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AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

October 15, 2025 at 7:30 p.m

City Council Chambers, El Cerrito City Hall
10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530

7:30 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

- 1. ROLL CALL** – Chair Joy Navarrete; Vice Chair Erin Gillett; Members Daniel Hamilton, Courtney Helion, Cara Houser, Michael Norwood, and Nathan Tinclair
- 2. COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**
The City Council Liaison or City staff may report on matters of general interest to the Planning Commission, Council policies, priorities and significant actions taken by the City Council.
- 3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**
Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person, and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first. Remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.
- 4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**
Adoption of the September 17, 2025 meeting minutes.
- 5. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION/CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE**
This time on the agenda is reserved for Commissioners to disclose communications from individuals regarding specific agenda items or to state a potential conflict of interest in relation to a specific agenda item.
- 6. PUBLIC HEARING: SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE**
Applicant: City of El Cerrito

Location: Citywide
Request: Planning Commission consideration of a recommendation to the City Council for the update of the Safety Element of the City's General Plan.
CEQA: Addendum to the City of El Cerrito 1999 General Plan EIR.

7. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Informational reports on matters of general interest, presented by City staff.

8. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, (510) 215-4330. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at 10890 San Pablo Avenue El Cerrito, CA 94530 during normal business hours.



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DRAFT MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

September 17, 2025 at 7:30 p.m

City Council Chambers, El Cerrito City Hall
10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530

7:30 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair Joy Navarrete; Members Daniel Hamilton, Courtney Helion, Michael Norwood, and Nathan Tinclair. Vice Chair Erin Gillett had an excused absence.

2. **COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**

The City Council Liaison or City staff may report on matters of general interest to the Planning Commission, Council policies, priorities and significant actions taken by the City Council.

Nothing was reported.

3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person, and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first. Remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.

No speakers addressed the Commission.

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Adoption of the June 18, 2025 meeting minutes.

Moved/Second: Member Helion/Norwood **Action:** Passed a motion to adopt the June 18, 2025 meeting minutes.

Ayes: Hamilton, Helion, Navarrete, Norwood, Tinclair
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Gillett

5. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION/CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

This time on the agenda is reserved for Commissioners to disclose communications from individuals regarding specific agenda items or to state a potential conflict of interest in relation to a specific agenda item.

Nothing was disclosed.

6. PUBLIC HEARING: 6318 FAIRMOUNT AVE – USE PERMIT

Application: PL25-0062
Applicant: Emma Pollack
Location: 6318 Fairmount Ave
APN: 504-160-015
Zoning: Theater District
General Plan: Theater District
Request: Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit for a “Offices, Medical and Dental” land use.
CEQA: This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 1: Existing Facilities.

Associate Planner Diego Romero presented the staff report and answered questions from the Commission.

The applicant, Dr. Emma Pollack, presented the project and answered questions from the Commission.

The public hearing was opened.

No speakers addressed the Commission.

The public hearing was closed.

Moved/Second: Member Hamilton/Navarrete **Action:** Passed a motion to approve a Conditional Use Permit allowing an “Offices, Medical and Dental” use in the Theater District.

Ayes: Hamilton, Helion, Navarrete, Norwood, Tinclair
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Gillett

7. PUBLIC HEARING: 556 RICHMOND ST – USE PERMIT

Application: PL24-0044
Applicant: Ahamed Mansoor & Fathima Badurudeen
Location: 556 Richmond Street
APN: 504-062-037
Zoning: RS-5 (Single Family Residential)
General Plan: Low Density Residential

Request: Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit for a Day Care Center land use proposed in an existing approximate 1,393 square foot building on an approximate 4,200 square foot site.

CEQA: This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 1: Existing Facilities.

Associate Planner Diego Romero presented the staff report and answered questions from the Commission.

The applicant, Fathima Badurudeen, presented the project and answered questions from the Commission.

The public hearing was opened.

The following speakers addressed the Commission:

Unidentified speaker
Reed O'Brien
Patrick (no last name given)
Kristin Lockhart
Unidentified speaker
Asher Schaffer
Cecilia Plaza
Tarik Kapoor

The public hearing was closed.

Moved/Second: Member Tinclair/Navarrete **Action:** Passed a motion to approve a Conditional Use Permit for a new Day Care Center Land Use to be located at 556 Richmond Street with the additional conditions of approval that the front yard not be used as an outdoor play area and that the number of children be limited to no more than 18 students.

Ayes: Helion, Navarrete, Norwood, Tinclair

Noes: Hamilton

Abstain: None

Absent: Gillett

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Planning Manager Sean Moss updated the Commission regarding the Safety Element update, the Outdoor Dining and Retail ordinance, the City Council's recent action to modify certain impact fees for qualifying projects, the MTC Transit Oriented Communities policy, and the policing agreement for the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station TOD project.

9. ADJOURNMENT

9:12 p.m.

Joy Navarrete, Chair

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting of September 17, 2025, as approved by

the Planning Commission.

Sean Moss, Staff Liaison

DRAFT



Community Development Department
Planning Division
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530
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PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

October 15, 2025

SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE

DETAILS

Applicant: City of El Cerrito

Location: Citywide

Request: A Planning Commission consideration of a recommendation to the City Council on an update of the City's General Plan Safety Element.

CEQA: An Addendum to the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the El Cerrito General Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All cities and counties in California must adopt a General Plan pursuant to the California Government Code. The General Plan establishes a community vision for future development. The General Plan must contain seven "elements" or topics. Safety of one of the required elements.

The City of El Cerrito has developed an update to the City's Safety Element as required by state law. The project commenced in early 2024.

In May 2024, the City held a community meeting to gather input on the Safety Element update. In November 2024, the City held a second meeting, in conjunction with the Planning Commission meeting, to review the draft goals and policies for the Safety Element update.

Following this meeting, City staff and the City's consultant, Placeworks developed a draft of the updated Safety Element. An initial draft of the updated Safety Element was published on August 15, 2025. The draft was revised in consideration of the public feedback received by September 15, 2025. The revised draft was submitted to CAL FIRE and the California Geological Survey for review.

The 2025 Safety Element complies with applicable State laws and is consistent with the other elements of the El Cerrito General Plan and the City's commitment to public safety, resilience, and emergency preparedness.

An addendum to the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the El Cerrito General Plan has been prepared in conjunction with the updated Safety Element.

City staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend that the El Cerrito City Council adopt the addendum to the General Plan EIR and adopt a General Plan amendment for the 2025 Safety Element.

Background

Pursuant to California Government Code, all cities and counties in California are required to adopt General Plans. The General Plan is a policy document that establishes a citywide vision and consistent direction for future development. It reflects community priorities and values, and includes supporting goals, policies, and implementation measures to achieve the community's vision. There are seven mandatory “elements” or topics that every jurisdiction must include in its General Plan. Safety is one of the mandatory elements.

The El Cerrito General Plan was last adopted in 1999. Rather than being organized into individual chapters, the required elements are woven throughout eight chapters. The introduction to each chapter explains which components of the required elements are contained in that chapter. El Cerrito’s existing Safety Element resides within portions of Chapter 6: Public Facilities and Services and Chapter 7: Resources and Hazards. The General Plan has been amended strategically at various times, notably in 2014 to accommodate the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. However, the Safety Element portion of the General Plan has not been substantively amended since its adoption.

Senate Bill 1035, adopted in 2018, requires cities and counties to update their Safety Elements upon each revision of the Housing Element or Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, but not less than once every 8 years. El Cerrito’s updated Housing Element was adopted by the City Council on August 15, 2023 and City staff indicated to the state Department of Housing and Community Development that the Safety Element would be developed next.

The Governor’s Office Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) publishes General Plan Guidelines that describe the focus and requirements of the mandatory elements. The Safety Element generally addresses risks of injury, death, property damage, and economic and social dislocation from various hazards including fire, earthquake, flood, landslide, and climate change.

In 2023, the City selected Placeworks as the consultant for the Safety Element update and commenced the Safety Element update project in early 2024.

On May 30, 2024, the City held a community meeting to gather feedback on the Safety Element update. AppCity staff and Placeworks gave an informational presentation on the Safety Element update project followed by an opportunity to ask questions and give comments, and then followed by an open house with interactive stations covering various safety topics. S

On November 20, 2024, City staff and Placeworks presented the draft policies to the Planning Commission and gathered feedback from the Commission and the public. The Commission’s feedback is described below. Staff and the consultant utilized the feedback from the Commission and the public to develop the draft of the updated Safety Element.

The draft of the Safety Element was published on August 15, 2025. Comments were accepted through September 15, 2025.

Analysis

The purpose of the Safety Element is to identify natural and human-caused hazards that may result in personal injury, loss of life, property damage, or environmental damage, and to include safety

considerations in planning and decision-making processes by establishing goals and policies that address potential hazards.

The draft Safety Element begins with an overview that describes the purpose of the Element and its relationship to other plans. The Element then identifies seven categories of hazards. For each category of hazard, the Element describes the hazard generally and how it could affect El Cerrito. The Element then identifies one broad goal to address that category of hazards and a more specific set of policies to implement to goal. The identified hazards include seismic and geologic hazards, hazardous waste and materials, flood and inundation, fire hazards, extreme heat and severe weather, drought, and human health hazards. Additionally, the Element addresses emergency preparedness and response through the inclusion of an eighth goal and policies for this topic. The Element also contains a policy matrix which lists each policy, the entities responsible for leading and supporting the implementation of the policy, the relative timing and cost of the implementation, and potential funding sources.

Input from the public has been accepted throughout the project, including as part of the May 30, 2024 community meeting, the November 20, 2024 Planning Commission meeting, and the review of the draft Safety Element. The input received at each stage has been incorporated into the draft Safety Element.

At the November 20, 2024 study session, the Commission provided feedback on the proposed Safety Element goals and policies. The Commission's feedback related to the description and assessment of the risks in the Element, and the identification of the relative cost of the implementation of each policy. In response to these comments, the risks or each type of hazard and the specific risks to the El Cerrito community have been described in detail in each hazard section. Additionally, a relative cost has been assigned to each policy in the policy matrix in the Implementation section of the Element (starting on page 55).

The Safety Element update also responds to several recent applicable changes in state law. Senate Bill 379 (2015) requires that the local agencies address climate adaptation within General Plans. Climate adaptation was addressed as part of the recent update to the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). Accordingly, the CAAP Climate Risk Assessment is referenced in the draft Safety Element. Assembly Bill 747 (2019) requires identification of evacuation routes and their capacity, safety, and viability under a range of emergency scenarios. This evacuation analysis is included as Appendix A to the draft Safety Element. This analysis has informed many of the policies contained under Goal 8. Senate Bill 99 (2019) requires identification of residential developments in hazard areas that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes. A map identifying these areas is included in the draft Safety Element as Figure S-14.

Review by Other Agencies

During the update process, the draft element was circulated to California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), and the California Geological Survey. Because El Cerrito contains areas with Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone designations, the California Board of Forestry must review the draft element. City staff and Placeworks have addressed all preliminary comments provided by CAL FIRE staff and have requested a formal review of the 2025 Safety Element. The Element will be reviewed by the

Board of Forestry Resource Protection Committee at their meeting on November 4, 2025, prior to the City Council's consideration of the Element.

Public Notice

Pursuant to State law, a quarter page display ad for this public hearing was published in the East Bay Times on October 1, 2025.

Environmental Review

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), City staff and Placeworks analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the draft Safety Element and determined that an Addendum to the 1999 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the El Cerrito General Plan is the appropriate document under CEQA. The proposed update to the Safety Element is a policy-level planning effort. It does not result in or authorize physical changes to the environment and will not change the current land use designations or assumptions about future development made in the certified General Plan EIR. It is also unlikely to cause new impacts or make existing impacts worse, and will not require the preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR under the criteria in CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162(a) and 15163(a). The addendum to the General Plan EIR is included as Attachment 3.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the information contained in this report, staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend that the El Cerrito City Council adopt an addendum to the Environmental Impact Report for the El Cerrito General Plan (SCH No. 99022058) and adopt a General Plan amendment for the 2025 Safety Element.

Proposed Motion

1. Move adoption of Resolution PC 2025-08 recommending that the El Cerrito City adopt an addendum to the Environmental Impact Report for the El Cerrito General Plan (SCH No. 99022058) and adopt a General Plan amendment for the 2025 Safety Element.

Attachments

1. Draft Resolution
2. Draft 2025 Safety Element
3. Addendum to the General Plan EIR

Planning Commission Resolution PC 2025-08

2025 SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF EL CERRITO PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING THE EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL ADOPT AN ADDENDUM TO THE EL CERRITO GENERAL PLAN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) AND ADOPT A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT FOR THE 2025 SAFETY ELEMENT

WHEREAS, recent legislation, including SB 1035 and SB 379, requires that Safety Elements be updated every eight years, in conjunction with Housing Element updates;

WHEREAS, as provided in Government Code Section 65350 et. Seq. and Public Resources Code adoption of the 2025 Safety Element Update constitutes a General Plan Amendment;

WHEREAS, the 2025 Safety Element incorporates by reference the current Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, as required by AB 2140 to increase opportunities for financial assistance under the California Disasters Assistance Act;

WHEREAS, the 2025 Safety Element was reviewed by CAL FIRE and the California Geological Survey; and developed in consultation with emergency service providers and the public, and reflects best practices outlined in the State's General Plan Guidelines and Technical Advisories;

WHEREAS, public meetings for the Safety Element update were held on May 30, 2024 and November 20, 2024, and a draft of the Element was published on August 15, 2025;

WHEREAS, as provided in Government Code Sections 65352 -- 65352.5 the City mailed a public notice to all California Native American tribes provided by the Native American Heritage Commission and other entities listed on June 23, 2025 and the City completed consultation with the Confederated Villages of Lisjan Nation and the Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan;

WHEREAS, an addendum to the Environmental Impact Report for the 1999 City of El Cerrito General Plan (SCH No. 99022058) has been prepared in conjunction with the Safety Element update;

WHEREAS, on October 15, 2025, the Planning Commission, after due consideration of all evidence and reports offered for review, does find and determine the following:

1. The Planning Commission has reviewed the Addendum to the City's certified General Plan Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 99022058) for the Safety Element General Plan Amendment, which determined that the 2025 Safety Element would not result in significant environmental impacts not previously studied in the EIR, and would not result in any conditions identified in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15162 that would require additional environmental review, and thus the Planning Commission finds and recommends that the City Council determine that the Addendum to the Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 99022058) is complete and adequate for the consideration of the General Plan Amendment.
2. The 2025 Safety Element is in the public interest and furthers the City of El Cerrito's commitment to public safety, resilience, and emergency preparedness.
3. The 2025 Safety Element is internally consistent with the other elements of the El Cerrito General Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that after careful consideration of all maps, facts, exhibits, correspondence, and testimony, and other evidence submitted in this matter, and, in consideration of the findings, the El Cerrito Planning Commission hereby recommends that the El Cerrito City Council adopt an addendum to the Environmental Impact Report for the El Cerrito General Plan (SCH No. 99022058) and adopt a General Plan amendment for the 2025 Safety Element.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this resolution was adopted by the El Cerrito Planning Commission at a regular meeting held on October 15, 2025, upon motion of Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Sean Moss, AICP
Planning Manager

City of El Cerrito

Safety Element



Hearing Draft

October 2025

Prepared for:

City of El Cerrito
10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530
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Safety Element

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Safety Element

OVERVIEW

The Safety Element is the section of the City's General Plan that helps to protect the community against natural disasters and other hazardous conditions. This Element identifies these hazards and contains goals, policies, and implementation measures to improve El Cerrito's resilience.

PURPOSE AND CONTENT

The Safety Element follows the requirements of Section 65302(g) of the California Government Code, which mandates that the Safety Element contain background information and policies to address multiple natural hazards, an analysis of vulnerabilities from climate change, policies to improve climate change resilience, and an assessment of residential areas with evacuation constraints. This Safety Element covers the following safety issues in El Cerrito:

- Seismic and geologic hazards
- Hazardous waste and materials
- Flood and inundation hazards
- Fire hazards
- Extreme heat and severe weather
- Drought
- Human health hazards
- Emergency preparedness and response

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LOCAL PLANS

The El Cerrito General Plan's Safety Element is one of several plans that address community safety and related topics. Other plans include the Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, El Cerrito Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, El Cerrito Emergency Operations Plan, and various local regulations. The Safety Element is consistent with these other plans and integrates them as appropriate to ensure that the City has a unified strategy to address public safety and resilience issues.

General Plan Elements

The Safety Element provides policy direction and designs safety improvements that complement the intent and policies of other General Plan elements/chapters. How land uses are determined in areas prone to natural hazards, what regulations limit development in these areas, and how hazards are mitigated for existing development are all issues that tie the elements together. For instance, the Public Facilities and Services chapter must consider how hazards will affect the park and recreation infrastructure and facilities in El Cerrito but also recognize that parks can provide strategies to reduce flood risks throughout the City. The Housing Element is closely tied to the Safety Element. Future potential development in the City must be protected from hazards and able to adapt to climate change hazards to ensure homes and the people living in them remain safe. Safety Element policies, especially those concerning evacuation routes and critical facilities, must also be consistent

with those of the Transportation and Circulation chapter.

Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) assesses the risk of hazards and vulnerabilities from natural and human-caused hazards, including risk to people and facilities, and identifies short-term (five-year) mitigation actions to reduce or eliminate hazard risks. The LHMP includes a dedicated annex for the City of El Cerrito, which discusses El Cerrito's characteristics and history, development trends, hazard mitigation capabilities, integration with other hazard mitigation planning efforts, and vulnerabilities of specific facilities and infrastructure. Contra Costa County led the preparation of the Hazard Mitigation Plan in collaboration with the City and other local agencies and special districts, in accordance with the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) hazard mitigation assistance guidance. The current LHMP and El Cerrito Annex, as certified by FEMA, is incorporated into this Safety Element by reference, as permitted by California Government Code Section 65302.6. It is available online at: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/6415/Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan>.

City of El Cerrito Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

On July 16, 2024, the El Cerrito City Council adopted the City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and community resilience in the face of climate

change-related hazards. The City developed the CAAP's focus areas and strategies based on results from community engagement, the vulnerability assessment, and GHG analysis. One of these focus areas is community resilience and empowerment, which includes efforts such as establishing climate resilience hubs, conducting equitable climate preparedness activities, and offering public education on climate risks and resources. The CAAP intends to serve as a roadmap toward achieving these goals: reaching aggressive emissions reduction targets, improving El Cerrito's resilience to climate change impacts, and guiding collaboration between the City and community of El Cerrito. The CAAP aims to distribute the benefits of climate action and adaptation equitably by prioritizing vulnerable communities in planning and implementation. The Safety Element incorporates the climate vulnerability assessment in the CAAP, as discussed in greater detail in the following section, and contains policies that support the adaptation and resilience efforts in the CAAP. The CAAP is available online at: <https://el-cerrito.org/325/Climate-Action-Plan>.

CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Under California law, the Safety Element is required to include a vulnerability assessment that looks at how people, buildings, infrastructure, and other key community assets may be affected by climate change. In 2024, the City conducted a vulnerability assessment to identify current and future climate change impacts and risks to different sectors and communities of El Cerrito. The Vulnerability Assessment includes an overview of climate trends, projections, and impacts for El Cerrito and the broader Bay Area region, and evaluates

the risks and vulnerabilities across four City sectors:

- **Infrastructure and the Built Environment.** El Cerrito's buildings, facilities, and transportation systems.
- **Natural Systems and Water.** El Cerrito's open space, tree canopy, water supply, and water-related (e.g., potable water, wastewater, stormwater) infrastructure.
- **Energy.** El Cerrito's energy delivery infrastructure, supply, and demand.
- **Community Health, Well-Being, and Public Safety.** El Cerrito's community mental and physical health and emergency response services.

El Cerrito faces increasing climate-related risks that threaten these four sectors. Climate change is expected to cause El Cerrito to experience warmer temperatures year-round, including higher maximum summer temperatures and more frequent and severe heat waves; greater precipitation fluctuations between wet and dry years, with higher risk of flooding during wet years and higher risk of drought during dry years; and increasing chance of wildfire and poor air quality due to wildfire smoke. El Cerrito's natural landscapes, urban forests, and water systems are highly vulnerable to climate change. Rising temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns will stress vegetation, increasing the risk of insect outbreaks, disease, tree mortality, and fire. Extreme weather events in the community, including droughts and floods, will lead to soil erosion, habitat loss, and biodiversity decline. Local water management will become more difficult as intensified rainfall strains aged stormwater infrastructure, increasing the risk of flooding, groundwater contamination, and untreated water entering homes and

waterways. The Bay Area's alternating wet and dry years are likely to create economic and environmental challenges, affecting water availability, agriculture, recreation, and public health.

El Cerrito's energy infrastructure faces growing risks from climate-driven floods, heavy rain, and strong winds, which could damage power lines, substations, and transmission towers, leading to outages. Wildfires pose an additional threat, disrupting energy distribution and impacting residents, businesses, and City operations. Rising temperatures will increase electricity demand, heightening the risk of brownouts and power failures. Climate hazards will also affect community health and safety. More frequent landslides, floods, and wildfires will raise the risk of injury, illness, and mental health challenges, especially for vulnerable populations like seniors and low-income residents. Displacement, property damage, and disruptions may worsen physical and mental health issues. Emergency response activities in the community will also be affected if flooding, landslides, and wildfires disrupt transportation routes, and energy blackouts impact communication systems, delaying critical services. The Vulnerability Assessment, included as Appendix F of the CAAP, is available online at: <https://el-cerrito.org/325/Climate-Action-Plan>.

To increase community resilience and help lower vulnerability, the Safety Element includes goals, policies, and implementation measures to improve the resilience of the populations and assets identified as highly vulnerable in the Vulnerability Assessment.

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES

SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

Seismic and geologic hazards are risks caused by the movement of different parts of the earth's surface, known as the crust. Seismic hazards include earthquakes and hazardous events caused by them, such as liquefaction and tsunamis. Geologic hazards are other hazards involving land movements that are not linked to seismic activity, including landslides caused by heavy rains, and can inflict harm to people or property.

Seismic Hazards

Seismic activity occurs along boundaries in the earth's crust, called faults. Pressure along the faults builds over time and is ultimately released, resulting in ground shaking, commonly referred to as an earthquake. Earthquakes can also trigger other hazards, including tsunamis, surface rupture (cracks in the ground surface), liquefaction (causing loose soil to lose its strength), landslides, and subsidence (sinking of the ground surface).

Earthquakes

Though El Cerrito is at risk from many natural and human-caused hazards, the event with the greatest potential for loss of life or property and economic damage is an earthquake. This risk is true for most of the San Francisco Bay Area region, which has several active seismic faults. Earthquake risk is very high in Contra Costa County, including the City of El Cerrito, due to the presence of five major active faults in the region: the Hayward Fault, Calaveras (North Central) Fault, Concord-Green Valley Fault, Mount Diablo Fault, and Greenville Fault.

The Hayward fault, which is an approximately 45-mile-long fault that runs through densely populated areas on the East Bay, passes through eastern El Cerrito. The Hayward Fault is increasingly becoming a hazard of concern throughout the Bay Area because of its likelihood of activity and its intersection with highly populated areas and critical infrastructure. A significant earthquake on the Hayward Fault is predicted to result in catastrophic damage to buildings and infrastructure and substantial loss of life. The probability of experiencing a Magnitude 6.7 or greater earthquake along the Hayward Fault in the next 30 years is 33 percent. An earthquake of this magnitude could cause widespread devastation across the Bay Area, with the potential for thousands of fatalities, mass displacement, and long-term disruption of essential services.

The U.S. Geological Survey developed the HayWired Earthquake Scenario, a scientifically realistic study of the likely impacts of a magnitude 7.0 earthquake and its aftershocks on the Hayward Fault, to evaluate these risks in greater detail.¹ The HayWired Scenario emphasizes the vulnerabilities and strengths posed by the Bay Area's interconnected infrastructure systems such as utilities, roads, communications, and the compounded effects these interdependencies create in communities and the regional economy. Because the Hayward Fault runs through heavily developed areas, the scenario anticipates widespread impacts, including injuries, damage to buildings and infrastructure, and significant displacement of residents. The Hayward Fault crosses critical infrastructure, including major highways, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) tracks, and water and gas pipelines, making the potential

consequences especially severe for local and regional transportation, utilities, and emergency response systems.

In addition to direct ground shaking and structural damage, large earthquakes can rupture water and gas mains, down power lines, and topple trees. These secondary impacts increase the risk of fires, reduce the City's ability to fight fires due to water system disruption, and can obstruct evacuation routes and delay first responder access. Such cascading hazards further illustrate the interconnected risks facing El Cerrito during a major seismic event.

The Calaveras (North Central) Fault, a major branch of the San Andreas Fault, extends 76 miles from Hollister to Danville, east of the Hayward Fault. The Concord-Green Valley Fault beneath Concord runs 11 miles from Mount Diablo to the Carquinez Strait and connects to the Green Valley Fault. The Mount Diablo thrust fault lies between the Calaveras, Greenville, and Concord Faults in Contra Costa County. The Greenville Fault, also part of the San Andreas Fault system, runs through Contra Costa and Alameda Counties, bordering Livermore Valley and extending northwest along the Marsh Creek and Clayton faults toward Clayton Valley. **Figure S-1** shows the location of faults and Alquist-Priolo Fault Zones in and around El Cerrito, while **Figure S-2** shows the fault lines in Contra Costa County.

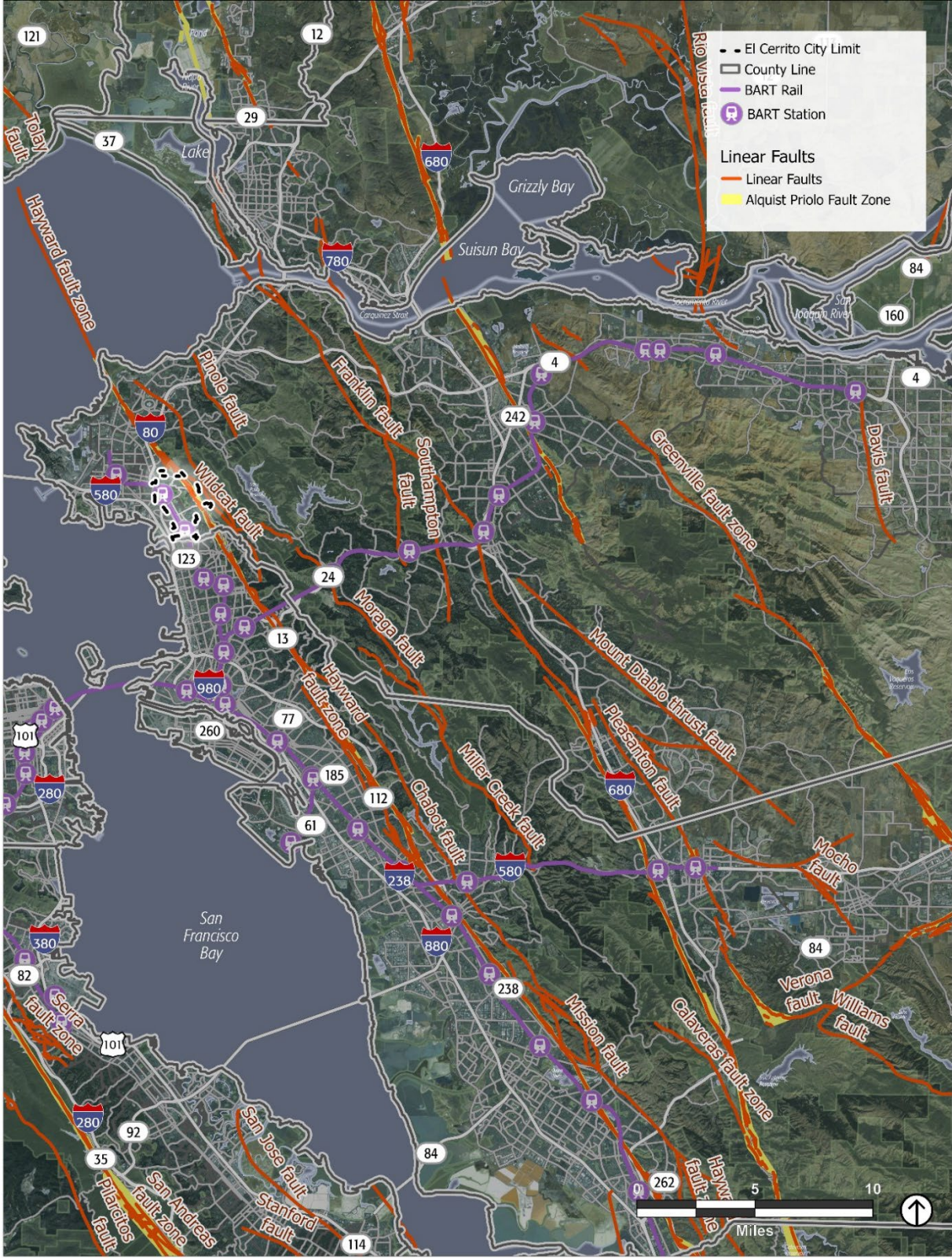
Earthquakes are likely to continue on an occasional basis. Most are expected to cause no substantive damage and may not even be felt by most people. However, a major earthquake along any of the nearby faults could result in substantial casualties and widespread destruction. The greatest risk in El Cerrito is from the Hayward Fault due to its

proximity and high potential to cause a severe earthquake.

Figure S-1 Local Fault Lines



Figure S-2 Regional Fault Lines



Source: ESR 2024, BART 2020, PlaceWorks 2024, US Geological Survey 2018, CDE, CoGIS 2019, 2023

Other Seismic Hazards

In addition to the direct physical damage that can result from the shaking of an earthquake, earthquakes can cause secondary hazards. Liquefaction occurs where waterlogged soils near the ground surface lose compaction during strong ground motion, causing the soil to lose strength and behave as liquid. This can cause building foundations to shift and can result in significant structural damage. Soils susceptible to liquefaction are typically found in low-lying current or former floodplains. Portions of the City near the floodplains in the southern part of the City, adjacent to I-80, are likely to face liquefaction during an earthquake. **Figure S-3** shows the areas facing an elevated liquefaction risk in El Cerrito.

Earthquake-induced landslides pose a significant risk due to the presence of landslide-prone areas in the hillsides of eastern El Cerrito and proximity of earthquake faults. Ground shaking from seismic activity can cause rocks, debris, and hillside soils to loosen and fall downslope, harming people, buildings, and infrastructure in their path.

