

# A COMMUNITY CONNECTED



## Mission, Vision and Values



### Our Mission

The City of Walnut Creek, working in partnership with the community, is committed to enhancing our quality of life by promoting:

**A positive environment** where people can live, work and play

**A vibrant local economy** to enhance and sustain long-term fiscal stability

**A progressive workplace** where dedicated employees can make a difference

### Our Vision

**A balanced community** meeting tomorrow's needs while protecting the quality and character we value today

### Our Values

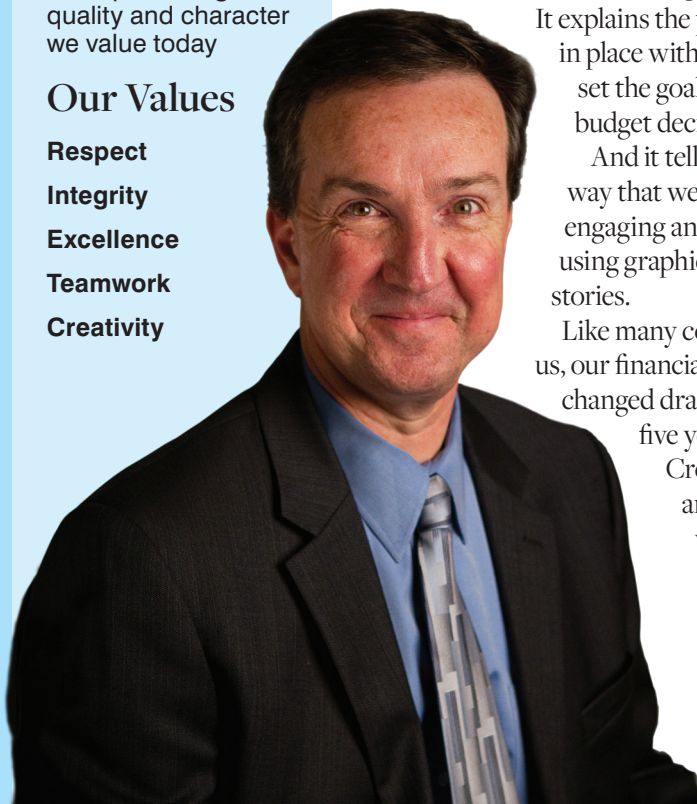
**Respect**

**Integrity**

**Excellence**

**Teamwork**

**Creativity**



I have the privilege of serving as one of over 340 dedicated City employees who work for you – our residents and businesses. One of our core responsibilities is to communicate about the activities, projects and issues going on in Walnut Creek.

When the City Council approved a balanced operating budget for 2012-14 in June, they also noted significant unresolved needs. They expressed a desire that our current and future financial situation be clearly communicated to the public.

Traditionally, telling our financial story meant providing a copy of our budget to anyone who asks. These documents continue to be available on our website and at the City Clerk's office.

However, we recognize few people are inclined to sift through numerous pages of budget data.

This special section of the Nutshell newsletter, "A Community Connected: The 2012-14 Budget Story," seeks to share our budget information in a new way.

It identifies what we plan to do over the next two years with the resources placed under our stewardship.

It explains the processes we've put in place with the community to set the goals that guided our budget decisions.

And it tells our story in a way that we hope will be more engaging and easy to follow, using graphics, photos and short stories.

Like many communities around us, our financial situation has changed dramatically in the past

five years. The Walnut Creek ways of the past are not going to be the ways of the future.

While the 'drive by' experience may not reflect noticeable changes in our community, it is clear we must chart together a shared future for Walnut Creek.

Critical decisions will need to be made over the next 18-24 months. One key question will be "to what extent does the community want programs and services to continue, and at what level?"

Simultaneously, we must examine how we are going to address maintaining the capital assets (e.g. parks, roads, public facilities) that are an integral part of our community and the services we deliver.

We can't wait until the next budget cycle in 2014 to answer these questions. We need to start this conversation now, to work together to whittle away at the challenges we face and to set a course for the future.

This story will continue to unfold and evolve over time; its outcome will affect everyone. Much like the world we live in today, operating a city in 2012 is fraught with ambiguity. As the City looks ahead, our choices are likely to become more difficult and the impacts more obvious to the community.

Stay involved. Get informed. We remain steadfast in staying engaged with our residents and businesses while approaching our work daily with creativity, resourcefulness and dedication.

On behalf of the City Council and staff, I encourage you to give us your feedback on our Budget Story. Details on how to share your thoughts appear on Page 18 of this special section.

*Ken Nordhoff*  
Walnut Creek City Manager

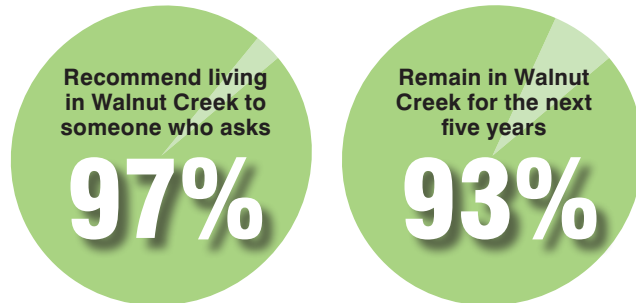
# Quality of Life in Walnut Creek

Percent of responding "excellent" or "good"



Some highlights from the National Citizens Survey 2012

Percent of responding "somewhat" or "very likely"



Walnut Creek's quality of life faces serious challenges in the years ahead. Here are some reasons why:



### Keeping libraries running

The County operates the libraries, and provides 35 hours of service per week. Residents passed a parcel tax, Measure Q, in 2002 to pay for additional hours and maintenance – currently \$1 million each year. The parcel tax expired in 2010; reserves are expected to last until 2014. Unless a new funding source is found, the City will need to consider taking money from its General Fund to maintain the extra hours, reducing library services, or a combination of both.

### Employee Costs

As a service agency, 67 percent of the City's operating budget is employee costs. Even with City employees contributing significant amounts toward health insurance and retirement costs, the City has no control over increases in pension rates and health insurance costs.

### Capital Needs

The 10-year Capital Investment Program identifies \$98 million in capital needs to take care of our roads, parks, facilities and other projects. To date, \$35 million has been identified, leaving a \$63 million gap.

### The Cost of Technology

Technology can streamline processes and reduce costs, and affects every service and program Citywide. But first, it takes a considerable investment. The 2011 Information Technology Strategic Plan identified \$12 million in unfunded needs over the next 5 years.

### Federal and State unfunded mandates

The Federal and State government can impose regulations without providing funding. That means that City dollars must be reassigned from general fund programs to cover these new costs. In 2011-12, the City spent \$11 million on programs that were mandated by the State or Federal government.

Inside 'A Community Connected':










Walnut Creek's Budget at a Glance  
**Pages 3-4**

The Priority Based Budgeting Process: How It Works  
**Pages 5-6**

Summary of the Blue Ribbon Task Force Recommendations  
**Page 7**

Priority Based Budget Goals

-  **High Performing Government** **Page 8**
-  **A Safe Community** **Pages 9-10**
-  **Culture, Recreation & Learning Opportunities** **Pages 11-12**
-  **Stewardship of the Natural and Built Environment** **Pages 13-14**
-  **Economic Vitality** **Page 15**
-  **Effective Transportation and Mobility Options** **Page 16**
-  **Strong Neighborhoods and a Sense of Community** **Pages 17-18**

**2012-2014  
Budget In Brief  
WVC**

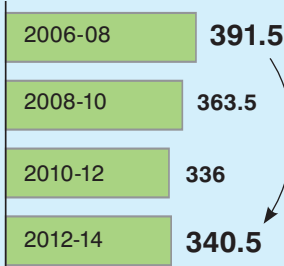
# THE 2012-14 BUDGET

Here is an overview look at Walnut Creek's anticipated revenues and expenditures in the Fiscal Years 2012-14 Biennial Budget.

