Executive Summary

Philadelphia 3.0 was founded in 2015 by parking garage magnates Joseph and Robert Zuritsky. It is currently run by Alison Perelman, heir to the Perelman fortune. The group originally sought to run “business-friendly” candidates for city council and promote business interests in general. It is mostly funded by dark money, though publicly disclosed donors include members of Philadelphia’s executive class and several school privatization groups.

Philadelphia 3.0’s political activities now center on the creation of a coalition between the business elite and “new Philadelphians” by co-opting government reform politics, urbanist planning ideas, and anti-Trump progressive anger, while down-playing their positions on trickle-down tax policy and Joseph Zuritsky’s ties to the anti-muslim right-wing.

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...was formed by the Philly 1% to reshape the Democratic Party...
The organization was founded by parking magnates Joe and Robert Zuritsky in order to put more-business friendly politicians into city council. Though it has largely dropped this as a public message Robert Zuritsky heralded the groups’ 2015 endorsement slate as “excellent”and “business friendly.”

...is built on dark money...
Philly 3.0 utilizes gaps in campaign finance law to funnel dark money from the group’s charity into its PAC.

...co-opts anti-Trump politics...
The group launched Get Mad Then Get Elected, their bid to take over the city Democratic Party, as an outlet to anti-Trump rage. Yet donor Dan DiLella donated to the president’s transition team and the group’s fiscal policies look like Trump tax cuts.

...is funded by anti-union school privatization groups...
The group got $50,000 in funding from anti-union, school-privatization groups Democrats for Education Reform and Education Reform Now!

...was founded by a board member of the Middle East Forum,
a conservative think tank that promotes Islamophobia...
Joe Zuritsky sits on the board of the Middle East Forum, a think tank designated as an “anti-Islam hate group” by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and as a central organization in the network fueling Islamophobia in the U.S. by the Center for American Progress.

...continues to be run by and for the Philadelphia business elite...
Joe Zuritsky, the “parking lot king of Philly,” is one of the largest landowners in the city, and their donors come from the executive class including the CEO of Equus Capital, the former CEO of Duane Morris and a board member at Comcast, the CEO of PECO and VP at Exelon Energy.

...is driven by a trickle-down “tax reform” agenda...
For years, the Zuritskys have been involved in lobbying city and state for wage, parking and business receipts tax reform on their own behalf and that of Center City District. Ali Perelman has particular expertise in tax reform. She worked as a tax policy expert for Councilman Bill Green during his 2010-13 campaign with María Quiñonez Sánchez to reform Philadelphia’s tax system. She has repeatedly spoken out against the BIRT tax.
II. Overview of Philadelphia 3.0

Philly 3.0 was founded in 2015 by Joseph and Robert Zuritsky of the Parkway Development Corporation. Originally called Philly Rising, news of the group came to public attention in 2014 when it was reported that the Zuritksys had reached out to members of the local business community to start a group that could recruit and elect business-friendly City Council candidates and “get the business community and voters more involved in city politics”. The group’s organization followed the collapse of the city’s bid to sell Philadelphia Gas Works to UIL, which many in the business community saw as a failure of governing and transparency. Sources familiar with the group’s intentions told the Philadelphia Business Journal that another “key reason for [Philly Rising’s] formation is that the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce does not always advocate for Philadelphia’s business community because it represents 11 counties — some of which see Philadelphia as competition.”

When the organization publicly launched in March 2015, Philadelphia 3.0 pitched themselves as a force for progressive reform. Their mission statement reads:

“[we are] a political organization committed to helping Philadelphia capitalize on its progress and promise. We support independent-minded candidates running for City Council and lead efforts to reform and modernize City Hall… Since the [2015] election, our focus has shifted to policy and governance. We are leading an initiative to eliminate the City Commissioners row office and producing research on the pension crisis, our tax structure, and the impact of municipal regulations on business creation. Our goal is a more competitive city and a local government that works for residents and businesses.”

But local press raised questions about the organization’s opaque fundraising structure. Two of the articles covering the group’s launch were titled “Secretive New Non-Profit Seeks to Uplift City Council” and “New political group’s secret donors hope to shape City Council.” Although Philly 3.0 often touts the importance of transparency, it operates as both at 501(c)4 non-profit and a PAC in order to conceal its donors. Or, as The Philadelphia Inquirer put it, “The group wants answers from Council candidates. Just don’t ask where the nonprofit’s money is coming from.” Other news outlets have described Philly 3.0 as “Philly’s biggest dark money group.”

