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Officials declare victory over the 710 tunnel

Activists ask if the 710 tunnel is both politically *and* legally dead

By SARAH GAVIT
DIRECTOR, WPRA

November 28 was an *almost* glorious day. Caltrans on that day released the final SR-710 Project Environmental Impact Report and Statement (FEIR/FEIS) during a hastily convened press conference in Arlington Garden.

In that final EIR/EIS, Caltrans, following Metro's lead several months earlier, selected for implementation the Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) alternative. TSM/TDM calls for street improvements and traffic management,

rather than a 4.5 mile tunnel, which many believe would be disruptive and destructive for the region, and economically and environmentally unfeasible.

Many believe Caltrans' choice to be a clear sign of victory in the 60+ years-long battle to stop LA Metro and Caltrans from connecting the 710 stubs in Alhambra and Pasadena. And this is certainly positive news for residents of Pasadena and neighboring communities, who've fought long and hard to kill the surface road and tunnel options.

However, while the immediate threat of the tunnel has been set aside, Caltrans has refused to declare the tunnel alternative unfeasible.

Technically speaking, this failure to discredit the tunnel option could permit Caltrans to change its mind at a later date and, possibly, base an argument for the tunnel on what many believe is a flawed tunnel alternative analysis in the FEIR. The shelf-life of the current environmental analyses may be as long as five years or more.

The executive summary of the FEIR/FEIS reads: "The Freeway Tunnel Alternative with Single Bore Tunnel design variation was determined to provide operational benefits. However, with the lack of funding and the lack of community consensus, the Single Bore Tunnel Alternative, estimated at \$3.15 billion, cannot be accomplished successfully within a reasonable period of time."

Local opponents of the tunnel have also called on Caltrans to seal the deal by eliminating references to the SR-710 freeway segment (between the I-210 to the I-10 freeways) from the California State and Highways Code. On December 3, State Sen. Anthony Portantino introduced Senate Bill 7 to prevent implementing the tunnel alternative and to address the seemingly stalled sale of surplus housing along the 710 corridor.

The WPRA will collaborate with allied organizations and Sen. Portantino to ensure that appropriate language is in this bill before it is brought to a vote next year. The WPRA will also strongly urge Caltrans to

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🕒 **In celebration of our common neighborhood and city interests.** Several hundred WPRA members and supporters on Sunday, October 28, answered the WPRA board's invitation to a fall party and neighborhood social at Susan and George Kinney's home on Bellefontaine Street. The photo above caught this distinguished quartet conspiring to have a great time. It looks like they succeeded. For more coverage, turn to pages 12-13. (Photos by Bob Reiter and Avram Gold)

A perfect time to consider why we should be grateful

BY DAN BEAL
PRESIDENT, WPRA

As I bask in the sun on this glorious Pasadena January day (I'm writing this before then, but it's pretty much guaranteed, right?), I suggest we take a little time to think about why we should be grateful: Namely, we have a city government that's pretty well scaled and responsive to what we need. The Goldilocks principle; just right.

Whatever you think of our local elected officials, individually or collectively, they spend far more hours and effort on these "part-time" jobs that take them away from their families and day jobs, than we could ever afford to pay them for.

Whatever you thought or however you voted on the city sales tax measure, it took a lot of courage and expenditure of political and personal capital to propose and advocate for it, or to oppose it.

Fortunately, we don't have the cutthroat, uncompromising, demeaning, destructive politics we've seen all too often on the national level. We also don't have a culture of

corruption like some cities. We won't have to comb the rubble of Pasadena's governance and social systems to find enough bricks to rebuild.

We'll take a little credit here at WPRA. We like to think we weigh in thoughtfully on important issues – but there are many more people working hard for the "Pasadena Way."

When I worked for a city council of, well, a really big city in this county, while public testimony was directed to councilmembers, they often were chatting, eating, reading the paper, dozing off or absent. And public "testimony" included shouted vulgarities. We don't have that here – both councilmembers and speakers tend to be respectful and attentive.

Government has different imperatives than the private sector. Rather than being driven by profit, government provides services and protection. You can't make a profit on those – they have to be judged on a different scale.

Of course, governments sometimes make mistakes and misallocate resources, and we must work to minimize those situations. But if you think the private sector has all the answers ... I give you Lehman Brothers, WorldCom,

Enron, Sears, WaMu, Toys-R-Us, the Pontiac Aztec, "New Coke," Deepwater Horizon and our very own IndyMac.

So, if you run into your district's councilmember, or a city staffer, or police officers or firefighters, smile and say "thanks." It'll make both of your days. Happy New Year!

P.S. Congratulations to new Pasadena Police Department chief, John Perez. He is a 33-year veteran of the department and has led the department as interim chief since last April, when his predecessor, Phillip Sanchez, retired. We hope Chief Perez will be able to attend a WPRA board meeting this year to share his approach to policing and, more specifically, how he'll deal with, among other issues, city crime and budget challenges.



Dan Beal

About us

2018 – 2019 officers

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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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Visit our website at wpra.net
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Voters support ballot measures to help fund city, PUSD

Editor's note: The Pasadena Unified School Board on December 10 voted 5-2 to approve a fiscal stability plan to achieve a State-mandated budget reserve and avert the threat of a district takeover by LA County. That plan cuts \$10.1 million in expenses over this and the next two school years.

On November 6, 2018, Pasadena voters went to the polls to decide the fate of two local measures: I and J. Of the 82,517 registered voters in Pasadena, 50,939 (62%) voted on measures I and J. Another 4,590 voters neglected to vote on the measures or "over" voted (selecting both "yes" and "no").

69% of voters approve Measure I

Measure I proposed to increase the sales tax rate in Pasadena to 10.25%, an increase of 0.75 percentage points. Proponents, including City Council, described this as necessary to maintain essential city of Pasadena such as fire, police, paramedics, emergency service/ response times; keep fire stations open; improve neighborhood and school safety; repair streets/sidewalks; address homelessness; maintain after-school programs/senior services, and other general fund services. The city estimates that the new sales tax would raise approximately \$21 million each year.

- It won voter approval by a large margin: 35,015 "yes" votes (68.74%) to 15,924 "no" votes (31.26%)

72% of voters approve Measure J

Assuming Measure I was approved, Measure J asked voters whether the city should consider allocating one-third of the resulting new sales tax revenue to help support the Pasadena Unified School District. [Two-thirds would go toward the city services, as noted above.]

- Voters, by an even greater majority, approved this measure, too: 36,179 "yes" votes (72.05%) to 14,036 "no" votes (27.95%).

City Council has subsequently formed an ad hoc committee to work out an agreement for sharing an estimated \$7 million in annual new sales tax revenues with the Pasadena Unified School District.

Revenue from the sales tax measure will start flowing in late June of 2019.

Investing in California Water "Fix"?

About 30 percent of the water that flows out of taps in Southern California comes from Northern California via the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. State and federal agencies want to modernize the water system by building three new intakes in the Northern Delta along with two tunnels to convey water to the existing aqueduct system in the southern Delta. Metropolitan has made a historic decision to invest \$10.8 billion, nearly 65 percent of the project cost, to allow for the construction of the full California WaterFix project to modernize the state's water delivery system as originally proposed and studied. Here are five reasons why California WaterFix is necessary for the reliability of the state's water system.

Five Reasons:

- 1. The Big One**
The new tunnel pipelines could safely transport supplies to the 25 million people, farms, businesses that depend on this water in the event an earthquake or other disaster collapses Delta levees and disrupts the existing decades-old system.
- 2. Drought**
Nearly all of the water that is stored in Southern California for drought and emergency needs comes either from Northern California or the Colorado River.
- 3. Groundwater**
Groundwater is Southern California's single largest local water source, but groundwater basin managers actually depend primarily on imported supplies from Northern California to help replenish those basins.
- 4. Big Storms**
A modernized system could once again reliably capture enough water to refill reservoirs after big storms because it would have multiple locations in the Delta to divert supplies, providing flexibility and reducing conflicts with migrating fish species such as salmon.
- 5. The Highest Quality = More Local Supplies**
Sierra snowmelt is pure enough to recycle again and again in Southern California, promoting more recycling projects in the region's future. And the Northern California supply has been good enough for Metropolitan to enter into international water tasting competitions – and win.

9,000
3 new intakes, each with 3,000 cubic-foot per second (cfs) capacity. Average annual yield of 4.9 million acre-feet.
2 tunnels up to 150' below ground designed to protect California's water supplies.

MET continues to upgrade water resources, system

CYNTHIA KURTZ
DIRECTOR, PASADENA REPRESENTATIVE
METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Some would say that when it comes to water in California every year is an exciting year. But 2018 was particularly notable.

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MET) took significant steps to upgrade a key Southern California imported water system and to move forward locally on a large reclaimed water project.

The proposed upgrade – referred to as Cal Water Fix – would build two 40-foot tunnels stretching from north of the Sacramento–San Joaquin River delta to Clifton Court Forebay in the southern end of the delta.

As sea levels rise, due to climate change, salinity in the delta is increasing and at a rate that will only grow higher in the future. The southern pumps that currently move water from Clifton Court Forebay and on to the San Francisco Bay Area, Central and Southern California also cause unnatural flow reversals of water and move fish and salt into the system.

Moving the intakes to the north end of the Delta will stabilize the delta environment and make Southern California's water supply more

reliable. It will also make it possible to move water in the event of an earthquake in the delta.



MET's approval isn't the final step. The State Department of Water Resources, which owns and operates the State Water Project, must still obtain some remaining permits for the project. The final decision on whether to build the tunnels is expected in 2019.

MET is also developing local water sources. The board authorized funding for a regional water recycling project demonstration facility in partnership with the LA County Sanitation Districts. Rather than discharge secondary effluent into the ocean, the facility will further treat the water for ground water recharge.

The demonstration facility will begin operation in early 2019. If the full build out of the plant is approved, it will be one of the largest recycling facilities in the world producing approximately 165,000-acre feet of water per year – enough for ½ million households a year.

As 710 tunnel is put to rest, historic homes need protection

BY SUE MOSSMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PASADENA HERITAGE

Pasadena Heritage, along with the WPRA and all our other friends and partners in the fight, are celebrating what many believe is the end of the 710 tunnel initiative. We also celebrate Caltrans' selection of the least impactful alternative to the tunnel as the preferred alternative!

We're still anxious that the final, final decision documents take the tunnel option off the table forever, but we are all encouraged and feeling victorious after a 60-year battle to keep the freeway out of our historic neighborhoods.

Victory over the 710

Continued from page 1

acknowledge that a new environmental impact analysis would be necessary if, in the future, it wishes to resurrect the tunnel option. Legal options focusing on the inadequacy of the existing tunnel analysis are also a possibility.

In the meantime, local cities will collaborate with Metro to reallocate Measure R tunnel funds for local transportation improvement projects that, as currently proposed, would include improved street mobility, synchronization of traffic signals and undergrounding the Gold Line tracks at California Boulevard. Local interests will also actively pursue elimination of the freeway stubs in Los Angeles/Alhambra and Pasadena.

But the mood at the press conference seemed to be one of closure, at least for the state, county and city dignitaries.

"This is the finish line," announced state Sen. Portantino during the press conference. "The tunnel is dead. Today we say goodnight to the 710 tunnel, and we turn on the lights to local transportation solutions."

We can only hope this is true.

A major concern for Pasadena Heritage all along has been the destruction of historic homes in the freeway path, many owned by Caltrans, and many that have suffered greatly as vacant or poorly maintained rentals. It is likely that Caltrans will now accelerate its plans to sell the houses, and will rely on city jurisdictions to take over responsibility for protecting their historic character.

"We are again urging Caltrans to resolve this problem for Pasadena Avenue before any historic properties are sold without adequate protection."

In Pasadena, this poses a problem for all those homes along Pasadena Avenue, south of Bellefontaine, that have been determined eligible for the National Register, but not yet officially listed. The city does not prohibit, but can only delay, major alterations or even demolition of eligible properties. (Homes north of Bellefontaine are protected by the Markham Place Historic District, nominated several years ago by Pasadena Heritage, as well as by the Governor Markham Landmark District regulations.)

We are again urging Caltrans to resolve this problem for Pasadena Avenue before any historic properties are sold without adequate protection, but have not yet received any substantive response. We are also negotiating covenants to more directly protect some particularly significant homes in the corridor.

Awaiting information on Fuller Seminary campus sale

Potential buyers submitted offers to Fuller Seminary in November to purchase individual or groups of buildings on its central Pasadena campus. No word has been given yet about the winning bids or who the new owners of the 13-acre campus will be.

Pasadena Heritage is particularly concerned because Fuller's property holdings include the Ford Place National Register Historic District, with nearly a dozen single-family and multi-family residences plus a beautiful open space in the center of the campus.



Our hope is that buyers will have proposed acceptable new uses for these historic structures and will preserve the landscaped open space which is also considered an historic feature.

We met with a group of stakeholders in September and formulated a series of recommendations for the future of the historic portion of the Fuller campus, south of E. Walnut Avenue and east of N. Los Robles Avenue. Those recommendations were sent to Fuller, CBRE (its real estate agent), and the city for consideration as future owners formulate their plans.

New building on Castle Green/Hotel Green block redesigned

After considerable push-back on the previous design for this large project on the block where the iconic Castle Green and Green Hotel Apartments reside, the proposed mixed-use project has been substantially redesigned.

This project will dramatically alter the corner of Dayton Street and S. Fair Oaks Avenue, just north of Central Park, within the Old Pasadena Historic District.

The Pasadena Heritage Advocacy Committee reviewed the new plans and were generally pleased with the new direction and some notable improvements. However, the group also offered a number of suggestions for further refinement and modification.

We understand that developer Goldrich Kest and architects from ARG are also meeting with the Castle Green Homeowners' Association, Old Pasadena Management District, and other stakeholders to discuss the newest iteration. The project will go to the Design Commission in early 2019.

Happy New Year from all of us at Pasadena Heritage!



Flowers are wound into the fencing on Colorado Street bridge to mark the death of a loved one who jumped from the bridge. (Photo by Bob Reiter)

City seeks designs for suicide prevention barriers on the Colorado Street bridge

BY AVRAM GOLD
VICE PRESIDENT, WPRA

Within a few years of its completion in 1913, the Colorado Street Bridge somehow became a destination for those wishing to take their lives by leaping into the Arroyo Seco below. To deter these tragedies, changes were made to the bridge over the years. The city removed the original balustrade and added chain-link fencing barriers, and then later added curved spikes, which were eventually removed. The current balustrade, with urn-shaped supports and a four-foot tall stake fence, was installed in 1994.

The modern barriers, however, have not effectively reduced the number of incidents, including near jumps, and they continue to rise. Consequently, in June of 2017, as a temporary measure, City Council again installed 10-foot fencing around the benched alcoves of the bridge. Still, more despondent males and females jumped. In response, Council added the higher fencing along the entire length of the bridge.

The city is now seeking a responsibly designed permanent feature to serve as an effective deterrent and to preserve the bridge's Beaux Arts integrity. Last October

the city published a request for proposals (RFPs) for the design and construction. The deadline for submissions, originally last November 27, was pushed back into this January.

Although the details of each proposal will not be open for public review, RFP guidelines stipulate that any new construction to the bridge retain its historic status and have minimal visual and aesthetic impact on its original design. The bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been designated a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Any future fencing deterrent must now be a minimum height of eight feet above the highest toe-hold (above the curbing) and include end treatments on both ends of the bridge to preclude access to the ledges along the outside of the bridge. The contractor must also prepare a visual impact analysis with renderings, simulations and scale models for each option, and then solicit feedback from the Design and Historic Preservation commissions, as well as the yet-to-be-appointed Design Advisory Group.

Regarding public involvement, the chosen contractor will be expected to develop a

public outreach program to incorporate all public notifications required under the California Environmental Quality Act; conduct informational meetings and public hearings; launch a website regarding the project; and attend on-going meetings with elected officials, commissions and staff to inform them about input gathered from the community.

Also, Pasadena residents will again be encouraged to participate in the bridge retrofitting through a small design advisory group, principally comprising selected members from the bridge task force. It will be similar to the Van De Kamp (AKA La Loma bridge) design advisory group. The design debate will be an open forum, assuming Pasadena residents take an active role and come to the meetings, speak at the meetings and/or write letters.

The WPRA encourages all Pasadena residents who are interested in suicide deterrents and bridge aesthetics to participate in the community outreach meetings and engage with city council, commissions and the future bridge design advisory board.

The final barrier retrofit is projected to be completed by May of 2021.

Plans call for replacing ‘Darth Vader’ building

BY MIC HANSEN
CHAIR, LAND USE/PLANNING, WPRA

The building at 150 E. Colorado was recently sold, and a new mixed-use structure will be taking its place. The current building, often referred to as the “Darth Vader” building was completed in 1980, having been approved during the era of the Pasadena Redevelopment Agency that at that time looked to bring larger, commercial buildings to downtown Pasadena.

The new owners will be replacing the current, infamous black glass-clad building with a contextual, architecturally compatible 3 to 8 story mixed-use project with 88-100 residential units, 50,000+ square feet of commercial space, and four levels of subterranean parking with approximately 400 spaces.

The ambitious design, by prominent local architects Moule and Polyzoides, will occupy the entire block between Arroyo Parkway and Marengo Avenue on the south side of Colorado Boulevard. An expressed and welcome objective of the project is to re-activate the current pedestrian dead-space between Old Pasadena and the Civic Center/Paseo Colorado area.

The project is located in a critical area between the Old Pasadena and Civic Center National Register Districts. Adjacent to the site are the Security Pacific building by Curlett and Beelman architects, and Chamber of Commerce and the Citizens Savings buildings, both by Parkinson and Bergstrom architects, all of which are historic resources.



Architect's rendering of a mixed-use development to replace the current “Darth Vader” structure at 150 E. Colorado. Its design and sensitivity for the setting will help achieve a more coherent aesthetic balance with its surroundings, and re-establish the continuous streetscape that was lost when the block's original historic buildings were demolished in the 1970s.
Illustration courtesy of Moule & Polyzoides

The design of the new building focuses on compatibility with the surrounding historic structures and provides an articulated and varied façade with a central glass pavilion. Although this will be a large project, its design and sensitivity for the setting will help achieve a more coherent aesthetic balance with its surroundings, and re-establish the continuous streetscape that was lost when the block's original historic buildings were demolished in the 1970s.

The new construction will be a single building of varying heights and configuration to better blend with Old Pasadena's mix of buildings.

To address the substantial variation in grade between Arroyo and Marengo, and to facilitate pedestrian access, the architects have devised a series of paseos and two courtyards.

Mayor Terry Tornek, quoted in Pasadena Now, said “From an urban design point of view, this is one of the most critical locations in the city. People are already making the trek from Old Town Pasadena to the Civic Center and anything that will encourage that ... is certainly to our benefit. It will be one of the most dramatic additions to downtown.”

The project was presented for preliminary review to City Council and to the Design Commission this past summer, and will be subject to zoning entitlements, concept design and final design reviews by the Design Commission, prior to obtaining building permits.

⦿ “The Plaza Centre building at 150 E. Colorado Blvd. looks like ‘the future’ as imagined by a 1970s dystopian sci-fi film. No wonder it’s been dubbed the ‘Darth Vader’ building. It was the brainchild of the Pasadena Redevelopment Agency (PRA), Wolff-Sesnon Development, and actor Wayne Rogers, best known for playing “Trapper John” on TV series M*A*S*H. Source: *Hometown Pasadena*, 2014.





Pasadena says good-bye to Fuller Seminary, looks to future

BY MIC HANSEN
CHAIR, LAND USE/PLANNING, WPRA

After calling Pasadena home for almost 70 years, Fuller Theological Seminary will be moving to a new campus in Pomona, most likely in 2021, and has put its Pasadena campus up for sale.

That 13-acre campus in downtown Pasadena is (roughly) bounded by Los Robles Avenue on the west, Walnut Street on the north, Madison Avenue on the east, and Union Street on the south. Fuller also has land and facilities to the north of the campus, between Walnut Street and the 210 Freeway.

The central portion of the Fuller campus, along the closed portion of South Oakland Avenue and Ford Place has historic designation, and contains excellent examples of turn of the 20th Century residential architecture. These former large single-family homes, now converted for office use, line the now-closed Oakland Avenue greenbelt. The Ford Place National Register district was designated in 2009, and includes several structures by marquee architects.

The Fuller campus was placed on sale in May 2018, with an October 26 deadline for

proposal submissions. The property could be acquired by a single developer or institution, or sold in smaller portions to a variety of developers. The sale is being handled for Fuller by the CBRE group. At this time, the submissions are under review by Fuller and their agents.

On October 12, Pasadena Heritage convened a forum for neighbors and stakeholders to learn from these community leaders' questions, concerns, and recommendations they had for the development of this property. Among the recommendations were strong support for preservation, quality, and public review.

Specifically, priorities cited were:

- The need for judicious planning and careful oversight for the development of the campus to ensure contextual compatibility, quality and design integrity
- The safeguarding and conservation of current landscaping, open and green spaces, and mature trees
- The education of stakeholders and neighbors regarding the ramifications of the dissolution of the Master Plan and potential effects of development agreements and/or

planned development designation, and

- The importance of community engagement, feedback, and collaboration throughout the entire planning and development process

Pasadena Heritage has provided an excellent summary of the discussion points and recommendations expressed by the group, and has submitted them to the city's and Fuller's decision-makers to ensure that this valuable and valued area in the heart of downtown Pasadena is developed sensitively and thoughtfully. The Pasadena Heritage recommendations and summary can be accessed at the following link: goo.gl/965TK2

The report strongly advocates care and restraint in developing the campus, which has been a downtown oasis adjacent to the Playhouse District for decades. WPRA applauds and agrees with the report's recommendations, and extends its appreciation to Pasadena Heritage for taking the initiative to ensure that this important downtown Pasadena resource is developed carefully, sensitively, and in partnership with the community.

County begins destructive four-year sediment removal project

Mindless of habitat value

BY TIM BRICK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ARROYO SECO FOUNDATION
PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARROYO SECO
FOUNDATION

Twenty-five years ago Pasadena dedicated Hahamongna Watershed Park at the mouth of the Arroyo Seco as a nature preserve. Now Los Angeles County Flood Control District (FCD) bulldozers and trucks are ripping into the precious habitat in the park, destroying the most vital environmental zone in our region. At the end of four years of devastation, the county will leave a massive 50-acre pit in the middle of the stream zone and again strip it of vegetation each subsequent year.

LA County has never fully recognized the significance of what Pasadena did when, in

1993, it established Hahamongna Watershed Park. For many decades the western portion of the basin had been a county park, Oak Grove Park, but the county turned it over to Pasadena, which set up an elaborate community planning process that eventually set lofty goals for the newly expanded Hahamongna Watershed Park. Today county engineers still refer to the area as Devil's Gate Reservoir, ignoring the fact that their 100-year-old flood easement is now in the middle of a Pasadena nature preserve.

Sediment is not a new problem in Hahamongna. It has plagued county engineers since the 1930s. Indeed, most of the accumulated sediment behind the dam has been there for 80 years. In the 1940s, the county had to drill a large tunnel through the dam for sediment release, and in the early 1970s the sand and sediment reached higher than the current level without any fear-mongering or disaster.

In recent decades instead of developing an ongoing sediment management program, the FCD engineers allowed the sediment to build



Making Hahamongna grade again

up to a dangerous level. Most everyone agrees a sediment management program is needed, but it should have begun 20 years ago. Instead the county has not removed any significant amounts from behind their dam since 1994, and that project was only about 10% of the current effort.

In other words, FCD's inactivity has compounded the problem, and now it wants to undo 100 years of sediment buildup in four. Its intensive "Big Dig," which will involve 425 diesel truckloads per day, will multiply the negative impacts on the nature in Hahamongna and on the local schools and neighbors, including all of us who live in this area.

Devil's Gate Dam was an early single-purpose experiment. Now faced with the challenges of climate change, a new, integrated approach to watershed management is needed to assure flood protection, but also protect wildlife, birds and habitat of this rare region, for the neighbors and for recreational opportunity.

County staff promotes the mandatory mitigation program as compensation for the damage they will do. But they will not be able to recreate the environmental value of the riparian and alluvial scrub zone that their big pit will destroy. They will plant similar species on slopes and in upland areas around the big pit and surround them with artificial irrigation systems, but that landscaping will not survive the next flood or the irresistible forces of nature. And the denuded big pit will



⊖ Trees become trash



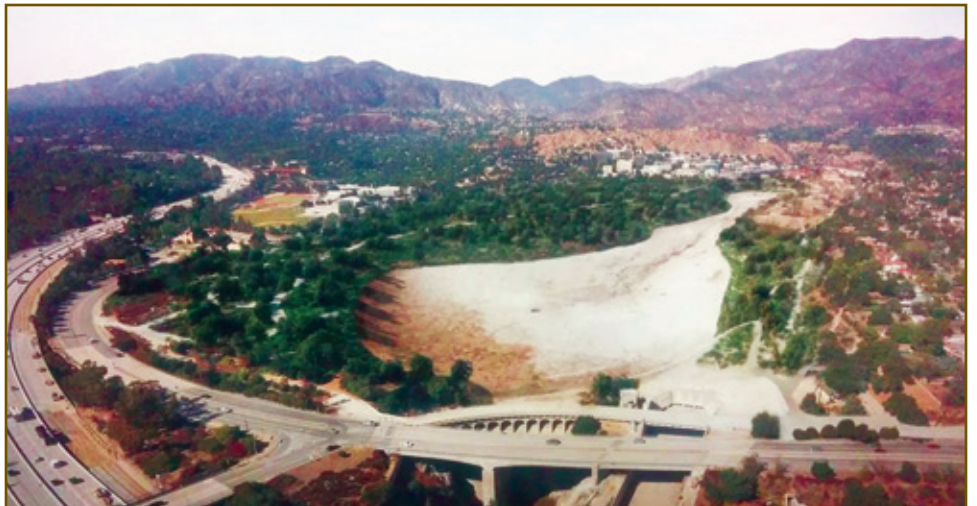
Staging for destruction

spread weedy, invasive species throughout the rest of Hahamongna, further degrading what is now a key wildlife and habitat corridor.

In the recent November election, the FCD promised voters nature-based solutions to stormwater programs to win support for Measure W, a tax that will give it and local agencies \$300 million annually to clean up and better manage the streams of LA County. Its Big Dig is an excruciating example of the wrong way to go.

The city of Pasadena, for its part, has been remarkably passive about the destruction of our region's greatest environmental treasure. After backing a more moderate and environmentally-sensitive sediment management program in 2014, city officials and staff have offered scant resistance to the destruction of Pasadena's largest park and to the enormous burdens that the county's project will impose on local residents including air pollution, traffic congestion, habitat destruction and lost recreational opportunity.

The Hahamongna dream sadly will be defeated as long as Pasadena and the courts permit the FCD to treat Hahamongna as a maintenance yard, rather than a river.



This is the county's rendering of what Hahamongna will look like after the sediment (and everything else) is removed



Something better: a dense forest of stream-zone habitat



County mitigation plan will not replace mature trees. *Photo by Bill Christian*

Big Dig ‘mitigation’ plan is defective on all counts

BY BILL CHRISTIAN
DIRECTOR, WPRA

The LA County Flood Control District’s (FCD) Hahamongna/Devil’s Gate sediment removal project will remove about 70 acres of prime wetland and riparian habitat from the Arroyo Seco watershed. The plan to construct a large permanent working area in the basin will also significantly interfere with animal migration through the arroyo. Federal and state laws require projects that will displace habitat and adversely affect species to mitigate for such losses.

The FCD has agreed to implement mitigation actions to compensate for the impacts to habitat resulting from the sediment removal project. FCD, in consultation with state and federal agencies, has chosen two options. First, to improve habitat surrounding the pit by removing invasive plants and replanting with native species. Second, by purchasing rights to improve habitat on a private mitigation bank located in the high desert.

There are quite good reasons to be skeptical of FCD’s promise to restore and create habitat on site, and even better reasons to be dismayed about the selection of a site outside the Arroyo Seco and LA River watershed.

Attempts to establish or restore native habitat, especially riparian and wetland areas are fraught with difficulty. Historically, many mitigation projects have failed or delivered only a fraction of the promised benefits. Success for the sediment removal project mitigation will be significantly hampered by the absence of shallow groundwater and periodic surface flows to support groundwater dependent vegetation — willows, cottonwoods and other wetland and riparian species that are so important for birds and other animals. FCD will attempt native plantings, bolstered by irrigation, but long-term success is questionable. And the previous size species and density of the vegetation will not be reached.

The purchase of credits from the distant

mitigation bank (near Palmdale) to offset habitat destruction in the arroyo seems even less warranted. The privately owned and operated Peterson Ranch mitigation bank is managed for grazing. It lies nearly 2000 feet higher in elevation than Devil’s Gate. The terrain and ecological setting is greatly dissimilar to the arroyo.

Why, when mitigation rules strongly favor in-basin sites and there are so many excellent opportunities to improve the ecological functioning of the Arroyo Seco as well as in the wider Los Angeles River watershed, was this choice made?

Compensatory mitigation — to offset the destruction of habitat — is the very last step in arriving at acceptable conditions for project approvals. The cardinal requirements are to first avoid and minimize harm by taking as little habitat as possible. FCD’s plan fails to do that, taking far more habitat and more permanently than necessary.

Check soil moisture, mulch, adjust watering schedule for shorter, cooler winter days

BY REBECCA LATTA
ARBORICULTURAL, HORTICULTURAL, AND
WATER MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Winter's cooler temperatures have arrived, and we've enjoyed refreshing rain after a long hot summer. Now it's time to help conifers and deciduous trees make the most of it.

First, check your soil for moisture. Using a shovel, wooden dowel or probe, dig down 2 or 3 feet to make sure water is penetrating into the root zone. Even though we've had rain, give trees a drink if the soil is still dry below 1-2 feet.

Have you been mulching? If so, good. However, after a dry period, mulch can prevent rainfall from reaching the soil. Counter that by drenching mulch layers right before the next rain, allowing

rainwater to penetrate and hold moisture like a sponge.

Now is the time to adjust your water controller for shorter, cooler days. Water less frequently with multiple start times to allow water to penetrate. Or turn the controller off and run manually as needed — but watch out for a sudden hot spell and don't forget to turn it back on. [Editor's note: Residents should remember that Pasadena restricts cool season (Nov 1-Mar 31) watering to Saturdays only, and only before 9 a.m. or after 6 p.m.]

Collect water on-site if possible. Rainwater is great for plants because it's more acidic and less salty than municipal water. Look for advice on rainwater harvesting from Tree People, LA County Arboretum and Theodore Payne Foundation.

Winter is the best time to prune deciduous trees — those that drop their leaves. Why? Winter pruning limits potential insect damage, since insects present here in warmer months are less likely to be active now.

It's important to remember that not all trees need to be pruned every year. They should only be pruned as needed, not on a schedule. I would not advise you, when pruning, to remove a tree's interior foliage. "Lion's tailing" and "lacing" leave branches and bark vulnerable to sunburn. Beware of over-pruning. If trimmers overdo it, trees can become stressed, causing them to decline and die. Remember, foliage feeds the tree. Removing too much of it puts the tree on a starvation diet.

If you are contracting a professional pruner, consider hiring an independent consulting arborist to inspect your trees and report any issues before



Root rot-causing *Phytophthora* species can survive in the soil for years, as long as moist conditions persist.

any pruning takes place. Make sure your pruning contractor follows the ANSI A300 Pruning Standard and International Society of Arboriculture's Best Management Practices (2008). Contractors should provide you with evidence of both worker's compensation and liability insurance, sent directly from their insurance company.

For more tips, visit treesaregood.com and inlandurbanforestcouncil.org.

Rebecca Latta has provided arboricultural, horticultural, and water management consultation services in the greater Los Angeles area for over 25 years. Contact her at rlattaconsulting@gmail.com.



This topped Aleppo pine is an example of poor pruning practices.

WPROA members, supporters enjoy fall party and neighborhood social

The West Pasadena Residents' Association Board of Directors welcomed more than 200 of its members, supporters and relatives to a fall party and neighborhood social. The event was convened on October 28 at Susan and George Kinney's home on Bellefontaine Street. In addition to sparkling conversation and wit, attendees partook of various beverages and capped the afternoon with dinner from the Pie & Burger food truck. We are happy to report that no one, even if tempted, ended up in the pool.

All photographs (unless otherwise noted) are by Bob Reiter



- ① Tom and Cheryl Palfrey, former Pasadena Mayor Bill and Claire Bogaard, and WPROA President Dan and Laura Beal
- ② Andre de Salis, Autumn Doerr and an unidentified woman
- ③ Alma Stokes, Emina Darakjy, Pasadena Mayor Terry Tornek, and an unidentified woman (photo by Avram Gold)
- ④ Two gentlemen and Merillee Fellows
- ⑤ Nancy McDonald, and WPROA directors Mic Hansen and Susan Kinney
- ⑥ David Lain and Cheryl Craft





- ⑦ Caryn Hofer and her husband
- ⑧ Hossein Berenji and family
- ⑨ Chris & Bruce Baily
- ⑩ Pete and Joan Ulyatt, Jim Patterson, and former WPRC President Kenyon Harbison
- ⑪ Anna Arnheim, Mimi Coombs and Phyllis Mueller
- ⑫ Shirin and Carl Friedlander

A personal point of view: Going ‘public’ in Pasadena

BY CATHERINE STRINGER

When my husband and I moved to west Pasadena in 2007, it was almost on a whim. We chanced upon an open house during a Sunday afternoon drive and fell instantly in love with it and the surrounding neighborhood of San Rafael. At the time, we gave little thought to where our toddler and baby-on-the-way would go to school. It just seemed like home.

As all parents can attest, the next few years passed with what felt like warp speed, and before we knew it, we faced what we understood to be a momentous decision: where to send our eldest to kindergarten. That’s when I got a crash course in what I came to think of as the Pasadena paradox.

