



**CITY OF EL CERRITO**  
**OUTLINE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**UPDATE**  
**(1-21-16)**

**BACKGROUND**

1. Summary of 2006 Economic Development Action Plan
2. Summary of subsequent planning efforts: San Pablo Ave. Specific Plan, Greenway Plan, Climate Action Plan, Arts and Culture Master Plan, and Urban Greening Plan
3. Summary of capital improvements made pursuant to the plans
4. Discussion of relevant findings from Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) grant funded studies
5. Summary of five year Strategic Plan and its adopted Strategy to develop an Economic Development Action Plan (an update of the 2006 plan)  
(The 2013 Strategic Plan provides a framework for linking identified priorities to the budget process, capital improvement program, important policy considerations, economic development initiatives, and the organization's desire for continuous improvement. The updated Strategic Plan called for an Economic Development Action Plan to update the 2006 Economic Development Plan and build on our strengths, including our diversity, arts, culture, and environmental sustainability (Strategic Plan: Pg. 12, Goal C))
6. Explain purpose of the 2016 Economic Development Action Plan  
(The purpose is to build upon and consolidate information from previous documents and provide focus for current and upcoming economic development efforts, including building upon unfinished but relevant recommendations of the 2006 plan; furthering implementation of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan; incorporate analysis from the CCTA PDA Implementation Plan (underway) of market conditions; and identify opportunities and constraints to economic development and recommend new economic development tools)

## REVIEW OF 2006 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

### A. LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. **Sustained leadership and vision for implementation of the action plan:** including adoption of San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, the Form Based Code, Complete Streets Plan and EIR.
1. **Improved the physical commercial environment:** implementation of numerous San Pablo Avenue streetscape and multimodal improvements, including improved and additional crosswalks, crossing signals, bicycle racks and street furnishings; hundreds of trees, dual bin trash-recycling containers; way finding and service organization signage and banners, refurbished light standards and LED lights, public art, and widely-acclaimed storm water improvements; adoption of Form Based Code
2. **“Product Ready” activities:** Completed the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, including an updated Zoning Ordinance and General Plan and completion of a programmatic EIR; identified nodes of development opportunity and sub areas of San Pablo Avenue
3. **Completed initial marketing efforts:**

#### ***Marketing:***

- Shop Local program
- Taste of El Cerrito
- Home Expo
- First El Cerrito Restaurant Week in 2015 with 18 participating restaurants
- The El Cerrito Economic Development Committee and Chamber of Commerce hosted Community Mixers in 2015 for the El Cerrito business community, residents and visitors interested in learning more, making connections and working to create a vibrant El Cerrito (Initiated 2015)

#### ***Targeted Advertising:***

- West Contra Costa Marketplace
- Participating in the Chinook Book

#### ***Business Development and Support:***

- Entrepreneur Training Program sponsored by the El Cerrito Economic Development Department for four years (2010 – 2014), for qualifying El Cerrito businesses (11 week program)
- Economic Development webpage promoted the Contra Costa Small Business Development Center Business Planning Workshops.



- Surveys of local businesses that participated in the Entrepreneur Training Program in 2015, and El Cerrito Restaurant Week 2 to gauge effectiveness and develop future targeted programs and events.
- Façade improvement grants: grants

#### 4. **New development and businesses in the San Pablo Area**

### ***B. LIST OF UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM 2006 PLAN, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2016 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES***

1. Commitment of staffing for consistent EDAC implementation
2. Complete San Pablo Avenue gateway projects, and district signage
3. Signage and way finding for Fairmount Ave. (e.g. gateway arch)
4. Prepare specific development concept plans for key sites and areas of opportunity at BART stations, San Pablo Avenue and Fairmount Avenue infill sites
5. Negotiate agreements with BART for development of the Del Norte and El Cerrito Plaza BART station sites
6. Consider façade and tenant improvement grants for buildings at prime nodes, especially Fairmount Ave.
7. Investigate the feasibility and benefits of creating a Neighborhood Business District on San Pablo Avenue
8. Create an updated inventory of potentially developable sites and buildings including information on zoning, ownership, rents/sale price, sizes of parcels, buildings and parking, site maps/photos, contact info; to be included on City website and converted to promotional hardcopy packets
9. Retain a retail broker or consultant to evaluate development sites and existing buildings for retail opportunities
10. Provide on-going communication with residents, and businesses on San Pablo Avenue, concerning new business activities. Communication to include web info, post cards, and/or a quarterly newsletter
11. Conduct periodic shopper, businesses, and property owner surveys



12. Implement promotional activities with Chamber of Commerce including seminars, business recognition, and outreach meetings with City officials
13. Create periodic promotional events with commercial brokers

## **UPDATE OF CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS**

1. List of prior constraints, based on 2006 plan, that remain:
  - Inconsistent vision, commitment and resource allocation
  - Inconsistent response to development opportunities
  - Market competition and timing
  - Expedient regulatory approvals
  - Insufficient budget resources
2. List of new constraints for re-use of existing buildings, improvement of existing businesses, and development of key parcels (from CCTA/MTC studies)

