



Los Angeles

RECONNECTING PASADENA

Pasadena, California

Technical Assistance Panel | March 2026

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ULI Los Angeles is a district council of the Urban Land Institute, serving a diverse membership of more than 2,000 professionals across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The district council supports ULI's mission by convening local leaders, advancing thought leadership, and addressing critical issues shaping the region's built environment. Through programs, panels, and initiatives, ULI Los Angeles fosters collaboration and knowledge exchange to promote equitable, sustainable, and resilient development throughout Southern California.

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ULI's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program provides expert, multidisciplinary guidance to communities and organizations facing complex land use and development challenges. TAPs convene volunteer professionals with diverse expertise to analyze issues, engage stakeholders, and develop actionable recommendations over a short, intensive timeframe. Drawing on ULI's broad network and commitment to objective, nonpartisan advice, the TAP program delivers practical strategies that help sponsors advance projects, policies, and plans that support vibrant and sustainable communities.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors/panelists and do not necessarily reflect the views of their affiliated organizations.

About

Technical Assistance Panel

TAP Sponsor

City of Pasadena

Panel Members

Richard Bruckner

City of Anaheim
Panel Chair

Ava Bromberg

Creative Urban Solutions

Joshua Foster

JAF

Shmel Graham

Ashurst

John Keisler

Sunstone Investment Group

Kacy Keys

Praxis Development Group

Jakub Rozga

Eldridge Acre Partners

Judith Taylor

HR&A Advisors

Lisa Trifiletti

Trifiletti Consulting

ULI Member Leadership

Lewis Horne

CBRE
District Council Chair

Walter Maynard

BRIDGE Housing Corporation
TAP Committee Co-Chair

Jonathan Nettler

PlaceWorks
TAP Committee Co-Chair

Jonathan Watts

Tighe Architecture
TAP Committee Co-Chair

ULI Staff

Kellie Kao Miles

Executive Director

Lisa Cahan Davis

Senior Manager

Molly Honnef

Associate

Sallyann Price

Report Writer

Nick Pinkham

Report Designer





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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Driving Transformation

The Reconnecting Pasadena initiative represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform a 50-acre former freeway corridor into a unified, connected, and future-oriented district at the heart of the city.

Following the 2022 relinquishment of the SR-710 northern stub from the State of California to the City of Pasadena, the City has advanced a comprehensive Vision Plan process to reimagine the corridor, a plan grounded in community input, restorative justice, and long-term sustainability.

As the City moves from planning toward implementation, it faces a new set of challenges: how to deliver a complex, multi-decade project; how to coordinate public and private investment; how to maintain community trust and accountability; and how to ensure that the project's benefits are both meaningful and enduring.

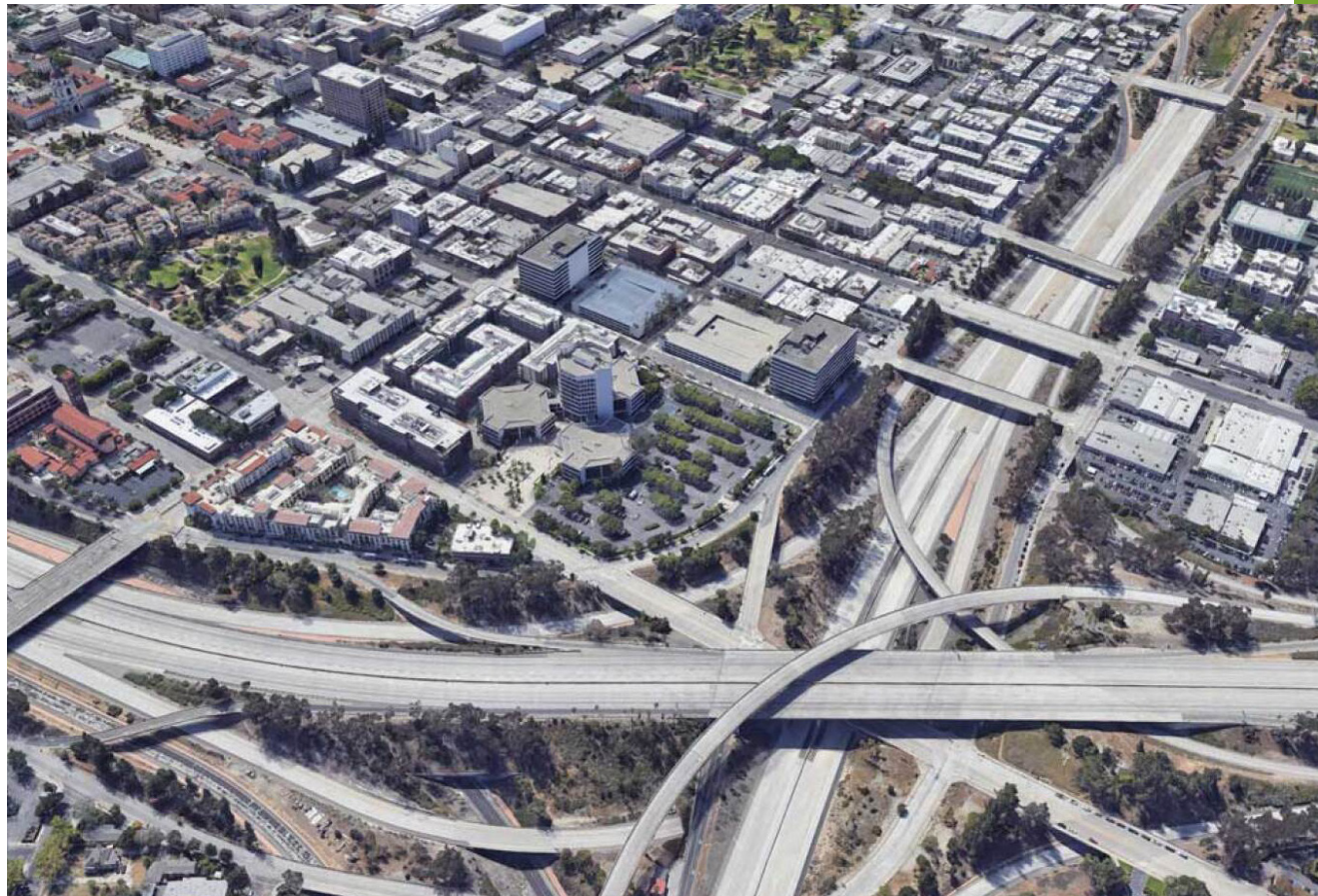
The Task at Hand

The panel was asked to develop a comprehensive implementation framework that addresses funding assembly, delivery acceleration, governance structure, and long-term operations and maintenance, while integrating City Council's restorative justice goals, urban design concepts, sense of scale, and flexibility over a multi-decade buildout.

Rather than revisiting the vision itself, the panel focused on the systems and decisions required to carry that vision forward. Its work

emphasizes how the City can move from concept to execution: structuring governance, sequencing investment, aligning roles, and establishing the conditions necessary to attract both public and private capital while delivering on community priorities.

This report intended to be a roadmap for that transition. While the recommendations extend through buildout and stewardship, the immediate focus is on the foundational actions needed to shape that process.



Key Themes Observed

Across its analysis, the panel identified several foundational themes and broad actions that should guide the project moving forward.

Establish a clear and durable “north star.”

A formally adopted mission and set of guiding objectives should serve as an operational tool, not a symbolic statement. In a project that will span decades, this framework provides continuity across political and market cycles and creates a shared basis for evaluating tradeoffs as conditions evolve.



Approach the project as a phased, outcomes-driven process. Implementation should be structured as a sequence of defined stages, each with clear outcomes that unlock the next phase of work. This approach allows the City to manage complexity, align decision-making with readiness, and maintain forward momentum without overcommitting too early.

Create governance structures that balance accountability and execution. As owners, the City must remain actively engaged in setting policy, overseeing compliance, and ensuring alignment with community priorities. At the same time, in order to attract the right partners, a focused and capable delivery structure is needed to coordinate partners, streamline decision-making, and sustain progress.

