



AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE

Monday February 10, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Staff Liaison

Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685
spre@ci-el-cerrito.ca.us

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 Cathy Bleier; Vice-Chair Robin Mitchell; Members: 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. INFORMAL INTERVIEWS OF URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE APPLICANTS - (20 minutes)**
 - A. Akhil Iyer- Youth Applicant
 - B. Randi Jimenez – Adult Applicant
- 6. ACTION ITEMS: (15 minutes)**
 - A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Consider a motion to adopt the minutes of the January 13, 2025, UFC meeting
 - B. YOUTH APPOINTMENT TO THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE: Consider a motion to appoint Akhil Iyer to the UFC for a term beginning March 1, 2025.

C. **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:** Consider a motion to recommend to the El Cerrito City Council the appointment of Randi Jimenez to the Urban Forest Committee for a term of four years beginning March 1, 2025.

7. COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

(2 *minutes*) Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the EQC.

8. COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

(2 *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:

(45 *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 (*Mitchell, Linhart, all*)

B. UFC 2025/26, 2026/27 WORK PLAN VISIONING (*Kazor, All*)

- Draft Plan Discussion and Refinement

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*)

- Work Plan Adoption
- Arbor Week 2025
- Richmond Street Complete Streets Project Review
- Urban Forestry Grants and Fundraising (*Hrubes, Kaczor, Mitchell*)
- Election of UFC Officers (April 14)

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 January 13, 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 Bleier* called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Cathy Bleier, Vice Chair Robin Mitchell members: Robert Hrubes, Jennifer Kaczor, Yan Linhart.

Also present: Members of the Public – Lauren Dodge, Arnold Henderson, Akhil Iyer, Randi Jiménez, Audrey Liese, Sandra Sprague and Staff Liaison Stephen Prée

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC: Arnold Henderson announced that he will not pursue UFC membership. Audrey Liese conveyed her concerns with the flammability of certain trees in the HNA and her advocacy for a more fire resilient environment. Lauren Dodge introduced herself as a gardener and an interested UFC applicant with a passion for streamlining government.

3. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE / CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA: *Linhart* shared several forestry-related books.

4. COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS: *Staff Liaison Prée* reported on the HNA Plan status in CEQA review; staff working on a USFS community wildfire defense grant; recent contracted tree work; a new CivicSpark Fellow is helping with the urban forestry program and CAAP implementation. *Prée* also provided a UFC membership update: 4 recent applicants, and the final UFC term of Chair Cathy Bleier is closing in February after 12 years of service.

5. ACTION ITEMS:

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Consider a motion to adopt the minutes from the December 9, 2024 UFC meeting. **Motion:** *Hrubes*; **2nd:** *Kaczor*; **Ayes:** Unanimous of those present.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Consider a motion to adopt the minutes from the December 10, 2024, joint UFC, EQC meeting. **Motion:** *Kaczor*; **2nd:** *Hrubes*, **Ayes:** Unanimous of those present.

C. RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: Consider a motion to recommend to the El Cerrito City Council the reappointment of Jennifer Kaczor to the Urban Forest Committee for a term of four years beginning March 1, 2025. **Motion:** Mitchell; **2nd:** Bleier; Ayes: Unanimous of those present.

D. RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: Consider a motion to recommend to the El Cerrito City Council the reappointment of Robin Mitchell to the Urban Forest Committee for a term of four years beginning March 1, 2025. **Motion:** Linhart; **2nd:** Kaczor; Ayes: Unanimous of those present.

6. COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE –*Vice Chair Mitchell* was not present in the December EQC meeting. *Prée* reiterated suggested collaborative activities between the EQC and UFC: Arbor Day, Earth Day and utilizing the Green Happenings Newsletter for announcements.

7. COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION- *Kaczor* reported the PRC had received the same update on the Draft HNA Plan that had been given to the EQC and UFC; the PRC also reviewed their work plan and meeting calendar.

