



**COMMUNITY  
CLIMATE ACTION  
STRATEGIES**

# Community Climate Action Strategies

## A Road Map to Reducing Emissions

The primary purpose of the CAP is to identify actions the City and community can take to reduce GHG emissions to achieve our reduction targets. The City of El Cerrito's role in reducing *community* emissions will be to provide leadership and to leverage its policy, planning, and programmatic functions to encourage additional community action.

El Cerrito's baseline GHG inventory is consistent with its primarily residential character, where the main sources of emissions result from driving to work and other destinations and from residential energy use. This represents the main challenge that El Cerrito faces in combating growth in emissions: instead of focusing efforts on a few large sources, *El Cerrito's success will come from the many small, aggregated actions taken by its 24,000 residents and the 5,700 people who work in El Cerrito.* Actions must be taken at every level to curb and ultimately reverse the growth in GHG emissions.

The City's reduction targets are ambitious but achievable if concerted action is taken. For example, the 2020 15% reduction target could be achieved if all households did the following: insulate the attic, use Energy Star appliances, drive 19 miles less per week per household member, and actively participate in the City's recycling and composting programs. Clearly many households in El Cerrito have already enacted and gone beyond these actions, but it will be more challenging to achieve similar reductions across the entire community.

### **We could meet our 15% reduction target by 2020 if every household in El Cerrito:**

- Insulated their attic
- Converted to Energy Star Appliances
- Drove 19 miles less per week per household member
- Participated in the City's recycling and composting programs
- Or took other actions similar to these

Near-term actions will encourage and/or require residents and businesses to take action to reduce their emissions. But the City will also have to lay the groundwork for a future that is structurally less dependent on fossil fuels, such as:

- Establishing more compact, higher density, mixed-use infill development along major transportation corridors to create more economic activity, serve the daily needs of residents and employees, and decrease daily vehicle miles traveled;
- Creating a transportation infrastructure that invites people to walk, bike and take transit;
- Achieving greater energy efficiency, water efficiency, and renewable energy in existing and new buildings through education, incentives and ordinances;
- Decreasing waste going to the landfill through waste reduction and recycling programs;

- Promoting education and outreach on trip reduction, energy efficiency, water conservation, and waste diversion; and
- Leading by example through increased efficiencies in the City’s operations, buildings and practices.

Many of these strategies are already being advanced by the City as part of its overall push towards a more livable, safe and sustainable community. Any new policies, programs, or projects proposed in the CAP would need to be further defined after the CAP is adopted. Each will go through its own public review, adoption, funding and implementation processes, as needed.

## Climate Action in El Cerrito Since 2005

**Since 2005, the City has undertaken the following activities to pursue a more sustainable urban form.**

- Completed 158 units and entitled 185 units of multifamily housing along the San Pablo Avenue corridor, including 56 affordable units
- Worked with CalTrans to take possession of sidewalks on San Pablo Avenue, aka State Route 123.
- Completed the award-winning San Pablo Avenue Streetscape Improvement Program, including improved pedestrian access and street furniture, upgraded bus stops, 75 new bicycle racks, new Bay-Friendly median and sidewalk plantings that save 1.5 million gallons of water per year, new rain gardens to clean storm water run-off
- Leveraged the restoration of the Cerrito Theater to catalyze private investment on the “Theater Block”
- Restored Baxter Creek and created Baxter Creek Gateway Park
- Extended Ohlone Greenway to connect with the Richmond Greenway
- Adopted the Ohlone Greenway Master Plan
- Secured funding to construct the Ohlone Greenway Nature Play Park near the El Cerrito BART Station
- Adopted El Cerrito’s first Circulation Plan for Bicyclists and Pedestrians
- Completed 75% of bike facility improvements identified in the Circulation Plan
- Adopted a Bicycle Parking Ordinance for new development
- Worked with El Cerrito Trail Trekkers to restore and extend the City’s network of public paths and trails
- Planted 1,160 street trees
- Drafted the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan in partnership with the City of Richmond
- Secured funding to develop a comprehensive Urban Greening Plan
- Adopted an Animal Ordinance to allow the raising of chickens, goats, bees and other animals for the purposes of hobby-level sustainable food production

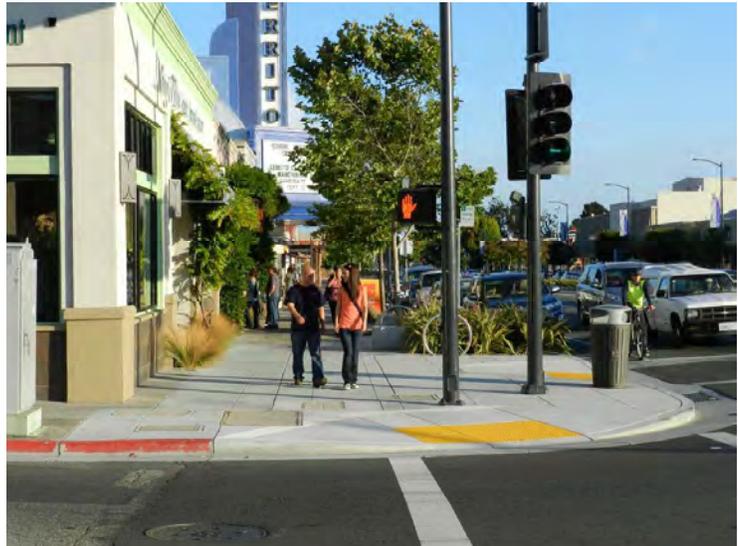
# Land Use, Transportation and Community Development

As is the case throughout California, automobile use is the largest single source of emissions in El Cerrito, comprising 51% of total GHG emissions. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, several state initiatives are aimed at reducing a portion of these emissions. The AB 32 *Scoping Plan* articulates a three-pronged strategy towards reducing emissions from the transportation sector: (1) increasing the fuel efficiency of vehicles, (2) reducing the carbon content of the fuel these vehicles burn, and (3) reducing the miles these vehicles travel. Improvements in vehicle fuel efficiency and the carbon content of fuel, although out of the sphere of local government policy, will provide nearly half the reductions in GHG emissions from passenger vehicles in El Cerrito by 2020 and more than two-thirds the reductions by 2035.

Regional and local governments have been asked to help with the third prong: reducing the number of miles Californians drive. It is the intent of SB 375, the Sustainable Community Strategy, to achieve these reductions at a regional and local level by advancing an integrated approach to land use and transportation which relies on a better jobs/ housing balance, and compact, transit-oriented development.

In order to make the City's GHG emissions reduction goals, we will need to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in El Cerrito by roughly 1,000 miles per year per resident and employee in El Cerrito, or just 19 car miles per week per person. Many El Cerritans would be able to make these reductions by making minor changes in their transportation habits, such as taking transit to work 1 or 2 days per week. However, effecting these reductions throughout the community will require not only a change in people's habits, but also changes in land use, development patterns, and public places that would make it easier for residents and workers to leave their car behind.

The following goals and strategies will assist the City in creating the foundation for vibrant public spaces and higher density, transit-oriented development. At the end of this section, *Figure 3.4, Sustainable Community: Summary of Goals and Objectives* summarizes the emissions reduction potential of each objective.



El Cerrito's "Theater Block" area on San Pablo Avenue. Streetscape improvements help support businesses and attract business investment.



## **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GOAL #1:**

**Encourage more compact, higher density infill development along transportation corridors to reduce vehicle miles traveled in El Cerrito and beyond.**

The most effective way to both accommodate growth and reduce VMT is to site new, higher density development near transit. Urban design studies are finding that higher residential densities lower household VMT between 5% to 12%, and as much as 25% if coupled with mixed uses, good design, higher parking fees, access to good public transit that links residents to higher employment centers, and other supportive transportation demand management measures. These studies have been used to inform the estimated VMT reductions from the measures listed below.

Fortunately, El Cerrito is a transit-rich community that has been proactive in creating policy that will allow for higher density, transit-oriented development along the San Pablo Avenue corridor. The following plans and actions have been developed and taken to transform El Cerrito's land use patterns to a compact, pedestrian-friendly community. An upcoming *General Plan Update* will further integrate these plans and the policies in this CAP.

