

# CHAPTER 2

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

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## 2.1 Project Background

In 2006, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency issued new guidelines for water quality that required open reservoirs to be covered, to be removed from service, or for the water to be treated before distribution. In response, the LADWP decided to decommission both the Silver Lake and Ivanhoe Reservoirs and build a new covered water storage facility north of Griffith Park called the Headworks Reservoir.

The Headworks Reservoir required the completion of the Silver Lake Reservoir Bypass and Regulator Station Project (Bypass Project). This project involved the installation of a bypass pipeline along the bottom of the Silver Lake Reservoir basin, and a new regulator station to connect the new Headworks Reservoir to the City's water distribution system. The Silver Lake Reservoir was removed from service in 2008, drained in 2015 to construct the Bypass Project, and then refilled in 2017. Ivanhoe Reservoir was removed from the distribution system in 2017 and remains filled with water.

Although Silver Lake and Ivanhoe Reservoirs are no longer a potable water source, LADWP still has active components at SLRC which requires the Master Plan to preserve areas of the site for LADWP system operations, personnel, and future projects.

The Master Plan project originated in March 2018, when the City Council approved a Memorandum of Agreement between the BOE and the LADWP, allowing the BOE to begin the Silver Lake Reservoir Complex Master Plan process. LADWP funded the development of the Master Plan. The agreement included LADWP continuing their operational responsibilities, such as maintaining then integrity of the dams and LADWP onsite facilities.

The Master Plan initiative was seen as a unique opportunity for the Silver Lake community and the City of Los Angeles to consider repurposing a major piece of urban infrastructure while addressing LADWP's on-going operational needs. Goals for the new Master Plan include balancing its historic character; its strategic location within the Silver Lake neighborhood; and its visual impact with its long-term environmental value; its use as a public and community gathering place; and its potential to blend urban wilderness with recreational spaces.

### PRIOR INITIATIVES – 2000 MASTER PLAN

A Master Plan was completed on November 1, 2000. Its purpose included defining long-range planning goals for the Silver Lake community and for the LADWP, providing the community with a better understanding of LADWP facilities, operations, and both planned and potential water quality improvement projects, and specifying potential public uses for the SLRC and adjoining property desired by the community including recreational elements and improved pedestrian safety, and serve as a guide to ensure all future improvements identified for public use were compatible with LADWP's operations and mandate to comply with federal and state water quality regulations.

The primary difference between goals of the 2000 Master Plan and those of this 2020 Master Plan is twofold. The 2000 Plan was part of a mitigation document for a proposed Water Quality Treatment Facility at that time. Now, the reservoirs are no longer part of the City's drinking water supply making the vast majority of the SLRC, including both water bodies, available for public use.

Between 2000 and 2018 the following projects identified in the 2000 Master Plan were implemented. These projects involved significant community involvement and many were funded through community efforts:

- 2005** – West Silver Lake Drive Path opens
- 2006** – Armstrong Path opens
- 2008** – Silver Lake Boulevard Path opens
- 2011** – Silver Lake Meadow opens
- 2012** – Tesla Path opens, Pocket Park and Meadow Native Garden are created
- 2015** – Path and Meadow improvements; Armstrong Native Meadow created
- 2018** – South Dam Path opens, inside the fence
- 2019** – Ivanhoe Path opens, inside the fence

*Cover of 2000 Silver Lake Reservoir Complex Master Plan Report*



## 2.2 Purpose of a Master Plan

A master plan is a dynamic, long-term planning document that provides a conceptual layout to guide future growth and development. It is based on community goals and aspirations, prior planning initiatives, existing site conditions, physical site characteristics, and social and economic conditions.

Master Plans specify near and long-range strategies for development and provide a framework for post-construction programming, operations, governance, and long-term financial sustainability. A master plan for a park includes neighborhood, site, and systems research and analysis, conceptual design, recommendations for implementation and future studies, and construction and operational budget estimates.

As long-term documents, Master Plans typically guide planning and implementation of community goals for 10 to 20 years. Once adopted by City Council and concurrence of the Mayor, environmental clearance, detailed design, permitting, and project implementation typically occur in phases and in accordance with funding and political will.

## 2.3 Master Plan Study Area

The Silver Lake and Ivanhoe Reservoirs, also known as the Silver Lake Reservoir Complex (SLRC), are owned by the LADWP. The SLRC is located on an approximately 127-acre site in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles and includes reservoirs, dams, buildings, water and stormwater infrastructure, interior roads, and public recreational facilities.

