

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia Office of the Chief Clerk Room 402, City Hall Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 260579)

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the Mantua community in West Philadelphia as the birthplace of the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network and Mural Arts Program, now known as Mural Arts Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Mantua is a community in West Philadelphia that is located north of Spring Garden Street, east of 40th Street, south of Mantua Avenue, and west of 31st Street, which was given its name in 1809 after the city in Italy; and

WHEREAS, Despite the presence of gang crime in the 1960s, Mantua has remained a proud community with strong homegrown organizations such as Young Great Society led by Herman Wrice and Mantua Community Planners led by Rev. Dr. Andrew Jenkins; and

WHEREAS, These transformational leaders worked tirelessly to bring new assets and opportunities to Mantua and thought creatively about how to empower young people to see that they had other options besides gangs and drugs; and

WHEREAS, Jenkins, who later became a Deputy Mayor, saw teenagers in West Philadelphia expressing themselves through graffiti and developed a blight removal initiative of his own in Mantua; and

WHEREAS, This ingenuity would spark then-Mayor Wilson Goode to appoint Tim Spencer in 1984 to lead the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network, which Spencer did up until his death in 1996; and

WHEREAS, The goal of the program was to reduce graffiti by providing job opportunities and life skills to the “wall writers,” and with the guidance of a young artist named Jane Golden, channeling their creative energy into murals that replaced the graffiti with public art that reflected the community; and

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WHEREAS, One of its most significant early achievements was the transformation of the Spring Garden Bridge in Mantua. Led by Golden and a team of young artists, this project was more than a beautification effort; it was a symbolic act of reclaiming public space and altering perceptions of the young people involved; and

WHEREAS, After Spencer's passing in 1996, Golden became Executive Director and led the organization to unprecedented heights, affirming Philadelphia's status as the "Mural Capital of the World" by creating over 4,400 murals over thirty years; and

WHEREAS, The initiative has evolved over time, now known as Mural Arts Philadelphia, and is a testament to the program's resilience, the power of collaborative vision, and giving people the voice and tools to become architects of their own destiny and builders of a brighter future for Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The Mantua community played a unique role in shaping this one-of-a-kind initiative that plays a prominent role in shaping Philadelphia's cityscape and its image around the world; and now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Mantua community in West Philadelphia be recognized as the birthplace of the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network and Mural Arts Program, now known as Mural Arts Philadelphia.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-eight day of May, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Gauthier

Sponsored by: Council President Johnson, Councilmembers Gauthier, Phillips, Landau, Lozada, Brooks, O'Rourke and Ahmad