- The *El Cerrito General Plan* (1999);
- Designation of the San Pablo Avenue corridor as a regional Priority Development Area (PDA) in 2007;
- The *Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation Plan* (2007);
- The *Ohlone Greenway Master Plan* (2009); and
- The *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan* (under review).

However, these planning efforts can only bear fruit in a market that can support such development. The land, buildings, and infrastructure along the City's transit corridors are under utilized and do not meet present market conditions for higher density and multi-family development. As such, the success of El Cerrito's transportation and planning initiatives will rely heavily on private sector investment, as well as strategic investments from the public sector to create an attractive environment for multi-family development.

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\* National Research Council. *Driving and the Built Environment: The Effects of Compact Development on Motorized Travel, Energy Use, and CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions*. Special Report 298. 2009.

## Objective SC-1.1:

Update the El Cerrito General Plan and other applicable plans and ordinances to allow greater residential and commercial density along major transportation corridors and establish Transit Oriented Development (TOD) near both BART stations.

Adopted in 1999, El Cerrito’s *General Plan* provides the policy framework for more compact, pedestrian-friendly urban development along transportation corridors. Since then, the City has continued to study the relationship between market demand and residential/commercial densities, developing both the *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan* and TOD studies to further define the balance between densities, building heights, and parking requirements along San Pablo Avenue. These studies confirm that multi-family residential development is the “highest and best use” along the corridor, but there remains a need for greater residential density, parking demand management.

Under SB 375, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) are developing a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), entitled *Plan Bay Area*, as part of a regional process that intends to harmonize the Regional Transportation Plan with land use and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The strategy looks at modeled VMT reductions from different growth scenarios throughout the Bay Area and proposes transportation and RHNA goals to achieve them. According to these scenarios, El Cerrito will grow to include 1,400 additional households and 700 new jobs between 2010 and 2040, with the San Pablo Avenue Priority Development Area (PDA) absorbing 95% of this local growth.<sup>†</sup> This is consistent with the density increase being investigated as part of the *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan* and *General Plan* update.<sup>‡</sup>



Mixed-use, compact development along San Pablo Avenue

Strategies to implement this objective include:

- E** Utilize the results of the *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan* and TOD studies to inform the *General Plan Update*.
- E** Continue to participate in the development of the Bay Area SCS’s *Plan Bay Area* process.

- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

<sup>†</sup> ABAG, MTC. *Plan Bay Area: Preferred Land Use and Transportation Investment Strategy*. May 2012.

<sup>‡</sup> The *Plan Bay Area* projection for El Cerrito is actually less than the generic growth projections contained in the ABAG 2009 *Projections and Priorities* report that was used to develop the CAP’s BAU growth scenario.

- E** Position El Cerrito to be competitive for SCS *Plan Bay Area* Grants by developing a *Complete Streets Plan* and implementing the City’s 2007-2014 *Housing Element* to facilitate the development of housing to meet regional housing needs.
- E** Continue to pursue developments of TOD in both the Del Norte Station area and El Cerrito Plaza areas.
- P** Partner with all regional transportation agencies serving west Contra Costa County to develop a congestion relief plan that mitigates automobile and parking impacts at the Del Norte Station area.

## Objective SC-1.2:

**Create planning mechanisms and development standards to encourage the right mix of high density, mixed-use and affordable housing development along major transportation corridors.**

In 2011 the City conducted a feasibility analysis for multi-family housing along the corridor, taking into account the unique market forces and land constraints affecting development in El Cerrito. A key recommendation of this study is that many factors impact the density, and perception thereof, of projects, such as requirements governing setbacks, open space, parking ratios, and ground floor uses and design. “Rather than choosing the ‘perfect’ density for the corridor, focus on creating the design guidelines that create a livable neighborhood for all residents.”<sup>§</sup>

### Strategies include:

- E** Strive to meet the City’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation goal for 2014 and 2012.
- P** Develop regulatory programs and incentives, such as an inclusionary housing ordinance<sup>¶</sup> and/or other innovative approaches to ensuring the creation of mixed-income housing in new multi-family development.
- P** Develop strategies to streamline planning entitlement processes in targeted PDA areas.
- P** Revise development standards along major transportation corridors to encourage higher density development.
- E** Prioritize potential development sites along the Avenue and work with owners to redevelop their parcels.
- E** Assist and collaborate with non-profit, private and public entities to maximize opportunities to develop affordable housing.

**E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects

**P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

§ AECOM. “El Cerrito Development Feasibility Analysis,” Memorandum to Lori Trevino, City of El Cerrito. November 28, 2010.

¶ Inclusionary housing policies require a certain percentage of all new housing to be made affordable to lower income households, enabling cities and counties to provide a fair share of the region’s low and moderate income housing need.

## Objective SC-1.3:

Develop and implement a parking demand management strategy in TOD areas that both responds to market conditions and encourages higher density development along transit-oriented corridors and alternatives to driving.

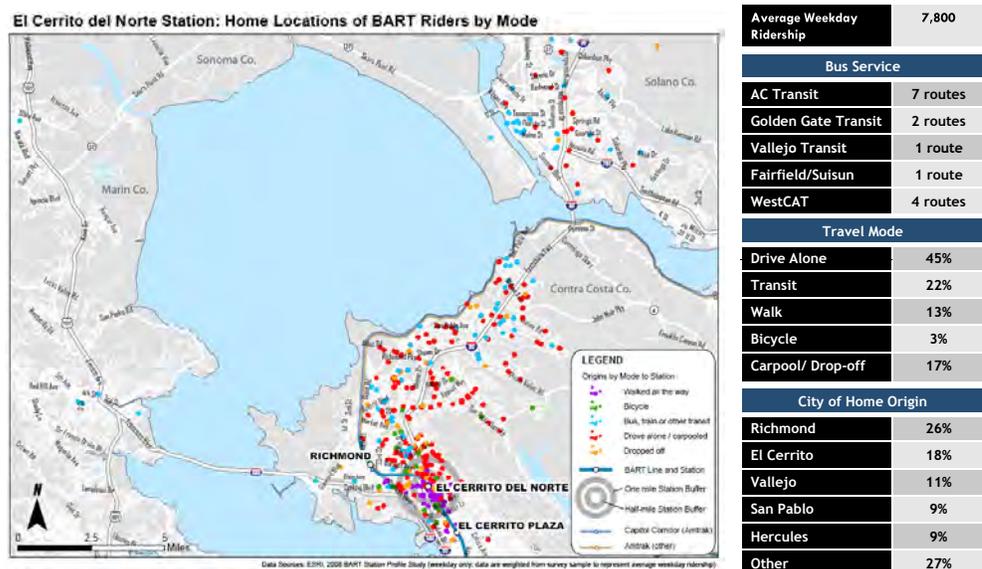
While El Cerrito does not currently have enough demand for parking in its business districts to merit near-term parking management strategies (except during commute hours near the BART stations), a strategy to phase in parking demand management will help maximize its effectiveness as a GHG reduction tool. El Cerrito’s TOD feasibility study concluded that with higher residential densities around the BART Stations, San Pablo Avenue would become more urban in character, leading to a reduction in car ownership and increased pedestrian-oriented commercial activity. By managing the existing parking supply more effectively while densifying the corridor, demand for parking would decline.

### Strategies include:

- P** Consider instituting parking pricing strategies around the BART stations, particularly the Del Norte Station where a majority of commuters drive alone to the Station and come from outside El Cerrito and other adjacent cities.
- P** Allow building owners to unbundle parking to be rented separately from the building space.
- P** Allow on-street parking to meet off-street parking requirements.
- P** Consider instituting flexible parking requirements for transit-oriented development that provides services, infrastructure and/or mitigations to reduce parking demand, such as:

- Access to car sharing and bicycle sharing programs;
- Dedicated parking for low carbon fuel vehicles;
- Resident and/or employee transit incentives;
- Certification under regional trip reduction programs; and
- Higher than required bicycle parking.

