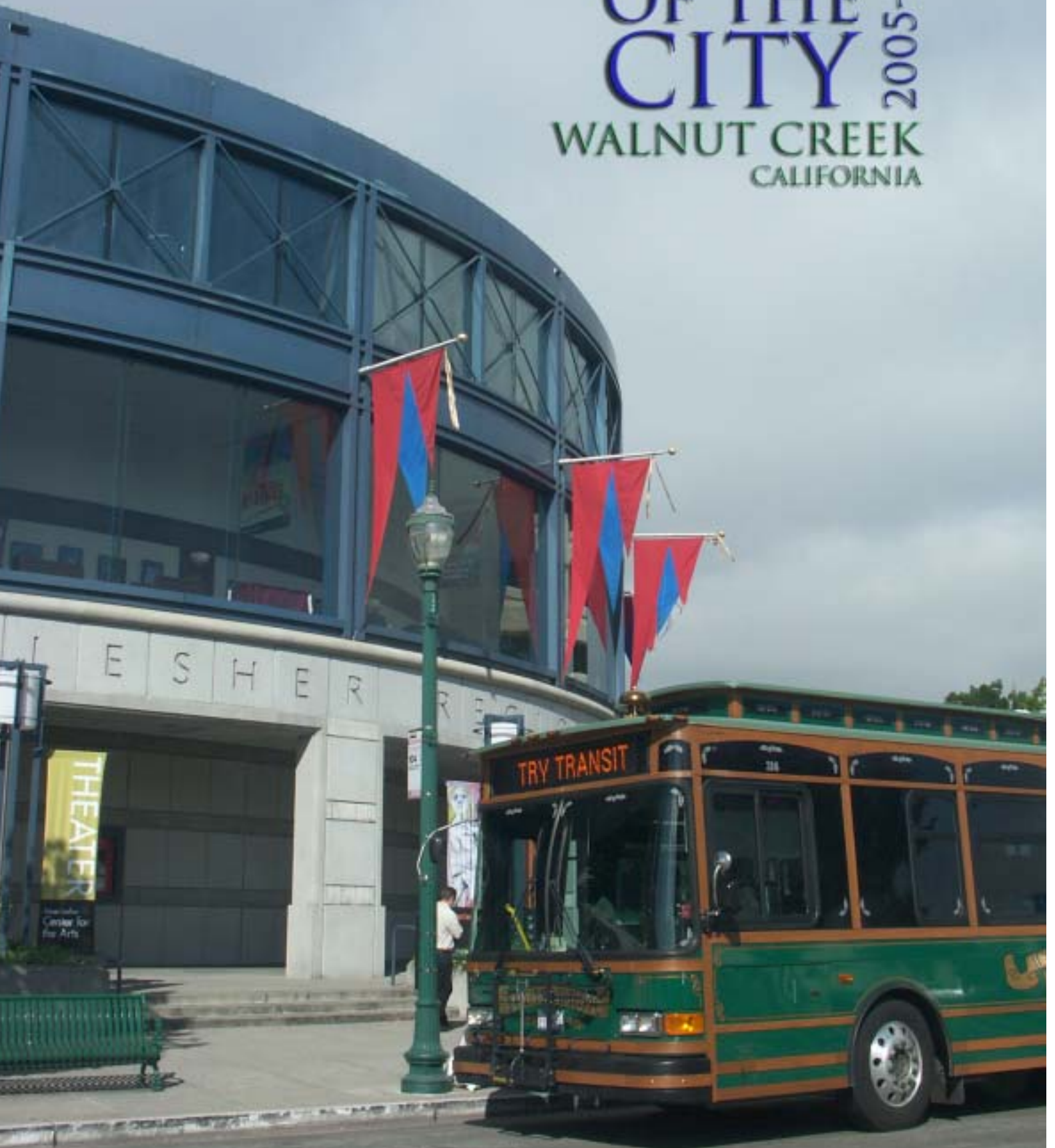


STATE  
OF THE  
CITY 2005-2006  
WALNUT CREEK  
CALIFORNIA





### **City Council**

Kathy Hicks, Mayor  
Susan Rainey, Mayor Pro Tem  
Charlie Abrams  
Gwen Regalia  
Gary Skrel

### **City Clerk**

Patrice Olds

### **City Treasurer**

Ronald Cassano

### **Executive Staff**

Gary F. Pokorny	City Manager
Paul Valle-Riestra	City Attorney
Lorie Tinfow	Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director
Valerie J. Barone	Community Development Director
Dan Richardson	Public Services Director
Barry Gordon	Arts, Recreation & Community Services Director
Tom Soberanes	Chief of Police

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On the front cover:

The City's Free Ride shuttle got a new look in November 2005 when the coaches were transformed to look like vintage trolley cars. This Route 104 stop is in front of the Dean Leshner Center for the Arts.

On the back cover:

Highlights of 2005-06 (clockwise from top left): the City's 2005 Holiday Tree Lighting in Civic Park, the grand opening of Walnut Creek on Ice on Nov. 21, 2005, the grand opening of the Walnut Creek Skate Park at Heather Farm Park on November 12, 2005.

# City Manager's message

**W**e have a story to tell, and it's one we think you'll want to know. It's an inspiring tale about the myriad strengths of our community and of the partnerships that have taken place in the last two years that have helped to make Walnut Creek the kind of place we all treasure.

The story of the last two years can be found in the following pages of this 2005-06 edition of our *State of the City* report. For 20 years we have used this special report to share a snapshot of the many ways the City of Walnut Creek has worked with the community to accomplish great and lasting things.

In 2005/2006, the snapshot tells the story of a community that worked together to redefine the future of Walnut Creek through its new General Plan. It's the story of a community that saw the need and value of a bigger and better downtown library and assisted the City in determining what that library should be. It's the story of how a community helped build a new meeting hall for our honored military veterans while paving the way for better community use of the old veterans building site.

In short, it's a very positive story. So often we've heard from visitors to our community how they envy our unique mixture of riches: a varied and vibrant downtown, thousands of acres of public open space, great schools, abundant parks and trails, a magnificent performing arts center, and an arts education program that is the largest in northern California.

But perhaps our greatest asset is the vigorous, can-do spirit that emerges from households, schools, businesses, churches, synagogues, and offices throughout Walnut Creek whenever there is a new challenge. That community spirit helped us capitalize on new opportunities time and again over the last two years. Whether it was designing and building a new skate park, working with the downtown business community to make a seasonal ice rink a huge success, finding a new home for our dog park, or creating safer children's play areas at our parks, our community met the challenge.

