



July 8, 2021

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk
Honorable Supervisor Gordon Mar
Board of Supervisors
City and County of San Francisco
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Transmittal of Planning Department Case Number 2021-005812PCA:
Establish the Sunset Chinese Cultural District
Board File No. 210599

Planning Commission Recommendation: Approval

Dear Ms. Calvillo and Supervisor Mar,

On July 7, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance, introduced by Supervisor Mar, that would amend the Administrative Code to create the Sunset Chinese Cultural District. At the hearing the Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval.

The proposed amendments are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378 and 15060(c)(2) because they would not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

Please find attached documents relating to the actions of the Commission. If you have any questions or require further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Starr
Manager of Legislative Affairs

cc: Anne Pearson, Deputy City Attorney
Li Miao Lovett, Aide to Supervisor Gordon Mar
Erica Major, Office of the Clerk of the Board

Attachments :

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution
Planning Department Executive Summary



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ADMINISTRATIVE CODE AMENDMENT

HEARING DATE: July 7, 2021

Project Name: Establish the Sunset Chinese Cultural District
Case Number: 2021-005812PCA [Board File No. 210599]
Initiated by: Supervisor Gordon Mar / Introduced May 25, 2021
Staff Contact: Paolo Ikezoe, Senior Planner
Paolo.Ikezoe@sfgov.org, 628-652-7501
Reviewed by: Aaron Starr, Manager of Legislative Affairs
aaron.starr@sfgov.org, 628-652-7533

Recommendation: Approval

Administrative Code Amendment

The proposed Ordinance amends the Administrative Code to establish the Sunset Chinese Cultural District (the “District”) in the Sunset neighborhood and to require the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) to submit written reports and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor describing the cultural attributes of the District and proposing strategies to acknowledge and preserve the cultural legacy of the District.

The Way It Is Now:

The Sunset Chinese Cultural District in the Sunset neighborhood does not currently exist.

The Way It Would Be:

The Ordinance establishes the Sunset Chinese Cultural District in the Sunset neighborhood in the area bounded by Lincoln Way to the north between 19th Avenue and the Great Highway, 19th Avenue to the east between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard, Sloat Boulevard to the south between 19th Avenue and the Great Highway, and the Great Highway to the west between Sloat Boulevard and Lincoln Way.

Background

This Ordinance relies on the Cultural District designation process outlined in Section 107.3 of the Administrative Code, which was adopted on May 22, 2018. Prior to adoption of this process the Board of Supervisors (BoS) adopted each cultural district and its process separately; however, there was no codified process directing City departments to provide an assessment a Cultural District's assets and needs. There was also no way to provide recommendations on programs, policies and funding sources benefitting the Cultural District, as well as other recommendations to advance Cultural District goals.

Per the Cultural District designation process, the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development, with assistance from a community-based organization and City Departments, will prepare a Cultural, History, Housing, and Economic Sustainability Strategy (CHHESS) Report within one year of the effective date of the ordinance, unless the BoS extends the deadline by resolution, for submittal to the BoS for approval, modification, rejection, or request for further information or analysis. MOHCD will provide progress reports on the strategies outlined in the CHHESS report every three (3) years.

Issues and Considerations

Preserving Our Cultural Heritage

San Francisco's cultural diversity is integral to the City fabric and is what helps make San Francisco a desirable location for living, working and recreating. Cultural heritage expresses a way of living. It is developed by a community through objects, beliefs, traditions, practices, art, and places. It manifests itself in tangible and intangible elements passed through generations. Examples of these elements include buildings, plazas, crafts, art, festivals, processions, protests, businesses, and other institutions. Losing any of these elements diminishes a community's cultural integrity. Preserving these unique cultural elements requires distinct strategies according to each community's needs in partnership with local government. During periods of rapid change cultural districts can help preserve and enhance indispensable elements of the City's fabric.

Draft Chinese American Historic Context Statement

The draft Chinese American Historic Context Statement documents the history of the Chinese community in San Francisco. It starts from the migration to the United States and formation of the Chinese community in San Francisco in the 19th century. It includes the community's civil rights struggles, the Asian American student movement, and the creation of communities in the Sunset, the Richmond District, and other neighborhoods outside of Chinatown. It discusses the establishment of long-serving businesses, educational, cultural and community centers, and the stories of early residents of the Sunset beginning in the 1960s. The context statement provides a foundation for identifying significant buildings and sites in the Sunset and throughout the City. It provides recommendations for landmarking properties, adding businesses and organizations to the legacy business registry, recognizing community leaders and interpreting places important to the history of the Chinese American community in San Francisco. The information in the draft historic context statement can help inform the development of the CHHESS and related future projects.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

The proposed amendments aim to advance Racial and Social Equity by recognizing the legacy and supporting the long-term sustainability of the Chinese and Chinese-American communities in the Sunset District. Many of the District's Chinese and Chinese-American households are multi-generational, moderate-income families, and the District has a higher proportion of limited-English speaking households than the City as a whole. High housing costs, various interconnected effects of the COVID19 pandemic, and, most recently, a disturbing rise in anti-Asian violence and racism threaten this community's stability. The CHHESS Report called for in the proposed Ordinance will analyze and record the tangible and intangible elements of the District's cultural heritage and identify areas of concern that could inhibit the preservation of the District's unique culture. The proposed Ordinance will also support the development of legislative, economic and other solutions to ensure the continued health, vibrancy and safety of the District's Chinese/Chinese-American community.

Mandated Timeline

Given the breadth of required information, it is the Department's experience that the identification and assessment of cultural heritage resources through a community-led inventory typically takes between nine (9) and eighteen (18) months to complete. Therefore, the proposed CHHESS report deadline of September 1, 2022 is practical and feasible.

Community-Based Organization

The Cultural District program relies on the integral participation of a community group to ensure a responsive and grassroots plan that can be implemented in partnership with the City. The ordinance recommends a process by which MOHCD will select a community-based organization to act as spokesperson, advisor, facilitator, and navigator of the CHHESS development and implementation. The Department supports this approach to partnering with the community.

General Plan Compliance

The proposed ordinance would comply with the General Plan, specifically with the Commerce and Industry Element, which calls for the City to "maintain and enhance a sound and diverse economic base and fiscal structure for the City." It is also consistent with the Arts Element, which calls for the City to "support arts and cultural programs which address the needs of diverse populations. The ordinance would also comply with General Plan Priority Policy #2, which states that "That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods." Creating the new cultural district will help efforts to preserve and enhance the City's remaining ethnic and cultural enclaves. Preservation and enhancement of these districts serves the City's interest as an abundance of cultural and recreational activities lends San Francisco a comparative advantage over other municipalities.

Implementation

The Department has determined that this Ordinance will not impact our current implementation procedures for permit review or their costs as it does not amend the Planning Code. The Department has determined that the Ordinance will require staff time for collaboration and assistance with the CHHESS report.

Recommendation

The Department recommends that the Commission recommend *approval* of the proposed Ordinance and adopt the attached Draft Resolution to that effect.

Basis for Recommendation

The Department is supportive of the proposed Ordinance and anticipates working collaboratively with the designated community-based organization and MOHCD to support the community stabilization and cultural heritage conservation goals of the community.

- The Ordinance recommends a feasible timeframe for the development of the required CHHESS report.
- The Ordinance proactively recommends a process for identifying an appropriate community partner to act as spokesperson, advisor, facilitator, and navigator of the CHHESS development and implementation. This should ensure that the work of MOHCD is responsive to community concerns and existing neighborhood conditions.
- The Ordinance complies with the City's General Plan.
- The Ordinance, while having an incremental impact to Department staff time dedicated to supporting the cultural district program, would not impact our current permit review procedures or costs.

Required Commission Action

The proposed Ordinance is before the Commission so that it may recommend the Board of Supervisors approve it, reject it, or approve it with modifications.

Environmental Review

The proposed amendments are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378 and 15060(c)(2) because they would not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

Public Comment

As of the date of this report, the Planning Department has not received any public comment regarding the proposed Ordinance.

