On February 5, El Cerrito voters approved Measure A, the El Cerrito Pothole Repair, Local Street Improvement, and Maintenance Measure. Thanks to a highly supportive vote, the measure passed with 71 percent approval.

Measure A established a dedicated one-half percent sales tax to be used exclusively for street improvements, and authorized the City to incur debt to immediately begin and accelerate street improvements. Measure A also includes fiscal accountability provisions, such as annual independent financial audits and a Citizens’ Oversight Committee.

Measure A raises El Cerrito’s sales tax rate to 8.75 percent, which is comparable to that of our neighboring cities. The sales tax increase will go into effect on July 1, 2008. One of the many benefits of a sales tax is that visitors and shoppers from neighboring communities will be contributing to the maintenance of the streets and roads they are using. The El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce endorsed Measure A, and the City is working with the State Board of Equalization to notify businesses of the sales tax increase.

The City of El Cerrito street system consists of approximately 68 miles of streets, the majority of which were constructed to the standards and conditions of the early to mid-20th century. The City uses the standard Pavement Condition Index (PCI) to rate streets on a 100-point scale, with failed streets rated at 0 and excellent streets at 100. The City will use this rating to help determine what type of work is needed for each street, as well as to help prioritize the order in which streets are repaired.

The City has developed a multi-year, intensive pothole and street repair program funded by Measure A to respond to the most significant street pavement problems throughout the city.

The City’s goal is to rapidly improve El Cerrito’s street system and to complete the repairs in the most efficient and effective manner. The City’s goal is to bring every street in El Cerrito up to this excellent pavement condition by 2012.

The Easy Ride Program is open to El Cerrito residents only. The fee is $8 per ride.

Eligible residents can call the Open House Senior Center at 559-7677 to schedule a ride. You may schedule a ride up to a week in advance, or you can call the same day between 8:30 and 9:30 a.m. Reservations are accepted on a first come, first served basis.

The Easy Ride Program is open to El Cerrito residents only. The fee is $8 per ride.
UPCOMING EVENTS!

Friday, Saturday, & Sunday
April 25–27
ANNUAL ART SHOW
The El Cerrito Art Association is proud to present the 32nd annual art show in conjunction with Earth Day 2008.

When: Friday to Sunday, April 25–27
Friday, 7–10 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Where: El Cerrito Community Center
7007 Moeser Lane

Saturday, April 26
EARTH DAY 2008

STEPS TOWARD A GREENER EL CERRITO
Get involved! Help plant trees, remove litter, and promote a healthy environment in El Cerrito. Then, join hundreds of other community members for a free lunch, family activities and a raffle at the Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane. Please bring your own drink container to the lunch. For details, call 215-4351.

When: Saturday, April 26
Work parties begin, 9 a.m.
Lunch for volunteers, 12 noon
Where: Sites throughout the City; lunch at the Community Center

Sunday, May 4
BRINGING BACK THE NATIVES GARDEN TOUR
Includes free and guided tours of water-conserving, pesticide-free gardens. Co-sponsored by the City of El Cerrito. Information and registration at www.bringingbackthenatives.net or call 236-9558.

When: Sunday, May 4, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Where: Various gardens and nurseries in the East Bay

Thursday, May 15
BIKE TO WORK OR SCHOOL DAY
Whether you bike every day or are a first-time cyclist, ride your bike to work or school on May 15 and enjoy encouragement, snacks, and other items at Bike to Work Day Energizer Stations along the way. For more information, call 511 and say “bicycling” or visit www.511.org and click on bicycling.

When: Thursday, May 15
Where: Energizer Station at El Cerrito Plaza BART Station

Sunday, May 18
DIVERSITY FILM & FORUM
Free screening of “From A Silk Cocoon,” followed by Q&A with filmmaker Satsuki Ina. Presented by the City of El Cerrito Human Relations Commission.

When: Sunday, May 18, 2–4 p.m.
Where: Cerrito Speakeasy Theater
10070 San Pablo Ave.

Tuesday, May 20
POTHOLE & STREET REPAIR COMMUNITY MEETING
Drop by to learn more about the Pothole and Street Repair Program.

When: Tuesday, May 20, 6–8 p.m.
Where: El Cerrito Senior Center
6500 Stockton Ave.

