

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: APRIL 23, 2014

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GREG RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER *GR*

BY: MIKE KAMINO, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT *MK*

SUBJECT: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATION ECONOMIC RECOVERY (TIGER) PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DESIGN FOR A WILDLIFE MOVEMENT CORRIDOR CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS AT LIBERTY CANYON AND THE 101 FREEWAY

The purpose of this item is for the City Council to consider a request for letter of support by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) regarding an application for the Transportation Investment Generation Economic Recovery (TIGER) planning grant to pay for the environmental analysis and design of the wildlife movement corridor crossing improvements at Liberty Canyon and the 101 Freeway.

The MRCA, as well as the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), National Park Service (NPS), and Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM) are co-applying for this grant, in the amount of \$2 million, that is available through the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The Liberty Canyon area is the last remaining place where a habitat linkage between the Santa Monica Mountains and the Simi Hills can be made. The link is vital to preserve bio-diversity and the long-term health of larger mammals like the mountain lion. Liberty Canyon Road at the 101 Freeway is the critical choke point of the wildlife movement corridor, and the concept of creating a viable wildlife movement structure to provide access of animals from the north side of the freeway with the south side has been discussed for years.

The proposed TIGER grant dovetails with the Proposition 40 grant funds authorized this year by SMMC to prepare the Caltrans Project Study Report (PSR) which will serve as the first step to analyze the feasibility and concept options for the wildlife movement crossing improvements at the freeway in Liberty Canyon. Possible options previously discussed regarding potential wildlife movement corridor crossings included a tunnel under the freeway or an overpass over the freeway, west of Liberty Canyon Road. (See attached map.) Once feasibility and concept options are determined, funds from the TIGER grant would be used towards conducting the environmental analysis of the

selected option beginning in mid-2016, followed by preparation of project design beginning in mid-2018.

The request by the MRCA, at this time, is for a letter of support for the grant application only, and not for any particular option of the wildlife movement crossing. As either the tunnel or overcrossing option would be in the City of Agoura Hills, our City would be actively participating in the ultimate selection and details of design of the wildlife movement corridor structure.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council direct staff to prepare a letter, for the Mayor's signature, expressing support for funding of the TIGER planning grant application for a wildlife movement crossing structure at Liberty Canyon.

Attachment: Aerial Map



-  SMMC MRCA Property
-  Other Public Land

