

# 5<sup>th</sup> SQUARE

## 2023 ISSUES (PRINTER FRIENDLY)



5th Square is Philadelphia's urbanist political action committee.

We organize for policy change in the areas of transportation, housing, land use, and public space, for a more accessible, sustainable, efficient, and equitable Philadelphia for all residents.

## ROADWAY SAFETY

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Philadelphia currently gives far too much space to cars and prioritizes the convenience of drivers over the health and safety of everyone else. We therefore advocate for the following policies so that our streets and other public spaces are designed for people, not cars, and are safe and accessible to all residents, regardless of race, age, gender, disability, or any other identity.

### 1. REDUCE TRAFFIC DEATHS

Despite taking a Vision Zero pledge to reduce traffic deaths to zero by 2030, more than 120 people died on city streets in 2022 as Philadelphia is [slow to implement safety measures](#).

In Philadelphia, fatal or serious injury crashes are [three times more likely to occur](#) in low-income areas of the city.

**We seek elected officials who commit to reducing Philadelphia's annual traffic deaths in half by 2026** through supporting these measures among others:

- **Support the redesign of our most dangerous roadways even if this means [eliminating travel lanes for automobiles or parking spaces](#).**
- **[Daylight intersections](#) city-wide with flexible posts, planters, or bollards that physically prohibit parking to ensure clear sight lines.**
- **[Increase funding towards Vision Zero projects](#) in the Capital Budget, and dedicate a Vision Zero line item for maintenance in the transportation budget.**
- Remove the [ordinance requirement for creating new bike lanes](#) from travel lanes and replace that requirement with a regulation guaranteeing community involvement and input.
- Support a comprehensive traffic calming program to reduce the [backlog of neighborhood requests](#), install more speed cushions, and daylight more intersections.
- Increase enforcement of parking regulations and expand speed camera enforcement.

## 2. CREATE A PHL DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Philadelphia combines transportation operations with sanitation in the [Streets Department](#). Consequently, transportation priorities are subsumed by the larger sanitation operations in terms of budget and staffing. Meanwhile, transportation planning and policy development is separately housed within the Managing Director's Office in the [Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability \(oTIS\)](#).

Combining the operations function of the Streets Department's Transportation Division with planning and policy functions of oTIS will allow for more efficiency, transparency, and accountability; this will also align Philadelphia with peer cities such as [Baltimore](#), [Chicago](#), and [Oakland](#).

By creating a new DOT, Philadelphia will be able to achieve more ambitious goals regarding its high quality bicycle network, traffic-calmed streets, Vision Zero projects, and Complete Street projects. A new DOT must have a Commissioner with Complete Streets and active transportation experience who can be accountable to these initiatives and be charged with prioritizing active transportation and safety.

In order to create a new department, the voters must approve a ballot measure to change the City's Charter. Recently, [voters approved Philadelphia's new Department of Aviation](#) for the PHL Airport for similar reasons.

**We support a ballot measure to establish a PHL Department of Transportation, combining the transportation division of the Streets Department with the Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability (oTIS).**

## 3. BUILD A COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK OF PROTECTED BICYCLE LANES

Currently, Philadelphia has nearly 30 miles of protected bike lanes and has 10 miles funded to be built through 2024. Philadelphia's next mayor must work with city council to build 40 additional miles of protected bike lanes by 2030 for a total of 80 miles.

Cities that build protected lanes for cyclists end up with [safer roads](#) for cyclists, but also drivers and pedestrians. Protected bike lanes reduce fatal collisions by discouraging driver speeding and improves pedestrian safety by shortening the crossing distance.

A [study of parking protected bicycle lanes](#) in Philadelphia found crashes decreased by nearly 20% with cycling increasing 96% in those roadways.

Besides the safety benefits, a network of protected bike lanes will encourage more Philadelphians to travel by bike -- [reducing congestion, lowering carbon emissions, and burning calories](#). Furthermore, this will provide [low-income residents with greater economic opportunities](#) and free them, along with other residents, of the financial burdens of car-ownership.