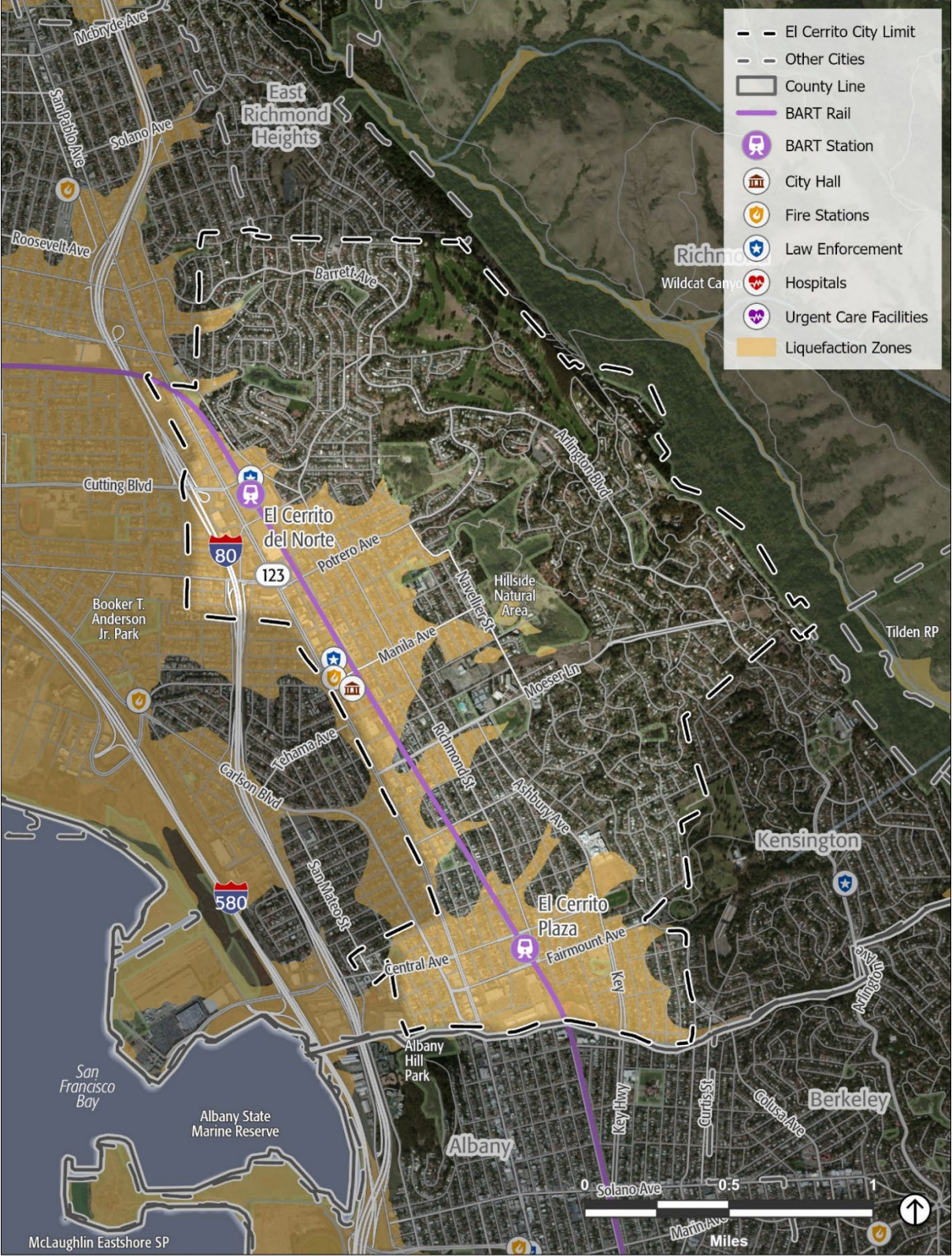
A secondary hazard of earthquakes is a tsunami, which has the potential to affect areas near the shoreline of the Richmond/El Cerrito area. Tsunamis are typically caused by earthquakes in places where ocean plates are forced down into the mantle by plate tectonic forces. These areas are known as subduction zones, although earthquakes in other parts of the ocean may also cause tsunamis. Tsunami waves can travel across entire ocean basins and impact coastal areas that are far from the earthquake's epicenter, including places where the shaking from the earthquake is not felt. Tsunamis can result in severe property damage and loss of life to affected areas near the coast. They can also disrupt emergency

services and transportation routes. Also, tsunami waves can diffract around land masses, and because they are not symmetrical, the wave may be much stronger in one direction than another, depending on the source and the surrounding geography. Earthquakes with magnitudes below 6.5 are very unlikely to trigger a tsunami. Earthquakes of magnitudes between 6.5 and 7.5 do not usually produce destructive tsunamis.

A similar hazard, known as a seiche, may also occur. A seiche is a standing wave that oscillates back and forth across an enclosed or partially-enclosed water body, such as the San Francisco Bay. Earthquakes, landslides, or strong storms may create a seiche wave that repeatedly floods shoreline areas, in a manner similar to a tsunami.

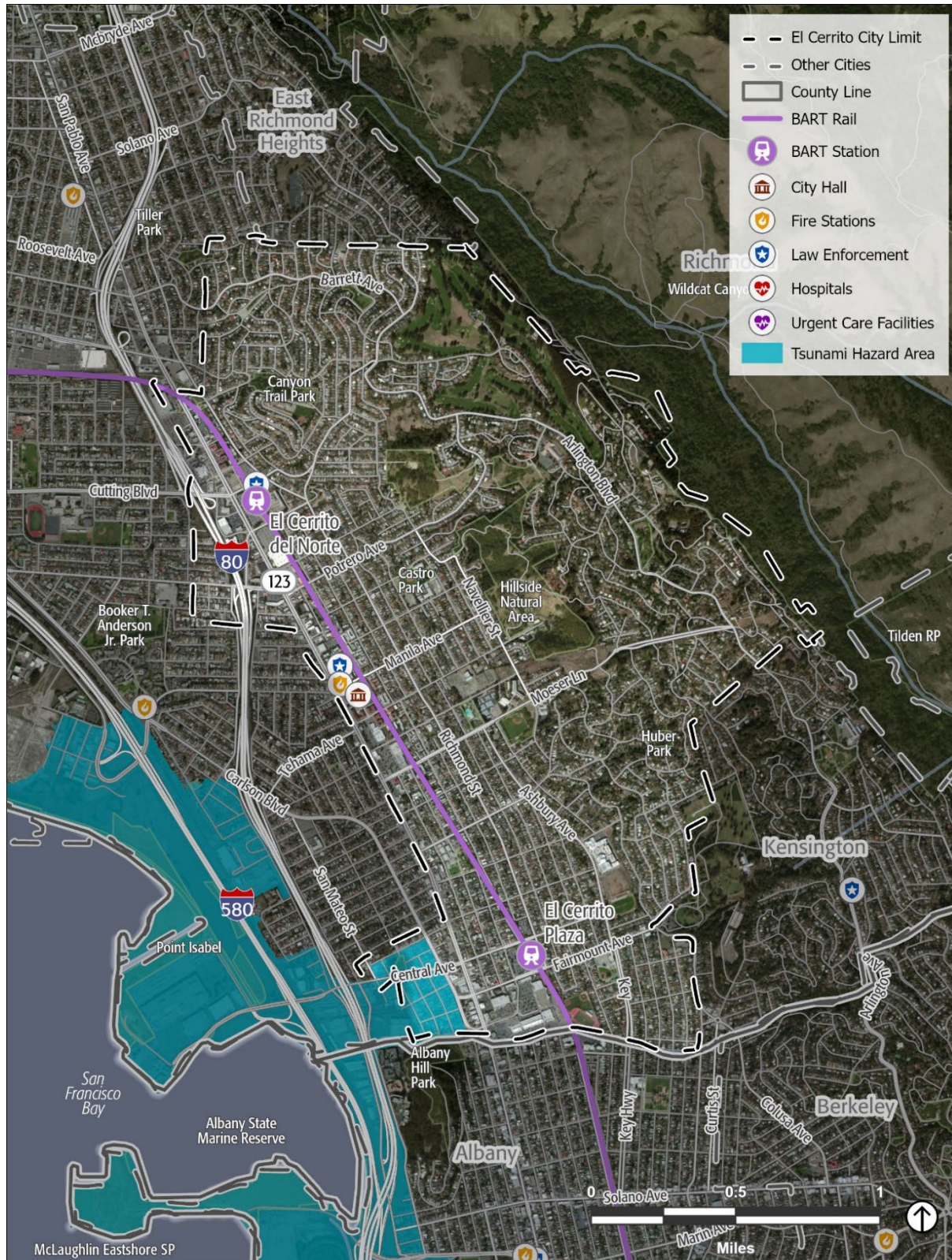
Figure S-4 illustrates the area that may be subject to inundation from a tsunami in El Cerrito.

Figure S-3 Liquefaction Areas



Source: ESRI, 2024; Bay Area Rapid transit, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2024; Cal Office of Emergency Services, 2019, 2033; US geological Survey, 2021

Figure S-4 Tsunami Inundation Areas



Source: ESRI, 2024; Bay Area Rapid transit, 2020; California Geographic Survey, 2022; Cal Office of Emergency Services, 2019, 2033; City of El Cerrito, 2024; PlaceWorks, 2024;

Geologic Hazards

Geologic hazards in El Cerrito include landslides and erosion. Landslides, which can occur as debris flows or rock falls, are most common in steep, sloped areas with loose and fragmented soil. While some landslides develop gradually, others happen suddenly, often with severe consequences. Landslides are a continuous natural process affecting all slopes with varying degrees of impact. Landslides are often triggered by other natural hazards, such as earthquakes, heavy rain, floods, or wildfires, so landslide frequency is often related to the frequency of these other hazards. Landslides have occurred on hillsides throughout the City, usually in winter during high rainfall years. Due to the hilly terrain, the eastern portion of the City is in a very high landslide susceptibility class, as shown on **Figure S-5**.

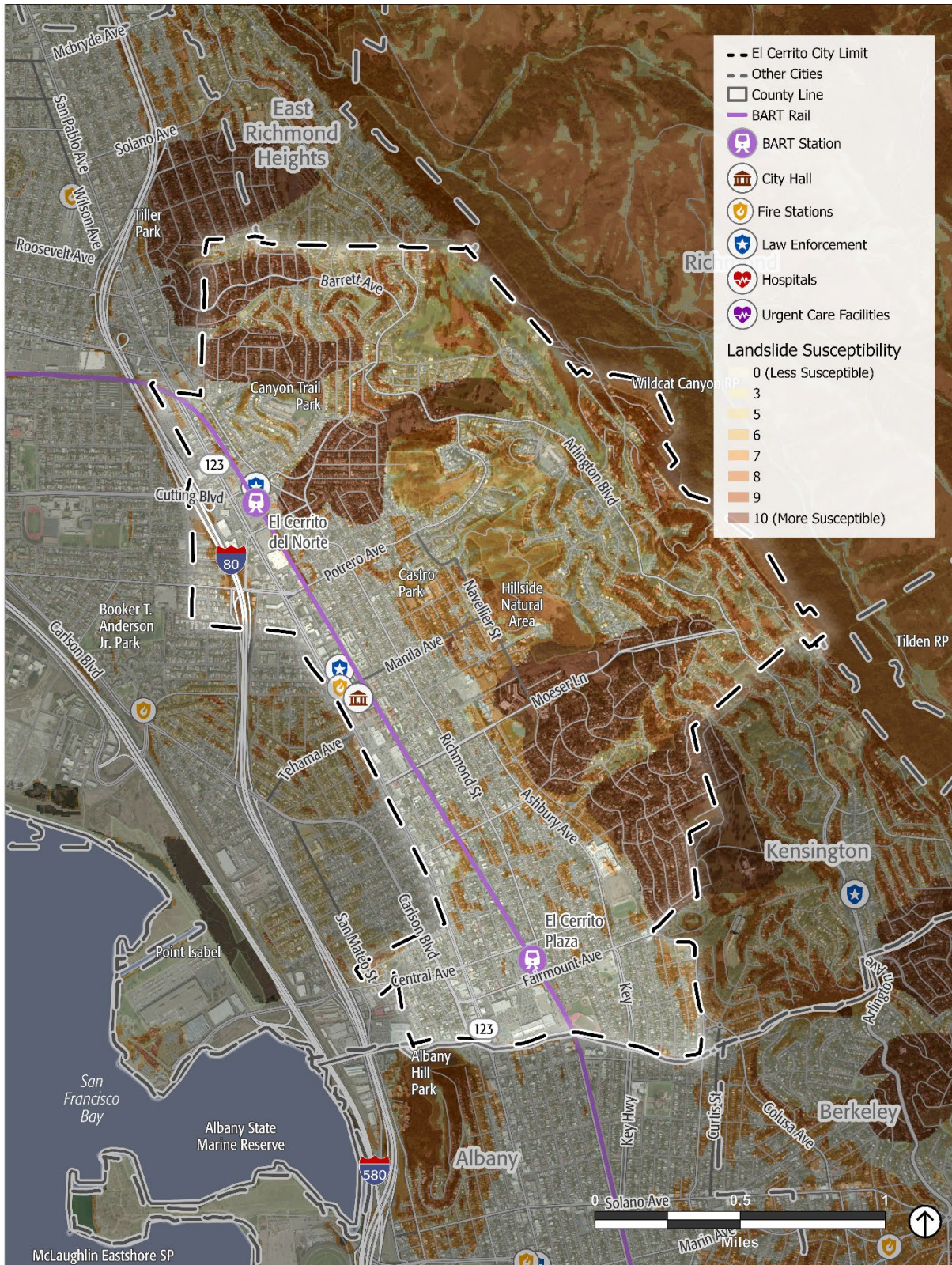
Localized over-steepened slopes in El Cerrito present elevated risk of rockfall, particularly when combined with heavy rainfall or earthquake shaking. For example, over-steepened slopes such as the quarry face near the City's Recycling Center pose a heightened risk of rockfall that could affect nearby facilities and operations. These site-specific conditions illustrate the potential severity of landslide hazards in the city and the importance of ongoing monitoring and mitigation where critical facilities are located near unstable slopes.

Climate change is expected to result in more precipitation extremes. More frequent periods of heavy rainfall could cause an increase in the number of landslides or make landslides larger than normal. Increased wildfire frequency can destabilize hillsides due to loss of vegetation and change soil composition, which can

contribute to greater runoff and erosion. Climate change will also cause more frequent and extreme droughts, which dries out soil. When heavy precipitation does occur (another expected effect of climate change), the soil cannot absorb as much water, which creates higher levels of runoff, potentially leading to landslides and mudflows. The combination of more frequent drought and intense rainfall combined with increased wildfire hazards are likely to cause more mudslides and landslides.

El Cerrito is also susceptible to hazards related to erosion, or the geological process in which rocks and soil are worn away by natural forces such as water or wind, causing the soil to deteriorate. The eroded particles can end up in local creeks and San Francisco Bay, creating water quality problems. The eastern hillsides of the City are particularly at risk due to their steep slopes, making them more vulnerable to erosion. Erosion can damage roads, bridges, buildings, and other structures by weakening the foundations of buildings and structures, causing washouts during heavy rains, and increasing the risk of landslides.

Figure S-5 Landslide Susceptibility Areas



Source: ESRI 2024, BART 2020, PlaceWorks 2024, California Geological Survey 2018, CalDES 2019, 2023

Goals and Policies

Goal 1: Mitigate risk from geologic and seismic hazards.

- Policy 1.1: Geotechnical Review.** Require geotechnical studies for development proposals in areas at risk from geologic and seismic hazards (see Figure S-1, Local Fault Lines; Figure S-3, Liquefaction Areas; and Figure S-5, Landslide Susceptibility Areas), in accordance with City procedures. Such studies should evaluate the extent of geotechnical hazards, optimum location for structures, the advisability of special structural requirements, and the feasibility and desirability of a proposed facility in a specified location.
- Policy 1.2: Erosion Control.** Provide appropriate control measures in conjunction with proposed development in areas susceptible to erosion, including an erosion control plan and revegetation plan as part of grading permits.
- Policy 1.3: Seismic Safety of New Development.** Require new structures to be designed to contemporary standards for seismic safety. Require that new City-owned critical facilities be constructed to the highest possible standard of seismic safety.
- Policy 1.4: Seismic Safety of Existing Development.** Assist occupants and owners of existing structures in identifying seismic risks to their structures and provide support in obtaining appropriate seismic retrofit measures. Evaluate all City-owned facilities to determine seismic risks and implement appropriate seismic retrofit measures.
- Policy 1.5: Seismic Safety of Utilities.** Encourage local gas, water, and sewer providers to review and retrofit their main distribution pipes.

HAZARDOUS WASTE AND MATERIALS

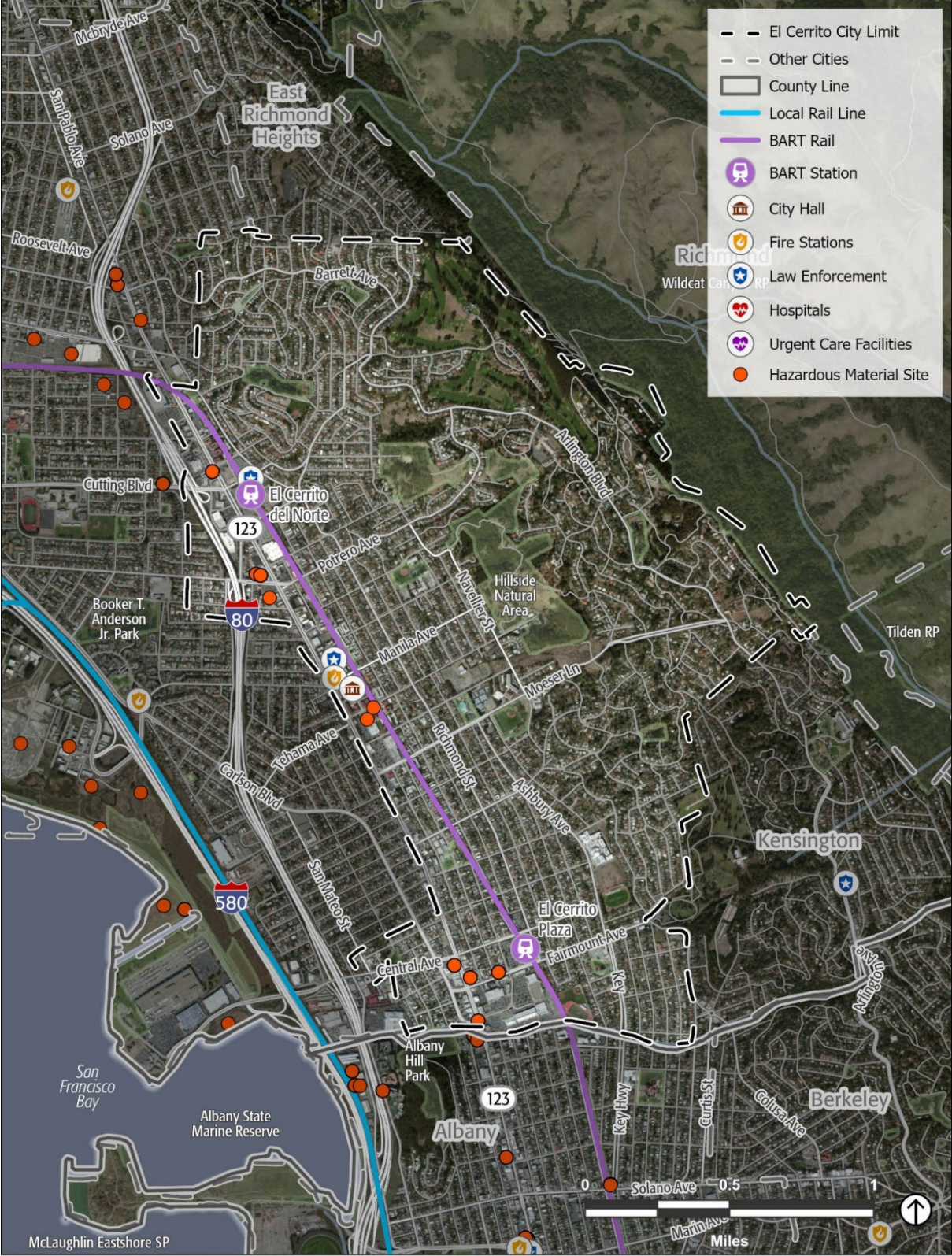
Hazardous materials are materials that pose a significant risk to public safety or to human or environmental health. These include toxic chemicals, flammable or corrosive materials, petroleum products, and unstable or dangerously reactive materials, which may be stored, transported, or processed at dry cleaners, gas stations, automotive repair centers, and similar light industrial facilities in El Cerrito. The release or spill of bulk hazardous materials could result in fire, explosion, toxic clouds, or direct contamination of water, people, and property. The El Cerrito Fire Department, Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division, and Contra Costa Environmental Health Division are responsible for hazardous materials accidents in El Cerrito.

Several State agencies have jurisdiction over hazardous materials sites and oversee the monitoring of hazardous materials and waste facilities. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) are responsible for different types of sites. Facilities that use or store hazardous materials, such as industrial plants, laboratories, and storage facilities, must comply with regulations enforced by the DTSC, which ensures proper handling, transportation, and disposal of hazardous substances. Cleanup sites, which include contaminated properties and hazardous waste disposal areas, fall under the oversight of both RWQCB and DTSC. The RWQCB focuses on preventing hazardous materials from contaminating water resources, conducting site inspections, and enforcing water protection regulations. The DTSC maintains records of these contaminated sites, supervises cleanup efforts,

and ensures compliance with hazardous materials laws. Both agencies coordinate with local governments, businesses, and other regulatory bodies to ensure the safe management of hazardous materials and the remediation of contaminated sites.

Figure S-6 identifies potential sites with hazardous materials. DTSC typically acts as the lead agency for sites involving toxic substances and remediation, and the RWQCB leads issues concerning water quality. Additionally, the Contra Costa Environmental Health Division serves as the oversight agency for sites within the City. A review of the leaking underground storage tank list produced by the RWQCB and the DTSC EnviroStor databases indicates 33 cleanup sites (2 open and 31 case closed sites) and 7 cleanup program sites (5 open and 2 case-closed sites).^{ii,iii} Open cleanup sites for hazardous materials are still undergoing investigation, remediation, or monitoring to address contamination; closed sites have met regulatory cleanup standards and no longer require active remediation.

Figure S-6 Hazardous Materials Sites



Source: ESRI, 2024; Bay Area Rapid transit, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2024; CA Department of Toxic Substances Control, 2025; Cal Office of Emergency Services, 2019, 2033

Since 1970, there is no recorded history of roadway or rail hazardous materials incidents in El Cerrito.^{iv} While El Cerrito has not experienced such incidents, the broader region has seen hazardous materials transportation incidents in the past, including cities adjacent to El Cerrito. Notably, Berkeley has recorded two roadway incidents; Richmond has recorded 29 roadway and 45 rail incidents; and San Pablo has recorded 21 roadway incidents.^v These events, which involve the release of hazardous materials during transportation by roadway or rail transit, can pose a threat to public health and safety, property, and the environment. Hazardous materials in nearby communities may affect El Cerrito, including through indirect impacts such as closing regional highways. It is possible that these events may occur in El Cerrito and surrounding communities in the future.

Climate change is unlikely to substantially affect hazardous materials transportation incidents. However, increases in the frequency and intensity of climate hazards, such as floods, landslides, and severe storms, may create a greater risk of hazardous material releases during these events. Beyond transportation incidents, climate change increases the risk of hazardous material releases from industrial facilities, storage sites, and other hazardous material locations. Extreme weather can stress infrastructure, causing equipment failures, leaks, or corrosion. Flooding may submerge storage tanks, leading to spills or contamination. Power outages can disrupt cooling systems, heightening explosion risks. Wildfires can ignite hazardous materials, releasing toxins into the environment.

Goals and Policies

Goal 2: Minimize potential damage from existing hazardous materials and prevent future hazardous materials contamination.

- Policy 2.1:** **Potential Hazardous Soils Conditions of New Development.** Evaluate new development on potentially contaminated sites (such as older fill sites, historical auto service uses, industrial uses, or areas where hazardous materials may have been used, as mapped in **Figure S-6, Hazardous Materials Sites**), and require that development proposals contain adequate measures to mitigate hazardous material exposure prior to development approvals.
- Policy 2.2:** **Hazardous Soil Conditions in Inundation Hazard Areas.** Work with Contra Costa Health Services and other regional partners to identify hazardous materials sites where proximity to mapped flood hazard zones, sea level rise inundation areas, and other water-based hazards that may spread hazardous materials. Prioritize remediation of these sites.
- Policy 2.3:** **Hazardous Materials at Municipal Facilities.** Ensure that hazardous materials owned or stored by the City are managed and disposed of appropriately to protect human and environmental health and safety.
- Policy 2.4:** **Hazardous Materials Storage and Disposal.** Require proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials in accordance with all State, federal, and local laws and regulations to prevent leakage, potential explosions, fires, or the escape of harmful gases, and to prevent individually innocuous materials from combining to form hazardous substances, especially at the time of disposal.
- Policy 2.5:** **Hazardous Materials Usage in Construction.** Require and enforce effective mitigation measures to minimize exposure to toxic and hazardous materials during building renovations and demolitions.
- Policy 2.6:** **Hazardous Materials Public Education.** Provide information to the community regarding the potential health hazards posed by hazardous materials and possible ways to reduce hazardous materials use and properly dispose of hazardous materials.

FLOOD AND INUNDATION HAZARDS

Flooding

Flooding is when water covers normally dry land, often from poor drainage during heavy precipitation or when a water body overflows its banks. Floods are one of the most frequent natural hazards in El Cerrito and among the costliest natural disasters nationwide in terms of human hardship and economic loss. Floods cause substantial damage to structures, landscapes, and utilities as well as life and safety issues.

Historically, El Cerrito has been at risk of flooding primarily during the winter and spring when stream systems swell with heavy rain. Occasionally, flash flooding results from intense rainfall. In urban areas, flash flooding can be a serious problem due to lack of vegetation and replacement of groundcover with impermeable surfaces such as roads, driveways, and parking lots. These hard surfaces prevent water from being absorbed into the soil, leading to rapid runoff that overwhelms storm drain infrastructure and natural waterways. Without proper drainage, excess water accumulates quickly, increasing the likelihood of localized flooding. Other impacts connected with flooding and associated stormwater runoff include erosion, sedimentation, habitat disruption, and increased pollution in waterways. These effects can degrade water quality, harm aquatic ecosystems, and contribute to long-term environmental degradation.

Areas at an elevated risk of flooding are divided into 100- and 500-year flood zones. A 100-year flood zone has a 1 percent chance of experiencing a major flood in any given year, and a 500-year flood zone has a 0.2 percent

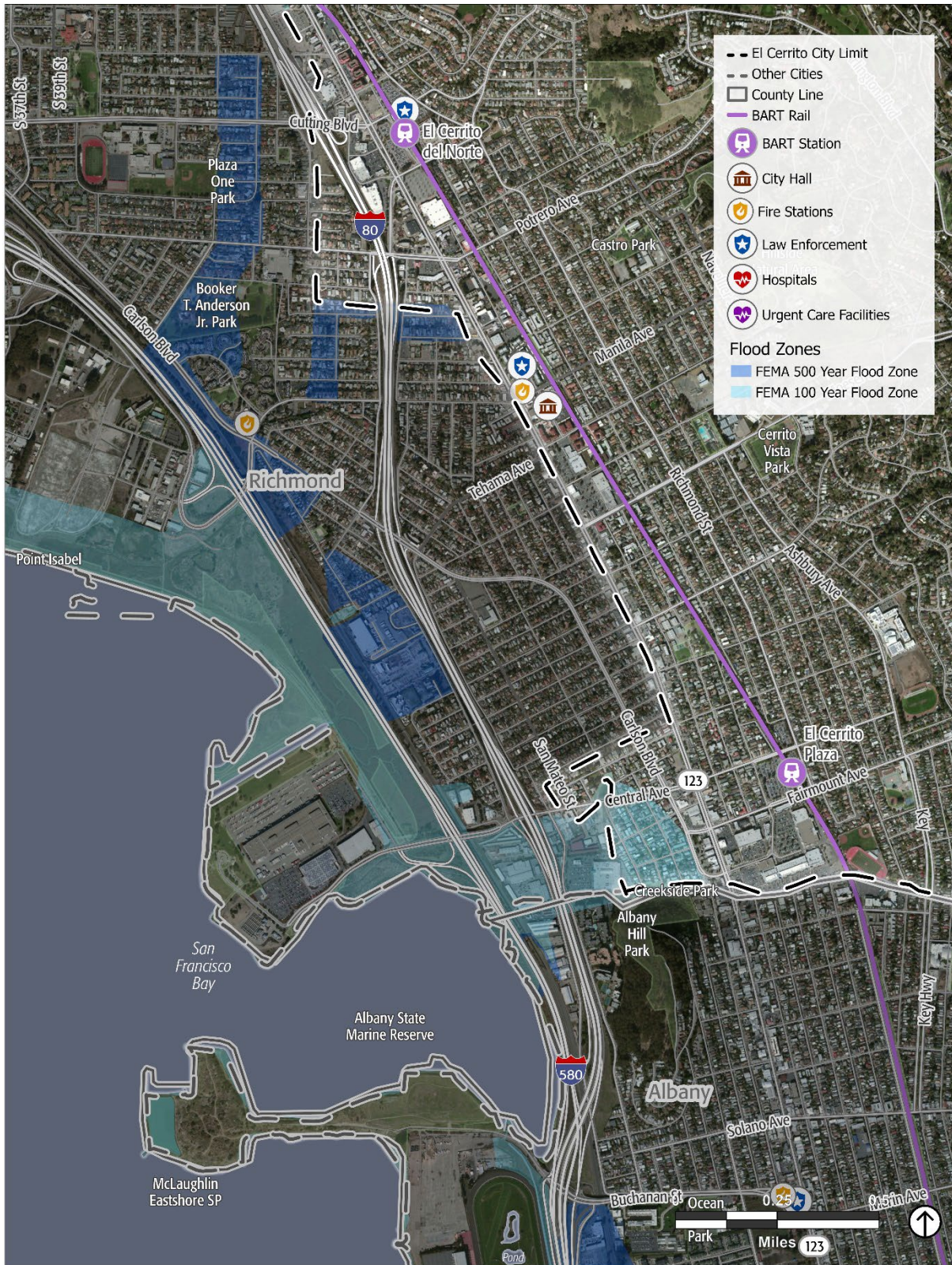
chance of flooding in any given year. The 100-year floodplain in El Cerrito is west of San Pablo Avenue and south of Central Avenue in the southern portion of the City. The City does not have any areas in the 500-year floodplain. However, it is important to note that flooding can still occur outside of these mapped flood zones, especially in low-lying areas with poor drainage. **Figure S-7** shows the mapped flood zones in and around El Cerrito.

Scientists expect that climate change will cause greater shifts in annual rainfall in El Cerrito. This shift toward more extreme events is likely to result in increases in flooding from intense storm systems as well as an increase in regional drought conditions. These intense systems can drop substantial volumes of precipitation over a short period and cause flooding. Because of this, floods are expected to happen more often in El Cerrito, and climate change may expand the parts of the City that are considered prone to flooding. More frequent droughts are also likely to dry out soil, hardening it and increasing the volume of runoff when rainfall does return. One extreme flooding scenario developed by scientists is known as ARkStorm (and its updated ARkStorm 2.0 model). These scenarios simulate the impacts of prolonged, high-intensity storms comparable to the “Great Flood” of 1862, which inundated much of California. ARkStorm 2.0 imagines a period of extreme rainfall lasting up to a month that would cause extensive flooding across the state, although particularly in the Central Valley. Such events would likely overwhelm flood-protection systems, trigger hundreds of landslides, disrupt power, water, and transportation infrastructure, and result in economic losses estimated at more than \$700 billion statewide.^{vi} Rainfall totals in El Cerrito could be as high as 23 inches over the course

of the event, with an average rainfall of slightly less than an inch each day, although some days are modeled to see as many as four inches of rainfall in El Cerrito.

The scenario underscores the potential for extreme precipitation events to impact large geographic areas simultaneously, thereby limiting the availability of mutual aid and compounding recovery challenges. This research highlights the importance of local flood preparedness and mitigation, particularly as climate change increases the frequency and severity of extreme weather events.

Figure S-7 Flood Hazard Zones



Source: ESRI 2024, BART 2020, PlaceWorks 2024, Adapting to Rising Tides Bay Area Sea Level Rise & Mapping Project (AATCOM, BCDC, MTC, BATA) 2017, Ca-025 2019, 2023

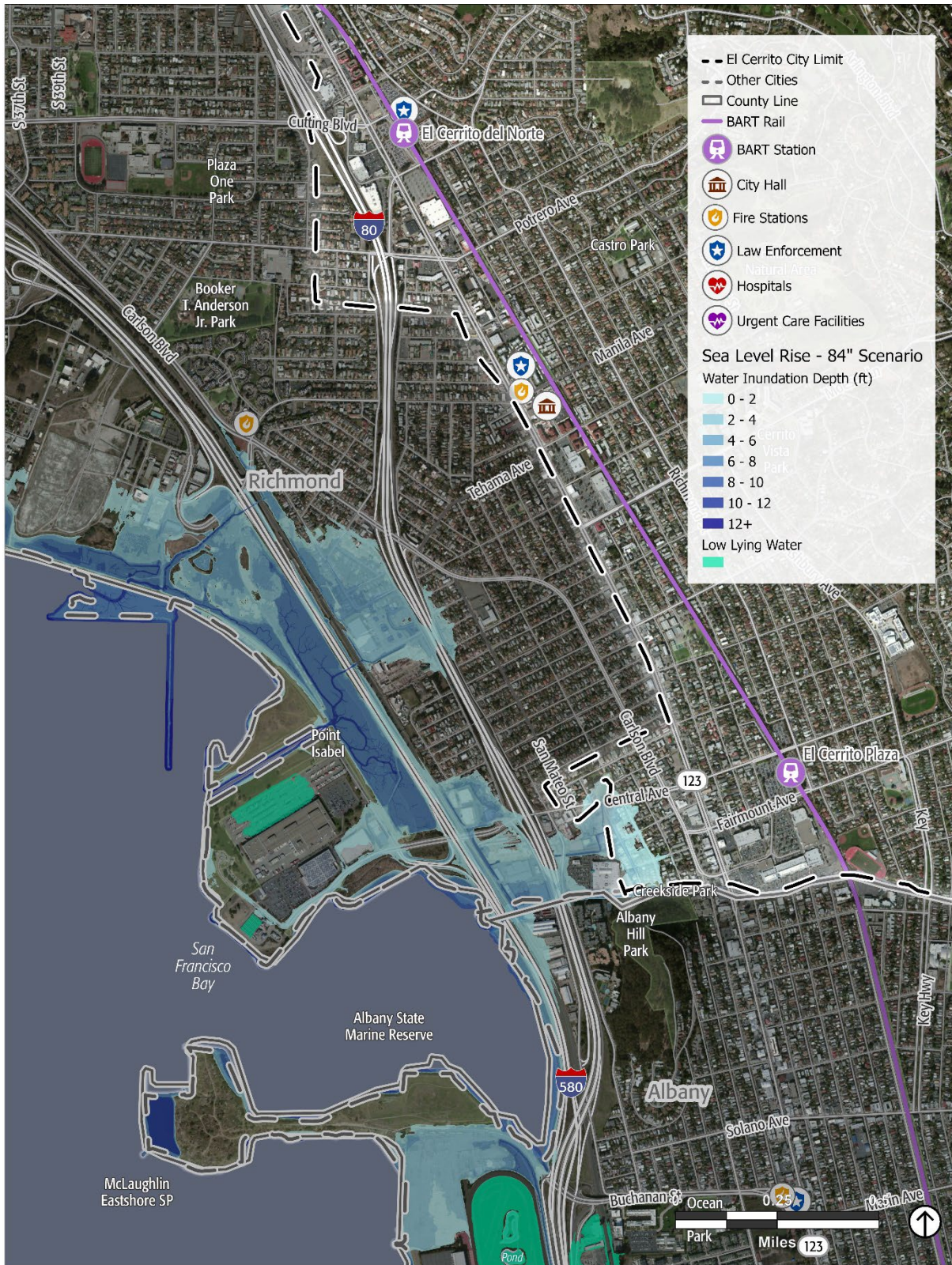
Sea Level Rise

Sea level rise is an increase in the ocean's surface height relative to the land and a direct result of climate change. Sea level rise has the potential to inundate homes, businesses, and infrastructure near shorelines. Along the shoreline, sea levels are projected to rise by as much as 3 feet (36 inches) by 2070 and 6.6 feet (79.2 inches) by 2100.^{vii} However, it is possible that sea levels could rise faster than these projections, which has happened historically. **Figure S-8** shows the permanent flooding that may occur by 2100.

Rising sea levels can cause the shoreline to flood more frequently and severely during storms or king tide events. For example, a storm that has a one in five chance of occurring in a given year (known as a five-year storm) can create a temporary increase in sea levels of approximately two feet. Because sea level rise will cause ocean levels to be higher during normal conditions, shoreline floods will expand and reach further onto land. **Figure S-9** shows the additional temporary flooding that may occur by 2100 from strong storms or high tides.

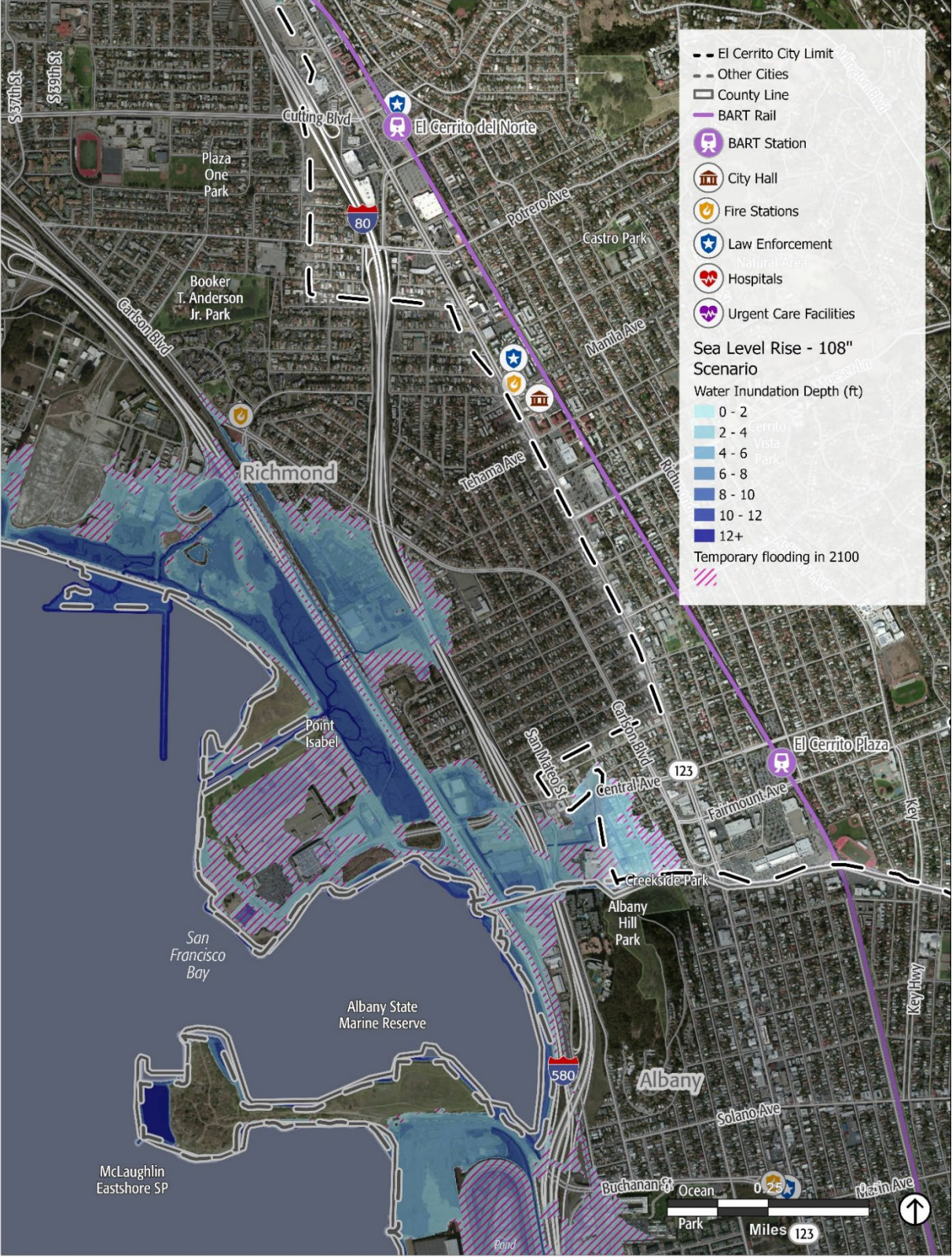
Historical records from the San Francisco tidal gauge show that the sea level in the San Francisco Bay rose eight inches from 1897 to 2006. Sea levels are expected to continue to rise over this century, likely faster than they have historically. Rising sea levels will increase the impacts of other coastal hazards, such as shoreline erosion and tsunamis.

Figure S-8 Sea Level Rise Projections by 2100 for Permanent Flooding



Source: ESRI 2024, BART 2020, PlaceWorks 2024, Adapting to Rising Tides Bay Area Sea Level Rise & Mapping Project (AATCOM, BCDC, MTC, BATA) 2017

Figure S-9 Sea Level Rise Projections by 2100 for Permanent and Temporary Flooding



Goals and Policies

Goal 3: Reduce risks from flooding and sea level rise and provide timely and effective flood response.

- Policy 3.1: Flood-responsive Siting of New Critical Facilities.** Prohibit the construction of new critical facilities and infrastructure, including hospitals, health care facilities, emergency shelters, fire stations, emergency command centers, and emergency communication facilities in mapped flood hazard and sea level rise inundation zones (see **Figures S-7, S-8, and S-9**).
- Policy 3.2: Flood-Proofing New Construction.** Require that new and significantly renovated buildings and structures in the mapped 100-year flood zones be constructed to a higher standard of flood protection to improve resilience, as required by the California Building Code and in accordance with the City's Floodplain Management ordinance.
- Policy 3.3: Flood Hazards from New Construction.** Require new development and significant redevelopment projects, greater than 5,000 square feet of conditioned space, to prepare drainage studies to assess stormwater runoff impacts on the local storm drain system, and to develop recommended detention and drainage facilities as needed to ensure that increased risks of flooding on to neighboring properties do not result from development.
- Policy 3.4: Flood Hazards to Existing Development.** Help property owners identify qualified service providers and obtain financial incentives to floodproof existing buildings. Continue to evaluate new opportunities to help reduce flood hazards to existing development, including development at risk of current or future flooding not in the mapped 100-year floodplain.
- Policy 3.5: Maintenance for the City's Storm Drainage Facilities.** Continue to enforce existing laws prohibiting the dumping of debris, fill, or other waste materials, and illicit discharges into storm drains, creeks and channels, and the littering of garbage. Continue to ensure that local storm drainage facilities are sufficiently maintained. Pursue viable funding sources for local and regional drainage improvements for adequate flood control and protection.
- Policy 3.6: Creek Maintenance Education.** Continue to educate local property owners about their responsibilities to maintain creeks, storm drainpipes, and open channels on private property, including regularly clearing trash and other debris.
- Policy 3.7: Natural Stormwater Management Solutions.** Continue to identify opportunities and funding sources to expand the City's green infrastructure network, as defined in the City's Green Infrastructure Plan. Update Chapter 8.40 of the City's Municipal Code, Stormwater Management and Discharge Control, to require new development to

incorporate natural stormwater management solutions on-site as a condition of approval for discretionary projects, as appropriate.

- Policy 3.8: Permeable Paving and Green Infrastructure.** Continue to require that new development complies with Contra Costa Clean Water Program Stormwater C.3 Guidebook requirements for treatment of stormwater. Encourage new development to reduce impervious areas and use permeable surfaces in paving and landscaping. Promote the use of green infrastructure, such as bioswales, rain gardens, and vegetated swales, to manage stormwater and enhance groundwater infiltration as outlined in the City's Green Infrastructure Plan. Include permeable surfaces and green infrastructure into City construction and improvement projects.
- Policy 3.9: Continuity of public facilities during flooding.** Maintain the structural and operational integrity of essential public facilities during flooding through structural retrofits, flood management, operational improvements, and other appropriate actions.
- Policy 3.10: Sea Level Rise Coordination.** Coordinate with local, regional, State, and federal agencies to plan for the impacts of flooding, sea level rise, and groundwater intrusion in the community.
- Policy 3.11: Flood Response.** Coordinate with the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and neighboring jurisdictions to address regional flood hazards.
- Policy 3.12: Public Flood Preparedness Information.** Improve public access to information about flood risks, preparedness, and response steps. Revise and expand on existing resources, such as those available on the City's website, to help residents and property owners understand what to do before, during, and after flooding events.
- Policy 3.13: Adopt-A-Drain Program.** Explore the development and funding of an Adopt-A-Drain program. This initiative would encourage residents, businesses, and community groups to voluntarily adopt storm drains and commit to their regular maintenance by removing debris, leaves, and litter to ensure proper stormwater flow.
- Policy 3.14: Central Avenue and I-80 Resilience.** Support efforts to improve flood protection and long-term resilience to sea level rise for Central Avenue and the I-80 interchange area. Ensure flood protection and climate adaptation initiatives prioritize El Cerrito's transportation needs, including emergency access and evacuation needs.

FIRE HAZARDS

Fire hazards include wildfires, urban fires, and structural fires. Historically, the wildfire season extended from early summer through late fall of each year, during the hotter, dryer months, although it is increasingly a hazard that can occur year-round. Fire conditions arise from a combination of high temperatures, dry conditions, plentiful fuel (such as dry plants or other debris), and high winds.

Wildfires

Wildfires start on hillsides, forest, scrub, and grassland environments, but may easily spread into developed areas next to or mixed in with these ecosystems, and from there may spread into more developed urban areas. Fuel, weather, and topography are primary factors that affect how wildfires spread. In and around El Cerrito, natural habitats provide highly flammable fuel that is conducive to wildfires.

Wildfires can occur in areas of natural vegetation, especially forests, brush and scrublands, and grasslands. When vegetation dries out and becomes highly flammable, especially during hot, dry, and windy conditions, it creates a wildfire risk. Historically, wildfires have been most common in late summer and fall, but they have become increasingly a year-round event. Wildfires most often ignite from human activities—such as sparks from vehicles contacting dry vegetation, downed power lines, or electrical equipment failures—or from natural causes like lightning. They may also be set deliberately. The hilly areas of eastern El Cerrito and the undeveloped lands of Wildcat Canyon Regional Park to the east, outside City limits, face an elevated wildfire risk.

There are no records of historic fires within the City or in the immediate vicinity. However, the surrounding East Bay Hills do have a history of wildfire events. One of the most destructive was the Tunnel Fire, also known as the “Oakland Hills Firestorm,” which occurred on October 19, 1991. The fire started on private property near the Caldecott Tunnel, rapidly spreading and burning 1,520 acres. It resulted in 25 fatalities, 150 injuries, and the destruction of approximately 3,000 homes. Other significant events include the 1970 Fish Fire in Oakland, which spread through the East Bay Hills, and the 1923 Berkeley Fire. This fire destroyed about 640 structures, and highlighted vulnerabilities such as insufficient fire breaks and limited water supply in the hills. Maps and data on areas burned in past fires is available from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s (CAL FIRE) Fire and Resource Assessment Program at <https://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/fire-resource-assessment-program/fire-perimeters>.

Within El Cerrito, the Hillside Natural Area has experienced numerous smaller fires over the past two decades, most ignited by human activity and contained less than two acres. Examples include a 2010 fire near Tamalpais Avenue, a 2012 fire at the entrance to the Recycling Center, and a 2020 lightning-caused fire south of Moeser Lane. Although these incidents were small, they demonstrate the ongoing fire risk within the Hillside Natural Area, particularly in grassland areas near heavily traveled access points. More recent wildfires have also occurred in the region, including two wildfires along Highway 4 east of Hercules in August 2022. Changing climate conditions are expected to increase the wildfire risk in and around El Cerrito. Warmer temperatures brought on by climate change can exacerbate drought conditions. Droughts

can kill or dry out plants, creating more fuel for wildfires. Increased winds will result in more erratic fire behavior, making fires harder to predict and contain. Warmer temperatures are also expected to occur later in the year, extending the wildfire season, which is likely to begin earlier in the year and extend later than it has historically.

Fire Hazard Severity Zones

CAL FIRE establishes Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), designating each as moderate, high, or very high severity. El Cerrito has 329 acres (14 percent of the City's land area) in the very high severity zone, 147 acres (6 percent) in the high severity zone, and 146 acres (6 percent) in the moderate severity zone. Various State requirements apply in some of these zones, including fire-safe standards for development or redevelopment activities, additional review and approval processes for new development, establishing and maintaining defensible space around buildings and facilities, and disclosing the presence of wildfire hazards during real estate transactions.

To reflect the threats posed by wildfires, the City has adopted local ordinances and programs to reduce wildfire risk. In July 2025, the City amended Chapter 8.30 of the El Cerrito Municipal Code to adopt the most recently available State-recommended FHSZ maps, and to establish procedures for defensible space and home hardening inspections within the high and very high zones. The ordinance can be accessed here:

https://library.municode.com/ca/el_cerrito/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT8HESA_C8.30FIHASEZODESPHOHARE. Current maps are available at CAL FIRE's Fire and Resource Assessment Program, at

<https://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/fire-resource-assessment-program>. Future updates to the Safety Element will incorporate new mapping data as it becomes available.

State law, established by Assembly Bill (AB) 39 in 2019, requires that properties in high and very high FHSZs be inspected by the El Cerrito Fire Department prior to the close of escrow. A report is issued confirming compliance or identifying corrective actions. Sellers must disclose the results of these inspections, along with any home hardening improvements or vulnerabilities, to buyers before the close of escrow.

While the City already had a robust vegetation management program, this action updated vegetation management standards (including "Zone Zero" standards for the areas within five feet of a building) and repealed outdated roofing requirements for properties in very high FHSZs. It also created a local requirement for owners of real property in high or very high FHSZs to have a home hardening and defensible space inspection completed and to disclose the result of that inspection to buyers prior to the time of sale per State law. These efforts better align the City of El Cerrito with state law, decrease vulnerability to wildfires, and assist residents in maintaining home insurance.

CAL FIRE designates these zones for areas where local agencies have responsibility for fire protection (known as local responsibility areas, or LRAs), and areas where the State is responsible, even if local authorities provide fire protection (known as state responsibility areas, or SRAs). El Cerrito is an LRA, and the unincorporated areas east of the City are a mix of LRAs and SRAs. **Figure S-10** shows the FHSZs in and around El Cerrito. The City's

Community View/GIS, available at the following link: <https://www.elcerrito.gov/154/GIS-Maps>, provides a user-friendly way to view property information, zoning, and land use patterns, and illustrates how development patterns are aligned with fire safety considerations.

The City's land use and housing plans, including the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan and the Housing Element, intentionally concentrate new growth and higher-intensity development outside of the very high FHSZ. This approach reduces risks to people, property, and critical infrastructure. This strategy also helps protect natural hillsides and provides a buffer between residential areas and high fire-risk landscapes.

Wildland-Urban Interface Area

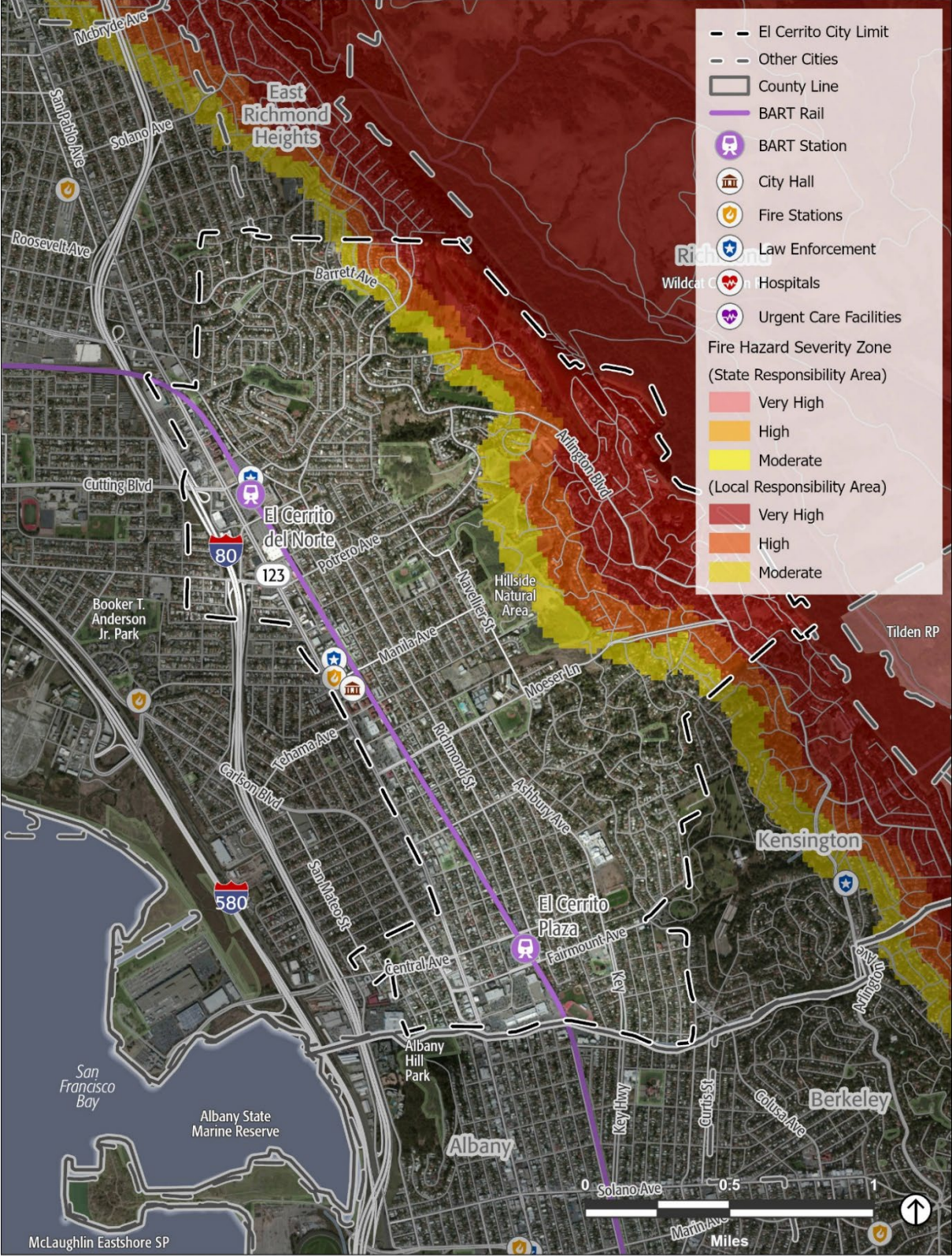
In addition to the FHSZ designations by CAL FIRE, the City contains areas identified as a Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). The WUI is an area where buildings (e.g., housing) and infrastructure (e.g., cell towers and water supply facilities) mix with flammable wildland vegetation, allowing wildland fires to spread to buildings and structures easily.

There are three distinct zones in the WUI.

1. The **intermix zone** contains housing development or improved parcels interspersed in an area dominated by wildland vegetation subject to wildfire.
2. The **interface zone** contains dense housing next to vegetation that can burn in a wildfire but is not dominated by wildland vegetation.
3. The **influence zone** contains wildfire-susceptible vegetation within 1.5 miles from the WUI or wildland-urban intermix zones.

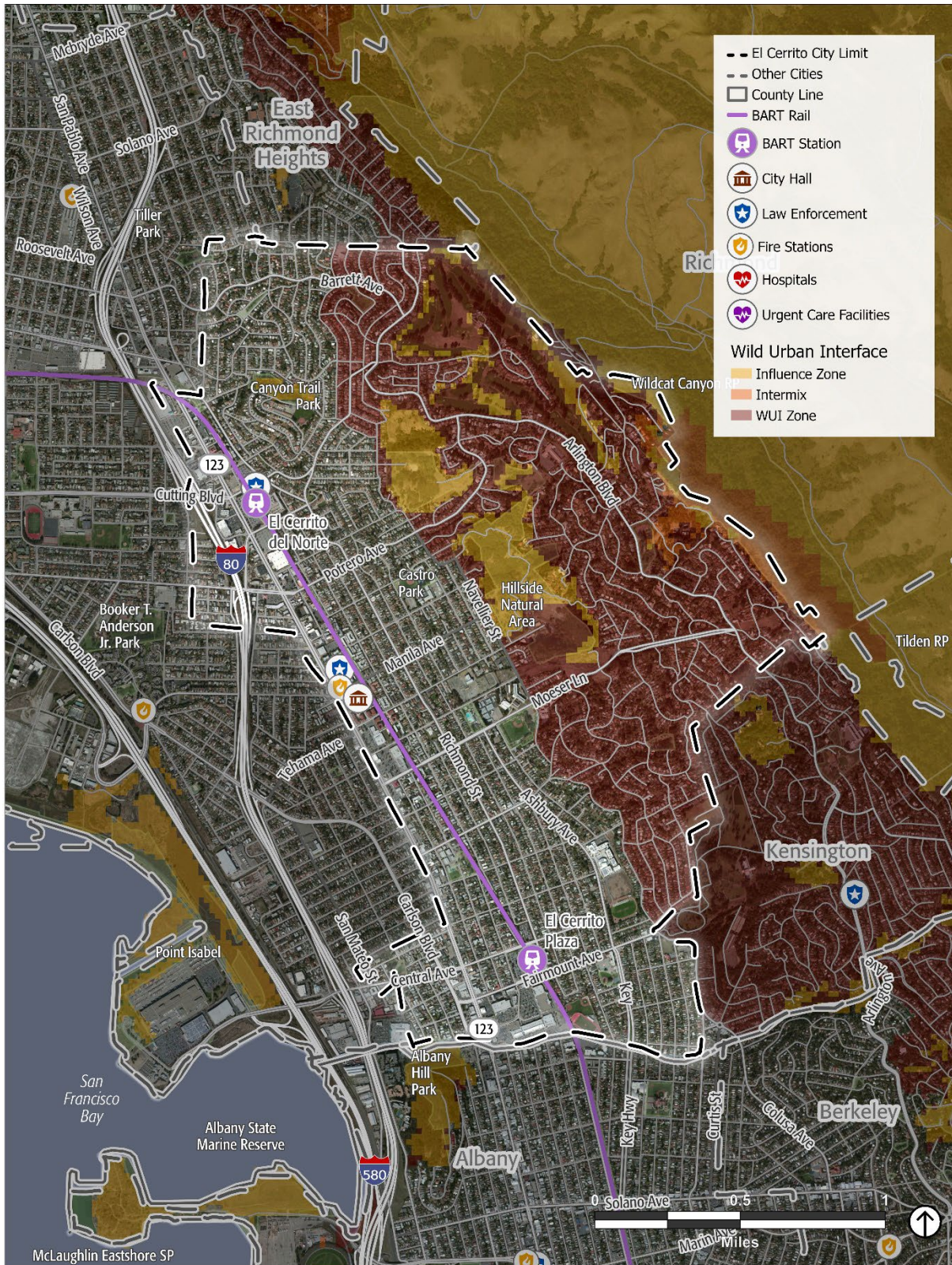
In the WUI area, efforts to prevent ignitions and limit wildfire loss hinge on hardening structures and creating defensible space through a multifaceted approach that includes engineering, enforcement, education, emergency response, and economic incentives. As shown in **Figure S-11**, most of eastern El Cerrito lies within the WUI zone. The WUI zones shown in this map are not formally established by the State or City and are not associated with any regulatory requirements. They are included in this Safety Element to help the City and community understand wildfire risks in different parts of El Cerrito. These zones may also inform insurance rates, evacuation planning, and other associated factors.

Figure S-10 Fire Hazard Severity Zones



Source: ESRI, 2024; Bay Area Rapid Transit, 2020; City of El Cerrito, 2024; PlaceWorks, 2024; Cal FIRE, 2025; Cal Office of Emergency Services, 2019, 2033;

Figure S-11 Wildland-Urban Interface Areas



Source: ESRI 2024, BART 2020, FireWorks 2024, CalFIRE 2019, CalOES 2019, 2023

Structural Fires

El Cerrito is also at risk from structural fires. Structural fires are often due to faulty wiring, mechanical equipment, or combustible construction materials in the built environment. The absence of fire alarms and fire sprinkler systems often exacerbates the damage associated with a structural fire. Structural fires are largely caused by human accidents, although deliberate fires (arson) may cause some events. Older buildings lacking modern fire safety features may face greater risk of fire damage.

Building construction standards help reduce the risk of structural fires. Every proposed construction project in El Cerrito is reviewed by the El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department for compliance with the most recent version of the California Fire Code adopted by the City, including City amendments to the code.

Fire Protection

The El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department provides fire protection to all areas of El Cerrito. There are no areas in the city that lack fire protection service. The Fire Department operates two fire stations in the City of El Cerrito and one in the unincorporated community of Kensington:

- Station 51 at 10900 San Pablo Avenue
- Station 52 at 1520 Arlington Boulevard, El Cerrito
- Station 55 at 217 Arlington Avenue, Kensington

In addition to local fire stations, the El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department participates in automatic and mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions, Contra Costa County agencies, CAL FIRE, and other regional, State,

and federal partners. These agreements ensure that personnel and equipment can be deployed quickly across jurisdictions to respond to large-scale natural disasters, including wildfires.

Goals and Policies

Goal 4: Reduce El Cerrito’s risk of wildfire and provide timely and effective fire response.

