



**Walnut
Creek 2050**
Rooted. Evolving. Thriving.



Open Space and Conservation

Existing Conditions Report

SEPTEMBER 2026

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Introduction

The natural resources, parks, trails, and environmental features of Walnut Creek contribute to the character and environmental quality of the city. The Open Space and Conservation Element of the General Plan will provide a framework for managing and protecting these resources while supporting ecological functions, recreational opportunities, and the community's connection to the natural environment. This Existing Conditions Report (ECR) provides a technical and informational foundation for the Open Space and Conservation Element of the City's General Plan Update (GPU) by documenting existing regulatory, environmental, and physical conditions and establishing a baseline understanding of the City's open space and conservation resources. The report draws upon available background information, mapping resources, and planning documents related to open space, natural resources, and environmental features to identify existing resources, characteristics, and constraints. This information will inform the development of goals, policies, and implementation measures for the Open Space and Conservation Element and provide background information for the environmental review process conducted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Summary of Key Findings

The following are key findings from the Open Space and Conservation ECR that will be further analyzed and explored in later phases of the GPU.

- **Parks and open space.** With over 3,000 acres of parks, open spaces, and recreational areas and 61 miles of trails, Walnut Creek has one of the largest City-owned and maintained open space networks in the United States. Walnut Creek is a regional destination for the use of recreational facilities by visitors and residents alike. A challenge identified with various users and types of recreation in Walnut Creek (e.g., hiking, biking, horseback riding) is balancing the needs of different recreationists with the protection and management of natural resources within the city's parks and open spaces.
- **Natural resources.** Walnut Creek contains a unique assortment of natural resources. For instance, the city has dozens of distinct vegetation and land cover types, special-status plant and wildlife species, a network of areas designated as California Essential Habitat Connectivity, a primary watershed flowing into numerous tributaries and natural drainage channels, and a growing urban forest network.
- **Conservation and restoration.** Walnut Creek prioritizes the conservation and restoration of its natural environments and has expanded the scope of natural spaces over the past decade. The maintenance and protection of the open spaces have

continually been at the forefront of the community's goals and vision. As the city continues to grow, maintaining balance between development and the natural characteristics that contribute to Walnut Creek's unique identity will be an important consideration during the GPU.

- **Climate change resilience.** Walnut Creek has acknowledged the importance of climate change vulnerability. The Sustainability Action Plan and General Plan Safety Element were developed to strongly position the city to face challenges anticipated from climate change. These plans provide a foundation for the GPU and promote actions including increased native tree planting and maintenance of existing trees, emphasizing areas with limited existing tree cover and other strategies to address the vulnerabilities and support community resilience, among other topics.



Acalanes Ridge. Source: City of Walnut Creek.

Historic Context

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Walnut Creek's growing population led to proposals for development of the hillside and ridgelines such as Shell Ridge Open Space. The community came together in a grassroots effort to protect these coveted spaces. As a result, Contra Costa Service Area R-8 was funded and approved by voters to protect approximately 2,500 acres of parks, open space, and trail easements across Walnut Creek and beyond. Walnut Creek's open spaces continue to be an important part of the community. Protecting and providing equitable access to these spaces is vital to maintaining and enhancing the city's community character.

More information on the evolution of the city may be found in the **Land Use and Community Design ECR**.

Existing Plan and Policy Review

Walnut Creek has prepared several open space, conservation, parks, trails, and creek restoration planning documents to preserve and enhance open space resources throughout the city. These planning efforts address preservation of natural resources, protection of wildlife habitat corridors, restoration of creek systems, and provision of outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the city. The following plans provide important context for existing open space and conservation conditions in Walnut Creek.

1985 Lime Ridge Regional Recreation Area Master Plan. The 1985 Lime Ridge Regional Recreation Area Master Plan was prepared to guide recreational development and management of the approximately 830-acre public open space area located along the boundary between Walnut Creek and Concord near Ygnacio Valley Road. The Master Plan established a framework for trail development, open space preservation, recreational use, and resource management in Lime Ridge while enforcing protection of natural resources and visually prominent open space areas with recreational access and public use.¹

1993 Creeks Restoration and Trails Master Plan. The City's 1993 Creeks Restoration and Trails Master Plan was prepared to provide a comprehensive framework for creek restoration, trail development, and enhancement of creek corridors within the city's Core Area.²

City of Walnut Creek General Plan: Natural Environment and Public Spaces. The City's approach to open space and recreational planning has evolved over time through successive General Plan updates. Chapter 3 of the Walnut Creek General Plan 2025, titled Natural Environment and Public Spaces, focuses on watershed ecosystems, management of natural resources, preservation of open space lands, and expansion of recreational and trail opportunities throughout the city.

2008 Open Space Vision Project Report. The 2008 Open Space Vision Project Report evaluated the long-term vision, management, and preservation of Walnut Creek's open space resources. The Report emphasized the importance of balancing recreational access with protection of natural resources and identified opportunities to strengthen long-term stewardship of Walnut Creek's open space system.³

¹ City of Walnut Creek. 1985. Lime Ridge Recreational Area Master Plan. <https://growlimeridge.org/s/Lime-Ridge-MASTER-PLAN.pdf>.

² City of Walnut Creek. 2006. Walnut Creek General Plan 2025. <https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/community-development-department/zoning/long-range-plans/general-plan>.

³ Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation. 2008. Open Space Vision Report: Appendix. <https://www.wcosf.org/enjoy/OSVisionReportAppendix.pdf>.

2013 East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan. The 2013 East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan establishes a long-term framework for management, preservation, and expansion of regional parklands and recreational resources throughout the East Bay region, including areas connected to Walnut Creek’s open space network.⁴

Your Parks, Your Future. Your Parks, Your Future (YPYF) initiative is a multiphase planning effort evaluating Walnut Creek’s recreational amenities and community facilities, including Heather Farm Park, Civic Park, and several other community and recreation centers. Phase 1A, completed in 2020, identified recommendations for programming and facility improvements, while Phase 1B focused on implementation planning for Heather Farm Park.⁵ Phase 2 is focused on master planning for Civic Park and Heather Farm Park, including evaluation of park amenities, recreational improvements, and community visioning.⁶

2023 Sustainability Action Plan. The Walnut Creek Sustainability Action Plan, adopted in 2023, identifies actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, enhance community sustainability and climate resilience, and protect the health and well-being of Walnut Creek residents. The plan incorporates findings from a climate vulnerability assessment that evaluated potential impacts of climate change and the community’s ability to prepare and recover from these hazards. The assessment identified air quality, drought, extreme heat, flooding, human health hazards, landslides and debris flows, severe weather, and wildfire as primary climate hazards. Based on these findings, the Sustainability Action Plan provides 21 sustainability strategies that aim to strengthen community resilience and address the needs of populations and areas most vulnerable to climate related impacts.⁷

Agencies and Organizations

Several City departments, agencies, and community organizations play a role in management, maintenance, preservation, and planning of Walnut Creek’s parks, open space lands, trails, and recreational resources.

Parks and Open Space Division. Management and maintenance of the city’s open space areas and trail system is overseen by the City of Walnut Creek Public Works Department,

⁴ East Bay Regional Park District. 2013. Walnut Creek Open Space Master Plan.

https://www.ebparks.org/sites/default/files/master_plan_2013_final.pdf.

⁵ City of Walnut Creek. 2020. Your Parks, Your Future (YPYF), Phase 1: Executive Summary & Inventory of Decisions, Meetings and Deliverables. <https://www.walnutcreekca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/25663/638088728431670000>.

⁶ City of Walnut Creek. 2023. Your Parks, Your Future (YPYF), Phase 1B Implementation of Heather Farm Park Combined Facility: Executive Summary & Inventory of Decisions, Meetings and Deliverables. Prepared March 27, 2023.

<https://www.walnutcreekartsrec.org/home/showpublisheddocument/29697/638155892571470000>.

⁷ City of Walnut Creek. 2023. Sustainability Action Plan.

<https://www.walnutcreekca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/30592/638854186807230000>.

Parks and Open Space Division. The Parks and Open Space Division manages more than 3,000 acres of open space and over 100 miles of trails and public recreational spaces.⁸ The division is responsible for stewardship of the Acalanes Ridge, Lime Ridge, Sugarloaf, and Shell Ridge open spaces and trails, in addition to 19 parks and four special use areas. Funding for this division is provided through the City of Walnut Creek's Annual Operating Budget.

Park, Recreation and Open Space Commission. The City of Walnut Creek Park, Recreation and Open Space Commission, serves as an advisory role to the City Council on matters related to parks, recreational programs, open space areas, trails, and community facilities. The Commission reviews and provides recommendations on planning efforts and policies related to parks and recreational resources in the city.

Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation. The Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation is a non-profit, community-based volunteer organization that supports preservation, stewardship, and public awareness of Walnut Creek's open space resources. This foundation is primarily funded through private donations, membership dues, and grants.⁹ The organization performs habitat restoration projects in open space areas of Walnut Creek. Its work includes removing invasive vegetation species, planting, and maintenance of native vegetation species, and restoring riparian habitat, among others.

Walnut Creek Watershed Council. The Walnut Creek Watershed Council is a volunteer-led, nonregulatory nonprofit organization that supports a healthy and sustainable Walnut Creek Watershed through community efforts, scientific studies, public education, and restoration projects that protect and enhance beneficial uses and resources in the entire watershed. The Council encourages sharing information and promotes collaboration among the stakeholders. Funding for the council comes from grants and collaborative partnerships with local agencies and municipalities.¹⁰

Existing Regulatory Framework

State and local regulations provide a framework for open space conservation planning in Walnut Creek.

Senate Bill (SB 1000), adopted in 2016, requires cities and counties with disadvantaged communities to incorporate environmental justice goals and policies into their general plans.

⁸ City of Walnut Creek. 2006. Walnut Creek General Plan 2025. <https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/community-development-department/zoning/long-range-plans/general-plan>.

⁹ Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation. 2016. About Us. <https://www.wcosf.org/about.html>.

¹⁰ Walnut Creek Watershed Council. 2024. 2023/2024 Achievement Report. https://www.wcwatershed.org/uploads/5/3/0/8/53085609/20232024_wcwc_achievement_report_for_web.pdf.

This bill focuses on reducing exposure to pollutants and increasing equitable access to public recreational facilities and resources.¹¹

Senate Bill 1425 and Assembly Bill 1889. Senate Bill 1425 (SB 1425), signed into law in 2022, and Assembly Bill 1889 (AB 1889), signed into law in 2024, require cities and counties to consider a broader scope of open space planning when developing updated general plans. SB 1425 encourages equitable access to open space, climate resilience, biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and other conservation efforts,¹² while AB 1889 focuses on the protection and restoration of wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity areas.¹³

Walnut Creek Hillside/Open Space Protection Ordinance. The ordinance was adopted in 1991 to preserve hillside and open space areas in and adjacent to the city. The ordinance intended to protect habitat areas and sensitive resources by limiting development density in open space areas, restricting development on steep slopes and ridgelines.¹⁴

Tree Preservation Ordinance. The City's Tree Preservation Ordinance was initially adopted in 1969 and included in Title 3, Chapter 8 of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code. The ordinance removal, alteration, and replacement of protected trees to protect and preserve the city's environmental quality and community aesthetics.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Parks and Recreational Facilities

This section discusses the existing parkland classification structure and includes an inventory of the parks and public recreational facilities in Walnut Creek. Walnut Creek has over 3,000 acres of parks, open space, and recreational areas, about 42.8 acres per 1,000 residents.

¹¹ California Legislature, SB 1000. 2016. Chapter 587, Land Use: General Plans: Safety and Environmental Justice. https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB1000.

