



IN A Nutshell



No. 174

Newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

SUMMER 2016



TRANSFORMATION IN PROGRESS. Work on The Orchards center is well under way, with some stores expected to open in late summer. In addition to a 55,000 square-foot “lifestyle” Safeway, health club, restaurants and stores, the 25-acre site at the corner of Ygnacio Valley and Oak Grove roads will include Viramonte (a continuing care retirement community), more than 4 acres of open space, a children’s park and splash area, an amphitheater and walking trails.

Unique Memorial Day observance on May 30

The City of Walnut Creek will pay tribute to American GI’s from the Civil War to present day with a unique program featuring live music and dramatic readings by professional actors. The free event begins at 10 a.m. Monday, May 30 at Civic Park.



The ceremony will include musical accompaniment by the Walnut Creek Concert Band. The Coast Guard of Alameda will close the ceremony with the traditional laying of the wreath at the Veterans Memorial Plaza.

Healthy financial forecast for City budget

The City Council is set to approve a two-year balanced budget that continues all programs and services at current levels, adds six new positions over two years, and provides for additional investment in roads, buildings and parks.



The Council reviewed the proposed 2016-18 budget on May 3 and directed staff to bring it back for approval at their June 21 meeting.

As proposed, the budget:
Allows for hiring two police officers, “unfreezing” two maintenance worker positions that had gone unfilled during the

economic downturn, and adding a Code Enforcement officer and an Information Technology analyst;

Invests more than \$26 million on maintaining roads, buildings and parks;

Continues library hours at the present level of 56 hours

per week (the county library system pays for 35 hours per week; the City will fund the additional 21 hours per week); and,

Complies with the City’s reserve policies.

To read the May 3 staff report, with detailed information on the proposed budget, go to walnut-creek.org/budget.

Summer programs

High School graduations

Watch the next generation reach a milestone during Las Lomas and Northgate High School graduations.

Memorial Day

The 2016 Memorial Day observance will air throughout the summer. The ceremony blends live music and dramatic readings as we honor GLS from the Civil War to the present.

Coming up on 'Creek Currents'

Ruby Lopez hangs out at the ballfield with the senior softball team 'The Creekers,' while Brendan Moran learns about the Diablo Regional Arts Association's remarkable program to bring the arts to all kids regardless of income level.

Find Walnut Creek TV on air & online

Watch Walnut Creek TV on Comcast Channel 28 (incorporated WC only), Rossmoor 26, Astound Channel 29, and AT&T U-Verse Channel 99.

Walnut Creek TV is also available at walnutcreektv.org.

All Council and Commission meetings are recorded. For past meetings, go to www.walnut-creek.org/meetings.

For original programs, community events, etc., go to youtube.com/cityofwalnutcreek or check local cable guide listings.

Summer Pops concert

The Walnut Creek Concert Band, under the direction of Harvey Benstein, will present their annual Summer "Pops" Concert on Tuesday, July 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the Leshner Center for the Arts.

This year's program highlights the depth and talent of the members of the Walnut Creek Band, showcasing individual members and sections as soloists and presenting a program of "player favorites" from light classics, traditional marches, patriotic selections and a few surprises.

For 28 years, the Walnut Creek Concert Band has served the community as the Official Con-



The Walnut Creek Concert Band, under the direction of Harvey Benstein, will perform at the Leshner Center for the Arts on July 19 with a Summer "Pops" Concert. Here, part of the horn section at a spring concert.

cert Band of the City of Walnut Creek. Tickets are available through the Leshner Center Ticket Office, by calling 925-943-7469, or by ordering online at lesherartscenter.com. Tickets are \$17 for adults, \$14 for seniors. Free for students!

