



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: October 2, 2019

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(d): Consideration of resolution authorizing signing a Letter of Intent with relevant public agencies to develop a Los Angeles River Park Partnership that unifies planning efforts throughout the 100 acres of public open space at Taylor Yard, City of Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing signing of a Letter of Intent with relevant public agencies to develop a Los Angeles River Park Partnership that unifies planning efforts throughout the 100 acres of public open space at Taylor Yard.

Background: Located in the Glassell Park neighborhood along the Los Angeles River, Taylor Yard is a 100-acre open space area comprised of three regionally-significant parks:

Rio de Los Angeles State Park (RdLA), an existing 40-acre State Recreation Area owned by California State Parks (CDPR) and managed cooperatively by CDPR and the City of Los Angeles (City) through its Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP);

The G1 Parcel (also known as the "Bowtie" parcel for its distinctive boundary shape), an 18-acre property owned and managed by CDPR; and

The G2 Parcel, a 42-acre property owned in fee by the City. MRCA owns a 12.5-acre multipurpose easement over a portion of the City's Taylor Yard G2 parcel.

The G2 parcel is located in the heart of Taylor Yard, adjacent to and connecting G1 and RdLA. MRCA's easement ensures those 12.5 acres will be public open space in perpetuity, with a goal of facilitating public recreational access, habitat restoration, and environmental remediation throughout the easement. As part of the easement acquisition, MRCA and City executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that

outlines roles and responsibilities, including a shared desire to work together on planning and development of the Taylor Yard G2 parcel.

CDPR and City are both currently in the process of planning for future improvements on their respective G1 and G2 parcels. In order to plan public use of the site, the City has included the MRCA in project planning meetings to develop a series of design alternatives that range from early activation to long-term improvements and include environmental remediation.

During the course of project planning meetings, a desire for unified planning throughout the entire 100-acres has been identified, most notably along the frontage abutting the Los Angeles River. Analysis has shown that it would be most beneficial for environmental remediation and habitat restoration projects, including river channel and bank modifications, if these activities were performed collectively across the G1 and G2 parcels. Meanwhile it is also known that recreational planning for G1 and G2 should be coordinated with RdLA, even though an active rail line separates RdLA from the other two parks.

The major landowners at Taylor Yard (CDPR, City, and MRCA) began to meet in 2019 to identify common goals and develop a framework to work together in unified project planning. There is a desire among the three agencies to cooperate to create a unified open space at Taylor Yard. The agencies recognize the significant mutual public benefits to be realized by cooperating on the design, construction, financing, operation, maintenance and management of the project. This is the basis for the proposed Los Angeles River Park Partnership.

The attached non-binding Letter of Intent identifies the shared goals and future steps to begin unified planning for Taylor Yard. Each of the relevant public agencies will be considering it for approval within the next 1-2 months. The next step is to develop a cooperative agreement within the next year, which would define a collaborative approach to remediation, design, construction, financing, operation, and management of the project. The subject Letter of Intent is not a financial commitment to future expenditures and does not create any obligations, legal or otherwise, between the entities that do not already exist.

Fiscal Impact: If approved, there will be no immediate impact to the MRCA's fiscal year 2019-20 budget, as the Letter of Intent does not create any immediate financial obligations. Staff will continue to use existing project planning and design grants for labor and project expenses already included in the fiscal year 2019-20 budget. Once

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a cooperative agreement is developed that outlines financial responsibilities, staff will provide an update that would describe any impacts to future budget years. There is no impact on the general fund.