



# The Green Living Plan for Philadelphia

## *An Action Agenda for Safer, Healthier, and Environmentally Equitable Communities*

### **Overview**

The *Green Living Plan* is a coalition of local environmental and neighborhood-based organizations, with the support of academia, that will produce a city-wide, community-driven agenda to share with the city's 2023 Mayoral candidates. The agenda outlines **environmentally-focused** and **neighborhood-based** policy, programmatic, and investment solutions to Philadelphia's most pressing quality of life challenges.

The *Green Living Plan* highlights the strong connection between greening and environmental justice, and racial, health, and neighborhood equity. It also directly addresses the quality of life issues that many Philadelphians recognize as top city priorities, including gun violence and crime, trash collection and illegal dumping, job creation and workforce development, and basic service delivery.

### **Investment Principles**

In addressing the challenges highlighted above, we must ensure that city resources are focused on the neighborhoods with the most need. The situation that undergirds all of the recommendations made in the *Green Living Plan* is the **urgent need to direct significant investment in neighborhoods with the greatest socio-economic disparities**. People in low-income neighborhoods must have a higher level of investment and attention than more affluent Philadelphia neighborhoods.

Newly focused investment must also come with plans for how to include, not displace, people in neighborhoods. To do this, the *Green Living Plan* recommends that the next Mayor adopt the following principles when making investment and resource-allocation decisions:

1. Commit to establishing a decision-making methodology to ensure that resources are allocated to the neighborhoods with the greatest needs;
2. Apply and deploy city, state, and federal funding in alignment with the developed methodology;
3. Create an executive level position to provide transparent oversight of departmental execution of policies and programs, with input from the Environmental Justice Advisory Commission; and
4. Develop a communication mechanism that ensures transparency, regular public reporting and opportunities for feedback.

## **Green Living Plan Priority Areas and Action Items**

The Green Living Plan is centered around five environmental priority areas that together impact neighborhood health, equity, and quality of life. These priorities are:

1. Address air pollution and heat islands;
2. Invest in, protect, and maintain green and public spaces;
3. Build a pipeline of high-quality green jobs;
4. Improve basic “clean & green” service delivery and enforcement; and
5. Accelerate efforts to reduce water pollution.

### **Priority 1: Address Air Pollution and Heat Islands**

- Fully fund and implement Philadelphia Parks and Recreation’s Philly Tree Plan to restore the urban forest in the lowest-canopy neighborhoods.
- Develop a neighborhood-focused strategy and implementation plan for heat mitigation, including more regular access to city pools, expansion of cooling centers, and other preventative measures that address heat related health issues.
- Expand funding for the Philadelphia Energy Authority Built to Last home repair program and other programs that provide low-income Philadelphians with comprehensive and other full home repairs programs and weatherization, including installing fossil-free electric heating and/or cooling systems pumps in homes, and improving building energy efficiency, and solar panels.
- Improve neighborhood air quality by strengthening Air Management Services regulations and providing for more robust community engagement opportunities.
- Appoint leaders to the Philadelphia Facilities Management Corporation and the Gas Commission who will ensure that PGW’s budgets and business plans match the city’s goal for a rapid shift from fossil fuels to clean energy while also ensuring that all Philadelphians can heat their homes at affordable rates.
- Fully fund and implement the Better Mobility Platform to reduce emissions from transportation and improve transit accessibility.

### **Priority 2: Invest in, Protect and Maintain Green and Public Spaces**

- Increase the Parks & Recreation Budget to provide adequate staffing, maintenance, safety, and programming for parks, rec centers, and green spaces. Philadelphia spends \$50 per person on Parks & Rec operations, compared to peer cities like Baltimore (\$127) or Atlanta (\$176).
- Build administrative capacity and hold the Philadelphia Land Bank accountable to prioritizing and streamlining the preservation of city-owned community gardens and green spaces. Develop fair and transparent processes for the equitable disposition and leasing of land for community greening purposes.
- Develop a clear process for long-time users of community land to register their equitable interest in tax delinquent, vacant property with the Department of Revenue to prevent its loss at Sheriff’s sale and revise the Land Bank’s policies to prioritize acquisition and disposition of such properties to their respective owners.
- Implement an “open space impact fee” requirement for developers to put aside a percentage of development funds for public spaces.
- Fully fund and implement the recommendations called for in “Growing at the Root”, the city’s urban agriculture strategic plan.

### **Priority 3: Build a Pipeline of High-Quality Green Jobs**

- Enhance partnerships with workforce development and job training entities in Philadelphia to build training providers' and community group capacity to offer green job training and placement.
- Expand existing workforce initiatives with low barriers to entry, including the Taking Care of Business commercial corridor cleaning program and Same Day Work and Day program, to support broader-based green skills development in tree care, landscaping, park maintenance, and green building trades.
- Ensure infrastructure investments made to improve the city's built environment account for green infrastructure and resiliency upgrades and provide on-the-job training and placement opportunities for graduates of green job training programs.
- Invest in vocational education programs, internships, and other alternative skills development initiatives to create pathways into the workforce for high school students and those not interested in or able to attend a 4-year college degree program.

### **Priority 4: Improve Basic "Clean & Green" Service Delivery and Enforcement**

- Fully fund and implement the actions called for in the Waste Free Philly Agenda, including recommitting to the Zero Waste Action Plan and establishing a mayoral office to address waste.
- Commit to cleaning and greening all eligible vacant lots in the neighborhoods with the highest rates of gun violence, with a target of stabilizing at least 50% of all vacant parcels citywide by 2028.
- Establish a sidewalk repair funding program and develop a master plan for sidewalk repair citywide.
- Ensure service delivery is improved upon in neighborhoods with slowest response times by investing in 311, the city's customer service center for non-emergency inquiries.

### **Priority 5: Accelerate Efforts to Reduce Water Pollution**

- Allocate 50 percent of remaining American Rescue Plan funding to water infrastructure.
- Expand emergency response plans around flooding.
- Ensure funding of at least \$30 million per year for the Water Department's stormwater grants programming.
- Issue an executive order to promote equitable distribution of green infrastructure with vegetation across combined sewer overflow basins.
- Direct the Water Department to undertake community outreach and engagement in the CSO basins to identify key neighborhoods and their needs relative to green infrastructure projects.