

MULTI-USE PATH ENHANCEMENTS



Multi-Use Path Enhancements

The multi-use path is the primary way people experience the length of the river. What exists today as an often harsh and austere asphalt stretch has the potential to become a beautiful, comfortable, and safe place that seamlessly connects the upper and lower stretches of this part of the river. This change will not happen all at once; rather it will be incremental as funding and design opportunities emerge. The strategies laid out in this template provide the foundation for consistency along the length of the multi-use path as it evolves over time, and should be seen as a baseline for communities and other entities as they incrementally improve the path.

Three major themes inform the template:

Strong Sense of Place

Much of the path will be simple surfaces, but amenity clusters, signage and wayfinding, and signature spaces along the path provide an opportunity to reinforce the identity of the river in a broad sense, and create a sense of identity for individual communities.

Continuous Experience

Multi-use path users should be able to expect both a continuous physical connection along the length of the lower river and a consistent quality of space and materials along the path, even where space might be constrained and conditions vary.

Safety and Comfort

Adherence to and provisions for safety and comfort should be noticeable and accessible along the full length of the multi-use path. The design of the path, provision of amenities, and signage and wayfinding all play an important role.

Existing Conditions

Currently, a path or trail exists in some form for the full 19-mile stretch from Vernon to the mouth of the river in Long Beach. The existing path is often designed as a bikeway (rather than truly multi-use) and requires users to switch banks of the river multiple times in order to make the complete journey.

The only fully "multi-use" section that is designed for equestrians as well as those on bikes and on foot is the 10.5-mile stretch of the Los Angeles River Trail, stretching from South Gate to mid Long Beach. Even in these multi-use sections, the demarcations for uses and priority of use is often unclear, leading to dangerous conflicts.

Along the length of the path there are few areas for rest and recovery. Some amenities, like benches, shade, water, and horse staging areas exist where the trail is adjacent to public parks including Hollydale and Dominguez Gap Wetlands but in many stretches of the path there are miles between such provisions.



Multi-Use Path: A Continuous High-Quality Experience

Description

Expansion and improvement of the north-south multi-use path will support the plan's goal of creating a consistent, safe, and comfortable user experience along the length of the river. Improvements and amenities considered in this template include infill of missing path segments, adding path modes (e.g. equestrian), shade, restrooms, lighting, art, signage, and engagingly curated historical, environmental, and cultural experiences. All path enhancements will be coordinated with the LA River Landscape Guidelines and other guidelines and templates as appropriate and applicable.

Physical Components

The multi-use path template consists of a number of elements that together form a robust, functional, and inviting path network. Wherever possible, designs and plans should incorporate all of the components listed below. Where site specific constraints prevent the full suite of elements, priority should be given to making the path itself as robust as possible, in conjunction with adjacent landscape and environmental improvements.

The primary physical components of this template:

- The Path itself: Design standards covering dimensions, surface, accessibility, and other basic geometric characteristics;
- Site Furnishing and Safety Amenities: Design, placement, and attachment standards for lighting, benches, trash receptacles, shade structures, bike parking, horse ties, 911 call boxes, bike fix-it stations, and other elements adding to the comfort and safety of all path users;
- Branding and Wayfinding: A comprehensive branding approach, including signage, furniture design, paving, markings and other design elements to be coordinated with the signage, branding, and wayfinding templates;
- Landscape and Environmental Improvements: Every path improvement project will include landscape improvements as outlined in the LA River Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes. These may vary in scope and scale, but should seek to increase the amount of plant cover as well as contribute to the character of the river corridor.

