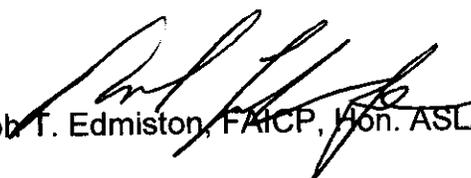


DESERT AND MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: June 11, 2008

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VII: Consideration of resolution authorizing the conditional transfer of approximately one-acre Joshua Ranch Trailhead facility to the City of Palmdale, and retaining a conservation easement.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the conditional transfer of approximately one-acre Joshua Ranch Trailhead facility to the City of Palmdale, and retaining a conservation easement.

Background: The Desert and Mountains Conservancy (DMCA) has title to the 200-plus acre Joshua Ranch open space dedication in southwestern Palmdale. The project developer took an approximately one-acre partially disturbed portion of the dedication parcel and created a parking lot for public trailhead purposes. The parking area surface will be decomposed granite. Issues about permission and timing for said improvements are not worth addressing because the parking lot, with a proposed high quality restroom, makes sense. The developer has also promised to restore any areas disturbed in the grading with a seed mix and restoration recommendations from the DMCA. The parking lot also is in a good location relative to road access and not creating additional visual impacts.

At the March 10, 2008 Governing Board meeting staff had discussed at length about transferring the approximately one-acre Joshua Ranch Trailhead facility to the City of Palmdale. Staff was directed by the Governing Board to discuss with the City of Palmdale on retaining a conservation easement over the trailhead.

Staff sees no downside to transferring the property to Palmdale in fee simple and retaining a conservation easement to ensure that improvements will never be expanded, that the surface will remain decomposed granite, and that only native plants will be allowed to grow. The City of Palmdale would build and maintain the restroom facility.

Some work will be necessary to create a link between the parking area and the existing trail on DMCA land.