Reduce uncertainty to attract investment.

Private capital will play a critical role in delivering the project, and its participation depends on clarity and predictability. Establishing well-defined land use and urban design frameworks, streamlined approval processes, and a coordinated infrastructure strategy will help reduce risk and make the project more competitive in the marketplace.

Center restorative justice throughout implementation.

Restorative justice should be embedded across all phases of the project, shaping both process and outcomes. This includes formal mechanisms for community participation, clear accountability measures, and strategies that deliver tangible economic, social, and cultural benefits to impacted communities.

What Must Happen First

The panel emphasized that the project's most consequential decisions will be made long before new buildings rise from the corridor. The choices made **now** will shape the pace of future progress and influence the project's ability to attract investment, maintain public confidence, and deliver lasting public value.

Though this report contains detailed recommendations for the lifecycle of the project, from groundwork to stewardship, the panel urges that particular attention be paid to the foundational early stages.

Before anything else, this project needs:

- A clear mission and definition of success
- Dedicated, sustained leadership and organizational capacity
- A structure for decision-making and accountability
- Technical readiness and infrastructure planning
- Early funding and investment strategies
- Ongoing community participation and trust

Implementation Framework

To operationalize these themes, the panel recommends a phased implementation framework that organizes the project into a sequence of coordinated steps that build one on another and evolve to address questions of governance and restorative justice:

1. Pre-development groundwork

2. Entitlement, governance & delivery policy framework

3. Procurement & Implementation

4. Ongoing development & ops/maintenance

Phase 0: Vision Study

Formalize and adopt a clear mission and guiding objectives to serve as the project's long-term foundation.

Phase 1: Pre-Development and Groundwork

Advance technical studies, define land use capacity, establish a community participation structure, secure initial funding, and organize a dedicated City-led project team.

Phase 2: Entitlement, Governance, and Policy

Complete the Specific Plan and environmental review, define financing and delivery strategies, and establish a development authority or equivalent structure to manage project delivery.



Phase 3: Implementation and Procurement

Prepare and issue procurement packages, initiate infrastructure delivery, and bring development partners to the project under clearly defined requirements and community benefit commitments.

Phase 4: Ongoing Development and Operations

Oversee long-term buildout, operations, and maintenance through a financially self-sustaining model that supports public spaces, infrastructure, and community programs.

The Road Ahead

The Vision Plan process has laid critical groundwork. These recommendations are designed to help the City move forward with clarity, structure, and momentum. The work ahead will require sustained leadership, coordination, and adaptability.

If carried forward with discipline and shared purpose, the Reconnecting Pasadena initiative has the potential to do more than transform a site. It can repair a historic divide, reconnect neighborhoods, and establish a national model for equitable, resilient urban redevelopment.

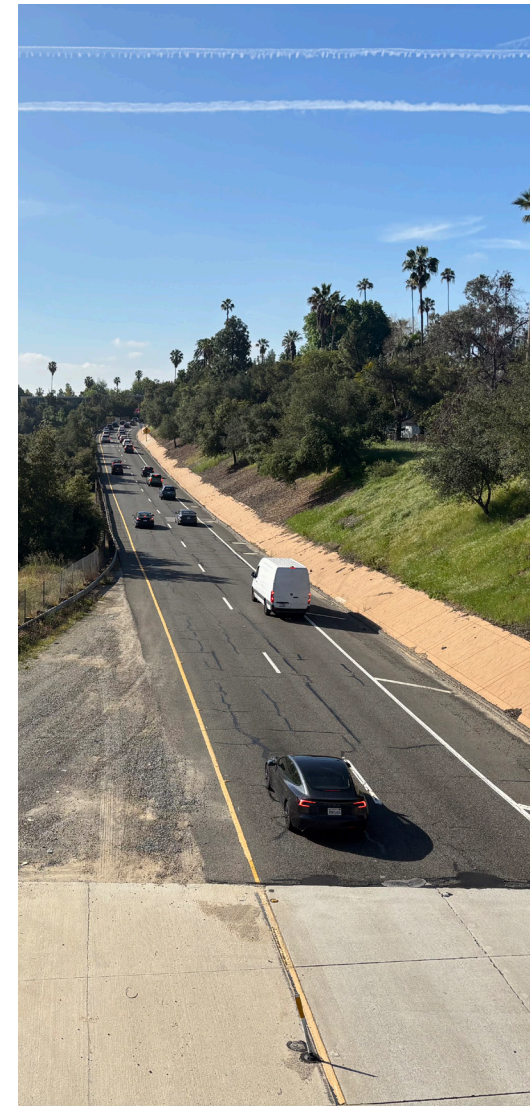
Introduction and Panel Charge

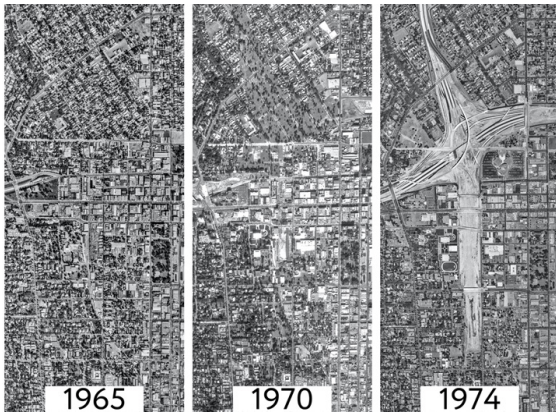
Historical Context

The State Route 710 (SR-710) North Stub is the product of a mid-20th-century freeway plan that was never fully realized, but whose impacts have shaped Pasadena for more than five decades.

In 1964, the California Highway Commission approved a route for the final segment of what was then known as the SR-7 freeway, intended to connect Long Beach to Pasadena. While the full extension was ultimately halted due to sustained community opposition and legal challenges, construction of the northern interchange in Pasadena proceeded in the early 1970s. This process displaced thousands of residents and businesses, many from low-income and minority communities, and severed once-walkable connections between residential areas and Pasadena's central business district.

The result was a partially completed freeway segment—commonly referred to as the “stub” or “ditch”—whose physical infrastructure has remained in place ever since, functioning as an internal barrier rather than a connector.



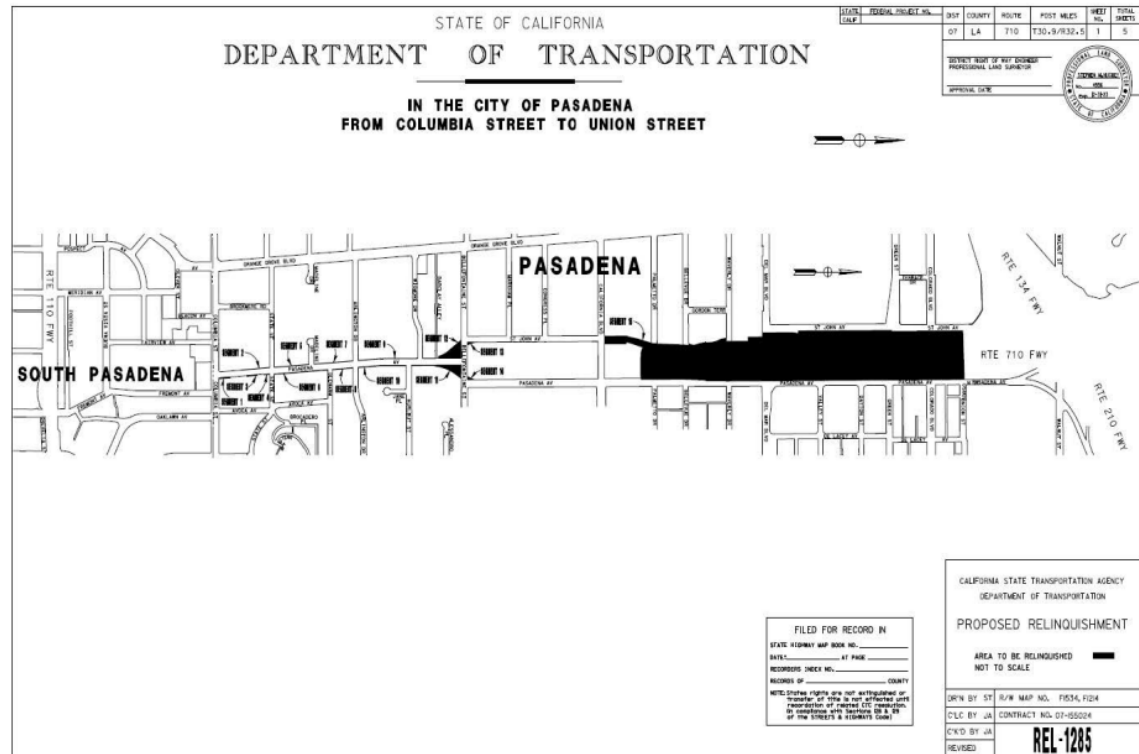


A Turning Point

Legislation introduced in 2020 enabled the California Transportation Commission (Caltrans) to relinquish control of the SR-710 North Stub to the City of Pasadena, contingent on an agreement with Caltrans. The relinquishment was formally approved in June 2022 and completed that August.

This process transferred approximately 50 acres of transportation right-of-way, extending from Union Street to Columbia Street, into local control. The transfer not only assigned responsibility for operations and maintenance, but also permanently eliminated the possibility of completing the freeway connection.

Finally, the City has regained full authority to determine the future of this centrally located corridor. The opportunity is substantial—few cities have the chance to reshape 50 contiguous acres of centrally located land within an already built-out urban fabric—but so are the complexities.



Reimagining the Corridor

To meet this moment, the City launched the Reconnecting Pasadena initiative, a comprehensive visioning effort led by a multidisciplinary consultant team to reimagine the corridor as a civic asset.

This work, greatly endorsed by recent City Council actions, reflects a substantial investment of time, analysis, and community engagement. It integrates multiple workstreams—including technical analysis, economic modeling, urban design, sustainability strategies, and a robust public process—to develop a long-term vision. The

vision includes a Restorative Justice Framework, which seeks to acknowledge and address historical harms while shaping future policy and investment decisions.

The emerging vision proposes reconnecting the corridor to the surrounding street grid; introducing new housing, jobs, and public spaces; and transforming an auto-oriented landscape into a pedestrian-focused, climate-responsive district. It also positions the site as a potential “living laboratory” for district-scale sustainability strategies aligned with the City’s Climate Action Plan.

The Challenge at Hand

After years of sustained planning and engagement, the initiative is now approaching a critical inflection point: the transition from defining a vision to determining how that vision can be realized.

In a briefing with Mayor Victor Gordo and City leadership, panelists heard a clear articulation of both the urgency and complexity of the moment. City officials emphasized the importance of establishing a governance and delivery approach that can sustain momentum over time while remaining accountable to the public. They also underscored the need to balance speed

and certainty—particularly in attracting investment and advancing infrastructure—with meaningful community engagement and responsiveness to long-standing concerns about equity, displacement, and neighborhood compatibility.

Leadership emphasized that this project is uniquely sensitive, both politically and historically. Decisions related to governance, implementation, and public oversight will require careful calibration to ensure that the City retains appropriate control while enabling a process that is efficient, coordinated, and capable of delivering results at scale.



THE PANEL'S CHARGE

The panel was asked to develop a comprehensive framework addressing five core areas:

Governance: What organizational structure or entity can best guide the project over time while balancing independence, accountability, and expertise?

Funding and Value Capture: How can the City assemble a viable financing strategy, including the use of tools such as enhanced infrastructure financing districts and public-private partnerships?

Delivery Strategy: What project delivery models and phasing approaches can accelerate implementation and manage risk?

Community Equity and Restorative Justice: How can the project meaningfully address past harms, prevent displacement, and ensure inclusive participation and benefits?

Operations and Long-Term Stewardship: What structures and revenue models can sustain the district over time without burdening the City's general fund?

—
Key Themes
Observed

What the Panel Heard

The panel approached the Reconnecting Pasadena project as a rare and complex civic undertaking: the opportunity to reshape a significant portion of the city within an already built and historically layered urban fabric. Across its review of briefing materials, stakeholder input, a site tour, and interviews with national precedents, the panel's observations converged on a set of interrelated themes that speak less to any single decision than to the conditions required for long-term success.



A clear vision must anchor the long-term process.

Because the project will unfold over multiple decades and through changing economic, political, and community conditions, the panel emphasized the importance of establishing a clear and durable “north star” at the outset.

The proposed guiding principle—moving Pasadena from division to connection—captures the project’s central ambition, but its practical value lies in how it informs decision-making. The panel stressed that a formally adopted mission and set of guiding objectives should function as a continuous reference point, shaping choices related to land use, infrastructure, partnerships, and community benefits.

This is not a symbolic exercise. In long-duration projects, drift is common: priorities shift, conditions change, and incremental decisions accumulate in ways that can erode the original intent. A clearly articulated framework helps prevent that drift by:

- Aligning stakeholders around shared goals
- Providing continuity across political and administrative transitions
- Creating a basis for evaluating tradeoffs as they arise

In this sense, the vision is not the starting point of the project, but an operational tool that must be actively maintained and applied across its lifecycle.

The project must be phased and outcomes-driven.

The panel found that the most effective way to manage the project’s complexity is through a structured, phased approach in which each stage establishes the conditions necessary for the next. More than a sequencing exercise, it is a strategy for managing risk, aligning investment, and building momentum over time.

The proposed framework—from initial visioning through pre-development, entitlement, procurement, and long-term operations—reflects a progression from uncertainty to increasing clarity and commitment. Early phases are characterized by testing, alignment, and groundwork; later phases focus on execution and sustained performance.

A key implication here is that major decisions are not made all at once. Instead, they are distributed across phases, with each stage responding to a different set of questions:

- What is possible? (technical feasibility, capacity, constraints)
- What is intended? (land use, community priorities, project definition)
- How will it be delivered? (governance, financing, partnerships)
- How will it perform over time? (operations, maintenance, revenue, community impact)

This structure allows the City to move forward deliberately while avoiding premature commitments that could constrain future flexibility or increase risk.



Governance is the critical determinant of success.

The panel repeatedly returned to the principle that process drives outcomes: a project of this scale and duration cannot succeed without a governance model capable of sustaining focus, coordinating across multiple actors, and making timely, informed decisions over decades.

Governance sits at the intersection of public accountability, operational efficiency, and market credibility. Review of comparable projects underscored a consistent pattern: projects that achieved their intended outcomes did so through governance structures that were both clearly empowered and purpose-built for delivery, not layered onto existing systems as an afterthought.

This does not point to a single prescribed model. Rather, it establishes a set of criteria any governance approach must meet:

- Clarity of roles and decision-making authority
- Capacity for sustained attention
- Insulation from short-term disruption while maintaining public accountability
- Ability to coordinate complex financial, technical, and community functions
- Commensurate technical knowledge and experience

Without these elements in place, even well-conceived plans risk delay, fragmentation, or loss of strategic direction.



Upfront investment is required to unlock long-term value.

A consistent theme across the panel's discussion was that the site, in its current condition, does not inherently generate value. Significant public investment, particularly in infrastructure, planning, and entitlements, will be required before private capital can be effectively engaged.

This reality reframes the early phases of the project. Rather than focusing primarily on vertical development or end uses, the initial priority must be to:

- Establish technical feasibility (transportation, utilities, environmental conditions)
- Define a coherent and market-responsive project envelope
- Secure early funding to advance planning, design, and critical enabling infrastructure
- Align with key public and private agency partners whose work is interdependent with the site

The panel noted that in comparable projects, these upfront, often substantial investments were essential to de-risk the opportunity and create the conditions for subsequent development. While this can create pressure in the near term, it is also what enables long-term value creation, both financial and civic.

Certainty and coordination are essential to attract private capital.

From a development and investment perspective, the attractiveness of the project will depend less on its conceptual ambition than on the clarity and predictability of its implementation environment. Private capital responds to clearly defined rules and expectations, streamlined and coordinated approval processes, known timelines, and financial transparency.

The panel emphasized that de-risking the development process directly increases the likelihood of participation and the value of that participation. In practical terms, this suggests the importance of:

- A single point of coordination for developers and investors
- Pre-defined and ministerial entitlement pathways
- Alignment between public infrastructure delivery and private development timing

These elements do not eliminate risk, but they make it legible and manageable, which is essential for attracting investment at the scale envisioned.

No single delivery or ownership model will fit all components of the project.

Given the diversity of uses anticipated, ranging from infrastructure and civic space to research, commercial, and residential development, the panel found that a flexible, multi-model approach will be necessary.

Different components of the project will have different capital requirements, risk profiles, operational characteristics, and market dynamics. As a result, delivery strategies may vary across the site and over time, including combinations of:

- Publicly delivered infrastructure
- Ground lease arrangements for specialized uses
- Parcel sales or other mechanisms for both market-rate and affordable residential development

Maintaining this flexibility is critical. Market conditions will evolve over the life of the project, and the City's ability to respond to those changes, without fundamentally altering its guiding objectives, will be a key determinant of success.



The City will retain a central and ongoing role throughout implementation.

Even as new governance or delivery structures are considered, the panel underscored that the City's role as owner does not diminish over time; it evolves.

Core City responsibilities are likely to include:

- Dedicating organizational capacity, including an interdisciplinary "strike team" empowered to coordinate departments and sustain momentum over the life of the project
- Establishing and maintaining the regulatory and policy framework
- Delivering or coordinating major infrastructure
- Ensuring compliance with approved plans, agreements, and environmental commitments
- Managing relationships with the community and key institutional partners

This continued involvement is particularly important in maintaining alignment between long-term public goals and day-to-day implementation decisions. It also reinforces the idea that governance structures should not replace the City's role, but rather enable it to be exercised more effectively within a complex, multi-decade project.

Restorative justice must be embedded in the structure of the project.

The panel recognized the City's existing work to define a Restorative Justice Framework and found that the central challenge is one of implementation: how to translate principles into durable, measurable outcomes over time.

To be effective, restorative justice cannot operate as a parallel initiative. It must be integrated into the core mechanisms of the project, including:

- Governance, through representation and oversight
- Planning, through land use and program decisions
- Procurement, through requirements for participation and inclusion
- Revenue allocation, through community benefit structures

This integration ensures that restorative justice is not dependent on individual decisions or moments in time but instead carried through the full lifecycle of the project. If done well, it also allows the project to serve as a model for how large-scale development can address historic harms while creating new economic and cultural opportunities for past and present residents.

Long-term success depends on sustained commitment and adaptability.

Finally, the panel emphasized that this project should be understood not as a single undertaking, but as a long-term civic effort that will evolve over decades. Conditions will change—economically, politically, and socially—and the project must be structured to adapt without losing its core direction.

This requires:

- Governance that can persist and adjust over time
- Financial strategies that remain viable across market cycles
- Ongoing engagement with the community and stakeholders
- A willingness to revisit and refine earlier decisions when warranted

The panel's review of comparable projects reinforced that the most successful efforts combined clear initial direction with the flexibility to respond to change. Achieving that balance will be essential to realizing the full potential of the project.

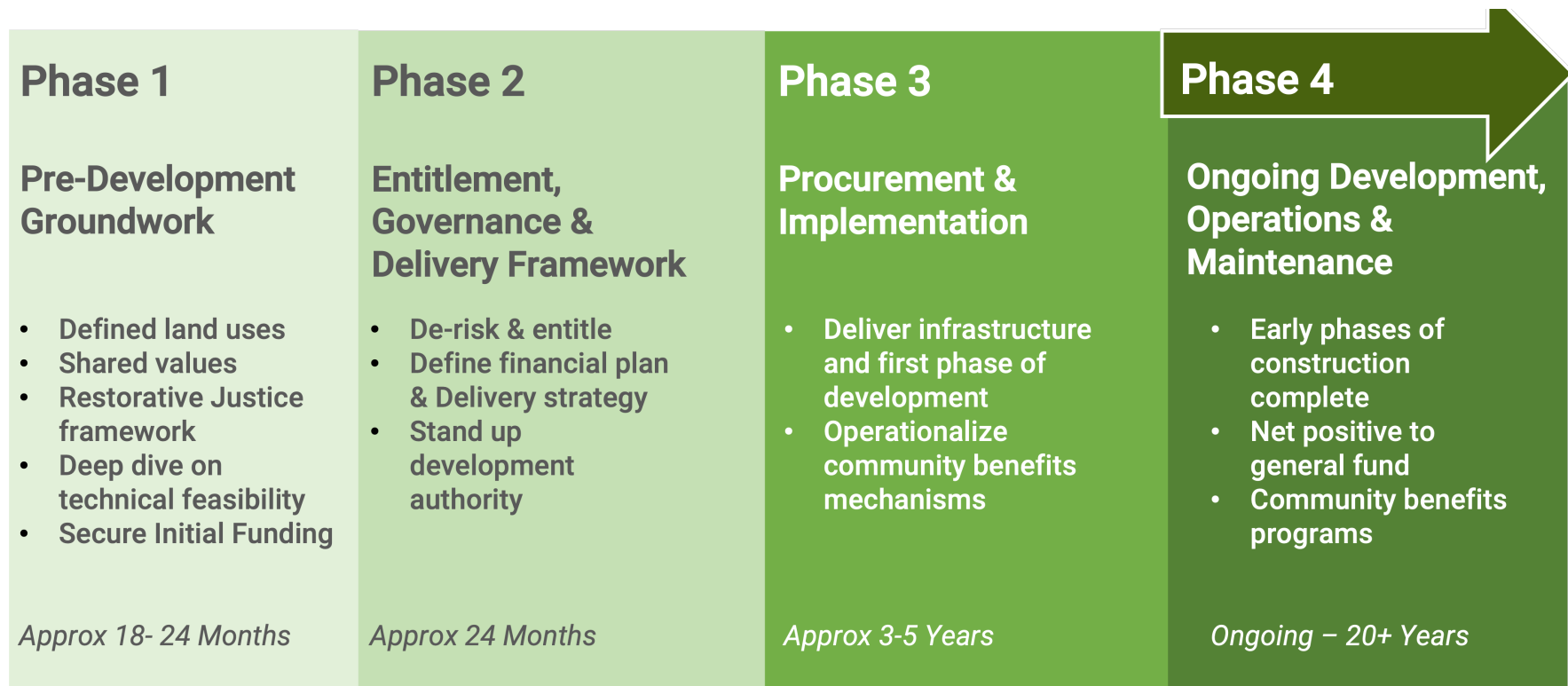


Proposed Implementation Framework

To translate the key themes into forward progress, the panel organized its recommendations around a framework and timeline for phased implementation. Each phase establishes the conditions to unlock the next, evolves governance structure, delivers on core objectives, and builds toward long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

While many activities will advance concurrently, the panel emphasized that early success depends on first establishing a clear vision, dedicated implementation capacity, durable governance structures, and the technical and financial groundwork necessary to support future entitlement, procurement, and development decisions.

The most critical work at this point lies in the near term, with the project's overall trajectory shaped by decisions made in Phases 1 and 2. The immediate priority is establishing the foundation for development: creating the organizational, governance, and implementation framework capable of carrying the vision forward.



Phase 0: Vision Study

This stage establishes the foundation for the future of the Reconnecting Pasadena initiative. Before advancing into detailed planning, entitlement, or delivery decisions, the City must adopt a north star—a clear and

shared vision that defines both the purpose of the project and the principles that will guide it over time. Without this clarity, the project risks losing coherence as it moves through multiple phases and political cycles.

Here, the panel has drafted a set of guiding principles and objectives intended as a starting point for refinement and formal adoption by the City, informed by leadership priorities and early community input.



Guiding Principle

From division to connection:

A generational investment in Pasadena's neighborhoods and future.

This principle reflects the project's core intent, to transform a long-standing physical and social divide into a unifying civic asset that benefits the entire city.

Mission Statement

To transform the former 710 corridor into a unifying civic asset that reconnects Pasadena's neighborhoods, advances restorative justice, and creates inclusive opportunities for housing, mobility, economic vitality, and public space—implemented through durable, financially and environmentally sustainable strategies over time.

Guiding Objectives

The panel identified a set of core objectives that should inform all subsequent phases of work. These objectives are intended to be applied consistently—across planning, governance, financing, and implementation decisions.

Restitch the City: Reconnect neighborhoods through walkable streets, public spaces, and integrated infrastructure.

Advance restorative justice: Address past harms through meaningful, community-informed outcomes.

Create a transportation and mobility hub: Integrate regional transit, local circulation, and active mobility systems.

Enable new neighborhood development: Support mixed-income housing, local-serving retail, jobs, and civic uses.

Ensure long-term financial and environmental sustainability: Structure the project to support operations and maintenance without reliance on the general fund, and align with the City's climate goals and long-term resilience strategies.

Maintain flexibility over a multi-decade buildout: Allow development strategies to evolve as conditions change, starting point for refinement and formal adoption by the City, informed by leadership priorities and early community input.

KEY OUTCOMES

By the conclusion of this phase, the City should have a formally endorsed vision and guiding framework that:

- Clearly defines the project as a unifying civic investment, not solely a development opportunity
- Forms the dedicated interdepartmental staff strike team needed to proceed with through future phases.
- Establishes a consistent set of guiding objectives to inform all future decisions
- Reflects input from City leadership and early stakeholder engagement
- Provides a durable foundation for planning, governance, and implementation

These outcomes enable the transition into Phase 1 with clarity about what the project is intended to achieve and how success will be measured.

Phase 1: Pre-Development and Groundwork

Phase 1 translates the City's vision and guiding objectives into the technical, financial, and organizational foundations required for implementation.

This phase is both analytical and strategic. It requires rigorous technical work—on infrastructure, land use, and environmental

considerations—alongside early decisions about governance, funding, and community participation. These efforts must proceed in parallel and inform one another.

Phase 1 is the most consequential period. While this report contains detailed guidance for all stages, and the most visible changes

won't be visible for several years from now, the project's entire trajectory depends on early decisions. How should the project be organized? What investments and actions are required to unlock opportunity? How can we sustain momentum and remain accountable? The work of Phase 1 is to establish the conditions to begin to answer these questions.



Defining the Development Framework

A central task of Phase 1 is to establish the overall framework for how the site can be developed. This work should be approached as an iterative process, in which land use assumptions are continuously evaluated against technical constraints, market conditions, and community priorities.

Rather than producing a fixed plan, the City should use this phase to test a range of scenarios, refining them over time to arrive at a development approach that is grounded in real-world conditions while retaining flexibility for future refinement.

This process includes:

- Establishing a preliminary range of land uses and development intensity
- Identifying development “sub-areas” that can support phased implementation
- Defining the overall gross square footage and mix of uses at a high level
- Testing how different configurations perform in terms of feasibility, cost, community impact, and infrastructure capacity

Technical and Environmental Analysis

Technical analysis underpins all aspects of Phase 1: infrastructure capacity, particularly related to transportation, utilities, and site conditions, will ultimately define what is achievable. This work should proceed in close coordination with the development framework, ensuring that assumptions are continuously tested and refined.

Key areas of analysis:

- Transportation systems, circulation patterns, and integration with regional mobility networks
- Utility infrastructure, including water, power, and stormwater systems
- Site conditions, including grading, environmental constraints, and potential remediation needs
- Development pad configurations and sequencing of infrastructure investments

The City should, in parallel, define an environmental review strategy that aligns with the project’s phased approach. This includes determining how environmental analysis can be structured to support both near-term implementation and long-term flexibility, including the relationship between project-level and program-level review.

Governance and Staffing

During Phase 1, the City retains primary responsibility for advancing the project and should establish a dedicated organizational structure to support this work.

The panel recommends the formation of an integrated, interdisciplinary project team that serves as a central hub for coordination across all workstreams.

The team should include:

- A project executive with overall responsibility for delivery
- A full-time project manager focused *exclusively* on this initiative
- Representation from key City functions, including planning, public works, transportation, economic development, and community engagement
- A coordinated, co-located working environment that enables rapid communication and decision-making

This structure lays the groundwork for more formal governance approaches in later phases, while enabling the City to move quickly and cohesively in the near term.

Community Participation and Restorative Justice Framework

Phase 1 is also the point at which the City establishes the structure for ongoing community engagement and begins to operationalize its restorative justice commitments.

The panel recommends creating a formal Community Advisory Group (CAG) early in this phase, with a clearly defined role that extends throughout the project lifecycle. This group should be responsible for helping shape development priorities, establishing evaluation criteria, and ensuring accountability to community-defined outcomes.

At this point, the City should begin solidifying a restorative justice framework that moves beyond principles to actionable strategies.

This includes:

- Defining how community input will be incorporated into decision-making
- Establishing metrics for measuring progress and outcomes
- Identifying opportunities for workforce development and small business participation
- Outlining community benefit mechanisms, such as community lease revenue participation or CBA requirements.

Funding Strategy and Early Resource Mobilization

Advancing into Phase 2 will require substantial financial resources—particularly to support planning, technical analysis, and environmental review—to unlock long-term value. Phase 1 should therefore include the development of an initial funding strategy, program budget, and grant management approach, along with efforts to secure early-stage funding.

While the City may contribute resources, external funding sources will be critical.

These could include:

- Local funding mechanisms and capital improvement programs
- Regional transportation and air quality funding
- State programs related to climate, transportation, and infrastructure
- Federal grants and discretionary funding opportunities

Establishing a coordinated approach to funding early in the process allows the City to align project priorities with available funding opportunities, sequence work in a financially feasible manner, and reduce reliance on any single funding source.

Agency Coordination and Partnerships

Given the scale and complexity of the project, early and sustained coordination with partner agencies is essential. This is particularly true for entities responsible for transportation infrastructure and regional mobility systems.

The City should establish formal alignment mechanisms, such as memoranda of understanding, to ensure that parallel efforts, such as roadway modifications, transit investments, and utility improvements, are coordinated with the overall development strategy.

Effective coordination in this phase reduces the risk of delays, conflicting priorities, and misaligned investments in later phases.



KEY OUTCOMES

By the conclusion of Phase 1, the City should have a clearly defined and broadly aligned foundation for advancing into entitlement and implementation. This includes:

- A feasible, community-informed development framework, including land uses and overall program scale
- A refined project definition, including phasing, infrastructure requirements, and development capacity
- A coordinated environmental strategy aligned with the phased development approach
- An initial funding strategy and program budget, with resources secured to advance into Phase 2
- A formal structure for community participation and early implementation of restorative justice priorities
- Early alignment with key partner agencies, particularly those responsible for transportation and infrastructure
- Governance structure ready to launch.

Together, these outcomes reduce uncertainty and enable the City to move into the next phase with a clear understanding of both opportunities and constraints.

Phase 2: Entitlement, Governance, and Policy

Phase 2 moves the project from exploration to definition. Building on the technical, financial, and community groundwork established in Phase 1, the City now formalizes the development framework, secures entitlements, and launches the governance and delivery structures that will guide implementation.

This is the stage where key policy decisions are made. It defines how the project will be built, who will be responsible for delivering different components, and how public and private investment will be structured over time. As in Phase 1, **decisions made at this stage will be crucial in shaping the success of the long-term effort.**

Phase 2 is fundamentally about reducing uncertainty. By clarifying land use rules, streamlining approvals, and aligning governance and financing strategies, the City creates the conditions necessary to attract private capital and advance the project with confidence.



Project Definition and Entitlement Strategy

The primary objective of Phase 2 is to translate the development framework established in Phase 1 into a formal entitlement structure that can guide implementation for decades. The panel recommends the use of a single specific plan with defined sub-areas. This approach provides a consistent regulatory framework while allowing for variation across different parts of the site and flexibility over time.

The process should:

- Define the overall project description, including land uses, development intensity, and phasing
- Establish sub-areas that reflect distinct conditions or programmatic priorities
- Create clear design standards and development parameters
- Align community-informed land use decisions with infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints

A key goal of this work is to de-risk the project for future development partners. By resolving major land use and environmental questions upfront, the City can reduce uncertainty and create a more predictable environment for investment.

To support this, the panel recommends incorporating a design-compliance approval pathway for future development that conforms to the specific plan. This approach

allows projects to proceed without discretionary review, provided they meet established standards, reducing time and risk for both the City and private partners

Environmental Clearance and Phasing Alignment

Environmental review should be structured to support the project's phased implementation strategy. Rather than approaching environmental clearance as a single, static process, the City should align it with the sequencing of development.

This may include project-level clearance for early infrastructure and initial phases of development and program-level clearance for later phases, with the ability to tier additional analysis as needed. This approach allows the City to advance near-term projects while preserving flexibility for future adaptation as market conditions, technologies, and community priorities evolve.

Establishing alignment between review and phasing is critical to maintaining momentum and avoiding bottlenecks.

Governance Structure and Development Authority

Phase 2 builds on the more formal governance structure to support delivery. The panel recommends the creation of a dedicated development authority, a single-purpose entity responsible for coordinating development activities, managing contracts, and advancing implementation.

Delivering a multi-billion-dollar, multi-decade development requires a level of focus, continuity, and operational capacity that is difficult to sustain within traditional municipal structures alone.

The proposed development authority would:

- Serve as a single point of coordination for development partners
- Manage procurement and contracting
- Oversee land disposition, including leasing and/or sale of parcels
- Administer financing tools and, where appropriate, issue debt
- Manage revenue streams and support long-term operations and maintenance
- Attract staff with expertise in large, complex development projects

The City should retain a central and ongoing role, responsible for establishing the regulatory framework, defining community benefits and restorative justice commitments, and ensuring compliance with adopted policies.

This dual structure—City as policy-setter and steward, authority as implementer—allows the project to balance accountability with efficiency.

Governance design should reflect both expertise and representation. A small, focused board (5-7 people) with clearly defined roles and relevant experience can support effective decision-making, while mechanisms for community representation ensure continued alignment with public priorities.

Delivery Strategy and Procurement Framework

With entitlement and governance structures defined, Phase 2 also establishes how the project will be delivered. The panel emphasized that a single delivery model is unlikely to be appropriate across all components of the project.

Instead, the City should maintain flexibility and align delivery strategies with the characteristics of different project elements, including public infrastructure and civic assets, commercial or institutional development (such as life sciences or education uses), and residential development. Each of these may involve distinct ownership models, financing structures, and procurement approaches.

From a development and investment perspective, several factors that are essential to accelerating participation and delivery:

- Clarity of vision and project identity, supported by a compelling narrative
- Streamlined governance and approvals, with a clear, consistent point of contact
- Infrastructure readiness, including utilities, access, and parking coordinated with development timing
- Certainty of outcomes related to entitlement, timing, and cost, and community benefit expectations.

Alternative Delivery Models

A range of delivery models should be evaluated at this stage, including traditional approaches and alternatives such as design-build, progressive design-build, and design-build-finance structures. Each model presents distinct tradeoffs related to allocation of risk between public and private partners, cost certainty and pricing structure, speed of delivery, and level of public-sector control and oversight.

The appropriate model will vary depending on the specific component of the project, but several overarching considerations apply:

- Alignment with project goals and guiding principles
- Allocation of risk to the parties best positioned to manage it
- Capacity of the City and its partners to effectively oversee delivery
- Market interest and willingness to participate under proposed terms

Alternative delivery models can offer advantages in terms of speed, coordination, and innovation, particularly for complex infrastructure components, but they also require sufficient internal capacity and clear governance structures to be implemented successfully.

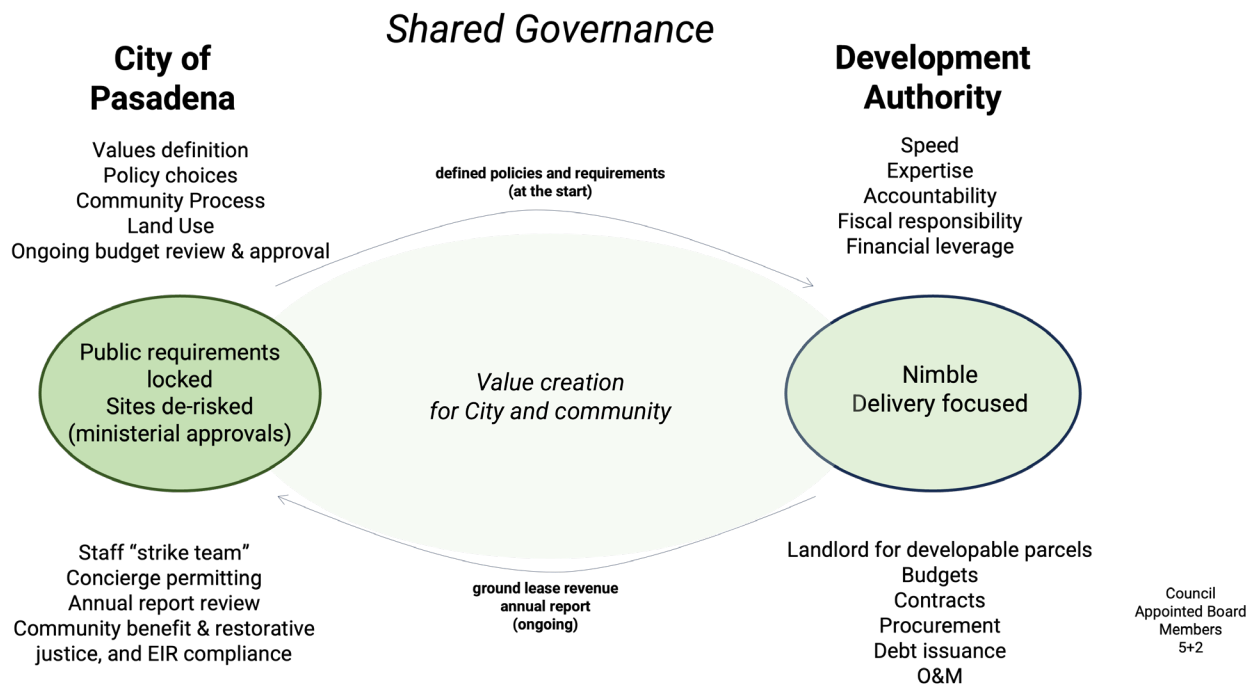
Financial Strategy and Value Capture

While detailed financial structuring will continue to evolve, Phase 2 is where the City defines the overarching approach to funding and value capture.

This includes:

- Evaluating financing tools such as tax increment mechanisms, assessment districts, and bonding strategies
- Determining how and when value created by public investment will be captured and reinvested
- Aligning financing strategies with phasing and delivery approaches

The potential for value creation is significant but must be intentionally captured. Public investment in infrastructure and place-making will generate increased land value; governance and financing structures must ensure that a portion of this value supports project delivery, community benefits, and long-term sustainability.



KEY OUTCOMES

By the conclusion of Phase 2, the City will have established the formal framework required to advance into implementation. This includes:

- An adopted specific plan that defines land use, development parameters, and phasing
- A coordinated environmental clearance strategy aligned with phased development
- A defined governance structure, including the establishment of a development authority and a clear delineation of roles in project delivery and oversight
- A comprehensive financial plan, including funding sources and value capture framework to support implementation
- A clearly articulated delivery strategy, including procurement approaches and potential use of alternative delivery models

Together, these elements create the structure, clarity, and confidence needed to move into procurement and construction.



Phase 3: Implementation and Procurement

Phase 3 marks the transition from planning to action. **The success of this work depends on the work completed in earlier stages.**

With entitlements secured, governance structures established, and delivery strategies defined, the City and its partners move into active implementation.

This phase is where the project enters the market and the public starts paying attention. Procurement processes are launched, development partners are selected, and construction begins on enabling infrastructure and early phases of development.

Phase 3 is not simply about execution—it is about maintaining alignment. The systems established in earlier phases must now function in real time, ensuring that development proceeds efficiently while upholding the project's guiding principles, community commitments, and long-term vision.



Procurement Strategy and Market Engagement

The central task here is to bring the project to market in a way that attracts qualified partners and delivers on the City's objectives.

Procurement packages should be carefully structured to reflect the delivery strategies defined in Phase 2, including distinctions across infrastructure, specialized districts, and residential development. These packages must clearly communicate expectations related to design, performance, community benefits, and long-term stewardship.

Rather than a single procurement event, the panel anticipates a sequenced and phased approach, allowing the City and development authority to:

- Test market interest through early opportunities
- Refine procurement strategies based on responses
- Align timing with infrastructure delivery and market conditions

Clarity remains critical at this stage. Development partners must be able to understand the parameters of the opportunity, including entitlement conditions, approval pathways, and financial expectations. The work completed in earlier phases, particularly around de-risking and streamlining approvals, becomes essential in enabling a strong market response.

Implementation of Infrastructure and Early Development

Phase 3 includes the initiation of both public infrastructure and initial vertical development. The sequencing of these efforts is critical, as infrastructure investment enables development while early development helps establish momentum, identity, and revenue for the district.

Key activities during this phase include:

- Advancing enabling infrastructure such as streets, utilities, and public realm improvements
- Coordinating closely with regional partners on mobility and transportation investments
- Preparing development pads and supporting site readiness
- Launching initial vertical development projects in alignment with the phasing strategy

The panel noted that early phases of development should be carefully selected to demonstrate viability, build confidence, and support subsequent investment.

Governance and Oversight During Implementation

As implementation begins, governance structures established in Phase 2 move into full operation. Responsibilities are distributed across the City, the designated governing entity, and supporting stakeholders, requiring ongoing coordination and clear delineation of roles.

The governing entity (such as a development authority, if established) is expected to:

- Lead procurement and contract execution
- Manage relationships with the community, elected officials, and development and construction partners
- Oversee project delivery and performance
- Administer financial resources and funding mechanisms.

The City will continue to:

- Oversee compliance with entitlements, environmental requirements, and community benefit commitments
- Manage ongoing planning work and future phases of development
- Coordinate across departments and with partner agencies
- Maintain accountability to the public and elected leadership

This dual structure requires coordination to ensure that efficiency does not come at the expense of accountability or alignment.

Operationalizing Restorative Justice and Community Benefits

Phase 3 is where restorative justice commitments and community benefit strategies move from planning into implementation. These elements must be embedded in procurement, contracting, and project delivery, not treated as separate or secondary initiatives, and supported by clear contractual requirements and enforcement mechanisms.

This includes:

- Incorporating equity and participation goals into procurement requirements
- Establishing and enforcing targets for participation by disadvantaged and minority- and women-owned businesses
- Setting up the workforce development and local hiring programs developed in earlier phases
- Advancing community benefit agreements and mechanisms for shared value creation and community-directed funds
- Implementing city-wide policies that prevent further displacement with this major investment

Agency Coordination and Parallel Workstreams

Phase 3 involves multiple workstreams advancing at once, including infrastructure delivery, development procurement, and regional transportation projects. Effective coordination across these efforts is essential to maintaining schedule and avoiding conflicts that undermine project momentum.

The panel emphasized the importance of:

- Continued alignment with agencies such as Caltrans and regional transportation partners
- Clear communication channels between project teams and partner organizations
- Ongoing management of dependencies between infrastructure and development timelines

KEY OUTCOMES

By the conclusion of Phase 3, the project should have transitioned from planning to delivery, with measurable progress across multiple fronts. Expected outcomes include:

- Procurement packages issued and advanced, reflecting defined project requirements and priorities
- Selection of development and construction partners for initial phases of work
- Initiation of infrastructure and horizontal development, aligned with phasing strategy
- Implementation of community benefits, workforce, and procurement commitments established in earlier phases
- Continued coordination with partner agencies to ensure alignment of parallel infrastructure investments

These outcomes signal that the project is fully underway and positioned for sustained development over time.

Phase 4: Ongoing Development and Operations/Maintenance

Phase 4 represents the long-term realization of the Reconnecting Pasadena project. While earlier phases focus on planning, structuring, and initiating development, this phase is concerned with sustaining and evolving the district over time, ensuring that it functions as a cohesive, high-performing civic asset.

This phase is not simply the continuation of development activity, but the establishment of a durable operational model. The success of the project will ultimately be measured not by what is built, but by how the district performs—economically, socially, and environmentally—over decades.

Phase 4 therefore centers on long-term stewardship: managing development over time, maintaining infrastructure and public spaces, generating and reinvesting revenue, and ensuring that the project continues to deliver on its guiding objectives.



Long-term Governance and Stewardship

In Phase 4, the governance structure established in earlier phases transitions into a long-term stewardship role. The governing entity—whether a development authority or similar structure—takes on primary responsibility for managing the district as an integrated system.

Core responsibilities include:

- Overseeing ongoing development and future phases of construction
- Managing property, leases, and development agreements
- Coordinating operations across infrastructure, public realm, and private development
- Monitoring performance and ensuring compliance with established standards and commitments

At the same time, the City continues to play a critical role in:

- Maintaining ownership of underlying assets and long-term policy authority
- Overseeing major off-site infrastructure systems
- Ensuring accountability and alignment with public objectives

Operations/Maintenance and District Management

A central focus of Phase 4 is the establishment of a sustainable approach to operations and maintenance (O&M). This includes not only physical infrastructure, but also the management of public spaces and overall district performance.

Key considerations include:

- Maintenance of internal streets, utilities, and shared infrastructure
- Management and programming of parks, plazas, and civic spaces
- Coordination of mobility systems, including parking and circulation
- Ensuring that operations support both residents and visitors while minimizing impacts on surrounding neighborhoods

These functions should be fully integrated rather than fragmented across multiple entities to ensure efficiency and a consistent user experience.

Financial Sustainability and Revenue Management

Phase 4 is also where the project's financial model is fully realized. The district should be structured to operate without reliance on the City's general fund, with revenues generated through development and ongoing operations supporting long-term needs.

Potential revenue sources may include:

- Ground leases and property-related revenues
- Parking and mobility-related fees
- Special assessments or district-based financing mechanisms
- Programmatic and event-related revenues

These revenues should be structured to:

- First support operations and maintenance
- Fund reinvestment in infrastructure and public space
- Support ongoing community benefits and programmatic initiatives
- Generate surplus value that can be returned to the City over time

Successful examples of similar projects have demonstrated the potential for substantial long-term value generation when these systems are properly structured.

Sustained Development and Market Responsiveness

Development within the district will continue over years, requiring an approach that remains responsive to changing market conditions, technologies, and community needs.

It will be important to:

- Maintain flexibility in land use and development strategies within the established framework
- Sequence future phases to align with infrastructure capacity and demand
- Periodically reassess development priorities and opportunities

Rather than attempting to fully define the end state in advance, the City and governing entity should allow the district to evolve over time, guided by the principles and structures established in earlier phases.

Continued Implementation of Community Benefits and Restorative Justice

This is when community benefits and restorative justice commitments are sustained and evaluated over the long term. These efforts must remain active and visible beyond initial implementation.

This includes:

- Ongoing workforce development and employment pathways
- Continued support for local and underrepresented businesses
- Management of community benefit agreements and revenue-sharing mechanisms
- Regular evaluation and reporting on outcomes

The Community Advisory Group (or similar body), through representation on the development authority, should continue to play a role in monitoring progress and ensuring that commitments are upheld over time.

