



Staff Liaison
Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685
spree@ci-el-cerrito.ca.us

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE

Monday June 9, 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 Jimenez; Members: Akhil Iyer, Robert Hrubes, Jennifer Kaczor, Yan Linhart
- 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 May 12, 2025, UFC meeting.
- 6. COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE - (3 minutes)** Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the EQC.
- 7. COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION- (3 minutes)** Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the PRC.

8. 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. ALLOCATION OF REMAINING ANNUAL UFC BUDGET (20 minutes): Consider a motion to transfer the remaining balance of the 2024/25 annual UFC budget 1.) back to a City of El Cerrito Urban Forest Program, 2.) to contribute the balance to The Arbor Day Foundation (Tree City USA) or 3.) donate the funds to another recipient.

- B. FY 25-26 & FY 26-27 BIENNIAL WORK PLAN & FY 24-25 ACCOMPLISHMENTS (40 min): Review and discuss revisions made by the ad-hoc subcommittee and consider adopting the UFC Biennial Work Plan for FY 25-26 & FY 26-2 and FY 24-25 Accomplishments. The work plan must be adopted no later than July 1, 2025.

- C. UFC Participation in the July 4, 2025 El Cerrito World One Festival (*15 minutes*)

9. ITEMS FROM TONIGHT’S MEETING THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION
(*3 minutes*)

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

- [Richmond Street Complete Streets Project](#) Review (Open House June 25)
- Arbor Day Tool Kit (*Kaczor, Mitchell*)
- Urban Forestry Grants and Fundraising (*Hrubes, Kaczor, Mitchell*)

11. 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.



Staff Liaison
Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685
spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

DRAFT MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
Urban Forest Committee
Monday May 12, 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: Vice Chair *Robin Mitchell* called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

- 1. ROLL CALL:** Present: Chair Robin Mitchell, members: Akhil Iyer, Robert Hrubes, Jennifer Kaczor, Yan Linhart. Absent: Vice chair Randi Jiménez. Also present: Member of the Public Paul Duncan; Council Liaison William Ktsanas, and Staff Liaison Stephen Prée
- 2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:** Paul Duncan announced that Make El Cerrito Fire Safe has changed its name and organizational status to El Cerrito Fire Safe Council. This reorganization provides additional eligibility for grants while maintaining the same goals and objectives in avoiding catastrophic wildfire through collaboration with the E.C.F.D., City Council, and community groups for education and outreach to the public.
- 3. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE / CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA:** *Linhart* announced that he and *Hrubes* will give a presentation to the Goleston School on May 2; the topic is “Trees are wonderful, trees are important, trees are useful”.
- 4. COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS:** *Council Liaison William Ktsanes* reported the City of El Cerrito recently hosted a delegation of mayors from Japan. The program by City staff included disaster and wildfire mitigation. *Staff Liaison Prée* reported on the El Cerrito Earthday work event removing invasive French broom that attracted 22 participants, including UFC members Robert Hrubes and Jennifer Kaczor. He also reported that City contractors have started work on vegetation management/fuel reduction activities in natural areas of the City. Prée made a general comment regarding the value of trees, “[wood is more rare than diamonds](#)”, which provoked a brief discussion.
- 5. ACTION ITEMS: APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Consider a motion to adopt the minutes from the April 14, 2025 UFC meeting, with corrections. Motion: *Linhart*; 2nd: *Hrubes*; Ayes: unanimous of those present.

6. COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE –*Vice Chair Mitchell* reported that there had been no EQC meeting since the April UFC meeting.

7. COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION- *Kaczor* reported that during the April meeting, Director of Public Works, Yvetteh Ortiz, gave a presentation on potential capital improvement projects including a \$500,000 repair to the El Cerrito swimming pool. *Kaczor* also reported that the PRC will recommend a fundraising ballot measure to City Council at the end of the year.

8. URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR, AND WORK PLAN UPDATE:

A. FY 2025/26, 2026/27 Biennial UFC Work Plan: Discussion regarding staff time estimates affecting the prioritization of goals and objectives. Action: *Kaczor and Mitchell* will edit the work plan to reflect the redesignation of priorities and send them to *Prée* for distribution to the UFC for review prior to the June meeting, when adoption of the work plan is scheduled.

B. UFC 2024/25 Annual Budget Allocation: Discussion of potential allocation of remaining annual UFC funds to such recipients as the Arbor Day Foundation, the City's urban forestry program, or Urban Tilth, etc. Continued to the June meeting

C. Earth Day 2025 Debrief- no additional discussion.

D. 2025 City of El Cerrito & World One 4th of July Festival- discussion of who might volunteer to distribute outreach materials at a UFC information table, the potential recirculation of a previous UFC survey.

