



October
**20
21**

Walnut Valley Water District

STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



Table Of Contents

● Executive Summary	3
● Guiding Principles	4
● Brand Statement	7
● Mission	7
● Goals & Objectives	8
● Targeted Audiences	11
● Communications Toolbox	13
AAPI & Mandarin Outreach	13
Media Relations	14
Water Awareness Education	15
Water Use Efficiency Program	17
District Programs & Events	19
● Key Messages	20
● Performance Evaluation	21
● Appendix	22

Executive Summary

To the Board of Directors & WVWD Community,

Walnut Valley Water District (WVWD) created the External Affairs Department in 2019 as a result of the development and implementation of its Strategic Vision Plan. Foreseeing the need to dedicate additional resources and personnel to the advancement of conservation and water use efficiency, the District is committed to delivering on the mission, goals, and objectives listed in this Strategic Communications Plan.

“Dedicated to meeting the water supply needs of the communities we serve.”

A key component of delivering this mission is to keep all customers, community members, and interested parties informed and engaged. In addition to the External Affairs team, it should be noted that the execution of efficient communications is a District-wide effort. All Board members and the entire WVWD workforce serve as water ambassadors and help define, shape, and communicate the District’s strategic priorities in-person, online, through the media, and beyond.

WVWD currently offers a variety of programs and services aimed at elevating water use efficiency and conservation through customer engagement, student education, interagency partnerships, and advocating for sound water policy at the state and federal level. Staff continually seeks new resources and tools to develop and coordinate impactful programs and services.

This Strategic Communications Plan is a living, breathing document that sets forth the instruments to be utilized to meet the District’s guiding principles for collaborative leadership, customer engagement, and supply reliability. In this document, the external affairs team has outlined the messaging, tools, and strategies to implement this plan.

Acknowledging that the world of communications is ever evolving and external circumstances such as a public health pandemic and innovation play a critical role in the District’s communication strategy, the External Affairs team will update and re-evaluate this plan at regular intervals as needed.

The focus of this plan is to connect customers and community members to resources and tools that help them lead a water efficient lifestyle and contribute to a sustainable water future. The External Affairs Department is proud to be a part of the movement to revolutionize water conservation and efficiency for all.

Sincerely,



Lily Lopez
Director of External Affairs
Walnut Valley Water District

Guiding Principles

Walnut Valley Water District's (District) communication efforts are guided by the principles outlined below. These principles are part of the District's Strategic Vision Plan implemented in 2019.

Collaborative Leadership



Statewide Presence

Advocacy and engagement at the state level is vital in ensuring sound water policy that focuses on equitable water access, affordability, and system resilience for all Californians. Fostering relationships with local and regional representatives has proven an effective tool for the District, who maintains an active and open line of communication with elected officials and their staff throughout the legislative cycle.

- » To amplify this effort, the District looks forward to hosting virtual and in-person tours of its facilities, brown bags with representatives and/or legislative summits, and the distribution of key messages and District updates.



Local District Visibility

Understanding the needs of customers and the local community is paramount to the successful delivery of District communications efforts. The District participates in local community meetings, represents the District at community events in-person and virtually, communicates with City and School District personnel, and consistently works towards earning public trust on all things water.

- » To amplify this effort, the District looks forward to building a bridge in which community members are empowered with the tools and resources they need to live a water efficient lifestyle.



Partnership Expansion

Enhanced system resiliency and reliability for the entirety of the District's service area is dependent on strategic industry and regional support. The District is currently working on alternative water solutions to decrease dependency and stress on the State Water Project and Colorado River Aqueduct. These projects create a regional partnership pipeline to ensure water sustainability and resiliency.

- » To assist in the optimization of water supply options and meet the District's long-term goals, the District looks forward to showcasing the value of these investments to community members through various digital, virtual, in-person, and print experiences.

Guiding Principles

Customer Engagement



Communications Planning

Transparency and communication are the driving forces behind excellence in customer service and developing an informed community. The implementation of this Strategic Communications Plan is the product of the guiding principles, integration of customer feedback, community partner input, and industry training.

- » This plan serves to define the District's communications and outreach efforts for the next five years.



