



LAND USE / PLANNING

EDUCATION

OPEN SPACE / CONSERVATION

NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

GOVERNMENT

PARKS / RECREATION

WPRA urges City Council to ...

## Cite Caltrans for code violations, call out Caltrans' unethical tactics

The West Pasadena Residents' Association is very concerned about the state of the Caltrans 710 corridor properties. Many have been vacant for years and have fallen into a dangerous state of disrepair. Besides being an eyesore, these properties are a public nuisance, a target for vagrants and drug users, and a fire hazard to the surrounding neighborhood.

Our research indicates there are at least 20 vacant properties on and around S. Pasadena Avenue (out of 103 Caltrans-owned homes in Pasadena), many of them historic. In addition, many of the Caltrans' properties (both occupied and vacant) are in violation of City codes, yet the City does not appear to be making a meaningful effort to require Caltrans to correct the violations, which includes much-needed repairs to its properties. In fact, some tenants currently

live without heat, with leaking roofs, and with unreliable electric service.

The WPRA is also concerned with Caltrans' attempts to depopulate the corridor of its low to moderate income tenants. For the past few years, Caltrans has been raising tenants' rents by 10% every six months until the rent reaches an undefined "fair market rent." According to the Caltrans Tenants Association, at least 52 tenants have been priced out of their homes.

In addition, Caltrans is presently pursuing the evictions of at least eight tenants for what our information indicates are unfair, trivial or resolvable reasons. According to the Caltrans Tenants Association, at least two tenants have been evicted already. The common connection among these tenants is that they qualify to purchase their homes at an "affordable rate" through the ongoing surplus sales process under the Roberti Bill, and they

have expressed a desire to purchase their home to Caltrans District 7 staff.

It appears that Caltrans is attempting to evict or price out as many of these low to moderate income tenants as possible before the properties are declared surplus so that Caltrans can then sell the empty homes at market value. If so, Caltrans is engaging in a bad-faith attack on the Roberti Bill, and violating the statutory rights of tenants (Pasadena residents) who qualify to purchase their homes at an affordable price but do not possess the resources to fight back against Caltrans. Some of these tenants have lived in and cared for these homes, to the best of their ability, literally for decades. Now they are being driven out just as the homes are finally becoming available for purchase. At the same time, of the total of 54 empty homes (that we know of) throughout the 710 Corridor, only three have been re-rented.



The sorry state of many Caltrans homes in the 710 corridor suggests it may not be the ideal landlord. To the left is 866 S. Pasadena Ave.; above is 894 S. Pasadena Ave.  
(Photos by Christopher Sutton)

# Wrapping up one year; preparing for a new year of service

BY KENYON HARBISON  
PRESIDENT, WPRA

In my last message, I noted fires that have raged this year throughout the Pacific Northwest. As I write now, major fires are burning throughout Southern California, including one that forced the evacuation of my wife's 93-year-old grandmother. By time of publication, I hope these fires will all have been quenched, and that more lives and property will not have been lost.

I mention this not only because it impacts (or has impacted) us all, at least indirectly, but because the WPRA has been following up with the City since at least October 2017 regarding fire danger in the Lower Arroyo resulting from piles of dead brush and trees. We fear that if a fire did start in the Lower Arroyo it would quickly climb the hills and threaten our neighborhoods. Linda Zinn and Joan Hearst have taken the lead on this important issue.

That is just one of the many ways in which the WPRA is always fighting for you. As detailed in my own separate piece about the Colorado Street Bridge task force, many other issues beset our City and region. Sarah Gavit, Avram Gold and others also continue to monitor the "710 issue" for any possible signs of resurgence. Here you will read Dan Beal explain short-term rental rules. Vince Farhat provides an update about the Civic Center task force, and more.



Kenyon Harbison

Even if your only connection with the WPRA is through this newsletter, which you receive four times each year, just know that the work never ends. I hope this year you'll consider donating to help support our publication and mailing costs, and the other great work that we do on your behalf. May the New Year find you healthy, happy and prosperous.



Signs of hope posted at the Colorado Street Bridge. (Photo by Pasadena Now)

## About us

### 2017 – 2018 officers

- President: Kenyon Harbison (harbison@wpra.net)
- Vice President: Avram Gold (gold@wpra.net)
- Treasurer: Blaine Cavena (cavena@wpra.net)
- Secretary: Justin Chapman (chapman@wpra.net)

**Mission:** Founded in 1962, the West Pasadena Residents' Association is dedicated to maintaining the character of our community and enhancing the quality of life in west Pasadena.

**Area:** The WPRA service area is bounded on the north by Colorado Boulevard, on the east by Fair Oaks Avenue and on the south and west by the city limits.

**Funding:** All WPRA activities are funded through membership dues and contributions. The WPRA receives no public funding and has no paid employees. Since the WPRA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public benefit corporation, contributions and donations are fully deductible to the extent permitted by law.

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The News is mailed each quarter to nearly 8,000 homes and businesses in the 91105 and 91103 ZIP codes and beyond.

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The West Pasadena Residents' Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public benefit corporation.

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Visit our website at [wpra.net](http://wpra.net)  
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## BRIEFS

## Street Bridge task force addresses suicide uptick

BY KENYON HARBISON  
PRESIDENT, WPRA

More than 150 have committed suicide at the historic Colorado Street Bridge since 1919. Though the numbers peaked during the Great Depression, we've seen a recent increase; at least 14 suicides have been recorded between March 15, 2015 and November 2, 2017. During this time we've also seen 64 aborted attempts, for which the Pasadena Police Department deserves credit.

As a result of this recent uptick in incidents, City Council has installed temporary 10-foot metal mesh fencing in front of the bridge alcoves and formed a task force to help evaluate options.

Given the bridge's history, this is not the first time the City has confronted such issues. During the Depression the bridge was eventually staffed — at great cost — with a police detail. At that time the bridge also had a temporary fence with barbed wire on top. Inwardly-curved metal fencing has been used as recently as 30 years ago, and netting designs have been proposed but never implemented. Phones are in place.

As of today, concerns have always revolved around balancing suicide prevention, liability issues, the structural integrity of the bridge, and aesthetics and history. Research has shown that restricting access at suicide flashpoints does save lives, because the period of risk is usually a brief time of crisis. Two major problems with prior solutions here have been:

1. Potential jumpers can climb outside the barrier/railing at the end approaches of the bridge and “walk the edge” to higher elevations.
2. The benches in the alcoves, combined with the pilasters that hold nearby

*Continued on page 11*

# City wrestles with financial challenges

## *Traditional sources of city revenue declining*

BY STEVE MADISON  
DISTRICT 6 COUNCILMEMBER, PASADENA

**T**he outlook for Pasadena's municipal finances is truly a “tale of two cities.” On the one hand, the present state of our City's finances is strong. Pasadena maintains a triple-A credit rating, and we continue to increase our already robust General Fund reserve.

Stunned by the discovery of a disheartening embezzlement of as much as \$6 million a few years ago, City Council's special committee (which I chair), working with City Council, staff and legal counsel, has now helped to recover over \$5.5 million, and claims for restitution from the perpetrators are still outstanding. Also, new projects are underway, including a new hotel at The Paseo, which will contribute directly and indirectly to our economy.

Against this backdrop, our upcoming fiscal year 2018 budget is balanced, but there are headwinds looming ahead. While property tax revenues are steadily increasing (along with our property values), overall City revenues are flat at best and some are on the decline. Some of this stagnation comes from the changing times: our sales tax has suffered as consumers shift from brick-and-mortar stores to online shopping; and the Utility Users Tax struggles to keep up with “cord cutting,” as more and more people leave cable behind and the resulting franchise fees bring in less and less revenue. Also, as we promote conservation of water and power, the result is a diminution in the Utility Users Tax, based as it is on consumption.

Meanwhile, as the source of funds for a municipal services organization, most of the General Fund's expenditures go to personnel costs to provide those services. I sometimes joke that my office never receives calls from constituents asking for less services—except, perhaps, where traffic police or Rose Bowl events are concerned. The cost of providing services is growing rapidly. Much of this acceleration comes from pension costs: steady annual increases in CalPERS pension rates have left municipal governments across the state struggling to attract new talent while keeping enough “boots on the ground” in

terms of police officers, firefighters, and public works.

Implications are already evident, and we spend much time and energy at City Hall thinking and talking about how best to address the situation. Pasadena has \$300 million worth of unfunded capital projects, including upgrades and repairs to fire stations, community centers, streets and sidewalks in every neighborhood in the City — unless we address the budget issues effectively, those numbers will continue to grow.

So while we successfully made it through FY2017, a continued balanced budget is now under immediate threat. In fiscal year 2018, we must reduce almost \$3 million in expenditures from the General Fund just to avoid a deficit. Budgeting is a zero sum endeavor: a shortfall can only be addressed with additional revenue or reductions in expenses, that is, City services.

Unfortunately, the low-hanging fruit — the easy cuts — have already been made: just last year the City slashed \$4.1 million and eliminated 14 full-time positions, and public employees hired after 2013 already have reduced pension formulas. Fortunately, the City expects to have a sufficient fund surplus in the General Fund by the end of this fiscal year to put toward long-term solutions for relief.

As one such measure, City budget officials want to consider establishing a Section 115 Trust to pre-fund pension and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). The trust would keep assets under local control, instead of sending them to CalPERS, and allow for greater potential investment earnings. Coupled with prioritizing the strength of our contingency and liability funds, these actions may be the best use of unassigned funds to protect us from both known and unknown future liabilities. Recommendations are expected to come to City Council next year. On the revenue side, there is some interest in placing a bond initiative on the ballot, perhaps for public safety (fire and police) and parks.

For now, these steps may not be enough, and they won't be here overnight. If misery loves

*Continued on page 11*

## BRIEFS

## Fire station assessment is mixed

Two Pasadena fire stations — #34, at 1360 E. Del Mar Blvd., and #39, at 50 S. Ave. 64 — have been declared in compliance with both current City building codes and California fire codes, according to a citywide structural assessment conducted by WLC Architects. The remaining six stations — #31, at 135 S. Fair Oaks Ave., #32, at 2424 E. Villa St., #33, at 515 N. Lake Ave., #36, at 1140 N Fair Oaks Ave., #37, at 3430 E. Foothill Blvd. and #38, at 1150 Linda Vista — do not conform with current California building codes. According to the California Building Code, essential facilities, which include fire and police stations, are intended to remain operational in the event of extreme environmental events such as floods, wind, snow or earthquakes.

## City to collect mosquito-abatement tax from property owners

The City of Pasadena will start collecting an annual benefit assessment charge as part of the property tax bill for residential and commercial properties in the city, to pay for mosquito-abatement services provided by the San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District. City Council has approved the city's annexation into the SGV Vector Control District, and has also approved a joint tax transfer agreement between the District, Los Angeles County and the City, which will mean the benefit assessment charge collected by the City will go to the Vector Control District. In a letter sent out to about 32,000 property owners in Pasadena, Pasadena Public Health Director Michael Johnson said the annual benefit assessment charge will be \$11.98 for residential properties, and up to \$20 for commercial properties.

Source: Pasadena Now

# Colorado Street Bridge task force gathers community suggestions, input

BY SUE MOSSMAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
PASADENA HERITAGE

At a community meeting in late November at La Casita del Arroyo, about 50 concerned citizens came to offer comments and ideas on the issue of suicide attempts at the Colorado Street Bridge. The challenge of how to preserve the integrity of the iconic and historic bridge, while doing more to deter suicides, is being addressed by the Public Works Department and the Colorado Street Bridge task force. The meeting included a presentation on the history and recent uptick in suicide jumps as well as information about preventive measures that can make a difference.

There were many constructive comments and suggestions, including volunteer

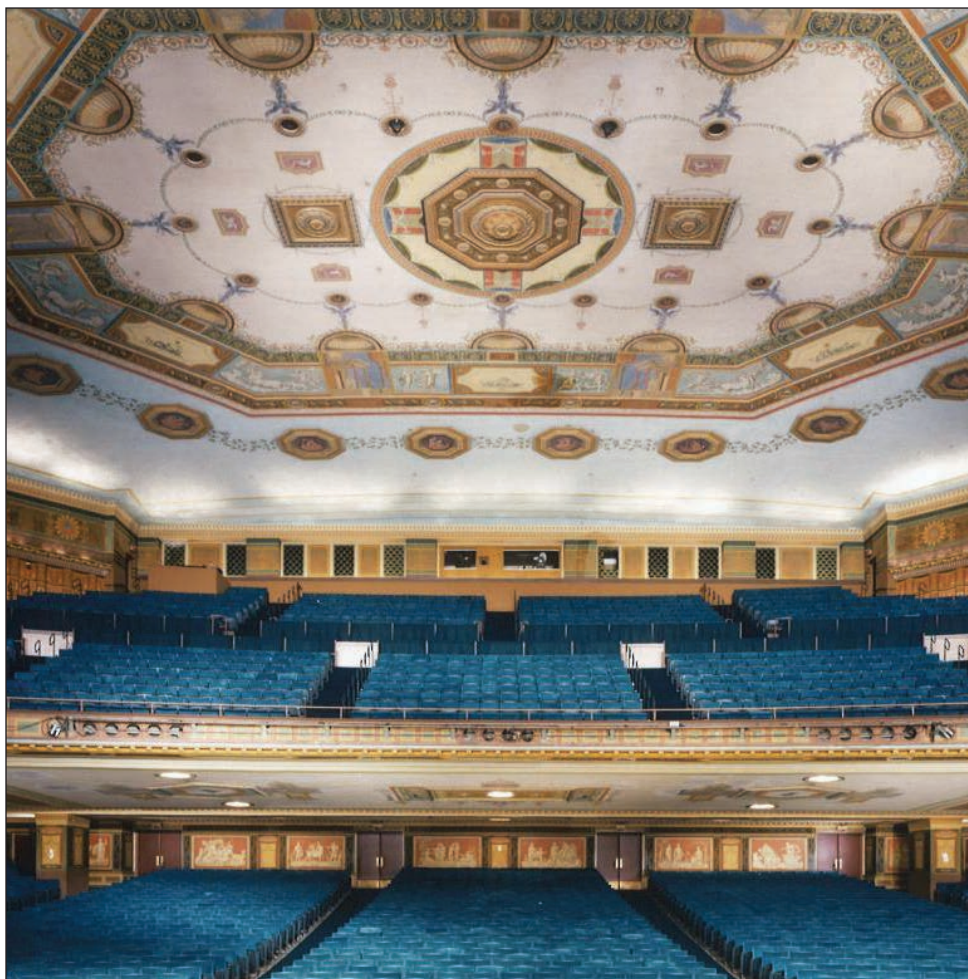
patrols, planting trees below the bridge, and technology that might help. Several local architects brought drawings and models of possible alternative barriers. Public Works Director Ara Maloyan and his staff and task force members, including Pasadena Heritage Board member Claire Bogaard and Executive Director Sue Mossman, architect Andrea Rawlings, and structural engineers Chris Peck and Mel Green, listened carefully to comments, suggestions, and questions.

The next community meeting is planned for January 18, when design alternatives will be presented for public review and discussion.

### Project proposed at 170-180 S. Euclid should respond to context

The new project proposed to replace the 1908 Pinney House on the east side of S. Euclid

*Continued on page 5*



Civic Auditorium interior



*Continued from page 4*

Avenue will now also encompass an adjacent lot, resulting in a massive new multi-housing project just north of the historic Masonic Temple. The five-story building will have approximately 44,000 square feet and 42 new residential units.

Pasadena Heritage urged the retention of the Pinney House, an unusual design combining Craftsman and Mission Revival elements, and insisted that the building was eligible for historic designation. After much debate, the building was ultimately determined to be historically significant, but that could not save it in place. The owner now plans to move the house to N. Fair Oaks Avenue. While always best for a historic resource to remain on its original site, it is better that the house will be saved and moved rather than demolished.

The proposed project is of a completely different size and scale than the Pinney House and the small, one-story 1958 office building it will replace. The streetscape will be dramatically altered. At a preliminary consultation with the Design Commission in November, Pasadena Heritage urged that the new project achieve compatibility with neighboring historic buildings, including the Masonic Temple and Miss Orton's School for Girls, both listed on the National Register.

The drawings of the new project show a very contemporary design with no visual relationship to any other building in the area. Commissioners asked for more contextual design and more sensitivity to the surrounding historic structures. The project will return the Design Commission for concept review. We hope to see a significant redesign that responds to the Design Commission's comments and ours.

### **Green Hotel project preview at City Council in January**

A major mixed-use project proposed for the southeast portion of the block that includes the historic Castle Green and Green Hotel Apartments (at Dayton Street and Fair Oaks Avenue) has resurfaced.

Previous versions of the project never received final approval. This new version has been completely redesigned and is also larger and has greater density.

The site is within the Old Pasadena National Register Historic District. Pasadena Heritage made a number of comments and suggestions and asked for the design to better reference



Colorado Street Bridge with barricades

the adjacent historic structures and be a compatible structure on this important Old Pasadena block. Castle Green homeowners also offered similar comments.

We have been told that Goldrich Kest, the owner/developer, is considering design revisions after receiving Design Commission comments. The project is currently scheduled to be presented at the City Council in early January, for its information and comment. We hope to see revised plans before then.

### **Pasadena Heritage annual meeting at the Civic Auditorium**

On Wednesday, January 24, Pasadena Heritage will host its annual meeting at

the Civic Auditorium and Gold Room. The inspiration for this location is to give members and guests a chance to see the newly restored historic fire screen that graces the auditorium stage.

Badly damaged by a fire some years ago, it has been restored to its former beauty and encapsulated for public safety. The program will include a review of 2017, Pasadena Heritage's 40th Anniversary year, and election of new directors. The meeting is free for all Pasadena Heritage members, and non-members are welcome with a \$10 donation at the door.

*To register, visit [pasadenaheritage.org](http://pasadenaheritage.org).*



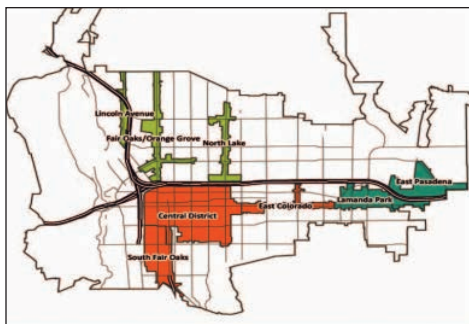
# On the WPRa Land Use committee watchlist

BY MIC HANSEN, LAND USE/PLANNING, CHAIR



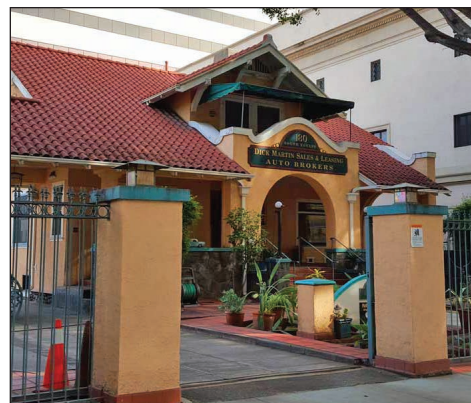
### Short-term rentals

First reading of the ordinance was conducted at the Dec. 11 City Council meeting. The ordinance amends title 17 of the Zoning Code to specify uses and allowances. *To learn more:* <https://www5.cityofpasadena.net/planning/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2017/10/AR-23-ORDINANCE-STR.pdf>



### Update all eight specific plans

Consultants have been retained, and work is expected to begin the first of the year.



### 170 S. Euclid Ave. (Pinney House)

Preliminary consultation was conducted at the Design Commission for a new five-story 42-unit residential building with a small ground floor commercial space. The historic Pinney House, which has been the subject of great concern, is to be relocated.



### Art Center College of Design master plan draft EIR

The comment period for the Draft EIR was extended to Dec. 18 from Dec. 11. Several WPRa members commented regarding the use of the Arroyo and Glenarm facades of the 1111 building as oversized electronic billboard. Several new buildings are planned on the S. Raymond Campus as well as a significant transit hub for the college. No date is known regarding the circulation of the final EIR.



### Green Hotel parking lot development, 86 S. Fair Oaks

New construction adjacent to Castle Green and immediately South of Hotel Green of six-seven story mixed-use building with 87 units. *To learn more, view the 8/2017 update regarding the project:* <http://dailynews.com/2010/09/26/proposed-mixed-use-building-in-old-pasadena-frays-nerves/>



### Kaiser Medical School

Construction of this building at the southeast corner of Los Robles and Green has begun. The four-story building will have floor-to-ceiling windows and a rooftop deck. Plans also call for underground parking for a maximum of 216 vehicles. It is estimated that it will be completed in fall 2019. The school will enroll an initial class of 48 students; to increase to 192 students enrolled by 2022.



### The Paseo Hyatt Hotel and adjacent residential building

Construction continues on the 186-room Hyatt Place Hotel at the southwest corner of Green and Los Robles. An adjacent seven-story mixed-use /retail and multi-family residential building is also under construction by a different developer.



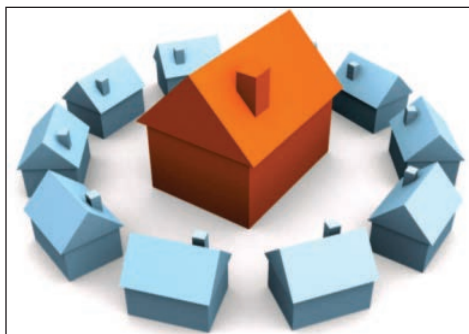
### Civic Center

The second meeting of the Civic Center task force took place on Dec. 2. Kevin Johnson, Senior Planner, recapped Civic Center architectural history and considerations, after which the task force and attendees toured the YWCA building. All meetings of the task force are public.



### 245 S. Los Robles Ave.

Conversion of existing office building and parking structure (on the southwest corner of Los Robles and Cordova) into mixed-use office and 105 residential units. Final Design review and approval was given, with conditions.



### Mansionization

No news now. Will resume after the first of the year.



### Alexandria Equities headquarters, 380 E. Union St.

New Construction on the southeast corner of Union and Euclid, diagonally from City Hall. This building is under construction on what was once called "Montana II." The five-story building will have 82,000 square feet of office space atop a subterranean garage. The site is approximately 30,700 square feet. Pasadena Heritage has described the style as "hyper-contemporary."



## City approves amended ADU rules to conform to State law

BY MIC HANSEN  
LAND USE/PLANNING, CHAIR

City Council reviewed and discussed its December 11 meeting the proposed new Zoning Code text amendments for accessory dwelling units (ADUs). The Council action was a response to California legislation — Senate Bill 1069 and Assembly Bill 2299 — that was signed into law on Sept. 29 and intended to limit any city's ability to regulate ADUs. The legislation invalidates local ordinances if they do not fully comply with the intent of the amended state law.

The City Planning staff's recommendations were carefully crafted to present equitable solutions within the confines of the state mandates.

While State Law allows local municipalities to adopt some additional restrictions, they cannot conflict with the dictates of the state law.

A majority of City Council voted to approve the staff recommendations, with some adjustments. The minimum lot size was reduced from the current 15,000 to 7,200 square feet, hillside zones were excluded, but historic districts (both landmark and National Register) were not exempted.

The one requirement in historic districts was that the ADU not be visible from the public right of way, understanding that perhaps this would encroach less on the visual integrity of our protected neighborhoods.

Regarding residential impact fees, all ADUs will be subject to City residential impact and permit fees, with the exception of ADUs built or converted expressly for use as affordable housing.

In these instances, affordability covenants will be placed on the unit to qualify for a fee waiver. New ADUs built/converted after January 1, 2017 are prohibited from being used as short-term rentals.

After approximately 40 community members gave public comment, Council voted 6-2 in support of the staff recommendations.



The use of illusion in art is nothing new, but a small town in Iceland is using the effect to help with public safety and traffic issues. A small fishing village painted a 3-D pedestrian crossing to slow traffic on a narrow street. The eye-popping illusion gives the effect of walking on air as pedestrians move from one side of the street to the other. The optical illusion shifts depending on your perspective. From the air, the white stripes jump up, making them appear as a column of walls. While at ground level, the bars seem to hover just above the ground. Right now the project is experimental, with the town seeing what effect the creative zebra crossing will have before deciding if they'd like to roll out more in other areas of the village.

Source: *My Modern Met* website, October 24, 2017

## Council settles on how to regulate, profit from short-term rentals

BY DAN BEAL  
DIRECTOR, WPRA

After more than a year of consideration and numerous public hearings, workshops and committee meetings, the Pasadena City Council took a major step forward during a December meeting by approving an ordinance to permit and regulate short-term rentals (STRs). It's likely the new regulations will become effective early in 2018.

"I think that the evidence, in terms of home-sharing being economically beneficial to the City, is pretty persuasive," said Mayor Terry Tornek, as cited in Pasadena Now. "And it'll be even more than official when we start collecting transit occupancy taxes, as soon as we get the various ordinances squared away and make the arrangements with the home-sharing platforms," he added.

STRs are residential property rentals of fewer than 30 continuous days. Broadly defined, there are three different types of STRs: hosted stay, where the unit is the property owner's (or renter's) principal residence and the owner or renter is present during the rental; un-hosted

stay, where the principal residence's owner or renter is not present during the rental, but lives in the home the rest of the time; and vacation rental, where the owner does not live in the unit.

The WPRA believes that the STR issue is critical to the character and future of Pasadena and has testified to committees and City Council on what we believe is a reasonable balance between responsible short-term renting and excessive partying. The WPRA surveyed residents and found that a considerable majority favored allowing hosted and un-hosted STRs, but only under a rigorous regulatory system, as reflected in our recent survey (see [wpra.net](http://wpra.net) for details).

The WPRA asked that the regulations limit occupancy and the number of rentals by an owner; prohibit vacation rentals and commercial events in STRs; require off-street parking; require notifying neighbors; assure fire and life safety requirements are met; and require permits, business licenses, local contacts, and payment of the City's transient occupancy tax, which is also levied against hotels, motels and B&Bs, among other provisions, which were adopted.



# “One Arroyo Day” highlights advisory group’s efforts on behalf of Pasadena’s great city park

BY AUDREY O’KELLEY  
DIRECTOR, WPRA

**N**ovember 18 was a beautiful, sunny, autumn day.

It was also One Arroyo Day in Brookside Park — a day to learn more about the Arroyo Advisory Group (AAG), which is looking into ways to protect the Arroyo’s natural beauty, maintain current amenities, provide appropriate upgrades and align these with funding to pay for proper upkeep of the Arroyo Seco over the long term.

In addition the day offered lots of fun activities. The festivities kicked off at 10 a.m. Upon entering each guest received a free raffle ticket and a chance to win Rose Parade tickets and Kidspace Children’s Museum family passes.

Some guests joined a cleanup group and worked on a nearby trail. Children were able to earn a One Arroyo Nature Explorer badge, meet critters from the Native Wildlife Reptile Station, and participate in a scavenger hunt. A real favorite was the face painting by Tom Sawyer Camps.

During a short program from the stage by Pasadena Mayor Terry Tornek, AAG co-chairs Bill Bogaard and Doug Kranwinkle and AAG Outreach Committee chair Tricia Kean stressed the importance of the AAG project and community engagement in the process.

Those attending One Arroyo Day socialized with many of the numerous Arroyo Seco stakeholders and learned about what they do. These stakeholders included JPL, The Rose Bowl Stadium, Tom Sawyer Camp, the Pasadena Roving Archers, the casting pond, the Audubon Society, the Rose Bowl Aquatic Center, Kidspace Children’s Museum, the Rose Bowl Riders, Brookside Golf Course, the bird sanctuary, the Arroyo Foothills Conservancy, Arroyo Seco Foundation, the Frisbee golf course, the horse stables and Mach 1.

A major AAG outreach avenue was the One Arroyo survey, which was on the One Arroyo website until November 30. One Arroyo Day guests were reminded to complete the survey and were asked to describe their own







vision for improving the nearly 1,000 acres of parkland. By the end of November, more than 2,500 area residents had responded to the survey. The results of the One Arroyo survey will be presented to City Council in the first quarter of 2018. Also, the AAG will present recommendations for potential projects culled from the ASMP and other plans as well as funding strategies to bring them to fruition.

The AAG also presented its project at various community and neighborhood associations for the past several months. This past summer/fall, Mayor Tornek held four “Walk

the Arroyo with the Mayor” events, which he said taught him a lot about what the community wants for the Arroyo. One Arroyo Day was the capstone to the AAG’s effort to raise awareness of its work to unify the Hahamongna, the Central and Lower Arroyo.

One Arroyo Day was sponsored by AEG, Western Asset, Wells Fargo, Sodexo Magic, Pasadena Fire Fighters Local 809, City of Pasadena and DusitD2 Hotel Constance.

The Arroyo Seco is a complex ecosystem across vast acreage with three distinct sectors.

The goal of the AAG is to achieve a civic consensus on what should be preserved and maintained and what changes, if any, should be made. Once that is determined, funding and governance will be addressed.

*Be sure to go to visit the Pasadena Arroyo Channel ([youtu.be/wZ-21rNQ0rk](https://youtu.be/wZ-21rNQ0rk)) to view the One Arroyo Day festivities.*

*Check out the One Arroyo project at [onearroyo.org](http://onearroyo.org) and contact us via social media: Facebook, Twitter (@one\_arroyo) and Instagram (onearroyo).*



## BRIEFS

## Report proves cost of a well-maintained urban tree canopy is quite a bargain

The cost of a well-maintained urban tree canopy is quite a bargain: just \$8 per person, according to a new research report from the Nature Conservancy. The report argues for the protection and expansion of urban forests at a time when many urban tree canopies are declining. In total, U.S. cities lose 4 million trees a year, or 1.3% of the total tree stock. The report identifies several studies that put a figure on the multiplier benefit of trees in developed settings — which rack up in terms of heat-island effect, water quality and well-being. The news about all the benefits of urban tree canopies, according to the study, hasn't reached the general public or even arborists. "This is reflected in the fact that average U.S. municipal spending on urban forestry has fallen by more than 25% since 1980, to around \$5.83 per urbanite today."

## 2016 PWP power supply mix now available online

The Pasadena Water and Power energy portfolio is derived from a variety of sources. The California Energy Commission ("CEC") requires utilities to create a Power Content Label that includes the utilities' actual power supply mix for the prior year, as well as an overview of the state's power mix. In accordance with CEC guidelines, the label is prepared annually, submitted to the CEC, and published on PWP's website for customers to access online. "These projects," says Gurcharan Bawa, PWP general manager, "ensure that PWP is well underway in achieving the goal of 40% renewable energy by 2020 and 50% by 2030, which is part the City's long-term Power Integrated Resources Plan. For more information, visit [PWPWeb.com/PCL](http://PWPWeb.com/PCL).



Looking south from Colorado Boulevard to the Civic Auditorium, prior to The Paseo and its' precedent malls.

## Community task force begins study of Civic Center's future

BY VINCE FARHAT  
DIRECTOR, WPRA

After rejecting a plan to redevelop the historic YWCA building with a 181-room Kimpton hotel, the Pasadena City Council formed a community task force to focus on the future development of the City's Civic Center, including rehabilitation and development of the YWCA site. The 15-member Civic Center task force met twice last year and is scheduled to meet again on Saturday, January 20, at 10 am (location TBD).

The task force kick-off meeting was held on October 26, 2017. Task Force members and City staff introduced themselves, reviewed the City Council's scope of work for the Task Force, and received an initial round of public comments. Community members provided a wide range of comments, such as considering potential impacts to historic resources (including the National Register listing); the City's green space element; maintaining existing green space and open space; respecting the Robinson memorial; protecting mature trees; and preparing a cultural landscape report.

Several community members commented that Pasadena should "Keep the Civic Center Civic" by emphasizing non-profit and other community-supportive land uses. During its second meeting on December 2, the task force received a report from City Manager Steve Mermell concerning municipal finances

related to future YWCA project. City staff also made presentations regarding the Bennett Plan and past civic center planning efforts, and provided an overview of current planning regulations affecting the area, including the National Register Historic District. Following the meeting at City Hall, task force and community members took a guided tour of the YWCA building and surrounding properties in the Civic Center area.

At its next meeting on January 20, the task force is expected to "roll up its sleeves" and start working on developing a future vision for the Civic Center. The agenda for the next meeting will likely include the following: City staff responses to comments/questions from the previous meeting; reviewing any missing information requested from the previous meeting; summarizing/establishing baseline facts going into the "visioning" phase; selecting breakout group participants and topics for full group discussion; and breaking into groups to begin substantive discussion.

The Civic Center has been the focus of community planning efforts dating back to the adoption of the Bennett Plan in 1925. *All task force meetings are open to the public and community participation is crucial to the success of this endeavor. For more information (including meeting information), please visit the task force website: [cityofpasadena.net/planning/civic-center-task-force](http://cityofpasadena.net/planning/civic-center-task-force).*



# Supervisors reduce scope, negative impacts of Big Dig

BILL CHRISTIAN  
DIRECTOR, WPRA

The scope of the Devil's Gate Dam sediment removal project has been reduced, although significant unresolved issues remain. On November 7, Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger's motion to reduce the amount of sediment by 700,000 cubic yards — to 1.7 million from 2.4 million cubic yards — unanimously carried.

