

## Broad Street Brief: City Council to Evaluate State of Higher Ed

### City Hall

#### Mayor Parker Announces New Appointments

Last week, Mayor Chelle Parker announced the appointment of Tyrell Brown as Director of LGBTQ+ Affairs, Andy Toy as Director of the Home Appraisal Program, Robin Torrance as Director of Pan Hellenic & HBCU Engagement, and Patricia Wellenbach as Chief Strategy & Partnership Officer. Meanwhile, Commerce Director Alba Martinez—the first Latina to hold the position—announced her resignation effective May 1.

#### City Council to Investigate Higher Ed, Reconsider Zoning Bill

During Thursday's meeting, the City Council committed to investigate the state of higher education, in light of recent closures and mergers, and reconsider a bill passed last month altering the zoning code governing "nonconforming" property uses. Councilmember Jamie Gauthier (District 3) also introduced legislation to amend the Mixed Income Overlay to exempt certain affordable housing developments and Councilmember Nicolas O'Rourke (At Large) announced plans to introduce legislation creating a Philadelphia Transit Access Fund to ensure permanent funding for the City's Zero Fare program.

#### City Council Tackles Proliferation of Drug Paraphernalia Stores

On Monday, the City Council's Licenses & Inspections and Public Safety Committees held a hearing to address the rise of convenience stores and smoke shops selling drug paraphernalia and other illegal items, with lawmakers and community leaders calling for stricter regulations and enforcement.

#### Budget Hearing Update

This week's budget hearings covered a broad range of topics, from workforce development and education initiatives to sanitation and clean energy projects. The City Council and other officials grappled with funding existing programs—such as Built to Last and the Philly Tree Plan—amid uncertainty about the availability of future federal funds.

Next week's slate of hearings will focus on public safety. The full schedule of FY26 budget hearings and a link to watch them can be found [here](#). The following hearings are coming up next week:

- **Philadelphia Police Department** on Tuesday, April 8 at 10 a.m.
- **Office of Public Safety** on Tuesday, April 8 at 1:30 p.m.
- **Managing Director's Office** on Wednesday, April 9 at 10 a.m.
- **Department of Prisons** on Wednesday, April 9 at 1:30 p.m.

#### Upcoming Committee Hearings

The Philadelphia City Council holds several public hearings throughout the legislative calendar year. Watch [here](#).

- The **Joint Committees on Education and Children & Youth** will meet on Friday, April 4



Joseph Hill

**Managing Director, Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies**

jhill@cozen.com  
Phone: (215) 665-2065  
Fax: (215) 665-2013



Brianna A. Westbrook

**Government Relations Associate, Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies**

bwestbrooks@cozen.com  
Phone: (215) 665-4757  
Fax: (215) 665-2013

#### Related Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

at 10 a.m. to discuss and hear testimony exploring the creation of a School District of Philadelphia Chief of Joy and the prevalence of exclusionary school discipline and collective punishment practices in public schools.

- The **Housing, Neighborhood Development & The Homeless Committee** will meet on Monday, April 7 at 10 a.m. to discuss and hear testimony regarding proposed Landlord & Tenant regulations around security deposits and application fees for residential rentals.
- The **Streets & Services Committee** will meet on Monday, April 7 at 1:30 p.m. to discuss and hear testimony regarding proposed traffic regulations, parking penalties, automated enforcement systems, and authorizations for encroachments.

### **City Launches Initiative to Combat Illegal Dumping**

On Tuesday, District Attorney Larry Krasner announced the Cleaner & Greener Enforcement Unit, a pilot program in Districts 8 and 9 to tackle illegal dumping and improve quality of life. The unit will use surveillance and dedicated prosecutors to address this persistent issue.

### **Around Town**

#### **PPA to Launch AI-Powered System for Noisy Car Ticketing**

A new bill from Councilmember Mark Squilla (District 1) will enable the Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA) to use AI-powered cameras for automated enforcement of vehicle noise violations, potentially starting this summer.

#### **Franklin Square PATCO Station Reopens After 46 Years**

The Franklin Square Port Authority Transit Corporation (PATCO) station in Philadelphia reopened Thursday after a \$29.3 million renovation, marking its first operation since 1979 and adding a new stop to the line.

#### **Free Library Offers Support to Federal Workers Affected by DOGE Cuts**

The Free Library of Philadelphia announced workshops to provide career search tips, resume help, and networking opportunities for federal workers laid off or facing potential job loss due to Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) cuts.

#### **Nonprofit Launches Guaranteed Income Pilot to Lift Families Out of Poverty**

Xiente, a Philadelphia nonprofit, is offering \$500 monthly cash payments and coaching to low-income families in a 14-month pilot program aimed at helping them move from poverty to the middle class.

#### **Kensington Nonprofits Launch Free Basketball League to Curb Violence**

Kensington nonprofits NKCDC's Cure Violence and Esperanza Health Center launched a free basketball league for men aged 18-40 to reduce gun violence and foster community engagement, with the league running from January to March 2025.

### **Election Update**

#### **WHYY's Voter Guide for PA Primary Elections**

WHYY published a resource for voters ahead of the Pennsylvania primary elections on May 20, which includes key voter deadlines and details about the Philadelphia and statewide candidates.

#### **Labor Unions Divided on DA Endorsement**

The Philadelphia Council AFL-CIO chose not to endorse either candidate in the Democratic primary for district attorney, underscoring the varied perspectives within the labor community.

## Suburban Spotlight

### DelCo Bans Ghost Guns

The Delaware County Council unanimously voted to ban ghost guns and devices that convert firearms into automatic weapons on Wednesday, making it the first Philadelphia suburb to implement such a ban.

### 300-Unit Apartment Building Planned for Conshohocken

Alterra Property Group plans to build a 300-unit apartment building on SEPTA-owned land in Conshohocken to enhance transit-oriented development and provide additional parking for commuters.

### How Philly-Area Schools Are Resisting Orders to End DEI Programs

Despite President Donald Trump's executive orders to dismantle diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs, some Philadelphia-area schools, like Phoenixville Area School District, are choosing to maintain their DEI initiatives, citing limited reliance on federal funding and a commitment to their values.

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