



DECEMBER 2025 ISSUE

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PRESERVATION PRESS

UPDATES



In our September newsletter, SPPF President Jenny Bright wrote:

“We hope you join us in celebrating South Pasadena’s rich history and consider becoming a member to keep preservation strong in South Pasadena.”

You heard the call!

What a wonderful way to begin our Holiday Edition with the announcement of a **significant increase** in memberships to the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation!

Thank you for joining up! **Pages 30 - 31** list all SPPF active members.

Remembering a Champion of Historic Preservation and Much, Much More: Joanne Nuckols

Joanne Nuckols was an extraordinary individual who was a fierce champion of South Pasadena especially in all matters related to historic preservation, mobility, and the city’s character and charm.

This Holiday Edition is dedicated in her memory. Read more about our reminiscences and stories of Joanne **on Pages 4 - 10**. The South Pasadena City Council is planning to recognize Joanne at their council meeting on December 17, 2025. Final confirmation of that awaits issuance of the December 11th council agenda.

Upcoming Events

With all the new excitement about SPPF, its recent events, and this year’s holidays, we are still planning the details for our Spring Walking Tour, the Greene and Greene Tour, and other fun activities.

Stay tuned and follow us on:

Webpage:

<https://sppreservation.org/>

FaceBook:

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthPasadenaPreservationFoundation>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/southpas_preservation/?hl=en





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hoping your THX dinner was a smash success! We are excited to share that this fall has been one of the busiest seasons in recent SPPF memory. Our volunteers, members and friends turned out for a full lineup of events including Doors Open California, the Raymond Twilight Walking Tour & Reception, the Mission District Scavenger Hunt & Craft, and thanks to the generosity of the Knights, our Member Appreciation Wine & Cheese gathering at the historic and majestic Wynyate estate.

One of the standout moments was the "Rialto 100" centennial celebration at the Museum. We welcomed more than **ONE THOUSAND GUESTS** (a new record!) who came to experience the new Rialto exhibit. The public response was full of gratitude that the theater's history now has a permanent home in the Museum where it sits proudly on display. The enthusiasm reminded us that Rialto holds a rare place in South Pasadena's collective memory, a landmark that has shaped our sense of community character and continues to spark nostalgia, pride and a deep sense of connection among neighbors. Visitors enjoyed a red-carpet entry, vintage cars, craft cocktails and a lively stage show in the park complete with vaudeville performances. Many thanks to Friends of the Rialto for cutting through the red tape to make it happen.

The enthusiasm around these events has translated into real membership growth for SPPF. New members are up 75% over last year and still climbing, a clear reflection of the deep care our community has for our small town and its unique stories and places. And of course, it's worth noting that our growth is also boosted by the fact that we genuinely have a lot of fun together at our events!

With that kind of momentum behind us, it's no surprise that we're rolling into the holiday season with extra cheer.

Continuing our honored tradition, the Museum will once again welcome neighbors and friends for complimentary holiday sweets and warm cider served up by SPPF volunteers. Kids and the young at heart can visit Santa's Mesmerizing Musical Mailbox where dropping him a note sets off a music and light show. Outside in Meridian Park, thanks to the SouthPas Chamber and SouthPas Arts Council, the evening will include holiday messages from City leaders, a tree and menorah lighting and several performances to brighten the night including the always spectacular SPHS Marching Band.

As we close out 2025, we hope your holidays are filled with rest, warmth and good company. We'll look forward to seeing you in the new year for a fresh round of SPPF fun.

-Jenny



Museum admission is free; however, Cash and/or Venmo Donations are Always Welcome

Venmo handle: @MeridianSPPF



SPPF Venmo Donations:
@MeridianSPPF





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2025-2026

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Peggy Christ

RENEW OR BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Join us in preserving the history and character of South Pasadena and in supporting the continuing operations of the South Pasadena Historical Museum. We can't preserve our local heritage without you! Your annual donation is tax-deductible.

SENIOR/STUDENT: \$25

INDIVIDUAL: \$35

HOUSEHOLD: \$50

SUSTAINING: \$100

BUSINESS: \$125

Start or renew your membership at:
<https://sppreservation.org/membership/>
or use the QR code:



Membership Sign Up

Founded in 1972, the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. It is led by an all-volunteer board of directors elected from the membership.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

As the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation continues to grow, we welcome new volunteers who can bring their energy and ideas to help shape our community. If interested, please use the QR code and sign up!

The URL link is:
<https://shorturl.at/855dz>.



Volunteers Sign Up

DONATIONS OF ARTIFACTS AND MATERIALS

If you think you might have something relevant to the history of our town, please let us know! As part of our collection process, proposed donations are carefully reviewed to ensure they align with the Museum's focus. We also consider whether we already have similar items in the collection and whether we have the appropriate space and resources to care for the artifacts properly. Please contact us at: info@sppreservation.org.



JOANNE NUCKOLS TRIBUTE



Screenshot of 2019 Video regarding the 710 Freeway Extension fight. Photo courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library.

On August 19, 2025, a long-time champion for our community passed away. Joanne Nuckols was the epitome of a courageous individual with an unwavering commitment to civic duty. She inspired so many people, along with diligently working on complex matters of civic importance. Many stories of Joanne and the Freeway Fighters have been told over the years. Here are some of her recently published articles that include those stories:

The South Pasadenan, June 4, 2019:

<https://southpasadenan.com/no-on-710-freeway-fighters-to-be-honored-library-hosts-event-june-7/>

The South Pasadenan, August 29, 2025:

<https://southpasadenan.com/the-passing-of-joanne-nuckols-south-pasadena-community-mourns/>

South Pasadena Review, September 5, 2025:

https://outlooknewspapers.com/southpasadenareview/remembering-a-fighter-for-the-city/article_80eaa03a-6115-44c0-abe5-de8c909632b1.html

The South Pasadenan, September 16, 2025:

<https://southpasadenan.com/honoring-joanne-nuckols-legacy-south-pasadena-water-polo-swim-alumni/>

The South Pasadenan, October 17, 2025:

<https://southpasadenan.com/obituary-joanne-nuckols-wife-mother-friend-guardian-of-south-pasadena/>

The following pages contain 10 personal stories from those individuals who knew Joanne:

Page 4: Dick Helgeson

Page 5: Jenny Bright and Mark Gallatin

Page 6: Tina Kistingner and Dina Morgan

Page 7: Felix Gutierrez

Page 8: Claire Bogaard

Page 9: Rick Schneider and Susan Bolan

Page 10: Delaine Shane

I wanted to add some of my personal memories of Joanne Nuckols to the others that have been provided. Joanne was instrumental in encouraging me to seek an appointment to the South Pasadena Freeway and Transportation Commission where I served with her from 2014 until 2020. Together, during that time, we dealt with a great many city transportation issues. However, most of our attention was directed to the 710 North Project, which at that time was principally focused on building a multi-laned freeway tunnel underneath South Pasadena. Joanne used to regularly show up at my home early on a Thursday morning every month and drive me to the Metro Board meetings to provide public comment opposing the 710 Tunnel Project. She also encouraged me to write a number of letters to the Metro Board addressing the futility of attempting to build more freeways and supporting the better reasoned approach of investing resources in providing better traffic management and more public transit. In one of these many pieces of correspondence to the Metro Board she acted as a sounding board for a proposed ordinance I drafted to remove the 710 Tunnel Project from the funding mechanism of what later became Measure M. In all of these endeavors I could always rely on Joanne to provide helpful advice and thoughtful recommendations.

