

Philadelphia Crosstown Coalition Questionnaire for Candidates

The Crosstown Coalition, a federation of 19 civic associations listed below, voted to present the enclosed questionnaire to Mayoral and Council candidates who will be on the ballot for the May 19th primary.

DUE DATE: *Responses from Mayoral candidates* should be delivered no later than *Friday March 13* in advance of the March 18 Mayoral Candidates night be hosted by four of our members from communities east of Broad Street. *Responses from Council Candidates* should be delivered no later than *Friday April 3*.

INSTRUCTIONS: Electronically insert your answers after each question.

RESPOND TO: Deliver the completed questionnaire to Crosstown Chair Stephen Huntington by email to shuntington@hhflaw.com.

QUESTIONS: Present any inquiries you may have by email or, less preferably, call Mr. Huntington at 215 523 7900 or Communications Chair Ilene Wilder at 215 514 0449

CIRCULATION: Answers (but not the Contact Information) will be promptly posted, first come, first served, on the Crosstown Coalition website: philacrosstown.org and emailed to our 19 member organizations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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The Office You Are Seeking: Council At-Large (Republican)

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Members of the Coalition:

Bella Vista Neighbors Association • Center City Residents' Association • Central Roxborough Civic Association • East Falls Community Council • East Passyunk Crossing Civic Association • Fishtown Neighbors Association • Logan Square Neighborhood Association • Northern Liberties Neighbors Association • Overbrook Farms Club • Packer Park Civic Association • Passyunk Square Civic Association • Queen Village Neighbors Association • Society Hill Civic Association • South Broad Street Neighborhood Association • South of South Neighborhood Association • Washington Square West Civic Association • West Powelton/Saunders Park RCO • Woodland Terrace Homeowners Association

TAX AND FINANCE QUESTIONS

1. TAX ABATEMENT

Philadelphia's ten-year tax abatement eliminates real estate taxes on new construction and improvements (but not the underlying land) for ten years. Supporters argue that the lost tax revenue is more than offset by enhanced business, wage and sales tax collections and note that since the abatement went into effect, development activity has increased dramatically. Opponents argue that the abatement stimulates development for only high income housing, and reduces much needed city real estate tax revenue, of which more than 50% goes to schools.

Should the ten year realty tax abatement continue as is?

No, I don't think the ten year abatement should not continue "as is".

Should it be modified or abolished?

It should be modified.

If you favor modification, what modifications should be made?

It should be modified so that it applies to those areas of the city that need development but are not being developed and are unlikely to attract development in the foreseeable future. In addition, the length of years of the abatement and the percentage of the abatement may be modified based on the need. I believe the ten year abatement did a lot of good for our city. We cannot know for sure that the recent development would have occurred with the ten year abatement. However, we do know that Philadelphia's best neighborhoods continue to be desirable places to live with more people willing to invest and develop property.

2. REAL ESTATE TAXATION

In 2013, for the first time in over two decades, the City reassessed all 579,000 parcels within the City limits. Tens of thousands of residential property owners were shocked to receive much higher property tax assessments

How frequently should reassessments occur?

State law requires that real estate be reassessed every year. Prior to AVI, the city had not reassessed all of its parcels for 10-30 years. The sticker shock that many property owners suffered when real estate was reassessed was the result of the cumulative increase in property values over those years.

I believe the city should reassess in accordance with the law. However, the reality is that Philadelphia does not have the funds or personnel to do a proper reassessment each year. Therefore, I support the proposal that the city assess a portion of its real estate each year so that the Office of Property Assessment may do an accurate job. An assessment every 3 or 4 years would still provide property owners with a reasonable understanding of what their property is worth.

3. WAGE TAX

Philadelphia receives 66% of its tax revenue from wages and business receipts; in contrast, in New York City and Washington DC, 34% and 35% of tax revenues are from wages and business receipts. In those two cities, proceeds from real estate taxes are much larger (41% and 36%, respectively) than in Philadelphia, where this value is 17%. Critics contend that Philadelphia's reliance on wage/business taxes drives workers and businesses out of the City because it is easier to relocate people than it is to relocate offices and factories.

Should Philadelphia shift more of its revenue sourcing from wage and business taxes to real estate taxes?

We should reduce the taxes rates on wage & net profits, U&O and business receipts to get to a more competitive rate that will help us increase the number of businesses, "Class A" office buildings, workers, residents, visitors and investors. The result will be an increase in rental fees and property values.

