

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 230195)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the City Council Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development, and the Homeless to hold public hearings to the examine the effects of tangled titles and gentrification on Philadelphia neighborhoods.

WHEREAS, A tangled title occurs when the name of the individual living in a residence does not match the name on the property's deed. This typically occurs when a home is passed between relatives without the presence of a will. Tangled titles can become a monumental problem for Philadelphia residents in the event they need to sell their property, and it can also be the reason families lose their only residence or are unable to keep up with maintenance; and

WHEREAS, Gentrification is a process in urban planning that changes the look and character of a neighborhood. Gentrification typically takes places in communities of color and impacts seniors, minority communities and low-income individuals; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, historically black and brown communities have been disproportionately impacted by both tangled titles and gentrification. Many of these communities began as working-class neighborhoods with residents working in local factories or in manufacturing type employment. These neighborhoods have suffered from a lack of investment in their infrastructure and rapid loss of blue-collar jobs in their neighborhoods. Over 100 years have passed since these neighborhoods were founded and much of the same crumbling infrastructure is still present. This is not only a local issue. It represents just a small part of a national trend seen in major cities all around the country; and

WHEREAS, As evidenced by Exhibits A and B, many of these historically black and brown neighborhoods that face disinvestment are plagued by issues with tangled titles and gentrification. Many communities that are experiencing rapid gentrification are neighborhoods that are impacted by tangled titles; and

WHEREAS, The 2022 property tax reassessment hit neighborhoods that were poorer and more diverse the hardest. According to a report from the Philadelphia Inquirer, The City of Philadelphia saw an average property tax increase of 31% but neighborhoods in North

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Philadelphia (224%), Kensington (150%), Fairhill (149%), Juniata Park/Feltonville (127%), Allegheny West (103%), Point Breeze (90%), Kingsessing (89%), Powelton (80%), Wynnefield (73%), Tioga/Nicetown (65%) Port Richmond (64%) saw dramatically higher average increases. Many of these neighborhoods that experienced such increases are also heavily impacted by tangled titles. In addition, with the recent property tax abatements, some residents are able to be abated from property taxes for ten years after moving into these neighborhoods, longtime residents are unable to receive these same benefits; and

WHEREAS, Interestingly, neighborhoods that have a high prevalence of tangled titles are not just experiencing economic issues. There is also a public safety crisis in many of these communities. Many areas in North Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, and Kensington that have a high number of tangled titles have seen record numbers of gun violence in their communities. Many areas that are experiencing higher violence have a higher number of tangled titles (Exhibit B).; and

WHEREAS, The current state of historically black and brown communities that are experiencing issues with tangled titles and gentrification have dealt with numerous structural and predatory barriers that prevent them from returning to the working class jobs that were once prevalent in their communities. These burdens create hardships in economic outcomes with financial and banking related barriers; and

WHEREAS, Many of these structural problems have caused numerous seemingly insurmountable issues in historically black and brown communities. Many of these communities have been frozen out of the homeownership market and have been relegated to a rent-based community. 87% of tangled titles are held by black and brown Americans, and this has led to a disparate impact of decreased property tax relief and a decentralized voting base; and

