



## III. Housing Constraints

The City of Walnut Creek has long facilitated the development of affordable housing through its practices and programs, and in the last Housing Element cycle adopted new policies to further aid the production of affordable housing. However, many factors can act as constraints to the development and maintenance of housing. This chapter describes these constraints which include private market forces, governmental codes and regulations, and the physical and natural environment, and analyzes their impact on the production and preservation of housing.

### A. Market, Non-Governmental Constraints

The Bay Area has seen a dramatic change in the housing market over the past several years. Between 1998 and 2007, the median price for single-family homes both in Walnut Creek and nationwide increased almost 160 percent. After the “housing bubble” burst, sale prices dropped 38 percent from a 2005 peak of \$946,000. In 2013, after a long and uneven recovery, the 2013 median sale price has rebounded to \$847,000. This price is still 10 percent lower than the peak, but 35 percent more than the lowest median monthly sale price of \$625,000 in March 2009. This trend of a recovery that has yet to match the highest sale prices of the mid-2000s is occurring nationwide.

The housing crisis did not change Walnut Creek’s median sale prices in relationship to the entire San Francisco Bay Area. Prices in Walnut Creek are still higher than the 2013 median single-family home price in the Bay Area of \$641,000.

Median sale prices in the condominium market peaked in January 2006, at \$491,000. By its lowest point in February 2012, the condominium market's median sale price had dropped 50 percent to \$243,000. As with the single-family home market, a recovery period followed, but the condominium market has yet to see median sale prices approach the 2006 peak. In 2013, the median condominium sale price is \$387,000. This price is slightly lower than the Bay Area median of \$408,000, but a four-person Walnut Creek household earning the median income can only afford to purchase a home for \$345,000.

## **Land Prices**

Land prices in Walnut Creek depend on a number of factors, including proximity to BART, the freeway, and downtown office and retail (?) developments; the allowable density and type of residential development suitable for the lot; the presence of services and utilities; the topography and/or other environmental constraints; and the quality of nearby development. There is only a very small supply of vacant land and it is usually burdened with development constraints. Redevelopment of existing underdeveloped land is occurring but is more costly. The extremely limited supply of vacant land combined with high demand acts to increase land prices.

Residential land prices in the Downtown Core Area are extremely high. A commercial real estate professional in Walnut Creek places downtown commercial land prices at \$120-130 per square foot. Land prices outside of the Downtown Core Area vary, and the average prices for improved single-family lots in a residential subdivision are estimated at \$1,000,000 per acre.

## **Cost of Housing Construction**

Construction costs vary widely according to the type of development, with multi-family housing being somewhat less expensive to construct than single-family homes, on a per square foot basis.

In 2013, RS Means (a reliable published source for construction industry costs) estimated that the hard construction costs in the Oakland area was \$135 per square foot for typical four- to seven-story multi-family residential construction and \$114 per square foot for one- and two-family residential construction. This equals a rough estimate of \$135,000 for a 1,000 square foot apartment and \$228,000 for a 2,000 square foot single-family home.

However, when underground or podium parking is involved, construction costs per square foot for multi-family residential development can approach that of single-family construction. For example, hard costs for a recently proposed three-story, wood frame, multi-family affordable development with underground parking were about \$312,000 per unit.

A reduction in amenities and the quality of building materials can result in lower construction costs and lower purchase prices. Per-unit costs also decline with the size of the project, as developers benefit from economies of scale and are able to produce housing at a

lower per-unit cost. However, market forces and the very limited supply of large developable parcels constrain the ability to use these mechanisms in Walnut Creek.

### **Availability of Financing**

The mortgage banking crisis that began in 2008 affected the availability of construction financing and mortgage loans. Lenders that had once offered mortgage loans more freely became much more restrictive after 2008. Lenders required downpayments of 20 percent and credit scores higher than 680 to receive competitive interest rates. These restrictions placed homeownership out of reach for many, though in 2013 lenders have begun to ease the qualifications required for a competitive mortgage rate. As the economy continues its slow recovery, lenders may continue to make mortgage loans more accessible, although they may never be as easy to obtain as they were prior to 2008.

Although land is scarce for new construction, housing developers are seeing interest rates at historic lows in 2013. Construction financing rates range from 4.2 percent to 5 percent. In the previous housing element cycle, many housing projects stalled, in part due to difficulties obtaining construction financing. The City is already noticing an increase in new projects and an increase in projects restarting. This could be an indication that housing developers have had an easier time financing construction. Given this trend, the availability of financing is likely to be less of a constraint on new housing construction during this Housing Element planning period than it has been in the recent past.

## **B. Governmental Constraints**

Local policies and regulations can impact the price and availability of housing. Land use controls, site improvement requirements, fees and exactions, permit processing procedures, and various other issues may present constraints to the maintenance, development and renovation of housing. This section includes an analysis of potential and actual governmental constraints for all income levels, including land use controls, building codes, site improvement requirements, fees and other exactions required of developers, and local processing and permit procedures.

### **Land Use Regulations**

Local governments are empowered with the authority to regulate the location, density, timing, and type of residential development. This authority is exerted in several ways, from controlling land uses through zoning to levying development fees and exactions to pay for municipal improvements. While intended to protect the interests of residents, property owners, and businesses, local regulations can result in potential barriers to the production of housing. The goals and policies of the City's *General Plan 2025* are designed to encourage smart growth (higher density, transit-oriented residential and mixed-use development). The following highlights several goals and policies from *General Plan 2025* aimed at facilitating the production of housing.

*Goal 2: Encourage housing development that helps to reduce the increase in traffic congestion.*

**Policy 2.1. Develop flexible policies and regulations that facilitate new housing development.** Action 2.1.1. Permit multifamily housing in all commercial districts (except the Shadelands Business Park and Auto Sales and Service) through a conditional use permit, subject to project density and development regulations to protect existing urban form.

*Goal 3: Encourage housing and commercial mixed-use development in selected locations that enhances pedestrian access and reduces traffic.*

**Policy 3.1. Create opportunities for mixed-use.**

The Land Use Element of the General Plan sets forth the City’s policies for guiding local development. These policies, and their associated land use designations, establish the amount and distribution of land allocated for different land uses in Walnut Creek. As summarized in Table III-1, the City provides for a wide range of residential development types and densities through its nine residential land use designations.

