San Francisco Planning

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December 3, 2025

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk
Honorable Supervisor Rafael Mandelman
Board of Supervisors
City and County of San Francisco
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: **Transmittal of Planning Department Case Number 2025-009592PCA:**
Castro Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Cultural District
Board File No. 250391

Historic Preservation Commission Action: **Adopted a Resolution for Approval**

Dear Ms. Calvillo and Supervisor Mandelman,

On November 19, 2025, the Historic Preservation Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance, introduced by Supervisor Mandelman. The proposed ordinance would amend Administrative Code Chapter 107. At the hearing the Historic Preservation Commission adopted a resolution for approval.

The proposed amendments are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c) and 15378 because they do not result in a physical change in the environment.

Please find attached documents relating to the actions of the Commission. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Starr
Manager of Legislative Affairs

cc: Peter Miljanich, Deputy City Attorney
Calvin Ho, Aide to Supervisor Mandelman
John Carroll, Office of the Clerk of the Board

ATTACHMENTS :

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution
Planning Department Executive Summary

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 1503

HEARING DATE: **November 19, 2025**

Project Name:	Castro Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Cultural District
Case Number:	2025-009592PCA [Board File No. 250391]
Initiated by:	Supervisor Rafael Mandelman / Introduced April 15, 2025
Staff Contact:	Alex Westhoff, Current Planning Division Alex.Westhoff@sfgov.org, 628-652-7314
Reviewed by:	Elizabeth Gordon-Jonckheer, Current Planning Division Team Lead elizabeth.gordon-jonckheer@sfgov.org, 628-652-7365

RESOLUTION APPROVING A PROPOSED ORDINANCE THAT WOULD AMEND CHAPTER 107 OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE TO EXPAND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CASTRO LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, AND QUEER (LGBTQ) CULTURAL DISTRICT AND PROIVDE ADDITIONAL DETAILS REGARDING THE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISTRICT; AND AFFIRMING THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT'S DETERMINATION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT.

WHEREAS, on April 15, 2025 Supervisors Mandelman introduced a proposed Ordinance under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter "Board") File Number 250391, which would amend Sections 107.3 and 107B.1 of the Administrative Code to expand the boundaries of the Castro Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Cultural District (hereinafter "Cultural District") and provide additional details regarding the cultural and historical significance of the District;

WHEREAS, The Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter "Commission") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance on November 19, 2025; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Ordinance has been determined to be categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Sections 15060(c) and 15378; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of Department staff and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, all pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the Custodian of Records, at 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400, San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has reviewed the proposed Ordinance; and

MOVED, that the Commission hereby adopts a **recommendation for approval** of the proposed ordinance.

Findings

Having reviewed the materials identified in the preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

The Commission recognizes that the amended findings of the Cultural District ordinance add important information to support the cultural significance of this area.

In keeping with the Commission's Resolution No. 1127 Centering Preservation Planning on Racial and Social Equity, the Commission finds that the proposed amendments would help to safeguard the Castro and Duboce Triangle LGBTQ community and its cultural assets and further racial and social equity for their community in multiple ways, including increasing Department knowledge of Castro and Duboce Triangle LGBTQ history and increased opportunities for meaningful engagement.

The Commission recognizes that San Francisco's cultural diversity is integral to the City fabric and is what helps make San Francisco a desirable location for living, working and recreating.

The Commission recognizes that cultural heritage is the expression of a way of living. It is developed by a community through objects, beliefs, traditions, practices, artistic interpretation, and significant places. It manifests itself in tangible and intangible elements passed through generations. Examples of these elements include buildings, plazas, crafts, art, festivals, processions, protests, businesses, and other institutions. Losing any of these elements diminishes a community's cultural integrity. Preserving these unique cultural elements requires distinct strategies according to each community's needs in partnership with local government.

The Commission recognizes that during periods of rapid change in the City, cultural districts can help preserve and enhance indispensable elements of the City's fabric.

The Commission recognizes that due to the shared cultural significance of the Castro and Duboce Triangle neighborhoods, an expansion of the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District boundaries to include Duboce Triangle is merited.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission hereby ADOPTS A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL of the proposed Ordinance as described in this Resolution.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on November 19, 2025.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Cox, Tsern Strang, Baroni, Baldauf, Vergara, Foley, Matsuda

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ADOPTED: November 19, 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE AMENDMENT

HEARING DATE: November 19, 2025

Project Name:	Castro Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Cultural District
Case Number:	2025-009592PCA [Board File No. 250391]
Initiated by:	Supervisor Rafael Mandelman / Introduced April 15, 2025
Staff Contact:	Alex Westhoff, Current Planning Division Alex.Westhoff@sfgov.org, 628-652-7314
Reviewed by:	Elizabeth Gordon-Jonckheer, Current Planning Division Team Lead elizabeth.gordon-jonckheer@sfgov.org, 628-652-7365
Environmental Review:	Not a Project Under CEQA

RECOMMENDATION: **Adopt a Recommendation for Approval**

Administrative Code Amendment

The proposed Ordinance would amend Chapter 107 of the Administrative Code to expand the boundaries of the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District (Cultural District) and provide additional details regarding the cultural and historical significance of the Cultural District.

