



PUBLIC WORKS

Staff Liaison

Will Provost | (510) 559-7684
wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE Environmental Quality Committee

Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

JOIN VIA ZOOM:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84727143643?pwd=b3E4Y2Y3Tk5iZU1mamiXRTI2RDVRdz09>

Meeting ID: 847 2714 3643 **Password:** 2154350
or Dial in: 1-408-638-0968

This advisory body is currently meeting by teleconference, consistent with the Brown Act as amended by AB 361 (2021). Under the amended rules, teleconference restrictions of the Brown Act are suspended and the City will not provide a physical location for members of the public to participate in the teleconference meeting. Any person wishing to speak to the Environmental Quality Committee on any of these matters is invited to participate via web-conference as described above. The City encourages submission of written comments in advance to the Environmental Quality Committee by emailing wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us prior to the meeting.

7:00 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair Neil Tsutsui; Vice-Chair Beth Molnar; Members Buddy Akacić, Howdy Goudey, Rebecca Milliken, Mark Miner, Sean O'Connor, Paloma Pavel, Ellen Spitalnik, Sheila Tarbet, Rose Vekony, and Dave Weinstein
2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC** *(Estimated time: 5 minutes)*
Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person, and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first, as well as introduction by individuals interested in serving on the advisory body. Remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.
3. **COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS** *(5 min.)*
Staff and/or Mayor Paul Fadelli may report on policies, priorities, and significant actions taken by the City Council, and/or on matters of general interest to the EQC.
4. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** *(5 min.)*
Consider a motion adopting the minutes of the EQC meeting on October 12, 2021.
5. **COLLABORATION WITH THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE** *(5 min.)*
Hear updates, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the City's Urban Forest Committee.
6. **EQC WORKPLAN 2022** *(60 min.)*
Review and comment on the EQC Work Plan and Calendar, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding updating the Work Plan for 2022.
7. **ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND RACIAL FRAMEWORK** *(10 min.)*
Discuss potential next steps for the EQC to promote diversity and inclusion, and the idea of developing an environmental, social, and racial framework to guide future EQC efforts.
 - Ad-Hoc Subcommittee report
 - Letter of Appreciation from the EQC commending the Breakthrough Communities Gaia Program Interns and showing appreciation for their leading of an Environmental Justice, Equity, and Anti-Racism training at the June 8, 2021 meeting.

8. EQC BUDGET AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS (10 min.)

Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding planning, logistics, and expenditures for the EQC calendar of events, including:

- Educational Events, Films, and Workshops
 - Green Team 2021 Cleanups / Broom Pulls:
 - Oct. 16, Saturday, Northern Gateway Cleanup - Debrief
 - Dec. 5, Sunday, Baxter Creek
 - SunShares 2021 – Signups through 11/30 (<http://www.bayareasunshares.org/>)
 - Recycling Center 50th Anniversary Celebration in 2022
 - Hillside Festival – May 14-15, 2022
 - Earth Day 2022
 - Virtual (Zoom) Fixit clinic (hosted by Berkeley Lab), on Sat. Nov. 20, 10am-12pm
 - Consider co-sponsoring

9. CLIMATE ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION (15 min.)

Hear updates, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

- BART Corridor Access Plan
- Community Organized Induction Burner Loaner Program
- Fire Prevention and Climate Action - Discuss coordinating a briefing from Fire
- MCE Clean Energy & California Public Utilities Commission Updates
 - Recent PG&E Webinars
- San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Update/EIR – EQC Comments
- Climate Action Plan Update Recommendations for City Council Ad-Hoc Subcommittee
 - EQC Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Membership / Report

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (5 min.)

Hear committee member announcements and suggestions for future EQC agenda items. Potentially engage in discussion and make decisions regarding logistics of EQC consideration of items including:

- EQC Meeting Schedule / Return to In-person Meetings
- Tree Planting / Project Commemorating Maria Sanders
- Climate Adaptation, Severe Weather Events, and Emergency Preparedness
- Integrated Pest Management Report from City Staff
- EQC Collaboration with Young People in El Cerrito
- Tool/Toy Lending Library
- Urban Greening Plan Implementation
- Community Member Suggestions (e.g. Meatless Green Mondays, Leaf Blowers)
- Real Property Transfer Tax Rebates for Energy Efficiency – Education

11. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, Will Provost, at (510) 559-7684. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center (7501 Schmidt Lane) during normal business hours.



