This chapter comprises four sections—Land Use, Growth Management, Urban Design, and Environmental Integrity.

**LAND USE**

**CITYWIDE**

The City of Walnut Creek, which lies some 23 miles east of San Francisco at the foot of Mount Diablo, is a regional economic and cultural center. Its 2004 population was approximately 66,500.  

Residential Development

The city’s growth in the 1960s and 1970s was predominately residential. Since the adoption of the 1989 General Plan, Walnut Creek has grown more slowly than the county or region, increasing from 61,446 residents in 1990 to 64,296 in 2000 and to an estimated 66,500 residents in 2004—an annual average growth rate of 0.5 percent. By comparison, Contra Costa County and the Bay Area have grown more rapidly during the same period, at annual average growth rates of 1.6 and 1.2 percent, respectively.  

Since 1990, two trends have exerted a strong and continuing influence on the housing market in Walnut Creek: a decline in average household size and an increase in the proportion of non-family households.

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units in Walnut Creek increased by approximately 5 percent from 29,969 to 31,480 units. Of these housing units, only 3.58 percent were vacant. From 2000 to 2004, the total number of housing units increased to an estimated 32,606, a relatively modest 3 percent increase when compared to Contra Costa County as a whole, where the total number of housing units increased by about 11 percent between 1990 and 2000 and by another 6 percent from 2000 to 2004.

Just over half (53 percent) of all housing units in the city in 2000 were single-family homes. From 1990 to 2000, the number of single-family homes increased by 3 percent while the number of multifamily housing units in buildings of five or more units increased 10 percent. This trend continued between 2000 and 2004. Of the 561 new housing units constructed in Walnut Creek, 63 percent are multifamily residences.

Although residential development has had a multifamily focus in recent years, the trend has been to construct ownership rather than rental units. In 2000, more than two-thirds (68.3 percent) of Walnut Creek’s households were homeowner occupied, up slightly from 1990 and significantly more than the homeowner-ship rate for the region (57.8 percent).

By 2000, seniors (those 65 and older) represented 25 percent of Walnut Creek’s population and this percentage is growing.

**Nonresidential Development**

Concerns about growth and urbanization dominated the public debate in Walnut Creek in the 1980s. The city’s growth in the 1960s and 1970s

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1 California Department of Finance, January 2005  
2 Projections 2005, Association of Bay Area Governments, December 2004  
3 Source: Census 2000
Chapter 4, Built Environment

1970s had been predominantly residential; however, the opening of the Walnut Creek BART station in May 1973 and economic growth at the time served as a catalyst for the construction of six million square feet of commercial space in Walnut Creek from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. The response from local voters was to pass a growth-limitation initiative in 1985. Then, in the 10 years from 1993 to 2003—after adoption of a Growth Limitation Plan—only 620,000 square feet of commercial space was built.

Shaping Our Future
In 2002, Contra Costa County and its cities undertook a joint effort to develop a “smart growth” response to future planning and growth. Called Shaping Our Future, the project outcomes were to encourage cities to:

- Preserve open space
- Preserve and reinvest in existing urban areas and neighborhoods
- Focus on mixed-use development to bring shops, services, and entertainment close to residential areas and encourage access by walking, biking, and transit (vs. automobiles)

Economic Development
The City’s Economic Development Plan (2004) called on the city to foster a vigorous and diverse economy, encourage development of premier business and employment locations, and strengthen Walnut Creek as the region’s primary destination for arts and entertainment.

Land Use Map
The General Plan 2025 Land Use Map shows the City’s vision for the development, redevelopment, and preservation of public and private properties in the Walnut Creek Planning Area over the next 20 years (from 2005 to 2025). The map designates the distribution and location of land to be used for housing, business, open space, public facilities, and other uses.

The land use map is different from a zoning map. First, it is not as specific as a zoning map. Each land-use category on the land use map typically has more than one consistent zoning district. Second, the City’s practice is to delineate boundaries between land-use categories on the land use map as specifically as possible. In most cases, the boundaries follow parcel lines.

Population Density and Building Intensity
California Government Code §65302(a) requires that a general plan include standards for population density and/or building intensity for each land use category on a land use map. Together, the map and text define the allowable population density for residential districts and the allowable building intensity for nonresidential development.

Population density is defined as the number of people and the number of dwelling units per net acre of land and is expressed in terms of dwelling units per net acre (du/ac). To develop the general plan’s residential population-density standards, the allowable number of dwelling units per net acre was multiplied by an assumed average number of persons per dwelling unit – in this case, 2.54 persons for single-family homes and 1.59 persons for multifamily units based on U.S. Census 2000.

The population-density ranges apply to a project or development as a whole and are used as a guide in planning for public services and facilities. The ranges are not intended to serve as a limit on population for a given area, and they cannot be used to restrict the number of people who may live in a given home or multifamily unit or to deny a permit to remodel or expand a residential dwelling unit.

A residential project or development must meet two standards. First, it cannot exceed the maximum densities established in the general plan. At the same time, a project must meet the required minimum density level. Existing building sites that do not meet the minimum or maximum density standards set forth for the various residential categories will remain legal nonconforming lots.
Building intensity is expressed in terms of floor area ratio (FAR) -- the ratio of gross building floor area (excluding areas designated for parking, etc.) to net lot area, both expressed in square feet. (See Figure 1.) Development projects that incorporate several parcels can have individual parcel FARs that exceed the general plan FAR, if the parcels are all located within the same Planned Development (PD) zoning district and if the total of the actual gross building floor area in the PD district does not exceed the total allowable FAR for the district.

The pages that follow list the definitions of each land use category on the General Plan 2025 land use map.

The population density or building intensity maximums assigned to the various land use categories do not constitute entitlements, nor are property owners or developers guaranteed that an individual project, when tested against the general plan’s policies, will be able or permitted to achieve these maximums.

Permitted Uses for Residential and Commercial Land Use Categories

Single-family residential units, churches, schools, parks, public/semi-public buildings, accessory uses, and day-care facilities are permitted in all residential land use districts provided they meet the requirements of the underlying zone and applicable general plan policies.

Private clubs, lodges, congregate-living facilities, residential-care facilities, and skilled nursing facilities are permitted in multifamily medium and higher-density land use districts (14.1+ du/ac) provided they meet the requirements of the underlying zone and applicable general plan policies.

Under certain conditions, residential-care facilities may be allowed in single-family districts.

Multifamily residential uses are allowed in all commercial districts except Business Park and Auto Sales and Service, provided they comply with applicable city codes, zoning requirements, and general plan policies. Under the same conditions, day-care facilities are allowed in residential and most commercial districts.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

Residential

Single-family Very Low (SFVL), 0.1-1.0 du/ac. Located in outlying areas; intended as a transition between the Open Space (OS/A and OS/R) areas and low-density single-family development. Also intended to preserve hillside areas, as those are defined in the City’s Hillside/Ridgeline Ordinance. Typical development is large-lot, single-family homes. Clustering is encouraged in hillside/ridgeline areas. The allowable density of 0.1-1.0 units per net acre translates to a population of 0.25 to 2.5 persons per acre.
Chapter 4, Built Environment

Single-family Low (SFL), 1.1-3.0 du/ac. Intended as a transition between the typical suburban single-family neighborhood and outlying rural residential areas. Rural activities such as stables, livestock, and the growing of crops are permitted only on a noncommercial, resident-use basis. The allowable density of 1.1-3.0 units per net acre translates to a population of 2.8 to 7.6 persons per acre.

Single-family Medium (SFM), 3.1-6.0 du/ac. Provides for the typical single-family neighborhood in Walnut Creek. Average lot size is 10,000 square feet. Dwellings are generally detached with ample front, side, and rear yards. Clustering and zero side yards (zero lot lines) may be appropriate where they can be visually integrated with existing neighborhoods. The allowable density of 3.1-6.0 units per net acre translates to a population of 7.9 to 15.25 persons per acre.

Single-family High (SFH), 6.1-9.0 du/ac. Development in this land use category is allowed only under a Planned Development Zoning District. A land use change to this category requires specific findings that the character and integrity of established residential neighborhoods will be preserved. Lot sizes will typically range from 4,840 to 7,260 square feet. Clustering and zero lot lines may be appropriate where they can be visually integrated with existing neighborhoods. The allowable density of 6.1-9.0 units per net acre translates to a population of 15.5 to 22.9 persons per acre.

Multifamily Low (MFL), 6.1-14.0 du/ac. This category accommodates moderately higher densities and is intended to serve as a transition between single-family neighborhoods and commercial or higher density residential areas. Cluster housing, zero lot line and patio homes, and attached townhomes are permitted. The allowable density of 6.1-14.0 units per net acre translates to a population of 9.7 to 22.25 persons per acre.

Multifamily Medium (MFM), 14.1-22.0 du/ac. This category is intended to provide for developments of condominiums and/or low-rise apartments with substantial amounts of open space, landscaping, and on-site recreational facilities. The visual character (height, massing, materials, color, landscaping) should look more like a single-family neighborhood than an apartment complex. The allowable density of 14.1-22.0 units per net acre translates to a population of 22.4 to 35 persons per acre.

Multifamily Medium High (MFMH), 22.1-30.0 du/ac. This density accommodates areas more urban in character than MFM. Typical development in this category is two-story (or higher) apartments or condominiums. The intent is to provide opportunities to live within walking distance of downtown and major transit centers. Maintaining a human scale through quality design and landscaping is a high priority in this district. The allowable density of 22.1-30.0 units per net acre translates to a population of 35.1 to 47.7 persons per acre.

Multifamily Very High (MFVH), 30.1-50.0 du/ac. This category accommodates most of the city’s conventional apartment complexes. Structures generally exceed two stories and include onsite amenities such as recreational facilities, private balconies or patios, and common open space. The allowable density of 30.1-50.0 units per net acre translates to a population of 47.9 to 79.5 persons per acre.

