I’d like to take a moment to remind our residents to be sure that you’ve responded to the 2020 Census. The 2020 Census shapes our future by helping to inform how more than $675 billion in federal funding each year is spent on critical services including education, health care, senior centers, and public transportation. Responding is important for you, your family, and our community. According to the Census website, El Cerrito’s current self-response rate is 65.1%. The national response rate is 49.1%, California is at 50.3%, and Contra Costa County is at 58.1%. While it’s great that we are doing well compared to those numbers, we have a lot of room to do better. Every household has received a census form, and it’s really easy to respond online at www.my2020census.gov. Let’s make sure we all count!

Our amazing City staff are continuing to work hard for our residents and businesses, as you will read on in this update. I am so proud of each and every City of El Cerrito employee. Their dedication, creativity, and resiliency inspire me every day. Our staff is also working hard on planning various scenarios for the coming months, including how to respond if the County health order is extended as well as how we will re-open City services and programs once restrictions are lifted. And as always, but especially during this emergency, our first responders are working tirelessly to keep our City safe. Our City family has been challenged this past month during this crisis in many ways, and they have risen to that challenge. I am grateful to our City team and honored to work with them on behalf of our entire community.

Stay safe and healthy, and please take good care of yourselves and each other.

Karen Pinkos  
City Manager  
City of El Cerrito
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CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE

Subscribe to COVID-19 Email List
As the situation changes, we will post new information on our City webpage at el-cerrito.org/covid19. If you’d like to receive notices, please go to el-cerrito.org/notifyme and select “Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update”.

Other Agency Links for Service 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

El Cerrito Creative ReUse Artist in Residence
The ECCRU Program was approved by the El Cerrito Arts and Culture Commission (“ACC”) in 2015. The program is intended to support local artists (in Contra Costa & Alameda Counties) who work with recycled materials, and to encourage environmental stewardship – specifically, resource conservation, recycling and upcycling - in the community through art that inspires people to think about sustainability and consumption.

One of the current artists, Risa Lenore Dye, has provided a video update of the work she is doing while sheltered in place. Several of her workshops, planned for March and April, were cancelled, due to the pandemic, but she is excited to show her works in progress. Grab a young person and see the development of a new friend at el-cerrito.org/risalenoreECCRU.
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Planning Commission Update
On April 15, the Planning Commission held their first meeting via teleconference. Upon the recommendation of staff, the Commission continued a request for a Variance and Conditional Use Permit at 7 Santa Fe Avenue in order to allow the applicant additional time to address neighbor concerns.

The Commission also adopted a recommendation that the City Council approve a parcel map and an exception to Title 18 (Subdivision Ordinance) for a two-lot subdivision at 956 Sea View Drive. This project will be scheduled for consideration by the City Council at an upcoming meeting.

Obtaining Economic Impact Payments for Low-Income Residents
The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) now has a new website for low-income people who did not file 2018 or 2019 tax returns. In order to receive stimulus funds through the CARES Act - Economic Impact Payments, individuals are encouraged to review and submit the IRS request for additional information. For more details, please visit: https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments.

Contra Costa County Launches COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund
The COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund is accepting cash donations to provide emergency assistance with food, housing, healthcare, workforce support and other pressing needs related to the virus. The fund was launched by the Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports the work of Contra Costa Health Services, especially with our most vulnerable residents.

The Contra Costa Rapid Response Fund is seeded with generous support from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. The Rapid Response Fund, which follows a model being used in many other places, will assist nonprofits, agencies and other organizations working on urgent needs in response to COVID-19. Grants from the fund will be made on a rolling basis and decisions will be based on benefit to our most vulnerable residents and the ability to respond quickly, among other factors. Please visit www.ccrhfcovid-19.org to learn more about how you can donate and apply for assistance.

FIRE

Fire Station Status
All three Fire Stations remain isolated from the public to ensure safety of our personnel. All three Stations continue monitoring their health status every day, which includes taking their temperature and noting any changes in their physical status such as onset of a cough or other possible COVID-19 symptoms. We are
continuing with wearing masks full-time in the Station and apparatus unless social distancing is maintained. Currently all personnel are without symptoms.

Wildfire Community Preparedness Day
May 2, 2020 is designated as “Wildfire Community Preparedness Day.” May marks the beginning of the season, during which, the Fire Department will start vegetation inspections throughout the City and notify residents who are not in compliance with the City Vegetation Management Policy.

