



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM: 
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: April 6, 2005

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing (a) the use funds from Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation District No. 1 to acquire APN 4355-009-016 in Acquisition Area B (Summitridge-Franklin Canyon), APN 2381-029-010 in Acquisition Area C (Laurel Canyon), APNs 5565-027-014, 5565-027-015, 5565-027-016, 5565-027-020, and 5567-007-010 in Acquisition Area D (Laurel Canyon), and APNs 5580-017-031, 5580-018-006, and 5580-018-025 in Acquisition Area E (Griffith Park area); (b) the acceptance of private donations to acquire said parcels, and 3) entering into agreements with adjacent property owners to be responsible for fuel modification on said parcels, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing (a) the use funds from Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation District No. 1 to acquire APN 4355-009-016 in Acquisition Area B (Summitridge-Franklin Canyon), APN 2381-029-010 in Acquisition Area C (Laurel Canyon), APNs 5565-027-014, 5565-027-015, 5565-027-016, 5565-027-020, and 5567-007-010 in Acquisition Area D (Laurel Canyon), and APNs 5580-017-031, 5580-018-006, and 5580-018-025 in Acquisition Area E (Griffith Park area); (b) the acceptance of private donations to acquire said parcels, and 3) entering into agreements with adjacent property owners to be responsible for fuel modification on said parcels.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has reserved the ten subject tax defaulted parcels for purchase from the Los Angeles County Treasurer and Tax Collector. These parcels are included in Chapter 8 Agreement Numbers 2358, 2368, and 2410. The parcels were included in the District No. 1 Final Engineer's Report. At their March 30, 2005 meeting the District No. 1 Citizens Oversight Committed adopted a resolution determining that the expenditure of Assessment District funds to acquire the ten parcels is consistent with the criteria and requirements established in the Final Engineer's Report.

The low cost to acquire these parcels warrants their consideration for acquisition. The attached table lists the properties, their respective Chapter 8 agreement number, the cost of each parcel, number of acres, jurisdiction, and a brief note to identify their location. Each parcel is shown on the accompanying set of maps. The maps show the relationship between the parcels and the surrounding land.

Acquisition Area B Parcel

APN 4355-009-016 is located in Acquisition Area B at the northern end of Summitridge Road to the west of Franklin Canyon DWP property. The parcel is part of a large habitat block in between the Peavine Canyon (San Ysidro) tributary of Benedict Canyon and Franklin Canyon. The parcel is entirely in the Franklin Canyon watershed. The parcel comprises 1.84 acres for a price of \$81,757 plus small administrative costs.

Acquisition Area C Parcel

APN 2381-029-010 is located just north of the intersection of Mulholland Drive and Laurel Canyon Boulevard. The parcel lies along Laurel Canyon Boulevard and has legal access from Mulholland Terrace. It contains high quality habitat that represents the easternmost extension of the Fryman Canyon core habitat area. Via this extension the property aids wildlife movement to two poor quality habitat linkages across Laurel Canyon Boulevard. The first one is behind the Department of Water and Power (DWP) facility at the northeast corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Mulholland Drive. The second one is providing wildlife access to the origin of Woodrow Wilson Drive where they can travel a short distance to a second DWP facility and make their way to the Briar Summit open space. Equally important, the property provides high quality viewshed along a major thoroughfare. The property is at least three properties south of the big white house along Laurel Canyon Boulevard that was destroyed in a mudslide and made the national news. Most likely an adjoining property owner will commit some acquisition funding and take responsibility for fuel modification (except along Laurel Canyon Boulevard).

Acquisition Area D Parcels

APNs 5565-027-014, 5565-027-015, 5565-027-016, 5565-027-020, and 5567-007-010 are located in Acquisition Area D in Laurel Canyon. APNs 5565-027-014, 015, and 016 lie adjacent to each other along the eastern side of Laurel Canyon Boulevard near Tianna Road. The parcels are critical to maintain wildlife movement across Laurel Canyon Boulevard from the large habitat block on the western side of Laurel Canyon Boulevard that includes Laurel Canyon (dog) Park. They all also provide substantial viewshed along a major thoroughfare. The four parcels total 0.43 acres and cost \$72,697 plus a small administrative fee. The properties may be difficult to develop under current conditions but future conditions—such as lot line adjustments and consolidations—could change that balance. Acquisition Area D funds are running low, but nonetheless staff's recommendation is to seize this opportunity while it is available. Back taxes (purchase price) can only increase in the current Chapter 8 sales arena.

APN 5567-007-010 is located the western side of Laurel Canyon Boulevard in a large habitat block. A full scale attempt to develop the subject area by utilizing old paper streets has been under way for over two years. The subject parcel is 0.13 acres and costs \$5,954 plus a small administrative fee. The property may be

difficult to develop under current conditions but future conditions--such as lot line adjustments and consolidations--could change that balance. Acquisition Area D funds are running low, but nonetheless staff's recommendation is to seize this opportunity while it is available. Back taxes (purchase price) can only increase in the current Chapter 8 sales arena. Staff is working on at least one other non-tax defaulted acquisition in the related ribbon of properties along Laurel Canyon Boulevard.

Acquisition Area E Parcels

APNs 5580-017-031, 5580-018-006, and 5580-018-025 are located in Acquisition Area E near the southwestern corner of Griffith Park between the Canyon Drive park entrance and Beachwood Drive. APNs 5580-018-006 and 025 abut Griffith Park. The two properties total 0.37 acres and cost \$22,481 plus a small administrative fee.

APN 5580-017-031 occupies a knoll top south of the two above parcels in a distinct separate habitat block. The knoll is highly visible and contains high quality chaparral cover. Being 0.64 acres in size and having a minimal amount of required annual brush clearance, it is a good value. The cost is \$11,905 plus a small administrative fee..

It is expected that the Los Angeles County Treasurer and Tax Collector will send the bill to acquire the parcels as soon as three months from now. The MRCA will then have 14 days to pay the bill once it is received. The funding for these parcels would come from the Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation District One. All of the Acquisition Areas contain adequate fund balances.