

1 **GAMMILL LAW**
2 **ACCIDENT & INJURY LAWYERS**
3 DAVID W. GAMMILL (SBN 258286)
4 ZACK V. MULJAT (SBN 304531)
5 8605 Santa Monica Blvd., PMB 162306
6 West Hollywood, California 90069-4109
7 *david@gammill.law*
8 *zack@gammill.law*
9 Tel: (310) 750-4149
10 Attorneys for Plaintiff ROBIN L. ACKERMAN

Electronically FILED by
Superior Court of California,
County of Los Angeles
1/05/2026 7:43 AM
David W. Slayton,
Executive Officer/Clerk of Court,
By W. Lee, Deputy Clerk

8 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
9
10 **COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

11
12 ROBIN L. ACKERMAN, individually
13 and as the successor-in-interest to THE
14 ESTATE OF BLAKE ADAM
15 ACKERMAN, deceased;

16
17 Plaintiff,

18 vs.

19 DOUGLAS MORTON ADAMS, an
20 individual; DOE MUNICIPALITY 1, a
21 public entity; DOE MUNICIPALITY 2, a
22 public entity; DOE COUNTY, a public
23 entity; and DOES 4 through 20, inclusive;

24 Defendants.

Case No.: **26SMCV00014**

COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES:

1. NEGLIGENCE;
2. DANGEROUS CONDITION OF
PUBLIC PROPERTY (Gov. Code §
815.2); and
3. WRONGFUL DEATH

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Unlimited Civil Jurisdiction

1 Plaintiff Robin L. Ackerman, individually and as the successor-in-interest to the Estate
2 of Blake Adam Ackerman, hereby complains and alleges as follows:

3 **PARTIES**

4 1. At all relevant times, Plaintiff Robin L. Ackerman was an individual, above the
5 age of 18, residing in the County of Los Angeles, California. Ms. Ackerman is the mother of
6 decedent Blake Adam Ackerman.

7 2. At all relevant times, Decedent Blake Adam Ackerman was an individual, above
8 the age of 18, residing in the County of Los Angeles, California, and was not married and had
9 no children. He was 27 years old at the time of his death.

10 3. At all relevant times, Defendant Douglas Morton Adams was an individual,
11 above the age of 18, who upon information and belief resides in the County of Los Angeles,
12 California.

13 4. At all relevant times, Defendant Doe Municipality 1 was a governmental entity
14 organized and existing under the laws of the State of California, and located wholly within the
15 County of Los Angeles, California. At all relevant times, Defendant Doe Municipality owned,
16 operated, and maintained the roadway and bike lane on which decedent Blake Ackerman was
17 killed.

18 5. At all relevant times, Defendant Doe Municipality 2 was a governmental entity
19 organized and existing under the laws of the State of California, and located wholly within the
20 County of Los Angeles, California. At all relevant times, Defendant Doe Municipality owned,
21 operated, and maintained the roadway and bike lane on which decedent Blake Ackerman was
22 killed.

23 6. At all relevant times, Defendant Doe County was a governmental entity
24 organized and existing under the laws of the State of California. At all relevant times,
25 Defendant Doe County owned, operated, and maintained the roadway and bike lane on which
26 decedent Blake Ackerman was killed.

27 7. The true names and capacities, whether individual, plural, corporate,
28 partnership, associate, or otherwise, of Defendants Doe Municipality 1, Doe Municipality 2,

1 Doe County, and Does 4 through 20, inclusive, are unknown to Plaintiff who therefore sues
2 these Defendants by fictitious names. The full extent of the facts linking Defendants Doe
3 Municipality 1, Doe Municipality 2, Doe County, and Does 4 through 20, inclusive, to
4 Plaintiff's injuries is currently unknown. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon
5 alleges, that each of Defendants Doe Municipality 1, Doe Municipality 2, Doe County, and
6 Does 4 through 20, inclusive, was and is negligent or in some other actionable manner
7 responsible for the events and happenings described in this Complaint and is thereby
8 negligently or in some other actionable manner legally and proximately responsible for
9 Plaintiff's injuries. Each of the Defendants, including Defendants Doe Municipality 1, Doe
10 Municipality 2, Doe County, and Does 4 through 20, inclusive, has acted as the employee,
11 contractor, partner, manager, and/or other agent for each and every other Defendant in causing
12 Plaintiff's harm as alleged herein. Plaintiff will seek leave of Court to amend this Complaint
13 to show the true names and capacities of Defendants Doe Municipality 1, Doe Municipality 2,
14 Doe County, and Does 4 through 20, inclusive after these have been ascertained.