Wednesday, May 21
PUBLIC WORKS OPEN HOUSE
Residents are invited to learn about public works systems such as water, sewers, streets and highways, public buildings, and recycling and solid waste collection. Kids will enjoy seeing the various equipment used to provide services. Talk with staff from the Public Works Department and other jurisdictions (EBMUD, El Cerrito Fire Department, Stege Sanitary District, etc.). All ages welcome. Refreshments provided.

When: Wednesday, May 21, 3–5 p.m.
Where: El Cerrito Community Center Parking Lot
7007 Moeser Lane

See You at the Fair

Join your friends and neighbors and celebrate Independence Day at the fun-filled City of El Cerrito July 4th Fair and worldOne festival on Friday, July 4, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Cerrito Vista Park and the Portola Middle School Blacktop (Moeser Lane between Pomona and Avis Streets).

Activities will include games for children, food, arts and crafts, as well as live entertainment on two stages. This year for the first time, we will also have two carnival-type rides for young children.

Look for more information about the July 4th Fair, including information and applications for vendors, performers and volunteers, on the City’s website at www.el-cerrito.org or call 559-7000.

BOOTH SPACE AVAILABLE! Is your business or non-profit organization interested in having a booth to sell food or products, or to promote your organization’s services? Did you know discounted rates are available to non-profit organizations and local home-based businesses? Sign up now! Download an application form from the website or call the Recreation Department at 559-7000 for more details.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS! Each year, we rely on community volunteers to help make the July 4th Fair a fun, safe event for everyone. If you are interested in volunteering at this event, please visit the website or contact the Recreation Department at 559-7000. Community groups with five or more volunteers may qualify for a stipend.
City Recreation Plans Summer Fun for Children

ARE YOU THINKING about fun, safe activities for your child this summer? The City offers numerous programs that are an exciting addition to your child’s summer experience. With a variety of half-day and full-day camps to choose from, you are sure to find something your child will enjoy.

Dates, times, locations, fees and a description about each camp are included in the Spring/Summer Recreation Brochure, available online at www.el-cerrito.org/recreation.

You can register for recreation classes in several ways:
- Sign up for some programs online at www.el-cerrito.org/recreation
- Mail or hand-deliver your completed registration forms, along with payment, to:
  El Cerrito Community Center
  Attn: Summer Day Camp Registrar
  7007 Moeser Lane
  El Cerrito, CA 94530

CAMP RAVENCLIFF FOR KIDS
For eight years, the Recreation Department has offered a fun camping experience away from home for campers ages 7 to 14 at Camp Ravencliff in beautiful southern Humboldt County. Campers can enjoy outdoor activities among the redwood trees, water activities, sports, arts and crafts, and much more from August 16 through 22. To learn more about this overnight camp experience, plan to attend the Family Information Night on Thursday, July 10, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., at the El Cerrito Senior Center, 6500 Stockton Ave. Please call 559-7000 for more information.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR TEENS
Two special programs for teens entering grades 10 to 12 are offered at Camp Ravencliff: the Teen in Leadership Training (TILT) Program and the Counselors-In-Training (CIT) Program. Teens accepted into these programs will focus on various projects throughout camp, including assisting counselors with camp activities and performing other support functions. The Ravencliff Teen Programs’ mission emphasizes teamwork, group dynamics, and personal growth. There are a limited number of TILT and CIT positions available. Interested teens should contact Chris at cjones@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or call 559-7000, and may participate in an interview as part of the selection process.

For more information about any of the summer programs offered by the City, call the Recreation Department at 559-7000 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Registration forms are available at the Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane, or online at www.el-cerrito.org/recreation.

What Would Your Child Like to Do this Summer?

With a variety of half-day and full-day programs to choose from, you are sure to find something your child will enjoy doing this summer.

Camps and special activities include:
- Basketball Camp
- Castro Day Camp
- Counselors-in-Training
- Dance and Drama Camp
- Fairmont Day Camps (AM and PM)
- Gymnastics Camp
- LEGO Camps
- Mornings Extended Care
- Mosaic Art Academy
- Pathfinders Field Trip Camp
- Pee Wee Fun Camp
- Pee Wee Enrichment Camp
- Ravencliff Camp
- Solar Powered Kids
- Sports Camp
- Swim Center
- Tennis Camp

For more information about the summer programs offered by the City, call the Recreation Department at 559-7000 or visit www.el-cerrito.org/recreation.
efficienct and quickest way possible. The initial years of the program will include a significantly accelerated work plan focused on repairing residential streets. This is intended to bring the City’s average PCI rating up to or near 70 by 2012. The accelerated work plan is expected to cost almost $17 million.

