

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.**

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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  
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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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