¹² California Legislature. 2022. Senate Bill 1425, Chapter 997, Open-Space Element: Updates. https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220SB1425

¹³ California Legislature. 2024. Assembly Bill 1889, Chapter 686, Conservation Element: Wildlife and Habitat Connectivity. https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1889

¹⁴ City of Walnut Creek. 1991. Walnut Creek Hillside/Open Space Protection Ordinance. Ordinance No. 1781, effective November 29, 1991. Reprinted in General Plan 2025, Appendix B. <https://www.walnut-creek.org/home/showpublisheddocument/5018/637305104782070000>.

Parks

The City owns and operates 19 community parks with various amenities and uses, plus four special use areas, including a golf course, historic museum, historic residence, and one urban plaza as shown in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**. In total, the City manages approximately 411 acres of parkland. The parks and four special use areas (23 total) are listed in **Table 1**, with identification numbers corresponding to their locations on **Figure 1**.

East Bay Regional Parks owns and manages Castle Rock Regional Recreation Area and Diablo Foothills Regional Park, located within the Walnut Creek Planning Area. Both areas provide additional recreational opportunities.

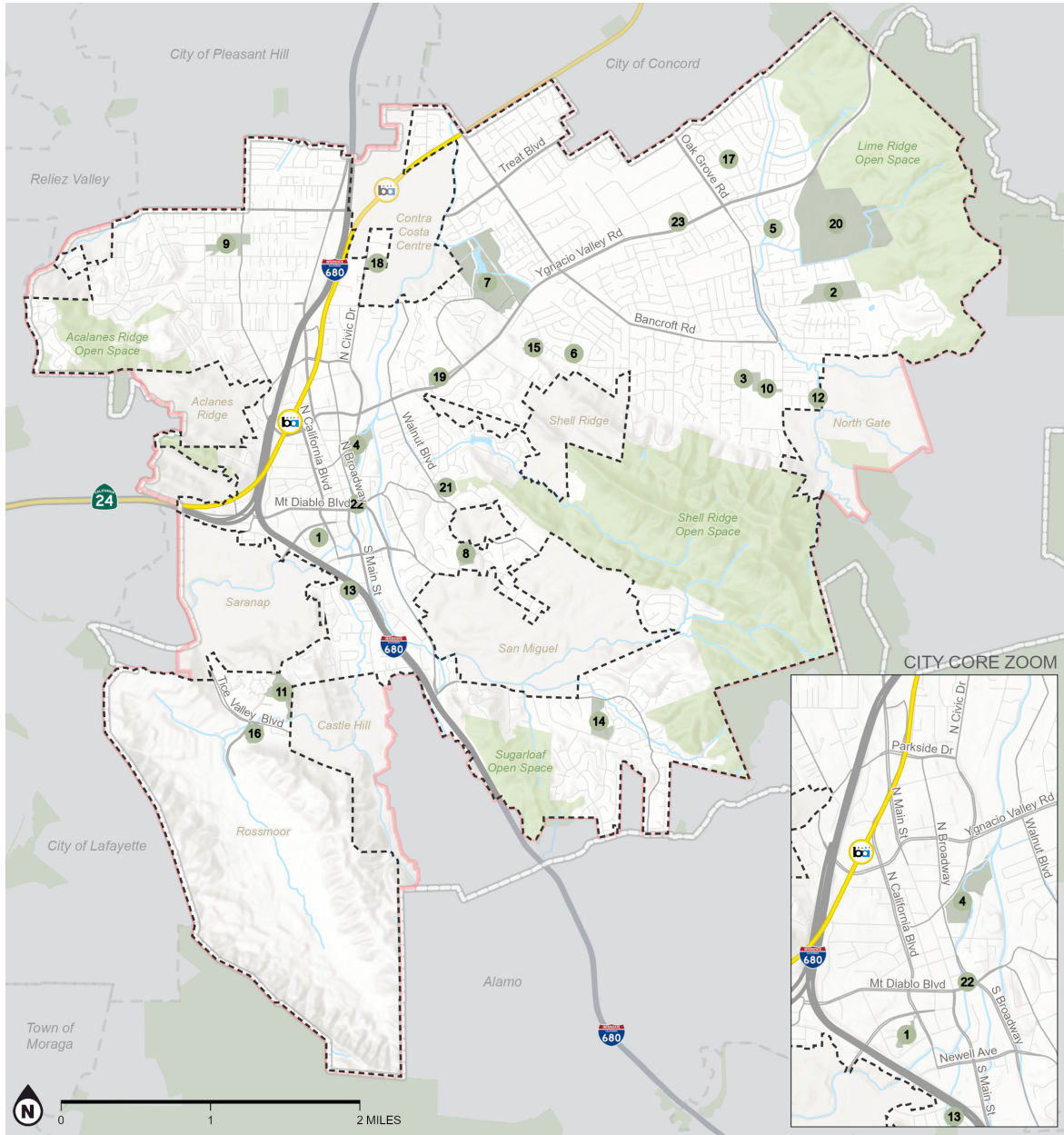
Table 1. City of Walnut Creek Parks and Special Use Areas

ID No.	Name	Location	Acreage
Parks			
1	Alma Park	California Boulevard at Botelho Drive	2.3
2	Arbolado Park	Arbolado Drive at Doncaster Drive	25.7
3	Castle Rock Youth Sports Park	800 Hutchinson Road near Walnut Avenue	8.2
4	Civic Park	1375 Civic Drive	15.7
5	Diablo Shadows Park	3205 Diablo Shadows Drive	2.6
6	El Divisadero Park	El Divisadero Drive east of San Carlos Drive	3
7	Heather Farm Park	301 North San Carlos Drive	87.8
8	La Rieu Park	196 El Camino Corto	10
9	Larkey Park	Buena Vista Avenue at First Avenue	15.7
10	Northgate Park	2871 Bowling Green Drive	3.5
11	Old Oak Park	Rossmoor Parkway	16.9
12	Pine Creek Park and Greenway	Hackney Lane & Trails End Drive, North Gate	5.4
13	Remembrance Park	Lancaster Road at Lilac Drive	0.1
14	Rudgear Park	2261 Dapplegray Lane near Stewart Avenue	15.8
15	San Miguel Park	10 San Jose Court	4.2
16	Tice Valley Park	2055 Tice Valley Boulevard	6.8
17	Valle Verde Park	529 Banyan Circle	0.9
18	Walden Park	2698 Oak Road near Contra Costa Water District Canal	6.6
19	Ygnacio Heights Park	1402 Marchbanks Drive	6.4
Total Parks Area Acreage			237.6
Special Use Areas			
20	Boundary Oak Golf Course	3800 Valley Vista Rd, Walnut Creek, CA 94598	164.5

Open Space and Conservation: Existing Conditions Report

ID No.	Name	Location	Acreage
21	Howe Homestead Park	2950 Walnut Boulevard	6.2
22	Liberty Bell Plaza	1400 Mt. Diablo Boulevard	0.4
23	Shadelands Museum	2660 Ygnacio Valley Road	2.7
Total Special Use Area Acreage			173.8
Total Acreage			411.4

Figure 1. Walnut Creek Parks and Special Use Areas



CITY PARKS

CITY OF WALNUT CREEK
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE



Source: City of Walnut Creek and Alta 2026.

FEATURES + BOUNDARIES

- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Parks (numbered)
- Open Space
- Waterbodies
- Freeways
- BART Stations

Walking Access to Parks

As shown in **Figure 2** below, many residents live within a 5- to 15-minute walk of a public or private park. Certain areas of the city, such as the outer edges of the city limits and much of the Rossmoor community, are more than a 25-minute walk from the nearest park. Areas that have more limited access to facilities such as open space, community centers, and parks are at risk for higher rates of unintended health consequences, such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and anxiety, than others that reside in communities with those facilities.

Other Recreational Uses

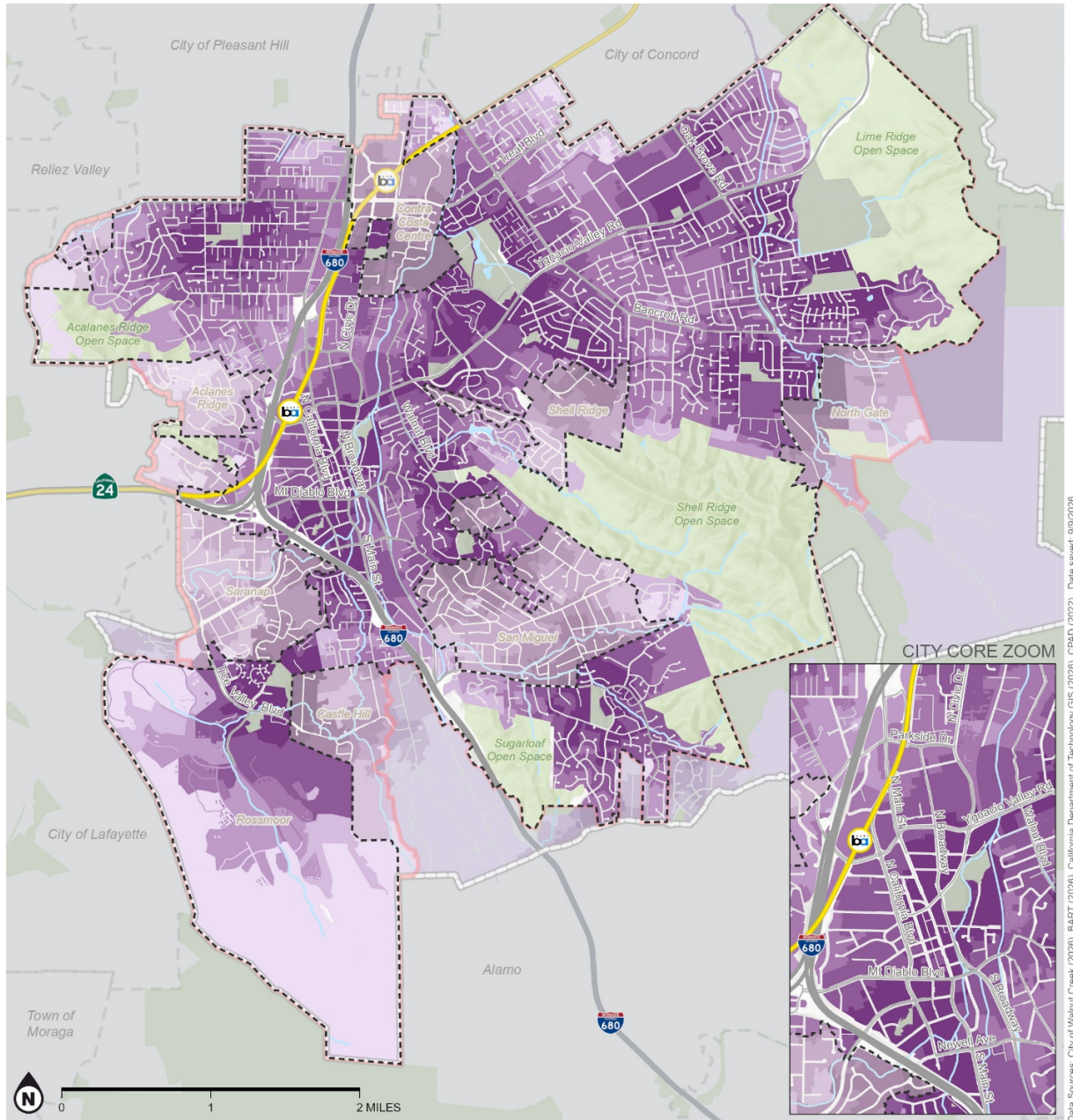
“Active recreation” is recreation or activity that requires the use of organized play areas including but not limited to fields and courts for baseball, basketball, golf, soccer, softball, tennis and volleyball; swimming pools; and designated areas for various forms of children’s play equipment. Different levels of activity may occur in these areas, including pickup sports, organized sports, or no activity.

