

1 [Establishing SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District in San Francisco]

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3 **Resolution establishing the SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District in the**  
4 **City and County of San Francisco.**

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6 WHEREAS, The South of Market neighborhood (“SoMa”) is home to the largest  
7 concentrations of Filipinos in San Francisco and is a cultural center of the regional Filipino  
8 community; and

9 WHEREAS, The Filipino community has deep roots that are embedded within the  
10 institutions, events and experiences of the Filipino community living in SoMa; and

11 WHEREAS, Filipino culture is a critical part of the SoMa community’s diversity, strength  
12 and resilience; and

13 WHEREAS, According to the 2010 Census, the Filipino population has grown to  
14 become the largest Asian American population in the state, totaling 1,474,707 persons, with  
15 43% of all Filipinos in the U.S. live in California; and

16 WHEREAS The City and County of San Francisco is known to be one of the most  
17 diverse population of immigrants in the nation, having certified Tagalog as its third official  
18 language in 2014, and according to the 2010 Census there are 36,347 Filipinos in the City of  
19 which 5,106 reside in District 6 clustered in the SoMa Pilipinas area; and

20 WHEREAS, SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District (hereinafter "SoMa  
21 Pilipinas") is home to Filipinos who have been an integral part of the City's cultural richness,  
22 economic prosperity and historical significance; and

23 WHEREAS, The boundaries of the SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District  
24 shall be the area bound by 2nd Street to the East, 11th Street to the West, Market Street to  
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1 the North and Brannan Street to the South, as identified in the Western SoMa Community  
2 Plan which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2011; and

3 WHEREAS, Additionally, SoMa Pilipinas shall include the I-Hotel, Gran Oriente, Rizal  
4 Apartments, the Iloilo Circle building, and surrounding areas including Rizal Street and Lapu  
5 Lapu Street, because of the historic and cultural significance associated with these buildings  
6 and areas; and

7 WHEREAS, SoMa Pilipinas' boundary demarcates the area with the highest visibility of  
8 Filipino cultural landmarks including the San Francisco Filipino Cultural Center and the  
9 Bayanihan Cultural Center, businesses, institutions, residences, places of worship, buildings,  
10 activities, organizations including Filipina Women's Network, Filipino Community Center,  
11 kularts, Keanry Street Workshop, Veterans Equity Center, West Bay Pilipino Center and  
12 important Filipino cultural activities including the FAAE/Pistahan Parade and Festival, the  
13 Parol Festival, Kulinarya and the New Filipino Cinema at Yerba Buena; and

14 WHEREAS, SoMa is today home to such landmarks as Bessie Carmichael  
15 School/Filipino Education Center, the nation's first and only elementary school with a  
16 curriculum in the Filipino language, , Victoria Manalo Draves Park, the first park named after a  
17 Filipino American Olympic champion, the Gran Oriente Filipino Masonic Temple, the seven-  
18 story Lipi Ni Lapu Lapu mural at the San Lorenzo Luis Center and several streets named for  
19 important figures in Filipino history including Bonifacio, Lapu Lapu, Mabini, Rizal, Tandang  
20 Sora, and Bindlestiff Studio, the only permanent community-based performing arts venue in  
21 the nation dedicated to showcasing emerging Filipino American and Filipino artists; and

22 WHEREAS, Filipino immigration patterns to San Francisco are rooted in the conquest  
23 and subsequent colonization of the Philippines by the United States in 1898, the American  
24 colonial regime in the Philippines from 1899-1946, and ongoing, often unequal and imperialist  
25 US-Philippines relations from 1946 to present; and

1           WHEREAS, U.S. Immigration policies intentionally caused waves of immigration of  
2 Filipinos to support various growing U.S. industries, including immediately after the Philippine-  
3 American War (1899-1913); and

4           WHEREAS, According to the 2013 San Francisco Filipino Heritage Addendum to the  
5 South of Market Historic Context Statement, the first wave of Filipino immigration to the United  
6 States can be traced directly to the Spanish-American War when San Francisco's Presidio  
7 served as the principal port of embarkation for soldiers headed to the Philippines; and

8           WHEREAS, after the war, under the US government's Pensionado Program, hundreds  
9 of Filipino students attended colleges and universities in the San Francisco Bay Area and in  
10 Northern California; and

11           WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Sugar Planter's Association heavily recruited thousands of  
12 Filipino workers to work on Hawai'ian plantations beginning in 1906, and after unsuccessful  
13 strikes protesting their labor conditions, thousands migrated to the mainland to settle on the  
14 West Coast and the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1910s and 1920s; and

15           WHEREAS, these students and workers were followed by thousands of Filipino  
16 immigrants who came directly to California in the 1920s and 1930s, many of whom were  
17 aspiring students, most of whom found work as Merchant Marines, on ships, and on farms,  
18 canneries, and in the service sector in San Francisco and Northern California; and

19           WHEREAS, San Francisco served as a principal port for these men arriving in the  
20 United States; and

21           WHEREAS, Many Filipino immigrants found employment in San Francisco's service  
22 sector as bellhops, dishwashers, servants and cooks; and

