

Santa Monica Democratic Club

2024 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. Only registered Democrats are eligible for our consideration. 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.

Please send the completed questionnaire to smdemocrats@gmail.com by 11:59pm on May 18, 2024. Interview appointment times with our Executive Committee will be scheduled on a first come first served basis for the weekend of May 25/26 as the questionnaires are returned.

None of these questions shall be construed as litmus tests. There are no questions that must be answered a certain way to be considered for our endorsement.

General Information

Candidate Name: Natalya Zernitskaya

Email Address: nzernitskaya@gmail.com (personal) (campaign)
natalya@natalyafrcitycouncil.com

Candidate's Current Occupation: [Sr. Due Diligence Analyst](#)

Candidate's Employer: [Cetera Financial Group](#)

Campaign Contact Person (if other than candidate):

1. What qualifications do you bring to this office?

[I bring both my lived, professional and community experiences all contribute to my deep understanding of the challenges facing our City.](#)

[I am an immigrant who at the age of six years old, fled Belarus with my parents after the fall of the former Soviet Union. Like many immigrants, my family arrived in the U.S. with only a few hundred dollars. Through government and nonprofit safety nets – such as food stamps and a rent-controlled apartment – my family was able to eventually achieve a better life. I know the importance of those safety nets and I know what it is like fearing to lose them. This lived experience has shaped my values and influences every decision I make and will continue to make as an elected official.](#)

[As a financial analyst and one of two residents appointed to the City Council's 2019 Audit Subcommittee, I have a deep understanding not only of finance, but of the particulars of our City's budget. I believe this experience will be a tremendous asset to the City Council as we navigate economic recovery from the pandemic and move our city forward to be transparent and accountable while protecting, restoring and expanding vital services. This work has taught me how to analyze and shape policy, resolve neighborhood issues, and make our city more fiscally responsible and transparent.](#)

[Through my decade plus of community involvement and activism in Santa Monica, I have come to know our neighborhoods, local organizations and underserved communities, and the challenges each one faces. I am a Pico neighborhood renter, and have served as President of](#)

the League of Women Voters of Santa Monica, as Recording Secretary of the Santa Monica Democratic Club, as Secretary of the Human Relations Council of the Santa Monica Bay Area, as an Advisory Board Member of Climate Action Santa Monica, as a board member of the Virginia Avenue Park Advisory Board, as a member of the City of Santa Monica's Transient Occupancy Tax Advisory Committee, and as an appointed delegate to the California Democratic Party where I also serve as a member of the Rules Committee. On a more global level, I serve as Secretary on the Board of the International Women's Resource Center (IWRC), and on the Rising Leaders Council of the Institute for Portfolio Alternatives (IPA) for 2022-2024.

I believe all of the above gives me exceptional qualifications to make meaningful, fact-based decisions.

2. Why are you running?

I moved to Santa Monica right after college to be part of a forward-thinking community. Since day one, I dove right in to become a part of this community and to help move forward democratic values. After over a decade of community involvement, running for City Council is an important next step in my dedication to our City. I am running at this particular time for the same reasons I ran (and nearly won) last time: because I am saddened with the direction the current City Council majority has taken us and believe that my combined skill set and unique voice and perspective will contribute a great deal to making our city more inclusive, diverse, affordable and sustainable.

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

My top 3 issues are: housing and homelessness, public safety (which includes implementing policies to further the City's Vision Zero goals and supporting more proactive enforcement of tenant-related safety issues), and economic recovery.

I plan to address housing and homelessness by building consensus around data-driven policies that we can implement and expand to protect current renters and build new housing of all types, with a special focus on affordable housing.

The City has begun expanding our biking and pedestrian infrastructure but I believe we can and should do more to ensure that our streets are safe for all to use. Once elected, I can work with my colleagues on the Council to implement measures that slow down automobile traffic on neighborhood streets (such as speed cushions which have cut outs to mitigate the effects of speed humps/bumps on emergency vehicles). Additionally, I would support allocating additional funding to code enforcement to more proactively address safety issues that tenants in Santa Monica face including those caused by deferred maintenance of older multifamily buildings.