<b>TABLE III-1                      GENERAL PLAN RESIDENTIAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS                      CITY OF WALNUT CREEK                      2025</b>		
<b>Residential Land Use Designation</b>		<b>Density Range                      (dwelling units/acre)</b>
SFVL	Single-Family Very Low	0.1 to 1
SFL	Single-Family Low	1.1 to 3
SFM	Single-Family Medium	3.1 to 6
SFH	Single-Family High	6.1 to 9
MFL	Multi-family Low	6.1 to 14
MFM	Multi-family Medium	14.1 to 22
MFMH	Multi-family Medium High	22.1 to 30
MFVH	Multi-family Very High	30.1 to 50
MFSH	Multi-family Special High	50.1 to 100

Source: Walnut Creek General Plan 2025.

In addition to its residential land use designations, Walnut Creek's General Plan also establishes the following three mixed-use designations:

**Mixed Use–Residential Emphasis (MU-R), FAR 1.5 to 2.5.** Intended to encourage a combination of ground floor retail with office and/or residential uses above the ground floor. However, residential must be the primary use, with commercial uses allowed only to a maximum FAR of 0.3.

**Mixed Use–Commercial Emphasis (MU-C), FAR 1.0 to 2.0.** Intended to encourage a combination of commercial and residential uses. Commercial (office or retail) must be the primary use, but will be allowed only to a maximum FAR of 0.85. This type of development and density is encouraged around the west Mt. Diablo Boulevard corridor, and in the Newell Avenue/South California Boulevard area.

**Mixed Use – Golden Triangle (MU-GT), FAR 1.5 to 2.5.** Intended to encourage a combination of ground-floor retail, high-intensity office, and/or high-density residential development near the Walnut Creek BART station. The appropriate density for new residential projects will be determined with the approval of a Planned Development Permit. The FAR associated with this district is applied to commercial (office or retail) development only.

## **Residential Development Standards**

The City regulates the type, location, density, and scale of development through the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. Provisions in the General Plan specify floor area ratios (FARs) and height limits for the City's Core Area. Provisions in the Zoning Ordinance specify minimum lot areas, setbacks, coverage, FAR, height limits, and parking (see Tables III-2, III-3, and III-4). Walnut Creek's regulations are comparable to those of similar cities. In addition to the base zoning districts described in the following tables, applicants can request rezoning to a customized Planned Development (P-D) District that allows deviation from the normal regulations where a development project is consistent with the General Plan and meets other community objectives.

**TABLE III-2  
SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS  
CITY OF WALNUT CREEK  
2013**

<b>Standard</b>	<b>SFH-PD1</b>	<b>R-8</b>	<b>R-8.5</b>	<b>R-10</b>	<b>R-12</b>	<b>R-15</b>	<b>R-20</b>	<b>R-40</b>
Minimum Lot Area (sq.ft.)	4,840	8,000	8,500	10,000	12,000	15,000	20,000	40,000
Minimum Front Setback	18-20 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.	30 ft.
Minimum Side Setback	0 ft.	5 ft., aggregate 15 ft.	5 ft., aggregate 15 ft.	5 ft., aggregate 15 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft., aggregate 25 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.
Minimum Corner Side Setback	15 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	15 ft.	30 ft.
Minimum Rear Setback	10-15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.
Maximum Height	25 feet, 2 stories	25 feet, 2 stories	25 feet, 2 stories	25 feet, 2 stories	25 feet, 2 stories	25 feet, 2 stories	25 feet, 2 stories	25 feet, 2 stories
Maximum Density (units/acre)	6 to 9 du/net acre	5.4	5.1	4.4	3.6	2.9	2.2	1.1
Maximum Lot Coverage	35-50%	40%	40%	35%	30%	25%	25%	n/a
Required Off-Street Parking	2 covered spaces per unit + 1 space (uncovered) for second unit							

Source: City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code 2013.

## Second Family Units

Second family units are allowed on parcels with an existing single family dwelling in all single family and duplex zones, contingent upon adequate water supplies, and a determination that the number of second family units in a Census Tract does not exceed 5 percent of the number of single family homes. Neither of these contingencies has ever precluded approval of a Second Family Unit. Homeowners have found the connection fees for water and sewer to be significant constraints when they consider adding a second family unit. However, sewer and water connection fees are charged by special districts and the City does not have control over these fees.

Second family units must comply with all the standards of the zoning district, including all yard (setback), building height, and lot coverage standards. Second family units are limited to a maximum floor area of 700 square feet and a maximum of one bedroom. No more than one second family unit is allowed on any one parcel of land.

## **Mobile Home/Manufactured Homes**

Pursuant to State law, the City continues to allow mobile home and manufactured homes to be constructed in all single family residential zoning districts. Currently no mobile home park is located within Walnut Creek.

## **Residential Care Facilities and Housing for Persons with Disabilities**

The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act (Sections 5115 and 5116 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code) declares that mentally and physically disabled persons are entitled to live in normal residential surroundings. A State-authorized, certified, or licensed family care home, foster home, or group home serving six or fewer disabled persons or dependent and neglected children on a 24-hour-a-day basis is considered a residential use that is permitted in all residential zones. No local agency can impose stricter zoning or building and safety standards on these homes than would apply to other single family homes. The City of Walnut Creek does not set a maximum concentration or spacing requirements for residential care facilities. In addition, Walnut Creek does not set site plan requirements that might constrain housing for persons with disabilities, because the Building Department reviews all plans to ensure ADA and accessibility requirements are met. The City has also included a program to ensure a clear policy exists to accommodate persons with disability who may request accommodations.

In compliance with State law, a residential care home with a capacity of no more than six persons, which provides 24-hour non-medical care to persons in need of personal services, supervision, or assistance is permitted by-right in all residential districts in Walnut Creek, and many are located throughout the city. Larger residential care facilities are permitted in the Duplex Residential district if the facilities serve disabled persons as defined by the State's Fair Housing Act. Larger residential care facilities are also conditionally permitted in the City's multiple family residential zones and High Density Planned Development District.

The City has a large inventory of residential facilities for persons with disabilities. Walnut Creek's community care facilities have 623 beds, its independent and supportive care facilities have 281 beds, and other residential facilities have 373 beds. In sum, Walnut Creek has 1,277 beds in its inventory of residential facilities for persons with disabilities. The City's zoning regulations comply with State laws governing the provision of residential facilities for persons with disabilities.

## **Multi-family Housing**

The purpose of the City's multi-family residential zones is to promote and encourage multi-family developments at densities that are consistent with the General Plan land use designation and surrounding development. The intent is to provide for higher density classifications in and around the Core Area and adjacent to major transit centers, and lower

density multi-family development in transition areas between single-family development and commercial areas or higher density residential areas. The development regulations for properties within the City's duplex and multi-family zones are summarized in Table III-3.

