

BETTER MOBILITY

Philadelphia 2015

A Platform: Making Philadelphia a more economically competitive city through safe and accessible transportation.

Our next mayor must continue to **build inspiring places** to walk and bicycle—like the new Schuylkill Banks Boardwalk—while also making our neighborhood streets safer for all road users through low-cost **safety improvements** and **policy changes**.

The next mayor and City Council need to make Philadelphia safer while also increasing mobility by committing to **10 transportation strategies**.



Ten Better Mobility Strategies

Make Philadelphia's streets safer by adopting a Vision Zero policy to reduce traffic crashes and adding more protective pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure

1. Adopt a Vision Zero policy to reduce traffic crashes.

- Commit to reducing all traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 50% by 2020.
- Convene a task force of agencies to identify the City's most dangerous corridors, intersections and types of collisions that contribute to fatalities and severe injuries (alcohol impairment, speed, distracted driving, failure to yield).
- Prepare an action plan that identifies and implements safety interventions (such as road diets, leading pedestrian signals, longer pedestrian countdown phases, and pedestrian refuge islands, among others) at Philadelphia's top pedestrian crash intersections and Roosevelt Boulevard.
- Adopt measures to enhance traffic enforcement and develop robust public education campaigns.
- Continue to secure Automated Red Light Enforcement and federal safety funds to deploy safety measures.

2. Connect the on-street bikeway network and improve bicycle policies

- Endorse full implementation of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan and develop community outreach strategy.
- Install 30 miles of physically-protected bike lanes.
- Install 75 new miles of standard bike lanes (15 miles annually) and restripe 10 miles of lanes annually.
- Increase bike parking, enhance enforcement of parking in bicycle lanes and address bike theft.

Enhance complementary commuting modes and build Circuit trails

3. Enhance accessibility to public transit

- Encourage implementation of improved service on key bus routes.
 - Support 24-hour bicycle access on regional rail and subway service.
 - Support efforts to identify implementable measures to increase capacity, frequency and quality of service.

4. Ensure access to bike share

- Support the ongoing expansion of Bike Share into all of Philadelphia where there is demand and opportunity.
- Support the integration of SEPTA and Bike Share farecards to weave together the fabric of Philadelphia's public transportation network.
- Explore and implement strategies to make the benefits of Bike Share affordable and accessible to all Philadelphians.

5. Build 25 miles of Circuit Trails

- Build remaining 8 miles of the Schuylkill River Trail to make it continuous from Roxborough to Fort Mifflin.
- Build remaining 10 miles of the East Coast Greenway along the Delaware River and Spring Garden Street Greenway.
- Build 7 miles of watershed trails such as the Cresheim, Tacony-Frankford, and Pennypack.

Prioritize transportation policy and good state of repair

6. Bring Philadelphia streets into good state of repair

- Double (or more) the paving budget in the city's Capital Budget to a level sufficient to repave 130 miles of streets annually and to provide 20% match for Federal Aid Funding to repave an additional 29 miles.
- Increase the automobile registration fee by \$5 (as permitted by Pennsylvania law) to generate a dedicated funding source for paving, striping and maintenance.
- Revise the Code provision that governs sidewalk maintenance and create a new program with matching funds for property owners who need assistance with sidewalk repairs.

7. Prioritize transportation policy and implementation

- Increase the Streets Department Transportation Operating Budget sufficient to keep 90% of the City's streets and sidewalks in good state of repair.
- Appoint a Deputy Mayor or other senior official to be responsible for transportation infrastructure, policy, enforcement and coordination and retain the Deputy Commissioner for Transportation position reporting to the Streets Commissioner.
- Create a Complete Streets Office within the Streets Department that develops and coordinates transportation policy and management and a reporting unit to coordinate performance tracking across all Streets Department Transportation divisions.

Create Welcoming and Livable Public Spaces

8. Improve the walkability of streets and sidewalks

- Encourage each District Council person to pilot at least one pedestrian plaza and take an active role

to expand the pedestrian plaza program into more neighborhoods.

- Enhance pedestrian crossings with safety measures including highly visible and durable crosswalks.
- Expand Streets and L&I enforcement resources to ensure compliance with City Code and regulations that impact sidewalk and street right of ways (ROWS).
- Strengthen code provisions and regulations that apply to sidewalk cafes and vendors to provide adequate clearance width for pedestrians.
- Enact new policies or legislation to minimize sidewalk closures during construction projects.

9. Enliven Philadelphia's streets

- Host a pilot Sunday or Open Streets program during June, July and August 2016 and expand in future years.
- Analyze Police Department cost reduction measures that could make open streets more affordable.

