

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Phil Ginsburg, General Manager, Recreation and Parks Department
Rich Hillis, Director, Planning Department

FROM: Stephanie Cabrera, Assistant Clerk, Government Audit and Oversight
Committee, Board of Supervisors

DATE: September 12, 2023

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

The Board of Supervisors' Government Audit and Oversight Committee has received the following proposed legislation, introduced by Supervisor Preston on Tuesday, September 5, 2023:

File No. 230951

Resolution expressing the Board of Supervisors' concern regarding the development of the United Nations (UN) Activation Plan and displacement of the Heart of the City Farmers' Market from the UN Plaza, urging the Recreation and Park Department to adopt mitigations requested by the Farmers' Market, and urging the Recreation and Park Department to provide information to the public and the Board of Supervisors regarding the pilot activation plan.

If you have any additional 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: Stephanie.Cabrera@sfgov.org.

CC:

Sarah Madland, Recreation and Parks Department
Beverly Ng, Recreation and Parks Department
Ashley Summers, Recreation and Parks Commission
Dan Sider, Planning Department
Corey Teague, Planning Department
Tina Tam, Planning Department
Lisa Gibson, Planning Department

Devyani Jain, Planning Department
Aaron Starr, Planning Department
Josh Switzky, Planning Department
Joy Navarrete, Planning Department
Debra Dwyer, Planning Department
Elizabeth Watty, Planning Department
Richard Sucre, Planning Department

1 [Urging the Recreation and Park Department to Publicly Share Information Regarding Pilot
2 Activation of UN Plaza and Take Steps to Mitigate Any Impact on the Farmers' Market]

3 **Resolution expressing the Board of Supervisors' concern regarding the development**
4 **of the United Nations (UN) Activation Plan and displacement of the Heart of the City**
5 **Farmers' Market from the UN Plaza, urging the Recreation and Park Department to**
6 **adopt mitigations requested by the Farmers' Market, and urging the Recreation and**
7 **Park Department to provide information to the public and the Board of Supervisors**
8 **regarding the pilot activation plan.**

9
10 WHEREAS, The United Nations Plaza was dedicated in 1975 to celebrate the 50th
11 anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, when delegates of fifty nations met in
12 San Francisco, between April 25 and June 26, 1945, for the United Nations Conference on
13 International Organization; and

14 WHEREAS, United Nations (UN) Plaza was constructed within the San Francisco Civic
15 Center Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on
16 October 10, 1978, and designated a National Historic Landmark District on February 27,
17 1987; and

18 WHEREAS, By Ordinance No. 17-99, the Board of Supervisors designated UN Plaza
19 as a park "for purposes of Articles 3, 4, and 7 of the Park Code" (Regulations, Disorderly
20 Conduct, and Permits), and specifically provided that the designation of United Nations Plaza
21 as a park for purposes of Articles 3, 4, and 7 "does not effect a jurisdictional transfer of these
22 plazas, does not place these plazas under jurisdiction and control of the Recreation and Park
23 Commission, and does not render these plazas 'park land' or 'park property' as those terms
24 are used in any provision of the San Francisco Charter;" and
25

1 WHEREAS, The Civic Center Public Realm Plan is an interagency project started in
2 2017, overseen by the Planning Department, to create a unified vision for medium- and long-
3 term improvements to Civic Center’s plazas, streets, and other public spaces, but the plan has
4 not been implemented; and

5 WHEREAS, UN Plaza has long hosted a range of uses including serving as a
6 gathering place for neighborhood residents, a site for food service to unhoused people, a play
7 area for pets at the UN Plaza Dog Run, and the home of the Heart of the City Farmers’ Market
8 (Farmers’ Market) on Wednesdays and Sundays, but has also struggled as a place with
9 extensive drug use, public intoxication, overdoses, drug dealing, and other unhealthy
10 behavior, uses that have intensified since the recent closure of the Tenderloin Center in
11 December 2022; and

12 WHEREAS, The City has invested substantially in recent months in an increased
13 presence of police, community ambassadors, and park rangers on UN Plaza, but conditions
14 remain unacceptable, and there is a growing recognition that to thrive as a healthy community
15 space UN Plaza needs positive activation and programming on a regular basis; and

16 WHEREAS, In May 2023, Supervisor Dean Preston learned from the director of the
17 Farmers’ Market that the Recreation and Parks Department (“RPD”) and the Civic Center
18 Community Benefit District (“CCCBD”) were allegedly putting forward plans that would
19 displace the Farmers’ Market from UN Plaza, and Supervisor Preston spoke with RPD
20 General Manager who described a skate park concept for UN Plaza and represented that no
21 plans had been finalized and that RPD was not displacing the Farmers’ Market; and

22 WHEREAS, On July 10, 2023, RPD applied for a CEQA Public Agency Exemption for
23 the UN Plaza Activation Project, which proposed removal and modification of 13,000 square
24 feet of red brick in UN Plaza and installation of a removable smooth surface with skateable
25 elements on the surface; and

1 WHEREAS, On July 11, 2023, local media reported that the RPD had developed the
2 pilot UN Plaza Activation Project, which included installation of a street skating area in UN
3 Plaza by November 2023, and move the Farmers' Market to Fulton Plaza in September 2023;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Despite repeated requests from the District 5 Supervisor's office, no
6 community meetings or public information sessions were held until RPD and CCCBD co-
7 hosted an Open House on August 14, 2023; and

8 WHEREAS, The Farmers' Market has served the City and County of San Francisco by
9 providing fresh fruit, vegetables, nuts, honey, and quality agricultural products for over 40
10 years; and

