

MEETING DATE: 12/11/06

AGENDA ITEM: Authorize Letter of Support for Mountain Recreation and Conservation Authority Grant Application for the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path Enhancement Project.

ATTACHMENTS

		<u>Pages</u>
1	Table 5-A is provided as Attachment No. 1.	1-2
2	City Council Resolution No. 2004-R044 amending certain Elements of the General Plan related to development along Ballona Creek.	3-13
3	City Council Ordinance No. 2005-001 amending Title 17, Zoning, of the Municipal Code to establish an Open Space Zone.	14-29
4	Draft Support Letter	30
5	October 17, 2006, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, California River Parkways Grant Application.	31-81

Final Design and Planning Principles

Table 5-A

Flood Control

1. Maintain or improve the ability of Ballona Creek to convey floodwaters.
2. Take no actions that would interfere with or impair the ability to maintain Ballona Creek for the purpose of carrying floodwaters.

Quality Of Life

1. Limit new access to trails from existing residential neighborhoods to discourage trail users from parking in those neighborhoods to access the trail.
2. Provide for vertical separation and buffer between the elevation of the bike trail and adjacent residential yards.
3. Provide additional landscaping and fencing to buffer public use areas from residential yards.
4. Encourage landscaping techniques that maximize noise absorption and minimize noise echoes.
5. Design paths that would encourage users to move through the trail system.
6. Develop enforceable design guidelines for creek-side development including standards for noise and lighting (i.e., low level and low emitting lighting, shielding of light glare/spill).
7. Control the hours of operation of public use areas.
8. Enforce existing municipal, County, and Federal codes along the bike path and adjacent properties.
9. Enhance Ballona Creek as an amenity for people who already use, live, or work near the bike path.

Public Safety and Maintenance

1. Develop a maintenance and safety program to assure the health and safety of Ballona Creek and Trail users and adjacent residents.
2. Coordinate and correct fragmentation of jurisdictional responsibility such as policing, graffiti control, homelessness, and maintenance.

Ballona Creek and Trail Focused Special Study

Aesthetics and Environment

1. Create environments that will enhance both the scenic beauty of Ballona Creek and the property values of nearby residents and businesses.
2. Spur the low impact revitalization of creek-side commercial and industrial properties and residential improvements towards beautification.
3. Improve the general condition and appearance of Ballona Creek and trail by eliminating dilapidated conditions and devising consistent standards for creek-side fencing, safety lighting, way-finding, landscaping, and guard rails.
4. Provide suitable landscaping (i.e. native plants for certain areas, drought tolerant or low maintenance) along the bike path and both sides of the channel.
5. Improve water quality in Ballona Creek.
6. Provide attractive signage for the Ballona Creek and Trail denoting Coastal Access.

Recreation and Use Potential

1. Provide a linkage and land-bridge connection to the Baldwin Hills Park area.
2. Provide a system of way-finding to better and more safely connect with various open space areas and parks such as Syd Kronenthal Park, Lindberg Park, Slauson Park, etc. via the trail system.
3. Seek to link the Ballona Creek bike path to other bikeway circulation systems in Culver City such as Culver Boulevard, MTA Exposition right of way and Downtown Culver City.
4. Provide trails that are ADA accessible.

Financial Resources

1. Devise a cohesive operations and maintenance strategy for Ballona Creek that does not cost the City of Culver City any more than it does today.
2. Ensure that improvements made to Ballona Creek and the trail system are funded through outside grants sources with minimal or no matching grants.

Study Process

1. Ensure that the plans for Ballona Creek are in the best interests of Culver City and its citizens.

RESOLUTION NO. 2004-R044

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING THE GENERAL PLAN TEXT AMENDMENT, GPTEXT P-2004019, AMENDING THE LAND USE, OPEN SPACE AND CIRCULATION ELEMENTS BY ESTABLISHING POLICIES GOVERNING DEVELOPMENT ALONG BALLONA CREEK.

(City-Initiated General Plan Text Amendment, GP TEXT P-2004019)

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed the issues related to the General Plan Amendment (GP TEXT P-2004019) needed along Ballona Creek; and

WHEREAS, on December 8, 2003, the City Council opened the duly noticed public meeting to review the "Ballona Creek and Trail Focused Special Study" (Ballona Creek Special Study); and

WHEREAS, after careful consideration of the Ballona Creek Special Study and public testimony, the City Council received and filed the Ballona Creek Special Study, with modifications, and directed staff to complete a General Plan Amendment that incorporates elements of the planning principles identified in Table 5-A of the Ballona Creek Special Study, proposes safeguards in case of development both within the Ballona Creek Channel and on adjacent properties, ensures long-term maintenance and operations funding sources for all improvements within the Ballona Creek Channel, and requires the provision of public safety and security improvements; and

WHEREAS, on April 14, 2004, the Planning Commission recommended by a vote of 4-0 that the City Council determine that pursuant to Sections 15162 and 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, GP TEXT P-2004019 is within the scope of the Culver City General Plan Program EIR approved on September 24, 1996, and no new environmental analysis is needed; and

WHEREAS, following the conclusion of the public discussion and thorough deliberation of the subject matter, the Planning Commission determined by a vote of 4 to 0 that GP TEXT P-2004019, with modifications, should be recommended to the City Council for approval, as set forth in Planning Commission Resolution No. 2004-P001; and

WHEREAS, on May 24, 2004, the City Council conducted a duly noticed public hearing during which it fully considered the Planning Commission's recommendation, all reports, public testimony, and the environmental determination regarding GP TEXT P-2004019; and

1 WHEREAS, following the conclusion of the public discussion and thorough
2 deliberation of the subject matter, the City Council determined by a vote of 4 to 0 that GP
3 TEXT P-2004019 is in the best interest of the City of Culver City;

4 NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CULVER CITY,
5 CALIFORNIA, RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

6 SECTION 1. Pursuant to the foregoing recitations, the following findings are hereby
7 made:

- 8
- 9 1. An Initial Environmental Study was prepared and completed on March 25, 2004, and
10 determined that there were no significant environmental impacts associated with this
11 General Plan Amendment (GP TEXT P-2004019). In addition, pursuant to Sections
12 15162 and 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, GP TEXT P-2004019, amending the
13 General Plan Land Use, Open Space and Circulation Elements by establishing
policies governing development along Ballona Creek is within the scope of the Culver
City General Plan Program EIR approved on September 24, 1996, and no new
environmental analysis is needed.
 - 14 2. The General Plan Text Amendment will establish policies governing development
15 along Ballona Creek.

16 A. Ballona Creek

- 17
- 18 1. It is the community's desire to protect neighborhoods adjacent to Ballona Creek
19 from impacts associated with regional use of the bike path and to memorialize
the completion of the "Ballona Creek and Trail Focused Special Study."
 - 20 2. The General Plan Text Amendment is consistent with and satisfies the
21 provisions of Measure 3 of the General Plan Land Use Element and Measure 2
22 of the General Plan Open Space Element, which call for the completion of a
Ballona Creek Focused Special Study.
 - 23 3. The General Plan Text Amendment is consistent with the General Plan Land
24 Use, Open Space and Circulation Elements. This amendment will protect the
25 peaceful, small-town environment of Culver City's residential neighborhoods,
26 while allowing for the recreational and aesthetic enhancement of the Ballona
27 Creek channel and bike path through clear and consistent guidelines. The
28 amendment will help the City more effectively coordinate with adjacent
jurisdictions and ensures that the recreational elements of Ballona Creek are
29 preserved for future generations through safety, security and maintenance
provisions.

1 4. The General Plan Text Amendment is consistent with the following General
2 Plan Goals:

- 3 a) *Land Use, Circulation and Open Space Elements – GOAL: An open*
4 *space, urban forest, urban design network that links neighborhoods*
5 *and businesses and instills civic provide.*
6 b) *Land Use and Circulation Elements – GOAL: Clear and consistent*
7 *guidance for balanced growth.*
8 c) *Land Use and Circulation Elements – GOAL: Ample and efficient City*
9 *services and infrastructure.*
10 d) *Land Use and Circulation Elements – GOAL: Residential*
11 *neighborhoods that offer residents the qualities of a peaceful, small-*
12 *town environment.*
13 e) *Land Use and Open Space Elements – GOAL: A community that*
14 *provides recreational, historical and cultural opportunities.*

15 5. The General Plan Text Amendment will require that any improvements made to
16 the Ballona Creek Channel or bike path do not, in any way, compromise the
17 Channel's flood control function or environmental quality.
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1 SECTION 2. Pursuant to the foregoing recitations and findings, the City Council hereby
2 approves General Plan Text Amendment No. P-2004019, as set forth in Exhibit A, attached
3 hereto and thereby made a part hereof.
4

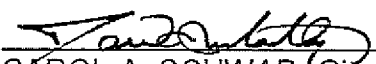
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6 APPROVED and ADOPTED this 24th day of May, 2004.
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11 STEVEN ROSE, MAYOR
City of Culver City, CA
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13 ATTEST:

Approved as to form:

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16 CHRISTOPHER ARMENTA, City Clerk
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19 CAROL A. SCHWAB, City Attorney
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Exhibit A

BALLONA CREEK-RELATED CHANGES TO THE LAND USE ELEMENT

1. LU-36

Policy 10.L

Protect and preserve the safety and quality of life of the residential, commercial and industrial properties adjacent to the Ballona Creek by assuring that all improvements are designed consistent with the objectives of the *Ballona Creek Focused Special Study* (see Measure 3.B).

2. LU-36—NEW POLICY TO FOLLOW POLICY 10.L

Policy 10.M

Ensure that any improvements made to Ballona Creek and/or the bike path include funding sources to maintain a comprehensive maintenance and operations program, and a safety and security program, produced by a safety and security consultant, with adequate and appropriate budgets to support them.

3. LU-38

GOAL: A community that provides recreational, historical and cultural opportunities.

Culver City residents have access to regional recreation resources and cultural opportunities within the greater Los Angeles and Westside Communities. The City's local recreational and cultural facilities, however, are in shorter supply. The Lucerne-Higuera and McLaughlin neighborhoods do not have parks, and overall the City's parkland is 27 acres short of achieving national park and recreation standards of 3-acres-per 1,000 people.

Ballona Creek provides active recreation and alternative transportation opportunities as a bikeway connection from Culver City to the beach. Residents of Culver City use Ballona Creek as a recreational bike path and some use it as a jogging path, or as a transportation corridor. However, those who use it and those who live adjacent to it have serious concerns regarding the safety and aesthetics of the existing channel. To maximize the Creek's potential benefit as a public amenity, implementation of any plan for its alteration must consider community and environmental impacts and assess all benefits and liabilities (See Policy 10.L and Policy 10.M).

