



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 1, 2014

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item IV : Consideration of resolution authorizing an application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a grant of Proposition 40 funds to purchase and maintain the Our Malibu Beaches digital application.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt a resolution authorizing an application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a grant of Proposition 40 funds to purchase and maintain the Our Malibu Beaches digital application in the amount of \$60,000.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority manages coastal beach access points along the Malibu Coast through a grant from the California Coastal Conservancy. These access ways to public beaches are often difficult to find, poorly marked, or illegally closed. Rangers routinely take down “No trespassing” signs or “No parking signs” that are illegally posted to keep people out. Even when the public can find the access point, ensuring legal use of the public beach can be confusing.

Our Malibu Beaches is a mobile-app guide to how to find and use the 27 miles of public beaches in Malibu. It includes access way locations, hours, tide info, and legal dos and don'ts, as well as tips for how to recognize inaccurate signs and other barriers to access on the beaches and in the public parking zones. It includes the locations of the hundreds of dry-sand public easements—with property-by-property lists for every beach with dry sand. And it includes e-mail links to public agencies to report and also request attention to barriers to public access.

Escape Apps teamed with writer Jenny Price to create the app, which was released for iPhone in May 2013 and for Android in May 2014. A Spanish version, Nuestros Playas de Malibu, will be released soon. The app builds on earlier guides by the California Coastal Commission and LA Urban Rangers to offer a highly portable and comprehensive guide. It allows people to enjoy and feel comfortable on beaches that are some of Los Angeles' most significant public spaces but that also have long been exceptionally hard to find and use.

Our Malibu Beaches iOS:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/our-malibu-beaches/id565636167?mt=8>

Our Malibu Beaches Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.escapeapps.knowwhat.app.la.yourmalibubeaches>

The apps are currently owned by Escape Apps LLC. Control of Escape Apps and all its assets will change hands to a group of investors who have backed the company thus far. While Escape Apps's custodianship of Our Malibu Beaches has been in line with the greater public interest, upon transfer to the private investment group, Escape Apps and Ms. Price will no longer have input into the management of the app and there will be no guarantee that it will remain available to the public or maintained effectively. It is critical that ownership of the app be transferred to a public entity to ensure that it continues as an interpretive tool for public access to public space.

The app has been downloaded over 40,000 times. Data also suggest that people outside of Malibu—mostly in the U.S. but also abroad—are exploring the app in significant numbers. These data, the e-mails received by the owners, and media coverage all suggest that the app has become a useful tool to advocate for open public access to public lands in Malibu and beyond. By purchasing the app, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority can ensure that it remains free and available for the public.

Consideration: The grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is not to exceed \$60,000 from Proposition 40 funds. \$40,000 for purchase of the app and \$20,000 for ongoing updates and maintenance.