[Administrative Code - Castro Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Cultural District]

Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to expand the boundaries of the Castro Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Cultural District to include the Duboce Triangle neighborhood; and affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act.

NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
Additions to Codes are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
Deletions to Codes are in ~~*strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*~~.
Board amendment additions are in double-underlined Arial font.
Board amendment deletions are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
Asterisks (* * * *) indicate the omission of unchanged Code subsections or parts of tables.

Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

Section 1. Environmental and Land Use Findings.

(a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 250391 and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board affirms this determination.

(b) On November 19, 2025, the Historic Preservation Commission held a duly noticed hearing regarding the effects of this ordinance upon historic or cultural resources, and submitted a written report to the Board of Supervisors as required under Charter Section 4.135. This report is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 250391.

Section 2. Chapters 107 and 107B of the Administrative Code are hereby amended by revising Sections 107.3 and 107B.1, to read as follows:

SEC. 107.3. LIST OF ESTABLISHED CULTURAL DISTRICTS.

The Cultural Districts of the City and County of San Francisco are:

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(g) **Castro Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Cultural District.** The Cultural District shall include the following areas:

(1) The area bounded by *Waller Street to the north between Webster Street and Castro Street; Castro Street to the west between Waller Street and Market Street;* Market Street to the north and west *between Castro Street and Grand View Avenue;* Grand View Avenue to the west *between Market Street and 22nd Street*; 22nd Street to the south between Grand View Avenue and Noe Street; Noe Street to the east between 22nd Street and 19th Street; 19th Street to the south between Noe Street and Sanchez Street; ~~*and*~~ Sanchez Street to the east between 19th Street and Market *Street; Market Street to the south between Sanchez Street and Duboce Avenue; Duboce Avenue to the north between Market Street and Webster Street; and Webster Street to the east between Duboce Avenue and Waller Street*;

(2) The lots along the north side of Market Street between ~~*Castro Street*~~ *Duboce Avenue* and Octavia Boulevard, including the Market Street public right-of-way and bookended by Block 0871, Lot 014 (occupied by the San Francisco LGBT Center as of ~~*2019*~~*2025*) and by Block 3562, Lot 015;

(3) Laguna Street between Market Street and Waller Street, including the public right-of-way only;

(4) The footprint of the 65 Laguna Street building (historically known as Richardson Hall, San Francisco Landmark No. 256) and the footprint of 95 Laguna Street

(known as Marcy Adelman & Jeanette Gurevitch Openhouse Community building as of ~~*2019*~~ *2025*), both located at the northwest corner of Laguna and Hermann Streets in the southeast portion of Block 0857, Lot 002;

(5) Block 3502, Lot 013 located on the west side of Valencia Street between Market Street and Duboce Avenue;

(6) Pink Triangle Park located to the west of the juncture of 17th and Market Streets, immediately adjacent to Block 2648, Lot 001 on the east; and

(7) The triangular area bounded by Market Street to the north; 15th Street to the south; and Church Street to the east.

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SEC. 107B.1. FINDINGS.

The Castro Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer ("LGBTQ") Cultural District (the "District") is a living, breathing, geographic and cultural area with rich political, social, economic, and historical significance to the LGBTQ community. The neighborhood has been recognized worldwide for nearly half a century as a beacon of LGBTQ liberty and an enclave for LGBTQ people to find safety, acceptance, and chosen family. The Castro neighborhood has long drawn new residents and visitors from every corner of the globe who seek out the neighborhood because of its significance as a center of LGBTQ life. The Castro became a global focal point for the development of gay culture, community, and politics in the 1970s, marking a significant step forward in the multigenerational struggle for LGBTQ visibility, civil rights, and equality. This historical background inspires today's struggles to keep the neighborhood's heritage alive and to support community growth and long-term cultural development.

The District embodies a diverse and layered fabric of historical and contemporary LGBTQ experiences, serving as a colorful and dynamic epicenter of queer culture for local residents; a destination for visitors from across the United States and around the world; and a globally recognized source of inspiration for resistance, freedom, and respect for LGBTQ people.

The Castro has deep roots that are embedded in neighborhood sites, institutions, businesses, nonprofits, customs, events, and experiences that reflect local, national, and international LGBTQ communities. Two ~~*recent*~~ historic context statements—the 2016 Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco and the 2017 Eureka Valley Historic Context Statement—identify many LGBTQ structures and sites of local, national, and international historic significance in the Castro area, while also recognizing the long history of the area going back over 2,500 years to the Yalamu tribe of Native Californians. A report by the United States National Park Service titled "LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer History" (2016) likewise identifies numerous LGBTQ historic sites of importance in the Castro neighborhood.

