“Walnut Creek Works: The 2016-2018 Budget Story” was produced by the City of Walnut Creek.

For questions or comments, email community@walnut-creek.org or call 925-943-5895.

Credits: Gayle Vassar, Communications & Outreach Manager; Liz Payne, photography; Carolyn Jackson and Carla Hansen, writers; Chuck Todd, design (www.chucktoddinfographics.com).
TRANSFORMATION & STEWARDSHIP

This is an exciting time to be in Walnut Creek. We have weathered the Great Recession, and find ourselves in the midst of a renaissance era, full of new ideas and energy. At the same time, we have a deep appreciation for what we already have, and a strong commitment to take care of it.

Our 2016-18 Budget Story reflects that dual purpose of transformation and stewardship. It seeks to tell the story of how we, your local government, spend the money you give us to meet community priorities, using the theme of “Walnut Creek Works.”

We are an evolving community, and this budget reflects that. Over the next two years, we will be exploring how our downtown parks can accommodate the increasing number of people who call our urban center home. We will create a long range vision for the area known as North Downtown, and complete a similar vision for the West Downtown.

We will add six people over the next two years in the areas of technology, law enforcement, community preservation, along with street and park maintenance. We’ll also be taking care of what we’ve got - $27 million will go toward street maintenance, a community center remodel and building upgrades. And, we will continue to look for ways to protect our environment, with creek restoration and ongoing commitment to programs that help us meet our Climate Action Plan goals.

Walnut Creek works in so many ways. Dedicated community members, along with non-profits, contribute their time and talents to make our community a better place. Businesses continue to innovate and ignite our local economy.

City employees come to work every day, ready to serve the public and make a difference. We will always have more needs to address than funds available. That’s why it’s important that we continue the dialogue about our future and our priorities. Late this year, we will be launching a citizen survey. Look for more information about that in the Winter Newsletter, and my electronic City Manager’s Update.

Ken Nordhoff
Walnut Creek City Manager

THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN 2016-18

1) Swim center at Heather Farm Park
The future of aquatics at Heather Farm Park is coming into focus. As envisioned at a July 5, 2016 Council study session, the new aquatics facility would include two pools—a family recreational pool and a 25-meter fitness/competitive pool.

The City Council has committed $6 million toward the project, the Walnut Creek Aquatics Foundation has expressed interest in raising money to increase the size of the fitness/competitive pool to 50-meters (the size of the current Clarke Swim Center Olympic pool). In addition, John Muir Health is exploring the possibility of developing a medical wellness center in conjunction with the swim center.

2) Walnut Creek Transit Village at BART
Phase 1 of this project — construction of a new parking garage — kicks off in 2017. Many of the Transit Village’s 596 market rate apartments will be available in 2020, with the entire project completing in 2021.

3) The Orchards Center
Some stores in this new town center at the corner of Ygnacio Valley and Oak Grove roads will begin opening in Fall 2016, including a 55,000-square-foot Safeway.

Complementing the retail will be a 55,000-square-foot Safeway opening in Fall 2016, including a 55,000-square-foot Safeway.

4) Citizen Survey
We want to hear from you! Whether you are one of the 3,000 households to receive a written survey or not, you can still weigh in via an online survey. Coming early 2017.

5) Downtown streetlamps go LED
The 360 decorative streetlights in the downtown will be converted to LED light bulbs, fulfilling the City’s goal of having all streetlights switch to LED.

6) Center for Community Arts
Formerly called Civic Arts Education, Walnut Creek’s community arts program will get a new name – Center for Community Arts – and a fresh look in Fall 2016.

Subscribe to the monthly City Manager’s Update at walnut-creek.org/subscribe
THE 2016-18 BUDGET
Here is an overview of Walnut Creek’s anticipated revenues and expenditures in the Fiscal Years 2016-18 Operating Budget.

General Fund Total Revenues 2016-2018: $178.4 million

Sales tax
While the total sales tax rate in Walnut Creek is 8.5 cents per dollar, the City receives a single penny. Bought a $40,000 car? Walnut Creek will get $400 in sales tax.