Dick Helgeson

SPPF Board Member



No 710 Tunnel Event on September 16, 2016. Left to right: Dick Helgeson, Joanne Nuckols, and Dr. William Sherman. Photo taken by Susan Bolan. Photo courtesy of Facebook Group "No 710 Freeway Extension."



JOANNE NUCKOLS TRIBUTE -- continued



No 710 Tunnel Event on September 16, 2016. Left to right: Joanne Nuckols and Dr. William Sherman. Photo taken by Susan Bolen. Photo courtesy of Facebook Group "No 710 Freeway Extension."

I remember the first time I spoke with Joanne. My husband handed me the phone and said, "Here, she wants to talk to you." We had just moved into town, and he was trying to help with some obvious local traffic problems. So naturally, he had already crossed paths with Joanne. From that first call, her energy was impossible to ignore. Before I knew it, she had both of us dashing off to meetings big and small, making flyers, and sending emails... so many emails. We tried to keep up but honestly, we never really did.

Joanne was unstoppable. Her determination, focus, laser-sharp memory, and uncanny command of large bureaucracies were astonishing. I've never met anyone like her.

Only later did I learn the full 710 story and realize she was part of a legendary South Pasadena resistance squad, some of whom still live among us today. It's an extraordinary tale of a tiny city that stood up to the giants of Sacramento and Caltrans, stared them down, and won.

Less than a week before her passing, my husband and I were still getting homework from Joanne. No doubt her strong spirit and ideas will continue to guide South Pasadena well into the future.

Jenny Bright
SPPF Board President

I think I first met Joanne Nuckols about 25 or 30 years ago on a house tour. We got to talking and I mentioned that I was a city planner with a keen interest in historic preservation. Joanne immediately urged me to become involved with the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation. I deferred, saying that I was really consumed with my career and didn't have much time for extracurricular activities. She understood but didn't forget. Fast forward to 2017. I was now recently retired and when she learned that she implored me to join the Foundation's Board of Directors. How could I say no at that point? I soon learned that one did not say no to Joanne! I'm eternally grateful to her for recruiting me, because it allowed me to find my "tribe" in retirement and to actively participate with fellow preservationists on issues critical to my beloved South Pasadena.

I remember the first time I attended a meeting of the No 710 Action Committee with Joanne at City Hall. The group was doing introductions at the beginning of the meeting. When it was my turn, I said "Hi, I'm Mark Gallatin. I'm on the Preservation Foundation Board and the Cultural Heritage Commission and I'm Joanne Nuckol's manservant." That cracked up the Committee, but in a humorous kind of way, it hinted at the close working relationship, I would develop with Joanne through SPPF over the years to come. Whether it was seeing the Caltrans historic houses returned to the tax rolls, organizing an SPPF event like the Gill Garden Gala at the Miltimore House, making public comment on a preservation issue at City Council meetings or conferring with a State Senator on legislation to help South Pasadena, Joanne and I formed a highly effective dynamic duo, the right balance of patience (me) and persistence (her).

Joanne's legacy is demonstrative of what can be accomplished when a city threatened by outside forces has a single-minded determination to put the interests of its neighborhoods and residents front and center and then to defend them unceasingly, often in the face of long odds. Every time we look around us and marvel at how fortunate we are to live in a community as magical as South Pasadena, we can look to the heavens and say a sincere "thank you" to Joanne Nuckols, South Pasadena's guardian angel.

Mark Gallatin
SPPF Board Secretary

JOANNE NUCKOLS TRIBUTE -- continued

She was always passionate about good food. Maybe because she was the daughter of a mother that didn't cook, she fully embraced it when she could be in control of what she could eat.

My mother was an excellent cook, and she collected cookbooks and recipes. I remember that she took a few gourmet cooking classes in the 70's when it wasn't common. I distinctly remember accompanying her to the local restaurant supply store to purchase a Cuisinart the first few years they were manufactured in the mid-70's.

In her later years when she grew tired of cooking, she always sought out good food and was game for trying new local restaurants. The food had to be tasty and flavorful. She had a massive sweet tooth and many stories abound that she would peruse the menu to determine her dessert choice before selecting her entree.

Tina Kistinger

Daughter of Joanne and Tom Nuckols



Screenshot of 2019 Video regarding the 710 Freeway Extension fight. Photo courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library.



SPPF Annual Meeting at the Woman's Club of South Pasadena on June 26, 2025. From left to right: Anne Bagasao, Joanne Nuckols, and Delaine Shane. Photo courtesy of Delaine Shane.

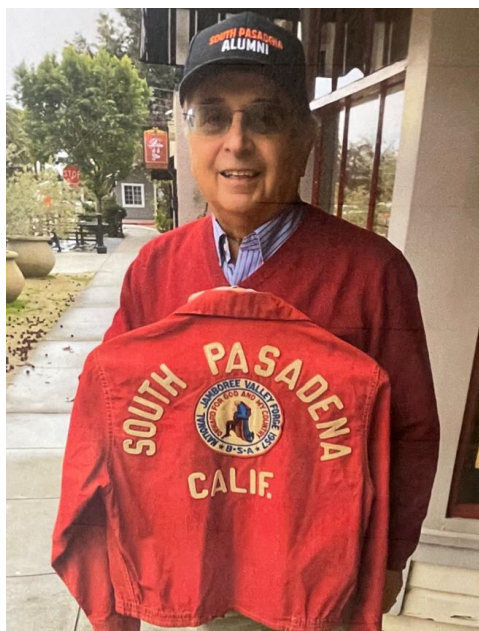
From my perspective, food and design were two other constants in her world that I was honored to share with her. Joanne and I would search out bakeries to satisfy "our sweet tooth" and any new and quirky antique and vintage shops. She was a consummate collector and loved the hunt.

Her interior design & staging skills enhanced a variety of residential properties, and I was able to collaborate-providing product and additional resources. I miss our adventures!

Dina Morgan

SPPF Board Member

JOANNE NUCKOLS TRIBUTE -- continued



SPPF Board Member Felix Gutierrez standing next to the Museum holding the South Pasadena jacket he wore to the 1957 Boy Scout Jamboree at Valley Forge, PA. Photo courtesy of Felix Gutierrez.

Joanne Nuckols and I first met in 1984 when I returned to my South Pasadena with my wife and three daughters. We bought a Craftsman home Joanne had redecorated on Ramona Avenue across the street from the Craftsman house she and Tom lived in and were carefully preserving.

When we talked, Joanne mentioned community meetings, and we agreed to ride together to some. In those days Joanne was a reluctant public speaker most comfortable writing letters to the editor and working behind the scenes. At these 1980s meetings she talked one by one with all sides. On rides home Joanne shared insights on the who/how/when and why of what was happening and also what needed to happen to move things our way.

I told her these were good for me to hear, but they would have more impact if she presented them to more people in public. At first, she declined, but fortunately for South Pasadena, she ultimately overcame her reluctance to publicly share her intelligence, drive and knowledge over the following decades.

