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Initial Study/ Negative Declaration

City of Walnut Creek Safety Element Update

February 2026

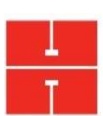
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

°F	degrees Fahrenheit
AB	Assembly Bill
ABAG	Association of Bay Area Governments
AQMD	Air Quality Management District
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
BART	Bay Area Rapid Transit
BMP	best management practice
C&D	construction and demolition
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CCCFPD	Contra Costa County Fire District
CCWD	Contra Costa Water District
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
Central San	Central Contra Costa County Sanitary District
CH ₄	methane
City	City of Walnut Creek (government entity)
city	City of Walnut Creek (geographic location)
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CO	carbon monoxide
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CO ₂ e	carbon dioxide equivalent
County	Contra Costa County
CWA	Clean Water Act
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
EBMUD	East Bay Municipal Utility District
EIR	environmental impact report
EMP	Emergency Management Plan
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
GHG	greenhouse gas
HFC	hydrofluorocarbon
HM	Hydromodification Management
I-	Interstate
IS	initial study
LHMP	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
mgd	million gallons per day
MS4	municipal separate storm sewer system
N ₂ O	nitrous oxide
ND	negative declaration

NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NO _x	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
O ₃	ozone
Pb	lead
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyl
PFC	perfluorocarbon
PM ₁₀	particulate matter measuring no more than 10 microns in diameter
PM _{2.5}	fine particulate matter measuring no more than 2.5 microns in diameter
project	City of Walnut Creek Safety Element Update
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RecycleSmart	Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SF ₆	sulfur hexafluoride
SFBAAB	San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SO _x	sulfur oxides
SR-	State Route
SWPPP	stormwater pollutant prevention plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminant
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VMT	vehicle miles traveled

Document Overview

This Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) has been prepared in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the City of Walnut Creek Safety Element Update (project). The primary intent of this document is to (1) determine if project implementation would result in potentially significant impacts to the environment, and (2) incorporate mitigation measures into the project design, as necessary, to eliminate or reduce the project's potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level.

In accordance with CEQA, projects that have the potential to result in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment must undergo analysis to disclose potential significant effects. The provisions of CEQA apply to California governmental agencies at all levels, including local agencies, regional agencies, state agencies, boards, commissions, and special districts. CEQA requires preparation of an Initial Study for a discretionary project to determine the range of potential environmental impacts of that project and to define the scope of the environment review document. As specified in Section 15064(f) of the CEQA Guidelines, the lead agency may prepare an ND if, in the course of the Initial Study analysis, it is recognized that the project may have a significant impact on the environment but that implementation of specific mitigation measures would reduce potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level. As the lead agency for the project, the City of Walnut Creek has the principal responsibility for conducting the CEQA environmental review to analyze the potential environmental effects associated with project implementation. During the review process, it was determined that potential impacts would be reduced to less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures. The City of Walnut Creek has incorporated mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate any potentially significant project-related impacts. Therefore, an IS/ND has been prepared for the project.

Note: The project has not been approved or denied. It is being reviewed for environmental impacts only. Approval of the project can take place only after the ND has been adopted.

This IS/ND is organized as follows:

- **Section 1: Project Description.** This section introduces the document and discusses the project description including location, setting, and specifics of the lead agency and contacts.
- **Section 2: Initial Study Checklist.** This section discusses the CEQA environmental topics and checklist questions, identifies the potential for impacts, and proposes mitigation measures to avoid these impacts.

- **Section 3: List of Preparers.** This section lists the organizations and individuals who were consulted and/or prepared this IS/ND.
- **Section 4: References.** This section presents a list of reference materials consulted during preparation of this IS/ND.

Public Review

The IS/ND will be circulated for a 30-day public review period from February 9, 2026, to March 11, 2026.

Comments regarding this IS/ND must be made in writing and submitted to Allison Rustick, 1666 North Main Street, Walnut Creek, California 94596 or by email to Rustick@walnutcreekca.gov.

Comments should focus on the finding that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment because revisions or mitigation measures have been made or agreed to by the project proponent. If the commenter believes that the project may have a significant environmental effect, it would be helpful for the commenter to identify the specific effect and explain why the effect would occur and why it would be significant.

Section 1 Project Description

1.1 Project Location

The City of Walnut Creek (“city” for geographic location and “City” for government entity) is a city in Central Contra Costa County (County), in the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area. The city is located approximately 23 miles east of San Francisco at the foot of Mount Diablo and approximately 12.5 miles from the San Francisco Bay near Berkeley. The city is connected to Sacramento and San Jose by Interstate (I-) 680 and to San Francisco and Oakland by State Route (SR-) 24. Several creeks traverse the City’s open space areas and a few of the city’s developed areas.

1.2 Project Overview

The City is proposing to update its existing Safety Element (Chapter 6: Safety and Noise) of the General Plan 2025 (GP 2025). The Safety Element Update, as part of the City’s GP 2025, would establish goals, policies, and actions that are intended to guide City decision-making related to safety and climate adaptation and resilience strategies. The purpose of the Safety Element goals, policies, and actions is to increase the city’s adaptive capacity to respond to hazards and climate change-related impacts to meet the current and future needs of people living and working in Walnut Creek.

1.3 Project Background

The proposed Safety Element Update is in alignment with the City’s GP 2025 vision to “maintain(s) and enhance(s) a high quality of life for the diverse members of the community by promoting safety, public health, a rich variety of active and passive cultural, recreational, and educational opportunities, and support facilities.” The proposed Safety Element Update is also in alignment with the City’s vision of enhancing the quality of community living, providing a safe, attractive community; protected natural resources and quality neighborhoods; safe streets and efficient transportation systems; and reliable and effective infrastructure.

1.3.1 State Requirements

Pursuant to California Government Code, Section 65302(g), a Safety Element is required to address the protection of its people from unreasonable risks associated with disasters, including earthquakes, floods, fires, landslides, and other hazards identified by the local community. Specifically, the Safety Element must identify hazards and hazard abatement provisions to guide local decisions related to zoning, subdivisions, and entitlement permitting, and should also integrate hazard and risk reduction strategies. In addition, the State of California recently adopted new legislation that requires the Safety Element to provide additional information related to flooding, wildfires, emergency evacuation, and climate change, as well as several other requirements:

- Government Code, Section 65302(g)(1), requires cities to evaluate seismic risks, including, but not limited to seismically induced surface rupture; ground shaking;

ground failure; tsunamis, seiche; dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides, subsidence, and liquefaction; and other seismic hazards identified pursuant to Chapter 7.8 (commencing with Section 2690) of Division 2 of the Public Resources Code, and other geologic hazards known to the legislative body.

- Assembly Bill 162 (Government Code, Section 65302[g][2]) requires cities to update their flood hazards descriptions, include the impacts of climate change on flooding, and prepare comprehensive goals and policies for flood protection.
- Government Code, Section 65302(g)(2) requires the Safety Element to address drought and water supply.
- Senate Bill (SB) 1241 (Government Code, Section 65302[g][1] and [3][A]) requires the Safety Element to address urban fires and wildfire risk in State Responsibility Areas as well as identify areas in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.
- SB 1035 (Government Code, Section 65302[g][6]) and SB 379 (Government Code, Section 65302[g][4]) require cities to address climate change and adaptation and resiliency in the Safety Element with a Vulnerability Assessment and measures to address vulnerabilities. On October 8, 2015, Government Code, Section 65302, was amended by SB 379 to require the Safety Element to be reviewed and updated as necessary to include a climate change Vulnerability Assessment, measures to address vulnerabilities, and a comprehensive hazard mitigation and emergency response strategy. SB 379 is triggered by the next update of a jurisdiction's local hazard mitigation plan (LHMP) (updated every 5 years) or before January 1, 2022, whichever is first. SB 1035 built off SB 379, requiring that the Safety Element be updated every 8 years upon the next Housing Element update.
- SB 99, Assembly Bill (AB) 747, and AB 1409 (Government Code, Section 65302[g][1] and [5]) require cities to include an evaluation of evacuation routes and locations, as well as residential areas that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes.
- Government Code, Section 65302(g)(1), requires the Safety Element to address other topics, including military installations, peak load water supply requirements, and minimum road widths and clearances around structures.
- Government Code, Section 65302[g][4][C][v], and AB 65 require the identification of natural infrastructure that may be used in adaptation projects, where feasible.

The City coordinated the update of its Safety Element with the update of its Housing Element and conducted early outreach and prepared a survey to gather information.

1.3.2 Related Hazards and Climate Plans

The proposed Safety Element Update builds off recent and related plans completed for Contra Costa County and the City, including the Contra Costa County 2024 LHMP, City of Walnut Creek 2020

Emergency Management Plan (EMP), and the City’s 2020 Vulnerability Assessment prepared for the Sustainability Action Plan.

The Contra Costa County LHMP provides a hazard risk assessment for the County and its participating jurisdictions (including the City) as well as mitigation actions for the planning area. Hazards assessed in the LHMP include dam and levee failure, drought, earthquake; flood; landslide; severe weather, tsunami, wildfire, and other hazards of interest (i.e., terrorism, cybersecurity, and public health hazards).

The City’s 2020 EMP is an all-hazards plan designed as a reference and guidance document, serving as the foundation for disaster response and recovery operations for the City of Walnut Creek. The EMP establishes the emergency organization, assigns tasks, specifies policies and general procedures, and provides for coordination of the City’s responsibilities as a member of the Contra Costa Operational Area with other member organizations, in both response and recovery procedures.

The City’s Sustainability Action Plan, adopted in 2023, continues citywide efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and address climate change in the short-term (i.e., through the year 2030) and in the long-term (i.e., out to 2050). This plan addresses climate resilience and other key sustainability topics, such as equity, air pollution, water conservation, and waste. As part of developing the Sustainability Action Plan, the City prepared a Vulnerability Assessment to assess climate change hazards and key vulnerabilities to assets and people in the city. Climate change hazards assessed in the Vulnerability Assessment include air quality, drought, extreme heat, flooding, human health hazards, landslides and debris flows, severe weather, and wildfire.

1.3.3 Public and Stakeholder Engagement

A Safety Advisory Committee, comprised of members from the City Manager’s Office, Community Development Department, Communications & Outreach Department, Public Works Department, Police Department, and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, provided expertise on hazard mitigation, resilience, public safety, and critical infrastructure. The Committee reviewed and provided input and feedback on:

- hazard profiles,
- adaptive capacity to mitigate climate change hazards,
- updated Safety Element goals and policies, and
- the Emergency Evacuation Route Analysis.

The City held two public workshops to engage the community on important hazards and potential mitigations to include as goals and policies in the proposed Safety Element Update. The first workshop, held on March 21, 2022, introduced the Safety Element, as well as the Housing Element, presented a profile of the city, and conducted a live poll on the City’s housing and safety needs, challenges, and

issues. During the second workshop, held on April 20, 2022, the City shared the initial results of the community survey and conducted live polling to seek input on potential policies and programs.

The City also held an online survey for the Safety Element between March 21, 2022 and April 10, 2022. A total of 112 participants responded to the online survey. The most concerning hazards identified in the survey were drought, extreme heat, and wildfire. Approximately 64 percent of respondents were very or extremely concerned about climate change. Approximately 83 percent of respondents were impacted by poor air quality resulting from a wildfire. The majority of the respondents (70 percent) experienced a power outage during an extreme weather event. Additionally, 28 percent of respondents reported feeling prepared for an emergency event.

1.4 Proposed Safety Element Update

The Safety Element Update would be consistent with existing and updated GP 2025 goals, objectives, and policies and regulatory compliance with new California legislation. The Safety Element assesses existing conditions of potential hazards, health risks, and environmental burdens faced by residents and visitors. The Safety Element Update includes policies related to future development intended to minimize the risk of personal injury, loss of life, property damage, and environmental damage associated with natural and human-made hazards. The Safety Element Update addresses the city's natural hazards and human activities that may pose a threat to public safety within the following topic areas:

- Seismic and Other Geologic Hazards
- Flooding
- Hazardous Materials
- Fire Hazards
- Public Safety
- Emergency Planning and Preparedness
- Climate Adaptation and Resilience
- Extreme Heat
- Extreme Precipitation
- Drought

The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update would not facilitate the development of new residential, commercial, or industrial uses. The goals, policies, and actions of the Safety Element Update may facilitate new development including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities. Additionally, the Safety Element Update may facilitate trimming or removal of vegetation and trees throughout the City due to fuel reduction requirements in the Safety Element Update intended to reduce fire risk.

1.5 Regulatory Requirements, Permits, and Approvals

The Safety Element Update is an amendment to the City's GP 2025; therefore, no other regulatory requirements, permits, or approvals are required.

Section 2 Initial Study Checklist

The following discussion of potential environmental effects was completed in accordance with Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines to determine if the proposed Safety Element Update may have a significant effect on the environment.

2.1 Project Information

1. **Project title:** City of Walnut Creek Safety Element Update
2. **Lead agency name and address:** City of Walnut Creek, Community Development Department
1666 North Main Street
Walnut Creek, California 94596
3. **Contact person name, address, and phone number:** Allison Rustick, Associate Planner
1666 North Main Street
Walnut Creek, California 94596
(925) 943-5899 x2186
Rustick@walnutcreekca.gov
4. **Project location:** City of Walnut Creek and sphere of influence
5. **Project sponsor's name and address:** City of Walnut Creek, Community Development Department
1666 North Main Street
Walnut Creek, California 94596
6. **General plan designation:** Citywide – varies
7. **Zoning:** Citywide – varies
8. **Description of project:** Refer to Section 1, Project Description, of this IS/ND.
9. **Surrounding land uses and setting:** Refer to Section 1 of this IS/ND.
10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required:** No other approvals are required.

11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

No consultation has been requested. Refer to Section 2.4.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, of this IS/ND for details.

2.2 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by the Safety Element Update, involving at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology and Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology and Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use and Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population and Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities and Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

2.3 Lead Agency Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent (state), including implementation of the mitigation measures identified herein. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature
Name, Title, Agency

Date

2.4 Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

This section documents the screening process used to identify and focus on environmental impacts that could result from the Safety Element Update (project). The checklist portion of the Initial Study begins below and includes explanations of each CEQA issue topic. CEQA requires that an explanation of all answers be provided along with this checklist, including a discussion of ways to mitigate any significant effects identified. The following terminology is used to describe the potential level of significance of impacts:

- **No Impact.** The analysis concludes that the project would not affect the particular resource in any way.
- **Less than Significant.** The analysis concludes that the project would not cause substantial adverse change to the environment without the incorporation of mitigation.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** The analysis concludes that it would not cause substantial adverse change to the environment with the inclusion of mitigation agreed upon by the applicant.
- **Potentially Significant.** The analysis concludes that the project could result a substantial adverse effect or significant effect on the environment, even if mitigation is incorporated. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

2.4.1 Aesthetics

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The City of Walnut Creek is a suburban city with walkable, active downtown area known for shopping, dining, and arts. The city is bordered by several open space areas (e.g., Acalanes Ridge Open Space, Sugarloaf Open Space, Shell Ridge Open Space, Lime Ridge Open Space) and regional parks (e.g., Diablo Foothills Regional Park, Castle Rock Regional Recreation Area, Briones Regional Park) with gently sloping areas that transition to the steeply sloped hillsides associated with major ridgeline systems. The numerous topographic features of the city and the surrounding vicinity provide distinctive views and vistas from within the developed portions of the city. According to the GP 2025 Chapter 4 (Built Environment), 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 to the surrounding open spaces and hills are representative of the city’s character and extremely important to the residents and to visitors. Figure 14 (page 4–30) of the GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter shows the city’s scenic corridors and significant views.

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less than Significant Impact. Scenic vistas in the city are identified in the GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter, which describes several areas within and adjacent to the city that provide scenic relief and vistas and backdrops, including scenic views of Mount Diablo, foothills, and open space areas that surround the city. The GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter includes goals to maintain and enhance

Walnut Creek’s identity and sense of place (Goal 16), enhance entrances to the city (Goal 17), and preserve and enhance the visual amenity provided by the open spaces, hills, and creeks (Goal 18).

The Safety Element Update does not specifically propose the development of infrastructure that would inhibit existing views of scenic areas in the city. However, the Safety Element Update may facilitate the construction, installation, or repair of critical infrastructure, such as water supply infrastructure, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure. Additionally, some vegetation and trees could be trimmed or removed due to fuel reduction requirements in the Safety Element Update intended to reduce fire risk. Future new development pursuant to the Safety Element Update would be subject to existing development standards in the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, GP 2025, and applicable design guidelines. Additionally, future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to scenic vistas and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Therefore, impacts to scenic vistas would be less than significant.

b. Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Less than Significant Impact. Portions of I-680 and SR-24 are officially designated state scenic highways due to the available scenic views toward Mount Diablo and the foothills (Caltrans 2018). The Safety Element Update would not specifically propose the development of infrastructure that would adversely affect (directly or indirectly) scenic resources, such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, in the city. Future new development pursuant to the Safety Element Update would primarily involve utilities and road repairs, the trimming or removal of trees and other vegetation, and repair or renovation of historical buildings to ensure they are updated with the most current safety and building codes. Therefore, implementation of the Safety Element Update could indirectly affect trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings; however, it is unlikely that development would obstruct views of Mount Diablo or other ridgelines surrounding the city. Future new development associated with the Safety Element Update would be required to reduce the impacts of hazards to city infrastructure and residents. Additionally, future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be subject to existing development standards in the Walnut Creek Municipal Code and would require project-specific CEQA analysis including review of adverse impacts to scenic resources and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Therefore, impacts to scenic resources would be less than significant.

c. Would the project, in non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the Safety Element Update would occur throughout the entire city, including the urbanized and non-urbanized portions of the city. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Future new development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with City’s goals, policies, and actions governing the scenic quality and visual character of public views of Mount Diablo, the foothills, and other open space areas. Individual projects would be subject to adopted development guidelines/standards when a development proposal is considered, and any impacts identified for discretionary development projects would be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the impact during CEQA review. Project-specific CEQA review and compliance with the standards/regulations at the time of future development would ensure less than significant impacts. As such, the project would not conflict with applicable zoning or regulations that have been designed to protect scenic quality. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

d. Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less than Significant Impact. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Future new development pursuant to the Safety Element Update would be subject to existing development standards in the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, and discretionary projects would be required to undergo project-specific CEQA review of impacts related to light and glare and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Light spillover and glare are regulated by Section 10-2.3.407 (L) of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, which states that all exterior lighting shall be designed and installed in such a manner that the light source is shielded from view off the site unless a finding is made that such lighting is necessary for safety reasons. New sources of light or glare would be consistent with the ambient light levels from nearby sources. Therefore, impacts to a) light or glare and b) day or nighttime views in the city would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

<p>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided. Would the project:</p>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The California Department of Conservation (DOC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program designates the majority of the city as Urban and Built-Up Land (not Important Farmland) (DOC 2022). While there are open space and agricultural lands within the city, no Prime Farmland, Farmlands of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmlands, or Farmlands of Local Importance as mapped by the DOC occur in the city.

Impact Analysis

- a. **Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?**

No Impact. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would occur in areas that have been defined as Urban and Built-Up Land. The Safety Element Update would not identify any new land that is subject to urbanization or rezoning from agricultural use to non-agricultural use. Future development facilitated by the Safety Element Update would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance to non-agricultural use. Therefore, no impact would occur.