However, a comparison of Philadelphia's real estate and workforce to those of cities like NY, Washington DC and Boston are not comparable at this time. In addition, Philadelphia recently reassessed all its parcels after 10-30 years of failing to assess its real estate.

Philadelphia has a large portion of real estate that is not taxable and a large portion of real estate that is assessed at a lower value because we have a large population of low income and unemployed residents.

While buildings don't move the people who work in them do thanks to technology. They can work from home or outside of the city even if the employer's building remains in Philadelphia. We are likely to have more proportional growth in workforce salaries and business income than growth in high value real estate. I would not rush to shift too much to real estate at this time. I believe we are looking at a change in the global economy and technology that is creating changes in tax policy.

If you believe we should shift away from wage and business taxes to real estate taxes, how would you propose to do this?

I believe that a shift from wage and business receipts to real estate will naturally occur with the increased desirability of Philadelphia as place to locate businesses and the need to reduce the wage & net profit tax and business receipts tax in order to be competitive with other cities. I introduced a bill to reduce the Wage and Net Profit Tax by \$100 million over 11 years. If enacted, it would cut the rate in half (from 3.92% to 2.09%) with the conclusion of the PICA portion of the Wage & Net Profit Tax.

If you do not believe that such a shift should occur, why not?

I provided my thought in the prior two answers.

4. DELINQUENT TAXES

The City currently has over \$1 billion in delinquent taxes. Approximately half are delinquent property taxes and half are delinquent wage, business income, and related business taxes. Each year, the deficit grows, a trend which suggests that the City lacks the political will or competence (or both) to collect taxes. One tax collection strategy is to remove the collection task from the City and sell tax liens to private investors so that the private sector would set about collecting these debts. Proponents observe that because the \$1 billion delinquency shows that the City is incapable or unwilling to collect delinquent taxes, tax collections should be transferred to the private sector. Critics worry that private concerns would engage in improper collection tactics or fail to fairly treat tax delinquents who are down on their luck.

Should the City sell tax liens to private investors?

While the city has over \$1 Billion in delinquent taxes only about \$150 million appears to be collectable. I don't think selling tax liens is a good idea in every case but I support collecting the delinquent taxes more efficiently through third-party collectors. I introduced a bill that requires the City to refer tax delinquent cases to its third-party collector if the City has not take action on the file, other than sending notices, for more than a year after the delinquency. Currently, the average age of a delinquent file referred to the City's third-party collector is 10 years old. An increase of 2% would produce an additional \$26 million per year.

If not, what steps would you take to ensure that the delinquency is addressed?

In March 2014, I introduced a bill that requires the Revenue Department to refer tax delinquent files to its third-party collector one year from the date of delinquency, if no action other than sending notices has been taken. It has a poverty threshold to protect senior citizens and low-incomes households. The intent of the bill is to target those who are able to pay the taxes, but simply are not paying. According to the 2013 Pew Study, every one percentage point cut in the

delinquency rate would potentially raise \$13 million annually. I expect better collection will improve voluntary compliance by 2% or \$26 million per year.

If my bill is enacted, the City would have to collect, reach agreement or being a process of negotiation with all outstanding delinquent taxes or send the files to its third-party collectors.

5. PGW SALE

Advocates of the recent failed sale of the Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW) favored the sale because the City could use the proceeds, about \$400 million, to reduce the \$5 billion underfunding of the City's pensions. They further contended that the City had no business running a gas company, that City ownership leaves open the door for patronage positions at PGW, that City ownership limited the business opportunities of the operation, and that under public ownership, it will take nearly 90 years to replace the City's ancient and increasingly unsafe gas mains. Opponents asserted that a sale would eliminate PGW's annual \$18 million contribution to the City's general fund. Opponents were also concerned that even though a privately operated PGW, like PECO, would be regulated by the Public Utility Commission, a private operator would be more likely to raise rates and be less responsive to the needs of low income residents than a City owned utility. Critics also contended that the private operator produced no credible plan for upgrading infrastructure that would not have entailed substantial long-term rate increases. Both sides presented reports substantiating their positions. Despite these divergent views, City Council decided not to hold public hearings on the proposal, let alone conduct a yea or nay vote.

Do you believe that City Council should have conducted public hearings on the PGW controversy? Please explain your answer.

What is your vision for the future of PGW?

