



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: MAY 14, 2024

FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT WARD: 5

SUBJECT: CONVEYANCE OF EASEMENT TO RIVERSIDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR A SEWER LINE ON VILLEGAS PARK PROPERTY TO SERVE CASA BLANCA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## **ISSUE:**

Approve Agreement for Conveyance of Easement with Riverside Unified School District for a sewer line on Villegas Park property to serve Casa Blanca Elementary School.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council:

1. Approve Agreement for Conveyance of Easement to Riverside Unified School District for a sewer line on Villegas Park property to serve Casa Blanca Elementary School and;
2. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute the Agreement for Conveyance of Easement to Riverside Unified School District including making minor, non-substantive changes, and to sign all documents and instruments necessary to complete the transaction.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Villegas Park is an 18-acre community park located at 3091 Esperanza Street, in the Casa Blanca neighborhood. The park has a community center, swimming pool, baseball field, playgrounds, and is a lively and vibrant center of community activities.

Adjacent to Villegas Park, a 9.8 acre lot (7351 Lincoln Avenue, APN 230-360-001) owned by the Riverside Unified School District (RUSD) will be developed with the new Casa Blanca Elementary School to serve approximately 800 children. The school will provide classrooms, administrative and supporting buildings, play areas, outdoor learning and shared spaces for transitional kindergarten through sixth grade students.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The school site is situated such that it cannot be designed economically for wastewater to drain towards the sewer main in Lincoln Street. Consequently, RUSD has requested a sewer easement through a landscape planter bed in the Bunker Street parking lot at Villegas Park. Granting of the sewer line easement will not have a long-term negative impact on the community's use of the park. Temporary minor impacts are expected during construction of the sewer line, such as unavailability of about 14 parking spaces in the Bunker Street parking lot for about 2-4 weeks. 39 parking spaces in the same parking lot will remain usable by the community during construction.

In exchange for the easement, RUSD will provide an ADA accessible concrete path over the easement in the park planter to allow families to walk to school from Emerald and Bunker Streets through the park and along the side of the school property to access the school entrance on Lincoln Avenue. This will create a connected campus with a more direct path of travel to the school entrance on Lincoln Avenue for families living behind the school, making it easier to walk or bike instead of driving to the school. This will help alleviate traffic congestion at the school pick-up and drop-off areas and promote an active and healthy lifestyle. RUSD will also provide landscape and irrigation improvements in the impacted planter bed to beautify the park.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The work contributes to **Strategic Priority 1 - Arts, Culture and Recreation**, priority of the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan, which aims to provide diverse community experiences and personal enrichment opportunities for people of all ages. The work also contributes to **Strategic Priority 6 - Infrastructure, Mobility, & Connection** priority which aims to ensure safe, reliable infrastructure that benefits the community and facilitates connection between people, place and information.

The proposed Grant of Easement to RUSD for the Casa Blanca Elementary School contributes to **goal 1.3**, to improve parks, recreational amenities, open space, and trail development, and fulfill critical lifecycle and facility maintenance needs; **goal 1.4**, to prioritize safety at parks, trails, arts, cultural and recreational facilities; **goal 6.1** to provide, expand and ensure equitable access to sustainable modes of transportation that connect people to opportunities such as employment, education, and healthcare, and community amenities; and **goal 6.3** to Identify and pursue unique funding opportunities to develop, operate, maintain, and renew infrastructure and programs that meet the community's needs.

The proposed Grant of Easement with RUSD for the Casa Blanca Elementary School also aligns with the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The Casa Blanca Elementary School is a much-needed resource for the community. The City supports RUSD's mission to provide engaging, innovative, and equitable learning experiences for all students, and thus is coordinating with RUSD to implement a cost-effective solution for critical sewer infrastructure to serve the school.
2. **Equity** – The Grant of Easement demonstrates that Riverside is fair, collaborative, and equitable in distribution of services, which ensures that every member of the community has equal access to share the benefits of community progress.

3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The park gains a new sidewalk as well as landscape and irrigation improvements at no direct cost to the City. The improvements will provide a better connection for the community between Villegas Park and Casa Blanca Elementary School.
4. **Innovation** – By partnering with RUSD, the park gains a new sidewalk to facilitate circulation through the park to the school, making it easier for families to access and enjoy both the park and school.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The new sidewalk through Villegas Park provides a comfortable path for families to use active modes of transportation to get back and forth to Casa Blanca Elementary School rather than driving, helping to reduce greenhouse gases while promoting an active and healthy lifestyle.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact report associated with this action.

Prepared by: Alisa Sramala, Principal Park Project Manager  
Approved by: Pamela M. Galera, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director  
Certified as to availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director / Assistant Chief Financial Officer  
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Location Map
2. Agreement for Conveyance of Easement
3. Easement Document with Legal Description and Plat