Greetings!

I am very excited about being your new City Manager. My family and I recently relocated to Walnut Creek after 15 years in San Luis Obispo, where I worked as the County Administrative Officer. We had long considered relocating to the Bay Area and when the opportunity in Walnut Creek arose, I jumped at it. The community is very engaged and the city organization is known for being forward-thinking and for providing quality services. Walnut Creek is a fantastic city and I already feel at home.

I believe strongly in public service and have quickly embraced the city’s values of respect, integrity, excellence, teamwork, and creativity. I will do my best to support transparency and to ensure that you receive the information you want and need about your city.

I look forward to learning more about Walnut Creek and to meeting members of the community.

In the meantime, you can always reach me at buckshi@walnut-creek.org.

Sincerely,

Dan Buckshi
Here’s what’s happening this fall

**Labor Day Concert**
The Walnut Creek Concert Band will perform a free Labor Day concert in Civic Park at 6 p.m. Monday, Sept. 4.

**Fall Family Art Day**
Celebrate fall with the Center for Community Arts on Saturday, Sept. 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Shadelands Arts Center, 111 N. Wiget Lane. Enjoy cozy crafts, art-making, performances, refreshments and giveaways at this free family event.

**Walnut Festival parade, events**
The Walnut Festival fun begins at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16 with the Twilight Parade on North Main Street. The Festival runs Sept. 21-24 at Heather Farm Park, and offers family-friendly entertainment, live music, carnival rides, and more. Visit www.thewalnutfestival.org.

**OktoberFest**
OktoberFest returns on Saturday, Oct. 14, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and the Walnut Creek Downtown Association, the fun takes place on Locust Street. Live music, great food, and of course, beer!

**Holiday Tea tickets on sale**
Tickets for the Walnut Creek Historical Society’s Annual Holiday Tea & Faire at the historic Shadelands Ranch go on sale 9 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 1. Phone reservations only! Call 925-935-7871.
The Holiday Tea & Faire runs Nov. 25 through Dec. 10, with daily seatings at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Tickets are $35 per person. New this year is a Champagne Tea on Saturday, Dec. 2 at 3:30 p.m. Tickets for the Champagne Tea are $45.
The nonprofit arts and culture industry generates $41.5 million in annual economic activity in Walnut Creek, supporting over 1,000 full-time equivalent jobs and generating $3.6 million in local and state government revenues, according to the Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 national economic impact study.

The results prove the key role that investing in nonprofit arts and culture activities plays in the Walnut Creek economy - supporting jobs, generating local spending, and serving as a cornerstone to a vibrant downtown.

Nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Walnut Creek spent $21.1 million during fiscal year 2015. In addition to spending by organizations, the nonprofit arts and culture industry generated $20.4 million in event-related spending by its audiences. As a result of attending a cultural event, audience members often eat dinner in local restaurants, pay for parking, buy gifts and souvenirs, and pay a babysitter.

In Walnut Creek, audiences spent an average of $32 per person, per event as a direct result of their attendance at an arts event, beyond the cost of event admission.

To access the full Walnut Creek Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 report, visit walnut-creek.org/artsandrec.

The arts mean business in Walnut Creek

People who attend performances at the Lesher Center spend, on average, $32 in addition to their ticket price.

Onstage this fall

Center REP, the City’s repertory company, starts the 2017-18 season with “Million Dollar Quartet,” a hit Broadway musical that brings to life the greatest jam session ever - the night in Memphis when Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Johnny Cash played together at Sun Records for one incredible night. Sept. 1 - Oct. 6.

Next on stage is the 17th-century comedy “The Liar,” adapted for today’s times. The charismatic Dorante has but a single flaw: he cannot tell the truth. Cliton, his manservant cannot tell a lie. Together they bring us one of the Western world’s greatest comedies. Oct. 2 - Nov. 18. Go to lesherartscenter.org or call 925-943-7469.

Next at the Bedford: Abstract paintings by Bay Area women

About Abstraction: Bay Area Women Painters” celebrates 16 Bay Area women artists, both emerging and established, who have worked in abstraction for years. This show provides a platform for their work that features precise, powerful lines, as well as gestural patterns. These paintings suggest a kinship with the Abstract Expressionist movement of 1940s SoHo and San Francisco.

The show runs at the Bedford Gallery Sept. 24 through Dec. 17, with an opening reception on Sunday, Sept. 24 from 3-5 p.m.

Image above: Lorene Anderson, Swirl & Roil, 2017, acrylic on canvas

Film society hosts short film competition

Walnut Creek’s Mountain Shadow Film Society will host its annual short film competition the weekend of Sept. 15-16. The 7:30 p.m. performances will be held in the Las Lomas High School Theater, 1460 S. Main Street. Admission is free to Mountain Shadow members; $12 general admission tickets will be available at the door beginning at 7 p.m.

