



NEWS

West Pasadena Residents' Association

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

ESTABLISHED 1962

WINTER 2010

The Pasadena General Plan Update: Guiding Our Community's Future

By Stephanie DeWolfe

Three thousand and counting! That's the number of residents, business owners, students, community leaders and others who have participated in the General Plan Update so far. Throughout the process, beginning in early 2009, thousands of comments, concerns, insights and visions were carefully documented. The General Plan Update Advisory Committee (GPUAC) is now tasked with the challenge of summarizing the wishes of the community into an Outreach Summary Report to be presented to City Council this Spring.

The report will include a summary of key themes that can be addressed in the General Plan Update as well as a technical appendix that will include full documentation of comments heard from the community. A draft of the final report will be circulated for public comment before being presented to City Council.

Following approval of the Outreach Report, the next steps will be to identify potential land use and mobility solutions to respond to the concerns raised in the report. The process will begin with a comparison of the current General Plan elements against the Community Outreach Report to identify areas of alignment, areas of conflict and areas that are not currently addressed at all.

Staff will work with the Planning Commission, Transportation Commission and GPUAC to develop and refine alternatives for the areas



WPRA board members, GPUAC commissioners and residents participate in General Plan Moveabout Gold Line tour



GPUAC commissioner and former WPRA president Carolyn Naber leads discussion at a General Plan district workshop

of major conflict, complete technical analysis of each alternative, and develop outreach programs that will describe the pros and cons of each choice. Following community discussion, preferred alternatives will be translated into specific policies and strategies that will be incorporated into the updated General Plan.

The General Plan is the blueprint to guide the City's future over the next decade and beyond. Community participation is a guiding principle of the current plan and the foundation on which the plan update is being built. The GPUAC, appointed by City Council, will continue to play a lead role in developing community participation and outreach programs with the goal of engaging diverse audiences.

Outreach activities to date have included dozens of community workshops, interactive "MoveAbout"

continued on page 19

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2	Conservancy Needs Public Support	11
Student Enrichment Programs	3	New State Rules Trump Local Control	12
City Hall Update	4	A Community Garden for Pasadena	14
Expanded Pasadena Convention Center	7	Ambassador West Update	15
Avenue 64 Undergrounding Project	8	Cell Phone Tower Update	15
WPRA Studying Hillside Zoning	9	Neighborhood Safety Corner	16
Rose Bowl Event—Let The Games Begin! ..	10	Pasadena Avenue – A Recent History	17
New Landmark for West Pasadena	10	Editor's Corner	17
Arlington Garden in Pasadena	11	San Rafael Elementary Update	18

President's Message

By Audrey O'Kelley

General Plan, Generally Not Pleasing

This year the City of Pasadena initiated a huge outreach program to get citizen's feedback about "their" city. It is part of the General Plan Update process recently concluded. Stephanie DeWolfe, Deputy Director, Planning and Development, City of Pasadena, notes that a report will be issued that will "distill all of the public inputs on land use, mobility, open space and conservation collected in 2009 – and form the foundation of our next steps."

I attended many of the Outreach sessions and the overarching message I heard was that people loved their city but feared that too much development, built too quickly and poorly designed, was threatening the character and quality of life here. They asked, "Why is this happening?" They urged, "Please stop it."

They were not pleased with the results of our General Plan and many cited faulty local control and processes. But I believe we need to look beyond our City Council, our City Manager and our Planning and Development Department and processes to an interesting conundrum we face. While it is true that the state requires all cities to develop a general plan, and that Pasadena has earnestly complied, the state has been increasingly undercutting local control.

The State of California is Forcing Density on Cities

State Senate Bill 375 demands that

housing be built near transportation centers (freeways and public transportation.) Also, the state has come up with population projections and from these projections they come up with

Many cited faulty local control and processes. I believe we need to look beyond our city.

The state has been increasingly undercutting local control.

RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Assessment) numbers for the projected population increase. The state then apportions these housing needs to cities throughout California. So, the logical conclusion is that the state will force Pasadena to up-zone, which means bigger, denser developments.

It doesn't matter that cities like Pasadena are built-out. It doesn't matter that the actual human beings who live in Pasadena don't want thousands of more people (density) and their cars. Which brings us to the next question: "Will there perforce be more cars on the streets of Pasadena?" I think there will be. No public transportation system, and certainly not our current one, can handle the myriad trips each individual needs to take in the course of his day; we're lucky if it can handle

two: going to and from work. Look at our streets and the buses and trains currently operating under capacity. Consider the bus routes that are being eliminated due to low ridership.

Smart Growth Lulls People Into False Comfort

Smart Growth is an enticing concept. Smart Growth encourages a community to build additional housing near transportation, jobs, and retail and entertainment venues thus precluding the need for car use. But how many car trips are eliminated by Smart Growth? I believe the implied promises of Smart Growth lull people into a false sense of comfort that the effects of additional development can be ameliorated. And I believe it is based on false assumptions because of one very basic fact: People operate in their perceived best interest. In the case of transportation, they will use their car due to the convenience it affords. And, of course, we are talking here solely about the relationship of development and transportation; there are infrastructure, design and many other issues related to increased density.

Will Citizen Concerns be Addressed?

We have a city with many concerned citizens. And, it remains to be seen whether the questions and concerns that have been raised during this General Plan Update process can

continued on page 19

NOTIFY YOUR CITY LEADERS

There is much going on in the city—Open Space and Conservation policies being set, General Plans being updated—these and other ongoing work will affect our quality of life. Our representatives need to hear from you. Take a few minutes to make your voice heard.

Mayor Bill Bogaard
bbogaard@cityofpasadena.net

Vice Mayor Victor Gordo, District 5
vgordo@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Jacque Robinson, District 1
jacquerobinson@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Margaret McAustin, District 2
mmcaustin@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Chris Holden, District 3
cholden@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Steve Madison, District 6
smadison@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Steve Haderlein, District 4
shaderlein@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Terry Tornek, District 7
ttornek@cityofpasadena.net

City Clerk Mark Jomsky
mjomsky@cityofpasadena.net

City Manager Michael J. Beck
mbeck@cityofpasadena.net

San Rafael Elementary and WPRA Sponsor Student Enrichment Programs

By Marilyn Randolph

Principal Alyson Beecher of San Rafael Elementary School continues to describe the content of the WPRA student enrichment program as creating a palpable intellectual “buzz” in the community.



Police Chief Chris Vicino tells students how to solve crimes with a pencil instead of with a gun

A group with almost as much credibility confirmed that education has to be the top national priority in this country. The November 23, 2009, edition of the Wall Street Journal reported that the top CEOs in the United States believe that education has to be placed ahead of health care, climate change, financial regulation and national security as the goals of these United States. Without that focus, this country endangers our citizens, our economy, our business growth and our national defense.

The one remaining public school in Councilman Steve Madison's District is San Rafael Elementary. WPRA has asked for and received resounding support from community leaders and citizens to bring top talent to these students, grades 1 through 6, to supplement the work of the outstanding teaching staff.

- Former California Attorney General John Van de Kamp gave the first student lecture on

“Conflict Resolution,” showing students how to think out problems without resorting to violence.



Pediatrician Annemarie Fanselau, M.D. (second from left) continues discussion on childrens' health issues including vaccinations for common flu and H1N1 at Parent Lecture.

- Police Chief Chris Vicino showed the students how using a pencil solves more crimes than a gun, again demonstrating that protecting people with mental skills means more than loading guns and breaking down doors. (Have you watched “The Mentalist”)?
- Captain George Gardner of Fire Station 39 brought his engine crew to demonstrate how a stream of water from a fire truck seems to reach to Glendale to protect people and homes.
- At the monthly Parent Lecture Series, Tina Bryson, Ph.D. and Dr. Annemarie Fanselau, M.D. shared their insights and recommendations on parenting, childrens' mental and physical health, and H1N1 and common vaccinations.
- Published watercolor artist Joseph Stoddard, whose work appears on the WPRA website, brought his talent to San Rafael Elementary on December 11 to instruct students to create their own watercolor of a Pasadena scene.
- Three scientists from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory will tell

the students about the next Mars Rover scheduled to reach the red planet in 2011.



Former California Attorney General John Van de Kamp discusses 'conflict resolution' with students.

- Dramatic writing skills will be presented by Michael Grace, producer of the movie “Snoopy”.
- Mayor Bogaard will talk with the students to explain how the City of Pasadena works, and Assemblyman Anthony Portantino will explain how the State of California does/or doesn't work.

This broad collection of intellectual stimulation is only the beginning in showing students where they might direct their skills - in law, in science, in



Crew from Fire Station 39 headed by Captain George Gardner demonstrates power of fire engine to students.

art, with their teachers and inspiration from community members showing the way. These San Rafael Elementary Students are our future leaders. That's a phrase from our high school graduation speakers that none of us really believed until it actually happened 10, 20, 30, 40 years hence. It is true.

San Rafael Elementary School and WPRA continue to seek and accept your skills, time, and resources too. We are seeking readers, mentors,

continued on page 19



City Hall Update

By Vince Farhat

Pasadena Seeks New Police Chief

Deputy Chief Christopher Vicino, a 24-year Pasadena police veteran, was appointed interim police chief effective November 9.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder has appointed former Pasadena Police Chief Bernard Melekian as director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) for the Department of Justice. Melekian retired from the City of Pasadena on November 8. The U.S. COPS Office is responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state and local law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Melekian was appointed Pasadena police chief in April 1996. He served as acting fire chief for six months in 1998 and as interim city manager from January to September 2008. He previously served for 23 years with the Santa Monica Police Department, where he was awarded the Medal of Valor in 1978 and the Medal of Courage in 1980. He was president of the California Police Chiefs Association, and served as president of the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs Association from January 2000 to December 2001.

The City has hired a recruiting firm to search for a new police chief. The firm, Bob Murray & Associates, conducted Pasadena's search for a city manager last year. Officials have hosted a series of public meetings on the police search to receive input from the community. The deadline for applications is January 15. The recruiting firm will narrow the applicant pool to 12. City Manager Michael

Beck will then narrow that list to a smaller pool of finalists, who will be interviewed by an advisory committee. The committee will likely consist of other cities' police chiefs and other department heads from within the city, along with two to three community members. The names of the finalists will not be released to the public.

In the meantime, City Manager Michael Beck appointed Christopher Vicino as interim police chief effective November 9. A 24-year veteran of law enforcement, Vicino, 47, has spent his entire career with the Pasadena Police Department, working his way up the ranks in a variety of assignments. He was hired as a police officer in 1985 and has been promoted six times. He was appointed deputy chief by Melekian in 2006. He served as acting police chief from January to October 2008 when Melekian was interim city manager.

Bad Economy Impacts Pasadena Budget

City staff proposes to offset the additional \$5.5 million through one-time budget transfers and cost reductions.

The City of Pasadena continues to face severe budget deficits. Throughout the last year, City staff provided regular budget updates to the City Council and Council Finance Committee. Staff projections of operating revenues indicate that the General Fund budget deficit for the current fiscal year will reach \$11 million; \$5.5 million higher than anticipated in the adopted budget. This increase is a direct result of the continued poor conditions in the economy as a whole and a continuing decline in local sales tax revenue. According to staff reports, although an economic recovery may be underway throughout Los Angeles County, the significant drop in revenues coupled with their projected slow growth

going forward will make restoring the City's fiscal stability a multi-year challenge. Moreover, while most attention is given to the City's General Fund, similar issues are occurring in many of the City's other important funds.

Staff has presented a plan to offset the additional \$5.5 million deficit through a combination of the following: a one-time transfer from the City's Power Fund in the amount of \$2 million; ongoing reductions totaling \$700,000 through various departmental efforts; and \$2.8 million in personnel cost reductions. At the time this newsletter went to press, one employee bargaining group, the Pasadena Management Association, was scheduled to receive a 4% increase in January. But the City was in the process of attempting to negotiate a 2% one-time payment in lieu of the scheduled 4% COLA. Other options under consideration include furloughs, reducing work hours, increasing employee contributions towards retirement costs, and layoffs.

As Pasadena grapples with budget shortfalls, City Hall is looking to use L.A. County Measure R funds for existing programs. Backers of Measure R promoted the half-cent sales tax as a way of paying for dozens of new transportation projects across the County. But now the City is using Measure R revenue to pay for existing programs such as the Area Rapid Transit System (ARTS) bus. Funding for the ARTS bus is sales-tax based, and the system is facing the possibility of major cut-backs because of declining sales tax revenue. Pasadena received approximately \$763,000 from Measure R this past fiscal year, and expects to receive another \$1.3 million this year. Some of this money will be used to fund the ARTS bus.

For the latest information on the budget, please visit the City of Pasadena website at www.cityofpasadena.net.

Pasadena Seeks New Top Planner

City Manager Michael Beck will consider splitting planning and development into two separate departments.

City Planning and Development Director Richard Bruckner will be leaving City Hall in February to take the job of Planning Director for Los Angeles County. Bruckner has served as Pasadena's planning and development director for the past 10 years. City Manager Michael Beck will fill the position.

City officials have been discussing the possibility of splitting the planning and development department into two separate departments. The planning and development functions were merged during Bruckner's tenure. While planning staff is responsible for determining whether development proposals are consistent with City rules, development staff focuses on attracting new businesses and housing projects to Pasadena. Some have argued that combining the two departments creates potential conflicts of interests, to the extent City staff is called upon to act both as project advocates and project planners.

City Preserves Annandale Canyon

The canyon will eventually feature a hiking trail open to the public.

Annandale Canyon was officially dedicated as public land late last year following a seven-year community effort to stop luxury housing from being built in one of Pasadena's last wilderness areas. The developer spent nine years seeking permission to build 24 homes in the canyon. In 2008, however, the developer agreed to negotiate its sale to the City of Pasadena. An agreement was reached in February 2009 when the developer reduced his original asking price from \$7 million to \$6.2 million, and the City was able to assemble a financial package to fund the purchase of the properties. The largest part of the purchase price came from a \$2.5 million Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy grant. Other funds will

come from a tax that neighbors voted to levy on themselves and \$500,000 from county Proposition A funds. The approximately \$2 million balance will come from residential impact fees.

Annandale Canyon will eventually feature a hiking trail open to the public. Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich recently awarded the City a \$150,000 grant that will go toward building a trail in the canyon. Many environmental and open-space advocates, including WPRA, hope the Annandale Canyon purchase will become a blueprint for future acquisitions in Pasadena.

710 Freeway Tunnel

Caltrans found that a tunnel extension is geologically feasible.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed legislation last year that would have guaranteed the decades-old gap in the 710 Freeway between Alhambra and Pasadena would be not be completed by a surface freeway. In his veto statement, Schwarzenegger called the bill, SB 545, "unnecessary." The legislation would have permitted the state to pursue a 4.5 mile tunnel option to complete the freeway, and eliminated a surface option. As reported in the Star-News, Schwarzenegger said Caltrans and MTA are the best agencies to determine the future of the 710 corridor, not the state legislature. Those agencies have been leaning toward the tunnel option for the last several years.

In a related development, Caltrans released a study in mid-November concluding that a tunnel extension of the 710 Freeway is geologically feasible. The study evaluated five different possible zones, and examined the soil and geological conditions, and possible hazards for each zone. The next step could be to start environmental planning for the project, but that would require approval of the tunnel project by Caltrans and the MTA board. The environmental review process would involve determining the cost of different possible routes.

That process could also become contentious, because South Pasadena and La Canada oppose the project, and certain communities will likely oppose a tunneling project under their city.

2010 One City, One Story Book Collection

"Gardens of Water" by Alan Drew is the book selection.

The book selection for Pasadena's eighth One City, One Story community reading celebration is Alan Drew's novel "Gardens of Water". One City, One Story activities and events will be scheduled in March 2010. A community dialogue with the author is scheduled on Sunday, March 14 at the Pasadena Convention Center. Details of book discussion groups, film series, lectures and other events will be announced later. The novel tells the story of two families – one Kurdish, one American – and the sacrifice and love that bind them together. For more information, please visit www.cityofpasadena.net and go to the library page.

Traffic Plan Recommended for Fair Oaks Corridor

WPRA asked the City for a comprehensive traffic management plan for this area. The City commission (TAC) agreed. WPRA has urged the City Council to approve.

The City Council recently approved an environmental impact report 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 within a two-level subterranean parking garage.

The WPRA is concerned about increased traffic congestion in the Fair Oaks / California corridor. During the hearing on the Monty's project, the WPRA asked the City to undertake a comprehensive traffic management

continued on page 6

City Hall Update, continued from page 5

plan for this area. The City Council referred the WPRA's request to the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) for review and comment. In November, TAC commissioners voted unanimously to request that the City Council direct City staff to study measures to alleviate traffic in the project area. TAC further recommended that the study be completed by no later than October 2010. The WPRA has urged the City Council to adopt TAC's recommendation.

One-Day-Per-Week Watering Schedule

A Level 1 water shortage remains in effect in Pasadena.

In November, the City of Pasadena announced that cool-season water restrictions will be in effect through March 31, 2010. Outdoor watering with sprinkler systems is restricted to one day per week, as provided in Pasadena's mandatory water shortage procedures. Each property owner may choose which one day per week to water (Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday) before 9:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. during this period. Watering by hand and drip irrigation are exempt from these procedures. In addition, irrigation systems with "smart" weather-based irrigation controllers are exempt because they are highly water-efficient and run only as needed in response to weather patterns. Pasadena Water and Power offers \$150 rebates on smart controllers. The City points out that, with more frequent rain and cooler, shorter days, lawns and landscaping need much less watering. Many species of plants and lawns are also dormant at this time of the year. Learn more at www.cityofpasadena.net/savewater or call the Water Shortage Hotline at (626) 744-8888.

City Studying Pre-Craftsman Homes

Pasadena received a grant to study homes built between 1881 and 1904.

The California Office of Historic Preservation has awarded the City of Pasadena a grant to study and document homes built between 1881 and 1904. City staff will be driving through neighborhoods to record information and take photographs of Pasadena homes built during this pre-Craftsman era. The homes will be added to a database of historic properties. As part of the project, the City will nominate two historic districts and 10 individual homes for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The study should be completed by September 2010. For more information, please e-mail kevinjohnson@cityofpasadena.net or call (626) 744-7806.

Pasadena Part of Green Cities California

Pasadena is featured on Green Cities' best practices web site.

The City of Pasadena is a founding member of Green Cities California. Pasadena has created a tree inventory using sophisticated technology, and has adopted a green building practices ordinance. Now Pasadena is featured on Green Cities' best practices web site www.greencitiescalifornia.org, a storehouse of environmental policies intended to help cities avoid pitfalls and save time. The free Web site, created by local governments for local governments, provides information to implement new policies, including policy documents, staff reports, background research, legal analysis, and outreach and education materials.

City Increases Parking Fines

Fine increase was mandated by State law; violations now typically range from \$35 to \$50.

The City Council voted the week of Thanksgiving to increase fines for parking violations. Ticket fines were increased by \$3. Pasadena parking violations now typically range from \$35 to \$50, including violations for

overnight street parking and overstaying a time limit. The City was required to increase fines under a 2008 bill passed by the State legislature intended to fund county court costs. Cities have been responsible for the extra \$3 per violation since the legislation became effective last January. Pasadena may be responsible for the extra fines for the period of time between the effective date of the legislation and the Council's vote to increase fines. According to news reports, the City could owe Los Angeles County approximately \$450,000 to cover the extra fines.

City Council Approves Playhouse Plaza Project

The project was approved despite objections from WPRA and others.

The City Council recently approved the Playhouse Plaza Project, a five-story office building with underground parking at the southeast corner of Colorado Boulevard and El Molino Avenue in the Playhouse District. The WPRA board joined the Planning Commission and Pasadena Heritage in expressing concern about the scale and size of the project. The Council voted 6-1 to give the developer a ten percent density bonus over and above what the local guidelines allow for the neighborhood. Margaret McAustin cast the only no vote. Terry Tornek recused himself because he campaigned against the project during his election campaign last Spring. Construction could begin later this year and be completed within two years.

Editor's Note: Please e-mail Vince Farhat at farhat@wptra.net if you want to receive weekly updates from WPRA regarding Pasadena civic affairs. ■

Expanded Pasadena Convention Center Is Thriving

By Ben Tremper

There is a sparkling new gem in Pasadena's crown. The \$150 million Pasadena Convention Center expansion was completed in late February 2009, just in time to host the California Police Chiefs Annual Conference on March 1. The largest public works project ever undertaken in the City of Pasadena was completed on budget and six weeks ahead of schedule. The result is a world-class convention center that is certain to become another of the city's treasured landmarks.

From weddings and fundraisers to meetings and trade shows, the Convention Center can host an array of events. New features include a state-of-the-art 55,000-square-foot exhibit hall, 25,000-square-foot ballroom, 25,000 square feet of pre-function space, a 22,000-square-foot outdoor plaza, and administrative offices. The existing 28,000-square-foot Conference Center building was renovated and received a new façade.

"Our ballroom is now the largest in the San Gabriel Valley," said Michael Ross, CEO, Pasadena Center Operating Company. "That makes us an ideal choice for weddings, corporate galas and philanthropic fundraisers."

The experts at the Pasadena Convention Center know it takes more than a great venue to create a memorable event. Their in-house culinary professionals add a unique flavor to any event. The team's stellar service and innovative California cuisine, which features locally grown ingredients, complement the sparkling facility. Full-service electrical and A/V production services, high-speed telecommunications, and on-site parking complete the package.

With increasing pressure to make environmentally friendly business decisions, more and more convention centers around the country are going green, and the Pasadena Convention



The largest public works project ever undertaken in the City of Pasadena was completed on budget and six weeks ahead of schedule.

Center is no exception.

The expanded Center has implemented a host of "go green" initiatives in water use, electricity, recycling and traffic reduction. Because of its commitment to responsible environmental practices, it is anticipated the facility will receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold Certification from the United States Green Building Council.



The Convention Center has implemented a host of "go green" initiatives and is already attracting more lucrative events.

"This is all very fitting, considering 'Popular Science' named Pasadena 'one of America's greenest cities' in 2008," Ross offered.

The expanded Pasadena Convention Center is already attracting larger and more lucrative events. In April 2010, the Center will host the 60th Annual Los Angeles County Science Fair, the oldest regional science fair in the United States. The fair traditionally attracts more than 4,000 attendees over its three-day run. For the last 10 years, the event has been held at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

"We are thrilled to be moving the

Los Angeles County Science Fair to the Pasadena Convention Center," said Fair President Dean Gilbert. "Pasadena's expanded facility offers the space, amenities and accessibility needed for our large event."

Meeting planners from around the country are also singing the new facility's praises. In November, the Center received a 2009 Planners' Choice Award Sponsored by "Meeting News." More than 40,000 meeting, convention and incentive travel planners selected the facility for its commitment to excellence.

"We are honored to be recognized with this prestigious award," Ross said. "It is a testament to our outstanding staff and this amazing new facility."

Accolades from the construction industry are also pouring in. "California Construction" recently awarded the project a Best of 2009 award. Selected by an esteemed jury of prominent local construction industry professionals, criteria included architectural and engineering design; execution of construction; innovation; contribution to the local community and construction industry; ability to overcome challenges; and overall excellence.

"We didn't get here alone," Ross reflected. "The Pasadena Center Operating Company appreciates all of the support we have received from the City of Pasadena and its residents. Together we have built a facility we can all be proud of." ■

Last Pole Rolls Away to Mark Completion of 13-Year Avenue 64 Undergrounding Project

By Chuck Hudson

On Saturday, Oct. 21, the last utility pole was rolled away. On hand to mark the moment was Pasadena District 6 council member Steve Madison, who, before an assemblage in San Rafael Park, proudly proclaimed “mission accomplished.” City residents and officials alike might well have added “at long last” to his pronouncement.

13-years and \$13 million later

The mission to which council member Madison referred was the 13-year, \$13 million city project to move from overhead to underground the power, cable-TV and telephone lines along Avenue 64 (between Colorado Avenue and the southern city limits) and La Loma Road (between Avenue 64 and Laguna Road).

These roadways join the nearly 65 miles of major thoroughfares under which the city has already buried lines. The city-wide long-term initiative, which started in the 1960s and is funded by a utility tax, is on a schedule to bury just over a mile of lines each year.

Deregulation, moratorium delay project

The Avenue 64-La Loma Road project was first begun in 1996 with the establishment of a utility district. Unfortunately, the project stalled due to deregulation and a five-year moratorium, which started in 1995.

In 2003, when the moratorium was lifted, the city resumed its work. Over the next six years the project proceeded. Water mains were relined and sewer systems repaired. Infrastructure, to house the utility lines, was installed and streets improved. Street lights installed and, finally, overhead wires and poles removed.



Michael Udell, WPR board member, and Alyson Beecher, principal of San Rafael Elementary School, spent a moment with William Farhat and his balloon.



Gordon and Mia Dean and Ethan Sicka got the word out about the spring season registration of the Southwest Pasadena Little League.



District 6 Councilmember Steve Madison frames the accomplishment, while the last utility pole awaits release.



Mike Daniels accepts Councilmember Madison's congratulations, on behalf of all those who labored to complete the project.



Pasadena Fire Fighters and grillologists Justin Hester, left, and Harry Kurdoghlian faithfully man their station.

Cost-benefit analysis

While the project was not without its annoyances to area residents who, as an area gadfly-blogger put it, had to suffer through “years of endless repairs, bumps and eyesores,” it was not, ultimately, without its benefits.

- New and improved street lighting is more energy-efficient.
- Unsightly poles and wires have been removed.
- Power, cable-TV and telephone services are more reliable and less susceptible to interruption from inclement weather.
- Curbs have been rebuilt.
- Resurfaced streets now provide a smoother ride for automobile passengers and cyclists, as well as reduced road noise for residents.

Meanwhile, back at San Rafael Park ...

On this sunny and mild October day, celebrants watched the last utility

pole roll away. With the speeches done, they turned their attention back to their neighbors and community interests.

Joining the park-side event to promote their various interests and contribute to the convivial atmosphere were representatives of the San Rafael Elementary School, San Rafael Library Associates, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena Police Department, Pasadena Humane Society's Dr. Doolittle Animal Companion Program, Pasadena Fire Department Engine 39 and Public Education/PERT, Pasadena Southwest Little League and West Pasadena Residents' Association.

Last, but not least, those who attended the event were also well-fed, thanks to the Pasadena Fire Fighters (Local 809) grillologists, who, thankfully, found a way to put fire to good use. ■

WPRA Studying Hillside Zoning

The hills and valleys of West Pasadena provide much of its character. These “hillside” areas, including much of the sloping terrain west of Orange Grove, most of Pasadena west of the Arroyo and nearly all of San Rafael, are subject to special zoning regulations. These regulations, commonly referred to as Hillside or HD zoning, address many elements related to building or remodeling, including maximum building height, floor area, set backs and placement.

These HD zones “overlay” or add to the requirements of established city-wide zoning, and impose additional requirements for permits and approval. The purpose of these HD zones and regulations is to help maintain the character of our community while allowing reasonable development.

The WPRA monitors activity related to hillside development and HD regulations, code, policy, guidelines and enforcement in our neighborhood. (The Linda Vista Annandale Association does the same for their neighborhood.) On occasion, certain HD elements are reviewed to determine their effectiveness and appropriateness.

If you would like to assist in this or have views regarding Hillside zoning you would care to share, please contact WPRA board member Blaine Cavena, cavena@wptra.net or 626 799 3358, or WPRA, PO Box 50252, Pasadena, CA 91115. ■

NU FLOW RELINE REPAIR RENEW

Plumbing Problems?

Don't tear up your house! Don't tear up your yard!

Nu Flow fixes your pipes from the inside!
The process is quick, safe and permanent with
NO DESTRUCTION, NO MESS and NO HASSLES!!
Call for a free in home evaluation, or see our website
www.nuflowtech.com

PHCC

Drain/Sewer Pipes	Hot and Cold Water Lines
 Blocked drain pipe	 Etched pipes begin to leak
 Pipe is cleaned	 Pipe is sanded clean
 Lined pipe stops root intrusion	 Coated pipes prevent leaks

No more Leaks!
No more Back-ups!
No Mess!
Problem Solved!
Guaranteed!!

Ask about our Whole Home Water Filtration Systems!

Rose Bowl Event—Let The Games Begin!

By Suzanne and Don Orsi

Remember to reserve May 16th on your calendar for a fun, family day at the Rose Bowl! The Rose Bowl Operating Company (RBOC) will be inviting the Pasadena community into the Rose Bowl on Sunday, May 16, 2010.

What better way to spend a day than on the beautiful Rose Bowl field? And, all are welcome. There will be fun and games for people of all ages and for all families throughout the city. The RBOC will be offering all who attend good food and lots of fun games on the field.

So stay tuned for more information. Starting early next year, the RBOC will be announcing details on their website. And, you will be able to register there to become a member of the "Rose Bowl family" entitling you to receive the latest information on the May 16 event and more.



So be sure to save the date! Mark May 16th on your calendar for a fun day at the Rose Bowl!

Editor's Note: Don and Suzanne Orsi are long time residents of Linda Vista and members of the Linda Vista Annandale Association. They will have a leadership role in developing the Rose Bowl event.

Don may be reached at donorsi@sbcglobal.net and Suzie at suzieorsi@sbcglobal.net ■

Save the Date: WPRA Annual Meeting

May 4, 2010 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The West Pasadena Residents' Association invites you and your family to join us for the WPRA Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 4. This year's Annual Meeting will be held on the beautiful West Pasadena campus of **Mayfield Senior School**, located at 500 Bellfontaine Street.

The Annual Meeting will include updates on important issues affecting Pasadena, information booths from community organizations, the election of WPRA directors and officers . . . and much, much more!

We hope you will join us May 4. Be sure to look for a more detailed meeting announcement in March. In the meantime, for more information, please contact Vince Farhat at farhat@wptra.net.

New Landmark for West Pasadena

By Vince Farhat

In collaboration with the City of Pasadena, community volunteer Emina Darakjy led the effort to create a new gateway to the North end of Prospect Boulevard. Neighborhood resident Peter Martocchio also was integral to the success of this project. Seventy-two households from the Prospect Park neighborhood contributed to the \$100,000-plus project which was funded with private donations.

Prospect Park features some of Pasadena's finest examples of Greene and Greene and Frank Lloyd Wright architecture. Local architect and

WPRA member Chris Peck designed the pillars to complement the original pillars built in 1906 at the Orange Grove entrance to Prospect Boulevard. The new pillars are comprised of arroyo stone accented with clinker bricks; they were built by masonry expert Chris Petersen. The City's Public Works Department required the addition of a street curb and gutter at the bases of the new pillars as a safety measure.

The WPRA thanks Emina and the Prospect Park residents for creating this new landmark for our City. ■



Emina Darakjy and Peter Martocchio with new pillar marking the west entrance to Prospect Park.

Arlington Garden in Pasadena

By Vince Farhat

Arlington Garden is a three-acre community garden on land owned by Caltrans. The site is leased to the City of Pasadena and entrusted by the City to the Arlington Garden in Pasadena, a non-profit corporation. The garden was first planted in Summer 2005 on vacant land that was to be used as a staging area for construction of the 710 Freeway.

The garden was inspired by Jan Smithen's book "Sun-Drenched Gardens: The Mediterranean Garden," and designed by Mayita Dinos. Arlington Garden in Pasadena is operated by West Pasadena residents Betty and Charles "Kicker" McKenney.

Arlington Garden is a water-wise garden which celebrates Southern California's Mediterranean climate.

The garden has 350 trees and thousands of plants and flowers, benches, tables, chairs, and a solar-powered fountain. Support from the City, Metropolitan Water District, Pasadena Beautiful,



WPRA, Westridge School and many others have helped create a place of beauty in West Pasadena.

The City recently secured a 10-year lease extension with Caltrans. But Arlington Garden is in immediate and continuing need for funds to put in new plants and to pay for increased maintenance and gardening services. Arlington Garden needs continued funding to ensure its long-term viability as a community-supported Mediterranean garden.

The WPRA encourages West Pasadena residents to visit and enjoy Arlington Garden. We also hope residents will join WPRA in supporting this important neighborhood project. To learn more about the garden, or to make a donation, please go to www.arlingtongardeninpasadena.org. ■

Conservancy Needs Public Support

By Vince Farhat



ARROYOS & FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY

2009 was a landmark year for the preservation and conservation of open space in our region. Highlights include the purchase of 20 acres at the trailhead of Rubio Canyon, where four trails will be restored and the land protected forever, and the dedication of Annandale Canyon as public land.

A leading voice for open space in our community is the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy (AFC), formerly known as the Altadena

Foothills Conservancy. The organization changed its name last year to better describe its expanded mission to encompass the San Gabriel Mountain foothills from the Verdugos on the west through Altadena on the east and extending southward through Eaton Canyon and the Arroyo Seco. AFC is supported by a board of dedicated volunteers, including WPRA friends Tim Wendler and Mary Barrie.

As a local land trust, AFC is in a

unique position to identify parcels that can be purchased and conserved for future generations. AFC also is actively restoring trails and leading other efforts to mitigate environmental damage from the Station Fire.

The WPRA encourages West Pasadena residents to learn more about AFC. For more information, please visit www.arroyosfoothills.org or contact Tim Wendler at joandtim@charter.net. ■

Guest Editorial: New State Rules Trump Local Control

By Laurie Barlow, AIA

The General Plan community participation process that Pasadena is currently undergoing for revision of the housing element is affected by some new ground rules signed into law in recent years. Legislation passed in Sacramento, AB 32 and SB 375, is based upon the concept that regional coordination of transportation and its related housing densities is necessary to combat the pollution and energy consumption generated by urban sprawl, which has been the primary engine of California development and GDP production since the postwar era. It recognizes that sprawl is unsustainable, particularly since the counties aren't able to maintain the infrastructure in rural and outlying areas. Hence the strategy of this legislation is to assign the majority of growth and development to urban areas, using "transportation" as the rationale for higher densities. This "fair share" housing allocation plan will focus new development in Transit Priority Areas and near employment centers within the transportation network, and gives regional planning priority over local control.

It shifts the old process of General Plans which cities used to plan for future growth, as the City of Santa Barbara noted in its March 2008 letter of objection to its SCAG Board of Directors (Southern California Association of Governments). The problem was that the Regional Housing Number Assignment (RHNA) created a requirement for housing which was nearly 150% of the city's existing General Plan capacity. That's because the method of calculating the housing requirements was revised to substantially increase the necessary housing using a growth forecast method developed by the State, called the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). This is outlined on the State's Housing and Community Development website,

which develops this number in consultation with SCAG.

The SCS mandates that local governments must complete housing elements within 18 months of receiving their housing allocation and states that local governments have three years to complete rezoning of sites to be consistent with the designations in the

*Since the state's cash flow
has been decimated, cities
rely more and more on
development and developer fees
to provide basic services. Cities
are essentially railroaded into
constant development in
order to pay the bills.*

housing element. It also determines that a court can compel local governments to complete the rezoning if the statutory deadline is not met; if the rezoning is not completed, there are new restrictions on local government's power to deny or condition affordable housing projects. It's rather draconian in that respect; a Building Industry Association profit-driven strategy, not one that accommodates actual needs in the communities or the infrastructure capacity available, such as power, water and sewer capacities that were previously a critical factor in the city General Plans. In effect, it disconnects these General Plan elements and creates further development issues in that commercial development is generally not capped, because of the revenue that it creates, yet it generates traffic issues

and demands more power, water and additional housing support. All this without identifying the concurrent balance of local resources required to support this growth.

The inability of local entities to support this growth is deleted from the planning process via SB 375, which provides the development community with the tools at the regional level to build out beyond all infrastructure resources to produce profit as well as create the fiscal assets which can then be sold by Wall Street in its continuing saga of selling toxic assets. Communities are now captive to the Federal mandate created by the large banks to provide more investment product on the global market to keep the US dollar and Federal Deficit funding at target levels.

Let's step back a moment and look at the State's overall picture. California's economy is all about construction, driven by real estate development. There's large investment leverage on about 25% of a \$1.58 trillion economy. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, California is responsible for 13% of the United States' gross domestic product (GDP). This means that our ground-zero 2008 implosion of the housing and mortgage markets has left a very, very large hole that the building industry is seeking to fill with development that is able to attract financing from the government and the private sector due to its legislated existence, backed by whatever credibility is left of Sacramento's fiscal Bond sales, Federal funding and debt payment structures. It ties transportation and infrastructure repair and expansion to development requirements in order to obtain this funding. Whether the market is actually there (during record unemployment) for this housing is left to the "Field of Dreams."

Since the state's cash flow has been

decimated by the Prop 13 loss in property tax revenues, local development revenue and taxes have taken a front seat in City revenue streams. Cities rely more and more on development and developer fees to provide basic services, and so are essentially railroaded into constant development in order to pay the bills. This is why California is in its present predicament. Unfortunately, the State's strategy for more density and development doesn't solve the problem, and reduces the quality of life for its residents, while depleting remaining resources. This disconnect of development versus resource consumption is a far bigger problem than the transit and pollution issues this legislation is supposed to solve. Water conservation is a non-issue, despite legislation authored by Sheila Kuehl in the State Senate (SB 221) signed into law in Oct 2001 to stop the practice of "paper water" over-allocation which has allocated, on paper, eight times the amount of water supplies actually available.

Cities that have tried to fight these RHNA allocations in court, such as Irvine's lawsuit against the SCAG allocations, have not found the courts to be supportive. The Fourth Appellate District recently held that courts have

no jurisdiction to review the propriety of a municipality's RHNA allocation. To cite attorney Katherine Hart: *The Court of Appeals reasoned that "...the nature and scope of a general plan's housing element and the length and intricacy of the process created to determine a municipality's RHNA [Regional Housing Number Assignment] allocation reflects a clear intent on the part of the Legislature to render this process immune from judicial intervention."*

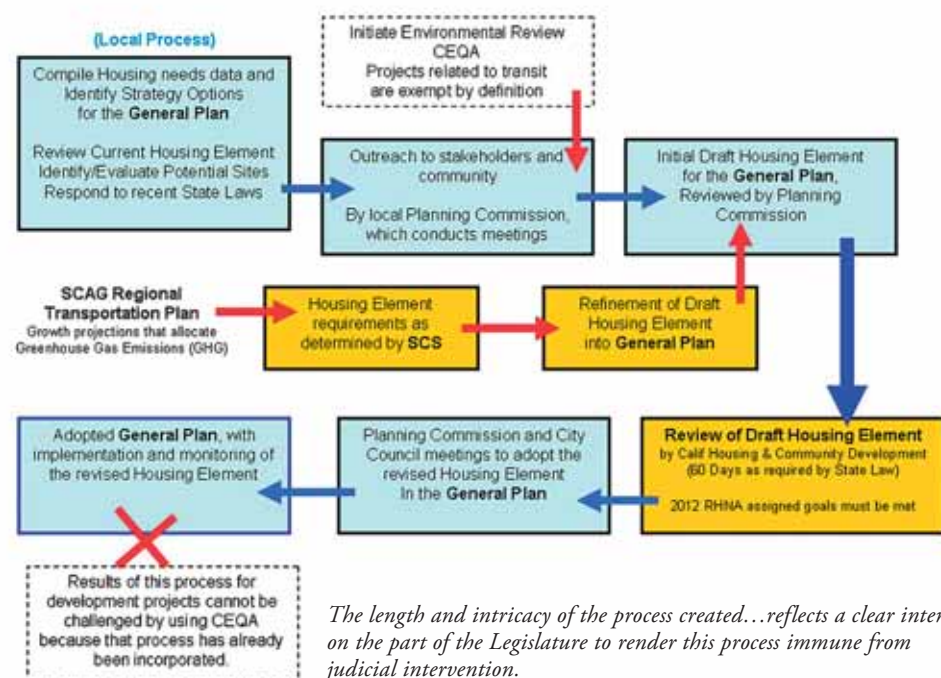
The impact of this on Pasadena's General Plan remains to be seen, but it is critical that residents insist that the growth impacts be accounted for in the update process.

So local communities and cities do not have much recourse with respect to the impact of the RHNA numbers

on their General Plans. While in theory there is a process to contest the SCS projections early in the process, which triggers a regional reallocation if a community is successful in rebutting a particular growth projection, it isn't going to happen under SCAG because all of the communities would then reject these projections. The only recourse would appear to be to challenge the basis of the growth numbers themselves, which are based upon a thesis prepared by USC's Population Dynamics Research Group. This group was retained by Sacramento to generate these projections based upon historic data and some interesting assumptions. They deny the Federal Census Bureau's contention that there has been a strong outflow of people from California during the past decade, but the state Department of Finance's demographic unit disputes that position, and the conflict presumably will be resolved by the 2010 census (this from the Sacramento Bee).

As it stands right now, the impact of this on Pasadena's General Plan remains to be seen, but it is critical during the public participation process that residents insist that the growth impacts be accounted for in the update process for Land Use, Mobility and Open Space/Conservation. It is important that the integrity of all of the General Plan elements is maintained; it must be fiscally responsible, and especially, environmentally sound. If the impact of traffic and growth is not in alignment with the stated goals of reducing carbon footprint (that includes all impacts of the environment) then it is open for renegotiation. That is the supposedly the basis of SB 375 and the transit and redevelopment funding that is attached to it.

Editor's Note: Laurie is an architect and past President of the American Institute of Architects, Pasadena & Foothill Chapter. Her background of 30 years is in commercial projects in the areas of design and project management. You can reach her via email at: nc_barlowco@yahoo.com.



The length and intricacy of the process created...reflects a clear intent on the part of the Legislature to render this process immune from judicial intervention.

Can You Dig it? A Community Garden for Pasadena

By Cathy Morrison

I know I'm not alone in wanting fresh organic fruits and vegetables that only growing your own can provide, and I know for sure that I'm not the only one living in Pasadena that doesn't have the space to do just that. Apartment and condominium dwellers, as well as those who live in houses with small yards or yards that lack the necessary growing conditions, are not able to enjoy the benefits of homegrown fruits and vegetables.

There is growing evidence of environmental and nutritional benefits in consuming fresh food products grown or raised closer to where we live. Farmer's markets and food co-ops are commonplace. Even the White House has recently created a community garden.

of surrounding neighborhoods. Most of these gardens provide social opportunities where lasting friendships

You can join the community garden project. To find out how, attend the public forum Saturday, January 16, or contact Cathy Morrison.

have been cultivated along with the tomatoes and corn. Many community gardens also provide learning centers where subjects such as water and land conservation, gardening skills and

a Community Garden! Preliminary efforts are underway.

What has been done to date?

- Potential garden sites have been identified.
- Preliminary discussions have begun with city, state agencies, local landowners, neighbors, city officials, Pasadena Water and Power.
- Support Organizations such as University of California Cooperative Extension / Common Ground Program and Los Angeles Community Garden Council have committed to provide guidance.

What is next?

You can join the community garden project. A public forum will announce the formation of "Pasadena Community Garden Project" on January 16. The concept of the community garden, how it works, how to become a member, and volunteer opportunities for anyone interested in helping make the Garden a reality will be on the agenda. There will be speakers from neighboring Community Garden board members, and the Los Angeles Community Garden Council. If you are interested in joining the community garden project, and cannot attend the public forum, please contact Cathy Morrison at the address below.

When: Saturday, January 16 at 11:00 a.m.

Where: Singer Park (North East Corner, California Blvd. and St. John)

(for your comfort, bring a blanket or portable chair!)

Editor's Note: Cathy Morrison is a past member of the WPRA board. For more information, please contact Cathy at pasadenacommunitygardenproject@gmail.com or (626) 441-8123 ■



Community Garden in Altadena.

There also is a growing demand for cities to provide opportunities for their citizens to grow organic foods. The City of Pasadena's General Plan and Green City Action Plan 2006 (action item #17) specifies its desire to support the development of Community Gardens in Pasadena.

Community Gardens are beautiful. Most have been established on abandoned properties and have been known to increase the property values

even cooking classes are taught.

Community Gardens are very popular. There is high demand for membership. Neighboring cities such as Altadena, Glendale, Alhambra, Eagle Rock, and Highland Park all have created successful gardens. In Los Angeles County alone there are over 60 community Gardens. All of these gardens have waiting lists exceeding one year to get in.

It is time to bring to Pasadena

Ambassador West Update

By Vince Farhat

As reported in the last issue of the *WPRA News*, the western portion of the former Ambassador College campus known as Ambassador West is being offered for sale. WPRA board members recently met with representatives of Fortress, the company that owns most of the property.

In March 2008, Fortress foreclosed on a significant portion of the property covered by the Ambassador West



Ambassador West is on the market

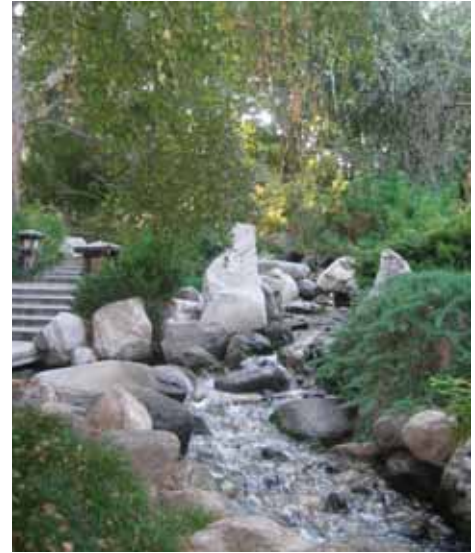
approvals. The foreclosure did not include any of the property owned by Maranatha High School and Harvest Rock Church. The foreclosure also did not include the property that was to be developed by Sunrise senior homes, or the historic Rankin House or Villa Francesca apartments owned by Dorn Platz. Fortress continues to maintain their property, as well as some of the common area property,

on behalf of the other property owners, at considerable expense.

Fortress has informed the WPRA that it will not develop the approved 70 new condominium homes. But Fortress continues to move the subdivision map toward completion and to market the property for sale to qualified developers.

In December 2008, Fortress sold two of the existing mansion properties to private owners: Mayfair Mansion (182 South Orange Grove) and Manor del Mar (359 West Del Mar). Both mansion owners intend to remodel and preserve these homes and occupy them as their personal single-family residences. Occupancy as residences requires garages which were not contemplated as part of the original Ambassador West approvals.

Fortress still owns the Terrace Villa Mansion, and has applied to the City to add a garage adjacent to the home. This home was originally approved for single family residential use and intended for individual ownership by a family. However, the parking solution originally proposed and approved (providing 2 stalls from a nearby apartment garage building) has not been well received by the small market



Ambassador West Campus along Grove Walk.

of buyers capable of purchasing, restoring and residing in a 9,000 square foot mansion. According to Fortress, the garage application is intended to resolve this issue and help get this mansion into the hands of a family willing to invest in the restoration of the home.

Editor's Note: The WPRA is closely following the sale of Ambassador West. Please e-mail Vince Farhat at farhat@wptra.net if you want to receive weekly updates from WPRA regarding Pasadena civic affairs. ■

Cell Phone Tower Update

By Bob Holmes

The first antenna to be installed after the end of the City's cell tower moratorium has been completed. The antenna is located atop the streetlight standard on the east side of Oak Knoll at Alpine. According to the City's engineering department, it is the prototype for new cell antennas on public right-of-ways in Pasadena. The electronics associated with the antenna are in an underground vault next to

the streetlight. The antenna is the structure above where the crossbar holding the light meets the pole in the accompanying photograph.

In October 2009, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals handed cities a new tool in preserving the ambience of their neighborhoods. The court ruled that cities may reject cell towers based on aesthetics. The ruling, in a suit between Sprint and Palos Verdes Estates, reversed

a policy which was reaffirmed in 2006 when the court told La Canada Flintridge they could not reject a tower since only the state had that power.

The WPRA is closely following this issue. ■



Neighborhood Safety Corner

By Bob Holmes

Police Department Releases Crime Statistics

The Pasadena Police department recently released the statistics on crime in Community Service Area 1 for calendar year 2009 through October. Almost all types of crimes are down from 2008. There were 124 residential burglaries through October 2008, and that number has declined to 107 in the first 10 months of 2009. Commercial burglaries were 45 in 2009, which is a reduction from 59 in the same period of 2008.

One disappointment was the number of vehicle burglaries which increased from 177 in 2008 to 192 in 2009. This continues to be the most frequent crime in our area. Most of the burglaries occur in the Marengo and Del Mar area, but many of them occur in the vicinity of the Rose Bowl.

There are several things you can do to protect yourself from having your vehicle burglarized. NEVER leave anything worth stealing in view when you park your car. Cell phones, iPods and such should be stored in your glove compartment. Packages and purses should be locked in your trunk. Of course, these things should be put away before you park so that the criminals cannot see where you have stowed your valuables. Also, always set your alarm if you have one.

You can see all of the crime statistics on the WPRA web site. Go to www.wpra.net, click on **Issues** and then click on **Neighborhood Safety**. On the left-hand side of the Neighborhood Safety page click on **Local Area Crime Statistics**. CSA 1 includes all of West Pasadena. The Neighborhood Safety page explains the coverage and has a link to a map which shows the areas covered by CSA 1 and the WPRA. **Pasadena Police Department Launches Nixle Service**

The Nixle service allows the Police Department to notify the public of

safety events and police news via email, cell phone or the Internet. The service provides information on traffic accidents, alerts such as warnings about burglaries from automobiles, community events such as a project to recycle cell phones for use by non-profit agencies, and advisories of police events such as the installation of the new police chief in Los Angeles.

Citizens can access this data on the Internet by going to **Nixle.com** and typing **Pasadena** in the city box, and then clicking on **Pasadena, California** from the list that appears. After entering the Internet site you can register to receive notifications via a text message on your cell phone, or via email, or both. You can also visit Nixle.com on a regular basis to keep yourself informed. Nixle has "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) page that can be accessed at <http://www.nixle.com/faqs.html> which you might find very useful.

The police already have available the "Reverse 911" service whereby they can call all the regular telephones in an area to warn residents of emergency information such as fires or police activity in the neighborhood. The Nixle service widens the opportunities for citizens to receive police-related information via cell phones or email, and also allows the police to communicate important but non-emergency information in a timely manner. Citizens can be assured that information provided through the Nixle service has been screened by the police and can be trusted.

Neighborhood email lists communicate safety news.

A third avenue that many people are using to communicate safety news is the neighborhood email lists where people warn each other of suspicious activities or other safety related issues in their neighborhood. One such list is



maintained by Alix Reeves for people in south-west Pasadena. You can learn more by going to the WPRA web site, wpra.net, clicking on **Issues**, then click on **Neighborhood Safety** in the list that appears. Look at **Current Events** for information on how to join her list. WPRA will list other lists. Please contact Bob Holmes (holmes@wpra.net) to get your information listed. These lists are not screened by the police, but they do allow neighbors to rapidly alert each other to events in their neighborhood. In addition, the Police Department is developing email and address lists to target their communications more effectively. Cynthia Murphy, our area rep is the point of contact and is helping Mrs. Givens in coordinating information for our association.

For more information on the Nixle service, please contact Janet Pope Givens at (626)744-4537 or jpopegivens@cityofpasadena.net.

Editors Note: Bob Holmes is Chair of the WPRA Neighborhood Safety Committee. You may contact Bob at Holmes@wpra.net. ■

Pasadena Avenue – A Recent History

By Claire Bogaard

As many residents in West Pasadena know, the Long Beach Freeway (710) is now a 50-year-old freeway controversy. During the 1940s and 1950s, freeway planners designed a web of freeways to be built across the Southland. Although a number of freeways were completed, many others have been withdrawn from consideration over time.

As to the 710 Freeway, in December 2003, Federal Highways withdrew its approval. Preliminary studies are now underway to determine the technical feasibility of constructing an underground tunnel as an alternative to the 710 surface freeway.

Pasadena Avenue in the 1970s

In the early 1970s, Pasadena Avenue between California Boulevard and Columbia Street was a typical neighborhood street with concrete sidewalks, wide parkways lined with mature camphor trees, and parking on both sides of the street.

Pasadena freeway opponents worked in cooperation with South Pasadena and others to oppose the extension of the 710 Freeway. Discussions were heated.

The Pasadena City Council (then called the City Board of Directors) agreed to a proposal championed by then-City Director Donald Yokaitis to widen Pasadena Avenue, to turn St. John and Pasadena Avenues into one-way streets, and to funnel freeway commuter traffic down the street and into South Pasadena neighborhoods. The goal was: “to bring South Pasadena to its knees” so that it would agree to the completion of the 710 Freeway. South Pasadena responded quickly by closing off its neighborhood streets at Columbia St. forcing the through traffic down Fremont Avenue.

WPRA strongly opposed the widening of Pasadena Avenue and the one-way traffic patterns along St. John

and Pasadena Avenues. City leaders assured WPRA and the neighborhood that the new traffic configuration, known as the ‘wishbone’, would only be in place for a couple of years and that the freeway construction would begin shortly.

*For several years, the
Director of Public Works
has been urged to apply for
grant funds for improvements
to Pasadena Avenue. Isn't
it time – after over 30
years – for us to reunite and
restore a great West Pasadena
neighborhood?*

Pasadena Avenue – Today

Since the 710 surface freeway is no longer under consideration, many elected officials and residents have been urging Caltrans to sell its properties along the freeway path. In Pasadena, Caltrans owns approximately 150 residences – mainly on and near St. John and Pasadena Avenues. Neighbors have asked that Pasadena Avenue be restored to its historic width with concrete sidewalks, parkways, and a new row of camphor trees. For several years, the director of Public Works has been urged to apply for grant funds that could be used to fund some of the improvements to Pasadena Avenue.

If these changes are made, traffic would again flow in the area at neighborhood speeds and traditional

on-street parking would be available. Commuter traffic could be directed east from the Del Mar and California freeway exits to South Raymond, an under-utilized street and one which has been widened for improved access to the Pasadena Freeway. Similar proposals were considered and supported during the Southwest Traffic Studies of the 1990s and more recently by the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC).

Isn't it time – now more than 30 years later – to reunite and to restore a great West Pasadena neighborhood?

Editor's Note: Claire Bogaard is a founder of Pasadena Heritage. She also served on the WPRA board in the 1970s and 1980s. Claire can be reached at cwbogaard@earthlink.net. ■

Editor's Corner

A new year is here, and with it another 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@wpra.net.

—Vince Farhat

San Rafael Elementary Neighborhood Update

By Alyson Beecher

Our first quarter of the school year has flown by and part of me is wondering what happened to November. If anyone finds it, can your return it to me? In all seriousness, the start of the new school year has been busy but amazing. Despite on-going budget cuts to education, which give me a headache when I think about them too much, there is a lot to celebrate at the school site.

The collaboration between San Rafael School and WPRA has taken off. San Rafael School looks forward to continuing to work with WPRA with further parent lectures and new enrichment opportunities for students.

