



IN A Nutshell



No. 203

Newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

FALL 2023

CITY ADOPTS TWO-YEAR BUDGET

YOUR MEASURE O DOLLARS AT WORK

Funds are just starting to be received by the City from the voter-approved half-cent sales tax increase known as Measure O. The ten-year measure will be used to fund high priority programs, projects and services for residents. The proceeds from Measure O will have a major impact on the City's ability to better serve the community. In the area of public safety, Measure O is covering the costs of an additional five police officers who are dedicated to a downtown patrol, and crossing guards to make access to schools safer. A crime prevention specialist will be added to the Police Department, to provide community outreach and crime-prevention education, along with a Police Services Supervisor to increase support to the City's dispatch team.

Measure O funding is going to help support our homeless programs, with a homeless outreach team and in partnership with the County for social service support. The Leshner Center for the Arts will benefit from increased funding to

help support the implementation of its strategic plan including the "Leshner Center Presents" programming series, and marketing activities. Funding is also included to help implement the City's recently adopted Sustainability and Climate Action plan. Economic development is a high priority for the City, and Measure O will support the City's downtown, by funding various events and initiatives. A major project will be to replace the pool and community center at Heather Farm Park. They are both more than 50 years old, and maintenance of the aging pool and equipment is becoming increasingly difficult. The City Council recently provided staff feedback on the community engagement strategies that will be used to keep Walnut Creek residents informed along the way. Other improvements are coming in the form of lights at the Tice fields, and a new synthetic turf for some of the fields at Heather Farm Park. All of these enhancements relate directly to the priorities identified by you, the voters, who approved the additional half-cent sales tax.



EVERY TWO YEARS, THE CITY adopts a budget to guide spending throughout the community and the organization. The City Council adopted a budget in June that went into effect July 1, with an emphasis on programs and services that support the community's and the Council's highest priorities. The City's largest fund, the general fund budget, which is used primarily for operating expenses and staffing, would ordinarily be approximately \$100 million per year. Due to the addition of Measure O funds from the voter-approved ½ sales tax increase, another \$12 million in income is expected this year, allowing the City to expand programs and services. The total City budget, including funding for capital projects and other activities, is approximately \$184 million.

Veterans Day: Save the Date

The City's annual Veterans Day commemoration will take place on Saturday, November 11, at 11:00 a.m. The City will pay tribute to those who have served, with the theme for this year's ceremony focusing on the overall concept of military service. The event will take place at the Leshner Center for the Arts. The City also recently reaffirmed its commitment to honoring Veterans with a major renovation of the Veterans Memorial Plaza outside City Hall. The peaceful memorial features new trees and grasses, fountain pools, and benches.



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT IN WALNUT CREEK



Residents of all ages came out to meet with members of the Walnut Creek Police Department and Contra Costa Fire for National Night Out on August 1.

PHOTOS BY MACKENZIE CRANE

HIGHLIGHTS

Check cable listings or walnutcreektv.org for the full schedule of shows.

For original programming, community events and more, visit the City's YouTube channel at [YouTube.com/CityofWalnutCreek](https://www.youtube.com/CityofWalnutCreek).

Battle of the Creek coming soon

It's the annual showdown on the football field: Northgate vs. Las Lomas high schools! The game will be played September 29th, with the video posted shortly afterwards. See who comes away with bragging rights!

Live! from the Library



Catch the presentation of "Artwear: Fashion and Anti-Fashion." Author Melissa Leventon speaks on Artwear, also called wearable art and artisan fashion, which sprang from counterculture street styles of the 1960s. Additional segments of Live! from the Library can also be found on Walnut Creek TV and the City's YouTube channel.

Memorial Day and Veterans Day commemorations

If you missed this year's Memorial Day ceremony, it's available now online. Following the November 11 Veterans Day ceremony at the Leshar Center for the Arts, that event will be showing online as well.