15 **JURISDICTION, VENUE, AND NOTICE**

16 8. Subject-matter jurisdiction is proper in the Superior Court of California, County
17 of Los Angeles, which is a court of general jurisdiction.

18 9. Personal jurisdiction over all Defendants is proper under Code of Civil
19 Procedure section 410.10, which provides that California courts are authorized to exercise
20 jurisdiction over parties "on any basis not inconsistent with the Constitution of this state or of
21 the United States."

22 10. Venue is proper, under Code of Civil Procedure section 395, in the Superior
23 Court of California, County of Los Angeles, because Plaintiff's injuries were sustained, in
24 whole or in part, in the County of Los Angeles.

25 11. Plaintiff has complied with the California Government Tort Claims Act. In
26 accordance with Government Code sections 910 *et seq.*, Plaintiff served government tort
27 claims on Defendants Doe Municipality 1, Doe Municipality 2, and Doe County, three public
28 entities who may be liable for Plaintiff's damages. Plaintiff's inability to determine the identity

1 or identities of the liable Doe defendants is caused by, among other things, the fact that the
2 site of the fatal collision is directly on the border dividing Doe Municipality 1 from Doe
3 Municipality 2. Should these entities reject Plaintiff's government tort claims, and Plaintiff's
4 investigation determines the potential for liability, said entities will be added to this action as
5 named Defendants.

6 **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

7 12. Decedent Blake Ackerman was a rising star in Los Angeles' legal community.
8 He was a graduate of Beverly Hills High School, the vice president of his undergraduate class
9 at the University of Southern California, and 2023 graduate of Loyola Law School. Mr.
10 Ackerman clerked for Judge Clyde J. Wadsworth of the Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals
11 and served as a Judicial Extern to Judge Autumn D. Spaeth of the US District Court for the
12 Central District of California. At the time of his passing, Mr. Ackerman had just begun his
13 legal career as a litigation associate at Morgan Lewis' Century City office.

14 13. On or about July 10, 2025, Mr. Ackerman was riding his bicycle westbound on
15 Fountain Avenue in the City of West Hollywood, California.

16 14. After passing Gardner Avenue, Mr. Ackerman was struck from behind by a
17 silver BMW sedan, which fled the scene.

18 15. Mr. Ackerman struck the BMW's windshield, breaking it, and was thrown to the
19 ground. Nearby pedestrians immediately rendered medical assistance and called 911, but Mr.
20 Ackerman passed away shortly thereafter.

21 16. Witnesses and investigators reported that the BMW was speeding at the time of
22 the collision—it was driving traveling at approximately 45 to 50 miles per hour. The posted
23 speed limit on Fountain Avenue was 35 miles per hour, which was subsequently reduced to
24 30 miles per hour shortly after the collision.

25 17. Five days after the fatal collision, a citizen tip led to the arrest of Defendant
26 Douglas Morton Adams. Mr. Adams was driving the BMW and killed Mr. Ackerman, fled the
27 scene, and evaded arrest for approximately five days.

1 18. Mr. Adams was subsequently charged with “hit-and-run driving resulting in
2 death or serious injury,” a felony, and is awaiting trial.

3 19. Following Mr. Ackerman’s death, the community groups West Hollywood
4 Bicycle Coalition and Streets Are for Everyone (SAFE), along with Mr. Ackerman’s family,
5 placed a white-painted bicycle at the site of the collision in Mr. Ackerman’s honor, and later
6 held a rally at West Hollywood City Hall to call for safer roads for cyclists and pedestrians.

7 20. At the time of the collision, Fountain Avenue did not have a dedicated or
8 protected bike lane.

9 21. Instead, the westbound lane 2 of Fountain Avenue is marked with a “shared lane
10 marking” or “sharrow,” indicating that lane 2 is to be shared by automobile traffic and bike
11 traffic.