Here's what's happening

Art & Wine Festival

The Walnut Creek Chamber Art & Wine Festival is Saturday, June 4, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, June 5, 11 a.m. to 6



p.m. at Heather Farm Park. New to the event are a Premium Collection of master arts and fine wine; a Rising Stars stage; Keith Sayers' freestyle motocross exhibit; and classic arcade games. Free admission; free parking at the Shadelands Business Park with continuous shuttles. Visit www.artwinefestivalwc.com, or call 925-934-2007

Mid-week Motown on June 1

Walnut Creek 1st Wednesdays, a free downtown street party, offers live music, food trucks and a variety of entertainment each Wednesday from 5-8 p.m. on Cypress Street between North Main and Locust. The June 1 theme is "Mid-week Motown." www.walnutcreekdowntown.com.

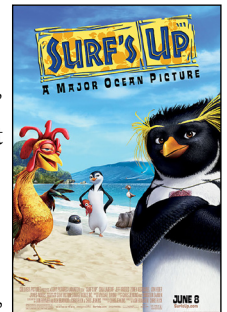
'Rock of Ages' through June 25

The Tony-nominated musical featuring big bands, big egos, and even bigger hair is at the Leshner Center through June 25. Featuring hits from the '80s and a 'rocking' cast. lesherartscenter.org.



Movies Under the Stars

The summer outdoor movie series returns with four offerings this year. "Surf's Up" will show on Friday, June 17 at Clarke Swim Center; "Inside Out" will screen on Friday, July 29 at Heather Farm Park, ballfield #2; "Aladdin" will ride his flying carpet on Friday, Aug. 19 at Civic Park, and "Toy Story" will wrap up the season on Saturday, Sept. 10 at Civic Park. Movies begin at dusk. Please do not bring pets. Call 925-943-5858 or visit WalnutCreekRec.org.



Fourth of July concert in the park

The Walnut Creek Concert Band will celebrate Independence Day with a free concert at Civic Park on July 4. The music begins at 6 p.m. Bring a picnic and a blanket to sit on the grass, and wish our nation a musical happy birthday!

History Walking Tours

The Walnut Creek Historical Society will lead an easy 90-minute downtown walking tour on June 11, July 9 and August 13. The free tour highlights points of historical interest, and departs at 9:30 a.m. from the fountain at Liberty Bell Plaza (corner of Broadway and Mt. Diablo Boulevard). Registration in advance is not required. For more details, call 925-935-7871 or visit the Historical Society's website at: www.wchistory.com.

Bedford Gallery highlights



Safe at Home: A Short Survey of Baseball Art

Through June 12

“Safe at Home” celebrates America’s beloved pastime by bringing the sights, sounds, and excitement of the stadium into the gallery.

Special closing event, 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, June 12. Visitors will enjoy poetry, literature, and music celebrating the big game, including live readings by Maxine Hong Kingston and other Bay Area luminaries.



Diablo Regional Arts Association Executive Director Peggy White shares a round of applause with youngsters waiting to see “The Wizard of Oz” on May 6. DRAA’s Arts Access provides schools with free performances or visits to the Bedford Gallery, as well as transportation.

Arts for all: Record number of school children visit Leshar Center for the Arts

They gasped when the Wicked Witch slithered on stage during a Fantasy Forum production. They thrilled to the sights and sounds of baseball, part of the Bedford Gallery’s “Safe at Home” exhibition. They eagerly followed a docent’s instructions to make artwork of their own.

And, by the time the children boarded the big yellow bus to return to school, tired but happy, they had become part of a record-breaking year for Diablo Regional Arts Association’s Arts Access program.

“Our goal was to not have to turn a single school or child away, and we did that,” said Peggy White, Executive Director for the DRAA.

All told, nearly 14,000 children visited the Leshar Center for the Arts this school year as part of the Arts Access program,

breaking previous records of 6,000. They received free tickets, transportation and study guides. For many of these school children, it was the only field trip of the year, and the first time in their lives that they were exposed to the magic and power of the arts.

This Arts Access success story owes much to the generosity of people like philanthropist Sharon Simpson, who donated \$500,000 for Educational Outreach as part of DRAA’s “Find Your Center” fund-raising campaign in honor of the Leshar Center’s 25th anniversary.

The campaign continues; in addition to Educational Outreach, the “Find Your Center” campaign offers opportunities to support Artistic Excellence and Technology at the Leshar Center. Learn more at draa.org.

