

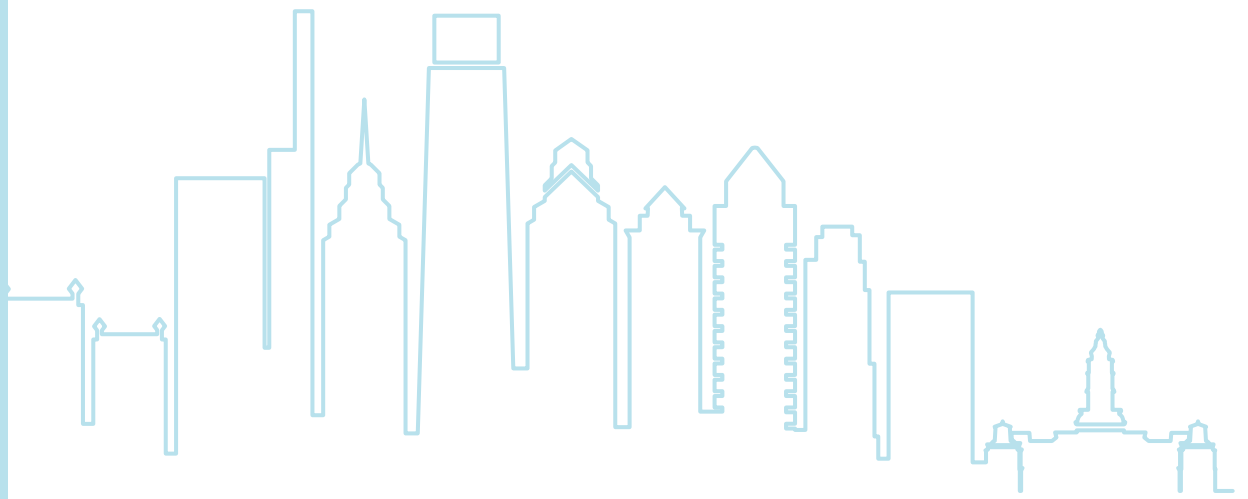


2023 Better Mobility Platform

For Philadelphia's
100th Mayor

Prepared by the 2023 Better Mobility Coalition:





A VISION FOR PHILADELPHIA

Everyone who calls Philadelphia home deserves a city that is connected, safe, and built for everyone regardless of income, race, age, or ability.

But what does it mean to be connected? By living in a metropolitan area, you should be able to get to a grocery store, local business, primary and secondary schools, transit hubs serving work centers and universities, recreation centers, or your place of worship safely within 15 minutes. You should have a safe route to school and have the opportunity to choose whether or not you want to drive, walk, ride a bicycle, or take public transportation. Our physical environment has the opportunity to bring us together, but too often it divides us.

This opportunity needs to be equitable. Neighborhoods made up of the highest income earners shouldn't be the only place you can walk or ride a bicycle to work. Every neighborhood regardless of income deserves basic quality of life services like safe roads and sidewalks, access to a high quality bike network, efficient public transportation, and safe public spaces. With proper investment in accessibility, lighting, and ongoing maintenance, these spaces lead to a reduction in crime and increase comfort and a sense of community.

And what does it mean to be safe? In 2022, 125 Philadelphians were killed in motor vehicle crashes. Philadelphia's per capita traffic fatality rate is higher than Chicago, Washington DC and New York City. And fatal and serious injury crashes are three times more likely to occur in areas of the city where most residents are living on low incomes and 30% more likely to occur in areas of the city where most residents are people of color¹. Eliminating traffic deaths will meaningfully benefit communities of color and low income that currently bear the burden of this epidemic both in terms of improved safe streets and concurrent crime reduction. We envision Philadelphia as a city where traffic deaths are a thing of the past and unacceptable ever in the future.

In 2020, Philadelphia adopted an Age Friendly, Livable City for All Communities Action Plan² that encompasses many transportation issues that are important especially for multi-generational households. The next mayor should use that Plan and this platform to guide its transportation related policies.

¹ "Vision Zero Action Plan 2025 - Philadelphia." Vision Zero PHL
² Philadelphia: An Age-Friendly, Livable City for All

Goals for the next mayor

We propose four high level goals for the next mayor around this vision. We hope that candidates not only use these suggestions during their campaigns, but take the necessary steps to see them through once in office. We hope the next mayor adopts these goals to guide its administration's policies and legislative initiatives:

- 1 Reduce annual traffic deaths in half by 2026
- 2 Motivate 2 out of every 3 Philadelphians to bike, walk, or take transit to get around
- 3 Reimagine and redesign streets to prioritize human life, public health, and community
- 4 Provide every resident with access to safe streets and sidewalks to get to school or work, to play, and to enjoy Philadelphia and its great neighborhoods

Recommendations

To meet the four goals outlined above, The Philadelphia Mobility Platform for 2023 offers the following six recommendations, each described in more detail in the proceeding pages:

- 1 Prioritize Safe Streets
- 2 Commit to the Vision Zero goal of eliminating traffic deaths
- 3 Build a connected network of protected bike lanes and Circuit Trails
- 4 Enable a City Connected By Transit
- 5 Expand Micromobility
- 6 Enliven Philadelphia's streets

1

Prioritize Safe Streets



1. PRIORITIZE SAFE STREETS

Create a new PHL Department of Transportation

Vision

Creating safe streets starts with investing in safe infrastructure and road design. Philadelphia needs leadership that is committed to reducing speeds on High Injury Network corridors and redesigning streets for their most vulnerable users: people walking, bicycling, and taking transit. We believe that Philadelphia can do this by creating a city-level Department of Transportation by retaining and combining the MDO Office of Transportation & Infrastructure, Office of Complete Streets, and the Streets Department Transportation Division to efficiently respond to neighborhood-level requests and deliver capital and maintenance projects that adhere to the City's complete streets policies.

