



## **CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2025 AT 7:00 PM**

### **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS**

Additional Documents to the January 15, 2025 City Council Meetings. The attached documents include submitted written public comments and amendments to the agenda. Submit by no later than 12:00 p.m., on the day of the City Council meeting. Correspondence received after this time will be distributed the following business day.

### **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS TO THE JANUARY 15, 2025 CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

[General Public Comments](#)

[Public Comment on Agenda Item 5](#)

[Public Comment on Item 10](#)

[Public Comment on Item 13](#)

**From:** [Yvonne LaRose](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Lessons on Harmonious Community Life  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 14, 2025 8:46:07 PM

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We are here. It's 2025 and we're one week away from the commencement of the new Administration. Expressions of shock and anxiety about what is to come, dread of enduring an autocratic regime have become a whisper of yesterdays.

Because of COVID and now the wind and fire storms, we are immersed in real-life lessons about building healthy, supportive, inclusive communities in this city. We need to continue these real-life lessons as the fires and winds die down to memories of what brought us together.

Some examples of our having a community include things like :

- messages sent to neighbors as far away as 2 to 5 blocks asking, "Are you okay?" and "Do you need anything." The implied message was, "I care about you."
- Neighbors who voluntarily retrieving trash barrels hurled up and down streets, away from their homes.
- For me it included my presence on social media as my recruiting, HR, and journalism colleagues began to **demand** that I inform them about my status and whether I am safe.

It was astounding to venture out to attend to business matters on Thursday and Friday. At each business and government location, the employees were present, dressed and groomed appropriately with a smile and a calm disposition. Their focus was on rendering flawless service to each patron. The realization that each one of those employees (including first responders) no doubt left home where the winds had torn apart their environment. Many probably also live in one of the fire zones yet they did not allow those personal concerns to interfere with their primary work focus - serving their patrons with dignity.

And the two even more personal examples of community came when it was time to cross the street on Fair Oaks. A man wearing a mask and I traversed first from the east side of the avenue to the west together. We conversed with one another about various things, especially the length of time it took for the light to change. On reaching our destinations, we parted company, glad for the sake of a companion for that part of our path.

I sat at Shakers to read a book while waiting for my transportation. When it was time to leave, a woman probably 10 years my senior held the door open for me. The irony is I should have been giving her that courtesy. We chatted about the memories Shakers represented for us as well as other commonalities we shared. We became friends because of that brief encounter and were glad of the meeting.

Then there was the incident at the post office on Friday. Business handled, it was time to descend the stairs. A man who is also at least 10 years my senior offered to tote my walker down the steps for me. The offer had to be declined because of a phone call but another person made a similar offer and actually **carried** the walker down both flights of steps.

Just holding the door by a senior underscored the fact that being a senior citizen does not mean you're useless. It means you have **value to be contributed** to your community and **that value should be recognized and respected**.

So our emergency events hold valuable life lessons for us on how to survive the next four years.

- Respect and value the talents of others, no matter the age, ethnicity, or status. Those talents can be of great benefit if they are properly used and not allowed to decay.
- Treat others with respect. While they may be ranting at the moment, it's important to realize the emergency is probably impacting them to a greater degree than you. Keep a calm head; be understanding.
- Check in with your neighbors - the ones next door and the ones at a distance. They are an extended family that we call Our Community. They are a source of security.

Viva

Yvonne LaRose, CAC  
Organization Development Consultant:  
Diversity>Title VII, Harassment, Ethics

**From:** [Anne Bagasao](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comment](#)  
**Cc:** [Anne Bagasao](#); [Casey Dukes](#)  
**Subject:** General Public Comment Open Session Council Meeting 1-15-25  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 11:05:56 AM  
**Attachments:** [SPTU Letter to the City Council Re\\_Rent Freeze.pdf](#)

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Dear City Clerk:

On behalf of South Pasadena Tenants Union, please include the attached as a written General Comment for the abovementioned meeting.

Thank you. I will also send from my personal email to ensure delivery.

Best,

Anne Bagasao



## **Subject: Urgent Action Needed: Implement a Rent Freeze and Tenant Protections Now**

Dear South Pasadena City Council,

The City of South Pasadena must act immediately to implement a **rent freeze**. In July 2024, the Council directed staff to prepare a report on a rent freeze to protect tenants while the City fulfills its commitments outlined in the Housing Element certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Despite this directive, no action was ever taken. The time for delay is over—we need a rent freeze now.

Price gouging in the wake of disasters is unacceptable and requires immediate action. A rent freeze is a simple, effective measure that could be enacted without delay. Will this Council step up and do what is right for our community?

We also need an **eviction moratorium** to prevent landlords from displacing tenants to exploit the current crisis for financial gain. For years, South Pasadena residents have asked this Council to adopt an increased relocation fee ordinance. This critical measure, also included in the Housing Element, has been ignored for too long. If residents are forced out of their homes by investor landlords or profiteering agents seeking to replace them with fire victims desperate for housing, how will they survive on a relocation fee of just one month's rent? Where are they expected to go? Should families pitch tents in Garfield Park? Should parents uproot their children from our school district?

This is both a health and economic crisis, much like the challenges we faced during COVID-19. Tens of thousands of people are newly homeless, and many more who have lost income are at risk of joining them. South Pasadena must implement robust homelessness prevention measures now. The community cannot wait months for debate or inaction.

We urge you to protect South Pasadena residents with a rent freeze, an eviction moratorium, and increased relocation fees without delay. Our community is counting on your leadership in this critical moment.

South Pasadena Tenants Union and South Pasadena residents

Megan Aaron	Patti Emery	Kimberly Ming
Tim Aaron	Jolynn Enz	Rhonda Mitchell
Cathy Abbey	Russell Farmarco	Michael Mizgalski
Amielynn Abellera	Nicole Farmarco	Mireya Naranjo
Lindsay Adams	Salik Farooqi	Thank Nguyen
Rilla Alexander	Rachael Faught	Michael Noe
Steve Alexander	Kathrin Ford	Kimber Norquest
Angelo Angeles	Roberto Fuentes	Joanne Nuckols
Alexander Aquino-Kaljakin	Stephany Gamez	Roxy Ortiz
Sepand Ardeshir	Jessica Gerhardt	Dean Peterson
Bree Arnall Hazard	Cameron Gibson	Denise Phille
Anne Bagasao	Paul Goetz	Hazel Portillo
Nicholas Bain	Joseph Grijalva	Fiona Purdon
Heidi Barnett	Wendy Gutschow	Karina Ramirez
Nick Barnett	Amber Haley	Erica Rede
Marcus Batista	Rachel Hamilton	Sarah Rodman
William Beasley	Alec Hamilton	Phoenix Rodman
Matthew Bennett	Vector Hasting	Abraham Romwro
Richard Blake	Aidan Howard-Rede	Philip Rowland
Heather Bland	Ella Hushagen	Tess Ryan
Sheri Borrego	Phung Huynh	Loresa Salazar
Britany Brodeur	Arend Jessurun	Kim Seltzer
Julianne Bull	Jazmin Joyce	Michael Serrano
Denise Burciaga	Laura Kieffer	Delaine Shane
Greg Burns	Alice Kim	Genevieve Sigala
Jody Butts	Tina Kistinger	Laura Sorenson
Ana Camacho	Jessica Klier	Kristen Swift
Ricardo Casas	Aileen Kutaka	Nick Taylor
Bianca Ciebrant	Caitlin Lainoff	Nany Thenard
Anastasia Coon	Lana Le	Judith H. Trout
Danelle Courtice	Therese A. Le Veque	Vanessa Valencia
David Courtice	Kimberly Leung-Earley	Gabriela Valle
Kathrine Cruz	Sergio Leyva	Melanie Wagner
Lula Cummings	Maria Angelicon Mapue	Kate Wilson
Leesa Dang	Esmeralda Marcial	Camila Zagarra
Valerie de la Rosa	Viri Mata	Michael Zahn
Susan Delgadillo	Yuka Matsuyama	Priscilla Zaragoza
Rigoberto Delgadillo	Christine Mauer	Manuel Zaragoza
Grace Dennis	Sean McCullough	
Casey Dukes	Debra McCurdy	
Jason Dukes	Kathleen McLaughlin	
Scott Dukes	Michael Mesker	
Denise Durrett	Arianna Messmer	

**From:** [Elizabeth Anne Bagasao](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: General Public Comment Open Session Council Meeting 1-15-25  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 11:06:27 AM  
**Attachments:** [SPTU Letter to the City Council Re\\_Rent Freeze.pdf](#)

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Thank you!

Anne

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**From:** Anne Bagasao <SPTenantsUnion@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 11:05 AM  
**To:** [ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov](#) <[ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov](#)>  
**Cc:** Elizabeth Anne Bagasao <[eabagasao@hotmail.com](#)>; Casey Dukes <[caseydukes@gmail.com](#)>  
**Subject:** General Public Comment Open Session Council Meeting 1-15-25

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Jason Dukes	Kathleen McLaughlin	
Scott Dukes	Michael Mesker	
Denise Durrett	Arianna Messmer	

**From:** [Yvonne LaRose](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment, Agenda Item 5: Fire and Windstorm Survivor Support  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 10:45:27 AM

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Last week I listened to Nataly Tavidian's (KNX reporter) story of losing her childhood home, as well as several other, similar interviews and realized how much support and cathartic healing needs to be provided to our own citizens and employees. Then going into the public on Thursday and Friday the realization of our need hit me in the face as I shared my thoughts at 3 different stops while also making the time to hear their stories.

This made me realize we need some designated disaster recovery mental health empathizers who can LISTEN, provide feedback, simply provide supportive words, or simply be the quiet, supportive presence as the survivor mentally processes their condition.

I propose that we provide listening spaces for this purpose where the support team members can be stationed for between 2 to 4 hours per day.

The purpose is to genuinely be a supportive, healthy community. It's significant when there is someone available to hear the thoughts, encourage the positive memories of comfort, and create a sense of being a person whose existence has meaning and worth.

As the one proposing this opportunity for community wellness, I am available and encourage you to include me in the conversations and considerations of this matter so that we are focused on the right steps to make it a reality.

Viva  
Yvonne LaRose, CAC  
Organization Development Consultant:  
Diversity>Title VII, Harassment, Ethics

Dear Council,

Please take the following into consideration.

## **Arborist Biases**

Tree removal companies staff arborists specifically to facilitate the removal process. Arborists unaffiliated with removal companies ultimately want to win the contract. These circumstances introduce a clear bias. Certifying bodies allow for ethics violation complaints in order to combat biased reporting but absent a third party review these are difficult to make.

City Staff's utilization of our City Arborist has been lackluster and opaque. The initial City Arborist approval was based upon the false premise that this was a development project yet her signature and approval was included in the presentation to the NREC nonetheless. This agenda presents the first mention of an informed interaction with our City Arborist:

"Following this report, the City Arborist reviewed the findings and, although acknowledging some concerns, approved the removal based on the arborist's assessment."

From this reading it appears that our City Arborist did not stand before the trees and make an independent assessment. Her concerns remain unknown.

I had a master arborist that I know take a look at the applicant's arborist's report and they see nothing unusual about the palms. They don't appear diseased and the frond dieback appears to be of the standard variety for palms.

Hazard claims are increasing and staff is asking for heightened ministerial authority while avoiding transparent independent review. It has been nine months since the start of the application process. Why hasn't the city arborist been to the site and why don't we have any kind of report from her?

The City of Pasadena utilizes independent arborists for review of all protected tree removal applications. This results in active, practicing arborists providing unbiased opinions and recommendations.

## **Safety**

Leaving the healthy palms unpruned has actually *created* a hazardous situation. The applicant has acknowledged this danger of falling fronds and instead of having the trees pruned to mitigate the danger chose to lead in his initial stand at the NREC podium with a threat of lawsuit if something were to happen as a result of injury caused by fallen fronds.

Regular strong winds in the area routinely remove deadwood from trees. This is a normal part of a tree's lifecycle in a forest setting. This process should not be relied upon in an urban setting.

When fire comes with high winds the hanging deadwood creates an extreme fire hazard. This is true for all trees but especially important with palm frond dieback due to their unique ability to create a large amount of embers. This is even more important with the large size of Canary Island Palm fronds.

This is a good reason to remove the palms but an extremely poor precedent to set with regards to upkeep of deadwood removal.

## **Current Status**

The recent winds have caused the dropping of most of the dead fronds. The canopy is now considerably more visible from street level observation. There is absolutely no indication of Fusarium Wilt and the City Arborist would have a clear view to see that if she were to stand before the trees.

## **Replacement Selection**

### **Japanese Maple**

A commissioner recommended that the Japanese Maple in the back yard be better selected for size and drought tolerance. No acknowledgment has been made to it being incorrectly placed next to the wall of Arborvitae mentioned in my appeal. Not only is there not enough room for the canopy of the miniaturized maple species the applicant has chosen but the tree would be immediately and perpetually in competition with the roots of the established trees well within its dripline.

### **Fruit Trees**

Fruit trees should not constitute a majority of the replacements. My appeal mentions the inappropriateness of Gala Apples but I'll explain further. Fruit trees are very different than non-fruit trees. They should often be optimized to be small. The apricot and plum trees should be pruned short and with an open center. If done correctly they will not represent any kind of meaningful contribution to our urban canopy-aesthetically or ecologically.

The orange tree however could be grown large and significant and would no doubt be culturally appropriate for a property on "Orange Grove Avenue".

### **Front Yard**

Palo Verde and Crepe Myrtle are probably the most common replacements being planted in South Pasadena. They grow quickly and produce vibrant floral displays.

It can be confusing when discussing them because there are different subspecies and hybrids that come in different sizes and shapes.

### **Palo Verde**

Palo Verde in general are native to the Arizona/Mexico desert. They are not adapted to cycles of torrential rain and drought-fueled fire.

The "Desert Museum" Palo Verde is a hybrid palo verde invented in the 70s. Its especially quick growth comes at the expense of branch strength and root/crown balance. There are ample accounts on the internet of branches breaking or the entire tree uprooting in strong winds or heavy saturation from rain.

Correct pruning and watering practices are vital to their long term success. I have not seen a single Palo Verde in the city pruned correctly to produce a safe, full canopy capable of standing the test of time.

## **Crepe Myrtle**

Crepe Myrtle trees are small and insignificant. They have limited ecological value and provide little benefit to our urban canopy.

## **Replacement Plan Details**

*In my most recent appeal I confused the placement of the Crepe Myrtle and Palo Verde. As a result the placement of these trees is **not incorrect** as I stated. I apologize for the confusion.*

I believe Staff should expect tree replacement plans to represent the mature canopy size of the species. This would have prevented my mistake and in general provide a much clearer understanding to all parties involved of the canopy before and after removal and replacement. I have raised this issue with Public Works and Planning on several occasions and the response has been that you can't determine the eventual size of the canopy. This is incorrect and represents the lack of foresight being put into the replacement process.

## **On-Site Natives**

Several times throughout the process natives were asked for by the commission. There are zero native replacements.

The applicant stated at one point:

"Commissioner Bourke had an issue that these were not native trees. If that is still a concern I'm happy to address that by simply saying that we can also donate whatever the amount is needed to plant native trees somewhere else if that's still a point of contention."

## **Conclusion**

Every single tree decision has lasting consequences. Staff speaks of an aging canopy as if it is an inherent problem. This is simply incorrect.

Trees will stick around longer than the property owner owns the property. This

requires property owners to inherit the decisions made before them and make sound decisions for future owners. This is why we have a tree code. The spirit of our tree code is not being upheld and this is just one of many examples of it.

**Please consider the future of South Pasadena's canopy one hundred years from now.**

## **Recommendations**

While our climate swings have clearly become more extreme the fundamentals have remained the same—multi year dry seasons leading to wind-fueled fire events and interspersed torrential rains.

Native trees have adapted to our climate, geology and hydrology over millions of years. They are designed to search deep for water, stay upright against winds and be resilient to fire.

What one property owner plants will naturally run with what another property owner plants. The amount of inputs are minimized—from water to fertilizer to management. Once established natives can be mostly left alone. Occasional structural pruning is minimal and thus the expense of using a certified professional can be justified.

Please have the city arborist take a look at the trees so that we may better understand arborist bias. Please ask for a more informed replacement plan for the benefit of the local and greater community but also to set the standard for staff to incorporate best practices moving forward.

Thank you,  
Angelo Gladding  
1856 Hanscom Drive

**From:** [Joanne Nuckols](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda item #13 Commission Consolidation/Against MTIC and PW merging at this time 1/15/25  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 11:11:55 AM

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To South Pasadena City Council,

Below are comments from former DAG members about combining MTIC and Public Works Commission from last month. Please review to hopefully better understand why the Public Works Commission was created in the first place? I am asking that you consider postponing this discussion until the consequences of not having a fully functioning MTIC are understood. The staff report discussion only takes about the possible reorganization, not providing any information as to why it's necessary and the potential negative consequences.

These comment are my own, but related, and reiterating the points from the previous joint letter which council needs to look into further to truly understand the problems of that past Fair Oaks change of plans by staff, faulty construction and why PW created to remedy the situation, before making a decision for this merging of MTIC and PW.

Citizen oversight of construction was definitely lacking and would have made a huge difference. Now we are stuck with a defective product in that past redo of Fair Oaks which has to now be redone for us to have the beautiful, functioning Fair Oaks that we could have had 15 years ago!

As to responsibilities of MTIC, that is incredibly important now that we have a one shot \$100 million from Metro to fix our traffic problems which we have been suffering with since 1976 with the opening of the 710 stub and Wishbone. This money is the result of killing the 710 at Metro and the projects ultimately produced have to be very carefully reviewed and vetted for the optimal use of that money. It will not come around again. We need to have continuity, institutional memory and full attention by MTIC to make this happen.

Additionally, with the potential formation of a 710 Corridor Committee, which is an excellent idea, the previous and future work by MTIC will be even more crucial and important. Merging with PW could potentially dilute the information needed to support the corridor committee's work?

Not enough consideration of new efficiencies for both commission have been explored. Ted and his staff are doing a great job and the commission should be a help, not a burden, with certain changes. Additionally, with the election of Omari Ferguson, former PW commissioner to the city council, his expertise could be useful to streamline and make less work for staff. I have not heard that discussion?

Please take a pause on this particular merger for more investigation of alternatives and potential negative consequences. "Those who can't remember the past are condemned to repeat it" is a very appropriate quote for this situation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joanne Nuckols  
South Pasadena Resident

Former Freeway and Transportation Commissioner, 1987-1993  
Former DAG Member 1999-2010

To South Pasadena City Council,

As former Design Advisory Group (DAG) members, we are against combining MTIC and the Public Works Commission.

We had the unpleasant and challenging experience of having our well thought out Fair Oaks project's vetted plans ignored and changed by persons with other agendas, after the DAG was disbanded just before construction began. This resulted in chaotic implementation and divisive reactions to the changed Fair Oaks project, which exist to this day, 12 years later.

To correct this situation in the future, the Public Works Commission was

formed to over see major construction projects in South Pasadena. The idea was to have citizen oversight of all big projects which is necessary. The situation improved as long as the Public Works Commission was listened to.

We believe each commission has separate functions and each should be allowed to continue with their separate and intended functions, which benefit the city. The staff time could be eased with more involvement of the commission chairman as has happened in the past.

Thank you for your consideration.

Richard Schneider, MD, Former Mayor

Harry Knapp, Former Mayor

Joanne Nuckols

John VanderCook