

A Greener El Cerrito

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

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San Pablo Ave. Green Spine Project Under Way

In early April, the San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP), a program of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), commenced construction of the San Pablo Avenue Green Stormwater Spine Project, a multi-year project with numerous components, grant funds, and partners, including Caltrans and the cities of El Cerrito, Oakland, Emeryville, and Berkeley.

The project portion in El Cerrito is located within the street and sidewalk areas along the northbound side of the 10500 block of San Pablo Avenue, fronting the Moeser Square Shopping Center, and



includes relocation of an existing water main (by EBMUD), installation of a dedicated bicycle lane against the existing curb, installation of stormwater capture cells outside of the bicycle lane, installation of Bay-Friendly landscaping, and interpretive signage. The design of the green infrastructure improvements meets the City's multi-modal mobility, economic development, and urban greening goals and implements a pilot section of the adopted San Pablo Avenue Complete Streets Plan. It is important to know that even though the project had to remove the existing trees in the area, the project includes planting of 26 new Persian Ironwood trees and additional Bay-Friendly shrubs, grasses, and perennials. For additional information about the project, please contact the City's Engineering Manager/Senior Engineer, Ana Bernardes, at abernardes@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us; or call the Public Works Department at (510) 215-4382.

Glyphosate Moratorium

In June 2019, the City instituted a moratorium on the use of glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup®) in all public landscapes. With sustained public concern regarding the potential hazards of glyphosate, the City of El Cerrito joins a large contingency of other public agencies that are investigating environmentally sustainable, cost effective, alternative methods of weed management. Over the past year, the City has increased the use of alternative weed management strategies with some success and is continuing its commitment to not use glyphosate in all city landscapes. To do this, the City continually consults with other integrated pest management (IPM) practitioners to learn more about the least toxic alternatives for effective management of invasive weeds. For more information, contact the City's IPM coordinator at spre@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Cardboard Recycling 101

One impact of the pandemic is that more families are ordering items online. This has increased the amount of cardboard the City collects at curbside and processes at the Recycling Center each day. With this increase in boxes, the City wants to remind the community that cardboard boxes must be empty, clean, and dry, and should be flattened before being placed in recycling containers. Empty, clean, and dry boxes ensure that there is no contamination in the recycling stream or damage caused to cardboard balers or other equipment. Flattened boxes further ensure that nothing is inside that could potentially break the baler machine or slow down productivity. The City depends on residents and businesses to help avoid recycling contamination, so that all materials received can be successfully recycled. For more info, contact the Recycling Center at (510) 215-4350.

Public Works Responders



The City's Operations + Environmental Services Division responds to a variety of urgent issues in our parks and in the public right-of-way. Public Works Staff frequently serve as first responders for tree failures, fallen tree limbs, irrigation leaks, illicit discharges,

storm and wind events, and flooding issues, among others. For example, earlier this summer, a Monterey Cypress Tree on Clark Place collapsed into the street. The tree split from the top causing the attached limb to fall and obstruct the road (see photo above). City staff responded quickly to the scene to ensure the road was opened and safe for use within hours.

These urgent maintenance issues happen at all hours, including evenings, nights, and weekends when City offices are closed. To report urgent maintenance issues that require immediate attention after normal business hours (evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays), please call Police Dispatch at (510) 233-1214. To report tree failures, fallen tree limbs, illicit discharges, etc., during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00am – 4:00pm), please e-mail Maintenance@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or call (510) 215-4369. For more information on maintenance services, visit el-cerrito.org/Maintenance.

Preparing for Rainy Season

Creeks and culverts can overflow during periods of heavy rains and the City needs your cooperation and assistance in assuring that the storm drain system functions properly. Here are some tips on how you 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 the City at (510) 215-4369.
- If your property is flooded by water from the street, report the problem to the City at (510) 215-4369.
- 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.

Environmental Activities Calendar

Recycling Center Open with Limited Services: Beginning August 11, the Recycling Center is open from 8:30am - 4pm Tuesday - Friday, and 9am - 4:45pm Saturdays. Face masks are required for all members of the public and staff. Customers are encouraged to spend 15 minutes or less dropping off materials. The Exchange Zone, Office, and Public Restrooms are currently closed to the public. And, the Styrofoam collection program has been suspended at this time. For more information visit el-cerrito.org/RecyclingCenter.

Bike to Wherever Days. This year, Bike to Work Day has reimagined the event as a month-long event in September that will be promoting bicycling in general, and encouraging bicycling as a way to get around on errands, for fun, or for exercise. Bike to Wherever Days will last through September. Track your rides and win prizes at lovetoride.net/bayarea.

Fall Citywide Garage Sale Cancelled: In response to the ongoing pandemic, and out of an abundance of caution, the Public Works Department has made the decision to cancel the Fall Citywide Garage Sale. However, if residents would still like to host a personal yard sale, the City wants to encourage community members to do so, being sure to follow safety guidelines by: conducting the sale outdoors, requiring face masks at all times, requiring social distancing, regularly sanitizing surfaces, providing hand sanitizer, and encouraging the use of online payment. For more info., contact lbrazil@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Green Teams: Stay tuned for more information on upcoming socially distanced cleanups and volunteer events. For the latest information on "Green Happenings", subscribe to the City's monthly e-newsletter at el-cerrito.org/greenhappenings.

Veterans' Day Holiday: The Recycling Center and East Bay Sanitary offices will be closed Wednesday, November 11 in observance of Veterans' Day. Curbside collection of recycling, green waste and garbage will occur as normally scheduled.

Thanksgiving Holiday: The Recycling Center and East Bay Sanitary offices will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 26 and November 27 in observance of Thanksgiving. Curbside collection will occur as normally scheduled.

Christmas and New Year's Holidays: The Recycling Center will be closed on December 24, 25, and 31 (beginning at noon), and January 1. East Bay Sanitary offices will be closed on December 25 and January 1. Curbside collection of recycling, green waste and garbage will not occur on December 25 and January 1. Service for all routes following those holidays will resume one day later than normally scheduled that week, with Friday's normal pick-up happening on Saturday.