

1 [Establishing SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District in San Francisco]

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3 **Resolution establishing the SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District in the**
4 **City and County of San Francisco.**

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6 WHEREAS, The South of Market neighborhood (“SoMa”) is home to the largest
7 concentrations of Filipinos in San Francisco and is a cultural center of the regional Filipino
8 community; and

9 WHEREAS, The Filipino community has deep roots that are embedded within the
10 institutions, events and experiences of the Filipino community living in SoMa; and

11 WHEREAS, Filipino culture is a critical part of the SoMa community’s diversity, strength
12 and resilience; and

13 WHEREAS, According to the 2010 Census, the Filipino population has grown to
14 become the largest Asian American population in the state, totaling 1,474,707 persons, with
15 43% of all Filipinos in the U.S. live in California; and

16 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco is known to be one of the most
17 diverse population of immigrants in the nation; and

18 WHEREAS, SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District (hereinafter "SoMa
19 Pilipinas") is home to Filipinos who have been an integral part of the City's cultural richness,
20 economic prosperity and historical significance; and

21 WHEREAS, The boundaries of the SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District
22 shall be the area bound by 2nd Street to the East, 11th Street to the West, Market Street to
23 the North and Brannan Street to the South, as identified in the Western SoMa Community
24 Plan which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2011; and

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1 WHEREAS, Additionally, SoMa Pilipinas shall include the I-Hotel, Gran Oriente, Rizal
2 Apartments and surrounding areas including Rizal Street and Lapu Lapu Street, because of
3 the historic and cultural significance associated with these buildings and areas; and

4 WHEREAS, SoMa Pilipinas' boundary demarcates the area with the highest visibility of
5 Filipino cultural landmarks, businesses, institutions, residences, places of worship, buildings,
6 activities, organizations, and important Filipino cultural activities including the Pistahan and
7 the Parol Festival routes; and

8 WHEREAS, SoMa is today home to such landmarks as Bessie Carmichael
9 School/Filipino Education Center, the nation's first elementary school with a curriculum in the
10 Filipino language and the first and only public school in the nation with a curriculum in the
11 Filipino language, Victoria Manalo Draves Park, the first park named after a Filipino American
12 Olympic champion, the Gran Oriente Filipino Lodge, the seven- story Lipi Ni Lapu Lapu mural
13 at the San Lorenzo Luis Center and several streets named for important figures in Filipino
14 history and Bindlestiff Studio, the only permanent community-based performing arts venue in
15 the nation dedicated to showcasing emerging Filipino American and Filipino artists; and

16 WHEREAS, Filipino immigration patterns to San Francisco can be traced to the
17 unequal relationship between the U.S. and Philippines; and

18 WHEREAS, U.S. Immigration policies intentionally caused waves of immigration of
19 Filipinos to support various growing U.S. industries, including immediately after the Philippine-
20 American War (1899-1913); and

21 WHEREAS, According to the 2013 San Francisco Filipino Heritage Addendum to the
22 South of Market Historic Context Statement, the first wave of Filipino immigration to the United
23 States can be traced directly to the Spanish-American War when San Francisco served as the
24 principal port of embarkation for soldiers headed to the Philippines; and

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1 WHEREAS, After the war many employers, primarily farms and canneries, began
2 aggressively recruiting Filipino men as a source of cheap labor; and

3 WHEREAS, San Francisco served as a principal port for these men arriving in the
4 United States; and

5 WHEREAS, Many Filipino immigrants found employment in San Francisco's service
6 sector as bellhops, dishwashers, servants and cooks; and

7 WHEREAS, A Filipino enclave of bachelor men known as Manilatown developed
8 adjacent to Chinatown; and

9 WHEREAS, Despite the passage of the United States Immigration Act of 1924 which
10 barred Asian immigration, Filipinos continued to be aggressively recruited as a source of
11 cheap labor because Filipinos were classified as United States Nationals, not aliens and were
12 therefore exempt from the provisions of the Act; and

13 WHEREAS, The Filipino population in California rose from 2,700 in 1920 to over
14 20,500 in 1930 resulting in the formation of numerous Filipino social support organizations in
15 San Francisco; and

