



AGENDA

CONCURRENT COMMUNITY TOWN HALL BUDGET MEETING AND SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING April 10, 2021 – 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Members:

Mayor Paul Fadelli

Mayor Pro Tem Gabe Quinto • Councilmember Janet Abelson
Councilmember Lisa Motoyama • Councilmember Tessa Rudnick

Join Via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93140504450?pwd=eWxGdkR2MGJPCjZuQVdBYmM0dVRHdz09>

Meeting ID: 931 4050 4450 **Password:** 610479
or Dial in: 1-408-638-0968

Pursuant to Executive Order N-29-20, teleconference restrictions of the Brown Act have been suspended, as well as the requirement to provide a physical location for members of the public to participate in the meeting.

Members of the public can watch or listen to the townhall online at www.el-cerrito.org/CouncilMeetingMaterials, or participate directly in the meeting by using the Zoom information listed above.

Submit your Questions, Comments or Feedback in Advance

Questions, comments and feedback may be submitted in advance to cityclerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us. Submissions will be accepted until **Friday, April 9th at 10:00 a.m.** This email will not be monitored during the town hall.

Ask Questions, Provide Comments or Feedback During the Town Hall

Questions, comments and feedback may be submitted during the town hall using the Q&A feature, or by using the "[Raise Hand](#)" icon to request to speak. If joining by phone, dial ***9** to "raise your hand", and when prompted by the host, ***6** to unmute/mute.

The City cannot guarantee that time will permit all questions submitted to be addressed during the town hall, but all submissions received will be provided to City Management and City Council.

**10:00 AM CONVENE CONCURRENT COMMUNITY TOWN HALL BUDGET
MEETING/SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

1. DISCUSSION ON CITY BUDGET AND CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

Proposed Action: Hear an update on the City's budget, ask questions of staff, and share your thoughts with the City Council on all financial topics such as budget priorities, the state audit, financial conditions etc.

Contact: Karen Pinkos, City Manager, City Management

**12:00 PM ADJOURN CONCURRENT COMMUNITY TOWN HALL BUDGET
MEETING/SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Please note this meeting will **not be the typical format for a City Council meeting**, this notice is being posted as a quorum of City Council Members are expected to attend and may participate in the discussion.

This meeting will be livestreamed and available at www.el-cerrito.org/CouncilMeetingMaterials.



SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

CONCURRENT BUDGET TOWNHALL AND SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 10, 2021

ITEM 1. DISCUSSION ON CITY BUDGET AND CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

1. City Manager Presentation
2. Written Questions, Comments and Feedback received from:
 - Al Miller
 - Michael Fischer
 - Gary Prost
3. Webinar Q&A Data

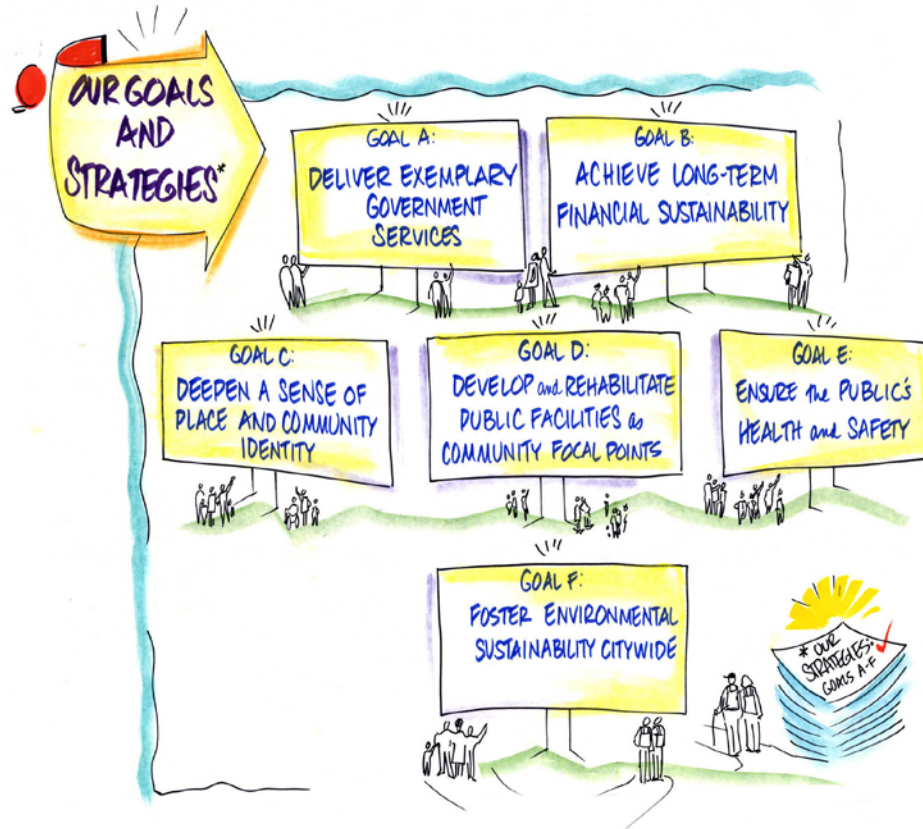


City of El Cerrito

BUDGET UPDATE

COMMUNITY TOWN HALL MEETING – APRIL 10, 2021

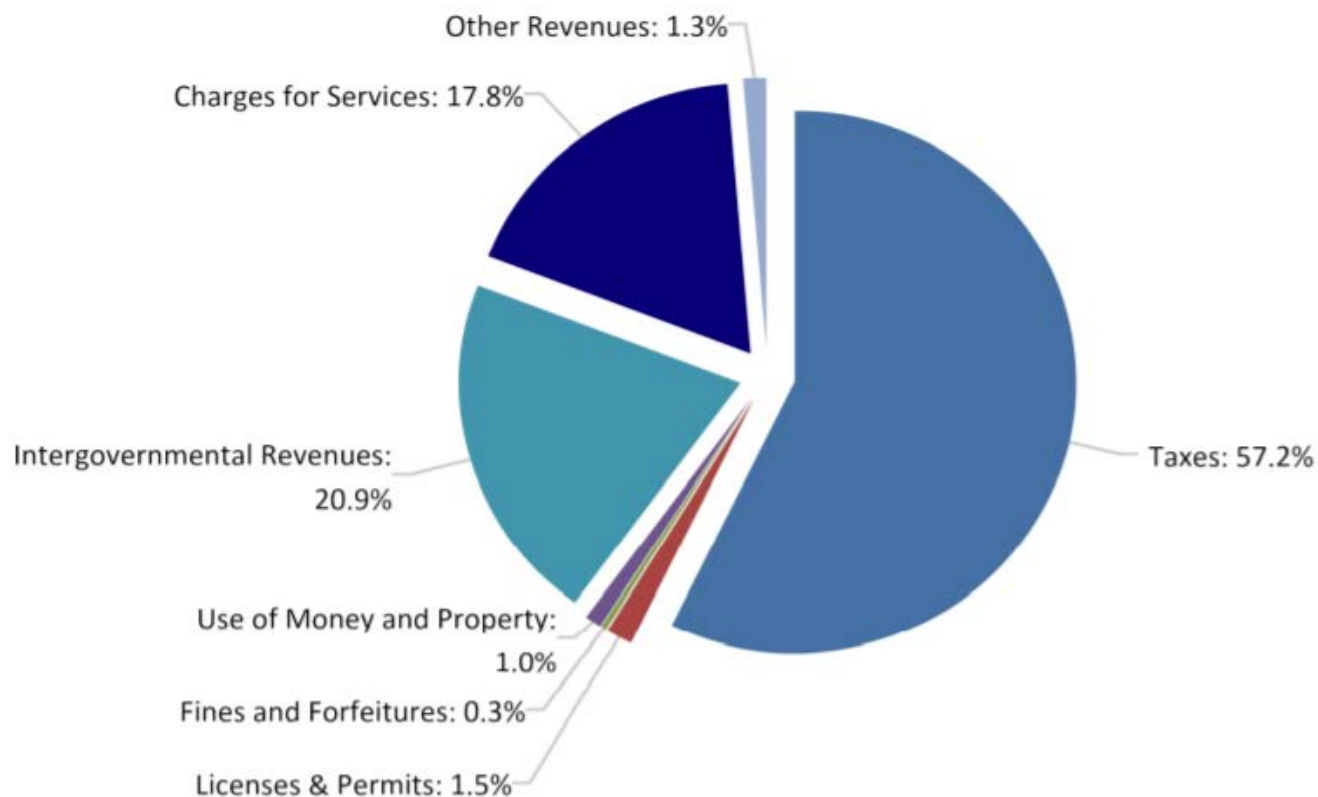
FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget Focus