4. LU-69

MEASURE 3. CREATE FOCUSED SPECIAL STUDIES. Some areas of the City have special needs or conditions that would benefit from detailed investigations which may address issues such as allowable land use patterns, design standards, zoning codes and other property development standards. They may include detailed regulations, conditions, programs and proposed designations supplemental to the General Plan, including infrastructure requirements, resource conservation, and implementation measures, and

1 identify potential changes in land use that may be appropriate to meet future needs. The
2 General Plan designates the allowable mix of uses within each Focused Special Study area
3 and identifies land use and development goals. To accommodate possible development
4 within these areas before the Focused Special Studies are completed, an underlying
5 designation or designations will identify the anticipated land uses for the first three.

6 **A. Blair Hills/Baldwin Hills Area Feasibility Study and Focused Special Study.** (Text
7 regarding the Blair Hills/Baldwin Hills Area Feasibility Study and Focused Special Study to
8 remain as is.)

9 **B. Ballona Creek Focused Special Study.**

10 Pursuant to the 1996 General Plan Update, a Ballona Creek Focused Special Study was
11 completed to determine whether there is potential for enhancing its use as a recreation
12 resource and improving its general condition and appearance. The completed study
13 contemplates a variety of improvements, which could be implemented to achieve those goals.

14 Once a natural waterway, Ballona Creek's primary purpose is to serve as a flood control
15 channel. Consistent with many other channels under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles
16 County Flood Control District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a bike path was
17 included within the channel to provide recreation and transportation opportunities.

18 Protect and preserve the safety and quality of life of the residential, commercial and industrial
19 properties adjacent to the Ballona Creek by assuring that all improvements are designed with
20 the following objectives:

- 21 ■ Maintain or improve the ability of Ballona Creek to carry floodwaters;
- 22 ■ Provide safety, security and crime prevention improvements and prohibit the
23 construction of new access trails through residential neighborhoods, local streets or
24 local parks;
- 25 ■ Buffer adjacent properties from noise and maintain the privacy of adjacent properties
26 through the provision of improvements including, but not limited to any or all of the
27 following: additional landscaping, fencing, vertical separation, and/or horizontal
28 separation between those properties and the bike trail;
- 29 ■ Establish design guidelines that minimize visual clutter and establish lighting design
guidelines that minimize glare and spillover into adjacent properties;
- Establish maintenance standards that provide for erosion, weed, and graffiti control
and trash and debris removal;
- Use landscape materials that are low-maintenance, plants should be native and/or
drought-tolerant species;

- Encourage bicyclists and pedestrians to move through the trail system, by limiting the development of rest stops along the bike path;
- Ensure that any proposed improvements to Ballona Creek and/or the bike path are thoroughly evaluated according to all applicable laws and regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA);
- Ensure that any proposed improvements either improve or do not negatively impact water quality in Ballona Creek;
- Ensure that any agency, group or organization interested in designing, installing and maintaining any improvements to Ballona Creek and/or the bike path work in collaboration with adjacent residents, property owners, businesses, interested parties and the City, and give them the opportunity to provide meaningful input with respect to planning, design, construction and operation. Consideration should be given to the concerns of adjacent and abutting residents;
- Ensure that any agency or group interested in designing, installing and maintaining any improvements to Ballona Creek and/or bike path coordinate with the City and all responsible government agencies and clearly indicate the respective agencies' specific responsibilities and jurisdictions with regard to any project;
- Work with Los Angeles County to establish reasonable hours of operation of public use areas.

(Figure LU-23 Ballona Creek Focused Special Study will remain.)

BALLONA CREEK-RELATED CHANGES TO THE OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

5. OS-13

GOAL: A community that provides recreational, historical, and cultural opportunities.

In comparison to established standards, Culver City residents have more than adequate access to regional park resources. The City's local open space resources fall short, however, of the goal of 3-acres per 1,000 people. The open space within Culver City defined as local parkland is deficient by 27 acres, as would be required to serve its 39,000 residents. Seven of the City's neighborhood parks also fall short of the desired minimum of five acres. The City's school playground space (32.5 acres) is deficient when compared to the goal of 1-acre-per-1,000 residents. Based on the current joint-use agreements covering only 3.5 acres, the deficiency is 35.5 acres.

Convenient pedestrian access to open space resources is also deficient in the Lucerne-Higuera and McLaughlin neighborhoods. These neighborhoods do not contain a park, and access barriers separate them from their nearest resources. The Lucerne-Higuera neighborhood is separated from Syd Kronenthal Park by National Boulevard and separated

1 from Culver City Park by Jefferson Boulevard. The McLaughlin neighborhood is separated
2 from Tellefson Park by the San Diego Freeway.

3 The Ballona Creek Bike Path has open space value both as active recreation and as a
4 bikeway connection to regional beach resources. As a recreation feature of the Ballona Creek
5 flood control channel, it has not been enhanced or maintained sufficiently to make it an
6 attractive resource. Bicyclists and joggers do use the bikeway, although many have serious
7 concerns regarding the safety and aesthetics of the channel. These concerns are echoed by
8 those who live adjacent to Ballona Creek (See Land Use Element).

7 6. OS-14

Policy (2.G)

8 Maintain and enhance the active recreation opportunities along the Ballona Creek bike path
9 while ensuring the safety and privacy of adjoining neighborhoods (see Land Use Element).

10 7. OS-15

Policy (2.H)

11 Encourage the preservation of family-oriented recreational uses such as the Culver-Palms
12 YMCA and the Culver City Ice Arena.

13 8. OS-15

Policy (2.I)

14 Develop a safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle link between the Lucerne-Higuera
15 neighborhood, south of National Boulevard, and Syd Kronenthal Park.

16 9. OS-19

MEASURE 2. CREATE FOCUSED SPECIAL STUDIES.

17 Focused Special Studies are identified within the Land Use and Circulation Elements for
18 areas where special conditions or potential indicate a need for more detailed analysis and
19 recommendations. This allows flexibility to focus land use and development on the goals of a
20 specific location.

21 Focused Special Studies identified for the Blair Hills/Baldwin Hills area and for Ballona Creek
22 will include standards and guidelines for protection, development and enhancement of
23 existing and potential open space resources. Each study will describe the location and type of
24 open space resources appropriate within the focused study area and the relationship of open
25 space resources to other identified land uses. The studies may also discuss subjects such as
26 infrastructure requirements (including access, water, drainage, resource conservation and
27 demand on City maintenance services) and funding strategies (see Land Use Element).

28 The Focused Special Study for Culver Boulevard will address open space potential in
29 addition to the circulation issues.

30 *A. Blair Hills/Baldwin Hills Area Feasibility Study and Focused Special Study (Text
31 regarding the Blair Hills/Baldwin Hills Area Feasibility Study and Focused Special Study to
32 remain as is.)*

B. Ballona Creek Focused Special Study

Pursuant to the 1996 General Plan Update Ballona Creek was studied to determine whether there is potential for enhancing its aesthetics and its use as a recreation resource. Upon the completion of the Ballona Creek Focused Special Study process, it was determined that in order to protect the residential, commercial and industrial properties adjacent to the Ballona Creek, all improvements to Ballona Creek or trail should be designed with the following objectives:

- Maintain or improve the ability of Ballona Creek to carry floodwaters;
- Provide safety, security and crime prevention improvements and prohibit the construction of new access trails through residential neighborhoods, local streets or local parks;
- Buffer adjacent properties from noise and maintain the privacy of adjacent properties through the provision of improvements including, but limited to any or all of the following: additional landscaping, fencing, vertical separation, and/or horizontal separation between those properties and the bike trail;
- Establish design guidelines that minimize visual clutter and establish lighting design guidelines that minimize glare and spillover into adjacent properties;
- Establish maintenance standards that provide for erosion, weed, and graffiti control and trash and debris removal;
- Use landscape materials that are low-maintenance, plants should be native and/or drought-tolerant species;
- Encourage bicyclists and pedestrians to move through the trail system, by limiting the development of rest stops along the bike path;
- Ensure that any proposed improvements to Ballona Creek or the bike path are thoroughly evaluated according to all applicable laws and regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA);
- Ensure that any proposed improvements either improve or do not negatively impact water quality in Ballona Creek;
- Ensure that any agency, group or organization interested in designing, installing and maintaining any improvements to Ballona Creek and/or the bike path work in collaboration with adjacent residents, property owners, businesses, interested parties and the City and give them the opportunity to provide meaningful input with respect to planning, design, construction and operation. Consideration should be given to the concerns of adjacent residents;

- Ensure that any agency or group interested in designing, installing and maintaining any improvements to Ballona Creek and/or bike path coordinate with the City and all responsible government agencies and clearly indicate the respective agencies' specific responsibilities and jurisdictions with regard to any project;
- Work with Los Angeles County to establish reasonable hours of operation of public use areas.

BALLONA CREEK-RELATED CHANGES TO THE CIRCULATION ELEMENT

10. C-19

Policy (3.B)

Expand the bicycle system to include loops which connect the Ballona Creek Bicycle Path to activity centers in the City. Bike path connections should be carefully limited to arterial streets. Decisions to locate additional bike path connections via non-arterial streets should be determined through a collaborative process during which adjacent residents, property owners, businesses and interested parties are provided the opportunity to provide meaningful input with respect to planning, design, construction and operation.

11. C-31

MEASURE 5. ADOPT A CITYWIDE BIKEWAY PLAN.

There are presently two marked bikeways which serve Culver City: the Ballona Creek Bike Path and bike lanes along Venice Boulevard.

The existing bikeway system within the City is proposed to be expanded with connections to the regional system. A Citywide Bikeway Plan will be developed which identifies potential bikeways and sets standards for construction and support facilities. Classification of the existing and proposed bikeway are indicated in Figure C-6, Existing and Proposed Bikeway Classification Map.

A. Coordinate Citywide Bikeway Policies with Ballona Creek-Related Policies in the Land Use and Open Space Elements.

The 1996 General Plan Land Use Element designated Ballona Creek as a Focused Special Study Area to determine its potential for development as a recreation resource. The Circulation Element supports this intention through classification of the Ballona Creek bikeway as a Class I Bike Path. The Citywide Bikeway Plan seeks to visually and physically link this bikeway to other circulation systems and open space resources. Functional considerations addressed by the Bikeway Plan will be balanced with concerns regarding the safety, aesthetics, noise, interagency coordination regarding maintenance and development, and the effects of appropriate and inappropriate use on adjacent residential properties. Ongoing safety and maintenance programs will be addressed by Land Use Element and Open Space Element Policies.

B. Develop a Class I bike path within the Exposition Right-of-Way. *(This section to remain as is.)*

C. Develop a Bikeway along Culver Boulevard.

1 (This section to remain as is.)