TABLE III-3 DUPLEX AND MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS CITY OF WALNUT CREEK 2013							
Standard	D-3 Duplex	M-1 Multi-family	M-1.5 Multi-family	M-2 Multi-family	M-2.5 Multi-family	M-3 Multi-family	M-H-D High Density
Minimum Lot Area (sq.ft.)	6,000	5,000	9,000	8,000	10,000	15,000	15,000
Minimum Front Setback	15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	20 ft.	n/a
Minimum Side Setback	5 ft.	5 ft.	5 ft.	5 ft.	5 ft.	10 ft.	n/a
Minimum Corner Side Setback	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	20 ft.	n/a
Minimum Rear Setback	10 ft.	5 ft.	5 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10-20 ft.	n/a
Maximum Height	25 ft., 2 stories	30-50 ft. as specified in the Zoning Map					70 ft.
Maximum Density (units/acre)	14.5	43.6	29.0	21.8	17.4	14.5	Max. FAR: 1.5
Maximum Lot Coverage	50%	70%	70%	60%	50%	50%	n/a
Required Off-Street Parking	2 covered spaces per unit	1.25 spaces per studio, 1.5 spaces per one-bedroom unit, 2.25 spaces per 2+ bedroom unit. Each multi-family unit is required to have one covered space. Parking for senior housing is determined on a case-by-case basis by the City's Transportation Administrator.					1 space/bedroom, min. 1.25 spaces/unit

Source: City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code 2013.

Multi-family residential development is also allowed in most of the City's commercial zoning districts. The development regulations for multi-family residences in commercial zones are summarized in Table III-4. Certain properties currently located within the City's commercial zoning districts are designated by the General Plan as MU-C, Mixed Use – Commercial Emphasis, and MU-R, Mixed Use – Residential Emphasis. Multi-family or mixed-use development is permitted or conditionally permitted in each of the underlying commercial zoning districts pursuant to the setback, FAR, and height regulations contained within the General Plan, and the parking requirements contained within the Zoning Ordinance. In Appendix A – Opportunity Site Details, all development regulations, as well as a narrative analysis of their impact, are included for each parcel.



<b>TABLE III-4                      MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS IN COMMERCIAL ZONES                      CITY OF WALNUT CREEK                      2013</b>				
<b>Standard</b>	<b>C-C Community Commercial</b>	<b>C-R Central Retail</b>	<b>O-C Office Commercial</b>	<b>P-R Pedestrian Retail</b>
Minimum Lot Area (sq.ft.)	n/a	10,000	10,000	n/a
Minimum Front Setback	10 ft.	n/a	15 ft. average	n/a
Minimum Side Setback	10 ft.	n/a	10 ft. average	n/a
Minimum Corner Side Setback	10 ft.	n/a	10 ft. average	n/a
Minimum Rear Setback	20 ft.	n/a	Same as abutting property	n/a
Maximum Height	20 ft. or map	Refer to Zoning Map <sup>1</sup>	Refer to Zoning Map <sup>1</sup>	Refer to Zoning Map <sup>1</sup>
Maximum Density (units/acre)	Determined by CUP	Determined by CUP	Determined by CUP	Determined by CUP
Maximum Lot Coverage	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Required Off-Street Parking	Determined by CUP	Determined by CUP	Determined by CUP	Determined by CUP

<sup>1</sup> The City of Walnut Creek regulates height limits through the Overlay Zoning, Building Height, Parking Reduction, and Future Street Line Map. Height limits do not correspond directly to zones.  
 Source: City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code 2013.

### Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, and Supportive Housing

A transitional housing facility is temporary housing (from six months to two years) for a homeless individual or family transitioning into permanent housing. Supportive housing is generally defined as permanent, affordable housing with on-site services that help residents transition into stable, more productive lives.

Under the Municipal Code, “family” is defined as:

*“one person living alone, or two or more persons living together as a single housekeeping unit in a dwelling unit. A housekeeping unit shall be a group which bears the generic character of a family unit as a relatively permanent household, regardless of biological relationship, and which is characterized by the following: a) Shared use of a single common kitchen; b) Shared household expenses; c) Use by all persons of a shared common entry to the dwelling unit; d) Shared use of all or virtually all areas of the dwelling unit at all times; e) Shared responsibility for household work; f) Shared food; g) Sharing of some or all meals; h) Occupation of the unit under a single lease if the unit is not occupied in part by the owner; i)*

*Shared social, economic and psychological commitments. Family also does not include a group occupying a boarding house, dormitory, fraternity or sorority house, convent, rectory or private residential club."*

In transitional housing or supportive housing, residents are provided with one-on-one case management, education and training, employment assistance, mental and physical services, and support groups. The City recently (2014) amended the Zoning Ordinance to treat transitional and supportive housing as permitted uses in all residential districts, subject only to those restrictions that apply to other residential uses of the same type in the same zone. In compliance with SB2, Walnut Creek has reviewed its zoning regulations and has identified areas where shelters are permitted by-right. The City of Walnut Creek's Zoning Ordinance allows emergency shelters for homeless persons to be established without the need for a Conditional Use Permit or other land use permit in three commercial districts:

- In the Central Retail (C-R) District, emergency shelters are permitted by-right when located more than 500 feet from a residential zone. There are more than 40 properties totaling over 23 acres that meet this criterion. Emergency shelters require a Conditional Use Permit in this zone if located within 500 feet of a residential zone.
- In the Community Commercial (C-C) District, emergency shelters are permitted by-right when located more than 600 feet from a residential zone. However, there are only portions of two properties that meet this criterion. Emergency shelters require a Conditional Use Permit in this zone if located within 600 feet of a residential zone.
- In the Automobile Sales and Service (A-S) District, emergency shelters are permitted by-right when located on the second or higher floor of a building. There are 53 properties totaling over 23 acres in this zone.

Emergency shelters are also allowed in several other zones throughout the City, upon issuance of a Conditional Use Permit. As shown above, there are considerable opportunities to establish emergency shelters.

## **Single Room Occupancy**

Single Room Occupancy units are classified under "Group Residential" (also known as a rooming house) which refers to shared living quarters without separate bathrooms and with no services provided. These are permitted by-right in all multi-family residential zones. They are also allowed upon issuance of a Conditional Use Permit in other areas.

## **Farm Employee Housing**

The Census identifies less than 1 percent of Walnut Creek residents employed in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations. No parcels in the City remain in agricultural use. Therefore, given the extremely limited presence of farm workers in the community, the City has not identified a need for specialized farm worker housing.

