

Communication from Public

Name: Liz Radley
Date Submitted: 04/01/2025 03:32 PM
Council File No: 23-0722
Comments for Public Posting: Comments regarding existing usage, public safety and design for the proposed bike path & equestrian trail are attached.

Christopher Adams
Department of Public Works
Bureau of Engineering
1149 S. Broadway, 6th Floor, Mail Stop 939
Los Angeles, CA 90015-2213
Christopher.Adams@lacity.org

Re: LA River Bikepath Phase IV, Draft MND on Council File 23-0722

Dear Mr. Adams:

My name is Liz Radley, Admin of Burbank-Glendale-Griffith Park Equestrians community group of over 11,000 members, anchored in this immediate area. I am personally a stakeholder, a frequent user of this area as both a pedestrian and equestrian.

I live directly opposite of the east end of the project, and have a clear view of it and its current users.

These comments represent discussions held with multiple members of Burbank-Glendale-Griffith Park Equestrians community group, and express just some of their concerns.

Missing Equestrian Usage Count

The proposed Project contains unmitigated impacts because it does not protect the safety of the existing long standing users of the bridle trail along the Los Angeles River. The Project introduces a new use into an historic location.

The equestrian users of the location have used this equestrian trail for decades and have only one point of access to Griffith Park, via the historic Mariposa Bridge.

The project does not accurately account for the number of equestrians, where their rides originate, and what their destinations are in the park.

Who uses the Griffith Park equestrian trails?

Horses who live in backyards and boarding barns in the cities of Burbank, Glendale and Los Angeles, including over 400 who reside at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center itself. The owners of these horses live in all 3 cities, including a large contingent from the City of Los Angeles, as there is no backyard horse-keeping area in Los Angeles near Griffith Park.

Because of the excellent public trail riding in the park, horses are also brought in by owners who live further away.

Finally, the riders include old and young, tourists, novices and families with children who rent horses from the stables in the area. Indeed, even the Los Angeles Equestrian Center is involved their clients renting horses to ride in Griffith Park.

How many riders use the trail between the Riverside Bridge/Tunnel 6 and the Mariposa Bridge/Tunnel 7 area?

The draft Mitigated Negative Declaration contains no information about equestrian usage. No accurate count has been taken, and usage varies with the season, weather, day of the week and access.

Apparently cameras were installed in the last 2 weeks of October 2024 to count usage. These cameras were reported as seen by multiple members of the public on October 28th. This period was not typical of usage and thus any data is incomplete, and needs to be redone.

Based on events and weather, the usage in those weeks was negatively impacted including:

- 1) A local public equestrian event in a nearby part of Griffith Park on Saturday October 26th that drew many equestrians away from the trail system.
- 2) The LAEC Perimeter Trail was closed on October 29th and partially closed on November 4th due to DWP tree trimming/palm frond removal. (The Perimeter Trail around Los Angeles Equestrian Center must be fully open for most horses to access the historic Mariposa Bridge, the only way over the LA River into Griffith Park.)
- 3) It rained on November 2nd, causing many riders to stay home to avoid slippery conditions.

The YouTube link below shows a 3 hour time span on a random Saturday in May 2023 as a timelapse video of almost 9 minutes.

This shows the volume of equestrians travelling by and over the Mariposa Bridge, showing all types and levels of riders.

