

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: June 24, 2019

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 13: Consideration of resolution authorizing a Proposition 68 grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for safety and accessibility improvements at Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 68 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for safety and accessibility improvements at Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, in the amount of \$1,500,000, Los Angeles.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204.2(a) and 33204.27(a) and Section 80100(a)(1)(A) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has submitted a grant application for safety and accessibility improvements at the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens. The improvements will improve accessibility to the park's primary public meeting spaces, including the Atrium, Los Feliz Room, and administrative offices. Please see the attached Proposition 68 grant application for a detailed description and analysis. The grant request is for \$1,500,000 to improve and upgrade the existing facility in order to create new access to programs, services, and activities for park users of all abilities and to contribute to more enjoyable user experiences. Activities funded by the grant would include pre-improvement planning, design and engineering, and implementation. Community access will be provided by a 5% allowance for the non-profit organization Community Nature Connection to provide programs at the facility. The objective of the improvements is to eliminate barriers to restrooms, paths of travel, parking, doorways, and information/signs.

MRCA's priority for accessibility improvements are those park facilities, such as the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, that frequently host public meetings and accommodate a wide variety of programs. The River Center's buildings and site design were constructed prior to enactment of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. An inventory of the River Center identified the specific features that require capital improvements to provide full accessibility, ranging from minor modifications to complete reconstruction. No major renovations to these specific facilities have occurred that provided funding to upgrade facilities to current accessible standards.

The work described in grant application includes improvements to eliminate architectural barriers to the park's main public meeting spaces, the California Building's Atrium, Los Feliz Room, Sierra Madre Building meeting room, and main courtyard, by upgrading the parking, paths of travel, doorways, and six restrooms that serve these spaces. It is expected that a full remodeling of most restrooms is necessary to meet current codes and standards. The interior finishes for the park's various offices that serve the public will be replaced to improve health and safety for users and extend the useful life of the facility; most of these areas have not been improved since the River Center opened in 1999. All work will be carefully scheduled and staged to prevent any conflicts with the River Center's operations and previously-scheduled uses.

Scoring - Competitive Grant Program

Under the Conservancy's Proposition 68 grant guidelines for Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Projects, this grant request received sufficient scoring under values for Prioritization, Category, Implementation, Climate Change, and Additional Consideration.

Scoring under the Conservancy's Proposition 68 Guidelines results in the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens Visitor Serving Improvements project receiving the following:

Prioritization Value: 18 (out of 21)
Category Value: 52 (out of 70)
Implementation Value: 16 (out of 16)
Climate Change Value: 14 (out of 16)
Additional Criteria: 20 (out of 25)
Matching Funds Weighting: 0%

Total points: 120 (101 minimum required).

Consideration: The application from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority is for \$1,500,000 of Proposition 68 funds.