2 **D. Develop a Bikeway Loop connecting the Ballona Creek Bike Path to Downtown.**

3 By designating a Class II bicycle lane along Overland Avenue, Culver Boulevard and
4 Washington Boulevard through downtown connecting to Ballona Creek and the Exposition
5 Right-of-Way, a complete bikeway loop can be created. Bike path connections should be
6 carefully limited to arterial streets and decisions to locate additional bike path connections via
7 non-arterial streets should be determined through a collaborative process during which
8 adjacent residents, property owners, businesses and interested parties are provided the
9 opportunity to provide meaningful input with respect to planning, design, construction and
10 operation.
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1 WHEREAS, the proposed Zoning Code Amendment ZCA-P2004152
2 establishing the Open Space Zone will enable the City to regulate the location and
3 development of new recreational facilities and public parks and the significant
4 expansion of existing public parks through the comprehensive plan process, which will
5 include review by the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission
6 and the City Council to ensure significant levels of public review and comment and

7 WHEREAS, the proposed Zoning Code Amendment ZCA-P2004152
8 implements specific General Plan policies (Land Use Element Implementation Measure
9 1 and Open Space Element Implementation Measure 1) that were included in the scope
10 of and fully addressed in the Culver City General Plan Update Program EIR approved
11 on September 24, 1996, therefore pursuant to Section 15162 and 15168 of the
12 California Environmental Quality Act, (CEQA), no new environmental analysis is
13 required, and

14
15 WHEREAS, on January 4, 2005 the Parks and Recreation Commission
16 reviewed and endorsed the proposed Open Space Zone, and

17
18 WHEREAS on January 26 2005, the Planning Commission conducted
19 a duly noticed public hearing on City-initiated Zoning Code Amendment ZCA P-
20 2004152 fully considering all reports, studies, testimony, and information presented,
21 and at the conclusion of the public hearing and thorough discussion of the subject
22 matter, the Planning Commission, by a vote of 3 to 0, determined Zoning Code
23 Amendment ZCA P-2004152 should be recommended to the City Council for approval
24 and

25
26 WHEREAS, on April 11, May 2, May 23, and June 13, 2005 the City
27 Council conducted duly noticed public hearings on City-initiated ZCA P-2004152 during

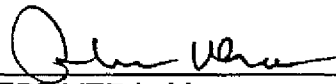
1 which it fully considered all reports, studies, testimony, and environmental information
2 presented, and

3 NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Culver City California,
4 DOES HEREBY ORDAIN as follows

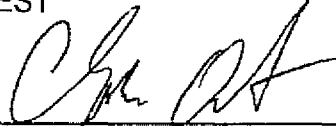
5 SECTION 1 Pursuant to the foregoing recitations and findings, the
6 City Council of the City of Culver City, California, hereby approves of ZCA P-
7 2004152 and as set forth in Exhibits A, and B attached hereto and thereby made a
8 part thereof

9
10 SECTION 2 This Ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days from the date of
11 its adoption and, as required by Section 512 of the City Charter, prior to the expiration of
12 fifteen (15) days from the adoption hereof the City Clerk shall cause this Ordinance to be
13 published in the Culver City News Additionally, the City Clerk shall post this Ordinance or
14 a summary thereof in at least three public places within the City pursuant to Section 517 of
15 the City Charter

16 APPROVED and ADOPTED this 13th day of June, 2005

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20 ALBERT VERA, Mayor
21 City of Culver City, California

22 ATTEST

23 
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25 CHRISTOPHER ARMENTA,
26 City Clerk

27 APPROVED AS TO FORM

28 
CAROL A SCHWAB,
City Attorney

Ordinance 2005- 001
Exhibit B

ARTICLE II
SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING ZONE
(R-1 AND R-1a ZONE)

Section 37-9 Uses Permitted

Except for conditionally permitted uses, enumerated in Section 37-9 1, and uses subject to a special permit, enumerated in Section 37-9 2, only the following uses shall be permitted

- (a) Only (1) single family dwelling
- (b) Accessory buildings, subject to the regulations set forth in Section 37-87
- (c) Public facilities, including libraries, ~~parks, playgrounds,~~ schools, and community buildings owned and controlled by the City of Culver City or another local, regional, State or national governmental entity, provided that their location is designated for "School", "~~Parks and Open Space~~", or "Institutional" use in the Land Use Element of the General Plan
- (d) Home occupations, subject to the regulations set forth in Section 37-83J Ord No 91-026 § 2

ARTICLE II A
HILLSIDE RESIDENTIAL (H-R) ZONE

Section 37-12 General Regulations

A Purpose The City's hillsides are valuable visual open space and aesthetic resources The purpose of the Hillside Residential (H-R) Zone is to encourage and provide a means for effectuating desirable hillside development and conservation in areas where the average slope is fifteen percent (15%) or greater, that allows variations in siting of low density residential land uses and varied dwelling types, and small support retail uses The amenities and compatibility of the H-R Zone shall be assured through adoption of a Comprehensive Plan showing proper orientation, desirable design character, and compatible land uses

B Uses Permitted Only the following uses shall be allowed

- 1 Detached single family dwellings
- 2 Clustered or attached dwellings
- 3 Accessory buildings
- 4 Common area recreational facilities
- 5 Small support retail uses, subject to the regulations set forth in Section 37-18 3
- 6 Home occupations, subject to the regulations set forth in Section 37-83J
- 7 Public facilities, including libraries, ~~parks, playgrounds,~~ schools, and community buildings owned and controlled by the City of Culver City or another local, regional, State or Federal governmental entity

Exhibit B

ARTICLE II 1
ONE-FAMILY DWELLING/ZERO LOT LINE ZONE
(R-1z ZONE)

Section 37-14 2 Uses Permitted

The following uses shall be permitted in the R-1z Zone unless otherwise provided in this Chapter

- A One-family dwellings, not to exceed one (1) dwelling per lot
- B Accessory buildings and structures provided no such building or structure shall be designed or used for dwelling purposes
- C Public uses and buildings including libraries, museums, ~~parks, playgrounds,~~ schools and community buildings owned and controlled by the City or school district, if their location is first approved by the City Council

ARTICLE III
TWO-FAMILY DWELLING ZONE (R-2 ZONE)

Section 37-16 Uses Permitted

Except for the conditionally permitted uses, enumerated in Section 37-16 1, and the uses subject to special permit, enumerated in Section 37-16 2, only the following uses shall be permitted

- (a) Dwellings
 - (1) One (1) single family dwelling
 - (2) One (1) two (2) family dwelling (duplex)
 - (3) Two (2) single family dwellings
- (b) Accessory buildings, subject to the regulations set forth in Section 37-87
- (c) Public facilities, including libraries, ~~parks, playgrounds,~~ schools, and community buildings owned and controlled by the City of Culver City, or another local, regional, State, or national governmental entity if their location is designated for "School", "~~Parks and Open Space~~", or "Institutional" use in the Land Use Element of the General Plan
- (d) Home occupations, subject to the regulations set forth in Subsection 37-83J Ord No 91-026 § 3

ARTICLE IV
LOW DENSITY MULTIPLE-FAMILY DWELLING ZONES
(R-3 and R-3a ZONE)

Section 37-18 Uses Permitted

Except as provided in Sections 37-18 1 and 37-18 2, only the following uses shall be permitted subject to all of the requirements of this Article IV

- (a) One (1), two (2), or multiple-family dwellings, not to exceed the number permitted by Section 37-19(b),
- (b) Accessory buildings and structures, subject to the regulations set forth in Section 37-87,
- (c) Public uses, buildings and facilities, including but not limited to courthouses, libraries, museums, ~~parks, playgrounds,~~ schools, and community buildings owned

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Exhibit B

and controlled by the City of Culver City, or the Culver City Unified School District,

- (d) Home occupations subject to the regulations set forth in Section 37-83(J) Ord No 91-001 § 2 (part)

ARTICLE V

MEDIUM DENSITY MULTIPLE-FAMILY DWELLING ZONE

(R-4 ZONE)7

Section 37-28 Uses Permitted

Except as provided in Sections 37-28 1 and 37-28 2, only the following uses shall be permitted subject to all of the requirements of this Article V

- (a) One (1), two (2), or multiple-family dwellings, not to exceed the number permitted by Section 37-29(b),
- (b) Accessory buildings and structures, subject to the regulations set forth in Section 37-87,
- (c) Public uses, buildings and facilities, including but not limited to courthouses, libraries, museums, ~~parks, playgrounds,~~ schools, and community buildings owned and controlled by the City of Culver City, or school district,
- (d) Home occupations subject to the regulations set forth in Section 37-83(J) Ord No 91-001 § 3 (part)

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ARTICLE XVI C Open Space Zone (OS Zone)

Section 37-75 H General Regulations

A Purpose

- 1 Regulate, protect, and preserve publicly accessible land that is well-suited for active recreation, amusement, relaxation, and/or scenic viewing
- 2 Provide consistency with and implement policies related to those locations which are designated Open Space on the General Plan Land Use Element Map and in the General Plan text
- 3 Provide a means for encouraging and promoting desirable park development ~~and open space preservation that is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and protects the existing quality of life~~
- 4 Ensure that the development of new parks or other open space, as well as major modifications to existing resources, is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods through the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan showing proper orientation, desirable design characteristics and programming, and compatibility of uses
- 5 Establish a set of regulations, requirements, and procedures that preclude any degradation in safety, security, and quality of life for residential properties adjacent to any Open Space Zoned parcels

B Applicability

- 1 The OS Zone shall apply to all parcels designated Open Space on the General Plan Land Use Element Map
- 2 The OS Zone shall not be applied to playgrounds, parks and open space areas located on Culver City School District-owned properties
- 3 The OS Zone shall not be applied to privately-owned schools
- 4 The OS Zone shall not be applied to private recreational facilities and private open space areas within any residential development that are not accessible to the general public

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- 5 The OS Zone may be established on parcels of land that are suitable for and of a sufficient size to be planned and developed in a manner consistent with the objectives of this Section. The decision of whether a parcel is suitable and sufficient to be zoned OS shall be determined by the City Council, after considering recommendations from the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission.
- 6 All areas designated OS on the official Culver City Zoning Map shall be subject to the provisions and regulations of the OS Zone.
- 7 The Community Development Director, or her/his designee, shall administer these standards as specified in this Section.

