

El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan

# DOCUMENT REVIEW



San Pablo Ave

Cutting Blvd

Fwy 80

Poinsett Park & Clubhouse

Tassajara Park & Clubhouse

Lower Canyon Trail Park & Clubhouse

Baxter Creek Gateway Park

Upper Canyon Trail Park Playfield

Madera Childcare & Clubhouse

Richmond/Blake Pocket Park

Hillside Natural Area

Arlington Park & Clubhouse

Bruce King Memorial Dog Park

Castro Park & Clubhouse

Dorothy Rosenberg Memorial Park

Casa Cerrito Clubhouse

El Cerrito Swim Center

Cerrito Vista Park

Huber Park & Clubhouse

El Cerrito Community Center

Ohlone Greenway

Centennial Park (formerly Fairmont Park)

Fairmont Playfield & Clubhouse

Central Park

Harding Park & Clubhouse

Creekside Park

Cerrito Creek

**INTRODUCTION.....5**

ADA Transition Plan, 2009 .....7

City of El Cerrito Active Transportation Plan, 2016 .....8

City of El Cerrito Climate Action Plan, 2013 .....9

City of El Cerrito HVAC Equipment Inventory Report, 2012.....11

City of El Cerrito Landscape Management Plan, 2003 .....11

City of El Cerrito Strategic Plan 2015 to 2020, 2015.....13

City of El Cerrito Urban Forest Management Plan, 2007 .....14

City of El Cerrito Urban Greening Plan, 2015.....15

El Cerrito General Plan, 1999.....20

El Cerrito Structural Facilities Management Plan, 2004.....27

Ohlone Greenway Master Plan, 2009 .....29

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, 2014 .....29



San Pablo Ave

Cutting Blvd

Fwy 80

Poinsett Park & Clubhouse

Tassajara Park & Clubhouse

Lower Canyon Trail Park & Clubhouse

Baxter Creek Gateway Park

Upper Canyon Trail Park Playfield

Madera Childcare & Clubhouse

Richmond/Blake Pocket Park

Hillside Natural Area

Arlington Park & Clubhouse

Bruce King Memorial Dog Park

Castro Park & Clubhouse

Dorothy Rosenberg Memorial Park

Casa Cerrito Clubhouse

El Cerrito Swim Center

Cerrito Vista Park

Huber Park & Clubhouse

El Cerrito Community Center

Ohlone Greenway

Centennial Park (formerly Fairmont Park)

Fairmont Playfield & Clubhouse

Central Park

Harding Park & Clubhouse

Creekside Park

Cerrito Creek

### Document Review

A review of El Cerrito's relevant planning effort was completed as a component of this Master Plan, ensuring that the Plan's goals, and recommendations build upon and support previous work. Recent and ongoing planning efforts by the City help direct and inform the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan. The following master planning documents directly guide the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan and are reviewed in this report (listed in alphabetical order).

- *ADA Transition Plan, 2009*
- *City of El Cerrito Active Transportation Plan, 2016*
- *City of El Cerrito Climate Action Plan, 2013*
- *City of El Cerrito HVAC Equipment Inventory Report, 2012*
- *City of El Cerrito Landscape Management Plan, 2003*
- *City of El Cerrito Strategic Plan 2015 to 2020, 2015*
- *City of El Cerrito Urban Forest Management Plan, 2007*
- *City of El Cerrito Urban Greening Plan, 2015*
- *El Cerrito General Plan, 1999*
- *El Cerrito Structural Facilities Management Plan, 2004*
- *Oblone Greenway Master Plan, 2009*
- *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, 2014*

Page intentionally left blank

## A. ADA Transition Plan, 2009

El Cerrito's *ADA Transition Plan* addresses the changes necessary to implement program accessibility in the City's buildings, parks, and public rights-of-way. The *Transition Plan* is a requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and documents the physical changes necessary to achieve program accessibility throughout El Cerrito. The *Transition Plan* assesses physical barriers on the external sites and internal area of City facilities and major pedestrian routes within the public rights-of-way, estimates the cost of their mitigation, sets priorities for their elimination, and provides a schedule for their removal. Facilities and public rights-of-way inventoried through the planning process include:

El Cerrito Facilities	El Cerrito Public Rights-of-Way
City Hall (temporary housing during completion of <i>Plan</i> )	Arlington Boulevard
Public Safety Building	Ashbury Avenue
Community Center	Barrett Avenue
Library	Carlson Boulevard
Senior Center	Central Avenue
Fire Station #72	Colusa Avenue
Civic Theater	Cutting Boulevard
Recycling Center	Eastshore Boulevard
Corporation Yard	Elm Street
Cerrito Vista Park	Fairmount Avenue
Arlington Park	Key Boulevard
Poinsett Park	Manila Avenue
Huber Park	Moeser Lane
Fairmont Park	Navellier Street
Harding Childcare Center	Ohlone Greenway
Madera Childcare Center	Portrero Avenue
Castro Park	Richmond Street
Casa Cerrito Childcare Center	Sam Pablo Avenue
Canyon Trail Park	Stockton Avenue/Terrace Drive
Tassajara Park	

The detailed assessment of the City-owned facilities includes the documentation and description of accessibility barriers, method of mitigation, proposed solution, code citations, and estimated cost for barrier removal. The facility assessment results in a prioritized list based on importance of the facility's program, its frequency in use, and its location and relation to other program uses. The 2009 *Transition Plan* prioritizes barrier removal in the City's facilities as follows.

- Community Center
- Public Safety Building
- Senior Center
- Library
- Civic Theater
- Harding Childcare Center
- Madera Childcare Center
- Fire Station #72
- Casa Cerrito Childcare Center
- Arlington Park
- Cerrito Vista Park
- Canyon Trail Park
- Tassajara Park
- Castro Park
- Fairmont Park
- Huber Park
- Poinsett Park
- Corporation Yard
- Recycling Center
- City Hall

The assessment of the City's public rights-of-way also includes the documentation and description of barriers, method of mitigation, proposed solution, code citations, and estimated cost for barrier removal. To prioritize barriers in the public rights-of-way, the *Transition Plan* evaluates the severity of identified barriers, their relationship to prioritized City facilities, and the following prioritization criteria. The *Plan* prioritizes sidewalks within mid-blocks and curb ramps at street intersections serving or connecting to City facilities.

Priority 1	Pedestrian routes wherein request(s) for barrier removal by any person with mobility and/or vision disabilities seeking full and equal access
Priority 2	Pedestrian routes serving State and local government offices and facilities
Priority 3	Pedestrian routes serving important transportation corridors, including pathways leadings to schools.
Priority 4	Pedestrian routes serving commercial/business zones and other Title III entities
Priority 5	Pedestrian routes serving facilities containing employers
Priority 6	Pedestrian routes serving residential neighborhoods and undeveloped regions

The 2009 *ADA Transition Plan* is a critical document that details existing barriers in facility accessibility and addresses their mitigation and removal for a wide range of community use. The *El Cerrito Recreation and Facilities Master Plan* incorporates the finding of the *Transition Plan*.

## B. City of El Cerrito Active Transportation Plan, 2016

The *City of El Cerrito Active Transportation Plan* is a combined bicycle and pedestrian master plan, and an update to the City's 2007 *Circulation Plan for Bicyclists and Pedestrians*. The *Active Transportation Plan* was completed to:

- Continue to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Update and enhance bicycle and pedestrian networks to encourage more bicycling and walking
- Build off the *ADA Transition Plan* and *Climate Action Plan*
- Focus on 2007 routes that required additional evaluation
- Recommend bicycle and pedestrian projects based on recent best practice documents, such as the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) *Urban Bikeway Guide* and the updated American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Guide for the Design of Bicycle Facilities*
- Provide grant-ready projects for which the City can pursue competitive grant funding

- Establish a citywide crosswalk policy to install, enhance, remove, and relocate crosswalks throughout the City
- Coordinate directly and provide consistency with the *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan* and *Complete Streets Plan* (2014), *City of El Cerrito Urban Greening Plan* (2015), *City of Richmond Bicycle Master Plan* (2011) and *City of Albany Active Transportation Plan* (2014)

The *Active Transportation Plan* recommends nine study areas for the development of detailed projects. These areas receive special consideration as these projects would help create a highly connected active transportation network within the City of El Cerrito and include the following:

- BART to Bay Trail Access Improvements
- Ohlone Greenway Crossing Improvements
- Citywide Wayfinding
- Arlington Boulevard Pedestrian Improvements
- East Side Bicycle Boulevard
- East Side Bicycle Boulevard Wayfinding
- Key Boulevard Improvements
- Fairmount Avenue Improvements
- Potrero Avenue Improvements

The *Active Transportation Plan* contains elements that guide improvements to the City's existing recreation network, directly informing the *Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*. To understand the City's existing methods in supporting cycling and walking, the *Active Transportation Plan* conducts a policies, programs, and practices benchmarking assessment to compare El Cerrito's efforts against national best practices and thereby provide recommendations for network improvement. The assessment finds that El Cerrito's adoption of open space requirements is a leading strength of the City. Specifically, the *Active Transportation Plan* acknowledges that the City's 2015 *Urban Greening Plan* encourages connectivity through creating a greener and more sustainable community. Additionally, the City is acknowledged for its accomplishments in ADA accessibility through its adoption of the 2009 *ADA Transition Plan*, strategizing and enforcing accessibility throughout the City's facilities.