Multifamily Special High (MFSH), 50.1-100.0 du/ac. This district occurs only in the Core Area around Alma Avenue, where the Alma Avenue Specific Plan governs development. Its primary intent is to expand the potential for downtown living. The allowable density of 50.1-100.0 units per net acre translates to a population of 79.7 to 159 persons per acre.
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. The allowable FAR of 1.5-2.5 can translate to a population of approximately 47.9 to 79.5 persons per net acre.

Pedestrian Retail (PR), FAR 0.75 to 2.0. Intended to provide for a range of retail and personal service uses that are accessed by pedestrians. This type of development will occur where central parking lots and on-street parking are available. With minor exceptions, ground floor uses should be retail, with non-retail uses only on the second floor or above. Typical uses include salons, spas, bookstores, clothing stores, framing galleries, gourmet food shops, greeting card stores, restaurants, and travel agencies.

General Retail (GR), FAR 0.3 to 1.0. Intended for one-stop-shop businesses that rely on customers arriving by auto and provide on-site parking. Uses include discount merchandise stores, financial institutions, hardware stores, hotels, nurseries, restaurants, and shopping centers. Ground floor retail is encouraged; offices may be allowed on the second floor or above.

Service Commercial (SC), FAR 0.1 to 0.3. Provides for service businesses that rely on customers who arrive by auto but do not require a central location. Examples of permitted uses include auto sales and service, cabinetmakers, car washes, drive-in warehousing, glass shops, incubator businesses, laundromats, mini-marts, restaurants, self- and mini-storage, service stations, and sculptors. Office uses are permitted on the second floor and above, but not on the ground floor.
Auto Sales and Service (AS), FAR 0.1 to 0.6. Primarily intended for auto dealers, auto service and repair, and other auto-related and auto-oriented retail sales. Businesses not associated with auto sales, service, or repair are allowed only if they demonstrate their presence will have no adverse effect on the long-term viability of the auto sales and service district.

Office (OF), FAR 0.5 to 1.5. Primarily high-quality administrative, professional, and general business offices that meet local and regional office space demands. Cultural facilities, restaurants, and retail stores are encouraged on the ground floor.

Business Park (BP), FAR 0.1 to 0.5. Intended primarily to facilitate higher-quality, employment-based businesses including administrative, professional office, and research uses. This category is only applicable to the Shadelands Business Park. A mix of lot sizes is encouraged to accommodate small businesses as well as larger campus-style uses. Parcels adjacent to single-family residential areas are required to have larger setbacks, more extensive landscaping, and are limited to a maximum 0.3 FAR.

Other

Hospital (HO), FAR 0.6 to 0.85 outside the Core Area; FAR 1.05 inside the Core Area. For facilities providing primarily in-patient medical, surgical, psychiatric, or emergency medical services. This classification also includes out-patient treatment facilities; facilities providing training, research, and administrative services for patients and employees; and offices associated with hospital use.

Public/Semi public (PU), FAR 0.1 to 2.0, determined on a case-by-case basis. This category encompasses facilities serving the public and the larger community good, including BART stations, the civic center, fire stations, government buildings, libraries, public utility stations and yards (but not their offices), public schools, and large, privately owned community-serving recreational facilities.

Open Space/Agriculture, OS/A, 0.1 du/ac. Designates areas currently undeveloped or used for grazing, equestrian, or agricultural pursuits. Intent is to maintain open space/agricultural character. The allowable density of 0.1 units per net acre translates to a population of one person per 4 acres. (Measure P Ordinance 1781. Adopted 11/5/91)

Open Space/Recreation (OS/R), not to exceed 0.1 du/ac or an FAR of 0.1, density to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Designates existing publicly owned open space, parks, and golf course. Includes some County-owned land designated for open space use.

CITYWIDE GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

Goals 1 through 5 set citywide land use policy and, in large measure, determine the overall framework for the land use map in General Plan 2025. Because the city is almost fully developed, the map closely reflects the city’s existing land uses and zoning and only calls for minor changes in distribution and intensity of land use.

Of critical importance is the availability of an adequate and varied supply of housing for the workforce on which the local economy depends. Walnut Creek’s high housing costs reflect increasing demand and limited supply and pose a long-term challenge to the city’s attractiveness as a place to live, work, and shop. Providing affordable housing close to jobs and transit is a major component of Walnut Creek’s land use planning.

Several areas in the city could benefit from coordinated public and private improvement plans at scales smaller than the general plan. These areas include the west Mt. Diablo Boulevard area; the area bounded by Botelho Drive, South Main Street, Newell Avenue, and I-680; underutilized sites between the North
Locust Street parking garage and Bonanza Street; and the Locust Street/Mt. Diablo Boulevard precise plan area.

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**GOAL 1**

Maintain the balance of open space and public and private land uses existing in Walnut Creek in 2005.

Policy 1.1. Strive to maintain the balance of housing, commerce, and open space in the community.

Action 1.1.1. Adopt a land use map for the Walnut Creek Planning Area.

Policy 1.2. Work to balance the number and types of jobs and the amount and kind of housing available in Walnut Creek.

Policy 1.3. Provide for public lands to accommodate community services, including recreational, arts, and cultural programs and activities.

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**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.

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**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 developments.

Action 3.1.1. Encourage mixed-use development at and near the Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill BART Stations.

Action 3.1.2. Require that office development in the Golden Triangle (see Figure 2, page 4-5) and new development in the Mixed Use – Residential land use categories provide housing components.
GOAL 4

Promote and facilitate development that reflects the City’s long-term vision.

Policy 4.1. Develop specific plans, precise plans, concept plans, or area plans for underdeveloped or underutilized areas of the city that are changing or have the potential to change significantly.

Action 4.1.1. Prepare a specific plan for the two-block Newell Ave./S. California Blvd. area that would support mixed-use development that combines residential, retail, and office uses in a pedestrian-oriented environment that takes advantage of the creek location. The specific plan should address the following issues: preservation of visual corridors, a circulation plan that considers and mitigates additional traffic impact on the Parkmead and other surrounding neighborhoods, bike and pedestrian access to and through the site, and improved pedestrian and visual access to the creek amenities. (See Figure 3.)

Action 4.1.2. Establish an overlay zone for all properties that abut the Almond/Shuey neighborhood that acknowledges the potential height disparity between adjoining land uses and requires site plans and architectural designs to minimize visual, noise, shadowing, and privacy impacts on the Almond/Shuey neighborhood. Solutions may include, but are not limited to, maintaining a 10-foot setback for all new buildings from the Almond/Shuey neighborhood line, controlling the height of new buildings so that taller portions are located more distant from the neighborhood line in a manner that minimizes the visual impact from new buildings on the Almond/Shuey neighborhood, and incorporation of landscaping to screen new buildings. (See Chapter 2, Figure 1)

Action 4.1.3. Establish an overlay zone for the parcels along the south side of Mt. Diablo Blvd. between Alpine Dr. and S. California Blvd. to protect important views of Mount Diablo and the foothills.

Policy 4.2. Implement approved specific plans and redevelopment plans.
**GOAL 5**

Require that infill development is compatible with its surroundings.

Policy 5.1. Require infill development to be compatible with adjacent and nearby uses.

Action 5.1.1. Where new development occurs, study surrounding properties and uses for potential conflicts, and address those conflicts within the City's review processes.

Policy 5.2. Do not authorize the development of new flag lots when alternative lot patterns are feasible.

Policy 5.3. Require that all new parcels have permanent access to a public street.

**CORE AREA**

Walnut Creek’s Core Area is a 1.2-square-mile (768-acre) central district with higher densities than other parts of the city. (See Figure 2, Planning Area Boundaries, page 1-6.) The land uses in the Core Area are primarily commercial, with some residential infill as well as many public and civic facilities, parks, and Las Lomas High School.

The Pedestrian Retail District is the civic and retail center of downtown Walnut Creek. (See Figure 4, page 4-10.) With its large street trees, outdoor dining opportunities, and dense-but-small-scale development pattern, this area is a thriving shopping, dining, and entertainment district unique in central Contra Costa County. The City has built three parking structures in the Pedestrian Retail District to encourage people to come downtown and “park once and walk.”

At the center of the Core Area is the Traditional Downtown — located generally along Locust and North Main Streets, south of Civic Drive and north of Mt. Diablo Boulevard. (See Figure 5, page 4-11.) Small parcels and a modified grid street pattern characterize the Traditional Downtown. Buildings are primarily one and two story, built close together, and inviting to pedestrians. Many of the older buildings were constructed before on-site parking was required, so the area has only a few surface parking lots.

**GOAL 6**

Maintain and enhance Walnut Creek’s thriving Core Area, while keeping the Pedestrian Retail District lively and walkable.

Policy 6.1. Retain and encourage a balance of local- and regionalserving retail businesses in the Core Area.
Chapter 4, Built Environment

Policy 6.2. Focus development in the Pedestrian Retail District on retail and restaurants, and expand the area’s potential to host arts and cultural events.

Action 6.2.1. In the Pedestrian Retail District, require pedestrian-oriented uses at street level.

Action 6.2.2. Promote building layouts and designs that create pedestrian interest and encourage people to “park once and walk”.

Action 6.2.3. Create flexible development policies and regulations that encourage owners and developers to provide parkland or other public spaces or plazas, beyond the amount of open space and/or landscaping already required. (See Chapter 3, Policy 7.3.)

Action 6.2.4. Require new development with creek frontage to incorporate pedestrian access to the creeks and to enhance the appearance of creek frontages.

Policy 6.3. Retain and encourage a variety of small stores and businesses in the Traditional Downtown.

Action 6.3.1. Review permitted uses and revise development regulations to maintain the smaller-scale commercial buildings and fine-grain character of the Traditional Downtown.

