



Staff Liaison
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AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE

Monday April 14, 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** - Vice-Chair Robin Mitchell; Members: Akhil Iyer, Robert Hrubes, Randi Jimenez, 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. **ACTION ITEMS- (20 minutes)**
 - A. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Consider a motion to adopt the minutes of the March 10, 2025, UFC meeting.
 - B. **Annual Election for Officers:** Nominate and elect a Chair and Vice Chair.
 - Chair and Vice Chair training will be held on Wednesday May 14 from 4:00-5:30 pm.

6. COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE -
(3 *minutes*) Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with 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:
(60 *minutes*) 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- 2025 Debrief and 2026 Look Ahead

B. UFC Annual Budget Allocation

C. Earth Day 2025

D. FY 25-26 & 26-27 Biennial UFC Work Plan- must be adopted no later than July 1, 2025

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*)

- Work Plan Review and Adoption
- Richmond Street Complete Streets Project Review
- Del Norte Complete Streets Project Review
- Informational Outreach
- 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.



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

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

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

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

1. ROLL CALL:

Present: Vice Chair Robin Mitchell members: Robert Hrubes, Akhil Iyer, Randi Jiménez Jennifer Kaczor, Yan Linhart.

Also present: Member of the Public Sandra Sprague; City Council Liaison Ktsanes, and Staff Liaison Stephen Prée

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC: There were none.

3. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE / CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA:

Kaczor inquired about recent fuel reduction work on Motorcycle Hill at Snowdon Ave. *Prée* responded that ECFD was managing a Measuer X project there that included the removal of several eucalyptus trees.

4. COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS: *Council Liaison Ktsanes* had no comments. *Staff Liaison Prée* reported that the Draft HNA Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan updated with adopted UFC, EQC and PRC revisions has been posted on the [City website](#); The Plan's Draft IS and CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) 30 day public comment period is open until April 14, 2025, and is on the [City website](#). *Prée* also reported that the City's application for a USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) for work in the HNA will be submitted Friday March 14; the application requirements had changed under the new Executive administration and the grant would now require a match.

5. ACTION ITEMS:

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Consider a motion to adopt the minutes from the February 10, 2025 UFC meeting. **Motion:** *Hrubes*; **2nd:** *Kaczor*; **Ayes:** Unanimous.

B. Approval of Annual Fund Allocation: Consider a motion to allocate funds from the UFC annual budget for reimbursement to UFC members for Arbor Week 2025 expenses, and to purchase 10 copies of The Arbor Day Foundation's '[Tree Board Handbook](#)' for distribution to UFC members. **Motion:** *Hrubes*; **2nd:** *Linhart*; **Ayes:** Unanimous.

- 6. COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE –***Vice Chair Mitchell* reported that the EQC will host a “fix-it-fair” on March 22 and a “green-mobility fair” on April 26, she reminded the UFC of the 11th annual Hillside Festival scheduled for May 3 & 4, and the Citywide Garage Sale on May 17.
- 7. COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION-** *Kaczor* reported that the PRC has three new members, making seven members with zero vacancies; the PRC has formed two ad-hoc subcommittees who are advocating for more Park and Recreation staff and for additional funding.
- 8. URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR, AND WORK PLAN UPDATE-**
- A. Arbor Week 2025- *Linhart* reported on the upcoming youth outreach program for the students in the Harding Clubhouse afterschool program, and *Jiménez* described her part of the program. *Prée* described plans to plant two ‘Eddie’s white wonder’ dogwood trees during a public tree planting at Arlington Park on March 14.
- B. UFC Annual Budget Allocation- A discussion on potential expenses to apply to the annual \$1000 budget awarded by City Council for use by the UFC. The Committee requested this item to be discussed further during the April meeting.
- C. Earth Day 2025 – April 19th activities discussion. *Prée* will participate in a French broom removal project at the Snowdon Ave. entrance to Motorcycle Hill with the Friends of the HNA.
- D. UFC 2025/26, 2026/27 Draft Work Plan Discussion: *Mitchell* voiced her wish to make additions to the work plan such as getting the City to plant more native plants; a discussion regarding the City using the expertise of Committee members followed. *Prée* agreed to review the estimated staff time section and report back during the April meeting.
- 9. ITEMS FROM TONIGHT’S MEETING THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION:**
- *Linhart* will contact the library regarding forestry related book showcase.
 - *Mitchell* will investigate potential future Arbor Week events
 - *Prée* will contact the Arbor Week ad-hoc committee for events refinement; will review staff time required for Work Plan goals; email UFC regarding Earth Day events.

