[Support for the SoMa Pilipinas Gateway Cultural Marker]

Resolution expressing support for a permanent cultural monument and public realm artworks for the Filipino Cultural Heritage District; urging the Arts Commission to commission new works that center voices and stories that are not currently highlighted in the Civic Art Collection, such as permanent and temporary public realm artworks 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 visually uplifting 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 2023, recommends that new monuments and memorials in the Civic Art Collection should center underrepresented voices and stories that 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, The San Francisco Arts Commission is advancing the recommendations of the Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee through a project funded by the Mellon Foundation, to broadly and transparently engage diverse communities who have historically been excluded from discussions regarding the process of commissioning new monuments and memorials; and

WHEREAS, This project will continue with community engagement and artist activations through 2025 and include a comprehensive equity audit of existing monuments and memorials in the Civic Art Collection; and

WHEREAS, The engagement of diverse underrepresented communities will guide the Arts Commission in the commissioning of new works; and

WHEREAS, The Arts Commission is actively doing outreach to the Filipino community for new works being commissioned in the SOMA Pilipinas Cultural District; 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, A bronze plaque contextualizing this conflict and the sacrifices made by the Filipino people in the struggle against the occupying American forces was permanently attached to the base of the Dewey Monument by the Philippine American War Centennial Committee of San Francisco in 2019; 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, 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 a permanent cultural monument and public realm artworks such as the SOMA Pilipinas Gateway given the structure will be in the public right of way; and

WHEREAS, The Arts Commission has provided SOMA Pilipinas representatives with technical assistance to navigate the public art guidelines and the considerations of designing an artwork in the public realm and right of way so that it remains beautiful and well-maintained for years to come; and

WHEREAS, A similar gateway over a road in Los Angeles was designed by its Bureau of Engineering and owned by the City of Los Angeles Public Works which could streamline

the coordination and administrative costs necessitated by its location over a road, and ensure timely maintenance; 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 and Memorials Committee Final Report to commission new works that center voices and stories that are not currently highlighted in the Civic Art 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.