

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

Jalon Alexander

What office are you seeking? *

City Council At-Large

Campaign Committee Name & Address:

Friends of Jalon Alexander

Campaign Website Address:

<https://jalonforcitycouncil.com/>

Candidate Introduction:

Jalon Alexander has been preparing for public service since his childhood in the North Philadelphia community of Strawberry Mansion. Born to a loving teenage mother who worked multiple jobs to provide for both him and his younger sister, Jalon experienced first-hand the inadequate resources and rising levels of violence that plagued his and so many other neighborhoods in the 1990's. Determined to do something toward solving these problems, at the age of nine, Jalon joined his grandmother in going door-to-door delivering election literature, working to get out the vote in his community. Even at this youthful age, Jalon believed the living conditions, poverty and lack of opportunities were unfair and that he wanted to take action to change these conditions. Growing up, Jalon mirrored what he observed from his mother, the value of a strong work ethic and constant improvement. He dedicated himself to his education, attending the prestigious public Bodine High School for International Affairs - the catalyst for what would ultimately jumpstart a life of advocacy and public service. At Bodine, Jalon became a nationally ranked debater advocating for issues that reflected the harsh realities of his childhood, winning debates and speaker awards at Yale, Harvard, Emory University, among others. This recognition provided Jalon scholarship opportunities to attend Penn State University where he became the first African American student body President of the Commonwealth Campuses Student Government in addition to becoming a student member of the Board of Trustees. In this role, Jalon worked with various state legislators to fight against proposed funding cuts to Penn State in the wake of the Jerry Sandusky scandal. During his senior year, at age 21, Jalon ran for Philadelphia Committeeperson, and although he fell short the experience motivated him to attend law school to better serve and provide for those in need. During his time at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and Graduate School of International Affairs, he maintained a commitment to public service through volunteerism, becoming a board member for Pittsburgh public broadcasting stations WYEP/WESA. He also provided pro-bono assistance with will drafting for the underserved and senior community members and protecting the rights of individuals and children with disabilities through Disability Rights PA. Throughout undergraduate education and law school, it became apparent to Jalon that many Philadelphians would be unprepared for the realities of the technologically advancing world. For that reason, Jalon studied cyber-security and the lack of access that people of color have in accessing these careers. Since graduation, Jalon has been employed as a cyber-security attorney, providing services to the federal government, and offering tech-employment opportunities to students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Jalon's lived experience and drive have established what his grandmother knew, and community members and constituents know - he is a fighter for those who need an advocate, and that gun violence, poverty and lack of opportunity will not be fully addressed until Philadelphia has the necessary leadership. Jalon Alexander is prepared to meet the moment.

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:

We can use technology to enforce traffic laws and make dangerous roadways safer. I am for flexibility and would be willing to consider removing travel lanes if the evidence was clear and compelling that its elimination was the only way to promote public safety and save lives.

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:

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:

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:

I will always prioritize public safety and creating environments to help support and save lives. I do not drive and do not have a driver's license, so I am a huge advocate for making sure the city in its entirety is accessible, safe and easy for everyone to travel in.
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ROADWAY SAFETY

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

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?

1- Expand speed cameras and there enforcement. 2- Increase enforcement of illegal parking. 3- Increase and support more daylight intersections. Support more Bus only lanes for efficient public transportation.
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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?

1- We have to enforce our traffic laws and increase the amount of tickets given for illegally parked vehicles. 2-Daylight intersections and exclusive bus lanes are an efficient way to eliminate this problem. Lanes exclusive to Buses help to create efficient and safer transportation for all vehicles and those using public transportation.
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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?

1st- I would like to establish a 5-million-dollar fund to provide sidewalk repairs eligible to low-income neighborhoods. As a member of the legislative oversight committee, I will work to make sure all sidewalks are maintained and ADA compliant. Additionally, I would like to invest more money and hire a sidewalk coordinator who seeks to constantly improve the quality of sidewalks and infrastructure in the city.
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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:

As an avid supporter of small businesses, I would like to ease the regulations on outdoor streeteries. I think it is important to help the businesses increase capacity and I firmly believe a city that eats together and is forced to engage one another has positive public health and intangible benefits that help to make the city more habitable.

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?

As a resident of Strawberry Mansion I completely understand both the need to continue cleaning and beautifying these areas. I will work effectively with the District Council representatives to allocate funds to 1st- SAFELY demolish abandoned buildings that cannot be saved. 2nd- Support and provide additional resources to the recently hired Philly forester who intends to plant 10,000 trees over the next decade and finally support and increase funding for parks and recreation to improve facilities in the area. Finally my Drones Force Philly program will effectively use drones to locate, track and enforce crimes of illegal dumping against individuals who dump illegally.

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?

Drone Force Philly- a plan to fight crime and illegal gun violence in the city can be found on my website. However, in summation drones will also be used to track those who dump illegally. It will have a deterrent effect once individuals are caught via the drone. Drones will patrol neighborhoods via A.I. and during patrols will be able to record those who dump illegally. 21 drones can cover the entire city of Philadelphia simultaneously and this program will be used to support and fight violent and non-violent crimes like illegal dumping.

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 a member of the legislative oversight committee, I will examine and look at existing programs that do not work and reappropriate that funding to support extending the hours of these facilities.

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:

Municipal employees should have the option to Opt into the Key Advantage program- making it optional helps to control cost, some employees may not wish to use public transportation.

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: I am flexible and willing to discuss this but I would have to ensure that the cost increase is not prohibitive.

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:

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:

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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?

Increasing the quality of our public transportation. This ranges from both cleanliness, safety, and bus only lanes to help incentivize more individuals to use public transportation and to decrease congestion.

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

We have to make Septa safer, cleaner and additionally more accessible. I also would like to implement a low-income rider program so that individuals in the city can have more access. Doing so will help increase business for SEPTA and increase its ridership.

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: ABSOLUTELY, I do not have a drivers license and am a strict urbanist. This is how I travel in my daily life.

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

I work remotely and the few times I must commute I take Amtrak to Washington D.C.

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:

I do support this, however the city and landlords need to enforce this provision equitably. Priority has traditionally been given to college students and professionals in the application process and not individuals whom are low-income but qualify and can afford to pay to live on the property.

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:

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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?

1- Encourage the use of existing rainy-day funds from both the state level and local level to provide more rental assistance to those who never caught up on due to the pandemic. 2- Increasing access to affordable or free legal services to stop unlawful evictions. Make the city's eviction diversion mediation program permanent.

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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?

The only long-term solution to this issue is to extend and create more high paying jobs for Philadelphians without traditional 4-year degrees. These jobs will provide careers to make homeownership more accessible. In city council I will advocate for subsidizing STEM/IT certifications that are 6-12 months so that residents can begin careers that demand salaries that allow them genuine opportunities for home ownership. Additionally, we need to expand vocational schools and programs that will teach and train Philadelphians with careers that earn higher incomes. We have to make the economy more accessible for everyone.

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 have to invest in Philadelphians that live in the city. This means providing them with more opportunities to engage and participate in the economy and culture. This means, supporting small businesses, expanding mobile programs and institutions hours like the library and public recreation centers and making public transportation more accessible so Philadelphians have access to more economic opportunities and can support small businesses outside of their neighborhoods.

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?

1st- I don't just speak about these issues I live it. I am a resident of Strawberry Mansion and I also do not own a driver's license. I take public transportation daily, I interact with the good, bad and ugly and have intimate knowledge of how we can make the city safer and more accessible. 2nd- My crime plan "Drone Force Philly" will make the city safer and help support enforcement against individuals who dump illegally. Finally, I ultimately believe in a united city that is inclusive for everyone regardless of identity. This means a city that is accessible, ADA compliant and inclusive. Philadelphia can never achieve the level of safety and success it desires to have if it's segregated. An effective safe public transportation system that is affordable is key to Philadelphia being what it truly can be.