Santa Monica unfortunately has a reputation for being a difficult place to open and run a business and we should address the common issues that businesses face such as complicated permitting rules and delays in issuing permits. I would utilize currently available resources such as the Audit Subcommittee's Permitting Efficiency Study (https://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/Council/Audit_Comm/2021-05-11%20Permitting%20Efficiency%20Study.pdf) and audit progress report to assess the implementation of permitting efficiency recommendations. We should also explore the feasibility of a commercial vacancy tax to incentivize property owners to rent to businesses at actual market rates rather

than keeping the rents artificially high and out of reach for all but the most well-capitalized businesses.

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

** Titles listed for identification purposes only.*

Western States Carpenters Union
Gleam Davis, Santa Monica City Councilmember*
Caroline Torosis, Santa Monica City Councilmember*
Jesse Zwick, Santa Monica City Councilmember*
Jennifer Smith, SMMUSD Board President*
Laurie Lieberman, SMMUSD Board Member*
Richard Tavildaran-Jesswein, SMMUSD Board Member*
Dr. Susan Aminoff, SMC Trustee*
Dr. Nancy Greenstein, SMC Trustee*
Dr. Margaret Quinones-Perez, SMC Trustee*
Dr. Tom Peters, SMC Trustee*
Rob Rader, SMC Trustee*
Barry Snell, SMC Trustee*
Daniel Ivanov, Rent Control Board Member*
Anastasia Foster, Rent Control Board Member*
Sheila Kuehl, Former LA County Supervisor*
Nat Trives, Former Santa Monica Mayor*
Rev. Jim Conn, Former Santa Monica Mayor*
Paul Rosenstein, Former Santa Monica Mayor*
Judy Abdo, Former Santa Monica Mayor*
Kevin McKeown, Former Santa Monica Mayor*
Terry O'Day, Former Santa Monica City Councilmember*
Kristin McCowan, Former Santa Monica City Councilmember*
Freddy Puza, Culver City Councilmember*
John Erickson, West Hollywood Mayor*
Chelsea Byers, West Hollywood Vice Mayor*
Jose Trinidad Castañeda, Buena Park City Councilmember*
Isabel Storey, Vice President Legislative, Santa Monica Democratic Club*
Susan Sheu, Vice President Communications, Santa Monica Democratic Club*
Derek Devermont, Vice President Political Action, Santa Monica Democratic Club*, DNC Member*
Abby Arnold, Former Co-Chair, Santa Monica Forward*
Angel Villaseñor, Pico Neighborhood Resident
Carl Hansen, Co-Chair, Santa Monica Forward*
Cris Gutierrez, Co-Founder, Climate Action Santa Monica*
Cynthia Rose, Director, Santa Monica Spoke*
Dan Hall, Santa Monica Pier Board Commissioner*
Ellis Raskin, Chair, Santa Monica Planning Commission*
Frank Gruber, Former Santa Monica Planning and Housing Commissioner*
Genise Schnitman, Former SMRR Steering Committee Member*
Joe Pertel, Santa Monica Airport Commission Member*

Katharine King, Co-Founder, Climate Action Santa Monica*
Nicole Faries, Sunset Park Resident
Sirinya Matute, Education and Mobility Advocate, Mid-City Resident
Shari Davis, Education Advocate
Vivian Rothstein, Labor Advocate
Will Burrington, Ocean Park Resident
Andrew Lachman, California Democratic Party Delegate*
Leah Pressman, Culver City Democratic Club Board Member*

5. How long have you lived in Santa Monica? Where else have you lived?

2024 will be my 10 year anniversary of living in Santa Monica – but I got involved with the community while living in West LA close to Pico/Bundy for 4 years prior in the hope I'd find a rent controlled apartment I could afford. I have also lived in Santa Cruz for about 4 years (with the exception of a semester of studying abroad in Maastricht, NL) while I was in college. I have also lived in San Bruno for 4 years, San Francisco for 6 years. I was born in Gomel, Belarus and lived there until I was 6 years old when my family and I were able to immigrate to the U.S.

