

# CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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## INTRODUCTION

Name: [Isaiah Thomas](#)

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

Political Party Affiliation: [Democrat](#)

Campaign Website and/or Facebook page: [www.voteisaiahthomas2015.com](http://www.voteisaiahthomas2015.com) [facebook.com/FriendsofIsaiahThomas](https://facebook.com/FriendsofIsaiahThomas)

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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

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.**

## The 5th Square PAC

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

- YES  NO
- I do not see this as an issue of law enforcement, this is an issue of infrastructure.

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

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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

This is beneficial for Center City-based businesses but the small businesses in other areas benefit from having these delivery options. I would speak to different different Councilmen and Councilwomen to find reforms that are appropriate for various types of business corridors

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

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

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## 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

The focus should be focusing the tax burden from business taxes and residential taxes to commercial real estate taxes.

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

- YES  
 NO

The zoning code was recently overhauled as part of a process with all stakeholders involved, we cannot revise the code without continuing the process.

## 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

All city-based fees should be constantly looked at and evaluated.

NO

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## 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?

Philadelphia streets, except for portions of the far northeast and northwest, are extremely narrow and densely populated with rowhomes. This narrowness helps to slow down some drivers, but lower limits could also help. Under Title 75 our speed limits are in most circumstances 25mph now, and I would like to see that limit lowered to 20mph on most neighborhood streets. For arterial streets within the city, I believe a maximum of 25-35mph is acceptable, but that will depend on a number of factors including, the condition of the street, how many driving lanes, how many traffic signals, and the conditions for bicycle and bus traffic."

I would like to investigate multiple traffic-calming methods for implementation in Philadelphia. The use of chicanes to bend and shape roads to slow down drivers has been used in San Antonio and Austin. The Philadelphia Complete Streets guide also contains suggestions on the use of medians, curbcuts, and raised speed reducers, or speed bumps, to calm traffic in the roadway. I will also increase the use of red-light cameras at significant intersections, and work with the General Assembly to allow the use of speed-cameras on our most dangerous roads, like Roosevelt Boulevard. I would also like to use curb extensions at the intersections of multiple streets, like on East Passyunk Avenue for instance. These have been identified by the leftover, virtually untouched snow in the street, and the area could easily be transformed into a curbed area as a refuge for pedestrians and as a way to reduce speed.

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# ZONING & LAND USE

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

Fostering development on our commercial corridors is a significant portion of my overall neighborhood economic development platform. In the 1990s and 2000s I was involved in the redevelopment of East Passyunk Avenue in South Philadelphia, and I believe that streets like this can be redeveloped across Philadelphia. As Mayor, I will work with Community Development Corporations and Business Improvement District managers to direct City investment into these businesses and properties. The ground-level commercial properties present a great opportunity to develop affordable housing on the 2nd and 3rd floors of these properties. Through low-interest loans from the City directly, or from a community bank or credit union supported by the City, the business can improve their portion, and improve the above floors with an agreement they keep rents affordable. This improves the high levels of vacancy on commercial corridors that can inhibit overall growth and appearance."

I will also expand the Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP), which currently has authority to enforce the Property Maintenance Code in some sections of the city. CLIP also handles graffiti abatement and vacant lot cleaning throughout the city. In my administration, CLIP will work directly with the commercial corridors to attack the blight and vacancy, hold speculating property-owners accountable for their failure to make necessary repairs, and also assist in the overall cleanliness of the street. This is an investment that will pay for itself over a short period of time, as new business open and more corridors improve.

# 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 I support increased funding for Parks & Recreation to improve public health and the economy. In a recent twitter chat about sustainable businesses, I explained that I would encourage Parks & Recreation to collaborate with grassroots organizers to allow the community to take responsibility over environmental and economic climate of Philadelphia.

# 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.

I believe that we do need more street trees to green Philadelphia. This should be a combination of city funding, environmental-based nonprofits, and community organizations to make greening Philadelphia a community effort.

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## PUBLIC SPACE

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

I see that parking on the City Hall apron is an issue for traffic. I would welcome an underground lot but due to the subway, I am not sure how possible this would be.

## 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?

I was impressed by the roll-out of the Indego Bicycle Share Project and think that it is an important step towards achieving Vision Zero. I believe that bicycle accessibility to to expand outside of the Center City corridor, starting with the Northwest area."

## 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?

I think the strategy works on paper but elected officials need to have conversations with business owners and waste management to make sure these strategies are being properly enacted. If elected to City Council At-Large, I would work with the various District Councilmen and Councilwomen to make sure that each trash collection system works for each community.

## 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 believe that MOTU should be the approving body for traffic alterations but with input from City Council and associated street-related agencies.

# 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

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Topic 6:

Increasing the amount of public space for non-transportation use, such as plazas and street closure programs: I believe that there is a decent amount of public space in Philadelphia that can be transformed into community space. If we work with education-based nonprofits to transform public space into playground and other play space for our young people. I would also utilize public spaces for more Indego bike share programs to expand outside of the Center City corridor. Before outlining more policies, I would invite feedback from residents in various parts of the city to hear about the public safety and infrastructure issues and recommendations directly from the people.

Candidate Signature:

THE 5<sup>th</sup> SQUARE