

SANTA MONICA

Safe Streets Alliance

Principles for Safe, Livable and Sustainable Streets in Santa Monica

Safe, livable, and sustainable streets are welcoming to everyone and strengthen our community.

Santa Monica has reached an important inflection point for mobility and active transportation: the Expo Line has connected our community to the rest of the region; our bike share system has reached over 83,000 active users; pedestrian-friendly plans are taking hold. Yet, serious problems persist:

- Increasing traffic violence continues to afflict our community.
- Too many households do not have access to reliable and affordable mobility options.
- Our streets exacerbate environmental instability with local urban heat and water problems.
- Car-oriented streets increase traffic, CO2 and particle pollution thereby depleting air quality, public health and well-being.

New revenue streams, including state and local funding, present a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest tens of millions of dollars to reshape our City's largest public space into a vital and safe infrastructure for connectivity, environmental resilience and community cohesion.

The following represent our "North Star" goals that should guide Santa Monica's policy-makers to invest in complete streets that are safe and welcoming for everyone in the City of Santa Monica.

WE BELIEVE THAT:

- 1. No traffic fatalities are acceptable.** The City needs to follow best practices in engineering, enforcement and education in order to fulfill its commitment to "Vision Zero": eliminating severe and fatal injury collisions by 2026. Traffic collisions must not be brushed aside as "accidents": collisions are predictable and therefore preventable. These preventable collisions can be eliminated through education, enforcement and engineering. With the number of crashes involving fatalities or severe injuries climbing at alarming rates, we reaffirm that the time is now to make a strong commitment to Vision Zero with true and meaningful investments in safer streets.
- 2. Invest resources to improve equity.** Our transportation investments must be distributed equitably but should prioritize neighborhoods, residents and workers with the highest need and those who have been historically underserved. Scarce public resources should be directed towards communities that are most disproportionately impacted by pollution, traffic collisions and a lack of transportation options.
- 3. All students and children have a right to walk, bike or scoot safely to school.** Crashes are the leading cause of death for American children.¹ Safe routes to schools facilitate and encourage active transportation, which enable academic performance, concentration and behavior. Active transportation benefits students regardless of age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity or prior achievement scores. As childhood obesity and inactivity are on the rise, active transportation options need significant support so that every student has the opportunity to safely travel on foot, bike, skateboard, etc. to school.
- 4. Access for all.** Our mobility and transportation systems should equitably serve Santa Monica residents and all those who study, work or visit in our community, regardless of gender, age, ability, income, race, or socioeconomic status. Transit service should be affordable for anyone. Everyone should feel personally safe when traveling through our community. To help ensure that commitment, our dedicated public safety officials should serve as a model of 21st Century constitutional policing.

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/safechild/child_injury_data.html

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- 5. Our transportation system should generate zero emissions.** Transportation emissions comprise 64% of Santa Monica's climate-changing carbon pollution.² Local air pollutants continue to diminish public health, particularly the health of residents living near major transportation corridors. We should invest our resources towards achieving a zero emissions bus and municipal fleet and aggressively facilitate a rapid transition to zero emission cars and trucks, including within less advantaged parts of our communities.
- 6. Streets are our largest public space.** Our streets occupy approximately 23% of our community space. Our streets do more than transport people and things. Street planning should integrate mobility and place-making to enhance social, economic and cultural opportunities, as well as our well-being needs. Our investments should uplift our main commercial corridors as the essential social and economic places. Priority on our roadways should address the modes of travel that use this scarce space most efficiently: public transit, walking, biking, etc. On-street parking is the private use of valuable public space; management of this public resource needs to reflect that reality.
- 7. Streets are essential environmental systems.** Our streets are critical components of our environmental and natural ecosystems that contribute to safeguarding water, air quality and climate resilience. We need to design our streets to capture rainwater to help replenish local supplies and divert polluted runoff from Santa Monica Bay. Paving with cool surfaces can reduce street temperatures by decreasing the heat created by asphalt. We need to protect and expand our urban forest to shade our streets, as well as clean our air and capture water.
- 8. Community co-creation is essential to enduring change.** Diverse community voices are critical for identifying core values and the vision for transformative change. Project development should proactively engage community stakeholders from inception to completion, with an emphasis on diverse, underrepresented and historically marginalized communities.
- 9. Data drives decisions.** We need to invest in robust, transparent collection and analysis of data that enable the community to give informed input for City officials to make thoughtful decisions. All public policy decisions involve difficult tradeoffs. Good data is essential for understanding what the tradeoffs are and to help provide transparency when challenging decisions are made. Good data is also the best bases of transparently and accurately measuring outcomes.
- 10. Plan our city and mobility together.** Our neighborhoods, community gathering spaces and employment and learning centers have a profound impact on our mobility options and choices. Policies on housing, open space, community facilities, commercial development, public spaces, and other land use policies should give priority to clean, affordable and sustainable mobility.

² <https://www.smgov.net/departments/pcd/agendas/Planning-Commission/2017/20171004/Electric%20Vehicle%20Action%20Plan/s201710047A%20EV%20Action%20Plan%20Draft.pdf>