

1 [Administrative Code - Establishing the Sunset Chinese Cultural District]

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3 **Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to establish the Sunset Chinese Cultural**
 4 **District in and around the Sunset neighborhood; to require the Mayor's Office of**
 5 **Housing and Community Development to submit written reports and recommendations**
 6 **to the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor describing the cultural attributes of the**
 7 **District and proposing strategies to acknowledge and preserve the cultural legacy of**
 8 **the District; and affirming the Planning Department's determination under the**
 9 **California Environmental Quality Act.**

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11 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
 12 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
 13 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.
 14 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.
 15 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
 16 **Asterisks (* * * *)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code
 17 subsections or parts of tables.

15

16 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

17

18 Section 1. Findings.

19 (a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this
 20 ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources
 21 Code Sections 21000 et seq.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of
 22 Supervisors in File No. 210599 and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board affirms
 23 this determination.

24 (b) On July 7, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission held a duly noticed
 25 hearing regarding the effects of this ordinance upon historic or cultural resources, and

1 submitted a written report to the Board of Supervisors as required under Charter Section
2 4.135. The report is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 210599.

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4 Section 2. Chapter 107 of the Administrative Code is hereby amended by revising
5 Section 107.3, to read as follows:

6
7 **SEC. 107.3. LIST OF ESTABLISHED CULTURAL DISTRICTS.**

8 The Cultural Districts of the City and County of San Francisco are:

9 * * * *

10 (i) **Sunset Chinese Cultural District.** The Cultural District shall include the area bounded
11 by 19th Avenue to the east, the Great Highway to the west, Lincoln Way to the north, and Sloat
12 Boulevard to the south.

13
14 Section 3. The Administrative Code is hereby amended by adding Chapter 107D,
15 consisting of Sections 107D.1 and 107D.2, to read as follows:

16
17 **CHAPTER 107D:**

18 **SUNSET CHINESE CULTURAL DISTRICT**

19 **SEC. 107D.1. FINDINGS.**

20 The Sunset Chinese Cultural District (the “District”) is a robust, culturally rich neighborhood
21 of working class families, many of which are multi-generational, with a special significance to the
22 Chinese American community. In establishing the District, the City acknowledges the importance of
23 recognizing the neighborhood’s history and preserving the legacy and traditions uniquely born in the
24 Sunset. The District will recognize and memorialize the Chinese American experience in San

1 Francisco, and will help to preserve and increase the depth and impact of the Chinese American legacy
2 in the City.

3 The growth of the Sunset District as a major Chinese neighborhood is a reflection of
4 government policies, international events, and an influx of immigrants seeking to call the Sunset home.
5 Beginning in 1948, a few pioneering Chinese families moved to San Francisco from around the
6 country, purchased homes, and opened businesses in the Sunset. During the 1950's and 1960's, many
7 Chinese families left the crowded tenements of Chinatown – where they were once required by law to
8 live – and purchased affordable single-family homes in the Sunset. Later waves of Chinese immigrants
9 began arriving in the neighborhood in the 1960's, following the enactment of the Immigration and
10 Nationality Act of 1965, which lifted racial quotas and allowed for more non-European nationals to
11 immigrate to the United States. The District saw an influx of Chinese immigrants after China's 1978
12 emigration policy reform allowed large numbers of Chinese to leave the country. The 1997 Hong Kong
13 sovereignty change led to another wave of new immigrants, many with sufficient wealth to purchase
14 Sunset district homes.

15 According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1970, the Sunset was still 85% white. But a great
16 migration was beginning. An estimated half of the properties sold in the Sunset in the 1970s were
17 purchased by Chinese Americans. By 1975, 22% of public school students in the Sunset were Chinese
18 American. Today, more than half of all residents of the Sunset identify as Chinese or Asian American.

19 The influence and vitality of Chinese culture can be found throughout the Sunset neighborhood.
20 The commercial corridors on Irving, Noriega, and Taraval Streets and Central Sunset are lined with an
21 abundant and unique mix of Chinese-owned businesses, including restaurants, cafes, bakeries,
22 groceries and markets, hair salons, herb stores, and acupuncture clinics, providing the neighborhood
23 with definitive Chinese character. The authentic and delicious Chinese food found in the Sunset is well
24 known throughout San Francisco. The Sunset District offers all of the amenities that Chinese

1 Americans view as part of their cultural heritage, leading people to refer to the Sunset as “Little
2 Chinatown” or “Third Chinatown.”

3 Many businesses in the Sunset commercial corridors were not, as of 2020, listed in the San
4 Francisco Legacy Business Registry, which recognizes businesses over 30 years old that have made a
5 significant impact on neighborhood history or culture, but were qualified for recognition. Sunset
6 Super, a supermarket opened in October 1940 and located at 2425 Irving Street, is still thriving and
7 bustling today, providing mainly Chinese and Asian goods. Peking Restaurant at 1375 Noriega Street
8 is family-owned, serving Shanghai and Sichuan food for over 40 years.

