



CITY OF WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA

ACHIEVING A VISION: MANAGING WALNUT CREEK'S DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT



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More than 10 years ago, City leaders began working with the community on a vision for the future of Walnut Creek.

More than 1,000 people participated in the process through 53 public meetings, stakeholder gatherings, and written comments. The result - General Plan 2025 - was adopted in 2006.

What is happening today in downtown Walnut Creek is the fruition of that plan to manage growth while protecting those community qualities residents hold dear. Concentrating that growth in the downtown protects neighborhoods and open space, takes advantage of nearby public transit, and promotes a vibrant downtown and healthy economy.



This special report was created to provide context to you, the community we serve, about the changes happening in our downtown.

These changes reflect the community's long-range vision for the downtown, captured in General Plan 2025: Balancing modest population growth (about 325 people a year) with the desire to protect our natural resources and residential neighborhoods. Concentrating housing downtown achieves that goal, and comes with other benefits as well, including welcoming the next generation of young professionals, along with empty nesters who want to downsize but don't want to leave the area.

Many of the projects coming out of the ground were approved years ago, but put on hold due to the recession. Now the economy is rebounding, and there is a lot of activity going on. This trend will continue for a few years, and then cool down.

Changes in population come to all communities. Our City has a strong legacy of creating comprehensive plans based on the goals the community holds for itself. Stated differently, Walnut Creek has been, and continues to be, proactive in thoughtful planning to accommodate population growth. Walnut Creek has benefitted from an engaged community throughout its history. I encourage you to continue that tradition. Stay informed! Get involved!

Ken Nordhoff
Walnut Creek
City Manager



Downtown Housing

Downtown is a hub of construction activity, thanks to the economic recovery and easier access to financing for housing and other projects.

1 Riviera Apartments
1515 & 1738 Riviera
58 affordable apartments on two lots

2 Riviera Avenue Condos
1605 Riviera
48 condominiums

3 Walnut Creek Transit Village
200 Ygnacio Valley Road (BART)
596 apartments

4 The Landing Apartments
207-235 Ygnacio Valley Road
178 apartments

5 Bonanza Heritage Condos
1874 & 1882 Bonanza
15 condominiums

6 Parkview Condos
1665 Carmel Dr
8 condominiums

7 The Arroyo
1250 Arroyo
100 apartments

8 Ascent
1960 N. Main St.
126 apartments

9 Villagewalk II Condos
1725-1727 Lacassie
12 condominiums

10 Cole Terrace Condominiums
1756 Cole Ave
12 condominiums

11 Lyric
1500 N. California
140 apartments

12 The Village @ 1500 Newell
1500 Newell
49 condominiums

13 McDonald's site
1380 N. California Blvd.
119 apartments

14 Trinity Condominiums
1950 & 1962 Trinity Ave.
13 condominiums

15 Fifteen24 Residential
1524 Oakland Blvd.
6 condominiums

16 Brio
141 N. Civic Dr.
300 apartments

Legend:
● Approved
● Under Construction
○ Under Review
○ Recently Opened

Modest growth

Long-range plans call for Walnut Creek to grow an average of a 1/2 percent per year – the same rate as the past 30 years. This translates to about 325 people per year.