Attachments:

- Exhibit A: Draft Historic Preservation Commission Resolution
Exhibit B: Board of Supervisors File No. 210599



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 1192

HEARING DATE: JULY 7, 2021

Project Name: Establish the Sunset Chinese Cultural District
Case Number: 2021-005812PCA [Board File No. 210599]
Initiated by: Supervisor Gordon Mar / Introduced May 25, 2021
Staff Contact: Paolo Ikezoe, Senior Planner
Paolo.Ikezoe@sfgov.org, 628-652-7501
Reviewed by: Aaron D Starr, Manager of Legislative Affairs
aaron.starr@sfgov.org, (628) 652-7533

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVE AN ORDINANCE THAT ESTABLISHES THE SUNSET CHINESE CULTURAL DISTRICT IN AND AROUND THE SUNSET NEIGHBORHOOD; REQUIRES THE MAYOR’S OFFICE OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (MOHCD) TO SUBMIT WRITTEN REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND THE MAYOR DESCRIBING THE CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE DISTRICT AND PROPOSING STRATEGIES TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND PRESERVE THE CULTURAL LEGACY OF THE DISTRICT; AND, AFFIRMS THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT’S DETERMINATION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT.

WHEREAS, on May 25, 2021, Supervisor Gordon Mar introduced an Ordinance under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter “Board”) File Number 210599, which would establish the Sunset Chinese Cultural District (hereinafter “District”) in and around the Sunset neighborhood and require the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development to report to the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor regarding the District; and

WHEREAS, the Board referred the proposed ordinance to the Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) on May 28, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the Ordinance on July 7, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Ordinance has been determined to be Categorically Exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Section 15060(c)(2) and 15378; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of Department staff and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, all pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the Custodian of Records, at 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400, San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has reviewed the proposed Ordinance; and

MOVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that the Board of Supervisors **approve** the Ordinance.

Findings

Having reviewed the materials identified in the preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

1. San Francisco's cultural diversity is integral to the City fabric and is what helps make San Francisco a desirable location for living, working and recreating.
2. Cultural heritage is the expression of a way of living. It is developed by a community through objects, beliefs, traditions, practices, artistic interpretation, and significant places. It manifests itself in tangible and intangible elements passed through generations. Examples of these elements include buildings, plazas, crafts, art, festivals, processions, protests, businesses, and other institutions. Losing any of these elements diminishes a community's cultural integrity. Preserving these unique cultural elements requires distinct strategies according to each community's needs in partnership with local government.
3. During periods of rapid change in the City, cultural districts can help preserve and enhance indispensable elements of the City's fabric.
4. The Ordinance recommends a feasible timeframe for development of the required CHHESS report. The City should plan for adequate City resources to support the CHHESS report development for the District.
5. The Ordinance proactively recommends a process for identifying an appropriate community partner. The City and community-based organization selected by the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development should support an inclusive community engagement process during the development of the Cultural, History, Housing and Economic Sustainability Strategy for the Sunset Chinese Cultural District.
6. The Ordinance, while having an incremental impact to Department staff time dedicated to supporting the cultural district program, would not impact our current permit review procedures or costs.

General Plan Compliance

The proposed Ordinance is consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

ART ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE II-2

SUPPORT ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS WHICH ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE POPULATIONS.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 2

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE A SOUND AND DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE AND FISCAL STRUCTURE FOR THE CITY.

Policy 2.3

Maintain a Favorable Social and Cultural Climate in the City in order to Enhance its Attractiveness as a Firm Location

The proposed Ordinance will support arts and cultural programs which address the needs of the Chinese and Chinese-American communities in the Sunset District. In doing so, the Ordinance will also support a favorable social and cultural climate in the Sunset District as well as across the entire city.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission hereby recommends that the Board APPROVE the proposed Ordinance as described in this Resolution.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on July 7, 2021.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Nageswaran, Black, Foley, Johns, Pearlman, So, Matsuda

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ADOPTED: July 7, 2021