

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

PARK IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS EVALUATION CRITERIA

Adopted May 14, 2001

The Park Improvement and Development Projects Evaluation Criteria have been developed for the assessment of projects nominated for the Conservancy's Workprogram 2000 to provide park improvement, trails, historical restoration, habitat restoration, interpretive programs, and planning for park enhancement projects. Land Acquisition Evaluation Criteria were previously adopted by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for evaluation of properties nominated for purchase, with the Workprogram for Land Acquisition adopted by the Conservancy on September 28, 2000. Both evaluation processes provide guidelines for the Conservancy in its review of current projects and potential new projects. The Conservancy explicitly reserves the right to amend its Workprogram at any time to reflect the overall objective to protect, maintain, and enhance regional habitat and linkages, trail linkages; urban, river, and open space park projects.

GOAL TO ENCOURAGE REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT PARK AND TRAIL PROJECTS

Through the Improvement Projects Evaluation Criteria, the Conservancy seeks to encourage regionally significant park, trail, and restoration projects. Projects are scored accordingly, and typically a project with the highest numeric scores in the largest number of Values categories, will rank above a project scoring high in only one or two categories. However, in project rankings, the Conservancy Board can apply a multiplier weight to the numeric score of a particular value or set of values, such as Urban Park Value, to provide geographic balance. Or, after all scores are totaled, the board may review a subset of projects (*e.g.* all urban projects or all river projects) and assign a subset priority ranking within those categories. A deciding weight for all projects will also be the degree to which Conservancy funds stimulate outside participation in funding a project.

Conservancy and MRCA Projects

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority have a primary responsibility for funding improvements on SMMC/MRCA owned or managed parklands in fulfillment of the Conservancy's mission. Therefore, the first priorities for funding are *Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy/Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority projects that are required by or which manifestly enhance the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's statutory mission to provide resource protection, safety, access, visitor services, and educational interpretation.* These include the following categories:

SMMC/MRCA Lands Resource Protection Projects: Projects which facilitate protection of wildlife, habitat, and historical/archaeological resources on agency-managed parklands, including habitat restoration projects in urban or rural parks.

SMMC/MRCA Lands Vegetation Management and Fire Safety: Projects which facilitate fire safety and any required fuel modification zones on Conservancy and/or MRCA owned or managed parklands.

SMMC/MRCA Visitor-Serving Projects: Projects which provide for enhanced visitation, urban accessibility, and safety to SMMC/MRCA owned or managed parks (including signage, restrooms, parking, trail building or repairs, etc.). This includes new projects to implement statutory requirements to provide better accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

SMMC/MRCA Education and Interpretation Projects: Projects which are required to achieve or expand the outreach mission of the agency and which provide interpretive programs and materials to substantially enhance knowledge, appreciation, and enjoyment of the natural environment, open space, parklands, and rivers .

PARK IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS CRITERIA FOR NOMINATED PROJECTS:

PUBLIC RECREATION VALUE (other than trails)

- PR1:** The project implements a major component of an existing plan (such as the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Master Plan, county or city plans) related to a major recreational public use facility (*e.g.*, nature park, campground, picnic area, visitor center, or educational interpretive center). 4
- PR2:** The project provides improvements to a park site that currently serves, or is expected to serve, a visitor base in a regional or greater geographic area. 4
- PR3:** The project adds visitor-serving amenities and public safety improvements to public parkland (*e.g.*, signage, restrooms, lighting, etc.). 3
- PR 4:** The project provides a high quality access point or parking area for adjacent open space or parkland. 2

ACCESSIBILITY VALUE

A1: The project improvements exceed legal standards for accessibility. 4

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION/INTERPRETATION VALUE

EE1: The project provides educational/interpretive displays that will significantly enhance appreciation and enjoyment of a resource. 4

EE2: The project will provide park information materials and educational/interpretive information, available to a large number of visitors of all ages. 3

EE3: The project provides informational materials but to more limited audience. 2

NATURAL RESOURCES ENHANCEMENT VALUE

NR1: The project substantially restores riparian or wetland habitat (>0.2 acres). 4

NR2: The project improves or supports regeneration of important native vegetative cover on slopes near a stream or river, which if substantially disturbed may contribute to flood, erosion, creek sedimentation, or reduced groundwater recharge. 4

NR3: The project significantly enhances the potential for wildlife movement in an identified movement corridor chokepoint. 4

NR4: The project substantially restores a site by removal of exotic species and reestablishment of native species. 3

NR5: The project provides substantial tree planting of appropriate native species. 2

NR6: The site provides a small scale (0.05 to 0.19 acres) riparian or wetland restoration project. 2

TRAIL PROJECT RESOURCE VALUE

TP1: The project builds a significant link in a major regional trail. 4

- TP2:** The project repairs a critical link on an existing major regional trail. 4
- TP3:** The project builds an important trailhead with parking for a major regional trail. 3
- TP4:** The project builds a new trail or repairs a trail which provides a connection from a populated area or trailhead to an existing trail. 3
- TP5:** The project builds or improves trail accessibility for trail users of a wide range of ability levels and physical conditions. 3
- TP6:** The project provides or enhances trail conditions for multi-use by equestrians, mountain bicyclists, and hikers. 2
- TP7:** The project provides or enhances a riverfront walking and bikeway trail. 2

SCENIC AND AESTHETIC VALUE

- SA1:** The project provides aesthetic features (e.g., outstanding design, art elements) to a park project that greatly enhance the park and visitor experience. 4
- SA2:** The project provides park or trail improvements located in an especially scenic area. 2
- SA3:** The project provides a vista point or scenic overlook over a significant viewshed. 2

HISTORIC /CULTURAL RESTORATION VALUE

- HC1:** The project restores or enhances a federal or state-designated or eligible historic site, such as a National Register of Historic Places. 4
- HC2:** The restoration project provides a significant and unique aspect to public parkland (historical interest, cultural appreciation, educational interest). 4
- HC3:** The project restores or enhances a designated local community historic resource. 3
- HC4:** The historic/cultural restoration project is an integrated component of a larger

park improvement project. 2

URBAN PARK VALUE

UP1: The project will improve or significantly enhance open space parkland in a densely urban and/or park-poor community. 5

UP2: The project substantially improves a park site by eliminating or significantly remediating environmental contamination, such as that from urban runoff or onsite conditions. 4

UP3: The project enhances or restores a substantial -sized (>2.0 acres) sample of a native ecosystem/plant community surrounded by an otherwise natural-resource-deficient urban area. 4

UP4: The project restores natural vegetation in smaller sized (<1.9 acres) park location in an otherwise natural-resource- deficient urban area. 3

SUSTAINABILITY VALUE

S1: Project provides substantial energy conservation measures and/or innovative power generation. 3

S2: Project provides state of the art design for wastewater and/or other innovative and substantial water conservation techniques 3

S3: Project provides innovative use of recycled materials in construction. 2

S4: The project reduces runoff and increases percolation on site with use of permeable surfaces. 2

PARTNERSHIP/ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY VALUE

PEO1: The project is significant to one or more partner government agencies and/or non-government organizations with funds available. 4

PEO2: Funding has been specifically allocated in the State Budget as a line item or legislative intent. 4

PEO3: Completion of the project would assist a government agency in fulfilling its master land protection or recreation plan. 3

PEO4: The project provides a plan or feasibility study that enhances cooperative land protection and recreation important to two or more governmental agencies or non-governmental organizations. 3

PEO5: A partner agency would provide maintenance of the improvements. 3

MATCHING FUNDS WEIGHTING

Scores for improvement projects that are matched with other funding sources can be given an extra weighted value:

Funding match on a one to one basis:

Multiply total score X 2

Funding match on a two to one basis:

Multiply total score X 3