Chevron Family Theatre Festival on July 16



The Chevron Family Theatre Festival returns Saturday, July 16 at the Leshar Center for the Arts. Now in its 10th year, the Festival offers a wide range of entertainment for all ages. Professional performers will stage shows in all three theatres of the Leshar Center for the Arts, as well as outside.

Free activities take place throughout the day, and ticketed performances are only \$5 per ticket. Buy tickets and learn more at lesharartscenter.org.



FLUX: A Site-Specific Installation by Crystal Wagner

June 26 – August 28

Internationally renowned artist Crystal Wagner (above, with her artwork “Elasticity”) will create an immersive piece that utilizes the entire gallery. Wagner’s mind-blowing installations form swirling, imaginative environments that appear to grow out of the walls.

Opening reception, 3-5 p.m. Sunday, June 26. Meet the artist and enjoy a root beer or beer “flux” float!

Artist Workshop: Drawing with a Blade

Saturday, June 25, 3-5 p.m.

\$90 (includes materials). Ages 16 and up

Preview Crystal Wagner’s FLUX exhibition with an artist talk and hands-on workshop. Participants will explore X-acto knife drawing techniques to create stunning stencils and a layered print. Supplies will be provided. Space is limited; tickets must be purchased to reserve a spot. No refunds. Purchase tickets in person during gallery hours or online at www.crystalwagnerflux.eventbrite.com.



City Hall to host drop-off box for absentee ballots

Walnut Creek residents who plan to vote by mail in the upcoming June 7 primary election may simply drop their ballots off at City Hall, thanks to “CoCo Vote-N-Go” boxes courtesy of the County Elections Office.

Look for the red steel box on the first-floor lobby counter, 1666 N. Main St. Ballots must be dropped into the box on or before June 7. No postage is required.

The secure, steel drop-off boxes are in place at all Contra Costa city halls and the County Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez, starting May 9. Contra Costa voters can drop their ballot at any city hall, regardless of where they live, or at any polling place on Election Day.

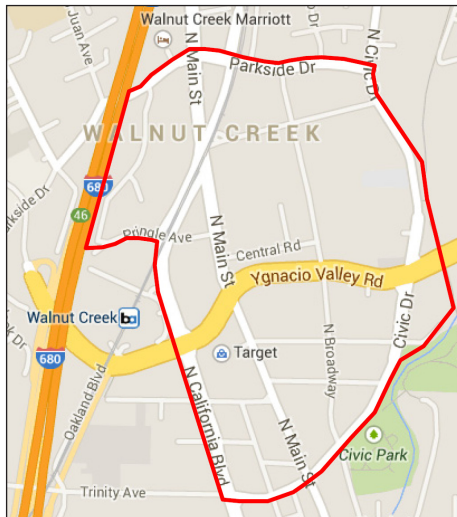
For more information about voting by mail, call 925-335-7800 or visit the Contra Costa Elections Office website at www.cocovote.us.

Three City Council seats up for election this fall

Three City Council seats are up for election this fall. The candidate nomination period begins July 18 and ends at 5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 12. If one or more incumbents does not run for re-election, the deadline to file for candidacy will be extended until 5 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 17.

Nomination papers can be obtained from the City Clerk’s Office. Candidates must be registered voters of the City of Walnut Creek.

Those interested in running for office should contact City Clerk Suzie Martinez at 925-943-5819 to schedule an appointment to pull nomination papers. The City Clerk will walk potential candidates through the election process and provide materials at this meeting. Appointments last approximately 1 hour.

