



# EL CERRITO COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Volume Seventeen: Number 1 January 2023



**HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**

**El Cerrito Community Council Meeting  
JANUARY 19, 2023, 7:00 - 9:00 PM**

**JOIN US TO HEAR FROM  
OUR NEIGHBORHOOD VOICES**

**VIA ZOOM AT**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6192863890>**

**Meeting ID: 619 286 3890**

**By Phone & One tap mobile  
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose);  
Meeting ID 619 286 3890#**

**Our Neighborhood Voices (ONV)** is a statewide group of community leaders, elected officials, and residents working to qualify a statewide initiative to protect local community planning and zoning in response to recent state laws like SB9 and SB10.

By changing state laws, development decisions can be returned to city and county officials.

As State laws, SB9 & SB10 have taken decisions on how a city should grow away from the city and handed that control over to developers. Toni Atkins, the CA State Senate representative for El Cerrito, was instrumental in these getting bills passed.

SB9 and SB10 allow developers into neighborhoods to tear down single residential homes and build multi-unit rental complexes. In the City of San Diego (City), these developments are in addition to the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that are no longer granny flats, but 30-foot-tall multi-unit developments many of us see encroaching into our neighborhood.

The State regulations for ADU's are for true granny flats, and do not include the San Diego 30-foot-tall, multi-unit dwellings, so other California cities do not have the outsized ADU problems that San Diego has.

However, the entire State does have the SB9 and SB10 problems and in San Diego neighborhoods are being slammed by our developer-friendly officials.

**Please join us to learn how you can help make some positive changes.**

**ECCC MEETINGS ARE CURRENTLY VIA ZOOM  
ON THE THIRD THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH.**



**YOU ARE INVITED TO CRAWFORD HIGH SCHOOL'S RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY  
PLEASE RSVP IF ATTENDING**

On behalf of San Diego Unified School District, the El Cerrito Community is invited to attend the ribbon-cutting for the Crawford High School new administration, classroom, and performing arts center facility!

**The Ceremony is on Wednesday, February 8,  
2023 from 10:30 – 11:15 a.m.**

Please RSVP to [iries@sandi.net](mailto:iries@sandi.net)

## **PLANNING UPDATES EFFECTING EL CERRITO BECAUSE WE NEED TO KNOW**

### **FAMILY HEALTH CENTER-PATH BUILDING ON EL CAJON BLVD**

In January 2021 our community reviewed plans introduced by Family Health Centers (FHC) and Matthew Winter, AIA, LEED AP, Director of Architecture, LPA, for a 10-story mixed-use building consisting of medical offices, some retail space, and 142 units of residential housing for various levels of low-income housing - 42 units were to be for FHC resident doctors, about half to be studios, the other half to be one-bedrooms with a handful of two-bedroom units. The El Cerrito Community liked the use, but voted against the building due to the height, the placement on the narrowest section of El Cajon Blvd and being surrounded by single residential housing.

On April 22, 2022, we learned that 10-story building is a drug, alcohol and mental health treatment facility for formerly chronically homeless people (once housed, homeless people become "formerly homeless") with incomes of less than 30% of the median area income, with 171 units. Since FHC got involved with PATH, the City of San Diego, and the County of San Diego, most of the units will be approximately 325-square-foot studios for its patients. Further, the structure is going to be made from steel intermodal shipping containers.

The June 8, 2022 Zoom meeting held at the College Rolando Library, arranged by Mayor Todd Gloria's office to discuss the project can be viewed at <https://sandiego.zoomgov.com/rec/share/P7oE8FC2ha577O2EaP0gPe2Mom-UBrw4-9Zx17CNBMAYtsda7V3XDzMSVswogSe.t9I5sf7YwYOxf0uJ>  
Passcode **cXYHAv4!**

On December 6, 2022, the City Council was presented with incorrect information and voted to approve a City loan for this building, after being encouraged by community members to wait a week and learn the facts.

1. The vote was for "Phase One" based on 41 units presented as affordable housing, while illustrated with renderings of the entire 171-unit treatment facility;
2. The City Council comments were out of touch with the real project, including:
  - a. the need for affordable housing - while this is a drug, alcohol and mental health treatment facility;
  - b. The quick 6-month development timeframe was praised - while the construction on the site has been ongoing for about a year now and has another 6 months to go.
  - c. We were told how affordable housing for the homeless does not destroy a neighborhood - while this will be a drug, alcohol, and mental health treatment facility located on our main boulevard.

The College Area Community Plan and good planning guidelines call for housing, employment, and

business development on El Cajon Blvd., which would revitalize and enhance the corridor and encourage a walkable neighborhood. They were completely ignored in the City's development and approval process.

The 40-year loan that the City Council approved will likely last longer than this steel-shipping-container building, with an approximate 35-year lifespan.

After many reminders sent to Jefferey Nguyen, Representative for District 9 Councilmember, Sean Elo-Rivera, and Lucero Maganda, Representative for Mayor, Todd Gloria, we have still not received responses to the written questions we turned in at the June 8th meeting or to emails sent to our City and County representatives since then.