The SLRC Master Plan Study Area includes approximately 116 acres of land, pathways, and water within the Complex (Figure 2-1). The remaining 11 acres of land at the Complex are restricted for LADWP facilities and infrastructure. LADWP currently leases approximately 3 acres of land to the Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department (RAP) to operate and maintain the Meadow. Approximately 4 acres of the Complex are owned and operated by RAP for the Silver Lake Recreation Center and a nursery school.

Currently, there are two pathways shared with the public on the west side of Ivanhoe Reservoir and along the top of Silver Lake Dam. Approximately 4 acres of existing paved surfaces around the reservoirs' perimeters and at the base of the Knoll are available for shared public use with LADWP.

Figure 2-1 Master Plan Study Area

TOTAL AREA (EXCL. LADWP)  
**116.4 ACRES**  
**(91.3 %)**

EXT. SHARED PATHWAY  
**0.9 ACRES**  
**(0.7 %)**

POTENTIAL FREE SPACE  
**103.6 ACRES**  
**(81.3 %)**

POTENTIAL SHARED SPACE  
**4.2 ACRES**  
**(3.3 %)**

RECREATION & PARKS  
**7.7 ACRES**  
**(6.0 %)**



## 2.4 LADWP Lands & Structures

Within the SLRC, several land areas and structures are excluded from the Master Plan Study Area to enable the LADWP to continue its required operations at the site as shown in Figure 2-2. The largest area outside the Study Area is located on the northeast side of the Complex where LADWP facilities are maintained. The reservoir bodies are bounded by three dams under LADWP responsibility, one on the north side of Ivanhoe Reservoir, one on the south side of Silver Lake Reservoir, and one separating Ivanhoe and Silver Lake Reservoirs which contains a spillway. Additional LADWP structures which must remain in place and operational include pipelines, a regulator station, valves, vaults, equipment, buildings, reservoir structures, power and communication systems, and other supporting infrastructure. These areas will all be fenced.

Future alterations to the SLRC resulting from the Master Plan must also allow access into both reservoirs and provide vehicular access around the reservoirs for LADWP operational use. At a minimum, the Master Plan design must accommodate one ramp into Ivanhoe Reservoir and two ramps into Silver Lake Reservoir. Designated paths for LADWP vehicles must maintain a minimum 15-foot clear width.

