City of Walnut Creek

Work Program

FISCAL YEARS 2012-2014

Approved by City Council October 2, 2012
Work Program Background and Explanation:

In 2010, the City Council approved its first formal Work Program. Development of the Work Program was based on establishing priorities for specific initiatives that would serve the Walnut Creek community. It was important during this first process (and it still is today) to denote that these initiatives and activities are set for a specific timeframe, designed to help the City organization focus our resources on Council’s high priorities, while delivering the day to day services provided to our community. Regular reporting provides measurements for progress and accomplishment on the first Work Program.

The City Council has been working to develop the 2012-2014 Work Program since early 2012. During this process, the City Council considered an extensive assortment of possible initiatives. Public meetings in January and April allowed the City Council to narrow the field of activities and programs under consideration. A July meeting resulted in further clarification and direction on the proposed Work Program, and the appointment of an Ad Hoc Subcommittee, represented by Councilmembers Silva and Lawson.

With this validation from the full City Council, the Ad Hoc Committee has been busy developing the 2012-2014 City Council Work Program. Elements of their work have included:

- A full review and consideration of the Work Program proposed initiatives dating back to January 2012.
- Incorporating the remaining City Council highest priority initiatives (as presented in the July 2012 staff report).
- Providing a report structure that clearly establishes a limited number of strategic priorities (including clearly defined objectives) from which flows initiatives and activities slated for major progress or completion in the coming two years.

What follows is the 2012-2014 City Council Work Program. Highlights of the Work Program report structure and key components are explained below:

1) Strategic Priorities and Objectives: The Work Program identifies four Strategic Priorities. Each of these four Priorities includes objectives definitions, articulated to establish clear understandings and expectations within each Priority and provide a basis for measuring overarching progress and results. As written, they reflect community values and Council vision.

2) Initiatives: Within each Strategic Priority, one or more Initiatives define and explain the ‘why’ and help set the stage for unique priority activities. These initiatives offer a blending of City history, our current environment and Council desires.

3) Activities: Presented within each Initiative are at least one or more supporting Activities, which will require significant allocations of staff time and resources. These critical tasks, as proposed, reflect the highest priorities of the City Council. Within each activity, we have provided
   a) Status – denotes whether an activity is already under way, or not yet started
   b) Timeframe – the estimated time to complete this activity, stated in months
   c) Targeted Completion – the projected completion date for a particular activity. Completion should be understood as formal action(s) by the City Council

4) Related City Work Programs: The Work Program captures the ongoing or one-time staff led programs that affect, influence or have some bearing on the Activities proposed under each Strategic Priority. Most of these programs are part of the City organization’s ongoing operations and efforts. Some recur cyclically (e.g. Budgets), while others will have a finite shelf life (e.g. Development applications). The community and City Council will be kept apprised of progress on these Programs at regular intervals, and, as required, the City Council will provide specific direction and action on each of these items.

5) Unprioritized Projects and Issues: These items reflect potential activities that were under City Council consideration as the Work Program was being developed. These projects and issues did not receive the majority support of the City Council. Each is listed here as informational; no effort or action on these items should be expected as part of implementing this Work Program.

Work Program Implementation: Once adopted, the City Council and community will receive six-month updates on the overall Work Program progress, with reports slated for regular City Council meetings. At these intervals, Councilmembers and staff will have an opportunity to raise issues or ideas, which may need to be considered as part of the existing Work Program. Ordinance modifications or other matters requiring public policy consideration or changes should be a formal part of these interim Work Program reviews.
Strategic Priority: Fiscal Sustainability

Objectives
For 2012-2014, the City Council’s objectives regarding fiscal sustainability are four-fold: To sustain City services and amenities by making wise compromises that provide for a balanced budget in an era when expenses are expected to continue to rise at a faster pace than revenues; to take full advantage of new opportunities for enhancing revenue and delivering services; to align the City’s investment and re-investment in capital infrastructure to best utilize our resources to meet the community’s needs; and to maintain a threshold of fiscal sustainability such that the first four years of the ten-year Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) for the General Fund is balanced with ongoing revenues meeting or exceeding ongoing expenses.