**Fig. 3.1: Del Norte BART Station. Home Locations of BART Riders by Mode**



See Appendix K: Home Locations of BART Riders by Mode for a larger format version of this graphic



## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GOAL #2:

**Increase El Cerrito’s economic base to create more jobs, encourage greater vitality and more pedestrian-friendly economic activity.**

The Climate Action Survey conducted by the City in 2010 revealed that an overwhelming majority of respondents (90%) drove alone 80% of the time to conduct errands and recreate. If the City is to reduce the emissions resulting from these trips, we will need to create an urban form that supports pedestrian-friendly economic and recreational activity. Urban design research further underscores this need, indicating that the density of businesses in a district is a key driver of pedestrian activity.\*\* In addition, as the regional Sustainable Communities Strategy is implemented, it will become increasingly important for El Cerrito to create more of a jobs/housing balance by attracting jobs closer to home. The following objectives will help reduce vehicle miles traveled as well as help support the wider goal of increasing El Cerrito’s economic vitality.

### Objective SC-2.1:

**Create a physical environment and stronger sense of place that supports high quality, walkable commercial and retail development and invites people to spend time in El Cerrito’s commercial areas.**

Strategies include:

- E** Continue to pursue projects in such nodes of activity as the Theater Block, the El Cerrito Plaza area, Midtown, and Del Norte to identify El Cerrito’s portion of San Pablo Avenue as a special place of dynamic activity.
- E** Create a reason for people to shop in El Cerrito by developing a unique El Cerrito experience that builds upon local assets.
- E** Link the City’s main commercial nodes through a network of open space, public art, and other cultural and historic amenities that encourage people to linger longer.
- E** Develop and implement design guidelines that promote a pedestrian-friendly commercial environment along transit-oriented nodes, such as allowing and encouraging outdoor seating and activities that enliven the street.
- P** Pursue innovative street parking solutions that support pedestrian access.

**E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects

**P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

\*\* “The number of businesses per acre is the single most robust indicator of whether people are likely to walk in their neighborhood. We find that people living in neighborhoods with more business establishments per acre conduct more of their travel within their neighborhood and are more likely to travel by walking.” Boarnet, Marlon G. et al. “Retrofitting the Suburbs to Increase Walking.” *Access Magazine*, Vol. 39, Fall 2011. University of California Transportation Center.

## Objective SC-2.2:

Enhance neighborhood-serving commercial nodes and encourage the development of commercial spaces in mixed-use areas that can better serve the daily needs of residents, businesses and people who work in El Cerrito.

Strategies include:

- E** Identify nodes and properties in commercial corridors that are economically feasible for commercial and/or mixed-use development.
- P** Develop conceptual area plans for priority nodes that communicate the City’s vision, goals and expectations to the development community.
- P** Develop study areas to more fully realize the potential for neighborhood-scale commercial nodes, such as the Stockton and the upper and lower Fairmount areas, as part of the next *General Plan* update process.

## Objective SC-2.3:

Encourage existing businesses to adopt environmentally friendly practices, and attract “green economy” businesses to El Cerrito.

Strategies include:

- E** Participate in the regional Green Business Program and support projects and policies to promote resource efficiency, waste reduction and pollution prevention in the commercial sector.
- P** Develop a business attraction strategy that investigates the types of “green economy” businesses (for example, community food enterprises or green building supplies and services) that would be successful in El Cerrito.
- P** Support the development of a local food economy<sup>††</sup> in El Cerrito by:
  - Recruiting local food enterprises to locate in El Cerrito; and
  - Expanding the frequency and enhancing the quality of local farmers’ markets.

### Hyper-Local Markets Provide Big Economic Boost

“There’s good evidence to show that community food enterprises generally provide more jobs—two to four times the amount per dollar of sales—and generate more income and wealth for their communities than non-locally owned businesses, even ones that source goods from the area.”

Michael Schuman  
*Community Food Enterprise: Local Success in the World Marketplace*

- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

<sup>††</sup> Finz, Stacy. “Hyper-local Markets Provide Big Economic Boost.” SFGate. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 Dec. 2011. Web. 26 Oct. 2012



### **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GOAL #3:**

**Continue to invest in infrastructure that invites people to walk, bike, and take transit more in El Cerrito.**

Since 2005, El Cerrito has taken great strides in laying the foundation for an environment that encourages people to use their cars less. The *Circulation Plan for Bicyclists and Pedestrians*, the *Citywide Pedestrian Safety Assessment*, and the *Ohlone Greenway Master Plan* aim to create attractive and safe routes for walkers and bikers throughout the City. The improvements along San Pablo Avenue Street help transform our City’s main street from a state highway commercial strip to an attractive, pedestrian-oriented space with its own sense of place. These improvements, detailed in *Figure 3.3, San Pablo Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project*, won the City the International City/County Management Association’s Community Sustainability Program Excellence Award in 2012 (see page 35).

However, these accomplishments are just the beginning, as vehicle ridership still dominates the transportation mode split in El Cerrito. Compared to vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users comprise only 12% of mode split along San Pablo Avenue in 2012.\*\* Increasing the number of connections (or “connectivity”) across San Pablo Avenue and between our commercial districts, the Ohlone Greenway and our neighborhoods will facilitate use of other transportation choices by developing a safer and more convenient infrastructure for those not driving a car.

### **Objective SC-3.1:**

**Create design standards for developments in commercial areas to require pedestrian-friendly improvements.**

Strategies include:

- E** Develop design standards to improve building facades so that they are pedestrian-scaled with windows and entries along the pedestrian frontages.
- P** Encourage the creation of both privately and publicly maintained pedestrian right-of-ways between San Pablo Ave and neighboring streets and amenities in order to break up long blocks and increase the number of pedestrian connections per block.

**E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects

**P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

\*\* Fehrs and Peers, “Mode Split Along San Pablo Avenue.” Memorandum to City of El Cerrito Public Works Department. May 29, 2012.

## Objective SC-3.2:

Maintain and expand an active program of streetscape improvements that enhance the pedestrian environment, character and continuity of residential and commercial districts and create greater connectivity between residential and commercial districts.

Strategies include:

- E** Identify and pursue additional opportunities to create and/or modify city street crossings, long blocks, and other city right of ways (pedestrian trails and stairs) to increase pedestrian and bicyclist convenience.
- E** Participate in regional efforts to create a wayfinding signage program connecting neighborhoods and the Ohlone Greenway to major transportation hubs.
- E** Develop a wayfinding signage program to promote use of pedestrian trails and stairs, especially as a way to improve pedestrian access to schools and transit.

## Objective SC-3.3:

Continue implementation of the *Ohlone Greenway Master Plan* and create greater connections between the Greenway, San Pablo Avenue and other regional trail networks.

The Ohlone Greenway Master Plan, adopted in 2009, sets forth the vision of how the Ohlone Greenway will evolve and develop over time, provides design guidelines, and prioritizes public improvements to maximize the public's safety, use, and enjoyment of this major pedestrian and bicycle path connecting the entire length of the City.

Strategies include:

- E** Secure funding to design and develop key "Activity Areas" as defined in the *Ohlone Greenway Master Plan*.
- P** Encourage the creation of pedestrian right-of-ways and bicycle facilities between San Pablo Avenue and the Greenway to increase connectivity, including the redesign of parcels as they redevelop and create partnerships or incentives for existing businesses to incorporate such access.
- E** Develop a comprehensive way-finding information program to inform Ohlone Greenway and other pedestrian users about connections to San Pablo Avenue and surrounding destinations.



Wayfinding signs installed as part of the San Pablo Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project.

- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

## Objective SC-3.4:

### Expand and improve the City’s transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and zero-emission vehicle infrastructure.

The City received funding in 2012 to update to the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan (Bike/Ped Plan)*, which is anticipated to be completed in 2014. During the community input process for the CAP, participants provided the following suggestions for improving El Cerrito’s bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, which will be reviewed as part of the Bike/Ped Plan update:

- Expand the City’s network of bicycle facilities, including adding bicycle boulevards to the network;
- Establish a network of bicycle rental stations, especially to connect the two BART Stations with Midtown/City Hall and the Community Center;
- Provide access to more secure bicycle storage near BART, shopping and recreational facilities;
- Increase the requirements for secure bicycle parking for new development;
- Partner with BART to expand and enhance pedestrian and bicycle access to BART stations, including better and safer connections between the Ohlone Greenway and the stations; and
- Develop strategies for facilitating greater bicycle and pedestrian connections between transit facilities along San Pablo Avenue and the hillside neighborhoods, such as encouraging casual carpool sites, an electric “zoo train,” or funicular on major east-west corridors to get people up and down the hills to and from BART.

