



Homelessness in Pasadena

WPRA sets date and theme for 57th annual meeting

The West Pasadena Residents' Association invites you to its 57th annual meeting on Wednesday, May 8, at Mayfield Senior School, 500 Bellefontaine Blvd. The theme of this year's business program is "Homelessness in Pasadena."

5:30 p.m.: Meet and greet

The evening starts with a reception, during which attendees will enjoy light refreshments while visiting with many community organizations that will be exhibiting their services and programs.

Among city officials we have invited to join us are Pasadena Mayor Terry Tornek, District 6 Councilmember Steve Madison and City Manager Steve Mermell. Also, State Sen. Anthony Portantino has accepted our invitation.

6:30 p.m.: Business program

Homelessness is an issue that affects our community, our city and our nation.

On a single night in 2018:

- 677 people in Pasadena were counted among the homeless. That is 18% more than in 2017 (575) and 28% more than in 2016 (530). For Pasadena, this represents a reversal in the five-year downward trend in homelessness between 2011-16.

- 552,830 people experienced homelessness across the U.S., half of which were in one of five states: California (24% or 129,972 people); New York (17% or 91,897 people); Florida (6% or 31,030 people); Texas (5% or 25,310 people); or Washington (4% or 22,304 people).

While there is much debate about the causes of and solutions for homelessness, the annual meeting's panel of authorities will focus on basic questions:

- What is the homeless count in Pasadena on any given night?
- What are the common characteristics and trends of homelessness?
- What are the city and police department doing to respond to this complex issue?
- What are local organizations doing to help?
- What can we, as individuals, do to help?

Panelists will include key city staff from the Department of Housing, leaders of the Pasadena Police Department's Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Evaluation (HOPE) team, and representatives of community organizations, such as Union Station.

Each of the panelists will help us frame the topic through a better understanding of the current situation and provide insight into what is being done, including what we,

Save the date

What:

WPRA 2019 annual meeting

When:

Wednesday, May 8, 2019
5:30-8:30 p.m.

Where:

Mayfield Senior School
500 Bellefontaine St.

Cost:

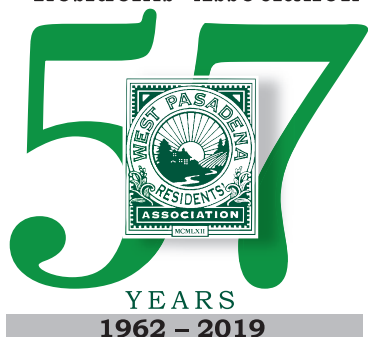
Free

as individuals, could do to address this challenging issue.

Also, the WPRA will formally recognize those whose activities have materially improved the quality of life in west Pasadena, and our members will elect officers and directors for the 2019-2020 WPRA fiscal year.

[Editor's note: The WPRA board strives to provide information and education about issues affecting our community. The board views its role as an advocate when it believes it has solutions or constructive recommendations. Homelessness, however, is much larger issue. As a result, the objective of this annual meeting is to provide information that residents may evaluate as they consider the issue.]

West Pasadena Residents' Association



The more things change ...

BY DAN BEAL
PRESIDENT, WPRA

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose is one of my favorite French phrases (out of the five I know). That is to say, 'the more things change, the more they remain the same.' To see if that maxim holds true, I took a 10-year look back into our newsletter archives (available on our website, by the way). Here's what I found.

Back then, we were raising the alarm about over-reaching state legislative mandates that dictated the character and development of our community. "Sustainable community" goals were emerging to enable residents to rely less on individual cars and provide greater opportunities for walking, biking and mass transit. Not necessarily bad things. **Now**, the state is poised to require super-dense development with no parking near transit hubs, requires us to permit additional units on single-family properties (indeed, single-family zoning doesn't really exist anymore)

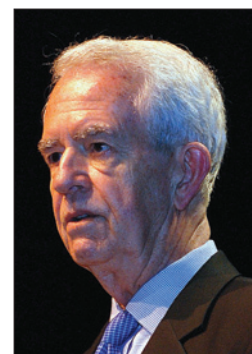
and tells us we should rely on nineteenth century technologies — bicycles and light rail — to solve twenty-first century mobility problems.

Then, we were beginning to see projects that were spatially and architecturally out of sync with Pasadena. The Westgate apartments complex (east of the 710 stub) is an egregious example of that. And let's not forget that the Ambassador West campus (west of the 710 stub) originally called for development of 2,000 units. **Now**, multi-story projects pop up in our neighborhoods so often that we just sigh and move on. However, it's not all bad news: The Ambassador Gardens development, as it is called now and is nearly complete, will end up with about 10% of what the original plan requested, a reduction in which the WPRA played a key role.

Then, we were revising the General Plan. **Now**, we're revising Specific Plans ... all in the hope that we'll be able to control our own development destiny. *Bonne chance!* (Another of my five phrases.)

Then, we were worried about our wonderful trees. We are, after all, known as a City of Trees. **Now**, we're even more worried about trees ... but there are fewer of them.

Then, crime, congestion and traffic safety were prime issues. Also, the city was struggling with serious budget problems, and Caltrans had begun to develop the environmental impact statements and reports that it hoped would justify closing the 710 gap with tunnels. **Now**, here's another bit of good news: We are very close to winning the 60-year fight over the 710. This was no easy feat, but, crime and traffic issues continue to dog us and the city is still wrestling with serious budget challenges.



Dan Beal

Continued on page 6

About us

2018 – 2019 officers

- Dan Beal
(president@wpra.net)
- Avram Gold
(vp@wpra.net)
- Blaine Cavena
(treasurer@wpra.net)
- Justin Chapman (on paternity leave)
(secretary@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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- Sarah Gavit
- Ken Grobecker
- Mic Hansen (planning@wpra.net)
Land use, Planning
- Joan Hearst
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- Priscilla Taylor
- Bill Urban, past president
- Nancy Walker
- Linda Zinn (membership@wpra.net)
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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.

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

Visit our website at wpra.net
Visit our Facebook page

Council streamlines pre-sale home inspection program

BY STEVE MADISON
COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 6

Pasadena City Council has in January adopted by a 7-1 vote an ordinance replacing the Occupancy Inspection Program (OIP) with the new Presale Self-Certification Program. Council discussed this matter at meetings in May and August 2018, and then again at a January 2019 meeting. *Staff report: <https://goo.gl/gQs79G>*

In these meetings the Pasadena Foothills Association of Realtors and the many agents and brokers it represents expressed tremendous frustration with the OIP, which required city staff to conduct an inspection upon the sale of a residential unit. The current real estate market as well as the transactional requirements have drastically changed since the program was first put into effect over 30 years ago. The current home-buying process in Pasadena and, in general, require an extensive amount of reports and inspections, creating what the association, city staff and many on Council deemed a redundancy and poor use of the city's resources that also could delay purchases and sales and discourage real estate transactions.

With the new Presale Self-Certification Program, responsibility shifts to the parties to the transaction (and their agents) to ensure compliance with code requirements and the city's Code Compliance department will no longer be asked to do routine inspections of properties.

What is the Presale Self-Certification Program?

Prior to the close of escrow for the sale of a single-family residential property or duplex, the buyer is responsible for obtaining a Presale Certificate of Completion or Inspection. Properties meeting eligibility requirements for a Presale Certificate of Completion (City inspection not required) are eligible for self-certification. Properties not eligible for a Presale Certificate of Completion require a Presale Certificate of Inspection (city inspection still required).



All hail to the (new) chief! After recently being named permanent Pasadena Police chief, John E. Perez dropped by a recent WPRA board meeting to discuss his views on policing and answer questions. Chief Perez, a 33-year veteran of the department, had served as interim chief since former Chief Phil Sanchez retired in April of 2018. In the photo are: (back row, left to right) WPRA President Dan Beal, Treasurer Blaine Cavena, directors Vince Farhat and Joan Hearst, Chief Perez, directors Susan Kinney and Bill Christian, and interim Secretary Evan Davis; (front row, left to right) directors Nancy Walker, Mic Hansen, Kenyon Harbison, Sarah Gavit and Bill Urban. (Photo by David Bise)

What properties are eligible?

Under the new program, the properties that are eligible can be determined from the seller's obligation to self-certify the following:

- The property's actual square footage of living space does not exceed LA County Assessor's current records by 10% or greater;
- The property meets all applicable fire prevention, detection and exiting requirements;
- The property does not have any unpermitted new construction, additions, conversions or accessory structures greater than 120 square feet; and
- The property does not presently have any open code compliance cases.

If any violations do exist, there will be two options to proceed with the transaction. The seller can correct the violation or the buyer can assume responsibility by submitting a permit application within six months and completing any modifications within 12 months. The city will then finalize the application with an inspection.

The application for self-certification will be available at the permit center in an "over-the-counter" transaction. The applicants will also be able to go online to a dedicated website where all forms will be available as well as access to a portal where property information will be made available

such as recorded information on square footage, additions, etc. and will allow the applicant to see immediately if there are any discrepancies that need to be inspected further. Once the process is completed and approved, the applicant will be given a certificate of completeness, to be included in their escrow documents. The goal is that this new program will help Pasadena constituents have a more streamlined approach by eliminating any unnecessary burdens that might affect the transaction, while still establishing firm requirements to disclose and remedy any violations.

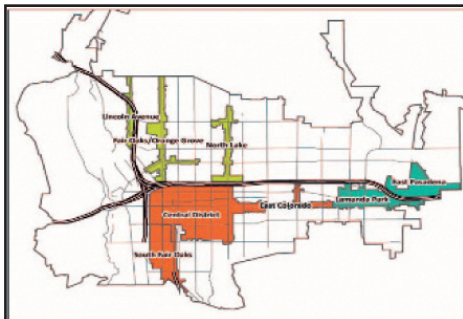
The city's Code Compliance Department will still offer an optional inspection for a fee for parties/transactions not wishing to self-certify. The Presale Self-Certification Program is seen as a compromise between the city's need to ensure up to date compliance with building safety and health codes, while eliminating city inspections that might unduly delay the transaction. The change in programs will also redirect those resources that were used in the OIP toward the inspection and maintenance of the city's multi-family units and ensuring that tenants are provided with well-maintained housing. A representative from the Pasadena Foothills Association of Realtors urged Council to adopt the staff recommendation and agreed to continue to

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On the WPRA land-use watch list

By MIC HANSEN

CHAIR, LAND USE/PLANNING, WPRA



Eight 'Specific Plans'

The city is currently revising and updating the eight Specific Plans to ensure they conform with the city's General Plan, which was adopted in 2015. Walking tours and a second round of community workshops regarding the specific plans continue. Specific Plans of interest to the WPRA service area are for the Central District and the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove. For more:

ourpasadena.org/events/view/141



Mansionization

This initiative was started to revise the zoning code to address what many consider oversized and out-of-context structures in single-family residential neighborhoods. Phase II of the effort, which encompasses non-hillside areas not protected with historic designation, is still in process. After reviewing staff recommendations, the Planning Commission asked the staff to re-submit a plan with further changes. A hearing scheduled for mid-March has been continued to an unspecified future date.



85 S. Fair Oaks – Hotel / Castle Green parking block

A proposal to construct multi-family housing on a parking lot adjacent to Castle Green has presented long-term design challenges. After multiple iterations over many years, the most recent plan will now be subject to an environmental impact report (EIR) and proceed to design review.



Civic Center

Mayor Terry Tornek has recommended that the historic Julia Morgan YWCA building be converted to permanent affordable housing. This issue was tentatively scheduled to be heard by City Council in late March. To view the WPRA position on this iconic area: <https://goo.gl/NwMjwT>



Desiderio Park public restroom

Construction of the small park on the edge of the Arroyo continues. Approximately 30 light standards have been erected throughout the park, and concrete walkways are being built. The construction of the restroom is also moving forward. Area neighbors (and beyond), who desired a simple passive park, continue to feel that their voices have not been heard.



Fuller Theological Seminary campus

Challenges abound for the development of this 13-acre landscaped site that is a National Register Historic resource and requires multiple preservation oversight resources. The site may be sold as one parcel or subdivided into multiple developable parcels. Negotiations are said to be in process with a viable new buyer.



Interior of the Fenyes mansion studio (photo by Eric Politzer)

Experience life in the 'past lane'

Join thousands of Southern Californians for Museums of the Arroyo Day, Sunday, May 19 from Noon to 5 p.m., when six museums stretching from Los Angeles to Pasadena will open their doors to visitors free of charge. Free shuttles connect all museums, so guests can park their cars once and see all. The Museums of the Arroyo include:

- Autry's Historic Southwest Museum/ Mt. Washington campus, 234 Museum Dr, Los Angeles
- The Gamble House, 4 Westmoreland Place, Pasadena
- Heritage Square Museum, 3800 Homer Street, Los Angeles
- The Los Angeles Police Museum, 6045 York Blvd., Los Angeles
- The Lummis Home and Garden, 200 E. Avenue 43, Los Angeles
- Pasadena Museum of History, 470 W. Walnut Street, Pasadena

You can reach MOTA Day by bike or car, with convenient free parking at many locations including next to the Pasadena Museum of History, Heritage Square and the Los Angeles Police Museum; and by train, exiting the Gold Line at the Southwest Museum or Heritage Square stations.

For more information, visit museumsofthearroyo.com or find us on Facebook at [museumsofthearroyoday](https://www.facebook.com/museumsofthearroyoday).

Waiting for mansionization redux

BY SUE MOSSMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Pasadena Heritage was eagerly awaiting publication of revised language for an ordinance developed by the city's planning staff to address new single-family home design and major remodeling projects.

Staff was subsequently directed by the Planning Commission to take a narrower approach to regulating single-family homes and since then has been working on an alternative proposal to present. Originally scheduled to be presented on March 13, the project has been delayed and no certain date set.

Pasadena Heritage, the Design Commission, and the Planning Commission, along with the WPRA and others, had supported the first draft of mansionization language.

We were frustrated when the Planning Commission changed course and sent the matter back for alternative interpretation with less design direction or discretionary review. Our goal is to see neighborhood compatibility addressed in new regulations so that new homes or major remodels fit better into the historic neighborhood context and don't present such jarring contrasts. We continue to monitor the process and are anxious to review any ordinance revisions that are put on the table.

The waiting game

Several major projects in Pasadena where Pasadena Heritage has expressed strong concerns or recommended modifications are somewhere in the design development and city review process, with no new public information available. These include:

- Fuller Seminary properties
- Avon site on E. Foothill Boulevard (future Home Depot)
- New residential and hotel buildings at Hill and Colorado
- Major new development at S. Fair Oaks and Dayton on the Castle Green/Green Hotel block
- New permanent fencing for the Colorado Street Bridge



- Final steps to wind up the 710 extension, sale of Caltrans-owned homes, and fate of the freeway stub

And the list goes on. Pasadena Heritage remains in a holding pattern until new information becomes available or the next round of hearings is scheduled for these projects.

In the meantime, we are actively participating in the Specific Plan Workshops and studying new project proposals as they arise.

Walking tours every weekend

Pasadena Heritage's 2019 calendar is a busy! Expansion of our Walking Tour program this year includes a neighborhood walk every month, alternating among three historic neighborhoods: Markham Place, Madison Heights and Arden Road.

Old Pasadena Walking Tours are offered on two Saturdays a month, and our popular Pub Crawls now happen monthly. With many more opportunities to walk with history available, we hope to attract and entertain new audiences, residents and visitors alike. The schedule is on the Pasadena Heritage website, and our month e-news highlights upcoming walks and other events. Sign up at pasadenaheritage.org.

Pasadena Heritage welcomes new preservation director

Andrew Salimian joined the Pasadena Heritage staff in early March as Preservation Director. Andrew hails from New York and has experience with historic preservation there, as well as having worked recently on a public garden project here in the Los Angeles area.

The organization is delighted to have Andrew on board and knows that he will be an asset to the organization and to the community.

'Urban edge' can deliver death sentence to street trees

Opinion

BY MIC HANSEN
CHAIR, LAND USE/PLANNING, WPRA

Pasadena is a multi-faceted and beautiful city. Those of us lucky enough to call it home realize that our urban forest and remarkable architecture are significant contributors to the equation. But drought, pests, state-housing construction mandates, among other considerations, are slowly eroding our city's ineffable beauty and aesthetic value.

Driving along Green Street, arguably one of the most attractive and shaded commercial streets in our city, we can see the loss of a number of mature trees that once provided shade. Some were felled by storms, others by disease, and a good number have succumbed to development. Some were victims of removal, but others died because they were trimmed too closely or their root systems were damaged or cut because a new structure and/or its subterranean parking were constructed without setbacks — what is referred to as zero-lot-line development, at times also referred to as "urban edge."

The urban edge was introduced into the zoning code in the 80's for commercial and retail areas so that sidewalks would be activated, and there would be no 'dead' space between sidewalks and adjoining buildings and businesses. After all, this was the practice prior to World War II, and Old Pasadena is a successful working example.

However, the more recent developments were likely to be mixed use. Also, the size and intensity of the new structures tended to diverge from the smaller, human-scale of its predecessors. Although many of the new buildings were along commercial streets, containing retail shops and restaurants on the ground floor, some zero setbacks were used with multi-family residential construction as well. We can see an example of this along Walnut Street, between Madison and Hudson. Several

"Sometimes an idea is perceived to be great on paper, and after it is implemented, it turns out a bit differently than envisioned. One example is the townhouses at El Molino and Walnut. They were built on the 'Urban Edge' concept where the structure is flush with the sidewalk. After they were built, people objected to the lack of a setback. We found out that the concept may work well for retail or commercial, but was not as successful for housing. It is important that we maintain quality."

— Richard Bruckner, former Pasadena Director of Planning and Development,
as quoted in fall 2007 WPRA newsletter

residential buildings along the street have no setback and, in some instances, privacy is diminished.

As noted above, along Green Street zero-setback construction has affected and continues to affect some of the mature ficus trees that for many years have provided beauty and a shady canopy for pedestrians. It is difficult to quantify the loss, but we may safely state that it takes several decades to replicate those canopies. It begs the question: At what point will the balance shift, when Green Street becomes just another bare and sunbaked thoroughway? Will it go the way of Colorado Boulevard?

The forces that are compelling this direction are multiple. As the cost of land becomes increasingly dear, developers understandably want to take full advantage of allowed square footage. Since our code permits no-setback building in certain

designated areas, this is their prerogative. More recently, state mandates have weakened the ability of local jurisdictions to exercise tighter controls over what can be built. This also contributes to greater density and larger building envelopes, which in turn encroach on existing mature trees.

Is rescinding zero setbacks the answer? Or should we require deep and large tree wells along the edges of the built structures to accommodate mature tree roots? And should we set back second and third stories to prevent having to severely and asymmetrically prune canopies?

Regardless of how we tackle this challenge, dealing with this in a swift and decisive manner seems the logical way to proceed. Accepting the systematic loss of more and more of our mature shade-providing street trees is neither sustainable, nor desirable.

The more things change ...

Continued from page 2

Then, Desiderio was going to be an extension of our beautiful Arroyo. **Now**, Desiderio will be blighted by an over-built park and unwanted restroom. The restroom alone will sop up \$750,000 in scarce park funds that surely would have been better spent elsewhere... for example, for a restroom in the Linda Vista park. Or much-needed improvements to Memorial and Central parks, for which there is no funding.

Then, we were planning trails for Hahamongna. **Now**, we mourn a huge scar carved in it.

All of this to say that the WPRA will continue to fight for our community's best interests, and you can help! Let us know what you care about and support. Volunteer to assist our committees and advocacy efforts.

And come to our annual meeting on May 8 at the Mayfield Senior School. I hope to see you there.

And finally, **back then**, WPRA President Audrey O'Kelley began a similar look-back in the Winter 2009 issue with ... wait for it ... "The more things change, the more they stay the same." Indeed.

Pasadena strives to permit multi-unit developments, encourage affordable housing and preserve city character

BY NINA CHOMSKY

Editor's note: See accompanying article for definitions of many of the key terms used in this article.

Development perspectives abound in Pasadena. Why are all those massive, out-of-context multi-unit buildings (such as on Walnut, west of Lake) going up one after another and changing the character of Pasadena? How can Pasadena produce more affordable housing?

Are these two perspectives reconcilable? Is it possible to maximize affordable housing production while keeping new multi-unit projects in line with accepted development standards and in character with Pasadena?

Before California mandated density bonuses and its progeny (Concessions, etc.), developers complied with Pasadena's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO) which kept multi-unit development within a Base Density, while providing affordable housing on- or off-site, or through payment of the In-Lieu Fee.

Lately, developers arguably seek to maximize market-rate "luxury" units by skipping over the IHO and choosing instead to obtain a state-mandated Density Bonus, often *plus* discretionary Concession(s). Affordable housing is produced on-site, but the resulting project often is massive and out-of-character. (Note: State law applies the IHO and the Density Bonus/Concessions laws in such a manner that the Density Bonus developer normally receives credit for IHO compliance. Advocates of both development perspectives wonder: Is the extra development mandated and allowed by California worth the relatively few, by comparison, affordable units produced on-site compared to the project's total units?)

Two recently proposed projects are illustrative and on appeal following Hearing Officer Affordable Housing Concession Permit (AHCP) approval:

■ **Los Robles: Size:94,165 square feet/six stories; Base Density permits 71 units**

By dedicating eight on-site units to very-low income households, the development qualifies for a 35% density bonus, which permits up to 96 total units, provided

the proposal is to build 92 total units. The developers have requested two Concessions:

- Increase maximum allowed FAR from 2.25 to 2.65
- Increase maximum allowed height from 60 feet (75 with height averaging) to a maximum of 80 feet (with no height averaging)

■ **N. Madison (mixed use): Size:72,000 square feet/five stories; Base Density permits 36 units**

By dedicating four on-site units to very-low income households, the development qualifies for a 35% density bonus, which allows up to 49 total proposed units. The developer has requested two Concessions:

- Increase maximum allowed FAR from 1.5 to 2.25
- Increase maximum allowed height from 50 feet (65 with height averaging) to 62 feet (no height averaging).

The appeal asks whether:

- Required financial analyses are correct,

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Definitions of key Pasadena, state housing laws, rules

The following rules apply to large multi-unit projects and affordable housing.

Pasadena Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO). This ordinance is mandatory (without discretionary approval) for all new rental or for-sale housing developments of 10 or more units.

- **Rentals:** 10% of units permitted under current zoning of project site ("Base Density") must be dedicated to low income level tenants, and 5% to moderate income level tenants.
- **For-sale:** 15% dedicated to moderate income level purchasers, subject to a smaller percentage if dedicated units are more affordable.

Three alternatives to the IHO are available:

1. Provide units off-site
2. Pay applicable, computed, Inclusionary In-Lieu Fee to city's Inclusionary Housing Trust Fund

3. Donate land that is at least equal in value to the fee

For-sale and rental developers often elect to pay the fee, but some rental developers prefer to include affordable units on-site. The IHO provides that certain local fees are reduced if IHO affordable units are provided on-site. In-Lieu Fee rates are adjusted regularly for inflation and changes in the housing market.

■ **California Mandatory Density Bonus Law.**

This mandatory density bonus law applies to multi-family residential and mixed-use projects of five or more units, provided a developer applies for a Density Bonus. The law allows an increase in the number of units permitted by Base Density on a project site, provided a specified percentage of units are designated as affordable. Depending on the affordability type and number of units proposed, the maximum Density Bonus available over the Base Density is up to 35%.

California Discretionary Concessions/Incentives & Waivers Law. Provided that a developer obtains a mandatory Density Bonus, a developer also may request up to three "Concessions" or deviations/incentives from applicable Pasadena development standards through a discretionary Affordable Housing Concession Permit (AHCP) application. The number of allowed concessions depends on the affordability type and number of units proposed.

"Concessions" or "incentives" include altering site development standards such as height limitations, setback requirements, and floor area ratio (FAR), or open space and parking requirements, no matter what local law requires, including the General Plan; allowing mixed-use development; or other developer-proposed Concessions or incentives. (FAR is the relationship of the size of the building to the size of the project

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A thank-you to our members!

The WPRA appreciates the financial support of all those who join our organization by contributing to our efforts. The membership donations listed below include the names of all those who've contributed \$100 or more between March 1, 2018 and February 1, 2019. If your name is not listed or is incorrectly listed, please contact me. As always, thank you for your generous support.

Linda Zinn, Membership chair, membership@wpri.net

To make it easier for you to help fund WPRA services and initiatives, we have enclosed an envelope within this issue. Just insert (1) the completed form on the envelope flap and (2) a check (made out to WPRA) into the pre-addressed envelope, add a stamp and mail it. You may also donate using your credit card by visiting wpri.net and clicking on EZ Donate in the upper left corner of our home page. The West Pasadena Residents' Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public benefit corporation. Memberships and donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Some litter is a key to a happy, healthy garden

BY REBECCA LATTA
ISA CERTIFIED ARBORIST #WE4264A
MEMBER, AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
CONSULTING ARBORISTS

Mulch and leaf litter don't sound very pretty, and certainly not like something you'd feature in a beautiful garden. Right? Maybe not. Let's take a look at litter, specifically leaf litter, one of many kinds of mulch. While it may be true that you don't want leaf litter to be center stage, it is the key to happy gardens.

Mulch is a many-splendored garden component. Mulching with leaf litter and other garden trimmings protects soil and plant roots from heat, conserves water, reduces erosion, encourages soil microbial activity, suppresses weeds, curbs pathogens and pests, improves soil structure, fertilizes, provides homes for helpful wildlife such as earthworms, protects seedlings and saves money. That's a powerful list of positives for your garden.

Don't blow away a garden asset. Think of mulch and leaf litter as free fertilizer, free shade cloth, free wetting agents for dry soil, and a free discount on your water bill. Blowing leaves out of garden beds and discarding them is like sweeping dollars into the trash. Valuable topsoil disappears, leading to bare rocky soil and struggling

plants, which have been robbed of nutrients and water-retaining cover. Remind gardeners to keep dropped leaves in planter beds, and to use blowers on hardscape only: patios, walkways and driveways—never garden beds, lawns or under trees.

How to mulch. Make mulch by shredding leaves and garden trimmings. Apply four inches deep around trees, shrubs and over bare areas. Or use garden litter to maintain a compost pile, which provides a steady supply of rich amendment for garden beds. Find tips for composting online. You can also buy mulch from a commercial supplier, but check for the possibility of imported pests and diseases. Better to make your own, if possible. If pathogens are a concern, let materials age before applying.

Do's and don'ts. When choosing mulch, don't use rocks, glass, plastic or rubber chips, plastic sheeting (so-called "weed barrier") or artificial lawn. These inorganics were never alive, will not break down over time, and are made of materials that can retain heat and suffocate plant roots. Organic mulches include formerly living material such as chopped leaves, straw, grass clippings, compost, wood chips, shredded bark, sawdust and pine needles. Both mulch types discourage weeds, but organic mulches improve the soil as they decompose.

Apply mulch when soil is moist. If soil is dry, water deeply before applying. Coarse-textured mulches such as wood chips and bark promote better permeability and water retention than fine-textured ones such as sawdust. Add new mulch on a regular basis as it decomposes, keeping to a four inch depth.

Once we learn to appreciate mulch, we might start seeing it differently. Could it be that "leaf litter" can look OK, even cool? Golden elm leaves scattered under a fall tree can be a striking reminder of changing seasons. Bright pink bougainvillea bracts (the specialized leaves surrounding the minuscule white bougainvillea flower) give a casual grace to a patio and float beautifully in a fountain.

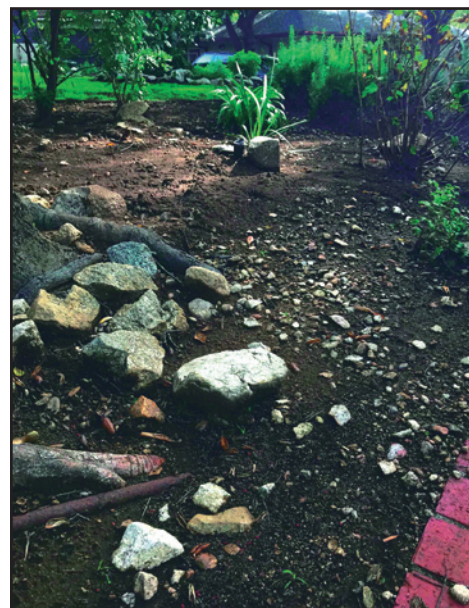
Another example: Majestic oaks in their native habitat prefer a surround of their own leaf litter. An oak tree stranded in a manicured lawn — where it is subject to overwatering, fungal disease, damage from mowers and other hazards — not so much. If we can at last accept the kind of garden that our plants prefer, it's easier to envision beauty in the settings where they thrive.

Rebecca Latta provides arboricultural, horticultural, and water management consultation services in greater Los Angeles. Contact Rebecca at rlattaconsulting@gmail.com.



Left: Blowing beneficial leaf litter, as in this photo, out of garden beds and discarding it is like sweeping dollars into the trash.

Right: Without this "litter," valuable topsoil disappears, leading to bare rocky soil and struggling plants.



Is Caltrans finally shutting down the 710-stub batch plant?

BY BILL CHRISTIAN
DIRECTOR, WPRA

Pasadena residents may soon have a reason to celebrate: It appears that Caltrans is shutting down its crushing and batch plant on the 710 stub. As of this writing Caltrans has also begun removing the rest of the materials stored on the stub, a 1.5 mile rectangular depression extending north from California Boulevard to the 210/134 interchange.

Caltrans began using the stub in 2015 for the current purpose. In addition to construction equipment, offices and a stockpile of materials and structures, the site was known for its mountain of concrete debris, which was crushed and then recycled into new concrete for freeway repairs along the 210.

As justification for using the stub for the crushing activity, Caltrans cited that the stub was relatively close to repaving work

it was doing on the 210 freeway. Placing the plant at a more distant (and maybe less objectional) site, the agency asserted, would have increased costs, added greenhouse gas emissions (from longer truck trips) and delayed work.

Since Caltrans owns the corridor for what appears to be the defunct 710 connection, it had the legal right to use the land for this industrial project – literally bisecting the heart of Pasadena – without consulting with the city, completing an environmental impact report or obtaining permits usually required for projects of this scope.

Caltrans' operations were cited for a number of violations of air quality rules by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, and generated complaints about noise, dust, safety, aesthetics and other issues.

While most of the industrial structures and materials have already been removed,

including the crusher, batch plant and mountains of broken concrete, a not insignificant amount of materials remains along a significant stretch of the corridor.

Caltrans public information officer Eric Menjivar recently reported that all of the remaining equipment and materials will likely be removed by the end of April, a year late, and after the final punch-list inspection is complete. Menjivar stated that Caltrans has no further plans for use of the corridor, and will return the land to its condition prior to the start of the project.

As Pasadena Mayor Terry Tornek previously noted about the stub operations: "Not only is it (the 710) a defunct highway, but it has become an industrial zone...This terrible manufacturing plant is in the middle of some of the most valuable and historic real estate in the city."



While most of the industrial structures and materials have already been removed, including the crusher, batch plant and mountains of broken concrete, a not insignificant amount of materials remains along a significant stretch of the corridor. (Photo by Bill Christian)



And so it begins. Local residents and community organizations, including the Arroyo Seco Foundation, have formed a group of watchdogs to ensure that the FCD fully complies with all its responsibilities for the Big Dig project. The inset photo catches a duckling who may well be wondering what happened to his habitat. (Photos by Bill Christian)

The (really) 'Big Dig' is underway

BY BILL CHRISTIAN
DIRECTOR, WPRA

The Los Angeles County Flood Control District (FCD) has begun sediment excavation and trucking operations from Hahamongna Watershed Park, behind the Devils Gate Dam. However, heavy rains in January, February and March have created extremely muddy conditions, requiring additional debris removal and making work in the area difficult. Entrance and exit road improvements have not yet been constructed.

The area behind the dam is now severely denuded. Without the stabilization provided by acres of missing trees, shrubs and other vegetation, the rains have caused deep erosion channels to form, pushing large quantities of sediment downstream into the Arroyo but capturing little or none of the water. Habitat for the annual influx of ducks and water birds, as well as other animals, is exceedingly limited.

Once the full excavation project gets underway, project permits allow removal of 1.7 million cubic yards of sediment. The current FCD plan would require over

400 round trips per day by heavy-duty tandem diesel trucks extending over four or more years during the dry season — presumably April through October. The trucks would enter and exit the 210 freeway via neighborhood streets adjoining the dam. The sediment would be transported to either Irwindale or Sun Valley for disposal in depleted gravel pits.

Two separate lawsuits previously filed by Pasadena Audubon and Arroyo Seco Foundation challenging the project are still active, focused on air emissions and several other issues. Most importantly, neighborhood air quality may well be significantly worse than the estimates relied on in the project's environmental impact report. EPA studies, released in 2017, found that the model-year 2010 trucks planned to be used for the project emit five to 18 times more in air contaminants than originally anticipated under in-use conditions, such as when idling or in slow-moving traffic-- conditions that are very likely to occur as these trucks load up and attempt to enter and exit the 210 freeway.

Careful air-quality monitoring in Pasadena, Altadena and LA Cañada neighborhoods

adjoining the project is thus critically important to detect and reduce emission levels of diesel exhaust — nitrogen oxides and particulate matter that may exceed project permit limits or violate air quality rules. Neither the project nor the municipalities have yet to commit to install and operate available, reasonable cost air emissions monitoring equipment.

Other potential issues with the project include noise and dust levels, compliance with mitigation (habitat restoration) requirements, and the size and operation of the permanent maintenance area behind the dam that will severely limit the habitat value of the area.

Natural conditions in the upper Arroyo Seco have been disturbed and destroyed, perhaps permanently. The question before LA County, Pasadena, the One Arroyo effort, and all of us, is: What is our collective commitment to the restoration and maintenance of natural conditions in this invaluable community resource?



Geraldine Silver

Geraldine Silver, former WPRA director, passes away at 84

Geraldine Anne “Gerry” Silver, a former West Pasadena Residents’ Association director, passed away on January 15, 2019. She was 84.

The WPRA benefited from her judgment and wise counsel between 2009 and 2011. She was a woman of strong integrity, who did not speak unless there was something important to say. And when she did have something to say, she was accurate and on point.

As a member of the WPRA’s Open Space committee, she attended countless city meetings when Pasadena was drafting the open-space element in the city’s Master Plan. She wanted Pasadena to provide more green, open space to accommodate the many developments that were being planned for the future.

Gerry served Caltech for 37 years as a mass spectroscopist and geochemist. Her research included the geology of the American Southwest and analysis of lunar samples.

Gerry is greatly missed by her family and friends at the WPRA. – *Linda Zinn*

‘Bungalow Bob’ passes away at 94

[Editor’s note: Special thanks to Mic Hansen, Bob and Marcie Gutzman and Tom Seifert for their contributions to this article.]

Robert “Bob” Winter, PhD, Pasadena’s beloved “Bungalow Bob,” passed away on February 9 at the age of 94. Dr. Winter was an extraordinary man: interested and interesting, full of humor and insights, with prodigious goodwill toward his city, his friends, and colleagues.

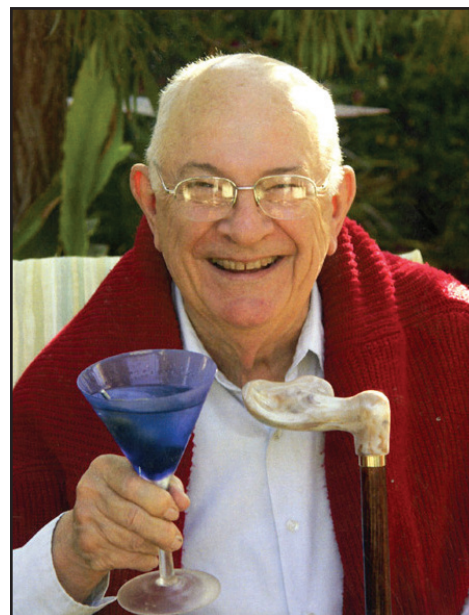
He was a catalyst for Pasadena’s historic preservation ordinance and a continuous gentle critic of bad or “unfit” architecture. With his colleague David Gebhard, he authored the seminal work on built Los Angeles: *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, with its 6th edition released just before Dr. Winter’s passing.

One of Dr. Winter’s passions was the American Arts and Crafts movement. He lived in the Arroyo Boulevard home that Ernest Batchelder, famed Arts and Crafts tilemaker, had built for himself. Dr. Winter considered himself the home’s “caretaker,” rather than the owner because he felt reverence for what it represented. He was instrumental in the resurgence of interest in the Arts and Crafts movement and a prolific author of multiple architectural books and articles. In jest, he used to say that, “...the Craftsman revival now has lasted longer than the original Arts and Crafts period.”

As a professor at UCLA, then at Occidental College, and a long-time resident of west Pasadena, Dr. Winter touched many lives. He was a Pasadena icon, much loved by all who knew and admired him.

“Bob was a dear friend and neighbor for 40 years,” wrote Tom Seifert, former WPRA president. “On one occasion during his later and ‘acoustically challenged’ years, he was being honored by a major architectural history organization. I both introduced him and outlined his extensive background and contributions to the field. Later, I asked how I had done with my remarks. He said: ‘Oh, you did just fine, in fact you were perfect.’ Then, after a brief pause, he added, ‘Actually, I couldn’t hear a word you said, but everyone laughed a lot and that’s what counts, right?’”

“I knew him for parts of five decades of my life — from my teens until into my 50s,” wrote Pasadenan Bob Gutzman. “At Occidental,



“Bungalow Bob”, in a light moment, toasts and expresses his irrepressible joie de vivre.

besides taking classes from him, Bob and I both played the viola in the Occidental-Caltech Symphony. Bob stopped playing after his arthritis started acting up, but eventually our son, Will, started playing the viola to ensure there were at least two violists in the La Loma/Arroyo neighborhood!”

For a complete obituary, visit the LA Times online: <https://goo.gl/awyxmB>

Council streamlines pre-sale home inspection program

Continued from page 3

working with Council to review the efficacy of the new program, and all seven district councilmembers agreed.

The mayor was the lone dissenting vote, citing concern that code compliance violations in single-family residences will go undiscovered without a city inspection.

The Planning and Permitting departments intend to implement the new program in the early spring.

For more: <https://goo.gl/nr5GdY>

Striving to permit

Continued from page 7

- including the consultant reports;
- The traffic analysis is adequate (Los Robles);
- Claimed California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) “Infill” exemptions are adequate; and
- Cultural resources analyses of “no impacts” are adequate (both projects include demolition of existing buildings and are located adjacent to historic resources, particularly N. Madison immediately adjacent to two National Register Historic Districts).

Affordable housing advocates continue to advocate on a number of fronts for an increase in the production of affordable housing, particularly units on-site. This advocacy includes proposals to increase IHO required affordable unit requirements, particularly the number of units required on-site, and/or require more on-site lower income units, and/or increase the In-Lieu Fee. The consequences of such increases (both intended and unintended) in the context of the Density Bonus mandate and related laws are not always clear.