The film festival features the work of 10 finalists pre-selected by a 30-member jury. The finalists will present their films in person and engage the audiences in a Q&A. The short films include a variety of genres.

Audiences will then vote on their favorite films for cash awards to be presented at the conclusion of the show on Sept. 16. Last year’s first-place winner was subsequently short-listed for an Oscar earlier this year.

Mountain Shadow is a non-profit film society that brings the best in foreign and independent filmmaking every month to Walnut Creek. For more information, go to www.mountainshadow.org, or contact John Bennison 925-787-6965 or jb@mountainshadow.org.
Artful living
All about Walnut Creek’s lively Public Art program

Why public art?
Integrating artworks into public spaces makes our city more livable and visually stimulating. Public art contributes to Walnut Creek’s identity and creates positive, memorable images that inspire city residents and visitors.

What is the public art program and when did it start?
The Walnut Creek public art program started in the 1980s, and provisions for Public Art in private development were later added to the city’s General Plan. In 2000, the City Council approved a Public Art Master Plan and two ordinances mandating funding and the inclusion of public art in private and municipal development and renovation projects. The Public Art Master Plan was revised in 2016 and a key addition mandated that all development in Walnut Creek include a public art component. The Public Art Program is administered by the Arts and Recreation Department’s public art staff and is overseen by the Arts Commission.

Do other cities have public art programs?
Yes. Today there are more than 350 established public art programs in the U.S.

Where does the money for public art come from?
With few exceptions, every new commercial, industrial, or multi-family residential (six or more units) project pays a public art fee in an amount not less than 1 percent of the cost of the completed project. This fee is either used to incorporate public art within the development site or paid into the city’s Public Art Fund.

What can the City’s Public Art Fund pay for?
The Public Art Fund is used for permanent and temporary municipal projects. The fund can only be used to prepare sites for works of art; acquire, install and maintain works of art; support exhibitions; and for other administrative costs associated with the Public Art Program. The Arts Commission makes recommendations to the City Council for approval of uses for the funds.

When are the Arts Commission meetings and can the public attend?
The City Council-appointed Arts Commission meets the fourth Monday in January, April, July and October at 6 p.m. in Council Chambers. Special meetings occur throughout the year as needed to meet the demands of projects. The public is welcome to attend the meetings and can share their input during the Public Communications portion of the agenda or during the public comment portion for specific projects.

How many pieces of Public Art are in Walnut Creek and how can I learn more about the collection?
There are more than 40 pieces of public art in Walnut Creek. They are located primarily in the downtown core, with a small but growing number in other parts of the city. There is a self-guided audio tour available for Public Art in Walnut Creek. Look for the magenta and orange Public Art signs around town, located near artworks. Dial the number on any sign to hear about that artwork. Find the Public Art Walking Tour web app at https://walkwc.oncell.com/en/public-art-tours-102961.html

There are also docent-led Public Art Walking Tours, which are held April through November on the third Saturday of the month. Visit the Bedford Gallery for a brochure, or go to bedfordgallery.org.

TAKE THE TOUR! Docent-led public art walking tours take place 11 a.m. to noon April through November on the third Saturday of the month. Tours meet in front of the Lesher Center for the Arts, and are $5 per person. Go to bedfordgallery.org for more information. Here, “Fountainhead” artist Seyed Alavi delights a crowd during a tour.

“Hand of Peace” by Beniamino Bufano, graces Civic Park.
Meet the K9s
Mighty trio makes a “pawsitive” difference

While out and about, you may notice a Walnut Creek Police Department vehicle with the emblems “Police Dog” and “K9” highlighting the very special four-legged passenger inside. WCPD currently has three canines working patrol. Want to get to know your WCPD K9’s a little better? We thought so! Here is a brief profile on each of our terrific K9’s given by their handlers.

K9 Danny (w/ Officer Randy Dickey)
Age: 5 years old
Approximate weight: 85 pounds
K9 Years of Service with WCPD: 3 years
Trained in: Searching for evidence and drugs, and tracking people
Favorite toy: Police Services Officer Larry Sardi (who voluntarily spends time training with the K9 team)!
Favorite experience with your K9: My favorite experience was the first time Danny tracked a parolee hiding in a residential area after committing a burglary at an elementary school. We would not have found the suspect without Danny. It was great to see all his training to come to fruition.
What do you enjoy most about working as a K9 Officer?
I get to go to a variety of in-progress calls and work with the best partner ever.
Ways the K9 program can benefit the city?
The canine program is a great bridge between the police and the community. I always enjoy talking with people about the dogs. We are very fortunate to have so many in the community that support the program.