- b. **Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?**

No Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any future development or result in land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would restrict or conflict with agricultural uses. Only the northeast portion of the city is designated as Agricultural land use. There are no Williamson Act contracts within the city limits. The Safety Element Update would not facilitate development within agricultural areas within the city boundaries or the sphere of influence. Therefore, the Safety Element Update would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract. No impact would occur.

- c. **Would the project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?**

No Impact. There are no state forests or lands currently used for timber production or management in the city. Additionally, there are no zoning designations for timberland or forest resources within the city. Therefore, future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would not conflict with existing zoning or cause rezoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. No impact would occur.

- d. **Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?**

No Impact. As described in Section 2.4.2(c) above, there are no state forests or zoning designations for forest resources within the city. The Safety Element Update may facilitate trimming or removal of vegetation and trees due to fuel reduction requirements in the Safety Element Update intended to reduce fire risk; however, this would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, no impact would occur.

- e. **Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?**

No Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development. The Safety Element Update would not identify any new land that is subject to urbanization or rezoning from agricultural use to non-agricultural use. The Safety Element Update would not result in a zoning change for existing agricultural properties and would not restrict agricultural uses on these properties. Adoption of the Safety Element Update would not involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. Further, the Safety Element Update would retain existing and incorporate new policies and actions intended to minimize wildfire hazards, which would further protect any forested areas in or near the city. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.3 Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The city is within the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin (SFBAAB), which is governed by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Regional climate and local meteorological conditions influence ambient air quality. The climate in the SFBAAB is largely dominated by the strength and position of the semi-permanent high-pressure system over the Pacific Ocean, known as the Pacific High. This high-pressure ridge over the West Coast often creates a pattern of late night and early morning low clouds, hazy afternoon sunshine, daytime onshore breezes, and little temperature variation year-round. The city is characterized by a Mediterranean climate with warm summers, mild winters, and moderate precipitation. Temperatures in Walnut Creek range from an average monthly low of 38.5 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) in December to an average monthly high of 89.0°F in July. Average annual rainfall is 19.37 inches with most precipitation occurring between November and April.

The favorable climate of the SFBAAB also works to create air pollution problems. Sinking or subsiding air from the Pacific High-Pressure Zone creates a temperature inversion, known as a “subsidence inversion,” which acts as a lid to vertical dispersion of pollutants. Weak summertime pressure gradients further limit horizontal dispersion of pollutants in the mixed layer below the subsidence inversion. The combination of poorly dispersed anthropogenic emissions and strong sunshine leads to photochemical reactions, which results in the creation of ozone (O₃) at this surface layer.

The federal Clean Air Act requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards for six common air pollutants (also known as “criteria air pollutants”). Criteria air pollutants include O₃, particulate matter equal to or less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀), and 2.5 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5}), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), and lead (Pb). Contra Costa County is currently in non-attainment for O₃, both

1-hour and 8-hour, and PM_{2.5} and in maintenance for CO under the NAAQS (USEPA 2025). Under the California Ambient Air Quality Standards, Contra Costa County is in non-attainment for O₃, PM_{2.5}, and PM₁₀ as of 2020 (CARB 2023). The BAAQMD has established significance thresholds for construction and operational emissions for six categories of pollutants, including nitrous oxides (NO_x), sulfur oxides (SO_x), volatile organic compounds, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, CO, and Pb. These thresholds are based on the potential adverse short-term health effects of each pollutant.

Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs) refers to a diverse group of air pollutants regulated at the regional, state, and federal level because of their ability to cause adverse effects on human health. Ambient air quality standards have not been set for TACs because of the diverse number of air toxics and the fact that their effects on health tend to be localized rather than regional. TACs are in ambient air, especially in urban areas, and are commonly caused by industry, agriculture, fuel combustion, and commercial operations (e.g., dry cleaners). Diesel exhaust is the predominant TAC in urban air and is estimated to represent about two-thirds of the cancer risk from TACs (based on the statewide average).

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The BAAQMD and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) are responsible for formulating and implementing the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) for the SFBAAB. A project is consistent with the AQMP if it furthers one or more policies or/and does not obstruct other policies. The BAAQMD's 2017 Clean Air Plan: Spare the Air, Cool the Climate provides a regional strategy to protect public health and protect the climate. To protect public health, the plan describes how the BAAQMD will continue our progress toward attaining all state and federal air quality standards and eliminating health risk disparities from exposure to air pollution among Bay Area communities. To protect the climate, the plan defines a vision for transitioning the region to a post-carbon economy needed to achieve ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2030 and 2050, and provides a regional climate protection strategy that will put the Bay Area on a pathway to achieve those GHG reduction targets. The 2017 Clean Air Plan includes a wide range of control measures designed to decrease emissions of the air pollutants that are most harmful to Bay Area residents, such as particulate matter, ozone, and TACs; to reduce emissions of methane and other "super-GHGs" that are potent climate pollutants in the near-term; and to decrease emissions of carbon dioxide by reducing fossil fuel combustion.

The 2017 Clean Air Plan relies on information from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the ABAG, including mobile and area source emissions and information regarding projecting growth in Contra Costa County, to project future emissions and then determine strategies necessary for the reduction of emissions through regulatory controls. The CARB mobile source emission projections and ABAG growth projections are based on population and vehicle trends and land use plans developed by

the cities and counties within the SFBAAB. Projects that propose development that are consistent with the growth anticipated by the City's GP 2025 are therefore consistent with the 2017 Clean Air Plan.

The Safety Element Update would not propose any specific development or result in land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would directly impact air quality. In fact, the Safety Element Update includes the following policies and actions related to reducing the impacts of poor air quality on the community:

- **Policy 9.1:** Reduce the impacts of poor air quality, including the impact of smoke from wildfires on public health, and improve air quality in the community.
 - **Action 9.1.1:** Work with community-based organizations to distribute masks in advance of and during poor air quality events, prioritizing masks for persons experiencing homelessness, under-resourced persons, those who work outdoors, and essential workers.
 - **Action 9.1.2:** Continue to work with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to alert residents when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy and to share information on ways to reduce air pollution.
 - **Action 9.1.3:** Encourage private businesses to allow for remote work during poor air quality days.
 - **Action 9.1.4:** Educate, and (if possible) provide financial subsidies to residential property owners to retrofit properties affected by adverse air quality with air purifiers and conditioners, landscaping, or other measures. Prioritize the homes of under-resourced persons, seniors, and those with chronic respiratory conditions.
 - **Action 9.1.5:** Require new multifamily residences and new sensitive uses to reduce vulnerability to air pollutants through project design features, such as green buffers, MERV filters, non-openable windows (in common areas), and balcony location.
 - **Action 9.1.6:** Ban new wood-burning fireplaces.

In addition, the Safety Element Update includes policies and actions related to hazardous materials and fire hazards that, if implemented, would also reduce impacts related to indoor and outdoor air quality. For example, Action 3.5.1 requires an environmental investigation for hazardous materials when reviewing applications for new development in former commercial or industrial areas. Additionally, Action 4.3.8 calls for working with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District to prepare a comprehensive wildland fire prevention program, including fuel breaks, brush management, controlled burning, and access for fire suppression equipment. Reduction of fire risk and the spread of wildfires inherently reduces air pollution caused by smoke from fires.

Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review which would evaluate consistency with the Clean

Air Plan. Therefore, implementation of the Safety Element Update would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of applicable Air Quality Plans, and impacts would be less than significant.

b. Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard)?

Less than Significant Impact. Air quality is defined by ambient air concentrations of the six criteria air pollutants identified by the USEPA to be of concern with respect to health and welfare of the general public (i.e., criteria air pollutants). The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or result in land use or zoning changes that would result in increased criteria air pollutant emissions. Instead, the Safety Element Update identifies policies and actions that could be implemented to mitigate the current levels of air pollution in the city (refer to Section 2.4.3(a) above for a list of applicable policies and actions). The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to air quality and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Therefore, the Safety Element Update is not anticipated to result in a cumulatively net increase of any criteria air pollutant, and impacts would be less than significant.

c. Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed previously, the Safety Element Update does not identify or approve any specific development projects and would not result in land use or zoning changes. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. All future discretionary development facilitated by the Safety Element Update would require project-specific environmental evaluation to determine if there are potential impacts. Potential air quality-related impacts of individual projects would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the nature of the project and location of a project site is known. Additionally, future discretionary projects would be subject to the BAAQMD air quality thresholds and would be required to comply with the City's environmental review process. For instance, when a development proposal is considered, the project would be subject to BAAQMD rules and regulations, and any impacts identified for implementation of the development project would be addressed through specific mitigation measures. Short-term air quality impacts resulting from construction, such as dust generated by clearing and grading activities, exhaust emissions from gas- and diesel-powered construction equipment, and vehicular emissions associated with the commuting

of construction workers, would be short-term, temporary, and minor given the nature of development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update (i.e., utilities and transportation infrastructure). Short-term construction emissions would also be subject to the thresholds set forth by the BAAQMD's CEQA Air Quality Guidelines.

In addition, the Safety Element Update would include several new policies and actions to reduce the impacts of poor air quality and improve air quality in the city (refer to Section 2.4.3(a) above for a list of applicable policies and actions). The Safety Element Update also incorporates new goals, policies, and actions aimed at reducing impacts related to hazardous materials and wildfire, which can cause adverse impacts to air quality in the city. With incorporation of these policies and actions, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in long-term benefits related to exposure of sensitive receptors to pollutant concentrations. Therefore, impacts to sensitive receptors from pollutant concentrations would be less than significant.

d. Would the project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Less than Significant Impact. The CARB's Air Quality and Land Use Handbook includes a list of the most common sources of odor complaints received by local air districts. Typical sources of odor complaints include facilities such as sewage treatment plants, landfills, recycling facilities, petroleum refineries, and livestock operations. Although offensive odors seldom cause physical harm, they can be a nuisance.

The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development projects or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would directly result in odors. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Construction associated with future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update could result in minor amounts of odor compounds associated with diesel heavy equipment exhaust. However, construction projects would be short-term and temporary, would not take place all at once, and would occur at various locations throughout the city. Therefore, impacts associated with odors during construction activities would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.4 Biological Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with any applicable policies protecting biological resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other applicable habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The city contains numerous plant and wildlife species that are defined as “sensitive” species, meaning listed as “Rare,” “Endangered,” “Threatened,” “of Special Concern,” or otherwise noteworthy by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the California Native Plant Society, or other conservation agencies, organizations, or local botanists.

A Biological and Wetland Resources Background Report was prepared for the GP 2025 to provide information on the regulatory framework related to sensitive biological and wetland resources, a general description of resources in the Walnut Creek Planning Area, and a discussion of key issues, opportunities, and possible constraints (City of Walnut Creek 2004). The Biological and Wetland Resources Background Report did not include detailed field surveys but relied on available literature and resource mapping reviewed including but not limited to mapping prepared as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service CalVeg program, mapping prepared as part of the

USFWS National Wetlands Inventory, the special-status species and sensitive natural communities occurrence records of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), and the California Native Plant Society Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California.

According to the Biological and Wetland Resources Background Report prepared for the GP 2025, vegetation in the city is dominated by a cover of suburban landscape, bordered by the remaining undeveloped grasslands and woodlands of the surrounding hillsides, and traversed by bands of riparian forest and scrub along the numerous creeks and drainages. Most of the valley floors and lower hillsides have been developed with urban and suburban uses, supporting a cover of primarily ornamental landscaping. Remnant native valley oaks and coast live oaks occur in scattered locations throughout the developed valley floor.

Plant Species

According to the Biological and Wetland Resources Background Report prepared for the GP 2025, plant species with varied special status have been reported in the city, and based on recorded geographic range and preferred habitat, numerous other species may potentially occur in the vicinity. Nine plant species have been reported within or at the edge of the city, including bent-flowered fiddleneck (*Amsinckia lunaris*), Mt. Diablo manzanita (*Arctostaphylos auriculata*), Contra Costa manzanita (*Arctostaphylos manzanita* ssp. *laevigata*), big tarplant (*Blepharizonia plumosa* ssp. *plumosa*), Mt. Diablo fairy-lantern (*Calochortus pulchellus*), Congdon's tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *congdonii*), Diablo helianthella (*Helianthella castanea*), Contra Costa goldfields (*Lasthenia conjugens*), and Hall's bush-mallow (*Monardella villosa* ssp. *globosa*). Existing development greatly limits the likelihood of continued occurrence of any populations of special-status plant species on the valley floor. Many of the special-status plant occurrences in the protected open space lands at the fringe of the city remain today, but are vulnerable to changes such as overgrazing, fire, invasive weeds, and other threats. There remains a possibility that additional populations of one or more species occurs on the remaining undeveloped lands in the planning area, particularly at the east, southwest and northwest fringe. Detailed surveys are required to provide confirmation on presence or absence from undeveloped land where thorough studies have not been conducted.

Wildlife Species

A number of bird, mammal, reptile, fish, and invertebrate species with special status are known or suspected to occur in the city's vicinity. These include: Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*), white-tailed kite (*Elanus caeruleus*), prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), northwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata*), Alameda whipsnake (*Masticophis lateralis euryxanthus*), California horned lizard (*Phrynosoma marmoratum frontale*),

California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*), steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*), Townsends' western big-eared bat (*Plecotus townsendii townsendii*), and San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes annectens*). Of these, four have actually been reported by the CNDDDB within the city, but many non-listed special-status species are not monitored by the CNDDDB, and occurrence data is therefore not available. Most of the special-status wildlife species known or suspected to occur in the city are bird species that forage in the remaining undeveloped habitats (e.g., burrowing owl, Cooper's hawk, loggerhead shrike, northern harrier, sharp-shinned hawk, tricolored blackbird, and white-tailed kite).

Sensitive Natural Communities

Several of the natural communities identified within the city are considered to have a high inventory priority with the CNDDDB. Sensitive natural communities in the city include: freshwater marsh, freshwater seeps and springs, riparian forest and woodland, willow riparian scrub, valley oak woodland, and valley needlegrass grassland. These communities have been designated as sensitive due to rarity and continuing loss as a result of development, flood control improvements, and other factors. While coast live oak woodland is not considered as having a high inventory priority with the CNDDDB, it should be recognized as an important habitat type in the city due to its relatively high wildlife value and presence of mature native trees. With the exception of the valley needlegrass grasslands, which integrates with non-native grasslands, the other community types are easily distinguished and mapped. Detailed field surveys are required to determine the extent of natural communities in the remaining undeveloped portions and designated open space lands of the city.

Wetlands

Wetlands in the city include areas of freshwater marsh around stock ponds, seeps, springs, and other waterbodies, seasonal wetlands in ephemeral drainages and possibly depressions on undeveloped parcels on the valley floor, and emergent marsh and willow scrub along creeks. Wetlands in the city mapped as part of the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory consist of emergent, scrub-scrub, and forested palustrine along the creeks and larger drainages, and unconsolidated bottom palustrine at the scattered stock ponds and larger seeps.

Habitat Connectivity

The extent of urbanization on the valley floor limits opportunities for movement and dispersal of native wildlife and plant species across the city; however, the remaining undeveloped lands at the northeastern, eastern, northwestern, and southwestern fringes of the city complement the adjacent protected parklands and watershed lands. The network of creeks and streams continue to provide limited opportunities for wildlife movement and dispersal through parts of the city, and are frequently used by a number of larger species such as black-tailed deer, raccoon, and numerous species of birds.

Impact Analysis

- a. **Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the Safety Element Update could result in impacts to habitats that support sensitive plant species due to vegetation trimming or removal or ground-disturbing construction activities associated with road and utility repairs; however, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development that can be evaluated in project-specific detail. Potential impacts to habitat and sensitive or special-status species would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of the project site and nature of the project is known. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to sensitive species and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. The GP 2025 Chapter 3 (Natural Environment and Public Spaces) includes policies and actions designed to “identify, protect, restore, and enhance sensitive biological and areas critical for habitat and habitat connectivity” (Policy 1.2 and Action 1.2.1).

Future projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local policies to protect sensitive species. For instance, Title 10 Article 4 (Hillside Performance Standards) of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code is intended to minimize the negative impacts that may otherwise be associated with developing in the hillside areas that define the city's boundaries and public open spaces. Section 10-2.3.409 of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code identifies Required Findings for Project Approval, which include that the “proposed development, as conditioned, minimizes disruption of the natural topography, preserves the appearance of scenic ridgelines, and protects natural features on the site in their natural state such as heritage quality trees, creeks, riparian corridors, stock ponds, hillslopes, knolls, ridgelines, outcroppings and natural habitat areas to the greatest degree possible.” Depending on the nature of future discretionary projects, the City, through its CEQA compliance program, may require that projects prepare an assessment of biological habitat and potential impacts to biological resources, including sensitive species. Therefore, impacts to candidate, sensitive, or special-status species would be less than significant.

- b. **Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?**

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the Safety Element Update could impact riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities due to vegetation trimming or removal or ground-disturbing construction activities associated with road and utility repairs; however, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development that can be evaluated in project-

specific detail. Potential impacts to riparian habitat and other sensitive natural communities would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of the project site and nature of the project is known. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. As described in Section 2.4.4(a) above, the GP 2025 Natural Environment Chapter includes policies and actions designed to “identify, protect, restore, and enhance sensitive biological and areas critical for habitat and habitat connectivity” (Policy 1.2 and Action 1.2.1). The GP 2025 Natural Environment Chapter also includes a goal to maintain and enhance the area’s creek systems, their riparian environments, and their recreational amenities” (Goal 3).

Future projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local policies to protect sensitive species. For instance, Title 10 Article 4 (Hillside Performance Standards) of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code is intended to minimize the negative impacts that may otherwise be associated with developing in the hillside areas that define the city's boundaries and public open spaces. Section 10-2.3.409 of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code identifies Required Findings for Project Approval, which include that the “proposed development, as conditioned, minimizes disruption of the natural topography, preserves the appearance of scenic ridgelines, and protects natural features on the site in their natural state such as heritage quality trees, creeks, riparian corridors, stock ponds, hillslopes, knolls, ridgelines, outcroppings and natural habitat areas to the greatest degree possible.” Depending on the nature of future discretionary projects, the City, through its CEQA review process, may require that projects prepare an assessment of biological habitat and potential impacts to biological resources, including sensitive species. Therefore, impacts to riparian habitats and other sensitive communities would be less than significant.

c. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Less than Significant Impact. Isolated wetlands that may be under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which regulates compliance with Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), are known to occur in the city. The construction of future development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update (e.g., utilities and transportation infrastructure) may directly or indirectly affect such wetlands; however, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development that can be evaluated in project-specific detail. Potential impacts to state or federally protected wetlands would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of the project site and nature of the project is known. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for

significant impacts to state or federally protected wetlands and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Any potential impacts to these resources from future projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require consultation with and permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and potentially require aquatic resources delineations to be performed. Future projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local policies to protect wetlands. Therefore, impacts to jurisdictional aquatic resources would be less than significant.

d. Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Less than Significant Impact. The construction of future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update (e.g., vegetation and tree trimming or removal, road and utility repairs) may affect the ability of wildlife to move through the city and cause habitat fragmentation; however, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development that can be evaluated in project-specific detail. Potential impacts to native resident or migratory wildlife corridors would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of the project site and nature of the project is known. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to native resident or migratory wildlife corridors. and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. As described in Section 2.4.4(c) above, the GP 2025 Natural Environment Chapter includes a goal to maintain and enhance the area’s creek systems, their riparian environments, and their recreational amenities” (Goal 3). The GP 2025 Natural Environment Chapter also addresses the need to “identify wildlife corridors and encourage their preservation” (Action 26.6.3). Future projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local policies to protect wetlands. Project-specific CEQA review and compliance with federal, state, and local regulations to protect species movement would ensure no adverse impacts from the project. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

e. Would the project conflict with any applicable policies protecting biological resources?

