



# 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: October 3, 2018

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item VII(j): Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 68 funds for Elephant Hill Open Space 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 68 funds for Elephant Hill Open Space project, City of Los Angeles, in the amount of up to \$1,500,000.

Background: Elephant Hill is an island of habitat in the northeast Los Angeles hills which has been proposed for residential development multiple times over the years. In 2009, the City acquired 20-acres as part of a legal settlement with a would-be developer. The MRCA was previously awarded funding from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) to acquire five of the twenty-acres from the City due to the fact that the funding source used by the City to pay for the settlement prohibits public access. Therefore, MRCA ownership was required before park improvements could be constructed. The MRCA has since identified other funding sources, including this Proposition 68 funding from the Conservancy for additional acquisition and public access improvements at Elephant Hill.

Community support for preservation of Elephant Hill has been the driving force behind acquisition and public access improvement efforts. A coalition of over 60 community leaders representing diverse organizations hopes to see the area preserved as open space and opened to the public as soon as possible. MRCA recently applied for \$700,000 in Proposition A funding from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District's first Supervisorial District excess funding. While this is enough to do some acquisition and trail work, it is not a sufficient amount to accomplish all the acquisition needed and to implement the full trail that is planned. The subject acquisition and improvement grant would be in an amount of up to \$1,500,000 to help MRCA staff to fulfill the community's desires and continue to protect Elephant Hill and provide much needed and desired public access.

Since the Elephant Hill area has a complex ownership pattern (mostly comprised of small, privately-owned parcels) staff has identified and prioritized the acquisition of numerous parcels from many different land owners. If acquired, these parcels will both facilitate the construction of a trail and implement a larger plan for Elephant Hill preservation. Attached is a map of the Elephant Hill Open Space that illustrates proposed future trail alignments and parcels which are currently privately-owned and have been identified for acquisition.

Consideration: The proposed action would authorize a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 68 funds in an amount not to exceed \$1,500,000.

Fiscal Impact: If the grant is awarded, funding for the acquisition and trail improvements will be paid for with a combination of a Conservancy and Proposition A grants. Staff time, Professional Consultant, and Contractor costs for planning and development will be paid for in the same way. Future annual maintenance cost has not been estimated.