

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

Maria Quiñones Sánchez

What office are you seeking? *

Mayor of Philadelphia

Campaign Committee Name & Address:

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Candidate Introduction:

Over the next ten years, Philadelphia's infrastructure will be fully built out. We can be a thriving, equitable city of two million or we can be another story of haves and have nots. The work of the next Mayor will be the deciding factor and I am ready to lead that work.

Philadelphia should be a city of diverse, mixed income neighborhoods, where residents in every zip code can access affordable housing, good schools, functional transit, and family-sustaining jobs. To get there, we need to invest in people and remove the barriers to success that government has created with bad policy.

We also need to have an honest conversation about our city's challenges. I am the right person to lead that conversation because I have lived every challenge this city faces, I know how to use government to solve problems and engage the private sector to leverage government investments, and there is nothing wrong with Philly that we can't fix together.

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:

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

Yes

No

Other:

1 (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:

My comprehensive public safety plan calls for the Water Department to lead on environmental justice work. I will realign our infrastructure work using zero-based budgeting so that departments are adequately funded to meet ambitious service delivery goals, focused on poverty reduction, public safety, and inclusion.

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:

My administration will develop a comprehensive infrastructure plan and adequately fund it. Using zero-based budgeting we will realign all department goals around equitable service delivery, poverty reduction, public safety, and inclusion.

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:

4 (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:

While I do support more protected bike lanes as part of a multi-modal, inclusive streetscape, I believe it is important to consider metrics beyond the total number of miles and focus on connectivity with our transit system. I am committed to using zero-based budgeting to ensure that all departments are adequately funded to meet their goals, which we will set based on our top priorities of poverty reduction and prevention, public safety, and inclusion. Every city department and every plan that my administration develops will contribute meaningfully toward making our city more equitable, safe, and inclusive.

ROADWAY SAFETY

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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?

My administration will develop a revised Vision Zero plan and fund it appropriately. I believe that speed reduction is the most critical component and best way to reduce traffic deaths. As 7th District Councilmember, I worked closely with communities in the 7th District to bring calming measures to dangerous streets. It is no surprise that traffic deaths are concentrated along with poverty, which is why Philadelphia's first two funded Slow Zones were in the 7th Council District. I believe that in addition to traffic calming, the restorative investments we will make in historically disinvested neighborhoods will make them safer, not just from violent crime, but from the dangerous and reckless driving that often causes these deaths.

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 serious public safety issue and an opportunity for real reform. I will deploy non-police traffic officers to handle ticketing and enforcement of illegally parked vehicles, prioritizing safety issues and communities with higher rates of traffic accidents, injuries, and deaths. This is a key area where trained civilian workers can assume responsibility for activities traditionally handled by the police, which will be more cost-effective and allow for redeployment of police to the areas where they are needed most – 911 response, the narcotics unit, and foot and bike patrols in neighborhoods and commercial corridors. I will also leverage the work of PPA to improve enforcement.

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?

In the 7th Council District, we funded a \$250,000 pilot program with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society which provided employment to returning citizens to remove dangerous street trees, replant appropriate replacement trees, and repair the sidewalks. We will scale this program citywide as part of the environmental justice work that the Water Department will be charged with as part of our public safety strategy. The City of Philadelphia has committed in a court settlement to a 15 year plan to install or repair 10,000 sidewalk curb ramps. As we make these necessary investments to provide true accessibility, I will align them with tree planting, beautification, and traffic calming measures so we are less disruptive in communities and leave behind better spaces for everyone as we make them accessible.

PUBLIC SPACE



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

Short Response:

TRANSIT

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:

Our administration will create a community-led protocol to ensure a more open and transparent process for these amenities. I will also create an interdepartmental task force to examine and improve our internal processes, to avoid creating burdensome, bureaucratic hurdles that lock communities out of public engagement and hamper neighborhood efforts to improve their spaces.

PUBLIC SPACE

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

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 first 100 days in office, I will tackle the 100 most dangerous intersections in Philadelphia – improving lighting, adding public safety cameras, cleaning up dumping, and sealing abandoned properties. In my public safety strategy, the services that our city operational departments provide are the centerpiece of our plan. We know that these investments make communities safer and this will set the tone for our entire administration, where we will use zero-based budgeting to align every department and investment to reduce poverty, improve public safety, and improve equity and inclusion.

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?

When I took office and reviewed my data sets, the 7th Council District had the highest litter index in the City. It also had the fewest number of public trash cans. We need to place and adequately service public trash cans to prevent litter, particularly around transit stops and other areas where people congregate. To address illegal dumping, I believe we must invest in more cameras at known dumping locations, so we can ticket and fine offenders. Research has shown that cameras combined with enforcement can meaningfully change behavior regarding illegal dumping. Additionally, as part of the Restore Kensington plan I proposed a series of aggressive and proactive cleaning measures which I believe should be implemented in areas of great need, including twice-weekly trash pickup, street sweeping and washing, and community dumpster availability. We must also improve the quality of our trash pickup by providing standardized, lidded trash and recycling containers, coordinated with an updated vehicle fleet. Making these changes will require significant investment in our Streets Department workforce and realignment of salaries to address the historically inadequate compensation so we can attract and retain workers. These are critical jobs and they should be family-sustaining jobs – Philadelphians doing this work should not make so little they qualify for food stamps.

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?

As we realign compensation across our operational departments, we will use zero based budgeting to set and adequately fund the departments to provide services in every zip code. There is a great deal of community mistrust around whether these assets will be available to them, and we must use our hiring and staffing to create opportunities to rebuild that trust with communities and provide safe and usable amenities for our families and residents. We will also better coordinate with community groups to enhance program services and provide diverse, accessible, culturally appropriate programming to communities.

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:

Congestion pricing is something that I would review, with the understanding that there must be an equity lens that creates a pathway to not overburdening low-income Philadelphians or excluding them from Center City.

4. Do you support increasing the cost of monthly residential parking permits and using the funds for improving public transportation?

Yes

No

Other:

Yes, with the caveat that we must not worsen displacement – I would create a financial hardship exemption in order to avoid increasing costs for longtime residents, seniors on a fixed income, and low income families. I created a pilot program in South Kensington to address this issue.

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:

5 (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:

I would consider it as an option within a comprehensive plan, which must include a racial equity conversation related to dirt bikes and ATVs as well.

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

Yes

No

Other:

I would consider it as an option within a comprehensive plan, which must include a racial equity conversation related to dirt bikes and ATVs as well.

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

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

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

Long Response:

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

The best way to reduce traffic is to get more people back on transit. We also need to take a look at construction sites that unnecessarily consume parking and traffic lanes and create congestion and slowdowns for extended periods of time. We have not yet come up with an effective way to address the traffic slowdowns created by more frequent deliveries and rideshare – from Amazon, to DoorDash and Uber, the frequent stops that often block traffic and bike lanes are incredibly inefficient and dangerous. My administration will develop a comprehensive plan for addressing the realities of our new normal.

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

Frequent and affordable public transportation is critical to a healthy city. It provides access to school, work, and recreation throughout the city for low income residents who cannot afford a car, it enables less car dependency, and it is one of the quintessential assets of city life compared with suburban life. Functional transit will help us retain residents, including young families, who might otherwise consider moving out of the city, and will help us draw new residents in from the suburbs and other metro areas.

I want to grow our population to two million, our transit system is critical to that goal.

While SEPTA is a regional authority, and Philadelphia is structurally outnumbered on its governing board, the Mayor must be a strong advocate for transit and transit riders. As Councilmember I worked closely with SEPTA and SEPTA police to address issues related to the 10 El stops in my district. As Mayor, I will direct our departments to prioritize safety, infrastructure, and cleanliness around transit stops to provide a welcoming and safe environment for riders. I believe it is appropriate to reexamine our bus routes, particularly regarding stop frequency, in order to improve efficiency and reduce the infrastructure and service demands of bus stops very close together, each with trash cans that need to be emptied and cleaned. We should expand bus-only lanes and use bus priority signals to improve the flow of traffic and make buses a more attractive option.

We must also address the ongoing issues related to substance use and antisocial behavior on transit. Without arresting and incarcerating, we must improve the protocol for clearing trains and preventing them from becoming mobile encampments. We can create connectivity with service providers and opportunities to receive help and treatment. Additionally, we can create systems for the unhoused population to bring them off of transit, such as storage lockers and shower facilities, located within or close to healthcare facilities where they can receive wound care and other needed treatment as well.

Finally, I believe we should expand the use of transit oriented development, which I pioneered in the 7th Council District, citywide. Building more diverse, mixed-income housing density near transit stops will get more people back on transit.

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.

My life has been shaped by the streets of North Philadelphia and the various modes of transit we use. I might not even be where I am today, running for Mayor, without the help of a single SEPTA bus driver. When I was a young single mom, working downtown and going to school, every morning the bus driver would wait an extra few seconds for me at the stop until I came running up with my toddler and both of our school bags. Transit is not just dots moving on a map, it is what ties our city together.

Growing up in Hunting Park, I took the bus. As a mom in Norris Square, my family takes the El. As a Councilmember I started driving more so I could reach the parts of my district that are not as accessible and I've seen with my constituents how our inequitable service delivery makes low-income Philadelphians, particularly families with kids, more dependent on cars.

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:

I will review parking minimums, in conversation with District Councilmembers and coordinated with the work of the Planning Commission. In the 7th District I lowered parking minimums for TODs and for the Mixed Income Housing requirements, and created a parking pilot for South Kensington to address this issue.

2. Will you veto or vote against downzoning overlays?

Yes

No

Other: I will fully fund the City Planning Commission to work with stakeholders to identify opportunities for density citywide.

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

Yes

No

Other: Yes, and I will work with neighborhoods to identify opportunities to ensure fairness.

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: Yes, to create affordability.

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

I have centered my economic opportunity platform and vision for 2030 around the goal of increasing our population to two million. I believe we can get there by using many of these tools in the toolbox – increasing density to create affordability, expanding TODs which I pioneered in the 7th District, and to do so effectively we must fully fund the City Planning Commission so we can identify opportunities for increased density and affordability throughout the city.

HOUSING & LAND USE

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

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 7th District Councilmember, I leveraged more public land for community gardens, side yards, and affordable housing than the other nine districts combined. In the 7th District we developed ambitious affordable housing pilots that are ready to scale citywide, including a housing preservation pilot in McPherson Square, and a public-private partnership with a new homeownership model for affordable duplexes at 3rd and Berks in partnership with APM and Tom Scannapieco. I worked with our CDCs and leveraged hundreds of Land Bank and PHA properties to create a pipeline of 500 affordable units in rapidly gentrifying South Kensington. As Councilmember, I learned what can work when we pursue new models, and as Mayor I am eager to scale that work citywide.

We need to recognize that our affordable housing is largely in the private market, and to that end I am prepared to invest millions to create a shallow rent program that is Philadelphia's own voucher program, which will provide "fixed-rate" housing, giving families rent they can afford, at deeper affordability levels than the market often supports, and giving small landlords the predictability and dependability of a subsidized rental payment.

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 Councilmember I supported the development of our first time homebuyer program, and through NPI, which is the result of my black and brown stimulus agenda from the FY21 budget, we are able to provide an even deeper subsidy. As Mayor, I will commit significant resources to expanding programs that are proven to work and deepening the level of subsidy we are able to provide to maintain accessibility.

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?

Public safety is critical to retaining residents and businesses and attracting new population and investment. My administration will make major investments in services and infrastructure that keeps us safer, including cameras, lighting, cleaning, and sealing abandoned properties. We will pursue environmental justice investments that promote climate resilience and prevent flooding in vulnerable communities.

Additionally, we will build on the success of the progressive business tax reform I authored and pursue further reforms to make our business tax structure more fair and equitable, while reducing regulatory hurdles for businesses and providing better transparency and predictability so small businesses can grow.

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?

As a District Councilmember I pursued every opportunity to pilot innovative models for affordable housing, infrastructure investments, and investments to stabilize working families, and as a result created the most robust toolbox of programs and policy reforms with proven effectiveness.

As Mayor, I will not need to learn on the job to set a comprehensive strategy for making the robust infrastructure investment which are key to making our city safe and growing our city.

My lived experience will ensure that we bring an equity lens to this work. I will, as I always did as Councilmember, convene all stakeholders to ensure a community-driven process as we make investments in neighborhoods.

There is no other candidate in this race who has a stronger track record of transformative legislation and policy reform to make Philadelphia a stronger and safer city. As the voice for some of our poorest zip codes, I developed historic legislation with citywide impact. My track record shows that when we take care of our most vulnerable and invest in people, the whole city gets better.

As Mayor I will lead a citywide conversation about race and equity, because I believe we must own our history in order to move forward. I will be honest about our challenges, but there is nothing wrong with Philly that we can't fix together.