Action 6.3.2. Study an amendment to the Pedestrian Retail Zoning District to allow business entrances off service alleys in the Traditional Downtown (e.g., Commercial Lane and Wilson Lane).

Action 6.3.3. Review and consider expansion of the City’s Design Review Guidelines for development in the Traditional Downtown to preserve the special character of that area.

Action 6.3.4. Discourage new residential development in the Traditional Downtown area.

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4 This policy does not preclude expansion of arts facilities or locating a hotel downtown.
Chapter 4, Built Environment

Figure 5. Traditional Downtown

Policy 6.4. Enhance the overall vitality of the Core Area south of Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

Action 6.4.1. Encourage diverse housing options, including mixed-use, higher-density developments.

Policy 7.1. Maintain and enhance shopping centers in neighborhood areas as local-serving retail centers.

Action 7.1.1. Study zoning amendments at existing shopping centers in neighborhood areas with Mixed Use-Commercial Emphasis land use designations to allow residential infill.

Policy 7.2. Protect and enhance service commercial and auto sales and service uses along upper North Main Street.

Policy 7.3. Maintain the Shadelands Business Park primarily as an employment center, while allowing some retail and restaurant use that will serve the Shadelands business community.

Action 7.3.1. Review and revise development regulations—such as minimum lot sizes and setbacks—for the Shadelands Business Park.

Policy 7.4. For the five properties that abut Ygnacio Valley Road at Ygnacio Court, allow office use in existing structures while providing adequate access and compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhood. (See Figure 6.)

Action 7.4.1. Establish stringent use and development regulations for the five properties.

COMMERCIAL AREAS OUTSIDE THE CORE

GOAL 7

Provide adequate location and expansion opportunities for businesses that serve and employ Walnut Creek residents.

April 4, 2006

Walnut Creek General Plan 2025
Chapter 4, Built Environment

**GOAL 8**

Allow development consistent with the density ranges of the *General Plan 2025* land use map.

Policy 8.1  
Require that residential projects be developed within the established minimum and maximum density ranges.

Policy 8.2  
Provide property owners and developers with information that clearly communicates the City’s density policies (i.e., that development at the high end of the density range in any land use designation or zoning district is not guaranteed; rather, it is contingent on site conditions, zoning require-
GROWTH MANAGEMENT

BALANCING LAND USES; PRECLUDING IMPACTS

Walnut Creek has had commercial growth management regulations — in various forms — since 1985, when voters adopted Measure H, a growth-limitation initiative. Measure H was proposed in response to resident concerns about excessive traffic congestion and the construction, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, of a number of large commercial office buildings in downtown Walnut Creek, primarily around the Walnut Creek BART station. The scale of these buildings was substantially different from most previous development in the city’s Core Area.

Although the California Supreme Court ruled Measure H invalid in 1990, the City continued to regulate the amount of commercial and residential development allowed each year, acknowledging the residents’ desire to meter growth in Walnut Creek.

In 1993, the City Council amended General Plan 1989 to include specific growth-management policies. This Growth Limitation Program limited new commercial growth to 75,000 square feet per year, metered in increments of 150,000 square feet every 2 years, and was adopted for 10 years. The program helped the City to limit growth to 620,000 square feet of new commercial development in the first 10 years (1993-2003).

In 2003, when work began on General Plan 2025, the City Council extended the program through August 2005. In August 2005, the council again extended the program through to the adoption of General Plan 2025.

General Plan 2025 continues the methodology of the growth management program for commercial development through 2015, limiting new commercial development exclusive of the Shadelands Business Park to 75,000 square feet per year, metered in 2-year periods. This will result in a maximum allowable commercial development of 750,000 square feet over 10 years.

The growth management policies do not restrict the rate or amount of residential development. The generally built-out character of the city’s residential areas, particularly in the lower-density single-family districts on the city’s perimeter, limit housing development more severely than would a continuation of the previous controls.

In addition, the growth controls do not regulate the development of community facilities as their benefits override any drawbacks they may create, such as additional traffic.

Other Growth Management Regulations

In 1988, Contra Costa County voters approved Measure C, which established a countywide half-cent sales tax for 20 years (through 2008). Measure C was designed to require cooperation among the various cities and the county on transportation and growth issues that cross city boundaries. The half-cent sales tax provided revenues to complying jurisdictions for roadway and other transportation system improvements.

The Contra Costa County Transportation Authority distributes the revenues to jurisdictions that implement the required growth management goals, policies, and actions adopted as part of their general plans. In 2004, County voters approved Measure J, extending the growth management requirements of Measure C through 2034.

This section of General Plan 2025 includes the goals, policies, and actions required by Measure C through 2008 and by Measure J from 2009 through 2025 -- the horizon year for this plan. These same goals, policies, and actions create the framework for the City’s commercial growth management program through 2015.
Chapter 4, Built Environment

**GOAL 9**
Manage the community’s orderly growth.

Policy 9.1. Mete out the amount of commercial development allowed annually.

Action 9.1.1. Limit the amount of commercial development permitted city-wide, outside of the Shadelands Business Park, to no more than 75,000 square feet per year from 2006 through 2015, allotting no more than 150,000 square feet in any 2-year period.

Action 9.1.2. Allow un-allocated commercial development square footage to be carried over to the next development cycle.


Policy 9.3 Establish a housing cap consistent with the Regional Housing Needs Determination allocation assigned to the City of Walnut Creek and exempt affordable units and density bonus units from the cap. Review the cap every 5 years for its adequacy in meeting the City’s regional housing needs allocation.

Policy 9.4. Support annexation of properties where existing condition or development potential promises positive fiscal, economic, or social impacts.

Action 9.4.1. Provide information on the annexation process to County residents within the city’s Sphere of Influence.

**GOAL 10**
Coordinate the location, intensity, and mix of land uses with transportation resources.

Policy 10.1. Support the development of medium- and high-density office, residential, and local-serving retail near and around the Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill BART stations (Core Area). (See Transportation Goal 7 and its supporting policies and action programs.)

Action 10.1.1. Apply land use designations that encourage transit-oriented development around the BART stations and in the Core Area.

Policy 10.2. For specific sites where traffic congestion could be significantly improved and view corridors would not be adversely impacted, consider supporting a change to Measure A height limits.

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5 Community Facilities serving the public and the larger community good, including the following zoning use classifications: Adult Day Care Facilities, Child Day Care Facilities, Clubs and Lodges, Colleges, Cultural Institutions, Emergency Medical Care, Government Offices, Heliports, Hospitals, Housing for the Homeless, Maintenance & Service Facilities, Park & Recreation Facilities, Public Parking Facilities, Public Safety Facilities, Public Transit Terminals, including BART stations, Recycling Facilities, Religious Assembly, Residential Care Facilities, Schools, public or private, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Utilities Major and Minor.

Goals 11 and 12 fulfill the Measure C and Measure J requirements for local general plans, through 2025.

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**GOAL 11**

Create a balanced, safe, and efficient regional and subregional transportation system.

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**Policy 11.1.** Require that commercial projects comply with the City’s performance standards for fire, police, parks, water, flood control, and sanitary sewer facilities.

**Policy 11.2.** Implement Measure C and plan for the implementation of Measure J.


**Action 11.2.2.** At a minimum, comply with the Measure C adopted standards for Level of Service at intersections along Basic Routes.\(^6\)

**Action 11.2.3.** Work with TRANSPAC in implementing the Central County Action Plan for Routes of Regional Significance.

**Action 11.2.4.** Participate with TRANSPAC and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority and other jurisdictions and agencies in a continuing planning process.

**Action 11.2.5.** Demonstrate reasonable progress in providing housing opportunities for all income levels.

**Policy 11.3.** Require that new development pay its share of costs associated with growth.

**Action 11.3.1.** Implement TRANSPAC’s Regional Transportation Mitigation Program with respect to new regional development and its impacts on Walnut Creek roadways.

**Action 11.3.2.** Assess a traffic impact fee on new development.

**Action 11.3.3.** Apply the Transportation Authority’s travel demand model (as updated from time to time) in analyzing developments that exceed Measure J thresholds.

**Policy 11.4.** Do not allow revenue provided from Measure J to be used to replace private developer funding that has or would have been committed to any transportation project.

**Action 11.4.1.** Prepare a Capital Improvement Plan that identifies roadway and transportation improvements needed to implement the general plan goals and policies for each five-year planning period.

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\(^6\) Basic Routes are defined in Measure C.
GOAL 12

Make more efficient use of the regional and subregional transportation system.

Policy 12.1. Promote the use of carpools and vanpools.

Action 12.1.1. Review the use of park-and-ride lots to maximize use.

Action 12.1.2. Update the transportation systems management (TSM) ordinance or resolution, as needed.

Action 12.1.3. Encourage transportation demand management (TDM) programs in new development.

Policy 12.2. Support infill and redevelopment in existing urban areas.

Action 12.2.1. Adopt a voter approved Urban Limit Line, either as mutually voted on countywide or relating solely to Walnut Creek.

URBAN DESIGN

A wide variety of built and natural features contribute to Walnut Creek’s rich and complex character. The pedestrian-scaled downtown, attractive residential areas, commercial corridors, neighborhood-serving shopping areas, regional employment centers, and extensive open space areas each contribute to the mosaic of places and experiences that make the city unique.

This section of the plan:

- Presents information on how the city’s urban form and visible features contribute to Walnut Creek’s identity and unique character.
- Sets forth goals, policies, and actions to reinforce that identity and character, and to influence the form of the city over the next 20 years.
- Provides guidance to help new development achieve a desired quality.
- Includes policies for city design and building design, for compatibility of infill development, and for specific areas of the city.

