

# EL CERRITO BUSINESSES & TREES – CREATING A VIBRANT BUSINESS COMMUNITY



Photo simulation courtesy of Urban Advantage showing 3-5 years future growth of existing trees.



invest  
from the  
ground up

Dear El Cerrito Business Owner,

One easy and effective way to create vibrant commercial districts is through caring for trees.

Tree-scaped business areas have been shown to attract more valuable and loyal customers, increase revenue streams, and leave customers more satisfied with the quality of goods and services they have purchased. Investing in trees also leads to investments and stewardship by neighboring businesses, stimulating more economic vitality from which we all benefit.

The City of El Cerrito has made substantial commitments to planting, enhancing and protecting street trees over the last two decades. These include tree protection ordinances, grants for tree planting and inventory, tree pruning, the development and approval of the 2007 El Cerrito Urban Forest Management Plan, and periodic efforts by the El Cerrito Tree Committee to update the approved tree list for planting the right tree in the right place.

In order to launch a conversation between El Cerrito businesses and the City about protecting these investments, we surveyed business owners in the winter of 2014 to identify the benefits and challenges of street trees. We've also created this educational brochure which includes useful information about trees, City responsibilities, business concerns and tree-related ordinances.

For more information about El Cerrito trees including the adopted urban forestry plan and a tree species list, visit [www.el-cerrito.org/trees](http://www.el-cerrito.org/trees)

We know there is more to discuss on this important issue and we invite you to get involved. For questions and comments on El Cerrito City street trees and service call 215-4369 or contact Stephen Prée, Environmental Programs Manager/City Arborist at: [spre@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:spre@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us), or attend a regular meeting of the Tree Committee held at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of each month at City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530.

Thank you for helping us create a thriving El Cerrito!

Sincerely,

The City of El Cerrito, the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce,  
the El Cerrito Garden Club and Invest From the Ground Up

## OVERCOMING TREE CONCERNS FOR BUSINESSES

The City of El Cerrito strives to maximize the environmental and economic benefits of trees for the whole community, including to work towards the success of local businesses. At the same time, there is much business owners can do to support and benefit from trees. Treescaped commercial areas attract more customers, so it's worth looking at potential means to turn tree concerns into opportunities for business growth.



**SIGNAGE.** Early pruning by the City will minimize impacts to the visibility of business signs. To reduce obstruction from young trees, business owners should work with the City to possibly add window signs, awning signs or blade signs in addition to wall signs.

Signs need to comply with City ordinances and should complement planning goals and strategies.

The City Planning Department can provide guidance. Contact them at 510-215-4360 or visit [www.el-cerrito.org/planning](http://www.el-cerrito.org/planning).

**SIDEWALK ISSUES.** The City takes care to plant the right type of tree in the right place to avoid problems caused by tree roots to the sidewalk and underground infrastructure by City street trees.

If you have sidewalk concerns please contact: Public Works at [www.el-cerrito.org/publicworks](http://www.el-cerrito.org/publicworks) or 510-215-4369.

**FALLING LEAVES, FLOWERS & FRUIT.** Trees provide many environmental and economic benefits, but they are

living organisms that can drop leaves, flowers, seeds and fruit. While regular City street sweeping will clean up curbside materials, business owners are responsible for keeping sidewalks in front of their property clean of leaves and debris. (El Cerrito Municipal Code Section 13.08.030).

**TRASH ACCUMULATION IN TREE WELLS.** City ordinances prohibit littering, however tree wells may collect rubbish. Business owners, like homeowners, are responsible for keeping sidewalks in front of their properties clean of weeds, trash and other debris.

**“The economic prosperity of a community is a product of many factors; one of which is the vitality of its natural landscape.”**

**JIMI SCHEID**  
URBAN  
FORESTER,  
CAL FIRE



## DON'T TOP TREES

Topping creates problems by stimulating multiple weak branches; it disorganizes the natural branching system and form of the tree. A topped tree appears disfigured and mutilated. A tree that has been topped can never fully regain its natural form.



**These trees were mutilated by topping cuts...notice how the main trunks have been cut off, resulting in bushy, weak branches.**

**TREE CARE.** The City is responsible for the management and pruning of public trees. This includes a new pruning strategy and schedule designed to evaluate and prune all City street trees every five to seven years.

Please do not prune City trees. If you have a City tree concern contact the City Arborist. For more information go to Public Works at [www.el-cerrito.org/trees](http://www.el-cerrito.org/trees) or call 510-215-4369.

### WHAT IS PRUNING A TREE?

Pruning is the most common form of tree maintenance. Usually trees are pruned to eliminate hazards, improve structure and to increase light and air penetration. Since each cut to a tree effects the health of the tree and its future growth, it is important that trees are pruned according to the standards of the International Society of Arboriculture under the direction of a Certified Arborist. Generally, no more than 25% of the tree's crown should be removed at once, and less removed on mature trees.

### WHAT IS TOPPING A TREE?

Topping is the indiscriminate cutting of tree branches to stubs and it is extremely harmful to trees. It usually aims to reduce the size of a tree or to eliminate hazards; however it actually makes a tree more hazardous in the long term and is harmful to the overall health of a tree.

By removing most or all the leaves, the tree is left with little means for food through photosynthesis. If branches do sprout out of a topped tree trunk, they are weak and prone to breaking.

Topping is expensive and increases tree maintenance costs; the indiscriminant growth that occurs after topping requires increased maintenance to control. Healthy, well-maintained trees increase property value, while disfigured, topped trees are an impending expense.

**Invest From the Ground Up**  
**Growing trees make great**  
**neighborhoods!**



# INCREASE THE VALUE OF YOUR BUSINESS AND YOUR REVENUE STREAM



Businesses on tree-lined streets show 20% higher income streams.<sup>1</sup>

# 20%

More profitable businesses produce more jobs and leave fewer storefronts vacant, which helps the entire community thrive.<sup>2</sup>

## TREES MEAN BUSINESS

**TREES ATTRACT MORE VALUABLE AND LOYAL CUSTOMERS**



**CUSTOMERS STAY LONGER, PAY MORE**

The presence of trees encourages consumers to shop more often, stay in stores longer and pay more for goods.<sup>3</sup>

Stores in shopping districts with trees can charge, on average, 9% higher prices, than those districts without trees.<sup>4</sup>

# 9%



**SHOPPING IN TREE-SCAPED AREAS LEAVES CUSTOMERS MORE SATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY OF YOUR GOODS AND SERVICES**

Customers are 30% more satisfied with products that they purchase in shopping districts with trees.<sup>5</sup>



Customers are also 15% more satisfied with the customer service experience in those stores located in shopping districts with trees.<sup>6</sup>

El Cerrito's trees remove 1.1 tons of pollutants from the air, including ozone (O<sup>3</sup>), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sup>2</sup>), and particulates (PM<sup>10</sup>) at a value of \$25,000 per year.<sup>7</sup>

Detailed analysis of El Cerrito's 2013 public tree population indicates that it provides annual benefits of \$1,313,833 (\$55.79 per capita).

El Cerrito's public trees reduce annual electric energy consumption by 797-megawatt hours, natural gas consumption by 16,859 therms, for a combined value of \$120,883 annually.<sup>7</sup>

Benefits include energy savings, air quality improvements, stormwater interception, atmospheric CO<sup>2</sup> reduction, and aesthetic contributions to the social and economic health of the community.<sup>7</sup>



Sources:

1. Dan Burden, *Walkable and Livable Communities Institute*
2. Kelly Caffarelli, *Home Depot Foundation*
- 3, 4, 5, 6. Dr. Kathleen Wolf, *University of Washington*
7. *Davey Resource Group/U.S. Forest Service*

# EL CERRITO CITY ORDINANCES

El Cerrito Municipal Code includes the following requirements for vegetation in parking strips, public property or public easements:

- Permission from the City Manager for planting trees.
- Trees must be on the City's official tree list.
- Tree and shrubs in parking strips should not be planted where roots will impact public sewers or obstruct vehicular line of sight.
- The City may trim, prune or remove any vegetation.
- It is illegal to abuse, mutilate or destroy public trees or shrubs or to attach anything to them.

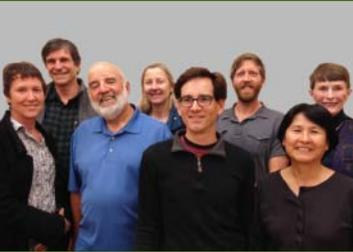
- Property owners shall keep sidewalks clean of rubbish, weeds and debris.
- Code violations are misdemeanors and subject to fines.

For more detail, see El Cerrito Municipal Code, Chapter 13.28 (Trees and Shrubs) and Chapter 13.08 (Street Cleanliness, Section.030).

For questions and comments on El Cerrito City street trees and service requests, please contact:

Stephen Prée,  
Environmental Programs  
Manager/City Arborist

Email: [spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us)  
Phone: 215.4369  
Web: [www.el-cerrito.org/trees](http://www.el-cerrito.org/trees)



The City of El Cerrito  
Tree Committee (March 2014)

The Tree Committee was established to advise the City of El Cerrito on tree planting and maintenance, to recommend appropriate implementation programs and policies, and to promote public support for the urban forest.

Its mission is to advocate and educate El Cerrito residents on the planting and care of trees, to demonstrate social, economic and environmental values of trees, and to work through coordinated action and collaborative projects to ensure a healthy, sustainable urban forest for current and future generations.

