



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: May 3, 2016

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(h): Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant augmentation request to Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy, SMM-84-1531, for the Wilacre Park improvements.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a request to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a grant augmentation to SMM-84-1531 for Wilacre Park improvements in the amount of \$350,000.

Background: Located in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains on Laurel Canyon Boulevard, the 128-acre Wilacre Park provides access to the Betty B. Dearing Trail and the Cross Mountain Park Trail system to Fryman Canyon Park, Coldwater Canyon Park, and Franklin Canyon Park. Because of this extensive access and convenient location, the trailhead at Wilacre Park is a popular hiking location, and the high amount of use strains the parking and visitor-serving amenities at the trailhead.

In April 2015 the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy authorized a grant to MRCA to plan, design, permit, and implement improvements to Wilacre's parking lot, restrooms, signage, and other visitor amenities. Since then MRCA staff and the project's consultants have completed the survey, geotechnical studies, preliminary engineering, specifications for the restroom building and other elements, utility calculations, and accessibility design, and the project now has construction documents at 90% complete. Based on these plans and an updated cost estimate, the original grant amount is insufficient to complete all of the desired improvements.

Since the grant application was made in 2015, the project specifics have changed in several ways:

- 1) The base cost of the restroom building has increased. The original budget cost is now sufficient for only a two-stall configuration vs. four.

- 2) A storage building for maintenance use was added to the project, similar to the building installed at Marsh Park. Secured storage is essential for efficient operations and to reduce vandalism and theft of equipment.
- 3) A low retaining wall is required to stabilize the slope behind the buildings and expanded parking area.
- 4) The water meter service requires an upgrade.
- 5) ADA parking and access changes had a greater footprint than anticipated, therefore the parking lot requires more reconfiguration, plus relocation of plants, a larger area of paving work, and the addition of concrete curb, ramps, and sidewalk for the accessible path of travel.
- 6) The original estimate underestimated the cost of general construction work, such as site clearing, salvaging materials, trenching, temporary fencing, SWPPP measures, and the coordination of subcontractors.
- 7) Difficulty encountered during the consultant selection process extended the project by several months, increasing costs generally. Geotechnical studies were not anticipated.

Consideration: The augmentation request to Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy would be for \$350,000 of Proposition 84 funds for a total grant amount, if approved, of \$750,000.

Fiscal Impact: The project would need to be substantially reduced if additional funding is not secured. It is likely that only a single-user restroom could be built, but ADA improvements cannot be reduced and some amount of retaining wall would still be required. There are other potential funding sources, such as Los Angeles County Measure A, but those funds may not be available for over a year.

If awarded, the funding would be included in the fiscal year 17/18 budget. No significant change to maintenance costs is expected because the increased restroom cleaning work will be offset by more convenient storage, less erosion after storms, and better accommodations for the parks high amount of visitors.