



COUNCILMEMBER DAVID ALVAREZ
City of San Diego
Council District Eight

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 19, 2016

TO: Council President Sherri Lightner
City Attorney Jan Goldsmith

FROM: Councilmember David Alvarez
Councilmember Todd Gloria
Councilmember Lorie Zapf
Councilmember Scott Sherman

David Alvarez
Todd Gloria
Lorie Zapf
Scott Sherman

SUBJECT: San Diego High School Charter Amendment for November 2016 Ballot

This past February the Charter Review Committee discussed City Charter Section 55, which affects the lease for San Diego High School with the City of San Diego. The land underneath San Diego High School is owned by the City and operated by the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) under a 50-year lease signed in 1974. This lease between the City and SDUSD runs out in seven years. Since its opening as the Russ School in 1882, generations of San Diegans have graduated from San Diego High and the campus is a public asset for the entire community.

On February 3, the San Diego Unified School District addressed the Charter Review Committee to ask for clarifying language in the City Charter that would allow San Diego High School to continue to operate and solve this problem once and for all. Unfortunately, the Committee failed to take any action to ensure that San Diego High School remains at its current location.

This is problematic as San Diego High School is the only high school that serves many nearby communities such as Logan Heights, North Park, Normal Heights and Barrio Logan. The City must take action not only to preserve San Diego's oldest high school, but also to ensure that the families in the surrounding communities will continue to be able to have their children attend San Diego High's top ranked international baccalaureate program. San Diego High is one of

SDUSD's most used school sites for youth/adult sports leagues and community events, such as Stand Down for Homeless Veterans, and should be protected.

In order to ensure that San Diego High School continues to be part of the fabric of our community, the City Council should take action to place a City Charter amendment before voters in November 2016 that would allow San Diego High to permanently remain at its current location. The existing site must be permanently secured for San Diego High School in order to move forward with the planned investment of over \$30 million to modernize the campus with:

- New performing arts/classroom building
- Modernization of library
- Re-designed student quad
- Renovation and modernization of existing buildings
- Upgraded stadium and athletic facilities

According to a City Attorney memorandum dated February 2, 2016, in order for San Diego High School to remain at its current location, Charter section 55 requires a two-thirds vote of the electorate. This requirement would be difficult to achieve under any circumstance and would require the San Diego High community to undertake an unnecessary and highly likely expensive campaign. In addition, the memorandum states that "An ordinance passed by City Council would not legally resolve the Charter section 55 issues". As such, we request that the City Attorney prepare draft language for a ballot measure that would amend Charter Section 55 that would allow San Diego High School to continue to operate at its current location. We would request that this Charter amendment be brought before the City Council in time for it to be placed on the November 2016 ballot. San Diego Unified School District has agreed to contribute towards the cost of this election.

Thank you for your timely response.

CC: Honorable City Councilmembers
Elizabeth Maland, City Clerk
Andrea Tevlin, IBA
Honorable San Diego Unified School District Boardmembers