



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: September 6, 2017

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XII: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 1 funds for Los Angeles River Community Access planning.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 1 funds for Los Angeles River Community Access planning in the amount of \$50,000.

Background: Earlier this summer the State of California finally appropriated Proposition 1's Urban Creeks funding to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The Conservancy is expected to issue grant guidelines and begin awarding grants in September. The subject grant application would propose a new planning effort, to focus solely on identifying and shaping potential Proposition 1 projects for the Los Angeles River.

Since the Proposition was passed in 2014, the amount of development activity in certain portions of the River has greatly increased, as has the awareness of potential negative impacts. Typical developments can have negative effects as property values increase, such as displacement of residents. Park planning in Los Angeles today must address these potential effects and engage a wider range of stakeholders in order to be successful. While broad guidelines exist to guide the analysis of benefits and burdens of a potential development project, it is not clear that these metrics are always applicable to the creation of parks and open space. Lack of park space is an equity issue for many communities, and the impacts of access to new parkland must go beyond objective measures of property value and unemployment. There are also widely accepted approaches to mitigate negative social impacts of a development projects, but again it is not clear that these solutions are always applicable to the creation of parks and open space. The positive impact to public health of more green space must also be taken into account.

The delay between passage of Proposition 1 and budget authority for the Conservancy's Los Angeles River funding has meant that potential projects may have been on hold for several years. The proponents of these potential projects may not yet have incorporated analysis of the social impacts, or incorporated appropriate mitigation. The subject grant is a proactive way to clarify and articulate how social impacts should be analyzed for parkland projects. These issues need to be addressed with specific attention to the type of projects funded by Proposition 1.

The activities proposed include hosting a forum for discussion of these issues with a wide range of community representatives, developing a white paper that describes best practices, and consultation with advocates for public health, housing and transportation, and environmental justice issues to identify innovative solutions for park and open space projects.

Consideration: The grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is for \$50,000 of Proposition 1 funds.

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.