



Staff Liaison
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AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE Environmental Quality Committee

Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

7:00 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair Howdy Goudey; Vice-Chair Simrun Dhoot; Members Buddy Akacić, Pamela Austin, Fred Bialy, Mark Miner, Eevelyn Mitchell, Sean O'Connor, Paloma Pavel, Sheila Tarbet, Rose Vekony
2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC** *(Estimated time: 5 minutes)*
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, as well as introduction by individuals interested in serving on the advisory body. Remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.
3. **COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS** *(5 min.)*
Staff and/or Mayor Lisa Motoyama may report on policies, priorities, and actions taken by the City Council, and/or on matters of general interest to the EQC.
4. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** *(5 min.)*
Consider a motion adopting the minutes of the EQC meeting held on September 12, 2023.
5. **ENVIRONMENTAL ART** *(10 min.)*
Discuss a standing agenda item for presenting environmental art.
6. **COLLABORATION WITH THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE** *(5 min.)*
Hear updates, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the City's Urban Forest Committee.
7. **CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION PLAN (CAAP)** *(10 min.)*
Hear updates, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding development of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.
8. **EQC BUDGET AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS** *(10 min.)*
Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding planning, logistics, and expenditures for the EQC calendar of events, including:
 - Green Team 2023 Cleanups / Broom Pulls:
 - Sept. 23, Saturday, Coastal Cleanup Day, Baxter Creek Park cleanup (Debrief)
 - Oct. 22, Sunday, Northern Gateways cleanup
 - Dec. 3, Sunday, Baxter Creek Park cleanup (with regular Baxter volunteers)
 - Sat., Oct. 7, 9:45am, Rialto Theater – Film: The Street Project w/ EC Strollers and Rollers (Debrief)
 - Sun. Oct 8; El Cerrito Library Parking Lot – El Cerrito Free Market (formerly "Swap It") (Debrief)
 - Sat. Oct. 21, 11am-3pm – Annual Ride Electric event adjacent to N. Berkeley BART

9. LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PLAN (LRSP) STAKEHOLDER GROUP (5 min.)

Consider a motion to appoint 1 member to the Local Road Safety Plan Stakeholder Group.

- The City is currently developing a Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP) that looks at traffic safety on our local street network. An LRSP results in an implementable plan with strategies, actions, and projects focused on reducing crashes on City roadways – particularly fatal and serious injury crashes.

10. EQC ANNUAL WORK PLAN (20 min.)

Review and comment on the EQC Work Plan and Calendar, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding updating the Work Plan for 2024.

- 2023 Work Plan and 2022 Achievements attached.

11. PRESENTATION FROM EQC MEMBER SIMRUN DHOOT (40 min)

Hear a presentation from EQC member Simrun Dhoot on BAAQMD's efforts to reduce harmful impacts from natural gas appliances and wood smoke on Bay Area residents.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (5 min.)

Hear committee member announcements and suggestions for future EQC agenda items. Potentially engage in discussion and make decisions regarding logistics of EQC consideration of items including:

- MCE Clean Energy & California Public Utilities Commission Updates
- Environmental, Social, And Racial Framework - Link to the [JEDI Tool](#)
- Climate Adaptation, Severe Weather Events, and Emergency Preparedness
- Environmental Films Series
- Integrated Pest Management Report from City Staff
- EQC Collaboration with Young People in El Cerrito
- Tool/Toy Lending Library
- Urban Greening Plan Implementation
- Community Member Suggestions (e.g. Meatless Green Mondays)
- Open Space Preservation
- Mitigation of heat effects; Federal Inflation Reduction Act

13. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, Christina Leard, at (510) 215-4338. 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 the El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center (7501 Schmidt Lane) during normal business hours.



