Legislation Details (With Text)

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Type:	Resolution			**Status:**	ADOPTED
File created:	5/28/2026			**In control:**	CITY COUNCIL
On agenda:				**Final action:**	5/28/2026
Title:	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.				
Sponsors:	Councilmember Gauthier, Council President Johnson, Councilmember Phillips, Councilmember Landau, Councilmember Lozada, Councilmember Brooks, Councilmember O'Rourke, Councilmember Ahmad				
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result	Tally
5/28/2026	0	CITY COUNCIL	Introduced and Ordered Placed on This Week's Final Passage Calendar		
5/28/2026	0	CITY COUNCIL	ADOPTED	Pass	

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

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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