9. ITEMS FROM TONIGHT'S MEETING THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION:

- Work Plan edits and recirculation for UFC review- *Kaczor, Mitchell, Prée*
- Consider the allocation of Annual UFC budget - *All*

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS –

- UFC Work Plan Refinement and Adoption (June)
- El Cerrito & World One 4th of July
- Richmond Street Complete Streets project
- Arbor Day Toolkit/ Arbor Day 2026

11. ADJOURNMENT- *Chair Mitchell* adjourned the meeting at 8:45 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 May 12, 2025, as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Chair Robin Mitchell

Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison



Staff Liaison

Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685
spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us
Public Works Department

**BIENNIAL WORK PLAN
FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026-2026/2027
URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE**

Chair: Robin Mitchell; Vice-Chair: Randi Jiménez; Members: Robert Hrubes, Jennifer Kaczor, Yan Linhart, Akhil Iyer

MISSION STATEMENT:

Resolution No. 2007-96:

The Urban Forest Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, other commissions, and the citizens of the City with regard to the growth, maintenance, and location of trees within the City:

- To recommend programs, policies, and ordinances to implement and promote the City's Master Street Tree Plan and Urban Forest Management Plan and coordinate with Public Works Department staff regarding management and maintenance efforts;
- To promote and foster public awareness, education, interest and support for urban forestry efforts, foster volunteer opportunities for tree planting and irrigation along the city's streets and in residential front yards, and educate El Cerrito residents regarding selecting, planting and maintaining trees; and
- Promote and foster public awareness and education about potential hazards of trees near underground and above ground utilities and the appropriate tree species for avoiding such hazards.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: (Brief discussion regarding when the commission/committee was established and how it has changed over time) The Tree Committee (later renamed to Urban Forest Committee) was established by Council Resolution 2007-96. The Committee's first five members (Ralph Boniello, Sheauching Cheng, Janet Hittle, Steve Price and Mike Srago) were appointed to terms starting 9/11/12 through 1/1/2016. Since that time, additional members have included Karen Christian, Shannon Lee-Rutherford, Cathy

FISCAL YEAR (2025/2026-2026/2027)

Items listed in priority order

Goal or Objective	Proposed Activities	Estimated Staff time needed	Timeline For Completion
<p>A. Increase awareness and support of the El Cerrito urban forest, and participation in urban forest activities by El Cerrito residents</p>	<p>1. Improve communication about the UFC and the El Cerrito urban forest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Develop an outreach campaign to educate residents about the Public Tree Ordinance, and the roles of the city and residents in maintaining city street trees. Consider various communication options, including city publications, printed materials, and social media. b) Develop and follow a monthly editorial calendar to plan and submit postings to Green Happenings and other prioritized communications about UF topics. c) Provide content for updates to the UFC website as needed to provide more information about the UFC, tree planting activities, etc. 	<p><i>Staff time for articles 2-8 hours/month</i></p>	<p>1. FY 25/26</p> <p>2. Annually for planning, monthly for review and submission</p> <p>3. As prioritized</p>
	<p>2. Evaluate annual UFC Arbor Week events and adjust to continually seek high impact on community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to work with schools (Fairmont Elementary, Prospect Sierra) 	<p><i>Each may require additional 24-48 hours staff time. All would be initiated by UFC and co-managed with staff with potential EQC participation.</i></p>	<p>a.). As prioritized</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Continue to involve the El Cerrito Garden Club when practical c) Add a fall tree planting event in addition to the spring Arbor Day event d) Organize an Urban Street Tree Tour 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b.) Ongoing/as prioritized c.) 2-3 months d.) 2-3 months
	<p>3. Develop, evaluate, and hold public activities based on estimated needed resources and impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tree planting workshops b) Tree care workshops c) Library events to educate children and adults about trees d) Work with EC school environmental classes / clubs to present information on trees (elementary and high school) e) Develop and implement an outreach strategy to recruit more UFC members 	<p>a.)- e.) Any one of these could impact staff time by 24-28 hours each event. All would be initiated by UFC and co-managed with staff with potential EQC participation.</p>	<p>a.) -e.) As prioritized</p>
<p>B. Increase revenue streams and make recommendations for how funds should be used to advance Urban Forest priorities</p>	<p>1. El Cerrito Urban Tree Fund – this fund can be used to plant more urban trees as well as fund their maintenance (initial watering, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Pursue the re-opening of the existing city tree fund b) Determine how the funds would be used, based in part on input from the public c) Help develop management guidelines for the fund d) Develop a set of proposed projects to be implemented in the next FY, based on public feedback from 2. above 	<p>a.)- d.) This will require staff creation of an outline (16 - 32 hours), review and refinement by Finance, City Manager's Office (CMO) and legal review, 60-80 hours over 6-10 weeks. Possible adoption by City Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.). 4-6 months b.). 4-6 months c.) 4-6 months d.). 4-6 months

