



# City of El Cerrito

## Citywide Strategic Plan 2023-2028

October 28, 2023

Nancy Hetrick, Managing Director, Baker Tilly



# Welcome from Mayor Lisa Motoyama



A blurred background image showing a group of people in a meeting or workshop. Several hands are raised in the air, suggesting an interactive session. The image is split horizontally by a dark blue band containing the title.

# Public Comment



# Opening Remarks from the City Manager



City Manager  
Karen Pinkos



# Workshop Overview

## Establish Shared Understanding

Establish a shared understanding of the elements to be included in the City's Strategic Plan

## Review Input

Review input obtained through engagement activities and information presented in the environmental scan

## Build Consensus

Discuss and build consensus on mission, vision, values, multi-year goals, and strategies for the next five years

## Next Steps

Prepare the Strategic Plan for City Council adoption, followed by an Implementation Action Plan for staff to integrate into work plans and future budgets

# Ground Rules



**Keep the  
big picture in  
mind**



**Listen with  
respect and  
inquiry**



**Assume  
good  
intent**

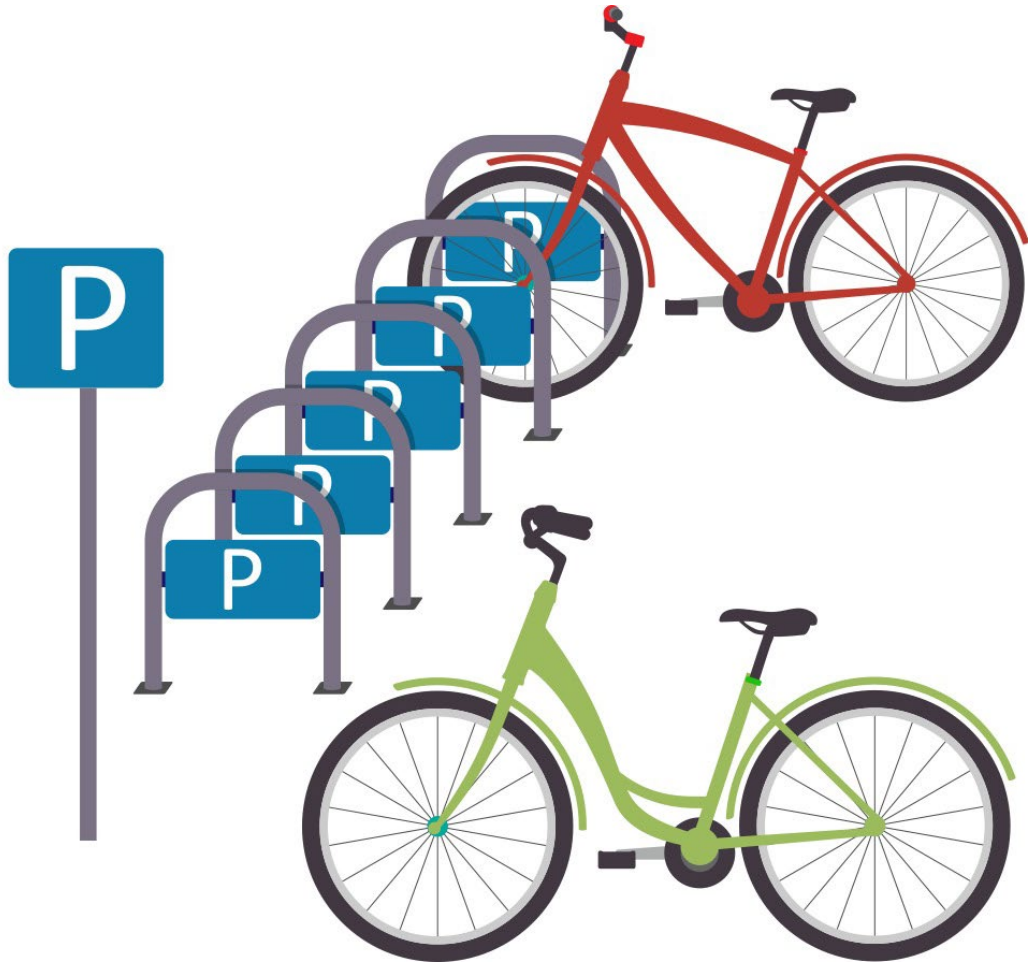


**Stay  
focused**



**Seek  
consensus**

# Bike Rack



**Time  
Management Tool**

**Items to discuss at a  
later time**



