

Attachment
SMMC Item 15
August 29, 2011

Materials prepared by: Barbara Romero and Melissa Guerrero, 08/23/11



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Mr. Antonio Gonzalez
Chairman
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-Six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90065

August 22, 2011

Dear Chairman Gonzalez:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this grant proposal to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. We are applying for Project, Planning, and Design support for the acquisition of 42 acres of land along the LA River known as G2/Taylor Yard, or the crown-jewel location for addressing regional water quality improvements and creating riparian habitat and open space. This property owned by Union Pacific is under threat for private industrial development.

The Los Angeles River Revitalization Corporation (RRC) is a non-profit organization (Tax ID: 27-2245545) that bridges the public and private sectors to transform one of LA's greatest untapped resources – the LA River – into an attractive destination and transformative corridor for the region. Our mission is to improve the quality of life in Los Angeles by revitalizing the LA River with sustainable development projects.

As you know, the LA River threads 51 miles through greater Los Angeles and it has been envisioned to connect and revitalize our neighborhoods, create multiple spaces for recreation and enjoyment, support a more integrated and sustainable water system, and catalyze jobs and the local economy. This Project would achieve multiple-benefits and is essential for the success of both the overall water management in the region and revitalization of the LA River.

Thank you for your consideration of our proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at 323/221-7800 or obrownson@larivercorp.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Omar Brownson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Omar Brownson

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
GRANT APPLICATION**

Project Name: G2 Project Planning and Design	Amount of Request: \$120,000		
Applicant Name: Los Angeles River Revitalization Corporation	Total Project Cost:		
	Amount of Match:		
	SMMC Fund Source(s):		
Applicant Address: 540 West Avenue 26 Suite 475 Los Angeles, CA 90065	Source of Match:		
	Project Address:		
	County	Senate District	Assembly District
	Los Angeles		
Phone: 323-221-7800	Email: obrownson@larivercorp.com		
Fax:			
Grantee's Authorized Representative:			
Omar Brownson, Executive Director		323-221-7800	
<hr/> <i>Name and Title</i>		<hr/> <i>Phone</i>	
Person with day-to-day responsibility for project:			
Omar Brownson, Executive Director		323-221-7800	
<hr/> <i>Name and Title</i>		<hr/> <i>Phone</i>	
Brief Scope of Work (60 words maximum):			
The project focuses on one of the most critical properties on the Los Angeles River – G2/Taylor Yard. The 42-acre parcel is considered the crown jewel of the LA River and it's under threat for private industrial development. The RRC will develop and implement an acquisition strategy, including identifying and securing appropriate partners, completing project and planning due diligence, community outreach, and negotiations with the owner.			
Funding Source Applied for:			
Narrative/Detailed Project Description: G2 PPD			
Summary			
<p>The RRC seeks the acquisition of the 42-acre G2 parcel, the “crown jewel” of the Los Angeles River. The G2 property, owned by Union Pacific Railroad Company, is located at 2850 Kerr Street and is immediately adjacent to the Glendale Narrows portion of the Los Angeles River flood control channel with over two miles of river frontage. This six-mile stretch of graded soft-bottom channel is one of the few areas of the river able to support regional water quality improvements, riparian habitat and abundant wildlife. G2 is a critically important site that has played a very high-profile role in the City of Los Angeles’ natural, economic, and cultural history and its location along the Los Angeles River places it within the context of long-term river revitalization.</p> <p>In 2001, <i>Common Ground: Watershed and Open Space Plan for San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers</i> – a plan prepared in part by the SMMC – identified the site as one with potential for open space and near-term restoration of wetland and riparian habitats to increase biodiversity and recommended acquisition as a way to fulfill the goals of open space and restoration. In 2002, the California Coastal Conservancy approved the “Taylor Yard Multiple-Objective Feasibility Study,” after a concerted public outreach process, which established G2 as a central component of a regional publicly-accessible open space network. In 2006, the City entered into a project partnership agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, which includes the portion of the River adjacent to the G2 parcel and which includes investigating the possibility of modifying the River’s concrete channel in that area. The G2 parcel is the single largest parcel along the</p>			

stretch of the Corps' feasibility study and provides the greatest opportunity for near-term restoration of the river's ecosystem.

In 2007, the City Council adopted the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, including the G2 parcel in one of its five "Opportunity Areas" as publicly-accessible open space with considerable modifications to the adjacent River channel. In 2008, the City Council adopted a Master Plan priority project list, which includes G2 as the "Taylor Yard River/Wetland Park."