Customer Empowerment

The District believes that conservation and water use efficiency programs for all of the District's customers serve as the bridge to a sustainable water future.

- » Tools and resources to meet this goal includes a new and interactive website and customer portal that will provide customers with access to their water usage through SMART technology.



Values & Trust

To uphold the District's core values of trust and excellence in customer service, transparency is key. The District understands that its customer's demographics are diverse and growing. To meet customers where they are, the District has refined customer excellence to include translated materials, ADA compliance, public meetings with various in-person and online options, program surveys, and access to Executive Staff and the Board of Directors.

- » As the community continues to grow, the District looks forward to increased workforce diversity and inclusion, data-driven results, professional development, and personal community ties.

Guiding Principles

Supply Reliability



Efficient Water Use

In September of 2020, the District completed its Water Use Efficiency (WUE) Strategic Plan that outlines goals and activities to maximize conservation for each customer category (residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and multi-use). Conservation and water use efficiency activities outlined in this Strategic Communications plan originate from the WUE Plan. The effectiveness of these activities will be measured utilizing internal evaluations and the Decision Support System (DSS) Model.

- » The District is moving forward with the implementation of water-efficient tools and programs to revolutionize water conservation for customers. This includes programs for customers who enjoy DIY projects and customers who require assistance from professionals due to constraints such as schedule availability, financial resources, and physical capabilities.



Alternative & Emergency Supplies

Climate change in California and around the world has amplified the need for emergency preparedness. The District has developed an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) to prepare for system disruptions that include earthquakes, wildfires, cyberattacks, and more.

Responding quickly to any event with the least disruption to the reliability and quality of the District's water supply is paramount. Most recently, the District was awarded \$300,000 from the CalOES

Public Safety Power Shutoff Grant Program to support District resiliency and emergency preparedness efforts that ensure quality and reliable drinking water to over 100,000 Southern Californian residents.

- » The District will continue to pursue grant-funding opportunities to integrate emergency response measures and innovation as part of its regular and long-term investments and highlight the value of infrastructure investment to the community.

Brand Statement

Walnut Valley Water District exists to provide quality drinking water, empower community members to lead a water efficient lifestyle, and develop personal connections with residents in the communities of Diamond Bar, Walnut, Rowland Heights, Pomona, Industry, and West Covina through multifaceted communication and water awareness initiatives.

Mission

Walnut Valley Water District is dedicated to meeting the water supply needs of the communities it serves.

The District's External Affairs Department has identified an integral component of mission delivery as the creation of community pathways towards a sustainable water future. We strive for a future built on innovative customer service, inclusive community engagement, and a safe and reliable drinking water supply. Ultimately resulting in an increased quality of life for District customers.



The District seeks to build connections with an attentive and interested customer base that is empowered to protect our most precious resource – water.

Under the guidance of this Strategic Communications Plan, the District will implement programs that build a resilient, informed, and engaged communities – working together towards water sustainability.

Goals & Objectives

The goal of this Strategic Communications Plan is to revolutionize water conservation for our customers to reach a sustainable water future. The District's objective is to elevate the value of water through effective communication and proactive support of customers' conservation efforts.

GOAL #1 – IMPLEMENT A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY THAT GUIDES CUSTOMERS TOWARDS INFORMED WATER USE DECISIONS.

OBJECTIVE 1

Consistency in communication efforts and brand identity.

- Provide customers with high value and consistent messaging that integrates water use efficiency and conservation into daily life.
- Provide community members such as educators, elected officials, city staff, and community advocates with the information they need to serve as an extension of the District known as "Water Ambassadors."

OBJECTIVE 2

Connect customers with new and effective conservation tools and resources.

- Customer recognition of the value of water being worth more than what is displayed on a monthly water bill.
- Integrate SMART technology (customer portal) that connects customers to their water usage, encourages behavior change, and results in District-wide water savings.
- Develop a customer base that is engaged, proactive, and believes that they have the power to control and measure the quality, accessibility and affordability of their water.
- Integrate data-driven results into each facet of our communications plan to measure program effectiveness and impact.

OBJECTIVE 3

District action that reflects internal commitment to mission, goals, and objectives.

