

**BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS
MEMBERS**

AURA GARCIA
PRESIDENT

M. TERESA VILLEGAS
VICE PRESIDENT

DR. MICHAEL R. DAVIS
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

VAHID KHORSAND
COMMISSIONER

SUSANA REYES
COMMISSIONER

DR. FERNANDO CAMPOS
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



KAREN BASS
MAYOR

**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS**

**BUREAU OF
ENGINEERING**

TED ALLEN, PE
CITY ENGINEER

1149 S. BROADWAY, SUITE 700
LOS ANGELES, CA 90015-2213

<http://eng.lacity.org>

July 31, 2023

The Honorable City Council
c/o Holly L. Wolcott
City Clerk
Room 360, City Hall

COUNCIL FILE NO. 23-0224 – RIVERWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY – ORO VISTA AVE CROSSING

SUMMARY

To address the flooding and access issue on Oro Vista Avenue over the Tujunga Wash, Bureau of Engineering (BOE) staff met with the Council District 7 staff to discuss viable alternatives to the current low water crossing, also known as an “Arizona crossing” that passes water from high flows due to storm events. Upon exploring several potential options, BOE identified two alternatives that would provide “all weather” access to the Riverwood Ranch Community. Given the cost associated with each alternative, an in-depth feasibility study would need to be conducted for all potential solutions outlined in this report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council RECEIVE AND FILE this report.

BACKGROUND

Riverwood Ranch Community was established in the 1910's and currently consists of approximately 35 privately-owned parcels. The only paved access to the community is through Oro Vista Avenue, which crosses along the bottom of the Tujunga Wash. This low water crossing is also known as an “Arizona crossing,” which is intended to allow water to pass over it during high flows from storm events.

In 1969, this section of Oro Vista Avenue was destroyed by a heavy storm event, and the homeowners filed claims against the City as a result. To settle the claims, a “by-road” was constructed per City Ordinance 140795 with reference to City Council Files Nos. 142557 and 70-1011. In 1970, the said replacement road and the bridge portion were constructed



as a low water crossing, per plan P-27075, with the understanding that the road would be unusable during storm events. Since then, City forces have maintained the Arizona Crossing portion of Oro Vista Avenue on an as-needed basis. To reduce the storm runoff overflowing Oro Vista Avenue, two 42-inch reinforced concrete pipe culverts were installed in 1996 to divert runoff underneath the roadway per plan P-34963.

There are small earthen berms and large boulders placed in the area adjacent to and along the margin of the road. These were placed for safety of the motoring public and the prevention of trespassing into the Wash area by motorized vehicles.

During times of high flow, the flowing water carries sediment, rocks, and debris onto and over Oro Vista Avenue. Under these scenarios, the resulting blockage makes Oro Vista Avenue impassable.

DISCUSSION

In response to the motion from Council District 7, BOE staff evaluated various long-term Capital Improvement proposals and alternatives for preventing future access closure of Oro Vista Avenue through the Tujunga Wash. During the evaluation process, BOE recognized that the Tujunga Wash is a natural habitat for various native plants and animals, and any maintenance work to be performed adjacent to or in the Tujunga Wash would require permission from various regulatory agencies, which could result in lengthy permitting processes. Minimizing future maintenance activities in the Wash becomes an important consideration. BOE has identified two alternatives for potential further exploration:

- 1) Constructing an elevated roadway or bridge crossing over the Tujunga Wash that ranges from 750 feet to 850 feet long, depending on the final alignment, and
- 2) Constructing a roadway that meets City street standards along the existing 1.2-mile dirt road between Riverwood Drive and Foothill Boulevard.

For comparison purposes, the preliminary construction cost estimate for the elevated roadway or bridge alternative is approximately \$70 million. The preliminary construction cost estimate for the roadway alternative is approximately \$55 million. Each of these alternatives would require a mix of regulatory permitting from environmental resource agencies and real estate acquisition because the City does not have a right of way over the proposed locations. These efforts would require additional costs that we are unable to establish at this time. Given the nature of these complexities, a feasibility study would be required to investigate the constructability of each alternative in detail and consider additional factors including but not limited to: 1) right-of-way acquisition, 2) permit requirements, 3) environmental studies, 4) street lighting requirements, and 5) geotechnical studies.

FISCAL IMPACT

BOE is working with CAO to identify potential funding sources for a feasibility study of these alternatives and will prepare a joint report once we have concluded our discussions. BOE estimates the cost of this study to be \$1 million.

If you have any questions, please contact Scott Gibson at (213) 485-5101 or at scott.gibson@lacity.org

Respectfully submitted,



Ted Allen, P.E.
City Engineer

Attachment

TA/KM/AM:sg:cj:ss:ab

Box\EXE_Ready for Signature\TSA\Outbox\Archived\2023\Report to Council –
Oro Vista-Arizona Crossing CF 23-0224 - Final.pdf

cc: Randall Winston, Office of the Mayor
Aura Garcia, Board of Public Works
Teresa Villegas, Board of Public Works
Alfred Mata, Bureau of Engineering

PUBLIC WORKS

MOTION

The Riverwood Ranch community in Sunland was established in 1910 and currently consists of roughly 35 parcels. Oro Vista Avenue—connecting the residents of the Riverwood Ranch community to the Sunland-Tujunga area—serves as a paved access from this hillside community.

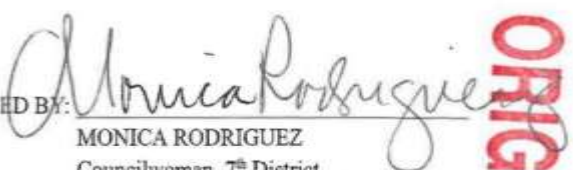
Its location within the Tujunga Wash and low traffic volumes, Oro Vista Avenue was built as an Arizona style crossing, which is a low-water culvert crossing where a road dips across a normally dry creek bed or drainage area. However, Oro Vista Avenue has become more prone to severe flooding during the wet weather season. In addition, the Big Tujunga Dam, located further upstream, must, on occasion, release water during extreme weather events, further exacerbating flooding in this area and isolating residents from access to emergency services during storm events.

The Big Tujunga Wash comes with its unique set of issues resulting from multiple jurisdictions having ownership along various segments of the Wash. It is therefore important to bring together all partners to identify solutions for better managing flooding and maintaining passable access during wet weather events.

I THEREFORE MOVE the Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Sanitation, Bureau of Street Services, the Los Angeles Fire Department, and all other relevant City departments, report back to Council in 15 days with solutions for addressing the flooding and access issues at Oro Vista Avenue at Big Tujunga Canyon Road and improvements that will prevent future access closures.

I FURTHER MOVE the Bureau of Engineering, with assistance from the Office of the City Administrative Officer, report back in 15 days on available funding options for the needed improvements and continued maintenance cost associated.

PRESENTED BY:


MONICA RODRIGUEZ

Councilwoman, 7th District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL

FEB 28 2023

PK