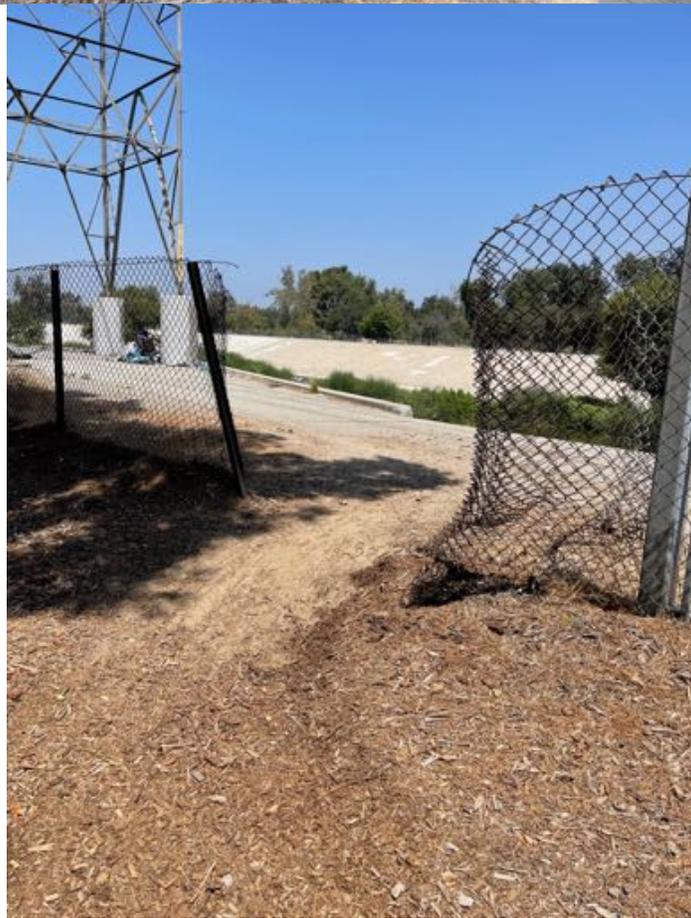
The total horse was count of 167 at a rate of over 50 per hour. That's way more than cars or bicycles on any day at that pivotal location.

<https://youtu.be/o-pQ7HJyraQ>

How can LA/DOT improve public safety at the east end of the bike path at Riverside Bridge?

Based on the maintenance observed so far, it seems that the proposed Project will NOT be maintained to normally expected public safety standards. The current east end is NOT secured or maintained in terms of public safety or signage, and I believe exposes the City of LA to possible liability claims.

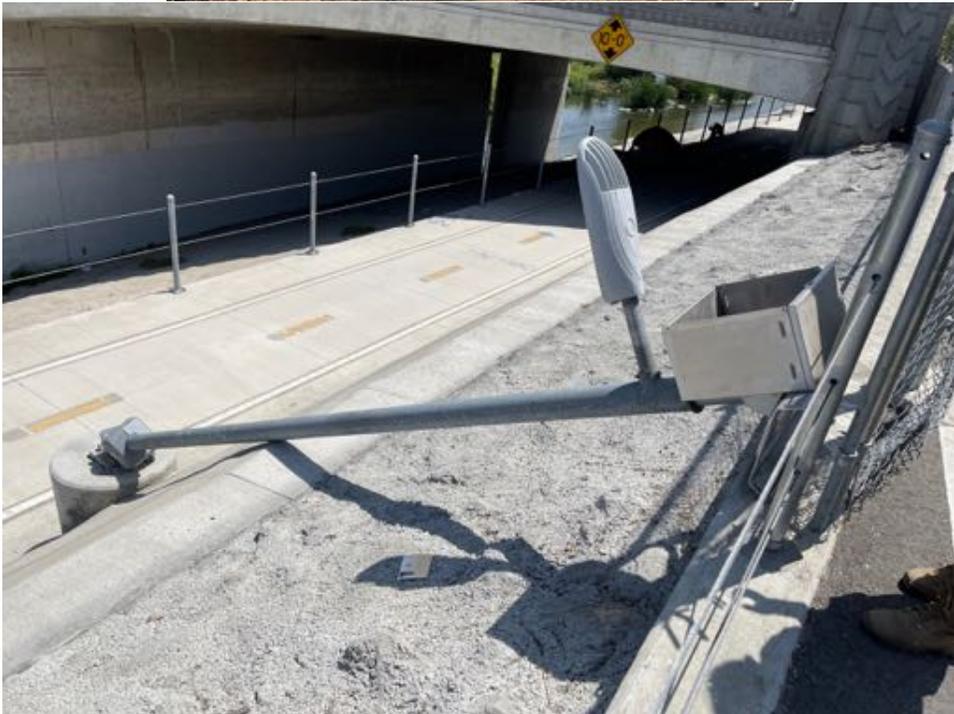
For years the east end of the current bikepath has had wide open gaps from cuts in the CalTrans chain link fencing. The secure metal DOT gates and wings at the east end offer little restriction because they do not extend far enough. They function as an island and people simply go around them. As was conveyed to DOT at previous meetings, metal security fencing needs to extend from the current east end to the bridle path at Tunnel #6 to prevent cyclists from bypassing the current gated-off location at the current terminus of the existing bikepath. (see photos)



Moreover, 'no bike' signs are painted out, graffiti'd or removed altogether. Even cyclists who wish to follow protocol do not have legible signage to inform them. This is a lack of maintenance that leads to a risk to the public.



There is so far just one recorded maintenance visit where the downed light poles and graffiti-covered signage were simply removed after being reported in 2022. No lighting has since been restored. The area lacks clear signage and is in darkness.

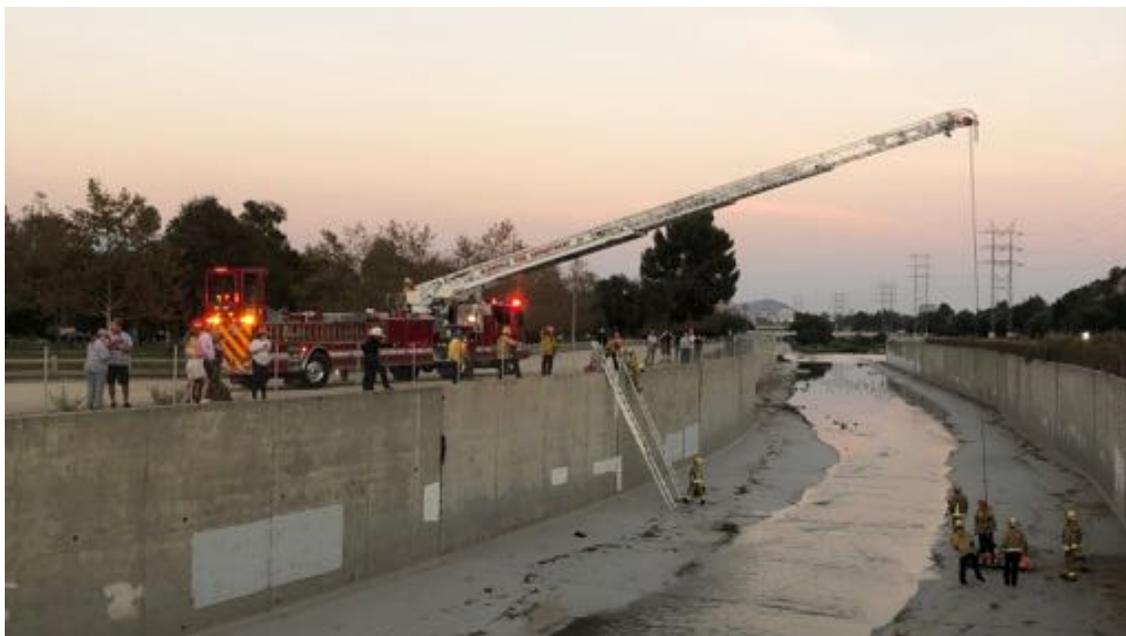


How will LA/DOT maintain and prevent the same chronic issues that currently occur at the east end, from happening at the proposed west end near the Forest Lawn freeway ramps? Given the number of agencies cited in the draft MND , there is no adequate mitigation measure for maintenance because there is no Master Agreement identified that gives LA/DOT the right to maintain all of the improvements: fences, Caltrans fence, LA River-side fence, all gates, landscaping, lighting, walls, trees? The agency complexity and the lack of maintenance shows the inadequacy of the MND. Given the enforcement complexity, the draft MND does not identify the agencies responsible for enforcement: LAPD, Park Rangers, LA/DOT, County Sheriff? The Army Corps and County Flood Control do not handle enforcement. Who do you call?

