



IN A Nutshell



No. 214

Newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

SUMMER 2026



KEYNOTE SPEAKER, RETIRED ARMY LIEUTENANT COLONEL KARL DAVIS

Commemorating Memorial Day

Thank you to the many Walnut Creek residents who gathered in Civic Park for the City's annual Memorial Day Commemoration, a solemn tribute to the men and women who gave their lives in service to our nation. Hosted by Mayor Kevin Wilk, the ceremony brought the community together to reflect on the meaning of Memorial Day and honor the sacrifices made by service members and their families.

Mayor Wilk shared the history of Memorial Day, tracing its origins from post-Civil War grave-decorating ceremonies to the national observance we recognize today. He reminded attendees that Memorial Day remains an important opportunity to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice and to express gratitude for their service.

The keynote address was delivered by Retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Karl Davis, whose distinguished military career included service in the Active Army, Army Reserve, National Guard, and U.S. Army Special Operations Command. Throughout the ceremony, the Walnut Creek Concert Band, under the direction of Matt Sadowski, performed patriotic selections that provided a moving backdrop to the morning's remembrance and reflection.

WALNUT CREEK GENERAL PLAN UPDATE HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE



Walnut Creek has an exciting opportunity ahead as we come together to help shape the future for our community. The City is beginning an update to its General Plan. Rooted in our shared values, the General Plan update will inform how the City of Walnut Creek will continue to serve our evolving community for decades to come. California law requires every city maintain and periodically update a General Plan that provides a roadmap for its future.

Many of the places and services the community uses every day, from neighborhoods, parks and open spaces, roadways, bike lanes, and public services, are shaped by thoughtful planning decisions. Once adopted, the General Plan will help guide decisions made by the City Council, commissions, and City staff on land use, transportation, housing, open space, natural resources, and public services.

Community input will play a key role throughout the process, from setting the

vision to exploring future policy options and reviewing draft plans. Planned outreach efforts include surveys, workshops, open houses, focus groups, pop-up events, an interactive website and a community speaker series, with both virtual and in-person opportunities to participate.

The General Plan encourages us all to work together on the issues that matter most to our city. The vision and goals are intended to capture what you love about Walnut Creek and what's most important to you. Whether you care most about the natural environment, housing affordability, economic vitality, traffic, or other community concerns, your voice matters.

A dedicated project website is coming soon with more information about the General Plan update and opportunities to participate and share your ideas. In the meantime, you can reach the project team at walnutcreek2050@walnutcreekca.gov with any questions. Stay tuned.



Election Candidate Filing Opens This Summer

Interested in serving the Walnut Creek community? Walnut Creek will begin accepting nomination papers on Monday, July 13, for the November 3, municipal election. Voters will elect two City Council members and the City Treasurer. The nomination period opens July 13 and closes August 7. If an incumbent does not file for re-election, the filing period will extend through August 12.

To qualify for office, candidates must be at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen, and a registered voter residing in Walnut

Creek. Candidates can obtain all required forms and filing information from the City Clerk's Office. Reviewing the materials with the City Clerk takes about one hour, and appointments are encouraged. Contact the City Clerk's Office at 925-943-5819.

City Hall will again serve as a ballot drop-off location ahead of the November 3 general election, providing residents with a convenient way to return completed ballots before Election Day.



Enjoy City programming, including original shows and community event coverage, live or on demand.



Scan the QR code or check your local cable listings for the full schedule of shows.

You can also watch on the City's YouTube channel at YouTube.com/CityofWalnutCreek, or stream on Roku, Amazon Fire TV, and Apple TV. Simply search Walnut Creek TV on your device to access the full lineup of City programming.

Memorial Day Ceremony

The City's annual Memorial Day Commemoration was held on May 25 in Civic Park. Watch the keynote address and enjoy patriotic selections performed by the Walnut Creek Concert Band.

