

1 [Support for the SoMa Pilipinas Gateway Cultural Marker]

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3 **Resolution expressing support for the SoMa Pilipinas gateway design and gateway**
4 **construction at the intersection of Folsom and Russ Streets; and urging the San**
5 **Francisco Arts Commission and the Department of Public Works to work closely with**
6 **the Planning Department and SoMa Pilipinas to build and own the gateway.**

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8 WHEREAS, SOMA Pilipinas was formally recognized by the City and County of San
9 Francisco as the Filipino Cultural Heritage District in April 2016, and designated by the State
10 of California in July 2017; and

11 WHEREAS, A core mission of the cultural district is to increase the visibility and
12 celebrate the contributions of the Filipino community in SOMA, San Francisco, California and
13 the Diaspora, and to develop cultural arts, assets, and creative place-keeping and place-
14 making cultural markers and monuments; and

15 WHEREAS, The SOMA Pilipinas Cultural District does not have any permanent cultural
16 markers that are clearly identifiable and recognizable by the public, as do other communities
17 in San Francisco; and

18 WHEREAS, A combination of ongoing displacement, historically racist planning, and
19 the lack of recognition of the South of Market as a neighborhood with families, children, and
20 seniors has rendered the Filipino community in the South of Market invisible to other
21 residents, workers, and visitors in the city; and

22 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee
23 Report, conducted on behalf of the San Francisco Arts Commission, Human Rights
24 Commission, and Recreation and Parks Department in 2020, recommends that new works
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1 should center voices and stories that have been neglected by the current collection, but are
2 important to the history and identity of San Francisco; and

3 WHEREAS, There are no works in the San Francisco Civic Arts Collection within the
4 South of Market that represent Filipino culture or identity; and

5 WHEREAS, All other historical and Philippine-related monuments in San Francisco are
6 war trophies and celebrations of the American invasion and occupation of the Philippines,
7 such as the Dewey Monument located in Union Square which serves as a tribute to the
8 bloody and exploitative colonial history between the U.S. and the Philippines; and

9 WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors approved unanimously in September 2022 the
10 SOMA Pilipinas Cultural History, Housing, and Economic Sustainability Strategy (CHHESS)
11 report, which was developed through a community process in collaboration with city
12 departments and serves as a roadmap of priorities and strategies for stabilizing and
13 developing the Filipino community; and

14 WHEREAS, The SOMA Pilipinas CHHESS report strategies include City support for
15 cultural district public realm improvements including the creation of monuments such as
16 gateways, and working with the San Francisco Arts Commission and other City Departments
17 to support and maintain community-empowering monuments; and

18 WHEREAS, The selected site of the gateway at Russ and Folsom Streets is within the
19 Youth and Family Special Use District which was created to protect and enhance the health
20 and environment of youth and families, is in proximity to community organizations serving the
21 Filipino community such as Bessie Carmichael Elementary School, Galing Bata - Filipino
22 Education Center, West Bay, and United Playaz, and is across the street from Victoria Manalo
23 Draves Park, a two-acre public open space named after the late SOMA resident and Filipino
24 American Victoria Manalo Draves who is the first woman diver to win two gold medals at the
25 1948 Summer Olympics; and

1 WHEREAS, The site of the proposed SOMA Pilipinas Gateway is a hub for cultural
2 connection and multigenerational community pride through public art works that center the
3 stories of Filipino American community members including: Francesca “ChiChai” Mateo’s
4 incoming Pagsasama Sama Mural on 1048 Folsom (commissioned by SOMA Pilipinas and
5 SOMA West CBD); Franceska Gamez and Cece Carpio’s mural at 1052 Folsom
6 (commissioned by SOMA West CBD), “We Live Here” Utility Boxes by Mel Vera Cruz
7 (commissioned by South of Market Community Action Network), and Polebanners by
8 Anotherwise.Co and Nix Guirre (commissioned by SOMA Pilipinas); and

9 WHEREAS, In 2021-2023, SOMA Pilipinas and SOMA West CBD have completed a
10 total of 7 activations at the Russ and Folsom intersection, as part of the Office of Economic
11 and Workforce Development Alley Activation Grant, to invite community members to
12 reimagine the intersection as a site for community, culture, and joy. Activations include a
13 holiday celebration called SOMA Sings, SOMA Neighborhood Clean Up, SOMA Sunday
14 Streets, a total of three Ethnotours with Bessie Carmichael Middle School Students, Balboa
15 High School Students, and attendees of SF Urban Film Festival’s Our Place in the Park; and
16 an upcoming community mural event in the Fall of 2023; and