City Council Work Plan Priority Initiatives and Activities

Initiative: Long-Term Fiscal Health Priorities, Policies and Plans
In 2011, the City Council appointed a 15-member Community Blue Ribbon Task Force on Fiscal Health, which was charged with analyzing the City’s financial condition and recommending viable short- and long-term strategies that could be implemented to improve the City’s financial health. After thousands of hours of work and dozens of meetings, the Task Force presented its report to the City Council in November 2011, encompassing 38 recommendations regarding financial management, maintenance and replacement of capital infrastructure, operating expenses and cost-management strategies, economic development, and cost-recovery and other revenue enhancement measures. Considering the recommendations of the Task Force, the City Council will undertake the activities that follow. The importance and urgency of these activities may require the City Council to appoint an Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

Activity 1: Evaluate and Affirm the City’s Mission. The delivery of City services are governed by varying requirements, including General Plan 2025, Federal and State laws and mandates, local policies, and numerous other regulations. Resource allocations of available discretionary revenues also affect service provisions. Given the operating and fiscal challenges that lie ahead, the first step toward fiscal health is to have clear agreement on the mission of the City – in other words, the City’s priorities in providing services to the community and, in turn, its priorities in providing the facilities to support the delivery of these services. This activity will involve significant effort for the City Council to define both the City’s primary customers and the appropriate level or method of serving the City’s customers. Outcomes from this evaluation may require changes to existing City Council policies.
Status: Initial work expected to begin at November 2012 City Council retreat
Timeframe: 6 months
Targeted Completion: May 2013

Activity 2: Study Alternative Service Delivery Models. The Task Force Recommendations identified a number of alternative service delivery models that could be employed to allow the City to deliver the range of services that are valued by the community in an optimally cost-effective manner. To provide policy guidance on these recommendations, the City Council requires an understanding of these various alternative delivery models and how they might be used effectively in Walnut Creek. This activity most likely involves a report from staff and study session with the City Council, informed with the work from Activity 1. City Council guidance on these alternative service delivery models will help to guide the development of the 2014-2016 Operating Budget.
Status: Implementation Proposal at January 2013 City Council retreat
Timeframe: 3 months following completion of Activity 1
Targeted Completion: August 2013

Activity 3: Evaluate Asset Requirements and Financing Alternatives. The Task Force spent significant effort in reviewing the City’s capital assets and the investment requirements to maintain and reinvest in these assets as they age or no longer meet the community’s needs. The City Council must carefully examine the asset management and infrastructure investment recommendations of the Task Force and provide guidance that will inform the development of the 2014-2024 Capital Investment Program.
Status: Implementation Proposal at January 2013 City Council retreat
Timeframe: 6 months, overlapping with Activity 1
Targeted Completion: November 2013
**Activity 4: Explore Sustainable Funding Sources.** The 2012 survey of residents shows that the community highly values the open space, parks and recreation programs, libraries, the arts, schools, and social service programs. As noted by the Blue Ribbon Task Force, the City has a long-standing tradition of supporting these programs and services, yet the City’s recent fiscal challenges have made it increasingly difficult to provide these programs and services in the same way and at the same level as it has in the past. At the same time, the community wants well-maintained infrastructure. A final recommendation of the Task Force was to explore alternative long-term revenue sources. The Task Force report was clear that this analysis should only be undertaken after beginning the implementation of various cost-reduction and cost-recovery measures. This work will involve many community stakeholders and a significant community engagement effort.

