

**Mayor**  
Carolyn Wysinger  
**Mayor Pro Tem**  
Gabe Quinto



**Councilmembers**  
William Ktsanes  
Lisa Motoyama  
Rebecca Saltzman

This information can be interpreted for you free of charge. Visit City Hall at 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 or learn more at [www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess](http://www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess)

Esta información se puede interpretar gratuitamente. Visite el Ayuntamiento en 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 o obtenga más información en [www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess](http://www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess)

这些信息可免费为您解释。请访问位于 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 的市政厅，或访问 [www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess](http://www.el-cerrito.org/LanguageAccess) 了解更多信息

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2025**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING (9:00 AM)</b><br/>Arlington Clubhouse - 1120 Arlington Ave El Cerrito, CA 94530<br/><b>This meeting will be held in-person only with no remote participation.</b></p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Accommodations:** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk at 510-215-4305. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable accommodations.

**Conduct:** This meeting shall be conducted pursuant to the El Cerrito [City Council Rules of Order and Procedure](#), including adjourning by 11:00 PM unless extended to a specific time determined by a majority of the Council.

**Public Comments:**

1. *In-person* by submitting a request to speak to the City Clerk.
2. *By Email* to [cityclerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us) identified in the subject line as **2/1/2025**

**Public Comments – Agenda Item #.**

Written comments received by **2:00 p.m. Friday, January 31, 2025** will be provided to the City Council and posted [online](#) in advance of the meeting. Comments received after the deadline will be provided to the City Council and will be posted **after the meeting**.

**9:00 AM      ROLL CALL - CONVENE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**1.      ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

*All persons wishing to speak should sign up with the City Clerk. Remarks are typically limited to 3 minutes per person and to items on the special meeting agenda only.*

**Mayor**  
Carolyn Wysinger  
**Mayor Pro Tem**  
Gabe Quinto



**Councilmembers**  
William Ktsanes  
Lisa Motoyama  
Rebecca Saltzman

---

**2. CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP RETREAT**

**Action Proposed:** Conduct a facilitated City Council retreat focused on City Council Governance and Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Budget and Priority Setting.

**Contact:** Karen Pinkos, City Manager, City Management; Nancy Hetrick, Facilitator, Raftelis

**3. ADJOURN SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

*The City of El Cerrito serves our diverse community by providing exceptional services that create a safe and resilient future for all.*

# MEMO

**To:** Mayor Wysinger and Members of Council  
**From:** Nancy Hetrick, Vice President, Raftelis  
**Date:** January 29, 2025  
**Re:** City Council Retreat

---

My colleague Julie Gieseke and I look forward to being with you on February 1, 2025. The purpose of this memo is to share the agenda and logistics and allow some time for you to reflect on conversations we intend to engage in during our time together. A couple of agenda items will require some advance preparation by the Council.

## Logistics

**Location:** Arlington Club House  
1120 Arlington Blvd.  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

**When:** Saturday, February 1, 2025  
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

## Purpose

Our goal is to build a sense of team, confirm Council goals and priorities, and create the space for important conversations about how you work with one another and the City Manager to build a foundation for effective governance.

## Preparation

Thank you for spending a few minutes considering the questions that correspond with various agenda items.

## This I Believe

During the retreat, participants will be given 5-7 minutes to share "what they believe" about the future of El Cerrito. This exercise is loosely based on the "This I Believe" essay format initiated by Edward R. Morrow on National Public Radio in the 1950s. Today, there is an international organization that engages people in writing and sharing essays describing their core values that guide their daily lives. Below are some guidelines on how to approach the activity.

- **Tell a story:** Be specific. Take your belief from the events of your career and experience in El Cerrito that have shaped how you look at and experience the organization.
- **Name your belief:** Focus on a core belief and talk about why it is true.
- **Be positive:** This is what you DO believe, not what you DON'T believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial "we" and make sure this is about what you believe. Speak in the first person.
- **Be personal:** Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak.
- Remember to share not only "**what**" is important for the future, but also "**why**" it is important to you and ultimately to the community.

## Governing Together

Attached is an article from the Institute for Local Government on the attributes of exceptional City Councils. We will use this article to discuss effective practices for elected officials and share ideas that you would like to incorporate into the City's governance culture. Please review this article in advance and come prepared to share what resonates for you.

## Council Member Roles

In 2016, Julia Novak and Dr. John Nalbandian collaborated with other local government thought leaders and identified Six Roles that Council members will fulfill as they perform their duties and serve their community. Please review the roles and descriptions listed below.

| Governance Roles and Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strategic/Vision – Big Picture Thinker</b><br>The focus here is on decisions that can have a significant impact on the City. Can be long-term or short-term; often focuses on the future and what might make a significant difference; seeing possible connections and relationships; thinking beyond present data and constraints. |
| <b>Trustee – Steward</b><br>While listening to and respecting constituent views, the trustee feels responsible to the City as a whole and to future residents. The trustee will make uncomfortable decisions that may run counter to constituent wishes because the decision is in the interest of the greater good.                   |
| <b>Representative – Constituent Advocate</b><br>In this role, the Council member acts as a "customer service representative." The Council member is a conduit between citizens and the City services. Often, residents see this Council member as responsive to their individual concerns.                                             |
| <b>Community Builder – Bringing People Together</b><br>In the community builder role, the Council member focuses on relationships and consensus-building. The community builder fosters relationships and is able to work through differences. Community is not just a casual word to the Council member who gravitates to this role.  |
| <b>Decision-Maker</b><br>The decision-maker sees his/her role much like a judge – information is presented, and the decision-maker votes it up or down. This is not an easy role, but often it is a more passive role in contrast to that of the community builder.                                                                    |
| <b>Oversight</b><br>In this role, the focus is on the accountability of staff to the Council.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## Strategic Plan Update and Priorities

We will review the [City's Strategic Plan](#) and discuss key accomplishments, progress made to date, and current initiatives. The City's five goals are listed below. During the retreat we will confirm Council's top priorities for the next year. Staff will provide a budget update to help inform the strategic plan discussion. The budget presentation slides are attached for your reference.

### High-Performing Organization

*Ensure the city maintains a strong financial position and a high-performing organization where employees feel a sense of inclusion and belonging.*

### Community Safety

*Maintain public safety staffing and responsiveness and ensure community emergency preparedness.*

### Livability and Belonging

*Promote a high quality of life and sense of community for current and future generations.*

### Infrastructure and Amenities

*Advance climate focused, sustainable infrastructure efforts that have community benefit.*

### Environmental Sustainability

*Promote environmental sustainability and stewardship by engaging in initiatives that reduce our carbon footprint, conserve natural resources, and foster a culture of environmental responsibility.*

## Norms

- Listen with respect
  - Let others finish before you start talking
  - Be attentive to the speaker
  - Disagree agreeably
- Be:
  - **BOLD**
  - Positive and realistic
  - Candid and honest
  - Patient and self-aware
  - Engaged and fully present
- Strive for consensus
  - Look for opportunities to agree
  - Remember the power of “if” and “and”
- Have fun!

## Agenda

**Saturday, February 1 – 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM**

### Welcome/Retreat Overview

- Welcome and introductions
- Public comment
- Agenda review
- Norms and expectations for the session
- Icebreaker discussion

### This I Believe

Each member of the governing body will be given an opportunity to share a core "belief" about the future of El Cerrito.

### Governing Together

We will discuss the roles of Council members and how the "ideal" Council member is viewed by the public, staff, and Council colleagues. The facilitator will also share some thoughts on governance and the Council-Manager form of government. Using the attached article from the Institute for Local Government, we will discuss effective practices for elected officials and share ideas to incorporate into the City's governance culture.

