




MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: June 3, 2015

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XI: Consideration of resolution a comment letter to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy on the Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Program Guidelines.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a comment letter to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy on the Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Program Guidelines.

Background: The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy released draft Competitive Grant Program Guidelines for Proposition 1 funding on May 14, 2015. Written comments are due on June 22, 2015. Staff have not yet completed a review of the guidelines and a draft letter has not yet been prepared. Based on an initial review, staff proposes to comment on the following items, at a minimum:

General

- The ineligibility of costs related to “visitor-serving amenities, accessibility, and public safety improvements” will eliminate many opportunities. This restriction ensures that no park project can be completed solely with Proposition 1 funding, yet adequate matching funds cannot always be obtained. Small community-based organizations would be at a particular disadvantage if this restriction remained due to their limited resources. This requirement will surely slow down implementation of projects, as they will not be allowed to proceed without first securing other funding.

- The requirement to reach a minimum score puts smaller-scale projects at a disadvantage because they cannot accumulate as many points. Community-based organizations would be put at a disadvantage as they typically do more small-scale and local projects, and opportunities to make incremental improvements to parks would be missed. Alternatively, a lower threshold could apply to smaller projects, or a dedicated program for smaller projects could be created so that they are not competing with large projects.

Urban Creeks Funding

- The requirement that all projects must use renewable or non-potable sources of water for irrigation will eliminate many opportunities. Municipal water providers do not provide recycled water lines to all locations, and not all sites are capable of collecting sufficient rainwater for adequate plant establishment. This requirement also puts smaller projects at a disadvantage because project budgets will not be large enough to add this component.

Staff are continuing to analyze the guidelines and will present any additional information at the meeting.

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