


**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM**

Date: October 22, 2024

To: Honorable City Council  
c/o City Clerk, Room 395  
Attention: Honorable Heather Hutt, Chair, Transportation Committee

From: Laura Rubio-Cornejo, General Manager   
Department of Transportation

Subject: **LA RIVERWAY PHASE IV PROJECT**

**SUMMARY**

In response to Council File 23-0722, this report provides an update on the LA Riverway Phase IV Extension Project, which will extend the LA River multi-use path and establish a parallel equestrian pathway.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the City Council NOTE and FILE this report.

**BACKGROUND**

The LA Riverway Phase IV Extension Project (Phase IV Project) will extend the existing LA River Path west of Riverside Drive to just east of Forest Lawn Drive. It will also establish an equestrian trail parallel to the multi-use path, which will connect equestrian facilities on either side of the LA River to trails in Griffith Park.

In February 2024, the Los Angeles City Council directed LADOT to report back on three components of the Phase IV project (CF 23-0722):

1. A design for the Phase IV Project that prioritizes maximizing space and enjoyment for all uses and forms a continuous segment with an outlet at Forest Lawn Drive or another identified bicycle/pedestrian facility;
2. A plan to close the anticipated short-term gap between the western terminus of the LA RiverWay Phase IV Project and the intersection of Forest Lawn Drive and Zoo Drive; and
3. Desired scope for a long-term gap closure traversing the CA-134 freeway for the LA RiverWay and improvement of the CA-134 westbound off ramp and Forest Lawn Drive intersection.

**DISCUSSION**

Equestrian Path Design Updates

The LA River Phase IV project is positioned between major equestrian areas in Griffith Park, Atwater Village, and Glendale. To meet community needs, in addition to designing the LA River multi-use path extension, LADOT is developing an adjacent equestrian path. LADOT collaborated with Council District 4,

the LA Equestrian Advisory Committee, and the Bureau of Street Services (BSS) to update the original design in order to improve the equestrian experience along the planned route.

In its design update, LADOT widened the equestrian path from a variable width of 5.5 feet to 10.5 feet to a consistent 10 feet, allowing horses to pass each other at any point along the path. The updated 10 foot width cannot be accommodated within the existing City of Los Angeles (City) right-of-way (ROW) and the City will need to acquire ROW from Caltrans to complete the project. To advance the ROW acquisition, the City will first complete the path design and submit it for design approval from the Army Corps of Engineers, which permits all projects alongside the river to ensure projects do not impact channel operations. Once the Army Corps provides support of the path design, LADOT will submit the design and ROW needs to Caltrans. Caltrans will review, provide feedback, and design requirements as well as provide the City with feasibility assessment and permitting details. LADOT will then seek appropriate permits or ROW funding. If the equestrian path remains at its variable 5.5-10.5 foot width, it is anticipated that ROW acquisition and supplemental funding are not needed.

LADOT also worked with BSS to update the fencing design to better suit equestrian needs. An 8.5 foot chain link fence will separate the bicycle path and equestrian path. Additional vertical posts will provide greater stability for the fence and will be installed throughout to ensure the fence can bear the load of a horse. Slats or a dark mesh can be used to block visibility between both users. The fence will be constructed out of materials that conform to the Army Corps of Engineers' structural requirements, while also mitigating the horses' exposure to visual stimuli outside of the equestrian path.

Additional changes to the project's design and scope will delay completion and may place the project grant funding at risk. LADOT is not pursuing a sound wall between the equestrian trail and the CA-134 Freeway due to lack of funding and staff capacity, as well as jurisdictional issues. The CA-134 Freeway is under Caltrans jurisdiction and LADOT does not have authority to construct a sound wall along the equestrian path.

#### End-Point to Forest Lawn Drive Gap Closure

Forest Lawn Drive terminates at the LA River and the CA-134 Freeway interchange and lacks sidewalks. Caltrans needs to evaluate Phase IV project ROW needs, the ROW needs for the interchange, pedestrian accessibility, and bicycle safety on Forest Lawn Drive at the interchange. There is no short-term solution to the design challenges to meet the needs for all users. The Phase IV project will not incorporate an outlet at Forest Lawn Drive due to significant design and jurisdictional challenges at the Forest Lawn Dr-CA-134 interchange. The path will stop pedestrians and cyclists about 200 feet east of this intersection, such that people walking and biking will need to turn around when they reach the end of the path and can access the existing outlet at Riverside Drive. Extending the path to the Forest Lawn Drive and SR-134 interchange requires a complex redesign of the intersection, signaling, and the addition of pedestrian paths.

The equestrian portion of the path will continue west along the LA River, beyond the Forest Lawn Drive and CA-134 interchange to an equestrian tunnel that connects to trails in Griffith Park. In order to ensure cyclists do not continue along the equestrian path, LADOT proposes to include a swing gate approximately six to eight feet tall at the terminus of the trail as well as signage and advanced warning signs to prevent cyclists and pedestrians from continuing.

LADOT will work with Caltrans to create a multi-use path outlet at Forest Lawn Drive. Caltrans initiated a Special Study to identify LA RiverWay gaps with a nexus to state right-of-way, which will include the

SR-134 and Forest Lawn Dr off-ramp location. Once locations are identified, Caltrans will conduct community outreach to inform the development, assessment, and prioritization of the study's resulting recommendations. The study will also help form partnerships that will be needed in the pursuit for future funding. LADOT will collaborate with Caltrans on this effort to ensure a successful outcome at this location within the City of Los Angeles. LADOT believes these planning efforts will guide Caltrans to a redesign of the interchange to address the needs of motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. The Caltrans planning project has not identified scope and project funding for a future interchange redesign to coordinate delivery of the two projects. Funding for Phase IV is currently in place and Phase IV will need to advance ahead of the Caltrans-led effort to meet the existing funding deadlines.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is no anticipated financial impact to the general fund at this time.

LRC:TC:ck