RANCHO SIMI RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

1692 SYCAMORE DRIVE

SIMI VALLEY, CALIFORNIA 93065

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to Section 54956 of the California Government Code, that the Board of Directors of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, by call of the Chair of the Board of Directors, has ordered that it will hold a Special Meeting on Wednesday, January 21, 2015, beginning at 6:30 p.m., at the Sycamore Drive Community Center, 1692 Sycamore Drive, Simi Valley, California. The purpose of the Special Meeting is to conduct the business listed on the attached Agenda.

Larry Peterson, District Clerk

Dated: January 16, 2015
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I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. PUBLIC DISCUSSION (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

IV. SCHEDULED ITEMS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Receive and Consider Public Input in Regards to the Proposed Acquisition of Alamos Canyon for Preservation as Public Open Space

B. Approval of Resolution of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Approving the Application for Land and Water Conservation Fund Alamos Canyon Acquisition Project

V. ADJOURNMENT

If any individual has a disability that may require accommodation to participate in this meeting, please contact Human Resources at 805/584-4400. Upon advance notification of the need for accommodation, reasonable arrangements will be made to provide accessibility to the meeting.
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DATE: January 21, 2015

TO: District Manager

FROM: Senior Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Receive and Consider Public Input in Regards to the Proposed Acquisition of Alamos Canyon for Preservation as Public Open Space

BACKGROUND

Alamos Canyon is located north of the 118 freeway between the Simi Valley Landfill on the east and the City of Simi Valley/City of Moorpark boundary line on the west. The canyon is currently owned by Waste Management of California, Inc. ("WM"), which also owns and operates the landfill. The Nature Conservancy ("TNC") and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy have targeted this canyon for acquisition and preservation as open space due to its being a key piece of open space needed to provide a wildlife corridor linkage between the Sierra Madre Mountains and the Santa Monica Mountains. Exhibit "A" (attached) identifies Alamos Canyon (shown as a green dot) and its relationship to surrounding wildlife linkage and protected lands (shown in dark blue).

Exhibit "B" (attached) uses a dotted red line to show the intended path of the conceptual Ronald Reagan Legacy Trail. Publicly owned properties are shown in green. This graphic indicates that the majority of the property needed to provide a continuous wildlife corridor linkage and public trail from the Sierra Madre Mountains to the north and the Santa Monica Mountains to the south are already owned by public agencies. Alamos Canyon represents the largest parcel still needed to connect the trail north of the 118 Freeway to the trail south of the 118 Freeway.

During Waste Management's landfill expansion application approval process, the City of Simi Valley entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (May 17, 2011) with WM in an effort to minimize the impact to the community resulting from the landfill expansion. Item 10 of that Memorandum addresses the issue of preserving Alamos Canyon as public open space:

10. Upon approval of the Project by the County Board of Supervisors, WM agrees to provide The Nature Conservancy ("TNC") with an option to purchase approximately 700 acres of open space land on the West side of the SVLRC on terms and conditions mutually agreeable to WM and TNC. TNC has agreed to work with the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District for the Park District to provide oversight and public accessibility to the area.

The 700 acres referenced in the Memorandum are identified in Exhibit "C" (attached). The dark blue line identifies the Alamos Canyon floor as the "Habitat Corridor." This graphic shows the proximity of the canyon to existing landfill and the expansion area.
On March 26, 2014, TNC and WM executed an *Option Agreement for the Purchase and Sale of Real Estate* which provided TNC a one-year option to purchase 734 acres located in Alamos Canyon, and also provided a one-year extension of the option term.

TNC has proposed that Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District should ultimately be the property owner and has requested that the Park District participate in the efforts to acquire the property. This includes working collaboratively with TNC to prepare and submit grant applications for state and federal grant funds. At this time in the negotiation process, the proposed acquisition would include the purchase in fee of approximately 345 acres in Alamos Canyon, the preservation of an additional approximately 331 acres within the canyon through a conservation easement, and the eventual acceptance of an additional 58 acres from WM once the required mitigation on those 58 acres is complete. The red line on Exhibit “D” (attached) shows the proposed conservation easement acreage, and the green line shows the proposed fee acquisition areas.

Park District staff has been working to determine if providing public access to the canyon is feasible. Staff has initiated discussions with the County of Ventura regarding the possible use of Oak Park County Park (located at 901 Quimsa Drive, Simi Valley) as a trailhead. This County-owned park lies north of the railroad tracks and south of the 118 freeway, and is adjacent to the westernmost edge of the Alamos Canyon property.

The Park District’s trail expert has scouted the area that lies between Oak Park County Park and Alamos Canyon Road. He has confirmed that a trail with sufficient width may be successfully constructed without too much elevation change to accommodate hikers, bikers and horseback riders, and also any emergency, Park Ranger, or maintenance vehicle access.

Exhibit “E” (attached) shows the location of Oak Park County Park in relationship to Alamos Canyon. The blue line indicates the proposed trail location. Staff envisions that the County’s formal permission (in a joint-use agreement) to use the County park as a trailhead would lead to the Park District’s construction of additional parking stalls in the park, a trailhead kiosk, and a connecting trail to Alamos Canyon.