This year, with the COVID-19 pandemic in place, residents will need to be more diligent in maintaining their social distancing and isolation while tending to their yards. While general landscaping such as mowing lawns is not considered an essential business, pruning brush, removing annual grasses and making one’s home more fire safe and providing a defensible space is an essential job and landscapers are permitted to conduct this type of business.

Last year nearly 100,000 acres (25+ times the size of our City) burned just north of El Cerrito in Sonoma County, taking out nearly 200 structures including homes, wineries and other businesses and caused nearly 200,000 people to evacuate. The Fire Department will be taking all precautions related to COVID-19 in making sure residents are complying.

PUBLIC WORKS
Continuing Public Works Services During COVID-19
The Public Works Department is continuing to provide essential services during the COVID-19 public health emergency, although at modified levels to comply with Contra Costa County’s Social Distancing Requirements, including our Department’s Social Distancing Protocols. City staff, consultants, and contractors are performing operations, maintenance, and repair of “Essential Infrastructure” which includes utilities, storm drains, streets, and recycling and solid waste facilities. For Public Works services and assistance during this time, please visit www.el-cerrito.org/PublicWorks.

Given that City staff and resources are stretched thin as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, City staff, in coordination with City partners such as the California League of Cities and the Contra Costa Clean Water Program, has been evaluating regulatory requirements that may not be able to be met at this time. City staff is preparing letters to the California Transportation Commission and Regional Water Quality Control Board to provide regulatory relief by extending deadlines and/or suspending portions of certain requirements. The two regulatory programs include SB 1 Local Streets and Roads Program Funding and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Regional Permit.
Neighborhood Traffic Safety – Slow Down for Pedestrians and Bicyclists
During this COVID-19 emergency, more people than ever are walking and biking on our local streets. This is to alert the few drivers doing “Essential Travel” on our streets to expect more pedestrians and bicyclists. Drivers are reminded to drive slowly and safely as follows:

- Drive below the speed limit at all times.
- Share the road safely with all road users, including bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.
- Stop for pedestrians at marked and unmarked crossings.
- Give yourself enough travel time so that you are not sacrificing safety or courtesy.
- Do not use your cell phone while driving.
- Devote your full attention to driving and avoid distractions.

Speed plays an important role in traffic collisions. It affects the probability of being in a collision and is most directly linked to the severity of a collision. The probability of severe injury increases sharply with the impact speed of a vehicle in a collision. The risk is even greater when a vehicle strikes a pedestrian, the most vulnerable of road users.

The City’s **Neighborhood Pace Car Pledge Program** encourages residents to take responsibility for the impact of their own driving while setting the "pace" for safer streets and more livable neighborhoods.

To make the pledge to set the pace, please visit [el-cerrito.org/PaceCarPledgeForm](http://el-cerrito.org/PaceCarPledgeForm).

**No Need to Push Pedestrian Buttons to Cross Streets at City Traffic Signals during COVID-19**
As indicated above, more people than ever are walking and biking on our local streets. In addition, there are many fewer vehicles given that only “Essential Travel” is permitted. As a result, this week the City reprogrammed the controllers at each of the 12 City-owned and operated signalized intersections so that they send an automatic call for the “Walk” signal. Pedestrians do not need to push the button to cross the street at these signalized intersections. Drivers should also expect to wait longer at these intersections. Please note that the signals on San Pablo Avenue at and south of Cutting Boulevard are owned and operated by Caltrans and cannot be reprogrammed by the City.
Properly Placing Solid Waste Carts at the Curb Especially Important During COVID-19

Regular collection of curbside garbage, recycling, and green waste is continuing during the COVID-19 public health emergency. As a result, the City is asking community members to take extra care to follow the City’s existing cart set-out instructions. Residents and business owners should place carts on the street with lids closed and wheels against the curb by 6 AM, or the night before collection day. **Most important, community members must leave 2 feet between carts and place them 4 feet from parked cars.**

Following COVID-19 social distancing protocols, solid waste workers are minimizing exiting their trucks while on their daily routes. As a result, carts must be set apart to allow trucks’ mechanical arm to easily pick them up. In addition, workers will not be picking up materials left outside the cart. These protocols are in place ordinarily and following them more closely at this time will help provide more protection for City of El Cerrito workers as well as East Bay Sanitary workers. For more information, please contact the El Cerrito Recycling Center at (510) 215-4350 or visit elcerrito.org/CurbsideProgram.

