

Staff Liaison
Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685
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AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE

Monday December 8, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

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

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

7:00 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

- 1. ROLL CALL** – Chair Robin Mitchell, Vice-Chair Randi Jiménez; Members: Akhil Iyer, Robert Hrubes, Jennifer Kaczor, Valerie Mih
- 2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC and INTRODUCTION BY INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE ADVISORY BOARD**
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.
- 3. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE / CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA** (10 minutes)
- 4. CITY COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS -** (10 minutes)
City Council Liaison Ktsanes and / or City Staff may report on Council policies, priorities, and significant actions taken by the City Council, and / or matters of general interest to the Urban Forest Committee (UFC).
- 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** (5 minutes) Consider a motion to adopt the minutes of the November 10, 2025, meeting.
- 6. ADOPTION OF 2026 UFC MEETING CALENDAR** (5 minutes) Consider a motion to adopt the 2026 UFC meeting calendar.
- 7. COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE -**
(3 minutes) Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the EQC.
- 8. COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION-**
(3 minutes) Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the PRC.

9. URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR, AND WORK PLAN:

Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible actions that correspond with development of the Urban Forest Committee Work Plan and calendar of events.

- A. Arbor Week Planning (*Kaczor, Mitchell, all*)
- B. City Tree Planting Fee / Tree Fund Discussion (*Jiménez, all*)
- C. Outreach Flyer Review
- D. Review the Arbor Day Foundation’s “Tree Board Handbook” and relevant City of El Cerrito ordinances (*Prée*)
- E. UFC Annual Budget Discussion
- F. UFC Work Plan Implementation Strategy

10. ITEMS FROM TONIGHT’S MEETING THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION

(3 minutes)

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS- hear committee member suggestions for future UFC meeting items *(3 minutes)*

- Arbor Day Planning (Kaczor, Mitchell)
- Review the Arbor Day Foundation’s “Tree Board Handbook”
- UFC Work Plan Implementation Strategy

12. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, 510-559-7685. 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 El Cerrito Recycling Center during normal business hours.



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DRAFT MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
Urban Forest Committee
Monday November 10, 2025 7:00 p.m.

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

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

CONVENE REGULAR MEETING: Chair *Robin Mitchell* called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

- 1. ROLL CALL:** Present: Chair Robin Mitchell, Vice Chair Randi Jiménez; members: Akhil Iyer, Robert Hrubes, Jennifer Kaczor. Also present: Members of the Public Arnold Henderson, Yan Linhart, Valerie Mih, Sandra Sprague. Council Liaison William Ktsanas, and Staff Liaison Stephen Prée
- 2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:** *Sandra Sprague*, representing El Cerrito Fire Safe Council, announced that the organization has been awarded a \$15,000 grant from Cal Fire for vegetation clearance along Rifle Range Road. E.C. Fire Safe also plans to apply for another Measure X grant in May 2026. *Arnold Henderson* reported that he witnessed the removal of a large City street tree, he was curious about the reason for removal and took the opportunity to use the online City tree inventory to educate his neighbors on City trees.
- 3. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE / CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA:** *Jennifer Kaczor* announced that she has joined the El Cerrito Trail Trekkers advisory board.
- 4. COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS:** *Council Liaison William Ktsanes* expressed his interest in maintaining his UFC liaison assignment in 2026, and he reported on recent City Council business. *Staff Liaison Prée* gave a presentation on the local outbreak of California oak worm, the recent increase in City tree planting fees, and provided an summary update of recent UF related grant application activities.
- 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** September 8, 2025 - **Motion:** *Mitchell*; **2nd:** *Kaczor*; unanimous.
- 6. INFORMAL INTERVIEW WITH RECENT UFC APPLICANTS-** UFC applicant Valerie Mih introduced herself and answered questions from Committee members. **Motion:** *Chair Mitchell*, “**Recommend to City Council the appointment of Valerie Mih to the El Cerrito Urban Forest Committee.**”; **2nd:** *Kaczor*; unanimous.