Not surprisingly, our greatest challenges turned out to be our greatest successes. When some citizens in 2005 believed the City Council might approve an

increased rate of commercial development over what has been allowed since 1993, the City Council listened and determined that things should remain on a measured course for the foreseeable future. That, in turn,

provided the foundation for a new general plan that respects the wishes of the people while still allowing Walnut Creek to evolve. The nearly three-year odyssey to redraft the General Plan engaged hundreds of residents in a meaningful dialogue on what we want our community to be. It turns out we want it to stay much as it has been. And that's a good thing, because it means we've been on the right path all along.

Another challenge occurred when the City failed to garner the necessary two-thirds supermajority to pass a library construction bond measure in November 2005. In an attempt to reflect on the meaning of that event, the City Council paused to take more time to listen to the public's concerns about the project before moving forward. Energized by the public's desire for a better downtown library, the Council downsized the parking and vowed in February 2006 to find a way to build it even if bond funds didn't materialize. Unfortunately, that scenario played itself out in June 2006 when the State library bond measure failed to pass statewide, even though it was supported in Walnut Creek. Undaunted, the City will use a combination of public and private financing to make this dream a reality.

As you read the *State of the City*, I hope you will reflect on the many good things that have been accomplished in the last two years and remember that they could not have been achieved without that sense of spirit, partnership and community that has always defined Walnut Creek.

I think you'll agree that our story has a happy ending: Walnut Creek continues to be one of the best places to live and work anywhere.

Enjoy.



Gary Pokorny

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary Pokorny". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

# City Activities

## City moves forward with new library plans

After years of study and community discussion, the City vigorously moved forward in 2006 with plans for a new, larger, and more tech-friendly downtown library to replace the 45-year-old facility next to Civic Park.

The \$43.5 million project was back on track in June 2006 after two library funding measures — one put forth by the City, the other by the State — failed despite strong local support. Despite the disappointing setbacks, the City Council determined that the City could afford to build the 42,000-square-foot library with its own funds without cutting services or programs to residents.

Although the City's Measure R garnered an impressive 61.5 percent "yes" vote in November 2005, it fell short of the two-thirds supermajority required for passage. Undaunted, the City Council in February 2006 vowed to build the new library even if the State bond measure, Proposition 81, failed in June (which it did).

The Council responded by trimming the cost of the project by 20 percent and expressed confidence that the



Citizens reviewed and critiqued several conceptual models and illustrations for the new library in early May 2005.

project could be completed with a combination of City funding and a vigorous private funding campaign led by the Walnut Creek Library Foundation.

With a spending plan in hand and a renowned architectural firm engaged, the Council on Aug. 1 expressed delight in the final conceptual design for the library prepared by Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning of South San Francisco (see page 9).

The selection of the right architectural firm was a major community accomplishment in May 2005 after more than 1,700 citizens viewed conceptual designs submitted by four firms at the City's invitation.

Based on recommendations from the public and a selection committee, the City hired Group 4 for its design and long track record of designing public buildings that meet community needs.

The new library will be a two-level facility to be built on the site of the existing library with lively areas for children, teens, and young adults. It will also provide lots of computer stations, quiet reading areas, a large reference collection section, meeting rooms, a Friends of the Library bookstore, and a cafe. An underground parking garage along with an adjacent surface parking lot will provide ample parking for library and community center patrons.

The City expects to break ground on the project in April 2008 and complete it by spring 2010.

## City OK's Comcast upgrade

In a move that pleased thousands of Comcast customers throughout Walnut Creek, the City Council in July 2005 approved the cable company's request to upgrade its system so it could offer high-speed internet, telephone service, and more high definition television channels.

The agreement came on the heels of a federal court ruling that Comcast must obtain written permission from the City before upgrading its system. In doing so, the court denied Comcast's attempt to force the City to allow it to rebuild its antiquated cable system without a formal



**CITY HONORS ITS RETURNING VETERANS** — Continuing a tradition begun in 2004, the City Council honored 10 local residents who had returned from military duty in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan at Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies in Civic Park in 2005 and 2006. Receiving commendations on Memorial Day 2005 were (from left) Army Maj. Aaron Davis, Army Maj. Robert Stern, Army Sgt. 1st Class William Cleaves, Army Sgt. 1st Class James McMurry, Navy AW2 Logan Knight, and Army Cpl. Richard Fehling.



Walnut Creek resident Rose Tranby uses a fire extinguisher with the assistance of partner Roc Lumley during a CERT training sessions in June 2005.

agreement. Comcast is expected to complete the upgrade in late 2006.

### Disaster training for community

Walnut Creek residents lined up in 2005 and 2006 to learn how to cope during and after a major emergency in the City's extremely popular Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training program.

More than 300 citizens went through the training, which was coordinated by the City Manager's office with the assistance of the Contra Costa Fire District.

Walnut Creek was the first city in Contra Costa County to offer the 20-hour training course, which is held four times a year and funded through a federal Homeland Security grant.

The City also sponsored an Emergency Preparedness Fair on Sept. 11, 2005 that attracted more than 3,000 people to Civic Park during the four-hour event.

### City supports civic pride projects

In 2005, the City Council disbursed nearly \$52,000 in Civic Pride Grants to nine community groups as it continued its practice of supporting a wide variety of non-profit social service organizations and activities out of the City's general fund. Civic Pride was started in

1989 to support programs and projects that improve the quality of life in Walnut Creek.

Among the groups receiving Civic Pride grants were the Walnut Creek Downtown Business Association (\$20,000 for the Civic Park ice rink), Friends of Civic Arts Education Association, Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek Aquanauts synchronized swim team, and the Walnut Creek Historical Society.

In May 2006, the Council also allocated \$433,000 in federal and City funds to support affordable housing programs and community service organizations that serve a broad range of people from needy children to senior citizens.

### New website unveiled

In January 2006 the City unveiled a newly-designed website to replace the site originally launched in 1996. The new City homepage at [walnut-creek.org](http://walnut-creek.org) features an array of photos of Walnut Creek and a comprehensive list of links on drop-down menus that help the user navigate the 8,000-page site. ❖



**HITTING THE ICE** — Ice skaters of all ages swarmed to the Walnut Creek on Ice rink in Civic Park from Nov. 21, 2005 to Jan. 16, 2006. The ice rink was made possible by a generous donation from Long's Drug, a \$20,000 City Civic Pride Grant, contributions from several Walnut Creek businesses, and support from the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Business Association.

### FACTS ON FILE

In 2005 and 2006, the City Manager's Office:

- Conducted four Citizens Institute programs attended by 110 residents.
- Provided over 60 historical downtown walking tours for over 1,220 third graders and nearly 350 parents.
- Conducted four City Bus Tours for 200 residents.

# Finances

## 2006-2008 Operating Budget

A robust local economy coupled with careful and conservative planning will once again see the City of Walnut Creek in good stead with a balanced budget for 2006-08.