## Accessibility Accommodations

Both the Federal Fair Housing Act and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act impose an affirmative duty on local governments to make reasonable accommodations (i.e., modifications or exceptions) in their zoning and other land use regulations when such accommodations may be necessary to afford disabled persons an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. For example, it may be a reasonable accommodation to allow covered ramps in the setbacks of properties that have already been developed to accommodate residents with mobility impairments.

The City has conducted a review of zoning and building code requirements, and has not identified any barriers to the provision of accessible housing. The City accommodates most accessibility modifications through issuance of a simple remodel permit. Handicapped ramps or guardrails are permitted to intrude into the standard setbacks required under zoning to allow first floor access for physically disabled residents. The Building Department has adopted the 2010 California Building Code and enforces the disabled access regulations delineated in chapters 11A (Housing Accessibility) and 11B (Accessibility to Public Buildings, Public Accommodations, Commercial Buildings, and Publicly Funded Housing). New apartment buildings with three or more units are subject to requirements for unit “adaptability” on ground floor units, and accessibility to common use areas. Adaptable units are built for easy conversion to disabled access, such as doorway and hallway widths, and added structural support in the bathroom to allow the addition of handrails.

The City recently (2014) adopted a Reasonable Accommodation Ordinance to allow special procedures for reasonable accommodation requests with respect to zoning and permit processing policies and procedures. The procedures specify who may request an accommodation, responsibility and time-frame for decision making, and scope of modifications.

## Parking Regulations

The City’s parking requirements vary by housing type and parking needs. The City calculates the parking requirements by unit type and on a per-bedroom basis for multi-family units. The City permits carports in lieu of garages for all housing units, which can reduce development costs. Under the City’s Density Bonus Ordinance, projects that provide affordable or senior housing may request a reduction in parking requirements. Additionally, parking requirements are reduced for BART-proximate and affordable housing developments.

Off-street parking spaces are required in accordance with the Parking Regulations outlined in Table III-5. Parking requirements for senior housing projects, which often need less parking, may be determined by the City’s Transportation Administrator; the City has established a reduced parking ratio of 0.25 spaces per unit for congregate care facilities. Although the City’s parking requirements are not excessive, parking requirements for residential uses can add significantly to project cost and can make housing financially much

less feasible than office or retail development in the Core Area because of very high land prices and the cost of building structured or underground parking. The City’s in-lieu fee for parking spaces in the Pedestrian Retail zoning district in its downtown is currently estimated at approximately \$32,000 per space (adjusted annually for inflation), which reflects the actual cost to construct a structured parking stall, not including land costs. Table III-5 below lists the parking requirements for all residential classifications.

<b>TABLE III-5 STANDARD PARKING REQUIREMENTS CITY OF WALNUT CREEK 2013</b>	
<b>LAND USE</b>	<b>OFF STREET PARKING REQUIREMENTS</b>
Single Family Residential	2 covered spaces per dwelling unit
Second Family Unit	1 space (may be a tandem space)
Duplex Residential	1 covered space for 1 bedroom units. 2 spaces for 1+ bedroom units (1 must be covered)
Multi-family Residential	1.25 spaces per studio unit (1 must be covered) 1.5 spaces per 1 bedroom unit (1 must be covered) 2 spaces per 2 bedroom unit (1 must be covered) 2.25 spaces per 2+ bedroom units (1 must be covered)
Group Residential	1 space per bedroom
Congregate Living Facility	0.25 spaces per dwelling unit or per bedroom (whichever is greater)
Senior Housing	Parking to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the City's Transportation Administrator.
Residential Care Home	Same as single family residential
Adult Day Care Home	Same as single family residential
Small Family Day Care Home	Same as single-family residential
Large Family Day Care Home	1 space per employee plus 1 space per 12 children

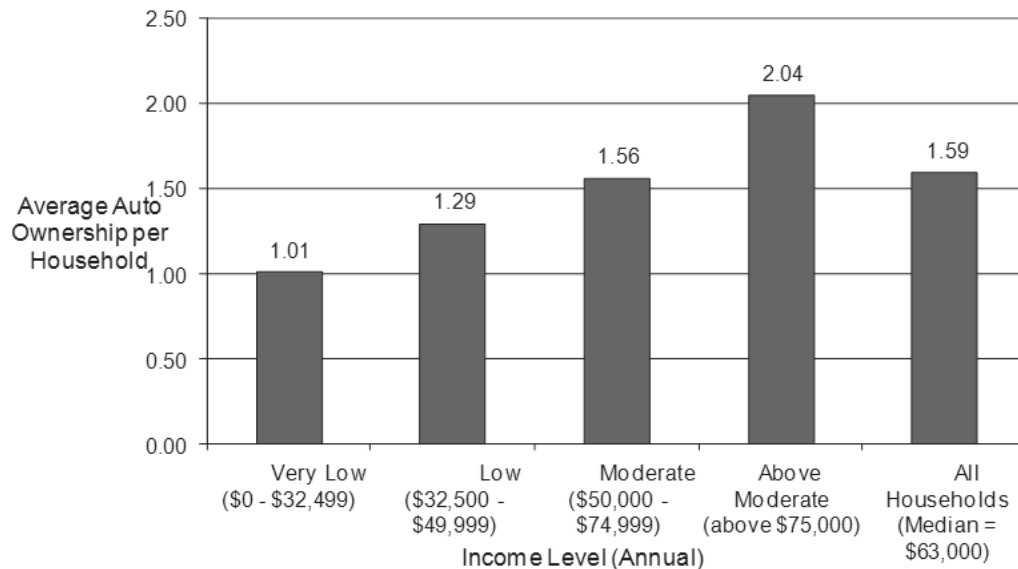
Source: City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code.

In 2005 field observations of over 35 multi-family developments in seven distinct neighborhoods in the Walnut Creek vicinity were conducted either by staff or by consultants undertaking work for developers. This data provided peak parking demand data and served as a good comparison to Census data. Low-income units were included in three developments and none of these showed parking rates greater than 1.29 per occupied unit. Field observations were undertaken late at night (between 11:00 PM and 3:00 AM) to ensure peak parking demand was captured. Parking demand, which includes resident and visitor, varied from a low of 0.92 spaces per unit to a high of 1.51 spaces per unit at all of the multifamily developments. Since greater household income generally is tied with greater

auto ownership, it was clear that the parking demand at these developments would be lower if they were solely or primarily lower-income.

The 2000 U.S. Census is the most recent Census data available on vehicle ownership by income. Figure III-1 below, presents income and vehicle ownership data based on the 2000 Census, and indicates that as income decreases, auto ownership also decreases. On average, the typical household in Walnut Creek in 2000 owned 1.59 vehicles with a median income of \$63,000 per year. However, Figure III-1 shows that low-income households owned only 1.29 vehicles and very-low-income households only 1.01 vehicles, on average. This pattern holds true throughout the city, in every census tract.