# Today's Agenda

Strategic planning overview, framework, and process

Stakeholder input and environmental scan

Review mission, vision, values

Discuss goals and strategies

Wrap-up and next steps





# What We Love About El Cerrito

we are a neighborhood

el cerrito is a gem

we want to stay here

our city feels open

sense of community

belonging

diversity

open spaces

affordability

working class people

non-pretentious

calming

proximity to UC berkeley

solidarity

quiet

safe

recycling center

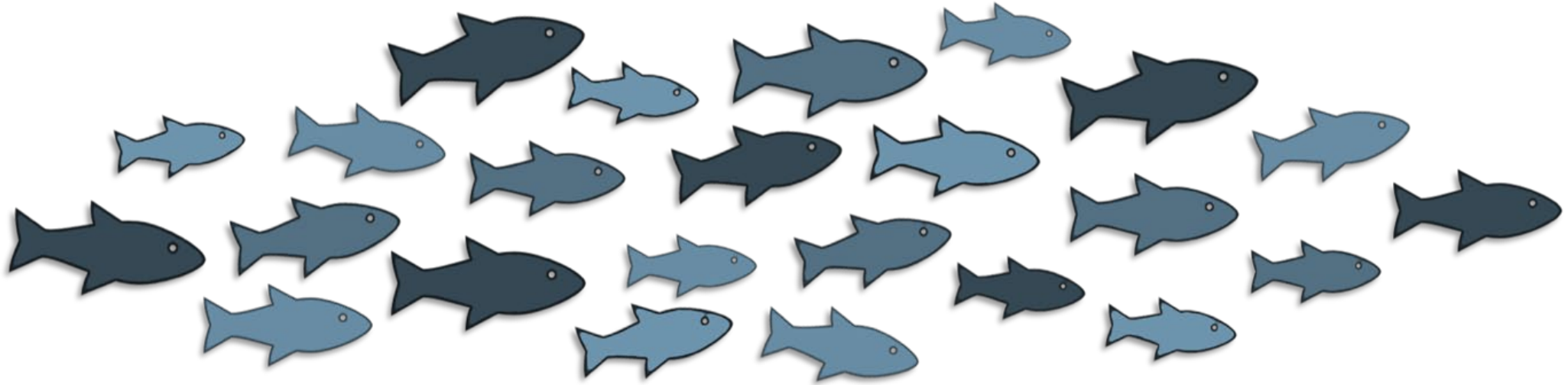
climate parks

access to everything

center



# Why Strategic Planning? Why now?

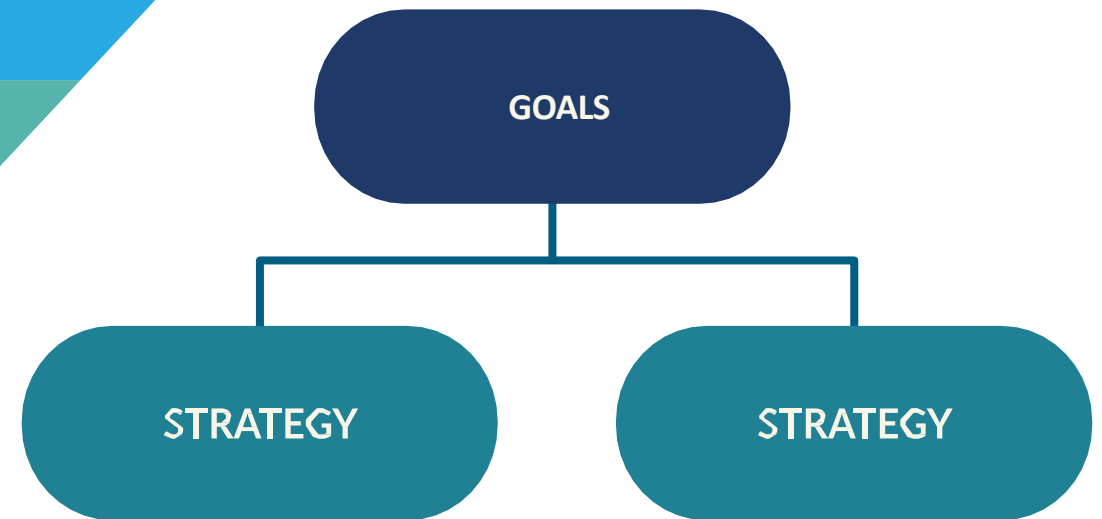


Provides **direction** to the organization

Aligns everyone toward a common **purpose**

Creates opportunity to **reevaluate** outdated goals and strategies

# Strategic Plan Framework





# Process Overview

Conducted  
interviews  
with Mayor  
and City  
Council  
members

Provided  
guidance for  
environmental  
scan

Administered  
employee  
survey and  
reviewed NCS  
survey themes

Conducted  
stakeholder  
focus groups

Engaged  
community  
voices

Engaged  
Department  
Directors

Today:  
Facilitate  
strategic  
planning  
workshop

# Environmental Scan



# Highlights - Demographics

Population **has grown from 23,550 to 26,845** from 2010-2020, projected to **increase to 29,075 by 2040**