The two-year financial plan, adopted by the City Council on June 20, 2006, continues vital services and programs without any reductions or major increases in fees.

The \$132 million spending plan also provides funding to construct the new downtown library while sustaining the City's on-going policy of maintaining streets, roads, and other facilities on a regular basis.

The budget includes \$124 million in expenditures for operations (see pie charts, next page), the largest of which is for the Police and Public Services departments. Personnel services account for 72 percent of the new budget, reflecting the fact that we are a service organization.

The City anticipates nearly \$129 million in revenues, a 24 percent increase over the previous budget period. As always, the City's financial fitness relies on



Walnut Creek's vibrant downtown (Plaza Escuela is shown here) is the economic engine of the East Bay, providing most of the City's anticipated \$43.5 million in sales tax revenue in 2006-08.

Rafat Raie

a hearty mixture of retail stores, restaurants, and auto dealerships. This combination is expected to generate \$43.5 million in sales tax revenue, the largest single source of income for the City which will account for nearly 34 percent of the City's total revenues through June 2008. Auto sales alone make up nearly a quarter of all the sales tax revenue the City receives.

As part of its budget process, the City updated its five-year Long Term Financial Plan (first adopted in 2004) so that the City will remain in good financial health through 2010.

The 2006-08 Capital Investment Program (CIP) budget calls for spending \$15 million, including \$3 million for major roadway reconstruction as well as funding for other projects such as opening the Lar Rieu park, an off-leash dog park, and improvements to Civic Park, including an enhanced creek walk.

## How the new downtown library will be financed

After both a local and a statewide library bond measure failed to gain the margins needed for passage, the City Council and staff found ways to finance construction of the new downtown library by reallocating local budget resources.

The City Council had already set aside \$17.4 million for the \$43.5 million project. In June 2006 it concluded that it could readily shift another \$8.2 million from various reserves in the 2006-08 budget without any cutbacks to services and programs.

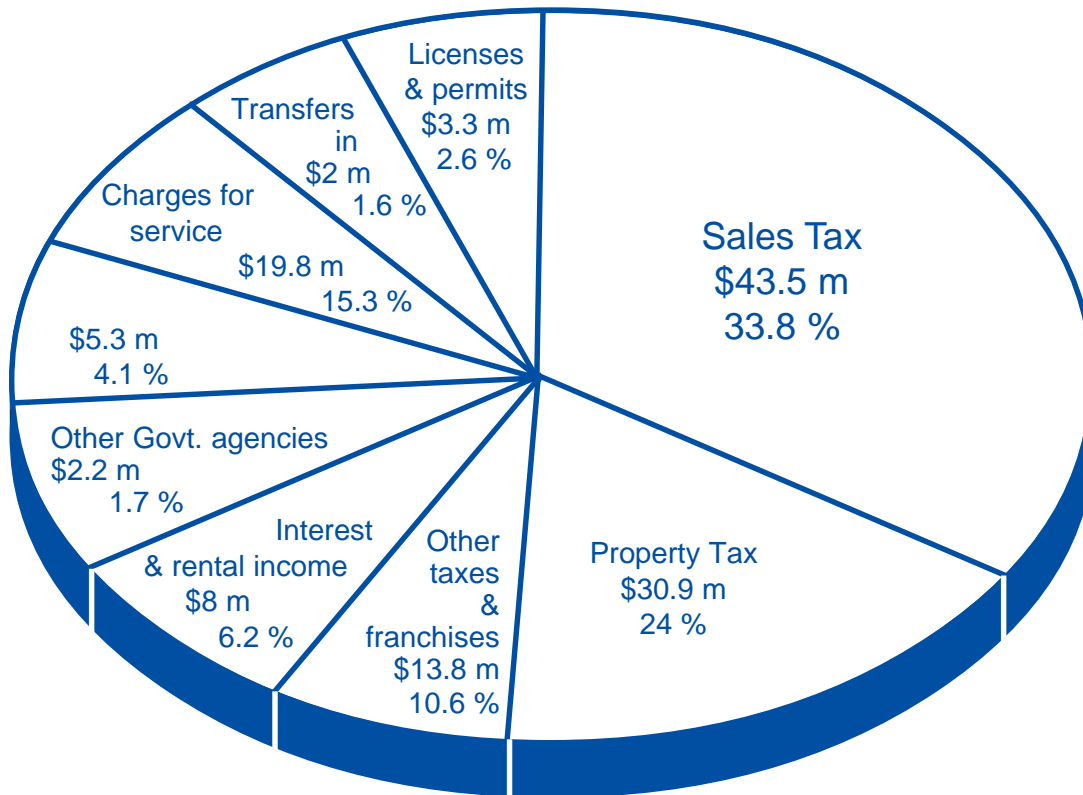
The remaining \$17.9 million will be obtained through private donations (an estimated \$5 million) and from a range of other City funds (most of which will be available by the time construction begins in spring 2008). ❖



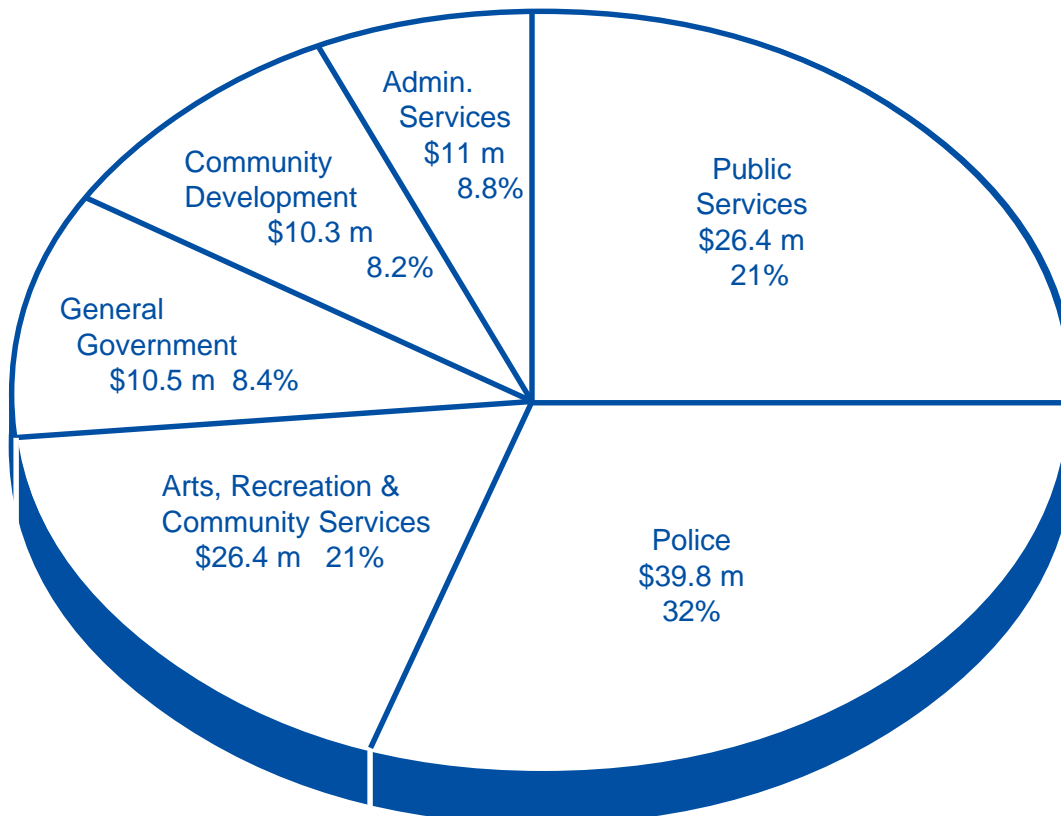
Street resurfacing projects throughout Walnut Creek, and particularly in the downtown, accounted for the lion's share of Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding in 2005 and 2006. (For details about the City's street maintenance program, see page 16.)

