

15. Eaton Fire

The Eaton Fire report is not included in the City Council meeting agenda at the time of the agenda posting. When will it be distributed? The day of the meeting?

Second Reading:

14. Adopt "AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PASADENA, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 13.04 TO REMOVE STRANDED INVESTMENT CHARGE AND RESERVES AND INCLUDE A RESERVE FOR WORKING CAPITAL" (Introduced by Councilmember Lyon)



ORDINANCE

INFORMATION ITEM

15. **EATON FIRE REPORT** (City Departments)
Recommendation: The report is provided for information only; no action is required at this time.
16. **HOMELESSNESS IN PASADENA 2024-2025: RESULTS OF THE 2024 ANNUAL COUNT AND 2025 POINT IN TIME COUNT** (Housing Dept.)
Recommendation: The agenda report is provided for information only; no action is required at this time.



It's only an informational item - is there no planned action after the City's largest disaster?!

Yadi
Pasadena City Council
June 9, 2025
15. Eaton Fire

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From: Marla Tauscher <
Sent: Monday, June 9, 2025 3:13 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Public Comment June 9, 2025; City Council Agenda Item #15, Eaton Fire Report *

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Dear Mayor Gordo and Council Members:

Since January, you and other city "leaders" have been patting yourselves on the back and nauseam with respect to your response to the Eaton fire. The City Manager even went so far as to describe the city officials' response as heroic. Your self-congratulatory behavior is not only unwarranted, it is dangerous because you apparently believe you handled the disaster so well, you don't need to improve a thing.

Nothing could be further from the truth! Your response, or rather, lack of response to the Eaton fire, was unconscionable, yet you have the audacity to continue to brag about a job well done. I was living in Pasadena for nearly 12 years when the Eaton fire erupted, and I had no idea which evacuation zone I lived in for one simple reason: There was no such information on the City's website or otherwise made available to the public. It wouldn't have really mattered though, because I never received a single message from the City of Pasadena during or after the Eaton fire, even when I received the ***mandatory evacuation order*** before dawn on the morning of January 8, 2025. That order came from Los Angeles County or some other entity. It was NOT from Pasadena City officials.

I found out which evacuation zone I lived in only after the area was enveloped by fire through an app called Watch Duty. I sat in my car, with my pets, for nearly 12 hours that day, with no information whatsoever from the City of Pasadena. I checked your website throughout the day for updates, orders, or any information about the fire, or what residents should do, but there was NOTHING! The City's website didn't even have any links to any information. The most recent information available on the website was a post from days earlier warning about high winds. To this day, there is no information about evacuation zones on the City's website!

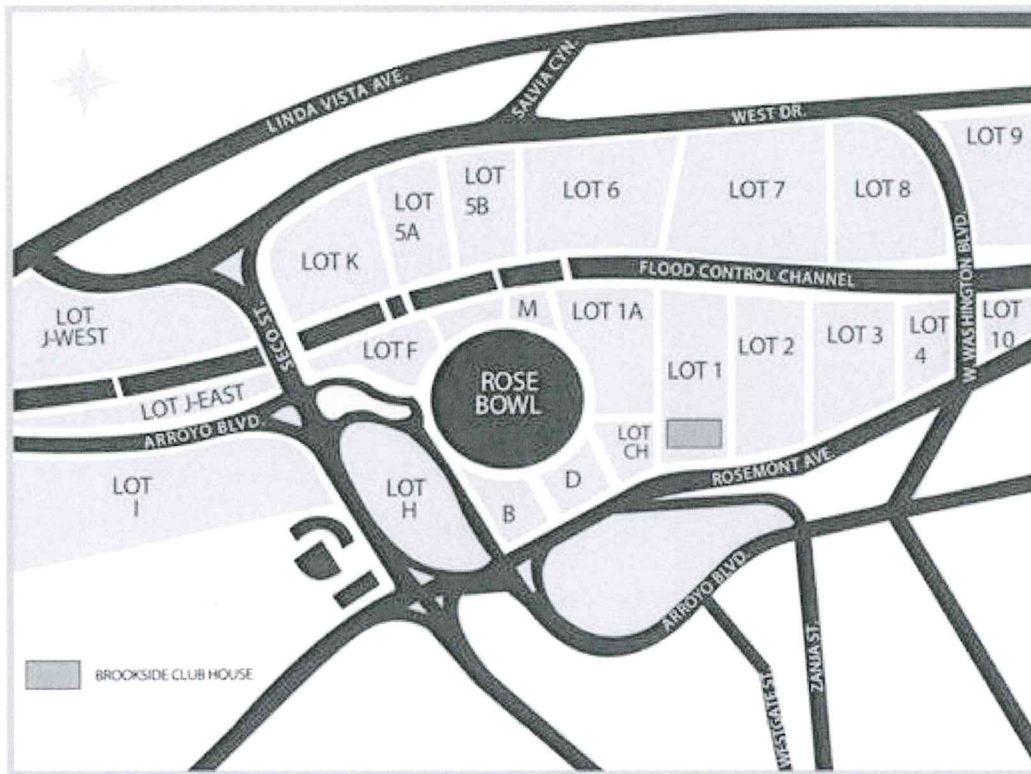
Days after the fire started, and while it was still raging, there were huge piles of dried vegetation in the parking lot of John Muir high school, much of which had blown up against the houses behind that lot. When I contacted my council member, Tyron Hampton, to request that the debris be removed as it posed a significant risk to our homes if embers ignited it, he told me that Pasadena Unified School District was an autonomous entity and that the City has no control over their facilities. That is an unacceptable answer. The highly flammable debris was not removed

for a week after the fire began. I thought such a lack of coordination among entities within the City, or concern for public safety was unfathomable, but now I understand how it occurred.

As it happens, *the City of Pasadena does not have an evacuation/disaster plan!!!* After the fire, a number of comprehensive public records requests were submitted to the City for copies of evacuation and/or disaster plans for Pasadena, mutual aid agreements, and other information related to the City's emergency response plans. The scant information provided was not only pathetic, but very telling. It is very clear that disaster preparedness and public safety are not a priority for Pasadena city officials and have not been for decades. At least 2 of you found the time to cosplay as firefighters to pose for photos with state and/or federal officials while the fire was still burning and thousands of people were still under mandatory evacuation orders. You should be ashamed of yourselves, but you're not, which is obvious from your behavior since then.

Many of you (Messrs. Gordo, Madison, Masuda, Hampton) have been on the City Council and/or involved in city leadership for more than 10-25 years. You have no excuse for failing to make public safety and disaster planning a priority. If you didn't know you don't have a plan, your ignorance is inexcusable. It is more likely that you do know and you hoped no one would find out.

You also have NO PLAN for evacuation of the Rose Bowl Stadium and surrounding areas! In response to a detailed public records request related to disaster/evacuation plans for the Rose Bowl, including evacuation of parking lots, traffic control, ingress for emergency vehicles, and evacuation routes for visitors (not to mention nearby residents) the diagram below and a ridiculous 1-minute video from 2017 telling people which exits to use based on seating areas, comprise the sum total of your Rose Bowl evacuation "plan".



Are you aware that State Emergency officials have upgraded the Arroyo to the top tier for fire danger in the State of California after the Eaton fire? Do you care? Or would you prefer to continue to pretend you have a plan and hope for the best as you've done for decades? Have you informed FIFA, UCLA, the IOC or any others who use or plan to use the Rose Bowl that the facility is a mass casualty event waiting to happen? Or will you just wait until there is a disaster there and pretend you didn't know that you have no plan?

Your lack of a plan was made clear once again just last week when a small fire near Marengo St. and California Ave. – **3 miles away from the Rose Bowl** – created big traffic problems for people going to an event at the Rose Bowl. That was in the middle of the day, when Rose Bowl traffic was not at its peak. If you can't handle traffic backups caused by a small fire miles away, how could you possibly evacuate the Rose Bowl and the Arroyo during a large-scale event? The answer is that you can't!

For years, City officials have found ways to skirt State laws related to disaster planning. For example, the City has not updated the Safety Element of the City's General Plan since 2002! The information in that outdated Safety Element is focused almost entirely on seismic activity, not fire. *California Government Code §65302(g)* **requires** you to update the City's Safety Element when you revise the Housing Element of the General Plan. The City Council adopted a revised Housing Element on July 18, 2022, nearly 3 years ago. Where is the updated Safety Element? How much more time do you need?

Requests were made for information related to the (at least) three consultants the City has contracted in recent years to create such a plan, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars. No

such information has been provided despite the fact that the names of those consultants appear in several City documents that purport to be plans. They're not plans. They're just recommendations, loaded with words like "should" and other possibilities. In any event, the recommendations are moot, because you didn't follow any of them during or after the Eaton fire anyway.

The City has failed to provide at least 95% of the requested records. Instead, your City Attorney, Michele Bagneris, has inserted herself into the process apparently to control disclosure of records, or more to the point, non-disclosure. City officials, including her office, which appears to be controlling access to requested records have not responded *at all* to the vast majority of the records requests. Why not? In the wake of the biggest disaster in Pasadena history, shouldn't emergency response information, especially an evacuation plan, be readily available? Why the secrecy? If not now, when? Where is the information? Are you waiting for a court order to comply with the California Public Records Act?

You have been very lucky so far in terms of avoiding a large-scale event with many casualties, but your luck won't last forever, especially where fire is an increasing risk in California, and particularly in and around the Arroyo. If the Eaton fire had occurred just one week earlier, when there were 800,000 spectators for the Rose Parade and nearly 100,000 people at the Rose Bowl for the football game, not to mention the floats parked in the area of Eaton Canyon, I hate to imagine what would have happened and how many more people would have. Your failure to prioritize public safety and to have any plan to protect not only residents, but the many visitors who come to the City of Pasadena for big events is dangerous and borders on criminal negligence.

What is it going to take for you to stop pretending and/or burying your heads in the sand and producing real plans?

*Please ensure that this correspondence is included in the public record.

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