In identifying pedestrian and cycling need the *Active Transportation Plan* notes that long term and short-term bike parking is identified as a need throughout the City to encourage cycling. The *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan* considers supporting bicycling through the installation of parking at Fairmount, Central, Creekside, Poinsett, and Huber Parks, which are noted as having no bike parking in the *Active Transportation Plan*.

The *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan* will support the proposed transportation network improvements put forth in the *Active Transportation Plan* as an attractive and safe recreation network supports non-vehicular circulation throughout El Cerrito. The *Transportation Plan's* recommendations in bike and pedestrian improvements at the Ohlone Greenway, enhancement of park trail connectors, and expanded hillside paths and trails will provide guidance in enhancing the City's park and recreation facilities.

### C. City of El Cerrito Climate Action Plan, 2013

The *City of El Cerrito Climate Action Plan* is a document guiding the City in pursuing community-wide and municipal reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, with reduction targets of 15% below 2005 levels by the year 2020 and 30% below 2005 levels by 2035. The *Climate Action Plan* explores the potential of reducing local GHG emissions from transportation, energy consumption, water use, and waster generation at the local level. The *Action Plan's* objectives are to:

- Provide guidance for the City in pursuing reduction in GHG emissions;
- Provide a policy framework for incorporation of a climate or sustainability element into the City's upcoming *General Plan Update*;
- Inspire residents, businesses, and employees to participate in community efforts to reduce GHG emissions; and
- Demonstrate El Cerrito's commitment to helping the State and the Bay Area reach their mandated GHG reduction goals.

The *Climate Action Plan* identifies actions for the City and community to take to meet the defined emission targets. The areas of action are categorized as transportation, energy and water, waste, and municipal operations. The *Action Plan* recommends goals, objectives, and strategies within each area of action. The following goals, and associated objectives and strategies, directly inform the *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*.

**Sustainable Community Goal #2:** Increase El Cerrito's economic base to create more jobs, encourage greater vitality and more pedestrian-friendly economic activity.

**Objective SC-2.1:** Create a physical environment and stronger sense of place that supports high quality, walkable commercial and retail development and invites people to spend time in El Cerrito's commercial areas.

- Link the City's main commercial nodes through a network of open space, public art, and other cultural and historic amenities that encourage people to longer

**Sustainable Community Goal #3:** Continue to invest in infrastructure that invites people to walk, bike, and take transit more in El Cerrito.

**Objective SC-3.1:** Create design standards for development in commercial areas to require pedestrian-friendly improvements.

- Encourage the creation of both privately and publicly maintained pedestrian right-of-ways between San Pablo Ave and neighboring streets and amenities in order to break up long blocks and increase the number of pedestrian connections per block

**Sustainable Community Goal #4:** Increase and enhance urban green and open space to protect biodiversity, conserve natural resources, conserve water, foster walking and bicycling, and improve the health and quality of life for residents and people who work in El Cerrito.

**Objective SC-4.1:** Develop a comprehensive *Urban Greening Plan* to guide the development, programming, and maintenance of the City's public open spaces and green infrastructure and to identify additional or different types of green spaces needed to support urban infill development.

- A needs assessment of green and open space in El Cerrito
- Policy recommendations
- List of potential urban greening and open space projects

**Objective SC-4.2:** Promote Bay-Friendly tree planting and landscaping, and the creation of green and open space that is attractive and helps restore natural processes, sequester carbon, clean storm water, conserve resources, and connect citizens to El Cerrito's natural environment.

- To lead by example, develop a policy for City maintained landscapes to follow the principles of Bay-Friendly design and maintenance
- Encourage and support the development of community gardens in order to increase access to healthy, affordable local foods

**Energy/Water Goal #4:** Partner with local, regional, and state agencies to encourage water conservation and efficiency.

**Objective EW-4.1:** Pursue opportunities to actively promote water conservation and efficiency program in commercial and residential buildings and landscapes.

**Objective EW-4.2:** Encourage the adoption of rainwater catchment and gray water irrigation systems in El Cerrito, consistent with California State code, to offset potable water use.

**Municipal Goal #2:** Reduce reliance on utility provided energy and water in municipal operations by 15% by 2020 and 30% by 2035.

**Objective M-2.1:** Reduce overall energy and water use in municipal operations.

- Develop a municipal energy and water efficiency plan, which creates a baseline for the City's energy and water use, identifies energy and water inefficiencies in operations, and develops a rolling 3-year investment strategy for retrofitting or upgrading equipment
- Regularly assess and maintain City facilities to ensure that City buildings and irrigation operate at optimal efficiencies

**Objective M-2.2:** To lead by example, develop and implement a municipal solar energy strategy to locate solar energy projects at city facilities.

- Assess all city facilities for the technical and economic feasibility of using solar photovoltaic systems to offset municipal electricity use. Develop a similar solar hot water assessment for city facilities

**Objective M-2.3:** Use Bay-Friendly and Water Smart irrigation practices and technologies to maintain the City's landscaped facilities, parks, medians, and streetscapes, and to become more resilient to water shortages.

- Procure and install weather-station enabled, centrally controlled irrigation systems for all irrigated city landscapes
- Use Bay-Friendly landscaping techniques that use less water and energy and produce less waste
- Identify preventative maintenance measures to proactively address water leakage in City facilities
- Where feasible, install gray water and rainwater catchment systems in new construction and major retrofit projects

**Objective M-2.4:** Convert City landscaped areas to drought-tolerant, Bay-Friendly landscape, whenever possible.

- Adopt a City policy that requires the specification of Bay-Friendly, drought-tolerant landscapes in any new City project or private project receiving City funds that include landscape areas as a project element
- Where feasible, and as funding allows, replace non-active turf areas maintained by the City with Bay-Friendly landscaping

**Municipal Goal #4:** Make City operations and facilities models of “reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost”.

**Objective M-4.1:** Institute robust recycling and food waste composting programs in all City facilities and provide on-going education to decrease contamination of recycling and composting streams.

**Objective M-4.3:** Institute waste reduction polices and projects in City facilities.

#### **D. City of El Cerrito HVAC Equipment Inventory Report, 2012**

In 2012, a survey was conducted to assess major mechanical equipment (HVAC) at the following City facilities:

- City Hall
- Community Center
- Arlington Clubhouse
- Canyon Trail Clubhouse
- Casa Cerrito Childcare
- Castro Park Clubhouse
- Cerrito Vista Field House
- Corp Yard
- Contra Costa Theater
- El Cerrito Library
- Fairmont Childcare
- Fire Station 72
- Harding Park Clubhouse
- Madera Childcare
- Public Safety Bldg
- Recycling Center
- Senior Center
- Swim Center
- Tassajara Pottery Center

The assessment was conducted as a component of the City’s Energy Management Plan and Climate Action Planning to assure that the most efficient and economical replacement equipment and systems would be selected for use upon the failure, or end of useful life, of existing equipment in the City. The *City of El Cerrito HVAC Equipment Report* identifies, classifies, and assesses the conditions of major mechanical equipment in the City’s building and facilities. The *Equipment Report* also provides recommendations for equipment replacement options as well as upgrades to the systems.

Overall the 2012 *Equipment Report* finds the City’s major mechanical equipment (HVAC) to be operational but recommends the replacement of systems to improve efficiency and additionally provides guidance on system safety and sustainability. The *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Master Plan* incorporates this assessment into the inventory of the City’s recreation facilities.

#### **E. City of El Cerrito Landscape Management Plan, 2003**

The *City of El Cerrito Landscape Management Plan* provides a comprehensive inventory and assessment of the City’s landscaped facilities, including trees, landscape plants, and turf grass areas. It additionally provides an assessment of existing site conditions and a cost estimate for management and maintenance of renovated landscape areas. Field inventories were conducted on 48 of the City’s public properties, resulting in a landscape inventory that reveals significant management issues and deficiencies. These 2003 results include:

- Significant pest and disease problems affecting common pine species including pine pitch canker disease and bark beetle infestations. California white alders are also in decline from damage by flat head borer infestations
- The potential for sever loss of coast live oak from infection by the Sudden Oak death pathogen (*Phytophthora ramorum*)
- Decline of mature southern magnolias in roadway medians, probably due to root disease

- Extensive weed infestations including blackberry, Algerian ivy, various volunteer tree species, and noxious weed species such as broom, eucalyptus, and pampas grass
- Lack of regular tree pruning, including training of new trees and maintenance/hazard abatement pruning of mature trees
- Degradation of irrigation systems resulting in plant problems associated with chronic drought stress
- Damage to new trees from mowing and turf trimming equipment
- Sidewalk and hardscape damage from tree root systems with *Liquidambar* being the primary problem

The *Landscape Management Plan* was created to satisfy requirements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, Statement 34 (GASB 34) and to guide the management of existing trees and landscapes on city-owned property. GASB 34 requires governments to offer new financial data and an objective and readable analysis of the government's financial performance for each year, helping to establish and improve accounting and financial reporting standards for many governmental units in the United States. The *Landscape Management Plan* informs the City on how to manage, finance and schedule landscape maintenance throughout El Cerrito.

In the inventory process of the *Landscape Management Plan*, 48 public sites in El Cerrito were assessed, collecting the following information at each site:

- The number and condition of trees
- Landscape characteristics including turf areas, shrubs, and groundcovers
- Observable pests and diseases
- Tree structural hazards
- Current maintenance levels and deficiencies

From this inventory, 85 trees were noted for removal and recommended to be replaced with low maintenance, low water, and environmentally tolerant alternatives.

Following the inventory, renovation, replacement, and maintenance costs were estimated for each public space and area assessed. These estimates incorporate costs associated with maintaining hardscape, landscape and natural areas, such as scheduled inspections, irrigation management and repair, mulching, mowing, and pest managements. Though the 2003 maintenance and landscaping budget was \$100,000, the projected amount for the complete and proactive maintenance plan, at the time, was estimated to be \$600,000 in the *Landscape Management Plan*, revealing a contrast in need and capacity. According to the *Landscape Management Plan* the primary cause of loss of trees and declining health in existing trees, is a lack of consistent, high-quality maintenance.

The final component of the *Landscape Management Plan* comprises a public survey which collects input from parks users regarding their perception of landscape and tree maintenance in the City's public spaces. 10,000 paper surveys were mailed to El Cerrito residents and business owners, with a responsive rate of 1,137 individuals. Key findings of the 2003 survey, informing the City on user needs, include the following:

- Cerrito Vista Parks is in closest proximity to most residents and business and is the most frequently used park
- Residents largely use Cerrito Vista and other City-managed public sites for exercise, shade, use of recreational equipment, and wildlife
- Most residents use the City's parks on a weekly basis
- Half of the respondents believe that El Cerrito parks are adequately maintained
- Respondents suggested a variety of means that would improve their parks perception including weeding, tree maintenance, native plant enhancement, and enhanced safety
- Overall, a majority of respondents shared that trees and vegetation positively contribute to El Cerrito's parks as elements of beautification, habitat, and environmental quality
- Top priority improvements identified by respondents include tree maintenance; creation preservation, and maintenance of water ways; and an increase and improvements of fields, courts, and lawns. Additionally, respondents were interested in improved maintenance

With regard to the *El Cerrito Park and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*, the *Landscape Management Plan* provides an extensive inventory of the City's public landscaped space, inclusive of El Cerrito's park and recreation system. The site information collected in the *Landscape Management Plan*, as well as public input on the City's park system, directly informs the assessment of park and recreation facilities in the *Park and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*.

## F. City of El Cerrito Strategic Plan 2015 to 2020, 2015

The *City of El Cerrito Strategic Plan 2015 to 2020* provides a framework to link the City's identified priorities with El Cerrito's budget process, capital improvement program, important policy considerations, economic development initiatives, and the City's desire for continuous improvement. Collecting input from City staff, community stakeholders, and the El Cerrito community at large on current and desired perceptions of the City, the *Strategic Plan* identifies a vision, mission, values, and goals and strategies that will guide the City's annual priority-setting and resource decision-making processes. This strategic plan is intended to guide the City in providing, and improving, a desirable quality of life for its community members.

The City's vision, or desired future, is identified in the *Strategic Plan* as follows:

*The City of El Cerrito is a safe, connected, transit-oriented and environmentally focused destination with welcoming neighborhoods, thriving businesses and vibrant public spaces, and diverse cultural, educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages.*

The City's mission, a statement of purpose, is stated as follows:

*The City of El Cerrito serves, leads and supports our diverse and transit-rich community by providing exemplary and innovative services, public places and infrastructure, ensuring public safety, and creating an economically and environmentally sustainable future.*

The values of the City, as identified in this plan include:

- Ethics and Integrity
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Inclusiveness and Respect for Diversity
- Innovation and Creativity
- Professional Excellence
- Responsiveness
- Transparency and Open Communication
- Sustainability

In addition to a vision, mission and values, the *Strategic Plan* sets forth goals, and their accompanying strategies. The following goals, and associated strategies, relate directly to the *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan* and inform the planning process.

### **Goal B: Achieve long-term financial sustainability**

- Develop a financial plan to address ongoing and deferred maintenance of facilities and infrastructure

### **Goal C: Deepen a sense of place and community identity**

- Promote strong neighborhoods
- Develop a vision for underdeveloped and underutilized properties through advanced planning efforts that encourage investment in/or new development
- Identify, promote, and/or develop entertainment, recreation, and leisure activities for people of all ages and demographics

### **Goal D: Develop and rehabilitate public facilities as community focal points**

- Develop a plan to address ongoing and deferred maintenance of facilities and infrastructure

- Continue the facilities assessment to prioritize and strategize investment (i.e., library, public safety facility, senior center, community center)
- Revisit and update the *Structural Facilities Management Plan*

**Goal E: Ensure the public’s health and safety**

- Utilize environmental design techniques to deter and prevent crimes
- Explore innovative and best practices for promoting public health (e.g., smoking ordinances, nutrition, obesity prevention, living wages, and strategies to promote walking/biking)

**Goal F: Foster environmental sustainability citywide**

- Be a leader in setting policies and providing innovative programs that promote environmental sustainability

**G. City of El Cerrito Urban Forest Management Plan, 2007**

Building from the 2003 *Landscape Management Plan*, the 2007 *Urban Forest Management Plan* outlines the social, environmental, and economic benefits that a healthy urban forest is expected to provide while establishing these benefits as the standard of performance for El Cerrito’s urban forest. To meet this standard, the *Urban Forest Management Plan* defines the elements necessary for a healthy urban forest as well as goals and strategies to attain success.

Well-maintained urban forests provide social, environmental, and economic benefits to a community. In social benefits, the *Urban Forest Management Plan* affirms that urban forests provide a community with:

- Connection to the natural world
- Improved city legibility
- A sense of community

In environmental benefits, an urban forest provides:

- Mitigation of urban heat island effects (heating of an urban area due to human activities and modification of land surface)
- Reduction of airborne pollutant
- Sequestering of carbon dioxide

And in economic benefits, an urban forest creates:

- Increase property values
- Strong business districts
- Improved city image
- Contribution to the City’s financial strength

In order to provide these three key benefits, a successful urban forest must have intelligent planning and management, community and government commitment, consistent funding, and excellent maintenance.