True to their mission statement, Philly 3.0 has been focused on changing the local democratic party and pushing reforms in city government, collaborating with a number of prominent civic groups in the region. Their most recent organizing work has focused on recruiting candidates for the city’s 2018 committeeperson elections, as part of a strategy to change the party from the ground up. While organizing the business class, the group’s other target demographic has been transplanted millennials living in the gentrifying central city. Executive Director Ali Perelman frames their case:

“Philadelphia has had the largest per capita millennial boom. They punch above their weight in presidential elections but turnout in extraordinary low numbers in municipal races... What seems to be really clear about this group of younger Philadelphia is that they’re tremendously civically engaged but they’re not politically engaged, and that ties back to the fact that politics is such an insider game that there’s really no reason to get involved.”

Philly 3.0 has remained silent on organizing or reaching out to other local demographic groups. They were mostly quiet on the organizing front during the 2017 election cycle, remaining notably neutral in the highly anticipated District Attorney’s race. To our knowledge, they have declared no significant support for economic, racial, or gender justice in their public communications.
III. Key Figures

**Joseph Zuritsky: Co-Founder**

Joseph “Joe” Zuritsky is the CEO and Chairman of Parkway Corp., a family parking garage business. After taking over the business, Zuritsky built Parkway into a multi-state real estate development corporation, which the city has regularly subsidized. Zuritsky was a founding member of the Center City District and continues to sit on the board. He became involved in city politics in the late nineties as “a matter of self defense.” Since 2006, he has been one of the largest individual donors to the current council, contributing at least $112,000. He has also contributed significant campaign cash in other Pennsylvania cities—donations that have caught the attention of the FBI. In 2015, Parkway and Zuritsky were among the dozens of people and companies named on federal subpoenas for documents served on Allentown City Hall in connection with a FBI corruption investigation into now-former Mayor Ed Koslowski’s practice of of trading city contracts for campaign donations. In 2016, The Morning Call published an investigation showing that Parkway company executives donated $26,000 to Pawloski’s political efforts while trying to secure city contracts. In March of 2018, jurors convicted Koslowski, agreeing with the majority of charges brought by prosecutors and “convicting the mayor of trading city contracts for campaign donations and other items of value such as Eagles playoff tickets.” (Federal, state and local donations here.)

Next to Zuritsky’s campaign donations, his main political passion has been city tax issues. His “self defense” is primarily against the city’s parking tax. In the years following the Great Recession, he has been a consistent voice for tax reform in Philadelphia. He has been critical of the parking tax, as well as the business privilege tax and the wage tax. He recently testified before the State Senate finance committee with on behalf of Philadelphia Jobs Growth Coalitions tax reform plan, along with mega-developer Gerry Sweeney.

Zuritsky is a board member of several local and national organizations. Perhaps most striking is his membership on the board of the Middle East Forum, a conservative think tank designated as an “anti-Islam hate group” by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and as a central organization in the network fueling Islamophobia in the U.S. by the Center for American Progress. According to its website, the Middle East Forum’s mission is to “promote American interests in the Middle East and protect Western values from Middle Eastern threats.” The Middle East Forum is led by Daniel Pipes. According to CAIR, Pipes, “has criticized the ‘different standards of hygiene’ and ‘strange foods’ of ‘brown-skinned peoples.’ He believes Islam ‘has nothing functional to offer’ and that simply teaching the Arabic language to students is a means to ‘promote radical Islam.’”

The organization “relies upon its publication, the Middle East Quarterly, and a network of monitoring programs - including Campus Watch, Islamist Watch, and the Legal Project - to inculcate fears of “militant Islam” and to monitor the people and organizations whose views contradict Pipes.” The Middle East Forum has also provided funding to other organizations that promote Islamophobia, including Zuhdi Jasser's American Islamic Forum for Democracy; Frank Gaffney's Center for Security Policy; Robert Spencer's Jihad Watch; and Steven Emerson's Investigative Project on Terrorism.
Alison Perelman: Executive Director

