

NEWS

West Pasadena Residents' Association

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

ESTABLISHED 1962

SPRING 2004

WPRA Annual Meeting – May 12, 2004

by Cheryl Auger

On a typical drive from my house in West Pasadena going east on California, it takes several minutes to pass through a few lights to get past Fair Oaks. If the Gold Line is crossing my path, my time is doubled. If I wish to turn north at Raymond, I may needlessly have to wait, even though there may be no traffic on Raymond.

My commute to and from work on the 210 used to take 15 to 20 minutes, now my commute more often than not is doubled. Traveling down Lake Avenue can take as much as 20 minutes



from the freeway to California. When I shop at the local grocery store, I circle the parking lot several times looking for a space. When I want to have dinner in Old Town on a weekend night, I need to park my car by 7:00 pm or I might as well change plans. Besides feeling the effect of increased traffic, I now hear the constant hum of vehicles traveling along the 210.

The traffic in Pasadena has affected every resident and visitor in Pasadena. With the recent and anticipated development throughout our city, I can only expect my travel time to increase and the hopes of finding a parking space greatly diminished. At best, I can hope the Gold Line will take some of the load off the 110 on the mornings that I need to travel to Irvine. At worst, I'll lose more of the free time that I value, and along with that, a portion of my quality of life. The traffic problem is a daunting problem that is facing people in most LA cities. One of my reasons for choosing to live in Pasadena was

because I loathe the congestion in those cities between the 405, the 10, the 210 and the 110. Now that the 210 has been extended, I seriously wonder if Pasadena is the next Hollywood, where valet parking is the only choice. I also wonder how we as a community are preparing ourselves to prevent this from occurring.

Congestion Indigestion: This year's Annual WPRA Meeting will focus on the traffic that is plaguing our city. Steve Scauzillo, editor of the Star News, will moderate a panel discussion that will

focus on traffic and development. Panelists will participate in a discussion about what can be done and what is being done to prevent traffic problems from escalating out of control.

The meeting will be held on May 12th at the Western Justice Center, located at 55 South Grand Avenue, just north of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals building. There will be a reception 6:30 pm, followed by the meeting at 7:00 pm.

President David Romney will summarize the past year's accomplishments and next year's slate of new board members will be presented for your vote. Please join us for an exciting evening – guests will be invited to ask questions of the panelists. ■

The traffic problem is a daunting problem...

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President's Message



David Romney

WPRAs needs the support of its members now more than ever.

The Ambassador Project has not gone away. The developer, World Wide Church Of God, has just changed its strategy. Parcels are being sold off to several individual developers in piece-meal fashion which adds to our burden to monitor and counter any negative aspects of their development.

The voluminous Central District Specific Plan and the even more voluminous General Plan are undergoing potentially major revisions. A massive EIR, documenting matters of significant adverse impact, will be disseminated soon. All will require tremendous effort in research and assimilation of background facts for constructive formulation of WPRAs

recommendations to the planning commission and council.

The proposed Granny Flat Ordinance did not originate out of a concern for grandmothers. Instead, it is stealth rezoning of approximately 7,000 properties currently in single family residential zones where second units will be allowed. The legal parameters of the State law allegedly requiring such rezoning have yet to be publicly aired at a council meeting. No EIR has been required. No complete inventory of the City's existing affordable/assisted housing has been disseminated for review by the public. No examination of how public entities in our immediate area have dealt with this law has been made. Yet passage of the Granny Flat Ordinance is on the council agenda and imminent.

The proposed Hillside Ordinance, and short moratorium for construction on hillsides provide an opportunity for the City to shape the nature and location of development allowed on our hillsides, which are visible throughout the entire City, as well as grapple with the difficult issue of how

to preserve the privacy of those living in existing homes subject to intrusive viewing by later construction.

Traffic remains a major concern. The city council finally has acknowledged need to assess the cumulative impact of all growth throughout the City on traffic rather than deeming some growth as "not significant". The task ahead will be to devise a fair and easily understood measure of "cumulative impact" and an equally fair and easily understood standard for measuring when a street has reached its maximum traffic capacity short of gridlock.

These are but a few of the issues ahead. To deal with them responsibly will require assistance from professionals in the fields of planning, zoning and environmental law, municipal planning and zoning, and traffic engineering. It also will require commitment of the personal resources of our members in time and money.