The policies focus on both the design of buildings and the design of spaces between buildings—plazas, parks, courtyards, walkways, street corridors, and intersections. These spaces, which create the “public realm,” contribute as much or more than individual buildings to creating a vital and memorable city.
CITY WIDE

A city’s setting is perhaps the most important determinant of its urban form. Walnut Creek takes its form and visual identity from the interplay of the built and natural environments. The combination of built and natural features gives the city a specific “sense of place.”

In general, the majority of Walnut Creek’s built areas are residential, while the city’s Core Area hosts varying types of development. The residential development predominantly comprises suburban one- and two-story single-family detached houses. Multifamily residences are located along some arterials and dispersed in some neighborhoods. Rossmoor, the gated senior community, is somewhat self-contained within its large valley setting.

Scale of Development

The policies guiding urban design are meant to shape the physical form of the city. They do so with four components that regulate and shape buildings: development intensity, building height, building setback (distance) from the public right-of-way, and building setbacks (additional setbacks at upper floors).

1. Development Intensity

Development intensity is regulated by floor area ratio (FAR) (see pages 4-20 and 4-21). FAR determines the amount of gross floor area permitted on a site, but does not specify how that mass is arranged. Because parking structures are excluded from the FAR calculation, the built mass of a development project with a large parking structure can substantially exceed the allowable FAR. (See Figure 1 on page 4-3 and Figures 8 and 9.)

2. Height Limits

The City regulates building height. While FAR determines intensity of use and affects the amount of traffic generated, building height affects the city’s appearance and identity, particularly in the pedestrian-scaled areas that comprise the Core Area and the Traditional Downtown. (See Figure 10 on page 4-22.) By regulating building heights, the City can protect view corridors, regulate building scale, and ensure consistency and compatibility within an area or along a street.

Measure A (1985 voter initiative) established height limits for the entire city. Basically, Measure A froze building height limits for new development based on the applicable zoning ordinance on the date the initiative was approved. As a result, height limits throughout the city vary widely, from 89 feet (and no more than 6 stories) to 20 feet. The Measure A height limits can be modified only with voter approval.

Areas where Measure A height limits have discouraged or could preclude reasonable redevelopment are the Palos Verde Mall, 1510 Geary Road (former Co-op site), and City properties on Lawrence Way, which includes the city corporation yard, the traffic operations site, and the land used by the recycling center.

3. Building Setbacks

Along specifically designated streets, setbacks regulate the placement of buildings with respect to their front (street-side) property lines and right-of-way boundaries. These regulations provide for a required minimum setback distance from the right-of-way and a required minimum amount of open area between the building and the right-of-way. Building setbacks in the Core Area are illustrated in Figure 11 on page 4-26. Figure 12 on page 4-27, Setback Averaging Principle, shows how a building façade may protrude into the required average setback so long as the open area between the building and the right-of-way is no less than the area required for a building constructed to the average required setback.
With the exception of the Almond/Shuey residential district, the required minimum dedicated sidewalk width in the Core Area is 10 feet. In the Core Area where more than a minor (0-10 foot) building setback is required, the additional setback area may be provided as additional sidewalk width, pedestrian plazas, or landscaping. The actual design and use of the additional setback area will be determined on a case-by-case basis as new developments are proposed.

The Setback Averaging Principle (Figure 12 on page 4-27) is designed to encourage new buildings that have public plazas, courtyards, significant landscaping, or other public amenities that are visible and accessible from the street. Under this principle, the building setback may vary along the “principle building frontage” so long as the average distance between the required public right-of-way and the building edge is at least as great as the prescribed average setback.

4. Building Stepbacks
Regulating both building height and building setbacks is needed in some areas to preserve views to Mt. Diablo and surrounding open space areas. Most view loss occurs at the street edge when excessive building height is permitted at or near the street frontage.

Maintaining a lower building height is also desirable in areas such as the Traditional Downtown, where smaller, pedestrian-scale development is preferred at the street level. In most areas within the Pedestrian Retail District, building heights cannot exceed 50 feet. For most parcels in that district, a building stepback is also required for upper floors, any part of which is 35 feet or more above street level. The required depth of this stepback will be decided on a case-by-case basis, but must be at least 10 feet. The building stepback is illustrated in Figure 7, this page.

Figure 7. Building Stepback

Neighborhoods
Neighborhoods are residential areas of varying size and character. A typical suburban neighborhood in Walnut Creek has wide tree-lined streets and one- and two-story homes with well-landscaped front yards.

Walnut Creek’s urban neighborhoods are primarily found in the Core Area. Urban neighborhoods have a higher density than typical suburban neighborhoods and comprise single-family homes on small lots and/or multifamily developments.

The Almond/Shuey neighborhood is located in the urbanized downtown district. It is a unique living environment due to the concentration of single-family homes located within walking distance of downtown shops, offices, and BART. The character of this area is a mixture of older-style, detached and duplex homes, many with gracious front yards and mature trees. It is the City’s goal to maintain the Almond/Shuey neighborhood in much the same way as it currently exists. The General Plan designates the area as 6-14 dwelling units/acre category (Multifamily Low), but this simply reflects the density of the existing area. No major intensification is contemplated for the area, although some additional duplex units may be built.
Rural character neighborhoods are usually found in the hillside areas of the city and the unincorporated parts of the planning area. Parcels in these areas are often larger than elsewhere in the planning area and have building constraints because of slopes or other natural features. Roads in rural-character areas can be narrow and winding and often lack sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and streetlights, all of which makes on-street parking limited or, in some cases, hazardous.
Figure 8. Core Area Commercial Floor Area Ratios

The floor area ratios shown in this figure only apply to the core area. Refer to the zoning ordinance for areas outside the core area.
Figure 9. Mixed Use Floor Area Ratios
Figure 10. Core Area Height Limits

Height limits shown in this figure apply to the Core Area only. The height limits found in the Zoning Ordinance apply to residential districts and areas outside the Core Area.
Walnut Creek’s open spaces are critical components of the city’s identity. They provide physical orientation, boundaries for urban development, and a sense of place. The views from the city to the surrounding open spaces and hills are extremely important to the residents and to patrons of many businesses.

**Connectivity**
Walnut Creek’s irregular street patterns also contribute to the community’s sense of place. They differentiate neighborhoods from each other, and the city from surrounding communities. The streets, street patterns, and a system of trails all influence connectivity—the ease or difficulty of travel between neighborhoods and commercial areas.

**Landmarks and Nodes**
Landmarks and nodes are reference points that help people orient themselves in the community. Landmarks are prominent physical objects that serve as visual focal points. Nodes are gathering places and significant points of activity. The locations of a number of city landmarks are shown in Figure 13, page 4-28.

**Gateways**
Gateways are landmarks, nodes, or views that define an arrival point. They promote community identity by providing unique reference points and orientation. Several goals, policies, and actions address gateways and their de-
sign. The locations of Walnut Creek's vehicular gateways are shown in Figure 13, page 4-28:

- North Main Street at Geary Road/Treat Boulevard
- Ygnacio Valley Road at North California Boulevard
- Mt. Diablo Boulevard at Oakland Boulevard
- Olympic Boulevard at I-680
- South Main Street at I-680
- South Broadway at Rudgear Road
- Ygnacio Valley Road at Oak Grove Road

Scenic Corridors and Views
The views from Walnut Creek to surrounding open spaces, hills, and Mount Diablo are integral to the city’s identity, sense of place, and character. Figure 14, page 4-29, shows the city’s scenic corridors and significant views.

G O A L  1 3
Maintain and enhance high-quality building design and urban design.

Policy 13.1. Maintain urban design and architectural standards for evaluating the scale, appearance, and compatibility of new development proposals.

Action 13.1.1. During the City’s review processes, confirm that the project design will be compatible with adjacent uses.

Action 13.1.2. Consistently apply the City’s Design Review Guidelines and periodically examine and revise as needed.

Action 13.1.3. Review and maintain the building setback map for the Core Area, and amend the zoning ordinance as necessary.

Policy 13.2. Regulate building placement and upper-floor stepbacks along important streets in the Core Area.

Action 13.2.1. Establish building setbacks along specifically designated streets. (See Figure 9, page 4-21.)

Action 13.2.2. Use policies to encourage developers of new buildings to include public plazas, courtyards, significant landscaping, or other public amenities that are visible and accessible from the street. (See Figure 12, page 4-27.)

Action 13.2.3. Develop a comprehensive plan for siting and developing public and publicly accessible spaces and plazas in the Core Area.

Action 13.2.4. Use policies to encourage new and existing commercial development to incorporate accessible roof gardens, ground-level public plazas, public courtyards and passageways, landscaping, public art, and other desired public amenities beyond those specified during the normal City review process.

Policy 13.3. Coordinate the building heights allowed under the general plan, zoning ordinance, and Measure A.

Action 13.3.1. Through the City’s review processes, permit architectural elements, mechanical equipment, alternative-energy devices, and other structures to be
placed above the roofline and above the height limit—as permitted in the zoning ordinance.

**Action 13.3.2.** Allow increases in height, up to the Measure A height limits, for developments that provide exceptional public amenities such as accessible roof gardens, ground-level public plazas, creek orientations, public courtyards and passageways, landscaping, public art, and other desired public amenities beyond those specified during the normal City review process.

**Action 13.3.3.** For specific sites that offer good potential for mixed-use development (e.g., former Co-op site [1510 Geary Road] or the Palos Verde Mall), facilitate community discussion about increasing the Measure A height limits.

