

Pasadena Pedestrian Plan

For a Livable & Walkable Community

VOLUME I

DRAFT

Department of Transportation

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1. OVERVIEW

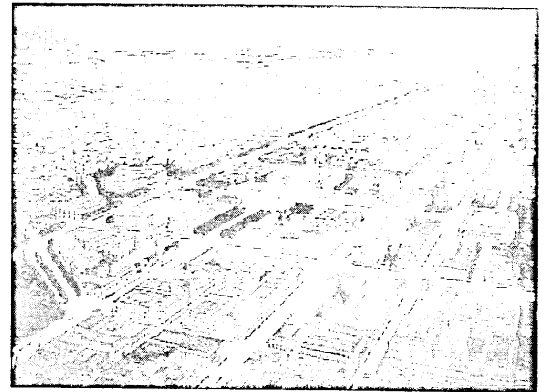
Pasadena's vision is for a livable community - one that is walkable, safe and healthy, with engaging places, a sound economy, vibrant and comfortable streets and interesting places of activity. Pasadena will be a City where development patterns and the pedestrian network provide safe, convenient, and enjoyable access throughout the developed portions of the City. Its neighborhoods will be protected from cut-through and speeding traffic. Its commercial districts will be easily accessible and will be linked to maintain them as viable and sustainable places to live.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The City's vision builds upon its rich history dating as far back as 1925 when a bold plan for creation of a new Civic Center was unveiled. Outstanding buildings with tree-lined streets and comfortable sidewalks resulted from that initiative and are a notable part of Pasadena's identity.¹

The 1994 General Plan reaffirmed this design legacy by establishing urban design principles that are shaped and driven by community values reflecting views of residents². In addition to promoting good design and walkable streets, a guiding principle was established that **Pasadena be a community where people can circulate without cars.**³ Policies regarding historic preservation and maintaining a "city of gardens" environment also help protect the attractive and unique character of neighborhoods.⁴ Historic structures are preserved and designs which typify the garden character of Pasadena's earlier apartments and bungalow courts are encouraged. These features and a favorable year-round climate contribute directly to an enhanced environment that makes Pasadena a great city for walking.

For Pasadena, walking is more than a pleasant pastime. It is an essential component of City goals to reduce reliance on the automobile, promote pedestrian safety and convenience, encourage the use of transit and bicycles, create transit-oriented developments, preserve unique qualities of the City's historic districts,



The "Plan for the City of Pasadena", prepared by Bennett, Parsons, and Forst, provided for civic design organized around an axial plan ("Bennett Plan").

raise awareness of the important role of walking in promoting public health, and enhance Pasadena's attractive identity.

In 2004, the City updated the Mobility and Land Use Elements of the General Plan. These documents along with updated specific plans and updated Zoning Code, the Bicycle Plan, the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, and the Short Range Transit Plan guide land use and transportation policy. Collectively, they provide guidance for the future by directing growth into specific areas close to transit facilities in order to protect established residential neighborhoods and create new and attractive business and mixed-use urban environments. These areas are based on a concept of higher density, and mixed use environments that support transit, bicycle- and pedestrian-oriented mobility strategies.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE PEDESTRIAN PLAN

Pasadena recognizes that the quality of the walking experience often defines the livability of a community. The ability to walk safely, comfortably and conveniently from one place to another will often determine whether one chooses to walk, bike, take transit, or drive. The Pedestrian Plan builds upon the strengths of adopted policy and nearly \$91 million capital programs already underway to improve the pedestrian environment. The Plan establishes the direction to guide future pedestrian improvements. It emphasizes the importance of the pedestrian in city life and aims to increase the public's awareness of the importance of walking for good health and fitness.

The Pedestrian Plan provides guidance to preserve the walkability of pedestrian areas, to better design and develop pedestrian-friendly projects, to better integrate pedestrian improvements into street maintenance and traffic management programs, and to implement public education, and enforcement programs that improve pedestrian safety and increase levels of walking.

1.3 PLANNING APPROACH

Pasadena's Pedestrian Plan is part of an ongoing effort to make the City an even better place to walk. Much of the groundwork has been accomplished in previously adopted plans and policy documents and by the initiatives of community-based organizations including those promoting walking in places of special interest. The Pedestrian Plan relies on such programs to help raise public awareness about places of interest and the



The Bungalow Heaven Landmark District includes more than 800 homes built from the 1900s through the 1930s.

