

INTRODUCTION

What is your name as it will appear on the ballot?

DONAVAN WEST

What office are you seeking?

CITY COUNCIL AT LARGE

Campaign Committee Name & Address:

DONAVAN FOR PHILLY

Campaign Website Address:

www.DonavanForPhilly.com

Candidate Introduction:

With a BA in Administration of Justice and Minority Studies from Penn State University and an MA in Organizational Leadership from Eastern University, Donovan S. West has developed, created, and envisioned systematic blueprints to manage community partnerships and workforce development initiatives. He has held various leadership positions, including COO of PFP, Inc, President and CEO of the African American Chamber of Commerce of Philadelphia, Delaware and New Jersey, and has been recognized for his expertise and intimate knowledge of the issues faced in these communities. Donovan interned on Capitol Hill for Senator Carol Moseley Braun as a college senior, and he has leveraged his vast network to create opportunities for other community organizers and entrepreneurs to showcase their passions and perspectives. He is the CEO of Culturally Congruent Solutions, providing workplace solutions to entrepreneurs, executives, and management staff. Donovan is also a media personality and co-hosted a radio show on WURD, a Black-owned radio station before declaring his candidacy. He is a motivational speaker, mentor to Black youth, and provides relationship coaching to individuals of all ages and backgrounds, guiding them through emotional trauma using introspection and reflection, hopefully leading to a healthier, holistic view of themselves and their relationships. Donovan is a member of the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on African American Males, most recently participating in the 2nd Annual Black Generational Wealth series and various community listening events. Donovan S West is a highly accomplished, well respected community development catalyst, activist, entrepreneur, critical thinker, and strategic planner. He has built a reputation as a vocal community advocate, unapologetically committed to promoting positive outcomes and driving diversity, belonging, equity, and inclusion in all arenas.

ROADWAY SAFETY

For 5th Square's positions on these issues see: https://www.5thsq.org/2023_issues

Short Response:

1. a) Will you commit to reducing Philadelphia's annual traffic deaths in half by 2026?

Yes No Other: _____

- b) Do you support redesigning Philadelphia's most dangerous roadways if this means eliminating travel lanes for automobiles and parking spaces?

Yes No Other: _____

- c) Daylighting is a pedestrian safety measure achieved by replacing curb parking spaces near an intersection with flexible posts, planters, or bollards – increasing visibility for pedestrians and drivers. Do you support daylighting more intersections in Philadelphia if this means removing parking spaces?

Yes No Other: _____

2. Will you 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)?

Yes No Other: _____

3. After two terms in office, the Kenney Administration will have built 30 miles of protected bicycle lanes. Will you support an expansion of Philadelphia's network of protected bicycle lanes by an additional 30 miles by 2028?

Yes No Other: _____

4. a) The pilot speed camera program on Roosevelt Blvd has changed driver behavior, improved safety, and saved lives. Do you support making the speed cameras on Roosevelt Blvd permanent?

Yes No Other: _____

- b) Do you support expanding speed camera enforcement to more high-crash corridors across Philadelphia?

Yes No Other: _____

Use this space if you'd like to elaborate on any of the above short response questions:

Long Response:

5. Despite the city taking a Vision Zero pledge to reduce traffic deaths to zero by 2030, more than 120 people died on city streets in 2022. What will you do to significantly lower the rates of traffic deaths in Philadelphia?

Reducing traffic deaths to zero is an ambitious but important goal that requires maximum buy-in from all branches of city government approach and tight coordination with the PennDot. Here are some thoughts and ideas that could help lower the rates of traffic deaths in Philadelphia:

- Enhance transportation infrastructure:
 - Safer pedestrian crossings
 - Protected bike lanes
 - Improved signage
- Increase public education and awareness:
 - Promote safe driving practices
 - Reduce speed limits in high-risk areas
 - Avoid distracted driving
 - Use seatbelts
 - Use public service announcements, community outreach, and partnerships with local school
- Enforce existing traffic laws:
 - Increase police presence on high-risk roads
 - Install speed cameras
 - Impose harsher penalties for traffic violations
- Encourage alternative modes of transportation:
 - Walk, cycle, and public transportation
 - Incentivize with expanded bike-sharing programs, improved public transportation services, and tax incentives for employees who bike or walk to work
- Invest in new technology:
 - Smart traffic lights
 - Autonomous vehicles
 - Intelligent transportation systems

6. Many curb cuts, crosswalks, bus stops, and sidewalks across Philadelphia are routinely blocked by illegally-parked vehicles. How will you address this specific problem?

