



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: August 3, 2016

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XVI: Consideration of resolution adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Pacoima Wash Bikeway Project.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution to adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Pacoima Wash Bikeway Project.

Background: The proposed 3.25 mile Pacoima Wash Bikeway (Bikeway) will run along the banks of Pacoima Wash as one component of a future regional recreational greenway. The Class I Bikeway will be located within some of the most densely populated areas of the San Fernando Valley, along the eastern edge of the City of San Fernando and the Pacoima area of the City of Los Angeles. The Bikeway will connect these communities to the Angeles National Forest providing opportunities for experiencing the natural forest of the foothills, and is a recommended project in the City of Los Angeles' Bicycle Master Plan and the County of Los Angeles' (March 2012) Bike Master Plan. Additionally, the bikeway route will connect visitors to current and future urban parklands including MRCA's Pacoima Wash Natural Park and El Dorado Park (in planning).

The proposed bikeway would include several design features including a 12 foot wide paved bikeway, several new crossings of the wash, fencing along the channel, increased access points, mileage markers, interpretive signage where appropriate, solar powered lighting, pedestrian amenities such as seating, trash receptacles, and water fountains, erosion control measures, and native landscape plantings.

The proposed project was included in the 2013 Federal State Transportation Improvement Program. Because it is funded in part with federal funding in the form of local assistance funds, the proposed project is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as well as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Because the proposed project is a bikeway, it is eligible for a Categorical Exclusion (CE) under NEPA pursuant to 23 CFR 771, activity (c)(3)-bicycle and

pedestrian lanes, paths, facilities. A CE with supporting studies is being prepared by Caltrans.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code §21000 *et seq.*) and the CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, California Code of Regulations §15000 *et seq.*), a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for the Pacoima Wash Bikeway project. The MND evaluated the potential environmental impacts associated with project implementation and identified the mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid the project's significant adverse impacts on the environment. The following environmental factors would be potentially affected by this project: Biological Resources, Hydrology/Water Quality, and Transportation/Traffic. The determination reached on the basis of the initial evaluation finds that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. These mitigation measures are fully described in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and reflect standard practices for this type of project.

Section 15367 of the State CEQA Guidelines defines the Lead Agency as the public agency with the primary responsibility for carrying out or approving a project. The City of San Fernando will be responsible for the subsequent implementation of the Pacoima Wash Bikeway improvements, and therefore, is serving as the Lead Agency for the project. As the Lead Agency, the City of San Fernando is responsible for completing the environmental review process, as required under CEQA and the CEQA guidelines, and has authorized the preparation of the MND document.

The public review period for the MND was from June 3, 2016 to July 6, 2016. Four (4) written letters were received during the public review and comment period, and none after. The commenting parties are listed in the "Responses to Public Comments" document.

Written responses were prepared to address each environmental concern raised, and the "Responses to Public Comments" has become part of the final MND along with the Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Plan. Any changes to any of these documents made at the August 3, 2016 meeting shall also become part of the final MND with no further action required of the Governing Board. Once the MND is adopted by the Governing Board, the Governing Board must approve the project, and the final step is to file a Notice of Determination which shall be filed with the State Clearinghouse and Los Angeles County Clerk.