C Comprehensive Plan Requirements

- 1 A Comprehensive Plan approval, valid for one year, shall be secured for all new development proposed in the OS Zone.
- 2 All Comprehensive Plans shall comply with Section 37-75 H G Development Standards.
- 3 All Comprehensive Plans shall be prepared and endorsed by a professional team which shall include a licensed landscape architect, a registered civil engineer, a licensed architect (if any buildings are proposed), and a safety and security professional, of a type to be determined by the Community Development Director, or his or her designee, and the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director, or his or her designee, and shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - a Site plan showing building(s), various functional use areas, parking and circulation,
 - b Description of development standards, which may include, but not be limited to, building heights, setbacks and parking requirements,
 - c Preliminary building plans, including floor plans and exterior elevations,
 - d Landscaping plans, including a plant palette, with preferably native, low maintenance and/or drought-tolerant plants,
 - e Recreational activity programming plans,

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- f Lighting and information and directional signage plans,
- g Civil Engineering plans, including site grading, public rights-of-way improvements, drainage, trash/recycling areas, and public utility extensions, as necessary,
- h Proposed use and occupancy, construction type, building height and area of each building or structure, and proposed distances between buildings or structures, and setbacks to property lines,
- i A maintenance and operations program that addresses, at a minimum, erosion control measures, graffiti and vandalism removal, amenity maintenance and landscape maintenance requirements. The maintenance and operations program shall also include an assessment of long-term amenity and landscape maintenance requirements, replacement schedules, and costs,
- j Documentation that the applicant has collaborated with adjacent residents, businesses and all appropriate government agencies throughout the design development process and clearly indicate the respective agencies' specific responsibilities and jurisdictions with regard to any project. The documentation shall clearly indicate the role and responsibilities of all involved parties,
- k Proposed hours of operation and an implementation plan for enforcing hours of operation, and
- l The Comprehensive Plan must address the safety and security of open space patrons and adjacent properties through the use of passive security devices including but not limited to landscape design, lighting, and graffiti and vandalism control measures

D Comprehensive Plan Exemptions

- 1 All parcels in the OS Zone developed with a City-owned public park or publicly managed facilities as of the effective date of the ordinance adopting this Section, shall not require a Comprehensive Plan unless a new use or alteration is proposed that will significantly intensify the existing use and significantly impact the surrounding community. The Community Development Director, or his or her designee, and the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director, or his or her designee, shall

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jointly determine if a new use or alteration will result in significant intensification or other significant impacts to the surrounding community

- 2 The Community Development Director, or his or her designee, and the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director, or his or her designee, may administratively approve a new use or alteration that will not result in a significant intensification and significant impacts to the surrounding community, subject to the following findings
 - a The proposed changes are consistent with the existing use and operations of the City-owned public park or publicly managed facility,
 - b The proposed changes will not adversely impact the environment,
 - ~~c The proposed changes will not be detrimental to the surrounding uses,~~
 - d The proposed changes will not significantly increase traffic levels on existing streets and thoroughfares within and surrounding the development, and
 - e Any proposed change, which requires exception from standard ordinance requirements, is warranted by the design and amenities incorporated into the approved Comprehensive Plan
- 3 Maintenance, rehabilitation, renovation, and reconstruction of existing structures, that will not alter the site plan, shall not require a Comprehensive Plan
- 4 If the Community Development Director and Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director do not reach a consensus determination as required by this subsection, then the Chief Administrative Officer shall make the determination after reviewing the recommendations of the two Directors
- 5 All determinations required by this subsection are subject to appeal pursuant to section 37-120A

E Comprehensive Plan Findings

The Planning Commission, in conjunction with a public hearing, and the Parks and Recreation Commission, in conjunction with a public meeting, shall review and make recommendations to the City Council regarding the Comprehensive

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Plan The City Council, after a public hearing, may approve, conditionally approve or disapprove a Comprehensive Plan A Comprehensive Plan may be approved provided the facts submitted and evaluated during the review process support the following findings

- 1 The proposed Comprehensive Plan can be substantially completed within four (4) years,
- 2 The proposed development is capable of creating an environment of sustained desirability and stability or adequate assurance will be provided such objective will be attained,
- 3 The proposed uses will not be substantially detrimental to present and potential surrounding uses but will have a beneficial effect,
- 4 The streets and thoroughfares serving the development are suitable and adequate to carry anticipated traffic and the development will not generate traffic that will overload the street network surrounding the OS Zone,
- 5 The development will account for, and adequately address, parking needs to reduce potential parking impacts to surrounding neighborhoods and on users of the facilities,
- 6 The proposed development is compatible with the surrounding area,
- 7 The Comprehensive Plan is in conformance with the General Plan, or a concurrent General Plan amendment is in process,
- 8 Any exception from standard City land use law, rules or regulation requirement is warranted by the design and amenities incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan and is desired by the City Council, and
- 9 Existing and proposed utility services are adequate for the proposed uses
- 10 The Comprehensive Plan has complied with all applicable City requirements
- 11 The proposed development will not degrade the safety and security of residential properties adjacent to any OS Zone

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F Comprehensive Plan Modifications, Major and Minor

- 1 Major changes or alterations to an approved Comprehensive Plan shall be considered by the Parks and Recreation Commission at a public meeting and the Planning Commission at a public hearing and each shall make recommendations to the City Council. The City Council may then approve, conditionally approve or disapprove the proposed changes or alterations, after a public hearing.
- 2 The Community Development Director, or his or her designee, and the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director, or his or her designee, may administratively approve minor changes or alterations to an approved Comprehensive Plan, subject to appeal pursuant to Section 37-120A, provided, that the Community Development Director, or his or her designee, and Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director, or his or her designee, make the following findings:
 - a The proposed changes are consistent with the intent of the approved Comprehensive Plan,
 - b The proposed changes will not adversely impact the environment,
 - c The proposed changes will not be detrimental to the surrounding uses,
 - d The proposed changes will not significantly increase traffic levels on existing streets and thoroughfares within and surrounding the development, and
 - e Any proposed change, which requires exception from standard ordinance requirements, is warranted by the design and amenities incorporated into the approved Comprehensive Plan.
- 3 If the Community Development Director and Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director do not reach a consensus determination as required by this subsection, then the Chief Administrative Officer shall make the determination after reviewing the recommendations of the two Directors.
- 4 If the Community Development Director, or his or her designee, and the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director, or his or her designee (or Chief Administrative Officer, if applicable), determine the above findings cannot be made, then the request shall be considered a

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major change and referred for Planning Commission for review at a public hearing, the Parks and Recreation Commission at a public meeting and for City Council review at a public hearing

- 5 Maintenance, rehabilitation, renovation, and reconstruction of existing structures, that will not alter the site plan, shall not require a Comprehensive Plan or any Comprehensive Plan modification, minor or major
- 6 All determinations required by this subsection are subject to appeal pursuant to section 37-120A

G Development Standards

- 1 The following development standards shall apply to all OS Zoned properties
 - a Unless specifically outlined in this Section, development standards for site area, lot coverage, development intensity, height, setbacks, parking, walls and fences, architectural design, signage, amenities and all other development standards shall be as specified in a Comprehensive Plan approved by the City Council, after considering recommendations from the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission
 - b Standards for public improvements in the OS Zone shall be governed by all applicable laws, rules and regulations of the City. Exceptions to those standards may be granted by the City Council if the City Council finds such exceptions encourage a desirable environment and are warranted in terms of the total proposed development. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Section and Section 5 04 065, all utilities including telephone, cable television and electric systems required within the OS Zones shall be located underground
 - c Bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails shall only be illuminated with low-level bollard or ground level lighting that does not create glare or light spillover to adjacent properties
 - d Rest areas, which are small spaces adjacent to a path or trail where users of a path or trail can briefly stop, may be permitted along Ballona Creek pursuant to the following conditions

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- i The City determines that seating areas in a proposed rest area are attractive, relate to the surrounding area, vandal resistant, and are designed in a manner that discourages long-term loitering and climbing
 - ii No vending machines shall be permitted
 - iii The City determines that the proposed rest area does not interfere with the operation of the bicycle path or the flood control channel
 - iv The City determines that the proposed rest area does not degrade the safety and security of adjacent residential properties
 - v Rest areas adjacent to residentially zoned parcels may only be permitted with the explicit consent of owners of "primary abutting properties" which are (a) any property directly abutting the proposed rest area boundary and (b) the next abutting property in either direction, and approval from at least fifty percent (50%) of owners of property extending one hundred (100) feet beyond the primary abutting properties in either direction. If the proposed rest area boundary abuts a multi-family residential property of three (3) or more units, approval from at least fifty percent (50%) of the residents of any building adjacent to Ballona Creek shall be required. Approval of the proposed rest area location shall be verified by the Community Development Director via a City approved petition form circulated by the project applicant
- e Development or improvements that are immediately abutting residentially-zoned parcels, must be buffered from said parcels to reduce noise, maintain safety and security, and to maintain privacy through the provision of improvements including, but not limited to, any or all of the following: additional landscaping, fencing, vertical separation, and/or horizontal separation
- f Public access points to or from any parcel in the OS Zone may not connect to any private property, with the exception of easements for utility and maintenance services. Public access points connecting to Ballona Creek shall only be located off public rights-of-way in non-residentially zoned areas

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- g Wireless communication facilities shall be subject to the requirements of Article XVII B Regulations for Dish Antennas and Cellular Mobile Radio Telephone Utility Facilities and any other applicable City regulations

H Public Notice

- 1 Notice of an application for a Comprehensive Plan, modification of an approved Comprehensive Plan, or a zone change to the OS Zone, shall be given pursuant to the requirements of Section 37-116 6 (a), (b), (c), and (d)
- 2 Notice of an application for a Comprehensive Plan Exemption or a Minor Change to a Comprehensive Plan shall be given pursuant to the following
 - a All adjacent property owners and occupants within three hundred (300) feet of the boundary of the project site shall be notified of the application by mail at least twenty-one (21) calendar days prior to the anticipated date of decision by the Directors. The mailed notice shall include a detailed description of the proposed new use or alteration, a contact person, and a location to which public comment can be sent
 - b The applicant shall post notice on the project site for at least twenty-one (21) calendar days prior to the anticipated date of decision by the Directors. The posted notice shall include a detailed description of the proposed new use or alteration, a contact person, and a location to which public comment can be sent. The posted notice shall be located in a conspicuous place on the project site with minimal setback from an abutting public street
- 3 Neither posted nor mailed notice shall be required for maintenance, rehabilitation, renovation, landscaping improvements and/or reconstruction of existing structures that will not alter the site plan of an Open Space Zone parcel

I Approvals

- 1 The Community Development Director, or his or her designee, shall schedule complete applications for public hearings before the Planning Commission

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- 2 The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director, or his or her designee shall schedule complete applications for the public meetings before the Parks and Recreation Commission
- 3 The Community Development Director, or his or her designee, shall schedule complete applications for public hearings before the City Council
- 4 Application for change of zone to the OS Zone shall be approved by the adoption of an ordinance or disapproved by resolution of the City Council, after consideration of the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission recommendations. The Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation shall be provided to the Planning Commission, prior to the Planning Commission public hearing considering the zone change
- 5 A Comprehensive Plan shall be approved or disapproved by resolution of the City Council after consideration of the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission recommendations. The Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation shall be provided to the Planning Commission, prior to the Planning Commission public hearing considering the Comprehensive Plan
- 6 The City Council may modify any provisions of this section after consideration of the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission recommendations
- 7 Nothing in this Section shall preclude the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission from recommending, and the City Council from approving a Comprehensive Plan in concept only and requiring subsequent discretionary review of that Comprehensive Plan



CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

CITY OF CULVER CITY

9770 CULVER BOULEVARD, CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA 90232-0507

(310) 253-6000

FAX (310) 253-6010

JERRY B. FULWOOD
City Manager

November 6, 2006

California River Parkways Grant Program
The Resources Agency
Attn: Bond and Grant Units
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Letter of Support for Mountain Recreation and Conservation Authority Grant
Application for the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path Enhancement Project.