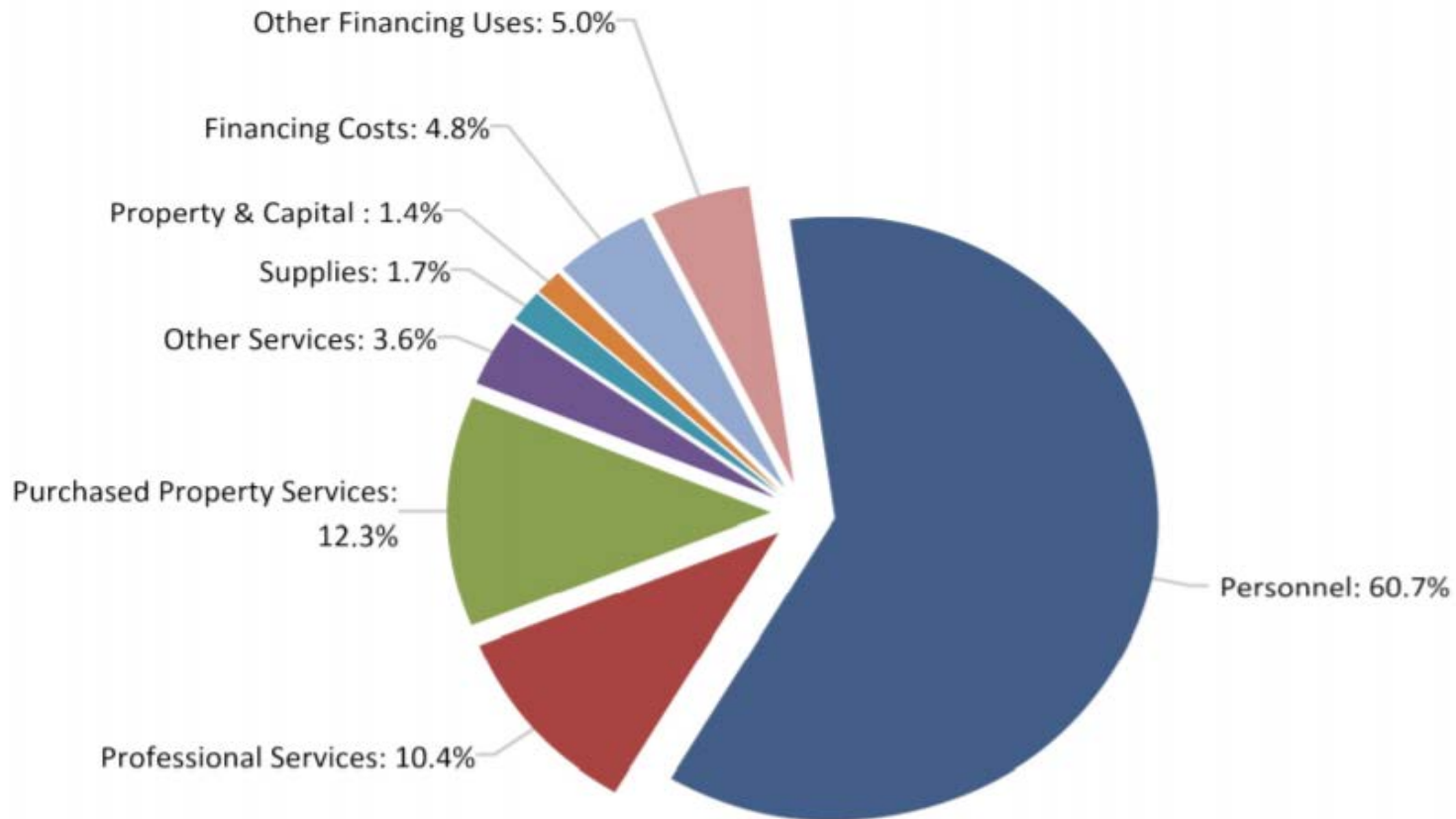
Achieve Long-term Financial Sustainability

- ▶ General Fund Reserve
- ▶ Fiscal Response Plan
- ▶ Constant Monitoring of Financial Position
- ▶ Fiscal Discipline

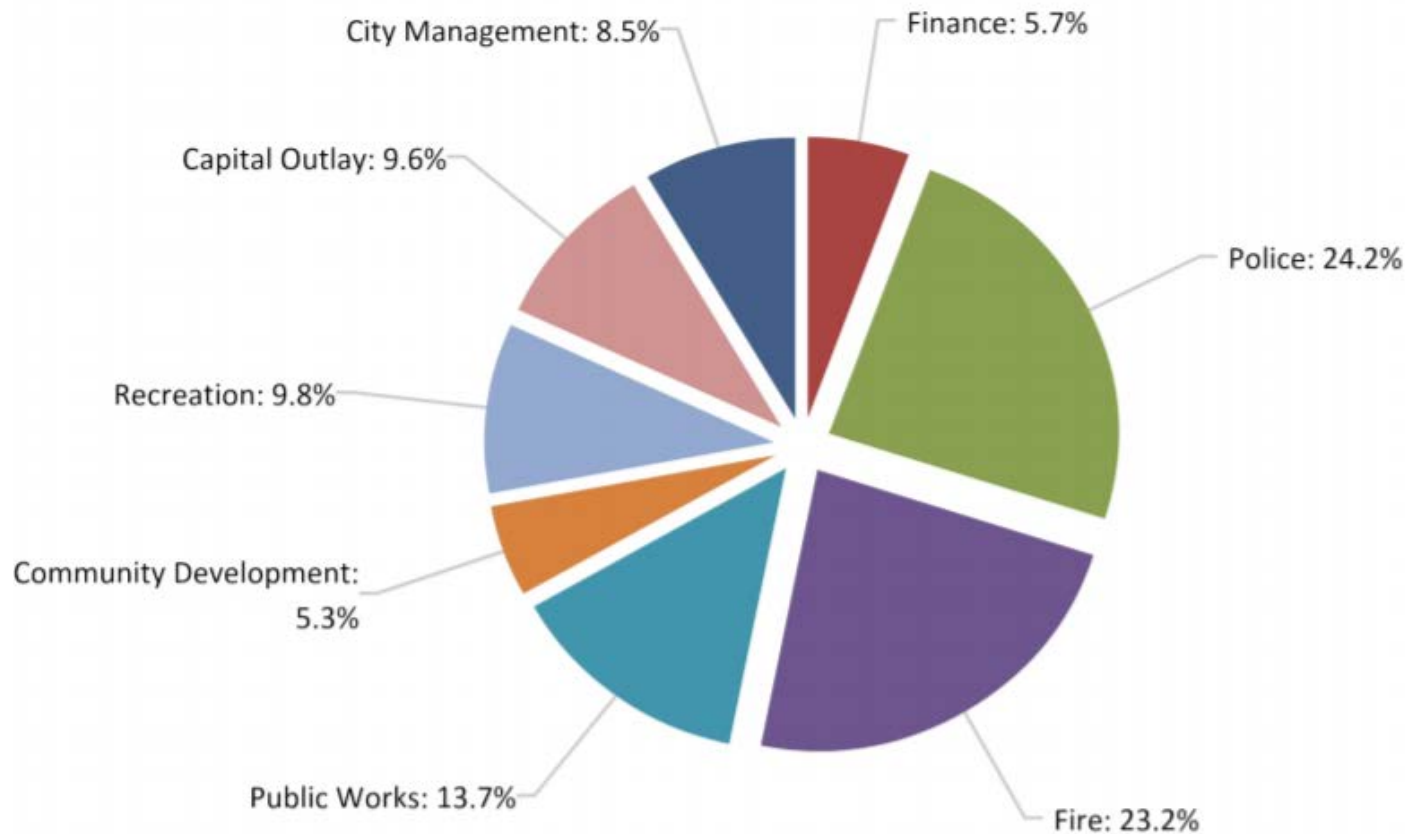
FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget Citywide Revenues All Funds = \$52,084,040



FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget Citywide Expenditures by Type All Funds = \$52,643,691



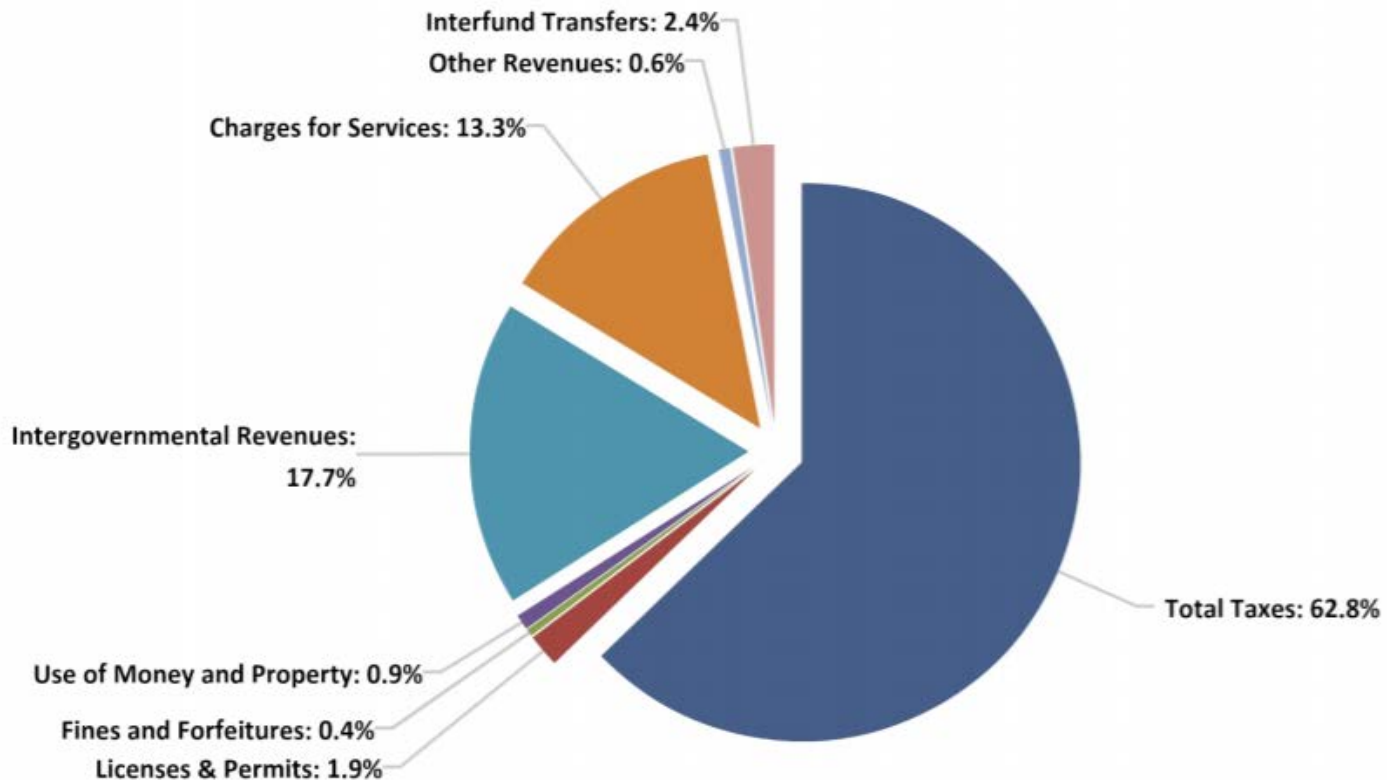
FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget Citywide Spending by Department All Funds



