McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: William M. Paparian
Sent: Saturday, November 7, 2026 5:09 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Special Joint Meeting 11/9/26 - Item #2 - UPDATE ON LOS ANGELES COUNTY HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EFFORTS

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Guest Essay | William Paparian: Pasadena's Ghost Platoon: 43 Homeless Veterans, Two Days Before Veterans Day

Published on Saturday, November 7, 2026 | 4:32 am

On Monday, November 9, the Pasadena City Council will hold a special joint meeting with Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger to discuss homelessness, housing collaboration, and joint encampment mitigation. Two days later, on Veterans Day, the City will hold a public ceremony in front of City Hall to honor those who served. The proximity of these two events makes a simple fact impossible to ignore.

Pasadena's 2026 Point-in-Time Count found 43 Veterans experiencing homelessness—7.5 percent of the total homeless population and 12 percent of those who were unsheltered. Veterans make up approximately 3 percent of Pasadena's adult population. They are overrepresented among the homeless by a factor of more than two, particularly among those living on the streets. Forty-three is not an abstract number. It is the approximate strength of a U.S. infantry platoon—the basic building-block unit of ground combat forces. In Pasadena, that platoon has become a Ghost Platoon: counted in the data, yet invisible to the Housing, Homelessness and Planning Committee charged with overseeing homelessness policy. No dedicated agenda items, no focused briefings, no sustained attention.

Picture that platoon as it once stood: American service members trained to defend this country, prepared to give their lives for it, standing shoulder to shoulder in formation with discipline and purpose. Now picture those same 43 Veterans scattered across the streets of Pasadena—sleeping in doorways, under overpasses, or in vehicles—carrying the same service and the same willingness to sacrifice, but reduced to a Ghost Platoon that the city counts and then leaves behind.

This is not a data problem. The City counts Veterans. It is a priority problem.

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Supervisor Barger has been clear on this issue. She has repeatedly stated that the words "Veteran" and "homeless" should never be used together, and she has supported specific housing projects and policy changes aimed at getting Veterans off the streets and into stable housing. Monday's joint meeting is an opportunity for the City of Pasadena to align with that approach rather than continue treating the Ghost Platoon as a footnote in broader reports.

The causes are well documented. Mental health conditions (including PTSD), substance use disorders, the difficult transition from military to civilian life, and the extreme shortage of affordable housing in our region all contribute. These are not abstract risks. They are the reasons Veterans remain overrepresented among the unsheltered in Pasadena even as national and countywide numbers have declined through targeted programs such as HUD-VASH and dedicated navigation efforts.

Pasadena does not need to invent new solutions. It needs to use the ones that already work and to give them the attention they have not yet received at the Committee level. That means asking, at Monday's meeting, for concrete collaboration with the County on Veteran-specific housing navigation, outreach, and encampment response—including targeted outreach and priority access to existing County Veteran housing resources. It means treating the 43 Veterans counted this year not as one more data point, but as people whose service should not end with them sleeping outdoors in the city they once called home.

On Wednesday, Pasadena will honor Veterans in front of City Hall. The Ghost Platoon—the 43 Veterans counted on our streets—will not be among those recognized. That contrast is precisely why Monday's meeting matters. On Monday, inside City Hall, we have the chance to match that honor with action. The Housing, Homelessness and Planning Committee and the joint City-County discussion should make the Ghost Platoon a specific priority, not an afterthought. Veterans who are living on our streets deserve more than a ceremony two days later. Americans should not leave their service members behind.

William Paparian is a former mayor of Pasadena (1995–1997) and a former East Pasadena councilmember (1987–1999).

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Paul Little
Sent: Saturday, November 7, 2026 12:08 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Cc: Hawkesworth, Matthew; Gordo, Victor; Rivas, Jessica; Lyon, Jason; Hampton, Tyron; Jones, Justin; Madison, Steve; Masuda, Gene; supervisorbarger@lacbos.gov; rcole@cityofpasadena.net; Paul Little; Wong, Jim
Subject: Street and Sidewalk Safety and Homelessness Prevention

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Hello.

Thank you all for meeting to discuss this very important issue in all our communities.

Homelessness may be declining in Pasadena and the surrounding communities, but as long as there are persons and families needing housing in our communities, it will remain an issue we need to address.