	e) Start a public campaign to accept contributions, once the projects are determined	e.) "Donations Page on City Website" (City Manager's suggestion) 24-36 hours	e.) 6-12 months
	2. Review and allocate the annual UFC budget, appropriated by the El Cerrito City Council		July 1 of each year
	3. Research grant opportunities to support city urban forestry goals and HNA management plan activities	Uncertain how to assign staff time here without consultants. 2-4 hours/month staff time, UFC can research and suggest too.	Ongoing
	4. Explore opportunities for financial support from city organizations (such as the El Cerrito Rotary Club) and businesses, including members of EC Chamber of Commerce	UFC, not staff time	6-12 months
C. Grow and sustain El Cerrito's urban forest	<p>1. Identify and support the implementation of opportunities to increase and maintain El Cerrito's urban forest inventory, potentially using funds from the El Cerrito Urban Tree Fund</p> <p>a) Pursue and support efforts to exceed the number of trees planted by the city and avoid reduction of the tree inventory, year over year</p> <p>b) Improve reporting to understand the nature and trends of removal and mortality of trees; check inventory database periodically to assess growth or reduction of tree inventory</p>	<p>a.) Additional staff time as needed to facilitate grants and funding mechanisms for more tree planting</p> <p>b.) 24-48 hours annually</p>	<p>a.). Plan annually, review quarterly</p> <p>b). At least every 2 years</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Geolocate street tree planting opportunities to prepare for grant opportunities, such as EEMP (Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program) d) Review relevant existing city plans, identify goals and projects to prioritize, work with the city to implement e) Update El Cerrito's Urban Forest Management Plan (from 2007) f) Revise El Cerrito Master Tree List as needed g) Consider community groups as potential resources for EC UF projects, funded via grants or city funds: Urban Tilt, Watershed Project, Groundwork Richmond h) Encourage development of a "Friends of EC Urban Forest" group to support the awareness and implementation of UF projects 	<p><i>c.) 12-24 hours annually with assistance from database contractor</i></p> <p><i>d.) Staff to prep and present: 8 hours/ plan; UFC to review and comment.</i></p> <p><i>e.) May require a grant for consultants to draft and complete. Requires City Council adoption. 140-180 staff hours.</i></p> <p><i>f.) The most recent list was a collaborative effort with UFC members and City staff which required 40+ hours of each participant. Periodic revisions could be completed with less intensity.</i></p> <p><i>g.) This would be led by the UFC but may require staff and CAO time.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c.) As needed d.) At least annually e.) Ongoing f.) As prioritized, estimate 1-2 years to complete g.) As needed h.) As prioritized i.) As prioritized
<p>D. Review and give input on city plan documents</p>	<p>1. Provide ongoing UFC input, facilitate public review, and advocate for upcoming projects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Implementation and funding of the HNA Management Plan b) Street tree planting for the Richmond Complete Streets project 	<p><i>No additional staff time required</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.) Ongoing b.) As requested

ONGOING PROJECTS

Project	Activities	Funding and other Resources requested	Estimated Staff time needed
Maintain El Cerrito's Tree City USA status	Meet Tree City USA requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arbor Day event ● Arbor Day proclamation ● Maintain Tree Board (UFC) ● Investigate Growth Award 	<i>Annual UFC budget is \$1,000</i>	<i>Annual TC USA application requires 8-12 hours</i> <i>Events: 16-48 hours</i> <i>Proclamation: 3 hours</i> <i>UFC maintenance: 96-112 hours/year</i> <i>TC USA Growth Awards: 24-64 hours/year</i>

PRIOR FISCAL YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Updated annually by July 1 and provided to City Council on Consent

Goal/Objective	Activities Supporting Goal	Status
Maintain El Cerrito's Tree City USA status	UFC meetings and Arbor Week activities contribute towards maintaining Tree City designation	Complete
Provide UFC related input on City plans	- Provided input on HNA Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan drafts in meetings and public workshops - Provided input on Richmond Complete Streets project	Ongoing

Increase awareness and support of the El Cerrito urban forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Planned and participated in Arbor week activities- Represented UFC at July 4th festival	Complete for CY 2025
---	--	----------------------

DRAFT