*Status: Implementation Proposal at January 2013 City Council retreat*  
*Timeframe: 12 months (following major progress on Activities 1-3 above)*  
*Targeted Completion: April 2014*

**Related City Work Programs**
- Boundary Oak Golf Course Clubhouse Renovation Funding
- RDA Dissolution
- Updated Cost Allocation Study and Fee Policies
- 2012-2022 Long-Term Financial Plan (includes the adoption of new fiscal assumptions for the 10-year period)
- 2014-2016 Operating and Capital Budgets
- 2014-2024 Capital Investment Program
- Establishment of a Non-Profit Foundation

**Unprioritized Projects and Issues**
- None
Strategic Priority: Strong Local Economy

Objectives
For 2012-2014, the City Council has four objectives for supporting a strong local economy: To promote a business-friendly environment that enables local job growth and the continued success of existing local businesses and key industry sectors; to attract new businesses and opportunities to Walnut Creek by emphasizing the importance of education at all levels and by focusing land use planning and economic development efforts on high-priority areas, such as the traditional downtown and Shadelands Business Park; to provide additional housing opportunities near job centers; and to improve multi-modal transportation systems that enhance job growth and support local businesses.

City Council Work Plan Priority Initiatives and Activities

Initiative: Revitalize Shadelands Business Park
The 300+ acre Shadelands Business Park was developed on the former Shadelands Fruit Farm in the 1960s and 1970s. Through the 1990s, the Shadelands Business Park became a major job center for Walnut Creek, having at its peak over 3,000 research, engineering, and professional jobs in international companies such as Dow Chemical, AirTouch Communications (now Verizon), the Joint Genome Institute, the Contra Costa Times (now part of the Bay Area News Group), Varian, and Del Monte Foods. In recent years, the Shadelands has become a less-desirable business park. Walnut Creek and the surrounding region have undergone transformative land use and transportation system changes and office parks such as Bishop Ranch (San Ramon) and Hacienda Park (Pleasanton) have become more desirable because of their proximity to BART and the freeways. Economic changes have also impacted the business park (e.g., AirTouch Communications was sold to Vodafone, the British telecommunications giant, and many of the jobs were moved to other domestic and international locations). Significantly, these changes have rendered the original 1971 Shadelands Specific Plan obsolete and property owners have not made major re-investments in their properties. In recent years, the City has allowed more medical office uses in the business park, which has helped to sustain the area. As of 2012, Shadelands Business Park has a 25% percent vacancy rate, more than 25% percent greater than downtown Walnut Creek.

Considering the importance of the Shadelands Business Park as a Walnut Creek jobs center, the City’s Economic Development Division will continue to focus a significant amount of its efforts on the revitalization of the business park and bringing innovative business opportunities to the park (e.g., green businesses, biotech start-ups, urban agriculture). In addition, the City Council will continue the following key activity in 2012-2014.

Activity 1: Shadelands Gateway Specific Plan. In 2011, the City Council reviewed a pre-application for a General Plan amendment (GPA) for approximately 25 acres owned by Safeway and located within the Shadelands Business Park at the corner of Ygnacio Valley Road and Oak Grove Road. The City’s General Plan 2025 identifies this “Shadelands Gateway” property as a gateway to the City, and the City Council required the GPA application to be processed through the creation of a Specific Plan. The Specific Plan process commenced in 2012 and remains underway. The City Council will need to receive regular updates on the progress of the work, particularly prior to the completion of the process and before any formal Specific Plan review and approval process commences.

Status: In Process
Timeframe: 12 months, including creation of Specific Plan, environmental (CEQA) review and public hearing processes
Targeted Completion: September 2013

Initiative: Sustain and Enhance Walnut Creek’s Downtown
Walnut Creek’s downtown is a thriving regional center of commerce and culture that continues to draw great interest from regional planning agencies, business organizations, real estate developers, entrepreneurs and national retailers. In addition to the major national retailers located south of Mt. Diablo Boulevard, the downtown is home to many locally owned businesses; it also serves as a significant employment base for both Walnut Creek residents and the region. The City Council sees great opportunity to sustain and enhance a strong local economy by supporting and leveraging private economic development efforts in the downtown through public-private partnerships and in collaboration with local organizations.

