



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: April 16, 2015

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VII: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for North East Los Angeles Hilltops and Connectors project planning and design funding.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for North East Los Angeles Hilltops and Connectors project planning and design in an amount not to exceed \$95,000.

Background: The MRCA develops and implements a wide range of projects for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) including through project planning and design grants. To continue this effort to secure and develop land interests and public recreation resources in the Conservancy's jurisdiction, staff is seeking authorization to submit a project planning and design grant application to the Conservancy. This proposed grant application is for the North East Los Angeles Hilltops and Connectors project.

The North East Los Angeles Hilltops and Connectors project recognizes the watershed, airshed, viewshed, habitat, and recreational values of the remaining natural lands and drainage ways in the northeastern Los Angeles hilltop area. These natural areas provide close in trail access to a wide range of densely populated communities, and they are positioned to absorb air pollution and green houses gases in high concentration areas. All of these areas are within the upper Los Angeles River watershed.

Positioned just south of the San Rafael hills and just east of the Santa Monica Mountains and the Los Angeles River, the hilltops have shown remarkable biodiversity in the past two years. One goal of this project is to facilitate the acquisition of land to maintain wildlife corridors between the individual hilltop systems and corridors to the larger surrounding natural areas. This is a difficult but worthy challenge.

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A map of the proposed grant area boundary is attached. It covers an area from the south side of the 134 freeway southward to Montecito Heights and Ascot Park. Given the range of existing and projected funding sources for capital projects over the next two years, it is prudent to conduct immediate parcel level focused project planning and design work in this proposed grant area. Much of this work would be for pre-acquisition efforts to acquire large parcel assemblages such as Paradise Hill and Walnut Canyon.