**Figure III-1 - Auto Ownership by Income Level  
(Year 2000, Census Data, Walnut Creek Only)**



As mentioned, field observations of over 35 multifamily developments in seven distinct neighborhoods in the Walnut Creek vicinity were conducted. Parking demand, which includes resident and visitor, varied from a low of 0.92 spaces per unit to a high of 1.51 spaces per unit – regardless of proximity to BART. This demonstrates the complex character of the factors that determine parking demand and vehicle ownership. The one development with the highest parking demand of 1.51 is well-removed from BART. However, even this total parking demand rate (for residents and visitors) is less than the average citywide auto ownership rate of 1.59 vehicles per unit.

Staff analyzed the impacts of parking on development and recommended reducing parking requirements for BART-proximate and low-income housing units, primarily due to the additional cost of providing parking and the limited land availability in the city. The City Council approved special off-street parking reductions for low-income or BART-proximate

units in Walnut Creek, as indicated in Table III-6 below. BART-proximate projects are those that are located within one-half mile walking distance from a BART station. This distance was chosen because it is a typical 10 minute walk and is recognized by transit planners as being an acceptable distance to expect riders to walk, rather than drive, to a BART station or major transit center.

	<b>Studio</b>	<b>1 Bedroom</b>	<b>2 Bedrooms</b>	<b>3+ Bedrooms</b>
<b>Low Income</b>	1.1 spaces per unit	1.35 spaces per unit	1.8 spaces per unit	2 spaces per unit
<b>Very Low Income</b>	1 space per unit	1.15 spaces per unit	1.5 spaces per unit	1.75 spaces per unit
<b>BART Proximate</b>	1 space per unit	1.25 spaces per unit	1.5 spaces per unit	2 spaces per unit

*Source: City of Walnut Creek Municipal Code 2013.*

## Residential Processing Procedures

Review of development proposals and building construction is necessary in order to ensure that health and safety standards are met and that community character and quality of life are maintained. Development review is a standard component of the housing development process in California cities. Development costs increase if development review takes a long time or if uncertainty creates greater risk. Risk is also increased with the number of discretionary permits required for housing projects, or if a developer is uncertain about the type of development desired by the city or community.

The State Permit Streamlining Act identifies timeframes for review of development applications and in most cases, applications must be processed within one year. The Act also contains provisions that require cities to identify information needed for a complete application, and to provide follow-up information requests within certain timeframes. The City of Walnut Creek complies with the Permit Streamlining Act. Most residential development applications are processed within three to six months of submittal; although more significant subdivisions and projects may take up to a year or more, particularly if an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required.

The City's Zoning Ordinance requires Design Review, but not Conditional Use Permits, for most residential development in residential zones. In this way, developers are ensured that a residential use will be acceptable and the focus of review is on the quality of the design. The City has also adopted a number of Specific Plans for various areas of the city in order to provide clear land use direction to property owners, developers, and the community, and to streamline environmental review.

The Design Review Commission (DRC) reviews the site, building, and landscaping plans for all new commercial and multi-family residential buildings and single-family dwellings in new subdivisions. The Design Review Commission considers the following in its review:

- Consistency with the General Plan;
- General site, architectural, and landscape considerations; and
- Compliance with Public Safety and Preservation of Trees on Private Property.

Design Review applications are generally processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Timing for Design Review projects varies considerably, depending on the location and complexity of the projects. Staff estimates that a large-scale (60-unit) housing project with an affordable housing component would take three to six months to complete the entire development review process, including Design Review. The Design Review Commission may review a project an average of two times; however, the input from the Commission has been beneficial in terms of creating high quality residential and commercial projects, particularly in downtown Walnut Creek. Developers are also provided with Design Review Guidelines (see Appendix C) to assist them in the application process. Smaller projects, such as individual single family homes, may be reviewed at staff level instead. No residential projects have been denied based upon design review comments, and therefore, design review has not impacted the certainty of development in Walnut Creek.

As part of the Design Review process, multi-family residential and commercial projects in the City's Core Area are required to provide a public art component or pay an in-lieu fee. Developers may either pay an in-lieu fee or provide public art (reviewed by the Design Review Commission and Arts Commission) as part of their project.

Walnut Creek also offers a preliminary review process for development projects, free of charge. The Preliminary Review Team (PRT) consists of representatives from relevant City departments (e.g., Community Development, Public Services) who review development proposals and make recommendations to the applicant regarding the design of their project, in order to streamline the formal development review process. Most applicants are encouraged to have their projects reviewed by the PRT and the process is generally well received by developers.

### **Timing of Development Review Process**

The typical review process for a multi-family development application in Walnut Creek can be described as follows. As a means of saving time and costs, applicants are encouraged to request a free review by the Preliminary Review Team (PRT) prior to completion of project design. These projects are reviewed by the PRT as described above. The purpose of this review is to inform the applicant of relevant code requirements, explore possible modifications to the project, and to identify any technical studies that may be necessary for the environmental review process. The review is conducted with the Preliminary Review

Team providing the applicant with early input from all relevant City departments. The PRT review process includes distribution of the project to members of the PRT.

Upon submittal of the formal development application, City staff conducts a review to check for completeness of the submittal, and within 30 days, informs the applicant in writing of any missing information. Corrections and/or additions are made to the project application and supporting documents and resubmitted to staff. In the initial 30-day review process the project is distributed to all relevant City departments and interested outside agencies.

Upon completion of project review by the case planner, a staff report is prepared summarizing the scope of the project and compliance with code requirements. A Conditional Use Permit is required for multi-family development if the project is in a commercial or other non-residential zoning. It is only prohibited in Community Facility, Open Space, Automobile Sales and Service, or Business Park zoning districts. All new multi-family developments and single-family residential subdivisions require review by the Design Review Commission; smaller projects are reviewed at staff level. Projects that also require a Conditional Use Permit must also be approved by the Planning Commission. After an application is deemed complete it takes one to two months to be heard by the Design Review or Planning Commissions.

In Walnut Creek, the average processing time to obtain all of the necessary permits to construct a new single-family residence on an existing lot range between one and three months, depending on the types of permits required. The City of Walnut Creek places a strong emphasis on customer service and satisfaction and the City's development review processes are designed for expedited processing of all planning and building permits.

The duration of project review for higher density projects depends upon application completeness, the response time from applicants to address issues, and the levels of approvals needed. Higher density residential projects going through design review in the past five years have taken from 6 months for a 48-unit project, to 9 months for a 125-unit project, to 18 months for an 87-unit condominium project.

