



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: December 02, 2020

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing acceptance of a public coastal access easement over Los Angeles County Assessor Parcel No. 4460-009-016 (PNRW LLC), Malibu, California.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing acceptance of a donation of a public coastal access easement over Los Angeles County Assessor Parcel No. 4460-009-016 along the Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, at Escondido Beach.

Background: The beaches in western Malibu are the closest beaches for many of the 20 million residents of the greater Los Angeles Metropolitan Area and, importantly, for a large range of underserved communities that often have inadequate access to public spaces in the San Fernando Valley and elsewhere.

Of these Malibu beaches, Escondido Beach is unusually wide and especially lovely. Escondido Beach is one of the few beaches that generally remains uncovered at high tide, open and safe for visitors to enjoy throughout the day. Its close proximity to the hiking trails across the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH)-and to the especially popular Escondido Canyon waterfalls-also makes Escondido a wonderful "mountains to ocean" destination.

The proposed coastal access easement dedication over the subject parcel (Los Angeles County APN 4460-009-016) would provide safe pedestrian access to Escondido Beach from the north side of the PCH for both beachgoers who park along this section of the PCH as well as hikers coming from or going to Escondido Canyon Park.

This dedicated public access easement would formalize the public's historic use of an existing approximately 10-foot earthen path running approximately 130 feet to a CalTrans-managed box culvert under the PCH leading to Escondido Beach. (See Exhibit 1). Directly across from the subject parcel on the south side of the PCH is

a public beach accessway owned and managed by Los Angeles County Beaches and Harbors. Bus stops for the #534 bus route are on the north and south side of the PCH at this intersection, providing direct access to Escondido Beach using local public transit. And the trail linkage via Meadows Court to Escondido Canyon Park and its waterfalls lies only a short walk of approximately 600 feet west from this proposed beach access easement. (See Exhibit 2).

There is no signalized vehicular intersection or safe pedestrian crossing in the vicinity for pedestrians to safely cross the PCH to access Escondido Beach. The nearest PCH pedestrian crosswalk traveling west is located 1.2 miles at Paradise Cove Road, and the next pedestrian crosswalk traveling east is located 1.5 miles at Corral Canyon Road. This proposed easement offers a safe pedestrian coastal accessway underneath the PCH to and from the popular Escondido Beach.

Once accepted, the proposed coastal access easement will remain in substantially its existing or repaired (restored) condition to preserve existing natural conditions and the open space character of the area.

Consideration: The proposed action would authorize MRCA to accept the donation of a public access easement over Los Angeles County Assessor Parcel No. 4460-009-016, facilitating the public's right to access and utilize the CalTrans managed box culvert to safely cross under the Pacific Coast Highway to and from Escondido Beach.

CEQA : Acceptance of this public coastal accessway and any necessary repair to the existing or former pathway are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 15325 because acceptance of the accessway is a transfer of ownership of land to preserve open space; section 15317 because it is an acceptance of an easement in order to maintain the open space character of the area; section 15304 because the project may consist of minor public alterations in the existing coastal access pathway condition which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees; section 15302 because the project may involve the replacement or reconstruction of the existing or former coastal access pathway on the same site with substantially the same purpose; section 15303 because the project may involve new construction of a portion of the pathway accessory to the existing pathway; section 15301 repair, operation, maintenance or minor alteration of existing public or private topographical features involving negligible expansion of existing or former use as described but not limited to subsection (c) for existing pedestrian trails and pedestrian crossings; and section 15311 construction of accessory structures such as on-premise signs and small parking lots accessory to existing institutional facilities of the County public coastal accessway and the Pacific Coast Highway. Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Exemption for this project.