



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM: 
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: April 11, 2005

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XVI: Consideration of resolution authorizing the acceptance of a donation of approximately 0.5 acres (APN 2380-005-010) in Studio City, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the acceptance of a donation of approximately 0.5 acres (APN 2380-005-010) in Studio City at the southern terminus of Lankershim Boulevard.

Background: The subject property is located on the north slope of the eastern Santa Monica Mountains along a well-studied wildlife movement corridor between the Wrightwood Drive and Multiview Drive areas. The parcel contains virtually 100 percent closed canopy cover of coast live oak trees. The adjacent parcel to the west contains a significant year-round spring with lush riparian and wetland vegetation. Both of these parcels are on the Final Engineer's Report for Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation District No. 1. At its first meeting in 2003, the District No. 1 Citizens Oversight Committee determined that the subject approximately 0.5-acre property (APN 2380-005-010) was consistent with the Engineer's Report. It is one of the highest priority parcels in acquisition Area C of the District.

The acquisition has not proceeded because staff is reserving the remaining funds in Area C for the critical 8701 and 8715 property located along Mulholland Drive within Fryman Canyon Park. At its April 7, 2004 meeting, the Governing Board adopted a resolution authorizing acquisition of the Lankershim property contingent on the completion or impossibility of the sale of the 8701 and 8715 Mulholland Drive property. Quite fortuitously, the owner of the property, Cloggers Paving Trust, recently decided to outright donate the property. The street address is 3598 Lankershim Boulevard.

The MRCA has yet to provide its full share of general benefit obligation in Area C of its Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation District No. 1. The substantial value of the MRCA's appraisal of the subject property will help fulfill a

major portion of that general benefit obligation. Given that State funds are now unlikely to be granted for all but a few parcels in the District, donation opportunities are paramount to satisfying the MRCA's 20 percent general benefit obligation.

As staff worked on the acquisition over the past year and a half, we have received a commitment from the downhill owner to the north regarding brushing and mudslide liability. They are willing to record all necessary indemnities and waivers across their property if the MRCA were to acquire the subject property. In addition, they are willing to assume all brushing requirements on the property as it relates to their house. The attached resolution also authorizes granting easements to all adjoining owners to allow them to brush on MRCA property. Nonetheless the brushing requirements are modest. The southern tip of the property as shown on the attached aerial photo was actually split off of the subject lot to increase the size of the adjacent lot, further reducing the brush clearance liability. Perhaps more importantly the dense oak canopy cover allows for minimal understory growth and none that contains flash fuels. The steep north-facing slope provides an unusually moist environment. The net result is that there is less than 0.1 acres of brushing obligation. That clearance requires a much reduced effort compared to almost any other 0.1 acres of brushing.

The habitat, viewshed, airshed, and general benefit value of the subject property warrant the assumption of this small brushing obligation.