### Context Setting

Staff will provide a budget update to help inform the strategic plan discussion.

### Strategic Plan Update and Priorities

City Staff will provide context around available resources, the status of major initiatives, and recent accomplishments. Council will have an opportunity to confirm priorities and discuss what success looks like this time next year.

### Wrap Up and Next Steps

We will end the day with each participant sharing a reflection on one thing that was useful in spending the day together during the retreat.

# Attributes of Exceptional Councils

Leading public organizations and governing with colleagues on a council is a challenging art of community service. The Institute recognizes that many aspects of leadership and governance are not intuitive. This piece is intended to provide councilmembers and city managers insight into the attributes of exceptional councils as well as provide practical tips to help them become exceptional.

## 1. Exceptional councils develop a sense of team – a partnership with the city manager to govern and manage the city

The mayor, councilmembers and city manager see themselves and work as a team as they undertake a series of tasks to further their common purpose. The individual team members work in a coordinated and collaborative manner with a high degree of respect, trust and openness. The team values diversity in style and perspective. The team thinks and acts strategically as it examines issues/situations and decides on a course of action serving their city's mission and goals.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Successfully transition from candidate to a member of the council.
- Become a champion of the city. Make decisions based on the needs and interests of the community at-large / the greater good.
- Develop, communicate and support policy goals and council decisions.
- Demonstrate a willingness to work collaboratively (as a team) and have a citywide perspective.

### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Build capacity to create a more effective team. The governance team (mayor, councilmembers and city manager) should get to know each other; how each person approaches issues, decision making style and so on. This can be accomplished at annual meetings or workshops through-out the year. In the event that councilmembers disagree, clear ground rules (norms of behavior and practice) can help quell acrimony before it becomes a problem. It's important to remember that trust is built around understanding and respect, not necessarily agreement.

## 2. Exceptional councils have clear roles and responsibilities that are understood and adhered.

Exceptional councils understand their role is to serve as policy maker - to represent the values, beliefs and priorities of their community while serving in the community's best interest. They carry out a variety of responsibilities including: developing and adopting a vision for the city; focusing and aligning plans, policies, agreements and budgets in furtherance of this vision; and holding themselves and the city manager accountable for results.

Exceptional councils understand that the city manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. The city manager is responsible for undertaking and accomplishing the policy objectives of the council. Exceptional councils recognize the subject matter expertise of staff and utilize their knowledge and experience to guide and inform decision making.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Understand the role of local government and their responsibilities.
- Know their role- to set vision and policy, avoid micromanagement.
- Councilmembers should strive to be informed about the issues facing the city and be prepared to ask questions of staff and each other.

### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Create a shared understanding of the city manager's role and the council's expectations to optimize the working relationships. This shared understanding is informed by local charter and ordinance provisions that provide the overall framework for the relationship. The council should make time to have conversations during retreats and or study sessions to define and/or reveal and refine their role and responsibilities. Since role clarity between the city council and city management is critical to mutual success, having clear protocols helps avoid misunderstandings.

### 3. Exceptional councils honor the relationship with staff and each other

Exceptional councils understand that a good working relationship with staff is vital for the city to be run successfully. Exceptional councils treat each other and staff with dignity and respect. They act with civility and a high level of professional decorum. Councilmembers build trust by not playing the “gotcha game” and strive to have a no secrets, no surprises approach as an operating norm. Finally, they respect the diversity of styles and perspectives among their colleagues and staff and are open to new ideas.

#### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Councilmembers have the ability to respectfully disagree (to disagree without being disagreeable). They are able to leave it at the dais; debates are about policy, not personality.
- Exceptional councilmembers reflect positive decorum/model of leadership by providing respectful tone with colleagues.
- Establish a set of behaviors ahead of time, potentially documented in a code of conduct, to help promote civility and respect.

#### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Set council priorities and strategic goals at an annual meeting; these goals and priorities are a tool to guide the city manager and staff on where to focus their efforts. This annual meeting provides time for the council to reflect on community priorities as well as offer an opportunity to discuss their decorum and their relationship among each other and the relationship between the city manager/staff and the council.

### 4. Exceptional councils routinely conduct effective meetings

Open and public meetings are central to democratic decision-making. Exceptional councils master the art of effective meetings. They develop and adhere to meeting protocols and processes. They spend time planning and organizing the agenda with the aim of having a more focused meeting. They allocate the council's time and energy appropriately (focused on the council's role and responsibilities) and meeting short- and long-term priorities. They honor the public's participation and engagement and they generally start on time and are held during reasonable hours.

Exceptional councils use public meetings not only for their intended purpose, information sharing and decision-making,

#### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Councilmembers are respectful of each other, the public and everyone's time.
- Councilmembers use engaging body language as a way to demonstrate respect.
- Issues are not personalized, thoughtful dialogue is the objective.
- Agenda packets are read, councilmembers come prepared and have an open mind
- Respect is demonstrated for varied opinions.
- Everyone strives to be civil and act with decorum.

but they also use the meeting to demonstrate respect and civility for each other, staff and the public. Exceptional councilmembers prepare in advance of the meeting, remain focused on the city goals and objectives and mindful of their role and responsibilities.

### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Develop and adopt (with regular reviews and updates), guidelines for conducting meetings and making decisions. These governance protocols typically address meeting procedures (agenda preparation, how to put issues on the agenda, debate and voting procedures (parliamentary rules) and standards of decorum (civility)). As part of a regular self-assessment, councils should evaluate their meetings and their effectiveness and adjust behavior and practices for better results.

## 5. Exceptional councils hold themselves and the city accountable

Exceptional councils operate openly, ethically and work to engage the community in a myriad of decisions impacting the prosperity and well-being of their community. Toward that end, exceptional councils consistently provide short- and long-term strategic direction and goals, as well as provide budget, program and policy oversight.

Exceptional councils hold themselves accountable for the conduct, behavior and effectiveness of the council. They establish clear priorities and goals and hold the city manager accountable for results. And finally, they embrace accountability as a process and tool to calibrate ongoing efforts to address and meet policy and program objectives.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Councilmembers operate ethically and with integrity.
- Councils conduct team building / goal setting exercise to track progress towards mutually agreed upon goals
- Councils taking responsibility for the results (good and bad).
- Councils celebrate success.
- Councilmembers hold themselves responsible for adhering to operating protocols and codes of conduct.

### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Annually evaluate council and city manager performance toward achieving the city's priorities and goals (consider having this be part of an annual goal setting meeting). Council should consider assessing its own behavior and effectiveness as part of its annual self-assessment.

## 6. Exceptional councils have members who practice continuous personal learning and development

Governance is not intuitive. In addition, the policy and economic environment impacting cities are ever changing. Exceptional councils continually provide the opportunity to build their knowledge and skills, to enhance their understanding of key issues, increase their awareness of best practices and sharpen their leadership and governance skills.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Stay informed on key issues
- Gain key insights and knowledge on all aspects of governing, from budgets to plans and everything in between.
- Learning to listen is sometimes more important than learning to give a speech.

### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Seek out national, state and local professional growth and educational opportunities. These opportunities can focus on the nuts and bolts of governing to helping you gain valuable information and/or insights on key policy issues facing your city. In addition, city run orientations for newly elected officials provide a good way to acclimate new members to the council's norms and protocols as well as the budget and key policy issues.