Though Lucero, [LMaganda@sandiego.gov](mailto:LMaganda@sandiego.gov), has been responsive to our emails, she has not been able to provide information and the only feedback we have received was a very general informational flyer sometime in late June and information that PATH is not involved with Phase One of the building, so cannot answer our questions. Yet PATH is the party that was named on the Phase One loan application approved by the City Council. Project inconsistencies abound.

### **CAN WE SAVE OUR COLLEGE-ROLANDO LIBRARY**

The Friends of the College-Rolando Library recently found that a building permit for high-density residential development is being processed on the City's fast track. This is of concern because this is the property (6650 Montezuma Rd) on which the City built most of the parking for the library. Some parking on the privately-owned property is temporarily available for city use, but the library needs permanent parking for our library. Prior City messages assured the community that a zoning change would be necessary for this type of development to gain approval. That seems not to be the case.

The City passed up the opportunity to purchase the property in 2016, giving up rights for use of the property as library parking and a public park.

The current library may become largely unusable without a resolution to the parking issue.

The Friends of the College-Rolando library are hopeful that the Rolando Community Council January 17, 2023 meeting will result in answers and assistance from our City Councilperson, Sean Elo- Rivera.

### **REVIEW OF LAND USE & HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Land Use & Housing Committee (LU&H) passed the Sustainable Development Area (SDA) proposal in a three-to-one vote Thursday, January 12, 2023, extending transit-oriented development beyond a half-mile walking distance to a distance of one mile. Joe LaCava was the lone NO vote, with Kent Lee, Vivian Moreno, and Stephan Whitburn voting YES.

Neighbors for a Better San Diego, a local non-profit group of San Diego neighbors, community leaders, and advocates spoke against this change and encouraged written comments to be uploaded for the committee. This group continues to do excellent work for our San Diego communities. Their website is <https://www.neighborsforabetersandiego.org/>

This change adds 688 acres of commercial property and 4,612 acres of single-family properties over the existing Transit Priority Areas.

### **UPCOMING COLLEGE AREA COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE SUBCOMMITTEE**

On November 17, 2022, the San Diego Planning Commission (Commission) reviewed two plans for the College Area Community Plan Update (Update) presented by the San Diego Planning Department (City) and the College Area Community Plan Update Sub-Committee (College Area).

One of the main differences between the two plans is the number of additional housing units and the changes to zoning to accommodate the units.

The College Area's plan retains the single residential zoning and adds an additional 19,430 units housing approximately 48,565 additional residents, based on recent State and SANDAG growth numbers.

The City plan wipes out a lot of single residential zoning to allow for up to 5- and 7-story multi-units on those lots and adds 34,990 new units to house approximately 87,475 additional residents, based on numbers that are out of date by about 10 years.

A few Commissioners suggested that the Board and City could further collaborate to come up with a compromise plan, though most approved of the City's huge unit and resident increases.

The Subcommittee will continue working to see where changes to the 7 Visions Plan may be possible. Info at: <https://www.plancollegearea.org/>.

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### **JOIN THE REGIONAL TASK FORCE TO COUNT THE HOMELESS POPULATION FOR WEALLCOUNT, JANUARY 26, 2023**

The Regional Task Force on the Homeless conducts an annual count and survey of homeless individuals throughout San Diego County, called *WeAllCount*, for a one day snapshot of where the homeless population is living in San Diego.

San Diego County's annual Point-in-Time Count campaign will happen on Thursday, January 26, 2023. Volunteers meet starting at 5:30 am and head out for counting from 6:00 am to 9:00 am. Their work helps the Regional Task Force better understand the state of homelessness in our region in order to help individuals, veterans, and families leave the streets.

This effort has involved 1,600 volunteers countywide in

the past, but this year more volunteers are being requested for a thorough count. This is a great way to serve the community as it gives a voice to the homeless and helps direct critical funding for housing and services.

Volunteers will be assigned to a team to help count and interview homeless persons to produce an estimate of the total number of individuals living unsheltered and in shelters in San Diego County.

Data from the *WeAllCount* is used to help inform decision-making at both regional and national levels and helps our community to create solutions for homelessness.

If you are interested, more information is available at <https://www.rtfhsd.org/about-coc/weallcount-pitc/> and you can please at <https://sandiego.pointintime.info/>.



### **DONATIONS DONATIONS DONATIONS**

A Big **THANK YOU** to all of you who donated to the **El Cerrito Community** the last few months.

We do need donations - big or small. Donations can be made to the P.O. Box 151268 - there is an easy to use form on the last page of this newsletter or you can use our PayPal account on our web page, <https://www.elcerritocommunitycouncil.org/>

Let us know if you would like your name published or if you want to remain anonymous.

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### **PICK UP YOUR DOG'S POOP! NO EXCUSES!**

**Calling all dog walkers.** It is so important to get out and walk our best friends, but we are hearing complaints from neighbors, parks, and schools about dog poop not getting picked up!