“Passive recreation” is recreation or activity that does not require the use of organized play areas. It includes, but is not limited to, bicycling, dogs off-leash, hiking, horseback riding, and picnicking.

The City’s Recreation Division offers various active recreational opportunities for all ages. Fee-based and free programs are offered year-round in aquatics, sports, therapeutic recreation, special events, and leisure activities. In addition, community groups or organizations run many programs at City facilities, such as the Girls VIP/Odyssey Volleyball Camps, Little League, Movies Under the Stars, and Walnut Creek Soccer Club, Churches, sports leagues, and not-for-profit organizations provide even more opportunities for youth, families, and older adults. Several private facilities in Walnut Creek, such as Diablo Hills Golf Course, Rossmoor Golf Course, gyms and fitness centers, martial arts academies, gardens, and dance and yoga studios, also provide recreational opportunities.

Walnut Creek is adjacent to Mount Diablo State Park and several regional parks, such as Briones Regional Park, Diablo Foothills Regional Park, and Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve, that provide passive recreational, educational, and leisure opportunities. The open spaces and trail systems are described further under the **Open Space and Trails section**.

Figure 2. Walking Access to Parks



Data Sources: City of Walnut Creek (2026), BART (2026), California Department of Technology GIS (2026), CPAD (2022). Date saved: 9/9/2026.

WALKING ACCESS TO PARKS

CITY OF WALNUT CREEK
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE



WALK TIME TO NEAREST PARK

- Less than 5 minutes
- 5-10 minutes
- 10-15 minutes
- 15-20 minutes
- 20-25 minutes
- More than 25 minutes

FEATURES + BOUNDARIES

- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Parks (numbered)
- Open Space
- Waterbodies
- Freeways
- BART Stations

Open Space and Trails

Walnut Creek contains an extensive network of open spaces, hillsides, creek corridors, and natural areas. The City manages one of the largest aggregations of City-owned open space in the United States, encompassing more than 2,700 acres of oak woodland, savannah, chaparral, and other natural landscapes. Major open space areas, such as Shell Ridge, Lime Ridge, Sugarloaf, and Acalanes Ridge contribute to the city's extensive network of protected natural lands and recreational resources.¹⁵ Other major open space areas outside the city that serve Walnut Creek residents include Castle Rock Regional Recreation Area, Diablo Foothills Regional Park, and Mount Diablo State Park.

Walnut Creek's extensive open space system includes a network of trails that provides opportunities for recreation, active transportation, and access to the city's natural landscapes as shown in **Table 2. Figure 3** shows many of these trails are found in the city's open space, while more than seven miles of neighborhood trails connect residents to parks, open space preserves, and surrounding communities. The Contra Costa Regional Trail network follows the Contra Costa Canal and intercepts Larkey Park and Heather Farm Park, providing access to other regional networks, including the Iron Horse Trail. Together, these trail systems provide designated spaces for hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, and other recreational users to enjoy.

Table 2. Open Space and Trails

Name	Acreage	Miles of Trail	Trailheads
Acalanes Ridge Open Space (north & south)	195	4	6
Contra Costa County Regional Trails	-	-	7
Lime Ridge Open Space	1,226	17.2	14
Shell Ridge Open Space ¹⁶	1,475	31	19
Sugarloaf Ridge Open Space	176	3.5	7
Ygnacio Canal Trail - Paved Trail System	-	5.5	-
Totals	2,726 acres	61.2 miles	53 (46 city + 7 regional)

Source: City of Walnut Creek and Alta 2026.

¹⁵ City of Walnut Creek. 2006. Walnut Creek General Plan 2025. <https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/community-development-department/zoning/long-range-plans/general-plan>.

¹⁶ Trailheads listed here include those in Howe Homestead and Old Borges Ranch and Hanna Grove, leading into Shell Ridge.

Shell Ridge Open Space

Shell Ridge Open Space is the largest open space preserve in Walnut Creek. It consists of a series of parallel ridges that extend from northwest to southeast, connecting Walnut Creek to the slopes of Mount Diablo. These ridges and valleys form a major watershed for the Walnut Creek and Ygnacio Valley basins, with runoff from the area contributing significantly to local groundwater recharge and underground aquifers. The preserve encompasses approximately 1,420 acres and offers more than 31 miles of trails for hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. There are two ranger stations that serve this open space. They are located near Old Borges Ranch and Howe Homestead Park.

The landscape is predominantly composed of Annual Grassland and Blue Oak Woodland habitats, providing a diverse range of recreational opportunities throughout its hillsides, ridgelines, valleys, and creek corridors. Shell Ridge Open Space also contains several important historical and cultural resources, including the historical Borges Ranch, a working ranch established in 1899 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and Howe Homestead Park, the former residence of James Howe, an Associated Press correspondent during the early twentieth century. Howe Homestead Park also features community gardens that provide Walnut Creek residents with opportunities to cultivate vegetables, flowers, and other ornamental plants. Refer to the Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources Section of this report for further information regarding the City's historical and cultural resources.

Lime Ridge Open Space

Lime Ridge Open Space is along the eastern edge of Walnut Creek on a prominent ridgeline extending toward Mount Diablo. The preserve supports a diverse array of native plant and wildlife species and contains some of the region's last remaining chaparral habitat. With approximately 25 miles of trails, Lime Ridge provides opportunities for hiking, bicycling, wildlife observation, and nature appreciation. This open space does not have a dedicated on-site ranger station.

The preserve provides habitat for several sensitive species, including the Western Burrowing Owl and the Alameda Whipsnake, as well as various native plant species, including Hall's Bushmallow and Mt. Diablo Fairy Lantern. Refer to the Biological Resources Section of this report for further information regarding the special-status species and critical habitat in Walnut Creek. In addition to its ecological significance, Lime Ridge functions as an important natural greenbelt connecting Walnut Creek with the neighboring communities of Concord and Clayton to the east.



Lime Ridge Open Space. Source: City of Walnut Creek.

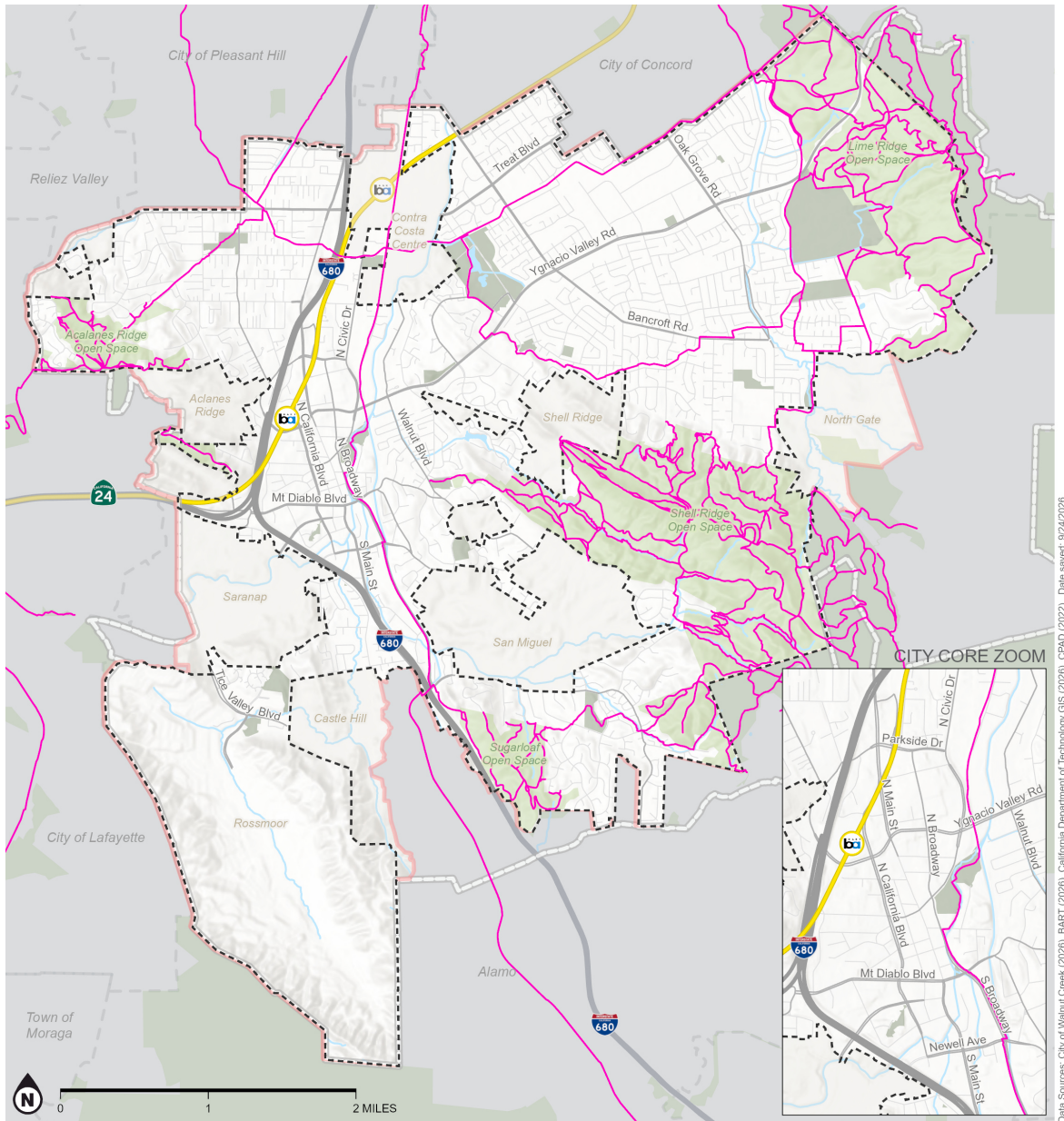
Sugarloaf Open Space

Sugarloaf Open Space is a 177-acre preserve in southern Walnut Creek along the Interstate 680 corridor, extending between Rudgear Road and Livorna Road. The preserve offers approximately three miles of easily accessible hiking trails, as well as picnic areas, a native plant garden, and an amphitheater that supports various recreational and educational opportunities. Sugarloaf is served by one ranger station, located in the north entrance off of Ygnacio Valley Road. This open space also provides panoramic views of Mount Diablo, Shell Ridge, and Las Trampas Ridge. The preserve contains one of the last remaining black walnut orchards in the city, contributing to Walnut Creek's natural and agricultural heritage.

Acalanes Ridge Open Space

Acalanes Ridge offers panoramic 360-degree views, including the Carquinez Strait and Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta to the north and Mount Diablo to the southeast. This preserve runs along the northwestern edge of Walnut Creek, between Walnut Creek and Lafayette. Acalanes Ridge does not have a dedicated on-site ranger station. It consists of a series of ridges that extend northwest and southwest, terminating near the junction of State Route 24 (SR-24) and Interstate 680 (I-680). The preserve provides approximately four miles of hiking trails, offering convenient public access for outdoor recreation and scenic viewing.

Figure 3. Open Spaces and Trails in Walnut Creek



TRAILS

CITY OF WALNUT CREEK
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE



FEATURES + BOUNDARIES

- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Parks (numbered)
- Open Space
- Waterbodies
- Freeways
- BART Stations
- Trail

Natural Resources

Biological Resources

The open space areas and vegetation land cover in Walnut Creek are rich in biological resources, including several sensitive species. Many of these open space areas serve as wildlife movement corridors, connecting wildlife to broader, more sustainable habitat.

Vegetation and Land Cover Type

Walnut Creek contains a diverse range of vegetation communities and land cover types, reflecting the city's varied topography and natural landscape. Recent vegetation mapping by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) identified several distinct vegetation and land cover types in Walnut Creek. **Figure 4** illustrates the distribution of these vegetation communities and land cover types throughout the city. The majority of the city is comprised of urban land cover, while the western, northeastern, eastern, and southern edges of the city limits support Annual Grassland, Blue Oak Woodland, Chamise-Redshank Chaparral, and Montane Hardwood. The northwestern portion of the city also supports a couple areas of Mixed Chaparral. Additionally, the southwestern portion of the city, including the Rossmoor community, supports Coastal Oak Woodland in addition to Annual Grassland, Blue Oak Woodland, Chamise-Redshank Chaparral, and Montane Hardwood.

Forest and Urban Forest Resources

Walnut Creek is a primarily urbanized area, with woodland and forest vegetation communities that exist largely within the city's open space and parks. The Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation has led multiple initiatives to maintain and restore valued forest ecosystems such as the Oak Habitat Restoration.¹⁷ The City recognizes the importance of urban forestry, and the crucial role tree canopy plays in the environmental health and resilience of the city, through shading and cooling of urban areas. The Walnut Creek Tree Preservation Ordinance outlines regulations to protect and preserve existing trees. Initiatives to promote new plantings and increase tree canopy stem from grants, sustainability plans, and community action. For instance, there are several actions in the City's Sustainability Action Plan that focus on master planning for the city's trees as well as tree planting and tree preservation.¹⁸ There are no timberland production areas within the city.

¹⁷ Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation. Oak Habitat Restoration. <https://www.wcosf.org/projects/oak.html>.

¹⁸ City of Walnut Creek. 2023. Sustainability Action Plan.

<https://www.walnutcreekca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/30592/638854186807230000>.

Special-Status Plants and Wildlife

CDFW has identified numerous special-status plant and wildlife species that are designated as rare, threatened, or endangered under state and federal regulations in and surrounding Walnut Creek. For instance, there are documented occurrences of 33 special-status plant and wildlife species within one mile of Walnut Creek's sphere of influence, as shown on **Figure 5**. Many of these species occur within the City's open space preserves and other natural areas, highlighting the importance of these lands for regional biodiversity and habitat conservation. Of the 33 special-status species, one bird species, the Western Burrowing Owl, is known to occur within Walnut Creek and the one-mile buffer. Special-status amphibian species within the one-mile buffer include the California Red-Legged Frog, California Tiger Salamander – Central California Distinct Population Segment (DPS), and Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog – Central Coast DPS. Reptile species include the Alameda Whipsnake and Blainville's Coast Horned Lizard. Invertebrate species include the Western Bumble Bee and Obscure Bumble Bee. Mammal species include the San Francisco Dusky-Footed Woodrat and Townsend's Big-Eared Bat. The remaining 21 species are special-status plants known to occur in Walnut Creek and the one-mile buffer, including Antioch Dunes Evening-Primrose, Bent-Flowered Fiddleneck, Big Tarplant, Congdon's Tarplant, Contra Costa Goldfields, Contra Costa Manzanita, Diablo Helianthella, Fragrant Fritillary, Hall's Bushmallow, Hospital Canyon Larkspur, Jepson's Coyote-Thistle, Lime Ridge Eriastrum, Lime Ridge Navarretia, Loma Prieta Hoita, Mt. Diablo Buckwheat, Mt. Diablo Fairy Lantern, Mt. Diablo Manzanita, Northern Slender Pondweed, Oval-Leaved Viburnum, Slender Silver Moss, and Woodland Woollythreads.

Critical Habitat

Portions of Walnut Creek provide designated critical habitat for the Alameda Whipsnake and California Red-Legged Frog under the federal Endangered Species Act, as shown on **Figure 5**. These designations identify areas that provide important habitat for federally protected species and are subject to federal regulatory requirements. Critical habitat designations require federal agencies to ensure that actions under their jurisdiction do not destroy or adversely modify designated habitats. The city is not located within the planning area for the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan & Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP); however, the plan provides regional context for habitat conservation efforts in Contra Costa County.

Alameda Whipsnake

The Alameda Whipsnake is endemic to California and is typically associated with mixed chaparral, coastal scrub, annual grasslands, and oak woodlands adjacent to scrub habitats. Critical habitat for the species encompasses Mount Diablo and much of the surrounding

foothills. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated approximately 164,150 hectares (406,598 acres) of land as critical habitat for the Alameda Whipsnake, including portions of Walnut Creek along the northeastern, eastern, southwestern, and western city boundaries.¹⁹ The largest area of Alameda Whipsnake critical habitat in Walnut Creek is in the Lime Ridge Open Space Preserve.

California Red-Legged Frog

The California Red-Legged Frog is the largest native frog in the western United States. The species is closely associated with ponds, streams, and other aquatic habitats, while also using adjacent upland areas for foraging, shelter, and dispersal.²⁰ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated approximately 730,402 hectares (1,804,865 acres) of critical habitat in 28 California counties.²¹ While the majority of designated critical habitat for the California Red-Legged Frog occurs outside the city boundaries, it occurs within the one-mile buffer of the city and sphere of influence. The California Red-Legged Frog critical habitat is immediately adjacent to Shell Ridge Open Space, underscoring the ecological importance of Walnut Creek's riparian corridors and surrounding natural lands.

Habitat Connectivity

Creek corridors and associated riparian areas provide important ecological functions and habitat connectivity throughout the city. The California Essential Habitat Connectivity (CEHC) network was developed by the CDFW to identify large habitat blocks that support native biodiversity and the landscape linkages necessary for wildlife movement between them. The CEHC network serves as an important planning resource for conserving habitat connectivity and informing future land use decisions.²²

¹⁹ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2000. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Final Determination of Critical Habitat for the Alameda Whipsnake (*Masticophis lateralis euryxanthus*). Federal Register Vol. 65, No. 192. October 3. https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/federal_register_document/00-24763.pdf.

²⁰ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2026. California Red-Legged Frog (*Rana draytonii*). <https://www.fws.gov/species/california-red-legged-frog-rana-draytonii>.

²¹ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2008. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Revised Critical Habitat for the California Red-Legged Frog. Federal Register Vol. 73, No. 180. September 16. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2008-09-16/pdf/E8-20473.pdf>.

²² California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2026. Connectivity Advance Mitigation. <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/Connectivity/CEHC>.

As shown on **Figure 6**, several parks and open space areas in Walnut Creek are identified as components of the CEHC network. These include Lime Ridge Open Space Preserve, Heather Farm Park, Sugarloaf Open Space, Rudgear Park, Warden Park, Acalanes Ridge Open Space, Larkey Park, Dinosaur Hill Park, Cambridge Neighborhood Park, Old Oak Park, and other interconnected open space areas.



Briones trail. Source: City of Walnut Creek.

Figure 4. Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

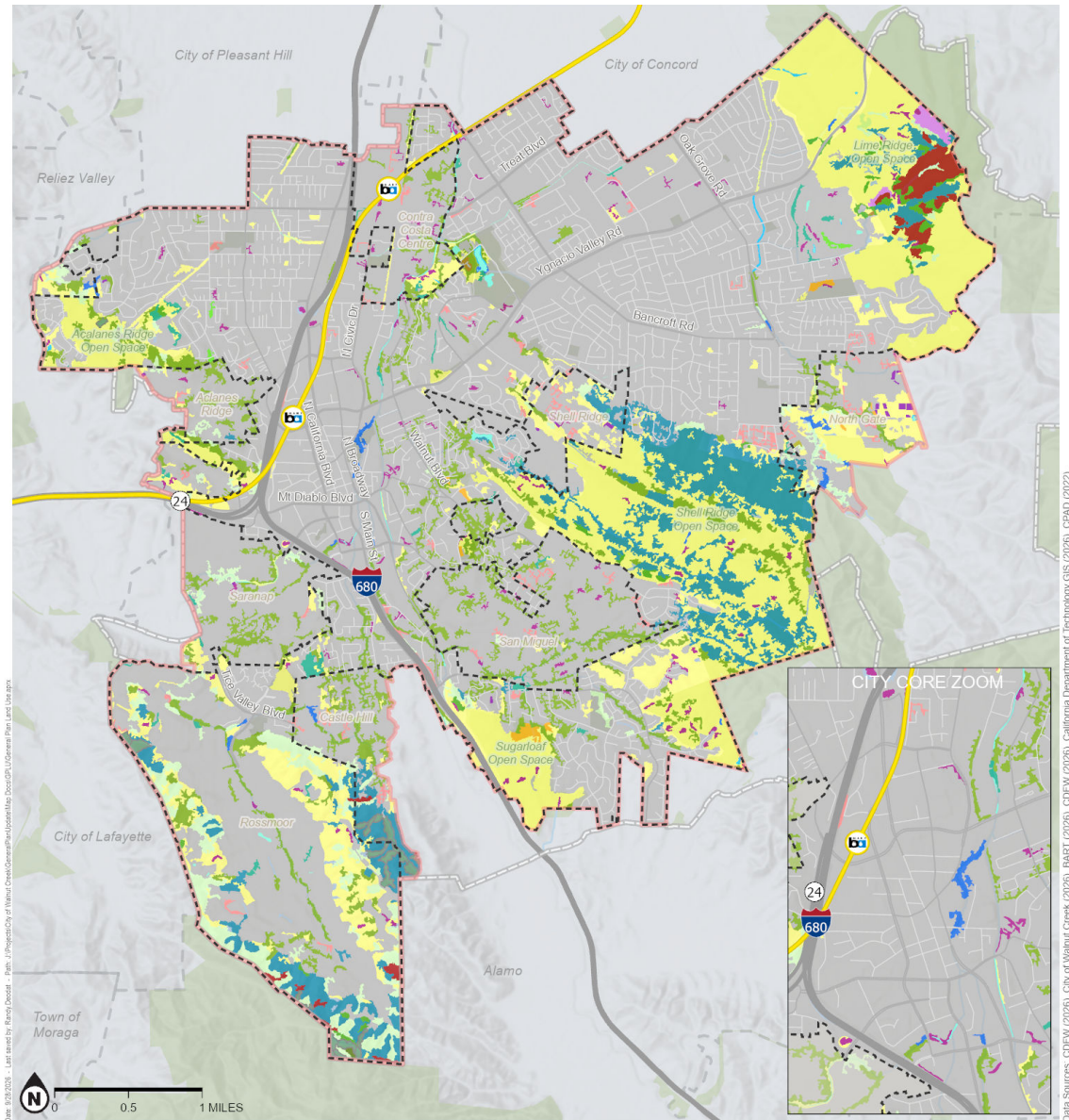
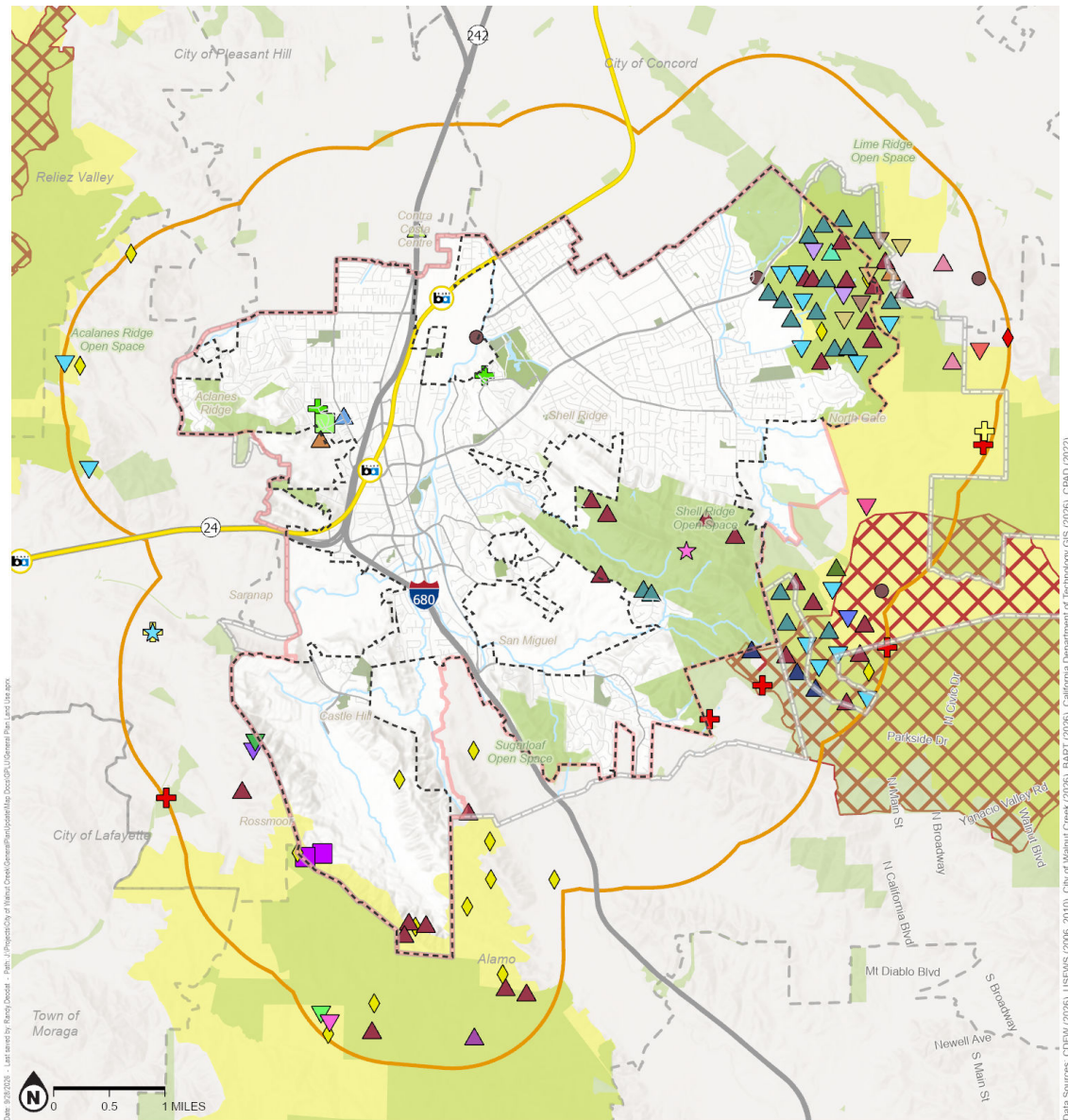


