

Forest Lawn Drive Safety and Mobility Project FAQ

January 2025

PROJECT DESIGN

How will the project improve safety?

The proposed design on Forest Lawn Drive improves safety by discouraging speeding, providing dedicated space for turning vehicles, and protecting the space for bicycles.

- Traffic crashes are more deadly at higher speeds, and data shows that 74% of vehicles on Forest Lawn Drive currently travel at 42 mph or faster, [a speed at which collisions involving pedestrians have a 50% risk of death according to an AAA Foundation study](#). By redesigning the roadway from two travel lanes in each direction to one travel lane with a center turn lane, the project discourages speeding. Slowing down traffic directly reduces collision frequency and severity. For additional studies, please see:
 - [US Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#) indicates that the benefits of a roadway configuration such as the one being proposed by this project include a crash reduction of 19 to 47 percent, reduced vehicle speed differential, improved mobility and access by all road users, and integration of the roadway into surrounding uses that results in an enhanced quality of life.
 - A study on "[Analyzing the Safety and Speed Effects of High-Traffic-Volume Road Diets](#)" in the City of Los Angeles highlights how lane reconfigurations can lead to reduced vehicle speeds, lower crash rates, and safer road conditions.
- By upgrading the existing bike lanes to protected bike lanes, the new design provides bicyclists physical separation from vehicle traffic, significantly increasing comfort and safety for cyclists. Project survey feedback showed community concerns about vehicles passing too closely. Protected bike lanes [can also be a factor in reducing vehicle speeds](#) to improve overall safety.
- By extending left-turn pockets and adding a center turn lane, the project facilitates safer access to the Junior Achievement of SoCal (JASoCal) center. These enhancements provide designated space for turning vehicles, minimizing sudden stops or lane changes that can result in crashes. This design promotes smoother traffic flow, reduces the likelihood of rear-end collisions, and creates a safer environment for drivers and nearby pedestrians and cyclists.

How does a project like this one encourage drivers to slow down?

Projects that narrow the roadway and provide dedicated space for different types of travel - driving, turning, and biking - create a visual and physical environment that signals to drivers to drive slower and have been shown to reduce speeding.

- A study on "[Analyzing the Safety and Speed Effects of High-Traffic-Volume Road Diets](#)" in the City of Los Angeles highlights how lane reconfigurations can lead to reduced vehicle speeds, lower crash rates, and safer road conditions.
- [FHWA](#) has also deemed Road Diets a proven safety countermeasure and promotes them as a safety-focused design.

How will the project ensure access to Forest Lawn and Mt. Sinai Memorial Parks?

To access Forest Lawn and Mt Sinai Memorial Parks, visitors use the signalized intersections at Forest Lawn Drive/Memorial Drive and Forest Lawn Drive/Mt Sinai Drive, respectively. Both intersections have traffic signals with left turn arrows that are triggered only when 3-5 vehicles are waiting in the left-turn pocket. Access to Forest Lawn and Mt. Sinai Memorial Parks is currently limited by left-turn pockets that allow for only four to six vehicles at a time. When left-turn demand is high, this limited storage space can lead to vehicles to spill over into the adjacent through lane, blocking one of the two through lanes. The proposed project design adds a center turn lane that will increase left-turn storage capacity to approximately 40 vehicles at each intersection, increasing access and reducing congestion at these intersections. The City will continue to work with Forest Lawn and Mt. Sinai to better understand and accommodate traffic operations during funeral processions and other major events.

What type of barrier will be used to protect the bike lanes?

LADOT will use high-visibility plastic posts, also known as “bollards,” to clearly separate the bike lane from the vehicle travel lane. The bollards are approximately 30” tall and include bands of reflective material that allow them to be seen at night from a distance by approaching drivers. Using bollards allows LADOT to achieve safety benefits quickly and make adjustments if needed. LADOT is exploring more durable materials to bolster bollards that may be added to future projects as funding allows.

Why does the project include protected bike lanes when I don’t see that many people biking on Forest Lawn Drive?

The current conditions—high vehicle speeds, narrow bicycle lanes, and no physical protection for cyclists—create an uncomfortable environment that does not encourage biking. By adding protected bike lanes, this project aims to create a safer and more welcoming space for cyclists of all ages and abilities.

- Research such published by [NACTO](#) and the [Urban Institute](#) show that when high-quality bike infrastructure is provided, more people choose to bike.
- Forest Lawn Drive is a critical connector for the city’s growing bike network. It links to future projects like the LA River Path, LADWP Headworks Complex, and Zoo Drive Bike Lanes which provides direct access to Griffith Park, one of Los Angeles’ premier destinations for recreation and cycling. These connections make the area more attractive and accessible, supporting the City’s goals for active transportation and sustainability.

