

1 [Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Japantown in the Western Addition]

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3 **Resolution celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Japantown in the Western Addition.**

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5 WHEREAS, The first wave of Japanese immigrants arrived in San Francisco in the  
6 1880s and settled in the Western Addition, on the edge of Chinatown, South Park, and in the  
7 South of Market area; and

8 WHEREAS, After the great 1906 earthquake San Francisco’s Japantown, known as  
9 *Nihonmachi*, re-established itself in its current Western Addition location; and

10 WHEREAS, After the earthquake, the Board of Education attempted to segregate  
11 Japanese American students, and this controversy led to President Theodore Roosevelt  
12 negotiating the 1908 “Gentlemen’s Agreement” between the United States and Japan, which  
13 drastically reduced immigration of Japanese laborers; and

14 WHEREAS, The “Gentlemen’s Agreement” did allow immigration of former residents,  
15 parents, wives and children of former residents in the United States, which promoted the  
16 growth of Japanese families, community and the *Nisei*, or second generation, who would  
17 further integrate Japantown into San Franciscan and American culture; and

18 WHEREAS, San Francisco’s Japantown is the oldest in the United States and one of  
19 only three remaining in the United States; and

20 WHEREAS, Japantown is a city within a city with an identifiable main street on Post  
21 Street; major public gathering places such as the Peace Plaza; a commercial core found at  
22 the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center, now known as the Japan Center; and areas with  
23 community and cultural facilities on Sutter Street and the Buchanan Mall; and

24 WHEREAS, Japantown has persevered through such adversities as the Heney-Webb  
25 Alien Land Act, which forbade property ownership by Japanese immigrants, and the unjust

1 incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II who were taken from their  
2 homes to US detention and internment camps from 1942 until 1945; and the razing of half of  
3 the core of Japantown by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency; and

4 WHEREAS, The US Japan Peace Treaty was signed in San Francisco in 1951, making  
5 the City a symbol of reconciliation between the two nations; and

6 WHEREAS, February 19, 1979 was proclaimed Day of Remembrance to  
7 commemorate President's Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order 9066 which set into motion  
8 the eventual removal and incarceration of 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry in 1942, and  
9 to recall the lessons of the Japanese American World War II internment, and to reflect upon  
10 our shared responsibility to protect the rights of all people at all times; and

11 WHEREAS, The Walter-McCarran Immigration and Nationality Act, passed in 1952,  
12 enabled Asian immigrants to become naturalized citizens and allowed first generation  
13 Japanese immigrants, or *Issei*, to become Americans; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1948, 27 blocks of the Western Addition, including much of Japantown  
15 were selected for the A-1 portion of redevelopment, which led to the displacement of a large  
16 number of residences and small businesses; and

17 WHEREAS, The A-2 portion of redevelopment, commenced in 1966, resulted in the  
18 loss of nearly 4,000 units of affordable housing, and spurred the people of Japantown to  
19 organize the Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation (NCDC) and Citizens Against  
20 Nihonmachi Evictions (CANE) to protect Japantown; and

21 WHEREAS, In recent years, Japantown's resilience continues to prevail and adapt in  
22 light of substantive land-use changes and speculative threats as posed by both private and  
23 public interests; and

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1           WHEREAS, Japantown is enjoying a renaissance with the creation of the Japantown  
2 Special Use District by the Board of Supervisors and plans for the new J-Pop Center to be  
3 built on Post Street; and

4           WHEREAS, Two family-run businesses, Benkyodo confectionary store and Uoki Sakai  
5 grocery store, are also celebrating their centennial; and

6           WHEREAS, Japantown provides unique cultural, educational, and commercial  
7 opportunities for San Francisco residents and tourists, and it continues to serve as the  
8 epicenter for Japanese American culture; now, therefore be it

9           RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco  
10 honor San Francisco's Japantown, or *Nihonmachi*, for its contributions to the cultural heritage  
11 of San Francisco on the occasion of its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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