

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: January 22, 2018

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 14: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 1 funds to North East Trees for water capture and other improvements at the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 1 funds to North East Trees for water capture and other improvements at the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, in the amount of \$450,000.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204.2 of the Public Resources Code; and Section 79735(a) of the Water Code.

Background: Acquired by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) in 1998, the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens (River Center) has been a public parkland and a highly used multi-use venue visited by people from all over the greater Los Angeles area and beyond. Although the River Center has many valuable uses and visitor-serving amenities including restrooms, drinking fountains, bicycle parking, and outdoor recreational areas, it lacks critical water capture or treatment elements which are more important today than ever before. Additionally, facility upgrades to the roof of the MRCA Building are crucial to provide use and extend the life span of the facility so that it can continue to be used and enjoyed by the public.

Through the proposed project, North East Trees proposes to modify the building into a demonstration of sustainable multi-purpose infrastructure with benefits to local water supplies and water quality. Currently, the roof is leaking in multiple locations causing significant damage to the interior and exterior of the structure, and the surrounding landscaping is either non-existent, struggling, or non-native. This project will convert it into a more innovative structure and extend the useful life span of a capital asset. All aspects of the project will be designed to enhance water quality in local area, decrease reliance on water resources, and improve the health of the Los Angeles River watershed. The project will install a new roof, California native shade trees and shrubs, incorporate an educational element, and integrate Best Management Practices (BMPs) for water capture by installing water capture drains that will irrigate the adjacent landscaping and divert water away from local storm drains. These improvements are necessary to the building and surrounding grounds to provide continued safe and enjoyable

public use of the River Center facility and expose more people to the site's interpretive opportunities.

Analysis - General Obligation Bond Law

The General Obligation Bond Law provides that bond funds may be used for the construction and acquisition of "capital assets." Capital assets include major maintenance, reconstruction, demolition for purposes of reconstruction of facilities, and retrofitting work that is ordinarily done no more often than once every 5 to 15 years or expenditures that continue or enhance the useful life of the capital asset (Government Code Section 16727 (a)). Capital assets also includes equipment with an expected useful life of two years or more, and tangible physical property with an expected useful life of 10 to 15 years. Section 16727 (a) also allows bond funds to be used for costs that are incidentally but directly related to construction or acquisition including costs for planning, engineering and other design work.

The activities that North East Trees proposes to fund with this grant constitute planning of a land improvement project to protect land and water resources, protect and restore rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water and other natural resources. Thus, the proposed activities fall within the definition of "capital assets" or are incidentally but directly related to acquisition or construction, and therefore are proper under the General Obligation Bond Law.

Scoring - Competitive Grant Program

Please see the attached Proposition 1 grant application from North East Trees for a detailed project description. Scoring under the Conservancy's Proposition 1 Guidelines results in the project receiving 77 points (out of a possible 94; 66 minimum required), plus 12 out of 18 climate change value points, plus 10 out of 20 possible points under Additional Criteria. **Total points: 99** (out of possible 132).

Consideration: The application from North East Trees is for \$450,000,000 of Proposition 1 funds.