Average **income is relatively high** (33% higher than CA; 6% higher than Contra Costa County), but varies across the community

Resident view of El Cerrito as **a good place to live** is rising: 85% in 2016 to 89% in 2022

Top resident priorities from NCS Survey: **Parks, Public Safety, Open Space, and Library** as the highest priorities

## Population of El Cerrito is diverse

- Over 50% identify as non-white
- 33% born outside the US
- 37% speak language other than English at home

## City of El Cerrito employees are diverse

- Over 50% identify as non-white
- Vary by age and tenure, with most employees between 35 and 54 years old, tenure 10 years or less
- 39 employees receive bi-lingual pay



# Highlights - Financial

\$250M+  
unfunded CIP  
needs

Reserves are  
higher than ever  
before \$16.6M

Pension costs  
will continue to  
rise

# Highlights – Staffing and Workload Measures



Authorized positions have **decreased** since FY 2019-20 from **180 to 170** in FY 2023-24



City challenged by turnover in recent years: 23 turnovers in 2021; 27 turnovers in 2022



Among the 19 Contra Costa cities, El Cerrito has the **2<sup>nd</sup> highest property crime** rate and **6<sup>th</sup> highest rate of violent** crimes



Fire incidents per capita **increased** from .12 in 2012 to .16 in 2022  
(majority are EMS: 31%, Public Assist: 24%, Good Intent: 23%)



Municipal emissions **decreased 30%** from 2005 to 2021



68 miles of streets maintained; 70 2023 PCI Rating



# Stakeholder Input: Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats



# Strengths



- **Location**
- **Diversity**
- **Access to BART and transit options**
- **Commitment to environmental sustainability**
- **Parks, trails, and open space**
- **Community-focused**
- **Committed City staff**
- **Recreation programs and facilities**
- **Family-oriented: summer camps, events, swimming pool and splash park, recreation programs**
- **Dedicated public safety departments**
- **Pro-housing designation**

# Challenges



- Limited budget and staffing resources
- Impacts of vacancies and lean staffing
- Heavy reliance on property tax base for revenue
- Space and condition of public facilities
- Managing community expectations
- Lack of retail businesses
- East/west mobility
- Balancing aspirations with basic service delivery
- No central/downtown gathering place

# Opportunities



- **Support economic growth and small businesses**
- **Develop San Pablo Avenue as a livable, vibrant corridor**
- **Create a downtown community hub anchored by the Plaza Transit-Oriented Development**
- **Increase community emergency preparedness**
- **Invest in community facilities and assets**
- **Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and access**
- **Update technology systems and increase automation**



# Threats



- **Natural disasters: earthquakes, wildfires, flooding**
- **Crime**
- **Economic downturn and the effect on businesses and city financial stability**
- **State mandates**
- **Inflation**
- **Rising home prices/cost of living**
- **Homelessness**
- **Distrust in government**
- **Vulnerability to climate change**

# Takeaways from Stakeholder Engagement

## Community Priorities (focus groups, NCS survey, and public engagement events)

- Parks and Open space
- Public safety
- Emergency preparedness
- Library
- Music, arts, culture
- Accessibility; sidewalks
- Safe, clean community
- Senior Center
- Climate action
- Support for small business
- Community access/engagement

## Staff Priorities (employee survey)

- Public safety
- Public Safety Center
- Financial health and fiscal responsibility
- Economic development
- Infrastructure investment
- Emergency preparedness
- Professional excellence

## Council Priorities (Council interviews)

- Financial health and fiscal responsibility
- Accessibility
- Community engagement
- Public safety
- Public safety center
- Emergency preparedness
- Equity plan
- Community events/gathering spaces
- Development of San Pablo Ave./Economic development
- Implement the climate action plan





# Discussion

What stands out to you? Are there any surprises?

# Stretch Break







# Mission, Vision, and Values

# Existing Mission and Vision Statements

**Mission:** The City of El Cerrito serves, leads and supports our diverse and transit-rich community by providing exemplary and innovative services, public places and infrastructure, ensuring public safety, and creating an economically and environmentally sustainable future.