**Action 13.3.4.** For important civic buildings, allow exceptions to the Measure A height limit, not to exceed 89 feet.
Figure 11. Building Setbacks

Building Setbacks
- Minor - 0’ to 10’ (2’ average)
- Moderate - 10’ to 20’ (15’ average)
- Major - 20’ to 30’ (25’ average)

Base Map Data: January 16, 2004
Example A

**Moderate Setback:** 10 feet minimum setback / 15 feet average setback

Minimum Required Setback: 10 feet from parcel line  
Average Required Setback: 15 feet from parcel line  
Length of Principle Building Frontage: 100 feet  

Calculated Average Setback  
15 feet (Average Setback) X 100 feet (Building Frontage) = Minimum 1,500 square feet  

Shaded Setback Area = 1,500 square feet

Example B

**Minor Setback:** 0 feet minimum setback / 2 feet average setback

Minimum Required Setback: 0 feet from parcel line  
Average Required Setback: 2 feet from parcel line  
Length of Principle Building Frontage: 50 feet  

Calculated Average Setback  
2 feet (Average Setback) X 50 feet (Building Frontage) = Minimum 100 square feet  

Shaded Setback Area = 120 square feet

Figure 12. Demonstration of Setback Averaging Principle
Figure 13. Landmarks and Gateways

Selected Landmarks:
1. Pleasant Hill BART station
2. Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Larkey Park
3. Golden Triangle office buildings
4. Walnut Creek BART station
5. Target
6. Dean Lesher Regional Center for the Arts
7. Civic Park
8. Traditional Downtown at Main/Locust Streets
9. Liberty Bell Plaza
10. Saint Mary’s Church
11. Office buildings at NW corner of Mt. Diablo and California Boulevards
12. The Corners with Oak Tree
13. Fountains at Broadway Plaza
14. Nordstrom
15. Saranap Filling Station
16. Kaiser Permanente Medical Center
17. John Muir Medical Center
18. Heather Farm Park
19. Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum
20. Four Open Space Areas
Figure 14. Urban and Non-Urban Areas with Scenic Corridors and Views
**GOAL 14**
Create livable, well-designed, mixed-use communities.

Policy 14.1. Improve transitions between land uses, as opportunities arise, with new development or redevelopment.

Action 14.1.1. Require mixed-use development to address issues that arise from the proximity of residences to commercial uses.

Action 14.1.2. Supplement the City’s Design Review Guidelines and other construction standards to address, for mixed-use projects, noise and security of entrances, open spaces, and parking areas.

**GOAL 15**
Enhance connectivity and mobility throughout the city.

Policy 15.1. Encourage new development that optimizes both interconnecting street layouts within a neighborhood or residential subdivision and street and walkway/bikeway connections to surrounding neighborhoods and nearby commercial areas.

Action 15.1.1. In new development where street connections are possible, encourage both street and walkway/bikeway connections and discourage use of cul-de-sacs.

Policy 15.2. Discourage the establishment of gated communities, while allowing for the security of resident parking together with required visitor access to visitor parking.

Action 15.2.1. Establish specific design guidelines for security gates in multi-family developments.

**GOAL 16**
Maintain and enhance Walnut Creek’s identity and sense of place.

Policy 16.1. Foster the preservation, restoration, and compatible reuse of architecturally significant structures and sites.

Action 16.1.1. Develop an inventory and map of architecturally significant properties and landmarks.

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North Main Street office building and restaurant
Chapter 4, Built Environment

Policy 16.2. Use public art to enliven and beautify the public realm.

Action 16.2.1. Implement the Public Art Master Plan

Goal 17
Enhance the entrances to the city.

Policy 17.1. At all major entry points to the city develop welcoming gateways that emphasize the unique qualities of Walnut Creek.

Action 17.1.1. At each gateway (See Figure 13), install similarly themed gateway designs.

Action 17.1.2. Prepare design guidelines for areas and properties adjacent to the gateways to the city.

Action 17.1.3. Consider mural projects on freeway overpasses and streetscape improvements such as landscaping and medians, and coordinate with Caltrans where necessary.

Goal 18
Preserve and enhance the visual amenity provided by the open spaces, hills, and creeks.

Policy 18.1. Preserve and enhance the urban connections to scenic views that are important to residents and visitors.

Action 18.1.1. Identify and map specific public vistas and views (See Figure 14 and Actions 4.1.1 and 4.1.3.).

Action 18.1.2. Develop guidelines to preserve and enhance notable public view corridors.

Action 18.1.3. Preserve and enhance the off-site visual appearance of open space lands, particularly the views from other vantage points in the city.

Action 18.1.4. Keep and, where possible, expand the public visual buffers between developed areas.

Policy 18.2. Improve the appearance and prominence of designated scenic corridors.
Chapter 4, Built Environment

**Eastward view along Mt. Diablo Boulevard**

**Action 18.2.1.** Review and, if necessary, update the designations of the city’s scenic corridors.

**Action 18.2.2.** Require a 35-foot landscaped setback along Ygnacio Valley Road between Walnut Avenue and Oak Grove Road.

**Policy 18.3.** Mitigate the visual impacts of walls and fences.

**Action 18.3.1.** Regulate the use, scale, and appearance of walls and fences.

**Action 18.3.2.** Allow soundwalls along streets other than arterials and freeways only where no other design solutions exist for reducing the impact of roadway noise on residential areas.

**Action 18.3.3.** Along publicly traveled ways, require that all new soundwalls, masonry walls, or fences, 50 feet in length or longer, be designed to be visually attractive.

**Policy 18.4.** Eliminate all billboards (as defined by State law) within the city.

**Action 18.4.1.** Do not allow any new billboards within the city.

**Action 18.4.2.** Require removal of existing billboards as sites develop or redevelop.

**Policy 18.5.** Place utility lines, electrical transformers, and similar utility structures underground along identified corridors, at designated gateways, and in other strategic areas.

**Action 18.5.1.** Maintain a priority list of areas where undergrounding of utility lines is desired.

**Action 18.5.2.** Incorporate undergrounding projects into the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget.

**Action 18.5.3.** Require new development to underground utilities where feasible, or to pay an in-lieu fee where the affected utility serves more than the new development, or to provide adequate screening or consider art and landscaping opportunities.

**Action 18.5.4.** Require electrical transformers and similar utility structures to be undergrounded or to provide adequate screening or consider art and landscaping opportunities.

**Action 18.5.5.** If pre-existing site conditions such as a high water table make undergrounding unfeasible, require the enclosure of the utility facility within the building or provide adequate screening from any public right-of-way or consider art and landscaping opportunities.
**CORE AREA**

The Core Area (see Figure 8 on page 4-20) is both the economic and cultural center of the city and the region. The area is more urban in character than the rest of the city, comprising a number of commercial, mixed-use, and residential areas. The area’s unique character comes from the way the somewhat higher density residential areas mix with intensive regional- and local-serving commercial development.

At the center of the Core Area is an 18-block area designated as the Pedestrian Retail District (see Figure 4 on page 4-10). Residents refer to this area as “downtown.”

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**GOAL 19**

Enhance the urban design quality of the Core Area and its subareas.

**Policy 19.1.** Use specific plans and precise plans for subareas within the Core Area. (Figures 15 and 16 show specific plan and precise plan areas as of 2005.)

**Action 19.1.1.** Prepare and implement a design plan for a stronger visual and pedestrian connection between City Hall, Civic Park, and the library, including streetscape improvements, a safer crossing of Broadway, orientation of Civic Park to City Hall, and the integration of an expanded or new community center with a new library.

**Policy 19.2.** Improve directional signage for pedestrians and vehicles in the Core Area.

**Action 19.2.1.** Design and implement a comprehensive Core Area direc-
tional sign program that shows shuttle stops; parking garage locations, capacities, and availability; orients residents and visitors; and shows optimal routes for getting to key cultural, shopping and civic destinations in the city.

**Policy 19.3.** Establish design guidelines for retaining and enhancing the identity of the Auto Sales and Service district.

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**GOAL 20**

Reinforce the urban design and character of the Pedestrian Retail District as a gathering place for local residents as well as a regional retail destination.

**Policy 20.1.** Strengthen the identity of the Pedestrian Retail District as a pedestrian-oriented shopping destination for local residents and regional shoppers. (See Figure 4, page 4-10.)

**Action 20.1.1.** Develop specific design guidelines aimed at maintaining and enhancing the area’s urban, pedestrian-oriented character.

**Action 20.1.2.** Develop a comprehensive “park once and walk” program aimed at encouraging people to park their cars in public garages at the periphery of the downtown.

April 4, 2006

*Walnut Creek General Plan 2025* 4-33
Chapter 4, Built Environment

Action 20.1.3. Conduct studies to:

- Evaluate the free downtown shuttle and ways to enhance its service
- Explore ways to enhance existing pedestrian connections and corridors with new signage, graphics, landscaping, and lighting
- Evaluate ways to enhance the appearance and use of alleys and mid-block pedestrian-ways
- Investigate narrowing streets and/or converting some streets to one-way to provide public spaces
- Identify and establish a permanent location for a farmers’ market

Action 20.1.4. Provide a high level of pedestrian amenities in the downtown, including landscaping, trash containers, and special lighting.

Policy 20.2. Maintain the special “small town” character, fine-grain development (narrow lots, slender buildings, many different uses in proximity), and pedestrian orientation of the Traditional Downtown.
Figure 15. Specific Plan Boundaries
Planning Boundaries

- East Mt. Diablo Specific Plan
- North Main St. / Ygnacio Valley Rd. Specific Plan
- South Newell Area Specific Plan
- Alma Avenue Specific Plan
- Mount Diablo Redevelopment Area
- South Broadway Redevelopment Area
- Core Area

Figure 16. Core Area Specific Plan and Redevelopment Areas
Outside the Core Area, the city’s commercial activity takes place in neighborhood shopping centers, along commercial corridors, and in employment districts.

**Neighborhood Shopping Centers**
As in most communities, Walnut Creek’s neighborhood shopping centers are located on arterial streets and serve adjacent and nearby residential neighborhoods. More often than not, these shopping centers have a “strip commercial” character, with buildings at the back of the property and large parking areas between the storefronts and the arterial street.

