



# THE NEWS

Pasadena, California

Celebrating 64 years  
of community service

Spring 2026

WPRA IN MOTION

CITY IN MOTION

LAND USE/PLANNING

EDUCATION

DONORS/MEMBERS

COMMUNITY

OPEN SPACE/NATURAL RESOURCES

## Wildfire protection, prevention Unleash 'the power of your neighborhood'

The West Pasadena Residents' Association invites you to its 2026 annual meeting on Thursday, June 4, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., in the Maranatha High School Student Center, 169 S. St. John Ave. Free parking is available next to the school on S. St. John Avenue, underground (beneath the athletic field), and (for those with handicap hang-tags or license plates) on the surface lot.

### 5:30 p.m.: Meet & greet

The evening starts with an information fair featuring representatives from multiple city agencies, community groups and organizations that will be exhibiting their services and programs. In addition, we've invited a number of local elected/appointed luminaries to mix and mingle with us. They include:

- Victor Gordo, Pasadena Mayor
- Steve Madison, Pasadena Councilmember (District 6)
- Chad Augustin, Pasadena Fire Chief
- Eugene Harris, Pasadena Police Chief
- Dr. Elizabeth J. Blanco, Pasadena Unified School District superintendent
- Yarma Velázquez, PUSD Board of Education clerk and District 7 trustee

- Kathryn Barger, LA County Supervisor (District 5)
- Sasha Renée Pérez, State Senator (D-25)
- John Harabedian, State Assemblymember (D-41)
- Adam Schiff, U.S. Senator
- Judy Chu (D-28): U.S. Representative (D-28)
- Laura Friedman, U.S. Representative (D-30)

### 6:30 p.m.: Business program

The wildfires of January 2025 serve as a powerful reminder that we live in a high-risk wildfire area. This year's annual meeting continues the discussion started last year about how to respond to this risk. The year's business program theme is "Wildfire Protection and Prevention: The Power of Neighborhoods."

In the first part of the program, we'll hear about the significant progress we've already made and how future plans can help make us safer from wildfires.

- Legislation and other efforts are striving to bring balance to the California insurance market, for example, by promoting and crediting efforts to harden our neighborhoods against wildfires.
- The Pasadena Fire Department has expanded and updated emergency mitigation plans to meet growing needs and identify specific projects to address that risk.
- The City has embarked on a plan to protect our shared public spaces, such as the Arroyo Seco.

The second part of our program will feature a panel discussion about the power of neighborhoods. One lesson learned

### Save the date

#### What:

WPRA 2026 annual meeting

#### When:

Thursday, June 4, 2026  
5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

#### Where:

Maranatha High School  
Student Center  
169 S. St. John Ave.

from the 2025 wildfires is that the best way to protect your home is to make sure your entire neighborhood is hardened against wildfires. Since the fires and, as of this writing, at least four Firewise Communities have formed around the Arroyo Seco, and several more neighborhoods are considering it. Our panel of experts will discuss how you, in cooperation with your neighborhood, can do even more to make your neighborhood safer.

### Looking forward

Also, the annual meeting provides the opportunity for WPRA members to elect directors for the 2026-2027 membership year, meet their WPRA officers, and hear remarks from the incoming WPRA president and other special guests.

We look forward to seeing you on  
**Thursday, June 4.**

### West Pasadena Residents' Association



# The best ideas from the 710 land-use, mobility draft plans

By Pete Ewing  
President, WPRA

After 2½ years of study, the third-party master planner Perkins Eastman and the citizen's Reconnecting Communities 710 Advisory Group, have presented the first draft of the land-use and mobility recommendations for development of the 710 stub. The Restorative Justice plan has already been presented.

The WPRA has reviewed all 30 of the draft's recommendations. Among those recommendations that the WPRA believes would be of greatest interest and highest benefit to west Pasadena residents and businesses are:

## Land use

- The City should retain ownership of the property, but offer long-term leases.
- The context and design of the area should be of paramount consideration and take into consideration neighborhood character, adjacencies, stylistic compatibility and Pasadena's unique "sense of place."
- The plan should comply with our General Plan.
- The plan should include:
  - Housing-unit sizes of all types: affordable and senior living housing, and both rental and

- homeowner housing
- public space and community gathering places
- space for retail businesses

## Traffic and transportation

- The plan should also:
  - avoid creating new net vehicle trips in the ditch area
  - develop the street grid to achieve the above
  - maintain good (or better) access to Huntington Hospital
  - consider a "mobility hub" at the north end of the property to encourage transfer from cars to other forms of transportation

## Timing

Don't, however, expect construction in the ditch to start any time soon. Caltrans will likely take 5-10 years to prepare the property for development, which will probably be conducted in phases, with housing coming first. Additionally, planners will likely move slowly with "trial" traffic recommendations to avoid driver confusion.

## Economics

It's important to note, however, that the total project cost has yet to be calculated and will likely dictate what actually can be done. Consider that the estimated cost of Infrastructure alone could hit \$1 billion or

more, a cost that Caltrans may share with us.

## Coming soon

City Council has engaged the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a non-profit group Pasadena has used in the past. The ULI is a multi-discipline, land-use and real-estate development organization and has experience in revising projects such as the 710 ditch.

And with the Perkins Eastman contract expiring soon, the appropriate City departments — such as Planning and Community Development, Transportation and others — will now be directly involved in the planning.



Pete Ewing

## Your city (and the WPRA) needs you!

Want to make a real difference in your community? By committing as few as three hours a month you can help your city and the WPRA be more efficient and effective — and no special skills are required. If we've piqued your interest, please send an email to [president@wpra.net](mailto:president@wpra.net)

## 2026 - 2027

### Officers

**President: Pete Ewing**

[president@wpra.net](mailto:president@wpra.net)

**Vice President and Public Safety chair, Carlos Javelera**

[vp@wpra.net](mailto:vp@wpra.net)

**Treasurer: Dave Bise**

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- Ann Scheid
- Lee Wallace

**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

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

**Editor:** Chuck Hudson, [editor@wpra.net](mailto:editor@wpra.net)

P. O. Box 50252  
Pasadena, CA 91115-0252

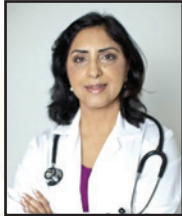
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Visit our Facebook page at [facebook.com/westpasadena](https://www.facebook.com/westpasadena)

**CITY COUNCIL HAS APPROVED PHASE 2 OF THE PASADENA CENTRAL LIBRARY** retrofit and renovations [tinyurl.com/5b3r4p92](https://www.pasadenanow.com/5b3r4p92). The amended contract sets the total cost not to exceed \$186.2 million. Also, in a separate vote, Council approved a \$335,950 contract for related materials testing and special inspection services. Source: *City of Pasadena*

**PARVEEN KAUR, AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE SPECIALIST,**

has been selected as the city's permanent health officer after servings in an interim capacity since 2023. The appointment fills the top medical authority role at the Pasadena Public Health Department — one of only a handful of independent city-run health departments in California. Source: *Pasadena Now*



Parveen Kaur, MD

**TO ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY AND STORMWATER DRAINAGE,** City Council approved a contract to remove and replace approximately 25,000 square feet of damaged sidewalks in more than 200 locations [tinyurl.com/5xvdwnuw](https://www.pasadenanow.com/5xvdwnuw). Sidewalks in need of repair were prioritized for locations with significant vertical sidewalk displacement, areas with high pedestrian activity, streets with heavy traffic, and locations where ADA-related concerns have been reported. For more information, visit [CityOfPasadena.net/Housing/CDBG/](https://www.cityofpasadena.net/Housing/CDBG/). Source: *City of Pasadena*

**MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN FEDERAL FUNDING** will flow to the Pasadena area for major infrastructure repair, including \$3.24 million to continue cleaning up contaminated groundwater in the San Gabriel Basin, and more than \$1 million to replace century-old water and wastewater pipes at the Rose Bowl Stadium. Additionally, the Pasadena Central Library will receive \$1.7 million to install solar and energy storage systems. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW** of the Pasadena Police Department's most serious uses of force found that officers acted within department policy in all cases examined, while also identifying areas where procedures, training and oversight could be strengthened. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**UCLA HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL PLAY ITS 2026 FOOTBALL SEASON AT THE ROSE BOWL STADIUM,** which the Bruins have called home since 1982. The announcement comes less than three weeks after an LA Superior Court judge denied UCLA's motion to compel arbitration in the breach-of-contract lawsuit filed by the City of Pasadena and the Rose Bowl Operating Company, which seeks to hold UCLA to its lease through June 30, 2044. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**THE COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF**

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** will continue using the 12-team playoff format for the 2026–27 season, extending the current structure for at least one more year as officials evaluate potential long-term changes. First-round games will again be played at campus sites, and the Rose Bowl Game will once again host a quarterfinal game. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**THE CITY'S PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT** has launched a website [tinyurl.com/4km37t25](https://www.pasadenanow.com/4km37t25) to centralize access to information about stormwater and urban runoff programs. The website consolidates information about Pasadena's stormwater management system into a single platform. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**PASADENA'S ADOPTION OF ITS 2025 LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN** [tinyurl.com/3n7c7a7h](https://www.pasadenanow.com/3n7c7a7h) formalizes the City's efforts to guide response to future devastating events. The strategic document identifies the city's vulnerabilities to earthquakes, wildfires, flooding and extreme heat, and outlines 41 specific actions to reduce those risks. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**A SINGLE HYPERSCALE DATA CENTER,** reports Pasadena Water and Power staff, could consume more than a third of Pasadena's entire current electrical load, and that the City has no zoning rules, infrastructure, or policy framework to handle one. One data center of about 50 megawatts, said PWP staff, could consume around 36% of the entire Pasadena system load. This is the equivalent of 41,000 houses or 115,000 electric vehicles. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**STATE SEN. SASHA RENÉE PÉREZ (D-PASADENA) SUPPORTS SB 895** [tinyurl.com/33mbk7je](https://www.pasadenanow.com/33mbk7je), the \$23 billion bond measure to increase stability of the Jet Propulsion Lab to ensure it will continue its

mission for space exploration and climate research. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**TECH UPDATE: SOPHIA SPACE** has raised \$10 million in seed funding to accelerate development of space-based edge computers and orbital data centers. The company is located at Mandala Space Ventures, a venture studio and fund in Pasadena's Playhouse Village. The startup also is expanding its staff of engineers designing Tile, the technological building block of Sophia Space orbital data centers. Source: *City of Pasadena*

**PASADENA WATER AND POWER HAS BEEN AWARDED** four state and federal grants totalling nearly \$10 million to help support the deployment of emerging technologies to accelerate the PWP clean-energy transition to meet its goal of sourcing only carbon-free electricity by the end of 2030. Source: *Pasadena Water and Power*

**THE CITY'S RATE OF UNFILLED EMPLOYEE POSITIONS** dropped to 7.9% as of Jan. 1, down from 9.7% a year earlier. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**A LANDLORD ADVOCACY GROUP FILED A PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT** that would, if approved by voters, give property owners and tenants an equal number of seats on the city's Rental Housing Board, the panel that regulates rents for the majority of Pasadena's residents. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**THE CITY'S FISCAL YEAR 2025** (ending June 30, 2025) annual financial reports show stable financial management, despite pressures on operating funds and rising service costs. External auditors issued unmodified, or "clean," opinions on all financial statements, indicating Pasadena's financial data is fairly presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and government auditing standards. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**CITY COUNCIL VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION** directing City staff to develop new protections against federal immigration enforcement activity on City property, establish formal police protocols for interacting with ICE agents, and require City contractors to disclose agreements with the Department of Homeland Security. Source: *Pasadena Now*

# 'Rising Together': theme of 2026 State of the City address

In his 2026 State of the City address on Jan. 28, Mayor Victor Gordo reflected on the challenges of the past year and the resilience that defines Pasadena. He concluded that one year after the devastating Eaton Fire — and eight months after federal immigration raids unsettled our community — Pasadena continues to move forward with strength and unity. "We are Rising Together," he said. "Pasadenans have always shared a commitment to working for the betterment of our community. This past year has proven that once again."

What follows are notable highlights from the Mayor's speech.

## Response to wildfire

The Eaton Fire destroyed many homes and displaced hundreds of residents. In its aftermath, the City accelerated debris removal, assigned dedicated staff to assist affected homeowners, waived nearly all permitting fees, and implemented expedited review and next-day inspections. To date, 80 rebuild applications have been filed, including 50 for single-family homes. Several families have already returned home. "This is about helping our neighbors rebuild their lives," said the Mayor.

## Response to ICE

Just months after the Eaton Fire, federal immigration raids added another layer of fear and uncertainty, he said. Gordo condemned the tactics used and reaffirmed that Pasadena's Police Department will not participate in civil immigration enforcement.

"Our community is stronger than fear, stronger than intimidation, and stronger than any attempt to divide us," he said. "To those who feel afraid or targeted — know that you belong here." Drawing from his own childhood experiences growing up in an immigrant household, Gordo spoke about living with uncertainty and emphasized Pasadena's commitment to dignity and safety for all residents.

## Fiscal strength in uncertain times

Despite national and state economic headwinds, Gordo declared Pasadena financially stable. The City's General Fund increased from \$342 million to \$365 million this fiscal year — a 6.8% rise — supported largely by strong property values and steady sales tax revenue. Transient Occupancy Tax (hotel and short-term rental tax) reached \$19.3 million as tourism rebounded and new hotel capacity came online. Sales tax revenue is projected at \$77.6 million, with growth in building materials and home-related sectors reflecting post-fire rebuilding efforts. Pasadena's reserves now exceed \$85 million across emergency, operating, and trust funds — higher than pre-pandemic levels.

## Housing and community investment

Beyond fire recovery, housing affordability remains a priority. Over the past four years, said Gordo, 322 affordable housing units converted 868 market-rate units into affordable or workforce housing. Today, more than 10% of Pasadena households benefit from affordable housing or rental assistance programs.

## Workforce development and education

Recognizing the need for skilled labor during the Altadena rebuilding process, Gordo highlighted progress from the Career Training and Education Working Group, a collaboration among Pasadena City College (PCC), PUSD, regional trade councils, and local employers. In January, PCC launched its new Construction Trades Lab — an important step toward establishing a comprehensive career technical training center. "Our community needs it, our people deserve it, and together we will get it done," Gordo said.



Pasadena Mayor Victor Gordo outside City Hall. (Myung J. Chun/2025 LA Times)

## Priorities for 2026

City Council's top 2026 priorities, said Gordo, for the upcoming fiscal year include:

- Enhancing fire prevention and modernizing the fire department
- Improving roadway pavement conditions
- Developing of a year-round homeless shelter
- Advancing the goal of 100% carbon-free energy by 2030
- Implementing the Economic Development Strategic Plan

Gordo also encouraged the SR-710 Reconnecting Communities Plan and the Central Library retrofit and renovation will continue moving forward.

## What's happening in Pasadena?

Concurrent with the rebuilding efforts, Pasadena continues to thrive as a hub of economic activity and innovation, he said. "From AI, robotics, life science and quantum technologies to healthcare, hospitality and tourism, we are home to businesses that will build our community's future. Pasadena companies are developing technologies that solve real-world challenges and create positive change," said Gordo.

## Our resilience

By investing in all these projects, Gordo said, "we are honoring Pasadena's heritage while laying the groundwork for a vibrant, connected future for our residents. Together we will rebuild a stronger, more resilient Pasadena."

## A preservation perspective

# Take time to celebrate our milestones

By Sue Mossman  
Former executive director,  
Pasadena Heritage

**T**his summer will be a time of multiple celebrations, and I encourage you to be part of them in ways we most enjoy.

### Independence Day and more!

July 4th will, of course, be Independence Day for the whole country, but this year is an important milestone as we mark the 250th (semiquincentennial) anniversary of our country's founding! It will be again uniquely celebrated in Pasadena at our National Historic Landmark Rose Bowl Stadium.

Though we don't yet know what form it will take (fireworks or not, drones or not), we do know that there will be grand festivities to enjoy as we mark this moment. Hopefully it can be a time of coming together, reducing the divisiveness and rancor that have so colored our recent years as a country. But perhaps that is just the optimist in me, hoping for a national reset of our common values and priorities.

### Our main street marks birthday

Here at home, this summer will also be the 150th anniversary of Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena's main street since the city was incorporated. It will also be 100th birthday of Route 66, the "Mother Road" that ran right through our fair city.

Celebrations are planned in late June, and Visit Pasadena has some information already posted on its website about what's in store, from classic cars to historic places and other highlights of the Route's midcentury heyday. The Gamble House, Pasadena Museum of History, and Pasadena Heritage, as well as a coalition of local organizations that has been working for more than a year to pull one great party together.

### Happy birthday, Pasadena Heritage

On a more personal note, Pasadena Heritage will kick off its 50th anniversary



Sue Mossman

year this summer on July 11 with a tribute to its founders, including Claire Bogaard, Bill Ellinger, and Katie Harp McLane. It's hard to believe that this preservation organization has been active for a third of the city's history!

The event will take place at the historic Castle Green, an Old Pasadena landmark that has figured prominently in Pasadena Heritage's history. More information will be available on the Pasadena Heritage website soon, and everyone is invited to take part. This tribute will honor these surviving visionaries who saw the need for an organization dedicated to preserving and protecting our past.

In our too-busy lives, I believe that too often we don't take time to stop and bask in the joyful and the positive. Even in retirement, I let worries intrude; life's pressures dominate too much of my days. I'm working on it and look forward to some celebrating this summer. I hope you will join me.

**CITY COUNCIL VOTED TO DENY AN APPEAL** and approve the concept design review for a four-story, 93,539-square-foot research and development building on Caltech-owned property at 1364 E. Green St., in spite of arguments from neighbors who said the project would harm an adjacent Catholic school and church. The vote, which came after hours of testimony from more than 50 speakers and the receipt of 728 letters expressing concerns and/or opposition, upheld the Design Commission's January approval and cleared the project to proceed to final design review. Thirty-one letters in support of the project were also received. *Source: Pasadena Now*

**THE DISTINCTIVE 50-YEAR-OLD HEXAGONAL BUILDING** that once housed Parsons' corporate headquarters at 100 W. Walnut St. in Old Pasadena could be torn down and replaced with 975 housing units on a nearly 10-acre site. This property's

original approved use was as office space. The proposed Phase 2 of the Parsons site redevelopment would include 170 affordable units with a modest density. *Source: Pasadena Now*

**THE ROSE BOWL OPERATING COMPANY (RBOC) HAS ASKED** for City Council's approval to host up to six more major concerts at the stadium in April and/or May 2027. If approved, the concerts would count as the 22nd through 27th displacement events in the fiscal year running from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. The stadium is generally limited to 15 displacement events per calendar year. However, this number can be exceeded with approval from the RBOC or City Council. In recent years the stadium has hosted 25 or more approved major events. *Source: Pasadena Now*

