



BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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MEMORANDUM

Date: November 30, 2022
To: Carla Short, Interim Director, Public Works
From:  Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board, Office of the Clerk of the Board
Subject:  Designation of Commemorative Sites; Commemorative Street Plaques -
LEATHER & LGBTQ Cultural District Leather History Cruise (File No. 220888)

On October 18, 2022, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 439-22, sponsored by Supervisors Dorsey, Peskin, Melgar, Preston, and Mandelman and enacted by Mayor London N. Breed on October 28, 2022.

A copy of the Resolution is being submitted to pursuant to Resolution No. 439-22.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Erica Major, Assistant Clerk, at (415) 554-4441 or by email at: Erica.Major@sfgov.org.

cc: David Steinberg, Public Works
Ian Schneider, Public Works
John Thomas, Public Works
Lena Liu, Public Works
Jason Wong, Public Works

1 [Designation of Commemorative Sites; Commemorative Street Plaques - LEATHER & LGBTQ
2 Cultural District Leather History Cruise]

3 **Resolution designating various locations within and near the LEATHER & LGBTQ**
4 **Cultural District in the area bounded by Brannan Street, Third Street, Mission Street,**
5 **12th Street, and Division Street as commemorative sites in recognition and honor of**
6 **the extensive history and contributions of the leather and LGBTQ community in the**
7 **South of Market area; initiating the process set forth in Public Works Code, Sections**
8 **789 et seq. to facilitate the installation of commemorative plaques on the sidewalks**
9 **near these locations to delineate the Leather History Cruise, subject to the submittal of**
10 **all required application materials and the review and approval of the same by Public**
11 **Works and the City Engineer.**

12
13 WHEREAS, The LEATHER & LGBTQ Cultural District was created to preserve,
14 advance, and promote San Francisco's LEATHER & LGBTQ Cultural District as a local,
15 national, and international resource, and as a culturally and commercially enriched
16 neighborhood and district; and

17 WHEREAS, San Francisco's South of Market has been a local and world capital for
18 leather culture since the 1960s, as well as one of the city's most significant and distinctive
19 LGBTQ neighborhoods since the 1950s, with a unique concentration of businesses,
20 institutions, organizations, events, individuals, and artists that has been an integral part of the
21 City's cultural richness, economic prosperity, and historical significance; and

22 WHEREAS, South of Market had long been the west coast center for printing and
23 publishing, and most of San Francisco's gay and leather printers, typesetters, lithographers,
24 and publications were concentrated South of Market, including Drummer magazine, the most
25 important national and international leather publication from 1975 to 1998; and

1 WHEREAS, After intensive police repression in the early 1960s drove gay businesses
2 from the Embarcadero, many began to flow into the South of Market, where suburbanization,
3 deindustrialization, and urban renewal had resulted in many vacant buildings, which quickly
4 became occupied by queer bars, restaurants, and bathhouses; and

5 WHEREAS, South of Market quickly became one of San Francisco’s major LGBTQ
6 areas, in which most of the city’s gay bathhouses were located, as were innumerable bars
7 catering to diverse populations, such as the lesbian bars the Hula Shack and the Baybrick Inn,
8 famous dance bars such as the Stud and the End-Up (featured in “Tales of the City”) and
9 most recently, the drag-focused Oasis; and

10 WHEREAS, The first gay leather bar in the South of Market, the Tool Box, became
11 world famous when a photo of its interior, with a massive mural painted by local artist Chuck
12 Arnett, was featured in a 1964 Life magazine article titled “Homosexuality in America;” and

13 WHEREAS, South of Market became most identified with the emerging leather
14 community in San Francisco when leather bars such as Fe-Be’s, the Ramrod, and the In
15 Between (now the site of the Powerhouse) opened along Folsom Street, starting the formation
16 of a distinctive leather neighborhood; and

17 WHEREAS, By the late 1960’s Folsom Street had already acquired the nickname of
18 “The Miracle Mile” in maps and travel guides of San Francisco, codifying a leather character
19 that expanded dramatically throughout the 1970s, such that by 1980 there were at least forty
20 South of Market bars, baths, shops, and restaurants serving the leather population, and the
21 area had the largest and most dense concentration of leather institutions anywhere in the
22 world; and

23 WHEREAS, Much of leather social life was produced by the leather motor cycle clubs
24 and leather social organizations, which used the physical spaces, buildings, and streets South
25

1 of Market for their meetings, gatherings, and events, and which have engaged in long
2 traditions of raising funds for charitable causes; and

3 WHEREAS, Leather places and groups sparked an explosion of art and iconography,
4 much of it generated by dozens of artists and photographers and sculptors whose work
5 adorned the bars and baths and club insignia, and who were featured in galleries such as
6 Fey-Way, 544 Natoma, 80 Langton, and later, Mark I Chester's studio, as well as in the many
7 art shows that were regularly displayed on the walls of bars such as the Ambush and the
8 Eagle; and

