Costa Civic Theater Parking Lot, 951 Pomona Avenue
Contact: Mark Deleon, mdeleon@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 559-7677

Join us for monthly walking and hiking trips exploring new places and meeting new people. Trips range from easy to moderate and are graded by type of terrain.

April 9 (Tuesday) – Bookmaking Workshop - Recycled Materials, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Location: El Cerrito Library, 6510 Stockton Avenue

Contact: Alison Peters, apeters@ccclib.org, 526-7512

Join Erin McCluskey Wheeler, El Cerrito artist-in-residence, for a recycled paper bookmaking workshop! Make a custom journal out of recycled materials using simple sewing and folding techniques. Incorporate poetry into your book or use it as a mini journal.

April 13 (Saturday) – Earth Day Celebration, Work parties, 9 a.m. to noon; Lunch, noon to 1:30 p.m.

Location: Work parties at various locations; lunch at the El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane

Contact: earthday@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 559-7686, www.el-cerrito.org/earthday

The City celebrates Earth Day with a morning of volunteerism and work parties followed by our Volunteer Appreciation lunch. Register to host or participate in a work party!

April 19 (Friday) – Hiking Trip: Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, leave at 8:30 a.m.

Location: Leaving from Contra Costa Civic Theater Parking Lot, 951 Pomona Avenue

Contact: Mark Deleon, mdeleon@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 559-7677

Join us for monthly walking and hiking trips exploring new places and meeting new people. Trips range from easy to moderate and are graded by type of terrain.

April 19 (Friday) – Elder Financial Abuse Prevention Presentation by Attorney Summer Selleck, CPA and Fiduciary Mary Rose, 1:30 p.m.

Location: Midtown Activity Center, 10940 San Pablo Avenue

Contact: Blanca Martinez-Campos, bmartinez-campos@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 559-7677

The Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging strives to help seniors help themselves by educating and empowering them to be their own advocates as the best form of prevention. The importance for seniors to be educated on how to identify the warning signs of financial abuse and strategies they can use to protect themselves will be presented.

April 20 (Saturday) – Housing and Home: An Art-based Inquiry, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Location: El Cerrito Community Center (Garden Room), 7007 Moeser Lane

Contact: Maya Williams, 215-4318, mwilliams@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

This two-hour community gathering will ask questions about what home means to each of us - individually and for all of us as El Cerritans. Explore feelings and thoughts about home through making art.

April 20 (Saturday) – Annual Egg Hunt, 10:00 a.m.

Location: Arlington Park, 1120 Arlington Blvd.

Contact: Eden O'Brien-Brenner, edo@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 559-7003

Spring is in the air, and the Egg Hunt is a great way to celebrate! Perfect for children ages 1-10. Be on time as the hunt for eggs and candy goes very quickly! A very special bunny will be there for photo opportunities.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

April 25 (Thursday) – Recycled Art - Trees!, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: El Cerrito Library, 6510 Stockton Avenue

Contact: Alison Peters, apeters@ccclib.org, 526-7512

Join Erin McCluskey Wheeler, El Cerrito artist-in-residence, for a workshop celebrating trees. Make a custom leaf stamp out of recycled materials and stamp leaves all over your recycled paper tree. This free event is brought to you by the Friends of the El Cerrito Library.

May 3-5 (Friday-Saturday) – 6th Annual Hillside Festival

Location: Arlington Park, 1120 Arlington Blvd.

Contact: Will Provost, wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 525-7622,
ectrailltrekkers.wordpress.com/hillside-festival-2019

Explore El Cerrito's Hillside Natural Area. Hike, play, learn about nature, history, geology, dogs, more. Activities for young and old. Presented by El Cerrito Trail Trekkers and El Cerrito's Environmental Quality Committee.

May 9 (Thursday) – Bike to Work Day

Location: El Cerrito Plaza BART Station, 6699 Fairmount Avenue

Contact: Jennifer Peat, jpeat@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 215-4362

Each year, the City participates in the regional "Bike to Work Day" by hosting an Energizer Station and other events. Energizer Stations are open all morning with refreshments, free Bike to Work Day bags and high fives for everyone riding by.

May 18 (Saturday) - Spring Citywide Garage Sale, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Citywide

Contact: Laureteen Brazil, green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 559-7686

Each year the City's Recycling + Environmental Resource Center designates days for residents to hold their own garage sales. The event promotes reuse, gives residents a chance to get rid of clutter, is a fun community event, and gives neighbors a chance to get to know other neighbors. Map available at el-cerrito.org/GarageSale closer to the sales.

PERSONNEL UPDATES

New Hires:

Shannon Bassi to Human Resources Specialist, effective March 25, 2019

Jarrett Nunes to Firefighter, effective March 27, 2019

Retirement:

Human Resource Technician Chery Mosby retired April 1, 2019

Attachments: none