



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: February 6, 2013

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing the acquisition of APN 2076-017-025 totaling approximately 5.3 acres in Woodland Hills using funds from Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation Assessment District No.2.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the acquisition of APN 2076-017-025 totaling approximately 5.3 acres in Woodland Hills using funds from Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation Assessment District No.2.

Background: The subject 5.3 acre property comprises a landmark hillside and promontory on the north side of Mulholland Drive. Coupled with natural open space on the south side of a pass on Mulholland Drive, there is a significant green belt separating distinct neighborhoods. The property occupies important viewshed along the Mulholland Drive Scenic Parkway.

This green belt pass also comprises the only unbroken habitat linkage that still connects Woodland Hills open space located west of Topanga Canyon Boulevard to the core habitat of the Santa Monica Mountains. The MRCA owns properties purchased with Assessment District funds in both the Cerrillos and San Sebastian hill systems. The subject property supports chamisal chaparral, walnut woodland, and annual grassland. The size of the property is enhanced by 1.5 acres of City of Los Angeles-owned natural open space that falls within the fee simple Mulholland Drive right-of-way.

The property includes a well used dirt trail (unpaved Reforma Road) that connects Mulholland Drive to a commanding pad 136 feet higher and then to paved Reforma Road. There currently is, and would so remain, public access to the site from these two entry points. There is ample street parking on a fully separated, dead end section of Mulholland Drive. The pad at the top of the site offers sensational views from Orange County to Los Padres National Forest to the Simi Hills and unique views of the north-facing slopes of the Santa Monica Mountains. The site is a great

neighborhood resource that is accessible to all visitors right off of Mulholland Drive where a park and rules sign would be highly visible. There is also an MTA bus stop located 1,000 feet east of the Mulholland Drive property entrance.

Property passive management should lead to a slow reforestation with California black walnut woodland on the north and east-facing slopes. The brush clearance is more than minimal in square footage but consists of annual grassland and mustard that is one of the easiest fuel types to get a permanent handle on after an initial treatment. The specific benefits of the property make the added maintenance burden acceptable and funding from recently passed Measure MM will cover those costs.

All funding would be from the Assessment District Area F funds and the sale is proposed as a bargain sale. Price and terms are to be discussed in closed session.