The Way It Is Now:

1) **Boundaries**
Cultural District boundaries are generally encompassed by Market Street to the north and west, 22nd Street to the south and Noe Street to the east. The district also includes specific areas along the south and north sides of Market Street between Noe Street and Octavia Boulevard.

2) **Cultural Significance**
Administrative Code Section 107B.1 currently lists findings supporting the cultural significance of the Castro LGBTQ community within the existing Cultural District boundaries.

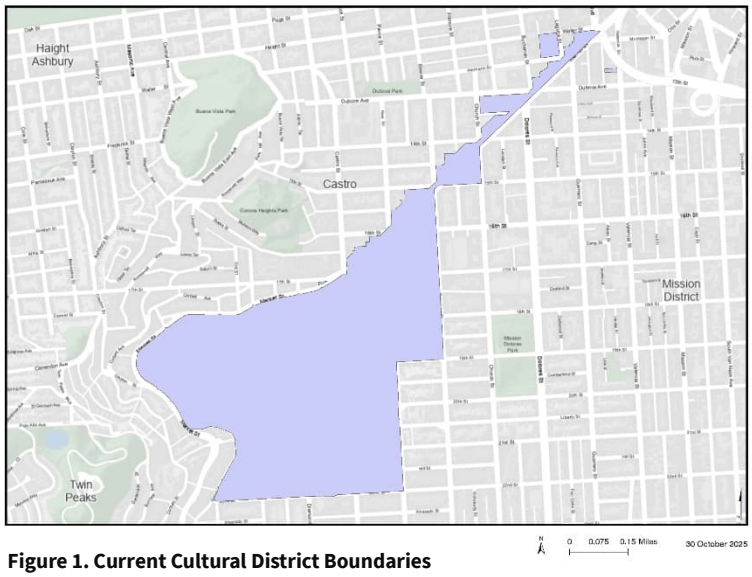

Figure 1. Current Cultural District Boundaries

The Way It Would Be:

1) **Boundaries**
Cultural District boundaries would be amended to include Duboce Triangle, in addition to the existing boundaries.

2) **Cultural Significance**
Administrative Code Section 107B.1 would be amended to add additional findings, including findings related to the LGBTQ historical significance of the Duboce Triangle neighborhood.

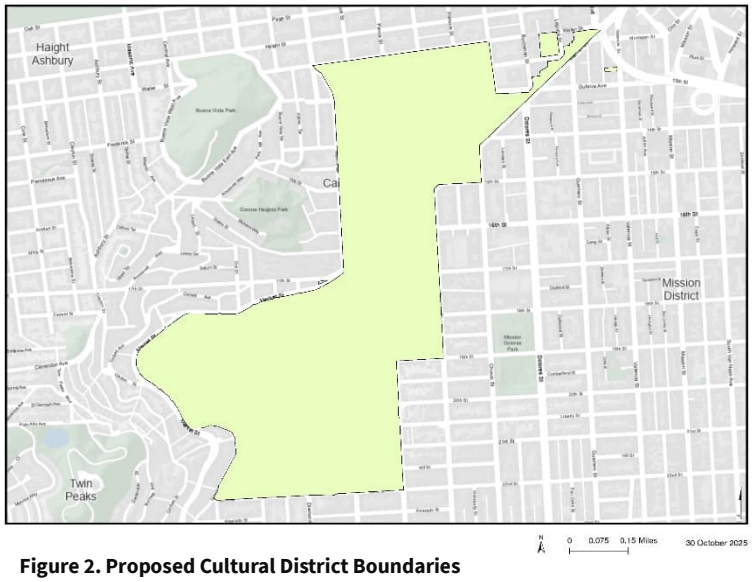

Figure 2. Proposed Cultural District Boundaries

Background

The ordinance first establishing the Cultural District was passed July 12, 2019 [Board File No. 190389]. This ordinance [Board File No. 250391] expands the boundaries of the Cultural District to include the historically rich and culturally vibrant Duboce Triangle neighborhood.

Issues and Considerations

Boundary Description

Per the Administrative Code, "Cultural District shall mean a geographic area or location within the City and County of San Francisco that embodies a unique cultural heritage because it contains a concentration of cultural and historic assets and culturally significant enterprise, arts, services, or businesses, and because a significant portion of its residents or people who spend time in the area or location are members of a specific cultural or ethnic group that historically has been discriminated against, displaced, and oppressed." This amendment would expand the boundaries to include the Duboce Triangle area, given its large concentration of LGBTQ residents, as well as strong historical associations with the Castro LGBTQ community. This is demonstrated in the revised ordinance findings, which cite specific events, businesses, institutions, and people specific to Duboce Triangle, but with close ties to Castro LGBTQ history. While there are no size requirements for cultural districts, the increased footprint would expand the Cultural District's geographic jurisdiction which may support additional community stabilization and cultural heritage preservation efforts. The cultural district program does not automatically confer any land use controls, but zoning changes could be recommended as strategic tools to encourage future development that is compatible with the Cultural District's goals.

