

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: November 4, 2013

From : 
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 13: Consideration of resolution authorizing a matching grant of Proposition 84 funds to the City of Santa Clarita for acquisition of Valley Vista project, approximately 232 acres (former Las Lomas project) in the Newhall Pass wildlife habitat linkage, APN's 2827-030-011, -012, -013; 2827-029-008; 2927; Santa Clarita.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy authorize a matching grant of \$650,000 in Proposition 84 funds to the City of Santa Clarita for acquisition of 232 acres, Valley Vista project area (former Las Lomas project), APN(s) 2827-030-011, -012, -013; 2827-029-008; 2827-031-002, and -007), unincorporated Santa Clarita area.

Legislative Authority: Section 33204(c) of the Public Resources Code states that the Conservancy may

Award grants to state agencies, cities, counties, resource conservation districts, and park and recreation districts for the purpose of acquiring sites identified as necessary for park, recreation, or conservation purposes and for development of essential related public facilities.

Background: The Conservancy and the City of Santa Clarita have for many years cooperated and identified the Newhall Pass area for potential acquisition and preservation, including the subject highly visible wedge of land lying between the Golden State Freeway (I-5) and the Antelope Valley Freeway (Highway 14). This area is a key linkage in the essential intermountain wildlife habitat linkage, or "corridor," and is of state-wide importance. A massive 5000-unit development project called Las Lomas had been proposed for the site and adjacent properties but that development stalled and the land since became available for acquisition from willing sellers. The Conservancy provided extensive comments during the environmental review period for the Las Lomas development, emphasizing the area's environmental significance.

The City of Santa Clarita has been working for several years with the Trust for Public Land to secure this and an adjacent property. Funding is proposed from the City's own open space funds (\$1.54 million), the state Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), County of Los Angeles Proposition A funds (see related agenda item 10 (d)), and this request for a grant of

Agenda Item 13
November 4, 2013
Page 2

Proposition 84/Los Angeles River Watershed funds from the Conservancy. The property is within the Los Angeles River Watershed. A Santa Clarita Conservation Corridor Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) was prepared for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and WCB, and the Valley Vista project has been prioritized for acquisition. The area was evaluated and included in the Conservancy's 2000 Workprogram acquisition priorities.