TWO-PHASE PLAN

PHASE ONE will prepare a street for the final paving to be done in phase two. The repairs and other preparatory work may include:

- Sealing cracks
- Fixing potholes by making structural pavement repairs
- Installing curb ramps
- Miscellaneous repairs (curbs, gutters, and street-drainage problems)

Phase one is planned to be largely completed in 2008 and 2009. Although this work will occur throughout the City, it will not require widespread parking restrictions or street closures because this type of work usually involves only a portion of the street being repaired. After the repairs and preparatory work have been completed, the street will be ready for the final resurfacing work in phase two.

PHASE TWO is planned to be carried out Citywide over a three-year period (2009–2011). This phase will include:

- Leveling and grinding to create a smooth street surface
- Repaving, using one of the following methods:
  - Micropaving/cape seal (thinner layer of paving material to renew wear surface and eliminate cracks)
  - Asphalt overlay (substantial thickness of new asphalt)
  - Slurry seal (single layer of paving material to seal pavement surface)
- Replacing/upgrading pavement markings, striping and signage where appropriate, including vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety improvements

Because crews resurface a whole block at a time, there will be some short-term inconvenience (such as parking restrictions and street closures) while streets in your area are being repaved. We will be sure to provide residents and businesses ample notice regarding the street repaving schedule. The City intends to undertake a significant public information program to help keep you informed.

The City is also working with utility agencies to ensure that they don’t plan to dig up any of the City’s streets after they have been paved. The City is already working closely with Stege Sanitary District regarding impacts on the streets of its sewer lateral policy.

LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE

After completion of the accelerated work plan in 2011, future years’ work will be devoted to ongoing maintenance. In addition, a portion of Measure A revenues will be used to improve non-vehicular mobility and accessibility (such as curb ramps, and bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements) as well as to resolve significant street drainage problems.

The City is dedicated to controlling costs and operating as efficiently as possible. We want to continue to provide excellent service to the residents of El Cerrito, today and in the future. We are excited to have the opportunity to fix the streets and to keep repaired streets from falling into disrepair again.

Plan to attend a community open house to learn more about the pothole and street repair program on Tuesday, May 20, from 6:00–8:00 p.m. at the Senior Center, 6500 Stockton Avenue. Call 219-4155 for details.
Consider a Career in Law Enforcement

The City of El Cerrito offers two programs for students considering a career in law enforcement: the Police Explorer Program and the Police Cadet Program. The Police Explorer Program is a volunteer program for teens aged 14 through 18. It offers an excellent opportunity for teens interested in law enforcement to learn about all aspects of police work. Explorers ride in patrol cars, work in the office, and help at special events. Explorers receive police-related training to handle special jobs and assignments. The Police Explorer Program is co-sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America. Many successful law enforcement officers began their careers as Explorers.

Candidates must maintain a C grade average or above in school, have parental consent, and pass a background check. There is a minimum commitment of 10 hours per month required. If you are interested in applying to the Police Explorer Program, pick up an application form from the Police Department or call 215-4400.

The Police Cadet Program is open to college or university students who are at least 18 years of age and are considering a career in law enforcement, criminal justice, or related fields. Police Cadets are hired as employees of the City. This is a part-time, paid position. Cadets are expected to commit to work for the department for a two-year period. The position is designed to be a “stepping stone” to teach potential future employees about sworn (as well as non-sworn) careers in public service.

Cadets have the opportunity to perform a wide variety of non-sworn law enforcement duties, such as assisting the Records Bureau, Field Operations, and Investigations Divisions; assisting members of the public; and participating in some law-enforcement training programs.

There are a number of requirements for the Police Cadet position, and candidates whose names are placed on the eligibility list must undergo an extensive background investigation. If you are interested in applying to become a Police Cadet with the El Cerrito Police Department, please pick up an application form from the Police Department or the Employee Services Division. For more information, call Administrative Sergeant Robert De La Campa at 215-4415.

