

# Santa Monica Democratic Club

## 2022 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in the Santa Monica Democratic Club endorsement. Candidates seeking the endorsement of our Club must complete and return the following questionnaire. Note that only registered Democrats are eligible for our consideration.

Please send the completed questionnaire to [smdemocrats@gmail.com](mailto:smdemocrats@gmail.com) by 11:59pm on August 26, 2022. Interview appointment times with our Executive Committee will be scheduled on a first come first served basis as the questionnaires are returned.

Submitting this questionnaire constitutes acknowledgment that its contents are now part of the public record and may be reproduced and distributed by the Santa Monica Democratic Club.

### General Information

Candidate Name: [Jesse Zwick](#)

Email Address: [hello@jessezwick.com](mailto:hello@jessezwick.com)

Phone Number: [\(424\) 259-2791](#)

Candidate's Current Occupation: [Senior Advisor to LA City Councilmember Mike Bonin](#)

Candidate's Employer: [City of Los Angeles, Council District 11](#)

Campaign Contact Person (if other than candidate): [N/A](#)

What qualifications do you bring to this office?

[I am a public policy advisor, writer, renter, homeowner, and father. I have worked in city government and on the front lines of homeless outreach, with direct experience getting people housed. I enjoy deep relationships with and seek the regular advice of mentors like Gleam Davis, Abby Arnold, Mike Bonin, and Nithya Raman. And I advocate for affordable housing in my role as chair of Inclusive Santa Monica.](#)

Why are you running?

[I'm running to help solve our housing and homelessness crisis, and make my community more inclusive, sustainable, and safe – and each of those begins with making it more affordable to live here.](#)

[My journey into local politics began 6 years ago, when I couldn't ignore the level of](#)

suffering on our streets any longer, and I started volunteering every weekend in homeless services.

But I got tired of the fact that every time I helped someone get on a path to housing, I'd see two more people immediately take their place on the street. I got tired of seeing young parents too afraid to let their kids run around their local park or neighborhood.

Because this crisis hurts all of us. It hurts our economy, and worst of all, it hurts our humanity. And the worse it gets, the more it's succeeding in hardening our hearts.

So I started fighting for policies to keep people in their homes. And it turns out that all healthy cities do the same 3 things:

- Rent Control, and other tenant protections against harassment and eviction
- Subsidized housing for people who can't afford to pay market rate
- Sufficient housing options so rents don't keep soaring for the 95 percent of us without access to a subsidized unit

Remove any pillar, and your community breaks down. And that's what's happening in Santa Monica – and it's empowering the right-wing forces that swept to power two years ago in our city.

The people who don't believe in civil rights, or affordable housing. The people who think there's no problem that more police funding can't solve. The people who want to kill rent control.

These are the people who are going to benefit if we don't allow a new generation of progressive voices, and new progressive solutions, to take on our biggest problems.

I'm running because nothing less than the progressive soul of our city is at stake. Because I have a young son and he'll need housing he can afford and a climate that's livable. Because everyone deserves that. I hope you'll join me!

What are the top issues of your campaign? How do you plan to address those issues once elected?

My top issues are homelessness/ public safety, climate change/traffic, and racial and economic justice. The biggest impact I can hope to make on all these issues is by making housing more affordable in Santa Monica, thereby making it possible for more low-income people of color who work in our community to live here as well, and send their children to school in our high-resource neighborhoods.

Affordable housing is also crucial to halting the displacement of longtime low-income residents, staunching the flow of people into homelessness, and creating opportunities for our unhoused neighbors to transition off the street by successfully redeeming Section 8 and rapid rehousing vouchers.

Finally, urban infill housing close to jobs is recognized by climate scientists and city planners at UCLA and Berkeley as the number one most important climate intervention that cities like Santa Monica could make, as it would rectify our city's jobs/ homes imbalance, reduce our community's total Vehicle Miles Traveled, and take cars off our roads and freeways.

