

## 2021 Mayoral Candidate Survey



1. One in five Pittsburghers are living with food insecurity.

Inspired by our previous successful city partnerships, such as our Lean & Green Lunch and Learn series and Heart of a Hero (which received national recognition in an American College of Lifestyle Medicine documentary), HAP has created the Ethical Eating Collective, which is working to bring healthy and affordable plant-based nutrition to residents who need it the most.

**Will you commit to sitting down with HAP to discuss ways your office can support our campaign to ensure food justice to all Pittsburgh communities?**

*Yes, if elected I would welcome the opportunity to partner with HAP on confronting food insecurity. Food deserts are a major issue in Pittsburgh, and disproportionately effect low-income communities and communities of color. Unfortunately, the problem is currently on track to get worse with the scheduled closing of the Shakespeare Giant Eagle to make way for new development, which is the primary grocery store for many of the neighborhoods in my Legislative District. As Mayor I would utilize a people-centered economic development strategy to ensure that development projects deliver meaningful benefits to the neighborhoods hosting the development, which in many cases could include improvements to food access. I am also committed to supporting our City's urban farmers, who fill a critical gap in our local food system.*

2. Pittsburgh's previous Climate Action Plan (CAP) included the goal of reducing meat consumption by 50% by 2030. In the most recent plan, this goal was removed and replaced with a lesser goal. (Humane Action Pittsburgh can provide qualified experts to assist the city with measurement.)

**Considering the United Nations #1 recommendation to combat climate change is to reduce or eliminate meat consumption, will you ensure meat reduction is prioritized in the CAP 4.0?**

*The City's ability to regulate meat consumption is limited, but I am committed to supporting urban agriculture and initiatives to encourage healthy, balanced nutritional choices for all Pittsburghers and limiting food waste.*

3. Separating bonded elephant pairs, fighting progressive and humane Pittsburgh ordinances, and having a veterinarian refer to the Zoo as a "third world jail for elephants" have earned the Pittsburgh Zoo the title of In Defense of Animal's "2019 Worst Zoo in North America for Elephants."

In 2015, the Pittsburgh Zoo forfeited their AZA accreditation over their elephant handling policy, which constitutes a material breach of their lease with the City of Pittsburgh. Even with several extensions and letters from the mayor demanding restoration, the Zoo has not come into compliance.

They are now accredited by the much lower ZAA (the letters deceptively resemble the AZA), a trade organization promoting the right for private citizens and exhibitors to own exotic animals.

If the City of Pittsburgh continues to be ignored by the Zoo, or worse yet, drops the AZA requirement from the terms of the new lease, essential animal protections like routine veterinary care requirements could be replaced with the ZAA's substandard policies. Considering the Zoo has received numerous USDA violations, there's even more reason for AZA standards to be restored.

The ZAA caters to roadside zoos (think the Netflix series "Tiger King") and its standards do not meaningfully protect animal welfare or public safety. The ZAA has actually lobbied against animal protection legislation and continue to push to exempt their members from animal protection laws.

Barbara Baker, President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Zoo, is also the Board Chair of the ZAA. This means Dr. Baker is in charge of accrediting her own organization, a clear conflict of interest.

The Zoo's current lease expires on December 31, 2022.

**As leader of the city and Board member of the Pittsburgh Zoo, will you demand restoration of AZA accreditation and ensure that the new lease has definitive and actionable damages for noncompliance?**

*Earlier this week, the Zoo announced that it is in the process of pursuing AZA accreditation, a step that I applaud. I support the use of lease conditions to establish high standards for animal, staff, and visitor safety.*

4. For a city of our size, Pittsburgh has one of the cruelest and most archaic wildlife trapping programs in the country. Citizens have become accustomed to calling Animal Care and Control for a taxpayer-subsidized trap that results in euthanasia of hundreds of animals every year. Not only is trapping ineffective and inhumane, but it requires Pittsburghers to pay tens of thousands of dollars every year for a program that even Animal Care and Control admits doesn't solve the problem. The good news is, easy and humane solutions exist!

HAP has hired an advertising agency and made a sizable investment to educate Pittsburghers on humane solutions that actually work – and would mitigate the city's litter problem. If successful, not only will the lives of these innocent animals be saved, but so will tens of thousands of tax dollars.

**What will you do as mayor to support HAP's wildlife educational campaign?**

*I welcome a partnership with HAP to incorporate more humane strategies into the City's animal control program. Animal Control can and should advise city residents on humane alternatives to trapping wherever possible, and resort to trapping only as a last resort.*

**The root cause of most wildlife/resident conflicts is improperly stored trash. How will you enforce existing city code related to trash storage?**

*Improving enforcement requires investments in our city workforce, including the hiring of more inspectors and 311 operators, and more effective leadership to improve morale and*

*performance. It also requires greater investment in maintaining city-owned vacant lots, which when neglected become hotspots for illegal dumping. Finally, addressing improper trash storage requires greater education and resources for home owners concerning waste reduction and proper storage.*