Background

The nation's sixth largest city has a decidedly 20th century approach to transportation. Philadelphia combines transportation operations with sanitation in the Streets Department. Consequently, transportation priorities are subsumed by the larger sanitation operations in terms of budget and staffing. Meanwhile, transportation planning and policy development is housed separately within the Managing Director's Office in the Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability (oTIS).

Philadelphia has challenging transportation-related problems. With one of the highest per capita traffic fatality rates among peer cities, fatal crashes disproportionately impact Black or Hispanic Philadelphians, and disproportionately impact Philadelphians that live in predominantly low-income zip codes. There is a major backlog of streets to be repaved and ADA ramps that are under court order to be created.

Combining the operations function of the Streets Department's Transportation Division with planning and policy functions of oTIS will allow for more efficiency, transparency, and accountability, and will align Philadelphia with its peer cities such as Cincinnati, Chicago, and Oakland.

Learning from other cities



Cincinnati Department of Transportation & Engineering hired their own dedicated in-house maintenance crew to build out pedestrian infrastructure and more than doubled their pedestrian safety initiatives in their 2023 budget.³



Chicago's Department of Transportation lists accessible links to programs and services like Open Streets, Bike Chicago, and Chicago Smart Lighting Program, making resources readily available to the average Chicago citizen.⁴



The Mayor of Oakland ran on a platform that included establishing a Department of Transportation with the explicit goal of maintaining ongoing metrics, including “percent more potholes repaired” and “Street Murals.”⁵

By creating a new DOT, Philadelphia will be able to achieve more ambitious goals regarding keeping its transportation network in good state of repair, building its high quality bicycle network, creating traffic-calmed streets, constructing Vision Zero and Complete Street projects. A new DOT must have a Commissioner with Complete Streets and active transportation planning or engineering experience who can be accountable to these initiatives and be charged with prioritizing active transportation and safety over congestion. This will also allow for more transparency, efficiency, and accountability. Recently, the City created a new agency for the PHL Airport for similar reasons.

Recommendations

1 Introduce legislation to ask Philadelphia voters to create a Department of Transportation by May 2024

In order to create a new department, the voters must approve a ballot measure to change the City's Charter.

2 Create a Discrete Traffic-Calming Program

The next mayor needs to successfully execute the recommendations in “Reducing Barriers in the City's Traffic-Calming Request Program,”⁶ which outlines steps to redesign the City's Traffic Calming Program to make the program more accessible, inclusive, and transparent. Traffic calming helps reduce speeds and improve traffic safety. By improving access to resources related to traffic calming, the new PHL DOT will be able to create safer streets and reduce the

³ “Cincinnati Hires Dedicated In-House Crew To Build Pedestrian Infrastructure.” Streetsblog USA

⁴ “Transportation.” City of Chicago

⁵ “Creating a New Department of Transportation for Oakland.” Bloomberg Associates

⁶ “Reducing Barriers in the City's Traffic-Calming Request Program.” Operations Transformation Fund

impact of traffic crashes. The Traffic Calming program should encompass the following:

- Reduce the backlog of 800+ requests by creating additional capacity to conduct speed studies
- Increase the budget allocated to install speed cushions and other traffic calming devices
- Create a daylighting program to keep 500 intersections clear over 4 years similar to Hoboken, NJ
- Establish a dedicated Traffic Calming/Vision Zero maintenance crew: install speed cushions, maintain flex posts, etc.
- Prioritize enforcement of illegal parking on sidewalks and pedestrian rights of way.

3 Create a Discrete Sidewalk Safety Program

The major barrier to improving Philadelphia's sidewalks is funding. To establish a more robust approach to sidewalk repair, the City should bear some portion of maintenance funding for residential sidewalks. Current Philadelphia policy assigns responsibility for sidewalk repair and maintenance to property owners, and gives the City the power to repair the sidewalk on its own initiative if the City deems it necessary. With lack of City funding for repair and high costs on property owners or little motivation, the city's sidewalks are badly deteriorated and unsafe to all users.

In order to not just react to requests but to proactively maintain good sidewalks, we recommend the following as stated in "The Case for Sidewalk Repair"⁷:

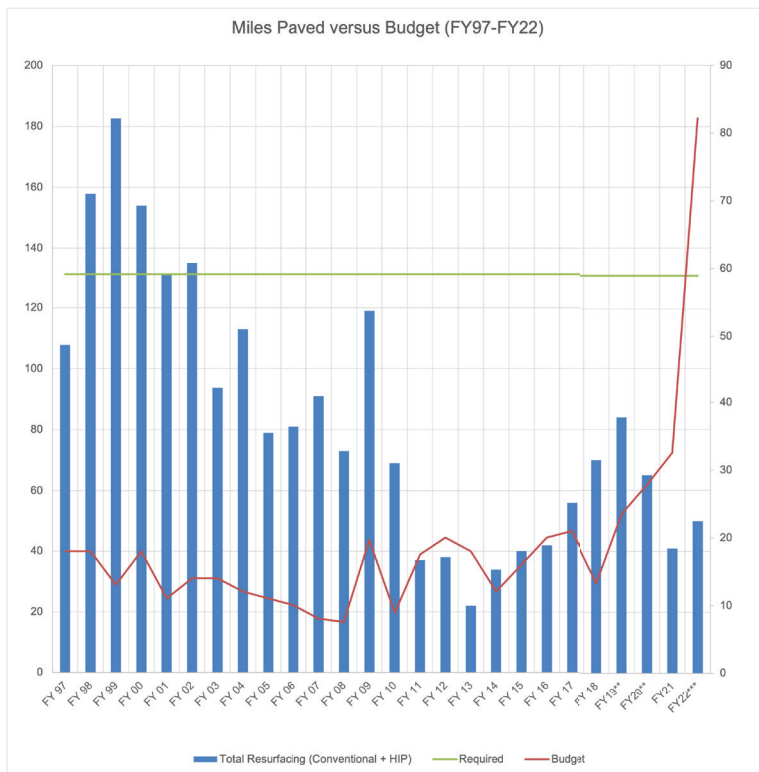
- Hire a sidewalks coordinator
- Launch a sidewalks master plan process
- Develop a strategy for funding sidewalk repair
- Launch education and outreach campaign

In addition to these actions, Philadelphia should **establish a grant program of \$2 million annually to help low-income property owners repair their sidewalks**. The City's sidewalks are in disrepair at much higher rates in its poorest neighborhoods. The City's budget should also set aside funding annually to provide local match for new opportunities in grant programs created by recent federal legislation, as it does for other transportation infrastructure.

⁷ "The Case for Sidewalk Repair." DVRPC.org

4 Hire third paving crew and pave 131 miles of local roads annually and 30 miles of Federal Aid roads

Since 2002, Philadelphia has not reached its goal of repaving 131 miles of streets during a calendar year despite it being a goal of Mayor Kenney and Mayor Nutter. This is partly due to legal requirements that Philadelphia replace ADA curb ramps⁸ and labor issues caused by the pandemic. Even with more money dedicated in recent fiscal years, the fact remains that the City has struggled to reach its annual repaving goal. A critical component is the need for a third paving crew that must be budgeted for and hired by the Streets Department.



5 Add line items in the Capital Program for traffic calming, maintenance of Vision Zero and bicycle/pedestrian projects.

Giving transportation needs a higher profile will help shed light on Philadelphia’s budgetary needs when it comes to making its streets safe for people.

The City’s Capital Plan lumps together many expenses into its paving line including: bicycle lane maintenance; sidewalk improvements; and traffic calming such as speed cushions, curb extensions, and raised crosswalks. **There needs to be more transparency on how these expenses are allocated and budgeted in order to keep the Department accountable.**

⁸ Philadelphia Paving

- 6** Create an “Enterprise Fund” for the new DOT by “siloing” revenue from review fees, similar to Philadelphia Water Department and the new Department of Aviation
- 7** Prioritize compliance with the Philadelphia city code to ensure safe pedestrian passageways at construction sites.
- 8** Support and expand the current Philly Street Light Improvement project to upgrade 120,000 high pressure sodium street lights into a network of more efficient, longer-lasting LED lights.⁹

The pilot is set to expire after three years and should be made permanent until all street lights are upgraded to LED

⁹ “Philly Streetlight Improvement Project.” City of Philadelphia

2

**Recommit
to The
Vision Zero
Goal of
Eliminating
Traffic
Deaths**

2. RECOMMIT TO THE VISION ZERO GOAL OF ELIMINATING TRAFFIC DEATHS

Increase resources to reduce traffic deaths in half by 2026

Vision

Under the leadership of the next mayor, more people will choose to walk or ride a bicycle for short trips because Philadelphia's streets are safe and comfortable to use. The Vision Zero program will have succeeded in achieving zero traffic fatalities due to it being prioritized for funding and capital projects, with implementation of proven policies Automated Speed Enforcement, safe pedestrian crossings on all roads and a connected network of parking protected bike lanes and trails.

Background

In 2017, Mayor Kenny signed a Vision Zero Executive Order setting the City's goal of eliminating traffic deaths by 2030 and created a new team of staff in the Office of Complete Streets within the Office of Transportation, Infrastructure and Sustainability (oTIS). Since then, the Office of Complete Streets has issued two Vision Zero action plans (2017 and 2020), annual reports (2018-2022), and a 2025 Capital Plan.

