



PUSD earmarks \$35 million
for school renovation

A saving moment for San Rafael Elementary?

By Mark Mastromatteo
WPRA director

On Thursday, Nov. 16, the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education trustees voted 4-3 to fund the infrastructure remodeling of the San Rafael Elementary campus at 1090 Nithsdale Road.

The \$35 million for the school is part of an \$85 million package that also funds infrastructure projects at Webster Elementary (\$30 million) and Pasadena High School (\$22 million).

As the 489-student K-5 school hasn't had a significant campus upgrade in decades, this turn of events seems to represent a vote of confidence that west Pasadena will continue to host a PUSD school well into the future.

According to our local District

7 Trustee, Yarma Velázquez, the improvements will include upgraded and improved bathroom facilities, and improved and enhanced plumbing, electrical and water infrastructure.

It was a little over a decade ago that the School Board was ready to close the school due to it being on an earthquake fault line that runs down the west side of the Arroyo Seco. This same fault also threatened nearby Fire Station 39. However, a deeper analysis of the fault line by the Fire Department and PUSD found that it posed no significant threat from a serious quake. Both the fire station and elementary school were, as a result, saved.

In that unsteady interval, however, PUSD removed San Rafael Elementary from the Measure TT funding list, which effectively put off badly

needed site improvements.

Fast forward to present times, and this latest restoration/modernization opportunity seemed to represent a do-or-die moment for the campus.

This time funding comes from Measure O, the most recent bond to pass in Pasadena. It added more than \$500 million to PUSD coffers for building upgrades, improvements to campus safety systems, and technology advances for students.

Concerns arose earlier this fall when San Rafael Elementary failed to gain the top level of consideration for Measure O funding. To some it appeared that PUSD trustees seemed unwilling to rehabilitate the campus and were instead targeting for closure the last public school in west Pasadena.

With this key vote, the next step will be to calendarize the work. At present, the work could be completed within 12-18 months from the summer of 2025. However, some related minor work may begin as early as this summer.

When major work begins on the building itself, the students and staff will be temporarily rehoused at a nearby campus that was recently closed; most likely the Allendale or Roosevelt school sites.

With all of the optimism tied to the new Board decision, the school community and the neighborhood will have to wait patiently for 2025 or longer and, equally important, hope that PUSD's resolve and funding is firmly in place ... at least until the work begins. But for now, cheering can be heard on Nithsdale Road.

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Who ensures safety at the Rose Bowl?

By Evan Davis
President, WPRA

On Oct. 15, 2023, the Rose Bowl Stadium was packed with more than 86,000 fans for a soccer match between two powerhouse Mexican club teams, Club América and Chivas. Given the Rose Bowl's financial issues, this game, dubbed "El Clásico de México," should have been a roaring success for the storied venue that bid on hosting World Cup games, but lost out to glitzy SoFi Stadium.

Instead, the Rose Bowl was lucky to avoid serious injuries to fans and fire inside

the stadium – followed by inevitable lawsuits – when its security utterly failed to stop scores of each team's spectators from bringing in illegal fireworks that they ignited inside the stadium.

Smoke billowed across the field from smoke bombs thrown onto the field and held in the stands, enveloping the playing field and half of the stadium. More concerning, thousands of Roman candles and even larger missile-type fireworks were fired into the air. These illegal fireworks aren't exactly known for JPL-level precision engineering and reliability, with frequent misfires and errant trajectories endangering fans and players, in addition to the smoke bombs hurled onto the playing field.

This wasn't the work of a few disturbed fans; the smoke

bombs on the respective ends of the field matched team colors, reflecting the fans' pre-game coordination. It was also entirely predictable, as YouTube is filled with examples of supporters setting off fireworks in other matches.

Security guards conduct thorough searches at certain sporting events, including at the Rose Bowl, so the magnitude of the fireworks debacle presumably means the security guards were told they don't need to search bags. Who knows what else was sneaked into the stadium that day?

This incident came just two weeks before another security black eye for the Rose Bowl – the theft of jewelry and other valuable items from the Colorado locker room during a game against UCLA. Who is responsible for ensuring the



Evan Davis

safety of fans, players, and officials?

When it comes down to it, the buck stops with the Rose Bowl Operating Committee, which the City's website describes as being "responsible for the governance and stewardship of the Rose Bowl Stadium." We haven't seen much in terms of the RBOC accepting responsibility for the incident, but we care more about actions than words. Will the City and the RBOC learn from the incident and take security seriously for future events?

About us

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2023 – 2024 WPRA Advisory Board

- Vince Farhat
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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.

Service 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.

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

THE NEWS

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Visit our website at wpra.net
Visit our Facebook page at facebook.com/westpasadena

PASADENA'S PRIMARY MUNICIPAL ELECTION will be held on March 5. Among the issues voters will decide are contests for mayor and council districts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6.

- **Mayor:** Incumbent Victor Gordo versus Allen Shay
- **District 1:** Incumbent Tyron Hampton is unopposed
- **District 2:** Incumbent Felicia Williams versus Rick Cole
- **District 3:** Incumbent Justin Jones versus Brandon D. Lamar, for a two-year term ending Dec. 7, 2026
- **District 4:** Incumbent Gene Masuda versus John Doyle and Jonathan Horton
- **District 6:** Incumbent Steve Madison is unopposed

The top two vote-getters in each race will advance to a May 16 general election if no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote. The 2024 Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education election will be held in November. *Source: City of Pasadena*

CITY COUNCIL HAS PLACED three amendments recommended by the Charter Study Task Force (see next brief), to the City Charter on the March 5 election ballot. The first addresses clerical corrections to various sections in the City Charter, and updates accounting methods related to the annual transfer from the Power Fund to the City's General Fund. The second relates to procurement, settlements, and legal claims requiring the City Council to set limits by ordinance. The third allows for additional options for contract selection and alternative project delivery methods for public capital improvement and infrastructure projects. *Source: City of Pasadena*

THE FOLLOWING WERE SELECTED TO SERVE on the Charter Study Task Force formed by City Council to consider and recommend to City Council amendments to the City Charter:

- **District 1:** Lena Kennedy and Jacque Robinson-Baisley

- **District 2:** Margaret McAustin
- **District 3:** Marcus Hatcher
- **District 4:** Paul Novak and Diana Carbajal Mejia
- **District 5:** Liberty McCoy
- **District 6:** Ken Chawkins
- **District 7:** Andy Wilson
- **Mayor's nominee:** Vince Farhat
- **At-large nominee:** Raul Salinas

Source: Pasadena Now

PASADENA WILL enter into professional services contracts with local real-estate brokers for the sale of five Caltrans properties the City recently purchased from Caltrans. William Podley, Compass (formerly Deasy Penner Podley), Michael Slaughter/Mutual Realty Consultants and Michael Bell/Sotheby's International Realty will provide broker listing services for the marketing, listing, and sale of the residential properties for a one-year combined \$1.4 million contract. *Source: Pasadena Now*

CITY COUNCIL APPROVED making the newly formed Pasadena Rental Housing Board (PRHB) a City department, and its staff City employees. PRHB was originally independent from the City Council, but to resolve concerns regarding staffing and procurement that were not addressed in the Measure H charter amendment, members of the Board had pushed for its integration as a City department. *Source: Pasadena Now*

THE PRHB APPROVED A RESOLUTION requiring landlords in 2024 to pay 0.41% in interest annually on rental security deposits held for at least one year. *Source: Pasadena Now*

THE NEW HISTORIC VENUE RESTORATION AND RESILIENCY ACT (SB 96) permits certain public venues — built prior to 1940, have a seating capacity of more than 15,000, and be owned by a public entity — to keep a percentage of the state tax revenue they generate. That new revenue may be used for capital

infrastructure, preservation, retrofitting and Americans with Disabilities Act improvements. Although the proceeds may fluctuate from year to year, the new source of revenue could net the Rose Bowl Stadium as much or more than \$1.5 million annually. *Source: Pasadena Star-News*

THE ROSE BOWL OPERATING COMPANY (RBOC) REPORTED that the 2022 July 4th AmericaFest event in the Rose Bowl Stadium resulted in a net loss of \$500,000. The RBOC replaced that event with a soccer match in 2023 and netted a profit of \$400,000. *Source: Pasadena Now*

CITY COUNCIL'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE awarded a \$176,920 contract to Streetsense, a creative global collective, to develop a vision for Pasadena's economic future. The project calls for a market analysis of existing conditions, and the identification of undervalued assets and community challenges. *Source: City of Pasadena*

THE CITY HAS LAUNCHED AN EXPRESS PERMIT PORTAL ONLINE to make it easier to request permits for HVAC, mechanical, plumbing, electrical and solar photovoltaic system projects, and solar energy and energy storage systems. Visit mypermits.cityofpasadena.net/Permit/Express. *Source: Pasadena Now*

PASADENA HAS WON two American Public Works Association (APWA) BEST awards for two 2023 outstanding projects: renovation and rededication of the John J. Kennedy Pool and creation of the Union Street protected bicycle track. *Source: Pasadena Now*

PASADENA WATER AND POWER IS INCREASING the amount of geothermal energy it purchases to help it meet its commitment to deliver 100% carbon-free energy to its customers by 2030. The new 15-year geothermal energy contract starts in January 2027. *Source: Pasadena Now*

City continues to seek ways to discourage bridge suicides

By Dave Bise
WPRA Public Services chair

City Council is still looking into options to deter suicides from the Colorado Street Bridge, which may or may not include a permanent vertical barrier. In April of 2023, City Manager Miguel Márquez awarded a contract to Apexx Architecture for the conceptual design of enhanced vertical barriers for the bridge.

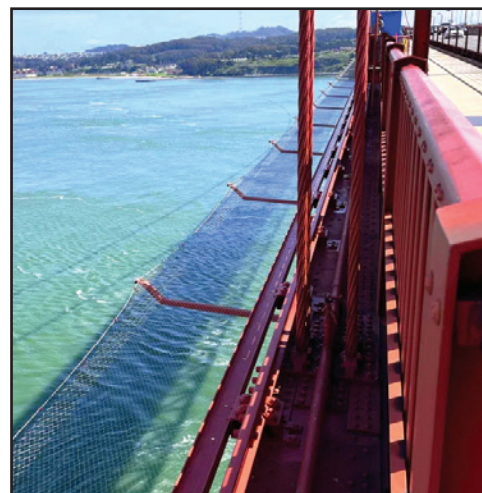
The City formed a stakeholder group, which includes first responders, the historic preservation community, public and mental health experts, architects, and engineers to consider three design options: vertical

webmesh, metal pickets, and canted webmesh. Public Works and Apexx presented their design concepts to the Public Safety Committee on November 15. During this meeting it was clear that some members of the Public Safety Committee were not convinced that a permanent vertical barrier was the best deterrent option.

District 6 Councilmember Steve Madison said he could not support any of the current vertical barrier concepts that have been proposed. He also stated, as have others, that the temporary chain link fencing has been effective at reducing the number of incidents on the bridge. Mayor Victor Gordo agreed to look at alternative

options that could include the use of technology and staffing.

On December 5 the design concepts were presented to the Historic Preservation Commission. At this meeting the canted webmesh design received the least support among commission members. In a close vote the vertical webmesh was the preferred option over the vertical metal pickets, mainly due to the lack of transparency and the fact that the pickets could block the lighting from the lampposts.



This photo captures a segment of the 1.7 mile Golden Gate Bridge "safety net" San Francisco installed 20 feet below the deck and 20 feet for \$217 million. Since the net was installed, the number of bridge suicides has been cut almost in half.

The concept of a safety net like the one being installed at the Golden Gate Bridge will also get a second look. Apexx will come up with a rendering of a safety net below the bridge. This idea was ruled out years ago, but some in the

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Briefly

AFTER 45 YEARS ON STAFF AND 30 OF THOSE YEARS as executive director of Pasadena Heritage, Sue Mossman plans to retire this spring. Pasadena Heritage has formed a search committee to find a new executive director. *Source: Pasadena Now*

THE CITY OF PASADENA HAS PURCHASED the long-vacant former Kaiser Permanente property at the southeast corner of Lake Avenue and Villa Street. The property will be repurposed for up to 100 affordable housing units and mental health services. *Source: Pasadena Star-News*

THE STATE HAS AWARDED \$5 MILLION to Pasadena for the construction of an affordable senior housing development

at 280 Ramona St., across from City Hall. The plan calls for 100 dwelling units, including 44 studio units, 55 one-bedroom units, and one two-bedroom manager's unit. The units will be available to very low- and low-income seniors, along with permanent supportive housing units for homeless seniors. *Sources: City of Pasadena and Pasadena Now*

CITY COUNCIL HAS APPROVED AN UPDATE to the Central District Specific Plan that increases the housing density and adds new design standards for the city's downtown area. The changes will allow for up to 87 residential units per acre on Lake Avenue, north of Green Street, which was previously zoned for commercial development only. Residential density north of Cordova Street will also increase from a minimum of 60 to a standard of 87 units per acre.

Source: Pasadena Star-News

THE HISTORIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING in Old Pasadena has renewed its LEED E-B Gold Certification from the Green Building Council. The certification recognizes that the landmark building uses current best practices to consume less energy, water and natural resources, and continues to uncover and reduce operating inefficiencies. *Source: Pasadena Now*

LA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS presented a \$200,000 grant to Friends In Deed, a longstanding non-profit organization known for its work in supporting unhoused and at-risk individuals in the Pasadena area. *Source: Pasadena Now*

Part 1

The 710 stub challenge: What's next?

By Pete Ewing

WPRA vice president and Planning and Land Use chair
and Land Use/Planning chair

In the fall 2022 issue of the WPRA quarterly newsletter, WPRA Board Member Dave Bise wrote an excellent piece about the history of the State's and County's failing effort to extend I-710 from Alhambra through several cities to the I-210 in Pasadena.

In this quarterly newsletter issue we're introducing what will become a regular feature focusing on the development and status of the planning process for revising the stub. With the State's relinquishment of the 50+ acre stub area last year, it's only natural to ask, what's next?

Three committees get to work

To date, the following three committees have been formed to evaluate and recommend stub plans:

1. **Reconnecting Communities 710 Advisory Committee:** Formed by City Council, this committee has 16 members.
2. **West Pasadena 710 Round Table:** This committee is sponsored and was formed by District 6 Councilmember Steve Madison.
3. **WPRA Stub Committee:** The WPRA has been working on this project for a very long time and is moving forward with a group of experienced and creative members. We are currently examining the history of the stub area, establishing the economic plans for developing

the 50+ acres, evaluating resulting traffic and transportation challenges, and considering how to refurbish the dilapidated houses in the stub — a result of 60 years of neglect by Caltrans.

The following discussion focuses on this committee's approach.



This artist-enhanced image looking southwest shows where the SR-710 stub (left) meets SR-134/I-210 (right).

First steps

Our first step was to create an initial list of expectations that residents of the affected areas in west Pasadena might reasonably have. For the stub, we consider the area boundaries to be Orange Grove Boulevard to Marengo Avenue (west and east), and Union Street to Columbia Street (north and south), as well as some adjacent areas.

The following list of challenges must be resolved during the planning process. After 60 years of being subjected to daily hardship and distress at the hands of Caltrans, the WPRA will scope out how we can:

- Reweave our neighborhoods and street grid with appropriate urban planning to reflect the character of our city and the compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Connect other Pasadena neighborhoods with a new gathering area for our entire city, while improving the north-south and east-west circulation and neighborhood coherence to accommodate this.
- Re-establish new, sustainable areas with green and open spaces, affordable housing, and climate resiliency for future generations of our diverse population.
- Re-orient, reduce and disperse the *de facto* freeway and cut-through traffic

that currently flows onto residential neighborhood streets.

Our second step will be to start the planning process by identifying and evaluating (1) what work will be necessary, (2) what work has already been done, and (3) what work is in process for the rehabilitation of the stub.

A good place to start

We have carefully reviewed materials from the 2014 Connecting Pasadena Project ("CPP") initiative, and believe this is a sound and logical place to start. [To review the CPP report, visit the WPRA website (wptra.net), and click on "Current" at the top of the page.]

The formation of CPP was a grass-roots, community-based effort with robust representation from approximately 300 Pasadena citizens, representing all Pasadena council districts and three adjacent cities. Its goal was to develop recommendations during two charrette sessions that would be acceptable to the whole community.

CPP was guided by the following three forward-looking, internationally acclaimed consultants:

- Stefanos Polyzoides, a local architect and urban planner and the current dean of architecture at Notre Dame University

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City aims for 2028 (or earlier) to complete Central Library's retrofitting, reopening

By John Favvre

The 1927 Myron Hunt

Central Library has inspired Pasadena and helped keep it literate for almost a century ... until a seismic review in 2020 found it to be unsafe. Given the potential risk, City Council closed the building in May 2021.

In February 2023 City Council retained Gruen Architects to come up with an optimal retrofitting plan, which Council approved in August 2023. The project team is led by Tony Olmos, the City's director of Public Works, and Debra Gerod, Gruen's chief architect.

The price tag and plan

The City estimates the total cost for seismic retrofitting and repairs could be as much as \$200 million. This would include installing a fire-alarm system, making much-needed roof repairs, and upgrading the facility to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. All the interior woodwork and decorations would be removed and stored until construction was complete, and then carefully replaced.

Paying for the retrofit, timing

Assemblymember Chris Holden in June 2021 secured \$4 million for the project from the California State Library System, and in July 2022 the State earmarked an additional \$5 million.

To cover the difference

between the state earmarks and the total estimated cost, City Council hopes to place a bond issue on the November 5 ballot. The current plan expects construction to begin in the fall of 2025, depending on funding, and anticipates reopening the Central Library by the fall of 2028 or earlier.

Tentative timeline:

- Spring 2024: 60% completion of design development, which includes plans and cost estimates
- November 2024: Voters will decide on a bond measure to fund the project
- Spring 2025: 100% completion of construction document, plans, cost estimate, and plan check
- Summer 2025: bid and construction contract awarded, pending funding

- 2027: Central Library celebrates its 100th anniversary
- 2028: Central Library re-opens

Although City Council may consider an alternative retrofitting method, which some believe could save the city as much as \$80 million, it appears doubtful that either alternative would be completed in time for the Central Library's 100th anniversary in 2027. However, fair winds, following seas, additional cost and expeditious schedule management might deliver a completed project in time for the anniversary.

For more information on the Central Library retrofitting project, visit PasadenaPublicLibrary.net.



Photo by Keith Birmingham,
Pasadena Star-News/SCNG

Adaptive reuse has become a hot topic

By Sue Mossman
Executive Director
Pasadena Heritage

A lot is happening around the topic of adaptive reuse, whereby existing buildings are converted to new uses. Pasadena Heritage supports new life for a historic (or non-historic) building, which is frequently a much more ecologically sound strategy than demolition and new construction.

When a historic building is involved, the challenges include protecting and restoring important original design and architectural features, but most conversions require significant change. Historic buildings like St. Luke's Hospital and the original Avon building, both in east Pasadena, are ones

we hope can accommodate new uses and be returned to productivity.

One related topic is adapting struggling office buildings, often built in the 1960s-80s, into housing units. This was done in Pasadena successfully by Adept with its project at Cordova and Green streets, but Adept reports it was complicated, costly and involved more than 100 different inspections.

Several large office buildings on Lake Avenue might be candidates for this type of conversion, and a recent foreclosure announcement for the Pasaroyo office complex, at Lake Avenue and Cordova Street, has prompted more speculation about adaptive reuse for it. Originally built in the 1960s and designed by noted Modern architect William Pereira, we believe the complex could be an eligible historic resource, though most perceive it as a "new" building.

The City of Pasadena is currently drafting an adaptive-

reuse ordinance to simplify the process and encourage these kinds of projects. To assist in this process, Pasadena Heritage recently held a roundtable discussion with City Planning, Economic Development, and Housing staff plus several developers and architects to explore ideas and share experiences. We will continue to follow the process and provide input as the ordinance moves forward.

Restoration of Blinn House pergola continues

Since acquiring the 1906 Blinn House in 2021, Pasadena Heritage has been investing in its restoration and rehabilitation, but much of the work, while critical, has been invisible.

Over recent months, at last, a highly visible and important restoration has been underway. The intricate pergola that graces the front of the 1906 Prairie style home is being restored. From sourcing and ordering the needed redwood (the original material), to measuring and making templates for each of



Restoration of the intricate pergola that graces the front of the Blinn House nears completion, as does the campaign to raise the \$70,000 to pay for the restoration. (Photo by Andrew Salimian)

the pieces, to cutting, painting and installing all the replicated pieces, it has been an intensive and expensive undertaking.

As the project nears completion, its entire cost has approached \$70,000, and more than half of that amount has been raised through donations to the Blinn House campaign. Fundraising will continue into the new year to replenish reserves that have been used to cover the expenses.

Briefly



PASADENA HAS LAUNCHED A NEW PROJECT: "Historic Places Pasadena: Completing Our Story." The project's intention is to identify currently

unrecognized historic resources within the city. These would be added to the current total of more than 375 designated historic properties and dozens of historic districts such as Old Pasadena and Bungalow Heaven. Previous studies and surveys were limited in scope or focused on architecture and building types, but did not provide sufficient identification of properties that may have historical significance based on historical events,

development trends, or historically significant people.

CITY COUNCIL HAS AGREED TO SPONSOR A BAD-WEATHER SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS AT Trinity Lutheran Church, 997 E Walnut St. The City chose Friends In Deed to provide motel vouchers and operate that winter shelter for five years with a total contract amount not-to-exceed \$1.9 million. Friends in Deed has hosted Pasadena's seasonal bad weather shelter out of

a Lake Avenue church gym for more than 30 years, until COVID-19 shuttered the operation in March 2020. Since at least 2021, the City has searched for a new site that could replace the longtime shelter, finding few suitable spaces or willing partners to take on the task. This year, the shelter will open no later than Feb. 1, and run through April. Source: Pasadena Now and Pasadena Star-News

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A saving moment for San Rafael Elementary?

Send San Rafael Elementary-related questions or comments to mnmastro@charter.net.



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Discouraging bridge suicides

community would like to see this as an option.

On January 9, 2024, the Design Commission will weigh in. The City will continue to seek feedback from the community through an online survey until late February and will hold another community meeting in March.

- Share your thoughts about how the city can better discourage suicides

at the bridge through the community engagement questionnaire at <https://rb.gy/hiqiwn>

- Visit the City's Public Works website at cityofpasadena.net/public-works/ to learn more about this project.

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The 710 stub challenge: What's next?

- Ian Lockwood, transportation expert and principal of Toole Design Group
- Amitabh Barthakur, a USC professor specializing in land-use economics.

Critical sections of the final CPP document are:

- Section 2: Land use and density
- Section 3: Urban design, development intensity, as well redesign of freeway ramps, and mobility and traffic patterns that were built in anticipation of the abandoned 710-210 interchange
- Section 4: Economic analysis of sources and uses of new revenue from the development of the stub

We freely acknowledge that some underlying conditions explored in the report have changed over the past nine years, but the framework and renderings still provide thoughtful and viable initial alternatives.

Going forward

Over several following quarters you'll hear from board members such as Lee Wallace, who will describe his idea for a double-decker plan with traffic below and residential/commercial and parks above to improve the economics. Is that feasible? Stay tuned to find out.

You'll also hear from Board members Rick Madden and Dan Beal, who will focus on transportation and traffic challenges, and Lee Wallace and Lynn Sullivan who will analyze land-use economics. To top it off, we'll have a number of subject-matter experts to help us along the way.

For more information or answers to questions relating to this enormous community undertaking, send an email to vp@wptra.net.

Briefly

AT ITS ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING in December, the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education named Kimberly Kenne as its president for the 2024 calendar year. Jennifer Hall Lee will serve as vice president and Tina Fredericks as clerk. Board officers serve one-year terms in these roles. *Source: Pasadena Now*

WELLNESS ROOMS MAY BRING A SENSE of calm to Pasadena Unified School District students. Campus wellness rooms are staffed with qualified wellness teachers to help students with social or emotional needs. *Source: Pasadena Now*

THE FRIENDS OF THE PASADENA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOOKSTORE reopened in early January at a new location on the

Jefferson Elementary School campus, 1500 E Villa St. The closure of Pasadena Central Library in May 2021 for seismic retrofitting required the bookstore to relocate. *Source: City of Pasadena*

ARTCENTER100, A FINANCIAL SUPPORT GROUP of ArtCenter College of Design, recently reached a major milestone by raising more than \$2 million to help support student scholarships. *Source: Pasadena Now*

THE PASADENA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION hosted its annual "Principal for a Day" program, through which community leaders and business professionals serve as guest principals at schools in the Pasadena Unified School District. The lineup of guest principals included Manuel Carmona, acting director of Pasadena Public Health, who was

assigned to San Rafael Elementary. *Source: Pasadena Now*

PASADENA CITY COLLEGE REDEDICATED and renamed its iconic "C" building to honor of one of its most noted leaders: former PCC president, community college chancellor, and state legislator Dr. Jack Scott. *Source: Pasadena Now*

PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (PUSD) TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS received a substantial boost in the form of \$223,000 in grants for the 2023-2024 school year, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Pasadena Educational Foundation, College Football Playoff Foundation, and the Tournament of Roses Association. This year, a total of 222 educators received awards. *Source: Pasadena Now*



Photo by Bob Reiter



Photo by Bob Reiter

La Feria de San Rafael: window into Latin cultures

The promise of “an immersive cultural experience celebrating Latin American culture and Spanish influences” was realized at San Rafael Elementary School in December. Students,

parents, faculty and others made the most of *La Feria de San Rafael*. And if the fair’s aim was to unite the community in an exploration of art, music and cuisine from various Latin America regions

and countries ... *misión cumplida*. All proceeds from the event went toward San Rafael Elementary educational programs and initiatives.

Note: The center photo below is of PUSD Board of Education District 7 Trustee Yarma Velázquez, left, and San Rafael Elementary interim Principal Sandra Rizzo.



Photo by Bob Reiter



Photo by Bob Reiter



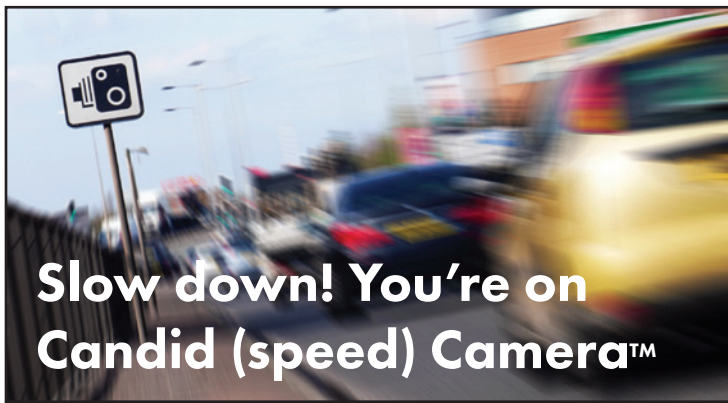
Photo by Bob Reiter



Photo by Bob Reiter



Photo by Bob Reiter



By Carlos Javelera
Public Safety chair, WPRA

Last year California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law California Assembly Bill 645, which for the first time enables California municipalities to install speed cameras that will automatically issue citations to drivers (by mail) who are going at least 11 mph over the speed limit.

Testing the program

Pilot programs are underway in Los Angeles, Glendale, Long Beach, San Francisco,

San Jose and Oakland. The City of Pasadena has formally requested that it be permitted to join the program following the end of the pilot period, which could take up to two years.

Generally, the cameras will likely be installed near schools, high-injury intersections, bike lanes, medians, traffic circles, and known street-racing corridors.

How it could work

In Long Beach, which is part of the pilot program, the citations

are \$50, \$100, \$200 or \$500 for exceeding the speed limit by 11, 16, 26 and over 100 mph, respectively. The first citation would be a warning, and subsequent citations would be treated like parking tickets; no points would go against a driver's record.

Cities eye new revenue source

Proponents of the idea expect revenue from the citations to cover the cost of the cameras and fund additional traffic-calming measures, according to the *LAist*. Additionally, if the program is successful, it will enable the cities to reassign employees who would otherwise be allocated for traffic enforcement.

Yes, but ...

However, it seems useful to recall that several years ago City Council decided not to renew a contract for seven red-light cameras. One

reason was that the program's monthly costs exceeded the ticket revenue. For example, the city found itself \$300,000 in the hole for the 2010–2011 fiscal year.

And the beat goes on

Then again, as municipalities across the country lean into this newly emerging era of autonomous traffic control and hands-free municipal revenue-generation programs, who knows what's next? Boston, it seems, knows. It's "Safety Sticks." These solar-powered camera devices take photographs of illegally parked cars, and then automatically send citations by mail.

To share your comments on this topic or to suggest other ideas for articles, send an email to carlos@verluxenergy.com

Briefly

REMINDER: The Pasadena Fire Department is offering a paramedic subscription program for \$89 a year. The program provides unlimited access to Pasadena Fire's emergency medical system, including ambulance transport for Pasadena residents and those in their households with or without health insurance. For more information and to apply, visit bit.ly/PasadenaParamedicService. Source: Pasadena Fire Department

PASADENA POLICE DEPARTMENT IS "REVAMPING and re-branding" itself, reflecting strategic changes in the department, from cars to uniforms. Source: Pasadena Now

LA CITY COUNCIL RECENTLY ADOPTED the terms "crash," "collision," and

"incident," in lieu of the term "accident." Its reasoning? Calling a violent traffic event an "accident," tends to absolve the driver — and transportation decision-makers — of any responsibility. Source: *StreetsBlog LA*

THE CITY IS IMPLEMENTING A 5-YEAR PLAN to serve as a roadmap for reducing homelessness in Pasadena by 50% over the next five years. The draft plan is created by the Continuum of Care (COC), a collaborative network of nonprofit organizations, government agencies, faith-based organizations, advocates, and system partners, managed by the City Housing Department. Source: Pasadena Now

DISAPPOINTED BY DELAYS, PASADENA MAYOR VICTOR GORDO urged LA County MTA to help identify funding opportunities for the countywide retrofit soundwall program.

Phase I projects are approximately one mile of wall segments to be constructed along I-210 between Raymond and Wilson avenues. Phase II includes 4.2 miles of walls on both sides of I-210 between Orange Grove and Arroyo boulevards. Source: Pasadena Now

AS THE THREAT FROM WILDFIRES IN CALIFORNIA ONLY GROWS, insurance companies have cut back or halted coverage for homeowners in California. The State unveiled an agreement that called for insurers to resume coverage in wildfire zones, but made it easier to increase rates. Further, it required major insurers to cover a certain share of homeowners in the most wildfire-prone areas. Source: CalMatters



Tree of the quarter **Arbutus "Marina" – strawberry tree**

By Emina Darakij
President, California Urban
Forests Council

The Arbutus 'Marina' is a very handsome evergreen tree. It has a broad canopy with dense foliage, and is native to the Mediterranean and some parts of Ireland. It was introduced to the nursery trade in 1984 by the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation.

The tree's growth rate is moderate, but it can grow to 50 feet tall and 40 feet wide. The elliptical leaves are dark green and glossy, with

serrated edges.

Its remarkable trunk features reddish- to cinnamon-colored bark that peels away in layers in late summer to expose a smooth lighter-colored bark underneath.

Its various shades of pink and white flowers hang in clusters, resembling lily of the valley, and attract bees, hummingbirds and butterflies.

The tree tends to have both the flowers and mature fruit on it at the same time. The fruit can take up to two years to mature and looks like small,

rounded warty globes. Initially they are green, turning yellow, orange and finally bright red at which point it becomes edible, although without much of a flavor.

It does well in a three-foot parkway, is drought tolerant once established, performs better in full sun, and can benefit from occasional pruning to shape it. It's not recommended to be planted underneath power lines. As for fungi, the tree is resistant to armillaria, but susceptible to anthracnose. It is also susceptible to insects such as scales and thrips.

The Arbutus can be planted both as a standard or multi-trunk form. It's a truly gorgeous tree, but not very suitable as a street tree because its ripe fruit drops on sidewalks to create a messy and slippery path.

Emina Darakij is also chair of the Pasadena Beautiful Tree Program and engaged with other tree organizations, including California Re-Leaf, the Arbor Day Foundation and American Forests. She is also a past president of Pasadena Beautiful and Street Tree Seminar, Inc.

Help protect, preserve the San Gabriel Mountains

by John Howell
Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel, Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy

As a regional land conservancy saving land for wildlife, all of us here at Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy (AFC), alongside many local conservation organizations and elected officials, urge President Biden to use the Antiquities Act to expand the borders of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.

The current 346,177 acres of the Monument were designated by President Obama in 2014. Expanding the borders would protect the western Angeles National Forest and 45.5 miles of rivers in Southern California, and designate over 30,000 acres as protected wilderness.

Join the effort

We hope you'll join us in this effort to safeguard the critical wilderness

surrounding Los Angeles, both for wildlife and for people. AFC holds and actively restores three land preserves directly adjacent to the proposed expanded area.

The mission

We work to enhance biodiversity by connecting urban habitat islands, like the San Rafael Hills, Verdugo Mountains and Griffith Park, with the biologically rich San Gabriels.

We know that protecting wilderness areas and water sources of the San Gabriels would support wildlife health and prevent habitat loss, essential ways to address species extinction and help make our city more climate resilient.

Make your voice heard

We stand with U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla



Join the movement to further protect the wilderness surrounding Los Angeles. Scan the QR code or visit QRcodes.pro/san-gabriels to add your name to the petition urging President Biden to expand the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. (Photo by Denis Callet)

and U.S. Rep. Judy Chu to protect this critical wilderness, and invite you to join us. Make your voice heard by signing the petition from our partners in the Nature for All coalition. Just visit QRcodes.pro/san-gabriels (or open the QR code with your smartphone) and add your name to help preserve these important wildlands.

Briefly

PASADENA CITY COUNCIL HAS APPROVED AND ADOPTED the aspirational 2023 Pasadena Water and Power Integrated Resource Plan. That plan identifies multiple approaches and policies to achieve its goal of powering Pasadena entirely with carbon-free electricity by 2030 — 15 years earlier than the state target. Many residents had pushed for the plan to go further and outline more specifically how the PWP will meet its goals. Source: *Pasadena Now*

EVEN BRIEF EXPOSURE TO HIGHWAY POLLUTION could cause significant increases in blood pressure, a new study from the University of Washington has found, adding to a growing body of work correlating vehicle exhaust with

negative health outcomes. Worse, the effects are nearly immediate. Source: *Pasadena Star-News*

VEGANS ARE GOOD FOR THE PLANET. A new study from the University of Oxford (England) concluded that those who eat only plant-based food are responsible for 75% less greenhouse gas emissions than those who eat more than 3.5 ounces of meat a day. Source: *The New York Times*

IN EARLY NOVEMBER THE UNDER-SECRETARY of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment heard from dozens of speakers, most of whom supported expanding the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument with additional protections of scenic rivers (including the Arroyo Seco) and sensitive mountain

habitat. Source: *Pasadena Star-News*

LESS THAN A YEAR AFTER FACING HISTORIC WATER SHORTAGES, California in late 2023 was declared drought-free thanks to a year of epic rains. Source: *LA Times*

GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM'S EFFORT TO BUILD A MEGA TUNNEL to send water from Northern California to Southern California faces the same obstacle that doomed past governors' efforts: deep distrust from residents of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. The governor has reaffirmed his support for a 45-mile underground tunnel that would move water under the Delta south into the system that provides water to 27 million residents. Source: *Pasadena Star-News*

Gone, but not forgotten



Bob Holmes

ROBERT (BOB) HOLMES PASSED AWAY on Sept. 22 at the age of 78, from Parkinson's Disease. Bob served on the WPRA board from 2008 through 2014. During those years, he also served as board secretary, and chaired the Public Safety committee. He is survived by his spouse Mary, five children and eight grandchildren. The WPRA Board is most grateful for his service to the community. *Source: Pasadena Now*



James Robenson

JAMES ROBENSON, THE FIRST BLACK CHIEF of the Pasadena Police Department passed away at age 82. While chief, from 1985 to 1990, he ushered in a new era of diversity and inclusion. Robenson spent his entire 26-year career in law enforcement

with the Pasadena Police Department. *Source: Pasadena Now*



Charlie Munger

CHARLIE MUNGER, THE "ORACLE OF OMAHA [AND PASADENA]" and Warren Buffett's investment sidekick at Berkshire Hathaway, passed away at age 99. A Pasadena resident, Munger helped Buffett build Berkshire Hathaway into an investment powerhouse and used much of his personal wealth to benefit local educational institutions in Southern California and beyond. *Source: LA Times, Pasadena Now and Pasadena-Star News*

JOE HOPKINS, PASADENA JOURNAL FOUNDER AND FORMER PUBLISHER died in late October. Hopkins earned his juris doctorate from Glendale University College of Law and opened a law



Joe Hopkins

practice in 1982. He moved his practice to Pasadena shortly after. In 1989 he and his spouse Ruthie Mae started the *Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley Journal News*. He is survived by his spouse of 62 years; their three sons, Yusef, Omar and Jamal; seven grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. *Source: Pasadena Now*



Fred Bertche

FRED W. BERTCHE, FORMER ACTING CHIEF AND RETIRED POLICE COMMANDER of the Pasadena Police Department, has died at the age of 88. Bertche's tenure with the department spanned 30 years from 1956 to 1986. *Source: Pasadena Now*

Statistics don't lie: Our community needs PSC now more than ever

By Ann Erdman
Public Relations consultant

About 30,000 adults 50 and older benefit annually from the Pasadena Senior Center's (PSC) programs and services. That includes those who are healthy and energetic and others who are not as fortunate.

Don't take my word for it. Here's what we learned about local residents 65 and older from Pasadena's most recent community health assessment:

- Total population: 15% nationwide and 20% in Pasadena.
- Living with disabilities: 37% in all of L.A. County and 38% in Pasadena.
- Living below the federal poverty level: 13% countywide and 16% in Pasadena.

- Living alone: 41% in all of L.A. County and 48% in Pasadena.

Most senior centers are managed by governmental recreation departments, which leaves them vulnerable to unfulfilled missions due to often severe budget cuts and staff shortages. PSC is one of very few donor-supported nonprofit senior centers nationwide that receives no government funding and is among only 115 that currently are accredited.

A donor who wishes to remain anonymous recently gifted PSC with \$1.25 million – the largest donation in 40 years.

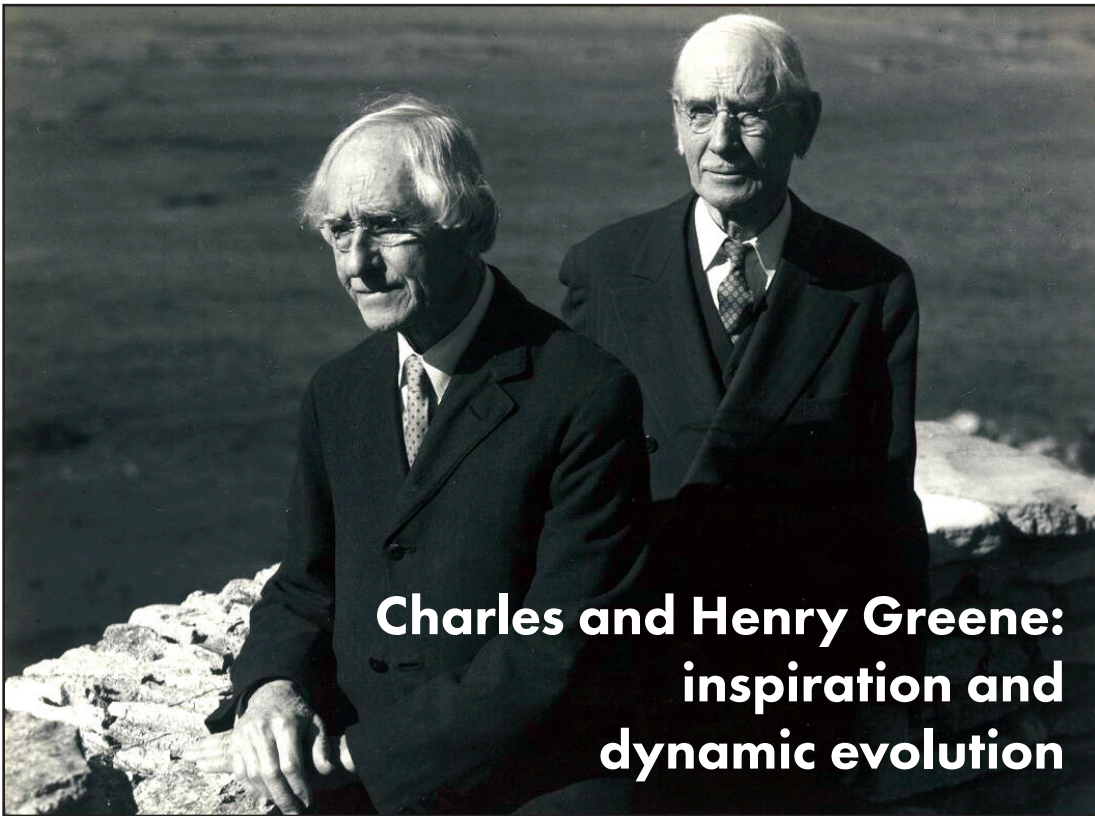
Don't have a million dollars? A \$50 donation supports a one-year membership for someone in financial need; \$100 funds a one-year membership with PSC's fitness



10,000 adults 50 and older benefit annually from the Pasadena Senior Center's programs and services.

center; \$500 can be invested in machine repairs and new exercise equipment, and the list goes on. It's also smart to remember PSC in estate planning, whether you're a member or not, as well as annual distributions from retirement accounts.