Activity 1: Guidance on Downtown Development and Business Programs. Over the last 18 months, the City has seen high interest in both new retail and new mixed-use projects in the downtown (e.g., Laconia mixed-use project, Broadway Plaza Master Plan). In addition, local business organizations have stepped up their efforts to support the work of their members (e.g., Downtown Business Association branding plan). The City Council must play an active role in providing community-
based guidance on the key development projects and be prepared to work collaboratively with local business organizations on their efforts. To do this, the City Council will need regular updates on these various development projects and business programs from staff at City Council meetings in addition to the formal evaluation of discretionary projects and programs. In addition, the City Council will continue to appoint ad hoc subcommittees to work on key development issues and appoint liaisons to the various business organizations.

Status: Underway  
Timeframe: Ongoing  
Targeted Completion: July 2014

**Activity 2: West Downtown Specific Plan.** In 2012, the City received a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to create a specific plan for the west downtown. The objective is to set a long-term vision for how this key residential and commercial area will re-develop over time, how the transportation network can be improved (transit, walking, biking), and how to protect the unique character of the Almond-Shuey neighborhood. A 13-member Citizens Advisory Committee was appointed and work on the plan began in Spring 2012. The City Council will need to receive regular updates on the progress of the work, particularly prior to the completion of the process and before any formal Specific Plan review and approval process commences.

Status: Underway  
Timeframe: 21 Months, including creation of Specific Plan, environmental (CEQA) review and public hearing processes  
Targeted Completion: July 2014

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**Initiative: Focused Local Coordination of Transportation Systems and Land Use Policies**

General Plan 2025 promotes the coordination of transportation and land use (both intensity and mix of land uses) and the consideration of all travel modes, including transit, bicycling, and walking, in future land use planning efforts. In addition, in the six years since General Plan 2025 was adopted, a consortium of regional agencies has undertaken a major effort to develop a regional long-range plan for sustainable land use, transportation, and housing that is consistent with the 2002 Shaping Our Future regional effort and supports the greenhouse-gas-reduction objectives of AB 32 and SB 375. The provision of affordable housing close to jobs and transit is a key component of Walnut Creek’s land use planning efforts.

**Activity 1: Transportation Network Improvements.** General Plan 2025 encourages development that helps to reduce traffic congestion and envisions a transit link between high-density residential development, schools, employment centers and shopping areas. Transportation improvements, including enhancements to the downtown trolley or the development of a shuttle system to the Shadelands Business Park, will evolve as part of local development activities and business and economic development efforts. This activity most likely involves ongoing reporting from staff on the efforts of individual projects to provide innovative and forward-thinking transportation planning solutions, as well as implementation of approved transportation plans (e.g. bicycle, parking).

Status: Not Started  
Timeframe: ongoing  
Targeted Completion: July 2014

**Activity 2: Post-Redevelopment Affordable Housing Policies.** Access to affordable housing is important to retaining the workforce on which the local economy depends. Prior to 2011, the City had two key sources of funding to support affordable housing programs: Redevelopment funds (tax increment funds generated each year) and affordable housing fees paid by residential and commercial developers. Following the dissolution of redevelopment by the State in 2011, Walnut Creek has permanently lost a key source of stable, recurring funding for its affordable housing programs. The City Council must evaluate and affirm the City’s housing policies in light of the changed funding circumstances. This activity most likely involves a report from staff and study session with the City Council. The work should coincide with the kick-off of the Housing Element Update, which will occur in early 2013.

Status: Not Started  
Timeframe: 6 months  
Targeted Completion: July 2013
Related City Work Programs

- Bicycle Master Plan Implementation
- Broadway Plaza Master Plan
- ‘Complete Streets’ Policy
- Corp Yard Relocation
- Downtown Hotel
- General Plan 2025 Zoning Ordinance
- Housing Element Update
- Laconia project
- Locust Street/Mt. Diablo Specific Plan Zoning Update
- Parking Management Plan Implementation
- Shadelands Business Park Economic Development Efforts
- Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Transportation Planning – Pedestrian Master Plan
- Walnut Creek Transit Village

Unprioritized Projects and Issues

- Multi-Family Housing Design Guidelines
- Upper North Main Street Specific Plan

Ordinance Updates:

- Auto Sales/Service Zoning Ordinance
- Sign Ordinance
Strategic Priority: Community Health and Well-Being

Objectives
The City Council’s three objectives for the health and well-being of the community are to provide for a safe and healthy living and working environment for residents and visitors; to sustain Walnut Creek’s unique community character by preserving key community resources, such as our open space, and by providing a diversity of services that meet the recreational, educational, cultural, and social service needs of residents; and to encourage an active level of community involvement among residents while integrating new residents and neighborhoods into the fabric of the community.