National Night Out is Tuesday, August 5

Plan to join your neighbors and talk to local police officers and City officials as part of the annual National Night Out event on Tuesday, August 5.

The City of El Cerrito’s annual Night Out events bring together friends and neighbors in an effort to promote crime and violence prevention, neighborhood spirit, and police-community partnerships.

For over a decade, El Cerrito residents across the City have turned on their porch lights as a sign of unity and had fun attending neighborhood-hosted barbecues and potlucks, or simply taking time to visit with neighbors as part of this nationwide event.

Interested in hosting a block party? The City hopes there will be neighborhood block parties throughout El Cerrito on National Night Out. If you sign up in advance to host a block party, the City will ensure that Police Officers and other City staff will visit your party to answer your questions. Efforts will be made for a fire engine to stop by most parties as well.

For more information about National Night Out, or to get involved, please call the El Cerrito Crime Prevention Committee at 215-4414, ext. 30, or contact Suzanne Iarla, Public Information Specialist, at 215-4318 or siarla@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Easy Ride: Continued from page 1

$1 each way (there is no charge for accompanying caregivers).

When calling, you will be asked to provide your name, your requested pick-up and/or drop off time, your pick-up address, and destination address within the City of El Cerrito. Please also let us know if you will be using a wheelchair or other mobility device.

Residents must complete an application form, which is available at the Senior Center or online at www.el-cerrito.org/recreation/senior_center.html, before using the service.
Aerobic Water Exercise Classes

AEROBIC WATER EXERCISE improves cardiovascular fitness and minimizes impact-related injury because it puts less stress on joints, bones, and muscles. Water workouts are both safe and highly energizing.

If you are tired, stressed, injured, or just bored with your exercise program, a water workout can make it possible for you to keep exercising. Workouts involving different techniques will also increase range of motion, flexibility, and core strength. Plus, your face is out of the water, so there is more opportunity for socializing as you work out!

Pick a water exercise class that meets your needs and schedule. The City currently offers three water-exercise classes at the El Cerrito Swim Center, 7007 Moeser Lane. The box below shows the winter/spring schedule. For summer classes, call the Swim Center hotline at 559-7011 or visit www.el-cerrito.org/recreation and click on Swim Center.

---

Dispose of Old Needles and Pills the Right Way

DO YOU HAVE medical needles, syringes, medications, or inhalers that you need to get rid of? At no cost, you can take all of these items to the West County Household Hazardous Waste Facility at 101 Pittsburg Ave. in Richmond. For more information, including hours and directions, please call 888-412-9277 or visit www.recyclemore.com.

Many health care providers also offer mailback or collection programs for needles and other syringes. Check with your health care provider or the company that supplies your needles for more information.

Please don’t just throw all these items into the trash! Medications that end up in the landfill contaminate the soil and groundwater—and ultimately, drinking water and food. Needles and syringes thrown into the trash or recycling bins pose a health and safety threat to the workers who collect the garbage and recycling from your home every week. Workers can contract diseases if they come into contact with used needles or syringes. Starting in September, state law will make it illegal for these items to be disposed of in the landfill.

---

Renew Your Business License

IT IS THE responsibility of all El Cerrito business owners to hold current business licenses. Current licenses expire on June 30, 2008 and renewal notices will be mailed by early June. You must renew your business license before the end of July to avoid incurring a late fee.

The City of El Cerrito requires that any person who transacts and carries on any business, trade, profession, calling, or occupation in the City, or who provides a service within the City, must obtain a business license and pay the appropriate fees.

You may also need other permits or licenses to operate legally. For example, you may need Home Occupation, Taxi-cab, Bingo, Conditional Use, or other permits. You may also need federal, state, or county licenses or permits, such as a California Seller’s Permit or a State Contractor’s License.

