



Action Plan for Philadelphia

As an At-Large member of City Council, Eryn will work with colleagues and our communities to build an intentional, audacious, thoughtful, and measurable plan for the city's future.

Eryn understands the many challenges facing Philadelphia are connected, so our solutions must be holistic and comprehensive. If our schools are better performing, our local economy improves; if our local economy grows faster, we can progressively lower our stagnant and unacceptably high poverty rate. Eryn also believes we can begin to address some of the root causes of our greatest challenges by focusing on our city's mental, emotional, and behavioral health issues. These complicated issues require our focused attention if we want to make meaningful progress for our children and families.

Read more about what Eryn will do as our next Councilperson to tackle the biggest issues facing Philadelphia: the opioid and substance use disorder epidemic, building safe and healthy communities, job and economic growth, high-quality city services in every neighborhood, improving our schools, protecting our environment, strengthening Philadelphia's ethics rules, and preserving affordability.

Substance Use Disorder

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Substance Use Disorder

Too many generations of families have suffered from the impact of substance use disorder (i.e. alcoholism and addiction). This disease has broken down our communities and families for generations. Now, Philadelphia finds itself in the midst of a crisis yet again - one that is killing thousands of Philadelphians, our children, our family members, our neighbors, and our friends.

Eryn knows firsthand from the experiences of family members the devastating impact SUD has on our communities and how it can exacerbate generational economic, social, and emotional issues. We must do a better job of providing supportive services to those in need and get to the root of our greatest challenges by way of counseling, casework, social work, and therapy. Additionally, those struggling with SUD must have access to quality treatment programs that provide support for loved ones also impacted by these complicated issues.

It's also true that addiction is disruptive to our safety – substance use disorder is frequently linked directly to acts of violence in our neighborhoods. We have to balance our support for the afflicted with our need to keep communities safe. This will require a careful, compassionate, and comprehensive response so we can save lives and rebuild our families and neighborhoods together.

ACTION PLAN

- Create and fund a mobile and flexible facility focused on saving lives. A mobile response unit provides the flexibility needed to respond to active users by supplying lifesaving medications as well as addressing changing conditions, including but not limited to geographic concentrations of usage that shift over time and type of drug usage. This approach also appreciates that communities should not be inundated with the responsive infrastructure and programming of this epidemic through the development of permanent structures in their neighborhood. A mobile response unit is not a long-term solution – only recovery treatment is – but in the meantime, we must save lives immediately and educate our communities. All of this requires a flexible and varying set of interventions.
- Establish standard levels of care for all public dollars spent on recovery treatment facilities, including offering family treatment programs for those living with someone working a recovery program. Additionally, entities contracting with the City must be held to these standards when managing coordinated care for our most economically vulnerable people.
- The City of Philadelphia must always lead by example and cover the full cost of recovery treatment as part of its insurance plan for government employees (approximately 28,000 people).
- Support Medication Assisted Treatment - a treatment program overseen by a physician to promote recovery - as a necessary option to maintain stability for a subset of individuals working towards full recovery.
- Train our law enforcement leaders (police officers, prosecutors, and correctional officers) and our city employees to better identify issues of substance use disorder and give them the tools to assist in medical emergencies (use of Narcan). We must also authorize and encourage local law enforcement leaders to partner with treatment and community leaders on programs that divert individuals who have overdosed, or who are actively using drugs or alcohol, away from the justice system and into treatment services.
- Continue to strengthen our partnership and coordination between Philadelphia's local law enforcement as well as the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) – and other local, municipal authorities particularly in adjoining counties - to prevent drugs from entering our communities in the first place. Eryn will work with the Philadelphia Police Department and our partners to secure new resources to curb the effects of the drug trafficking market and promote best enforcement practices.