- 7. COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE –** *Chair Mitchell* reported that the City was awarded a Metropolitan Transportation Committee (MTC) grant to purchase 98 vehicles; the City has established an internal climate taskforce, and that the EQC has initiated a climate literacy program for El Cerrito High School students. She announced that PG&E has a new “Electrify my Block Program”.
- 8. COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION-** *Kaczor* reported that the PRC has been reviewing the 2017 Parks and Facilities Master Plan. The Commission is gathering community input for capital improvement project recommendations.
- 9. URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR, AND WORK PLAN UPDATE:**
- A. Introduction to the Arbor Day Foundation’s “Tree Board Handbook” and relevant City of El Cerrito Ordinances- *Prée* distributed folders containing the Handbook, Council Resolution No. 2017-69, the Public Tree and Shrub Ordinance, and the Public Tree Program Standard Operating Procedures documents. A brief discussion followed; further review will be on future UFC agendas.
 - B. Arbor Week Planning- *Kaczor* and *Mitchell* reviewed the ad-hoc subcommittee’s recommendations for action/activities. A discussion followed, resulting in the UFC agreeing on the following priorities: 1. Tree planting – establish locations, *Prée*. 2. Outreach re. the Public Tree Ordinance and the UFC – refine the draft flyer and other outreach media, *Jiménez, Mitchell*. 3. ECHS participation- Engage Key Club, etc., *Iyer*. 4. EC Library kids and adult programs, *Hrubes, Jiménez*.
 - C. City Tree Planting Fee Discussion- *Jiménez* reviewed with the Committee the draft UFC Recommendation to City Council that she prepared. A discussion regarding sponsorship and fundraising followed. Action: Establish an official City tree fund and seek donations to fund street tree planting and other activities; continuing discussion/action in future meetings.
 - D. UFC Work Plan Implementation Strategy- this agenda item was brief and focused on review and refinement of the outreach flyer drafted by *Jiménez*, the UFC members will provide recommendations in a future meeting.
- 10. ITEMS FROM TONIGHT’S MEETING THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION:**
- *All-* review the Tree Board Handbook, Council Resolution No. 2017-69, the Public Tree and Shrub Ordinance, and the Public Tree Program Standard Operating Procedures documents.
 - *Prée* will email fundraising guidance and distribute the draft outreach flyer for Committee input.

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS –

- Adopt the 2026 UFC Meeting Calendar
- Arbor Week Planning & Outreach
- UF Fundraising
- “Tree Board Handbook” and El Cerrito Public Tree Ordinance
- UFC Work Plan Implementation

12. ADJOURNMENT- *Chair Mitchell* adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular Urban Forest Committee meeting of November 10, 2025, as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Chair Robin Mitchell

Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison



JOIN THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE TODAY!

Your voice can shape our city's forest. Join us and help El Cerrito thrive!



WHAT WE DO

- ✓ Advise the City on tree policies, planting, and care
- ✓ Support Arbor Week & community events
- ✓ Promote education on tree safety, selection, and maintenance

WHY JOIN?

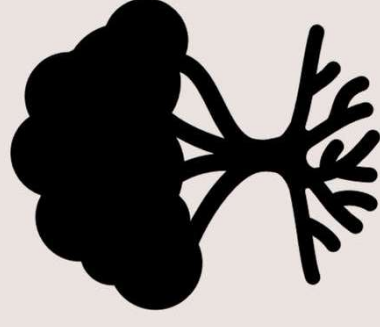
- ❖ Shape the future of El Cerrito's trees and green spaces
- ❖ Work with neighbors who care about sustainability
- ❖ Help make our city healthier, safer, and more beautiful



Visit our website:
<https://tinyurl.com/ElCerritoUFC>

TIME COMMITMENT

- Two hours each month for one monthly meeting
- Optional volunteering at tree plantings & events
- No experience needed — just a love of trees!



CITY OF EL CERRITO

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: ADOPT-A-PARK PROGRAM

NUMBER: I C 2

DATE: October 2005

AUTHORITY: City Manager

Scott Hanin

PURPOSE: To reaffirm the City's commitment to the Council established Adopt-A-Park program and to delineate staff responsibilities for the program.

POLICY: It is the policy of the City of El Cerrito to encourage residents, community organizations and businesses to become involved in improving our City parks and landscaped public areas. This can take many forms, including establishing a presence in the park to be on the look-out for vandalism and maintenance problems and reporting these to the City; providing maintenance assistance in the form of general park clean-up, such as picking up litter, painting, weeding and minor planting (e.g., flowers, replacement shrubbery); providing direct monetary assistance for park enhancements; and providing input to the City on park use.

