

# SMRR 2014 Platform

## Adopted May 1, 2016

### **A. All residents are entitled to stability, safety, privacy, dignity and peace in their homes. A primary goal of Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights is to support, defend and enhance rent control and tenant protections locally, regionally and statewide.**

1. The protections tenants should be afforded include: fair and reasonable rent controls; freedom from harassment and unfair evictions; well-enforced habitability standards; continuation of established services and amenities; the right to reasonable guest visitation; maintenance of roommate privileges; strong anti-discrimination enforcement, including family protection laws, inheritance rights, and domestic partnerships; and the right to communicate with other tenants and government without threat or coercion, about conditions or circumstances in their rentals.
2. SMRR advocates for the creation and maintenance of laws that give adequate notice and time for tenants to fix curable tenancy violations, with the exceptions of nonpayment and serious criminal behavior. Tenants should be protected from eviction through no fault of their own and should receive sufficient relocation payments. Evictions should be severely limited for particularly vulnerable populations such as the elderly and terminally ill.
3. SMRR advocates and will work for the repeal or major amendments of the Ellis Act and the return of local control in deciding conditions by which landlords can remove buildings from the rental market. The City should stop abuse of Ellis and protect the community from unbridled condo-redevelopment. The City and Rent Control Board should enforce all owners' obligations under the Ellis Act.
4. Destabilizing households and communities through vacancy decontrol, even with recontrol as it exists under the Costa-Hawkins Act, incentivizes harassment and unfair evictions and must be stopped. SMRR will work for repeal or an amendment to limit the amount of rent-increase upon vacancy. The City should continue to adopt and enforce laws to stop harassment and unfair evictions.
5. SMRR acknowledges the health impacts of secondhand smoke, and supports policies that protect all tenants, including protection from eviction.
6. Counseling and legal assistance for all renters is necessary, including by continued City-funded legal services for low- income tenants, and by nonprofits and private attorneys. SMRR's tenant assistance hotline is 310-394-0848.
7. SMRR will work with tenant groups and other allies around the state to protect and enhance renters' rights.

### **B. SMRR strongly supports programs that seek to preserve and expand the supply of accessible and affordable housing, including two- and three-bedroom units, and maintain and expand the historic ethnic and economic diversity in Santa Monica.**

1. Housing policies shall protect the tenure of existing tenants, including Section 8 and mobile home tenants, ensure the preservation of existing affordable housing, and increase the supply of new affordable housing.
2. SMRR encourages the City to refocus and redouble public and private creation of affordable housing, emphasizing nonprofit housing, including family and senior housing; long-term-care facilities; temporary, transitional, and permanent housing for the homeless; and live-work housing for artists. SMRR encourages collaborations to facilitate affordable housing opportunities for local, low-income students.
3. SMRR encourages the City to create, and to fund from existing and new revenues, a local rent-subsidy program to assist low-income Santa Monica residents who currently live in rent-controlled apartments and are severely rent burdened.
4. To preserve the character of residential neighborhoods and to stem the loss of existing housing, Santa Monica must maintain the current reduced height and density limits in multifamily zones, with appropriate exemptions for 100%-affordable projects and with standards for authentic community benefits.
5. Most new multifamily building activity should be shifted to mixed-use projects in commercial and industrial areas, with only housing permitted above the first floor and where pedestrian access to retail and transit services can be provided. There should be allowances for first-floor housing for artists and people with special needs.
6. Santa Monica should refocus and redouble its efforts on creation of affordable housing both to meet the needs of existing residents, (prioritizing those subject to Ellis Act and other no-fault evictions) and local low-wage workers, and to meet or exceed its regional responsibility for production of affordable housing.
7. Santa Monica must adopt policies that more dependably ensure that it meets or exceeds the mandate of voter-approved Proposition R that 30% of all new multifamily housing built each year be affordable to and occupied by households that earn 100% or less of the Los Angeles County Median Income, with at least half of those units affordable to and occupied by households that earn 60% or less of Los Angeles County Median Income.

8. The City and the Housing Authority should commit funds from existing sources, and seek to identify and create new funding sources for preserving, buying land for, and building new affordable housing for low-income, very-low-income, and extremely low-income households. New affordable housing should include a healthy mix of two- and three-bedroom affordable units to ensure that low-income families have housing security and a place in Santa Monica's future.
9. The City should facilitate below-market-rate homeownership and rental opportunities for very-low-income and low-income households that live or work in Santa Monica. SMRR opposes condo-conversion schemes that create displacement and harassment risks for existing residents.
10. Housing policy should enable current residents to remain in Santa Monica. Housing opportunities for first-responders, essential service workers, and school and hospital workers with moderate incomes should be encouraged, but not at the expense of reducing funding for low-income housing.
11. Housing policies should protect residents from the adverse effects of residential and commercial development by managing the rate of construction, and should preserve all existing housing structures including, but not limited to, courtyard apartments, mobile homes, and cottage bungalows, which add history, charm, and/or character to the community.
12. Requiring affordable inclusionary housing is vital to our community, but the addition of inclusionary units is not a proper reason to approve an otherwise unacceptable project. The City, in an ongoing and systematic manner, must monitor and effectively and humanely enforce all agreements to keep deed-restricted units affordable and occupied by qualified tenants.
13. Support the enactment of a "visitability and livability" ordinance for new and/or substantially remodeled homes to (1) meet the housing needs of those with disabilities or who "age in place" and (2) ensure that people with disabilities have basic visitation access to all new housing, where such an ordinance can be implemented in a fair and reasonable manner and without imposing unduly excessive costs on homeowners.
14. Santa Monica housing policy should ensure a mix of unit sizes, including units sized adequately for families and households of different sizes. City policies should be formulated to discourage a majority of new units from being very small and non-affordable single units.

**C. SMRR supports Santa Monica as a Lifelong Learning Community committed to strengthening educational planning for all ages and stages of life. SMRR supports breadth, diversity, and equity in educational programming and facilities to achieve social and economic justice for all students.**

1. SMRR reaffirms its strongest commitment to our public schools and college, including their teachers and support staffs. A well-educated community is in the best interests of all Santa Monicans. SMRR is committed to both vocational/career and academic programs to meet the needs of our diverse community and that assist in Santa Monicans' personal, social, and professional development. We support high-quality, affordable early-childhood education; childcare; and recreational and youth services for our community.
2. The City, School District, and College should develop an ongoing partnership and joint use facility projects that recognize and serve the full community's interest in maintaining excellent public schools.
3. The City, in order to ensure high-quality public education for all students in core curriculum and bilingual education, special education, music, fine arts, and PE, should continue ongoing financial support for our schools and help develop ongoing sustainable funding from a number of sources. SMRR recognizes that it is the responsibility of the School District to determine the best use of such funds.
4. The City, School District, and College should implement programs that focus on ages 0 to 5 and ensure every child is born healthy, enjoys learning, and enters school ready and eager to succeed.
5. Santa Monica College should promote and provide appropriate workforce and economic development programs in support of residents, workers, and businesses in Santa Monica.
6. The City, in cooperation with the School District and College, should ensure that high-quality, affordable childcare is available to every Santa Monica family who seeks it.
7. The City should ensure meaningful opportunities for advocacy, empowerment, and participation in community affairs for all youth and establish a Youth Commission.
8. SMRR considers it a high priority in community, college, and school affairs to maintain and expand programs that reach out to and address the needs of young people so as to help them achieve success.
9. Expand employment programs, including programs for youth in public and private jobs emphasizing internships, service learning, apprenticeships, and mentoring, that lead to meaningful and long-term employment.
10. SMRR will work with groups locally and throughout the State and nation to support policies that promote and protect high-quality public education.

**D. SMRR supports ensuring the continued prosperity of our local economy while protecting the community from excessive development and the traffic it generates. SMRR is committed to protecting residential neighborhoods from intensification of nearby commercial development.**

1. SMRR opposes increasing commercial heights and densities in any commercial district in Santa Monica.
2. Since commercial development generates much more traffic than housing does, land-use policy should allow only housing above the first floor on commercial boulevards and work to improve affordability, sustainability, and preservation of neighborhood character. SMRR favors housing rather than commercial development in order to improve the jobs/housing balance.
3. City policy in the Downtown should make at least 50% of all new residential units affordable to and occupied by households at or below the Los Angeles County Median Income.
4. Commercial development must not exceed the capacity of the City's infrastructure, nor should development or infrastructure be permitted where it adversely affects existing residential neighborhoods, including by exacerbation of traffic congestion.
5. Mixed-use with ground-floor, neighborhood-serving retail and multi-family housing above the first floor, should be prioritized on Santa Monica's commercial corridors, and in the Downtown. Santa Monica should encourage and facilitate mixed-use transit oriented development (TOD) with maximal affordable housing including live/work housing -- at the deepest levels of affordability -- particularly in neighborhoods near high-service transit corridors and the Expo Light Rail stations. High-density commercial uses should be disallowed where they will worsen already severe traffic burdens. TOD and transit should be designed to work together to relieve existing congestion rather than worsen it.
6. Regional and international visitors are important to Santa Monica's fiscal success and add important multicultural dimensions to our community. However, visitor-attracting services and activities must be designed also to serve and benefit Santa Monica residents.
7. Small, locally owned businesses should be protected, encouraged, and facilitated.
8. Commercial development should not be allowed on or under currently designated "A-lots," or other residential lots now used for parking with underlying residential zoning.
9. With respect to commercial boulevards outside the Downtown, SMRR generally supports the City Council approved Zoning Code standards in effect as of April 2016, which allow maximum heights of only three or four stories.
10. With respect to Downtown Santa Monica, SMRR generally supports the standards that have been in place in the Downtown since 1984.
11. We strongly object to the proposals for excessively massive hotel projects, and especially projects combining hotels with luxury condos along Ocean Avenue.
12. SMRR is committed to giving the community greater assurance that these standards will be adhered to, including by means of a possible ballot measure.
13. Developers of new projects and their successors should be required to provide transportation demand management programs at no cost to their employees and residents of their projects, and these requirements should be effectively and strictly enforced.
14. We oppose use of residential housing for commercial or short-term rentals, including corporate housing, as these uses remove much-needed housing from availability for long-term residential use, drive up the price of housing, and have adverse effects on the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

**E. SMRR urges Santa Monica to enhance its position at the forefront of environmental sustainability policies. Given global climate changes, our local public institutions and environmental policies should become models for others to emulate. We must strive to make our community and built environment resilient and adaptable for the sake of future generations with livable residential zones and more public open space. We strive to make our community and environment better than the way we found them. We affirm the principles of environmental justice, and recognize that disproportionate environmental burdens have been placed on low-income communities. We are committed to land-use policies that consider the cumulative impacts and protect residents from increased levels of pollution and expand green and healthy space in impacted areas.**

1. The "Sustainable City Program" should be updated regularly and be a guiding principle in policies and decisions made by the City Council, City departments, and all City boards and commissions.
2. Both public and private entities should reduce their greenhouse-gas footprint by increasing use of clean,

renewable energy; implementing aggressive energy-conservation measures; and promoting land-use and infrastructure policies that encourage walking, biking, and public transportation.

3. The City, School District, and College should continue to improve and expand their recycling, waste-reduction, and toxic-recovery programs. Schools should further integrate environmental curriculums for every grade and every student.
4. Santa Monica should strongly support water-conservation and urban-runoff-reduction programs and encourage other cities to fulfill their obligation to take the steps needed to reduce pollution in Santa Monica Bay, and the City should continue to integrate cleaner alternative-fuel and zero-emission vehicles into its fleets.
5. Santa Monica should create an efficient, multimodal transportation system - - with robust transit alternatives and strong pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly components including safe routes to school and work - - so that all members of the community have effective, accessible, safe, and affordable mobility options that meet their needs. We support the Wilshire subway to Santa Monica; expanded local bus service; and the promotion of other efficient, affordable transit - - including convenient, economical shuttle systems to serve and connect our neighborhoods, schools, commercial areas, beaches, and parks. We prioritize first- and last-mile connectivity to Expo light rail stations.
6. Drought-prone regions like ours must conserve water. This is the responsibility of everyone including residents, businesses, visitors, the City, and other public and private institutions.
7. Santa Monica should accelerate participation in a new renewable-energy agency that will serve power users in regional municipalities with clean renewable energy.
8. The City needs to continue to clean up and protect neighborhoods adjacent to and near sources of toxic substances, both current and historic.

**F. SMRR believes in the right of all community members to feel safe and secure. Reducing crime requires the commitment of the entire community and partnerships between the people and the Police Department. SMRR is committed to working with the SMPD to achieve a comprehensive community-based approach to law enforcement.**

1. SMRR supports community-based policing. Community policing is a philosophy, a management style, and an organizational strategy, which promotes problem solving and police/community partnerships that jointly identify safety issues, determine resources, and apply innovative strategies to create and sustain healthy, vital neighborhoods.
2. Public safety departments should develop collaborative relationships with our community, including neighborhood- based organizations, and include community members in advisory and decision-making processes.
3. Police and Fire Departments should have the appropriate resources to address the safety needs of our community.
4. Traffic management and pedestrian protection should be critical components of a public safety program.
5. Checks and balances should be promoted to assure an ethical Police Department that does not tolerate such untoward actions as selective enforcement, racial profiling, and violations of constitutional protections.
6. SMRR believes our police policies must ensure sensitivity to issues that impact families and relationships (e.g., domestic violence, concerns with/for juveniles).

**G. SMRR is committed to the restoration and expansion of our parks and our public open space and their recreational facilities and programs. Santa Monica parks should be the pride of our community.**

1. The City should improve and expand open spaces and public parks and ensure effective maintenance and safety.
2. We support the goals of and urge aggressive implementation of the City's Open Space Element and Parks & Recreation Master Plan for the financing and creation of more parks and the greening of the City.
3. We support non-aviation recreational uses at Santa Monica Airport, including the development of active recreational facilities to meet the broad range of needs in our community on residual land not needed for airport purposes.
4. We support the continued expansion and cultivation of a generous urban forest in every neighborhood.

**H. SMRR is committed to sustaining the broad array of social service programs for seniors, for persons with disabilities, for families, for youth, and for the poor in Santa Monica, including a continued local commitment to humane efforts to meet the needs of the homeless.**

1. SMRR supports the right to full enjoyment of and a sense of security in all public places. The civil rights of the housed and the unhoused are, and should be, equally protected in the eyes of the law and the community.
2. Homelessness is a national disgrace that can only be solved when we act as one nation in facing its challenge. The Council should consistently speak out to the political community and business leaders of our region, our state, and our nation about this.
3. The community should be consulted on a regular basis regarding social service needs in Santa Monica through surveys, focus groups, and/or public hearings.
4. Funding for homeless-serving programs should maintain a continuum-of-care model, in which emergency assistance programs are supported, as well as a “housing first” model.
5. SMRR supports the full inclusion of people with disabilities as a basic right and responsibility of the community.

**I. SMRR is committed to assuring a vital artistic and cultural life in our community.**

1. The arts are a part of the success of our local economy as well as a vital part of our community and cultural life and should be nurtured.
2. We urge the City to expand our arts and cultural programs to increase support for the performing arts and public art, assist and facilitate the development of effective arts programs in our schools, give priority to supporting local artists in its arts programs, and encourage live-work spaces and the retention of the local artist community.
3. The City should create a professional cultural center in the Civic Center.
4. We support the City’s Creative Capital plan for the arts.
5. The City, the College, and the School District should collaborate to preserve, provide, and enhance accessible recreational and cultural activities and facilities for all people in our community.

**J. SMRR is committed to public participation in all aspects of community life, including its political life.**

1. We support affirmative action for full and equal access to community leadership positions, membership on boards and commissions, jobs, contracts, housing, and educational opportunities to all people without regard for race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
2. Voter participation should be increased, by facilitating voter registration and finding convenient voting locations.
3. We support campaign contribution limitations as adopted by City law, and urge consideration of measures that ensure that campaign money for local candidates is principally raised from local residents.
4. CityTV’s non-partisan programming of local-issue forums and candidates debates should be enhanced.
5. Resources should be provided to ensure the vitality of neighborhood organizations and include them in policy debates, and community members should be notified early and broadly about issues of concern.
6. SMRR supports community connectivity and inclusive public involvement through telecommunications technology, with a commitment to universal access.
7. Residents should have cost-effective access to the highest quality of cable and other information services, including local public education and government programming.

**K. SMRR is committed to workers’ rights.**

1. SMRR supports a living wage and fair benefits including respecting and defending the rights of workers in Santa Monica to organize to achieve these conditions, without harassment or intimidation.
2. The City, School District, College, and the business community should guarantee these rights, promote decent working conditions, and give employees a voice on the job and on boards and commissions that affect the industries, institutions, and organizations in which they work.

**L. SMRR is committed to maintaining and enhancing the security and quality of life for senior citizens.**

1. Access to the community must be ensured for seniors through affordable transportation options.
2. An aging population requires protection of and access to affordable healthcare, housing, and specialized care facilities.
3. Education options must extend throughout one’s life. SMRR re-states its support for lifelong learning for seniors.