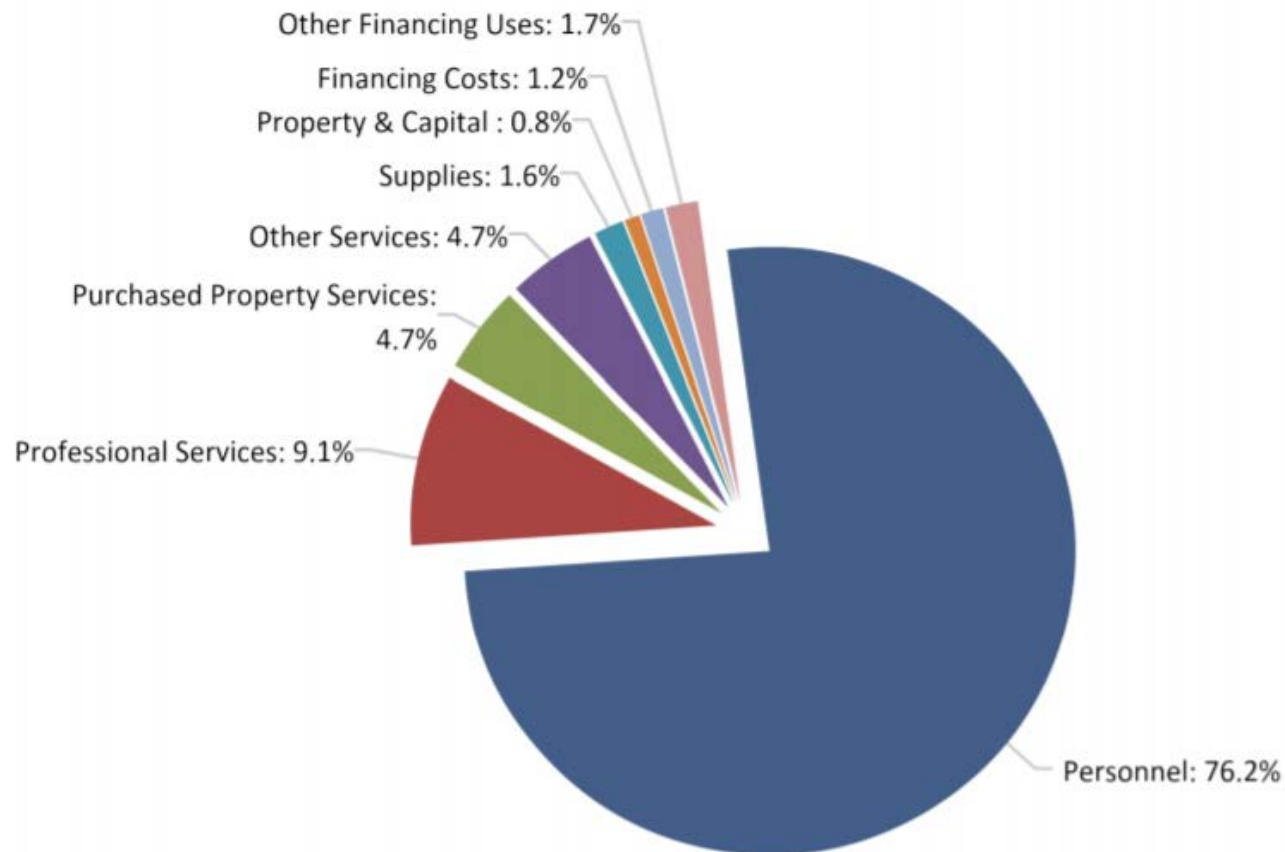
FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget – General Fund

- ▶ The “baseline” for the Proposed FY 2020-21 General Fund Budget was presented to the City Council in February 2020
 - ▶ Projected General Fund revenues of \$42.7 million and expenditures of \$42.6 million
- ▶ Based on financial position in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on City revenues, staff presented City Council with expenditure reductions of approximately \$4 million in April 2020
- ▶ In July 2020 staff revised the original baseline estimates and City Council adopted a General Fund Budget of \$39.4 million in revenues and \$38.7 million in expenses for FY 2020-21.
 - ▶ \$3.3 million (or 8%) reduction in revenues and \$4.0 million (or 9%) reduction in expenditures over the baseline budget.
- ▶ City Council amended the budget in October 2020 with the prepared line-item budget document and included the Fiscal Response Plan that was developed in August 2020
- ▶ In February 2021, City Council discussed midyear budget adjustments and further amended the budget in response to trends and ongoing challenges due to the pandemic
 - ▶ General Fund amended to \$38.0 million in revenues and \$37.4 million in expenses

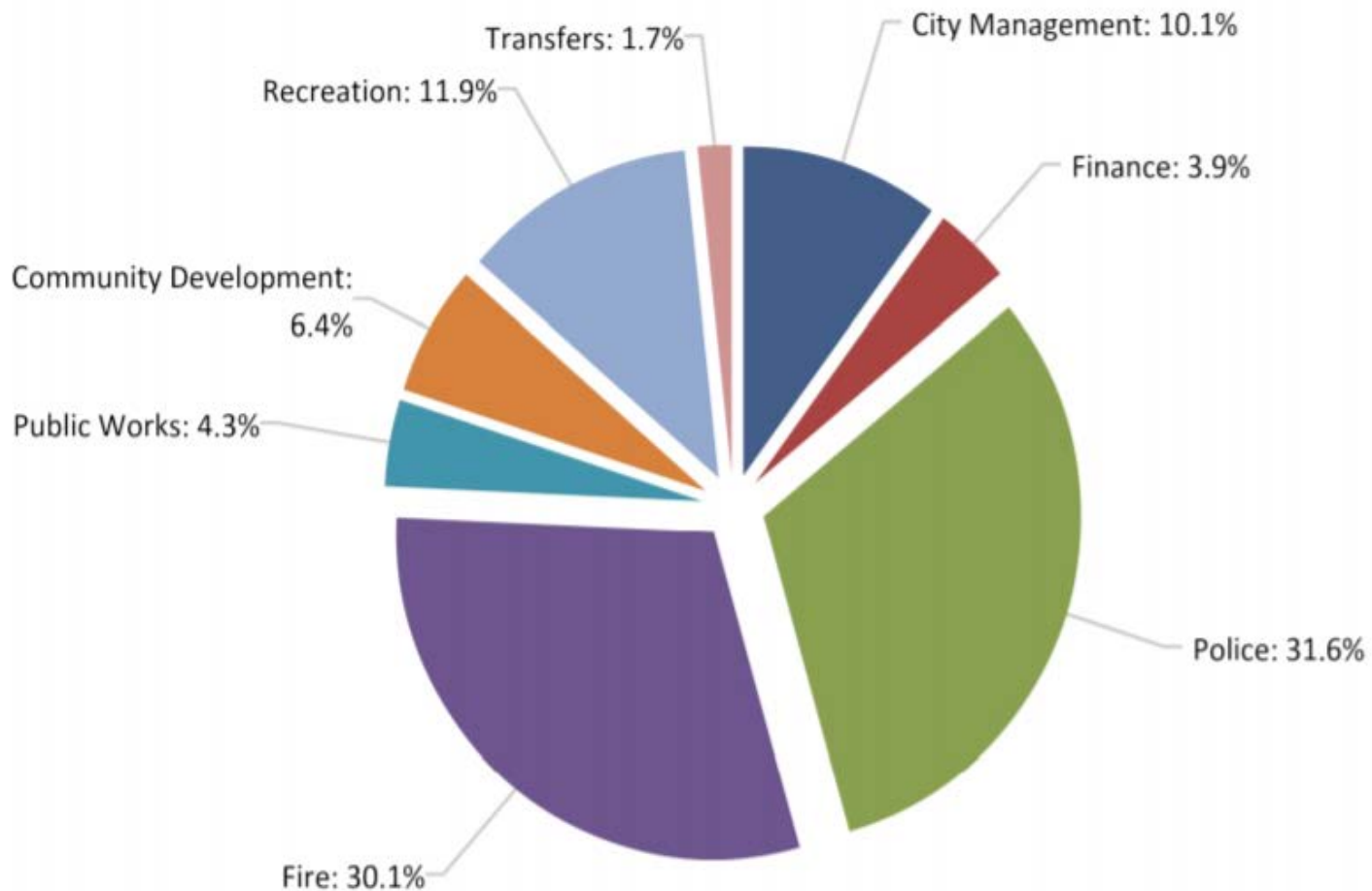
FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget General Fund Revenues \$39,377,869



FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget General Fund Expenditures \$38,714,837



FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget General Fund Expenses by Department



FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget

General Fund Reductions by Department

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Department	Reductions	Amount (rounded)
City Administration	Consulting services, Street Banner Program, supplies/equipment, travel/conferences, printed materials	\$199,000
Community Development	Vacant positions, consulting/legal services, contract services, travel/conferences	\$141,000
Finance	Consulting/tech services, retiree pension cost financing	\$80,000
Fire	Defer vehicle replacement costs, suspending/cancelling education programs	\$80,000
Police	Vacant positions, eliminate SRO, defer vehicle purchases	\$816,000
Public Works	Consulting services, transferring landscape maintenance costs to Measure H fund, suspending Neighborhood Traffic Management & New Streetlight Programs	\$153,000
Recreation	Contract expenses, supplies/equipment, transferring eligible maintenance costs to Measure H	\$163,000
Total		\$1,632,000

FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget

Personnel Reductions by Employee Group

Bargaining Unit	Action	Cost Savings
Local 1230 Firefighters	Deferred COLA	\$177,684
Public Safety Management Association - Battalion Chiefs:	Deferred COLA	\$38,523
SEIU Local 1201	Deferred COLA, furloughs	\$740,104
Police Employees Association	Deferred COLAs (Jan 2020 & Jan 2021)	\$323,597
Public Safety Management Association - Police Management	Deferred COLA	\$40,217
Public Safety Management Association - Police Chief	Deferred COLA	\$12,445
Management/Confidential; City Manager	No COLA, no auto allowance, increased contribution to CalPERS, furloughs, CM 3% salary reduction	\$1,196,380
Total		\$2,528,950

FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget Fiscal Response Plan

Budget Strategy	Department	Estimated Annual Fiscal Impact
Reduce city administration	City Administration	\$345,000
Change service delivery approach of finance functions	Finance	\$25,000
Restructure fire management functions	Fire	\$210,000
Restructure police operations	Police	\$595,000
Reduce/shift funding for landscape maintenance costs	Public Works (Parks)	\$165,000
Reduce recreation administrative functions	Recreation	\$166,000
Total Budget Strategies		\$1,506,000
Goal		\$1,500,000

State Auditor Report

- ▶ In 2019, the City of El Cerrito was notified by the California State Auditor that it was being assessed under its Local High Risk Program.
- ▶ In February 2020, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee approved an audit of the City by the State Auditor, which took place from October 2020 to March 2021.
- ▶ The City was provided with a draft of the audit report in early March and, per regulations, was given five days to respond to the audit. The City responded in the appropriate timeframe and the full report was released on March 16, 2021.
- ▶ Following the issuance of the report, the City is required to prepare a Corrective Action Plan that addresses the high risk areas identified in the report. The City will then provide progress reports to the State Auditor every six months regarding implementation of the Corrective Action Plan.