Dear Sir or Madam:

In keeping with the City of Culver City's adopted planning principles the City's Public Works Department recognizes the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's ("MRCA") desire to explore opportunities for enhancements along the Ballona Creek. The Bike Path is located on a County easement directly adjacent to Ballona Creek, a portion of which runs through Culver City. Increasing the public safety, aesthetic and educational value will improve this amenity used by members of our community.

The MRCA's proposed project to install way-finding and interpretive signage, striping, and fencing to portions within the Ballona Creek Bike Path are consistent with the City's adopted planning principles. As such, this letter is intended to support MRCA's grant application.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please do not hesitate to contact John Rivera, Senior Management Analyst at 310-253-5616 or john.rivera@culvercity.org.

Sincerely,

Jerry Fulwood
City Manager

cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
Martin R. Cole, Assistant City Manager
Charles D. Herbertson, Public Works Director and City Engineer
Susan Evans, Community Development Director
John Rivera, Senior Management Analyst
Emmy Storheim, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

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California River Parkways Grant Program
Grant Application

BALLONA CREEK TRAIL & BIKE PATH ENHANCEMENT

Submitted to:

California River Parkways Grant Program

The Resources Agency

ATTN: Bonds and Grants Unit

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311

Sacramento, California 95814

Submitted by:

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

570 West Avenue 26, Suite 100

Los Angeles, California 90065

Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

October 17, 2006

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Project Name Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path Enhancement		Grant Amount Requested \$ 192,319 Estimated Date of Completion: Estimated Total Project Cost \$ 192,319 (State Grant and other funds and In-Kind donations)	
APPLICANT (Agency and address - including zip code) Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority 570 West Avenue 26, Suite 100 Los Angeles, CA 90065 Check one: Non-Profit ☐ Public Agency ☒		County Los Angeles	Nearest City to Project Los Angeles
Project Address Ballona Creek Trail between National Bl & Beach Bike Path Nearest Cross Street multiple		Senate District No. 26, 28	
Assembly District No. 47, 51, 53			
Applicant's Representative Authorized in Resolution Name: Cara McLane Phone: (323) 221-9944 ext. 117 Title: Contracts Officer Email Address: cara.mclane@mrca.ca.gov			
Person with day to day responsibility for project (if different from authorized representative) Name: Barbara Romero Phone: (323) 221-9944 ext. 188 Title: Director of Urban Projects Email Address: barbara.romero@mrca.ca.gov			
Brief description of project The project will improve 7.2 miles of the existing Ballona Creek Trail & Bike Path with 12 coordinated interpretive exhibits, new bike lane striping, wayfinding signage at 15 locations, and visitor amenities at key locations.		Latitude 33d 59m 46s N	Longitude 118d 24m 11s W
		Coordinates Represent: Approx. midpoint of bikepath Coordinates Determined Using: Google Earth	
Name of River, Stream, or Creek: Ballona Creek			
Check only two (2) statutory conditions		Check If project is located in:	
{ Recreation ☒ Habitat ☐ Flood Management ☐ Conversion ☐ Conservation & Interpretive Enhance ☒		CALFED Solution Area ☐ San Gabriel and Los Angeles River Watersheds ☐ Disadvantaged Community ☒	
For Development Projects - Project is 0.1 acres: _____ feet / miles of trails to be created _____ acres of habitat to be restored Acres owned in fee simple by Applicant: 0 Acres available under a _____ year lease: 0 Landowner Name: _____ Project is located on existing bike path operated by L.A. County Acres other interest (explain): _____ APN Number(s): multiple; see list		For Acquisition projects - Projects will be _____ acres: _____ feet / miles of trails to be created _____ acres of habitat to be restored Acquire in fee simple by Applicant: 0 Acquire in other than fee simple (explain): 0 _____ APN Number(s): _____	
Signed: <u>Cara McLane</u> Applicant's Authorized Representative as shown in Resolution <u>10/16/06</u> Date			

2. ONE PAGE SUMMARY

Ballona Creek is one of few creeks in southern California whose entire life above ground is experienced within the urban matrix of Los Angeles. Such close proximity provides a wealth of benefits for social and recreational uses along the creek. Fortunately, public access in the form of the Ballona Creek Trail & Bike Path exists along the flood control easement on the north bank of the creek. A lack of bike path amenities and connectivity between the Baldwin Hills and the Pacific Ocean, however, has led to underutilization and disconnect. Additionally, planning efforts have been fragmented by jurisdiction and funding. It is the goal of the MRCA to facilitate the development of a cohesive enhancement of the recreational facilities and connections along Ballona Creek.

The 7.2-mile Ballona Creek Trail & Bike Path (trail) has existed in a basic unimproved condition for many years. After the channelization of Ballona Creek, the County of Los Angeles and the cities of Los Angeles and Culver City improved the paralleling maintenance access road with the addition of a bikeway in the 1970s. In the past 30 years, little has changed or been improved along this public trail. Signs are defaced or missing and entrances are deteriorated, uninviting and unsafe. Where vegetation exists, it is typically overgrown exotic species. Except for improvements installed by MRCA in 2005 at Centinela Avenue, there are no interpretive exhibits or visitor amenities anywhere on the trail.

The Ballona Creek Trail & Bike Path Enhancement project includes three major elements: striping of bike lanes, installation of wayfinding signs, and the creation of a coordinated system of interpretive exhibits along the length of the trail. At several key locations, additional amenities will be installed along with an interpretive exhibit. These will include benches, bike racks and artwork. Another project already underway by MRCA will install these items plus native landscaping and drinking fountains at three entrances to the trail. The combination of these projects will measurably increase the value of the existing trail, resulting in higher usage and more awareness of this recreational resource.

The Project is part of a larger regional effort to connect the Baldwin Hills to the Pacific Ocean with one continuous bikeway and greenway known locally as "Park to Playa". The Applicant, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), recently completed improvements upstream at the Centinela Avenue entrance as part of this plan, and the proposed Project will be of similar quality and style. The Park to Playa plan seeks to improve public access and safety along Ballona Creek while also providing an enhanced greenway.

This Project is but one aspect of many wide-ranging conservation efforts in the Ballona Creek watershed, including projects currently underway by MRCA. We have chosen not to count those other efforts as a match for the Project, but we conceive this Project to be a seamless part of the overall work. MRCA staff have been involved with many of the stakeholders focused on the creek, including the Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force, and this involvement will continue to allow easy collaboration with other agencies and groups. The project location is crucial in that its close proximity and connectivity to the beach, other bicycle paths, and the Ballona Wetlands will encourage a high volume of recreational use, and provide important opportunities to interpret the natural systems of Ballona Creek and the watershed.

3. PROJECT EVALUATION QUESTIONS

CONDITION 1: RECREATION

a) Describe the specific recreational elements planned for your Project and explain how these elements contribute to your overall recreational goals and objectives and how they are compatible with the environment and location.

The Ballona Creek Trail & Bike Path Enhancement project (Project) includes three major elements: striping of bike lanes, installation of wayfinding signs, and the creation of a coordinated system of interpretive exhibits along the length of the trail. The combination of these three items will measurably increase the value of the existing trail, resulting in higher usage and more awareness of this recreational resource. All of the Project's elements are inherently compatible with the location and environment, because the recreational trail already exists.

Because major improvements to the 7.2-mile Ballona Creek Trail & Bike Path (trail) have not been made since it was created in the 1970s, the function, appearance and use of the trail are now suffering. The trail has limited and uninviting access. The goals for this Project are to increase trail use by more groups, and make use of the trail a more pleasant and rewarding experience. The expected impact on the local community will be an increased perception of public safety and awareness of the Ballona Creek watershed's resources.

Stakeholder participation will help inform community members, who in turn will promote the projects and activities along Ballona Creek. Increased awareness will also be achieved through an interpretive component, increased use and accessibility. This trail is the only limited-access inland recreational trail that serves the approximately 3 million people who reside within three miles of the proposed project area. While it is already a popular trail, it has the capacity for more users.

Striping on the bike path will assist in directing the safe flow of opposing directions of bicycle and pedestrian traffic. The segment of the trail in unincorporated Los Angeles County already has some striping, but the majority of the trail, in the cities of Los Angeles and Culver City, does not. The Project will make the condition of the path consistent along its entire length.

Wayfinding signage along the bike path will promote regional connectivity by highlighting points of interest, access, and connecting bike routes and transportation opportunities. At the most basic level, the wayfinding will help users find and access the trail. Standard signs indicating trail access and cross streets will be installed at fifteen locations. Specific sign placement and selection will occur during the project's design phase.

A coordinated system of interpretive exhibits will be installed, spread along the trail at twelve locations. The concepts behind the interpretive content are discussed under Condition 5. The addition of these exhibits will add an entirely new dimension to a visitor's experience on the trail, providing the opportunity to learn about the Ballona Creek watershed. Additional amenities including benches, bike racks, and artwork will be installed at several key locations along with an interpretive exhibit. Fencing may be replaced in the vicinity of the new interpretive signs if the current condition is deteriorated or unsafe.

b) What national, State or local construction standards will be used for recreational facilities

and amenities such as trails, restrooms, bike paths, etc.?

The bike lane striping will be consistent with current County of Los Angeles specifications for bikeways, and all improvements to the bikeway surface will adhere to the *Caltrans Highway Design Manual*. The layout, grading, and width of the trail will not be altered from the existing condition. Material specifications (ash/portland mixture) will meet the Public Works Standard Specifications *Greenbook*. All park amenities will be fully compliant with the *State Architectural Guidelines for Public Places* as well as federal ADA standards. None of the improvements contemplated qualify for regulation under the building code.

c) If the Project includes a trail, what construction materials will be used? Include any Environmentally-Friendly materials that will be used for trail construction (e.g., permeable surfaces). In addition, what percentage of the proposed trail system will be ADA accessible? Describe accommodations. See <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/accessible/FSTAG03.html> for assistance.

The subject trail is already constructed. The primary surfaces for the trail are asphalt and concrete. Where concrete work is required during installation of interpretive signs, posts and benches we would promote the use of concrete with fly ash. Fly ash is a fine, glass-like powder recovered from gases created by coal-fired electric power generation. U.S. power plants produce millions of tons of fly ash annually, which is usually dumped in landfills. Fly ash is an inexpensive replacement for portland cement used in concrete, and it improves strength, segregation, and ease of pumping.

The Project does not include any areas where permeable paving would have a significant benefit. The subject trail is already ADA accessible.

d) If conflicts exist between recreational user groups, how do you plan to resolve them?

This project will not cause or increase conflict. The Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path is a multi-modal trail with a dominant user group of bicyclists. Multi-modal trails inherently have conflicts between cyclists, walkers, joggers, dog walkers, adults with children, and other users. The Project includes the striping of lanes on the trail, which will clearly delineate boundaries, reducing the potential for such conflicts. With the edges of bike lanes defined, it will be easier for cyclists and non-cyclists to stay out of each other's way.

