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Mayor Genser and City Council Members  
City of Santa Monica, 1685 Main St.  
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Dear Mayor Genser and City Council Members:

I write to strongly recommend the Council prioritize capital funding for the proposed Joint Use recreational and cultural facilities at the Civic Center, including substantial upgrades to the Santa Monica High campus track and football field, soccer and softball fields, the Michigan Avenue Promenade, and the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Pedestrian Bicycle Bridge. The visionary plans for upgrades to the Samohi campus require extensive involvement and coordination by City and Redevelopment staff to refine joint use concepts and identify potential City and Redevelopment assistance. In addition to additional school facility bonds, grants and redevelopment financing will be needed to implement this ambitious plan for improving cultural and recreational facilities for community use and public benefit.

Exciting opportunities exist to increase the convenience and safety of pedestrian and bicycle access to heavily used recreational, educational and cultural facilities and Samohi and the Civic Center. Projects such as the proposed Seventh Street Pedestrian and Bike Bridge over the I-10 Freeway will provide a much needed safe route into the campus from neighborhoods north of the freeway. Development of an extension to Michigan Avenue as a bicycle and pedestrian route through the campus which can be open during non-school hours will facilitate community access to the many cultural and recreational attractions on the school campus, Civic Center and beach front. This extension through the Civic Center and campus will provide a much needed safe bicycle connection from the beach and Main Street to the north and east, a route currently requiring hazardous left turns on heavily travelled downtown streets.

I'm currently working with City Transportation Management staff on grant applications which could provide up to \$900,000 in state funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements on campus and City streets to improve the safety of biking and walking to school. The School District is moving ahead with plans for a new Science and Technology complex and reconfiguration of the major pedestrian and bicycle entrance to campus at Michigan and 7<sup>th</sup>. City participation in planning for the Civic Center, 7<sup>th</sup> Street bike/pedestrian bridge and Michigan bike route is important to the overall success of this effort.

As Transportation Committee Chair for the Samohi PTSA, I work closely with City and Big Blue Bus staff to increase the number of students walking, biking and taking the bus to reduce traffic congestion and safety hazards. Bike Days organized by the student-led Samohi Bike Coalition and Solar Alliance have increased the number of students cycling to school from 20 to over 120 in just one year. Student demand has outstripped the supply of 100 bike parking spaces, and the joint use bicycle improvements will provide essential safety improvements to accommodate growing numbers of student cyclists.

.Planned improvements to heavily used bus stops adjacent to the Civic Center and Samohi can increase the convenience, comfort and safety of all bus riders. Streetscape and pedestrian crossing improvements at Fourth Street and Civic Center Drive, 6<sup>th</sup> and Pico, Michigan and Lincoln and Lincoln and Pico will improve safety and reduce traffic congestion as well. An impressive 28% of Samohi students take the bus to school, and 48% take the bus home, according to 2007 survey data. The Civic Center joint use improvements will enhance the viability of taking the bus to community recreation and cultural facilities.

With Joint Use, efficient structured parking facilities with active recreation facilities on top can be constructed at the Samohi Campus and Civic Center and managed to accommodate the full range of community activities on both sides of the street. Students needing to drive to high school to transport siblings, get to after school jobs and stay late for sports and activities will have safe and affordable parking options. Parent and community volunteer participation in school activities will be encouraged and expanded, benefiting student achievement. And community members can have improved access to an array of excellent cultural events and recreational facilities at Santa Monica High.

There are exciting opportunities for improving cultural and recreational facilities at Samohi as part of the Civic Center Specific Plan Area along with improved parking, transit, pedestrian and bicycle access. We look forward to continuing close collaboration between the School District, City, and PTSA to enhance access to programs and facilities which strengthen our schools and our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alison Kendall, AICP, LEED AP

Cc:

City Council

City Manager

Lucy Dyke, Transportation Planning Manager

Beth Rolandson, Senior Transportation Planner

Eileen Fogarty, PCD Director

SMMUSD Board of Education

Elizabeth Stearns, Samohi PTSA President

Stephen Saks, Samohi BB Committee

Michael Hill, Samohi Joint Use

Virginia Hyatt, Director of Purchasing

Dr. Hugo Pedroza, Principal

Catherine Baxter, Dean of Administrative Services

Greg Runyon, S House Principal

Michael Cahn, Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, Education Committee