

COMPLETE STREETS AND WELCOMING



Complete Streets and Welcoming

Description

A major component of a consistent, safe, welcoming experience of the river is the ability to navigate to and between the river and surrounding communities seamlessly. Strengthened community identity and wayfinding, as well as physical improvements to the street network leading up to the river, can enhance this access. Welcoming strategies will direct the community to the river and also draw trail users to surrounding retail districts and points of interest (lateral connections). Complete streets and special “river streets” also play crucial roles, both in creating a safe environment for river visitors in all modes of transportation, and in announcing proximity to the river through design.

Existing Conditions

The street network surrounding the river has been developed to prioritize the movement of goods and people in vehicles. Most streets that provide access to or cross the river have high posted speed limits and 4-6 lanes of fast moving traffic with little to no safe accommodation for people traveling in any other mode. It is often unclear which routes will lead to river access points, and little to no identification of the river or the communities through which it flows.

The best examples of identity and safe access generally occur where the river is adjacent to a public park, though often times the access points themselves may be difficult to locate in the surrounding context (e.g., the south entrance to Dominguez Gap Wetlands).



Multi-Modal Access to the Lower LA River

Physical Components

Site-specific requirements will dictate which elements are necessary for each potential complete street and welcoming project, but elements that should be considered include:

Complete Streets Guidelines for Major Streets: Improvements to existing major streets in order to balance all modes of movement based on need and use, based on National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) design guidelines.

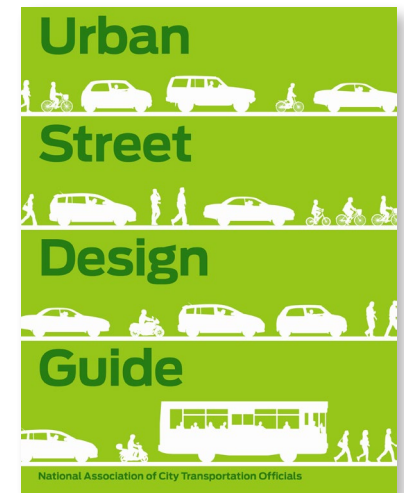
River Street Guidelines: Design concepts for streets that end at, but do not provide direct access to, the river.

Green Streets Guidelines: Some complete streets may also be green streets, integrating green infrastructure and stormwater management techniques.

Landscape and Environmental Improvements: All complete street improvements should consider the goals of the LA River Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes. The location, size, specific plant selection, and other details will vary based on street type and location and other site-specific factors.

A Wayfinding System: Includes direction and locational signs, maps, markers, etc., coordinated in design with the overall river brand strategy, and with a consistent plan for spacing and placement.

Interpretive Signage and Markers: Where appropriate, the signage strategy should also include educational materials about the river, the community, and other cultural or historical points of interest.