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importance of walking. It provides information and planning tools in support of the Open Space and Recreation Element, and the Recreation and Parks Master Plan and future update of Specific Plans to enable development of pedestrian improvements as part of new projects and expansion of existing ones.

Preparation of this document is particularly timely since the following significant City initiatives present opportunities to enhance the pedestrian environment and promote walking for short trips.

1.3.1 Improved Transit/Pedestrian Services

The City is committed to improving transit service in order to stem the increasing reliance on the automobile for most trips. Public officials have focused on this goal for the past decade with considerable success. Today, Pasadena benefits from an extensive network of regional and local transit services, most notably the opening of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Metro Gold Line Light Rail service which has six stations in the City. Also, the City's local transit "Area Rapid Transit System", or ARTS, has undergone significant development since its inception in 1994. Currently, Pasadena is served by twenty-one transit routes and eighty-nine percent of the population resides within a quarter-mile walk of a transit route (approximately 1,300 feet).⁵ Local service routes have been approved for future system expansion, coordination with regional services has been improved to promote use of regional services, and local bus stops throughout Pasadena are being analyzed to insure that appropriate safety provisions facilities and user amenities are provided.

Assuring good pedestrian access is critical to a well-functioning transit system. If transit users cannot easily walk to and from bus stops, fewer people will consider transit a viable travel option. The availability and condition of sidewalks, lighting for evening hours, bus pads and bus stop amenities can influence public opinion regarding use of the transit system.

The Pedestrian Plan provides data and analytical tools to address the needs of pedestrians. It identifies improvements that should be considered based on bus stop function, location and usage. It also links City initiatives that promote use of public transit with public health messages regarding the importance of walking.

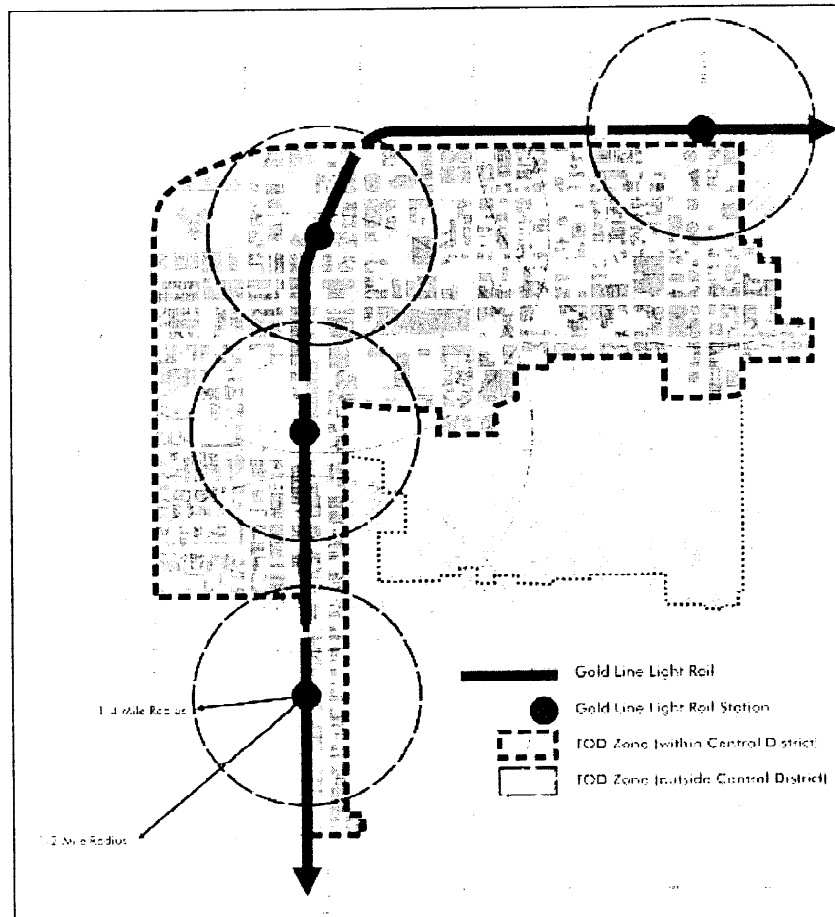


With an annual budget of \$3.7 million, Pasadena ARTS served 1.3 million passengers in 2005.

1.3.2 Establishment of Pedestrian-Friendly Transit Oriented Districts

The opening of the Metro Gold Line Light Rail service provides significant opportunities to establish pedestrian-friendly Transit Oriented Districts around selected stations (as shown in Figure 1-1). By directing growth away from neighborhoods and into the downtown and along major transit corridors, opportunities can be created to provide diverse and active economic, housing, and cultural places. Catering to pedestrians and improving the walkability and connectivity between light-rail stations and nearby housing, recreation, shopping, and employment are major components of transit-oriented development. The goal is a comfortable five- to ten-minute walk from the transit station to retail, office, or housing. Buildings, sidewalk lighting and landscaping will be designed for easy use by pedestrians to encourage walking and enliven public spaces.

Figure 1-1: Illustration of Transit-Oriented Boundaries in the Central District⁶



1.3.3 Pedestrian Improvements Enabled by Traffic Signal Technology Upgrades

Pasadena will be installing improved traffic signal technology along major travel corridors over the next few years. This technology will enable the City to incorporate signal timing settings that will better address the needs of pedestrians at selected intersections during mid-day, evening and weekend periods. Also, these new traffic signals will be fitted with audible and tactile features to assist visual- and hearing-impaired persons. The information collected for the Pedestrian Plan will be used to implement such pedestrian-friendly improvements.

1.3.4 Walkable Neighborhoods with Traffic Management Programs

Walkable communities promote neighborliness and enhance the local character of places. With this in mind, Pasadena places an emphasis on the protection of its neighborhoods from the negative impacts of cut-through traffic. The Neighborhood Traffic Management Program specifies a comprehensive process for implementing traffic calming measures designed to improve the safety of local streets. This process differs from ongoing traffic reviews in scope, depth, and involvement of the entire residential community. Because the process is interactive at the neighborhood scale, it provides timely opportunities to obtain information from residents regarding popular destinations, how often they walk, and suggestions for improvement. This information will be used to augment traffic calming measures with programs to promote pedestrian activity.

1.3.5 Public Safety and Health Outreach Initiatives to Encourage Physically Active Lifestyles

Public outreach and information are essential implementing components of any policy plan. All of Pasadena's programs and services incorporate extensive public review and outreach initiatives. For example, Pasadena regularly conducts safety programs particularly for children. The **Safe Routes to School Program**, classes on safe biking, and pedestrian safety initiatives conducted at grade schools prior to opening the light rail service are examples of City safety initiatives. Pasadena also participates in the region's **Watch the Road Campaign** and conducts safe driving classes for high school students. Simple and effective campaigning messages (see Figure 1-2) are posted on bus shelters throughout the City.

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The City of Pasadena is an active participant in the Countywide traffic safety campaign.



Warning: Slow down, your family is waiting for you. Watch the Road.

watchtheroad.org

OPERATION TRAFFIX



Warning: It's better to lose one minute of your life than your life in one minute. Watch the road.

watchtheroad.org

OPERATION TRAFFIX

The Pedestrian Plan identifies the need for additional public information on the importance of walking for public health. In addition to preparing this policy document, Pasadena is initiating an **Up and Moving Pasadena** campaign to promote walking. These are timely public policy initiatives since lack of physical activity has become a public health epidemic throughout the United States. Pasadena, along with many other communities throughout California, recently learned that childhood overweight rates continue to be a very significant public health concern. According to a recent statewide health study, thirty-two percent of Pasadena's children in grades 5, 7, and 9 are considered overweight and are in need of increased physical activity.⁷ And, children who are overweight are likely to remain so as they age. Adults can lead by example since the large majority of trips each day are less than five miles. In fact, 27% of trips are one mile or less.⁸

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The Pedestrian Plan document is presented in five sections with four accompanying appendices. Additional detail information on implementation projects and design guidelines is provided in Volume 2 of the Pedestrian Plan.

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

The Overview section discusses the purpose and organization of the Pedestrian Plan, the approach in preparing the document, and major related initiatives that provide timely opportunities for improving the City's pedestrian environment.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

The Background section highlights the unique setting and character of Pasadena. It provides background information on the City, its population, employment, residential characteristics, and travel behaviors, as well as other factors to be taken into account in improving the City's pedestrian environment.

SECTION 3: POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Policy Framework section synthesizes pedestrian policies of adopted plans and programs to provide a policy framework for future pedestrian programs and projects.

