



IN A Nutshell



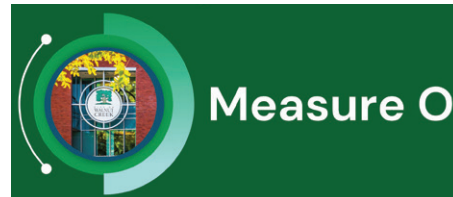
No. 205

Newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

SPRING 2024

YOUR MEASURE O TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

SEVERAL MAJOR PROJECTS ARE in progress in Walnut Creek with funding primarily from the voter-approved Measure O. The largest project is the planned replacement of the aquatic center and community center at Heather Farm Park, which is still in the design phase. Other efforts underway include converting two ballfields at Heather Farm Park into synthetic turf fields, allowing fewer rainy-day closures for planned play, and the fields will allow for safe and sustainable conditions year-round. The City has also been able to expand its crossing



guard program to ensure safe walks and rides to schools, and expanded hours at our two libraries are also benefitting from the sales tax dollars.

Arts are an essential part of the quality of life in Walnut Creek, and Measure O funding is

also making an impact at the Lesher Center for the Arts. The revenue supports production and marketing staff recommended in the Center's strategic plan, which has expanded the operating model to proactively book artists to perform on City stages and for staff to absorb new responsibilities as a presenting sponsor. The City expects to receive significant return on the investment in this new operating model through increased attendance for the Lesher Center and downtown restaurants, and sponsorships and donations from individuals.

Election season underway

The primary election will take place on March 5, and now there is another option for dropping off your ballot in a secure location. For several years, there has been a ballot drop off box next to the City Hall parking lot. The volume of ballots being returned there has steadily grown, so the County Registrar of Voters office has installed a second, larger one next to the entry doors at City Hall on N. Main Street. The larger ballot box can hold up to 1,300 ballots. Both boxes are emptied by elections staff almost every day. Ballots can be dropped off through 7:00 p.m. on March 5. During the November election, the City of Walnut Creek will have three city council positions on the ballot.



Mark your calendar for Memorial Day



The City of Walnut Creek proudly honors those who have given their lives in service to our country on Memorial Day with a ceremony in Civic Park. This year's commemoration will take place Monday, May 27 at 11:00 a.m. As always, the ceremony will include remarks from the Mayor and a keynote speaker, and will feature patriotic music from the Walnut Creek Concert Band.



Driving range improvements coming to Boundary Oak Golf Course

The City of Walnut Creek is proud to have Boundary Oak Golf Course as one of its most beautiful and entertaining facilities, serving as one of the best municipal golf courses in Northern California. Boundary Oak's driving range, though, is due for modernization. The range will undergo a comprehensive upgrade this summer to address aging infrastructure and a deteriorating landscape. The City Council authorized the improvement project in January, which will create a more modern, environmentally sustainable driving range with contemporary amenities and an improved appearance. The improved driving range experience, paired with the 18-hole championship course, Taphouse Bar and Grill, and a beautiful event venue with complete rental services and amenities, will excite regular patrons and entice many new users. The driving range improvements are expected to be complete this fall.

HIGHLIGHTS



Here's what's happening

PUBLIC ART

NEW MURAL AT TICE VALLEY GYM

The Making of a Mural

The *Where's Walnut Creek?* mural, recently finished at Tice Valley Gymnasium, is the newest piece of public art in the City. Watch how it came to life, and see the artist, Nigel Sussman in action.

Watch High School Sports

Catch our featured local high school sports coverage from January: Las Lomas hosted Northgate in men's basketball, and Northgate hosted the women's soccer team from Las Lomas.

Messages from the Mayor

Each month, the City's Mayor provides a video community update, sharing the latest news and information. Find out what's happening in Walnut Creek by checking out the Mayor's Report.

Public Meetings

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

Live! From the Library

Watch the most recent Live! From the Library event, which focused on the intersection of Levis jeans and social movements for change.

Check cable listings or WalnutCreekCa.gov for the full schedule of shows.