# City of El Cerrito

**City Council Retreat**  
February 1, 2025  
9:00 am to 1:00 pm

## Welcome and Public Comment



Mayor  
Carolyn Wysinger



Mayor Pro Tem  
Gabe Quinto



Councilmember  
William Ktsanes



Councilmember  
Lisa Motoyama



Councilmember  
Rebecca Saltzman

# Agenda

1. Welcome and Overview
2. This I Believe...
3. Governing Together
4. Context-Setting
5. Strategic Plan Update and Priorities
6. Next Steps



## Retreat Objectives



**Build a sense of team**



**Discuss best practices for governing together**

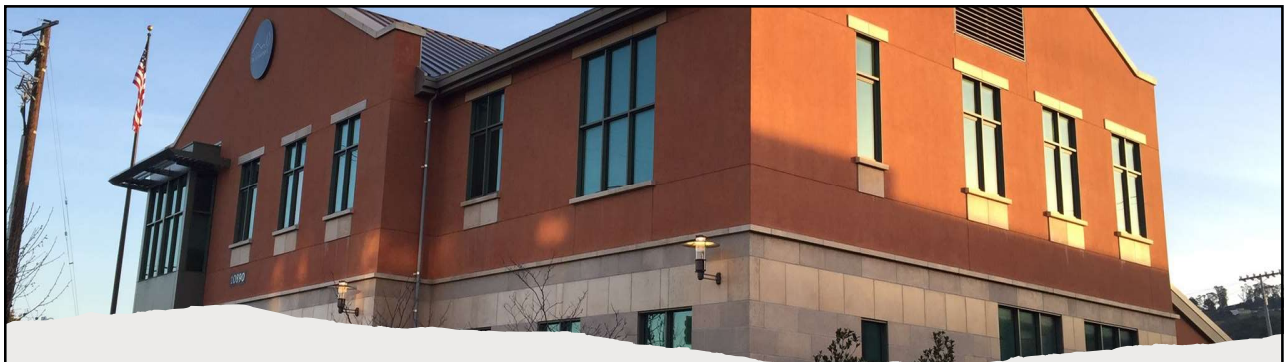


**Confirm priorities**

## Ground Rules for Today's Retreat

|                |                                                        |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Listen         | Listen to understand                                   |
| Engage         | Engage in conversations, stay focused, and share ideas |
| Be Open        | Be open to new or different perspectives               |
| Seek consensus | Look for opportunities to agree                        |

**HAVE FUN**



**What are your expectations  
for our time together?**

## Bike Rack

Things to discuss at  
another time will be  
tracked separately

Time management tool



## This...I Believe



# Governing Together



*what does*  
GOOD  
GOVERNANCE  
LOOK LIKE  
*to you ?*

10

The Six  
**Council  
Roles**

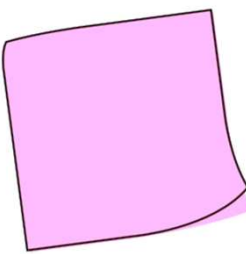


- 1 Strategic Vision**
- 2 Trustee/Steward**
- 3 Representative**
- 4 Community Builder**
- 5 Decision Maker**
- 6 Oversight**

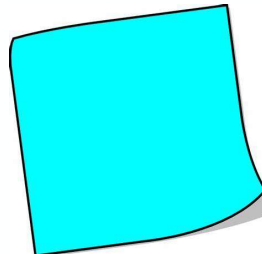
11

## The *Ideal* Council Member

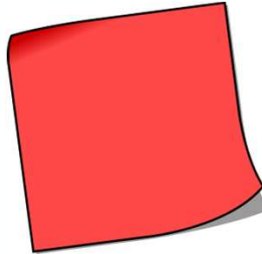
How would the **PUBLIC**  
describe the ideal Council  
Member?



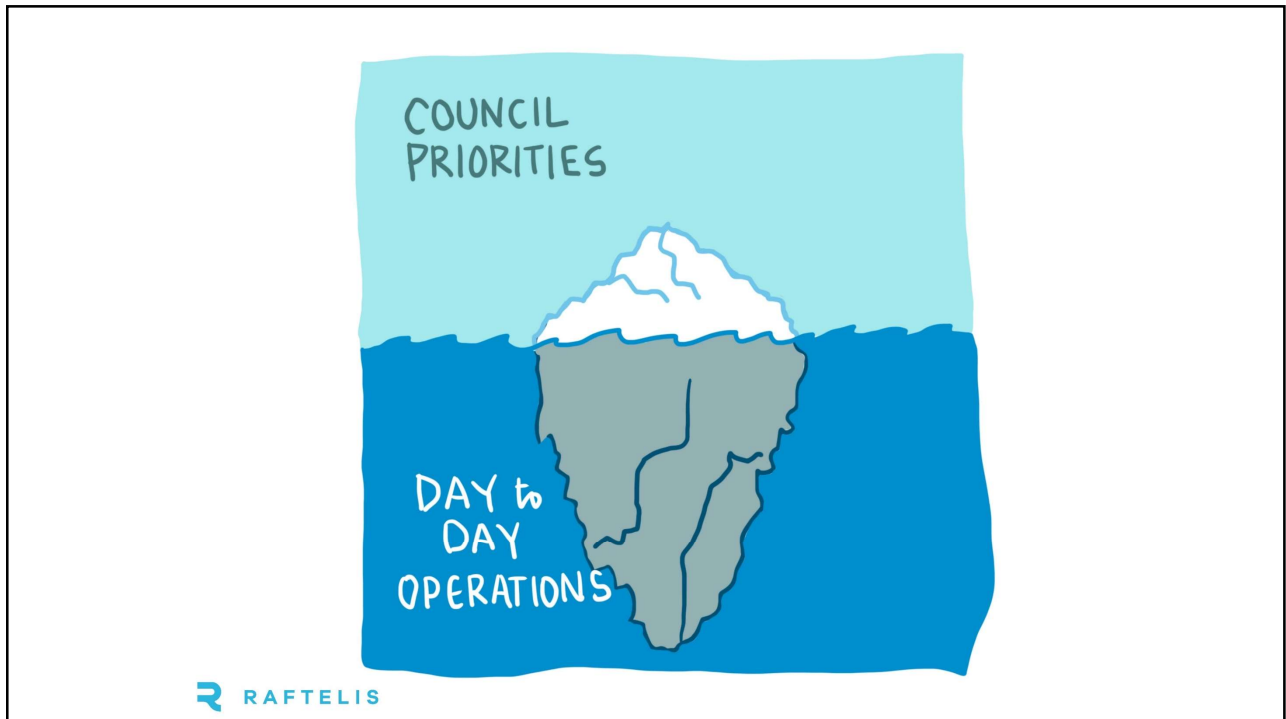
How would the **STAFF**  
describe the ideal Council  
Member?

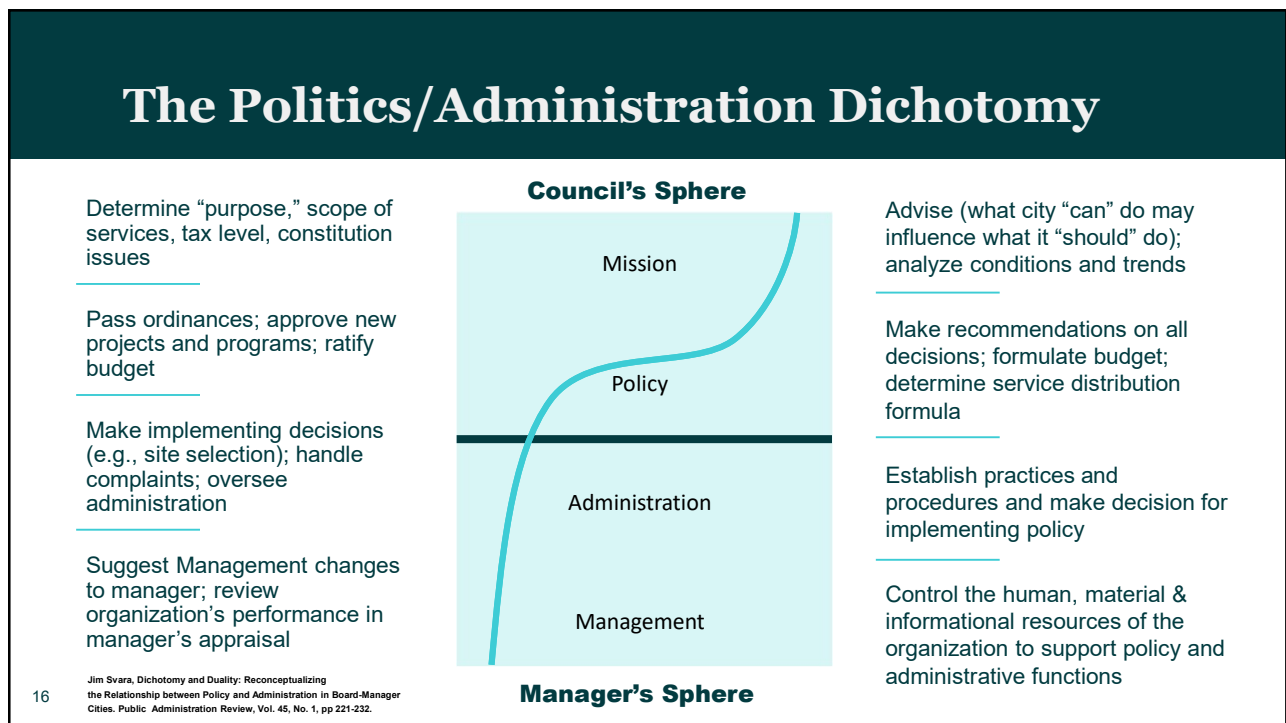


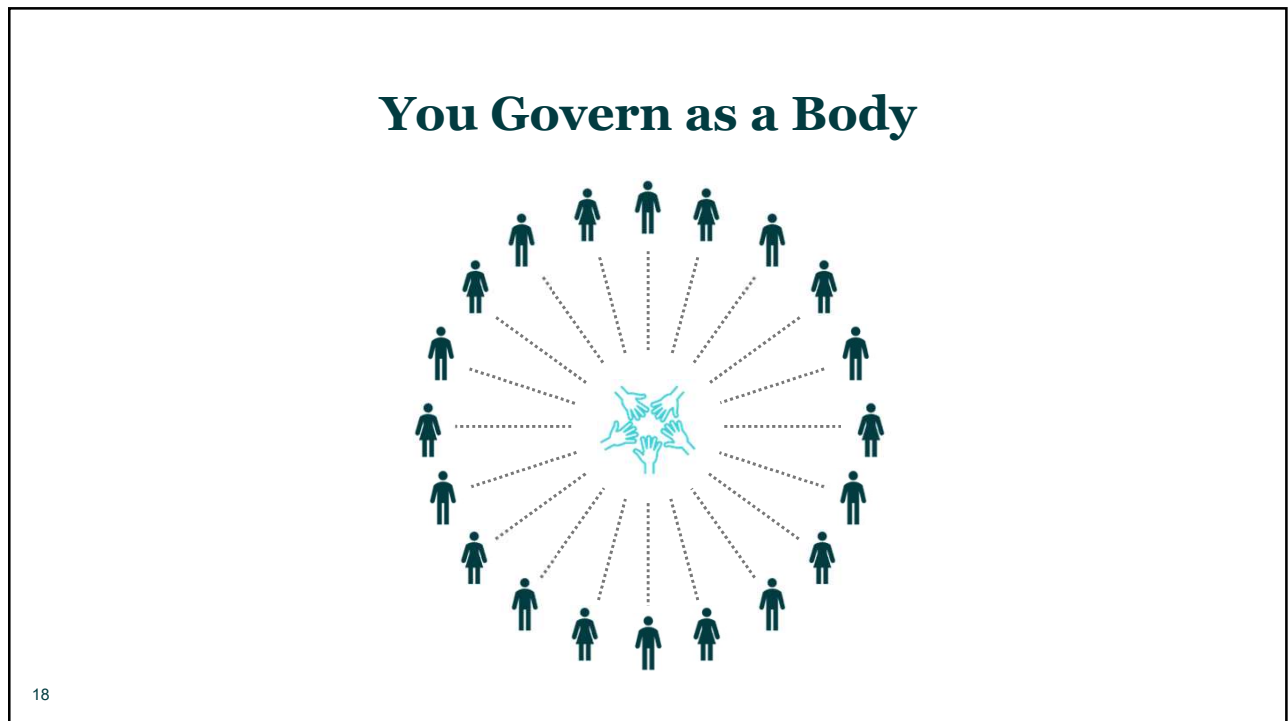
How would your **COUNCIL  
COLLEAGUES** describe the  
ideal Council Member?



12







# Exceptional City Councils

*Institute for Local Government*

1. Have a **sense of team** – a partnership with the city manager to govern and manage the city
2. Have **clear roles** and responsibilities that are understood and adhered to
3. Honor **the relationship** with staff and each other
4. Routinely conduct **effective meetings**
5. Hold themselves and the city **accountable**
6. Have members who practice **continuous improvement**

**INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT™**  
Promoting Good Governance on the Local Level

## Attributes of Exceptional Councils

Leading public organizations and governing with colleagues on a council is a challenging art of community service. The Institute recognizes that many aspects of leadership and governance are not intuitive. This piece is intended to provide councilmembers and city managers insight into the attributes of exceptional councils as well as provide practical tips to help them become exceptional.

### 1. Exceptional councils develop a sense of team – a partnership with the city manager to govern and manage the city

The mayor, councilmembers and city manager see themselves and work as a team as they undertake a series of tasks to further their common purpose. The individual team members work in a coordinated and collaborative manner with a high degree of respect, trust and openness. The team values diversity in style and perspective. The team thinks and acts strategically as it examines issues/situations and decides on a course of action serving their city's mission and goals.

#### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Successfully transition from candidate to a member of the council.
- Become a champion of the city. Make decisions based on the needs and interests of the community at large / the greater good.
- Develop, communicate and support policy goals and council decisions.
- Demonstrate a willingness to work collaboratively (as a team) and have a citywide perspective.

#### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Build capacity to create a more effective team. The governance team (mayor, councilmembers and city manager) should get to know each other; how each person approaches issues, decision making style and so on. This can be accomplished at annual meetings or workshops throughout the year. In the event that councilmembers disagree, clear ground rules (norms of behavior and practice) can help quell acrimony before it becomes a problem. It's important to remember that trust is built around understanding and respect, not necessarily agreement.

19

## Reflections on Effective Practices for Elected Officials

- *What resonates for you?*
- *Which ideas are important to the City's governance culture today?*

**INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT™**  
Promoting Good Governance on the Local Level

## Attributes of Exceptional Councils

Leading public organizations and governing with colleagues on a council is a challenging art of community service. The Institute recognizes that many aspects of leadership and governance are not intuitive. This piece is intended to provide councilmembers and city managers insight into the attributes of exceptional councils as well as provide practical tips to help them become exceptional.

### 1. Exceptional councils develop a sense of team – a partnership with the city manager to govern and manage the city

The mayor, councilmembers and city manager see themselves and work as a team as they undertake a series of tasks to further their common purpose. The individual team members work in a coordinated and collaborative manner with a high degree of respect, trust and openness. The team values diversity in style and perspective. The team thinks and acts strategically as it examines issues/situations and decides on a course of action serving their city's mission and goals.

#### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Successfully transition from candidate to a member of the council.
- Become a champion of the city. Make decisions based on the needs and interests of the community at large / the greater good.
- Develop, communicate and support policy goals and council decisions.
- Demonstrate a willingness to work collaboratively (as a team) and have a citywide perspective.

#### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Build capacity to create a more effective team. The governance team (mayor, councilmembers and city manager) should get to know each other; how each person approaches issues, decision making style and so on. This can be accomplished at annual meetings or workshops throughout the year. In the event that councilmembers disagree, clear ground rules (norms of behavior and practice) can help quell acrimony before it becomes a problem. It's important to remember that trust is built around understanding and respect, not necessarily agreement.

## Effective Council Meetings

### Potential Topics for Discussion

- Expectations
- Zoom public comments
- Other protocols and practices?



# Break





## Recap of FY 2023-24

- Audit results presented to City Council on January 21<sup>st</sup>
- Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) shared with Council and the Financial Advisory Board (FAB) on January 24<sup>th</sup>
- ACFR presented to the FAB on January 28<sup>th</sup>
- Full presentation of ACFR to be presented to Council on February 4<sup>th</sup>

## FY 2023-24 General Fund Highlights

|                                                   | Budgeted Amounts |               | Variance with<br>Final Budget |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
|                                                   | Original         | Final         | Actual<br>Amounts             | Positive<br>(Negative) |
| <b>REVENUES</b>                                   |                  |               |                               |                        |
| Total Revenues                                    | 48,525,092       | 48,679,292    | 52,119,903                    | 3,440,611              |
| <b>EXPENDITURES</b>                               |                  |               |                               |                        |
| Total Expenditures                                | 47,852,822       | 51,369,923    | 48,670,741                    | 2,699,182              |
| Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenditures | 672,270          | (2,690,631)   | 3,449,162                     | 6,139,793              |
| <b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)</b>             |                  |               |                               |                        |
| Transfers in                                      | 3,671            | 3,671         | 3,671                         | -                      |
| Transfers out                                     | (582,763)        | (3,622,194)   | (3,702,980)                   | (80,786)               |
| Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)              | (579,092)        | (3,618,523)   | (3,699,309)                   | (80,786)               |
| Net Change in Fund Balance                        | 93,178           | (6,309,154)   | (250,147)                     | 6,059,007              |
| Fund Balance Beginning                            | 23,143,081       | 23,143,081    | 23,143,081                    | -                      |
| Prior Period Corrections                          | 404              | 404           | 404                           | -                      |
| Fund Balance Beginning, as Adjusted               | 23,143,485       | 23,143,485    | 23,143,485                    | -                      |
| Fund Balance Ending                               | \$ 23,236,663    | \$ 16,834,331 | \$ 22,893,338                 | \$ 6,059,007           |

26

- **Original change in fund balance – \$93,178**
- **Amended change in fund balance – (\$6.3M)**
- **Projected change in fund balance – (\$250,147)**



## Fiscal Year 2024-25 & Fiscal Year 2025-26 Biennial Budget



## Biennial Budget Public Engagement Process in 2024

- December 5: Strategic Plan Adopted by City Council
- January 13: Budget Priority Setting Workshop
  - Online Survey Launched (175 responses received)
- March 5: Mid-Year Budget Update
- March 19: FY 2022-23 ACFR Presented to Council
- April 6: Community Budget Workshop
- April 23: Financial Advisory Board Budget Workshop
- May 7: City Council Budget Study Session
- May 21: Department head presentations, Assessment hearings, Master Fee Schedule adoption
- May 28: Financial Advisory Board meeting and budget discussion
- June 4: First Budget Hearing
- June 6: FAB Special Meeting
- June 18: Second Budget Hearing and Adoption

28



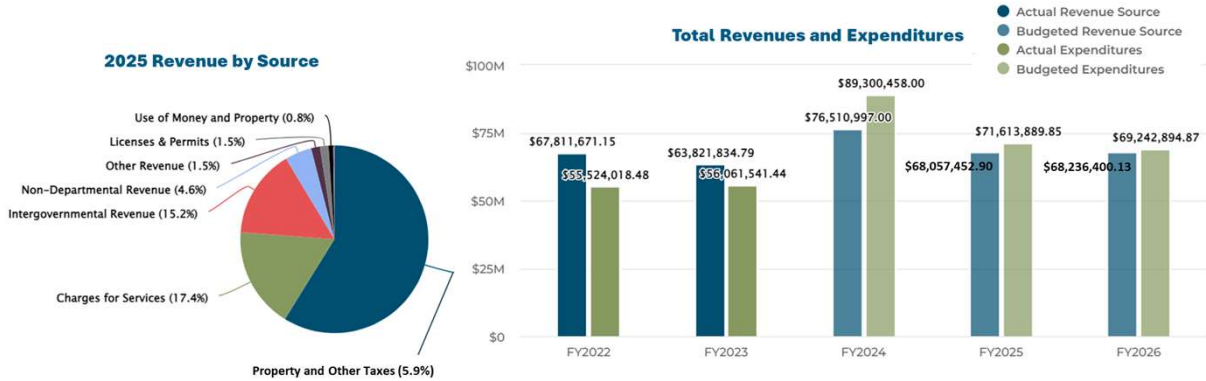
## Budget Process – FY 2025-26

- Mid-year update to Council in early March 2025
  - Few adjustments anticipated
- Mid-Cycle update and formal adoption of FY 2025-26 Budget in June 2025
  - Staff begin preparations in March after mid-year
  - Staff to bring any recommended adjustments to Council
- Anticipated changes for FY 2025-26 from existing Biennial Budget:
  - Personnel cost increases from:
    - New labor contracts (SEIU, PEA, PSMA, City Manager)
    - Position reclassification from Class and Comp Study
  - Grants and other new revenues

29



## Biennial Budget - All Funds



30

## Highlighted Revenue Trends



### Real Property Transfer Tax

|                            | FY<br>2021-22<br>Actual | FY<br>2022-23<br>Actual | FY<br>2023-24<br>Actual | FY<br>2024-25<br>Adopted | FY<br>2025-26<br>Adopted |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Real Property Transfer Tax | \$4,863,035             | \$4,157,840             | \$3,129,523*            | \$3,000,000              | \$3,200,000              |

| FY 2023-24<br>Month | Properties Sold | Amount Received |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| July                | 12              | \$ 173,868      |
| August              | 17              | \$ 235,014      |
| September           | 19              | \$ 266,855      |
| October             | 21              | \$ 278,220      |
| November            | 27              | \$ 360,954      |
| December            | 16              | \$ 224,868      |
| January             | 10              | \$ 120,038      |
| February            | 18              | \$ 254,166      |
| March               | 13              | \$ 172,536      |
| April               | 30              | \$ 531,408      |
| May                 | 27              | \$ 366,174      |
| June                | 17              | \$ 228,642      |
| Total FY23-24       | 227             | \$ 3,212,743    |

\*Actual total includes RPTT rebates of \$83,220



### Measure R/G

|                   | FY<br>2021-22<br>Actual | FY<br>2022-23<br>Actual | FY<br>2023-24<br>Actual | FY<br>2024-25<br>Adopted | FY<br>2025-26<br>Adopted |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Measure R Revenue | \$3,632,337             | \$4,651,914             | \$4,322,227             | \$4,459,000              | \$4,581,000              |

