

A Greener El Cerrito

News from the City of El Cerrito Operations + Environmental Services Division

Spring/Summer 2020 Volume 28

www.ecenvironment.org | 510-215-4350

TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19, THE FOLLOWING EVENTS HAVE BEEN CANCELED OR POSTPONED:

- Bike To Work Day
- Spring Citywide Garage Sale
- Green Team Work Parties
 - Earth Day
- El Cerrito Hillside Festival
- 4th of July
- May Meetings for the Environmental Quality Committee and Urban Forest Committee

Other events and non-essential meetings are subject to cancellation.

For the latest info., please visit el-cerrito.org/covid19.



10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530
green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

El Cerrito Considering Expanded Foodware Ordinance **Public Hearing Postponed**

The City of El Cerrito adopted a Foodware Ordinance in 2013 to prohibit expanded polystyrene foam (“Styrofoam”) take-out containers, and require the use of reusable, recyclable, or compostable foodware. Over the last year, the City has developed proposed changes to the municipal code, and conducted outreach in the community, to potentially phase out single-use plastic foodware items in the city and encourage the use of reusable and compostable containers to help protect waterways, promote environmental sustainability, and reduce waste. If approved, this would apply to all food providers in the city and would prohibit products such as non-compostable, non-reusable straws, eating utensils, and food containers. The ordinance would also require food providers that provide compostable or reusable straws to keep plastic straws in stock for customers who rely on durable, plastic straws for drinking and request them due to disabilities or medical needs.

This ordinance would support the City’s goals to reduce the community’s environmental impact, to reduce recycling contamination and costs, and to decrease greenhouse gas emissions, in line with the City’s Climate Action Plan and Strategic Plan goals.

City Staff are currently sharing information, listening to concerns, answering questions, and gathering



input as we continue to develop the ordinance. This has included letters and in-person outreach to over 80 businesses that will be impacted, hosting multiple public meetings, print and online outreach efforts, and engaging with stakeholders from the business community, the Environmental Quality Committee, Chamber of Commerce, and the City’s Economic Development Committee.

Staff anticipated bringing the draft ordinance for City Council consideration in Spring 2020, but **scheduling of the Public Hearing for the expanded ordinance has been suspended until further notice pending the City’s assessment of the impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency, including economic impacts on local businesses.**

If the Ordinance is adopted, the City will provide an instructional brochure, and free on-going technical training to all affected businesses and food providers, to build public awareness to support a smooth transition. Interested parties can review the Draft Ordinance and find more information at el-cerrito.org/foodware or provide input by emailing wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Removing Containers From the Curb

Public Works and Community Development Staff frequently receive complaints regarding garbage, recycling, and green waste containers that are left on the street. City Staff will be making a new outreach effort, in this publication and others, to remind residents that containers are not allowed to be left on the street, on sidewalks, or on parking/planter strips per the El Cerrito Municipal code (8.12.070(G)), on non-collection days. The Municipal Code reads that “No person shall place garbage, recyclable materials and green waste containers for collection at any time other than the day or days established for collection, or earlier than sunset of the day preceding the day designated for collection. All garbage, recyclable materials and green waste containers shall be removed from the curb prior to midnight of the day the containers have been emptied”. City streets, sidewalks, and parking/planter strips all belong as public right-of-way and are common



spaces shared by the public. It is important that sidewalks and streets are left unobstructed by containers to allow accessibility and a safe path for cars, pedestrians, and wheelchairs. The City is asking community members to retrieve carts shortly after collection in order to keep the right-of-way clear, safe, and accessible to everyone. Questions? Please contact green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Receive a Free Smart Thermostat for Your Home or Property!



MCE Clean Energy's new Residential Direct Install Program provides qualifying homeowners and renters with a free smart thermostat, installed at no cost by technical experts. Heating and cooling can account for nearly half of your home's energy costs. A smart thermostat offers both automation and greater control over your home's temperature and climate, resulting in lower electricity bills and increased comfort in the home. Smart thermostats also help to reduce your home's electricity usage, shrinking your electricity-related carbon footprint.

For more information on how to qualify, please visit mceCleanEnergy.org/home-savings or call 877-284-1764.

UPDATES DURING COVID-19

(April 17, 2020) Public Works is continuing to provide many essential services during the shelter-in-place order. City staff, consultants and contractors are performing operations, maintenance and repair of “essential infrastructure” which includes utilities, storm drains, streets, and recycling and solid waste facilities. The City will continue to provide these services although at modified levels to meet Social Distancing Requirements.

- Curbside pick up of garbage, green waste, and recycling will continue as normally scheduled. Please set out carts by 6:00 am on your collection day.
- The El Cerrito Recycling Center, including the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection on Tuesdays, is closed during the shelter-in-place order.
- The HHW facility in Richmond is open Wednesday through Saturday 9:00 am-4:00 PM located at 101 Pittsburg Ave. For more info., visit recyclemore.com.
- City dog parks, playgrounds, picnic areas, basketball courts, tennis courts, and shared recreational facilities are currently closed until at least May 3, 2020.

For Coronavirus updates from the City, please visit el-cerrito.org/covid19. For additional Public Works information, please visit el-cerrito.org/136/Public-Works.