For original programming, community events and more, visit the City's YouTube channel at YouTube.com/CityofWalnutCreek. You can now also watch City programming on demand. WCTV is on Roku, Amazon Firestick and Apple TV. Search Walnut Creek TV on each site for a full list of programming from the City of Walnut Creek.

Berkeley artist Nigel Sussman is a professional illustrator and muralist who has a unique skillset to transform everyday scenes into storybook-like reveries. His ability to freehand paint largescale whimsical and dynamic works of art, using his talent and humor, reimagine existing places into wonderous imagery. He draws inspiration from local flora and fauna depicting communities in a creative way. An official "unveiling" of the *Where's Walnut Creek?* mural map and opportunity to meet the artist is planned for the springtime.

ARTS + REC



Summer Camp Registration is open

Discover pure fun with Walnut Creek Arts + Rec Summer Camps

Join Arts + Rec for an exciting summer of swimming, arts, sports, recreation, and more. Our engaging camps cater to children, teenagers, and young adults, providing the perfect environment to explore exciting activities and forge new friendships. Families can register campers for our Adaptive + Inclusive Camps, Camp Community Arts, Specialty Camps, and Classic Day Camps. Learn more and sign up at WalnutCreekArtsRec.org/camp or call our Customer Service team at (925) 295-1490.

Scholarships The City offers need-based scholarships that can cover 30% to 75% of Arts + Rec program fees, including camp offerings. Learn more about scholarships at WalnutCreekArtsRec.org/scholarships.

Recreation/Social Services and Center for Community Arts

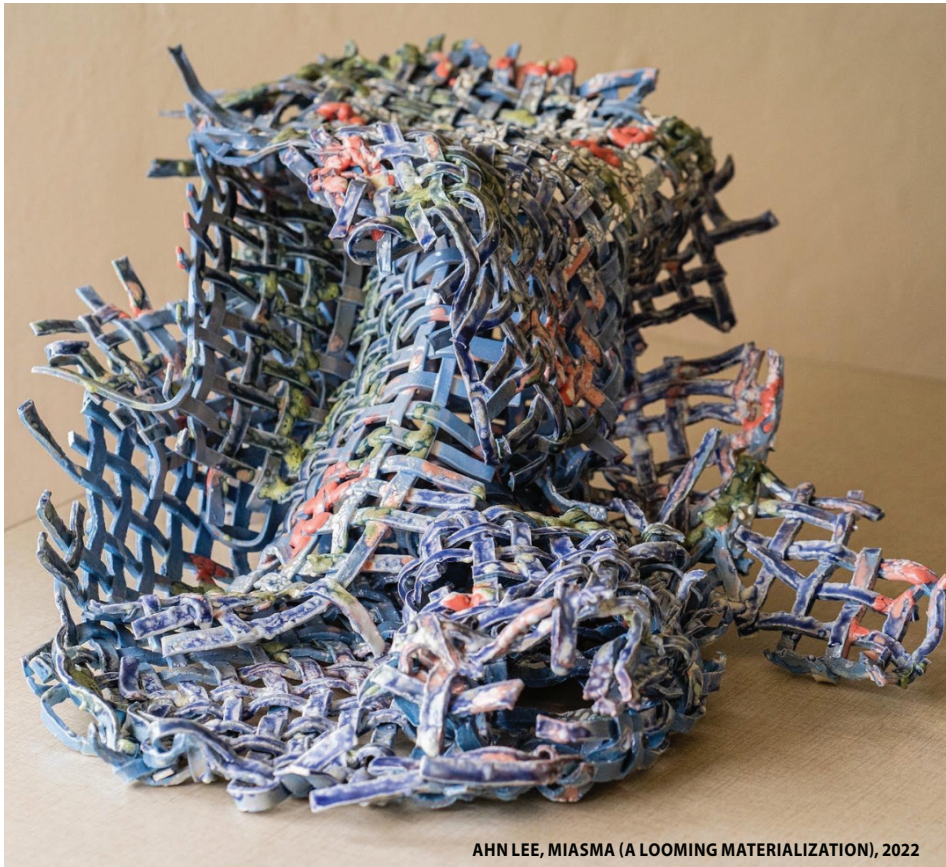
Registration is open now for Spring Arts + Rec courses and activities