We look forward to success in calendar years 2004-2005! ■

Message from the Treasurer

by Dorothy Lindsey

Due to the generous support of more than 880 members this year, WPRAs has been able to make a difference in the quality of life in West Pasadena, and indeed the entire city. With your continued generous support we can positively influence the direction of development in the community of Pasadena and continue to bring our issues before City Council

and staff. Hiring experts in traffic and city planning, as well as obtaining legal advice concerning development issues is quite costly. Please be as generous as possible this year.

A few dedicated board members are constantly working on various issues that directly affect our quality of life, such as the Ambassador property development, traffic, environmental

concerns and citywide overdevelopment. If you, too, would like to make a difference in our quality of life by getting more involved with WPRAs, please email me, Dorothy Lindsey, at dorlind@pacbell.net or call (323) 256-4972. Your help and interest on one or more of our committees would be greatly appreciated. ■

San Pascual Stables

The Gateway to the Arroyo Seco Declared Endangered!

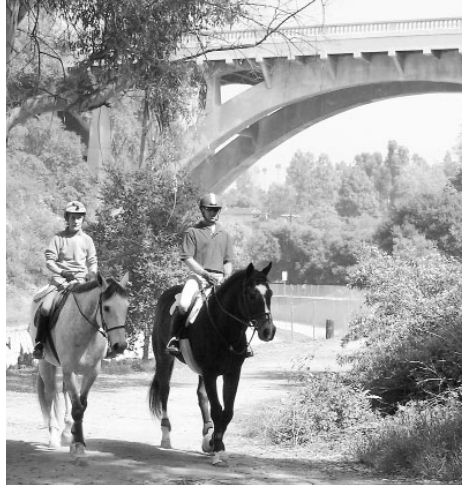
By Cathy Morrison

Trouble is brewing! The Arroyo Seco continues to require our never-ending diligence to protect her!

The equestrian riders and friends of the Arroyo would like to bring to your attention a situation that will impact the historic Arroyo Seco, you, and your neighbors directly.

The South Pasadena City Council has established the Advisory Committee to explore possible "alternative uses" for the city owned land now occupied by the Stables. This committee was formed because the current leasehold, originally established in 1978, expires in April, 2005. However, the equestrian use of this land parcel predates this leasehold by many decades. Historically, this site has always been "horse country" and should always remain so.

The Lease Committee has been asked to provide city council members with a recommendation by May 5th of this year. The Lease Committee is currently exploring alternative uses including exclusive soccer use, a combined soccer/equestrian use, and a combination of



Photograph: Andrew Katside

recreational uses. A mixed use of this area would substantially reduce the current equestrian facility and the remaining portion would be converted to another use, i.e. soccer, baseball, volley ball, basketball etc. *Undoubtedly, a change of this magnitude would alter the historic Arroyo Seco in terms of increased traffic, noise, lighting, parking and a compromised access to the Arroyo Seco trail!* This 5.4 acre site is simply not large enough for these incompatible uses!

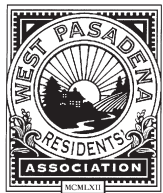
There is an ongoing effort by citizens from South Pasadena and the surrounding communities to save San Pascual

Stables to preserve the presence of horses and the natural surroundings that attract many folks to this point of access to the Lower Arroyo.

You can help support the continued presence of this historical stable that is situated on the boarder of Pasadena.

- Write letters to South Pasadena City Council Members at:
1414 Mission Street
South Pasadena, CA 91030
- Write e-mails to South Pasadena City Council Members to the attention of Marc Castagnola/ Assistant to the City Manager:
mcastagnola@ci.south-pasadena.ca.us
- Attend the South Pasadena City Council meeting on May 5th at 7:30 pm. At this meeting, Council members will decide the fate of the Stables. *This threat is real!*
- Submit a petition from the website with neighbors and friends signatures.

The San Pascual Stables website will provide updates on meetings and other ways you can help. The website is: www.sanpascualstables.com. ■



Join the WPRRA Today

All membership dues are tax-deductible, and donations of \$75 or more are acknowledged in this newsletter. Please take a moment to complete this form and mail it with your check today!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-Mail _____

- Associate \$25-\$49
 Patron \$75-\$99
 Neighborhood Protection Fund
 Friend \$50-\$74
 Benefactor \$100-\$249
 Platinum \$250 or more

Please mail to: West Pasadena Residents, Association, Post Office Box 50252, Pasadena California 91115

Neighborhood Update

Pasadena Neighborhood Coalition holds Growth/Development Symposium

The Pasadena Neighborhood Coalition (PNC) will hold a growth/development symposium to address the topic: "Is This the Future We Imagined?" Former Pasadena mayor Rick Cole will discuss current development trends in Pasadena from the perspective of the original intent of the City's 1994 General Plan. Arnie Siegel, Chair of the Pasadena Planning Commission, Stephanie Landregan, urban green space planner and

Michelle White of Affordable Housing Services will join Mr. Cole in assessing various city-wide impacts from recent growth and development. Representatives from Pasadena commissions and neighborhood associations will participate in expanded panel discussion, with ample time for audience Q & A.

The event takes place Saturday, May 1st from 9:00 a. m. to Noon at the Travis Auditorium, Fuller Theological

Seminary. This is a city wide event.

The public is invited to attend. For further information please contact PNC Chair Bob Kneisel at (626) 797-2707. ■

Editor's Note: The PNC is the city-wide coalition of neighborhood associations advocating for issues of livability and quality of life in neighborhoods across the City of Pasadena.

The Garden of Readin'

Libraries represent a quiet oasis in a loud and hectic world. It's not always about the books, or the specific information needed. Sometimes it's about the opportunity to enter a world outside your own where your imagination can take flight. While the collection and the staff at the San Rafael Branch Library are undeniably a neighborhood treasure, the physical environment should be enhanced so that more children and adults can enjoy this world of imagination.

The San Rafael Library Associates (SRLA) is working to do precisely that, through redesigning and revitalizing the library's garden areas. Local landscape artist Charlotte Chen has designed a new look for the patio area which can accommodate the branch's growing schedule of school groups (when weather permits) as well as shady nooks for individuals to enjoy a good book. The new design will also provide improved handicapped access as well as minimize safety concerns for groups using the library at night and voters.

Please join SRLA in its first fundraising event, a wine tasting at Heritage Wines, on Thursday, April 22. Proceeds from the event will help fund the garden project. For further information, or to purchase tickets, please contact the San Rafael Branch Library at 744-7270.

Stop by the San Rafael Library to take a look at the preliminary plans for the garden revitalization, or meet the SRLA members and learn more about the support group and its various activities at the April 22 event. ■



A Taste of Wine, A Love of Books and Thou

The San Rafael Library Associates

*invites you to an evening of
wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres*

Thursday, April 22, 2004

From 5:00 to 7:30 pm

Heritage Wines

*155 North Raymond Avenue
Old Pasadena*

Tax-deductible donation: \$25 per person

Proceeds benefit the San Rafael Library Garden Project

To reserve your tickets contact the San Rafael Branch Library: (626) 744-7270

Caring for your Oak Tree

By Cheryl Auger

We have all been reading about the old oak tree alongside the Arroyo Seco at the bird bath. Ray Dashner and The Arroyo Brigade have been diligently working to save this old oak. The oak tree has a fungus at its root, probably from too much moisture. Ray has been leading the efforts to save the tree. The City fears that the tree may be hazardous.

The City of Pasadena maintains an inventory of about 60,000 trees. Approximately 12% of these trees are oaks, with the most common being the Coast Live Oak. Because of the recent press on oak root fungus and sudden oak death, we asked Darya Barar, Pasadena Parks certified arborist, for suggestions on how to care for your oaks. She provided us with the following information.

1. Never use rocks directly around the base of oak trees. Rocks will retain moisture around the trees crown and collar and could potentially kill the tree through drowning or through fungus. Only use mulch around the oak tree base.



Photographs: Robert Wittry

2. Never water mature oaks in the summer. An oak grows in the winter and is dormant in the summer. Watering in the summer will cause root fungus. Only water oak trees in the winter if it has been an unusually dry year.

3. Never prune more than 10-20% green out of your oak.

4. Only prune oaks around July or August the hottest months of the summer during the trees dormant season.

5. Never remove all of the green foliage from the branches since the trunk and main branches will get sunburned.

6. Try not to plant under an oaks canopy. If you need to plant something, use plants that require similar soil types and water requirements, native plants are best, such as Currants, *Ribes sp.*

7. Never plant azaleas or rhododendrons near your oaks. Besides requiring different soil types they have been found to contain sudden oak death. No cases of sudden oak death have been found south of Monterey to date.

For questions related to city trees or information on how to get mulch, call Darya Barar with the Parks and Recreation Department at 744-3846. ■

wpra.net wpra.net wpra.net wpra.net wpra.net wpra.net wpra.net wpra.net wpra.net wpra.net wpra.net

New wpra.net website coming

By Blaine Cavena

This April, the WPRA will unveil a completely redesigned website. The new site will provide more accurate and timely information to members and residents in a format that is easy to use and attractive. The site will become the focal point for information about the WPRA, the issues we are pursuing, the

latest news and events for the WPRA, and the current status of our activities. Our web site will provide easy access to news and information for our residents, useful links to City and community services, and contact information for the WPRA and board members.

The new wpra.net will improve the WPRA's ability to make information

available, but it will not replace our quarterly newsletter, weekly emails or special mailings. They will continue as usual.

The premiere of our new site will be announced via email later this spring. Look for more information on the new wpra.net at the WPRA's Annual Meeting in May. ■

WEDNESDAY

Children's Night

JUNE 23 7pm
Bob Baker Marionettes
Lively, colorful puppet show by master puppeteers
 Bobbakermarionettes.com

JUNE 30 7pm
Circus Skills with Terrell & Takako
Juggling, clowning, paper folding & unicycling to bedazzle you
 musicunlimitedtalent.com

JULY 7 7pm
Limpopo
Energetic Russian folk music, phenomenal Jazz & Blues, dancing
 limpopo.com

JULY 14 7pm
Mussukeba Sane
Glorious West African music & dancing
 Musiccenter.org

JULY 21 7pm
Joanie Bartels
Award winning children's entertainer shares her musical magic
 Joaniebartels.com

JULY 28 7pm
Diane Ferlatte / David Prather
Storytelling to capture & inspire the imagination
 Musiccenter.org

THURSDAY

Eclectic Blends

JUNE 24 7pm
Rococo String Quartet
Classical music with a twist

JULY 1 7pm
Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles
A dynamic vocal performance by world-renowned men's chorus
 Gmcla.org

JULY 8 7pm
Art Deco Orchestra
Dance to timeless, romantic, big band music
 instantweb.com/s/swingmusic

JULY 15 7pm
Opera Noir
Multicultural celebration of classical music as well as American music, blues, jazz and spirituals

JULY 22 7:30pm
New Town
Original musical performances paired with video imagery
 Newtown.org

JULY 29 7pm
One World
An exciting blend of Latin, Brazilian & Caribbean styles
 Sunstonerecords.com

FRIDAY

World Beat

JUNE 25 8pm
The Nervis Brothers
Toe-tapping New Orleans R&B
 Eddiebaytos.com

JULY 2 8pm
Nocy
Soulful, rhythmic classical guitar wizardry.
 Nocymusic.com

JULY 9 8pm
Isouljahs
Roots, Rasta, Reggae
 Isouljahs.com

JULY 16 8pm
Bonnie Musique Zydeco
Dance to a celebration of Louisiana culture & music
 Bonnemusiquezydeco.com

JULY 23 8pm
Francis Awe & the Nigerian Talking Drum Ensemble
Amazing African drums & dance
 Nitade.com

JULY 30 8pm
Blay Ambolley
African Jazz from multi-talented Ghanaian musician

SATURDAY

Música Latina

JUNE 26 8pm
Thania Sanz
Venezuelan artist ignites stage with boleros poetry & music
 Thaniasanz.com

JULY 3 8pm
Tremolocos
L.A. band with deep roots in Tex-Mex, Country, Zydeco, Folklorico, Folk & Blues.
 Tremolocos.com

JULY 10 8pm
Lalo Guerrero
Celebrate Mexican-American culture with this Chicano Musical Icon
 Break-records.com

JULY 17 8pm
Caravana
High energy Latin-R&B-Rock
 Community-2.webtv.net/hotmail.com/caravana14/CARAVANA/

JULY 24 8pm
LA Mambo Combo
Flavorful Afro-Cuban, Tropic-Jazz, Salsa style performance

SUNDAY

Jazz, Blues & Fusion

JUNE 27 7pm
Billy Mitchell
Extraordinary smooth Jazz/be-bop mix
 Billymitchell.com

JULY 4 7pm
Susie Hansen Band
Electric violin blended with Jazz & Salsa
 Susiehansen.com

JULY 18 7pm
Barbara Morrison is back!
Legendary Jazz vocalist
 Barbaramorrison.com

JULY 25 7pm
Juke Logan / Doug MacLeod
Lively Blues, harmonica & guitar
 Mocomborecords.com
 Doug-macleod.com

AUGUST 1 7pm
Donavan / Muradian Quintet
Upbeat, low down, classic, original Jazz
 Dimgtazz.com

<p>AUGUST 4 Ashley Maher <i>Africa meets the Caribbean. Native flutes, funk guitar, wild saxophones, colorful dancers</i> Ashleymaher.com</p>	<p>AUGUST 5 Hot August Night! <i>A tribute to Neil Diamond</i> Hotaugust.com</p>	<p>AUGUST 6 Acida <i>Latin Pop peppered with traditional Argentinean sounds</i> Sonic360.com</p>	<p>AUGUST 7 Louie Cruz Beltran <i>Contemporary music, traditional Mexican influence</i> Louiecruzbeltran.com</p>	<p>AUGUST 8 Gary Primich <i>Wailing Blues from Austin's premier harmonica player</i> Garyprimich.com</p>	<p>AUGUST 11 Parachute Express <i>Bring your smile for this kid-friendly production</i> Parachuteexpress.com</p>
<p>AUGUST 12 Rococco String Quartet <i>Classical music with a twist</i></p>	<p>AUGUST 13 Lisa Haley and the Zydecats <i>Traditional & Zydeco swamp music</i> Bluefiddle.com</p>	<p>AUGUST 14 Los Alacranes <i>San Diego's favorite Mexican-Chicano group, with special guest Quino of Big Mountain</i> Losalacranes.com</p>	<p>AUGUST 20 Upstream <i>Formidable Rock influenced by Reggae & Soca</i> Upstreammusic.com</p>	<p>AUGUST 21 Alessa & MC <i>Salsa rhythms, Peruvian waltzes, Brazilian Jazz</i> Alessa-alessa.com</p>	<p>AUGUST 22 Doc Powell <i>Guitarist/composer brings life to his music with dramatic guitar artistry</i> Docpowell.com</p>
<p>AUGUST 25 Cuahtemoc <i>Must see Aztec warrior dancers</i></p>	<p>AUGUST 26 IRIE <i>Reggae & Caribbean band performs original music & hits</i> www.surf.to/irie</p>	<p>AUGUST 27 Rolando Morales <i>Latin-Jazz infused with Afro-Cuban grooves</i> Rolandomorales.com</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 3 Tango Night <i>Sophisticated sensual music & professional dance</i></p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 4 Chris Korblein <i>Smooth Jazz guitar with lyrical & melodic arrangements</i> Korblein.com</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 5 Chris Korblein <i>Smooth Jazz guitar with lyrical & melodic arrangements</i> Korblein.com</p>
<p>SEPTEMBER 1 The Karavan Dance Group <i>International, folk, traditional & classical dance celebrate Armenian culture</i></p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 2</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 3 IRIE <i>Reggae & Caribbean band performs original music & hits</i> www.surf.to/irie</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 4 Tango Night <i>Sophisticated sensual music & professional dance</i></p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 5 Chris Korblein <i>Smooth Jazz guitar with lyrical & melodic arrangements</i> Korblein.com</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 8 Bob Baker Marionettes <i>Lively, colorful puppet show sure to entertain the entire family</i> Bobbakermarionettes.com</p>
<p>AUGUST 18</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 10</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 11 Special Guest TBA</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 12 Steve Copeland & Raging Sun <i>Sizzling mix of Chicago Blues & west coast swing</i> Ragingsun.com</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 12 Steve Copeland & Raging Sun <i>Sizzling mix of Chicago Blues & west coast swing</i> Ragingsun.com</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 12 Steve Copeland & Raging Sun <i>Sizzling mix of Chicago Blues & west coast swing</i> Ragingsun.com</p>



West Pasadena Traffic and Transportation Update

By Vince Farhat

Environmental Report to Study Growth in Pasadena

Pasadena is in the midst of a citywide development boom that is testing our transportation and public service infrastructure. The Los Angeles Times recently reported that the Planning Department has issued permits for more than 1,600 housing units in Pasadena's central district since the year 2000.

