



5TH SQUARE
A D V O C A C Y
STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2027

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INTRODUCTION FROM THE BOARD

February 1st, 2026

Drawing on combined decades of grassroots organizing and political action experience, we present this 2-year strategic plan to ready **5th Square Advocacy** to tackle the challenges of our city and state. Our vision for Philadelphia, defined by housing abundance, equitable transit, and human-centered streets, is with you in mind. This strategic plan is a guidepost for the organization, ensuring that over the next two years, every campaign we lead brings us back to **our mission for a more accessible, sustainable, and equitable Philadelphia and Pennsylvania.**

Together, we can dismantle harmful planning legacies still plaguing our neighborhoods. We use this plan to clarify our priorities and focus on building a world that prioritizes your health and safety over the convenience of cars. Whether you are eight or eighty years old, you deserve to live and move with dignity, no matter your income level or identity.

In this document, we describe how, over the next two years, 5th Square Advocacy will professionalize our operations through hiring our first executive director (ED) and mobilize our robust network of volunteers who will turn these ideals into policy wins. We are anchored by these issue focus areas:

- **Housing and Land Use**
- **Public Transportation**
- **Roadway Safety**

A more livable city is not just a dream, not just a necessity; it is a policy choice that we must make real. We have the tools, the passion, and now the roadmap. **With members and supporters like you, we are ready** to build a more affordable, accessible, and sustainable place to live for everyone.

The Board of Directors, 5th Square Advocacy

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
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MISSION

5th Square Advocacy is a nonprofit organization working towards a more accessible, sustainable, and equitable Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. Through grassroots organizing, we mobilize neighbors to advocate for people-centered communities. At all levels of government, we fight for policies that promote abundant housing, safe roadways, and accessible transit.

VISION

We envision accessible, sustainable, and equitable neighborhoods. Abundant housing, safe roadways, and accessible transit will work in harmony to create human-centered cities for everyone.

VALUES

- Equity and Inclusion
- System Responsibility
- Abundance and Sustainability
- Good Governance
- Civic Engagement
- Evidence-based Policymaking

THE WORK

Our work is focused on three issue focus areas, each with a committee of volunteers dedicated to effecting change through advocacy.

Housing & Land Use Committee

GOAL

Efficient land use with accessible, walkable communities in which all Philadelphians can reside regardless of economic status.

Most people in Philadelphia can't afford a new home on the market today; and most of the iconic, affordable housing stock of Philadelphia would no longer be legal to build. More than half (52%) of renters and more than a quarter (28%) of homeowners are cost-burdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs.¹ Our goal is to modernize zoning to promote the most efficient use of land in our city, eliminate harmful requirements like parking mandates, and end councilmanic prerogative. We believe in building more housing to ease market pressures and seek to reduce housing costs to foster accessible, walkable communities in which all Philadelphians can reside, regardless of economic status.

Public Transportation Committee

GOAL

Safe, affordable mobility for all through equitable transportation policy by addressing historic harms.

Philadelphia suffers from longer commutes² and more congestion³ than most large cities in the US. We believe the solution to these mobility problems lies in fast, affordable, accessible, and safe public transportation. Philadelphia becomes a better, more equitable city when all people can get around it quickly, affordably, and safely in a way that best works for them. By recognizing the long-term harm that frequently racist, classist, and ableist transportation planning has had on the city; we advocate for freedom, safety, and equity for all travelers.



Credit: Michael J. Green

¹ https://www.housinginitiative.org/uploads/1/3/2/9/132946414/hip_philadelphia_housing_needs_may2025.pdf

² <https://www.inquirer.com/business/commute-philadelphia-worst-2024-transit-time-20251212.html>

³ <https://www.inquirer.com/transportation/philadelphia-traffic-jams-congestion-driving-20250110.html>

Roadway Safety Committee

GOAL

People-first, safe streets that improve accessibility and equity across Philadelphia.

Philadelphia currently gives far too much space to cars and prioritizes the convenience of drivers over the health and safety of everyone else, leading to a traffic death rate three times that of New York City¹. We therefore advocate for roadway safety policies, reforming on-street parking, and a complete network of bike lanes so that our streets and other public spaces are designed for people, not cars, and are safe and accessible to all residents, regardless of race, age, gender, disability, or any other identity.

Ongoing Activities

We achieve our policy goals through engaging and growing with our volunteer base by:

- Conducting issue-specific campaigns and online petitions.
- Convening issue-specific volunteer committee meetings.
- Onboarding new volunteers through bi-monthly orientations.
- Hosting general social meetups.
- Communicating with our subscriber and volunteer base through email and social media.
- In-person canvassing and targeted outreach to underrepresented communities.

We then mobilize our volunteers to engage with the public process by:

- Speaking with the press and authoring editorials, articles, and white papers.
- Contacting their elected officials through email, phone and text.
- Encouraging attendance and organizing public testimony at meetings including City Hall, the State Capitol, SEPTA Headquarters and at Community Organizations.



Credit: Daniel Paschall



¹ <https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/ideas-we-should-steal-stop-hitting-people-with-cars/>

We do this in coalition with and membership of allied local and national organizations:

- Housing & Land Use: Welcoming Neighbors Network (WNN), 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, Up for Growth, PA Housing Choices Coalition, Parking Reform Network.
- Public Transportation: Transit Forward Philadelphia, Transit for All PA, Transportation for America, Clean Air Council
- Roadway Safety: The Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia (BCGP), Families for Safe Streets, Philly Bike Action (PBA), PA Safe Roads PAC, America Walks, Feet First Philly

To advance our goals in these areas, in 2026 we will:

- Meet with 20 legislators and their staff
- Make 500 touchpoints (email, phone, text) with policymakers
- Obtain 4000 petition signatures
- Turn out 50 people for public comment in, e.g., city council hearings, SEPTA board meetings

In 2027 we will:

- Meet with 30 legislators and their staff
- Make 750 touchpoints (email, phone, text) with policymakers
- Obtain 6000 petition signatures
- Turn out 75 people for public comment in, e.g., city council hearings, SEPTA board meetings



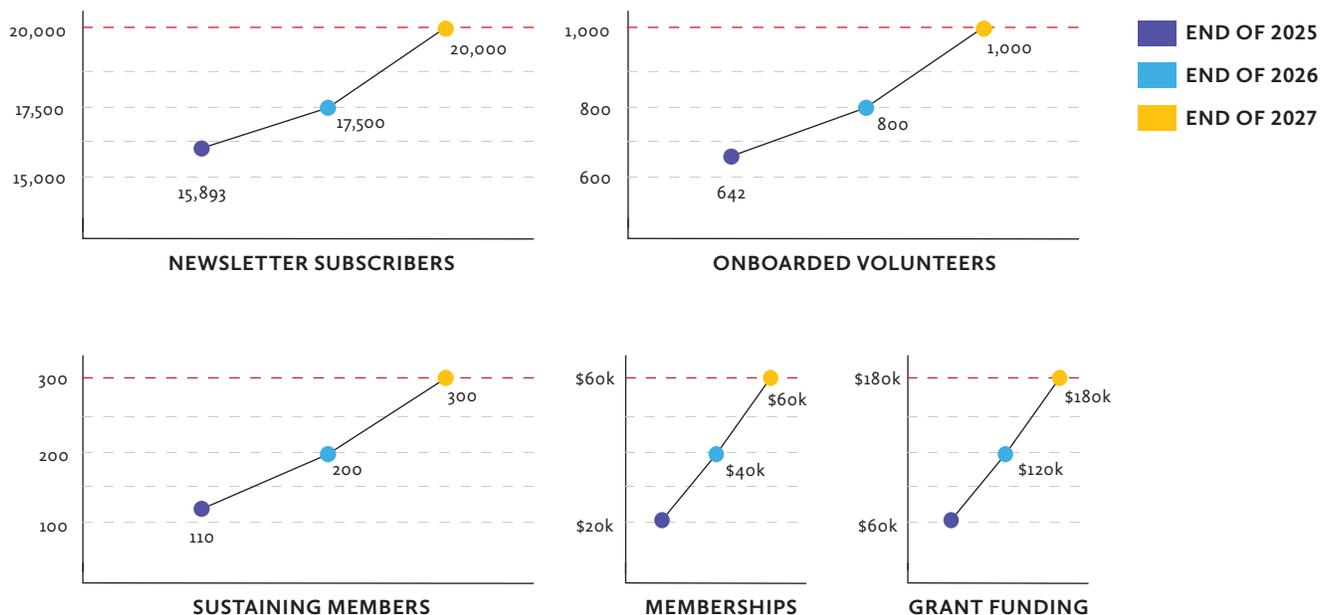
BUILDING CAPACITY

To better meet our mission, we will professionalize our organization over the next two years. Moving from an all-volunteer group, we will hire our first executive director (ED).

| Timeline | Key Milestone | Responsible Party |
|-----------|--|------------------------------|
| Q1 2026 | Form Hiring Committee | Board |
| | Post job description for Executive Director | Hiring Committee |
| Q2 2026 | Screen, Interview & Recommend ED Candidates | Hiring Committee |
| | Hire Executive Director | Board |
| Q3-4 2026 | ED onboarding; Develop fundraising plan | Board and Executive Director |
| | Apply for Grant Funding | Executive Director |
| 2027 | Raise \$240,000 in memberships, grants, corporate sponsorships | Board and Executive Director |

These staffing and fundraising milestones will be achieved through expanding our subscribers and members, volunteers and organizers, as well as donors and grantors.

By engaging neighbors and community members through our weekly newsletter, social media, regular social meetups, and local advocacy campaigns, we will grow by leading new volunteers and members up our ladder of engagement.



CLOSING NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors and Supporters,

I am a lifelong pedestrian. Whether you roll, ride, or stroll through our streets you know the value in a human-centered community, or what's missing from it. You've had a close call on a bike, you know someone impacted by traffic violence, you've struggled to meet up with friends or family, or to figure out how you'll make your next housing payment. We get what we fight for, and we deserve a place where we can build the life we choose.

Join us in the fight for abundant housing, safe roadways, and accessible transit.

Let's make sure policies reflect the world we deserve. Let's build a future full of access. This city was built by humans and can be changed by all of us. I am thrilled to work together with this strategic plan guiding our way to a more professional organization that remains committed to building a better place to live.

In solidarity,
Steph Davis, Board President
5th Square Advocacy, Inc.





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5TH SQUARE

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