- Policy 4.1: Fire-Resilient Existing Development.** Work with property owners and building occupants to raise awareness about potential building and landscape modifications to improve wildfire resilience and work to obtain funding to help property owners make these improvements, in accordance with applicable State requirements and the City’s local ordinances and Vegetation Management Program.
- Policy 4.2: Fire-Retardant Landscaping.** Require the use of fire-retardant vegetation for landscaping in new development in high fire hazard areas. Encourage the use of fire-retardant vegetation in all development City-wide. Fire-retardant vegetation, also known as fire-resistant plants, refers to plants that do not readily ignite from flames or other ignition sources and, if exposed to fire, their foliage and stems do not significantly contribute to the fire’s fuel or intensity.
- Policy 4.3: Hillside Natural Area.** Manage vegetation in the Hillside Natural Area to reduce fire hazards in accordance with the recommendations of the Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan. The Fire Department and Public Works Department shall share responsibility for implementation. Pursue viable funding sources to implement measures identified in the Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan that promote wildfire resilience.
- Policy 4.4: Hazardous Tree Removal on Private Property.** Help residents access resources for removing hazardous trees on private property that threaten residential buildings and critical facilities. Distribute information about available programs and facilitate efforts to connect property owners with external funding sources, local organizations, nonprofits, or state agencies that can provide resources or assistance.
- Policy 4.5: Urban Forest Management for Wildfire Risk Reduction.** Maintain and manage El Cerrito’s urban forest to reduce wildfire risk in accordance with the recommendations of the Hillside Natural Area Wildfire Resilience and Forest Conservation Plan.
- Policy 4.6: Fire Breaks.** Require property owners of existing and new development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones or the Wildland-Urban Interface (as shown on **Figure S-10** and **Figure S-11**) to create and maintain fire breaks and defensible space around structures and along roadways that is free from dry brush and other flammable materials and to comply with the 100-foot Defensible Space Requirement in the Public Resources Code Section 4291 and Government Code Section 51182 for fuel modification to reduce fire danger.
- Policy 4.7: Regional Wildfire Prevention.** Continue to collaborate with the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District, Alameda County Resource Conservation District, neighboring

jurisdictions, the East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments, the El Cerrito and Diablo Fire Safe Councils, Hills Emergency Forum, and local community organizations to regularly review regional wildfire hazards and vulnerabilities and develop regional wildfire abatement and response strategies.

Policy 4.8: Wildfire Risk from Energy Infrastructure. Coordinate with PG&E to reduce wildfire risk related to electrical infrastructure, including:

- Maintenance of fire breaks around electrical infrastructure.
- Installation of covered conductors to reduce ignition risk from contact with vegetation or debris.
- Use of Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings that automatically shut off power in high-risk conditions.
- Vegetation management beyond minimum clearance requirements in high-risk areas.
- Implementation of Public Safety Power Shutoffs during extreme fire weather events, with coordination to minimize community disruption.
- Undergrounding electricity infrastructure in Very High and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

Policy 4.9: Firefighting Infrastructure. Facilitate the timely and effective provision of firefighting services by:

1. Expanding the availability of fire hydrants in Very High and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. This may include installation of sufficiently sized hydrants in areas identified in the Hillside Natural Area.
2. Coordinating with the East Bay Municipal District to ensure that adequate peak load water supplies are available to fight fires. Redundancies in the water storage and capacity distribution network should be considered and implemented in those areas of the City where ground failure could result in breaks to both the water and gas mains, with the potential for significant conflagrations. Ensure that hydrants remain accessible for fire response.
3. Requiring that development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones contain visible street signage, such as reflective signs that clearly indicate street names, addresses, and directional arrows for emergency response,
4. Studying and establishing, as appropriate, Red Flag Day parking restrictions to ensure unobstructed access for emergency vehicles.
5. Requiring that new development provide roadways of adequate width to support emergency response vehicles.
6. Requiring that new development provide adequate water pressure for firefighting.

7. Identifying opportunities to facilitate access of emergency vehicles to existing development.

Policy 4.10: Sufficient Firefighting Services. Regularly review funding, staffing levels, fire station location, equipment availability, water availability, and availability of other key resources of the El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department to ensure that the Department is keeping pace with changes in local population.

Policy 4.11: Fire Protection for New Development. Ensure new development is located where fire and emergency services have sufficient capacity to meet project needs and that existing development maintains its current level of protection service. In addition to adequate Fire Department staffing and resources, this may include increased requirements for fire protection systems for residential units, such as roof sprinkler systems or other site-specific fire resilience features.

Policy 4.12: Post-Fire Development. Require redevelopment after wildfires to meet current California Building Code, California Fire Code, and California Fire Safe Standards to reduce future vulnerabilities to fire hazards through site preparation, layout design, fire-resistant landscaping, and fire-retarding building design and materials. Re-evaluate development standards after a wildfire to ensure consistency with the latest regulations and best practices. In addition, regularly review and update local development standards to ensure consistency with the latest regulations and best practices, independent of local fire events.

Policy 4.13: Post-Fire Displacement. Work with neighboring jurisdictions and local homeless service and emergency support providers to help residents displaced from wildfires to secure housing and other necessary services.

Policy 4.14: Post-Fire Slope Stabilization. Coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies to stabilize and vegetate burned slopes after a wildfire.

Policy 4.15: Wildfire Health Impacts. Work with the Contra Costa County Public Health Division and health service providers to plan for increased levels of illness and injury due to wildfire and to distribute N95 masks during periods of poor air quality.

Policy 4.16: New Development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Encourage new residential development to occur outside of the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones identified by CAL FIRE (see **Figure S-10, Fire Hazard Severity Zones**). Where new construction or significant redevelopment is proposed in such areas, require review by the Community Development Department and El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department prior to the issuance of development permits . Plans for proposed development in such areas shall include, at a minimum:

- Site plan, planting plan, planting palette, and irrigation plan to reduce the risk of fire hazards and with consideration to site conditions, including slope, structures, and adjacencies.

- Development and maintenance of defensible space and shaded fuel breaks.
- Development of fire protection plans that include at a minimum:
 - Risk analysis;
 - Fire response capabilities;
 - Fire safety requirements, including defensible space, infrastructure, and building ignition resistance;
 - Mitigation measures and design considerations for non-conforming fuel modification;
 - Wildfire education, maintenance, and limitations; and
 - Evacuation planning.
- Multiple points of ingress and egress to improve evacuation, emergency response, fire equipment access, and adequate water infrastructure for water supply and fire flow that meets or exceeds the standards in the California Fire Safe Regulations. This specifically includes two sections of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Division 1.5, Chapter 7: Subchapter 2, Articles 1-5 (commencing with Section 1270, State Responsibility Area Fire Safe Regulations); and Subchapter 3, Article 3, commencing with Section 1299.01, Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structures Regulations).
- Class A roof materials for new and replacement roofs.
- Location and source of anticipated water supply.

Policy 4.17: Fire Hazards Response Support. Facilitate firefighting in low-visibility conditions by requiring measures such as high-visibility signage for streets and building addresses that meet or exceed the standards in the California Fire Safe Regulations (Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Articles 2 and 3, Sections 1273 and 1274).

Policy 4.18: Access for Fire and Emergency Vehicles and Equipment. Require proposed development to provide adequate access for fire and emergency vehicles and equipment that meets or exceeds the standards in the California Fire Safe Regulations (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7): Subchapter 2, Articles 1-5 (commencing with Section 1270, State Responsibility Area Fire Safe Regulations); and Subchapter 3, Article 3 (commencing with Section 1299.01, Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structures Regulations).

Policy 4.19: Retrofitting City-Owned Roadways. Identify existing public and private roadways in fire hazard severity zones that are not in compliance with current fire safety regulations, to the extent resources are available. Work at retrofitting and maintaining City-owned roadways as needed to meet current standards and encourage private property owners to do the same, to the extent feasible and given the absence of other site constraints.

These standards include road standards for evacuation and emergency vehicle access, vegetation clearance, and other requirements of the California Fire Safe Regulations, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Division 1.5, Chapter 7): specifically Subchapter 2, Articles 1-5 (commencing with Section 1270, State Responsibility Area Fire Safe Regulations); and Subchapter 3, Article 3 (commencing with Section 1299.01, Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structures Regulations).

Policy 4.20: Firewise Communities. Work with the El Cerrito Fire Safe Council to publicize the Firewise USA program to neighborhoods in areas with high fire risks and support neighborhoods in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and the Wildland-Urban Interface in pursuing designation as Firewise Communities.

EXTREME HEAT AND SEVERE WEATHER

Extreme Heat

Extreme heat is one of the deadliest climate-related hazards nationwide; the Center for Disease Control and Prevention noted a rise in heat-related deaths—from 297 in 2004 to over 2,300 in 2023.^{viii, ix} The rising frequency and intensity of extreme heat events pose significant public health concerns, especially in areas such as El Cerrito that have historically experienced milder temperatures and are home to residents without access to climate-controlled environments. Warmer temperatures and the urban heat island effect can exacerbate extreme heat impacts in densely populated areas, especially those that have limited tree canopy. **Figure S-12** shows the relative levels of extreme heat in different neighborhoods of El Cerrito.

Extreme heat is when temperatures are well above normal conditions. In El Cerrito, the extreme heat threshold is 88.7 degrees Fahrenheit (°F), or hotter than 98 percent of historic days. Five extreme heat days in a row is considered a heat wave. When the daily minimum temperatures remain significantly above normal, warm nights worsen extreme heat days because overnight temperatures do not decrease to provide relief from high temperatures. A warm night occurs when temperatures remain above 60°F in El Cerrito.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognize extreme heat as a substantial public health concern. Seniors, persons with chronic illnesses or disabilities, persons experiencing homelessness, outdoor workers, low-resourced people of color, immigrant/linguistically isolated communities,

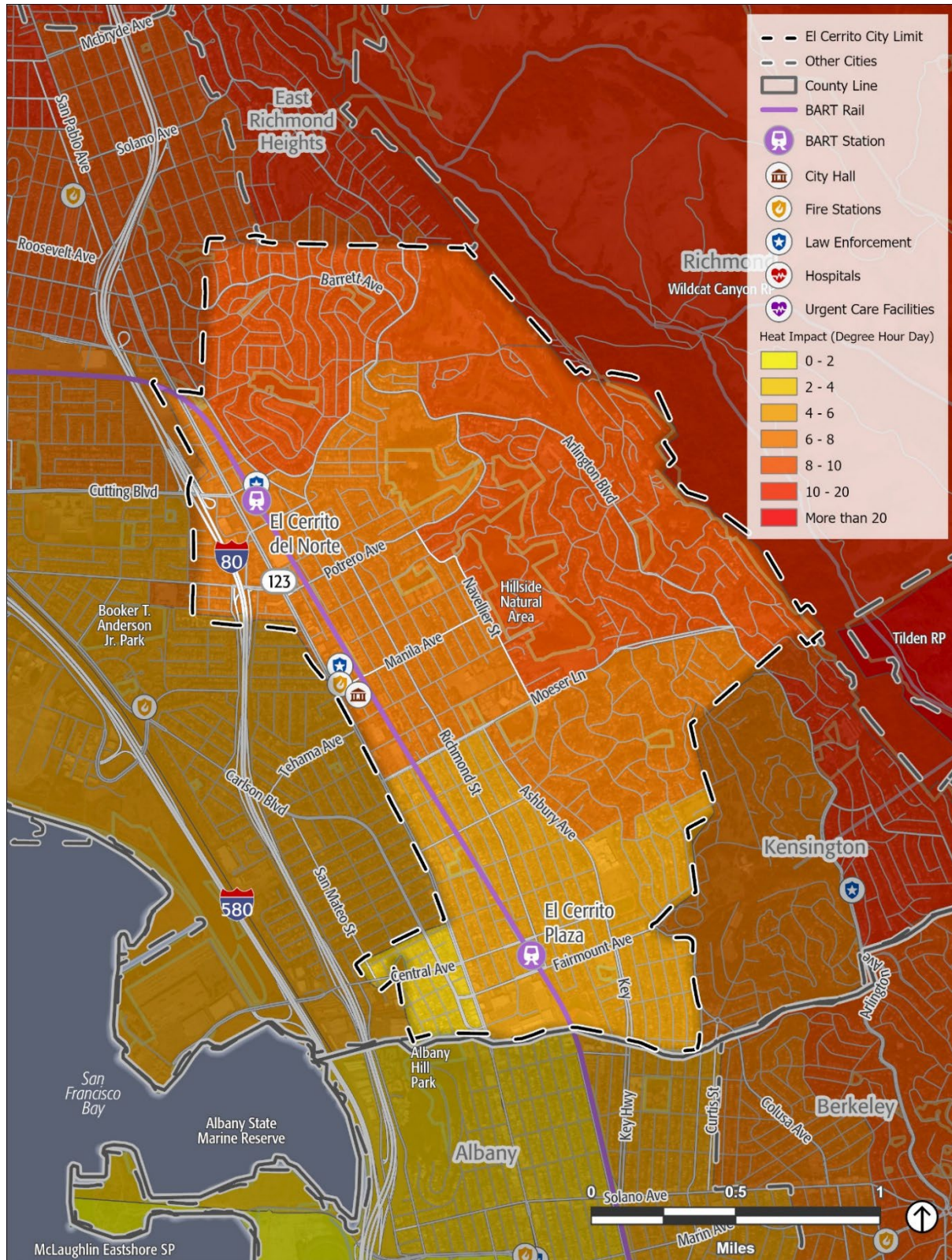
and households in poverty are among those most vulnerable to extreme heat.

According to the U.S. Census, approximately 82 percent of all housing in El Cerrito was built prior to 1980,^x which is unlikely to have air conditioning and may lack effective insulation. During extreme heat days, temperatures in poorly insulated homes may reach uncomfortable or dangerous temperatures. People living in these homes are at higher risk for heat-related illnesses from extreme heat events, especially people who are predisposed to heat-related illnesses.

Walking, biking, and other modes of active transportation become more difficult in extreme heat. These activities carry greater health risks when temperatures are very hot, especially for people who are already vulnerable to extreme heat and in areas with little or no shade coverage. Extreme heat can limit active transportation options and disproportionately affect those who rely on them.

Extreme heat also stresses infrastructure networks. Higher air conditioning demand during extreme heat days risks overloading the electrical grid and causing power outages. Very high heat can degrade transportation systems by softening and buckling asphalt and warping rail lines. These impacts reduce public transit capacity, as trains must operate at lower speeds, resulting in delays and increased risk of damage. Additionally, rising temperatures harm local ecosystems by increasing water temperatures in local lakes and streams, harming fish and plant species.

Figure S-12 Extreme Heat in El Cerrito



Source: ESRI, 2024; Bay Area Rapid transit, 2020; California Environmental Protection Agency, 2013; Cal Office of Emergency Services, 2019, 2033; City of El Cerrito, 2024; PlaceWorks, 2024;

The warmer temperatures brought on by climate change are likely to cause an increase in extreme heat events locally. In El Cerrito, the state projects that the number of extreme heat days is expected to rise from a historical annual average of 3 to 9 days by the middle of the century (2035 to 2064), and an average of 17 days by the end of the century (2070 to 2099). Additionally, the number of warm nights is expected to rise from a historical annual average of 5 to 47 nights by the middle of the century (2035 to 2064), and to an average of 119 nights by the end of the century (2070 to 2099).^{xi}

Severe Weather

Severe weather poses a significant threat to El Cerrito and the greater region, disrupting daily life, compromising safety, and affecting infrastructure and ecosystems. Severe weather is usually caused by intense storm systems, although some strong winds can occur without a storm. The types of dangers posed by severe weather include injuries or deaths, damage to buildings and structures, fallen trees, roads blocked by debris, fires sparked by lightning, downed power lines, flooding, storm drain overflows, and infrastructure failure. Heavy rain can cause widespread flooding, often overwhelming drainage systems and leading to significant disruptions in transportation, emergency response, and access to essential services. Severe weather often produces high winds and lightning that can damage structures and cause power outages. Lightning from these storms can ignite fires and cause explosions that damage buildings and endanger people. High wind events can also exacerbate the risk of wildfires in El Cerrito and across the region.

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) and other electrical utilities have begun to occasionally “de-energize” or turn off the electricity for power lines that run through areas with an elevated fire risk. Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events are intended to reduce the risk of power lines sparking or being damaged and starting a wildfire. A PSPS event may occur at any time of the year, usually during high wind events and dry conditions. While PSPS events have been smaller and less frequent recently, these events still pose a risk to PG&E customers across Contra Costa County, including El Cerrito. According to records of PSPS events, the hillside neighborhoods of El Cerrito experience an average of one PSPS every two years, and neighborhoods closer to the bayshore experience a PSPS approximately once every five years.

People who depend on medical devices, such as oxygen concentrators or ventilators, are at greater risk during power outages, as are those who need electricity for climate control to keep indoor temperatures safe. The loss of power to communications and other critical infrastructure disrupts access to goods and services.

Climate change is expected to cause an increase in intense rainfall and strong storm systems, such as atmospheric rivers. This increase means that El Cerrito could see more intense weather resulting from these storms in the coming years and decades, although such an increase may not affect all forms of severe weather. Heavy rainfall can increase the frequency and severity of other hazards, including flooding and landslides.

Goals and Policies

Goal 5: Reduce risk from and provide timely and effective response to extreme heat and severe weather.

- Policy 5.1:** **Urban Tree Canopy.** Maintain the health of the urban tree canopy to increase shaded surfaces and reduce risk of downed trees during severe weather. Expand and renew the urban tree canopy to help reduce the impacts of extreme heat.
- Policy 5.2:** **Shading and Heat-Mitigating Materials.** Use heat-mitigating materials and install shade structures, both green and built infrastructure, at parks, schools, along public streets and trails, and at other public spaces to reduce ground surface temperatures.
- Policy 5.3:** **Shading and Heat-Mitigating Materials at Transit Stops.** Coordinate with local and regional public transportation providers to increase shading and heat-mitigating materials at transit stops.
- Policy 5.4:** **Resilience Hubs.** Identify existing facilities that can function as community resilience hubs. Maintain these facilities as needed to serve as resilience hubs, ensuring they are well-equipped, accessible, and situated outside of areas at risk from hazards impacts, and that the public is aware of these resources. Work with neighboring jurisdictions to promote awareness and use of these hubs. Evaluate the feasibility of creating new resilience hubs when new facilities are developed or existing facilities are retrofitted, incorporating renewable energy generation, energy storage, and the ability to offer refuge from extreme heat and poor air quality due to regional wildfire smoke.
- Policy 5.5:** **Resilient Development.** Encourage new and existing development to incorporate building and site design features that reduce the effects of extreme heat, improve indoor air quality, and reduce energy demand. These features could include air conditioning, air filtration, energy-efficient duct work improvements, passive cooling design and amenities, cool roofs, reflective or pervious pavement materials, high-albedo surfaces, shade trees, and other green infrastructure. Help residents connect with contractors and financial assistance programs to implement these improvements.
- Policy 5.6:** **Resilient Power Supplies.** Work with PG&E, MCE, and local solar energy installers to support resiliency of the local power grid, including distributed generation and microgrids for residents, businesses, and public agencies.
- Policy 5.7:** **Renewable Energy and Energy Storage at City Facilities.** Maintain, improve, and where fiscally viable expand distributed renewable generation and energy storage at City facilities. Include provisions for the ongoing maintenance and performance monitoring of these systems to ensure long-term reliability. Prioritize buildings and facilities that provide essential City services during extreme weather events for energy storage systems.

- Policy 5.8: Community Solar and Energy Storage.** Work in partnership with MCE, the Bay Area Regional Energy Network, and others to support the development of community solar projects, streamline permitting where possible, and prioritize storage systems to ensure community solar could be used during outages.
- Policy 5.9: Planning for Extreme Heat.** Participate in regional planning with neighboring jurisdictions to develop an extreme heat response plan that includes establishment of community cooling centers, weatherization of City buildings, temperature triggers for when cooling centers would open, and cooling strategies for persons engaged in outdoor work and persons experiencing homelessness.
- Policy 5.10: Community Support and Mutual-Aid Networks.** Support residents in developing neighborhood support programs to perform wellness checks on vulnerable neighbors during hazardous events.
- Policy 5.11: Urban Greening Plan.** Implement the Urban Greening Plan to enhance public places and open spaces throughout the City. Open and green spaces provide cooling from heat and are linked to mental health and quality of life benefits.

DROUGHT

A drought is an extended period when precipitation levels are well below normal. Drought may affect domestic water supply, energy production, public health, wildlife, and contribute to wildfire. Like most of California and the western United States, El Cerrito chronically experiences drought cycles. The U.S. Drought Monitor recognizes a five-point scale for drought events: D0 (abnormally dry), D1 (moderate drought), D2 (severe drought), D3 (extreme drought), and D4 (exceptional drought). According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, the most intensive drought conditions in recent years were during most of 2014 and 2021, when all of Contra Costa County was classified in “extreme” drought. As of March 2025, El Cerrito was not facing drought conditions, but eastern Contra Costa County was classified as abnormally dry, and over half of California was in some level of drought. During severe drought conditions, water shortages are common, and water restrictions may be imposed to meet essential community needs.

El Cerrito’s water supply comes from imported water delivered by the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD). Approximately 90 percent of EBMUD’s water supply begins at the Mokelumne River watershed in the Sierra Nevada and extends 90 miles to the East Bay, passing through the Central Valley and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The Mokelumne Aqueducts convey the Mokelumne River supply to local storage and treatment facilities in Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

Drought in California is cyclical, driven by large-scale climate patterns. Although droughts are a regular feature of California’s climate,

climate change is leading to more frequent, prolonged, and intense droughts statewide. Overall, long-term precipitation levels are expected to remain similar to historic levels in El Cerrito, potentially increasing slightly by the end of the century.^{xii} However, there are likely to be more years with extreme levels of rainfall, both high and low, because of climate change. This is expected to cause more frequent and intense droughts, compared to historical norms, which cause soil to dry out, and harden, which can trigger landslides in the subsequent rainy season.

Reduced winter precipitation levels and warmer temperatures have decreased the size of the Sierra Nevada snowpack (the volume of accumulated snow), making less fresh water available for communities throughout California, including the imported water supply for El Cerrito. A continued decline in the volume of the Sierra Nevada snowpack is expected, which may lead to lower volumes of available imported water. More precipitation is expected to fall as rain instead of snow, and the snow that does fall will melt earlier, reducing the Sierra Nevada spring snowpack by as much as 70 to 90 percent.^{xiii} How much snowpack will be lost depends in part on future precipitation patterns, the projections for which remain uncertain. However, even under wetter climate projections, the loss of snowpack would pose potential water shortage issues and exacerbate drought conditions.

Goals and Policies

Goal 6: Secure a resilient water supply and use water supplies sustainably.

- Policy 6.1: Drought-Tolerant Landscaping.** Require drought-tolerant landscaping in new private and municipal development, in accordance with applicable state and local laws. Ensure that new landscaping does not exacerbate wildfire or flood risks and aligns with vegetation and stormwater management standards.
- Policy 6.2: Water-Efficient Development.** Require the installation of water efficiency measures in new private development and at municipal facilities. Encourage the installation of water efficiency and graywater measures in existing private development, including by helping residents identify rebates and other financial incentives.
- Policy 6.3: Drought Planning.** Work with regional water providers to prepare for reduced long-term water supply resulting from more frequent and severe drought events, and implement extensive water conservation measures and ensure sustainable water supplies, including fire suppression needs.

HUMAN HEALTH HAZARDS

Human health hazards, including bacteria, viruses, parasites, and other pathogens, pose significant concerns in El Cerrito. These conditions can result in physical injuries, fatalities, and mental health issues and exacerbate pre-existing conditions like asthma and allergies. Rats, mice, ticks, and mosquitos are common vectors, meaning they often spread the pathogens that can cause illness. Rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns due to climate change promote the proliferation of disease-carrying vectors. Many of these pathogens also reproduce more rapidly in warmer conditions, compounding the risk of transmission. Warmer conditions and wetter years allow for increased populations of mosquitoes and ticks, extending their geographic range and spreading diseases like West Nile virus, dengue fever, and Lyme disease.^{xiv} As temperatures rise and extreme weather events, such as heavy rainfall, become more frequent, these vectors can spread more broadly, transmitting diseases that threaten public health.^{xv}

Populations most vulnerable to human health hazards are those who spend a significant amount of time outdoors (such as outdoor workers or persons experiencing homelessness), those with fragile immune systems or existing illnesses (which may include persons with chronic illnesses and seniors), those who may live in substandard housing, or who do not have access to health insurance and medical care.

Heatwaves, another increasing hazard due to climate change, can directly impact human health by causing heat-related illnesses and deaths while worsening respiratory conditions

due to increased air pollution. The combination of these factors suggests that human health hazards will become more widespread and severe as climate change progresses, making proactive public health measures even more critical. The impacts of these health hazards extend beyond individual well-being. Widespread disease outbreaks can place strain on healthcare systems, increase economic burdens, and affect community-wide mental health.

Goals and Policies

Goal 7: Protect the health of El Cerrito residents.

- Policy 7.1: Regional Health.** Support Contra Costa County in disseminating information on disease conditions that may affect El Cerrito residents.
- Policy 7.2: Pandemic Planning.** Support Contra Costa County to plan for future pandemic events, including securing necessary public health supplies, preparing effective messaging for preventative actions and treatments, and identifying and evaluating potential public health measures.
- Policy 7.3: Vector-Borne Diseases.** Support the County and the Mosquito and Vector Control District in working with healthcare providers to support free or reduced-cost vaccinations for vector-borne diseases for El Cerrito residents.
- Policy 7.4: Medical Providers.** Support Contra Costa County to coordinate with local medical providers to ensure low-cost medical and emergency medical services are available to all residents in the City.
- Policy 7.5: Outdoor Workers.** Support opportunities to ensure that workers in outdoor industries have the training and resources to be adequately protected from environmental hazards, including extreme heat, poor air quality, pests, and diseases, in alignment with applicable OSHA and Cal/OSHA regulations and standards.
- Policy 7.6: Public Awareness.** Work with local community groups, providers of senior services, and childcare workers to raise awareness about disease prevention and response.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Local Emergency Response

Emergency preparedness and response in El Cerrito is a coordinated effort involving all City departments, which together constitute the City's emergency organization during an emergency, under the leadership of the City Manager, who serves as the Director of Emergency Services, as established in El Cerrito Municipal Code (ECMC) Chapter 2.28 and the City's adopted emergency plan.

The El Cerrito Police Department provides law enforcement services and the El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department delivers fire prevention and suppression services. Other departments such as Public Works also play key roles and have important responsibilities during emergency response efforts.

The City's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) guides these efforts by outlining roles, responsibilities, and coordination among departments, stakeholder agencies, community-based organizations, the business community, and residents. The EOP is regularly updated by staff and approved by the City Council, and it identifies operational strategies and plans for managing inherently complex and potentially catastrophic events. The EOP is available online at:

<https://www.elcerrito.gov/DocumentCenter/View/20415/Emergency-Operations-Plan>

During emergency events, or in anticipation of one, the City will activate its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate response and recovery efforts across departments and with regional, State, and federal partners. The EOC's organizational

structure, as outlined in the City's EOP, serve as a clear hierarchy and system for situational awareness, resource management, and providing public information. The City is committed to maintaining EOC readiness through regular training and drills for City staff, testing communication linkages with external agencies, and reporting on EOC preparedness activities to the community.

The Fire Department also conducts regular training exercises with residents, including the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. El Cerrito's CERT program is run by a partnership between the City and the Fire Department to provide residents with hands-on training in disaster first aid, disaster preparedness, basic firefighting, light search and rescue, damage assessment, and how to turn off utilities. Through CERT and other preparedness activities, the City equips community members with the skills and knowledge needed to assist themselves, their families, and their neighbors during emergencies.

Emergency planning

The State of California requires all State, regional, and local agencies, including PG&E and EBMUD, to maintain their own emergency plan relating to the infrastructure that they install and maintain. In the event of an emergency, the City relies on PG&E to implement its emergency plan, with City support as needed. When an incident occurs anywhere in El Cerrito, the Police Department and/or the Fire Department is typically the first to arrive at the scene, where they secure the area and then determine which other agencies need to be involved.

The City of El Cerrito website's Alert Center, allows residents to view all issued alerts and emergencies in the area and can be accessed at <https://www.el-cerrito.org/AlertCenter.aspx>. The City also provides various emergency alerts through posts on social media platforms and the City's Nixle system. El Cerrito residents may register with Contra Costa County's Community Warning System, an emergency notification system maintained by Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services. This system provides alerts and critical information during emergencies or disasters, including instructions on protective actions such as sheltering in place, lockdowns, evacuations, or avoiding certain areas. Residents receive CWS alerts via phone calls, text messages, emails, sirens, and social media to stay informed about life-threatening hazards.

Emergency Evacuation

With advanced warning, evacuation can effectively reduce injury and loss of life during a catastrophic event. Primary potential emergency access and evacuation routes include San Pablo Avenue, which runs north-south along the western portion of the City, and Arlington Boulevard, runs north-south along the eastern portion of the City. Other potential evacuation routes include Cutting Boulevard, Potrero Avenue, and Moeser Lane, which run east-west and connect Arlington Boulevard to San Pablo Avenue. **Figure S-13** shows the potential evacuation routes throughout the City, although the recommended evacuation routes in any given situation will depend on the specifics of the emergency. These evacuation routes face potential disruption from flooding, wildfire, landslides, or an earthquake, which may block roadways, damage the roadway surface, or collapse bridges and overpasses.

Figure S-14 shows residential parcels with evacuation constraints. All of these parcels are at least a half mile from a major roadway and have access to only one emergency evacuation route. The lack of multiple emergency access points limits roadway access for these properties, which may create difficulties if there is a need to evacuate.

As part of the Safety Element Update, the project team assessed emergency evacuation times, consistent with California AB 747, which requires that all general plan safety elements identify evacuation routes and their capacity, safety, and viability under a range of emergency scenarios. The study assesses evacuation under different scenarios, evaluating roadway capacity and the time needed to evacuate. The evacuation study is included as an appendix to this Safety Element (**Appendix A**).

This study focused on the use of private vehicles for evacuations, consistent with the focus on roadways under State law. While private vehicles are likely to be the primary means of evacuation in most scenarios, some El Cerrito residents may lack access to private vehicles. People may evacuate on foot, by bicycle, using public transit or school buses, or other means, depending on their specific circumstances and the nature of the emergency. Additionally, some residents who initially evacuate by car may have to leave their vehicles and evacuate on foot due to roadway congestion or the speed of the hazardous conditions, as has happened in some recent wildfires across California.

The evacuation study modeled an evacuation from three different scenarios: 1) an early-morning hazardous material spill on San Pablo Avenue, 2) a midday wildfire originating near

the Rifle Range Road trailhead, and 3) a midday wildfire in Wildcat Canyon Regional Park that prompts widespread evacuations. This study found that fully evacuating the affected areas may take up to 60 to 140 minutes for the hazardous material spill, up to 70 to 80 minutes for the Rifle Range Road wildfire, and up to 110 to 160 minutes for the Wildcat Canyon wildfire. These are general estimates that may be affected by numerous factors in an actual emergency, and that most persons in affected areas would likely be able to evacuate sooner.

The report provides a set of recommendations based on the results of the analysis, such as identifying multiple evacuation destinations in different locations to allow for more evacuation routes and shorter evacuation times; coordinating with other jurisdictions to maintain the designated evacuation routes that serve the City; prioritizing undergrounding utilities and upgrading power poles on main evacuation routes to minimize downed wires on these routes; and conducting community-wide evacuation exercises to test the recommendations and plans associated with scenarios in the evacuation study. This Safety Element incorporates many of these recommendations into the goals and policies discussed in this section.

Figure S-13 Potential Evacuation Routes



Source: ESRI, 2024; Bay Area Rapid transit, 2020; City of El Cerrito, 2024; PlaceWorks, 2024; Cal Office of Emergency Services, 2019, 2033;

Figure S-14 Evacuation-Constrained Parcels



Source: ESRI, 2024; Bay Area Rapid transit, 2020; City of El Cerrito, 2024; PlaceWorks, 2024; Cal Office of Emergency Services, 2019, 2033

Goals and Policies

Goal 8: A community prepared for an effective response and recovery in the event of emergencies or natural and human-caused disasters.