Of that 8.5 cents:
6.5¢ goes to the State
1¢ goes to Walnut Creek
0.5¢ goes to Contra Costa Transportation Authority
0.5¢ goes to BART

Property tax
Walnut Creek receives 9.4 cents per dollar of property tax. Of the average resident’s $3,912 property tax bill, only $368 goes to the City. A $100,000 property tax dollar go?

Where does your property tax dollar go?

40¢ — local schools
1¢ — Community College
1¢ — County
1¢ — State
1¢ — Federal

BY THE NUMBERS
The budget serves as a business plan to help the City and Citizens prioritize funding and plan for the future.

General Fund Total Expenditures 2016-2018: $172.1 million

40% Salaries: $69.6 million
37% Supplies, materials, contract services: $63.1 million
20% Benefits (pension, health insurance): $34.4 million

5% Transfers to other funds: $9 million
2% to reserves: $4 million

60% of the City’s expenses are related to personnel costs ($102.3 million)

$0 The City has no General Fund debt
$13 million Reserves set aside for catastrophic and fiscal emergencies

Cost Recovery by Department

Departmental revenue: $64.5 million
Other sources: $5.9 million
Other taxes: $17.5 million

What’s new

Library Hours
The additional 21 hours a week once paid for through a parcel tax are now included in the City’s General Fund.

Staffing Changes
The City will add two new police officers, a Code Enforcement officer, and an Information Technology position. In addition, the 2016-18 budget restores a street maintenance and a parks maintenance position that were cut during the recession.

Capital Budget
The Capital Budget provides $37 million for roads, storm water systems, bridges and other projects. (See page 11 for details).

Investing in Technology
The Council has directed surplus funds into several major technology projects, including an Enterprise Resource Planning system that will reduce redundancies and greatly streamline internal operations.
Building Community Connections

Walnut Creek has four unique policing areas — or ‘sectors’ — which are further broken down into police beats. This geographic approach lets police get to know the people they serve, as well as the particular challenges within their sector.

Every sector has a dedicated Lieutenant, or “sector commander,” who serves as the local point for public safety issues in his or her sector. Have a question or a concern? Contact your neighborhood’s Sector Commander. From crime concerns to neighborhood meetings, they are ready to help.

Crime analysis

“We’re taking a strategic approach to fighting crime by examining incidents, calls for service and crime statistics to identify potential problems and innovative solutions.”

Denise Joseph
Crime Analyst

Building Relationships with Walnut Creek Youth

The Police Department is expanding programming for younger students, building on the success of having School Resource Officers at high school campuses.

“‘These programs help build trust with the kids in our community. We want them to know Police Officers are here as a resource for them,’’ says Officer Drew Olson.

Seventh graders will be able to participate in the “Awareness” program, in which police officers discuss timely topics such as safe use of social media and the harmful effects of drugs.

At the 5th grade level, “Character Counts” is returning after a multi-year hiatus. The goal of “Character Counts” is to help 5th graders learn what it means to be a good person by focusing on six “pillars” of character, including trustworthiness and fairness.

Sgt. Bruce Jower
WCPD
CERT Leader Dale Blodgett

Volunteer for Safety

When disaster strikes, there won’t be enough police officers or firefighters to attend to every need. That’s where Walnut Creek’s Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program comes in. CERT members are trained to work together to safely respond to the needs of their neighborhoods following a disaster, and to serve as the eyes and ears for the City’s Emergency Operations Center and first responders.

Walnut Creek CERT contributions go beyond disaster response; in the past year, they’ve helped police search for missing persons, worked with Public Works to reduce flood hazards during heavy storms, and taught personal preparedness classes. Learn more about CERT — including how to sign up for training — at walnut-creek.org/cert.
New Inclusion Program
facilitates participation of children and adults with disabilities in any class.

“The Inclusion Program is a great step to help
provide all of our participants, special needs
and mainstream, the opportunity to enjoy
and successfully interact with the wide variety of
Arts + Rec programs.”