Live from Library

Explore "Ah, Wilderness!", Eugene O'Neill's most beloved comedy, through poetry, song, and live readings, while discovering the golden age of radio in this engaging program presented by the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House.



General Plan meeting at City Hall - June 25

Stay informed on the General Plan Update process by watching this study session with City Commissions, featuring a presentation from the General Plan project team and discussion on key community issues, goals, and engagement strategies. This is one of many conversations in the General Plan Update process to gather feedback; no decisions will be made.

Graduation time in Walnut Creek

Congratulations to area high school graduates! See the ceremonies for Northgate and Las Lomas.

Public Meetings

Catch recent City Council meetings, as well as those of our many commissions, including the Planning, Design Review, Arts, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commissions. Our public meetings are also broadcast live on YouTube, Walnut Creek TV, and on the City's website.

Here's what's happening

ARTS + REC

A SUMMER FULL OF FUN ACTIVITIES

Summer is here, and the City of Walnut Creek's Arts + Recreation Department is offering programs, camps, and activities designed to help residents of all ages stay active, creative, and connected throughout the season.



Paint & Sip Series

June 4, June 11, July 2, July 30, August 6, and August 27

Enjoy a creative evening out with guided painting and refreshments as part of Walnut Creek's Summer Nights programming. Learn more at CommunityArts.org.

Senior Club Drop-In Activities

Ongoing throughout summer

Older adults can enjoy Bingo, Mah-Jongg, Pinochle, Bridge and Chess, Qigong, music sessions, book discussions, and more. For more information visit WalnutCreekArtsRec.org/seniors.

Drop-In Sports at Tice Valley Gym

Ongoing throughout summer

Residents can participate in a variety of recreational opportunities, including pickleball, basketball, badminton, and more. For schedules and details visit WalnutCreekArtsRec.org/drop-in.



SUMMER BIKE CHALLENGE

Explore your town from the seat of a bike!

FREE! Fun + Prizes

2026

Noncompetitive | All Ages | Bike at your own pace June-August

Join the fun! Download Your Free Gameboard at 511.ccta.ca.gov/sbc

Planning a Celebration, Gathering, or Special Event?

Walnut Creek Arts + Recreation offers a variety of rental spaces throughout the community for birthdays, baby and bridal showers, retirement parties, celebrations of life, meetings, performances, receptions, and more.

From the charming Civic Park Gazebo to community centers, gyms, art spaces, and theater venues, there are flexible options available for events both large and small.

Learn more about available rental spaces and submit an inquiry at WalnutCreekArtsRec.org/rentals.

LESHER CENTER PRESENTS

Summer Sounds

JULY 9 - TOM RIGNEY AND FLAMBEAU
JULY 16 - MUSTANGS OF THE WEST
JULY 30 - ALPHA RHYTHM KINGS

ALL CONCERTS BEGIN AT 5:30PM ON THE OUTDOOR RUDNEY PLAZA!

LEARN MORE AT LESHERARTSCENTER.ORG

ARTS + REC

Celebrate Pride Month with Arts + Recreation

Walnut Creek Arts + Recreation invites community members to celebrate Pride Month through a series of inclusive events and activities designed to foster creativity, connection, and community throughout June. Learn more at WalnutCreekArtsRec.org/pride.

Pride Public Art Walking Tour

Sat., June 20, 10–11 a.m.

Starting at Bedford Gallery, this guided walking tour explores Walnut Creek's public art collection while encouraging community conversation and reflection. Tours are pay-what-you-can, and advance registration is encouraged.



Pre-Show Pride Mixer Wed., June 24, 6:30 p.m.

Ahead of Center Repertory Company's production of *Jagged Little Pill: The Musical* at Leshler Center for the Arts, this Pride Month mixer invites attendees to connect and celebrate before an evening of live theater.