Economic Growth

Our local economy is growing too slowly and prosperity isn't evenly distributed. From 2009 to 2018, private-sector jobs in Philadelphia grew at a rate slower than the national average and below the average of the 26 largest US cities. To boost our economy and foster job growth, Philadelphia's tax and regulatory structure must achieve a more perfect balance that unleashes our city's economic potential and leaves no Philadelphian behind. City Council must lead to establish an economic environment that is competitive locally and globally, supports businesses of all sizes, attracts new residents, and funds our public institutions and promises to our residents and families. Creating jobs and wealth is key to tackling pervasive and systemic poverty in Philadelphia; to reduce our unacceptable poverty rate, we need to be viewed as a place that is competitive and hospitable to business. Philadelphia needs to get this right.

ACTION PLAN

- Work with the Department of Revenue to build a more comprehensive and responsive tax system, including incentives and tax credits that build the economy we want - one focused on dramatically increasing our economic growth rate and one that responsibly supports our city's revenue needs.
- Reform the tax abatement program and propose graduated property tax abatements for the real estate industry and intentionally target areas of the city that have yet to experience the benefits of development. This may include expanding the incentive program to stimulate rehabilitation and/or new construction efforts in commercial corridors or residential areas outside of the greater Center City area.
- Shift to a higher commercial real estate tax model - rather than a uniform tax rate for commercial properties and homes - to enhance overall real estate tax collection, recognizing that this will require advocacy at the state level to amend the uniformity clause of the Pennsylvania Constitution. We need to bring our tax structure into alignment with our peer cities so we can improve our competitiveness.
- Continue reducing the wage tax and ultimately work with our Philadelphia Delegation in the State Legislature to make it progressive.
- Preserve affordable housing through increased investment in programs like the Housing Trust Fund as a requirement of any adjustment to our real estate tax abatement program (see affordability section).
- Reduce the gross receipts tax and work toward elimination over the next 5 to 7 years.
- Simplify our tax code and improve compliance; for example, by gradually phasing out the requirement that businesses pay for estimated future revenues as part of the Business Income and Receipts Tax (BIRT).
- Support and elevate the work of StartupPHL, Philly Startup Leaders and other such organizations who work to recruit startups into Philadelphia's tech and innovation ecosystem.
- Reduce the time and cost of doing business in Philadelphia by streamlining the permitting process (i.e. consolidating applications) and decreasing wait times for receiving approvals and processing appeals.

Best in Class City Services

City government's primary purpose is to provide services to people and businesses that excite, inspire, and satisfy basic needs like safety and cleanliness. Effectively prioritizing \$12B (approximately \$5B in General Fund, \$3B in Capital, and \$4B in other funds such as Grants, Water, and Aviation) in annual spending and orchestrating approximately 28,000 employees to deliver services harmoniously is only possible with an intentional vision for the city and a performance management program that tells you whether you're getting closer to your vision. There's a saying that "you can't manage what you don't measure," and in city government this type of mentality is key to solving problems and building trust with our taxpayers, residents, and families. To that end, city government should enhance Philly311 and City Council should create a performance program that serves as a consistent and transparent tool to help guide policy and budgetary decisions. City Council must provide more vigorous oversight of our services by asserting itself as a "board of supervisors" - using data to inform priorities and shape resource allocation. The cost of inefficient and mismanaged city services is too high and holding us back.

ACTION PLAN

- Create a City Council-overseen performance program for all major city services - a valuable oversight tool to set standards and expectations across departments, share data and information with the public, and work together to achieve our common goals and vision, including the equitable deployment of resources and services throughout the city.
- Expand Philly311's reach by leveraging "smart city" technologies to monitor operations in real time, analyze customer satisfaction and sentiment, and synthesize with other city data to better identify areas of success and opportunities for improvement.
- Modernize trash collection by making strategic investments in automated, semi-automated, and containerized trash collection both above ground and underground where possible. Through various enhancements to our trash collection system, we can free up well-trained employees to work in our communities, combating illegal dumping and assisting in future street sweeping programs in our neighborhoods.
- Review the quality and frequency of our street paving program to reduce potholes and hazardous road conditions for drivers, bikers, and pedestrians. Philadelphia must use more sustainable and durable materials and remain focused on the highest standards for our street paving program.
- Work with the Mayor to develop a "productivity bank" that continuously tracks savings found from operational and financial management improvements so city government can accurately and transparently show progress being made to save money. This allows city government to build trust and confidence in our ability to effectively and efficiently manage our public resources.