## **NEW/REVISED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

1. Create consistent 2020 vision with a transition to an urban lifestyle environment attracting high quality development in key commercial areas, and attracting new businesses for existing buildings, with a strong sense of community in commercial nodes (2006 goal)
2. Create physical environment with strong sense of place supporting high quality, dynamic urban lifestyle development, supported by the market (2006 goal)
3. Ensure that development sites are ready for development that achieves the vision for higher quality sustainable urban development (2006 goal)
4. Communicate with residents, local businesses, key brokers, developers to create awareness of the market and development opportunities (2006 goal)
5. Achieve long term financial sustainability by attracting and maximizing opportunities for new and expanding businesses; and exploring opportunities for public/private partnerships (2013 Strategic Plan goal)



6. Deepen a sense of place and community identity by re-imagining underdeveloped and underutilized properties through advance planning activities that encourage investment and new development; develop an Economic Development Action Plan; and encourage dense business nodes to minimize automobile traffic (2013 Strategic Plan goal)
7. Other goals that may emerge from the CCTA/MTC studies

## **NEW AND REVISED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMS**

### ***GOAL 1: CREATE A CONSISTENT 2020 VISION WITH A TRANSITION TO AN URBAN LIFESTYLE ENVIRONMENT ATTRACTING HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT IN KEY COMMERCIAL AREAS WITH A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY***

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Implement policies of the Strategic Plan, San Pablo Specific Plan, Climate Action Plan, Urban Greening Plan, and Arts and Culture Master Plan that are related to economic development, including the following:
  - Attract and maximize opportunities for new/expanding businesses (Strategic Plan)
  - Explore opportunities for public/private partnerships (Strategic Plan)
  - Reimagine underdeveloped and underutilized properties through advanced planning efforts that encourage investment and/or new development (Strategic Plan)
  - Develop an Economic Development action plan (Strategic Plan)
  - Encourage dense business nodes to minimize or eliminate automobile traffic (Strategic Plan)
  - Promote arts and culture and community celebrations (Strategic Plan).
  - Reduce vehicle miles traveled by creating a well connected, pedestrian, bicycle and transit oriented urban forms that will make it easier for residents and visitors to leave their car behind (Climate Action Plan)



- Encourage more compact higher density infill development along transportation corridors to reduce vehicle miles travelled (Climate Action Plan)
- Build the El Cerrito economic base to create more jobs, encourage greater vitality and more pedestrian friendly economic activity (Climate Action Plan)
- Encourage new construction to build to a higher level of green building, and energy and water efficiency, than required by California codes (Climate Action Plan)
- Optimize place-making in all developments (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan)
- Maximize TOD potential (BART and AC Transit) (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan)
- Stimulate investment in vacant/-underutilized sites at key focus areas (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan)
- Build on recent and planned private and public investments, and leverage all investments to catalyze new investments. (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan)
- Encourage practical and market friendly development by: incorporating flexible development codes that respond to constrained parcels, surrounding context, and the market; and, allowing ground floor residential development to provide flexibility and expand the Specific Plan Area's residential base (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan)
- Promote residential infill development through increased land use intensity close to existing transit infrastructure (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan)
- Reduce parking requirements to encourage transit use and reduce reliance on the private automobile (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan)
- Improve walkability through more intensive and varied development that provides additional services and locates more future residents in service-rich nodes (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan)
- Increase the supply, diversity and affordability of housing in proximity to existing or planned transportation investments (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan)
- Identify ways that arts and culture can assist with the City's efforts to promote economic development and create a strong identity for El Cerrito (Arts and Culture Master Plan)
- Improve air and water quality and protect natural resources through green infrastructure, preserved biodiversity, context-sensitive infill development and



alternative transportation opportunities. (Urban Greening Plan)

- Support economic activity through temporary and permanent open spaces and landscaping that create a sense of place and attract residents and visitors (Urban Greening Plan)
  - Create and strengthen active commercial corridors that allow community members to gather, stroll and interact while meeting their daily needs close to home, and engage the business community in planting and maintaining street trees (Urban Greening Plan)
  - Develop a program to provide opportunities for commerce, play and pop-up uses within the public right-of-way (sidewalks and streets), particularly along commercial corridors, including identifying locations appropriate for mobile businesses and incorporate infrastructure elements like electrical outlets, water sources, grease drains, etc., into these streets during maintenance projects (Urban Greening Plan)
2. Add other objectives to the Economic Development Plan that emerge from CCTA/MTC studies, including policies to encourage place making.
  3. Conduct annual City Council reviews of status of implementing the objective of the Economic Development Plan prior to the adoption of the City budget or mid-cycle budget update

