

1 [Establishment of the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District]

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3 **Resolution establishing the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District, with the intent of**  
4 **preserving, sustaining, and promoting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and**  
5 **Queer (“LGBTQ”-a term here that includes an array of gender identities and sexual**  
6 **orientations) history and culture of the neighborhood; highlighting the structures and**  
7 **sites important to this history; fostering racial, ethnic and cultural diversity among its**  
8 **residents and businesses; and creating a safe, beautiful, and inclusive space for**  
9 **LGBTQ and allied communities, from those who call this neighborhood home to those**  
10 **who visit it from around the world.**

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12 WHEREAS, The Castro LGBTQ Cultural District affirms a living, breathing  
13 geographical and cultural area with rich political, social, economic, and historical significance  
14 to the LGBTQ community; and

15 WHEREAS, The neighborhood has been recognized worldwide for nearly half a  
16 century as a beacon of LGBTQ liberty and an enclave for LGBTQ people to find safety,  
17 acceptance, and chosen family; and

18 WHEREAS, The Castro has long drawn new residents and visitors from every corner of  
19 the globe who seek out the neighborhood because of its significance as a center of LGBTQ  
20 life; and

21 WHEREAS, The Castro became a global focal point for the development of gay  
22 culture, community and politics in the 1970s, marking a significant step forward in the  
23 multigenerational struggle for LGBTQ visibility, civil rights, and equality; and

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1           WHEREAS, This historical background inspires today’s struggles to keep the  
2 neighborhood’s memories alive and to support community growth and long-term cultural  
3 development; and

4           WHEREAS, The Castro LGBTQ Cultural District embodies a diverse and layered fabric  
5 of historical and contemporary LGBTQ experiences, serving as a colorful and dynamic  
6 epicenter of queer culture for local residents; a destination for visitors from across the United  
7 States and around the world; and a globally recognized source of inspiration for resistance,  
8 freedom, and respect for LGBTQ people; and

9           WHEREAS, The Castro has deep roots that are embedded in neighborhood sites,  
10 institutions, businesses, nonprofits, customs, events, and experiences that reflect local,  
11 national, and international LGBTQ communities; and

12           WHEREAS, Two recent historic context statements—the 2016 Citywide Historic  
13 Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco and the 2017 Eureka Valley Historic  
14 Context Statement—identify many LGBTQ structures and sites of local, national, and  
15 international historic significance in the Castro area; and

16           WHEREAS, A recent report by the United States National Park Service titled LGBTQ  
17 America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer History (2016)  
18 likewise identifies numerous LGBTQ historic sites of importance in the Castro neighborhood;  
19 and

20           WHEREAS, The Castro has historically been a destination for LGBTQ youth from  
21 throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, the United States of America, and the world, arriving  
22 with hope of finding the love, acceptance, and even safety, that has too often been denied in  
23 their own communities; and

24           WHEREAS, These youth advance the social justice legacy of the LGBTQ community to  
25 promote safe and accessible spaces for all, and ensure the existence of critical social services

1 and leadership development opportunities for youth, such as exists at the Lavender Youth and  
2 Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC), located in the Castro reminding all that youth, in  
3 particular youth of color and trans/gender non-conforming youth, are an important part of our  
4 community deserving of our support and respect; and

5 WHEREAS, The Castro District has been a center of LGBTQ-owned and LGBTQ-  
6 friendly small businesses starting as early as the 1950s with Maurice Gerry's beauty salon at  
7 587 Castro Street and staking an unmistakable public claim in 1963 with the opening of the  
8 neighborhood's first gay bar, The Missouri Mule, at 2348 Market Street; and

9 WHEREAS, Such small businesses created public spaces, economic resources,  
10 employment opportunities, and cultural assets that enabled the LGBTQ population to grow,  
11 thrive, create community, and organize for positive social and political change; and

12 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Legacy Business Registry, which recognizes  
13 businesses over 30 years old that have made a significant impact on neighborhood history or  
14 culture, lists 12 legacy businesses within the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District's boundaries,  
15 including the Castro Country Club, Cliff's Variety, Moby Dick, Anchor Oyster Bar, Cove on  
16 Castro Cafe, Ruby's Clay Studio and Gallery, Dog Eared Books, Beck's Motor Lodge, Rolo  
17 San Francisco, Cafe Du Nord, and Eros; and

18 WHEREAS, Many additional LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly businesses in the Castro  
19 neighborhood are not yet listed in this registry but are qualified for recognition; and

20 WHEREAS, The Castro has been the focal point of San Francisco's LGBTQ political  
21 activism since the 1970s, with the Castro Muni station, Harvey Milk Plaza, Jane Warner  
22 Plaza, Market Street, and Castro Street serving as gathering places for celebrations,  
23 marches, protests, and memorials, including both the candlelight vigil that took place after the  
24 assassinations of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk and the march that  
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1 resulted in the White Night Riot that occurred after the assassin, Dan White, received a lenient  
2 sentence; and

3 WHEREAS, Supervisor Harvey Milk, the owner of Castro Camera, began his political  
4 career on the proverbial soapbox at Castro and Market streets in 1973 and became the first  
5 openly gay elected official in California in 1978 and the first Supervisor to represent the Castro  
6 after district elections were created, authoring the City's gay rights ordinance as well as the  
7 country's first pooper-scooper law, which required dog owners to pick up after their pets; and

8 WHEREAS, Following Milk's assassination in November 1978, the LGBTQ community  
9 consolidated its power by renaming the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club to honor Harvey  
10 Milk, by working to elect further openly LGBTQ public officials, and by fighting back against  
11 anti-LGBTQ practices; and

12 WHEREAS, Such activism in the Castro District helped advance respect for the  
13 LGBTQ community in San Francisco and beyond; and

14 WHEREAS, The LGBTQ community banded together to find safety in the Castro,  
15 because elsewhere they faced violence at the hands of the police, the general public, and  
16 numerous hate groups, thus making preservation of LGBTQ culture in the Castro an important  
17 part of further lowering the levels of violence, homelessness, addiction, and other disparities  
18 that the LGBTQ population faces; and

19 WHEREAS, The Castro is an international center for LGBTQ cinema, being home to  
20 the art-deco masterpiece Castro Theater, which annually hosts numerous LGBTQ film  
21 showings including events for Frameline and the Transgender Film Festival; and

22 WHEREAS, The Frameline festival traces its roots to informal showings of gay super 8  
23 films projected onto a bedsheet at the apartment of queer filmmaker and impresario Marc  
24 Huestis and others at 527 Castro Street in the mid-1970s; and

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1           WHEREAS, The Castro District is an internationally known center of LGBTQ street life  
2 and nightlife, including a large number of historic and long-running bars, nightclubs,  
3 restaurants, and retail establishments that provide the neighborhood a unique character; and

4           WHEREAS, Together, this street life and nightlife scene has made the Castro a  
5 significant space for a diversity of gender and sexual minorities for many decades even as  
6 neighborhood activists confronted racism by organizing movements including the “And Castro  
7 For All” campaign of the mid-2000s; and

8           WHEREAS, The Castro also has been a neighborhood where different groups within  
9 the LGBTQ community have struggled for space, yet came together when faced with the  
10 necessity of unity during the AIDS crisis, when many cisgender and transgender women,  
11 including many lesbians, came forward to care for sick gay men; and

12           WHEREAS, Although not traditionally a neighborhood strongly welcoming to  
13 transgender people, the Castro has seen trans activists work to create visibility, including the  
14 efforts of Veronika Fimbres and others successfully fighting to have the transgender flag flown  
15 at Harvey Milk Plaza; and

16           WHEREAS, The Castro has embodied a commitment to creating a greater welcome for  
17 all by offering a public space for such events as the Castro Street Fair, San Francisco Pride,  
18 the Dyke March, and numerous other cultural events; and

19           WHEREAS, Many forms of art have been cultivated in the Castro by the LGBTQ  
20 population, giving rise to notable artistic organizations such as the Names Project and its  
21 AIDS Memorial Quilt, the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, and the San Francisco  
22 Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band; and

23           WHEREAS, The art form of drag has long flourished in the Castro District, home to  
24 many groundbreaking and celebrated drag shows such as Peaches Christ’s Midnight Mass  
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1 and Cookie Dough’s Monster Show, as well as groups such as the Cockettes, which launched  
2 the career of disco superstar Sylvester; and

3 WHEREAS, Books and literature by LGBTQ authors have long found a home in the  
4 Castro, location of such establishments as the Walt Whitman Bookstore (1982–1987), A  
5 Different Light Books (1986–2011) and Dog Eared Books, as well as being the setting of  
6 much of Armistead Maupin’s Tales of the City series, and long-time home to the author; and

7 WHEREAS, LGBTQ history has long been celebrated in the Castro, with the  
8 neighborhood providing the first home to the GLBT Historical Society archives (1985-1990),  
9 serving as the current home for the GLBT History Museum (open since 2011), and hopefully  
10 providing the space for a full-scale, world-class LGBTQ history and culture museum in the  
11 future; and

12 WHEREAS, The neighborhood brings together additional LGBTQ history resources  
13 and monuments such as the Rainbow Honor Walk and numerous other historical plaques,  
14 Pink Triangle Park, the annual pink triangle installation on Twin Peaks to fight against  
15 homophobia and intolerance, the Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy, an elementary school  
16 with an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, and the Gilbert Baker rainbow flag at the corner of  
17 Castro and Market Streets; and