The *Urban Forest Management Plan* qualifies El Cerrito’s urban forest to be in poor health. At the time of the 2007 report, the City had a net loss of 443 street trees since 1991 with 6% of street trees dead or declining, and 12% of street trees non-growing. Older street trees within the City’s urban forest are typically inappropriately located, have reached maturity, and are declining. Younger street trees suffer from stress and lack of irrigation. According to the *Landscape Management Plan* the primary cause of loss of trees and declining health in existing trees, is a lack of consistent, high-quality maintenance.

To improve the health of El Cerrito’s urban forest, and ensure its future success, the *Urban Forest Management Plan* sets the following goals.

Goal I: Establish and maintain a citywide commitment to a healthy, growing urban forest in the City of El Cerrito.

Goal II: Integrate the principles of the Urban Forest Management Plan into subsequent documents required by or in support of the City of El Cerrito General Plan.

Goal III: Provide consistent funding for urban forestry effort that reflects the importance of the urban forest to the public.

Goal IV: Provide excellent professional maintenance for the City's urban forest.

The *Urban Forest Management Plan* asserts that meeting these goals will require coordinated city-wide effort, enforcement of ordinances, and the creation of a capital improvement plan that supports the City's urban forestry effort. The *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan* is informed by and supports the recommendations of the *Urban Forest Management Plan*.

## H. City of El Cerrito Urban Greening Plan, 2015

The *City of El Cerrito Urban Greening Plan* outlines goals, objectives, and policies to create a greener and more environmentally sustainable and livable El Cerrito. Intended to address a growing demand for increased infill development along the City's transit corridors while preserving existing natural assets, places, and open spaces, the *Urban Greening Plan* additionally highlights opportunity projects and focus areas that will help implement the identified goals in the public realm. The overarching goals identified in the *Plan* include:

- Environmental Sustainability
- Environmental Stewardship
- Community Identity
- Active Living/Transportation
- Economic Vitality
- Urban Livability

To develop these goals, and their related objectives and policies, the *Urban Greening* planning process inventories the City's existing assets and identifies opportunities to better program parks and open space in

an environmentally and economically sustainable manner. The planning process additionally analyzes existing best practice in urban greening, which is defined as the improvement of environmental sustainability to create a stronger sense of place and community while supporting and accommodating infill growth. Overall, El Cerrito is generally well-served by available parks and green spaces but retains opportunity for an improved network of green space that connects and builds the community. The following objectives identified in the *Urban Greening Plan*, and their associated policies and programs, directly inform the *El Cerrito Recreation and Facilities Master Plan*.

### Objective 1: Improved Trails and Paths

Continue to invest in bicycle, pedestrian, trail and pathway improvements to reduce reliance on the private automobile, provide active recreation opportunities and support the local economy.

#### 1.6 Implement the Active Transportation Plan Proposed Sidewalk and Pathway Network projects

- Review street and parks projects to identify opportunities for pedestrian improvements as part of funded projects

### Objective 3: Strengthened Ohlone Greenway

Continue to strengthen the Ohlone Greenway through public projects and private developments that increase connectivity, create community gathering spaces and activity nodes, and improve community health and safety.

*3.1 Work with private developers and property owners to implement the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan - Ohlone Greenway Street Type guidelines.*

- Encourage private developers to emphasize their project's connection to the Greenway early in the process to maximize opportunities for pocket parks, plazas, entrances and mews onto the Greenway
- Emphasize safety in use and design, encouraging “eyes on the Greenway” and increased levels of activity throughout the day to reduce crime

*3.2 Implement the Ohlone Greenway Master Plan, particularly projects that improve connectivity to San Pablo Avenue, the BART Stations and commercial nodes, projects that create activity nodes and community gathering spaces, and projects that improve the environmental services of the Greenway.*

- Pursue funding to design and construct projects identified in the Master Plan
- Develop a pollinator pathway along the Greenway to provide pollinator species with adequate access to pollen and nectar

*3.3 Incentivize community events and activities along the Greenway that provide recreational, environmental stewardship and community development opportunities.*

- Provide tools and support services to volunteer clean-up and maintenance efforts
- When developing community events, consider locating them along the Greenway to increase activity

## **Objective 4: Enhanced Existing Parks**

Enhance and expand existing parks to maximize their use, improve environmental and ecological services while reducing maintenance costs, encouraging volunteer efforts and meeting multiple Urban Greening goals.

*4.1 Identify and pursue funding for a Parks & Recreation Master Plan to analyze access to a variety of recreational opportunities and to identify policies and programs to address these needs.*

- The Plan should build off the environmental considerations of this Plan to balance the environmental and recreational needs of public parks and open spaces
- Continue to survey and engage the community to better understand and meet El Cerrito-specific recreation needs
- The Plan should consider adopting performance metrics to evaluate community access to active and passive recreation facilities in order to prioritize project construction where gaps exist

*4.2 Coordinate project design review to ensure that parks improvements integrate environmental benefits through restorative, resource-conserving landscaping and green infrastructure projects.*

- Develop design guidelines and environmental criteria to streamline project design review. These design guidelines should consider broad community priorities, such as active and passive recreation, environmental services, and design review details including the relationship between tree selection, site planning, and the protection or enhancement of existing natural assets such as view corridors

- Begin to engage the Parks & Recreation Commission on public project review by providing them with trainings and environmental guidelines to ensure that proposed projects meet these criteria
- Consider engaging the Design Review Board on, high profile public parks projects to ensure they are consistent with landscaping and other design guidelines applicable to private projects

*4.3 Continue to identify funding for Parks in the CIP to ensure continued maintenance and investment in projects that make parks more multipurpose and meet multiple community benefits.*

- Incorporate currently underutilized spaces that could provide a broader diversity of uses, including off-peak and joint use
- Consider prioritizing projects that expand and develop play fields for fl at spaces, particularly in higher density areas
- Evaluate opportunities to enhance, expand and maintain existing fields, parks, trails and open spaces, including their trees and landscapes, and improve maintainability
- Consider new projects when they fulfill an unmet community need or represent a unique acquisition or expansion opportunity. New projects should include maintenance projections for the first 5 years of the project

*4.4 Continue to identify trash generation hotspots as part of the Municipal Regional Stormwater process.*

- Evaluate different strategies on a site by site basis to improve capture and diversion: storm drain trash capture devices, waste receptacles, recurring clean-up events and education campaigns
- When new receptacles are being considered, evaluate the use of new technologies to reduce maintenance costs and increase use
- Evaluate parks projects for hotspots and include trash capture as a component of public projects

## **Objective 5: Active Commercial Corridors**

Create and strengthen active commercial corridors that allow community members to gather, stroll and interact while meeting their daily needs close to home.

*5.3 Identify funding to develop and implement the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Open Space In-Lieu program to develop green multi-purpose open spaces, such as pocket parks and plazas, that create active social gathering spaces and streetscape amenities to increase walkability and connectivity, catalyze continued investment, and support high density neighborhoods.*

- Incorporate environmental guidelines into the project design review process to ensure that these open spaces are providing environmental services, such as nodes along a pollinator pathway, stormwater capture and treatment, community gardening, connectivity, etc.

## **Objective 6: Resilient Higher Density Neighborhoods**

Emphasize the need for strategic open spaces in higher density neighborhoods to provide multifamily housing residents with additional tot lots, playgrounds, and other active recreation, urban agriculture, and community gathering opportunities. Public open space should be flexible and accessible, meeting the needs of community members who may not have access to private open space.

*6.2 Prioritize projects that enhance existing parks in higher density areas to be more multipurpose and higher quality.*

- Prioritize parks in high density residential neighborhoods
- Evaluate open space access in high density neighborhoods on a regular basis to ensure residents have easy access to a range of parks and open spaces, including community gardens, tot lots, gathering spaces, and natural landscapes. Explore opportunities for land acquisition through the in-lieu program, condition of approval process, or other mechanisms where a need is identified

*6.3 As part of the General Plan update, develop zone-specific Level of Service standards to ensure residents of higher-density neighborhoods continue to have access to open spaces that provide multiple benefits.*

- Review Best Practices to ensure these metrics are responsive to real conditions and work as a tool to improve open space access and use

## **Objective 7: Enriched Natural Areas**

Develop projects that enrich natural features and ecological services, particularly in dedicated natural areas such as the Hillside Natural Area, Canyon Trail Park, Creekside Park, etc.

