

City Innovation Snapshot | Walnut Creek, United States

Overview

- ▶ Mayor: Justin Wedel
- ▶ Lead staff on innovation: Jessica Cole
- ▶ Population of municipality: 69,773 (2017)
- ▶ Innovation/open data website: www.walnut-creek.org/departments/community-and-economic-development/economic-development

Spotlight on Walnut Creek | SMART Goals

Walnut Creek innovation team has been using **SMART goals as an innovation tool** following several steps:

1. **Identification of an area or process to be improved** with the department directors
2. **Data searches** for both qualitative data that involves user interviews and journey mapping, and quantitative data that involves going back through many metrics and records
3. **Idea sourcing with staff at all levels to develop SMART goals** and consult a final one with senior staff.
4. **Identification of individual SMART goal** for every single staff member of the involved department or division to support the broader department-wide goal.
5. **Tracking progress over the months-long implementation** process while coaching staff through each step.

Vision and approach to innovation capacity

The city's innovation strategy

Along with 56% of cities surveyed, Walnut Creek does not have an **explicit innovation strategy**.

The city most closely associates innovation capacity with the following terms:

Human-centred design

Experimentation

Approaches to innovation capacity

Similar to 40% of cities surveyed, Walnut Creek approaches innovation capacity **both** from a **holistic/macro level**, as well as in **specific policy areas**.

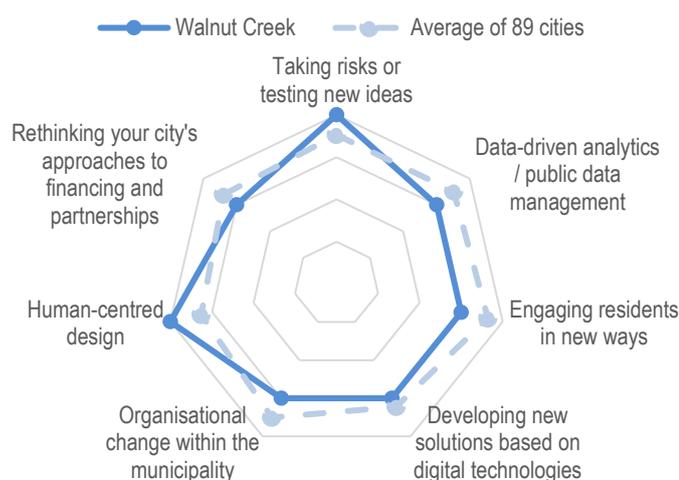
The **top two priority policy areas** for the city's innovation work include:

Economic development

Digital governance

Most common innovation activities

Walnut Creek's most common innovation activities are **taking risks and testing new ideas** and **human-centred design**.



Funding for innovation capacity

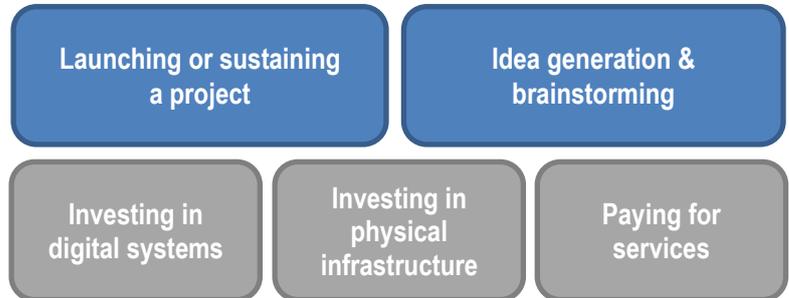
Funding to support innovation capacity

Like 77% of cities surveyed, Walnut Creek has dedicated funding to support innovation capacity, which originates from the following sources:

- ✓ **Municipal budget**
(city council approved funds/operating budget)

Types of activities being funded

Walnut Creek's funding for innovation capacity is generally directed towards **launching or sustaining a project**, and **generating ideas & brainstorming**. These are the two most commonly funded activities among all cities surveyed.



Organisational structure & staffing



Situated in the City Manager's office, Walnut Creek's innovation work is led by the Head of Innovation and Economic Development who is leading informal, cross-functional teams based on challenge at hand.

Staff skills and profiles include:

- ✓ **Project manager**
- ✓ **Designer**
- ✓ **Community engagement staff**

Partnerships for innovation & data



Walnut Creek has developed partnerships to promote its innovation capacity with **other public agencies, private firms, not-for-profit organisations, and city residents/resident associations**. In particular, in partnership with the City Innovate Foundation, **the city hosts an annual Start-up in Residence Program** to solve city challenges. There are also **public-private pilot programs for the community** such as a dock-less bike share and semi-autonomous sidewalk delivery robots.

To improve data use, the city has also developed **data partnerships with the private sector for qualitative data from outside the city**. The city also helps to **host an Open Data Day civic hackathon** to find good data sets.

Measuring outcomes

Policy areas that **benefit from sufficient data**, or **lack sufficient data**, to support innovation capacity in the city:



NB: No response provided by the city for the policy areas in grey.

Innovation is **helping the city** to:

- ✓ **Improve service delivery**
- ✓ **Improve internal government operations**
- ✓ **Anticipate and manage future challenges**

The most **critical success factors** in supporting the city's innovation work:

- ✓ **Dedicated innovation team**
- ✓ **Culture of innovation in city**