K9 Izy (w/ Officer Liz Wallace)
Age of K9: 3 years old
Approximate weight: 60 pounds
Years of Service with WCPD: 2 months
Trained in: Finding people and things
Favorite toy: Tug toys
Favorite experience with your K9: Early on in his career, Harry trailed a teenage girl who had taken pills in an effort to commit suicide. He trailed her from downtown out into the open space and found her lying down in the grass. We got the girl to AMR and she was saved. AMR asked what pills she had taken and we went back and located the empty pill bottle. Catching bad guys is great, but saving a life rocks!

K9 partner Harry (w/ Officer Pat Duggan)
Age of K9: 4.5 years old
Years of Service with WCPD: 3.5 years
Trained in: Patrol and narcotics
Favorite toy: Anyone in a bite suit!
Favorite experience with your K9: Early on in his career, Harry trailed a teenage girl who had taken pills in an effort to commit suicide. He trailed her from downtown out into the open space and found her lying down in the grass. We got the girl to AMR and she was saved. AMR asked what pills she had taken and we went back and located the empty pill bottle. Catching bad guys is great, but saving a life rocks!

How does the program help the city?
The K9 is a force multiplier. We are able to locate people faster and more safely for both the suspect and the police officers involved. People who would not surrender to an officer with a gun will usually give up to an officer with a dog which means a safer workplace for the police as we go hands-on less. It is a win-win!

We invite all of our community members to come to one of the K9 demonstrations that we do throughout the year! Look for announcements on our Walnut Creek Police Facebook page (facebook.com/walnutcreekpd) and on Nextdoor.

Walnut Creek Police launched its current K9 program in 2007. Today, there are three canines on patrol, including Belgian Malinois Izy, above, who joined the team in May, along with Danny, top right, and Harry, bottom right. All three hail from the Slovak Republic, and receive their commands in Czech!

WCPD K-9
“Danny”

WCPD K-9
“Harry”

Walnut Creek Police Captain Steve Skinner retired in August after 33 years of distinguished law enforcement service, including nearly 30 years in Walnut Creek.

Skinner began his career at the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office in Nevada in 1984, before coming to WCPD in 1988. Skinner began his WCPD career in Patrol and quickly advanced to various special assignments, teams, and promotions. Skinner was promoted to Captain in 2010, and was the Interim Chief of Police in May and June of 2013.

Police Captain retires after 33 years

Captian Steve Skinner
Addressing Pension Liabilities

Council saves surplus for future liability

In July the Council took a major step in addressing pension liabilities when they unanimously agreed to put a $12.8 million surplus into an irrevocable trust. The trust can only be used for pension-related costs. The $12.8 million is seed money – the Council acknowledged that additional funds would need to be put in the trust. Staff provided a model that provides for deposits into the trust of an additional $11.2 million over the next 4 years. Combined with anticipated interest earnings, that would provide for $38 million to address a large portion of the pension cost increases.

Having the money in trust means the City has a better chance of having limited service disruptions when PERS requires additional payments.

Why pension liabilities matter

Like most cities across California, Walnut Creek is facing steep increases in the amount the City is required to contribute to the California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS).

Costs are expected to balloon from $8.2 million in 2016 to $20.4 million in FY 2028.

How this impacts the community

Why is there an unfunded pension cost increase?

- CalPERS has suffered significant losses due to poor investment returns.
- Beginning in Fiscal Year 2008, CalPERS became cash flow negative when it started paying out more than it collected. The gap – called the unfunded accrued liability – continues to grow.
- In addition, retirees are living longer. In fact, in Walnut Creek, there are more retirees receiving benefits than there are active employees paying into CalPERS.
- As of June 2016, CalPERS has only 68 percent of the funds required to pay estimated retirement benefits and this gap is expected to grow before it reverses. CalPERS wants to be fully funded.
- To close the gap, CalPERS is increasing employer contribution rates. For the City of Walnut Creek, this translates into higher pension costs in future years.
- Walnut Creek has a projected liability of $83 million as of June 2016, up from $73.4 million in 2015. Employer contribution rates are expected to increase through the year 2033.

Pension Costs Q & A

Q: Why can’t the City buy its way out of CalPERS?
A: It would be extremely expensive -- The estimated cost of buying out of CalPERS is between $350-400 million.

Q: How much does the City of Walnut Creek pay to its retirees in pensions?
A: Our latest numbers show that for our 352 non-sworn (meaning not police) retirees, the average pension being paid by Walnut Creek is $25,923 a year. Keep in mind that this is what Walnut Creek is paying. It’s possible that some of these people worked for other public agencies and are getting other pensions.