Ali Perelman’s family is worth billions. She is the heir to prominent Philadelphia philanthropists Marsha and Jeffrey Perelman, who live on a Lower Merion estate around the corner from Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie. Marsha built her career in oil and gas. She co-founded Clearfield Ohio Holdings and Clearfield Energy Inc., a crude oil gathering and distribution company. Until recently, she was a director at Penn Virginia Corporation, a shale oil company active in the Eagle Ford Shale in South Texas. Jeffrey is the founder of JEP Management, a holding company that buys and sells gardening equipment and products and services for dental health professionals. Jeffery is the son of Raymond Perelman and the brother of Ronald Perelman (net worth: $9.9 billion), Philadelphia holding company magnates and big wigs in the city’s philanthropic elite. Around 2010, Jeffrey and his parents were involved in a prolonged and vicious legal battle centered on Alison’s trust fund.

Alison Perelman has a PHD in Communication from UPenn and began her political career in 2013 working for Councilman-at-large Bill Green as a legislative aide working on tax reform, particularly business tax reform. During that period Green worked on and passed legislation to reform the city’s Business Income and Receipts (BIRT) tax, eliminating a tax on net income on businesses. The bill also included a small reduction in the City’s parking tax rate. In June of 2013, legislation he co-authored with María Quiñones Sánchez passed to reform tax delinquency law in the city. Many of the taxes he spoke on and worked on reforming are the same that people like the Zuritsky’s find fault with themselves. Perelman herself has been quoted on behalf of Philadelphia 3.0 denouncing the city’s business income taxes. In particular, she has advocated for rollbacks of the BIRT.

In 2014, when Green resigned council to join the School Reform Commission, Perelman was hired by Philadelphia 3.0 to be the Executive Director. She is the public face of the organization. Perelman also holds a number of civic positions and is rumoured to be running for ward leader in the 2nd Ward as part of Philadelphia 3.0’s efforts to gain power in the local Democratic party.

Robert Zuritsky: Co-Founder

Robert Zuritsky took over as president at the Parkway Corporation from his father in 2002. In recent years he has been an outspoken proponent of tax reform in the city.

Zuritsky has repeatedly lobbied city council on the issue of parking taxes, actively fighting increases in 2011 and 2015. In his defenses against parking taxes, Zuritsky has emphasized the uneven tax burden on parking and business. He hosted seminar in 2017 on helping others in the parking industry to fight tax increases and gain the political traction to promote “fair taxes.”

On the issue of tax reform in Philadelphia, Zuritsky has praised the action taken by Mayors Street and Rendell:
“[they] understood that the city’s historical pattern of raising wage and business taxes was a major reason it had lost half its jobs. Their steady, cumulative tax cuts, though small, sent a message that Philadelphia was going in the right direction. For more than a decade, the city got more competitive, and it started to grow.”

He has since slammed the increases in various taxes under Kenney and Nutter. He has written that despite Philly having “accessible airports, great universities and hospitals, strong public transportation, and world-class arts, sports, and entertainment” it has created a hostile business environment. He claims that it is known, “as one of the worst cities for business taxes as well as last in tax collections” He believes that tax reform will invite businesses to the city and increase tax revenue for city services.

Zuritsky is also chair of the Philadelphia Municipal Authority and a major donor to City Council. See his federal, state and local campaign donations here.

Jon Geeting: Engagement Editor

Jon Geeting is a leader in the Philadelphia urbanist community. He started his career as an active journalist and commentator on the national and local urbanist sites, including Next City and PlanPhilly. Working at PlanPhilly as the engagement editor, Geeting helped found several urbanist political groups including 5th Square and Open Streets PHL. He also serves as secretary of the Bella Vista Neighbors Association, a Steering Committee Member of the Italian Market Business Improvement District Steering Committee as well as organizer of urbanist networking group called Philly Geek Drinks.

Geeting is married to Brooke Saylor, the Executive Assistant for Ori Feibush at his firm, OCF Realty. Ori Feibush is particularly well known in Point Breeze for his efforts to gentrify the neighborhood. Geeting’s sect of the urbanist community focus on the role of improvements in street sharing, land use, walkability, and transit improve local livability and economic vitality. This brand of urban politics is represented best by 5th Square and Open Streets PHL.

In a piece for This Old City, Geeting laid an urbanist case for tax reform in Philadelphia:

“Philadelphia taxes the wrong things: our dependency on wage and business taxes disproportionately pushes mobile office tenants, start-ups, and entrepreneurs to lower-cost suburbs or other cities...The fundamental problem Philadelphia urbanists face is the attitude among current elected officials that tax reform and reductions in reverse commuting must come before path-breaking land use and transportation changes. Persuading City Council to start pushing the limits on key issues...will require [us] to come to the table ready to support root and branch tax reform. We need a 10-year plan that slowly shifts the tax burden off stuff that can move (wages, investment, profits), and onto stuff that can't move (land) and stuff we want less of (surface parking, speeding, garbage, stormwater runoff)... For progressive taxation reasons we should shift the BIRT onto land specifically... Most of our tax money should come from land rents, not taxes on wages or business investment or sales.”

Geeting joined Philadelphia 3.0 in August of 2016.
IV. Funding: Dark Money & Disclosed Donors

Philadelphia 3.0 consists of two parts: the Philadelphia 3.0 PAC, which has to report where its donations come from, and Philadelphia 3.0 Inc., a 501(c)4 nonprofit (“dark money organization”) that does not have to disclose its donors. Therefore, donors can conceal their giving by giving money directly to the non-profit, which then contributes to the PAC. In 2015, this setup allowed Philly 3.0 to keep secret the sources of seven out of every 10 dollars it raised.1

Asked about the issue, Exec. Director Ali Perelman has said “We think [naming donors] distracts from our mission, which is to talk about these issues that no one is discussing.”

Since 2014, Philadelphia 3.0 has raised $651,531, the majority of which was raised just prior to the 2015 City Council Primaries. 57% was contributed by Philadelphia 3.0 PAC. Direct donors to Philadelphia 3.0 Inc. are listed here. The chart on the left displays top donors and their total share of contributions to Philadelphia 3.0 Inc.

Largest (Disclosed) Donors3:

- **Tom Scannapieco:** $75,000
  - Owner of Scannapieco Development; builds luxury apartments in Philly, inc. 500 Walnut; has worked on several projects with Joe Zuritsky.4
- **Leslie Ann Miller:** $37,500
  - PA General Counsel under Rendell; board chair of Philadelphia Museum of Art; super-connector on seven-plus Philadelphia boards.
- **John J. “Jack” Donnelly:** $25,000
  - Former CEO of L.F. Driscoll Construction Management; Board Member, Independence Mission Schools; Deceased (2016)
- **Dan DiLella:** $20,000.00
  - Chair and CEO at Equus Capital Partners LLP; former Union League President; donated $25,000 to Pat Toomey’s Super PAC6 and the maximum $5,000 to Trump for America, Donald Trump’s transition committee.7
- **Democrats for Education Reform & Education Reform Now Advocacy:** $25,000/$25,000
  - National school-privatization and school choice (charter school) orgs.
- **Convention Center Parking & Parkway Corporation:** $10,000.00/$25,000.00
  - LP that owns the Convention Center Parking Garage at Arch St.; largest parking garage operator in Philly, owned by Joe Zuritsky.

Honorable Mentions:3

**David Maser**, Dir. of Delaware Valley Regional Center (an EB-5 Infrastructure Project Consultancy) & treasurer of Philly 3.0 - $7,500.00; **H. Chase Lenfest**, son of Gerry Lenfest - $7,500.00; **Sheldon Bonovitz**, Comcast chair emeritus/former CEO at Duane Morris4 - $5,000.00; **Craig L. Adams**, CEO at PECO, VP at Exelon - $5,000.00
V. Political Organizing

Candidate Endorsement and Ad Campaign (2015)

Ad campaigns (2015) 1,2: During 2015 primary ran three TV ads and a print campaign calling for a ballot measure adding city council term limits to the City Charter; advertising for a slate of endorsed candidates.

Candidate Endorsements (2015) 3: The group appoints a panel of the “kind of people we’d like to see elected” to endorse six city council candidates. Two candidates won the general, Derek Green and María Quiñones Sanchez. The groups’ impact on the election is not evident.

- **Nominating Panel:** Brigitte Daniel (VP Wilco Electronic Systems), Cynthia Figueroa (then CEO of Congreso de Latinos Unidos), Beatriz Garces (wife of José, founder of Garces Foundation), Keith Leapart (CEO Replica Global, Chair of Lenfest Foundation), Christine Jacobs (VP at NRG Energy, former President of Excelon), TJ Hurst (Philly 3.0), Ali Perelman (Philly 3.0).

