

DATE: May 21, 2017

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FROM: Sheila Irani  
Former Director, Special Projects CD4, Councilman LaBonge

REFERENCE: Council File 11-1246-S1

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to strongly support the City's construction of the North Atwater Bridge, a critical public access point across the Los Angeles River to Griffith Park that serves all non-motorized modes equally: pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists.

The Los Angeles River bike path is a regional destination, however, it is hard to access from communities on the east bank of the river. This bridge will provide a safe, convenient connection from residential communities on the east side to both the bike path and all the other recreational opportunities in Griffith Park. Working for Councilman LaBonge, I worked with the communities affected by the lack of connectivity they experienced and the LARRC (now LA RIVER) in creating a solid solution that would have long lasting impact and serve as a memorable landmark. Councilman LaBonge decided to fund the EIR along with then Councilmember Garcetti from CD13 with their respective discretionary funds in the hope of seeing this vision be constructed.

The importance for the equestrian community to avoid going into the River to cross into Griffith Park as well as cyclists and pedestrians to join the LA RIVER bike/ped path or enter Griffith Park has been noted by community leaders from all these groups, and the decision to invest discretionary funds from two council offices to begin the process of building this bridge was made with an eye to the future when the LA RIVER will be the vital open space and recreation area it should be. The design was to be memorable but practical in that it allows for both equestrians and cyclists to cross safely.

After all these years, I am happy to see it is in the final leg of approval, and I do hope that the Councilmembers will support this vision for the River and the constituents of this City who want to escape our reliance on the automobile, exercise and enjoy the LA River and Griffith Park. I think it will become a centerpiece from which more infrastructure will be developed to promote and increase the value of these areas for the benefit of all.

I believe the North Atwater Bridge project will greatly benefit my community and so I urge the City to provide the remaining funds needed to begin construction of this project right away. If you have any questions about my support, I can be reached at 323-793-7868.

Sincerely,

Sheila Irani