Less than Significant Impact. Projects in the city are required to comply with policies protecting biological resources identified in the City’s Tree Preservation Ordinance (Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 3, Chapter 8) and the habitat preservation policies and actions in the GP 2025 (e.g., Policy 26.4. Protect tree resources on public and private property). Implementation of the Safety Element Update could result in trimming or removal of trees and other vegetation to reduce fire risk and the spread of wildfire. However, any tree removal projects would be required to obtain a tree removal

permit and comply with all other components of Title 3, Chapter 8, of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code. In addition, the Safety Element Update includes Action 10.4.2 which calls for establishing policies and management plans to develop urban forests and incentivize the use of best practices for long-term maintenance and preservation of urban trees. As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would not conflict with applicable policies protecting biological resources. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

f. Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other applicable habitat conservation plan?

No Impact. The City of Walnut Creek is not subject to the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or any other applicable habitat conservation plan. As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would not conflict with provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or any other applicable habitat conservation plan. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.5 Cultural Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Cultural resources are defined as those environmental components which are fragile and non-renewable evidence of human activity as reflected in districts, sites, structures, artifacts, works of art, and natural features that were of importance in human events, which, in the city, primarily consist of archaeological sites, features, and structures ranging from early prehistoric to recent historic age.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources related to Euro-American presence in the region are defined as historical resources. As of 2006 (the most recently available data), the California Archaeological Inventory (now known as the California Historical Resources Information System) identified 11 specific cultural resource sites within the city. The sites contain either Native American artifacts or burial deposits. These locations were recorded but are kept confidential to prevent their disturbance. (California Government Code, Section 6254.10, exempts archaeological site information from public inspection under the California Public Records Act.) A confidential map locating the 11 sites is maintained by the Community Development Department solely for City staff use in determining the degree of professional archaeological involvement required on projects proposed near the sites. However, Figure 17 of the GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter maps the majority of the city as high sensitivity areas for architectural resources.

Historic Resources

The Walnut Creek Municipal Code adopted the 2022 California Historical Building Code by reference (Title 9, Chapter 18, of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code). Actions 25.1.1 and 25.1.2 of the GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter require the City to develop an inventory of historically significant properties and develop a Historic Preservation Plan and supporting ordinance. The GP 2025 also noted that until a historical inventory for the city is completed, individual development projects involving buildings constructed prior to 1946 would require evaluation for environmental significance by a qualified architectural historian. In this way, the City has a means to identify historical properties and to intervene if

such a property or landmark becomes seriously deteriorated or threatened with demolition. In 2019, the City’s historical built environment was inventoried in the Contra Costa County Historic Resources Inventory (Contra Costa County Conservation and Development, Community Development Division 2019). The County’s Historic Resources Inventory lists 16 historic structures, 7 historic architectural specimens, and 4 historic sites in the city (Table 1, City of Walnut Creek Historic Resources).

Table 1. City of Walnut Creek Historic Resources

Resource	Address	Evaluation Category
Bancroft Residence	1500 Bancroft Road	Structure of Historical Significance
Brubaker Residence	30 Brubaker Lane	Structure of Historical Significance
Burgess Residence	2950 Walnut Boulevard	Structure of Historical Significance
Casey Residence	2641 Oak Grove	Architectural Specimen
Howard Residence	2372 Walnut Boulevard	Structure of Historical Significance
California Water Service Company Pumping Plant	Walker Avenue	Structure of Historical Significance
James T. Walker Home	1200 North Gate Road	Structure of Historical Significance/Architectural Specimen
Business	1332 Main Street	Structure of Historical Significance
Burgess Residence (Rice Home)	1056 Hacienda Drive	Structure of Historical Significance
Lawrence Meat Company	1423 North Main Street	Site of Historical Significance
Stanley Dollar House	Tice Valley Rossmoor	Structure of Historical Significance/Architectural Specimen
Burgess Residence Rabbit Cannery	962 Seven Hills Ranch Road	Structure of Historical Event
March Bank Horse Ranch	1660 Ygnacio and Bancroft	Structure of Historical Significance/Architectural Specimen
Chapel, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church	Trinity Avenue	Structure of Historical Significance
Leach Home	1837 North Main Street	Architectural Specimen
Walnut Creek Women’s Clubhouse	Corner of Carmel Drive 7 Lincoln Avenue	Architectural Specimen
Brookside Vineyard Residence	2190 Oak Grove Boulevard	Structure of Historical Significance
Johnson Residence (Shadelands Ranch)	2660 Ygnacio Valley Road	Structure of Historical Significance/Architectural Specimen
Dole House	1614 Mount Diablo Boulevard	Architectural Specimen
Walnut Creek Southern Pacific Depot	South Broadway	Structure of Historical Significance/Architectural Specimen
Marshal Residence	43 Quail Court	Site Relating to Important Person in History
Welch House Residence	2190 Oak Grove Road	Site Relating to Important Person in History
Rogers Hotel	Duncan and Main Street	Site of Historic Event
Adams Residence	2030 San Miguel Drive	Architectural Specimen
Bronson Residence	210 El Camino Corto	Architectural Specimen
Larriell Residence	196 El Camino Corto	Architectural Specimen
Stow Residence	1721 Stow Avenue	Structure of Historical Significance

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

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Less than Significant Impact. Previously unrecorded and recorded historical resources are located in the city. Implementation of the Safety Element Update could result in impacts to historical resources in the city by requiring that existing facilities meet the City's standards for emergency management and hazard mitigation (e.g., seismic and geotechnical, flood control, and fire standards); however, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development that can be evaluated in project-specific detail. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to historical resources and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Additionally, the GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter encourages the preservation, restoration, and compatible reuse of historically significant structures and sites (Policy 25.1). Future projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with applicable policies to protect historical resources. Therefore, impacts to historical resources would be less than significant.

b. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the Safety Element Update could result in impacts to cultural resources in the city due to ground-disturbing construction activities associated with road and utility repairs; however, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development that can be evaluated in project-specific detail. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to archaeological resources and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Additionally, the GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter includes several goals, policies, and actions to preserve significant archaeological resources, including reviewing the potential for the presence of archaeological and paleontological resources and remains in or near identified archaeological sites (Policy 24.1); requiring review by the California Archaeological Inventory, Northeast Information Center, Sonoma State University, of all major new projects and all projects of any size within 660 feet of a site identified on the City's map of sensitive archaeological sites and adding appropriate mitigations as conditions of project approval as may be recommended by the California Archaeological Inventory (Action 24.1.1); and requiring developers to halt all work if cultural resources are encountered during a project, and to retain a qualified archaeologist to evaluate and make recommendations for conservation and mitigation (Action 24.1.2).

Future projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local policies to protect archaeological resources. As

required by the policies and actions of the GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter described above, development proposed within 660 feet of known sensitive sites, or sites that are discovered to be sensitive, requires review for archaeological resources prior to construction. If cultural resources, including archaeological resources, are encountered during construction, developers would be required to cease work and retain a qualified archaeologist to evaluate and conserve the resource(s). Therefore, impacts to archaeological resources would be less than significant.

c. Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Less than Significant Impact. Future development consistent with the Safety Element Update has the potential to encounter previously buried, unrecorded human remains due to ground-disturbing construction activities associated with road and utility repairs; however, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development that can be evaluated in project-specific detail. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to archaeological resources, including human remains and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts.

Additionally, Policy 24.1 of the GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter outlines actions that strive to preserve cultural resources in the city, which include human remains. Furthermore, if human remains are encountered during project construction, the California Health and Safety Code and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5, require that work in the immediate area must halt and that the remains must be protected. The County Coroner and the Native American Heritage Commission shall be notified immediately, if applicable, per Section 5097.98 of the California Public Resources Code and Section 7050.5 of California Health and Safety Code. The responsibilities for acting on notification of a discovery of Native American human remains are identified in California Public Resources Code, Section 5097.94. Future projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with federal, state, and local regulations in place to protect human remains, including the California Health and Safety Code and Actions 24.1.1 and 24.1.2 of the GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter, described in Section 2.4.5(b) above. Therefore, impacts to human remains would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.6 Energy

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The California Building Code (CBC) contains standards that regulate the method of use, properties, performance, or types of materials used in the construction, alteration, improvement, repair, or rehabilitation of a building or other improvement to real property. The CBC includes requirements in the Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6) and voluntary energy efficiency provisions in the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) (Title 24, Part 11), which are updated every 3 years; the most recent version includes the 2025 Building Energy Efficiency Standards that go into effect January 1, 2026. These standards focus on four key areas: smart residential photovoltaic systems, updated thermal envelope standards (preventing heat transfer from the interior to the exterior and vice versa), residential and non-residential ventilation requirements, and non-residential lighting requirements. The City has adopted the 2025 CBC, including CALGreen, into its own Building Code (Title 9, Chapter 1, of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code).

The City of Walnut Creek adopted a Sustainability Action Plan in 2023. The Sustainability Action Plan provides strategies and actions that support the state’s greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets through 2045, including:

- Reduce community-wide GHG emissions by 40 percent from the 1990 baseline by 2030.
- Reduce community-wide GHG emissions by at least 85 percent from the 1990 baseline by 2045 and be on a pathway to support statewide carbon neutrality.

Impact Analysis

- a. **Would the project result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?**

Less than Significant Impact. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development that could result in energy use, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees.

Given that future development pursuant to the Safety Element Update does not propose land use or zoning changes, the Safety Element Update would be consistent with the GP 2025 and would not result in any unplanned regional energy use. It is anticipated that limited energy resources would be consumed during construction of future development facilitated by the Safety Element Update. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to energy use, including analysis of individual project consistency with the CBC, Energy Code, CALGreen, and any other requirements included as part of the GP 2025 and Sustainability Action Plan and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Compliance with state and local building regulations and standards would ensure that energy usage would not be inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary.

Additionally, the Safety Element Update would improve energy efficiency by incorporating several new policies and actions addressing energy use and energy efficiency in the city:

- **Action 8.1.7.** Increase the resiliency of existing and new development through structural strengthening, fire-safe landscaping, and energy efficiency upgrades. Where appropriate, support retrofitting or relocation of structures in high hazard areas, prioritizing structures that have experienced repetitive losses.
- **Action 9.2.3.** Furnish appropriate facilities with necessary infrastructure and goods, including renewable energy and energy storage systems, water resources, non-perishable food and potable water, basic medical and hygienic supplies, and other appropriate items.
- **Policy 10.1:** Strengthen energy infrastructure systems against damage from climate-related effects and expand alternative sources in the energy network.
 - **Action 10.1.1:** Minimize stress on the electrical grid by encouraging the conservation of energy during peak demand hours.
 - **Action 10.4.1:** Reduce the impacts of extreme heat on people and the electric grid through measures such as increasing urban tree planting and implementing cool roofs and pavement materials.
 - **Action 10.4.2:** Pursue grant and funding opportunities to provide financial assistance, reduced cost for energy retrofits, or installation of other adaptation measures to help protect low-income, senior citizens, and other vulnerable residents against extreme heat events.

As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to the efficient use of energy in the city. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

No Impact. Based on the limited scale of development projects that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update, implementation would not conflict with, nor obstruct, a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, such as the City’s Sustainability Action Plan. Future projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with federal, state, and local regulations in place to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts related to energy and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. In addition, as described in Section 2.4.6(a) above, the Safety Element Update would improve energy efficiency by incorporating several policies and actions addressing energy use, renewable energy, and energy efficiency in the city. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.7 Geology and Soils

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The city is located in the seismically active Bay Area, a region that has experienced numerous earthquakes in the past. The Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone Act specifies that an area termed an Earthquake Fault Zone is to be delineated if surrounding faults are deemed sufficiently active or well-defined after a review of seismic records and geological studies. The city is located partially within and in proximity to several Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Hazard Zones. The eastern portion of the city is located within the Concord/Green Valley Fault, an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault. The city is also located within 35 miles of several other regional faults and Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Hazard Zones, including the Greenville Fault, Calaveras Fault, Rodgers Creek Fault, Hayward Fault, San Andreas Fault, and San Gregorio Fault. Other area faults (i.e., not in Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault

Hazard Zones) pass through the city, including the Lafayette Fault, Las Trampas Fault, Mount Diablo Thrust Fault, North Calaveras Fault, South Hampton and Franklin Fault, and Walker Canyon Fault.

The City’s GP 2025 Safety and Noise Chapter includes several goals, policies, and actions to prevent geologic hazards in new projects and reduce the risk of these hazards in existing developed areas, including restrictions on development and required geotechnical evaluations:

Goal 1. Protect life and property from geologic hazards.

- **Policy 1.1.** Reduce the potential effects of seismic and other geologic hazards, including slope instability.
 - **Action 1.1.1.** Identify areas prone to seismic and other geologic hazards, including slope instability.
 - **Action 1.1.2.** Establish minimum road widths and clearances around structures at risk from known geologic hazards.
 - **Action 1.1.3.** Review and update the existing maps of geologic hazards.
 - **Action 1.1.4.** Require appropriate mitigations for new development or redevelopment in areas prone to seismic and other geologic hazards.
- **Policy 1.2.** Limit development within high-risk geologic areas to a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 20 acres.
 - **Action 1.2.1.** Identify high risk areas after taking into account soil stability, history of soil slippage, proximity to earthquake faults, slope grade, accessibility, and drainage conditions, and continue to assign low intensity uses, not exceeding a density of one dwelling unit per 20 acres, to such areas.
 - **Action 1.2.2.** As updated seismic-hazard zone maps become available, incorporate them in the General Plan.
 - **Action 1.2.3.** Identify areas where surface ruptures are most likely to occur and cause damage to human-made structures, such as dams.
 - **Action 1.2.4.** For development proposals submitted in areas near earthquake fault zones listed under the Alquist-Priolo Act, require a geotechnical evaluation to identify hazard mitigation measures needed to reduce the risk to life and property from earthquake-induced hazards.
 - **Action 1.2.5.** For development proposals submitted in areas near high or very high liquefaction-susceptibility areas, require a geotechnical evaluation to identify hazard mitigation measures needed to reduce the risk to life and property from liquefaction-induced hazards.

Impact Analysis

- a. **Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:**
 - i. **Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.**

Less than Significant Impact. Several fault systems could produce earthquakes that cause substantial ground motion resulting in serious injuries or deaths, as well as significant property damage, due to the seismic activity of the region as a whole. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would result in increased risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would not include habitable structures and therefore, would not expose people to risk of loss, injury, or death from rupture of an earthquake fault. Nevertheless, future discretionary projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review and would be required to comply with the CBC, which would reduce exposure of people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects from seismic ground shaking. Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 10-2.3.407(G), prohibits development of structures within 50 of a fault line. In addition, any proposed construction requiring a grading permit would require the preparation of a soils and engineering geology report prepared by a professional soil investigation firm under the direction of a soils engineer and an engineering geologist and shall include: an adequate description of the geology of the site; conclusions and recommendations regarding the effect of geologic conditions on the proposed development; opinions and recommendations covering the adequacy of sites to be developed by the proposed grading; data regarding the nature, distribution strength, and in-place relative compaction of existing soils; conclusions and recommendations for grading procedures and design criteria for corrective measures when necessary; and groundwater conditions (Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 9-9.06). Recommendations included in the soils and engineering geology report as approved by the City shall be incorporated in the grading plans and/or specifications. With the adoption of appropriate engineering design in conformance with the recommended geotechnical recommendations for construction, future development projects facilitated by the Safety Element Update are not anticipated to cause adverse effects involving rupture of an earthquake fault.

Additionally, the Safety Element Update evaluates seismic and other geologic hazards in the city and incorporates several policies and actions to protect life and property from seismic shaking and other geologic hazards:

- **Policy 1.1:** Reduce the potential effects of seismic and other geologic hazards, including slope instability.
 - **Action 1.1.1:** Identify areas prone to seismic and other geologic hazards, including slope instability.
 - **Action 1.1.2:** Establish minimum road widths and clearances around structures at risk from known geologic hazards.
 - **Action 1.1.3:** Review and update the existing maps of geologic hazards.
 - **Action 1.1.4:** Require appropriate mitigations for new development or redevelopment in areas prone to seismic and other geologic hazards.
- **Policy 1.2:** Limit new development and residential intensification within high-risk geologic areas, consistent with State housing law.
 - **Action 1.2.1:** Identify high risk areas using objective criteria, such as soil stability, history of soil slippage, proximity to earthquake faults, slope grade, accessibility, and drainage conditions, and guide land use and development in high risk areas to safely mitigate risks.
 - **Action 1.2.2:** Maintain up-to-date seismic hazard zone maps to inform development decisions and ensure risks are addressed in project planning.
 - **Action 1.2.3:** Identify areas where surface ruptures are most likely to occur and cause damage to human-made structures, such as dams.
- **Policy 1.3:** Encourage the design of projects to accommodate seismic shaking, and encourage the location of projects, particularly critical infrastructure, away from areas subject to hazards caused by seismic shaking (e.g., landsliding, liquefaction).
 - **Action 1.3.1:** Require geotechnical studies in hazard areas (e.g., earthquake, steep slopes, and liquefaction) as identified by federal, state, and regional agencies. Require sites to be developed in accordance with recommendations from geotechnical investigations, such as soils and/or geologic reports.
- **Policy 1.4:** Promote the design of major infrastructure, such as transportation, pipelines, and water and natural gas mains, to avoid or minimize proximity to active fault traces.
 - **Action 1.4.1:** Require the retrofitting of existing structures to withstand earthquake ground-shaking.
 - **Action 1.4.2:** Educate the public about seismic hazards and related structural hazards.

- **Action 1.4.3:** Maintain the City’s Municipal Code consistent with the most current California Building Code to ensure that new buildings and renovated structures incorporate earthquake-resistant design and materials.
- **Action 1.4.4:** Develop and implement an earthquake retrofit plan to identify seismically unsafe buildings and structures, reduce earthquake hazards, and ensure inspections or improvements are completed as needed.

As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to the risk from seismic hazards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less than Significant Impact. Ground shaking is responsible for the majority of damage from earthquakes and can damage or destroy buildings. The intensity of shaking depends on the type of fault, distance to the epicenter, magnitude of the earthquake, and subsurface geology. Several fault systems could produce earthquakes that cause substantial ground motion resulting in serious injuries or deaths, as well as significant property damage, due to the seismic activity of the region as a whole. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would result in increased risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would not include habitable structures and therefore, would not expose people to risk of loss, injury, or death from strong seismic ground shaking. Nevertheless, future discretionary projects facilitated by the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review and would be required to comply with the CBC, which would reduce exposure of people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects from seismic ground shaking. In addition, any proposed construction requiring a grading permit would be required to prepare a soils and engineering geology report and incorporate any recommendations included in the report as approved by the City, in accordance with Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 9-9.06. As described in Section 2.4.7(a)(i) above, the proposed Safety Element Update incorporates several policies and actions to protect life and property from seismic and geologic hazards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less than Significant Impact. Liquefaction results when water-saturated, sandy, unstable soils are subject to intense shaking, such as that caused by an earthquake. These soils lose cohesiveness, causing unreinforced structures to fail. The California Geological Survey has not mapped liquefaction potential for the city. However, the GP 2025 Safety and Noise Chapter maps the liquefaction susceptibility in the city as determined by the U.S. Geological Survey. As shown on Figure 2 of the Safety Element Update, portions of the city, particularly areas along waterways, are within moderate and very high liquefaction-susceptibility areas. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would result in

increased risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would not include habitable structures and therefore, would not expose people risk of loss, injury, or death from liquefaction. Nevertheless, future discretionary projects facilitated by the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review and would be required to comply with all relevant federal and state regulations and building standards related to structural and slope stability. For instance, Title 10 Article 4 (Hillside Performance Standards) of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code is intended to minimize the negative impacts that may otherwise be associated with developing in the hillside areas that define the city's boundaries and public open spaces. Section 10-2.3.409 of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code identifies Required Findings for Project Approval, which include that the “proposed development has been reviewed against the seismic and slope instability hazard maps and the ABAG Ground Shaking and Damage Potential maps, after which a geotechnical analysis was made and designated high risk areas have been designated as undevelopable on the approved plans.” In addition, any proposed construction requiring a grading permit would be required to prepare a soils and engineering geology report and incorporate any recommendations included in the report as approved by the City, in accordance with Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 9-9.06. The proposed Safety Element Update also incorporates several policies and actions to protect life and property from seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction (refer to Section 2.4.7(a)(i)). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

iv. Landslides?