- PROCEDURE:**
- A. The Recreation Department shall regularly promote the City's Adopt-A-Park program, including the application form, in the brochure that is distributed to all residents. Additional advertisements may appear in the City Newsletter, local publications and the like.
 - B. Individuals or groups seeking to participate in the Adopt-A-Park program shall complete the application form (attached) and submit it to the Public Works Department or telephone the Maintenance Services Supervisor, who will note the information.
 - C. The Maintenance Services Supervisor is responsible for coordinating with the Recreation Department and maintaining a list of facilities or projects that would benefit from "adoption" by an individual or group. He/she shall receive the applications or talk with the applicants in person or by telephone. After notification of the individual's or group's

intended project or site-adoption, the Supervisor shall advise the group of the City's approval. The Maintenance Services Supervisor shall also ensure training, if needed, and provide general oversight for the individuals and groups involved in the Adopt-A-Park program.

- D. The individuals or groups who participate in the program shall provide their own supplies and equipment as needed. The City maintains workers compensation that covers the volunteers and liability insurance. In the event of an injury during volunteer activities, the individual or group should notify the Maintenance Services Supervisor immediately to insure all City procedures are followed.
- E. Public Works Department staff will determine whether it is appropriate to recognize the individual's and/or group's by placement of a plaque at the site or some other form of recognition. In addition, a news release announcing the adoption of the park or other area shall be prepared and mention should be made in the Recreation Brochure and/or City Newsletter.
- F. Public Works staff shall maintain a list of all individuals and groups participating in the Adopt-A-Park program. Each January Public Works shall review the list of individuals and groups that have signed up for the program. A letter shall be forwarded to the original applicant or the applicant on file to determine whether their intent is to continue participation in the program. An updated list of participants in the program shall be provided to the City Council and published in the next issue of the Recreation Brochure and/or City Newsletter.

Attachment: Adopt-A-Park Application

CITY OF EL CERRITO

ADOPT-A-PARK APPLICATION

Organizational Applicant:

Name of Organization _____

Contact Person Name and Signature _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Type of Organization _____

Total Membership _____

Briefly Describe Your Intended Project or Contribution _____

Individual Applicant:

Name and Signature _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Number of Participants over 18 years of age? _____ Under 18 years of age? _____

Is the applicant over 18 years of age? _____ Under 18 years of age? _____

Briefly Describe Your Intended Project of Contribution _____

STAFF USE: Public Works Department Comments _____

Date Received _____ Date Approved _____

CITY OF EL CERRITO

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

NUMBER: I C 3

DATE: October 2005

AUTHORITY: City Manager

Scott Hanin

PURPOSE: To reaffirm the City’s commitment to and define the process for providing scholarships for recreation and childcare programs.

POLICY: It is the policy of the City of El Cerrito to solicit and accept donations to the City of El Cerrito to sponsor scholarships for recreational and childcare programs. Scholarships in the form of reduced fees for recreational, after-school and childcare programs, within the limitation of funds available, shall be granted to families in need of financial assistance in order to participate in the City’s programs, thereby providing safe, high quality recreational and childcare programs for their children. Scholarships granted to a family shall normally not exceed \$150.00 per calendar year, but a higher amount may be granted depending on need and funds available. El Cerrito residents shall be given priority over non-residents in the granting of scholarships when other factors are equal.

- PROCEDURE:**
- A. City staff may solicit donations for City programs either personally or through the Recreation Brochure or other publications. All donations received shall be forwarded to the Finance Department for deposit no later than the day after receipt. The receiving department shall advise the City Manager and the City Clerk of the donation.
 - B. The City Council receives all donations and a letter of gratitude is sent on the Council’s behalf to the donor. The City Clerk shall schedule receipt of all sizeable donations for a convenient City Council meeting.
 - C. A child’s parent or guardian must submit the attached application stating why the family is in need of a scholarship. The request for scholarship should be accompanied by a letter from the child’s school indicating that the child qualifies for

the free or reduced-cost lunch program or, if the child does not qualify for the lunch program, a copy of the family's household budget and any other documents that may substantiate the need for assistance. The request must also include the number of children in the family and the number of children requesting scholarships in the family.