Maintaining Closure of City Playgrounds, Picnic Areas, Tennis Courts, Fields, and Similar Shared Recreational Facilities During Covid-19

Public Works Maintenance crews are continuing their emergency response activities by maintaining COVID-19-related closures of City playgrounds, dog park, picnic areas, tennis and basketball courts, playfields and similar shared recreational facilities as required by the Contra Costa Health Office Order dated March 31, 2020.

As a reminder the Order indicates the following:

- Use of playgrounds, dog parks, public picnic areas, and similar recreational areas is prohibited and
must be closed to the public.

- Use of shared public recreational facilities such as golf courses, tennis and basketball courts, pools, and rock walls are prohibited.
- Sports requiring people to share a ball or other equipment must be limited to people in the same household.

It is important to note that playfields are closed to sports activities, although recreation activities by members of the same household are permitted.

In addition, Public Works and Recreation Department staff are closely working together to follow the Contra Costa County Health Officer Guidance for Parks as an Essential Service During Covid-19 dated April 8, 2020 (attachment). The County’s aim is to work in close coordination with the East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD) to ensure parks stay open with the dual goals of:

1. Minimizing transmission of communicable disease to staff and the public
2. Safeguarding essential activities that are crucial for the mental, emotional, and physical health of community members.

This guidance is also applicable to the City of El Cerrito. Many community members are relieving stress and staying healthy by going for walks or runs in El Cerrito neighborhoods, as allowed by the Order, which may include visiting a neighborhood park. However, in doing so, it is important to practice the 6-foot social distancing to reduce the potential for the spread of COVID-19.

Encroachment Permits

Due to the extended Contra Costa County Health Officer Order, issued encroachment permits are now limited to the operations, maintenance, and repair of “essential infrastructure” including utilities (water, sewer, gas, and electrical), roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste facilities, and telecommunications systems. These were the primary types of permits being issued by Public Works Engineering staff over the last month so this was not a significant change. In addition, permits are being issued for other public works projects if specifically designated as an “essential governmental function” by the lead governmental agency for that project.
For example, last week Engineering staff issued a permit for the San Pablo Avenue Green Stormwater Spine Project, located south of Moeser Lane (picture shown to the left). The San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP) and its lead agency, the Bay Area Association of Governments (ABAG), designated this project as an Essential Governmental Function, citing Governor Gavin Newsom’s Executive Order N-33-20, in which he referred to 16 federal critical infrastructure sectors, including transportation systems, under which work may continue because of the importance of these sectors. All contractors are required to comply with applicable occupational safety and health standards, rules, regulations, and orders, including recent Health Officer’s Orders to implement, maintain, and post a social distancing protocol.

For any questions related to encroachment permits, please contact the Engineering Division at street@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 215-4382, or visit el-cerrito.org/Public-Works.

Eureka Avenue and Lexington Avenue Street Improvement Project Update
The Eureka Avenue and Lexington Avenue Street Improvement Project consists of the repair of Essential Infrastructure, including roadway pavement and sidewalk, and is anticipated to be completed within the next month. The project is located on Eureka Avenue from Kearney Street to Liberty Street and Lexington Avenue from Eureka Avenue to one block north, and is within two blocks of Fairmont Elementary School, El Cerrito Library, Centennial Park, and the Ohlone Greenway path.

The Project is considered Essential Business that is permitted to continue at this time. The Contra Costa Health Officer March 31, 2020 Order allows individuals to leave their residences to perform any work necessary to the operation and maintenance of Essential Infrastructure including roads and highways and further defines Essential Business to include construction for projects immediately necessary for maintenance, operation or repair of Essential Infrastructure. In addition, the Order exempts individuals performing Essential Governmental Functions as determined by the governmental entity performing those functions, and further defines Essential Business to include construction for public works projects if specifically designated as an Essential Governmental Function by the lead governmental agency, which is the case for this Project.

GradeTech Inc., the City’s contractor, began construction work at the end of March and is anticipated to complete the work by the middle of May. As of April 15, most of the concrete work including construction of curb ramps, sidewalk and storm drain
structures has been completed. The section of Eureka Avenue just west of Liberty Avenue had significant sidewalk displacements that have now been repaired as shown below. This sidewalk repair had been on the City’s list of ADA requests for many years and has been monitored by the City’s ADA Advisory Group.

