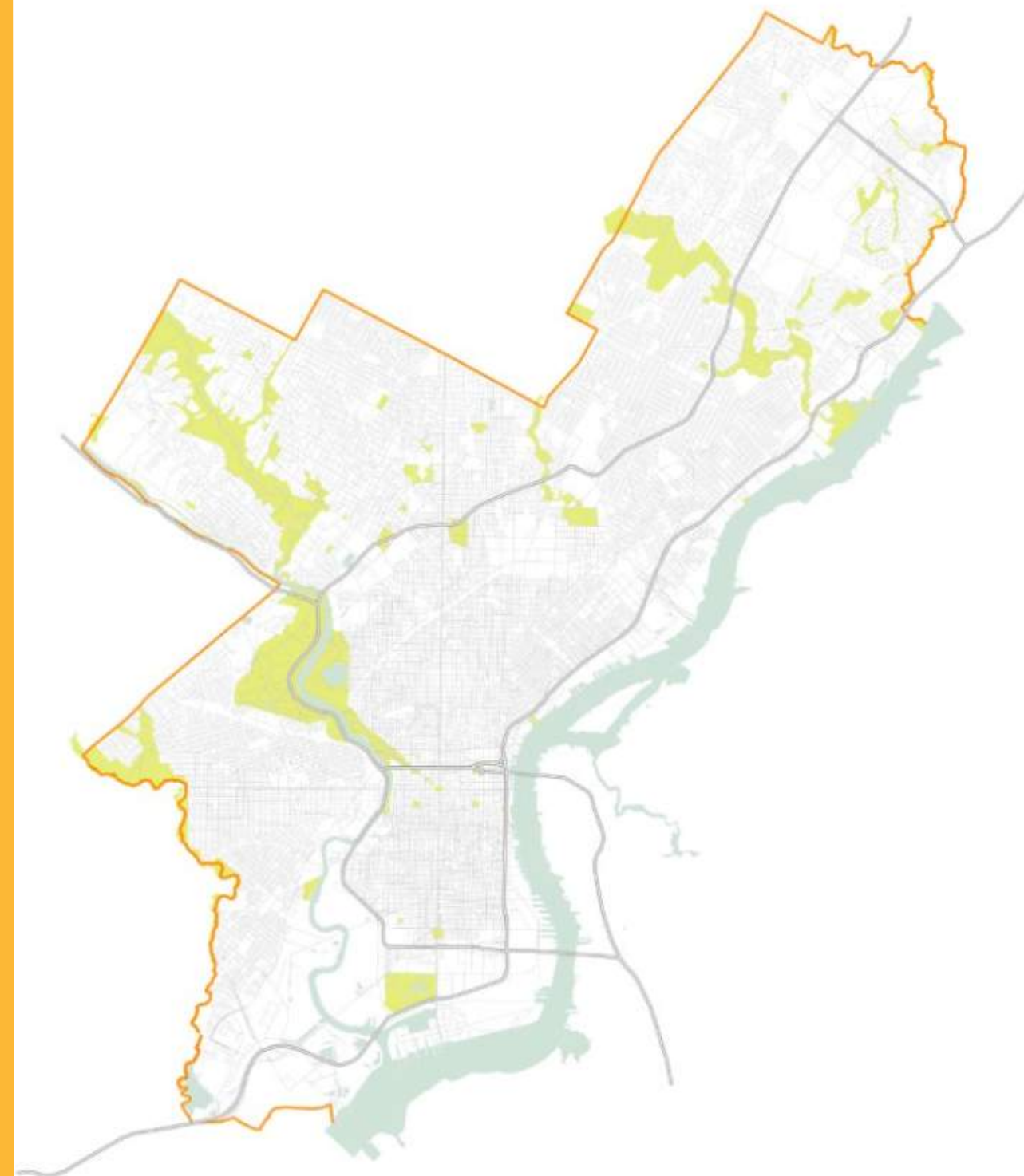


# PHILADELPHIA BID ALLIANCE

2023 POLICY AGENDA







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ABOUT

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## 1. SAFETY

---

## 2. CLEANLINESS

---

## 3. URBAN POLICY PRACTICES

---

## 4. SUPPORT LOCAL EVENTS

---

## 5. BID/CITY PARTNERSHIP

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**CENTER CITY DISTRICT**

**CHESTNUT HILL BID**

**CITY AVENUE DISTRICT**

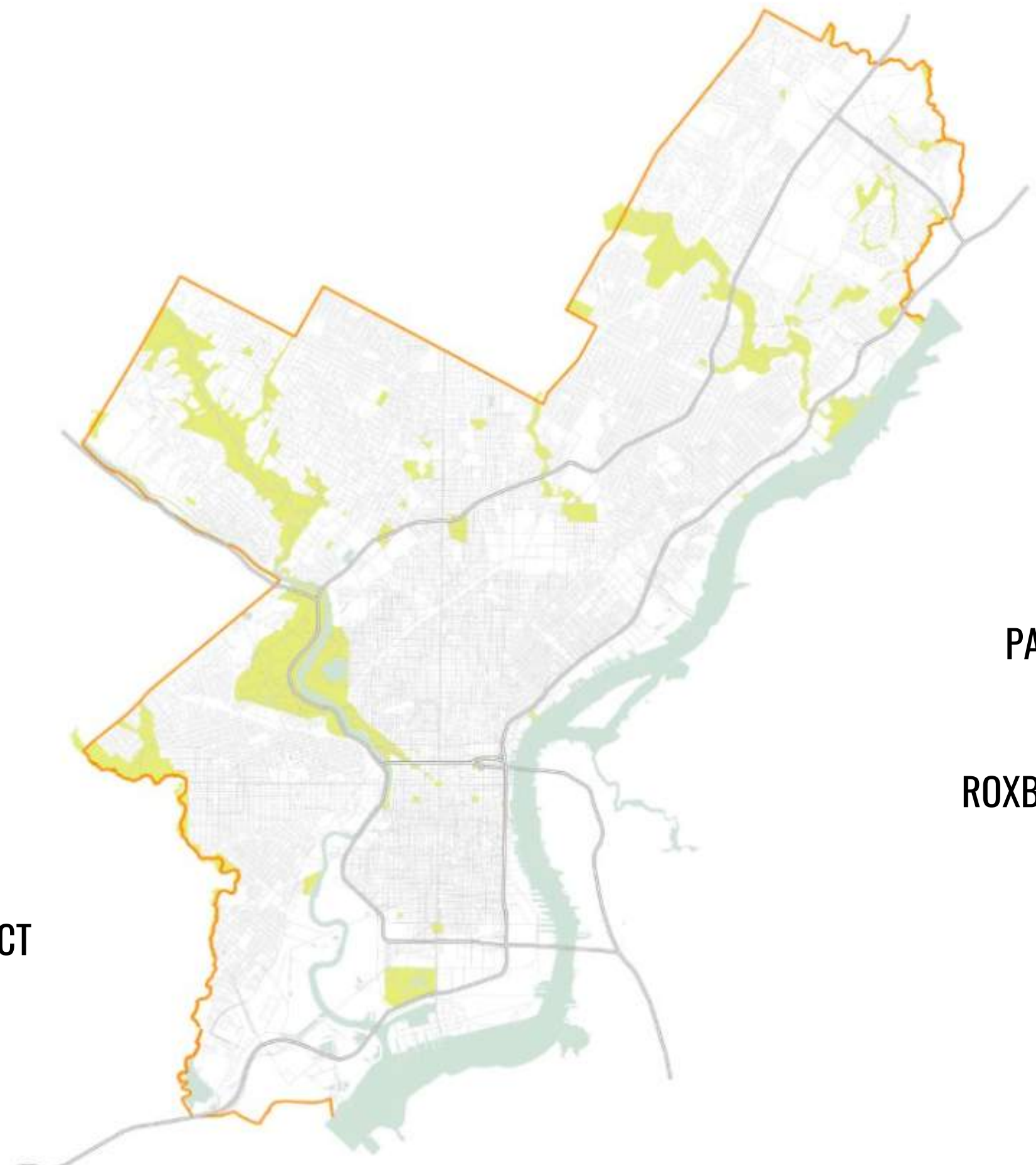
**EASY PASSYUNK AVENUE BID**

**FISHTOWN DISTRICT**

**IMPACT**

**MANAYUNK SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT**

**MAYFAIR BID**



**MT. AIRY BID**

**NORTH BROAD RENAISSANCE**

**NORTHERN LIBERTIES BID**

**OLD CITY DISTRICT**

**PASSYUNK AVENUE REVITALIZATION CORP**

**ROXBOROUGH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**SOUTH STREET HEADHOUSE DISTRICT**

**UNIVERSITY CITY DISTRICT**

# ABOUT



The [Philadelphia BID Alliance](#) was established during the COVID-19 shutdown in May 2020 to respond to, advocate for, and support the respective commercial corridors of its members. The BID Alliance is made up of sixteen BIDs from across the city and represents over 14,000 businesses. The BID Alliance meets regularly to discuss ongoing issues and collaborate to put forth solutions.