In the late 1980s, South Pasadena was winning national support to fight the freeway by protecting upscale historic homes. I told Joanne we should now reach out to working-class El Sereno. She looked at me quizzically and said she didn't know anyone in predominately-Latino El Sereno, but then she and others crossed city limits to meet and join forces with our neighbors. After making contact Joanne proudly told me the names of the people she'd met and asked if I knew them. They wanted to preserve some of East Los Angeles' best affordable housing. We both shared a mutual goal of protecting our homes and neighborhoods to stop the freeway.

Felix Gutierrez
SPPF Board Member
No 710 Action Committee



No 710 Tunnel Rally on July 20, 2013. Far right is Felix Gutierrez, center is Glen Duncan, Diana Mahmud is at the far left, and Charles E. Miller is holding the Garvanza sign. Photo taken by Tina Gulotta-Miller. Courtesy of Facebook Group "No 710 Freeway Extension."

JOANNE NUCKOLS TRIBUTE -- continued



In attendance for the Funeral Mass for the legendary late Mary Ann Parada, Freeway Fighter are from left to right: Sam Burgess, Joanne Nuckols, Claire Bogaard, and Rick Schneider. South Pasadena. Dated February 18, 2023. Photo courtesy of Rick Schneider

The passing of Joanne Nuckols marks a milestone in South Pasadena's history of opposing the extension of the 710 Freeway. Joanne understood how damaging construction of the Freeway would be to South Pasadena and surrounding communities.

For decades, Joanne studied and informed us about the many proposals and possible routes under consideration for the extension of the 710 Freeway. She attended hundreds of meetings and conferences and met with innumerable elected officials and Caltrans representatives to better understand the different Freeway proposals.

In the later 1970s, I joined with a group of residents to create Pasadena Heritage, an historic preservation organization. We realized that the 710 Freeway would destroy much of Southwest Pasadena and that we needed to become educated about the Freeway proposals. We quickly learned that Joanne Nuckols was the person to approach to answer our many questions.

That was the beginning of my longtime friendship with Joanne, and we worked together for approximately 50 years. I was in awe of her freeway expertise and her ability to recall so fully the history and the details of the history of the Freeway. With Joanne in the lead – the battle was won, and the 710 Freeway was withdrawn from consideration.

Together we join with our many colleagues from South Pasadena, the City of Pasadena, El Sereno and other nearby communities to recognize and salute Joanne Nuckols as one of the great leaders in defeating the construction of the 710 Freeway.

Claire Bogaard

No 710 Action Committee



No 710 Hand Fans for 2012 Fundraiser as posted by Miriam Nakamura on Facebook. Courtesy of Facebook Group "No 710 Freeway Extension."



JOANNE NUCKOLS TRIBUTE-continued



Taken at Event Held at the South Pasadena Public Library on June 7, 2019. Left to right: Top Row: Harry Knapp, Mike Gallatin, Dr. Rick Schneider, and Glen Duncan. Bottom Row: Joanne Nuckols, Dr. William Sherman, Clarice Knapp, Sam Burgess, Mary Ann Prada, Dr. Marina Khubesrian, and Ernie Arnold. Photo taken by Susan M. Bolan. Photo courtesy of Facebook Group "No 710 Freeway Extension."

Joanne Nuckols was like a general among the 710 freeway fighters. Her car's license plate was No 710. She would ask you to talk to people, attend meetings and sometimes speak. But only after she was sure about you.

I met Joanne in the 1980s after the Meridian Route was moved west to take my neighborhood along Prospect Avenue. I joined her on the South Pasadena Transportation Commission in the 1990s where we tried to keep the City Council on track opposing the 710. In 2007, she and Janet Ervin drafted me to run for the South Pasadena City Council to replace Odom Stamps who decided not to seek re-election.

After being elected, I was a voice for the Freeway Fighters Joanne introduced me to fighters in all the surrounding communities. We had a wide network of freeway opponents, and she had an excellent memory of people's names. By surrounding communities, I mean all the way from Glendale, Pasadena, and Arcadia to El Sereno and Long Beach. We even had a few people in Alhambra Highland Park, San Marino, and Sierra Madre. These freeway opponents hailed from different backgrounds: some were preservationists, others were environmentalists opposed to pollution, or traffic diversion through neighborhoods and congestion. El Sereno people opposed environmental racism sacrificing poorer neighborhoods. Some favored local control and opposed the high cost.

Joanne was central to the movement and was kept aware of 710 issues whenever and wherever they appeared on agendas. These agendas could be local meetings, or elected bodies such as city councils, county, or state, or even state agencies. Being an elected she asked me to go to these meetings and make sure our viewpoint was aired. I went to meetings for electeds in all the above cities and also Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and even once to Sacramento. Quite often she accompanied me. She never failed to introduce me to someone new with whom she kept in contact. Fortunately, the 710 issue won the day in 2018. The state legislature removed the 710 from the state highway map. We were done – except for the houses and other properties owned by Caltrans. This is still a problem which Joanne, I, and others kept working on. It is too bad we did not complete this before her passing. We miss her ever-present leadership.

Rick Schneider, M.D.

SPPF Board Member

Former SP Mayor and Councilmember

I met Joanne Nuckols when she and Tom Williams came to one of the Crescenta Valley Community Association meetings in 2009. They were there to update the group on the 710 Freeway Tunnel Project and how it would affect the communities situated along the 210 Freeway. I soon learned that Joanne was one of the most intelligent and knowledgeable women I had ever met, and I have known many. She was strategic, cunning, and had the most uncanny ability to convince me to drop everything and do what was needed for the cause, which I did. I went on to write for the no710.com website and collaborate on many other projects such as the "No 710 Notebook." It was a pleasure to work alongside such strong and capable community leaders like Joanne, and I was proud to become one of the "freeway fighters." With Joanne's tenacity and the combined effort of so many others, we ultimately removed the horrific project from the California Highway Code and from any further consideration. I learned so much from Joanne Nuckols. I am grateful to have had her as a mentor, and I am sincere when I call her my friend.

Susan Bolan

No 710 Committee

La Crescenta/Glendale Resident



JOANNE NUCKOLS TRIBUTE -- continued

“Delaine, Marina [Khubesrian] forwarded your email to me to respond. We would love to have your help on the upcoming EIR/EIS. Your expertise, in particular, is very much needed NOW.” Email message entitled “710 fwy and general plan” from Joanne Nuckols to me dated November 18, 2011.

And just like that, I met Joanne. She was my activist mentor and friend for over 13 ½ years.

In 2007, my husband and I bought a condo in South Pasadena. I was employed at a government agency as an environmental planning professional with expertise in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Looking back now, I bet Joanne thought she hit the jackpot by finding another expert to review and critically comment on Caltrans environmental documents. We had lots of discussions, strategies, and goals towards the demise of the 710 extension, as well as hopes for an updated sustainable general plan for South Pasadena. I always had the upmost respect for her and her ability to withstand setbacks.

When my family and I bought a small house in 2015 on Meridian Avenue, we saw how pernicious the 710 fiasco was. Our home was a fixer upper and the deed noted that our home was in the pathway of the freeway extension. It had the potential for an eminent domain claim by Caltrans. Not knowing if we should invest in the house weighed on us. Also, Meridian Avenue and its local side streets are dotted with Caltrans’ neglected houses that are still problematic even today.