Messages from the Mayor

Mayor Cindy Silva provides a video community update each month. Find out the latest news and information for Walnut Creek residents by checking out the Mayor's Report.

Public Meetings

Catch recent City Council meetings, as well as those of our many commissions, including the Design Review, Arts, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commissions. Our public meetings are also broadcast live on YouTube, Walnut Creek TV, the City's website, and Zoom.

Here's what's happening

NEW AT CENTER REP

Award-Winning Theatre Maker Takes the Helm of Center Rep

Center Repertory Company welcomes new Artistic Director **Matt Morrow** this season.

Joining the artistic leadership team of the Leshar Center for the Arts, Morrow will help develop and guide Center REP's theatrical productions while contributing to its larger strategic initiatives, building upon the company's successful more than 50-year history.



Joy-filled, thought-provoking productions from Center REP:



Crowns

Sept. 9- Oct. 6:
A celebration of song, dance, cultural history – and glamorous headwear.

The Legend of Georgia McBride

November 4 – 26
A big-hearted, music-filled comedy.

A Christmas Carol December 7- 21
Celebrate the season with this treasured holiday classic.

Plus, attend "Pay what you can" preview shows during the first two performances of each production. Learn more and purchase tickets at CenterREP.org or call 925-943-7469.

LESHER CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Third Headliners Season kicks off in September

Presented by the Leshar Center and Diablo Regional Arts Association, the season launches with a Country Music Fest featuring Sara Evans September 22 and Valerie Ponzio (plus a special guest!) on September 23. Find the complete Headliners season and other Leshar events at LesharArtsCenter.org.



EVANS



PONZIO

UPCOMING EVENTS

Music Under the Stars: Shrek

September 8

Enjoy music from Native Gold Entertainment starting at 5:45 in Civic Park, with the movie Shrek starting at sundown.

Food trucks from Hella Mas and Cousins Maine Lobster will be on hand; bring low chairs or blankets.

Celebrate Halloween early

Friday, October 27



Plan for an afternoon of fun, free, family-friendly Halloween events downtown. The “Boo Bash” starts with a noon – 3:00 p.m. “Spooktacular Stroll” through downtown and Broadway Plaza. Then head to Civic Park for the 4th annual “Trunk or Treat” from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., where families walk through the trick-or-treat lane with booths of games, giveaways, activities food trucks and more.

Hearst Castle Holiday & Cambria Christmas Markets Overnight Trip

November 29 - 30

For adults ages 50 and older, enjoy a holiday overnight visit with a stay at the Cambria Pines Lodge, private buffet banquet and breakfast, and admission to the Cambria Christmas Markets and a tour of Hearst Castle. Call 925-295-1490 or email artsrec@walnut-creek.org for details and help registering.

Handcrafted Holiday Sale

December 9 – 10, Shadelands Art Center
Plan for a holiday shopping weekend with handcrafted items made by Community Arts teaching artists and students. This event is free, and runs 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Saturday, and 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Visit communityarts.org/handcrafted or call 925-295-1490 for details.

AT THE BEDFORD GALLERY

Last Chance to Visit Sight Unseen: International Photography by Blind Artists

July 8-September 17, 2023

This exhibition presents work by 13 of the world’s most accomplished blind photographers. Each artist uses a camera to bring their inner visions into the seeing world, revealing a rich visual and emotionally complex blend of physical and conceptual artworks.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN KRANTZ STUDIO

Up Next

Bits + Pieces: Contemporary Art on a Small Scales

September 30 –
December 17

Explore the cultural phenomenon of miniature things, from teacup dogs and ships in a bottle, to tiny dinner tables set with a feast. Focusing on minute, precise details, this exhibition celebrates the quirky anomaly that permeates our world.