**Vision:** The City of El Cerrito is a safe, connected, transit-oriented and environmentally focused destination with welcoming neighborhoods, thriving businesses and vibrant public spaces, and diverse cultural, educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages.

# Feedback on Mission and Vision

Overall, addresses areas of interest and priority

Too long, seems like a laundry list, streamline, shorten

Need to make memorable

Considerable overlap between mission and vision; need to differentiate

Values further describe what the City stands for



# Mission Statement

- **Mission: a statement of the *purpose* of the organization; why it exists**
  - Understandable
  - Achievable
  - Succinct
  - Shared





# Existing Mission Statement

The City of El Cerrito serves, leads and supports our diverse and transit-rich community by providing exemplary and innovative services, public places and infrastructure, ensuring public safety, and creating an economically and environmentally sustainable future.

# Mission Statement Discussion

*Existing: The City of El Cerrito serves, leads and supports our diverse and transit-rich community by providing exemplary and innovative services, public places and infrastructure, ensuring public safety, and creating an economically and environmentally sustainable future.*

**Optional: The City of El Cerrito serves our diverse community by reliably providing quality services that create a safe and sustainable future for all.**

# Vision Statement

- **Vision: a statement of the *desired future* of the organization**
  - Future-focused
  - Vivid
  - Challenging
  - Inspiring
  - Succinct



# Existing Vision Statement

The City of El Cerrito is a safe, connected, transit-oriented and environmentally focused destination with welcoming neighborhoods, thriving businesses and vibrant public spaces, and diverse cultural, educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages.



# Vision Statement Feedback

## *Is our vision statement...*

- Future-focused?
- Vivid?
- Challenging?
- Inspiring?
- Succinct?



70% of employees strongly agree or agree vision is still relevant, but there is opportunity to streamline and make it shorter



We are a community, not a destination



Connected/transit-oriented doesn't fit



Emphasize welcoming

# Vision Statement Discussion

*Existing: The City of El Cerrito is a safe, connected, transit-oriented and environmentally focused destination with welcoming neighborhoods, thriving businesses and vibrant public spaces, and diverse cultural, educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages.*

**Optional: The City of El Cerrito is a welcoming and culturally rich community committed to fostering a high quality of life, thriving businesses and public spaces, and diverse cultural, educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages.**

# Existing Organizational Values

- Ethics and Integrity
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Transparency and Open Communication
- Professional Excellence
- Inclusiveness and Respect for Diversity
- Innovation and Creativity
- Responsiveness
- Sustainability



# Existing Organizational Values

## Council Feedback

- **Ethics and Integrity**
- **Fiscal Responsibility**
- **Transparency and Open Communication**
- Professional Excellence
- Inclusiveness and Respect for Diversity
- Innovation and Creativity
- Responsiveness
- Sustainability

**Ranked highly by  
Councilmembers**



# Existing Organizational Values

## Employee Feedback

- **Ethics and Integrity**
- **Fiscal Responsibility**
- Transparency and Open Communication
- **Professional Excellence**
- Inclusiveness and Respect for Diversity
- Innovation and Creativity
- Responsiveness
- Sustainability

77% of employees say the current values still resonate

**Ranked highly by employees**

# Proposed Organizational Values and Definitions

- **Ethics and Integrity** *We exercise good judgement, while keeping the public's interest in mind; we know and follow ethical rules and do the right thing, even when no one is looking.*
- **Fiscal Responsibility** *We ensure responsible spending of the City's revenues while delivering services in the most cost-effective and efficient manner.*
- **Transparency and Open Communication** *We champion public transparency to enhance accountability and build trust; we foster community participation and inclusion and provide access to information regarding matters of public interest.*
- **Professional Excellence** *We strive to deliver best practices, encourage innovative and creative approaches to problem solving, commit to timely response, and foster a positive work environment that is sensitive to the needs of others.*
- **Inclusiveness and Respect for Diversity** *We demonstrate compassion and respect for others, cultivate a welcoming sense of belonging, and ensure our actions reflect an equity lens in everything we do.*
- *Innovation and Creativity (included in Professional Excellence value statement)*
- *Responsiveness (included in Professional Excellence value statement)*
- *Sustainability (included in mission statement and highlighted as a strategic goal)*