## General Fund: Total Revenues

Here is what we have done so far (between 2008 to present)

Reduced staff by the equivalent of 51 full-time positions from 391.5 employees in 2008 to 340.5



Contracted out for more services

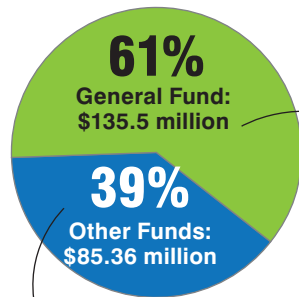
Implemented a "second tier" pension benefit for non-safety employees hired after March 2012 with the least generous plan allowed under CalPERS (the City's retirement system); will complete second tier for public safety new hires by early 2013

Negotiated agreements with all employee groups to pay full employee portion of pension costs (Exception: Police managers already agreed to pay 7 percent of their 9 percent employee portion of pension costs – currently under negotiations)

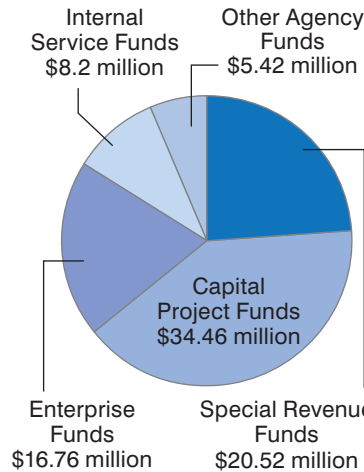
Negotiated agreements with all employee groups to contribute more toward health insurance costs

Increased use of volunteers

All City Appropriations 2012-2014: **\$220.86 million**



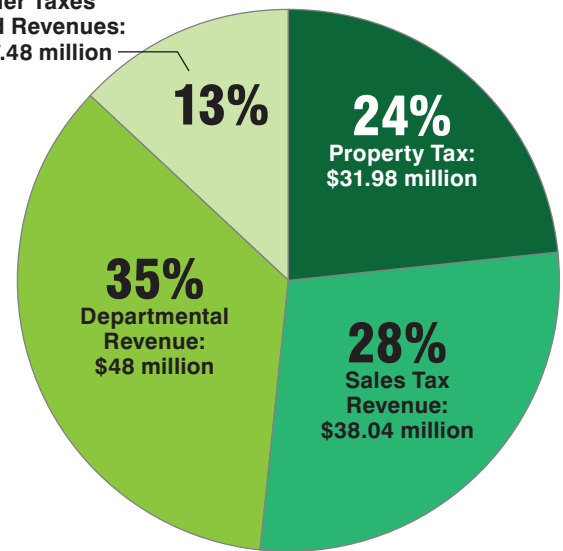
Other Funds (Restricted Funds): **\$85.36 million**



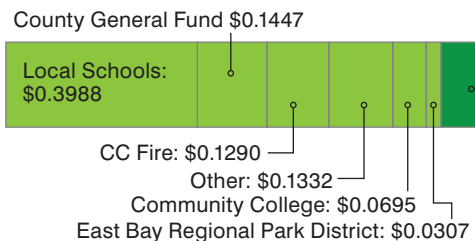
General Fund Total Revenues 2012-2014:

**\$135.5 million**

Other Taxes and Revenues: \$17.48 million

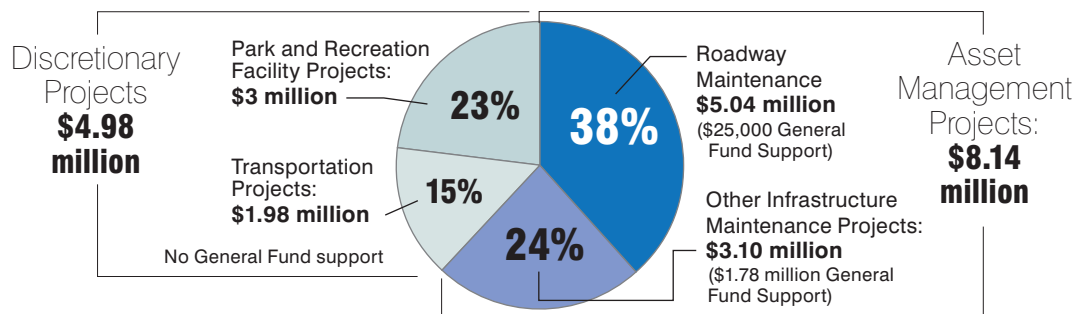


### Your property tax \$1



For every property tax dollar paid by a resident, the Walnut Creek General Fund gets less than a dime: **\$0.0941**

## Capital Budget Funding 2012-14: **\$13.12 million\***



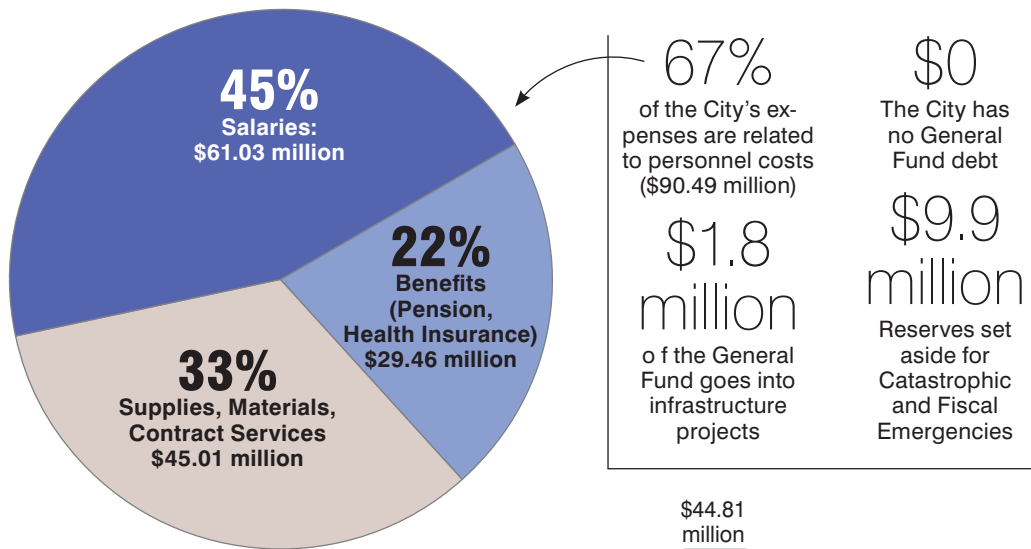
# BY THE NUMBERS

The budget serves as a business plan to help the City and Citizens prioritize funding and plan for the future.

## General Fund: Total Expenditures

General Fund Total Expenditures 2012-2014:

**\$135.5 million**



### 2012-2014 Budget In Brief



#### What these numbers don't tell you

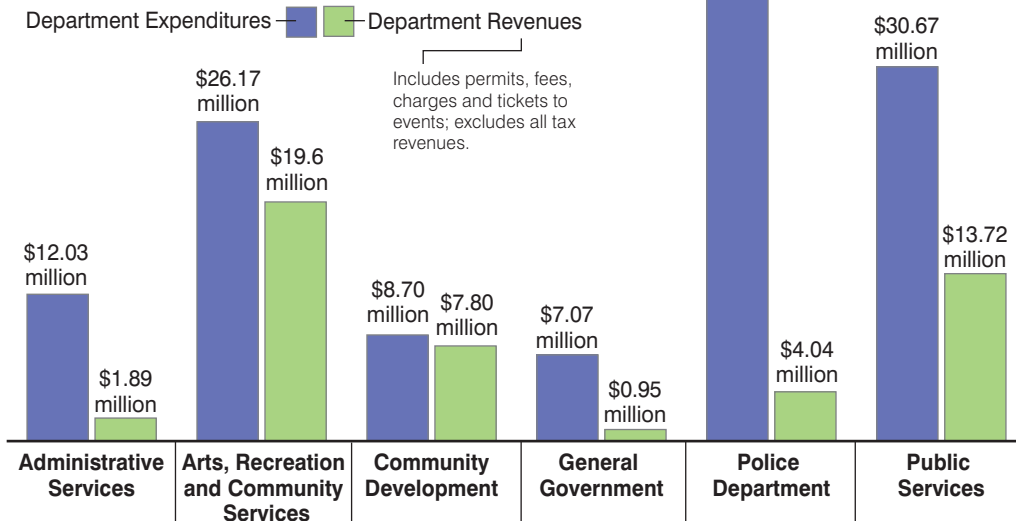
Tax revenues are below pre-recession levels

Increases in operating expenses outpace revenues, mostly due to external drivers: e.g. health insurance, pension costs, gas, utilities

While funds are available for 2012-14 capital projects, the 10-year Capital Investment Program identifies \$98 million in needs, and only \$35 million has been identified

**Bottom line:** There are insufficient resources to continue existing service levels beyond 2012-14 and still meet unfunded capital needs

#### General Fund: Cost Recovery by Department



#### 3 ways to get the 2012-14 Budget

- To see the entire 2012-14 Budget: 1) scan the QR code in this box
- 2) visit [www.walnut-creek.org/budget](http://www.walnut-creek.org/budget) or
- 3) visit the City Clerk's office: 925-943-5819

# Priority Based Budgeting: How it works in Walnut Creek

## It's all about the Goals

Priority-Based Budgeting is a new way to make sure that resources are directed to those programs that do the most to achieve the community's Goals.

Traditionally, municipal budgeting is done along department lines. Priority-Based Budgeting takes into account that a particular Goal may be achieved by programs from many departments.