## **Site Improvements, Fees, and Exactions**

The cost of producing a housing unit not only includes land, construction, and design costs, but also infrastructure connections, site improvements, and payment of fees to ensure adequate public facilities and services. In 2005, an analysis of Walnut Creek's impact fees was performed as part of a background report for the City's commercial linkage fee ordinance. The analysis indicated that Walnut Creek's fees were about \$8 to \$11 per square foot for residential, and about \$7 per square foot for office, and \$3.50 per square foot for retail. These were substantially lower (at least 35 percent to 50 percent lower) than comparable cities of Concord, Pleasanton, Livermore, and Sunnyvale.



Site improvements include water, sewer, circulation (e.g., street, sidewalks), and other infrastructure needed to serve new development. Developers are required to construct internal subdivision streets, sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. Developers are also required to either construct or pay fees toward construction of needed off-site improvements, such as extension of sewer, water and storm drainage systems, and circulation improvements and traffic signals. Given that almost all of the remaining development potential within the city is on infill sites, most infrastructure improvements are already in place.

The City, in 1974, adopted an Open Space Protection Initiative (Ordinance Number 1791) that provides for open space requirements for hillside development. Given the limited potential for residential development on hillsides in the city and the significant costs involved in hillside development, affordable housing development on hillsides is unlikely. Therefore, this ordinance will not constrain the development of affordable housing in the city.

Payment of development impact fees/exactions is required in order to fund needed school, park, and service connections. Planning application fees and building permit fees are charged to cover the cost of development review and building inspections.

For the City of Walnut Creek, processing of development applications and appeals is charged on an hourly rate for required staff time. A deposit is required for all applications and accounts are charged at a billable rate that may be adjusted periodically. As of 2013, the billable rate is \$180 per hour. Table III-7 summarizes the planning and development fees collected by the City planning staff. Sewer and water service, as well as fire and emergency medical service, are not provided by the City, but rather by special districts. Connection or impact fees are estimated below but are subject to the special district regulations. School impact fees are collected by the City at time of building permit issuance, but are passed on to the specific school district that adopted the fee.

<b>TABLE III-7 DEVELOPMENT FEE SCHEDULE CITY OF WALNUT CREEK 2013</b>		
<b>Application Type</b>		
	<b>Deposit</b>	<b>Rate</b>
<b>Building Permit Fees</b>		
Building permit fees are based on the valuation of the project. Plumbing, electrical, and mechanical building permit fees are based on the building permit amount.		
<b>Environmental Review</b>		
Environmental Assessment	\$1,200	\$180/hr
Probable Negative Declaration	\$1,200	\$180/hr
Environmental Impact Report	\$2,000	\$180/hr
<b>Design Review</b>		
New Homes- Staff Design Review	\$1,200	\$180/hr
New Homes- Commission Design Review	\$2,000	\$180/hr
New Buildings/Projects	\$5,000	\$180/hr
<b>Zoning Requests/Amendments</b>		
All zones	\$4,000	\$180/hr
General Plan Amendment	\$4,000	\$180/hr
<b>Subdivisions</b>		
Tentative Map (4 parcels or less)	\$4,000	\$180/hr
Tentative Map (5 or more parcels)	\$10,000	\$180/hr
Use Permit	\$1,200	\$180/hr
Variance	\$1,200	\$180/hr
Pre-Applications	\$2,000	\$180/hr
<b>Project Review Team (PRT)</b>		
Single-family 1st Visit		No charge
Single Family 2 <sup>nd</sup> Visit		Flat fee 90.00
Multi-family and commercial 1st visit		Flat fee 180.00
Multi-family and commercial pre-application fee- Commission review, no action		\$180/hr
Building Permit Planning Division Review		With work order or 15% of the Building Division's total Permit Fees for each development permit.

Source: City of Walnut Creek

<b>TABLE III-8</b> <b>SAMPLE DEVELOPMENT FEES FOR REPRESENTATIVE PROJECTS</b> CITY OF WALNUT CREEK 2013		
<b>Fee Description</b>	<b>Single Family Development (7-Unit Detached +1 Second Unit)</b>	<b>Multifamily Development (300 Units)</b>
Entitlement Process Fees	\$43,602	\$153,020
Building Permit	\$24,368	\$74,262
Plumbing Permit	\$4,386	\$13,367
Electrical Permit	\$4,874	\$14,852
Mechanical Permit	\$4,242	\$12,625
Strong Motion Instrumentation Fee	\$4,966	\$6,050
Building Technology	\$3,510	\$15,163
Building Plan Review	\$15,436	\$74,262
Electrical Plan Review	\$5,982	\$28,777
Plumbing Plan Review	\$5,981	\$28,777
Mechanical Plan Review	\$5,979	\$28,777
Cal Green	\$147	\$960
Traffic Mitigation	\$19,565	\$88,740
Waste Management	\$364	\$50
City Green Permit	\$3,778	\$11,511
Building P	\$878	\$3,791
City Green	\$3,338	\$16,059
Application	\$1,543	n/a
Count	\$7,084	n/a
Base Map	\$350	n/a
Parkland	\$84,000	\$800,000
General Plan	\$2,736	\$24,000
Record Imaging	\$1,072	\$1,754
<b>Total City Fees</b>	<b>\$248,180</b>	<b>\$1,396,797</b>
<b>Total City Fees–Per Unit</b>	<b>\$31,022.46</b>	<b>\$4,655.99</b>
<b>Other Agency Fees<sup>1</sup></b>		
School Impact Fee (by school district)	\$67,434	\$65,944
Water District (separate from City)	\$181,704	\$600,000
Sewer Impact Fee	\$56,000	\$2,100,000
<i>Subtotal: Other Agency Fees</i>	<i>\$305,138</i>	<i>\$2,765,944</i>
<i>Subtotal: Other Agency Fees–Per Unit</i>	<i>\$38,142.25</i>	<i>\$9,219.81</i>
<b>Totals</b>		
<b>Total Fees</b>	<b>\$553,318</b>	<b>\$4,162,741</b>
<b>Total Fees–Per Unit</b>	<b>\$69,164.71</b>	<b>\$13,875.80</b>

Source: City of Walnut Creek

<sup>1</sup> This is not a complete list of fees.

Assuming a land cost of approximately \$1,000,000 per acre, and hard construction costs of about \$114 per square foot for a new 2,000 square foot single-family home on a quarter-acre

lot, total costs would be approximately \$547,000 per unit. Development fees, including other agency fees, are about 13 percent of the total development costs. This is not a substantial portion of the cost of development and would not deter developers. Within the city of Walnut Creek, the high price of land remains the major development expense.

