MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Karen Pinkos, City Manager
DATE: September 3, 2020
SUBJECT: City Manager’s Update

On Tuesday, September 1, the City Council held a study session that discussed the City’s ongoing efforts to address our budget challenges and the impacts of the COVID-19 public health crisis. The meeting included reports from our Departments featuring Melanie Mintz, Community Development Director; Christopher Jones, Recreation Director; Yvetteh Ortiz, Public Works Director/City Engineer; Michael Pigoni, Fire Chief; and Paul Keith, Police Chief. If you are a regular reader of this update, you already know much of the work our Departments have been doing; however during this meeting our Directors were able to discuss with the City Council the impacts of the current environment due to financial challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic as well as their focus for this coming year. It was extremely informative and I encourage anyone who wasn’t able to watch the meeting live to watch it at your leisure.

I want to thank our Directors for the great work they and their teams do for El Cerrito residents, businesses, and visitors every day, especially in these unprecedented times. Next week, the updated proposed Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget Document will be available for review and will be discussed by the City Council at their next Council Meeting on September 15, 2020. Once available, it will be posted on our Annual Budget Process webpage.

As you will see in the Recreation Department section of this update, this month we are presenting our 30 in 30 Challenge! For just about 20 minutes a day, most can achieve at least one mile’s worth of walking, running, or other low impact exercise. As of today, I am already 5 miles in, including a wonderful hike yesterday with my co-workers Chris Jones and Alex Orologas in our beautiful Hillside Natural Area. We saw several hikers, families, and joggers out and about—all appropriately masked and social distanced—and it is great to know our residents enjoy our outdoor spaces responsibly and enthusiastically! So, I invite you to join me. Let’s get moving! Exercise of any kind is good for our mental and physical health and we can totally do this, by moving around our neighborhoods or parks, in our own yards, or even in our living rooms. These days, we could certainly use something to look forward to – the reward of doing something good for ourselves. We definitely deserve that!

Please stay safe and healthy, and please take care of yourselves and each other.

Karen Pinkos
City Manager
City of El Cerrito
CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE
September 3, 2020

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CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATES

COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund-Share for Contra Costa County Residents

On August 28, 2020, Richmond Neighborhood Housing Services launched the COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund-Share. The program provides support to single-family households with minor children and/or seniors, who can demonstrate a COVID-19 financial hardship and are at risk of losing utility services. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come/first-served basis and awards will be based on family size. To apply, please email info@eastbaynhs.org.

Additional Businesses Open in Contra Costa County

According to these new state rules, hair salons and barber shops can now operate indoors in Contra Costa County with safety guidelines in place. Indoor shopping malls may also reopen at 25% maximum occupancy as long as public congregation points and food courts are closed and the mall has approved a COVID-19 safety plan from Contra Costa Health Services. Gyms and fitness centers may begin operating outdoors in accordance with their own state guidelines and checklist.

These new state rules do not change the restrictions on in-person education or the state’s school waiver process in Contra Costa. See full press release for details.

CITY MANAGEMENT/CITY CLERK

November Election Update

El Cerrito Candidates - As of the close of nominations, the City of El Cerrito had a total of eight candidates qualified for placement on the November ballot to elect three City Councilmembers. Information on candidates is available on the City’s website at el-cerrito.org/1426/November-2020-Candidates.
Nomination Period for Write-In Candidates - The nomination period for write-in candidates will open on Monday, September 7, 2020 (please note this is a City Holiday) and end on **Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 6 p.m.** Write-In candidates are subject to the same requirements as other candidates; however, a candidate statement is not available, and name and ballot designation will not appear printed on the ballot. Qualifying as a write-in candidate allows write-in votes cast for the individual to be counted. For more information, please contact the City Clerk at cityclerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 215-4305.