One cost-effective, reliable, workable and measurable program is homelessness prevention. Keeping people housed through financial support to maintain housing is much less expensive, has a much more positive impact, especially on families with children, and can be tracked for effectiveness.

The Pasadena Chamber Foundation was hoping to laugh a new version of the Real Change program in Pasadena. This would not involve parking meters as donation points but would use "street" art, window stickers and posters in businesses to engage people and encourage donations to a fund that would support homeless prevention programs locally. Unfortunately, the tragic Eaton Fire demanded everyone's attention and philanthropy. (The Pasadena Chamber Foundation raised nearly $150,000 in private donations that was distributed as micro grants to assist Altadena businesses in reopening. In January, 2026m nearly 50% of the businesses granted funds had reopened in Altadena.)

The idea behind Make Real Change (2.0) is to engage the business community in supporting solutions, rather than simply experiencing problems and complaining.

As opposed to the previous effort, businesses would not be required to pay to participate. Local businesses could have window clings with a QR code that directs customers to give to support homelessness prevention. They could have a small, human scaled mural on their building (Banksy-style) that encourages donations. They could even host a large scale mural that also directs philanthropy.

Each sticker, poster or mural (as yet to be designed) would use graphic representations to explain the effort and direct those interested to a website that further explains the program and effectiveness of prevention. All would encourage donations of any size which would go toward local homeless prevention efforts.

The Pasadena Community Foundation initially pledged to match the first $25,000 raised. We are hoping to try to relaunch in 2027 but still need to identify the $35,000 in funding necessary to design the website, create the graphic elements and begin implementation and promotion.

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On another topic critical to your local businesses, street homelessness is a significant issue that needs to be addressed.

We have all been impacted by those few persons who spend their days and nights on our sidewalks and create significant problems for those who encounter them. These are chronic mentally ill, drug and alcohol dependent persons who are encountered by residents, visitors, shoppers, business-people and those living nearby.

We have all seen the effect certain persons have had on our community. North Lake Avenue, for example, still has empty storefronts and blight resulting, at least in part, from those persons camping on the sidewalks and in doorways.

These are not people who will choose to leave on their own. They also do not want to to relocate to shelters or other housing opportunities, because of addictions, mental illness or fear.

I would encourage you, please, to consider making every effort to relocate these persons. The State of California has reinstated regulations that allow for relocation of those persons. I would ask that you use those to enhance the public safety. Of our residents, businesses and their customers.

Thank you again for what you are doing already. Your discussions can lead to further improvements to our quality of life and even more reduction in homelessness in the Pasadena area.

All the best,

Paul Little
Executive Director, Pasadena Chamber of Commerce Foundation

President and Chief Executive Officer, Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Sarah Hayden
Sent: Sunday, November 8, 2026 8:33 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: November 9 Meeting | Comment for Agenda Items 2A and 2B

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Dear Mayor Gordo, Members of the Pasadena City Council and Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger:

Thank you for scheduling this joint meeting to discuss opportunities for the county's collaboration and coordination with the Pasadena City Council's Housing, Homelessness and Planning Committee. I am grateful that the city has finally formed this committee to address issues related to our homelessness crisis, hopefully, on an urgent basis. As you know, the city finally allocated an initial $2 million to start the process of developing a year-round shelter, which our city desperately needs. While we have some services for our unsheltered population provided for by our excellent nonprofit organizations, mutual aid groups, and churches, we do not have nearly enough money to provide what is needed most: shelter and/or permanent housing. Our unsheltered neighbors cannot get well living on the street. Some of our unsheltered folks have mental illness and substance use disorders which may require special programs, but the majority have neither. They need both interim housing to transition to permanent housing as well as permanent housing.

Rabbi Joshua Grater, the CEO of Friends in Deed has presented the City Council with the option of master leasing local motels for interim housing. The rooms are available as well as staff to provide services. But we need a partnership with the county to provide the necessary funding. Supervisor Barger, please strongly consider recommending that the county fund this option along with the city.

As for the issue of mitigation of encampments, which is also on the agenda for this meeting, Pasadena already has municipal code provisions to address illegal activity. I vehemently oppose any attempt to criminalize homelessness for such activity as simply existing in parks, libraries and other public spaces which are so important to our unsheltered neighbors, especially during excessive heat episodes and rain. ***If we are not providing an alternate solution, we cannot criminalize simply existing while unhoused.***

Finally, as for complaints regarding public urination and defecation, the obvious and humane solution is to provide toilets. I am unaware of any public toilets in the city that are available to our unsheltered neighbors on a 24/7 basis. This is unacceptable. Please recommend that the city and the county provide funding for public toilets for our city.

Thank you,

Sarah Hayden

11/9/2026
Item 2A & 2B

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Denise Robb
Sent: Sunday, November 8, 2026 9:57 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Cc: Selena Rosario-Myles
Subject: Agenda item 2A and B

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While we have some services for our unsheltered population provided for by our excellent nonprofit organizations and churches, we do not have nearly enough money to provide what is needed most: shelter/housing. Our unsheltered neighbors cannot get well living on the street. Some of our unsheltered folks have mental illness and substance use disorders which may require special programs, but the majority have neither. They need both interim housing to transition to permanent housing as well as permanent housing.

Rabbi Joshua Grater, the CEO of Friends in Deed has presented the City Council with the option of master leasing local motels for interim housing. The rooms are available as well as staff to provide services. But we need a partnership with the county to provide the necessary funding. Supervisor Barger, please strongly consider recommending that the county fund this option along with the city.

As for the issue of mitigation of encampments, which is also on the agenda for this meeting, Pasadena already has municipal code provisions to address illegal activity. I'm in favor of addressing actual criminal activity through the criminal justice system. But I oppose any attempt to criminalize homelessness for such activity as simply existing in parks, libraries and other public spaces which are so important to our unsheltered neighbors especially during excessive heat episodes and rain.

Finally, as for complaints regarding public urination and defecation, the obvious and humane solution is to provide toilets. I am unaware of any public toilets in the city that are available to our unsheltered neighbors on a 24/7 basis. This is unacceptable. Please recommend that the city and the county provide funding for public toilets for our city.

A couple of years ago I visited Australia and New Zealand, and I was amazed at how many public toilets they had. This is a basic human right.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Denise Robb

Sent from my iPhone
Denise Robb, Ph.D.
Professor of Political Science,
Pierce College; and

11/9/2026
Item 2A & 2B

"Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."
(Possibly Voltaire)

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Joanne Long
Sent: Monday, November 9, 2026 1:03 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: 11/9 Special City Council meeting - agenda item 2

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Dear Mayor Gordo, City Councilmembers and Supervisor Barger,
Thank you for this public discussion on homelessness in Pasadena.

Like many Pasadena residents, I have been closely following the City's response to homelessness. There has undoubtedly been an increase in visible homelessness in Pasadena, and we are facing a humanitarian crisis. Homelessness is likely one of the top issues that residents are concerned about. It is also a very divisive topic, especially around how to address homelessness.

As you know, some Pasadena residents want more enforcement and restrictions around where unhoused people are allowed, effectively criminalizing homelessness. This will not solve the underlying problems that need to be addressed, and will only exacerbate the situation. Instead of considering enforcement solutions, I would urge you to really consider the suggestions from those people in our community who are engaged in this work daily and have seen what actually works.

In Pasadena we have a number of service providers, from city programs like PORT, non-profits like Friends In Deed and Union Station. We also are very fortunate that in general, most Pasadena residents have compassion and empathy and look for ways to help. Community groups include volunteers that have extensive experience supporting people experiencing homelessness. Mutual aid groups like Pasadena For All are also out every weekend making sure people have essential supplies on the days where most service providers are not active. There are lots of examples of Pasadena residents giving up their own time and resources because they understand that access to shelter should be a right for every human being. Even when an individual or family is connected with a case worker, getting into housing takes years (and a lot of patience and luck).

Collectively, between service providers and volunteers, these groups have valuable experience supporting Pasadenans as they move through the long process to housing. They understand very well the barriers that unhoused residents face which can lead to them being suddenly dropped from a program after years of waiting. These barriers include lack of access to mental health services, substance use treatments and difficulty finding employment.

In addition, all discussions should include the voices of those that are experiencing homelessness. Their voices should of course be included and take priority as they are the community members most at risk. As you work on addressing homelessness in Pasadena, and the year-round shelter, I urge you to consult regularly with service providers, community groups and individuals with lived experience and use their knowledge to understand what is most likely to actually work to reduce homelessness in Pasadena.

Thank you,
Jo

--
Joanne Long
IO Rodeo Inc.

11/9/2026
Item 2

Pasadena, CA 91107

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