# Values Discussion

## Group Discussion

**What do you like about the suggested values and definitions?**

**Is there anything you would change?**

# Providing Focus

We can't do  
everything



But we can do  
some things  
well with focus





# “Big Rocks”

**Don't fill up the bucket**  
with so many small  
rocks that there isn't  
room for the big ones

**Put the big  
rocks in first**

**Then add the small  
ones where there is  
room**



# Strategic Goals

**Provide the direction and focus of the organization, including resource decisions**

**Are multi-year in nature**

**Are achieved through a range of strategies**

# Existing Strategic Goals *(from 2013-2018)*

Goal A: Deliver exemplary government services

Goal B: Achieve long-term financial sustainability

Goal C: Deepen a sense of place and community identity

Goal D: Develop and rehabilitate public facilities as community focal points

Goal E: Ensure the public's health and safety

Goal F: Foster environmental sustainability citywide

# Proposed Strategic Goals



## High Performing Organization

*Ensure the city maintains a strong financial position and a high-performing organization where employees feel a sense of inclusion and belonging.*



## Community Safety

*Maintain public safety staffing and responsiveness and ensure community emergency preparedness.*



## Livability

*Promote a high quality of life and sense of community for current and future generations.*



## Infrastructure and Amenities

*Advance climate focused, sustainable infrastructure efforts that have community benefit.*



## Environmental Sustainability

*Promote environmental sustainability and stewardship by engaging in initiatives that reduce our ecological footprint, conserve natural resources, and foster a culture of environmental responsibility.*



# High Performing Organization

*Ensure the city maintains a strong financial position and a high-performing organization where employees feel a sense of inclusion and belonging.*

## Proposed Strategies

- Shift to a **two-year budget cycle** to focus on planning and performance.
- Preserve and expand **revenue sources** that provide sufficient resources to deliver services and programs to the community.
- Develop **financing strategies for capital investments** and deferred facility and other infrastructure needs as identified in the long-range financial plan.
- **Empower employees** to deliver outstanding services to the community with a focus on teamwork, service and innovation.
- Increase **public communication and engagement** to ensure access to services and promote community events.
- Drive a **positive organizational culture** that fosters a sense of belonging among City staff.
- Improve **technology systems** to increase automation and efficiency and **strengthen cybersecurity**.



# Community Safety

*Maintain public safety staffing and responsiveness and ensure community emergency preparedness.*

## Proposed Strategies

- Continue to seek funding for **technology investments** that promote efficient and effective public safety operations.
- Align **public safety services with community needs** based on a data-driven decision-making approach.
- Strengthen El Cerrito's **overall emergency preparedness capabilities, resources, and tools** and implement changes as needed to ensure the City is properly positioned to respond to disasters.
- Evaluate options for a **new Public Safety Center**.
- Sustain and enhance Hillside Nature Area **fire resilience and forest conservation** activities.





# Livability

*Promote a high quality of life and sense of community for current and future generations.*

## Proposed Strategies

- Leverage **pro-housing designation** to attract new and infill development.
- Capitalize on location to **support small businesses and economic growth**.
- Advance the **San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan** to create a livable, vibrant corridor.
- Update the **General Plan** to reflect and address current community values.
- Enhance **senior services** offerings.
- Develop a citywide **equity plan**.
- Expand **public art and cultural** programs.
- Improve **parks and recreation facilities**.



# Infrastructure and Amenities

*Advance climate focused, sustainable infrastructure efforts that have community benefit.*

## Proposed Strategies

- Invest in the maintenance, rehabilitation and development of sustainable, **climate-adapted infrastructure and community assets**.
- Conduct a **facility needs assessment** to evaluate and prioritize investment in city facilities, including update and implementation of the ADA transition plan.
- Improve **sidewalks and connections** to enhance safety, accessibility, comfort and convenience.
- Continue to implement the **Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan**.
- Continue to implement and seek **grant funding to complete the citywide trails and bikeway network**.
- Complete and implement the **Storm Drain Master Plan** Update.
- Complete and implement the **Local Road Safety Plan/Comprehensive Safety Action Plan**.
- Complete construction of **Complete Streets and Ohlone Greenway** projects.



# Environmental Sustainability

*Promote environmental sustainability and stewardship by engaging in initiatives that reduce our ecological footprint, conserve natural resources, and foster a culture of environmental responsibility.*

## Proposed Strategies

- Update and implement the **Climate Action and Adaptation Plan**.
- Continue to promote the **Recycling Center** as a community asset.
- Develop a plan to support the infrastructure needed to **shift to clean energy vehicles**.
- Promote strategies that address the **climate emergency**.

# Discussion of Draft Goals and Strategies

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Review strategies



Are any missing?



Should any be removed or modified?



Report out and discussion

# Next Steps

City Council **adopts Strategic Plan**

Staff creates a **Strategic Plan Implementation Plan** with the support of Baker Tilly

Staff periodically reports on **progress**



# Wrap Up

Final Comments  
and  
Evaluations





# Thank you!

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Management  
Partners

