

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 23, 2016

To: The Governing Board Members

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

Subject: **Agenda Item VII: Consideration of resolution authorizing entering into a contract with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for pre-acquisition and acquisition services.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing entering into a contract with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for pre-acquisition and acquisition services, in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.

Background: The Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority (WCCA) is on cusp of receiving a \$1 million grant from the Los Angeles Regional Park and Open Space District (District) to acquire property located east of Colima Road as specified in 1996 Proposition A Section 3(b)(14). Per the Proposition A guidelines at least 20 percent of the grant amount can be spent on pre-acquisition and acquisition services. The guidelines refer to these costs as Administrative expenses.

WCCA can now proceed with obtaining appraisals and title reports and making offers on property interests. Soon WCCA should hold title to its first property. However both the sum and parts of pre-acquisition and acquisition efforts are staff and expense intensive over considerable periods of time. Most acquisitions take many months and often years to complete. The Proposition A guidelines require appraisals to be not more than six months old when a purchase and sale agreement is signed. Quite often properties require appraisal updates because of this requirement. It is not practical for WCCA to hire staff or private contractors to handle its pre-acquisition and acquisition efforts. The most practical and seamless route is to contract with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for these services.

Since its inception almost twenty years ago, over eighty percent of WCCA's staff costs and all of its staff work have been provided by the staff of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The MRCA planning staff and legal staff handle a continuous stream of acquisitions ranging from processing small deed restrictions to multi-million dollar transactions. The District knows the MRCA well.

The proposed \$200,000 contract with the MRCA would be on a time and materials basis that includes the MRCA's cost allocation percentage on each staff hour worked. It is important to remember that WCCA has an additional \$9 million dollars from the same Section of the 1996 measure. Pre-acquisition ground work under the proposed contract would help pave the way for deals to save additional lands with that \$9 million. To date this is WCCA's only opportunity to appraise property and make offers with a readily available acquisition funding source to back them up. It took several years to convince the 4th Supervisorial District to release the first million dollars. Part of that office's reluctance was the absence of ready to go deals for them to agree to fund. To address that issue going forward, it is imperative to have ample funding available to begin to set up deals for the \$9 million and potentially the over \$18 million of 4th District Proposition A Big Five Specified Excess Funds designated to WCCA. Even if the 4th District green lights a portion of the remaining \$9 million it generally takes over three months until that funding can be accessed to shepherd and complete acquisitions. Good and consistently available staff input and funding for contingencies is critical to complete most acquisitions.

The intial \$10 million from 1996 Proposition A Section 3(b)(14) must be exhausted for WCCA to access the Excess Funds in coordination with 4th Supervisorial District.