Fields at Mann Middle School, Clay Park, and Catoctin Park are all areas you absolutely have to be diligent about because children also play on these fields and when one of them comes into contact with dog poop, it can become a health problem.

Carry bags, watch your dog and where it poops, and pick up after your dog. Plain and simple.

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### **STREETLIGHT BULB REPAIR / REPLACEMENT IN JANUARY**

Jefferey Nguyen and Lucero Maganda reported that our section of District 9 will be getting streetlight replacement and repairs during the month of January. Jefferey would like you to send an email to him when

you report a dark streetlight on *Get It Done* so he can help monitor the repair and schedule.

He also requests that you only send in one request for the repair, as multiple requests just clog the system. Jefferey's email is [Jeffereyn@sandiego.gov](mailto:Jeffereyn@sandiego.gov).

The *Get It Done* app lets you report problems and request improvements in the neighborhood with your phone or you can go online and report a problem.

You can take and upload photos related to over 20 non-emergency problems like homeless encampments, illegal parking, roads, traffic signals, and more.

After uploading photos, be sure to identify a few details about the problem and submit.

Visit <https://www.sandiego.gov/get-it-done>.

Download from the [AppleAppStore](#) or [GooglePlay](#).



## **IT'S TIME TO PLANT FOR BEES, BUTTERFLIES AND HUMMINGBIRDS**

Many El Cerrito residents have expressed interest in helping bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. We talked to our resident Master Gardeners and some bee experts and are passing on what we have learned, so you can join in the fun.

The key to attracting these pollinators is planting their favorite flowers. And January is a great time to get your garden started so flowers will be ready for spring and summer.

Providing nectar and pollen as food and creating habitat for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds is important as their natural habitats become less abundant. Planting friendly gardens in our community may increase the diversity of bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds, even within concrete-laden urban areas. That's great news for us!

We can reduce the impact of disappearing habitat by creating bee, hummingbird, and butterfly friendly gardens. Native plants that occur naturally in the wild may require less maintenance, less fertilizer, and less water than many non-native plants.

Exotic plants that produce lots of nectar are great for attracting bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies into your yard, but they often cannot support the entire life cycle of these insects. Opting for native plants makes your garden attractive to adult bees that are foraging for nectar and pollen, but will also increase native habitat in your area for other wildlife, like caterpillars and birds.

In addition to many plant varieties, there are seed

mixes for attracting your favorite critters. There are packets full of seeds to produce flowers to attract your favorite pollinator available from nurseries and home improvement stores.

If you want to help Monarch Butterflies as they migrate through San Diego, your best bet is Milkweed. Many nurseries carry milk weed in a variety of sizes and types. Monarchs lay their eggs almost exclusively on the underside of milk weed leaves. The hatching caterpillars eat nothing but Milkweed. Please take note: if you start attracting Monarchs you will need more milkweed plants to feed the caterpillars - and they are hungry. They strip the plants bare. You can buy more plants but Milkweeds produce hundreds of seeds which you can plant to grow more. Cutting them back also stimulates regrowth. Monarch caterpillars are green, white, and black striped and their cocoon is bright green and called a chrysalis.

Another pretty orange butterfly is the Fritillary. These butterflies prefer passion flower vines. The caterpillars for this butterfly are a little over an inch long, bright orange in color, and covered in rows of black spines. The cocoons look like brown crumpled leaves. These butterflies can be very prolific and fill your yard with many charming flitting butterflies for the whole summer season.

Swallowtails are the stunning black-lined, yellow butterfly in our area. This species likes a plant called Queen Anne's lace, but they also eat garden plants in the carrot family, including carrots, parsley, dill, and fennel.

Cloudless Sulphur are the big, yellow butterflies you see a lot of in your garden that are attracted primarily to red, orange, and purple colors.

Bees are one of the main pollinators in the world and have had problems recently. The main culprit appears to be insecticides, particularly ones that are systemic, meaning your plants absorb the pesticide. The same properties that kill a pest chewing on the plant also harm the bees gathering pollen and nectar.

Limiting the use of insecticides in your garden ensures bees are not accidentally poisoned by pesticides. Native bees are attracted to your garden by plant nectar and pollen, but are harmed if pesticides are present. High doses of insecticides can kill foraging bees outright. Even low doses have adverse effects and cause bees to get lost, never making it back to the hive. Pesticides brought back to the nest, can destroy the entire colony, so please consider natural pest control as much as possible.

It is estimated that hummingbirds need nectar from between 1,000 to 2,000 flowers each day. Development and urban sprawl across their migratory routes have destroyed a lot of the natural habitat containing nectar-producing plants. A hummingbird-friendly garden requires three key ingredients: nectar-producing flowers, insects, and water. Hummingbirds prefer plants with brightly colored tubular flowers. They are especially attracted to red flowers, followed by oranges and pinks, purples, blues, and yellows. Most varieties of sage are good choices for hummingbirds.

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