*7.1 Strengthen and, where needed, restore natural areas in existing open spaces to restore their natural function, wildlife habitat, biodiversity and ensure ecological resilience, as appropriate.*

- In partnership with stakeholders, identify priority environmental services and develop project design, management and monitoring plans to conserve and restore these services while addressing other, potentially competing community needs

- Consider strategic land acquisition where needed to preserve environmental benefits and establish or expand wildlife corridors
- Participate in regional planning and management efforts that may identify critical services in El Cerrito

*7.2 Establish a Bortle Dark-Sky threshold or other light threshold for natural areas to reduce light pollution and its effects on wildlife. Maintain visual access to the night sky for community members.*

- Analyze and address any major publicly-owned light sources, particularly as they affect light levels in natural areas
- Include light analysis in major projects and projects that border natural areas

*7.3 Designate the Hillside Natural Area and Cerrito Creek as Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Priority Conservation Areas. Consider designation of other community areas in the future.*

*7.4 Engage the Parks & Recreation Commission and Tree Committee on land conservation and restoration activities and projects, helping to identify funding and resources and supporting community engagement where feasible.*

*7.5 Analyze natural area use policies to better understand what uses are currently permitted in these areas.*

- Identify Best Practices for increasing use of natural areas, such as nighttime use permits and restoration activities

## Objective 10: Vibrant Schoolyards

Partner with the West Contra Costa Unified School District and private schools to maximize the benefits provided by their schoolyards. Encourage multipurpose spaces that jointly allow school children to learn from and interact with nature while reducing the need for additional recreation spaces for community members.

*10.1 Work with the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) to develop Wilderness Classroom and other outdoor education programs that incorporate natural elements into schoolyards, parks and open spaces and encourage school use of natural areas.*

- Provide gathering spaces in park projects that allow classes to engage and interact with nature

*10.2 Partner with WCCUSD to develop Green Schoolyard Design Guidelines that encourage school-design and programming to better integrate facilities into neighborhoods, i.e. access, connectivity, neighborhood cohesion and multipurpose/public use. Develop guidelines that ensure students have the opportunity to interact with and learn from nature.*

- Consider guidelines that create permeable boundaries between schoolyards and neighboring parks to increase use of City resources

## Objective 11: Urban Agriculture

Ensure that all El Cerrito residents have opportunities to grow their own food by removing barriers to urban agriculture and providing opportunities for gardening where they may not otherwise exist.

*11.1 Develop a program that allows local volunteers to request planting of food crops in the public right-of-way (ROW) when they develop an agreement to support and maintain these public resources.*

- Evaluate key nodes and opportunity sites for urban agriculture, including medians, sidewalks and other street ROW. Focus urban agriculture near low income and multi-family residences which do not have adequate access to space to grow food

## Sustainable Landscape and Maintenance Policies

Implement sustainable landscape maintenance practices to conserve natural resources and reduce costs in order to maximize the ecological services of existing parks and open spaces.

*1 Develop a Drought Response and Management Plan to develop short-term and long-term drought mitigation and response protocol.*

- Analyze long-term water conservation practices to proactively transition landscapes and projects to be less resource-intensive and more resilient
- Evaluate the feasibility of water recapture and reuse
- Evaluate the long-term water use of landscaping and parks projects to anticipate periods of reduce water use

*5 Establish pollinator friendly maintenance guidelines.*

- Design pollinator corridors through coordinated park plantings that meet established best practices
- Incorporate bird-friendly planting and pruning practices that provide appropriate plant species and vegetation for nests

To implement that goals and objectives developed through the *Urban Greening* planning process, 14 projects are selected to achieve multiple urban greening benefits, build off of existing projects and efforts, and induce additional investment throughout the City over time. The 14 projects, or focus areas are selected based on their ability to meet the following criteria:

- Address multiple Urban Greening objectives
- Pilot Urban Greening strategies
- Include green infrastructure opportunities
- Catalyze economic development
- Enhance placemaking
- Include implementable and funding-eligible projects
- Fulfill City goals and policy priorities
- Build on community stewardship and engagement

The focus area sites include:

- Blue to Green Connections (connecting the San Francisco Bay to the Bay Trail)
- Ohlone Greenway – Portola Drive to Schmidt Lane
- Ohlone Greenway – Gladys Avenue to Blake Street
- Fairmont Park
- Central Park
- Creekside Park
- Hillside Natural Area
- El Cerrito Plaza
- Conlon Avenue at Key Boulevard
- Cutting Boulevard at San Pablo Avenue
- Avila Street at San Pablo Avenue
- Former Portola Middle School site
- Ashbury Avenue
- Lower Fairmount Avenue

At these focus area sites, the *Plan* identifies the urban greening opportunities each location hosts and the urban greening objectives the identified projects would satisfy. Focus areas at Fairmont Park, Lower

Fairmount Avenue, Hillside Natural Area, and Blue to Green Connections received additional analysis and design and are the *Plan's* early implementation, or pilot, projects. The *Urban Greening Plan* represents the extensive planning work the City has completed with regard to its park and recreation network and is a guiding document for the *Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*.

## I. El Cerrito General Plan, 1999

El Cerrito's 1999 *General Plan*, an update to the City's 1975 General Plan, was developed in accordance with California state law to adopt a general plan that includes the planning elements of land use, circulation, housing, safety, open space conservation, and noise. At the City's discretion, the *General Plan* also adopts additional planning elements of economic development, community design, and parks and recreation. The *Plan* serves as a 20-year guide for the City to improve its quality of development and long-term fiscal health so that El Cerrito remain an attractive community to live and work. Though largely built out and defined by single-family housing, the *General Plan* identifies strategies for El Cerrito to encourage and attract future development that will increase tax revenues and better enable the City to provide its community with vital services in the future. The *General Plan* puts forth 10 key principles that direct the document:

- No major changes in land-use patterns are expected to occur
- Emphasis will be on quality of development.
- Incentives, if used, will have clear criteria and limits
- Emphasis will be on impacts of development, not on the type of development itself
- Increased residential development, where allowed, must be done with care in order to enhance neighborhoods
- New development in the San Pablo Avenue Corridor will be encouraged to take place in mixed-use activity centers that may extend up selected perpendicular streets in order to allow a more pedestrian friendly environment

- The preservation and enhancement of natural features – trees, creeks, natural open space areas – and historical features will be a high priority for the City
- The City should have distinct destination areas, including commercial areas, a civic center and community meeting places
- Development should contribute to the fiscal health of the City while minimizing adverse impacts
- Access should be improved by balancing automobile use with improved transit, bicycle, and pedestrian opportunities

In establishing a strategic framework for the future of El Cerrito, the *General Plan* identifies the City’s strengths and challenges in a vision for El Cerrito in the year 2020. The highest priority strategic issues identified in this process include:

- Residential quality, whereas El Cerrito must maintain its high-quality single-family areas and improve the multi-family areas of the City, especially with regards to design and compatibility with surrounding areas
- Paying for services, whereas the City must increase its tax base in order to maintain the parks and other public services and facilities that make El Cerrito an attractive place to live

In relation to the *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*, the *General Plan* provides goals and policies, per planning element, that will enable the City to achieve its vision. These goals and policies directly guide the planning process and recommendations of the *Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*. The *General Plan* acknowledges the importance of the City’s park, open space, and recreation network and recommends goals and policies intended to strengthen this aspect of the community. Importantly, as a component of the 1999 *General Plan* a Green Infrastructure Initiative was identified as a primary action strategy for the implementation of the City’s vision. This Initiative called for the

development of a range of improvement measures associated with the Ohlone Greenway, the City’s parks and recreation programs, open space preservation, and new and revitalized cultural facilities. This Initiative has provided a framework for the City’s extensive planning efforts in urban greening and sustainable development.

The following goals, and associated policies from the 1999 *General Plan* relate directly to the City’s park and recreation network and inform the *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*.