The City is updating the Land Use and Mobility Elements of the Pasadena General Plan. City staff also has drafted a new Central District Specific Plan, and has revised Pasadena's Zoning Code to implement General Plan policies. Last year, the City retained a consultant to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to study the potentially significant environmental effects that may result from the adoption and implementation of these planning documents. The consultant's initial study concluded that these planning documents, if implemented by the City, could "cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system."

City staff is expected to formally release the draft EIR on May 7. The public will have 45 days to review and comment on the draft EIR. You are encouraged to get involved in the EIR review process. On May 18, the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) will hold a public hearing on the draft EIR, with a special emphasis on traffic and the Mobility Element. For more information, please call the Planning Department at (626) 744-4009 or visit www.cityofpasadena.net.

TAC Moves Forward on ARTS Bus Expansion

The Pasadena Area Rapid Transit System (ARTS) is a bus service designed to provide convenient transportation between many of the City's residential neighborhoods and retail, business and entertainment centers. Currently, however, there is no ARTS bus service to most neighborhoods in West Pasadena.

On February 5, TAC reviewed the WPRA survey results which were reported in our Winter newsletter, and heard a presentation from City staff concerning ARTS service requests from neighborhoods throughout Pasadena. West Pasadena residents are not alone in wanting expanded ARTS service; the opening of the Gold Line in July 2003 generated a high level of requests for service by residents throughout the City.

ARTS expansion will require additional funding not yet available in the City's budget. At TAC's request, however, City staff will be conducting a service analysis to determine the feasibility and expected cost of expanding ARTS service to West Pasadena. In the meantime, for more information about ARTS, please visit http://www.cityofpasadena.net/trans/transit/trans_arts.asp or call (626) 398-8973.

710 Transportation Improvement Projects

The City of Pasadena Public Works Department is constructing eight individual transportation improvement projects that are designed to reduce traffic congestion in the 710 Freeway corridor. These projects were selected by the federally-mandated State Route 710 Design Advisory Group (DAG), in conjunction with City staff. The projects are being funded, in part, by

federal transportation appropriations obtained by former Congressman James Rogan.

Six of the DAG street improvement projects are located in West Pasadena. The following projects are scheduled to be constructed between Fall 2004 and Winter 2006: California Boulevard right turn lane at Fair Oaks Avenue (Spring 2005); California Boulevard right turn lane at Raymond Avenue (Spring 2005); Raymond Avenue widening (Fall 2006); Arroyo Parkway street enhancement (Summer 2006); Raymond Avenue to 110 Freeway connector (Fall 2005); and 110 Freeway to 210 Freeway connector and Marengo interchange emphasis (Winter 2005).

For more information about the SR 710 Mitigation Project, please visit <http://www.cityofpasadena.net/publicworks/Engineering/sr710/default.asp> or call (626) 744-4695.

TAC Reviews New Speed Hump Guidelines

At the request of the City Council, TAC has revisited the Transportation Department's proposed new guidelines for speed humps so that neighborhood associations would have an additional opportunity to review and comment on the proposed guidelines.

At its March meeting, TAC heard from representatives of the Madison Heights Neighborhood Association (MHNA), who raised a number of concerns about the proposed speed hump guidelines. As a result, TAC asked City staff to prepare a report responding to the concerns raised by MHNA. TAC will reconsider the proposed speed hump guidelines at its May 7 meeting.

Traffic Safety Top Priority for Police Department

As reported in the last issue of the newsletter, recent City statistics confirm statements by Police Chief Bernard Melekian that traffic has replaced violent crime as the biggest problem throughout the City. As a result, traffic safety and enforcement now are top priorities for the Pasadena Police Department (Department).

The Department has divided Pasadena into four geographic service areas, with a field operations lieutenant assigned to each area. West Pasadena's field operations officer is Lieutenant Phlunte Riddle. To learn more about the Department's efforts to promote traffic safety, or to report traffic problems in West Pasadena, please contact Lt. Riddle at (626) 744-4620 or priddle@cityofpasadena.net.

Get Involved

All TAC meetings are open to the public, and we welcome your ideas, comments and questions. Please feel free to call me at (626) 441-1388 or send me an e-mail at VFarhat@earthlink.net. ■

Editor's Note: Vince Farhat serves as West Pasadena's representative to TAC. He has been on the WPRB Board of Directors since 1997, serving as President from 2001 to 2003.

Rose Bowl Commentary: NFL Bait and Switch?

By Joan Hearst

In April 2003, the Rose Bowl Operating Company held a heavily attended public meeting at the Pasadena Senior Center to unveil a plan for renovating the Rose Bowl to accommodate an NFL team. The greatest emphasis in the proposal was to preserve the historic aspects of the Rose Bowl and its original configuration. The plan called for the vast majority of the extensive new amenities required for an NFL stadium (concessions, concourse, lounges, etc.) to be concealed from view by constructing them out of sight by excavating below the existing seating and within the existing exterior stadium wall. The plan was represented as one that had the conceptual approval of the NFL. It received many favorable comments from the public and garnered a great deal of good will for its sensitivity to the historic elements of the stadium. On the basis of this plan, the City of Pasadena began the Environmental Impact Report process and proceeded with negotiations with

the NFL on other aspects of an agreement to bring an NFL team to Pasadena.

On March 10, 2004, the *Pasadena Star News* reported that the NFL has called for the stadium architects to "go back to the drawing boards" and come up with a new design that drastically reduces the cost of the renovation plan presented at the Senior Center in 2003. Apparently the main target of the cost-cutting redesign effort is the extensive (and very expensive) excavation necessary to conceal the 800,000 square feet of new stadium amenities and preserve the historic exterior appearance of the Bowl.

Where will those new NFL stadium amenities be placed? Will they be plastered on and around the exterior of the stadium to save on costs? What additional effects might this plan have on the environment in our beloved Arroyo Seco?

The *Star News* also reported that the NFL wants to reconfigure the interior

seating from that which was presented last year and which preserved the unique interior elliptical curve of the Bowl. **Why should the interior now be changed?** Is this to enhance ticket revenues from "club seats"?

Is this part of a "bait and switch" strategy and an effort to continue to play Pasadena off against one or two other potential NFL sites in the Los Angeles area? Was the "bait" last year's plan that was to be sensitive to the stadium's historic aspects, in order to hold the many skeptics at bay, and induced by the City's to continued with negotiations? Is the "switch" the NFL's push now to now cut costs at the expense of the very the key historic aspects features of the prior plan that preserved the key historic aspects of the Rose Bowl that are so important to the community?

Is Pasadena about to join the long, long line of cities that look back with regret and disappointment in their dealings with the NFL? ■

Ambassador College Update

Much has happened on the Worldwide Church of God property in the past few months. After its five single family houses on Orange Grove above Del Mar were named City Landmarks, the Church sold them to private parties.

The Church also sold the entire East Campus to Sares Regis Group, a real estate development and management firm that has acquired or developed 36 million square feet of commercial property and 18,000 apartments and homes. Sares Regis has indicated that it will be submitting an application for a "transit-oriented urban village" that will "help ease the housing shortage and complement the exciting and vibrant Old Pasadena with an urban village neighborhood that is an easy walk to

two Gold Line stations." Indications are that it seeks to build a project similar in size and scale to what the Church had proposed for the area, 735 dwelling units and 40,000 square feet of commercial space.

On March 8 the Church filed an amended application to develop the West Campus in a manner similar to its original West Campus plan, or 696 dwelling units plus the demolition of the Ambassador Auditorium. The City's Environmental Administrator has indicated to the Church that this is a substantial change from the prior project and consequently will require a new Notice of Preparation of a new EIR, which means that the project will undergo its own separate and independent environmental review.

This means that each "Campus" plan will undergo a full, new environmental review. While projects such as these take their own time, it is anticipated that it will take at least a year before these plans reach City Council.

As this edition was going to press, it was announced that Maranatha High School and Harvest Rock Church have expressed a strong interest in the buildings that line St. John Avenue, including the threatened Ambassador Auditorium. (*Gary Scott, Pasadena Star News, April 8, 2004*)

Plan to check WPRA's new website for announcements regarding the development and use of the Ambassador Campus, including the Ambassador Auditorium. ■

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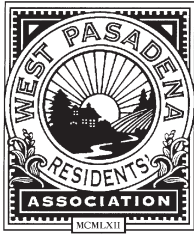
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