The project will also reduce these conflicts through the provision of the interpretive exhibits and additional visitor amenities such as benches. For example, birdwatchers will be able to stand or rest off of the main path of travel. At specific stations, interpretive signs could direct birdwatchers to wetland areas north of the bike path help to separate the different use areas.

Additional contention exists in specific neighborhoods where residents feel as though bike path improvements will increase the number of criminals and homeless. This project will not have such an effect. It is MRCA's experience that as the bike path becomes more heavily used and the user base increases, vandalism will decrease as more eyes will be on the trail. Serious conflicts are resolved with the local neighborhood association, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and the local City Council office, or the local police as appropriate.

e) What will happen to the project site if this Project does not occur?

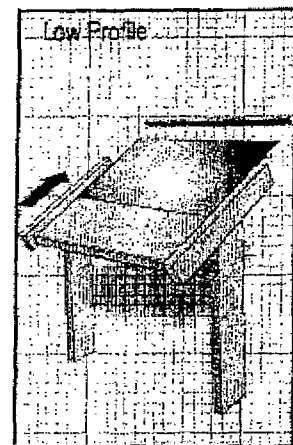
If this project does not occur, the trail will stay in its current condition and continue to deteriorate. Also, this opportunity to significantly improve the visitor experience would be lost. More importantly, the unique opportunity to help guide and facilitate a cohesive bike path project which will focus efforts and promote continuity will be lost, leaving the bike path to efforts that are piecemeal at best.

CONDITION 5: CONSERVATION AND INTERPRETIVE ENHANCEMENTS

a) Describe the planned visitor serving amenities.

The Project's primary visitor serving amenities are the collection of twelve interpretive exhibits that will be installed at various locations on the Ballona Creek Trail & Bike Path (trail). The exhibits will be free-standing trailside/wayside displays. The content of the interpretive exhibits is discussed below. At key locations, additional amenities will include benches/seating, artwork and U-shaped bike racks, giving visitors several new 'rest stops'. Other visitor-serving amenities will be installed as part of the creek-wide improvements, by MRCA and other agencies. These amenities include seating, bike racks, trash cans, native landscaping, and drinking fountains. The addition of bike lane striping on the trail and wayfinding signage will also serve visitors, making the trail easier to use.

The wayside display frames will be constructed from high-strength aluminum and are designed to National Park Service standards. The chosen low-profile model of exhibit frame angles the panel at an easy to read angle without interfering with the surrounding view. The top rail of the frame is removable, and centered posts keep the frame sturdy. MRCA's interpretive signs are typically mounted to a stiff plastic backing and covered with a Lexan or plexiglass panel. The plexiglass covering can be cleaned and buffed out if graffiti occurs. It is also easily and inexpensively replaced if repeated vandalism causes permanent damage. Recently we have used a fiberglass technology and are evaluating the durability of that material. All materials will be compliant with ADA regulations.



Although the range of improvements that comprise this Project is limited, the interpretive exhibits will immediately be an opportunity to educate community members, school children and visitors about the diversity of ecosystems along the Ballona Creek trail and bike path. Habitat types explored would include saltmarsh, freshwater marsh, riparian corridor, bluffs, upland, dune and marine.

The wayfinding signage will fill an information gap that currently exists on the trail. Currently, there are few signs that indicate how to access the path, or that give users information about destinations. We have identified fifteen locations where some amount of wayfinding signage is needed. The specific amount and type of signage to be installed will be specified during the design phase of the Project if it is funded; the cost estimate is based on three signs per location. Some of the destination information may also be incorporated in the interpretive exhibits.

A typical location would be a cross street where one can access the path. Here we would install standard bike route signs with arrows visible to traffic in both directions on the cross street. On the trail itself, signs with the name of the cross street would be posted so that users know where they are. Signs that list the distance to destinations such as the South Bay Bike Trail would also be posted. The placement and number of wayfinding signs will be carefully designed to not have a negative effect on the area's aesthetics.



b) How will your visitor serving amenity communicate the significance and value of the resource?

The interpretive content along the path will tell the stories of both the natural and cultural heritage of Ballona Creek and its watershed. Natural science topics will include wildlife and plant identification, and the effects of human development on water quality. Cultural topics will recount the use of the creek as both transportation and food source by indigenous peoples. The value of the resources that are interpreted will be communicated directly through the text and graphics on each exhibit. The content of each sign will be related to its location on the path, highlighting resources in the vicinity if possible. Multiple exhibits could be located in one location if desired. Specific topics and their locations will be determined during the Project's design phase if funded.

The overall concept for the interpretive exhibits is to share information in a connected progression. Although each exhibit will be a complete display of information, the collective experience of seeing multiple interpretive sites will provide the viewer with opportunities for a greater comprehension of the connectivity of ecological areas. Regardless of where a visitor initiates his/her travel along the Ballona Creek Trail & Bike Path, there will be opportunities to explore and learn. Additionally, content will be spread along the trail so that even visitors who travel just a short distance on the Trail will benefit.

Ballona Creek flows approximately 8 miles through west Los Angeles into the Santa Monica Bay at Marina del Rey. Ballona Creek is part of a unique system of ecologies within a relatively small geographic area of the Los Angeles Basin. The lower reaches of Ballona Creek support a diversity of wildlife, especially where tidal waters create brakish water, critical for the life abundant estuaries. These estuaries occur both within the creek channel and within the Ballona wetlands. The Baldwin Hills are another sanctuary for birds and animal life along the Creek. Enhancing and connecting these two open-space areas will significantly enhance the ecological communities along Ballona Creek. Similarly, this connection will significantly benefit the public by increasing access, recreation and ecological awarness.

The interpretive signs will be designed to minimize the amount of text while featuring photographs and drawings so that a wide range of visitors can understand the content. Essential content may be included in both English and Spanish or other language as appropriate. The signs will primarily communicate basic scientific concepts but will also contain some information for more advanced visitors. The MRCA's Interpretive Division staff has extensive experience and training in education (see question E.1.), and has assisted in the Project planning. They will continue to assist in the development and editing of content.

The interpretive signs will also provide a new feature for guided walks and rides that already occur on the trail. In addition to the non-personal interpretation offered with exhibits and signs, the MRCA is now initiating a comprehensive interpretive program designed to give visitors a more in-depth guided experience, funded through the State Coastal Conservancy and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Public walks and bike rides along the creek with a naturalist and school programs with curriculum tied to the state science content standards will enhance the visitor experience of the creek.

c) Describe the project's geographic location in relation to the resources, subjects, structures, places or collection of objects to be interpreted.

All of the interpretive content will be related to the resources of Ballona Creek and its watershed. The trail parallels the creek through the center of the watershed and bisects areas of saltmarsh, freshwater marsh, and dunes. Additionally the trail in the coastal reach is within the viewshed of the coastal bluff, a critical upland habitat. If possible, the content of each interpretive sign will be related to a resource that one can see or experience from the sign location. For example, an interpretive sign located overlooking the Ballona Wetlands will discuss a topic related to the wetlands; the wetlands would not be a topic for an interpretive sign on the upstream portion of the trail. The specific content and location of each sign will be determined during the project's design phase.

d) Will the amenity address themes not interpreted in existing facilities? Describe.

There is not a comprehensive interpretive exhibit system such as this anywhere else in the watershed. The MRCA installed the only existing exhibit on the trail at Centinela Avenue in mid-2005. The interpretive topic of that sign is an overview of the watershed and native plants. MRCA plans to install exhibits as part of County-funded improvements to the entrances at Sepulveda Boulevard, McConnell Avenue, and Inglewood Boulevard. These exhibits will be developed in conjunction with the creek-wide concept implemented by this Project.

This proposed project will also benefit the Middle School Education Project. Developed by Friends of Ballona Wetlands, with support from Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and the University of Southern California Sea Grant Program, this program will offer curriculum activities based on California State Standards. It includes sections for in-class learning, on-site learning, and service learning activities. The curriculum aims to integrate concepts for Earth Sciences, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, History, Sociology, and Geography. The program addresses natural and cultural history, formation and functions of estuaries, connecting to our watershed, the importance of native habitats, and environmental stewardship and philosophy. The implementation of interpretive signage will reinforce the uniqueness of each area, providing on-site learning opportunities.

A number of other conservation-oriented organizations are implementing interpretive programs within the watershed. The content and organization of the interpretive signs under this Project will be determined with consideration of these other resources so that efforts are not duplicated. An established interpretive facility with programs exists at the freshwater marsh at southeast corner of the intersection of Culver Lincoln Boulevards. Friends of Ballona Wetlands and the Audubon Society offer bi-monthly interpretation tours at the freshwater marsh focusing on a variety of birds, native plants, and how the freshwater marsh system works.

The Baldwin Hills Environmental Interpretation Initiative (Initiative), funded by the Baldwin Hills Conservancy, seeks to foster environmental stewardship and inspire action in local school age youth and families. Key components of the Initiative include a map of environmental education agencies, parks, museums, and science based programs within a five-mile radius of the Baldwin Hills; development of an approved curriculum and interpretive materials focused on the ecosystems of the Baldwin Hills for use in area elementary, middle and high school districts; training and workshops for local educators; and planning and development of a facility for interpretive programs.

e) Describe any future actions needed beyond the scope of this project to fully address your goals.

The core-underlying goal for MRCA's Ballona Creek work is to improve regional recreational and ecological awareness while supporting restoration and conservation efforts. To optimize the value of the Project, all of the planning, improvement, and restoration projects currently contemplated should be implemented. The Project will have its highest value when combined with all the other improvements planned for the trail, including the entrances at Sepulveda, Inglewood and McConnell.

Most importantly, an ongoing interpretive program that brings children and other visitors to the site with knowledgeable docents will maximize the Project's benefits. The MRCA is initiating such a program at the Ballona Wetlands with funding from the State Coastal Conservancy and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Tailored to the specifics of the site, this programming may include ranger reports at community meetings, junior ranger programs and support of the on-going site clean ups.

To ensure that the project has maximum benefit, local school programs should make the resources provided by the Project an integral part of the curriculum.

B. Statewide Resource Priorities

1. Collaboration with agencies and other interested parties

a) Describe partnerships with nonprofit groups and public or governmental agencies and their corresponding roles in the project.

The primary project partner is the County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works (DPW). The Flood Control section of DPW is responsible for maintenance of the channel, the Watershed Management division is a key participant in planning, and the Bikeways division is providing some in-kind staff support to help design the Project and prepare the project application. DPW will also provide plan review and permitting as needed, and MRCA plans to contract with DPW to install the bike lane striping.

The City of Los Angeles will provide cooperation with the community and plan review as needed. The City of Los Angeles is in support of the project and offers a letter of support. The City of Culver City is in support of the project and offers a letter of support. The Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force and Ballona Creek Renaissance will continue to provide input on the project design and the content of interpretive panels. The Baldwin Hills Conservancy is in support of the project and Environment Now, a nonprofit, is in support of the project. The State

Coastal Conservancy and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy are providing funding for interpretive programs and ranger services at the Ballona Wetlands.

b) Describe Community involvement and support for the project, including watershed groups, appropriate business groups, landowners, local governments, environmental groups, technical experts, neighborhood associations, etc.