Walnut Creek Police pensions are in a bigger pool than just Walnut Creek (more than 23,000 officers are in this pool). The average annual pension that the public safety pool pays to its retirees is $37,282.

Walnut Creek employees do not get medical benefits after retirement.

Q: How are Walnut Creek’s pensions calculated?
A: For our non-safety employees:

1. CalPERS payments come out of the City’s General Fund – The same fund that pays for everything from parks to police ...
2. ... The more money taken out of the General Fund for CalPERS ...
3. ... the less money available for services to the public.

Prior to 2012, the retirement age for non-safety employees was 55. In 2012, the retirement eligibility age for new police officers was shifted to 55. In 2013, the plan was further amended so new members will receive 2.7% at age 57.
How to save on solar or electric car

SunShares, a renewable energy procurement program that makes it easier and more affordable for Bay Area residents to go solar or purchase an electric vehicle, is back!

Learn more about SunShares at a free workshop on Thursday, Sept. 28 from 7-8 p.m. at Concord’s City Hall, 1950 Parkside Drive, Concord. There’s something for everyone - renters can also learn more about clean energy options.

In addition to the workshop, there will be several webinars covering the same information. Go to www.bayareasunshares.org/events.

SunShares is a project of the Business Council on Climate Change (BC3), a non-profit working with Bay Area businesses to take collective action on sustainability issues. Walnut Creek is participating in SunShares to help support the clean energy goals in our Climate Action Plan.

Keep leaves, grass out of storm drains

Autumn, with its falling leaves, is a good time to consider how to maintain one’s landscape without impacting the environment.

It’s important to keep yard waste such as grass clippings and leaves out of storm drains. Although leaves and organic waste are biodegradable, their breakdown process robs valuable oxygen from the water. This can kill fish and other aquatic life.

Instead, consider “grasscycling.” Simply leave grass clippings on the lawn when mowing. Once cut, the clippings will dry out and decompose, adding healthy nutrients back into the soil.

Compost helps control erosion during rainy days and can protect plant roots from sun and wind damage. For tips on how to start a home compost pile, and a schedule of free compost workshops, go to recyclesmart.org.

Use organic mulch if needed, but only use less-toxic pesticide mulches. For more information on less-toxic pesticide products, visit the Our Water-Our World website www.ourwaterourworld.org.

Discover the Open Space with fall events

Hiking in the Open Space at night is one of the special programs offered through Walnut Creek’s Open Space division. [Photo courtesy of Bob Brittain]

In addition to monthly bird walks, animal care days and ranch tours at Old Borges Ranch, the Open Space division is offering a series of special programs this fall. Here are some highlights. To receive a brochure covering fall Open Space activities, email dollard@walnut-creek.org.

Old Borges Ranch open house.
Saturday, Sept. 23, Nov. 18 and Dec. 16, 1-3 p.m. Take a self-guided tour of the historic ranch house. An Open Space ranger will be on hand to answer any questions. 1035 Castle Rock Road.

National Public Lands Volunteer Day
Saturday, Sept. 30, 9 a.m. to 12 noon Join us for a day of service topped off by a community picnic and Ranger-led hike. Location to be determined; contact Supervising Ranger Nancy Dawson Dollard, dollard@walnut-creek.org or call 925-943-5899 ext. 2135.

Take a Kid Mountain Biking
Saturday, Oct. 7
Riders are encouraged to take a kid mountain biking on this fun day. Ranger Corri Frazier will be leading a ride through Walnut Creek’s open space. The time and location will be determined based on most recent trail condition. RSVP is required – email Frazier@walnut-creek.org or call 925-943-5899 ext. 2665.

Howe History Tour
Sunday, Nov. 5, 1-2:30 p.m.
James Pomeroy Howe was a Kansas boy, an Associated Press correspondent, a wine maker and a flyer of pigeon flutes. Tour his home, and learn more about his amazing history. 2950 Walnut Boulevard; meet at the flag pole by the barn. Ranger Art Janke, 925-943-5899 ext. 3521.
Managing traffic today and tomorrow

Traffic tops the list of concerns throughout the Bay Area, and Walnut Creek is no exception.

Of those taking the 2017 Citizen Survey, only 23% rated “traffic flow” as excellent or good. In fact, only affordable quality housing received a lower rating.

So what are we, your local government, doing to move traffic safely and efficiently?

Over the next 30 years, we plan to invest more than $84 million in transportation improvements.

