SoMa Pilipinas
Filipino Social & Cultural Heritage
Special Use District
in South of Market (San Francisco)

A presentation by:
MC Canlas, Cultural Specialist
Filipino American Development Foundation
Cultural Assets & Significant Places

Veterans Equity Center

SoMa Health Center

Bindlestiff Theater

Ed dela Cruz Apartment / West Bay Pilipino Center

SoMEC

Langton Garden Fil-Am Mural

SomArts/Cultural Center

Bessie Carmichael School

Victoria Manalo Park

Tutubi Children’s Park

Filipino Education Center

Gran Oriente Filipino Hotel (South Park)

Filipino Owned Businesses & Properties

Rizal Marker @ Palace Hotel

Yerba Buena Gardens

San Lorenzo Ruiz Center

Philippine Heroes-named Streets

SoMa Child Care Center
Manifestations of Social/Cultural Heritage in the Neighborhood

- SoMa as a central gathering place or plaza for Filipinos
  - Religious and community rituals
  - Cultural Pride Festivities
  - Filipino Bilingual Education
  - Social Support Services
  - Housing and Residence
  - Trade and Commerce
The Filipino Framework of Socio/cultural Heritage in SoMa

- **Vertical integration**

- **Horizontal Integration**
Challenges and Impediments
(Resources being threatened)

- Business negative growth (moving out/ closing out)

- Housing (vulnerabilities of renters & displacement)
- **Bilingual education (inadequate staffing and program development)**
  - Bessie Carmichael / Filipino education Center

- **Sustainability of Community Assets and Resources**
  - Bindlestiff Theater
  - Bayanihan Community Center
  - San Francisco Filipino Cultural Center
Community Efforts and Initiatives to Address the Threat of Community/Cultural Resources

- Business and commercial resources
  - Business Filipino business assistance services and advocacy
  - Proposed neighborhood residents small-business incubation/development

- Housing
  - Housing assistance (BISHOP – Bill Sorro Housing Program of VEC)
  - Purchase housing and promote cooperative housing (San Francisco Land Trust)
○ Filipino Bilingual Education Program
  ▪ Parents leadership and Advocacy for Bessie/FEC (San Francisco Unified School District)
  ▪ Staff and program development (FEC/Bessie Galing Bata)

○ Community Cultural Assets Development and Support
  ▪ San Francisco Filipino Cultural Center (to be built)
  ▪ Bindlestiff Theater (sustainability)
  ▪ Bayanihan Community Center (sustainability)
- Ethno-tour and neighborhood tourism
- Special Use District Initiatives & Advocacy
USING THE URBAN LANDSCAPE TO CELEBRATE HISTORY

1. To establish boundaries for a Filipino Social Heritage Special Use District (SUD) that demarcates core cultural heritage assets.

2. To identify and classify individual assets.

3. To sustain on-going research and policies that encourages the preservation of local social heritage and local culture through the Western SoMa Plan and other means.

4. To use the urban landscape to celebrate public history, using public features as a way to educate and accept diversity, leaving an important legacy at the heart of the neighborhood.

   a) Honor a handful of Filipino sites which have embodied the essence of the neighborhood legacy with individual commemorative inscription and symbols.

   b) Create a social-heritage path or tourist trail which celebrate collective important and valuable events and traditions such as festivals and street fairs still growing into local, regional and even world wide history.

   c) Propose renaming streets and alleyways after some of the major figures of local Filipino history.
Strategies to Preserve History & Community

History

1. Establish Certificate of Social Heritage Compliance & Rating Criteria
2. Permanent urban design elements – lamp posts, district signage, etc.
3. Provide historical education and recognition through commemorative inscriptions or historical markers
4. Establish Philippine/Filipino American History Trail (PATH)

Community

1. Economic Development Initiatives to promote Filipino businesses
2. Preserve existing senior housing, especially at risk sites i.e. Gran Oriente Filipino, San Lorenzo Center
3. Incorporating West SoMa community stabilization policies to preserve Filipino community
Lessons Learned
Vanishing Filipino Communities
In San Francisco

Manilatown / International Hotel
(Kearney & Jackson)

Filipino Enclave in Fillmore District

South of Market / South Park