



FEET FIRST PHILLY

Allan Domb

Question #1: When you replace car trips with walking, you help reduce carbon emissions.

In the past week, where did you walk to and why?

I walk miles every day, beginning with the walk from my house to my office and continuing through to meetings in addition to going to events and tours in neighborhoods across the city as part of my campaign. Even prior to the campaign, I walked across neighborhoods as part of my career in real estate. I believe the single best way to understand a community and the needs of the people who live there is to walk its streets.

Question #2: The public discussion surrounding the 2023 municipal elections has mostly addressed the surging gun violence in Philadelphia.

Do you believe quality of life issues like broken and blocked sidewalks, abandoned cars, and lack of accessibility to greenspace are connected to the violence? Will your administration's approach to gun violence incorporate a focus on safe streets and sidewalks?

I do believe that a lack of historic investment in some neighborhoods – and the lack of concern about the people who live there – is directly connected to the violence too many communities are suffering.

As part of my community safety plan, I announced that one of the 10 actions I will take in my first 100 days will be to clean all vacant lots and seal abandoned buildings across the city. I have also pledged to tow abandoned cars, more timely fix potholes, and fully fund our park system to ensure every neighborhood has access to open space.

Of course, that is just part of an overall plan to reduce Philadelphia's violence. As mayor, I will move quickly to implement a 10-point plan in my first 100 days that will crack down on violence as we begin to rebuild a broken public safety system.

In my first 100 days as mayor, I will:

- 1) Declare a Crime Emergency on my First Day in Office
- 2) Aggressively Crack Down on Illegal Guns
- 3) Declare a Public Health Emergency in Kensington

- 4) Get Illegal Vehicles Off the Street
- 5) Crack Down on Retail Theft and Repeat Offenders
- 6) Increase Penalties for Violence Against City Employees
- 7) Triple Funding for Recruitment of Police Officers
- 8) Expand Programs to Protect Against Violence Based on Race, Religion, Gender, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- 9) Install Cameras at Every High School, Increase Coordination with School Leaders
- 10) Clean Every Vacant Lot, Seal Every Abandoned Building

These 10 actions will have an immediate impact on violent crime and begin to restore the sense of law and order in the city. Because I understand that crime is usually a symptom of underlying problems, these first 10 steps are just a start of my public safety agenda. My community safety plan is a holistic strategy that also includes investing in education and training; rebuilding a broken public safety infrastructure; reinvesting in neighborhoods and housing; combating the addiction crisis; and focusing on inclusive job growth policies that provide people with real opportunity.

Question #3: Hit-and-runs have reached a crisis in Philadelphia. In 2022, hit-and-run fatalities rose to a record 31, more than triple the count in 2019.

How will you address this epidemic in the short and long term?

I am committed to doing what the city can to prevent hit-and-runs and catch those responsible and hold them accountable. There are five (5) things I would prioritize as mayor to make our streets safer:

- Add more police on the street: It is a truism that increased public presence of police lessens law breaking, including unsafe driving. We must increase the number of police – Philadelphia’s force is already badly depleted – and change how we police. As mayor, I will triple the funding for recruitment efforts, bolster the department’s cadet program, with a particular emphasis on increasing diversity, and increase the department’s non-sworn personnel staff in order to maximize the street deployment of sworn officers.

- Increase traffic management: I believe that we need to improve the flow of traffic by, in part, having someone to direct traffic. I supported the 2019 ballot question to amend the City Charter to create “public safety officers.” I believe freeing up the police to focus on crime, while having people to guide traffic, would help limit aggressive driving.

- Install cameras on dangerous roads and at dangerous intersections: I have committed to expanding the use of cameras to improve road safety. 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.

- Improve lighting: As mayor I will ensure that our street lights are working as part of an overall plan to improve public and road safety.

- Expand bike pathways and repair sidewalks: I will support a comprehensive network of protected bike paths that allows riders to avoid roads that are busy but cannot reasonably accommodate bike lanes. I will also propose funding to repair sidewalks so people do not have to walk in the street.

Question #4: Philadelphia first committed to “Vision Zero,” a strategy to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries, in 2017. The premise of the city’s pledge is that traffic deaths are not “accidents,” but policy failures. However, 120 Philadelphians died in traffic incidents in 2022, twice the 2022 target set by the city’s Vision Zero Action Plan 2025.

What went wrong, and what will you do differently as Mayor?

I have publicly committed to reducing Philadelphia’s annual traffic deaths by half by 2026. 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; and, work with SEPTA to make public transit a more viable option (both in terms of service areas and cost for most riders).

Question #5: In May 2017, City Council passed a bill amending City law on sidewalk closures (Chapter 11-600 of The Philadelphia Code). Now, those who seek a Streets Department permit to close a sidewalk or even a portion of a sidewalk must submit an analysis regarding the feasibility of providing a protected walkway. But this reform only matters if those responsible for sidewalk closures bother applying for a permit. Unpermitted sidewalk closures persist across the city, endangering pedestrians and making our sidewalks inaccessible to people who are wheelchair-bound or push strollers.

What went wrong, and what will you do to fix it?

This comes down to leadership and accountability. Safety is the primary responsibility of city government. As mayor, I will direct all department and agency leaders, including the Commissioner of Licenses and Inspections, to prioritize safety with any and all City services or operations.

The first legislation I passed in City Council was to strengthen compliance requirements for businesses to receive City licenses or permits. The intent of this measure was not only to ensure businesses, including developers, were paying their taxes but also to help the city

ensure that any development expels bad actors. As mayor, I will direct additional resources to support these efforts, particularly in the Department of License and Inspections.

The Department of Licenses and Inspections also has an alarming staff shortage that is a leading cause of unsafe worksites. As mayor, I will improve the City efforts to hire and retain a highly qualified workforce that will improve enforcement of building codes.

Question #6: The Streets Department is responsible for paving and maintaining roadways, but the City leaves sidewalk maintenance to property owners – many of whom cannot afford to make sidewalk repairs on their own. Philadelphia has over 230 miles of sidewalks in poor condition, which decreases the quality of life and makes walking and rolling difficult.

What forms of mobility does the Streets Department exist to serve? Do you support using the Streets Department budget to develop a plan, or a funding strategy, to repair and replace sidewalks?.

Philadelphia has programs and policies to help homeowners who can not afford basic maintenance of their homes. I will support allowing these programs to also rebuild broken sidewalks and, through the Streets Department, coordinate road repairs with the needed work on sidewalks.

Question #7: Car ownership rates are skyrocketing in Philadelphia, seeing its largest increase in low-income households. Car ownership is a huge burden on household costs and on public space. Because much of the city was built in a time before cars, there is limited public space for personal car storage, leading to illegally parked cars on sidewalks and crosswalks.

Will your administration promote mode shift and reduce reliance on personal car ownership? How will your administration advance this policy goal?

Yes, I will support programs and policies to reduce driving, although I will not promote or accept a ban on autos or support congestion pricing. I will support the City of Philadelphia enrolling all municipal employees into the SEPTA Key Advantage program and establishing a fare discount program for low-income riders to increase use of mass transit. I will also work with the Planning Department to increase development around transit hubs to lessen the need for cars.

Question #8: Public parking management and enforcement of parking rules in Philadelphia are entrusted to the Philadelphia Parking Authority, a State agency that operates outside the control of City government. However, this does not mean that the City has no role to play in holding the PPA accountable for its decisions, lobbying Harrisburg for more funding, or taking action on its own to supplement activities that the PPA is not but perhaps should be doing.

Are you satisfied with the PPA's stewardship of public space and enforcement? What is your Administration's strategy for the City to proactively address illegal parking, abandoned cars, and other parking management concerns?

I am hopeful, now that the PPA has a new majority on its board and executive director, that its operations will improve – something it needs to do. As mayor I will prioritize towing abandoned cars and increase enforcement of parking regulations to stop parking on sidewalks.

Question #9: After nearly a decade of planning, two rounds of community input, and a great deal of controversy, in the spring of 2022 the City Council authorized a “hybrid redesign” of Washington Avenue, intended to protect the safety of cyclists and pedestrians on an important, but notoriously deadly thoroughfare. However, the portion of Washington Avenue west of Broad Street was left alone, in deference to councilmanic prerogative.

What went wrong with the Washington Avenue Complete Streets project? How will your administration govern differently to ensure Complete Streets projects across all council districts are successful?

I believe that the failure to have a single agreed to plan of how to reform Washington Avenue is a missed opportunity due to a lack of leadership by the Kenney Administration.

In my government and ethics reform plan (available on my website www.votedome.com), I called for reforms to Philadelphia's long-standing practice of allowing Councilmanic prerogative to dictate important development, zoning, and other land-use decisions. It is arcane and out of step with modern principles of good governance. At a basic level, it is anti-democratic.

As mayor, I will begin the process of reforming Councilmanic prerogative by issuing an Executive Order directing city agencies to cease any deference to councilmanic prerogative in decision-making unless required by law. I will also work with city departments and the Council itself to codify common guidelines and timelines for zoning reviews, and to define rules for routine, non-discretionary matters, such as approving signage and parking permits, to obviate the need for councilmanic approval and promote efficiency. Relatedly, as mayor I will limit any efforts to propose and enact “block by block” legislation. Legislation that can treat a business or homeowner differently on one block than another should be unacceptable except in certain situations (e.g. keeping certain businesses away from schools). If presented with a bill that changes requirements with no justification, I will veto it.