Figure 2-2 LADWP Land

LADWP LANDS  
**11.1 ACRES**  
**(8.73 %)**

spillway

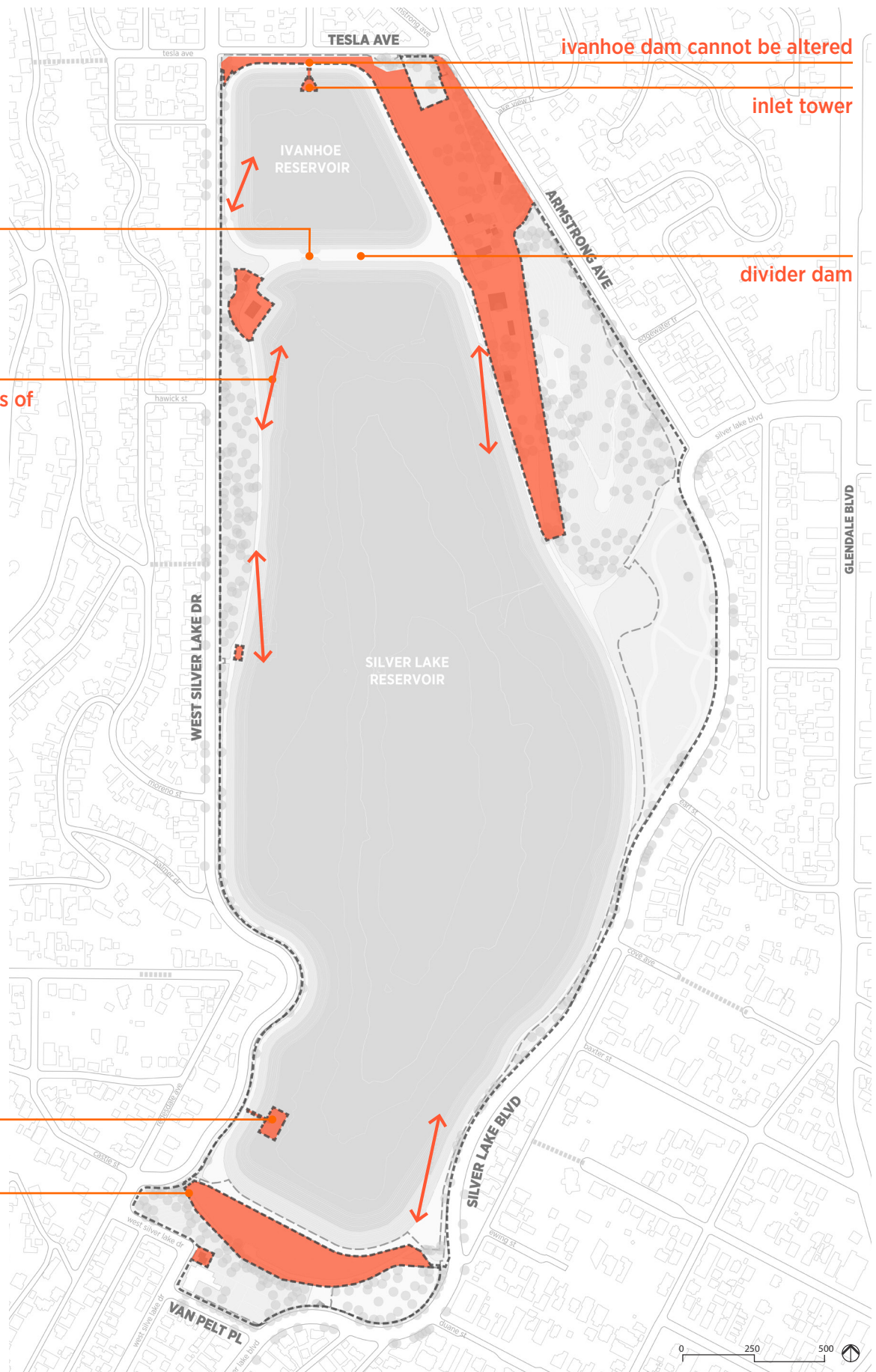
existing ramps / points of water access

outlet tower

silver lake dam cannot be altered

**LEGEND**

- LADWP LANDS
- EXISTING RAMPS



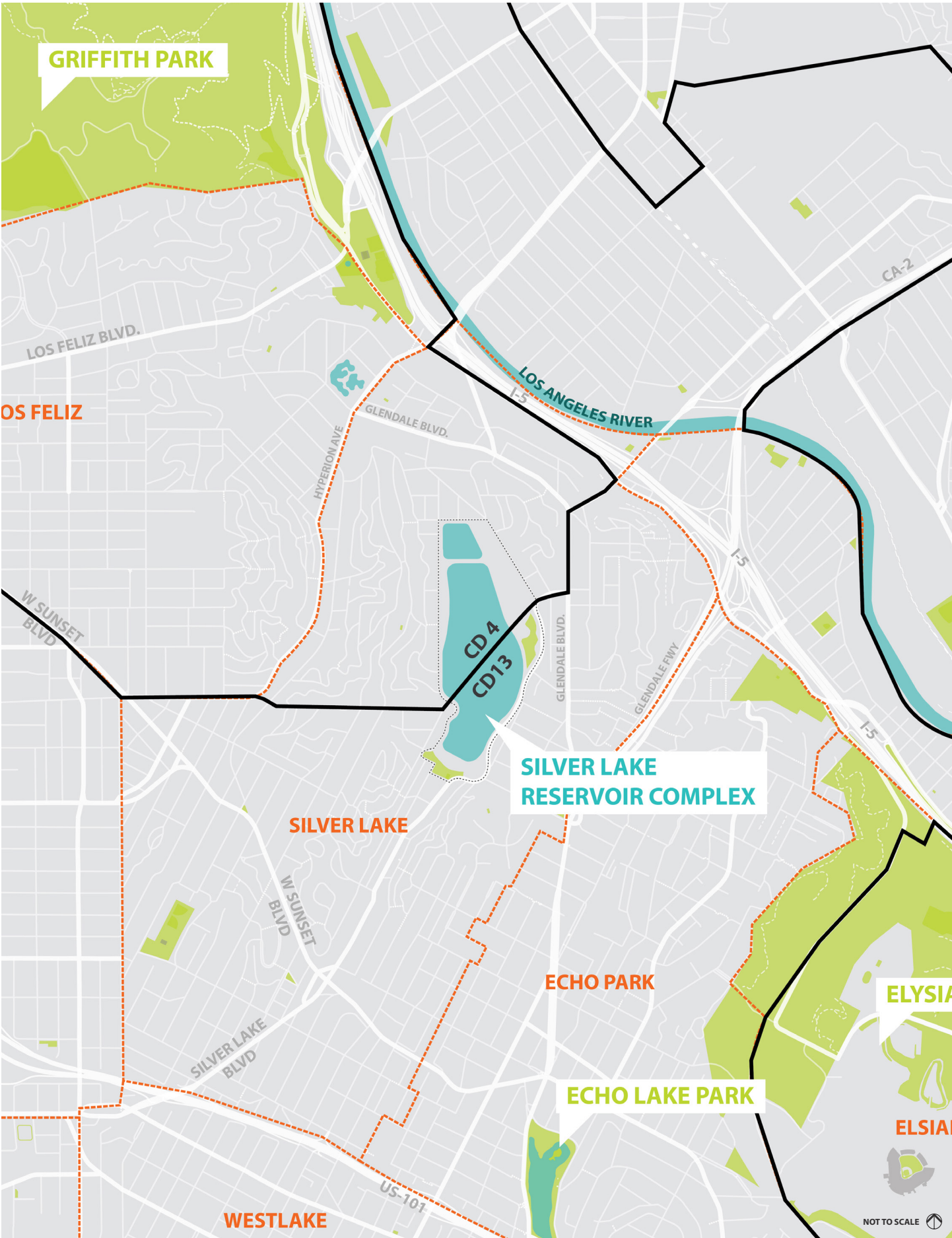


## 2.5 Existing Site Conditions

The Silver Lake Reservoir Complex is located in the Silver Lake neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles (Figure 2-3). Silver Lake is primarily a residential neighborhood with some commercial areas. Under the Los Angeles General Plan, Silver Lake is part of the Silver Lake–Echo Park–Elysian Valley Community Plan Area which establishes policy and land use guidelines. The Complex is zoned as Open Space (OS) for which the Master Plan design is compatible. Additionally, the Complex crosses two Los Angeles political jurisdictions, Council Districts 4 and 13 (CD4 and CD13).

The Silver Lake–Echo Park–Elysian Valley Community Plan identifies several opportunities related to the SLRC Master Plan including the promotion and facilitation of implementing the Master Plan as a valuable community and recreational asset. The Community Plan also supports and encourages creating pedestrian and bike linkages between parks and open spaces with which the SLRC Master Plan proposal is compatible.

Figure 2-3 Silver Lake Reservoir Complex Context



The irregularly shaped site is bounded by Tesla Avenue on the north, Armstrong Avenue and Silver Lake Boulevard on the east, Van Pelt Place, and Silver Lake Boulevard on the south, and West Silver Lake Drive on the west.

The existing site is organized into a series of spaces surrounding the reservoirs as described below and shown in Figure 2-4.

### **MEADOW**

The Meadow is mostly open lawn with some shade trees and mix of ornamental and native planting with several walking paths. Approximately 3 acres of this space is currently leased by RAP and open to the public during the day and closed at night. This public amenity was identified and implemented as part of the 2000 Master Plan.

### **KNOLL**

The Knoll is a hill approximately 45-feet high north of the Meadow. It's currently restricted to LADWP access only. The Knoll is mostly a woodland mix of Eucalyptus and Pine species with a varied grass and shrub understory. A portion of the Knoll is used by LADWP landscape maintenance for material storage.