“Pasadena character” advocates have considered and suggested a number of alternatives:

- Reduce the very large number of state and otherwise required Pasadena affordable units, compared to surrounding communities. This is under consideration, particularly as Pasadena currently and historically arguably exceeds its “fair share” of required affordable housing production.
- Reduce General Plan development standards so that Density Bonuses and Concessions bring projects back to more “acceptable” Base Density results. The state has rejected this approach.
- Deny Concessions and incentives if an affordable housing project can “fit” in Base Density, an idea percolating in Northern California. Making projects “fit” (i.e., smaller rooms, lower ceilings, less open space, etc.) may have unintended consequences along with reducing “luxury” units.
- Encourage high quality project design so that Density Bonus/Concessions projects do not undermine Pasadena’s character. There are such projects in Pasadena.
- Provide a local “Menu” of incentives to motivate developers to skip Concessions

and incentives and stay within the mandated Density Bonus including on-site affordable units, or stay within Base Density by electing compliance with the IHO. Such a “Menu” could include further reduced fees, and streamlining in terms of time and requirements. Some form of the local “Menu” appears to have a good chance of adoption.

Back to the original question: Is it possible to maximize affordable housing production while keeping new multi-unit projects more in line with acceptable development standards *and* in character with Pasadena?

Both the Pasadena City Council and staff realize that Pasadena’s policies, rules and procedures, as applied to affordable housing and Pasadena’s character, cannot be changed on a piecemeal basis, particularly considering state influence. That is, a “holistic” approach is necessary to consider how all the state and local laws interact with each other and produce consequences for Pasadena within dynamic real estate development and housing markets, and various environment and community perspectives.

In fact, a Pasadena consultant (AECOM) currently is preparing such “holistic” detailed and specific economic and policy analyses. The resulting report will be presented soon to the Planning Commission and then City Council.

Definitions

Continued from page 7

site. The larger the FAR, the larger the building in relationship to the project site.)

Per state law:

- Concessions or incentives must: “result in identifiable and actual cost reductions to provide for affordable housing costs” or affordable rents. Pasadena requires a Finding to this effect for approval of an AHCP, and also submission of a consultant-prepared financial analysis, although Pasadena’s required Finding for approval summarily is worded as follows: “The concessions or incentives are required for the designated units to be affordable.”
- It must be found that a Concession/incentive would not have a specific, adverse impact on public health, public safety, the physical environment or historic resources. Impacts include such issues as traffic, noise and vibration, air quality, green house gas emissions and cultural resources. Last, the concession must not be contrary to state or federal law.
- If a developer utilizing a Density Bonus and a Concession/incentive determines that compliance with a development standard would still preclude construction of the affordable housing project, the developer may request a discretionary Waiver of the standard. Pasadena requires a Variance procedure to grant a Waiver.

Playing at the Rose Bowl

- Saturday, May 4, BTS concert, 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, May 5, BTS concert, 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, May 11, Rolling Stones concert, 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, June 15, Soccer double-header, TBD
- Thursday, July 4, Annual AmericaFest fireworks show
- Saturday, September 7, UCLA vs San Diego State football game, TBD
- Saturday, September 14, UCLA vs Oklahoma, TBD
- Saturday, October 5, UCLA vs Oregon State, TBD
- Saturday, October 26, UCLA vs Arizona State, TBD
- Saturday, November 2, UCLA vs Colorado, TBD
- Saturday, November 10, UCLA vs California, TBD
- Wednesday, January 1, Rose Bowl Game, 2 p.m.

Note: The dates and times for this annual Arroyo Seco Weekend have not been announced yet.



La Solana Inn, 1896. Thirty years later, *California Southland* noted that one could sit in a comfortable garden chair and dream of "his own cottage smothered in roses of all colors" or plan "a palace in Pasadena on one of the broad boulevards."

A 'sunny spot' in west Pasadena: La Solana Inn

BY KIRK MYERS
ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST
PASADENA MUSEUM OF HISTORY

Early in the 20th century, Pasadena's elegant tourist hotels catered to the needs of wealthy visitors, some of whom were so impressed with the area that they decided to build their own homes here.

According to *California Southland* magazine in January 1926, the next step was to "look around for a small hotel in which to live while selecting their home site, their architect, and appropriate household goods for a typical Californian home. The transient boarding houses, thickly placed over the town near its center are indeed for transients only, and serve them well."

One of these transient hotels stood out among the others – La Solana Inn, on the

southeast corner of Lockhaven Street and S. Grand Avenue.

"La Solana is not merely typical of Pasadena's expert reception of tourist and winter resident, it is more than that. Through the years which have witnessed it as charming neighborhood center and town builder, it has led in this highly developed function of giving the particular people who come to Pasadena a particular reason and a particular 'sunny spot' for their return."

"Some world tourists who like to live quietly for part of the year in Pasadena's finished environment choose this quiet little hotel for their permanent abode; while others, settled in their own homes on Pasadena's west side along the handsome boulevards and little side-streets of Orange Grove Avenue, depend upon La Solana with its central dining room for an aid in maintaining the life of a home without its

carking (distressing) cares and drudgery." (*California Southland*, January 1926)

La Solana was a notable feature of west Pasadena, and enjoyed a long run. It was first listed in the Pasadena City Directory in 1895. In January 1981 the WPRA newsletter reported that "The old Inn and adjacent buildings on the site were recently demolished. ... Eventually there will be a total of four homes on the site."

The Pasadena Museum of History is located at the corner of Orange Grove Boulevard and Walnut Street (470 W. Walnut); 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, or call (626) 577-1660, ext. 10.



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