Less than Significant Impact. As described above, several earthquake faults are located in the city, including the Concord/Green Valley Fault, an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Hazard Zone. Seismic risks are significantly higher in areas closer to the region’s major faults, and a moderate or major earthquake could result in potentially damaging landslides. Development on the hillside areas where steep slopes are present can exacerbate landslide hazards. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would result in increased risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would not include habitable structures and therefore, would not expose people to risk of loss, injury, or death from landslides. Nevertheless, future discretionary projects proposed as a result of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with the CBC and the recommendations of a project-specific soils and engineering geology report (Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 9-9.06), including engineered site preparation and adequate structural design, which would reduce potential adverse impacts from landslides. Further, Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 10-2.3.407(G) prohibits development of structures within 50 of a known landslide area. Additionally, the Safety Element Update incorporates several policies and actions to protect life and property from seismic hazards, including landslides (refer to Section 2.4.7(a)(i)). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development. As such, the nature of construction activities for future individual projects that may be facilitated by the Safety Element Update, such as the amount of grading, excavation, and vegetation removal, are unknown at this time. However, given the nature of development projects that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update (i.e., utilities and transportation infrastructure), ground-disturbance is anticipated to be limited in scale. If a project proposes to disturb more than 1 acre of soil, it is required by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which would include best management practices (BMPs) for erosion and sedimentation control. Typical BMPs include an effective combination of erosion and sedimentation controls, which include barriers such as silt fences, hay bales, drain inlet protection, and gravel bags. Additionally, Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 10-2.3.407(C) requires development to be designed to minimize disruption of the natural topography. Future development facilitated by implementation of the Safety Element Update would be subject to these conditions for a construction permit. Following construction, implementation of individual projects that may be facilitated under the Safety Element Update would not increase the potential for soils to be subject to wind or water erosion. In addition, several policies and actions established in the Safety Element Update promote the use of low-impact development and other flood control practices that inherently reduce the potential for soil erosion and sedimentation. For instance, Policy 11.1 calls for reducing local flooding through implementation of low-impact development (e.g., rain gardens, rainwater harvesting, green roofs). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

c. Would the project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

Less than Significant Impact. Development on hillside areas where steep slopes are present can increase rates of erosion and exacerbate landslide hazards, lateral spreading, liquefaction, or collapse, which may threaten structures. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development. Future discretionary projects proposed as a result of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review and would be required to adhere to the CBC, the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, and other standards and regulations for building designs. For instance, Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 10-2.3.407(D), prohibits development of any kind on portions of any site where the true slope is above 30 percent to prevent property damage resulting from slope failure. In addition, Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 10-2.3.409(G), requires that projects on any property or portion of a property with an average slope of 15 percent or greater be reviewed against the seismic and slope instability hazard maps and the ABAG Ground Shaking and Damage Potential maps, after which a geotechnical analysis was made and designated high risk areas have been designated as undevelopable on the approved plans. In addition, any proposed construction requiring a grading permit would be required to prepare a soils and engineering geology report and incorporate any

recommendations included in the report as approved by the City, in accordance with Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 9-9.06. Further, Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 10-2.3.407(G), prohibits development of structures within 50 of a known landslide area.

Policy 1.1 and Actions 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 of the existing Safety Element address impacts related to slope instability and steep slopes. The Safety Element Update would retain these existing policies and actions. Additionally, the Safety Element Update incorporates several policies and actions to protect life and property from seismic and geologic hazards (refer to Section 2.4.7[a][i]).

Impacts resulting from unstable geologic units or soil would be reduced through compliance with the GP 2025, existing state and local codes, and adherence with the recommendations of a project-specific geotechnical report, including engineered site preparation and adequate structural design. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

d. Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

Less than Significant Impact. Certain types of clay soils expand when they are saturated and shrink when dried. These are called expansive soils and can pose a threat to the integrity of structures built on them without proper engineering. Expansion and contraction of soils in response to changes in moisture content could lead to differential and cyclical movements that could cause damage or distress to structures and equipment. Thus, they are less suitable for development than non-expansive soils.

Future development consistent with the Safety Element Update could be adversely impacted by expansive soils; however, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development that can be evaluated in project-specific detail. Future discretionary projects that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review. Any future development that is supported by the Safety Element Update would be required to adhere to the CBC, the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, and other standards and regulations for building designs. In addition, any proposed construction requiring a grading permit would be required to prepare a soils and engineering geology report and incorporate any recommendations included in the report as approved by the City, in accordance with Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 9-9.06. Impacts resulting from expansive soils would be reduced through compliance with existing state and local codes and adherence with the recommendations of the project-specific soils and engineering geology report. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

e. Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

Less than Significant Impact. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would not include habitable structures that would require the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Nevertheless, any proposed construction requiring a grading

permit would be required to prepare a soils and engineering geology report and incorporate any recommendations included in the report as approved by the City, in accordance with Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 9-9.06. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

f. Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the Safety Element Update could result in impacts to unique paleontological resources or sites in the city due to ground-disturbing construction activities associated with road and utility repairs; however, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development that can be evaluated in project-specific detail. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to paleontological resources and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Additionally, the GP 2025 Built Environment Chapter includes several goals, policies, and actions to preserve significant archaeological and paleontological resources, including reviewing the potential for the presence of archaeological and paleontological resources and remains in or near identified archaeological sites (Policy 24.1); requiring review by the California Archaeological Inventory, Northeast Information Center, Sonoma State University, of all major new projects and all projects of any size within 660 feet of a site identified on the City’s map of sensitive archaeological sites and adding appropriate mitigations as conditions of project approval as may be recommended by the California Archaeological Inventory (Action 24.1.1); and requiring developers to halt all work if cultural resources are encountered during a project, and to retain a qualified archaeologist to evaluate and make recommendations for conservation and mitigation (Action 24.1.2). Future projects facilitated by the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations that protect paleontological resources. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) trap heat in the atmosphere and occur from natural processes as well as human activities. Human activities that produce GHGs are the burning of fossil fuels (e.g., coal, oil, and natural gas for heating and electricity, gasoline and diesel for transportation); methane from landfill wastes and raising livestock, deforestation activities; and some agricultural practices. Scientific evidence indicates a correlation between the worldwide proliferation of GHG emissions by mankind over the past century and increasing global temperatures (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2023). The principal GHGs that enter the atmosphere because of human activities are:

- Carbon dioxide (CO₂) enters the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels (oil, natural gas, and coal), agriculture, irrigation, and deforestation, as well as the manufacturing of cement.
- Methane (CH₄) is emitted through the production and transportation of coal, natural gas, and oil, as well as from livestock. Other agricultural activities (e.g., ranching, dairy production, and fertilizer) influence CH₄ emissions as well as the decay of waste in landfills.
- Nitrous oxide (N₂O) is released most often during the burning of fuel at high temperatures. This GHG is caused mostly by motor vehicles, which also include non-road vehicles, such as those used for agriculture.
- Fluorinated Gases are emitted primarily from industrial sources, which often include hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆). Although they are often released in smaller quantities, they are referred to as High Global Warming Potential Gases because of their ability to cause global warming.

These gases have different Global Warming Potentials or potentials for trapping heat in the atmosphere. For example, one pound of CH₄ has 21 times more heat capturing potential than one pound of CO₂. When dealing with an array of emissions, GHG emissions are typically reported in terms of pounds or metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e) per year for comparison purposes.

The City’s Sustainability Action Plan identifies strategies intended to reduce GHG emissions in the city through transition to renewable and carbon-free energy sources (Strategy 1), facilitation of energy efficiency and electrification at existing buildings and infrastructure (Strategies 2 and 3), requiring electrification and low-carbon materials for new buildings (Strategy 4), promoting the use and accessibility of electric vehicles (Strategies 5, 6, and 7), reducing vehicle miles traveled (Strategies 8, 10, and 11), reducing waste (Strategy 14), and supporting a fair and just countywide and statewide transition to a low-carbon economy (Strategy 19).

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. The greatest source of GHG emissions associated with development projects in California is vehicular emissions (CARB 2025). The second greatest source is emissions from energy consumption (both natural gas and electrical) (CARB 2025).

The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development project or land use or zoning changes that would directly generate GHG emissions. However, the goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the Safety Element Update may facilitate development associated with hazard mitigation projects, such as road and infrastructure repairs, tree and vegetation removal, and drainage improvements, that could generate construction-related GHG emissions. It is anticipated that limited GHG emissions would be generated during construction of future development facilitated by the Safety Element Update. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts related to GHG emissions, including analysis of individual project consistency with the CBC, Energy Code, CALGreen, and any other requirements included as part of the GP 2025 and Sustainability Action Plan, and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Compliance with state and local building regulations and standards would ensure that GHG emissions do not have a significant impact on the environment.

The Safety Element Update would not include any policies that would encourage inefficient building practices that could affect the volume of GHG emissions. Additionally, the Safety Element Update would reduce GHG emissions in the city by incorporating several policies and actions addressing energy use and energy efficiency:

- **Action 8.1.7.** Increase the resiliency of existing and new development through structural strengthening, fire-safe landscaping, and energy efficiency upgrades. Where appropriate, support retrofitting or relocation of structures in high hazard areas, prioritizing structures that have experienced repetitive losses.
- **Action 9.1.6.** Ban new wood-burning fireplaces.

- **Action 9.2.3:** Furnish appropriate facilities with necessary infrastructure and goods, including renewable energy and energy storage systems, water resources, non-perishable food and potable water, basic medical and hygienic supplies, and other appropriate items.
- **Policy 9.3:** Support a fair and just countywide and statewide transition to a low-carbon economy.
 - **Action 9.3.1:** Support the City's economic development team to help attract green business and jobs to Walnut Creek.
 - **Action 9.3.2:** Amend the City's purchasing standards to prioritize local goods and services, such as from certified green businesses.
 - **Action 9.3.3:** Conduct education and outreach on organics recycling to all residents, businesses, haulers, solid waste facilities, and local food banks and other food recovery organizations, such as RecycleSmart.
 - **Action 9.3.4:** Partner with local non-profits, community groups, and schools to provide green jobs training, prioritizing training for disadvantaged persons and persons currently or recently working in extractive resources.
 - **Action 9.3.5:** Advocate for State legislation to accelerate the phasing out of fossil fuel extraction and refining in the region.
 - **Action 9.3.6:** Support State and federal green jobs programs that provide access to jobs paying a livable wage.
 - **Action 9.3.7:** Promote fairness in purchasing activities Citywide, including just practices for sourcing materials, fair trade purchasing, and purchase of sustainable products and materials.
- **Policy 9.9:** Design adaptation initiatives and programs to provide multiple co-benefits, including reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, support for the local economy, enhancements to the natural environment, or alleviating underlying health inequities.
- **Policy 10.1:** Strengthen energy infrastructure systems against damage from climate-related effects and expand alternative sources in the energy network.
 - **Action 10.1.1:** Minimize stress on the electrical grid by encouraging the conservation of energy during peak demand hours.
 - **Action 10.4.1:** Reduce the impacts of extreme heat on people and the electric grid through measures such as increasing urban tree planting and implementing cool roofs and pavement materials.
 - **Action 10.4.2:** Pursue grant and funding opportunities to provide financial assistance or reduced cost for energy retrofits or installation of other adaptation measures to help protect low-income, senior citizens, and other vulnerable residents against extreme heat events.

As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to the citywide generation of GHG emissions. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Less than Significant Impact. As previously stated, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would directly result in increased GHG emissions. However, future development facilitated as a result of the Safety Element Update would have the potential to generate short-term construction-related GHG emissions associated with hazard mitigation projects, such as road and infrastructure repairs, tree and vegetation removal, and drainage improvements. Future discretionary projects under the Safety Element Update would be required to demonstrate consistency with the state and local plans, policies, and regulations, such as the City's Sustainable Action Plan, through project-specific CEQA review and would implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce GHG emissions. In addition, as described in Section 2.4.8(a) above, the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to the citywide generation of GHG emissions by incorporating several policies and actions addressing energy use, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and GHG emissions. As such, the Safety Element Update would be consistent with the City's overall efforts for reducing GHG emissions; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. For a project located within an airport land-use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The California Health and Safety Code Section 25260 defines a hazardous material as “any material that because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment.” Thus, the term “hazardous material” is a broad term for all substances that may be hazardous, specifically including hazardous substances and hazardous waste. Substances that are flammable, corrosive, reactive, oxidizers, radioactive, combustible, or toxic are considered hazardous.

Hazardous materials are transported through the city via the primary transportation routes (i.e., I-680, SR-24, and Ygnacio Valley Road) and via underground pipelines.

Hazardous materials sites in the city include EnviroStor cleanup sites as identified and regulated by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and open sites identified by the SWRCB's GeoTracker database, shown in Table 2, City of Walnut Creek Hazardous Materials Sites.

Table 2. City of Walnut Creek Hazardous Materials Sites

Facility Name	Address	Program Type	Status
EnviroStor Cleanup Sites			
Agilent Technologies Inc	2700 Mitchell Drive	Haz Waste – RCRA	Closed
Broadway Muffler Service	2596 North Main Street	Voluntary Cleanup	Active – Land Use Restrictions
City of Walnut Creek Corp Yard	470, 480, 490 Lawrence Way	Voluntary Cleanup	Active
City of Walnut Creek Corp Yard	511 Lawrence Way	Voluntary Cleanup	Inactive – Needs Evaluation
Contra Costa Newspapers	2640 Shadelands Drive	Tiered Permit	Inactive – Needs Evaluation
Diablo Pest Control	1457 Sos Drive	Voluntary Cleanup	Certified
Eagle Peak Montessori School Site	800 Hutchinson Road	School Cleanup	Certified
Habitat For Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley	1250 Las Juntas Way	Voluntary Cleanup	Certified
Kenmar Properties	1525 Cypress Street	Voluntary Cleanup	Active
Arian Chromatography Systems	2700 Mitchell Drive	Corrective Action	Certified
Walnut Creek Shadeland	2801 Shadelands Drive	Cal-Mortgage	No Action Required
Wayne Stead Cadillac	1800 Mt Diablo Boulevard	State Response	Certified
Ygnacio Valley Road Id #744	2801/2803 Ygnacio Valley Road	Evaluation	No Evidence of Release
GeoTracker Open Sites			
Chevron	1998 Tice Valley Boulevard	LUST Cleanup Site	Site Assessment
Doherty Brothers	2082 Mt Diablo Boulevard	LUST Cleanup Site	Remediation
Ebmund Fleet Maintenance East	2658 North Main Street	LUST Cleanup Site	Site Assessment
Former Dutch Girl Cleaners	1950 Mount Diablo Boulevard	Cleanup Program Site	Inactive
Jim's Auto Body	2639–2645 North Main Street	LUST Cleanup Site	Site Assessment
Kinder Morgan LS-16 Pipeline Release	South Broadway Avenue	Cleanup Program Site	Long-term Management
Rodrigues Property	2679 North Main Street	LUST Cleanup Site	Site Assessment
Shell Service Staton #136245	1790 Ygnacio Valley Road	LUST Cleanup Site	Site Assessment
Siemens Medical Laboratories	2404 North Main Street	Cleanup Program Site	Inactive
Sparklizing Cleaners	1958 Tice Valley Boulevard	Cleanup Program Site	Assessment/Interim Remedial Action
Virginia Cleaners	1305–1335 South Main Street	Cleanup Program Site	Verification Monitoring

Source: DTSC 2025.

Notes: RCRA = Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

The City's GP 2025 Safety and Noise Chapter includes several goals, policies, and actions to address hazards and the transport, handling, use and disposal of hazardous materials:

Goal 3. Reduce dangers from hazardous materials.

- **Policy 3.1.** Facilitate the proper disposal of hazardous materials.
 - **Action 3.1.1.** Work with Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA) to ensure that options are available for: full-service hazardous-material disposal; household and small business hazardous-waste disposal; convenient, economical drop-off and/or pickup of used motor oil and antifreeze; convenient, economical drop-off and/or pickup of universal waste (e.g., computer monitors, televisions, consumer electronic devices, batteries).
- **Policy 3.2.** Prioritize safety needs of nonindustrial land uses.
 - **Action 3.2.1.** Carefully examine proposed mixed-use areas and plans with respect to the presence or prospective presence of hazardous materials.
- **Policy 3.3.** Incorporate hazardous-material-abatement provisions in zoning and subdivision decisions and entitlement permits.
- **Policy 3.4.** Work with federal and state authorities to ensure that any transport of hazardous materials through Walnut Creek is at the highest standard of safety.
 - **Action 3.4.1.** Designate hazardous-material carrier routes that direct hazardous materials away from populated and other sensitive areas.
 - **Action 3.4.2.** Prohibit hazardous-materials transport vehicles from parking on City streets.
 - **Action 3.4.3.** Require, as much as possible, that new pipelines and other channels carrying hazardous materials be placed to avoid residential areas and, in particular, areas where the population is less mobile (e.g., convalescent homes).
- **Policy 3.5.** Require that soils, groundwater, and buildings affected by hazardous-material releases from prior land uses, and lead and asbestos potentially present in building materials, will not have the potential to adversely affect the environment or the health and safety of residents.
 - **Action 3.5.1.** Require an environmental investigation for hazardous materials when reviewing applications for new development in former commercial or industrial areas.

Impact Analysis

- a. **Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update is a policy document and does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would directly result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment related to

hazardous materials. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Potential hazard-related impacts would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of the project site and nature of the project is known. Construction activities associated with future utilities and infrastructure construction, installation, and repair could involve the use of chemical substances, such as solvents, paints, fuel for equipment, and other potentially hazardous materials. These materials are common to typical construction activities and do not pose a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Given the nature of development that may be facilitated under implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update (e.g., tree and vegetation trimming and removal, utilities and transportation infrastructure, drainage improvements), long-term operation of future projects would not involve large quantities of hazardous materials. Adherence to federal, state, and local regulations and standard protocols during future construction activities would minimize the hazard to the public and environment associated with the storage, transportation, disposal, and usage of any hazardous materials. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts related to hazardous materials and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Compliance with state and local building regulations and standards would ensure that the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials do not have a significant impact on the environment.

In addition, the Safety Element Update would include the following policies and actions to protect the community from the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials:

- **Policy 3.1:** Facilitate the proper disposal of hazardous materials.
 - **Action 3.1.1:** Coordinate with Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority to ensure that options are available for: full-service hazardous-material disposal; household and small business hazardous-waste disposal; convenient, economical drop-off and/or pickup of used motor oil and antifreeze; convenient, economical drop-off and/or pickup of universal waste (e.g., computer monitors, televisions, consumer electronic devices, batteries).
- **Policy 3.2:** Prioritize safety needs of nonindustrial land uses.
 - **Action 3.2.1:** Carefully examine proposed mixed-use projects with respect to the presence or prospective presence of hazardous materials.
- **Policy 3.3:** Ensure that development incorporates hazardous-materials abatement measures to identify, mitigate, and remediate hazardous substances.

- **Policy 3.4:** Consult with federal and state authorities to ensure that any transport of hazardous materials through Walnut Creek is at the highest standard of safety.
 - **Action 3.4.1:** Designate hazardous-material carrier routes that direct hazardous materials away from populated and other sensitive areas.
 - **Action 3.4.2:** Prohibit hazardous-materials transport vehicles from parking on City streets.
 - **Action 3.4.3:** Limit the placement of new pipelines and other channels carrying hazardous materials near residential areas, particularly near vulnerable immobile populations (e.g. residential care facilities).
- **Policy 3.6:** Require that new development and redevelopment protect public health and safety from hazardous materials.
- **Policy 3.7:** Minimize risks of exposure to or contamination by hazardous materials by educating the public, establishing performance standards for uses that involve hazardous materials, and evaluating soil and groundwater contamination, as part of development project review.
 - **Action 3.7.1:** Support the removal of hazardous wastes from the solid waste stream in the City in accordance with Citywide plans.
 - **Action 3.7.4:** Educate businesses and residents about the proper use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and ways to reduce or eliminate the use of hazardous materials, including the use of non-toxic or less-toxic alternatives.

As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to reducing hazards from the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. Incidents that result in an accidental release of hazardous substances into the environment can cause contamination of soil, surface water, and groundwater, in addition to any toxic fumes that might be generated. If not cleaned up immediately and completely, hazardous substances can migrate into the soil or enter a local stream or channel causing further contamination of soil and water. Human exposure to contaminated soil, soil gas, or water can have potential health effects depending on a variety of factors, including the nature of the contaminant and the degree of exposure.

The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development and does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would directly result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment related to hazardous materials.

However, the goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate construction, installation, and repair of water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, which could result in accidental releases during construction, such as petroleum-based fuels or hydraulic fluid used for construction equipment. The level of risk associated with the accidental release of hazardous substances is not considered significant due to the small volume and low concentration of hazardous materials that may be present during new construction. The construction contractor would be required to use standard construction controls and safety procedures that would avoid and minimize the potential for accidental release of such substances into the environment. Standard construction practices would be observed such that any materials released are appropriately contained and remediated as required by local, state, and federal law, including the California Hazardous Waste Control Law, California Division of Occupational Safety and Health requirements, federal Resources Conservation and Recovery Act, and the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act. Compliance with existing laws and regulations would ensure impacts would be less than significant.

Given the nature of development that may be facilitated under implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update (e.g., tree and vegetation trimming and removal, utilities and transportation infrastructure, drainage improvements), long-term operation of future projects would not involve large quantities of hazardous materials. Adherence to regulations and standard protocols during the storage and use of any hazardous materials, as discussed above, would minimize and avoid the potential for significant upset and accident condition impacts. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts related to hazardous materials and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Compliance with state and local building regulations and standards would ensure that the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials do not have a significant impact on the environment.

In addition, the Safety Element Update would include the following policies and actions to protect the community from the risk of release of hazardous materials into the environment:

- **Policy 3.5:** Prevent soils, groundwater, and buildings from being affected by hazardous-material releases from prior land uses, and lead and asbestos potentially present in building materials, from adversely affecting the environment or the health and safety of residents.
 - **Action 3.5.1:** Require an environmental investigation for hazardous materials when reviewing applications for new development in former commercial or industrial areas.
- **Policy 3.6:** Require that new development and redevelopment protect public health and safety from hazardous materials.

- **Action 3.6.1:** Require environmental investigations stipulated by State and County regulations for potential hazardous material releases from prior uses, as well as for lead and asbestos present in building materials.
- **Action 3.7.2:** Limit hazardous uses to specific zoning districts and sites that are least impacted by disasters.
- **Action 3.7.3:** Coordinate with the Contra Costa Department of Environmental Health and other appropriate regulatory agencies during the review process of all proposals for the use of hazardous materials or those involving properties that may have toxic contamination, such as petroleum hydrocarbons, asbestos, and lead.

As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to reducing the risk of release of hazardous materials into the environment. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

c. Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Less than Significant Impact. There are schools located throughout and adjacent to the city. As previously described, the Safety Element Update does not propose specific development that can be evaluated in project-specific detail at this time. Potential impacts related to hazardous materials of individual projects would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the nature of the project and location of a project site is known. However, development that may be facilitated as a result of the Safety Element Update would not use or store large quantities of hazardous waste. Future development would include hazard mitigation projects, such as utilities and transportation infrastructure, tree and vegetation trimming and removal, and drainage improvements, and would be subject to planning, zoning, and permitting procedures involved in site plan approvals. As such, land use planning would typically separate uses that would place a school near a development where hazardous materials may be used. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts related to hazardous materials and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Compliance with state and local building regulations and standards would ensure that projects do not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.

In addition, the Safety Element Update would include the following policies and actions that would protect schools from hazardous emissions and hazardous materials:

- **Action 3.2.1:** Carefully examine proposed mixed-use projects with respect to the presence or prospective presence of hazardous materials.
- **Policy 3.3:** Ensure that development incorporates hazardous-materials abatement measures to identify, mitigate, and remediate hazardous substances.
- **Policy 3.4:** Consult with federal and state authorities to ensure that any transport of hazardous materials through Walnut Creek is at the highest standard of safety.
 - **Action 3.4.1:** Designate hazardous-material carrier routes that direct hazardous materials away from populated and other sensitive areas.
 - **Action 3.4.2:** Prohibit hazardous-materials transport vehicles from parking on City streets.
 - **Action 3.7.2:** Limit hazardous uses to specific zoning districts and sites that are least impacted by disasters.

As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to hazardous materials near a school. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

d. Would the project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update is a policy document and does not propose any specific development that can be evaluated in project-specific detail at this time. Potential impacts from individual projects being located on a hazardous materials site would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the nature of the project and location of a project site is known. However, future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update could locate new development on or adjacent to a hazardous materials site (refer to Table 2).

Through the project-specific CEQA review process, it would be determined if a potential development site is on or within the immediate vicinity of any known hazardous material site. If applicable, projects may be required to prepare a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, which would include a database search for existing hazardous materials sites; identify potential violations under federal and applicable state and local environmental laws; and provide recommendations for correcting deficiencies or problems. Where appropriate, mitigation measures would be required for specific projects to reduce potential hazards to the public. With implementation of the City’s environmental review process as well as proposed goals, policies, and actions addressing hazards in the city, impacts related to hazardous waste sites would be less than significant.

In addition, the proposed Safety Element Update would include the following policies and actions aimed at reducing the potential for a significant hazard to the public or the environment from hazardous materials sites:

- **Policy 3.7.** Minimize risks of exposure to or contamination by hazardous materials by educating the public, establishing performance standards for uses that involve hazardous materials, and evaluating soil and groundwater contamination as part of development project review.
 - **Action 3.7.1.** Support the removal of hazardous wastes from the solid waste stream in the City in accordance with Citywide plans.
 - **Action 3.7.2.** Limit hazardous uses to specific zoning districts and sites that are least impacted by disasters.
 - **Action 3.7.3.** Coordinate with the Contra Costa Department of Environmental Health and other appropriate regulatory agencies during the review process of all proposals for the use of hazardous materials or those involving properties that may have toxic contamination, such as petroleum hydrocarbons, asbestos, and lead.

As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to hazardous materials and wastes in the city. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- e. Would the project for a project located within an airport land-use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?**

No Impact. There are no airports or private airstrips in the city. The nearest airport to the city is Buchanan Field Airport in Concord, approximately 3 miles north of the city. Therefore, the city is not within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport. The city is not within the airport land use plan for Buchanan Field Airport. Further, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning, or other actions or policy changes, changes that would result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working on the project site due to proximity to an airport. Therefore, no impact would occur.

- f. Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

Less than Significant Impact. The City prepared an EMP in compliance with the State Office of Emergency Services and the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, which identifies responses and actions depending on the nature and the scope of the disaster (City of Walnut Creek 2020). As described in Section 1.3.2 of the EMP, the EMP establishes the emergency organization, assigns tasks, specifies policies and general procedures, and provides for coordination of the City’s responsibilities as a member of the Contra Costa Operational Area with other member organizations, in both response and recovery procedures. The Safety Element Update and the Emergency Evacuation Route Analysis prepared for the Safety Element Update both incorporate information from the City’s EMP to ensure consistency with the EMP. The Safety Element Update is a policy document that evaluates hazards present in the city and identifies goals, policies, and actions to protect the public from unreasonable

risks associated with those hazards. Incorporating the results of the Emergency Evacuation Route Analysis and feedback from City staff and emergency personnel, the Safety Element Update identifies broad goals, policies, and actions intended to improve emergency response and evacuation in the city. Therefore, the Safety Element Update is consistent with the intentions of the City's EMP.

Construction activities associated with future development associated with the Safety Element Update would have the potential to interfere with emergency plans and procedures if authorities are not properly notified or multiple projects are constructed during the same time and multiple roadways used for emergency routes are concurrently blocked. However, implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update would not facilitate large construction projects, such as residential or commercial development. As described in Section 1.4, Proposed Safety Element Update, development associated with the proposed Safety Element Update would primarily be limited to construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities. Any future development facilitated under the Safety Element Update would be consistent with the City's GP 2025 land use designations. Additionally, future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review and would be subject to City regulations regarding street design, site access, and internal emergency access. As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with the City's EMP. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

g. Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

Less than Significant Impact. As described further in Section 2.4.20, Wildfire, and shown on Figure 5 of the Safety Element Update, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) designates most of the undeveloped, open space portions of the city as a High and Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs). Besides undeveloped open space areas, other land uses in the High FHSZs include single-family residential. There are no Very High FHSZs within the city.

The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that could directly result in exposure of people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. The goals, policies, and actions included in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities. Development of facilities in Moderate and High FHSZs are subject to higher wildfire hazards due to fuel conditions, slope, and prevailing winds based on the location, which would consequently result in higher fire-related risks to people and structures. However, future development would be required to comply with the 2022 California Fire Code and the CBC to minimize risk from wildfire. Additionally, as described further in Section 2.4.20, the Safety Element Update would include several goals, policies, and actions intended to reduce the exposure of people

and the environment to wildland fire risks. Compliance with existing regulations and proposed Safety Element Update policies would ensure impacts related to wildfire risk are below significant. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Walnut Creek Watershed

The city is located within the 146-square-mile Walnut Creek watershed, the largest watershed in Contra Costa County. 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. The Walnut Creek watershed drains the central region of Contra Costa County northward to Suisun Bay. The watershed has eight major tributaries which 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 (CCWD 2021). It consists of 109 miles of tributaries and main channels that originate from the headwaters in Mount Diablo State Park and the East Bay foothills. Within it are the Grayson, Pine, San Ramon, and Las Trampas sub-watersheds through which flow the Walnut, Pine, San Ramon, Tice, and Las Trampas Creeks. San Ramon and

Las Trampas Creeks join under the fountain in Liberty Bell Plaza to form the north-flowing Walnut Creek (City of Walnut Creek 2006). An estimated 71.5 percent of Walnut Creek’s 28.74 miles of channels are in a natural state. 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. The Cities of Concord, Martinez, and small areas of Moraga and San Ramon are also partly within the watershed (CCWD 2021). The entire Walnut Creek watershed is estimated to contain approximately 30 percent of pervious surfaces.

Water Quality

Water quality within the Walnut Creek watershed is governed by the San Francisco 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 May 2017, is 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.

Three creeks in the city are listed in the CWA Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies. Pine Creek and Walnut Creek are listed as Category 4a water body segments (i.e., a water segment where all of its 303(d) listings are being addressed and at least one of those listings is being addressed by a USEPA-approved total maximum daily load). Grayson Creek is listed as a Category 4b water body segment (i.e., a water segment where all of its 303(d) listings are being addressed by action(s) other than the total maximum daily load) (SWRCB 2021).

The Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 9, Chapter 16, Article 1, includes the City’s Stormwater Management and Discharge Control Ordinance. The ordinance states that, in accordance with the City’s National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, “every development project application, including but not limited to a rezoning, tentative map, parcel map, conditional use permit, variance, site development permit, design review, or building permit, that is subject to the development runoff requirements in the City’s NPDES permit shall be accompanied by a stormwater control plan that meets the criteria in the most recent version of the Contra Costa Clean Water Program Stormwater C.3. Guidebook.”

Stormwater and Flooding

The County Watershed Program is responsible for ensuring that the County complies with its municipal stormwater NPDES permits. The NPDES program is mandated by the CWA, and administered in California by the SWRCB and the RWQCBs on behalf of the USEPA.

Stormwater drainage facilities (e.g., storm drains, drain pipes, catch basins, and drainage channels) in the city are maintained and operated by the City’s Public Works Department Maintenance Services Division. The Public Works Department administers the City’s Clean Water program, which is a comprehensive program comprised of various activities designed to reduce stormwater pollution to the maximum extent practicable and to eliminate non-stormwater discharges.

Portions of the City are identified as 100- and 500-year flood hazard areas (Special Flood Hazard Areas) by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The City’s GP 2025 Safety and Noise Chapter includes several goals, policies, and actions to minimize flood hazards in the city:

Goal 2. Reduce the potential for flooding in flood-prone areas.

- **Policy 2.1.** Reduce the risk of property damage and personal injury due to flooding.
 - **Action 2.1.1.** Limit the amount of impervious surface in flood-prone areas.
 - **Action 2.1.2.** Limit runoff in flood-prone areas.
 - **Action 2.1.3.** Work with the County to adopt similar standards for unincorporated parts of the Planning Area.
 - **Action 2.1.4.** Collect drainage fees for projects in designated drainage-improvement areas.
 - **Action 2.1.5.** Work with creekside property owners to reduce and mitigate flood hazards.

Groundwater

The city is located partially within the 15,900-acre Ygnacio Valley Groundwater Basin. The basin is bound by I-680 to the west, Suisun Bay to the north, the Concord Fault to the east, and the City of Walnut Creek to the south. The Cities of Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill overlie the Ygnacio Valley Groundwater Basin. Walnut Creek and Grayson Creek are the two principal surface waterbodies within the Ygnacio Valley Groundwater Basin. The California Department of Water Resources Bulletin 118 indicates that the Ygnacio Valley Groundwater Basin occupies a structural depression between the Berkeley Hills and the Diablo Range. Thick alluvial deposits that cover a faulted and folded complex of consolidated Cretaceous and Tertiary rocks underlie the Ygnacio Valley Groundwater Basin. The water bearing units in the basin are Quaternary Alluvium and Alluvial valley fill deposits. The combined thickness of these deposits exceeds 700 feet. Aquifers in the Ygnacio Valley Groundwater Basin area are hydrologically connected to the Sacramento River. The Ygnacio Valley Groundwater Basin is not adjudicated (i.e., there are no legal disputes over the Ygnacio Valley Groundwater Basin).

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Less than Significant Impact. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Clearing, grading, excavation, and construction activities associated with this development could result in short-term impacts to water quality due to sheet erosion of exposed soils and subsequent sedimentation in local drainages. Grading activities lead to exposed areas of loose soil and sediment stockpiles that are susceptible to sheet flow, if uncontrolled.

Future development facilitated by the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local water quality standards. For instance, future development within the city would be subject to the CWA, which is established through compliance with the requirements of the NPDES Construction General Permit, and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. The San Francisco RWQCB issues and approves NPDES permits in the city, in accordance the CWA. NPDES Construction General Permits require individual projects of one or more acre to develop and implement a SWPPP, which must identify BMPs the applicant will employ to prevent all construction pollutants from contacting stormwater and BMPs must be developed with the intent of keeping all products of erosion from moving off site into receiving water channels. The SWPPP must also include a visual monitoring program and a chemical monitoring program for non-visible pollutants.

The NPDES also requires local governments to obtain an NPDES Permit for stormwater-induced water pollutants in its jurisdiction. The San Francisco RWQCB regulates discharges from Phase I municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) in the San Francisco Bay Area region under the Regional MS4 Permit, pursuant to the CWA. The Regional MS4 Permit covers 73 municipal, county government, and special district entities (referred to jointly as “co-permittees”) in the San Francisco Bay region who own and operate large MS4s that discharge stormwater (wet weather) runoff and non-stormwater (dry weather) runoff to surface waters throughout the region. The city is one of 18 co-permittees in Contra Costa County. Phase I MS4 permits require the discharger to develop and implement a Stormwater Management Plan/Program with the goal of reducing the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable. The Regional MS4 Permit specifies the following: 1) requirements to effectively prohibit non-stormwater discharges into the storm drain system; 2) technology-based effluent limitations that require controls to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the “maximum extent practicable”; and 3) water quality-based effluent limitations for pesticides, trash, mercury, Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and bacteria. Pollutant control measures in the Stormwater Management Plan/Program focus on failing municipal operations, new development and redevelopment, industrial/commercial sites, pesticides, and illegal dumping. For each of these

components, the Regional MS4 Permit includes a list of recommended BMPs. Developers are required to implement appropriate BMPs on construction sites to control erosion and sediment.

To comply with the Regional MS4 Permit, the city requires development projects to incorporate appropriate stormwater controls. These may include site design measures, source controls, low-impact development techniques, and Hydromodification Management (HM). In addition to these stormwater controls, future projects would be required to comply with Title 9, Chapter 16, of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, which contains requirements for stormwater management and discharge control. In addition, Goal 3 of the GP 2025 Natural Environment Chapter encourages the maintenance and enhancement of the area's creek systems, their riparian environments, and their recreational amenities.

If individual development projects are required to implement construction activities within a waterbody (e.g., drainage improvements, construction or repairs of bridges), these projects would be required to obtain applicable permits, which may include a CWA Section 404 Nationwide Permit, Section 401 Water Quality Certification, and Section 1602 lake and streambed alteration agreement prior to commencement of project construction activities. These permits would include standard construction BMPs (e.g., off-site fueling and maintenance of construction equipment), which would be in place for the duration of project construction to avoid potential impacts to surface or groundwater quality. Future projects associated with the Safety Element Update would comply with the requirements under the NPDES Permit program, the Phase I MS4 General Permit for the San Francisco Bay Region, the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, and the GP 2025. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would also require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to water quality and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Compliance with federal, state, and local regulations, including the SWPPP and associated BMPs, would reduce impacts to water quality to less than significant.

Further, the Safety Element Update includes the following policies and actions related to flood control that inherently would improve water quality:

- **Action 2.1.1:** Limit the amount of impervious surface in flood-prone areas.
- **Action 2.1.2:** Collect drainage fees for projects in designated drainage-improvement areas.
- **Action 2.1.3:** Continue to implement ongoing preventative maintenance in flood-prone areas to reduce the potential for flooding.
- **Policy 2.2:** Promote flood control measures that advance the goals of recreation, resource conservation (water quality and soil conservation), groundwater recharge, and preservation of habitat and scenic values, through the adoption of low-impact development practices.