Larkey Pool Renovation Project

Set to open Summer 2017, the new Larkey Swim Center will be a community aquatic facility for all ages and ability levels.

The project involves the complete reconstruction of the 44-year-old pool to meet current health, safety and water efficiency standards. To better serve the changing aquatic needs of the community, the pool shape will be "squared-off" and deepened to ensure it can safely accommodate varying swim activities, host a full swim team of 10 to 12 lanes, or feature a synchronized swim show.

With the addition of a splash playground, Larkey Pool will provide an engaging water play experience that is water efficient, healthy, and safe for children of all abilities. The new facility will also have shade structures and a renovated bathhouse.

The Larkey Pool renovations are funded through special park funds and private donations in coordination with the Civic Pride Foundation, Walnut Creek Aquanuts and Walnut Creek Swim Club.

The Public Art program continues to make Walnut Creek unique. In the next few years, residents will see numerous new public art works installed at the Orchards center in the Ygnacio Valley area. Right across the street from Walnut Creek BART at the Landing development will be a landmark piece by artist Sharyn Oak. The recently revised Public Art Master Plan also opens the door for a future Downtown Murals Program.

The City of Walnut Creek, “Fountain Head” one of the 15 most spectacular fountains in the world. In front of the fountain are, from left, Arts Commissioner Carol Fowler, Bedford Gallery manager Carrie Lederer and Public Art program supervisor Steven Husse.

Boundary Oak Improvements

The past two years have been a time of renovation and renewal for Boundary Oak, the City’s golf course and clubhouse, with more to come in 2017.

Improvements at the 47-year-old clubhouse include: 50A upgrades, remodeled second-floor restrooms, more efficient heating and cooling, complete re-painting of the facility, as well as remodel of the kitchen for more efficient food service. New carpeting, flooring, and lighting have been added to enhance the guest experience.

Further improvements are in the planning stages for the upstairs bar's, and the downtown Grille’s Grille. Simultaneous to the Boundary Oak improvements, the golf course itself has received upgrades including new sand bunkers, new tee boxes, and additional landscaping. The golf course improvements enhance both guest experience and sustainability of the golf course infrastructure.

The Clubhouse improvements are part of a three-year $5.5 million plan funded by user fees.

For more information go to playboundaryoak.com.

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Walnut Creek’s economic vitality and quality of life is rooted in the City’s tradition of planning for the future through the establishment of, and commitment to, a shared community vision.

Ethan Bindernagel
Economic Development Manager

The next two years will be a time of visioning and exploration for the North Downtown, as the City undertakes development of a Specific Plan for the 80-acre area. The planning process started in May and is expected to conclude with a public hearing before the City Council in November 2017.

The purpose of a Specific Plan is to provide detailed guidelines on everything from design standards to economic development objectives. Specific Plans must be consistent with the General Plan, define land uses, address transportation and infrastructure needs and set standards for conservation of natural resources.

The North Downtown has a number of unique aspects to be considered during the planning process. It is close to transportation, in the North Downtown, as the City undertakes development of a Specific Plan for the 80-acre area. The planning process started in May and is expected to conclude with a public hearing before the City Council in November 2017.

The purpose of a Specific Plan is to provide detailed guidelines on everything from design standards to economic development objectives. Specific Plans must be consistent with the General Plan, define land uses, address transportation and infrastructure needs and set standards for conservation of natural resources.

The North Downtown has a number of unique aspects to be considered during the planning process.

- It is close to transportation, including BART, the 24/680 corridors, and the trail system.
- Several governmental agencies, including the DVF, the Post Office, and the County Superior Court, have buildings there. There are also many office buildings, such as the Adirin.
- And, in the past few years, North Downtown has gained new residents with the coming of several large apartment complexes.

Guiding the Specific Plan process is a 13-member Advisory committee composed of two North Downtown business owners, a major property owner, an auto dealer, two area residents, representatives from all five City Commissions, and two Council members. The committee meets the fourth Monday of the month. All meetings are open to the public. In addition, there will be a robust community outreach component, with workshops, online surveys, and more. To subscribe for updates, go to walnut-creek.org/northdowntown.