SECTION 4: CITYWIDE PEDESTRIAN NEEDS AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

This section provides information on citywide programs to improve sidewalks, construct curb ramps, improve transit stops and adjust signal timing. This section also presents analytical tools to facilitate development of future projects to better address pedestrian needs.

SECTION 5: IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation section provides a summary overview of initiatives to improve citywide pedestrian facilities, a summary of capital programs that constitutes nearly \$91 million of pedestrian improvements in Pasadena, institutional arrangements and sources of funds for pedestrian implementation. Additional detail information on implementation projects, a summary of the Central District Design Guidelines, precedents for pedestrian friendly urban design, and the Transportation Guidelines for Review of Projects is provided in Volume 2 of the Pedestrian Plan.

APPENDIX A contains full-page, high-resolution maps referenced throughout this document.

APPENDIX B contains full-page, high-resolution **Safe Routes to School** Maps.

APPENDIX C contains the Pedestrian Questionnaire for inclusion in Neighborhood Traffic Management Programs.

APPENDIX D provides a glossary of commonly used terms in transportation.

APPENDIX E contains reference material for those interested in additional studies regarding pedestrian safety and pedestrian improvements.

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¹ City of Pasadena 2004 Central District Specific Plan (adopted on Nov. 8, 2004); p. 5

¹ City of Pasadena 2004 General Plan

¹ <http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/planning/deptorg/commplng/GenPlan/principle5.asp>

¹ City of Pasadena Central District Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report (adopted on Nov. 8, 2004); p. 134

¹ Arroyo Verdugo Cities Transportation Audit Project

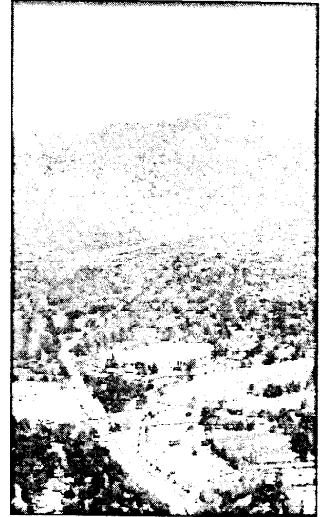
¹ City of Pasadena Central District Specific Plan (adopted on Nov. 8, 2004); p. 64

¹ [California Center for Public Health Advocacy. The Growing Epidemic Policy Brief No. 4, August 2005](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Imz/Pages/20050801_01.aspx)

¹ <http://www.dcd.gov/nccdphp/sgr/summ.htm>

2. BACKGROUND

Pasadena's natural and built environment, noted places of activity, and services offer significant opportunities to support the pedestrian. Located in the west San Gabriel Valley, the northern portion of the City extends into the San Gabriel Mountains. The Arroyo Seco nature area and the outstanding views of the San Gabriel Mountains and canyons provide a remarkable natural setting for the City. They are a part of the City's identity and aid orientation. Scenic views and vistas are a special part of the public's experience particularly along the major north-south roadways such as Linda Vista Avenue, Fair Oaks Avenue, Los Robles Avenue, Orange Grove Boulevard, Arroyo Boulevard, Lake Avenue, Allen Avenue, Altadena Drive, Sierra Madre Villa Avenue, and Michillinda Avenue. The Arroyo Seco also provides views of the mountains and is one of the most scenic areas in the City.¹



Pasadena has a rich architectural heritage that defines the scenic character within many neighborhoods. The City Hall, Library and Civic Auditorium were built as part of the "Bennett Plan" that established a Beaux Art framework for the City's major civic buildings. These buildings and other historically significant structures such as the Rose Bowl stadium, and the historic Arroyo Hotel (now the 9th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals) add to the quality of the built environment. Cultural facilities such as the Pasadena Community Playhouse and establishment of the Pasadena Civic Symphony Orchestra and Civic Chorus contributed to Pasadena's reputation through the 1920's as an inviting and attractive tourist center and winter resort. A 1939 study rated it as the best city in the U.S. in which to live.²

The placing of the historic civic buildings established an early precedent for the relationship between buildings and outdoor open space in Pasadena. Their unique series of outdoor rooms, streets and alleys integrate art works, seating and lighting to create a high-quality urban pedestrian environment with visual interest and physical comfort.³ The recent restoration of an uninterrupted view between the library and the Civic Auditorium provides added opportunities to view the City Hall dome, a historic icon of Pasadena. The Colorado Street Bridge, designed in 1913 as a "work of art" and renovated in the early 1990's to conform to seismic safety