9 Wah Mei School is a vital part of the fabric and history of the local Sunset District community.
10 Deeply rooted in the Asian American community, Wah Mei 華美 means “Chinese-America” and holds
11 historic significance as the first bilingual school in San Francisco. Wah Mei was founded in 1974 by a
12 group of community activists, bilingual educators, and parents, as Chinese American activists found
13 their voice on critical issues in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement. In the 1974 landmark case of
14 Lau vs. Nichols, the Supreme Court held that the school system’s failure to provide supplemental
15 English language instruction to students of Chinese ancestry who spoke no English violated the Civil
16 Rights Act of 1964 because it deprived those students of an opportunity to participate in the public
17 education program. Wah Mei School is a San Francisco Legacy Business and an anchor institution
18 that has served generations of San Francisco families. Some 8,500 San Francisco residents have
19 graduated from Wah Mei School. The longevity of relationships in the community is evidenced by the
20 intergenerational cycle of participation; many parents themselves were preschool graduates and their
21 children now participate in the same programs.

22 Self-Help for the Elderly is another pivotal institution in the Sunset District serving Chinese
23 American residents. Since 1966, this nonprofit community organization has provided culturally
24 aligned services and programs to promote independence, well-being, dignity and more purposeful lives
25 for seniors. Self-Help for the Elderly’s South Sunset Senior Center at 2601 40th Avenue is dedicated to

1 maximizing self-sufficiency, safety, health, and independence for seniors so they can remain living in
2 the Sunset District for as long as possible with the highest quality of life.

3 North East Medical Services (NEMS) operates several health care clinics in the Sunset District,
4 servicing a medically underserved population; 93% of NEMS patients are of Asian descent, a majority of
5 whom are uninsured or low-income. NEMS offers linguistically-competent and culturally-sensitive
6 health care services in many languages and dialects, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Toishan,
7 Vietnamese, Burmese, Korean, Spanish, and Hindi. The multilingual and culturally-competent staff
8 help patients to express themselves in a familiar environment. Health education programs, many of
9 which bridge the gap between Western and Asian medical practices, are available at the clinic and
10 through weekly radio broadcasts on local Chinese media. The programs address preventative health
11 care education and practices as it relates to the cultural needs of the community.

12 Chinese Hospital is another important part of the Asian medical infrastructure in the Sunset
13 District. It operates the Sunset Health Services neighborhood clinic, located at 1800 31st Avenue,
14 which improves access to outpatient care in the Westside of San Francisco. The hospital has a rich
15 history, dating back to the late-1800s, when it began providing health care services to the underserved
16 Chinese community in Chinatown who faced discrimination and limited access to public services. As
17 more and more patients migrated from Chinatown to other neighborhoods, Chinese Hospital
18 recognized the community's growing need for improved health care access and opened a number of
19 community clinics.

20 Great Wall Hardware, located at 1821 Taraval Street, is a San Francisco Legacy Business
21 established in 1983 by Robert and Mariana Chow. This family-owned store prides itself on having over
22 20,000 items for sale, including electrical, garden, painting, plumbing, cleaning, hardware, tools, and
23 lumber. Albert Chow is Great Wall's current owner and son of original owners Robert and Mariana
24 Chow. Born and raised in San Francisco, Albert Chow moved with his family from Chinatown to the
25 Sunset once they had enough money to start the hardware store. Great Wall's exterior Chinese

1 language sign reflects the large Chinese-speaking population in the Sunset, and the business's
2 commitment to maintaining Chinese culture in the district.

3 The Sunset District is home to a significant number of religious organizations that cater to a
4 diverse array of faiths including Buddhism, Presbyterianism, and Evangelism. Sunset Church, Sunset
5 Ministry, San Francisco Chinese Alliance Church, Hope Evangelical Free Church, San Francisco
6 Chinese Baptist Church, First United Presbyterian Church, and Lutheran Church–Holy Spirit serve
7 diverse and multilingual faith communities, with a history of expanding their missions and
8 congregations to include Asian immigrants. Tzu Chi, in the mid-Sunset, is part of an international
9 Buddhist organization that engages volunteers in providing humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and in
10 addressing health and medical needs, including supplying masks to front-line workers during the early
11 days of the Covid-19 pandemic.

12 The Sunset has demonstrated a commitment to celebrating Chinese culture with large public
13 events such as the 2020 Lunar New Year Celebration held at Jefferson Elementary School, which
14 featured live performances and demonstrations by the San Francisco Sunset Ladies' Dance Team, Wah
15 Mei School, Wing Chun Kung Fu Academy, and traditional lion dances by Panda Kung Fu Center.
16 The Autumn Moon Festival (held on Irving Street until 2017) featured booths, merchants, music,
17 traditional lion dance and arts. The Sunset Community Festival is held annually at various locations in
18 the Sunset, such as Sunset Recreation Center and other recreation centers.

19 The Sunset is also home to smaller cultural gatherings. At West Sunset Playground, the
20 weekends are filled with traditional and cultural dancers, tai chi, and chi gong. And the tennis courts
21 at Coppin Square and at Parkside Square are a place where local residents gather for group exercise
22 and to be outdoors.

23 The history and legacy of Chinese Americans in the Sunset District was featured in the Chinese
24 Historical Society of America's exhibit called "Chinese In the Sunset," which has been shown at the
25 Chinese Historical Society of America in Chinatown, the Sunset Recreation Center, the San Francisco

1 Public Library at the Main Branch, Ortega and North Beach branches, and the Western Neighborhood
2 Projects. The exhibit highlights the history of racial restrictions preventing Chinese and other people
3 of color from living in the Sunset; the impact of the 1960's civil rights movement on racial restrictions
4 and housing mobility; and how the diversity of perspectives within the community have led the Sunset
5 to become the vibrant community it is today.

6 In recent years, the Sunset has faced challenges that threaten the long-term sustainability of this
7 uniquely important ethnic community, and the legacy of Chinese Americans in the Sunset is now in
8 jeopardy.

9 Most Sunset Chinese households are moderate income immigrant families including a high
10 proportion of multi-generational households. As Sunset District housing costs have skyrocketed over
11 the past decade, fewer moderate income Chinese families have been able to afford to buy a home or
12 rent a family-sized apartment in the neighborhood. The Sunset Chinese community faces an uncertain
13 future, with recent demographic and economic trends potentially leading to long-term displacement
14 and gentrification.

15 In addition, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, there has been a disturbing rise
16 in anti-Asian violence and racism in the San Francisco Bay Area, including the Sunset. In response to
17 anti-Asian hate, a March for AAPI Solidarity + Safety event was held on April 18, 2021 at the Great
18 Highway, calling for collective solidarity, community safety, and healing, and demonstrating the Sunset
19 District's importance as a region for Asian American social activism and direct action.

20 Chinese American resilience in the face of racism and discrimination has transformed the
21 Sunset into the dynamic and vibrant neighborhood it is today. Establishment of the District will
22 recognize and honor the important history of the Chinese American community and the contributions of
23 those who transformed the Sunset neighborhood in the past, laying the foundations for its current and
24 future importance to Chinese American culture.

1 **SEC. 107D.2. MAYOR’S OFFICE OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
2 **RESPONSIBILITIES; CULTURAL, HISTORY, HOUSING, AND ECONOMIC**
3 **SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY REPORT.**

4 **(a) Cultural, History, Housing, and Economic Sustainability Strategy Report.**

5 **(1) Preparation of Report.** *By no later than September 1, 2022, the Mayor’s Office*
6 *of Housing and Community Development (“MOHCD”) shall prepare and submit to the Board of*
7 *Supervisors and the Mayor a Cultural, History, Housing, and Economic Sustainability Strategy Report*
8 *(“CHHESS Report”) for the District. The CHHESS Report shall include a demographic and economic*
9 *profile of the District, including past, current, and future trends; analyze and record the tangible and*
10 *intangible elements of the District’s cultural heritage; identify areas of concern that could inhibit the*
11 *preservation of the District’s unique culture; and propose as appropriate legislative, economic, and*
12 *other solutions and strategies to support the District.*

13 **(2) Assistance from City Departments.** *In preparing the CHHESS Report, MOHCD*
14 *may request assistance from the Historic Preservation Commission and any other City department,*
15 *office, or other agency of City government. Those agencies shall upon request provide to MOHCD an*
16 *assessment of relevant assets and needs in the District, recommendations on programs, policies, and*
17 *funding sources that could benefit the District, and other recommendations that could serve the District*
18 *to advance its goals.*

19 **(3) Community Outreach and Engagement.** *In preparing the CHHESS Report,*
20 *MOHCD shall facilitate a community outreach and engagement process with the District’s residents,*
21 *businesses, workers, and other individuals who regularly spend time in the District, in order to develop*
22 *the strategies and plans that will preserve and enhance the culture of the District.*

23 **(b) Board of Supervisors Consideration.** *Following receipt of the CHHESS Report from*
24 *MOHCD, the Board of Supervisors may take any action by resolution that the Board deems*
25 *appropriate regarding the report, including approving the report, modifying the report, rejecting the*

1 report, or requesting additional information or analysis from MOHCD or any other City department or
2 agency.

3 (c) **Progress Reports.** MOHCD shall provide a progress report on the strategies outlined in
4 the CHHESS Report at least once every three years following enactment of a resolution approving or
5 modifying the CHHESS Report.

6 (d) **Assistance from Community-Based Organization.** Subject to the budgetary, fiscal, and
7 civil service provisions of the Charter, MOHCD shall issue a competitive solicitation for a community-
8 based organization to (1) assist MOHCD with planning, organizing, and facilitating the community
9 outreach and engagement process under subsection (a)(3); (2) provide input and advice to MOHCD
10 regarding the contents of the CHHESS Report and regarding strategies to support and preserve the
11 unique culture and heritage of the District; (3) provide additional advice and assistance to MOHCD
12 after the issuance of the CHHESS Report to implement the City's strategies to support and preserve the
13 culture of the District; (4) assist MOHCD with progress reports required under subsection (c); and (5)
14 fulfill any other responsibilities that MOHCD determines would help the City to support the District.

15
16 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after
17 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the
18 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board
19 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

20
21 Section 5. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors
22 intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles,
23 numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal
24 Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment
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