

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE



INTRODUCTION

Name: [Sherrie Cohen](#)

Seeking The Office Of: [Council At Large](#)

Political Party Affiliation: [Democrat](#)

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YES OR NO

For each question below please indicate whether you agree or disagree. You may comment to elaborate on your response. (optional)

VISION ZERO

Do you support funding a Vision Zero approach for pedestrian & cycling safety citywide?

- YES
 NO

In terms of social equity, traveling on foot and cycling are the two least expensive modes of transportation available to Philadelphians. Simultaneously, these two modes of travel also improve the health and wellbeing of our residents. Also, infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists is the least expensive in terms of upfront costs and upkeep when compared against transit and automotive travel. Therefore, funding should be made available to ensure that both cyclists and pedestrians are able to travel safely.

Would you support enhancing penalties for aggressive, distracted and reckless driving, including speeding and DUI, in order to reduce road safety deaths and injuries?

- YES
 NO

Motor vehicles are the largest, loudest and inherently most dangerous objects on the road, especially when operated carelessly, recklessly, at an excessive rate of speed and/or when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Our laws should prioritize the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, who are the most vulnerable users of the right of way and who pose the least risk to others.

Candidate, please initial each page and sign last page.

The 5th Square PAC

Should the Philadelphia Police Department do more to enforce existing traffic laws?

YES

NO

There is ample opportunity for officers to issue tickets to dissuade aggressive and careless driving. Aggressive traffic enforcement is a revenue generator which results in a double positive for the city in encouraging safer driving while generating revenue when safe driving is not adhered to. Further, the police should also do a better job of enforcing against parking in bicycle lanes (and should also set an example by not doing so themselves). ~

Do you support the use of traffic calming devices, such as curb bump-outs, chicanes, speed bumps or garden medians?

YES

NO

When done well, these types of traffic calming measures can achieve multiple goals at once, including increased safety for all mode users and increased storm water management capacity, all while enhancing the pedestrian experience and making the city more attractive to residents and visitors alike.

Would you find room in the budget for additional Streets Department traffic calming devices?

YES

NO

In addition to revenue generation through more aggressive ticketing and the red light cameras, I would seek additional budgetary funding for traffic calming measures to ensure the safety of all travel mode users.

TRAFFIC PLANNING

Do you support giving buses priority over private cars on city streets?

YES

NO

I would support recommendations for bus priority as made by MOTU and SEPTA. ~

Do you support the installation of 30-minute loading zones on all blocks with high residential density and/or commercial activity?

YES

NO

In high density areas, short term access to street space is far more beneficial than long term storage of vehicles, which can be accommodated in garages. ~

Mayor Nutter created MOTU (Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities) in his first administration. Do you support continuing the overall mission of MOTU in the next 4 years?

YES

NO

MOTU has been an efficiently run office, whose benefits significantly outweigh this office's cost. Savings achieved through energy reduction coordinated through this office, in addition to increased taxes through enhanced property values and business activity are some examples of the monetary benefits of this office, over and above the invaluable services that it provides as a coordinating agency with a results driven approach. ~

The 5th Square PAC

Do you support restricting commercial deliveries to late night and early morning hours, and banning the largest trucks from residential neighborhoods absent compliance with special permit and insurance requirements?

- YES
 NO

I would look to restricting deliveries from the morning and evening rush hour peaks to reduce traffic obstruction during peak hours. However, I would be cautious about mandating late night deliveries due to the potential for disruptive noise. ~

Philadelphia used to repave streets every 9 years. It now repaves every 15 years. Overall, the city has a 900 mile backlog of streets needing to be repaved. Do you support doubling the funding levels for Streets Department's paving budget by fiscal year 2017?

- YES
 NO

Yes, depending on budgetary constraints. I would also look to studying whether there has been a reduction in the wear and tear on streets that have added bicycle lanes. If these streets require less frequent repaving due to reduced wear and tear, then that can be looked at as a cost saving rationale for implementing more bicycle lanes citywide. ~

Do you believe that universities, colleges and large non-profits should be encouraged to subsidize the cost of public transit for students, staff, administration, etc.?

- YES
 NO

I would absolutely encourage this. I would also urge these institutions to not provide free or subsidized parking which is a perk that undermines transit use. ~

OPEN DATA

Should the City Revenue Department release as much of its records as legally possible for independent analysis and overall transparency?