We will continue to take the lead in implementing technologies to manage traffic. Through strategic planning, we will reinvent our City for all modes of transportation. We will concentrate development in the downtown, as outlined in the General Plan, to minimize impact of new growth on neighborhood streets.

Under the vision outlined in our General Plan, Walnut Creek will continue to grow at about a half-percentage point per year, and with that growth, additional cars will come. We recognize the impact traffic has on our community, and are committed to using the strategies explained on these pages, as well as new ideas not yet discovered, to make it easier for all of us to get around our town.

Dan Buckshi
City Manager
New ways to keep people moving

‘SMART CITY’ TECHNOLOGY HELPS COMMUTERS

Here is a look at how the City uses Smart City data to keep traffic running smoothly:

1. Real-time traffic and parking data is sent to the Smart City Data Cloud.

2. The data is stored and processed in the data cloud.

3. The data is translated ...

4. ... and then pushed out to real-time signage, apps and in car navigation systems.

Trends of the Future

It takes more than one strategy to manage traffic. Here are some trends of the future:

Walk and Bike in Walnut Creek. New striping on Buena Vista and on Walnut Avenue provided a much improved cycling experience. Walking conditions around Foothill School and Walnut Acres are improved with bike lanes, more visible pedestrian crossings with warning lights. These examples are just the beginning of reinventing the street scape.

Bike shares are no longer just for big cities. Walnut Creek is on the way to provide the freedom to pick up a bike for one-way trips. The goal is to make bicycling a practical solution for getting around town. The City continues to work with neighboring agencies to implement regional bicycle connectivity for major arterials like Olympic Boulevard and Treat Boulevard.

Adaptive Signal Timing. Walnut Creek is already ahead of most cities when it comes to managing traffic signal timing. From the Traffic Signal Master room at City Hall, traffic engineers can monitor all 100 of the City’s traffic lights and make adjustments to keep cars moving. In the future, the City hopes to shift to Adaptive Signal Timing, which uses real-time data to adjust signal timing without the need for human intervention.

Better Transit Stops. The City received an $852,000 grant to improve bus stops throughout Walnut Creek. The money will be used to replace non-compliant shelters with new ADA accessible and solar-powered shelters; improve lighting, and add real-time travel information. The integration of transit into the downtown fabric will be augmented with public art.
Introducing long-term street parking

City seeks to balance downtown parking demand, by offering nearby long-term parking.

**THE PROBLEM:**
During peak times in the downtown core, street parking and garages are filled to capacity, while parking options a block or two away have ample space available.

**Parking statistics:**

- **10,000** Total parking spaces
- 70% privately managed parking and 30% managed by the City.
- **3,000** City managed parking spaces in Walnut Creek
- **1,500** Metered parking spaces
- **1,500** Parking spaces in three City-owned garages

*Where your parking dollars go*
Money is reinvested in a healthy, vibrant downtown and goes to:

- Public safety
- Keeping downtown clean
- The Free Ride Downtown Trolley

**THE SOLUTION:**
Removing metered time limits in underutilized areas near downtown starting Sept. 15. Look for purple meter poles.

Long-term parking areas:

- Meter time limits removed*
- $1 per hour
- Look for purple color coded meter poles.

**Tip:** Use the ParkMobile app to add time to your meter.

**Downtown Core:**

- 2 hour time limit
- $2 per hour on parking meters

**Parking Garages:**

- First hour free
- 50¢ per hour parking at Lesher Center and Broadway; $1 per hour at South Locust.

**Ever-changing world of Parking Management**
As parking demand in the Downtown changes, the strategies to manage the demand will as well. Stay in the loop for updates www.walnut-creek.org/parking

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*Note that cars may not park in the same on-street spot for more than 72 hours.*

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**ParkMobile makes it easier to stay longer**
The ParkMobile App makes it easier to stay longer. Download the app to pay for parking. Get a notification when your time is running out, and extend your time without returning to the meter.

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**Map of Walnut Creek**

- **WALNUT CREEK**
- **680** Parkside Drive
- **N. Broadway**
- **S. Broadway**
- **N. Main St.**
- **S. Main St.**
- **N. California Blvd.**
- **S. California Blvd.**
- **Locust St.**
- **S. Broadway**
- **Ygnacio Valley Road**
- **Newell Ave.**
- **Mt. Diablo Blvd.**
- **Botehlo**
- **Cypress**
- **Olympic Blvd.**
- **Civic Dr.**
- **Lesher Center Garage**
- **Broadway Plaza Parking Garage**
- **South Locust Garage**

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City funds homeless support services

The City Council has created a Homeless Services Fund which would give $200,000 a year to programs and activities that address homelessness. Two program will receive that funding in Fiscal Year 2017-18.