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS –

- Annual election of officers (April 14)
- UFC Budget
- Arbor Week Debrief
- Earth Day 2025 (April 19)
- UFC Work Plan Refinement
- Richmond Street Complete Streets Project Review
- Del Norte Complete Streets Project Review

11. ADJOURNMENT- *Vice Chair Mitchell* adjourned the meeting at 8:57 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 March 10, 2025, as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Vice Chair

Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison



Staff Liaison

Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685
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Public Works Department

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

Chair: Cathy Bleier; Vice-Chair: Catherine (Cassie) Hughes; Members: Robert Hrubes, Jennifer Kaczor, Robin Mitchell, Yan Linhart

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 included Karen Christian, Shannon Lee-Rutherford, Cathy

Bleier, Michael Charlton, Yan Linhart, Robert Hrubes, Mary Torrusio, Robin Mitchell, Jennifer Kaczor, Catherine (Cassie) Hughes, Melissa Feudi.

FISCAL YEAR (xxxx/xxxx - xxxx/xxxx)

Items listed in priority order

Goal or Objective	Proposed Activities	Estimated Staff time needed	Timeline For Completion
<p>1. Increase revenue streams and make recommendations for how funds should be used to advance Urban Forest priorities</p>	<p>El Cerrito Urban Tree Fund – this fund can be used to plant more urban trees as well as fund maintaining them (initial watering, etc.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursue the re-opening of the existing city tree fund 2. Determine how the funds would be used, based in part on input from the public (web based survey, etc.) 3. Help develop management guidelines for the fund 4. Develop a set of proposed projects to be implemented in the next FY, based on public feedback from #2 above 5. Start a public campaign to accept contributions, once the projects are determined 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4-6 months 2. 4-6 months 3. 4-6 months 4. 4-6 months 5. 6-12 months Ongoing
	<p>Review and allocate the annual UFC budget, appropriated by the El Cerrito City Council</p>		<p>July 1 of each year</p>

	<p>Research grant opportunities to support city UF goals and HNA management plan activities</p>		<p>ongoing</p>
	<p>Explore opportunities for financial support from city organizations (such as the El Cerrito Rotary Club) and businesses, including members of EC Chamber of Commerce</p>		<p>6-12 months</p>
<p>2. Grow and sustain El Cerrito's urban forest</p>	<p>Identify and implement opportunities to increase and maintain El Cerrito's urban forest inventory, potentially using funds from the El Cerrito Urban Tree Fund (see Goal 1)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursue and support efforts to exceed the number of trees planted by the city and avoid reduction of the tree inventory, year over year 2. 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 3. Geolocate street tree planting opportunities to prepare for grant opportunities, such as EEMP (Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program) 4. Review relevant existing city plans, identify goals and projects to prioritize, work with the city to implement 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. plan annually, review quarterly 2. at least every 2 years 3. as needed 4. at least annually

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Respond to urban forestry issues and opportunities via city staff, that arise from utilities and other agencies 6. Update El Cerrito’s Urban Forest Management Plan (from 2007) 7. Revise El Cerrito Master Tree List as needed 8. Consider community groups as potential resources for EC UF projects, funded via grants or city funds: Urban Tilth, Watershed Project, Groundwork Richmond 9. Encourage development of a “Friends of EC Urban Forest” group to support the awareness and implementation of UF projects 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. ongoing 6. as prioritized, estimate 1-2 years to complete 7. as needed 8. as needed 9. as prioritized
<p>3. Review and give input on city plan documents</p>	<p>Provide ongoing UFC input, facilitate public review, and advocate for upcoming projects, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation and funding of the HNA Management Plan 2. Street tree planting for the Richmond Complete Streets project 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ongoing 2. as requested
<p>4. Increase awareness and support of ECUF and activities by EC residents</p>	<p>Develop, evaluate, and implement public activities based on estimated impact and effectiveness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tree planting workshops 2. Tree care workshops 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ongoing/as prioritized 2. ongoing/as prioritized

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Library events to educate children and adults about trees 4. Work with EC school environmental classes / clubs to present information on trees (elementary and high school) 5. Develop and implement an outreach strategy to recruit more UFC members 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. at least annually 4. ongoing/as prioritized 5. 2-3 months
	<p>Evaluate annual UFC Arbor Week library events and adjust to continually seek high impact on community</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to work with schools (Fairmont Elementary, Prospect Sierra) 2. Continue to involve the El Cerrito Garden Club when practical 3. Add a fall tree planting event in addition to the spring Arbor Day event 4. Organize an Urban Street Tree Tour 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. at least annually 2. ongoing/as prioritized 3. 2-3 months 4. 2-3 months
	<p>Improve communication about the UFC and the EC urban forest</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and follow a monthly editorial calendar to plan and submit postings to Green Happenings about UF topics 2. Provide content for updates to the UFC website as needed to provide more information about the UFC, tree planting activities, etc. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annually for planning, monthly for review and submission 2. As prioritized

ONGOING PROJECTS

Project	Activities	Funding and other Resources requested	Estimated Staff time needed
Maintain El Cerrito's Tree City USA status	Fill this out based on Tree City USA requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arbor Day event ● Arbor Day proclamation ● Maintain Tree Board (UFC) ● Investigate Growth Award 		

PRIOR FISCAL YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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

Goal/Objective	Activites Supporting Goal	Status