AMENDED IN COMMITTEE
1/11/24

FILE NO. 231087 RESOLUTION NO.

[Support for the SOMA Pilipinas Gateway Cultural Marker]

Resolution expressing support for a permanent cultural monument for the Filipino Cultural Heritage District; urging the Arts Commission to commission new works that center voices and stories that are not currently reflected by the current collection, such as the voices that reflect Filipino culture and identity; and finding that the SOMA Pilipinas Gateway Project could provide a model for the City to advance social and racial equity by producing cultural monuments that lift up the rich history and collective experience, contributions, struggles, and triumphs of people of color and immigrant communities who are an important part of San Francisco's diversity and soul as a City.

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

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

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

WHEREAS, A combination of ongoing displacement, historically racist planning, and the lack of recognition of the South of Market as a neighborhood with families, children, and

seniors has rendered the Filipino community in the South of Market invisible to other residents, workers, and visitors in the city; and

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, The selected site of the gateway at Russ and Folsom Streets is within the Youth and Family Special Use District which was created to protect and enhance the health and environment of youth and families, is in proximity to community organizations serving the

Filipino community such as Bessie Carmichael Elementary School, Galing Bata - Filipino Education Center, West Bay, and United Playaz, and is across the street from Victoria Manalo Draves Park, a two-acre public open space named after the late SOMA resident and Filipino American Victoria Manalo Draves who is the first woman diver to win two gold medals at the 1948 Summer Olympics; and

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

WHEREAS, In 2021-2023, SOMA Pilipinas and SOMA West CBD have completed a total of 7 activations at the Russ and Folsom intersection, as part of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development Alley Activation Grant, to invite community members to reimagine the intersection as a site for community, culture, and joy; and

WHEREAS, Activations include a holiday celebration called SOMA Sings, SOMA Neighborhood Clean Up, SOMA Sunday Streets, a total of three Ethnotours with Bessie Carmichael Middle School Students, Balboa High School Students, and attendees of SF Urban Film Festival’s Our Place in the Park; and an upcoming community mural event in the Fall of 2023; and

WHEREAS, In July 2019, SOMA Pilipinas issued a call for qualifications, inviting artists in the community to submit their portfolios. Upon review by the SOMA Pilipinas team and a SOMA Pilipinas Gateway advisory board involving professionals in landscape architecture,

placemaking, and commercial interior design (including Gerdo Aquino, Susanna Fracker, and Primo Ordilla), SOMA Pilipinas invited four artists (Michael Arcega, Robin Birdd of Microwaves, and Franceska Gamez) to submit proposals for the SOMA Pilipinas Gateway; and

WHEREAS, In July 2021, SOMA Pilipinas presented three gateway design proposals at the Moss St. Block Party organized by SF Parks Alliance and SOMA West CBD, more than a year after the district first publicly released a call for design proposals; and

WHEREAS, Community members selected Franceska Gamez's Pagmamana proposal and shared that the design highlights the importance of learning the history of our motherland and preserving the unique contributions of Filipinos in San Francisco and California; and

WHEREAS, Selected Filipina-American artist, Franceska Gamez has been creating large-scale public murals, fully immersive installations, and sculptures; and

WHEREAS, Her mural work can be seen throughout California, the East Coast, as well as overseas in Europe and Southeast Asia, which includes public artworks commissioned by Asian American Women Artists Association and the SF Arts Commission, SOMA Pilipinas, and the City of Sacramento, and the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency; and

WHEREAS, The Pagmamana (Heritage) Gateway Design Proposal is a tribute to the rich history and legacy of Filipinos in the SOMA community and a celebration and reminder of the significant role that the Filipino community has played in shaping the culture and identity of San Francisco and California; and

WHEREAS, The symbols incorporated into the design share Filipino traditions and values that have been passed down from generation to generation; and

WHEREAS, In 2022, SOMA Pilipinas conducted a total of 9 formal feedback sessions with Community Advisory Groups which includes 50 community members representing Residents living in SOMA and the Tenderloin, School Communities, Artists, Seniors, Small

Business Owners, Community Workers, and Youth within the Filipino community in the South of Market; and

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

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

WHEREAS, Riz Gache, landscape architect who has worked closely with architects, engineers, city agencies, and contractors on large-scale projects such as Union Square Redesign and the Mission Rock Street Scape Project and, Crissy Field Promenade; and

WHEREAS, Riz Gache is also a community member, who grew up in San Francisco and was a youth client of West Bay. Riz worked closely with Gateway artist Franceska Gamez to conduct site analysis and support with landscaping for the site of the proposed Gateway Design; and

WHEREAS, Franceska Gamez and Riz Gache produced a Gateway Design Proposal that includes a +/-45-foot wide by 25-foot tall corten steel arch supported on concrete foundations at each end; and

WHEREAS, The Gateway Design Proposal also includes landscaping plans to ensure the safety of pedestrians to include vehicular safety barriers, various paving surfaces, site lighting, and concrete seat walls; and

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, SOMA West CBD has committed to routine maintenance of the steel structure (including regular inspections for damage or wear, power washing to remove dirt and grime, removal of graffiti, and routine maintenance of the bronze relief; Maintenance for the steel structure would include regular inspections to check for any damage or wear, powerwashing to remove dirt and grime, tightening bolts and fasteners, repairing any

damaged or worn parts power-washing the ground and seating, lighting repair to ensure structure is well-maintained and safe; and

WHEREAS, SOMA West also commits to use spray cleaner that breaks down enamel paint that can be used to remove the graffiti, and it can then be wiped or power-washed off. SOMA West commits to routine Maintenance for Bronze Relief which could include hosing off accumulated dust, bird droppings, salts from ice control, and other materials weekly; and

WHEREAS, In January 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved the Flower Mart Development Agreement which includes as part of their Developer's Eastern Neighborhoods Infrastructure Impact Fees up to $300,000 that the developer shall fund the design and complete the construction or a SOMA Pilipinas monument in a public location approved by the Planning Director, unless it is not fully approved and permitted within three years of the effective date of the Development Agreement; and

WHEREAS, The initial phase of the Flower Mart Project at Sixth & Brannan Streets is the construction of a new, permanent relocation site for the Wholesale Flower Market at 901 16th Street in San Francisco and that the new market at 901 16th Street is currently under construction with an anticipated completion date in 2024; and

WHEREAS, Once the new market is completed, the existing flower vendors at Sixth & Brannan will move into their new, permanent home and the Sixth & Brannan site can be developed, the timing of which will depend on market conditions and other factors; and

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

WHEREAS, For the last ten months, the Planning Director has met with the City Departments including the Planning Department, SF Arts Commission, Department of Public

Works, and SFMTA to discuss the City finalizing the design, permitting, building and owning the SOMA Pilipinas Gateway given the structure will be in the public right of way; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors express wholehearted support for the importance of a permanent cultural monument for the Filipino Cultural Heritage District; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urge the San Francisco Arts Commission, in furtherance of the recommendations of the Monuments report, to commission new works that center voices and stories that are not reflected by the current collection, such as the voices that reflect Filipino culture and identity; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors finds that the Gateway Project could provide a model for the City to advance social and racial equity by producing cultural monuments that lift up the rich history and collective experience, contributions, struggles, and triumphs of people of color and immigrant communities who are an important part of San Francisco’s diversity and soul as a City.