



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: June 3, 2009

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VII: Consideration of resolution entering into a contract for design services for the Visitor Center project at King Gillette Ranch, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution entering into a contract for design services for the Visitor Center project at King Gillette Ranch, unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Background: As part of the cooperative management of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the MRCA is working with the National Park Service, California State Parks, and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to create a new Interagency Visitor Center. The Visitor Center will be located in the existing 6,900 square-foot stable building at King Gillette Ranch. The stable building was designed in 1928 by Wallace Neff, and constructed of adoblar bricks by Fritz Ruppel under Neff's direction in 1929.

The project partners desire to convert the stable, the adjacent courtyard and associated site area into a new public Visitor Center that will reflect the historic significance of the property and Wallace Neff's architectural design. Adjacent buildings within the visitor center area may be considered for exhibit or education programs functions, including the print shop, nursery area, and White house and garage. The Visitor Center will serve as the main information and interpretive center for the SMMNRA including state park units, national park sites, and conservancy lands. A LEED rating of "Gold" or "Platinum" is desired and the agencies would like to achieve "net zero" energy consumption through use of appropriate energy generation and conservation practices. The visitor center shall be a demonstration of green practices and shall teach visitors, in part, ways they can reduce carbon emissions and achieve greater energy and resource conservation.

On March 25, 2009, the MRCA issued a Request for Proposals for Architecture, Engineering and Exhibit Design Services for the Visitor Center. Proposals were due

April 30, 2009, and MRCA received 46 submissions. Each proposal was reviewed by staff from MRCA, NPS, and State Parks. In addition to evaluating the competence and qualifications of each design team relative to the project, the following items were reviewed per the MRCA's Purchasing and Contracting Procedures, Section 3.3, Professional Services:

- List of names and contact information for clients for which services were performed in the last five years
- Samples of the services performed including the scope and cost
- Disclosure of any actions taken against the professional
- A statement of change order(s) to plans or specifications or projects for which services were provided and the reason for the change order(s)

Interviews with ten (10) design teams were scheduled for May 27-29, 2009. Following the interviews, final selection will be made by the MRCA's Executive Officer, the Superintendent of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, and the Superintendent of the Angeles District of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. At the time of this writing, the interviews had not been held and final selection was not complete. All ten teams under consideration have demonstrated competency and qualifications.

It is desired that the selected design team begin work in early June, so that the project can move forward as quickly as possible. The proposed design fees for the ten interviewed firms range from \$850,000 - \$1,350,000 (not including construction administration services). The estimated fees presented in the proposals were based on the scope of work as presented in the Request for Proposals. These amounts will need to be negotiated as the scope of work becomes more clearly defined through the preliminary design process.

The design contract will be funded by an existing grant from the National Park Service in the amount of \$1,540,000, and if necessary, an existing Proposition 84 grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy in the amount of \$2,040,000. Although the Proposition 84 grant was suspended per the Department of Finance's instructions, recent developments indicate that at least a partial amount will be available for use during FY 09/10. Although approval of the contract by the Governing Board is not required by the MRCA's Purchasing and Contracting Procedures, the amount of the contract warrants the additional review.