The Castro has historically been a destination for LGBTQ youth from throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, the United States, and the world; they arrive with the hope of finding the love, acceptance, and even safety that has too often been denied in their communities of origin. These youth advance the social justice legacy of the LGBTQ community to promote safe and accessible spaces for all and to ensure the existence of critical social services and leadership development opportunities for youth, such as exists at the Lavender Youth and Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC), located in the Castro. The attraction of young people to the Castro is a forceful reminder that youth, in particular youth of color and transgender and gender nonconforming youth, are an important part of our community deserving of our support and respect.

The Castro neighborhood has been a center of LGBTQ-owned and LGBTQ-friendly small businesses starting as early as the 1950s with Maurice Gerry's beauty salon at 587 Castro Street and staking an unmistakable public claim in 1963 with the opening of the neighborhood's first gay bar, The Missouri Mule, at 2348 Market Street. Such small businesses created public spaces, economic resources, employment opportunities, and cultural assets that enabled the LGBTQ population to grow, thrive, create community, and organize for positive social and political change.

The San Francisco Legacy Business Registry, which recognizes businesses over 30 years old that have made a significant impact on neighborhood history or culture, as of ~~*2019*~~ *2025* lists ~~*twelve*~~ *twenty-five* legacy businesses within or near the District's boundaries, including the Castro Country Club, Cliff's Variety, Moby Dick, Anchor Oyster Bar, Cove on Castro Cafe, Ruby's Clay Studio and Gallery, For Your Eyes Only Optometry, ~~*IXIA, Dog Eared Books,*~~ Beck's Motor Lodge, Rolo San Francisco, Cafe Du Nord, ~~*and Eros,*~~ *Underglass Custom Framing, Castro Village Wine Co., Courtney's Produce, Scarpelli and Associates Physical Therapy, GLBT Historical Society, Castro Nail Salon, PO Plus, San Francisco Bay Times, La Méditerranée, Marcello's Pizza, Thai House Express Restaurant, Academy of Ballet, Maitri Compassionate Care, Cruisin' the Castro Walking Tours, and Yankee Clipper Travel*. ~~*Many additional LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly businesses in the Castro neighborhood are not yet, as of 2019, listed in this registry but are qualified for recognition.*~~

The Castro has been the focal point of San Francisco's LGBTQ political activism since the 1970s, with the Castro Muni station, Harvey Milk Plaza, Jane Warner Plaza, Market Street, and Castro Street serving as gathering places for celebrations, marches, protests, and memorials, including both the candlelight vigil that took place after the assassinations of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk in 1978 and the march in 1979 that

resulted in the White Night Riot, which occurred after the assassin, Dan White, received a lenient sentence.

Supervisor Harvey Milk, the owner of Castro Camera, began his political career on the proverbial soapbox at Castro and Market streets in 1973 and became the first openly gay elected official in California in 1978 and the first Supervisor to represent the Castro after the voters created a system of Supervisorial district elections. *Terminal 1 at the San Francisco International Airport has been named for Harvey Milk in recognition of his historical importance and inspirational life.* During his short time in office, he authored the City's gay rights ordinance as well as the country's first pooper-scooper law, which required dog owners to pick up after their pets. Following Milk's assassination in November 1978, the LGBTQ community consolidated its power by renaming the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club to honor Harvey Milk, by working to elect further openly LGBTQ public officials, and by fighting back against anti-LGBTQ practices. Such activism in the Castro neighborhood helped advance respect for the LGBTQ community in San Francisco and beyond.

The LGBTQ community banded together to find safety in the Castro, because elsewhere they faced violence at the hands of the police, the general public, and numerous hate groups, thus making preservation of LGBTQ culture in the Castro an important part of further lowering the levels of violence, homelessness, addiction, and other disparities that the LGBTQ population faces.

The Castro is an international center for LGBTQ cinema, being home to the art-deco masterpiece Castro Theater, which annually hosts numerous LGBTQ film showings including events for Frameline and the Transgender Film Festival. The Frameline festival traces its roots to informal showings of gay super 8 films projected onto a bedsheet at the apartment of queer filmmaker and impresario Marc Huestis and others at 527 Castro Street in the mid-1970s.

In addition, the Castro neighborhood is an internationally known center of LGBTQ street life and nightlife, including a large number of historic and long-running bars, nightclubs, restaurants, and retail establishments that provide the neighborhood a unique character. Together, this street life and nightlife scene have made the Castro a significant space for a diversity of gender and sexual minorities for many decades even as neighborhood activists confronted racism by organizing movements including the “And Castro For All” campaign of the mid-2000s.