Community Pride Chain Throughout June, select Arts + Recreation facilities

Free community activity celebrating joy, belonging, and connection. Participants can add personalized links sharing what makes them feel proud. Available at Shadelands Art Center, Tice Valley Gym, Clarke Swim Center, and Civic Park Community Center.



CENTER REPERTORY COMPANY

Alanis Morissette's Jagged Little Pill: The Musical

On now through June 28, 2026

Inspired by Alanis Morissette's iconic album, this Tony Award-winning musical follows a seemingly perfect suburban family as they confront hidden truths, shifting relationships, and the meaning of home —

all set to unforgettable music by Grammy Award-winning songwriters Alanis Morissette and Glen Ballard. For tickets visit CenterRep.org.



Announcing the Center REP 26/27 Season

Center REP's 59th season dives heart first into stories chock full of characters exploring how to disrupt the noise of everyday life and find fulfillment by betting big and taking unexpected leaps of faith. Learn more at CenterRep.org.

Young REP Theatre Lab

Student Showcase July 2 at 7 p.m.

Young REP Theatre Lab is Center REP's newly expanded theatre arts summer program for teen artists age 13 - 18 who are looking to engage all aspects of their creativity. The four-week program culminates July 2 at 7pm in a final performance of new short plays, created and performed by the students for family and friends, onstage at the Leshler Center for the Arts. CenterREP.org/education/young-rep



BEDFORD GALLERY

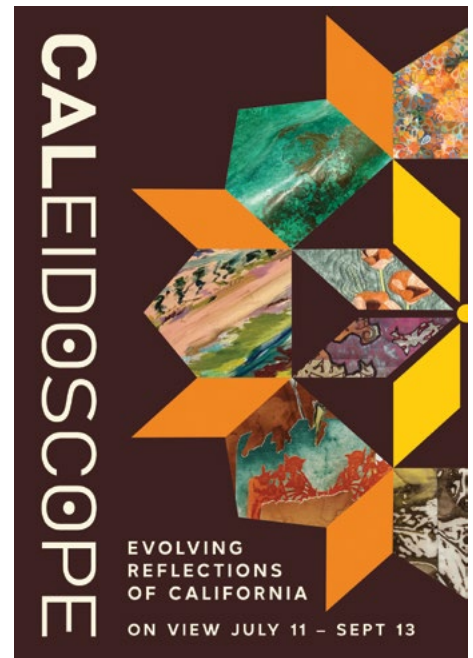
CALeidoscope: Evolving Reflections of California

July 11 – September 13, 2026 (opening party July 11 from 5-7pm)

Bedford's annual juried exhibition returns with **CALeidoscope: Evolving Reflections of California**, a vibrant celebration of our Golden State, featuring works from over 70 artists.

From the Mexican border to Oregon, California stretches nearly 900 miles along the Pacific Ocean and is home to sundrenched beaches, verdant farmlands, majestic mountains, dramatic deserts, and monumental redwood forests. With all this natural beauty, it's no wonder California serves as a source of inspiration and promise for dreamers, makers, and visionaries across the US.

CALeidoscope honors the breathtaking geography of our great state and reflects its esteemed position as a cultural leader and hotbed for creativity and innovation. For tickets visit BedfordGallery.org.





Pass2Class – Free Back to School Bus Rides

Contra Costa students can take the bus to school for free with 511 CCTA's Pass2Class program! Families can apply for up to two months of free youth rides on County Connection, Tri Delta Transit, WestCAT, or AC Transit. Applications open in early July. Passes available while supplies last.



Apply for Youth Leadership Commission and a Seat at the Table!