Figure 5. Special-Status Plant and Wildlife Species and Critical Habitat



SPECIAL STATUS PLANT AND WILDLIFE SPECIES AND CRITICAL HABITAT

CITY OF WALNUT CREEK GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

FEATURES + BOUNDARIES

- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- 1-Mile Buffer

Critical Habitat

- Alameda Whipsnake
- California Red-Legged Frog

Amphibian Species

- California Red-Legged Frog - Central California DPS
- California Tiger Salamander - Central California DPS
- Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog - Central California DPS

Bird Species

- Western Burrowing Owl
- Invertebrate Species
- Western Bumble Bee

Mammal Species

- San Francisco Dusky-Footed Woodrat
- Townsend's Big-Eared Bat

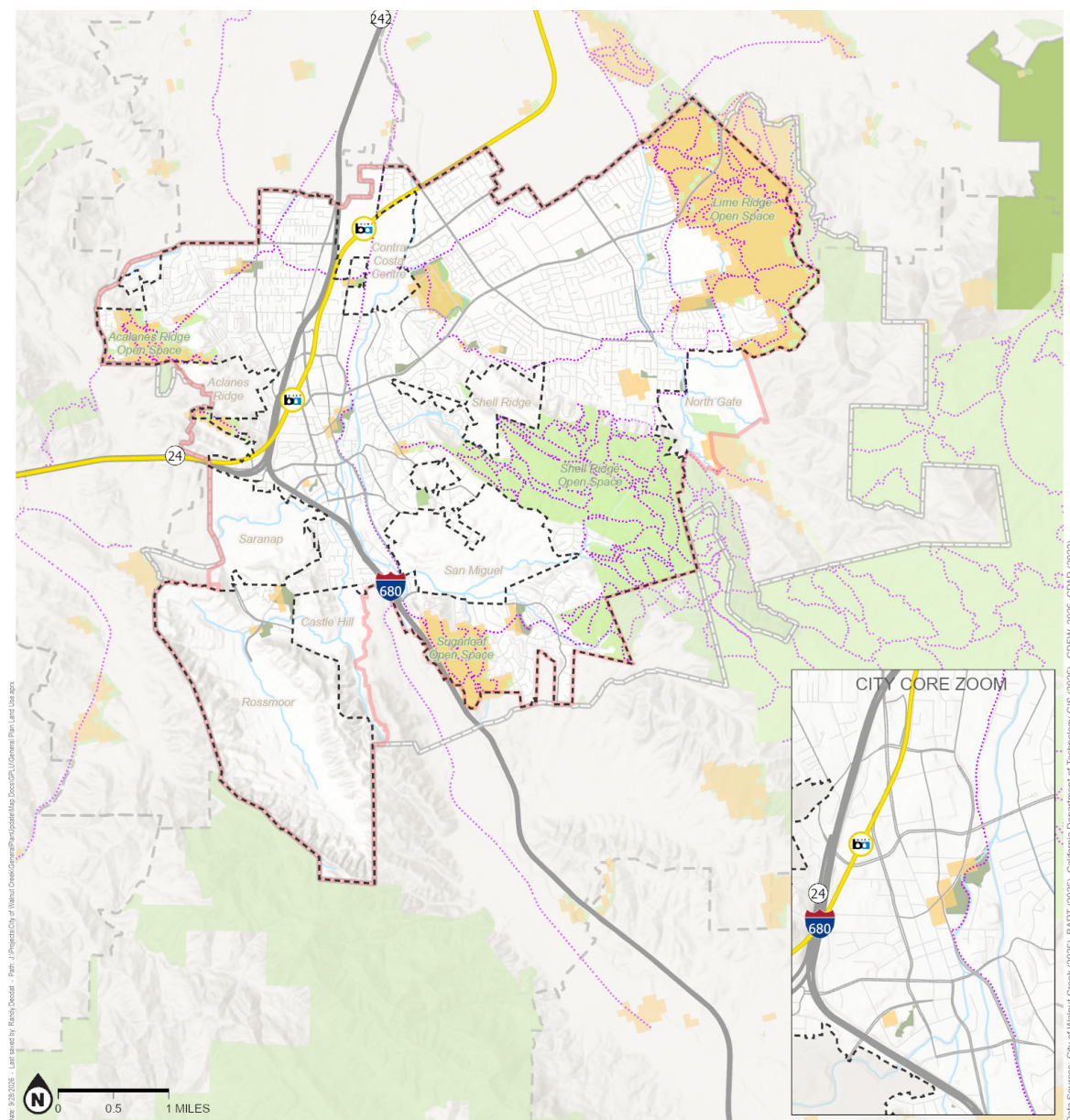
Reptile Species

- Alameda Whipsnake
- Blainville's Coast Horned Lizard

Plant Species

- Antioch Dunes Evening-Primrose
- Bent-Flowered Fiddleneck
- Big Tarplant
- Congdon's Tarplant
- Contra Costa Goldfields
- Contra Costa Manzanita
- Diablo Helianthella
- Fragrant Fritillary
- Hall's Bushmallow
- Hospital Canyon Larkspur
- Jepson's Coyote-Thistle
- Lime Ridge Eriastrum
- Lime Ridge Navarretia
- Loma Prieta Hoita
- Mt. Diablo Buckwheat
- Mt. Diablo Fairy-Lantern
- Mt. Diablo Manzanita
- Northern Slender Pondweed
- Oval-Leaved Viburnum
- Slender Silver Moss
- Woodland Woollythreads

Figure 6. Habitat Connectivity and HCP/NCCP Areas



HABITAT CONNECTIVITY AND HCP/NCCP AREAS

CITY OF WALNUT CREEK
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

FEATURES + BOUNDARIES

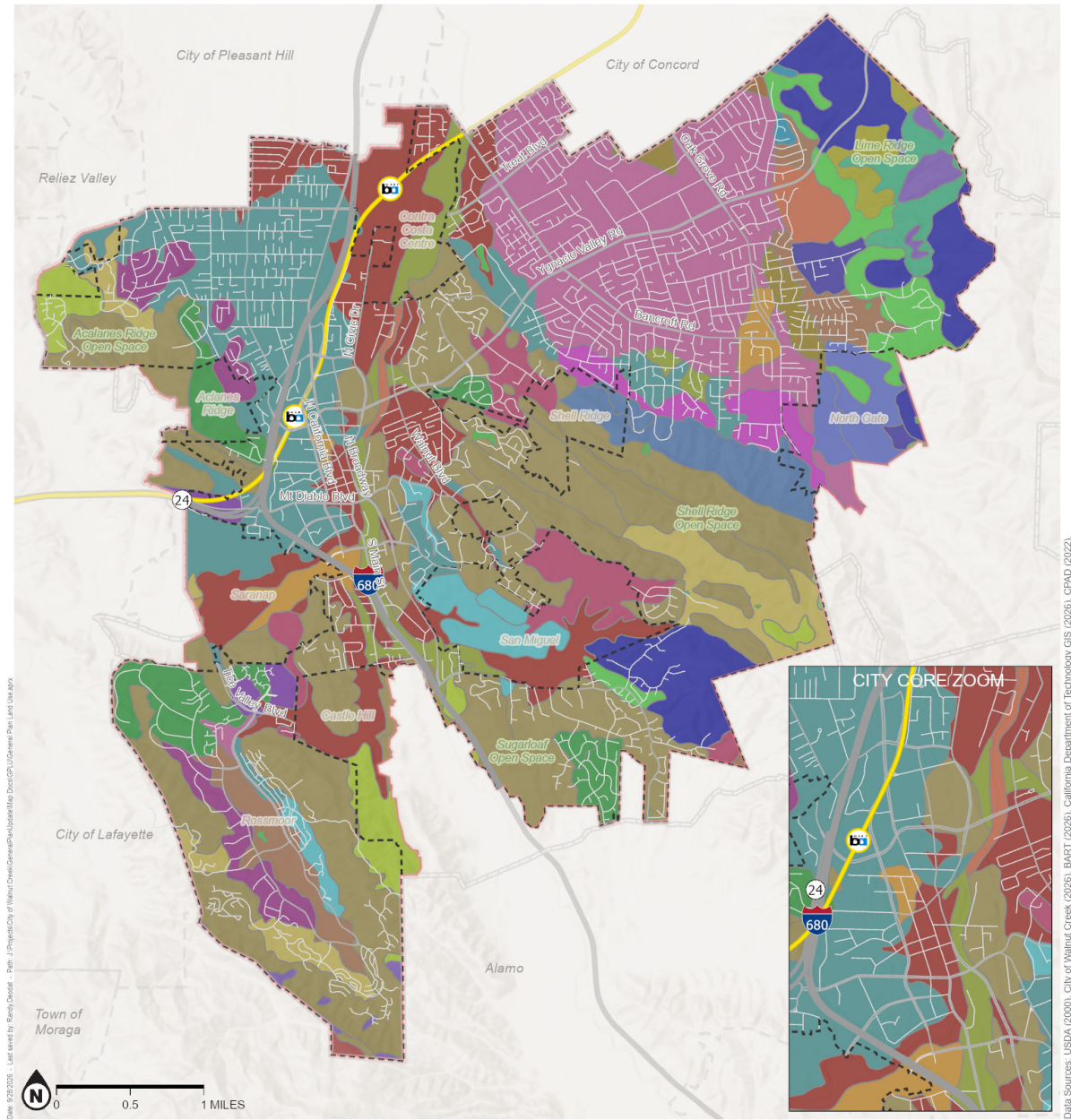
- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Trails
- California Essential Habitat Connectivity
- Open Space
- East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP

Soils

Soil composition determines the types of habitats and diversity of plants and wildlife found in open spaces in the city. Maintaining a healthy soil composition can prevent erosion, which degrades open spaces and recreational use, sustain water resources, and preserve cultural and historical resources. Surface soil textures within the city are primarily comprised of the following as shown in **Figure 7**:

- **Clay.** This surface soil texture is defined by a dense and compacted structure due to predominance of clay particles near the surface. It impacts soil properties such as water retention, drainage, and nutrient availability. Despite its tendency for waterlogging and compaction when dry, proper management can harness clay soil's nutrient retention capacity, making it fertile for plant growth.
- **Clay loam.** This surface soil texture is defined by a balanced mixture of clay, silt, and sand particles, with a slightly higher concentration of clay. It typically exhibits properties of both clay and loam soils, offering good water retention, nutrient availability, and drainage characteristics.
- **Loam.** This surface soil texture is defined by a balanced mixture of sand, silt, and clay particles, with no type predominating. Loam soil is often considered ideal for plant growth because it provides good drainage, sufficient water retention, and aeration for root development. It also tends to be fertile and workable, making it suitable for various agricultural and gardening purposes.
- **Loamy sand.** This surface soil texture is defined by a predominance of sand particles, with a smaller proportion of silt and clay. It is characterized by its gritty feel and ability to drain water quickly due to the high sand content. However, the presence of some silt and clay provides some nutrient retention and fertility, making it suitable for certain types of crops or plants when managed appropriately.
- **Sandy loam.** This surface soil texture is defined by a relatively balanced mixture of sand, silt, and clay particles, with a higher proportion of sand compared to silt and clay. Sandy loam soil is characterized by its loose, well-draining structure, which allows for good water infiltration and root development. It offers a balance between drainage and water retention, making it suitable for a wide range of plants and crops.

Figure 7. Soil Types in Walnut Creek



Data Sources: USDA (2000), City of Walnut Creek (2026), BART (2026), California Department of Technology GIS (2026), CPAD (2022).

SOIL TYPES

CITY OF WALNUT CREEK GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

FEATURES + BOUNDARIES

- Sphere of Influence
- City Boundary

Soils

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Alo Clay | Clear Lake Clay | Los Osos Clay Loam |
| Altamont Clay | Conejo Clay Loam | Los Osos-Los Gatos Complex |
| Altamont-Fontana Complex | Cropley Clay | Millsholm Loam |
| Antioch Loam | Cut And Fill Land-Diablo Complex | Positas Loam |
| Botella Clay Loam | Cut And Fill Land-Los Osos Complex | Quarry |
| Briones Fine Sandy Loam | Cut And Fill Land-Millsholm Complex | Rincon Clay Loam |
| Briones Loamy Sand | Diablo Clay | Rock Outcrop-Xerotherm Association |
| Capay Clay | Garretson Loam | Sycamore Silty Clay Loam |
| | Gaviota Sandy Loam | Tierra Loam |
| | Lodo Clay Loam | Water |
| | Los Gatos Loam | Zamora Silty Clay Loam |

Mineral Resources

Mineral resources are naturally occurring geologic materials that have economic value, including construction aggregate, industrial minerals, and energy resources. The California Geological Survey (CGS) classifies mineral resource potential through Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs), which identify areas based on the presence or likelihood of significant mineral deposits. These classifications assist local jurisdictions in making informed land use decisions and conserving mineral resources, where appropriate. MRZ classifications are defined as follows:

- **MRZ-1.** Areas with little likelihood for significant mineral deposits.
- **MRZ-2.** Areas containing significant mineral deposits or having a high likelihood for them.
- **MRZ-3.** Areas with mineral deposits but with unknown significance based on available data.
- **MRZ-4.** Areas with insufficient information to assign any other MRZ designation.

Walnut Creek does not contain any documented regionally significant mineral resources or active mining operations. According to the CGS, the city is primarily designated as MRZ-3, indicating that the significance of mineral deposits cannot be determined based on the available geologic information. Three geologic formations in Walnut Creek, the San Ramon Formation, Cierbo Formation, and San Pablo Formation, have been identified as having the potential to contain aggregate resources. However, there is insufficient data to determine whether these resources are economically significant.²³

Hydrology and Water Quality

The city's network of creeks and other water bodies provides important hydrologic and ecological functions, including stormwater conveyance, groundwater recharge, riparian habitat, and wildlife movement.

Watersheds and Creeks

The city lies within the 146-square-mile Walnut Creek watershed, the largest watershed in Contra Costa County, which drains the county's central region northward to Suisun Bay. The Walnut Creek watershed extends from San Ramon to the south, Martinez to the north, Moraga and Orinda to the west, and Concord to the east. It consists of eight major tributaries,

²³ Stinson, M.C., Manson, M.W., and Plappert, J.J. 1987. Mineral Land Classification: Aggregate Materials in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Area. Classification of Aggregate Resource Areas, South San Francisco Bay Production-Consumption Region. California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, Special Report 146, Part II. https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/documents/publications/special-reports/SR_146-MLC-Report02.pdf.

totaling 109 miles, that originate from the headwaters in Mount Diablo State Park and the East Bay foothills, and flow into the generally south-north trending direction of Walnut Creek. These tributaries include San Ramon Creek, Bollinger Creek, Las Trampas Creek, Lafayette Creek, Grayson Creek, Murderers Creek, Pine Creek, and Galindo Creek.²⁴ Within the Walnut Creek watershed are the Grayson, Pine, San Ramon, and Las Trampas subwatersheds, through which the Walnut, Pine, San Ramon, Tice, and Las Trampas Creeks flow. San Ramon and Las Trampas Creeks join under the fountain in Liberty Bell Plaza to form the north-flowing Walnut Creek.²⁵ Creeks and canals within the city are shown in **Figure 8**.

According to the 2013 Walnut Creek Watershed Inventory, an estimated 70% of Walnut Creek's 28.74 miles of channels are natural, meaning they have no obvious reinforcements, and 28% have been altered with concrete or underground channels. "In comparison to county averages, the Walnut Creek Watershed has a lower percentage of nature channels and a correspondingly higher percentage of altered channels."²⁶ Due to steep slopes and land protection efforts, the upper watersheds along the perimeter of the Walnut Creek watershed generally remain undeveloped open space. The valleys of the watershed are densely urbanized and populated by the Cities of Walnut Creek, Lafayette, Pleasant Hill, and Danville. Small portions of the Cities of Concord, Martinez, Moraga, and San Ramon are also included.¹⁹

The city has several ongoing restoration projects within the open space system that strive to restore disturbed water resources, rehabilitate native vegetation, and improve access for the community. These initiatives include the Walnut Creek Restoration Plan, Bayberry Pond Restoration, and Indian Valley Pond Restoration. Many of these efforts are coordinated by the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation, Walnut Creek Watershed Council, and associated stewardship programs.

Water Quality

Water quality in the Walnut Creek watershed is governed by the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The San Francisco RWQCB's Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay Basin (Basin Plan) is the RWQCB's master water quality control planning document. The Basin Plan, most recently updated in December 2025, is

²⁴ CCWD (Contra Costa Water District). 2021. 2020 Urban Water Management Plan.

<https://www.ccwater.com/DocumentCenter/View/9851/2020-Urban-Water-Management-Plan-PDF>.

²⁵ City of Walnut Creek. 2006. Walnut Creek General Plan 2025. <https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/community-development-department/zoning/long-range-plans/general-plan>.

²⁶ Walnut Creek Watershed Council. 2013. Walnut Creek Watershed Inventory

<https://www.ccwater.com/DocumentCenter/View/9851/2020-Urban-Water-Management-Plan-PDF>.

designed to preserve and enhance water quality and protect the beneficial uses of all regional waters. Specifically, the Basin Plan:

1. Designates beneficial uses for surface and ground waters;
2. Sets narrative and numerical objectives that must be attained or maintained to protect the designated beneficial uses and conform to the state's anti-degradation policy;
3. Describes implementation programs to protect the designated beneficial uses of all waters in the region; and
4. Describes surveillance and monitoring activities to evaluate the effectiveness of the Basin Plan.²⁷

The Clean Water Act lists one city creek in Section 303(d), "List of Impaired Waterbodies." Walnut Creek is a category 4a water body segment. A category 4a water body segment is where all 303(d) impairments are undergoing corrective action, and at least one of those listings is managed under a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.²⁸

Las Trampas Creek and Mount Diablo Creek are listed as Category 5 water body segments. A Category 5 water body segment is a water segment where no 303(d) standards are met and a TMDL is required, but not yet completed, for at least one pollutant listed for this segment.²⁹

The City's Public Works Department administers the City's Clean Water program, a comprehensive program comprising various activities designed to reduce stormwater pollution to the maximum extent practicable and to eliminate non-stormwater discharges.

Groundwater

Groundwater resources also contribute to Walnut Creek's long-term water resilience. Surface water infiltration from creeks, floodplains, open space preserves, and undeveloped lands provide opportunities for groundwater recharge, or refill, through soil and rock percolation, within portions of the Walnut Creek Watershed. These recharge processes are supported through maintenance of permeable open space, healthy riparian corridors, and natural drainage, which also improve water quality and watershed health.

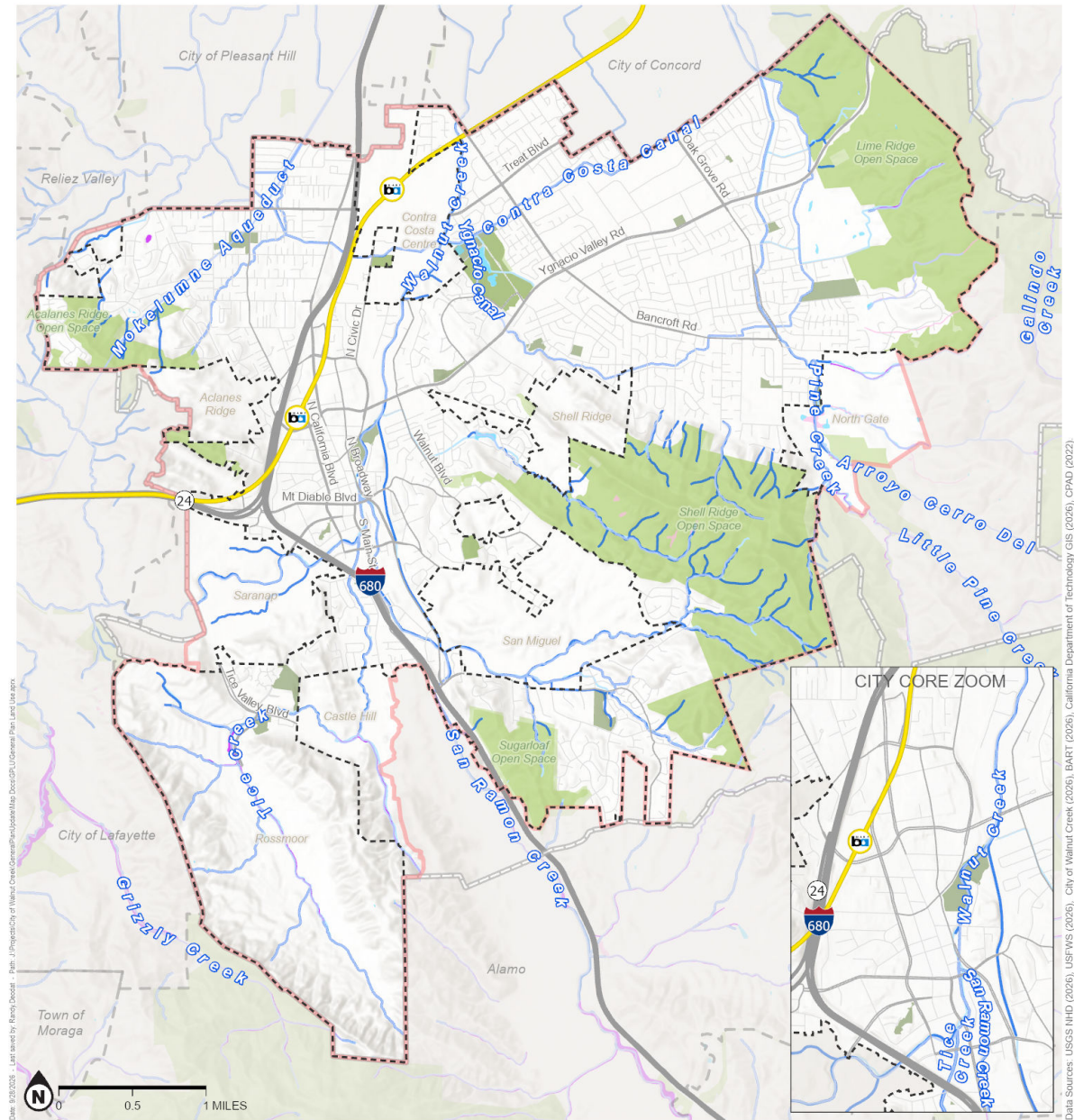
²⁷ California State Water Resources Control Board, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. 2026. Basin Planning. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/basin_planning.html