That means getting the Goals right is critically important. Policy makers (in this case, the City Council), the community and the staff each make unique and important contributions.

The Council sets the Goals; the community defines and validates the Goals; and staff scores each program based upon its ability to achieve the Goals.

The more Goals a particular program supports, the greater its score. And the greater the score, the more likely a program will receive funding as part of Priority Based Budgeting.

It is the ultimate "getting the biggest bang for the taxpayer's buck."

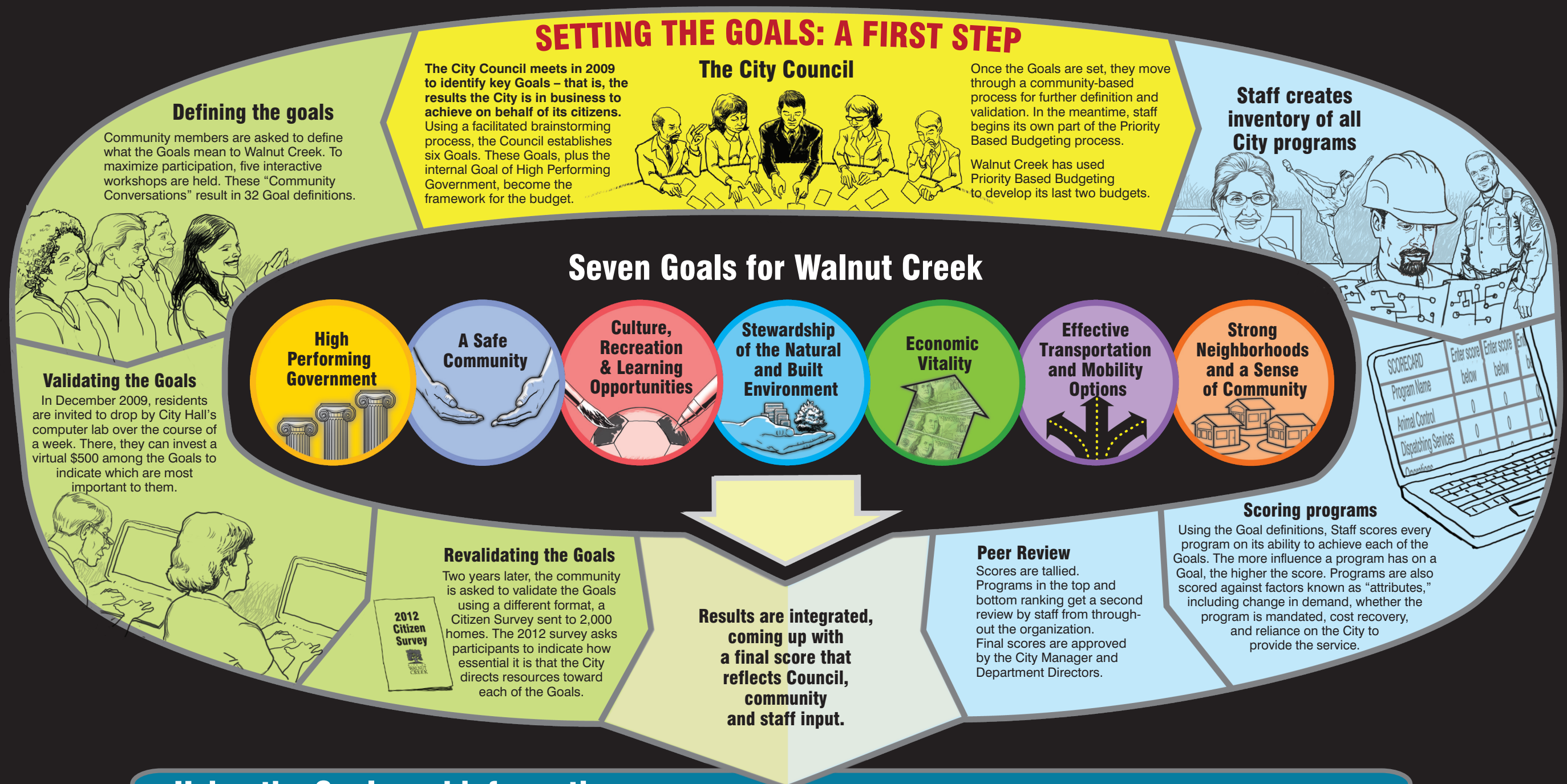
## Defining the Goals

Why define Goals anyway? Doesn't everyone know what "A Safe Community" means?

It depends. Nearly everyone will agree that "A Safe Community" includes effective law enforcement. However, to a person in Minneapolis, "A Safe Community" also means getting snowplows out quickly to clear roads in the winter.

In Walnut Creek, residents told us "A Safe Community" means working together on earthquake preparedness.

The unique Goal definitions guide staff as they score programs based on their ability to achieve the Seven Goals.



**High Performing Government**

**A Safe Community**

**Culture, Recreation & Learning Opportunities**

**Stewardship of the Natural and Built Environment**

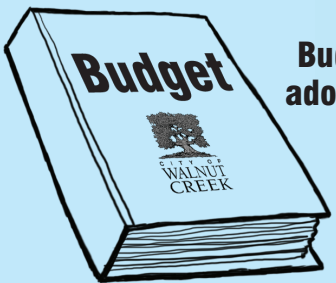
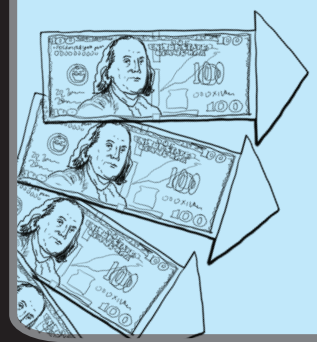
**Economic Vitality**

**Effective Transportation and Mobility Options**

**Strong Neighborhoods and a Sense of Community**

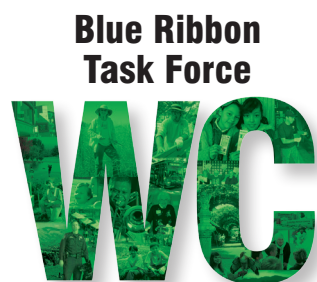
**SCORECARD**

Program Name	Enter score below	Enter score below	Enter score below
Animal Control	0	0	0
Dispatching Services	0	0	0
...	...	...	...



This page intentionally left blank to facilitate “flipbook” ability of this document.

This page does not appear in the printed version.



## Time to get involved

“Our world is changing, and how the City does business needs to change, too. Some tough decisions are going to have to be made, both in the short term and for a long time to come. My advice to the community? Get involved.”

**Leslie Dawson**  
Member, Community Blue Ribbon Task Force on Fiscal Health  
Forensic CPA



# Community Blue Ribbon Task Force on Fiscal Health

In December 2010, the Walnut Creek City Council approved the creation of a community task force that would analyze the City’s financial condition and recommend viable short- and long-term strategies that could be implemented to improve the City’s financial health. Fifteen people representing a broad range of financial and community experience were selected from a pool of more than 100 applicants.

The Task Force met for the first time in late February 2011. They received a “crash course” in public financing and city operations, led by City Manager Ken Nordhoff and department directors, asked questions and challenged assumptions. By the time they were done, Task Force members had dedicated thousands of hours combined to analyzing the City’s finances and developing strategies for the future.

In November 2011, the Task Force presented its Final Report, which was accepted by the City Council. Excerpts from the report follow:

## Among the Task Force Findings:

The Task Force acknowledges that, since the economic downturn began several years ago, the City of Walnut Creek has already undertaken efforts to address operating budget shortfalls. However, further measures are required. The conclusions presented in this report are of major importance to the long-term financial wellbeing of the City. The Task Force has provided 38 recommendations. From these, it has identified several recommendations that will result in the greatest benefits to the City with respect to ensuring long-term fiscal health for both City operations and care of the infrastructure.

## Summary of Task Force Recommendations:

**1. Develop an integrated financial management process**, which includes a) operations, b) current capital projects, c) maintenance, preservation and replacement reserves for capital assets, d) long-term capital investments, and e) long-term employee benefits costs.

**2. Set aside funds for replacement costs of aging capital assets.** This includes catching up on current deficiencies in such funds.

**3. Establish greater cost efficiencies in the use of the City’s capital assets** by consolidating uses in fewer facilities and selling or leasing underutilized properties.

**4. Reduce the City’s operating expenses by implementing reductions in total payroll costs** through changes to employee contributions to retirement and health insurance costs and programs. Also, determine how to best manage the unpredictable financial exposure associated with participation in CalPERS.

**5. Support the efforts of the Economic Development Program** in developing effective strategies that will enhance the strength of the City’s commercial and retail base.