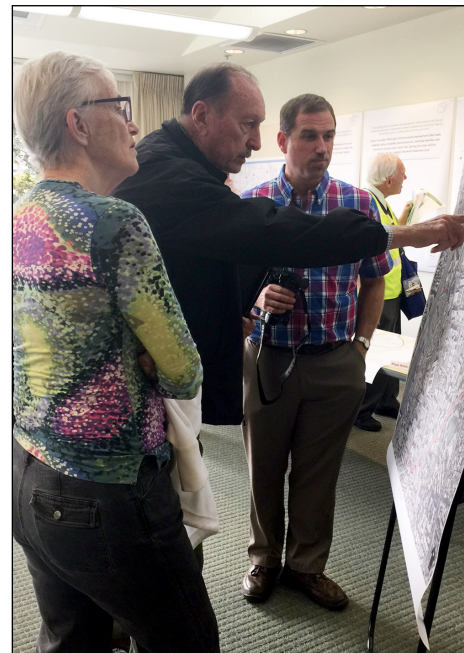


The North Downtown Specific Plan area.

Creating a long-range vision for North Downtown

The City is embarking on a Specific Plan or long-range vision for North Downtown, a diverse area extending from Civic to Parkside Drive, and from Highway 680 to the Iron Horse Trail. Looking forward 20 years or more, the plan will be prepared in collaboration with residents, local businesses and property owners.

To kick off the visioning process, the City’s Community and Economic Development department hosted an introductory open house on April 18. More than 40 people attended and shared ideas and concerns about the future of North Downtown on maps, index cards and other



Community members at an introductory open house review a map of North Downtown with senior planner Andy Smith.

exhibits, which will be reviewed as part of the planning process.

A 13-member Advisory Committee will help guide the process. Committee members include a representative from each of the City’s five commissions (Arts; Design Review; Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Planning; and, Transportation), two City Council members, and six “at large” members. North Downtown Advisory Committee meetings will be open to the public, and are expected to start later this summer.

To sign up for agenda notifications and other updates, go to walnut-creek.org/northdowntown.

Coming this summer: pay-by-phone parking

Downtown visitors will soon have another way to pay for parking at the meter. The City has partnered with Park Mobile to offer an app for customers to use when paying for parking.

Parking customers can download the free Park Mobile app, enter the meter number and desired length of stay. The app will alert parkers 15 minutes before the time limit is up. The app also allows parking sessions to be extended by phone as long as the parking session has not hit the hourly limit. There is a \$0.35 convenience fee each time the app is used.

The app will be introduced in the early summer. Look for stickers with mobile payment information and instructions on all City meters.

Skip the Line...

Pay by App Parking

Download: **PARKMOBILE APP**

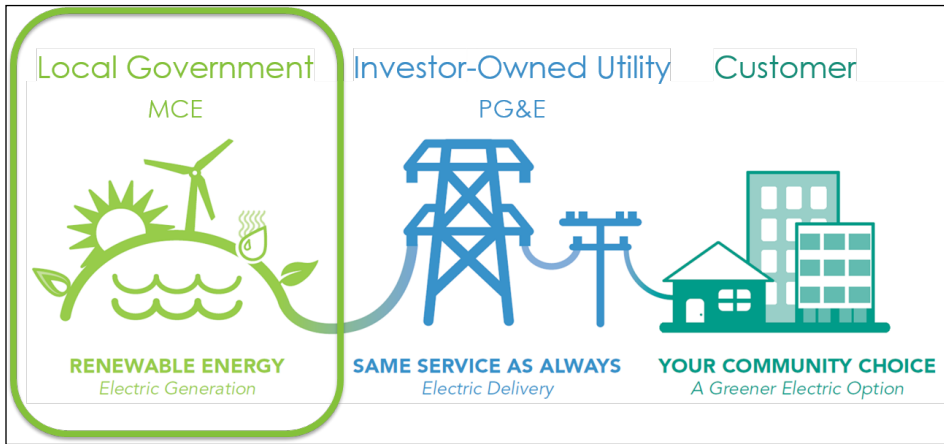


Parking Zone #:

0000

Or call 877-727-5714



This graphic illustrates how electricity provided by Marin Clean Energy will continue to be delivered to customers through the PG&E system.

City joins clean energy consortium

Residents will be automatically enrolled, with ability to opt out

New electric energy choices are coming to Walnut Creek. Starting in the fall, households in incorporated Walnut Creek will be automatically enrolled in Marin Clean Energy (MCE) unless they choose to opt out and remain with PG&E.

