



## MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: April 4, 2007

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VIII: Consideration of resolution amending Resolution No. 03-148 to authorize the use of additional funds from the Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation Assessment District No. 1 to acquire APN 2274-018-013 in Sherman Oaks without an access easement from Beverly Ridge Drive, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution amending Resolution No. 03-148 authorizing the use of \$25,000 of additional funds from the Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation Assessment District No. 1 to acquire APN 2274-018-013 in Sherman Oaks without an access easement from Beverly Ridge Drive, Los Angeles. Negotiators: Joseph T. Edmiston and Veronique Fornaldes. Under consideration: price and terms. (This item may be heard in closed session pursuant to § 54956.8 of the Government Code.)

Background: At its October 27, 2003 meeting, the Governing Board adopted Resolution No. 03-148 authorizing the use of Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation Assessment District No. 1 funds to acquire a 2.77-acre property in Sherman Oaks (see attached aerial photograph). The primary importance of the subject property is its function as part of the only contiguous natural lands wildlife corridor along the north slope of the eastern Santa Monica Mountains. In particular the property is part of a habitat linkage between the San Fernando Valley side of Beverly Glen and Fossil Ridge Park, owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The property contains mixed woodland and grassland. Its southern boundary abuts an approximately 10-acre property owned by the Conservancy.

The sellers rejected offers in 2003 and 2006. A new appraisal was conducted in the past four months. There is now one owner who has agreed to a bargain sale. The confidential acquisition summary handed out to the Governing Board at the October 27, 2003 meeting actually authorized the use Assessment District No. 1 funds for the current negotiated price if a revised appraisal supported the amount. The proposed action would solidify that approval and make clear that the Governing Board approved of the sale without an access easement from the northern terminus of Beverly Ridge Drive. The sale of the property is contingent on the separation of

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that easement from the APN 2274-018-013. That easement goes down a long private driveway, makes two ninety degree turns, goes along the side of the seller's house, and then descends to connect with the narrow southern extension of the subject property. It is totally undesirable for public use, and its separation from the property distinctly does not change the appraised value. Ample public access exists from over 200 feet of street interface along Camino de la Cumbre and from the adjacent Conservancy-owned parcel.

The surrounding community, including \$10,000 from Buckley School, have turned over \$25,000 to the MRCA to be used as a permanent maintenance endowment for fuel modification. The annual brush clearance amount is warranted by the critical wildlife corridor function of the property. The property has been brushed to a high standard for many years.