17 WHEREAS, In July 2019, SOMA Pilipinas issued a call for qualifications, inviting artists
18 in the community to submit their portfolios. Upon review by the SOMA Pilipinas team and a
19 SOMA Pilipinas Gateway advisory board involving professionals in landscape architecture,
20 placemaking, and commercial interior design (including Gerdo Aquino, Susanna Fracker, and
21 Primo Ordilla), SOMA Pilipinas invited four artists (Michael Arcega, Robin Birdd of
22 Microwaves, and Franceska Gamez) to submit proposals for the SOMA Pilipinas Gateway;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, In July 2021, SOMA Pilipinas presented three gateway design proposals
25 at the Moss St. Block Party organized by SF Parks Alliance and SOMA West CBD, more than

1 a year after the district first publicly released a call for design proposals. Community members
2 selected Franceska Gamez’s Pagmamana proposal and shared that the design highlights the
3 importance of learning the history of our motherland and preserving the unique contributions
4 of Filipinos in San Francisco and California; and

5 WHEREAS, Selected Filipina-American artist, Franceska Gamez has been creating
6 large-scale public murals, fully immersive installations, and sculptures. Her mural work can be
7 seen throughout California, the East Coast, as well as overseas in Europe and Southeast
8 Asia, which includes public artworks commissioned by Asian American Women Artists
9 Association and the SF Arts Commission, SOMA Pilipinas, and the City of Sacramento, and
10 the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency; and

11 WHEREAS, The Pagmamana (Heritage) Gateway Design Proposal is a tribute to the
12 rich history and legacy of Filipinos in the SOMA community and a celebration and reminder of
13 the significant role that the Filipino community has played in shaping the culture and identity of
14 San Francisco and California. The symbols incorporated into the design share Filipino
15 traditions and values that have been passed down from generation to generation; and

16 WHEREAS, In 2022, SOMA Pilipinas conducted a total of 9 formal feedback sessions
17 with Community Advisory Groups which includes 50 community members representing
18 Residents living in SOMA and the Tenderloin, School Communities, Artists, Seniors, Small
19 Business Owners, Community Workers, and Youth within the Filipino community in the South
20 of Market; and

21 WHEREAS, In 2022, SOMA Pilipinas shared the SOMA Pilipinas Gateway design
22 model at multiple community and public events including an online virtual presentation of the
23 proposed Gateway design, FEC Galing Bata’s Filipino American History Month Celebration,
24 UNDISCOVERED Block Party, and the SOMA Pilipinas 6th Anniversary “Art is Power,” and
25 the 20th Annual Parol Lantern Festival; and

1 WHEREAS, Community feedback surveys demonstrated that 84% of respondents
2 shared that they would love to see this district gateway design as a public art piece in the
3 SOMA Pilipinas Filipino Cultural Heritage District and 84.2% of respondents shared that they
4 would be excited to visit the incoming SOMA Pilipinas Gateway with family, friends, and other
5 community members; and

6 WHEREAS, Riz Gache, landscape architect who has worked closely with architects,
7 engineers, city agencies, and contractors on large-scale projects such as Union Square
8 Redesign and the Mission Rock Street Scape Project and, Crissy Field Promenade. Riz
9 Gache is also a community member, who grew up in San Francisco and was a youth client of
10 West Bay. Riz worked closely with Gateway artist Franceska Gamez to conduct site analysis
11 and support with landscaping for the site of the proposed Gateway Design; and

12 WHEREAS, Franceska Gamez and Riz Gache produced a Gateway Design Proposal
13 that includes a +/-45-foot wide by 25-foot tall corten steel arch supported on concrete
14 foundations at each end. The Gateway Design Proposal also includes landscaping plans to
15 ensure the safety of pedestrians to include vehicular safety barriers, various paving surfaces,
16 site lighting, and concrete seat walls; and

17 WHEREAS, Riz Gache consulted with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation
18 Agency (SFMTA) and the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) in consideration of Fire
19 Vehicle Height Clearance, SFFD Turning Radius, and Fire Vehicle Turn Plan (North and
20 South Bound) in collaboration with SFMTA also prepared layout plans with consideration of
21 existing utility and grading plans, provided by the Department of Public Works to ensure the
22 gateway structure does not impede on existing utility lines; and

23 WHEREAS, In November 2022, SOMA Pilipinas contracted with a structural
24 engineering geotech firm to conduct analysis of the Russ and Folsom intersection including
25 soil studies outlining the soil conditions and dictating the footing demand. The Geotech

1 analysis included reviews of geotechnical information for the site and site vicinity, site
2 reconnaissance to check site access subsurface conditions, historic earthquake failures and
3 utility markings, and a preliminary geotechnical report to evaluate different foundation types
4 and the potential impact of liquefaction associated hazards for the proposed project, and Riz
5 Gache pre-submitted a packet to the Department of Public Works, on behalf of SOMA
6 Pilipinas, including renderings of the Gateway Design Proposal; and

7 WHEREAS, SOMA Pilipinas has coordinated with SFMTA to correspond with the
8 incoming Howard and Folsom Streetscapes work, which will include implementing Filipino-
9 themed crosswalk designs at 9 locations, including the Russ and Folsom intersection and the
10 upcoming Howard Streetscape Improvement Plan; and

11 WHEREAS, SOMA West CBD has committed to routine maintenance of the steel
12 structure (including regular inspections for damage or wear, power washing to remove dirt and
13 grime, removal of graffiti, and routine maintenance of the bronze relief; Maintenance for the
14 steel structure would include regular inspections to check for any damage or wear,
15 powerwashing to remove dirt and grime, tightening bolts and fasteners, repairing any
16 damaged or worn parts power-washing the ground and seating, lighting repair to ensure
17 structure is well-maintained and safe. SOMA West also commits to use spray cleaner that
18 breaks down enamel paint that can be used to remove the graffiti, and it can then be wiped or
19 power-washed off. SOMA West commits to routine Maintenance for Bronze Relief which could
20 include hosing off accumulated dust, bird droppings, salts from ice control, and other materials
21 weekly; and

22 WHEREAS, In January 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved the Flower Mart
23 Development Agreement which includes as part of their Developer's Eastern Neighborhoods
24 Infrastructure Impact Fees up to \$300,000 that the developer shall fund the design and
25 complete the construction or a SOMA Pilipinas monument in a public location approved by the

1 Planning Director, unless it is not fully approved and permitted within three years of the
2 effective date of the Development Agreement; and

3 WHEREAS, The initial phase of the Flower Mart Project at Sixth & Brannan Streets is
4 the construction of a new, permanent relocation site for the Wholesale Flower Market at 901
5 16th Street in San Francisco and that the new market at 901 16th Street is currently under
6 construction with an anticipated completion date in 2024. Once the new market is completed,
7 the existing flower vendors at Sixth & Brannan will move into their new, permanent home and
8 the Sixth & Brannan site can be developed, the timing of which will depend on market
9 conditions and other factors; and

10 WHEREAS, In January 2023, SOMA Pilipinas, Franceska Gamez, and Riz Gache has
11 prepared a major encroachment packet to submit to the Department of Public Works for
12 permitting and the SF Arts Commission's Visual Arts Committee for design approval to
13 explore the Planning Director's proposal that the gateway be built and owned by the City; and

14 WHEREAS, For the last ten months, the Planning Director has met with the City
15 Departments including the Planning Department, SF Arts Commission, Department of Public
16 Works, and SFMTA to discuss the City finalizing the design, permitting, building and owning
17 the SOMA Pilipinas Gateway given the structure will be in the public right of way; now,
18 therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors express wholehearted support for the
20 importance of a permanent cultural monument for the Filipino Cultural Heritage District and
21 the robust community-led planning and design process conducted by SOMA Pilipinas for
22 several years; and, be it

23 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urge the Planning Director to
24 continue to lead a coordinated effort between Planning Department, SF Arts Commission,
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1 Department of Public Works, and SFMTA, on prioritizing the approvals, permitting and
2 construction of the SOMA Pilipinas Gateway; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urge the San Francisco Arts
4 Commission, as part of the recommendations of the Monuments report, to partner with SOMA
5 Pilipinas on finalizing and approving the community-led gateway design and to build and own
6 the gateway as part of its Civic Art Collection and to identify and prioritize funding for this
7 project from the Public Arts Trust; and, be it

8 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urge the Department of Public
9 Works to waive any encroachment fees and other permitting cost; and, be it

10 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urge the San Francisco
11 Municipal Transportation Agency to work with SFAC and other public realm departments to
12 include the Gateway as part of the Howard Street and Folsom Street Improvement projects;
13 and, be it

14 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hope that this project can
15 provide a model for the City to advance social and racial equity by producing cultural
16 monuments that lift up the rich history and collective experience, contributions, struggles, and
17 triumphs of people of color and immigrant communities who are an important part of San
18 Francisco's diversity and soul as a City.

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