City Council Work Plan Priority Initiatives and Activities

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<tr>
<th>Initiative: Programs to Enhance the Community’s Character</th>
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<td>October 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of Walnut Creek’s incorporation as a city. The anniversary will give the community a unique opportunity to celebrate our past, while concurrently reinvigorating our commitment to sustaining and enhancing the unique character of the community.</td>
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**Activity 1: Sustainable Funding for Recreational, Educational, Cultural, and Social Service Programs.** As noted through recent resident surveys and by the Blue Ribbon Task Force, the community highly values the range of quality-of-life services in Walnut Creek. Through this Work Program, the City Council has established fiscal sustainability as the key strategic priority for the next two years (refer to pages three and four). As part of this Strategic Priority, the City Council is committed to working with the community to define its priorities for quality of life services and the means and methods for delivering these services.

*Status: See ‘Fiscal Sustainability’ Strategic Priority*
*Timeframe: See ‘Fiscal Sustainability’ Strategic Priority*
*Targeted Completion: See ‘Fiscal Sustainability’ Strategic Priority*

**Activity 2: Centennial Celebration.** The City will work with local community leaders to create a 100th celebration that commemorates the community’s unique and rich heritage. The collaboration may involve the Walnut Creek Historical Society, the business community, arts organizations, schools, neighborhood groups and other stakeholders. The City Council must determine the structure for organizing the Centennial Celebration.

*Status: Underway*
*Timeframe: Start early 2013*
*Targeted Completion: October 2014*

**Activity 3: Public Art Master Plan Update.** Since the adoption of Walnut Creek’s first public art ordinances in 2000, public art has become an integral part of the cultural fabric of Walnut Creek and the downtown. The renewed interest in downtown development creates an opportunity to update the Public Art Master Plan to ensure that it aligns with the community’s vision. This activity requires the City Council to set the framework for the update (completed on September 18, 2012) and to then review and approve the recommendations of the Arts Commission.

*Status: Underway*
*Timeframe: 18 months*
*Targeted Completion: March 2014*

**Activity 4: Downtown Plaza.** Walnut Creek’s downtown has been described as the “heart” of the community where residents and visitors can shop, dine, enjoy the arts and other cultural amenities, and meet and visit with friends and neighbors. Both General Plan 2025 and the Locust St.-Mt. Diablo Specific Plan call for the development of a plaza in the traditional downtown. For 2012-2014, this activity would involve the City Council engaging with the community to develop a vision for this plaza and, based on this vision, to complete a feasibility study that analyzes, among many elements, sites and funding sources.

*Status: Not Started*
*Timeframe: 12 months*
*Targeted Completion: June 2014*
Initiative: Ordinances and Regulations to Promote the Community’s Environment

The City is committed to providing both a safe community and a healthy environment for residents and visitors.

**Activity 1: Single-Use Plastic Bag Ordinance.** According to a study done by the California Department of Resources, Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), California hands out approximately 19 billion single-use plastic bags at the point of sale annually, or roughly 1.4 single-use plastic bags per person per day. About 377,579 tons of polystyrene are produced in California alone, including 154,808 tons of food service packaging. Single-use plastic bags and polystyrene containers represent a significant amount of the waste in our landfills and debris in our creeks, storm drains, and the San Francisco Bay. Efforts to recycle plastic bags have been limited by technology and consumer patterns of behavior. Adopting a single-use plastic bag ordinance, along with an ordinance to regulate polystyrene containers at special events, would help to achieve State-mandated waste-reduction requirements and federal and state clean water mandates. Efforts to ban single-use plastic bags in other cities, counties, and states – and the legal challenges posed by the plastic bag manufacturers industry – shows that this activity will require close collaboration with other public agencies, including other cities in the region, Contra Costa County, Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority, and the State. Prior to the development of any proposed regulations and a formal review process, this activity must begin with a study session with the City Council to set the framework for the effort, including outreach with key stakeholders. Staff has started a discussion with other interested agencies to possibly undertake a joint environmental review process and develop a model ordinance.