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DRAFT MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE Environmental Quality Committee

Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

CONVENE REGULAR MEETING Chair Goudey called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair Howdy Goudey; Members Buddy Akacić, Pamela Austin, Mark Miner, Eevelyn Mitchell, Sean O'Connor, Sheila Tarbet, Rose Vekony **Absent:** Vice-Chair Simrun Dhoot; Fred Bialy; Paloma Pavel **Also Present:** Yvetteh Ortiz, Staff Liaison
2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**
There was public comment made by El Cerrito High School students Neel and Ava.
3. **COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**
Staff Liaison Yvetteh Ortiz informed the EQC that the September 19 City Council Meeting would include a Study Session on Boards, Commissions and Committees. She also provided an update the the City Hall Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station project will begin and be under construction.
4. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**
Consider a motion adopting the minutes of the EQC meetings held on July 11, 2023 and August 8, 2023.
Move/Second: O'Connor/Miner **Action:** Passed a motion to adopt the Minutes of the July 11, 2023 and August 8, 2023 EQC meetings. **Ayes:** Unanimous of members present **Noes:** None
5. **ENVIRONMENTAL ART**
Member Akacić made comments highlighting a film shown in Richmond regarding the Richmond Greenway and proposed that the EQC arrange a visit to the Richmond Greenway. Public comments were made on the need for North-South bikeways in El Cerrito specifically on Richmond St. Staff Liaison Ortiz provided information on the Richmond Street Complete Streets project.
6. **COLLABORATION WITH THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE**
Urban Forest Committee (UFC) Member Robin Mitchell reported that the UFC had reviewed the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) methods to quantify carbon sequestration and had created an ad-hoc subcommittee to look at strategies for urban forest carbon sequestration. She indicated City Arborist Stephen Pree had summarized work done in the Hillside Natural Area (HNA) related to fire fuel reduction and that internal meetings for the HNA master plan had started.
7. **CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION PLAN (CAAP)**
Staff Liaison Ortiz and Chair Goudey provided updates. The last community workshop was held on August 23, and the consultant will now prepare draft plan for public comment. Member Miner indicated that he is convinced that the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory is extensive and the right way to measure GHG. Committee members indicated that when GHG is calculated as a portion of county, region or state, it is harder for El Cerrito to demonstrate an impact of any specific City actions taken so key performance measures/ local monitoring measures need to be identified to assess progress.

8. EQC BUDGET AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Staff and Committee members provided updates on recent events the EQC has supported and discussed plans for future events in 2023, including:

- Green Team 2023 Cleanups / Broom Pulls:
 - Aug. 13, Sunday, Creekside Park cleanup (Debrief)
 - Sept. 23, Saturday, Coastal Cleanup Day, Baxter Creek Park cleanup
 - Oct. 22, Sunday, Northern Gateways cleanup
 - Member Bialy unable to lead, Member O'Connor volunteered to lead but will need help with getting tools.
 - Dec. 3, Sunday, Baxter Creek Park cleanup (with regular Baxter volunteers)
- Sat., Oct. 7, 9:45am, Rialto Theater – Film: The Street Project w/ EC Strollers and Rollers
- Sun. Oct 8; El Cerrito Library Parking Lot – El Cerrito Free Market (formerly “Swap It”)
- Sat. Oct. 21, 11am-3pm – Annual Ride Electric event adjacent to N. Berkeley BART

Committee members discussed boosting advertisement about activities beyond City website, and to market events. Member Austin suggested a couple of kiosks along Ohlone greenway.

9. PREVIEW PRESENTATION FOR THE STREET PROJECT EVENT

EQC Members previewed Steve Price’s draft presentation on transportation, participated in discussion and considered possible action items regarding transportation in El Cerrito and the Street Project event on October 7 at the Cerrito Theater. Committee members indicated more bike racks and lanes are needed in the City.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Hear committee member announcements and suggestions for future EQC agenda items. Potentially engage in discussion and make decisions regarding logistics of EQC consideration of items including:

- Presentation on BAAQMD’s efforts to reduce harmful impacts from natural gas appliances and wood smoke on Bay Area residents
- Support for Kiosks on Ohlone Greenway
- Don’t Litter Campaign to encourage businesses that don’t pick up after their events
- An EC Drive Electric Event
- Composting Enforcement
- Environmental, Social, And Racial Framework - Link to the [JEDI Tool](#)
- Climate Adaptation, Severe Weather Events, and Emergency Preparedness
- Environmental Films Series
- Integrated Pest Management Report from City Staff
- EQC Collaboration with Young People in El Cerrito
- Tool/Toy Lending Library
- Urban Greening Plan Implementation
- Community Member Suggestions (e.g. Meatless Green Mondays)
- Open Space Preservation
- Mitigation of heat effects; Federal Inflation Reduction Act

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Howdy Goudey, Chair

This is to clarify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Environmental Quality Committee meeting of September 12, 2023 as approved by the Environmental Quality Committee.

Christina Leard, Staff Liaison



Environmental Quality Committee

2023 WORK PLAN

AND

2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Members: Chair Howdy Goudey; Vice-Chair Rose Vekony; Buddy Akacić, Fred Bialy, Simrun Dhoot, Mark Miner, Eevelyn Mitchell, Sean O'Connor, Paloma Pavel, Ellen Spitalnik, Sheila Tabet, Neil Tsutsui, and David Weinstein

Because the City of El Cerrito recognizes that environmental quality is an important issue that demands immediate and ongoing attention, the Environmental Quality Committee (EQC) was established in 2008 by Resolution 2008-13 as a Council-appointed body of up to 15 El Cerrito residents and business owners. It typically meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 PM in City Council Chambers (or virtually as required). The enabling resolution identifies the whole City's role and responsibility in reducing environmental impacts and the EQC's role in providing environmental leadership and effecting cultural change in the way that the City and its residents relate to the environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Environmental Quality Committee's **mission** is to educate, inspire, and activate our community to thrive in a socially just, equitable, and regenerative manner.

The EQC **duties and responsibilities**, as stated in its enabling resolution, are

1. To serve in an advisory capacity to the City Council, staff, other boards, commissions, and committees, and the citizens of the City with regard to environmental quality issues within the City of El Cerrito
2. To recommend programs, policies, and ordinances to the City Council and promote the City's environmental quality efforts
3. To promote and foster public awareness, education, interest and support for environmental quality efforts, foster volunteer opportunities, and educate El Cerrito residents regarding environmental quality and issues relating to environmental impacts

The EQC **goals** are

- To reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to meet or exceed targets of the El Cerrito Climate Action Plan, also proposing revised goals as appropriate
- To apply a framework of social, racial, and environmental justice in the implementation of our work
- To promote environmental education, action, engagement, equity, and justice
- To involve learners of all ages
- To help businesses and residents work and live in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly fashion
- To inform and champion the City's environmental policies and ordinances
- To change material use patterns by encouraging Reduction, Reuse, Recycling, and Composting
- To champion energy/water efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainable transportation
- To minimize hazardous chemical use and human/environmental exposure to toxins
- To protect, expand, and steward green spaces with public path/trail connectivity; maintain and restore natural areas with an emphasis on native ecosystems; and encourage a network of human/wildlife-friendly green habitat throughout the City
- To support water quality, healthy creeks and forests, and green infrastructure to increase resiliency in the face of climate change
- To bring attention to disadvantaged community members who are inequitably impacted by environmental degradation

The EQC's work is guided by the 2015–2020 El Cerrito Strategic Plan (excerpted below):

Goal F: Foster environmental sustainability citywide

- Be a leader in setting policies and providing innovative programs that promote environmental sustainability.
- Promote environmental education to facilitate behavioral changes by working with the school district and other community groups.
- Implement policies to promote waste diversion (i.e., mandatory commercial recycling and green waste).
- Encourage alternative modes of transportation to the single occupancy vehicle.
- Implement and monitor the City's Climate Action Plan to:
 - Reduce vehicle miles traveled (by creating well-connected, pedestrian, bicycle and transit-oriented urban forms that will make it easier for residents and visitors to leave their car behind.)
 - Facilitate energy and water efficiency and greater use and generation of clean energy
 - Reduce the amount of waste generated in El Cerrito
 - Make municipal operations more resource-efficient and environmentally friendly