While most know that Joanne was involved with the 710, SPPF, historic preservation, transportation, and affordable housing, she also championed Meridian Avenue. Our portion of Meridian Avenue is almost one mile in length, between Monterey Road and Kendall Avenue. It had NO stop signs and consequently many drivers used it as an informal 710 thoroughfare to race and put others in danger. Walking and crossing at the intersection of Meridian Avenue and Oak Street were at the pedestrians’ peril, especially school kids. Many parked vehicles were and are still today hit and totaled by speeders and/or those drivers under the influence.

Earlier, neighbors from 1999-2001 and beyond tried and failed to get a three-way stop sign at that intersection. When my family and I moved to Meridian, we also became enraged about the lack of leadership at City Hall to rectify this issue. Joanne immediately worked with

me and other engaged neighbors on this challenge. It wasn’t at the level of a 710 fight, but that was Joanne, caring about the character of our City down to a neighborhood. She convinced me and others that we had to organize, get a name and logo, and just pressure the commissions and the council. She advised us all along this process and beyond. My daughter Sara and I worked on a name while Sara created a logo: Save Meridian Avenue for its Residents Together = SMART Families.



It took a few more years and a lot of help from others, but with over 130 individuals supporting our fight, our neighborhood finally got a three-way stop sign! Without a doubt, I credit our organizing strategy and messaging with that of Joanne’s behind the scenes involvement and guidance. She was amazing! May her memory be for a blessing for all.

Delaine Shane
SPPF Board Member



City employees install 3-way stop at Meridian & Oak, August 10, 2021. Photograph taken by Wende Lee.



ANNUAL HOLIDAY EVENT

December 4, 2025: Holiday Celebrations



Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation



Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation

Continuing our honored tradition, on December 4th, the Museum once again welcomed neighbors and friends for complimentary holiday sweets and warm cider served up by our SPPF volunteers.

Outside in Meridian Park, thanks to the South Pasadena Chamber and South Pasadena Arts Council, the evening included holiday messages from City leaders, a tree and menorah lighting ceremony, and several performances to brighten the night including the always spectacular SPSHS Marching Band.



Enjoying the holidays at the Museum are from left to right: Dean Serwin, Member of SPPF and Derek Vaughan, SPPF Board Member. Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation



Holiday festivities at the South Pasadena Historical Museum in 2019. Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation



HOLIDAYS & TRADITIONS

By Delaine Shane
SPPF Board Member

VETERANS DAY

Am I the only one who confuses Veterans Day and Memorial Day? South Pasadena officially salutes our veterans with heartfelt speeches on Memorial Day at the War Memorial Building. On Veterans Day, the City celebrates this holiday by closing its non-essential services, so that its employees can celebrate this holiday in their own ways.

In consulting the internet, the two holidays are different with Memorial Day dating back to 1868 and originally called National Decoration Day. People would place flags and flowers on the graves of Civil War soldiers. In time, the holiday was renamed and extended to pay homage to all fallen service members serving our nation.

On November 11, 1919, Armistice Day was established to honor the one-year anniversary of the end of World War 1. By 1954, then President Dwight D. Eisenhower had the name changed to Veterans Day to honor all those who over the years, living or dead, served in the military.

Wanting to know more about the historic activities relating to Veterans Day in South Pasadena, I consulted two excellent references from our library: "South Pasadena 1888-1988: A Centennial History," by Jane Apostol and "Images of America: South Pasadena," by Rick Thomas.

The City and its residents were clearly supportive of their military hometown "boys" in those early years of Armistice Day. With the strong support and fund raising by the American Legion – Post 140, the City was convinced to float 12 separate bonds, each at \$1,000, with the American Legion responsible for raising an additional \$3,000 to build the South Pasadena War Memorial Building. Voters approved the bond measure in 1921.

On December 4, 1921, Marshal Ferdinand Foch laid the cornerstone of the War Memorial Building, whose purpose was to serve as a municipal war memorial and an American Legion clubhouse for the returning WW1 veterans.



Marshal Foch placing the War Memorial Building cornerstone in 1921. Photo courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library



Cornerstone on War Memorial Building. Photo taken by Delaine Shane in November 2025.

Amazingly, the American Legion was successful in securing Marshal Foch's appearance and participation in this historic event. According to a Wikipedia entry, "Ferdinand Foch was a French general, Marshal of France and a member of the Academie Francaise and Academie des Sciences. He distinguished himself as Supreme Allied Commander on the Western Front during the First World War in 1918...to a large extent the final Allied strategy which won the war on land in Western Europe...was Foch's alone." The significance of Marshal Foch coming to South Pasadena to honor our military service men and City should not be understated. It was quite the honor at that time.



HOLIDAYS & TRADITIONS -- continued

VETERANS DAY -- continued

In 1923, another legendary military officer came to plant a redwood tree to the north of the War Memorial Building. He was none other than General John J. Pershing. According to another Wikipedia entry: "General of the Armies John Joseph Pershing... was an American army general, educator, and founder of the Pershing Rifles. He served as the commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) ... and led the AEF to victory in WW1." Another international figure coming to honor our military servicemen by planting a tree. Today, that redwood tree still stands – over 100 years later as does our War Memorial Building, City Landmark No. 2.



General John J. Pershing in both photos at South Pasadena War Memorial Building to plant a redwood tree in 1923. Photos courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library.

The three photos adjacent to the right margin of this page were taken by Delaine Shane in November 2025.





HOLIDAYS & TRADITIONS -- continued

By Scott Christ
Lifetime Circle Member

HALLOWEEN



Halloween in 1990s South Pasadena felt like stepping into another world. The streets seemed to glow orange and black, and anticipation built for weeks at Would You Believe? on Fair Oaks Avenue, a curiosity shop that completely transformed itself for the holiday. Oneonta Church on Garfield and the Bilicke House on Monterey Road hosted haunted houses, their eerie architecture lending the illusion that these places might actually be haunted, thrilling every child brave enough to enter.

When darkness fell on Halloween night, Milan Avenue came alive: fog drifted across sprawling lawns, costumed hosts beckoned from porches, and oak and eucalyptus trees stretched long shadows over walkways, guiding trick-or-treaters on their quest. Hours later, legs ached, pillowcases sagged under the weight of candy, and masks fogged or face paint smudged, but dumping the loot on the carpet at home felt like uncovering treasure. That was Halloween in 1990s South Pasadena: pure, magical, unforgettable. Even looking at pictures of Milan Avenue on Halloween night in 2025, the familiar streets and atmosphere still stir that same nostalgic thrill.

Photos taken on October 31, 2025, on Milan Street by Peggy Christ.





HOLIDAYS & TRADITIONS -- continued

By Scott Christ

Lifetime Circle Member

THANKSGIVING HELPERS IN SOUTH PASADENA

In South Pasadena, Thanksgiving isn't just a date on the calendar; it's the way our community shows up for one another.

Each November, the South Pasadena Senior Center hosts its annual Thanksgiving Luncheon at the War Memorial Building, supported by the Senior Citizens' Foundation of South Pasadena. Built in 1921, this California Spanish-style building is on the City's Official Landmark List as Landmark No. 2 and is available for community events year-round.

This year's gathering on November 19th brought together good food, warm conversation, and the neighborly spirit that defines the season.



Joyous Thanksgiving feast held at the South Pasadena War Memorial Building. Photo by Peggy Christ.

Across town, the Holy Family Church Giving Bank continues its long tradition of providing turkeys, fresh produce, and pantry staples to local families, reflecting the parish's year-round commitment to compassion.