### **SILVER LAKE RECREATION CENTER AND DOG PARK**

This Recreation Center is located on the south side of Silver Lake Dam. It includes a Recreation Center building with a small gym and support spaces, tot lot, informal play field, basketball court, fenced dog park, open lawn, and picnic area. The Recreation Center is operated from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm on weekdays, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturdays, and is closed on Sundays.

### **EUCALYPTUS GROVE**

Along the western side of Silver Lake Reservoir, is a large, wooded space known as the Eucalyptus Grove. It's a mostly flat area dominated by non-native Eucalyptus trees and a monoculture of mostly grasses on the ground plane. Access to the grove is currently restricted to LADWP.

### **IVANHOE RESERVOIR**

Ivanhoe Reservoir is the smaller of the two reservoirs and bounded by a path along the top of its dam. The narrow lands around the water body are currently restricted to LADWP access with the exception of a shared path on the west side that connects to a public sidewalk on West Silver Lake Drive and which allows people to walk along the water's edge before being directed back to West Silver Lake Drive near the Spillway. This shared path is closed to the public at night.

### **SOUTH SILVER LAKE DAM**

At the top of this dam is a shared pathway that connects to sidewalks at West Silver Lake Drive and Silver Lake Boulevard and which allows people to walk along the top of the embankment and take in long views of the water body and San Gabriel Mountains in the distance. This shared path is closed to the public at night.

### **EAST AND WEST CONNECTORS**

The south end of Silver Lake Reservoir is bounded on the east and west sides by narrow areas of land consisting predominantly of a pathway at the embankment edge that connects the Meadow on the east side and Eucalyptus Grove on the west side to the Silver Lake Dam pathway. The width of these spaces vary from roughly 25- to 50-feet and are restricted to LADWP access.

### **PERIMETER FENCE**

The entire reservoir complex is enclosed by a perimeter chain link fence varying in height from 6- to 12-feet. In some areas the fence is topped by three rows of barbed wire. Access gates managed by LADWP are dispersed throughout.