12 22. Additionally, immediately after the intersection with Gardner Street, Fountain
13 Avenue’s lane 2 is narrowed by street parking at the curb, further reducing the ability of
14 motorists to share the lane with cyclists like Mr. Ackerman. Further, this section of Fountain
15 Avenue is not equipped with sufficient street lighting to alert drivers to the presence of cyclists
16 after sunset.

17 23. Cyclists, residents, community leaders, and elected officials have long
18 recognized the danger posed to cyclists on Fountain Avenue. Damian Kevitt, the Executive
19 Director of SAFE, stated publicly that “Fountain Avenue’s inaccessible design is directly
20 responsible for Ackerman’s death.”

21 24. In May of 2017, Doe Municipality 1’s city council adopted a “Pedestrian and
22 Bicycle Mobility Plan” (“PBMP”).

23 25. The PBMP’s final draft required improvements to Fountain Avenue that
24 included dedicated bike lanes to improve cyclist safety.

25 26. But when the PBMP was formally adopted, however, Doe Municipality 1’s city
26 council specifically cancelled the construction of dedicated bicycle lanes on Fountain Avenue,
27 and instead elected to proceed only with “short-term pedestrian safety improvements on
28 Fountain Avenue.”

1 27. Thereafter, Doe Municipality 1 continued to acknowledge the danger posed to
2 cyclists by the dangerous design and condition of Fountain Avenue, while also refusing to take
3 reasonable, necessary steps to protect cyclists.

4 28. For example, in a March 21, 2021 city council report, Doe Municipality 1 stated
5 that “Fountain Avenue is a designated bicycle route, but it currently only has sharrows –
6 something many drivers do not understand, and bicyclists may not feel safe utilizing.”

7 29. In the same 2021 report, Doe Municipality 1 admitted that it had already
8 identified and fixed similar problems on other roadways, including by installing dedicated bike
9 lanes, within less than two years time: “In September 2019, the City Council approved a
10 project to provide bike lanes on Santa Monica Boulevard between Doheny Drive and Almont
11 Drive, which completed a missing link in the bike lane network.”

12 30. A similar report authored by Defendant Doe Municipality 1 acknowledged the
13 extreme danger posed by its design of Fountain Avenue: “From 2013–2024, there were 35
14 severe injury crashes and 5 fatalities on the West Hollywood segment [of Fountain Avenue]—
15 three times higher than adjacent segments in Los Angeles.”

16 31. That same report continued: “36% of West Hollywood’s overall fatal crashes
17 have occurred on Fountain Avenue, despite it making up only 4% of the City’s overall roadway
18 network. These fatalities have impacted people travelling in all modes - walking, biking, and
19 driving. This crash rate demonstrates a significant safety challenge for the City Council’s
20 consideration.”

21 32. Incredibly, Doe Municipality 1’s own website states admits that its design of
22 Fountain Avenue presents an unreasonably dangerous condition for cyclists. The website’s
23 “Bicycle Conditions” section states that “[t]he [Fountain Avenue] corridor is currently
24 **designed for the ‘fearless’ cyclist only**. The high volumes and high speeds of cars paired with
25 the lack of a dedicated bicycle facility create an uncomfortable experience for the typical bike
26 rider.” (Emphasis in original.)

27 33. Worse still, Defendants were aware of the exceptionally unsafe condition of the
28 *the specific intersection* at which Mr. Ackerman was killed. A January 2024 “Street Design

1 Concept Plan” drafted by Defendant Doe Municipality 1 states that “Motor vehicle collisions
2 are highest at Fountain Ave. & Gardner St.”—the exact location of the collision that killed Mr.
3 Ackerman.

4 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

5 **NEGLIGENCE**

6 *(Plaintiff as successor-in-interest to the Estate of Blake Adam Ackerman against Defendants*

7 *Douglas Morton Adams and Does 4–20, inclusive)*

8 34. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference each and every allegation
9 contained in the proceeding paragraphs, inclusive, of this Complaint as though fully set forth
10 herein.

11 35. At all times relevant herein, Defendant Adams owed Mr. Ackerman a duty of
12 care to operate his vehicle with due regard for the safety of other persons and property, and
13 without creating an unreasonable risk of harm to others, including Mr. Ackerman.

14 36. Defendant Adams breached his duty of care by failing to operate his vehicle at
15 a safe and/or lawful speed, failing to adequately observe and yield to Plaintiff’s right-of-way
16 as a cyclist, striking and killing Mr. Ackerman, and otherwise failing to operate his vehicle
17 with the required due regard for the safety of others.