Vision Zero in Philadelphia currently focuses attention on making the transportation system itself safer, rather than changing individual behavior. It embraces a framework of safe speeds, safe streets, safe people, safe vehicles, and safety data, to acknowledge that people are not perfect, and make

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Vision Zero IS possible

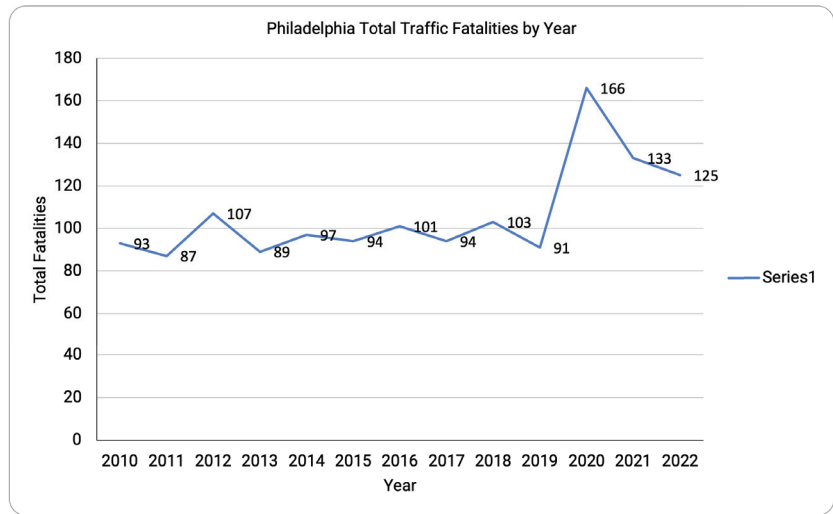
Hoboken, New Jersey (pop. 60,000) had zero traffic deaths over a four year period by deploying quick implementation, high impact solutions to make certain intersections and roads safer.

Jersey City, New Jersey (pop. 283,000) adopted a Vision Zero policy in 2018 and eliminated traffic deaths by 2022 on roads it controls.

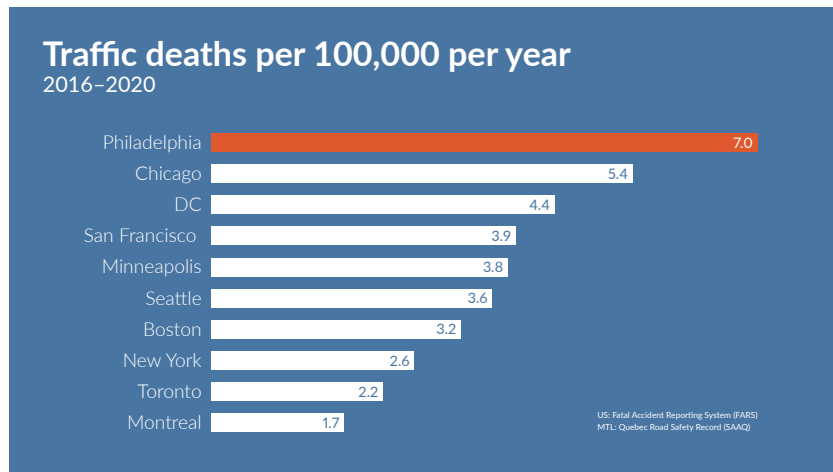
¹⁰ "A New Jersey city achieved 0 traffic deaths in 4 years with quick, high impact ideas." NPR
¹¹ "It's Been a Deadly Year on US Roads. Except in This City." Bloomberg.com

mistakes, but when they do, systems should be in place to prevent traffic-related deaths.

Philadelphia must retain and strengthen its Vision Zero policy because over 100 people a year die on its roadways due to traffic crashes. And that level of traffic violence has increased over the past three years due to the pandemic. While the number is slowly declining since 2020, the level of traffic violence is still an epidemic that is not receiving enough attention and must be prioritized in order to truly begin to reach reductions that will enable the City to achieve its goal of zero deaths by 2030.



Additionally, Philadelphia has a high rate of traffic deaths compared to many peer cities. Though Philadelphia's rate of traffic deaths spiked due to the pandemic, it was high before 2020 compared to other cities.

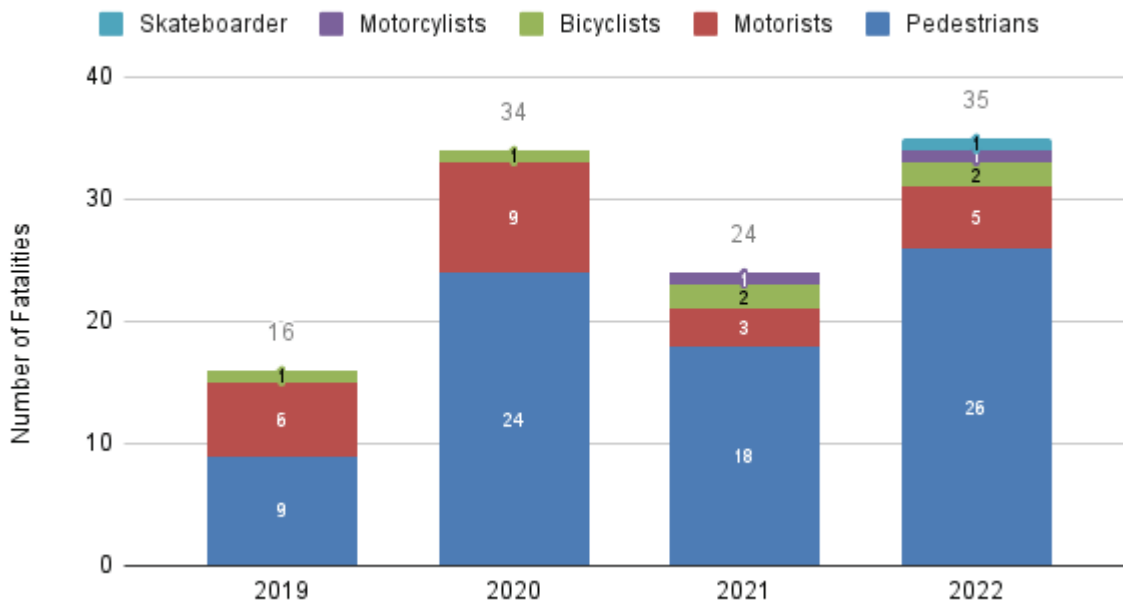


In Philadelphia, people walking (40%), riding a motorcycle (16%) or riding a bicycle (4%) are more likely to be seriously injured or killed in a crash, even though 90% of people involved in a crash are motor vehicle occupants¹². This means that a disproportionate number of Philadelphians killed in crashes are pedestrians, motorcyclists and bicyclists.

Moreover, crashes also disproportionately impact neighborhoods where a majority of residents live in poverty or a majority of residents are people of color. Fatal or serious injury crashes are three times more likely to occur in areas of the city where most residents are living on low incomes compared to areas where fewest residents are living on low incomes. This disparity in how traffic safety problems affect lower income communities and communities of color reflects decades of disinvestment.

Lastly, Philadelphia is experiencing a major spike in hit and run fatal crashes. The number of deaths caused by hit and runs in 2022 is double the deaths that occurred in 2019. A majority of victims are pedestrians. While street redesign can't necessarily prevent hit and run crashes, Philadelphia can take other measures, such as controlling reckless behaviors including speeding and timely reporting to auto body shops.

People Killed by Hit & Run Drivers (2019-2022)



¹² "Vision Zero Action Plan 2025 - Philadelphia." Vision Zero PHL

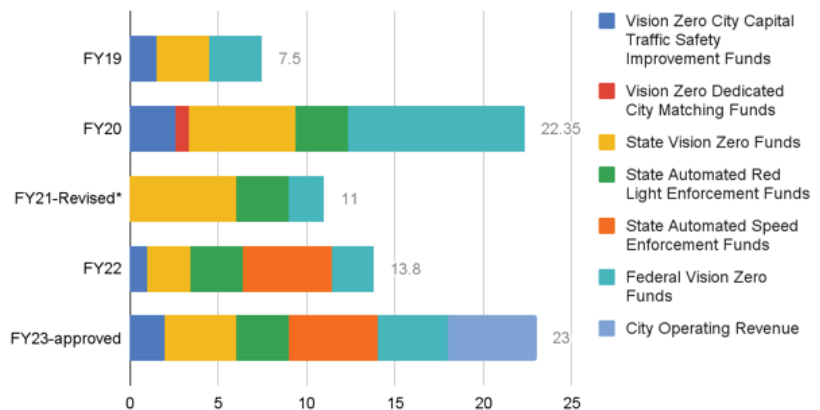
2025 Vision Zero Action Plan

The 2025 Vision Zero Action plan (issued in 2020) committed to focusing Vision Zero efforts where a majority of residents are either people of color or people living on low incomes where data shows the impact of traffic crashes is highest. The Action Plan also commits to emphasizing automated enforcement instead of police-led enforcement that has unjustly been concentrated among Black, Brown, and immigrant communities. Both of these policies should be continued by the next mayor. The next mayor should also recommit to the existing Vision Zero Capital Plan and major initiatives such as expanding automated speed enforcement to other dangerous roadways, which should be a high profile priority.

Budget

Philadelphia dedicates a small amount of capital funding for its Vision Zero work. Since FY19, the City has committed its own capital funds in the amounts of \$1-2 Million annually. In FY23, it ultimately doubled its commitment from \$1M to \$2M from its proposed budget to its final budget, and also added \$5M from its operating revenue towards Vision Zero capital in the final budget. When federal and state funding is added in, Philadelphia is projected to spend \$23M in FY23. Compared to the need, \$23M is not enough to make a large scale difference to reducing traffic violence.

City of Philadelphia Vision Zero Approved Capital Funding Sources



Recommendations

- 1 Introduce Vision Zero ordinance to codify in the City code in order to eliminate all traffic fatalities by the 2030 target

- 2 Commit \$15 million annually for Vision Zero projects in the Capital Program
- 3 Dedicate staff resources to press the Pennsylvania General Assembly to pass legislation 1) to expand automated speed enforcement beyond only Roosevelt Boulevard, and 2) to lower posted speed limits to 20MPH
- 4 Ask Governor Shapiro to find an administrative solution to allow parking separated bike lanes on all roads
- 5 Create a Vision Zero line item for maintenance of bike lanes and other low cost safety enhancements in the PHL Transportation budget
- 6 Support continuation of Automated Speed Enforcement on Roosevelt Boulevard and expansion to other similar arterials by prioritizing the passage of new legislation in Harrisburg



3

**Build A
Connected
Network Of
Protected
Bike Lanes
And Circuit
Trails**

3. BUILD A CONNECTED NETWORK OF PROTECTED BIKE LANES AND CIRCUIT TRAILS

By 2030, Philadelphia has a network of 175 miles of protected bike lanes and Circuit Trails

Currently, Philadelphia has nearly 30 miles of protected bike lanes and has 10 miles funded to be built through 2024. Philadelphia also has 66 miles of completed Circuit Trails.

To have a seamless, connected network of high quality bike lanes and trails that serves anyone aged 8-80 and that attracts more people to use a bicycle for transportation or recreation, Philadelphia should build an additional 40 miles of protected bike lanes and an additional 29 miles of trails, closing gaps in the bike lane and trail network.

Philadelphia has plenty of roads where protected bike lanes could and should be installed. However, the City's ability to build protected bike lanes is hamstrung by a requirement adopted by City Council in 2012 that requires an ordinance for any bike lane that is installed in place of a traffic or parking lane. Eliminating that requirement is one important step that should be taken to enable the City to build another 40 miles of protected bike lanes.

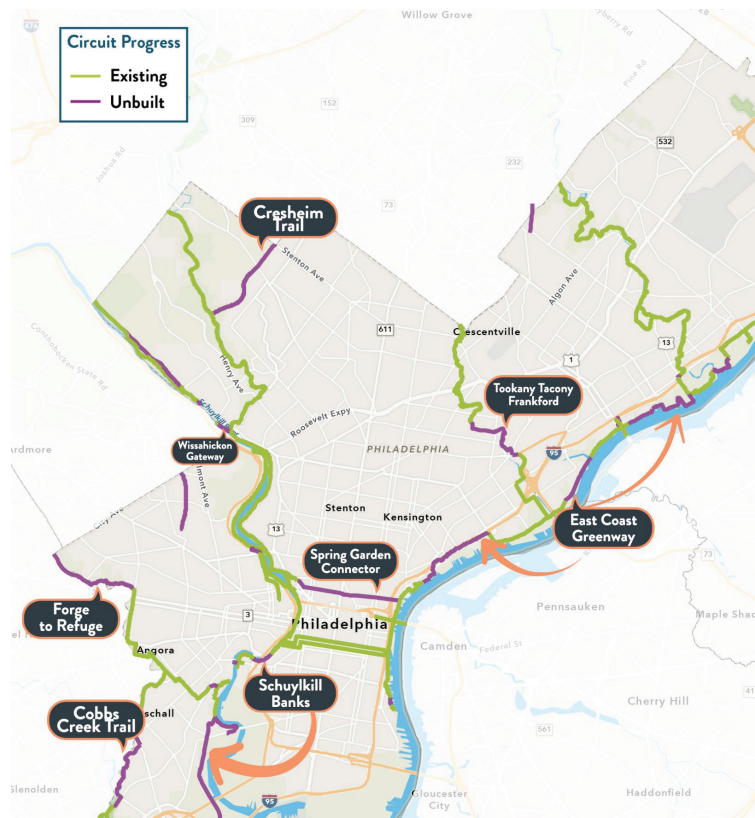
The next mayor must add an additional 40 miles of protected bike lanes to what will be built by 2024 to make an 80-mile network of protected bike lanes.

Completing its Circuit segments is an achievable goal for Philadelphia; a number of those segments are in some stage of development already. The next mayor should commit to building out the Circuit Trails during their two terms, given that the rate would be to complete 4.1 miles annually over a seven year period. If Philadelphia commits to providing matching funds, it can raise the bulk of the construction dollars from state and federal sources.

Recommendations

- 1** Build out the remaining 29 miles of Circuit Trails within Philadelphia by 2030
- 2** Build the 10 miles of protected bike lanes that are currently funded

- 3 Build 40 additional miles of protected bike lanes by 2030 for a total of 80 miles
- 4 Add key Circuit Trail segments to future regional Transportation Improvement Programs
- 5 Commit at least \$25 Million in the future capital programs to build out the Circuit Trails segments between FY23 and FY31
- 6 Commit to dedicated line item in the capital budget to build out protected bike lanes between FY24-FY31
- 7 Support legislation to remove the ordinance requirement for creating new bike lanes from travel lanes and replace that requirement with a regulation guaranteeing community involvement and input.
- 8 Commit to upgrade all protected bike lanes with more durable separation
- 9 Commit to dedicated maintenance line item for Circuit Trails in the Parks and Recreation budget
- 10 Commit to dedicated line item for maintenance of bike lanes, sidepaths and other low cost safety enhancements in the PHL Transportation budget



In Philadelphia, there are 66 miles of existing Circuit Trails that are identified as green on the map. The segments that are identified as purple are unbuilt and together comprise over 26 miles that need to be prioritized in order to complete Philadelphia's vision of a seamless network of trails. (12.56 miles in progress, 7.8 miles in the pipeline and 5.96 planned miles)¹³

¹³ "Circuit Trails Map" DVRPC.com

A stylized bus icon composed of white geometric shapes: five vertical rectangles for windows, two circles for wheels, and a horizontal line for the body. The bus is positioned in the upper center of the page.

4

**Enable
A City
Connected
By Transit**

4. ENABLE A CITY CONNECTED BY TRANSIT

Invest \$75 Million over six years in high capacity transit infrastructure and implement and advance the policies and recommendations outlined in The Philadelphia Transit Plan: Vision for 2045 to make transit safer and more convenient for riders.¹⁴

Vision

A city where everyone can get to the grocery store, local business, schools, transit hubs serving work centers and universities, recreation centers, or your place of worship safely within 15 minutes is a city worth investing in. Philadelphia's next mayor will work with SEPTA, state, and regional stakeholders to fund high capacity transit infrastructure, implement bus priority improvements, right of way protections, and enact parking reforms for transit that are critical to ensuring every Philadelphian has a right to safe, accessible, and affordable transit.

Background

SEPTA is a lifeline for Philadelphians that connects families, seniors, and youths to jobs, schools, healthcare, and commerce. Investments in SEPTA that support safe, frequent, affordable, and reliable transportation enrich the lives of all Philadelphians. Investing in a well connected transit network is key to the city's competitiveness in attracting and retaining people, jobs, and employers. It is also an opportunity for the City to reduce the income disparity between residents through a low-income fare program, and help reduce climate change and save our region from climate disaster.

SEPTA and the City must work in tandem to address quality of life issues aboard transit such as safety and cleanliness, as well as create a lifestyle transit network that connects our communities together. While SEPTA is the operator of our city's transit network, the City plays an instrumental role in ensuring the stops, roadways, and policies are in place to provide SEPTA with the strongest network possible.

Currently, SEPTA is pursuing major planning efforts to improve its bus network, trolley infrastructure and regional rail in order to increase ridership, improve accessibility and efficiency. These major planning efforts should be supported by the next Mayor,

¹⁴ "The Philadelphia Transit Plan." Phila.gov

Recommendations

1 Implement bus priority improvements on critical bus corridors

- Implement signal prioritization, stop location improvements, and dedicated bus lanes on 10 corridors identified in the oTIS Transit Plan by 2025
- Unless passed in 2023, seek passage of bus lane camera enforcement ordinance

2 Fund high capacity transit infrastructure & a low-income fares program

- Increase the City's capital assistance and operating subsidies to SEPTA as part of the City's capital budget process
- Work with SEPTA, state, and regional stakeholders to authorize a regional or municipal tax to fund public transit directly
- Support and endorse the Transit For All PA platform

3 Fund bus shelters with real time travel information

- Commit at least \$1M in future capital programs to implement new bus shelters with real time travel information

4 Hold SEPTA accountable to station ADA accessibility

- Ensure SEPTA meets its 2035 goal in providing ADA accessibility on both the MFL and BSL

5 Create walkable neighborhoods connected by transit

- Seek implementation of dynamic meter pricing by Philadelphia Parking Authority
- Remove minimum parking mandates from the city's zoning code
- Integrate transit and land use planning to expand and improve the TOD overlay

6 Support SEPTA's goals to improve bus, trolley and regional rail service



5

**Expand
Micromobility
Access**

5. EXPAND MICROMOBILITY ACCESS

Support Micro Modal options to improve city's connectivity

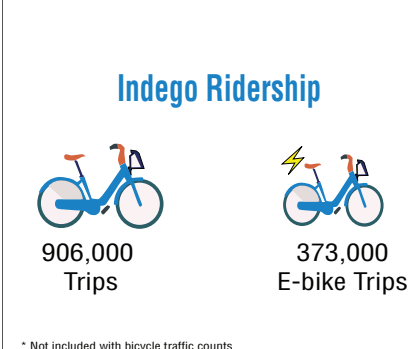
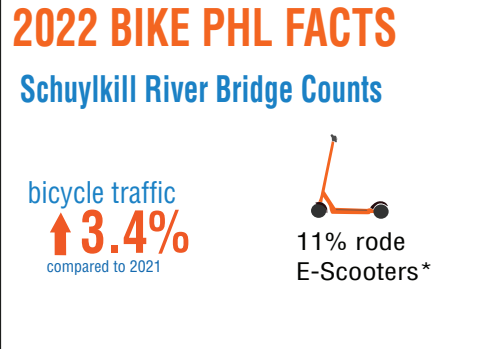
Vision

Micromobility allows a user to fill small gaps in their commute by using a bike, scooter, or another micro modal device. Expanding access to these modes helps create an efficient, sustainable, and accessible transportation system. Through micromobility, we have an opportunity to create better connections between our standard metro system, bicycle infrastructure, and beyond that would allow users to reach their destinations in 15 minutes. We need a mayor that will advocate our needs to Harrisburg and fight for everyone's right to get around in the way that most makes sense to them.

Background

In 2021, 52% of all trips in the US, including all modes of transportation, were less than three miles, with 28% of trips shorter than one mile. Just 2% of all trips were greater than 50 miles.¹⁵ If more users had the access to micromobility and safe infrastructure, the US would be poised to turn a lot more of the '52% of trips' into trips made by public transit, bike, or scooter.

Daily life has changed since the pandemic and it is clear that pre-pandemic commuting is not returning in the same way. With a change in 'peak' and 'off-peak' travel, Philadelphia has the opportunity to increase access to micro-modal transportation and shift people from their cars and on to trains, Indego bikes, or personal electric scooters or electric assist bikes.



2022 ¹⁶

2023
Better
Mobility
Platform

¹⁵ "More than Half of all Daily Trips Were Less than Three Miles in 2021." Department of Energy
¹⁶ "2021-2022 Bike Counts." BCGP

Recommendations

1 Expand and Integrate Indego Bike Share

- Continue the pace that will reach full expansion of Indego by installing 7,000 docks and 3,500 bicycles that also meets equity goals to improve transportation access for all people, with particular attention to BIPOC and people with economic challenges as laid out in the 2022 Indego Equity Plan.
- Integrate Indego with the SEPTA key card, allowing users to seamlessly travel from bus to bike and bike to train

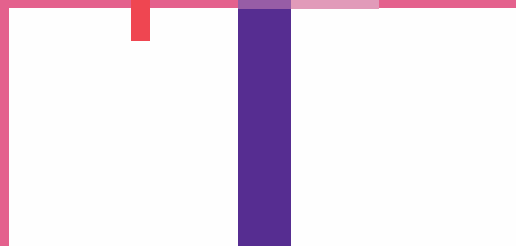
2 Support Legislation that would regulate Electric Assist Bicycles and Electric Scooters

- Electric assist bikes and Electric scooters continue to grow in popularity as a more accessible and realistic choice for people. Currently, Pennsylvania does not regulate either E-bikes or E-scooters. However, without regulations e-bikes can be dangerous to pedestrians and other cyclists because of increasing speeds.
- Currently, Electric Scooters are illegal in Pennsylvania according to the Title 75 Vehicle code. Despite this status we have seen a steady increase in e-scooter users on the streets in Philadelphia. According to our 2021 Bike count, e-scooters made up 5% of all riders counted.
- As E-Bikes advance, it becomes more difficult to determine the difference between different electric assist and non-electric bicycles. By regulating speed on trails and bike lanes, PA will be able to keep up with any technological advancements.
- The Philadelphia Mayor needs to support both Electric Assist Bikes and Electric Scooters and push for this issue with the Philadelphia state delegation.



6

Enliven Philadelphia's Streets



6. ENLIVEN PHILADELPHIA’S STREETS

Make it easier for community members, non-profits, and businesses, to engage and adapt Philadelphia’s streets to meet the needs of their communities

Vision

The next Mayor of Philadelphia will make it easier for citizens to transform and steward their streets: reducing the burdens associated with placemaking in the right-of-way. Under their leadership, Philadelphia will support the growth of a portfolio of over 50 parklets, pedestrian plazas, and art enhanced intersections. A Mayor that enlivens city streets will also create a monthly Open Streets program and implement the Philadelphia Tree Plan

Background

Philadelphia’s streets, sidewalks, medians, and traffic triangles represent the city’s largest public asset: over 30 square miles, or 14,000+ football fields worth of asphalt and concrete owned by Philadelphia’s citizens.



Photos taken by Steve Weinik for StreetboxPHL

During the pandemic, more neighborhoods than ever before took to the street, with residents across the city discovering the joys of eating and walking in the road. In 2019, only four of 18 city Planning Districts featured at least one parklet or pedestrian plaza – small platforms

that turn parking spaces into parks or plazas delineated by little more than planters and flexible posts. Some had as many as three. In 2021, every planning district saw citizens transforming parking spaces into pedestrian spaces or streeteries, ranging from 11 in the far Northeast to over 450 in Center City. Meeting Philadelphia's demand to transform its streets, to give concrete back to communities, and empower ROW stewards, the City should:

- Reduce administrative burdens
- Reduces technical burdens
- Increase predictability and support

Enlivening Philadelphia's streets also means implementing the Parks and Recs Tree Plan. The plan not only lays out ambitious goals to restore and grow Philadelphia's tree canopy, it articulates a vision that can cool neighborhoods, improve the air we breathe, and support community investment and engagement in planting and caring for street trees. This Mobility Platform specifically calls for attention to be paid towards:

- Reducing the burden of tree care on residents
- Growing the urban forest across the city
- Investing in people and communities

Bringing life to Philadelphia's streets requires a mix of administrative and legislative lifts. It requires revising ordinances and codes, as well as investing in projects and procedural reform. Changes to how rules are made must be met with investments in mechanisms, processes, and resources that make it easier for citizen stewards.



Photos taken by Steve Weinik for StreetboxPHL

Recommendations

1 Reduce administrative burdens

The process is broken, be it individual right-of-way (ROW) encroachment ordinances for each bench, or burdensome insurance requirements. To reduce administrative burdens:

- Create omnibus encroachment ordinances that reduce individual legislative and coordination burdens
- Provide flexible standards for community support for adoption on a council district basis
- Create a Pilot Permit that allows ROW interventions a pilot period before seeking longer term permits with standard approval requirements

2 Reduce technical burdens

It's too hard for civic stewards to meet the design and program requirements associated with pedestrian enhancements. To enliven city streets the City needs to:

- Provide more and more detailed design guidance for Streeteries, Parklets, and Pedestrian plazas, with acceptable vendors and solutions clearly articulated
- Ensure safety and design guidance is context appropriate and reflects area traffic, safety, and local conditions
- Remove seasonality requirements for parklets and other ROW interventions
- Develop creative solutions to reduce insurance burden to stewards

3 Increase predictability and support

Long review times and high capital costs are significant obstacles for community groups seeking to enliven city streets. To bring vitality to neighborhoods the next administration must:

- Provide pedestrian enhancements the same review and response time as other permitted activities
- Develop a Street Furniture library

4 Reduce the burden of tree care on residents

Growing the urban forest across the city by bringing equitable access to the benefits of street trees and their canopy requires:

- Neighborhood scale tree plans and implementation
- Set up a Tree Fund
- Develop a proactive inspection and maintenance cycle on street trees
- Providing alleyway and vacant lot tree removal services

5 Relocate Sidewalk Vendors to Parking Lanes

Center City lunchtime vendors park on the sidewalks, creating pinch points for pedestrians that are less than six feet wide. Space near corners should be reserved for those vendors between the hours of 10-2pm.

References

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