Don Manikoski

## 2006-08 Operating Revenues — \$128,970,500



## 2006-08 Operating Expenditures — \$124,642,879



## 2006-08 Revenues over Expenditures — \$4,327,621

# Planning & Building

## General Plan adopted

A new General Plan that charts Walnut Creek's course for the next 20 years was adopted by the City Council on April 4, 2006 after nearly three years of work involving more than 1,000 residents.

As a blueprint for Walnut Creek's future, *General Plan 2025* is the single most important planning document in the City. The new



plan, which updates the 1989 version, incorporates the goals of the community as well as policies that will help the City reach these goals.

So, what's in the new General Plan?

The Plan recognizes that there are some things Walnut Creek citizens want to keep the same: abundant open space areas; the City's commitment to protecting our creeks, view sheds, and quality public recreational opportunities; protection of the character and quality of our existing residential neighborhoods.

The General Plan maintains the existing 75,000-square-foot per year commercial growth cap (although it exempts the Shadelands Business Park in an effort to develop more quality jobs at that location).

*General Plan 2025* also includes a residential growth management program that includes a cap that is set to be equivalent to the State-assigned housing target — which is currently 1,653 units — for the next 20 years, or about 83 units per year.

The General Plan also recognizes that commercial development plays an important role in maintaining the vitality of the local economy by providing jobs, a wide range of places to shop and obtain services, and substantial tax revenues that support the high level of City services residents receive.

Because traffic remains a big concern to Walnut Creek residents, the General Plan suggests focusing new development near public transportation and improving pedestrian and bicycle opportunities.

To maximize public input, the City held an ambitious series of televised public hearings on the draft General Plan before the Planning Commission and City Council in 2005 and early 2006.



A capacity audience listened to Assistant Planning Manager Victoria Walker discuss the proposed General Plan at a City Council public hearing on March 21, 2006.

## City honored for new veterans hall

The City of Walnut Creek, along with the City of Lafayette and Contra Costa County, received a prestigious Helen Putnam Award from the League of California Cities in 2005 for their joint effort to build a new meeting hall for local veterans groups to use.

The new veterans memorial building was constructed in Lafayette to replace Walnut Creek's 81-year-old veterans memorial building on Locust Street, across from the Century 14 Theatres, which had fallen into a state of dilapidation and was razed on Aug. 4, 2006.

Meanwhile, the City Council had decided to rethink plans to redevelop the veterans building block after efforts stalled on a project that called for new retail, condominiums, and parking.

The 1.39-acre area, known as Block C, is bordered

### FACTS ON FILE

- The Planning Division from Jan. 1, 2005 through Aug. 30, 2006 accepted 781 applications, ranging from small home additions to major retail projects.
- Planners handled 208 projects, 465 home occupation applications, 108 sign permit requests.
- Code Enforcement, from Jan. 1, 2005 through Aug. 30, 2006, responded to 2,184 nuisance and zoning cases, including abandoned vehicle removal, debris in public view, and illegal banners.
- Planning staff responds to 5,200 inquiries a year, or approximately 430 a month.
- Planning staff made 11,650 inspection stops in 2005.



by Locust Street, Olympic Boulevard, and Mt. Diablo Boulevard. It had been the focus of a detailed redevelopment plan, but the majority of the Council agreed on July 18, 2006 that the City's goals for the block were unattainable due partly to a lack of cooperation among neighboring property owners.

### **Downtown improvement district OK'd**

To promote and market downtown Walnut Creek, the City Council in June 2005 established a downtown business improvement district. The City began collecting an annual fee (typically \$125) from more than 500 businesses to generate an estimated \$118,000 annually to fund the Walnut Creek Downtown Business Association's activities, such as beautification projects and special events.

### **John Muir Medical Center expansion**

Following lengthy study and review, the City in February 2006 approved John Muir Medical Center's master plan for a major expansion. The project will involve a net 263,000-square-foot expansion of the 41-year-old hospital, including a new, earthquake-resistant, two-wing, five-story addition and a 757-space parking structure. The ambitious, eight-phase project is envisioned to be completed over the next 40 years.

### **Historic preservation rules studied**

A committee of historical society members, business owners, and residents spent five months in 2006 guiding City staff in developing guidelines to govern how various historic buildings and sites within Walnut Creek are to be preserved. The City Council is expected to consider adopting a new historic preservation ordinance in early 2007.

### **Affordable housing**

In an effort to provide more housing options to people of all income levels, the City moved forward with several projects in 2005 and 2006 to help it meet its housing obligations.

In fact, the City of Walnut Creek was commended by the State in May 2006 "for making substantial progress in meeting its housing needs, including the



The City helped fund the Acalanes Court apartments for very low income families. Margot Ernst

approval of 395 affordable units, of which 134 are affordable to very low-income households."

City officials helped break ground in March 2005 on the 17-unit Acalanes Court apartments (formerly La Casa Bonita) at Trinity Avenue and Oakland Boulevard, made possible by a \$1.8 million contribution from the City, including a land grant and redevelopment funds. All 17 apartments in the project, which opened in early August 2006, are being rented to very low income families. The City helped negotiate the acquisition of the site for the project from Caltrans.

Construction was also completed on the 47-duplex/condominium Citrus Walk project on Citrus Avenue that includes five affordable units. The City also approved the 125-unit Windsor Apartments (with 13 affordable units) next to the Marriott Hotel; Riviera Homes, a 48-apartment complex with five affordable units; and the 33-unit low-income senior housing Casa Montego II project on Montego.

