

RYAN A. BIZZARRO, CHAIRMAN

116 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
P.O. BOX 202003
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-2003
(717) 772-2297



HOUSE MAJORITY POLICY COMMITTEE

PAHOUSE.COM/POLICY
POLICY@PAHOUSE.NET
✕ f @ @PADEMPOLICY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH of PENNSYLVANIA

House Democratic Policy Committee Hearing

Safety and Security in 2026: Philadelphia Welcomes the World

Wednesday, August 20, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.

Representative Sean Dougherty

OPENING REMARKS

10:00 a.m. Rep. Sean Dougherty, D-Philadelphia

PANEL ONE

10:05 a.m. Michael Newmuis, 2026 Director
City of Philadelphia

Michael Giardina, Deputy Director
Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management

Q & A with Legislators

PANEL TWO

10:35 a.m. Scott Sauer, General Manager
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

Rich Montanez, Deputy Commissioner
Philadelphia Department of Streets

Q & A with Legislators

Good morning, Chairman Bizzarro and distinguished members of the PA House Democratic Policy Committee.

My name is Michael Newmuis, and I serve as the 2026 Director in the Office of Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle L. Parker.

As we prepare to celebrate 250 years of the Declaration of Independence, I have the extraordinary privilege of working alongside a dedicated team of public servants and our partners to help Philadelphia prepare for the U.S. Semiquincentennial. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shape how Philadelphia—the birthplace of American democracy—rises to meet this moment. And I assure you, the Parker Administration does not take that responsibility lightly.

From day one, the Parker Administration's approach has been unprecedented in scope and partnership.

We believe that any city worthy of a global celebration is a city that celebrates, empowers, and uplifts its very own residents. For America's 250th anniversary, our charge is to engage every corner of Philadelphia across every demographic — driving meaningful investments, economic opportunities, and the spirit of celebration to residents, small businesses and commercial corridors in neighborhoods to every Council District.

We have committed ourselves to ensuring that the 250th is not just for those who visit Independence Hall—it is also for the child in Southwest Philadelphia who attends their first arts workshop to reimagine the future of Democracy, the small business owner in North Philadelphia whose corridors shines for new customers, and the young athlete in Kensington who meet peers from across the city through citywide student activations.

Philadelphia must also ensure the nation's birthplace, and first World Heritage City, takes center stage as we host a slate of global events that will bring people together around what unites us, while elevating Philadelphia's greatness on the world stage.

Through committees on transportation, public safety, cleaning and greening, and marketing, the City of Philadelphia is committed to readying for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the MLB All Star Game, NCAA March Madness, are more. We are all hands-on deck.

Through all of this, public safety remains the utmost priority as we build upon Philadelphia's track record of hosting big events from the Papal visit to National Conventions, and most recently a Super Bowl parade, Philadelphia has shown time and time again that we are ready

To that end, under Mayor Cherelle Parker and in partnership with Council President Kenyatta Johnson and City Council, the City of Philadelphia has committed to more than \$120M in investments for 2026 including a half a billion dollars in investments to help Philadelphia International Airport prepare to welcome the world in 2026.

The Parker Administration, Philadelphia City Council, with our local, state and federal 250th commissions, in collaboration with dozens of cultural and community partners, have rallied behind one vision: to host a unifying celebration that reaches every neighborhood, welcomes every visitor,

and leaves a legacy of pride, progress and connection that positions our people for greater success over the next 250 years.

Strategic Investments

The City has committed more than \$120 million across five pillars:

- **Public Safety** – Safeguarding residents and visitors during the biggest year of events in our city’s history.
- **Infrastructure Improvements** – Upgrading civic commons, highways, the Philadelphia International Airport, and more.
- **Neighborhood Revitalization** – Beautifying and supporting business corridors across every corner of Philadelphia.
- **Strategic Event Programming** – Inspiring civic pride while attracting visitors through a yearlong calendar of events and community programming.
- **Marketing & Promotion** – Telling Philadelphia’s story to the world through marketing efforts the aim to boost civic pride, increase tourism, and generate economic impact.