**Commercial Corridors**
Commercial corridors are commercial areas that border residential areas, creating edges or transitions that require care in both land use and design. Commercial corridors tend to be underutilized and, thus, offer opportunities for redevelopment or intensification that can create more successful and vibrant places.

**Employment Districts**
Areas such as the Shadelands Business Park, John Muir Medical Center and office area, and the Pleasant Hill BART station area are outlying employment districts that are connected to other commercial areas and to residential areas via arterials, collector streets, and pedestrian paths. Future development should provide for appropriate transitions in scale, architectural design, and land use between nonresidential and residential areas.
GOAL 21
Enhance the attractiveness and character of the city’s neighborhood shopping centers and integrate them with surrounding development.

Policy 21.1. Encourage new shopping center development and redevelopment to incorporate pedestrian-oriented mixed-use, and to make pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding residential areas.

Action 21.1.1. Revise City Design Review Guidelines to encourage developers to include the following features in the development of new and the redevelopment of existing shopping centers:

- Pedestrian amenities such as landscaping, benches, and attractive lighting
- Pedestrian walkways and bikeway connections that create safe paths of travel through the shopping center and parking, and to transit and nearby sidewalks
- Outdoor and sidewalk seating
- Orientation of buildings to transit facilities, where applicable
- Orientation of the businesses to adjacent creeks, where applicable
- Shared parking
- Attractive and convenient bicycle parking

GOAL 22
Enhance the urban design character of the city’s commercial corridors.

Policy 22.1. Protect and enhance the streetscape and service commercial uses along upper North Main Street (north of I-680).

Action 22.1.1. Implement the Geary Road/North Main Street Area Plan.

Policy 22.2. Encourage beautification and intensification of development along West Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Boulevard Way (see Action 4.1.3. regarding an overlay zone).

Action 22.2.1. Working with the County, study narrowing Boulevard Way to improve the pedestrian character and to provide land for intensification of development and pedestrian amenities.

Action 22.2.2. Develop design guidelines for the West Mt. Diablo Boulevard area.
GOAL 23

Encourage well-designed development and redevelopment of employment districts such as the Shadelands Business Park and at Pleasant Hill BART.

Policy 23.1. Encourage development of region-serving employment districts that promote transit, pedestrian and bicycle travel and reduces auto trips.

Policy 23.2. Improve the image and functionality of the Shadelands Business Park.

Action 23.2.1. Develop a comprehensive walkways and bikeways plan for the Shadelands Business Park.

Action 23.2.2. Require streetlights and sidewalks in new development and redevelopment in the Shadelands Business Park.

Policy 23.3. Encourage development around the Pleasant Hill BART station that supports the County's specific plan goals for well-designed, transit-, pedestrian-, and bicycle-oriented development.

Action 23.3.1. Work with the County toward ensuring that development of the Pleasant Hill BART station area is compatible with and accessible to adjacent areas within the incorporated city.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The city’s open space areas and creeks harbor evidence of territories occupied by the Planning Area’s first known inhabitants—two small Native American (Bay Miwok) tribelets, the Tatcan and Saclan. Most of the Planning Area is considered highly sensitive with respect to Native American resources. Three levels of archaeological sensitivity are shown in Figure 17 on page 4-41.

The California Archaeological Inventory identified 11 specific cultural resource sites within the Planning Area. The sites contain either Native American artifacts or burial deposits. These locations were recorded but are kept confidential to prevent their disturbance. (California Government Code §6254.10, exempts archaeological site information from public inspection under the California Public Records Act.) A confidential map locating the 11 sites is maintained by the Community Development Department solely for City staff use in determining the degree of professional archaeological involvement required on projects proposed near the sites. Professional archaeological examination may require appropriate reburial of any Native American remains discovered during construction.

GOAL 24

Protect and conserve archaeological and paleontological resources.

Policy 24.1. Review the potential for the presence of archaeological and paleontological resources and remains in or near identified archaeological sites.

Action 24.1.1. Require (a) review by the California Archaeological Inventory, Northeast Information Center, Sonoma State University, of all major new projects and all projects of any size within 660 feet of a site identified on the City’s map of sensitive archaeological sites and (b) add appropriate mitigations as conditions of project approval as may be recommended by the California Archaeological Inventory.

Action 24.1.2. Require developers to halt all work if cultural resources are encountered during a project, and to retain a qualified archaeologist to evaluate and make recommendations for conservation and mitigation.
Note: The boundaries of the sensitivity areas are based on hand-edited maps prepared by Stephen Byrne, M.S., RPA, of Garcia and Associates, San Anselmo. The sensitivity area boundaries correspond to a variety of elevation levels, ridge lines, urbanization edges, and jurisdictional boundaries depicted on the following USGS 7.5’ quadrangle maps used: Walnut Creek (1995), Las Trampas Ridge (1980), and Clayton (1994).

Figure 17. Archaeologically Sensitive Areas
HISTORICAL RESOURCES

In 1849, William Slusher built a roofed cabin on the banks of what was then called “Nuts Creek” near what today is downtown Walnut Creek. He and his family became the first American settlers in what became known simply as “The Corners” – so named because it was the crossing of the two dirt roads leading from Pacheco to the north and Oakland to the west. Milo Hough of Lafayette came to The Corners in 1855 and built a hotel and store called the Walnut Creek House, at the present day intersection of S. Main Street and Botelho Drive. It is believed that Walnut Creek got its name from The Walnut Creek House.7

Hiram Penniman, whose 1903 ranch house in Ygnacio Valley serves today as the Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum, laid out the town site of The Corners in 1856. He was also responsible for realigning the north-south road away from the creek, creating Main Street in the process. In 1862, a U.S. Post Office was established in the village, which was then named Walnut Creek. Homer Stow Shuey arrived in 1869, buying 57 acres in an area near the junction of N. Main St. and Mt. Diablo Blvd. He was the first to file a subdivision map in 1871 and began selling off lots.

By 1871, a two-room school had been established in Walnut Creek. In 1880, the U.S. census established that Walnut Creek had a population of 300, and the Walnut Creek Independent newspaper was first published in the growing village in 1882. Ten years later, the town had grown to a population of 400, and the Southern Pacific began train service to Walnut Creek. The train depot was constructed in 1891 on donated land, and it still exists as a restaurant, although relocated from its original location.

By 1914, the population of Walnut Creek had grown to 500, and it was incorporated as a City, primarily as a way to raise the funds needed to finally pave Main Street.

Since the 1920s, Walnut Creek has grown and changed. Most of the structures that were built within the original city limits have been demolished and replaced, some several times over. In spite of this, Walnut Creek retains a number of historic and potentially historic buildings, both commercial and residential.

Policies and actions in General Plan 2025 are directed at protecting Walnut Creek’s historic resources. The general plan envisions that the Traditional Downtown would retain its smaller scale buildings and character, and that infill development would be done in a manner that is sensitive to and compatible with the existing area.

As of 2005, the city’s historic built environment had been only partially inventoried. These buildings and sites are listed in Figure 20, Potentially Historic Resources. The location of many of these buildings and sites is shown in Figures 18 and 19. Actions 25.1.1. and 25.1.2. require the City to develop an inventory of historically significant properties and develop a Historic Preservation Plan and supporting ordinance.

Until the historical inventory is completed, proposed development projects which would involve buildings constructed prior to 1946 will require evaluation for environmental significance by a qualified architectural historian. In this way, the City has a means to identify historic properties and to intervene if such a property or landmark becomes seriously deteriorated or threatened with demolition.

7 From 150 years in Pictures: An Illustrated History of Walnut Creek, by Brad Rovanpera, published by Heritage Media, 1999
Figure 18. Potentially Historic Resources

1. Stan’s Brick House (Le Virage Restaurant)
2. Howard Residence
3. Chapel, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church
4. Leech Home and Office
5. Women’s Club of Walnut Creek Building
6. Old Fire Station (Havana Restaurant)
7. Valley Mercantile
8. Lawrence Meat Company
9. Dr. Eckley’s (Tudor Architecture)
10. Schroder Insurance Company
11. California Water Service Company
12. Old Mortuary (Crogans)
13. Christian Science Church
14. Rogers Hotel
15. Dole House
16. Masonic Temple (Home Chef)
17. First Commercial Building (La Fogata)
18. Veterans' Memorial Building
19. Walnut Creek Southern Pacific Depot
20. Marshall Residence
21. Casa Christina
Figure 19. Potentially Historic Resources, City-Wide

- Bancroft Residence
- Penniman Residence*
- Welch Residence
- Casey Residence
- Burgess Residence
- Rice Residence
- James T. Walker Home
- Howe Homestead
- Brubaker Residence
- La Rieu Residence
- Adams Residence
- Borges Ranch*
- Il Povone Restaurant
- Stanley Dollar House

* - National Register of Historic Places
GOAL 25
Maintain and enhance
Walnut Creek’s historic resources.

Policy 25.1. Foster the preservation, restoration, and compatible reuse of historically significant structures and sites.

Action 25.1.1. Develop an inventory and map of historically significant properties.