Interested in representing youth voices and taking an active leadership role in the community? Walnut Creek residents entering grades 9-12 are invited to apply to the following youth opportunities with the City:

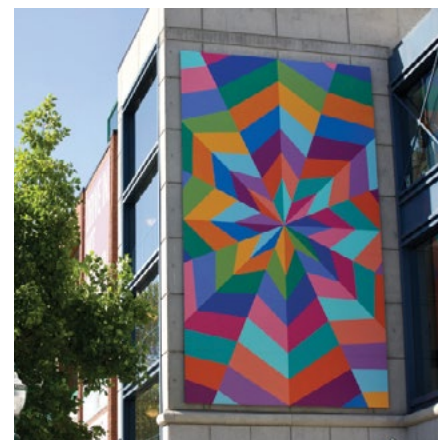
- **Youth Leadership Commission** - The commission is composed of 15 students gaining hands-on experience with local government, contributing to service and policy projects, and sharing their perspectives with the City Council.
- **Seat at the Table** - This program facilitates youth representation on City boards and commissions. Seat at the Table is looking to fill vacancies on the Chief's Community Advisory Board; Arts Commission; Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commission; and Transportation Commission.

Learn more about these opportunities and apply on the City's website at walnutcreekca.gov/youthcommission or see QR code above.

Welcoming Visiting Youth Ambassadors from Sister Cities



SINCE 2012, WALNUT CREEK SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL HAS facilitated an annual Youth Ambassador Exchange program for 8th grade students with our City's two sister cities: Noceto, Italy and Siófok, Hungary. As part of this year's Youth Ambassador Exchange visit, the City proudly hosted a delegation of 25 students from both sister cities on April 1 for an afternoon of cultural exchange and civic learning. Following a warm welcome and meet-and-greet hosted by Mayor Kevin Wilk and Councilmember Craig DeVinney, the delegation joined the City's traffic engineering staff for an interactive presentation on the traffic control center. Students then received an engaging introduction to public safety operations at the police department, including demonstrations with our K9 and bomb squad. Additional highlights included a behind-the-scenes tour of the Leshner Center for the Arts and a guided public art walking tour through downtown Walnut Creek. The visit was a celebration of international friendship, local pride, and the enduring power of youth diplomacy. To learn more about the Youth Ambassador Exchange program and see photos and stories of prior exchange trips, visit wscsi.org/yae.



KRISTIN FARR, WEST COAST BARN QUILT, 2018, ACRYLIC PAINT ON DIBOND PANELS. PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH ISAACS

Public Art Walking Tours

June 20 (Pride Tour!),
July 18, August 15 at 10am

Held on the 3rd Saturday of the month from April through November, these one-hour docent-led walking tours of Walnut Creek's downtown public art collection are a perfect opportunity to explore the unique murals, ceramics, and commissioned works seen through the City. Appropriate for all ages, tickets are now pay-what-you-can.

Join us for a special Pride Month tour on June 20 highlighting the City's most vibrant and colorful works. Wear your Pride and express your own vibrant style for this unique event! For tickets visit BedfordGallery.org.



Conserve Water This Summer

As summer begins, water becomes an even more essential part of daily life, from staying hydrated to enjoying pools, parks, and gardens. To help protect this valuable resource, Sustainable Contra Costa is encouraging residents to participate in the Water Wise Challenge. The community-wide effort helps residents take simple, practical steps to reduce water use and create healthier, more resilient landscapes. Through the Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge platform, participants can track actions, explore resources, and help conserve local water supplies. Together, participants have already helped save more than 4.38 million gallons of water. Participants who complete at least three water-wise actions and post them to the challenge platform by June 30 will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a gift card.

Getting started is easy. Take shorter showers, check for leaks, and run full loads of laundry and dishes. Outdoors, add mulch to reduce evaporation, water lawns early in the morning, and consider native plants. Small changes can make a big difference in protecting our water supply all summer long. Learn more at sustainablecoco.org/challenge.

CAF Seeking New Board Members

The Community Arts Foundation (CAF) is seeking new board members to help expand access to arts education in Walnut Creek. CAF is a

nonprofit organization supporting the Center for Community Arts and its mission of "Arts for All." For nearly 20 years, CAF has worked to provide financial support for students of all ages to attend classes at Center for Community Arts. Board members help guide the organization, support outreach efforts, and promote inclusive arts programming in the community. Individuals passionate about the arts and community engagement are encouraged to apply. To learn more, contact Cole Portocarrero at colep.caf@gmail.com.



