

**From:** [Micah Parzen](#)  
**To:** [DSD EAS](#)  
**Cc:** [Sanders, Jerry](#); [Lightner, Councilmember Sherri](#); [Faulconer, Council Member Kevin](#); [Councilmember Todd Gloria](#); [Young, Anthony](#); [DeMaio, Councilmember Carl](#); [Zapf, Council Member Lorie](#); [Emerald, Councilmember Marti](#); [Alvarez, Council Member David](#); [info@plazadepanama.org](mailto:info@plazadepanama.org)  
**Subject:** Plaza de Panama Project  
**Date:** Monday, March 19, 2012 4:27:27 PM

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E. Shearer-Nguyen, Environmental Planner  
City of San Diego Development Services Center  
1222 First Avenue, MS 501  
San Diego, CA 92101

VIA E-MAIL: [DSDEAS@sanidiego.gov](mailto:DSDEAS@sanidiego.gov)

Dear Ms. Shearer-Nguyen:

As the westernmost institution on Balboa Park's Central Mesa, the San Diego Museum of Man (SDMoM) is arguably the most impacted by the proposed Plaza de Panama project and alternatives considered in the Draft EIR for the project. We are situated on the Plaza de California at the entrance to Balboa Park just east of the Cabrillo Bridge. We also are the institution that is closest to the proposed Centennial Bridge, which would be directly across from our administration building and curve around our collections facilities.

Nearly 7,000 cars pass by our front door each day. Unfortunately, this thoroughfare creates a safety concern for our patrons, including many school children, as well as the many visitors who back up into traffic as they take photographs of the California Tower. If cars were removed from the Plaza de California, it would be one of the most enjoyable pedestrian spaces in all of Balboa Park.

We have carefully studied the Plaza de Panama project and fully support it. While we understand that the Centennial Bridge will have an historical impact, we believe there will be a number of important benefits that will be enjoyed by the millions of people that visit Balboa Park each year. Of particular interest to SDMoM is the restoration of the Plaza de California to its original condition. As the heart of the "California Quadrangle," this plaza is one of the most historically important features of Balboa Park designed by architect Bertram Goodhue. Restoring this plaza to its pedestrian only splendor will give visitors an opportunity that they have not had in decades, namely, the chance to experience the architecture of the California Quadrangle as it was intended. We believe this is a significant benefit, particularly since these buildings are among the few permanent buildings constructed for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition.

We are not in favor of any alternative that proposes to continue traffic through the Plaza de California. This simply perpetuates the problems that we have experienced for years, and which will continue to get worse as traffic to Balboa Park increases. We also are strongly opposed to any alternative that would close the Cabrillo Bridge to vehicle traffic. Such closure would effectively cut off access to SDMoM and leaves us in a cul-de-sac at the west end of Balboa Park. Visitors are our lifeblood, and cutting off an access used by nearly half of Balboa Park's 12 million annual

visitors would negatively impact our ability to attract visitors and, thus, seriously threaten our livelihood.

In our view, the Plaza de Panama project does the best job of balancing the needs of Balboa Park, its visitors, and its institutions. We believe that the project will successfully restore Balboa Park's beautiful public spaces for the enjoyment of the public, while still maintaining the public access from both sides of Balboa Park that is so critical to its many institutions, including SDMoM.

Sincerely,

Micah Parzen  
CEO, San Diego Museum of Man

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*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." -- Margaret Mead*