

# Agenda Report

February 27, 2023

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** The Office of the City Manager  
**SUBJECT:** 710 COMMUNITY ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

- 1) Find that the action proposed herein is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Section 21065 and State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(2) and (c)(3), and 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines; and
- 2) Recognize the Mayoral and Council Appointments to the Reconnecting Communities Working Group<sup>1</sup> and provide further direction to staff regarding the appointment of the four at-large members.

## **BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY:**

The City Council has recently received updates regarding planning efforts for the relinquished portion of the 710 N Route right-of-way at its meetings of August 15, 2022, September 19, 2022, and January 9, 2023 (Attachment A). This report provides the Council with an update of the progress and steps taken by staff to implement the Council's direction regarding this topic and seeks further guidance concerning the establishment of a community working group.

## **SEQUENCING AND GENERAL APPROACH**

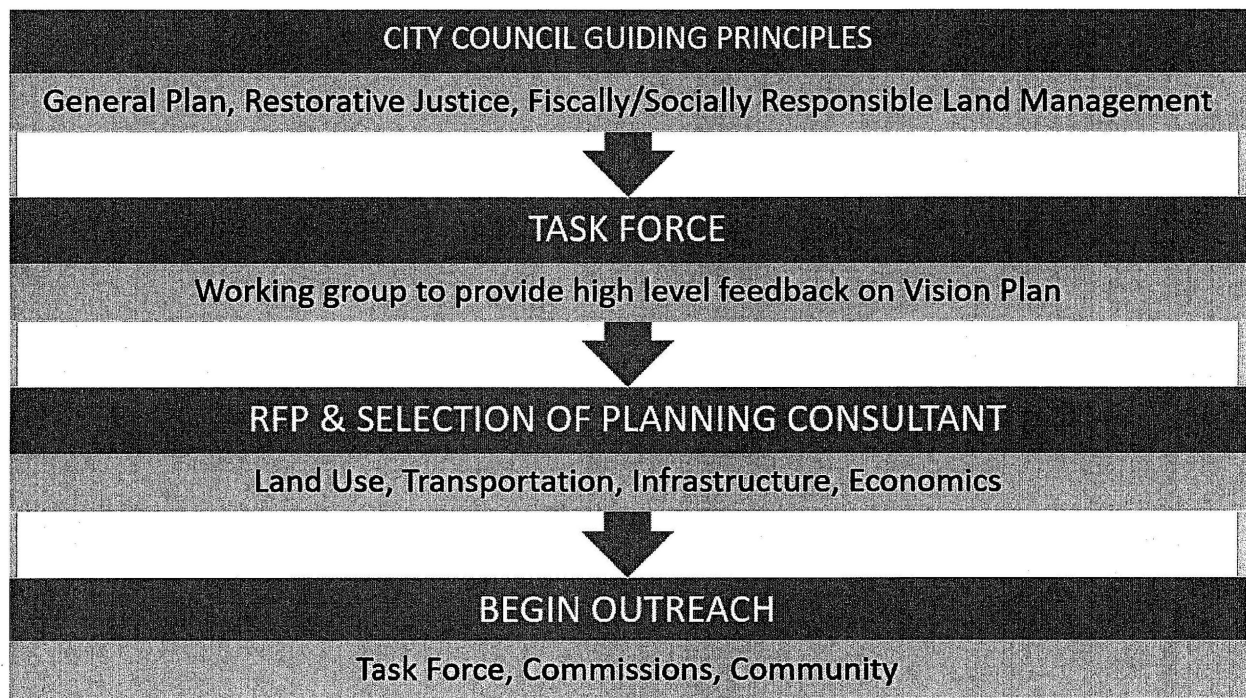
The Council has previously provided input on the following general sequencing for the planning steps:

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<sup>1</sup> This is a working title – the name of this working group to be determined by the group itself.

1. Development of a Draft Concept Plan that would identify future land uses (housing, commercial, institutional open space, etc.), the massing and scale of new development, as well as the future transportation network and other basic infrastructure needs;
2. Feasibility Analysis to further evaluate infrastructure needs and costs, market analysis and preliminary financing, and development options (based on Draft Concept Plan);
3. Specific Plan (Explore Form Based Code) and Environmental Impact Report; and
4. Infrastructure Financing Plan and any other technical documents/processes to facilitate development of the area.

The Council has also discussed the following general guidance regarding planning efforts:



### **BUILDING THE FOUNDATION**

Planning efforts for this project represent a monumental task and a generational opportunity to plan and develop over 40 acres of land that was, in many cases, taken by eminent domain to accommodate freeway expansion. In recognition of the importance of this project, the City Manager has taken the following steps:

- Created a new Assistant City Manager position to assist in executive oversight of this project;
- Created a new Senior Project Manager position to oversee the day-to-day management of the project;
- Authorized the submittal of a Federal Reconnecting Communities Planning Grant; and

- Continued the City's long-standing relationship with Point C to provide consulting, communication, and advisory services relating to the project.

### **CREATING A NEW VISION:**

For more than a half century, California planned a freeway through the heart of Pasadena, extending the 710 to connect the 110, 134, and 210 freeways. In 1964, the State of California took possession of a half-mile swath of land, displacing an established portion of the City made up of homes, businesses and institutional uses. After more than two decades of opposition, the State abandoned the highway expansion effort and relinquished the land to the City in August of 2022. The planning and re-knitting of this recently reacquired part of our community will take sustained effort, collaboration and time. Toward that end, staff seeks further Council direction and input regarding the establishment of the Reconnecting Communities Advisory Working Group.

### **COMMUNITY ADVISORS TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

As of August 15, 2022, the City owns the relinquished land, and the City Council has regulatory authority over land use and development standards to guide its future growth, consistent with applicable state planning laws. In addition, the Planning Commission is *legally* required to provide a recommendation to the City Council on all matters involving General Plan land use designations and zoning classifications for all parcels within the City, including the former 710 land area. Beyond the Planning Commission's regulatory advisory role, it is envisioned that robust community input will be provided by:

- The Transportation Advisory Commission;
- The Design Review Commission;
- The Northwest Commission;
- Other City Commissions as may be determined or required;
- Other community meetings that may be held over the years; and
- Community members through numerous public meetings.

In addition to the community input to be provided as noted above, the City Council has directed the establishment of a **community advisory working group**. This group will further serve the Council in a non-regulatory advisory capacity and will meet over the course of the Reconnecting Communities planning process. The working group will provide input to the City Council on the vision, land use, massing, circulation, and other urban design aspects of the plan, as well as other key policy issues, including potential restorative justice efforts relating to the displacement caused by the proposed freeway expansion.

### **THE LONG-TERM PLANNING PROCESS**

The opportunity to develop a new vision for this area will take sustained effort and clear Council direction. As previously discussed, the approach undertaken can serve as a model for finding common ground to reconnect communities that have been impacted

by freeway expansion. It is important to note that this already long-term process would be unnecessarily delayed by uncompromising positions that impede a collaborative, problem-solving process, further delaying the development of a long-term plan that best meets the Council and the community's vision and goals. It is also vital the process be given the space and time needed to set the foundation required to ensure its success.

In addition to the actions the City Manager has taken as described above, the creation of a community advisory working group is a critical step. The Council previously provided the following direction:

- The working group will be comprised of 13 members;
- Each Councilmember will appoint 1 member;
- The Mayor will appoint 2 members;
- The City Council as a body will appoint 4 at-large members;
- Two of the 13 members shall be descendants of community members that were displaced due to freeway expansion; and
- The composition of the working group should be diverse and reflective of the entire City and may be appointed in consideration of a background in Planning, Economic Development/Real Estate/Housing Development, Transportation, Historic Preservation, Engineering, Community Advocacy, or other related area of expertise.

In response to this direction, the City has received dozens of applications from individuals who possess the qualifications noted above (Attachment B, Complete List of Working Group Applications).

#### **APPOINTMENT OF THE RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES WORKING GROUP**

**MAYORAL AND COUNCILMEMBER APPOINTEES.** Pursuant to previous Council discussion, the Mayor and Councilmembers have each made or will make appointments to the working group. The following appointments have been made:

##### **MAYOR GORDO:**

1. **Cynthia Kurtz:** Planning/Infrastructure/City Governance; and 2. **Wayne Brandt:** Workforce Housing Owner-Operator/Real Estate Investment/Development

##### **D1, COUNCILMEMBER HAMPTON:**

**Tina Williams:** Community Advocacy/Former Field Representative/Harambee Ministries

##### **D2, VICE-MAYOR WILLIAMS:**

**Nevil Green:** Commercial Real Estate Advisor

##### **D3, COUNCILMEMBER JONES:**

**Danny Parker:** Community Advocacy/Attorney/Legal and financial services

##### **D4, COUNCILMEMBER MASUDA:**



**Bryan Takeda:** Local Business Owner/Civic Leader

**D5, COUNCILMEMBER RIVAS:**

**Blair Miller:** Housing/Real Estate/Community Advocacy

**D6, COUNCILMEMBER MADISON:**

*As of this writing, still vetting numerous applications received*

**D7, COUNCILMEMBER LYON:**

**Randy Shulman:** Community Relations, Huntington Library

**NEXT STEPS**

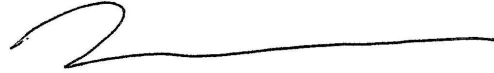
AT-LARGE MEMBERS TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD ON MARCH 6, 2023.

The above-appointed members represent a broad cross-section of the community, a variety of expertise areas, and diverse backgrounds. Based on the composition of the already-appointed membership, the Council may wish to appoint the 4 at-large members in consideration of the following:

- Two members who are descendants of displaced community members. Based on the applications received to date as set forth in Attachment B, 3 candidates would satisfy this requirement: **Edgar Riddle, Barbara King and Michelle Bailey;**
- Members from a diverse ethnic background; and
- Members who would "round-out" the working group based on specialized backgrounds or expertise that might not be provided by the above Appointees.

Additional applications (beyond those in Attachment B) for at-large positions should be submitted to Acting Assistant City Manager David Reyes no later than Wednesday, March 1, at 5:00 pm. Staff will assist in the facilitation of Council's March 6 discussion and looks forward to its decision regarding the ultimate make-up of the community advisory working group.

Respectfully submitted,



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DAVID M. REYES  
Acting Assistant City Manager

Approved by:



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MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ  
City Manager

Attachments (2):

Attachment A – Agenda Reports dated August 15, 2022, September 19, 2022, and January 9, 2023  
Attachment B – Complete list of Working Group Applications