



## MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens  
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### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: March 6, 2019

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XI: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for grant funds for capital improvements to the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, 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 grant funds for capital improvements to the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, City of Los Angeles.

Background: Since opening in March 2000, the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens (River Center) has proved to be an extremely popular location for a variety of activities ranging from Los Angeles River educational programs, public and private special events, and non-profit and community meetings. The River Center has established itself as a hub for activism related to river revitalization, water resources, community service, outdoor equity, and sustainable development—all of these issues correlate with the MRCA's mission to preserve and manage local open space and parkland, watershed lands, trails, and wildlife habitat. The meeting rooms and grounds are frequently used by community groups, elected officials, and many government agencies for public meetings and trainings. The River Center's central location, ample parking, and attractive grounds makes it an ideal, non-intimidating venue for members of the public who may be participating in a public process for the first time.

The River Center is a well-utilized venue that needs facility upgrades to keep up with public use demand, extend the lifespan of the facilities, and improve access for a wide range of visitor abilities. Restrooms, parking, and the paths of travel between these elements and public meeting rooms require significant renovations to meet current standards. Previous work at the River Center suggests that remodeling will be complex, costly, and could trigger structural remediation and utility upgrades. The facility's electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems tend to have been built in a

piecemeal fashion, making them difficult to partially upgrade. Many of the facility's architectural components, such as doors and windows, are unusual shapes/sizes and cannot be substituted without significant custom construction. Most, if not all, of the restrooms may require structural changes to accommodate a new approach and doorway locations.

Staff are still evaluating the facility's needs to determine priorities and develop a scope of work for the grant application. It is expected that the amount requested will be within the range of \$500,000 to \$1,500,000. Staff are also in the process of evaluating whether the proposed project is better suited for the Conservancy's Proposition 1 or Proposition 68 funds.

Consideration: The grant budget is still being developed by staff, but it is expected that the application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy will be within the range of \$500,000-\$1,500,000.

Fiscal Impact: The subject grant was not included in the fiscal year 18/19 budget and will need to be added (if awarded). Without the subject grant, the improvements would not be able to move forward. Completion of the improvements will make the MRCA's facilities more attractive for public meetings and special events. The subject grant will not result in any new maintenance obligations. A capital investment in these improvements will extend their useful life span and is expected to reduce MRCA's maintenance costs over the long term.