Five High Risk Areas

- ▶ Continual diminishing of financial reserves through overspending
 - ▶ Corrective Action: Monitor revenues, reduce expenditures, and prioritize increasing General Fund reserves
- ▶ Ineffective budget development and monitoring practices
 - ▶ Corrective Action: Implement stricter budget policies and procedures and increased focus on departmental budgets
- ▶ Lack of a formal financial recovery plan
 - ▶ Corrective Action: Develop Fiscal Recovery Plan to achieve financial sustainability
- ▶ Insufficient reductions in ongoing costs
 - ▶ Corrective Action: Monitor personnel expenditures, work with employee bargaining units, ensure appropriate compensation
- ▶ Missed opportunities to increase revenue
 - ▶ Corrective Action: Review all opportunities to increase cost recovery

American Rescue Plan Act

- ▶ Signed by President Biden on March 11, 2021
 - ▶ \$130 billion direct funding to cities
- ▶ Current funding calculation for El Cerrito is \$4.8 million
 - ▶ Based on population
 - ▶ Distributed over two-year period
- ▶ U.S. Treasury currently firming regulations
 - ▶ Funds can be used to offset reduction in revenues due to pandemic
 - ▶ Funds cannot be used to offset a tax decrease or for pensions
 - ▶ Cities will have to provide funding reports to Treasury
 - ▶ Funds must be used by December 31, 2024
- ▶ Funds must be distributed to states within 60 days; states must then distribute to cities within 30 days

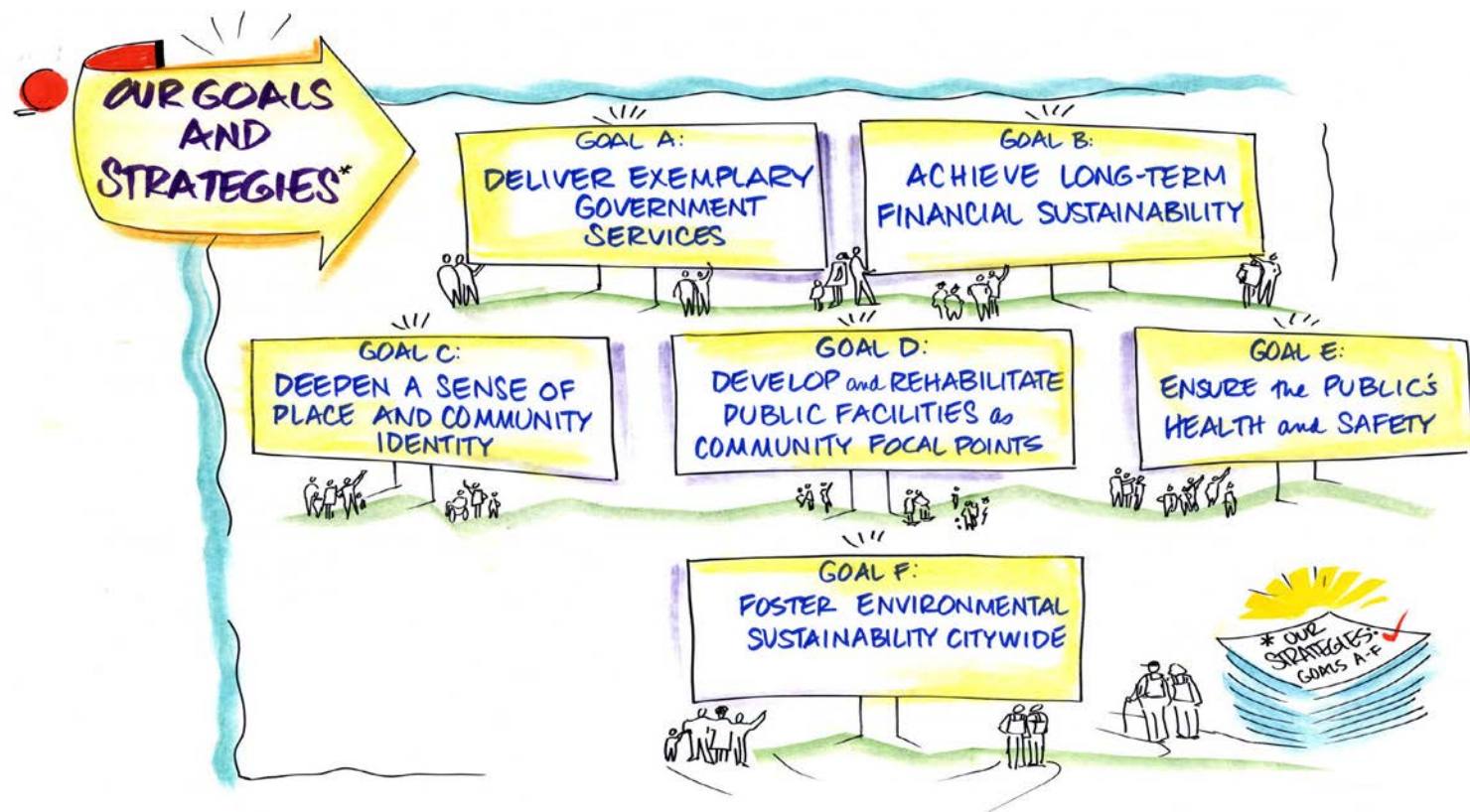
Priority: Restore General Fund Reserve

- ▶ City Council directed staff to prioritize bringing General Fund reserves to minimum 10% level beginning in FY 2021-22. This means further reductions will be reviewed and considered.
- ▶ City Council will review compensation for Management/Confidential staff (all other employees are in bargaining units and subject to negotiation)
- ▶ Reductions previously considered by City Council include:
 - Outsourcing services in various departments
 - Reducing City subsidy for Library hours
 - Reduce/eliminate subsidies for Recreation programs
 - Decrease Fire Department response/services
 - Decrease Police Department response/services
 - Decrease maintenance Citywide
- ▶ All options will have impact on service delivery

Next Steps

- ▶ City staff preparing budget for all funds and departments
- ▶ April 13, 2021: Financial Advisory Board meeting
- ▶ April 20, 2021: City Council will review and discuss Corrective Action Plan to submit to State Auditor
- ▶ May 4, 2021: Master Fee Schedule public hearing
- ▶ May 8, 2021: Public workshop to discuss Fiscal Recovery Plan for future financial sustainability
- ▶ May 18, 2021: Departmental budget presentations
 - ▶ Additional meetings as needed TBD
- ▶ June 1 and June 15, 2021: Budget hearings
 - ▶ Additional meetings as needed TBD
- ▶ Adopt FY 2021-22 budget prior to June 30, 2021

www.el-cerrito.org/annualbudgetprocess



FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget – Midyear Update

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Revenues (\$000s)	FY 2018-19 Audited	FY 2019-20 Audited	Actuals July-Dec 2020	FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget	Year to date actuals as a % of Budget
Taxes					
Property Taxes	10,182	9,840	5,070	10,440	49%
Sales Taxes	7,545	6,975	3,026	6,450	47%
Utility Tax	3,208	3,166	1,228	3,200	38%
Property Transfer Taxes	1,102	3,467	2,008	2,400	84%
Franchise Taxes	1,244	1,587	377	1,250	30%
Business License Tax	910	919	821	850	97%
Other Tax	149	173	46	136	34%
Total Taxes	\$24,340	\$26,127	\$12,576	\$24,726	51%
Licenses & Permits	776	785	322	758	42%
Fines and Forfeitures	219	227	68	170	40%
Use of Money and Property	157	465	134	350	38%
Intergovernmental Revenues	6,744	6,729	2,205	6,958	32%
Charges for Services	6,934	4,748	1,675	5,223	32%
Other Revenues	182	118	48	253	19%
Interfund Transfers	2,036	1,024	476	938	51%
Total Revenues	\$41,388	\$40,222	\$17,504	\$39,376	44%
Expenditures (\$000s)					
Personnel	29,862	30,383	15,664	29,490	53%
Professional Services	4,487	3,702	1,163	3,534	33%
Purchased Property Services	2,300	2,152	603	1,814	33%
Other Services	1,840	1,806	1,033	1,833	56%
Supplies	726	606	133	611	22%
Property & Capital	422	413	173	456	38%
Financing Costs	478	536	161	310	52%
Other Financing Uses	1,416	697	602	665	91%
Total Expenditures	\$41,531	\$40,294	\$19,532	\$38,713	50%
Net Change in Fund Balance (\$000s)	(\$143)	(\$72)	(\$2,028)	\$663	
Beginning Total Fund Balance	\$105	(\$38)		(\$110)	
Ending Total Fund Balance	(\$38)	(\$110)		\$553	
Total Fund Balance Reserve %	-0.1%	-0.3%		1.4%	