### **Land Use Element**

**Goal LU 4:** A safe, attractive, and interesting community.

**Policy LU 4.1: Mixture of Uses.** Encourage a mix of uses that promotes such community values as convenience, economic vitality, fiscal stability, public safety, a healthy environment, and a pleasant quality of life.

**Goal LU 5:** A land use pattern and types of development that support alternatives for the movement of people, goods, and ideas.

**Policy LU 5.6: Development Along the Ohlone Greenway.** New or substantially altered development abutting the Ohlone Greenway will be evaluated with respect to how the development enhances the aesthetics and ambiance of this important linear recreational and transportation facility, and how the development contributes to the security of users of the Greenway. The City will expect frontage along the Greenway to be treated as if it were public street frontage, with commensurate attention to design quality and access. The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan designates the Ohlone Greenway as a Street Type within its Regulating Plan. Projects within the Plan Area abutting the Greenway are subject the development standards of this Street Type.

**Goal LU 6:** Development patterns that promote energy efficiency, conservation of natural resources, and use of renewable rather than nonrenewable resources.

**Policy LU 6.1: Natural Features.** Preserve or restore the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation on and near development sites and open-up buried creeks where opportunities can be found, unless there are compelling reasons why this cannot be done.

### **Community Development Element**

**Goal CD 1:** A city organized and designed with an overall attractive, positive image and “sense of place.”

**Policy CD 1.3: High-Quality Design.** Encourage higher-quality design through the use of well-crafted and maintained buildings and landscaping, use of higher-quality building materials, and attention to the design and execution of building details and amenities in both public and private projects.

**Policy CD 1.7: Views and Vistas.** Preserve and enhance major views and vistas along major streets and open spaces, providing areas to stroll and benches to rest and enjoy views.

**Policy CD 1.8: Edges.** Preserve and enhance El Cerrito’s well-defined edges along the hillside open spaces, the eastern border along the regional park, and the I-80 freeway.

**Goal CD 2:** A city with attractive, safe, and functional streets, parking areas, and pedestrian walkways.

**Policy CD 2.7: Accessible Design.** Site and building design must meet basic accessibility needs of the community and not be exclusively oriented to those who arrive by car.

**Goal CD 3:** A city with attractive landscaping of public and private properties, open space, and public gathering spaces.

**Policy CD 3.3: Site Landscaping.** Improve the appearance of the community by requiring aesthetically designed screening and landscaping on public and private sites. Ensure that public landscaping includes entry areas, street medians, parks, and schools. Require landscaping for all private sites, yard spaces, parking lots, plazas, courtyards, and recreational areas.

**Policy CD 3.8: Public Spaces.** Require projects within the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan area to provide on-site public and private open space to: incentivize development of multifunctional new public open space; encourage urban open spaces; allow private open space for residential buildings; customize the design of open space to site context; and, increase safety by providing more “eyes on the street”.

**Policy CD 3.9: Ohlone Greenway.** Enhance the usability and aesthetic appeal of the Ohlone Greenway by integrating it into the fabric of the City. Design buildings with entries, yards, patios, and windows to open onto and face the Ohlone Greenway. Avoid blank walls, backs of buildings, and large parking lots adjacent to the greenway.

**Policy CD 3.12: Landscape Species.** Indigenous and drought-tolerant species that reduce water usage and are compatible with El Cerrito’s climate are encouraged.

### **Growth Management Element**

**Goal GM 5:** An effective system of providing urban services to support infill and redevelopment in existing urban and brownfield areas.

**Policy GM 5.3: Capital Improvement Program.** Identify in the City’s Capital Improvement Program funding sources, as well as intended phasing, for projects necessary to maintain police, fire and park service standards. Encourage outside agencies providing vital services to El Cerrito to maintain adequate funding and long-range facility planning activity to adequately anticipate future demands of growth and the life-cycle/replacement of equipment and infrastructure.

**Goal GM 6:** Support land use patterns that make more efficient use of the transportation system.

**Policy GM 6.1: Land Use Patterns.** Recognize the link between land use and transportation. Promote land use and development patterns that encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use. Emphasize high-density and mixed land use patterns that promote transit and pedestrian travel. Where feasible, emphasize the following land use measures:

3. Encourage pedestrian-oriented land use and urban design that can have a demonstrable effect on transportation choices.

**Policy GM 6.9: Pedestrian Circulation.** Provide a safe, convenient, continuous and interconnected pedestrian circulation system throughout the City. Ensure safe pedestrian access to local schools. Improve crossing opportunities, enhance crosswalks, and improve sidewalks to maintain a consistent 'High' Pedestrian BEF on San Pablo Avenue. Emphasize the placemaking qualities of the streetscape, including sidewalk and curb extensions. Though no delay-based pedestrian LOS metric is identified, seek to reduce pedestrian delay at signalized intersections and when considering changes to intersections, consider pedestrian delay (T1.4).

### **Transportation Element**

**Goal T 1:** A transportation system that allows safe and efficient travel by a variety of modes and promotes the use of alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle.

**Policy T 1.4: Pedestrian Circulation.** Provide a safe, convenient, continuous and interconnected pedestrian circulation system throughout the City. Ensure safe pedestrian access to local schools. Improve crossing opportunities, enhance crosswalks, and improve sidewalks to maintain a consistent 'High' Pedestrian BEF on San Pablo Avenue. Emphasize the placemaking qualities of the streetscape, including sidewalk and curb extensions. Though no delay-based pedestrian LOS metric is identified, seek to reduce pedestrian delay at signalized intersections and when considering changes to intersections, consider pedestrian delay (GM 6.9).

**Goal T 2:** A land use pattern that encourages walking, bicycling, and public transit use.

**Policy T 2.1: Land Use Patterns.** Recognize the link between land use and transportation. Promote land use and development patterns that encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use. Emphasize high-density and mixed land use patterns that promote transit and pedestrian travel. Where feasible, emphasize the following land use measures:

3. Encourage pedestrian-oriented land use and urban design that can have a demonstrable effect on transportation choices

### **Parks and Recreation Element**

**Goal PR 1:** Adequate, diverse, and accessible recreational opportunities for all residents – including children, youth, seniors, and others with special needs – in parks, school yards, and open space.

**Policy PR 1.1: Priorities for Rehabilitation.** Place the highest priority on maintaining and rehabilitating existing recreational facilities to operational and safety standards that, at a minimum, comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. The highest priority facility for rehabilitation is the Swim Center on Moeser Lane.

**Policy PR 1.2: Regular Maintenance Program.** Continue regular inspection and maintenance of park facilities to prolong the life of equipment, ensure facility safety and accessibility, and enhance the enjoyment of park users.

**Policy PR 1.3: Level of Service Standard.** Use a level of service standard of five acres of publicly owned parkland per 1,000 residents as the minimum requirement for recreation and open space land. Additional requirements for publicly owned recreation and open space land may be imposed by the City on development approvals, dependent upon the characteristics of the project, including its proximity to existing recreation and open space facilities. This requirement is independent of any requirements for project-scale open space addressed by Policy CD3.2.

**Policy PR 1.4: Minimum Parkland.** Ensure that the amount of City owned park and open space lands is not reduced below the 1999 level of 131.5 acres, and work with other public agencies to ensure that the amount of other publicly owned park and open space lands is not reduced.

**Policy PR 1.5: Costs Resulting from New Facilities.** Assure that long-term maintenance needs are considered when reviewing new park facility proposals, including the need for future staff and equipment.

**Policy PR 1.6: Private Involvement.** Continue to encourage community organizations and private citizens to help maintain public parks and open spaces, and to assist in running recreation programs.

**Policy PR 1.7: Coordination on Use of School Facilities.** Continue to coordinate with adjacent cities and other agencies in providing adequate recreational facilities, including connections to the Ohlone Greenway, for all El Cerrito residents.

**Policy PR 1.8: Inter-Agency Coordination.** Continue to coordinate with adjacent cities and other agencies in providing adequate recreational facilities for all El Cerrito residents.

**Policy PR 1.9: Alternative Sources of Space.** Continue to explore the possibility of using semipublic and private facilities for additional indoor recreational space.

**Policy PR 1.10: Existing Facilities.** Encourage the continuation of Mira Vista Golf Club, Cougar Field, and Camp Herms because of their contribution to meeting recreational needs and providing aesthetic appeal.