- D. The Recreation Director shall designate a selection committee to review all requests for scholarships. The selection committee shall normally include some combination of members of the administrative staff in the Recreation Department. Scholarships shall be granted to children in the following rank order of priority: (1) those who qualify for the free or reduced-cost lunch program and are City residents; (2) those who qualify for the lunch program but are not residents; (3) those who are El Cerrito residents and are able to prove need even though they are not eligible for the free or reduced-cost lunch program; (4) those who are not City residents and do not qualify for the lunch program, but can prove need. The selection committee shall advise the Director of scholarship recipient(s). Scholarship recipients shall be advised accordingly (See attached information sheet and notification to applicants).
- E. Scholarship recipients must utilize the scholarship within a month from the date granted or request an extension, which may or may not be granted. If not used within the month, the scholarship may be redirected to the next eligible family on the list.

**CITY OF EL CERRITO
RECREATION DEPARTMENT
DAVID HUNTER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The City of El Cerrito offers a limited number of scholarships supported by donations for its recreational and childcare programs to assist families in need of providing safe, high quality recreation and childcare programs for their children.

SCHOLARSHIPS:

Scholarships are offered in the form of a reduced payment for recreation programs, excludes, but not limited to, materials, products, permits and passes sold at the Recreation Department.

Scholarships granted may not exceed \$150.00 per child per school year for after-school enrichment classes.

The El Cerrito residents may be given priority over non-residents in the granting of scholarships when all other factors are equal.

DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS:

The scholarship award of \$150 will be credited to the last weeks of day camp or last weeks of childcare in December (scholarships are awarded by the calendar year). You will still be required to pay the \$25 deposit per week/activity per child.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

To apply for a scholarship fill out the attached form and submit one of the following:

1. Affidavits from the school district verifying that your child is eligible for free or reduced lunch program. These affidavits are available from the school district office or from the person in charge of the lunch program at your school.
2. Verification that your family is receiving Food Stamps, CalWORKS assistance, or TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families).
3. Proof that the child is a foster child.
4. Copy of your last Federal Income Tax Return (1040) showing that you fall under the following income eligibility guidelines:

Household Size (including parents and children)	Weekly Income	Monthly Income	Annual Income
2	\$457	\$1,978	\$23,736
3	\$573	\$2,481	\$29,767
4	\$689	\$2,984	\$35,798
5	\$805	\$3,486	\$41,829
6	\$921	\$3,989	\$47,860
7	\$1,037	\$4,491	\$53,891
8	\$1,153	\$4,994	\$59,922
For each additional household member add:	\$116	\$503	\$6,031

5. Written request to the Recreation Department Director stating your special situation.

For office use only:

Date: _____

_____ Congratulations, your scholarship application has been accepted and your scholarship award granted in the amount of \$150.00 for the current calendar year. Please note that failure to attend the program you sign up for will result in future scholarship disqualification.

_____ Sorry, your scholarship application is incomplete and returned for the following reason(s):

-
-

 Scholarship Committee Staff Member Date



**CITY OF EL CERRITO RECREATION DEPARTMENT
DAVID HUNTER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

2005 Scholarship Application

(Please fill out a separate application for each child)

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

HomePhone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____ work/cell/other

School child is attending: _____ Grade: _____

Qualification for scholarship award:

- Free or reduced lunch program at school - 1040
- Receiving public assistance (circle one): Food stamps CalWORKS TANF Other
- Income below eligibility guidelines - 1040 & check stub
- Foster child
- Recommendation (city/school staff, community leader, etc.)

Please include any written documentation that shows how you qualify.

The undersigned, in consideration of participation in this program agrees to indemnify and hold the City of El Cerrito harmless, and release it from any and all liability, and necessary costs and expenses for any loss/damage to property or injury from any cause whatsoever regardless of negligence which may be suffered by the above-named individual registered in this program arising out of or in anyway connected with participation in this program and/or use of the facilities.

I understand scholarship policies and scholarships are limited to \$150.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

LIST CLASS OR PROGRAM YOU WANT TO APPLY THIS SCHOLARSHIP TOWARD:

Program	Co-Pay (minimum 25%)	Cost
_____	\$ _____	\$ _____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
	TOTAL =	\$150.00

El Cerrito Urban Forest Fund Recommendation

Prepared by the Grants & Fundraising Ad-Hoc Committee of the El Cerrito Urban Forest Committee

Overview

The City of El Cerrito Urban Forest Management Plan (2007) outlines the community, environmental, and economic benefits that a vital urban forest is expected to provide, and establishes these benefits as the standard of performance for the City of El Cerrito's urban forest.