- **Action 2.2.2:** Maintain a comprehensive storm drain infrastructure database and implement routine inspections of public storm drain facilities to ensure adequate peak-flow capacity.
- **Action 2.2.3:** Coordinate with the County and other jurisdictions to conduct feasibility studies and implement nature-based storm water improvement projects aimed at flood control, such as creek restoration.
- **Action 2.2.4:** Implement current design standards, guidelines, and setback requirements for development on properties that are nearby creeks and waterways. Encourage the replanting and restoration of riparian vegetation, if necessary. Collaborate with creekside property owners to reduce and mitigate flood hazards.
- **Action 2.2.5:** Limit runoff in flood-prone areas by encouraging low-impact development, such as limiting the amount of impervious surfaces and incorporating green infrastructure into projects, as well as stormwater best management practices (BMPs).

Therefore, the Safety Element Update would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. Impacts would be less than significant.

b. Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Less than Significant Impact. As described further in Section 2.4.19, Utilities and Service Systems, the city receives its water supply from two water districts, neither of which currently use groundwater for their respective water supplies. As such, future development facilitated by the Safety Element Update would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies. In addition, implementation of the Safety Element Update would not facilitate residential or commercial development or generate population growth which could increase the demand for water. Given the nature of development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update (e.g., tree and vegetation trimming and removal, utilities and transportation infrastructure, drainage improvements), this development would not result in pavement of large areas which would interfere substantially with groundwater recharge. Further, the Safety Element Update includes the following policies and actions that would promote groundwater recharge:

- **Policy 2.2:** Promote flood control measures that advance the goals of recreation, resource conservation (water quality and soil conservation), groundwater recharge, and preservation of habitat and scenic values, through the adoption of low-impact development practices.
 - **Action 2.2.8:** Educate the community and engage property owners to use stormwater BMPs (e.g., “Slow it, Spread it, Sink it” practices) to manage urban

rain runoff and keep drainage channels clear to catch the water, hold it on-site, and get the water back into the ground.

- **Policy 11.1:** Reduce local flooding through implementation of low-impact development (e.g., rain gardens, rainwater harvesting, green roofs).
- **Policy 11.3:** Encourage and incentivize the use of pervious and climate-smart landscape surfaces (e.g., permeable pavement, stormwater parks, green streets) in new and existing development.

Therefore, the Safety Element Update would not interfere with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. Impacts would be less than significant.

c. Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?

iii. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less than Significant Impact. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update could result in the alteration of drainage patterns due to utility installation and repairs, tree removal, or drainage improvements; however, given the nature of development that could be facilitated, it is unlikely that projects would substantially increase the area of impervious surfaces or increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in the city. As described in Section 2.4.10(a), future development would be required to comply with all applicable regulations, including the NPDES Permit, Regional MS4 Permit, and the City's requirements for appropriate stormwater controls, such as site design measures, source controls, low-impact development techniques, and HM. Low-impact development and HM facilities would promote retention and infiltration of stormwater. In accordance with the City's NPDES permit, Regional MS4 Permit, and the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 9, Chapter 16, future development would be required to implement BMPs for surface runoff control, which would reduce the potential for runoff and flooding.

The proposed Safety Element Update would also incorporate policies and actions to reduce flood risks in the city:

- **Policy 2.1:** Reduce the risk of property damage and personal injury due to flooding.
 - **Action 2.1.1:** Limit the amount of impervious surface in flood-prone areas.
 - **Action 2.1.2:** Collect drainage fees for projects in designated drainage-improvement areas.
 - **Action 2.1.3:** Continue to implement ongoing preventative maintenance in flood-prone areas to reduce the potential for flooding.
- **Policy 2.2:** Promote flood control measures that advance the goals of recreation, resource conservation (water quality and soil conservation), groundwater recharge, and preservation of habitat and scenic values, through the adoption of low-impact development practices.
 - **Action 2.2.1:** Require preparation of flood control studies for proposed projects located in FEMA-designated potential flood risk areas. Develop permit conditions in response to study findings.
 - **Action 2.2.2:** Maintain a comprehensive storm drain infrastructure database and implement routine inspections of public storm drain facilities to ensure adequate peak-flow capacity.
 - **Action 2.2.3:** Coordinate with the County and other jurisdictions to conduct feasibility studies and implement nature-based storm water improvement projects aimed at flood control, such as creek restoration.
 - **Action 2.2.4:** Implement current design standards, guidelines, and setback requirements for development on properties that are nearby creeks and waterways. Encourage the replanting and restoration of riparian vegetation, if necessary. Collaborate with creekside property owners to reduce and mitigate flood hazards.
 - **Action 2.2.5:** Limit runoff in flood-prone areas by encouraging low-impact development, such as limiting the amount of impervious surfaces and incorporating green infrastructure into projects, as well as stormwater best management practices (BMPs).
 - **Action 2.2.6:** Participate in activities that prevent or reduce flood impacts to new and existing development as described under the Community Rating System program developed by FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program.
 - **Action 2.2.7:** Continue to monitor damage from flood events in Walnut Creek and amend the City's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, as needed, to provide continued protection against flood hazards for new development.
 - **Action 2.2.8:** Educate the community and engage property owners to use stormwater BMPs (e.g., “Slow it, Spread it, Sink it” practices) to manage urban

rain runoff and keep drainage channels clear to catch the water, hold it on-site, and get the water back into the ground.

Considering these requirements, future development facilitated by the Safety Element Update would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

d. Would the project, in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Less than Significant Impact. A tsunami is a very large ocean wave caused by an underwater earthquake or volcanic eruption. Tsunamis can cause flooding to coastlines and inland areas less than 50 feet above sea level and within 1 mile of the shoreline. The city is located approximately 7.6 miles inland (south) from the Suisun Bay to the north and 11.7 miles inland (east) from San Francisco Bay to the west. Therefore, the city would not be susceptible to inundation or flooding due to a tsunami.

Seiches are defined as wave-like oscillatory movements in enclosed or semi-enclosed bodies of water, such as lakes or reservoirs, and are most typically associated with seismic activity. The nearest lake or reservoir is Lafayette Reservoir, located approximately 2.5 miles west of the city. Therefore, the city is not subject to inundation by seiche.

As described under Section 2.4.10(c) above, future development would be subject to the NPDES Permit, which requires the development and implementation of a SWPPP, which specifies BMPs that minimize surface runoff, flooding, and erosion during construction. Portions of the city are identified as 100- and 500-year flood hazard areas (Special Flood Hazard Areas) by FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. New development or building additions in Special Flood Hazard Areas as identified by FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps must comply with the requirements of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 9, Chapter 12, Flood Damage Prevention, which contains provisions to safeguard the public and structures from flood hazards, including restrictions on uses that are dangerous to health, safety, and property; controls on alterations of natural floodplains, stream channels, and natural flood barriers; and restrictions on development within 100-year flood zone areas. Compliance with the SWPPP, Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, and standard construction BMPs would ensure future individual projects would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation.

Additionally, the Safety Element Update includes several policies and actions to protect the community from flood hazards (refer to Section 2.4.10(c) above). With incorporation of these policies and actions, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to risk of pollutant release from project inundation. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

e. Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed previously, the city is under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco RWQCB. Water quality standards and control measures for surface and groundwaters of the San Francisco Bay region are contained in the Basin Plan for the San Francisco Bay. The plan designates beneficial uses for water bodies and establishes water quality objectives, waste discharge prohibitions, and other implementation measures to protect those beneficial uses.

Future projects associated with the Safety Element Update would comply with the requirements under the NPDES Permit program, the Phase I MS4 General Permit for the San Francisco Bay Region, the San Francisco RWQCB Basin Plan. Future projects would also require implementation of BMPs and other requirements of the SWPPP, which would ensure stormwater discharges associated with construction and use of future development projects comply with regulatory requirements in the city and would not conflict with the Basin Plan. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.11 Land Use and Planning

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Physical development in the city is currently governed by the existing GP 2025, originally adopted in 2006 and most recently amended July 15, 2025. The GP 2025 identifies land use designations within the city and its sphere of influence, with single-family residential being the predominant existing land use.

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project physically divide an established community?

Less than Significant Impact. Projects that divide an established community can involve large-scale linear infrastructure, such as freeways, highways, and railroads that bisect an established community or create barriers to movement within that community. “Locally undesirable land uses,” such as prisons or landfills, sited within economically depressed areas can also divide an established community. The Safety Element Update would not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would physically divide an established community. As described in Section 1.4, development associated with the proposed Safety Element Update would primarily be limited to construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities. Implementation of the Safety Element Update would not facilitate large-scale linear infrastructure, such as freeways, highways, and railroads, or locally undesirable land uses. Any future development facilitated under the Safety Element Update would be consistent with the City’s GP 2025 land use designations and would not physically divide the community. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. Would the project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update would be a component of the GP 2025 that improves the capacity of the City to respond to natural and human-caused changes in the environment. In addition, the Safety Element Update would define the goals, policies, and actions that would guide the City’s approach to increasing its resiliency and would recommend a set of programs that would be

implemented over the next several years. The Safety Element Update would contain elements required by state law and establish specific policies that align with the Contra Costa County LHMP, the City's EMP, and the Vulnerability Assessment prepared for the Sustainability Action Plan to bring policies into compliance with current state laws and to allow for increased adaptability in the light of a changing climate.

Future projects consistent with the Safety Element Update would be subject to the GP 2025, the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, and other local regulations. These documents and ordinances include standards to protect aesthetic quality and scenic viewsheds, biological resources, cultural resources, and public health and safety. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.12 Mineral Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 requires the classification of land into mineral resource zones, according to known or inferred mineral resource potential. The process is based solely on geology, without regard to existing land use or land ownership. According to the DOC’s Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 Mines Online mapping tool, there are no mines within the city. The nearest mines are the Clayton rock quarries, approximately 2.1 miles east of the city (DOC 2016). The City’s GP 2025 does not provide further detail regarding mineral resources in the city.

Impact Analysis

a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

No Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be subject to the City’s GP 2025 land use designations and would not limit the future availability of known mineral resources. Further, as described under Section 2.4.12(b) below, there are no mineral resources within the city classified by the California Division of Mines and Geology as important mineral resources; therefore, no impact would occur.

b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?

No Impact. There are no mineral resources within the city classified by the California Division of Mines and Geology as important mineral resources. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.13 Noise

Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Noise is usually defined as unwanted or excessive sound. Noise consists of any sound that may produce physiological or psychological damage and/or interfere with communication, work, rest, recreation, and sleep. As described in the GP 2025 Chapter 6 (Safety and Noise), the primary sources of noise in the city are freeways and roadways, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), parking lot maintenance, and building construction (City of Walnut Creek 2006).

The GP 2025 Safety and Noise Chapter includes the following goals, policies, and actions related to noise:

Goal 8. Provide compatible noise environments for new development, redevelopment, and condominium conversions.

- **Policy 8.1.** Apply the noise and land use compatibility table and standards to all residential, commercial, and mixed-use proposals, including condominium conversions.
- **Policy 8.2.** Address the issue of residences affected by intermittent urban noise from sources such as heating, ventilating, and air conditioning equipment and by outdoor maintenance activities, such as parking lot sweeping and early morning garbage collection.
 - **Action 8.2.1.** For new single-family residential projects, use a standard of 60 Ldn for exterior noise in private use areas.

- **Action 8.2.2.** For new multifamily residential projects and for the residential component of mixed-use development, use a standard of 65 Ldn in outdoor areas, excluding balconies.
- **Action 8.2.3.** Strive for a maximum interior noise levels at 45 Ldn in all new residential units.
- **Action 8.2.4.** For new downtown mixed-use development or for new residential development affected by noise from BART or helicopters, ensure that maximum noise levels do not exceed 50 Ldn in bedrooms and 55 Ldn in other rooms.
- **Action 8.2.5.** Establish single-event noise standards for new downtown mixed-use development or for new residential development affected by noise from BART or helicopters.

Goal 9. Control excessive noise sources in existing development.

- **Policy 9.1.** Control all residential and commercial noise sources to protect the existing noise environment.
 - **Action 9.1.1.** Require the evaluation of noise mitigation measures for projects that would cause a substantial increase in noise.
- **Policy 9.2.** Strive to reduce traffic noise levels in existing residential areas.
 - **Action 9.2.1.** Install quiet pavement surfaces for repaving projects, where feasible.
 - **Action 9.2.2.** Control vehicle-related noise.

The Walnut Creek Noise Ordinance (Title 4, Chapter 6, Article 2 of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code) identifies prohibited noises including:

- **Construction or Repair of Buildings.** The erection, construction, demolition, alteration or repair of any building, structure or residence that requires a permit, or the excavation of any earth, fill, streets or highways that requires a grading permit, other than between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays which are not holidays, or those precise hours of operation enumerated in individual building and grading permits.
- **Maintenance Equipment.** The use and operation of any noise-creating commercial or residential landscaping or home maintenance equipment or tools including, but not limited to, hammers, blowers, trimmers, mowers, chainsaws, power fans or any engine, the operation of which causes noise due to the explosion of operating gases or fluids, other than between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays.

Impact Analysis

- a. **Would the project result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?**

Less than Significant Impact. Development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would have the potential to generate both short-term and long-term noise impacts. Short-term noise impacts could occur during grading and construction activities. Construction activities have the potential to expose adjacent land uses to noise levels that could temporarily exceed the City’s Noise Standards. The degree of noise impact would depend on the distance between the construction activity and the noise sensitive receptor. Long-term noise impacts would primarily be associated with stationary mechanical equipment on site. However, depending on the equipment, noise may be noticeable for some people but may not significantly impact surrounding sensitive uses and may not generate a substantial increase in ambient noise levels.

However, the Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development and would not facilitate the development of new residential or commercial structures. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to noise and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Individual projects would also be subject to existing local noise policies. For example, Policy 8.1 of the GP 2025 Safety and Noise Chapter which states “Apply the noise and land use compatibility table and standards to all residential, commercial, and mixed-use proposals, including condominium conversions,” would reduce harmful and annoying noise associated with future development projects. The City’s Noise Ordinance is found in Chapter 6, Article 2 of the City’s Municipal Code. The City of Walnut Creek Noise Ordinance regulates the hours of construction and excavation activities to mitigate significant noise impacts. For example, Section 4-6.203(f) prohibits construction activities other than between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on non-holiday weekdays, or those precise hours of operation enumerated in individual building and grading permits. Additionally, on large construction projects, City practice requires that construction noise be reduced to the extent feasible. Compliance with the Walnut Creek General Plan Noise Element policies and the City’s Noise Ordinance standards would reduce potential temporary and permanent noise impacts as a result of future development under the Safety Element Update. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. Would the project result in the generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than Significant Impact. Construction activities from developments facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update could generate varying degrees of groundborne vibration, depending on the construction procedure and the construction equipment used. Operation of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish in amplitude with distance from the source. The effect on buildings in the vicinity of a construction site often varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and construction characteristics of the receiver building(s). The results from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels to low

rumbling sounds and perceptible vibration at moderate levels to slight damage at the highest levels. Groundborne vibration from construction activities rarely reach levels that damage structures.

The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development at this time. Potential vibration impacts of individual projects would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the nature of the project and location of a project site is known. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to groundborne vibration and groundborne noise and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Compliance with the GP 2025 Safety and Noise Chapter policies would reduce groundborne noise impacts. Adherence to the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, particularly Section 4-6.203f, “Prohibited Noises Enumerated,” which sets limits on the time of day, and days of the week that construction can occur as well as setting noise limits for construction activities, would also reduce groundborne noise impacts. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- c. Would the project, for a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?**

No Impact. As stated in Section 2.4.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, there are no airports or private airstrips in the city. The nearest airport to the city is Buchanan Field Airport in Concord, approximately 3 miles north of the city. Therefore, the city is not within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, and no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.14 Population and Housing

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

According to the California Department of Finance, the population in the City of Walnut Creek and Contra Costa County has fluctuated between 2020 to 2025 (refer to Table 3, City of Walnut Creek Population [2010–2020]). Population, housing, and employment are generally expected to grow in both the city and the County over the next 2 decades. Specifically, the ABAG forecasts that the Central and South Contra Costa County Superdistrict populations will reach 89,000 and 70,000, respectively, by the year 2050. This represents a growth of 47 percent (28,000 people) and 28 percent (15,000 people), respectively (ABAG 2021).

Table 3. City of Walnut Creek Population (2020–2025)

Year	City Population	County Population
2020	70,306	1,165,927
2021	70,663	1,164,050
2022	69,750	1,154,254
2023	69,414	1,150,306
2024	70,238	1,158,249
2025	69,927	1,158,225

Source: California Department of Finance 2025.

Impact Analysis

- a. **Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?**

No Impact. The Safety Element Update would be a component of the GP 2025 that would assess the needs of all economic segments of the City and would address the City’s ability to adapt to a changing climate as determined by the State of California. In addition, the Safety Element Update would define the goals, policies, and actions that would guide the City’s approach to resolving those needs and identifies a series of implementing actions to improve the City’s adaptive capacity to climate change-related impacts. The Safety Element Update is concerned with specifically identifying ways in which

the needs of existing and future residents can be met as necessary to meet state safety-related legal requirements. The Safety Element Update would not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would affect population growth or housing in the city. As described in Section 1.4, development associated with the proposed Safety Element Update would primarily be limited to construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities. As such, future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would not directly (by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (through extension of roads or other infrastructure) induce population growth. Therefore, no impact would occur.

b. Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. As described under Section 2.4.14(a) above, any new development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would primarily be limited to construction, installation, and repair of new and existing utilities infrastructure. Additionally, the Safety Element Update is intended to enhance the safety and security of existing residents as well as the planned growth for the city. The Safety Element Update would not displace existing people or housing; therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.15 Public Services

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Public services for fire protection, police protection, school, parks, and other facilities, are described below.

Impact Analysis

- a. **Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:**

Fire Protection?

No Impact. Fire protection and emergency medical services for the city are provided by the Contra Costa County Fire District (CCCYPD). The CCCYPD Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division is responsible for the initial training of all personnel that come into the CCCYPD during their Fire Academy. The EMS Division develops, delivers and coordinates all medical response related training for all CCCYPD employees, with the exception of some paramedic continuing education attended outside the CCCYPD. The EMS Division also coordinates the purchasing of all EMS-related equipment and supplies. The CCCYPD currently operates 30 full-time Advanced Life Support engine companies, each staffed by certified Emergency Medical Technicians (CCCYPD 2024).

The Operations Division staffs 19 engine companies, five truck companies, and a daily Shift Training Captain/Safety Officer. The Division maintains 24 fully staffed stations, and two more stations staffed with paid-on-call Reserve Firefighters. Minimum daily staffing is 77 personnel. The 24 stations are

trained and regularly cross-staff numerous specialty response units including 18 wildland fire apparatus, three rescue units, a trench rescue unit, a fire rescue boat, and a mobile breathing air support unit. Contra Costa County Fire Department Stations 1, 3, and 4 are within the city limits (CCCFPD 2022).

The Safety Element Update would not propose any specific development. Given the nature of future development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update (i.e., utilities and transportation infrastructure), implementation of the Safety Element Update would not generate population growth which could increase the demand for fire services. Future discretionary development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be subject to project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts related to fire protection and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Additionally, future development would be required to comply with CBC standards, which include site access requirements and fire safety standards. Future development would be subject to CCCFPD review through the Site Plan Review process to ensure that adequate emergency access and fire safety features are provided as part of the project.

The Safety Element Update includes policies that focus on public safety related to fire and emergency response, including:

- **Policy 5.1:** Enhance school safety by ensuring reliable emergency access during school hours.
- **Policy 5.2:** Maintain a response time of less than 5 minutes for emergency calls and less than 20 minutes for non-emergency calls, 95 percent of the time.

