

Philly ‘middle neighborhoods’ like Tacony, Mayfair to get City Council hearing

Cherelle Parker has a resolution to discuss solutions for areas a researcher called “endangered.”

Cottman Avenue in Mayfair, which is considered one of Philly's middle neighborhoods.

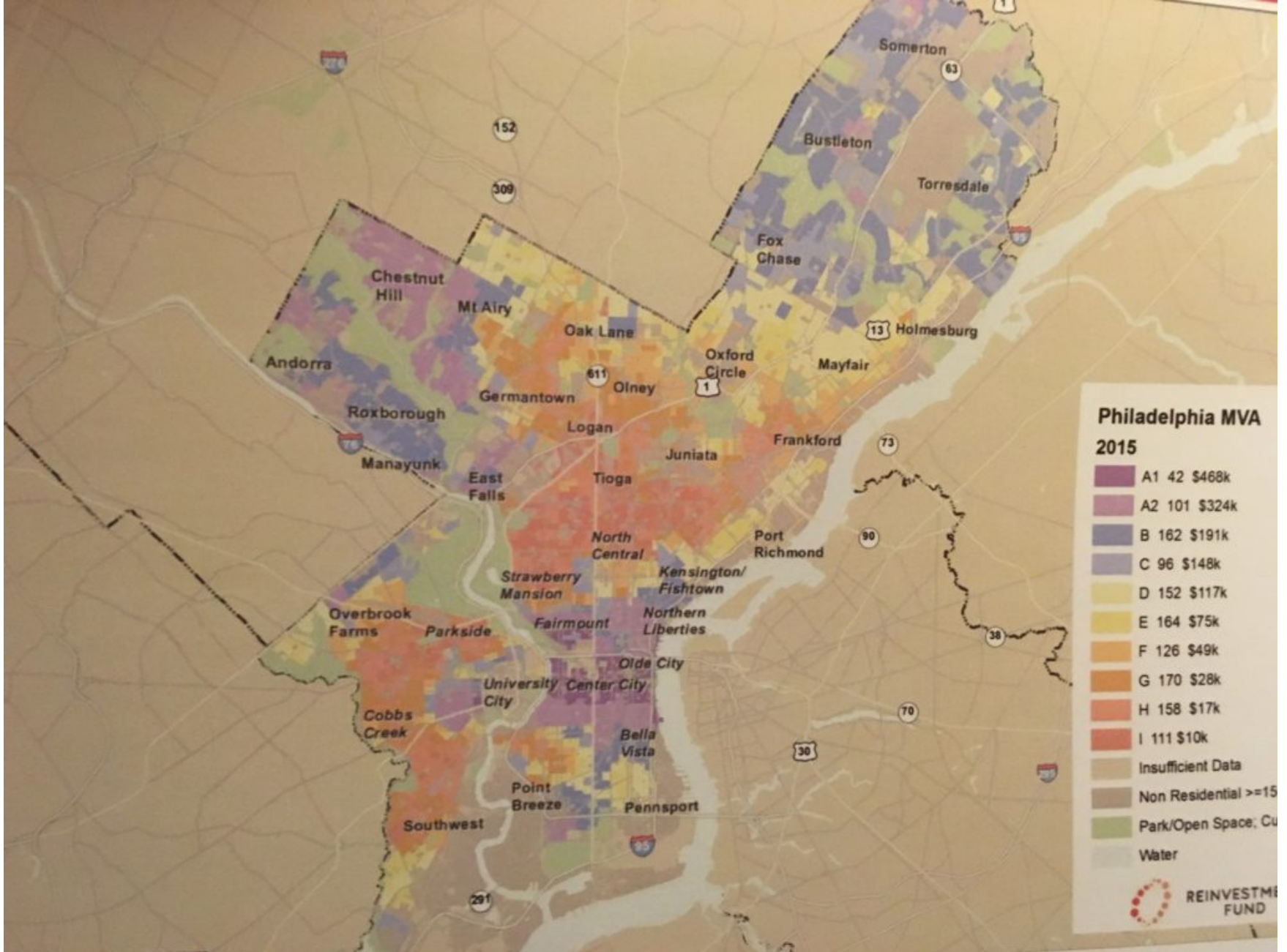
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Two weeks ago at Temple, researcher Paul Brophy gave a discussion about Philadelphia’s seemingly stable but at-risk middle neighborhoods and noted our city had no plan for them. He talked about the need for advocates to step up, directly calling out local politicians to do something about it.

It appears City Council has taken the message to heart. Ninth District Councilwoman Cherelle Parker plans to introduce a resolution calling for a hearing on middle neighborhoods this morning. The resolution stresses the need to “explore intergovernmental policy solutions to stabilize and support” the neighborhoods.

Middle neighborhoods are the areas of Philadelphia we don’t hear a lot about. They’re not the glamorous or developing areas in Center City or the adjacent neighborhoods; they’re not the low-income neighborhoods the city, state and nation aid through funding. They’re the neighborhoods doing reasonably well but at risk for decline.

They’re in almost every city, particularly once-thriving manufacturing cities like Philadelphia. Here, the middle neighborhoods are Tacony, West Oak Lane, East Oak Lane, Mayfair, Germantown, East Mt. Airy and others shaded in yellow and light orange on this map.



Areas shaded in yellow and light orange are Philly's middle neighborhoods.

Reinvestment Fund

Residents of these neighborhoods have incomes generally at or above Philadelphia's median, homeowner rates and voting participation higher than average and income segregation lower than average. But their relative stability is at risk because of a lack of private and public investment.

If these neighborhoods decline, Philadelphia stands to lose. Up to 45 percent of Philadelphians live in middle neighborhoods, many with the means to move elsewhere.

“It really is painful to me,” said Brophy, a Hunting Park native and editor of [*On The Edge: America's Middle Neighborhoods*](#). “We’re watching neighborhoods decline because we’re not paying attention.”

Parker's resolution describes the neighborhoods as "vulnerable to decline" but in many instances "providing a good quality of life for their residents." It calls for securing funding to neighborhood organizations, intervention on vacant buildings, changes to Philly rules on Community Block Development Grants and targeting funds to promote racial and income balance among other solutions.

During the presentation at Temple two weeks ago, she said, "historically we've made policy decisions where we have literally made decisions which neighborhoods are winners and losers. It's almost as if (middle neighborhoods) have been penalized because they've been civically engaged and have a high rate of ownership."

She called for the need for local and federal authorities to contribute.

"When you talk about need-based you're only talking about those neighborhoods in deep poverty," Parker said. "And we can't grow Philadelphia if we're just making an investment at the bottom and not preserving what is stable."