



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens  
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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: October 6, 2004

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XV: Consideration of resolution authorizing acceptance of an approximately 15,000 square feet open space dedication from Tentative Tract No. 60222, and entering into an agreement with California Home Builders, Inc. to purchase, or accept a donation of, additional lots from Tentative Tract No. 60222, 7011 Shoup Avenue, Canoga Park.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing acceptance of an approximately 15,000 square feet open space dedication from Tentative Tract No. 60222, and entering into an agreement with California Home Builders, Inc. to purchase, or accept a donation of, additional lots from Tentative Tract No. 60222 along Bell Creek.

Background: Tentative Tract No. 60222 would authorize the construction of up to 18 homes on a 2.7-acre property along Bell Creek in the west San Fernando Valley. The project was approved by the City Planning Commission (Zone Change) and the Deputy Advisory Agency (Tract Map). As approved, the project would provide the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) with an approximately 15,000-square-foot open space dedication at the upstream end of the project. The subject open space lot would have public street and sidewalk access. The applicant also agreed to install a water meter for native landscape restoration.

The dedication would provide a small but valuable natural park along a tributary of the Los Angeles River. The applicant has also agreed (although not in the City conditions of approval) to sell the MRCA any additional lots at fair market value up until final construction fees and permit documents need to be submitted. This is a handshake deal and the methodology for determining fair market value would require negotiation. Staff is looking at various funding sources to see if additional lots (approximately 7,500-square-feet each) could be acquired. In any case the applicant is willing to solidify this agreement in writing if it benefits the MRCA's quest for funding.

The project approval, and an adjacent, related school project, are now under appeal. The appellant is attempting to negotiate options to acquire more of Tentative Tract No. 60222 over a period of time that is greater than what the applicant has offered at no cost to the MRCA. The appellant is requesting that the MRCA consider a transfer of his negotiated option rights at no cost to the MRCA. Staff has agreed not to oppose the project based on the obtaining the 15,000-square-foot option. However, if the applicant agrees to additional option terms that are transferable to the MRCA, it would be behoove the MRCA to accept such rights.

The subject property is one of two excellent quality natural areas that remain along Bell Creek. The other one is upstream closer to the Simi Hills. The property supports foraging Canadian geese in the fall and winter months. The larger the park can be expanded beyond 15,000-square-feet, the greater the likelihood that it will be used by the Canadian geese and many other unique bird species.