

1 [Recognizing the Portola as San Francisco’s Garden District - Supporting the Portola Green
2 Plan]

3 **Resolution recognizing the Portola neighborhood as San Francisco’s Garden District**
4 **and supporting the implementation of the Portola Green Plan.**

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6 WHEREAS, The Portola is a special neighborhood in the southeastern part of San
7 Francisco bordered by San Bruno Avenue and the 101 Freeway to the east, Marshall Street to
8 the south, University Street to the west, and the 280 Freeway to the north; and

9 WHEREAS, The Portola was once a primary source of cut flowers for the City and
10 widely known as “San Francisco’s Garden,” with flowers grown in open fields and in many
11 family-owned commercial greenhouses; and

12 WHEREAS, The Portola aided in relief efforts after the devastation of the 1906
13 Earthquake by providing agricultural resources, such as vegetables and meats, and later a
14 home for many of those relocated from other parts of the city; and

15 WHEREAS, Although the Portola of today is overwhelmingly residential and very few
16 physical markers of its agricultural history remain, some landmarks have persisted, including:
17 the original Alemany Farmers Market, the University Mound Nursery greenhouses at 770
18 Woolsey Street, which are the last standing family-owned commercial greenhouses in San
19 Francisco, and a historic windmill once used to draw up groundwater to irrigate crops; and

20 WHEREAS, The Portola’s unique environment continues to make it an ideal location
21 for agricultural and horticultural activity; the peaks of McLaren Park create a natural fog break
22 giving the community a sunny climate, a natural watershed in Yosemite Creek which flows
23 through the Portola continues to feed plant growth and enrich the soil, and residential parcels
24 tend to have large rear yards protected from wind and ideal for gardening; and

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1 WHEREAS, The Portola prides itself on being San Francisco’s Garden District based
2 on a vibrant urban-agricultural heritage, an identity that stems from a rich history of
3 commercially operating greenhouses as well as current community-driven efforts such as the
4 Portola Garden Tour as well as the SF Bee-Cause bee farm, a new pocket park at the
5 terminus of Burrows Street, and a multitude of public works reflecting the Portola’s rich
6 agricultural history; and

7 WHEREAS, The *Portola Garden Tour* which led the neighborhood in publicly and
8 proudly rediscovering its Garden District identity is celebrating its tenth consecutive annual
9 tour this September 24, 2016, and is now joined in this neighborhood community-building and
10 resilience work by other notable Portola organizations, including the *SF Bee-Cause* bee farm
11 which creates educational opportunities and habitat for pollinators, *Help McLaren Park* which
12 advocates for increased investment in public green space, *Goettingen Neighbors Group* which
13 beautifies the public realm, *The Greenhouse Project* working to transform the City’s last
14 standing historic greenhouses into a vibrant urban farm and community asset, and the *Portola*
15 *Neighborhood Association*, which celebrates community identity through murals and
16 maintenance of green spaces; and

17 WHEREAS, In 2014, diverse Portola residents and stakeholders, including
18 representatives of the Portola Branch Library, the San Francisco School, Portola and
19 Excelsior Family Connections, the Portola Neighborhood Association, The Greenhouse
20 Project, and the San Francisco Community Empowerment Center, convened for the first time
21 as the Portola Urban Greening Steering Committee, with the goal of helping to promote the
22 burgeoning Garden District identity, to join in community and to contribute to the Portola’s
23 broad vision for community sustainability through gardening and greening; and

24 WHEREAS, From Fall 2014 through Spring 2015, the Steering Committee engaged a
25 professional community planning consultant to help facilitate and produce a community-led

1 Portola Green Plan, which was published in July 2015 to provide an environmental history and
2 context for the neighborhood, as well as a general roadmap for promoting a safe, healthy and
3 enriching public realm based on community feedback and the Portola's Garden history; and

4 WHEREAS, Several projects identified by the Portola Green Plan as high opportunity
5 are actively being planned or are underway, including a prominent public mural proclaiming
6 the Portola as San Francisco's Garden District; and

7 WHEREAS, The Portola Urban Greening Steering Committee, in partnership with the
8 Department of Recreation and Parks is working to enhance the garden identity of the
9 neighborhood by restoring the historic greenhouses in the neighborhood; and

10 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Commission on the Environment adopted Resolution
11 No. 006-15-COE on December 14, 2015, in support of the Portola Green Plan and in
12 recognition of the Portola as San Francisco's Garden District; now, therefore, be it,

13 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors formally recognizes the Portola as San
14 Francisco's Garden District and commends the neighborhood's environmental, residential,
15 and small business leaders for success in advancing a bold vision of community sustainability
16 and resilience.

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