



FEET FIRST PHILLY

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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?

One of my campaign offices is located at 17th and Sansom, so every week I walk to and from meetings around Center City. I live in Norris Square, where I walk my dog, Norman, every day. When we did the community-driven redesign of Norris Square Park, we worked hard and invested to make it a multi-generational space with safe and accessible walking paths.

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?

Absolutely. 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.

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?

My comprehensive public safety plan charges the Streets Department with developing and maintaining our comprehensive citywide CCTC camera network precisely because a camera network can address so many of the public safety issues we face – including hit and runs. In the short term, we will use our camera network to find and prosecute hit and run crimes, with the understanding that in the long term, Philadelphians will know that this behavior is captured on

camera and will lead to more effective enforcement. Studies show that if a camera program is used to improve enforcement, it can ultimately have an effect on altering future behavior.

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?

A plan must be appropriately scaled and funded. 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.

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?

Unpermitted sidewalk closures are a serious safety issue in our city and an opportunity for real reform. I will deploy non-police traffic officers to handle ticketing and enforcement of illegally obstructed sidewalks, 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.

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?

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.

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?

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.

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 EI 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.

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?

The residents west of Broad Street felt the public engagement process for Washington Avenue was insufficient. True public engagement is more than an online survey and a few evening meetings, particularly for communities of essential workers with limited time because of work schedules. In the 7th Council District, with one of the poorest constituencies, I learned that truly engaging the community is much more difficult than sending out a survey. You have to build trust, ask the right questions, and really listen to the answers. My office mastered this process, and as a result we were able to do proactive, community-driven remapping in 90% of the 7th District.

It’s easy to check off the box and say you’ve done engagement, and it’s easy to then unite people against something. It’s much harder to bring people together to plan for the future, but I know from experience that it’s worth the work. As Mayor, my administration will prioritize true engagement for infrastructure projects, working with members of Council, RCOs, CDCs, community stakeholders, and neighbors.