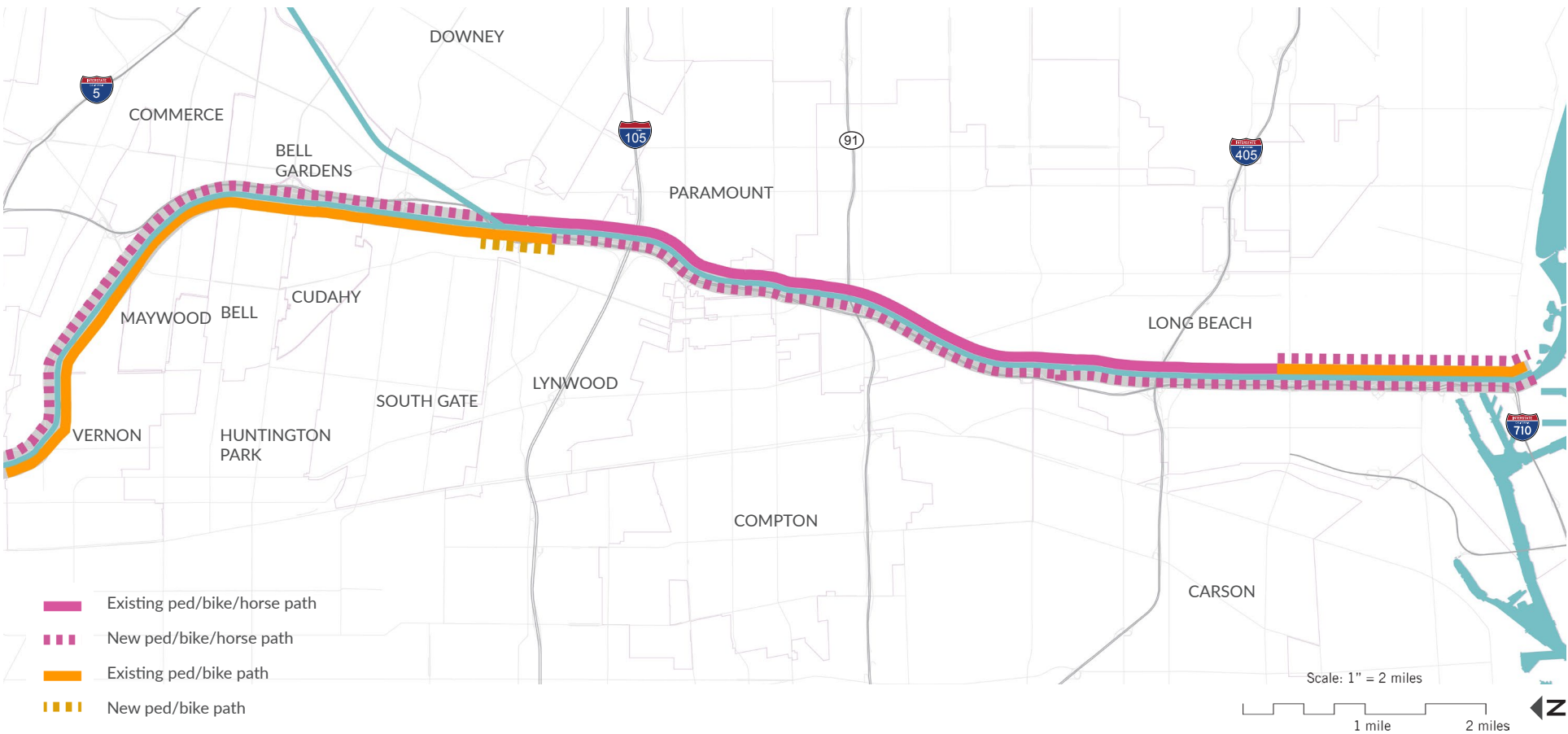
Best Case vs Constrained

The approaches laid out in this template represent a best-case scenario for areas along the river with the space and structure to accommodate the ideal layout for a multi-use path. Many areas are constrained, often by the location of the path on top of the levee or between other barriers.

In such constrained cases, the multi-use path should be designed to safely accommodate all modes in the space allowed and clearly demarcate priority. The balance of each type of element should be employed depending on the needs of the path in any particular section. When space is limited, emphasis should be on the quality of experience and clear wayfinding rather than trying to integrate all elements.

Finally, equestrians are an important user group for the river. Special attention should be paid to opportunities to connect existing equestrian facilities, and create new alongside or integrated with the multi-use path.

Multi-Use Path Enhancements



Existing and New Multi-Use Path Improvements

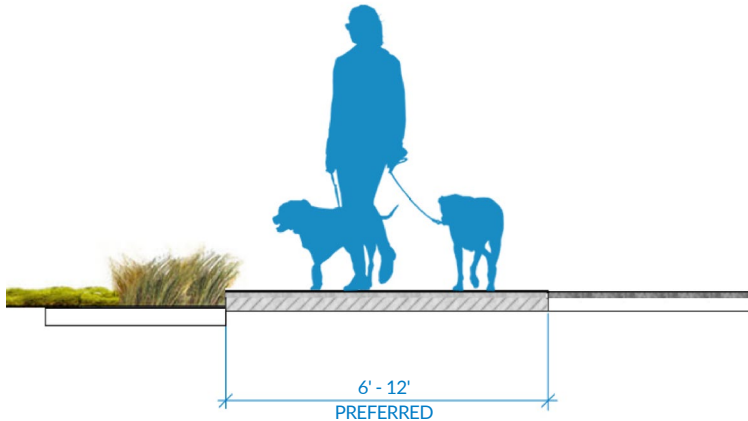
Multi-Use Path: Access for All Modes



Illustrative Path Enhancements Diagram

Wherever possible, the multi-use path should provide access and connectivity for the three prime modes of mobility: pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian. Further, this multi-use path will enhance connectivity by providing opportunities to develop secondary paths branching into communities found along the river.

Multi-Use Path: Pedestrian Path



Objective

The pedestrian path is a clear-way designed to accommodate the specific speed and surface needs of pedestrian users. Wherever possible, it should be designed as a pedestrian-only lane or path that is distinct from the adjacent paths. A wider path eases passage between pedestrians moving in opposing directions.

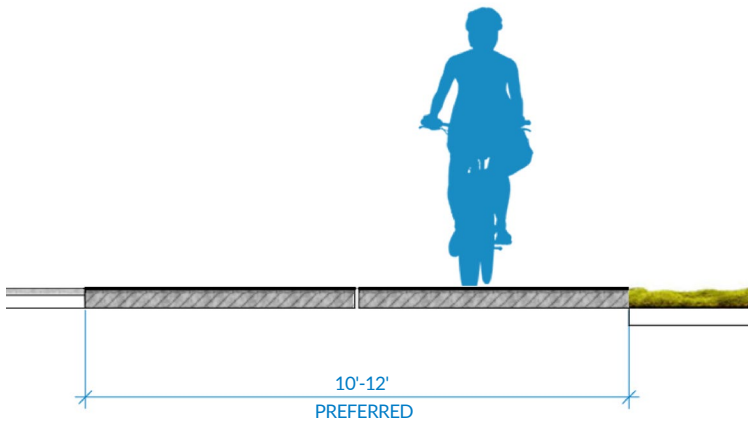
Design Criteria

- Minimum width 6 feet, 10-12 feet preferred
- Maximum slope 5% wherever possible
- Lane delineations and pavement markings when adjacent to bike path
- Guardrail at slopes and drops

Adjacencies

- When the pedestrian path adjoins the bicycle path, a painted 2 foot shy zone is preferred. If there is insufficient room, the two paths should be separated by a simple painted line.
- When the pedestrian path adjoins an equestrian path, a 3 foot shy zone should be provided whenever possible. An equestrian-friendly barrier can provide additional safety.
- The pedestrian path is generally paved. It can also be constructed compacted decomposed granite, though paved paths ease maintenance.

Multi-Use Path: Bicycle Path



Objective

The bicycle path is a designated clear-way designed to safely accommodate the specific speed and surface needs of bicycle users. To be successful, they must be clearly marked and designed for varying degrees of ability. There should be lanes for both directions that are free of obstructions. At significant waypoints and destinations bike racks should be installed.

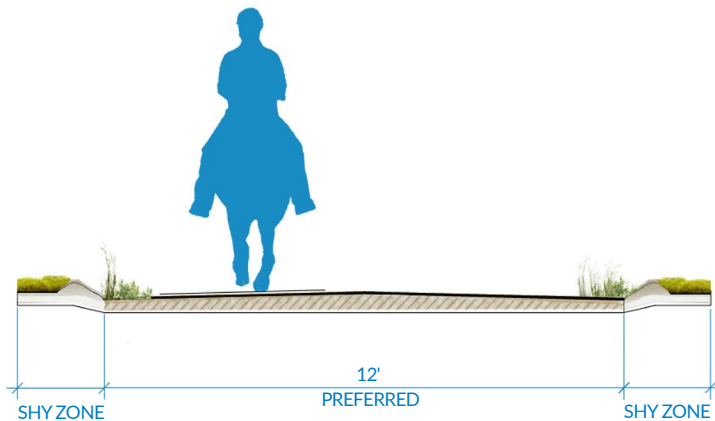
Design Criteria

- Wherever possible width 5 feet each direction, 6 feet preferred, for a total of 10-12 feet.
- Lane delineations should separate each direction.
- Lane markings should conform to California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Adjacencies

- When the bicycle path adjoins a pedestrian path, a 2 foot shy zone is preferred. Lane markings should separate paths.
- When the bike path adjoins an equestrian path, a 3 foot shy zone should be provided whenever possible. An equestrian-friendly barrier can provide additional safety.
- When bike path adjoins with equestrian and pedestrian path, bikes should yield to slower moving traffic.

Multi-Use Path: Equestrian Path



Objective

The equestrian path is a designated clear-way designed to accommodate the speed, size, and safety needs of horses and riders. In an urban area, it is especially important to account for visibility, safety at crossings, grade changes, and potential conflicts with other path users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

Design Criteria

- Wherever possible width 6 feet plus 3 foot buffer on either side, 12+ feet plus vertical clear space preferred.
- Path surface should be free of obstacles and level. Compacted soft surface such as decomposed granite is preferred.
- 54 inch guardrail is preferred at grade changes, ramps, crossings, or other scenarios.
- Provide space for staging at bridge approaches.

Adjacencies

- 3 foot minimum separation from other modes, grade separated preferred. Where this is not possible, vegetation or a horse-friendly barrier is recommended.
- Particular care should be taken to separate equestrian modes from bicycle modes.

Multi-Use Path: Mixing Zones

Resolving Conflicts on the Multi-Use Path

Using signs, pavement markings, and other techniques will not only help orient path users, but also prevent dangerous conflicts. Where conflicts may occur, there are two main goals of the mixing zone. First, right-of-way should not be given priority to any particular user. Second, faster moving users along the path yield to slower moving users in the mixing zone.



Multi-Use Path: Environment and Landscape



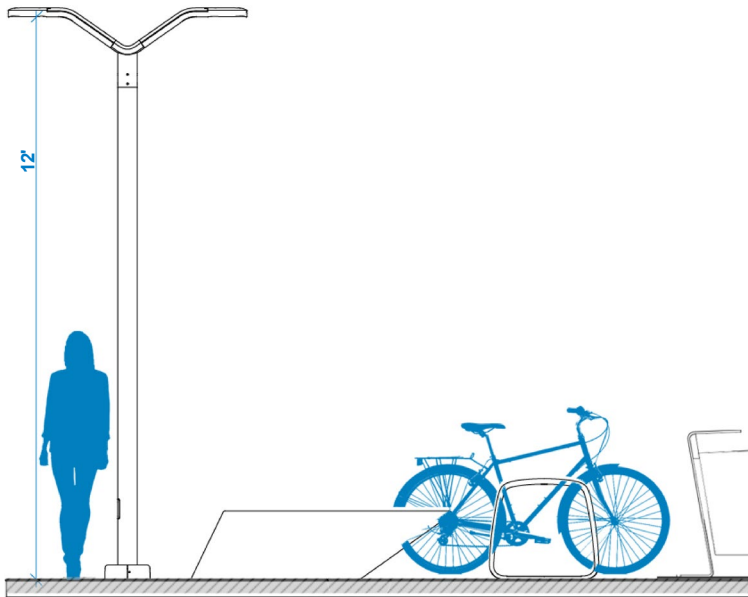
Objective

Improvements and additions to the multi-use path will consider multi-benefit environmental solutions. These may include green stormwater infrastructure, habitat enhancements, or simple landscape improvements.

Design Criteria

- Path and trail improvement projects will include landscape improvements as outlined in the LA River Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes. These may vary in scope and scale, but will seek to increase the amount of plant cover as well as contribute to the character of the river corridor.

Multi-Use Path: Amenities



Objective

The provision of amenities such as lighting, seating, trash receptacles, and bicycle parking is critical to creating a consistent, comfortable, safe, and welcoming experience for users along the full length of the Lower Los Angeles River. Not all stretches of the multi-use path will have the space to accommodate the full suite of amenities; when this is the case, priority should be given to lighting. Consideration should also be given to maintenance, both in terms of product selection and placement.

Design Criteria

- Lighting, seating, trash receptacles, and bicycle parking designs should be selected to reflect a common identity for the length of the Lower River, with some variation based on individual community desires.
- All furnishings should be high-quality and durable.
- Pedestrian lighting should range between 12-14 feet high.

- Lights may be wired, solar, batter powered, or otherwise powered as appropriate.
- Low-scale lighting may be considered where appropriate.

Adjacencies

- Wherever possible, the full group of elements should be clustered for ease of access and maintenance.
- Multi-use path access points, signature project areas, and other wider gathering spots should house all amenities listed.
- Where the path area is not wide enough, priority should be given to lighting. Opportunities for seating and bike parking between access points should be explored for the comfort and safety of users.

Amenities: Site Furniture



Furnishings along the multi-use path, including seating, lighting, trash, cycling, and horse amenities, should be coordinated with a consistent palette to convey a sense of continuity along the full length of the river, while allowing for some variation in key community access points. Attractive design and ease of maintenance should both be considered when selecting a family of site furniture.

Shade on the Lower LA River



Simple shade structures provide protection from the sun and will be key to increasing comfort along the multi-use path. They should be paired with seating or other activity areas and not be placed or attached so as to impact the levee structure.

Finding Your Way on the Lower LA River



A robust system of signage provides consistent orientation and identity along the length of the river with some variation allowed for the different cities along the river.

Templates (Multi-use Path Enhancement) Next Steps

Additional required analyses and next steps for the Multi-use Path Enhancement template include:

- LA River Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes should be applied for all landscaping and plantings,
- LA County Trail Signage Handbook should be applied for all paths that are enhanced or added.
- 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,
- 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