### **Building permit activity**

Building permit activity was up by 1.5 percent in 2005 as the City issued 4,440 construction-related permits, compared to 4,333 permits in 2004. However, permit valuation climbed 32 percent — from \$74.8 million in 2004 to \$109.2 million in 2005 (in large part due to the John Muir Medical Center and Mercer projects).

More homes were built as well, as the City issued 55 permits for new single family houses in 2005, compared to 28 in 2004. Three permits were issued for multi-family structures in 2005.

Remodeling and additions to existing homes were down about 12.5 percent in 2005, with 1,095 residential alteration and addition permits being issued, compared with 1,231 in 2004. ❖

# Engineering & Transportation

## Downtown parking study done

With a downtown as successful as Walnut Creek's, an unavoidable side effect is increased traffic and the need for more parking to accommodate everyone who wishes to shop, dine, or be entertained. Even though visitors and shoppers perceive there is a lack of parking, the opposite is actually true. There is, in fact, an abundance of parking in the downtown, although most of it is within parking structures and not on the street.

Managing parking is the City's goal, and to that end the City in 2005 conducted a comprehensive study of downtown Walnut Creek's parking and transportation issues. The study's findings prompted the City Council in May 2006 to approve a wide-ranging downtown parking and transportation plan that calls for increasing on-street parking meter rates from 50 cents to \$1 an hour and increasing the City parking garage daily fee from \$3 to \$5 to be more in line with fees charged at nearby parking facilities.

The parking meter rate change, which could take place by early 2007, is intended to create an environment so users can regularly find an on-street parking space. The increase is also intended to make off-street parking more attractive to long-term visitors.

The three primary goals of the plan are to:

- 1) improve parking access and availability downtown and in the three City parking structures;
- 2) increase ridership on the Free Ride trolley service (Route 104);
- 3) make downtown more pedestrian-friendly.

## Capital Investment Program

Major roadway reconstruction projects were completed in 2005 and 2006 as part of the Capital Investment Program (CIP), including an extensive beautification of



The new Free Ride trolleys debuted in November 2005 on Route 104 in downtown Walnut Creek.

North Main Street between Civic Drive and Ygnacio Valley Road (see photo below) and several paving projects in the downtown area.

Other major CIP projects completed were the Walnut Creek Skate Park (\$800,000) and the updating of play areas (\$392,150) that included the installation of climbing rocks at Civic Park (see photo, page 16) and seven new pieces of play apparatus at Larkey Park.

The City invested \$4.8 million in 16 CIP projects during the last two years. The major costs were in three

downtown roadway reconstruction projects that included rehabilitating California Boulevard and providing facelifts to more than two miles of streets, crosswalks, and ramps. The work was done at night to minimize the impact on businesses, residents, and commuters (for more on street projects, see page 16).



**MAIN STREET'S FACELIFT COMPLETED** — Following 10 months of construction, the City in February 2005 finished the makeover of North Main Street between Civic Drive and Ygnacio Valley Road. The \$2.4 million cost will be shared by adjacent property owners on Main Street. The finished project involved the removal of power lines and utility poles and the addition of attractive new landscaping, walkways, lighting, and pedestrian-friendly crosswalks.

## Library conceptual design approved

The City Council approved a final conceptual design for the new downtown library on Aug. 1, 2006.

The design, prepared by Group 4 Architecture of South San Francisco, showcases a two-level structure with a lot of windows, appealing open areas inside and outside, a curved roof line, and a glass beacon. The exterior's mix of glass, wood, plaster, and brick is highlighted by balcony decks at the north and south ends of the building that will provide users a pleasant setting for reading or contemplating the park.

The 42,000-square-foot library will be built on the same site as the existing, 9,234-square-foot facility. The two-story building will be constructed atop a 135-space underground garage, with an additional 30 spaces of surface parking off Lincoln Avenue. By shifting the new building closer to Lincoln Avenue, the City has created more green space in Civic Park at the north end of the library.

The new library will be accessible from all four sides. It will meet environmental standards with energy-efficient heating and cooling and will use natural lighting as much as possible.

Unlike the current library, built in 1961, the new facility will meet all disability access standards.

## Free Ride buses get a fresh look

The City's popular Free Ride buses, which since 1996 have been transporting folks at no charge from Walnut Creek BART to various destinations in downtown Walnut Creek, got a fun facelift in late 2005 when the City Council appropriated \$180,000 to convert three buses into classic cable car trolleys.

The Route 104 Free Ride service is operated by the County Connection with support from the City. The Council decided to dress up the shuttle buses to draw attention to the free service and encourage more ridership. A head count of riders in December 2005 indicated an impressive 20 percent increase in daytime ridership compared with a year earlier.

In partnership with Broadway Plaza, the Free Ride's operating hours were extended from 7 until 11 p.m. during the 2005 holiday season. The increase in ridership, particularly during the evening hours, showed there is a demand for evening service on the route. ❖



The conceptual art of the north view of the new downtown library as it would appear from Civic Park (above) and the interior (below).

Group 4



## FACTS ON FILE

The Engineering and Transportation divisions from January 1, 2005 through August 2006:

- Issued/renewed 2,164 Preferential Residential Parking Program permits in 12 areas
- Reviewed 1,726 accident reports
- Responded to 379 public traffic complaints
- Issued 416 oversize truck permits
- Maintained 96 traffic signals
- Maintained 1,500 street lights
- Maintained 4,500 traffic control signs
- Maintained 5,700 street name signs
- Maintained 3,880 pavement legends and 160 miles of striping and curb marking
- Maintained 1,650 parking meters
- Installed 308 digital parking meters
- Installed 120 countdown pedestrian signals
- Issued 1,553 encroachment permits
- Reviewed 70 applications for site development permits

# Arts & Entertainment

## Center REP enjoys banner year

A vibrant, New York-bound tribute to the music of John Denver that drew 8,000 fans launched the most successful season in the City's Center REPeritory Company's history in 2005-06.

*Almost Heaven: John Denver's America* shattered Center REP's records for ticket sales, selling 91 percent of available seats for the four-week run in September-October 2005. The show was produced by Denver's longtime friend and business manager Hal Thau. Large audiences were also drawn to Center REP's other productions: *The Women* by Clare Booth Luce, Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*, Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*, Neil Simon's *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, and actress Kerri Shawn's outstanding encore performance in *Shirley Valentine*.

Center REP's 39th season ended with 30,000 tickets sold and gross revenues of \$1 million. To open its 40th season in September 2006, Center REP staged *The Marriage of Figaro*, Beaumarchais's 18th century comic masterpiece that inspired Mozart's opera.

The Young REPeritory Theatre Workshop, a program of Center REP that celebrated its 32nd year in 2005/06, trained and developed nearly 200 students interested in the theatre arts over the past two years.

