

## Proposals

### **Q: Would you describe this as a “tune-up” of the 2025 General Plan or a brand-new Plan?**

**A:** We view this as a fresh overhaul of the General Plan rather than a minor ‘tune-up’. Our goal is to create a user-friendly and aesthetically cohesive document. The Safety Element, which is currently being updated and requires no additional policy revisions, will need to be reformatted only (layout, etc.) to align with the 2050 General Plan. This will ensure all planning documents share a consistent structure, style, and presentation. It is anticipated that the same formatting approach will apply to the upcoming Housing Element update to maintain alignment across all planning documents. However, the Housing Element update itself is not included in this RFP; it is mentioned only to provide context for potential future coordination.

### **Q: The RFP states that project summaries are limited to 3 pages. Is 3 pages total for all project summaries or 3 pages for each individual project summary?**

**A:** The intent is to give the City an understanding of the consultant’s recent work. Please provide brief descriptions of at least two recent projects that demonstrate your team’s relevant experience. All project summaries combined should total no more than three pages. Including links to the projects is highly encouraged.

## Specialists

### **Q: Which kinds of environmental consulting firms are best aligned with WC staff’s needs and expectations?**

**A:** The City works with a wide range of environmental consulting firms, depending on each project’s needs. We generally have the best experience with firms that are responsive, communicative, and show they have a strong, capable team. For this RFP, we are seeking a consultant to prepare a programmatic EIR that will enable future projects to tier from the General Plan.

### **Q: Can you provide more detail on the level of translation the City is seeking?**

**A:** We serve a diverse community with several cultural and linguistic groups; however, we have not yet met the thresholds under state law that would require us to provide translation services. While translation resources are valuable and appreciated, they are not a required component of this RFP. That said, having access to translation resources is still valuable and appreciated should need arise during the project.

## Elements & Land Use Alternatives

**Q: Is the City open to optional General Plan Elements?**

**A:** The inclusion of optional General Plan elements will be evaluated through the Council-directed visioning process and community engagement efforts.

**Q: Is the City seeking an Environmental Justice Element?**

**A:** The City prides itself on being an inclusive community. We are not required to have a separate Environmental Justice Element however, our City Council prioritizes and is committed to ensuring that the goals, policies, and actions of the General Plan reflect inclusivity throughout.

**Q: Does the City want to consider initiating the 7<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element update during the later part of the General Plan update?**

**A:** Yes, the Housing Element update will begin in the later stages of the General Plan update to ensure alignment with its goals and policies. The Housing Element's formatting, layout, and visual style are intended to be consistent with the General Plan, but will be part of a separate, distinct project.

**Q: Does the City anticipate substantial land use changes to the land use diagram resulting from the land use alternatives process?**

**A:** Recent household and employment forecasts do not indicate major shifts. We expect some changes in development patterns and an expansion of community voices participating in the process, but the most significant change is likely to stem from the Housing Element, as recent state laws have affected the unit capacity we had previously planned. We also have several opportunity areas, particularly within our transportation corridors, where refinements may occur. Our current specific plans are predominantly mixed-use, though we have not yet conducted detailed economic analysis of the retail environment.

**Budget**

**Q: Is the budget for the full General Plan Update and EIR approved by City Council?**

**A:** Council has acknowledged a total budget of \$3.6M for this update effort. The FY 26/27 includes partial funding, with the remainder to be included in the FY28/29. Final funding for the project will depend in part on the proposals we receive. At this time, we have sufficient funds within the budget, but all expenditures will need to remain within the established limits.

**Q: Does the budget figure you cited include City staff time?**

**A:** The General Plan budget includes a minimal amount of staff time and most of the City staff contributing to this effort are funded through other budget sources.

### **City Staff**

**Q: How involved will City Staff be in managing the General Plan Update and public engagement?**

**A:** The General Plan Update will be managed by a dedicated project team, led by Crystal DeCastro, Principal Planner, with support from Community Development Director Erika Vandenbrande, Associate Planner Allison Rustick, and Assistant Planner Kat Lee. While the consultant will lead public engagement, City staff will be actively involved throughout the process.

### **Community Engagement**

**Q: Could you share a bit more about the importance of community engagement for this plan update and any lessons learned from the last time?**

**A:** Community engagement is a top priority. During the last General Plan update, outreach relied on a limited subset of community members. We aim to take a proactive approach that affirms and refines the vision and policies and develops land use alternatives based on broad community input. We are seeking creative, progressive, and accessible strategies to engage people both online and in person. Our goal is to implement a robust engagement process that ensures all voices are heard and provides the Council with a clear understanding of the community's perspectives and aspirations as the update progresses.

Establishing a strong communication and branding plan will be essential to this effort.

**Q: For the previous General Plan Update, the City used a working group. Why did this method not provide a holistic view?**

**A:** Communication methods have changed since 2005, including a greater reliance on social media. This update aims to involve neighborhoods and a broad range of community voices to advance a shared long-term vision. A broad and inclusive vision will offer stronger clarity for policy development.

**Q: How has the community responded to the idea of updating the General Plan?**

**A:** During initial engagement efforts conducted at City events this past summer and fall, staff found that Walnut Creek residents feel positively about their city and its future. Our community is highly engaged and expresses genuine care for local issues. Both residents and the business community are eager to participate in shaping the community's long-term vision. Overall, there is strong enthusiasm for this process.

**Q: Will the consultant attend City Commission meetings?**

**A:** Yes, the consultant will attend meetings based on scope. The City will not be using a traditional GPAC; instead, we envision the consultant participating in commission and/or joint commission meetings before items are presented to the City Council. City commissions will be involved throughout the exploration and visioning phases, providing input prior to formal decision-making. Proposals should describe how they would incorporate this level of engagement.