FY 2020-21 Proposed Budget Amendments	FY 2020-21 Projected Year-End
(200)	10,240
(200)	6,250
	3,200
200	2,600
(200)	1,050
	821
	136
(\$400)	\$24,297
	739
(75)	95
	332
700	7,805
(1,565)	3,658
	213
	941
(\$1,340)	\$38,080
FY 2020-21 Proposed Budget Amendments	FY 2020-21 Projected Year-End
(222)	29,268
(334)	3,100
(104)	1,710
(197)	1,576
(121)	408
	409
	310
	665
(\$978)	\$37,446
(\$362)	\$634
	(\$110)
	\$524
	1.4%

Five-Year Forecast – General Assumptions

- FY 2019-20 actuals and COVID-19 projections for FY 2020-21 form the baseline for projections
- COVID-19 ceases to be a significant threat after mid-2021
- No new positions beyond those already budgeted for in FY 2020
- No COLA in FY 2021 and FY 2022 for all Management and Confidential City Staff
- Moderate recession in FY 2021-22, recovery begins in mid-2022, no double-dip recession
- City will meet all its debt obligations without default with an annual TRAN
- Restore pre-2016 bond ratings by FY 2022-23
- Write off the General Fund advance to the City's Redevelopment Agency Successor Agency in the amount of \$1.325 million in FY 2020-21
- No changes to service delivery
- Federal Government COVID-19 relief of \$4.8 million in two annual installments

From: [Al Miller](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment for Concurrent Budget Townhall and Special City Council Meeting March 10, 2021
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 9:48:26 PM

Mayor Fadelli & Council Members Abelson, Montoya, Quinto, Rudnick;

As you continue your efforts to improve the financial condition of The City of El Cerrito, please remember the following items:

- The strong comments of support for the El Cerrito Library each of you have made in your campaigns to be elected to the El Cerrito City Council,
- the "WHEREASEs" in the proclamation you all unanimously approved under Agenda Item 4.A. of the April 6th City Council Meeting proclaiming National Library Week in El Cerrito, and,
- the fact that the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors have decided to increase County support for library hours to 40 hours per week because of their belief that such services are vital, especially in this time of pandemic crisis,

Then, realize that this is not a time El Cerrito should again be considering reducing library hours, especially since the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors have given you the win-win opportunity to actually reduce the City's funding of additional library hours without reducing the current weekly hours of operation.

For the eleven eloquently expressed reasons in your proclamation and the other reasons listed above, I urge you to Live up to your past promises and continue funding at least six additional library hours per week to maintain the current schedule of 46 hours per week.

6 for 46!

Thank you.

Al Miller

A resident of El Cerrito, CA 94530

From: [Michael A Fischer](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Paul Fadelli](#); [Gabe Quinto](#); [Janet Abelson](#); [Lisa Motoyama](#); [Tessa Rudnick](#); [Karen Pinkos](#); [Alexandra Orologas](#)
Subject: Budget and Library Hours (for April 10 Concurrent Townhall and Special City Council Meeting)
Date: Friday, April 9, 2021 12:01:37 AM
Attachments: [Now is the time to treat the internet as a utility - Los Angeles Times.rtf](#)

Dear Mayor Fadelli, Mayor Pro-tem Quinto, and Council Members Abelson, Motoyama, and Rudnick:

I write this as your designated Library Commissioner. As I promised when I was first selected, I report to you as necessary on library issues. It is my duty to obsess about library issues including such things as library hours. Indeed, it is basically my only duty and I'm the one person in the city hierarchy who is so charged. This is one of the most important times for that report.

I don't envy you your task with regard to the budget. The cuts will be painful. My expertise and my authority don't extend to that area. I have some views but I will leave that to others. My charge is our library. The choice there is clear -- accept the win-win offer that the County Library Administration has provided. Cut the city-funded library hours from 11 to 6. This is both the most you can do in regard to library hours and saves almost 50% on this budget item. Most importantly, it is the only equitable choice.

Earlier last year, in the middle of pandemic and as the enormity of our budget problem was becoming clearer, the city council received an outpouring of comments from our community to leave the library hours in the budget alone. The council voted, twice, unanimously to do so. That was then. Times and circumstances have changed.

Through extremely hard work on the county library budget, the county now provides 40 hours for the library to be open every week, up from the previous 35 hours. I remember some of you asking earlier why the county couldn't step in and help some. Now it has.

The county also allows cities to increase the county-provided 40 hours by either 6 hours, 12 hours, or 16 hours. The choice of 6 city-funded hours, down from the current 11 hours, will leave the library open the 46 hours

that were funded for the current fiscal year. But the cost to the city is roughly half of what it was for this year thanks to the increase in county provided hours.

In addition, the county has also stated that for the El Cerrito Library the city cannot have more than these 6 hours because our library is too small to accommodate the staff that would be required. So the choice is either 6 hours or none. The city should not turn its back on our most needy who require the library for such basic needs as internet access especially since we can now fund a total of 46 combined county and city hours for roughly half the amount in the current budget.

The intensity of support of our community for our library hours has not diminished. Every member of this council has campaigned on supporting the library and this must include keeping the library open as much as possible. Keeping the library open is not a luxury for our community. The library is most needed by the most vulnerable among us. We must not fix our financial problems on their backs.

People need our library to help recover from the pandemic and the economic downturn. They will need the computers and internet access that for all too many of them can only be gotten through the library. For the benefit of the new council members, and as a reminder to others, I note that when the library hours were last increased from 35 to 50 -- about 43% -- internet usage on the library's public access computers increased over 100%. No one can deny the existence of a digital divide here in El Cerrito.

The County Library has announced that most branches, including El Cerrito, will be open to the public starting April 26, albeit on a restricted basis. This opening will allow for the use of the library's computers by those in need of internet access.

The internet has become a utility, a necessity to everyday life. David Lazarus, the business columnist for the Los Angeles Times has discussed this in the attached article (which can also be found here: <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2020-10-23/coronavirus-internet-is-a-utility>). Broadband access is high on the agendas of both our Legislature and our Congress. For those without the equipment to connect,

though, a fiber cable means nothing. Our library meets that crucial equipment need. As I've said several times to this Council, our library is like an umbrella -- it only really works when open.

We know how much worse the pandemic and economic downturn has affected our most vulnerable. Equity must be a core value of our city and equity demands that we provide as many library hours as we can. This \$60,000 budget item could not be better spent.

Michael A. Fischer (he him)

eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com

El Cerrito City Designated Library Commissioner

Vice Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission

Library Hours Provide Vital Access to Services for Our Most Needy

P.S. The irony about how our library is too small to accommodate staff needed to be open more than 46 hours a week is clear and represents an issue that, notwithstanding the pandemic and our budget issues, needs to be addressed.

Now is the time to treat the internet as a utility

Like power and water, the internet has been shown by the pandemic to be a necessity for households. It's time for it to be regulated as a utility.

(Los Angeles Times)

After months of being stuck at home, many Americans know full well that there are three things they can't live without. Two of them are power and water.

The third, I'm sure, will be obvious to all.

Internet access.

Imagine this prolonged ordeal without being able to work or attend school from home, without email, without being able to shop online, without streaming video and music.

The few times my home has lost power and/or internet access since the pandemic began (including just this week), it felt like life came to a crashing halt. The harsh reality of isolation became impossible to ignore.

“We’re looking at something that has truly become a necessity for survival,” said Lisa Gilbert, executive vice president of the advocacy group Public Citizen. “It’s critical to the functioning of society.”

For that reason, she told me, “treating the internet like electricity or water is the way we need to think about it.”

Which is to say, the internet has grown into a utility, and internet access should be regulated as such.

[Maximum Observability, Minimum Effort][2] [3]

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! [4]

I heard as much from a number of experts in the field.

“If it wasn’t clear before, it’s now crystal clear that internet access is necessary to survive in our contemporary world, similar to electricity,” said Catherine Powell, a law professor at Fordham University who focuses on digital rights and civil liberties.

Susan Aaronson, director of the Digital Trade and Data Governance Hub at George Washington University, went so far as to say affordable high-speed internet access “is a service that government should provide.”

“It is an essential public good and should be embedded in the law

as some nations do,” she said. “It is essential to equality of opportunity, access to credit, access to other public goods, access to education.”

This is a separate matter from debates about regulation of internet content, or whether behemoths such as Google and Facebook [have too much power][5].

The position of the U.S. government — not to mention phone and cable companies — is that the internet is a free-market service, full stop. It’s not a utility.

Ajit Pai, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, says the internet industry merits only what he calls “light-touch” regulation, which is to say hardly any regulation at all.

“The FCC’s light-touch approach is working,” Pai declared last year.

At first glance, that seems to be true. Over the last decade, the percentage of Americans with access to broadband internet climbed to 93.5% from 74.5%, according to [a recent report][6] from BroadbandNow, a service comparison site.

Meanwhile, the [consumer price index][7] for internet service has remained relatively stable over the same period, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The average U.S. internet user pays about \$60 a month for

service.

But industry observers say we're measuring things wrong. Rather than comparing current internet prices with how much we paid 10 years ago, we should be comparing our prices to what people in other developed countries pay.

By that yardstick, Americans are getting a lousy deal, not just in terms of pricing but also in terms of service quality — that is, speed.

A [recent comparison][8] of worldwide broadband charges by Britain's Cable.co.uk, a telecom service provider, found that the U.S. ranked 119th out of 206 countries, with monthly costs far surpassing those of Germany, Britain and Japan.

Another study, this one by DecisionData.org, found that although U.S. internet speeds had increased over the last decade, we're [not even in the top 10][9]. (Want fast internet? Move to Romania.)

"Americans have the slowest, most expensive internet in the world," said Ernesto Falcon, senior legislative counsel for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, with just a bit of hyperbole.

Telecom companies have been steadily raising internet prices to offset growing numbers of cord cutters ditching their TV plans. The companies are fond of saying that the main reason for these price hikes is investment in new high-speed lines.

