



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: November 4, 2015

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XI: Consideration of resolution authorizing (a) acceptance of funding from the City of Los Angeles and (b) awarding a grant for the benefit of the Laurel Canyon Association for the acquisition of APN 5562-006-020 an approximately 17 acre open space property in the City of Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) authorize (a) acceptance of funding from the City of Los Angeles and (b) awarding a grant for the benefit of the Laurel Canyon Association for the acquisition of APN 5562-006-020 an approximately 17 acre open space property in the City of Los Angeles.

Background: MRCA staff was recently approached by the Laurel Canyon Association (LCA), along with the Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife (CLAW) and the Laurel Canyon Land Trust regarding the acquisition of an approximately 17 acre hilltop open space property in the Laurel Canyon neighborhood. The property in question is an unimproved area that serves as vital habitat for local wildlife and ensures that the existing wildlife corridors will remain intact.

Representatives of the LCA have reached an agreement with the property owner to purchase the land if the total amount of the purchase price can be raised by November 2016. The community groups are currently conducting a wide ranging campaign to raise the funds necessary for the transaction from both private and public sources.

To date, they have raised more than enough funds to make the initial down payment of \$48,000 and have begun efforts to raise the remaining funds. The City of Los Angeles, through the office of Councilmember David Ryu, has pledged \$15,000 toward the total purchase price. In turn, since the community groups intend to transfer title of the property to the MRCA, Councilmember Ryu's office requested that the MRCA be the recipient of the \$15,000 pledge for the benefit of LCA for the purchase of the property for a total of \$1.6 million.

If this resolution is approved, MRCA staff and the LA City Attorney's office will negotiate the terms of the transfer of the \$15,000 and the MRCA will work with LCA,

CLAW, and the Land Trust to minimize the associated risk and ensure that these public funds are applied directly toward the purchase price.

The intent of the parties is that the MRCA will eventually take title to the property and manage it as MRCA parkland, potentially subject to an open space or conservation easement to be held by LCA or one of its partners. Staff will continue to work with LCA, CLAW, and the Land Trust to determine the most effective manner for completing the transfer subject to formal approval by the Governing Board.