The Castro also has been a neighborhood where different groups within the LGBTQ community have struggled for space, yet came together when faced with the necessity of unity during the AIDS crisis, when many cisgender and transgender women, including many lesbians, came forward to care for sick gay men. Although not historically a neighborhood strongly welcoming to transgender people, the Castro has seen trans activists work to create visibility, including the efforts of Veronika Fimbres and others who successfully fought to have the transgender flag flown at Harvey Milk Plaza.

The Castro has embodied a commitment to creating a greater welcome for all by offering a public space for such events as the Castro Street Fair, San Francisco Pride, the Dyke March, and numerous other cultural events.

Many forms of art have been cultivated in the Castro by the LGBTQ population, giving rise to notable artistic organizations such as the Names Project and its AIDS Memorial Quilt, the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, which has found a permanent home near the Castro on Valencia Street, and the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band. The art form of drag has long flourished in the Castro neighborhood, home to many groundbreaking and celebrated drag shows such as Peaches Christ’s Midnight Mass and Cookie Dough’s Monster Show, as well as groups such as the Cockettes, which launched the career of disco superstar Sylvester.

Books and literature by LGBTQ authors have long found a home in the Castro, the location of such establishments as the Walt Whitman Bookstore (1982–1987), A Different Light Books (1986–2011), and Dog Eared Books, as well as being the setting of much of Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City series, and long-time home to the author.

LGBTQ history has long been celebrated in the Castro, with the neighborhood providing the first home to the GLBT Historical Society archives (1985-1990), serving as the home for the GLBT Historical Society Museum since 2011, and projected as the future space for a full-scale, world-class museum of LGBTQ history and culture. The neighborhood brings together additional LGBTQ history resources and monuments such as the Rainbow Honor Walk and numerous other historical plaques; Pink Triangle Park; the annual pink triangle installation on Twin Peaks to fight against homophobia and intolerance; the Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy, an elementary school with an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum; and the Gilbert Baker rainbow flag at the corner of Castro and Market streets.

Numerous activists and political organizations have formed in and operated out of the Castro, demonstrating the neighborhood's importance as a territory for queer political activism and direct action over the decades since the early 1970s, including such pioneering and influential groups as the Butterfly Brigade, the Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club, the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP/San Francisco and ACT UP/Golden Gate/Survive AIDS), Queer Nation, and Lesbians and Gays of African Descent for Democratic Action (LGADDA).

Numerous LGBTQ-focused and LGBTQ-led nonprofit organizations have thrived in the Castro, including the Shanti Project, LYRIC, and the SF LGBTQ Speakers Bureau. In addition, the Castro has become home to a number of LGBTQ-welcoming religious and spiritual groups and institutions, including the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, the Night

Ministry, the Metropolitan Community Church, Most Holy Redeemer, the Hartford Street Zen Center, and the Grand Central Faerie House among other Radical Faerie centers and houses.

The neighborhood has fostered LGBTQ athletics, including gay softball leagues at Rikki Streicher Field and the world's largest LGBTQ athletic organization, the Federation of Gay Games, which started in and still operates out of the Castro neighborhood.

The Castro has been home at various times to numerous LGBTQ-focused and LGBTQ-owned newspapers, periodicals, and news sources, including the Castro Village Other (1972); Coming Up/San Francisco Bay Times (founded 1978); OUT/LOOK (1988–1992); Electric City TV (1991–1995); and Frontiers Newsmagazine (1994–2005).

The Castro was one of the first neighborhoods in the world to bear the full brunt of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and was one of the first neighborhoods in the world to organize an effective and sex-positive response to the epidemic, thereby making it an internationally important site of homage and commemoration. The AIDS epidemic inspired activist responses in the Castro neighborhood in the 1980s and 1990s led by groups such as Citizens for Medical Justice, the AIDS Action Pledge, and ACT UP/San Francisco, while the federal government ignored the massive health crisis caused by HIV.

The Castro has been home to numerous pioneering HIV/AIDS healthcare, social services, prevention, education, advocacy, and fundraising organizations. These groups helped elaborate the world-renowned San Francisco model of care that marshaled volunteer, nonprofit, foundation, and City resources to respond to the epidemic.

The Castro's beautiful and varied housing stock, including many Victorian homes, provided affordable housing from the 1950s into the 1970s, yet the neighborhood subsequently became a hotbed of real estate speculation and its residents have increasingly fought evictions and economic displacement. The neighborhood has supported many kinds of living situations, from large cooperative homes, to homes for LGBTQ-led families with

children, to community-wide land investment by organizations such as the Queer Land Trust that work to fight displacement.

The Castro neighborhood was one of the first places modern medical marijuana activism emerged in the United States, with Dennis Peron, the architect behind Proposition 64 that made medical marijuana legal in California, organizing and operating out of the Castro for many years and writing the introduction to Brownie Mary's famous marijuana cookbook in the Castro, as well as hosting meetings of the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club in his home to expand political force behind cannabis reform.

The sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s found a place in the Castro, which became home to sex clubs, bathhouses, and other erotic gathering spaces for gay and bisexual men including the Jaguar adult bookstore (1971-2005); the Eros sex club, founded in 1992 as a groundbreaking business promoting safer sex and sex-positive education during the AIDS epidemic; and AutoErotica/Mercury Mail Order founded in 1996 to sell vintage gay erotica.

Community-based health organizations such as the Castro Country Club, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and its brick-and-mortar health centers Strut and Magnet, the SF Therapy Collective, API Wellness, the UCSF Alliance Health Project (formerly the AIDS Health Project), and Lyon-Martin Health Services provide specialized health services to the LGBTQ community in the Castro.

The boundaries of the District extend into parts of the immediately adjacent Hayes Valley neighborhood. This extension recognizes the significance of the LGBTQ heritage of Hayes Valley and of existing LGBTQ cultural organizations in the area such as Openhouse and the San Francisco LGBT Community Center, two vital institutions that contribute to the neighborhood in which they're located, and to the nearby Castro, and that provide critical services to the broader LGBTQ community.

Although the Castro emerged as a gay neighborhood in the 1960s, the support it provided to LGBTQ people often was qualified by such limitations as socioeconomic status, race, age, and gender identity. Because Hayes Valley largely escaped the forces of gentrification into the 2000s, it offered less expensive housing and commercial spaces and retained a vibrant culture accessible to an LGBTQ population of lesser means and greater diversity.

As a result, by the mid-1970s, a sizable contingent of gay people had moved into Hayes Valley, where they began developing local LGBTQ cultural practices and institutions. This visible presence occasionally produced tensions with other residents, yet gay people worked to negotiate a respectful place within the area's diverse populations by forming personal ties with their neighbors and by contributing to the communal life of the neighborhood.

As early as 1966–1967, Hayes Valley already was home to the short-lived Sirporium, a second-hand fundraising shop at 525 Hayes Street run by the Society for Individual Rights, San Francisco's major gay-rights organization of the 1960s. The 1970s saw the opening of such establishments as Dottie's Stardust Lounge, a gay bar at the corner of Hayes and Laguna Streets.

A particularly striking example of LGBTQ community engagement in Hayes Valley was the Lily Street Fair, held on a four-block long alley in the neighborhood from 1981 to 1990, a period coinciding with some of the darkest years of the AIDS crisis. Part block party, part potluck, and part Easter parade, the fair was both a display of fabulous drag and a festive celebration of the community created by residents of the street and their friends.

One of the organizers of the fair was the drag performer known as Lily Street, who was active in the San Francisco Imperial Court, a drag fundraising organization founded in San

Francisco in 1965. She became the court's Absolute Empress XXIII in 1988. Her Hayes Valley neighbor Simeon Traw, who performed at the fair, became Emperor XVIII A.N. in 1990.

One of the longest lived and most significant sites for LGBTQ enterprise in Hayes Valley is 488 Hayes Street, where the gay bar David's House and its adjacent restaurant, David's Garden Café, opened in 1984. The bar became the Overpass in 1986, in turn becoming Marlena's in 1990. For almost 25 years, Absolute Empress XXV Marlena held court there, providing a particular welcome for older gay men and for drag culture. Marlena's was a bastion of the Imperial Court, hosting events that raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for charity.

Hayes Valley also was home to an important institution of the local LGBTQ media during an era when print publications remained a primary means of information exchange and community building: The editorial and business offices of The Sentinel, one of San Francisco's major weekly gay newspapers published from 1974 to 1995, were located at 500 Hayes Street for more than half of the periodical's existence (1983–1992).

The neighborhood likewise supported one of San Francisco's renowned queer photographers: From 1990 to 2000, Daniel Nicoletta created his work in a studio at 320 Fell Street. He not only produced portraits of LGBTQ luminaries there, he also opened his doors for salons, fundraisers, and memorial services. Nicoletta's work during this period notably portrayed activists, drag queens, the transgender and genderqueer community, punks, former prisoners, and others often marginalized by society and even by parts of the LGBTQ community.