The 2023 Philadelphia municipal elections represent the best opportunity for the City of Philadelphia to improve its course, particularly as it relates to commercial corridors. These corridors create jobs and equity via small businesses and provide services for neighborhood residents. The BID Alliance proposes the following policies in support of high priority issues on those corridors. These issues are not only prevalent on commercial corridors but throughout the city, and the proposed solutions will benefit more than just the business districts. This memo highlights specific goals and recommends policy solutions to reach these goals.



# 1. SAFETY

## ENSURE PHILADELPHIA'S COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS ARE SAFE.

### 1A. Dedicated, daily PPD foot or bike patrol officer for each commercial corridor.

The City should provide a daily dedicated foot or bike patrol police officer to every commercial corridor. This will provide corridor stakeholders and BIDs direct contact when issues arise and an officer with specialized knowledge of the neighborhood. The City and PPD should work with each BID to establish the optimal shift for its patrol police officer based on the neighborhood's needs. The City and PPD should also provide an overnight patrol police officer to BIDs who feel it is necessary; also ensure substitute coverage is readily available if a corridor's dedicated officer is unable to report to their patrol. Community policing is extremely successful in neighborhoods that have a dedicated officer, such as Old City, and every corridor should have this same level of service. Such patrols function to deter crime and build relationships between stakeholders and police.





## 1B. Schedule regular meetings between commercial stakeholders and the Philadelphia Police Department.

The Philadelphia Police Department plays a vital role in creating and maintaining safety on commercial corridors. To encourage trust between police and corridor stakeholders, the City of Philadelphia and BIDs should support and facilitate regularly scheduled meetings between the respective PPD District Captain(s), BID leadership, and commercial stakeholders. A business-focused meeting, separate from PSA meetings, between the PPD and corridor stakeholders will allow for discussion of ongoing issues and encourage open, consistent communication. A representative from the PPD Commissioners Office should also participate in these meetings in order to facilitate BIDs who are in multiple police districts. This type of proactive information sharing can help reduce criminal and nuisance activity on commercial corridors.

## 1C. Improve PPD technologies, staffing, and retention.

The City should prioritize technology, evidence processing, social media monitoring, and officer hiring and training, to make neighborhood policing more effective and efficient. The City and the PPD should also provide clarity for businesses and residents on the differences between public and criminal offenses and the role of the police in situations that occur frequently in business corridors.



## 1D. Assign an Office of Homeless Services representative to each commercial corridor.

Homelessness and panhandling on commercial corridors create a perception that a destination is unsafe for those who live, work, and visit the area. The City should continue to provide and expand services to individuals who experience homelessness, addiction, and physical/mental health. Funding should also go to assigning an OHS representative and point-of-contact for each corridor. This hands-on approach will offer services to even more individuals in each neighborhood and will establish a point of contact for each BID with OHS.

## 1E. Publish a Clear Philadelphia Homeless Response Policy Document

The City should put forth a homeless response with clear policy guidance for BIDs and other corridor managers to follow, such as what is permissible under the law regarding encampments, what behavior/actions require police or OHS intervention, etc. The City should also clearly define the laws regarding panhandling to BIDs and enforce these laws.



## 1F. Install, upgrade, and maintain adequate pedestrian street lighting along corridors.

Pedestrian streetlights are critical to creating a safe environment for residents, visitors, and businesses. The City should provide all commercial corridors with pedestrian streetlights to attract business and create a welcoming space but to also prevent and deter crime on commercial streets. Pedestrian street-lighting provides transparency on the street for everyone who uses it, which makes it feel safe, well taken care of, predictable, and active. Installing streetlights is a [low-risk, high reward and affordable way](#) for the City to deter crime on commercial corridors.



## 1G. PROHIBIT THE USE OF ATVS.

ATVs create unsafe environments throughout commercial corridors. The City should enact policies to prohibit the use of ATVs within Philadelphia and develop enforcement strategies.

- Prohibit ATVs and dirt bikes that are not properly attached to a hitch or trailer from purchasing fuel within city limits. This policy is enacted in [other municipalities](#).
- Prohibit the storage of ATVs in storage units.
- Establish an incentive program for those who report storage locations of ATVs.
- Establish a robust confiscation program, which is already in place in New York City, and is permitted for third class cities in Pennsylvania.



## 1H. CREATE MORE URBAN-FRIENDLY STREETSAPES TO DETER ATV USE.

Policies that encourage pedestrianism and traffic calming will discourage the use of ATVs and dirt bikes on commercial corridors, including the following:

- Install speed cushions on main streets of commercial corridors to slow traffic and deter the use of ATVs and dirt bikes.
- Create bump-outs on sections of a street to slow traffic by requiring vehicles to drive around objects instead of driving in a straight line.
- Install curb bump-outs, or planters, such as those in the [Meatpacking District](#) in New York City, to prohibit ATVs/dirt bikes from racing down main commercial streets at high speed, increase safety for other modes of transit safer, and improve the aesthetic of the street.