Action 25.1.2. Develop an historic preservation plan and supporting ordinances.
**Figure 20. Potentially Historic Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parcel Number</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Name Historic Use - Current Occupant</th>
<th>Year Built</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>178300022</td>
<td>1632 Live Oak Way</td>
<td>Casa Christina -Elizabeth Heidt and family</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134460015</td>
<td>2278 Oak Grove Rd.</td>
<td>Site of Welch Residence</td>
<td>ca 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139180003</td>
<td>1035 Castle Rock Rd.*</td>
<td>Borges Ranch -Shell Ridge Open Space</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142220232</td>
<td>2651 Oak Grove Rd.</td>
<td>Casey Residence -Dental Office &amp; Lab</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143030029</td>
<td>1500 Bancroft Rd.</td>
<td>Bancroft Gardens – Home</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143040069</td>
<td>2680 Ygnacio Valley Rd.*</td>
<td>Penniman Residence -Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum</td>
<td>1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144230001</td>
<td>1650 Ygnacio Valley Rd.</td>
<td>Marchbanks Residence – St. John Vianney Rectory</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172150009</td>
<td>962 Seven Hills Ranch Rd.</td>
<td>Rabbit Cannery - Home</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17316002</td>
<td>2373 Walnut Blvd.</td>
<td>Howard Residence</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174150044</td>
<td>2211 N. Main St.</td>
<td>Stan’s Brickhouse - Le Virage Restaurant</td>
<td>1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178071001</td>
<td>1924 Trinity Ave.</td>
<td>St. Paul’s Episcopal Church</td>
<td>1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178160001</td>
<td>1387 Locust St.</td>
<td>Burpee Residence - Crogan’s</td>
<td>ca 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178160005</td>
<td>1347 Locust St.</td>
<td>Christian Science Society - Paint Pallette</td>
<td>ca 1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178160008</td>
<td>1604 Mt. Diablo Blvd.</td>
<td>Masonic Lodge - Home Chef</td>
<td>1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178160030</td>
<td>1614 Mt. Diablo Blvd.</td>
<td>Dole House - Real Estate Agency</td>
<td>ca 1883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178172003</td>
<td>1403 N. Main St.</td>
<td>Valley Mercantile, Dress Barn</td>
<td>1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178220007</td>
<td>1533 N. Main St.</td>
<td>Leech House - Restaurant/ Offices</td>
<td>1860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178220011</td>
<td>1514 Bonanza St.</td>
<td>Old Fire House – Havana Restaurant</td>
<td>1927</td>
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<tr>
<td>178230012</td>
<td>1315 N. Main St.</td>
<td>Sherburne Store -La Fogata Restaurant</td>
<td>1880</td>
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<tr>
<td>178240019</td>
<td>1350 N. Main St.</td>
<td>Site of Rodgers Hotel - Mechanics Bank</td>
<td>1880</td>
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<tr>
<td>178250029</td>
<td>1432 N. Main St.</td>
<td>Walnut Creek Meat -Crepes A Go-Go Restaurant</td>
<td>1910</td>
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<tr>
<td>178250039</td>
<td>1410 N. Main St.</td>
<td>Post Office - Schroder Insurance</td>
<td>1928</td>
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<tr>
<td>178250044</td>
<td>1412 N. Main St.</td>
<td>Retail Building - Mai Thai + other retail</td>
<td>ca 1890</td>
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<tr>
<td>178262020</td>
<td>1200 Mt. Pisgah Rd.</td>
<td>California Water Service Pumping Plant -Office Building</td>
<td>1937</td>
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<tr>
<td>178290001</td>
<td>1224 Lincoln Ave.</td>
<td>Women’s Club - Business Offices</td>
<td>1938</td>
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<tr>
<td>179090109</td>
<td>2950 Walnut Blvd.</td>
<td>Howe Homestead Park</td>
<td>1920</td>
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<tr>
<td>179130120</td>
<td>1056 Hacienda Dr.</td>
<td>William Rice Residence</td>
<td>1861</td>
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<tr>
<td>180030019</td>
<td>2030 San Miguel Dr.</td>
<td>Adams Residence</td>
<td>1937</td>
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<tr>
<td>180060034</td>
<td>30 Brubaker Dr.</td>
<td>Brubaker Residence – Heritage Tree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>180080001</td>
<td>196 El Camino Corto</td>
<td>Lar Rieu Estate</td>
<td>1936</td>
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<tr>
<td>180090015</td>
<td>876 Bronson Ln.</td>
<td>Bronson Residence</td>
<td>1933</td>
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<tr>
<td>183050021</td>
<td>45 Quail Ct.</td>
<td>Site of Marshall Residence - Office</td>
<td>N/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>183270052</td>
<td>850 S. Broadway</td>
<td>Southern Pacific Railroad Depot</td>
<td>1891</td>
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<tr>
<td>184060013</td>
<td>1250 Locust St.</td>
<td>American Legion Veterans Hall</td>
<td>1925</td>
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<td>138210011</td>
<td>1200 North Gate Rd.</td>
<td>James T. Walker Residence</td>
<td>1869</td>
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<td>184311018</td>
<td>2291 Olympic Blvd.</td>
<td>Il Pavone Restaurant</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>189170011</td>
<td>1015 Stanley Dollar Dr.</td>
<td>Stanley Dollar House</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Listed with the National Register of Historic Places
ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY

The impacts of human development on the natural environment are complex and constantly changing. A number of specific policies in Chapter 3, Natural Environment and Public Spaces, focus on preserving and expanding Walnut Creek’s open space lands. This chapter promotes the integrity of the environment with policies to reduce or mitigate the negative impacts of development in order to make today’s health, economic, and aesthetic benefits available to future generations.

PROTECTING NATURE IN DEVELOPMENT

The Walnut Creek community has long recognized the value of protecting hillsides, ridgelines, and native trees. The City’s Hillside/Ridgeline Ordinance (See Appendix B, Measure P Ordinance 1781, 11/5/91) grew out of citizen concern over the potential loss of hillside open space to development.

To implement Measure P, a voter initiative adopted in 1991, the City enacted a Hillside Zoning Ordinance and modified the Tree Preservation Ordinance. Policy 26.1. contains general plan text required by Measure P.

The policies that follow are intended to encourage development that retains important natural elements and harmonizes with, rather than dominates, the environment. For example, retaining a high percentage of vegetation will generate oxygen, cool the air, offer needed shade, and provide food and habitat for wildlife.

GOAL 26
Develop a comprehensive, integrated plan to preserve the natural environment in the built environment.

Policy 26.1. “Preserve Open Space/ Agricultural Lands, as defined in this Ordinance” by:

(1) “prohibiting Development on existing slopes with grades of twenty percent (20%) or greater, or within 75 vertical feet of any Ridgeline, or within the area surrounding any Native Tree for a distance of one and one-half times the distance from the trunk to the drip-line, which slopes and areas shall be preserved in their natural state;
(2) limiting Development to detached, single-family residential housing and normal appurtenances, with a maximum density of one (1) dwelling unit per ten (10) acres;
(3) requiring that any permitted Development be located and constructed in such a manner as to prevent visual impacts on scenic vistas and existing neighborhoods; and
(4) prohibiting the cutting of and damage to any Native Tree.”

Policy 26.2. Incorporate natural features such as trees, hillsides, and rock outcroppings into new development.

Policy 26.3. Preserve and add to the city’s tree canopy.

Policy 26.4. Protect tree resources on public and private property.

8 Measure P, Ord. 1781, 11/5/91, Section 3.f. See Appendix B for the complete “Walnut Creek Hillside/Open Space Protection Ordinance,” Measure P.)
Policy 26.5. Protect tree groves (especially oaks) and their understories.

Action 26.5.1. Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of and, if necessary, modify the City’s Tree Preservation Ordinance. (Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 3, Chapter 8.)

Action 26.5.2. Plan for the replacement of trees that have been removed.

Action 26.5.3. Set standards for—and require new developments to have—adequate tree canopy.

Policy 26.6. Recognize the benefit of urban wildlife and their habitat.

Action 26.6.1. Work with the Lindsay Wildlife Museum to promote humane interaction between people and urban wildlife.

Action 26.6.2. Create an urban wildlife advisory committee to explore an urban wildlife preservation ordinance.

Action 26.6.3. Identify wildlife corridors and encourage their preservation.

Policy 26.7. Study the impacts of light pollution and develop actions to reduce its effects.

Action 26.7.1. Consider adopting a “dark sky ordinance” aimed at reducing light spillage both upward and onto adjoining properties.

SUSTAINABILITY

The California Building Codes, Title 24, have for decades set the standards and regulations for energy conservation in California. In 2004, the U.S. Green Building Council initiated a more comprehensive and voluntary set of national standards for “green building” through its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. (“Green” is a term that describes environmental practices and buildings that are highly energy efficient and have a minimal impact on the environment.) The LEED Green Building Rating System ranks developments and awards points in such additional areas as water-use reduction and ventilation-system effectiveness. Projects are certified at one of four levels (standard, silver, gold, platinum) based on the total number of points.

GOAL 27

Promote “green” development and redevelopment.

Policy 27.1. Encourage resource-efficient building techniques, materials, and technologies in new construction and renovation.

Action 27.1.1. Explore incentives to use green building techniques.

Action 27.1.2. Consider adding an energy-audit requirement to the City’s review processes.

CONSERVATION

Conservation is the management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect. Limiting the use of a resource, such as energy or water, can promote conservation. For example, water is conserved with drought tolerant landscaping.

Reuse is another way to conserve resources (e.g., donating a computer to a nonprofit agency or reusing old bricks to build a new home). Products also can be recycled by providing a new and different use for an existing...
waste product, such as converting auto tires into pavement.

The City proposes to set an example of environmental stewardship by employing conservation policies on City property and in City buildings. Researching and employing environmentally sustainable methods of doing business can provide valuable information on what works. The information learned can then be communicated to the wider community.

Action 28.2.5. Where appropriate, include energy-conservation projects in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan.

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G O A L  2 8

Promote energy conservation.

Policy 28.1. Implement energy conservation measures in City facilities and operations.

Action 28.1.1. Conduct an energy audit of all City activities and functions.

Action 28.1.2. Provide City departments with incentives to conserve energy.

Policy 28.2. Promote energy conservation throughout the city.

Action 28.2.1. Adopt residential and commercial energy-conservation ordinances.

Action 28.2.2. Adopt a solar-access ordinance.

