



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: June 6, 2018

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item X: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 1 funds for Project Planning and Design for the Sepulveda Basin River Recreation Zone project, 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 Project Planning and Design for the Sepulveda Basin River Recreation Zone project in the amount of \$350,000, City of Los Angeles.

Background: Located in the West San Fernando Valley, the Sepulveda Basin is Federally owned by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). It is situated in the 6<sup>th</sup> Council District represented by Councilwoman Nury Martinez. The Sepulveda Basin provides many uses and amenities, including City of Los Angeles active recreational parks, a water treatment plant, open space habitat with trails and creeks, the River Recreation Zone, and a dam which impounds flood waters within the basin during storms. A future non-motorized bike path is being planned by the City of Los Angeles along the Los Angeles River through the Sepulveda Basin to close a gap in the San Fernando Valley Bikeway and establish connectivity along all 51 miles of the River.

Since the launch of the Los Angeles River Recreation Zone pilot program in 2012, the public has been invited to kayak, walk and fish in a stretch of the River within Sepulveda Basin. In 2014, the MRCA entered into a lease with USACE to formally establish the Sepulveda Basin River Recreation Zone (RRZ), with MRCA Rangers regulating usage and promoting public safety.

During the six years that the RRZ has been in effect, thousands of visitors have experienced the Los Angeles River in a way that changed perceptions and provided a fundamentally positive experience. MRCA staff, and concession kayak vendors, have led countless kayak trips with very minimal amenities available or improvements made to date to enhance access and experiences within the RRZ.

As the RRZ has become a fixture within Sepulveda Basin, it is now necessary to conduct pre-improvement planning to identify improvements that will enhance access.

Capital improvements that should be studied include ADA launch points, signage, restrooms, rest areas and overlooks, various user amenities, security enhancements, restoration planting, and connectivity to the future bike path so that visitors can bike or walk to the RRZ. Additionally, this project would continue the planning and development effort to improve the water quality within the River, which is negatively impacted by lack of restrooms, fishing activities, homeless encampments, and nearby outfalls without Best Management Practices (BMPs). The presence of year-round water makes the Sepulveda Basin a unique opportunity along the main stem of the River.

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 is in June 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. Outfall locations within the basin into the RRZ also have the potential to treat stormwater flows and therefore could positively affect water quality in the River.

The Proposition 1 grant request will fund pre-improvement planning for capital improvements that would enhance public access into the RRZ, identify strategic locations within the basin for water quality interventions, aid in connectivity between the RRZ and future bike path, and plan for new amenities such as restrooms.

Consideration: The grant application will be for \$350,000 for pre-improvement planning of capital improvements that will enhance public access and water quality within the Sepulveda Basin River Recreation Zone.

Fiscal Impact: If funding is not secured, the project would 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.