



● **Board of Directors**
Real Property and Asset Management Committee

12/12/2017 Board Meeting

7-4

Subject

Adopt CEQA determination and authorize granting a year-to-year access license to the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy on Metropolitan-owned property located northeast of Palm Springs, in an unincorporated portion of Riverside County

Executive Summary

This action authorizes the General Manager to grant a year-to-year license to the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (CVMC) for a pedestrian /equestrian low-impact, non-motorized, mixed-use outdoor recreation trail in the County of Riverside. This would allow public use of an existing unpaved road, connecting to an existing unpaved trail inside the Joshua Tree National Park. CVMC will assume maintenance and repair of the road, relieving Metropolitan of the expense. It is proposed that the standard license fee be waived due to the mutual benefits derived by both parties from the granting of this license.

Details

CVMC is a California state agency established in 1991 to protect the natural and cultural resources of the Coachella Valley. CVMC collaborates with local communities, state and federal agencies, elected officials, non-profit organizations, business and environmental interests to achieve this goal. Since its inception, CVMC and its partners have conserved over 81,000 acres.

CVMC has requested a year-to-year license on 8.8 acres of Metropolitan fee-owned land, and use of a 1.4 mile Metropolitan access road easement for a mixed-use outdoor recreation trail and access to the Joshua Tree National Park. This property is used by Metropolitan for access to the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) which is located along the boundary of the Joshua Tree National Park and approximately 12.5 miles northeast of the City of Palm Desert in Riverside County, California (Attachment 1). This would allow public use of an existing unpaved road, connecting to an existing unpaved trail inside the Joshua Tree National Park. Improvements to the trail are not proposed, except for trail markers and signage to be installed at the proposed Pushawalla Trailhead and Park boundary on land owned by the State of California. Metropolitan currently maintains this private road to ensure access to CRA facilities.

The license will have the following key provisions:

- This conveyance is subject to Metropolitan's paramount rights reservation.
- CVMC activities would include routine trail inspections and patrols to identify any maintenance needs and unauthorized uses.
- Routine trail maintenance and repairs would be performed by CVMC using hand tools, removing weeds along the trails & trailheads and without the use of herbicide.

The current estimate for weed abatement cost for Metropolitan in this area is between \$300 and \$500 per acre per year depending on environmental conditions, accessibility, and visibility. The proposed license is revocable and is compatible with Metropolitan's access and other needs related to the CRA. Considering an appraisal showing

de minimis commercial value for this property and the direct benefit Metropolitan will derive by being relieved of the road maintenance responsibility, it is proposed that the license fee be waived in lieu of the mutual benefits derived by all parties. Board authorization to grant this road license is required because the term of the real property interest to be conveyed may exceed five years.

Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 8230: Grants of Real Property Interests

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 8231: Appraisal of Real Property Interests

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 8232: Terms and Conditions of Management Documents

By Minute Item 48766, dated August 16, 2011, the Board adopted the proposed policy principles for managing Metropolitan's real property assets.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination(s) for Option #1:

The proposed action is categorically exempt under the provisions of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The proposed action involves the funding and minor alterations of existing private or public facilities, along with minor modifications in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. These activities would not result in significant impacts to the physical environment. Accordingly, the proposed action qualifies under Class 1 and Class 4 Categorical Exemptions (Sections 15301 and 15304 of the State CEQA Guidelines).

The CEQA determination is: Determine that the proposed action is categorically exempt under Class 1, Section 15301 and Class 4, Section 15304 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Board Options

Option #1

Adopt the CEQA determination that the proposed action is categorically exempt, and

Authorize granting a year-to-year license to The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy.

Fiscal Impact: Metropolitan can avoid up to \$4,300 in maintenance costs per year.

Business Analysis: This option will allow the use of Metropolitan's patrol road and avoid maintenance costs.

Option #2

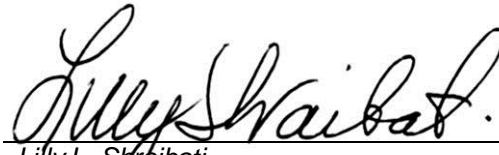
Do not approve the license

Fiscal Impact: Metropolitan will continue to spend up to \$4,300 per year to maintain the patrol road.

Business Analysis: This option would forgo an opportunity to reduce costs by allowing the use of Metropolitan's patrol road.

Staff Recommendation

Option #1



Lily L. Straibati
Manager, Real Property

11/30/2017
Date



Jeffrey Kightlinger
General Manager

11/30/2017
Date

Attachment 1 – Location and site maps

Ref# rpdm12657667

Location and Site Maps



Location and Site Maps