The Eureka Avenue and Lexington Avenue Street Improvement Project is funded by the City’s Measure A Street Improvement funds and SB 1 Local Partnership Program funds and will directly benefit school-age children, current residents, and future residential development by providing safe and accessible walking, biking and driving routes.

For information or questions on the project, please contact the City’s Engineering Manager/Senior Engineer, Ana Bernardes, at abernardes@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or visit el-cerrito.org/EurekaLexingtonStreetProject.

**Earth Day Observance on Saturday, April 18**
The first Earth Day was proclaimed 50 years ago, in 1970, to foster public awareness of the need to protect the environment and conserve resources. The City of El Cerrito has celebrated Earth Day every year, in keeping with the spirit of the initial Earth Day. The City of El Cerrito seeks to involve all community members in improving our local environment and becoming more aware of the global environment.

This year, due to the COVID-19 emergency, instead of participating in community work parties and an annual volunteer appreciation event, the City of El Cerrito is encouraging community members to celebrate Earth Day by incorporating environmental practices into their day-to-day activities as well as work around their homes, such as weeding their gardens, planting drought-tolerant plants, adjusting their thermostats to use less energy, opting up to MCE’s “Deep Green” 100% renewable energy option, and learning more about the City’s environmental programs at el-cerrito.org/Green.

The City Council proclaimed Saturday, April 18, 2020, as “Earth Day” in the City of El
Cerrito and encourages all residents and businesses to help make El Cerrito a greener, healthier, more sustainable place for all.

RECREATION

Online Scavenger Hunts
Leading up to Easter Sunday, the Recreation Department ran a series of virtual scavenger hunts through social media. Each day a different scavenger hunt was posted, and participants were asked to hashtag #rECHunts when they posted their finds online. Different scavenger hunt themes included “Book Scavenger Hunt”, “Math Scavenger Hunt” and “Rainbow Scavenger Hunt” culminating with a “Spring (Egg) Hunt.”

Recreation’s social media pages will also include updates on new content added to el-cerrito.org/rECsources, like newsletters from Recreation Staff and Instructors, and information on services that are still being provided for seniors such as the weekly lunch program. If the community has any ideas on a weekly theme for our social media, content for our rECsources page, or any other way we can engage with each other while physical distanced, please message recreation@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

C.C. Café Delivered & To-Go Lunch Program
Do you know an older adult (age 60+) in El Cerrito who would benefit from weekly meal delivery? Please encourage them to call or email us to get them registered for Contra Costa County’s meal program today. If they are comfortable sharing their contact information, please send it to us and we will reach out to them. Seven meals are delivered weekly on Wednesdays. Orders must be received by the preceding Monday at noon. For more information or to place an order for meals, call (510) 559-7677 or email midtown@ci.elcerrito.ca.us

Meals on Wheels
Home-delivered meals for Seniors 60+ may be available through the Meals on Wheels home delivered meals program. Meals on Wheels has changed from daily meal delivery to weekly meal delivery. Meals will be delivered on Mondays between 11 a.m. - 12:30
p.m. Call (510) 412-0166 for more information or to sign up for this program.

Cancelled and Future Programs
Many people have registered for Recreation programs and classes that have been or will be cancelled due to this crisis during the current Shelter-in-Place (SIP) order. However, Recreation Department staff are focused on ensuring that we can reopen when the time comes. While the SIP order is through May 3, we realize it is likely that this timeframe will be extended. If that is the case, we will inform participants of our plans for further modifying or cancelling programs. Because of the large number of programs and services that have been cancelled, household credits and refunds will be processed in order of their original start date and after their original end date has passed. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Subscribe & Follow
For up-to-date information in the El Cerrito Recreation Department, please subscribe to our email newsletter rECnews at el-cerrito.org/recreation
Follow us: Instagram - @ecrecreation | Facebook - @ecrecreation | Twitter - @ElCerritoREC
ATTACHMENTS/FLYERS

- El Cerrito Restaurant List
- Contra Costa County Health Officer Guidance for Parks as an Essential Service During Covid-19 (April 8, 2020)
Dine Out
El Cerrito

These restaurants offer take out food during the COVID-19 lockdown. List subject to change. El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce members shown in red. Check restaurant websites as many provide online ordering and delivery to maintain social distancing.

Bánh Mi Sandwich Deli
10174 San Pablo Ave.