Voter Registration - Voters can check their registration status with Contra Costa County at cocovote.us/registration-and-voting-options/my-voting-information, and can register online at registertovote.ca.gov. The deadline to register for the November Election is **Monday, October 19, 2020.**

Vote-By-Mail Secure Drop Boxes - Under Executive Order N-64-20, all registered voters in California will receive a vote-by-mail ballot with prepaid postage. Ballots will be mailed to voters beginning **October 5, 2020.** Contra Costa County voters can return their ballots using the 24-hour secure ballot box located at El Cerrito City Hall. Ballots are only accessible by the City’s Election Official and County Election staff who will pick up the box contents directly and transport back to the County facility for processing. There is no involvement with the U.S. Postal Service in servicing the permanent ballot box and the box is under the city’s video surveillance system. The box will be unlocked on October 5, 2020 and remain open until 8 p.m. on election day. For more information on secure ballot drop boxes, please visit cocovote.us/registration-and-voting-options/secure-ballot-drop-boxes.

Track Your Ballot - While ballots will not be mailed until October 5, you can sign up now to track your ballot though California’s official “Where’s My Ballot?” tracking tool. Signing up takes less than three minutes and you will be able to track when your ballot is mailed, when it has been received, and when it has been counted. Visit wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov to sign up today.

For more information please contact Contra Costa County Elections at voter.services@vote.cccounty.us or (925) 335-7836. Voters can also contact the City Clerk at cityclerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 215-4305.

**Upcoming City Council Meeting(s)**

The City Council will hold a special meeting in closed session to discuss existing litigation on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6 p.m. This meeting will not be televised or streamed online. The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7 p.m. Meeting materials and information for City Council meetings can be found online at el-cerrito.ca.us/CouncilMeetingMaterials. For more information, please contact the City Clerk at cityclerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 215-4305.
Census 2020
Time's almost up to fill out the 2020 Census, which ends on September 30. Once the count is over, we'll have to wait another 10 years for the next one! The future of our community starts right now. Complete the census online at 2020CENSUS.GOV

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Temporary Outdoor Dining and Retail Program
As many local restaurants, service providers, and retailers continue to adapt during these times, the City Council adopted a new program in July to boost El Cerrito businesses. A special Community Development e-news was sent to business owners on August 4, noticing them of this opportunity to continue doing business using the outdoor private and/or public space in proximity to their businesses. To date, we have received three applications.

For more information on this program, please visit el-cerrito.org/outdoorseating or community@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

PennDel’s Bakehouse
A building permit for Tenant Improvements has been issued for a new bakery that will be located at 6491 Portola Drive (in the Ohlone Gardens mixed-use building adjacent to the Ohlone Greenway). PennDel’s Bakehouse will largely feature special order, but it will also feature a quick-service counter for to-go coffee and baked goods. The bakery hopes to open in about 3 months. For more information on this, or other new businesses, please email community@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.
State Eviction Moratorium Through January 31, 2021
On August 31, 2020, the Governor signed a new eviction moratorium bill, **AB 3088** Tenant, Homeowner and Small Landlord Relief and Stabilization Act of 2020. AB 3088 is a statewide eviction moratorium that applies to residential tenants and small property owners. The protections are in place for COVID-19 related financial hardships through January 31, 2021 and establish guidelines for unpaid rent starting in March 2020. The City is currently analyzing AB 3088 and updates will be posted on our website.

County residents in need of housing counseling can reach out to the Contra Costa Housing Services Collaborative at no cost.

Building Permit Issuance Improving with Streamlined Processes
Under the guidance of Interim Building Official Keith Marks, the Building Division is striving to resolve any outstanding issues regarding streamlining processes, and the backlog of permit applications, while preparing to transition to a more digital “over the virtual counter” system for simple permits. To date, permit issuance more than doubled with 106 permits issued in August compared to the 48 issued in July. Anyone still having trouble getting through the permit process can contact Keith Marks at kmarks@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 215-4365.

Tenant Protections Task Force Meeting
On September 22, 2020, the Task Force will convene and receive a presentation from City staff about the Rent Registry Program data for the July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019 reporting period. The Task Force was appointed by the City Council in August 2019, composed of 4 tenants and 4 landlords, to consider policy recommendations with support from a non-staff facilitator. It is likely that one additional meeting will take place this fall in order to prepare their final recommendations report. To learn more about future meetings and to access agenda packets, please visit el-cerrito.org/tenantprotections.