Learn a new sport, dive headfirst into aquatic activities, take a class, or flex your creative muscles. Do it all with Walnut Creek Arts + Rec. With programs including Social Services, Recreation Programs, Public Art, Picnic Rentals, Leshner Center for the Arts, Gymnasiums and Sports Fields, Facility Rentals, Center Repertory Company, Center for Community Arts, Boundary Oak Golf Course, Bedford Gallery, and Aquatics, there is something for everyone. Learn more about the endless experiences available this spring at WalnutCreekArtsRec.org or contact the Customer Service team at (925) 295-1490 or artsrec@walnut-creek.org.

Arts + Rec is Hiring

Arts and Rec is looking for enthusiastic, creative, and community-oriented individuals, and hiring for multiple hourly positions. Among the openings are for Summer Camp Counselors, Building Attendants, Coaches, Gym Attendants, Teaching Artists, Lifeguards, Swim Instructors, Preschool Co-Teachers, Ticket Agents, House Managers, Customer Service Associates, Office Aides, and more. www.walnutcreekartsrec.org/ar-jobs Email questions to jobs@walnut-creek.org.

BEDFORD GALLERY



AHN LEE, MIASMA (A LOOMING MATERIALIZATION), 2022

California Clay

Through March 31, 2024

California Clay features an intriguing mix of functional and aesthetic ceramic works that highlight the versatility of the medium, and celebrate ceramics as both functional and fine art, showcasing the talent and creativity of contemporary ceramicists.

Special Event: (Grand) Parent & Me Clay Workshop -

Sunday, March 10, 10:30am.

Parents and grandparents are invited to bring their special youngster to this hands-on opportunity to explore ceramics! Tickets are required.

Learn more at
BedfordGallery.org.

LESHER CENTER FOR THE ARTS

At the Leshar Center this spring— Uplifting Native Voices

This spring, Bedford Gallery and Leshar Center Headliner Series jointly present *Uplifting Native Voices*, an original series of events celebrating the broad artistic talent and creative process of today's leading Indigenous artists.

Launching April 2024 with Bedford Gallery's exhibition, *Re-Discovering Native America: Stories in Motion with the Red Road Project*, and culminating with the smash-hit all-Native stand-up comedy event *Good Medicine* in June, audiences are invited to explore the individuals and communities that are changing the conversation around Native American cultures and legacies through diverse visual media, live performance, interactive experiences and conversations. Tickets are required for all events; learn more at LesharArtsCenter.org.



CENTER REPERTORY COMPANY

Center Repertory Company is the resident professional theatre company of the Leshar Center for the Arts.

Its mission is to celebrate the power of the human imagination by producing emotionally engaging, intellectually involving, and visually astonishing live theatre, and through Outreach and Education programs, to enrich and advance the cultural life of the communities it serves.



CenterREP

The Great Leap

March 16 – April 7

by Lauren Yee | Directed by Nicholas C. Avila

In this sharp-witted new drama, an American basketball team travels to Beijing for an exhibition game in 1989, setting the stage for an international drama that goes deeper than the strain between countries. Tensions rise right up to the final buzzer as a pivotal moment in history collides with the action in the arena. Driven by rapid-fire dialogue, this perceptive new play explores the cultural and political risks of raising your voice and standing your ground.



Young REP Theatre Training Program

June 10 – July 25

Center REP's six-week summer intensive theatre training program at the Leshar Center offers an acting program and a musical theatre performance workshop for youths aged 12 and above. Directors Jeffrey Draper, Kerri Shawn, Michael Patrick Wiles and Jennifer Perry will hold interviews/auditions for placement in Young REP 2024 from March – May at the Leshar Center. For more information visit youngrep.org. To schedule your audition, call (925) 295-1400.

Con Fire enhancing wildfire protection in Rossmoor



Groundbreaking has taken place for a shaded fuel break across Walnut Creek and southern Lafayette that will provide significant protection from wildfires for Rossmoor residents. A shaded fuel break is a strip of land where wildfire “fuel,” (such as dead trees and brush, dead branches and needles, or downed logs,) has been removed to limit a fire’s potential rapid spread. The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (Con Fire) received a \$3 million grant from the State.

The project area will encompass roughly 200 acres along eleven miles of East Bay open space, with the goal to considerably reduce the threat by decreasing the fuels critical to the spread of a wildfire. Fuel breaks go a long way towards lowering the intensity and speed of a wildfire, allowing more time for firefighters to respond, especially in hard to reach locations.

REDUCE YOUR FLOOD RISK

WHILE THIS EL NINO YEAR IS LOOKING TO BE Milder compared to last year in terms of catastrophic rain events, a flood does not have to be a catastrophic event to result in high out-of-pocket costs, and you do not have to live in a high-risk flood area to suffer flood damage. In fact, from 2014 to 2018, policyholders outside of high-risk flood areas filed more than 40% of all National Flood Insurance Program claims, and required one-third of federal disaster assistance for flooding.

PROPERTY OWNERS SHOULD REMEMBER TO:

Buy Flood Insurance

Most standard homeowner policies do not cover flood damage. Flood insurance protects your investment and provides peace of mind. Talk to your insurance agent about the National Flood Insurance Program’s low-cost options.

Prepare Now

Gather supplies in case of a storm, strengthen your home against damage, and review your insurance coverages. No flood insurance? It typically takes 30 days for a new flood insurance policy to go into effect, so waiting until the next storm is approaching would be too late. The City’s five sandbag locations are stocked and ready; if your property is prone to flooding,



getting them in advance makes sense.

Plan Ahead

Know how you would get out safely if flooding occurred on your property. Keep important papers in a safe, waterproof place. Conduct a home inventory: itemize and take pictures of possessions,

and the inside and outside of your home.

Improve Your Awareness

The City sends out alerts and instructions in the event of an emergency. Text “WCALERT” to the number 888-777 to receive alerts by text.

NEW! ELECTRONIC BIKE LOCKERS

Del Monte Parking Lot at N. Wiget and Mitchell Drive



SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

The Sustainability Action Plan, adopted in July 2023, serves as a guide for the City of Walnut Creek to achieve a sustainable future, adapt to changing climate conditions, and rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions for a net-zero emissions goal by 2045. The plan consists of more than 125 actions the City will implement to achieve our sustainability goals. Implementation is outlined in three timeframes: near-term (by year-end 2023), mid-term (by year-end 2026), and long term (by year-end 2030).

The City made significant progress on the near-term actions in the areas of diverting waste from

landfills, reducing the impacts of poor air quality, and establishing local resilience hubs. Notable achievements include: promoting the RE:Source tool for community reuse or repurpose options, improving Spare the Air messaging, and continuing to promote resources for emergency preparedness. Staff members continue to work toward implementing the mid-term and long-term actions while maintaining progress on the short-term actions. Explore more details of our progress in the E.C.O. section of the City’s website at walnutcreekca.gov/eco. **Monitor progress on our goals by scanning the QR code.**

Search and Rescue Team recruiting members

The Contra Costa Sheriff Search and Rescue Team (CoCoSAR) is currently seeking new members. Applications will be accepted through June for the September training Academy.

CoCoSAR is a 200-member all-volunteer group. Its primary focus is to find missing persons quickly and safely in urban or wilderness locations and reunite them with their loved ones. Search and rescue teams also provide support in times of need, disaster or other emergency. The work can be physically, mentally, and emotionally challenging, but also comes with great rewards.

Members don't need any special skills or experience to join the team. They are looking for people with the right attitude and a genuine desire to help others. Members are provided extensive training in all the skills that might be needed to become a qualified searcher and first responder. Team members come from many different backgrounds and professions, and many find ways to leverage their existing skills as search and rescue team members.



To learn more, visit contracostasar.org/new-home, scan the QR code, or email applicants@contracostasar.org.

