

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Adrienne Pon, Executive Director
Office of Engagement and Immigrant Affairs

FROM: Alisa Somera, Assistant Clerk
Land Use and Transportation Committee

DATE: November 3, 2015

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

The Board of Supervisors' Land Use and Transportation Committee has received the following proposed legislation, introduced by Supervisor Kim on October 27, 2015:

File No. 151109

Resolution establishing the SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District in the City and County of San Francisco, and a working group to develop recommendations to the City on policies and strategies to encourage community development, preservation, and stabilization.

If you have comments or reports to be included with the file, please forward them to me at the Board of Supervisors, City Hall, Room 244, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102 or by email at: alisa.somera@sfgov.org.

1 [Establishing the 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, and a working group to develop recommendations**
5 **to the City on policies and strategies to encourage community development,**
6 **preservation, and stabilization.**

7

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

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

13 WHEREAS, Filipino immigrants and their descendants have had a longstanding
14 presence in SoMa; and

15 WHEREAS, Filipino culture is a critical piece of the SoMa community’s diversity,
16 strength and resilience, and the community building that has occurred in SoMa; and

17 WHEREAS, There is a concentration of local cultural assets; sites, streets, buildings
18 and institutions related to the Filipino Community within the Cultural District boundaries
19 identified in the Western SoMa Community Plan which was adopted by the Board of
20 Supervisors in 2012; and

21 WHEREAS, Filipino immigration patterns to San Francisco can be traced directly to the
22 relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines; and

23 WHEREAS, U.S. immigration policies allowing waves of Filipinos to immigrate were
24 directly related to the increased need for labor to support various growing industries in the
25 U.S.; and

1 WHEREAS, San Francisco was the city from which soldiers headed to the Philippine-
2 American War were deployed between 1899-1913, and beginning immediately after the
3 colonization of Philippines, Filipinos began immigrating to San Francisco, as military
4 personnel and as workers in the service sector of San Francisco as bellhops, dishwashers,
5 servants, and cooks; and

6 WHEREAS, Since the 1920s, San Francisco served as a primary destination for new
7 arrivals of Filipino immigrants, mostly single Filipino men who formed a bachelor community
8 called Manilatown, adjacent to Chinatown, consisting of ten blocks; and

9 WHEREAS, Despite the passage of the United States Immigration Act of 1924 that
10 barred Asian immigration, many employers, primarily farmers and canneries, began
11 aggressively recruiting Filipino men as a source of cheap labor because Filipinos were
12 classified as United States nationals, not aliens, and were therefore exempt from the
13 provisions of the Act; and

14 WHEREAS, According to the CalTrans 2013 Historical Context and Archaeological
15 Research Design for Work Camp Properties in California, the aggressive recruitment efforts
16 by employers along the West Coast increased the Filipino population from 2,700 in 1920 to
17 over 30,500 in 1930; and

18 WHEREAS, By the late 1960s, Filipinos became the single largest ethnic group in the
19 South of Market; and

20 WHEREAS, By 1970, the San Francisco-Oakland metropolitan area had the largest
21 population of Filipinos of any metropolitan area in the continental United States at the time;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, The mass evictions of the International Hotel ("I-Hotel") in 1977 and the
24 expansion of the Financial District caused displacement of Filipinos from San Francisco's
25

1 Manilatown and significant numbers sought refuge in SoMa where they established new
2 homes, businesses, institutions, and cultural facilities; and

3 WHEREAS, After 1990, with the amendment to the Immigration Nationality Act,
4 (IMMACT90) tens of thousands of Filipino WWII Veterans immigrated to the United States
5 seeking recognition and benefits, thousands of whom moved to San Francisco, specifically in
6 the SoMa and other nearby areas; and

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

9 WHEREAS SoMa is today home to such landmarks as the first and only public school
10 with a curriculum in the Filipino language in the nation, Bessie Carmichael Elementary
11 School/Filipino Education Center, and the first park named after a Filipino American Olympic
12 Champion, Victoria Manalo Draves Park; and

13 WHEREAS SoMa remains home to other significant Filipino cultural assets and
14 houses, educates and serves an active, thriving Filipino community living in San Francisco
15 today; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco is
17 committed to preserving the history and developing the cultural presence of the Filipino
18 community; and, be it

19 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San
20 Francisco shall work with City departments to establish the SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural
21 Heritage District, with the working boundaries identified in the Western SoMa Community
22 Plan; and, be it

23 FURTHER RESOLVED, That a SoMa Pilipinas – Filipino Cultural Heritage District
24 working group shall be established to advise the City upon the District’s formation and
25 implementation, to make recommendations on policies and strategies that encourage

1 community development, preservation and stabilization and to strengthen present zoning
2 including the SoMa Youth and Family Special Use District or any expansion thereof; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, The working group shall have designated seats and
4 representation to include department staff, philanthropic and community representatives; and,
5 be it

6 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the working group's recommendations shall be
7 memorialized in a Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan for the SoMa Pilipinas – Filipino
8 Cultural Heritage District, and that such Plans shall be presented at a hearing at the Planning
9 commission and Board of Supervisors within 12 months of adoption of this resolution.

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