In addition, the City plans to develop its first San Pablo Avenue Complete Streets Plan. The purpose of the Complete Streets Plan is to provide a consistent set of objectives, policies, and implementation measures to provide for a well-connected, safe and convenient multi-modal transportation network that serves travelers of all ages and abilities.

### Strategies include:

- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- E** Update the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan* (to be completed in 2014). The update will focus on corridors and key intersections identified for additional evaluation in the previous plan; identify new design standards and traffic control methods; integrate Climate Action and Complete Streets Policies; and prioritize improvements.
- E** Develop the *San Pablo Avenue Complete Streets Plan* and incorporate plan elements into the *General Plan Update*. Elements of the Plan include:
  - Goals for future mode share and level of investment needed to achieve these goals;
  - Performance and level-of-service standards for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes;
  - New street and intersection design standards that specifically consider incorporation of bicycle, ADA, and pedestrian facilities, transit accessibility and transit priority
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

measures, streets trees and planting strips, and traffic calming measures;

- Alternative Performance Measures/Multi-Modal Transportation Service Objectives for next update to *West County Action Plan for Routes of Regional Significance*; and
- Integration with the *Caltrans Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan*, which applies to state highway system, including San Pablo Avenue.

**P** Work in conjunction with regional efforts to support the development of electric vehicle charging stations in appropriate locations throughout El Cerrito.

## Objective SC-3.5:

Collaborate with the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC), BART, AC Transit and WestCAT, major employers, and schools to support improvements and greater access to transit facilities throughout El Cerrito.

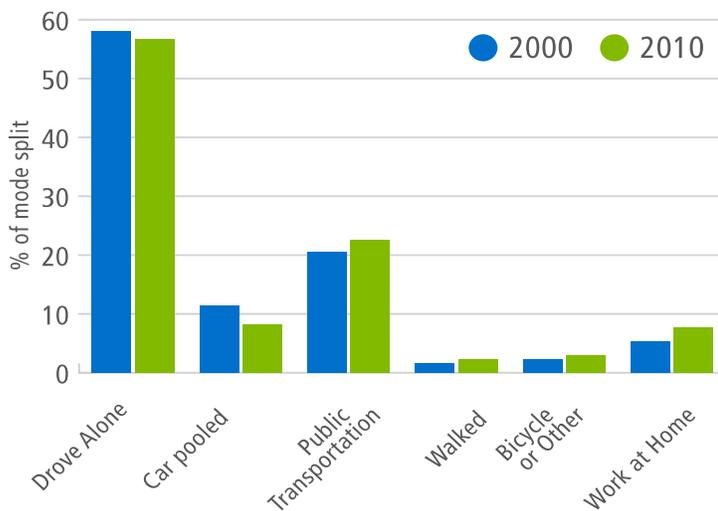
Strategies include:

**E** Seek grant opportunities to implement improvements identified in the West County Transportation Enhancement and Transit Wayfinding Projects and to fund pilot projects that increase access to transit.

**E** Work with WCCTAC, 511 Contra Costa, employers, shopping centers, and schools in El Cerrito and nearby communities (such as Berkeley National Lab’s new Richmond Field Campus) to develop commuter trip reduction programs to decrease single-occupant vehicle use in EL Cerrito’s transit, commercial , and educational centers.

**P** Identify and help mitigate barriers, such as lack of access to high speed broadband in business centers, to employers being able to use high tech solutions, such as video conferencing, to cut down on business travel.

**Fig. 3.2: El Cerrito Means of Transportation to Work (2000 & 2010 Census Data)**



**E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects

**P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

Fig 3.3: San Pablo Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project

# SAN PABLO AVENUE STREETScape PROJECT

## EL CERRITO, CALIFORNIA

RECIPIENT OF THE 2012 ICMA COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM EXCELLENCE AWARD

INNOVATION, EXCELLENCE, AND SUCCESS IN BALANCING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL NEEDS

EL CERRITO

San Pablo Avenue Corridor

El Cerrito Hills

San Francisco Bay

San Pablo Avenue

Cutting Blvd

Potrero Avenue

Phase 2

Madison Ave

Phase 1

Mundy Ave

Monterey Lane

Shannon Ave

Central Avenue

New signage and median planting create gateway to the City

Sidewalk tiles tell the history of El Cerrito

Improved crossings for pedestrian safety

Wayfinding signage orients visitors to the City

Historic theater highlighted with special paving

75 new bike racks encourage healthier transportation choices

Over 300 newly planted trees for beauty, shade and air quality

LED streetlights save 63,000 kwh/year

Interpretive displays in English, Spanish and Chinese explain how raingardens improve stormwater quality

Streetscape improvements help attract private investment and support new businesses



#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GOAL #4:

Increase and enhance urban green and open space to protect biodiversity, conserve natural resources, conserve water, foster walking and bicycling, and improve the health and quality of life for residents and people who work in El Cerrito.

During public input for the CAP, urban greening was raised as an important element in both curbing the causes of climate change and in helping the community and its ecosystems adapt to its impacts. Urban greening is a key strategy for:

- Reducing vehicle miles by creating a more walkable, interconnected and well-programmed network of green spaces;
- Reducing the need for energy intensive inputs for landscaping by fostering easier to maintain, drought tolerant and native landscapes;
- Sequestering carbon and mitigating urban heat islands by expanding the urban forest canopy;
- Providing more opportunities for local food production through community gardens, especially as the San Pablo Avenue corridor begins to accommodate higher density development;
- Mitigating the impacts of heavy winter downpours and flooding by reducing impervious paving through rain gardens, bio-swales, and increased open space;
- Maintaining biodiversity by protecting habitats and providing wildlife corridors to increase the likelihood that native ecosystems will be able to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

### Objective SC-4.1:

Develop a comprehensive *Urban Greening Plan* to guide the development, programming, and maintenance of the City’s public open spaces and green infrastructure and to identify additional or different types of green spaces needed to support urban infill development.

*The City received grant funding in 2012 to develop the Urban Greening Plan -- integrate aspects of the Plan into the General Plan Update.*

Aspects of the plan include:

- E** A needs assessment of green and open space in El Cerrito;
- E** Updated Master Street Tree List, City planting palettes, and a Park Planting Maintenance Guidelines;
- E** Policy recommendations;
- E** List of potential urban greening and open space projects.

- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

## Objective SC-4.2:

Promote Bay-Friendly<sup>§§</sup> tree planting and landscaping, and the creation of green and open space that is attractive and helps restore natural processes, sequester carbon, clean storm water, conserve resources, and connect citizens to El Cerrito's natural environment.

Strategies include:

- P** Update the Urban Forestry Management plan to diversify tree species, implement successive replanting and standardize best management practices in order to maintain and enhance a community forest that contributes to a sustainable environment.
- P** To lead by example, develop a policy for City maintained landscapes to follow the principles of Bay-Friendly design and maintenance.
- E** To enforce the regional clean water requirements and the State's Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance, ensure that ecologically beneficial storm water retention systems (rain gardens) and water conservation features are integrated into the design of landscapes for applicable new developments.
- P** Conduct education and outreach to encourage the voluntary development of Bay-Friendly landscapes, rain gardens and water conservation features in projects not required by ordinance to do so.
- E** Encourage and support the development of community gardens in order to increase access to healthy, affordable local foods.
- P** Seek funding to increase the urban forest through a variety of programs, including a street tree planting and stewardship program.

**E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects

**P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects



Community members build a demonstration community garden on Earth Day 2012.

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§§ Bay-Friendly landscaping is a holistic approach to gardening and landscaping that fosters soil health, conserves water, minimizes maintenance requirements, and uses a plant pallet that is well suited for the natural conditions of the San Francisco Bay Area.



## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GOAL #5:

Develop alternative transportation outreach, education, and incentive campaigns tailored to El Cerrito.

Many of the land use, urban design and economic development strategies articulated in the CAP will help El Cerrito switch to more sustainable forms of transportation, playing a greater role in reducing GHG emissions by 2035 as more of the City’s compact development goals are met. In the meantime, education and outreach to encourage residents, businesses, and workers to voluntarily switch some of their automobile trips to other modes of transportation will be more critical in achieving our 2020 goals.

### Objective SC-5.1:

Encourage residents and businesses to use vehicle trip reduction programs.