- **Candidates endorsed:** (At large) Terry Tracey (R; former Ralph Lauren exec.); Paul Steinke (GM of Reading Terminal Market, Finance Director at Center City District); Derek Green (former ADA, aide to Marian Tasco); Tom Wyatt (Water privatization attorney); Isaiah Thomas (Dean at Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School), (7th District) María Quiñones Sánchez (7th District Incumbent.)

Voter Mobilization & Engagement (2015-17)

Voter registration/outreach leading into 2015 primary; Leading into the 2016 Presidential Election and Primary, organized voter registration and outreach as well as election/debate viewing social events.

- **Voter Registration Locations:** Clark Park, Queen Village/Bella Vista, and Rittenhouse Square 4

Better Philadelphia Elections Coalition (2016-present)

Coalition for electoral reform with 13 other groups. 5 Filed joint lawsuit in PA for right to run a 2018 ballot measure to replace the Commissioner’s Office with appointed officials. 6 Lost.


City Committeeperson Candidate Recruitment (2017-18)

Biggest organizing effort overall. Following the 2016 Election of Donald Trump, the group started the Get Mad, then Get Elected Campaign to train people to run for committeeperson in the 2018 election. 7

- According to a 2/23/2018 outreach email, they “have cracked 1,000 committeeperson prospects in 64 of 66 wards.” The claim is unqualified by a clear geographical spread of candidates and how exactly they are counting these candidates. Their impact on committee person candidates is currently unclear, though the City Commissioner’s office has reported no significant increase in city-wide candidates. 8
  - **Event Locations:** Center City (Graduate Hospital, Washington Square West/Rittenhouse on the Broad St. Line); West Philly (University City); South Philly (East Passyunk) 9

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<td><strong>Panels (2016-17):</strong> Organized five panels of varying size, generally around local zoning policy and ward politics. 6</td>
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<td><strong>Blog (2015-present):</strong> Run by Jon Geering. Hosted on main site, often shared to the UrbanPHL facebook group; covers issues with a “market urbanist” lens—focusing on zoning and hyper-local neighborhood improvement issues as well as political reform.</td>
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VI. Citations

Part 1: Overview

   a. “The PAC points to Council’s recent decision to scrap the proposed sale of PGW without holding hearings as a perfect example of the problem. ‘Putting aside the question of whether this specific sale was the right sale, at a minimum, there should have been a public hearing and debate about it,’ said Alison Perelman, executive director of Philly 3.0. ‘It was a huge piece of legislation, a matter of tremendous importance to the city, and it didn’t even get a hearing. That’s the very definition of a political climate where tough issues won’t be discussed and tough votes can’t be taken.”
3. http://www.phila3-0.org/about

Part 2: Key Figures

- Joe Zuritsky

   a. “The two parking garage TIFs, at 1501 Spruce and on the 1200 block of Filbert Street, were developed by Parkway Corporation, which is led by Joseph Zuritsky and his son Robert. Together, the Zuritskys have given more than $200,000 to local political campaigns since 2007.”
   a. “Zuritsky was granted nearly $17 million in tax write-offs for a garage he is building on 12th Street to join the Convention Center and Reading Terminal Market.”

- Alison Perelman


- Robert Zuritsky
  1. https://www.metro.us/local/rogue-parking-lots-how-many-are-cheating-the-city/mWkob---c1rQJUNcLrmA
  2. http://www.phillymag.com/citified/2015/06/04/parking-tax-hike/CHK38rLhS5CeHbSx.99

- Jon Geeting
  1. https://www.linkedin.com/in/jongeeting/

Part 3: Funding

  5. http://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/person.asp?personId=4073160&privcapId=3785722&previousCapId=367512&previousTitle=MEDIBAY%20INC

Part 4: Political Organization

  2. http://www.bronsteinandweaver.com/2/philadelphia_3_0_for_term_limits
  5. http://www.phila3-0.org/election_reform_advocates_file_suit
“I discovered Porsches when I was 18 years old, and I’ve been obsessed with them ever since. I began buying Porsches in the late ’70s. Tom Cruise was right in Risky Business: ‘Porsche. There is no substitute.’”

-Joe Zuritsky