Police Department welcomes new officers

The Walnut Creek Police Department added new members to its ranks in January, including four recent graduates from the Contra Costa County law enforcement academy. The new staff members bring diverse backgrounds and experiences to contribute to the safety and well-being of our community. Newly sworn in officers Jason Yee, Alina Mendoza, Jarret Tomada and Tamkeen Osmani recently completed the rigorous six month academy, showcasing their commitment to excellence. It has been more than ten years since the Walnut Creek Police Department had four recruits graduate in the same class.

In addition to the new recruits, Officer Nicholas Michels joined the force, coming



from the South San Francisco Police Department, bringing extensive experience in a variety of positions within law enforcement. Also bringing a wealth of experience is newly hired Officer Justin Winkler, who comes from the Hanover Park Police Department

in Illinois. Rounding out the January hires is Police Services Supervisor Erin Smith, who has had 19 years of administrative experience at the Yolo County Sheriff's Office. Welcome to the newest members of the Police Department team, and we encourage even more people to consider joining the force.



THE WALNUT CREEK POLICE DEPARTMENT IS HIRING!

Join us and make a positive impact on a thriving community! Contact a recruiter today! (925) 943-5873

Community Arts Foundation seeking new board members

Are you passionate about fostering creativity and ensuring that everyone, regardless of financial constraints, has access to the enriching world of arts education? Consider becoming a board member for Walnut Creek's Community Arts Foundation, and help raise funds to provide scholarships to students of all ages.

Community Arts Foundation believes in "Arts



for All," and recognizes the need is great for arts scholarship funding. Many of its scholarship recipients are designated at the extremely low-income level. Board members actively help meet this need. The impact of the Foundation's board extends beyond raising funds to the additional benefits of bringing arts awareness, advocacy, and arts accessibility to our entire county. The foundation is looking for individuals with

experience in fundraising, as well as those with marketing and social media experience.

Above all, the Foundation welcome voices and perspectives from all backgrounds.

You can learn more about the Foundation's work at commartsfoundation.org.

If you have questions or would like to apply, contact the Development Director, Cole Portocarrero at colep.caf@gmail.com.

AARP Foundation
TAX-AIDE
 Free tax assistance for those who need it most

Free Income Tax preparation services

Tax season is here, and for many people, this can be a challenging time. Free income tax preparation for the 2023 tax season is available now through the AARP Foundation's Tax-Aide program. It provides IRS certified tax counselors for residents at various locations throughout Contra Costa County. In Walnut Creek, the tax assistance is being offered in the Vista Room of the Hillside Clubhouse in Rossmoor, and appointments should be made onsite.

Other nearby locations where the services will be available include Pleasant Hill Hillcrest Congregational Church, the Concord Senior Center, the Concord Library, and the Lafayette Library. Several other locations are available throughout Contra Costa County, but not as close to Walnut Creek. For general information or specifics about how to book an appointment outside of Rossmoor, call 925-726-3199.

The service is offered to people of all ages with limited to moderate income, and with special attention given to those age 50 or older. Since 1986, the program has helped more than 78 million taxpayers.



Mountain Shadow Film Society in 11th Season

Mountain Shadow Film Society brings the best in international and independent filmmaking to Walnut Creek. Monthly shows are held in the Walnut Creek downtown public library. These films follow international film festivals, and are pre-theatrical or new theatrical releases, otherwise unavailable in our community. Pro-rated memberships are available for both the matinee and evening series, held over one weekend each month. Because some shows do sell out, annual memberships guarantee a seat will be available. For details and upcoming attractions, visit MountainShadow.org.



Walnut Creek's office market was the sector hardest hit by the COVID pandemic. Corporate downsizing and the uncertainty of work-from-home and hybrid work trends have led to a significant increase in vacancy rates locally and nationwide. However, while Walnut Creek also saw a drop in occupancy, it was much smaller, and new companies continue to locate in Walnut Creek.

A recent report released by real estate firm Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) suggests that 2024 could mark a nationwide turning point in the return of employees to the office citing data from employee security badge swipes. Based on that data, in-office attendance is expected to keep rising through the rest of the year as a wave of companies begin to shift in favor of a return to office, with some offices back in person 100% and others doing a hybrid schedule.