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

A. Arbor Week 2025- March 7-14: Open discussion regarding potential activities and ad-hoc committee formation. Including: *Bleier* large scale planting with trees offered by PG&E; *Linhart* is inquiring with the library regarding potential programming like what he organized in 2024.

B. UFC 2025/26, 2026/27 WORK PLAN VISIONING: *Kaczor* shared the updated version with the edits incorporated from the December meeting. *Bleier* circulated a document: “EC URBAN FOREST COMM GOALS X VARIOUS CITY PLANS” to raise the UFC awareness of current conditions of the El Cerrito urban forest and the relationships of the 2007 Urban Forest Management Plan with other City planning documents, e.g. Urban Greening Plan. Discussion regarding balancing planting more trees for a net increase in tree canopy vs. removal of fire hazard trees; improve records to report accurately on trends in removals and plantings; address planting in high heat areas, i.e. Potrero Ave at Eastshore Blvd.; number of tree species on El Cerrito City Tree List.

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

- *Prée* will contact Arbor Week ad-hoc committee follow up
- *Kaczor* will edit and send Work Plan edits
- *All-* Review and consider work plan additions/edits
- *Prée* contact recent applicants regarding appointment timeline

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS –

- UFC Appointments
- UFC Work Plan Refinement
- Arbor Day Planning
- Richmond Street Complete Streets project

11. ADJOURNMENT- *Chair Bleier* adjourned the meeting at 9:02 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 January 13, 2025, as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Cathy Bleier, Chair or Vice Chair Robin Mitchell

Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison

EC URBAN FOREST COMM GOALS X VARIOUS CITY PLANS

2007 UF MGMT PLAN:

Urban forest Conditions

- 1991-2005 changes: +73 on maj art, -60 on minor and -456 residential; 7, 8 and 5.5% dead or dying respectively
- mortality due to drought, pruning and insufficient soil volume

GENERAL RECS

- 50% cover over new and renovated parking lots
- require irrigation in all planting areas
- require structural soil for plantings in hardscape
- require permanent maintenance by commercial developers
- Heritage tree ordinance

Others benefits:

- mitigating heat island effects. (where most?), air pollution
- mental health benefits to patients, etc
- neighborhood identity

ACTION II-A: signature trees at major intersections, gateways, arterials and medians
arterials: (Arlington Boulevard Ashbury Avenue Barrett Avenue Carlson Blvd Colusa Avenue Fairmount Avenue Key Boulevard, Macdonald Avenue Manila Avenue Moeser Lane Potrero Avenue Richmond Street Stockton Avenue)

CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN TREE PLANTING 2024

Develop and implement an urban tree planting program to expand the urban forest.

- Partner with CBOs, schools, and the Urban Forest Committee for outreach, education, volunteer recruitment, and decision-making on tree planting locations.
- Prioritize areas that experience extreme heat or urban heat island effect, have existing environmental or health disparities, are frequently used by the community (churches, schools, playgrounds, etc.), are in lower-income neighborhoods, or have lower existing canopy cover.
- Explore partnering with and using resources from the Green Pocket Forests initiative to develop and implement programs to plant Miyawaki forests 7 at schools and City properties, if pilot studies determine they are cost-effective.
- Prioritize drought tolerant and native tree species selections, where possible, to reduce water consumption for irrigation.
- Prioritize diversity in tree species and tree age. Select tree species with climate changes and impacts in mind.
- Pair this action with Action WNS1.3, tree maintenance, to ensure trees remain healthy.
- Set a target for tree canopy increase as appropriate using available data.

Native plants and biodiversity: Support planting and maintaining native plants, where possible, to enhance biodiversity and improve fire and drought resilience.

- Develop and continually update a preferred planting list for plant species that are less sensitive to drought, disease, fire, and pests. ?????
- Develop a program (or leverage existing programs) to encourage conversion of lawns to drought-tolerant native plant gardens.