FIRE

September is National Preparedness Month
National Preparedness Month is recognized each September to promote family and community disaster planning now and throughout the year. As our nation continues to respond to COVID-19, there is no better time to be involved than this September.

If 2020 has taught us anything, it is that “Disasters Don’t Wait” and they take many forms like earthquakes, wildfires, and aggressive viruses. No matter the type of disaster, National Preparedness Month encourages residents to map out a survival strategy for yourself, your family, your pets and your belongings.

Tackle these weekly goals and you’ll be one step ahead of last year on planning for an emergency:
Week 1: Make a Plan  
Week 2: Build a Kit  
Week 3: Prepare for Disasters  
Week 4: Teach Youth About Preparedness

Ready.gov has all the tools you need to accomplish these goals. Find details on valuable local resources on El Cerrito’s Emergency Preparedness webpage, which focuses on scenarios most likely to happen in our community.

Sign up for emergency alerts at cwsalerts.com/registration and el-cerrito.org/notifyme

POLICE

Fire Response  
The week of August 17, El Cerrito Police Department (ECPD) officers, as part of the Contra Costa County Law Enforcement group, were called upon to support the firefighting effort in the unincorporated part of Vacaville. ECPD Officers provided extra security in the evacuated areas. They looked for looters and assisted homeowners who were allowed to return to their homes for necessary items. This was done as part of our commitment to regional cooperation and mutual aid agreements.

Use of Force Report  
The El Cerrito Police Department has put together a Use of Force Report for 2017-2019. The report is intended to serve as an overview of the use of force by ECPD officers. The Use of Force Report can be found at el-cerrito.org/useofforcereport2017-2019.

PUBLIC WORKS

Clean Water Program Annual Report Summary and Highlights  
At the end of August, Public Works staff submitted the 2019-20 Annual Report for the City’s Clean Water Program to the Contra Costa County Clean Water Program and ultimately the Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board). The report highlighted El Cerrito’s continued efforts to meet and exceed the requirements of the National

Photo by TJ Gehling
Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit.

Notable highlights included: 1) The City’s robust public outreach and education campaign through more than 40 newsletter articles and events and 2) Numerous completed and proposed development projects that are being reviewed and monitored for stormwater compliance; and the city-wide implementation of trash capture devices.

For example, the report showed that through the City’s installation of over 170 full trash capture systems, source control measures (e.g. El Cerrito’s single-use bag ban), and regular cleanups, El Cerrito was able to claim a greater than 90% reduction in the trash load. In addition, the City implemented major Clean Water Program initiatives this reporting period, including ensuring 80% of storm drain inlets are marked with educational messaging, such as “Drains to Bay”, and adoption of a Green Infrastructure Plan in September of 2019. Contractors also broke ground on the San Pablo Avenue Stormwater Spine Project, which will add a new green infrastructure facility on San Pablo Avenue at Moeser Lane. The City also successfully piloted a full-year moratorium on the use of glyphosate in all city landscapes and intends to continue that moratorium.

Every year, this report highlights the significant efforts undertaken by the City to meet the requirements of our permit through public outreach, municipal operations, trash reduction, green infrastructure, illicit discharge detection and elimination, and new development and construction review. A new NPDES permit is likely to be issued within the next year, with new requirements and changes that are expected to increase the resources necessary for the City to stay in compliance. For more information, please contact Public Works Staff at wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 525-7622.

Celebrate Coastal Cleanup Month in El Cerrito Throughout September

The City of El Cerrito Environmental Quality Committee in conjunction with the California Coastal Commission and the Watershed Project invite you to participate in Coastal Cleanup Month. Celebrate the coast and the creeks that feed the Bay by paying them respect. Throughout the month of September residents are encouraged to visit Cerrito Creek, Baxter Creek, or any of their tributaries along the Ohlone Greenway to remove trash before it washes into the Bay during the rains.