# 2. CLEANLINESS

ENSURE PHILADELPHIA'S COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS ARE CLEAN.

## 2A. Adjust the trash pickup schedule for commercial corridors.

Trash is one of the highest priorities for BIDs and is often the top complaint from residents and businesses on commercial corridors. The City should adjust the trash collection date for commercial corridors. Trash collection should only occur between the days of Monday - Thursday and only picked up on Fridays in the case of a trash delay. This will limit the amount of trash left out on weekends in the case of delayed pickup and give BIDs time to sweep any leftover debris before peak weekend hours.



## 2B. Provide pan-and-broom sidewalk and street sweeping services to every commercial corridor.



Consistent sidewalk and street cleaning is a simple, straightforward initiative that makes a significant impact. Streets covered in litter, trash bags, and overflowing garbage cans give off the impression that a neighborhood is not taken care of and “tolerates” disorder. This type of disorder suggests crimes will go unreported because the space looks like it is a low priority. Neighborhood safety very much correlates with the cleanliness of its streets. The University of Pennsylvania [reports residents to feel much safer](#) after seeing their neighborhood cleaned, with 58% than having fewer security concerns when leaving their homes.

The City should evenly and equally pan-and-broom sweep every commercial corridor in Philadelphia by continuing and expanding funding for the PHLTCB initiative that would allow BIDs and CDCs to manage their own sidewalk sweeping programs. (Alternatively, the city could develop its own in-house program within the Streets Department.) Many BIDs are unable to afford a third party street cleaning service, and ideally, each commercial corridor will have a daily team of City-funded street sweepers.

## 2C. Service and maintain all Big Bellies, or put forth an alternative solution.

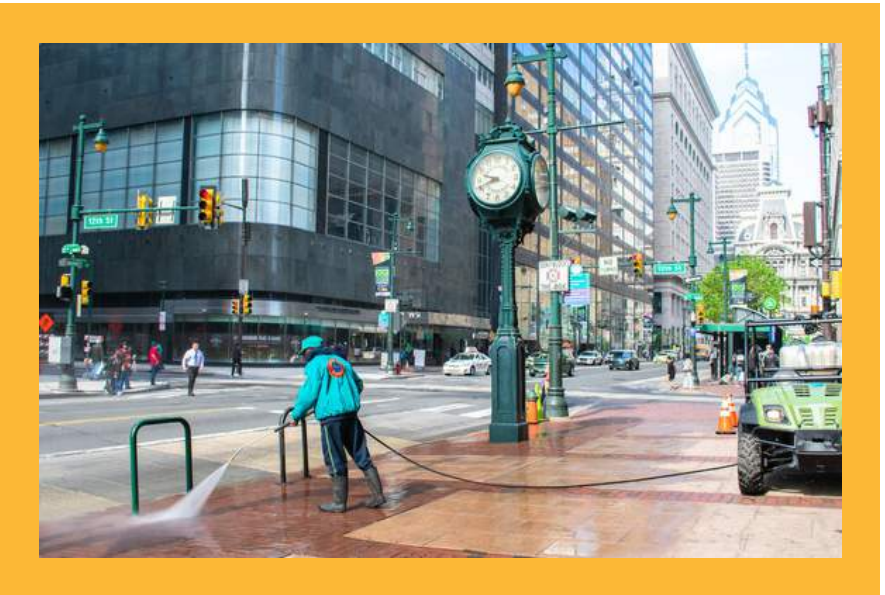
Many commercial corridors have multiple Big Bellies which are often unserviced and ignored by the City. This leads to overfilled cans and trash placed on top and around the container. When maintained, Big Bellies are effective, but in their current conditions, they cause more problems than they solve. The City should work to service the containers when their sensors indicate they are full in a timely and consistent manner, repair them when they are broken, conduct regular inspections of all containers, and plan and budget for replacements when their service life is approaching. If this is not possible, the City must find a viable alternative for Big Bellies. See *paragraph G*





**2D. Allow BIDs and their third-party street cleaners full access to sanitation centers.**

The City should allow BIDs and their third party street cleaners full access to all sanitation centers (including satellite centers) and have zero trash limits when dropping off. BIDs should also have permission to bring any trash found on their corridors, such as tires, fenders, furniture, and other bulk items to sanitation centers. Most BIDs sweep litter, which is waste that would have ended up in the municipal system in the absence of BIDs. Accordingly, allowing BIDs access to sanitation centers does not add to the City’s current burden and alleviates a significant financial burden to the BIDs.



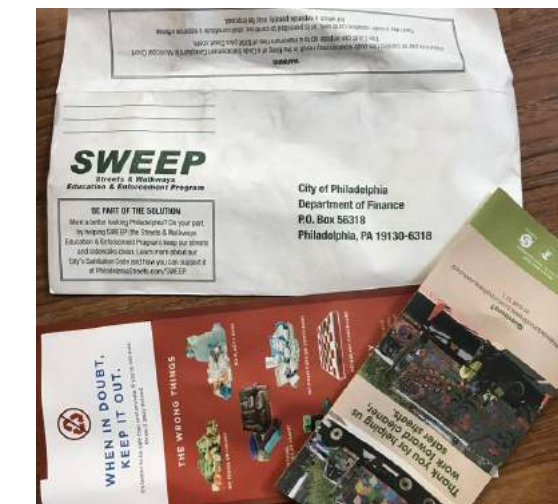


## 2F. Require short-term rentals to have a commercial trash plan.

In addition to [enforcing stricter regulations on short-term rentals](#) (“STRs”), the City should also address the trash issues these STRs create. In many commercial corridors, housekeeping for short-term rentals dump bags on the street all days of the week, which leaves dozens of bags out for days at a time. The City should require STRs to have a commercial trash pickup plan and fine them accordingly when trash is left out on non pickup days or when a trash plan is not in place. BIDs also struggle with knowing what specific locations/units are used as STRs. The City should share the list of all registered STRs with BIDs in order to have easy access to the property address and owner.

## 2E. Expand the SWEEP program and provide each corridor with a daily SWEEP detail.

Every commercial corridor should have a daily SWEEP detail in order to issue trash and illegal dumping tickets as quickly as possible. The City should expand the SWEEP program by hiring more officers and expanding their hours on the streets, which would allow corridors to have a regular SWEEP detail and to work together to identify and ticket nuisance properties





## 2G. IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES FROM OTHER CITIES.

- The City should explore and implement best practices from other cities. Many cities elsewhere, such as [Amsterdam](#), place trash and recycling containers at the end of blocks for residents and businesses to use whenever they need them. [Lisbon](#) also collects trash on city blocks and provides colored bins for different types of trash. In both cities, these containers are only serviced when the container sensor indicates it is almost full. Amsterdam also utilizes [underground trash storage](#), which keeps bags off the street, eliminates them from being ripped open, and controls trash odor. Cities like Barcelona provide regular street [cleaning and washing](#) for all streets but prioritize those with the heaviest traffic volume.



## 2H. INSTALL AND MAINTAIN PUBLIC RESTROOMS THROUGHOUT THE CITY, ESPECIALLY ON COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS.

Philadelphia is a public restroom desert that increasingly became worse over the last two years due to citywide business closures. This affects all Philadelphians, especially its most vulnerable residents, but also those who come to visit and work. Many commercial corridors have very few or no public restrooms, and BIDs often find themselves responsible for cleaning human waste. The Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial Board [reported](#) in June that the City is planning on installing a [Portland Loo](#) public restroom at 15th and Arch Streets later this year; and according to the [pilot survey](#), 89% of respondents view public restrooms as a positive amenity.

At the BID's option, the City should install public restrooms on their corridors and keep them well-maintained and clean. The City should also work with each BID to decide on locations for installations and how many restrooms are needed.



# 3. URBAN POLICY PRACTICE

**ENSURE BIDS AND THE CITY IMPLEMENT BEST URBAN POLICY PRACTICES.**

**3A. Prioritize mixed-use density on commercial corridors and throughout the city.**

In order to thrive, commercial corridors need people: residents, workers, and visitors. In addition to bringing dollars to a commercial corridor, more people on the street in urban centers also keep the movement and security of a street intact. More bodies indicate more people are ready to assist and protect from danger. A constant mix of strangers on the streets contributes to the street's well-being by making it a safe, livable place. People are attracted to dense spaces that are pedestrian and transit-focused. The City should prioritize mixed-used density on and near commercial corridors to accommodate and encourage the growth of the residential population in support of business corridors.







The City should consider the following policy options in support of concept 3A.

- 1 Increase height and FAR limits.
- 2 Institute [minimum density requirements](#).
- 3 Eliminate [parking minimum requirements](#).
- 4 The Historical Commission should encourage and permit added height in historic districts, especially at intersections.
  - Specifically, appoint Historical Commission members who take a less rigid view of Secretary of the Interior Standard Nine.





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### 3B. PRIORITIZE AND EXPAND TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT ZONES.

The City should prioritize and expand Transit-Oriented Development zones in order to create thriving, livable sustainable communities in Philadelphia. TOD zones are areas of the City that are compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use, and centered around high quality and frequent modes of transit. TOD zones are extremely desirable for residents, businesses and developers. The City should relax requirements in TOD zones to make development as simple as possible.





### 3C. INVEST IN TREES.

Urban tree canopies play a critical role in relieving heat, creating a welcoming, safe environment, and attracting residents and visitors to commercial corridors. Trees enhance streetscapes; they make a place feel safer, livelier, more inviting, and walkable. Trees in urban environments can play a role in [reducing both violent and petty crime](#) in neighborhoods, regardless of socioeconomic factors. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports [there is a strong inverse relationship](#) between tree canopy and neighborhood crimes. It was found that just a 10% increase in tree canopy reduced crime by roughly 12%.

Planting and maintaining trees is a simple task the City can do that will provide huge benefits for commercial corridors. The City should fund the Parks and Recreation department accordingly and invest in communities with the lowest amount of tree canopy. Such work should include sidewalk work and stump grinding as necessary.



### 3D. REDUCE RELIANCE ON MOTOR VEHICLES BY PRIORITIZING OTHER MODES OF TRANSIT.



The City should create policies that prioritize pedestrianism, urbanism, and cycling, and reduce reliance on vehicles in dense commercial corridors.

- Installing curb bump-outs, such as planters will slow traffic and make the street safer for other modes of travel other than vehicles.
- Increase the frequency of every SEPTA route to 10 minutes less between buses - high-frequency transit provides freedom of movement that makes it a much more compelling option than driving. More people use transit when the bus or train comes so frequently that they do not need to check a schedule.
- Construct as many protected bike lanes as possible, continue to add Indego stations, and install safe bike storage locations, such as Oonepod, to encourage cycling.
- Close specific streets, especially those around commercial corridors, to vehicle traffic.
- Streamline the process and give BIDs the authority to install street furniture, bike racks, and trees, and remove parking spaces. Eliminate the requirement for property owner sign-off. Work with the state legislature to secure authority as necessary.





### 3F. Legalize outdoor dining on every commercial corridor.

Outdoor dining is a lifeline for restaurants and is enjoyed by their customers. The City should enact policies to make outdoor dining as easy as possible for restaurants and cafes. The City should allow cafe seating by-right on all commercial corridors and cafe seating at neighboring properties with owner permission. The City should also include streeteries by-right in all commercial corridors and allowed neighboring parking spaces with permission. Permanent, by-right outdoor dining will create economic opportunities for the City, such as the ability to collect additional revenue through tax revenue from employment and sales; application fees, renewals, and compliance. It will also continue to benefit restaurants throughout the City.

### 3E. Establish community benefit loading zones.

The City should establish community benefit loading zones throughout commercial corridors and increase total loading linear footage as necessary. A community benefit loading zone allows for many types of uses on a street throughout a single day, such as deliveries in the morning, and off-street parking for later in the day, with the price of parking shifting as demand changes. The current system of allowing a business to pay for a loading zone is outdated and inequitable.



# 4. PROMOTING LOCAL EVENTS

ENSURE THE CITY SUPPORTS BID-CREATED EVENTS AND COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LOCAL ECONOMY.



## 4A. Reduce the fees required for BIDs when hosting a neighborhood event.

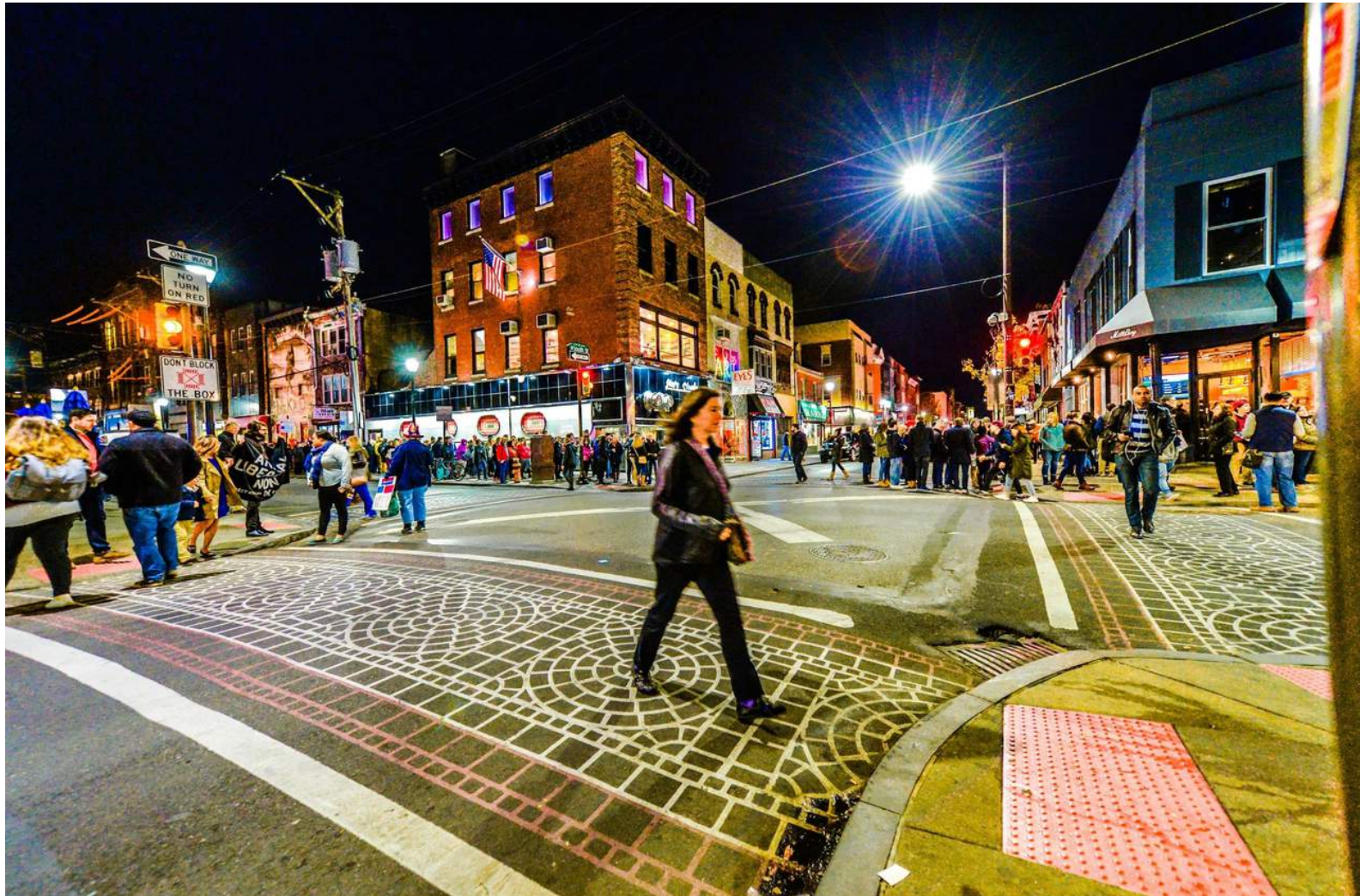
Events and programming in commercial corridors attract people to the neighborhood and bring in business for independent retailers. Hosting an event or festival on a main street in a commercial corridor is an extremely expensive and drawn-out task, and many BIDs can only afford to host one or two events a year. Much of the expenses are due to the number of police, emergency staff, and EMTs the City requires. To address these costs, the City should:

- Review event requirements and related costs and expenses, and allow BIDs to hire their own emergency staff.
- Install pneumatic bollards on all commercial corridors to make street events and outdoor dining safer.
- Extend the cities umbrella insurance policy to BIDs as event organizers.



#### 4B. Work with the Night Time Economy Director on neighborhood programming on commercial corridors.

The Night Time Economy Director position was created in recent months within the Commerce Department. This position has the potential to be vital to the nighttime economy and should be staffed and budgeted for appropriately. [Night Time Economy Directors](#) specifically focus on the untapped potential in the social and economic value of their night economies while also maintaining clean and safe initiatives. The City should work closely with the Night Time Economy Director to create safe, inclusive, and vibrant neighborhood programming on commercial corridors.





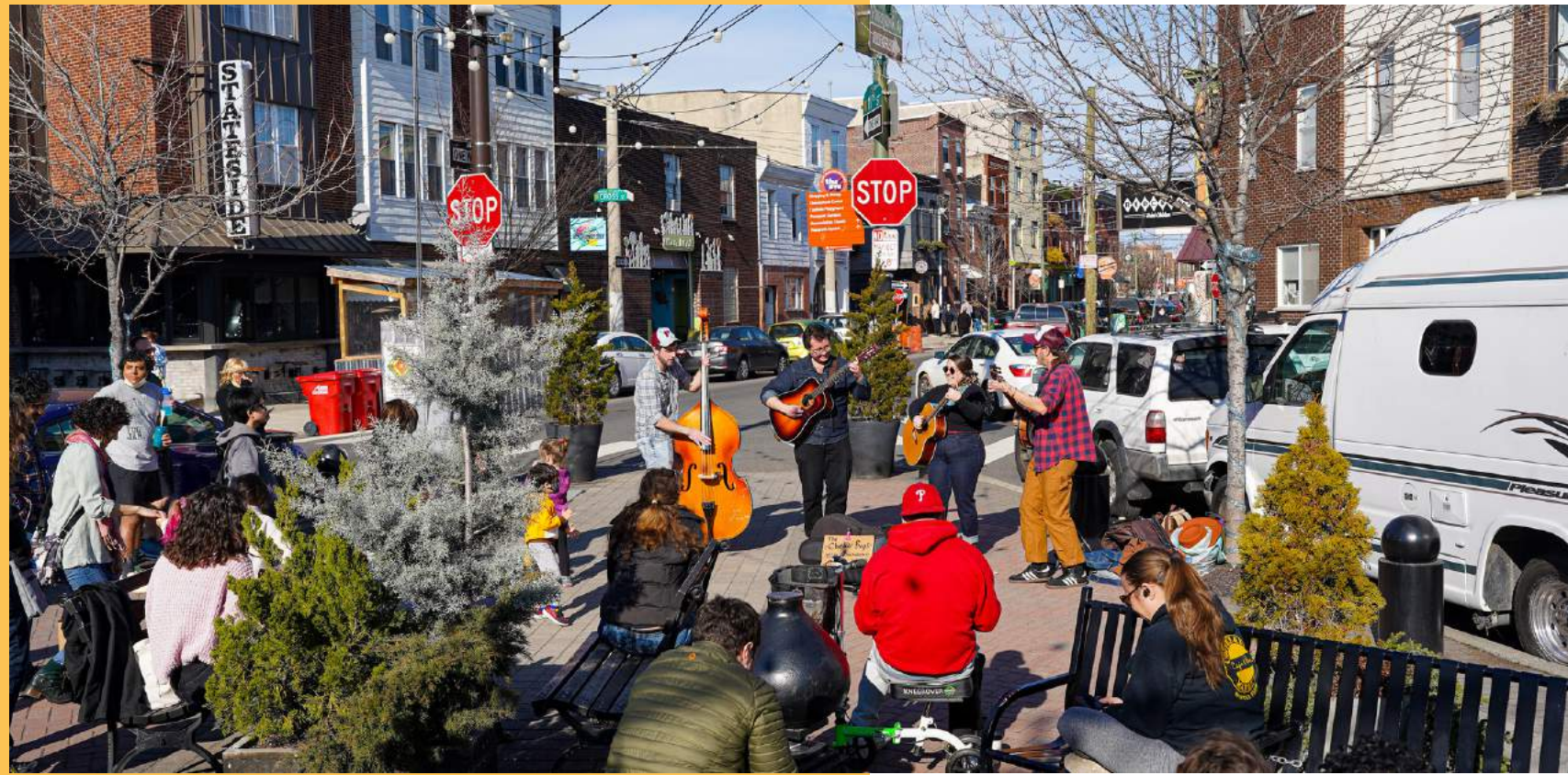
# 5. BID/CITY PARTNERSHIP

## ENSURE THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA AND BIDS ARE TRUE PARTNERS.

### 5A. Establish specific contacts for BIDs in each City department.

BIDs go through their Councilperson's office for almost all City-related issues. The City should appoint a person in each department (L&I, Streets, OPA, oTis) who is dedicated solely to liaising with BIDs. This would give BIDs a clear person of contact in each specific office and remove the "middle man" line of communication. This person should also notify BIDs when a business in their corridor receives a violation.





## 5B. Create relationships between BIDs and the City's subcontractors.

The City often subcontracts out to various organizations for homeless services, crisis response, public works, professional services, etc. BIDs are often left out of these contracts even though they can provide valuable information and insights to work performed in their neighborhoods. The City should provide BIDs with a clear person of contact for its contracts to streamline communication.

## 5C. Expand the Commerce Department's programs and services.

BIDs already have an excellent relationship with the Commerce Department and should continue to build the resources offered. Properly funded and staffed, Commerce can engage in additional activities:

- Pay for bulk mobility and purchasing data providers, such as Placer.ai or Streetlight, and provide BIDs with sub-licenses. This data is an extremely powerful tool that is used to create and support policy decisions that would benefit the commercial corridors, but the tools are prohibitively expensive for most BIDs.
- Host regular meetings for entrepreneurs regarding opening a business in Philadelphia, the permitting process, and other programs.
- Work towards streamlining the process of opening a business in Philadelphia. The current system is extremely [confusing and drawn-out](#) and is an extra burden for business owners.

## 5D. PAY THE BIDS THEIR ASSESSMENT BUDGET AND COLLECT ASSESSMENTS ON THEIR BEHALF.

At the BID's request, the City should bill and collect assessments on behalf of the BID and send an annual check to the BID for the BID's full budget attributable to assessments. This would greatly benefit BIDs, which spend a disproportionate amount of their budget and staff time on collections and filing liens. Importantly, this saves the BIDs from writing off bad debt due to inaccurate, or illegal, assessments made by OPA. Many other cities, including New York City, engage in this practice.







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