Join Us for National Night Out

The Walnut Creek Police Department invites you to join the community for National Night Out (NNO) on Tuesday, August 4 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Broadway Plaza.

National Night Out is an annual event held across the country to strengthen relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Each year, millions of neighbors participate by attending local gatherings such as block parties, festivals, and cookouts, creating opportunities to connect with first responders and one another. National Night Out creates a positive environment for local police and neighbors to interact and build positive relationships.

Why Participate? National Night Out is a chance to:

- Connect with neighbors and build community
- Meet Walnut Creek police officers and first responders
- Strengthen partnerships that help keep our neighborhoods safe and welcoming

Host a Neighborhood Block Party

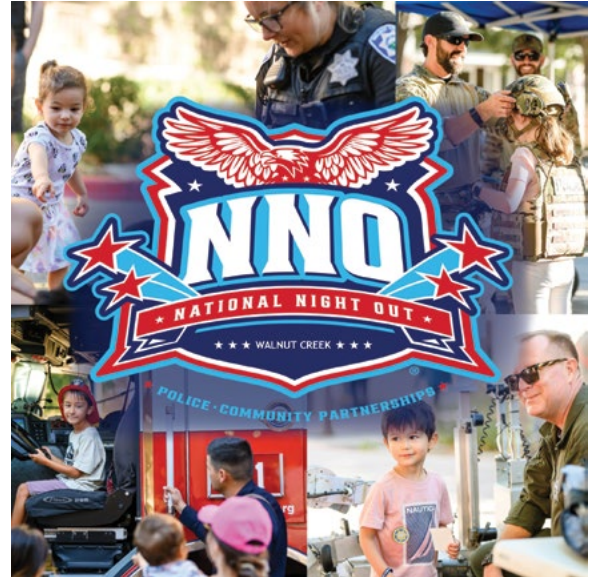
In addition to the citywide event at Broadway Plaza, neighborhoods are encouraged to host their own National Night Out gatherings. If

you are planning a block party and would like a visit from the Walnut Creek Police Department, please register your event. Officers will do their best to stop by between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., as staffing allows.

How to Register:

Email kraman@walnutcreekpd.com by July 14, 2026, and include: Contact Name, Email, Phone Number, Event Address, Event Start Time and Estimated Number of Guests.

Stay up to date on National Night Out 2026 by following the Walnut Creek Police Department on social media [@walnutcreekpd](https://www.instagram.com/walnutcreekpd). We look forward to seeing you there!



PREPARE FOR EXTREME HEAT

An extreme heat event is two or more days and nights of unusually high heat for a given area. With California experiencing more frequent episodes of extreme heat, now is a good time to revisit your preparedness plan. Sign up to receive emergency alerts from the City and Contra Costa County by visiting walnutcreekca.gov/emergency. To learn more about extreme heat preparedness, visit ready.gov/heat.

Extreme Heat Planning Timeline

Pre-Season	A Few Days Out	During and After
<p>Start planning before hot weather arrives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build an emergency kit ✓ Make a plan for power outages ✓ Become trained in first aid for heat-related emergencies ✓ Check that your A/C and fans are in working order 	<p>If the forecast calls for extreme heat, be ready.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gather food, water, and medication ✓ Make a list of friends and family to check on & help them prepare ✓ Know your local cooling shelters or other cool locations ✓ Reschedule outdoor events 	<p>Remain vigilant and stay informed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stay in air conditioning and out of the sun if possible ✓ Check on friends, family, neighbors, and pets ✓ Drink plenty of water ✓ Take breaks and use a buddy system if working outdoors

weather.gov

WALNUT CREEK CONCERT BAND

Free Summer Concerts to Celebrate America at 250

The Walnut Creek Concert Band will present its annual free summer concerts in Civic Park this year as part of the nationwide celebration of America's 250th anniversary. The Band will perform two family-friendly outdoor concerts in downtown Walnut Creek, beginning with its annual 4th of July Concert on Saturday, July 4, from 6 to 7 p.m., followed by its Labor Day "Parkconcert" on Monday, September 7, also from 6 to 7 p.m.



