

Broad Street Brief: Councilmember Gym Resigns Ahead of Mayoral Run; Four New Members Sworn In to City Council



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CITY HALL

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For a brief window of time, Philadelphia City Council returned to its normal 17-member roster as Quetcy Lozada, Anthony Phillips, Jimmy Harrity, and Sharon Vaughn were sworn in Monday as the new 7th District, 9th District, and at-large councilmembers, respectively. All four members were elected earlier this month in special elections to serve out the remaining 13 months of the current legislative term following the resignations of former Councilmembers Maria Quiñones-Sánchez, Chelle Parker, Allan Domb, and Derek Green — all of whom are currently running for mayor. Helen Gym has joined her former colleagues in the race, as she announced her resignation from City Council Tuesday morning and her run for mayor Wednesday afternoon.

Unexpectedly High Fund Balance the Subject of Negotiation Among Executive Office, City Council

For many reasons — ranging from unexpectedly high tax collections, difficulties filling city positions and providing regular city services, and a slow-spending approach to the \$1.4 billion the city received in American Rescue Plan funds — Philadelphia finished its most recent budget year with an unprecedented \$779 million fund balance, placing the city in the unusual position of having more funds than it knows precisely what to do with. While many members of City Council are proponents of more aggressive spending on programs to mitigate gun violence or aid in post-pandemic economic recovery, the Kenney administration favors erring on the side of caution to prepare for the potential of a widely expected impending recession.

Center City Foot Traffic, Retail Occupancy on the Rise, Nearing Pre-Pandemic Levels

Last week, Center City District (CCD) released a report showing increased rates of retail occupancy and foot traffic — both of which are approaching pre-pandemic levels — a promising sign of economic recovery and potential for improved public safety. According to CCD data, rates of foot traffic are currently at about 77% of what it was in October 2019, representing a more than 100% increase from this time last year. And despite a perception of struggling business in the downtown neighborhood, CCD reports that approximately 80.5% of storefronts are open, a 54.5% increase since June 2020. Recent retail trends have included an increase in “digitally native” storefronts, “entertainment concepts,” and the continued popularity of outdoor dining options.

Former Activist, Politician T. Milton Street Sr. Dies at 83

Local activist and politician Thomas Milton Street Sr. died Monday at the age of 83 after a years-long battle with cancer. Street served both in the state House and Senate, and was known throughout Philadelphia for his dedication to combating poverty and homelessness. He was the brother of Mayor John Street and the uncle of state Senator Sharif Street.

One-Fifth of Philadelphia Homeowners Pay More in Taxes Than They Should

Approximately one in five Philadelphia homeowners is not enrolled in any of Philadelphia’s tax relief programs. As a result, that one-fifth of homeowners pays an estimated combined \$73 million more in taxes than they should. With the most recent citywide tax assessment raising the property value by an eye-watering average of 31%, as well as the cost burden of high inflation rates, the

Philadelphia Inquirer has put together an [informative guide](#) for homeowners to determine which tax relief programs may be right for them — and how to check whether or not they are already enrolled.

New Affordable Housing Development for Seniors Coming to Chinatown

A new 51-unit building intended for use as affordable housing for Chinatown's senior citizens is being developed at Ninth and Vine Streets by Penrose in consultation with the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation and the city Redevelopment Authority. The development is expected to cost \$23 million, slashing the original pre-pandemic estimate, and will offer rents for studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments for approximately 60% of the area median income.
