

City of  
**SOUTH PASADENA**

# YEAR IN REVIEW 2024



Prepared by:  
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# About the City

## Mission Statement

The City of South Pasadena is committed to providing effective and efficient municipal services for the community while preserving our quality of life and small-town character in a 21st Century environment.

## Vision

We are a culturally and economically diverse, and fiercely independent community that cherishes creativity, education, and our small-town character, committed to building a more just and environmentally and financially stable future.

## Stay Connected



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# City Manager Message



## Don Penman

*Interim City Manager*

Don Penman has an extensive career in local government, having served as City Manager in San Fernando and Baldwin Park. He spent 14 years with the City of Arcadia, retiring as City Manager in 2011. Since then, he has stepped in as interim City Manager for numerous cities, including Azusa, Covina, San Fernando, Temple City, Ventura, and Calabasas. Don has over 40 years of experience in local government, including full-service cities with Police and Fire Departments. Mr. Penman holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Southern California.

As we reflect on 2024, it has been a year of progress, collaboration, and resilience for the City of South Pasadena. Together, we've made significant strides in enhancing our community, strengthening local services, and preserving the unique character that makes South Pasadena such a special place to live and work.

From critical infrastructure improvements to innovative public programs and community events, we've continued to build on our shared vision for a vibrant, sustainable future. I am incredibly proud of the dedicated city staff, local organizations, and engaged residents

who work hand-in-hand to make our city thrive.

Looking ahead, we are committed to maintaining this momentum, addressing new challenges, and ensuring that South Pasadena remains a place all can be proud to call home. Thank you for your ongoing support and involvement in making our city a better place every day.

Sincerely,

**Don Penman**

*Interim City Manager*

# Mayor & City Council



**Mayor**  
**Evelyn G. Zneimer**  
*District 1*



**Mayor Pro Tem**  
**Jack Donovan**  
*District 2*



**Councilmember**  
**Jon Primuth**  
*District 3*



**Councilmember**  
**Michael A. Cacciotti**  
*District 4*



**Councilmember**  
**Janet Braun**  
*District 5*

# 2024

## QUICK STATS

187,049 patrons served in our library, with 272,935 physical items checked out

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7,028 tots, youth, and adults participated in leisure classes

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520 park gazebo rentals and 239 facility rentals executed

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5,288 Dial-A-Ride facilitated trips

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40 ADU units permitted through the Community Development Department

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74 film permits issued, with a total of 99 production days

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Over 2,500 attendees at the 4th of July Festival of Balloons

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Completed 40 recruitments and onboarded 44 new employees

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300 historic photos belonging to the school district successfully digitized and cataloged by the Library

32,694 items checked out of eBooks and eAudiobooks

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34 Level 2 electric vehicle chargers in the rear parking lots of City Hall

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714 youth serviced through Camp Med Program

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\$46,000 collected in film permit fees, \$27,000 collected in city location fees

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Hosted 2 compost giveaway, 2 dumpster days for bulky-item disposal, 3 mobile electric leaf-blower outreach events

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Hosted 13 community events, including, Concerts in the Park, Halloween festivities, the Multicultural Event, and Breakfast with Santa

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1.8-miles of Fremont Avenue received major restriping work

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**2,322** Calls for service responded to by the Fire Department

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

While Community Development has experienced a great deal of change - saying sad goodbyes to several staff members while happily greeting new ones - 2024 has nevertheless been a year with many accomplishments:

## Accela Permit System Up & Running

On January 1, staff began entering permit applications into the new permitting system purchased through a grant that Community Development received more than four years ago. Many of the kinks have been worked through over the year, and the system will go public-facing on January 1, 2025. Coordination between the Building and Planning Divisions has greatly improved, permit review times are already dropping, and more streamlining using additional program features will further increase customer satisfaction. Truly a highlight of 2024!

## Caltrans Homes for Sale

Community Development took the lead in preparing the sale of properties that were once regarded as condemned for a freeway the community opposed. Now the 710 extension plan is in the rearview mirror, and the City can sell these properties to become homes for South Pasadenans, with the proceeds generating funds for the City's first affordable housing project. The Housing Division has already laid the groundwork for this project and looks forward to advancing it in the coming year.

## Certified Housing Element

It was a long time coming, but on July 29, 2024, the State Department of Housing and Community Development certified the 6th Cycle Housing Element, adopted by Council in May 2023. In the meantime, Planning had already taken many implementation steps forward, including General Plan and Zoning changes. The most significant this year was Council's adoption of the Housing Opportunity Overlays on March 6.

- The Housing Element's program to place a measure on this year's ballot that would remove the 45' height limit ceiling was fulfilled when Council placed Measure SP on the November 2024 ballot. Community Development staff took the lead in preparation and communications for this important measure.

## More ADUs on the Way

The popularity of ADUs continues, with another 40 units permitted so far this year, and many completed and already in use. Nearly 300 applications have been submitted to Planning in the last four years, and about 170 are either in construction or completed, including 26 completed for occupancy so far this year.



## Filming in South Pasadena

Our city continues to be a favorite filming location. There has been an overall decrease in film production in California state-wide this year, due to several factors including lingering effects from the pandemic, last year's writers' and actors' strikes, a contraction in production of TV streaming content, and increased competition for out-of-state tax incentives. On-location film production in South Pasadena remains consistent with this trend with 74 film permits, 99 days of filming, and \$46,000 in film permit fees, \$27,000 in city location fees from January through October of 2024.

# COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Community Services Department encompasses several key divisions: Administration, Recreation and Youth Services, Senior Services, and Transit (Dial-A-Ride). This department plays a vital role in coordinating a wide range of activities, programs, classes, and events for the community. Additionally, it manages various facility leases and contracts to ensure seamless operation and service delivery.

## Administration

- Actively developing a comprehensive plan for the golf course to enhance its offerings and ensure it continues to meet community needs for years to come
- Initiated the Parks Comprehensive Plan, laying the groundwork for strategic improvements and enhancements to our community's green spaces and recreational facilities
- Contributed to the development of the Library/Community Center Comprehensive Site Plan, fostering a holistic approach to enhancing community resources and services
- Opened new batting cages at the Arroyo, providing a valuable resource for local athletes and families.
- Successfully managed a variety of co-sponsored special events, including the South Pasadena Chamber Arts Crawls, South Pasadena Flea, Parti Gras, Homecoming, Tiger Run, a Taste of South Pasadena, among many others.

## Recreation & Youth Services

- Offered a range of leisure classes, including specialty camps, with 7,028 participants.
- Successfully hosted 13 events this year, including Eggstravaganza, Concerts in the Park, Movies in the Park, Shakespeare in the Park performances, the 4th of July Event, Halloween festivities, the Multicultural Event, and Breakfast with Santa.
  - For the second consecutive year, the department organized the Festival of Balloons 4th of July event, which featured a parade with opening ceremonies at the Library Community Room. The parade included 44 entries and traveled along Mission Street to Garfield Park. Following the parade, the City hosted a Party in the Park, featuring games, inflatables, and food vendors, attracting over 2,500 attendees. The celebration culminated with a live concert followed by a fireworks show at South Pasadena High School.
  - Coordinated our inaugural multicultural festival, "Around the World in South Pasadena," on September 28, 2024, at Library Park. The event showcased diverse performances, international cuisine, and activities for kids, reflecting our City's commitment to celebrating the community's cultural diversity.

- Facilitated 520 park gazebo rentals and 239 facility rentals.
- Camp Med welcomed 714 registrations, representing a 13% increase. Among these registrations, 193 were unique campers, with 91 being South Pasadena residents.

## Senior Services

- Hosted 12 luncheons with an average attendance of 96 per event. This year, the Senior Center introduced special luncheons.
- Expanded programming to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, Native American Heritage Month, and other cultural events. The Senior Center hosted a Lunar New Year celebration in partnership with South Pasadena Chinese American Club, along with a Cinco de Mayo luncheon featuring live traditional entertainment. Staff organized activities for Hispanic Heritage Month, facilitated a visit to the Autry Museum for Native American Heritage Month, and introduced programming for Día de Los Muertos .
- Offered 12 excursions for older adults through the Senior Services Division. This year's itinerary included new destinations such as a tour of the Dodgers Stadium, Downtown Disney District, the Los Angeles Natural History Museum, and a day trip to Solvang.
- The Senior Services Division prioritized community health by ensuring that older adults had access to essential vaccines and resources. The Senior Center hosted a flu shot clinic in partnership with Huntington Health and organized two COVID-19 booster clinics in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.
- The Senior Services Division celebrated our dedicated staff, Katrina Faulmino, who earned the CPRS Rising Professional Award, and commended our Senior Center volunteer, Sue Quon, who earned the CPRS Community Hero Award and was recognized at the Los Angeles County Aging & Disabilities Department's 59th Annual Older Americans Recognition Day Awards Program.

## Transit Division

- Acquired two all-electric vehicles for service, reflecting our commitment to sustainability and providing eco-friendly transportation options for our residents. This aligns with the City's Strategic Plan for citywide electrification.
- Dial-A-Ride served 203 active riders facilitating 5,288 trips
- Provided 28 leisure trips each month to different destinations including the Huntington Library, Santa Anita Mall, and Walmart.
- Successfully completed the National Transit Database (NTD) Audit for Fiscal Year 2022,-2023 and submitted the NTD Audit for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 to METRO for their review.



# FINANCE

The Finance Department is responsible for managing all fiscal services, which include preparing accounting and financial reports for all City funds. Additionally, the department coordinates treasury services, utility billing, and customer service, and prepares the City's Annual Budget.

This year, the team faced the loss of several key positions, including the Deputy Finance Director, Finance Manager, two Management Analysts, and an Accountant. Despite these staffing reductions, the department successfully presented a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25. After a thorough review process and close collaboration with all departments, the budget was adopted on August 21, 2024.



The City contracted NHA Advisors to create a comprehensive five-year forecast to aid in budget development. This forecast model includes dynamic models designed to project various financial scenarios, serving as a tool to engage the community, commissions, and council in the city's financial planning. The forecast model played a crucial role in developing the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Adopted Budget and will be used for future budgets.

In September 2023, the City Council approved the implementation of new budgeting software Questica. The Finance team is currently being trained on its various features and capabilities, with plans to implement this software for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget. In October 2024, Finance staff attended the annual Springbrook Conference, where they learned from specialized professionals about maximizing the software's tools. This experience provided valuable insights into advancements in governmental finance. As the department continues its efforts to fill vacant positions, the upcoming year has ample potential for continuous development and improvements.

# LIBRARY

The South Pasadena Public Library is a welcoming gathering space for the community that builds connections, supports creativity, and encourages learning. The Library is responsible for maintaining a large collection of physical and digital resources for children, teens, and adults, and for helping meet their information needs. The Library also hosts various events and programs for a range of community members to participate in and enjoy.

## Library Use

In the past year, the Library saw a total of 187,049 visitors, with a daily average ranging from 576 to 696. A record high of 1,274 visitors was set on a Thursday in June. The Library facilitated 272,935 check-outs of physical items and 32,694 check-outs of eBooks and eAudiobooks. Additionally, 3,550 new library cards were issued, reflecting a strong engagement from the community.

## Collections

In collaboration with South Pasadena Unified School District, the Library successfully digitized and cataloged 300 historic photos belonging to the school district. The collection grew with 5,658 new books, 1,442 DVDs, CDs, and audiobooks, and 1,151 additional ebook and audiobook titles. The Library also expanded its Wonderbooks collection for early readers, adding 145 new titles to help foster literacy.

## Facility Improvements

The Library made several upgrades, including a refreshed patio area with new furniture, offering additional seating for visitors and small groups. Additionally, work began on a refresh of the Teen Room, which included removing shelving to create more space, along with fresh paint, new carpet, and updated furniture.