On August 20, 2019, the City of El Cerrito approved a resolution (2019-52) and joined hundreds of jurisdictions across the globe in declaring a climate emergency. This resolution, which sets a target to reduce GHG emissions further, with the ultimate goal of reaching zero GHG emissions, has heightened both the urgency and import of the EQC's work.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since the EQC's establishment in 2008, the committee's emphasis has cycled between public education, community volunteer organization, and environmental policy, but the general commitment to all forms of action envisioned for the EQC has remained consistent over time. The committee has also maintained a fairly consistent size, with a number of long-serving members. More than 40 community members have served, and the committee is currently operating near its full 15-member capacity.

2023 WORK PLAN

OBJECTIVE	PROPOSED ACTIVITIES	PRIORITY RANKING	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION
1. Public Education and Outreach	a) Use “Act on the Climate Emergency!” as the EQC’s theme for 2023.	1	1 year
	b) Implement our JEDI tool (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) as part of all our EQC work.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	c) Host public events (e.g., virtual films, lectures, webinars, workshops, youth activities) to mobilize residents about the Climate Emergency and educate them on electrification, sustainability, and resiliency.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	d) Provide outreach for the new Foodware Ordinance and food waste composting to residents and businesses. In particular, educate residents about bioplastics vs. fiber-based materials that can be composted in El Cerrito.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	e) Participate in events and programs that encourage energy efficiency and electrification of buildings and transportation (e.g., Bay Area SunShares program to increase rooftop solar adoption; Ride and Drive Clean webinars, discount campaigns, and ride-and-drives; BayREN Home+ workshop; National Drive Electric Week).	1	1 year (ongoing)
	f) Co-sponsor the Hillside Festival and other related hikes and educational events	1	1 year (ongoing)
	g) Pilot public education and outreach to promote electrification in home retrofits and encourage the replacement of gas-powered home appliances and landscaping equipment; survey East Bay HVAC companies on what would help their businesses take advantage of electrification; compile informational resources and promote tool and appliance lending programs to facilitate electrification.	1	1 year (ongoing) 1 year (ongoing)
	h) Lead public outreach on water-saving measures and fire-safe practices (defensible space, xeriscaping).	1	1 year (ongoing)
	i) Co-sponsor Fix-it Clinic events to promote waste reduction.	1	

	j) Support Citizen Scientist activities to increase awareness of El Cerrito's biodiversity. k) Engage with the public at major City events that take place in 2023 and perform other outreach activities to spread awareness. l) Continue enrollment outreach for MCE Deep Green 100% renewable power and other MCE programs	1 1 1	1 year (ongoing)
2. Volunteer Work Parties	Hold a Green Team work party every other month (~ 6/year); diversify work party activities; organize broom pulls and other regular habitat improvement projects.	1	1 year (ongoing)
3. Policy Development and Recommendations	a) Provide input to, and host public meeting for, the Climate Action Plan (CAP) update to accelerate achievement of zero net GHG emissions, as stated in our declared climate emergency; to promote electrification to reduce residential and commercial natural gas usage; and to focus on equity. Engage in the budget process to assure it includes CAP goals and provide recommendations to help achieve social, racial, and environmental justice goals. b) Develop and promote policies to increase electrification of new buildings and decrease or eliminate use of natural gas citywide, with a focus on new developments included in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan update. c) Support efforts to promote and expand the use of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure in the City; support current City efforts such as including charging infrastructure as part of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan; provide more public charging in logical places as City budget permits. d) Interface with other relevant City commissions and committees to help develop environmentally friendly policies	1 1 1 1	1–2 years 1 year (ongoing) 1 year (ongoing) 1 year (ongoing)
4. Implementation of City Environmental Programs	a) Help implement City policies related to new State solid waste regulations for businesses and residents. b) Expand stewardship of Hillside Natural Area (invasive plants; deferred maintenance) and support wildfire risk reduction while	1 1	1 year (ongoing) 1 year (ongoing)

	preserving native plants and habitat (as a resource, provide access to the fire-safe plant list from ECFD/Diablo Fire).		
	c) Support the work of the Urban Forest Committee and the potential Hillside Master Plan.	1	1 year (ongoing)
	d) Support future acquisition of public open space or public access easements; help implement Urban Greening and Green Infrastructure Plans.	2/3	1 year (ongoing)
	e) Work to enhance and promote active transportation modes and access in El Cerrito and support the initiatives of the Sustainable Transportation Program.	1	