Center Manager Scott Denison was responsible for bringing *Almost Heaven* to Walnut Creek. He also directed one of the most popular shows presented at the Center in 2005/2006: Contra Costa Musical Theatre's



Young Rep students rehearsed a scene during their summer class at the Margaret Leshner Theatre in July 2006.



Center REP's record-setting 2005-06 season was highlighted by (clockwise from left) "*Almost Heaven*," "*Desire Under the Elms*" and "*Shirley Valentine*."



production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. As a result of the popularity of these shows and productions by a host of other local companies, the Dean Leshner Center for the Arts in 2005 and 2006 saw nearly 1,000 shows and events scheduled, which attracted over 425,000 patrons.

One of the most popular drawing cards continued to be the *Newsmakers: Leshner Speaker Series*, which brought to the Leshner Center in 2005-06 such celebrities as former San Francisco 49er quarterback Steve Young, Pulitzer Prize winning humorist Dave Barry, *60 Minutes* correspondent Lesley Stahl, and poet/author Maya Angelou.

The biggest event in terms of media coverage was the Center's hosting of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Oct. 24, 2005 to promote four ballot measures in a televised broadcast sponsored by KTVU-Channel 2 and the *Contra Costa Times*.

## Bedford Gallery

Bedford Gallery enjoyed a resurgence in popularity as attendance increased to approximately 55,000 during 2005/2006. This helped the City achieve an estimated gross of \$112,000 in admission fees through June 2006. The year started off with the visually stunning exhibition, *The World of Joyce Hsu: A Site-Specific Installation of Dogs, Daisies and Flying Objects*. The gallery was transformed into a colorful, animated universe created by Oakland artist Joyce Hsu. The



Bedford Gallery volunteer Bonnie Hunt, left, assisted visitor DonnaMarie Wasilewski of Walnut Creek during her visit to see the "Majestic Tapestries of Magnolia Editions" exhibition in January 2006.

exhibition attracted 13,400 visitors, including 1,636 children on tours.

In summer 2005 the gallery hosted a national juried exhibition of ceramics called *POTS: Objects of Virtue*. The work on view ranged from humble, almost prehistoric-looking vessels to the most contemporary flights of fancy. The gallery grossed \$19,000 from art sales and hosted an "Art of Collecting Contemporary Clay" lecture and a Master Potter Workshop with Mark Pharis through the Clay Arts Guild of Walnut Creek. Following this was a juried exhibition of work by Contra Costa artists titled *Local Voice: Defining Community Through Art*. The gallery received 864 entries of artwork from the local community, and juror Marian Parmenter of the SFMOMA Artists Gallery selected 216 works for the exhibition. The opening reception on Sept. 14, 2005 was one of the largest ever with 450 people attending.

The most celebrated exhibition of the season was *The Kennedy Years: Photographs from the Archives of Stanley Tretick*, presented in partnership with John F. Kennedy University. Tretick's photos of the Kennedy White House are some of the most memorable images of the administration. Exhibition attendance was 13,254, including 250 people who attended the Opening Night Gala on Feb. 4, 2006 and 350 adults and 206



Carol Chiavetta of Civic Arts Education assisted a resident in the program's new office that opened in City Hall in May 2005.

elementary school children who came for tours. Bedford Gallery and JFK University also presented a *Kennedy Speaker Series* featuring Ted Kennedy, Jr., Rory Kennedy and University President Steven Stargardter.

Other popular exhibitions included *Majestic Tapestries of Magnolia Editions*, *See Jane Run: Contemporary Art About Childhood*, *By the Hand: A National Juried Exhibition of Traditional and Innovative Craft*, *Embroidered Stories / Knitted Tales* and 2006 will finish with *Anatomy of a Hot Rod*.

## Civic Arts Education

Civic Arts Education — the largest community-supported arts education program in Northern California — saw the long-awaited relocation of its administrative offices to City Hall in May 2005 after spending more than 40 years in "temporary" buildings on the east side of the creek in Civic Park.

Civic Arts Ed serves an estimated 16,000 students in 1,200 classes, workshops and programs each year. In 2005/2006 the ArtReach program of Civic Arts Ed provided activities for 2,430 K-8th grade students as well as professional development for over 200 teachers and artists.

In 2005 and 2006, Arts, Adventures and Academics, a joint summer program with the Walnut Creek School District, provided painting, acting, singing, and dancing classes to over 500 area children.

The Fine Arts Preschool provided instruction to 293 children in 2005 and 273 children in 2006. Highlights of the program during 2005/2006 included the fifth annual "Winterfest" children's concert for parents, the child-initiated Tower Project (an in-depth study of towers), and the Community Helper Project.

The Youth Arts program enrolled 4,776 students between Jan. 1, 2005 and Aug. 31, 2006. ❖

# Police

## Character Counts

The Walnut Creek Police Department launched a new awareness program in 2005 to talk to more than 800 Walnut Creek fifth graders about how to be better people.

“Character Counts” is a 10-week program that uses a set of guidelines for appropriate behavior that children are encouraged to follow.

Ten police officers went into 36 classrooms in 12 public and private elementary schools throughout Walnut Creek to conduct the program, which served to remind children to be honest, to treat others with respect, and to take responsibility for their actions.

The program, funded by the City of Walnut Creek, replaced the traditional D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program that ended in June 2004.

“Character Counts” continues the dialogue on drug and alcohol awareness by focusing on things like peer pressure, being able to say no, and identifying the types of illegal substances that might be offered to children.



Officer Bill Holian monitors protesters at Civic Drive and Locust Street during Gov. Schwarzenegger's visit to the Dean Leshner Center for the Arts in October 2005.

## Every 15 Minutes program

Hundreds of local high school students witnessed a powerful demonstration of the potentially fatal consequences of driving under the influence when the City's “Every 15 Minutes” program returned to Northgate High School in April 2005 and made its fourth appearance at Las Lomas High School in March 2006.

In the fall of 2005 and spring 2006, nine police officers provided more than 800 seventh grade students at Walnut Creek

Intermediate School and Foothill Middle School with valuable information in the Awareness program. This five-week course that focused on laws that affect junior high and high school age youth, as well as personal and Internet safety, tolerance, and chemical dependency.

## Community policing

The Walnut Creek Police Community Policing Team was originally formed in May, 1997 to address the complex issues of delivering quality police services in a suburban area. While Walnut Creek has minimal, violent, personal crime, it nonetheless has numerous quality of life issues as identified by its citizens that pose challenges to its police force. The team is made up of two patrol officers, two motor officers, a civilian crime prevention specialist, and a sergeant.

The goal of Community Policing is to accomplish the following:

- Share responsibility between police and community for public safety.
- Develop and commit to long-term strategies to solve problems.
- Empower community members to take an active role in resolving issues.
- Be flexible enough to successfully use non-traditional methods.



Officer Shawn Wallace conducts a Character Counts class in a fifth grade classroom at Valle Verde School in 2006.

Some of the projects have included coordinating Conflict Resolution Panels for ongoing neighborhood disputes, designing crime prevention strategies for local businesses and private citizens, establishment of a school liaison officer team with each middle and high school in the City, assisting the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children by introducing child safety programs to local stores, and working with neighborhoods on traffic issues.

## Volunteers

Citizen volunteers are vital to the smooth operation of the Police Department, which relied on 22 Volunteers in Police Service, or VIPS, to perform a wide range of support duties such as scanning reports into the department's computer system, providing front counter assistance, assisting with handicapped parking enforcement, and doing patrol vehicle inventory.

In 2005, VIPS provided 2,540 hours in donated time to the City.

The Reserve Officer Corps is a group of 30 specially trained citizens that for more than 54 years have worked

side-by-side with regular police officers to keep the community safe. In 2005, reserve officers donated a total of 10,245 volunteer hours. Reserve officers are uniformed and assist at events such as the Walnut Festival, the Art & Wine Festival, and after-school sports activities.

## Teaching law enforcement

The Police Department continued its successful program of teaching law enforcement to interested Las Lomas High School juniors and seniors in 2005-06.

Twenty-three students enrolled in the Regional Occupational Program's "Introduction to Law Enforcement," a class where students become familiar with the fields of criminal justice and police science.

## Criminal activity

In 2005, the Police Department handled 33,588 calls, of which 10,371 were cases that required follow-up. Crimes against property accounted for 1,891 incidents. As in previous years, vandalism and petty theft were the most common occurrences (see box below). Also in 2005, the department investigated 1,067 non-injury motor vehicle accidents. There were 271 injury accidents and two fatalities. ❖

### CRIMINAL OFFENSES

CRIME	2004	2005
Homicide	1	2
Rape	4	8
Robbery	33	39
Burglary (structure)	520	508
Grand larceny/Theft	2,332	2,142
Auto Theft	285	279
Vandalism	685	726
Sex Offenses	20	20
Driving Under Influence	307	345
Weapons	38	45

### FACTS ON FILE

- The 109-member Walnut Creek Police Department is made up of 58 officers, 10 sergeants, six lieutenants, two captains, one chief, and 32 non-sworn personnel.
- In 2005, the department documented 3,064 alarm calls, and officers responded to 1,424 false alarms.

# Recreation, Parks & Open Space

## Skate Park opens

More than 500 people attended the Nov. 12, 2005 opening of the Walnut Creek Skate Park, a project made possible through a unique community partnership.

The 12,250-square-foot skate park was built at a cost of about \$800,000 at the corner of Heather Drive and Marchbanks Drive in Heather Farm Park. It was designed by the renowned design firm of Purkiss•Rose-RSI of Fullerton with the input of area skaters.

The Friends of the Skate Park, a group of Walnut Creek residents who helped shepherd the project, worked with the Walnut Creek Fountain for Youth Foundation to conduct an ambitious fundraising campaign to raise more than \$35,000 in 2005 for amenities such as lighting and benches. Organizations that made major donations included Sunrise Rotary Club of Walnut Creek (\$10,000), the Walnut Creek Soccer Club (\$5,000), and Copeland Sports (\$5,000).

## Dog Park plans move ahead

After considerable discussion and debate in the community, the City Council decided May 16, 2006 to build a long-awaited dog park at the north end of Heather Farm Park.

The new dog park will be a place where pets may be let off-leash by their owners in a fenced-off, protected area near parking and restrooms. Plans are being proposed to have it open in 2007.

After the Council directed City staff in January 2006 to study Arbolado Park as an alternative site for the dog park, strong opposition voiced by residents in that area



Skateboard pro Holly Lyons tried out the bowl in the new Walnut Creek Skate Park at its Nov. 12, 2005 opening in Heather Farm Park.

prompted the Council to establish the dog park at a more central location.

## Movies Under the Stars success continues

“Movies Under the Stars,” the City’s free, outdoor movie program at Heather Farm Park, continued to draw huge crowds in 2005 and 2006 as seven feature films were shown to appreciative audiences. Attendance averaged 2,500 to 3,000 people for each of the features: (in 2005) *Shrek 2*, *Spy Kids*, *Ice Age*, and *The Sound of Music*; and (in 2006) *Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the*

*Were-Rabbit*, *Madagascar*, *Back to the Future*, *Racing Stripes*, and *Oliver!*

## Open Space

Thousands of children and adults were exposed to the wonders of the Walnut Creek Open Space during 2005 and 2006 as the City increased the number of public programs offered.



Living History Program interpreter Debi Bylin demonstrates an antique telephone to children at Borges Ranch in May 2006.

The popular Living History Program, a 10-week course in what life was like at the Borges Ranch in the early 1900s, attracted kindergarten through fifth grade classes from public and private schools throughout central county. An estimated 5,000 children and adults participated in the program and ranch tours in 2005-06.

The City’s annual Heritage Day at Borges Ranch, which offers a first-hand look at the early days of Walnut Creek, attracted 1,100 visitors in June 2005 and June 2006.



## Aquatics

The City's swimming pools at Heather Farm and Larkey parks were again used by close to 1 million swimmers annually in 2005 and 2006. The trained staff at both swim centers taught well over 7,000 children and adults how to swim in the past two years, and continued to train more than 600 lifeguards.

Clarke Swim Center at Heather Farm Park is also homebase for these aquatics teams: the Walnut Creek Aquabears, a year-round USS competitive swim team; the 400-member Walnut Creek Masters Swim Team, ages 19 through 90-plus; the Walnut Creek Aquanets,

an internationally-renowned synchronized swimming team; Diablo Divers, a team of 30 divers that competes locally and nationally; and the

Walnut Creek Swim Club, one of the premier recreational summer swim teams in the Bay Area for more than 40 years.



Kids play in the tot pool at Clarke Swim Center in Heather Farm Park.

## Classes, Camps & Preschools

The Recreation Division provided an average of 150 fee classes, programs and activities for 3,000 participants every quarter in 2005 and 2006. The EZ Reg online class registration is available on the Recreation

Division's website, [www.WalnutCreekRec.org](http://www.WalnutCreekRec.org), made it easier for residents sign up for recreation classes any time of the day or night.

Summer camp activities in 2005 and 2006 included popular playground, day camp, and sports camp programs for over 2,000 children age 4 to 13, held at locations throughout town.

Preschool classes were also provided, enrolling 120 children ages 2 1/2 to 4. Over 150 preschoolers took part in several summer-time programs.

## Boundary Oak Golf Course

The City's 160-acre Boundary Oak Golf Course, rated among the top 10 golfing facilities in the East Bay, hosted an average of 61,000 rounds of golf annually in 2005 and 2006. Boundary Oak also boasts the largest teaching staff in Northern California.

## Teen Activities & Adult Sports/Gyms

The Walnut Creek Youth Council, a group of 20 teens (grades 7-12), in 2005 and 2006 provided advice and made recommendations on subjects of interest to local youth to the Park, Recreation and Open Space Commission and the City Council.

Over 10,000 participants from up to 25 non-profit organizations used the Foothill and Tice Valley community gymnasiums annually in 2005 and 2006. Adult basketball's 60 teams have a combined 700 players per season. Adult coed volleyball has 45 teams comprising 300 players.

## Social Services

More than 200 trained volunteers donated 54,000 hours of service in 2005 and 2006 to the Social Services Division, located at Civic Park Community Center, which provides programs for seniors and the disabled such as hot meals, tax preparation assistance, and mini-bus transportation.

The 2,800-member Walnut Creek Seniors' Club celebrated its 54th year in 2006.

The Specialized Recreation Program, providing services for the developmentally and physically disabled, had activities for about 500 users. ❖

### FACTS ON FILE

- The Recreation Division coordinates and schedules the use of 19 City parks, 13 playfields, 35 tennis courts, two community centers, two swim centers, and two gyms.
- Facility rentals generated \$150,000 in 2005 and served more than 45,000 people.

# Public Services

## Street maintenance

The City takes pride in maintaining the vast network of streets and roads that connect us with our homes, our schools, our jobs, our stores, our parks — everything.

As a result, street maintenance is a vital service provided by the City, which each year spends more than \$1 million to resurface or prolong the active life of Walnut Creek roadways.

In 2005 and 2006, about 100 streets were given a protective coating of slurry seal, which when applied directly to the existing asphalt will keep the street surface fresh for another five to seven years.

During the same period, about 20 streets were overlaid, meaning new asphalt was put over the old to extend the life of the street for 10 to 20 years.

For slurry sealing, City crews do all the preparation work, thereby saving the City upwards of \$300,000 on this type of maintenance. Public Service employees also provide a wide range of other street maintenance work, such as filling potholes and cracks, repairing sidewalks, and maintaining trails in parks and open space areas.

## New playground equipment installed

When a group of moms started talking about the need for updating the playground with safer equipment at Larkey Park, it set in motion a major facelift for the popular tot lot that the parents helped to fund in what became yet another unique partnership for the City.

Esther Kim of Walnut Creek and Elissa Lawson of Pleasant Hill secured a \$10,000 First Five Grant from



Parents Esther Kim and Elissa Lawson watch their kids enjoy the new playground they helped to create with the City at Larkey Park.



Street maintenance was a high priority in 2005 and 2006. Here, Encina Camino gets an overlay. Carleton Thompson

Contra Costa County to purchase new playground apparatus, and the City paid for the balance of the \$350,000 upgrade that took place in 2005. The result was seven new pieces of play equipment and a sand play area for kids ages 2 to 8 at Larkey Park.

The City also installed four new climbing rocks for older children in the play area at Civic Park. ❖

## FACTS ON FILE

In 2005 and 2006:

- Eighteen building maintenance workers maintained 54 City buildings.
- The City maintained a fleet of 375 vehicles and maintenance equipment, as well as Lindsay Wildlife Museum vehicles.
- Employees inspected and maintained 215 miles of City streets, 6,088 storm drain inlets, 226 miles of culverts, 26 miles of ditches, and 36 miles of constructed channels.
- The City manages three public garages totalling 1,378 spaces that provided short-term parking for 1.2 million vehicles.
- As part of the street maintenance program, the City repaired 130,000 square feet of street in 2003 and 130,000 square feet in 2004.
- Street sweepers cleaned 386 curb miles monthly and removed 4,650 cubic yards of debris.
- The Parks & Trees divisions maintained over 195 acres of parks, 20 miles of medians and greenways, and 20 acres of Walnut Creek School District fields. Thirty-five full-time workers put in 72,800 hours each year. Their work included 36 turf mowings per year, annual pruning, trimming and weed abatement, and general litter clean-up that requires approximately 12,000 staff hours each year.

# Walnut Creek: A Profile

<b>Population</b> (2006)	66,111
<b>Date of Incorporation</b>	October 21, 1914
<b>Form of Government</b>	Council-Manager
<b>Type of Government</b>	General Law
<b>Land Area</b>	19.45 square miles
<b>Elevation</b>	131 feet
<b>Annual Average Rainfall</b>	Less than 14"
<b>Annual Average Temperature</b>	60 degrees
<b>Registered voters</b> (6/28/06)	41,106
<b>Party affiliation of voters</b>	
17,422 Democrats	
15,190 Republicans	
8,271 Others	

<b>Sister Cities</b>	Noceto, Italy (since 1987) Siófok, Hungary (since 1991)
<b>Total Housing Units (2005)</b>	32,647
<b>Homeowner Occupied*</b>	68.3%
Residential Vacancy Rate*	1.1%
<b>Median Age*</b>	45.1 years
<b>Persons/Household*</b>	2.09
<b>Median Family Income (1999)*</b>	\$83,794
Average price of detached single family home (July 2006)	\$857,136
<b>% High School Graduate or Higher (Population age 25 and older)*</b>	95%

<b>Number of Licenses &amp; Permits Issued (2006)</b>	
Building Permits	4,440
Business Licenses	9,154

<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	
Number of parks	19
Park acreage	over 233 acres
Open Space Territory	2,704 acres
Number of City golf courses	1
Number of City swim facilities	2
Number of City gymnasiums	2
Number of tennis courts	35
Number of community centers	2
Number of museums	2

<b>Police</b>	
Sworn employees	77
911 calls (2005)	33,588
Calls investigated (2005)	10,371



Veterans Memorial Plaza and City Hall

## Transportation

Number of traffic signals	96
Number of street lights	1,200+
Number of traffic control signs	5,000
Number of parking meters	1,706
Number of street name signs	5,700

## Services provided by other agencies

School Districts:	
	Walnut Creek School District
	Acalanes Union High School District
	Mt. Diablo Unified School District
	San Ramon Valley Unified School District
	Lafayette School District
Animal Control	Contra Costa County
Libraries	Contra Costa County and City of Walnut Creek
Public transit	County Connection
Refuse collection & Recycling	Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (Allied Waste Services, Valley Waste Management)
Fire Protection	Contra Costa Fire Protection District
Mosquito Abatement	Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control

\* 2000 Census



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