ANDREA FÁBREGA,
MINIATURE POT,
porcelain, 1 inch



CRAFT FEST VENDORS CURIOWOLF, HANDBREWED SOAPS, AND CREATIVE PLAYWARE. PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLY WU

Craft Fest Returns to Bedford Gallery

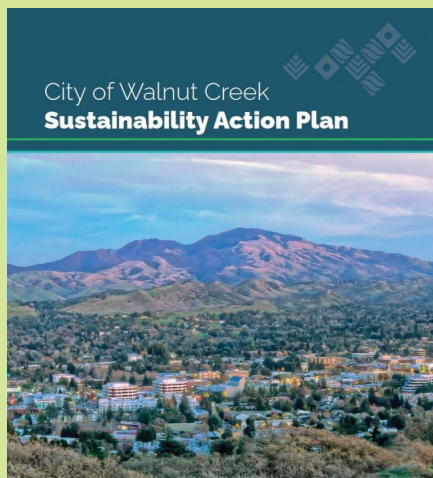
Saturday, November 18, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

This cheerful, bustling marketplace of Bay Area craftspeople returns for its fourteenth year at Bedford Gallery. Featured will be handmade jewelry, ceramics, body care, home goods, artisanal foods, toys, clothing and more.

CITY COUNCIL ADOPTS UPDATED SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

SUSTAINABILITY IS ONE of the Walnut Creek City Council's top priorities, and this summer, the City adopted a new Sustainability Action Plan. The culmination of three years of work with the community, Councilmembers unanimously approved the Plan at their July 18 City Council meeting. The Plan focuses on the actions that the City and community will take to address climate change and improve the health and well-being of everyone in Walnut Creek.

The Plan was developed over three phases, with significant community input gathered through surveys, workshops, public hearings, pop-up



events, letters, and meetings. The next step is to carry out the Plan's 21 strategies and nearly 130 actions.

The City will be working to lead, implement, and monitor the Plan, as well as coordinate and communicate with the community. We are all part of the solution to climate change, and participation from the whole community is key to the Plan's success. Together, actions of residents, businesses, community groups, and City departments will ensure that the City is resilient into the future.

You can learn more about the Sustainability Action Plan—as well as information and incentives to help you can take action on sustainability—on the Sustainability section of the City's website at walnut-creek.org/eco.

BACK TO SCHOOL, SAFE ROUTES

School is back in session, and that means more pedestrians, bicyclists, and parents dropping kids off. That can be a dangerous situation for everyone involved. For those driving, you have the power and responsibility to look out for those walking or biking. Before making a right turn, always check for pedestrians in the crosswalk and at the corner. If you're not sure which direction a pedestrian is going to cross, assume they'll be crossing in your path.

The City will continue supporting the crossing guard program this school year. Funding for the program is partially through Measure O funds, and it includes thirteen school crosswalk locations throughout the City. The locations were recently reviewed and updated as part of the ongoing "Safe Routes to School" study and are consistent with the City's Sustainability Action Plan. For any feedback about the crossing guard locations, more information on school traffic safety, or to receive updates on the Safe Routes to School Study, please email dutytraffic@walnut-creek.org.



Police Vehicles Get a New Look



The Walnut Creek Police Department is in the process of replacing old police cars with new Ford Police Interceptor Hybrid AWD utility vehicles. These new vehicles are expected to save the City money as they use significantly less fuel and require less maintenance, aligning with the City's Sustainability Action Plan to lower our carbon footprint. The Police Interceptor was engineered to meet the 75-MPH rear-impact crash test with improvements to protect officers in a collision.

The new patrol vehicles are easily recognizable from the older models with new graphics. The former star has been replaced with the Walnut Creek Police Centennial

Badge. Also added is reflective lettering to include the word POLICE on the side of the vehicles, which was missing from prior vehicles. Department staff and the Chief's Community Advisory Board collaborated to create possible concepts to give the Department a fresh, modern look.

After a final vote by Department employees, the new concept was moved into the production phase. City staff from the Public Works had the equipment and expertise to print and install the graphics onsite. This saved money for the City, and highlighted some of the unique talents of City staff. Three of the new vehicles are in service, with more on the way soon.

