



## MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: March 7, 2007

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item V(d): Consideration of resolution authorizing the acquisition of properties in Los Angeles County Chapter 8 Agreement No. 2531 in part, or in whole, using funds from Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation Assessment District No. 1 and authorizing the acceptance of public or private funds for said acquisitions, City of Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the acquisition of properties in Los Angeles County Chapter 8 Agreement No. 2531 in part, or in whole, using funds from Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation Assessment District No. 1 and authorizing the acceptance of public or private funds for said acquisitions.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) commonly enters into Chapter 8 Agreements with Los Angeles County to acquire tax defaulted properties. This process is an essential component of the agency's efforts to increase the amount of protected open space in southern California. The MRCA has acquires over 1,800 acres through this process.

The County Treasurer and Tax Collector has provided an Agreement to sign. Chapter 8 Agreement Number 2531 contains 5 parcels totaling 8.54 acres in the City of Los Angeles. In order for the County Treasurer and Tax Collector to finalize these agreements, the MRCA must provide a resolution authorizing the acquisition of the parcels. Prior to the Executive Officer or his assignee signing the agreement (and before final payment is made) a few parcels can be removed if physical problems with the property are discovered or if funding is not available. The proposed action provides the Treasurer and Tax Collector with the authorization they need to continue processing an agreement.

Four of the five subject parcels are located within Acquisition Area D of Open Space District One. Those four parcels have been deemed consistent with the Final

Engineer's Report by the District One Citizens Oversight Committee. The fifth parcel (APN 2582-002-010) is located in Sylmar in Sombrero Canyon adjacent to a 144-acre open space dedication owned by the MRCA and near the Rim of the Valley Trail.

The table below includes each parcel, its size, general location, and current cost to the MRCA. The cost estimate is projected through April 2006. Unfortunately, the cost of the parcels increases substantially every year as penalties and back taxes increase. That rate of increase is approximately 1.5 percent per month with an additional 18 percent annual fee. A brief description of each parcel, or cluster of parcels, follows along with attached aerial photographs with the parcel boundaries.

**Agreement Number 2531**

<b>APN</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Price</b>
2582-002-010	8.08	N of Hwy 210. Sylmar. Adjacent to Sombrero property	\$27,534
5556-008-025	0.11	W of Crescent Heights Blvd terminus	\$3,539
5565-027-007	0.17	E of Laurel Canyon Blvd. near six MRCA properties.	\$8,480
5567-022-005	0.07	N of Kirkwood Dr., Laurel Cyn.	\$6,495
5567-028-002	0.11	N of Kirkwood Dr., Laurel Cyn.	\$6,560
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8.54</b>		<b>\$52,608</b>

**Sylmar**

APN 2582-002-010 is located between City of Los Angeles-owned Stetson Ranch equestrian park and immediately south of the MRCA's Sombrero Canyon property. An SCE power line and Los Angeles County Watershed Protection Division debris are also shown on the attached figure. The current Rim of the Valley Trail courses along the north side of the 210 Freeway right of way. Although the terrain is extremely steep, if a section of trail alignment is ever desired away from the freeway the subject property could be a critical component. It currently contains the terminus of a trail from Stetson Ranch that probably is an SCE access road. It has low development potential but any non-public use on the property would be a nuisance that would detract from the existing public open space values. Staff is consulting with the 5<sup>th</sup> Supervisorial District staff about using Proposition A Excess Funds to acquire the property. No brushing is required.

### **Laurel Canyon**

Three of the four Area D parcels are located in Laurel Canyon. One parcel is located in a cluster where the MRCA has accumulated a considerable block of land. This area provides important viewshed along the east side of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and is part of a wildlife corridor across Laurel Canyon Boulevard into the westernmost fork of Nichols Canyon. No brushing is required.

Two other Laurel Canyon properties are located in the Kirkwood area just west of the Canyon Country Store where a speculator is attempting to put in a road system from Kirkwood Drive to a point further north on Laurel Canyon Boulevard. Parkland acquisition of these two parcels will reduce the probability of that road and its related development from producing substantial environmental damage. Both parcels contain high quality chaparral. No brushing is required.

### **Sunset Plaza**

APN 5556-008-025 is located north of Sunset Boulevard near the Laurel Canyon watershed divide. It is located in a canyon where no brushing is required near the terminus of Crescent Heights Drive. The subject canyon is part of a habitat linkage that leads to a broad network of open space blocks north of Sunset Boulevard. The parcel supports high quality arborescent chaparral.