Environmental Quality Committee

2022 WORK PLAN

AND

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Members: Chair Neil Tsutsui; Vice-Chair Beth Molnar; Buddy Akacić, Howdy Goudey, Rebecca Milliken, Mark Miner, Sean O'Connor, Paloma Pavel, Ellen Spitalnik, Sheila Tabet, Rose Vekony, and David Weinstein

Because the City of El Cerrito recognizes that environmental quality is an important issue that demands immediate and ongoing attention, the Environmental Quality Committee (EQC) was established in 2008 by Resolution 2008-13 as a Council-appointed body of up to 15 El Cerrito residents and business owners. It typically meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 PM in City Council Chambers (or virtually as required). The enabling resolution identifies the whole City's role and responsibility in reducing environmental impacts and the EQC's role in providing environmental leadership and affecting cultural change in the way that the City and its residents relate to the environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Environmental Quality Committee's **mission** is to educate, inspire, and activate our community to thrive in a socially just, equitable, and regenerative manner.

The EQC **duties and responsibilities**, as stated in its enabling resolution, are

1. To serve in an advisory capacity to the City Council, staff, other boards, commissions, and committees, and the citizens of the City with regard to environmental quality issues within the City of El Cerrito
2. To recommend programs, policies, and ordinances to the City Council and promote the City's environmental quality efforts
3. Promote and foster public awareness, education, interest and support for environmental quality efforts, foster volunteer opportunities, and educate El Cerrito residents regarding environmental quality and issues relating to environmental impacts

The EQC **goals** are

- To reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to meet or exceed targets of the El Cerrito Climate Action Plan, also proposing revised goals as appropriate
- To apply a framework of social, racial, and environmental justice in the implementation of our work
- To promote environmental education, action, engagement, equity, and justice
- To involve learners of all ages
- To help businesses and residents work and live in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly fashion
- To inform and champion the City's environmental policies and ordinances
- To change material use patterns by encouraging Reduction, Reuse, Recycling, and Composting
- To champion energy/water efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainable transportation
- To minimize hazardous chemical use and human/environmental exposures to toxics
- To protect, expand, and steward green spaces with public path/trail connectivity; maintain and restore natural areas with an emphasis on native ecosystems; and encourage a network of human/wildlife-friendly green habitat throughout the City
- To support water quality, healthy creeks and forests, and green infrastructure to increase resiliency in the face of climate change
- To bring attention to disadvantaged community members who are inequitably impacted by environmental degradation

The EQC's work is guided by the 2015–2020 El Cerrito Strategic Plan (excerpted below):

Goal F: Foster environmental sustainability citywide

- Be a leader in setting policies and providing innovative programs that promote environmental sustainability.
- Promote environmental education to facilitate behavioral changes by working with the school district and other community groups.
- Implement polices to promote waste diversion (i.e., mandatory commercial recycling and green waste).
- Encourage alternative modes of transportation to the single occupancy vehicle.
- Implement and monitor the City's Climate Action Plan to:
 - 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.)
 - Facilitate energy and water efficiency and greater use and generation of clean energy
 - Reduce the amount of waste generated in El Cerrito
 - Make municipal operations more resource-efficient and environmentally friendly

On August 20, 2019, the City of El Cerrito approved a resolution (2019-52) and joined hundreds of jurisdictions across the globe in declaring a climate emergency. This resolution, which sets a target to reduce GHG emissions further, with the ultimate goal of reaching zero GHG emissions, has heightened both the urgency and import of the EQC's work.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since the EQC's establishment in 2008, the committee's emphasis has occasionally cycled between public education, community volunteer organization, and environmental policy, but the general commitment to all forms of action envisioned for the EQC has remained consistent over time. The committee has also maintained a fairly consistent size, with a number of long-serving members. More than 40 community members have served, and the committee is currently operating near its full 15-member capacity.

2022 WORK PLAN

OBJECTIVE	PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AS ALLOWED	PRIORITY RANKING	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION
1. Public Education and Outreach	a) Host at least one Spring and one Fall public event (e.g., virtual films, lectures, webinars, workshops) to educate residents about the Climate Emergency and support Climate Emergency mobilization.	1	1 year
	b) Create an internal social, racial, and environmental justice framework assessment tool to guide the EQC in its future work.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	c) Support implementation of an Expanded Foodware Ordinance and provide outreach and education to residents and businesses. In particular, educate residents about bioplastics vs. fiber-based materials that can be composted in El Cerrito.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	d) Participate in events and programs that encourage energy efficiency and electrification of buildings and transportation (e.g., Bay Area SunShares program to increase rooftop solar adoption, Electric Cars 101 workshop, BayREN Home+ workshop, National Drive Electric Week)	1	1 year (ongoing)
	e) Pilot public education and outreach to promote electrification in home retrofits and encourage the replacement of end-of-life gas water heaters, furnaces, and stoves with heat pumps and induction cooktops or ranges; develop lending programs that facilitate electrification and reuse.	TBD	TBD
	f) Co-sponsor the Hillside Festival and other related hikes and educational events		
	g) Co-sponsor Fix-it Clinic events to promote waste reduction.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	h) Support Citizen Scientist activities to increase awareness of El Cerrito’s biodiversity.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	i) Engage with the public at any major City events that take place in 2022, and perform other outreach activities to spread awareness.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	j) Continue enrollment outreach for MCE Deep Green 100% renewable power on a virtual basis (social channels; Green Happenings).	1	1 year (ongoing)

2. Volunteer Work Parties	Hold a Green Team work party every other month (~ 6/year); diversify work party activities; organize broom pulls and other regular habitat improvement projects.	1	1 year (ongoing)
3. Policy Development and Recommendations	a) Review and support the update of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) to accelerate achievement of the stated goal of zero net GHG emissions, in view of our declared climate emergency; to promote electrification to reduce residential and commercial natural gas usage; and to focus on equity. Engage in the budget process to assure it includes CAP goals and provide recommendations to help achieve social, racial, and environmental justice goals.	1	1–2 years
	b) Develop and promote policies to increase electrification of new buildings and decrease or eliminate use of natural gas citywide, with a focus on new developments included in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan update.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	c) Support efforts to promote and expand the use of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure in the City; support current City efforts such as including charging infrastructure as part of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan; provide more public charging in logical places as City budget permits.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	d) Interface with other relevant City commissions and committees to help develop environmentally friendly policies.	1	1 year (ongoing)
4. Implementation of City Environmental Programs	a) Expand stewardship of Hillside Natural Area (invasive plants; deferred maintenance) and support wildfire risk reduction while preserving native plants and habitat (as a resource, provide access to the fire-safe plant list from ECFD/Diablo Fire)	1	1 year (ongoing)
	b) Support the work of the Urban Forest Committee and the potential Hillside Master Plan.	TBD	TBD
	c) Help implement City policies related to new state solid waste regulations for businesses and residents.	2/3	1 year (ongoing)
	d) Support future acquisition of public open space or public access easements; help implement Urban Greening and Green Infrastructure Plans.	2/3	1 year (ongoing)

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING GOAL
1. Public Education and Outreach	a) Received “Centering Equity and Anti-racism” training offered by Breakthrough Communities b) Hosted an Electric Vehicles 101 Workshop c) Co-promoted virtual National Drive Electric Week events d) Promoted the SunShares program e) Set up Ohlone Greenway arch for Bike to Work Day f) Promoted 2021 Earth Day and Douglas Tallamy’s “Bringing Back the Natives” presentation g) Co-sponsored 2021 East Bay Green Home Tour
2. Volunteer Work Parties	a) Organized regular Green Team work parties (which had been paused in 2020 due to the pandemic), including trash removal from streets, parks, and creeks and participation in Coastal Clean-up day); held broom pulls in the Hillside Natural Area
3. Policy Development and Recommendations	a) Developed Climate Action Recommendations and presented them to City Council b) Supported relaunch of the Expanded Foodware Ordinance, with the goal of reducing plastic usage in the City, and hosted public meeting to support the public outreach process c) Provided additional environmental recommendations for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Update
4. Implementation of City Environmental Programs	a) Supported City programs through public education, outreach, and work parties, to the extent possible during the pandemic.

ONGOING PROJECTS

PROJECT	ACTIVITIES
1. Green Team Work Parties	Coordinate roughly six trash clean-up events each year in various City parks, the Ohlone Greenway, and City streets. Organize other volunteer work parties focused on weed/invasive plant removal, pollinator habitat restoration/stewardship, tree planting (in collaboration with the Urban Forest Committee and City arborist), and maintenance/stewardship of the Hillside Natural Area.
2. Hillside Festival	Assist Trail Trekkers in production of the annual event celebrating the Hillside Natural Area with many hikes, talks, and activities.
3. Climate Action Plan Implementation and Progress Metrics	Work with City staff to evaluate successes and opportunities as we further implement the Climate Action Plan. Explore opportunities to reduce residential natural gas use and promote electrification of home appliances and automobiles as a complement to 100% renewable electrical power. Improve municipal electric vehicle infrastructure/readiness and fleet management. Explore ways to achieve greater social, racial, and environmental justice.
4. Urban Greening Implementation	Organize volunteer work parties and aid in policy/program development to strengthen pollinator habitat and green infrastructure.
5. Future Project Ideas/Areas to Explore (2020/2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Liaise with other City commissions/committees to ensure sustainability considerations. Increase EQC participation on related topics in City budget process. b) Explore environmental benefits/impacts of new development. c) Participate in regional climate action information sharing and coordination. d) Provide education about the El Cerrito Real Property Transfer Tax (RPTT) rebates for seismic upgrades and energy and water conservation. e) Provide emergency preparedness education (e.g., PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoffs). f) Review how the City cares for its creeks and riparian habitats.