The Project enjoys strong community and political support. The Project is included in the Ballona Creek Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, which was developed with the County and the City of Los Angeles through a local stakeholder process. The Project is consistent with the *Ballona Creek Watershed Management Plan's* goals to Coordinate Watershed Planning Across Jurisdictions and Boundaries, and Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Access and Safety.

The MRCA has taken advantage of existing stakeholder processes and organizations to share the project concept with a variety of interested parties. The Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force is one such organization and its members are described under question C.5. A more comprehensive list of organizations and agencies that participate in some aspect of the overall conservation effort surrounding Ballona Creek was found on the State Coastal Conservancy's website, listing the following organizations as working on issues related to the Ballona Wetlands restoration:

- ♦ Access for all
- ♦ Audubon Society – Ballona Education Program
- ♦ Baldwin Hills Conservancy
- ♦ Ballona Creek Renaissance
- ♦ Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force
- ♦ Ballona Ecosystem Education Project
- ♦ Ballona Institute
- ♦ Ballona Wetlands Conservancy
- ♦ Ballona Wetlands Foundation
- ♦ Ballona Wetlands Land Trust
- ♦ Etina Grassroots Coalition
- ♦ Friends of Ballona Wetlands
- ♦ Gabrielino-Tongva Tribal Council
- ♦ Heal The Bay
- ♦ In Defense of Animals
- ♦ Loyola Marymount University
- ♦ Marina Del Rey Lessee's Association
- ♦ Playa Vista Capital
- ♦ Playa Vista Little League
- ♦ Santa Monica Baykeeper
- ♦ Semptra Energy
- ♦ Sierra Club
- ♦ Spirit of Sage Council
- ♦ Trust for Public Lands
- ♦ Wetland Action Network
- ♦ California Coastal Commission
- ♦ California Conservation Corps

- ♦ City of Culver City
- ♦ City of Los Angeles, Environmental Monitoring Division
- ♦ County of Los Angeles, Department of Beaches and Harbor
- ♦ County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works
- ♦ Los Angeles Conservation Corps.
- ♦ Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
- ♦ National Marine Fishery Service
- ♦ Port of Los Angeles
- ♦ Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission
- ♦ US Army Corps of Engineers, Operations Branch, LA District
- ♦ US Fish and Wildlife Service

2. *Economic Benefit*

a) How will your project contribute to the economic development of the Community?

The Project does not include any direct economic opportunities, but will contribute to the cumulative beneficial effect provided by parks and open space. The Trust for Public Land's report "The Economic Benefits of Open Space" lists numerous examples where parks and open space have had positive economic impacts such as:

- ♦ Preventing higher costs of unplanned development
- ♦ Attracting tourists, resulting in increased sales tax revenue
- ♦ Attracting new businesses and residents, resulting in increased property taxes
- ♦ Promoting inner-city revitalization
- ♦ Cost-effective alternatives to flood control infrastructure
- ♦ Inexpensive way to achieve environmental goals like clean air and water

The Project will have these same beneficial effects on the Ballona Creek area. Its success will also encourage more improvement efforts on the creek, multiplying its positive effects.

b) Describe how the project is consistent with or part of a Community redevelopment plan.

The Project is not within or near a Community Redevelopment Area.

c) How does the project revitalize deteriorated urban neighborhoods?

The 7.2 mile Ballona Creek Trail & Bike Path extends through several differing neighborhoods, all urban. The central segment of the trail through the City of Los Angeles extends past some neighborhoods in decline. The enhancements to the trail that will be created by the Project will help ensure that the Trail remains heavily used, and this will prevent it from deteriorating due to neglect. The popularity of the trail will be increased as a result of the Project.

Related projects are underway to provide new landscaping and amenities to trail entrances, transforming these barren spots into safe and inviting access points. The Project will contribute to improvements in the recreation capability, beauty, and livability of the neighboring areas and contribute to the rise of property values.

d) How will this project encourage tourism in the area?

The Ballona Creek Trail & Bike Path already provides a multi-modal recreational route out to the beach. The Project, by increasing the trail's value, will also increase the use. Tourists that are at the beach are already able to rent bicycles, and the Project's interpretive exhibits will make the trail a more desirable destination. Access and usage by both residents and tourists will increase when the metro light rail builds a station just east of the trail's inland terminus in Culver City.

3. Use of Recycled or Reclaimed Water, Recycled Materials and/or Energy Efficiency

a) Will the project use recycled or reclaimed water? Describe how these practices will be included in the project.

The Project does not include any elements that use water.

b) Will the project utilize recycled-content materials? List the recycled-content materials to be used.

Yes, the Project will utilize recycled-content materials whenever possible. Selection of materials will occur with the final design phase, but could include items made of recycled plastic and concrete with fly ash.

c) What, if any, energy efficiency measures will be incorporated into the project?

The project does not use any electricity, so there is no great opportunity to incorporate energy efficient measures.

4. Other Statutory Conditions Met

a) If the Project meets other statutory conditions in addition to the two checked on the Application Page (Appendix M), please describe the statutory conditions met and the associated benefits.

The Project does not meet any other statutory conditions.

C. Access and Location (15 points)

1. How will the public access the project site?

The public will access the project site on foot or bicycle from any of the twelve existing entrances to the trail, as well as from the connection with the South Bay Bike Trail. A pedestrian bridge over Ballona Creek has been built in Culver City near Overland Boulevard. The bridge provides an easy connection across the creek, especially for students on the south side of the creek attending school on the north side. The bridge is also the easiest route currently in place for connections to the Baldwin Hills.

2. Describe the project location and the populations to be served by the project. Address local, regional and statewide uses, if appropriate. Identify new populations served.

The Project is located in west Los Angeles, amid a population comprised of mixed economic and ethnic groups. In addition to local residents who may use the path for recreation or cycling commutes, the trail is heavily used by recreational bicyclists from all over southern California. The path striping and wayfinding signage will benefit both the local and regional users. The trail

passes two areas of statewide significance – the Ballona Wetlands and the Baldwin Hills – and the interpretive exhibits will communicate the unique values of these areas.

Four public schools are adjacent to or near the path (Marina Del Rey Middle School, Culver City High School, Culver City Middle School, and Culver City Elementary). The addition of the interpretive content will provide a new educational resource for these groups.

3. Describe how the project is in, or close to, population centers and the various transportation methods that are available for the public to access the project, including streets and highways, public transportation, non-motorized trails or routes of travel and other access routes.

The project is situated in the middle of Los Angeles County; it is estimated that 3.2 million people are within a 3 mile radius. Numerous MTA bus lines have stops near trail entrances as well as a proposed metro light rail stop at Fairfax Blvd. In addition, the path is accessible by from numerous residential neighborhoods adjacent to the trail. Because of the linear nature of the Project, it is accessible by numerous streets throughout a wide community. See site plan (page 28) for specific street access.

4. Describe any limits to public access such as parking, hours of operation, available staffing, user fees, seasonal restrictions or other ecological considerations.

There are no limits to public access between sunrise and sunset. It is standard practice for the County to restrict access to flood channel right-of-way during storm events. There will be no fees to use the parkway and street parking in most areas is also free. The Project will not require staffing other than maintenance. The various groups involved will staff interpretive programs associated with the Project.

5. Describe discussions you have had with interest groups concerned with this parkway.

The MRCA is a member of the Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force (Task Force), and regularly participates in meetings where issues related to the parkway are discussed. The stakeholder groups' participation in the Task Force is voluntary, however there are dedicated regular participants, including:

- ♦ City of Los Angeles
- ♦ Los Angeles County
- ♦ Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission
- ♦ Ballona Creek Renaissance
- ♦ City of Culver City
- ♦ Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
- ♦ Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- ♦ Los Angeles County Bike Coalition
- ♦ Sierra Club
- ♦ Ballona Wetlands Action Network
- ♦ Ballona Institute
- ♦ Ballona Wetlands Land Trust
- ♦ Friends of Ballona Wetlands
- ♦ Ballona Network

6. Has the issue of competing interests between public access and ecological protection been

addressed? Explain.

Because the Ballona Creek Trail is already in place and is comprised of a narrow corridor, and Ballona Creek itself is channelized, there are few areas, if any, where increased use would be detrimental to valuable habitat. Any improvements near the Ballona Wetlands would be carefully sited so that no damage to the ecological resources would result.

D. Project Readiness (15 points)

1. Identify and describe the steps to be taken immediately following the award of grant funds.

The first step will be to contract with the County to have them complete the bike path striping on a reimbursable basis. This is expected to take a couple of months and will entail multiple levels of approval and coordination, so it will be undertaken well before the striping work is to be completed. Next, a Notice of Exemption will be filed for the improvements outside of the existing CEQA filing. Third, the final design process will commence with site visits to identify specific locations for interpretive signs and the strategic placement of wayfinding signs. The final step to fully kick off the project will be to outline the interpretive exhibits, forming a coordinated story that continues along the entire trail.

2. Explain your method for estimating costs and in what way your project is cost-effective.

The unit costs for the cost estimate were derived from a variety of sources. The most expensive item, the bike lane striping, was researched on the internet and with County staff; estimates ranged from \$1/foot to \$4/foot; \$2 per foot was selected as a reasonable average cost. Costs for interpretive exhibits and amenities were taken from similar projects completed by MRCA within the last year. A detailed estimate for the wayfinding signage could not be completed without significant design/specification work; therefore an allowance of \$900 per location was selected as an average cost, using an estimate from County staff of \$300 per sign. The quantity of fencing was estimated to be no more than 20' per interpretive exhibit.

Other unit costs were taken from MRCA's internal master cost estimate, which was derived from multiple sources, including City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks, private landscape architecture firms, and actual costs on previous projects. The estimating sheet is updated periodically with current prices on materials from bids received on other MRCA projects. This results in an up-to-date estimating system for materials that are commonly used as well as for typical park elements. Contingencies are always included and are reduced as the design moves from concept to schematic to construction drawings and details. At each stage of design, material quantities are taken from the current site plan.

The Project is cost-effective because it has a true "more bang for the buck" effect. The requested funding amount is small but this small amount will add great value to an existing trail resource. The small funding for these amenities will create a comprehensive aesthetic and an easy-to-use wayfinding system for the length of the trail, and will increase both the value and functionality of the trail considerably. The project is also cost-effective in that it employs proven County and MRCA standard design elements and materials, value-added in-house expertise and labor, and will capitalize on our years of park building experience.