Our city government must prioritize safe, accessible, and sustainable active transportation over the convenience of motorists in addition to equal consideration in transportation planning processes - oftentimes, non-motorists are viewed as an afterthought.

**We support the creation of a comprehensive network of protected bike lanes even if this means removing a travel lane for cars, parking spaces, or going against the traditions of councilmanic prerogative.**

#### 4. EXPAND SPEED CAMERA ENFORCEMENT

The pilot speed camera program on Roosevelt Blvd has [changed driver behavior](#), improved safety, and saved lives. Crashes on Roosevelt Boulevard dropped 36% from 2019 to 2021, compared to a decline of 6% in Philadelphia overall. A [new state study of the program](#) recommends the program be used elsewhere in the city and across Pennsylvania.

**We support making speed enforcement cameras on Roosevelt permanent.**

Speed enforcement cameras would have profound improvements to safety on Philadelphia's most heavily-traveled high-crash roadways such as Lincoln Drive, Ridge Avenue, Henry Avenue, and Bustleton Avenue.

**We support expanding speed camera enforcement to more high-crash corridors across Philadelphia.**

#### 5. ACCELERATE PROGRESS TOWARDS VISION ZERO

Philadelphia has one of the highest per capita traffic fatality rates among peer cities with pedestrians and cyclists over-represented in these statistics.

Additionally, [a third of households in Philadelphia](#) don't have access to a car, with this rate increasing for low-income households and people of color. It is these groups who are [affected the most](#) by vehicle crashes, with fatal or serious injury crashes are [three times more likely to occur](#) in low-income areas of the city.

**Our elected officials must make a serious commitment in order to achieve its pledge of achieving zero roadway deaths by 2030.**

*Measures to achieve roadway safety are detailed in the platform point #1: **Reduce Traffic Deaths***

Our mayor and city councilmembers must be willing to make the hard decisions in the face of councilmanic prerogative and loud motorist voices in favor of roadway safety and equity.

#### 6. COMBAT DANGEROUS ILLEGAL PARKING

[Illegally-parked vehicles](#) block curb cuts, crosswalks, bus stops, bike lanes, and sidewalks across the city, jeopardizing pedestrians, destroying sidewalks, and hindering travel for those with disabilities. In Philadelphia, parking within 20 feet of intersections is not only illegal, it also blocks sight lines for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

Philadelphia's parking enforcement policies are woefully inadequate in addressing this, especially in residential neighborhoods. PPA parking enforcement in residential neighborhoods is limited to blocks with residential permit parking. Outside of that, the Police Department is responsible for ticketing violators, typically responding with an armed presence only when requested through 911.

**We support the following solutions to combat this problem:**

- [Daylight intersections](#) city-wide with flexible posts, planters, or bollards that physically prohibit parking to ensure clear sight lines.
- Permit more loading zones in both residential streets and commercial corridors.
- Task unarmed [Public Safety Enforcement Officers](#) with enforcing parking regulations.
- Support the Philadelphia Parking Authority's [Bicycle Patrol Program](#).
- Pilot [parking camera enforcement systems](#) using cameras mounted on poles or city vehicles to catch parking violators.
- Enable citizens to report illegally-parked vehicles [as proposed by NYC Council](#).

## 7. PRIORITIZE SIDEWALK REPAIR

In Philadelphia, the state of a neighborhood's sidewalks depends on who can easily afford the repairs. The poorer the neighborhood, the worse the sidewalks — and the more disadvantaged the disabled residents.

Current Philadelphia policy assigns responsibility for sidewalk repair and maintenance to property owners, and gives the City the power to repair the sidewalk on its own initiative if the City deems it necessary. With lack of City funding for repair and high costs on property owners or little motivation, the city's sidewalks are [badly deteriorated and unsafe to all users](#).

**In order to ensure the city's sidewalks are safe and usable for all pedestrians, including people with disabilities and families with strollers, we recommend the following as stated in “[The Case for Sidewalk Repair](#):**

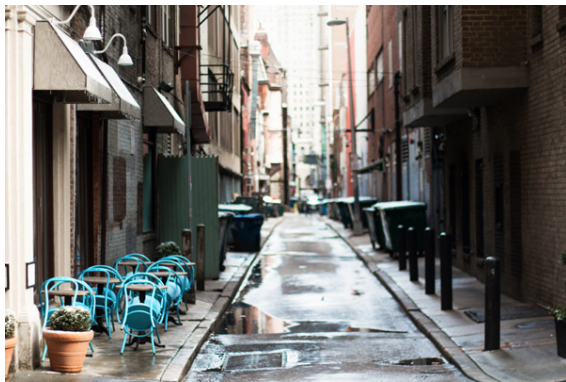
- Hire a sidewalks coordinator
- Launch a sidewalks master plan process
- Develop a strategy for funding sidewalk repair and establish sidewalk repair standards
- Launch education and outreach campaign

In addition to these actions, Philadelphia should establish a grant program of \$2 million annually to help low-income property owners repair their sidewalks. The City's sidewalks are in disrepair at much higher rates in its poorest neighborhoods.

The City's budget should also set aside funding annually to provide local match for new opportunities in grant programs created by recent federal legislation, as it does for other transportation infrastructure. This could provide an excellent opportunity to not only improve mobility, but also public health.

## PUBLIC SPACE

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We believe public space in every neighborhood in Philadelphia needs to be designed for people, not cars, and be safe and accessible to all residents. These spaces need to include ample *natural, green, and publicly-accessible* recreational opportunities as well.

### 1. EXPAND STREET SWEEPING

Since the early 2000s, Philadelphia has been the only major U.S. city without a citywide street-sweeping program. Mayor Kenney's administration has implemented a street-sweeping pilot program [focused on neighborhoods with the highest litter concentration](#).

Still, the lack of mechanical street sweeping in many of our neighborhoods outside of those zones leaves our streets and our waterways much dirtier than they have to be, and this is a major contributor to our litter problems.

**We support an expansion of the current municipal street sweeping program, even if it means non-compliant motorists may receive parking violations or have their vehicles towed.**

### 2. ENCOURAGE STREETERIES, PARKLETS, AND PEDESTRIAN PLAZAS



Philadelphia's streets, sidewalks, medians, and traffic triangles represent the city's largest public asset: over 30 square miles, or 14,000+ football fields worth of asphalt and concrete owned by Philadelphia's citizens.

Adapting street space for use by people instead of parking not only enlivens our streets, it also provides the City with economic benefits. [A study on curbside dining in Toronto](#) found their streeter program produced 49 times more revenue than what would have been earned from parking fees.

Philadelphia permits community members, non-profits, and businesses to adapt curbside street space traditionally reserved for parking into public parklets and streeteries. However, current regulations [make these spaces difficult or impossible to implement](#).

To meet Philadelphia's demand to transform its streets, give concrete back to communities, and provide a continued economic jolt to the local economy, elected officials need to make it easier for community groups and businesses to obtain permission for roadway use.

**We support easing regulations on outdoor dining streeteries and facilitating more parklets and pedestrian plazas even if this means eliminating space for parking**

### 3. INVEST IN PLACE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

Decades of disinvestment due to a history of racist policy has led to the physical deterioration of many predominantly-Black urban neighborhoods. Additionally, the tree canopy disparity between neighborhoods means our historically-disinvested neighborhoods do not see the health and environmental benefits of tree coverage.

Research has shown that [greening vacant lots](#) and [repairing abandoned homes](#) in Philadelphia is linked to a reduction in violent crime in the surrounding area, a decrease in illegal dumping, and lower rates of depression among residents. Additionally, having a proper tree canopy means lower temperatures on our hottest days and better health outcomes.

Fixing dilapidated, abandoned houses is an inexpensive intervention that Philadelphia must add to prevention efforts to address the current gun violence crisis. Philadelphia has current programs to board up or demolish abandoned homes, and [clean vacant lots](#), but much more investment is needed to work on our city's [over 10,000 abandoned homes](#).

We seek candidates who will commit to **more investment in these place-based interventions, with measurable outcomes** to track their progress. We also seek candidates who **support the [Philly Tree Plan](#) and encourage street tree adoption** by paying for sidewalk repair from tree damage and dedicating more city resources to planting and maintaining street trees.

### 4. COMBAT LITTERING AND ILLEGAL DUMPING

Philadelphia's public spaces suffer from two main types of improper waste disposal: littering and illegal dumping. For decades, the City's reduction and removal efforts have been woefully inadequate.

There are abundant solutions to fixing this trash issue which we support:

- Step up [enforcement of illegal dumping](#) by installing and monitoring more cameras
- Recognize volunteers as a complement to citywide program, [not a substitute](#)
- Deploy [public and frequently-placed trash receptacles](#) city-wide using low-cost wire baskets
- Expand [street sweeping](#) to more neighborhoods
- Explore [containerized trash bins](#) and [underground waste containers](#)

### 5. INCREASE HOURS AT LIBRARIES, POOLS, AND RECREATION CENTERS

The city has struggled to staff city services, which has resulted in reduced hours at libraries, pools, and rec centers. The current budget doesn't allow parks and libraries to be consistent safe havens in communities most affected by gun violence.

The Free Library of Philadelphia has gone from a staff of [1,100 employees 10 years ago to 600 today](#).

Philadelphia's Parks and Recreation budget, which was [slashed in 2020](#), is still [not back at pre-pandemic levels](#).

**We seek candidates who will fight to increase funding for our city's libraries, parks and rec centers.**

We join with the Philadelphia Parks Alliance in their [2023 asks for](#):

- Safe and clean Parks & Recreation sites in every neighborhood
- More recreation programming
- Grow the Urban Forest

## TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

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We advocate for transit improvements that benefit all Philadelphians and better connect the Greater Philadelphia region. Our mission is to amplify the voices of SEPTA riders and residents within Greater Philadelphia in support of a safe, accessible, and sustainable transit network.

### 1. ENROLL ALL CITY EMPLOYEES INTO SEPTA KEY ADVANTAGE

City government needs to enroll its employees into the [SEPTA Key Advantage program](#). Providing city workers with an employer-paid transit pass would be an incentive to join the municipal workforce, boost ridership, and help deliver reliable funding for SEPTA to improve service.

### 2. IMPLEMENT A LOW-INCOME REDUCED FARE PROGRAM

The City of Philadelphia needs to implement a fare discount program for low-income riders like those in Los Angeles, Seattle, Boston, and New York. Such a program would provide discounted or free fares for low-income households, directly aiding those [who need help the most](#), boosting ridership and increasing SEPTA's operating funds.

### 3. IMPLEMENT CONGESTION PRICING

[Congestion pricing](#) is a fee charged to vehicles traveling into or within a predetermined area of a city at certain hours of certain days. The goal is to discourage people from driving into a city's busiest areas so they turn to public transit instead. Funds from this program must be used to improve public transportation and provide a viable alternative to driving.

Congestion pricing will have [benefits for communities](#) across the city and region, by

- reducing traffic congestion and improve air quality.
- raising ridership and revenue for public transit.
- making the transportation system more equitable.
- boosting economic output by cutting down on wasted hours in traffic.

Philadelphia roads recently ranked as the [4th most congested in the nation](#), and elected officials need to study and enact congestion pricing.

**We support congestion pricing - a toll for vehicles entering Center City and University City during peak travel times - with funding used for improving public transportation.**

## 4. INCREASE PERMIT PARKING FEES TO FUND TRANSIT

Letting people [use the public streets to park their private vehicles](#) has a cost far higher than the \$35 a year we charge for a residential parking permit. Between the street maintenance costs, the cost of administering the residential permit program, and the opportunity cost of dedicating so much public land to idle vehicles, city taxpayers are on the hook for a truly massive hidden subsidy to both urban and suburban drivers.

Meanwhile, the city also contributes the lowest amount per-capita of any of our peer cities to public transit operating costs, and there's a real need to both increase our local contribution to SEPTA to reverse its ongoing ridership losses and increase the share of street space dedicated to transit vehicles to get SEPTA buses and trolleys out of ever-increasing traffic congestion. That new local revenue should come from city car owners, and the dedicated street space for transit vehicles should be redistributed away from parked cars.

**We support increasing the cost of monthly residential parking permits and using the funds for improving public transportation.**

## 5. EXPAND AND ENFORCE BUS-ONLY LANES

Bus lanes dedicate a portion of the roadway for buses. When implemented well, they enable buses to travel freely through congested areas. Bus lanes are being increasingly employed throughout the United States.

Philadelphia currently only has bus lanes on 3 streets in Center City. The [Philadelphia Transit Plan](#) has identified several additional corridors suitable for bus-only lanes throughout the city, which would improve bus speeds and reliability.

Existing bus lanes are frequently used by motorists as travel lanes or for parking, delaying thousands of bus riders daily. [Bus lane camera enforcement](#) would improve bus service by using cameras to ticket non-compliant vehicles.

**We support expanding bus-only lanes throughout Philadelphia and camera technology to enforce bus-only lanes.**

## 6. INCREASE LOCAL TRANSIT FUNDING

Philadelphia currently only funds around 11 percent of SEPTA's budget, with the state and federal governments funding the majority of the operating and capital budgets. This is one of the lowest local contributions in the country, per-capita.

In April 2019, the [Southeast Partnership for Mobility issued a report](#) calling on elected officials to address this funding crisis, with [measures to raise revenue](#) through:

- ride-hailing service fees
- congestion pricing charge
- fees for tire purchase, vehicle lease and vehicle rental

Unlike cities such as Boston or Denver, which regularly expand transit access, Philadelphia and the surrounding counties have [never made a steady, substantial investment](#) in local public transit, instead relying on Harrisburg to shoulder the load.

Philadelphia can look to Denver, which adopted a [transit-dedicated 0.4% sales tax](#), or Seattle, which has created a [transit benefit district](#). While introducing new taxes is never a pleasant experience for politicians, transit referendums have [seen success in communities across the country](#) as taxpayers recognize them as a worthwhile investment.

**We support increasing local funding for transit.**

## 7. SUPPORT A SUBWAY FOR ROOSEVELT BLVD

Roosevelt Boulevard is a wide, often congested, urban highway that has earned the nickname “the corridor of death due to the exorbitant rate of pedestrian and motorist fatalities. The design of Roosevelt Blvd and the land use surrounding it prioritizes moving a high-volume of vehicles over safety and livability.

A [Boulevard Subway](#) would improve the quality of life of hundreds of thousands of Philadelphians by:

- Providing affordable and direct connections to jobs in Center City and Northeast Philly
- Improving equity by closing the gap in transit access across race and income

- Relieving traffic congestion and shorten commute times
- Enhancing pedestrian safety through a safer roadway design with buried lanes of traffic
- Fighting climate change and improving local air quality
- Growing the economic impact of the region through transit-oriented commercial and residential development
- Creating local construction jobs

**We support a subway/metro line for Roosevelt Boulevard** and urge our elected leaders to find a path forward for this project.

## 8. OFFER AN E-BIKE REBATE PROGRAM

Similar to an electric vehicle incentive, the City of Denver launched a wildly-popular [e-bike rebate program](#) in an effort to reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve sustainability. The rebate program offered \$1,200 for income-qualified residents and \$400 for everyone else for e-bike purchases.

A majority of car trips are for three miles or less, and with an ever-increasing abundance of E-bike options - ranging from commuter to cargo bikes - there is an excellent opportunity to take cars off the street for local trips. Doing so would benefit public health, improve air quality, save residents money, and improve pedestrian and motorist safety. This would be especially true when such an incentive program is paired with a robust and interconnected protected bike lane network.

**We support an e-bike rebate program for Philadelphia.**

## 9. EXPAND MICRO-MOBILITY ACCESS

Micro-mobility allows a user to fill small gaps in their commute by using a bike, scooter, or another micro modal device. Expanding access to these modes helps create an efficient, sustainable, and accessible transportation system. Through micro-mobility, we have an opportunity to create better connections between our standard metro system, bicycle infrastructure, and beyond.

**We support micro-mobility initiatives such as scooter share programs for Philadelphia.**

## 10. COMBAT CONGESTION

Philadelphia roads recently ranked as the [4th most congested in the nation](#). Philadelphia needs to consider sustainable and equitable solutions today to combat our congestion and mobility problem.

We oppose adding vehicle travel lanes on major freeways and streets due these measures [inducing more demand](#) for the use of motor vehicles. **We support solutions to increase walking, biking, and riding public transit:**

- Design safer streets to encourage walking and cycling
- Make cycling safe and easy by building a network of protected bike lanes
- Encourage walking by ensuring well-maintained sidewalks and curb cuts
- Implement congestion pricing to discourage driving and fund transit
- Incentivize transit ridership through improved funding and discounted pass programs
- Build bus-only lanes and expand access to rail lines
- Implement [dynamic-priced parking](#), basing meter rates on demand
- Enforce parking and loading regulations to discourage blocked sidewalks and travel lanes
- Expand micro-mobility access through bike and scooter share programs
- Support an e-bike rebate program
- Permit more housing near frequent transit

## 11. REBUILD TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

Philadelphia transit ridership took a large hit during the pandemic and is slowly recovering, but has not reached pre-pandemic levels. We support measures to accelerate ridership growth in our transit system.

- Improve frequency and reliability - Bus riders, when surveyed, cited the largest barriers to transit access as [frequency and reliability](#).
  - Redesign the bus network and build bus-only lanes to speed transit service
- Fare discounts for riders through a low-income reduced fare program



- Expand [SEPTA Key Advantage](#), where employers purchase transit passes for their employees at a bulk discount
- Advocate for progressive fare policies:
  - [Eliminate all transfer fees](#)
  - Integrate the [regional rail system](#) with bus and subway service within Philadelphia
  - Implement [fare capping](#)
- Make Transit Clean and Safe
  - Enhanced cleaning at stations and vehicles
  - Expand the [SCOPE program](#) system-wide, provide social services to people using SEPTA stations as shelter
- Improve accessibility, bus stop amenities, and [access to stations](#)
- Permit more housing near frequent transit

## HOUSING & LAND USE

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Our goal is to promote the most efficient use of land in our city, fostering accessible, walkable communities in which all Philadelphians can reside, regardless of economic status. We believe in building more housing, reducing costs, increasing the vitality of our commercial corridors, and facilitating transit-oriented development.

### 1. ELIMINATE MINIMUM PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Minimum parking requirements for residential, office, and mixed-use developments are a regressive hidden tax on non-drivers that [makes housing more expensive](#), increases driving and congestion, and only boosts the number of cars in the neighborhood.

About a third of Philadelphians either don't have the means to own a vehicle or simply don't want to own one. If residents want to rent or buy just a house—without an unwanted parking space bundled in—they should have the freedom to do that.

**We support eliminating minimum parking requirements for all of Philadelphia's zoning categories.**

### 2. OPPOSE DOWNZONING OVERLAYS

Over the past few years, City Council has passed bills downzoning, or reducing the zoning density of, several neighborhoods across the city, many of which have [excellent access to public transportation](#).

While these bills seek to limit development and retain a neighborhood's character, they reduce the supply of housing, and in the face of increased demand, translates to [higher property values and higher rents](#).

Downzoning has traditionally been [a tool of segregation](#) used to prevent affordable housing in wealthy, white neighborhoods. This tradition continues today with the recent [downzoning of Society Hill](#).

By reducing zoning density, [neighborhoods lose housing affordability](#), walkability, transit riders, and customers for our commercial corridors. We also limit our ability to lower greenhouse gas emissions through less efficient single-family housing, longer regional commute times, and more car-dependent neighborhoods.

**We oppose downzoning overlays.**

### 3. LEGALIZE SINGLE-ROOM OCCUPANCY DWELLINGS

We have an affordable housing crisis, but [a prohibition](#) against establishing the most inexpensive form of housing in the areas where they are needed most.

Single room occupancies, or SROs, are single rooms rented as part of a multi-tenant building with shared bathroom and kitchen facilities, like many university dormitories. SROs require full Zoning Board approval in much of the city, restricting a housing typology accessible to those with very limited income or no rental history.

We support permitting SROs for Philadelphia because it would:

- [Create more affordable housing](#) options for our most vulnerable populations
- [Combat street homelessness](#) – which can be directly attributed to the loss of this SRO stock that began in the '60s
- Bring under regulation [SROs that already exist in an informal economy](#) and improve conditions for their existing tenants

**We support bringing legal SROs back, permitting them in all multifamily and commercial zoning districts across Philadelphia.**

### 4. SUPPORT CITYWIDE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) OVERLAYS

Our local and state governments need to address our region's rising housing costs, lengthening commute, and job sprawl through legislation that allows for more home construction near high-quality transit.

**We support designating Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) overlays city-wide, allowing increased commercial and residential zoning density near all rail transit stations in Philadelphia.**

This would incentivize well designed, mixed-use, higher density development adjacent to frequent transit. Such development would:

- increase sustainable transit ridership
- revitalize communities
- enhance quality of life
- strengthen economic competitiveness
- minimize the congestion and environmental impacts of housing

Zoning for denser development would allow our region to become greener, more accessible, and more affordable — less centered around car culture, and better able to deliver housing in walkable places.

### 5. ENCOURAGE GROWTH TO 2 MILLION PHILADELPHIANS

Philadelphia currently has 400,000 less residents than its peak population of over 2 million. Regaining this population would have [tremendous benefits](#), it would:

- Grow in-city jobs
- Strengthen neighborhood commercial corridors
- Increase tax revenue and expand city services
- Increase Philadelphia's political power in Harrisburg and Washington, D.C.
- Lower per-capita greenhouse gas emissions

**We seek candidates who will work to encourage the growth of Philadelphia's population back to 2 million residents**

### 6. ALLOW MORE HOUSING IN HIGH-AMENITY NEIGHBORHOODS

**We support changes to our zoning code to allow for denser housing, and more residents, in high-income and high-amenity neighborhoods, rich in jobs, transportation, and infrastructure.**

**More housing in high opportunity areas is key to a healthy environment**

Single-family detached zoning consumes too much of our land. This results in a "drive 'til you qualify" effect, forcing Americans to commute long distances from places where homes are affordable, to areas with jobs and other amenities.

This leads to significant increases in traffic congestion and pollution. To mitigate this, policymakers must reform zoning codes and land use policies to enable more homes to be built in high-amenity places.

### **More housing is essential to creating race and class equity**

Unjust policies continue to drive working families, people with low incomes, and people of color out of high opportunity neighborhoods. To create access to opportunity and a housing system that serves everyone, policymakers must prioritize racial and economic equity outcomes and actively reverse the nation's history of exclusionary policies.

### **More housing is essential to a robust and durable economy**

From cities to suburbs to rural America, the cost of housing and demand for it has drastically outpaced salaries and supply. Today, far too many Americans cannot afford to live well where they work, play and gather. Economic mobility is most profound where there is sufficient housing in areas rich in jobs, transportation and infrastructure.

## **7. ADDRESS THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SHORTAGE**

The affordability crisis hits renters harder than owners. Philadelphia Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) estimates the city needs about [70,000 affordable rental units](#) to meet demand.

Public investment is needed to ensure that all Philadelphians enjoy the benefits of abundant housing and stable communities. A well-regulated private housing market can serve a large portion of our population, and tenant protections paired with rental housing preservation can assist even more. But there will always be people who are left behind by these efforts—sometimes temporarily, sometimes over their lifetime.

Acting through the collective will of our local, state, and federal governments, we have a responsibility to provide support to those who need it and to live up to our professed belief that housing is a human right.

- Recognize and remove zoning barriers to the creation of affordable housing.
  - Allow [Single Room Occupancies](#) and [Accessory Dwelling Units](#).
  - Allow [expedited zoning and permit review](#) for developments that provide at least 50% affordable housing units.
- Expand funding for the [Housing Trust Fund](#).
  - Keeping people in their current homes is the most affordable way to provide housing.
  - Increase funds to the [Basic Systems Repair Program](#) and expand the program to fix smaller issues before they become an emergency, such as allowing any roof leak to be eligible.
- Increase knowledge of [Housing Choice Vouchers](#) (Section 8) and enforce [Source of Income discrimination laws](#).
- Increase uptake of property tax relief programs like [Pennsylvania Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program](#), [LOOP](#), [Homestead Exemption](#), [senior property tax freeze](#).
- Make the [shallow rent subsidy pilot program](#) permanent and expand it.
- Prioritize abundant low- and moderate-income [housing use of public parcels](#) and remove council approval requirements for disposition of any public parcel that will build affordable housing.

## **8. MAINTAIN AFFORDABILITY IN DEVELOPING NEIGHBORHOODS**

[Record low housing supply](#) and [financialization](#) has pushed up home prices, closing off the possibility of home ownership to many first-time homebuyers. The median home value in the Philadelphia metropolitan area has reached [\\$320,000](#), [increasing \\$100,000](#) from 5 years ago.

Stability of tenure in one's home and neighborhood is about recognizing the dignity of housing—that it's more than an investment vehicle and a means of creating personal wealth, as it is often treated today.

- Support [abundant and dense housing](#) in order to reduce competition for existing moderately-priced housing.
- Make the City's [eviction diversion mediation program](#) permanent.
- Increase funding for legal services, expanding [Right to Counsel](#) to additional at-risk zip codes.
- Increase access to free and low-cost estate planning to reduce "[tangled title](#)" issues that threaten the ownership rights of individuals who inherited a property from a family member who left no will.
- Increase [place-based investments](#) and basic services in developing and higher poverty areas to improve quality of life through Philadelphia and decrease strain on quickly-gentrifying neighborhoods.

- Utilize [Housing Trust Funds](#) and [Whole Home Repair](#) funding for landlords to repair rental homes in exchange for maintaining affordability through capped annual rent increases for 5 years.
- Allow homeowners to create [accessory dwelling units](#) within their homes by right to encourage multigenerational living. Provide forgiveness and an easy process to bring current illegal ADUs into compliance.

## 9. PROMOTE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FROM PANDEMIC

Keeping residents and businesses from leaving city limits for surrounding counties requires a combination of multiple strategies aimed at cultivating the vibrant urban life that makes Philadelphia so special to begin with.

For too long, the City has strived to emulate the suburbs and focused efforts on accommodating visitors instead of supporting everyday quality of life. These are strong strategies to support retaining residents and enterprises, maintaining and expanding the tax base in the long term.

- Improve public space and support the pedestrian experience, ranging from allowing more streeteries to expanding tree cover and tackling our trash problem.
  - Expand universal programs that are attractive to mobile workers, such as Free Library and rec center/pool hours, and expand free pre-K to younger ages.
  - Support small business creation and success to foster unique and attractive neighborhood amenities throughout the city.
-