

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE



INTRODUCTION

Name: [Helen Gym](#)

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

Political Party Affiliation: [Democrat](#)

Campaign Website and/or Facebook page: www.helengym.com, www.facebook.com/HelenGym2015

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

I operate with the guiding principles that we need to stop prioritizing cars over people and that our streets must be safe for every single user. My sense on many of our streets is that while speed is one problem, so are other basic traffic issues such as cars not making complete stops, using turn signals, and not occupying bike lanes. With the data we currently have access to concerning unsafe locations and intersections, there is no excuse for not taking all steps within our power to reduce risk of injury. We also must do more to support non-car modes of transit that are relied on by all types of Philadelphians in all neighborhoods, including by instituting and steadily expanding a network of protected bike lanes."

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

Candidate, please initial each page and sign last page.

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

- YES
 NO

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

- YES
 NO

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

- YES
 NO

TRAFFIC PLANNING

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

- YES
 NO

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

- YES
 NO

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

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

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

We'll have to look carefully at where we can find room in the budget to do this, but anyone who's driven on Philly streets lately knows we need to reduce the paving backlog. It's not just an issue of convenience for drivers, but a serious safety issue as well."

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

OPEN DATA

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

- YES
 NO

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

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
- NO

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

- YES
- 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
- NO

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

- YES
- NO

PUBLIC SPACE PLANNING

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

- YES
- 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

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

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?

I operate with the guiding principles that we need to stop prioritizing cars over people and that our streets must be safe for every single user. My sense on many of our streets is that while speed is one problem, so are other basic traffic issues such as cars not making complete stops, using turn signals, and not occupying bike lanes. With the data we currently have access to concerning unsafe locations and intersections, there is no excuse for not taking all steps within our power to reduce risk of injury. We also must do more to support non-car modes of transit that are relied on by all types of Philadelphians in all neighborhoods, including by instituting and steadily expanding a network of protected bike lanes.

ZONING & LAND USE

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

Again, I believe that as a Council member, my role is to support and defer to knowledgeable planners. I do believe that we need to move as quickly as we can to complete zoning remapping, so we finally move to a system less dependent on variances. I am open to upzoning to help incentivize activity near key transit nodes and commercial corridors, and to strengthen the market for those businesses located there. As I've stated in my released policy proposals, I would also pursue more accurately assessing land values and would more aggressively tax parking lots, to raise needed funds for services and encourage more robust uses that will improve our tax base and local economy.

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?

Certainly. The bottom line is that our parks and rec system is often the most unabashedly positive interaction citizens have with City government. On a summer day you can ride your bike along the Schuylkill River Trail, head to the Japanese Gardens, pass by Kelly Pool and head to the Belmont Plateau and the entire time you will never stop seeing crowds of Philadelphians-- of all ages and all backgrounds-- enjoying our public spaces. We must invest in each one of them, from our rec centers, playgrounds and pools to Fairmount Park's crown jewels of the Wissahickon and Pennypack. I support increasing resources through the general fund, through philanthropy, and through whatever means necessary to adequately fund them.

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.

Absolutely. In parts of the City it will take organizing to explain to neighbors the benefits of putting in trees, and how they benefit the city economically and improve the health of our citizens.

PUBLIC SPACE

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

It is ridiculous, stupid, ugly and must end."

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?

We need them. Too many politicians seem to think they can cast off cycling as a fad or as an activity of the privileged. Nothing could be further from the truth. Tech workers are riding to work on N. 3rd street, young moms are taking children to daycare, and immigrants are coming home late at night from grueling third shifts at our most trendy restaurants. All these uses must be supported, protected and encourage. I specifically think there are some low-hanging fruit of wide streets that could be re-worked smartly, including Washington Avenue, Market Street and JFK, and Spring Garden Street come to mind. But again, I want to defer to experts here, including the Bicycle Coalition.

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?

It is an interesting idea worthy of study. Our Streets Department does a good job, but I would want to know whether we even have the proper vehicle infrastructure to consider doing something like that."

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?

Absolutely not. The lack of a bicycle lane on 22nd Street is the most glaring example of that sort of disastrous policy making.

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: I, Helen Gym, have personally read and responded to this questionnaire.

THE 5th SQUARE