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

Yes. Barring any unforeseen significant impediments to my ability to serve – such as a medical emergency – I pledge to serve my entire term on the City Council if elected.

Campaign Finance

1. How much money have you raised for your campaign to date?

In the month or so that my campaign committee has been open, I have raised a little over \$21k

2. How much do you intend to raise by Election Day 2024?

I intend to raise at least \$80,000 by Election Day 2024.

3. Candidates for local office often choose not to take campaign contributions from particular types of organizations or industries. Are there any such sources from which you would decline donations? If so, which?

Santa Monica's current campaign contribution limit is \$410 per person or entity. Anyone who could be bought for that sum, has no business running for office.

That said, I am being cautious around contributions from developers who may have projects coming before the Council. There are certainly some projects that may have merit and I do not want to be precluded from participating in important discussions around shaping future development in Santa Monica. Additionally, given my professional work, I am also cautious about donations from real estate firms that may be involved with the types of investments I analyze. I will not accept donations from industries that do not align with my values, such as oil & gas companies, tobacco companies and Big Pharma.

Party / Activism

1. 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 have been a registered Democrat since I was first eligible to register to vote over 17 years ago. I am a lifelong Democrat.

2. 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 have primarily been politically active on issues such as housing, homelessness, transportation, women's rights, social justice, and the environment. Because of my leadership roles in the League of Women Voters of Santa Monica, I had not been able to engage publicly in any candidate-specific or political party-specific activism prior to my decision to run in 2022. During those years, I did use my position with the League to persuade it to take positions that uplifted Democratic values. Once I stepped down from serving as League President, I have become fully engaged with the Democratic Party and now serve on the Rules Committee of CADEM and am Assemblymember Rick Zbur's delegate appointee.

I have previously volunteered for and worked on (in an unpaid capacity) ballot measure and proposition campaigns primarily as a representative of the League of Women Voters of Santa Monica. This included being on the committee for Measure SM in 2020, doing advocacy & outreach to support Prop 15 in 2020, engaging in advocacy & outreach to support Measure SMS in 2018 and oppose Measure LV in 2016.

3. Which political candidates have you endorsed or supported publicly in the past? Please list as many as possible, *especially where you endorsed during a contested primary*.

Prior to the 2022 election, due to my prior leadership roles with the League of Women Voters of Santa Monica, I was not able to endorse candidates for public office. In 2022, I publicly endorsed Laurie Lieberman, Richard Tavildaran-Jesswein, and Alicia Mignano for SMMUSD School board. Since I was a candidate for City Council, I did work along with Caroline Torosis and Jesse Zwick, my fellow Santa Monica Democratic Club-endorsed candidates in the 2022 election.

4. 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.

No, I have never publicly supported efforts to recall a public official from office. Generally, unless there is significant egregious unethical or criminal action, I believe that we should let the voters opine on the effectiveness of a public official via the ballot box.

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

California Democratic Party- Appointed Delegate & Rules Committee Member
LACDP
LA County Young Democrats
Stonewall Democrats

Stonewall Young Democrats
Westside Young Democrats
Santa Monica Democratic Club
National Women's Political Caucus
International Women's Resource Center, Board Member & Secretary
Sierra Club
Abundant Housing LA
Yimby Action
Santa Monicans for Renters Rights League of Women Voters of Santa Monica- Previously served as President and Treasurer
Human Relations Council of the Santa Monica Bay Area, Board Member & Secretary
Climate Action Santa Monica, Advisory Board Member
Ocean Park Association

6. Please confirm that you have read the latest version of the California Democratic Party Platform, as found below. List any items in the CDP Platform with which you disagree.

<https://cadem.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FinalPlatform2024.pdf>

I support the CDP platform.

City Governance

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

There has been a lot of divisiveness on the Council and it has been disappointing to watch the quality of civil discourse fall. In many ways it has been dysfunctional and has driven away good, hard-working Councilmembers who have been the victim of deeply personal, unnecessary attacks.

2. Do you believe we should keep the current system of seven at-large council seats? Why or why not? If not, how would you change this system?

At this time, I believe the current at-large system of elections works well. We are a small city and districts will not change the demographics on the Council. Chopping us up will pit neighborhoods against each other. I would support exploring a move to ranked choice voting if we can demonstrate that we will invest the time and resources to educate the public about how it works.

3. What other type of changes to our City Charter would you be interested in exploring to make the City government more democratic?

I support exploring how to best widen the potential pool of candidates for office through measures such as public financing of campaigns, higher wages for elected officials so that people of different income levels could afford to serve, and investing more into opportunities for younger residents to learn the importance of local government.

4. Should each City Council member have their own paid staffer? Should Council be a full time job?

NO. We have seen how this has worked in other small cities and ends up being a political nightmare. However, we should definitely explore how to help Council with the heavy workload that part-time Councilmembers have, many of whom have full time jobs and families in addition to serving the community. More support would enable a more diverse pool of people to serve as councilmembers. This would certainly help parents with young children and others who work demanding jobs, to serve on Council. There are dangers to paid staff for individual councilmembers. When West Hollywood first became a city, each councilmember had a deputy. At that time, it was necessary as they were creating a city from scratch. Over time, however, the positions became very political and were more like political operatives inside city hall. I think we would need to do further analysis of options that actually serve the community and not the political agenda of individual councilmembers. I believe that making the role of a councilmember a full time job would most likely require a change to the City Charter.

5. What changes, if any, should be made to the current structure of boards and commissions in terms of how they are empowered or how members are selected?

I believe that we need to ensure commissions have the support they need to be able to accomplish their stated goals and purposes. For example, I believe the Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission should have more staff support which would also help with transparency of what the commission is doing and facilitate being able to disseminate the insights of the commission more broadly across our community.

I believe we need to bring back the Commission on the Status of Women because at a time when women's rights are being eroded and outright denied in many other states and other parts of the world, we cannot take our rights for granted and we need a dedicated team of people who are tasked with the specific purpose of protecting women's rights, empowering women, expanding opportunities for women in our City, and disseminating information on how our community can help protect and empower women.

In the past several years, we have seen numerous examples of well-qualified, effective board and commission members being kicked off of boards and commissions where they have been removed and replaced by people whose primary eligibility criteria appeared to be their political alignment with those making the appointments.

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

1. In what concrete ways would you support the City of Santa Monica following through on the promise of the Black Apology?

Now that we have issued the Black Apology, we need to continue along the path to correct the historic wrongs, but this needs to be done with the buy-in of the people who were harmed and/or their descendants. I support a right-to-return policy and reparations, which may take different forms such as priority in housing access, subsidies for purchasing homes, or other compensation as appropriate. Additionally, I support right-to-counsel for tenants, youth diversion programs, and commemorating the rich history of neighborhoods such as Belmar and Broadway to uplift the Black Community.

2. In what form, if any, should reparations be considered for racist wrongs from our city's past? Are there specific examples in our city where you believe this would be an appropriate response?

I believe that we need to follow through with reparations for the family of Silas White as laid out in the March 19th City Council agenda item 16L after the City Manager and City Attorney report back to the Council with the information and next steps.

We should also take what we learned from our "Right to Return" pilot program to fine tune, and if appropriate, expand the Right to Return program. As noted in the paper entitled "Reparations and the Right to Return" by Deborah Archer, "Ultimately, a right to return as reparations must begin with the full participation of the impacted people in the planning and management of their own return and reintegration." (see: https://socialchangenyu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Archer_45.3_Reparations-and-the-Right-to-Return.pdf)

As I'm not an expert on best practices for reparations, I look forward to working with experts in the field to make meaningful progress in correcting past injustices. I will look for guidance based on the recommendations of the California Reparations Task Force in chapter 22 of their report (<https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/ch22-ca-reparations.pdf>) such as:

- Provide Property Tax Relief to African Americans, Especially Descendants, Living in Formerly Redlined Neighborhoods, Who Purchase or Construct a New Home
- Expand Grant Funding to CommunityBased Organizations to Increase Home Ownership
- Provide Direct Financial Assistance to Increase Home Ownership Among African Americans, Especially Descendants, Through Shared Appreciation Loans and Subsidized Down Payments, Mortgages, and Homeowner's Insurance
- Provide Restitution for Racially Motivated Takings
- Provide a Right to Return for Displaced African American Californians

Santa Monica has already begun some of this work but we still need to acknowledge that families of color did not only include African Americans, but also people who were members of other marginalized communities including but not limited to the Tongva people and other Native American tribes, Latino Americans, and Asian Americans. No matter what policies we choose to ultimately implement, those policies need to be shaped by the people who were harmed by these policies and/or their descendants.

At a recent Santa Monica Democratic Club meeting, I had the opportunity to learn more about reparations including how making progress on implementing policies supporting reparations for African Americans can help create more opportunities for reparations for other systemically disenfranchised communities.

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

I fully support a timely pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. Although I would not be able to directly impact legislation if elected as a councilmember, I would be able to support undocumented residents and stakeholders who live, work, and/or attend schools in our City in other ways, such as supporting funding for Santa Monica College, our local community

college which offers the DREAM Program for undocumented students. I will also work with the Rent Board and others to make sure undocumented residents are not being taken advantage of by landlords who often use immigration status as a threat to refuse making necessary repairs in a unit,

I am proud our our city's policy enacted in 2016, to forbid local law enforcement from cooperating with ICE and specifies that we do not "use City monies, resources, or personnel to investigate, question, detect, apprehend, detain or register persons whose only violation is or may be a violation of the civil provisions of federal immigration law related to documented status." If elected, I will stand against any efforts to change this policy.

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

Air quality/pollution, heat, transportation, and mold infested apartment buildings not properly remediated by the landlord. The most environmentally impacted area in the City is the Pico neighborhood, with pollution impact rating in the 96th percentile per CalEnviroScreen 4.0. Most of our housing stock is fairly old and as such, does not have air conditioning so although we're lucky to live in an area where the climate is much better than further inland, we still have people at risk of negative health impacts from heat and pollution. Transportation is part of both air quality/pollution and heat because generally speaking, people who are the most impacted are those who live and work in the neighborhoods along the 10 Freeway. Part of the way that we can address the heat issue would be to add more tree cover and shade where our urban forest is insufficient.

As with other policies intended to address historic wrongs, we need to address environmental justice issues with the buy-in of those who have been harmed by these issues.

5. 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?

I support expanding our Cradle to Career initiative as well as expanding mentorship, fellowship, and paid internship opportunities for Santa Monica students from under resourced backgrounds. I would also support the work of City staff as each department is currently tasked with identifying and rectifying the policies, practices, and behaviors that perpetuate racism, discrimination, and other negative racial-based outcomes.

Housing / Development

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

Housing first is the most effective solution for people currently experiencing homelessness. However, in order to reduce and end the homelessness crisis, we need to focus on both preventing people from falling into homelessness and getting people into safe, stable, affordable housing with wraparound services when needed. Preventing people from falling into homelessness may use strategies such as rent or utilities subsidies, rapid re-housing, and at a higher level, building more housing.

There are as many reasons for people experiencing homelessness as there are people experiencing homelessness because every person's story is unique. There can be similarities among these experiences but we have to remain flexible and have a "menu" of solutions so that we can tailor the solution to the person.

Bottom line is we need to be more creative in building more affordable housing to keep people housed in the first place – upcycle properties, use city-owned land, look at what other cities have successfully done – and we also need to better address mental health issues to get people off the streets and end the revolving door of homelessness.

2. 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?

I believe that housing is a human right. Beyond the slogan, I believe that all people deserve access to safe, affordable, decent housing. I have worked on housing issues for nearly a decade locally both personally and previously when I was President of the League of Women Voters of Santa Monica.

Although Santa Monica has generally sought to use a housing-first approach to homelessness and believe that it is a systemic problem. As a candidate for the Santa Monica City Council, I also support a local right-to-counsel ordinance for tenants which would ensure that renters have access to legal protection against unjust evictions. In order to address the issue of homelessness, we need to get unhoused people into safe, stable, affordable housing and prevent people from falling into homelessness in the first place.

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

I believe we must utilize the most efficient use of space and encourage new housing in underutilized locations near the types of amenities people need near their homes. Any new commercial development should be balanced with a sufficient number of new homes so that Santa Monica workers can have a choice if they would prefer to live near where they work. Additionally, new development should be directed to locations where it would not displace residents, with limited exceptions if there are significant safety issues with an existing residence and the residents are justly relocated and fairly compensated.

We should lower the costs of building housing through efforts such as eliminating parking minimums which would allow us to prioritize our limited land and resources for housing people rather than storing cars. Additionally, we should explore ways to further streamline deed-restricted affordable housing.

4. What should the balance be between state and local control of zoning?

The state should set overall goals for development of new housing, pass laws which allow local municipalities to meet those goals, and pass laws that hold local municipalities accountable to their commitments. The state's role in zoning should also be to protect vulnerable and marginalized communities against environmental hazards like oil wells. Local control over

zoning should focus on developing zoning policies that incentivize new housing in locations that would not displace existing residents, ensuring that zoning aligns with the municipality's values as a community, and balancing the overall needs of the municipality in the present as well as with an eye towards the future.

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

I believe that rent control provides stability and safety for tenants and it also helps keep our city diverse and more equitable than without – although vacancy decontrol has diminished that. I am hopeful that after the Justice for Renters Act passes in November, the Council should work with the Rent Control Board to seek a City Charter amendment to reinstate vacancy control.

6. How would you enhance or change tenant protections for renters?

First of all, we must get rid of Costa Hawkins and ensure illegal Ellis Act evictions are not occurring. I would also expand funding to code enforcement so that they could do more proactive enforcement of existing tenant protections, including enforcing building safety codes and the homesharing ordinance. Further, we should update our homesharing ordinance to include a private right of action similar to that of West Hollywood.

7. What is your history of involvement with 2022 Santa Monica Measure GS?

I supported Measure GS in 2022. First, however, I had to complete my obligation to the League of Women Voters of Santa Monica, which precluded me from taking a position on Measure GS. Once I did, I publicly stated my support for the measure in 2022. While I was campaigning for my own City Council race, I shared my support of and literature on the measure when I was canvassing. I supported GS and continue to support GS because I believe that it provides an opportunity for our community to “put our money where our mouth is” and dedicate funds for education, affordable housing, and keeping the most vulnerable members of our community safely housed. I oppose the current effort to change GS.

Public Safety

1. 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?

This is a very difficult question to answer because it depends on what kind of crime we are talking about and how we determine what we consider to be crime. At a high level, I believe we need to determine the root causes and address those to reduce crime. In order to do that, we need to go beyond the statistics and see people who have had interactions with the carceral justice system as human beings to understand what external factors and life experiences led them to that point. Some crimes go unreported when the victim is undocumented and fears reprisal from authorities. Some people steal because they have limited employment opportunities or other factors in their lives that leave them feeling like they have no other choice. Some people vandalize signs, sidewalks, buildings, etc. because they are bored and impulsive and others because that's what their friends are doing and they want to fit in. In my opinion, one of the biggest drivers of crime is poverty so if we can address the underlying condition of people living in poverty, we can help reduce crime. Locally, we can do this by continuing to support the

partnership with our schools to ensure that every child has a good education, by building more affordable housing, and by continuing to support food giveaways and other supportive services like free or low-cost afterschool programs, health services, etc. This may require some additional funding from the City for things like staffing for afterschool programs and childcare programs, but it is difficult to identify specific sources of funding or how much without performing additional analysis.

The SMPD crime statistics show that the majority of part 1 crimes has been for larceny, the act of theft or stealing for each year that the statistics are available (68.4% in 2019, 57.2% in 2020, 58% in 2021, 58.2% in 2022, and 59.3% in 2023). We should perform additional analysis on the crime statistics because each type of crime requires different types of intervention and prevention.

Although it is not within the control of the City Council, I believe we should lobby our state and federal legislators to pursue a guaranteed minimum income program. Guaranteed minimum income is different from universal basic income because guaranteed minimum income is based on need so it can be more focused on helping those who need it.

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

We need to perform an analysis of how police resources are being used to ensure that our law enforcement officers' valuable time is not being wasted on tasks and issues that could be better addressed by other types of city or nonprofit resources. In doing so, we must keep in mind the police budget also includes our City's valuable youth diversion program, our animal control/animal services division, crossing guards, the HLP team, and the Harbor Unit. In order to determine how to best allocate our resources in the future, we need to understand how they're being used today.

For fiscal year 2023-2024, the total police budget from the general fund of \$113.3 million makes up approximately 26.8% of our \$436.9 million general fund budget. Including the police budget from other funds, the \$116.1 million total budget comprises about 15.2% of our total FY23-24 \$745 million expenditure budget which includes the general fund, enterprise funds, and other funds.

For Fiscal Year 2024-2025, the total police budget from the general fund of \$117.7 million makes up approximately 25.7% of our \$458.6 million general fund budget. Including the police budget from other funds, the \$119.8 million comprises about 16% of our total \$750.6 million total expenditure budget.

3. Do you support the LA County Department of Health's needle exchange program as it is currently constructed? What changes, if any, would you suggest for this program?

Yes, I support LA County's Syringe Exchange Program. I believe any prospective changes should be driven by data and done in a manner that comports with the mission of harm reduction. We may want to explore developing a safe use site in conjunction with the syringe exchange program. It has been working and continues to work as evidenced by the fact that it's

down to 1 hour a week in 1 park from several hours a week in 3 parks. Additionally, it has saved multiple lives each month.

4. Do you support or oppose the re-election of District Attorney George Gascón? Do you support DA Gascón's special directives on restorative justice? If not, what approach should be taken?

I support the re-election of DA George Gascón. I believe he has done a great job amidst tremendous right-wing opposition that has misrepresented his positions. While I have not studied all of the DA's special directives in detail, I support restorative justice, including moving from a carceral justice system to a restorative justice system. I support a CARE First system.

5. Do you support the Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission's proposal to adopt the same policy on pretextual stops as the LAPD in Santa Monica? Why or why not?

Yes, I support the PSROC's proposal to adopt the same policy on pretextual stops as the LAPD in Santa Monica.

6. Four years after the start of the pandemic, what is your assessment of the health of the Third Street Promenade? Do you support DTSM Inc.'s decision to replace the downtown ambassadors with private security? If not, how would you change the current agreement?

No, I do not agree with DTSM Inc.'s decision to replace downtown ambassadors with private security. I believe the funds would have been better spent increasing the number of ambassadors and their hours. I believe this decision was based on the wrong factors and other measures — such as preventative not punitive measures against crime — must be taken to make residents feel safer in downtown.

Mobility

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

Yes – it will help get people out of their cars, reducing our carbon footprint – and it will make neighborhoods more approachable and interesting. I would love to see this on parts of Main Street and Montana Avenue. I am open to considering additional locations for pedestrian-only streets.

2. What changes should be made to promote safety for bike riders, pedestrians, and other alternate modes of transportation?

I believe we can make our streets safer and improve the biking and pedestrian experience so that people feel more comfortable using non-automobile types of transportation. We should expand bike lanes and crackdown on scooter riders that jeopardize pedestrian and bike rider safety. We can reduce headways for buses, make public transit more convenient and improve the perceptions of safety. We could also expand subsidy programs that would allow people to purchase electric bikes, cargo bikes, or electric cargo bikes to reduce their dependence on cars.

I am very proud of the progress we've made in enabling students to use public transit by providing discounts and subsidies, and I believe we should continue to build on that work.

3. 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?

Yes, I support more public transit and more Metro rail lines in Santa Monica. It would be great to have a north-south oriented rail line that could go at least to LAX.

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

Yes, we should expand our first-mile/last-mile solutions in a way that would allow more people to use them such as people with young children, elderly people, and disabled people. I believe we should encourage shared mobility devices in Santa Monica but we should also ensure we continue to expand our safe streets infrastructure so that people do not feel like they have to ride these devices on the sidewalks to avoid being hit by motor vehicles, which in turn endangers pedestrians. Further, we should create more public bike parking so that these devices don't get carelessly left behind blocking sidewalks.

5. Should the overall amount of street parking in Santa Monica be reduced in order to encourage other modes of transportation?

Yes, but I would first focus on reducing off-street parking. Studies indicate that reducing off-street parking reduces traffic/emissions but does not reduce retail revenue.

Ballot Measures

Do you support the Justice For Renters Act?

Yes.

Do you support the repeal of Article 34?

Yes.

Do you support the initiative to require new local taxes to pass by a two-thirds vote?

No.

Do you support the potential measure to amend Prop 47?

No.

Do you support the proposed amendments to Measure GS to exempt multifamily housing?

No.

Additional Questions

1. Do you support Medicare For All single-payer healthcare?

Yes.

2. Why should union workers in Santa Monica, especially those in the hospitality industry, trust that you will fight for their jobs?

I grew up in a union household and have fought for workers' rights my entire life. Most recently, I have stood in solidarity with workers during last year's strikes and demonstrations throughout LA County . I have advocated for their right to free speech when the City Council repeatedly attempted to pass a new noise ordinance that would have severely limited the ability of workers to make their voices heard. Rather than blaming the workers for using the most important tool, their voices, the City Council should have urged the hotel owners to come to the table, rehire workers who were fired for nothing more than exercising their constitutional rights, and sign contracts that would provide fair wages and benefits for workers. And I urged the Council to do so when the item was supposed to come before them.

I have not had the opportunity to work in an industry with a union, but my campaign only uses union vendors. While most unions have yet to endorse candidates, I am proudly endorsed by the Western States Carpenters union and expect to earn other union support.

3. What do you envision for the future of the Santa Monica Airport?

Our main priority should be community-serving uses including a grand park, arts & cultural, and educational uses as specified in 2014's Measure LC but I believe the community-serving uses include using a portion of the land for housing (especially deed-restricted affordable, mixed income, and/or social housing). However, I believe that we should hold off on seeking to make any changes to Measure LC until we are closer to 2028 as trying to make updates to the City Charter in this manner may inadvertently result in catalyzing opposition to closing the airport.

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

The Santa Monica Democratic Club should support democratic values and facilitate education on issues important to the Democratic party to enable our City to enact good policies to enrich the lives of our residents. I believe that means not only writing letters and testifying before City Council and commissions, but I believe we should be more proactive in proposing ideas and policies to our representatives in all levels of government. We should also be a leader in registering new or relocated voters and mobilizing turnout for elections.

5. 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?

As I have done since leaving my position with the League of Women Voters Santa Monica (when I could finally participate in partisan politics) I would continue to attend SMDC meetings and those of other like-minded political organizations to confer on proposed policies and listen to different perspectives of the community.

6. What is the most important topic that was left off of this questionnaire?

I believe the most important topic left off this questionnaire is how we can reclaim our progressive council majority this November and regain our reputation and respect among our peers as a forward-thinking city and leader in setting policies that become a model for the nation.