Trip reduction programs often include incentives for carpooling, taking transit, and bicycling, as well as employee orientation programs, event promotions, publications, flexible work schedules for employees, transit subsidies, parking cash-out or priced parking, shuttles, and “guaranteed ride home” programs for carpoolers. These types of programs are provided in El Cerrito by 511 Contra Costa.



Alberrito Street Play Day on Ashbury Street and Key Route Boulevard

#### Strategies include:

- E** Work with WCCTAC, 511 Contra Costa, and other transportation agencies to promote their programs to El Cerrito’s business and residential communities.
- P** Create a welcome packet for new businesses and residents in El Cerrito, which will provide information on trip reduction options, as well as bicycling and pedestrian amenities, in El Cerrito.
- E** Pursue funding to develop trip reduction incentive and education programs specific to El Cerrito and to increase community participation in such events as Bike-to-Work Day.

### Objective SC-5.2:

Develop and implement other programs and campaigns that are known to increase biking and walking, such as “Sunday Streets”, Bike Rodeos and Safety Classes etc.

#### Strategies include:

- E** Enhance and expand the City’s “Street Play” days, such as the Alberrito Street Play Day, to include more events and other neighborhoods.

- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

- E** Expanding on the success of Bike-To-Work Day, sponsor a variety of “Bike-To” or “Walk-To” events that link biking and walking to everyday activities, such as shopping, recycling and recreating.
- P** Promote organized hiking events to increase use and awareness of the City’s pedestrian paths and trail network.

Goal #	Fig. 3.4: Sustainable Community (SC)	Annual Tons CO <sub>2</sub> e Reduced	
		by 2020	by 2035
	Summary of Goal and Objectives		
SC-1	Encourage higher density TOD and infill development on transportation corridors		
SC-1.1	Update General Plan and other applicable plans and ordinances to support higher densities along major transportation corridors		
SC-1.2	Develop planning mechanisms to encourage development of higher densities in designated areas		
SC-1.3	Develop a parking demand management strategy to encourage high density development and alternatives to driving		
SC-2	Diversify El Cerrito’s economy to increase El Cerrito’s job base, create greater commercial vitality and more pedestrian-friendly economic activity		
SC-2.1	Create a walkable physical environment that invites people to spend time in El Cerrito’s commercial areas		
SC-2.2	Enhance neighborhood-serving commercial nodes and encourage commercial spaces in mixed-use areas.		
SC-2.3	Encourage adoption of green business practices and attract “green economy” businesses to El Cerrito	10,027	20,378
SC-3	Invest in pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly infrastructure		
SC-3.1	Create design standards for bicycle and pedestrian friendly design		
SC-3.2	Maintain an active streetscape improvement and maintenance program		
SC-3.3	Continue implementation of the Ohlone Greenway Master Plan		
SC-3.4	Expand and improve the City’s bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure		
SC-3.5	Work with regional agencies to support improvements and greater access to transit facilities in El Cerrito		
SC-4	Increase and enhance urban green and open space		
SC-4.1	Develop a comprehensive Urban Greening Plan		
SC-4.2	Promote Bay Friendly tree planting and landscaping and open and green spaces, including community gardens		
SC-5	Develop alternative transportation outreach and incentive programs to increase the number of trips made by walking, biking or taking transit.		
SC-5.1	Encourage residents and businesses to adopt trip reduction programs		
SC-5.2	Develop education and outreach campaigns and events to promote walking, biking and taking transit	242	443
TLU-State	State transportation measures: fuel efficiency & low carbon content	14,189	27,167
	Total Sustainable Community Reductions Identified (Tons CO <sub>2</sub> e)	24,458	47,988

# Energy and Water

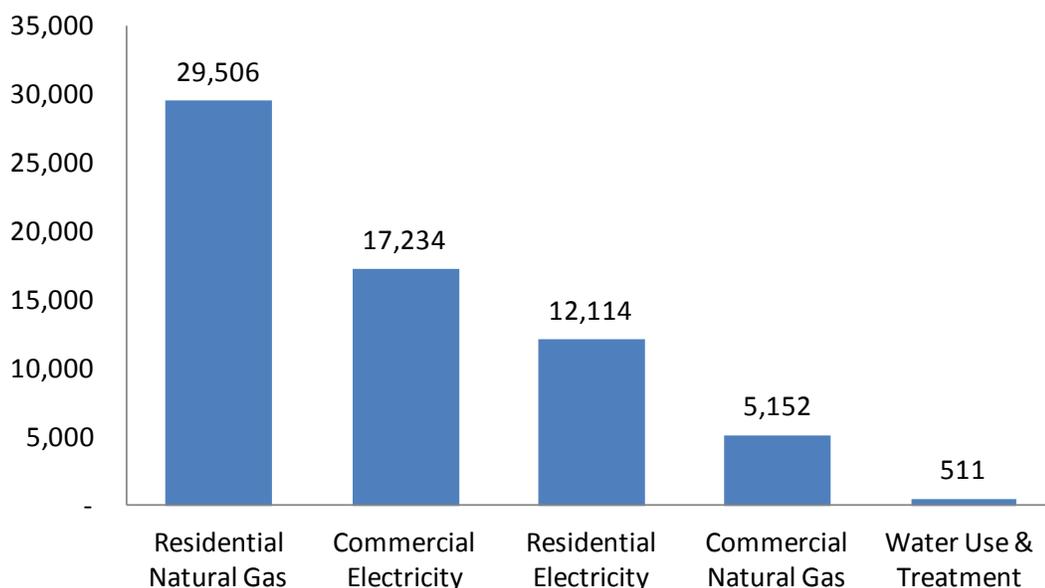
The electricity, natural gas, and water we use to keep our economy going and our built environment maintained, comfortable, and attractive are also major sources of GHG emissions. As discussed in *Chapter 2, El Cerrito’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, natural gas used to heat our buildings is the second largest source of emissions, followed by electricity and then water use, which places a distant third. While the water we use for both interior and exterior applications is not a significant source of GHG emissions, the likelihood of more frequent water shortages in the future calls for more efficient use of this valuable resource. Investing in ways to more sustainably source and use energy and water not only reduces our GHG emissions, but also improves our building stock, reduces our energy costs, and secures our long-term energy and water future.

There are a number of ways to reduce GHG emissions from energy and water use. These include:

- Optimizing energy and water efficiency in new construction;
- Retrofitting existing buildings to reduce energy and water consumption;
- Promoting energy and water conservation and efficiency through education and incentive programs; and
- Advancing the use of renewable energy and grey water systems.

As these methods to increase energy and water efficiency in buildings are similar, we have combined them into the same set of goals. *Figure 3.6*, at the end of this section, summarizes the goals and objectives for energy and water use, including annual GHG emissions reductions associated with each.

**Fig. 3.5: GHG Emissions from Energy and Water Use (2005)**





### ENERGY/WATER GOAL #1:

Reduce energy and water use by 20% of the 2005 baseline in existing residential and commercial buildings by 2020.

Nearly 30% of El Cerrito’s current greenhouse gas emissions come from our residential buildings, with two thirds of that stemming from the natural gas use, as shown in *Figure 3.5, GHG Emissions from Energy and Water Use*. This is due primarily to the fact that the vast majority of El Cerrito’s houses were built prior to enactment of California’s energy

efficiency standards. Built between the 1940s and the 1970s, most homes in El Cerrito lack proper insulation, leak heat, and/or have leaky furnace ducts and antiquated heating systems. If properly retrofitted and insulated, these homes could use 20% to 60% less natural gas, significantly cutting winter energy bills.

**By weatherizing their homes, El Cerrito residents could be using 20%-60% less natural gas, drastically cutting winter energy bills.**

The next largest source of emissions is El Cerrito’s commercial and institutional building electricity use. El Cerrito’s commercial building stock varies greatly, ranging from BART stations to big box retail to small store fronts. This variety will necessitate of a more customized approach to providing efficiency and clean energy services to lower emissions.

Reducing energy and water use in El Cerrito’s existing building stock will require a combination of education programs, incentives, new financing tools, and regulations. During the public input process, most participants favored an implementation approach that emphasized education and incentives to achieve our goals, with the option of using a more regulatory approach at later phases if voluntary measures fell short.

### Objective EW-1.1:

**Pursue opportunities to actively promote energy and water efficiency education and incentive programs in El Cerrito.**

El Cerrito does not have the dedicated resources to adequately operate energy and water efficiency education and incentive programs; therefore, all efforts to do so will be pursued in conjunction with outside sources, such as through grant funding and partnerships with state, regional and utility programs.

- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

#### Strategies include:

- P** Structure building permit fees, processes, and requirements to incentivize greater adoption of energy efficiency, clean energy, and water conservation improvements.
- E** Develop partnerships with PG&E, EBMUD, ABAG, Contra Costa County Weatherization

and Green Business Programs, and East Bay Energy Watch to bring residential energy and water efficiency technical assistance and incentives to El Cerrito.

- P** Create a low-cost marketing strategy to encourage resident participation in energy and water efficiency programs.
- E** Work with regional, county, state and federal policy makers to ensure small local governments have access to dedicated energy efficiency funding.
- E** Apply for appropriate grants for marketing, outreach and incentive programs dedicated to energy and water efficiency in El Cerrito.



About 75% of El Cerrito homes are not adequately insulated. By properly sealing and insulating just the attic, homeowners could cut natural gas use by as much as 30%.

## Objective EW-1.2:

**Promote financing strategies that will encourage property owners to make energy efficiency and other clean energy investments in their properties.**

In order to bring down the up-front costs associated with installing efficiency and/or renewable energy projects, private and public agencies have been partnering to create new financing tools, most notably PACE\* financing, to help residents and businesses make clean energy improvements on their properties. Similarly, PG&E provides financing for energy efficiency improvements in commercial buildings, in which the loan is paid off as a portion of the monthly energy bill at 0% interest.

### Strategies include:

- P** Pursue commercial PACE financing in conjunction with other public entities.
- P** Adopt residential PACE financing if it becomes available in California.
- P** Promote and help market on-bill financing by the utility companies to sectors where this service is available.



In a business, lighting efficiency upgrades are some of the most cost-effective ways to save energy and reduce costs.

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\* Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) is a financing mechanism offered by local government entities to provide sustainable energy project loans to qualified property owners, who then repay the loans through a tax assessment on their property for up to 20 years. PACE is currently only available for commercial properties.

## Objective EW-1.3:

Utilize existing points of interaction with the City to encourage and/or require cost-effective energy and water efficiency improvements.

Strategies include:

- P** Structure building permit fees and requirements to incentivize greater adoption of energy and water efficiency improvements.
- P** Encourage or require a home energy performance report at time of sale in order to promote better understanding of home comfort, indoor air quality, and utility costs.
- P** Encourage or require improvements to a building's energy or water performance during major renovation, sale, or certain types of improvements.
- P** Encourage compliance with AB 1103, which requires disclosure of an EPA Energy Star rating at time of sale or lease in commercial buildings.

### Climate Action in El Cerrito Since 2005

#### Energy and Water Use in the Community

Since 2005, El Cerrito, its residents, businesses and institutions have taken the following actions to reduce energy and water use.

- The City offered the El Cerrito Home Energy Assessment rebate to help residents qualify for the EnergyUpgrade California Program, achieving the 2nd highest number of Energy Upgrade participants (43) out of all cities in Contra Costa County.
- Worked with PG&E and the East Bay Energy Watch Program to complete energy efficiency upgrades in 135 El Cerrito businesses.
- Residents reduced their water consumption by 20% since 2005.

**E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects

**P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects



## ENERGY/WATER GOAL #2:

Encourage new construction to build to a higher level of green building, energy and water efficiency than required by California code.

As an already built-out community, El Cerrito currently has relatively few new construction projects. However, in order to accommodate transit-oriented development, new growth will primarily occur through urban infill development along the San Pablo Avenue corridor. The City can influence the GHG emissions associated with new construction, while also increasing building quality, by linking local development standards to nationally and regionally recognized, voluntary green building standards. These standards include the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), Build It Green’s Green Point Rated (Green Points), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Energy Star Buildings and Benchmarking Program (Energy Star). This action will also support the State’s goal for achieving “zero-net energy” in new buildings,<sup>†</sup> in which efficiency and on-site energy generation are combined to significantly reduce energy use in both residential and commercial buildings.

### Objective EW-2.1:

Encourage new construction to be built to green building, energy, and/or water performance standards contained in LEED, Green Points, and Energy Star.

Strategies include:

- P** To lead by example, require newly constructed city buildings and projects receiving City funds to be built to a minimum LEED Silver certification and to strive towards net-zero energy design (discussed in more depth under *Chapter 5, Municipal Climate Action*).
- P** Simplify project review and permit approval processes to encourage the use of net-zero energy design and water conservation strategies such as rain water catchment and grey water systems.
- P** Encourage access to education and technical assistance through energy and water utility programs such as PG&E’s Savings by Design and Zero-Net Energy Buildings, and EBMUD’s Water Smart Program.
- P** Link participants to incentives, such as recognition and rebate programs.
- P** Assess feasibility of adopting higher energy efficiency (also known as “reach codes”) and/or green building requirements, as recommended by the California Green Building Code.

- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

<sup>†</sup> California Public Utilities Commission, *California Long Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan*. September 2008.



### ENERGY/WATER GOAL #3:

Reduce reliance on fossil fuel based energy by increasing renewable energy use throughout El Cerrito.

#### Objective EW-3.1:

Develop and implement a strategy to facilitate greater adoption of solar and renewable energy use in the residential and commercial sectors.

The rate at which El Cerrito’s residents, businesses, and institutions are installing renewable energy systems each year is accelerating. In 2005 and 2006, the City issued no permits to install either a solar photovoltaic (PV) or a solar hot water system. By 2011, the City issued 30 solar permits, an increase of 36% from the year before. Solar is well-suited to El Cerrito’s climate and suburban/urban form and could offset most of a typical household’s electricity use. As the economics of solar continue to improve, the City can play an important role in encouraging the adoption of solar.



Solar is well suited to El Cerrito’s climate and could offset most of a typical household’s electricity use.

#### Strategies include:

- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

- P** Streamline, to the extent possible, the permit process for installing solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems.
- E** Continue participation in the East Bay Green Corridor’s regional solar permitting streamlining efforts.
- P** Provide educational workshops for residents and businesses on assessing the feasibility of using renewable energy to offset their grid-tied electricity use.
- P** Work with local financial institutions, solar vendors, and community groups to develop a program to lower costs of solar for El Cerrito residents and businesses, based on models developed by the cities of San Francisco and San Jose.
- P** Pursue funding resources to develop and implement an El Cerrito Go Solar program containing the elements listed above.

## Strategy EW-3.2:

Participate in regional efforts to provide a higher percentage of electricity from renewable sources than otherwise provided.

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) is an energy procurement framework that allows groups of municipalities to procure electricity to meet the collective load of their residents and businesses. CCAs provide municipalities with access to the wholesale power market to meet their desired electricity supply portfolio, while still having the local utility provide transmission and distribution services. CCAs can provide their residents and businesses with lower electricity costs, a greater ability to spur renewable energy development, better and more locally appropriate access to energy efficiency and renewable energy incentives, and reduced GHG emissions.

In 2010, Marin Clean Energy (MCE) launched California's first CCA, which is now purchasing electricity that is 65% carbon-free, including 35% from renewable sources (compared to 20% from PG&E). In addition, MCE is providing competitive solar net-metering and feed-in tariff programs to incentivize customers to feed solar electricity into MCE's energy portfolio. Given the success of Marin Clean Energy, East Bay communities are taking a fresh look at instituting a CCA. Pursuing CCA on an individual basis is not practical for small jurisdictions such as El Cerrito; however, El Cerrito could opt-in to a regional CCA. The City of Richmond recently joined MCE, which will be rolling out services to Richmond residents and businesses beginning in 2013.

### Strategies include:

- P** Explore opportunities for instituting or joining a regional Community Choice Aggregation effort.

**E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects

**P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects



#### **ENERGY/WATER GOAL #4:**

**Partner with local, regional, and state agencies to encourage water conservation and efficiency.**

As annual temperatures continue to rise, the Sierra Nevada snowpack will decrease, putting stress on California’s water supply. There are a number of water-efficiency strategies that will help optimize our use of potable water. In addition to conserving this essential resource, water efficiency strategies can reduce costs to residents and businesses that are currently using inefficient appliances and landscaping practices. Given that the majority of El Cerrito’s water use is for irrigation, the strategies below emphasize water conservation practices in landscaping.