SAN PABLO AVE PLAN. 2014 2.05.07.05 Landscaping Standards

1. All new landscapes shall meet the requirements of the following documents:

- The City of El Cerrito's Approved City Street Tree List
- The City of El Cerrito's Street Tree Requirements for the Public Right-of-Way or as approved by the Public Works Department
- The State of California's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance
- Prohibited species including all species listed as invasive by the California Invasive Plants Council

Focus on native or adapted species in order to provides landscapes that are:

- -DROUGHT TOLERANT: Use minimal water, and Require little maintenance
- -Provide a variety of textures and colors, both in foliage and bloom Provide interest throughout the year
- Be sensitive to site conditions and make selections based on any special constraints, such as reduced size planting areas, adjacent utilities, or specialized adjacent uses
- -Be planned in such a way as to not encroach on adjacent properties and/or the Public Right of Way through careful species selection and plant placement.

An important aim of the tree and plant selections is to reinforce the identity for the different Street Types. Where applicable, the tree palette should build on the palette that exists on the ground

Water Conservation. Conserve water use for landscaping or other outdoor purposes to achieve Climate Action Plan and Urban Greening Plan Goals.

1. All irrigation systems must be equipped with rain sensors that disable systems when the soil is adequately moist.
2. Consider harvesting rain water or indoor grey water to be used for irrigation.
3. All landscaping and irrigation systems must be in compliance with the California Code of Regulations, Title 23. Waters, Division 2. Department of Water Resources, Chapter 2.7 Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.

URBAN GREENING PLAN 2015

HNA plan –

Green streets: Conlon and Key Blvd, Avila

Greener gateways: Ohlone greenway, Central park, El Cerrito Plaza, Cutting

Other stuff inc Biofiltration, trails, creek improvements, improved parks: Fairmont Park,

Creekside Park, Cutting, Ashbury, lower Fairmont

Portola former middle school site

Blue-to Green connections



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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, Sheauchi 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
1. Increase revenue streams and make recommendations for how funds should be used to advance Urban Forest priorities	El Cerrito Urban Tree Fund – this fund can be used to plant more urban trees as well as fund maintaining them (initial watering, etc.) 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		1. 4-6 months 2. 4-6 months 3. 4-6 months 4. 4-6 months 5. 6-12 months Ongoing
	Review and allocate the annual UFC budget, appropriated by the El Cerrito City Council		July 1 of each year

	Research grant opportunities to support city UF goals and HNA management plan activities		ongoing
	Explore opportunities for financial support from city organizations (such as the El Cerrito Rotary Club) and businesses, including members of EC Chamber of Commerce		6-12 months
2. Grow and sustain El Cerrito's urban forest	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) 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		1.plan annually, review quarterly 2.at least every 2 years 3.as needed 4. at least annually

	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 Tilt, Watershed Project, Groundwork Richmond 9. Encourage development of a "Friends of EC Urban Forest" group to support the awareness and implementation of UF projects		5. ongoing 6. as prioritized, estimate 1-2 years to complete 7. as needed 8. as needed 9. as prioritized
3. Review and give input on city plan documents	Provide ongoing UFC input, facilitate public review, and advocate for upcoming projects, including: 1. Implementation and funding of the HNA Management Plan 2. Street tree planting for the Richmond Complete Streets project		1. ongoing 2. as requested
4. Increase awareness and support of ECUF and activities by EC residents	Develop, evaluate, and implement public activities based on estimated impact and effectiveness 1. Tree planting workshops 2. Tree care workshops		1. ongoing/as prioritized 2. ongoing/as prioritized

	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		3. at least annually 4. ongoing/as prioritized 5. 2-3 months
	Evaluate annual UFC Arbor Week library events and adjust to continually seek high impact on community 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		1. at least annually 2. ongoing/as prioritized 3. 2-3 months 4. 2-3 months
	Improve communication about the UFC and the EC urban forest 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.		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 • 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	Activities Supporting Goal	Status