But Harold Feld, senior vice president of the advocacy group Public Knowledge, says this is misleading. Most of the necessary fiber-optic cables for current internet use are already in the ground, he said.

“These days, if you want to make your network go faster, you’re talking about software upgrades, not new fiber,” Feld observed of industry moves.

“The only reason for why our broadband prices are relatively stable,” he said, “is because there isn’t much competition.”

Moreover, not everyone shares equally in the benefits of a wired world.

About 44% of households with annual incomes below \$30,000 don’t have broadband service, according to a Pew Research Center [report last year][10]. Roughly half don’t have a computer.

That average \$60 monthly bill for internet access may not seem exorbitant to many people. But it can be an onerous burden for lower-income households when it has to compete with other necessities, such as food and rent.

Alok Gupta, a professor of information and decision sciences at the University of Minnesota, proposed to me giving all Americans “a base rate of access” to the internet for free, and then charging more to people who want faster speeds or more data usage.

In other words, everyone would receive sufficient bandwidth to surf the net and send emails. People who want to spend all day watching Netflix in high definition can pay extra for the privilege.

I find this an attractive idea, not unlike the notion of the government providing everyone with basic health coverage and then allowing private insurers to charge for more comprehensive plans.

But that doesn't mitigate the need for oversight. The simple fact is that if the internet is a necessity, like power and water, we need clear rules to ensure the greatest possible access and the lowest possible price.

"The internet is the direct descendant of the U.S. telephone network," said Jeff Chester, executive director of the Center for Digital Democracy, a digital rights advocacy group.

Until the phone industry was deregulated in the 1980s and '90s — a move that boosted competition for a while before the industry reunited into a handful of big players — "it was the first information utility," he told me.

The internet now plays that role, Chester said.

Aaronson at George Washington University says one reason we lag behind other advanced countries is because we don't view broadband as a right — just as we don't view healthcare or higher education as things all people are entitled to.

This, she told me, is incredibly shortsighted.

“Access to broadband is essential for society as a whole to succeed,” Aaronson said.

The very definition of a utility.

Your guide to our new economic reality.

Get our free business newsletter for insights and tips for getting by.

Enter email address

You may occasionally receive promotional content from the Los Angeles Times.

[1]:

<https://ca-times.brightspotcdn.com/dims4/default/d206ec8/2147483647/strip/true/crop/750x422 0>

[0/resize/840x473!/quality/90/?url=https://california-times-brightspot.s3.amazonaws.com/cb/ff/e4714a4d6a59476acfb365527a27/750x422](https://california-times-brightspot.s3.amazonaws.com/cb/ff/e4714a4d6a59476acfb365527a27/750x422) [2]: [3]:

https://ad.doubleclick.net/ddm/trackclk/N1114924.3526545NATIV OINC./B25366724.298568951;dc_trk_aid=492112249;dc_trk_cid=116585169;dc_lat=;dc_rdid=;tag_for_child_directed_treatment=;tfua=;gdpr=0;gdpr_consent=;ltd= “Maximum Observability, Minimum Effort” [4]:

https://ad.doubleclick.net/ddm/trackimp/N1114924.3526545NATI VOINC./B25366724.298568951;dc_trk_aid=492112249;dc_trk_cid=116585169;ord=-1028702889;dc_lat=;dc_rdid=;tag_for_child_directed_treatment=;tfua=;gdpr=0;gdpr_consent=;ltd=? [5]:

<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-10-21/justice-department-google-antitrust-lawsuit> [6]:

<https://broadbandnow.com/research/broadband-2020> [7]:

https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CUUR0000SEEE03?output_view=data [8]:

<https://www.cable.co.uk/broadband/pricing/worldwide-comparison/> [9]:

<https://decisiondata.org/news/analysis-us-falls-out-of-top-10-average-internet-speeds/> [10]:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/07/digital-divide-persists-even-as-lower-income-americans-make-gains-in-tech-adoption/>

From: [Gary Prost](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: April 10 Town Hall Comments and Questions
Date: Saturday, April 10, 2021 10:31:58 AM

Mayor and City Council,

I would like to reiterate my support for all of the recommendations in the State Auditor's report and urge you to get the city's financial house in order. Structural changes are needed in how we prepare and carry out our budget, especially with the monitoring of spending.

I do have a question that I have not heard explained: what are the consequences to El Cerrito if we do not meet the Auditor's recommendations?

Thank you,

Gary Prost

--

Gary Prost
garyprost01@gmail.com
<http://garyprostgeology.com/>
www.crcpress.com/9781498756082

Question Report

Report Generated: 4/12/2021 9:41:00 AM

Topic: Concurrent Budget Townhall and Special City Council Meeting 04/10/2021

Webinar ID: 931 4050 4450

Actual Duration (minutes): 152

Actual Duration (minutes): 4/10/2021 9:34:00 AM

Actual Duration (minutes):132

Question Details

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer(s)
1	So I see that the city said they proposed 4 million in cuts for the current fiscal year. If so how come actual expenditures are only down 600k? Were the cuts actual cuts? where can i find a list of them drilled down?	Anonymous Attendee	This question has been addressed verbally. All agenda reports on the budget can be found at http://www.el-cerrito.org/492/Annual-Budget-Process , under 2021 Financial Updates to the City Council.
2	How many participants are here today?	Anonymous Attendee	at this time we have 46 attendees on the call; Update as of 10:15am - there are 65 attendees; Update as of 11:40am - there are 74 attendees. This does not count all the other individuals who are streaming the meeting online (not through zoom).
3	The dire step of El Cerrito declaring bankruptcy is not one anyone wants taken but shouldn't we be prepared for this if our finances prove intractable to meeting the State auditor's reasonable standard?	Ruby MacDonald	Thank you for your comments.
4	is there a way we can see the other participants?	Anonymous Attendee	the webinar is set up the same way as council meetings, Attendees will remain limited to audio only when they have requested to speak.
5	How much of personnel is actually retirement costs? Why isn't that broken out?	Susan Ruiz	live answered
6	To Gabe Quinto: For the period 2015-19, what in your opinion prevented City Council from foreseeing, managing, and mitigating the current financial crisis?	jan hu	please feel free to email Mayor Pro Tem Quinto at gquinto@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us to ask his direct feedback on your question. Thank you.
7	Why is the baseline a hypothetical budget rather than the actual expenditures and revenues from the prior year?	Anonymous Attendee	live answered
8	Expenditures again doesnt include a breakdown for how much we are required to spend on health care or retirement. This should be clear so people know what is and is not fixed.	Susan Ruiz	Thank you for your comments.

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9	You have discretion over 23 management positions. I note that some positions enjoyed large increases over the last 3 to 4 years. Why?	Anonymous Attendee	live answered
10	Travel and conference attendance wasn't frozen until THIS year? Why?	Susan Ruiz	
11	Do you agree that it's worthwhile to review the ECPD staffing levels and how they are staffed based on the large number of non emergency calls? Most crime is property crime, do we need 35 sworn officers with guns and only 1 CSO. A CSO is paid on average 60,000 to start, a SPO starts at 121,000?	Anonymous Attendee	live answered
12	Please elaborate how long these deferred COLAs are. Will they extend into FY 21-22 or were they only for FY 20-21?	Anonymous Attendee	FY 20-21. The City has reached out to all employee unions to open lines of communication. For more information on deferrals and scheduled COLAs, you can review the City's MOUs: http://www.el-cerrito.org/229/labor-relations
13	Characterizing not getting raises as a sacrifice during this last year when many residents have taken large pay cuts or losing their jobs is insensitive. I appreciate it but it is fairer to say they are doing their part to keep the city afloat, not a sacrifice.	Susan Ruiz	Thank you for your comments.
14	Do you intend to make structural changes, if so what are your general ideas. For example, freeze salaries, renegotiate salaries, pension contributions, reclassifications, etc.	Sherry Drobner	live answered

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15	What's the typical percentage for a salary increase for employees and how often are salary increases given?	Anonymous Attendee	On average, past salary increases have been about 3% and are given per Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements with the various employee unions. For more information about the City's MOUs, please visit: http://www.el-cerrito.org/229/Labor-Relations
16	Seeing as PD is the main funding, will the City of El Cerrito do what other cities have done and move non-violent and mental health related calls to mental health trained professionals, like CAHOOTS in Eugene, Oregon? That would reduce costs of overtime	Anonymous Attendee	live answered
17	Why does this "town hall" not allow participants to see and interact with one another?	Anonymous Attendee	As with council meetings, to address security concerns, attendee video and images will remain disabled.
18	Referring us to lengthy documents is not publicly answering questions.	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comments.
19	A "plan" is not "reduce expenditures." A PLAN should outline HOW the city will do this. This is too vague to be a plan.	Susan Ruiz	This question has been addressed verbally, the City is working on a detailed Fiscal Recovery Plan per the State Auditor's Recommendation and will be hosting a Community Meeting on May 8.
20	Is Karen going to take up 25% of the allotted time?	Ira	Thank you for your comments.
21	Please allow the community to see and interact with one another. There's no need to be afraid of community involvement.	Anonymous Attendee	As with council meetings, to address security concerns, attendee video and images will remain disabled.
22	how can I (educated citizens) recommend or suggest ways we can increase City revenues through new projects that Improve and support the community?	Indy Rishi Singh	Thank you for your comment.