This agenda item is intended to allow interested members of the public to testify on this subject, and to allow the Board to receive and consider that public input as it considers its acquisition of the Alamos Canyon property.

**RECOMMENDED BOARD ACTION**

Staff recommends the Board receive and consider public input in regards to the proposed acquisition and purchase of the Alamos Canyon property.

Robin Walker  
Senior Management Analyst
Access limited by Waste Management consent
Drilling locations restricted by:
1. 800’ setbacks to structures
2. (35b) Habitat Corridor
Alamos Canyon Acquisition
Alternate Acquisition - Fee and Easement Scenario

Approximate Easement Acquisition Area

Fee Acquisition Areas

EXHIBIT "D"
Alamos Canyon Acquisition
Preliminary Parking and Site Access
11-26-14
RANCHO SIMI RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 21, 2015

TO: District Manager

FROM: Senior Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Approval of a Resolution of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Approving the Application for Land and Water Conservation Fund Alamos Canyon Acquisition Project

Background:

The Nature Conservancy ("TNC") is an organization whose mission is to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. TNC and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy ("SMMC") have proposed the acquisition of a 734-acre portion of Alamos Canyon for preservation because it is a key piece of open space needed to provide a wildlife corridor linkage between the Sierra Madre Mountains and the Santa Monica Mountains. The canyon is located north of the 118 freeway between the Simi Valley Landfill on the east and the City of Simi Valley/City of Moorpark boundary line on the west.

TNC has acquired a Willing Seller Letter from the property owner, Waste Management of California, Inc. ("WM"), and has also secured a grant of $500,000 from the SMMC to be applied towards the land acquisition. If the acquisition is achieved, TNC has indicated its desire that Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District become the property owner, and has therefore requested the Park District to participate in the acquisition of the property by being the named "Applicant" on grant applications for state and federal grant funds.

Originally all 734 acres were to be acquired in fee, and the purchase price was $7.9 million. It is very difficult to raise funds for this purpose in the current economic environment. This fact has led the parties to consider a sale/purchase of less property while also creating a conservation easement. This would achieve development restrictions and also allow WM to perform exploratory oil drilling on a portion of the property. Of the remaining acreage, WM is required to perform mitigation on 58 of those acres. At this time it appears that WM would retain ownership of the 58 acres until the mitigation is completed, then deed the mitigation area to the Park District. Therefore, TNC is seeking to purchase 345 acres in fee, acquire a conservation easement over 331 acres, and then the Park District will eventually accept title over the remaining 58 mitigation acres. Currently, an appraisal is underway, and the final purchase price has not yet been determined.

TNC is actively seeking funding for the purchase of the property. One of the funding opportunities currently available is the Land and Water Conservation Fund administered
by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Grants and Local Services. This program is intended to preserve land in perpetuity specifically for the public's outdoor recreational use. The grant application is requesting a grant award between $1,000,000.00 and $1,466,000.00 to be used towards the purchase of the fee acreage. As the grant, if awarded, is a reimbursement grant, the application and resolution must certify the Park District can advance the funds while awaiting reimbursement. The Park District's financial position can allow for this. There are also matching fund limitations. The Nature Conservancy believes that grant funds pledged by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and to be pledged by the Wildlife Conservation Fund will match the grant funds sought from Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Staff is requesting the Board's authorization to submit an application under the Land and Water Conservation Fund for funds to assist in the purchase of Alamos Canyon, and recommends approval of the attached resolution.

**Fiscal Impact:** There is no direct fiscal impact to the District associated with the filing of this application. If the grant is awarded, the District may be asked to advance funds towards the acquisition of the property.

**Board Action Requested:**

That the Board approve the Resolution of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Approving the Application for Land and Water Conservation Fund Alamos Canyon Acquisition Project.

Robin Walker
Senior Management Analyst
RANCHO SIMI RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

RESOLUTION NO. __________

RESOLUTION OF THE RANCHO SIMI RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND ALAMOS CANYON ACQUISITION PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Congress under Public Law 88-578 has authorized the establishment of a federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant-In-Aid program, providing matching funds to the State of California and its political subdivisions for acquiring lands and developing facilities for public outdoor recreation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for administration of the program in the State, setting up necessary rules and procedures governing applications by local agencies under the program; and

WHEREAS, the Applicant certifies by resolution the approval of the application and the availability of eligible matching funds prior to submission of the application to the State; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors hereby:

1. Approves the filing of an application for Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance for the proposed Alamos Canyon Acquisition Project; and

2. Agrees to abide by Section 6(F)(3) of Public Law 88-578 which states, “No property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the National Secretary of the Interior, be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. The Secretary shall approve such conversion only if he finds it to be in accord with the then existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan and only upon such conditions as he deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.”

3. Certifies that said agency has matching funds from eligible source(s) and can finance 100 percent of the Project, which up to half may be reimbursed; and

4. Appoints the District Manager as agent of the Applicant to conduct all negotiations and execute and submit all documents, including, but not limited to, applications, contracts, amendments, payment requests, and compliance with all applicable current state and federal laws which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned project.
The foregoing resolution was approved and adopted by the Board of Directors of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District at its special meeting held on January 21, 2015, at 1692 Sycamore Drive, Simi Valley, California on a motion by

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Chair, Board of Directors
Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District