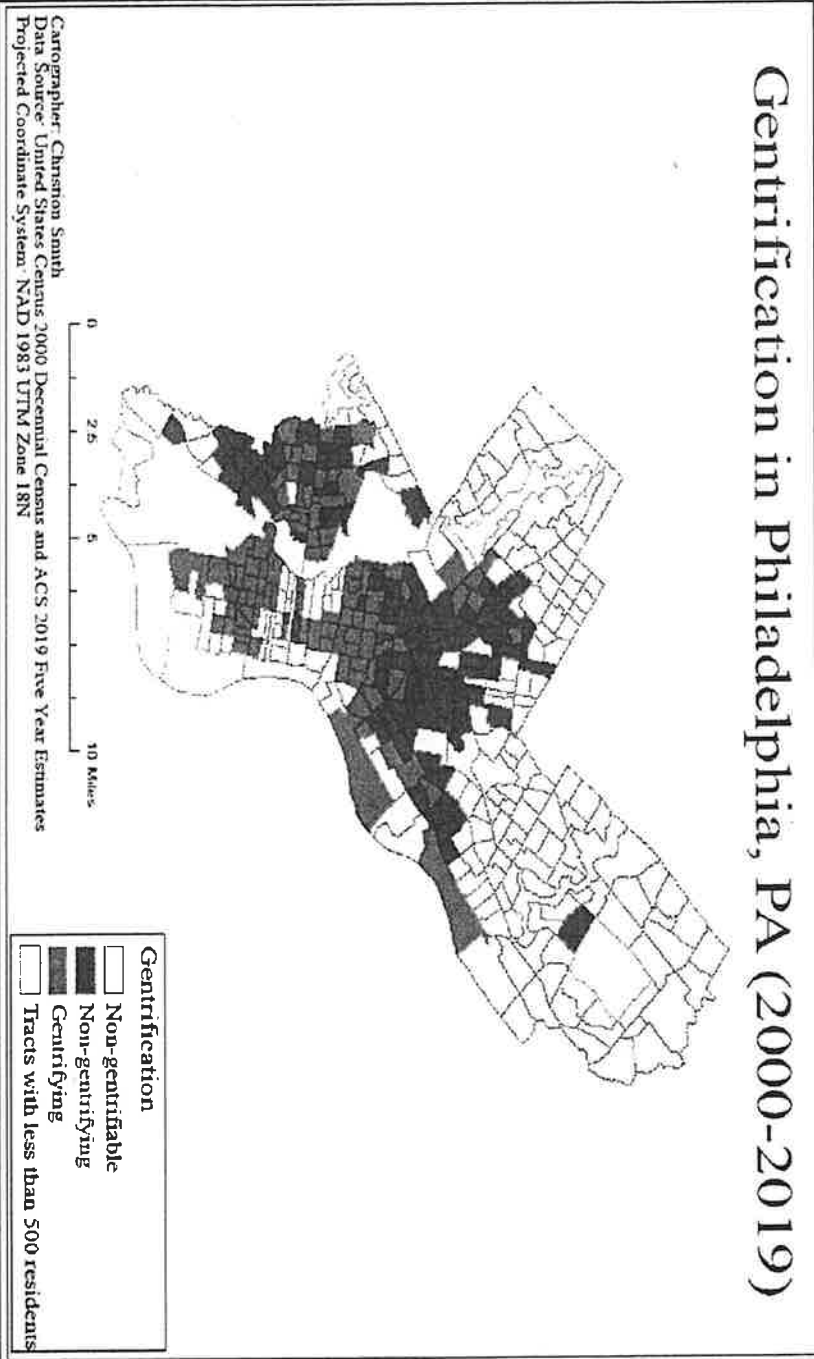
WHEREAS, It is imperative for this Council body to examine the impact that tangled titles have on issues like housing, gentrification, poverty, crime, voting, and economic patterns to determine solutions that address these issues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the City Council Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development, and the Homeless to hold public hearings to the examine the effects of tangled titles and gentrification on neighborhoods of Philadelphia.

Exhibit A

Philadelphia Gentrification Map

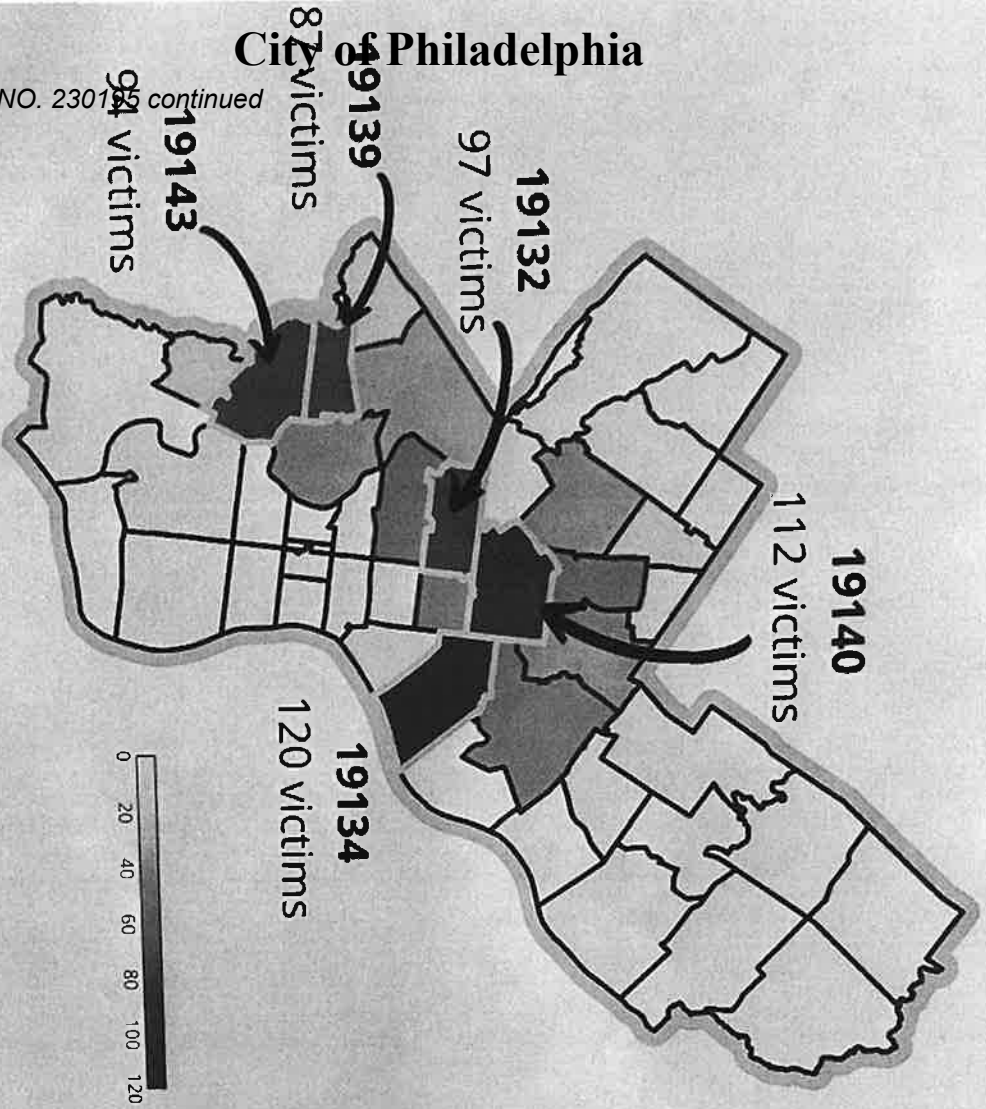
Gentrification in Philadelphia, PA (2000-2019)



Confidential/ Jacqueline J. Barnett

Exhibit B

Shooting Victims by ZIP Code

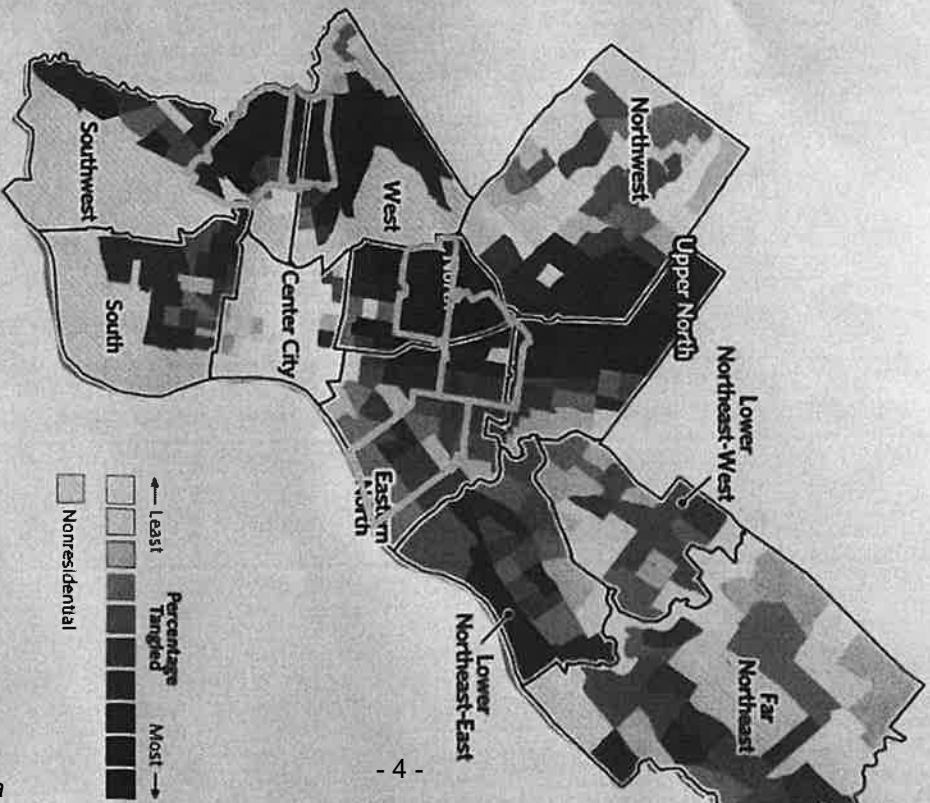


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Controller Rebecca Rhyhart
Open Data Philly Data set for shooting victims as of 7/21/21



Philadelphia Tangled Titles



PEW Charitable Trust Tangled Title Study
In Yellow: 19140, 19132, 19139, 19143, 19134

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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 ninth day of March, 2023.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Jones

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Jones, Lozada, Johnson, Vaughn, Gauthier, Squilla, Harrity, Driscoll, Phillips, Gilmore Richardson, Bass and Brooks