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23	Many of the "savings" were just costs that were deferred to next year. If the city had retained a two-year budget, suddenly many of the "savings" would disappear.	Ira	Thank you for your comments.
24	One more reason to be transparent about how much we are spending on pensions. When will this be made available to the public?	Susan Ruiz	live answered
25	Will you be conducting a compensation study as recommended by the state auditor?	jan hu	live answered
26	How come you are not answering the question about expenditures. Isn't it important that we actually monitor and understand why expenditures are not reduced?	Sherry Drobner	Thank you for your comments.
27	Will their be an equity audit to ensure the closed positions and lay-offs do not disproportionaty harm and impact BIPOC employees?	Anonymous Attendee	Racial equity is a priority of Mayor Fadelli and this was taken into account in the recent employee layoffs.
28	Can we contract out the City Manager and Finance Director	Anonymous Attendee	As the City Manager noted, there are Cities in California that are known as Contract Cities in which most City service delivery functions are contracted out.
29	Can you elaborate on the structural changes proposed to ECPD and the fire department?	rhea and ezra	live answered
30	please register at www.democraSEE.club we will allow live conversations between community members while streaming these city meetings. we should be able to share, connect and discuss ideas on what we can do and to inspire the city staff that may not have the ideas/clarity to address a crisis	Indy Rishi Singh	Thank you for your comments.
31	Since Karen is taking up all of our time, will the meeting be extended beyond noon?	Ira	Thank you for your comments.

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32	This should be a town hall, not a "presentation."	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comments.
33	Is there a not a requirement to provide this information in Spanish, as well? Let's take all stakeholders into account when communicating with the public.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comments.
34	let me try again you cut the budget. How did that show up in actual spending reductions? i do not want to be referred back to documents	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comments.
35	Can we please pause to answer the questions submitted?	Anonymous Attendee	We are taking both written and verbal comments. thank you for your patience.
36	This is not a town hall. It's an infomercial for city management. Shameful.	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comments.
37	Where is the finance director?	debra saunders	All Department Directors are attendees on this call.
38	Have we considered selling the pool? In a few years it will be an even larger liability due to needed repairs.	debra saunders	Thank you for your comment.
39	What is the "security concern" with allowing community engagement?	Anonymous Attendee	We are operating on best practices and I.T. recommendations. Thank you for your comments.
40	1. Deffered COLAs, when are they deffered to?	Pearson Miller	Deferred COLAs are eliminated COLAs for that year. For more information on scheduled COLAs, you can review the City's MOUs: http://www.el-cerrito.org/229/labor-relations

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41	The Planning Department is not helping to maintain a revenue stream. The delays for projects applying for permits and plans review in the City have been exorbitantly delayed - it's been embarrassing as an El Cerrito resident to see the quagmire my employer's been in. I had to make a call to the Head of the Planning Dept., and then plans and permits were released in less than a week, after 6 months of waiting as a subcontractor on an affordable housing project on San Pablo Ave. This municipality had the worst and longest response of all AHJs we have been working with during the pandemic. Let's put some attention on the Depts that SHOULD BE generating revenue for the City and are showing no interest to follow through on their responsibility.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comments.
42	I second Ira's proposals.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comments.
43	There is no way to reduce pension costs without more contributions from employees. Will city employees be asked to permanently increase contributions without any conditions?	debra saunders	All employees except those who are considered part of the Management/Confidential group are represented by Unions that have legally bound contracts that are not open. The City has opened lines of communications with all bargaining groups to discuss the City's financial condition.
44	What criteria are being used to assess managers? What happened in June 2019 when many people got raises? Why are personnel costs consistently exceeding expectations?	Ira	Evaluations are conducted by the City Manager, a cost of living increase (COLA) was provided to Managers in July 2019 (at the same time as other employees). Consistent with other cities in the State of California, personnel costs are also significantly impacted by rising CalPERS and health costs.

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#	Question	Asker Name	Answer(s)
45	Can you be clear as to exactly what the dollar amount is that the City needs to reduce in 2020-21 and 2021-22? Is this taking into account the Federal \$4.8 million bailout? Would this result in an increase in the General Reserves?	Gail	
46	My understanding is that a "baseline budget" is a "proposed budget" so cut's to that are no actual cuts. Going forward can we commit to making cuts/showing cuts as to last year's actual expenditures so that we can see real reductions in spending? Otherwise we cannot track our reductions.	Pearson Miller	live answered
47	Please make it more clear where all the budget planning docs, plus today's presentation, are located. I don't see them linked from the Transparency page or the Finance Dept page. They are not linked from this meeting's agenda, as far as I can tell. Please highlight this more for the public and put the info on the screen today. Thank you.	Rochelle	All agenda reports on the budget can be found at http://www.el-cerrito.org/492/Annual-Budget-Process , under 2021 Financial Updates to the City Council. The presentation will be posted after the meeting.
48	Thank you for hosting this town hall. I would like to stress the need to create a budget that is values driven. Our services and financial expenditures should, in my opinion, reflect the values of the community, be innovative and bold. It is overdue to redefine public safety, instead of maintaining an outdated status quo. We need to design a budget in the short term and long term that again reflects this opportunity to rise to the occasion, realign to meet the needs of all people. It is time to take a hard look at the ECPD budget which takes 31% of our city's general funds.	Leslie D Adams - LLS (she/her)	Thank you for your comments.

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49	I requested info on the mutual aid issue and I was told it would cost me about \$2,500.	Ira	Thank you for your comments.
50	El Cerrito fights more residential fires in Richmond than it does in El Cerrito. We need better data. We need numbers	Ira	Thank you for your comment.
51	People--add the "PulsePoint" app to your phone. This will show the responses. Our firefighters are critic to our neighborhood safety. In the app, you will see when there is a fire or critical event, Richmond and others respond. This is transparency.	Denise Sangster	Thank you for your comments.
52	To City Mangager. Why haven't you elimated the Finance Director position and taken full responsility of the City's Financials. This would be an savings of 200k +. We are small town... City Manager needs to take on more responsibilities of the Financials of over spending.	Arthur Yee	Thank you for your comments.
53	Why is the Cheif getting so much airplay? Come on, there are people who want to speak.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comment.
54	This was billed as a community town hall. Please allow the community to be heard.	William Ktsanes	Thank you for your comment.
55	Are there any concerns from city staff about the auditor's recommendations? The recommendations to cut management salaries and ECPD seem like huge opportunities to improve the budget situation without impacting services residents benefit from most.	Allison Marie Cooper	The Administration provided a response to the State Auditor Report: https://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/View/15430/El-Cerrito-Response-to-State-Auditor---PR State Auditor Report: https://www.auditor.ca.gov/reports/2020-803/index.html
56	Just want to say thank you to Chief Pigoni for his answer to my question.	Dan Schulman	Thank you for your comment.

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57	Mayor and City Council, I would like to reiterate my support for all of the recommendations in the State Auditor's report and urge you to get the city's financial house in order. Structural changes are needed in how we prepare and carry out our budget, especially with the monitoring of spending. I also have a question that I have not heard explained: what are the consequences to El Cerrito if we do not meet the Auditor's recommendations? Thank you, Gary Prost	Gary Prost	
58	Will you be answering more of the written questions posed here or are you only going to be calling on raised hands?	Anonymous Attendee	We are alternating between answering verbal and written questions.
59	Time limit on the city's comments please!	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comment.
60	A question for the City Manager: we heard what the budget revenues and expenditures are for FY 20-21. We did not hear what the actuals are, that is, how the actual income and expenses compare to the projected income and expenses. Can you tell us how we are actually meeting the projected budget?	Gary Prost	Information on year to date revenue and expenditures for the current fiscal year are provided in the monthly updated to city council, available at www.el-cerrito.org/CouncilMeetingMaterials . This includes actuals for prior months in the current fiscal year.

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61	why is a deep dive needed? comparison across cities and local surrounding seems efficient. and yes, total compensation should be compared against.	Leslie D Adams - LLS (she/her)	As noted in the Administration's response to the State Audit, base salaries between cities and other entities is not an apples to apples comparison. Total Compensation is layered and complex, so to accurately analyze the City's compensation would require a compensation study. This is an industry-wide best practice.
62	I have questions re: Building Department personnel and service cuts	Terry Stokes	live answered
63	Thank you. Have non-represented employees received similar increases?	Anonymous Attendee	live answered
64	Is management going to give the public an adequate amount of time to speak? I noticed there was no response to the issues I raised.	Ira	Thank you for your comment.
65	Who is Shannon? She was introduced as the HR person at the Human Relations Commission	Sherry Drobner	Shannon Bassi is the sole staff member of the Human Resources Unit as a Human Resources Specialist. Alexandra Orologas is serving as Interim Human Resources Manager.
66	Please allow the community to be heard.	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comment.
67	Thank you to Chief Keith for his commitment to reducing costs while keeping us safe. I really appreciate it. His focus and commitment are a great example for other department heads.	Pearson Miller	Thank you for your comment.
68	PLEASE allow time for community concerns to heard.	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comment.
69	Are you all going to answer the many great questions in this chat or are we going to have to continue to listen to speeches. The Mayor said this was to be a listening session. I thought he meant listening to us not us listening to the CM and the chiefs.	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comment.

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70	Is overtime factored into budgets? If so, is there a breakdown of anticipated base + OT expenditures?	Anonymous Attendee	Yes and Yes.
71	Here, here!!!	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comment.
72	I had similar experiences to the speaker at the Planning Dept. IT's out of control. See my comment earlier in this thread.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	live answered
73	Can you please pose the questions that are pertinent to the topic of this town hall?	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comment.
74	Correct - no email responses from Planning.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	live answered
75	Please do not take valuable time responding to the comment by Terry Stokes!!!!	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comment.
76	Why did expensditures go up \$10 million from 2014-2019?	Ira	
77	Manager Pinkos, this was a yes or no question. This answer is too much fluff. This type of response loses people's attention and seems you're going around just plainly stating why we are not seeing ACTUAL budget numbers.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comments.
78	We need an Excel spreadsheet which clearly shows the reductions, if any.	Ira	Thank you for your comments.
79	To Mayor Fadelli: Have the conditions or circumstances which prevented City Council from foreseeing, managing, and mitigating the current financial crisis during the period 2015-19 been ameliorated?	Anonymous Attendee	please feel free to email Mayor Pro Tem Quinto at pfadelli@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us to ask his direct feedback on your question. Thank you.
80	Thank you for your talk, Indy	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comments.