²⁸ California State Water Resources Control Board, "Walnut Creek," 2025–2026 Integrated Report, Appendix B: Fact Sheets, 2026. https://water.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/2025_2026state_ir_reports_final/apx-b-factsheets/00710.shtml?utm_source

²⁹ SWRCB (State Water Resources Control Board). 2024. 2024 Integrated Report Map. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/2024-integrated-report.html

The city is located within the 15,900-acre Ygnacio Valley Groundwater Basin (YVGB). The basin extends from Interstate 680 to the west, Suisun Bay to the north, the Concord Fault to the east, and the City of Walnut Creek to the south. Walnut Creek and Grayson Canyon are the primary surface water features within the basin. According to the California Department of Water Resources' Bulletin 118, The YVGB occupies a low-lying area between the Berkeley Hills and Diablo Range. Groundwater within the basin is connected to the larger regional water system associated with the Sacramento River. There are no known legal disputes or adjudications concerning groundwater rights within the YVGB.

Figure 8. Hydrology and Water Features in Walnut Creek



HYDROLOGY AND WATER FEATURES

CITY OF WALNUT CREEK GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

FEATURES + BOUNDARIES

- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- NHD Flowlines

Aquatic Resource Types

- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Riverine

Agricultural Resources

The California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) classifies agricultural lands throughout California based on soil quality and agricultural productivity. According to the most recent FMMP mapping, no lands within the city are designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance. As shown on **Figure 9**, the majority of the city is designated Urban and Built-Up Land. The undeveloped open space areas along the outer edges of the city are designated as grazing land.³⁰

While the city contains extensive open space areas and natural lands, these areas are primarily managed for resource conservation, habitat preservation, recreation, and scenic values rather than commercial agricultural production. In the Walnut Creek General Plan 2025, Open Space/Agriculture (OSA) designates areas currently undeveloped or used for grazing, equestrian, or agricultural pursuits. According to the City's land use and zoning maps, agricultural land within city boundaries is limited to grazing land in the Lime Ridge Open Space. In addition, a large area of grazing land exists outside the city limits to the east, between the Lime Ridge Open Space and Shell Ridge Open Space.

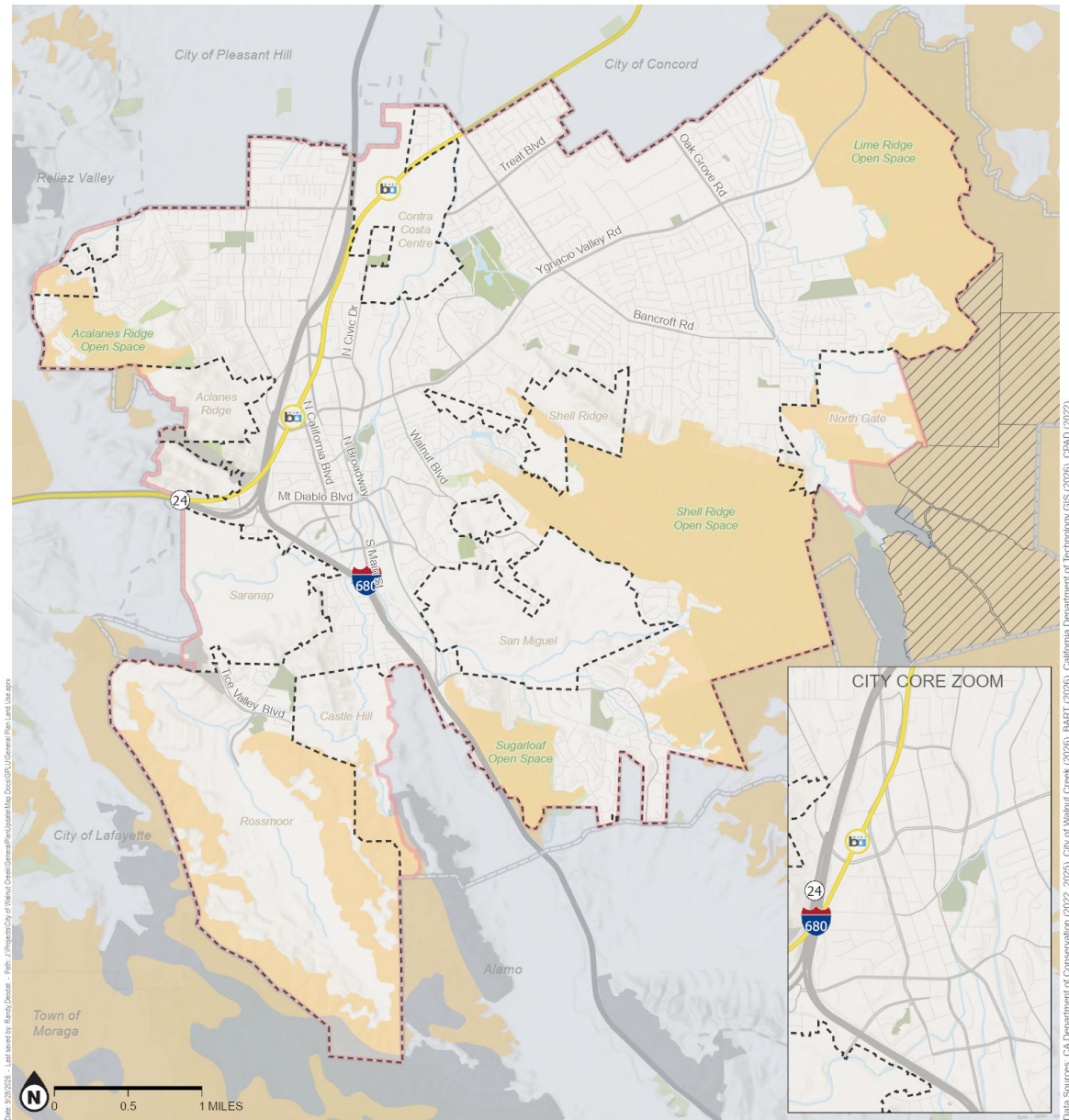
The City has established grazing lands throughout the open spaces as a resource management technique used to control invasive species, reduce fuel load for wildfires, improve survival of native plants, and benefit native wildlife. Grazing operations occur at the following open space areas:³¹

- **Acalanes Open Space.** Goats and sheep are used in a limited area for removal of weed species in late spring.
- **Shell Ridge Open Space.** Approximately 40% of Shell Ridge has cattle during winter and spring.
- **Lime Ridge Open Space.** Rotational cattle grazing practices take place throughout areas of Lime Ridge. The seasonal timing of grazing depends on site specific conditions.

³⁰ California Department of Conservation. 2026. California Important Farmland Finder. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>.

³¹ City of Walnut Creek. 2026. Grazing Operations FAQ. <https://www.walnutcreekca.gov/government/departments/open-space/rules-and-regulations/grazing-operations-faq>.

Figure 9. Agricultural Resources



AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

CITY OF WALNUT CREEK
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

FEATURES + BOUNDARIES

- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Williamson Act Enrollment 2025**
- Nonprime Agriculture Land

California Important Farmland

- Grazing Land
- Other Land

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

Archaeological Sensitivity and Tribal Resources

Walnut Creek's first known inhabitants were two small Native American (Bay Miwok) tribelets, the *Tatcan* and *Saclan*. The City has identified areas that have the potential to contain highly sensitive Native American artifacts. The highly sensitive sites have been identified by the California Archaeological Inventory to contain either Native American artifacts or burial deposits. The locations of the sensitive sites have been recorded but kept confidential to prevent disturbance. The confidential map is accessible to City staff for determining the level of archaeological involvement required to ensure their protection.³²

A records search request will be filed for preparation of the Open Space Conservation Element and General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report.

Historic Resources

Historic resources contribute to Walnut Creek's community character and provide a connection to the City's agricultural, commercial, and civic past. In 2019, the City's historical built environment was inventoried in the Contra Costa County Historic Resources Inventory.³³ The County's Historic Resources Inventory lists 16 historical structures, seven historical architectural specimens, and four historical sites within the city as shown in **Table 3**. The locations of these historical resources are shown on **Figure 10**.

³² City of Walnut Creek. 2006. Walnut Creek General Plan 2025. <https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/community-development-department/zoning/long-range-plans/general-plan>.

³³ Contra Costa County Conservation and Development, Community Development Division. 2019. Historic Resources Inventory. <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1116/Historic-Resources-Inventory-HRI?bidId=>.

Table 3. City of Walnut Creek Historic Resources

ID No.	Resource	Address	Evaluation Category
1	Bancroft Residence	1500 Bancroft Road	Structure of Historical Significance
2	Brubaker Residence	30 Brubaker Lane	Structure of Historical Significance
3	Burgess Residence	2950 Walnut Boulevard	Structure of Historical Significance
4	Casey Residence	2641 Oak Grove	Architectural Specimen
5	Howard Residence	2372 Walnut Boulevard	Structure of Historical Significance
6	California Water Service Company Pumping Plant	Walker Avenue	Structure of Historical Significance
7	James T. Walker Home	1200 North Gate Road	Structure of Historical Significance/Architectural Specimen
8	Business	1332 Main Street	Structure of Historical Significance
9	Burgess Residence (Rice Home)	1056 Hacienda Drive	Structure of Historical Significance
10	Lawrence Meat Company	1423 North Main Street	Site of Historical Significance
11	Stanley Dollar House	Tice Valley Rossmoor	Structure of Historical Significance/Architectural Specimen
12	Burgess Residence Rabbit Cannery	962 Seven Hills Ranch Road	Structure of Historical Event
13	March Bank Horse Ranch	1660 Ygnacio and Bancroft	Structure of Historical Significance/Architectural Specimen
14	Chapel, St. Paul's Episcopal Church	Trinity Avenue	Structure of Historical Significance
15	Leach Home	1837 North Main Street	Architectural Specimen
16	Walnut Creek Women's Clubhouse	Corner of Carmel Drive 7 Lincoln Avenue	Architectural Specimen
17	Brookside Vineyard Residence	2190 Oak Grove Boulevard	Structure of Historical Significance
18	Johnson Residence (Shadelands Ranch)	2660 Ygnacio Valley Road	Structure of Historical Significance/Architectural Specimen
19	Dole House	1614 Mt. Diablo Boulevard	Architectural Specimen
20	Walnut Creek Southern Pacific Depot	South Broadway	Structure of Historical Significance/Architectural Specimen
21	Marshal Residence	43 Quail Court	Site Relating to Important Person in History
22	Welch House Residence	2190 Oak Grove Road	Site Relating to Important Person in History
23	Rogers Hotel	Duncan and Main Street	Site of Historic Event
24	Adams Residence	2030 San Miguel Drive	Architectural Specimen
25	Bronson Residence	210 El Camino Corto	Architectural Specimen
26	Larriell Residence	196 El Camino Corto	Architectural Specimen
27	Stow Residence	1721 Stow Avenue	Structure of Historical Significance

Source: Contra Costa County Conservation and Development, Community Development Division, 2019.