2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING GOAL
1. Public Education and Outreach	a) Helped plan and develop the 50th Anniversary event for the Recycling Center, providing historical programming/speakers, original poetry, a custom upcycled artistic banner, food and more. b) Promoted electric vehicle outreach and education in collaboration with Drive Clean Bay Area. c) Participated in National Drive Electric Week events. d) Promoted electrification of vehicles, home heating and cooking, including induction cooktop loaner programs. e) Promoted the SunShares program. f) Began a recurring agenda item to present an example of environmental art at each meeting. g) Promoted and hosted 2022 Earth Day work parties. h) Co-sponsored 2022 East Bay Green Home Tour. i) Promoted the postponed 7th Annual Hillside Festival, co-sponsored with El Cerrito Trail Trekkers. j) Participated in the relaunched 4th of July Festival and Bike-to-Work day event with electrification outreach. k) Received a presentation on a workshop regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety and the formation of El Cerrito Strollers and Rollers. l) Co-hosted a Fix-it Clinic event. m) Maintained steady coordination with the Urban Forest Committee, including participation in Arbor Week event.
2. Volunteer Work Parties	a) Organized in-person Green Team work parties, including trash removal from streets, parks, and creeks and participation in Coastal Clean-up Day; held broom pulls in the Hillside Natural Area.
3. Policy Development and Recommendations	a) Developed Climate Action Recommendations and presented them to City Council. b) Supported relaunch of the Expanded Foodware Ordinance, with the goal of reducing plastic usage in the City, and hosted a public meeting to support the outreach process. c) Provided additional environmental recommendations for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Update. d) Developed and adopted a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) evaluation tool to inform EQC work.
4. Implementation of City Environmental Programs	a) Supported City programs through public education, outreach, and work parties, to the extent possible during the pandemic.

ONGOING PROJECTS

PROJECT	ACTIVITIES
1. Green Team Work Parties	Coordinate roughly six trash clean-up events each year in various City parks, the Ohlone Greenway, and City streets. Organize other volunteer work parties focused on weed/invasive plant removal, pollinator habitat restoration/stewardship, tree planting (in collaboration with the Urban Forest Committee and City arborist), and maintenance/stewardship of the Hillside Natural Area.
2. Hillside Festival	Assist Trail Trekkers in production of the annual event celebrating the Hillside Natural Area with many hikes, talks, and activities.
3. Climate Action Plan Implementation and Progress Metrics	Work with City staff to evaluate successes and opportunities as we further implement the Climate Action Plan. Explore opportunities to reduce residential natural gas use and promote electrification of home appliances and automobiles as a complement to 100% renewable electrical power. Promote improved municipal electric vehicle infrastructure/readiness and fleet management. Explore ways to achieve greater social, racial, and environmental justice.
4. Urban Greening Implementation	Organize volunteer work parties and aid in policy/program development to strengthen pollinator habitat and green infrastructure.
5. Future Project Ideas/Areas to Explore	a) Liaise with other City commissions/committees to ensure sustainability considerations. Increase EQC participation on related topics in City budget process. b) Explore environmental benefits/impacts of new development. c) Participate in regional climate action information sharing and coordination. d) Provide education about the El Cerrito Real Property Transfer Tax (RPTT) rebates for seismic upgrades and energy and water conservation. e) Provide emergency preparedness education (e.g., PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoffs). f) Review how the City cares for its creeks and riparian habitats.