## Programs

The Library hosted over 150 programs throughout the year, reaching more than 9,000 children and 2,400 adults. Notable programs included the All Abilities Club, a partnership with the Institute for the ReDesign of Learning, attended by 155 adults with developmental disabilities. Due to high demand, a second weekly English Language Conversation Group was added. The Sowing South Pasadena initiative, funded by grants, launched a Seed Library, hosted a repair café, and offered various programs for both adults and children, along with tree identification signage for Library Park. The Walking Book Club became a popular monthly program, and the Summer Reading Program saw 1,774 participants, with 43 teens volunteering over 1,000 hours. A unique Silent Film Series was also presented, featuring silent films with live piano accompaniment.





# MANAGEMENT SERVICES

This year, the Management Services Department filled key vacancies and welcomed three new team members, including two Human Resources Analysts and a Deputy City Clerk, strengthening our department's capacity and expertise.

## Innovation & Technology Division

This year, the Innovation and Technology Division focused on citywide technological improvements and network security enhancements to serve staff and the community better.

- **Office 365 Integration:** Finalized the migration to Office 365 by collaborating with each department to create customized Teams channels, ensuring seamless access to collaborative tools that boost productivity and foster cross-departmental collaboration.
- **Enhanced Communication for Appointed Officials:** Rolled out official City emails for all appointed officials to improve transparency and secure record-keeping.
- **Remote Access and Cybersecurity Initiatives:** Implemented a new Virtual Private Network (VPN) to facilitate seamless, secure remote access for City employees. A comprehensive cybersecurity software was deployed to safeguard the City from cyber threats, complemented by staff and elected officials training sessions on identifying and preventing cyber risks.
- **Hardware Upgrades and Online Resources:** The second phase of hardware replacement was completed, enhancing technological capabilities across departments. The Division also launched iterative updates to the City's website and initiated the development of a new intranet for City staff, providing a centralized resource hub.

## City Clerk's Office

The City Clerk's Office capitalized on newly implemented technologies to support essential city functions, from managing municipal elections to training elected and appointed officials.

- **2024 General Municipal Election:** Coordinated with Los Angeles County to conduct the 2024 election, which included three City Council seats (Districts 1, 2, and 3) and Measure SP. After the election, the Clerk's Office hosted the State of the City event to honor the outgoing Mayor and organized a Council meeting to swear in newly elected members and appoint the Mayor for 2025.
- **Policy and Process Improvements:** Secured approval for the updated retention policy to enhance document management practices. The Deputy City Clerks also trained new staff as advisory body liaisons and onboarded incoming commissioners.
- **Annual Commissioner Congress:** Held the annual Commissioner Congress to celebrate the dedication and contributions of officials. The City Clerk's Office looks forward to collaborating closely with the new Council and Commissioners in 2025.

## Human Resources & Risk Management Division

The Human Resources and Risk Management Division made substantial progress this year, focusing on continuing our digital transformation, employee engagement, and recruitment improvements.

- **Continued Digital Transformation:** Implemented NEOGOV Forms for secure digital document storage and streamlined management of electronic forms through efficient routing and approval workflows.
- **Recruitment and Onboarding:** Completed 40 recruitments and onboarded 44 new employees alongside a comprehensive audit of the City's job classifications, career paths, and group structures to ensure alignment with market standards and organizational needs.
- **Employee Self-Service and Process Enhancements:** Launched an Employee Self-Service portal, providing staff with easy access to W-2 forms and pay stubs. Additionally, revamped the City's interview process to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of hiring.
- **Employee Engagement Initiatives:** Hosted an employee benefits fair, a summer luncheon, and a service award ceremony to recognize and engage employees, fostering a supportive workplace culture.

# PUBLIC SAFETY: FIRE

The Fire Department is a full-service department providing fire, rescue, paramedics, community risk reduction, inspections, plan reviews, and emergency management to the community and visitors of the city. The department operates in conjunction with thirteen other agencies affiliated with Verdugo Fire Communications.

This year, the Fire Department focused on strengthening and streamlining its operations. Utilizing up-to-date technology, the department combined fire inspections, pre-fire planning, scheduling, fire reporting and training programs under one software platform. This program leverages the shared information between fire prevention and operational activities to provide crews the needed situational awareness during emergency responses.

In addition, the Fire Department supported the fight against three major brush fires in the region. Single resource personnel were deployed for twenty days to the Line Fire to provide medical care to firefighters.

Keeping in line with the vehicle replacement schedule, the department is expected to take delivery of a new ambulance in mid to late December. The current ambulance will be placed into reserve status as a backup.



This year also saw the transition of a new Fire Chief. Chief Paul Riddle enjoyed 33 years of service in the city and was a valued member of the city's executive team. Fire Chief Greg Lloyd came on board in September with 27 years of fire experience and looks to continue the culture of professionalism and high-standards set forth by Chief Riddle.



**Fire Department Data**  
There was a total of 1,060 hours spent on training for company, EMS, pre-planning, driving, hazmat, and officer training. The team continues to maintain their Emergency Response Times below the National Standard of 5 minutes. This year's data from the Fire Department includes the following: 2,322 total incidents 1,941 EMS, 307 Fires, 72 Service calls. The most common EMS calls for the year were falls, difficulty breathing, and traffic collisions. Of the 307 fire responses, 198 were structural buildings, 37 were brush or vegetation, and 11 vehicles.

# PUBLIC SAFETY: POLICE

## Electric Vehicle Fleet



The South Pasadena Police Department has established the first fully electric police vehicle fleet in the nation, setting a new standard for sustainable law enforcement operations. The project also included installing electric vehicle charging stations in the department's parking lot, underscoring the department's commitment to environmentally conscious practices.

## Recruiting



Law enforcement agencies across the United States are experiencing significant recruitment and hiring challenges. While specific needs vary by agency size and location, recruitment difficulties have impacted the entire field of law enforcement. In response, the South Pasadena Police Department has taken a proactive and innovative approach by targeting retired officers from non-CalPERS agencies. These experienced professionals support specialty assignments, including detective and administrative roles, which allows the department to allocate more resources to frontline patrol duties.

## RIPA Dashboard



In 2015, California passed Assembly Bill No. 953 (AB 953), also known as the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA). This act mandates that law enforcement agencies across the state collect perceived demographic data from specified police interactions, with implementation phased in based on agency size. To promote public trust through transparency, the South Pasadena Police Department has published all law enforcement contact statistics on its website in an interactive dashboard. This feature enables community members to explore the data, viewing demographics and the reasons for law enforcement interactions within South Pasadena.

## Department Assessment



In 2024, the South Pasadena Police Department completed and presented its departmental assessment to the community. This comprehensive evaluation involved thorough research and extensive community input, marking an essential step in fostering accountability and aligning with community expectations.

# PUBLIC WORKS

The South Pasadena Public Works Department operates the City's infrastructure systems and programs such as water supply, treatment, and distribution, maintenance of sewer systems, parks, trees, traffic signals & street lights, facilities, streets, sidewalks, and storm drains, as well as management of sustainability programs, environmental compliance, waste and recycling, water conservation, traffic and transportation systems, engineering, design, land development and permitting, capital improvements, and more.

This year, the Public Works team kicked off its comprehensive multi-year street improvement plan, rebuilding the western section of Monterey Road from Pasadena Avenue to the City's western boundary, as well as street segments along Alta Vista Avenue, Forest Avenue, and Sterling Place. In this project, the City also created a new Class II green bike lane along Monterey Road – connecting to the City of Los Angeles bicycle network and continuing the implementation of the City's adopted Bicycle Master Plan. The City Council reviewed the multi-year street improvement plan in June, which will serve as a program to execute major street, water, and sewer reconstruction projects each year moving forward.

Public Works also completed facility improvements across the City, including a new seating area at the Library, repairs to the Fire Station roof before the rainy season, and installation of new parklet equipment along Mission Street as part of the Slow Streets Program and Mission Street reconfiguration. In parks maintenance, after several years of preparatory work and planning, 2024 saw significant improvements to field conditions for youth sports leagues. The Public Works team completed a major repair to the City sewer system at the intersection of Fremont Avenue and Huntington Drive. This is in addition to the 11 water breaks and four (4) service leaks repaired as of October in the City. The team also finished major restriping work along the entire 1.8-mile length of Fremont Avenue to enhance pedestrian, cycling, and vehicle safety by improving street marking visibility.

Along with the presentation of the new citywide street improvement plan to the City Council, Public Works also conducted a comprehensive assessment of the Lighting and Landscape Maintenance District finances and an extensive review of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) during the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget adoption. As a result, the Department created a new 'CIP Division' of contracted staff to work on street, water, sewer, facilities, and transportation projects. Public Works implemented new multi-year agreements for traffic signal maintenance and stormwater compliance and finalized a complete revision of the exclusive solid waste handling agreement with the City's waste hauler, Athens Services, for the City's trash and recycling programs. This includes implementation of State-mandated organics diversion/recycling requirements (SB 1383), and provision of new collection barrels for all residents and some businesses.

After several years of planning and design, the City installed 34 Level 2 electric vehicle chargers in the rear parking lots of City Hall – 20 of which now support City Public Safety operations and the City's new – first-in-the-nation – all electric Police patrol fleet. A press conference was held in July to debut the new state-of-the-art vehicles and charging system, fostering national media attention.

In 2024, Public Works completed pre-construction and design work for numerous major projects, including two new pocket parks located on Grevelia Street and Berkshire Avenue, a new San Pascual stormwater capture wetland and recreation area on Stoney Drive, and new ADA-compliant curb-ramps and sidewalks in some sections along Meridian Avenue. The pocket parks construction project was awarded to a contractor by the City Council and started construction, as did another project awarded to replace the aging garage doors at the City Fire Station.

In community engagement, Public Works hosted numerous events throughout the year, most notable were the Active Streets Mission-to-Mission open streets event – the City's 3rd open streets event in as many years, and the team's participation in the Arroyo Vista Elementary Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Night – teaching elementary school children and parents/guardians about the importance and challenges of water treatment and distribution systems. In 2024, Public Works kicked off its Landscape Academy, a series of water-conserving training sessions for the community, that provide education on transforming outdoor spaces. The Department also assisted in volunteer organizations to coordinate programs including Eagle Scout and community gardening projects. Public Works hosted two (2) compost giveaway, two (2) dumpster days for bulky-item disposal, three (3) mobile electric leaf-blower outreach events focusing on enforcement, and a Sustainability Fair. Our team looks forward to another exciting year of continuing City operations and new capital improvement projects!



# CITY DIRECTORY

## **City Manager's Office**

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## **Community Development**

Planning: (626) 403-7220

Building: (626) 403-7224

## **Community Services**

Recreation: (626) 403-7380

Email: [recreation@southpasadenaca.gov](mailto:recreation@southpasadenaca.gov)

Senior Services: (626) 403-7360

Email: [seniorcenter@southpasadenaca.gov](mailto:seniorcenter@southpasadenaca.gov)

Dial-A-Ride: (626) 403-7368

## **Finance**

Telephone: (626) 403-7250

## **Fire**

Telephone: (626) 403-7300

Emergency: 9-1-1

## **Library**

Telephone: (626) 403-7330

Email: [library@southpasadenaca.gov](mailto:library@southpasadenaca.gov)

## **Management Services**

Telephone: (626) 403-7230

Email: [cityclerk@southpasadenaca.gov](mailto:cityclerk@southpasadenaca.gov)

## **Police**

Non-Emergency: (626) 403-7270

Emergency: 9-1-1

## **Public Works**

Telephone: (626) 403-7240

