

1 [Initiating Landmark Designation - Alexandria Theatre]

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3 **Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for**
4 **the Alexandria Theatre, at 5400 Geary Boulevard, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 1450,**
5 **Lot No. 048.**
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7 WHEREAS, Under Planning Code, Section 1004.1, the Board of Supervisors may, by
8 Resolution, initiate landmark designation; and

9 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theatre, located at 5400 Geary Boulevard, Assessor's
10 Parcel Block No. 1450, Lot No. 048, is representative of Neighborhood Movie Palaces in San
11 Francisco, known for their bright lights and elaborate character; and

12 WHEREAS, The construction and operation of the Alexandria Theatre was undertaken
13 by the Levin family, owners of San Francisco Theaters, Inc., as part of the family's circuit of
14 San Francisco neighborhood theaters; and

15 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theatre was the Levin family's flagship theater amongst
16 the other neighborhood theaters in San Francisco that were erected, owned, and operated by
17 San Francisco Theaters, Inc.; and

18 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theatre was built in 1923 in the Egyptian Revival
19 architectural style, and designed by one of San Francisco's leading architectural firms, Reid
20 Brothers; and

21 WHEREAS, Reid Brothers, after beginning their career in Illinois, became one of the
22 most successful firms in San Francisco, designing numerous important buildings in San
23 Francisco and California including the Fairmont Hotel, the Cliff House, and many movie
24 theaters in the Bay Area; and
25

1 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theatre was remodeled in 1941 in the Streamline
2 Moderne style by architect Alexander Aimwell (A.A.) Cantin, one of California's first registered
3 architects, and a prominent San Francisco architect with an active career that included design
4 of several other notable movie theaters; and

5 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theatre is a representative and significant example of the
6 work of architectural firm of merit, Reid Brothers, and of architect of merit, A.A. Cantin; and

7 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theater had a special significance for its sheer magnitude,
8 with one of the largest capacities of any neighborhood theater in San Francisco; and

9 WHEREAS, The original 2000-seat interior of the Alexandria Theatre was converted to
10 a three-screen multi-plex in 1976; and

11 WHEREAS, While the Alexandria Theatre was, for much of its life, a second-run
12 neighborhood theater, in the late 1950s it was converted to a first-run, reserved seat operation
13 with several films running for nearly a year or more; and

14 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theatre was constructed within a neighborhood
15 commercial strip, and falls into the period of significance for Neighborhood Movie Palaces as
16 documented in the draft report of San Francisco Neighborhood Movie Theater Non-
17 Contiguous Multiple Property Historic District Context Statement; and

18 WHEREAS, Many of San Francisco's single-screen movie theaters and Neighborhood
19 Movie Palaces have closed or have been converted to other uses in the past few decades
20 and these Neighborhood Movie Palaces are important and unique cultural
21 institutions in San Francisco; and

22 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theatre had served as a beacon to the central and outer
23 Richmond District neighborhoods, drawing in people from around the city to watch a movie
24 and frequent local small businesses; and

1 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theatre was a cultural hub for the Richmond District
2 community, as a central point where neighbors would come to socialize and patronize the
3 Geary Boulevard corridor; and

4 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theatre exhibits and retains many of the character-
5 defining features of a Neighborhood Movie Palace; and

6 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theater was found eligible for listing on the California
7 Register of Historical Resources individually and as part of a historic district in a CEQA
8 evaluation determined by the Planning Department; and

9 WHEREAS, The Alexandria Theatre's physical structure, with blade sign, marquee,
10 chandelier, Egyptian revival motif murals, and the six rounded columns also holds unique
11 architectural and aesthetic interest and value; and

12 WHEREAS, The landmark should preserve generally all of its particular exterior
13 features, including the features described as the blade sign, the marquee, the chandelier, and
14 the murals; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the Board hereby initiates landmark designation of the Alexandria
16 Theatre, built in 1923, and located at 5400 Geary Boulevard; and, be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors requests that the Planning
18 Department prepare a Landmark Designation Report to submit to the Historic Preservation
19 Commission for its consideration of the unique historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest
20 and value of property and existing structure; and, be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors requests that the Historic
22 Preservation Commission consider whether the Alexandria Theatre warrants landmark
23 designation and submit its recommendation to the Board according to Article 10 of the
24 Planning Code.