Community Service Day



Get Out. Give Back. Feel Great.

Join with friends and family for
a morning of celebration
and service

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 14th**

**Projects
for All Ages**
Libraries
Parks & Gardens
Community Centers
Schools



**Community
Food Drive**
Neighborhoods
Local Grocery Stores
Rossmore
Online



**To Volunteer
or Donate Visit**

www.walnut-creek.org/service



Apply for Civic Pride Grants

The Walnut Creek Civic Pride Foundation is now accepting applications for its 2023 Community Grant Program. Ranging from \$500 to \$2,500, the grants will be for community-based recreation, cultural or educational programs and services provided by Walnut Creek non-profits. The online grant application system is available through the Civic Pride website, WCCivicPride.org, through October 13, 2023.

Annual Short Film Competition



Walnut Creek's Mountain Shadow Film Society will hold its 9th Annual Short Film Competition on Saturday, Sept. 23rd, with two screenings at the Las Lomas High School Theater. A dozen finalists, selected from approximately 300 submissions by a volunteer jury, will present their animated, live-action and documentary shorts at 3:30 PM and 7:30 PM. Audience ballots will determine the top three films. This competition is unique, with no submission fee charged for entrants, who are often aspiring filmmakers. Finalists will present their films in person, and engage the audience in a question and answer session, followed by a filmmaker reception. Tickets are \$13 and available at the door. Additional information can be found on Mountain Shadow's website, mountainshadow.org.

Tax-Aide Program Looking for Volunteers

AARP's annual free tax preparation service program is gearing up for next spring's tax season, and is currently seeking volunteers from Walnut Creek and beyond to join their team. The Tax-Aide program seeks people with diverse backgrounds and experiences, and while prior tax experience is helpful, it's not required. Training and ongoing support will

be provided. Positions include tax counselors and client facilitators to help provide tax preparation free for anyone in Contra Costa County. Apply by mid-November; call (925) 726-3199 for more details.



Economic Development Action Plan

LEARNING FROM THE many lessons of the pandemic, and with input from the City Council and many stakeholders, City staff has developed a draft Economic Development Action Plan. The Plan is focused on action-oriented strategies to be accomplished in the next two years to best position the Walnut Creek economy. To inform this new plan, market studies on office, retail and medical office were completed, extensive outreach was conducted to industry experts, and local



stakeholders including the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Walnut Creek, Diablo Regional Arts Association, property owners, brokerage houses and

business owners were consulted on their perspective on next steps to grow the Walnut Creek economy.

Economic Development staff presented the draft Action Plan to the City Council in May to ensure these actions align with the Council's vision for the community, and received feedback to incorporate moving forward. Updates and progress on action items will be presented to the City Council during its quarterly Council priority updates.



Economic Development Data Dashboard 2023 Updates

The Economic Development Division has launched a Data Dashboard, highlighting relevant economic indicators in the city and community information. Developing Walnut Creek's economy and creating jobs has been identified as a City Council priority, and this Dashboard highlights key economic indicators of how the City is trending as a community. The Dashboard will be used as a key source of ongoing information for future decisions on how to support businesses and as a valuable tool for attracting prospective companies and businesses to locate in Walnut Creek.