Additionally, the Safety Element Update incorporates several policies and actions intended to reduce impacts from fire hazards in the city (refer to Section 2.4.20[b]). As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to fire protection in the city. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Police Protection?

No Impact. Police protection for the city is provided by the Walnut Creek Police Department. The Walnut Creek Police Station is located at 1666 N. Main Street. The Patrol Division consists of 36 sworn officers who respond to emergency calls at all hours of the day and who regularly interact with the members of the community to deliver an exceptional law enforcement product. The Traffic and Outreach Team supplements patrol teams with two motorcycle officers focused on traffic enforcement and two Homeless Outreach Program officers (Walnut Creek Police Department 2025).

The Safety Element Update would not propose any specific development. Given the nature of future development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update (i.e., utilities and transportation infrastructure), implementation of the Safety Element Update would not generate population growth which could increase the demand for police services. Future discretionary

development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be subject to project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to the Walnut Creek Police Department and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts.

Additionally, the Safety Element Update includes the following policies and actions addressing public safety:

- **Policy 5.1:** Enhance school safety by ensuring reliable emergency access during school hours.
- **Policy 5.2:** Maintain a response time of less than 5 minutes for emergency calls and less than 20 minutes for non-emergency calls, 95 percent of the time.
- **Policy 5.3:** Support Community Oriented Policing.
- **Policy 5.4:** Coordinate with the County on public safety and policing issues outside the city limits.
- **Policy 5.5:** Reduce police service demands through project design enhancements.
 - **Action 5.5.1:** Incorporate crime-prevention and safety features into private and public project design.
 - **Action 5.5.2:** Send discretionary permits applications with potential police services impacts to the Police Department for review.
- **Policy 5.6:** Support and assist in establishing volunteer community programs that aid police, fire, and other emergency personnel during disaster recovery.

With incorporation of these policies and actions, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to public safety in the city. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Schools?

No Impact. The city is served by the Walnut Creek School District, Acalanes Union High School District, Mount Diablo Unified School District, Lafayette School District, and San Ramon Valley Unified School District. The Safety Element would not propose any specific development. Given the nature of future development that may be facilitated by implementation of the Safety Element Update (i.e., utilities and transportation infrastructure), implementation of the Safety Element Update would not generate population growth which could increase the demand for school facilities and services. Additionally, all future residential development would be subject to the requirements of AB 2926 and SB 50, which allow school districts to collect development impact fees to minimize potential impacts to school districts as a result of new development. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Parks?

No Impact. Outdoor recreation resources in the city include public parks, open space, golf courses, bicycle paths, pedestrian and equestrian trails, and ground-level linkages between recreation areas and

urbanized places. The GP 2025 identifies 24 public parks, one downtown plaza, one museum, and four City-owned open spaces (City of Walnut Creek 2006).

The Safety Element Update would not propose any specific development. Given the nature of future development that may be facilitated by implementation of the Safety Element Update (i.e., utilities and transportation infrastructure), implementation of the Safety Element Update would not generate population growth which could increase the demand for public parks. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Other Public Facilities?

No Impact. The Safety Element Update would not propose any specific development. Given the nature of future development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update (i.e., utilities and transportation infrastructure), implementation of the Safety Element Update would not generate population growth which could increase the demand for other public facilities. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts to public facilities and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.16 Recreation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

As previously described, the city is surrounded by undeveloped lands associated with open space and regional parks, including Acalanes Ridge, Lime Ridge, Shell Ridge, and Sugarloaf Open Spaces as well as Diablo Foothills Regional Park, Las Trampas Regional Wilderness Park, and Bionos Regional Park. Outdoor recreation resources in the city include public parks, open space, golf courses, bicycle paths, pedestrian and equestrian trails, and ground-level linkages between recreation areas and urbanized places. The City’s GP 2025 identifies 24 public parks, one downtown plaza, one museum, and four City-owned open spaces (City of Walnut Creek 2006).

Impact Analysis

- a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?**

No Impact. As described in Section 1.4, development associated with the proposed Safety Element Update would primarily be limited to construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities. As such, implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update would not increase the demand for parks or the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated. Therefore, no impact would occur.

- b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

No Impact. As previously identified, new development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update is not anticipated to result in an increase in demand for existing recreational resources. Additionally, Policy 2.2 of the Safety Element Update would advance the City’s recreational goals: “Promote flood control measures that advance the goals of recreation, resource conservation (water

quality and soil conservation), groundwater recharge, and preservation of habitat and scenic values.”
Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.17 Transportation

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The City's circulation system is composed of freeways and their interchanges; arterial, collector, and local streets; public transportation; and non-motorized transportation. In addition to these facilities and services, implementation and management of the circulation system include parking policies and goods and freight movement. The freeways that serve the city are I-680 and SR-24.

The GP 2025 Chapter 5 (Transportation) states that the local road system is a hierarchy of streets comprising routes of regional significance, arterials, collectors, and local roads.

- Routes of Regional Significance are the major roadway and freeway corridors that serve regional traffic, as identified in Action Plans adopted by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority as part of the countywide Measure C program. Facilities within Walnut Creek designated as Routes of Regional Significance are Ygnacio Valley Road, Treat Boulevard, Geary Road, North Main Street (from I-680 to the north city limits) and Pleasant Hill Road.
- Arterials provide intra-city travel and access to the regional roadway network. The City's arterials include California Boulevard, Broadway, Tice Valley Boulevard, Olympic Boulevard, Mount Diablo Boulevard, Bancroft Road, and Oak Grove Road, which provide connections between Walnut Creek and the surrounding communities of Concord, Pleasant Hill, Lafayette, and Alamo.
- Collectors provide access within and between neighborhoods and carry trips from Local Streets to Arterials. Collectors in the city include Boulevard Way, La Casa Via, San Luis Road, Buena Vista Avenue, Walnut Boulevard, and San Carlos Drive.
- Local Streets are roadways not otherwise classified. They provide direct access to fronting properties. Travel speeds and traffic volumes are generally low on these streets.

Public transit options available within the city include County Connection buses (Routes 1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 14, 15, 92X, 93X, 95X, 98X, 301, 311, 321, and the Alamo Creek Shuttle) and the BART system (Yellow Line). The city is served by BART with one station in Downtown Walnut Creek and one station at the Contra Costa Centre adjacent to the city limits.

Impact Analysis

a. **Would the project conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Due to the conceptual nature of future development, future discretionary development proposals would require project-specific CEQA review, including an assessment of potential impacts to City plans, programs, or policies supporting alternative transportation, and would implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Future development would be required to be consistent with City standards, including Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 9, Building Regulations, which adopts the CBC standards and regulations related to access and circulation. All development design is subject to review by the City to ensure adherence to local requirements for internal site circulation and site access. Additionally, future development would be required to comply with all GP 2025 Transportation Chapter goals, policies, and objectives addressing the circulation system, including alternative transportation. These include, but are not limited to, promoting bicycle use as an alternative way to get to work, school, shopping, recreational facilities, and transit stops (Policy 5.1); providing safe and attractive pedestrian routes along arterials and collectors leading to schools, along arterials or collectors that carry high traffic volumes, on all downtown streets, along major streets leading to the downtown, and on all streets leading to transit facilities (Policy 6.1); and developing a comprehensive plan with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority to install public transit amenities such as benches, passenger shelters, and walkways. Compliance with federal, state, and local design standards, including the Walnut Creek Municipal Code and GP 2025 policies, would ensure impacts are less than significant.

Further, the Safety Element Update does not include goals, policies, or actions that are inconsistent with current provisions of the GP 2025 Transportation Chapter. In fact, the Safety Element Update includes several policies and actions intended to improve evacuation capacity and safety for all city residents (refer to Section 2.4.17[d]) and contains a new action that would encourage opportunities for transit and active transportation:

- **Action 8.1.5:** Coordinate with community members, transportation agencies, and private entities to continue to monitor and update local and regional transportation, transit, and active transportation corridors that are at-risk from climate change effects.

As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the city. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that could increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT) generation. In addition, future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would not include new residential or commercial development that would generate vehicle trips and VMT. Projects facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would primarily be limited to utilities and transportation infrastructure and building renovations/repairs. Nevertheless, future discretionary development within the city would be subject to the City’s Transportation Analysis Guidelines during project-specific CEQA environmental review (City of Walnut Creek 2021). The City’s Transportation Analysis Guidelines include screening criteria and thresholds of significance to assess an individual project’s impact on VMT during CEQA environmental review. The three types of project screening criteria are for projects located in a transit priority area, residential and office projects located within a low VMT-generating area, and small or local-serving projects. Therefore, future development projects in the city would be required to adhere to the City’s Transportation Analysis Guidelines, assess VMT impacts, and require project-specific mitigation measures as applicable.

Additionally, the Safety Element Update includes actions that would support reduction in VMT citywide and regionally:

- **Action 9.1.3:** Encourage private businesses to allow for remote work during poor air quality days.
- **Action 8.1.5:** Coordinate with community members, transportation agencies, and private entities to continue to monitor and update local and regional transportation, transit, and active transportation corridors that are at-risk from climate change effects.

As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to VMT reduction in the city. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

c. Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. Design features of future development would need to be consistent with Contra Costa County’s General Road Work Standard Plans (Contra Costa County Public Works Department 2014) Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Title 9, Building Regulations, which adopts the CBC standards and regulations related to access and circulation. All development design is subject to review by the City to ensure adherence to local requirements for internal site circulation and site access. Through the CEQA environmental review process, future discretionary development projects would be evaluated for potential safety impacts due to a geometric design feature or incompatible use and would implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts.

Additionally, the Safety Element Update includes new actions to address public safety related roadway designs:

- **Action 1.1.2:** Establish minimum road widths and clearances around structures at risk from known geologic hazards.
- **Action 4.3.2:** Require all new development to incorporate safe design of adequate infrastructure, such as minimum road widths, safe access for emergency response vehicles, visible street signs, and water supplies for fire suppression.
- **Action 4.3.6:** Ensure regulations and standards for streets, driveways, and emergency access are consistently applied through the ongoing interdepartmental review of proposed projects prior to approval.

As such, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to roadway design features in the city. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

d. Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would result in inadequate emergency access. Individual projects that could be facilitated by implementation of the Safety Element Update would have the potential to interfere with emergency plans and procedures during construction activities if authorities are not properly notified or multiple projects are constructed during the same time and multiple roadways used for emergency routes are concurrently blocked. However, implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update would not facilitate large construction projects, such as residential or commercial development. As described in Section 1.4, development associated with the proposed Safety Element Update would primarily include construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities. Future development and transportation infrastructure projects would be subject to site-specific review and

would be subject to City regulations regarding street design, site access, and internal emergency access.

An Emergency Evacuation Route Analysis was prepared as part of the Safety Element Update in accordance with state law. The Emergency Evacuation Route Analysis identifies evacuation routes and assesses the capacity, safety, and viability of those routes under a range of emergency scenarios in accordance with AB 747; identifies residential developments in hazard areas that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes in accordance with SB 99; and identifies evacuation locations in accordance with AB 1409. The Emergency Evacuation Route Analysis also identifies recommendations for the City's evacuation planning and practices based on the results of the analysis and feedback from City staff and emergency personnel. These recommendations were incorporated into the following policies and actions established within the Safety Element Update to address potential barriers to safe and efficient evacuation:

- **Action 4.3.6:** Ensure regulations and standards for streets, driveways, and emergency access are consistently applied through the ongoing interdepartmental review of proposed projects prior to approval.
- **Action 4.3.8:** Work with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District to prepare a comprehensive wildland fire prevention program, including fuel breaks, brush management, controlled burning, and access for fire suppression equipment.
- **Action 6.1.1:** Coordinate with different neighborhoods to determine the best evacuation routes, pre-distribute evacuation information, and increase public awareness that specific evacuation routes will be determined during an emergency event to direct people away from the hazard areas.
- **Action 6.1.2:** During a disaster, strategically identify which zones should be notified for evacuation orders versus warnings to avoid confusion, vehicle congestion, and misdirection to an evacuated area. Messaging should first issue evacuation orders or warnings and then subsequently identify an evacuation location(s).
- **Action 6.2.2:** Coordinate with residents and service providers, where feasible, to identify in advance individuals who may need additional assistance during evacuations.
- **Action 7.1.2:** Incorporate adequate emergency water flow, emergency vehicle access, and emergency evacuation routes into new development plans prior to project approval.
- **Action 7.1.4:** Provide training and drills on the City's evacuation plan that identifies evacuation routes, establishes notification and traffic control methods and protocols. Include provisions for evacuating people that have mobility constraints or lack access to a personal vehicle, and identify the role of transit providers in providing evacuation assistance.

- **Action 7.2.1:** Develop public education programs on first aid, personal preparedness, and disaster response. Provide information encouraging residents and businesses to maintain emergency supplies, keep vehicles fueled, understand emergency access routes, protect themselves from poor air quality, stay safe during extreme heat, and monitor evacuation warnings and emergency messaging..

The policies and actions established within the Safety Element Update to address potential barriers to safe and efficient evacuation would result in beneficial impacts related to emergency access within the city. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Tribal Cultural Resources are sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe that are either included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources or included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in subdivision (k) of Public Resources Code, Section 5020.1, or determined to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in Public Resources Code, Section 5024.1.

According to the GP 2025, the city’s open space areas and creeks harbor evidence of territories occupied by the city’s first known inhabitants—two small Native American (Bay Miwok) tribelets, the Tatcan and Saclan. Most of the city is considered highly sensitive with respect to Native American resources.

Impact Analysis

- a. **Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:**
 - i. **Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or**
 - ii. **A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.**

Less than Significant Impact. The project proposes the adoption of the Safety Element Update. Tribal outreach pursuant to AB 52 and SB 18 was initiated on September 22, 2022, with the following Tribes: Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista, Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Guidiville Indian Rancheria, Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan, Ione Band of Miwok Indians, The Ohlone Indian Tribe, Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of SF Bay Area, Nashville Enterprise Miwok-Maidu-Nishinam Tribe, North Valley Yokuts Tribe, The Confederated Villages of Lisjan, and Wilton Rancheria. The Native American Heritage Commission provided a list of Tribes who should be contacted for information related to Tribal Cultural Resources, which also included the Wuksache Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band. The additional Tribe identified by the Native American Heritage Commission was contacted on October 13, 2022. Once the Safety Element Update planning process was re-engaged in 2025, the originally contacted Tribes were notified again of the open consultation and asked to either comment or conclude consultation. Again, no responses have been received to date.

AB 52 and SB 18 consultation is ongoing and will continue throughout the processing of the project. In addition, future development projects facilitated under implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update would require additional consultation with Native American Tribes in accordance with AB 52. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Water Supply

Walnut Creek gets its water from two water districts: Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) serves primarily the northern and eastern third of the city. East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) serves the remaining two-thirds of the city. CCWD and EBMUD own all water distribution and treatment facilities in the city. The largest distribution, treatment, pumping, and storage facilities are outside the city's limits. Both the CCWD and EBMUD maintain Urban Water Management Plans, which provide information on each district's water supply and demand forecasts, water shortage contingency planning, and other ongoing activities to ensure adequate water supply for existing and future demands (CCWD 2021; EBMUD 2021).

The primary source of water for 500,000 residents of the CCWD in central and eastern Contra Costa County is the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Water flows from rivers within the Sierra into the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, and eventually into the Delta. The CCWD draws water from Rock Slough near Oakley, Mallard Slough in Bay Point, Old River near the Town of Discovery Bay, and nearby Middle River. The CCWD diverts water under its federal Central Valley Project contract as well as its own water rights and agreements with neighboring agencies. The water is transported in the

48-mile Contra Costa Canal, which starts at Rock Slough, then stretches west to Clyde, south to Walnut Creek, and north to Martinez. The CCWD also stores water in Los Vaqueros Reservoir south of Brentwood, Contra Loma Reservoir in Antioch, the Mallard Reservoir in Concord, and the Martinez Reservoir in Martinez (CCWD 2025).

CCWD is almost entirely dependent upon the Delta for its water supply. CCWD's primary source of water supply is diverted from the Delta under a contract with U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Central Valley Project contract. Other water supply sources used within the service area include surface water from the Delta diverted under the CCWD's and East Contra Costa Irrigation District's water rights, recycled water, a minor amount of groundwater, and water transfers.

EBMUD captures snowmelt from 575 square miles of mostly undeveloped public and private watershed lands of the Mokelumne River and collects this snowmelt at Pardee Reservoir, located approximately 90 miles east of the Bay Area. EBMUD has water rights for up to 325 million gallons daily from the Mokelumne River watershed. Pardee Reservoir has a capacity of 203,795 acre-feet, which is equal to a 10-month supply for EBMUD's 1.4 million water customers. Approximately 10 miles downstream from Pardee Reservoir, Camanche Reservoir provides flood control and stores water to meet the needs of fisheries, riparian habitat, and downstream water-rights holders. Camanche Reservoir has a capacity of 417,120 acre-feet of water.

Local runoff is stored in several East Bay reservoirs for treatment and delivery to customers and to assure emergency supplies are available locally. EBMUD can store up to 151,670 acre-feet of water in the East Bay reservoirs. Typically, EBMUD stores a six-month emergency supply in local reservoirs. In a year of normal precipitation, EBMUD uses an average of 21 million gallons per day (mgd) of water from local watershed runoff. In dry years, enough water can be lost through evaporation to completely offset any water gained from local runoff.

EBMUD now also has a contract with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for a supplemental water supply from the Sacramento River. EBMUD has rights to up to 100 mgd from the Sacramento River in dry years. When needed, the water is conveyed through the Freeport Regional Water Facility jointly owned by EBMUD and Sacramento County (EBMUD 2025). EBMUD currently does not use groundwater to meet water demands.

Wastewater

Division 3 of the Central Contra Costa County Sanitary District (Central San) provides sewer service to residents and businesses in the city. Central San's Wastewater Treatment Plant opened in 1948 in Martinez and has been upgraded several times. The treatment plant has a treatment capacity of 54 mgd and 240 mgd of wet weather flow. An average of 34 mgd of wastewater are treated every day. Most of the wastewater is treated to a secondary level, disinfected by ultraviolet light, and then discharged into Suisun Bay. Approximately 600 million gallons per year are treated to a tertiary level through

additional filtration and disinfection before being distributed as recycled water for landscape irrigation, industrial processes, and plant operations (Central San 2025).

Stormwater

Stormwater drainage facilities (e.g., storm drains, drain pipes, catch basins, and drainage channels) in the city are maintained and operated by the City’s Public Works Department Maintenance Services Division.

Solid Waste

The Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (RecycleSmart) is a local government joint powers authority located in in the city, whose member agencies include: the Towns of Danville and Moraga and the Cities of Lafayette, Orinda, and Walnut Creek and the surrounding unincorporated Central Contra Costa County. RecycleSmart provides solid waste services for Central Contra Costa County residents and businesses. RecycleSmart has contracted with Republic Services for the collection, transfer, and disposal of residential and commercial garbage, recycling, and organics and Mt. Diablo Recycling for the processing of residential and commercial recyclable materials (RecycleSmart 2025).

Impact Analysis

- a. Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update could include the construction, installation, or repairs of stormwater drainage or other utilities to ensure public safety in the city. Potential utility-related impacts would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of a project site and nature of the project is known. Future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant impacts related to utilities infrastructure and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. All projects would be required to comply with federal, state, and local regulations, including Title 9, Chapter 16 (Storm Water Management and Discharge Control), of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code and other sections of the City’s Building Regulations (Title 9 of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- b. Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?**

Less than Significant Impact. No specific development is proposed as part of the Safety Element Update. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of

existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Given the nature of future development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update, implementation of the Safety Element Update would not generate population growth which could substantially increase the City's potable water demand. Further, discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review to identify the potential for significant water supply impacts and implement mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. All new development would be required to comply with applicable state and local laws and regulations governing conservation of water supply resources. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

c. Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

No Impact. Central San operates a 54 mgd wastewater treatment plant through its facility in Martinez, while an average of 34 mgd of wastewater are treated at the plant every day. Therefore, the wastewater treatment plant has additional capacity for 20 mgd of wastewater treatment.

No specific development is proposed as part of the Safety Element Update. Potential utility-related impacts would be location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of a project site and nature of the project is known. However, given the nature of future development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update (i.e., utilities and transportation infrastructure), implementation of the Safety Element Update would not generate population growth which could substantially increase wastewater generation in the city. Therefore, no impact would occur.

d. Would the project generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any development. Future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would primarily include construction, installation, and repairs of utilities and transportation infrastructure, which would generate construction and demolition (C&D) debris in the city. According to Contra Costa County's recycling guide, four active landfills and transfer stations within the County accept C&D debris (refer to Table 4, Contra Costa County Landfill Capacity). Given the nature of future development that may be facilitated under implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update (i.e., utilities and transportation infrastructure), implementation of the Safety Element Update would not generate population growth or uses which could substantially increase solid waste generation in the city. Therefore, it is anticipated that these landfills will have sufficient permitted capacity to service solid waste generated by future infrastructure upgrades under implementation of the Safety Element Update.

Table 4. Contra Costa County Landfill Capacity

Facility	Address	Maximum Permitted Throughput	Total Remaining Capacity
Acme Landfill	950 Waterbird Way, Martinez	1,500 tons per day	506,590 tons
Contra Costa Transfer & Recovery Station	951 Waterbird Way, Martinez	1,900 tons per day	--
Recycling Center & Transfer Station	1300 Loveridge Road, Pittsburg	1,500 tons per day	--
Golden Bear Transfer Station	Foot of Parr Boulevard, Richmond	1,000 tons per day	--

Source: CalRecycle 2025; Contra Costa County 2022.

CALGreen, as amended in the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, requires that at least 65 percent of C&D debris generated by most types of building project types be recycled, reused, or otherwise diverted from landfill disposal. This requirement applies to demolition projects and most new construction, as well as the majority of building additions or alterations. CALGreen requires submission of plans and reports with verifiable post-project documentation to demonstrate that at least 65 percent of the nonhazardous C&D debris generated on the job site are salvaged for reuse, recycled or otherwise diverted. Additionally, future projects would be subject to compliance with all applicable construction waste handling, processing, and disposal requirements stipulated in Title 5, Chapter 3, Article 6 (Construction Debris Recycling) of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code. Compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations would ensure that impacts related to solid waste generation would be less than significant. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

e. Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development. However, construction activities for future development would be subject to conformance with applicable federal, state, and local requirements related to solid waste disposal. Specifically, future projects would be required to demonstrate compliance with the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939), which requires all California cities to “reduce, recycle, and reuse solid waste generated in the state to the maximum extent feasible.” AB 939 requires that at least 50 percent of waste produced is recycled, reduced, or composted. Local jurisdictions, including the city, are monitored by the state (CalRecycle) to verify if waste disposal rates set by CalRecycle are being met that comply with the intent of AB 939. Future projects would also be required to demonstrate compliance with CALGreen, which includes design and construction measures that act to reduce construction-related waste through material conservation measures and other construction-related efficiency measures, as described above. Compliance would be verified by the city through review of project plans and specifications. Lastly, future projects would be subject to compliance with all applicable construction waste handling, processing, and disposal requirements stipulated in Title 5, Chapter 3, Article 6 of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code. Future projects would be required to comply with the City’s efforts in reducing solid waste and with solid waste regulations at the state level. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.20 Wildfire

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The city is surrounded by more than 2,700 acres of undeveloped hillsides designated as open space. These areas pose a potential fire hazard to adjacent development in the wildland-urban interface.

CAL FIRE designates lands into responsibility areas based on who is financially responsible for fire protection services. Local Responsibility Areas include areas where city fire departments or local fire protection districts are charged with fire protection. State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) include unincorporated areas and state lands where the State of California has financial responsibility for wildfire protection. Walnut Creek is within a Local Responsibility Area, and the CCCFPD provides fire protection and first responder EMS for the area. There are no areas of Walnut Creek that currently lack access to fire protection services. There are four CCCFPD stations within or adjacent to the city, including CCCFPD Station No. 1 (1330 Civic Drive), CCCFPD Station No. 3 (1520 Rossmoor Parkway), CCCFPD Station No. 4 (700 Hawthorne Drive), and CCCFPD Station No. 7 (1050 Walnut Avenue).

CAL FIRE also maps FHSZs as part of its Fire and Resources Assessment Program. A FHSZ is an identified fire hazard area based on the physical conditions that create a likelihood and expected fire behavior over a 30-to-50-year period without prevention measures, such as fuel reduction. These zones are based on factors such as fuel, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors including areas where winds have been identified by the Office of the state Fire Marshal as a major cause of wildfire spread. FHSZs fall into one of three classification categories: Moderate, High, and Very High.

According to current Fire and Resources Assessment Program data, there are no SRAs or lands classified as Very High FHSZs within the city boundary. However, there are Moderate and High FHSZs within the city boundary. As shown on Figure 5 of the Safety Element Update, the High FHSZs within the city are limited to the southern, eastern, and northeastern edges of the city limits, encompassing most of the city’s open space areas. Moderate FHSZs line the areas around High FHSZs and also encompass the Sugarloaf Open Space and the Acalanes Ridge Open Space. Besides undeveloped open space areas, other land uses in the High FHSZs include single-family residential (CAL FIRE 2025).

The City’s existing General Plan Safety Element includes several goals, policies, and actions to minimize risk from wildfire hazards:

Goal 4. Strive to prevent and reduce damage related to fire hazards.

- **Policy 4.1.** Regulate projects in high-risk areas, such as areas near fire hazard severity zones.
- **Policy 4.2.** Work with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District to ensure adequate fire response times and address other fire-related issues in the Planning Area.
 - **Action 4.2.1.** Require that all new development or redevelopment plans [of critical infrastructure] be submitted to the Fire District for review.
 - **Action 4.2.2.** Require greenbelt zones and fire-resistant landscaping and building materials in developments in and on the edges of higher risk areas.
 - **Action 4.2.3.** Establish minimum road widths and clearances around structures in high, very high, and extreme fire risk areas.
 - **Action 4.2.4.** Working with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, use nuisance ordinances to reduce the risks of dry grasses.

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The City prepared an EMP in compliance with the State Office of Emergency Services and the Walnut Creek Municipal Code, which identifies responses and actions depending on the nature and the scope of the disaster (City of Walnut Creek 2019). As described in Section 1.3.2 of the EMP, the EMP establishes the emergency organization, assigns tasks, specifies policies and general procedures, and provides for coordination of the City’s responsibilities as a member of the Contra Costa Operational Area with other member organizations, in both response and recovery procedures. The Safety Element Update and the Emergency Evacuation Route Analysis prepared for the Safety Element Update both incorporate information from the City’s EMP to ensure consistency with the EMP. The Safety Element Update is a policy document that evaluates hazards present in the city and identifies goals, policies, and actions to protect the public from unreasonable risks associated with those hazards. The Safety Element Update identifies hazards present in the city

and assesses the scope of risk associated with the hazards. The Safety Element Update also identifies general emergency preparedness procedures and fire and police facilities and staffing. Incorporating the results of the Emergency Evacuation Route Analysis and feedback from City staff and emergency personnel, the Safety Element Update identifies broad goals, policies, and actions intended to improve emergency response and evacuation in the city. Therefore, the Safety Element Update is consistent with the intentions of the City's EMP.

The Safety Element Update would have the potential to interfere with emergency plans and procedures if authorities are not properly notified or multiple projects are constructed during the same time and multiple roadways used for emergency routes are concurrently blocked. However, implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update would not facilitate large construction projects, such as residential or commercial development. As described in Section 1.4, development associated with the proposed Safety Element Update would primarily include construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities. Any future development facilitated under the Safety Element Update would be consistent with applicable federal, state, and local regulations, such as the CCCFPD Ordinance No. 2022-34 which was adopted into the City's Fire Code (Section 9-19.02 of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code) and states that plans shall be submitted and a permit is required to install, improve, modify, or remove public or private roadways, driveways, and bridges for which Fire District access is required by the Fire Code. Future projects would be subject to site-specific review and would be subject to City regulations regarding street design, site access, and internal emergency access. Compliance would prevent multiple roadways used for emergency routes from being concurrently blocked. Additionally, future discretionary development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would require project-specific CEQA review and would be subject to City regulations regarding street design, site access, and internal emergency access. Therefore, implementation of the Safety Element Update would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with the City's EMP.

The proposed Safety Element Update also incorporates several policies and actions related to emergency response and evacuation planning:

- **Action 4.3.2:** Require all new development to incorporate safe design of adequate infrastructure, such as minimum road widths, safe access for emergency response vehicles, visible street signs, and water supplies for fire suppression.
- **Action 4.3.3:** Adopt and revise, as needed, requirements that new and significantly retrofitted development in the wildland-urban interface include fire-safe landscaping, building materials, visible addresses, emergency vehicle access, access to sufficient water for firefighting needs, and other appropriate fire-safe standards.

- **Action 4.3.6:** Ensure regulations and standards for streets, driveways, and emergency access are consistently applied through the ongoing interdepartmental review of proposed projects prior to approval.
- **Action 4.3.8:** Work with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District to prepare a comprehensive wildland fire prevention program, including fuel breaks, brush management, controlled burning, and access for fire suppression equipment.
- **Policy 5.1:** Enhance school safety by ensuring reliable emergency access during school hours.
 - **Action 6.1.1:** Coordinate with different neighborhoods to determine the best evacuation routes, pre-distribute evacuation information, and increase public awareness that specific evacuation routes will be determined during an emergency event to direct people away from the hazard areas.
 - **Action 6.1.2:** During a disaster, strategically identify which zones should be notified for evacuation orders versus warnings to avoid confusion, vehicle congestion, and misdirection to an evacuated area. Messaging should first issue evacuation orders or warnings and then subsequently identify an evacuation location(s).
 - **Action 6.2.2:** Coordinate with residents and service providers, where feasible, to identify in advance individuals who may need additional assistance during evacuations.
 - **Action 7.1.1:** Distribute information about emergency preparedness to community groups, schools, religious institutions, homeless service providers, and business associations to increase awareness of response plans, emergency checklists, evacuation tips, and other resources.
 - **Action 7.1.2:** Incorporate adequate emergency water flow, emergency vehicle access, and emergency evacuation routes into new development plans prior to project approval.
 - **Action 7.1.3:** Maintain the adopted Emergency Management Plan (EMP) periodically to ensure the safety of residents, employees, and visitors in times of human-caused or natural disaster.
 - **Action 7.1.4:** Provide training and drills on the City’s evacuation plan that identifies evacuation routes, establishes notification and traffic control methods and protocols. Include provisions for evacuating people that have mobility constraints or lack access to a personal vehicle, and identify the role of transit providers in providing evacuation assistance.

- **Action 7.2.1:** Develop public education programs on first aid, personal preparedness, and disaster response. Provide information encouraging residents and businesses to maintain emergency supplies, keep vehicles fueled, understand emergency access routes, protect themselves from poor air quality, stay safe during extreme heat, and monitor evacuation warnings and emergency messaging.
- **Action 8.1.3:** Coordinate and improve emergency preparedness systems including emergency evacuation, emergency outreach materials, supplies, and alert systems.
- **Action 9.2.2:** Educate the public on conditions for opening of resilience hubs, including extreme heat events, poor air quality events, and large-scale evacuation notifications.

With incorporation of these policies and actions, implementation of the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts associated with emergency response and evacuation plans. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. Would the project, due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would exacerbate wildfire risks. However, the goals, policies, and actions incorporated into the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Construction and maintenance activities in Moderate and High FHSZs within the city are subject to higher wildfire hazards due to fuel conditions, slope, and prevailing winds based on the location, which would result in higher fire-related risks to people and structures. However, new infrastructure components would be required to comply with applicable CBC and California Fire Code regulations as well as other applicable federal, state, and local regulations. Through the City’s design review process, future development projects associated with the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with the 2022 (or most recent) California Fire Code and CBC, which contain measures to reduce fire hazards in structures, including the use of materials, fire separation walls, building separation, and fire sprinklers. Compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations would ensure impacts related to wildfire risk are below significant.

In addition, the Safety Element Update includes several policies and actions intended to reduce the exposure of people and the environment to wildland fire risks:

- **Policy 4.1:** Regulate projects in high-risk areas, such as areas near fire hazard severity zones.
- **Policy 4.2:** Coordinate with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District to ensure adequate fire response times and address other fire-related issues in the city.

- **Action 4.2.1:** Require that all new development or redevelopment plans be submitted to the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District for review.
- **Action 4.2.2:** Require greenbelt zones and fire-resistant landscaping and building materials in developments located within or near higher fire risk areas.
- **Policy 4.3:** Avoid or minimize the fire hazards associated with new and existing development.
- **Action 4.3.1:** Provide water supply and fire protection facilities and services needed to serve existing and planned development.
 - **Action 4.3.2:** Require all new development to incorporate safe design of adequate infrastructure, such as minimum road widths, safe access for emergency response vehicles, visible street signs, and water supplies for fire suppression.
 - **Action 4.3.3:** Adopt and revise, as needed, requirements that new and significantly retrofitted development in the wildland-urban interface include fire-safe landscaping, building materials, visible addresses, emergency vehicle access, access to sufficient water for firefighting needs, and other appropriate fire-safe standards.
 - **Action 4.3.4:** Encourage existing non-conforming development to update to contemporary fire safe standards (e.g., road standards, vegetative hazards).
 - **Action 4.3.5:** Provide public education and outreach programs on fire safety and wildlife preparedness.
 - **Action 4.3.6:** Ensure regulations and standards for streets, driveways, and emergency access are consistently applied through the ongoing interdepartmental review of proposed projects prior to approval.
 - **Action 4.3.7:** Collaborate with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District to establish an inspection period for properties located in fire hazard, wildland, intermix, and interface areas.
 - **Action 4.3.8:** Work with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District to prepare a comprehensive wildland fire prevention program, including fuel breaks, brush management, controlled burning, and access for fire suppression equipment.
 - **Action 4.3.9:** Encourage public and private landowners to reduce wildfire risk by strengthening structures with fire-resistant materials and construction techniques, maintaining and improving defensible space on their properties, and supporting vegetation management in adjacent undeveloped areas to prevent fire spread from wildlands or neighboring properties.

With incorporation of these policies and actions, the Safety Element Update would result in beneficial impacts related to wildfire risk. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- c. Would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development or land use or zoning changes, or other actions or policy changes, that would exacerbate fire risk or result in adverse impacts to the environment. However, future development consistent with the Safety Element Update may require the installation and maintenance of roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities to avoid unreasonable risk in the city from wildfires and other hazards. Any new infrastructure components would be required to comply with applicable CBC and California Fire Code regulations as well as other applicable federal, state, and local regulations. For instance, Section 9-3.801 (Undergrounding Required) of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code requires electric, communication and cable television lines for all new buildings and electrical service entrance facilities to be installed underground to the point of connection with the utility distribution facilities in accordance with utility filed rules approved by the California Public Utilities Commission. Undergrounding electric lines minimizes fire risks by reducing the potential for sparks from exposure to wind, vegetation, and debris. Additionally, the Safety Element Update incorporates several policies and actions designed to reduce risk from wildfires (refer to Section 2.4.20[b]). Therefore, implementation of the Safety Element Update would not exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Impacts would be less than significant.

- d. Would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?**

Less than Significant Impact. The goals, policies, and actions incorporated in the proposed Safety Element Update may facilitate new development, including construction and installation of new water supply, fire protection, roads, drainage improvements, and other utilities infrastructure, as well as repair of existing facilities and trimming or removal of vegetation and trees. Any future development that is facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to adhere to the CBC and other federal, state, and local standards and regulations for building designs, which would minimize potential risks associated with landslides. In addition, future development facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update would be required to comply with the CBC and the recommendations of a project-specific soils and engineering geology report (Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 9-9.06), including engineered site preparation and adequate structural design, which would reduce potential adverse impacts from landslides. Further, Walnut Creek Municipal Code, Section 10-2.3.407(G), prohibits development of structures within 50 feet of a known landslide area. Additionally, the Safety Element Update incorporates several policies and actions to protect life and property from seismic hazards, including landslides (refer to Section 2.4.7[a])[i]). Therefore, future development would

not expose people or structures to significant risk associated with post-fire landslides, mudflows, and flooding. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

2.4.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Does the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21083.05, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 65088.4, Gov. Code; Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21083, 21083.05, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21095, and 21151, Public Resources Code; Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino,(1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296; Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors, (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337; Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

Impact Analysis

- a. Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development. Instead, the Safety Element Update would establish goals, policies, and actions that could be implemented to provide additional capacity for the City to adapt to hazard- and climate-related changes in the environment. Development facilitated by the Safety Element Update would be subject to compliance with the regulations and guidelines set forth in the GP 2025, Walnut Creek Municipal Code, development review process, and other local regulations. Due to the conceptual nature of future development, impacts cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of a project site and nature of the project is known. However, future discretionary development projects would require project-specific CEQA review, including an assessment of potential impacts to biological and cultural

resources. If necessary, mitigation measures would be identified to reduce potential project-level impacts to a less than significant level.

Adoption of the proposed Safety Element Update would not significantly degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or wildlife community, reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plants or wildlife, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. Therefore, the proposed Safety Element Update would not contribute to adverse impacts on wildlife resources, individually or cumulatively. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update is a policy document designed to guide future planning in the city and establishes goals, policies, and actions that could be implemented to provide additional capacity for the City to adapt to hazard- and climate-related changes in the environment. Due to the conceptual nature of future development, impacts cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of the project sites and nature of the projects are known. Cumulative impacts associated with future development that may be facilitated under implementation of the Safety Element Update have been evaluated at a program or policy level. In addition, future development would require compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations, including the Walnut Creek Municipal Code and GP 2025 policies aimed at reducing cumulative impacts. Furthermore, through the City’s project-specific CEQA review process, future development projects would be evaluated for potential cumulative impacts and mitigation measures would be implemented as needed to reduce those impacts. Therefore, the Safety Element Update would not contribute to cumulatively considerable impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less than Significant Impact. The Safety Element Update is a policy document designed to guide future planning in the city and establishes goals, policies, and actions that could be implemented to provide additional capacity for the City to adapt to hazard- and climate-related changes in the environment. The Safety Element Update does not propose any specific development. Due to the conceptual nature of future development, impacts cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of the project sites and nature of the projects are known. Environmental impacts with the potential to adversely affect people have been evaluated at a program or policy level. Further, future discretionary development projects would require project-specific CEQA review, including an assessment of potential impacts to hazards and hazardous materials, noise, and other environmental

topics that would directly or indirectly affect people and mitigation measures as needed to reduce those impacts. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The analysis completed for this section concludes that no significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed Safety Element Update. As a result, no mitigation measures are required.

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