9 WHEREAS, South of Market institutions and personnel were centrally involved in the
10 construction of political organizations, such as the Tavern Guild, which give San Francisco its
11 current queer friendly politics and reputation and have helped mitigate the routine police
12 harassment of LGBTQ individuals and businesses; and

13 WHEREAS, During the AIDS epidemic, using the models of mutual aid practiced by the
14 motorcycle clubs, leathermen became leaders in combating the epidemic, established
15 institutions such as the AIDS Emergency Fund, and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars
16 to provide direct assistance for people with AIDS and HIV; and

17 WHEREAS, Sex educators and AIDS activists from the leather community developed
18 and effectively disseminated some of the earliest and most comprehensive safer sex
19 guidelines and practices; and

20 WHEREAS, Despite the consensus among public health professionals that the gay
21 bathhouses were opportunities to promote safer sex practices, the City was swayed by a
22 campaign that erroneously blamed the bathhouses for the AIDS epidemic, and the City
23 adopted regulations that effectively closed the existing bathhouses and sex clubs in San
24 Francisco, badly damaging the gay and leather economies located in the South of Market and
25 drastically reducing the gay and leather presence in the neighborhood; and

1 WHEREAS, Since the 1960s, South of Market has experienced relentless pressure
2 from the urban renewal and redevelopment projects in and around the Moscone Center and
3 Yerba Buena Complex, which have displaced thousands of residents and small businesses in
4 favor of capital-intensive civic construction and private developments; and

5 WHEREAS, The leather and LGBTQ presence in South of Market continues to be
6 imperiled by the displacement caused by rising rents and land costs resulting from the
7 ongoing economic and physical reconstruction of much of South of Market, particularly the
8 current building boom of high end housing and retail and the escalating competition for
9 commercial space; and

10 WHEREAS, Although the first Folsom Street Fair was founded in 1984 as a protest
11 against the impact of such redevelopment on the South of Market, the Folsom Street Fair
12 evolved into an annual event that is the largest celebration of leather sexuality in the world,
13 drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors to what has become a major international festival,
14 while the smaller and more local Up Your Alley Fair, begun as an AIDS fundraiser in 1985, is
15 also a major tourist destination, and both of these street fairs are vivid and cherished
16 expressions of the leather cultural character of the neighborhood; and

17 WHEREAS, The Western SOMA Citizens Planning Taskforce, established by the
18 Board of Supervisors in 2004, worked for almost a decade, consulting with multiple
19 stakeholders in the area in a collaborative planning process, to formulate a plan for
20 sustainable development that would enhance the existing neighborhood rather than destroy it;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, The Western SOMA Citizens Planning Taskforce's Western SOMA
23 Community Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2013, and the plan included
24 proposals for a Filipino social heritage district (Recognizing, Protecting and Memorializing
25 South of Market Filipino Social Heritage Neighborhood Resources) and an LGBTQ social

1 heritage district (Recognizing, Protecting and Memorializing South of Market LGBTQ Social
2 Heritage Neighborhood Resources); and

3 WHEREAS, The importance of the leather and LGBTQ presence in South of Market
4 has been recognized in the National Park Service LGBTQ Theme Study (titled “LGBTQ
5 America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History”), as
6 well as in the Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History, and in the South of
7 Market Historic Context Statement of the San Francisco Planning Department; and

8 WHEREAS, The commemorative installation known as the Ringold Alley Leather
9 History Walk on Ringold Alley, and the Eagle Plaza, are physical manifestations of the rich
10 leather heritage of South of Market; and

11 WHEREAS, In April 2021, the Board of Supervisors, by unanimous vote, approved
12 Resolution No. 141-21, on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 210223,
13 authorizing the establishment of the LEATHER & LGBTQ Cultural District’s Leather History
14 Cruise and anticipating the future installation of commemorative plaques at various culturally
15 and historically significant sidewalk locations within and near the Leather and LGBTQ Cultural
16 District in the area bounded by Brannan Street, Third Street, Mission Street, 12th Street and
17 Division Street; and

18 WHEREAS, In April 2021, the Civic Design Review Committee of the San Francisco
19 Arts Commission (“Commission”) completed a single-phase review of the “Leather and
20 LGBTQ District Commemorative Plaque Project,” which included the review and approval of
21 the design of the “Leather District Plaque,” a commemorative plaque made of bronze and
22 measuring 18 square inches with a thickness of 3/8 of an inch; and

23 WHEREAS, The District proposes to have the commemorative plaques installed in
24 phases to delineate the Leather History Cruise, depending on the availability of the required
25 funds; and

1 WHEREAS, Following the approval of Resolution No. 141-21, the District's historians
2 have identified additional sidewalk locations that were omitted from Resolution No. 141-21,
3 which are listed below; and

4 WHEREAS, The following businesses and organizations represent historic locations
5 important to the communities represented by the LEATHER & LGBTQ Cultural District, and

6	Address		Businesses and Organizations
7	285	Shipley -	Drummer Magazine; The Sentinel
8	68	4th -	Keystone Room
9	250	4th -	Gay Service Project; San Francisco Clinic
10	500	4th -	Hotel Utah
11	43	6th -	New Crow Tavern; Ginger's Too
12	60	6th -	Frisco Cafe; Frisco Club; Frisco Saloon; Frisco Royale
13	67	6th -	67 Club; Sixth Street Rendezvous
14	83	6th -	Society for Individual Rights
15	205-225	6th -	South of Market; The Glory Hole; The Night Gallery;
16			Nightshift
17	241	6th -	Buzz's South Side Hotel
18	98	7th -	Haven Bar
19	288	7th -	Bay Times; Gauntlet
20	50	8th -	Holiday Inn Civic Center
21	135	8th -	Pimiento Restaurant; Comme Nous; Black House; Cherry
22			Bar; Jungle Music
23	285	9th -	Anon Salon
24	54	10th -	San Francisco AIDS Foundation
25	169	11th -	Fort Help

1	12	Decatur -	Asylum; The 8th Day
2	947	Folsom -	Folsom Gulch Adult Books
3	1052	Folsom -	La Fe Mexican Restaurant
4	1099	Folsom -	Source Gallery
5	1129	Folsom -	Coyote; National Task Force on Prostitution; Victoria
6			Woodhull Foundation
7	1137	Folsom -	Bald Billy's Bath House Billy's Locker Club Hotel
8	1250	Folsom -	National Leather Association International Headquarters
9	1258	Folsom -	The Folsom Street Man
10	1369	Folsom -	Folsom Street Club/Corn Holes; Night Gallery
11	1898	Folsom -	Corner Longhorn Saloon; Folsom Prison
12	1309	Harrison -	Golden Gate Tattooage; Folsom Magazine
13	1550	Harrison -	Warehouse
14	2300	Harrison -	The Leather Shop; Circa Corporation
15	927	Howard -	Auto Motion
16	1360-1380	Howard -	Project One Association; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Substance
17			Abuse Task Force
18	1550	Howard -	Bay Area Reporter; Noe Valley Printing Company
19	33	Hunt -	San Francisco VD Clinic
20	98	Lafayette -	Tavern Guild of SF Tavern Guild Foundation; WR
21			Wholesale Resource
22	74	Langton -	Eighty Langton Street
23	471	Minna -	Citizen News/Guy Strait
24	655	Minna -	Lou Greene Printers
25			

1	1551	Mission -	Cheque Room; Meet Market; Campus; Hair; Upper
2			Warehouse
3	431	Natoma -	Page One; Hanno's in the Alley; The Tempest
4	64	Rausch -	Little Michelle's; The Half-Shell Seafood Bar & Grill
5	10	Rodgers -	M & M Technical Production Pavilion
6	22	Russ -	Citizen News/Guy Strait
7	209	Stevenson -	My Room; Latex Lilly's Saloon
8	735	Tehama -	Phallic Church of San Francisco
9	38	Washburn -	Bunkhouse Hotel

10 WHEREAS, The businesses and organizations identified herein represent a part of the
 11 extensive history and contributions of the leather and LGBTQ community in the South of
 12 Market area of San Francisco; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors, consistent with the Commemorative Street
 14 Plaque Ordinance (Public Works Code, Section 789, et seq.), designates the sidewalks
 15 fronting the street addresses associated with the aforementioned businesses and
 16 organizations to be commemorative sites and portions of the Leather History Cruise, in
 17 recognition and honor of the extensive history and contributions of the leather and LGBTQ
 18 community in the South of Market area of San Francisco; and, be it

19 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors declares its intent to initiate the
 20 process in accordance with the Commemorative Street Plaque Ordinance for the installation
 21 of commemorative plaques on the sidewalks fronting the aforementioned street addresses to
 22 delineate the Leather History Cruise; and, be it

23 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors authorizes the placement of
 24 commemorative plaques on the sidewalks fronting the aforementioned street addresses,
 25

1 following the submittal of all required application materials and approval of the same by Public
2 Works and the City Engineer; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors directs Public Works to take all
4 actions necessary and appropriate to implement the intent of this Resolution; and, be it

5 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors directs Public Works to add the
6 aforementioned locations on the City's official list of commemorative sites effective
7 immediately from the date of passage of this Resolution.

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City and County of San Francisco
Tails
Resolution

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

File Number: 220888

Date Passed: October 18, 2022

Resolution designating various locations within and near the LEATHER & LGBTQ Cultural District in the area bounded by Brannan Street, Third Street, Mission Street, 12th Street, and Division Street as commemorative sites in recognition and honor of the extensive history and contributions of the leather and LGBTQ community in the South of Market area; initiating the process set forth in Public Works Code, Sections 789 et seq., to facilitate the installation of commemorative plaques on the sidewalks near these locations to delineate the Leather History Cruise, subject to the submittal of all required application materials and the review and approval of the same by Public Works and the City Engineer.

October 03, 2022 Land Use and Transportation Committee - RECOMMENDED

October 18, 2022 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Dorsey, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

File No. 220888

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 10/18/2022 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.



Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

London N. Breed
Mayor

10/28/22

Date Approved