



# THE NEWS

Pasadena, California

Celebrating 62 years of community service

Fall 2024

WPRA IN MOTION

CITY IN MOTION

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SAFETY

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COMMUNITY

# WILDFIRE! NOW WHAT?

By *Nina Chomsky*  
President, *Linda Vista-Annandale Association*

**L**et's assume you live in west Pasadena, and the news reports that a ferocious wildfire is coming. First, of course, you'll follow directions from emergency personnel and grab your Go Bag. And then ....

## EVACUATE!

Imagine that when the evacuation order comes it's hours before another sold-out Columbian singer Karol G. concert in the Rose Bowl Stadium. And, as it was on that August 2023 night, there is little traffic management, and evacuation roads out of the hillside neighborhoods and city are gridlocked by incoming concert traffic.

OR it's 2028 and the Rose Bowl Stadium is hosting a series of Olympic soccer games that will attract some 80,000 plus attendees per game. Again, the roads are similarly gridlocked by incoming traffic that

*Continued on page 13*

The past few days have featured wildfires that have run up and over mountains, backed down hills and into communities, and manufactured their own weather, complete with towering clouds of smoke and ash that produced thousands of lightning strikes. The public largely believes we can extinguish all the fires all the time, and this is not true. Axios, 9/13/2024

# WPRA needs direct access to 710 project managers, consultants

By Pete Ewing  
President, WPRA

We were all very pleased that 300 or so area residents attended our annual meeting in June. Our speakers, Ian Lockwood and Charles Loveman, did indeed show us novel and inspiring ideas about what Pasadena could do in the 710 stub to create a world-class project.

**So where are we now with the 710 stub?** We find ourselves at a crossroads with the City and with our obligation to represent the views of the west Pasadena community.

West Pasadena has been ignored for 60 years by Caltrans and unfortunately, now, for two years it seems, maybe by the City. West Pasadena residents have received minimal information as to how the 710 stub project will affect their lives.

The 710 stub IS west Pasadena and has been for 60 long years. This lack of inclusion creates frustration and fear of the unknown for many of the 9,000

residents and businesses of our service area. We need access to the consultants to directly share what is needed by our neighborhoods. Otherwise, the process may veer off in an uninformed direction in conflict with our neighborhood and all of Pasadena.

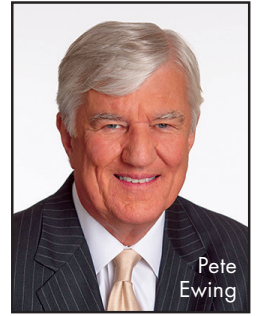
The City formed the Reconnecting Communities 710 Advisory Group two years ago. The group consists of 16 members from the community. The City also retained Perkins Eastman as master planner for \$2.8 million this past February and is now focusing on seven planning elements. They estimate a completed plan in two years.

While all seven planning issues are important, over the past two years the Advisory Group has focused primarily on only one of the seven. We believe that there are two immediate threshold areas that require focus now.

Consultants control the process, which will control the outcome.

**Traffic.** This will be evaluated by Perkins Eastman's traffic engineering consultants;

however, we have already studied the traffic and the impacts of this for over 60 years. Traffic was the catalyst for seeking solutions to heal the ditch scars on west Pasadena.



Pete Ewing

This resulted in the development of the WPRA's seminal work product – the 2015 Connecting Pasadena Project – that took place over two weekends, engaged more than 300 Pasadena citizens from all parts of Pasadena, and was led by three world-class planners with expertise in traffic, land use and economics.

**Economics.** This aspect is being addressed by AECOM, and will tell us what we can afford when we attempt to build out the vision, based on the plan. We believe that AECOM must seriously consider input from commercial developers and even a public/private partnership. Examples of this in Los Angeles are the Bunker Hill Redevelopment Plan and Playa

*Continued on page 12*

## 2024 - 2025

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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.



The News is mailed each quarter to more than 9,000 homes and businesses in the 91105 and 91103 ZIP codes and beyond.

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## Briefly

### VOTE BEFORE OR ON NOV. 5: GENERAL ELECTION

Since all City Council positions in contention this year were resolved in the spring primary election, only six local measures are on the general Nov. 5 election ballot for west Pasadena voters. The topics are: floating a \$195 million bond to retrofit, repair and upgrade our Central Library (**Measure PL**); four charter amendments (**Measures PF, PA, PB, PC**); and one rent-control question (**Measure PR**). See next page for PUSD bond and parcel tax information.

**City Council recently gave** the Rose Bowl Operating Company the authority to schedule up to a total of 25 large-scale ("displacement") events in a calendar year until the end of 2033 – an increase of 10 each year. Source: *Pasadena Star-News*

**Pasadena will launch** a new educational training program for future high-school and college students. This initiative, made possible by a partnership between Pasadena City College, the Pasadena Fire Department, and the Pasadena Unified School District, is intended to address the regional shortage of first-responders. Source: *Pasadena Star-News*

**Construction of the 710 stub and 210 freeway** dramatically reshaped the city's racial makeup between 1950 and 1980. It polarized neighborhoods and increased segregation. Areas north of the interchange overwhelmingly became home for people of color. Areas south of the interchange overwhelmingly non-Hispanic white. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**City Council unanimously adopted** a \$1.1 billion budget for FY 2024-2025. Pasadena Water and Power funding is set at \$345 million. The Police Department follows closely with \$111 million. The budget includes funding for 2,403 full-time

equivalent positions. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**The LA County Board of Supervisors** has agreed to move forward on a plan to increase the number of members to nine from the current five, elect a county executive officer, and establish an ethics commission. District 5 Supervisor Kathryn Barger abstained. Source: *Pasadena Star-News*

**Pasadena is turning to roundabouts** to improve street safety and traffic flow. The City Public Works Department reports that the North Hill Avenue roundabout at E. Topeka Street, which handles an average of 9,000 daily car trips, is now complete. A second roundabout on Avenue 64 at Burleigh Drive is, as of this writing, nearing completion. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**Hollywood Burbank Airport will receive** a \$8.2 million federal grant to fund the third phase of construction of a new terminal building. Source: *Pasadena Star-News*

**The California Public Utilities Commission rejected** a proposal by AT&T to discontinue landline phone service in much of the state. Many residents in Linda Vista and San Rafael neighborhoods opposed the proposal because they rely on landline service in emergencies and when internet/cell reception is poor. Source: *District 6 Councilman Steve Madison*

**The City's Department of Transportation** has installed five new solar-powered devices at local bus stops as a test to provide customers real-time bus arrival information at the touch of a button. Source: *City of Pasadena*

**The City of Pasadena has introduced** a new strategic economic development plan to capitalize on its strengths and ensure continued prosperity over the next five years. The plan focuses on fostering innovation, resilience and economic growth to strengthen Pasadena's

reputation as a regional leader in deep-tech industries, including life sciences; artificial intelligence; and quantum technologies. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**Motiv Space Systems**, a Pasadena-based aerospace company, expanded its presence in Pasadena by opening a new facility in east Pasadena. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**Among the local businesses that have recently opened** in Pasadena are: Lucid Motors, an electric vehicle manufacturer; Topdrawer, a maker of premium bags and accessories; Tomikawa Japanese Restaurant; Criterion Coffee; and PlayLab Beauty, a woman-owned Asian beauty product store. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**Pasadena Public Library System is celebrating 140 years of service.** To celebrate library staff is collecting library stories for lifetimes to come. To submit your fond memories of the library, visit the library's website at <https://shorturl.at/OVvf0>. Source: *City of Pasadena*

**Pasadena's Public Works Department has earned reaccreditation** from the American Public Works Association. The rigorous year-long process involves updating policies and procedures, reporting organizational changes, and demonstrating compliance with recommended practices. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**City Council has approved amendments to the zoning code** relating to some pandemic-era measures for restaurants, including walk-up windows, on-site sale of alcohol, and outdoor dining on private parking lots and plazas. Council added performance measures on lighting and amplified sounds, and a requirement for a minor conditional use permit for walk-up windows adjacent to residential areas. Source: *Pasadena Now*

Screened Water Color Painting by Joseph Stoddard

# The ABCs of PUSD fall ballot measures

By Mark Mastromatteo  
WPRA Education chair

On Nov. 5, the Pasadena Unified School District is asking voters to approve two measures: **Measure EE**, a parcel tax; and **Measure R**, a bond. The total ask is just shy of \$1 billion, making it the largest request ever made by the school district and nearly double the amount that voters approved just four years ago.

“Right now, we have well of over \$1 billion in badly needed infrastructure improvement needs,” according to PUSD Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Blanco. “Many of our buildings are in need of both safety upgrades and modernization. Safety and security-related improvements are at the top of our list.”

Many of PUSD’s school buildings date from the 1920s-1940s, with electrical, plumbing and ADA access issues dating from that period. One official noted that even the windows are well past their replacement time.

Included in **Measure R** are funds to improve safety and security systems at the schools, and enhance mental health and special education capacities.

## Q: What happened to the funds from bonds approved in the recent past?

**A:** In 2008, **Measure TT** was largely used for technology upgrades, but some went to major remodeling projects at Blair 6-12, and McKinley and Octavia Butler (formerly Washington) K-8. Some of those funds were supposed to reach San Rafael Elementary (the only remaining PUSD school in west Pasadena), but they ran out, and San Rafael received minimal attention.

The second was **Measure O**, which was approved for \$516 million. Those

## Briefly: PUSD fall 2024 ballot measures

### Measure EE – parcel tax

**Expected revenue:** \$40 million  
**Tax rate:** \$90 per parcel for 8 years  
**Voter margin:** 66.67% or greater voter approval to pass  
**Objectives:** for staffing, instruction, and education programs



funds are being used now on several major remodels, including Longfellow and Madison elementaries, a project at Muir High School, and another at San Rafael Elementary. The San Rafael remodel, priced at over \$35 million, is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2026.

### Q: How will the new money be spent?

**A:** **Measure R** money can *only* be used for infrastructure upgrades. While the specifics as to which schools are targeted is worked out, one key change of direction for funding has emerged: Part of the bond will be used to convert the former Roosevelt Elementary campus to affordable housing for PUSD teachers and staff. About 115 units are slated

### Measure R – bond

**Expected revenue:** \$900 million to be repaid over 24-30 years  
**Tax rate:** \$60 per \$100,000 of assessed property value.  
**Voter margin:** 55% or better voter approval to pass  
**Objectives:** for remodeling campuses, replacing/upgrading infrastructure, adding/enhancing safety and security systems, affordable housing at the former Roosevelt Elementary site

for the property, with the resulting one-, two- and three-bedroom units having subsidized rents in the \$600 to \$3,500 per month range. The resulting revenue should net PUSD up to \$2 million annually, and it’s expected that additional projects of this nature may follow.

The parcel tax, **Measure EE**, on the other hand, can be used for instruction, staffing, and educational programs. Targets for these funds include making/keeping teacher pay competitive with neighboring districts, expansion of music and visual arts programs, enhancing and expanding STEAM (Science, Technology training, Engineering, Arts and Math) instruction, and bolstering college prep and career training programs.

## Briefly

**The Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education approved a \$335.1 million budget** for the 2024-25 school year and adopted a fiscal stabilization plan to address projected deficits. The budget projects a significant decrease in revenues, including a 61.3% reduction in federal and state funding and a 13.4% drop in other local revenue. *Source: Pasadena Now*

**PUSD welcomed approximately 13,700** students back to its 23 campuses on August

19 for the start of the 2024-25 academic year. *Source: Pasadena Now*

**PUSD Board of Education voted** to move forward with a controversial workforce housing project, approving plans to pursue a streamlined entitlement process for approximately 115 units on district-owned property.

The project proposed for the now-closed Roosevelt Elementary would create affordable housing for District employees. Families attending local schools would not be eligible to rent the units. *Source: Pasadena Now*

# City makes incremental progress on bridge barrier designs

By Dave Bise  
WPRAs Public Services chair

It has been exactly one year since the WPRAs provided an update on the status of the Colorado Street Bridge barrier enhancement project, and seven years since the idea of a bridge barrier was first proposed.

**June 2017.** The City installed 10-foot-high metal fencing around the benched alcoves on both sides of the bridge as a temporary suicide deterrent. The following year a temporary 10-foot chain-link fence spanning the entire length of the bridge was installed.

**November 2023.** Public Works (PW) staff submitted three preliminary vertical barrier design concepts to the Public Safety Committee (PSC):

- vertical webmesh
- metal pickets
- canted webmesh

The PSC directed staff to continue its community outreach efforts and presentations to City commissions, and then return with comments, feedback, and results of a public survey. Lastly, the PSC asked staff to consider alternative concepts, since it did not seem to favor any of the designs presented. In fact, District 6 Councilman Steve Madison was clear in that he did not support any of the three options.

**December 2023.** The Historic Preservation Commission voted to recommend to City Council the vertical webmesh, as its first choice, and metal pickets, as its second.

**January 2024.** PW staff brought the design concepts to the Design Commission, which could not reach a consensus. Commission chair Julianna

Delgado said she could not support any of the three design concepts.

**July 2024.** During a PSC meeting, staff discussed alternative measures as an information item. Two main alternatives to vertical barriers were presented: a horizontal under-the-bridge netting system, and a bridge patrol.

PW seemed to rule out the horizontal netting idea due to construction complexity, higher maintenance and installation costs, and the logistics and complexities of rescue operations. First-responders made it clear that retrieving someone from a net 10 to 20 feet below the bridge would be very challenging and pose additional risk to rescue personnel. The idea of a bridge patrol failed to get support mainly due to the high cost and potential City liability.

Staff shared the results of the public survey to which 678 citizens responded. The question of whether a vertical barrier was needed and would help prevent suicides received mixed results. Of responders who did not prefer any of the options, approximately 92% did not think a vertical barrier was needed.

Since then, some progress has been made. One of the design options — canted webmesh — has been eliminated. Also, installing additional lighting under the balustrades seems to have found wide support.

Next steps will be more community outreach to refine and further develop the top two preliminary concepts (metal pickets and vertical webmesh), based on feedback from the PSC, Historic Preservation and Design Commission. Staff will return to those stakeholders later this year and in early 2025.



And then there were two: metal picket (above) and vertical webmesh (below).



## Briefly

**Pasadena Water and Power (PWP) has completed** the Bellefontaine Street Water Main Replacement Project, replacing 1,400 feet of aging water infrastructure to improve service reliability and water quality. *Source: Pasadena Now*

**Pasadena's Public Works Department** sent a crew to Central Library to examine critical infrastructure and check for damage to the nearly 100-year-old building following a recent 4.4 earthquake. The crew discovered two new cracks in the great hall and expansion of an existing crack in the northeast corner. The library was closed several years ago to undergo a seismic retrofit, which, once construction begins, could last three or more years. *Source: Pasadena Now*

**PWP is exploring options** to prioritize seniors and residents with life-saving medical devices for early access to new smart meters. This initiative is part of the City's ambitious advanced meter infrastructure project, set to launch in the coming months. The project, which will take approximately four years to complete, involves replacing or retrofitting every electric and water meter. *Source: Pasadena Now*

# Striving to maintain empathy The dilemma of Pasadena's homeless encampments

By Carlos Javalera  
WPRAs Public Safety chair and  
Chuck Hudson  
WPRAs Communications chair

[Editor's Note: Data cited are from City of Pasadena Housing Department.]

Pasadena is no different from most other major American cities. It struggles, often within a constrained budget, to maintain order in public while striving to maintain empathy and compassion for those who have lost their way – the homeless, many of whom exist within a mostly permanent underclass and are forced to live by their wits or the generosity of strangers.

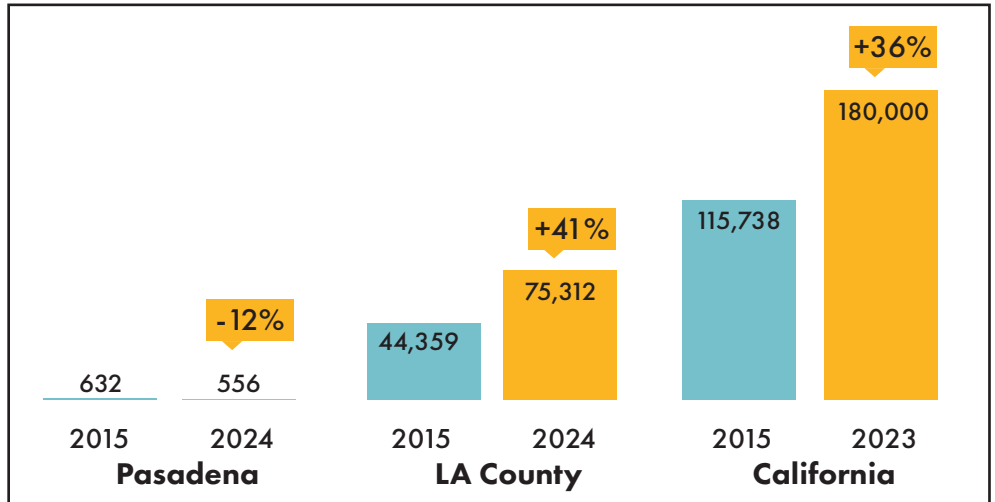
## The annual homeless count

As is customary every January, Pasadena (and other California cities) sends a team of volunteers out to count the homeless in our city over 24 hours. Volunteers canvas the homeless staying in places not ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations, which they define as emergency shelters and transitional housing, on the streets and sidewalks, in vehicles, and in faith-based temporary housing sites.

## Good and bad news

This year's count brought some relatively good news. The total number of unhoused individuals found in Pasadena – 556 – was down slightly from the 2023 count, but there were significant shifts in demographics and patterns.

1. Compared to the 2023 count, in 2024 the **chronic homeless** population fell by 19%, and the count for **homeless veterans** fell by 20%.
2. A disproportionate representation persists for **homeless Blacks, and Hispanics/Latinos**. That is, the percentage of these three racial groups among the homeless was significantly higher than in the general population. Blacks, who make



**Regional Comparisons** As the homeless counts between 2015 and 2024 has declined slightly in Pasadena, the numbers in LA County (unincorporated areas) and the State have risen dramatically by 70% and 56%, respectively.

up only 8% of Pasadena's general population, comprise 27% of the homeless population. Hispanics and Latinos now account for nearly half (46%) of the homeless population, a significant increase from their 35% representation in the general population.

3. Rising housing costs in Pasadena have led to increased homelessness among **survivors of domestic violence and first-time homelessness** since the pandemic.
4. More than half (56%) of **unsheltered people** have called Pasadena home for an average of 22 years before losing their housing.

## City shows its commitment

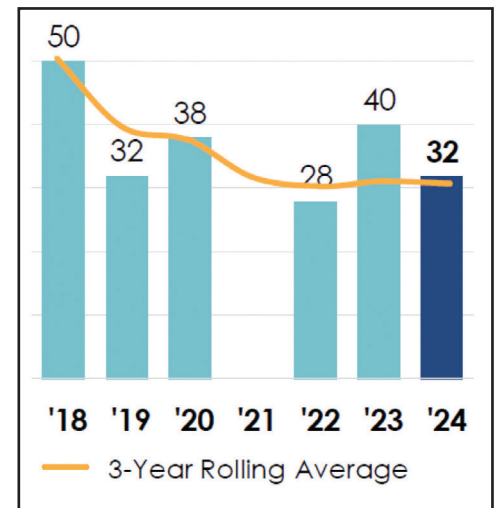
Helping the homeless find permanent housing isn't easy or cheap. In fact, the City in FY 2024-2025, along with LA County, State and Federal funds, has a budget of nearly \$38 million to help reduce the numbers of those who live in the shadows.

## Encampments

As a means of coping with their current situation, many homeless individuals have gathered together in what are now referred to as encampments. The groups find various locations, such as under

bridges, that offer some protection from the weather and prying eyes.

While the problem is crystal clear, solutions are proving illusive in spite of the fact that the City's homeless support teams bring offers of housing, clothing, food and treatment facilities. The City has also trimmed foliage; posted "no trespassing" signs to warn the homeless of the possibility of prosecution; and erected new fencing. The homeless, once cleared out, magically re-emerge in a matter of days.



## Homelessness among veterans

With the exception in 2023, the general trend of homelessness among veterans over three-year rolling averages since 2018 is declining.

## Empathy is one thing; this is another

By Chuck Hudson

WPRA Communications chair

**P**asadena resident, Sarah, is the first to agree that those who are fortunate enough to have a home, and all that comes with it, have “a responsibility to help those in need.” However, she adds, “laws exist to maintain a peaceful society and protect citizens from those who are unable or unwilling to follow the law.”

Sarah’s cautionary tale took place near the S. Fair Oaks and Columbia Street homeless encampment. It involved a homeless individual who felt entitled to set up camp inside a storage unit on the property Sarah was leasing.

That woman, let’s call her Mercy, had “meticulously set up a home with a neatly folded blanket, delicate trinkets and even a toothbrush,” said Sarah. And since she had seen Mercy sweeping the area, Sarah assumed (incorrectly, as it turns out) that Mercy had been hired by Sarah’s landlord.

Shortly after, Sarah was startled to

discover in her backyard a “half naked” Mercy taking a shower with a garden hose. As politely as she could, Sarah offered to help Mercy find shelter, but not in the storage shed.

Mercy didn’t receive the message well. “She started yelling profanities and acting erratically. And once the police arrived,” says Sarah, Mercy “threatened to kill me.”

Over the next four years, Mercy broke Sarah’s windows, kicked in the front door, blocked cars, and “stood in the middle of the street challenging passers-by to a fight.” Mercy also pushed a hose through the mail slot of Sarah’s office to flood it. [See photo at the top] The death threats continued, as well.

At her breaking point, Sarah was granted a civil harassment restraining order. But each time Mercy violated the order, Sarah said she “was back on the street within 24 hours.” Subsequent to the restraining order, Sarah learned that Mercy owed more than \$100,000 in fines levied against her for damages to



Sarah’s business was flooded when Mercy pushed a hose through the mailbox and turned on the water.

other businesses and property. She was also on record for stabbing a boyfriend, and, no doubt exacerbating the situation, for abusing drugs.

While even Sarah says her experience is not the norm, “the encampment under the Columbia Street bridge not only serves as a constant reminder of her nightmare with Mercy, but also sends trash and graffiti to the neighborhood.

As Sarah suggests, there are at least two reasons to address and cure, as much as possible, homelessness. First is because the homeless deserve and need our help; it’s the right thing to do. Second, those who live in the area of an encampment should not have their safety or property values compromised.

## Helpless, homeless and on the street in Pasadena

By Carlos Javalera

WPRA Public Safety chair

**D**iminutive and frail, Emily looks to be in her 70’s. She sits on a folding chair at Pasadena’s Central Park, has a two-wheeled cart that holds her sleeping pad, sleeping bag and clothes. Originally from Philadelphia, she prefers staying on the East Coast. The environment there, she offers, is more friendly to the homeless and those who provide services are closer together. However, the weather on the West Coast keeps drawing her back to California.

Emily, however, believes that in Southern California services for the homeless have dried up. She no longer receives free



hygiene supplies at Central Park, housing at an emergency shelter on Lake near Villa, or showers at gyms and community pools. Orange County shelters also seem to have declined. Even thrift stores no longer offer her free clothes.

Emily admits she has often been harassed on the streets. As she tells it, passersby

don’t seem to want to deal with her because they are not sensitive to or can’t understand her plight. As a result, her first request is pepper spray for her own sense of security.

Unable to work anymore, Emily considers herself a Seventh-Day Adventist, and is received housing vouchers from the Adventists.

She speaks matter-of-factly as she tells her story. She doesn’t seem to be overwhelmed by her situation on the streets. Nevertheless, she still needs support, resources and housing ... desperately.

# A thank-you and reminder!

**T**he WPRA appreciates the financial support we receive from our members. Since it is our only source of funding, we depend on it to achieve our organizational objectives. The member-donors listed below made contributions of \$100 or more that were received between **July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024**. If your name is not listed or is incorrectly listed, please contact me. As always, we thank you for your generous support.

— Linda Zinn, Membership chair, [membership@wpra.net](mailto:membership@wpra.net)

To make it easier for you to help fund WPRA services and initiatives, we have enclosed in this issue an envelope. Just insert (1) the completed form on the envelope flap and (2) a check (made out to the WPRA) into the pre-addressed envelope, add a stamp, and mail it. You may also donate securely online using a credit card by visiting [wpra.net](http://wpra.net) and clicking on "Donate," at the top of our home page.

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# Pasadena has it 'made in the shade.' Literally

## Thanks to our mature tree canopy

By Ann Scheid  
WPRA director

As the potential effects of climate change are becoming more apparent in our daily lives, and we are confronted with dire predictions on a daily basis, the role of trees for the shade canopy they create is getting attention. Pasadena is fortunate in that it has a mature urban forest.

A study in 2009 found that Pasadena's 60,000 street trees and 25,000 park trees, plus the thousands of trees on private property means that over 28% of the city is covered by tree canopy and over 18% of the canopy is located within the public right of way. Compare our 28% to Boston's (18%), Los Angeles's (15%) and New York's with 13.5%, as shown in the bar chart on this page.

In other words, Pasadena's 23.5 square-mile-area is covered by 6.58 square miles of tree canopy. This compares with the City of Sacramento, considered in the U.S. vanguard of tree coverage, which has 23.6% tree canopy coverage.

This year Sacramento embarked on a plan to increase its tree coverage to 35% by 2045. Sacramento's study provides more information on canopy distribution than we have here in Pasadena. Not surprisingly 10 Sacramento neighborhoods have tree coverage of 35% or higher while 69 neighborhoods have 20% or less coverage.

Depending on the canopy coverage in an area, temperatures can vary up to 20 degrees; wealthier neighborhoods with more trees tend to be cooler. The plan notes that trees "not only lower temperatures, but also improve air quality and lower electricity bills."

The California State Legislature passed a bill in 2022, mandating the completion of a statewide strategic plan in 2025 to achieve a 10% increase in tree canopy coverage in urban areas. The bill sets targets, lists resources and threats to the urban forest, and emphasizes tree canopy expansion in disadvantaged communities as well as measures to reduce net loss of any existing tree canopy.

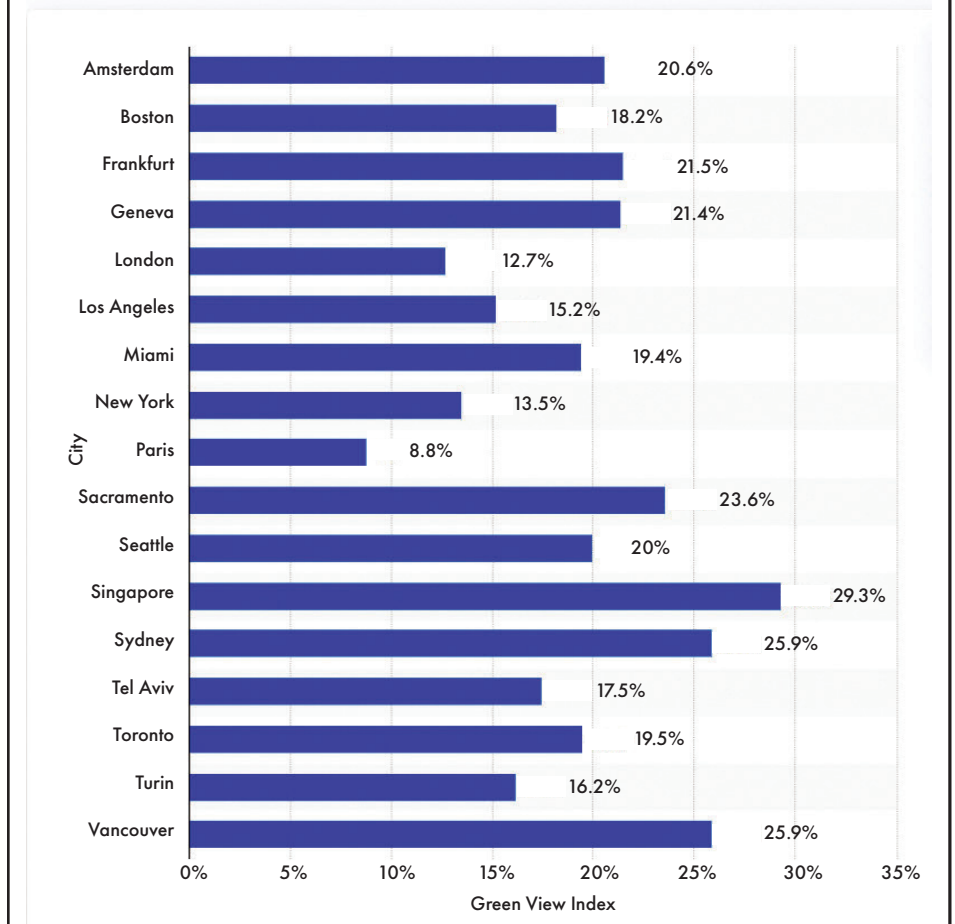
In light of these efforts statewide and in Sacramento itself, it would seem that Pasadena could rest on its laurels. Think again. Pasadena, too, has a greater tree canopy in the wealthier neighborhoods than in the less-prosperous neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods south of California and

west of the 710/210 freeway appear greener on Google maps than other parts of the city, as do neighborhoods east of Hill Avenue and south of Del Mar. The fact that Pasadena's street-tree planting plan began as early as 1905 also means that older neighborhoods north of S. Orange Grove Boulevard and stretching up to the north city boundaries also have well-established street tree canopies.

Pasadena's recent street-tree watering study, as reported in the previous issue of the WPRA newsletter, *The News*, recommends greater community participation in the care and watering of street trees. The WPRA and other neighborhood associations need to take the lead in educating citizen in the care and nurturing of street trees.

**Tree canopy coverage worldwide in 2017, by select city**



# The latest threat to Pasadena's oaks: GSOB

**T**he goldspotted oak borer (GSOB), or *Agrilus auroguttatus*, is a 0.4-inch bullet-shaped beetle with six golden spots on its forewings. It burrows its way into mature oak trees, cutting off a tree's water and nutrients and leaving it to shrivel and die in about three years.

Although it has not yet been seen in the Pasadena area, this relatively new kind of pest, with origins in the southeast Arizona mountains, has only been in Southern California for 20 years. This region has yet to adapt to the danger. The beetle is said to have killed 80,000 oak trees from Mexico to Southern California, mostly in San Diego County.

## County Supervisors prepare for battle

In May the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion to consider declaring a state of emergency and hiring a deputy forester and two assistants to seek out the GSOB in trees on state, federal, county and private lands. The motion also calls for working with CalFire and other agencies on testing, monitoring, treatment and reforestation.

The GSOB only infests oak trees, namely the three that are native to California: coast live oak, canyon live oak and the California black oak. These are the most prevalent trees in SoCal's collective tree canopy.

## When first detected?

GSOBs were first detected in San Diego County in 2004 by the California Department of Food and Agriculture

during a survey for exotic woodborers. Four years later, the beetle was found attacking three species of oak in the Cleveland National Forest in San Diego County.

## How did it get here?

It was likely brought into the state on oak firewood collected and transported from the insect's native range in southeastern Arizona or northern Mexico. Although currently confined to San Diego and Riverside counties, this pest could invade other areas of California ... possibly Pasadena.

## Let's not forget the PSOB

The emergence of GSOB in Southern California may bring to mind another infestation — the polyphagous shot hole borer (PSOB) — between 2003 and 2015. While its origins and method of arrival in California are unknown, what is known is that the tiny grain-sized beetle drills a hole into a host tree and plants a fungus called *Fusarium*, which can spread and kill the tree within two to four years.

Many trees in Pasadena and the surrounding

area, including the Arroyo Seco, were attacked by the PSOB. In late 2014 the Urban Forest Advisory Committee and volunteers conducted an inventory of possible reproductive host trees. The result was that approximately 20% of the trees inspected had symptoms and were removed.

## So, what can we do to stop the GSOB

Researchers are not in agreement about what can be done to halt the relentless

and voracious goldspotted oak borer. Pesticides are championed by some, but they have environmental drawbacks. Some have seen positive responses to treating the trunk with an experimental nontoxic limewash. Regardless of an answer, heavily infested oaks must be felled.

Sources: University of California Riverside Center for Invasive Special Research, the Orange County Register, and the LA Times



The Goldspotted Oak Borer is, in life, less than a half-inch long, but can fell a giant oak in no time.



A volunteer paints lime wash on an oak tree that is dying from a beetle infestation in Silverado Canyon. Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times



## A win for wildlife in the heart of Glendale

A mule deer buck is captured by a remote camera in Sycamore Canyon. Photo by Johanna Turner for Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy

By John Howell  
Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy CEO

In a landmark achievement for wildlife and urban conservation, Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy (A&FC) has acquired 10 vital acres of natural habitat in the heart of Glendale. This is the conservancy's 16th acquisition and means it has directly conserved close to 100 acres in one of the most densely populated areas in the United States.

The new preserve, called Sycamore Canyon, is a critical wildlife corridor through the San Rafael Hills. After studying how wildlife moves through Glendale, A&FC determined that Sycamore Canyon is the route mammals (like deer, coyote and bears) most actively use to cross E. Chevy Chase Drive. By preserving this property, in combination with A&FC's Cottonwood Canyon Preserve in Pasadena, we've ensured that wildlife can freely roam the 4,200 acres of the San Rafael from the Arroyo Seco to the 2 freeway.

Creating and preserving wildlife corridors is the most effective way to ensure healthy wildlife populations. When A&FC acquires land before it can be developed, remove barriers, engineer wildlife crossings, and restore habitat to native plants, we create

stepping stones for wildlife to safely move through our dense urban environment to hunt, forage, mate and establish territories. These patches of natural habitat support large wildlife species, but also the small pollinators, insects, reptiles, and resident and migratory birds that rely on our preserves for survival.

Purchasing Sycamore Canyon was just the first step — now the work begins! A&FC needs to enhance the corridor through proper stewardship to help preserve and increase biodiversity. To do that, A&FC has formed Friends of Sycamore Canyon: a group of neighbors and volunteers who care deeply for wildlife, feel especially connected to this place, and want to share this exciting story with the surrounding community.

The conservancy will be holding restoration days on the second Sunday of every month to remove invasive plants and replace them with native ones. It will also work to secure more wildlife passage routes along and across the section of Chevy Chase Drive that bisects the San Rafael, to provide even more protection for wildlife.

Visit [arroyosfoothills.org/calendar](https://arroyosfoothills.org/calendar) to learn about our upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

## Briefly

**Pasadena Water and Power has secured** a nearly \$10 million grant from the California Energy Commission that will go toward the cost of Pasadena's Battery Energy Storage System, which will be located at the Glenarm Power Plant, will provide 25 MW of storage capacity for up to four hours at a time, and should be operational by 2027.  
Source: *City of Pasadena*

**The Metropolitan Water District**, Southern California's water wholesaler, received a \$38 million State grant to increase rebates for businesses and other institutions that will replace turf with water-efficient landscaping. Next year's rebates will be \$3 per square foot of replaced turf.  
Source: *Pasadena Now*

*Continued from page 2*

## WPRA needs direct access ...

Vista, both of which were enormously successful.

As noted earlier, both of these two threshold issues are very important. In our opinion, if we don't solve both correctly, all of our efforts might not deliver the world-class project the City wants.

The WPRA has asked the 710 project managers to grant us direct access to the consultants to explain our issues, solutions and alternatives. To date, we have been denied access. We understand that the plan determines the outcome. The eventual outcome is all too important to ignore the concerns and experiences of west Pasadena residents who have lived with the ditch for 60 years.

We respectfully ask City management to allow the WPRA to directly contribute our extensive experience with this process.



## One Arroyo groundbreaking!

Years of planning and fundraising culminated in a groundbreaking ceremony at Brookside Park on July 13 as The One Arroyo Foundation and the City of Pasadena celebrated the beginning of work on the Arroyo Trail Demonstration Project. The two small links at the southern and northern ends of the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena are the first section of The One Arroyo Trail Critical Linkages Project, a project sought by One Arroyo since its founding in 2019. Source: Pasadena Now. Photo by SunRose Creative

*Continued from page 1*

### **WILDFIRE! NOW WHAT?**

effectively block those trying to get out of the city on those same roads.

OR a wildfire storm blows into the area during one of these events and the Central Arroyo is gridlocked with parked vehicles and panicked attendees attempting to escape somehow while residents gridlock our "one way out" roads.

The hillsides in west Pasadena, particularly Linda Vista-Annandale, include many narrow roads with sharp curves and steep inclines. Some streets are dead-ends with minimal or no turn-around areas. Many properties include steep slopes and dense vegetation. Many of the narrow streets are less than 26 feet wide, which can interfere with pedestrian access, vehicle movement and emergency vehicle access.

Wildfires are enormous threats to Wildland-Urban Interface areas like

in west Pasadena, particularly on the hillsides. Such fires advance at an incredible rate including crossing freeways. They create their own weather including generating high winds. Most of the firefighting aircraft cannot fly after dark or even during day. The 1991 Oakland Hills (CA) Fire resulted in trapping vehicles while evacuating hillsides, with firefighting equipment blocked by vehicles on narrow, winding hillside roads along with panicked residents. Twenty-five deaths resulted. Hillside firefighting has improved, but wildfire characteristics are just as bad.

Pasadena has a 2023 Wildfire Disaster Plan, but that plan has not been customized for west Pasadena "facts" on the ground and in our hillsides. The plan identifies a major portion of west Pasadena as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. It calls out major evacuation routes as the 134 and 210 freeways unless they are "closed," in which case it calls out routes like North/South San Rafael Avenue, Colorado

Boulevard, West Drive and N. Arroyo Boulevard.

A Linda Vista-Annandale Association Board Committee, in cooperation with the West Pasadena Residents' Association, is in communication with the Pasadena Fire Department personnel to consider a more detailed wildfire evacuation plan that relies on new technologies and carefully detailed evacuation exercises.

**Here's a Plan:** Prohibit Central Arroyo parking for the Olympics and other large events during a time of high wildfire risk. Park elsewhere with appropriate charges and bring attendees to the Rose Bowl in clean shuttles that remain ready to evacuate the attendees if necessary. This would leave the Central Arroyo open for the use of residents and first-responders and reduce gridlock.

Let's plan for wildfires with specific reference to the needs of west Pasadena and in a detailed and effective manner.

# A day without the Pasadena Senior Center

It was Monday, July 15. About 40 people were finishing lunch, and about 275 others were preparing for afternoon art, French classes, bridge, an aerobics workout.

Suddenly, the plumbing stopped working!

Everyone had to be evacuated, and the Pasadena Senior Center (PSC) had to be closed. Emails, press releases, social media announcements were sent out; signs posted; and calls made.

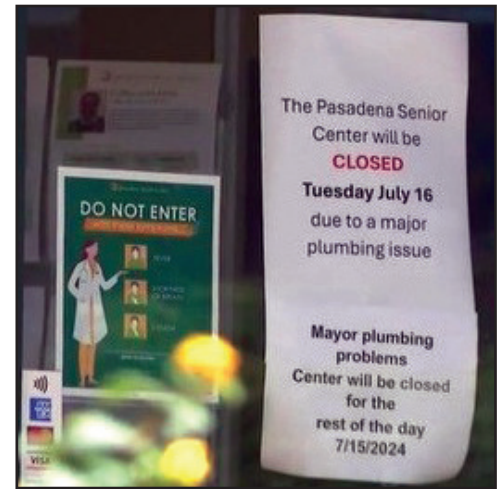
On Tuesday the PSC was closed for the entire day. Typically, the PSC is open every day of the year except Christmas and New Year's Day, something it's done for the past 65 years. In fact, it is what many would call a home away from home.

In spite of the outbound communications to alert all to the problem, 40 people still showed up on Tuesday. One woman who hadn't heard the news had walked in the hot sun to spend the day at PSC. Disappointed, she collapsed in Executive

Director Akila Gibbs' arms during her interview by a TV news crew. Akila gave her a hug and arranged for a ride home, rather than wait for Dial-A-Ride. With the PSC closed, many had nowhere to go since the Central Library was closed due to earthquake retrofitting. The fact is, no other place offers what PSC does: a welcoming place to engage with old friends and learn from new friends.

Luckily, now the PSC's plumbing is back to normal. Except ... it's not. Donations are down, we have waiting lists for our classes, we are running out of physical space for all we need to do, and we are serving more folks than ever. Our monthly food program line, with more than 400 people waiting, now stretches across several blocks.

If there was ever a time to support the PSC, that time is now. Any donation amount is welcome. Simply go to [pasadeniorcenter.org](https://pasadeniorcenter.org) and click on the red "Donate" button. Other ideas for support include the following and can be done by



Not a great way to start the day!

calling the Center at (626) 795-4331:

- Rent PSC's Scott Pavilion for your event
- Sponsor its concert summer series
- Ask friends to send a donation in your name to the PSC for your birthday or anniversary gift

Its closure on Tuesday, July 16 should be a wake-up call for our community. PSC is vital to the health of older adults. Let's make sure this unique gem stays open for the generations to come.

PS: If you haven't seen the KCBS/KCAL news story, check it out: <https://rb.gy/k3uvwb>

## Briefly

### City Council has approved

\$188,455 in grants to fund 30 arts and culture projects in FY 2024-2025. The grants will support 25 Pasadena-based organizations and five individual artists' projects. *Source: Pasadena Now*

### A "transformational" portion of a \$640 million gift

from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott is headed toward Pasadena. Pasadena-based Families Forward Learning Center, which provides free education and social services to low-income families with children from birth to 5 years old in Pasadena and surrounding communities, received a \$2 million gift. *Source: Pasadena Star-News*

### The Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation

has appointed James Washington as president of the new Rose Bowl Institute. Washington, a Southern California native, is a UCLA alum, Rose Bowl Game® champion, and two-time Super Bowl winner with the Dallas Cowboys. *Source: Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation*

### The family of Jackie Robinson

family supports a project to create a new and more prominent memorial at the site of Jackie and Mac Robinson's childhood home in northwest Pasadena. *Source: Pasadena Star-News*

### Friends In Deed, a Pasadena

nonprofit dedicated to aiding the local homeless and vulnerable populations,

commemorated its 130th anniversary in August. Originally founded in 1894 as an interfaith initiative, Friends In Deed addresses a wide range of needs. *Source: Pasadena Now*

### Jennifer DeVoll, president and CEO of Pasadena Community

Foundation (PCF), will retire in June 2025 after 22 years at the helm. Under DeVoll's stewardship since 2002, PCF's assets have grown from \$16 million to \$180 million, with grant programs expanding from two to 11, now supporting countless scholarships. *Source: Pasadena Now*



## Memories of the wonderful Balinese Shop

By Jenny Goodwin  
Pasadena Museum of History  
Research associate

Though it came and went before my time, I often hear fond memories of Pasadena's Balinese Shop, once located at 450 W. Colorado Blvd and S. Orange Grove Blvd. Now, a large grassy area next to a parking lot comes to life each New Year's Day as a seating and setup area for the Rose Parade. From the 1950s to the 1970s, it sounds as if it was a magical place year-round.

Monza and Jim Stevens opened the shop around 1953, investing in the rented white-shingled 1891 Victorian house on the site. Some spaces were opened, others closed off, and an onsite apartment was created.

"This place was a haunted house when we started," Jim Stevens once said. A

simple painted sign and rotating second-floor window display — best known for its distinctive round moon lantern — invited shoppers inside.

The old house was transformed into an inviting space filled with imported decor, jewelry, neckties, greeting cards, and gourmet items like papaya pineapple jam and gunpowder tea. Earrings cost around \$10, while gold rings with semi-precious stones were priced at \$60.

The Stevenses became known for their imaginative gift wrappings, tucking rings into seashells, or decorating Christmas packages with white paper, gold ribbon, and sprigs of date palm.

According to Jim Stevens' 2013 obituary, "Indicative of his generous happy spirit, the shop had a brass plaque on the door that read: Children May Touch! The Owners assume responsibility for any

items broken by children in the shop." His wife Monza passed away in 2022.

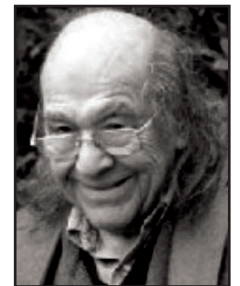
Upstairs, a gallery hosted new art shows monthly. Invitations were sent to everyone on the mailing list, and punch, tea, coffee, and cookies were served at each opening. The shop even ran an outdoor summer cinema series with an admission price of 85 cents.

In 1970, Pasadena bought the lot where the shop stood to make room for more Rose Parade bleachers. The house was torn down, and a bit of local magic disappeared with it.

The Stevenses briefly opened a new shop at California Boulevard and Arroyo Parkway before moving into gift manufacturing and global distribution, and the charm of the original shop lived on only in the memories of those who visited.



The Balinese 'paper moon'



Jim Stevens

The Balinese shop was 'a magical place year-round'



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