The first, Trinity Center, will receive up to $100,000 to operate a four-month evening Winter Shelter Program. Similar to previous years, the program is operated as a “closed” shelter where participants are pre-screened and are registered members of Trinity Center’s daytime program. Trinity Shelter hopes to operate the shelter at the National Guard Armory adjacent to Civic Park east. The Planning Commission is expected to vote on a Conditional Use Permit for the shelter in September.

In addition, the Council approved $70,000 in funding for an additional homeless Coordinated Outreach, Referral, and Engagement (CORE) team to be shared between Walnut Creek and Concord. CORE team members establish relationships with homeless persons through ongoing engagement in the streets, in camps, and in shelters. The CORE team connects clients to a variety of services, medical and mental health care, case management, substance abuse treatment and services, benefit counseling, and housing.

Be ready for floods

The rainy season is fast approaching, and with it, the possibility of floods. Properties located in the 100-year floodplain have a 25 percent chance of experiencing a flood during the life of a 30-year mortgage. But localized flooding can occur in any location. Nationwide, more than 30 percent of flood losses occur outside of mapped flood areas.

Flood insurance is available for purchase to all residents in Walnut Creek and unincorporated portions of the County as a result of Walnut Creek’s participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). It takes 30 days after purchase for a policy to take effect, so it’s important to buy insurance before the floodwaters start to rise.

Contact the City’s Engineering Division at 925-943-5839 for additional information or to determine if your property is located in a 100-year floodplain.

Development Update

**Walnut Creek Transit Village**

Work is to begin in September on a new parking garage at the Walnut Creek BART Station. The garage is the first phase of the Walnut Creek Transit Village. When complete, the transit village will include 596 apartment units (all with underground parking), and retail on the ground floor. No BART parking will be lost during or after construction. Get the latest information by going to webartparking.com

**West Downtown Specific Plan**

After a thorough chapter-by-chapter review, the draft West Downtown Specific Plan is now moving on to the Planning Commission and City Council for final review, with adoption anticipated early next year.

The plan focuses on making it easier to walk and bike between the BART station and downtown, and plans for new homes and businesses between Olympic Boulevard and the BART station while preserving the Almond-Shuey neighborhood. The Specific Plan Area is generally bounded by the Walnut Creek BART station at the north, California Boulevard at the east, Olympic Boulevard at the south, and I-680 at the west.

To join the West Downtown Specific Plan mail list, and for additional information, go to walnut-creek.org/westdowntown.

**North Downtown Specific Plan Update**

The third and final community workshop on the North Downtown Specific Plan took place on the evening of July 25, followed by an online version for additional public feedback. Participants provided input on the proposed land use and circulation concepts. The proposed concepts and public feedback will be presented to the City Council on Sept. 19.

North Downtown extends from Civic Drive to Parkside Drive and from Highway 680 to the Iron Horse Trail. To join the North Downtown Specific Plan mail list, and for additional information, go to walnut-creek.org/northdowntown.

New online access to development services

The City regularly receives calls from residents curious about the history of a property. Now, the Development Services Team is pleased to offer online access to that information through the Citizen Online Services Portal. Members of the general public can research basic permit history for local properties.

Members of the development community also benefit from the new portal. Applicants can view the status of their plan review and schedule inspections online for active applications. In the future, the Citizen Online Services Portal will expand beyond the Building Division to include updates from Planning and Engineering applications. City staff is working to make this website a one-stop shop for all your Permit Center needs.

More than 250 users have used the portal.

To learn how to use the new Citizen Online Service portal, visit the Permit Center website at www.walnut-creek.org and select Citizen Online Services.
Hard hats to the rescue! George Fields of Public Works rescues a marmalade kitten from a downtown tree after the City received a frantic phone call about the stranded feline from a passerby. After a smooth ride to the ground, the lucky kitty was reunited with its owner.

A rendering of the new Ruth Bancroft Garden Visitor and Education Center.

A boost for new Bancroft Garden visitor center

With a $1.15 million Challenge Grant, the Ruth Bancroft Garden is closing in on the funds needed for its new Visitor and Education Center. The grant was pledged by Ken and Donna Coit, and Sharon Simpson and the Barclay and Sharon Simpson Foundation, with the stipulation that it will match all new gifts and pledges up to $1.15 million to help fund the historic building project.

A groundbreaking for Phase 1 of the project took place Aug. 19. The total project cost is $4.6 million; to date, the Garden has raised $3.45 million in gifts or pledges. Those interested in making a pledge or gift as part of the Challenge Grant should email Billie Hopper at billie@ruthbancroftgarden.org or visit the Garden website, ruthbancroftgarden.org.