- YES
 NO

Transparency is a major key to accountability.

Should the city make all data concerning street use, street conditions and traffic crash investigations available in a timely, digital format to the public?

- YES
 NO

Yes, assuming that this can be done in a cost effective manner given current budgetary constraints.

BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Protected bike lanes on JFK and Market were piloted and found to be minimally disruptive to drivers in 2011. Will you support funding the installation of these protected bike lanes if elected?

- YES These wide boulevards can use a “road diet.” Installing protected bicycle lanes is an important first step towards that end.
- NO

Do you believe that bike-friendly infrastructure is economically beneficial to a community’s commercial corridors & cities at large?

- YES Studies show that the provision of various forms of bicycle infrastructure (bicycle lanes, bicycle parking, etc.) increase more and safer bicycling. Other studies show that cyclists are apt to spend more money on a monthly basis at local businesses located along urban commercial corridors than their vehicle driving counterparts.
- NO

ZONING & LAND USE

Do you support raising millage rates on the land portion of the property tax, and lowering millage rates on improvements to the structure?

- YES I believe so, but would need to study this further. Raising the millage rate on the land portion of the property tax should lead to increased development, particularly in the core of the city where land values are highest. In turn, converting properties into more intensive uses will benefit city coffers through additional tax revenues, while absorbing some of the growth pressure in outlying gentrifying neighborhoods. In addition, the conversion of empty lots will raise values in nearby properties, further bolstering the city’s coffers.
- NO

Do you support revising the zoning code to remove minimum accessory parking requirements?

- YES I believe so, but would need to study this further. I know that minimum parking requirements drive up the cost of development and, as a result, drive up the cost for residential, commercial and mixed use development alike. Instead, developers can decide if they want to include accessory parking where it is permitted instead of setting a mandate. In addition, mandating car dependency in a highly walkable, bikeable and transit rich city makes no
- NO

PUBLIC SPACE PLANNING

Would you support pedestrianization of street space that may currently be used for parking or vehicle transit?

- YES Studies repeatedly show in Philadelphia and elsewhere that commercial activity increases when street space is converted to pedestrian parklets and plazas. This translates into jobs and tax revenue while beautifying our city and creating outdoor spaces for interaction amongst neighbors and visitors alike.
- NO

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Is regularly scheduled street sweeping of Philadelphia's streets more important than preserving the convenience of residents who prefer not moving their vehicles?

- YES
 NO

Keeping our civic spaces clean is much more efficiently achieved through mechanized street sweeping than through expecting businesses and residents to individually intercept street trash (that they might not have generated), before it goes into the sewers . . . and into our rivers. Other cities do this. We can too.

The current cost for an annual parking permit for car owners to store their private vehicle on public streets is \$35. Do you think this price point should be revisited?

- YES
 NO

The current fee encourages folks to lodge infrequently used vehicles on city streets. Any increase in the fee, however, must be accompanied by a low-income exemption to the fee.

OPEN RESPONSE

For each question below please answer using the provided space. Detail is appreciated.

VISION ZERO

What is an appropriate legal speed limit on a neighborhood street in Philadelphia? On an arterial street? What are some policies and/or physical alterations that can be implemented to help ensure drivers obey speed limits and other traffic laws?

20 mph is a reasonable speed limit for residential streets. We should replicate the example of Spruce and Pine Streets where the lights are calibrated to reward drivers who drive at twenty miles per hour or less with continuous green lights. At this speed, bicyclists can also take advantage of the continuous green. Also, studies show that pedestrians struck by vehicles that were moving 20 mph are exponentially less likely to suffer fatal injuries than by vehicles operating at 30 mph. Let us design streets to protect the most vulnerable users. For arterials, I would recommend reducing the speed down to 30 mph, with appropriate buffers from the pedestrian and cycling realm (e.g., protected bike lanes) with traffic signals timed to reward slower driving. Reducing lane widths, placing the bike lanes between parked cars and the sidewalk and planting large canopy trees are physical alterations that can reduce drivers' impulses to speed.

ZONING & LAND USE

What kinds of zoning and land use policies can best help our neighborhood commercial corridors and small businesses?

PARKS & GREENSPACES

Do you support increasing funding for Parks & Recreation throughout the city as a means to improving public health and the economy? If so, how would you better fund our parks? If not, why not?