- Increase enforcement of existing parking laws and regulations
- Educate the public about the importance of not parking in areas designated for pedestrian use
- Increase availability of public transportation to reduce the number of vehicles on the road
- Implement technological solutions such as automated parking enforcement systems to detect and issue fines for illegally-parked vehicles.

7. What is your plan to ensure the city's sidewalks are safe and usable for all pedestrians, including people with disabilities and families with strollers?

Here is the plan and approach I will recommend and advocate for:

- Assess all city sidewalks to identify areas needing repair or improvement for accessibility.
- Prioritize sidewalk repairs and improvements based on safety risks and pedestrian traffic.
- Allocate resources to upgrade sidewalks with wider paths, curb cuts, and ramps where necessary.
- Work with disability organizations and advocacy groups for inclusive sidewalk design.
- Implement a public education campaign to promote safe and clear sidewalks.
- Monitor sidewalk conditions and make adjustments as needed to maintain accessibility.

PUBLIC SPACE

For 5th Square's positions on these issues see: https://www.5thsq.org/2023_issues

Short Response:

1. Will you 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?

Yes No Other: _____

2. Do you support easing regulations on outdoor dining streeteries and facilitating more parklets and pedestrian plazas even if this means eliminating space for parking?

Yes No Other: _____

Use this space if you'd like to elaborate on any of the above short response questions:

Long Response:

3. Place-based interventions like greening vacant lots, repairing abandoned homes, and planting street trees in Philadelphia is linked to a reduction in violent crime, a decrease in illegal dumping, and lower rates of depression among residents. How will your office work to accomplish these place-based interventions in historically-disinvested neighborhoods?

- Allocate funds for interventions
 - Identify priority neighborhoods
 - Work with community groups and non-profits
 - Engage with local businesses
 - Develop a communication plan
 - Monitor and evaluate the impact

4. 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. What would you do to solve this issue?

If elected, I plan to do the following:

- Increase resources for waste reduction and removal
 - Strengthen enforcement of littering and illegal dumping laws
 - Increase public education and outreach
 - Encourage community participation, supports and incentives
 - Increase lighting & coverage around problem areas
 - Implement new technologies and innovations

5. The city has struggled to staff and adequately fund city services, which has resulted in reduced hours at libraries, pools, and recreation centers. How would you ensure consistent and convenient hours for these facilities?

1. I will vigorously support and advocate for increased funding. This will include proposing a budget that prioritizes funding for these services as well as working with other elected officials and the private sector to secure additional resources.
2. Initiate a workforce analysis to identify areas where additional staff may be needed to ensure consistent and convenient hours.
3. Explore partnerships and collaborations with other organizations to help staff and fund city services including partnering with local schools or universities to provide volunteer support and working with local businesses to sponsor events and activities.
4. Conduct community engagement and outreach gathering input from residents about their needs and preferences for city services.
5. Establish accountability mechanisms: Work with city officials to establish accountability mechanisms to ensure that city services are being delivered consistently and at convenient hours

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

For 5th Square's positions on these issues see: https://www.5thsq.org/2023_issues

Short Response:

1. Do you support the City of Philadelphia enrolling all municipal employees into the SEPTA Key Advantage program?
 Yes No Other: _____
2. Do you support the City establishing a fare discount program for low-income riders?
 Yes No Other: _____
3. Do you support congestion pricing - a toll for vehicles entering Center City and University City during peak travel times - with funding used for improving public transportation?
 Yes No Other: _____
4. Do you support increasing the cost of monthly residential parking permits and using the funds for improving public transportation?
 Yes No Other: _____
5. a) Do you support expanding bus-only lanes throughout Philadelphia, even if this means removing a lane of travel for personal vehicles or parking?
 Yes No Other: _____
b) Do you support using camera technology to enforce bus-only lanes and bus stops by ticketing violators?
 Yes No Other: _____

6. Will you advocate for increasing local transit funding to SEPTA?

Yes No Other: _____

7. Do you support a subway/metro line for Roosevelt Blvd?

Yes No Other: _____

8. The City of Denver launched a popular e-bike rebate program in an effort to reduce vehicle miles traveled. The rebate program offered \$1,200 for income-qualified residents and \$400 for everyone else for e-bike purchases. Do you support a similar program here in Philadelphia?

Yes No Other: _____

9. Do you support micro-mobility initiatives such as scooter share programs for Philadelphia?

Yes No Other: _____

Use this space if you'd like to elaborate on any of the above short response questions:

Long Response:

10. What are your ideas for combating Philadelphia's problem with traffic congestion?

- Promote telecommuting: Encourage employers to offer telecommuting options for employees to reduce the number of cars on the road.
 - Implement smart traffic management: Invest in intelligent traffic signals, smart parking systems, and real-time traffic updates to help reduce congestion.
 - Support bike lanes and pedestrian walkways: Create more bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly walkways to encourage alternative modes of transportation.
 - Improve roadways: Address the city's aging infrastructure by improving and expanding major roadways to alleviate congestion in high-traffic areas.

Politically to the left list.

 - Prioritize public transportation: Make public transportation more accessible and convenient by expanding bus and train lines, and lowering fares.
 - Encourage carpooling: Develop, promote and scale carpooling programs for commuters and incentivize employers to participate.
 - Promote alternative transportation: Invest in and promote alternative modes of transportation such as bicycles and electric scooters.
 - Implement congestion pricing: Consider implementing a congestion pricing scheme, which would charge drivers a fee for entering certain congested areas during peak hours and use the revenue to fund public transportation.
 - Promote walkable neighborhoods: Encourage walkable neighborhoods by improving sidewalks, crosswalks, and street lighting.
 - Create car-free zones: Establish car-free zones in high-density areas and encourage alternative modes of transportation such as biking, walking, and public transit.
 - Support workforce housing near public transportation: Encourage the development of workforce housing near public transportation hubs to reduce the need for car ownership.

- Implement traffic calming measures: Implement traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, roundabouts, and lower speed limits to reduce congestion and improve pedestrian safety.
- **Increase/Improve/Promote- web based platform to address other key needs to further reduce (Telehealth, Food/Produce/ Medication)**

11. What are your solutions to ensure SEPTA rebuilds its ridership post-pandemic?

My approach to solutions often leads me to look at promising solutions from other cities. After reviewing strategies and solutions implemented elsewhere, I would advocate looking to replicate - and adapt for Philadelphia- the following initiatives these cities have taken:

- New York City has implemented increased cleaning and sanitization of transit vehicles and facilities, as well as offering free masks and hand sanitizer to riders. They have also promoted contactless payment and real-time information for riders, and are offering reduced fares to encourage ridership.
- In Paris, the public transit authority has partnered with bike-sharing companies to integrate bike-sharing with traditional transit services, providing an additional mode of transportation for riders.
- In Tokyo, the public transit authority has launched a campaign to promote the benefits of public transit, and has emphasized the safety measures taken to ensure the safety of riders. They have also implemented contactless payment and real-time information services, as well as ensuring that public transit is accessible to all riders.
- San Francisco has implemented a reduced fare program for low-income riders, as well as a contactless payment system and real-time information services. They have also partnered with local businesses to offer incentives to riders.

These are just a few examples of the initiatives that cities have implemented to rebuild urban transit ridership post-pandemic that I would recommend Philadelphia considers, if I am elected.

Personal Travel Habits:

1. How often do you ride a bicycle for transportation in the city?
 Never Yearly Monthly Weekly Daily
2. How often do you ride public transportation in the city?
 Never Yearly Monthly Weekly Daily
3. How often do you travel by car in the city?
 Never Yearly Monthly Weekly Daily

4. Will you commit to taking public transportation at least one week of each year while in office?

Yes No Other: _____

5. How do you typically commute to work? Describe your experience traveling in Philadelphia and what you would do to improve it.

As an entrepreneur, I primarily work from home. My clients are in various parts of the Tri-State area and beyond which requires that I use a vehicle. When traveling in the city I will use public transportation and occasionally a ride share service.

HOUSING & LAND USE

For 5th Square's positions on these issues see: https://www.5thsq.org/2023_issues

Short Response:

1. Do you support eliminating minimum parking requirements for all of Philadelphia's zoning categories?

Yes No Other: _____

2. Will you veto or vote against downzoning overlays?

Yes No Other: _____

3. Do you support legalizing Single-Room Occupancy dwellings (SROs) in all multifamily and commercial zoning districts across Philadelphia?

Yes No Other: _____

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

Yes No Other: _____

5. Should our city government encourage the growth of Philadelphia's population back to 2 million residents?

Yes No Other: _____

6. Should our zoning allow for denser housing in high-income, high-amenity neighborhoods to accommodate more residents?

Yes No Other: _____

Use this space if you'd like to elaborate on any of the above short response questions:

Long Response:

7. 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. How will you address this affordable housing shortage?

As a candidate for city council, addressing the Workforce housing shortage in Philadelphia is one of my top priorities. I fully recognize the devastating impact that the affordability crisis has on renters, and I believe that it is our responsibility to take action to ensure that every resident has access to safe and affordable housing.

To address the workforce housing shortage, I propose an innovative solution that involves the reallocation of existing residential properties. Specifically, I believe that we can work with developers and property owners to convert vacant or underutilized properties into workforce housing units.

One way to achieve this is through the creation of a "vacant property tax" or a "blight tax" that would penalize property owners who allow their properties to sit vacant or deteriorate. The funds generated from this tax could be used to finance the conversion of these properties into workforce housing units.

Additionally, I believe that the city could work with developers to incentivize the construction of workforce housing units. This could be achieved through tax breaks, expedited permit processes, and other incentives that would make it more financially feasible for developers to build workforce housing.

Another potential solution is to establish a community land trust that would acquire and hold land for the purpose of developing workforce housing. This would enable the city to maintain control over the land and ensure that it is used for the public good, rather than being sold to the highest bidder.

Finally, I believe that we can explore innovative financing solutions, such as social impact bonds, to fund the development of affordable housing. Social impact bonds are a form of public-private partnership that leverages private investment to fund social initiatives, such as workforce housing.

In conclusion, I believe that the workforce housing crisis in Philadelphia requires bold and innovative solutions. By reallocating existing residential properties, incentivizing the construction of workforce housing, establishing community land trusts, and exploring innovative financing solutions, we can take meaningful steps to ensure that every resident has access to safe and affordable housing.

8. Record low housing supply 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. How can we keep neighborhoods affordable and sustainable as Philadelphia sees more growth and development?

As a candidate for city council, it's important to address the issue of keeping neighborhoods sustainable while dealing with the growth and development of the city. Here are some potential ways to address this challenge:

1. **Promote Workforce Housing:** Encourage the construction of workforce housing units for low-income families and individuals. This could be done by offering incentives to developers, such as tax breaks or fast-track permitting, for building workforce housing.
2. **Preserve Existing Housing:** Incentivize the rehabilitation of existing buildings and housing units to keep them habitable and affordable. This could be done by offering low-interest loans or grants to property owners who want to make improvements to their properties.
3. **Encourage Mixed-Use Development:** Promote the development of mixed-use buildings that can offer both residential and commercial spaces. This would allow for increased density in neighborhoods while also providing more job opportunities and convenience for residents.
4. **Ensure Sustainable Development:** Encourage developers to follow sustainable building practices to reduce the environmental impact of new construction. This could be done by offering incentives for developers who use green building materials, energy-efficient systems, and renewable energy sources.
5. **Community Engagement:** Engage with community members and encourage their involvement in the planning and development process. This would ensure that their needs and concerns are taken into account in the decision-making process.

It's essential to balance the needs of developers and homeowners while ensuring that the city's growth is sustainable and inclusive. As a city council candidate, it's essential to work with community members and stakeholders to develop and implement policies that are fair, sustainable, and responsive to the changing needs of the city.

9. Philadelphia faces some serious headwinds from more residents and businesses considering leaving the city for the suburbs, more than at any point in the last two decades. What do you think must happen to ensure the region's economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic comes out in urban-Philadelphia's favor?

Ways to ensure economic recovery and revitalization after the COVID-19 pandemic in Philadelphia:

- **Promote Small Businesses:** Provide financial support and incentives for small businesses.
- **Support Job Creation:** Encourage the creation of new jobs in Philadelphia.
- **Invest in Infrastructure:** Invest in the city's infrastructure.
- **Focus on Sustainability:** Emphasize sustainability and green energy.
- **Encourage Remote Work:** Encourage businesses to allow remote work.
- **Develop Workforce Development Programs:** Develop programs for workforce development.
- **Address Public Safety Concerns:** Address public safety concerns.
- **Encourage Real Estate Development:** Encourage real estate development in the city.
- **Invest in Education:** Invest in education to provide students with skills.

- Foster Community Engagement: Foster community engagement. A comprehensive economic recovery plan that promotes sustainability, invests in infrastructure, and supports small businesses and job creation can make Philadelphia a stronger, more resilient city after the pandemic.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Tell us more about what you bring to the table as an ally for urbanist politics in City Hall. Why should 5th Square endorse you over other candidates running for your position? What makes you the right person to advance the urbanist movement's goals politically at the local level?

I am fully aligned with the urbanism agenda. The 5th Square should endorse me because I am a forward thinking advocate that will leverage, my ability to establish a "common sense" consensus on our common issues, concerns and objectives for the purposes of mobilizing my fellow decision makers towards the development of legislation that is more comprehensive and cohesive in it's application , appeal and impact on the residents of philadelphia.