The Ruth Bancroft Garden is a nonprofit public dry garden that was planted by Ruth Bancroft in 1972. The Garden was opened to the public in the early 1990s. It is located at 1552 Bancroft Road.

Give the gift of English

The Diablo Valley Literacy Council is seeking volunteers to tutor adults in English. English need not be the tutor’s first language; no teaching experience is required. Volunteers typically give 1-2 hours a week.

The next training will be Saturday, Sept. 30 and Oct. 7 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 4000 Clayton Road, Concord. Both sessions are required. There is a $20 fee. Go to dvlc4esl.org; call the hotline at 925-685-3881; or email dvlc4esl@gmail.com.

Apply for Civic Pride Grants

The Walnut Creek Civic Pride Foundation is now accepting applications for its 2017 Community Grant Program. Ranging from $500 to $2,000, the grants will be for community-based recreation, cultural or educational programs and services provided by Walnut Creek non-profits. Grant applications are available on the Civic Pride website (www.WCCivicPride.org); applications are due Oct. 16.

AARP seeks volunteers for 2018 tax season

Contra Costa County AARP Tax-Aide is looking for volunteers to become members of a team providing free tax preparation for individuals of all ages. Needed are Tax Counselors who are trained by Tax-Aide and certified by IRS, and Client Facilitators, who schedule appointments and assist clients at tax sites. Orientation is in November 2017, and classes for tax counselors start in January 2018. Apply at www.aarp.org/taxvolunteer or call LaVerne Gordon at 925-726-3199.

Last chance to take a walk into history

The final Downtown History Tours for 2017 take place on Saturday, Sept. 9 and Oct. 14.

The easy 90-minute guided walking tour of the downtown area is sponsored by the Walnut Creek Historical Society. The tour brings to life the early days of Walnut Creek and reveals parts of our history hiding in plain sight.

The tours are free and depart at 9:30 a.m. from the fountain at Liberty Bell Plaza (corner of Broadway and Mt. Diablo Blvd.). A booklet with historic photos of the sites visited may be purchased at the tour for $5. No advanced registration is required.

For more details, call 925-935-7871 or visit the Historical Society’s website at www.wchistory.com and select Tours.

Light the Night on Oct. 21

When a loved one hears the words “you have cancer,” it is a dark and scary time. The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s “Light The Night” brings light to the darkness of cancer through hope, research and support for patients, families, friends, doctors, nurses, researchers, colleagues and caregivers. On Saturday, Oct. 21 from 5 – 9 p.m., survivors of blood cancers, their friends and families, other volunteers and corporate supporters will gather at Civic Park for this inspirational fund-raising event. While walking a route through downtown Walnut Creek, they will literally Light The Night with white, gold and red lanterns. Visit www.lightthenight.org/greater-bay-area to register your team or for more details.
With more than 50 projects to choose from, Community Service Day 2017 offers something for everyone. For details on these projects, go to www.walnut-creek.org/service.

ANIMALS (PETS & WILDLIFE)

ARF Giving Tree Ornaments
Make craft ornaments.
Ages: Adults only.

Community Concern for Cats: Thrift Shop Capers
Organize the store for the coming seasons.
Ages: 16+

Equestrian Center Refresh
Paint, plant and do general fix-up work.
Ages: All ages.

Lindsay Wildlife Educational Materials Treasure Hunt
Help sort the collection of wildlife books, crafts, and educational resources.
Ages: Adults only.

Lindsay Wildlife Hospital Helping Hands
Give the outdoor areas some tender loving care!
Ages: Adults only.

ARTS

Bedford Gallery Visitor Bench Covers
Experienced seamstresses wanted to fabricate covers for three new visitor benches.
Ages: 14+

Bedford Gallery School Tour Project Prep
Prepare materials for school gallery tours and art projects. Ages: 16+

California Symphony Music Education Crafts
Build cardboard-kit instruments for the Sound Minds program.
Ages: 10+

See next page for more projects
How to volunteer

1. Go to www.walnut-creek.org/service to get detailed project information and the link to the registration system.

2. Use the online volunteer registration system to sign up. You can register as an individual or on behalf of a family or group. (Please, only one project!)

3. Mark your calendar for October 14 and build a better Walnut Creek!

Don’t have Internet access? Call the Community Service Day hotline: 925-256-3505.