And at the Crowell Family YMCA, community care remains steady and hands-on. After step-ping up during the Eaton fires, the Y is now helping to distribute food and essential supplies as SNAP & CalFresh benefits are in flux, joining other L.A. Y's in meeting a growing need.



Above: Holy Family Church was built in 1927 and is a prime example of Spanish Baroque Revival-style architecture. Photo by Peggy Christ.



Below: Crowell Family YMCA was originally built in 1965 and is an example of a mid-century vernacular building. Photo by Peggy Christ.



Preservation of historic buildings is not only to safeguard history and foster a sense of place, but in turn can support food security to those of our most vulnerable residents. Volunteers, donors, and everyday helpers like these keep South Pasadena's heart beating strong through the holidays.

From the SPPF Newsletter Editor: If your organization is also spreading care this season, please consider sending us your story and a photo of where you distribute your donations to:

sppfnewsletter@gmail.com.

HOLIDAYS & TRADITIONS --continued

By Scott Christ

Lifetime Circle Member

CHRISTMAS -- Living History Shines Bright on Diamond Avenue



Traffic signage at the intersection of Diamond Avenue and Monterey Road. Photo taken by Peggy Christ in December 2025.

On December nights, the short stretch of Diamond Avenue between Oxley Street and Monterey Road, tucked beside South Pasadena's original commercial district and some of its earliest homes, transforms into one of the city's brightest holiday traditions.



Diamond Avenue north of Monterey Road. Photo taken by Todd Schroeder in December 2025.

What began in 2004 with homeowner Todd Schroeder's ambitious display has expanded into a block-wide spectacle of thousands upon thousands of lights.



Christmas decorated homes on Diamond Avenue. Photo taken by Todd Schroeder in December 2025.

This effort requires a small team countless hours and the kind of electric bill only true holiday devotees would dare face.

The payoff, however, is pure holiday magic. Families roll by slowly, windows down, offering the familiar chorus of ooohs and aaahs, while children quietly bank memories they'll carry into adulthood.



HOLIDAYS & TRADITIONS --continued

CHRISTMAS -- Living History Shines Bright on Diamond Avenue -- continued



Christmas decorated homes on Diamond Avenue. Photo taken by Todd Schroeder in December 2025.



Christmas decorated home on Diamond Avenue. Photo taken by Peggy Christ in December 2025.

By October many of these same houses shift into Halloween mode, proving that holiday spirit here runs year-round. Set against the backdrop of one of South Pasadena's oldest neighborhoods, the glowing 1100 block of Diamond Avenue stands as both a festive destination and a reminder of the living history that surrounds us, making it a must-see stop on any holiday drive!

From the SPPF Newsletter Editor: What are your favorite memories of the Holidays spent in South Pasadena? Send your stories to: sppfnewsletter@gmail.com.



*Wishing our SPPF Members and their Families
Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year 2026!*



MUSEUM NEWS



Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation

By Brian Bright
Museum Director & SPPF Vice President

It's been a busy few months at the South Pasadena Historical Museum.

We have a wonderful new exhibit about the historic Rialto Theater, thanks to the Friends of the Rialto nonprofit. During the October Arts Crawl the Museum had over 1,000 guests and, in looking back at visitor logs since 1987, this is by far a new record!

Look in the Museum's front window and you will see a recently restored 1:12 scale model of the South Pasadena Santa Fe train station. The station was a staple for regional travel in town from 1887 until it's demolition in 1954. This model was originally built by Bert Peterson in the early 1950's and, in addition to being an expert model builder, Peterson also owned a local hardware store. It has been in disrepair, tucked away upstairs for many years and now has been fully restored and put on display for all to enjoy.

Please come by and check out the new exhibits.

Location:

South Pasadena Historical Museum
913 Meridian Avenue
South Pasadena, CA 91030

Museum Open to the Public – Free Admission:

Thursdays: 4:00 pm to 7:45 pm
Select Saturdays: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm
Special Events and by Appointment
Appointment Scheduling: 626-833-5310

For More Information, Contact:

Brian Bright, Museum Director
Colleen Boken, Museum Archivist
626-833-5310
info@sppreservation.org



From the old caption above: "Model builder Bert Peterson (left) points out some of the details of his model to local businessman Fletcher H. Swan. Peterson, in addition to model building operated a local hardware store. Swan spent after-school hours while in high school at the depot learning telegraphy and working for the Railway Express Agency. Swan is a former Mayor of the City of South Pasadena. (Photo taken 1953). Courtesy of the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation Archives."

MUSEUM HALLOWEEN STORIES

Archivist's Corner, Experiences in the Haunted Museum

By Colleen Boken
Museum Archivist



Welcome to this edition of Archivists Corner, in which the SPPF Board graciously gives me, your fabulously “What even is my job anymore, Archivist” space to chat about various things relevant to the Museum and its various happenings. It’s similar to “A Few Minutes with Andy Rooney,” though without a TV Deal (CBS Call me I’m Available!).

Given we are just coming out of Halloween and all of the spooky stories that one often tells around the campfire, it’s time for the story that I’ve often told in the Museum to those that want a real experience of a ghost, or a series of ghosts, that seem to inhabit the building at 913 Meridian.

The building that the Museum now occupies has lived a number of different lives over the years. From being a general store, to a church, and even the red-light district of South Pasadena, many people have occupied the space, and some have never left. This will be a little bit different from other articles as what gets recounted here are a few personal experiences I’ve had in the Museum.

Focusing first on general experiences, it would appear that whatever is haunting the Museum loves to make little noises and produce little smells. Oftentimes when in the Museum we’ve heard footsteps upstairs when nobody has been there, or the smell of chewing tobacco near the old counter in the Museum. Smells and sounds that don’t fully connect with the building just settling here and there. Experiences like this have been shared by visitors as well as other folks working in the building.

In addition, we’ve had a number of interesting experiences with folks who have reported feeling a “presence” of some sort in the Museum. One even suggested using a Ouija board after feeling a specific presence midway through the building, though it wasn’t a negative presence apparently. Suffice to say we have had a number of experiences within the Museum, though one specifically comes to mind.



It was late September on a Wednesday in 2022. I happened to be at the Museum late working up in the archives documenting and organizing. At the time the front door required a key to unlock the top lock even from inside. The AC was not on and the two bathroom doors were open slightly. It was pretty quiet around the Museum, and I was sitting upstairs working. It is also important to note that from upstairs one can hear any doors opening so it’s pretty easy to tell if someone comes into the Museum.

While upstairs I suddenly heard one of the bathroom doors slam shut. Grabbing what I had near me, which turned out to be a hammer along with my keys, I ran down the short set of stairs to see the first bathroom door closed. Ripping it open and finding it empty, I ran outside, having to unlock the door first, I found that there was, quite unusually, nobody around. It was eerily quiet, so much so that I decided at that point the ghosts probably didn’t want me there at that particular moment, so I packed up and left within 10 minutes.

Later tests showed that the door, even with the AC on, could not have made such a loud sound unless someone had pulled it. Given the fact that I didn’t hear anyone enter, it is still a mystery as to how that bathroom door managed to slam shut with nobody around. We’ve had further hauntings, with quite a few centered on that particular bathroom for whatever reason

Following that we’ve had a few cleanses of the energy of the space but suffice to say that the old building definitely has some stories still hanging out, perhaps laughing about the good ole days as time continues on. Now I tend to be a pretty logical individual, but there are definitely some things in that old 138-year-old building that defy any sense of logic. Out of habit now whenever I close up the Museum, I put on the ole Edison “Nearer my god to Thee” just to let them know I’m heading out, just in case.

