

MEMORANDUM



TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Karen Pinkos, City Manager
DATE: February 9, 2022
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

I'd like to say a huge "Thank You" to our community for their compassion, understanding, and patience as our entire City team went through a difficult January.

First, our public buildings, lobbies, and counters have been closed to the public since January 12, 2022 thanks to the COVID-19 omicron variant. Several City staff members (myself included) tested positive in the first couple of weeks of January and were required to quarantine, and throughout the County extra precautions were taken due to the extreme contagiousness of omicron. The closure has been helpful for allowing staff and the public to be separated so as not to add to the omicron spread, and has allowed for staff who are able to work remotely to do so. City programs and services have continued, with City Hall services available by appointment and via online and email. We have tried our best to maintain service levels and have worked hard to accommodate community members however we can.

We had originally planned to reopen on February 1, but extended two weeks to be safe, and at this time we are slated to **reopen on February 14, 2022**. Some buildings will have limited hours, so please check our website at www.el-cerrito.org for details. **City Hall's hours will revert to the schedule in place before the closure, which is Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** I will continue to review this schedule in light of the continuing pandemic and taking the Contra Costa County Health orders into consideration. Again, we appreciate everyone's patience and are grateful for your understanding as we keep working to get through all the impacts of the pandemic.

I also want to thank the community for the wonderful outpouring of support that our entire El Cerrito family received upon our loss of El Cerrito Police Department Officer Jerrick Bernstine on January 9, 2022 in a tragic car crash on his way home from work. Officer Bernstine was laid to rest on January 24, 2022 following a moving, poignant funeral service held at El Cerrito High School on January 22, 2022. We received condolences and support from all over the Bay Area, and the El Cerrito Police Department would especially like to thank the agencies that helped cover the City while Department members attended the funeral and burial services, including Richmond Police Department, San Pablo Police Department, Pinole Police Department, Hercules Police Department, Kensington Police Department, Albany Police Department, California Highway Patrol,



and the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department. The City team pulled together as well, particularly the Fire, Public Works, and Recreation Departments and our El Cerrito Volunteers in Police. The photo below shows our El Cerrito Fire Department saluting Officer Bernstine's funeral procession as it passes on the way to the burial at Rolling Hills Memorial Park.

While there are no words anyone could possibly say to alleviate the sorrow of Officer Bernstine's loss to his family, friends, and co-workers, I have been heartened and comforted by the way our community and our staff team has come together to comfort and help each other through these difficult times. Our hearts remain with Officer Bernstine's family, and his memory will continue to be a blessing.

Many community members have asked about donations in honor of Officer Bernstine. The El Cerrito Police Employees Association has set up a fund in his honor, and all donations will be given to Officer Bernstine's family. You can find the information at this link: www.porac.org/fundraiser/in-memory-of-officer-jerrick-bernstine-fund/.

Though our City staff team has been through a tough month, the way that our community has supported us and each other has been hopeful and encouraging. Coming together through challenges is another example of our resilient and compassionate community that I'm so honored to be a part of. Again, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of you, and look forward to all that is to come.

Please continue to be safe and be well, and take care of yourselves and each other.

Karen Pinkos
City Manager