The new Recycling + Environmental Resource Center is EL Cerrito’s first LEED Platinum facility. Green building features include zero-net energy use, rain water catchment, rain gardens, and a Bay-Friendly native plantings.

#### **Objective EW-4.1:**

**Pursue opportunities to actively promote water conservation and efficiency programs in commercial and residential buildings and landscapes.**

Strategies include:

- P** Provide educational workshops for City staff, residents and businesses on water efficiency measures and Bay Friendly landscapes and maintenance practices.
- E** Enforce the State mandated Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance, in which new and rehabilitated landscapes with at least 2,500 sq. ft. of landscape area are required to meet an annual water budget.

#### **Objective EW-4.2:**

**Encourage the adoption of rainwater catchment and gray water irrigation systems in El Cerrito, consistent with California State code, to offset potable water use.**

Gray water and rain catchment systems can be used to offset potable water use in landscapes. Gray water is any water that has been used by a building user, except from kitchen sinks and toilets. Both gray water and rainwater catchment systems can range from the very simple to the complex and each should be done correctly. In order to help residents

adopt these beneficial measures, the City shall provide information about existing permitting process and consider easing permitting process , consistent with California State Code to encourage increased use of these systems.

Strategies include:

- P** Provide educational workshops for residents and businesses on installing and using rainwater catchment and gray water systems to reduce water use.
- P** Streamline, to the extent possible, the permit process for installing gray water and rainwater catchment systems.
- P** Structure building permit fees and requirements to incentivize greater adoption of water efficiency improvements.
- P** Seek grant opportunities to provide incentives for water conservation strategies.
- P** Work with East Bay Municipal Utility District to bring recycled water to El Cerrito.

Goal #	Fig. 3.6: Energy and Water Use (EW)	Annual Tons CO <sub>2</sub> e Reduced	
		by 2020	by 2035
	Summary of Goals and Objectives		
EW-1	Reduce energy and water use in existing buildings by 20%		
EW-1.1	Promote and provide energy and water efficiency education & incentive programs in El Cerrito	2,736	10,411
EW-1.2	Promote clean energy financing strategies for property owners	887	1,953
EW-1.3	Utilize existing points of interaction with the City to encourage and/or require cost-effective energy and water efficiency improvements	867	3,503
EW-2	Encourage new construction to build to a higher level of green building and energy efficiency than is required by California code		
EW-2.1	Encourage new construction to be built to green building, energy, and water performance standards	445	1,333
EW-3	Reduce reliance on fossil fuel based energy by increasing renewable energy use in El Cerrito		
EW-3.1	Facilitate greater adoption of renewable energy use	1,061	3,566
EW-3.2	Join a Community Choice Aggregation	4,242	6,868
EW-4	Encourage water conservation and efficiency and diversify the community's water supply.		
EW-4.1	Promote and provide water efficiency education & incentive programs in El Cerrito	63	95
EW-4.2	Encourage adoption of rainwater catchment and gray water irrigation systems		
EW-State	State Electricity Measures: Renewable Energy Standard	5,294	8,553
	Total EW Reductions Identified (Annual Tons CO <sub>2</sub> e)	15,595	36,282

# Waste Reduction

El Cerrito, as a community and a city, has a long history of taking proactive steps to reduce waste. In 1972 community members set up one of the first community recycling facilities in the nation, and soon thereafter the City instituted one of the first curbside recycling programs. By operating the Recycling Center and its curbside programs, the

City has been able to create a steady downward trend in the generation of solid waste. Between 2005 and 2011, per capita waste (including recyclables and green waste) dropped 17% at an annual average rate of -2.4%. This decline resulted in CO<sub>2</sub>e reductions of over 3,000 tons annually.\*

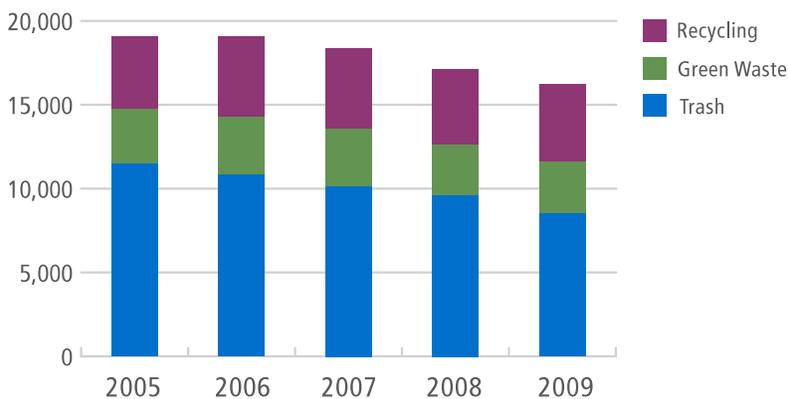
**Between 2005 and 2008, El Cerritans were able to reduce all waste by 12%, reducing CO<sub>2</sub>e by 3,228 tons per year. This is equivalent to permanently retiring 536 cars.**

Besides keeping waste in the landfill from emitting methane, waste reduction and recycling reduces GHGs in a variety of other ways. Recycling reduces the amount of embodied energy in a product by eliminating the need for extraction, transport, and pre-processing of raw materials. The use of compost derived from our foodscraps and green waste reduces the need for energy-intensive fertilizers and pesticides.

Finally, while emissions from land-filled waste only represents 5% of El Cerrito’s total 2005 inventory, waste is an indicator of a much larger source of emissions: the provision of food, consumer goods, and services. As described in Chapter 2, the embodied energy in the production and transport of food and other goods accounts for a large portion of El Cerrito’s carbon footprint. Absolute reductions in the amount of waste generated may also be an indication that El Cerritans are considering the waste implications of their

purchases.

**Fig. 3.7: El Cerrito Annual Tons of Waste, 2005-2009**



The waste reduction goals discussed below are based on projections of per capita waste generation in 2020 and assume that El Cerrito’s programs could divert between 25% and 50% of food scrap, green, and mixed waste from the landfill. *Figure 3.8 Waste Reduction Summary of Goals and Objectives*, at the end of this section, summarizes the potential for emissions reductions from waste reduction.

\* The CO<sub>2</sub>e of methane emissions from lifetime decomposition associated with waste in landfills, using the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Waste Reduction Model (WARM) software, as recommended by the BAAQMD.



## WASTE GOAL #1:

Reduce waste going to the landfill to a total of 4,000 tons by 2020 and to 2,000 tons of waste by 2035.

### Objective W-1.1:

Maximize participation in waste reduction curbside services in the residential, commercial, multi-family, and educational sectors.

According to the 2012 National Citizen’s Survey, between 96% of El Cerrito’s households participate in the City’s curbside recycling programs.<sup>†</sup> However, staff estimate that, as a subsector, businesses and multi-family apartments are participating at closer to 60% and 75%, respectively. These lower rates are due to a variety of challenges, including difficulties contacting the target audience for education and training. Commercial programs include the additional barrier of customized services for differing waste streams and logistics.

Since the majority of future development in El Cerrito will be higher density, mixed-use development along the San Pablo Avenue corridor, increased participation by businesses and apartment complexes is necessary for continued reductions in waste disposal.

In 2010 and 2011, the City introduced a food scraps composting curbside program and a new multi-family outreach and education campaign, which included the distribution of collapsible recycling bags to make storing recyclables and carrying them to common areas more convenient.



El Cerrito’s curb-side recycling and organics programs help the City lower the total amount of waste going to the landfill.

### Strategies include:

- P** Conduct Waste Characterization Profiles for each sector (residential, commercial, multi-family, and educational) in order to determine where greater waste diversion, reduction and outreach is needed.
- P** Provide specialized customer service and collection approaches (e.g., more frequent collections, specialized containers, site consultations) that are customized to meet the needs and limitations of each sector.
- E** Expand outreach and education on waste diversion and reduction programs available to El Cerrito’s residents, businesses, multi-family dwelling and schools, via targeted programs including mailing inserts, site visits, and bill insert newsletters.
- P** Adopt a mandatory recycling ordinance for commercial and multifamily facilities.
- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

<sup>†</sup> ICMA and National Research Center. *National Citizens Survey, City of El Cerrito, 2012*. April 2012.

- E Expand the types of materials collected curbside as new markets develop.