Please list all of your individual and/or organizational endorsements.

## INDIVIDUAL ENDORSEMENTS

Sheila Kuehl, LA County Supervisor  
Gleam Davis, Santa Monica City Councilmember  
Leslie Lambert, Santa Monica Planning Commissioner  
Abby Arnold, Santa Monica Forward Co-Chair

Vivian Rothstein, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) Board Member  
Nithya Raman, LA City Councilmember  
Mike Bonin, LA City Councilmember  
Alex Fisch, Culver City Councilmember

Pam O'Connor, Former Santa Monica Mayor  
Juan Matute, Former Downtown Santa Monica Chair  
Carl Hansen, Former Santa Monica Housing Commissioner  
Dan Hall, Santa Monica Pier Corporation Board Member

Cynthia Rose, Community Safe Streets Advocate and Santa Monica resident  
Jason Islas, Pico Neighborhood Resident  
David Edimo, Santa Monica Resident  
Tim Harter, Santa Monica Resident

Joseph Edmiston, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Executive Director  
Richard Brand, Santa Monica Landmarks Commissioner  
Joe Antognini, Santa Monica Disabilities Commissioner  
Gwynne Pugh, Former Santa Monica Planning Commission Chair  
Leonora Camner, Former Santa Monica Housing Commissioner  
Elena Christopoulos, Former Santa Monica Commissioner on the Status of Women

## ORGANIZATIONAL ENDORSEMENTS

Santa Monica Forward  
Abundant Housing LA

How long have you lived in Santa Monica? Where else have you lived, and why did you live there?

I grew up in Santa Monica Canyon, attended Santa Monica schools, and played Santa Monica organized sports for 18 years. I lived in Boston, where I attended Harvard University, and Washington DC, where I worked as a political journalist. Upon returning home, I lived again in Santa Monica for about a year before moving east to Silver Lake in search of more affordable housing. I returned to Santa Monica 1.5 years ago because I was about to have a son and wanted to raise him in the same wonderful community in which I grew up, and allow him to be close to his grandparents.

Will you pledge to serve on City Council for your entire four year term?

Yes.

## Party / Activism

How long have you been a registered Democrat? Have you ever been registered as a member of another political party, or as Decline To State? If so, which party and why?

I've been a registered Democrat since I was 18 years old – so 18 years in total, as I am 36. I have never been a member of another political party.

What is your experience with political activism? Have you ever volunteered or worked for a political campaign other than your own, and if so, in what capacity were you involved?

I protested against the Iraq war in 2003 and marched in favor of Black lives in 2020.

I volunteered and knocked on doors for John Kerry in 2004, Barack Obama in 2008, Hillary Clinton in 2016, Katie Hill in 2018, and Elizabeth Warren in 2020.

I served as Director of Communications for Nithya Raman in her successful run for LA City Council in 2020, and I served as Director of Communications for Mike Bonin to defeat the right-wing recall attempt against him in 2021.

Which political candidates have you endorsed or supported publicly in the past? Please list as many as possible.

### Federal

Al Gore in 2000, John Kerry in 2004, Barack Obama in 2008, Barack Obama in 2012, Hillary Clinton in 2016, Katie Hill in 2018, Elizabeth Warren in 2020.

### Local

Nithya Raman in 2020, Hugo Soto-Martinez in 2022, Eunisses Hernandez in 2022, Erin Darling in 2022, Katy Yaroslovsky in 2022, Kenneth Mejia in 2022

Have you ever signed for or publicly supported efforts to recall a public official from office? If so, please list the name(s) of the officials and why you felt they should be recalled.

Never.

Please list any organizations with which you are a member, including any leadership position you have held in each organization.

- SELAH Neighborhood Homeless Coalition, past leader
- Inclusive Santa Monica, chair
- Sierra Club, member
- American Civil Liberties Union, member
- Santa Monica Forward, member
- Santa Monica Democratic Club, member
- Santa Monica for Renters Rights, member

Please confirm that you have read the latest version of the California Democratic Party Platform, as found here:

<https://cadem.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CDP-Platform-2022-FINAL-1-1.pdf>

List any items in the CDP Platform with which you disagree. (This is in no way a litmus test for our endorsement; however, because the party delegates have worked so hard on every word of this platform document, we believe it will be a helpful guide to comprehend the policy differences between each candidate.)

I have read the latest version of the California Democratic Party Platform and cannot find one plank with which I disagree.

## Campaign Finance

Please indicate Yes or No to the following statements:

1. I pledge not to take contributions from oil, gas, and coal industry executives, lobbyists, and PACs.

YES

2. I pledge not to take contributions from police or law enforcement unions, lobbyists, and PACs.

YES

3. I pledge not to take contributions from development firms, lobbyists, and PACs.

YES

If you answered No to any of the above contribution questions, please explain here:

## City Governance

What is your brief assessment of how City Council has functioned over the past two years?

Santa Monica City Council has devolved into a far less effective and responsive body over the past two years because recent members are not bringing the commitment, professionalism, integrity and knowledge necessary to do the job effectively.

Do you believe we should keep the current system of seven at-large council seats? What other type of representation would you be interested in exploring?

I believe our council seats should remain at-large.

Do you support the elimination of the City Manager position and/or the creation of an empowered, directly elected Mayor of Santa Monica?

I am open to exploring the creation of an empowered, directly elected Mayor of Santa Monica.

Do you favor any changes to our City Charter as a means to make the city government more democratic?

The creation of an empowered, directed elected Mayor is something I would support exploring further, and would consider placing such a reform to our City Charter on the 2024 ballot.

Are top city staffers' salaries too high, and is this a potential source for balancing the City budget?

We need top talent to run our top-tier city. Slashing salaries is a recipe for losing out on talented people, who will instead be lured away from public service to the private sector. It is not the way to best balance our City budget.

Should each City Council member have their own paid staffer, and/or should Council be a full time job?

I do believe City Council members require additional resources to effectively do their jobs, either through a paid staffer or by making the position a full-time job. This is also a matter of equity – as many residents are not in a financial position to make the kind of time commitment required to serve our city with little to no compensation.

## **Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion**

In what ways can the City of Santa Monica ensure that, in a real, practical sense, Black Lives Matter in our community?

Despite its reputation for progressive values, Santa Monica's history is steeped in a legacy of exclusion. From racial covenants to the seizing of land held by Black Santa Monicans through eminent domain, our city has enacted policies to undermine the welfare of Black people who live here and exclude Black people from moving here.

Acknowledging this past is not enough. Instead, we must enact policies that affirmatively further the welfare of Black people today.

Restrictions on the construction of new apartments in our city have fueled racial exclusion and gentrification, causing a mass exodus of Black people from the LA metro area. Every neighborhood in our city is high-opportunity, with excellent public schools, and incredibly low rates of crime and gun violence. The best thing we could do for the Black community is allow more Black people and their families to live here and flourish.

In addition, we must continue the work that has just barely begun in reimagining public safety, not back away from it as our city council has done, and ensure our Public Safety Reform & Oversight Commission is not a rubber stamp for law enforcement but rather the critical independent body it was intended to be.

I walk through my neighborhood of Sunset Park and see a lot of signs that say "Black Lives Matter." But talk is cheap, and actively denying more housing opportunities for

Black families in our city belies the message on our front lawns. I'm proposing we actually live those values instead.

In what ways can the City of Santa Monica better protect its undocumented residents?

Santa Monica has enacted policies consistent with many "Sanctuary Cities" around the state and county, which is commendable. It could go further, however, in ensuring that its undocumented residents are eligible for assistance in the many ways that are prohibited by state and federal law.

We saw the consequences of this play out during COVID-19, when undocumented workers were often barred from or afraid of claiming desperately needed unemployment and rental subsidies. We can do more as a city to set up parallel programs that provide assistance to all our residents, regardless of their citizenship status.

Santa Monica could also explore allowing all residents, regardless of citizenship, the right to vote in local elections. New York City passed legislation to this effect, but it has been met with resistance in the courts.

How do you plan to (in the moment) counteract any and all observed possible acts of microaggressions towards Women, African Americans, Hispanics, LGBTQ and others of marginalized communities from your fellow Councilmembers or members of the public? What is your experience in dealing with these situations?

It is vitally important, as an ally to Women, African Americans, Hispanics, LGBTQ and others of marginalized communities, to never be silent in the face of bias, hatred, or microaggressions, but rather to call them out and explain why they are unacceptable in the moment.

While our city council is limited by the 1st amendment in what kind of language it is able to police, its members are not barred from talking forcefully about why such language is unacceptable and has no place in our city.

I have worked in diverse workplaces and managed diverse teams of people, and have listened to colleagues and worked with them to ensure that everyone could feel heard, respected, and safe.

What are the most significant environmental justice issues in Santa Monica, and how will you address them?

The most significant environmental justice issues in Santa Monica center around the Pico Neighborhood, and its proximity to several health and environmental hazards. These include the I-10 Freeway and the tailpipe and particulate pollution it is

responsible for, Gandara Park and the possibility of methane emissions from the landfill on which it was built, and excessive cut-through car traffic on Michigan Ave. to access Santa Monica High School.

In addition, there is a disparity in tree canopy coverage and park access between residential neighborhoods in our city, with low-income communities often enjoying less of both.

Every time we look, as a city, to improve our environment, water, air quality, tree canopy, and access to green space, we must do so through the lens of environmental justice, and ensure that the improvements we make disproportionately benefit the communities that have traditionally suffered the most.

In the long term, pursuing a cap over the I-10 freeway would go a long way to reverse wrongs of the past, increase access to green space, and bring together the two halves of our city that the freeway divided.

What specific initiatives to increase diversity and promote inclusion among City staff are you interested in pursuing, and how will you work with the City Manager to implement these policies?

Our city must prioritize DEI principles and best practices in every hiring decision, as well as in representation on our various boards and commissions. We should explore best practices in localities across the country that have been successful in diversifying their staff and implement them to the fullest extent allowed under state and federal law.

## **Housing / Development**

What steps would you propose to address the homelessness crisis in the City of Santa Monica?

In the short term, we must ramp up outreach services in our city, funding more multidisciplinary teams with an emphasis on mental health care that are able to make offers of immediate housing via rapid rehousing vouchers, Project Roomkey/Homekey and supportive housing openings, etc. We must allow these teams the leeway to do the deep, methodical proactive outreach work required to gain trust and connect people to housing and services, while at the same time we must work towards an unarmed 24/7 response capability to provide immediate help to small business owners and residents who require assistance dealing with an unhoused individual who is in crisis.

In the long run, the only thing that will solve our homelessness crisis is the construction of sufficient deed-restricted affordable housing and naturally occurring affordable

multifamily housing in our city and region. We can start moving in the right direction by completing a good faith rezoning process in Santa Monica that fulfills our state RHNA obligation and affirmatively furthers fair housing.

What is your philosophy on the appropriate scope of development that should be approved in Santa Monica?

Santa Monica has room to grow responsibly, sustainably, and equitably while preserving the character and charm of our beach community. We need to move towards rectifying our job/ homes imbalance, so that our daytime and nighttime populations are closer aligned, commuter cars are taken off the road, and a sustainable 15-minute city is made possible for more people.

The best place to make room for growth is along the Expo line and our commercial corridors, which were historically downzoned and have room to add multifamily residential units above businesses. We must embrace more mixed-use projects along these corridors so long as they do not displace current tenants, do not destroy rent-controlled units, and so long as they provide additional funding for the construction of desperately needed deed-restricted affordable housing.

In what specific ways has Santa Monica failed to address the housing affordability crisis? What concrete steps would you take on Council to better address the crisis?

Santa Monica has added only 1 home for every 5 jobs created in our city since 1980. This jobs/ homes imbalance has increased competition for scarce residential units and resulted in soaring rents and home prices, which are displacing low-income renters, eroding the stability of middle-income families, forcing over 90% of our workforce to commute from somewhere else, and fueling our homelessness crisis.

We need more middle-income housing to stabilize market-rate rents, and we need more deed-restricted low-income housing for community members who cannot afford to pay market rate. These policies are complementary, as market-rate housing provides crucial funds for low-income housing development, and adding more of both kinds of housing increases the power of renters vis a vis landlords and stabilizes rents for the many working people who do not qualify for (or do not have access to) deed-restricted affordable housing.

How can the City of Santa Monica meet its next RHNA cycle goal of 6,153 new deed restricted affordable housing units for low and moderate income households and 2,721 new market rate housing units?

In order to build 6,152 new deed-restricted affordable housing units, Santa Monica must adopt an all-of-the-above approach to housing, employing public funds and city-owned

land to finance the construction of deed-restricted affordable housing while creating incentives for private developers to build and/or finance additional deed-restricted affordable units whenever market-rate housing is built. The cost of building 6,152 deed-restricted affordable units with public funds is estimated at approximately \$4 billion, and thereby infeasible with public funds alone. Only through creativity and a willingness to embrace all options on the table can we hope to achieve our housing goals as a city.

What is your assessment of the 2022 Housing Element proposed by City Council?

The latest draft of the 2022 Housing Element proposed by City Council presents a good-faith plan to meet our city's RHNA obligation and will likely be approved by Sacramento. This is good, as remaining out of compliance with the state opens us up to a number of legal risks and economic problems as a city.

The Rent Board and its staff have committed to hosting a discussion about the city's rent control law with the community at large. The City has always complemented the Rent Charter's mission in the areas of the City's jurisdiction, including: Tenant Harassment, Code Enforcement, Land Use (AirBnb & corporate rentals laws) and Tenant Relocation Benefits. How would you enhance or change these areas of tenant protections on City Council?

I would work to strengthen tenant protections in our city by expanding our right to counsel program for renters facing eviction, expanding our rental assistance program for low-income rent-burdened seniors, codifying right of first refusal (ROFR) provisions contained in SB330 for any tenants displaced by redevelopment, expanding our rent registry to include all rental units in our city, and of course, supporting the passage of Measure RC and Measure EM this November.

Measure RC is needed to avert a 6% rent hike on many low-income renters who cannot afford it, replacing it with a more appropriate 3% cap going forward. Measure EM is needed to give our rent control board the authority to freeze rents in times of emergency. Both provisions are vital, as our current health and economic crisis has made abundantly clear.

What do you see as the mission or purpose of Rent Control in a city where 70% of the population are renters?

Rent Control is the bedrock of our 70% renter community. Its purpose is to ensure that all residents of Santa Monica are entitled to stability, safety, privacy, dignity, and peace in their homes. A 30-year mortgage should not entitle you to greater peace of mind and economic stability in your community, and rent control assures that renters, and not just homeowners, are entitled to this basic dignity, and thereby keeps our community diverse and vibrant.

## Public Safety

What is your assessment of the role of the Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission in Santa Monica?

All city agencies should be subject to robust public oversight. In the wake of the protests over the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, it was particularly appropriate for Santa Monica to establish a commission to ensure that SMPD was engaging in best practices that promoted the fair treatment and safety of all residents and to recommend reforms for how complaints of bias or misconduct were investigated and, if substantiated, how consequences were levied.

Recent appointments by council, however, have shifted the orientation of the commission towards being a rubber stamp for law enforcement agencies, as opposed to the critical independent body it was intended to be.

What is your assessment of the OCR Report regarding the police response on May 31, 2020, and what changes to City and SMPD policy should be implemented in light of its findings?

The OCR report notes, correctly, that major flaws in SMPD leadership, communications, and policy, as well as violations of its existing policy, led to a deeply inadequate, troubling, and at times potentially criminal response to the protests of May 31, 2020. It is further concerned, correctly, with attempts made by SMPD leadership to conceal the organization's failures and perpetuate a false and misleading narrative to council and the public.

The findings reveal flaws in SMPD's rules regarding Use of Force and subsequent system of investigation and discipline for officers who violate it, flaws in SMPD's policies and training regarding protest and crowd management, and an inadequate system of receiving, tracking and maintaining transparency regarding complaints of officer bias and misconduct. All three areas must be overhauled, with guidance from experts and the best practices of other public safety agencies around the country and world.

What steps do you think need to be taken in the next two years to reduce crime in the City? If this requires additional funding, how should it be funded?

First, SMPD must hire to its full allotment of 220 sworn officers. Because that number is low for cities of comparable size, I would also be comfortable exploring an expansion to 230 sworn positions. In addition, council must support an expansion of mental health services, in conjunction with County DMH and nonprofit providers. I support the TOT tax

increase on the November ballot to raise additional revenues for public safety and mental health services.

Is the Santa Monica Police Department presently well funded? Should more or less of the City budget be allocated to hiring SMPD officers?

It is difficult to simultaneously remove resources from an agency and expect better outcomes from it. I would be comfortable exploring an expansion of SMPD to 230 sworn positions.

Do you support efforts to promote investment of general fund monies previously allocated toward armed police response to instead go toward mental health services and other unarmed departments when appropriate?

I support those funds going to whatever system of unarmed mental health and crisis response is the most efficient and effective use of public tax dollars.

Do you support or oppose efforts to recall District Attorney George Gascón? Do you support DA Gascón's special directives on restorative justice? If not, what approach should be taken?

I oppose efforts to recall District Attorney George Gascon and support his special directives on restorative justice.

Was the City Council justified in choosing *not* to implement an indoor vaccine mandate during the omicron surge in January/February 2022? What was your position at the time?

There are reasonable justifications for council choosing not to implement an indoor vaccine mandate in Jan/Feb 2022, but I would have voted in favor of such a requirement, as mortality rates have remained high among unvaccinated adults during the omicron surge.

## **Mobility**

Should Santa Monica encourage more pedestrian-only streets like the Third Street Promenade? If so, on which streets would you consider this?

Yes. I would consider exploring it on Main St.

Do you support additional Metro rail lines being built in Santa Monica, and if so, which potential projects do you support? Which regions of the City would you like to see serviced?

I think focusing on Bus Rapid Transit/ dedicated bus lanes along corridors such as Wilshire, Santa Monica, Lincoln and Pico is a more efficient and cost-effective solution.

I would also be interested to explore the cost and efficacy of above-ground electric street cars along some of these boulevards as well, however.

Should shared mobility devices and apps (eg, scooters, e-bikes) be encouraged or discouraged in Santa Monica?

Shared mobility devices and apps are an important part of first/ last mile solutions in a functioning system of public transit, so long as they operate under and obey sensible regulations and guidance outlined by our city to ensure such services are safe, minimize negative externalities, and best serve our residents' and visitors' needs.

Should the overall amount of street parking in Santa Monica be reduced in order to encourage a shift away from cars toward other modes of transportation?

Our city parking lots are rarely, if ever, at full capacity. And we saw during COVID the benefits to allowing restaurants and other businesses to operate and serve customers outdoors, often in place of existing parking spaces and parking lots.

I would support studying where in the city reductions in street parking would be most feasible and minimally impactful, as well as where such reductions would provide the biggest bang for your buck as far as improving the speed and efficiency of alternative modes of public transit.

## **Ballot Measures**

Do you support California Proposition 1?

Yes.

Do you support the citizens initiative ballot measure which would tax real estate transactions over \$8M and provide revenue for affordable housing, rent subsidy, and SMMUSD? Why/why not?

Yes. I think a tax on the transfer of high value real estate is an appropriate intervention to raise desperately needed revenues for affordable housing and school funding.

Do you support the competing council-approved ballot measure which would tax real estate transactions over \$8M and provide revenue into the general fund? Why/why not?

No. It does not raise enough revenue to be impactful.

Do you support the rent control ballot measure which would permanently lower the rent control General Adjustment cap from 6% down to 3%?

Yes.

Do you support the SMC bond measure?

Yes.

Do you support the 1% transient occupancy tax ballot measure?

Yes.

Do you support the cannabis business tax ballot measure?

Yes.

## Federal Legislation

Do you support the **Inflation Reduction Act of 2022** which just passed Congress? It compromises on many of the important provisions included in the previous Build Back Better Act. Do you think it's good enough?

Yes, I support it. No, I don't think it's good enough, but it pushes our country in the right direction.

What do you think of legislation proposed since Roe v Wade was struck down – designed to protect other previously assumed fundamental freedoms? Notably: the **Right to Contraception Act** (HR 8373) and the **Respect for Marriage Act** (HR 8404) which would codify into federal law the rights for access to contraception and same-sex and interracial marriage.

I support these bills.

Do you think we need the **Protecting Access to Medication Abortion Act** (S 4467)? It defends access to medication abortion in states where the right to an abortion is still protected. Do you support the **Medicare For All Act** (HR 1976)?

I support both.

Whether you support that bill or not, how can we ensure universal, single payer health care coverage for all Santa Monicans?

Support, organize, and advocate for state and federal legislation that guarantees it.

## Additional Questions

What steps must Santa Monica take to enact a Green New Deal in our own city, if any?

Transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in our state. Without making big investments to allow more people who work in Santa Monica to live in Santa Monica, and make our buses and trains move faster than cars, we are not going to meet our climate goals.

Additionally, we should provide more support to programs offering funding streams for good, union jobs reimagining our landscaping with native, drought resistant plants, installing solar panels on our roofs, and weatherizing and insulating our homes to be more energy efficient.

Although marijuana is legal in California for recreational use, there are currently no dispensaries operating in Santa Monica. Why is this the case, and should that be changed? If dispensaries are allowed in Santa Monica, what processes would govern the business approval process to ensure equity?

Recreational dispensaries are currently not allowed in Santa Monica. If they are to be, we should prioritize business approvals for low-income people of color, specifically Black entrepreneurs, to address our shameful, racist history of unequal enforcement of our laws governing the sale and possession of marijuana.

What role do you believe the Santa Monica Democratic Club should have in our City?

The Santa Monica Democratic Club does a wonderful job increasing political participation in our local, state, and federal political system, building an informed and engaged electorate, and furthering the goals, principles, and successes of the Democratic Party.

It should continue to build upon its past successes in analyzing and weighing in on legislation, making endorsements of candidates, volunteering time and resources on behalf of endorsed candidates, informing the public of political developments in our city and state and providing important context for them, furthering the goals and principles of the Democratic Party, and ensuring the continued growth of diversity, equity, and inclusion in its membership and leadership.

If elected, how would you attempt to interact with the Santa Monica Democratic Club and other political organizations to ensure community buy-in on new proposals?

I think city councilmembers should be in regular communication with the SM Dems and other political organizations, previewing ideas and soliciting feedback on potential policies to better our city.

Those in the community who are most impacted by a particular problem are often most qualified to weigh in on what is wrong and how it can be fixed. That is why I would attempt to co-govern with residents and bring them into the political process as much as possible, and the earlier the better, so that everyone feels like they have been heard and has a sense of ownership over a piece of legislation or policy before it is put to a vote.