Due to the pandemic, we can enjoy these beautiful spots while improving the environment and following health guidelines. Wear a mask, practice physical distancing, and strictly follow both local guidance and County safety protocols.

Please register in advance and help us track the amount of trash removed. To register or for more information, contact City cleanup coordinator spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or call (510) 559-
Bike to Wherever Days throughout September
Since the Bay Area’s Bike to Work Day, normally scheduled in May, was cancelled due to COVID19, the regional group that organizes the event has rescheduled and rebranded it as Bike to Wherever Days (BTWD) – a month-long celebration of bicycling in September, deemphasizing "work" and encouraging bicycling as a way to get around on errands, for fun, or for exercise.

BTWD tote bags were printed prior to the cancellation of the event and will be available at the Contra Costa Library system, the Richmond Main Library, Rich City Rides in downtown Richmond, and The Pedaler in El Sobrante. The public is invited to come at their leisure, to these various locations, starting in mid-September to pick up a tote bag. Curbside pickup is encouraged to minimize contact. There will not be any energizer stations for the event, nor will the bags be stuffed with the normal giveaway items.

511 Contra Costa is also hosting the West County Greenway Challenge. Starting on September 1, banners with QR codes and specific websites for cyclists to scan and check in will be hung along the Richmond and Ohlone Greenways in El Cerrito. Cyclists that check in to at least two stations will receive a $10 Amazon gift card. (Limit 1 per person, while funding lasts). We hope that in lieu of everything else going on this can be a fun activity to encourage folks to ride these wonderful West County amenities. Locations of all the stations can be found here: https://bit.ly/BTWDStations. More information on Bike to Wherever Days from a regional perspective can be found here: bayareabiketowork.com/about

Help Prepare for Rainy Season
With September arriving, it is time to start preparing for the rainy season in the Bay Area. In El Cerrito, creeks and culverts can overflow during periods of heavy rains and the City needs cooperation and assistance from residents and businesses in assuring that the storm drain system functions properly. Here are some tips on how the community can help:

- If you have a creek on your property, make sure that debris and vegetation do not block the flow of water.
- Make sure to not allow soil, trash, or other materials in the storm gutter area and never put or pour anything other than storm water in the drain inlet.
• If you have a storm drain grate in the street near your home or business, check it frequently during heavy rains. Make sure no trash or leaves block the grate. If you observe a catch basin that is not draining or needs to be cleaned, contact Public Works at (510) 215-4369 or email Maintenance@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

• To prevent flooding from the street, the City provides up to ten (10) sandbags per household before a storm hits or after it has arrived. The sand pile and bags are available for El Cerrito and Kensington residents only and are available at the El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center (7501 Schmidt Lane). Please bring proof of residency and check in with Recycling Staff.

• If you have questions about storm drain system maintenance or need additional assistance, please contact Public Works at (510) 215-4369 or email Maintenance@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Richmond Ferry to Bridge to Greenway Complete Streets Plan
The Ferry to Bridge to Greenway Complete Streets Plan is an exciting opportunity to provide valuable connections for people bicycling and walking to the new Richmond Ferry, the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge multi-use path, and the Richmond Greenway.

These new connections will have regional significance, connecting three counties (San Francisco, Contra Costa and Marin) together for the first time with pedestrian and bicycle facilities that have not existed before. Improved facilities will connect to the San Francisco Bay Trail leading into Berkeley to the south, as well as north to North Richmond and beyond. Improvements will also connect to the Richmond Greenway, which leads through the heart of Richmond and connects two BART stations.

The Plan will incorporate abundant local community input, with creative engagement intended to bring a wide variety of voices to the planning process.

To view the draft plan click here. For more information visit ferry2bridge2greenway.com.

Drive Clean Bay Area Presents National Drive Electric Week
For National Drive Electric Week this year, the City of El Cerrito is co-promoting a series of virtual events during National Drive Electric Week to help residents start their clean transportation journey. Community members can discover the many benefits of electric cars and e-bikes during the following online events.