Assuming a land cost of about \$150,000 per unit for a multifamily project, and hard construction costs of about \$135 per square foot for a new 800 square foot unit in a multifamily development, total costs would be an estimated \$272,000 per unit. Development fees, including outside agency fees, would amount to about five percent of the total development costs. Again, as is the case with single-family development, the fees are not significant enough to deter development; instead, land costs are the limiting factor.

### **Article 34**

Article 34 of the State Constitution requires that a local government obtain voter approval before developing, constructing, or acquiring a rental housing project restricted to low-income households. Article 34 requirements can be a constraint to the development of affordable housing as local jurisdictions and developers are often reluctant to undertake the delay, uncertainty, and potential additional expense of a local election.

In 1978, the City held an Article 34 election and the residents voted to approve the development, construction, and/or acquisition in the City of assisted housing for the elderly and handicapped, not to exceed 200 dwelling units. This allocation has now been met with the recent construction of Casa Montego and Villa Vasconcellos. Since the City's election covered only elderly and handicapped housing, Article 34 requirements still affect the City's ability to provide housing for families and other identified needs groups. Since 2004, the City has only restricted the affordability of a percentage of units within a given development, not the entire project's affordability. Developments also have affordability requirements based upon Federal and State funding requirements specific to each development.

### **Measure A, Building Height Freeze Initiative**

On March 12, 1985 the voters of the city of Walnut Creek approved the Building Height Freeze Initiative as follows:

- (a) The building height limitation in the Zoning Ordinance shall not be raised without the approval of the electorate.
- (b) No use permits to exceed the basic building height limitations of a land use district shall be granted.
- (c) No permit shall be issued to construct a building over six stories in height without the approval of the electorate.

The Initiative freezes the maximum building height that was permitted on each parcel at the time of the election. Single-family housing may be constructed up to 25 feet (29 feet for some roof designs). The height limit in the Multi-family Residential District is 30 feet or as specified on the Building Height Zone map which allows some Core Area sites a 50-foot height limit. All of the realistic capacity assumptions in the opportunity sites inventory in Chapter 4: Housing Resources use the appropriate building height limit when making capacity calculations. These height limits do not pose a constraint to meeting Walnut Creek's RHNA.

### **Growth Limitation Plan**

On July 27, 1993 the City Council adopted a Growth Limitation Sub-element of the General Plan. The Program limited new commercial growth to 75,000 square feet per year for 10 years. In 2006, the City Council extended the program through the adoption of the 2025 General Plan. The General Plan continues the growth management program for commercial development through 2015, which will allow 750,000 square feet of commercial space over a 10-year period. The growth management program allows unallocated square footage to be carried over from year to year. Policy 9.3 in General Plan Chapter 4: Built Environment, establishes a housing cap consistent with the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation assigned to the City of Walnut Creek, and exempts affordable units and density bonus units from the cap. The cap is to be reviewed every 5 years for its adequacy in meeting the City's regional housing needs allocation. As the housing cap is consistent with the RHNA, the growth limitation plan is not a constraint to meeting the RHNA.

### **Inclusionary Zoning**

The City of Walnut Creek adopted an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance in 2004 to expand the supply of affordable housing in conjunction with market rate housing development. In 2009 and 2010 the City adopted revisions to the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance that addressed issues raised through two State court cases. The current ordinance requires all rental development projects to pay a housing impact fee, and all ownership projects of two or more units to either pay a housing impact fee or provide affordable units onsite. The unit requirement for ownership varies depending on the depth of affordability. Developers may provide 10 percent affordable to moderate-income households, 7 percent affordable to low-income households, or 6 percent affordable to very low-income households. Ownership projects of less than 10 units can meet the requirement by providing a second family unit. Developers may opt to pay an in-lieu fee for projects of two to nine units, or for fractional remainders. The ownership and rental impact fees are shown in Table III-9.

TABLE III-9 INCLUSIONARY FEES CITY OF WALNUT CREEK 2010		
Unit Count	Rental Impact Fee/ Square Foot	Ownership Impact Fee/ Square Foot
2	\$1.60	\$2.00
3	\$2.40	\$3.00
4	\$3.20	\$4.00
5	\$4.00	\$5.00
6	\$4.80	\$6.00
7	\$5.60	\$7.00
8	\$6.40	\$8.00
9	\$7.20	\$9.00
10 and up	\$15.00	\$15.00

Source: City of Walnut Creek Resolution No. 10-59.

Since the adoption of the ordinance, over 30 residential developments have been approved and/or constructed, ultimately resulting in 50 new affordable ownership units, 17 affordable rental units, 40 units under agreement, and over \$3.6 million in fees were collected (through December, 2013). The inclusionary requirement has facilitated new affordable ownership opportunities which otherwise would never have been possible and has done so without dampening residential development in Walnut Creek. Inclusionary rental units are income-restricted for 55 years and ownership units are income-restricted for 45 years, consistent with redevelopment statutes. Due to the 2010 ordinance revision, no new inclusionary rental units will be constructed.

As a means of providing flexibility with the inclusionary requirements, the City allows the following alternatives to the provision of on-site affordable units:

- Off-site construction of affordable units when on-site units are not feasible.
- Dedication of land sufficient to accommodate the required units when the value of the land is equal to or greater than the value of the units.
- Payment of an in-lieu fee for projects with fewer than 10 units.

Additional flexibility is also allowed through the following:

- The size of the affordable units may be smaller than the market rate units.
- A development of single family homes may meet the inclusionary requirement by providing second family units.
- The affordable units may have different interior finishes and features than the market rate units.

Projects that provide affordable units in addition to those required by the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, up to or beyond Density Bonus Ordinance required percentages will qualify for Density Bonus Incentives. For example, a project with 11 percent affordability will qualify for incentives pursuant to the City's Density Bonus Ordinance.

Walnut Creek's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance provides for a reduction or waiver of the requirement if an applicant can show that the inclusionary requirements represent a taking.

## **Building Codes and Enforcement**

Building codes and their enforcement influence the style, quality, size, and costs of residential development. Such codes can increase the cost of housing and impact the feasibility of rehabilitating older properties that must be upgraded to current code standards. In this manner, building codes and their enforcement can act as a constraint on the supply of housing and its affordability.

In July 2010, the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) adopted the 2010 California Green Building Standards Code, otherwise known as "CALGreen", which became effective January 1, 2011. CALGreen is California's first green building code and a first-in-the-nation state-mandated green building code. It is formally known as the California Green Building Standards Code, Title 24, Part 11, of the California Code of Regulations. CALGreen establishes mandatory minimum green building standards and includes more stringent optional provisions known as Tier 1 and Tier 2. Cities and counties, at their discretion, may adopt Tier 1 or Tier 2 as mandatory or adopt and enforce other standards that are more stringent than the CALGreen Code. As of February 2014, the City has not adopted any of the tiers or more stringent standards.

In addition to CALGreen, the City of Walnut Creek has adopted the Uniform Building Code and the Uniform Housing Code, the purpose of which is to protect health and safety, and development must comply with these codes. The Code Enforcement Section handles enforcement of the Walnut Creek Zoning Ordinance and of the nuisance provisions of the Municipal Code (including noise, garbage, abandoned vehicles, tall weeds, property maintenance, etc). The Building Division typically handles enforcement of the Building and Housing Codes. Most code enforcement in the city is in response to reports or complaints by citizens; however, the City will initiate enforcement proceedings if a staff member witnesses something, depending on the nature and severity of the violation as well as the availability of staff time. City staff also works in cooperation with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District in the case of fire hazards, the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District in the case of vermin or insect infestations, and the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District in the case of clean water violations. There is a very low level of incidences of substandard structures in the city.

In the case of code enforcement actions regarding residential buildings, code enforcement staff works in cooperation with property owners, with a vast majority of cases being resolved through voluntary compliance. Additionally, in cases that involve at-risk

individuals, code enforcement staff works closely with the City's Housing Program staff and in some cases, the County's Health Services Department, to provide access to services to the greatest extent possible when the situation warrants.

When cases involve severely substandard apartment complexes, the City's code enforcement staff initiate an inter-jurisdictional enforcement program whereby a comprehensive property inspection is performed by the various agencies. A compliance plan is created that establishes a timetable for the property owners to bring the apartments into compliance. At the same time, code enforcement staff provides information to tenants regarding their legal rights and the tenants were given access to bilingual tenant advocates for assistance. In one case, a non-profit housing developer created a development proposal to acquire one of these code enforcement sites, a deteriorated complex on Third Avenue in northwestern Walnut Creek, after the Housing Program Manager was alerted to the site by the Code Enforcement Supervisor.

In another case, a Code Enforcement officer noticed a house in which the resident had accumulated so much material that the unit's plumbing could not be used and was a fire and health hazard. The Housing Program Manager was able to coordinate with service providers who assisted the homeowner in disposing much of the material, thereby making the unit habitable.

The City continues to monitor the condition of its housing stock, particularly the older apartment complexes.

## **C. Environmental and Service Capacity Constraints**

Environmental constraints that exist in Walnut Creek include but are not limited to earthquake fault zones, areas subject to liquefaction and landslides, and 100-year flood zones. These types of environmentally constrained lands exist in nearly every California community. These constraints are typically addressed and managed through careful site planning and sound engineering in the design of improvements. At times, these measures do increase the cost of producing housing, such as when seismic strengthening to meet seismic design criteria results in higher-cost materials and construction techniques. These measures can also result in fewer units developed on a site, such as when floodplain setback requirements decrease the developable area of a site.

In Walnut Creek, the California Department of Water Resources Best Available Map (BAM) shows a small 100-year flood zone in the area of Civic Park downtown, but none of the housing opportunity sites listed in Chapter IV: Housing Resources are within this area. Opportunity sites C-3 and C-4, however, do intersect with another small 100-year flood zone. Las Trampas Creek cuts through both opportunity sites and the BAM shows the creek can cause some minor local flooding along its banks. The current site is developed, though the creek is preserved and the flood zone consists almost entirely of a small riparian buffer.



The Las Trampas Creek and buffer have been taken into account when determining the realistic housing capacity for these opportunity sites. No units will be placed within the flood zones. Similarly, earthquake fault hazards are limited to existing low density areas where infill development potential is very limited.

In summary, while Walnut Creek is subject to the environmental constraints described above, no known environmental conditions will impact development on the sites identified in the Housing Element during the planning period (refer to Appendix A). The City incorporates its knowledge of safety hazards into its land use planning and development review processes. Furthermore, the Environmental Impact Report prepared for the City's *General Plan 2025* is based on the concept of "tiering," which means that as project proposals are made on specific sites, the need for additional environmental analysis will be determined based on existing knowledge and analysis will focus on project specific issues. If a proposed project has the potential for impacts which exceed those discussed in the Program EIR, additional environmental analysis is required under State law.

### **Infrastructure and Public Service Capacities**

Water, sewer, and storm drainage capacity will not act as a constraint to development within the city limits within the 2015-2023 timeline of this Housing Element. Traffic congestion may act as a constraint, but will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Water Supply**

Water is supplied to Walnut Creek through two separate water districts. The East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) serves about two-thirds of the city, including the western, central, and southern portions. EBMUD published their Water Supply Management Program 2040 in 2012. The plan meets the need for water in the district through 2040.

The Contra Costa Water District serves the eastern portion of Walnut Creek. The District has capacity to serve development through build-out of the City's General Plan. Consistent with State law, affordable housing projects will be given priority for water services.

#### **Water Treatment**

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCSD) provides water treatment service for the entire city, as well as much of the surrounding region. Wastewater treatment is provided by one central plant located near the intersection of Interstate 680 and Highway 4 in Martinez. Currently the District is permitted to discharge 53.8 million gallons a day (mgd). This limit was increased in April 2012 and will remain the limit until March 2017. At that time, CCCSD may apply for a new permit with an increased discharge limit.

## **Storm Drainage**

The City's storm drainage system consists of underground pipes and open ditches that empty into local flood control channels. System-wide, storm drainage capacity will not impose a constraint on development, although on a case-by-case basis certain projects may need to fund local storm drainage improvements.

## **Roadway Capacity**

Roadway capacity is limited, and concerns about unacceptable levels of traffic congestion will likely have an effect on the amount of new development within the city. Many of the roadways within the city see significant levels of traffic congestion at peak hours, resulting in the need for new development to incorporate traffic mitigation measures or impact fees that will offset their impacts. Under the City's Growth Limitation Plan, a traffic study is required for new developments that generate more than 100 peak hour trips per day, and the project is referred to TRANSPAC (Transportation Partnership and Cooperation – a coordinating committee consisting of representatives from the Cities of Clayton, Concord, Martinez, Pleasant Hill, and Walnut Creek, and Contra Costa County) for review and consideration of regional traffic impacts. In addition to metering growth through the City's Growth Limitation Plan, *General Plan 2025* focuses most new development to the City's Core Area, where walking and public transit (i.e., BART, buses, and free shuttles) provide alternatives to driving.