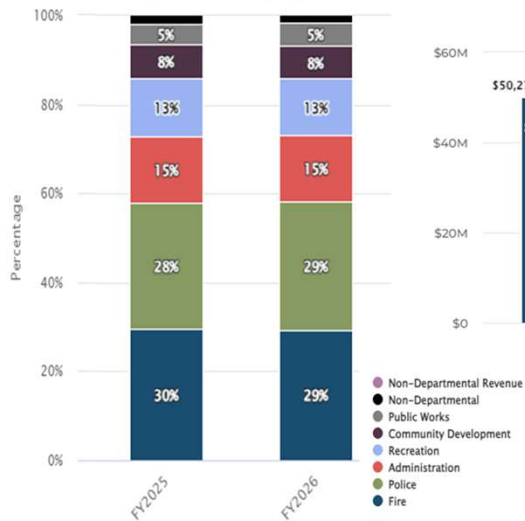


### General Fund Cannabis Revenue

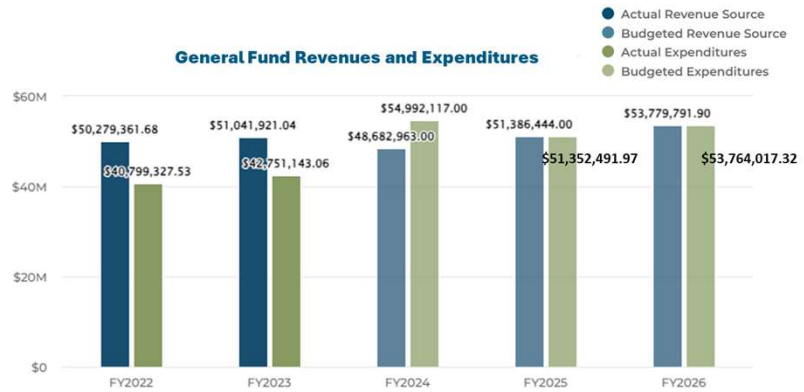
|                  | FY<br>2021-22<br>Actual | FY<br>2022-23<br>Actual | FY<br>2023-24<br>Actual | FY<br>2024-25<br>Adopted | FY<br>2025-26<br>Adopted |
|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cannabis Revenue | \$330,425               | \$448,514               | \$519,098               | \$440,000                | \$550,000                |

## General Fund Budget

General Fund Expenditures by Department



General Fund Revenues and Expenditures



32

## Updates After Adoption

### Updates with FY 2024-25 Budget Impact

- Roll-forward of purchase orders from FY 2023-24
- New labor contracts signed (SEIU, PEA, PSMA, City Manager)

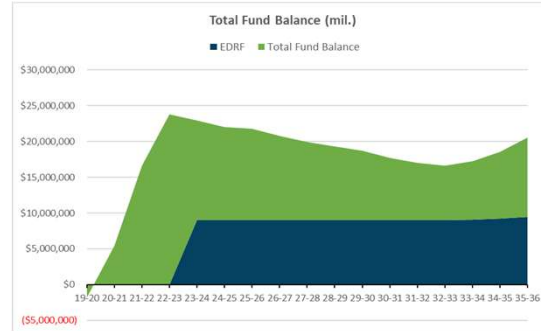
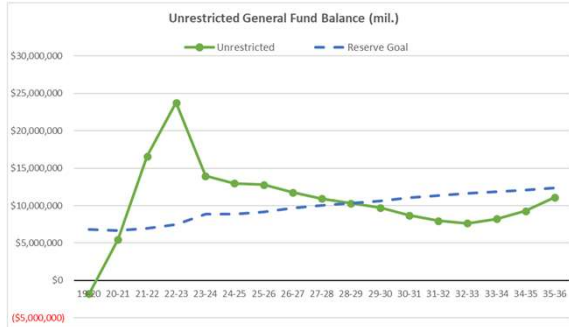
### Updates with no FY 2024-25 Budget Impact

- Measure G passes with 81% approval
  - No change to current Biennial Budget but supports long-term sustainability
- FY 2023-24 year-end finalized, ACFR presented – update to fund balance from budget estimates
- General Fund Reserve policy level increased from 10% to 17%
- El Cerrito recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)
  - Distinguished Budget Presentation Award
  - Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

33



## General Fund Forecast - Updated



- Maintains assumptions from former forecast, with current biennial budget as baseline
- Higher beginning fund balance due to FY 2023-24 actuals improved over amended budget
- Includes impact of additional appropriations added during FY 2024-25
- Ongoing structural changes of \$0.6M beginning in FY 2026-27 required to ensure long-term sustainability and maintain reserve levels above 17%

34



## Strategies for General Fund Long-Term Sustainability

- Ongoing structural changes for ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability
- Studies using independent experts to collect further data and information on City operations
  - Citywide Cost Allocation Plan and Fee Study (underway)
  - Service Delivery Study (RFP in development)
  - Provide information, strategies, and options to City Council for future fiscal years, including next biennial budget cycle

35

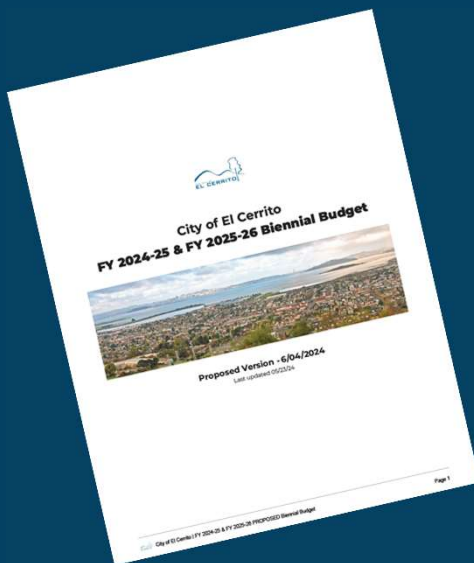


## Biennial Budget Summary

### The FY 2024-25 & FY 2025-26 Adopted Biennial Budget:

- Reflects City Council priorities, including feedback received as the budget was developed
- Aligns with the City's Strategic Plan
- Maintains reserves above 17% (new policy level), not including \$9M in EDRF
- Enables the City to continue providing key services without service delivery impacts, while making thoughtful decisions about long-term adjustments

36



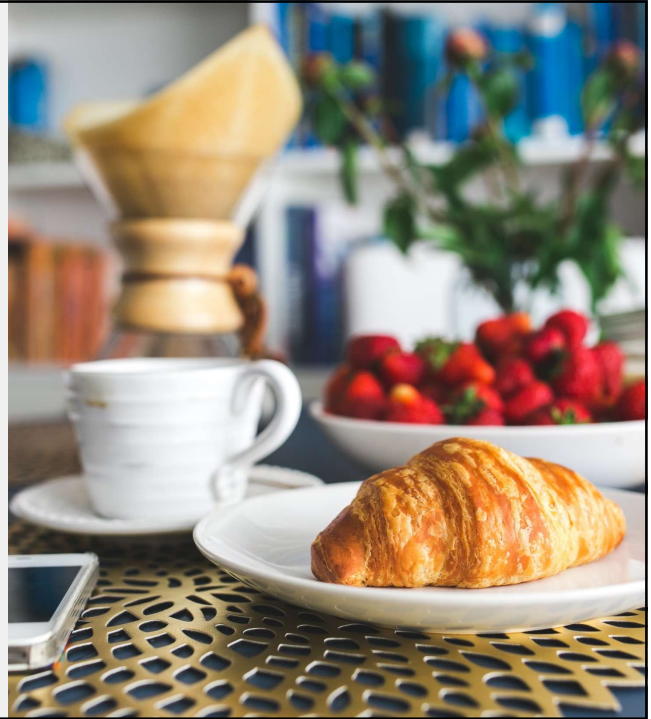
### IMPORTANT LINKS:

The Digital Budget Book is available online at:  
[el-cerrito.org/BiennialBudget](http://el-cerrito.org/BiennialBudget)

More information at:  
[el-cerrito.org/BudgetProcess](http://el-cerrito.org/BudgetProcess)

37

# Brunch Break



# Strategic Plan Update and Priorities



## Goals *from the Strategic Plan*

---

1. **High-Performing Organization:** Ensure the city maintains a strong financial position and a high-performing organization where employees feel a sense of inclusion and belonging.
2. **Community Safety:** Maintain public safety responsiveness and ensure community emergency preparedness.
3. **Livability and Belonging:** Promote a high quality of life and sense of community for current and future generations.
4. **Infrastructure and Amenities:** Advance climate focused, sustainable infrastructure efforts that have community benefit.
5. **Environmental Sustainability:** Promote environmental sustainability and stewardship by engaging in initiatives that reduce our carbon footprint, conserve natural resources, and foster a culture of environmental responsibility.