- Policy 8.1: Hazard Awareness.** Publicize areas at risk of local hazards, emergency preparedness programs, evacuation planning resources, and other efforts to promote resident awareness and caution regarding hazards, including soil instability, earthquakes, flooding, and fire.
- Policy 8.2: Public Facilities.** Avoid construction of new emergency buildings (police, fire, hospital, etc.) and vital utilities, communication systems and other public facilities in identified fire, flood, and geologic hazard zones (see **Figure S-5, Landslide Susceptibility Areas**; **Figure S-7, Flood Hazard Zones**; and **Figure S-10, Fire Hazard Severity Zones**) to the extent feasible. Design such buildings and infrastructure to remain operational during and after an emergency or disaster and ensure that existing critical facilities and infrastructure remain operational during and after an emergency or disaster.
- Policy 8.3: Emergency Notification and Communication.** Promote participation in the City's Emergency Alert E-Notifications program, PG&E's emergency alert system, emergency HAM radio operators' network, and other networks that can reach residents in the event of an emergency. Continue to support the County's Community Warning System sirens and explore opportunities to expand emergency warning siren systems in El Cerrito. Use all City social media channels, both citywide accounts and departmental accounts to share timely and accurate emergency information. Ensure that the City can issue emergency warnings and ensure communication between emergency responders even in the absence of electrical and cellular service and update the Emergency Operations Plan to specify these alternatives. Ensure that all official City communications are provided in formats and languages that are reflective of the demographics of El Cerrito. Conduct regular outreach and education so that residents understand how notifications and alerts will be shared during an emergency, what emergency sirens mean, and what protective actions should be taken when they are activated.
- Policy 8.4: Power Outages.** Identify residents whose health and safety may be most severely impacted by power outages and provide support and assistance in obtaining backup power supplies and other safety resources.
- Policy 8.5: Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.** After update and certification by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, incorporate the current Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and the City's Annex into this Safety Element by reference, as permitted by California Government Code Section 65302.6.

- Policy 8.6: Community Emergency Preparedness.** In partnership with neighboring jurisdictions, conduct community emergency response and evacuation drills to increase awareness and support improved community preparedness for future emergencies.
- Policy 8.7: Community Emergency Response Team Training.** Support, encourage, and continue to offer Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training to residents and members of the business community to increase disaster awareness and emergency response capability.
- Policy 8.8: Hazard Insurance.** Work with property and rental insurance providers to raise awareness about the latest safety requirements related to seismic, flood, and fire hazards and regularly incorporate these requirements into development codes as necessary, referencing related local ordinances and programs, such as the City’s 2025 amendments to Chapter 8.30 of the El Cerrito Municipal Code. Work with other jurisdictions and local community-based organizations to evaluate opportunities to preserve and improve the cost and quality of property insurance for El Cerrito community members.
- Policy 8.9: Regional Emergency Response and Mutual Aid.** Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions, the Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Services, Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Office, and Caltrans in emergency response and evacuation planning. Maintain and participate in mutual aid agreements with these agencies to ensure coordinated response capabilities, adequate medical and emergency services, and effective inter-agency communication. Cooperate with partners to assess and project future emergency service needs and to conduct joint preparedness, training, and exercises.
- Policy 8.10: Multi-Destination Evacuation Planning.** Identify and maintain a list of multiple evacuation destinations in different locations in the vicinity of the city to provide diverse points of refuge and reduce evacuation times. The City should select these sites based on their capacity to accommodate the estimated number of people evacuating from El Cerrito and unincorporated Kensington.
- Policy 8.11: Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination for Evacuation Route Maintenance.** Collaborate and plan with the City of Richmond, Contra Costa County, Contra Costa Transportation Authority, and Caltrans to ensure the ongoing maintenance and readiness of potential evacuation routes serving El Cerrito and unincorporated Kensington, including making improvements to existing roads to support safe evacuations, as needed. Continue to implement and expand existing agreements where feasible along evacuation routes. These agreements shall include provisions for:
- a. Regular assessment and improvement of existing roads to support safe evacuations.
 - b. Coordinated planning and implementation of traffic management strategies during evacuations.

These efforts will help to ensure adequate capacity, safety, and viability of evacuation routes in the event of an emergency.

- Policy 8.12: Evacuation Route Infrastructure Preparedness.** To enhance evacuation efficiency and safety, the City will:
- a. Continue to evaluate and to the extent feasible provide back-up power systems for all City-owned traffic signals on potential evacuation routes.
 - b. Evaluate and as appropriate develop or update emergency evacuation traffic signal timing plans for all signals on potential evacuation routes, prioritizing outbound traffic flow while maintaining access for emergency vehicles through traffic signal pre-emption.
 - c. Identify and designate routes where temporary evacuation capacity can be created through manual traffic direction to optimize traffic flow, including use of available parking lanes, shoulders, and bikeways for traffic while ensuring emergency responder access is maintained. This will include pre-identifying bottleneck intersections and positioning law enforcement personnel to maintain traffic movement during evacuations.
 - d. Identify additional opportunities to preserve and enhance evacuation route infrastructure preparedness as part of regular maintenance activities, including evaluating the expansion of temporary parking restrictions (such as the red flag day pilot program) to enhance public safety during evacuations, as appropriate.
- Policy 8.13: Evacuation Route Clearance and Capacity Enhancement.** To maximize evacuation route effectiveness:
- a. The City will implement a permanent program that allows restriction of on-street parking on designated evacuation routes during high-risk periods for various hazards based on evaluation of pilot program.
 - b. El Cerrito will support efforts by PG&E to prioritize the undergrounding of utilities and the upgrading of power poles with current isolating/shutdown technologies along main evacuation routes to minimize the risk of downed wires during evacuations. The City will also support tree trimming and other regular maintenance conducted by PG&E along utility corridors.
- Policy 8.14: Community Evacuation Education and Preparedness.** El Cerrito will implement a comprehensive community evacuation education and preparedness program, including:
- a. Regular updates and dissemination of information about how to plan for safe and effective evacuations, in multiple languages and formats accessible to all community members.

- b. Coordination with West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) and private schools to develop and regularly update evacuation plans that address both safe on-campus procedures and coordinated off-site transport to predetermined refuge locations beyond the disaster area.
- c. Targeted outreach and planning for areas with high concentrations of physically and socially vulnerable residents, including those with age-related, disability-related, or other mobility challenges.
- d. Conducting periodic community-wide evacuation exercises to test and refine evacuation plans and procedures.
- e. Encouraging residents and employees to sign up with the Contra Costa County Community Warning System and Genasys Protect to receive emergency alerts and ensure effective distribution of evacuation notifications (New policy).
- f. Identifying pedestrian paths, including stairs and trails, on evacuation maps.

Policy 8.15: Evacuation Assistance Program. Support and coordinate an evacuation assistance program with Contra Costa Transportation Authority, AC Transit, paratransit, dial-a-ride agencies, and care homes to help those with limited mobility, lack of access to a vehicle, and other at-risk populations evacuate safely. Consider training for emergency responders and volunteers in assisting vulnerable populations during evacuations.

Policy 8.16: Hazard Planning in Capital Improvements. As part of the Capital Improvements Program, CIP Budget, and related planning and funding processes for capital improvements, include a forward-looking assessment of how the proposed improvements may be affected by current and anticipated future hazards, including those subject to climate change. Highlight how the project supports community-wide safety, equity, and climate readiness now and in the future. All projects shall incorporate at a minimum standard resilience practices, materials, and other elements to minimize future maintenance. Larger or more complex projects shall include a thorough resilience analysis that describes specific design, material, and construction strategies to ensure long-term durability and adaptability.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation matrix identifies information to support the implementation of the Safety Element policies. For each policy, the implementation matrix includes information on the Department responsible, time frame, and the relative cost to implement the measure (ranging from low to high). The City Manager's Office oversees all departments and leads community outreach and engagement efforts to support these measures.

Table 1: Safety Element Policy Matrix

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Goal 1: Mitigate risk from geologic and seismic hazards.						
1.1: Geotechnical Review. Require geotechnical studies for development proposals in areas at risk from geologic and seismic hazards (see Figure S-1, Local Fault Lines; Figure S-3, Liquefaction Areas; and Figure S-5, Landslide Susceptibility Areas), in accordance with City procedures. Such studies should evaluate the extent of geotechnical hazards, optimum location for structures, the advisability of special structural requirements, and the feasibility and desirability of a proposed facility in a specified location.	Community Development Department, Building Division	Ongoing			Low	Permit fees
1.2: Erosion Control. Provide appropriate control measures in conjunction with proposed development in areas susceptible to erosion, including an erosion control plan and revegetation plan as part of grading permits.	Community Development Department, Building Division	Ongoing	Public Works		Medium	Permit fees
1.3: Seismic Safety of New Development. Require new structures to be designed to contemporary standards for seismic safety. Require that new City-owned critical facilities be constructed to the highest possible standard of seismic safety.	Community Development Department, Building Division	Ongoing			Low	Permit fees
1.4: Seismic Safety of Existing Development. Assist occupants and owners of existing structures in identifying seismic risks to their structures and provide support in obtaining appropriate seismic retrofit measures. Evaluate all City-owned facilities to determine seismic risks and implement appropriate seismic retrofit measures.	Community Development Department, Building Division	Mid-term			High	Bonds, General Fund, grants, permit fees

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
1.5: Seismic Safety of Utilities. Encourage local gas, water, and sewer providers to review and retrofit their main distribution pipes.	Public Works Department,	Long-term		EBMUD, PG&E	Low	General Fund, grants
Goal 2: Minimize potential damage from existing hazardous materials and prevent future hazardous materials contamination.						
2.1: Potential Hazardous Soils Conditions of New Development. Evaluate new development on potentially contaminated sites (such as older fill sites, historical auto service uses, industrial uses, or areas where hazardous materials may have been used, as mapped in Figure S-6, Hazardous Materials Sites) and require that development proposals contain adequate measures to mitigate hazardous material exposure prior to development approvals.	Community Development Department	Ongoing			Low	Permit fees
2.2: Hazardous Soil Conditions in Inundation Hazard Areas. Work with Contra Costa Health Services and other regional partners to identify hazardous materials sites where proximity to mapped flood hazard zones, sea level rise inundation areas, and other water-based hazards that may spread hazardous materials. Prioritize remediation of these sites.	Community Development Department, Public Works Department	Mid-term		Contra Costa Health Services	Medium	General Fund, grants
2.3: Hazardous Materials at Municipal Facilities. Ensure that hazardous materials owned or stored by the City are managed and disposed of appropriately to protect human and environmental health and safety.	Public Works Department	Near-term		Contra Costa Health Services, Contra Costa Clean Water Program	Medium	General Fund

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>2.4: Hazardous Materials Storage and Disposal. Require proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials in accordance with all State, federal, and local laws and regulations to prevent leakage, potential explosions, fires, or the escape of harmful gases, and to prevent individually innocuous materials from combining to form hazardous substances, especially at the time of disposal.</p>	Fire Department	Ongoing		Contra Costa Health Services	Low	General Fund, permit fees
<p>2.5: Hazardous Materials Usage in Construction. Require and enforce effective mitigation measures to minimize exposure to toxic and hazardous materials during building renovations and demolitions.</p>	Community Development Department, Building Division	Ongoing		Bay Area Air District	Low	Permit fees
<p>2.6: Hazardous Materials Public Education. Provide information to the community regarding the potential health hazards posed by hazardous materials and possible ways to reduce hazardous materials use and properly dispose of hazardous materials.</p>	Public Works	Near-term		Contra Costa Health Services, Recyclemore	Low	General Fund, grants, permit fees
<p>Goal 3: Reduce risks from flooding and sea level rise and provide timely and effective flood response.</p>						
<p>3.1: Flood-responsive Siting of New Critical Facilities. Prohibit the construction of new critical facilities and infrastructure, including hospitals, health care facilities, emergency shelters, fire stations, emergency command centers, and emergency communication facilities in mapped flood hazard and sea level rise inundation zones (see Figures S-7, S-8, and S-9).</p>	Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions, Public Works Department	Ongoing			Low	General Fund

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
3.2: Flood-proofing New Construction. Require that new and significantly renovated buildings and structures in the mapped 100-year flood zones be constructed to a higher standard of flood protection to improve resilience, as required by the California Building Code and in accordance with the City's Floodplain Management ordinance.	Community Development Department, Building Division	Ongoing	Public Works		Medium	Permit fees
3.3: Flood Hazards from New Construction. Require new development and significant redevelopment projects, greater than 50,000 square feet of conditioned space, to prepare drainage studies to assess stormwater runoff impacts on the local storm drain system, and to develop recommended detention and drainage facilities as needed to ensure that increased risks of flooding on to neighboring properties do not result from development.	Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions, Public Works Department	Ongoing			Medium	Permit fees, developer impact fees
3.4: Flood Hazards to Existing Development. Help property owners identify qualified service providers and obtain financial incentives to floodproof existing buildings. Continue to evaluate new opportunities to help reduce flood hazards to existing development, including development at risk of current or future flooding not in the mapped 100-year floodplain.	Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions, Public Works Department	Mid-term		Contra Costa County Flood Control District, FEMA	Medium	FEMA grants, General Fund, Community Development Block Grants

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>3.5: Maintenance for the City's Storm Drainage Facilities. Continue to enforce existing laws prohibiting the dumping of debris, fill or other waste materials, and illicit discharges into storm drains, creeks and channels, and the littering of garbage. Continue to ensure that local storm drainage facilities are sufficiently maintained. Pursue viable funding sources for local and regional drainage improvements for adequate flood control and protection.</p>	Public Works Department	Ongoing		Contra Costa County Flood Control District	High	Stormwater utility fees, General Fund
<p>3.6: Creek Maintenance Education. Continue to educate local property owners about their responsibilities to maintain creeks, storm drain-pipes, and open channels on private property, including regularly clearing trash and other debris.</p>	Public Works Department	Near-term		Friends of Five Creeks, Contra Costa Clean Water Program	Low	General Fund
<p>3.7: Natural Stormwater Management Solutions. Continue to identify opportunities and funding sources to expand the City's green infrastructure network, as defined in the City's Green Infrastructure Plan. Update Chapter 8.40 of the City's Municipal Code, Stormwater Management and Discharge Control, to require new development to incorporate natural stormwater management solutions on-site as a condition of approval for discretionary projects, as appropriate.</p>	Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions, Public Works Department	Mid-term		San Francisco Estuary Partnership, State Water Resources Control Board	Medium	Green Infrastructure grants, Prop 84/1 Stormwater Grant Program

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>3.8: Permeable Paving and Green Infrastructure. Continue to require that new development complies with Contra Costa Clean Water Program Stormwater C.3 Guidebook Requirements for treatment of stormwater. Encourage new development to reduce impervious areas and use permeable surfaces in paving and landscaping. Promote the use of green infrastructure, such as bioswales, rain gardens, and vegetated swales, to manage stormwater and enhance groundwater infiltration as outlined in the City's Green Infrastructure Plan. Include permeable surfaces and green infrastructure into City construction and improvement projects.</p>	Community Development Department, Public Works Department	Near-term			Low	Development impact fees, General Fund
<p>3.9: Continuity of public facilities during flooding. Maintain the structural and operational integrity of essential public facilities during flooding through structural retrofits, flood management, operational improvements, and other appropriate actions.</p>	Community Development Department, Public Works Department	Mid-term		Cal OES, FEMA	High	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, General Fund, infrastructure resilience bonds
<p>3.10: Sea Level Rise Coordination. Coordinate with local, regional, State, and federal agencies to plan for the impacts of flooding, sea level rise, and groundwater intrusion in the community.</p>	Community Development Department, Public Works Department	Long-term		BCDC, State Coastal Conservancy	Medium	State Coastal Conservancy grants, regional adaptation funds

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
3.11: Flood Response. Coordinate with the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and neighboring jurisdictions to address regional flood hazards.	Public Works Department	Near-term		Contra Costa County Flood Control, Water Conservation District	Medium	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, General Fund
3.12: Public Flood Preparedness Information. Improve public access to information about flood risks, preparedness, and response steps. Revise and expand on existing resources, such as those available on the City’s website, to help residents and property owners understand what to do before, during, and after flooding events.	Public Works Department	Near-term		Contra Costa County Flood Control, Water Conservation District	Low	General Fund
3.13: Adopt-A-Drain Program. Explore the development and funding of an Adopt-A-Drain program. This initiative would encourage residents, businesses, and community groups to voluntarily adopt storm drains and commit to their regular maintenance by removing debris, leaves, and litter to ensure proper stormwater flow.	Public Works Department	Near-term		Local schools, community-based organizations	Low	Volunteer services, General Fund
3.14: Central Avenue and I-80 Resilience. Support efforts to improve flood protection and long-term resilience to sea level rise for Central Avenue and the I-80 interchange area. Ensure flood protection and climate adaptation initiatives to prioritize El Cerrito’s transportation needs, including evacuation needs.	Public Works Department	Long-term		Caltrans, Contra Costa County Flood Control, Water Conservation District	High	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, infrastructure resilience bonds

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Goal 4: Reduce El Cerrito's risk of wildfire and provide timely and effective fire response.						
4.1: Fire-Resilient Existing Development. Work with property owners and building occupants to raise awareness about potential building and landscape modifications to improve wildfire resilience and work to obtain funding to help property owners make these improvements, in accordance with applicable State requirements and the City's local ordinances and Vegetation Management Program.	Fire Department, Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions	Mid-term			Medium	General Fund, FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants, State Fire Marshal grants
4.2: Fire-Retardant Landscaping. Require the use of fire-retardant vegetation for landscaping in new development in high fire hazard areas. Encourage the use of fire-retardant vegetation in all development City-wide. Fire-retardant vegetation, also known as fire-resistant plants, refers to plants that do not readily ignite from flames or other ignition sources and, if exposed to fire, their foliage and stems do not significantly contribute to the fire's fuel or intensity.	Fire Department, Community Development Department, Planning Division	Near-term			Low	Permit fees, development impact fees
4.3: Hillside Natural Area. Manage vegetation in the Hillside Natural Area to reduce fire hazards in accordance with the recommendations of the Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan. The Fire Department and Public Works Department shall share responsibility for implementation. Pursue viable funding sources to implement measures identified in the Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan that promote wildfire resilience.	Public Works Department, Fire Department	Ongoing		Friends of the HNA, Friends of Five Creeks, El Cerrito Fire Safe Council, El Cerrito Trail Trekkers	High	General Fund, CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
4.4: Hazardous Tree Removal on Private Property. Help residents access resources for removing hazardous trees on private property that threaten residential buildings and critical facilities. Distribute information about available programs and facilitate efforts to connect property owners with external funding sources, local organizations, nonprofits, or state agencies that can provide resources or assistance.	Community Development Department, Planning Division	Mid-term			Medium	CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants
4.5: Urban Forest Management for Wildfire Risk Reduction. Maintain and manage El Cerrito's urban forest to reduce wildfire risk in accordance with the recommendations of the Hillside Natural Area Wildfire Resilience and Forest Conservation Plan.	Fire Department, Public Works Department	Ongoing			Medium	General Fund, CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants
4.6: Fire Breaks. Require property owners of existing and new development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones or the Wildland-Urban Interface (as shown on Figure S-10 and Figure S-11) to create and maintain fire breaks and defensible space around structures and along roadways that is free from dry brush and other flammable materials and to comply with the 100-foot Defensible Space Requirement in Public Resources Code Section 4291 and Government Code Section 51182 for fuel modification to reduce fire danger.	Fire Department	Ongoing	Community Development Department, Planning Division		Medium	

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>4.7: Regional Wildfire Prevention. Continue to collaborate with the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District, Alameda County Resource Conservation District, neighboring jurisdictions, the East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments, the El Cerrito and Diablo Fire Safe Councils, Hills Emergency Forum, and local community organizations to regularly review regional wildfire hazards and vulnerabilities and develop regional wildfire abatement and response strategies.</p>	Fire Department	Ongoing		Contra Costa RCD, Alameda County RCD, neighboring jurisdictions, East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments, and local community-based organizations	Low	General Fund, interagency agreements, regional resilience grants
<p>4.8: Wildfire Risk from Energy Infrastructure. Coordinate with PG&E to reduce wildfire risk related to electrical infrastructure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintenance of fire breaks around electrical infrastructure. ▪ Installation of covered conductors to reduce ignition risk from contact with vegetation or debris. ▪ Use of Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings that automatically shut off power in high-risk conditions. ▪ Vegetation management beyond minimum clearance requirements in high-risk areas. ▪ Implementation of Public Safety Power Shutoffs during extreme fire weather events, with coordination to help minimize community disruption. ▪ Undergrounding electricity infrastructure in Very High and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. 	Fire Department, Public Works Department	Mid-term		PG&E	Medium	PG&E infrastructure hardening funds, CAL FIRE mitigation grants

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>4.9: Firefighting Infrastructure. Facilitate the timely and effective provision of firefighting services by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding the availability of fire hydrants in Very High and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. This may include installation of sufficiently sized hydrants in areas identified in the Hillside Natural Area. Coordinating with the East Bay Municipal Utility District to ensure that adequate peak load water supplies are available to fight fires. Redundancies in the water storage and capacity distribution network should be considered and implemented in those areas of the City where ground failure could result in breaks to both the water and gas mains, with the potential for significant conflagrations. Ensure that hydrants remain accessible for fire response. Requiring that development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones contain visible street signage, such as reflective signs that clearly indicate street names, addresses, and directional arrows for emergency response, Studying and establishing, as appropriate, Red Flag Day parking restrictions to ensure unobstructed access for emergency vehicles. Requiring that new development provide adequate water pressure for firefighting. Identifying opportunities to facilitate access of emergency vehicles to existing development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Identifying opportunities to facilitate access of emergency vehicles to existing development. 	<p>Fire Department, Public Works Department</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>		<p>EBMUD, PG&E</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>EBMUD partnership funds, CAL FIRE grants, General Fund</p>

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
4.10: Sufficient Firefighting Services. Regularly review funding, staffing levels, fire station location, equipment availability, water availability, and availability of other key resources of the El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department to ensure that the department is keeping pace with changes in local population.	Fire Department	Ongoing	City Manager's Office		High	General Fund, equipment replacement reserves
4.11: Fire Protection for New Development. Ensure new development is located where fire and emergency services have sufficient capacity to meet project needs and that existing development maintains its current level of protection service. In addition to adequate fire department staffing and resources, this may include increased requirements for fire protection systems for residential units, such as roof sprinkler systems or other site-specific fire resilience features.	Fire Department, Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions	Ongoing			Medium	Development impact fees, General Fund
4.12: Post-Fire Development. Require redevelopment after wildfires to meet current California Building Code, California Fire Code, and California Fire Safe Standards to reduce future vulnerabilities to fire hazards through site preparation, layout design, fire-resistant landscaping, and fire-retarding building design and materials. Re-evaluate development standards after a wildfire to ensure consistency with the latest regulations and best practices. In addition, regularly review and update local development standards to ensure consistency with the latest regulations and best practices, independent of local fire events.	Fire Department, Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions	Near-term		California Office of Emergency Services	Medium	Permit fees, General Fund, CAL FIRE resilience grants

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
4.13: Post-Fire Displacement. Work with neighboring jurisdictions and local homeless service and emergency support providers to help residents displaced from wildfires to secure housing and other necessary services.	Community Development Department, Housing Division	Near-term		Contra Costa Health Services, local housing, and emergency assistance nonprofits	Medium	General Fund, Emergency Solutions Grants, Community Services Block Grant
4.14: Post-Fire Slope Stabilization. Coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies to stabilize and vegetate burned slopes after a wildfire.	Public Works, Fire Department	Near-term		CAL FIRE, Cal OES, FEMA	High	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Cal OES grants, General Fund
4.15: Wildfire Health Impacts. Work with the Contra Costa County Public Health Division and health service providers to plan for increased levels of illness and injury due to wildfire and to distribute N95 masks during periods of poor air quality.	Fire Department, City Manager's Office	Mid-term		Contra Costa County Public Health Division, local healthcare providers	Medium	General Fund, public health grants

<p>4.16: New Development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Encourage new residential development to occur outside of the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones identified by CAL FIRE (see Figure S-10, Fire Hazard Severity Zones). Where new construction or significant redevelopment is proposed in such areas, require review by the Community Development Department and El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department prior to the issuance of development permits. Plans for proposed development in such areas shall include, at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site plan, planting plan, planting palette, and irrigation plan to reduce the risk of fire hazards and with consideration to site conditions, including slope, structures, and adjacencies. ▪ Development and maintenance of defensible space and shaded fuel breaks. ▪ Development of fire protection plans that include at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Risk analysis; ○ Fire response capabilities; ○ Fire safety requirements, including defensible space, infrastructure, and building ignition resistance; ○ Mitigation measures and design considerations for non-conforming fuel modification; ○ Wildfire education, maintenance, and limitations; and ○ Evacuation planning. ▪ Multiple points of ingress and egress to improve evacuation, emergency response, fire equipment access and adequate water infrastructure for water supply and fire flow that meets or exceeds the standards in the 	<p>Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions, Fire Department</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>		<p>CAL FIRE</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Permit fees, developer-funded improvements, fire resilience grants</p>
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Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>California Fire Safe Regulations. This specifically includes two sections of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Division 1.5, Chapter 7: Subchapter 2, Articles 1-5 (commencing with Section 1270, State Responsibility Area Fire Safe Regulations); and Subchapter 3, Article 3 commencing with Section 1299.01, Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structures Regulations).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class A roof materials for new and replacement roofs. ▪ Location and source of anticipated water supply. 						
<p>4.17: Fire Hazards Response Support. Facilitate firefighting in low-visibility conditions by requiring measures such as high-visibility signage for streets and building addresses that meet or exceed the standards in the California Fire Safe Regulations (Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Articles 2 and 3, Sections 1273 and 1274).</p>	Fire Department	Near-term			Medium	General Fund
<p>4.18: Access for Fire and Emergency Vehicles and Equipment. Require proposed development to provide adequate access for fire and emergency vehicles and equipment that meets or exceeds the standards in the California Fire Safe Regulations (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7): Subchapter 2, Articles 1-5 (commencing with Section 1270, State Responsibility Area Fire Safe Regulations); and Subchapter 3, Article 3 (commencing with Section 1299.01, Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structures Regulations).</p>	Fire Department, Public Works Department, Community Development Department	Ongoing		CAL FIRE	Medium	Development impact fees

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>4.19: Retrofitting City-Owned Roadways. Identify existing public and private roadways in fire hazard severity zones that are not in compliance with current fire safety regulations, to the extent resources are available. Work at retrofitting and maintaining City-owned roadways as needed to meet current standards and encourage private property owners to do the same, to the extent feasible and given the absence of other site constraints. These standards include road standards for evacuation and emergency vehicle access, vegetation clearance, and other requirements of the California Fire Safe Regulations, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Division 1.5, Chapter 7): specifically Subchapter 2, Articles 1-5 (commencing with Section 1270, State Responsibility Area Fire Safe Regulations); and Subchapter 3, Article 3 (commencing with Section 1299.01, Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structures Regulations).</p>	Public Works Department, Fire Department, Police Department	Long-term			High	General Fund, state transportation grants, infrastructure resilience grants
<p>4.20: Firewise Communities. Work with the El Cerrito Fire Safe Council to publicize the Firewise USA program to neighborhoods in areas with high fire risks and support neighborhoods in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and the Wildland-Urban Interface in pursuing designation as Firewise Communities.</p>	Fire Department	Near-term		National Fire Protection Association, neighborhood associations	Low	General Fund, Firewise USA program support
<p>Goal 5: Reduce risk from and provide timely and effective response to extreme heat and severe weather.</p>						
<p>5.1: Urban Tree Canopy. Maintain the health of the urban tree canopy to increase shaded surfaces and reduce risk of downed trees during severe weather. Expand and renew the urban tree canopy to help reduce the impacts of extreme heat.</p>	Public Works Department	Mid-term			Medium	Urban Greening Grants, CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry Program, General Fund

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
5.2: Shading and Heat-Mitigating Materials. Use heat-mitigating materials and install shade structures, both green and built infrastructure, at parks,, along public streets and trails, and at other public spaces under City control. Coordinate with school districts and private schools to encourage similar improvements at school sites to to reduce ground surface temperatures.	Public Works Department	Mid-term		West Contra Costa Unified School District, California Department of Education, private school operators	Medium	Prop 68 funds, General Fund, California Natural Resources Agency grants
5.3: Shading and Heat-Mitigating Materials at Transit Stops. Coordinate with local and regional public transportation providers to increase shading and heat-mitigating materials at transit stops.	Public Works Department	Mid-term		Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, Bay Area Rapid Transit District, Western Contra Costa Transit Authority, Contra Costa Transportation Authority	Medium	Transportation grants, Green Infrastructure funds, Caltrans Active Transportation Program

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>5.4: Resilience Hubs. Identify existing facilities that can function as community resilience hubs. Maintain these facilities as needed to serve as resilience hubs, ensuring that they are well-equipped, accessible, and are situated outside of areas at risk from hazards impacts, and that the public is aware of these resources. Work with neighboring jurisdictions to promote awareness and use of these hubs. Evaluate the feasibility of creating new resilience hubs when new facilities are developed or existing facilities are retrofitted, incorporating renewable energy generation, energy storage, and the ability to offer refuge from extreme heat and poor air quality due to regional wildfire smoke.</p>	Public Works Department, Operations & Environmental Services Division	Mid-term		Contra Costa County, PG&E, local community-based organizations	High	Community Resilience Centers Program, Resilience Hubs Grant Program, General Fund
<p>5.5: Resilient Development. Encourage new and existing development to incorporate building and site design features that reduce the effects of extreme heat, improve indoor air quality, and reduce energy demand. These features could include air conditioning, air filtration, energy-efficient duct work improvements, passive cooling design and amenities, cool roofs, reflective or pervious paving materials, high-albedo surfaces, shade trees, and other green infrastructure. Help residents connect with contractors and financial assistance programs to implement these improvements.</p>	Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions	Mid-term			Medium	BayREN incentives, Green Building grants, Energy-Efficiency Financing programs
<p>5.6: Resilient Power Supplies. Work with PG&E, MCE, and local solar energy installers to support resiliency of the local power grid, including distributed generation and microgrids for residents, businesses, and public agencies.</p>	Public Works Department	Mid-term		PG&E, MCE, local solar energy providers	High	California Energy Commission programs, federal energy resilience funding, General Fund

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
5.7: Renewable Energy and Energy Storage at City Facilities. Maintain, improve, and where fiscally viable expand distributed renewable generation and energy storage at City facilities. Include provisions for the ongoing maintenance and performance monitoring of these systems to ensure long-term reliability. Prioritize buildings and facilities that provide essential City services during extreme weather events for energy storage systems.	Public Works Department	Mid-term		BayREN, California Energy Commission	High	BayREN incentives, state/local infrastructure funds, renewable energy rebates
5.8: Community Solar and Energy Storage. Work in partnership with MCE, the Bay Area Regional Energy Network, and others to support the development of community solar projects, streamline permitting where possible, and prioritize storage systems to ensure community solar could be used during outages.	Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions	Long-term		MCE, BayREN	Medium	BayREN incentives, MCE incentives, state energy grants, infrastructure investment funds
5.9: Planning for Extreme Heat. Participate in regional planning with neighboring jurisdictions to develop an extreme heat response plan that includes establishment of community cooling centers, weatherization of city buildings, temperature triggers for when cooling centers would open, and cooling strategies for persons engaged in outdoor work and persons experiencing homelessness.	Fire Department	Near-term		Contra Costa Health Services, neighboring jurisdictions	Medium	Public Health Emergency Preparedness grants, General Fund
5.10: Community Support and Mutual-Aid Networks. Support residents in developing neighborhood support programs to perform wellness checks on vulnerable neighbors during hazardous events.	Fire Department, Police Department,	Near-term		Neighborhood groups, senior service providers	Low	General Fund

