

1 [Support for the SoMa Pilipinas Gateway Cultural Marker]

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**Resolution expressing support for a permanent cultural monument and public realm artworks for the Filipino Cultural Heritage District; urging the Arts Commission to commission new works that center voices and stories that are not currently highlighted in the Civic Art Collection, such as permanent and temporary public realm artworks that reflect Filipino culture and identity; and finding that the SOMA Pilipinas Gateway Project could provide a model for the City to advance social and racial equity by visually uplifting the rich history and collective experience, contributions, struggles, and triumphs of people of color and immigrant communities who are an important part of San Francisco’s diversity and soul as a City.**

WHEREAS, SOMA Pilipinas was formally recognized by the City and County of San Francisco as the Filipino Cultural Heritage District in April 2016, and designated by the State of California in July 2017; and

WHEREAS, A core mission of the cultural district is to increase the visibility and celebrate the contributions of the Filipino community in SOMA, San Francisco, California and the Diaspora, and to develop cultural arts, assets, and creative place-keeping and place-making cultural markers and monuments; and

WHEREAS, The SOMA Pilipinas Cultural District does not have any permanent cultural markers that are clearly identifiable and recognizable by the public, as do other communities in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, A combination of ongoing displacement, historically racist planning, and the lack of recognition of the South of Market as a neighborhood with families, children, and

1 seniors has rendered the Filipino community in the South of Market invisible to other  
2 residents, workers, and visitors in the city; and

3 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee  
4 Report, conducted on behalf of the San Francisco Arts Commission, Human Rights  
5 Commission, and Recreation and Parks Department in 2023, recommends that new  
6 monuments and memorials in the Civic Art Collection should center underrepresented voices  
7 and stories that are important to the history and identity of San Francisco; and

8 WHEREAS, There are no works in the San Francisco Civic Arts Collection within the  
9 South of Market that represent Filipino culture or identity; and

10 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Arts Commission is advancing the recommendations  
11 of the Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee through a project funded by the Mellon  
12 Foundation, to broadly and transparently engage diverse communities who have historically  
13 been excluded from discussions regarding the process of commissioning new monuments  
14 and memorials; and

15 WHEREAS, This project will continue with community engagement and artist  
16 activations through 2025 and include a comprehensive equity audit of existing monuments  
17 and memorials in the Civic Art Collection; and

18 WHEREAS, The engagement of diverse underrepresented communities will guide the  
19 Arts Commission in the commissioning of new works; and

20 WHEREAS, The Arts Commission is actively doing outreach to the Filipino community  
21 for new works being commissioned in the SOMA Pilipinas Cultural District; and

22 WHEREAS, All other historical and Philippine-related monuments in San Francisco are  
23 war trophies and celebrations of the American invasion and occupation of the Philippines,  
24 such as the Dewey Monument located in Union Square which serves as a tribute to the  
25 bloody and exploitative colonial history between the U.S. and the Philippines; and

1           WHEREAS, A bronze plaque contextualizing this conflict and the sacrifices made by  
2 the Filipino people in the struggle against the occupying American forces was permanently  
3 attached to the base of the Dewey Monument by the Philippine American War Centennial  
4 Committee of San Francisco in 2019; and

5           WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors approved unanimously in September 2022 the  
6 SOMA Pilipinas Cultural History, Housing, and Economic Sustainability Strategy (CHHESS)  
7 report, which was developed through a community process in collaboration with city  
8 departments and serves as a roadmap of priorities and strategies for stabilizing and  
9 developing the Filipino community; and

10           WHEREAS, The SOMA Pilipinas CHHESS report strategies include City support for  
11 cultural district public realm improvements including the creation of monuments such as  
12 gateways, and working with the San Francisco Arts Commission and other City Departments  
13 to support and maintain community-empowering monuments; and

14           WHEREAS, For the last ten months, the Planning Director has met with the City  
15 Departments including the Planning Department, SF Arts Commission, Department of Public  
16 Works, and SFMTA to discuss the City finalizing the design, permitting, building and owning a  
17 permanent cultural monument and public realm artworks such as the SOMA Pilipinas  
18 Gateway given the structure will be in the public right of way; and

19           WHEREAS, The Arts Commission has provided SOMA Pilipinas representatives with  
20 technical assistance to navigate the public art guidelines and the considerations of designing  
21 an artwork in the public realm and right of way so that it remains beautiful and well-maintained  
22 for years to come; and

23           WHEREAS, A similar gateway over a road in Los Angeles was designed by its Bureau  
24 of Engineering and owned by the City of Los Angeles Public Works which could streamline  
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1 the coordination and administrative costs necessitated by its location over a road, and ensure  
2 timely maintenance; now, therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors express wholehearted support for the  
4 importance of a permanent cultural monument for the Filipino Cultural Heritage District; and,  
5 be it

6 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urge the San Francisco Arts  
7 Commission, in furtherance of the recommendations of the Monuments and Memorials  
8 Committee Final Report to commission new works that center voices and stories that are not  
9 currently highlighted in the Civic Art Collection, such as the voices that reflect Filipino culture  
10 and identity; and, be it

11 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors finds that the Gateway Project  
12 could provide a model for the City to advance social and racial equity by producing cultural  
13 monuments that lift up the rich history and collective experience, contributions, struggles, and  
14 triumphs of people of color and immigrant communities who are an important part of San  
15 Francisco's diversity and soul as a City.

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