

1 [Urging the Establishment of the San Francisco African-American Freedom Trail]

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3 **Resolution urging the Department of Public Works to designate the public right-of-way**
4 **between Fort Mason and Visitacion Valley as eligible for installation of commemorative**
5 **plaques, pursuant to Public Works Code, Section 789.2(a), in order to identify and mark**
6 **points of interest along of the African-American freedom trail.**

7
8 WHEREAS, It is essential that the significant contributions, culture and history of San
9 Francisco's African American population be recognized and highlighted; and

10 WHEREAS, A trail has been identified by the Carlton B. Goodlett Institute from the
11 northernmost part of San Francisco to the southernmost part to recognize the significant and
12 globally important contributions of the African-American freedom struggle in San Francisco
13 from the 1800s through the United San Francisco Freedom Movement; and

14 WHEREAS, The trail will be known as the African-American Freedom Trail, consistent
15 with similar trails in 30 states across the United States and in other major metropolitan areas.
16 However, it would be the first such trail in the Western states; and

17 WHEREAS, Five African-American organizations founded in 1852 are still active today
18 Third Baptist Church, Bethel A.M.E., First A.M.E. Zion, Hannibal Lodge No. 1 and Victoria
19 Lodge No. 3, A 2012 scholarly conference at each of those institutions established their
20 historical significance; and

21 WHEREAS, Captain William Alexander Leidesdorff and James Douglass have made
22 important contributions to the geography and built environment of Yerba Buena and the
23 establishment of civil society in San Francisco; and

24 WHEREAS, San Franciscans played a catalytic and practical role in the development
25 of the Emancipation Proclamation through the activities of black and white abolitionists in the

1 National Underground Railroad, described in Public Law 105-203 as the most important social
2 movement of the 19th century; and

3 WHEREAS, The abolitionist movement turned its attention in the late 19th century to
4 ending segregation in transportation and public accommodations, obtaining the right to vote
5 and the end of school segregation; and

6 WHEREAS, The integration of the labor movement nationally occurred in San
7 Francisco through the initiatives of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, and
8 the speech of A. Philip Randolph for the recognition of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car
9 Porters by the American Federation of Labor at the Hotel Whitcomb in 1935 and the role of
10 the San Francisco NAACP in the integration of the workforce of the National Youth
11 Administration; and

12 WHEREAS, Dr. Howard Thurman, W.E.B. DuBois, and Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett
13 mentored and welcomed African liberation movement leaders to the opening conference of
14 the United Nations as local families hosted them for the duration of the sessions, creating
15 enduring ties between the anti-colonial movement and local leaders; and

16 WHEREAS, New migrants in the 1940s opened war industry jobs at the Hunters Point
17 Naval Shipyard, ended auxiliary unions, utilized the Fair Employment Practices Committee to
18 establish standards in equal opportunity, organized the Church-Labor Coalition and created
19 pioneering middle class neighborhoods through the financial resources assembled in
20 Transbay Savings and Loan and other black-owned lenders; and

21 WHEREAS, African-American scientists and medical practitioners in San Francisco
22 broke through professional barriers and devoted their resources to the broader civil rights
23 struggle by providing medical services, business investment, and led such organizations as
24 the Bay Area Urban League and San Francisco NAACP; and

1 WHEREAS, The popularization of African-American literature to mass audiences was
2 hastened by the books of local writers and filmmakers such as Melvyn Van Peebles, Maya
3 Angelou, Ernest Gaines and Alex Haley; and

4 WHEREAS, There are more than 150 current markers, works of public art, museums
5 and streets recognizing the accomplishments of African-Americans in San Francisco; and

6 WHEREAS, There are multiple public benefits to be realized from the African-American
7 Freedom Trail and these attractions are little known to visitors and even to most residents;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, To visually communicate the significance of centrality of African-American
10 contributions to the development of San Francisco, California and the United States,
11 permanent plaques should be placed at strategic points of view along the trail; and

12 WHEREAS, The Department of Public Works should work to with community groups
13 for an inclusive implementation of the African- American Freedom trail; and

14 WHEREAS, Public Works Code, Section 789.2 was developed to provide a procedure
15 for the City to authorize the installation and placement of such plaques; and

16 WHEREAS, There is planned to be approximately 400 of such plaques installed in
17 public rights of way or private property along the African-American Freedom Trail throughout
18 San Francisco, the design and composition of which will be subject to review by the
19 Department of Public Works and the Board of Supervisors; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors, pursuant to Public Works Code Section
21 789.2 does hereby designate the public right of way existing in the areas to comprise what will
22 be known as the African-American Freedom Trail; and, be it

23 FURTHER RESOLVED, That along the public rights of way in the area known as the
24 African-American Freedom Trail, commemorative plaques designating significant and unique
25 events or periods in San Francisco history may be installed and maintained.