- Develop personal connections with every person that interacts with District representatives built on empathy and compassion.
- Support a workforce culture based on educational, professional, and cultural growth.
- Reinforce our commitment to public service by anticipating and responding to customer needs.

Goals & Objectives

GOAL #2 – IMPLEMENT SPECIALIZED CONSERVATION AND WATER EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO MEET FUTURE WATER NEEDS LOCALLY AND REGIONALLY.

OBJECTIVE 1

Rollout of the 2020 Water Use Efficiency (WUE) Strategic Plan conservation measures to meet future water needs, meet the state of California's current and future conservation requirements, and save an estimated 2,400 acre-feet of water per year beginning in 2045.

OBJECTIVE 2

Diverse and inclusive workforce pipeline via student engagement and water awareness education.

GOAL #3 – FOSTER PUBLIC TRUST IN THE DISTRICT'S DECISION MAKING PROCESS TO SECURE WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY AND RESILIENCY.

OBJECTIVE 1

Increase transparency of the rate setting process that results in deeper understanding of the District's financial planning and capital improvement efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2

Raise awareness of day-to-day District operations. Shine a light on the essential workforce that manages the pipes, pumps, and plants that deliver safe drinking water.

OBJECTIVE 3

Spotlight investments that secure our local and regional water supplies.

OBJECTIVE 4

Highlight water quality and testing. Re-imagine the annual quality report/consumer confidence report.

Goals & Objectives

GOAL #4 – ADVOCATE FOR EQUITABLE AND AFFORDABLE WATER POLICY THAT RESPONDS TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

OBJECTIVE 1

Join coalition efforts that advocate for local, regional, and national infrastructure investment.

OBJECTIVE 2

Active engagement in the California legislative and decision-making process as it relates to water equity, affordability, investment, and representation.

OBJECTIVE 3

Secure monies from federal and state grant and assistance programs to support system upgrades, conservation efforts, and relief packages.

Targeted Audiences

This section is a sample of the community members that live, work, and play in the District's service area. The Strategic Communications Plan intention is to serve all WWWD community members. The listed personas below provide an outlook on the types of conservation and outreach programs the District seeks to provide.



Persona: Senior/Lifelong Community Member

Key Adjectives: Affordability, Invested, Traditional

Activities & Partnerships:

- Access to Board of Directors & Staff
- Access to Qualified WUE Professionals
- Citizens Advisory Committee
- Direct Install Programs
- District Facility Tours
- Energy Savings Partnerships
- In-person & Hands-on Events
- Landscape Beautification
- Water Ambassador Representation
- Affordable Rate Programs



Persona: New Homeowner with Young Family

Key Adjectives: Active, Innovative, "Set It & Forget it"

Activities & Partnerships:

- Customer Portal
- Direct Install programs
- Energy Savings Partnerships
- Hands-On Workshops
- How-To Videos
- Interactive Education Tools
- User-Friendly District Website
- Virtual Programs & Classes



Persona: Student 6-8th Grade (Middle School)

Key Adjectives: Curious, Environmental Advocate, Imaginative

Activities & Partnerships:

- Career Pathways Program
- Field Trips
- School/Classroom Presentations
- Social Media
- STEM School Challenge
- Student Water Summit
- Virtual & In-Person Tours
- Water Education Contests
- Water Science Experiments

Targeted Audiences



Persona: High School Teacher/Counselor

Key Adjectives: Flexible, Creative, Impactful

Activities & Partnerships:

- Career Fairs
- Career Pathways Program
- High School Internship Program
- Interactive Education Tools
- ProjectWET
- School Supplies for Educators
- Student Engagement



Persona: Elected Official

Key Adjectives: Engaged, Ambitious, Informed

Activities & Partnerships:

- Access to Board of Directors & Staff
- Community Events
- Community Organization Presentations
- District Facility Tours
- Educational Materials
- Social Media
- Water Ambassador Program
- Water Awareness Month Legislative Luncheon



Persona: Young Professional

Key Adjectives: Equitable, Efficient, Accessibility

Activities & Partnerships:

- Career Pathways
- Community Events
- District Facility Tours
- Environmental Advocacy
- Rebates
- Social Media
- Webinars

Communications Toolbox

The District's External Affairs Department has developed a menu of communications resources to meet the goals and objectives of this Strategic Communications Plan. These items reflect input from District representatives, customer feedback, and industry trends. This toolbox serves as a program guide of the activities that the District will pursue over the next five years.

Asian-American Pacific Islander (AAPI) & Mandarin Outreach

The District believes that effective communications includes diversity and equity. Based on U.S. Census Bureau Data available from 2019 and Data USA, along with regular interaction with community members it is necessary that all programs are accessible to the District's largest demographic, Mandarin speakers and the AAPI community (see Appendix A).

The District is a participant of the WaterNow Alliance Project Accelerator program for support in ensuring that water use efficiency programs and activities are reaching Mandarin speaking and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community members as effectively as possible. WaterNow will partner with WWD to develop outreach tools to enhance communications for the AAPI community. The project team will analyze participation in water use efficiency activities across AAPI and Mandarin speaking communities in the service area; survey other utilities for lessons learned and best practices; and work with local stakeholders to develop a replicable and scalable plan with a set of recommendations.

Communications Toolbox

Media Relations



The Director of External Affairs serves as the District's official spokesperson and media representative. The External Affairs Director maintains an open line of communication to all members of the media (traditional, digital, broadcast, influencer) and public. Responses to interview and media requests are delivered in a timely and efficient manner to cultivate trust and professionalism. The Director of External Affairs currently serves on the speakers bureau of the California Department of Water Resources' "Save Our Water" (SOW) public awareness campaign.

The District's Board of Directors also serve as spokespersons particularly for the Mandarin speaking community. The District will ensure that any request to provide information in another language (English, Mandarin, and Spanish) is done promptly, as it is feasible.

Fostering relationships with local media personnel to ensure delivery of District news, conservation measures, and water use efficiency tips is a priority. Press releases and media advisories are available on the District's website, the District's "The Patch" account, and announced via social media as well as directly provided to journalists and bloggers.

Communications Toolbox

Water Awareness Education

Activities under this category are for students attending elementary, middle, and high school in the District's service area. As well as community college and university in the regional area. The goal of these resources is to introduce students to the water industry at an early age, develop informed citizens that choose to live a water efficiency lifestyle, are active in the climate of their community, and are aware of careers in the water industry.



Elementary School — Grades 3 to 6

- Classroom & Grade Level Competitions
- Classroom Presentations with Hands-On Activities
- District Branded Goodie Bags & Giveaways
- District Coloring/Reading Book
- District Led, Hosted, & Arranged Field Trips
- Interactive Virtual Reality (VR) Tools
- Poster & Media Contest
- Teacher Materials to Match Curriculum
- Themed Activities (Halloween, Water Professionals Week, and more)
- Water Awareness Summer Reading List
- Water Education Games on New District Website
- Water Education Videos with Students of their Age
- Water Science & STEM Experiments



Middle School — Grades 6 to 8

- Classroom & Grade Level Competitions
- District Branded Goodie Bags & Giveaways
- District Led, Hosted, & Arranged Field Trips
- Imagine a Day in Water (Job Fair/Career Shadowing)
- Interactive Classroom Presentations
- Teacher Materials to Match Curriculum
- Themed Activities (Halloween, Water Professionals Week, and more)
- Water Awareness Summer Reading List
- Water Education Games on New District Website
- Water Education Videos with Students of their Age
- Water Science & STEM Experiments

Communications Toolbox

Water Awareness Education



High School — Grades 9 to 12

- AP Environmental Studies Class Curriculum
- Career Pathways Program
- Demo Days: Welding, Freeze Machine, & Valve Exhibition
- District Branded Goodie Bags & Giveaways
- District Facility Tours
- High School Internship (Social Media Competition)
- Interactive Classroom Presentations
- Job Fairs for Underrepresented Youth
- Poster & Media Contest
- Promote District Tuition Reimbursement
- Rowland Adult Education – Career Pathways Program
- Shadow the GM for A Day
- Solar Cup
- STEM Career Outreach
- Student Led Water Audits & School Board Presentation
- Volunteer Opportunities at District Events
- Women in Water
- Youth Advisory Committee