## Interview Themes

---

- Financial sustainability
  - › Key accomplishment moving off State Auditor's list
- Communication with residents
  - › Building trust
- Prioritizing the Library and other capital needs
- Good government and working together

## Major Accomplishments

### **High-Performing Organization**

- Voter-approval of Measure G, 81% Support
- Reserve Levels over 40% of Expenditures
- Biennial Budget Received Distinguished Budget Presentation Award
- FY23 ACFR Received Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting
- Stable Finances Confirmed by State Auditor
- Completed Class. and Comp. Study
- Held Over 120 Public Meetings
- Expanded Public Records Portal
- Improved City's Cybersecurity
- DEI Training for Employees
- Launched New Language Access Programs

### **Community Safety**

- Fire Inspected over 8,000 Parcels to Improve Defensible Space
- Launched Red Flag Parking Pilot Program
- PD Conducted Targeted and Enhanced Retail Theft Operations
- Sharp Drop in Stolen Vehicles alongside Implementation of LPR Cameras
- New Fire Engine, EKG Monitors, & Kensington-El Cerrito Fire Station
- Restarted CERT Classes and Increased EOC Training



42



## Major Accomplishments

### **Livability & Belonging**

- Approved TOD Master Plan and Secured \$39M in AHSC Grant Funds for the Project
- Completed Arlington Park and Clubhouse Improvements & HNA Trail Signage Project
- Recreation Recognized as a Winner and/or Top 5 in 15 Parents Press Award Categories
- Expanded Senior Programming with Senior Social Times, Expanded Lunch Offerings, and Senior Resource Fair
- Brought Back October Arts Month and Initiated City's First Pavement Art Project
- Expanded Homeless Services in Partnership with County and San Pablo
- 89% Rate El Cerrito as an Excellent or Good Place to Live

### **Infrastructure and Amenities**

- Broke Ground on Transformative Del Norte Complete Streets Project
- Repaired 260 Sidewalk Trip Hazards
- Began Design of Richmond St. Complete Streets Project
- Continued Moving Forward Opportunity for a New Library

### **Environmental Sustainability**

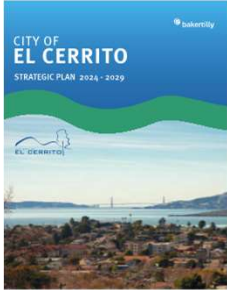
- Adopted Climate Action & Adaptation Plan, Aims for Net Zero Emissions by 2045
- Received \$200k MTC Grant for Fleet Electrification Planning
- Hosted Arbor Week, Earth Day, B2WD, Coastal Clean-Up, & Garage Sale Events



43



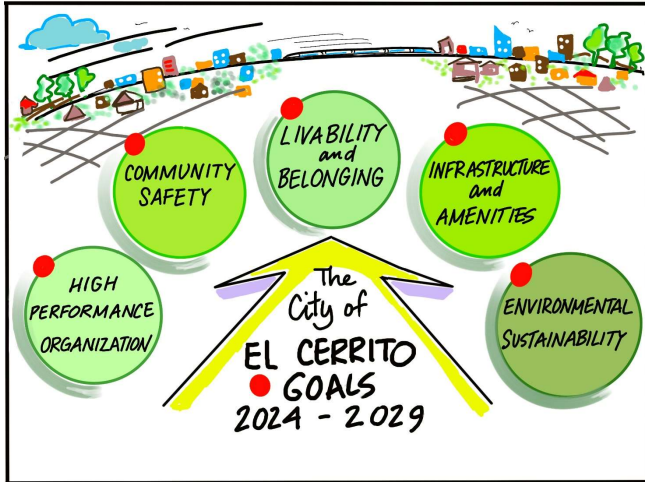
# Aligning Annual Planning with the Strategic Plan



**CITY OF EL CERRITO**  
STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2029

**Vision**

THE CITY OF EL CERRITO is a welcoming community committed to a high quality of life with thriving businesses, active public spaces, as well as diverse cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities FOR EVERYONE.



**Hand-drawn diagram of City of El Cerrito Goals 2024-2029:**

- COMMUNITY SAFETY
- LIVABILITY and BELONGING
- INFRASTRUCTURE and AMENITIES
- HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION
- ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Centered in a yellow arrow pointing up: **The City of EL CERRITO GOALS 2024 - 2029**

**Mission**

THE CITY OF EL CERRITO serves our diverse community by providing exceptional services that create a safe and resilient future for all.

**Organizational Values**

**Ethics and Integrity**  
We govern with integrity, while ensuring the public interest is met, and we are transparent and accountable in our actions.

**Fiscal Responsibility**  
We ensure responsible stewardship of public funds, while ensuring services to the community are not compromised.

**Transparency and Open Communication**  
We maintain open communication with the community, ensuring transparency and accountability in our actions.

**Professional Excellence**  
We ensure our employees are well-trained, motivated, and committed to providing exceptional services to the community.

**Inclusiveness and Respect for Diversity**  
We ensure our services are accessible and inclusive for all, while respecting and celebrating our diverse community.



44



## High-Performing Organization

*Ensure the city maintains a strong financial position and a high-performing organization where employees feel a sense of inclusion and belonging.*

- Preserve and expand revenue sources that provide sufficient resources to deliver services and programs to the community **(In Progress)**
- Develop financing strategies for capital investments and deferred facility and other infrastructure needs as identified in the long-range financial plan. **(In Progress)**
- Cultivate a positive organizational culture where employees experience a sense of belonging that results in teamwork, innovation, and outstanding services to the community **(In Progress)**
- Increase public communication and engagement to ensure access to services and promote community events **(In Progress)**
- Improve technology systems to increase automation and efficiency and strengthen cybersecurity **(In Progress)**

## Current Initiatives

- Complete Cost Allocation Plan and Fee Study
- Complete Service Delivery Study
- Create Internal Service Funds
- Actively Pursue Grants
- Explore Potential Ballot Measure to Fund New Library
- Focused Public Outreach Efforts & Comm. Engagement
- Domain Migration to .Gov
- Enhance Cybersecurity
- Enhance Online User and Customer Experience with Technology (e.g., Rec Registration on Mobile)

## Community Safety

*Maintain public safety responsiveness and ensure community emergency preparedness.*

- Maximize funding level for technology investments that promote efficient and effective public safety operations. *(In Progress)*
- Align public safety services with community needs based on data-driven decision-making approach.
- Strengthen El Cerrito's overall emergency preparedness capabilities, resources, and tools and implement changes as needed to ensure the City is properly positioned to respond to emergencies and disasters. *(In Progress)*
- Evaluate options for a new Public Safety Center that is centered on community.
- Sustain and enhance climate-adapted resilience, forest conservation activities, and wildfire prevention in the Hillside Natural Area. *(In Progress)*
- Ensure on-going training and availability of equipment to meet community needs. *(In Progress)*

