



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: May 2, 2018

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 1 funds for Elysian Valley Gateway Park capital improvements, City of Los Angeles.**

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 capital improvements at Elysian Valley Gateway Park in an amount between \$500,000 - \$850,000.

Background: Located in Elysian Valley at the terminus of Knox Avenue, Elysian Valley Gateway Park was the MRCA's first Los Angeles River park, constructed in 1995 on a dilapidated residential parcel. Since the park's opening, much has changed at the River, including the formalization of the maintenance road into a bike path, other River parks, and recreational activities in the river's water. Land uses in the neighborhood have trended away from industrial and manufacturing to residential.

Elysian Valley Gateway Park was a clear catalyst for other park and recreational projects on the river, but after twenty-three years is in need of rehabilitation and updates. The park's original design consisted primarily of native trees and large areas of turf grass, with a chain-link fence providing a barrier along the River's edge. The fence was seen as a desirable park feature at the time, but today creates a barrier that separates the park away from positive river uses. The existing irrigation system is not as efficient as today's standards, and there is not an accessible pathway between the street level and the bike path.

The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1) allocated funding to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for projects to protect and enhance an urban creek (Water Code Section 79735(a)). The next regular grant application round for these funds ends in May 2018 and staff recommends submitting an application at this time. The site is a good candidate to score highly in the Proposition 1 program, due to its proximity to the river and the

potential for enhanced habitat connectivity, water quality improvements, more recreational and interpretation resources for the public, and promotion of access to the Los Angeles River. This property also has the potential to treat neighborhood stormwater flows and therefore could positively affect water quality in the River.

Two public workshops were conducted in 2017 to get input from the community about a park rehabilitation. MRCA then retained a local firm, Withers and Sandgren Landscape Architecture, to create renovation concepts that incorporated the public input, today's accessibility standards, ideas for stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), augmented native landscape planting, and typical park amenities such as seating and interpretive elements. The existing healthy native trees, planted by MRCA as part of the park's original development, will be augmented by additional trees to provide shade and native landscaping. These capital improvements will enhance the utility and safety of the existing facilities and will contribute to a more enjoyable user experience.

The Proposition 1 grant request will fund the full project planning, design and engineering, and implementation of improvements at the site. Work will be accomplished by a combination of MRCA staff, professional consultants, and subcontractors. A final budget for the renovation has not yet been determined, but is expected to be in the range of \$500,000 to \$850,000, depending on the complexity of stormwater BMPs.

Consideration: The grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy will be between \$500,000 and \$850,000.

Fiscal Impact: If funding is not secured, implementation of the project will be postponed. If awarded, the subject grant will be included in the MRCA's fiscal year 2018-19 budget. There is no impact on the general fund. The funds would be spent over multiple fiscal years.