Community/Junior College & University

- Career Pathways Program
- Demo Days: Welding, Freeze Machine, & Valve Exhibition
- District Branded Goodie Bags & Giveaways
- District Facility Tours
- College Internship
- Career Fairs & Interactive District Booth
- Promote District Tuition Reimbursement
- Outreach to Adult Education
- Diverse & Underrepresented Outreach
- Trade School Presentations
- Water Tech, Engineering & Chemistry Competition to Solve Water Crisis

Communications Toolbox

Water Use Efficiency (WUE) Programs

These activities are offered to customers within the District's service area. The goal is to introduce the community WUE implementation into their daily life, increase water savings, and savings on the monthly water bill. The overall goal is to provide each community member with tools to make smart water-use decisions.



Residential Customers

- "Nominate My Neighbor" Program
- "Yard of the Month" Campaign
- Citizens Advisory Committee
- Conservation Chats at Coffee Shops (& local business)
- Conservation Presentations
- Customer Portal
- Demonstration Garden Tours
- Direct Install Programs
- District Facility Tours
- Drip-Irrigation Workshop
- Energy Savings Partnerships
- Fix-A-Leak Incentive
- Landscape Home Beautification Tour
- Landscape Irrigation Education
- Landscape Tours
- Participation Incentives
- Rebates
- Resources for Qualified Water Efficient Landscapers/Professionals
- Spotlight of Customers Who Save Water Online & Social Media
- Summer Water Usage Education
- Turf Replacement
- Virtual & In-Person Water Audits
- Water Ambassador Program
- Water Efficient Landscape Makeovers
- Working Adult Opt-In Options
- WUE Retrofits



Multi-Family Customers

- Conservation Chats at Coffee Shops (& local business)
- Customer Portal
- Energy Savings Partnerships
- Fix-A-Leak Incentive
- Landscape Retrofits
- Participation Incentives
- Premium High Efficiency Toilet Installation
- Rebates
- Renter Specific Outreach
- Sensor Industries Pilot Program
- Virtual & In-Person Water Audits
- WUE Retrofits

Communications Toolbox

Water Use Efficiency (WUE) Programs



Commercial Customers

- Customer Portal
- Direct Install Programs
- Direct Install Programs
- Energy Savings Partnerships
- In-Person Audits
- Landscape Retrofits
- Participation Incentives
- Rebates
- Turf Replacement
- WUE Retrofits

Communications Toolbox

District Programs & Events

The District will continue to host a variety of events that promote water use efficiency and conservation with an emphasis on community engagement. The External Affairs Department will offer customers, community members, and elected officials innovative programming to introduce them to the water industry and strengthen their conservation knowledge to serve as District message carriers.

- Art Murals
- Bill Inserts/Snipes
- California Water Professionals Week Recognition
- Community Advertising
- Community Presentations
- Conservation Giveaways
- Conservation Luncheons
- District E-News
- District Facility Tours
- Drought Messaging: Reminder of Efforts, What Worked, & How to Manage Moving Forward
- East Gate Tour & Events
- Fire Station “Pump Pods”
- Fix-A-Leak Week Activities
- HOA Presentations
- Interactive Conservation Booth
- Interactive Website
- Joint Events with Cities & Regional Partners
- Legislative Summit/Brown Bag
- Presentations at Parker Canyon Recycled Reservoir
- Recycled Water Competition
- Revamped Consumer Confidence Report/Annual Water Quality Report
- Roundtable Discussions
- Signage & QR Codes at Demonstration Gardens to provide information on type of native plants and where to buy them
- Smart Irrigation Month Activities
- Social Media
- Summer Series Education “Summer Save Off”
- Virtual Tours of the Water Quality Process
- Water Awareness Month Activities
- Water Bottle Filling Stations
- Water Quality Week Activities

Key Messages

- » Community connections to resources and tools for a sustainable water future.
- » Revolutionize water conservation for a sustainable future.
- » Informed, engaged & proactive community.
- » Initiatives that prioritize resilient and informed communities.

Team Members Driving These Messages



Lily Lopez, Director of External Affairs

Key Message: Inspire and encourage professional growth and District initiatives for a sustainable water future.



