



Protecting Tenants - Preserving Neighborhoods

By Sonya Sultan, SMRR Steering Committee member

SMRR is proud of how we've helped shape our community. Here are some highlights:

Rent Control For over 36 years, SMRR has fought to protect tenants and preserve neighborhoods. In 1979, SMRR led the effort to enact Rent Control in Santa Monica. Since then, SMRR has thwarted repeated legal challenges to rent control, and has initiated stronger laws to protect tenants from harassment, and support the rights of all residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their homes and neighborhoods.

Defeating Overdevelopment at Hines SMRR has long been a leading voice for smart, responsible growth in Santa Monica. In the 1990's, we opposed huge traffic generating office projects like the Water Garden. More recently, SMRR joined with a coalition of neighborhood groups to defeat the Hines project which threatened to make our traffic problems even worse.

Now the improved economy has brought new development pressures which once again

threaten the security of Santa Monica homes and neighborhoods.

Stopping Tenant Harassment In 2014, SMRR elected a new slow-growth majority to the City Council, and they have risen to the challenge. First, the new Council amended our Tenant Harassment Ordinance to provide additional protection for tenants whose landlords want them out to make way for new market rate rents.

Protecting Neighborhoods with the Zoning Ordinance Update The Council enacted a neighborhood friendly Zoning Ordinance Update which scaled back potential projects on the boulevards, and made other significant changes to protect homes and neighborhoods.

What's Next? Much more remains to be done to protect tenants and preserve neighborhoods threatened with over development.

If you care as deeply about the direction of our City as I do, I hope you will make your voice heard at the SMRR Membership Meeting on November 1. Thank You!

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Groups who wanted to change our direction, including groups that want more and bigger development in Santa Monica, started to recruit their members to join SMRR. At our last convention these groups brought in enough new 'members' that our convention failed for the first time to endorse any City Council candidates. Fortunately, the SMRR Steering Committee is empowered to support candidates that represent core SMRR values and priorities if the convention fails to do so.

The steering committee supported longtime SMRR stalwarts and slow growth champions Kevin McKeown (now our mayor) and Jennifer Kennedy, as well as first time candidate Sue Himmelrich. Kevin and Sue were elected; Jennifer came close.

Since we first elected City Council members in

1981, SMRR has always been a strong voice for thoughtful growth, opposing oversized office projects like the Water Gardens and the Arboretum in the 1980's and last year, the Hines project that we worked with other community organizations to defeat. We also oppose high-rise ultra-luxury hotels with multiple floors of condos on top like the huge Miramar project on Ocean Avenue.

In the last election we elected a new majority on the Santa Monica City Council that is pro-rent control and pro-affordable housing, and is opposed to traffic-generating commercial office projects and to gentrifying hotel projects.

We need you to come on November 1 to make sure groups who do not uphold traditional SMRR values are not successful in electing our next Steering Committee.