From a customer experience, little will change. PG&E will continue to handle billing, deliver electricity, maintain the wires and provide gas service. MCE customers will see two fees on their bills, one for PG&E electric delivery, and one for MCE electric generation. The MCE electric generation fee simply replaces the PG&E electric generation fee.

The difference is that by default MCE provides 50 percent of its electricity from renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and hydroelectricity. Customers may

also opt for MCE's "Deep Green" program with 100 percent renewable energy.

The City Council voted to join Marin Clean Energy because using renewable energy will make a significant impact in achieving Walnut Creek's Climate Action Plan goals. Rates for MCE electricity are competitive with PG&E electricity.

Marin Clean Energy will be doing extensive outreach and multiple direct mailings to residents about the upcoming change. Once a customer receives the first mailing this summer, he or she may decide whether to stay with MCE or opt out to remain with PG&E.

Detailed information about the Marin Clean Energy program, including cost comparisons and options to remain with PG&E, are available at walnut-creek.org/cleanenergy.

For more information, contact Cara Bautista-Rao, the City's sustainability program coordinator, at 925-943-5899 ext. 2216 or bautista-rao@walnut-creek.org.

Sign up for a no-cost Green House Call

Walnut Creek residents are eligible for free home energy and water efficiency assessments through the California Youth Energy Services' Green House Calls Program.

During the Green House Call, a team of trained youth Energy Specialists will assess water and energy use, offer energy saving tips, and install free energy efficient light bulbs, showerheads and faucet aerators.



The program is provided by the City of Walnut Creek, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Contra Costa Water District, PG&E, and the non-profit Rising Sun Energy Center. Both renters and homeowners are eligible.

The program runs from July 6 through August 11.

Spaces are limited. Call 510-665-1501 ext. 5 or register at risingsunenergy.org.



A rendering of the Marriott Residence Inn.

Residence Inn coming to Walnut Creek

A 160-room Marriott Residence Inn will be built at the intersection of N. California Boulevard and North Main Street near the Walnut Creek BART station. The six-story hotel will offer a mix of studio and one-bedroom guest rooms. Parking will be primarily underground, and in some cases, will be done with a mechanical lift.

Home rehabilitation loans available

Low-income homeowners in Walnut Creek whose homes need emergency repairs or significant upgrades may apply to the Home Rehabilitation Loan and Emergency Grant Program. The improvements are required to fall under the following categories: health and safety, accessibility for the disabled, energy efficiency, property maintenance, and functional obsolescence.

The City provides up to \$65,000 for approved loans. The City also gives emergency grants of up to \$20,000. The house must be the primary residence.

Household income may not exceed 80 percent of Area Median Income. The maximum incomes by household size are as follows: 5-person, \$77,390; 4-person, \$71,600; 3-person, \$64,450; 2-person, \$57,300; and 1 person, \$50,125. The program is administered by the Contra Costa County Neighborhood Preservation Program. Call 925-674-7886.

Free counseling for tenant and landlord disputes

No-cost rental counseling and conciliation services for renters and landlords on housing issues, including rent increases, evictions, discrimination, and repair problems are available through the non-profit Eden Council for Hope and Opportunity. Walnut Creek provides funding for the program. Call 855-ASK-ECHO or visit www.echofairhousing.org.

#WALNUTCREEKWORKS



SHARING THE ART OF WALKING. Volunteer public art ambassadors for the Bedford Gallery lead monthly walking tours exploring Walnut Creek's incredible downtown art collection. In this photo, "Fountainhead" artist Seyed Alavi joins the group to talk about the renowned fountain. Tours meet at 11 a.m. in front of the Leshler Center for the Arts the third Saturday of the month through November. Visit www.bedfordgallery.org for more information.

Caring volunteers connect with lonely seniors

We all have a life story to tell. Imagine if no one was there to listen?

Caring Hands volunteers have the opportunity to be there for someone who has a lifetime of stories to tell. Sponsored by John Muir Health, the heart of Caring Hands is connecting a senior with a caring volunteer so they really get the chance to know each other well.