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81	I would like to be able to download the Q&A so I can follow up with links being provided by the city as well as think over some of the issues. I don't see a "save Q&A" button.	Anonymous Attendee	A transcript of the Q&A will be posted after the meeting by the City Clerk.
82	The current system isn't working. (26 people) of City Management take up the majority of the budget. We need to change how we offer services within the city and use more volunteers to provide services. Volunteers can offer time at the senior center, community center, community pool, recycle center, library, city hall, police department, fire department, and with basic services such as cleaning parks and streets. This will help to balance the city budget and change the culture. Local government shouldn't be run like a business-- it is a community serving the community	Arthur Yee	Thank you for your comments.
83	Excellent comments	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comments.
84	when the Q & A is posted will the questions that have not been answered be answered?	Anonymous Attendee	The Q&A thread will be posted online with supplemental materials. Staff will work to response to all questions not answered.
85	I want to echo the current residents comments	T. Mackie	Thank you for your comments.
86	Thanks to the speaker for good articulation of our need to not be passive in our responses and the need and opportunity for creative responses.	T. Mackie	Thank you for your comment.
87	Thank you, Denise!!!	William Ktsanes	Thank you for your comment.
88	Terry Stokes, it took me 11 months to get a permit. Lost plans and no returned emails and phone calls.	Arthur Yee	Thank you for your comment.
89	To feel heard, would be great to see the full City Council and City Manager on screen.	Rochelle	Thank you for your comments.

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90	For future presentations about the city budget by the Financial Manager: the presentations need to be much more accessible to the public. Do not use acronymns like "TRAN" over & over without explaining them (it turns out they are loans. Do not post a detailed breakdown on the Zoom screen that many of us cannot view on our screens (unless it making it clear in advance where to see these charts). Tell us the facts and show them clearly ... I heard someone else ask for PowerPoints & that would help.	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comments.
91	Thank you to Denise Sangster for clearly stating the problem. I agree with her comments.	Shelby	Thank you for your comments.
92	Here, here, Rayah	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comments.
93	Thanks to attending the last City Council meeting, I found out where to find and read the State Auditor's report (on the City Manager's website, but not well advertised). I understand the Auditor's report is supposed to be on a "Financial Transparency" page — I hope it is there now. ALSO - how does the city reach out these days to get citizens involved in attending city council meetings. Unless you are watching the website regularly, you might not even know the CRISIS we are in!	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comments.
94	Thank you Helen!	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comments.
95	Will there be additional meetings that ARE in Spanish (and Mandarin)? This is a huge inequity by design	Anonymous Attendee	

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96	I agree with Gary Prost when he wrote: I would like to reiterate my support for all of the recommendations in the State Auditor's report and urge you to get the city's financial house in order. Structural changes are needed in how we prepare and carry out our budget, especially with the monitoring of spending. I do not want slick answers. I need to see the action steps and the action taken. If my personal budget was in this much of a mess, I would have long since had to cut my expenses!	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comments.
97	hear hear, Rebecca Sutton!	rhea and ezra	Thank you for your comment.
98	Have the conditions or circumstances which prevented City Council from foreseeing, managing, and mitigating the current financial crisis during the period 2015-19 been ameliorated?	jan hu	
99	I'm curious regarding the status and timing of the Hampton Inn hotel project, as well as the cannabis dispensaries.	Dan Schulman	you can contact Melanie Mintz, Community Development Director at mmintz@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us for an update.
100	Can we see a list of all the written questions posed? If someone logs off and back on they will lose access to the prior questions.	Anonymous Attendee	The Q&A thread will be posted online with supplemental materials next week at www.el-cerrito.org/CouncilMeetingMaterials .
101	can we discuss here that the Rec Dept, that you want to cut costs in, is a REVENUE GENERATING dept? The Police Dept costs large outweigh whatever "revenue" it brings.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	

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#	Question	Asker Name	Answer(s)
102	When we were able to meet in person (before Covid) we had much more chance to interact with each other and respond to issues (even if only with post-its on a board). And we could see how many other citizens are concerned as well as hear citizens speak out and hear answers. This format on Zoom is not very interactive (not even as much as Zoom allows) & I feel that our participation is suffering. Since Covid concerns are not over, please continue to improve our online democratic process & access.	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comments.
103	To know how to change our city's financial culture we need to know where we went wrong. As the city manager presented, our "goal b" since 2013 is longterm financial stability. What is the city council and city manager's SPECIFIC examples of what has gone wrong in the past and how they will change for the future? How, SPECIFICALLY, will you provide accountability and consequences for now and the future?	Pearson Miller	
104	Agreed with RJ. Being stopped by police for simply existing is an active harm that happens in our community and is the opposite of public health and safety.	rhea and ezra	Thank you for your comments.
105	Wow. The situation JR describes about being stopped by police needs a closer look. I had no idea.	Anonymous Attendee	Thank you for your comments.

Question Report

Report Generated: 4/12/2021 9:41:00 AM

Topic: Concurrent Budget Townhall and Special City Council Meeting 04/10/2021

Webinar ID: 931 4050 4450

Actual Duration (minutes): 152

Actual Duration (minutes): 4/10/2021 9:34:00 AM

Actual Duration (minutes):132

Question Details

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer(s)
106	If you gut our valuable community services - Pool, Kids Camps, Library, Parks, Playgrounds, Street Cleaning, Recycling Center, Ohlone Greenway (City or BART?) - you gut the community morale, leave our City not thriving, not enjoyable - and then, you justify more police as disgruntled community members and a dirtier city mean there's more crime, more homeless encampments. The writing's on the wall to keep the Police Dept bloated and happy on the backs of its overly taxed, paying residents.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	Thank you for your comments.
107	I can see that we are going to need more city meetings like this because there are a lot of people with legitimate concerns that they need to express and have addressed. It shouldn't have been necessary to use this Town Hall to complain that the Building Dept was not accommodating the need of a citizen to adapt his front steps to his temporary disability!!!!	Linda Cain	The City will be holding another community budget workshop on May 8th. Details will be available soon.
108	yes to the Albert quote... that's why I invite all citizens to learn about community cooperatives... watch Richard wolff	Indy Rishi Singh	Thank you for your comments.
109	I support finding a new structure to move forward in a different way. Some of the other speakers have already provided interesting ideas for some versions of this alternate structure.	T. Mackie	Thank you for your comments.
110	We need financial information that is clearly explained in one place.	Ira	Thank you for your comments.
111	Please allow Debra Saunders to speak. She had technical problems.	William Ktsanes	

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#	Question	Asker Name	Answer(s)
112	Pensions: unfunded liability, according to Mayor Pro Tem Quinto, is over \$70 million. This is NOT for existing employees.	Denise Sangster	Thank you for your comments.
113	As a black person, according to the 2018 FBI report on policing in El Cerrito I am 13 times more likely to be stopped by police. This is not healthy or safe for me and my fellow community members.	RJ	Thank you for your comments.
114	Thank you for answering the pension questions. Where can we see that in writing, including the projections? Thank you.	Susan Ruiz	The presentation by NHA advisors was on March 2, 2021. Link Forthcoming....
115	During my decade living in the community, I have seen myriad low income folks pushed out of our community. Why do we center property and the needs of wealthy community members, rather than meeting the needs of the working poor and working class folks who are the lifeblood of our community and need more services?	Miguel Gravelle	
116	Thanks to Arthur Yee who wrote: The current system isn't working. (26 people) of City Management take up the majority of the budget. We need to change how we offer services within the city and use more volunteers to provide services. This is a very small city. I don't understand why it takes so many people, and very well-paid ones, to run the city —and not even do an adequate job with the budget.	Linda Cain	Thank you for your comments.
117	Can you please remind attendees of the next steps after this town hall? Thank you	Katie Fournier	We will review next steps before concluding. thank you.

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118	Saying "thank you for your comment" is NOT AN ANSWER to people's comments and questions. Comments also need to be meaningfully addressed.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	
119	(next steps in the budget process)	Katie Fournier	Next steps will be re-reviewed prior to the end of the meeting.
120	When. you say the city is able to pay its expenses—is that with actual money at hand, or are you using money you have borrowed?	Barbara Chan CMC	
121	I agree with Helen — it's very frustrating to read "thank you for your comments" as a response to real concerns being expressed in the Q&A. How will these excellent questions and concerns be addressed so that we all can see the answers? Will that be on the city website?	Linda Cain	live answered
122	to all city council members, city manager and other city employees: If you could create our city budget (real expenditures) going forward where would you put our limited resources taking into consideration the needs of the community, all that live, work, learn and visit this city? what would benefit us? what would help our community thrive? it is time for a new vision. the numbers are not transparent or easy to understand and not helpful, but really a vision and plan (budget) from that vision would make more sense.	Leslie D Adams - LLS (she/her)	

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123	What human and financial resources need be allocated in order to come up with a viable corrective action strategy (including whether more skilled and objective professionals need be consulted or added to our management team)? We need - and deserve! - stronger analysis by the council based on reviews of accurate and sufficient data. To the extent that the Council concludes we have need new perspectives and impartial advice it needs to move now! Is City Attorney involved?	ellen s	
124	https://www.scu.edu/government-ethics/resources/public-officials-as-fiduciaries/	ellen s	
125	i support keeping the library hours for all the reasons stated by my fellow El Cerrito residents.	Barbara Chan CMC	
126	The old Orchard Supply Hardware has sit vacant for at least 4-5 years. You can't blame that on the pandemic.	Helen Couture Rodriguez	
127	I support keeping the library hours. The library is very important to many residents, especially the children. A library is not just a place to remotely check out an ebook to read on a Kindle.	Anonymous Attendee	
128	I would hope Mayor Fadelli will also address before the end of this meeting	Helen Couture Rodriguez	
129	I support a new committee to continue these efforts and include significant citizen involvement, headed by the new council members ; thanks	ellen s	
130	How many people attended virtually?	Linda Cain	

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131	Were the City Manager and councilmembers to admit her own culpability in this situation, it would go a long way to building trust with the taxpayers and residents of this city.	Barbara Chan CMC	
132	Thank you for this meeting and the opportunity to comment. Appreciate all of the work going into addressing these tough issues.	Sarah Klauer	