The development review process can seem like a maze, whether one’s a homeowner seeking a water heater permit, or a developer planning a major project. But things are going to get simpler over the next few years as the City rolls out a Development Services Action Plan. The goal: To make the development review process more consistent, efficient and customer-friendly, while still ensuring safety and quality.

Some examples include:
- Accela Automation. Accela went live in July 2016, replacing an outdated system. Soon, permit applicants will be able to check their permit status and schedule an inspection online. A later phase will let people apply for permits online as well.
- Some commercial businesses seeking to do tenant improvement work can now request to begin rough framing of interior walls once their construction plans have been submitted for review, rather than have to wait for the building permit to be issued, cutting approximately 3 weeks out of the construction schedule.

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Do you know?

On the go pursuits “Over the next two years, we will continue to promote programs and pursue projects that offer a variety of multi-modal transportation options to enhance the quality of life in Walnut Creek.”

Jeremy Lochirco
Transportation Planner

The green Downtown Trolleys will be even greener – not to mention quieter – soon. The Central Contra Costa Transit Authority, commonly called County Connection, which manages the county bus system, is replacing the existing diesel-fueled trolleys with electric trolleys, thanks to a $4.3 million federal grant. County Connection was one of 27 projects throughout the United States to receive the 2012 Clean Fuels Grant funding. Charging stations will be located at the Walnut Creek BART Station and the Contra Costa County Transportation Authority bus yard in North Concord.

Get Pumped for the Bicycle Master Plan Update

Adopted in 2011, the Bicycle Master Plan provides goals, policies and actions which promote biking as a desirable transportation alternative to the automobile. Early in 2017, City staff will begin the process to update the plan. The updated plan will incorporate several new state policies and regulations related to alternative commute modes and so-called Complete Streets, which provide safe access to all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bikes, buses and cars. The community will be invited to provide ideas and input on the plan.

Downtown Trolley Goes Electric

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**THE CAPITAL BUDGET**

While most budget discussions focus on the City’s General Fund (which covers the cost of operating programs and services), the City also has a Capital Budget to pay for specific projects, including roads and bridges; storm water systems; public buildings; parks, open space and trails. The 2016-18 Capital Budget is $27 million.

**How do we pay for that?**

Nine main sources of funding for the 2016-18 Capital Budget.

- **Federal Highway Bridge Grants** $6.3 million
- **General Fund** $2.75 million
- **In-Lieu Park Fees** (paid by developers) $1.9 million
- **Traffic Impact Fees** (paid by developers) $1.4 million
- **Measure J** (half-cent countywide sales tax for roads only) $0.7 million
- **One-time Surplus Funds** $1.5 million
- **Capital Reserves** $1.4 million
- **Downtown Parking Fund** $1.8 million
- **Gas Tax** (for roads only) $1.4 million

**CAPITAL BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS**

The City is investing nearly twice as much in its physical assets in 2016-18 as it did in 2014-16, thanks in large part to an $8 million infusion of one-time and surplus funds and $6.3 million in Federal Highway Bridge grants.

**Northgate Park renovations** $150,000 in park funds for new park amenities, including sand volleyball courts, a picnic area, and new drought tolerant landscaping. Construction will start September 2016.

**Walker Homestead Drainage Improvements** $5 million in one-time funds resulting from budget surpluses to install a new drainage system to relieve the flooding in the Walker Avenue / Homestead Avenue Intersection.

**Walnut Acres/Foothill Middle School pedestrian improvements** $400,000 in Traffic Impact Fees will be spent to improve pedestrian safety near these schools, including medians at the Western Blackstone and Cedro/Casa Buena Intersections.