Banana Leaf Thai
11880 San Pablo Ave.
bananaleafelcerrito.com

Baskin Robbins
10598 San Pablo Ave.
baskinrobbins.com

Brasil Bistro
11866 San Pablo Ave.

BurgerIM
El Cerrito Plaza
burgerim.com

Burger King
6021 Central Ave.
bk.com

Chef’s Chinese
El Cerrito Plaza

Chipotle
Carlson & San Pablo
chipotle.com

Church’s Chicken
11575 San Pablo Ave.
churcs.com

Donut Time
10740 San Pablo Ave.

El Cerrito Natural Grocery Annex — wine & beer only
Stockton & San Pablo
naturalgrocery.com

Elevation 66 Brewing Co.
10082 San Pablo Ave.
elevation66.com

El Mono Fresh Flavors of Peru
10264 San Pablo Ave.
elmonofresh.com

Frannie Express Hawaiian Barbecue
11775 San Pablo Ave.
frannieexpresshawaiian.com

Gangam Tofu Korean Cuisine
11740 San Pablo Ave.

Himalayan Grocery
10340 San Pablo Ave.

HK Home Kitchen
10140 San Pablo Ave.

Jack in the Box
5920 Cutting Blvd.
jackinthebox.com

Jamba Juice
El Cerrito Plaza
jamba.com

Little Caesar’s Pizza
11299 San Pablo Ave.
littlecaesars.com

Little Hong Kong
10443 San Pablo Ave.

Lucky Store
El Cerrito Plaza
luckysupermarkets.com

McBears Social Club taco truck
10458 San Pablo Ave.

McDonalds
11821 San Pablo Ave.
mcdonalds.com

Mountain Mike’s Pizza
10750 San Pablo Ave.
mountainmikespizza.com

Mr. Pickle’s Sandwich Shop
10810 San Pablo Ave.
mrpickles.com

New India Supermarket
10289 San Pablo Ave.

Nation’s Giant Hamburgers
Central & San Pablo
nationsrestaurants.com

Noodles Fresh
10042 San Pablo Ave.
noodlesfresh.com

Nori Roll
10178 San Pablo Ave.
noriroll.com

Papi’s Pizza Roma
10616 San Pablo Ave.
papispizzaroma.com

Panda Express
El Cerrito Plaza
pandexpress.com

Peet’s Coffee
Carlson & San Pablo
peets.com

Popeye’s Louisiana Kitchen
10125 San Pablo Ave.
popeyes.com

Quickly
El Cerrito Plaza

Red Onion
11900 San Pablo Ave.

Romano’s Macaroni Grill
El Cerrito Plaza
macaronigrill.com

Safeway
11450 San Pablo Ave.
local.safeway.com

Sasa Kitchen
10350 San Pablo Ave.
sakitchenca.com

Starbucks Coffee
11861 San Pablo Ave.
starbucks.com

Subway
10398 San Pablo Ave.
11430 San Pablo Ave.
subway.com

Taqueria El Salva
11252 San Pablo Ave.

Tashi Delek Cuisine
11224 San Pablo Ave.
tashidelekcusine.com

The Junket
El Cerrito Plaza
thejunket.com

Uncle Wong’s
11760 San Pablo Ave.
unclewongselcerrito.com

Well Grounded Tea & Coffee Bar
6925 Stockton Ave.
well-grounded.com

Wienserschnitzel
11101 San Pablo Ave.
wiensersnitzel.com

Wingstop
El Cerrito Plaza
wingstop.com

Yammii Sushi
El Cerrito Plaza

Yoshio Sushi
10889 San Pablo Ave.
yoshiosushielcerrito.com

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East Bay Regional Park District
Dear Board President, Director Ellen Corbett

The Association of Bay Area Health Officers together with their legal County Counsels, have acknowledged the “essential” role of parks during the COVID-19 pandemic and included specific legal language in the shelter-in-place order to allow for the public to engage in the health benefits of parks while still following physical distancing measures to decrease community transmission of the novel coronavirus. This also means that park staff are disaster service workers that would be requested to continue their essential work or possibly be reassigned to different essential work (e.g. childcare for health care workers like in San Francisco or other emergent needs). As local public health experts, we feel it is important to continue providing guidance to all essential sectors of society supporting the public’s wellbeing during this prolonged emergency that is likely to continue for months to years.

