

# MEMORANDUM



**TO:** Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Karen Pinkos, City Manager  
**DATE:** March 19, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** City Manager's Update

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This has been a very challenging week for all of us. As I've said before, I'm proud to be a part of this community and this City staff team as we are faced with these extraordinary times. This version of my update is to let our community know how the City is responding to the public health crisis and provide information and resources on City services.

The City has a special webpage at [el-cerrito.org/COVID19](http://el-cerrito.org/COVID19) which is a central clearinghouse for information related to City services and other resources related to the COVID-19 coronavirus. We are updating this page constantly, so I encourage you to check it often. I also encourage you to check out the Contra Costa County page dedicated to the COVID-19 coronavirus at [coronavirus.cchealth.org](http://coronavirus.cchealth.org) daily. We are working closely with the County on all updates and will continue to push out information via our webpage and on social media. I am in constant contact with all City Managers in the County as well as County administration and County Health officials so that we are collaborating and sharing information.

All City facilities remain closed to the public through the current date of the County health order, April 7, 2020. Our Police and Fire Departments are on duty and are following strict safety protocols to prevent spread of the virus. Our Police Chief has posted a [letter to the community](#) (also see below in "Police" section) outlining how the Police Department has responded to the crisis. Our Recycling Center is closed, however curbside pick-up will continue. Our Recreation services have been cancelled with the exception of some essential Senior Services, please [click on this link](#) for more information. We also do have some limited City Hall services available; the listing is at [el-cerrito.org/COVID19](http://el-cerrito.org/COVID19) and we encourage you to call or email.

Most of our City Hall staff are working remotely, with limited staff on-site practicing social distancing requirements. We are doing our best to keep the business of the City going, of course in a very different fashion than we all are used to. Thank you for your patience with our staff as we work through this together. More details on all these items are in the department sections in this update.

I am working with the Mayor and City Council in moving forward to do the City Council's business as well. The City Council will be holding a special City Council meeting on Wednesday, March 25 at 5:00 p.m. to discuss a moratorium on evictions per the Governor's Executive Order authorizing local governments to do so. The agenda will be posted on our website no less than 24 hours before the meeting on the [Council Meeting Materials](#) page. We will also post information on how the public can remotely participate.

We are also closely monitoring and adjusting our financial projections as we face the uncertainty of the impacts of the coronavirus on our economy and the City's budget, which as the community knows, was already challenged. Our staff team has been working day and night throughout this emergency, and I

## CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

am proud of the way they have responded to ensure that the health and safety of our community is their top priority, while being mindful of the challenges we will have before us as a result of this crisis.

I want to once again thank our entire El Cerrito community for your patience, understanding, and kindness throughout this ordeal. It has not been easy, and we still face the unknown in this crisis. I know that our resilience will sustain us, and we will be a stronger community on the other side. Please be sure to take care of yourselves, be good neighbors, and, if you can, please patronize the El Cerrito businesses and restaurants that are open. We will make it through this, together.

Karen Pinkos, ICMA-CM

*Karen Pinkos*

City Manager

City of El Cerrito

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## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE – CITYWIDE CLOSURES AND LIMITED SERVICES

On Monday, the Contra Costa Health Services Officer with other health officers from the Bay Area have announced a [Public Health Order](#) that requires residents to stay home except for essential needs. The order went into effect on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 and is currently set to last for 3 weeks through Tuesday, April 7, 2020.

[Frequently asked questions about the Stay at Home order](#)

City offices and programs are closed or have been cancelled. Most services have been suspended or limited.

### **What can I do? What's open?**

These essential services will remain open:

- City/County government services: Police stations, fire stations,
- hospitals/clinics and healthcare operations, jails, courts,
- garbage/sanitation, transportation (including Muni), utilities (water, power and gas), and city offices
- Gas stations
- Pharmacies
- Food: Grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, convenience stores, take-out and delivery restaurants
- Hardware stores/plumbers
- Banks
- Community benefit organizations on a case-by-case basis
- Laundromats/laundry services

### **What's closed?**

- Dine-in restaurants
- Bars and nightclubs
- Entertainment venues
- Gyms and fitness studios

[Open restaurants and cafes in El Cerrito](#)

## CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

The El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce has listed some restaurants and cafes in El Cerrito that are open for take-out. Please visit and support our local economy at: [elcerritochamber.org](http://elcerritochamber.org).

As the situation changes, we will post new information on our City website at [elcerrito.org/COVID19](http://elcerrito.org/COVID19). If you'd like to receive these notices, please go to [elcerrito.org/notifyme](http://elcerrito.org/notifyme) and select "Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update".