11 WHEREAS, The Farmers' Market manages distribution and redemption for the largest
12 farmers' market EBT program in the nation, and makes over \$1 million per year in grant-
13 funded incentives to help low-income families purchase fruits and vegetables from local farms;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, More than 20,000 people on Sundays and Wednesdays shop for seasonal
16 fresh fruits, vegetables, and other staples that are vended by more than 50 California farmers,
17 many who travel for hours to sell their produce; and

18 WHEREAS, There have been concerns raised by Farmers' Market leadership and
19 Farmers' Market farmers and vendors that they were not consulted sufficiently by RPD before
20 the announcement to aid in a successful transition from UN Plaza to Fulton Plaza during the
21 pilot; and

22 WHEREAS, There have been concerns raised by the community and Farmers' Market
23 patrons about the lack of community input to ensure the needs for the community are met
24 during the pilot; and

25

1 WHEREAS, The failure to consult with community members, involve community
2 members in the development of plans for UN Plaza, or hold a single community meeting does
3 not comport with City goals around equity, conflicts with work led by the Planning Department
4 in the neighborhood, and raises serious questions regarding differential treatment of low-
5 income neighborhoods when compared to how projects are planned and implemented in more
6 affluent neighborhoods; and

7 WHEREAS, The Director of the Farmers' Market, and vendors, have raised significant
8 questions and concerns about the risk to the Farmers' Market of moving off the current
9 location on UN Plaza; and

10 WHEREAS, The District 5 Supervisor has requested from RPD alternative activation
11 plans that would allow the Farmers' Market to stay on the Plaza and at no time have any such
12 plans been shared or presented; and

13 WHEREAS, RPD and the Civic Center Community Benefit District have engaged with
14 the Farmers' Market regarding support for a move to Fulton Plaza, but at no time was the
15 Farmers' Market given the option to remain on UN Plaza; and

16 WHEREAS, RPD has made offers to Farmers' Market of support in the new location
17 (promotion, Civic Center Garage parking, technical assistance), but other demands of the
18 market to minimize risk and promote success of the Market in the new location have not been
19 met to date, with the first date for the Farmers' Market scheduled to operate off of UN Plaza
20 on September 2, 2023, according to RPD; and

21 WHEREAS, In a meeting between RPD, the District 5 Supervisor, and stakeholders on
22 August 24, 2023, RPD described the pilot as a "two-year pilot" for the first time, stating that if it
23 wasn't working out the Farmers' Market could move back after two years, an amount of time
24 that was met with great concern from the Farmers' Market and community stakeholders, who
25 had previously believed the pilot was six months; and

1 WHEREAS, According to information provided by RPD to the City Controller, the
2 overall UN Plaza project budget is \$1.8 million, \$500,000 from “Request for
3 APEC/Philanthropic Funding,” but there is a lack of clarity of who is providing those funds and
4 whether they have been committed or otherwise pledged; and

5 WHEREAS, Farmers’ Market leadership has provided a series of requests to aid in a
6 successful transition from UN Plaza to Fulton Plaza and mitigate adverse impacts during the
7 pilot, including but not limited to commitments regarding the length of the pilot, benchmarks,
8 additional security, financial compensation to farmers to offset direct costs, and specific
9 infrastructure improvements necessary to make Fulton Plaza work, but has not received clear
10 commitments on what steps will and will not be taken; now, therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors expresses its concern regarding the
12 process by which this activation plan was developed, the lack of meaningful community
13 engagement and transparency in the planning process, and the displacement of the Farmers’
14 Market from UN Plaza where it has been operating for over 40 years; and, be it

15 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges RPD to provide the
16 following information in writing to the public and this Board: the duration of the pilot, the
17 itemized cost and source of funds, detailed plans, the metrics for evaluating the pilot, the
18 commitments to the Farmers’ Market, the metrics for evaluating the success of the Farmers’
19 Market on Fulton Plaza, and the plan for returning the Farmers’ Market to UN Plaza if the
20 temporary relocation is not successful; and, be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges RPD to adopt and
22 implement the mitigations requested by the Farmers’ Market to the greatest extent possible to
23 decrease risk of any displacement and support the success of the Farmers’ Market; and, be it

24
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1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That Board of Supervisors urges RPD to provide a report on
2 the pilot activation to the Board of Supervisors no later than 120 days after the pilot
3 commences; and, be it

4 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges RPD to hold at least one
5 well-publicized community meeting during the period of the pilot to provide updates, share
6 data, gather input, and involve the community in the ongoing efforts to activate UN Plaza and
7 support the Farmers' Market.

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Introduction Form

(by a Member of the Board of Supervisors or the Mayor)



I hereby submit the following item for introduction (select only one):

- 1. For reference to Committee (Ordinance, Resolution, Motion or Charter Amendment)
- 2. Request for next printed agenda (For Adoption Without Committee Reference)
(Routine, non-controversial and/or commendatory matters only)
- 3. Request for Hearing on a subject matter at Committee
- 4. Request for Letter beginning with "Supervisor inquires..."
- 5. City Attorney Request
- 6. Call File No. from Committee.
- 7. Budget and Legislative Analyst Request (attached written Motion)
- 8. Substitute Legislation File No.
- 9. Reactivate File No.
- 10. Topic submitted for Mayoral Appearance before the Board on

The proposed legislation should be forwarded to the following (please check all appropriate boxes):

- Small Business Commission Youth Commission Ethics Commission
- Planning Commission Building Inspection Commission Human Resources Department

General Plan Referral sent to the Planning Department (proposed legislation subject to Charter 4.105 & Admin 2A.53):

- Yes No

(Note: For Imperative Agenda items (a Resolution not on the printed agenda), use the Imperative Agenda Form.)

Sponsor(s):

Subject:

Long Title or text listed:

Signature of Sponsoring Supervisor: