Memorandum

To: Pasadena City Council
From: Pasadena Environmental Advisory Commission
Date: 2/11/2025
Re: Letter of Support for CREEC

Dear Honorable Members of Pasadena City Council,

The Environmental Advisory Commission is in support of the revitalization of the Annex in Hahamonga Watershed Park for the Climate Resilience Education and Environmental Center (CREEC). In the wake of the Eaton Fires, now more than ever, it is apparent that climate adaptation strategies and resilient education is critical for living in the San Gabriel Valley. Strategically located at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains on the Upper Arroyo Seco in Hahamonga Park, CREEC would serve as a community resource to for the entire region.

CREEC is proposed by a coalition of eight nonprofits led by Outward Bound Adventures (OBA), including the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, Audubon Society, Arroyo Seco Foundation, Side Street Projects, Arlington Gardens, Friends of Los Angeles River and My Tribe Rise. For over 65 years OBA has changed lives through outdoor challenges and discovery, leading over 40,000 youth on nature trips, leadership academy and family outings. Their success of empowering youth through environmental stewardship earned them the prestigious "Leave No Trace" award at the Global Summit 2024. With decades of experience providing environmental education, habitat restoration, workforce development, and community outreach, this coalition is qualified and experienced to transform these boarded up dilapidated buildings into an interactive, environmental community hub.

Restoration of this site for an environmental education center aligns with the goals outlined in both the Hahamonga Watershed Master Plan (HWP) and Pasadena's General Plan. The HWP Masterplan Addendum includes a well-developed description of an environmental education center at the Annex (https:/www.cityofpasadena.net/wp-content/uploads/sites29-Watershed-Park-Master-Plan-Addendum.pdf). Both the (HWP) Masterplan and the Addendum were conducted in very public processes and were informed by significant numbers of community members, leaders, and representatives.

Furthermore, this project aligns with the goals of Pasadena's Climate Action Plan, specifically CAP's Adaptation Strategy Measure 5: Support educational campaigns and outreach efforts to increase public awareness of climate change and its anticipated effects. Adding the environmental justice element to the General Plan per SB1000 requires connecting the residents with nature and providing climate adaptation strategy to disadvantaged and at-risk communities most affected by climate change. By transforming the Annex into an environmental education

center, the city will provide a resource for learning about climate adaptation, sustainability methods, and health benefits to all members of the community.

Hahamonga, meaning “flowing waters, fruitful valley,” in the native Tongva language, is an invaluable natural treasure where the watershed connects the San Gabriel Mountains to Pasadena’s Upper Arroyo Seco. CREEC gives the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians the opportunity to have its **first** educational center in the San Gabriel Valley to inform the public on Traditional Ecology Knowledge, cultural heritage and historical perspective of the area. By advancing this project, Pasadena has the opportunity to honor the land’s cultural history while ensuring its ecological health and accessibility for generations to come.

The Arroyo Seco Foundation, Friends of the LA River and Audubon Society will add scientific-based research on the endangered native trout species, as well as local native plant monitoring, habitat restoration, and providing field work training on conservation methods, water resource management and the impact of climate change on our ecosystems.

Providing workforce development in wildfire prevention, habitat restoration, life sciences, and other STEM fields aligns with City of Pasadena Economic Development Strategy, Guiding Principle: Champion Life Sciences and Cultivate Deep Tech Ecosystem in Pasadena. By addressing workforce development and capital improvement priorities, this project will create jobs and foster economic growth while preserving the ecological and cultural significance of the Hahamonga Watershed.

My Tribe Rise and Side Street Projects have brought hands on learning through music and art, that transform environmental science into cultural experiences for a deeper understanding of place and stewardship.

The EAC recommends Pasadena City Council take action to restore the Annex in Hahamonga Watershed Park to the Climate Resilient Education and Environmental Center by signing a lease or MOU with OBA as the lead organization facilitating CREEC. The CREEC partnership is prepared to fund raise for the planning, design, construction and programming, not paid for by City of Pasadena. However, receiving grant funding is contingent on a MOU from the City of Pasadena. Additionally, staffing for this project would be done by the CREEC partners, and not significantly by City of Pasadena staff. Examples of this model have been successful in the Arroyo Seco at Kids Space Museum which revitalized historic buildings to bring a new life to Kids Space, and the One Arroyo Foundation restoring trails and historical structures along the Arroyo. We thank you for considering this project and taking the next steps at this time.

Thank you,
Pasadena Environmental Advisory Commission