# INTRODUCTION

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

Allan Domb

What office are you seeking?

Mayor of Philadelphia

Campaign Committee Name & Address:

Allan Domb for Philadelphia

Campaign Website Address:

www.votedomb.com

Candidate Introduction:

I am running for Mayor because Philadelphia is in crisis – we have a public safety crisis, a poverty crisis, an affordable housing crisis and an education crisis. But most importantly, the city faces a crisis of leadership. As someone who built a successful business from the ground up before twice being elected to City Council, I will bring a results focused skill set and perspective to the Mayor’s office.

Growing up, I learned the value of hard work from my parents, who worked in a factory. As a child, I shined shoes and had two paper routes. In high school, I mopped floors as a janitor after wrestling practice. I took college classes at night while working full time. I moved to Philadelphia and founded my own business shortly after I graduated. Since then, I have helped create jobs in neighborhoods across the city, supported other small businesses and invested in the city’s future. My experience as a business leader taught me that bringing people together to work on shared goals rather than focusing on creating winners and losers as most politicians do is the best way to ensure everyone can benefit.
After building my business, I wanted to give back to the city which had given me so much, so I ran for City Council in 2015. After winning without the support of the City Hall insiders and the political establishment, in my seven years on City Council, I focused on helping small and neighborhood businesses grow and thrive, cutting taxes for lower income taxpayers, and making every neighborhood safer by, among other things, creating opportunities for incarcerated people to get job training and education so when they return home from prison so they can avoid going back to jail.

I also pushed to change business as usual politics, calling for term limits for politicians, creating new rules for oversight on how City Council members spend our money, and exposing waste and mismanagement that costs taxpayers money. I donated his Council salary to education programs and the city's public schools.

As Mayor, I will address the biggest challenges the city, its residents and workers face by focusing on results, not "us versus them" type political debates. I understand that Philadelphia's crime crisis is a symptom of the city's problems and that reducing it will require bringing stakeholders, elected officials, and community leaders together to expand jobs and economic opportunity, increase the access to affordable housing, and fully fund city schools so every child can learn in a good, safe, and updated school. Because I believe that the opioid crisis which has devastated too many families is unacceptable, I will declare a state of emergency to address the public health and safety crisis in Kensington on his first day in office.

I am the proud father of my son Daniel and the proud grandfather of three. I live with his rescue dog, Allie.
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?

   [X ] 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  [ X ] Other: _I am generally supportive of creating dedicated biking lanes, but I do not believe that they are appropriate for every road, even busy or otherwise dangerous roads. For example, I do not believe something like this is appropriate for Roosevelt Boulevard, which is already slow during heavy traffic times. But I would agree to support a comprehensive network of protected bike paths that allows riders to avoid roads that are busy but cannot reasonably accommodate bike lanes._

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?

   [ X ] 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  [ X ] Other: _Although I am in favor of this idea, in this campaign, I have declined to agree to any of the requests that have been made to create new positions or departments – there have been at least a dozen requests for new offices or positions so far – because if they were all agreed to (and most have strong arguments for their creation), the government would become totally unwieldy and unmanageable. If elected, I will strongly consider this idea in order to meet Philadelphia's goals effectively and efficiently._

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?

   [ X ] 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?

   [ X ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Other: __________________
b) Do you support expanding speed camera enforcement to more high-crash corridors across Philadelphia?

[ X ] Yes       [ ] No       [ ] Other: __________________

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

Now is the time, with the lingering impacts of the pandemic, to make long overdue changes to our traffic system. I am fully committed to working with community groups to make these improvements as we do what is necessary to get workers back into the city and to our downtown business core. I think the lack of basic road maintenance is deplorable.
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?

There are three things I would immediately pursue for our most dangerous roads:

- Expand red light cameras to catch risky and unsafe drivers.
- Improve bike and pedestrian lanes to allow people to commute safely.
- Work with SEPTA to make public transit a more viable option (both in terms of service areas and cost for most riders).

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?

This is a two-part problem: we have too many cars in some neighborhoods and lax enforcement of parking regulations. As mayor, I will move to ensure that everyone who lives here has their car registered here – a quick walk through many neighborhoods reveals numerous out-of-state license plates – and is paying taxes here as one way to reduce the number of cars and ensure that those who have more than two cars pay higher registration fees.

And although as someone who has received my share of parking tickets I am loathe to further empower the Parking Authority, I do think increased zoning of streets, and the tickets they bring for the non-compliant, as well as increased fines for parking at curb cuts, in crosswalks and bus stops, and on sidewalks, will dramatically reduce it.

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?

This is a significant problem and a clear sign of a lack of performance by the city. As mayor, as I will not only prioritize fixing potholes, but as we repave streets, I will move to rebuild broken sidewalks and curbs.
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?
   
   [X] 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?
   
   [X ] Yes           [ ] No           [ ] Other: __________________

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

I was one of the leading proponents of streeteries during the pandemic and fought to allow them to remain open after life began to return to normal as the vaccination rate climbed. Unfortunately, I was not able to stop my colleagues from adopting a more narrow plan that forced some to close. As mayor, I will fight to allow restaurants to rebuild streeteries, subject to safety laws. How this administration has handled this issue, and the red tape mess it has created for approvals, is unacceptable.

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?

   In my community safety plan (available on my website at www.votedomb.com), I wrote “It is well established that vacant lots and abandoned, unsecured properties are too often used to hide criminal activity. While Philadelphia has long known where its vacant lots and abandoned properties are, not enough has been done to continually clean abandoned lots and seal (or reseal) abandoned properties. Modeled after the successful campaign to remove 40,000 abandoned autos from city streets in Mayor John Street’s first 40 days , under [my] leadership, the city will quickly reclean all vacant and abandoned lots, prioritizing those in high-crime areas, and either seal or re-seal all abandoned properties. Anyone found living in a property will be assisted with needed wrap-around services.”

   I have also pledged to rebuild (and restaff) the Department of Licenses & Inspections for a variety of reasons, including to illegal dumping of construction waste and debris.

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?
In my community safety plan (available on my website at www.votedomb.com), I wrote "It is well established that vacant lots and abandoned, unsecured properties are too often used to hide criminal activity. While Philadelphia has long known where its vacant lots and abandoned properties are, not enough has been done to continually clean abandoned lots and seal (or reseal) abandoned properties. Modeled after the successful campaign to remove 40,000 abandoned autos from city streets in Mayor John Street's first 40 days, under [my] leadership, the city will quickly reclean all vacant and abandoned lots, prioritizing those in high-crime areas, and either seal or re-seal all abandoned properties. Anyone found living in a property will be assisted with needed wrap-around services."

I have also pledged to rebuild (and restaff) the Department of Licenses & Inspections for a variety of reasons, including to illegal dumping of construction waste and debris.

I will also consider creating rewards for anyone who reports someone who is illegally dumping anywhere in the city.

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?

I believe every library, pool and rec center should be open and full staffed. Not only are the costs of providing those services miniscule in an almost $6 billion budget, but even when times are tight, we must make them a priority and as mayor, I will. I was proud to support legislation that would require any city worker to be a city resident for at least a year prior to hiring as a way to reduce the city's highest-among-big-cities poverty and increase the number of city workers living in the communities they serve. And while I am generally opposed to outsourcing services that should be provided by city workers, I will not allow libraries, rec centers or pools to be closed because we cannot find enough staff.

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?
   [ X ] Yes   [ ] No    [ ] Other: ________________

2. Do you support the City establishing a fare discount program for low-income riders?
   [ X ] 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?
4. Do you support increasing the cost of monthly residential parking permits and using the funds for improving public transportation?

[X] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Other: __________________

I believe we must first ensure that everyone who is living here, and parking on our streets, is paying taxes here and has their car registered here before raising fees on people who obey the law.

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?

[X] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Other: __________________

b) Do you support using camera technology to enforce bus-only lanes and bus stops by ticketing violators?

[X] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Other: __________________

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

[X] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Other: __________________

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

[X] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Other: _This is important, but a lower priority, I believe, than other improvements to public transit._

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  [X] Other: _We have an extensive bike share program now; I’d rather expand that than create a new incentive program._

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

[ ] Yes  [ ] No  [X] Other: _I have been to other cities where these scooters litter the streets. Until they are more like e-bike programs I cannot agree to them._

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?

This is a tricky issue for two reasons: the city needs workers to return to their jobs in the city and especially downtown and public transit is not currently configured in such a way as to make it easy for some to do so without driving. Given the limitations of SEPTA – both in terms of where it provides service and the frequency of some services – it is hard to argue that all commuters should ride public transit. I will work with SEPTA and appoint board members who will be committed to improving services generally, but also “right sizing” it for commuters.
Philadelphia stands to lose hundreds of millions of dollars of tax revenues if workers do not return and we are unable to grow our jobs base sufficiently.

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

This is an issue of cost as much as convenience and safety. I will work with SEPTA and appoint board members who will be committed to improving services generally, as well as improving safety on train and bus lines. As part of my community safety program, I pledged to deploy officers at highly trafficked stops during peak times. I will support programs and policies that make SEPTA more affordable for city employees and commuters.

Personal Travel Habits:

1. How often do you ride a bicycle for transportation in the city?
   - [ ] Never  
   - [ X ] Yearly  
   - [ ] Monthly  
   - [ ] Weekly  
   - [ ] Daily

2. How often do you ride public transportation in the city?
   - [ ] Never  
   - [ ] Yearly  
   - [ ] Monthly  
   - [ X ] Weekly  
   - [ ] Daily

3. How often do you travel by car in the city?
   - [ ] Never  
   - [ ] Yearly  
   - [ ] Monthly  
   - [ ] Weekly  
   - [ X ] Daily

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

   I always walk from my home to work (I purposely live only a few blocks away so my commute is short).

   But throughout my career, as a member of City Council and now as a mayoral candidate, I have been to every corner of this city, and am a semi-regular rider of public transit – it is easier, quicker and often times more convenient. There are two primary things I would do as mayor to improve travel in the city: incentivize use of public transit and make neighborhoods more economically vibrant, so people can find jobs close them and walk to work, as I do. Right now, too high of a percentage of city residents work downtown and far too many work in the suburbs.
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?
   - [ X ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Other: __________________

2. Will you veto or vote against downzoning overlays?
   - [ X ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Other: __________________

3. Do you support legalizing Single-Room Occupancy dwellings (SROs) in all multifamily and commercial zoning districts across Philadelphia?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ X ] Other: Philadelphia has an affordable housing crisis for two primary reasons: we are not building (or rehabbing) enough housing overall, and not enough affordable housing to meet the demand, and we are the poorest-big-city-in-the-country and create lower wages jobs at a much higher percentage than our peer cities. While creating Single-Room Occupancy dwellings will help meet the demand for affordable housing options, it is far from the best solution. As mayor, I will focus on creating new housing stock, either through new construction or rehabs, which will lower the prices as supply rises, and new jobs at higher incomes, which will make a larger variety of housing options more affordable.

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?
   - [ X ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Other: __________________

5. Should our city government encourage the growth of Philadelphia’s population back to 2 million residents?
   - [ X ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Other: __________________

6. Should our zoning allow for denser housing in high-income, high-amenity neighborhoods to accommodate more residents?
   - [ X ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Other: __________________

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

These questions get to the nub of one of the most important issues facing the next mayor: how do we maintain and build on what makes Philadelphia one of the best cities in the country? We have real problems that need to be addressed, which requires a thriving, vibrant and growing economy. I believe that Philadelphia must commit itself to growth – population and economic
— in order to meet the needs of our citizens and be a place that people want to live and work when they increasingly have the opportunity to do so where they want. As mayor, I will be focused on a few critical areas in order to rebuild Philadelphia’s future.

This election features two very different visions for our future. Some candidates believe that Philadelphia should be a laboratory of ideas, regardless of how much it will cost and without any real plan of getting it done.

I have a different vision.

I believe the best way, if not the only way, to address Philadelphia’s significant challenges is by focusing on what is most important. Taking the most violent off our streets. Getting more people working at better paying jobs. Increasing affordable housing. Making sure every child can learn. Fixing our roads, picking up the garbage and replacing streetlights.

It’s not just that I have a different vision than some of the other candidates – I have different experience.

I built a business from the ground up, creating jobs and supporting other small businesses. I donated my entire salary as a member of City Council to our schools and education programs and refused perks and a pension.

And I have a different way of doing things.

Some candidates will say that it will be others’ responsibility to fix our biggest problems. I don’t believe that. We have to work together to fix Philadelphia’s biggest problems. That’s what I did in my business, that’s what I did on City Council and that’s what I’ll do as Mayor.

I hope I can earn your support.
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 I have often said, our city is in a crisis – and one of its biggest problems is a lack of affordable housing. No one should have to be unhoused or live in cramped, unsafe housing. I do believe that everyone has a right to basic, safe housing.

We have three problems: we aren't creating enough housing overall – whether it is new construction or rehabilitation of existing housing – we are building the wrong kind of house (too many studios and one-bedroom apartments) and we aren't creating enough higher wage jobs to allow people to either afford rent or, even better, to become homeowners.

The first goal is to help people who are currently unhoused – get people in dire need off the streets and out of shelters.

The second thing is to improve planning – we should be thinking through what our actual needs are and embedding them in other developments. Not necessarily in a “you can only build if you include below market rate housing” way but rather ask “should we approve another 3,000 one bedroom rentals when we need family housing.”

The final problem we can only solve by getting more people working at higher wages. As the only candidate who has successfully built a business from the ground up, I believe I am uniquely qualified to help build a thriving economy in every neighborhood – and that's what we need.

As mayor, I will focus on dramatically increasing the amount of housing available, as well as expand the type of housing to include more housing that can accommodate a growing family looking to put down roots. I will also be focused on creating good new jobs in every neighborhood – inclusive growth policies are the only way to address our city's highest-among-big-cities poverty.

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?

It's important to note that while housing values in the metropolitan area have climbed, the city itself remains one of the most affordable housing markets among big cities. We need to focus on how to expand the amount of housing available overall and the types of housing so that growing families can stay and establish roots. We also need to increase the amount of money people are earning so that they can more easily become homeowners, rather than renters, to secure their future and build generational wealth.

Those two things alone, of course, are not enough. We must protect current and future homeowners who are living on fixed incomes. As mayor, I will continue to support programs and policies, including property tax abatements and repair services, to allow people to remain
in their homes and keep them safe and habitable.

Finally, we must ensure that every neighborhood remains open and inclusive. I will instruct my appointees at all city departments and agencies to ensure that our city remains welcoming.

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?

We are at a critical time in our city’s history and we need to ensure that we rebuild the growing, vibrant economic base we had prior to the pandemic.

As mayor, I will focus on what’s most important: improving community safety in every neighborhood because few will want to live, work or visit the city if they feel unsafe nor will businesses want to invest in job creation; expand the number of neighborhood businesses by focusing on inclusive growth policies; and provide high quality city services. There are, of course, many other needs – including rethinking how we educate our children and expanding access to affordable housing – but if we don’t address those first three issues, we won’t be able to generate the tax revenues necessary to provide critically needed services.

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 believe Philadelphia is in crisis – we have a community safety crisis, a jobs and poverty crisis, an education crisis and an affordable housing crisis. But most importantly, we have a crisis of leadership. If we are going to make Philadelphia the city it can be/the city we want it to be/ we all have to work together to address its biggest challenges. We have to stop the finger pointing and get to work. That’s what I will do as mayor.

I have spent the last four decades – as a business leader, on City Council, and working with community groups – focused on results, not making promises.

In this race, my experience is unique and so is my vision.

Some candidates seem to believe that the Philadelphia government can and should cure every ailment, address every issue, regardless of how much it will cost and without any real plan of getting it done. I have a different vision.

I believe the best way, if not the only way, to address Philadelphia's significant challenges is by focusing on what is most important. Taking the most violent off our streets. Getting more people working at better paying jobs. Increasing affordable housing. Making sure every child can learn. Fixing our roads, picking up the garbage and replacing street lights.

We can become the city we want to be – a place where you can raise a family, start a business and live your dreams, but only with strong leadership focused on making our streets safer and investing in our children. We need a leader who can bring our city together and address our biggest challenges.