ARTS, continued

Foothill Drama: Props and Set Organizing (Festival Opera sponsor)
Organize the drama department’s props and set pieces. Ages: 14+

Foothill School Band Shine-Up (Diablo Symphony sponsor)
Make the Foothill band instruments and music room shine! Ages: 11+

Lesher Center Costume Shop
Spruce up the costume shop. Ages: 10+

WCI School Band Library Database (Diablo Symphony sponsor)
Organize and catalog the WCI sheet music library. Ages: 16+

LIBRARIES

If libraries are your passion, you can help out at a local school library or at one of two public libraries — Walnut Creek (downtown) or Ygnacio Valley.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Emergency Preparedness (CERT sponsored)
Distribute emergency preparedness information to homes. Ages: All, those under 16 must be accompanied by an adult

Trinity Center Clean-Up
Spruce up the respite center for the homeless. Ages: Adults only.

CREEKS

Civic Park: Creek Ivy Removal
Remove ivy overgrowth along the creek channel. Ages: 12+

Pine Creek Cleanup @ Oak Grove
Clean two stretches of Pine Creek (Woodlands and Oak Grove). Ages: 8+

DOWNTOWN

Celebrate Oktoberfest!
Set up booths and decorations for this year’s events. Ages: 16+

Downtown Light Pole Spruce-Up
Clean and repaint light poles. Ages: 16+

PARKS & NATURE

Civic Park Fence Painting (with Boy Scouts)
Help the Boy Scouts paint the fence. Ages: All ages.

Civic Park Pollinator Garden Refresh
Mulch and plant in the garden. Learn about garden pollination. Ages: 10+

El Divisadero & San Miguel Park TLC (RSM neighborhood sponsored)
Give the parks some additional care. Ages: All ages.

Heather Farm Ballfield Infield
Groom and grad the fields. Ages: 16+

PLANTING at the Gardens at Heather Farm.

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Groom and grad the fields. Ages: 16+
Community Service Day
Give a half-day for the community, help a favorite cause

Thank you to our sponsors

Premier Sponsors
F&M Bank
John Muir Health
Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery
Republic Services

Major Sponsors
Kaiser Permanente, Diablo Area

Standard Sponsors
Lions Clubs
(Diablo Valley, Rossmoor, Walnut Creek, Ygnacio Valley)
Walnut Creek Civic Pride Foundation

Supporters
Dunkin’ Donuts
Peet’s Coffee
Safeway
Whole Foods

Start with pancakes!
Join us at Heather Farm Community Center for a free pancake breakfast, courtesy of our local Lions clubs.

FOOD DRIVES
Neighborhood Food Drive
Collect food in your neighborhood. During the week before Oct. 14, you will distribute food bags (provided by the Food Bank) to neighborhood homes. Then, collect the bags of food and bring them to Heather Farm Community Center on Oct. 14.

Rossmoor residents: Watch for details in the Rossmoor News about how you can donate to the food drive sponsored by Rossmoor Rotary.

PARKS & NATURE, continued

Heather Farm Picnic Table Refresh
Clean and paint the tables. Ages: 16+

Howe Homestead Picnic Ground Renovations (with WC Rotary)
Help renovate the picnic area. Ages: 14+

Lar Rieu Park Orchard TLC (Lar Rieu neighborhood sponsored)
Spruce up the orchard. Ages: All ages.

Children’s Garden @ Heather Farm
Build an interactive children’s area at the Gardens at Heather Farm.
Ages: 16+

Rudgear Park Landscape Renovation (Rudgear Estates neighborhood sponsored)
Help us refresh the park’s landscaping.
Ages: All ages

Rudgear Pickleball Court Enhancements (Pickleball Club sponsored)
Enhance the pickleball courts.
Ages: All ages.

SCHOOLS

Nearly all of Walnut Creek’s public schools are sponsoring projects involving gardening, clean-up or organizing. This is a great chance to help your neighborhood school! Check the Community Service Day website for the complete list.

TOTS OR SENIORS

All-Abilities Playground Spruce Up (Civic Pride Foundation sponsored)
Clean the play equipment for our kids.
Ages: All ages

Paint the Heather Farm Preschool
Help repaint the building exterior.
Ages: 16+

Seasonal Tray Favors for Seniors (Meals on Wheels sponsored)
Help brighten the season for Meals on Wheels seniors.
Ages: 8+

Senior Center Garden
Build raised garden beds and add art to the patio area. Ages: 14+

In a Nutshell ◆ Fall 2017

Painting murals at Civic Park Preschool.
CITY COUNCIL
Mayor Rich Carlston *
Mayor Pro Tem Justin Wedel
Loella Haskew
Cindy Silva
Kevin Wilk

* To reach the Council, call 925-256-3504

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ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER
The Nutshell Newsletter is published quarterly. For questions and comments, contact editor Gayle Vassar, 925-943-5895 or vassar@walnut-creek.org

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