

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: April 24, 2017

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 10: Consideration of resolution authorizing acquisition of a multipurpose easement for habitat restoration, environmental remediation, public access, recreation, and open space purposes from the City of Los Angeles over an approximately 12.5 acre portion of APN 5442-002-823, owned by the City of Los Angeles, located adjacent to the Los Angeles River in Glassell Park.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing the acquisition of a multipurpose easement for habitat restoration, environmental remediation, public access, recreation, and open space purposes from the City of Los Angeles over an approximately 12.5 acre portion of apn 5442-002-823, owned by the City of Los Angeles, located adjacent to the Los Angeles River in Glassell Park.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33203 of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The proposed easement will encumber a portion of a property known as “Taylor Yard,” or, the G2 parcel. The property was previously owned by Union Pacific Railroad and was used for railroad-related operations since the 1880s, including maintenance of locomotives, refrigeration cars, rail car storage, rail car switching, and equipment storage.

Acquisition of the property for river restoration purposes has long been an objective of the City of Los Angeles (“City”) and partner agencies and many consider this 41 acre property to be the “crown jewel” in the revitalization of the LA River. Recently, it was featured prominently in the United States Army Corps of Engineers’ Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration (LARER) plan, with the City designated as the local lead agency. After a multi-year effort to acquire the property and several months of negotiations, on March 1, 2017, the City celebrated the formal transfer of title for the property from Union Pacific to the City.

If the Conservancy approves the proposed resolution, it will authorize the acquisition of a multipurpose easement over a 12.5 acre portion of the property, as shown on the attached map. The scope of the easement will include the rights to habitat restoration, environmental remediation, improvements for public access and recreation, and open space preservation.

Additionally, the City and Conservancy intend to enter into an additional agreement or

memorandum of understanding which will outline the two agencies' cooperation for planning, remediation, and improvements to the site on a going forward basis. If the City is able to secure funding to complete the LARER plan, the agreement between the City and Conservancy will allow the easement area to be incorporated into the larger restoration project in a manner that is fully consistent with the terms of the easement and any restrictions imposed by grant funds received by other public agencies. Although the City is responsible for environmental remediation of the entire property up to industrial standards pursuant to a remedial action plan approved by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, the holder of the easement will be responsible for any additional remediation required to allow for the uses allowed under the easement.

Additionally, the proposed resolution and the related action regarding acceptance of funding from the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) will specifically authorize the Conservancy to assign its position and all rights under the easement and the WCB grant agreement to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to carry out the acquisition and complete the required planning and improvements on the easement area.