Walnut Creek is seeing a

rebound in its office and medical office markets with new companies moving in, specifically to newer and/or remodeled office spaces. In fact, downtown office buildings have the highest occupancy rates in the North 680 corridor. Recent activity in the downtown area includes:

- The law firm of Gordon, Rees, Skully & Mansukhani has relocated from Oakland to Pringle Ave.
- Retail brokerage firm The Eonic Group will be opening its East Bay office at The Plaza on N. California Blvd.
- Commercial brokerage firm JLL has expanded its office square footage within The Plaza.
- Flagstar Bank will be establishing its back-office operations and staff at Ygnacio Center on N. Main St.
- Lincoln Financial Group has leased 5,000 square feet on

Mt Diablo Blvd.

- Kindbody Fertility practice will open later this month on N. Main St.

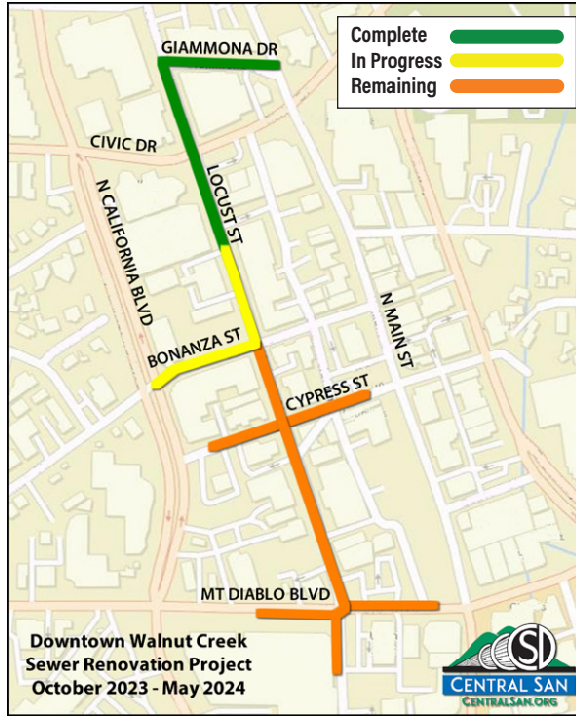
In the Shadelands district, Collab Fertility, a one-of-a-kind, state-of-the-art fertility center, recently opened on Ygnacio Valley Rd. The 8,000 square foot facility, with a fertility clinic and an in vitro fertilization (IVF) lab features three large viewing windows into the embryology lab, one of the largest labs in the Bay Area. Additionally, Muir Pulmonary leased 7,000 square feet in the same building.

With its prime location within the Bay Area and safety as a high priority, Walnut Creek continues to be a strong draw for financial, insurance, real estate, design, and legal businesses, and is poised to continue grow its medical and healthcare ecosystem.

EVENTS 2024

MEMBER & VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT February 21	SUMMER ARTS WALNUT CREEK June - August	FIRST WEDNESDAY STREET FEST (SUMMER) August 7
SPRING FLING WITH WCEF TASTE & TOAST March 20	DOWNTOWN STAGES PUBLIC PERFORMANCES June - October	OKTOBERFEST CIVIC PARK EAST September 27 & 28
EARTH DAY DOWNTOWN BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT April 21	FIRST WEDNESDAY STREET FEST (SPRING) May 1	CIVIC PARK HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY November 22
PAINTED PIANOS MUSICAL ART PROJECT April - October	WALNUT CREEK UNCORKED SIP, SAVOR & STROLL June 20	WALNUT CREEK ON ICE SKATING RINK Winter 2024

CONSTRUCTION WORK CONTINUES ON LOCUST STREET



East Bay Municipal Utility District has completed its work replacing and installing 2,500 feet of water main piping originally put in place in the 1950s. The new water main will improve reliability, reduce the likelihood of water main breaks, and increase water flow to the downtown area.