Further, because of its location in the LA River watershed, G2 has been studied for large-scale water quality and community improvements for over 20 years. Possibilities for water quality elements include constructed wetlands, on-site retention/detention of urban runoff, natural hydrologic features, and site-specific best management practices. Additional options include recreational, aesthetic, and educational elements, revegetation with native plant species, and re-establishment of riparian corridors.

Water quality improvements will require an assessment of remediation. There are significant environmental issues with the site dating from past activities as an industrial center, including locomotive and refrigeration car maintenance and washing; diesel service and maintenance; fueling; car storage and switching; equipment storage; and the operation of utility department shops for electrical, mechanical, and plumbing works. Generally, past chemical usage at Taylor Yard included acids, paint, waste oil, gasoline, and chlorinated solvents, resulting in soil and groundwater pollution associated with the following types of contaminants: Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH); Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs); Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOCs); and Heavy Metals (Metals). The G2 parcel is within the San Fernando Valley Groundwater Basin, an area designated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as a State Superfund site for groundwater contamination.

To aid water quality and restoration efforts, in 2007 the City set aside \$25 million of funds from Proposition O – a \$500 million bond issue for projects to protect public health by cleaning up pollution in rivers, beaches and the ocean – for acquisition of G2, which recognizes the historic contamination at the site and its water resource-related impacts.

G2 is now bordered by the Los Angeles River, a new LAUSD high school, Río de Los Angeles State Park - which was opened to the public in 2007, and will be further surrounded by a public park (on the adjacent G1 parcel owned by the California Department of Parks and Recreation) and a multi-family housing complex. It is critical to preserve its availability for restoration and community access to bring together all planning elements in that area and maximize the partnerships available for G2.

The parcel is owned by Union Pacific Railroad Company and has been used for railroad switching and maintenance operations since the early 1920s. The G2 parcel is currently in escrow, awaiting closing by a private industrial developer. Losing control of the crown-jewel parcel would threaten the single largest potential development for community access, open space and restoration along the LA River.

Funding from this grant would allow RRC to continue planning and development work for the site in preparation for acquisition of G2. Acquiring the site would preserve its potential for community development in accordance with the LA River Revitalization Master Plan and other regional open space and water quality plans. Without this grant the crown jewel site of the Los Angeles River revitalization is at risk, along with its potential for open space, ecosystem restoration and water quality benefits.

One of the key issues will be to address how remediation of the contaminated soil and water potentially impact both the acquisition price and subsequent use.

Acquisition Strategy Led by RRC Staff

RRC will lead, manage and oversee the development of acquisition strategy and execute all aspects necessary to coordinate outreach and support to secure this property as envisioned for the LA River. The

RRC seeks to facilitate on behalf of interested public agencies the gaining of rights to real property in the form of fee simple title. We will accomplish this through following the steps outlined in the Acquisition Strategy below. We will evaluate and test a variety of strategies including direct purchase, exchange of properties, or other means of transfer. Given the urgency of the acquisition, we seek to operate in an expedited manner that allows us to initiate several of the steps below simultaneously. This multi-tracked effort will require significant RRC staff coordination and planning.

RRC Acquisition Process

1. Manage all aspects and phases of the land acquisition process, including regular reporting of progress
2. Collect and review previous due diligence and studies including, but not limited to, appraisal maps, appraisals, title reports, boundary surveys, comprehensive plan information, hazardous waste reports, and any additional items pertinent to the valuation or acquisition of real property
3. Coordinate and commission, as appropriate, all necessary land acquisitions documents, including, but not limited to appraisal of property’s fair market value, surveys, remediation studies, and environmental assessments
4. Ensure all documents are consistent and comply with appropriate public agency requirements and solicit public agency and other stakeholder reviews and input
5. Establish project development and feasibility plan, including identifying necessary resources and partnerships for acquisition
6. Develop, track, and administer funds necessary to develop, structure, and execute a purchase agreement
7. Negotiate with owner for real property based on fair and impartial information that supports competitive negotiations and appropriate fiduciary responsibilities
8. Purchase of property

Key Public Agencies

To date, planning for G2 parcel has included participation from the City, Trust for Public Land, Corps, Los Angeles Unified School District, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, SCC, and State Parks. In addition to those mentioned, the following agencies will be involved with project development, including:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works
- County of Los Angeles, Department of Health (Vector Control)
- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California State Water Quality Control Board
- California Department of Transportation
- Los Angeles River Water Master
- High Speed Rail Authority

Tasks / Milestones:	Budget:	Start Date	Completion Date
1 <i>Direct Acquisition Expenses</i>		Month 1	Month 12
Appraisals	15,000		
Appraisal reviews	2,500		
Title Reports	750		
2 <i>Staff Time</i>	71,750	Month 1	Month 12
RRC Staff and Administration			