Donna DiLaura, Conservation & Special Projects Manager

Key Message: Implementation of water-efficient initiatives to promote a sustainable water future and strengthen industry partnerships.



Jillian Keller, Management Analyst

Key Message: Enhance water management initiatives to revolutionize and promote communications for a sustainable water future.



Stephanie Fu, Senior Outreach & Design Specialist

Key Message: Public education and outreach initiatives that prepare the next generation of water advocates to promote a sustainable water future.

Performance **Evaluation**

Walnut Valley Water District's WUE Plan describes performance metrics for all conservation and WUE programs. Utilizing the Decision Support System (DSS) Model designed by Maddaus Inc., the District's Conservation & Special Projects Manager, will track water savings and assess conservation programs. The External Affairs team will track program participation and develop a comprehensive database to develop unique customer profiles. These profiles will detail workshop/class attendance, giveaways received, participation in water savings programs, rebates, and all other interactions to ensure customers benefit from resources that complement their conservation efforts, increase water savings in and around their homes, and add value to the sustainability of water resources.

Additional Metrics Include:

- *Educational Pre & Post Test* - Provide students with a test to gauge what they learned and provide educators with content follow-up.
- *Program Awards* - Students review District programs and rank their favorites with awards.
- *Conservation Surveys* - Customer feedback to measure program effectiveness and integrate customer requests for increased participation.

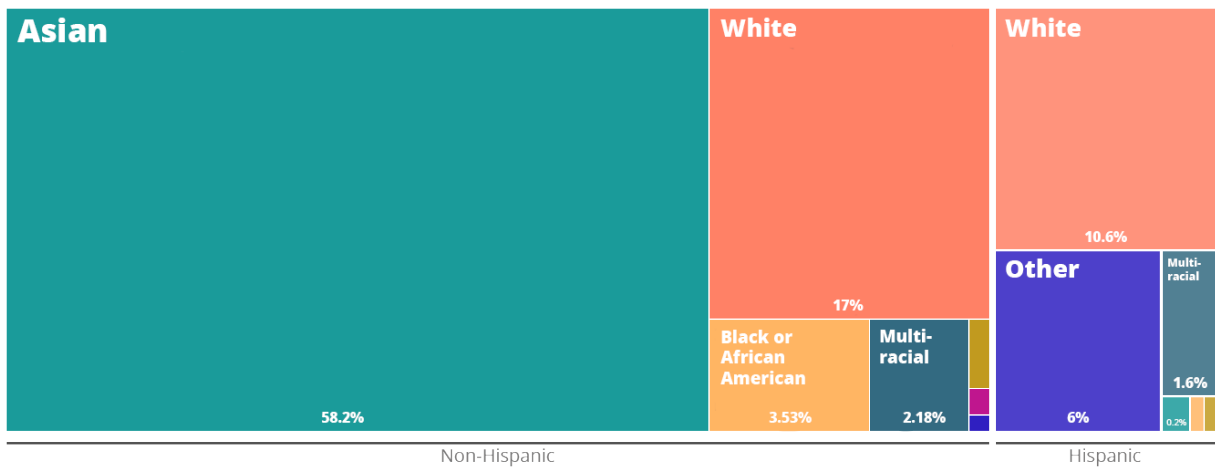
Appendix

Appendix A

City of Diamond Bar (U.S. Census Bureau Data, 2019)