23           WHEREAS, A Filipino enclave of bachelor men known as Manilatown developed  
24 adjacent to Chinatown; and

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1           WHEREAS, Despite the passage of the United States Immigration Act of 1924 which  
2 barred Asian immigration, Filipinos continued to be aggressively recruited as a source of  
3 cheap labor because Filipinos were classified as United States Nationals, not aliens and were  
4 therefore exempt from the provisions of the Act; and

5           WHEREAS, The Filipino population in California rose from 2,700 in 1920 to over  
6 20,500 in 1930 resulting in the formation of numerous Filipino social support organizations in  
7 San Francisco; and

8           WHEREAS, Filipinos experienced racial segregation and violent and brutal anti-Filipino  
9 sentiment in San Francisco and nationwide, resulting in the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act which  
10 gave the Philippines independence but re-classified Filipinos as aliens and restricted entry to  
11 50 per year; and

12           WHEREAS, During the Second World War, thousands of Filipino men volunteered for  
13 service, and some 16,000 Filipinos living in California obtained U.S. citizenship; and

14           WHEREAS, the 1946 U.S. Bases Agreement between the U.S. Military and the  
15 Philippines facilitated the recruitment of thousands of Filipino men into the U.S. Navy,  
16 thousands of whom settled in San Francisco and the larger Bay Area after World War II; and

17           WHEREAS, The Immigration Act of 1965 was responsible for the second great wave of  
18 Filipino immigration, when 20,000 Filipinos were allowed to enter the United States each year,  
19 along with family members of Filipinos who were already U.S. citizens, and

20           WHEREAS, During the 1960s the number of Filipinos living in San Francisco roughly  
21 doubled from 12,300 to 24,700 residents; and

22           WHEREAS, Many Filipino immigrants moved to SoMa because of its inexpensive rents  
23 and proximity to service sector jobs; and

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1           WHEREAS, By 1970, Filipinos were the largest ethnic group in the SoMa, and the San  
2           Francisco Oakland metropolitan area had the largest population of Filipinos of any  
3           metropolitan area in the continental United States; and

4           WHEREAS, Other social and economic forces including the creation of the Yerba  
5           Buena Redevelopment area which demolished approximately 10,000 residential units and 700  
6           businesses and the Fillmore/Western Addition Redevelopment area which demolished  
7           another Filipino residential enclave led to the decline of Filipinos living in the South of Market  
8           and Western Addition; and

9           WHEREAS, SoMa continues to be home to one of the highest concentrations of  
10          Filipinos in San Francisco, with multi-generational Filipino households in houses, apartment  
11          buildings and residential hotels nestled within the alleys and along the main streets of the  
12          neighborhood; and

13          WHEREAS, From the span of 1970's to 1990's, a significant number of Filipino arts  
14          facilities, retail businesses, streets and community-based organizations were established in  
15          SoMa; and

16          WHEREAS, After 1990, with the amendment to the Immigration Nationality Act,  
17          (IMMACT90) tens of thousands of Filipino World War II Veterans immigrated to the United  
18          States seeking recognition and benefits, thousands many of whom moved to San Francisco,  
19          specifically in the SoMa and other nearby areas; and

20          WHEREAS, To date, the surviving Filipino WWII Veterans still await full recognition and  
21          equity; and

22          WHEREAS, Without proper support and appropriate and timely planning, SoMa  
23          Pilipinas - its residents, businesses, arts, community-based organizations, places of worship,  
24          and other cultural markers are subject to the threat of displacement given the current market  
25          forces that are driving up housing and commercial rents; now, therefore, be it

1           RESOLVED That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco  
2 (hereinafter "the Board") establishes SoMa Pilipinas-- Filipino Cultural Heritage District  
3 preserve and further develop SoMa Pilipinas as the regional center of Filipino culture and  
4 commerce, recognize the historical and present contributions of the community and  
5 neighborhood, to stabilize Filipino residents, business and community-serving institutions;  
6 and, be it

7           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Department shall work with the SoMa  
8 Pilipinas Working Group consisting of members of the community representing the following  
9 sectors: arts and culture, workers, business, schools, affordable housing, community  
10 advocacy and land use, services, and city department and other local agency staff to develop  
11 a strategic and implementation plan to set policies that promote community development and  
12 stabilization, and increase the presence and visibility of the district; and, be it

13           FURTHER RESOLVED, These city departments and other agencies shall include but  
14 not limited to, the Planning Department, Office of Economic & Workforce Development,  
15 Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development, Grants for the Arts, San Francisco Arts  
16 Commission, Department of Human Service/Human Service Agency, Department of Aging  
17 and Adult Services, Department of Children, Youth and their Families, Department of Public  
18 Health, Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure, Department of Building Inspection,  
19 Department of Public Works, Entertainment Commission, Recreation and Park Department,  
20 and San Francisco Unified School District; and, be it

21           FURTHER RESOLVED, That such strategic plan for SoMa Pilipinas shall be developed  
22 by the Planning Department and submitted to the Planning Commission and Board of  
23 Supervisors within 6 months of adoption of this resolution; and, be it

24           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board commends the effort of the Filipino community  
25 in working toward the creation of SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District including

1 the monumental work of Filipino-American Development Foundation (FADF) in spearheading  
2 this effort in conjunction with many other individuals and community organizations to form  
3 district that will contribute to the sustainability, cultural visibility, vibrancy and economic  
4 opportunity for Filipinos in the City and County of San Francisco.

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