To donate or learn more, visit pasadenaseniorcenter.org and click on the red Donate button or call (626) 685-6728.



Charles and Henry Greene: inspiration and dynamic evolution

By Jenny Goodwin
Research assistant, Pasadena
Museum of History

Having adopted Pasadena as my hometown almost a decade ago, I've long been captivated by the American Arts & Crafts masterpieces of architects and brothers Charles and Henry Greene.

The James A. Culbertson house at 235 N. Grand Ave. caught my eye when it appeared on the market in the Summer of 2023. It was a name I'd heard before, but the unique home and its juxtaposition of craftsman and mid-century architectural styles suggested that there was a major story I did not yet know. This sparked a deep dive into the history not just of the home, but also into the lives of the brothers themselves and the inspiration that

gave birth to their signature architectural style.

Born in October 1867 just outside Cincinnati, Ohio, Charles Sumner Greene welcomed his brother, Henry Mather Greene, a mere 15 months later. In 1879, their father, Thomas Greene, embarked on medical studies at the University of Cincinnati. Charles, Henry, and their mother resided at the Mather family farm during this period. The rural setting captivated the inquisitive siblings, drawing attention to Henry's sociable disposition and Charles' more contemplative nature.

After completing his medical training in 1880, Dr. Greene reunited with his family in St. Louis. They resided in the end unit of a three-story row house with the fortunate feature of a large bay window

that welcomed natural light. Dr. Greene, with an interest in architecture and a specialization in the treatment of catarrh, often extolled the benefits of fresh air and abundant light. The influence of Dr. Greene's medical and architectural interests would be reflected in the brothers' future California designs.

Alongside their public-school education, the Greene brothers attended the Manual Training School of Washington University, overseen by their father's associate, Calvin Milton Woodward. Influenced deeply by the philosophies of William Morris and John Ruskin, Woodward emphasized the dignity of craftsmanship. In addition to standard coursework, students devoted two hours daily to manual training.

The first year they honed their

Charles and Henry Greene, 1947.
Courtesy of Greene & Greene Digital
Archive

skills in woodwork, followed by a second year dedicated to metalwork. Upon completing this program, Charles and Henry pursued a condensed architecture program at MIT before delving into apprenticeships, marking the beginning of their formal journey into the world of architecture.

In 1891, the aging Greene parents decided to relocate to the "little country town" of Pasadena. By 1893, they had convinced their sons to join them in this new chapter. The decision proved difficult, but the brothers headed west, making a noteworthy stop at the Chicago Columbian Exposition. It was there that they were introduced to Japanese architecture, a pivotal encounter that would leave another lasting imprint.

In Pasadena, the brothers were met not with a sleepy country town but rather with the vibrant energy of a growing city. An intense building and land speculation boom had transformed Pasadena into a wealthy cultural center, and the community's passion for constructing elegant homes quickly drew the attention of the Greene brothers. They soon found themselves approached with commissions for homes that, initially, bore no resemblance to their later distinctive style.

After marrying Alice White in 1901, Charles and his new bride honeymooned in Alice's

native England, immersing themselves in the English Arts and Crafts movement. Drawing inspiration from medieval architecture, the movement featured massive fireplaces, inglenooks, decorative brick chimneys, and leaded glass windows — a more conservative take than its American counterpart.

On their return to Pasadena, a stop in Buffalo at the Pan-American Exposition exposed Charles to the latest in the American Arts & Crafts movement, from Rookwood Pottery to Gustav Stickley's furniture and the glasswork of Louis Comfort Tiffany.

This journey left an indelible mark on Charles as he tackled the construction of his family home on Arroyo Terrace in 1901. Shortly after, the brothers were commissioned to design a residence for James A. Culbertson in the same neighborhood, with these projects marking the emergence of the Greenes' signature style.

Culbertson, a successful Chicago lumber executive, who had spent numerous winters in Pasadena, discovered a shared vision with the Greenes that led to a lasting partnership. In 1902, he moved into his newly constructed English Tudor home overlooking the Arroyo, with a shingled and half-timbered second-story and leaded glass windows.

The Greenes, discontented by the uniformity of cobblestones, had added clinker bricks to the foundation, retaining walls, and supports. These irregular bricks, having been too close to the kiln's heat source, were ripe with warm browns, purples, and blacks, adding richness and texture to the stonework. The interior featured extensive hand-carved woodwork, Japanese-influenced ceiling panels, and phrases reflecting the spirit of California. Featured in a 1906 *Good Housekeeping* magazine, the Culbertson house was described as an inexpensive embodiment of California living.

Until his death in 1915, James Culbertson continued to collaborate with the Greenes on alterations, including the addition of a grand entry hall in 1907. After his passing, the house belonged to his wife,

Nora Culbertson, until 1950, when it was passed to the Culbertsons' nephew, William Dunn. Upon Dunn's death that same year, his widow considered demolishing the house due to its large size and layout.

Architectural firm Smith and Williams persuaded her to preserve certain design elements by opting for a reconstruction that, despite significant alterations such as removing the second floor and interior woodwork and rearranging rooms, shaped the current structure. The reassembled entry hall is now displayed at the Museum of the American Arts & Crafts Movement in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Some claimed that the remodel made the Greene & Greene designed gardens even more accessible and

even went so far as to say that the combination of craftsman and modern styles "made the house more Greene & Greene" than it was to start with, but this may be open to a difference of opinion.

It should be noted that the Greene brothers were both still alive at the time of the transformation, with Henry in Altadena and Charles in Carmel. One can only wonder what their perspective was on this dramatic change.

Retracing Charles and Henry Greene's inspiration and the dynamic evolution of one of their first signature homes serves as an important reminder that Pasadena's architectural history holds many stories, with many more still waiting to be unraveled. *Pasadena Museum of History* | pasadenahistory.org



James Culbertson residence from the NW corner. Courtesy of Pasadena Museum of History.



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