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
5.11: Urban Greening Plan. Implement the Urban Greening Plan to enhance public places and open spaces throughout the city. Open and green spaces provide cooling from heat and are linked to mental health and quality of life benefits.	Community Development Department, Planning and Building Divisions, Public Works Department	Mid-term	Recreation Department		Medium	Urban Greening Program (Prop 84), General Fund
Goal 6: Secure a resilient water supply and use water supplies sustainably.						
6.1: Drought-Tolerant Landscaping. Require drought-tolerant landscaping in new private and municipal development, in accordance with applicable state and local laws. Ensure that new landscaping does not exacerbate wildfire or flood risks, and aligns with vegetation and stormwater management standards.	Community Development Department, Planning Division, Public Works Department	Near-term			Low	EBMUD rebates, General Fund
6.2: Water-Efficient Development. Require the installation of water-efficiency measures in new private development at municipal facilities. Encourage the installation of water-efficiency and graywater measures in existing private development, including by helping residents identify rebates and other financial incentives.	Community Development Department, Building Division	Near-term			Medium	EBMUD rebates, BayREN water-efficiency programs, General Fund
6.3: Drought Planning. Work with regional water providers to prepare for reduced long-term water supply resulting from more frequent and severe drought events, and implement extensive water conservation measures and ensure sustainable water supplies, including fire suppression needs.	City Manager's Office, Public Works Department	Mid-term		EBMUD	Medium	Integrated Regional Water Management funds, General Fund, Cal OES drought resilience funds

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Goal 7: Protect the health of El Cerrito residents.						
7.1: Regional Health. Support Contra Costa County in disseminating information on disease conditions that may affect El Cerrito residents.	Contra Costa County, Public Health Division	Ongoing	City Manager's Office		Low	General Fund, public health grants
7.2: Pandemic Planning. Support Contra Costa County to plan for future pandemic events, including securing necessary public health supplies, preparing effective messaging for preventative actions and treatments, and identifying and evaluating potential public health measures.	Contra Costa County, Public Health Division	Near-term	City Manager's Office		Medium	General Fund, public health grants
7.3: Vector-Borne Diseases. Support the County and the Mosquito Vector and Control District in working with healthcare providers to support free or reduced-cost vaccinations for vector-borne diseases for El Cerrito residents.	Contra Costa County, Public Health Division	Mid-term	City Manager's Office		Low	General Fund
7.4: Medical Providers. Support Contra Costa County to coordinate with local medical providers to ensure low-cost medical and emergency medical services are available to all residents in the city.	Contra Costa County, Public Health Division	Mid-term	City Manager's Office		Low	General Fund, community health partnerships
7.5: Outdoor Workers. Support opportunities to ensure that workers in outdoor industries have the training and resources to be adequately protected from environmental hazards, including extreme heat, poor air quality, pests, and diseases, in alignment with applicable OSHA and Cal/OSHA regulations and standards.	City Manager's Office, Public Works Department	Near-term		Cal/OSHA, labor unions, Public Works contractors	Low	General Fund
7.6: Public Awareness. Work with local community groups, providers of senior services, and childcare workers to raise awareness about disease prevention and response.	City Manager's Office	Near-term		Senior service providers, childcare organizations, local nonprofits	Low	General Fund

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Goal 8: A community prepared for an effective response and recovery in the event of emergencies or natural and human-caused disasters.						
8.1: Hazard Awareness. Publicize areas at risk of local hazards, emergency preparedness programs, evacuation planning resources, and other efforts to promote resident awareness and caution regarding hazards, including soil instability, earthquakes, flooding, and fire.	City Manager's Office, Fire Department	Near-term		Contra Costa County	Low	General Fund
8.2: Public Facilities. Avoid construction of new emergency buildings (police, fire, hospital, etc.) and vital utilities, communication systems, and other public facilities in identified fire, flood, and geologic hazard zones (see Figure S-5, Landslide Susceptibility Areas; Figure S-7, Flood Hazard Zones; and Figure S-10, Fire Hazard Severity Zones) to the extent feasible. Design such buildings and infrastructure to remain operational during and after an emergency or disaster and ensure that existing critical facilities and infrastructure remain operational during and after an emergency or disaster.	Community Development, Planning and Building Divisions, Public Works Department	Long-term			High	General Fund, grants

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>8.3: Emergency Notification and Communication. Promote participation in the City's Emergency Alert E-Notifications program, PG&E's emergency alert system, emergency HAM radio operators' network, and other networks that can reach residents in the event of an emergency. Continue to support the County's Community Warning System sirens and explore opportunities to expand emergency warning siren systems in El Cerrito. Use all City social media channels, both citywide accounts and departmental accounts, to share timely and accurate emergency information. Ensure that the City can issue emergency warnings and ensure communication between emergency responders even in the absence of electrical and cellular service, and update the Emergency Operations Plan to specify these alternatives. Ensure that all official City communications are provided in formats and languages that are reflective of the demographics of El Cerrito. Conduct regular outreach and education so that residents understand how notifications and alerts will be shared during an emergency, what emergency sirens mean, and what protective actions should be taken when they are activated.</p>	<p>City Manager's Office, Fire Department, Police Department</p>	<p>Near-term</p>		<p>Contra Costa County, PG&E</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>General Fund</p>
<p>8.4: Power Outages. Identify residents whose health and safety may be most severely impacted by power outages and provide support and assistance in obtaining backup power supplies and other safety resources.</p>	<p>Fire Department, Community Development Department, Building Division</p>	<p>Near-term</p>	<p>City Manager's Office</p>		<p>Medium</p>	<p>General Fund</p>

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
8.5: Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. After update and certification by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, incorporate the current Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and the City’s Annex into this Safety Element by reference, as permitted by California Government Code Section 65302.6.	Community Development Department, Planning Division	Near-term	Fire Department		Low	General Fund
8.6: Community Emergency Preparedness. In partnership with neighboring jurisdictions, conduct community emergency response and evacuation drills to increase awareness and support improved community preparedness for future emergencies.	Fire Department, Police Department	Near-term		0Neighboring jurisdictions	Medium	General Fund
8.7: Community Emergency Response Team Training. Support, encourage, and continue to offer Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training to residents and members of the business community to increase disaster awareness and emergency response capability.	Fire Department	Ongoing			Low	General Fund
8.8: Hazard Insurance. Work with property and rental insurance providers to raise awareness about the latest safety requirements related to seismic, flood, and fire hazards and regularly incorporate these requirements into development codes as necessary, referencing related local ordinances and programs, such as the City’s 2025 amendments to Chapter 8.30 of the El Cerrito Municipal Code. Work with other jurisdictions and local community-based organizations to evaluate opportunities to preserve and improve the cost and quality of property insurance for El Cerrito community members.	Community Development Department, Building Division	Mid-term			Low	General Fund

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>8.9: Regional Emergency Response and Mutual Aid. Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions, the Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Services, Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Office, and Caltrans in emergency response and evacuation planning. Maintain and participate in mutual aid agreements with these agencies to ensure coordinated response capabilities, adequate medical and emergency services, and effective inter-agency communication. Cooperate with partners to assess and project future emergency service needs and to conduct joint preparedness, training, and exercises.</p>	Fire Department, Police Department	Ongoing		Caltrans	Low	Mutual-aid agreements, General Fund
<p>8.10: Multi-Destination Evacuation Planning. Identify and maintain a list of multiple evacuation destinations in different locations in the vicinity of the City to provide diverse points of refuge and reduce evacuation times. The City should select these sites based on their capacity to accommodate the estimated number of people evacuating from El Cerrito and unincorporated Kensington.</p>	Fire Department, Police Department	Near-term			Medium	General Fund

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>8.11: Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination for Evacuation Route Maintenance. Collaborate and plan with the City of Albany, City of Richmond,, Contra Costa County, Contra Costa Transportation Authority, and Caltrans to ensure the ongoing maintenance and readiness of potential evacuation routes serving El Cerrito and unincorporated Kensington, including making improvements to existing roads to support safe evacuations, as needed. Continue to implement and expand existing agreements where feasible along evacuation routes. These agreements shall include provisions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regular assessment and improvement of existing roads to support safe evacuations. b. Coordinated planning and implementation of traffic management strategies during evacuations. <p>These efforts will help to ensure adequate capacity, safety, and viability of evacuation routes in the event of an emergency.</p>	<p>Public Works Department, Fire Department, Police Department</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>		<p>City of Richmond, Contra Costa County, Contra Costa Transportation Authority, and Caltrans</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Transportation planning funds, infrastructure grants</p>

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>8.12: Evacuation Route Infrastructure Preparedness. To enhance evacuation efficiency and safety, the City will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to evaluate and to the extent feasible provide back-up power systems for all City-owned traffic signals on potential evacuation routes. b. Evaluate and as appropriate develop or update emergency evacuation traffic signal timing plans for all signals on potential evacuation routes, prioritizing outbound traffic flow while maintaining access for emergency vehicles through traffic signal pre-emption. c. Identify and designate routes where temporary evacuation capacity can be created through manual traffic direction to optimize traffic flow, including use of available parking lanes, shoulders, and bikeways for traffic while ensuring emergency responder access is maintained. This will include pre-identifying bottleneck intersections and positioning law enforcement personnel to maintain traffic movement during evacuations. d. Identify additional opportunities to preserve and enhance evacuation route infrastructure preparedness as part of regular maintenance activities, including evaluating the expansion of temporary parking restrictions (such as the red flag day pilot program) to enhance public safety during evacuations, as appropriate. 	Public Works Department, Fire Department, Police Department	Mid-term			High	General Fund

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>8.13: Evacuation Route Clearance and Capacity Enhancement. To maximize evacuation route effectiveness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The City will implement a permanent program that allows restriction of on-street parking on designated evacuation routes during high-risk periods for various hazards based on evaluation of pilot program. b. El Cerrito will support efforts by PG&E to prioritize the undergrounding of utilities and the upgrading of power poles with current isolating/shutdown technologies along main evacuation routes to minimize the risk of downed wires during evacuations. The City will also support tree trimming and other regular maintenance conducted by PG&E along utility corridors. 	<p>Public Works Department, Fire Department, Police Department</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>		<p>PG&E</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>General Fund, PG&E infrastructure hardening funds</p>

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>8.14: Community Evacuation Education and Preparedness. El Cerrito will implement a comprehensive community evacuation education and preparedness program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regular updates and dissemination of information about how to plan for safe and effective evacuations, in multiple languages and formats accessible to all community members. b. Coordination with West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) and private schools to develop and regularly update evacuation plans that address both safe on-campus procedures and coordinated off-site transport to predetermined refuge locations beyond the disaster areas. c. Targeted outreach and planning for areas with high concentrations of physically and socially vulnerable residents, including those with age-related, disability-related, or other mobility challenges. d. Conducting periodic community-wide evacuation exercises to test and refine evacuation plans and procedures. e. Encouraging residents and employees to sign up with the Contra Costa County Community Warning System and Genasys Protect to receive emergency alerts and ensure effective distribution of evacuation notifications. f. Identifying pedestrian paths, including stairs and trails, on evacuation maps. 	<p>Police Department</p>	<p>Near-term</p>	<p>Fire Department, City Manager's Office</p>	<p>West Contra Costa Unified School District</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>General Fund</p>

Policy	Responsible Department	Timing	Supporting Department(s)	Supporting Agencies	Relative Cost	Potential Funding Sources
<p>8.15: Evacuation Assistance Program. Support and coordinate an evacuation assistance program with Contra Costa Transportation Authority, AC Transit, paratransit, dial-a-ride agencies, and care homes to help those with limited mobility, lack of access to a vehicle, and other at-risk populations evacuate safely. Consider training for emergency responders and volunteers in assisting vulnerable populations during evacuation.</p>	City Manager's Office	Mid-term	Public Works Department, Recreation Department	Contra Costa Transportation Authority, Alameda-Contra Costa County Transit District, paratransit, dial-a-ride agencies	Medium	General Fund
<p>8.16: Hazard Planning in Capital Improvements. As part of the Capital Improvements Program, CIP Budget, and related planning and funding processes for capital improvements, include a forward-looking assessment of how the proposed improvements may be affected by current and anticipated future hazards, including those subject to climate change. Highlight how the project supports community-wide safety, equity, and climate readiness now and in the future. All projects shall incorporate at a minimum standard resilience practices, materials, and other elements to minimize future maintenance. Larger or more complex projects shall include a thorough resilience analysis that describes specific design, material, and construction strategies to ensure long-term durability and adaptability.</p>	Public Works Department	Mid-term	City Manager's Office		Medium	General Fund

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES GLOSSARY

Capital Improvement Program - <https://www.el-cerrito.org/475/Capital-Improvement-Program>

El Cerrito's multi-year plan for funding and implementing major infrastructure projects, including those that enhance community safety, hazard mitigation, and climate resilience.

Climate Action and Adaptation Plan - <https://www.el-cerrito.org/325/Climate-Action-Plan>

El Cerrito's comprehensive strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change impacts, including measures that overlap with hazard mitigation such as urban forestry, green infrastructure, and wildfire prevention.

Community Collaborations

Partnerships between the City of El Cerrito and local organizations, neighborhood groups, businesses, and service providers to implement safety policies, conduct outreach, and enhance emergency preparedness.

Development Regulations

El Cerrito's set of zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, building codes, design guidelines, and other land use controls that govern how property can be developed, including requirements related to hazard mitigation and safety.

Development Review - <https://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/4760/2017-Development-Review-Application?bidId=>

The City of El Cerrito's comprehensive process for evaluating proposals for new construction and significant renovations. This process ensures compliance with applicable zoning regulations, subdivision standards, building codes, design guidelines, environmental requirements, and other municipal policies.

Emergency Preparedness Planning - <https://www.el-cerrito.org/572/Get-Ready--Emergency-Preparedness>

El Cerrito's comprehensive approach to planning for disasters. This covers a wide range of City activities, including maintaining and updating the Emergency Operations Plan that directs the City's emergency response and recovery procedures, evacuation plans and protocols, and coordination with the Contra Costa County Emergency Services.

Geologic, Fire, Flooding, and Other Hazard Maps

Official maps maintained by El Cerrito that identify areas subject to specific hazards, including fault zones, landslide-prone areas, Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and flood zones.

Green Infrastructure Plan - <https://www.el-cerrito.org/1335/Green-Infrastructure-Plan>

El Cerrito's strategy for implementing natural systems to manage stormwater, reduce flooding, and provide multiple environmental benefits, including specific projects and maintenance protocols.

Hazardous Soils Remediation

The process of identifying and cleaning up sites with soils that have been contaminated with hazardous materials or other pollutants in El Cerrito, particularly in areas with historical industrial use or other potential sources of contamination.

Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan - <https://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/21576/HNA-Draft-Final-Plan-020625?bidId=>

A specific plan for El Cerrito's 102-acre Hillside Natural Area that balances fire risk reduction through vegetation management with conservation of native plant communities and wildlife habitat.

Intergovernmental Coordination

El Cerrito's formal and informal relationships with other governmental entities, including Contra Costa County, neighboring cities, special districts, and state agencies to address hazards and emergency planning.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan - <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/82601/City-of-El-Cerrito-Annex-2024-HMP>

The Contra Costa County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and El Cerrito's Annex (a locally specific appendix), which identify risks from natural and human-caused hazards and outline short-term, detailed strategies to reduce these risks.

Municipal Code - https://library.municode.com/ca/el_cerrito/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT1GEPR

The codified ordinances of El Cerrito that establish legal requirements for various activities, including those related to public safety, building standards, and emergency management.

Release of Hazardous Materials - <https://www.cchealth.org/health-and-safety-information/hazmat-programs>

El Cerrito's protocols for responding to and providing public information about hazardous materials incidents, including

coordination with Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials Programs.

Urban Forest Management Plan – <https://www.elcerrito.org/463/Urban-Forest-Management-Plan>

El Cerrito's comprehensive approach to maintaining and expanding the city's tree canopy, including street trees and trees in parks and other public spaces. The tree canopy helps to reduce urban heat island effects and manage stormwater.

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ U.S. Geological Survey. 2025, September 22 (accessed). HayWired Scenario: Science Application for Risk Reduction. <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/science-application-for-risk-reduction/science/haywired-scenario>
- ⁱⁱ California State Water Resources Control Board. 2024, August 23 (accessed). GeoTracker Database. <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?CMD=runreport&myaddress>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ California Department of Toxic Substances Control. 2024, August 23 (accessed). EnviroStor Database. <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?myaddress>.
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- ^{vii} California Ocean Protection Council. 2024. *State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance: 2024 Science & Policy Update*. <https://opc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/California-Sea-Level-Rise-Guidance-2024-508.pdf>.
- ^{viii} Center for Disease Control and Prevention. 2022. QuickStats: Deaths Involving Exposure to Excessive Heat, by Sex. National Vital Statistics System, United States, 1999–2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7134a5.htm#:~:text=During%201999%E2%80%932020%2C%20the%20annual,than%20among%20females%20each%20year>.
- ^{ix} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2024. Extreme Heat. <https://web.archive.org/web/20250116035618/https://www.hhs.gov/climate-change-health-equity-environmental-justice/climate-change-health-equity/climate-health-outlook/extreme-heat/index.html>.
- ^x United States Census Bureau, 2020, “Year Structure Built,” in 2016–2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
- ^{xi} Cal-Adapt. 2025, March 18 (accessed). Extreme Heat Days and Warm Nights. <https://cal-adapt.org/tools/extreme-heat>
- ^{xii} Cal-Adapt. 2025, June 18 (accessed). Annual Averages. <https://cal-adapt.org/tools/annual-averages>
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- ^{xiv} California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. 2024. Vector-borne diseases. <https://oehha.ca.gov/climate-change/epic-2022/impacts-human-health/vector-borne-diseases#:~:text=Warming%20temperatures%20and%20changes%20in,the%20blood%20of%20infected%20birds>.
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APPENDIX A

Evacuation Study

Memorandum

Date: October 29, 2024
To: Eli Krispi, PlaceWorks
Sean Moss, City of El Cerrito
From: Sam Tabibnia and Amy Deng
Subject: **City of El Cerrito 2024 Safety Element Update – Emergency Evacuation Time Assessment**

OK24-0539

Fehr & Peers has prepared an assessment of emergency evacuation times for the City of El Cerrito's 2024 Safety Element Update, consistent with the requirements of California Assembly Bill (AB 747). This analysis provides an assessment of the evacuation capacity under different scenarios.

This memorandum consists of the following sections:

1. **Background** (page 1) – discusses the purpose of the analysis, the legislative background, and some of the limitations of the analysis.
2. **Evacuation Capacity Analysis Overview** (page 2) – presents the methodology and assumptions used in the analysis, including the designated evacuation routes, identified evacuation zones, and the evacuation scenarios analyzed in this memorandum.
3. **Evacuation Capacity Assessment** (page 7) – describes the results of the analysis under the three analyzed evacuation scenarios.
4. **Recommendations** (page 11) – presents potential recommendations that could improve emergency evacuation times.

1. Background

This assessment is intended to provide information to comply with the requirements of AB 747, signed in October 2019, which requires that all General Plan Safety Elements be reviewed and updated to identify evacuation routes and their capacity, safety, and viability under a range of



emergency scenarios. This is a requirement for all Safety Elements or updates to a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) completed after January 2022.

As the AB 747 requirement is new, there is no standard methodology or standard of care for this analysis. We have adapted available traffic analysis methodologies and resources that, in our knowledge and experience, we believe meet the intent of the AB 747 requirement. Nevertheless, these methodologies are necessarily limited by the parameters for our work for this project and the current state of our knowledge, as described in this and next section of this memorandum.

This document is intended to provide an assessment of roadway capacity and time needed to evacuate under the described evacuation scenarios and should not be considered an evacuation plan. Emergency evacuation can occur due to any number of events. Additionally, any emergency-caused movement is unpredictable because it has an element of individual behavior related to personal risk assessment for each hazard event as the associated evacuation instructions are provided. As such, this assessment is intended to provide the City of El Cerrito with a broad understanding of the capacity of the transportation system during a hypothetical evacuation scenario; it does not provide a guarantee that evacuations will follow modeling that is used for analysis purposes, nor does it guarantee that the findings are applicable to any or all situations. This memorandum was prepared for the specific and limited purpose of this project. It is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of evacuation planning in the City of El Cerrito or to be used as a specific evacuation plan.

While this assessment should help the City of El Cerrito better prepare for hazard related events and associated evacuations, the City should take care in planning and implementing any potential evacuation scenario.

2. Evacuation Capacity Analysis Overview

Various aspects of the evacuation capacity analysis, including the designated evacuation routes, the evacuation zones, the evacuation scenarios, and the various assumptions used in completing this analysis are described below.

Evacuation Routes

The *El Cerrito & Kensington Residents Guide to Wildfire Preparedness & Evacuation* (2019)¹ identifies evacuation routes for the City of El Cerrito and the unincorporated community of Kensington. The City of El Cerrito provides emergency services to the community of Kensington on a contract basis. These routes normally consist of the following corridors, which are shown on **Figure 1**.

¹ <https://www.kppcsd.org/files/9227af8b3/Fire+Pamphlet+7-24-2019.pdf>



- San Pablo Avenue
- Key Boulevard-Elm Street-Richmond Street
- Ashbury Avenue
- Colusa Avenue
- Arlington Boulevard
- Barrett Avenue
- Cutting Boulevard
- Potrero Avenue
- Moeser Lane
- Central Avenue
- Fairmount Avenue-Carlson Boulevard
- Berkeley Park Boulevard-Stratford Road-Coventry Road
- Westminster Avenue/Wellesley Avenue-Kenyon Avenue-Beloit Avenue-Grizzly Peak Boulevard-Spruce Street

These corridors are the primary routes that vehicles would likely use to evacuate the evacuation zones, depending on the specific emergency event. Considering that most of the evacuating population are local residents who are familiar with the local street network, the modeled evacuation scenarios assume that some of the evacuating vehicles would use other routes depending on their proximity to these routes, the level of congestion on the primary routes, and other factors.

Evacuation Zones

Evacuation areas are defined by the Genasys Protect (formerly known as Zonehaven) emergency response zones as directed by emergency responders. **Figure 1** also shows the 16 Genasys Protect zones in the City of El Cerrito, unincorporated Kensington, and the City of Richmond that may be evacuated at the same time and may use the same evacuation routes.

Evacuation Scenarios

As part of the preparation for this work, Fehr & Peers prepared hazard zone maps and reviewed potential emergency events with City staff, including representatives from the El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department and the El Cerrito Police Department. Maps showing high fire risk areas and landslide risk zones are shown in **Figures 2 and 3**.

The following three events requiring evacuation were chosen based on emergency responder staff input and evaluated in this memorandum:

- **Scenario 1: Hazardous Material Spill on San Pablo Avenue** – A hazardous material spill occurs on San Pablo Avenue at Blake Street in El Cerrito at 4:00 AM on a Monday morning, necessitating the evacuation of nearby residents. Affected residents in the City of El Cerrito are directed to evacuate to the Golden Gate Fields Parking Lot near the west end of Buchanan Street in the City of Albany or other destinations outside the evacuation zones. **Figure 4** shows the evacuated zones and the primary evacuation routes. The evacuation zones consist of Zones ECK-E016 and ECK-E001 in El Cerrito and Zone RCH-E047 in the City of Richmond. The primary evacuation routes



for the El Cerrito zones consist of Cutting Boulevard to I-80 freeway, Richmond Street south to Moeser Lane and to San Pablo Avenue, San Pablo Avenue south to Buchanan Street or to Central Avenue to either I-80 or I-580 to the south, Jacuzzi Street/Cleveland Avenue, or Pierce Street to Buchanan Street. Affected areas in the City of Richmond are directed to evacuate to the west.

- **Scenario 2: Wildfire Originating Near Rifle Range Road Trailhead (Local Evacuation)** – A brush fire originates in the grassy area near the Rifle Range Road Trailhead at 11:00 AM on a weekday in late September with schools in normal session. Fire spreads in a southwest direction. An evacuation is ordered at noon for portions of El Cerrito and Richmond.² Affected residents are directed to evacuate to the Golden Gate Fields Parking Lot near the west end of Buchanan Street in the City of Albany or other destinations outside the evacuation zones. The fire is contained by 3:00 PM and no further evacuation is necessary. **Figure 5** shows the evacuated zones and the evacuation routes. The evacuation zones consist of Zones ECK-E011 and ECK-E012 in El Cerrito. The primary evacuation routes consist of using Arlington Boulevard to Cutting Boulevard, Potrero Avenue, and Moeser Lane to access San Pablo Avenue and the freeways, and using either I-580 South, Jacuzzi Street/Cleveland Avenue, Pierce Street, or San Pablo Avenue to reach Buchanan Street and then the Golden Gate Fields Parking Lot.
- **Scenario 3: Wildfire Originating in Wildcat Canyon Regional Park (Large Area Evacuation)** – A brush fire originates in Wildcat Canyon Regional Park east of El Cerrito at 11:00 AM on a weekday in late September with schools in normal session. Fire spreads in a west direction. An evacuation is ordered at noon for the very high fire severity zones in El Cerrito, Kensington, and Richmond. **Figure 6** shows the evacuated zones and the evacuation routes. The evacuation zones consist of El Cerrito and Kensington Zones ECK-E001, ECK-E004 through ECK-E012, ECK-E014, ECK-E015, and ECK-E017. The primary evacuation routes consist of the designated evacuation routes in the City of El Cerrito and Kensington that generally evacuate out of the area to the north, west, and south, although additional routes may also be used.

These scenarios were chosen in discussions with City staff based on the likelihood of occurrence, availability of evacuation routes, and the judgment of the project team, including the emergency responder representatives.

² Consisting of residents of Vista Heights Road with only access through Rifle Range Road, which are accounted for in Zone ECK-E012.



Analysis Assumptions

Emergency events and corresponding evacuations can occur in myriad ways, some allowing for a range of advanced logistical planning, and others requiring more immediate responses such as shelter-in-place for certain sites (such as schools). Given the infinite range of potential timelines and event and evacuation characteristics, the following baseline assumptions are used in this analysis:

A. Evacuation Capacity

1. Although the evacuation orders for large area evacuations (such as Scenario 3) are expected to be staggered for different zones, this analysis assumes that the entire evacuation area is directed to evacuate at the same time.
2. The City of El Cerrito and the surrounding areas, including unincorporated Kensington and the City of Richmond, provide multiuse and footpaths that provide non-motorized connectivity between various parts of the area. Although some residents could use these paths during an evacuation, this analysis assumes that all evacuations would be by personal vehicle.
3. Conceptually, the time it takes to evacuate is fundamentally constrained by capacity constraints along the roadway system, otherwise known as “bottlenecks.” Thus, the evacuation times for each route and scenario are assessed on a bottleneck basis, whereby key collection points along each evacuation route are evaluated relative to the capacity and the estimated evacuating vehicles. The capacities incorporate operational assumptions as defined in the Transportation Research Board’s *Highway Capacity Manual (HCM, 6th Edition)*, including the following range of per-lane flow rates by lane type and capacity limits based on opposing flows. The HCM-based capacity assumptions were reduced to account for some of the potential capacity reductions during an evacuation due to reduced visibility, traffic signals not working properly, or other causes. The analysis assumes that during the evacuation events, the evacuation roadways would continue to have the same lane designations and intersection controls as during normal operations (i.e., no contra-flow lanes or special lane designations). The bottleneck capacities are presented as a range to account for these potential reductions. Evacuation times for each route include the following range of bottleneck-based time (measured as a flow rate of vehicles per hour) required to serve the entire evacuating flow to reach the designated evacuation destination:
 - Through lane: 750-850 vehicles/hour
 - Channelized right turn lane: 750-850 vehicles/hour.
 - Right turn lane: 450-500 vehicles/hour



- Left turn lane: 450-500 vehicles/hour.
- Shared lane (left-through-right, left-through, through-right, left-right): 450-500 vehicles/hour.
- Freeway on-ramps: 800-900 vehicles/hour

The analysis assumes that the background traffic on major evacuation routes, such as San Pablo Avenue, would be diverted to other routes upstream of the evacuation zones to ensure adequate capacity for the evacuating traffic.

B. Evacuating Population

4. For scenarios that require evacuation of schools, parents/guardians will pick-up students at the schools before evacuating.
5. Evacuating public school students are based on 2022-2023 enrollment numbers and evacuating private school students are based on 2018-2019 enrollment numbers as published by the California Department of Education.
6. The analysis also accounts for the adjacent areas in Kensington and the City of Richmond that would likely need to be evacuated at the same time and would likely use the same evacuation routes. The affected zones in unincorporated Kensington and the City of Richmond for each scenario are described in the previous section of this memorandum.
7. The number of existing residents and employees that would evacuate are based on the 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates data by census tract. Correspondence between the census tracts and the Genasys Protect zones, and determination of best available evacuation routes, is estimated by Fehr & Peers; in many cases, the estimated evacuating vehicles are distributed to multiple evacuation routes.
8. Based on US Census data, the average vehicle ownership in El Cerrito and the neighboring areas of Kensington and Richmond is about 1.8 vehicles per household. Therefore, this analysis assumes an average of 1.8 vehicles per household for all evacuating households. This is a conservative assumption.
9. For scenarios that include evacuation of employment uses, it is assumed that every employee has their own vehicle and will generate a trip during an evacuation.
10. This analysis adjusts the US Census employment numbers to not include residents that work from home.
11. To ensure a conservative analysis, and because reliable data on the number of adult residents who would be at work during daytime evacuation scenarios is not available, this analysis assumed that all adult residents would be at home during an evacuation and



therefore no reduction in residential evacuating vehicles is made for the daytime scenarios (Scenarios 2 and 3).

3. Evacuation Capacity Assessment

This section discusses the results of the evacuation analysis for Scenarios 1, 2, and 3 based on the methodology and assumptions presented in the previous section.

Scenario 1: Hazardous Material Spill on San Pablo Avenue

Table 1 summarizes the land uses and estimated number of vehicles that would be evacuating under Scenario 1 based on the assumptions and sources described above.

Table 2 shows the estimated evacuation times for Scenario 1. This analysis assumes that all El Cerrito evacuating vehicles would leave the evacuation zones and either evacuate to the designated evacuation area at the Golden Gate Fields Parking Lot or to other destinations to the south, west, and north of the evacuation zones.

It is assumed that the evacuation zone in Richmond would evacuate to the west, primarily through streets such as Carlson Boulevard and Potrero Avenue, and the El Cerrito evacuees would have minimal use of these evacuation routes to the west. Since the El Cerrito evacuees would not meaningfully affect the evacuation times for the Richmond evacuees, Table 2 does not report the evacuation times for the Richmond residents. It is estimated that it would take about 2.1 to 2.4 hours for all evacuating vehicles to leave the evacuation zones in El Cerrito.

Table 1: Land Uses and Evacuating Vehicles – Scenario 1

Land Use	Amount	Vehicles ¹
Households	2,770 ²	4,986
Employment ³	0	0
School Students ³	0	0
Total Vehicles		4,986

Note:

1. Assume 1.8 vehicles per household.
2. Consists of the evacuation zones in El Cerrito only (Zones ECK-E016 and ECK-E001).
3. No employment or school students included in this scenario because evacuation is at 4:00 AM when most employment locations and schools are closed.

Source: US Census, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates; Fehr & Peers, 2024.



Table 2: Estimated Evacuation Times by Route – Scenario 1

Evacuation Route	Total Time to Evacuate (Hours) ¹
Cutting Boulevard to I-80	1.6-1.8
San Pablo Avenue south to either Central Avenue or Buchanan Street	2.1-2.4

Note:

- The reported range of times represents the estimated time for all the evacuating vehicles to leave the evacuation area based on the estimated capacity range of the evacuation routes (it is not the travel time between the evacuation zone and destination).

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2024.

Scenario 2: Wildfire Originating Near Rifle Range Road Trailhead (Local Evacuation)

Table 3 summarizes the land uses and estimated number of vehicles that would be evacuating under Scenario 2 based on the assumptions and sources described above.

Table 4 shows the estimated evacuation times for Scenario 2. This analysis assumes that all evacuating vehicles would primarily use Arlington Boulevard to the north and south and Cutting Boulevard, Potrero Avenue, and Moeser Lane to the west to leave the evacuation zones (in addition to taking other routes if those are more feasible) and either evacuate to the Golden Gate Fields Parking Lot or to other destinations to the south, west, and north of the evacuation zones. It is estimated that it would take about 1.1 to 1.3 hours for all evacuating vehicles to leave the evacuation zones.

Table 3: Land Uses and Evacuating Vehicles – Scenario 2

Land Use	Amount	Vehicles ¹
Households	873	1,572
Employment	136	136
School Students ²	0	0
Total Vehicles		1,707

Note:

- Assume 1.8 vehicles per household and 1.0 vehicle per employment.
 - No school students included in this scenario because no schools are in the evacuation zones.
- Source: US Census, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates; Fehr & Peers, 2024.



Table 4: Estimated Evacuation Times by Route – Scenario 2

Evacuation Route	Total Time to Evacuate (Hours) ¹
Arlington Boulevard to Cutting Boulevard, Potrero Avenue, or Moeser Lane	1.1-1.3

Note:

- The reported range of times represents the estimated time for all the evacuating vehicles to leave the evacuation area based on the estimated capacity range of the evacuation route (it is not the travel time between the evacuation zone and destination).
 - Source: Fehr & Peers, 2024.
- Source: Fehr & Peers, 2024.

Scenario 3: Wildfire Originating in Wildcat Canyon Regional Park (Large Area Evacuation)

Table 5 summarizes the land uses and estimated number of vehicles that would be evacuating under Scenario 3 based on the assumptions and sources described above. The totals include both the City of El Cerrito and unincorporated Kensington that would evacuate at the same time and use the same evacuation routes.

Table 6 shows the estimated evacuation times for Scenario 3. This analysis assumes that all evacuating vehicles would primarily use the designated evacuation routes along with other side routes as appropriate, and evacuate either to I-80 in the west, north to Richmond along San Pablo Avenue, Barrett Avenue or Arlington Boulevard, or south to Berkeley and Albany along San Pablo Avenue, Ashbury Avenue, Colusa Avenue, Arlington Boulevard, or Grizzly Peak Boulevard. It is estimated that it would take about 2.3 to 2.6 hours for all evacuating vehicles to leave the evacuation zones.

Table 5: Land Uses and Evacuating Vehicles – Scenario 3

Land Use	Amount	Vehicles ¹
Households	8,751	17,752
Employment	3,440	3,440
School Students ²	4,828	0
Total Vehicles		19,192

Note:

- Assume 1.8 vehicles per household and 1.0 vehicle per employment.
- Since students would be picked up by parents/guardians first and parent/guardian trips are included in the household numbers, no additional vehicle trips assumed for the school students to avoid double-counting vehicles at bottlenecks.

Source: US Census, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates; Fehr & Peers, 2024.



Table 6: Estimated Evacuation Times by Route – Scenario 3

Evacuation Route	Total Time to Evacuate (Hours) ¹
Arlington Avenue to Unincorporated Contra Costa County	2.2-2.5
Barrett Avenue to City of Richmond	2.2-2.5
Cutting Boulevard to I-80	2.1-2.4
Potrero Avenue to I-80	2.2-2.5
Moeser Lane to San Pablo Avenue	2.3-2.6
Central Avenue to I-80	2.3-2.6
Ashbury Avenue to City of Albany	2.1-2.4
Colusa Avenue to City of Berkeley	2.0-2.2
Arlington Avenue to City of Berkeley	1.9-2.2
Grizzly Peak Boulevard to City of Berkeley	1.9-2.2

Note:

1. The reported range of times represents the estimated time for all the evacuating vehicles to leave the evacuation area based on the estimated capacity range of the evacuation routes (it is not the travel time between the evacuation zone and destination).
2. Source: Fehr & Peers, 2024.
3. .

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2024.

Analysis Limitations

Note that the evacuation time estimates presented above may not capture the following conditions:

- Evacuation times would vary depending on directions residents and employees may receive from emergency responders and individual decisions regarding which route to take or which destination to evacuate to, which may include primary evacuation routes or other feasible routes.
- Emergency scenarios are unpredictable and driver behavior can be disorderly.



- There is also general unpredictability in operational issues such as traffic signal timing coordination issues, or power issues that could trigger traffic signals to operate in “red flash.”
 - Smoke generated by wildfires could limit visibility and result in slower travel speeds by evacuees.
- 12.** Evacuation events are not linear in nature (that is, having an even distribution during the evacuation time period) and it is anticipated that evacuees would vacate at a rate that more closely resembles a bell curve from the time that the evacuation order is issued. These are conditions which would affect the total evacuation time estimated in our assessment that are not captured in the methodology used in this assessment since this analysis assumes that all evacuees would evacuate at once when the evacuation order is issued.

4. Recommendations

The City of El Cerrito maintains resources to inform residents and employees about emergency preparedness and evacuation procedures. These resources should be updated as technologies and best practices evolve. The results of the above analysis indicate the following potential improvements and enhancements to existing resources could reduce evacuation times:

1. Identify multiple evacuation destinations in different locations to allow for more evacuation routes and shorter evacuation times. Ensure each evacuation destination can accommodate the estimated evacuating traffic.
2. Coordinate with other jurisdictions including City of Richmond, Contra Costa County, City of Albany, City of Berkeley, and Caltrans to maintain the designated evacuation routes that serve the City of El Cerrito and unincorporated Kensington.
3. Ensure traffic signals on evacuation routes have back-up power, and develop emergency evacuation traffic signal timing plans for traffic signals on evacuation routes, prioritizing evacuation flows and minimizing opposing traffic flows. Emergency response vehicle access into evacuation areas can be maintained through traffic signal pre-emption. Coordinate with Caltrans to develop corridor evacuation timing plans for San Pablo Avenue.
4. Identify corridors where temporary evacuation capacity, such as reversible (contra-flow) traffic lanes, temporary use of parking lanes, shoulders, two-way-left-turn lanes, transit-only lanes or bikeways could be provided while maintaining emergency responder access in the opposite direction.



5. Continue the recently implemented pilot program and if necessary, adjust the program limiting on-street parking on designated evacuation routes either permanently or during high fire risk periods to reduce potential conflicts with evacuating vehicles.
6. Prioritize undergrounding utilities and upgrading power poles with current isolating/shut down technologies on main evacuation corridors to minimize downed wires on these corridors.
7. As part of evacuation messaging, ensure evacuees are informed of the availability of multiple evacuation routes, to allow effective use of all available capacity.
8. Work with West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) and private schools to coordinate evacuation plans for the schools in El Cerrito and Kensington.
9. Consider staggering the evacuation orders for citywide or large area evacuations for different zones and account for the impact on potential bottleneck locations when determining the timing for evacuation of different zones.
10. When considering roadway or intersection design modifications, especially in areas that have less accessibility and on key evacuation routes, consider evacuation capacity and consider design treatments that could allow reversible lanes or temporary use of parking lanes, shoulders, transit-only lanes, and/or bikeways as auxiliary lanes to provide additional capacity during an evacuation event.
11. Close major routes upstream from the evacuation zones and divert traffic to other routes to decrease demand on the primary evacuation routes. If necessary, coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions and Caltrans to plan and implement potential roadway closures.
12. Educate residents and employees about the importance of carpooling in evacuations to reduce the number of evacuating vehicles and minimize evacuation times.
13. Examine areas that have a high concentration of residents with social vulnerability indicators such as age, disability, and other mobility factors to determine other potential barriers to evacuation besides distance to and capacity of evacuation routes. Advanced coordination between first responders to ensure an efficient and well-communicated process for evacuation may be needed in response to various hazard scenarios.
14. Conduct community-wide evacuation exercises to test the recommendations and plans associated with these scenarios.

Please contact us if you have questions about this analysis.



Attachments:

Figure 1: Evacuation Zones and Evacuation Routes

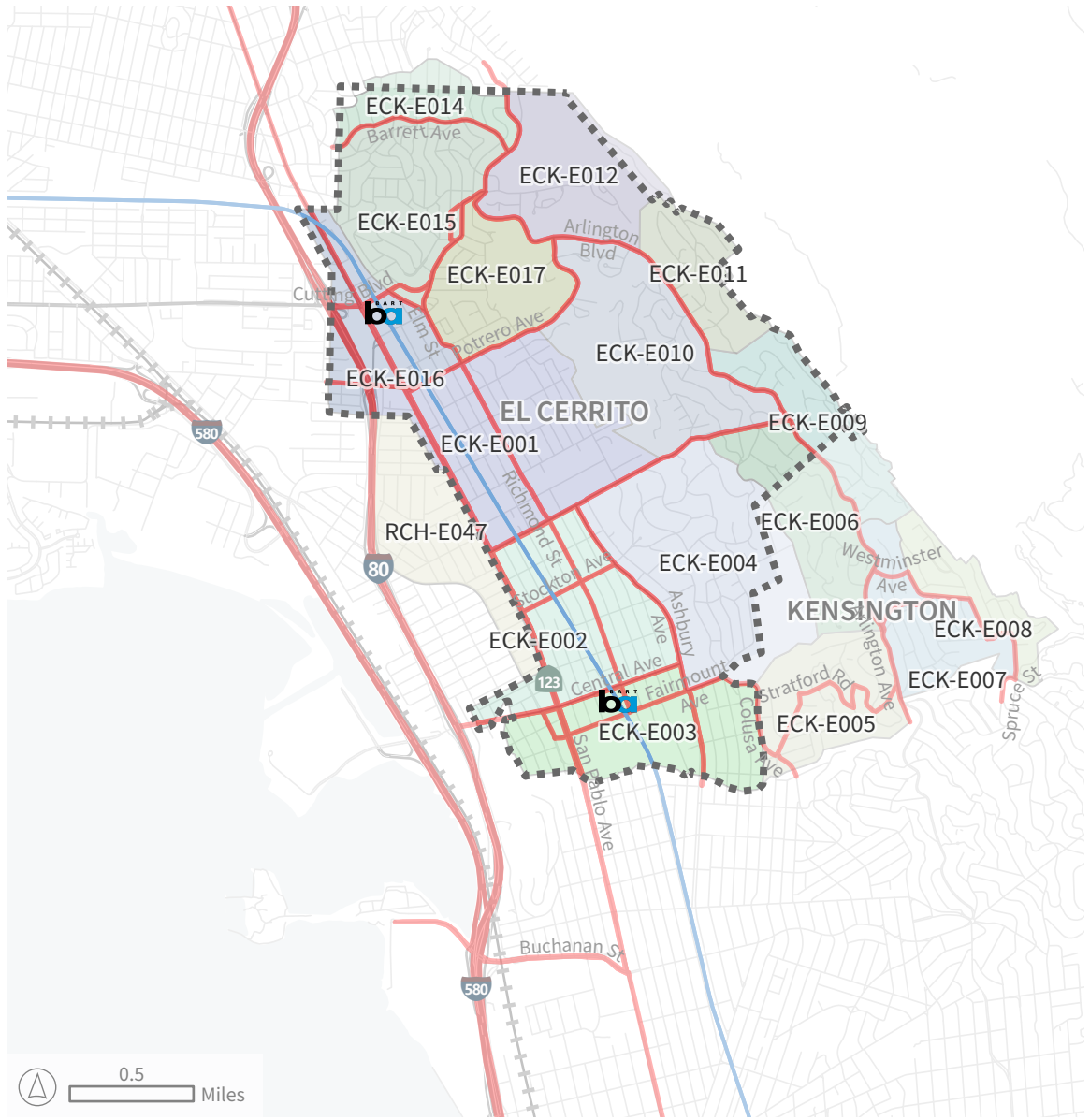
Figure 2: Very High Fire Severity Zones

Figure 3: High Landslide Susceptibility Classes

Figure 4: Scenario 1 (Hazardous Material Spill on San Pablo Avenue)

Figure 5: Scenario 2 (Wildfire Originating Near Rifle Range Road Trailhead, Local Evacuation)

Figure 6: Scenario 3 (Wildfire Originating in Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, Large Area Evacuation)








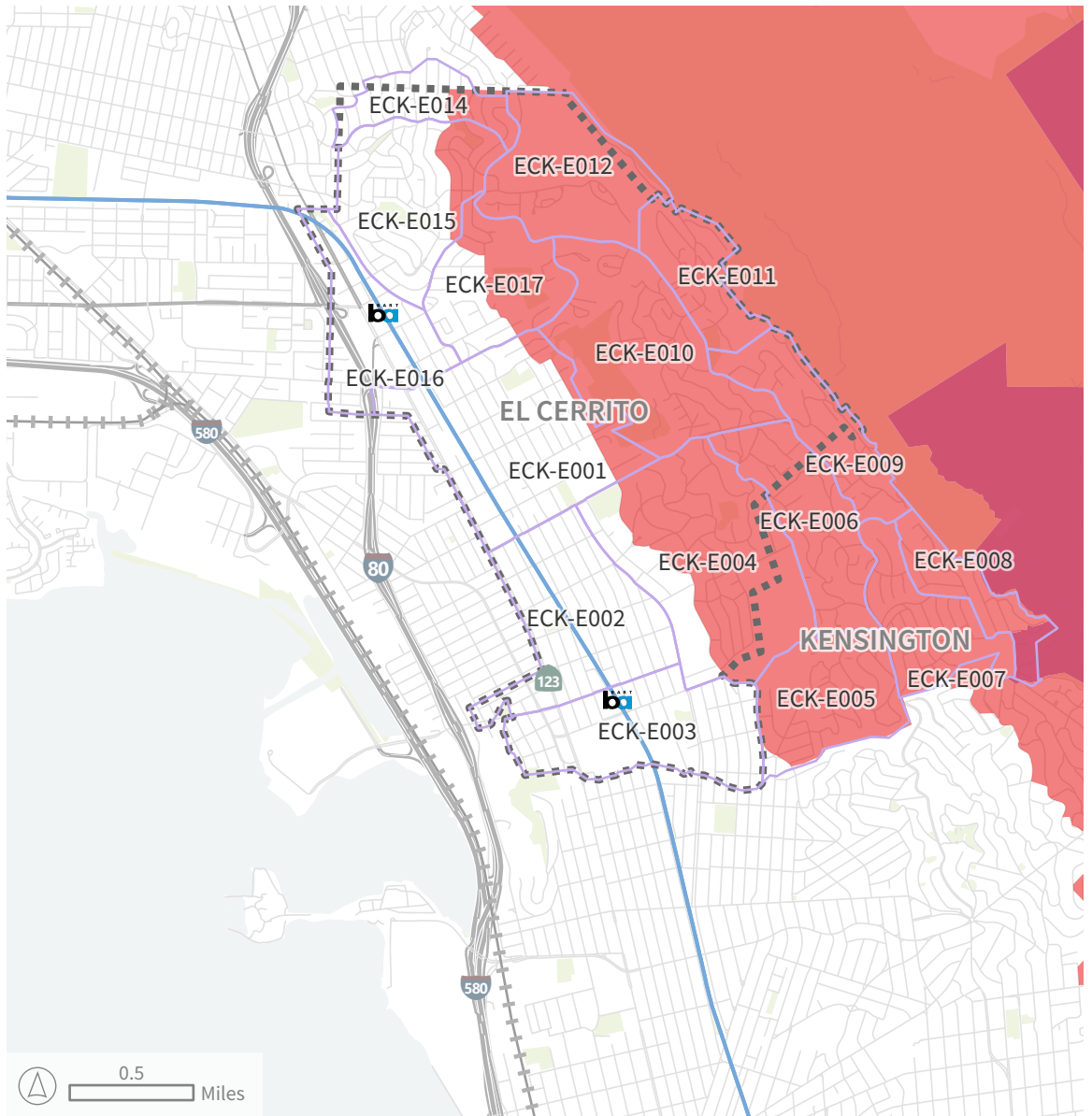




-  City of El Cerrito
-  BART Stations
-  BART Line
-  Primary Evacuation Routes
-  Evacuation Zones

Figure 1 – Evacuation Zones and Evacuation Routes

Source: *El Cerrito and Kensington Residents Guide to Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation*, <https://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/12931/Fire-Pamphlet-FINAL>, 2019. Genasys Protect, 2023.
 City of El Cerrito Safety Element Evacuation Study, Fehr & Peers



-  City of El Cerrito
-  BART Stations
-  BART Line
-  Evacuation Zones



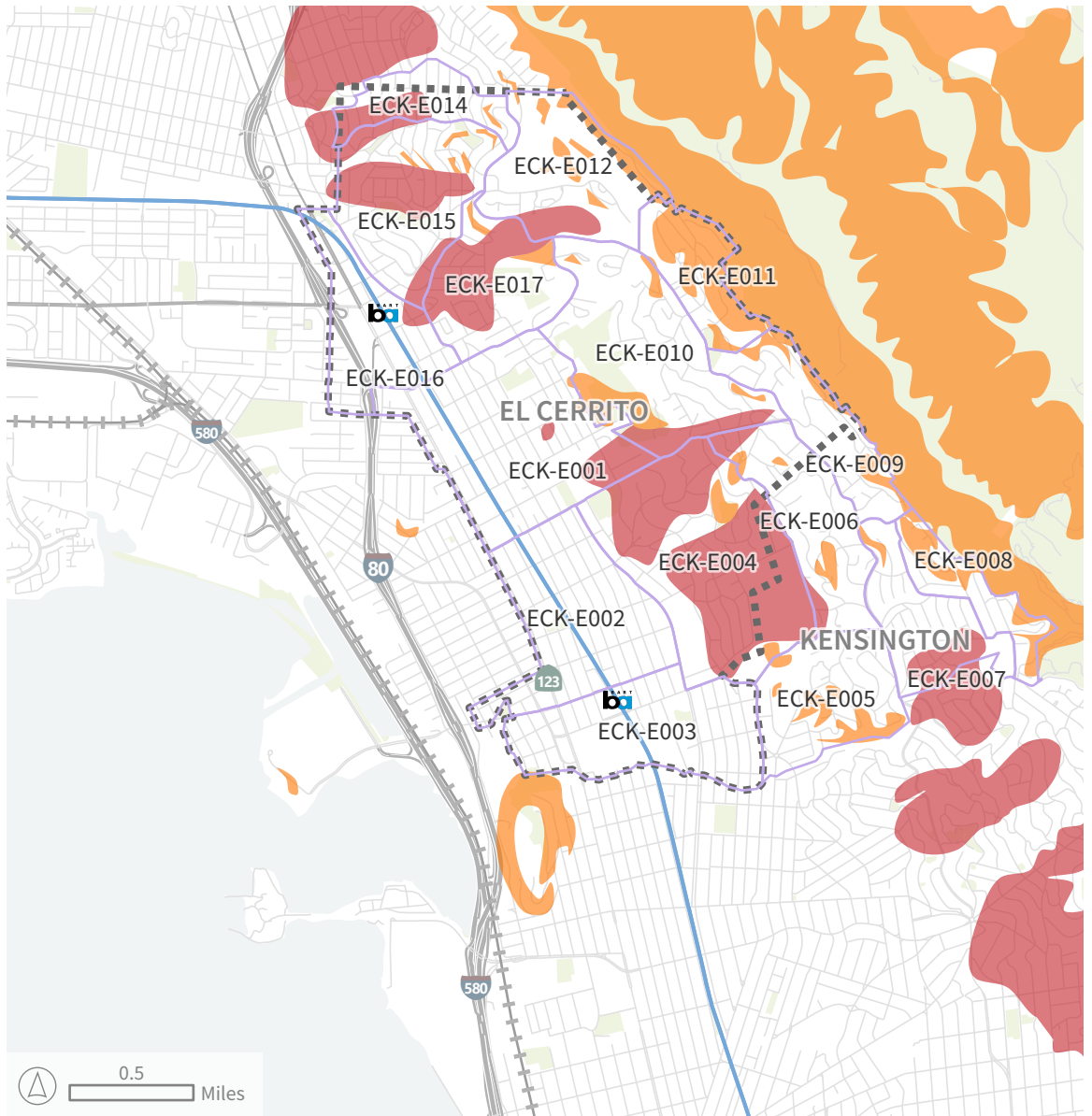




- Fire Severity Zones**
-  Very High (Local Responsibility Area)
 -  Very High (State Responsibility Area)

Figure 2 – Very High Fire Severity Zones

Source: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/03beab8511814e79a0e4eabf0d3e7247>, 2024. Genasys Protect, 2023. City of El Cerrito Safety Element Evacuation Study, Fehr & Peers



-  City of El Cerrito
-  BART Stations
-  BART Line
-  Evacuation Zones

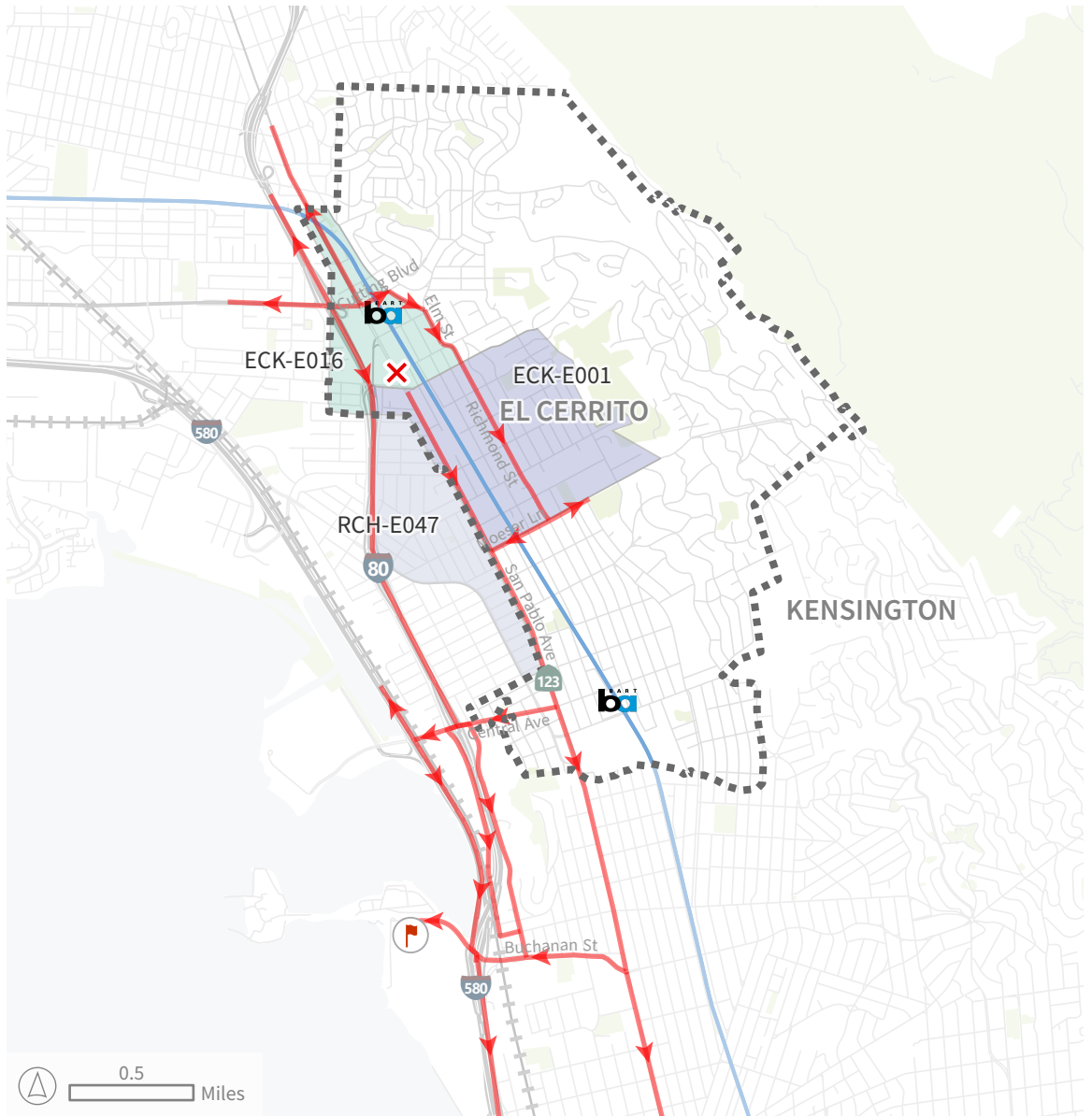
High Landslide Susceptibility Classes

-  Class 9
-  Class 10

Only the highest landslide susceptibility classes shown.

Figure 3 – High Landslide Susceptibility Classes

Source: California Department of Conservation, <https://maps-cnra-cadoc.opendata.arcgis.com/maps/cadoc::cgs-map-sheet-58-deep-seated-landslide-susceptibility>, 2010. Genasys Protect, 2023. City of El Cerrito Safety Element Evacuation Study, Fehr & Peers




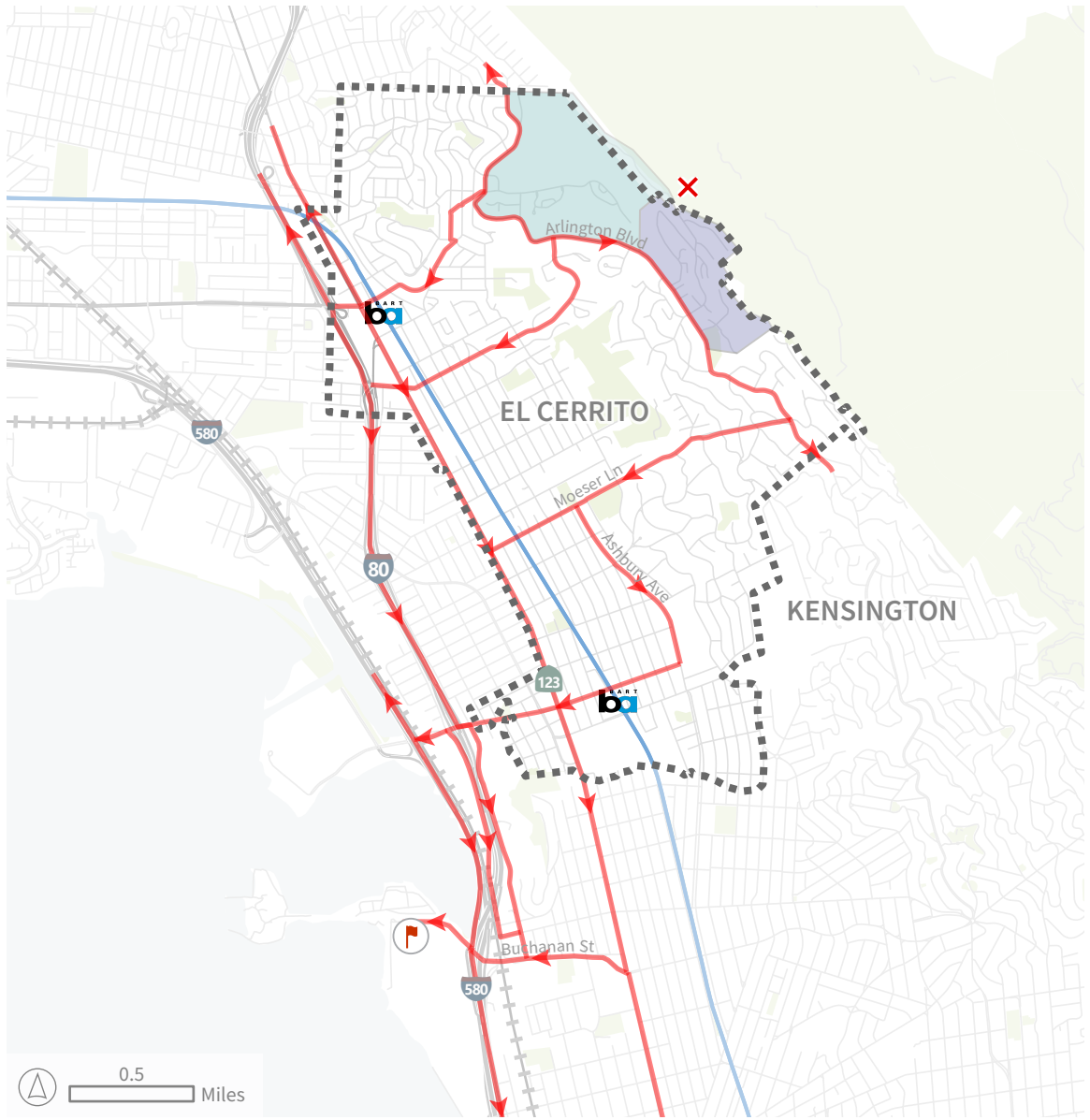
-  City of El Cerrito
-  BART Stations
-  BART Line
-  Primary Evacuation Routes
-  Evacuation Zones
-  Hazardous Material Spill
-  Golden Gate Fields Parking Lot

Figure 4 – Scenario 1 (Hazardous Material Spill on San Pablo Avenue)
 Source: El Cerrito and Kensington Residents Guide to Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation, <https://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/12931/Fire-Pamphlet-FINAL>, 2019. Genasys Protect, 2023.
 City of El Cerrito Safety Element Evacuation Study, Fehr & Peers



0.5 Miles

City of El Cerrito

BART Stations

BART Line

Primary Evacuation Routes

Evacuation Zones

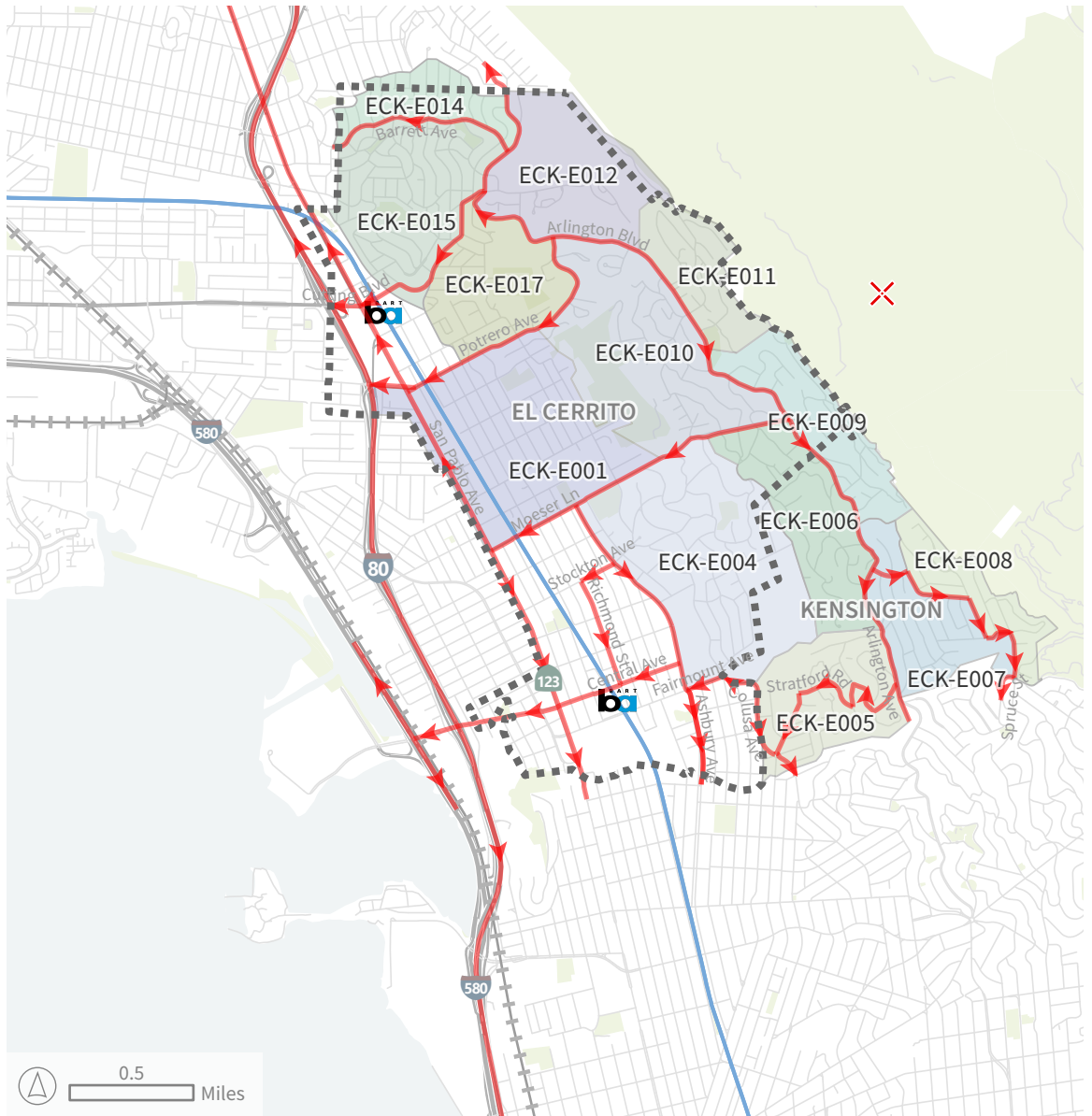
Origin of Fire






Golden Gate Fields Parking Lot

Figure 5 – Scenario 2 (Wildfire Originating Near Rifle Range Road Trailhead, Local Evacuation)

Source: El Cerrito and Kensington Residents Guide to Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation, <https://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/12931/Fire-Pamphlet-FINAL>, 2019. Genasys Protect, 2023.

City of El Cerrito Safety Element Evacuation Study, Fehr & Peers



-  City of El Cerrito
-  BART Stations
-  BART Line
-  Primary Evacuation Routes
-  Evacuation Zones


 Origin of Fire

Figure 6 – Scenario 3 (Wildfire Originating in Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, Large Area Evacuation)

Source: El Cerrito and Kensington Residents Guide to Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation, <https://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/12931/Fire-Pamphlet-FINAL>, 2019. Genasys Protect, 2023. City of El Cerrito Safety Element Evacuation Study, Fehr & Peers

City of El Cerrito

**GENERAL PLAN SAFETY ELEMENT:
ADDENDUM TO THE
CITY OF EL CERRITO GENERAL PLAN
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

October 2025 | Addendum

State Clearinghouse No. 1999022058

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October 2025 | Addendum
State Clearinghouse No. 1999022058

**SAFETY ELEMENT CEQA DOCUMENT:
ADDENDUM TO THE
CITY OF EL CERRITO GENERAL PLAN
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

for the City of El Cerrito

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is an Addendum to the El Cerrito General Plan Environmental Impact Report (General Plan EIR), prepared in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15168. This Addendum reviews the proposed goals and policies in the Safety Element update and finds that the Safety Element update is consistent with the General Plan and that its potential environmental impacts are within the scope of those addressed in the General Plan EIR, which was certified by the El Cerrito City Council in September 1999.

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The City of El Cerrito (City) certified the El Cerrito General Plan Environmental Impact Report (Certified EIR), State Clearinghouse (SCH) Number 1999022058, in September 1999. The General Plan is the “blueprint” for the City and lays out the future of the City’s development in general terms through a series of policies. The General Plan provides the City with a vision for achieving balanced residential, commercial, and civic uses in El Cerrito.

The Safety Element is a State-mandated General Plan element (topic area) that must identify potential natural and human-caused hazards that could affect the City’s residents, businesses, and services. The Safety Element is the section of the General Plan that helps to protect the community against natural disasters and other hazardous conditions. This element identifies these hazards and contains goals and policies to improve the City’s resilience. The proposed project consists of updating the Safety Element to address changed conditions, current best practices, and to meet current requirements in State law.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15164 and 15168, this Addendum has been prepared to document that the potential environmental impacts associated with the Safety Element update (herein referred to as Safety Element update or proposed project) are within the scope of those addressed in the Certified EIR. This Addendum also documents that none of the conditions have occurred, as described in Public Resources Code Section 21166 or CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15163, that would call for preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR. As described below, there are no changes associated with the proposed project or changes in circumstances that would trigger subsequent environmental review.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURES

Pursuant to the CEQA Statutes Section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, when an EIR has been certified for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for the project unless the lead agency determines that one or more of the following conditions are met:

- Substantial project changes are proposed that will require major revisions of the previous EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
- Substantial changes would occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken that require major revisions to the previous EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or
- New information of substantial importance that was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified shows any of the following:
 - a. The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR.
 - b. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than identified in the previous EIR.
 - c. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponent declines to adopt the mitigation measures or alternatives.
 - d. Mitigation measures or alternatives that are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponent declines to adopt the mitigation measures or alternatives.

Where none of the conditions specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 are present,¹ the lead agency must determine whether to prepare an Addendum or whether no further CEQA documentation is required (CEQA Guidelines Section 15162[b]). An Addendum is appropriate where some changes or additions to the previously certified EIR are necessary, but there are not any new or substantially more severe significant impacts (CEQA Guidelines Section 15164).

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, as demonstrated in Section 2, *Project Description*, and Section 3, *Environmental Analysis*, of this Addendum, the City has determined that an Addendum to the Certified EIR is appropriate for the proposed project.

1 See also Section 15163 of the CEQA Guidelines, which applies the requirements of Section 15162 to supplemental EIRs.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 REGIONAL LOCATION

The City of El Cerrito is in the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area. The City is approximately 11 miles northeast of San Francisco in Contra Costa County, bordered by the City of Richmond to the north and west, Wildcat Canyon Regional Park to the east, the Cities of Albany and Berkeley to the south, and the San Francisco Bay to the west (beyond the City of Richmond). Regional access to the City is provided by Interstate 80 (I-80), Interstate 580 (I-580), and by the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) transit system. The City encompasses approximately four square miles.

2.2 STUDY AREA

The Study Area for this Addendum is the area within the El Cerrito City limit, approximately 2,386 acres. This area was evaluated in the Certified EIR.

2.3 BACKGROUND

2.3.1 1999 General Plan

The General Plan, adopted in 1999, lays out the future of the City's development through goals and policy framework. Currently, the State-mandated Safety Element is woven through two chapters of the existing General Plan (Chapter 6, *Public Facilities and Services*, and Chapter 7, *Resources and Hazards*), which include the policies that address safety. These policies were evaluated as part of the environmental review conducted in the Certified EIR.

2.3.2 Safety Element Update (Proposed Project)

The existing 1999 Safety Element is out of date and does not include many of the required topics in current State law. As described previously, policies addressing safety within the City are addressed through two chapters in the General Plan. The proposed project will ensure that the Safety Element meets current requirements and contains important components, such as climate change adaptation and evacuation. The Safety Element will be a dedicated element in the General Plan.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Safety Element update follows the requirements of Section 65302(g) of the California Government Code, which mandates that a Safety Element contain background information and policies to address multiple natural hazards, an analysis of vulnerabilities from climate change, policies to improve climate change resilience, and an assessment of residential areas with evacuation constraints. The Safety Element update covers the following safety issues: seismic and geologic hazards, hazardous waste and materials, flood and inundation hazards, fire hazards, extreme heat and severe weather, drought, human health hazards, and emergency preparedness and response. The Safety Element update is a programmatic document, which provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

As previously described in Section 1.2, *Environmental Procedures*, this Addendum has been prepared pursuant to the Public Resources Code Section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15164 to determine whether implementation of the proposed project would result in any new impacts compared to those evaluated in the Certified EIR. This Addendum only considers the extent to which the proposed project could result in new or more severe impacts than previously evaluated in the Certified EIR; it does not reevaluate impacts that would remain consistent with the analysis provided in the Certified EIR.

The proposed project is a program-level policy document focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and policies and does not include land use or zoning changes that would result in direct or indirect growth or changes in building density and intensity. As shown in the supporting environmental checklist, no provisions implemented under the proposed project would result in direct or indirect population growth and thus would not place additional demands on natural resources, public services, or infrastructure. In addition, the proposed project does not include any site-specific designs or proposals to develop specific projects, nor does it grant any entitlements for development projects. Any future construction-level projects occurring from implementation of the proposed project would be subject to applicable federal, State, regional, and/or City regulations, including compliance with General Plan policies and Municipal Code requirements, and undergo an appropriate level of environmental review under CEQA, including incorporating mitigation measures from the Certified EIR, as required.

3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION

Sections 3.1.1 through 3.1.21 provide a summary of the conclusions from the Certified EIR and then provides an evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project as compared to the impacts identified in the Certified EIR. This evaluation is organized to correspond with the standards of significance consistent with Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist Form*, of the CEQA Guidelines. CEQA identifies and analyzes the significant effects on the environment, where “significant effect on the environment” means a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in any of the physical condition within the area affected by the project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15382). The proposed project, which does not increase development potential, introduce new types of development, or expand the boundaries of the Study Area evaluated under the Certified EIR, is analyzed herein.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

3.1.1 Aesthetics

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts on scenic vistas, would not substantially damage scenic resources, would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality, or create a new source of light and glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: LU1.1, LU1.2, LU1.3, LU.3, LU1.5, LU1.5, LU1.6, LU1.7, LU2.1, LU2.5, LU3.1, LU3.2, LU4.1, LU4.5, LU4.6, LU5.1, LU5.2, LU5.3, LU5.4, LU5.6, LU6.1, CD1.1, CD1.2, CD1.3, CD3.3, CD3.4, CD3.9, CD4.1, CD4.2, T1.7, T2.1, PR1.7, PS2.11, PS2.12, PS3.5, and PS5.3, and adherence to applicable guidelines, and procedures, including, but not limited to, Design Guidelines, Development Regulations (zoning), and Development Review.²

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. Therefore, the proposed project would not change the scale or location of development beyond that which could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts to aesthetics beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in no impacts on Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance, would not conflict with a Williamson Act contract, would not conflict with forest land or timberland, would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use, and would not involve the conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.³

² City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, page 2-10 and pages 4-83 through 4-87.

³ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, page 1-2.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The proposed project is a program-level policy document which provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. Therefore, the proposed project would not change the scale or location of development beyond that which could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to agriculture and forestry resources. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.3 Air Quality

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts with respect to conflicts with an applicable air quality plan and would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of a criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard. The Certified EIR also concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in a less-than-significant impact with respect to exposing sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations with implementation of normal permit and review procedures and mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: R1.4, LU5.5, T1.3, T1.4, and T2.2. In addition, the Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in no impact on other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.⁴

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts to air quality resources beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

⁴ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-4 and 2-5 and 4-31 through 4-38.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

3.1.4 Biological Resources

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts on candidate, sensitive, or special-status species, would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat, would not have a substantial adverse effect on wetlands or wildlife corridors, would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, and would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: LU6.1, R1.1, R1.2, R1.3, R1.7, R1.8, and R1.9, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies, including, but not limited to, Riparian and Stream Restoration Programs, Environmental Education Programs, a Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan, Tree Preservation Ordinance, Open Space Preservation Actions, and consultation with applicable regulatory agencies.⁵

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts to biological resources beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.5 Cultural Resources

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less than significant impacts on historical resources, would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, and would not disturb any human remains with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, Policy R1.3, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and

⁵ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-9 and 2-10 and 4-78 through 4-82.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

implementing strategies, including, but not limited to, Development Review, Historical Inventory and Designation, and Archaeological Resources.⁶

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts to cultural resources beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.6 Energy

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts with respect to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources and would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: LU5.5, T1.3, T1.4, T2.2, R1.4, R1.5, CD4.4, CD4.5, CD5.1, and H-7, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans, including, but not limited to, the Bicycle Master Plan, Capital Improvement Program, Travel Demand Management (TDM), Intergovernmental Coordination, Development Regulations (zoning), Development Review, and Air Quality Strategies.⁷

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. As described in more detail in Section 4.1.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the El Cerrito City Council adopted the City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) that addresses energy use along with GHG emissions and community resilience in the face of climate change-related hazards. The Safety Element update incorporates the climate vulnerability assessment in the CAAP and contains policies that support the adaptation and resilience efforts in the CAAP. Therefore, the proposed project reaffirms and further implements efforts of the CAAP in safeguarding the existing energy infrastructure and promoting energy efficiency. It

⁶ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-10 and 4-88 through 4-90.

⁷ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-8 and 4-63 through 4-64.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in more intense energy usage or any other adverse impacts to energy beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.7 Geology and Soils

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, related to faulting, seismic shaking, or landslides with implementation of applicable General Plan policies, guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans, including the use of Geologic, Fire, Flooding, and Other Hazard Maps, Geotechnical Review Procedures, and Emergency Preparedness Planning. The Certified EIR also concluded that there would be less-than-significant impacts with respect to the loss of topsoil and that development would not be located on unstable soil or expansive soil and would not destroy a unique paleontological resource with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: H1.1, H1.2, H1.3, H1.4, H1.5, H1.6, H2.1, and H2.2, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans, including, but not limited to, the Capital Improvement Program and Development Review. Additionally, the Certified EIR concluded that there would be no impacts associated with soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks.⁸

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project includes policies to address seismic and geologic hazards (Goal 1). It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to geology and soils beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was

⁸ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-9, 4-68 through 4-78, and 4-88.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Certified EIR did not include an evaluation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions pursuant to CEQA Guidelines criteria (a) and (b) for GHG emissions because these criteria were not introduced to the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist*, until 2010, and therefore were not required by CEQA at the time the Certified EIR was prepared. However, global climate change could have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the EIR was certified. In the U.S. Supreme Court Case of *Massachusetts v. USEPA* (2007) 549 U.S. 497, 507, the Court explained the issue began garnering governmental attention long before the General Plan EIR was certified in 1999. The opinion states: “[i]n the late 1970s, the Federal Government began devoting serious attention to the possibility that carbon dioxide emissions associated with human activity could provoke climate change. In 1978, Congress enacted the National Climate Program Act, 92 Stat. 601, which required the President to establish a program to ‘assist the Nation and the world to understand and respond to natural and man-induced climate processes and their implications.’” Although the Certified EIR did not include a GHG analysis, the Certified EIR included an evaluation of the GHG emissions (particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter [PM₁₀], reactive organic gases [ROG], nitrogen oxides [NO_x], ozone [O₃], and carbon monoxide [CO]) in Chapter 4.5, *Air Quality*.⁹

On July 16, 2024, the El Cerrito City Council adopted the City’s CAAP to address GHG emissions and community resilience in the face of climate change-related hazards. The City developed the CAAP’s focus areas and strategies based on results from community engagement, the vulnerability assessment, and GHG analysis. The CAAP intends to serve as a roadmap toward reaching aggressive emissions-reduction targets, improving the City’s resilience to climate change impacts, and guiding collaboration between the City and community of El Cerrito. The CAAP aims to distribute the benefits of climate action and adaptation equitably by prioritizing vulnerable communities in planning and implementation. The Safety Element update incorporates the climate vulnerability assessment in the CAAP and contains policies that support the adaptation and resilience efforts in the CAAP. Therefore, the proposed project would support the CAAP in reducing GHG emissions for construction and operation of potential future development in the City. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was

⁹ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 4-31-4-38.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts with respect to disposal of hazardous materials, would not cause a release of hazardous materials into the environment, would not emit hazardous emissions within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school, would not be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites, would not physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and would not expose people or structures to wildland fires with implementation of applicable mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: H1.7, H1.8, H1.9, H1.10, and H1.11, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans, including, but not limited to, the Hazardous Waste Management, Development Review, and Transportation of Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Materials Storage Tanks. The Certified EIR also concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would not result in impacts to an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport.¹⁰

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project includes policies to address hazardous waste and materials (Goal 2). It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to hazards and hazardous materials beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts with respect to water quality standards, would not decrease groundwater supply, would not alter the drainage pattern of the area such that it would cause erosion, runoff, polluted runoff, and flooding, would not release pollutants due to project

¹⁰ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-6, 4-55, and 4-56, and 4-65 through 4-68.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

inundation, and would not conflict with a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: PS1.1, PS1.2, PS4.1, H1.13, H1.14, H1.15, H1.16, R1.6, R1.7, R1.8, and R1.9, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans, including, but not limited to, the Capital Improvement Program, Development Review, Water Quality Strategies, and use of Geologic, Fire, Flooding, and Other Hazard Maps.¹¹

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project includes policies to address flooding and inundation hazards (Goal 3). It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to hydrology and water quality beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.11 Land Use and Planning

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts with respect to dividing an established community and would not conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: LU1.1, LU1.2, LU1.3, LU1.4, LU1.5, LU1.6, LU1.7, LU2.1, LU2.5, LU3.1, LU3.2, LU4.1, LU4.5, LU4.6, LU5.1, LU5.2, LU5.3, LU5.4, LU5.6, LU6.1, CD1.1, CD1.2, CD1.3, CD3.3, CD3.4, CD3.9, CD4.1, CD4.2, T1.7, T2.1, PR1.7, PS2.11, PS2.12, PS3.5, and PS5.3.¹²

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with

¹¹ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-6, 2-9, 4-44, and 4-73 through 4-77.

¹² City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-2, 2-3, and 4-3 through 4-17.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

respect to land use and planning beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.12 Mineral Resources

The Certified EIR does not identify any mineral resources in the City.

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to mineral resources beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.13 Noise

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts on temporary or permanent increases in ambient noise levels and would not be located in a private airstrip or airport land use plan that would expose people to excessive noise levels with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: H3.1, H3.2, H3.3, H3.4, H3.5, H3.6, H3.7, H3.8, H3.9, H3.10, H3.11, and H3.12, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans, including, but not limited to, compliance with the Noise Ordinance, State Noise Insulation Standards, and BART Noise.¹³

The General Plan EIR did not include an evaluation of groundborne vibration pursuant to criterion (b). However, impacts associated with groundborne vibration could have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the EIR was certified, and no such impact was identified in the Certified EIR. The Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual, prepared by the Federal Transit Administration, was originally issued in 1995, prior to

¹³ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-5 and 4-39 through 4-43.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

certification of the Certified EIR.¹⁴ The manual provides procedures for prediction and assessing noise and vibration impacts for transit projects and is commonly used to evaluate impacts associated with groundborne vibration for several types of development projects.

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to noise beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.14 Population and Housing

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts on inducing substantial unplanned population growth and would not displace people or housing with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: LU1.1, LU1.2, LU1.3, LU1.4, LU1.5, LU1.6, LU1.7, LU2.1, LU2.3, LU2.5, LU3.1, LU3.2, LU4.1, LU4.2, LU4.5, LU5.1, LU5.2, LU5.3, and LU5.4, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans, including, but not limited to, the Capital Improvement Program, Design Guidelines, Development Regulations (zoning), Development Review, Economic Development Strategy, Housing Program, Redevelopment Program, and Specific Plans.¹⁵

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities or directly or indirectly induce population growth beyond that which could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to population and housing beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project

¹⁴ Federal Transit Administration. 2018, September. *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*.

¹⁵ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-3 and 4-17 through 4-20.

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would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.15 Public Services

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts on fire protection services, police protection services, schools, parks, and other public facilities with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: GM4.2, PS1.1, PS1.2, PS1.3, PS1.4, PS1.7, PS2.1, PS2.2, PS2.3, PS2.4, PS2.5, PS2.6, PS2.7, PS2.8, PS2.9, PS2.10, PS2.11, PS2.12, PS3.1, PS3.5, PS5.3, PS6.1, PS6.2, PS6.3, H1.17, H1.18, H1.19, H2.1, LU4.6, CD2.4, CF1.8, PR1.1, PR1.6, PR2.3, CF1.1, CF1.2, CF1.4, CF1.5, CF1.6, CF1.7, and CF1.8, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans, including, but not limited to, the development review process and requirements for payments of public facilities fees.¹⁶

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project includes policies to reduce fire hazards (Goal 4) and assist the community and public services providers with responding to and recovering from emergencies (Goal 8). It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities or directly or indirectly induce population growth beyond that which could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to public services beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.16 Recreation

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts on existing neighborhood and regional parks and would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: PR1.2, PR1.3, PR1.4, PR1.5, PR1.6, PR1.7, PR1.8, PR1.9, PR1.10, PR1.11, PR1.12, PR1.14, PR2.1, PR2.2 and PR2.3, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing

¹⁶ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-5 through 2-8 and 4-44 through 4-61.

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strategies and plans, including, but not limited to, Development Review, Grant Funds, In-lieu Fees, Annual Budget, Asset Replacement Fund, and Capital Improvement Program.¹⁷

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities or directly or indirectly induce population growth beyond that which could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to recreation facilities beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.17 Transportation

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts on conflicts with the circulation system, would not increase hazards or incompatible uses, and would not result in inadequate emergency access with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: LU5.1, GM1.1, GM1.2, GM3.3, GM4.1, GM4.3, T1.1, T1.2, T1.7, T2.1, T2.2, T3.1, T3.3, T4.1, T4.2, T4.3, and T4.4, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans, including, but not limited to, the Capital Improvement Program, use of the General Plan Circulation Map, Development Review, Intergovernmental Coordination, Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan, Transportation System Performance Measures, Bicycle Master Plan, Travel Demand Management (TDM), Design Guidelines, Design Review, and Development Regulations (zoning).¹⁸

The Certified EIR did not include an evaluation of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) pursuant to criterion (b) of the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist*, because this criterion was not introduced to the checklist until 2018, and therefore were not required by CEQA at the time the EIR was certified. With the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 743 (September 2013), which was codified in Public Resources Code Section 21099, and the subsequent adoption of revised CEQA Guidelines (December 2018), level of service (LOS) can no longer be used as a criterion for

¹⁷ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-7 and 4-59 through 4-61.

¹⁸ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-7, 4-21 through 4-30, and 4-55 through 4-59.

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identifying significant transportation impacts for most projects under CEQA.¹⁹ SB 743 changed the focus of transportation impact analysis in CEQA from measuring quality-of-life impacts to drivers, to measuring the physical impacts of driving on the environment. Changes in law, regulation, or guidelines adoption are not “new information” as that term is used in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 if the information about the issue (i.e., VMT) was known or should have been known at the time EIR was certified (in this case 1999). The Certified EIR included a discussion of the generation of additional daily automobile trips in Chapter 4.8, Energy, of the Certified EIR.²⁰ Since the certification of the General Plan EIR, the issue of VMT has become a more prominent issue of concern, as evidenced by passage of SB 743 in 2013.

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity within the City. It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities or directly or indirectly induce population growth beyond that which could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to transportation beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

The Certified EIR did not include an evaluation of tribal cultural resources in accordance with criteria in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Sections XVIII(a) and XVIII(b) because these criteria were not introduced to the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist*, until 2017, and were not required to be evaluated per CEQA at the time the EIR was certified. Changes in law, regulation, or guidelines adoption are not “new information” as that term is used in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 if the information about the issue (i.e., tribal cultural resources) was known or should have been known at the time EIR was certified (in this case 1999). Numerous studies completed in the twentieth centuries have documented resources and/or sites of

¹⁹ LOS is the measure of the average amount of delay experienced by vehicle drivers at an intersection or along a road segment during the most congested time of day. VMT measures the total number of daily miles traveled by vehicles on the roadway network and thereby the impacts on the environment from those miles traveled. LOS is a measure of local vehicle congestion at an intersection or on a road segment, and VMT is a measure of the total miles of vehicle travel measured area-wide or at the project level.

²⁰ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 4-62 through 4-64.

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significance to Native American tribes. Therefore, this is not new information per CEQA Guidelines Section 15162.

In compliance with SB 18,²¹ a letter was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to determine whether any sacred sites are listed on its Sacred Lands File for the potential sites for housing. A response was received on June 13, 2025, indicating the search returned positive results for tribal cultural resources within the Study Area and recommended contacting tribal representatives. The City sent SB 18 letters to the tribal representatives provided by the NAHC on June 23, 2025. The City received a response from the Confederated Villages of Lisjan Nation requesting consultation on July 16, 2025, and a response from the Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan on July 25, 2025. The City clarified with representatives of both tribes that the Safety Element update is a policy document and any future discretionary projects occurring from implementation of the proposed project would undergo an appropriate level of environmental review under CEQA, including tribal consultation, as required per CEQA. City staff met with a representative of the Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan on August 12, 2025 and discussed the project. The City followed up with both tribes on September 17, 2025 to confirm that neither tribe had any comments to share regarding the Safety Element update. No other responses have been received to date.

3.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

The Certified EIR concluded that development consistent with the General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts on water, wastewater treatment, and stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities, would not affect water supply for future development, would not create the need for additional wastewater treatment capacity, would not generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, and would comply with statutes related to solid waste with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: GM5.1, GM5.2, GM5.3, GM5.4, PS2.8, PS3.5, PS5.1, S4.1, PR2.3, PS4.1, R1.6, R1.7, R1.8, R1.9, H1.14, and H1.15, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans, including, but not limited to, the Growth Management Element of the El Cerrito General Plan that establishes a service standard (for capacity planning purposes), Capital Improvement Program, and Development Review.²²

²¹ Senate Bill 18, passed in 2005, requires a city to consult with the Native American Heritage Commission and any appropriate Native American tribes for the purpose of preserving relevant tribal cultural resources prior to the adoption, revision, amendment, or update of a General Plan.

²² City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 2-5 through 2-8 and 4-44 through 4-57.

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The proposed project is a program-level policy document which provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project includes policies to safeguard utility infrastructure (Goals 1, 5, and 8). It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities or directly or indirectly induce population growth beyond that which could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to utilities and service systems beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

3.1.20 Wildfire

While wildfire was not introduced as its own topical section in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist*, until 2018, Chapter 4.7, *Public Services and Utilities*, of the Certified EIR addressed impacts to fire protection services and emergency evacuation and impacts were found to be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures that include the adoption of, and adherence to, the following policies: PS2.1, PS2.2, PS2.3, PS2.4, PS2.5, PS2.6, PS2.7, PS2.8, PS2.9, PS2.10, PS2.11, PS2.12, PS3.1, H1.17, H1.18, H1.19, and H2.1, and adherence to applicable guidelines, procedures, and implementing strategies and plans.²³

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. The proposed project includes policies to address fire hazards, including wildfire (Goal 4). It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities beyond those that could occur from implementation of the General Plan, and, as such, would not result in adverse impacts with respect to wildfires materials beyond what was evaluated in the Certified EIR. There are no changed circumstances or new information that meets the standard for requiring further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The proposed project would not result in new or more severe impacts beyond what was addressed in the Certified EIR and would not meet any other standards under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(3).

²³ City of El Cerrito. 1999, April 16. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of El Cerrito General Plan Update*, pages 4-49 through 4-57.

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3.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

The proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-disturbing activities or directly or indirectly induce population growth beyond that which could occur from implementation of the General Plan. As discussed throughout this Addendum, the proposed project would not result in a new impact or a substantial increase in magnitude of the existing impacts evaluated in the Certified EIR.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15355, *Cumulative Impacts*, defines cumulative impacts as two or more individual effects, which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts may result from individually minor, but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time. As described in Sections 3.1.1 through 3.1.20, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a new or a substantial increase in magnitude of the existing cumulatively considerable impacts of the General Plan.

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4. CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in the Certified EIR, all impacts from implementation of the General Plan were found to be less than significant except for the significant and unavoidable impacts related to air quality. As discussed in Section 3.1.3, *Air Quality*, the proposed project would not exacerbate these impacts. The proposed project does not include any site-specific designs or proposals to develop specific projects, nor does it grant any entitlements for development projects. Any future construction-level projects occurring from implementation of the proposed project would be subject to applicable federal, State, regional, and/or City regulations, including compliance with General Plan policies and Municipal Code requirements, and undergo an appropriate level of environmental review under CEQA, including incorporating mitigation measures from the Certified EIR, as required.

As summarized in this chapter and for the reasons described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Analysis*, the City has determined that an Addendum to the Certified EIR is appropriate for the proposed project. None of the conditions analyzed under the Certified EIR have changed, nor does the proposed project, as an implementing tool of the General Plan, meet any of the criteria for preparing a subsequent or supplemental EIR. The proposed project will not have one or more significant effects not discussed in the Certified EIR, nor does the proposed project create substantially more severe significant effects than previously examined in the Certified EIR.

4.1 SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES TO THE PROJECT

The proposed project does not represent a substantial change to the Certified EIR because the proposed project is a program-level policy document that provides strategies to address public safety and resilience issues focused on hazard reduction and adaptation goals and does not include land use or zoning changes and would not result in an increase in development capacity in the City. It would not change the scale or location of development or overall ground-distributing activities beyond those which could occur from implementation of the General Plan. Consequently, there are no substantial changes proposed that would require major revisions of the Certified EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.

4.2 SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES

The proposed project would not result in substantial changes in physical circumstances that would cause a new significant impact or substantially increase the severity of a previously identified significant impact, and there have been no other changes in the circumstances that

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meet this criterion. There have been no changes in the environmental conditions in the Study Area that were not contemplated and analyzed in the Certified EIR and that would result in new or substantially more severe environmental impacts in association with implementation of the proposed project.

4.3 NEW INFORMATION

There is no new information of substantial importance, which was not known or could not have been known at the time of certification of the General Plan EIR by the El Cerrito City Council in September 1999, that identifies a new significant impact; a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant impact; mitigation measures or alternatives previously found infeasible that would now be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the General Plan; or mitigation measures or alternatives that are considerably different from those analyzed in the Certified EIR and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment.