

## 2018 Highlights of the City of Pasadena and District 4

### Thank you for being a supporter of District 4!

#### Pasadena Balances Budget Seven Years in a Row

By June, 2018, Pasadena City Council had adopted a balanced budget seven years in a row. The previous 10 years were unbalanced so this is a continued improvement. The budget was \$236.8 million for fiscal year 2018/19 for the General Fund and the proposed budget for fiscal 2018/19 is \$236.8 million. According to the Finance Department, there has been an increase in sales tax, property tax revenue, utility user tax and transient occupancy tax (TOT) charged to visitors by hotels. Speaking of hotels, the Hyatt Place Hotel at Paseo Colorado opened in December 2018 just in time for New Years Day.

The TOT continues to improve because of the increase in tourism, business travel and bookings at the Pasadena Convention Center.

Starting 2018, our General Fund Five-Year Financial Forecast shows that we need to change the amount of total employees to help balance the budget, so as you can see below we have less total employees in 2018. The inevitable conclusion is that we cannot support the existing payroll of 2200 employees indefinitely and another major problem is the city's required contribution to the employee retirement system- CalPERS.

The passing of Measure I will definitely help support Pasadena's budget and pay for the increases to CalPERS without using our reserves.

In 2017, Pasadena had 2,218 employees.

In 2018, Pasadena had 2,171 employees.

During 2017, the City Council authorized the full funding of General Fund reserves in the amount of \$47.3 million, which represents 20 percent of the General Fund operating budget which are 15% of appropriations as the desired level for emergency contingency reserve for the General Fund and 5% of appropriations as the desired level of operating reserves. As of June 30, 2017 both reserves are fully funded at \$35.5 million and \$11.8 million respectively. In addition to these reserves, the City Council also authorized the establishment of a Section 115 trust for both pension plan funding. The pension trust will receive an initial contribution of \$10 million and Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) trust will receive \$2 million with a long-term plan of additional contributions to help off set cost increases in ten to fifteen years. Having fully funded reserves is part of a prudent fiscal policy of the organization.

#### Pasadena's Police Chief Phillip Sanchez Retires On April 18, 2018

We gratefully extend our sincere thanks for the outstanding leadership of Chief Sanchez and the Pasadena Police for protecting District 4. Whenever Chief Sanchez was needed, he made himself available, always giving his best effort to keep Pasadena safe. Our deepest appreciation goes to the Chief and his wonderful wife Debra. Wish you the best!

### **Home Depot Committee Meetings May 30, 2018 and October 3, 2018**

Home Depot committee members met with David Reyes, Director of Pasadena's Planning Department and the Home Depot representatives. These committee members (residents of District 4) and members of Pasadena Heritage gave valuable input with reasonable and challenging ideas to enhance the former Avon site at these meetings.

By the 2nd meeting four months later on October 3, 2018, Home Depot representatives gave a presentation about a new Home Depot store on that former Avon site with main access from Walnut Street. Clearly the Home Depot staff had listened carefully to the suggestions of the committee members from the first meeting by including their input into the plan.

Committee members: Greg Jones, Chair of the Committee, Alan Lamson, Harvey Cordner, Jeff Ross, Ellie Podway, Roger Hammock, Tim Price, Laura Ellersieck, Perry Helm, Kathy Vacio, Sue Mossman and Adam Rajper. They all deserve a special thanks and much appreciation for their service to our District 4 community.

### **Minimum Wage July 1, 2018**

On July 1, 2017 the minimum wage in Pasadena went from \$12.00 per hour to \$13.25 on July 1, 2018. The City will review the impact of those raises in 2019 to determine a raise to the minimum wage of \$15.00 per hour by the year 2020. Since our increase started, the State of California now has a plan to increase the minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour. So currently Pasadena's timing for minimum wage increases are different from the state but I believe it will all come out to be the same at the end. It is a positive thing that people will make more money yet a major concern is the financial impact on small businesses in Pasadena. Local businesses are concerned about how an increase in minimum wage may force them to raise prices resulting in the possibility of having fewer customers by which they may have to start cutting hours of employees.

As a part of the City's Minimum Wage Program, the city provided outreach, education and training to Pasadena employees and employers on minimum wage rules. As of July 1, 2018 seven minimum wage violation investigations were opened, five of which resulted in retroactive payments to employees.

### **Metro Bike Share Program Dismantled August 20, 2018**

Pasadena had over 30 new bike stations and Metro started removing bike share docking stations after the City asked to terminate the Pasadena Bike Share program. The City cited unanticipated costs and lack of sponsorships as some reasons for ending the program. One of the main reasons to pull out of the Bike Share program was the Department of Transportation found itself pouring about \$98,000 per month

into the program to cover costs.

The program was launched in July of 2017. The City had to pay Metro \$468,411 from its Measure R funds that month to cover initial operation and maintenance costs before the bike stations were actually installed. The program enjoyed a high of 10,764 rides in September 2017, and since then suffered a rapid and steady decline to December 2017, it had 3,826 rides.

### **OSH Closed our Pasadena Store on Veteran's Day 2018 August 22, 2018**

Lowe's closed all Orchard Supply Hardware stores nationwide. OSH was founded in 1931 in San Jose, California, and acquired by Lowe's in 2013 with 99 stores in California, Oregon and Florida. Lowe's is closing the stores to focus on its core home improvement business.

### **Home Invasion Meeting at Monte Vista Grove Homes August 22, 2018**

On August 19, 2018 on the block of Thorndike Road, a 13 year old boy was at home when gunmen forced their way in through the back, ransacked the home, fleeing with a cell phone and other possible items. The boy was unhurt.

The Sunday before on August 12, an elderly man and woman were victimized on Brigden Road in the next district when four men forced their way into the home pistol whipped the man and demanded money and valuables. They also ransacked the home before fleeing with cash and other items.

At the Home Invasion Meeting at Monte Vista Grove Homes, Interim Police Chief John Perez gave an informative presentation responding to all questions and answers from the residents until the meeting was over. Important home safety tips reminded residents of their responsibility to be prepared and vigilant. Remember to set your alarm. If you don't have one, consider getting an alarm. Don't leave windows open. Start talking to neighbors and look out for each other. Chief Perez spoke how our city is very safe but we all have to be pro-active and do what we need to do to be safe. Make sure to lock side gates. If someone comes to your door don't open the door answer through your door or window to let them know that you are home. Make sure your light bulbs are working and look into investing in a camera system.

### **Motel Conversion Plan, Council Approves a Zoning Change October 1, 2018**

Pasadena City Council approved motel conversions into permanent supportive housing as a solution of getting people off the streets. The zone change creates a streamlined process to allow owners of hotels and motels with fewer of 80 rooms to convert them into permanent supportive housing. All projects would require a public hearing before moving forward. The type of motels in my mind were the many motels in District 4 and I could not get any real assurance that multiple motels would not be converted in our district.

The council voted 7 to 1 in favor for the ordinance zone change. I was the lone council vote against the motel conversion plan.

### **Public Outcry Halts Conversion of Ramada Inn into Homeless Housing October 17, 2018**

A District 2 and 7 community meeting about converting the Ramada Inn at 2156 E. Colorado Blvd. into homeless housing met with such overwhelmingly negative reaction from residents that the City officials said the project has been pulled from further consideration.

### **Orange Grove Boulevard Road Diet was Terminated October 15, 2018**

City Council unanimously shelved the Orange Grove Boulevard Road Diet and traffic calming plan for an over a one-mile plus of Orange Grove Boulevard. The proposed pedestrian and bicycle improvement program will be eliminated from the future projects Section of the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), yet two new traffic signals from a related plan will still be considered for installation.

At a community meeting on March 22, 2018 at the Pasadena City College Community Education building on Foothill Blvd many speakers felt that trying to slow traffic on Orange Grove Boulevard by a Road Diet would cause traffic to spill over onto nearby parallel running streets causing dangerous traffic conditions in the various neighborhoods.

The plan for the road diet was to convert 1.8 miles of Orange Grove Boulevard from Sierra Madre Villa Avenue to Allen Avenue from a traditional street to "complete street" by reducing it from two traffic lanes in each direction to one, then adding back a turn lane running down the center of the street and two bicycle lanes along the sides of the street. Even though the Orange Grove Boulevard Road Diet has been terminated, most residents that spoke at the March 22, 2018 meeting said that Orange Grove Boulevard still needs more safety considerations and for ideas to improve the slowing of traffic speed, **but no road diet!**

### **New Public Information Officer October 2018**

Lisa Derderian has been appointed to City Public Information Officer by City Manager Steve Mermell. Lisa has a long history working for Pasadena with almost 16 years with the City as Emergency Management Coordinator and Fire Public Information Officer. Promoted in October to be the Public Information Officer (PIO) she will still continue with emergency responsibilities. Lisa is a proud resident of Hastings Ranch. Congratulations Lisa!

### **Danny Wooten Found Guilty of Embezzlement in Pasadena Over \$6 Million in Public Funds November 6, 2018**

A former Pasadena City employee and a contractor were convicted of charges stemming from the embezzlement of millions of dollars from Pasadena. Danny Wooten, a former Pasadena's Public Works Department and Tyrone Collins of Collins Electric were taken into custody following the jury's verdict in a downtown Los Angeles courtroom.

The jury found Wooten guilty of 53 felony counts, including embezzlement by a public or private officer, misappropriation of public funds and conflict of interest. Wooten while working for Pasadena Public Works, which was in charge of moving the city's utility line underground. He created false invoices for the program and stole roughly

\$3.5 million, according to the District Attorney's Office.

Collins was convicted of 10 felony counts each of embezzlement by a public or private officer and misappropriation of public funds.

Wooten funneled some of the stolen money to Collins, who owns Collins Electric. The embezzlement was discovered in 2014 after the city ordered an audit. The two were due back in court for sentencing January 11, 2019.

The City of Pasadena in January 2016 received \$5 million from its insurance carrier to settle a claim involving the alleged embezzlement.

**January 11, 2019**, Danny Wooten was sentenced to 14 years in prison and ordered to pay back \$3.5 million. His co-defendant, Tyrone Collins owner of Collins Electric which some of the money was embezzled, was sentenced to 7 years and ordered to pay back \$900,000 dollars.

### **New Sales Tax Measure Overwhelmingly Passes November 6, 2018**

Pasadena voters supported the 3/4 cent sales tax that is estimated to bring Pasadena City around \$21 Million. Measure I that mandated a new municipal 3/4 cent sales tax passed by 67.68%, yet only 50% plus 1 was needed. It showed what well-informed residents were willing to tax themselves and to invest in their city as well in their public schools. The sales tax that voters passed is to raise the tax from 9.5% to 10.25%.

Measure J is an advisory measure which recommends that one-third of the new sales tax revenue be shared with Pasadena Unified School District, subject to the City Council's approval. Measure J passed by 70.43%, a wider margin than Measure I, so it tell us on the City Council that our residents support Pasadena Unified School District.

Our City Manager, Mr. Mermell said since the great recession (2008) we have cut \$19 million from the city's budget and eliminated 123 positions, In 2017 the city eliminated \$4 million in costs, mostly from not filling vacant positions. The city was facing a deficit of \$12 million by 2024, so the measure passing will close the gap, avoid layoffs and keep services at levels that our residents are used to having.

With Measure I passing it will provide a locally-control funding source that will help us maintain the quality of service levels and address our much needed infrastructure needs includes support to having a strong public school system. The funds could help the city come up with millions needed to fix sidewalks and aging fire stations.

### **Pasadena Prepared New Marijuana Regulations**

57% of California voters voted yes on November 8, 2016 for Prop 64 to legalize marijuana. The ballot measure made it legal for adults 21 and older to possess up to an ounce of cannabis and to grow up to six marijuana plants per household. The state would have up to January 1, 2018 to get regulations and licensing in place so that sanctioned sales could begin. That process has begun in Pasadena.

**Starting January 2019**, to regulate pot, the City of Pasadena will be starting with an application fee of \$13,654.00 to be charged to all applicants. Following the establishment of an application selection committee, each application will be scored

and the best applicants will be chosen based on the scoring. The Planning Commission will review, then the applicants are invited to move forward with the permitting process later in the year with an additional cost of \$10,639. This second step is similar in process and cost to the city's existing conditional use permits.

Voters in June 2018 approved a measure that allows up to six retail dispensaries, four growing facilities and four testing labs in Pasadena.

No more than one of each type of business, retail, cultivation and testing will be allowed in any one district. Other state and local rules limit where cannabis businesses can open. For example, they must be 600 feet from residential neighborhoods, schools, churches and parks. Based on these restrictions there may be less opportunity to issue permits which may only allow 3 or 4 permits. The city has been holding workshops going over the application procedures and selection process.

Pasadena does have illegal pot shops and those illegal shops will not be allowed to apply for permits per new rules.

Voters also approved in June a new tax for retail marijuana businesses at 6% and all other new marijuana-related businesses at 4%.

The city's existing smoking ban which prohibits smoking within 25 feet of public entrances and in multifamily buildings also includes marijuana.

City Manager Steve Mermell's office is overseeing the overall development and implementation of the commercial cannabis program while departments of planning, finance and public health are leading and developing different aspects of the program.

### **Metro to Construct a Grade Separation for the Gold Line Train at California Boulevard December 6, 2018**

The Gold Line train and auto traffic will be on different grades so that auto traffic, bikers and pedestrians will not have to wait for trains to cross any longer. Think of it like a bridge.

Metro Board approved \$515 million new transit projects that have been set aside for the now abandoned 710 Freeway extension projects to other projects and has decided to build a grade separation for California Boulevard for the Gold Line crossing. The project will cost \$105 million. The preliminary design plan calls to raise the train tracks 12 feet and to lower California 9 feet to create the grade separation. That would mean no more waiting for the Gold Line Train to cross at California Blvd.

The project may mean closing California Boulevard for a year and it could take 2 years to build. It will be inconvenient but the end result would be the city's first east-west throughway for all vehicles and pedestrians without waiting for a train.

### **New Police Chief Hired for City of Pasadena December 18, 2018**

John Eduardo Perez, a thirty three year veteran of the City of Pasadena Police Department, has been appointed as the new Chief of Police by City Manager Steve Mermell. Perez was serving as Interim Chief of Police since April 2018.

Congratulations Chief Perez!

## **New Director Hired for the Department of Human Services and Recreation December 18, 2018**

Brenda Harvey-Williams, a thirty-one year veteran of the City of Pasadena has been appointed the Director of the Department of Human Services and Recreation (DHSR) by City Manager Steve Mermell. Harvey-Williams has been serving as Interim Director and Special Assistant to the City Manager since December 2017. Her department has \$11 million annual budget with more than 100 employees and the responsibility of over 24 parks. Congratulations Brenda!

## **Pasadena Creates Team to Resolve Chronic Homeless Problems**

Public Health Department has a new program of a field team that will provide basic medical treatment and mental health assessment to the homeless throughout Pasadena. Pasadena received a five-year, \$2 million federal grant to hire a nurse practitioner, a social worker, a case manager and a peer outreach worker. The team will go into the community to provide first aid, direct people to services and to build trust. This special treatment team will seek out individuals in the community that fall into the chronically homeless population.

## **Homeless Count in for 2018**

The homeless count had an **increase in homeless persons in the City of Pasadena from 575 in 2017 to 677 in 2018, yet it showed a 51% decrease in homelessness since 2011 when the count was 1216 homeless persons.** The homeless count is a one night count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons reported by HUD's Homeless Data Exchange. We still have a lot of work to do but many homeless have been successfully placed in permanent supportive housing yet we still have many of the chronic homeless that refuse housing or any kind of help. It requires resources, skill, patience, empathy and in some cases enforcement. Pasadena does not arrest people just because they are homeless. They are allowed to use public spaces. Pasadena does a homeless count in order to determine the characteristics they have, like being a veteran, women, mental illness, physically disabled and substance abuse. The homeless count has declined four years in a row until 2016, yet we are concerned about the slight increase in 2018. The City of Pasadena has a Homeless Prevention Program, Rapid Rehousing Program, Project House that uses rent subsidies for housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, Emergency Shelters, Basic Services for the Homeless, Mental Health Service & Substance Abuse Recovery Programs, Homeless Outreach Workers, Hope Team (three teams of the Pasadena Police Department) with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health that will intervene when appropriate with a mentally ill homeless person. Many former Pasadena residents who became homeless have benefited from these programs.

## **Housing Law by State Senator Scott Wiener is trying to speed up Residential Approval Process for Housing Development with less Local Control, Senate Bill 50**

Governor Gavin Newsom is advocating that California increase housing by 3 million units in 10 years, including rezoning and dense new building in places considered build out already. His plan is to have housing and to prevent localities from regulating

housing construction within half a mile from each transit stop. Minimum height of 45 feet to 85 feet in many places make eight story high rise buildings common in low rise parts of the state.

Senate Bill 50 would force city and county governments to automatically approve qualifying housing projects a half mile of a rail station or major bus stop. There will be no exemptions for cities like Pasadena, which is already generating housing at a rapid pace, so this Scott Wiener Senate Bill 50 will force more housing in all cities no matter of your general plan and local ordinances. This will eliminate city control and will in my opinion will start hurting neighborhoods, just like the state forcing cities with the granny flats law, yet before Pasadena had our zoning regulations and requirements. This new Senate Bill 50 will force housing down our throats with high density as long as developers include affordable housing units. We as a council should fight this Senate Bill 50 as fiercely as possible to protect our local control to protect our city's growth.

**I would like to thank the following District 4 residents for serving as commissioners for the City of Pasadena**

**Accessibility and Disability**

Sharon Rogers

**Recreation and Parks Commission**

Jon Fuhrman,

**Arts and Culture Commission**

Edgar Arceneaux

**Rose Bowl Operating Company**

Steve Haderlein

**Code Enforcement Commission**

Harvey Cordner

**Senior Commission**

Priscilla Hernandez

**Commission on the Status of Women**

Char Bland

**Transportation Advisory Commission**

Adriana Lim

**Historic Preservation Commission**

John Arbogast

**Human Relations Commission**

Emma Oshagan

**Human Relations Commission**

Emmell Beech

At Large/District 4, appointed by Mayor Tornek

**Human Services Commission**

Nasir Rasheed

**Planning Commission**

Michael Coppess

**Environmental Advisory Commission**

Julie Vallante

At Large/District 4, appointed by Mayor Tornek

**Library Commission**

Robert Karatsu

**Northwest Commission**

Allen Shay

**Pasadena Community Access Corporation**

Perry Helm

**Planning Commission**

Don Nanney

**The Following is a Land Development Report from the Pasadena Planning Department for Projects in District 4.  
As of 12-31-18**

**Home Depot:**

The applicant has requested a meeting in mid-January 2019 to review technical requirements for Building and Fire Life Safety issues. The applicant team is working on construction drawings for a remodel of the existing buildings to establish a new Home Depot. Although no formal plans have been submitted at this time, staff understands the proposal would include over \$1 million in traffic improvement, including a median on Foothill Blvd. to prevent neighborhood cut-through traffic and a signal at the primary entrance, Walnut St. and Sunnyslope Ave, to encourage better circulation. Staff anticipates that construction plans could be submitted to the City for this tenant improvement as early as late February, 2019.

**Space Bank:**

Approved Project : 550 units @ 55 feet max height  
3202 E. Foothill Blvd.

7/16/18 - PD approved by Council  
11/15/18 - Concept Design Review

*STATUS: Concept Design Review (Design Commission) was approved on November 15, 2018. Final Design Review has not been scheduled. No building permit submitted.*

**Panda Inn/Metro Center:**

Project: A new six-story, 232-unit residential project, the exterior remodeling of an existing Panda Inn restaurant and the first two floors of the existing Gateway Metro Tower Building.  
3452-3488 E. Foothill Blvd.

8/28/18 - Concept Design Review (Design Commission) granted

*STATUS: An application for Final Design Review was submitted on 12/10/18 and is tentatively scheduled for a hearing on 2/26/19.*

**170 N. Halstead Street:**

Approved Project: Construction of a 20,329 square-foot, six-story, multi-family residential building, with 19 residential units (two designated "very low income") built above 34 at grade parking spaces. The applicant would be utilizing the density bonus provisions to increase the maximum density on the subject property from 14 units to 19 units; a 35% density increase. One or more concession waivers may be requested when the density bonus provisions of Chapter 17.43 are utilized. The following two affordable housing concession waivers are requested:

1. To allow the proposed building to provide a reduced rear yard setback. Pursuant to Section 17.50.350.C.2(a), of the Zoning Code, the required rear setback for this property is 10 feet. The applicant is requesting a reduced rear setback of zero feet; and

2. To allow the at grade parking to be located beyond the rear 40% of the site. Pursuant to Section 17.46.020.K.1, of the City of Pasadena Zoning Code, at grade parking shall be located in the rear 40 percent of the site. The applicant is requesting to allow the at grade parking to occupy approximately 85% of the site.

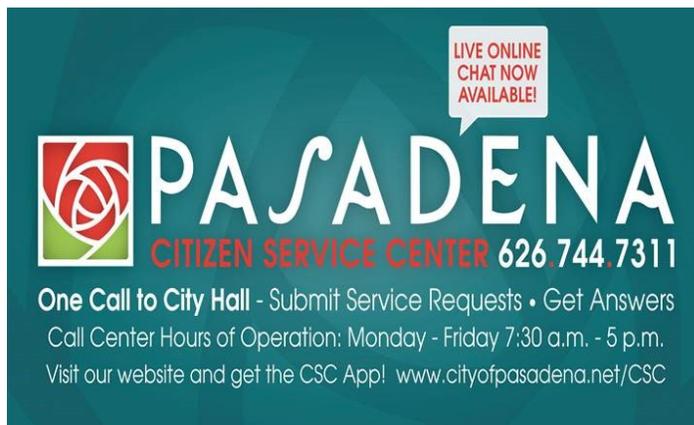
Affordable Housing Concession Permit #11829 approved at Hearing Officer on July 20, 2016

Final Design Review (Design Commission) was granted March 28, 2017.

STATUS: Plan check will expire on 12/30/18. Permits not yet pulled as of 12/28/18. Change of ownership occurred earlier this year. Staff will contact newowner to verify if they will be moving forward with this project.

## The Pasadena Citizens Service Center (CSC) 12-31-18

The Pasadena Citizen Service



The Citizen Service Center (CSC) is a centralized service to help Pasadena residents connect with their City. CSC is available via web, LiveChat, mobile app and phone to assist in answering questions about City programs, services and events. Our awesome, knowledgeable representatives can help you find the information and assistance you need!

<https://www.cityofpasadena.net/citizen-service-center/>

**Happy New Year!**  
**Noreen and I wish everyone good health and success in 2019**

**Gene**

## Councilmember Gene Masuda

Gene Masuda was elected to the Pasadena City Council in April 2011 to represent East Pasadena including the neighborhoods of Upper Hastings Ranch, Lower Hastings Ranch, Daisy-Villa, Eaton Blanche, East Eaton Wash, Eaton Canyon Wash, East Orange Grove, Fox

Ridge/Canyon Close, Loma Vista, Sierra Madre Villa, and Victory Rose. [Learn More](#)



**STAY CONNECTED**



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