10. Manage on-street parking for efficient and effective use

- Wherever curb parking is in short supply, set a price on it with a goal of establishing a maximum of 85% occupancy level per block, so that one empty space can be found on any block at any time.
- Develop a streamlined and transparent process for civic organizations and business improvement districts to create more loading zones to reduce double parking in commercial corridors.
- Strengthen enforcement of zoning code provisions that prohibit individual private garages or parking pads in rowhouse and twin neighborhoods and increase enforcement of parking within 20 feet from crosswalks to enhance visibility and safety at intersections.

Strategy 1 | Adopt a Vision Zero Policy

Vision Zero: A policy that aims to achieve a transportation network with no fatalities or serious injuries in road traffic.

Safer streets for all Philadelphians will save lives and money. In addition to preventing needless injuries and deaths, Philadelphia will become more economically competitive if it did not lose hundreds of millions of dollars in medical and legal costs annually.

Between 2008-2013, on average, 94 adults and children were killed in Philadelphia traffic crashes annually.¹ Of that number, approximately 63% were occupants of motor vehicles, 35% were pedestrians and 2% were bicyclists. In 2013 alone, over 11,000 persons were injured in traffic crashes.

Although motor vehicle occupants make up a majority of the fatalities of traffic crashes, pedestrians are, in fact, the most vulnerable road user. For every 1,000 crashes that occur in Philadelphia involving a pedestrian, 19 pedestrians die. By comparison, for every 1000 crashes that involve motor vehicles, 7 occupants die.²

The toll of these preventable deaths goes beyond grief. On average, these deaths cost the City of Philadelphia

nearly \$565 million annually in medical and legal costs and in lost taxes and workplace productivity.³ The economic toll of injuries from traffic crashes and fatalities and property damage is \$1 billion. For economic reasons alone, the City should take preventative steps to reduce traffic crashes by adopting measures that meet a Vision Zero goal.

Reducing bicycle and pedestrian fatalities by 50% by 2020 is already an adopted goal of the City's Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan. It should be broadened to include all traffic crash victims.

To date, roads have been getting safer for everyone but pedestrians. Looking back over the past five years (2009-2013) in Table 1, crashes have increased very slightly (4%), overall fatalities have dropped slightly (-6%) and injuries have slightly fallen (-4%). However, pedestrian fatalities have increased by 16%, while motor vehicles fatalities dropped by 15%. The finding that pedestrian fatalities is increasing is a disturbing trend.

Change in Traffic Crashes by Mode between 2009 and 2013

Total Traffic Crashes	Motor Vehicle Crashes	Pedestrian Crashes	Bicycle Crashes
4%	4%	0%	16%
Total Fatalities	MV Fatalities	Ped Fatalities	Bicycle Fatalities
-6%	-15%	16%	-100%
Total Injuries	MV Injuries	Ped Injuries	Bicycle Injuries
-4%	-6%	1%	15%

Table 1 Source: 2009-2013 PennDOT crash data provided by Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

1. Based on 2009-2013 PennDOT crash data provided by Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

2. 2014. Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. Safer Streets Philadelphia. Table 2

3. 2014. Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. Safer Streets Philadelphia. Table 3

Proposed Action Steps

DEVELOP

a comprehensive approach to road safety across multiple agencies.

ESTABLISH

Philadelphia's Vision Zero Goal and Plan to Eliminate all traffic deaths.

CREATE

an interagency Vision Zero Task Force charged with developing an annual workplan that meets the goal of reducing traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 50% by 2020.

- Use a data driven process to identify the city's most dangerous corridors, intersections and types of collisions that contribute to fatalities and severe injuries (alcohol impairment, speed, distracted driving, failure to yield).⁴
- Identify safety interventions, such as leading pedestrian signals, longer pedestrian countdown phases, and pedestrian refuge islands, at Philadelphia's top 20 pedestrian crash intersections.
- Adopt measures to enhance enforcement of the City's Traffic Code by the Police Department.
- Develop a robust public education campaign with large reach directed at all road users.
- Prioritize investments in safety measures and ensure coordination with all projects that impact streets and intersections.
- Re-envision Roosevelt Boulevard to eliminate 10% of the city's traffic deaths.
- Continue to apply for and deploy state Automated Red Light Enforcement and federal safety funding to invest in safety measures.
- Work with the state legislature to pass state legislation to 1) allow the hiring of a civilian traffic enforcement unit, 2) the installation and operation of speed cameras and 3) more specifically define "yield the right of way to pedestrians."
- Install speed cameras on road segments where speeding is the primary cause of crashes.

4. This analysis should include adjusting the crash data by a measure of pedestrian activity at each location, either specific pedestrian counts or walk to work mode share for the surrounding census tract. This will give additional insight into the nature of the problem and potential solutions at each location.

Strategy 2 | Connect the On-Street Bikeway Network

A connected bikeway network will improve safety and accessibility by calming streets, decreasing traffic crashes, and providing better connectivity between residences and employment centers.

In 2012, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission adopted a Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan (the plan). The plan sets ambitious 2020 goals of reducing bicycle fatalities and injuries by 50%, increase the bicycle commuting rate to 6.5% and improve the connectivity of the city's bicycle network. Meeting these goals will make our streets safer and less congested.

Philadelphia has been and remains a leader in conventional bicycle infrastructure. Based on the 2014 Benchmarking Report published by the Alliance for Biking and Walking, Philadelphia has over 200 miles of centerline miles of bike lanes; the fifth highest number of miles of bike lanes among large cities (and the highest number among east coast cities). On a per square mile basis, it is the fourth highest of all large American cities; close to 3 miles of bike lanes per square mile. These numbers demonstrate that Philadelphia made impressive strides in the 1990s and 2000s in installing a large number of bike lanes and it remains a leader of conventional (5-foot wide) bicycle infrastructure among large American cities.

The 2012 plan designates specific streets and bicycle facilities for each segment of the bicycle network. This includes 130 miles of new centerline bike lanes, and over 200 miles marked shared lanes (streets with “sharrows” in the travel lanes), “bicycle friendly streets,” and a small number of physically-protected bicycle lanes.

Between 2008-2013, only 36 miles of bike lanes (6 miles per year) were added to Philadelphia's bikeway network. Although this included Philadelphia's buffered bike lanes, no physically separated bike lanes were installed. To meet the goals of its own Pedestrian/Bicycle plan, and to stay competitive with other east coast cities, Philadelphia not only needs to increase its pace of bike lane installation, but also needs to install a greater number of lanes with higher degrees of protection. The next administration should act on the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan's recommendations while setting its sights even higher by applying to become a Green Lane Project city.⁵ Dedicating more of its own local funding toward meeting network goals and leveraging that funding with state and federal funding will make closing the gaps in the bikeway network achievable.

COMMIT

to existing and new bicycle network goals.

INSTALL

30 miles of physically-protected bike lanes.

75 new miles of standard bike lanes (15 miles annually).

RESTRIPE

10 miles of bike lanes annually.

5. See www.peopleforbikes.org/green-lane-project.

Proposed Action Steps

- Endorse full implementation of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan.
- Apply for federal and state funding to match leverage local funding for bike lane installation.
- Develop, coordinate and implement a community outreach strategy on bike lane installation; announce new lanes for forthcoming paving seasons and work with Council members on community outreach.

Additional Steps to Improve Bicycle Policies

- Task the Streets, Parking Authority and Police Departments to set enforcement goals to address moving and parking violations by motor vehicles and bicyclists.
- Develop a robust bicycle theft reduction task force that includes establishing a city-wide registration program and stings to target and arrest bike thieves.
- Work with SEPTA, Center City District and Parks & Recreation to develop a location for a secured bike parking area (or bike station) to service downtown employees.
- Require utilities to fully repave streets and replace pavement markings after utility cuts.
- Adopt best practices:
 - Install up to 30 bike corrals and 600 sidewalk racks purchased by private citizens or businesses.
 - Operate a “request a rack” and “request a corral” program to identify new locations.
 - Establish a regularly scheduled abandoned bicycle pick-up program.
 - Establish snow removal, sweeping and detour policies for bike lanes.
 - Maintain up-to-date website content.
 - Add bicycle-specific requests to the 311 system.
 - Establish agreement with the Philadelphia Parking Authority to implement more effective enforcement measures to reduce illegal parking in bike lanes, especially on Spruce and Pine Streets.

Strategy 3 | Enhance Accessibility to Public Transit

An effective and efficient public transit system is critical to Philadelphia's economic competitiveness and the mobility of its residents.

Over the past 15 years, SEPTA ridership has increased by 50% in an environment of constant budgetary constraints. The 2013 passage of Act 89 has improved SETPA's capital budget. Meanwhile, PATCO is now slowly implementing long-delayed capital improvements.⁶

Improving transit service in a time of limited funding requires maximizing the efficiency of existing services and increasing integration with other methods of transportation. Expanding SEPTA access for people arriving on bicycles is a cost-effective way to improve transit access.

The next Mayor should use the mayor's bully pulpit and representation on the SEPTA Board to advocate for investments and policy changes to improve SEPTA's accessibility and service.

Proposed Action Steps

- Advocate for SEPTA to:
 - Adopt 24-hour bicycle access policy on regional rail and subway service.
 - Establish Volunteer Ambassador Program at PHL, 30th Street and Suburban Station.
 - Expand the electronic farecard system and establish a process to gather feedback and fine-tune the electronic farecard implementation.
- Support efforts to identify implementable measures to increase capacity, frequency and the quality of service on subway, trolley and regional rail lines.
- Request recommendations from the Transit First Committee on how to improve bus service along key routes.

6. <http://www.courierpostonline.com/story/news/local/south-jersey/2014/06/21/drpa-ceo-faces-angry-riders-old-perceptions-transition/11227865/>

Strategy 4 | Ensure Access to Bike Share

Bike Share will introduce biking as a new, convenient way to get around for many Philadelphians. Philadelphia should sustain and expand the bike share system so that it is used and valued by a true cross section of Philadelphians.

In 2015, Bike Share will launch with the placement of approximately 60 stations throughout sections of Center City, West, North and South Philadelphia. In 2016, an additional 60 stations will be placed to cover more neighborhoods in South, West and North Philadelphia. Bike Share represents an inexpensive, accessible, and

healthy form of public transit and holds tremendous promise to fill in gaps in the regional transportation network. Bike Share will complement transit and help to encourage more households to reduce car usage and ownership.

The City of Philadelphia needs to continue efforts to increase the use of bike sharing throughout the city to ensure that its bike share system is accessible, convenient, and a relevant form of transportation as well as a recreational choice for all.

Proposed Action Steps

- Support the ongoing expansion of Bike Share into all of Philadelphia where there is demand and opportunity.
- Support the integration of SEPTA and Bike Share farecards to weave together the fabric of Philadelphia's public transportation network.
- Explore and implement strategies to make the benefits of Bike Share affordable and accessible to all Philadelphians.

Strategy 5 | Build 25 Miles of the Circuit

Longer and more connected trail networks will help provide more recreational and transportation opportunities to a greater percentage of Philadelphia's population. Underserved communities will have greater access to green space if more open and connected trails are built throughout the city.

The Circuit is the region's 9-county bicycle and walking trail network. Planned for 750 total miles, it is the most ambitious urban and suburban trail network in the country and already is a major boost to our region's economic competitiveness and quality of life. Philadelphia has 87 miles of the planned network, 54 miles of which (62%) have been built.⁷

Since 2009, Philadelphia has worked hard to plan for and add to its trail system, with great success. It released a trail master plan in 2013 and has built

16.7 miles in the past three years. It has been very successful at raising federal and state funds for trails, highly leveraging its scarce capital program dollars. This momentum should continue in the next administration.

Trail building is the most economically-productive form of transportation investment. According to a study released by the Centers for Disease Control, every \$1 investment in trails for physical activity leads to \$2.94 in healthcare savings.⁸ Every day, Philadelphia residents use trails to exercise, to relax, and to connect to jobs, green space, and communities. Philadelphia's next administration should maintain the trail building momentum by finishing the Philadelphia sections of the Schuylkill River Trail and East Coast Greenway, two major spines of the Circuit that lie within Philadelphia.

Proposed Action Steps

- Build remaining 8 miles of the Schuylkill River Trail to make it continuous from Roxborough to Fort Mifflin.
- Build remaining 10 miles of the East Coast Greenway along the Delaware River.
- Build 7 miles of watershed trails such as the Cresheim, Tacony-Frankford, and Pennypack Trail.

7. 2014. *Eight Facts to Know About the Circuit*. http://connectthecircuit.org/uploads/media_items/circuit-progress-report-june-2014v2.original.pdf

8. 2005. Wang, et. al. "Cost Benefit Analysis of Physical Activity Using Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail." in *Health Promotion Practice*; April 2005 Vol. 6, No. 2, 174-179

Strategy 6 | Bring Philadelphia's Streets and Sidewalks into a Good State of Repair

Philadelphia's roads, bridges and sidewalks are suffering from years of disinvestment. When fewer streets are repaved, fewer bike lanes are installed or repainted. And given these fiscal restraints, there is great reluctance to try innovative or high-quality infrastructure, such as green lanes or physically separated bike lanes that require design and additional maintenance expenses. Philadelphia's rate of bike lane installation averages 6 miles a year⁹, which is less than other peer cities have been able to accomplish. Philadelphia will launch Bike Share in Spring 2015, adding many more bicyclists to city streets. Increasing the installation rate of bike lanes and adding new protected bike lanes is needed to accommodate the current and soon-to-increase number of people bicycling for transportation in Philadelphia.

According to the Streets Department, the backlog of streets in need of repaving has grown to over 900 miles, up from 600 miles just five years ago (see Figure 2). The backlog has grown because the budget available for paving has decreased due to court and federally-mandated installation of ADA-compliant curb ramps (4,958 ramps at 826 intersections). For several years, curb ramps were consuming 50-60% of Philadelphia's paving budget.¹⁰ While curb ramps provide an important public benefit and must be installed to comply with federal law, they have come at the expense of the rest of the city's street infrastructure. Despite an injection

of approximately \$10 million through the stimulus bill in 2009, the amount of city funding available for resurfacing (paving and ADA ramps) has fluctuated between \$4-11 million annually over the past ten years, a level insufficient to maintain a state of good repair and to install ADA ramps at the same time.

The Philadelphia Streets Department estimates it should repave 29 miles of federal aid arterials per year and 130 miles of local streets to maintain the city's network in a state of good repair. Due to fiscal constraints and record snowfalls, Philadelphia restored less than 25 miles of street surface in each of the years 2013 and 2014. While the number of miles is projected to increase to 60 in 2015, the level of capital funds for paving (\$16 million) is still half or less than what is needed to repave 130 miles annually.

Sidewalks are essential to a walkable city, and Philadelphia has an extensive sidewalk network, but a combination of legal and funding constraints over a long period of time has led to a serious deterioration of sidewalk conditions in many neighborhoods. The 2010 sidewalk inventory of arterials and collectors found that approximately 10% were in poor or very poor condition. This did not include issues like uneven surfaces caused by tree roots heaving the pavement, which is a widespread problem. By some estimates, Philadelphia spends over \$3 million annually on sidewalk claims.

9. 2014. Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. *Safer Streets Philadelphia*. Figure 9

10. http://articles.philly.com/2012-10-09/news/34323865_1_new-ramps-intersections-domes

Strategy 6 | Bring Philadelphia's Streets and Sidewalks into a Good State of Repair

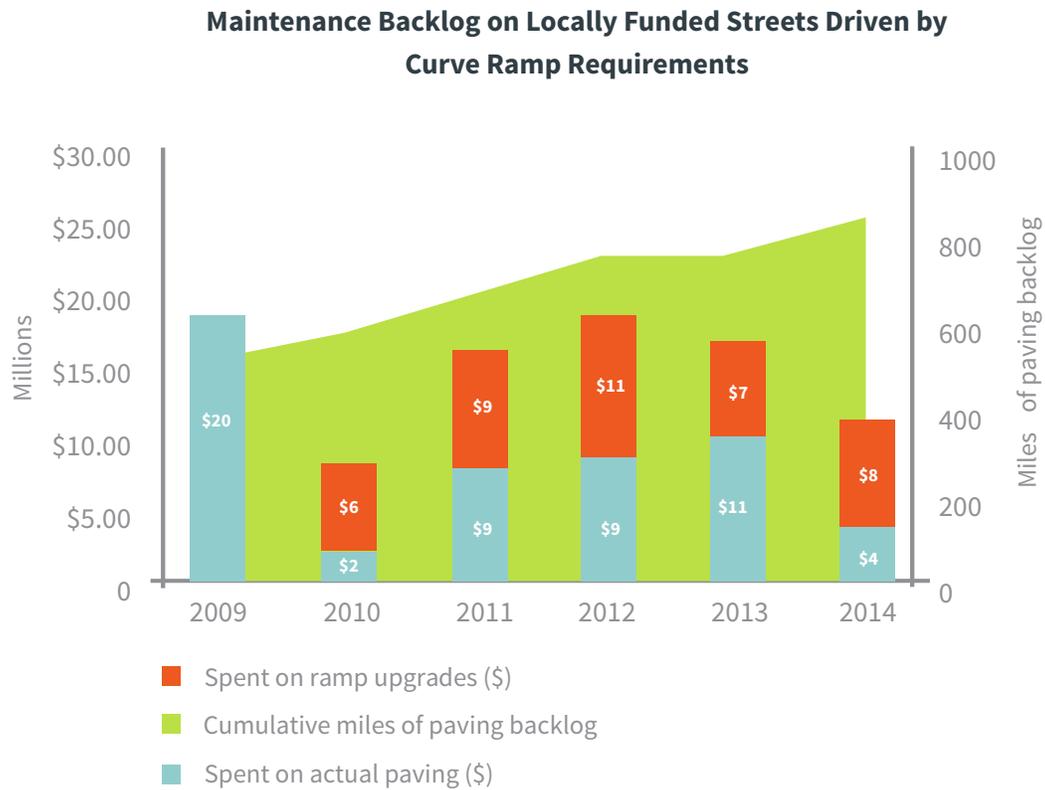


Figure 2 Source: Streets Department, City of Philadelphia

The street paving backlog has grown despite the fact that the Nutter Administration secured over \$100 million in federal and state funding for a variety of transportation projects such as bike share, trails, signal timing improvements and low cost safety measures. Under the Nutter administration, the Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities (MOTU) provided leadership and coordination among a variety of agencies that impact the condition of the city's transportation infrastructure. It is critical that this policy

and coordination function be continued and further strengthened by the next administration.

Furthermore, the City of Philadelphia must start to increase its own operating and capital budgets in order to bring its streets and sidewalks into a good state of repair. Currently, the City of Philadelphia dedicates more capital funding for technology than paving (Figure 3).¹¹

11. Capital budget figures are from Five-Year Financial and Strategic Plan FY15-19

Strategy 6 | Bring Philadelphia's Streets and Sidewalks into a Good State of Repair

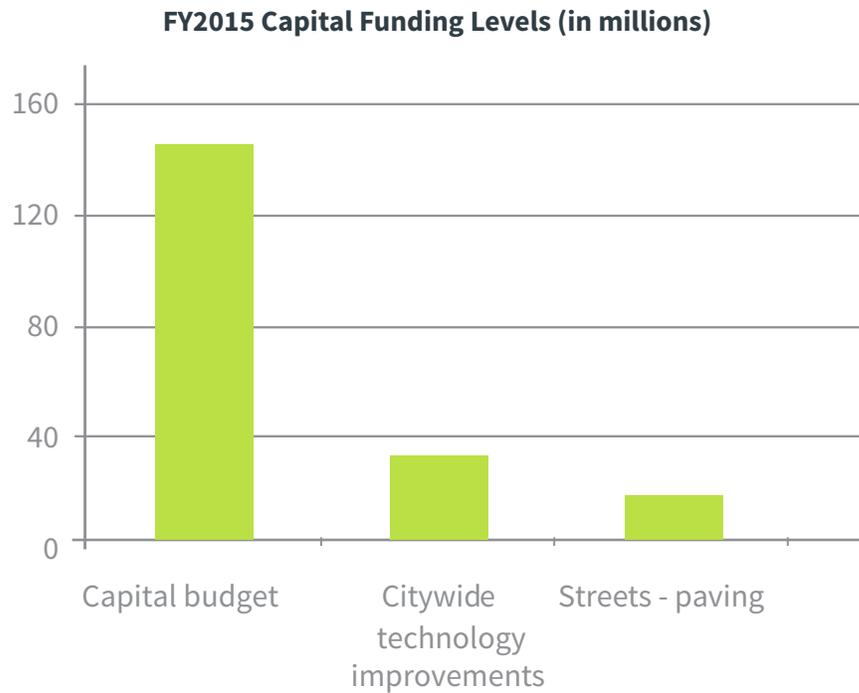


Figure 3 Source: City of Philadelphia, Five-Year Financial and Strategic Plan FY15-19. p. 45, Exhibit A p.74 and 97

Proposed Action Steps

- Increase (by at least doubling) the paving budget in the city's Capital Budget to a level sufficient to repave 130 miles of streets annually and to provide 20% match for Federal Aid Funding to repave an additional 29 miles.
- Increase the automobile registration fee by \$5 (as permitted by Pennsylvania's new transportation bill) to generate a dedicated funding source for paving, striping and maintenance.
- Develop a plan to address the maintenance of sidewalks.
- Revise the Philadelphia Code provision that governs sidewalk maintenance and create a new program with matching fund for property owners who need assistance with sidewalk repairs.
- Require sidewalk inspections whenever properties are sold.

Strategy 7 | Prioritize Transportation and Infrastructure Policy and Local Investment

Philadelphia’s transportation and infrastructure operating funds are well below its peer cities. Philadelphia can change this by boosting operating resources. It should also create a coordinated framework to oversee transportation infrastructure.

Transportation policy and planning is carried out both by the Mayor’s Office of Transportation and Utilities and the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. Transportation operations and maintenance is managed by three Streets Department divisions that comprise the transportation “side” of the Department. These functions need to continue and be coordinated at a high level within the administration.

The operating budget for the Transportation side of the Streets Department is one third that of the Sanitation side. The Streets Department-Transportation operating budget is currently less than 0.7% of the General Fund and has declined by 50% over the past ten years. Other peer cities such as Chicago, Pittsburgh and Baltimore all have budgets that range from 1.5%-5.5% of their general funds.

While New York City has approximately one DOT worker for every street mile, Philadelphia has one Streets Dept. employee for every five miles. The transportation side of the Streets Dept. does not have enough staff or resources to keep its streets in a good state of repair or proactively design them to be safer.

Philadelphia Street Dept. Transportation Operating Budget as Percentage of General Fund



Figure 4 Source: Philadelphia Five-Year Financial and Strategic Plans

Philadelphia Streets Dept. Transportation Operating Budget as Percent of General Fund

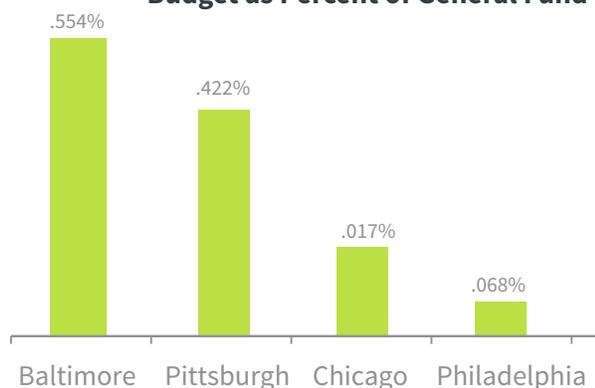


Figure 5 Source: City Operating Budgets for 2013

Strategy 7 | Prioritize Transportation and Infrastructure Policy and Local Investment

Proposed Action Steps

- Increase the Streets Department Transportation Operating Budget and staff resources sufficient to meet the demands of keeping 90% of the City's streets and sidewalks in good state of repair.
- Appoint a Deputy Mayor or other senior official to be responsible for transportation infrastructure, policy, enforcement and coordination among Streets, Water, Police, Parks & Recreation Departments, SEPTA and Philadelphia City Planning Commission.
- Maintain the Deputy Commissioner for Transportation position to report to the Streets Commissioner.
- Create a Complete Streets Office supervised by the Deputy Commissioner for Transportation that develops and coordinates transportation policy, as well as complete street and bike share operations and management.
- Appoint the Deputy Commissioner for Transportation to the SEPTA Board and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Board.
- Have the Transit First Committee report annually on outputs/outcomes.
- Create a reporting unit within the Office of Complete Streets that coordinates among all Streets Department Transportation divisions.
- Create an annual performance report that provides information on:
 - Number of potholes filled
 - Street miles repaved
 - ADA ramps installed
 - Bike lane miles installed & refreshed
 - Crosswalks installed and refreshed
 - Average milling lag time
 - Miles of streets swept
 - Miles of sidewalks repaired
 - State of utilities coordination
 - Number of (traffic, pedestrian, bicycle) signals repaired/replaced
 - Average response time to utility cut patching
 - Number of plumber cuts repaired & average lapse time
 - Number of Complete Streets checklists online

Strategy 8 | Improve the Walkability of Streets and Sidewalks

Philadelphia is the nation's fourth-most walkable large city.¹² Walking is a vital mode of transportation for children, the elderly and people who don't own cars. Numerous studies have found that improving walkability increases economic activity and reduces crime by adding "eyes on the street."

Sidewalks are fundamental to the pedestrian network and a key element of the public realm. The sidewalk is the part of the street where pedestrians should be able to move freely and comfortably without fear of vehicular conflicts. However, competition for narrow sidewalk space is fierce and too many sidewalks are cluttered with encroachments or even closed for long

periods of time due to construction. Weak regulations and inadequate enforcement mean that pedestrian flow is often cramped or even displaced into the street where walkers must compete with motor traffic.

The public realm and the pedestrian experience can be enhanced through wider use of pedestrian plazas, which take advantage of excess pavement. These plazas convert awkwardly configured, and sometimes unsafe, intersections into attractive and lively open spaces, such as The Porch, located just outside 30th Street Station. The pedestrian plaza program could be expanded if it were simplified and provided with more public support.

12. <http://www.walkscore.com/PA/Philadelphia>

Strategy 8 | Improve the Walkability of Streets and Sidewalks

Proposed Action Steps

- Encourage each District Council person to pilot at least one pedestrian plaza.
- Take an active role to expand the pedestrian plaza program so that more neighborhoods can create pockets of pedestrian friendly spaces.
 - Streamline the renewal process, whereby existing plazas are auto-renewed except in cases of neighbor complaints or other poor management.
 - Develop a standardized process in which pedestrian plazas are considered for permanence based on an evaluation of success as temporary plazas.
 - Take a more active role in selecting sites for new pedestrian plazas based on where they would have the most impact and success in increasing the safety and comfort of pedestrians, enhancing the economic vitality of a commercial area, or addressing a need for open space.
- Enhance pedestrian crossings with safety measures, such as leading pedestrian intervals, curb bumpouts, highly visible and durable crosswalk designs, and pedestrian refuge islands.
- Strengthen code provisions and regulations applicable to sidewalk cafes and food vendors (for example, by requiring measures such as temporary railings or sidewalk plaques or moving carts off sidewalks) to provide adequate clear width clearance for pedestrians that are consistent with the 2013 Complete Streets Design Handbook and the 2012 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.
- Expand Streets and L&I enforcement resources to ensure compliance with City Code and regulations that impact sidewalk and street right of ways (ROWS).
- Establish clear policies and enact necessary legislation or regulations to minimize sidewalk closures during construction projects and improve signage requirements.
- Adopt best practices from peer cities for sidewalk snow removal that minimize corner and intersection blockages.

Strategy 9 | Enliven City Streets

Nearly 100 North American cities operate some kind of Open Streets or Cyclovia program that promotes physical activity, sustainable transportation and community spirit.¹³ Philadelphia's lack of such a program is conspicuous.

When the Streets Department held a street party to celebrate the opening of the South Street Bridge in 2010, the excitement and happiness quotient surpassed all expectations. Replicating that type of closure could be done on many key neighborhood streets or bridges. Philadelphia should explore a more formally programmed and robust open streets program

throughout the City. Logistics include sponsorship, closure costs, site selection, partnerships and programming.

Although the April to October MLK Drive weekend closure is technically an "open street," it lacks programming, services, and accessibility to and from residential neighborhoods. Other than closing MLK and the Ben Franklin Parkway and Broad Street for festivals and parades, Philadelphia has no purposed program that encourages all Philadelphians to use the street for exercise, recreation, and fun.

Proposed Action Steps

We urge the next Administration to commit to:

- Host a pilot Sunday or Open Streets program during June, July and August 2016.
- Expand the program in 2017-2019.
- Analyze cost reduction measures that could make open streets more affordable.

13. <http://openstreetsproject.org/initiatives/>

Strategy 10 | Manage Parking Efficiently and Effectively

The public sector owns and controls a vast supply of parking spaces on public streets. This asset should be managed as a resource for the use of the public, primarily for transportation related purposes.

Attitudes toward parking vary widely and disputes over parking are common. Automobile parking is not always the best use of street space, but it will always be highly desired and it has important side-benefits; for example, creating a physical buffer between pedestrians on the sidewalk and moving traffic in the street.

On the other hand, when on-street parking overflows into illegal spots, it causes traffic congestion and hazardous conditions.

Publicly-owned on-street parking spaces are more efficient than individually-owned spaces because they can be used by more drivers over the course of a day. Replacing a public on-street space with a private space, typically by creating a driveway to a parking pad or garage, means making it harder for your neighbor's mother to visit or for the UPS truck to make a delivery. This type of front-loaded parking is particularly disruptive in rowhouse developments because it typically prevents the construction of livable rooms

with a window on the street, and because it introduces so many driveways across the sidewalk.

The public on-street supply must be managed carefully, not to maximize revenues, but to ensure availability of spaces. This can be done through setting the parking rates at a level that will promote sufficient turnover of parked cars. A review of sixteen studies of parking behavior in cities found that an average of 30 percent of traffic in central business districts is caused by drivers searching for parking.¹⁴ Establishing an appropriate level of parking availability can reduce the amount of time it takes to find a space, and potentially reduce congestion. While increased revenues are not the goal of this action, to the extent that revenues do increase, it is vital that the Philadelphia School District receives its fair share.

Attention is also needed to the off-street garages and lots that comprise the bulk of the parking supply in Center City. These facilities are licensed by the City and required to post rates, but the signs are not adequate for drivers to comparison shop. The parking rate signs are often complex and confusing, with small print, and can be placed in hard-to-see locations, sometimes even facing the wrong direction.

Figure 6: Example of Simplified Parking Rate Sign



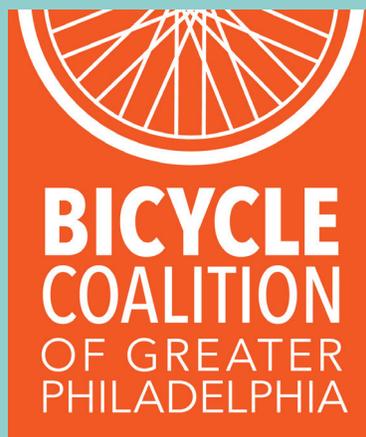
¹⁴.2007. Shoup, Donald. "Cruising for Parking," in *Access*; Spring 2007 Number 30

Strategy 10 | Manage Parking Efficiently and Effectively

Proposed Action Steps

- Develop a streamlined and transparent process for civics and business improvement districts to create more loading zones to reduce double parking in commercial corridors.
- Wherever curb parking is in short supply, set a price on it with a goal of establishing a maximum of 85% occupancy level per block, so that one empty space can be found on any block at any time.
 - Establish adjustable rates at parking kiosks.
 - Desticker a few spots on residential permit blocks to create availability of short term parking.
 - Fine tune the resident parking permit program in areas where residential vehicle demand exceeds the supply of curb parking spaces by considering changes such as expanded hours of coverage, increased fees for additional cars per household, and/or limiting the number of permits per household.
 - Don't scuttle good policy by allowing meter feeding.
- Strengthen enforcement of zoning code provisions that prohibit individual private garages or parking pads in rowhouse and twin neighborhoods, especially when neighbors don't want them.
- Increase enforcement of parking within 20 feet from crosswalks to enhance visibility and safety at intersections.¹⁵
- Develop and enforce a standard sign for all parking lots and garages that are licensed by the City and open to the public, with a few basic facts allowed and required: the Cost per Hour, the Maximum Daily cost, and the Evening cost (if any). The signs would be designed to be visible for a minimum distance in advance of each garage entrance.
- Determine how to create a flexible and functional parking garage wayfinding system coupled with intelligent transportation systems to alleviate the cruising and queuing that occur as drivers search for available parking in the core of Center City.
- Perform a comprehensive review of all existing valet licenses and review current enforcement practices.

15 .<http://www.streetfilms.org/daylighting-make-your-crosswalks-safer/>



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