**Policy PR 1.11: New Parks.** Pursue the purchase of new parks with City money only after existing facilities are brought up to an acceptable level of adequacy or when action is required to meet the accepted level of service or the minimum parkland requirements.

**Policy PR 1.12: New Residential Development.** Require that all new multi-family residential projects provide on-site open space and recreational facilities for residents or provide a combination of park in-lieu fees and on-site facilities.

**Policy PR 1.13: People with Special Needs.** Ensure that public access points to open space areas and design features for all recreational facilities provide equal opportunity for people with special needs.

**Policy PR 1.14: Bicycles.** Implement bicycle route improvements, including signing, striping, paving, and providing bicycle racks.

**Policy PR 1.15: Development Impacts.** Development should not be allowed to denigrate or interfere with the use or enjoyment of City-owned park, recreational, and open space facilities.

**Policy PR 1.16: Recreation Programs.** Maintain and expand, as budgets allow, existing recreation programs to meet the needs of City residents.

**Policy PR 1.17: Buffer Zones.** Encourage the creation of native plant buffer zones between natural areas and residences.

**Goal PR 2:** High quality open space protected for the benefit of present and future generations, reflecting a variety of important values: ecological, educational, aesthetic, economic and recreational. These values are interwoven throughout the community in numerous ways so that the preservation of open space is very important to the well-being of the City.

**Policy PR 2.1: Open Space Purpose.** Identify and protect the natural resources of the TriCities Area (El Cerrito, Richmond and San Pablo) for the benefit of present and future generations.

**Policy PR 2.2: Development Suitability.** Encourage urban growth in those areas where the natural characteristics of the land are most suited to such development, and to protect the public from risks to life and property.

**Policy PR 2.3: Open Space Plan Map.** Preserve the open space areas identified on the Open Space Plan Map for visual resources, protection of environmental resources, public health and safety reasons, and for recreational use.

**Policy PR 2.5: Open Space Use.** Improvements within open space areas shall be limited to those needed for educational and recreational purposes, and those improvements necessary for health and safety purposes. All improvements shall be compatible with protection and preservation of existing natural and habitat resources.

**Policy PR 2.6: Existing Open Space Preservation.** Except where extraordinary circumstances indicate otherwise, ensure that development decisions protect existing open space areas.

**Goal PR 3:** Public access to open space areas while protecting important habitats.

**Policy PR 3.1: Clear Delineation.** Clearly delineate which areas of publicly owned open space are appropriate for public use and access, and clearly differentiate them from those areas to be protected from human disturbance.

**Policy PR 3.2: Open Space Improvements.** Design any improvements in open space areas to minimize adverse impacts to habitats, view, and other open space resources.

**Policy PR 3.3: Creek Restoration.** Integrate recreational amenities with creek restoration efforts in a way that protects riparian values, including natural habitats.

### **City Facilities Element**

**Goal CF 1:** Public access to open space areas while protecting important habitats.

**Policy CF 1.1: Safety.** Place the highest priority on ensuring the safety of existing community facilities, especially the Public Safety Building, Community Center, and neighborhood clubhouses, including seismic retrofits and necessary upgrades.

**Policy CF 1.2: Regular Maintenance.** Provide regular maintenance of community facilities to ensure their continued usability and prevent deferred maintenance, which adds to long-term costs.

**Policy CF 1.3: Development Incentives.** Obtain community facilities through appropriate development incentives that are consistent with other policies in this Plan.

**Policy CF 1.4: Future Development.** Require future development to pay its fair share of purchasing sites and financing needed improvements for existing and future community facilities.

**Policy CF 1.5: Responding to Growth.** Provide new or expanded community facilities as the need increases due to increased population or development.

**Policy CF 1.6: New Facilities.** Build a new City Hall/Public Safety Building, gymnasium/teen center/multi-purpose facility, cultural and arts center, and children's art center in the Canyon Trail Clubhouse, provided that funds are available after public safety upgrades and deferred maintenance are accomplished.

**Policy CF 1.7: Asset Replacement.** Ensure that money is set aside for major repairs, renovations, and replacement of public facilities.

**Policy CF 1.8: Joint Use.** Seek opportunities for joint use of community facilities and shared maintenance and operation agreements with other service providers, including the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) and Contra Costa County.

## Public Services and Infrastructure Element

**Goal PS 1:** An adequate, comprehensive, coordinated law enforcement system consistent with the needs of the community.

**Policy PS 1.2: Development Design.** Development design should address public safety issues – encourage use of technology to support defensible design, encourage neighborhood social interaction, maintain eyes on the street, and support a clean and orderly public appearance.

**Goal PS 3:** Safe and adequate public infrastructure to serve El Cerrito's residents, now and in the future.

**Policy PS 3.3: Upgrading Infrastructure.** Upgrade public infrastructure that experiences deterioration or obsolescence.

## Resources Element

**Goal R 1:** Protected natural resources (important habitat, ecological resources, key visual resources, ridges and ridgelines, creeks and streambanks, steeper slopes, vista points, and major features), and clean air and water.

**Policy R 1.1: Habitat Protection.** Preserve oak/woodland, riparian vegetation, creeks, native grasslands, wildlife corridors and other important wildlife habitats. Loss of these habitats should be fully offset through creation of habitat of equal value. Compensation rate for habitat re-creation shall be determined by a qualified biologist.

**Policy R 1.11: Native Plant Communities.** Encourage use of native plant species for landscaping in hillside areas, preserve unique plant communities, and use fire-preventive landscaping techniques.

## Hazards Element

**Goal H 1:** Minimal potential for loss of life, injury, damage to property, economic and social dislocation and unusual public expense due to natural and man-made hazards, including protection from the risk of flood damage, hazards of soil erosion, fire hazards, weak and expansive soils, potentially hazardous soils materials, other hazardous materials, geologic instability, seismic activity, and release of hazardous materials from refineries and chemical plants in West County.

**Policy H 1.8: Seismic Safety.** Assure existing and new structures are designed to contemporary standards for seismic safety. Review, amend, and update, at regular intervals, all relevant City codes and ordinances to incorporate the most current knowledge and highest standards of seismic safety.

**Policy H 1.21: Fire Retardant Landscaping.** Encourage the use of fire-retardant vegetation for landscaping, especially in high fire hazard areas.

**Policy H 1.22: Hillside Natural Area.** Control vegetation growth in the Hillside Natural Area to reduce fire hazards.

**Goal H 2:** Government agencies, citizens and businesses are prepared for an effective response and recovery in the event of emergencies or disasters.

**Policy H 2.2: Public Facilities.** Locate and design emergency buildings (police, fire, hospital, etc.) and vital utilities, communication systems and other public facilities so that they remain operational during and after an emergency or disaster.

## J. El Cerrito Structural Facilities Management Plan, 2004

The *El Cerrito Structural Facilities Management Plan*, completed in 2004, is a comprehensive inventory and assessment of City-owned facility assets. The plan inventories assets, evaluates facility condition, and notes deficiencies for 20 City-owned buildings and 11 City-owned parks, excluding the Ohlone Greenway, informing the City in developing priorities for maintenance, improvements, or replacement of the facilities.

The *Management Plan* initiates with an inventory of El Cerrito's buildings and parks, documenting the facility assets of walls, floors, ceilings, windows, and doors, and park elements such as playgrounds, sport courts, and pedestrian paths. Following the inventory of existing structures and features, the *Management Plan* evaluates their condition and rates each feature as 'good', 'fair', or 'poor'. This assessment provides a metric for serviceability for the identified features, wherein 'good' signifies a feature of the facility in new or acceptable condition; 'fair' signifies a feature in serviceable condition; and 'poor' signifies a feature that is unsafe or non-functional. Additionally, a structural condition assessment to evaluate the life safety of El Cerrito's facilities, per Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 310, was completed, excluding City Hall, the Recycling Center, and the Civic Theatre. Overall, the *Management Plan* finds El Cerrito's facilities are in good to fair condition as of 2004, despite age.