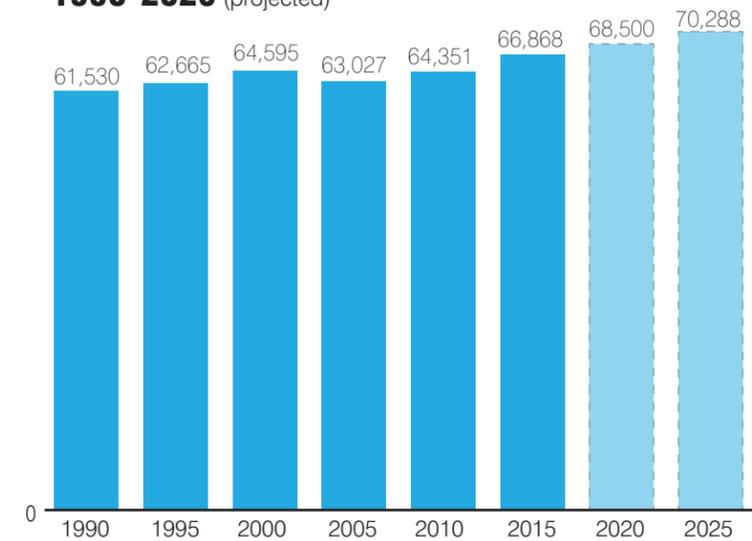
Planned annual population growth rates comparison

0.99%
Contra Costa County

0.83%
California

0.50%
Walnut Creek

Population Growth in Walnut Creek 1990-2025 (projected)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, City of Walnut Creek

Businesses investing in Walnut Creek

Businesses are investing in Walnut Creek in a big way, and bringing jobs with them. Here are a few examples and updates.

Del Monte Corporation is relocating its headquarters from San Francisco to Walnut Creek. In May, four more San Francisco companies signed leases for Walnut Creek office space.

Macerich's \$250 million renovation of Broadway Plaza will reach another key milestone this holiday season with the opening of a new parking structure behind an expanded Macy's store. When the majority of the project is



Rooftop restaurant will top this building

complete in Spring 2016, it will have 700 additional parking spaces. Specific details about the project's status are available at www.broadwayplaza.com.

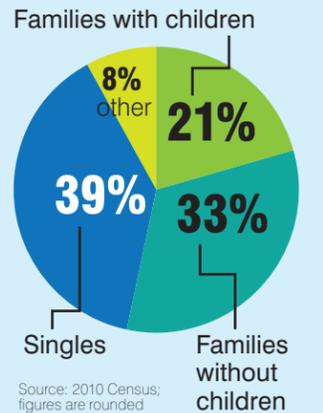
Marriott has submitted an application to build a six-story, 160-room Residence Inn at 2050 N. California Boulevard, currently the site of the Bank of the West and the Dirito Brothers used car lot. The project is under review by staff and will head to the Design Review and

Planning commissions later this summer for study sessions. Because the proposed hotel would have a bigger footprint and greater mass than the General Plan allows, it will require City Council's review and approval of a General Plan Amendment to move forward.

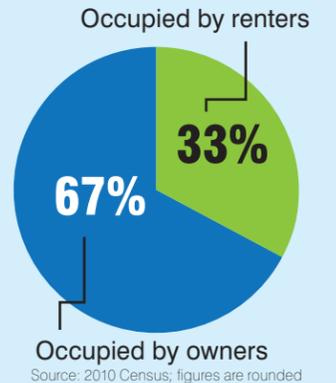
Walnut Creek's first rooftop restaurant, Rooftop Restaurant & Bar, is expected to open late this year, part of a two-story building at the corner of Main and Mt. Diablo. The project will also include Vineyard Vines store and café on the ground floor, as well as the area's first authentic Spanish tapas restaurant Teleferic Barcelona on the second floor.

WALNUT CREEK HOUSING: DID YOU KNOW?

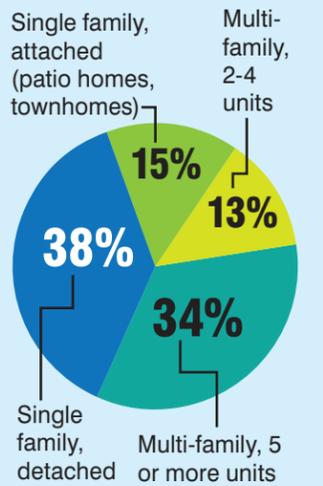
Of the 30,433 households in Walnut Creek:



Of the occupied housing units in Walnut Creek:

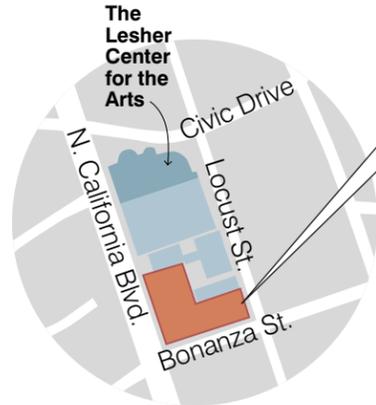


Of the housing units* in Walnut Creek:



EVOLUTION OF A PROJECT

Development projects evolve as they go through the application process. In the case of the Lyric project, the original design changed dramatically based on feedback from the community, staff and City officials. (Note: There is no "one size fits all" development process; the Lyric is being used as one example for this report.)



Lyric @ 1500 N. California Boulevard
What it is: A 6-story mixed-use building with retail on the ground floor, 140 apartments on the upper floors, and 210 parking places.
What was there: The long-vacant California Café, Scott Valley Bank and a private parking lot.

3/6/12 Formal application filed
 After developer revises design based on Commission and Council feedback
(From formal application to final approval of design; Environmental Impact Report and conditional use permit)

(Review of project prior to formal submittal; optional, but often recommended by staff)



Original design
 In the original design, all three street facades had the same modern look. The Bonanza and Locust street facades did not reflect the context-sensitive design of the traditional downtown.

The final design
 Height at street corners reduced, and Bonanza and Locust facades were changed to have a variety of textures and colors so they more closely resembled the small storefronts of the traditional downtown.



Role of commissions

The City's five commissions each play a distinct role in the development process, and contribute in unique ways to the quality of development projects in Walnut Creek.

Planning Commission

Prepares and recommends, for adoption, the City's General Plan and Specific Plans. Reviews projects for compliance with the City's land use and zoning regulations; has approval authority for subdivision maps, use permits and variances.

Design Review Commission

Develops design standards and policies. Reviews project's architecture, design and landscaping.

Park, Recreation and Open Space Commission

Advises on park, recreation, creek, trail and open space needs. May weigh in on whether the developer's parkland dedication fees can be reduced in context of other amenities the project is providing.

Transportation Commission

Advises on issues affecting all modes of transportation (walking, biking, cars and transit) and parking. May weigh in on bicycle issues relating to a specific project.

Arts Commission

Advises on facilities, programs and policies that enhance the artistic and cultural quality of life. Guides implementation of the Public Art Master Plan; selects public art for development projects.

\$3.3 million in developer fees to date, includes:

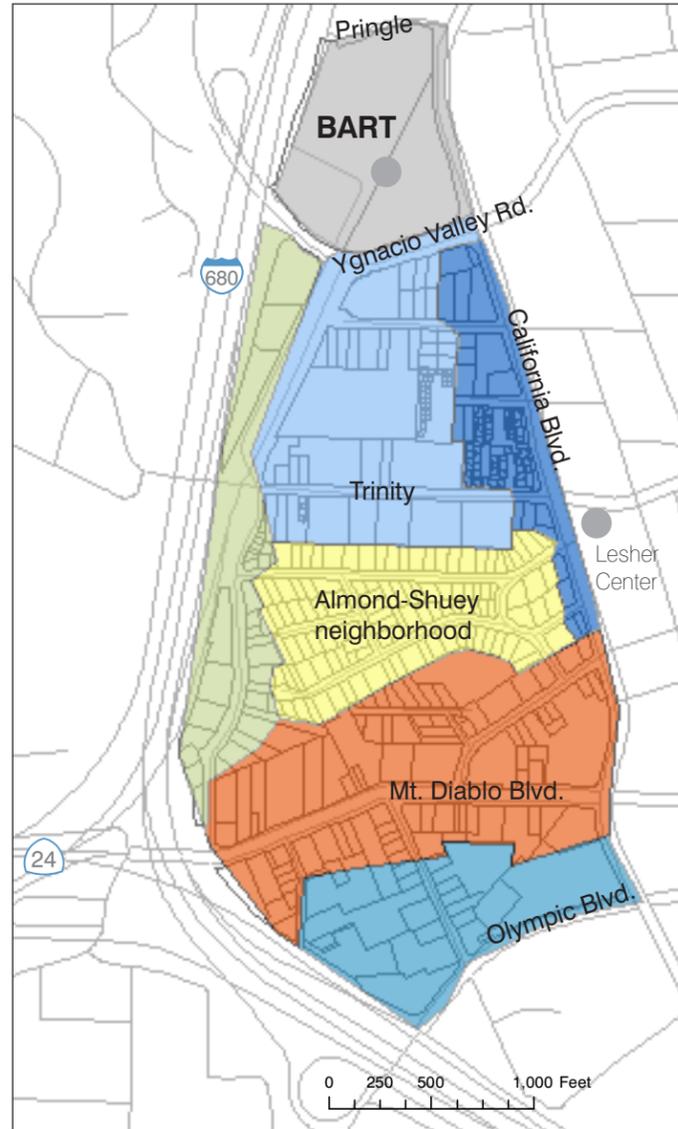
- \$220,289 Public art fee
- \$319,520 Traffic impact fees
- \$412,190 School district fees
- \$720,000 Parkland dedication fee
- \$1,635,195 In-lieu affordable housing fees

Other project benefits

- Public plaza
- Removal of blighted buildings
- New retail spaces
- More convenient housing in downtown Walnut Creek
- New Public Art
- Sidewalks wider and ADA accessible



A Vision for West Downtown



Community members at an interactive West Downtown meeting.

5 things to know about the West Downtown Specific Plan:

1. It's BIG! (172 acres)
2. Long-range vision
3. Promotes walking & biking
4. Process not over
5. Get involved

Those interested in weighing in on the next 25 years of Walnut Creek's west side evolution have the perfect opportunity to do so with the West Downtown Specific Plan currently under way.

West Downtown stretches from the Walnut Creek BART station to Olympic Boulevard, 172 acres in all. A draft Specific Plan – the result of a two-year, community-based process – proposes creation or preservation of seven small districts, each with its own character. For instance, the small homes of the historic Almond-Shuey neighborhood would be preserved, while the Trinity/Lacassie area would transition into an urban residential neighborhood.

The long-range plan pays special attention to how people will get around, with new bicycle and pedestrian amenities and improved access to public transit. Fees from new de-

velopment will help provide funding for parks, schools and workforce housing.

The draft is currently going through a lengthy public review process involving all five of the City's commissions that will last, at a minimum, through the fall.

Following commission review and input, the West Downtown Specific Plan will be considered by the City Council.

The public is encouraged to attend any or all of these meetings and provide comments. To find out about meeting agendas, view videos of past meetings, and read the draft plan and other background materials, go to www.walnut-creek.org/westdowntown.

Questions & Answers

Here are some answers to frequently asked questions about the impact of downtown residential development.

Why is the City allowing new housing at all?

There are two answers to this. First, like in most of California, population will continue to grow. In Walnut Creek, city and community leaders recognized that fact when creating the General Plan 2025, and acknowledged the need to plan for a population increase of about 1/2 percent per year (the equivalent of 325 people).

There are also legal implications if the City refused to allow new housing. The State establishes housing targets for each community. The City must demonstrate in its Housing Element and by local zoning that the new units can be accommodated.

Won't all this new housing overcrowd our schools?

It's true that school enrollment is on the rise, but most of the growth is coming from existing housing, according to school district officials.

The Walnut Creek School District projects that fewer than 100 K-8 students would result from 1,500 new condos and apartments.

The district is basing that projection on recent experience with new, similarly sized and priced projects in the downtown (such as 555



YVR or the Mercer), which resulted in 1 student for every 20 units.

In addition, developers pay an impact fee to school districts, based on the number of bedrooms in the project. For example, developers of the Lyric Apartments being built next to the Lesher Center garage will pay \$412,190 in school impact fees.

The Walnut Creek School District used about \$720,000 in school impact fees to help fund the initial renovations required to open a new K-8 school, Tice Creek School, this fall. Home of the former Parkmead Intermediate School, the property was leased to the private Dorris-Eaton School for more than 30 years.

Won't more housing mean more traffic?

Yes, every new housing unit means more cars. Still, while residents of downtown housing have cars, they need to

use them less than the typical resident of a single-family home. Locating multi-family housing downtown helps reduce the level of increased traffic because residents can walk or bike to work, local stores, restaurants, and entertainment venues; take the Free Trolley to get around downtown, or BART to get out of town; and have short distances to drive to the freeway.

In addition, every project is analyzed for its traffic impacts before it is approved. Based on the information from this review process, the City works with the developer to define and implement the steps needed to minimize the impact.

For example, a traffic study identified potential traffic impacts for the BRIO project on Civic Drive. To mitigate these impacts, the City required the developer to install a new traffic light on Civic Drive to reduce the effects of vehicles entering

and leaving the site, and to lengthen the southbound left-turn pocket from Civic Drive to Ygnacio Valley Road to create more room for vehicles waiting to turn.

Why build housing during a drought?

The new housing is exactly the kind of housing that should be built in a drought-prone state. Multi-family housing uses much less water than typical single family homes as there is little or no landscaping to water. In addition, the new units must meet current building code requirements for water conservation, such as low-flow showers and toilets.

What benefits do current residents get as a result of these new projects?

Developers pay a variety of fees to the City and to the school districts to offset the impact of their project. Those fees are often used for amenities that have community-wide benefits.

Example: Multi-family housing contributes \$4,000 per bedroom in parkland dedication fees. Parkland dedication fees collected by the City and County in Walnut Creek paid for almost half of the All Abilities Playground that opened last fall in Walnut Creek.

 CITY OF WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA

GETTING IN THE KNOW ON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Here are ways you can be informed and get involved:

| UNDER CONSTRUCTION - COMMERCIAL | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| PROJECT NAME LOCATION CONTACT | SITE SIZE (in acres) | GROSS FLOOR AREA/USE |
| The Village @ 1500 Newell (Mixed Use) 1500 Newell Avenue Andrew Baker, Essex Alamo LLC Abaker@essexpropertytrust.com 650-849-1705 | 1.89 | Demolish existing 8-story office building and 1-story retail building to construct new 4-story structure with 17,000 square feet of retail and 49 condominium units, including two-level underground parking garage with 250 parking spaces. |

Read the project pipeline report

This quarterly report gives details on all development projects from the time the first application is filed.
www.walnut-creek.org/pipeline



Mixed-use, 18,270 sq ft, 140 units. On-site surface lot (28 stalls), on-site garage (132 stalls). Est. completion: Fall 2016. More info.



Check out the interactive map of development projects

at www.walnut-creek.org/developmentprojects.
The map includes project renderings and details



Speak up at Council and Commission meetings

Agendas are posted on our website, www.walnut-creek.org/meetings.
Or, send written comments to mayor@walnut-creek.org.



Can't make the meeting? All Council and Commission meetings are televised live

on Walnut Creek TV and streamed on the Internet. They are also archived for later viewing at www.walnut-creek.org/meetings.



Stop by the City Council booth at the Walnut Creek Farmers Market

and talk to a Council member most Sundays from 9 a.m. until noon.

Coming Soon:

The City is committed to making it easier for people to find the information they want. Two significant changes are coming soon: online subscription service for updates on specific topics and a new website with simpler navigation and a robust search engine. To get an email alert when the subscription service is up and running, email community@walnut-creek.org