**6. After beginning implementation of further cost reduction measures** and other methods for increasing revenue (such as economic development and cost recovery), consider a local ½-cent sales tax increase. Conduct a survey of the community to determine the level of community support for the sales tax increase.

## What’s happened since the Task Force finished

Since the Task Force Report was accepted by the City Council, further progress has been made on fiscal health recommendations in several areas.

Examples include:

- reviewed cost recovery policies, and related fee schedule for user-based services and programs, put into place as part of the 2012-14 operating budget, provides more than \$500,000 in new revenues per year;
- creation of a one-time revenue policy, codifying past practices of using one time revenues for one time expenditures. Two elements were imbedded in this policy – General Fund surpluses being directed to capital and technology under-funding, and new one-time dollars being set aside outside of the General Fund for future direction from the City Council; and
- continued movement, through the employee negotiation process, in employees making greater contributions toward retirement and health insurance costs.

## Next Steps:

Look for the Task Force Report findings and recommendations review as part of formal City Council meetings over the coming months. Your input and involvement in helping shape our fiscal health by being part of the public dialogue is encouraged.

To read the full Task Force Report visit [www.walnut-creek.org/fiscal\\_health](http://www.walnut-creek.org/fiscal_health) or use your Smartphone to open the QR code in this box.





# Customer Service is Job 1

Getting a building permit can be a confusing experience. Walnut Creek decided to change this by creating a one-stop permit counter. To do this, two departments (Community Development and Public Services) teamed up to create the Development Review Center.

Permit technicians from both departments received cross-training; in addition, they are all certified plan examiners. That means they can process the majority of construction-related permits themselves, instead of sending the permit-seeker to several different departments.

Bottom line? Less waiting for permit seekers and cost savings for the City.

“My time is respected by processing building permits in an expedient manner,” said builder Dennis Sattler when asked about his experience at City Hall. “Thanks for always doing a great job!”

The City’s business license team turned to technology to improve



Sheri Lund helps a customer at the Business License counter. Business licenses generate about \$2 million a year in revenue.

their customers’ experience in getting a business license. Anyone doing business in Walnut Creek is required to get a business license each year. To make it easier for businesses owners to know what to expect before coming to City

Hall, the business license team updated its website to provide all business license-related information and applications online. Just go to [www.walnut-creek.org](http://www.walnut-creek.org) and look for Business Licenses under the Quick Links tab.

## Innovation saves time and resources

The City receives between 200 and 1,000 applications for every job opening. In the past, processing those applications required multiple formal written notifications and creation of cumbersome application files. Today, the Human Resources Department uses NeoGov, which allows city staff to post jobs and process applications without using a single sheet of paper.

“Using NeoGov saves close to 40 percent of the time it used to take to process applications manually,” says Kelly Guertin of HR. “That means we have more time to spend review-

ing applications to find the right candidates to interview for the position instead of processing paper.”

**NeoGov is one way the City is applying new ideas to streamline processes. Others include:**

■ Public Services’ Street Maintenance crew developed a “red curb painting machine” that lets them paint both the top and the side of the curb at the same time. “Thanks to this device, city staff can paint curbs at about a third of the cost of hiring a private contractor,” said Public Services Manager Rich Payne.

■ The Information Technology Department knows that good things do come in small “green” packages. Aging desktop computers are being replaced with Panalogue devices about the size of a pint of ice cream. These nifty mini-computers save more than space – they cost less to buy, use less energy, require less material to make and take less packaging to ship.



### High Performing Government



**Provide** superior customer service

**Ensure** regulatory and policy compliance

**Proactively protect** and maintain City resources

**Enhance** innovation and accountability in all City business

### The heart of service

“Employees in the City of Walnut Creek are the heart of providing service to our community. Our unique staff brings diversified experiences, exceptional knowledge, and a true breadth of skills to our organization.”

**Ken Nordhoff,**  
City Manager

### Employees of the Year

**Bob Hardie**  
(Building Maintenance Supervisor, Public Services) and **Fran Duffy**  
(Senior Permit Technician, Building Division)

#### Reining in risks

The City has a robust Risk Management program. Not only does Risk Management keep staff and the community safe, but by eliminating or mitigating certain risks, taxpayer dollars are protected.

For example, the Sidewalk Replacement Program, which proactively identifies and repairs sidewalk hazards on the City’s sidewalks, has reduced injuries and claims by over 40 percent since its inception in 2000.

## A Safe Community

**Provide** effective and adequate law enforcement

**Partner** with the community on broad emergency preparedness program

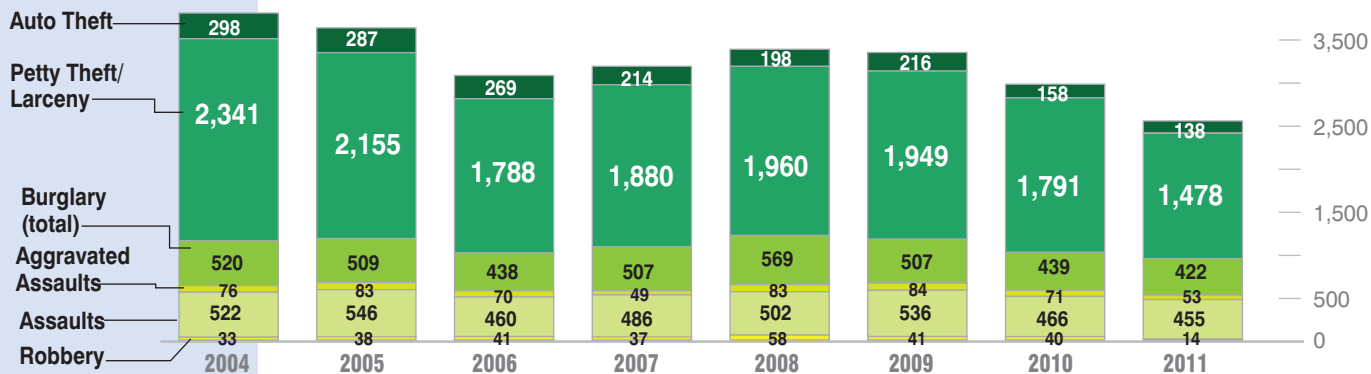
**Keep streets safe** for cars, pedestrians and cyclists

**Maintain** positive and safe environment through enforcement of building codes and prompt graffiti removal

### Consider this

Since January 2012, approximately 50 non-violent offenders have been released into Contra Costa County each month, as a result of a State law meant to address prison overcrowding. While it is too early to say what impact this will have on local crime rates, law enforcement experts predict a rise in theft and other property crimes, said Chief Joel Bryden.

### Walnut Creek crime stats 2004-2011



Officers Jeff Slater and Anthony Morasco talk with an Apple store manager who contacted the police after a customer tried to use a fraudulent credit card.

## CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

By any measure, Walnut Creek is a safe community.

“People feel safe here, and they should,” said Police Chief Joel Bryden. “When you look at the breadth of the area, and the number of people who live, work, or visit Walnut Creek, we have very little violent crime.”

A key to the Police Department’s success is its ability to evolve as needs change.

For instance, as Walnut Creek fully achieves its vision of becoming a regional business and entertainment center, more attention is needed in the downtown – but not at the expense of the neighborhoods. To meet this need, the department reorganized earlier this year. Each of the three “sectors” (police talk for neighborhoods) of Walnut Creek now has a dedicated lieutenant whose main focus is knowing and meeting the needs of his or her sector. In addition, the City created a Downtown Team that works closely

with business owners on a variety of issues.

The reorganization came with trade-offs. The police no longer offer school-based programs such as Character Counts, and scaled back support of Neighborhood Watch.

Another sign of the times needing increased police attention is cyber-crime, particularly identity theft. Three of the department’s 10 detectives now focus full time on stopping and solving these complex crimes.

The department is also harnessing the power of technology to stay connected with the people it serves. Residents can sign up for text and email alerts through Nixle.com, a free service that gives the police a quick way to get information out to the community.

Recognizing the importance of public safety, the Council approved adding two additional police positions as part of the 2012-14 Budget, bringing the total number of sworn personnel to 78.

### Volunteers make a significant contribution to the Walnut Creek Police Department

#### 40 Volunteers in Police Services

**Hours donated in 2011: 3,500**  
VIPs perform a wide range of services, from conducting vacation home checks to being part of an emergency HAM radio team. They staff the first-floor counter, answer phones, assist with paperwork and make sure police cars are stocked with supplies, among other possible duties.

#### 30 Police Reserve Officers

**Hours donated in 2011: 13,250**  
Police Reserve Officers undergo the same intense training that regular police officers do. They support beat officers in the downtown on weekends and serve on a variety of special assignments, such as the crisis negotiation team, the bomb squad, and the Open Space patrol. These reserve officers are the face of Walnut Creek PD at city festivals, parades, and local high school football and basketball games.

