

## MEMORANDUM

**From:** Pasadena Environmental Advisory Commission  
**Date:** January 13, 2026  
**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the Pasadena City Council  
**Subject:** Environmental Advisory Commission Input on the Reconnecting Communities 710 Vision Plan

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Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers,

The Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Reconnecting Communities 710 Vision Plan. We commend City staff and consultants for a thoughtful, forward-looking framework that aligns with Pasadena's Climate Action Plan and the City's legacy of environmental leadership.

The Vision Plan reflects strong planning principles, with a clear focus on sustainability, climate resilience, public health, and restorative justice. The EAC is particularly encouraged by the emphasis on district-scale water and energy systems, integration of passive design strategies, and the potential to transform the 710 Stub into a model 21st-century sustainable community.

To strengthen implementation and ensure measurable outcomes, the EAC offers the following recommendations for City Council consideration:

### **1. Make Water a Defining Civic and Environmental Feature**

Water-centered design can distinguish the 710 area as a climate-adaptive district (rather than a conventional mixed-use development) while strengthening long-term water resilience. The EAC strongly supports elevating water as both a functional and symbolic centerpiece by:

- Expanding district-level greywater reuse, stormwater capture, and infiltration for parks, boulevards, and open space
- Using water features for cooling, habitat, and public education—not just aesthetics
- Maximizing groundwater recharge to the Raymond Basin Aquifer where feasible, such as through stormwater capture, infiltration, and permeable landscape design
- Incorporating visible, interpretive “living laboratory” elements to showcase climate-resilient water systems

### **2. Advance an Innovation Incubator and Workforce Development**

The 710 Stub presents a strategic opportunity to retain and attract talent from Caltech, JPL, ArtCenter, Huntington Hospital, and Pasadena's growing biotech sector. To ensure sustainability investments deliver community benefits, including fostering the development of technological startup, the EAC recommends:

- Creating incubator/innovation spaces with enhanced power, loading access, and technical capacity
- Establishing workforce pathways for Pasadena residents in clean energy, water systems, green infrastructure, and high-performance buildings both during construction and during operations.

### **3. Require Green Infrastructure as Core Climate, Health, and Mobility Infrastructure**

Green infrastructure must be treated as essential public infrastructure on par with streets, utilities, and buildings; not as an optional amenity. Given rising temperatures, air quality concerns, and public health risks, the 710 corridor should set a clear standard for heat resilience and active transportation.

The EAC recommends that the Vision Plan:

- Establish a measurable Urban Tree Canopy target for the corridor and require it to be achieved early in project phasing, with long-term maintenance commitments.
- Prioritize continuous, shaded green networks that connect housing, transit, schools, and public spaces, ensuring shade coverage along all primary pedestrian and bicycle routes.
- Mandate heat-mitigation strategies, including high-albedo and permeable surfaces, extensive tree canopy, and layered landscaping to significantly reduce surface and ambient temperatures.
- Integrate green infrastructure to improve air quality, reduce noise, and support biodiversity, particularly along freeway-adjacent edges and high-exposure areas.
- Design walking and biking routes as safe, shaded, and universally accessible, making active transportation viable year-round and reducing dependence on automobiles.

By embedding green infrastructure requirements into zoning, design standards, and project approvals, the 710 Stub can function as a climate-resilient corridor that protects public health, supports mobility, and sets a new benchmark for urban redevelopment in Pasadena.

### **4. Commit to Net-Zero Energy with Site-Specific Innovation**

Consistent with Climate Resolution 9977, the EAC recommends a Net-Zero Energy goal for the 710 Stub, supported by innovative, site-responsive strategies:

- A firm commitment to no new natural gas infrastructure
- District-scale battery storage and microgrids for resilience during outages
- Exploration of geothermal or thermal energy systems that leverage the site's unique topography

## **5. Strengthen Air Quality, Noise, and Public Health Protections**

To center health and well-being, the EAC recommends adopting WELL v2 Certification at a minimum Silver level. (WELL prioritizes high indoor air quality, noise augmentation, community, light and building performance standards for energy, waste and water.)

Additional recommended actions include:

- Clear targets and monitoring for air pollution and freeway-related noise reduction including through high-performance building envelopes, vegetation buffers, and indoor air quality strategies
- Dedicated organic waste, recycling, and composting facilities, including a site-wide compost hub
- Data-driven metrics to track environmental and public-health outcomes over time

## **6. Enforce Implementation, Accountability, and Long-Term Performance**

Pasadena's leadership in planning must be matched by enforceable implementation. Without clear accountability, even strong sustainability goals risk being diluted over time. The EAC urges the City Council to ensure the Vision Plan functions as a binding framework, not a conceptual guide.

The EAC recommends that the City:

- Codify sustainability commitments including net-zero energy, water reuse, tree canopy, and green infrastructure into zoning standards, development agreements, and design guidelines.
- Establish clear timelines, interim milestones, and performance thresholds tied to project phasing and approvals.
- Require annual public reporting on progress toward climate, health, and equity outcomes, with updates to the Environmental Advisory Commission and City Council.
- Assign departmental ownership and accountability for each major sustainability objective to prevent gaps between planning and delivery.

- Identify and fund early, high-impact implementation actions to demonstrate feasibility and build public confidence.

## **Conclusion**

The EAC views the Reconnecting Communities 710 Vision Plan as a pivotal opportunity for Pasadena to lead by example. By leveraging the site's topography and water systems, committing to net-zero energy, and fostering innovation and workforce development, the 710 corridor can become a national model for climate-forward redevelopment—advancing both environmental resilience and economic vitality.

Respectfully submitted,

**Environmental Advisory Commission**  
City of Pasadena