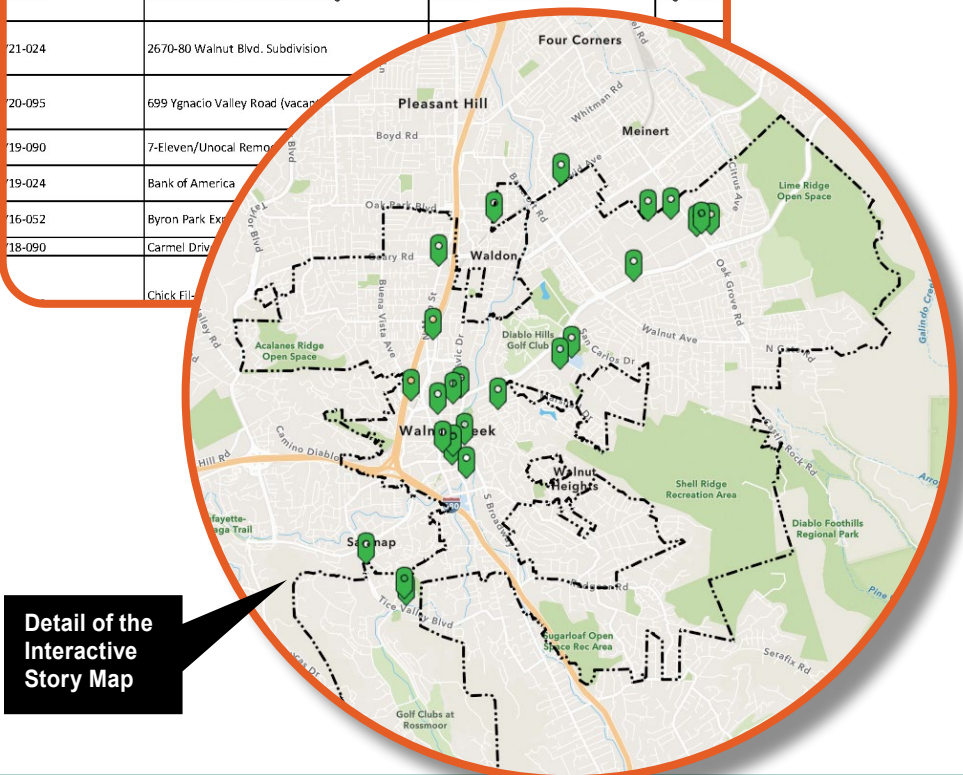
The Data Dashboard is updated and published on a biannual basis, and can be found on the City's Economic Development website at walnutcreekconnected.com.

Development Project Pipeline Revamped

The City has launched a revamped development projects webpage to better highlight major development activity within Walnut Creek. The overhaul includes major changes to the design of the website to make it more user friendly for the public, an update to the development pipeline list, and an all new, interactive story map. Check it out at walnut-creek.org/developmentprojects.

Project Order Number	Project Name	Street Address	Contact
14-066	1380 N. California (Mixed Use)	1380 N. California Blvd.	Brand & A
21-050	1455 Montego Senior Living	1455 Montego Wy.	Douglas Pan
19-068	1501 N. California Boulevard (Mixed Use)	1501 N. California Blvd.	LCA Archite
18-063	1532 Mt. Diablo Mixed-Use Building	1532 Mt. Diablo Blvd.	Align Real E
21-024	2670-80 Walnut Blvd. Subdivision		
20-095	699 Ygnacio Valley Road (vacan		
19-090	7-Eleven/Unocal Remo		
19-024	Bank of America		
16-052	Byron Park Ex		
18-090	Carmel Driv		
	Chick Fil		

Detail of the updated Development Pipeline List



Detail of the Interactive Story Map

WALNUT CREEK HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAPPENINGS



It's time to dust off the dirndls and lederhosen for an evening of fun Oktoberfest festivities in the Shadelands Ranch Museum Biergarten. The Historical Society is hosting its 3rd annual Oktoberfest on Saturday, September 30, from 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. Live music, German beer and cuisine and more; \$60 per person, ages 21 and older only.

The Society is gearing up for the holidays as well, with the traditional holiday teas returning, a holiday craft fair, and a visit from Santa planned. Activities run from November 25 – December 10; all the dates and details are on the Historical Society website at wchistory.org.

WALNUT CREEK ON ICE: December 15 – January 15



One of Walnut Creek's holiday traditions will be returning in November, as Walnut Creek on Ice is back for its 18th season. The outdoor ice rink will be constructed in Civic Park this fall, and unique activities and celebrations will be held throughout the skating season, including ice skating and hockey lessons, and weekly theme nights. The rink can be reserved for birthday parties, field trips and other special events. Look for more information coming soon at walnutcreekonice.com. Walnut Creek on Ice is brought to you by Walnut Creek Downtown and the City of Walnut Creek.