In September, we welcomed three new classes to San Rafael School as part of the Pasadena Unified School District's new Dual Language Immersion Program. Already in the first 12 weeks of the program, many of the kindergarten children are speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish. This is particularly exciting since many of the students started the school year without speaking any Spanish.

The parents have brought a new enthusiasm to the school and have joined in with the Parent Teacher Association ("PTA") to create a parent work room, assist with a food drive for the holidays, and to help with overall fundraising for the school

Over the past several weeks, the school has held scheduled tours for interested parents and community members. There have been approximately 15 to 20 people on each of our tours. Many of the parents who have expressed interest in the program are from the West Pasadena area.

The collaboration that has been growing between San Rafael School and the West Pasadena Resident's Association has taken off. Thanks to the hard work of Marilyn Randolph and Michael Udell, the school has had an increase in guest enrichment presenters and the Parent Lecture Series has had two events since October. I have also been very thankful for all of the connections that Ms. Randolph and Mr. Udell have made on behalf of the school. They have been diligent in finding new volunteers and new partnerships. Additionally, Ms. Randolph worked with the Pasadena Museum of History to provide space for the school's pre-start of the school year staff retreat. I look forward to our continued collaboration as we seek to make San Rafael the best school that it can be.

As we enter into the 2010 year, and the second half of the school year, San Rafael School is looking forward to continuing to work with the WPRA with further parent lectures, and new enrichment opportunities for students. Work on facilities improvements funded by Measure



TT will continue during the summer of 2010, and meetings with architects have been on-going. The teaching staff continues to seek ways to help all students continue the academic growth that was so evident last year. We will also be gearing up for Science Camp (Fifth and Sixth Graders attend science camp in Big Bear), a Science Expo, a Drama Production, and our annual Read Across America Day (March 5, 2010).

On behalf of all the staff, parents and students at San Rafael School, I would like to thank the West Pasadena Residents Association and the San Rafael community for their continued support. And we wish you all a Happy New Year!

Editor's Note: Alyson Beecher is principal of San Rafael School. She can be reached at abeecher@pusd.us. ■

A Pasadena Patron: The Life and Legacy of Eva Scott Fenyes

In an era when well-to-do families took a special interest in creating significant and valuable collections, Pasadena's Eva Fenyes devoted her discriminating tastes, vast knowledge, and ample funds to surround herself with the finest furniture, textiles, china, silver, jewels and art the world had to offer. The Fenyes Mansion is filled with heirloom-quality art and antiques assembled by Eva and Dr. Adelbert Fenyes from their travels worldwide. Themes covered in this special exhibition include Fenyes family history, Eva as an art patron and watercolorist, the influence of Europe, the East Coast, and travel itself on her thinking, and the social milieu she created here in Pasadena. Exhibition highlights include items from the Fenyes collection never before on public display. The exhibition starts January 30, and will be open from noon to 5:00 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays through August 2010.

The Wild, Wild West: An Evening to Benefit Pasadena Museum of History-January 28

Explore tales of the west as you tour the extraordinary Zane Grey Estate, former home of one of the 20th century's first millionaire authors. Grey's romanticized stories of the rugged Old West will share the spotlight the true-to-life saga of pioneering adventurer Don Benito Wilson, whose multi-faceted endeavors shaped the course of Southern California history. The January 28 event includes a light supper, wine, coffee & dessert, raffle opportunities and musical entertainment. The event will raise funds for restoration of the Oriental carpets in the Fenyes Mansion at Pasadena Museum of History.

For more information on these and other museum activities, please call (626) 577-1600 or visit www.pasadenahistory.org.

President's Message, continued from page 2

be addressed. Many are asking for a better planning process, validated assumptions, non conflicting codes and plans. They are hoping that we, as a city, will be able to figure out what hasn't worked and develop plans and procedures that will work.

Planning and Development Departments Should be Separate

One thing that many are urging the city to do is to separate the Planning and Development functions in Pasadena. Currently, these functions lay under one Director. Given the many development pressures on our city, Pasadena would be best served by having a dedicated Planning Director that could focus on the many planning challenges facing us in the years ahead.

Citizen Involvement is Critical

In any case, every citizen that is unhappy with the development course Pasadena has taken should familiarize themselves with the many pressures being put on our city and its leaders. Be sure to read about the next phase of the General Plan Update in Stephanie DeWolfe's article on page 1 of this newsletter. She states that there will be "full documentation of comments heard from the community" during the first phase of the process and a draft of the final report summarizing this Outreach will be circulated for public comment before being presented to City Council. The current General Plan elements will be compared "against the Community Outreach Report to identify areas of alignment, areas of conflict and areas that are not currently addressed at all."

In the months ahead, there will be more community discussion and many opportunities to stay informed and provide comments as the plan develops, including the use of new media tools. So, be sure to participate. ■

General Plan, continued from page 1

tours, a speaker series, a special youth outreach program, and an open house extravaganza attended by more than 700 people. GPUAC members participated in every community meeting as group facilitators and scribes. Together, staff and GPUAC members have heard first hand what people love about the City, what they are concerned about and what they want for Pasadena's future.

There are many opportunities to stay informed and provide comments as the plan develops, including the use of new media tools. The General Plan website provides the opportunity to subscribe to e-mail updates on the latest happenings. In addition, new tools on the website allow the submittal of online comments regarding specific documents such as the Outreach Summary Report. The General Plan even has its own Facebook page at www.facebook.com (type "Pasadena General Plan"). Become a Fan of the Plan!

There will be many more opportunities to participate in the General Plan Update process in the coming months. For further information, please visit the website at www.cityofpasadena.net/generalplan or call (626) 744-6807.

Editor's Note: Stephanie DeWolfe is Deputy Director for the Pasadena Planning & Development Department. You may reach her at sdewolfe@cityofpasadena.net. Please e-mail Vince Farhat at farhat@wptra.net if you want to receive weekly updates from WPRA regarding Pasadena civic affairs, including the General Plan update. ■

San Rafael, continued from page 3

speakers, researchers, demonstrators, a laptop for each of 20 classrooms with a document camera and printer and an upgrade of all televisions in each classroom to be digitally compatible. Packages of copy paper are needed for every classroom. What can you do?

Kindly contact marilyn97@earthlink.net, mudell@mckennalong.com and abeecher@pusd.us to best direct your contributions. ■



**WEST PASADENA
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**
Post Office Box 50252
Pasadena, CA 91115-0252

Visit our website @ www.wpra.net



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Pasadena, CA
Permit #1105

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 email 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, reaching nearly 1,000 households each week, informing residents of important meetings that affect our quality of life, as well as arts and entertainment around the city. If this interests you, contact Judy Klump at klump@wpra.net.

Join the WPRA Today

Your generous support will help the WPRA publish its newsletter and keep you informed of issues affecting our neighborhood. So, please take a moment to join us and stand with the WPRA. Please contact Vince Farhat at farhat@wpra.net.

Board of Directors 2009 - 2010

Officers:

President	Audrey O'Kelley	323-229-0541
Vice-President	Mic Hansen	626-799-2992
Communications Co-Director	Vince Farhat	626-375-6619
Communications Co-Director	Bill Urban	626-577-7982
Director of Membership	Fred Zepeda	626-578-7505
Treasurer	Blaine Cavena	626-799-3358
Secretary	Dorothy Lindsey	323-256-4972

For more information about our committees, please contact:

Newsletter & Advertising	Vince Farhat	626-375-6619
Membership	Fred Zepeda	626-578-7505
Land Use & Planning	Mic Hansen	626-799-2992
Open Space & Conservation	Linda Zinn	626-396-3980

Board Members:

Cheryl Auger	Judith Klump	Bill Urban
Geoffrey Baum	Marilyn Randolph	John Van de Kamp
James B. Boyle, Jr.	Gerry Silver	Linda Zinn
Joan Hearst	Priscilla Taylor	
Robert C. Holmes	Michael Udell	



WEST PASADENA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Post Office Box 50252
Pasadena, CA 91115-0252
Website: www.wpra.net

The West Pasadena Residents' Association is a Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation.