



# NEWS

West Pasadena Residents' Association

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

ESTABLISHED 1962

SPRING 2009

## New City Manager to Speak at WPRRA Annual Meeting

*By Vince Farhat*



Pasadena's new City Manager, Michael Beck, will be the featured speaker at the WPRRA's Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 13, at the Maranatha High School Student Center, located on the historic Ambassador West campus. The WPRRA will host a reception beginning at 5:30 p.m. The program starts at 6:30 p.m.

Last year, the City Council hired Mr. Beck to serve as City Manager, replacing West Pasadena resident Cynthia Kurtz, who retired after 20-plus years of service to the City. Mr. Beck came to Pasadena from the City of Riverside, where he served as Assistant City Manager. Shortly after taking the helm, Mr. Beck announced a number of top administrative appointments at City Hall, including new directors of finance and housing.

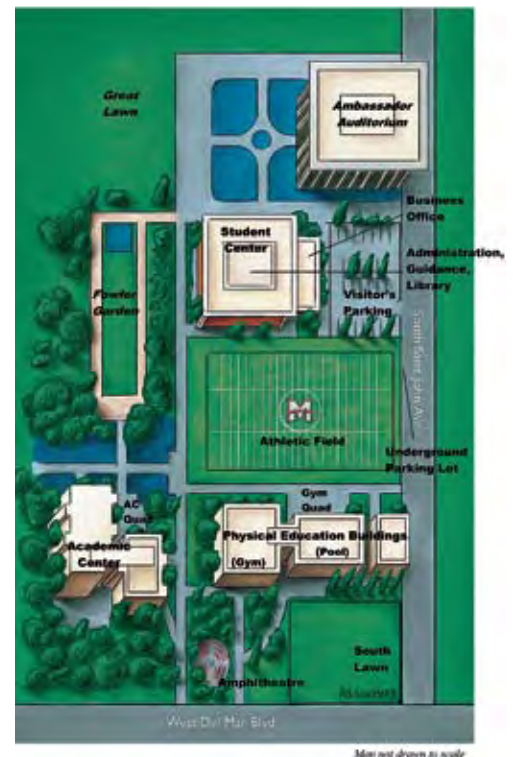
Mr. Beck will be joined at the Annual Meeting by representatives from Planning and Development,

Police, Fire, Public Works and Transportation. Mr. Beck will talk about the current challenges facing City Hall, including traffic, development, and the City's budget deficit. The program will include ample time for residents to ask questions of Mr. Beck and his department heads.

West Pasadena residents are encouraged to submit their questions in advance of the Annual Meeting. To submit a question or comment, please visit the WPRRA website at [www.wpra.net](http://www.wpra.net) or send an e-mail to [questions@wpra.net](mailto:questions@wpra.net).

The business portion of the Annual Meeting will include the election of a new slate of directors and officers, and the presentation of the WPRRA's annual community service award. Exhibitors at the reception will include the Rose Bowl Operating Company, Pasadena Water & Power, Pasadena Police Department, and local community groups. Invited guests include Mayor Bill Bogaard, Councilman Steve Madison, and Assemblyman Anthony Portantino.

The Annual Meeting is free and open to the public. For more information, please visit [www.wpra.net](http://www.wpra.net). ■



**Maranatha High School  
Campus Map**

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# President's Message

By Audrey O'Kelley

Every year, several times a year, we thank West Pasadena residents for their generous and constant contributions to the WPRA. We are grateful for your support. Now, I want to extend gratitude to the hard working people on the WPRA board of directors. And, there's no better way to acknowledge people than to take a look at the work they do, week after week, year after year.

Volunteer board members attend numerous city and civic meetings on behalf of WPRA, including:

- City Council
- Planning Commission
- Transportation Advisory Commission
- Design Commission
- Open Space Conservation Element Committee
- Quarterly Police Advisory
- Historic Preservation
- Rose Bowl Neighborhood
- Rose Bowl Board of Directors
- Parks and Recreation
- Code Compliance
- San Rafael School
- District 6 Town Hall Meetings
- City Council subcommittees
- Business Groups (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary)
- Private Meetings with community and city leaders

The above bodies receive information that they review to develop policies. Policies determine the quality of life in our neighborhood and our city. How to handle telecommunications equipment and should the city chop down the shade trees on Colorado Boulevard are current public policy issues facing Pasadena. Just two of thousands.

WPRA volunteers read documents

submitted to these bodies. They research the issues, write, and submit documents so that our city leaders know what West Pasadena residents want. The WPRA knows what residents want because they send surveys asking what is important to you, what you think must be done to maintain the beauty, character and quality of life in our neighborhood and our city as you go about your activities there.

WPRA volunteers read your emails and respond to them. They produce an annual meeting to hear what you think and deliver information to you. In addition to the WPRA annual meeting, there are other WPRA meetings directors and volunteers attend – monthly Board Meetings and Committee Meetings (Communication, Land Use, Neighborhood Safety, Education, Executive, Membership, Board Recruitment) – where they discuss what you have told them, what they have observed at the various meetings they have attended, what leaders and people from various interest groups tell them. From this they develop and disseminate positions and figure out how to do the work.

WPRA volunteers attend meetings and speak, send letters and e-mails to city staff and leaders regarding the issues before them. WPRA volunteers produce the quarterly newsletter you are reading right now. And every week they produce the e-mail Neighborhood Update. The WPRA website is the place to go to get more information about what is being done on behalf of your neighborhood and the place to leave your comments and suggestions.

This is a lot of work. And, there are people who have been at it for years.

I wanted to review just what it

means to be a WPRA volunteer director because many of these people approach their work as they would a job and they do not get paid. They do it for the love of Pasadena and our neighborhood.

Now, I must close by saying that this volunteer work is fun! Being connected and working with so many other caring people in our city and making a difference is a wonderful thing. So thanks to all of you for the quality work you do and thanks to those of you who have supported us through the years. Our community is the better for all of you.

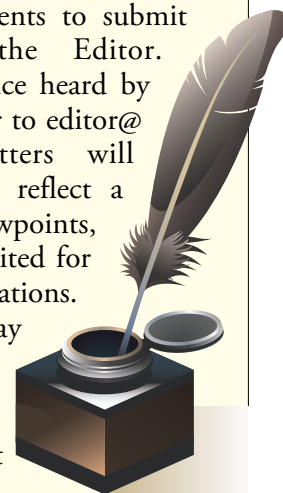
*Editor's note: Audrey O'Kelley is WPRA president. She can be reached at [OKelley@wpra.net](mailto:OKelley@wpra.net). ■*



## Have Your Say

The WPRA invites West Pasadena residents to submit Letters to the Editor. Make your voice heard by sending a letter to [editor@wpra.net](mailto:editor@wpra.net). Letters will be selected to reflect a variety of viewpoints, and may be edited for space considerations. Have your say . . . submit a letter today!

—Vince Farhat



# Don't Miss the Rose Bowl Open House May 16

*Fun for the entire family Saturday, May 16 from 9am to 1pm!*

The Rose Bowl is a famed National Historical landmark and renowned around the world. Now you and your family can see it up close and personal at this free community open house. You will be able to enjoy interactive games on the field and have a free hot dog from the official stadium concessionaire.

## Past, Present and Future

Docents will offer fascinating facts about this historic stadium and better yet, you will learn about the exciting plans to take the Rose Bowl into the future.

The Rose Bowl Operating Company (RBOC) has developed an elegant and clever plan to renovate and restore the stadium to make it financially viable,



structurally secure, and physically comfortable while maintaining its character-defining features and historic status.

So, mark May 16 on your calendar and visit Rose Bowl and see it like you never have before:

- See the stadium from field seats, press box, locker rooms, media center, and field

- Enjoy a free hot dog
- Play interactive games on the stadium field
- Hear about the past, current, and future Rose Bowl

WPRA will be there too, at one of the tables set up on the field, so drop by and see us!

The open house is hosted by the Rose Bowl Operating Committee and sponsored by local groups, including WPRA.

*Editor's note: Be sure to stop by the RBOC exhibit area at the WPRA Annual Meeting May 13 and learn more about the Rose Bowl concept plan for renovation and restoration of the historic stadium. ■*

## WPRA Wants You!



The WPRA is looking for volunteers to serve on committees and to get involved in neighborhood issues. Whatever your interests, we have many opportunities for involvement and are looking for dedicated West Pasadena residents committed to preserving our neighborhood quality of life.

The WPRA wants you and needs your help! For more information, please contact Vince Farhat at [farhat@wptra.net](mailto:farhat@wptra.net). ■

## Editor's Corner

Spring is here, and with it another quarterly issue of the *WPRA News*. This issue brings you updates on happenings at City Hall and PUSD, and information concerning projects and issues affecting West Pasadena.

More than anything else, Pasadena is defined by the quality of life in our neighborhoods. As residents of West Pasadena, we are truly fortunate to live in one of the most beautiful and unique areas of Southern California. The WPRA is committed to maintaining the quality of life that makes West Pasadena a special place.

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. The WPRA welcomes your feedback and comments. Please e-mail me at [farhat@wptra.net](mailto:farhat@wptra.net).

—Vince Farhat



# West Pasadena Development and Planning Update

By Vince Farhat

## Office Building Proposed for Monty's Restaurant Site

The City of Pasadena has released a draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the 16 East California project at the southeast corner of Fair Oaks Avenue and California Boulevard (formerly Monty's Steakhouse). The proposed project includes demolition of the existing on-site structures and surface parking areas in order to develop a four-story, 113,200 square foot office building with 255 parking spaces provided within a two-level subterranean parking garage. The EIR states the project would generate 1,246 weekday daily vehicle trips, and would cause "significant and unavoidable" traffic impacts on Pico Street between Raymond Avenue and Edmonson Alley.

The public review period for the EIR began on March 17, and will conclude on May 1. The Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) reviewed and commented on the EIR at its regular meeting on April 2. The City's Hearing Officer held a public hearing to receive comments from the community on April 15. Following the close of public comment, the draft EIR will be revised to incorporate responses to comments received during the 45-day public review period. Staff will then submit the final EIR to the Hearing Officer for review and approval. If the Hearing Officer approves the project,

the Design Commission will then review the Concept and Final design of the proposed building.

For more information about the proposed office building project, please visit [http://www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/environmental/Environmental\\_Home.asp](http://www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/environmental/Environmental_Home.asp). The WPRA is actively participating in the public review process for this project. We will report back to residents in a future issue of the newsletter.

## General Plan Moves Forward

The City of Pasadena is updating its General Plan. General Plans are the strategic or master plan documents for cities that outline how progress should look, and how resources must be used and protected to meet community needs. The State of California mandates seven elements for a city's general plan: circulation, conservation, housing, land use, noise, open space and conservation, and safety. Pasadena has added others such as mobility, energy, economic development, and public facilities to better meet current requirements.

On March 30, the City Council appointed a citizens' committee to work with staff and experts in the development of the Land Use and Mobility Elements of the General Plan. For more information, please visit the General Plan page on the City's website: [www.cityofpasadena.net/generalplan](http://www.cityofpasadena.net/generalplan). The website will

be regularly updated throughout the process. In mid- to late-April, community events will be scheduled to help the public participate in the General Plan updates.

## Design Guidelines Ready for Comment

A first draft is ready for the City's new design guidelines for commercial centers and multifamily homes. On April 13, the Pasadena Design Commission held a hearing to comment on the draft.

The new guidelines, for neighborhood commercial areas and multifamily projects with three or more units, were developed by city staff and other experts using community input from two September public meetings.

Information on the project, including a map of affected areas, is available at [www.cityofpasadena.net/guidelines](http://www.cityofpasadena.net/guidelines). To submit comments, please call (626) 744-7806, send a fax to (626) 396-7259, e-mail [kevinjohnson@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:kevinjohnson@cityofpasadena.net) or write to the Planning and Development Department, 175 N. Garfield Ave., Pasadena CA 91101.

*Editor's Note: Please send an e-mail to [update@wptra.net](mailto:update@wptra.net) if you want to receive weekly neighborhood updates regarding Pasadena city government and civic affairs. ■*

## NOTIFY YOUR CITY LEADERS

Our representatives need to hear from you. Take a few minutes to make your voice heard.

**Mayor Bill Bogaard**  
[bbogaard@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:bbogaard@cityofpasadena.net)

**Vice Mayor Steve Haderlein, District 4**  
[shaderlein@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:shaderlein@cityofpasadena.net)

**Councilmember Jacque Robinson, District 1**  
[jacqueroberinson@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:jacqueroberinson@cityofpasadena.net)

**Councilmember Margaret McAustin, District 2**  
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**Councilmember Chris Holden, District 3**  
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**Councilmember Victor Gordo, District 5**  
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**Councilmember Steve Madison, District 6**  
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**Councilmember Sid Tyler, District 7**  
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**City Clerk Mark Jomsky**  
[mjomsky@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:mjomsky@cityofpasadena.net)

**City Manager Michael J. Beck**  
[mbeck@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:mbeck@cityofpasadena.net)

# Updates and Happenings at San Rafael School

By Alyson Beecher

## San Rafael Community Volunteers Are Fantastic!

In September, I put out the word that we were in need of volunteers and I have been pleasantly and thoroughly delighted in the responses we have had from the readers of the WPRA newsletter. You folks rock! As a result of the various articles, we have had new volunteers working weekly in classrooms helping students with reading, learning sight words, practicing math concepts and more. This month, I would like to feature two of the programs that have benefitted from the involvement of the WPRA readership.

On March 6, we held our annual Dr. Seuss/Read Across America event. Guest readers come to the school and read stories in classrooms, socialized with one another over refreshments, and in general had a great time. Some years we struggle to find enough readers to even have 2 or 3 readers per classroom. This year I put out a call for guest readers in the weekly WPRA e-blast, and the response was phenomenal. We probably ended up having 7 or 8 readers per classroom. I know the children were delighted to have all of the readers who came to visit them and I loved getting to know our fantastic neighbors and their personal stories which they shared over coffee and muffins.

In addition to the weekly volunteers and readers for Read Across America, we have had one special volunteer who has shown a remarkable commitment. In one of the early articles, I mentioned that the school had started a book club for upper grade students and that we were interested in volunteers to help with this. I received an email from Nino Sutcliffe telling me of her interest in helping with this program. Ms. Sutcliffe has been coming twice a month, reading the assigned books and discussing the book with a group

of our students. She also shared with us an art history program she had done at Chandler when her children were in school. We then asked her if she would like to work with a group of GATE (gifted and talented) students and provide a similar enrichment program for them. Without hesitation, Ms. Sutcliffe pulled together a plan for a series of classes, the list of materials needed, and a final field trip proposal to the Norton Simon. As of the writing of this article, Ms. Sutcliffe has met three times with her group. The students are currently learning about cave drawings, and ancient Greek architecture, and Chinese art. They have responded enthusiastically to her instruction and eagerly anticipate their meeting times with her. We are thankful for her hard work and dedication to our students and we brag about her program at some of our District meetings.

### SOME UPCOMING DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

#### May 19, 2009

San Rafael PTA invites neighbors to come and join us for an interactive lesson on rockets to be lead by Bruce Krohn, JPL engineer and parent of a San Rafael Student. It will take place at 7 p.m. on the upper playground.

#### June 6, 2009

San Rafael School invites the neighbors to join us for a Pancake Breakfast from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. More information to come.

### New Dual Language Immersion Program

In Fall 2009, there will be a new program at San Rafael. The District heard the voices of parents asking about a dual language immersion program.



This program integrates students who are native English speakers with students who are native speakers of a targeted language (i.e., Spanish, Chinese, Korean, etc.) and at first, instruction is provided to all of the students in the targeted language. Each year, English instruction increases until instruction is 50-50 in both languages. The goal is that children will be bilingual and bi-literate by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The ability to speak, read and write in more than one language is critical for students wanting to compete in a global economy. Initially, San Rafael was the selected site for both a Spanish-English Immersion Program and a Mandarin/Chinese-English Immersion Program. However, the demand for the two programs was so great that the Mandarin/Chinese-English track was moved to Burbank Elementary. Families from all over the Pasadena Unified School District as well as from neighboring districts applied to be in the program. As a result there will be 4 new immersion classes beginning with kindergarten and first grade at the school in the fall. We will be sharing more information about the program at the WPRA Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 13.

*Editor's Note: Alyson Beecher is principal of San Rafael School. She can be reached at [ABeecher@pusd.us](mailto:ABeecher@pusd.us). Ms. Beecher will be at the WPRA Annual Meeting. Be sure to stop by her table in the exhibit area. ■*



# City Hall Update

By Vince Farhat

## **City Officials Grapple with Budget Deficit**

Over the past several months, City staff has made a number of presentations to the Pasadena City Council regarding the fiscal challenges currently facing municipal government. In particular, City Hall faces a growing structural deficit which has become more severe as a result of the current national recession.

According to staff reports, the current fiscal year 2009 budget anticipated an operating deficit of \$14 million. Largely as a result of revenue shortfalls due to current economic conditions, the budget deficit this year could have risen to nearly \$20 million if gone unchecked. As a result of actions taken by city officials, the current year deficit is now projected at \$8.2 million.

At its March 30 meeting, the Council discussed a proposed strategy to achieve a balanced budget by 2014. City officials are considering a combination of spending cuts, revenue increases, and tapping into reserves in order to balance revenues and expenses between now and fiscal year 2014. The City also is considering delaying scheduled pay raises for employees or laying off approximately 60 workers. Labor costs are a major concern. According to news accounts, the median pay of Pasadena's 2,200 employees is approximately \$80,000. Moreover, the City Council approved pay raises last Summer totaling approximately \$5 million, despite signs the economy was slowing down.

On April 13, City staff is expected to present to the City Council the recommended fiscal year 2010

operating and capital budgets. At that time, specific details on programs, services, and projects that will be impacted by budget reduction strategies will be presented.

## **City Budget Goes Online**

Everything you ever wanted to know about Pasadena's General Fund and other City budget issues is now available at [www.cityofpasadena.net/budget](http://www.cityofpasadena.net/budget). Learn where the money comes from and how it is spent, and impacts on Pasadena as a result of State budget cuts. The website also features a brief version of the current fiscal year's budget, as well as the full document. The budget website site will be updated often.

## **City Council Approves New Energy Plan**

In March, the City Council approved an ambitious new energy plan intended to increase Pasadena's use of renewable sources. Under the new plan, 40 percent of the City's residences and businesses would be powered by renewable energy sources within 20 years. The plan calls for Pasadena to eventually replace coal with solar and wind power as the City's primary energy sources. Under the new plan, Pasadena would exceed state-mandated standards. The City's goal is to reduce greenhouse emissions by 40 percent by the year 2020. For more information, please visit [www.cityofpasadena.net](http://www.cityofpasadena.net) and click on "Green City."

## **No-Smoking Ordinance**

The City of Pasadena has a relatively new outdoor no-smoking law. That's because the City Council, wishing to protect residents from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, passed a ban that became effective last November. Smoking is no longer

allowed at outdoor shopping malls, bus stops, outdoor patio areas, at bars and restaurants, in outdoor areas of smokers' lounges or tobacco shops. No smoking at outdoor public gatherings like parades and festivals, including the Tournament of Roses parade. For more information, please call the Pasadena Public Health Department, Tobacco Control Program office (626) 744-6014 or go on the web at [www.cityofpasadena.net](http://www.cityofpasadena.net).

## **Avenue 64 and La Loma Undergrounding Update**

The utility undergrounding project on Avenue 64 and La Loma Road (between San Rafael and Avenue 64) is nearly complete. As of March 13, all utilities had been converted to underground and all properties connected to the underground system.

Telephone and cable TV wiring has finally been removed from the remaining poles (mostly on La Loma), allowing pole removal to proceed. Assuming no unforeseen issues, the City expects the poles to be gone before the end of April, and the project will be complete. (The tall poles on the west side of Avenue 64 south of La Loma will remain as those are Southern California Edison distribution lines, and not part of Pasadena's utility infrastructure.)

*Editor's Note: Please send an e-mail to [update@wpra.net](mailto:update@wpra.net) if you want to receive weekly neighborhood updates regarding Pasadena city government and civic affairs. ■*



# New Landscaping for Bellefontaine Triangle

By Marilyn Randolph

The Bellefontaine Triangle, a plot of Caltrans land so configured, with sides bounded by Bellefontaine Street, Pasadena Avenue and St. Johns Avenue, has also been referred to as the “Bermuda Triangle.” That ignoble title is now buried with the low flow irrigation lines placed for nourishment of drought tolerant plants which will distinguish the space.

Four existing trees remain, including an oak, supplemented with three Western Redbud, showing pink blossoms in the spring, complemented by deep magenta flowers of the Sunset Rockrose shrubs. Summer brings forth the deep yellow flowers of the Gold Medallion tree, when the Kangaroo

Paws plants (curved at the tips like kangaroo paws) present striking lemon yellow and clear red flowers.

New Zealand Flax shows year round color on its leaves with clusters of flowers on established plants in late Spring/early Summer. The ground cover Myoporum presents tiny white summer flowers followed by purple fruits, and each point of the Triangle is spread with mulch.

This excellent result stems from a recent City Council agreement with Caltrans to lease the Triangle and the adjoining parcels from Caltrans for \$100 per year for five years based on the City’s willingness to pay for improvements, maintenance and insurance. Historically,

the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) over five years ago, had gathered local citizens and organizations with resulting recommendations for improvement of the 710 freeway corridor. One of those recommendations was to create a landscape plan for the Triangle and its adjoining parcels. Happily, TAC’s recommendation has begun to become real.

*Editor’s note: Marilyn Randolph is a member of the WPRA board of directors. ■*



Newly Refurbished Bellefontaine Triangle

Photo courtesy of Marilyn Randolph

# Pasadena Beautiful Foundation Advocates for Street Trees

By Bette Cooper

The history of Pasadena is an incredibly valuable resource, not to be taken lightly and treated with respect. Pasadena's history is a changing canvas, which reflects not only on her 200 year past but her more recent history of just 12 years ago.

## Pasadena's Street Trees

A plan was written and agreed upon over 10 years ago to take down the Ficus trees along Colorado Boulevard and Lake Avenue. This plan was implemented on much of Colorado Boulevard from Old Town to Los Robles, with the exception of the Playhouse District. It only recently came again before Pasadena's City Council, to finally implement the next phase between Los Robles and Lake Avenue. Business owners representing the Playhouse District, and residents began appearing at City Council meetings on a weekly basis. They were there specifically to lobby either "for" or "against" the plan for the Colorado street trees.

The Pasadena Playhouse District wanted the plan to proceed as soon as possible, which meant the demise of the Ficus trees from Los Robles to Lake, to be followed by the planting of the replacement trees, the Ginkgo and the Mexican Fan Palm, before it was too late in the season to plant trees due to the approach of warm weather.

The Ficus trees were, and are, a pest to many of the businesses for their aggressive root system, especially in the pipes below ground. The fullness of the canopy meant that those passing by in cars, as well as pedestrians, could not see their business signs. Plus, it was solely the responsibility of the individual businesses to pay for any city street improvements needed due to the invasiveness of the Ficus roots. These were understandable concerns from the District.



The residents wanted the plan to be postponed believing that the Ficus trees were beautiful, established trees, offering a rich canopy of green and luxurious amounts of shade during the hot summers, and that the choice of the replacement trees was a poor one. The Ginkgo trees that have already been planted in Old Town are spindly and provide lackluster shade. They are slow growing, are deciduous for 4 months of the year, and therefore the shade canopy hoped for will not be a reality for at least five years. They have need of tender loving care, which has not been provided, and they reflect it. The Mexican Fan Palm trees add nothing and give off little shade. One might as well stand behind a light post.

## The Future of the Tree City

Pasadena is a beautiful City largely due to its shade canopy throughout the City proper, as well as the residential neighborhoods. Pasadena is known throughout California as the "Tree City."

Now, more than ever, the shade canopy is important. It helps in a time of drought, it has been proven that for the City streets, it attracts more foot traffic, it absorbs higher levels of CO<sub>2</sub> and produces lower levels of bioemissions. The shade canopy reinforces Pasadena's credo of "going green".

When a plan is 10 years old, give or take several years, it is history, and needs to be treated as such. Indeed, use the plan, if it has merit, as a referral and learn from it.

Then proceed with a revised plan that fits the present day more

effectively. Due to environmental needs, it is most important to consider all the parameters.

The Mayor and City Council members have been inundated by a barrage of communications from those who were for the continuation of the plan to be carried forward, and from those who wanted a temporary stop for a review. This intensified after several Ficus trees met their demise early one morning. There were friendly protests bemoaning this action. At each City Council meeting, people spoke, mostly against this old plan moving forward. Articles appeared in the *Pasadena Star News*. Plus, not all the City Council members were for the continuation of this old plan.

After hours of debate, the City Council moved that a moratorium be in effect for 9 months applying to any further trees being cut down, as well as any replacement trees being planted.

The City Council, the City, UFAC, and citizens should go forward and work together towards a positive consensus. Does this mean that all involved will be thoroughly satisfied? Hopefully, it will mean that Pasadena will be proud of the outcome because she will proceed in a more eco-friendly environment, which will be a positive outcome for our City.

Finally, if the lesson of the Ficus trees has taught us anything, it would be that the City and the businesses must work together so that one does not have to be solely responsible either for the maintenance or for the monetary output necessary to keep these healthy trees a benefit to us all.

Let us move forward to further ensure that Pasadena remains the "Tree City" of California.

*Editor's note: Bette Cooper is president of the Pasadena Beautiful Foundation. She can be reached at [bbcooper@pacbell.net](mailto:bbcooper@pacbell.net). ■*



# District 6 Town Hall Meeting

By James B. Boyle, Jr.

**O**n March 3, Pasadena City Councilman Steve Madison held his quarterly Town Hall meeting at Westridge School. After introductions, Mr. Madison started off with John Pollard, Code Enforcement Administrator, talking about wide-ranging code compliance inspections. A great deal of time was spent talking about the building which is wrapped in blue tarps at St. John and Green. Mr. Pollard stated that there are single family residential inspections at the time of sales, and that there are other inspections from-time-to-time. If a neighbor ever complains about some problem, they should contact the Pasadena Code Enforcement Administration and have the representatives of that office come out and inspect the situation.

Next, there was a discussion of the proposed Red Flag Ordinance. This deals with on-street parking within brush fire areas. This would be

when weather conditions require it. When such conditions exist, parking on narrow streets is restricted. If the streets are 27 feet or less, then there can be no parking. If the streets are 27 to 35 feet wide, residents can park on one side. The obvious need for this is to allow space for fire trucks to come down the streets. Residents would be warned in advance whenever there would be a need to restrict parking within their streets.

There also was a discussion of public art, particularly at the Civic Auditorium and Convention Center. It is necessary to have public art displayed within these areas, and the developer of the locations is charged with the responsibility of arranging for the public art to be prepared and exhibited.

With respect to the trees on Colorado within the Playhouse District, Mr. Madison reported that there had been a moratorium placed on removing

trees, and that further review would take place. The City also is going to beautify the triangle at Bellefontaine, since it is not appropriate to have that ugly space exist in one of the primary entrances to Pasadena.

Regarding the budget, city staff is predicting a \$15,000,000 deficit. They have avoided, and will continue to avoid, any layoffs. The only problem areas will have to do with City employees' pensions. With respect to the City's general plan, a committee is going to be formed by the City Council to advise appropriate updating. A question came up with regard to St. Luke's Hospital, and it is quite possible that that will require a zone change. Mr. Madison concluded the meeting by informing everyone of his contact number, (626) 744-4739.

*Editor's note: Jim Boyle is a member of the WPRA board of directors, and a past president of the Pasadena Tournament of Roses. ■*

## City Seeks Increase in Residential Trash Fees

**Installation of 5,000 "No Parking" signs throughout Pasadena will cost \$625,000.**

By Linda Zinn

**T**he Pasadena City Council will hold a public hearing Monday, April 27 at 7:30 p.m. to solicit public comments about proposed refuse collection fee increases, which, if implemented, would become effective July 1. The proposed increase would be 2.9% of the current refuse collection fee.

The City also wants to charge residential refuse customers and commercial haulers their share of the cost of City street sweeping expenses. Currently, the City pays for street sweeping services from the General Fund. This translates into a proposed additional cost per residential refuse customer of \$9.44 per year.

The proposal also would change street sweeping services to daytime

hours. The rationale for this change is that City crews could do a better job cleaning the streets during the day, because there are areas within Pasadena with large numbers of overnight parking exemptions. In these areas, the sweepers cannot clean effectively because of the parked cars.

In order to implement this change in street sweeping services, the City would be required to install approximately 5,000 "No Parking" signs throughout Pasadena. The cost of this proposal would be \$625,000, which would be paid from the existing fund balance in the Refuse Fund.

### **Speak Up About Increased Fees and Signs**

If you are concerned about more

signage in the City, fee increases, or the cost of implementing the proposed changes, make your thoughts known by attending the City Council Meeting or writing the City Clerk.

Written comments must be submitted by no later than on April 27 at 5:00 p.m. Comments should be directed to the City Clerk, 100 North Garfield Avenue, Room S208, Pasadena, California 91109. For more information, please contact the Department of Public Works at (626) 744-7120.

*Editor's note: Linda Zinn is a member of the WPRA board of directors and chair of the Open Space and Conservation Committee. Be sure to visit her exhibit at the WPRA Annual Meeting May 13. ■*

# La Loma Bridge Rehabilitation

*Arroyo access to be affected during project*

The La Loma Bridge, now 90 years old, was determined to be structurally deficient and deteriorating in reviews conducted after the Loma Prieta earthquake. Because of its historic character and significance, the City approved a retrofit/rehabilitation approach that will maintain, as much as possible, the bridge's historic character and appearance.

While construction was to have begun in 2009, geologic studies located the Eagle Rock fault running directly beneath the bridge. The location of this fault necessitates additional engineering and design effort (while still adhering to the retrofit/rehabilitation approach) and will require additional time for construction. According to the City, construction is anticipated to begin in late 2010 and is expected to last for 18 months, although the engineering and construction complexities of dealing with the fault may affect the schedule. (The availability of committed funding from Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration may also affect the schedule.)

The bridge will be closed to all traffic – vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian – for the entire duration of the project. There will be no access across the Arroyo at La Loma until the bridge is re-opened.

Trail access into and within the Arroyo will be affected by the project. The current trail at the southwest corner of the bridge, at Rockwood and La Loma, will be closed for the entire duration of the project. Since this is the only access into the Arroyo from the west side, all Arroyo access will be from the east (Arroyo Boulevard) for the duration of the project.

In addition, all paths running beneath the bridge, including those next to the flood control channel, will be closed at various times during construction. In the initial phase of the project, while the bridge deck is being removed, all paths on both sides of the flood control channel will be closed for a few weeks. Current plans anticipate one or more paths remaining open during the later phases of the project, although there may be times when all paths are closed for a few days.

With no exit from the Arroyo to the west (since the trail to Rockwood will be closed) and limited opportunities to cross the flood control channel, users of the lower Arroyo will need to be aware of these path closures to avoid lengthy detours on foot or horseback. All paths and trails will be reopened at the project's conclusion.

For more information on this project, please contact Roubik Mardirosian, Project Manager at (626) 744-7456 or [rmardirosian@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:rmardirosian@cityofpasadena.net). ■

## "Arroyo Horse" Restored




Thanks to the efforts of Pasadena resident and sculpture artist Alix Reeves, a life-size equine sculpture made of bark and branches and known as the "Arroyo Horse" has been restored. The Arroyo Horse is located in a clearing just south of the La Loma bridge, where it has stood since at least 2000. ■



# Pasadena — Our Lovable City

By Linda Zinn

n February 28, the City of Pasadena held an Open Space and Conservation Community Fair in the beautiful gardens of our City Hall. This was an attempt by the City to bring citizens together to learn about the important work being done on the General Plan's Open Space/Conservation element. The plans we lay now will determine what open space will be saved for recreation and conservation purposes.

Will Rogers, President of the Trust for Public Land, was the keynote speaker at the Fair. He said that this is our chance, as residents of Pasadena, to make a difference in the future of our City. In the upcoming months, citizens will have an opportunity at City outreach meetings to influence the direction of development through the creation of a new Master Plan. Rogers encouraged us to take the long view and to think boldly about acquiring and preserving open space for future generations. We should be asking ourselves:

What do we really care about? What gives our City a sense of place? How important are shade trees lining our boulevards? How important are wild places, parks, trails, greenbelts, and viewscape?

Following are possible areas that have potential for open space uses. These are some of the ideas that were

presented at the Fair and suggested by residents in answering the City's Open Space and Conservation questionnaire.

- **Hilltop behind Hillside School for Children:** 17 acre hill, undeveloped, with 360 degree views. Neighbors are mounting a campaign to preserve this area as open space.
- **Annandale Canyon:** 20.6 acres of undeveloped land, preserved by neighbors, with funding from a benefit assessment tax, and grants from the Santa Monica Conservancy, LA County, and Pasadena City funds.
- **Eagle Rock Trail:** 4.5 acre parcel in Pasadena, purchased by The Collaborative Eagle Rock Beautiful, to preserve as open space and create a trail to be enjoyed by the public.
- **Golden Necklace:** A proposal to create a regional trail and open space system, connecting the Arroyo Seco on the west and Eaton Wash on the east through the foothills. This necklace connects the Santa Fe Dam Recreational Area down through Rio Hondo and Whittier Narrows to the San Gabriel River and out to the ocean. It would also run to the sea on the west from the Arroyo by way of the Los Angeles River.
- **Southern California Edison Utility Easements:** Passive uses

are only allowed. There could be opportunities for trails and parks with no permanent structures.

- **The Great Park:** 50 acres of parkland, stretching from Fair Oaks Blvd. to Wilson Ave. above the existing 210 Freeway. 20 such highway parks have been created.
- **Earthside Nature Center site:** several acres, once beautiful garden of California native plantings, now neglected and overgrown. It is located in the 3200 block of Del Mar Blvd. adjacent to the Boys and Girls Club.
- **Pacific Electric Rail Way:** This right of way runs along Walnut and could be developed into parkland and trails.
- **Hillside areas:** Undeveloped in the Linda Vista area, including the Art Center property.
- **Scholl Canyon Landfill:** Possible future open space after it closes.
- **Public Schools:** Asphalt recreation areas made more neighborhood friendly and accessible after school hours.

*Editor's Note: For further information, please contact Laura Dahl, Staff Representative of the Open Space and Conservation Committee. She can be reached at (626) 744-6767 or by e-mail at [ldahl@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:ldahl@cityofpasadena.net). ■*

## Neighborhood Update Co-Editor

Are you a frustrated writer? Then we just may have the antidote to that. The WPRA is looking for someone to co-edit the weekly e-mail *Neighborhood Update*. If you enjoy writing, and can devote a few hours

a week to this project, the editors will train you to assist them. The *Neighborhood Update* is a vital tool for West Pasadena, which reaches over 700 households each week, informing residents of important

meetings that affect our quality of life, as well as arts and entertainment around Pasadena. If this interests you, please contact Judy Klump at [klump@wptra.net](mailto:klump@wptra.net).

# Long Beach Freeway (710) Tunnel Proposal

By Mic Hansen

For over 50 years, the controversy over extending the 710 (Long Beach) Freeway through Pasadena, South Pasadena, and El Sereno has continued. Now that the prospect of a surface route has been all but spent, transit officials are considering the feasibility of building a 4.5-mile tunnel to connect the 710 with the 210 Freeway. CalTrans and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) are conducting seismic reflection and boring studies as an initial step to determine the viability of constructing a tunnel to close the existing gap between the end of the 710 Freeway at Valley Blvd. in Alhambra to the 710 /210 Freeway stump between Del Mar and California Boulevards in Pasadena.

In June of 2008, a study was commissioned jointly by CalTrans and the MTA, outlining five study zones as shown in the below map. CalTrans and MTA have said that the "...study is being conducted in a route neutral manner." This study is not an environmental assessment.

The above phase of the study involves research, exploration, and technical analysis of the soil conditions found if tunneling at depths of more than 250 feet. Exploration program includes boring, which gives information about the various soil types (such as rock, sand, gravel, etc.) by drilling deep into the ground and taking samples to be analyzed; and geophysical line testing which provides an electronic image of soil conditions along a specific area.

Each boring lasts approximately 10 to 15 days, depending on depth, weather, and equipment. Each geophysical line test lasts one day. In Pasadena, five sites were tested. Residents were notified by door-to-door canvassing. The CalTrans website listed the testing site dates for Pasadena, all within the WPRA service area:

- January 13-17, area just North of Del Mar Blvd., on CalTrans land at the Freeway stump,
- February 4-19, at the triangle where Pasadena Ave., St. John Avenue, and Bellefontaine Street meet,
- February 13-March 2, on State Street, between Pasadena Freeway and North Railroad Street,
- February 24, on South Grand Avenue, between Hermosa Ave. and Madeleine Street, and
- February 27-March 17, on West Colorado at Avenue 64.

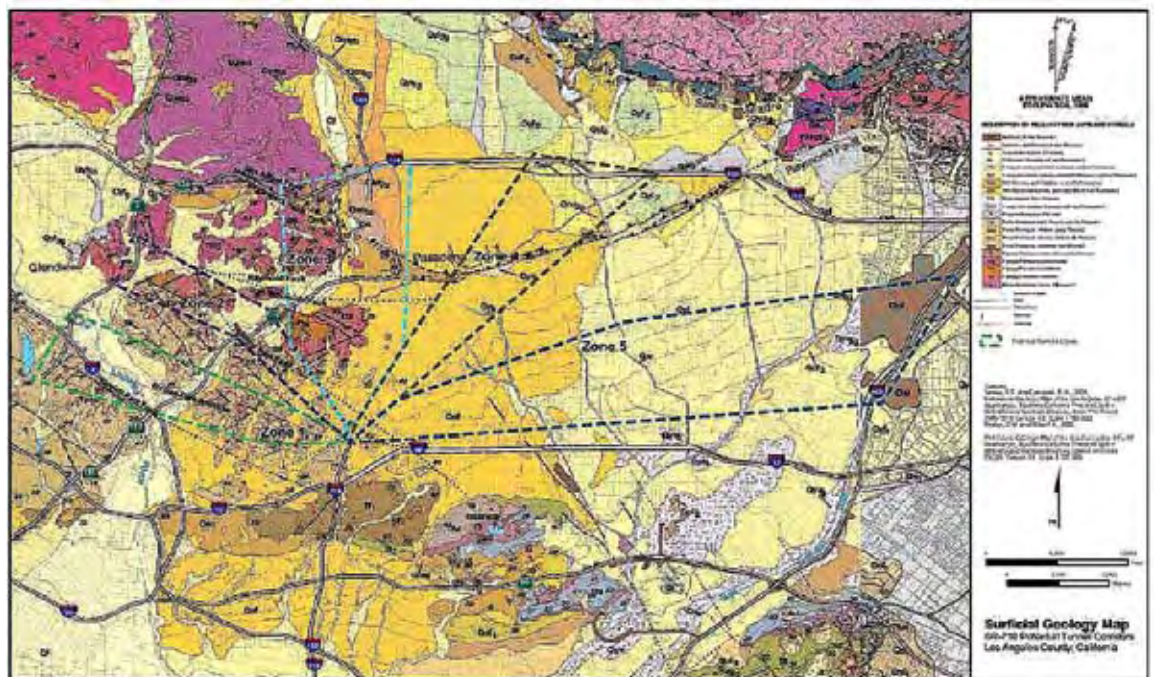
Once these initial studies are concluded, then further detailed studies will be performed on selected zone(s) during future phases.



**Technical study teams at boring site**



Key facts influencing tunneling are faults, uniformity of geological conditions and the potential for adverse conditions for tunneling, groundwater conditions, and hazardous materials. Summary reports for the zones will outline findings for the above.



*Drilling sites.*





**Tunnel Boring Machines**



Controversy continues over the potential benefit or detriment of the tunnel to this area. The 710 Tunnel Technical Study cites that,

*"Because a tunnel connection would relieve regional and local congestion, and improve air quality [sic.], it gained the support of METRO, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Federal Highway Administration*

*(FHWA) and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)."*

MTA member Richard Katz believes the project would reduce traffic through downtown Los Angeles by 20%, providing motorists a more direct route. *"For 30 years, the tail has been wagging the dog on this thing,"* Mr. Katz has said. *"It's time to bring relief to the rest of the county."* Officials from the City of Alhambra concur that constructing the tunnel would markedly alleviate the current 710 spillover into their city.

However, an article in the San Gabriel Valley Tribune (10/30/07-*"Researcher: Tunnel could lead to more pollution"*) discussed the findings of Rob McConnell, the deputy director of the USC-UCLA Children's Environmental Health Center,

*"... Heavy stop-and-go traffic inside the tunnel could raise pollution levels significantly ... It could also potentially pose health risks to people living, working, and attending schools near the freeway... Children who lived within 550 yards of a freeway for the first 10 years of their lives grow up to have lower lung capacity than their peers who live a mile away, the USC study showed. McConnell said previous USC-UCLA studies have shown children living within a block of a freeway have an*

*89 percent chance of developing asthma than those not living near major traffic arteries ... plans for the 710 tunnel show the proposed freeway "is going to cut quite close to various schools," he said.*

Funding for the study comes from a combination of sources, including \$5 million from Metro, \$4 million from Caltrans and \$2.4 million in federal funds. At this writing, it is believed that if it were to be built, the funding for the tunnel itself would come primarily from private sources, potentially augmented by public funds. The towns of South Pasadena and La Canada have filed separate suits about the tunnel that would receive \$780 million from Measure R, which passed last past November. Their suits declare that since an environmental study has not been conducted, the project should not be eligible for public funds. A website (<http://710tunnelstudy.info/>) has been set up by CalTrans and the MTA that provides updates and contacts for those interested in additional information.

*Editor's Note: Mic Hansen is Vice-President of WPRA, and chairs the Land Use Committee. She can be reached at [Hansen@wpra.net](mailto:Hansen@wpra.net). ■*



## Questions and Comments for the City Manager

**City Manager Michael Beck will be the featured speaker at the WPRA Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 13, at Maranatha High School.**

**West Pasadena residents are encouraged to submit their questions and comments in advance of the Annual Meeting. To submit a question or comment, please visit the WPRA website at [www.wpra.net](http://www.wpra.net) or send an e-mail to [questions@wpra.net](mailto:questions@wpra.net). ■**

# PUSD Update

By Tom Selinske and Edwin Diaz

The Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) Board of Education and leadership team have adopted a bold and urgent plan to significantly improve student achievement, to provide a more rigorous, relevant and personalized learning experience for kids, and to build organizational capacity district-wide. As we enter the final months of the school year, we are pleased to report that PUSD has taken significant steps to implement the priorities outlined in our Approach to Excellence II plan, and to confront the educational and fiscal challenges facing urban school districts nationwide.

## Instruction

The Board of Education has approved initiatives to create innovative educational opportunities for students, and prepare them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy and global workforce. The Excellent Middle Schools reforms are entering their second phase of implementation, building on the scheduling and instructional improvements now in place at our three middle schools and at Sierra Madre School. The Board has authorized K-5 grade configurations for elementary school throughout PUSD by 2010-11 to support our middle school reforms. In April, we will convene parent and staff meetings to evaluate the ability of existing K-8 campuses to offer comprehensive middle school programs and facilities to sixth through eighth graders.

Reflecting our commitment to prepare students to learn, compete and succeed on a global level, PUSD will offer a dual language immersion program next September for Kindergarten and first grade students. Located at San Rafael Elementary and recently expanded to include Burbank Elementary, the program offers academic instruction in English/Spanish or English/Chinese.



## Budget

The state budget adopted last month has resulted in the loss of approximately \$13 million this fiscal year, with more cuts likely in June. Through immediate action to reduce expenditures and the use of one-time reserve money, PUSD has been able to absorb most of the cuts this year, but the district faces a reduction of at least \$6.5 million more to balance the 2009-10 budget. In the coming weeks, we will form a budget advisory committee to review 2009-10 budget projections and make recommendations for additional reductions.

## Measure TT

With the selection of architects to design school improvement projects, the recently-restructured facilities division has initiated the first phase of work to prioritize and plan Measure TT-funded school improvements. Designs for schools must be approved in a series of steps that include sign-off by the State of California. We expect construction to reach its peak in 2010.

Over the next several months, PUSD will begin a wide range of modernization projects at campuses district-wide, including: converting Webster to a K-5th grade campus, adding middle school facilities at Blair, installing artificial athletic fields at Muir and Pasadena High Schools, and upgrading classrooms at San



Rafael to house the new dual language immersion program. The facilities division will meet with school site councils over the next several weeks to further hone priority lists and develop project timelines.

The Board of Education also selected 15 highly-qualified members of the Citizens Oversight Committee this month, establishing a diverse mixture of business, civic and community stakeholders who represent the three communities of Altadena, Pasadena, and Sierra Madre. The Committee will hold its first meeting on April 15.

In the final quarter of this school year, our focus is on the initiatives and reforms of Approach to Excellence II. Many of our neighborhoods, businesses, civic organizations and individuals have stepped forward to offer help, ongoing support and partnerships. In these difficult economic times, we truly appreciate your support as we continue to pursue academic excellence for every student.

*Editor's Note: Tom Selinske is Board of Education President, and Edwin Diaz is Superintendent. They can be reached at (626) 396-3619. ■*



# City Develops New Policy for Telecommunications Facilities

By Vince Farhat

## Opportunity Maps

In February, the City Council discussed the adoption of a new policy for the placement of wireless telecommunications facilities and cable/video telecommunications facilities throughout Pasadena. As part of the discussion, City staff presented what they called an "opportunity map" identifying certain areas where telecommunications facilities could be located. Staff wants to give applicants the opportunity to co-locate their facilities in these City-owned areas, and thereby receive expedited approval of their requests as a way to encourage applicants to locate in areas designated by the City.

## WPRA Raises Concerns

The WPRA has formed a new committee to review the proposed policy. The full board discussed the issue at its March board meeting, and voted to send the City a letter expressing some concerns about the proposed policy and the opportunity maps.

The WPRA board is concerned that some City-owned property is not suitable for either wireless or wired telecommunications facilities, and that without proper controls some of the selected sites could be overburdened by telecommunications facilities. For example, the staff's opportunity map shows two sites on the west side of the Arroyo, one at La Loma and the other a couple of blocks further north. It is not appropriate to have cell towers or telecommunications boxes in the Arroyo. There is another site on Grace Walk which is a 12-foot wide "street" with dense housing on both sides and no place to put any facilities. The WPRA board urges caution as the City develops these sites.

Pasadena residents should have input in selecting opportunity sites. The City should widely-publish the proposed sites, and conduct public hearings to give citizens a meaningful opportunity to present their reasons for eliminating sites from the map.

In its letter, the WPRA board also urged the City to conduct justification studies for all wireless facilities. There are many reasons for companies to want to erect wireless facilities. Some of these have to do with competitive strategies between companies and other reasons that do not directly benefit consumers. By requiring justification studies, the City can ensure that all new facilities will result in improved services to consumers, and that excessive facilities will not be built.

Another issue is the frequency of review of these sites. Apparently current plans call for review only after 20 years. The WPRA board believes that much more frequent review is in order.

## Get Involved

As noted above, a new committee is tracking the telecommunications issue for the WPRA board. For more information and to get involved, please contact committee chair Robert Holmes at holmes@wpra.net. ■



## WPRA 2009-2010 Membership

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