16 WHEREAS, During the Second World War, thousands of Filipino men volunteered for
17 service, and some 16,000 Filipinos living in California obtained U.S. citizenship; and

18 WHEREAS, The Immigration Act of 1965 was responsible for the second great wave of
19 Filipino immigration, when 20,000 Filipinos were allowed to enter the United States each year,
20 along with family members of Filipinos who were already U.S. citizens, and

21 WHEREAS, During the 1960s the number of Filipinos living in San Francisco roughly
22 doubled from 12,300 to 24,700 residents; and

23 WHEREAS, Many Filipino immigrants moved to SoMa because of its inexpensive rents
24 and proximity to service sector jobs; and

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1 WHEREAS, By 1970, Filipinos were the largest ethnic group in the SoMa, and the San
2 Francisco Oakland metropolitan area had the largest population of Filipinos of any
3 metropolitan area in the continental United States; and

4 WHEREAS, Other social and economic forces including the creation of the Yerba
5 Buena Redevelopment area which demolished approximately 10,000 residential units and 700
6 businesses and the Fillmore/Western Addition Redevelopment area which demolished
7 another Filipino residential enclave led to the decline of Filipinos living in the South of Market
8 and Western Addition; and

9 WHEREAS, SoMa continues to be home to one of the highest concentrations of
10 Filipinos in San Francisco, with multi-generational Filipino households in houses, apartment
11 buildings and residential hotels nestled within the alleys and along the main streets of the
12 neighborhood; and

13 WHEREAS, From the span of 1970's to 1990's, a significant number of Filipino arts
14 facilities, retail businesses, streets and community-based organizations were established in
15 SoMa; and

16 WHEREAS, After 1990, with the amendment to the Immigration Nationality Act,
17 (IMMACT90) tens of thousands of Filipino World War II Veterans immigrated to the United
18 States seeking recognition and benefits, thousands many of whom moved to San Francisco,
19 specifically in the SoMa and other nearby areas; and

20 WHEREAS, To date, the surviving Filipino WWII Veterans still await full recognition and
21 equity; and

22 WHEREAS, Without proper support and appropriate and timely planning, SoMa
23 Pilipinas - its residents, businesses, arts, community-based organizations, places of worship,
24 and other cultural markers are subject to the threat of displacement given the current market
25 forces that are driving up housing and commercial rents; now, therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
2 (hereinafter "the Board") establishes SoMa Pilipinas-- Filipino Cultural Heritage District
3 preserve and further develop SoMa Pilipinas as the regional center of Filipino culture,
4 recognize the historical and present contributions of the community and neighborhood, to
5 stabilize Filipino residents, business and community-serving institutions; and, be it

6 FURTHER RESOLVED, That a working group shall be established and convened at
7 least monthly by the Planning Department in conjunction with the District 6 Supervisor; and,
8 be it

9 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the D6 Supervisor shall appoint members of the
10 community representing the following sector: arts and culture, workers, business, schools,
11 affordable housing, community advocacy and land use, services, and city department staff to
12 the workgroup; and, be it

13 FURTHER RESOLVED, These city departments shall include but not limited to, the
14 Planning Department, Office of Economic & Workforce Development, Mayor's Office of
15 Housing & Community Development, Grants for the Arts, San Francisco Arts Commission,
16 Department of Human Service/Human Service Agency, Department of Aging and Adult
17 Services, Department of Children, Youth and their Families, Department of Public Health,
18 Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure, Department of Building Inspections, San
19 Francisco Public Works and San Francisco Unified School District - to develop a strategic and
20 implementation plan to set policies that promote community development and stabilization,
21 and increase the presence and visibility of the district; and, be it

22 FURTHER RESOLVED, That such strategic plan for SoMa Pilipinas shall be developed
23 and presented at a hearing at the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors within 6
24 months of adoption of this resolution; and, be it

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1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board commends the effort of the Filipino community
2 in working toward the creation of SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District including
3 the monumental work of Filipino-American Development Foundation (FADF) in spearheading
4 this effort in conjunction with many other individuals and community organizations to form
5 district that will contribute to the sustainability, cultural visibility, vibrancy and economic
6 opportunity for Filipinos in the City and County of San Francisco.

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