The concerts are open to everyone and offer a festive atmosphere for the community to gather and enjoy live music in Civic Park. Audiences can look forward to patriotic marches like "The Stars and Stripes Forever," selections from Hamilton, "A Disneyland Celebration," and other music for all ages. Attendees are encouraged to bring picnic dinners, lawn chairs, or blankets and enjoy relaxing summer evenings in the park. **For more information, visit walnutcreekconcertband.org.**

IAN CHIN PHOTOGRAPHY

SUMMER READING 2026: PLANT A SEED, READ!

Feed your body and your mind with the Contra Costa County Library's Summer Reading Program, running June 1 through August 1. Readers of all ages are invited to explore new books, enjoy the outdoors, and take on fun challenges throughout the summer. Participants who complete a reading passport or the online Beanstack challenge will receive a free book and be entered for a chance to win prizes. Learn more and sign up at ccclib.org/summer.



Youth Ride Free on CC Buses

Getting around just got a whole lot easier. Youth ages 18 and under can ride any County Connection bus fare-free from June 1 through July 31. No application. No ID. No passes required. Just get on and go! Learn more about the Youth Ride Free program at countyconnection.com/yrf.



Free Locust Street Festival Returns

Walnut Creek's favorite summer street bash returns with two evenings of live music, local flavor, and downtown energy. The free Locust Street Festival will take over downtown Walnut Creek on Wednesday, July 8, and Wednesday, August 5, from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., transforming Locust Street and Cypress Street into a lively outdoor celebration.



Hosted by the Walnut Creek Downtown Association, the festival features more than 50 artisan vendors, food trucks, local restaurants, giveaways, and nonstop entertainment throughout the evening. New this year, the Entertainment Zone allows guests ages 21 and over to sip and stroll between participating bars and restaurants while exploring downtown's vibrant food and beverage scene. Families, friends, and four-legged companions are all invited to join the summer fun.



City of Walnut Creek's Team of the Year: APEX (Achieving Peak Employee and Customer Experience)

Innovation Celebrated at the City: Employee and Team of the Year

Innovation is more than a buzzword at the City of Walnut Creek. It's a mindset that is actively transforming how the City serves both employees and the community. This year's Employee and Team of the Year honorees exemplify that spirit through collaboration, creativity, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Named Team of the Year, the 62-member APEX team — short for Achieving Peak Employee and Customer Experience — was created to turn ideas into action, and the results are already reshaping City operations. Their work led to the launch of a cross-department mentoring program, the reimagining of the Employee Institute known as “The Journey,” and support for a modernized performance management system designed to better align goals, feedback, and accountability across the organization.

APEX also streamlined processes to improve efficiency, strengthen customer service, and support technology improvements. The team established new AI governance guidelines and successfully launched “Wally,” the City's first chatbot, across City websites, helping residents find information and services more easily. Just as importantly, APEX fostered a culture of collaboration, innovation, and customer experience, proving that some of the best ideas come directly from employees working together to solve problems.

That same innovative spirit is reflected in this year's Rosie Coan Employee of the Year, Ben Schuster. Known for



Ben Schuster:
The Rosie Coan Employee of the Year

his creativity, curiosity, and talent for problem-solving, Schuster has become a driving force behind many high-impact City projects. As a member of the APEX Technology and Business team, he helped improve the City's contracting process and supported major Development Services process improvements through data analysis and workflow mapping.

