

January 2002 Update:

9th Street / Michigan Avenue Permit Parking Petitions

Will "Solution" fix parking situation?

In response to petitions signed by residents of 9th & Michigan, The City of Santa Monica has proposed that the majority of available spaces on 9th Street, the perpendicular spaces on the east side of 9th be left unregulated (available to high school students and others who abuse the "free parking"). This does not solve our problems, in fact, it makes matters worse. I urge you to vote against allowing ANY unregulated parking spots on 9th Street.



As long as even ONE spot remains on 9th street which is "free", then the high school students & local businesses will continue to rely on 9th street to provide **their** parking. This will only frustrate those who come into our neighborhood to find free parking. They will be even more anxious, obnoxious, rude and dangerous while pursuing these (fewer) spaces. But the temptation will remain. We solve nothing.

The parking on 10th Street is permit parking ONLY. We want the exact same regulations for 9th Street.



Perpendicular spaces along 9th Street

High school senior claims:

"We deserve those parking spots."

The above quote was printed in a November edition of the SAMOHI (school newspaper). The students wish to fight any restrictions implemented by local residents. But how much of a difference would these regulations make? SAMOHI has nearly 3500 students and only 60+ parking spaces on campus. (continued on other side)



UHAUL: using neighborhood to provide overnight parking:

It appears that Uhaul instructs its customers to park their trucks in our neighborhood overnight. It's routine to find one, two, three or even four huge moving vans parked on Michigan or 9th Street, especially in the evening. Stacks of parking citations have been written up. Yet seems to have little effect.

(Continued on other side.)

Parking Survey Results

In response to our petition, the City conducted a survey of the traffic and parking around SAMOHI. They discovered that the highest saturation, 100% during peak hours, was at the intersection of 9th & Michigan. Higher than any other intersection surveyed!

Why 10th Street has permit



parking (and we don't)

The residents of 9th Street & Michigan have signed petitions to get permit parking. Over a year ago, 10th Street erected permit parking signs. They signed a petition just a year or so before us. So how did they get approved? When 11th St. & Euclid petitioned for permit parking some time

earlier, the restricted parking area surrounding Santa Monica College was evaluated. At that time, the City proposed the boundary be extended to include Euclid, 11th and 10th Street. Even though 10th Street had not petitioned at the time the Council convened, the street was included in the extended SMC boundary. Later, 10th Street submitted the signatures, but they did not then need to appear before City Council to hear objections as that requirement had already been met. They were done, and signs went up.

We may feel that parking problems on 10th Street were not caused by SMC. Nevertheless, by some "fluke", or incredible good luck, they were able to use this boundary to get permit parking. 9th Street does not fall within the same boundary and therefore must appear before the City Council.

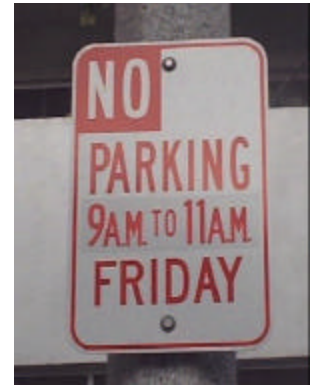
DRUG DEALS ON 9TH ST ?

Drugs transactions involving students often take place in the alleys and streets adjacent to SAMOHI. Students purchasing drugs do NOT want to take the drugs onto school grounds if they can avoid it. It is much preferable to make drug transactions outside school. Students who sell drugs can keep their supply of drugs in their cars, where it can more easily be distributed after school, or at lunch. In this way, neither the seller nor the buyer risk taking the drugs to school. This lowers the risk of expulsion, suspension, prosecution, theft, or confiscation for both buyer and seller.

Why are we "helping" these dealers by providing them a relatively safe place to store their stash and transact their crimes? By having unregulated parking, the 9th Street residents are providing the venue for these drug transactions to occur !

TGIF!

Residents of 9th Street welcome the relief of Friday street cleaning, when local high school students do not abuse 9th Street.



Friday "Experiment":

Every week we have an experiment on Friday mornings on 9th Street. It's great! There is street cleaning every Friday morning on the east side of 9th Street. (This effects the majority of available spaces, the perpendicular spots). The signs clearly state "NO parking". For residents, it's like a dream. For students, does the world stop on Fridays? Does SAMOHI attendance drop 30%? I don't think so. Does the littering stop? Does traffic go away? Yes - pretty much. The difference is **drastic**. And not just the traffic. There is a dramatic reduction in noise, TRASH, and invasion of space. We like it. TGIF! We need to have Fridays every day.

Where do students of Beverly Hills High School park?

Take a look at Beverly Hills high school, and their parking situation. ALL nearby streets are permit parking ONLY. And nearby Century City parking lots are expensive - \$20 - \$35.00 per day. The school has a long waiting list of students who want to use the campus lot, and yet can not use the street. Yet they manage using alternatives such public transportation, carpools and ridesharing. BHHS has slightly more spaces, (100+ at BHHS compared with 60+ spaces at SAMO). But SAMOHI students who park on campus pay only \$50.00 per year for the privilege, while BHHS students who park on campus pay around \$250.00 per year. That's five times what SAMO charges! Perhaps if SAMO were to increase the parking fee, they could use the additional revenue to fund alternative student parking or transportation options.

High school senior (continued)

These spaces are assigned via a lottery system at the beginning of the school year. The annual cost of the parking permit is \$50.00.

The SAMOHI newspaper mentions the parking at Civic Center not being available to students. This is incorrect. The Civic Center parking IS available to students, but there is a 6.00/day cost to park there. The city has been reluctant to issue monthly or long term permits to students as there are times when the Civic Center parking lot is full to capacity. For this reason, the Civic Center parking lot has not been a viable long term solution to the SAMOHI student parking problem. But there is parking available on a first come first serve, day by day basis.

It is clear that the students of SAMO do not have adequate parking. But is it the responsibility of 9th Street residents to provide that parking? Apparently so, at least according to some high school students. A member of the student body who met with representatives from the City and dozens of local residents is quoted in the SAMOHI paper as follows:

"We are trying to fight for the parking spots because we are tax paying citizens as well and those are public streets. We deserve those parking spots".

Over the years, students and others have tried to rally the school or the city of Santa Monica to resolve this. Apparently there were even plans to erect a large parking structure on school grounds. Budget constraints and lack of priority have postponed this project repeatedly. It is not considered a high enough priority in comparison with other budget items

If we want to help the students of SAMO resolve their parking crisis, we must do everything we can to remove the temptation of ANY free parking nearby. Only when they have *no other choice*, will the priority be high enough on the agenda to be addressed. Only when students, parents, school & city officials have enough complaints, will this issue be resolved. And as long as street parking is available, students, parents, school & city officials will use that as an excuse to avoid incurring additional parking costs (such as erecting a new parking structure.)

Does SAMOHI need to build a parking structure for students?

This is a controversial issue. From the student's point of view, they "need" a place to put their car while they're in school, and a school parking lot is obviously the most desirable. Nevertheless, the school and the city are fiscally responsible to the tax payers of Santa Monica.

What about alternatives?

As a taxpayer, do I want my funds being used to build a student parking facility? Personally - no. I take a bus to work. And Santa Monica's Big Blue bus is great! I believe in public transportation, even living in Southern California, where it is definitely not "cool" to take the bus. But it can be practical, economical and easier than dealing parking and traffic. Just ask anyone who works in downtown LA and lives in the San Gabriel Valley. When I worked downtown, I knew very few who drove their cars everyday. Driving to downtown was cost prohibitive - parking in downtown was expensive, 15.00-20.00 per day and up. Plus, the time spent in traffic was prohibitive - an ADDITIONAL 20 minutes of traffic for those not using the San Bernadino freeway's carpool lane. People made a choice, and for most of them they chose not to drive.

Resident tired of "Tailgate parties"

A neighbor of mine watches the street fill up before 8:00 each day. He's fed up with the noise, trash, and inconsiderate behavior caused by the students, saying it wouldn't be so bad if it weren't for the "tailgate parties". "They come here to park, and then act like

they own the place - radios blaring, honking, shouting, eating, drinking & smoking, and then leaving behind a filthy mess for me to clean up, it's so rude!" Many neighbors have echoed similar sentiments.

"I feel like I'm being stalked"

Like many working adults, a neighbor of mine leaves for work every morning around the same time. When school started, she noticed that the same car would always be parked nearby with the driver inside waiting. Finding this too often to believe it was a coincidence, she finally confronted the driver. The driver answered nonchalantly. Yes, the driver knew she left for work every day at this time. Yes the driver looked for her car specifically - knowing she'd be leaving soon. When she relayed the story to me she added "I feel like I'm being stalked - I mean, somebody out there actually watches what I'm doing and waits for me to leave each day, it's creepy." I agree.



UHAUL: (Continued)

It seems that the cost of parking citations is not prohibitive to doing business. My understanding is that they are able to pass these costs on to their unsuspecting customers or distribute the costs back to franchise operators in distant states and cities, where the trucks originated from.

So will having permit parking stop Uhaul from overnight parking? Maybe, maybe not. But – having **those big signs "permit parking ONLY" posted all up and down both sides of 9th and Michigan is going to make it OBVIOUS to their customers who may be inclined to park here, and they're at least going to think twice.**

If the neighborhood stops "subsidizing" Uhaul with street parking, they will be forced to find an alternative. For instance, they could lease additional offsite parking. Or they could keep their facility open later so that trucks being returned at night could go inside. (Currently, they lock their gate by 7:00 pm). We think solutions can be found, if it is made a priority to do so.

Urban Community

How is parking handled in Beverly Hills, downtown LA or New York? We are an urban community. Real estate is at a premium. This is not Palmdale. It may be a rude awakening but it's become just too dense to provide free parking to everyone who lives in and comes into this community.

What's the Coastal Commission have to do with this? Or Bay Street?

The city has expressed some reservations about implementing permit parking on 9th Street despite the residents' clear intent and desire for this. There's concern about *displacement* into the adjacent Coastal Zone. In other words, 9th Street has applied for and met requirements to warrant permit parking. And we fall into the city's jurisdictions (not the Coastal Commission). However, if permit parking is granted for 9th Street, traffic and parking problems on 9th Street will "move" to nearby streets. Since most nearby streets already have permit parking, the only remaining

unregulated area is the Coastal Zone streets around Bay Street. Unfortunately, the city does not have jurisdiction over this area. (West of Lincoln is the jurisdiction of the Coastal Zone). Changes to 9th Street could force more traffic into that community. The city is reluctant to make a recommendation about a change to 9th which will adversely affect nearby streets, and which they are powerless to fix.

Although I understand the city is doing their best to accommodate all concerned, I do not believe the answer is to exclude the east side of 9th as they have suggested. As stated earlier, I believe this will only make drivers more frantic - and does nothing to remedy the byproduct of unregulated parking such as littering and tailgate parties which will continue unheeded.

So what do we do about Bay Street? They already have similar problems in their area and they too have already submitted permit parking petitions. (Which the city can not help them with). According to the city survey, they do not have 100% saturation, but it was pretty high. We can expect that changes to 9th Street could easily drive their saturation up to 100. For that matter, even implementing permit parking for Michigan and the west side of 9th Street will adversely affect Bay Street. I don't think we can expect otherwise. The solution is not to make things worse on 9th Street by granting some strange conglomeration of east-side-unregulated, west-side-permitted regulations.

The solution is to enact full and 100% permit parking on 9th & Michigan (the last hold-outs). Yes, this will make things worse in the Coastal Zone. But we must come to the aid of our neighbors. We must campaign for relief for Bay Street as well. Okay, so it isn't in the City's jurisdiction. It's in *someone's* jurisdiction! And as residents and tax payers, we do have *some* rights about the regulations (or lack of) which are enacted. Just because Bay Street is in the Coastal Zone does not mean nothing can ever be done. It just means that the city may have their hands tied. But we do not need to feel powerless. We need to back up the residents of Bay Street with petitions, hearings, meetings etc, just as we are doing for 9th Street. It's just a different bureaucracy and a different process. It may get worse before it gets better, but that's only going help our cause and prove to the Coastal Zone the urgency of the problem. Trying to ignore or partially solve the parking issues are not going to make them go away. It only forces a few residents to bear the burden for the rest of the community.

"But I have to work for a living..."

While circulating the petition, I received an outpouring of support and gratitude from people who desperately want the permit parking enacted. But unlike high school students, most neighbors do not have the time or resources to fight for their rights, circulate petitions, etc. Some are housebound, or work nights, or travel a lot. Many could not attend the previous meetings at City or at SAMOHI. The SAMOHI student body has voiced it's **intention to fight the proposed parking restrictions as one of it's primary goals.** (Per handout at PTA 11/13/01). They have nearly 3500 students, many who will gladly show up at the City Council meeting. The dozens of working adults who live on/near 9th Street can not possibly devote similar time or energy into this campaign. Yet we are the ones paying the property taxes which support the school district. The city council will be hearing this matter soon. Letters to city may be addressed to: City of Santa Monica 310/ 458-8291 Transportation Management Division P.O. Box 2200, 1685 Main Street, Room 115 Santa Monica, Ca. 90401-2200 I hope you make the city aware of where you stand.