



# 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: December 2, 2020

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(j): Consideration of resolution authorizing the acceptance of fee simple, conservation easement, or deed restriction donations or dedications of various areas within APN 2076-023-019 and entering into any agreements necessary to secure such land interests, Woodland Hills, City of Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the acceptance of fee simple, conservation easement, or deed restriction donations or dedications of various areas within APN 2076-023-019 and entering into any agreements necessary to secure such land interests in Woodland Hills.

Background: For years the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has joined with a coalition of entities attempting to reduce visual and biological impacts of Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 70505 on 6.2 acres in the inner corridor of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway. The subject property abuts the Los Angeles City Department of Water and Power's Girard Reservoir open space. New State housing legislation has made it difficult for cities to shape vesting tract maps such as the subject 19 lot map. A local non-profit called Save Oak Savannah (SOS) has been prominent in this longstanding development battle. SOS, the MRCA, Louisville High School, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy have all appealed both the vesting tract map and Final Environmental Impact Report up to the Los Angeles City Council. The City has to take final action on the proposal by December 9<sup>th</sup>. A much delayed hearing before the Council's Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee is scheduled for December 3<sup>rd</sup> to be followed by a full City Council vote.

It appears that a compromise that will net SOS two of the 19 lots in donation, and an option to purchase a third lot, will be solidified and signed prior to the December 3<sup>rd</sup> hearing. Staff should have some form of update at the Governing Board meeting. That compromise is also expected to include a conservation easement

and/or deed restriction area between the two proposed housing clusters to create a habitat linkage between the broad Mulholland Drive right-of-way and the DWP open space. If such a deal is signed to staff's satisfaction, staff intends to formally drop its appeals of the tract map, FEIR, and Zoning Administrator's determination.

The key role of the MRCA is as follows. The charter of SOS does not allow the holding of land interests. To expedite a settlement, it is best to leave the MRCA out of a signed agreement. However, the written agreement between SOS and the applicant can provide SOS the rights to assign land interests to the MRCA or another non-profit. It is essential for SOS to know that an eligible entity has authorized acceptance of the land interests it has negotiated. That is the principle purpose of this action. Potentially the MRCA would receive a donation of the two most northerly lots and be assigned an option to acquire a third lot. The valuation of the third lot and time period of the option is being negotiated. The MRCA might also be assigned the rights to accept a conservation easement or the rights to enforce open space deed restrictions. No funding would be provided to MRCA.

The potential fee simple open space property is one hundred percent coast live oak woodland with minimal if any under story. The brushing obligation would be minimal because of the lack of under story vegetation. The subject open space area is currently fenced along with the remainder of the 6.2 acres and the DWP open space. The DWP offered a license agreement for a walking trail in its Girard Reservoir property just as the pandemic hit. Because of reduced operational funding to the MRCA from pandemic restrictions, staff has not moved forward with DWP license agreement. The three potential fee simple lots provide a strong complement to the biological and visual resource value of the DWP open space. The conservation easement/deed restriction area provides an irreplaceable habitat linkage for larger mammals to access the DWP open space from City of Los Angeles Alizondo Park open space and open space on the Louisville High School property.