Supervisor Barger's motion further calls for the completion of the Arroyo Seco ecosystem restoration study, led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. That study was initiated earlier, but had stalled at the scoping phase. Supervisor Barger's motion provided up to \$2.5 million in county funds for that study. Additionally, her motion asks the County

Flood Control District (FCD) to coordinate with the City of Pasadena to assess how to improve stormwater capture and groundwater recharge in the Devil's Gate reservoir area. Each of these actions will, if implemented as intended, positively affect the Arroyo and surrounding neighborhoods.

WPRA sent a letter to the LA County Supervisors prior to the November vote recommending that the sediment removal plan approved by the City of Pasadena be adopted. That plan called for even larger reductions in the size and scope of sediment removal.

Unfortunately, the Barger amendments to the FCD plan did not include any mandated reduction in the number of trucks per day, the size or shape of the disturbed area, or define needed mitigation requirements to match the

reduced plan. The need for additional changes led Pasadena Audubon and the Arroyo Seco Foundation — plaintiffs in the original lawsuit challenging FCD's plan — to seek additional relief from the County Supervisors and to file a second lawsuit.

The judge in the original lawsuit brought by Pasadena Audubon and the Arroyo Seco Foundation prescribed changes in the mitigation plan and truck emissions technology, which required a partial recirculation of the environmental impact report for the project.

FCD's response proposed very minimal changes, and the judge recently lifted restrictions on the final EIR, which would allow FCD to start work in the late spring of 2018 subject to any additional changes.

## Colorado Bridge task force addresses suicide uptick

*Continued from page 3*

lights, provide "steps" people have used to get over prior barriers.

Ideas proposed at the community meeting or by the task force included creating barriers at the ends of the bridge, elevating and/or curving the existing fence, specialized fencing around the nook pilasters, planting trees below the bridge, greater police presence, volunteer patrols, motion-detector systems.

City Council is expected to take the matter up in February.

*If you or a loved one is at risk of suicide please call (800) 273-8255.*

## City wrestles with financial challenges

### Traditional sources of city revenue declining

*Continued from page 3*

company, we have plenty as most California cities are burdened by these same challenges. We can learn much about best practices from other cities as they address their own CalPERS obligations, shrinking sales tax receipts, and

stagnant utility tax revenues. There is no easy solution, but together we will find a way to keep the state of our City strong. Pasadena, as always, will get the job done.

## Schiff, Feinstein introduce new Rim of the Valley legislation

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) in mid-October introduced the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act.

This landmark legislation would add more than 191,000 acres of the Rim of the Valley Corridor to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA). The Rim of the Valley stretches from the Simi Hills and Santa Susanas to the Verdugos and on to the San Gabriel Mountains.

"The Rim of the Valley is the critical bridge between the urban city centers, suburbs in the Los Angeles basin and the spectacular wilderness beyond - our bill would help protect these lands for generations to come," said Rep. Schiff. "As more of this area is developed and open space diminishes, the wildlife it supports is increasingly at risk. Congress must preserve the Rim of the Valley for generations to come, but we must act quickly on a bipartisan basis, or this once in a century opportunity will be gone."





These photos capture some of the flammable brush that has collected in the Arroyo over the past year or more.  
(Photos by Linda Zinn and Joan Hearst)

## City, at long last, begins to clear flammable brush from Lower Arroyo to reduce risk of fire

BY LINDA ZINN  
OPEN SPACE, CHAIR

**T**he Lower Arroyo has been under severe drought conditions for many years, a condition that's been exacerbated by the City's lack of maintenance and inability to divert water from the flood control channel into the low-flow stream beds. This has resulted in piles of dead trees and brush in stream beds.

The Southern California wildfires have made all residents more conscious of the extreme danger of fire and the volatile environment in which we live. Therefore, it is critical that we keep the landscape clear of dead weeds, brush, and trees. The City spends more than \$150,000 annually for abatement of potential fire hazards in the Arroyo Seco, but somehow the dire situation in the Lower Arroyo has not

been addressed.

This glaring issue came to residents' attention when Mayor Tornek offered a tour of the Lower Arroyo to introduce people to the area and to talk about future "Arroyo One" project ideas, such as rebuilding stone walls and connecting the trails through the Arroyo. It was obvious to many attending that there was a more immediate problem that needed to be remedied.

The Mayor, when asked why the area was so neglected, thought it was due to budgetary cut-backs. However, those in the group, familiar with the history, said it had to do with the expiration of permits, and that no clean up could be done in the low-flow stream beds until the City acquired the permits. Whatever the reason, it was shocking and obvious that the existing conditions were a real fire danger.

Citizens, including members of the WPRA board, wrote to City officials to request the Pasadena Fire Department to conduct an inspection and make recommendations. The Fire Department did inspect and deemed the clean-up work necessary for the community's safety and requested such work not be delayed by the permit process. The work began on Saturday, December 9.

The City says it will continue until the job is completed. That means the whole Lower Arroyo, which is strewn with years of dead trees and brush, not just the low-flow stream beds, will be cleaned up.

There will be many eyes watching the progress, but residents should sleep better at night, knowing the work is proceeding and hoping this dangerous situation will never be allowed to happen again.



# Arlington Garden rebrands, passes leadership to next-gen “constant gardeners”

BY JUSTIN CHAPMAN  
TREASURER, WPR

*[Editor’s note: The following is an excerpt of an article that was originally posted on Pasadena Weekly’s website on Nov. 9, 2017.]*

**B**etty McKenney, who along with her late husband and former Pasadena City Council member [and WPR president] Charles “Kicker” McKenney founded and cared for the garden since 2005, has retired. The garden’s board of directors is expanding and has hired a new executive director, Michelle Matthews, who started July 1. And the garden has been given a new name: The McKenney Family Arlington Garden in Pasadena.

The three acre Mediterranean climate, water-wise garden is located in the infamous 710 Corridor and owned by Caltrans, which leases the property to the City. That lease expires in December 2018. The City, in turn, entrusts the property to Arlington Garden, a nonprofit corporation established by the McKennys. Betty and Kicker were known as the “constant gardeners” and spent countless volunteer hours turning the ugly empty lot into the vibrant and colorful space it is today.

The City is currently attempting to purchase the property from Caltrans through the State agency’s ongoing surplus sales process, according to Assistant City Manager Julie Gutierrez, who sits on the garden’s board of directors as the City’s representative.

## Back to its roots

The property was originally the site of the historic Durand House, “one of the most elegant homes on South Orange Grove Boulevard,” according to Kirk Myers of the Pasadena Museum of History. In April 1902, John Durand purchased 10 acres known as Arlington Heights.

The existing Victorian home was removed and “a team of skilled workmen spent more than three years executing architect F. L. Roehrig’s reconstruction of a chateau in France admired by Durand. With 17,000 square feet of floor space — 50 rooms in three stories — the home was said to be the largest in Southern California, if not the entire Southwest. A



Arlington Garden co-founder Betty McKenney, left, and the Garden’s new executive director, Michelle Matthews. (Photo by Mercedes Blackehart)

setback of more than 600 feet from South Orange Grove Boulevard allowed landscape architects to create a ‘tropical paradise’ in front of the mansion, with palms, cacti and century plants besides hundreds of varieties of flowering bushes, including roses and chrysanthemums. A hedge of Cherokee roses extended along Arlington Drive, toward the Busch home on the opposite side of Orange Grove. A small orange grove was set out in the rear of the home, along Pasadena Avenue.”

The year after John M. Durand III died in 1960, the furnishings and art objects were sold at public auction and the home was demolished. Three remaining acres became an empty lot with seven palm trees, two oaks, a jacaranda, a pepper tree and lots of weeds for nearly a half-century. After a rainstorm, high school kids would spin donuts with their cars and knock down trees, McKenney said. Just about every Fourth of July there would be a fire.

Caltrans acquired the property in the 1960s along with about 460 properties with the intention of razing the houses and building a freeway connecting the 710 and 210 freeways. Shortly after the McKennys moved next door in 2002, District 6 City Councilmember Steve Madison reached out to neighbors to see what they would like the property to become. The McKennys volunteered to come up with a good use for the site.

The garden costs about \$100,000 a year to run. The city gives \$21,100 per year in addition to a \$5,000 grant from Public Works, and the rest comes from individual donations and from selling marmalade made from fruits of the orange grove. Matthews hopes to increase the garden’s operating budget to at least \$300,000 to be able to fund new projects and hire in-house staff to replace the large hole created by the constant gardeners’ absence.

*For more information on the McKenney Family Arlington Garden in Pasadena, visit [arlingtongardenpasadena.org](http://arlingtongardenpasadena.org).*



BRIEFS

## City Council passes resolution to align elections with State cycle

The Pasadena City Council in December adopted a resolution formally approving a plan for Pasadena to end City-run elections and comply with the California Voting Participation Rights Act, bringing the City in line with statewide election dates. The resolution formalizes the City's intention to bring a new charter amendment before voters in June of 2018.

The California Voter Participation Rights Act, signed by Governor Jerry Brown on September 1, 2015, directed all California cities to shift any "off-cycle" local elections to statewide election dates, if local election participation rates result in low voter turnout elections. Council must now choose from a series of options to conform with the California Voting Participation Rights Act, each of which would involve extending the terms of all current office holders to "synchronize" with the terms of State officeholders. A recent League of Women Voters meeting at City Hall showed public support for keeping the City's current format of Primary and general elections.

The proposed Charter Amendment vote in June of next year will cost approximately \$165,000, the City Clerk's office estimated.

## Shriners Hospital opens in Pasadena

After 65 years of giving children and families the specialized medical care they need, Shriners Hospitals for Children—Los Angeles has closed and has opened a new state-of-the-art medical center located in Pasadena at 909 S. Fair Oaks Ave. Shriners for Children Medical Center is one of the first facilities in the Shriners Hospitals for Children network to be created specifically to meet the rigorous demands of the rapidly-changing health care system. *Source: Pasadena Now*

# Police report crime stats for Gold Line

Between January 2016 and July 2017, the Pasadena Police Department received 70 "Part 1" calls for service at or around the Gold Line's Del Mar Station, the highest number reported among Pasadena area's six Metro Gold Line stations. Memorial Park Station was second with 68 Part 1 crime calls, while Fillmore Station came in third with 51 calls about Part 1 crimes.

Part 1 crimes, a reference to the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting standards, include murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary/ breaking and entering, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, and arson.

However, the number of calls related to the presence of homeless individuals around the stations overshadowed the Part 1 crime calls, with at least two of the stations — Fillmore and Lake Avenue — reporting more than 200 transient calls each during the period covered by the report made public by the Pasadena Police Department.

One notable incident occurred in June with the arrest of a 28-year-old Georgia man who, at the Sierra Madre Villa station, was discovered to be in possession of a duffel bag full of weapons and loaded ammunition magazines. Authorities did not disclose what the suspect intended to do with the weapons. "But for the grace of God," said LA Sheriff Jim McDonnell, "we could have had a tragedy today."

In June Los Angeles Police Department officers became responsible for security of Metro trains and buses within the City of Los Angeles. In Pasadena, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department continues to be responsible for security on Metro's trains, buses and stations, while the Pasadena Police Department provides support as is necessary. *Source: City of Pasadena and Pasadena Now*

Calls for police service within 500 feet of local Metro Gold Line stations	
Station	Calls
<b>Allen Station</b>	
Part 1	8
Transients	36
<b>Del Mar Station</b>	
Part 1	70
Transients	193
<b>Fillmore Station</b>	
Part 1	51
Transients	223
<b>Lake Station</b>	
Part 1	15
Transients	220
<b>Memorial Park Station</b>	
Part 1	68
Transients	104
<b>Sierra Madre Station</b>	
Part 1	4
Transients	33

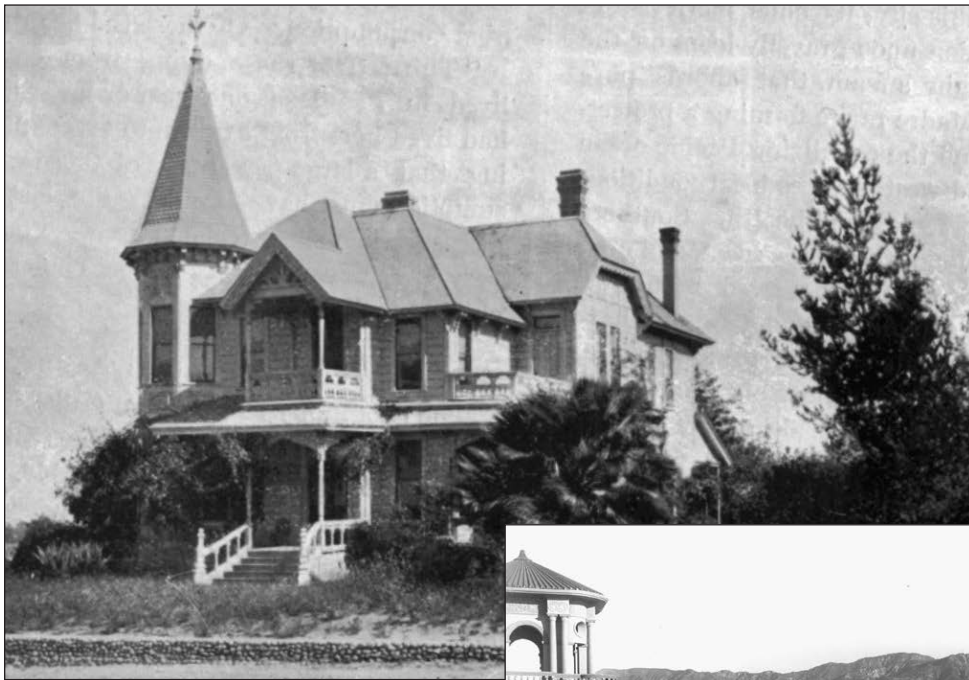
## As of January 1, DUI in California doesn't just mean liquor

While alcohol-impaired driving remains the most serious problem on our roadways, the percentage of drivers in fatal crashes with other impairing substances in their system keeps rising. Faced with more instances of DUID - Driving Under the Influence of Drugs - state and local officials are reiterating the message that "DUI Doesn't Just Mean Booze." The message takes on increased importance now that the state has on January 1 begun licensing commercial nonmedical marijuana sales, under provisions of Proposition 64, the Adult Use of Marijuana Act.

"It has taken more than 35 years to convince the vast majority of the public that driving under the influence of alcohol is dangerous, illegal and socially unacceptable," said Rhonda Craft, State director of the Office of Traffic Safety. "With more dying on our roadways every day, we can't

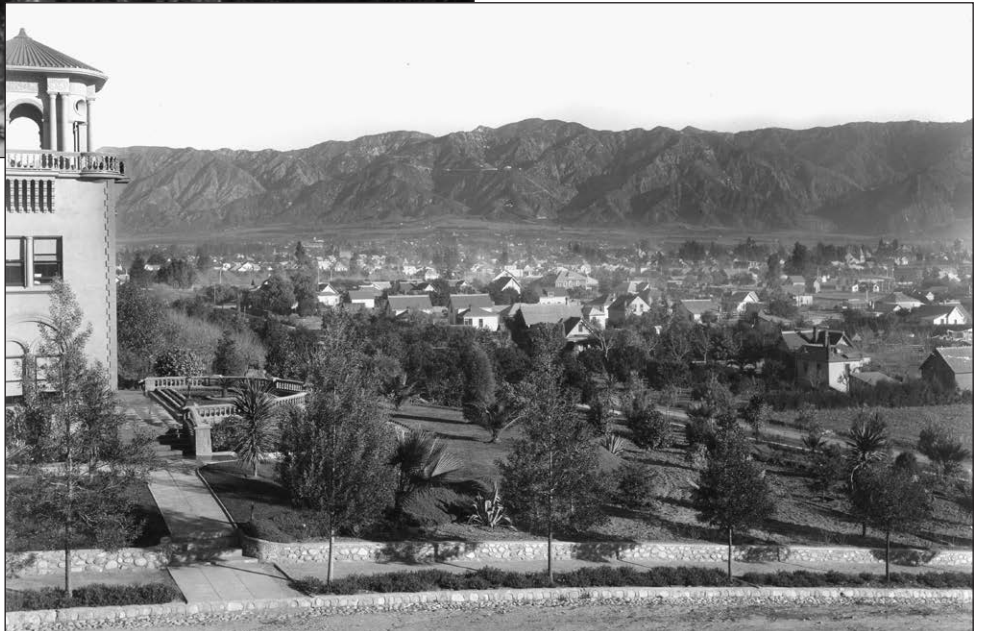
afford to take that long when it comes to driving under the influence of prescription medications, marijuana, illicit drugs and even some over-the-counter medications."

In the 10 years from 2005-2015, the percentage of drivers in fatal crashes with an impairing drug other than alcohol in their system has risen to 42.6% from 26.5%. As far back as 2012, a roadside survey in California showed more drivers tested positive for drugs that may impair driving (14%) than did for alcohol (7.3%). Of the drugs, marijuana was most prevalent, at 7.4%, slightly more than alcohol. In addition to marijuana, drivers could be subject to a DUI arrest if they are under the influence of prescription medications like sleep aids, tranquilizers, barbiturates, opiates and other pain killers, anti-depressants, and even over-the-counter allergy or cough medications.



Left: This photograph of the Ross home appeared in a booklet published by real estate dealer Thomas Earley in 1894. On Grove Street, looking south.

Below: "Everything viewable in landscapes, light or shadow, can be viewed from Mrs. Dexter's verandas." This view from the home was taken a few years after Mrs. Dexter's time, but it indicates why the writer so lavishly described the vista of early Pasadena from Grove Street.



## The essentially domestic life at Mrs. Dexter's tourist home

BY KIRK MYERS  
ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST  
PASADENA MUSEUM OF HISTORY

On February 1, 1890 the *Pasadena Daily Evening Star* printed an article on the front page about "Tourists' Homes," noting that "In a country where boarding enters so largely into the business of existence, establishments equipped with the conveniences, comforts and luxuries of life, become a subject of universal interest."

Six homes were profiled, and the "transcendentally attractive threshold" of Mrs. E. B. Dexter was described in the florid writing style of the Victorian era:

"Most worthy of mention among the transient homes for tourists is the mansion of Mrs. E.B. Dexter, at 368 Grove street. Of New England birth and education, this accomplished proprietress naturally attracts the Yankee element, which means by interpretation, the best in the world, as it is unanimously conceded that those born in Bostonian atmosphere need no second birth.

"Life at Dexter's is essentially domestic. Each inmate in that widely gathered group (for all the guests come from across the continent) share the same sentiments, customs, tastes and circumstances.

"New England concoctions are conspicuous at that generous board. Among these rarified mornings, one might imagine himself in Boston, with the steaming brown bread, beans, batter cakes and coffee.

"One of the first things to attract a new arrival within that transcendentally attractive threshold, are the carved mantel and mouldings, the Corinthian like corridors and stair case, all of which were evidently done with an eye to the elegant. Each room is brightened by the morning or afternoon sun, heated by steam, and handsomely furnished.

"To speak of views in this connection, is like unto attempting to 'gild refined gold or paint

the lily." Everything viewable in landscapes, light or shadow, can be viewed from Mrs. Dexter's verandas."

Tourists would only enjoy the home for a few months more, as the newspaper reported on August 27 that John Ross "has retaken possession of his home on Grove street, which has been occupied by Mrs. Dexter for some time."

*The Pasadena Museum of History is located at the corner of Orange Grove Boulevard and Walnut Street (470 W. Walnut, Pasadena 91103); free parking in the Museum lot. The Research Library & Archives are open to the public free of charge Thursdays-Sundays from 1-4 p.m. For additional information, please visit the Museum's website, [pasadenahistory.org](http://pasadenahistory.org), or call (626) 577-1660, ext. 10.*





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