Well, I hope that you’ve enjoyed this edition of Archivist’s Corner, come and visit me every Thursday to hear the board members groaning at my terrible jokes along with listening to my knowledge of the wonderful and weird of South Pasadena!





PAST EVENTS:

Treasures Unlocked: South Pasadena's Attic — 2025 Doors Open California

By Delaine Shane
SPPF Board Member

The South Pasadena Historical Museum welcomed numerous visitors on Saturday, September 13th and Sunday, September 14th for its inaugural membership in “Doors Open California.”



Doors open to greet visitors for this event.

This event is the largest statewide celebration of historic places in California. SPPF joined with other operators of historical museums and archives to provide access to our Museum's holdings. Free transit bus service was offered in a loop of the historic facilities.



Visitors engaged with the Museum's collections.



Visitors were greeted to rousing music on an Edison Diamond Disc Phonograph over 100 years old and still operating just fine.

Volunteer docents were introducing visitors to special and unusual objects at the Museum.



SPPF President Jenny Bright at the left with SPPF Consultant Peggy Christ at the center speaking with a visitor.

Photos taken by Delaine Shane at the South Pasadena Historical Museum on September 13, 2025.



PAST EVENTS -- continued:

The Raymond Hill Twilight Walking Tour

By SPPF Volunteers

The South Pasadena Preservation Foundation and our local historians, Mark Gallatin and Lori Rusch, conducted a sold-out walking tour on September 20th that explored the fiery history of the Raymond Hotel and the fascinating architectural story of the resulting housing development that resides in its place today.



Twohey's Restaurant sponsored a free ice cream kick off before the walk.



These walking tour photographs were all taken by Colleen Boken, Museum Archivist.



After the walk, a hilltop city-view reception was hosted by SPPF and its volunteers, thus closing out the event with time to mix and mingle over refreshments and light bites.





PAST EVENTS -- continued:

Mission District Scavenger Hunt and Craft

By Jenny Bright

SPPF President

On September 28, 2025, SPPF held a scavenger hunt and a calligraphy craft station at the South Pasadena Historical Museum.

The scavenger hunt was a family-friendly event walking in the South Pasadena historic Mission District. Over 20 visitors were encouraged to take a short walk, answer simple questions along the way with small prizes awarded for the youngsters who completed this challenge. Those in attendance had a fun time and were very interested in calligraphy.

Inside the Museum was a craft station with calligraphy coach, Jennifer Woo, where kids could create their own "vintage document" that featured their names in beautiful hand lettering.



All photographs taken by Jenny Bright on September 28, 2025, at the South Pasadena Historical Museum.



PAST EVENTS -- continued:

RIALTO THEATRE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

By Escott O. Norton

Friends of the Rialto Founder

For almost a century the Rialto Theatre was the premiere cultural and social heart of South Pasadena. Generations of locals saw their first movie there, had their first kiss, celebrated with friends and family, and experienced some of the best cinematic art ever made on the Rialto screen.

Friends of the Rialto, in collaboration with the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation, installed a Centennial celebration exhibit to mark the history of the Rialto Theatre.



Rialto 100 Celebration. Escott O. Norton and Jenny Bright. Photo taken on October 17, 2025, by Delaine Shane.

On Friday, October 17, 2025, a new permanent display was unveiled inside the South Pasadena Historical Museum at 913 Meridian Ave. Fascinating artifacts with graphic placards included an amazing array of photographs, historic movie ticket stubs and souvenir programs, an original Rialto audience seat, film reels, and an actual period-piece of carpeting saved from the theater, to name just a few of the items.



Rialto 100 Celebration.. Grand Opening of Permanent Exhibit at the Museum. Photo taken on October 17, 2025, by Colleen Boken..



Curtain parted and the Rialto 100 Centennial exhibit revealed by Escott O. Norton and SPPF Board Member Odom Stamps on the right. Photo taken on October 17, 2025, by Colleen Boken.

This private VIP event welcomed and acknowledged the Friends of the Rialto responsible for the creation and assembling of the historic artifacts that characterized the charm and joy of the Rialto Theatre.



Rialto 100 Celebration. Left to right: Colleen Boken, Jenny Bright, and Mayor Pro Tem Sheila Rossi. Photo taken by Delaine Shane on October 17, 2025.

South Pasadena Mayor Pro Tem Sheila Rossi and Board/Team members from the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation welcomed and congratulated the efforts of the Friends of the Rialto for creating this new exhibit and making it available to the public at the Museum.

PAST EVENTS -- continued:

RIALTO THEATRE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION -- continued

On Saturday, October 18th, as part of the South Pasadena Fall Arts Crawl, Meridian Avenue was temporarily closed between Mission Street and El Centro Avenue, with artisan booths, food and drink vendors, and commemorative Rialto theatrical merchandise to celebrate the anniversary. Guests could walk the red carpet past vintage cars in front of the Museum. Nearly 1,000 attendees came inside the Museum to enjoy this new exhibit, an all-time high in attendance never in recent memory achieved.



*Rialto 100 Celebration in front of the Museum.
Photo taken by Brian Bright on October 18, 2025.*

As the sun began to set, a 2.5-hour evening stage show in the park adjacent to the Museum featured live and on-screen acts representing 100 years of entertainment at the Rialto.



Rialto 100 Celebration at night in front of the Museum. Photo taken by Brian Bright on October 18, 2025.



This presentation showcased the rich history of this theater, from a silent picture movie house with a live organist, to a vaudeville stage, cinema (including campy shows related to the Rocky Horror Picture Show), and even a shooting location seen in the movies *La La Land*, *Scream 2*, Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, and more.



Rialto 100 Celebration at night in front of the temporary stage adjacent to the Museum. Crowd watching silent movie clips shown at the Rialto Theatre with an organist performing. Photo taken by Brian Bright on October 18, 2025.

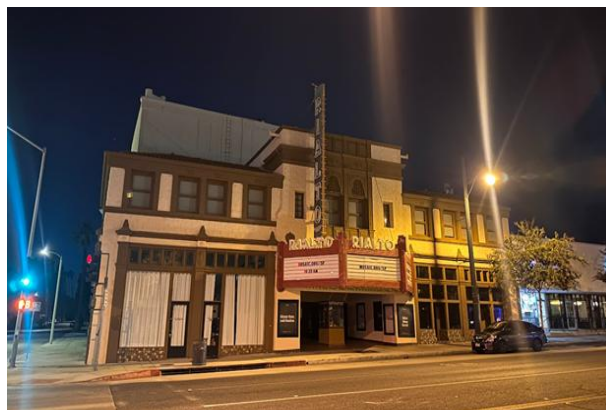


Photo of the Rialto Theatre taken at night by Colleen Boken on October 17, 2025. No festivities took place at the Rialto Theatre because the building is now used as a religious facility.

PAST EVENTS -- continued:

RIALTO THEATRE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION -- continued



Photo taken by Colleen Boken on October 18, 2025.

Performers included:

- Mark Herman who performed live organ accompaniment to a selection of silent movies.
- Janet Klein and her ukelele as the “Enchanting Chanteuse” who performed a selection of 1920s songs.
- Bob Baker Marionette Theater with Flapper Dodo and other historic marionettes, which performed acts inspired by 1920s vaudeville.