For questions or more information, please contact Lori Framsted, Business License Clerk, at 215-4335 or lframsted@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.
You May Need a Permit to Spruce Up Your Yard

The City Council recently adopted a resolution promoting sustainable, environmentally friendly practices in landscaping and gardens throughout our community. When doing yardwork, residents are encouraged to consider the following seven principles, which are intended to help you design, create, and maintain Bay-friendly landscapes:

- Landscape locally (and in harmony with the natural conditions of the San Francisco Bay watershed)
- Landscape for less to the landfill (Reduce waste and recycling materials so that less waste goes to landfill)
- Nurture healthy soils while reducing fertilizer use
- Conserve water
- Conserve energy
- Protect water and air quality
- Create wildlife habitat

If you are considering major yard improvements, you may need a permit from the City. Permits are part of zoning, building, and construction codes that safeguard life, health, property, and public welfare. The City enforces the codes through plan review and field inspections.

Examples of some types of yard improvement projects that require a building permit and Planning approval include:

- Covered patios (wood or metal)
- Decks
- Retaining walls and masonry block fences
- Swimming pools, spas, recirculating fountains, or other water features
- Any work that affects a creek (open or channeled) that runs through your property may require a permit from the Public Works Department.
- Fences less than 6 feet high do not need a building permit but the property owner must submit a fence clearance application to the Planning Division.

Examples of some types of yard improvement projects that require a building permit and Public Works approval or a public works permit include:

- Irrigation, including sprinkler systems
- Drainage work
- Grading (50 cubic yards or more)
- Adding a tree, pavers or concrete in the parking strip.
- Sidewalk replacement or repair

NOTE: Sewer replacement work outside a building requires a permit from Stege Sanitary District, at 524-4668. If the sewer replacement work extends into the public right-of-way (street or sidewalk area), an encroachment permit from the Public Works Department is also required.

To obtain a building permit in the City of El Cerrito, you will need to speak with a Permit Technician. Complex projects often require building plans, some of which can be drawn by the property owner. Although some home improvement projects do not require plans, plans can be helpful to both the homeowner and the Building Department. Some permits can be issued “over the counter” while others require review and also may need to be reviewed by the Planning and the Public Works Divisions.

The City is your resource, and City staff are here to help you! Staff are always available to discuss your project and can immediately tell you what types of approval would be required. It is highly recommended that you speak to staff prior to drawing plans for any project.

The Public Works Division has a guidebook regarding Bay-friendly landscaping techniques, which is available for review at the City Offices.

Residents with a creek on their property may be eligible for the Urban Creek Council’s Stream Management Program for Private Landowners (SMPPL), which provides free advice to homeowners dealing with erosion, sediment deposits, or other concerns about their creek. Call the Urban Creek Council at 540-6669.

LET US HELP YOU

If you are wondering if your HOME OR YARD IMPROVEMENT project needs a permit, or if you have other questions, call the Building Division at 215-4360.

Questions about CONSTRUCTION near a creek or replacing or installing a fence, trellis, gazebo, etc., should be directed to the Planning Division at 215-4330.

For questions about GRADING, call the Engineering Division at 215-4382.

BEFORE YOU DIG, call USA North at 800-227-2600. You should call at least two days before to “know what’s below” (underground utilities). This call is free and helps to ensure a safe excavation!

Shop El Cerrito

The City’s Economic Development Division works to attract new businesses to El Cerrito and to assist existing businesses to grow and expand.

Shop El Cerrito is a new marketing campaign designed to promote El Cerrito businesses. Visit the campaign’s web site at www.ShopElCerrito.com

For more information about how the City can help your business succeed, please contact Dwayne Dalman at 215-4362.
Looking for a Way to Get Involved?

THE CITY COUNCIL invites all residents to participate in local boards, commissions or committees. These bodies are advisory to the City Council and generally meet once a month. Meetings are open to the public and agendas and minutes are posted on the City’s website for the:

- Arts and Culture Commission
- Civil Service Commission
- Committee on Aging
- Crime Prevention Committee
- Design Review Board
- Economic Development Board
- Environmental Quality Committee
- Financial Advisory Board
- Human Relations Commission
- Park and Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Street Repair and Maintenance Citizens’ Oversight Committee
- Tree Committee

The City Council invites all interested residents to submit an application form at any time. Applications will be reviewed for consideration as vacancies arise. Forms are available at City Hall, by calling the City Clerk’s Office at 215-4305, or online at www.el-cerrito.org.

To download the City Council meeting agenda packet, go to www.el-cerrito.org, then click on “Government” and follow the “City Council Agenda” link. Agendas are available at least three days prior to each meeting.