According to the Mayor's bill, selling PGW to UIL Holdings (UIL) was the best deal possible for Philadelphia. The basic deal was to sell PGW which nets \$50 million per year, to UIL for \$1.87 Billion for which the City would receive between \$242 million and \$400 million (the City was still responsible for the worker's pension). The City would lose PGW's contribution of \$18 million per year and the taxes that are collected as a result of PGW's residency requirement that 1,500 workers live in Philadelphia.

The two issues before Council members were: 1. is the sale of PGW to UIL the best deal for Philadelphians? and 2. if it is, can and will UIL perform in accordance with the contract so that Philadelphians receive the benefit of the sale? After months of reviewing documents, speaking with Administration officials, meeting UIL officers and lobbyist, speaking with consultants and

doing other due diligence, Council members could not answer “yes” to either question.

The reason Council did not hold a public hearing on the Mayor’s bill to sell PGW to UIL was because not one member of Council believed in the sale enough to introduce the bill and advocate for it.

Council consists of 17 elected representatives ranging from liberal Democrat to conservative Republican. There is usually disagreement on major issues such as the sale of PGW. And while Council members disagree on various issues related to the sale of PGW, all Council members agreed that the UIL deal was not a good deal.

Unless a bill is introduced, it cannot be assigned to a Committee for a public hearing. I’ve heard a few candidates for City Council say that they would have introduced the bill so that a public hearing could be held. While that may sound nice to some, it’s both impractical and unwise. Council members are elected to act on the public’s behalf. There are an overwhelming number and variety of issues that comes before Council. That includes complex matters the general public, and even experts, do not have the time or resources to examine. And then, we must make the tough decisions.

I did not introduce the bill because I concluded that the UIL deal was a bad deal for Philadelphia. First, I believe PGW is worth far more than \$242 million. Second, UIL did not appear to be able to abide by the contract after purchasing PGW and more likely to sell PGW in part or in whole to another buyer (the City’s contract would not be carried over to a new buyer). UIL was underfunded and overleveraged to do the job it said it would. Its officers were eager to purchase PGW despite lacking the capital to replace pipes. They had no plan, funds or interest in developing PGW’s LNG (liquid natural gas) capabilities. When I met the senior officers of UIL, they told me they were going to develop LNG exports and ship LNG from Philadelphia. They were not aware Philadelphia did not have an LNG export license until I told them. UIL stated it would replace pipe mains in half the time but it did not have an objective basis to make such a claim nor was the claim reflected in the contract.

As we know now, UIL was sold to a foreign energy company, Iberdrola of Spain. Iberdrola and UIL had dealings in 2010. Had PGW been sold to UIL, it would have been a terrible loss for Philadelphia.

As Chairman of Global Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative Economy, I have a serious interest in examining the potential of developing natural gas, compressed natural gas, natural gas liquids (NGL’s) and liquid natural gas (LNG) to benefit Philadelphia. On April 16, 2015, I will hold a hearing on LNG Export and host a symposium on it afterwards at Drexel University. Testimony received from Penn America Energy, LP on March 13, 2015 stated it would make a privately funded investment of \$2.1 Billion to

develop LNG infrastructure and pay a tolling fee of \$150 million to the PGW on an annual basis for the term of its contract which is typically 20 years. If successful, that would generate \$3 Billion in new funds for the City that could be used to fund our schools, improve our city and lower our taxes.

6. PENSIONS

The City spends 18% of its budget – about \$660 million (in 2012) – on pensions. Even so, the City’s pension obligations are currently underfunded by approximately \$5 billion, more than the \$4 billion the City expects to take in during the next fiscal year. Three questions:

Do you believe that the City can “grow” its way out of this deficit– i.e. that prosperity in the City, as distinguished from tax hikes, will produce higher realty and business tax revenues so that the additional funds can be used to pay down the deficit OR that the City can somehow change its ways and pay down the deficit by better practices?

The City cannot “grow” its way out of the Pension deficit. The City must first fix the flaws in our Pension system which allows it to continue to pay only the MMO (Minimum Municipal Obligation) and use money it should contribute to the Pension Fund for other projects. I introduced a bill to restructure and reform the Pension Board so that the City will begin to pay down the Pension debt and stop using funds that should be contributed to the Pension Fund for other purposes.

If you do not believe that “growth” alone will suffice to address this issue, , which do you favor: raising taxes, cutting spending or selling assets? Depending on your answer, specifically identify the taxes to be raised, the names of the programs that should be cut (please no generalities like eliminating “waste and abuse”), or the assets to be sold.

Once the flaws in the Pension system have been fixed, the City will benefit from responsible annual payments to the Pension Fund that will help reduce the deficit continuously over time. These larger contributions will be appropriated from the budget’s unidentified, over-appropriations. Last year, I introduced an amendment to reduce the budget by \$74 million in unidentified, over-appropriations (in order to reduce the real estate tax rate from 1.34% to 1.29%) and the year before that, I introduced an amendment to reduce the budget by \$48 million in unidentified, over-appropriations.

I believe we can raise additional funds to pay down the Pension debt based on economic growth and greater efficiency. For example, I am exploring LNG (liquefied natural gas) exports. If successful, it may generate over \$150 million in annual tolling fees for PGW. A portion of this money could be used to help pay down the Pension debt. A typical 20-year contract would generate over \$3 billion for the city.

We can raise an additional \$26 million in annual funds without raising taxes by improving the efficiency of local tax collection. In Philadelphia, the average age of a delinquent tax file that is referred to third-party collection is 10 years old. As a result, the collection rate is under par compared to cities and counties that refer delinquent files after one or two years. In March 2014, I introduced a bill that requires the Revenue Department to refer tax delinquent files to its third-party collector one year from the date of delinquency, if no action other than sending notices has been taken. It has a poverty threshold to protect senior citizens and low-incomes households. The intent of the bill is to target those who are able to pay the taxes, but simply are not paying. According to the 2013 Pew Study, every one percentage point cut in the delinquency rate would potentially raise \$13 million annually. I expect better collection will improve voluntary compliance by 2% or \$26 million per year.

We can raise an additional \$2 million in annual funds without raising taxes by closing loopholes for vehicle owners who do not register with the Department of Transportation and who intentionally collect license plates to evade boot and tow. I introduced such a bill in January 2015. The implementation of this bill would raise approximately \$2 million annually.

I am working with state legislators to create an International Trade and Investment Fund to capture overseas investment for water front development, infrastructure, startups, innovation and other projects. A portion of the funds generated for the City can be used to pay down the Pension debt.

To gradually improve the pension plan's funding status, do you favor continuing the defined benefit plan for existing employees while instituting a defined contribution plan for more recently hired employees?

Yes.

DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS

7. CHANGING NEIGHBORHOODS

Some Philadelphia neighborhoods are changing, with better-off people moving into areas historically occupied by less well-off residents. This trend increases the city's tax base (and thus its ability to address the challenges many of its residents face) and often improves the physical characteristics of a neighborhood, but it can also bring unsettling changes, not only through

increasing property taxes but also via alterations in the makeup of affected communities.

Other than providing real estate tax relief to long-time residents whose assessments have increased due to rising values in the neighborhood, do you believe that government should intervene regarding these neighborhood changes?

Yes, I believe the goal of a great city regarding its population is to be transformational and not simply transitional. I am very happy that new people are coming to Philadelphia and moving into neighborhoods that had lost population. They are adding many benefits to the community which benefit the people who have lived and worked there.

If so, list the disruptions you would target and the remedies you would suggest.

I believe the City can help neighborhood improvement groups offer assistance to long term residents, seniors and persons with disabilities who need home repair and maintenance. I am interested in exploring the value of offering long term, low income, residents a mini-tax abatement for improvements made to their homes. Finally, the city can expand its tax deferment program and payment plan for low income senior residents who are in areas where property values have risen sharply.

8. ZONING RELIEF THROUGH COUNCIL

In 2012, after years of effort, the City passed a comprehensive revision of its zoning code. Many developers with projects which do not conform to the new zoning code have sought City Council ordinances to revise the zoning of their parcels, without going through the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a variance. Critics claim that zoning by council ordinance favors those with Council connections and/or big-ticket projects. Proponents argue that stakeholder input can be received in Council and that the Council procedure will encourage development because legal challenges to council ordinances are less likely than appeals from Zoning Board decisions.

Would you vote for (or sign) ordinances enabling developments contrary to the zoning code and which have not received a variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment? If so, under what circumstances would you vote for (or sign) such ordinances?

Yes, if I believe the development is in the public interest and the new zoning code did not foresee the benefits of the type of development that is being proposed.