Here are links to other agencies pages for services and information updates:

- [State of California](#)
- [Contra Costa Health Services](#)
- [California Department of Public Health](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [West Contra Costa Unified School Closures](#)
- [AC Transit Service Updates](#)
- [BART Service Updates](#)

## CITY MANAGEMENT

### Strategic Plan Update

Due to the COVID-19 public health crisis, the City Council Strategic Planning Workshop that was scheduled for March 14 was postponed. We will keep the public informed when this meeting will be rescheduled.

### City Council Meetings

On March 18, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-29-20 suspending several requirements of the Brown Act related to teleconferencing. All members of the legislative body and staff are allowed to participate remotely, and remote locations do not need to be accessible to the public. No physical location is required for public participation; however, the City will be providing the ability for public comments remotely.

The City is actively working on technological solutions to ensure that upcoming City Council meetings are as accessible to the public as possible. More information will be provided when the technology has been finalized and put into place. Questions or concerns can be submitted to [cityclerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us).

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Please note that while City Hall is closed to the public, the Community Development Department continues to operate with modified procedures and will continue to process Building and Planning permits, and conduct inspections for allowed activity, during the Shelter in Place order. If you have specific questions about how the order affects your project, please contact Community Development at (510) 215-4330 for Planning or (510) 215-4360 for Building.

### [Business Support & Resources During COVID-19 Crisis](#)

The State has prepared a comprehensive list of resources for businesses, employers, and employees in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Please visit the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) website at [business.ca.gov](http://business.ca.gov). In addition, the U.S. Small Business Administration is offering low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to California small businesses suffering substantial economic injury. For more information or to apply for assistance, please visit:

[disasterloan.sba.gov/ela](http://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela).

### [COVID-10 Effects on Tenant Protections](#)

On March 16, 2020, Governor Newsom issued [Executive Order N-28-20](#) to protect tenants and homeowners experiencing sudden financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. Currently, the Contra Costa County Sheriff and Superior Court have halted evictions during the County's Shelter in Place Order in effect until April 7, 2020. The City is actively exploring options available under the executive order and the City Council will discuss this at a [special City Council meeting](#) on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. If you are a tenant, homeowner, or landlord in need of assistance, the [Contra Costa Housing Services Collaborative](#) provides counseling services to County residents.

Additional information regarding tenant protections is available at [elcerrito.org/tenantprotections](http://elcerrito.org/tenantprotections).

## FIRE

### [COVID-19 Protocols](#)

The Coronavirus breakout has caused the Fire Department to take even stricter precautionary measures while treating patients. Our dispatch center has initiated a preliminary questionnaire in addition to the normal triage that is used when anyone calls 9-1-1 for a medical emergency. These questions are being used to determine if the patient or anyone in the house has potentially been exposed to the Coronavirus. Additionally, when arriving on scene, only one person is making patient contact and maintains a 6-foot distance until the situation can be sized up. All personnel are wearing gowns, gloves, N95 masks, and eye protection.

At this point, the Fire Department has two personnel out on self-quarantine due to early

cold symptoms but no temperature or other indicators. One person has been tested and awaiting results, the other is monitoring their health condition.

## POLICE

Link to [letter to the community](#)



## EL CERRITO POLICE DEPARTMENT

10900 SAN PABLO AVENUE • EL CERRITO, CA 94530-2391  
TEL (510) 215-4400 • FAX (510) 235-6618

March 19, 2020

Dear El Cerrito Community,

The El Cerrito Police Department has made changes to our operations, in response to the coronavirus threat. Our community is currently under orders to shelter in place. This means that many businesses have closed their doors while essential stores remain open. We have answered a number of calls from the public asking for clarification about the Health Officer's order. We have had people report that builders are still working on residential construction projects and that people are out walking and jogging. These are allowed activities under the current order.

If you want clarification on the health order, please follow this link:

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/64474/Stay-at-Home-Except-for-Essential-Needs-FAQ>

Contra Costa County has also established a coronavirus hotline at (844) 729-8410.

The Police Department has made some changes in operations to adjust to the challenges posed by this virus. The police department normally deploys with a team concept. This means that officers are assigned to work with the same group of officers each day of their work week. We believe this style of deployment will help isolate virus outbreaks from affecting the broader department. We have taken additional action to reduce the impact of virus spread.

- We sent home some employees to reduce the chance of virus spread.
- We closed our lobby to the public and suspended Live Scan fingerprinting services. If you have business with the El Cerrito Police Department, please call ahead at (510) 215-4400.
- We created split work groups to limit employee interaction across the agency.
- We created a relief team to help ensure that we have healthy officers, in the event a team becomes exposed.
- We are adhering to social distancing standards.
- We significantly increased cleaning procedures in the building and patrol vehicles.
- We deployed CDC recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect officers and the public.

*"We protect our community, solve crime and pursue justice."*

## CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

- We increased the types of reports that can be made through our online reporting service. To make a report online, please follow this link:

<https://www.el-cerrito.org/985/Online-Police-Reporting>

- We are suspending enforcement of residential parking permits.
- We are in regular communication with our EMS and law enforcement partner agencies.
- We authorized officers to contact community members by telephone first for non-emergency responses.

The El Cerrito Police Department is committed to keeping our community safe, during these challenging times. We want to reassure our community that if you have an emergency and need the police to respond, we will come.

Stay safe and healthy.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Keith', written in a cursive style.

Paul Keith  
Chief of Police

*"We protect our community, solve crime and pursue justice."*

## PUBLIC WORKS/RECYCLING CENTER

### COVID-19 Impacts - Limited Public Works Services Available

Please see below for Public Works services and assistance available during this time. Due to City building closures, Public Works is encouraging the public to conduct all possible businesses via email and phone. We will do our best to respond to you in a timely manner, but response times may be delayed.

#### Recycling and Solid Waste Services

Curbside recycling and solid waste services will continue; however, the Recycling Center is closed. For any Recycling related questions, please email [greenassistant@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:greenassistant@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us) or contact the Recycling + Environmental Resource Center at (510) 215-4350. Visit our website for updates: [Recycling + Environmental Resource Center](#).

#### Maintenance Services

For any maintenance requests or concerns related to street trees, streets, storm drains, streetlights, parks, etc., please email [maintenance@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:maintenance@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us) or contact Maintenance at (510) 215-4369.

In case of an urgent Maintenance issue, such as flooding, after regular business hours or during a weekend or holiday, please call El Cerrito Police Dispatch (Non-Emergency) at (510) 233-1214.

#### Engineering Services

For any Encroachment Permit, Capital Improvement Project or traffic improvement-related questions, please email [street@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:street@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us) or contact the Engineering Division at (510) 215-4382.

#### Earth Day

Earth Day, scheduled for April 18, will be cancelled if the current COVID-19 public health directives remain in place.

For additional Public Works information, please visit [el-cerrito.org/136/Public-Works](http://el-cerrito.org/136/Public-Works). We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we try and navigate through this difficult time.

## RECREATION

### COVID-19 Response

As part of the City of El Cerrito's COVID-19 transmission mitigation efforts, in accordance with El Cerrito City Council's Declaration of a Local Emergency and Contra Costa County Order of Shelter in Place, the **El Cerrito Recreation Department has closed all facilities**

**and cancelled all classes, programs, special events and rentals until further notice.** This includes the Spring Egg Hunt originally scheduled for April 11, 2020. Essential senior services will still take place, as detailed in the article below.

**Recreation offices will remain closed to the public during the shutdown. Please be patient when waiting for a response to an email or phone call.**

The measures being taken are in the best interest of all participants, staff and public health. It is our hope that this will help reduce the spread of the Coronavirus. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

There are essential senior services provided by the El Cerrito Recreation Department that will continue to take place. These services are detailed below:

**C.C. Café To-Go Lunch Program (ages 60+)** - weekly meals consisting of 7 frozen meals will be available to seniors ages 60+ years old by request and as available.

- Orders must be placed no later than 10am on the Monday prior to delivery.
- Meals will be delivered to the homes of senior participants living in El Cerrito on Tuesdays, 3/24 and 3/31 between 11am-12pm. Meals will be left on the doorstep of the home.
- Non-El Cerrito resident senior participants must pick up their meals at the Midtown Activity Center, 10940 San Pablo Ave in El Cerrito between 11 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. on Tuesdays, 3/24 and 3/31.
- To ensure your safety as well as the safety of the driver, meals will be handed to you directly, they will be dropped on your doorstep.
- To place an order for the meals, call (510) 559-7677 or email [midtown@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:midtown@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us). Leave a message with your name and call back number.
- NOTE: Seniors new to the C.C. Café Lunch Program will need to complete registration paperwork to receive meals. Call (510) 559-7677 or email [midtown@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:midtown@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us) for more information.

**Meals on Wheels (ages 60+)** – Home-delivered meals for Seniors 60+ may be available through the Meals on Wheels home delivered meals program (subject to availability). Call (510) 412-0166 for more information about this program.

**Easy Ride Paratransit Service (Essential Transportation ONLY)**

Easy Ride Paratransit Service is available to El Cerrito Residents ages 65+ and residents with disabilities ages 18+ for essential transportation to medical appointments and grocery store trips within El Cerrito boundaries. Rides are limited to Monday, Wednesday, Friday between the hours of 12:30 p.m - 2:30 p.m.

Safeway shopping trips during reserved times for vulnerable shoppers will take place on Tuesday mornings from 7:30 a.m. – 9 a.m. All trips require advance reservation

## CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

and registration in the Easy Ride Paratransit program is required. To schedule an Easy Ride Paratransit Essential Transportation Trip, call (510) 559-7677 or email [midtown@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:midtown@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us).

Voicemail messages will be returned M-F between 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Please leave a detailed message including your name, phone number, requested date and location.

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