• Electrify Your Ride, Saturday, September 26, 4-5:30 p.m. - Explore a variety of Electric Vehicles (EVs) and engage with EV and e-bike owners to learn what they love most about driving electric. Presented by Cool the Earth. Register here.
• **Electric Cars 101, Wednesday, September 30, 5-6 p.m.** - Learn about benefits of driving electric, vehicle range, charging, rebates & incentives, consumer resources, and lots of Q&A. Presented by 350 Bay Area, City of Berkeley and the Ecology Center. [Register here.](#)

• **Drive & Ride Electric, Thursday, October 1, 1-3 p.m.** - Meet EV owners and learn about electric vehicles and e-bikes, financing, rebates, incentives and other local resources. Presented by the City of Richmond. [Register here.](#)

• **Clínica de Incentivos Financieros Para Vehículos Eléctrico, Domingo, 4 de Octubre 4-5 p.m.** - Conozca los numerosos programas de asistencia financiera que pueden hacer que la propiedad de un vehículo eléctrico sea una realidad para usted y su familia. [Presentado por Acterra.](#)

### RECREATION

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<th>OPEN (with Modifications)</th>
<th>CLOSED</th>
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<td>• Facility &amp; Picnic Rentals</td>
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<td>• Easy Ride for Essential Appointments</td>
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<td>• Youth Field Permits</td>
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<td>• El Cerrito Community Center Office</td>
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### Fall Childcare Programs Begin

On Monday, August 24, the first session of Fall 2020 Youth School Year programs began. A variety of childcare and recreation opportunities are available to the community including:

- Learning Labs to assist with distance learning
- Afternoon Recreation
- Enrichment classes like soccer, STEAM, and gymnastics

Modeled after our successful summer camp program, all activities are being offered in small pods...
of 12 or fewer students with designated staff and facilities. Though the first week of the program brought its challenges with balancing COVID-19 safety measures with poor air quality, staff were excited to meet and support the 90+ youth enrolled in the different pods across the City. Limited space is still available in some pods, and more information on Fall Programs can be found at el-cerrito.org/childcare.

**Virtual Youth Activities**
In addition to limited in-person programs, the Recreation Department is offering a variety of virtual youth activities in partnership with some of our most popular school-year instructors. Virtual classes included sports, science, cooking, circus, and more! For more information on these online programs, visit el-cerrito.org/childcare and click our “Virtual Programming” button.

**September is #EC30in30**
For the month of September, join the Recreation Department in our newest social media campaign: #EC30in30. The goal is to promote health and wellness and inspire the community to commit to 30 miles of physical activity over 30 days. 15 minutes of moderate physical activity is equal to 0.75 miles. That means for a little over 20 minutes each day you are challenging yourself to complete your 30 miles in just one month!

Print a month-long tracking sheet, get more information, and download our calendar of alternative physical activity suggestions at el-cerrito.org/alternative-community-activities.

**ATTACHMENTS/FLYERS**

- COVID-19 Temporary Outdoor Dining & Retail Program
COVID-19 TEMPORARY OUTDOOR DINING & RETAIL PROGRAM

August 2020

ABOUT THE PROGRAM
As many local restaurants and retailers continue to adapt during these times, the City Council adopted a new program in July to boost El Cerrito businesses. If you are a business owner and want to use the outdoor private and/or public space in proximity to your business, the City has created a streamlined no-fee Temporary Outdoor Dining & Retail Permit Application.

ELIGIBLE BUSINESSES
We are here to support all businesses, so whether you operate a restaurant or retail sales, please review the Application Process, and let us know if you have specific questions or needs.

TYPES OF SPACES
There are three categories of outdoor dining and business activities that are generally eligible:

1. Use of Outdoor Private Property
2. Use of Public Sidewalks
3. Use of Public Parking Spaces

APPLICATION PROCESS

Note: All restaurants and businesses must adhere to all applicable orders, guidance and guidelines issued by the Contra Costa County Health Officer and the State of California.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
For additional information, visit our website www.el-cerrito.org/OutdoorSeating or contact the Community Development Department by email community@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.