Heritage Sites

The Walnut Creek Historical Society identifies numerous landmarks that reflect the community's agricultural, commercial, and cultural heritage and facilitates docent-led and

self-guided tours of the City's heritage sites.³⁴ Historical resources are concentrated in the downtown area and include early commercial buildings, civic structures, historical residences, and sites associated with the city's early settlement and agricultural history. The Downtown Heritage Walk comprises six tours covering 60 heritage sites, including Civic Places, Main Street (Early Years), Main Street (Later Years), Locust Street, The Corners, and The Plazas.

- **Civic Places.** This district runs along Civic Drive, consisting of seven heritage sites. Civic Places recognizes Walnut Creek's first park, City Park (now Civic Park), which opened in 1949 and held events such as Walnut Festival. It also highlights the city's third library, Walnut Creek library, and has been the site of historic libraries since 1916. The library served the community for nearly 50 years before it was remodeled in 2010 to become what is now the current library. Civic Places also includes the Civic Arts Theatre ("Nuthouse"), City Hall, and more.
- **Main Street (Early Years).** The early years of Walnut Creek's downtown are remembered by a district made up of eight heritage sites, including Guy and Ed Bradley's Soda Shop, The Stow Building, Walnut Creek Meat Market, and Lawrence Garage. These businesses and buildings helped shape the city through establishment of community and downtown identity.
- **Main Street (Later Years).** The later years of Main Street's historic identity is memorialized through eight heritage sites ranging from the central fire station to the original town hall. Many of these buildings are no longer standing, but the historic significance remains and is reflected in the city's character.
- **Locust Street.** The heritage buildings along Locust Street consist of historic community gathering places. The landmarks identified in this historic district range from the Veterans Memorial Building, Masonic Temple, Walnut Creek Methodist Church, and Kitty Milk Bar, a popular café known for its ice cream and donuts.
- **The Corners.** Walnut Creek was originally named "The Corners." In the early 1850s, the two main roads of the region met at the corners of what is now North Main Street and Mt. Diablo Road. The historic Oak Saloon stood at the junction of the two streets, serving as a main attraction for locals and visitors. Today, the Corners has 12 designated heritage sites including the oldest remaining commercial building, courtroom, and Rogers Hotel.
- **The Plazas.** This district includes 12 sites in the downtown area. The Plazas were established, most notably, by the Botelho family who owned 300 acres of farmland in the southern region of the city. Antonio Botelho donated land for the development of many locally identifiable sites such as the train depot and St. Mary's Catholic Church,

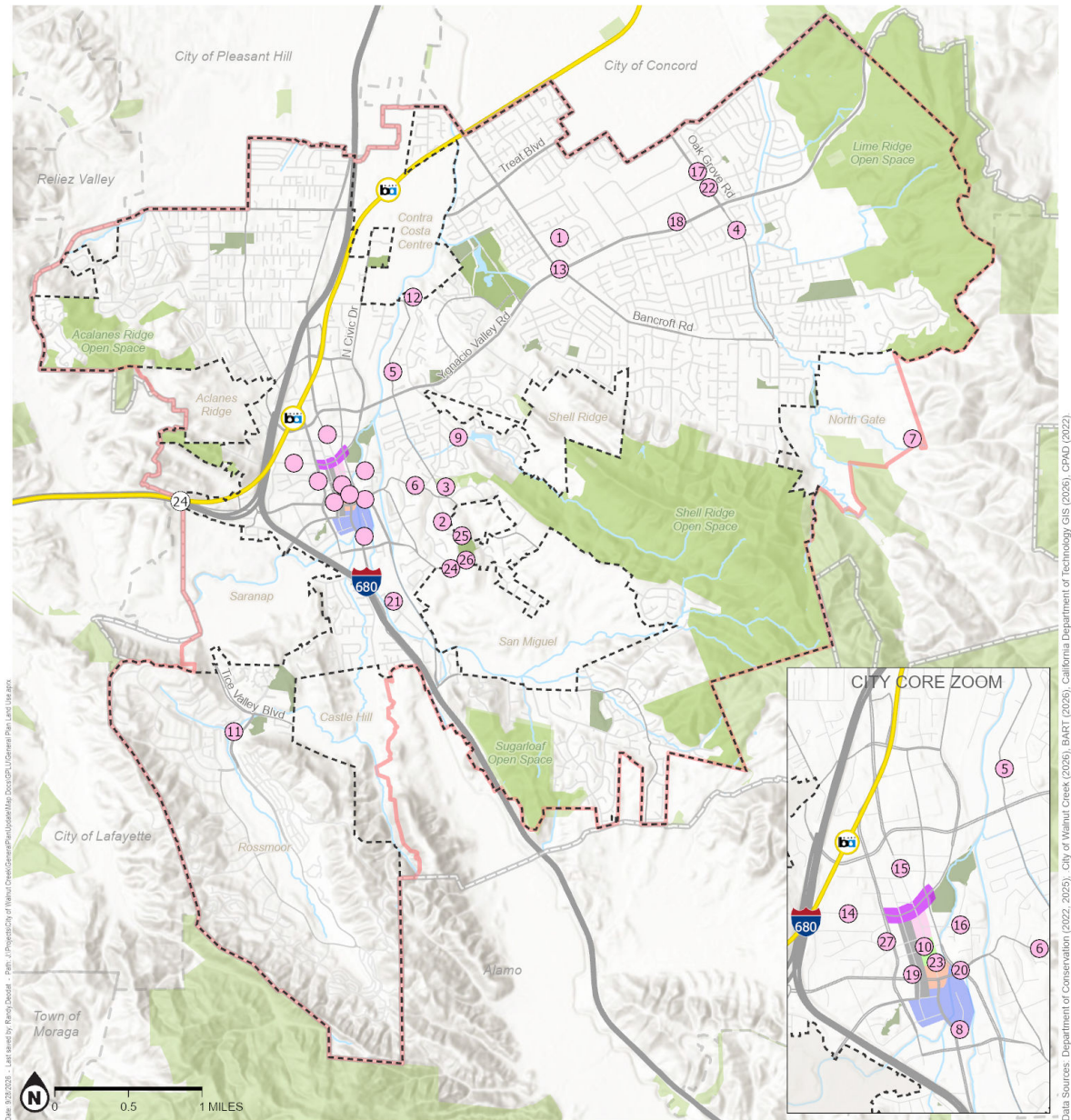
³⁴ Walnut Creek Historical Society. Across Walnut Creek. <https://wchistory.org/history/heritage-sites/across-walnut-creek/>.

Walnut Creek's first catholic church. The Plazas district includes the famous Broadway shopping center. The shopping center, constructed in 1951, was one of the country's first open-air, auto-oriented malls.

Outside the downtown area, the Walnut Creek Historical Society identifies the following heritage sites:

- **Borges Ranch.** Nestled in the foothills of Mount Diablo in Shell Ridge Open Space, Borges Ranch was an early 20th century cattle ranch owned by Francisco Borges and his family. Today, many of the original structures still stand, including the Borges' House, corrals, barns, and outbuildings.
- **Stanley Dollar House.** Originally built in the 1930s as a ranch house for Robert Stanley Dollar Sr. in the Tice Valley area of Walnut Creek, the property was purchased in 1963 and converted into what is now the Stanley Dollar Clubhouse in the Rossmoor community.
- **James Pomeroy Howe Estate.** Following the death of James Howe, an associated press correspondent in the early 20th century, Walnut Creek acquired and property and memorialized it as Howe Homestead Park.
- **John Marchbank Residence at Heather.** Following the death of James Howe, an Associated Press correspondent in the early 20th century, Walnut Creek acquired the property and established Howe Homestead Park in his memory.
- **Hiram Penniman Residence.** In 1903, Hiram Penniman established a stately Colonial Revival-style home on his 370-acre Shadelands fruit farm. His home is now the Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum where community members can explore the historical significance of the area.

Figure 10. Historic Resources in Walnut Creek



HISTORIC RESOURCES

CITY OF WALNUT CREEK GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

FEATURES + BOUNDARIES

- | | |
|--|---|
| Sphere of Influence | Locust Street |
| City Boundary | Main Street Early Years |
| Heritage Sites | Main Street Later Years |
| Downtown Heritage Walk | The Corners |
| Civic Places | The Plazas |

Visual Resources

Walnut Creek's visual character is defined by the interaction of natural landscapes and urban development. The city is located within the California Coast Ranges physiographic province and surrounded by rolling hills, ridgelines, open space areas, creek corridors, and established neighborhoods that contribute to its scenic quality and community character.

Natural Features

The hills and ridgelines surrounding Walnut Creek are among the city's most recognizable visual features. Open space areas such as Shell Ridge, Lime Ridge, Sugarloaf Open Space, and Acalanes Ridge contain oak woodlands, grasslands, and chaparral vegetation that contribute to the city's scenic character. These natural landforms provide scenic views of and create a visual transition between developed neighborhoods and the broader regional landscape. Regional open space resources, including Castle Rock Regional Recreation Area, Diablo Foothills Regional Park, and nearby Mount Diablo, further contribute to the scenic backdrop and visual resources of Walnut Creek.

The city's open spaces are critical components of the city's identity. They provide physical orientation, boundaries for urban development, and a sense of place. The views from the city of the surrounding open spaces are representative of the city's character and highly appreciated by residents and visitors.

Water Courses

The city is traversed by an interconnected network of creeks and tributaries. These waterways and associated riparian corridors provide visual contrast to the urban environment and scenic significance in the open spaces of Walnut Creek.

Trails

Walnut Creek's extensive network of trails traverses open space areas, creek corridors, parks, and neighborhoods. These trails provide access to scenic viewpoints, open space lands, and natural features. Recreational users experience views of hillsides, woodlands, grasslands, creek corridors, and surrounding urban areas from various locations throughout the trail system.

Scenic Highways

State scenic highways are either officially recognized by the California Department of Transportation or eligible for such designation as per the Streets and Highway Code, Section

260, of the California Scenic Highway Program. Two officially designated State Scenic Highways (I-680 and SR-24) exist within city limits. These highways provide views of surrounding hillsides, ridgelines, open space areas, and developed areas of the city. They also foster a visual experience for residents and visitors traveling to and through Walnut Creek.

Conclusion

This report examines Walnut Creek's extensive network of parks, open spaces, and recreational opportunities, as well as the natural resources that support the health of the environment. The community deeply values its unique access to open spaces and natural resources and supports preservation and restoration efforts through grassroots initiatives and volunteer programs. A key challenge is balancing the needs of diverse recreational users while protecting and effectively managing the city's parks and open spaces.

As the General Plan looks forward, the climate conditions in Walnut Creek will be an important consideration as they already differ from historical conditions. Information from the vulnerability assessment will help position the City to address these challenges more effectively. The General Plan also provides an opportunity to identify actions and policies that will help the community continue to adapt to changing conditions and build resilience.