In addition to the site evaluation, the *Management Plan* provides estimated costs for the replacement, maintenance, and deficiency improvement of the inventoried features throughout El Cerrito's facility system. In 2004, the *Management Plan* estimated that the City should pay a minimum of \$260,000 per year to maintain its facilities at their current condition, however, at that time the City spent roughly \$50,000 on structures and \$15,000 on hardscape, annually, for routine maintenance, creating a shortfall in maintenance budgeting. In addition to this, the *Plan* notes that as of 2004, the City had a \$3.8 billion backlog of repairs and improvements concluding that without improving maintenance and addressing the backlog, the value of the City's facility assets would decline. This table lists the assets evaluated, and their value, through the *El Cerrito Structural Facilities Management Plan*.

In relation to the *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*, the *Structural Facilities Management Plan* is the precedent and guiding document for the current inventory and assessment of El Cerrito's parks and recreation facilities. The *Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan* is informed by the 2004 assessment and builds from the report's analysis.

### Facility Assets of El Cerrito and their Condition

	Buildings and Parks	Building Area (sf)	Hardscape Area (sf)	Facility Condition Assessment	Asset Value (Replacement Cost)	Routine Maintenance	Deficiency Improvement Budget
1	Arlington Clubhouse and Park	1,640	13,802	Good	\$262,200	\$2,622	\$45,700
2	Canyon Trail Clubhouse and Park	1,640	18,190	Good-Fair	\$257,600	\$2,576	\$61,800
3	Casa Cerrito Clubhouse	2,120	3,084	Good-Fair	\$306,000	\$3,060	\$60,900
4	Castro Clubhouse and Park	2,574	87,273	Good-Fair	\$657,200	\$6,572	\$96,000
5	Central Park	0	8,458	Fair	\$33,800	\$338	\$0
6	Cerrito Vista Facilities and Park	752	10,392	Good-Fair	\$262,500	\$2,625	\$68,000
7	City Hall	5,760	21,420	Good-Fair	\$92,400	\$924	\$23,500
8	City Library	7,981	11,188	Fair	\$2,000,000	\$20,000	\$263,200
9	Civic Theater	7,713	20,153	Fair	\$1,900,000	\$19,000	\$63,000
10	Community Center	15,672	31,341	Good	\$3,900,000	\$39,000	\$230,200
11	Corporation Yard	11,759	37,808	Fair-Poor	\$2,900,000	\$29,000	\$1,793,850
12	Creekside Park	0	5,720	Fair	\$77,200	\$772	NA
13	Fairmont Neighborhood Childcare and Park	1,400	2,592	Good	\$211,300	\$2,113	\$36,000
14	Fire Station #72	4,200	8,759	Good	\$1,010,200	\$10,102	\$0
15	Harding Clubhouse and Park	2,526	36,944	Good	\$750,100	\$7,501	\$82,900
16	Huber Park Clubhouse and Park	450	17,638	Good	\$258,600	\$2,586	\$33,600
17	Madera Childcare Facilities	1,440	679	Good	\$165,400	\$1,654	\$36,700
18	Poinsett Clubhouse and Park	450	16,520	Good	\$242,100	\$2,421	\$20,000
19	Public Safety Building	16,581	24,656	Fair	\$6,600,000	\$66,000	\$642,400
20	Recycling center	6,234	62,056	Fair	\$1,400,000	\$14,000	\$101,308
21	Senior Center	5,949	9,714	Good	\$1,400,000	\$14,000	\$180,000
22	Tassajara Clubhouse and Park	1,648	7,580	Good	\$197,800	\$1,978	\$36,000
	Facility Subtotals	98,489	455,967		\$24,884,400	\$248,844	\$3,875,058
	Irrigation Subtotals		1,787,745		\$1,385,795	\$13,858	NA
	Total				\$26,270,195	\$262,702	\$3,875,058

## K. Ohlone Greenway Master Plan, 2009

The Ohlone Greenway is a pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle path that runs through the cities of Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito, and Richmond. Composed of open space and trail, the Greenway is a rails-to-trails site along a former railroad right-of-way that runs adjacent to elevated BART tracks. 2.7 miles of the Greenway run through central El Cerrito, creating significant social and geographical relevance to the City as a whole.

The 2009 *Ohlone Greenway Master Plan* articulates a vision and goals for the Greenway to guide and inform future improvements and ensure consistent development of the site. Created to work in tandem with BART seismic retrofitting the *Plan* builds upon the extensive construction, and resulting damage of the Greenway, that will need to be mitigated as a result of BART's project. The *Master Plan's* overarching goals for the Greenway include:

- Improved circulation and infrastructure
- Improved safety and security
- A more maintainable site
- Modern amenities
- Increased stewardship and community involvement
- Enhancements integrated into future and adjacent development

To formalize future planning at the site, the *Master Plan* puts forth a series of guidelines to inform improvements. These include guidelines in:

- Design
- Security and safety
- Accessibility
- Maintenance
- Signage
- Planting
- Active and passive use areas
- Community building

- Play Areas
- Lighting and site furnishing
- Opportunities for art and interpretive elements
- Ecological and sustainable design

In providing recommendations for improvements to El Cerrito's Ohlone Greenway, the *Master Plan* divides the site into seven distinct planning areas. Each of the seven planning areas includes a review of existing site conditions and provides a schematic level design of recommendations. These recommendations range from the incorporation of passive seating and planting areas to the development of active sport courts, play areas, and gathering spaces that will serve the community.

Pursuant to this 2009 *Master Plan*, the City has begun to implement projects along the Greenway as resources allow. The *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan* will consider and support the recommendations put forth in the *Ohlone Greenway Master Plan* to ensure consistency and successful enhancement of this valuable recreation corridor.

## L. San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, 2014

San Pablo Avenue is a major north-south boulevard that runs through the cities of Emeryville, Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito, Richmond, San Pablo, Pinole, Hercules, Rodeo and Crockett. A major regional route for civic, transit, and retail destinations, two and a half miles of San Pablo Avenue run through the City of El Cerrito, from El Cerrito Plaza to Baxter Creek Gateway Park, and serve as the City's main commercial thoroughfare.

The 2014 *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan* articulates a vision for the future development of San Pablo Avenue as a multimodal corridor that provides opportunities for living, working, and community life. Divided into three portions, the Specific Plan Area in El Cerrito identifies San Pablo Avenue through its downtown, midtown, and uptown sites and aims to create a vibrant, walkable, sustainable, and transit-oriented corridor. The *Specific*

*Plan* is comprised of three elements; Form-Based Code, Complete Streets, and an infrastructure analysis.

The Form-Based Code portion of the *Specific Plan* provides context-sensitive development regulations and design guidelines for land parcels within the Specific Plan Area including standards for height, land use, building placement, and open space. Enforcing physical standards for development ensures that El Cerrito's existing conditions and values are supported as the Plan Area develops. The *Specific Plan* sets forth design guidelines and development standards to increase walking, biking, and transit use.

The Complete Streets portion of the *Specific Plan* promotes the creation of a multimodal avenue through improvements that enhance placemaking, encourage economic development and improve livability. This describes potential street improvements and design standards for San Pablo Avenue and adjacent streets in the Plan Area. In regards to the *Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*, the Complete Streets chapter of the *Specific Plan* considers portions of the Ohlone Greenway that lay within the Specific Plan Area.

The concluding section of the *Specific Plan*, the infrastructure analysis, identifies the utility providers for the corridor, provides a review of potential limitations in currently installed systems, and recommends feasibility-level improvements and associated costs.

The following goals and policies that guide the *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan* directly inform the *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*.

### **Goal A: Strengthen Sense of Place**

Strategy 2: Reinforce distinguishing sense of place by responding to existing assets such as the Ohlone Greenway and key views.

Strategy 4: Attract pedestrian activity to key nodes to foster community and identify places of interest.

### **Goal D: Enhance and Humanize Public Realm**

Strategy 3: Create new gathering places to serve the needs of existing and new users.

Strategy 4: Promote environmental sustainability.

Strategy 5: Celebrate and strengthen the unique natural context.

### **Goal E: Catalyze Mode Shift**

Strategy 3: Strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connectivity through existing and new connections that provide more alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles.

The *El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan* will support the strategies put forth in the *San Pablo Avenue Specific* and acknowledges that in addition to portions of the Ohlone Greenway, Baxter Creek Gateway Park and Central Park are within the boundaries of the Specific Plan Area.

El Cerrito Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan

# DOCUMENT REVIEW