



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: July 26, 2017

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XI: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to provide Proposition 1 funding for the acquisition of a multipurpose easement over a 3.22 acre portion of APN 5442-002-823, owned by the City of Los Angeles, located adjacent to the Los Angeles River in Glassell Park, and for project planning and design of public access improvements on the property.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to provide Proposition 1 funding for the acquisition of a multipurpose easement over a 3.22 acre portion of APN 5442-002-823, owned by the City of Los Angeles, located adjacent to the Los Angeles River in Glassell Park, and for project planning and design of public access improvements at the Los Angeles River Taylor Yard G-2 property.

Background: The Taylor Yard G-2 site is a critical site for restoration of the Los Angeles River watershed, and was acquired by the City of Los Angeles in March 2017. The 42-acre site includes nearly one-mile of river frontage along the soft-bottom portion of the River. This large site has the potential to treat regional stormwater flows and therefore can impact the long-term water quality of the River. Its proximity to existing open space, recreational resources, and interpretive resources, including Rio de Los Angeles State Park, Elysian Park, riparian habitat in the river itself, numerous parks along the opposite bank of the River, and Los Angeles River High School, means that G-2 is a singularly unique opportunity to create a regional multiple-benefit park, enhance habitat connectivity, provide recreation and interpretation, improve the water quality of the Los Angeles River watershed, and promote access to the Los Angeles River.

Earlier this month the State of California finally appropriated Proposition 1's Urban Creeks funding to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Although the Conservancy has not yet issued grant guidelines, the G-2 project is expected to be a very competitive application. Staff is asking for authorization at this time so that the

project is ready to be submitted with the first round of applications.

The MRCA is currently negotiating the purchase of an approximately 9.28 acre easement at the G-2 site in order to develop public access and habitat restoration improvements. The subject grant would fund acquisition of an additional area, up to approximately 3.22 acres, from the City of Los Angeles. Further, the subject grant will be used for project planning and design for both permanent and interim improvements within the easement, primarily for public access elements. Aspects of the subject project that make it a good candidate for Urban Creeks funding are its location directly adjacent to the main channel of the river; the ability to create multiple benefits including recreation, water quality enhancements, native habitat, and interpretation; and the location within a disadvantaged neighborhood as defined by the CalEnviroScreen mapping tool. Furthermore, improvements can be made to the site without displacing any entrenched uses.

Consideration: A purchase price for the subject acquisition has not yet been determined. The grant application will also include funding for project planning and design of public access improvements. As noted above, staff is requesting early authorization, before a final amount can be determined, so that no delays are experienced once the Conservancy opens a grant round.

Fiscal Impact: The subject grant will need to be added to the MRCA's fiscal year 2017-18 budget. There is no impact on the general fund.