



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90065
Phone (323) 221-9944

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: September 6, 2017

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item X: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant augmentation request to the Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy for SMM-84-1531, Wilacre Park improvements.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a request to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a grant augmentation to SMM-84-1531 for Wilacre Park improvements in the amount of \$300,000.

Background: Located in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains on Laurel Canyon Boulevard, the 128-acre Wilacre Park provides access to the Betty B. Dearing Trail and the Cross Mountain Park Trail system to Fryman Canyon Park, Coldwater Canyon Park, and Franklin Canyon Park. Because of this extensive access and convenient location, Wilacre Park is a popular hiking location, and the high amount of use strains the parking and amenities. Improvements planned for the site include a permanent restroom, storage building, parking lot work, and new visitor amenities.

In April 2015 the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy authorized a grant to MRCA to plan, design, permit, and implement improvements to Wilacre Park. An augmentation request was approved in May 2017 for additional scope of work and cost increases. Staff have been working since that time to finalize plans for the construction phase and coordinate various aspects of the project. It was determined that a full closure of the park's trails and parking lots would be necessary during construction. The closure will help to keep both the public and the construction crews safer, and the trail closure is intended to deter parking in the surrounding neighborhoods by trail users.

The temporary closure of the park results in new costs, and new opportunities, that had not previously been anticipated. New costs for the closure include rental of temporary fencing to secure multiple entrances to the park, additional staff time needed to manage the closure logistics, a public information campaign about the closure details, significant additional staff time needed to respond to public inquiries

and distribute information, and services from a private security company to help with the initial days of closure. New opportunities include the ability to rehabilitate larger portions of the park's trails, build permanent erosion control measures for sloped areas, install low-water use irrigation for new plantings, remove large tree limbs that died during the drought, add short runs of fencing for resource protection, and perform other tasks that are difficult to do while visitors are enjoying the park. All of the work will need to be performed in an expedited manner to take full advantage of the four-month closure.

Consideration: The augmentation request to Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy would be for \$300,000.

Fiscal Impact: If additional funding is not secured, the added rehabilitation work will need to be eliminated from the project. The opportunity to perform these tasks while the park is temporarily closed is not likely to occur again. If awarded, the funding would need to be added to the fiscal year 17/18 budget. The trail improvements and ancillary work are expected to decrease annual maintenance costs.