#### 15 Police Cadets

**Hours donated in 2011: 600**  
Police cadets range in age from 16-22 and must be enrolled in high school or college. Cadets gain exposure to various aspects of police work and what it means to have a career in law enforcement while assisting with special projects and community events.



Want to schedule a neighborhood meeting with personnel assigned to your neighborhood? Call 943-5869 and the Chief’s Executive Assistant will direct you to the Lieutenant assigned to your area.

## Keeping it clean, safe

Clean, well-maintained neighborhoods and commercial areas are cornerstones of a safe community. Keeping Walnut Creek that way is the job of the City's Code Enforcement Officer.

Walnut Creek receives 800-900 code enforcement complaints each year about quality-of-life problems such as front yard debris, inoperable vehicles parked in public view, and excessive pets. Thanks to a diplomatic but direct approach to code enforcement and voluntary compliance by residents, these complaints result in the issuance of only 5-10 citations per year.

The Code Enforcement Officer also ensures public safety by enforcing seasonal weed abatement requirements set by the Contra Costa County Fire District for fire prevention.

The Code Enforcement division was cut by 50 percent in 2010, from two Code Enforcement officers to one. Tips from residents are more important than ever. In 2011, the City started using SeeClick-Fix, a web-based system that lets

residents report problems from their computer or smartphone. Go to [www.SeeClickFix.com](http://www.SeeClickFix.com) or call (925) 890-4763.

### 2012 Survey Info

**92 percent**  
rated Cleanliness of Walnut Creek 'excellent or good'

**82 percent**  
rated Graffiti removal 'excellent or good'

### Watching out for kids at play

In 2011, Public Services conducted a playground safety audit for the City's nine playgrounds.

From this, staff developed a work plan to replace and upgrade playground equipment; the upgrades are currently under way. In addition, Public Services is in the process of leveling the City's 14 sports fields for safety.

### Consider this

Police Services Officers are available by appointment to safely install child car seats. In 2011, Walnut Creek PSOs installed 125 car seats by appointment, and either hosted or participated in three drop-in car seat clinics. Call 925-943-5844.



### An officer's best friend

"Our two K-9 units are force multipliers – they can sniff out drugs or find a suspect hiding in a building in a fraction of the time it would take an officer."

**Police Chief  
Joel Bryden**

## CERT: Residents ready to respond

More than 1,400 Walnut Creek residents have taken Community Emergency Response Team training.

CERT teaches everyday people the skills they need to respond safely during disaster. Students take a 20-hour training course, followed by a hands-on graduation drill, and are then sworn in as Volunteer Disaster Service Workers for the City.

Walnut Creek CERT is a joint effort of the City and a dedicated team of volunteer leaders.

When disaster strikes, CERTs are trained to report to their staging area, set up radio communications with the City's Emergency Operations Center, and then fan out in need to help those in need.

They can do everything from shutting off gas if leaks are detected to stabilizing most injuries until professional help can arrive. At the staging area, CERTs will set up a temporary shelter for displaced pets,



Volunteers make a fake wound to participate in a CERT drill.

and create a medical treatment area for the injured.

Perhaps most important of all, CERT volunteers will be the eyes and ears for the City, feeding information to the Emergency Operations Center about what is happening in the neighborhoods so scarce resources can be directed to where they are needed most.

CERTs are proving to be resourceful during non-disaster times as well. Classes, drills and ongoing refresher trainings are taught by

trained volunteers, and nearly all the supplies stored at the staging areas have been paid for through grants and a variety of fund-raising methods. It takes about \$20,000 to equip each staging area; Walnut Creek CERT is about 50 percent of the way toward completely equipping all staging areas.

To learn more about Walnut Creek's Community Emergency Response Team program, visit [www.walnut-creek.org/CERT](http://www.walnut-creek.org/CERT) or go to [facebook.com/walnutcreekcert](http://facebook.com/walnutcreekcert).

### Increased focus on disaster planning

To enhance emergency preparedness, the City Council approved funding for a half-time emergency planner to focus on internal training and organizational readiness in the 2012-14 Budget.



Sergeant Joe Donleavy and Kar

## Culture, Recreation & Learning Opportunities

**Provide** high quality, diverse and multi-generational arts, recreation and athletic programs and venues

**Collaborate** with the community to jointly support cultural, recreational and learning opportunities

**Support** a vibrant downtown with gathering places and a variety of entertainment and shopping venues

**Partner** with schools

### Jobs for teens

"I got my first job with the City when I was 15. A really cool thing is watching kids that I coached years ago now become camp counselors themselves."

**Donald Scully,**  
Summer Camps  
Programmer



### Consider this

Thanks to ticket sales, theater rentals, generous sponsorships and contributions from the community, the Leshler Center for the Arts and its resident programs, Center Repertory Company and the Bedford Gallery, recovered 90 percent of their \$5.65 million budgeted costs for the 2010-11 fiscal year and expect to do the same in 2012-14.

## From 'Nuthouse' to powerhouse

Walnut Creek's arts scene started in the mid '60s when the Walnut Creek Civic Arts Center opened in an empty walnut warehouse at the corner of Civic and Locust. Locals referred to the performance and art gallery complex as "The Nuthouse."

By the mid '70s, it was clear that the demand for performing arts had outgrown the funky venue. After 15 years of planning and fund raising, the Leshler Center for the Arts opened in 1990 on the same site.

Today, the Leshler Center for the Arts is a constant hub of activity. In addition to its resident programs, Center REP and the Bedford Gallery, the Leshler Center hosts a wealth of events, from musical performances to business conferences; 783 total in 2011 alone.

Visitors come from throughout the Bay Area to attend performances and gallery events, with more than 30 percent from outside Contra Costa County.

The economic benefits extend beyond the Leshler Center doors.

Based on the most recent Arts and Economic Prosperity Study done by Americans for the Arts, every ticket to a Leshler Center event generates an additional \$23.75 in spending in the downtown, helping local restaurants and other businesses thrive.

In 2011, more than 200,000 tickets were sold for performances at the Leshler Center.

## Enrichment at a bargain

Walnut Creek's incredible array of activities for every age and interest could not happen without collaboration between the City and the community.

A case in point: the senior programs based at Civic Park Community Center.

The City owns the building, and offers programs geared toward seniors through its recreation division. Staff also coordinates with outside agencies to bring services to the center – everything from investment counseling to the low-cost lunches served weekdays in the "C.C. Café."

The smiling people at the front desk? Those are members of the non-profit Walnut Creek Seniors Club, which has more than 2,200 members. They answer phones, greet visitors and generally make sure everyone feels welcomed.

Seniors Club members raise money for programs through their annual Holiday Boutique, coordinate the Club's travel program, and put on several special events each year.

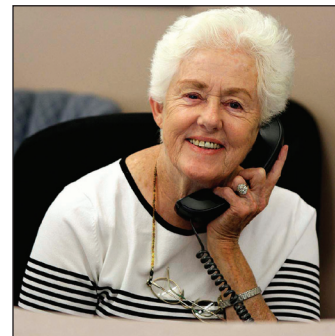
Partnerships like this happen throughout Walnut Creek, whether it's the Clay Arts Guild raising money to support Civic Arts Education's Ceramics Studio or the Walnut Creek Swim Club renting pool time from the City but providing its own coaches. The Friends of Civic Arts Education Foundation works to raise money

for scholarships so everyone has access to civic arts programs, while the Diablo Regional Arts Association raises money to support programs at the Leshler Center for the Arts.

As a result of partnerships, dollars go farther in providing the kinds of programs that encourage social connections, wellness and life-long learning.

The City's Arts, Recreation and Community Services department recovers 75 percent of its annual direct costs.

"It's a joint investment with the community," says Kevin Safine, Assistant Director of the Arts, Recreation and Community Services Division. "The quality of life in Walnut Creek wouldn't be possible without these non-profit partnerships."



A Seniors Club volunteer answers the phone at the Community Center.



**Culture,  
Recreation & Learning  
Opportunities**

**A place for  
everyone**

“... there is a place for everyone to do whatever it is they came to the library to do. There are spaces for quiet reading, for collaboration, for relaxing. The teens moved in, found their place and went about their business. Being able to facilitate that has been magical.”

**Bill Kolb**  
Teen Librarian,  
Walnut Creek Library



**Volunteers**

In 2011

**318**

volunteers ushered at the Leshner Center

**165**

volunteers led tours and greeted visitors at the Bedford Gallery

**150**

volunteers helped Civic Arts Education

**228**

volunteers kept Walnut Creek's Seniors Club running

For a combined total of

**89,765**  
donated hours



**Partnership with schools**

While the City has no governing authority over schools, the current City Budget supports Walnut Creek schools in a number of ways, including:

**Crisis counselors:** \$80,000 a year to cover up to half the cost of crisis counselors at the four public middle and high schools.