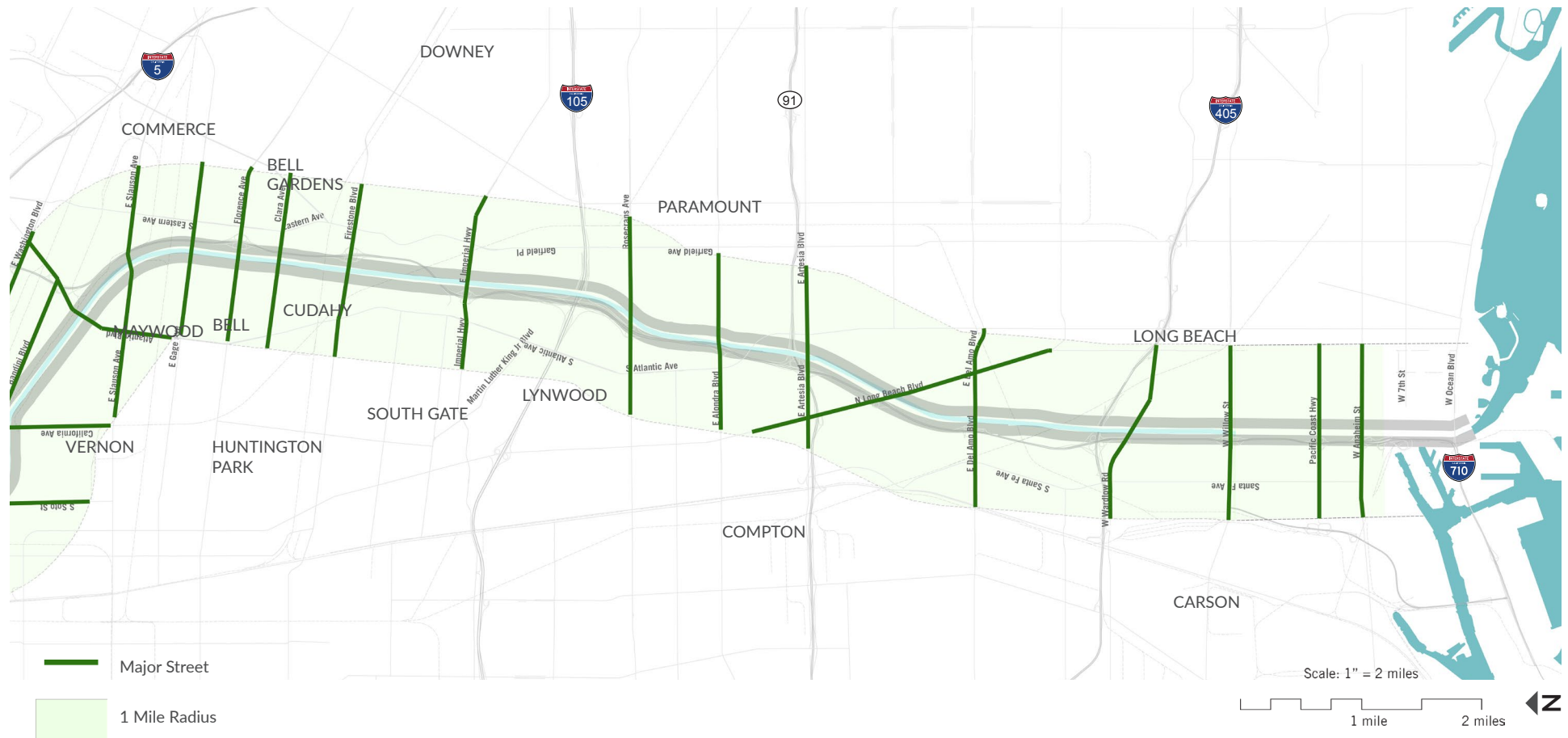


NACTO Urban Street Design Guide

Provides guidance for designing spaces where people can safely walk, bicycle, drive, take transit, and socialize

Complete Streets Opportunities Map

Potential major complete streets are indicated below, but every street within the one mile study area should be evaluated as potential river streets or green streets. Community input should be sought to determine priority streets and desired street character.



Complete Streets: Major Streets



Complete Streets: Major Street Illustrative Rendering

Street updates that are specific and respond to the needs and desires of each community can come together to create a safe and welcoming mobility network, that also expresses the unique identity of the river itself and the communities around it.

Objective

A “complete street” is one that is designed to safely accommodate users of many modes. Most major streets around the river currently prioritize cars and trucks over walking and cycling, while most river visitors eventually end up on foot, bicycle, or horse. Depending on the role of the street, the balance of space within the right-of-way dedicated for each mode may shift, but safety and comfort are always the priority. Near the river, a network of complete streets will guide community residents and other visitors safely to and from river access points and across the river.

