

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: September 28, 2015

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 13: Consideration of resolution authorizing grant application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for Proposition 50 funding pursuant to Water Code Section 79572(a)(2) and Proposition 84 funding pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)(1) for the acquisition of open space, restoration, and recreational easement rights over the Los Angeles River-adjacent Taylor Yard G-2 Parcel, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing grant application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for Proposition 50 funding pursuant to Water Code Section 79572(a)(2) in the amount of \$20,000,000 and Proposition 84 funding pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)(1) in the amount of \$5,000,000 for the acquisition of open space, restoration, and recreational easement rights over the Los Angeles River-adjacent Taylor Yard G-2 Parcel, Los Angeles.

Legislative Authority: Section 33202 of the Public Resources Code provides:

The conservancy may apply for grants from any source to be used for the purposes of this division

Section 33203.5 of the Public Resources Code provides:

Notwithstanding any other provision of this division, the conservancy may acquire and improve real property, or any interests therein, anywhere within the zone upon a finding that the action is consistent with the plan.

Background: The Taylor Yard G2 Parcel (G2) is a critical site for restoration of the Los Angeles River watershed, and is a key component of the Army Corps of Engineers' Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. The 42-acre site includes nearly one mile of river frontage along the scenic soft-bottom portion of the river. Its proximity to existing open space and recreational resources, including Río de Los Angeles State Park, the G1 parcel (also known as the "bow tie" parcel) owned by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, riparian habitat in the river itself, and numerous parks along the opposite bank of the river, means that G2 is a singularly unique opportunity to create a regional multiple-benefit park, enhance habitat connectivity, provide recreation and interpretation, improve the water

quality of the Los Angeles River watershed, and promote access to the Los Angeles River.

The State's adopted 2015/2016 budget included the allocation of \$25 million of Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) funds for restoration of riparian habitat and wetlands projects along the Los Angeles River, from Propositions 50 and 84. Those funds include \$20 million in Proposition 84–Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Public Resources Code Section 75055), and \$5 million from Proposition 50–California Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002 (Water Code Section 79572).

The City of Los Angeles is in ongoing negotiations with the property owner to acquire the land, with funding sources that include City Proposition O and the Municipal Improvement Corporation of Los Angeles (MICLA). These funding sources do not require that acquired land provide public access to the river. In order to ensure that the Army Corps' Ecosystem Restoration Project can be achieved on this site, and that public recreational access be provided to the maximum extent feasible, it is proposed that the Conservancy acquire an easement for open space, restoration, and recreational purposes from the City. The extents of the proposed easement will be determined based on the WCB-approved appraised value of the entire parcel.

The fee owner of the G2 parcel is obligated to complete environmental remediation on portions of the site, related to the use of the property for maintenance and fueling of trains from the 1930s to 2006. An easement would not result in that obligation being transferred to the Conservancy.