

1 [Condemning Recent Vandalism of Cherry Blossom Trees in Japantown and Urging Prompt  
2 Rehabilitation and Replacement]

3 **Resolution condemning recent vandalism of Cherry Blossom trees in Japantown and**  
4 **stating solidarity with the Japanese American community and commitment to ensure**  
5 **prompt rehabilitation and replacement of the Cherry Blossom trees.**

6  
7 WHEREAS, The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California in  
8 San Francisco’s Japantown neighborhood, planted the trees to commemorate a 1994 visit by  
9 his Majesty, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan during a two-week tour of the  
10 United States; and

11 WHEREAS, The Cherry Blossom trees were the first to be planted in San Francisco’s  
12 Japantown in over fifty years since the Redevelopment Agency uprooted every tree in  
13 Japantown during the 1960-1970s; and

14 WHEREAS, Cherry blossoms are the unofficial national flower of Japan and are seen  
15 as a timeless symbol of the human existence in that their short but beautiful life illustrates  
16 what people can immediately accomplish and be grateful for; and

17 WHEREAS, For hundreds of years the Cherry Blossom tree has been one of the most  
18 important cultural features of Japan; and

19 WHEREAS, Cherry blossoms are the sign of renewal, optimism, and of new hopes and  
20 dreams; and

21 WHEREAS, The Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival, started in 1968, is one of  
22 California’s most prominent celebrations of Asian traditions and the biggest on the West  
23 coast, drawing in over 200,000 people each year to experience the color and grace of  
24 Japanese culture and the diversity of the Japanese American Community; and

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1           WHEREAS, An annual Cherry Blossom Festival has been consecutively held in the  
2 City and County of San Francisco since 1968 and will continue to hold its 2021 Festival as a  
3 virtual event; and

4           WHEREAS, When the cherry blossoms were first planted, it took two years from  
5 concept to permitting to planting the Cherry Blossom trees; and

6           WHEREAS, Cherry Blossom Trees are not native to the United States, Japanese  
7 cherry blossoms can be found throughout the country and also have come to symbolize  
8 peace in U.S.-Japanese diplomatic relations; and

9           WHEREAS, San Francisco's Japantown, also known as Nihonmachi or J-Town, is an  
10 ethnic enclave created in the early 1900s after the Great Earthquake of 1906 when Japanese  
11 residents relocated from the Chinatown and South Park areas to the Fillmore/Western  
12 Addition section of the city; and

13           WHEREAS, San Francisco has a diverse Asian population, with Asian-American  
14 residents accounting for over 30 percent of its total population; and

15           WHEREAS, Japantown in San Francisco is one of the last few Japantowns remaining  
16 in the United States (with California once boasting 43 Japantowns before WWII) and one of  
17 the oldest Japantowns in the United States, with others in San Jose, Los Angeles, Sawtelle  
18 and Seattle; and

19           WHEREAS, On the morning of January 5, 2021, the two Kanzan Cherry Blossom trees  
20 in front of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California were  
21 completely vandalized and destroyed with all of the branches torn off and only the base of the  
22 trunk remaining; and

23           WHEREAS, Surveillance camera footage from the center shows the vandalism taking  
24 place over three days, beginning January 1, while the center was closed; and

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1           WHEREAS, The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California took  
2 to Facebook to report that two trees outside their office, located in the 1800 block of Sutter  
3 Street, had been stripped of their branches, with just the trees' trunks left standing; and

4           WHEREAS, A third tree was vandalized in a similar way two years ago; and

5           WHEREAS, San Francisco police are still investigating the crime; and

6           WHEREAS, The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California  
7 created a GoFundMe page dedicated to the effort to replace and restore the famous Cherry  
8 Blossom trees; and

9           WHEREAS, The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California  
10 sincerely appreciates the outpouring of support, kind words of encourage and financial  
11 support it has received from the community, residents and people around the nation and  
12 hopes that mature cherry blossom trees can be replanted in time for it to bloom in the Spring  
13 of 2021; and

14           WHEREAS, The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California  
15 receives VIP guests from Japan, including diplomats, dignitaries and corporate executives;  
16 and

17           WHEREAS, The new cherry blossom trees will be replanted to replace the ones  
18 vandalized and to continue to serve as a symbol of beauty, peace and hope for Japantown,  
19 and this has been made possible with the over 500 donations received from donors around  
20 the country, raising over \$27,000 in three days; and

21           WHEREAS, The JCBD has contacted the Mayor's Fix-It Team and San Francisco  
22 Public Works and they sent out investigators from the Bureau of Urban Forestry; and

23           WHEREAS, The plan is for new cherry blossom trees to be planted to replace the ones  
24 vandalized in partnership with the City, Japantown merchants, Japantown for Justice, the  
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1 Community Center of Northern California, and Japantown Community Benefit District; now,  
2 therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors condemns the vandalism and destruction  
4 of the Cherry Blossom trees in Japantown that took place on or about January 5, 2021; and,  
5 be it

6 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors stands in solidarity with the  
7 Japanese American Community in condemning this attack on culturally significant trees and  
8 commits to supporting their prompt rehabilitation and replacement.

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