

## Broad Street Brief: City Council to Investigate UArts Closure

### City Hall

#### City Council Approves FY25 Budget

Early Thursday morning, Philadelphia City Council advanced Mayor Cherelle Parker's proposed \$6.37 billion FY25 Budget. The budget prioritizes public safety and quality-of-life improvement without raising taxes. Read CPS's summary [here](#).

#### Mayor Parker Planning \$100M Triage, Wellness Center in Northeast

Mayor Cherelle Parker plans to spend more than \$100 million to build a "triage and wellness" facility for more than 600 people near the city's jail complex in Northeast Philadelphia, with the goal of expanding treatment capacity and dismantling open-air drug markets.

#### Finance Committee Advances Controversial Contracting Legislation

The City Council Finance Committee advanced a bill this week that would eliminate the nonprofit exemption from competitive bidding for City contracts. The bill's opponents have expressed concern about increased burdens and potential disruptions to services.

#### City Council Passes Land Bank Bill Aimed at Protecting Community Gardens

A bill passed by City Council last week allows for the Land Bank to maintain priority status over other bidders when tax-delinquent land goes up for sheriff sale. Advocates say the legislation will protect communal garden space, as the city has reported a net loss of 140 gardens since 2008.

#### Upcoming Committee Hearings

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

- The **Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Committee** will meet Tuesday, June 11 at 2 p.m. to hear testimony on ensuring recreation centers have the staff needed to respond to the diverse challenges of Philadelphia neighborhoods.

### Around Town

#### Forman Arts Initiative Scores Big in Acquiring Kensington Block

The Forman Arts Initiative acquired 100,000 square feet of commercial property, including a quarter of an acre of green space on the 2200 block of North American Street. The initiative indicated that it will collaborate with internationally renowned artist Theaster Gates to develop a proposed city arts campus.

#### UArts' Sudden Closure Announcement Prompts Unrest

After 154 years, the University of the Arts (UArts) announced Friday that it will permanently close its doors on June 7, citing "significant, unanticipated expenses." In the days since the shocking announcement, President Kerry Walk resigned, UArts faculty filed a class-action lawsuit over the



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lack of notice, and other Philadelphia institutions stepped up to help UArts students looking to continue their education — with Temple University exploring a potential merger. City Council will also be investigating the closure.

#### **Safehouse Files Federal Appeal in Pursuit of Opening Overdose Prevention Center**

Two months after the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia dismissed a five-year dispute between the Department of Justice and Safehouse over the legality of supervised injection sites, the Philadelphia nonprofit filed a notice of appeal arguing that opening an overdose prevention center is protected by the First Amendment's religious safeguards, precluding alleged violations of federal drug law.

#### **SEPTA Considers Ending Free Commuter Parking**

For nearly four and a half years, SEPTA riders have avoided having to pay for parking in the agency's 25,000 spots located at 146 different stations. However, a recent jump in Regional Rail ridership prompted SEPTA to consider slashing its pandemic-era policy and reinstate commuter parking fees.

#### **OTIS Conducting Feasibility Study for Intercity Bus Station Location**

After receiving a \$90,000 grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Philadelphia will conduct a feasibility study to optimize the location of an intercity bus station near 30th Street. While the exact locations to be studied remain publicly unknown, Philadelphia's Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems (OTIS) confirmed that it has already identified three potential sites.

#### **Election Update**

##### **Trump's Philadelphia Campaign Strategy: Engage Black Voters**

A week after the Biden-Harris campaign launched their own strategy to engage Black voters, former President Donald Trump's campaign hosted two events in Philadelphia designed to achieve the same purpose. The recent visits underscore the political importance of Philadelphia in securing victory in the critical battleground state of Pennsylvania.

##### **State Reps Call for PA Constitutional Amendment to Force Resignation of Elected Officials Convicted of a Crime**

Following former President Donald Trump's criminal conviction in New York, state Representatives Malcolm Kenyatta (D-181) and Jared Solomon (D-202) advocated for an amendment to the Pennsylvania State Constitution that would bar criminally convicted elected officials from sustaining political office.

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