While we understand that different counties and park districts may place varied restrictions to decrease crowding, in Contra Costa County in close partnership with Alameda County’s Interim Health Officer Dr. Erica Pan, we aim to continue working in close coordination with the East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD) to ensure parks stay open with the dual goals of:

1. Minimizing transmission of communicable disease to staff and the public
2. Safeguarding essential activities that are crucial for the mental, emotional, and physical health of community members

We have and will continue to provide guidance, trainings, and protocols to all sectors (e.g. education, transportation, parks). Over the past few weeks we have provided such guidance to EBRPD management. Restroom and trash maintenance should be continued for essential services to promote hygiene and sanitation. There is no additional risk to these everyday tasks for other venues (restroom and trash maintenance at grocery stores, pharmacies etc.). The same personal protective and disinfecting measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control are sufficient. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html

There is a national shortage of some PPE (personal protective equipment) that must be reserved for higher risk, longer duration, closer proximity interactions (e.g. health care workers doing procedures with COVID-19 positive individuals). Disposable gloves, access to soap and water or hand sanitizer, washable clothing (coveralls, outdoor suits, or gowns) and cloth face covers are sufficient for park staff engaging in restroom and trash maintenance or brief engagements with the public. We do not recommend requiring N95 masks or other highly specialized PPE for park staff although individuals may choose to personally acquire and utilize additional PPE. We have provided similar guidance to full-time trash collectors and sanitation workers in our county that continue to provide these essential services to the public.
Closing parks come at some cost. Never before in human history has a call for prolonged shelter in place overlapped with our 21st century industrialized world reality: most people spend 90% of their lifetime in enclosed spaces. Social distancing strategies may worsen the mental health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among the least economically and socially stable. Social distancing measures have in the past exacerbated issues of personal conflict, domestic violence, and even child abuse. We are unfortunately already seeing a rise in domestic violence.

Parks have always been a community-based resource to alleviate these types of stressors. Exposure to nature has been shown in adults to improve adaptation to stress in cross-sectional and experimental studies. Nearby nature can buffer the effect of poverty on cardiovascular disease and mortality in adults, an effect postulated to be through stress relief over the lifespan. In children, even when adjusted for income, stressors have a smaller deleterious effect on mental health when children live in more green and natural settings supporting the development of important protective strategies that enhance resilience. Parks can be an antidote to excessive screen time and sedentariness which worsen obesity and chronic disease. Parks promote physical activity, which can be key to the long-term mental and physical health of youth and elderly populations. Parks allow for outdoor time, which may allow people to feel less isolated, even if they are not outdoors to socialize.

Like other elements of the built environment, access to the outdoors, and to nature, is not equitably distributed in the United States. Low-income and minority neighborhoods often have less tree cover and fewer parks near their homes. While affluent populations have access to the nature found in their homes or neighborhoods, low-income populations are less likely to, which only exacerbates the impact park closures will have on health equity. While we support messaging around no destination recreation (stay within your county, go to your local parks) we are not recommending a mileage limit within our county.

As public health professionals who fully support the necessity of shelter-in-place orders in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, we also believe that access to nature is an essential component of modern life. We seek to strike a balance between park access over the short and long run and the physical distancing currently necessary to stop transmission. Pursuant to § 120175 of the California Health and Safety Code, the Health Officer of Contra Costa County in our March 31st order included clear guidelines about which park components are not allow for social distancing - playgrounds, dog parks, public picnic areas, and similar recreational areas must be closed to public use. Use of shared public recreational facilities such as golf courses, tennis and basketball courts, pools, and rock walls must be closed for recreational use. Sports requiring people to share a ball or other equipment must be limited to people in the same household.


* H&S Code § 120175, et seq. (2001), Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Act. Each health officer knowing or having reason to believe that any case of the diseases made reportable by regulation of the department, or any other contagious, infectious or communicable disease exists, or has recently existed, within the territory under his or her jurisdiction, shall take measures as may be necessary to prevent the spread of the disease or occurrence of additional cases.
However, we intentionally maintained general use of parks and trails as an essential service. We have worked with EBRPD management to create a menu of strategies to further limit crowding which can be strengthened and loosened over time (e.g. informational awareness, parking modifications, staggered access).

We hope to continue our partnership to make healthy parks for healthy people part of our pandemic response.

Sincerely,

CHRIS FARNITANO M.D.
Health Officer

ROHAN RADHAKRISHNA M.D.
Deputy Health Officer

4/8/2020
Date

References: