

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Administrative Code - Process for Establishment of Cultural Districts]

Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to create a process for the establishment of cultural districts in the City to acknowledge and preserve neighborhoods with unique cultural heritage, and to require City departments to report to the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor regarding existing cultural districts previously established by resolution; and affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Existing Law

Current law does not include a definition of the term "Cultural District," and does not describe a process for the establishment of Cultural Districts. The Board of Supervisors has adopted resolutions establishing several districts in the city as "cultural districts" or "cultural heritage districts," including Calle 24 (Veinticuatro) Latino Cultural District (Resolution Nos. 168-14 and 201-14); SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District (Resolution No. 119-16); and Compton's Transgender Cultural District (Resolution No. 239-17). In 2013, the Board adopted Resolution No. 352-13, endorsing the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy. And the Board is currently considering a resolution to establish the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Leather Cultural District (Board File No. 171019).

None of these resolutions impose reporting obligations on City departments, create special funds to support the districts, or provide for the creation of advisory bodies regarding the cultural districts.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed ordinance would adopt a definition of the term, "Cultural District": a geographic area or location in the City that embodies a unique cultural heritage because it contains a concentration of cultural and historic assets or culturally significant enterprise, arts, services, or businesses, or because a significant portion of its residents are members of a specific cultural, community, or ethnic group.

The ordinance would establish a process for the Board's creation of new Cultural Districts. Although the process would not be binding on the Board of Supervisors, it would set a policy that the Board intends to follow in the future. Under the process, any Supervisor could introduce an ordinance proposing to establish a Cultural District. That ordinance would have several elements:

- Name the proposed Cultural District.

- Define the District's boundaries.
- In the Board's discretion, possibly create a five-member advisory body to advise the Board and the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development ("MOHCD") on how to support the preservation and enhancement of the District.
- Establish an administrative fund into which the Board may appropriate money and into which foundations or members of the public may donate money to support the District.
- Require the following City departments to prepare reports within six months regarding the characteristics of the District and making recommendations regarding strategies to preserve and support the culture of the District: Historic Preservation Commission, Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Arts Commission, MOHCD, Public Works, Planning Department, and Human Rights Commission.
- Require MOHCD to prepare a Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy (CHESS) Report for the District within nine months for consideration and approval by Board. The CHESS Report would analyze and record the tangible and intangible elements of the District's cultural heritage, identify areas of concern that could inhibit the preservation of the District's unique culture, and propose legislative, economic and other solutions and strategies to support the District.
- Require MOHCD to initiate a competitive solicitation process to enter a contract or grant with an organization to provide support in preparing these reports.
- Require MOHCD to update the CHESS Report at least once every three years.

Under the non-binding process for adoption of an ordinance proposing to establish a Cultural District, the Clerk of the Board would transmit the ordinance to the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Small Business Commission for their review. Within 60 days following the transmittal of the ordinance, each commission would be required to hold a hearing regarding the proposed Cultural District and make recommendations regarding the creation of the proposed Cultural District. The Board would not hold a hearing on the proposed ordinance until the commissions hold their hearings or 60 days have passed.

Finally, the ordinance would require the City departments listed above to submit reports to the Board and the Mayor regarding Calle 24 (Veinticuatro) Latino Cultural District, SoMa Pilipinas - Filipino Cultural Heritage District, Compton's Transgender Cultural District, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Leather Cultural District by September 1, 2018. And the ordinance would require MOHCD to prepare a CHESS Report for each of those Districts by December 1, 2018.

FILE NO. 171140

A Cultural District, as defined under the proposed ordinance, would be a separate designation from a Landmark or Historic District under Article 10 of the Planning Code or a Significant or Contributory Building or Conservation District under Article 11 of the Planning Code. But the Board could form Cultural Districts in areas that have been designated as Landmarks, Historic Districts, Significant or Contributory Buildings, or Conservation Districts.

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