18 37. Defendant Adams’ negligent conduct was the actual and proximate cause of the
19 collision with Mr. Ackerman and his subsequent death, as Mr. Ackerman was lawfully
20 proceeding westbound on Fountain Avenue with the right of way when Defendant Adams
21 negligently struck and killed him with his vehicle.

22 38. The collision would not have occurred but for Defendant Adams’ negligent
23 operation of his vehicle, and the harm to Mr. Ackerman was a reasonably foreseeable
24 consequence of Defendant Adams’ unsafe operation of his vehicle.

25 39. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants’ negligent conduct, Mr.
26 Ackerman was struck by Defendant Adams’ vehicle and later died.

27 40. Before his death, Mr. Ackerman experienced pain, suffering, emotional distress,
28 and sustained economic and noneconomic injuries. Under Code of Civil Procedure section

1 377.30, Decedent Blake Adam Ackerman's right to recover for such injuries passes to Plaintiff
2 Robin Ackerman as the successor-in-interest to his estate. The Estate of Blake Adam
3 Ackerman is therefore entitled to general and special damages in a sum in excess of the
4 jurisdictional limits of this Court, which will be stated according to proof.

5 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

6 **DANGEROUS CONDITION OF PUBLIC PROPERTY (Gov. Code § 815.2)**

7 *(Plaintiff as successor-in-interest to the Estate of Blake Adam Ackerman against Defendants*
8 *Doe Municipality 1, Doe Municipality 2, Doe County, and Does 4 through 20, inclusive)*

9 41. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference each and every allegation
10 contained in the proceeding paragraphs, inclusive, of this Complaint as though fully set forth
11 herein.

12 42. At all relevant times, Defendants Does 4 through 20, inclusive, were elected
13 representatives, employees, and/or agents of Defendants Doe Municipality 1, Doe
14 Municipality 2, and/or Doe County. At all relevant times, Defendants Doe Municipality 1, Doe
15 Municipality 2, and Doe County owned, operated, and maintained the roadway and bike lane
16 on which decedent Blake Ackerman was killed.

17 43. At all relevant times, Plaintiff was lawfully present and obeying all traffic laws
18 as a cyclist on Fountain Avenue, which is a public street.

19 44. As the owners, operators, and parties responsible for the safety and condition of
20 Fountain Avenue in the area of the collision, Defendants owed a duty of care: (1) to maintain
21 the roadway and bike lane in a reasonably safe condition for cyclists like Plaintiff, (2) to avoid
22 creating or maintaining dangerous conditions in the roadway or bike lane, (3) to repair or
23 remedy known dangerous conditions involving the roadway or bike lane, (4) to warn cyclists
24 and motorists of dangerous conditions involving the roadway or bike lane, (5) to implement a
25 reasonably safe design for the roadway and bike lane within a reasonable time after identifying
26 its hazardous nature, and (6) to otherwise avoid creating unreasonable risks of harm to cyclists
27 and motorists.

28 ///

1 45. Government Code section 835 provides that:

2 [A] public entity is liable for injury caused by a dangerous
3 condition of its property if the plaintiff establishes that the
4 property was in a dangerous condition at the time of the injury,
5 that the injury was proximately caused by the dangerous condition,
6 that the dangerous condition created a reasonably foreseeable risk
7 of the kind of injury which was incurred, and that either:

8 (a) A negligent or wrongful act or omission of an employee of the
9 public entity within the scope of his employment created the
10 dangerous condition; or

11 (b) The public entity had actual or constructive notice of the dangerous condition
12 . . . [and] a sufficient time prior to the injury to have taken measures to protect
13 against the dangerous condition.

14 46. Defendants also had a general duty of care to conduct themselves in such a
15 manner as to avoid creating, maintaining, or failing to warn of a dangerous condition on their
16 property.

17 47. Defendants breached their duties by failing to maintain, warn, and implement a
18 reasonably safe design for the roadway and bike lane on Fountain Avenue where the collision
19 occurred.

