

Coalition for a Vibrant and Inclusive Walnut Creek (C-VIEW)

Greenbelt Alliance, East Bay Housing Organizations, TransForm, East Bay Bicycle Coalition, Bike Walnut Creek, Habitat for Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley, Contra Costa Interfaith Housing

Let's make "West Downtown" an even better place to live!

As a growing coalition of residents and organizations, we believe the West Downtown Plan can provide a long-range vision that strengthens our economy, protects our environment, and enhances the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in Walnut Creek. To do this, the plan should focus on the following:

Vibrant Neighborhoods

By encouraging a mix of new homes and businesses near BART and downtown, the plan can help "West Downtown" become an even more thriving, attractive component of the community. Making efficient use of land to create more great neighborhoods will strengthen the local customer base, provide more options for transit-friendly living, and bring life to empty sidewalks and vacant lots. It will also ease the pressure of sprawl on our farms, ranches, and watersheds – especially the foothills of Mount Diablo. To achieve these results, the plan should integrate approximately 2,800 new homes – reflecting the consultant team's economic studies – and incorporate space for a variety of neighborhood-serving businesses, such as a corner grocery store and dry cleaner. This should be done in a thoughtful way that benefits current residents, businesses, and civic institutions. It should also be carried out with an eye toward enhancing the connections between West Downtown and the rest of the city to knit together the community and promote easy access to nearby destinations.

Homes We Can All Afford

Ensuring that homes are available for the full range of incomes and needs is critical for creating inclusive, complete communities. This allows more people to participate and invest in their own community, rather than face a grueling commute home from work on congested roads. In 2013, the average rent for a 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartment in Walnut Creek is \$2,000, making it out of reach for many people. To ensure that Walnut Creek remains a great place for everyone, the plan should build upon the city's strong commitment to serving those most in need, by integrating homes for seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, low-wage employees, and families facing homelessness. It should also provide safeguards against displacement so current renters can remain a vital part of West Downtown. The city should consider including a Public Benefit Bonus Program to link development with investment in community priorities, including homes that are affordable.

Safe, Pleasant Places to Walk and Bike

Every street should be safe and pleasant for someone who is walking or biking – from a senior to a young child. To make this a reality in West Downtown, the plan should draw from features of Walnut Creek's walkable downtown, including wide sidewalks, moderate traffic speeds, and highly-visible crosswalks. It should also institute bike-friendly street designs, with buffered and physically protected bike lanes along our wider streets, including North California Blvd., Mount Diablo Blvd., and Olympic Blvd. The plan should also consider a connector bridge across Ygnacio Valley Road to BART. These improvements should be complemented with programs for residents and employees that are proven to encourage healthy forms of transportation, reduce traffic congestion, and minimize land needed for parking, such as free carsharing, bulk transit passes, and unbundled parking. It's time to reimagine how nice our streets can be by focusing on creating great places for people rather than cars.

Coalition for a Vibrant and Inclusive Walnut Creek (C-VIEW)

Access to Nature

To create world-class neighborhoods, the plan should include well-designed areas for relaxation and recreation, including pocket parks, rooftop gardens, and streetscape improvements such as street trees, lighted pathways, and natural rainwater solutions. It should also create stronger connections for walking and biking to the region's trails, parks, and open spaces, particularly the Iron Horse Trail and the Lafayette-Moraga Trail. Adding these elements will help make West Downtown a unique destination and provide outdoor gathering places for a deeper sense of community while fostering "eyes on the street" for increased safety.

Green Buildings

Green buildings create beautiful, comfortable spaces while saving money and protecting our limited natural resources. Use of recycled building materials can also help establish unique character and charm while honoring the history of a neighborhood. Development in West Downtown should incorporate the latest in high-performance green architecture, including energy efficiency, recycled and reused materials, water efficiency, renewable energy, and waste reduction strategies.

JOIN US!

To get involved or learn more, contact:

Matt Vander Sluis, Greenbelt Alliance | mvaardersluis@greenbelt.org | 925-932-7776
1601 North Main Street, Suite 105, Walnut Creek, CA