Design Criteria

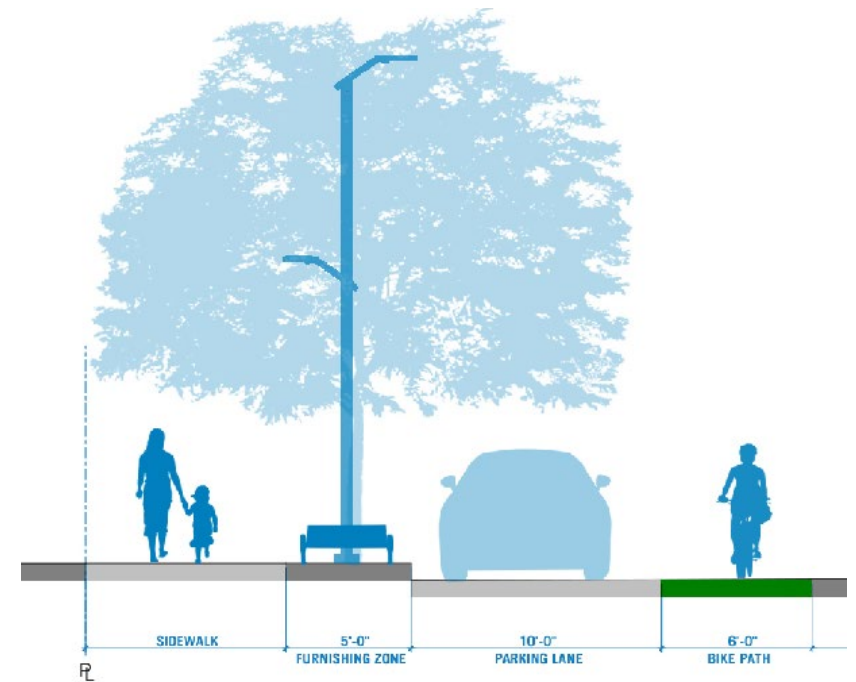
- Community input should be sought to determine priority streets and desired street character.
- A transportation study should be consulted before any project to understand the specific needs of that street.
- Any street designated as a Complete Street will have facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. Where appropriate, equestrian trail should also be considered.
- Bike lanes should be a minimum 5-ft width per direction, and fully separated from vehicular traffic by a curb or barrier. When this is not feasible, a painted stripe and/or lane color should delineate the lane.
- Pedestrian sidewalks should be a minimum 60-in wide, without obstruction and ADA compliant where possible.
- Vegetation and furnishing zones should be provided to buffer pedestrians and cyclists from vehicular traffic.
- Lighting, seating, and other amenities should be provided in key locations for user comfort and safety.
- Reference NACTO Urban Street Design Guide and Urban Bikeway Design Guide for alternative layouts and precedents.

Complete Streets: Bicycle Lanes on Major Streets

The higher-capacity major streets should have designated and clearly marked bicycle lanes. Depending on the specific needs of the street and community, however, these lanes may be provided in a number of different ways. A mobility study and community visioning should help determine the physical need and street character goals for each street project. Reference NACTO Urban Bikeway Guide for alternative layouts and precedents.

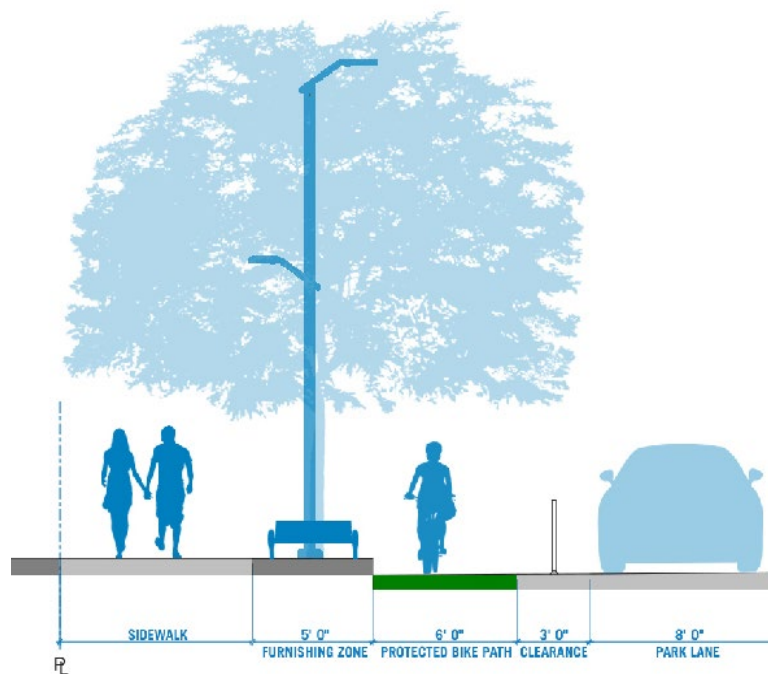
Options for bike lanes on major streets include:

- On-street striped bike lane
- On-street buffered bike lane
- Off-street buffered cycle track



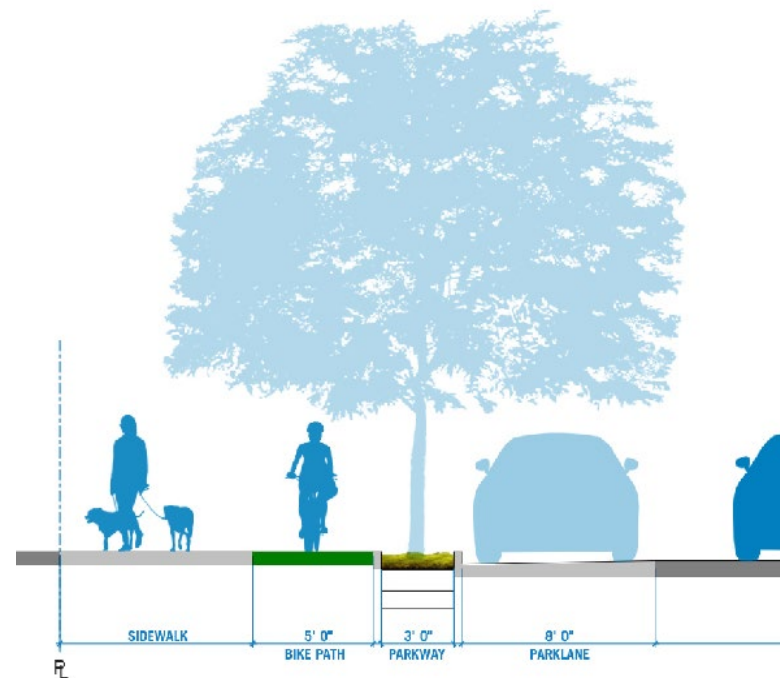
On-Street Striped Bike Lane

On-street striped bike lanes are in the street right-of-way, and are either directly adjacent to the curb, or between the parking lane and vehicle travel lanes, if there is on-street parking. These lanes should be clearly marked with a painted stripe. A solid fill of a color, such as green, is preferred. Lanes should be wide enough to allow two cyclists to pass comfortably.



On-Street Buffered Bike Lane

On-street buffered bike lanes are in the street right-of-way, directly adjacent to the curb. They are separated from parking lanes and vehicle travel lanes by a shy zone and physical barrier such as a curb or set of bollards. These lanes should be clearly marked with a painted stripe. A solid fill of a color, such as green, is preferred. Lanes should be wide enough to allow two cyclists to pass comfortably, to prevent faster riders from veering into vehicle travel lanes.



Off-Street Buffered Cycle Track

Off-street buffered cycle tracks should be level with the pedestrian sidewalk, out of the street right-of-way. They are separated from vehicular traffic by both a grade change and a buffer such as a curb, vegetation, or other street furnishing. These lanes should be clearly marked with distinctive pavement, solid paint, or other methods. Lanes should be wide enough to allow two cyclists to pass comfortably.