18 WHEREAS, Numerous activists and political organizations have been formed in and  
19 operated out of the Castro, demonstrating the neighborhood’s importance as a territory for  
20 queer political activism and direct action over the decades since the early 1970s, including  
21 such pioneering and influential groups as the Butterfly Brigade, the Alice B. Toklas LGBT  
22 Democratic Club, the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club, ACT UP/San Francisco, Queer  
23 Nation, and Lesbians and Gays of African Descent for Democratic Action (LGADDA); and

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1           WHEREAS, Numerous LGBTQ-focused and LGBTQ-led nonprofit organizations have  
2 thrived in the Castro, including the Shanti Project, LYRIC, and the SF LGBTQ Speakers  
3 Bureau; and

4           WHEREAS, The Castro has become home to a number of LGBTQ-welcoming religious  
5 and spiritual groups and institutions, including the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, the Night  
6 Ministry, the Metropolitan Community Church, Most Holy Redeemer, Congregation Sha'ar  
7 Zahav, the Hartford Street Zen Center, and the Grand Central Faerie House among other  
8 Radical Faerie centers and houses; and

9           WHEREAS, The neighborhood has fostered LGBTQ athletics, including gay softball  
10 leagues at Rikki Streicher Field and the world's largest LGBTQ athletic organization, the  
11 Federation of Gay Games, which started in and still operates out of the Castro District; and

12           WHEREAS, The Castro has been home at various times to numerous LGBTQ-focused  
13 and LGBTQ-owned newspapers, periodicals, and news sources, including the Castro Village  
14 Other (1972); Coming Up/San Francisco Bay Times (founded 1978); OUT/LOOK (1988–  
15 1992); Electric City TV (1991–1995); and Frontiers Newsmagazine (1994–2005); and

16           WHEREAS, The Castro was one of the first neighborhoods in the world to bear the full  
17 brunt of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and was one of the first neighborhoods in the world to  
18 organize an effective and sex-positive response to the epidemic, thereby making it an  
19 internationally important site of homage and commemoration; and

20           WHEREAS, The AIDS epidemic inspired activist responses in the Castro District in the  
21 1980s and 1990s led by groups such as Citizens for Medical Justice, the AIDS Action Pledge,  
22 and ACT/UP San Francisco, while the federal government ignored the massive health crisis  
23 caused by HIV; and

24           WHEREAS, The Castro has been home to numerous pioneering HIV/AIDS healthcare,  
25 social services, prevention, education, advocacy and fundraising organizations that helped

1 elaborate the world-renowned San Francisco model of care that marshaled volunteer,  
2 nonprofit, foundation, and city resources to respond to the epidemic; and

3 WHEREAS, The Castro's beautiful and varied housing stock, including many Victorian  
4 homes, provided affordable housing from the 1950s into the 1970s, yet the neighborhood  
5 subsequently became a hotbed of real estate speculation and its residents have increasingly  
6 fought evictions and economic displacement; and

7 WHEREAS, The neighborhood has supported many kinds of living situations, from  
8 large cooperative homes, to homes for LGBTQ-led families with children, to community-wide  
9 land investment by organizations like the Queer Land Trust that work to fight displacement;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, The Castro District was one of the first places modern medical marijuana  
12 activism emerged in the United States, with Dennis Peron, the architect behind Proposition 64  
13 that made medical marijuana legal in California, organizing and operating out of the Castro for  
14 many years and writing the introduction to Brownie Mary's famous marijuana cookbook in the  
15 Castro, as well as hosting meetings of the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club in his home  
16 to expand political force behind cannabis reform; and

17 WHEREAS, The sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s found a place in the Castro,  
18 which became home to sex clubs, bathhouses, and other erotic gathering spaces for gay and  
19 bisexual men including the Jaguar adult bookstore (1971-2005); the Eros sex club, founded in  
20 1992 as groundbreaking business promoting safer sex and sex-positive education during the  
21 AIDS epidemic; and AutoErotica/Mercury Mail Order founded in 1996 to sell vintage gay  
22 erotica; and

23 WHEREAS, Community-based health organizations such as the Castro Country Club,  
24 the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and its brick-and-mortar health centers Strut and Magnet,  
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1 the SF Therapy Collective, API Wellness, and Lyon-Martin Health Services provide  
2 specialized health services to the LGBTQ community in the Castro; and

3 WHEREAS, The boundary of the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District shall be the area  
4 bound by the south side of Haight Street between Buena Vista Avenue West and Buena Vista  
5 Avenue East, to the south side of Adah's Stairway between Buena Vista Avenue East and  
6 Waller Street, to the south side of Waller Street between Adah's Stairway and Octavia Street,  
7 to the West side of Octavia Street between Waller Street and Market Street, to the north and  
8 south sides of Market Street between Octavia Street and Dolores Street, to the west side of  
9 Dolores Street between Market Street and 18th Street, extending east along the south side of  
10 18th Street to Valencia Street, continuing south on the west side of Dolores Street between  
11 18th Street and 22nd Street, to the north side of 22nd Street between Dolores Street and  
12 Grand View Avenue, to the east side of Grand View Avenue between 22nd Street and Market  
13 Street, to both side of Market Street between Grand View Avenue and Clayton Street, to the  
14 northeast side of Clayton Street between Market Street and 17th Street, to the south side of  
15 17th Street between Clayton Street and Monument Way, to both sides of Monument Way  
16 between 17th Street and Upper Terrace, to the west side of Upper Terrace between  
17 Monument Way and Buena Vista Avenue West, to the east side of Buena Vista West between  
18 Upper Terrace and Haight Street. Additionally, the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District shall  
19 include the Pink Triangle on Twin Peaks and the Women's Building on 18th Street; and

20 WHEREAS, Various significant LGBTQ historic sites and living intangible cultural  
21 assets within these boundaries, including those aforementioned, are threatened or being  
22 displaced by gentrification, ill-considered real-estate development, high costs, and lack of civic  
23 support; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco  
25 (hereinafter, "the Board") establishes the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District to preserve and

1 further develop the Castro as an international focal point of LGBTQ culture; protect the  
2 Castro’s cultural assets from destruction and demise; help propel the Castro into becoming an  
3 even more inclusive and appealing neighborhood for LGBTQ people and their allies; and  
4 provide a bright future by expanding affordable housing as well as business and nonprofit  
5 opportunities to LGBTQ communities which have been devastated and displaced,  
6 disadvantaged, and left behind by gentrification, including LGBTQ people of color, those living  
7 with HIV and AIDS, and those who are economically disadvantaged; and, be it

8 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District will be governed by a  
9 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that will be formed after a series of public meetings organized  
10 by the community-based Castro LGBTQ Cultural District Working Group comprised of Castro  
11 residents and representatives of Castro-based LGBTQ culture and community organizations  
12 and this nonprofit shall be established with the intent of preserving, sustaining, and promoting  
13 the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (“LGBTQ”—a term here that includes an  
14 array of gender identities and sexual orientations) history and culture of the neighborhood;  
15 highlighting the structures and sites important to this history; fostering racial, ethnic and  
16 cultural diversity among its residents and businesses; and creating a safe, beautiful, and  
17 inclusive space for LGBTQ and allied communities, from those who call this neighborhood  
18 home to those who visit it from around the world; and, be it

19 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board commends the efforts of the Castro LGBTQ  
20 community in working toward the creation of the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District that will  
21 contribute to the sustainability, vibrancy, economic growth, and preservation of the lesbian,  
22 gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community of San Francisco; and, be it

23 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Mayor’s Office of  
24 Housing Community Development (“MOHCD”), with advisement from the Planning  
25 Department, the Historic Preservation Commission, the Office of Economic Workforce

1 Development, and other relevant City departments, to implement a community process in  
2 collaboration with the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District Working Group and its successor  
3 nonprofit organization that leads to the development of a Castro LGBTQ Cultural Heritage and  
4 Economic Sustainability Strategy (“CHESS”) to set policies that promote community  
5 development, stabilize the displacement of LGBTQ businesses and residents, preserve the  
6 Castro as the center of LGBTQ culture and commerce, enhance the unique nature of the  
7 Castro as a special place for San Francisco’s residents and tourists, and ensure that the City  
8 of San Francisco and interested stakeholders have an opportunity to work collaboratively on  
9 the community planning process, which may result in the designation of a Special Use District  
10 or other amendment to the Planning Code; and, be it

11 FURTHER RESOLVED, That other city departments and other bodies may be  
12 requested to be part of the community process to create the CHESS, including but not limited  
13 to the Department of Public Health; the Department of Homelessness; the Aging and Adult  
14 Services Commission; the Small Business Commission; the San Francisco Arts Commission;  
15 the Department of Human Services; the Department of Aging and Adult Services; the  
16 Department of Children; Youth and their Families; the Office of Community Investment and  
17 Infrastructure; the Department of Building Inspection; the Department of Public Works; the  
18 Entertainment Commission; and the Recreation and Park Department; and, be it

19 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the CHESS as developed by MOHCD through a  
20 community process should be submitted to the Board of Supervisors within 12 months of the  
21 adoption of this resolution.

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