Volunteers can make a significant

impact on dispelling the loneliness and isolation that affects so many seniors.

The Caring Hands mission is to keep seniors in their own homes and independent as long as safely possible. Volunteer hours are flexible and John Muir Health offers volunteers comprehensive training and ongoing support. For information, call Linda Groobin at 925-952-2999 or visit www.johnmuirhealth.com/caringhands.

Submit a project for Community Service Day

Community Service Day 2016 is set for Saturday, Oct. 8, and local non-profits and community groups, public schools and libraries are invited to plan a project for the day. Good projects involve simple tasks that can be accomplished by volunteers of many ages. Projects must be located in Walnut Creek.

Last year, more than 1,300 people answered the call to service! For many, it was their first chance to learn about their



project's sponsor. For more information, visit www.Walnut-Creek.org/Service. Submission deadline is June 21.

Come see how we work! Open House on Aug. 13

This year's theme is "Walnut Creek Works," and on Saturday, August 13, everyone is invited to come see how we work! Go behind the scenes at the Leshler Center, get up close and personal with giant street-sweeping machines, and get an

insider's perspective of what happens on WCPD's Bomb Squad, and more! The free event takes place from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, August 13 at City Hall and the Leshler Center for the Arts. Look for more information closer to the event.

Volunteer opportunities

Want to be part of what makes Walnut Creek work? Here are some opportunities.

Walnut Creek 'Relay for Life' volunteers sought

The American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life" is coming to Heather Farm Park for the first time on Saturday, July 23, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society's work to end cancer.

Walkers form relay teams to ensure that at least one member of the team is walking at all times. Join a team, or register a team of your own.

In addition to relay walkers, volunteers are needed to help with event planning, team recruitment, food and hospitality and more! Go to www.relayforlife.org/walnutcreekca for more information.

Shadelands Ranch Museum seeking volunteer docents

The Walnut Creek Historical Society is seeking interested adults to lead house tours for the Shadelands Ranch Museum and/or work with the 3rd Grade Living History Program.

The museum is open for tours Wednesdays and Sundays 1 to 4 p.m. The Living History Program takes place Mondays and Thursdays during the school year. No prior experience is required. Training by an experienced volunteer docent team will be provided. Time commitments are flexible.

Applications and more information are available by emailing wshadelands@sbcglobal.net or by calling the Walnut Creek Historical Society at 925-935-7871.

Book a summer picnic

Group picnic areas are available for reservation at Heather Farm Park and Larkey Park. All other picnic areas in Walnut Creek parks are available on a first-come/first-served basis. Book at walnut-creek.org/picnics or call 925-943-5858.

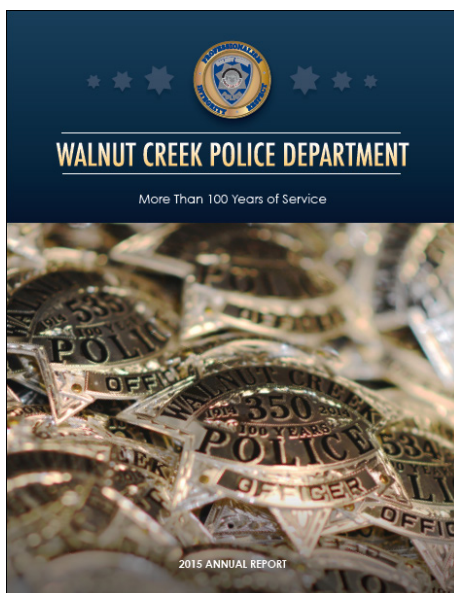
Comprehensive annual report by Walnut Creek Police Department

The Walnut Creek Police Department's 2015 Annual Report offers an in-depth look at the people and programs that make the Police Department function, and highlights some of the major initiatives implemented in the past two years. Those initiatives include:

- Creating a deployment model that puts more officers on the streets during the busiest times
- Adding a downtown foot and bike patrol
- Introducing a School Resource Officers program based at Northgate and Las Lomas high schools.
- Forming a Crime Analysis Unit to provide pertinent data on crime trends
- Launching monthly "Crime View" meetings where sworn and professional staff work strategically together to brainstorm ways to address crime and quality-of-life issues.