Will this impact emergency access?

LADOT designs all lane reconfiguration projects according to guidelines that were agreed upon between LADOT and LAFD, and each individual project is reviewed by LAFD before it is finalized. On Forest Lawn Drive, emergency vehicles will be able to use the proposed center turn lane in addition to regular travel lanes. Drivers should continue to safely pull to the side of the road to allow emergency vehicles to pass.

Will the project fill potholes or improve the roadway surface?

Forest Lawn between Zoo Drive and Memorial Drive will be resurfaced as a part of this project. Resurfacing involves the grinding down of two to four inches of pavement and the complete replacement with new asphalt.

If speeding is a problem on Forest Lawn, why doesn't the City lower the speed limit?

California state law requires cities to set speed limits based on the "85th percentile," or the speed at or below which 85 percent of the drivers travel. The 85th percentile speed on Forest Lawn is 49 mph, so the lowest speed we can set the speed limit by law today is 45 mph. Recent changes to state law allow local jurisdictions to set safer speed limits under certain circumstances, but Forest Lawn does not meet the criteria for a speed limit reduction. If the 85th percentile speed decreases due to the new design aimed at reducing speeding, the City will have an opportunity to decrease the speed limit.

Does the Mobility Plan require that the City maintain a certain number of vehicle travel lanes on Forest Lawn?

Forest Lawn Drive is designated as an "Avenue I" in Mobility Plan 2035 and the City of LA's Bureau of Engineering's Street Standard Plan. Avenue I streets must have Right-of-Way dimensions of 100 feet total and roadway width of 70 feet. Street classifications do not bind the city to a particular lane configuration or striping design, and the new design meets the dimension requirements to conform with the Avenue I designation.

- For more information on Street Designations, see [Mobility Plan 2035](#) (pages 18-29). The City's [Complete Streets Design Guide](#) offers additional guidance, though not instruction, on street designations. See Chapter 2. Street Classifications (page 20) for more information on the Avenue I designation.

Is there a center turn lane throughout the project area?

There is a center turn lane or left turn pocket throughout the project area, except for a 0.4 mile portion of the road in between Memorial Drive and Mt. Sinai Drive. For this section of road, the roadway narrows and a center turn lane cannot fit in the design.

How were the flower vendors along the corridor incorporated or considered in the design?

City staff observed vendor locations and met with vendors on site to incorporate vending needs into the design to address safety concerns. At these locations, the design includes a pull-out lane so that people driving can safely pull over to purchase flowers. Currently, people either pull all the way onto the dirt parkway or stop in the bike lane.

Can we accomplish the project by removing parking/adding a sidewalk/path for cyclists and keep the current lane configuration?

There is currently no parking along the corridor in the project area from Memorial Drive to Zoo Drive that can be removed to accommodate the new design. Adding a sidewalk/path would require additional funding/design and would not be likely to have any traffic calming safety benefits, which is one of the primary goals of the project.

Can the City use speed humps to reduce speeding instead?

Speed humps and speed tables are not permitted on streets with a 45 mph speed limit.

Who will use the improved protected bike lanes?

By creating a safer, more comfortable bike facility that connects to nearby bike lanes and the LA RiverWay path, this project will promote bicycling for all levels of ability and connect bicyclists to key destinations in Griffith Park. Because there are currently no sidewalks, the protected bike lanes will also provide added safety for people on foot, including many residents who jog along Forest Lawn Drive.

Is this project consistent with the City's Mobility Plan?

Yes - Mobility Plan 2035 identifies Forest Lawn as part of the Bicycle Lane Network which requires at a minimum that the street must have a striped bicycle lane. However, with 42 mph average speeds, a protected bicycle lane is a safer and more appropriate treatment.

TRAFFIC, PARKING, AND OTHER IMPACTS

How will removing two vehicle lanes impact traffic?

LADOT completed a [traffic analysis](#) of the corridor to anticipate the vehicular impacts of a lane reconfiguration. The study estimated that this project will have a relatively minor impact on travel times even during the busiest periods of the day. According to LADOT guidelines, anticipated delays are considered low and do not necessitate special consideration.

- During evening and morning weekday rush hour, travel times may increase by up to 15 seconds per mile (or about the length of the corridor) and on weekends, travel times may increase up to 1:36 minutes.
- LADOT will conduct a pre- and post-project evaluation (1 year after project installation) to ensure that the project is operating as intended and will make adjustments to the design as needed.

What methodology do you use to analyze travel delay impacts?

LADOT carefully evaluates potential travel delay impacts for most lane reconfiguration projects, consistent with its Transportation Assessment Guidelines. An overview of the process can be found below.

- *Traffic Data Collection*
 - Counts were taken at signalized intersections along the corridor during weekday peak hours (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.) in February

2023. According to Transportation Assessment Guidelines, counts are to be taken on weekdays during these peak hour periods, when local schools are in session and during non-Summer months. The counts collected in February 2023 are consistent with these guidelines.

- To account for weekend-specific traffic patterns related to the Forest Lawn and Mt Sinai Memorial Parks, additional weekend counts were collected in November 2023.
- To account for possible increases in traffic during holiday dates, observations were also made on Memorial Day 2024 to validate the earlier data collected.
- *Analysis of Travel Time Changes*
 - Traffic data is used to model existing conditions (“Existing”) and future conditions with the project in place (“Existing Plus Project”).
 - Travel time changes are calculated by analyzing the additional time vehicles may experience at intersections due to the proposed design. This is done by summing changes in auto delay at each signalized intersection in both directions of the corridor.
- *Tools and Standards Used*
 - LADOT follows federal and local guidelines, applying industry-standard methodologies like Synchro 11 and the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) developed by the Transportation Research Board to calculate intersection Level of Service (LOS) and vehicle delays.

How does the 2023 traffic data used in the travel delay study compare to pre- and post-COVID traffic levels?

Citywide traffic data indicates that 2023 traffic volumes have met or surpassed pre-COVID levels observed in 2019. Available data for 2024 indicates that traffic levels are consistent with those in 2023, making the 2023 data a reliable representation for evaluating travel delay impacts under existing and near-future conditions. By using 2023 data, the analysis ensures that the study reflects current travel patterns and provides an accurate basis for understanding the potential impacts of the proposed project.

OUTREACH, PROJECT TIMELINE, AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Does my feedback get taken into account?

Yes - community feedback is taken into account to inform the final project design. To give feedback, add your comment [here](#) or send an email to ladot.active@lacity.org. Public feedback will close on January 20th, 2025.

What outreach has been conducted?

LADOT and Council District 4 began community and stakeholder engagement in Spring 2023 and have gathered feedback through surveys, meetings, and community events.

- Spring and Summer 2023: The City held seven meetings with major internal and external stakeholders including City of Burbank, City of Glendale, Forest Lawn, Mt Sinai, NBC Universal, Warner Brothers, LA Metro, LAPD, and LADWP.

- August 2023: online survey distributed via LADOT and CD4 e-newsletters collected over 700 responses. Over 300 respondents stated they use Forest Lawn once a week or more.
- Fall 2023 through Summer 2024: LADOT reworked the design, updated the traffic survey, and gathered supplemental data.
- November 2024: additional outreach to NBC Universal, Los Feliz and Hollywood Hill West Neighborhood Councils, advocacy groups representing Griffith Park users, roadway safety and active transportation advocates, and other public agencies such as the City of Burbank and Glendale, LADWP, Metro, LAPD, LAFD, and Caltrans.
- December 4, 2024: Open House at the Junior Achievement Center of Southern California with over 80 attendees.
- Between November 1, 2024 and December 17, CD4 and LADOT received over 250 comments via email, website form, and the open house regarding the project.

Was the City of Burbank briefed regarding the proposed project?

Yes - the City of Burbank's Transportation Division of the Community Development Department as well as other neighboring agencies were briefed on the proposed project in April 2023 and informed as the project has progressed to ensure ongoing collaboration across jurisdictions.

What will be the impact of construction?

Construction dates are still pending and the City will pursue the most efficient and least impactful construction plan/schedule. There will be three construction phases: 1) surface removal 2) new pavement 3) new striping and bollard installation.

- Forest Lawn Dr will be closed from Zoo Dr to Memorial Dr during the hours of construction in each phase. The street will be reopened after each working day.
- Phases 1 & 2 will include uneven pavement conditions that impact any non-vehicular mode of transportation (walking, running, cycling, scooters, etc.).

According to its protocol, the City's Bureau of Street Services will issue a mailed notification of the resurfacing project to affected stakeholders along the corridor 30 days prior to the start of work. A second notice will be hand-delivered to affected stakeholders along the corridor at least five days prior to construction, and temporary no parking signs will be posted at least three days prior to construction. Once the project is confirmed and scheduled by the Bureau of Street Services, the City will send an email notification to all constituents who have provided comments and questions on the project.

What is the funding source for this project?

This project is funded through the city's regular resurfacing restriping budget. By utilizing quick build materials, we can implement the project quickly, without seeking additional funding, and allow for future flexibility if changes need to be made.