On one hand, Pasadena is a city with world-class academic and cultural institutions, a booming business sector, the best in science and tech, and an engaged citizenry. The public schools, though? We were told that Pasadena once boasted a stellar public-school system, but a decades-long decline in enrollment had left its reputation somewhere far south of mediocre. Many families that could afford the high cost of tuition were choosing private schools, and with more

than 50 to choose from — about twice the number in Pasadena Unified — those options were plentiful. But for us, going public was the preference. We wanted to participate in the success of district schools, and join together in contributing to the education of the kids in our community.

In 2011, we sent our daughter to San Rafael Elementary, which had started a Spanish/English dual language immersion program (DLIP), and our son followed the next year. Today, they are both middle schoolers at Blair, which is Pasadena’s only International Baccalaureate World School and also offers continuation of the Spanish DLIP. With more than seven years’ hindsight, we have not once regretted our choice to go public.

Our kids are fluent learners in English and Spanish. Their academic courses — honors classes in English, math and science, and two classes in Spanish (grade-level history and Spanish language arts) are challenging. Many of their teachers are not just good, but exceptional. That academic rigor shows up in student achievement; Blair has had the district’s highest AP pass rate for the last three years, with a 100% pass rate in Calculus. There are outstanding programs in music and theater, and a growing athletics program.

Blair is a small school, with just under 1,000 students in grades 6-12, and that intimacy promotes an atmosphere of familiarity and inclusivity that supports students both academically and socially. Just this morning, my 7th grade daughter ran a half marathon with her Students Run Los Angeles (SRLA) team from Blair. The kids on the team and their teacher-coaches represent diverse cultures, life experiences and ambitions, but each loudly and enthusiastically supports everyone’s success — a dedication that will continue through training and every race leading up to the LA Marathon in March. They are in it together.

We share the conviction that a good public education is the right of every child, and that thriving public schools are key to thriving communities — and, in turn, a healthy, prosperous society. I asked my daughter to tell me her favorite thing about Blair. She offered: “I like how small it is, because when you can get to know everyone, people are really nice to each other. It’s like a big family.”

Right. Because we are all in this together.

Catherine Stringer is a member of the WPR Advisory Board and a parent of students at Blair High and Middle School in Pasadena.



Blair’s SRLA team at the Holiday Half-Marathon, Pomona Fairplex, December 9, 2018.

Promoting Pasadena as a paradise

BY BY KIRK MYERS
ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST
PASADENA MUSEUM OF HISTORY

In proposing his concept of the Tournament of Roses to the Valley Hunt Club in 1889, Charles F. Holder touched on a theme that would be a factor in the growth of early Pasadena.

“Gentlemen, I came from the east to this beautiful area for my health. I found it here. I also discovered happiness and beauty. In New York, people are buried in snow. Here our flowers are blooming and our oranges are about to bear. Let’s have a festival and tell the world about our paradise.”

Early Pasadena was extolled as an earthly paradise in many published articles. From the first Tournament of Roses on January 1, 1890, a parade of floral beauty in winter was but one means of telling the wider world about the glories of Pasadena.

In 1883, R.W.C. Farnsworth published “A Southern California Paradise,” which focused on Pasadena and neighboring areas. The introduction began, “No apology is needed for the title of this book. Visitors as well as residents, are constantly exclaiming, ‘This is the Garden of Eden!’ and ‘This is Paradise!’ They involuntarily use such phrases to describe what they see, and to express the emotions awakened by their surroundings.”

Along with the Tournament of Roses, the Pasadena Board of Trade, incorporated in 1888, promoted Pasadena vigorously. An article in the 1905 Tournament of Roses edition of the *Pasadena Daily News* explained:

“The sole purpose of the Pasadena Board of Trade is to advertise Pasadena and to promote and encourage everything that will make our beloved city more beautiful, more healthful, morally and physically, and more and more the home of the highest type of American and foreign citizenship. That we are succeeding, everyone who knows Pasadena, will cheerfully admit.”

Writer Elbert Hubbard published “Pasadena the Modern Garden of Eden” in 1914, with superlatives similar to other promotional materials of the time:

“But in all my little journeys, never had I found any place to compare in loveliness, beauty and delightsomeness to that threshold of Eden – Pasadena. ...There is no

fairer city than Pasadena; none with cleaner avenues, sweeter atmosphere, higher ideals.”

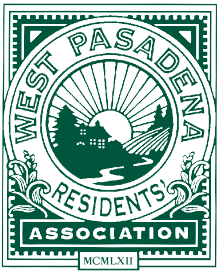
Even now, when snow-bound TV viewers watch the Rose Parade, is it any surprise that many of them might still think that Pasadena must be paradise?”

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.



“The fame of Pasadena is not confined to the San Gabriel Valley or Southern California alone; it has spread over the entire country and throughout the civilized world. Thousands of publications have, unsolicited, sung its praises. Pasadena has exerted a marvelous influence. Like a magnet, it has attracted people from almost every nation.” One of the earliest Pasadena Board of Trade publications, in 1888.



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