How will LA/DOT ensure physical signage at the Riverside Bridge that informs cyclists well in advance of the DEAD END and requirement to turn around and go back a mile in order to exit where they started?

How will LA/DOT ensure electronic GPS's (such as Google Maps) mark this as a DEAD END with NO outlet, so cyclists with a destination will transfer onto Zoo Drive as originally intended? As currently proposed, this has been characterized by cyclists as 'a Bike Path To Nowhere'. Until Caltrans reviews, designs, funds and builds a bridge at the Forest Lawn 134 entrance/exit, I'm told this has limited attraction to cyclists.

How will LA/DOT design the path to be striped to avoid the same misconception as currently exists at Riverside Bridge? The current striping leads cyclists onto the horse trail incorrectly believing this is in fact currently a bicycle path, and leads to hostile interactions which could end in a rider falling from their horse over the very low chainlink fence. A photo is attached of a rider being rescued, thankfully alive, from a fall face-first into the concrete-lined river as a result of a horse being startled. A cyclist could be also injured in an altercation, not realizing a horse's concern.



Additionally the current asphalt is not intended or maintained as a bike path, leading to the possibly of injury to cyclists, as described by cyclists on the recent Zoom call.

What specific law enforcement agencies will have jurisdiction? How will they coordinate? Who currently handles enforcement on the bike path east of the Riverside Bridge?

How will LA/DOT plan for law enforcement to have on/off/turnaround access on both the bike path and the horse trail? Same question for fire trucks and ambulances. And for maintenance vehicles?

Additionally, this area has an unhoused population resulting in unpredictable situations, such as this fire right beside the existing bike path just east of Riverside Bridge on July 10 2023. There have been several small fires like this - this one did ignite the main park (see photo).



Are small motorcycles and e-bikes traveling fast permitted to use the proposed bike path? They currently use the existing path sometimes at what appears to be about 25mph. Will there be a speed limit if they are permitted?

How will LA/DOT post and maintain the rules? Who will be involved in the wording to ensure clarity?

What will be the legal penalty if cyclists bring their bikes onto the horse trail? Who will enforce that? Note: LAMC 63.44 (B)(16) No person shall drive or ride any cycle or vehicle, whether powered by a motor or human power, except on paths, roads or drives designed and provided for such purposes.

Are there liability concerns for the City of LA, and Rec & Parks, for design errors that result in injury or death? Example: a horse's gruesome death at North Atwater Bridge. Link to ABC article:

<https://abc7.com/atwater-village-equestrian-bridge-los-angeles-river-horse-euthanized/5874329/>

What will be the horses' and cyclists' visibility of each other to prevent surprises leading to startles and falls? Clear visibility with a suitable barrier (such as a robust post-and-rail fence) is better than partial or obscured visibility to prevent people and horses being suddenly startled especially in low light.

How will these paths be managed after dark? Will the path/trail be closed at night outside the Griffith Park standard hours (10:30pm)? If so, how will that be implemented? Will gates be installed and then closed by Park Rangers?

How will LA/DOT or the City of LA prevent taxpayers money being wasted by preventing equipment being stolen? Example: stolen solar panels are now powering a encampment located at an outfall just feet from the east end gate within the LA River itself.



Nearby, multiple additional solar panels have been installed on the roof of a small RV, parked outside Tunnel 6 on Zoo Drive.



Thank you for reviewing these significant concerns.

Best regards,

Liz Radley
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a community group of over 11,000 members.
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