Schuster also developed tools that improve transparency and public access to information, including a public-facing Parcel Viewer and key dashboards tracking building permits and Housing Element progress. Whether building data visualization tools, creating historical story maps, or helping colleagues troubleshoot complex challenges, Schuster consistently combines innovation with teamwork and service.

Together, Team APEX and Ben Schuster represent a shared commitment to building a more responsive, modern, and forward-thinking City of Walnut Creek.

Citibot

Walnut Creek residents now have a new way to connect with City services thanks to the launch of Wally, the City's new AI-powered web chat assistant. Wally is available 24/7 on the City's websites to answer questions and connect visitors to vital information in real time.



Powered by advanced generative AI technology, Wally can communicate in 70+ languages, helping the City provide more accessible and inclusive customer service for Walnut Creek's diverse community. Residents can access Wally on both desktop and mobile devices by clicking the chat icon on walnutcreekca.gov and other City websites.

Traffic Safety Newsletter

Traffic Engineering has launched Safe Travelers, a new email newsletter focused on traffic safety. Each edition highlights key safety topics, shares practical tips to help you stay safe on our roadways, and provides updates on City projects and initiatives. The newsletter also features a short comic from mascot



Safe T. Sloth, offering a fun take on traffic safety. Sign the Safe Travelers Pledge to subscribe and receive each issue in your inbox.



Carpool Back to School for a Chance to Win

Carpool to save time and reduce school traffic. Drivers and passengers who register their carpools will be entered to win one of ten \$250 back-to-school shopping sprees at Target, courtesy of 511 CCTA's free SchoolPool program. Registration opens in early July. Learn more and sign up at 511.ccta.ca.gov/schoolpool.



KNOW YOUR WALNUT CREEK PARKS:

DIABLO SHADOWS PARK

TUCKED INTO A QUIET WALNUT CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD JUST one block from the Ygnacio Valley Library, Diablo Shadows Park offers a community gathering space for families, neighbors, and outdoor enthusiasts alike. This 2.5-acre passive park is designed for relaxed recreation, making it an ideal spot for family picnics, birthday celebrations, or an afternoon spent enjoying the outdoors.

The park features a playground designed for children ages 5–12, along with a large open turf area perfect for casual games or simply stretching out under the sun. Shaded picnic tables and grassy open space create a peaceful setting that feels like a hidden neighborhood retreat while still remaining conveniently close to nearby amenities.

One of Diablo Shadows Park's standout features is its connection to Walnut Creek's paved trail system, offering easy access for walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and dog owners looking to explore the surrounding area. Dogs are allowed on leash, making the park a favorite neighborhood destination for pet owners. Whether stopping by for a quick playground visit or spending the whole afternoon, residents can visit Diablo Shadows Park to connect with the community and enjoy nature close to home. The park is open dawn to dusk and offers street parking only.




More Outdoor Dining Downtown

This season, outdoor dining is better than ever thanks to the City's PODS Incentive Program. Designed to enhance the downtown experience, these permitted outdoor dining structures, also known as parklets, bring more vibrancy, energy, and al fresco options to our streets. Adopted by the City Council on July 15, 2025, the program provides grants of up to \$10,000 to help restaurants build high-quality outdoor dining spaces. A total of \$100,000 funding is available on a first come basis.



Since its launch, eight local restaurants have added PODS, creating inviting spaces to gather, dine, and enjoy the sunshine. Participating restaurants include Sasa, Ramen Hiroshi, Xicote, Broderick Roadhouse, Limon, Elia's, Stereo 41, and Montesacro. These upgrades expand outdoor seating and bring a more vibrant, welcoming vibe to downtown for everyone.

Own a downtown restaurant? Apply now to take advantage of available funding before the program ends on June 30, 2026 at walnutcreekca.gov/outdoordining.

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Kris Farro, *Arts and Recreation Director*

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ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The Nutshell Newsletter is published quarterly. For questions and comments, contact editor Betsy Burkhart, 925-943-5895 or burkhart@walnutcreekca.gov

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