**Ygnacio Valley Road paving** $1.4 million to pave Ygnacio Valley between California and Casa Buena Intersections.

**ONE TIME PROJECTS IN 2016 – 2018**

- **Pine Creek** $6.5 million
- **Las Trampas Creek** $5 million
- **Walker Homestead Drainage** $5 million
- **Ygnacio Valley Road** $1.4 million

**SOME PROJECTS OF NOTE COMING IN 2016-18:**

- **Bridges** $6.5 million in Federal grants, plus $675,000 in local matching funds, to replace the 97-year-old South Main Street Bridge over Las Ramblas Creek and to widen the Blanchard Road Bridge over Pine Creek. Environmental and design work will begin in 2016, with construction anticipated in 2018.

**GREEN GOALS**

“Saving natural resources and addressing climate change is a priority for Walnut Creek. We hope the community will take advantage of our Going Green Together sustainability programs and help us achieve our Climate Action Plan goals.”

**Cara Baungi-Rao, Sustainability Coordinator**

**GROWING NEEDS OF DOWNTOWN PARKS**

Over the next two years, Walnut Creek will take a look at its two downtown parks and consider how they should evolve to meet the needs of the increasing number of people who call downtown home. While most are aware of Civic Park, few know that Alma Park, nestled between Ivy Hill Apartments and the Regent on the Park condominiums, is a public park. Alma Park is easily accessed on California near Ohlone, and features lawns, benches, decorative arbors and an impressive view of Mount Diablo. The 2016-18 Capital Budget commits $510,000 in developer-paid park funds for Alma Park planning, and $315,000 in developer-paid park funds for Civic Park planning. The public will be invited to participate in both planning efforts.

In addition to planning for downtown parks, the 2016-18 Capital Budget provides for more than $2 million for infrastructure upgrades and new amenities throughout the City’s park system.

**Plotting plans for gardens**

Would be gardeners will soon have a place to test their green thumbs, thanks to a partnership between the City and the non-profit Gardens at Heather Farm to create a community garden. While the City is providing approximately $54,000 in developer-paid park funds for materials, it is the non-profit Gardens at Heather Farm and its cadre of dedicated volunteers that will actually build the garden plots on-site and manage the day-to-day operations. In addition, beginning gardeners will be able to take advantage of on-site classes taught by Gardens volunteers.

Construction on the 30-plot garden will start this fall, so the plots will be ready for planting in the later winter – early spring of 2017. For more information on reserving a plot, contact the Gardens at Heather Farm at gardens40.org.
Do you ever wish your phone or your car could guide you to an open parking spot? That technology is coming to downtown Walnut Creek thanks to a $495,000 grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Often labeled as a “Smart City” strategy, the City will build an open data platform that collects, stores, and processes parking and traffic data. The data will then be translated and pushed out to apps and in-vehicle guidance systems. Making the data available on an open platform will also allow public sector partners to access and use the data to create apps to ease traffic congestion by making it easier to get around.

This Smart Cities project will be implemented in late 2017. Stay tuned for updates.

Coaching for excellence

Walnut Creek is joining a number of top companies, from Adobe to General Electric, who are adopting the traditional performance evaluation model for something more dynamic.

The City’s approach is called “Coaching for Excellence.” Instead of an annual “check the box” supervisor and employee will be trained to work together to set and achieve work goals through ongoing conversations. A pilot training program in September will include 20 employees from the Police and Arts & Rec departments.

The goal of Coaching for Excellence is to create an environment in which employees and supervisors can continue to work together to achieve career success and experience greater fulfillment at work and provide the best possible service to the public.

Leveraging resources

“The partnership between the City, Walnut Creek Downtown, and the Chamber of Commerce is essential. When we leverage our resources, we can accomplish great things.”

Jay Hoyer
Executive Director, Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce

Byron Best
Executive Director, Walnut Creek Downtown

The City is committed to developing and recognizing employee excellence. Shown here, Police Officer Will Appel and Gina Eicher of Public Works, Employees of the Year.

Showcased here, Parklets and artistic utility box wraps, colorful gateway banners, planted beds and parklets. Based on the success of the 2014-16 initiative, the City is continuing its downtown partnerships, reinvesting $272,000 in downtown parking fees to support a range of events and amenities that spur activity in the downtown while garnering support from merchants along the way.

CULTURE OF INNOVATION

Smart Cities Grant to connect parking to phones

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