***GOAL 2: CREATE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT WITH STRONG SENSE OF PLACE SUPPORTING HIGH QUALITY, DYNAMIC URBAN LIFESTYLE DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORTED BY THE MARKET***

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Complete place-making projects for San Pablo Avenue
2. Implement a façade and tenant improvement program at prime commercial nodes, with grants and loans, including an annual allocation to a grant program fund
3. Install entry signage and way finding for Fairmount Avenue and key commercial nodes



**GOAL 3: ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT SITES ARE READY FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT ACHIEVES THE VISION FOR HIGHER QUALITY SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Adopt an agreement with BART for cooperative development of the BART sites
2. Create a more specific inventory of potentially developable sites and buildings including info on zoning, ownership, rents/sale price, sizes of parcels, buildings and parking, site maps/photos, contact info; to be included on City website and converted to promotional hardcopy packets
3. Create program with Stege Sanitary District for more streamlined provision of new service
4. Proceed with the disposition and development of former redevelopment assets pursuant to the approved Long Range Property Management Plan
5. Additional activities and programs suggested by CCTA/MTC studies

**GOAL 4: DEEPEN A SENSE OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY BY RE-IMAGINING UNDERDEVELOPED AND UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES THROUGH ADVANCE PLANNING ACTIVITIES THAT ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT AND NEW DEVELOPMENT; DEVELOP AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN; AND ENCOURAGE DENSE BUSINESS NODES TO MINIMIZE AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC**

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Hire an architect to develop site-specific drawings of key development sites to illustrate translation of vision to specific sites. Use drawings for communications with property owners and developers
2. Based on info from CCTA/MTC studies, prioritize catalyst sites for on-going promotion to potential businesses/developers, and continued contact with property owners to motivate sale or redevelopment of underutilized property
3. Based on the SPA Specific Plan, determine appropriate development to promote for key sites For residential or mixed-use key sites – determine goals for inclusion of affordable/workforce housing, and resources available to create affordability in mixed-income projects



**GOAL 5(new): *CREATE CAPACITY FOR ON-GOING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE EXISTING BUSINESSES, ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES AND IMPLEMENT OTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS***

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Investigate and prepare a report on the feasibility of creating a Neighborhood Business District, or Business Improvement District, and/or Economic Development Corporation for San Pablo Avenue and key commercial nodes, including small business assistance programs and job training programs
2. Retain a retail broker or consultant to evaluate key development sites for retail opportunities, and review mixed-use development plans for appropriate retail design
3. Appropriate funds to new economic development business incentive and assistance programs (which may be in the form of reduced permit fees for certain types of improvements). Key programs to evaluate and consider are façade and/or signage grants, and tenant improvement grants and loans for key business types and/or essential improvements such as ADA access.
4. Create staffing capacity to implement on-going programs such as business retention attraction, promotion and administration of façade/tenant improvement programs, continual communication with property owners of key development sites, promotion of business location and development opportunities:
  - Develop a list of programs that are desirable to pursue and estimate the administration hours required.
  - Prioritize list based on available City budget
  - Determine if permanent staffing, support of a business based local development corporation, or consulting services are the most efficient and sustainable means of providing consistent program services over at least a five year implementation period
5. Investigate application and appropriateness of New Market Tax Credits program
6. Communicate regularly with businesses and potential businesses/developers to understand barriers and opportunities and develop proactive responses (i.e. through surveys, focus groups and in-person meetings)



**GOAL 6: COMMUNICATE WITH RESIDENTS, LOCAL BUSINESSES, KEY BROKERS, DEVELOPERS TO CREATE AWARENESS OF THE MARKET AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Determine level of staffing resources that will be allocated to on-going communication methods. Based on resources available for a sustained communications effort, determine utilization of the following methods/objectives:
  - Resident communications including periodic newsletters, post cards, Facebook/Twitter info pushes, news articles and shopper surveys
  - Develop program with Chamber of Commerce for business outreach including welcome letters/visits, newsletters/ Facebook Twitter info dissemination, business recognition events and mixers, coordinated advertising of EC businesses
  - Other social media and communication platforms (such as OppSites)
2. Based on information from the CCTA/MTC studies, develop electronic and hard copy brochures for key development sites to promote interest
3. Update website as the major source of business, developer and resident info on business and development opportunities
4. Continue programs to encourage resident and visitor experience in the commercial area including movie nights, pop-up retailers, and first Friday type events.
5. Host joint session with Economic Development Committee, Arts and Culture Committee, and Human Relations Commission to determine events and strategies that promote and build upon our strengths, including our diversity, arts , culture, and environmental sustainability.

**Appendices (or url links)**

1. Climate Action Plan - <http://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/2689>
2. Arts and Culture Master Plan - <http://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/3188>
3. Urban Greening Plan - <http://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/5415>
4. Strategic Plan - <http://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/2760>
5. Restaurant Week Survey/Flyer
6. Entrepreneur Training Survey
7. Strategic Economics Market Study