**PASADENA WATER AND POWER HAS EXPANDED** rules for customer-installed solar

power. Customers may now install solar power systems of up to 150% of the customer's maximum annual historical usage within the past five years. Solar power systems can also exceed 150% when paired with a battery storage system or when an actual need is demonstrated. *Source: Pasadena Water and Power*

**GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM SIGNED LEGISLATION** (AB 238) that provides mortgage payment relief for survivors of the 2025 Los Angeles fires. The Mortgage Forbearance Act, authored by State Assemblymember John Harabedian (D-41), permits fire victims to pause mortgage payments for up to one year without penalties or credit damage during the pause. The law also prohibits lenders from demanding lump-sum payments when the forbearance period ends. *Source: Pasadena Now*

# Brown Mountain Dam: A massive concrete barrier to endangered steelheads

By Tim Brick  
Executive Director, Stewards of the  
Arroyo Seco

**H**idden in the shade of the Angeles National Forest, Brown Mountain Dam is a favorite destination in the Upper Arroyo Seco. Some people even mistake it for a natural waterfall, because water spills constantly over the top. It's a dramatic sight — but behind that curtain of water lies a very different story: one about mud, blocked wildlife, and a growing effort to restore a living river.

The U.S. Forest Service built Brown Mountain Dam in 1943, during a wave of dam construction after Southern California's devastating 1938 flood. It was intended to be a flood control dam — a pilot project meant to catch sediment, rocks, and woody debris washing down from the steep San Gabriel Mountains, especially after storms or wildfires.

But sediment began accumulating almost immediately. Today, more than 80 years later, the "reservoir" is no reservoir at all. It's filled to the top with saturated soil and mud. Instead of a deep pool, the streambed has risen to the crest of the 86-foot-high structure. That matters because trout need clean gravel beds and a natural river bottom to spawn. When fine sediment buries those gravels, it can destroy the



Brown Mountain Dam is a landmark, but is also a massive concrete structure in the middle of a wild canyon.

habitat that fish rely on to reproduce.

In 2013, federal officials removed Brown Mountain Dam from the national inventory of dams — previously listed as a moderate hazard — after the Forest Service argued it wasn't really a dam, but merely a barrier. That label may sound technical, but it points to the core issue: it blocks the river.

Hikers can scramble up a steep trail around the dam, but fish can't. Brown Mountain Dam is a complete barrier for Arroyo Seco rainbow trout and for endangered Southern California steelhead — rainbow trout that can migrate to the ocean and return to spawn.

Without a connected river, trout above the dam can't travel downstream to the Pacific, and steelhead returning from the ocean can't reach cooler upstream waters during droughts and heat waves. Experts have identified the Arroyo Seco as the most important stream in the Los Angeles River watershed for steelhead recovery.

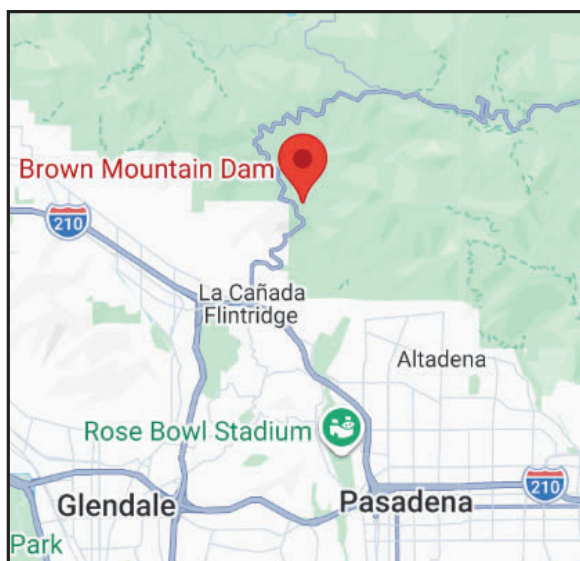
Some people believed the Station Fire in 2009 wiped out the fish, but the trout have persisted. A 2024 California Department of Fish and Wildlife survey counted more than

4,400 trout, and a 2025 estimate found about 3,815. That's a strong population — but the dam traps them in a shortened, fragmented system.

Removing the dam, however, is not as simple as knocking down a wall. More than one million cubic yards of sediment have piled up behind it. If the dam comes out without careful planning, large volumes of mud and debris could wash downstream. Some sediment would help rebuild a starved stretch of the riparian stream zone below the dam, but some could travel miles downstream toward Hahamongna and Devil's Gate Dam — potentially creating new management and cleanup challenges.

Climate change raises the stakes. Southern California is expected to face longer dry spells that shrink cold-water habitat, along with fewer but more intense storms that lead to flashier floods and larger sediment pulses. That combination is hard on trout, riparian habitat, and the stability of mountain streams.

The good news: Brown Mountain Dam no longer serves its original purpose, and there is a growing effort to remove it and restore a healthy, connected river. A June 2024 study by Stillwater Sciences describes what responsible removal would require: engineering design, seismic and sediment





analysis, careful monitoring and a plan for ecological recovery.

But a forward-looking strategy can't stop at removing one barrier. Long-term recovery means restoring more natural hydrology and river function across the watershed: reconnecting channels and floodplains where feasible, protecting cold-water refuges, and allowing the river to spread flows, sort sediment, and rebuild habitat on its own. Done well, this kind of nature-based approach benefits trout, enhances biodiversity, and supports a more resilient water future. For hikers and visitors, restoration can also improve the experience.

Brown Mountain Dam is a landmark, but it's fundamentally a massive concrete structure in the middle of a wild canyon. Replacing it with a natural cascade or step-pool stream reach would better reflect the canyon's true character. Restoration can also create a powerful place for education: Why was the dam built? What changed? What does river recovery look like? And what about those legendary steelhead trout?

Will steelhead return to the Arroyo Seco? Not if the dam remains. The future of trout here depends on rebuilding a connected river and building broad public support to undo past mistakes and prepare for a hotter, flashier future.

We hope you'll join the cause.

Some hikers mistake the dramatic 86-foot water spill for a natural waterfall.

**PASADENA WATER AND POWER HAS EXPANDED** rules for customer-installed solar power. Customers may now install solar power systems of up to 150% of the customer's maximum annual historical usage within the past five years. Solar power systems can also exceed 150% when paired with a battery storage system or when an actual need is demonstrated. *Source: Pasadena Water and Power*

**PASADENA WILL REMOVE 17 NON-NATIVE TREES** from the Lower Arroyo Seco near the Van de Kamp Bridge for fire safety and habitat restoration,

effectively reversing a 2020 Urban Forestry Advisory Committee decision to preserve those trees. The reversal came after residents adjacent to the Arroyo renewed their fire safety concerns following the January Eaton Fire. *[Editor's note: Removal has been delayed until September due to the discovery of a pair of owls roosting in one of the trees.] Source: Pasadena Now*

**A \$2.9 BILLION STATE WATER INVESTMENT** is strengthening supply options for Pasadena. The initiatives can add 2.9 billion gallons annually

to the state's water supply, which will provide enough water for roughly 20,000 homes each year. The project calls for an upgrade of local systems to boost wastewater recycling and removal of harmful chemicals. *Source: Pasadena Now*

**CALIFORNIA IN 2014 WAS SUPPOSED TO KICK OFF A NEW ERA OF DAM BUILDING** when voters passed a \$7.5 billion water bond. But 10 years later, only one dam project — at the Sites Reservoir in the Sacramento Valley — from the list is still active. *Source: Politico*

# A thank-you and reminder to our current, future members

The 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 have contributed \$100 or more in 2025.** If your name is not listed or is incorrectly listed, please send an email to [membership@wpra.net](mailto:membership@wpra.net). As always, we thank you for your generous support.

## We need your continuing support

To make it easier for you to help support WPRA services and initiatives, we have enclosed an envelope within this issue. Just insert (1) the completed form on the envelope flap and (2) a check (made out to 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 the home page.

### Platinum [\$500+]

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Bill Barney	The Ewing Family	Jack and Charlene Liebau	Greg Stone and Cindy Vail
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Mary Coquillard	Beth Fishbein Hansen	McNamara	Randy and Judy Wilson
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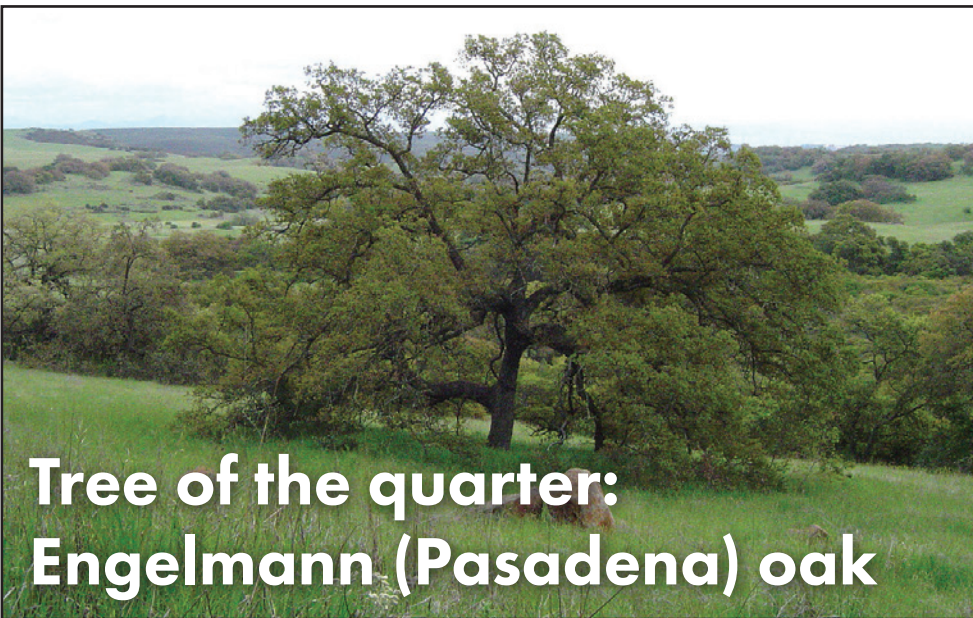
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## Tree of the quarter: Engelmann (Pasadena) oak

### Quercus engelmannii

Origin: Southern California  
Family: Fagaceae

By Emina Darakij  
President, California Urban Forests Council

The Engelmann oak, also referred to as the “Pasadena oak,” is an evergreen tree native to the foothills and woodlands of Southern California. This tree is moderate-to-fast-growing with a round and spreading crown reaching a height of 50 feet or more. This majestic-looking tree provides lots of shade and a source of food for a variety of birds, butterflies and squirrels.

### Propagation

It’s easily propagated through acorns harvested directly from the tree, before they fall to the ground, and performs better in the sun but tolerates some shade. It’s considered drought-tolerant and thrives in well-drained soil.

### Leaves and flowers

The leaves are 1 to 3 inches long, blue-green on the top and pale green underneath. In late winter, clusters of cream-colored flowers grow on long, narrow catkins. The acorns on this tree are oval, dark brown and edible. They are unique among acorns. They sit in a thick, warty cup that covers one-third of their length.

### Considerations

Because of its spreading canopy, this tree is not suitable for narrow parkways. It grows

The Pasadena oak is moderate-to-fast-growing with a round and spreading crown reaching a height of 50 feet or more.

best when planted in a park or open space. Also, the tree is susceptible to oak mites, oak wilt fungus and root diseases. Less irrigation is better.

### Birth of the “Pasadena oak”

In 2003 the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee approved the removal of 36 carob trees growing in front of City Hall on Holly Street between Marengo and Garfield. These trees were nearing the end of their life cycle and were also suffering from an Armillaria fungus, which had no known cure.

A discussion followed to gather input on what to replace the carobs with; the Engelmann oak was selected. However, at the time this species was not readily available. I was able to locate a nursery in Riverside that had a selection of them — all grown from acorns collected in Pasadena, thus making them truly “Pasadena” oaks. Pasadena Beautiful then stepped in to pay for and plant the beautiful allée of oaks that is there today.

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



In late winter, clusters of cream-colored flowers grow on long, narrow catkins.



Its acorns are oval, dark brown and edible.



Pasadena Beautiful paid for and planted the beautiful allée of oaks in front of City Hall on Holly Street.

# How light pollution leads to habitat fragmentation, species loss



Bright lights don't only block our view of the stars; they also disturb animals. (Photo by Johanna Turner.)

By John Howell  
CEO, Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy

Los Angeles' bright lights don't only block our view of the stars, they also disturb animals. From the species in the sea and on the coasts, to the foothills and mountain dwellers, artificial light affects how and where wildlife travel, and disrupts their natural behaviors and patterns.

Artificial light can lead to habitat fragmentation in the same way that fences, roads and urban development create barriers to wildlife movement. Many animals, both small and large, will not pass through brightly lit areas because it can expose them to their predators (or prey). Migrating birds can be led off course by light that confuses their navigation systems. For Los Angeles' mountain lions, who already struggle to survive in small ranges, city lights limit where they can travel and make it even harder to find food and mates.

Many of our wild neighbors are nocturnal and extremely sensitive to artificial light, which disrupts hunting and reproductive behavior. Lights shining on or near roosts can disorient roosting creatures like bats, causing them to not emerge at dusk (when they can most easily feed), abandon their roosts, or stay inside which leads to starvation. Bats play an important role in the ecosystem by managing insect populations. Like many species, when they're at risk the balance of the overall ecosystem is threatened.

It is not only animals that are impacted by artificial light. Studies show that artificial light at night can impact urban trees and shrubs by adversely affecting spring regrowth and leaf development. By altering natural cycles, artificial light threatens these plants' overall health and ecosystem function.

Preserving darkness is a critical step to protecting wildlife. Through city-wide measures and individual actions, we can make a difference for animals immediately. California state law now requires jurisdictions to include the protection of wildlife corridors in their Open Space and Conservation Elements. Cities should be striving to minimize lighting and take wildlife into consideration when developing lighting plans.

We can help from home by being thoughtful about when we use outdoor lights. When they are necessary, make sure to minimize brightness and direct them efficiently and downward. We can also implement motion detectors and timed lights to reduce the effect on wildlife. However, be vigilant about turning off all unnecessary lights at night. These small choices can have a meaningful impact.

# Opinion: Why is PWP committed to 100% carbon-free power by 2030?

## Security, efficiency and affordability

By Cynthia Cannady  
Chair, Pasadena 100

The City of Pasadena and Pasadena Water and Power (PWP) have developed a detailed plan (“Optimized Strategic Plan” or “OSP”) and are committed to complete the transition to delivery of carbon-free electric power by December 2030. [For more background, visit the WPRA website and open the Spring 2025 issue of The News; page 12.]

Pasadena has owned PWP, its own non-profit utility company, since 1906. This gives the City a great deal of flexibility for implementing new policies. The decision to shift from burning coal and natural gas (methane) for electricity to solar, wind, hydro, geothermal and batteries was based on a number of factors, in addition to the concern about greenhouse gas emissions. What is not often recognized is that this transition is essential for security, efficiency and affordability.

### Security

Our dependence on imported oil and methane gas is a weak link in the electric power supply chain. Energy security means being able to access the energy resources needed to generate, transmit and distribute electricity reliably, even when transmission is disrupted by, for example, the 2021 Texas power grid failure and the current war in the Middle East. As Martin Wolf, *Financial Times* editor, recently pointed out: “[W] need to reduce our vulnerability to the shocks in the availability of fossil fuels.” And as oil prices recently soared to as high as \$120/barrel and the price of methane gas skyrocketed, it became clear that counting on imported resources carries an unacceptable risk.

In Pasadena, we have an additional weak link: the TM Goodrich Receiving Station (Goodrich Intertie), PWP’s primary, single connection point to the California state power grid. The Goodrich Intertie limits how much electricity PWP can import when the current level is beneath our peak load. The Glenarm gas plant is not designed to serve

as a baseload resource generator for our city. It also breaks down frequently, and the wait for repairs and replacement turbines is long.

Plans to expand the Goodrich bottleneck are being explored, but it will be expensive and involve some legal risk. Also, it’s unlikely that the fix can be accomplished before 2035. The City in 2018 terminated its contract with a coal-burning developer in Utah, a long-standing source of cheap electricity. The reality is that Pasadena must continue to import electricity, and the cost of carbon-generated electricity is volatile and increasing.

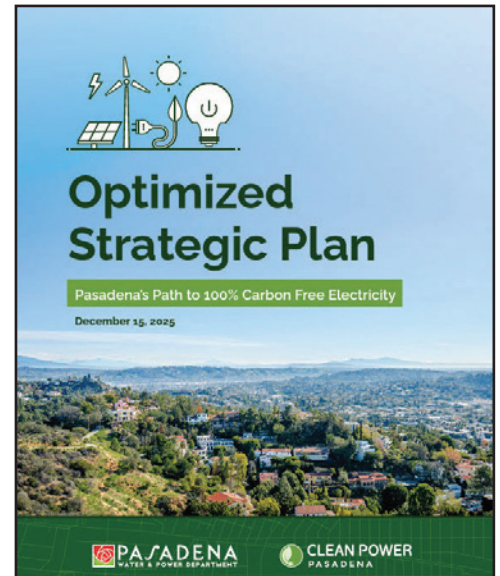
### Efficiency

The OSP also recommended a major increase in local solar and storage. In addition to avoiding the Goodrich bottleneck and reducing our dependency on the aging Glenarm plant, more solar installations can help make our local grid more flexible and sophisticated.

For example, the OSP recommends creating neighborhood microgrids. If there is a problem in one part of the distribution grid, a well-designed microgrid makes it possible to divert power to that diminished microgrid. The OSP also recommends that the Pasadena fire stations serve as a backup with modern batteries, instead of being dependent on the larger grid. In short, a carbon-free local distribution grid can operate more efficiently than an old-fashioned grid based solely on imported electricity.

### Affordability

Affordability is another reason for the transition to clean electric power. Rates are going up all over the country, and especially in California, and are driven by inflation, supply-chain challenges and the need to modernize the power infrastructure. In Pasadena it appears that a major rate increase is on the way. However, residential ratepayers who invest in solar, can dramatically reduce their utility rates. To encourage this residential trend Pasadena



is also implementing a new rebate program to make more solar and storage installation very attractive.

*Pasadena 100 is a coalition of non-profit, non-partisan community organizations. Our goal is to spread the word about the energy transition and encourage public participation. Feel free to reach out to us at [pasadena100.org](http://pasadena100.org) or follow up on Instagram @pasadena100*

## Four pillars of City's OSP

1. Expand the purchase of imported solar, wind, geothermal and hydro power. Fortunately, this objective is supported by California's energy trend.
2. Increase local solar installations on municipal, residential, commercial and institutional property, which includes Pasadena Unified School District, which is the largest landowner in Pasadena.
3. Build storage (batteries) to provide electricity at night and during times when the sun is not shining. PWP is encouraging ratepayers to install batteries that could be linked into a city-wide system.
4. Demand reduction and smart-grid technology. A number of programs can help reduce electricity use during peak load periods and smart-grid technology is a fast-growing technology field that rationalizes and optimizes electricity as it courses through our grids.

# PUSD is on the path toward financial stability; school remodeling, repurposing

By Mark Mastrometto  
Education chair, WPRA

The Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) continues to work toward improved financial stability in advance of its latest report to the Los Angeles County Board of Education (LACOE) to avoid the possibility of a management takeover by that entity. LACOE was apparently satisfied with the progress PUSD made through November.

To support financial stability, PUSD has announced its planned layoffs for the upcoming fiscal year — roughly 160 positions. This number is greater than in years past, due to the extraordinary student population decline related to last year's Altadena Fire. In a typical year, notices come out at this time, and some of these positions are reinstated later in the year, as the financial picture and attendance estimates become clearer.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The Board of Education on March 12 certified the district's second interim financial report as "positive," indicating that the district can meet its financial obligations for the current fiscal year and the following two years, even as

administrators cautioned that the system remains financially fragile.]

## SRES remodeling discussion

Early conversations have begun regarding the proposed and funded remodeling of San Rafael Elementary School. The tentative project start date has been set for the fall of 2027, as of which SRES class and activities will be conducted at the former Allendale Elementary School, at 1135 S Euclid Ave., and could last for up to two school years.

The early remodel plans include some options such as demolition of the current 1920s façade and replacement by a

modern façade. Other plans would retain the current façade. The current discussions are taking place within the Superintendent's Facilities Advisory Committee, whose eventual recommendations to the PUSD Board of Education are non-binding.

## LVES transformation

The transformation of the former Linda Vista Elementary School parcel is underway. The request-for-proposals period ended in late February. Most projections have this parcel converted into a limited number of teacher housing units and possibly an early learning center, with at least some of the existing open space retained as a community park.



San Rafael Elementary School

## THE PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

commissioned a comprehensive study on potential school closures and consolidations, a significant step that could reshape the district's footprint as it grapples with years of declining enrollment. To address the situation and the anticipated structural budget deficit exceeding \$30 million, the board approved preliminary layoff notices affecting 161.35 full-time equivalent certificated positions and scores of classified positions. Source: *Pasadena Now*

**PASADENA PUBLIC LIBRARY HAS BEEN NAMED A TOP INNOVATOR** for 2025 by the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), North America's leading nonprofit for urban

libraries. This recognition is in honor of the Pasadena library's building resilience after the Eaton Fire project. The Jefferson branch was transformed into a cornerstone of recovery by creating a safe, structured hub for learning, care and connection. Source: *City of Pasadena*

**CITY'S PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT SAMPLED SOIL** after the Eaton Fire and found lead at concentrations exceeding Department of Toxic Substances Control screening levels in two Pasadena communities within district boundaries. Pasadena Unified School District confirmed the need for soil removal and replacement after additional soil testing across all campuses. Initial testing at San Rafael identified areas of soil requiring additional assessment within the play field and two

planter areas along the north and east boundaries of the school. Source: *Pasadena Now*

## PASADENA CITY COLLEGE CELEBRATED THE OFFICIAL REDEDICATION OF

the historic John A. Sexson Auditorium, and the famed mirror pools, marking the start of a new chapter in the lives of two campus icons. Over the last year, both the auditorium and the mirror pools have undergone extensive renovations to restore them to their former glory. Prior to the upgrades, the auditorium had been shuttered, and the mirror pools were in a state of disrepair. The renovations were funded by a \$565 million general obligation bond measure approved by voters in 2022. Source: *Pasadena Now*

## At Pasadena Senior Center ...

# Get strong, balanced with 'After Physical Therapy' program



By Sheryl MacPhee

**M**any older adults have aches, pains and physical challenges that are part and parcel of advancing years. Physical therapy can be the solution to grow stronger and reduce pain. But what happens when the medically necessary physical therapy sessions have run their course?

That's when the Pasadena Senior Center's (PSC) **After Physical Therapy** program comes in. That program is designed to be both additive to physical therapy programs that have been completed, as well as a stand-alone program that allows older women and men the opportunity to work with a licensed physical therapist at PSC's Fitness Center.

Launched in 2025 with the goal of providing a one-on-one fitness and wellness program, After Physical Therapy is directed by Chrystal Yen, a doctor of physical therapy who is also board-certified in geriatric physical therapy. Dr. Yen directs the treatment plan for each individual, creating a personalized exercise routine and personalized care with flexible scheduling.



Chrystal Yen, MD

The innovative program, which is open to the public, has caught the attention of geriatric-focused medical professionals, including Dr. Anthony Hou, MD, who serves as the chief of Service, Geriatrics, Palliative Medicine and Continuing Care at Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles, and also chairs PSC's social services committee.

"There are many older adults — both post physical therapy or otherwise — who could take advantage of this program to build strength and improve function," says Dr.



Program trainer Carolyn Zorn guides a participant through an exercise routine. Photo by Peter Matus

Hou. "The program is a proactive approach to allow older adults to maintain strength, flexibility and independence as they age. This is a very unique program that I've never seen in a senior center setting."

Currently more than 50 clients are enrolled in the program with Dr. Yen, whose background was originally in the sports medicine world at UCLA. The sessions consist of an initial evaluation and development of a treatment/exercise plan with Dr. Yen, then each 30-minute session is a 1:1 workout with personal trainer. Each session costs \$35 and requires a minimum of four sessions.

"We find there is such a need for a program of this type among the older adults in the Pasadena area," says Dr. Yen. "As a community-based program, not a healthcare facility, we do not accept any clients for medically necessary physical therapy, only fitness and wellness clients who are independent and looking to perform better as they age."

Clients in the program — about 68 residents so far — range from tennis and

pickleball fanatics to 90-year-olds who have never been in a gym before in their life.

"This program is a holistic approach to wellness, meeting people with challenges where they're at," says Dr. Hou.

For more information or to enroll in the program, contact the Pasadena Senior Center at (626) 795-4331.

**FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR,** the American Public Power Association gave Pasadena Water and Power (PWP) an award of "Excellence" in the Public Power Communications category. PWP was the sole recipient of the Award of Excellence in the Print/Digital category for its "Outtawatta Family" storybook, Kate's Career Date, which introduces students to the wide variety of careers in the utility industry. PWP was also one of three recipients of an Award of Merit for the animated video version of Kate's Career Date. Source: City of Pasadena

# Poppy Peak: The vision and legacy of William C. Carr

By Christian Rodriguez  
Visitor Services and Outreach manager  
Pasadena Museum of History  
crodriguez@pasadenahistory.org

At the southwestern edge of Pasadena, the hillside neighborhood now known as the Poppy Peak Historic District is celebrated for its sweeping views and remarkable collection of Mid-Century Modern homes. Yet the neighborhood began with the vision of one developer whose influence on Pasadena extended far beyond architecture. William C. Carr (1890-1978) not only subdivided Poppy Peak, but also became a notable advocate for civil rights and fair housing.

Carr arrived in Southern California in the early 1920s after graduating from the University of Illinois. After establishing a hardware store on what is now N. Figueroa Street, he became intrigued by the undeveloped hillside rising behind it in the San Rafael Hills. In 1924, Carr purchased roughly 12 acres and built his own home on the hill, becoming Poppy Peak's first resident.

The lots he later subdivided attracted architects and homeowners interested in innovative residential design. Over time, the neighborhood came to include homes by leading figures of Mid-Century Modern architecture in Southern California, including Richard Neutra, the firm Buff, Straub & Hensman, and landscape architect Garrett Eckbo.

Carr's significance in Pasadena history, however, extends well beyond development. During World War II, he became an outspoken defender of Japanese Americans who had been forcibly removed and incarcerated by the federal government. As co-founder and



This photo of the Carr family was published in 1968 in LA Japanese-American newspaper *The Rafu Shimpō*. William C. Carr and his spouse, Beatrice, are in the center of the photo. (From the collection of John Carr)  
HEAD: Poppy Peak: The vision and legacy of William C. Carr

chairman of Pasadena's "Friends of the American Way,"

He wrote letters to political leaders and publicly opposed racial prejudice, advocating for the civil rights of Japanese Americans. The organization even helped sponsor the return of Pasadenans from the Amache incarceration camp in Colorado. Much excellent research on Carr's wartime activism has been written by Suzie Ling, professor of History and Asian American Studies at Pasadena City College.

Carr continued this commitment through his work in real estate after the war. At a time when racially restrictive housing covenants were common throughout Southern California, Carr and his son John deliberately sold homes in the San Rafael Hills to Japanese American, Jewish, and Africa-American families. These actions challenged the entrenched "color line" and drew controversy among some local realtors and residents.

Among those who broke the barrier was architect Kenneth Nishimoto, who designed and built his own home in 1957. His home was later featured in the Japanese-American newspaper, *The Rafu Shimpō*. Nishimoto's family still recalls Carr's community spirit, remembering how he

welcomed neighbors to use the Carr family swimming pool.

Sadly, the Carr home that began the Poppy Peak neighborhood was significantly damaged by fire in 2023. Still, the quiet streets and striking architecture of Poppy Peak very much reflect the forward-thinking vision of its original developer, William C. Carr.

## HUNTINGTON HEALTH, A CEDARS-SINAI AFFILIATE, ANNOUNCED A \$500,000 DONATION

from Panda Cares Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Panda Restaurant Group founded by Andrew and Peggy Cherng. The contribution will directly support neonatal intensive care and pediatric services at Huntington Hospital in Pasadena. Source: *Pasadena Now*

## PASADENA PUBLIC LIBRARY HAS

ANNOUNCED ITS BOOK SELECTION for Pasadena's 2026 *One City, One Story* community reading celebration: "The Dream Hotel," by author Laila Lalami. In its 24th year, the program is designed to broaden and deepen an appreciation of reading and literature and to promote tolerance and understanding of differing points of view. Source: *Pasadena Now*



**WEST PASADENA  
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

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Visit our website @ wpra.net

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PERMIT #1105

## Pasadena: city on call

### Police Department

Emergency..... 9-1-1  
Pasadena Crime Stoppers ... (800) 222-8477  
Non-emergency..... (626) 744-4241

### City services

Full listing of city phone numbers:  
[cityofpasadena.net/contact](http://cityofpasadena.net/contact)



### CITY SERVICE CENTER

One Call to City Hall  
626.744.7311

### Submit service requests — Get answers

#### Call center hours of operation:

**Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

Download the CSC App!



ANDROID



IPHONE

## Express yourself

### Pasadena

Mayor Victor Gordo  
[vgordo@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:vgordo@cityofpasadena.net)

City Manager Miguel Márquez  
[migueldmarquez@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:migueldmarquez@cityofpasadena.net)

Police Chief Eugene Harris  
[eharris@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:eharris@cityofpasadena.net)

Fire Chief Chad Augustin  
[caugustin@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:caugustin@cityofpasadena.net)

City Clerk Mark Jomsky  
[mjomsky@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:mjomsky@cityofpasadena.net)

### City Council

Tyron Hampton, Council District 1  
[thampton@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:thampton@cityofpasadena.net)

Rick Cole, Council District 2  
[rcole@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:rcole@cityofpasadena.net)

Justin Jones, Council District 3  
[justinjones@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:justinjones@cityofpasadena.net)

Gene Masuda, Council District 4  
[gmasuda@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:gmasuda@cityofpasadena.net)

Jessica Rivas, Council District 5  
and Vice Mayor  
[jrivas@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:jrivas@cityofpasadena.net)

Steve Madison, Council District 6  
[smadison@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:smadison@cityofpasadena.net)

Jason Lyon, Council District 7  
[jlyon@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:jlyon@cityofpasadena.net)

### Los Angeles County

LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger  
(District 5): [Kathryn@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:Kathryn@bos.lacounty.gov)

### California

Governor Gavin Newsom  
[gov.ca.gov/contact/](http://gov.ca.gov/contact/)

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez (D-25):  
[senator.perez@senate.ca.gov](mailto:senator.perez@senate.ca.gov)

Assemblymember John Harabedian (D-41):  
[assemblymember.harabedian@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.harabedian@assembly.ca.gov)

### United States

President Donald J. Trump  
[president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

Vice President JD Vance  
[vice.president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:vice.president@whitehouse.gov)

Senator Adam Schiff  
[schiff.senate.gov/share-your-opinion](http://schiff.senate.gov/share-your-opinion)

Senator Alex Padilla  
[padilla.senate.gov/contact/contact-form](http://padilla.senate.gov/contact/contact-form)

Representative Judy Chu (D-28):  
[chu.house.gov/contact](http://chu.house.gov/contact)

Representative Laura Friedman (D-30):  
[friedman.house.gov/contact](http://friedman.house.gov/contact)