Action 28.2.3. Develop incentives to help small businesses become more energy efficient.

Action 28.2.4. Develop incentives for new development or substantial redevelopment to incorporate energy conservation.
GOAL 29
Promote water conservation.

Policy 29.1. Implement water conservation measures in City facilities and operations.

Action 29.1.1. Study the feasibility of applying water conservation techniques, including the use of drought-tolerant plants, in city parks.

Policy 29.2. Promote water conservation throughout the community.

Action 29.2.1. Explore possibilities for safe and effective use of reclaimed or recycled water consistent with State law (e.g., for landscape irrigation and toilet flushing in commercial buildings).

Action 29.2.2. Work with local water agencies on water conservation efforts, education, and promotion.

Action 29.2.3. Encourage water use consistent with the City’s adopted water-conservation guidelines.

Action 29.2.4. Follow existing standards and guidelines for water-conserving landscaping, and encourage the planting of native and drought-tolerant plants.

WASTE REDUCTION

Reducing waste provides direct and indirect environmental benefits including cleaner air and water, reduced resource and energy use, and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. California’s Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 set an ambitious goal for cities to divert 50 percent of all solid waste from landfills by 2000 through source reduction, recycling, and composting. In 2003, the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA) calculated the diversion rate for Walnut Creek at 55 percent.

GOAL 30
Meet or exceed State goals for source reduction and waste diversion.

Policy 30.1. Implement source reduction and recycling in City facilities and operations.

Action 30.1.1. Implement source-reduction and waste-diversion programs within City government.

Action 30.1.2. Give preference to recycled content and environmentally friendly products in City procurement.

Policy 30.2. Promote source reduction and recycling throughout the community.

Action 30.2.1. Locally implement the State’s 1993 Source Reduction and Recycling Element.

Action 30.2.2. Consider adopting a comprehensive source-reduction and recycling plan specific to Walnut Creek.
Chapter 4, Built Environment

Action 30.2.3. Promote and participate in residential and commercial waste-prevention and diversion programs.

Action 30.2.4. Make recycling convenient for small businesses.

Action 30.2.5. Develop size, location, and design standards for commercial and multifamily trash and recycling facilities and enclosures.

Action 30.2.6. Consider an ordinance requiring businesses and multifamily dwellings to participate in recycling and waste-reduction programs.

Action 30.2.7. Require the recycling of construction waste for all City and private projects.

Action 30.2.8. Encourage shared recycling facilities among businesses, especially those with limited space, for example, within the Core Area.

Action 30.2.9. Provide accessible disposal containers, including recycling containers, at appropriate locations downtown and at City public facilities and parks.

Policy 30.3. Provide opportunities for residents and businesses to divert organic waste from landfill disposal.

Action 30.3.1. Work with the waste management companies to institute curbside residential organic waste-collection programs.

Action 30.3.2. Encourage restaurants to recycle organic waste.

AIR AND WATER QUALITY

Water and air are easily damaged by unregulated development. Although these issues are best handled on a regional or national basis, the City can take actions to improve air and water quality and reduce negative impacts from development.

Air Quality

The San Francisco Bay Area is among major U.S. metropolitan areas with the cleanest air, yet the area doesn’t meet air-quality standards for particulate matter or ground-level ozone. Light winds — combined with strong temperature inversions — trap pollutants, leading to locally high pollutant concentrations.

The air pollution potential in Walnut Creek is relatively high because of hot summer weather conditions and the city’s location in a large urban area. The city is particularly prone to high ozone levels in the summer, when ozone and its precursors drift into Walnut Creek from the more densely urbanized parts of the Bay Area.

In winter, light winds combine with strong temperature inversions to trap wood smoke and carbon monoxide, both of which can appear in locally high concentrations.

Although federal and State laws establish regulations for major sources of pollution, air quality is regulated at a regional level — with primary focus on reducing emissions.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) regulates air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. It prepares regional air-quality plans every three years. These plans include implementation strategies, some of which rely on local governments for implementation.

A key element in regional air-quality planning is the accurate projection of future human activity, including population and vehicle-use
Local general plans are important sources of this data.

As a cooperating regional entity, Walnut Creek can promote better air quality by recognizing the bottom-up nature of pollution—that the cumulative results of transportation and land use policies can assist or negate regional air quality planning and accomplishments.

GOAL 31
Strive to meet State and federal air-quality standards for the region.

Policy 31.1. Work with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and the County in promoting better air quality.

Action 31.1.1. Support local transportation control measures (TCMs) and other ideas in the latest Bay Area Clean Air Plan.

Action 31.1.2. Develop a local, voluntary Clean Air Plan.

Action 31.1.3. Participate in the BAAQMD Spare the Air program.

Policy 31.2. Consider additional land use and development criteria, standards, and decisions that have positive impacts on air quality and quality of life in general.

Action 31.2.1. Review parking lot landscaping requirements to ensure adequate width and depth to allow for appropriate tree canopy.

Action 31.2.2. Investigate policies that promote cleaner air, such as commercial reflective roofing ordinances.

Action 31.2.3. Promote residential development and redevelopment opportunities near transit and commercial centers, and encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use.

Policy 31.3. Proactively manage local air-quality issues.

Action 31.3.1. Control emission of dust from construction sites.

Action 31.3.2. Adopt a wood smoke ordinance.

Action 31.3.3. Provide buffers between identified stationary sources of odors and sensitive land uses.

Action 31.3.4. Projects that locate new sensitive receptors (facilities or land uses such as hospitals, day care centers, schools and residences that are occupied for substantial amounts of time by members of the population particularly sensitive to the effects of air pollutants, such as children, the elderly and people with illnesses) proposed within 500 feet from the edge of the closest travel lane of Interstate 680 or Highway 24 should include an analysis of mobile source toxic air contaminant health risks, based on appropriate air dispersion modeling. Project review should include an evaluation of the adequacy of the setback from the highway, and, if necessary, identify design miti-
gation measures to reduce health risks to acceptable levels.

**Water Quality**

Federal and State laws govern water quality and regulate the major sources of water pollution. The laws are implemented regionally through the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

Four major watersheds drain the Walnut Creek Planning Area. The quality of surface and groundwater is affected by land uses and activities within the watersheds, as well as the underlying geology.

Walnut Creek gets its water from two water districts: The Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) serves primarily the northern and eastern third of the city. The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) serves the remaining two-thirds of the city.

EBMUD and CCWD own all water distribution and treatment facilities in Walnut Creek. The largest distribution, treatment, pumping, and storage facilities are outside the city limits.

EBMUD customers in Walnut Creek used more than 9 million gallons per day (mgd) in 2003. CCWD’s Walnut Creek customers used 2.4 mgd. Residential users consumed 75 percent of the combined 2003 total of 11.4 mgd. Commercial customers used 18 percent, and 7 percent was consumed by others.

EBMUD’s 2000 Demand Study estimated customer demand would rise 20 percent by 2020. Both EBMUD and CCWD are looking for new and increased water supply and sources. As of 2005, both had large system improvement projects underway to seismically retrofit and increase reservoir capacity. Both have extensive conservation and recycling programs.

Cities are required to implement Stormwater Management Plans (SWMP) with performance standards and controls to reduce pollutants in stormwater discharge. “Best management practices” refer to any procedure or device designated to minimize the quantity of pollutants that enter the storm drain system. Recent changes strengthen the regulations for projects that replace or create new impervious surface.

The policies that follow meet the State’s requirements that general plans must include water-quality and watershed protection principles. The Creeks and Trails subsection of Chapter 3, Natural Environment and Public Spaces also addresses some of the State requirements.

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**GOAL 32**

Meet or exceed State and federal water-quality standards.

**Policy 32.1.** Support regional, State, and federal clean water efforts.

**Action 32.1.1.** Implement the Stormwater Management Plan.

**Action 32.1.2.** Enforce the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit regulations.

**Action 32.1.3.** Seek Regional Water Quality Control Board NPDES exemptions for low- and moderate-income housing and transit village projects.

**Action 32.1.4.** Prohibit development in areas particularly susceptible to erosion and sediment loss.

**Action 32.1.5.** Prepare information-and-action handouts on water-quality best-management practices and provide this information with project application packets.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy 32.2.</th>
<th>In redevelopment projects in the Core Area, evaluate the desirability of specific, off-site, source-control measures.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy 32.3.</td>
<td>Maximize infiltration of rainwater into the soil, where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 32.3.1.</td>
<td>Reduce the amount of impervious surfaces in new development and redevelopment. (See Safety and Noise Action 2.1.1.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action 32.3.2.</td>
<td>Require that impervious surfaces not drain directly into storm drains. (See Safety and Noise Action 2.1.1.)</td>
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<td>Policy 32.4.</td>
<td>Reduce the transport of urban runoff and surface pollutants offsite.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action 32.4.1.</td>
<td>Verify the effectiveness of stormwater treatment facilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action 32.4.2.</td>
<td>Verify, through the commercial, industrial, and illicit discharge inspection programs, that interior floor drains are connected to the sanitary sewer system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy 32.5.</td>
<td>Encourage preservation of natural water bodies and drainage systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 32.5.1.</td>
<td>Retain natural water bodies and leave drainage systems undisturbed while allowing construction of adjacent creek walks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action 32.5.2.</td>
<td>Prioritize onsite impacts and their mitigations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action 32.5.3.</td>
<td>Require participation in offsite or regional programs—including stream restoration—that provide water-quality benefits within the same water-shed, wherever development and/or redevelopment projects disturb natural water bodies or drainage systems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy 32.6.</td>
<td>Reduce pollutant loading in the wastewater system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action 32.6.1.</td>
<td>Apply best-management practices to discharges to the sanitary sewer system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 32.6.2.</td>
<td>Establish a pesticide-reducing protocol for city parks.</td>
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