KEY OUTCOMES

Phase 4 is ongoing by design, but several defining outcomes characterize a successful transition into this phase:

- A financially self-sustaining district, with revenues supporting operations, maintenance, and reinvestment
- Continued phased development, responding to market conditions and evolving community needs
- Fully operational public spaces, infrastructure, and mobility systems that serve both the district and surrounding neighborhoods
- Active programming and activation of civic and open spaces, contributing to identity and vitality
- Sustained implementation of community benefits and restorative justice commitments

These outcomes reflect the project's shift from delivery to long-term performance and value creation.

Conclusion

The Road Ahead

The Reconnecting Pasadena initiative stands at a threshold. Years of work—reclaiming the land, studying its possibilities, listening to the community, and shaping a vision—have brought the City to this moment. The outline of what the site could become is now visible. What remains is the work of making it real.

The panel's guidance is intended to help the City step across that threshold. It offers a path that is both structured and adaptable: one that begins with clarity of purpose, builds

the capacity to act, and establishes the systems needed to carry the project forward over time. It recognizes that the most important decisions ahead are not only about design, but about how to organize effort, align partners, and sustain momentum through the long arc of implementation.

What comes next will unfold in stages: early groundwork, formal entitlements, initial investments, and, over time, the gradual emergence of a new district.

The most important work happens now, laying foundations with the discipline, coordination, and steady commitment to the principles that have guided the project so far.

The story of this swath of Pasadena has long been defined by interruption. But each new chapter will increasingly be defined by opportunity, healing, and connection. With hope, generations to come will tell this story with pride, as a national model for urban transformation and restorative justice. ■



About the Panel

Richard Bruckner

Panel Chair Urban Planning

Bruckner is a senior land use specialist at Mayer Brown LLP, where he advises developers and investors on complex land use entitlements, CEQA compliance, and public-sector approvals for major real estate projects. He brings extensive public-sector leadership experience, having served as director of the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (2010–2017), overseeing planning and regulatory functions for more than 1 million residents. Previously, he was director of planning and development for the City of Pasadena, where he managed citywide planning, economic development, and multiple redevelopment areas. Earlier roles include senior positions with the City of Anaheim and the Community Redevelopment Agency.



Bruckner holds a BA from Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York, and a master's in city and regional planning from the Ohio State University. He serves on advisory boards for ULI Los Angeles and the USC Lusk Center for Real Estate.

Ava Bromberg

Real Estate

Bromberg is founder and CEO of Creative Urban Solutions, Inc., a strategic advisory and development firm established in 2010. With more than 20 years of experience, she advises public agencies, institutions, and private clients on large-scale real estate initiatives. Current projects include Stanford University's StanfordNext, LA Metro's Union Station, and the Los Angeles County Land Bank Pilot for Affordable Housing. Previously, she led community and development strategy for Downtown West, Google's 80-acre mixed-use project in San José, delivering a major mixed-use entitlement including housing, office, and public space, along with an innovative community benefits framework. Earlier, she developed large-scale creative and mixed-use projects in Los Angeles.



Bromberg holds a master's in urban planning from UCLA, where she is also a PhD candidate, and a BA from Hamilton College in Clinton, New York. She is a senior fellow at the USC Annenberg Innovation Lab.

Joshua Foster

Impact Strategy

Foster is founder and CEO of JAF, a consulting firm focused on community impact at the intersection of strategy, design, and development. He brings a multidisciplinary background as an architectural designer, educator, and community strategist, with experience advancing equity-centered development initiatives. Foster also serves as an adjunct professor of architecture at Long Beach City College and El Camino College in Torrance, and is active in professional organizations including the National Organization of Minority Architects and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture. His work emphasizes stakeholder engagement and community-driven design in complex urban environments, often in collaboration with public agencies and development teams.



A Philadelphia native and former New Yorker, Foster holds degrees in architecture, sustainability, and real estate development from Columbia University and the University of Southern California.

Shmel Graham

Legal

Graham is counsel at Ashurst, where she advises on land use, real estate, and infrastructure-related matters. With experience in both public and private sectors, she has represented developers on entitlements and permitting while also leading major public initiatives for the City of Los Angeles. Graham previously served as director of the mayor's operations innovation team under Mayor Eric Garcetti, where she led complex technology infrastructure and public safety projects, including procurement and negotiation of multi-million-dollar contracts. Her background includes roles in real estate asset reform and public safety operations.

She holds a bachelor's from the University of Michigan and a JD from Indiana University's Robert H. McKinney School of Law, and has completed leadership programs including REAP and LAAAWPPI. She is an LA native.



John Keisler

Funding

Keisler is CEO and managing partner of Sunstone Investment Group, Inc., and CEO of Sunstone Cities, LLC, where he focuses on aligning investment strategies with economic development outcomes. He brings more than 20 years of public-sector leadership, including serving as economic development director for the City of Long Beach, where he led initiatives that expanded private investment and advanced key regional sectors such as goods movement and advanced manufacturing. His work integrates public policy, finance, and community development.

He holds a bachelor's from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and a master of public administration from the University of Southern California. He began his career with AmeriCorps and Teach for America. He is a longtime resident of Long Beach.



Kacy Keys

Development

Keys is founder of Praxis Development Group, launched in 2019 with a focus on mission-driven urban development. She brings more than 25 years of experience across law, public policy, and real estate development, with over \$1 billion in completed development across residential, retail, office, and mixed-use sectors. Keys previously served as senior vice president at Seritage Growth Properties and as head of development and general counsel at JH Snyder, where she led large-scale entitlement and development efforts. Her work emphasizes urban infill, community impact, and navigating complex regulatory environments.

With deep family roots in Los Angeles, Keys holds a bachelor's in economics and a JD from UC Berkeley and a master's in urban planning from UCLA.



Jakub Rozga

Design & Development

Rozga is senior vice president of design and construction at Eldridge Acre Partners, where he oversees real estate investments across major US markets. With nearly three decades of experience spanning private equity, development, and general contracting, he brings cradle-to-grave expertise across acquisitions, underwriting, design, permitting, and construction. Rozga has led projects across multifamily, office, hospitality, and industrial sectors, with a strong track record in complex deal structuring, budgeting, and execution. His experience includes direct coordination with public agencies and utilities across Southern California, supporting infrastructure delivery and entitlement processes. Prior to Eldridge, he held roles with Cityview, Trumark Urban, Dalian Wanda, and leading contractors including Webcor Builders and Pankow.

He holds a bachelor's in civil engineering and a master's in construction management from Cornell University.



Judith Taylor

Impact Strategy

Taylor is a partner at HR&A Advisors in Los Angeles, with more than 20 years of experience in real estate, land use, and inclusive economic development. Her work focuses on aligning financial feasibility with community priorities, particularly through transit-oriented development, public-private partnerships, and equitable growth strategies. She has advised public-sector clients across California and nationally on major initiatives, including development agreements, value capture, and community benefits frameworks. Taylor played a key role in community benefits negotiations for Downtown West, helping shape a \$200 million benefits package and community-controlled fund. Her work also includes anti-displacement strategies and policy toolkits for transit corridors and under-resourced communities.

She holds a bachelor's in economics from Stanford University and a master of public policy and urban planning from the Harvard Kennedy School.



Lisa Trifiletti

Planning

Trifiletti is founder of Trifiletti Consulting, launched in 2016 to provide strategic planning, entitlement, and environmental advisory services for complex infrastructure and development projects. With more than 20 years of experience, she is known for leading large, multi-jurisdictional efforts. Previously, she held senior leadership roles at Los Angeles World Airports, including deputy executive director of environmental programs, where she oversaw planning and environmental approvals for major capital projects such as the LAX Landside Access Modernization Program. She has since led major initiatives including the Inglewood Transit Connector and advises agencies such as LA Metro and Los Angeles County. Her work emphasizes coordination, regulatory strategy, and delivery of complex, large-scale public infrastructure projects.

She holds a BA from Boston College, a master's from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and JD from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.



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2001 L Street, NW | Suite 200

Washington, DC 20036-4948

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