## Current Initiatives

- General Plan: Safety Element Update
- HNA Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan
- Using Technology to Improve PD Operations
  - Dashboard Cameras
  - LPR Cameras
  - Facial Recognition
- Updating the Fire Department's Equipment Replacement Schedules and Seeking Funding for Replacement
- Implementing the Emergency Operations Plan, including Training All Staff
- Continuing Focus on Vegetation Management and Fire Prevention Programs
- Continuing Red Flag Parking Program
- Upgrading Chambers for EOC-readiness
- Improving Security at City Facilities
- Ordering new Type 1 Engine
- Seeking Grants



## Livability and Belonging

*Promote a high quality of life and sense of community for current and future generations.*

- Leverage the City's pro-housing designation to attract new and infill development for all income types. *(In Progress)*
- Support businesses and economic growth. *(In Progress)*
- Advance the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan to create a livable, vibrant, and diverse corridor. *(In Progress)*
- Update the General Plan to reflect and address current community values.
- Evaluate options for older adult services. *(In Progress)*
- Develop a citywide equity plan. *(In Progress)*
- Expand public art and cultural programs. *(In Progress)*
- Create a downtown community hub anchored by the Plaza Transit-Oriented Development and a new library. *(In Progress)*
- Improve parks and recreation facilities. *(In Progress)*

## Current Initiatives

- Actively Supporting Plaza TOD and Opportunity for a New Library Downtown
- Studying and Updating Managed Parking Program to Support All Users
- Building on Success of San Pablo Ave. Specific Plan in Changing Environment – Economic Study Underway
- Continued Collaboration and Leadership in Applying for Grants and Supporting Affordable Housing
- Completing new Mandatory Housing Element Steps and State/MTC Requirements
- Triennial Building Code Update
- Permanent Outdoor Dining Ordinance
- Supporting Businesses in new ways (e.g., Maker's fair)
- Expanding Senior Programming
- Launching Rec Registration App
- Completing Projects Identified in the Parks and Rec Facilities Master Plan
- Expanding Public Art
- CORE Pilot Program for Homeless Services
- Historic House at 1715 Elm

## Infrastructure and Amenities

*Advance climate focused, sustainable infrastructure efforts that have community benefit.*

- Invest in the maintenance, rehabilitation and development of sustainable, climate-adapted infrastructure and community assets (i.e., electric vehicle infrastructure). *(In Progress)*
- Conduct a facility needs assessment to evaluate and prioritize investment in city facilities, including updating and implementing the ADA transition plan.
- Improve sidewalks and connections to enhance safety, accessibility, comfort, and convenience. *(In Progress)*
- Implement major initiatives associated with the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (i.e., citywide trails and bikeway network). *(In Progress)*
- Complete and implement major Public Works infrastructure improvements (i.e., the Storm Drain Master Plan Update and the Local Road Safety Plan/Comprehensive Safety Action Plan). *(In Progress)*
- Complete construction of Complete Streets and Ohlone Greenway projects. *(In Progress)*
- Identify funds to off-set General Fund contributions for infrastructure improvements (i.e., Landscape and Lighting Assessment District and clean water programs).

## Current Initiatives

- Del Norte Complete Streets Project
- Complete Design of Richmond St. Complete Streets
- Complete and implement the Local Road Safety Plan/Comprehensive Safety Action Plan
- Support El Cerrito Plaza TOD & Street Improvements
- Develop a Plan to Systematically Address Deferred Maintenance of City Facilities, Including Financial Resources Needed on Annual Basis
- Design Ohlone Greenway Uptown Improvements
- Design Swim Center EV Charging & ADA Improvements
- 2025 Street Improvement Project to Resurface 9 Miles
- Complete Swim Center Slide Replacement, Castro Pickleball Courts Conversion, Arlington Park Tennis Center, and Other Projects in the City's CIP
- Seeking Grants



## Environmental Sustainability

*Promote environmental sustainability and stewardship by engaging in initiatives that reduce our carbon footprint, conserve natural resources, and foster a culture of environmental responsibility.*

- Update and implement the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and infuse it in all that we do. *(In Progress)*
- Maintain and leverage the Recycling Center as a community asset. *(In Progress)*
- Develop a plan to support the infrastructure needed to shift to clean energy vehicles. *(In Progress)*
- Promote strategies that address the climate emergency. *(In Progress)*
- Seek regional funding for environmental solutions.

## Current Initiatives

- Implement Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
- Developing Zero-Emission Fleet Transition Plan
- Implementing New Clean Water Program Requirements
- Procuring Solid Waste Post-Collection Services
- Implementing SB 1383 Organics Recycling Requirements
- Increasing Communication and Education to Motivate Action
- Seeking Grants



## Priorities Discussion

**What most excites you?**

**What does success look like this time next year?**

**Are changes needed?**

**What is your highest priority for the next year?**



## Confirming Council's Top Priorities



## Next Steps

- Retreat report
- City Manager's follow up

## Closing Comments

Share one thing that was  
useful for you in spending  
the day together

# Thank You!

Nancy Hetrick and Julie Gieseke



**From:** [Howdy Goudey](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for 2/1 Council Retreat  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 9:01:40 PM

---

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

[Allow sender](#) | [Block sender](#)

Dear Mayor Wysinger and Council members,

As you discuss the 2025-26 budget and set priorities in your Feb 1 Council retreat, please consider and direct incorporation of the following.

- **Implementation of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) needs to be highly prioritized, across all departments, with both staff time and funding to meet the goals of the adopted CAAP.**
  - In the department "work plan" portion of the currently adopted budget document, Climate Action only shows up in the Public Works department, even though the Strategic Plan states: "Update and implement the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and infuse it in all that we do"
  - In the 2025-26 Budget update, there needs to be a clear, strong message, and expectation, that implementation of the CAAP is everyone's job and the department work plans need to be updated to reflect this cross department responsibility, especially now that the CAAP is adopted, too.
  - For instance, a work plan item that should show up for all departments from the adopted CAAP is: MP1.1 Interdepartmental task force: Create an interdepartmental task force of City staff to regularly meet and collaborate on the integration of climate action into routine business practice and all areas of the City.
  - CAAP phase 1 is 2024-2027 which falls mostly in the current biennial budget period, and there are many phase 1 CAAP items that need immediate implementation attention as well as many more that start in Phase 1 and continue. In some ways those need as much, or more, attention because they are larger in scope and an early start is the only way to make the necessary progress to meet their longer implementation schedule.
  - CAAP implementation is not just up to Public Works. The Strategic Plan and the CAAP is clear about that. Please update the Department work plans accordingly and provide the budget for a strong and early implementation of the CAAP.
- **Disaster preparedness, response and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) responsibility, training and exercises should not be limited to the Fire Department**
  - A true disaster response and EOC activation needs to incorporate the whole City organization and there is no public evidence that anyone outside the Fire Department has regularly trained and exercised on EOC activation for a major disaster. City Management and Public Works, as well as other departments, should be part of regular EOC training and exercises.
  - There is a complacency that prevailing communications infrastructure will be available at all times. City disaster preparedness and EOC exercises need to expect and practice operation with impaired communication (limited or no cellular service and/or internet), as well as widespread grid power outages.

- While both wildland urban interface fires and earthquakes are important disasters to prepare for, there is an underappreciated risk of a catastrophic flooding event exacerbated by climate change. The so-called [ARkStrom2.0 plausible extreme flood scenario](#) could easily exceed the impacts of serious fire and earthquake events, because the scope of the impacted area will likely be much larger and hence put much more limitation on timely mutual aid response from surrounding communities.
- Disaster preparedness isn't just having a disaster recovery fund (which is great), it also needs to include an organization that has taken preventative measures ahead of the event and is prepared to respond effectively in the moment of the disaster. There is too much of a gamble being taken that these serious potential impacts aren't going to happen soon, leading to complacency that other priorities can prevail over this fundamental disaster preparedness responsibility.

Thanks,  
Howdy Goudey  
El Cerrito