



FEET FIRST PHILLY

Derek Green

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?

Earlier this week I walked from my campaign office on South Broad Street to interviews with Metro Newspaper and WHYY. Despite having my car parked downtown and relatively easy access to public transportation options, I chose to walk because it is the most reliable and inexpensive way to get around downtown, due to congestion and inconsistent schedules for SEPTA.

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 depressed infrastructure and blight contribute to the public safety concerns we see across Philadelphia. That is why I included in my recently released public safety plan a commitment to investing both City and federal dollars to upgrade our streets and sidewalks around the city, as well as making strategic investments to dramatically expand the number of surveillance cameras in the city to reduce crime in all neighborhoods.

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?

We need to dramatically expand the number of cameras across the city for the purposes of enforcing hit-and-runs and other public safety concerns, most notably gun violence. Additionally, we need to fill the ranks at the Police Department, where we have a shortage of nearly 1,000 officers. Replenishing our Police Department with officers that reflect our City will allow us to

increase the presence of safety in our streets and ultimately reduce the number of hit-and-runs we've seen spike in the last few years.

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?

The underlying problem is that Philadelphia, like many other cities, struggles with high levels of congestion. We can address congestion and traffic related deaths by increasing access for cyclists and pedestrians, while also improving our public transportation options. As Mayor, I would be committed to the continued expansion of bike lanes around the city and would make it a priority to see SEPTA become a reliable, safe, and clean source of transportation that families can rely on.

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?

Currently, our Streets Department and Department of Licenses and Inspections are understaffed. As Mayor, I will aggressively recruit to fill these positions with City residents as well as those who attend our local colleges and universities (including regional Historically Black Colleges & Universities). Through an enhanced workforce we can properly enforce unpermitted sidewalk closures and appropriated fine violators and persistent bad actors. Additionally, we need to upgrade our IT infrastructure so that we can have better coordination between these Departments so that the City can become more effective in providing protected walkways for our residents.

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?

Under a Green Administration, the Streets Department will exist to serve all forms of mobility. From last mile forms of transportation (e.g., Indigo bikes and e-scooters which I championed as a member of Council) to a more reliable, cleaner, and safer SEPTA system, the City needs a proactive approach to address all of these forms of mobility. As Mayor, I will work not only to expand mobility in our City, but also work to improve sidewalks. Considering that numerous sidewalks are privately owned, we need to develop creative ideas to address this issue. Drawing on my experiences and relationships as the National President of Democratic Municipal Officials and Executive Committee & Board Member of the National League of Cities, I will bring to Philadelphia best practices from other cities in order to develop a strategy and funding plan to repair and replace sidewalks in Philadelphia.

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, this will be a priority for my Administration. Like I mentioned previously, SEPTA has become an unsafe and unreliable source of transportation in the eyes of many Philadelphians. People are not comfortable sending their children to school on SEPTA because they're concerned about potential violence or exposure to drugs. The conditions of SEPTA facilities have contributed to these issues for the same reason that blight and deteriorating infrastructure invites crime in our neighborhoods. Therefore, people are relying on cars for transportation because they feel they have no other option. Under a Green Administration, I am committed to addressing these concerns around SEPTA, with the ultimate goal of increasing ridership and reducing congestion.

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?

As with any non-City agency that has stewardship of City resources, I have experienced frustration with the operations of PPA, but I believe that we can do a better job leveraging PPA's work to manage parking issues. In the 7th Council District, we developed a pilot program with the PPA to address parking management concerns in rapidly gentrifying South Kensington. We should also have PPA taking over more parking enforcement duties that are typically handled by PPD officers. PPA can help facilitate car removal and enforcement of increased commercial truck parking and RV parking in neighborhoods.

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?

It is true that there has been a great deal of controversy around this issue, which I had a front seat for as a member of City Council. As Mayor, I would work with the community west of Broad Street to continue this dialogue around the importance of pedestrian/cyclist safety along Washington Avenue in particular. I agree with the merits of the Complete Streets project, but I also value the opinions of local residents who have voiced their concerns around the impact this project will have on local businesses that line Washington Avenue and the potential gentrification that will push people out of their neighborhoods. I am committed to working with both Complete Streets activists and the community in order to ensure all concerns are addressed and that we ultimately move Washington Avenue and the City at-large forward.