



MARIA QUIÑONES SÁNCHEZ

COUNCILWOMAN 7th DISTRICT

Office of María D. Quiñones Sánchez
Councilmember, 7th District
Room 508, City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Contact: Megan Barry
megan.barry@phila.gov
215-686-1952

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, July 28, 2020

Statement about Kenney Administration's response to the "Restore Kensington Action Plan"

"I am very disappointed that the response to our very modest Restore Kensington Plan, where almost every item is contingent on new budget allocations.

"In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and weeks of civil unrest, the City has stated its commitment to realigning budget priorities to address disparities and prioritize disadvantaged communities. That commitment is nowhere to be found in this response to the plan.

"Kensington has endured a public health crisis and a pandemic for years, made worse as Philadelphia's leadership refused to take responsibility and prioritize this community. To say after all this time that there is still no money for restorative investments in Kensington is insulting to the residents and community organizations who live and work in unimaginably difficult circumstances, doing critical work without receiving basic services, let alone sufficient support from the city.

"The conditions of the alleys and vacant lots in Kensington and the public health crisis which caused a Hepatitis A outbreak last year are a direct result of the City's failed policy and inability to address the needs of the unsheltered population. These critical conditions, further heightened now by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, demand immediate action. In addition to badly needed budgetary alignment to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable Philadelphians, the City must explore using CARES Act resources to swiftly respond to these conditions before they worsen further. The refusal thus far to do so highlights an unacceptable unwillingness to address historic racial and economic disparities in this poor, working class community.

"I intend to use my role as Chair of Council's Committee on Appropriations to challenge the notion that the needs of Kensington cannot be addressed within the current budget challenges and with our CARES federal and state allocations. Kensington cannot afford further mismanagement as the public health and safety crisis continues to worsen. The choice to pay later---overtime to continue in our unsuccessful reactionary posture, rather than investing now is yet another mistake.

"Again I call on Mayor Kenney to provide needed leadership in this critical moment. Doing almost nothing, which is what this response is, is no longer acceptable."

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