Now underway is work by the Contra Costa County Central Sanitation District to replace the sewer lines in the same area of Locust Street, as well as on several side streets. The sewer replacement work is roughly one-third complete, with the goal of finishing in May of this year. Following the sewer work, Walnut Creek Public Works Department will begin the process of repaving and sealing the roadways that have been under construction. The City appreciates the patience of businesses, shoppers, diners and visitors that have been impacted by the more than a year-long project.

We're Hiring!

Join the Walnut Creek team and make a direct and positive impact on your community!

Career opportunities include:

- Competitive salary and benefit packages;
- Robust health and wellness programs for work-life balance;
- Flexible or hybrid work schedules.

Apply online today!

www.walnutcreekca.gov/careers

City staffing and service levels up

From police officers to park maintenance crews, City workers are essential and allow residents to enjoy the Walnut Creek lifestyle. Like most employers, the City was challenged post-pandemic to fill vacant jobs. The City worked with Regional Government Services, a public agency, to assist with recruitment efforts which resulted in filling 88 fully-benefitted positions with qualified employees in 2023 alone. This brought the City's vacancy rate down significantly.

The City still has positions open – will you be the next person to join the team?

County Connection fares have been reduced

Whether you use County Connection's bus service for your commute, to get to school, or to hop on the free downtown trolley, County Connection is a major part of our community's transit system. Beginning at the first of the year, County Connection lowered rates for a number of services.

Youth Clipper discounts have gone from 20% off to 50% off for youth ages 6 – 18 on any County Connection route. Clipper START users have also gone to a 50% off rate for eligible riders. And the County Connection Express routes now cost \$2.00, the same as local routes, for anyone who pays with a regular adult Clipper card. Visit CountyConnection.com for all the details about how to take advantage of this convenient, and now even more cost-effective, service.

County Connection

YOUTH CLIPPER

ROLLING DEEP in DISCOUNTS

SAVE \$\$\$\$ ON

- ▷ YOUTH CLIPPER
- ▷ CLIPPER START
- ▷ EXPRESS ROUTES

\$100 RIDES

\$2 with Clipper

\$100 RIDES

CLIPPER START ▶▶

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF EXPANDED OPEN SPACE



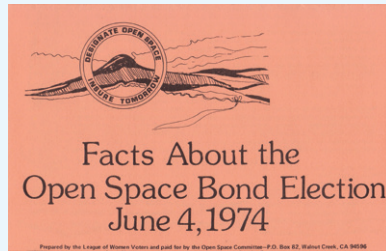
2024 IS A LANDMARK ANNIVERSARY YEAR FOR the City of Walnut Creek and its residents who appreciate and enjoy the nearly 3,000 acres of Open Space. Those acres are spread in four unique areas and offer more than seven miles of neighborhood trails. It was 50 years ago that Walnut Creek residents passed a bond to allow for the purchase of most of the City's Open Space.

The R-8 Bond enabled the purchase of Lime Ridge, Shell Ridge, Sugarloaf and Acalanes, as well as a couple of local community parks.

To honor the anniversary of this major investment half a century ago, the City's Public Works Department, in collaboration with the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation and the Walnut Creek Historical Society, will be hosting several celebratory events throughout the year.

On June 6, the Historical Society will host an event at Shadelands Ranch Museum. The Museum will showcase a visual timeline of events and milestones crucial to the success of the Open Space Foundation's mission and the preservation of the City of Walnut Creek's natural environment. It will also pay tribute to the community participation and grassroots activism that enabled the purchase of so much acreage.

On June 8, the City will host a Heritage



Day celebration at Borges Ranch, with food trucks and activities for the whole family. In the fall, there will be a community planting of 50 trees in various parts of the Open Space to honor the anniversary. More details will be available closer to the events. Visit the City's website at walnutcreekca.gov for more information on City Open Space, and venture out to enjoy the Open Space in person.

This year also marks a series of celebrations for the East Bay Regional Park District, which turns 90 years old in 2024. Visit ebparks.org for details on those events.



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Mayor Pro Tem Cindy Darling
Matt Francois
Cindy Silva
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*
Trish Raver, *Human Resources 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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