9. CITY-OWNED VACANT PROPERTIES

The City owns some 10,000 vacant properties. These properties cost \$21 million per year to maintain. Selling these properties requires City Council approval under the newly enacted Land Bank Ordinance. Sales must also be reviewed by the 14-member vacant property review committee, composed of City officials. Some worry that these procedures serve to delay the sale of these properties and open the process to political bartering, favoritism, and waste. Others say that City Council and the Project Review Committee will appropriately protect the public interest and increase community input in redevelopment.

Will you vote to amend the ordinance by eliminating the Council ordinance provision? Explain your response.

No. Our democracy (and our judicial system) provides protection for the individual and minority that may conflict with the wishes of the majority. As a Councilman At-Large, I primarily deal with the City as a whole. District Council members primarily deal with one tenth of the city that is their district. If the sale of vacant land negatively affects an individual or neighborhood and they feel the bureaucrats are not giving fair consideration to their issues, they can speak with their elected District Council member.

GOVERNMENT & ADMINISTRATION

10. ETHICS: CREATING A PERMANENT INSPECTOR GENERAL

The current City Inspector General, Amy Kurland, holds office pursuant to an Executive Order originally issued in 1984 which could be rescinded at any time by any mayor.

Are you willing to support for Bill 130001 calling for a ballot referendum to amend the City Charter to establish an independent Inspector General funded by taxpayer dollars who would have oversight over every city department?

Yes. But I also think there may need to be clarification of duties and responsibilities between the Inspector General and the Ethics Board and Chief Integrity Officer.

If elected Mayor, would you leave the current Executive Order in place and promptly fill the Inspector General's position?

N/A

11. UNFAIR ELECTORAL DISTRICTING

“Gerrymandering” is drawing electoral districts to serve the interests of politicians or parties. A 2010 survey ranked two of Philadelphia City Council districts (5 and 7) among the top ten gerrymandered districts nationwide, with two others (1 and 9) also highly ranked on the gerrymandering scale.

Would you vote to amend the City Charter in 2015 so that the next redistricting in 2020 will be conducted by an independent, non-partisan commission?

Unless we have a computer just divide Philadelphia into 10 blocks of equal population, redistricting will continue to be a political endeavor where neighborhoods, parks, business districts, firehouses and police stations, libraries, schools, communities of people, historic areas, and many, many other considerations play a role. I am not sure which is better, an appointed commission (appointed by elected politicians or judges) or the elected politicians themselves. Like our judicial system where lawyers battle it out in court, it may be as fair a system to let the elected officials battle it out, as well.

12. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Philadelphia elects three “City Commissioners” whose only duty is to administer elections. They serve four years regardless of their performance. In most cities, the election process is not run by three people, but by one, who is appointed by the mayor and can be removed for poor performance. Proponents say that the current system in Philadelphia empowers voters who can reject ineffectual or dishonest Commissioners. Detractors assert that Philadelphia voters are largely unaware of the duties of the three City Commissioners whose job title does not describe their job function so that the ballot results do not reflect voter’s assessments of on the job performance.

Would you vote to amend the City Charter, eliminating the City Commissioners and adding the position of an election administrator that reports to the Mayor?

No. Under our Charter we have a strong Mayor form of government. Giving authority to the Mayor over elections would be too much power. I like our democratic system of checks and balances. The Election Commissioners are elected and can be removed by the people. The Charter requires that only two of the three can be from the same political party and decisions are made by majority vote.

13. SHERIFF’S OFFICE

Per the City Charter, the Sheriff’s office is an elective position charged with responsibility for the sale of tax delinquent properties, courtroom security,

and transport of inmates. Like the Clerk of Quarter Sessions, another elected office which was recently eliminated by a Charter revision, the Clerk of Quarter Sessions Court has been unable to account for the funds which it receives and its foreclosure procedures have been seen as partially responsible for the half billion dollars of property tax delinquencies. Critics of the Sheriff's office maintain that its functions should be administered by administration appointees who can be hired and fired based upon their competence. Defenders of the Office assert that Philadelphia's voters, not the Mayor, should choose who should conduct sheriff's sales, and arrange for courtroom security and inmate transport.

Would you vote to abolish the Sherriff's office, transferring to other City agencies its functions (Sheriff's sales, courtroom security and inmate transfer)?

No. The Sheriff's Office is an elected position so the best safeguard already exists in that the Sheriff may be removed every four years. The Sheriff's Office provides enforcement and security for the Court system. I don't think the public would be better served by adding the functions of the Sheriff's Office to the Mayor's Office.

14. ROLE OF NEIGHBORHOODS IN DEVELOPMENT & QUALITY OF LIFE

Philadelphia is called the city of neighborhoods, but many of our basic planning, resource, and development decisions are made with little or no effective input of neighborhoods--vital stakeholders in the city's future. These include overall development patterns, placement and design of special events, major construction, and placement and operation of key public facilities—each of which can have major impacts on adjacent communities. Some measures have been made, such as the design review process is zoning code and open public involvement. But these remain advisory, and most localized decisions and issues are still the purview of district Councilpeople rather than the administration.

What would you do to give neighborhoods more meaningful roles in decision-making and more effective engagement as partners in the city's goals and mission?

I believe that we have an existing system of democracy that allows neighborhood organizations to have input. Each neighborhood organization can increase its influence simply by increasing the number of supporters who vote and/or contribute. People who organize have increased influence but fundamentally, decisions outside of one that require specialized education or training should be based on "one person, one vote" as much as possible.

15. SCHOOLS

Per the Mayor's Tale of the Tape, In fiscal year 2013-2014, Philadelphia contributed \$1,216,319,000 to fund the School District, a contribution which accounted for 42.3% of the School District's revenues, a percentage smaller than Chicago (50.3%), Dallas (57.7%) and Boston (67.2%) but larger than Memphis (38.4%), Baltimore (20.7%) and Detroit (20.4%).

What is the dollar amount of the contribution that you believe the City should make in fiscal year 2016 – 2017, your first year in office, and how you would finance it. Explain your conclusion

The comparison in the question is not fair. Philadelphia has a higher tax rate than any of the cities listed above. So while Philadelphia may contribute less in percentage of taxes to fund Schools, Philadelphia pays more taxes.

School funding is a difficult and complex political issue. Currently, the State has taken responsibility for running and funding the PSD. The more the City gives, the less the state gives. The City is not financially able to fund the PSD to the extent it needs.

For fiscal year 2016-2017, the School Reform Commission will make a formal request of City Council for a specific amount of money. Council will respond at that time and not before. However, we can predict that it will ask for an additional \$100-150 million from the City.

The City cannot continue to take, over \$100 million out of the City's operating fund, year after year, to cover a portion of the State's inadequate funding. We need to reach an agreement with the State to adopt a sustainable solution to funding Philadelphia Schools. Harrisburg is likely to fund this transition if Philadelphia presents it with a workable plan that improves educational quality and fiscal responsibility.

In October 2014, I introduced Charter change legislation to restructure the Philadelphia School District's governance to implement global "best practices" to ensure that every school provides academic excellence, up-to-date vocational and career training, technology and resources in the classroom, in a safe environment that is run efficiently, economically and effectively. I am meeting with stakeholders and state legislators regarding it's willingness to fund the transition of the School District back to local control.

Do you believe that any strings/conditions should be attached to the City's contributions to the School District budget and, if so, what are they?

The City has tried to attach conditions to the money it gives to the School District. It is not effective because it is not enforceable. What the City can do is refuse to provide funds the next time the School District makes a request.

LIFESTYLE

16. HOUSING FIRST

Philadelphia has one of the lowest levels of street homelessness of any major American city – 1 in 5,000 Philadelphians lives on the streets in comparison to 1 in 2,700 Bostonians, 1 in 1,800 Chicagoans, 1 in 300 San Franciscans or 1 in 100 Los Angelinos. [Source: Project Home, Saving Money, Saving Lives, 2009, at p. 4] Nevertheless, anyone who has spent time in our public spaces recognizes that there is a significant street population, typically suffering from mental illness or substance addiction, many of whom are likely not homeless. The City has implemented “housing first” programs that place individuals in supportive, permanent housing without regard to continued substance use and/or untreated mental health conditions and spends 108 million per year on homeless services.

If housing is readily available for homeless people, should they be permitted to live in public spaces?

No. Living in public spaces is unhealthy, unsanitary and dangerous for the homeless and problematic for the public. Using and enjoying public spaces is everyone’s right. And everyone should respect the rights of others to use and enjoy those space.

Do you favor sidewalk ordinances to regulate aggressive panhandling and other antisocial behavior?

Yes.