

NOMA

North of Montana Association

SPRING 2019 NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER

We are a non-profit all-volunteer group of residents working to protect and enhance the quality of life in the North of Montana area of Santa Monica.

1112 Montana Ave. #516, Santa Monica, CA 90403 // SMNOMA.org

Make Music Day Summer Solstice

When:	5:00 p.m.	Captain Dan 4 Kids
June 21, 2019 5:00 p.m. to Sunset	5:30 p.m.	Del Rey Community Jazz Band
Where:	6:30 p.m.	The Rattlesnakes
Palisades Park Ocean Ave between San Vicente and Georgina	7:15 p.m.	Beatles Sing-A-Long with Ben Allen
	7:30 p.m.	The Wilde-Hartmans

MONTHLY MEETINGS

When:
The first Thursday of each month
(except July and January)
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Where:
Montana Branch Library
17th St. and Montana Ave.

NOMA IN 2019

Nancy Coleman, *Chair*

NOMA had its Annual Celebration at the Aero Theatre on February 23rd. State Senator Ben Allen was the featured speaker. He grew up in NOMA and attended local public schools. Prior to being elected to the state senate he served on the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District. He challenged those in attendance to think about state and local issues and what we could do rather than focus on the national scene. He took questions from the audience as he engaged in a lively discussion. He was followed by Mayor Gleam Davis who updated those in attendance about the district voting case. The Santa Monica High School Jazz Combo provided music while people gathered in the lobby for refreshments and discussion.



State Senator Ben Allen and his mother, Elena Allen at the NOMA celebration.

NOMA continues to follow issues in Santa Monica:

The association filed a landmark application for 435 Georgina that the Landmark Commission then designated. The Landmark at 401 Ocean is being renovated and the owners have included a history of the house in photos that

are posted around the fencing. It is worth a walk around Georgina and Ocean Ave. to see this important Santa Monica Landmark.

The R-1 Interim Zoning Ordinance continues. Four technical workshops were held and community meetings took place in late May. Following the community meetings a draft will be presented to the Planning Commission that should take place before the fall of 2019.

Photos by Evelyn Lauchenaer

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

NOMA's monthly meetings seek to inform the residents about city-wide issues as well as what might be happening in the area. We value your input. Take time to connect with us!

- Visit us at www.smnoma.org
- Email us at nomaboard@gmail.com
- What are other issues for NOMA?
- What should be the top priority for our city?

The Garden Project at 4th and Montana has been given a conditional use permit from the Planning Commission and has made a presentation before the Architectural Review Board. Neighbors continue to be concerned about the number of evening/weekend events planned (including the hours), the number of people allowed to use the facility at such events, and the parking of cars/buses for the students and for events.

NOMA works with the other Neighborhood Organizations to raise issues and meet with City officials.

If any NOMA members are interested in greater participation please let any Board Member know of your interest.



Meet our Santa Monica Police Department Neighborhood Resource Officer Peter Lashley and Suzie Lockwood, Crime Prevention Coordinator.

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT (OR DAY)

Ann Greenspun

What's that loud noise? A truck, a sonic boom, an earthquake?

24 years since the Northridge Earthquake, we are aware that the Big One, is looming. Aware, but not necessarily concerned. We are told "when, not if" but perhaps have become complacent. It is understandable, but dangerous.

I was present at the Santa Monica Farmers Market crash in 2003 and was astounded how organized and calm the police and fire personnel were in the face of this horrendous scene. Together they had recently practiced disaster scenarios and were ready. But that was a localized emergency. A regional earthquake would tax the resources of even the most trained professionals. Help could take days to arrive. We too will be called upon when the big one hits. Santa Monicans must be prepared.

NOMA can play an important role, working with other neighborhood associations and utilizing "Best Practices" disaster information.

Everyone should store emergency supplies and keep a simple and usable disaster guide in a convenient location. Knowing your neighbors, will also increase your likelihood of survival.

Comprehensive information is available from the City of Santa Monica, supervision Sheila Kuehl's office, FEMA, the Red Cross and other public and private entities. The information is out there, but how do we better ensure that it reaches everyone. Do we have a plan to assist the elderly or infirm? Can we coalesce the information into one easy to understand pamphlet?

If you are interested in participating in a project to better prepare our community for a disaster, please contact our organization at www.smnoma.org

Unfunded Pension Liability

James Williams

The City of Santa Monica pension liability is currently \$1.8 billion which has grown at an annual average rate of 13% from 2007 to 2017. This is the City's cost for employees who will retire in the future. By comparison General Fund revenue has grown at a 4.7% annual rate for the same period. The City's unfunded accrued liability is \$467 million which applies to previously retired employees. This is a current debt for which the City makes annual payments above the amount required by the State of California Public Employee Retirement System. The largest payment was \$45 million in 2017.

The City pays \$1.3 million annually to pay down the unfunded liability and has previously used \$77.5 million of annual budget savings for these payments. Because of financial policy changes by PERS including a lower discount rate used to project required payments, the City's unfunded liability has increased. With the currently projected \$467 unfunded liability the total annual payments will increase from \$52 million to \$103 million for 2018-19 to 2029-30. Presently, police officers and firefighters contribute up to 29% of the total cost of their retirement benefits and non-safety employees contribute up to 29.5% of that cost.

Because of the projected volatility of payments by the City to the unfunded liability and resident interest in the management of the City's pension obligation the City Manager appointed an advisory committee to examine the pension obligation and to establish a payment system which would reduce the long term costs due to accrued interest payments and variable investment income to PERS. The advisory committee included residents and City employees.

The committee met six times beginning in November 2018 and ending January 2019. At its final meeting January 7, the committee voted to adopt a set of principles and recommendations to the City Council that included accelerated payments of the unfunded liability from 20 years to 13 years to reduce the interest costs paid by the City. The committee adopted the following principles:

- The committee believes that the unfunded liability represents a serious threat to the City's financial stability and long term fiscal health.
- The City should adopt an aggressive repayment plan to ensure long term availability of funds to meet City obligations.
- The City should commit to a not-to-exceed 13 year repayment period for the unfunded pension liability concluding in 2032-33. By following this recommendation, the City is projected to save approximately \$100 million.
- In the event of a fiscal emergency the City can reduce the annual payment for the year of the emergency to a 15 year repayment schedule ending in 2034-35 after holding a public hearing and making appropriate findings.

The sources for the accelerated payments are being evaluated by the city staff, including the use of General Fund reserves and money derived from changes to future budget expenditures. The actions recommended to the City Council will be included as part of the fiscal year 2019-21 budget review occurring in April, 2019.



Members begin to settle at NOMA's annual meeting and community celebration.



Mayor Gleam Davis in discussion with members in the Aero Theatre Lobby.

Photos by Evelyn Lauchenauer

BICYCLISTS AT RISK ON MONTANA AVE

John Zinner, *NOMA resident*

There's a dangerous situation for cyclists in our neighborhood that needs to be fixed – and quickly – before someone is seriously hurt.

An aggressive and misinformed driver recently honked at me several times and then cut me off and nearly hit me while I was biking east on Montana Ave. on the hazardous stretch between 21st and 24th Streets. The danger here is that there is insufficient space between the landscaped islands in the middle "suicide" lane and parked cars for both a cyclist and a car (let alone a bus) to simultaneously move forward.

Per State code, bicyclists have the right of way over vehicles. Ironically after he stormed past me, I caught up with the driver at the 26th Street light. When I expressed my displeasure, he angrily insisted that he had the right of way. He's dead wrong – and I could have died.

There are short and long term strategies.

The short-term strategies are partial solutions. They include repainting the faded sharrows (shared lane markers) painted on the street, and adding color, striping, flashing signs and/or speed humps – anything to warn drivers and reinforce the fact that cyclists have the right of way.

There is only one true fix: remove the conflict between vehicles and bikes by creating enough space for both. Specifically, match the way Montana is striped east of 26th by taking out the islands and suicide lane and connecting the existing painted bike lanes that approach this zone from both directions. The bike lanes are currently part of the problem because they invite cyclists into the dangerous area.

I recognize that the city has processes that make it slow to act and that some may object to my recommendations, but our roadway design must reflect a balance of interests so that everyone is safe. Quickly.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

E-mail _____

(NOMA does not share or sell email addresses)

ANNUAL DUES

NOMA is the City-recognized organization that represents the interest of our neighborhood. If you paid your dues in January 2019 you need not pay now.

\$30 Household

\$50 Business

___ Additional Donation

___ New ___ Renewal

Dues can be paid online:
<http://www.smnoma.org/join-noma.html>

Please make check payable to "NOMA" and mail to:

NOMA
1112 Montana Ave., #516
Santa Monica, CA 90403

(NOMA is a 501(c) (4) organization; dues and contributions are not tax-deductible)