In addition to creating uniquely queer cultural and commercial institutions, LGBTQ inhabitants of Hayes Valley have actively joined forces with non-LGBTQ residents to sustain and develop the neighborhood as a home for those whose experience reflects

intersectionalities and inequalities due to their social and economic standing and their race, sexual orientation, gender, and age.

Notably, the former Oak Hill Neighborhood Association, and the larger and ongoing Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association ("HVNA") included significant LGBTQ leadership since their formation. The HVNA took a groundbreaking position by stating a commitment to maintaining neighborhood diversity in its bylaws. LGBTQ people also had prominent roles in the campaign to demolish the Central Freeway after the 1989 earthquake and in the subsequent creation of Octavia Boulevard and Patricia's Green, as well as in advocating development of at least 50% affordable housing on parcels cleared by the freeway removal.

The boundaries of the District encompass only a portion of Hayes Valley, but this inclusion enables organizations throughout the neighborhood to participate in the benefits of the District. This Chapter 107B recognizes the historic importance of LGBTQ people's contribution to Hayes Valley and honors the neighborhood's contributions to LGBTQ culture that have likewise benefitted the adjacent Castro neighborhood, the City at large and society as a whole.

The boundaries of the District also include 170 Valencia Street, home of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus ("SFGMC") and the National LGBTQ Center for the Arts. SFGMC was founded in 1978 and sparked a nationwide and international LGBTQ choral movement after its first public performance at a vigil on the steps of City Hall following the assassinations of Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone. Since then SFGMC has been embedded in the fabric of San Francisco. It has soothed souls in pain and lifted spirits in triumph, and has remained a steadfast beacon of hope. In January 2019, SFGMC announced the establishment of the National LGBTQ Center for the Arts. The Center will create space for LGBTQ artists, composers, librettists, and choreographers to produce, practice, and perform in state of the art facilities. Recording and broadcast studios will allow

for filming and live streaming master classes, interviews, lectures, clinics, and symposia to be shared throughout the world.

The boundaries of the District also include Duboce Triangle, a neighborhood adjacent in both proximity and history to the Castro. Duboce Triangle lies roughly north and northeast of the heart of the Castro, bounded by Castro Street, Market Street and Waller Street. In the 2020 census, Duboce Triangle had the largest concentration of LGBTQ residents in the greater Bay Area.

In the 1970s, when LGBTQ people were beginning to move to the Castro, Duboce Triangle also became a landing place for many members of the community. After the Summer of Love in 1967, gays and lesbians from the Haight moved to Eureka Valley, which included Duboce Triangle at the time – Duboce Triangle was not officially recognized as a distinct neighborhood until 1976. The gays and lesbians bought run-down Victorians in the neighborhood and painted them vibrant colors and created a community that endures to today. Before Harvey Milk set up his camera store in 1972 in the Castro, he lived in Duboce Triangle at 24 Henry Street.

The neighborhood hosted its fair share of sex clubs, bathhouses, adult venues, bars, and LGBTQ businesses. The first lesbian biker bar, Scott's Pit, was in Duboce Triangle from 1970 to 1984. Located at 10 Sanchez Street, the bar hosted women's groups and political organizations including the Lesbian Mothers Union. Other historic LGBTQ businesses in the neighborhood include Naked Grape, Mind Shaft, Rear End, Purple Pickle, Missouri Mule, and Balcony.

In 1987, Issan Dorsey, a teacher at the Hartford Street Zen Center, took in a homeless student dying of AIDS and started Maitri, an eight-bed hospice. Maitri moved to Duboce Triangle in 1997 and as of 2025 still provides healthcare to the LGBTQ community.

LGBTQ businesses in Duboce Triangle as of 2025 include the Harvey Milk Community Center, Beaux, Lookout, The Academy, The Detour, Blackbird, Wooden Spoon, and Café Flore. The planned site of the GLBT History Museum will also be in Duboce Triangle at the intersection of 16th Street, Market Street, and Noe Street, often referred to as the heart of the Castro. Approximately 50% of the

businesses in the Castro Merchants Association are within Duboce Triangle, and the footprint of events, like the Castro Art Walk include galleries and LGBTQ businesses in Duboce Triangle.

The story of the Castro neighborhood and the adjacent areas included in the District continues to unfold. At the same time, San Francisco must recognize and honor the contributions of those who transformed the neighborhood in the past, laying the foundations for its current and future importance to LGBTQ culture.

Section 3. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

Section 4. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles, numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment additions, and Board amendment deletions in accordance with the "Note" that appears under the official title of the ordinance.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DAVID CHIU, City Attorney

By: */s/ Bradley A. Russi*
BRADLEY A. RUSSI
Deputy City Attorney

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