20 48. The design and condition of the roadway and bike lane created an unreasonable
21 risk of harm to all cyclists on Fountain Avenue, including Mr. Ackerman, in that the speed of
22 traffic, variable lane width, and inadequate lighting, when combined with the unprotected
23 nature of the “sharrow” shared traffic/bike lane and the documented history of serious and
24 fatal collisions, presented a documented, known, and unreasonable risk of harm to all cyclists,
25 including Mr. Ackerman.

26 49. Defendants Does 4 through 20 created the dangerous condition while acting
27 within the course and scope of their employment with Defendants by failing to design,
28 maintain, and implement reasonably safe bike lanes when they had a duty to do so.

50. Defendants knew or should have known about the dangerous condition posed by the roadway and bike lane, and had sufficient time to take measures to eliminate the dangers caused by the dangerous conditions in time to prevent Mr. Ackerman's death, but they failed to do so.

51. As described above, Defendants identified the danger posed to cyclists by their design of Fountain Avenue as early as 2017, created and then eliminated a plan to add dedicated bike lanes for cyclist safety, all while implementing significantly safer bike infrastructure in other areas within two years. Defendants' own internal reports demonstrate the significantly heightened and unreasonable danger posed by the condition of the shared roadway and bike lane at the site of the collision, but failed to act to prevent Mr. Ackerman's death.

52. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' breaches of their duties of care, Mr. Ackerman was killed.

53. Before his death, Mr. Ackerman experienced pain, suffering, emotional distress, and sustained economic and noneconomic injuries. Under Code of Civil Procedure section 377.30, Decedent Blake Adam Ackerman's right to recover for such injuries passes to Plaintiff Robin Ackerman as the successor-in-interest to his estate. The Estate of Blake Adam Ackerman is therefore entitled to general and special damages in a sum in excess of the jurisdictional limits of this Court, which will be stated according to proof.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

WRONGFUL DEATH

(Plaintiff individually against all Defendants)

54. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained in the proceeding paragraphs, inclusive, of this Complaint as though fully set forth herein.

55. As alleged above, Defendants are liable for the death of Blake Adam Ackerman under the theories of Dangerous Condition on Public Property and Negligence.

56. Mr. Ackerman's death was legally and proximately caused by the

1 aforementioned tortious conduct of Defendants.

2 57. As a direct, proximate, and legal result of Defendants' wrongful conduct,
3 Plaintiff has incurred reasonable and necessary expenses associated with Mr. Ackerman's
4 death, and has thereby been damaged in an amount according to proof.

5 58. As a direct, proximate, and legal result of Defendants' wrongful conduct,
6 Plaintiff has been deprived of the love, companionship, comfort, care, assistance, affection,
7 society, and moral support of her son, Mr. Ackerman, and has thereby been damaged in an
8 amount according to proof.

9 59. As a direct, proximate, and legal result of Defendants' wrongful conduct,
10 Plaintiff has been deprived of Mr. Ackerman's future earnings, earning capacity, and the value
11 of his household service, and has thereby been damaged in an amount according to proof.

12 60. Plaintiff Robin Ackerman brings this cause of action pursuant to California Code
13 of Civil Procedure section 377.60.

14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26 ///

27 ///

28 ///

1 **PRAYER FOR DAMAGES**

2 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff hereby prays for judgment against Defendants, and each of
3 them, as follows:

4 1. For general damages (also known as noneconomic damages), including, but not
5 limited to, compensation for pain and suffering, and loss of love and companionship, in an
6 amount in excess of the jurisdictional minimum of this Court, according to proof;

7 2. For special damages (also known as economic damages), including, but not
8 limited to, compensation for expenses related to Mr. Ackerman's death, and the deprivation
9 of his future wages, earning capacity, and household service, in excess of the jurisdictional
10 minimum of this Court, according to proof;

11 3. For prejudgment interest and interest on damages awarded to the maximum
12 extent permitted by law, according to proof;

13 4. For costs of suit incurred herein, according to proof; and

14 5. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

15
16 Dated: December 30, 2025

GAMMILL LAW
ACCIDENT & INJURY LAWYERS

17
18 By: 

19 DAVID GAMMILL
20 Attorney for Plaintiff
21 ROBIN L. ACKERMAN,
22 individually and as the successor-in-
23 interest to THE ESTATE OF
24 BLAKE ADAM ACKERMAN
25
26
27
28

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25
- 26
- 27
- 28

Dated: December 30, 2025

By: A. J. [Signature]

- 13 -