Neighborhoods & Economic Opportunity

We are revitalizing commercial corridors in partnership with Council District offices, the Department of Commerce, and trusted community organizations—rolling out storefront improvements, art installations, new banners, and more.

Infrastructure & Hospitality

Our gateways are getting ready. Philadelphia International Airport is undergoing \$500 million in upgrades—new gates, modernized amenities, and streamlined security for millions of guests. Highway beautification and large-scale public art will ensure visitors feel Philadelphia’s pride the moment they arrive.

Historic Preservation & Legacy Sites

We are restoring the treasures that tell our national story. Independence Hall—a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the most enduring symbol of democracy—is undergoing long-needed restoration. Additional investments in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Mann Center, and the Please Touch Museum will keep our cultural institutions vibrant for generations.

Yearlong Programming: From Reflection to Celebration

The Semiquincentennial will be a year of moments—big and small—that invite everyone to join in. Major sporting events will draw millions of visitors and generate hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity, and neighborhood festivals will spread the spirit of celebration across Philadelphia.

- **52 Weeks of Firsts** – Weekly spotlights on Philadelphia’s innovations.
- **ArtPhilly: What Now** – A citywide arts festival with large-scale works in neighborhoods.
- **Major Exhibitions** – Art, history and culture will come alive through world class exhibitions.
- **Homecoming 250** – Celebrating the national US Navy and Marine Corps 250th anniversary with ship parades and air shows.
- **Philadelphia Tour Series** – Telling neighborhood stories via neighborhoods and cultural attractions.
- **Youth Engagement** – Sports clinics, cultural workshops, and events reaching every Council District.
- **Civic Dialogues & Democracy Forums** – Public conversations on democracy’s meaning today.

Business Resources

The Parker Administration is committed to ensuring these proposed investments deliver a return for the business community. The Philadelphia Department of Commerce and the efforts they drive are essential to the success of America’s 250th anniversary.

Not all small businesses are ready to handle the anticipated influx of visitors anticipated in 2026. That is why the Mayor’s Business Action Team (MBAT) is actively engaging small businesses across commercial corridors to help them enhance their physical infrastructure, including storefront improvements, outside beautification, and security camera installation for business safety. These efforts aim to help businesses prepare and scale operations to handle the uptick of tourism anticipated in the next 14 months. This work is not just because company’s coming. It’s part of ongoing efforts to help local small businesses scale by improving their marketing plans, pricing models, customer service and other growth factors.

MBAT will also be delivering additional engagement opportunities for the 20 commercial corridors receiving targeted enhancements to commemorate the 250th.

We are preparing to communicate additional resources to help businesses get involved, including a matchmaking tool to connect service providers – think of food truck companies, collateral producers, transportation services -- with event hosts seeking to procure locally. We will be announcing workshops to help businesses prepare for upcoming opportunities. By identifying and promoting local procurement opportunities, we are ensuring that local businesses within the city can actively participate and benefit from this historic celebration.

As you’ve heard, we’re incredibly excited to host our nations 250th celebration, but most importantly we’re proud to show the intergovernmental collaboration and investments that will show the world that we are ready. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today to share all of these exciting investments and highlights that will make Philadelphia the place to be in 2026. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.

Good morning, Chairman Bizzarro and members of the PA House Democratic Policy Committee, thank you for allowing me to join you this morning to discuss public safety preparations for the numerous special events occurring in 2026. My name is Michael Giardina, and I am the Deputy Director of Operations with the Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

The Office of Emergency Management has been coordinating a public safety workgroup focused on the upcoming major events since the Summer of 2023. The workgroup is co-chaired by OEM, the Philadelphia Police and Fire Departments and is in close coordination with the City's Office of Special Events and the Transportation work. This workgroup is comprised of local, state, federal, and private stakeholders who are charged with securing these events. The workgroup has more than two-dozen specialty focuses and benefits from the cooperation of the US Department of Homeland Security, Pennsylvania State Police, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, Pennsylvania Office of Homeland Security, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and dozens of additional partners.

As Philadelphia looks towards a variety of major special events next year, ranging from international events such as the FIFA World Cup to the 250th 4th of July celebrations, the MLB All Star Game, and the myriad of annual events that occur throughout the City, the public safety community has been working diligently to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for visitors and residents alike.

The public safety community has been working collaboratively towards several unified objectives.

First and foremost, our top priority is ensuring that a fully available public safety system is in place throughout the events with adequate resources to concurrently provide services to the special events occurring across the city, while still ensuring that emergency coverage is in place for the everyday needs of Philadelphia. This system also includes accounting for capacity to handle the known challenges that occur in June and July, such as extended heat waves and severe summer storms.

Our second objective is to balance protecting the communities hosting these special events while still ensuring the quality of life within the neighborhoods, opening their doors to visitors. This objective materializes as a balance between safety and security while limiting disruptions to daily life and community activities. As examples, discussions around road closures for safety are balanced with considerations towards ensuring resident and business access, or taking steps to ensure key city services such as ambulance access or parking are maintained for residents close to the Fan Fest at Lemon Hill.

Finally, and certainly not least, is protecting the events and visitors coming from across the world to experience the best that Philadelphia has to offer. We are working to ensure that attendees are protected and prepared for a range of threats, including natural concerns such as heat or severe weather, human-caused intentional acts of violence, or accidental hazards such as transit disruptions.

These public safety planning efforts are not without unique challenges.

2026 will be unique in the number and duration of large-scale special events occurring. The multiple-week period in which Philadelphia will be hosting the World Cup already plays host to well-known events such as the ODUNDE festival, Juneteenth Parade, Pride events, the Manayunk Arts Festival, and many others. Our public safety community will need to account for providing services to the World Cup, the Fan Festival at Lemon Hill, and an expanded 4th of July, all while still servicing those numerous other events, big and small. Additionally, the duration of this event period will be unique, as Philadelphia's recent experience with the 2015 Papal Visit and 2016 Democratic National Convention was limited to roughly one week.

Beyond the scale, volume, and duration of special events in 2026, we are also navigating an environment in which there are numerous private event producers, some of whom are familiar with Philadelphia, while others are not. This fact will require an onboarding and familiarization process that adds another layer of complexity to planning and preparedness efforts. In the case of the World Cup, there is also a need to balance an international event that is host to production expectations and coordination across 11 other cities within the United States, as well as locations in Mexico and Canada.

The international crowds expected for the World Cup add one final layer of complexity and considerations towards public safety preparations, particularly around language access. Our traditional large-scale special events, such as the 4th of July or this year's Eagles parade, see a largely local population that speaks English or is reflective of the known languages spoken in our area, which means we are prepared for them with translated materials and services. The World Cup, however, will draw visitors from across the globe, as we saw with this year's Club World Cup. Planning efforts are underway to address those cultural and language needs, and measures piloted during the Club World Cup, such as translated messages and dedicated police officers to translate, will be key to success in 2026.

The Philadelphia public safety community is taking several key steps to prepare ourselves to meet our objectives and address the unique challenges described.

Building off our existing experiences with major special events on the national stage, an extensive work group structure is in place across the City to prepare for a variety of event-related conditions, of which public safety is one. Within the public safety front, various subcommittees have been established to address an extensive range of areas, including, but not limited to, law enforcement, consequence management, intelligence and information sharing, crowd management, fire suppression, and medical care. These efforts are all-encompassing and include representation from City, regional, state, federal, and private sector partners, including event organizers. Our efforts are further influenced by the information exchange and collaboration with other FIFA World Cup host cities.

These work groups and subcommittees are working to refine numerous plans and concepts of operations to address the variety of possible concerns that could occur specific to the range of 2026 events, as well as working to implement existing city plans. Most of these plans are built upon existing proven frameworks that guide the public safety community, many of which are routinely activated in support of special events. Furthermore, a multitude of command-and-control elements are being developed or strengthened to support the large-scale special events response next year. Various command posts are being planned and coordinated for direct area management, while the City's Emergency Operations Center is being improved and expanded to provide extended capacity. These plans and procedures are being backstopped by extensive training and exercises focused on the Incident Command System and management of significant special events delivered by the Department of Homeland Security, to include a full-scale exercise at Lincoln Financial Field this past spring. Finally, a wide range of equipment purchases have occurred or are underway to support public safety operations in 2026, including trauma care supplies, radio communications equipment, vehicles, and equipment to protect pedestrians from vehicles. These training events and equipment purchases aim to ensure public safety personnel are prepared for any potential incident.

In closing, Philadelphia looks forward to hosting the events of 2026 after a busy summer events season this year. The enthusiasm and engagement shown by attendees for the Club World Cup showed that we can expect passionate visitors who are just as excited to see the events they traveled for as they are to see all that Philadelphia has to offer. We know our experiences this summer and in prior years, paired with extensive planning and training, will ensure a safe and secure 2026 events season.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Testimony of Richard Montanez,
Deputy Commissioner of Transportation
Philadelphia Department of Streets**

**PA House Democratic Policy Committee
August 20, 2025**

Chairperson and members of the committee, thank you for having me today and good morning. My name is Richard Montanez; I am First Deputy Commissioner of Transportation for the Streets Department. I am here to present testimony on behalf of the City of Philadelphia regarding the 2026 World Cup.

In 2026, Philadelphia will host the World Cup, MLB All-Star Game, US Semi-quincentennial Celebration, NCAA March Madness, Welcome America, and the routine Phillies games, concerts, and Welcome America celebration. These events overlap significantly with a concentration of events in June and July 2026.

Philadelphia is one of 16 cities in North America to host the World Cup and will host six games at Lincoln Financial Field. As with other major events like the Papal Visit in 2015, the NFL Draft, and the Phillies and Eagles parades, we coordinate closely with state agencies to ensure an enjoyable and safe event for residents and visitors alike.

The World Cup games will be held at Lincoln Financial Field, which will host nearly 60,000 attendees including international dignitaries and leaders and soccer fans from across the globe. These high profile and high ticket cost games, international visitors will travel to Philadelphia to support and follow the teams beyond the six matches at practice and hotel locations and participate in fan marches to the field. The City of Philadelphia is working closely with SEPTA and the Philadelphia Soccer organization to make sure that our public communication is multilingual and accessible to visitors from other countries in town for the festivities.

The Philadelphia Soccer organization is working with City agencies to host a Fan Festival throughout the World Cup on Lemon Hill in the Fairmount neighborhood near Boat House Row. This free ticketed event will host game watch parties for all World Cup games over fourty days.

We are working closely with local, State and Federal emergency management and homeland security staff, transportation operations management agencies, and transit agencies to efficiently move people, fans, and goods throughout the region during the summer of 2026. We've partnered with emergency service entities to anticipate and prepare for scenarios that may occur and ensure we're ready to support visitors and residents alike. There is an upgrade

underway for the Transportation Operations Center at the Stadium District that will nimbly manage any localized emergency or transportation related issues in real time, a scenario we tested during the FIFA Cup World Cup this past June and July. Temporary and permanent infrastructure improvements are underway to enhance access to Stadium District and Fan Festival locations, including road closure plans, enhanced SEPTA transit services, security and transportation route planning for teams and dignitaries, highway interchange and roadway management, and upgrades to multimodal facilities to reduce personal vehicle travel for those attending events and traveling around the City.

To put our best foot forward for visitors, we are partnering with Mural Arts, Parks & Recreation, Office of Clean & Green Initiatives, PennDOT, and others to spruce up our public spaces and increase accessibility for people walking, taking transit, and biking in the City.

Finally, there are several ways that people across the city can get involved in the festivities for 2026. There are volunteer opportunities through the Philadelphia Soccer Foundation. The Commerce Department, Philadelphia Visitor Center, and Philadelphia Soccer will roll out other opportunities and neighborhood programs over the coming months.

As we plan to welcome the world to Philadelphia in 2026, we look forward to collaborating with the state legislature and state officials to ensure that the World Cup and other 2026 events show off our great state of Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your consideration. I will be happy to respond to any questions.