Expanded Findings

Historic preservation professionals typically rely on historic contexts when evaluating the cultural and historical significance of properties. The draft ordinance includes additional information about Duboce Triangle's LGBTQ history, including details on associated significant people, businesses, events and trends. This information is of critical importance for ongoing Planning Department efforts including the Citywide Cultural Resources Survey and the Landmark Designation Program. These efforts seek to further identify and designate properties associated with underrepresented communities, including San Francisco's LGBTQ communities. Having this history documented in the ordinance helps provide Planning Department staff with a context to evaluate properties in Duboce Triangle for their LGBTQ significance. Ultimately this could lead to more identified eligible historic properties and/or city landmarks with this association.

Community Stabilization

In December 2024 the Cultural District completed their *Cultural History, Housing, and Economic Sustainability Strategies* Report (CHHESS Report). Paramount to the CHHESS Report are community stabilization goals and strategies under the categories of Heritage Recognition & Preservation; Arts & Culture; Cultural Humility & Cultural Competence; Economic & Workforce Development; Land Use: Place-Keeping & Placemaking; and Housing and Tenant Protections.

The boundary expansion would not add, remove or amend CHHESS Report strategies. Expanding the Cultural District's boundaries however would provide greater geographical jurisdiction which relevant goals and strategies could be applied to, specifically the Duboce Triangle neighborhood which historically and currently has had a sizeable concentration of LGBTQ residents.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

Understanding the benefits, burdens and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed amendments provide is part of the Department's Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor's Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which requires all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The proposed amendments would help to safeguard the Castro and Duboce Triangle LGBTQ community and its cultural assets and further racial and social equity in multiple ways. The ordinance would encourage engagement by the Planning Department with the community during the review of planning projects within the expanded boundary. This engagement would help to daylight and address the concerns of the Castro and Duboce Triangle LGBTQ community, including its most vulnerable residents who have historically been excluded from decisions affecting its people's wellbeing. Goals and strategies relevant to community stabilization and place-keeping could be applied towards a broader geographic jurisdiction, including Duboce Triangle. The boundary expansion and narrative corrections and clarifications also more accurately convey the cultural significance of this area and the LGBTQ history of Duboce Triangle associated with the Castro neighborhood. This accuracy is especially important given the Citywide Cultural Resources Survey and Landmark Designation Program which seek to document and designate additional properties with underrepresented community associations to better uplift their histories. The revised ordinance will facilitate an expansion of the City's knowledge about this important cultural group. This better understanding may ensure more equitable treatment of its people and significant places in the future.

Implementation

The Department has determined that this ordinance will not impact current implementation procedures.

Recommendation

The Department recommends that the Commission ***adopt a recommendation for approval*** of the proposed Ordinance and adopt the attached Draft Resolution to that effect.

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recognizes that the amended findings of the Cultural District ordinance add important information to support the cultural significance of this area.

In keeping with the Historic Preservation Commission's Resolution No. 1127 Centering Preservation Planning on Racial and Social Equity, the Department finds that the proposed amendments would help to safeguard the Castro and Duboce Triangle LGBTQ community and its cultural assets and further racial and social equity for their community in multiple ways, including increasing Department knowledge of Castro and Duboce Triangle LGBTQ history and increased opportunities for meaningful engagement.

The Department recognizes that San Francisco's cultural diversity is integral to the City fabric and is what helps make San Francisco a desirable location for living, working and recreating.

The Department recognizes that cultural heritage is the expression of a way of living. It is developed by a community through objects, beliefs, traditions, practices, artistic interpretation, and significant places. It manifests itself in tangible and intangible elements passed through generations. Examples of these elements include buildings, plazas, crafts, art, festivals, processions, protests, businesses, and other institutions. Losing any of these elements diminishes a community's cultural integrity. Preserving these unique cultural elements requires distinct strategies according to each community's needs in partnership with local government.

The Department recognizes that during periods of rapid change in the City, cultural districts can help preserve and enhance indispensable elements of the City's fabric.

The Department recognizes that due to the shared cultural significance of the Castro and Duboce Triangle neighborhoods, an expansion of the Cultural District boundaries to include Duboce Triangle is merited.

Required Commission Action

The proposed Ordinance is before the Commission so that it may adopt a recommendation of approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications.

Environmental Review

The proposed amendments are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2) and 15378 because they do not result in a physical change in the environment.

Public Comment

As of the date of this report, the Planning Department has not received any public comment regarding the proposed Ordinance.

ATTACHMENTS:

Exhibit A: Draft Historic Preservation Commission
Exhibit B: Resolution Board of Supervisors File No. 250391