Rich with photos and graphics, the Annual Report tells the story of the department's units, from the Bomb Squad to Dispatch. It acknowledges the significant contributions that volunteers make, including volunteer Police Reserves, Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS) Cadets and Chaplains.

It notes that while Walnut Creek remains a very safe community, property crimes increased slightly in 2015,



"We recognize that the trust between the police and the community is delicate and we must protect and honor that trust at all costs." — Chief Tom Chaplin

particularly with auto burglaries and stolen vehicles.

Looking ahead, the report encourages community members to connect with the police through its robust social media outlets, including Nextdoor, or in person through programs such as Neighborhood Watch and Coffee with a Cop in Rossmoor.

Producing the annual report is another way to be transparent and interactive with

the community, said Chief Tom Chaplin.

"We are excited to share with our community all of the work, commitment, and successes we enjoyed this past year," he writes in the introductory Chief's Message. "We enjoy an excellent relationship with our community. We believe in policing with you, not at you."

The 28-page report is available for download by visiting walnutcreekpd.com.

Significant Crimes Trend

CATEGORIES	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	'14-'15 Change
Homicide	1	1	0	0	1	100.00%
Rape	2	3	4	4	2	-50.00%
Robbery	14	19	31	24	28	16.67%
Aggravated Assault	53	63	43	46	60	30.43%
Simple Assault	455	317	282	280	276	-1.43%
Residential Burglary	200	206	148	196	162	-17.35%
Vehicle Burglary	413	419	478	530	632	19.25%
Theft (From Motor Vehicle)	255	266	314	338	357	5.62%
Theft (All Other Types)	663	620	680	728	753	3.43%
Shoplifting	147	163	172	200	220	10.00%
Stolen Vehicles	138	151	169	224	245	9.38%
Fraud Crimes	419	363	382	383	363	-5.22%



Walnut Creek Employees of the Year Will Appel and Gina Eicher.

City names Employees of the Year

Gina Eicher, Public Works Administrative Analyst II, and Walnut Creek Police Officer Will Appel are the 2015 Walnut Creek Employees of the Year.

Eicher joined the City in 2010, and is based at the Public Works' Corporation Yard. Public Works Director Heather Ballenger called Eicher "the quarterback who has made the Public Works Corporation Yard a high functioning, well-oiled machine." Going above and beyond her job assignments, Eicher also

serves on the City-wide Safety Committee and the Information Technical Advisory Committee.

Appel started working for the City in 2009 as a Reserve Police Officer. He was hired as a full-time Police Officer in 2010. He is a Regional SWAT Team member, a Field Training and Defensive Tactics Team instructor, and an award-winning sniper.

Police Chief Tom Chaplin described Appel as a "consummate professional who always puts others above himself."

More community gardens for Walnut Creek

Walnut Creek will see its gardens grow over the next few years. The City Council on May 3 unanimously approved a plan to create community gardens in Heather Farm, San Miguel and Arbolado parks.

The pesticide-free gardens will be created in a phased approach, with the first being built and managed at the Gardens at Heather Farm. The City will provide the materials to create the 50-plot garden, using about \$45,000 of park fees paid by developers.

Additional public outreach and site evaluations will be conducted before moving forward with the plan to build community gardens at San Miguel and Arbolado parks.

Surveys conducted earlier this year found overwhelming support for adding community gardens/farms/orchards.

There is a six-year waiting



period for a plot at Howe Homestead Park, the lone community garden on City property.

The Council expressed a desire to see more gardens developed in the future, particularly in parks closer to the downtown, where many residents live in apartments and condominiums without backyards for gardens.

Those interested in learning more about community gardens/farms/orchards may contact Mike Vickers, who manages the City's Park and Open Space Division, at 925-256-3538 or Vickers@walnut-creek.org.

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