Population : 55,720

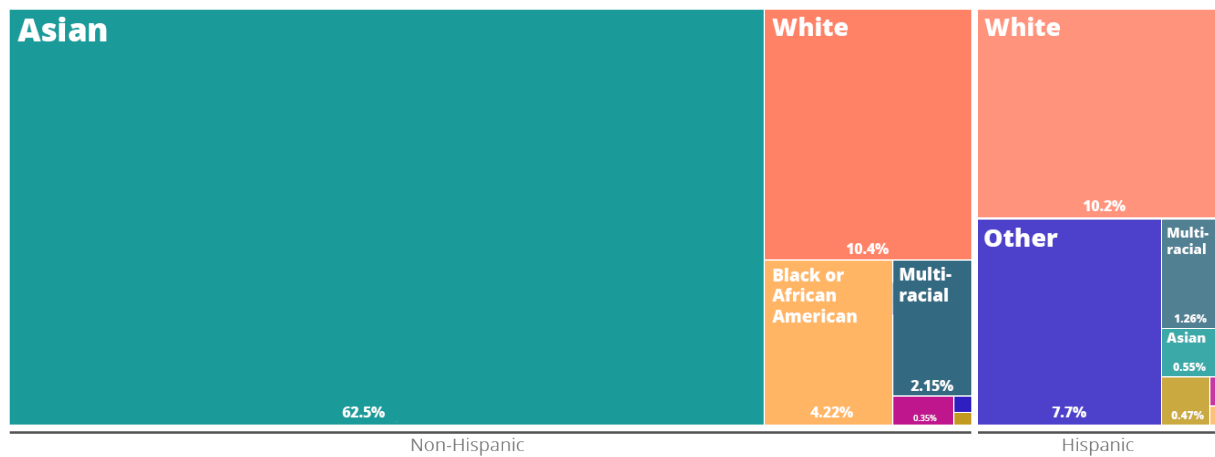
Asian : 58.4%



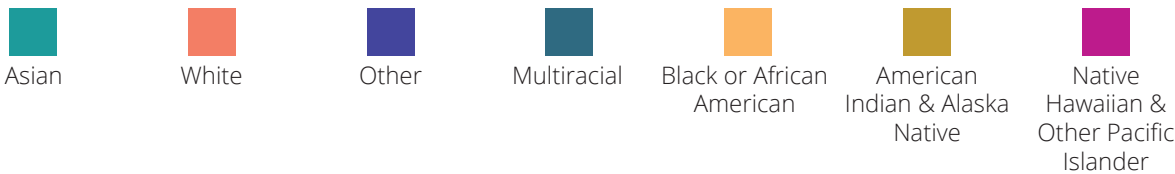
City of Walnut (U.S. Census Bureau Data, 2019)

Population : 29,685

Asian : 63.1%



Key :



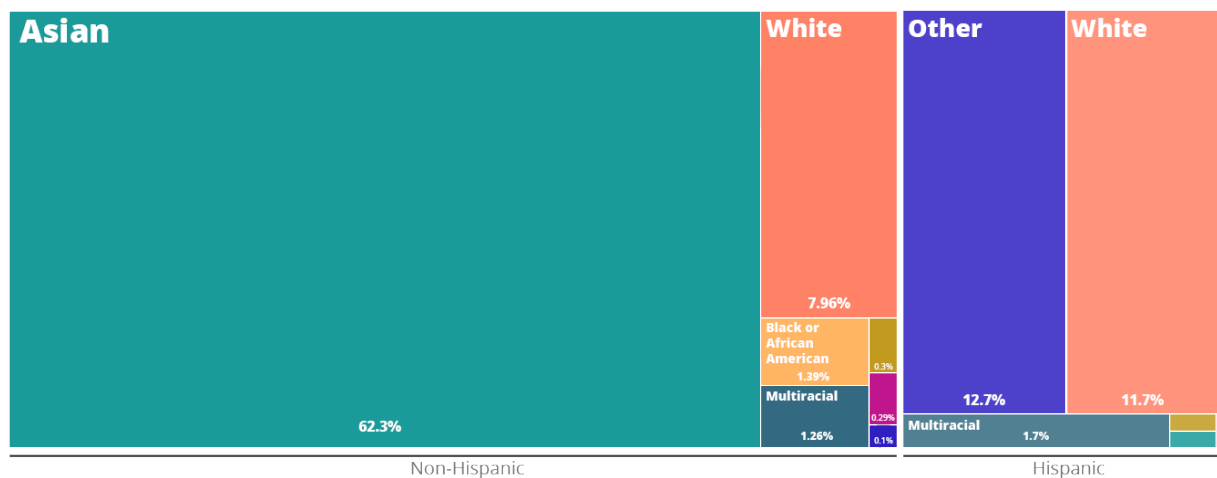
Appendix

Appendix A

City of Rowland Heights (U.S. Census Bureau Data, 2019)

Population : 50,602

Asian : 62.4%



Key :