*Status: Underway*

*Timeframe: 8 to 14 months based upon model ordinance approach and environmental (CEQA) compliance*

*Targeted Completion: Not later than July 2014*

**Activity 2: Secondhand Smoke Ordinance.** When the City adopted its first smoking ordinance in the 1990’s, Walnut Creek became a leader in the County in controlling the effects of smoking on the community. Currently, the City’s ordinances restrict smoking in locations such as private and public workplaces, bars and restaurants... In recent years, neighboring communities in the Bay Area have adopted more stringent regulations to control the effects of secondhand smoke, particularly in multi-family residential complexes (i.e., apartments, condominiums, townhomes). Over 50% of Walnut Creek’s housing units are multi-family dwellings. This activity will involve a study session with the City Council to set the framework for the effort and engagement with key stakeholders prior to the development of any proposed regulations and a formal review process.

*Status: Not Started*

*Timeframe: 6 months*

*Targeted Completion: June 2013*

**Activity 3: Wireless Communications Facilities Ordinance Update.** The City first adopted its Wireless Communications Facilities Ordinance in 1995. Over the past 15 years, the ordinance has served the city well as it has endeavored to manage the impact of the rapid expansion of wireless communications services and the need for increased facilities to support the demand of users. While the ordinance has served to allow the City to strictly manage the aesthetic impacts of the traditional towers and cell sites, the City is now faced with the need to update the ordinance to address issues related to the latest technologies, including distributed antenna systems (DAS). This activity will involve a study session with the City Council to set the framework for the effort, including engagement with key stakeholders, prior to the development of any proposed regulations and a formal review process.

*Status: Not Started*

*Timeframe: 12 months*

*Targeted Completion: March 2014*

**Related City Work Programs**

- Climate Action Plan Implementation
- Emergency Preparedness Plan Updates
- School District Relations

**Unprioritized Projects and Issues**

- Historic Preservation Ordinance
- Medical Marijuana Ordinance
Strategic Priority: Inclusive Governance

Objectives

For 2012-2014, the City Council places a high priority on promoting a culture of learning, listening and communication that supports a well-informed community and sustains a high-level of confidence in local government as well as developing a culture of strategic visioning on key priorities that sets the framework for significant City work programs.

City Council Work Plan Priority Initiatives and Activities

Initiative: Improved Methods and Technology for the City’s Communications with the Public

The City of Walnut Creek is committed to keeping our residents and all stakeholders informed and engaged on a wide variety of topics. In an era of rapidly changing priorities and issues, the City must be able to communicate consistently and effectively with the community. How people receive, access and process information continues to rapidly evolve. For instance, social media, smart phones and other emerging technologies that are now part of our daily lives play an integral part in how the City and our community interact with one another. The City Council desires to formalize our communications into a comprehensive plan that includes appropriate goals, strategies and tactics to be utilized for interacting with the Walnut Creek community and beyond.

Activity 1: Develop Strategic Communications Plan. This plan would encompass strategies and tactics for engaging the community on a range of issues, press relations, and targeted communications and messaging. It will also establish a structure for the flow of information to our constituents through various communications and outreach strategies. This activity will begin with a study session with the City Council to set the framework for development of a formal communications plan, including appropriate scope of work, policy direction and outreach with key stakeholders.

Status: Not Started
Timeframe: 6 months
Targeted Completion: April 2013

Related City Work Programs

- Negotiate new I-Net agreement