Activities included:

- The unveiling of the Rialto 100 exhibit inside the Museum.
- A raffle for prizes hosted by Jojo Bozo the Clown similar in nature to the Kiddie Shows hosted by the Rialto in the 1950s.
- Discussions by filmmakers, David and Sandy Wasco, and April Wright, who filmed scenes inside and outside at the Rialto. Clips and exclusive behind the scenes stills were also shown on the stage next to the Museum.
- Dance performances from Thrill the World Los Angeles and Dark Refrain (2.0) were done live to honor Thriller and the Rocky Horror Picture Show, respectively.
- Guests could color free samples from the Coloring Historic Theatres Rialto Theatre coloring book.

Food & drink vendors offered delicious beverages & treats:

- Rialto Bar –custom cocktails and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Rialto Sweetaria – vintage movie theatre concessions.



Friends of the Rialto on October 17, 2025, grand opening of the Rialto exhibit at the Museum. Photo taken by Delaine Shane. Left to Right:

- Mike Hume - Historic Theatre Photographer (HistoricTheatrePhotos.com), former president of the LA Historic Theatre Foundation
- Escott O. Norton - Founding Director- Friends of the Rialto, Rialto 100 Co-Producer, Author/Illustrator Coloring Historic Theatres coloring book
- Jeff DePaoli - Rialto 100 Co-Producer, Friends of the Rialto Board Member
- Bill Counter - Historic Theatre Historian, consultant, and advisor
- Scott Feldmann - Former South Pasadena Chamber President, co-founder of the Arts Crawl, driving force behind "Vision Rialto"

About the Friends of the Rialto: Founded in 1983 by Escott O. Norton, Friends of the Rialto is dedicated to the preservation and revitalization of the beautiful Rialto Theatre in South Pasadena, California. Originally a committee of the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation, Friends of the Rialto became a 501 (c)3 not-for-profit corporation in 2016. Their Board of Directors consists of community members, theatre professionals, historians, and artists. For more information, go to:

<https://www.friendsoftherialto.org/> or
<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsoftheRialto>.

From the SPPF Newsletter Editor: What are your favorite memories of the Rialto? Let us know at sppfnewsletter@gmail.com.



PAST EVENTS -- continued:

Wynyate – Donor Appreciation Event – Business & Sustaining Members Only

By SPPF Volunteers

On November 9, 2025, over 60 Business and Sustaining Members were treated to a rare opportunity to gather at the historic Wynyate, a private residence listed on the National Register of Historic Places and one of South Pasadena's most cherished historical homes.

Mark Gallatin gave an historical overview of the property, while Jennifer Trotoux spoke on the home's architectural details.



All photographs were taken by Colleen Boken, Museum Archivist on November 9, 2025.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

By Mark Gallatin

SPPF Board Member & Secretary

FAQ: APPROVED SENATE BILL 79 – HOUSING & HISTORIC RESOURCES

The goals of providing much needed new housing for Californians and preserving the architectural and cultural heritage of our neighborhoods are not mutually exclusive, but a new law introduces fresh challenges to achieving both compatibly. The following Qs and As about SB 79 seek to inform you and to encourage you to help shape its implementation by sharing your thoughts and opinions with our elected representatives as noted on Page 29.

What is SB 79?

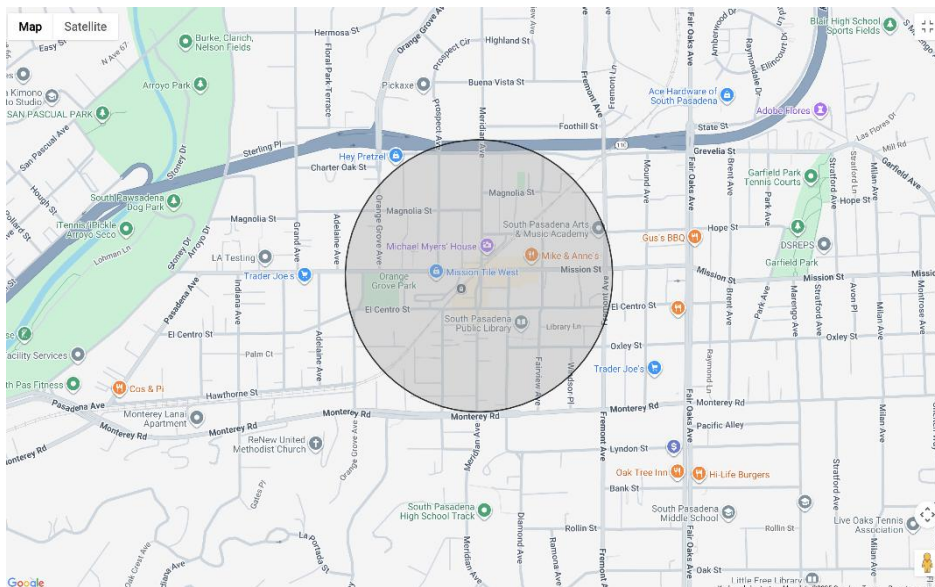
Senate Bill 79 (SB 79) was legislation authored by State Senator Scott Weiner of San Francisco and signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom in October. Most of the bill's provisions go into effect on July 1, 2026, and allow any site zoned for residential, mixed-use or commercial uses located within a specified distance of a “transit-oriented development stop” to be developed with residential or mixed-use buildings at greater heights, densities and floor areas, regardless of local zoning regulations.

The new law categorizes these transit-oriented development stops, generally meaning stops for commuter heavy rail (i.e. Metrolink), light rail (i.e. Metro lines A, B, C, etc.) or bus rapid transit lines (dedicated lanes or rights of way for buses only, like Metro's Orange Line in the San Fernando Valley), into two tiers. Tier 1 covers qualifying commuter heavy rail stops, while Tier 2 encompasses qualifying light rail and bus rapid transit stops. What is allowed under SB 79 is further determined by a site's distance from the stop and the population of the city.

How does it affect South Pasadena?

For South Pasadena, because it has a population of less than 35,000, SB 79 applies to a quarter-mile radius around the Metro A Line stop on Meridian Avenue. This is an area roughly bounded by the 110 Freeway on the north, Fremont Avenue on the east, Monterey Road on the south and Orange Grove Avenue on the west.

Within this radius, the law permits residential or mixed-use (meaning roughly two-thirds of the building's floor area is devoted to housing) buildings up to 65 feet tall, with a maximum density of 100 dwelling units per acre and a maximum floor area ratio of 3.0. (Floor area ratio is the ratio of a building's square footage, with some exceptions, divided by the lot size). Significantly, the law permits residential/mixed-use projects that are adjacent to the transit stop (meaning within 200 feet of a pedestrian access point to the station) to a maximum height of 85 feet, with a maximum density of 140 dwelling units per acre and a maximum floor area ratio of 4.0. SB 79 projects are only subject to ministerial review and approval by staff, which means no discretionary reviews, such as Planning Commission hearings are allowed. If the project satisfies all applicable code requirements, the City must approve it.



Quarter-mile radius in South Pasadena affected by SB 79 centered around Metro's A Line Station (photo credit: Google Maps).



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT -- continued

FAQ: APPROVED SENATE BILL 79 – HOUSING & HISTORIC RESOURCES

By comparison, much of the area affected by SB 79 is located in the Mixed-Use Core-70 (MUC-70) zone, which allows a maximum height of 55 feet and a maximum density of 70 dwelling units per acre. In the Mission West National Register Historic District, 50 feet is the maximum height and 50 dwelling units per acre is the maximum density. South Pasadena does not have a floor area ratio requirement for multifamily residential and mixed-use buildings.

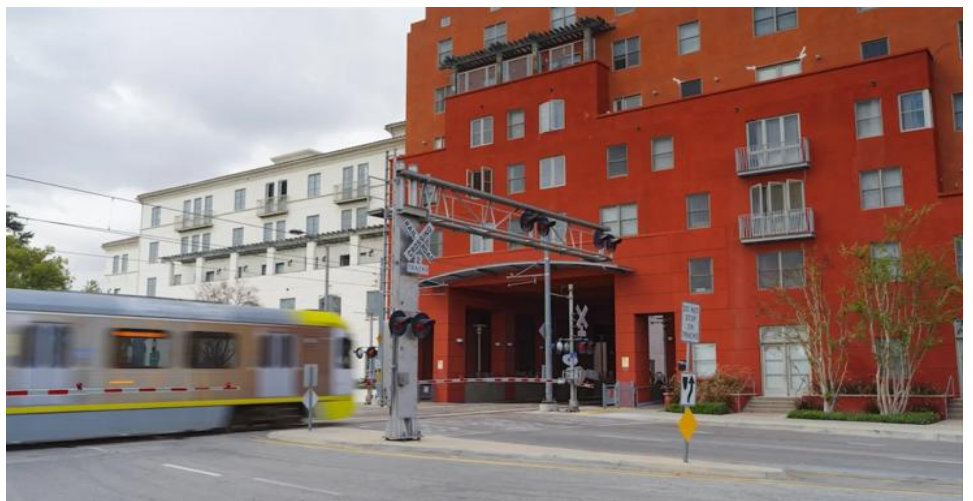
The law requires certain affordability commitments. (7 percent extremely low income, 10 percent very low income or 13 percent lower income) or the local affordability requirements, whichever is higher; projects with 10 or fewer housing units are exempt from the statutory affordability requirements but may still be required to comply with any local affordability requirements.

SB 79 does not provide a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)-exempt or by-right pathway for qualifying projects, although such projects may benefit from other streamlining laws, such as SB 35. Notably, a

SB 79 project may qualify for CEQA-exempt ministerial processing under SB 35 with only 10 percent very low-income units (for rental project) or 10 percent low-income units (for-sale projects). This is a significant reduction from SB 35's affordable obligations in most instances. Even where SB 79 projects do not qualify for SB 35's CEQA-exempt ministerial process, other CEQA exemptions may apply.

How does it affect historic resources in South Pasadena?

SB 79 only allows cities to exclude a maximum of 10% of the area within a transit-oriented zone due to historic resources, and then only those resources that have been designated on a local register as of January 1, 2025. The law provides no specific protection for historic resources of state or national significance. The Mission West National Register Historic District is located within the city's SB 79 transit-oriented zone, as are two locally designated historic districts and a number of designated city landmarks.



*Metro A line train approaching Del Mar station in Pasadena (photo credit: Angel DiBilio/
<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/pasadena-ca-usa-january-22-2021-1900416352>)*



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT -- continued

FAQ: APPROVED SENATE BILL 79 – HOUSING & HISTORIC RESOURCES

The city recently revised densities and height limits in certain areas. Will SB 79 change that?

It is not yet certain how SB 79 may impact the revisions to height limits and densities approved by the City Council in certain areas to implement Measure SP and comply with the City's state-certified housing element. In an effort to allow for local flexibility in implementation, SB 79 includes provisions allowing cities to adopt alternative transit-oriented development (TOD) plans that allow at least as much overall development. However, these measures must be approved by California's Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), which is charged with enforcing SB 79 and providing guidance for implementation. A TOD alternative plan must maintain the same total increase in zoned capacity as provided in SB 79 across all eligible areas within one-half mile from qualifying TOD stops. Within these constraints, cities with approved alternative plans may reduce a site's maximum allowable density under SB 79 by up to 50 percent, may also reduce allowable units and residential floor area by 50 percent. SB 79's primary provisions will not apply to cities until July 1, 2026, unless the city, prior to that date, adopts a local TOD alternative plan. In addition, HCD must come up with standards for implementing SB 79 by that date, and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) must create maps of TOD stops and coverage zones to ease implementation.

What happens next?

SB 79 now moves into an implementation and amendment phase, during which technical edits and clarifications will be made. In a recent community event in South Pasadena, State Senator Sasha Renee Perez indicated that additional legislation is likely to be introduced in 2026 to provide greater specificity and clarity to SB 79's language. Such proposed amendments will be opportunities to continue to advocate for revisions that provide greater protection for historic

properties, maximize creativity and flexibility in developing local alternative plans, and promote proven planning principles that will result in contextually sensitive denser housing near transit areas. The City Council and the Planning Commission will hold a joint meeting on January 14, 2026, to discuss SB 79 implementation. Check www.southpasadenaca.gov for more information as the date approaches.

You can help the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation by making your thoughts about SB 79 implementation known to your City Council representatives and the offices of State Senator Sasha Renee Perez and Assembly Member Mike Fong.

Their contact information is as follows:

South Pasadena City Council

1414 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030
(626) 403-7218
cco@southpasadenaca.gov

State Senator Sasha Renee Perez

215 N. Marengo Ave., Suite 380, Pasadena, CA 91101
(626) 304-1086

Assembly Member Mike Fong

1411 S. Garfield Ave. Suite 307, Alhambra, CA 91801
(626) 457-4918

Please let your elected representatives know that communities do not have to choose between housing and historic preservation, but through collaboration, dialogue and intelligent planning practices they can have both as we work together to sensibly implement this new law.



913 Meridian Avenue
South Pasadena, CA 91030

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP LIST

Thank you to our renewing members! Without your support, the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation could not exist.

Business Members

Thano Adamson, Mission Tile West
Cathy Billings, City of South Pasadena Public Library
Kevin Bourland, Compass
Claire Chang, Kaldi Coffee and Tea
Tanya Christos & Greg Mallis, Twoheys Restaurant
David Clark, The Shellhamer Real Estate Group
Edward Corey, Corey & Corey
Nichole Dunville, Realtor
Family Chiropractic Center
Zack Grey, The Urban Pet
Lisa Henderson Harvest Architecture
Pete Kutzer, The Kutzer Company
Yvonne LaRose, Consultant's Desk
Alberto Lopez, Law Office of Alberto Lopez, APC
Conrado Lopez, 2_L Studio LLC
Dina Morgan
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Azelle Santa Ana, The Maya Salon
Dean Serwin, Serwin Media Group
Odom & Kate Stamps, Stamps and Stamps
Eric Steen
Becky Thompson & Mark Smeaton, Crux Studio
Derek Vaughan, South Pasadena Homes

Sustaining Members

Skulpan Asayasopon
Lela Bissner
Janet Braun
Brian Bright
Jenny Bright
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Eric Steen
Tom Stone



**SOUTH PASADENA
PRESERVATION
FOUNDATION**

913 Meridian Avenue
South Pasadena, CA 91030

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP LIST -- continued

Member List Compiled by Peggy Christ

Sustaining Members --continued

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