3. *Are you aware of any toxins on the property? Has a Phase I or Phase II Toxic Report been done? If so, address timing of clean-up, type of toxins and delays to project construction that might result from toxins on the site.*

The MRCA is unaware of any toxins on the site and it is unlikely that any exist. The Project site is a bike path/maintenance road that dates back to the 1970s. Prior to its creation the area was part of the Ballona Creek stream corridor. In most areas the trail is bordered by residential properties. The only Project elements that would require any excavation are footings for the fence and exhibit frames, and these would be minor disturbances into existing pavement.

4. *Are there other impediments on the project site (e.g., overhead or underground utilities)? If so, explain their location and nature, including any mitigation measures planned.*

There are no known impediments on the project site. The exact locations for the interpretive exhibits and wayfinding signs will be determined after funding is secured. The nature of the improvements is such that if any impediments are encountered, the amenities could be relocated without affecting the Project's quality.

5. *For Acquisitions, address status of all the following:*

N/A. The proposal is for a development project.

6. *For Development Projects, explain the status of all of the following:*

- ♦ **Preliminary plans.** The preliminary plans are essentially complete; the project has a limited scope and will not require extensive construction plans. If the project is awarded funding, detailed layout for each sign location will be conducted then.
- ♦ **CEQA compliance.** Complete: a Categorical Exemption stamped by the County Clerk is attached. See page 37.
- ♦ **Commitments from project partners and contractors.** Los Angeles County Department of Public Works is in support of the project. A formal contract with the county of Los Angeles to install the striping will be executed after funding is secured. Construction contractors have not been selected; we expect to use in-house construction labor for the majority of the other improvements.
- ♦ **Planting palette and landscape designs.** The Project does not include any planting.
- ♦ **Land access/tenure agreements.** The cities of Los Angeles and Culver City and Los Angeles County DPW have given contingent approval to the Project. Full approval will be gained after the project's design phase.
- ♦ **Applicable permits.** Los Angeles County DPW will review the project after design is complete.
- ♦ **Required reviews by other agencies.** No other reviews are required.
- ♦ **Project renderings.** Renderings are not contemplated as part of the Project design.

- **Architectural/engineering designs.** All work will be designed to County Bikeway standards using existing details and manufacturer specifications.

- **Mitigation requirements** (permits or environmental clearance). None required.

7. *What other factors may affect the project's timeline and completion? How will these factors be addressed?*

There are no other factors likely to affect the project's timeline and completion.

E. Organizational Capacity and Sustainability (10 points)

1. *Describe your organization's experience in completing this type of project or similar projects.*

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) is a joint powers entity that was established in 1985 and is comprised of two local park districts and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The mission of the MRCA is to complement the work of other agencies in protecting land and developing natural parks in southern California mountains and rivers. The MRCA currently manages over 65,000 acres of parkland and holds fee title to approximately 10,000 acres.

Since its inception, the MRCA has constructed scores of small and large natural park projects. Our dedicated construction staff constructed six riverfront parks now owned and maintained by the MRCA. The eight-acre Augustus F. Hawkins Park in South Los Angeles, now operated by the City of Los Angeles, is one of the finest urban natural parks ever constructed. In partnership with the County Watershed Management division, the MRCA is the lead in constructing one-half-mile of River Parkway along Tujunga Wash in the San Fernando Valley. We also have broken ground on a five-acre park along the Los Angeles River Greenway in Elysian Valley. Other relevant project successes include Bosque del Rio Hondo, Ballona Creek Trail-Centinela Entrance, Arroyo Seco Woodland and Wildlife Park, and the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens.

The MRCA has been responsible for the protection of open space for parkland, trail building, restoration and development of parkland along Los Angeles River, creating public and private partnerships, and directing nationally acclaimed educational programs that target inner-city youth. The MRCA has a proven track record of working with communities, elected officials, agency representatives and project stakeholders. Public input on park design is an integral part of the planning process.

The MRCA provides comprehensive interpretive programming throughout the Los Angeles region utilizing parks as outdoor laboratories and classrooms. Interpretation is a proven method of meeting agency objectives because it produces awareness and appreciation, which leads to stewardship and protection. Programs include curriculum-based environmental education programs for schools which meet state content standards; after-school programs for at-risk youth focusing on outdoor leadership and awareness skills; public programs for seniors, families and small children that range from full-moon hikes to photography classes to edible plant walks; youth leadership programs in the form of Junior Rangers for middle school participants and

Ranger Explorers for teens and young adults; and transportation programs that make it easier to visit our public open space.

Current programming is offered at a variety of parks. The MRCA centers for educational programming are located at the William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom in Franklin Canyon, and Temescal Gateway Park in the Pacific Palisades. Public programs are also offered at Towsley Canyon, Mentryville and Whitney Canyon in Santa Clarita, Ramirez Canyon in Malibu, and the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve in Calabasas.

2. Is the expertise needed for your project readily available within your organization? If not, how do you plan to acquire it? Will you be using experts who are appropriately licensed according to State law?

The MRCA is fortunate to have all the necessary expertise readily available on its full time staff to design and construct the Project. The MRCA professional staff includes landscape architects, plant and animal ecologists, a habitat restoration specialist, an interpretation specialist, GIS specialists, project analysts, and a natural resources manager, and field staff provides experienced maintenance, construction, and law enforcement services. Construction of the enhancements will be overseen by a licensed landscape architect as appropriate.

3. Describe how you will provide for long-term management and maintenance of the project over the time period indicated by the Site Control/Land Tenure requirements, including:

a) What is planned for long-term maintenance?

Long-term maintenance will continue to be the responsibility of the cities of Los Angeles and Culver City and Los Angeles County, and consists of weed control, trash pick-up and graffiti removal. The striping has a life expectancy of at least 20 years. The interpretive exhibits will be regularly monitored for damage due to condensation and graffiti. The signs will have a UV coating to protect against fading, so that is not expected to be a problem.

b) Who will perform long-term maintenance? Describe their experience in maintaining this type of project.

Long-term maintenance will continue to be the responsibility of the cities of Los Angeles and Culver City and Los Angeles County. These entities have been maintaining the trail since the 1970s. The agreements establishing the maintenance responsibilities are attached, refer to page 39.

c) How will ongoing maintenance be funded?

Maintenance will continue to be funded by operations funds controlled by the cities of Los Angeles and Culver City and Los Angeles County.

4. How will the project be protected from vandalism and deterioration?

Given the Project's location in urbanized Los Angeles, vandalism cannot be completely prevented. However, the project's elements are designed to minimize the effects of vandalism, particularly graffiti. The interpretive exhibits will be covered with a clear sheet plexiglass, that can be cleaned and buffed to remove paint and scratches. The plexiglass is inexpensive to

replace. The exhibit frames, bike racks, and benches will be set in concrete and/or bolted per manufacturer specifications for maximum stability.

The interpretive exhibits will have a UV coating to prevent fading. Wayfinding signage will have an anti-graffiti coating applied prior to installation that prevents permanent damage to the sign. Fences and gates are in place to allow closure of the trail during periods of flooding, and could be used for nightly lockup if desired. None of the project's elements are expected to deteriorate.

5. For Conservation Easements, describe your plan for perpetual stewardship and address the ongoing funding that will be needed to support the terms and conditions of the stewardship plan.

N/A. The project is not a conservation easement.

F. Community and Regional Impacts

1. Land Use Planning and Community Involvement

a) Within the project service area, what is the current use of river frontage?

The Project extends along 7.2 miles of river frontage on the north bank, which is an existing bike path. The south bank of the river is a flood access and maintenance road used by Los Angeles County and is not open to the public. Tributary creeks including Sepulveda Channel and Centinela Creek, are only used as storm water conveyance and offer limited public access.

b) Estimate the acreage of park and open-space areas currently found within the Community where the project is located. How much acreage will this project add?

The largest developed park in the community is Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, a XX-acre park. The Ballona Wetlands, a natural conservation area, is approximately 600 acres owned by the State. Culver City has one large 42-acre park with active recreation facilities, and several small active neighborhood parks totaling approximately 30 acres. The new Playa Vista development includes a few small neighborhood parks. The Project will not add any acreage of parkland because it is an enhancement of an existing trail.

c) How have you coordinated this project with local land use authorities?

The Project is an enhancement of an existing trail and will not alter any land uses.

d) What is the Project's expected impact on the local Community?

The Project will add a new dimension to the existing bike path but is not expected to result in any new impacts.

e) What have you done to address potential conflicts between competing user groups?

The subject trail is a multi-modal trail with a dominant user group of bicyclists. Multi-modal trails inherently have conflicts between cyclists, walkers, joggers, dog walkers, adults with children, and other users. The Project includes the striping of lanes on the trail, which will clearly delineate boundaries, reducing the potential for such conflicts. With the edges of bike lanes defined, it will be easier for cyclists and non-cyclists to stay out of each other's way.

f) Has there been any opposition to the project? If so, explain the nature of the concerns and

how you have addressed them.

The conservation movement around Ballona Creek and Santa Monica Bay has a long history of opposition, mostly related to the controversial Playa Vista development and the acquisition of the Ballona Wetlands. Although the trail has been in place and in use since the 1970s, some residential neighbors oppose any proposals that would encourage use.

The MRCA typically encounters some opposition to any project, whether development or land acquisition, regardless of the project's merits. This opposition generally is founded on misunderstandings about the agency and is addressed during public meetings. Updates on the project will be given at regularly scheduled MRCA board meetings.

g) Explain how you plan to keep the Community informed and involved in the project.

The MRCA will keep the community informed and involved in the Project primarily through our continued involvement with the stakeholder and planning groups focused on the creek, including the Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force. Regular updates on the Project's progress will be given at monthly MRCA and Conservancy Board meetings.

h) What local organizations or partnerships will be assisting with construction and on-going maintenance and operations of the River Parkway?

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works will apply the striping to the bike path. The ongoing maintenance and operations will continue to be the responsibilities of the County and Cities of Los Angeles and Culver City.

2. Public Health

a) Describe how your project may increase physical activity levels and fitness among users. What measurements (i.e., surveys) do you have, or plan to have, to support these projections?

The Project will increase physical activity levels and fitness by improving and drawing attention to the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path, and encouraging longer trips. Coupled with the MRCA's new interpretive programming at the Ballona Wetlands, and improvements to three entrances, the Project will result in more people using the trail to bicycle, walk, or jog.

The interpretive exhibits will encourage users to travel farther along the trail because the content of each exhibit will be part of a coordinated overall story that continues as one travels down (or up) the trail. The interpretive exhibits will be distributed regularly along the trail, and the provision of benches and other amenities at key locations will allow users to rest without leaving the trail, making it easier to take a longer ride, run, or walk.

The installation of wayfinding signs at major entrances to the trail will make it easier for people to find and access the trail. At major access points to the trail, signs will show the distance to destinations such as the Ballona Wetlands, the South Bay Bike Trail, or other attractions. Knowledge of the distance to such destinations will make it more likely that users will extend their trip.

No formal surveys or counts are planned to measure use of the trail. However, MRCA's Interpretive Division staff at the Ballona Wetlands will be able to provide anecdotal evidence of increased use over time. In addition, the continued participation in watershed planning processes