Protect Walnut Creek's Natural Floodplains



Floodplains play a valuable role in providing a wide range of benefits to both human and natural systems. Floodplains by their nature are periodically flooded at different points in time and provide a natural basin to collect and retain runoff, which reduces the severity of floods. The stormwater treatment facilities you see on new development projects – sometimes called rain gardens - are an engineered version of a natural floodplain, both slowing down the runoff and removing pollutants. If your property is in or near a floodplain, development activities are restricted in the floodway. If you have natural drainage features on your property, such as creeks or ditches, maintain them in their natural state to preserve their drainage pattern. Be sure to keep them clear before the rainy season. To find out if your property is in a floodway, contact City Engineering staff at 925-943-5839. You can also find out by checking the FEMA website at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>.

SEPTEMBER IS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MONTH

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) uses the month of September to highlight the importance of preparing in advance for emergencies. Whether it's a fire, flood, earthquake or other natural disaster, there are many things Walnut Creek residents can do in advance to prepare. This year's theme is "Preparing for Older Adults," acknowledging that many older adults face greater risks during extreme weather



events or emergencies. The City will be sharing messages and tips throughout the month for you to consider when preparing for yourself or your family. One of the best steps to take is to sign up for emergency alerts from the City. Find out more at walnut-creek.org/emergency.

KNOW YOUR WALNUT CREEK PARKS:

LAR RIEU PARK



LAR RIEU PARK IS A HIDDEN GEM WITHIN THE WALNUT Heights neighborhood, just a stone's throw from downtown Walnut Creek. With 10 acres of rolling hills and trees, the site is known for its remarkable views of Mount Diablo. The gnarled oaks create a peaceful environment at this naturalistic site. The original water tower and windmill add an air of nostalgia, alluding to Walnut Creek's agricultural past. The beautiful site offers respite and space for walking, picnicking, nature-watching and relaxing.

The site was grant deeded in 1976 to the City by Miriam Lar Rieu. Mrs. Lar Rieu was a resident of Walnut Creek since 1936, remembered for her many philanthropic contributions to the community, including as a major fund-raiser for the John Muir Hospital and the Regional Center for the Arts. She founded the Thrift Shop for the American Cancer Society in Walnut Creek and was the recipient of the John Muir Award of Distinction from the John Muir Hospital. A long-time friend of Ruth Bancroft, she was active in the Ruth Bancroft Garden. Miriam Lar Rieu left a legacy of contribution to the community in Walnut Creek.

Following Mrs. Lar Rieu's passing, ideas abounded amongst the

community with how to best utilize the property as a park. In 2016, there were a number of improvements made including picnic tables, all-weather walking trails, benches, planting of about 40 trees, and renovated entry points and signage. These amenities help honor the history of the family that has preserved this gorgeous site and shared it with the community.

Lar Rieu Park is open from dawn to dusk, 7 days a week. It can be accessed from El Camino Corto, where there is street parking available. For more information, please contact the Public Works Manager Charles Montgomery at (925) 943-5899 extension x2494.



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CREEK

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Mayor Cindy Silva
Mayor Pro Tem Loella Haskew
Cindy Darling
Matt Francois
Kevin Wilk

For an appointment, call 925-256-3504

CITY TREASURER

Ronald Cassano

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Teri Killgore, *Assistant City Manager*
Steve Mattas, *City Attorney*
Suzie Martinez, *City Clerk*
Kirsten LaCasse, *Administrative Services Director*
Kevin Safine, *Arts and Recreation Director*
Erika Vandenbrande, *Community Development Director*
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ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The Nutshell Newsletter is published quarterly. For questions and comments, contact editor Betsy Burkhart, 925-943-5895 or burkhart@walnut-creek.org

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