



# Save Our Heritage Organisation

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*Saving San Diego's Past for the Future*

December 20, 2010

Mayor Jerry Sanders  
City of San Diego  
202 C Street, MS 11A  
San Diego, CA 92101

Dr. Irwin Jacobs  
c/o Qualcomm  
5775 Morehouse Drive  
San Diego, CA 92121

Dear Mayor Sanders and Dr. Jacobs,

Save Our Heritage Organisation, SOHO and the greater San Diego preservation community strongly oppose the current plans for a bypass bridge and roadway to be built onto the historic Cabrillo Bridge in Balboa Park. The current proposal is extremely destructive and would forever alter the iconic Cabrillo Bridge and the historic landscape, and would hide the most important character defining features of the front entrance to this National Register District. The project also includes the removal of over 82 feet of the historic Cabrillo Bridge railing and lighting.

We cannot support the premise that a swath of concrete and massive fill bisecting the entire front façade of the National Historic Landmark Spanish Colonial Hilltop town and historic entry to the park is necessary in order to remove 70 parking spaces from the Plaza de Panama. The plan as currently conceived and recommended would destroy for all time the architectural, historic, and cultural integrity of Balboa Park, along with its historic landscape. The proposed addition would be in the most visible and destructive location possible. This plan is not consistent with any of the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and is in fact the antithesis of these standards and must not be allowed. There could not be a worse siting for the project. I cannot emphasize enough how detrimental to San Diego this would be and how strongly we object to this.

The underlying premise that there is currently no other way to accommodate the removal of approximately 70 parking spaces from Plaza de Panama and to remove traffic from that area is flawed. The plan being presented appears to have a different goal, one of expansion of automobile traffic and parking into the heart of the park. Instead of simply restoring Plaza de Panama and removing excessive automobile traffic from the historic core, the design includes a 900 parking space structure behind the Spreckels Organ Pavilion to encourage even more automobile traffic into the parks core solely for parking. We believe a shuttle or tram service is the key to bringing visitors into the park. We do encourage the removal of cars from the Plaza de Panama and the Palisades area returning it to parklands is a goal that should be pursued. However, behind the Organ Pavilion is not an appropriate site for the proposed garage. Placing the partially underground parking structure instead in a different area, possibly Inspiration Point or other areas on the periphery would be more appropriate.

The temporary and immediate solution to remove the cars from the plaza is to route the traffic around the southwest quadrant of the Plaza de Panama as in the current precise plan. There are adequate areas behind many of the museums for parking displaced by this project to be added to existing lots or placed adjacent, as we look for a long-term solution that could include parking garages on the periphery of the park and a robust tram system.

There are several other potential solutions that are not being pursued. SOHO would be happy to meet and discuss reasonable options that meet the goals of the community, the museums, the city and that also meet the needs to protect Balboa Park.

Who will determine the destiny of one of our state's most revered places and that of a National Historic District? Community input has

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gone largely ignored. Balboa Park belongs to all the people of San Diego and it is the public who should have the greatest right to help decide its future.

We ask that you reject the current plans and instead focus on the basic restoration of the Plaza de Panama and make use of the viable, simple options presented here as the solution to removing the 70 parking spaces.

We do look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Bruce Coons  
Executive Director  
Save Our Heritage Organisation

cc: Hon. Christine Kehoe, State Senator  
Hon. Toni Atkins, Assembly Member  
Hon. Todd Gloria, City Councilmember  
Stacey LoMedico, Park and Recreation Director  
M. Wayne Donaldson, State Historic Preservation Officer  
Janet Matthews, Ph.D., Associate Director for Cultural Resources  
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