**Crossing guards:** \$75,000 per year to pay for crossing guards at four elementary and two middle schools. Walnut Creek teamed up with Concord two years ago to negotiate a new crossing guards contract, and saved \$35,000 a year.

**Middle school after-school sports:** \$140,175 -- slightly less than half the \$297,000 annual cost -- for after-school sports programs at Foothill and Walnut Creek Intermediate; the rest is paid for by participants. In addition, the City partners with the schools to program and rent out the middle school gyms on weeknights and weekends year round, maximizing availability for community groups.

**Theater credits:** The two middle and two high schools receive theater credits to use the Leshner Center auditorium free of charge, a combined value of \$5,000.

**TOP SHELF TEAMWORK**

Walnut Creek's downtown library is the busiest in Contra Costa County, while the Ygnacio Valley library ranks 5th. Combined, 28,000 people visit Walnut Creek's libraries each month; 78 percent of residents responding to the 2012 National Citizen Survey reported using the libraries.

They are gathering places for all ages; parents bring their toddlers for story time, teens meet for after-school study groups, senior citizens take classes in the Computer Lab, and job seekers and entrepreneurs tap into the free wi-fi and ample reference materials. And yes, there are plenty of books, in print and in digital form, plus movies, music CDs, magazines and newspapers.



**\$1 million**

Annual cost of maintaining the library facilities and providing an additional 21 hours of service a week at Walnut Creek's two libraries.

The libraries' success is a team effort. Contra Costa County operates the library system, providing 35 hours per week of staffing. Walnut Creek maintains the buildings.

The Library Foundation funds special collections and programs such as the Children's Summer Reading Program and the "Live! From the Library!" series. The Friends of the Walnut Creek Library and Ygnacio Valley Library raise money to support library collections, services and programs, mostly through used book sales.

Today, Walnut Creek libraries are open 56 hours per week, thanks to the voter-approved Measure Q parcel tax.

However, Measure Q funds will run out in 2014; to date, an alternative funding source has not been identified beyond the current budget.

## Stewardship of The Natural and Built Environment



**Preserve** natural resources, parks, creeks and open space

**Maintain** facilities, streets and other infrastructure

**Foster** a sustainable community

**Promote** responsible development and environmentally sound transportation systems

**Protect** community character

## The cost of clean water

Federal and State Clean Water requirements.

The City collects \$1.25 million in clean water fees to pay for this program; however, new requirements imposed by the Regional Water Board will exceed current funding levels by 2015.

A countywide ballot measure to raise additional funding for clean water costs failed.



Patrick Graney at the Shell Ridge Open Space. Graney always carries a plastic bag to pick up any trash he finds in the open space.

PHOTO BY BRAD HECKMAN

# Open minded

If you love the open space that surrounds Walnut Creek, find someone who lived here in the early '70s and thank them. It is because of a group of determined community members that Walnut Creek has more permanent open space per capita than any other city in California except Palo Alto.

In 1968, developers proposed building homes in much of the 1,500 acres known as Shell Ridge. Residents were adamant that the area remain in its natural state. Then-City Council member Bob Schroder suggested that if the community wanted the land to remain undeveloped, they needed to buy it.

And that is exactly what happened.

In 1974, Walnut Creek residents approved a \$6.75 million local open space and park bond measure to purchase 1,800 acres.

Over the years, additional purchases were made, and today the 2,704 acres of open space continue to host numerous wildlife in protected oak woodland, chaparral and grassland savannah habitats.

The City's Open Space division oversees protection of the land and offers programs throughout the year so people of all ages can experience this community treasure.

## Creek savvy, water wise

With a name like Walnut Creek, no wonder clean water is a shared priority. Community groups organize creek cleanups with support from the City, and those strolling the Creek Walk will see interpretive signs telling the history of the creek and how important it is to keep it healthy.

Community member Pam Romo organized the first creek cleanup in May 1990. Later that year, she persuaded the City Council to establish a task force charged with creating a plan to protect the creeks. In 1993, the Council adopted the finished Creeks Restoration and Trails Master Plan. Task



PHOTO BY BRAD HECKMAN

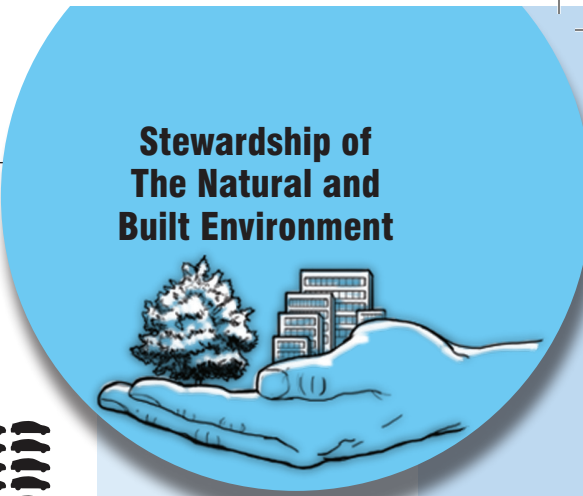
force members formed Friends of the Creeks the next year to work with the City in implementing the Master Plan and advocating for creeks.

Federal Clean Water legislation

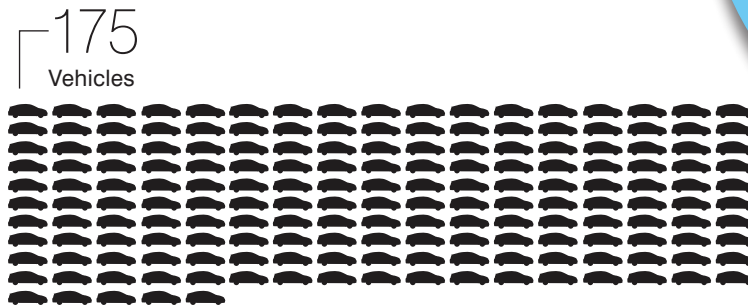
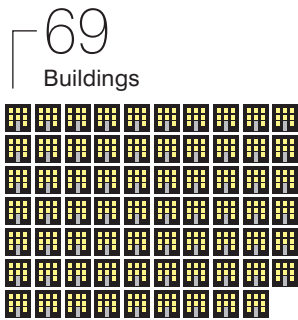
in 1993 added new requirements meant to control what goes into the waterways, and eventually, the Bay. In addition to creek cleanups, clean water strategies include street sweeping, retrofitting city storm drains with grates to capture debris, and educating residents.

Has it worked? The answer is yes. Residents report the return of birds, fish, mammals and insects not seen for many years in local riparian habitats. Even local creek cleanups are beginning to yield less trash as citizens recognize the importance of keeping waterways free of debris.

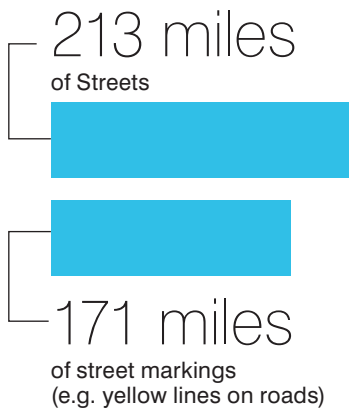
# Taking care of what we've got



## Stewardship of The Natural and Built Environment



4,172 Catch basins  
 480,000 Feet of storm drain  
 1.6 million Feet of curb and gutter  
 150 Mowers, equipment items



22 Parks (total of 249 acres)  
 2,704 Acres of open space  
 9 miles of paved trails  
 43 miles of unpaved trails in open space

### A green perspective

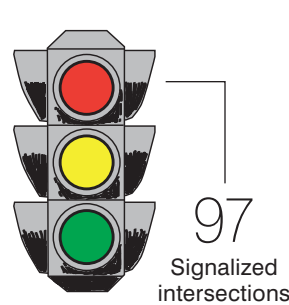
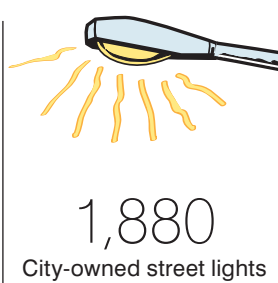
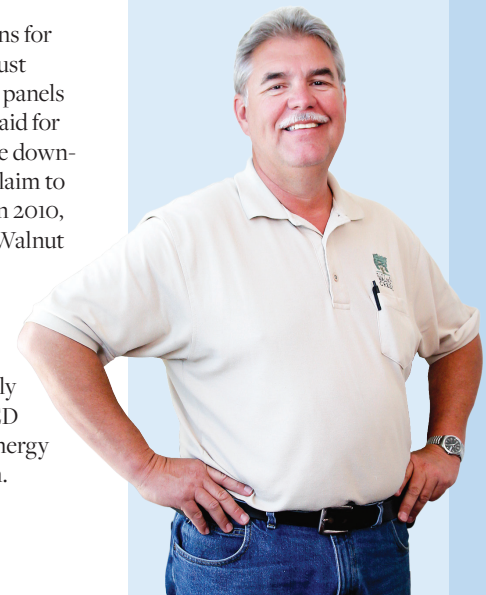
“If people paid attention to the plant world, they would be amazed.

Plants are like people. Each has its own personality. Plant it in the right spot and it grows like crazy.

If I didn't enjoy doing this, I would not have done it for the past 23 years.”

**Dave Harvey**

Parks division employee since 1989, maintaining medians and greenways



# And making it greener

When the City adopted its Climate Action Plan in early 2012 it marked the latest step in its green journey. Walnut Creek is home to 75 certified “green” businesses that go through a rigorous review by a number of regulatory agencies, including the City of Walnut Creek.

Five of the 75 green businesses are actually City operations: the auto shop, park maintenance operations, City Hall, the police department and the Leshner Center for the Arts.

Walnut Creek was among the first cities in Contra Costa County

to utilize eco-friendly gardening practices. For example, Parks maintenance workers can be found placing ladybugs instead of pesticides in many city rose gardens.

Other examples of “going green”

**Consider this**  
 57 of the 69 buildings the City maintains are more than 35 years old.  
 Replacement value: \$75 million

include the charging stations for electric vehicles at the Locust Street garage and the solar panels on the roof of City Hall – paid for through grant funding. The downtown Library has its own claim to sustainable fame: opened in 2010, it was the first building in Walnut Creek to attain LEED Gold certification for its use of recycled building materials, energy efficient design, and environmentally friendly construction. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

## Economic Vitality



**Attract and retain** businesses and job opportunities

**Provide** diverse housing options

**Attract** regional visitors

## Quality of life and new business potential

“I am into quality of life, and that’s what I get in Walnut Creek. I see big, big potential for new and wonderful and progressive companies.”

**Claudia Wentworth**  
Founder of Quick Mount PV



### WHERE THE JOBS ARE

**27%**  
Education, Health & Social Services

**17%**  
Professional, Scientific, Management & Administration

**15%**  
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing

**14%**  
Retail Trade

**8%**  
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Lodging and Food Service

Source:  
The American Community Survey



Construction of Anthropologie is under way in downtown.

Walnut Creek has benefitted from its central location since its early days.

But in today’s global economy, location alone can’t guarantee economic vitality. Competition can be down the road or across the world.

That’s why the City Council adopted an economic development strategic plan that included hiring the City’s first Economic Development Manager.

The purpose of the Economic Development plan is three-pronged: attracting new business, retaining the ones we’ve got, and helping those that wish to do so expand their business.

Over the next two years, Economic Development goals include bringing a boutique hotel to the downtown and relocating the City’s public services corporation yard next to Highway 680, freeing up the site for commercial uses.

### Potential to be realized

Some might see the “Property for Sale or Lease” signs dotting the Shadelands Business Park as symbols of decline.

But not Economic Development Manager Ron Gerber. He sees potential. Developing a strategy to reposition, diversify and expand the role of the 240-acre business park is among Gerber’s top priorities. Cutting-edge science and technology will play a major role in that future, says Gerber.

In addition, a reinvigorated Shadelands Business Park will:

- Attract innovators and entrepreneurs
- Generate high-value jobs
- Support flexible land uses
- Contain a contemporary mix of businesses

- Complement the downtown

Gerber cites the recent relocation of Quick Mount PV to Shadelands as an example. Walnut Creek residents Stuart and Claudia Wentworth founded the company in 2006 to produce fixtures for the solar industry. Moving their growing company to Walnut Creek gave them access to an enthusiastic employee base, many of whom take advantage of the adjacent bike trails to ride to work.

City staff is looking at ways to improve transit options, such as the possibility of an express BART-to-business park shuttle.

## A great community begins with good planning

Imagine what Walnut Creek would be like if the Sunvalley Mall were located in the Ygnacio Valley.

Developers in the early 1960s wanted to do exactly that, but City leaders turned the proposal down because it could have devastated the traditional downtown.

That’s just one example of the kind of long-range vision Walnut Creek residents and their elected leaders have used to create a sustainable community.

Thriving cities and attractive neighborhoods don’t just happen. It takes careful planning before the first shovel of dirt is turned to insure that a new project becomes an integrated part of the community.

City leaders use specific plans to “think big” about a specific area of town to insure that projects connect to make thriving neighborhoods, attractive business parks or commercial areas that meet residents’ needs.

Two specific plan efforts are currently under way. The 13-member Shadelands Gateway Specific Plan Advisory Committee is exploring the future of 25 acres owned by Safeway at the corner of Oak Grove and Ygnacio Valley roads. Safeway has asked for a General Plan Amendment rezoning the property from Business Park to General Retail. Given the site’s prominent location, the Council endorsed staff’s recommendation to process Safeway’s re-

quest through a specific plan process that incorporates the public’s ideas for this gateway to the City.

The West Downtown Specific Plan will focus on making it easier to walk and bike between BART and the downtown; and to plan for new homes and businesses between Mt. Diablo Boulevard and the BART station while preserving the Almond-Shuey neighborhood. A 13-member Citizens Advisory Committee has been appointed.

Both Specific Plan processes are open to the public. For agendas, go to [www.walnut-creek.org/SGSP](http://www.walnut-creek.org/SGSP) (for Shadelands Gateway Specific Plan) or [www.walnut-creek.org/west-downtown](http://www.walnut-creek.org/west-downtown).





# TRAFFIC FLOW KNOW HOW

Walnut Creek's 97 signalized intersections are connected to a sophisticated computer system known as the **Traffic Signal Master**, based at City Hall.

The timing at each intersection is controlled via the Traffic Signal Master to accommodate factors such as time of day, day of the week and special events.

Traffic engineers monitor traffic flow throughout the day via live video feeds at 20 key intersections. If traffic begins to back up, traffic engineers can adjust signal timing

to keep traffic flowing.

## Coming up

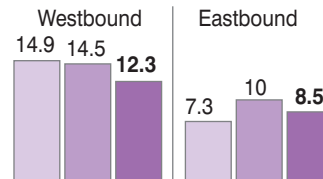
Thanks to a \$2.2 million grant from the state Department of Transportation, signals along **Ygnacio Valley Road** will soon be able to adapt directly to real-time traffic conditions, allowing for 24/7 traffic signal timing adjustments.

"This system utilizes technology to facilitate pedestrian and bike safety and vehicle efficiency while decreasing fuel consumption and improving air quality," said City Traffic Engineer Rafat Raie.

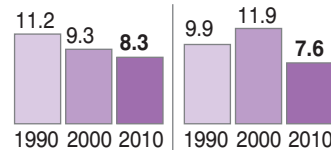
## Ygnacio Valley Road:

Morning and afternoon commute times have improved

### Morning commute in minutes



### Afternoon commute in minutes



# Easing parking woes

New technology is being deployed to make parking easier in downtown Walnut Creek.

Over the next year, the City will install wireless parking sensors at metered street-parking spaces. These sensors, along with those already installed in city-owned parking garages, will provide real-time information about open parking spaces on the City's website or through a smartphone app.

Of course, not every parking solution has to be high-tech. Sometimes simple is best.

That's the idea behind a way-finding program that will result in

easy-to-read signs directing drivers to public parking and points of interest throughout Walnut Creek.



The City Council is expected to approve a contract with a wayfinding company in September. As the company develops signage there will be many opportunities for the public to weigh in. Stay tuned.

## Pay it forward:

Parking meter fees are reinvested in the downtown to pay for parking improvements and other enhancements.

Stay on top of parking news. Sign up for our e-newsletter by emailing [wcpark@walnutcreek.org](mailto:wcpark@walnutcreek.org).

# A free ride

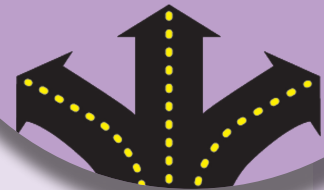
Those cute green downtown trolleys have the highest ridership of any bus line in Contra Costa's County Connection system. The route is officially called Route 4, but many call it "the Free Ride." That's because the City covers the cost of the fares so the service is available at no cost to riders.



The trolleys loop from Walnut Creek BART to Broadway Plaza, stopping at every other block along Locust and Main streets. Most of the year, the trolleys run from 7 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. weekdays, and from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on weekends.

During holidays, Broadway Plaza pays to extend the hours for evening shoppers.

# Effective Transportation and Mobility Options



**Develop** adequate and accessible parking options

**Foster** diverse and efficient modes of transportation

**Provide** a well-planned transportation system that eases congestion

**Ensure** safe and convenient travel for pedestrians and cyclists

## Planning for bikes

### Thanks to the 2011 Bicycle Master Plan:

- Walnut Creek is working with neighboring cities and Contra Costa County to "fill in the gaps" in existing bicycle routes, including connecting the Iron Horse Trail to the Orinda-Moraga Trail.

- A Bicycle Trails Map update is under way. The new map will identify all city bike routes and trails, including those in open space areas; public restrooms; water fountains; and bicycle storage lockers.



## Strong Neighborhoods and a Sense of Community



**Collaborate** and communicate with citizens

**Promote** physically attractive, safe neighborhoods

**Support** ways to connect neighborhoods and the downtown

## Helping and learning

“We went to the Citizens Institute in 2004, and have been volunteering with it ever since. Every time, we learn something new.”

**Tom and Maryann Sheridan**



Volunteers of all ages teamed up to make Walnut Creek a better place at the first Community Service Day on October 1, 2011. Here, volunteers build a bridge at the Howe Homestead park. **The 2012 Community Service Day will be Saturday, Oct. 6.**

# VOLUNTEERING MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

In today’s challenging economic times volunteerism makes an even greater difference, stretching limited local financial resources.

In 2011 alone, **2,300 volunteers** contributed **119,000 hours** to City programs,

from volunteering at the Police information counter to patrolling Open Space trails on bicycles. **Total market value of these donated hours? \$1.4 million!**

Local non-profits also benefit from these volunteers.

This strong sense of community commitment was clearly evident during the City’s first ever Community Service Day, held in October 2011. More than 1,000 people spent a half day working on everything from painting the Meals on Wheels parking lot to building a bridge at the Howe Homestead park.

**The 2012 Community Service Day will be Saturday, Oct. 6.** More than 50 projects are waiting for eager volunteers to lend a hand. Look for registration information in the Nutshell newsletter and on the City’s website.

## Getting to know your city

**Ever wonder how Walnut Creek really works?** The Walnut Creek Citizens Institute is a great place to start. Through interactive exercises, tours of city facilities, presentations by City Council members and city staff, and group discussions on the challenges facing communities like ours, participants learn the inner workings of city government.

The Institute is open to anyone who lives or works in Walnut Creek. Since its first class in May 2000, 489 people have taken part in this community-building program.

Institute graduates stay involved – more than half of the current Commission members got their start by taking the Citizens Institute, and Institute alumni regularly volunteer for everything from special events like the Library grand opening to being an usher at the Leshner Center for the Arts.

The Institute is offered once a year. To be put on the Interest List for notification of upcoming sessions, email [community@walnut-creek.org](mailto:community@walnut-creek.org).



## Places to call home

The City’s Housing Division offers a range of programs for moderate- and low-income people who want to call Walnut Creek home – senior citizens, local workers, and others who meet income guidelines.

In Contra Costa County, a moderate income for a family of four is \$110,750; the same family with an annual income of \$64,960 qualifies for low-income housing.

Among the housing programs: down payment assistance loans; below-market-rate units for sale; and affordable rental housing for

seniors and families.

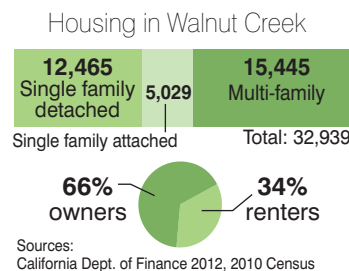
No General Fund money is used to pay for these programs, said Housing Manager Laura Simpson. Instead, the City leverages developer fees, state and federal grants and redevelopment loan repayments to support affordable housing projects. In some cases, such

as the Walden Park townhomes currently for sale, the builders opt to offer a percentage of units for sale at below-market-rates to meet City housing requirements.

To learn more about the City’s Housing programs, including low-interest loans for home improvements, visit [www.walnut-creek.org/housing](http://www.walnut-creek.org/housing), or call 925-943-5895 ext. 2236.

### Looking ahead:

Over the 2012-14 Budget cycle the City Council will need to re-examine affordable housing policies due to the loss of redevelopment agencies. Limited funding translates to a lower future level of investment in affordable housing.



# Connecting past...

Fred Lawrence and Al Stephan built the Walnut Creek Meat Market in 1910. One hundred years later, Sasa Restaurant opened in the same building. What the Lawrence brothers would think of Sasa's Japanese-style small plates is unknown, but they would recognize much of the carefully restored brick building. Look for "Lawrence's Meat Market" painted on the side of the brick building.

Four years after the Meat Market opened, Walnut Creek incorporated as a means of paving Main Street. The City will reach its 100 birthday on October 22, 2014.



The Walnut Creek Meat Market (soon called Lawrence's Meat Market) shortly after it opened in 1910. The Lawrence brothers – Fred (far left), Joe and Harry (in carriage) and their descendants ran the market there until moving to Alamo in 1988.

# ...to present

## Ways to Stay Connected

Visit the Council's booth at the downtown farmer's market on Sunday mornings and get to know your local leaders.

**Participate at public meetings.** Agendas are posted on the City's website and in the lobby at City Hall 72 hours in advance. Missed the meeting? Videos of Council and Commission meetings are available on demand on the City website. [www.walnut-creek.org](http://www.walnut-creek.org)

**Get social:** Become a fan of the City of Walnut Creek or specific City programs on Facebook, and share your opinions. Or follow us on Twitter and YouTube. A list of the City's many social media outlets is available at [www.walnut-creek.org/socialmedia](http://www.walnut-creek.org/socialmedia).

**Get WCPD alerts:** Sign up at [www.Nixle.com](http://www.Nixle.com) to get email and text alerts from the Walnut Creek PD.

**Be notified:** For a great way to receive timely updates, information, and meeting notices and to go "paperless", sign up online at [www.walnut-creek.org/](http://www.walnut-creek.org/)



services/E-Notify.

**Tune in:** Watch meetings from the comfort of your family room. City Council and Commission meetings are aired live on Walnut Creek TV: Comcast Channel 28 (incorporated Walnut Creek only), Rossmoor 26, astound Channel 29 and AT&T U-Verse Channel 99.

**Stay in the know with Walnut Creek TV:** The City's government access channel covers community events, activities and organizations in addition to public meetings. For listings, go to [www.walnutcreektv.org](http://www.walnutcreektv.org) or

check your local cable listings.

**Log on:** The best source for comprehensive and up-to-date information about the City of Walnut Creek programs, services, projects and local events is the City's website: [www.walnut-creek.org](http://www.walnut-creek.org).

**And finally ... Stay tuned ---** We are looking for more ways to give community members a way to connect with City leaders.

Email [community@walnut-creek.org](mailto:community@walnut-creek.org) to be the first to hear about new ways to share your opinions!

## Strong Neighborhoods and a Sense of Community



## A shared future

As the City Council develops its work plan priorities, council members emphasize the importance of informing and involving the community in setting Walnut Creek's course for the future.

Be on the lookout for ways to get involved in initiatives such as:

Celebrating Walnut Creek's Centennial

Community Conversations on the City's fiscal health

Evaluating and prioritizing programs and service levels

Weighing in on asset management policies, planning and funding

To receive email notifications about opportunities for involvement, email [community@walnut-creek.org](mailto:community@walnut-creek.org).

Walnut Creek City Council

Bob Simmons, *Mayor*  
Kish Rajan, *Mayor Pro Tem*  
Kristina Lawson  
Cindy Silva  
Gary Skrel

Walnut Creek Executive Team

Ken Nordhoff - *City Manager*  
Lorie Tinfow - *Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director*  
Heather Ballenger - *Public Services Director*  
Joel Bryden - *Chief of Police*  
Barry Gordon - *Arts, Recreation & Community Services Director*  
Sandra Meyer - *Community Development Director*  
Sally Rice - *Assistant Admin Services Director*  
Bryan Wenter - *City Attorney*

"A Community Connected: The 2012-14 Budget Story"

Lorie Tinfow - *Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director*  
Gayle Vassar - *Communications & Outreach Manager*  
Karen Majors - *Writer & Researcher*  
Cindy Mosser - *Finance Manager*  
Liz Payne - *Walnut Creek TV/Multi-Media*  
Chuck Todd - *Design (www.chucktodd.net)*

For comments or questions about  
"A Community Connected: The 2012-14 Budget Story"  
email [community@walnut-creek.org](mailto:community@walnut-creek.org) or call 925-943-5895