## Objective W-1.2:

### Expand one-stop waste diversion options at the new Recycling + Environmental Resource Center.



The El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center offers a pleasant and easy to navigate environment to drop off a variety of hard to recycle items.

Completed in early 2012, the new El Cerrito Recycling and Environmental Resource Center provides the public with the opportunity to recycle hard-to-recycle items and to exchange more items for reuse. The facility provides drop-off opportunities for materials not currently collected at the curb, such as expanded polystyrene blocks, hard and soft plastics, carpet, cooking and motor oil, pharmaceuticals, sharps, household batteries, and electronics. In addition, it houses a reusable materials exchange, a Goodwill donation site, and a reusable construction materials drop-off station. These expanded services are intended to

maintain the momentum behind El Cerrito’s success in not only diverting waste, but also in reducing the overall amount of material being discarded in the first place.

#### Strategies include:

- E Continue to expand drop-off options at the Center.
- E Increase outreach to educate visitors on the “4 Rs” (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot) of waste diversion.

## Objective W-1.3:

### Reduce landfill waste from Construction and Demolition.

The California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen)<sup>‡</sup> requires that at least 50% of new construction and demolition (C&D) waste from construction of new structures of a certain size be diverted from landfills for reuse or recycling. Builders can comply either by submitting a waste management plan or proving compliance with a local ordinance. While El Cerrito does not currently have a C&D ordinance, passage of one may be preferable as it can offer the benefit of streamlining requirements for builders, showing City leadership on the issue, and capturing a greater portion of the C&D waste stream. For example, an

‡ Building Standards Commission. 2010 California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen). California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11.

ordinance developed to capture C&D waste not only from new structures, but also from renovations and additions (which comprise a greater percentage of El Cerrito’s overall construction) would increase overall waste diversion.

### Strategies include:

- P** Conduct Waste Characterization Profiles for El Cerrito construction and demolition projects.
- P** Negotiate terms with waste haulers and processors to collect, process, and divert the maximum potential construction and demolition waste.
- P** Adopt a Construction and Demolition Debris Recycling Ordinance that includes recycling requirements for renovations, additions, and other small projects and require builders and haulers to use City-approved C&D processing sites or otherwise prove that they are recycling more than 50% of their waste.
- P** Conduct ongoing outreach to the El Cerrito community and local contractors regarding the new Ordinance and compliance options.

### Objective W-1.4:

**Develop and implement a Zero-Waste 2035 Plan for El Cerrito, wherein reducing the amount of waste produced is an ever-present goal.**

Current industrial markets are major obstacles to creating a society that generates a lot less waste. Currently the responsibility for disposing of waste is shifted from those who

## Climate Action in El Cerrito since 2005

### Waste

- Achieved an annual average decrease in absolute waste going to the landfill of 2.4% per year since 2005
- Regularly achieve a 96% to 99% residential participation rate in the City’s recycling programs according to the National Citizen’s Survey
- Introduced single stream recycling and organics composting as part of curbside pick-up services
- Built the new LEED Platinum Recycling + Environmental Resource Center, facilitating greater ease in reusing and recycling such items as:
  - *Books, household goods, and textiles*
  - *Universal waste items such as electronics and fluorescent lamps*
  - *Prescription medicines and sharps*
  - *Motor and cooking oil*
  - *Styrofoam blocks*
  - *Carpets, building supplies, and paints*
- Introduced a new multi-family education and outreach program

- E** Existing Policies, Programs, or Projects
- P** Potential Policies, Programs, or Projects

create wasteful and/or toxic products and packaging to local governments, and ultimately to the residents and businesses who generate the waste as a result of consuming these products. Creating a zero-waste community – wherein reducing the amount of waste produced wherever feasible is an ever-present goal – will require actions that transcend the local level and include actions by private and public entities throughout society such as instituting closed-loop manufacturing and “extended producer responsibility.”

Since zero-waste is a very ambitious goal, the associated actions will require extra study. The purpose of a *Zero-Waste Plan* is to investigate future actions that can move El Cerrito as close to producing zero waste as possible.

Scope of the study includes:

- P** Analyze El Cerrito’s waste streams (as mentioned in W-1.1 and W-1.3, above)
- P** Identify materials to be targeted by current and future programs.
- P** Investigate potential waste reduction strategies, such as:
  - *New or modified diversion (reuse, recycling, or composting) programs*
  - *Bans on problematic materials (such as single use plastic bags and expanded polystyrene take-out containers)*
  - *“Return for deposit” and “producer take-back” requirements.*<sup>§</sup>
- P** Recommend types of “zero-waste” programs best instituted at the local level, as opposed to the state, regional, or national level.
- P** Encourage producers, consumers, and recyclers to focus on product stewardship to reduce environmental and human health impacts.

Goal #	Fig. 3.8: Waste Reduction (W)	Annual Tons CO2e Reduced		
		existing measures	by 2020	by 2035
	<b>Summary of Goals and Objectives</b>			
<b>W-1</b>	<b>Reduce waste going to landfill to 4,000 tons by 2020 and to 2,000 tons of waste by 2035.</b>			
W-1.1	Maximize participation in curbside waste reduction services in the residential, commercial, multi-family sectors.	3,288	6,324	8,397
W-1.2	Expand one-stop waste diversion options at the Recycling Center			
W-1.3	Reduce land-fill waste from Construction and Demolition Projects			
W-1.4	Develop and implement a “Zero-Waste” 2035 Plan			
	<b>Total Waste Reductions Identified</b>		<b>6,324</b>	<b>8,397</b>

§ On August 16, 2010 the El Cerrito City Council issued letters of support to the California Legislature for two Assembly bills that would increase producer responsibility for waste. These bills are The Plastic Bag Ban (AB 1998), which did not pass, and the Paint Recovery Act (AB 1343), which did pass.

# Adaptation Planning for Climate Impacts

Local governments have been the first responders to climate change as communities start to deal with the diverse impacts of climactic shifts. It is important that the projected impacts of climate change are incorporate into the decision-making process. While not included in the scope of this CAP, subsequent CAP updates and other long-term planning and emergency preparedness processes should incorporate elements that will help El Cerrito become more resilient to climate impacts (also known as “Adaptation” Planning). A menu of potential adaptation strategies and measures is provided in the table below.

**Fig. 3.8: Climate Change Impacts and Sample Adaptation Measures**

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS	SAMPLE ADAPTATION MEASURES
<p><b>Sea Level Rise</b></p> <p>Risks to existing facilities, natural systems, private property and public infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate and engage the community on the need for long-range planning</li> <li>• Partner with other jurisdictions to increase awareness and build community support</li> <li>• Identify funding mechanisms and seek partnerships to protect vital infrastructure from erosion, inundation, and flooding</li> </ul>
<p><b>Extreme Heat Events</b></p> <p>Risks to public health and infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify vulnerable populations and develop emergency preparedness plan</li> <li>• Increase access to cooling centers, especially for vulnerable populations</li> <li>• Reduce urban heat islands through tree planting, cool roofs and other reflective surfaces</li> <li>• Enact requirements for shading in new parking lots, other large paved areas</li> <li>• Evaluate need for increased fire protection measures</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regional Drought</b></p> <p>Risks to reliable water supply and natural systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and increase capacity for community water storage</li> <li>• Promote local water conservation</li> <li>• Diversify water supply for non-potable uses, such as increased use of gray and rain water</li> <li>• Partner with other jurisdictions to increase awareness and build community support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increased Flooding and Severe Weather Events</b></p> <p>Risks to public health, private property, public infrastructure, and ecosystems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate flood management plans with adaptation planning</li> <li>• Identify and educate vulnerable neighborhoods</li> <li>• Establish local land use policies that decrease flood risk; avoid building in high-risk areas</li> <li>• Make modifications to storm water system routing and storage. Develop storage areas for peak flows</li> <li>• Maximize use of bio-swales and permeable surfaces to improve aquifer recharge and mitigate flooding from storm water</li> </ul>
<p><b>Threats to Species, Ecosystems, and Ecosystem Services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an urban green program to preserve open space and other critical habitats, improve biodiversity, and sequester carbon</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risks to local agriculture and food supply</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support local farmers markets, backyard farming and community gardens</li> <li>• Support food growing education at all levels</li> </ul>