Yes. The cuts to the Department funding have been unconscionable. Funding for the Parks and Recreation Department must be restored, at least, to the preFY 2010 level of funding. I would consider proposing a dedicated tax on all tickets sold for the two professional sports stadiums and the professional sports arena. This would help us recoup the \$30 million we spend each year on the mortgage for the two stadiums, and direct needed funds to our parks and recreation centers.

STREET TREES

At 16% of total land area, Philadelphia has one of the lowest tree canopy percentages among large U.S. cities. Comparable cities exceed 30%. Do you believe Philly needs to increase this percentage? If so, how? Please be specific about how you would fund this.

Increasing the tree canopy is vital to the health and wellbeing of our city, and I would start by more effectively protecting the mature trees that we currently have. This way, when we plant young saplings, fewer of them will be replacing mature trees and more will actually be going toward increasing our canopy. Our current policy of merely mandating replacement of an equivalent caliper measurement of replacement trees for an unsanctioned removal is an insufficient penalty to deter haphazard tree removal, particularly during construction activities. I would advocate for significant fines (\$1,000 or more) for the removal of mature street trees (5" or greater caliper measurement) that were not preapproved by the designated arborist, with the proceeds going towards a tree replenishment fund. I would have this added to the 311 App so that citizens can take a photo of the site of the removed or severely damaged tree and report it just as easily as they do to report graffiti.

PUBLIC SPACE

What is your position about vehicles parked on the City Hall apron/sidewalk?

Unless it is needed for someone who is elderly or disabled, it sets a bad example, flaunts the law and shows disrespect to the pedestrian realm which is one of Philadelphia's greatest assets. This is unacceptable in a city where everyone is a pedestrian at one point or another. "

BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

What is your position in regards to creating an integrated protected bike lane network throughout the city of Philadelphia? Are there areas in the city that you believe should be addressed first?

A bicycle lane network is only as good as is its connectivity. I would place great weight on the recommendations of MOTU and the Streets Department where they have studied areas that they believe can provide connections in order to bridge gaps in the current bicycle lane network. As a general rule, safety trumps driver convenience. I would place priority on lanes in or near areas with high ridership and high known crash rates, to increase safety. I would also look to maintain Philadelphia's strong track record of placing bicycle lanes in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and in neighborhoods of color. "

TRASH & LITTER

Philadelphia provides municipal trash service to residences, but businesses are left to contract with private vendors, resulting in multiple large dumpsters in the public realm (e.g., alleyways). Do you think the City should change this current trash collection strategy? If so, how?

We can do a better job of utilizing and reenvisioning our smaller streets, so that they are more than mere dumpster alleys. I would encourage MOTU to look into means for centralizing trash collection/pickup points, with frequent pickup schedules, so that these intimate streets can be repurposed as they have been in other cities. "

TRAFFIC PLANNING

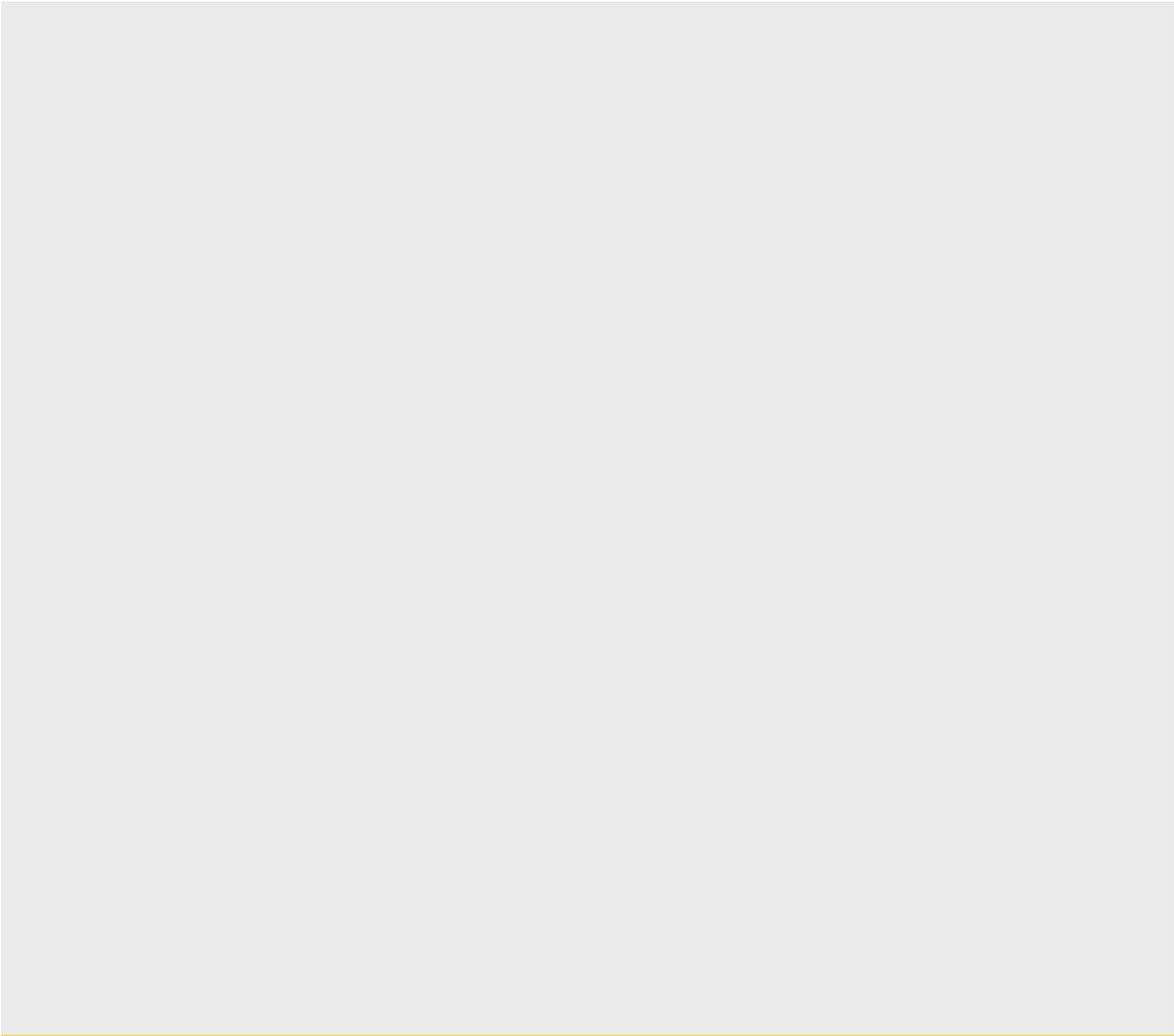
Should City Council be the approving body for traffic alterations to Philadelphia's citywide street network, e.g. removal of a traffic lane, turning lane, parking lane, etc.? Or should this be determined by the Streets Department, MOTU, PennDOT and other street-related agencies?

I need to research this issue further. I believe in the importance of community input and participation, as well as the importance of recommendations by transit officials. Perhaps where there is a strong recommendation by transit officials that the proposed traffic alteration is a matter of public safety, Council should not be the approving body. Or, in the alternative, where there is a proposal by transit officials to materially alter traffic patterns and community members are not in agreement with the proposal, I would encourage 6month pilot programs with subsequent reevaluation by community members and transit officials.

BLOG INVITATION

We invite you as a candidate for political office to reach out to the voters of Philadelphia by speaking to them directly. We will host your thoughts on one of the following 9 topics below if you so choose. Please choose one topic and detail 3-5 policy changes you would make to achieve this goal.

1. Reducing the number of motor-vehicle crashes and conflicts among street users with appropriate infrastructure or roadway design changes, automated traffic law enforcement, or street- or neighborhood-specific changes in traffic rules
2. Ensuring thorough investigation of, and appropriate consequences for, drivers who commit traffic offenses that result in injury or death
3. Encouraging Philadelphians to use public transit, walk or bicycle within the city, instead of driving
4. Repurposing street space to better meet transportation needs (please specify particular streets)
5. Making land assessments accurate, and keeping them accurate
6. Increasing the amount of public space for non-transportation use, such as plazas and street closure programs (e.g., open streets and play streets.)
7. Expanding the on-street bike network in the most heavily-biked areas
8. Investing in walking and biking infrastructure outside of Center City
9. Getting our most popular bus and trolley lines out of congested mixed traffic



Candidate Signature:

THE 5th SQUARE