In order to meet this standard, the City's urban forestry effort must provide: intelligent planning and management, community and government commitment, consistent funding, and excellent maintenance.

Within the plan, one of the recommended actions for the Urban Forest Committee is to *Generate urban forestry funds from private sources to supplement City funding.*

Further on in the plan, one of the listed Elements of a Successful Urban Forest is Consistent Funding, and elaborates: *Strong community supporters can bring in supplemental funding through sources such as grants, donations, and local fund-raising efforts in order to fund special projects and to maintain public visibility of urban forestry efforts.*

The *Urban Forest Program Donations* account was established in 2015 to accept donations to support the urban forest program, and it is the Urban Forest Committee's understanding that there is an unused balance available in the fund.

The UFC, and specifically the Grants & Fundraising Ad-hoc Committee, is seeking to re-open the fund in pursuit of donations to support urban forest management efforts that have been identified as priorities for the City, and that are currently without available funding through City sources.

Value for the City and its citizens

El Cerrito is committed to preserving and improving its urban forest. The City has been designated as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation, has a full-time environmental programs manager/City arborist, and established an Urban Forest Committee. Due to fiscal constraints within the City's budget, funds are not readily available to fully support projects documented in City plans (such as the [Urban Greening Plan](#) and the [Urban Forest Management Plan](#)). An El Cerrito Urban Forest Fund would provide a mechanism for residents to contribute towards an improved urban forest.

The 2013 El Cerrito Tree Inventory provided a benefit analysis of the value of public trees, and identified up to 4,000 vacant public planting sites throughout the City:

- El Cerrito's public trees provide annual benefits of \$1.3 million.
- For every \$1 spent on public trees, the residents of El Cerrito receive \$4.28 in benefits
- El Cerrito's public trees are reducing annual electric energy consumption by 797 megawatt hours and annual natural gas consumption by 16,859 therms.
- City trees remove 1.1 tons of pollutants from the air and they reduce annual storm-water runoff volume by 9 million gallons.
- They sequester 551 tons of atmospheric CO2 per year.

Other benefits include:

- Lowered temperatures from shade provided by trees
- Recreational opportunities in parks

Resident and community groups interest in the urban forest

In the 2022 National Community Survey (NCS), about 8 in 10 residents identified both the natural environment and parks and recreation opportunities as an essential or very important area of focus for the community in the next two years, placing them amongst residents' top priorities for the City.

Relevant community groups:

- [El Cerrito Trail Trekkers](#)
- [Friends of Five Creeks](#)
- [Strollers and Rollers](#)

Outreach & communications

The Grants & Fundraising Ad-hoc Committee and the full Urban Forest Committee would seek to inform El Cerrito citizens of the fund through new and available sources, including:

- City publications including the Green Happenings newsletter and the Rec Guide
- Byline, the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce monthly newsletter
- Community groups ([Strollers and Rollers](#), [Friends of Five Creeks](#), [El Cerrito Trail Trekkers](#))
- Urban Forest Committee mailing list
- Public comment periods during City Council meetings
- Word of mouth

Potential projects to fund

- Updating the City's tree inventory (\$40K expected budget)
- Tree planting and maintenance
- Arbor Day events
- Educational workshops
- Urban forest deferred maintenance in City parks (Identified in Appendix D, Table 2 of the 2019 Parks and Recreation Facilities Master)

Managing the fund

The Public Works Department, through the Urban Forest Program, would manage the fund, spending only on projects identified or added in consultation with the Urban Forest Committee. Staff will communicate and report on projects that have been funded at least once annually through the Urban Forest Committee and available City channels.

In conclusion

In pursuit of the benefits produced from an actively managed and healthy urban forest, and to respond to the priorities of City residents, the Urban Forest Committee's Grants & Fundraising Ad-hoc Committee seeks City support to re-open the tree fund and accept donations from citizens and El Cerrito businesses. This would enable the City to fund projects to improve the health of its urban forest and reduce the number of vacant public planting sites, without being fully reliant on City funds.