



# Santa Monicaans for Sensible Priorities

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Special Winter 2005 Update

## Does new City Hall leadership represent a force for change?

Local citizens are anxious to see if the new City Council will adopt a more innovative approach to the tough issues facing the city. Hopes are running high in the community that the new leadership provided by Mayor Pam O'Connor and Mayor Pro Tem Robert Holbrook along with input from Councilmember Bobby Shriver will offer a much needed new perspective.



(Seated, l-r): Robert Holbrook, Mayor Pam O'Connor, Ken Genser. (Standing): Kevin McKeown, Bobby Shriver, Herb Katz, Richard Bloom.

The council faces an agenda that includes several tough and thorny issues:

- Vagrancy and homelessness
- Supporting local public schools
- Traffic and parking
- Protecting the bay and open spaces
- Streamlining the city bureaucracy

It will be especially interesting to see if the new City Council decides to participate in efforts to find a regional solution to the homeless problem rather than rely on the "go-it-alone" approach that has repeatedly failed.



## Public drunkenness still a huge problem for Santa Monica

According to the city's "Coordinated Plan for Homeless Services," the homeless accounted for 90% of the 478 "alcohol-related" paramedic calls last year. There were also 836 arrests of homeless individuals for public inebriation. The city's report revealed, "Of the confirmed transients, approximately 50 people were arrested five or more times."

The City Council is reportedly debating a plan to address public intoxication. Frustrated residents and local businesses point out that the City Council considered a similar plan back in 1991. The message to the Council is loud and clear: cooperate with other cities in the area and develop a program that works – *now*.

## Council adopts living wage ordinance without knowing cost

It was disappointing to see the City Council push through a new version of a living wage ordinance without requiring a fiscal analysis.

This new ordinance will cost taxpayers anywhere from \$500,000 to several million dollars. Most of the criticism for the Council's hurried action has been directed toward Councilmembers Kevin McKeown and Ken Genser who pushed the measure forward without any fiscal analysis or data on how much it would cost the city.

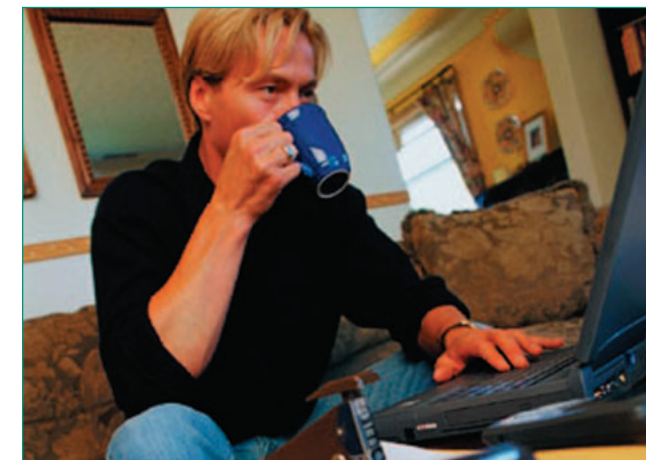
At a time when local school budgets are overstretched, skeptics questioned why the Council would pass a financially open-ended ordinance that will primarily benefit construction workers who live outside Santa Monica.

Passing a law without knowing how much it could cost is irresponsible – a classic example of one step forward and two steps backward.



## Santa Monicans for Sensible Priorities needs your input

A big thank you goes out to all those who submitted their stories to [cityhallstories.com](http://cityhallstories.com). Undoubtedly, there are many more stories out there, raising important issues. Submit your story or experience by logging on to [cityhallstories.com](http://cityhallstories.com). Become a force for real, meaningful change in Santa Monica by sending in your ideas or your story today.



With your encouragement, the new City Council can be a force for change, too.

How do you think the new City Council is doing? Let your voice be heard by participating on one of the message boards at [cityhallstories.com](http://cityhallstories.com). Open discussion is the best watchdog when it comes to City Hall.



Have you had a problem  
dealing with City Hall?

E-mail us your story or  
experience so we can let the new  
leadership on the City Council  
know what issues Santa Monica  
residents care about. Send your  
story or comments to  
[stories@cityhallstories.com](mailto:stories@cityhallstories.com).

## Santa Monicans for Sensible Priorities

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