Improving Our Schools

Philadelphia continues to spend less per student than our surrounding suburbs, and this remains one of our most pressing 21st Century civil rights issues. Philadelphia must advocate to Harrisburg for increased investment in our public schools, but city government also has the responsibility to ensure our schools are fully resourced and that our school buildings are inspiring places to learn. That means we must be creative in securing additional resources for the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) – both in terms of hard dollars and through leveraging the city’s many assets. Additionally, as we remain focused on academic achievement and the well-being of our students and families, our approach to education must recognize and respond to the emotional, behavioral, physical, and mental health issues plaguing our children and their families. We must expand in-school support services and further invest in counseling, therapy, casework, and social work if we truly hope to change the trajectory of our children and families’ lives for generations to come.

ACTION PLAN

Funding

- Adjust the ten-year tax abatement with a goal of increasing funding for our public schools (see Economic Growth section).
- Explore creative resource development mechanisms like PILOTS (Payments-In-Lieu-Of-Taxes) and SILOTS (Services-In-Lieu-of-Taxes) so that our major nonprofits such as hospitals and universities help to enhance the lives of our kids and their families.
- Ensure annual audits of the Pennsylvania Parking Authority (PPA) are completed to make sure every dollar owed to the SDP is paid. Work with the PPA, and our state and local leaders to reduce any and all unnecessary overhead costs that may limit our school funding stream.
- Shift to a higher commercial real estate tax model - rather than a uniform tax rate for commercial properties and homes - to enhance overall real estate tax collection for our public schools, recognizing that this will require advocacy at the state level for a change to the uniformity clause of the Pennsylvania Constitution.
- Eliminate inefficiencies in city government by employing best practices and effective management tools to free up additional resources for our public schools (see City Services section).

Addressing Critical Needs and Gaps

- Support large-scale financing and partnership options for facility acquisition or development, and desperately needed capital improvements to ensure our schools are safe for students, families, and faculty.
- Identify and secure funding and other incentives to dramatically decrease our teacher vacancy rate.
- Support summer learning opportunities to ensure our students have continued academic and emotional support outside of the academic calendar year.
- Focus on placing an exceptional principal in every school, including support for the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders.

Emotional and Behavioral Learning

- Provide additional counseling and case worker services in our schools to support our children and their families more directly. Eryn wants our counselors to provide support to our teachers and the children in their classrooms by taking a teacher-led approach to helping students process their complex emotions and learning differences. If we can do this, we can begin to tackle some of the life challenges our children and families face - issues that get in the way of fostering a successful learning environment. Counselors are trained to help students manage internal and external conflict by supporting their emotional needs, mental health, and personal development. It's time we invest differently in our kids during and after school hours.
- Institute a social and emotional learning curriculum (inclusive of the Counselor Teacher model) in our public schools so we can begin to teach our children many of the life lessons necessary to grow into successful adulthood.

Efficiency and Accountability

- In partnership with the District's Family and Community Engagement Office, use the Philly311 model to track requests, needs, and develop a customer-service approach for families and parents interacting with the SDP.

A Green and Sustainable Philadelphia

Human activity is the main driver of global climate change. To address this crisis, Philadelphia needs to think globally and act locally. City Council should explore the concept of a Green New Deal for Philadelphia that is citizen-generated, focused on Philadelphia-based solutions, and recognizes that our most vulnerable communities are already disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change. We must continue to engage city departments, businesses, community groups, and residents to build upon the important strides made through our Office of Sustainability's comprehensive Greenworks plan.

ACTION PLAN

- Achieve Zero Waste by phasing out single-use plastics and Styrofoam, working to implement a citywide compost program, and hiring a Commodities Broker within the Streets Department to ensure Philadelphia's recycling is sold at the highest price and for the best use. Eryn fully supports the goals of the City's Zero Waste and Litter Action Plan.
- Increase transit ridership to cut down on emissions from cars. We need to focus on improving SEPTA's levels and scopes of service to increase ridership and reduce the need for vehicle ownership and driving. This includes improving bus service and exploring Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to better connect our communities to each other, Center City, and neighborhood commercial corridors. In particular, we need to examine and act on transit strategies that better connect areas such as the Northeast and Northwest with the rest of Philadelphia.
- Optimize and reduce the size of city government's fleet by expanding vehicle and equipment-sharing between departments. We should reduce the reliance on City-owned non-emergency passenger vehicles by promoting other lower-cost options such as car-share, transit, bike-share, or walking.
- Seek opportunities to invest in, and incentivize, the use of alternative energy sources to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Invest in renewable power (solar, wind, otherwise) for all city and School District buildings, to lead by example.
- Further fund the TreePhilly program to reduce the number of "heat islands" citywide. Heat islands - where neighborhoods are significantly warmer than surrounding areas due to human activity - result in increases in energy use, utility bills, and elevated emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases.
- Expand and invest in Philadelphia's Green Stormwater Infrastructure network through the Water Department's Green City, Clean Waters program.
- Identify means through which City Council can support triple bottom line businesses that center sustainability as part of their business model, such as expanding the number of businesses eligible to receive the Sustainable Business Tax Credit.
- Transform our vacant lots into productive use. Philadelphia has approximately 40,000 vacant lots that attract litter and illegal dumping, insight public safety concerns, and destabilize entire neighborhoods. City Council must be proactively engaged in policy solutions to crack down on absentee owners and promote the reuse of appropriate parcels into community gardens and other green space.

Strengthening Our Ethics Rules

Philadelphians deserve a City Council that prioritizes public service over personal gain. We must continue to move away from our “politics as usual” mindset. Accordingly, Eryn believes the following reforms are necessary to ensure our members of Council and all elected offices are independent stewards of our city.

ACTION PLAN

- Introduce legislation that would amend the Home Rule Charter to make permanent and independent the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) with jurisdiction over every elected official (including City Council, the District Attorney, City Controller, Sherriff, Commissioners, Register of Wills), appointed officials, and public employees. This extends to any board or commission appointed by the Mayor and entities that receive city funds. The OIG would be responsible for reviewing, investigating, and acting on all issues associated with acts of misconduct, fraud, corruption, and abuse of power.
- Require City Council to publicly disclose and account for its annual budget, including the expenditures of each Council office.
- Eliminate improper influence of money on our political system by reducing contribution limits and aligning our campaign finance rules with Federal Election Commission regulations.
- Prohibit campaign contributions to elected officials and candidates from entities with business matters before the city both six months prior to, and six months after, said business is conducted and/or decided upon. This would include, but not be limited to, real estate transactions and development projects.

Preserving and Increasing Affordable Housing Opportunity

Affordable housing is key to the stability of our residents and communities, and is linked to better outcomes across a wide range of important issues facing Philadelphians including healthcare, education, and economic development. City government has an obligation to uphold safe and sanitary housing standards for Philadelphians from all walks of life. From lobbying for increased Federal and state funding to incentivizing affordable housing development and preservation, City Council can wield a great deal of power in establishing a robust housing market with a range of affordable choices for households of any income.

As one of America's big cities, Philadelphia faces many of the same opportunities as its peer cities experiencing explosive growth in the housing market. However, our aging housing stock and long-standing high poverty rate, along with historical inequities produced by redlining, Federally-subsidized suburbanization, and the subprime mortgage crisis, create several unique challenges for the city's most vulnerable populations. Despite an overall growth in new housing units, Philadelphia has lost 13,000 low-cost units (with monthly rent below \$800) between 2008 and 2016.

ACTION PLAN

- Expand funding for Philadelphia's Housing Trust Fund, a flexible program that supports a variety of activities that preserve and create new affordable housing opportunities including unit development, financial counseling, and services for those experiencing homelessness.
- Continue to reform our zoning code to promote affordability through density requirements and inclusionary zoning practices (e.g. "tiny" homes, single-room-occupancy units, "in-law flats", etc.)
- Incentivize new and innovative means of construction - projects that bring jobs to the city, help grow our communities responsibly, and result in increasing pipelines to property ownership, lowering rates of homelessness, and builds wealth for more of our people who live here.
- Work with our state and federal delegations to advocate for increased funding for affordable housing preservation and construction, including increased funding for the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) - the state housing trust fund - and a State Housing Tax Credit.

Safe Communities

Eryn wants Philadelphia to be the safest city in America. Currently, we're not heading in the right direction. Philadelphia has seen an uptick in homicides and shooting victims – a nearly 10% increase in shootings and fatalities by shooting from 2015 to 2018, and a homicide rate that is the highest it has been in a decade. Unfortunately, we're having difficulty solving these crimes as the clearance rate for homicides is leaving violent offenders on our streets. This is a symptom of a lack of coordination or fractured relationships between our officers and detectives, and the communities they serve. We need to respond to these challenges with a sense of urgency, creativity, and compassion.

According to data from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, from 2010 to 2017 Philadelphia experienced a reduction in violent crime (22% reduction) – the second largest improvement of any city with more than one million people. However, our city had - and currently has - much more violent crime to contend with compared to those same cities. Only Chicago has a higher rate of violent crime than Philadelphia.

No matter the issue, as Philadelphians we are truly all in this together. Violent crime, and particularly homicides, affect us all. Families are torn apart by gun violence, creating great emotional trauma and other challenges for victims and their loved ones. Further, the reality and perception of violence have a devastating impact on the social fabric and economic well-being of the neighborhoods where it is concentrated.

We have made great strides in the past to reduce violence in our neighborhoods by focusing on community engagement strategies, and we must remain focused on building safe neighborhoods for everyone if Philadelphia is going to continue to grow and prosper for all people.

Building safe communities also means effectively addressing our various emergency response needs. Emergency Medical Services calls have been on the rise nationally, including Philadelphia where the majority of calls for service in the Philadelphia Fire Department (PFD) are medical in nature. With public health concerns surrounding Philadelphia's higher rates of obesity, asthma, and heart disease, the city must be prepared to deploy emergency responders in a manner that matches the needs of our patients. In addition to prioritizing EMS response capacity, we must also work with our public health experts and the broader medical community to improve the overall health conditions of our people and prevent medical emergencies from occurring in the first place.

ACTION PLAN

- Ensure the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) prioritizes patrol units and detectives over other administrative activities. Additionally, we need our patrol officers to build on their community engagement work by “walking the beat” and knocking on doors to talk with community members and build stronger relationships well in advance of an incident occurring. Philadelphia has used this tactic before to build stronger community-based networks that help promote safety and we must do this again.
- Build partnerships to address the trauma that results from violent crime. When there is a loss of life or a shooting in a neighborhood, entire families and their communities are impacted by these acts of violence. We need more than just a police response; we need to coordinate supportive services for victims, their family members, and their surrounding community members. Eryn will work with our non-profits who already provide social and emotional supports in our neighborhoods to coordinate response teams to help manage the trauma associated with this kind of violence.
- Work with the PPD to prioritize resources (budget dollars and personnel) into targeted areas of the city that are experiencing the greatest amount of violent crime.

- Go after the guns on our streets. We know that guns are far too easy to access in Philadelphia, and Eryn supports ongoing coordination with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to go after those bringing and fueling the gun violence in our neighborhoods. Eryn will also work to build regular and adequately funded gun buy-back programs so that we focus on the root cause of so much violence.
- Ensure Philadelphia's first responders are prioritizing responses. We have the technology to adjust our responses based on the level of emergency and should focus our response goals and resources around this targeted approach. This allows our public safety units – especially in the PFD – to be more efficient, effective, and safe when responding to medical emergencies.
- As a matter of public health, ensure public employees (targeting those working out in our communities) receive appropriate lifesaving training so when confronted with medical emergencies they are prepared to assist. This includes use of Narcan to prevent drug overdose, CPR training, and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs).
- Coordinating with the medical community, our nonprofits, and our public institutions on preventative public health programs, such as providing nutritionists in our schools (focusing on family nutrition) and promoting opportunities for our individuals and families to walk, bike, and engage in other forms of exercise.