



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: September 4, 2019

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(k): Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant augmentation 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 augmentation to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 1 funds for Los Angeles River Community Access planning in the amount of \$25,000.

Background: In the summer of 2017, the State of California appropriated Proposition 1's Urban Creeks funding to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The Conservancy awarded a grant to the MRCA in September of 2017 to 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 augmentation to the original grant is a proactive way to continue 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 original subject grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy in the amount of \$50,000 was used to support the MRCA's and the Conservancy's involvement with the LA Regional Open Space and Affordable Housing Collaborative (LA ROSAH). The efforts undertaken and funded through this grant include hosting a forum for discussion of issues around displacement from public investment, engaging a wide range of open space and housing representatives from the community, the development of a white paper that describes best practices, and consultation with advocates for public health, housing and transportation, and environmental justice issues to help identify innovative solutions for park and open space projects. The subject grant augmentation will serve to continue these efforts and highlight strategies to collaboratively combat homelessness and displacement in areas receiving public investment. This will include an event this fall with stakeholders and advocates interested in the work LA ROSAH has conducted in the last two years. The augmentation will also support the next steps for developing pre-improvement and pre-acquisition planning for future joint development projects with LA ROSAH members.

Consideration: The grant augmentation to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is for \$25,000, bringing the total grant amount to \$75,000 of Proposition 1 funds.