Complete Streets and Welcoming: River Streets

Objective

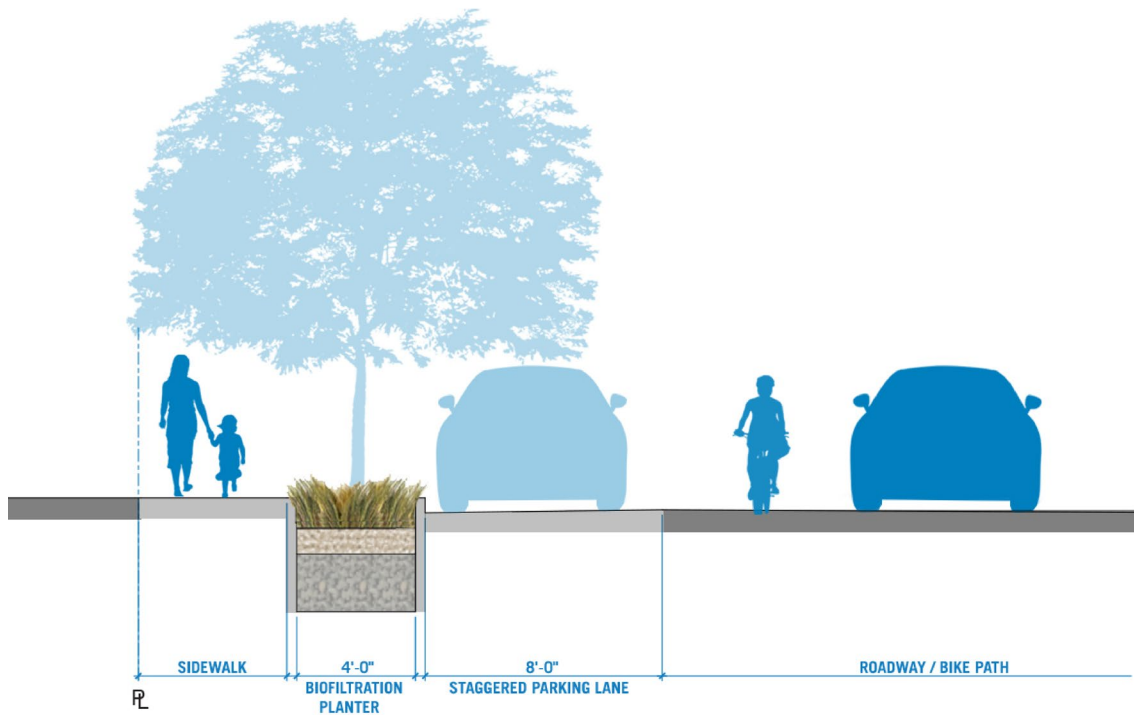
For the purposes of this study, a “River Street” is one that abuts the river, but does not provide direct public access to either the multi-use path or the river itself. These streets are either parallel or perpendicular to the river. While they present a challenge in that the lack of river access is not always clear to visitors, they also provide a significant opportunity for the expression of a river-specific community identity, as well as other aesthetic and safety enhancements.

Design Criteria

- Community input should be sought to determine priority streets and desired street character.
- A transportation study should be consulted before any project to understand the specific needs of that street.
- Signage and other markings indicating a route to the river should be clearly visible.
- Where appropriate, streets parallel to the river should be designed as shared space streets (see Cudahy River Road Signature Concept).
- Public art and space for community gatherings and events should be incorporated where appropriate.



Complete Streets and Welcoming: Green Street Approaches



Objective

Streets are not only a means to convey people from one place to another, they are places within neighborhoods, and they serve as part of the stormwater infrastructure of an area. A “green street” is one that is designed with stormwater infrastructure or ecological function in mind. Making streets around the river functioning components of a sustainable stormwater system can contribute to water quality enhancement as well as community identity. Depending on the scale and function of the street, there are many possible variations of the green street, but all should have the same function - to slow and filter stormwater, to add to the environmental function of the street corridor, and to reflect the desires of the surrounding community.

Design Criteria

- A stormwater assessment should be consulted prior to the design of any selected street to ensure technical needs are met.
- Community input will guide selection of priority streets and desired street character.
- Reference NACTO Urban Street Stormwater Guide for alternative layouts and precedents.

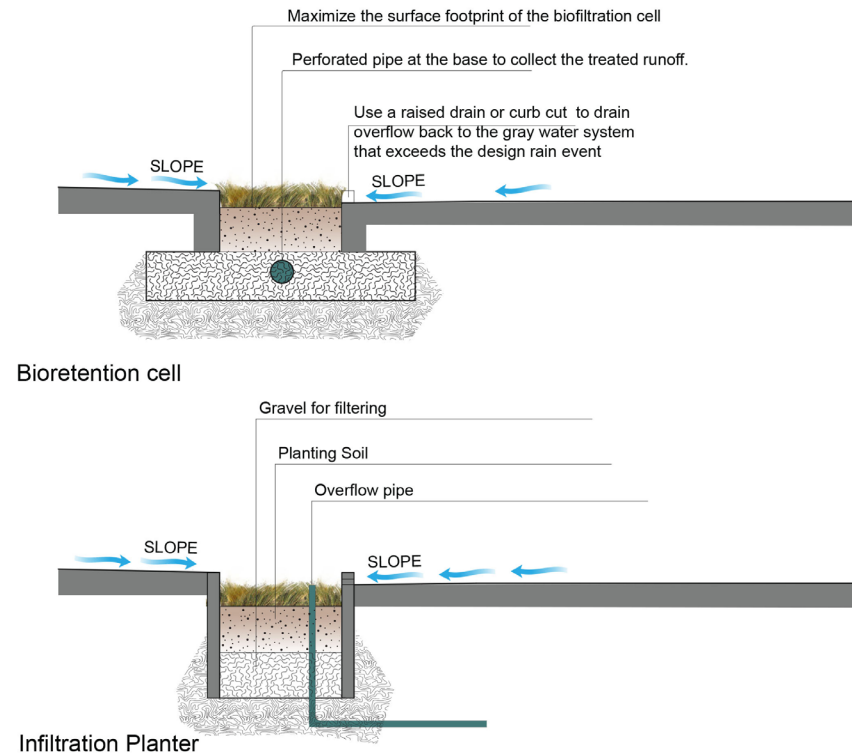
Complete Streets: Green Approaches to Stormwater Management

There are many different components to a successful green street, ranging in intensity and investment level. One of the most impactful for larger streets and systems is a series of bioswales that can capture stormwater runoff, and either slow the rate at which it enters the municipal storm sewer, or divert it from the municipal storm sewer all together.

Three typical bioswale configurations may be used, depending on site-specific conditions:

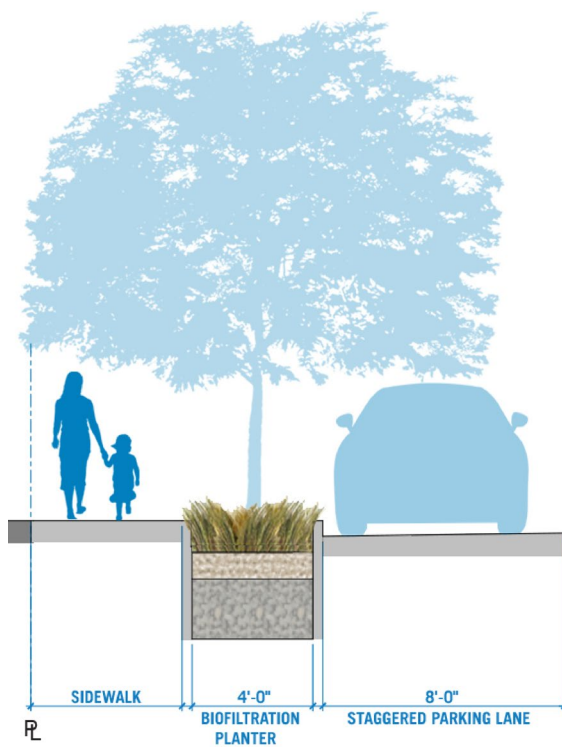
1. Infiltration planter with trees
2. Infiltration planter without trees
3. Planter with bioretention

NACTO Urban Street Stormwater Guide can provide additional alternative layouts and precedents.

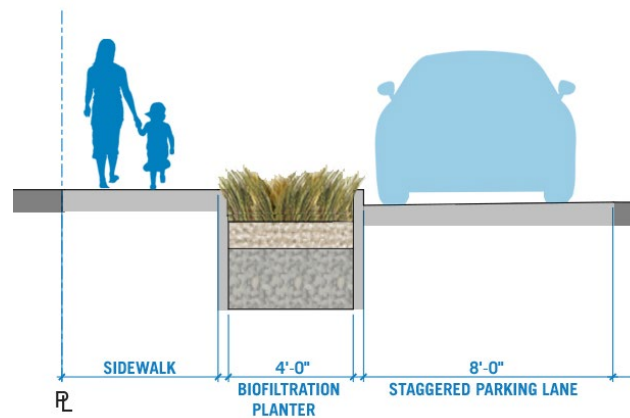


Bioretention vs Infiltration

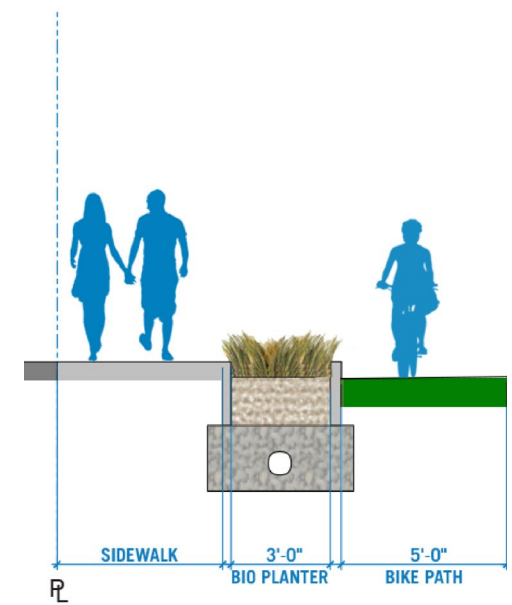
Bioretention is the process of slowing the entrance of runoff into the municipal storm sewer by retaining it in a swale. It filters through layers of vegetation, soil, and gravel before entering a pipe. Infiltration, on the other hand, aims to bypass the storm sewer altogether. Runoff is captured in the swale, where it filters through vegetation, soil, and gravel, before returning to the ground water table. Infiltration swales often require much more space than bioretention swales.



Bioinfiltration Planter with Trees



Bioinfiltration Planter without Trees



Bioretention Planter without Trees

Complete Streets and Welcoming: Wayfinding and Welcoming

Objective

A comprehensive, coordinated system for signage and markings will improve legibility of river access points and routes, and celebrate the identity of both the river and the communities around it.

Design Criteria

- All wayfinding and welcoming signage and markings should be coordinated through a river-wide strategy to confirm a consistent identity.
- River access points (both on the multi-use path side, and on the community side) and other decision making points should be prioritized for ease of orientation.
- Points of interest or educational elements should include interpretive signage, coordinated with the river branding system.
- Adhere to all applicable codes and regulations, including permitting with the proper jurisdictional municipality.



Templates (Complete Street/Connectivity+Wayfinding/Signage) Next Steps

Additional required analyses and next steps for the Complete Streets/Connectivity + Wayfinding/Signage template include:

- LA River Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes should be applied for all landscaping and plantings,
- Structural analyses of all new and expanded paths should be performed,
- Geotechnical evaluations for all new and expanded paths should be conducted,
- Thorough investigation of land records identifying easement holders, including the assessment of land rights should be conducted, easement fees must be identified, and approval from identified easements should be obtained,
- Permitting requirements, including through USACE and LACFCD, should be determined,
- The collection capacity and storage of stormwater should be determined for complete streets and green streets,
- Soil, permits, leadership for potential community garden at street ends should be established,
- Soil remediation analyses to determine extent of any contamination should be conducted,
- An Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/EIS) may be required to assess any potential environmental impacts, and

- Key studies to assess the potential for environmental and habitat restoration should be performed, and local and native vegetation should be planted to support the native habitat and restore the natural and historical ecosystem wherever possible.

To meet the goals and objectives of the Plan, the Working Group recommends that cities, non-profit organizations, and developers work together to realize the maximum benefits from revitalization investments while stabilizing the surrounding community, and that the community stabilization toolkit be considered during project implementation. The Plan acknowledges that each city has authority over its respective land use planning policies and guidelines outside the river channel and that each city shall individually determine which tools provide the greatest practical benefit for implementation within its jurisdiction.

The community stabilization toolkit includes:

- Community Benefits Agreements
- Inclusionary Housing Policies
- Locally Owned Business Support
- No Net Loss Housing Policies
- Rent Control Ordinances
- Workforce Development
- Community Land Trusts

