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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, The Portola’s unique environment continues to make it an ideal location for agricultural and horticultural activity; the peaks of McLaren Park create a natural fog break giving the community a sunny climate, a natural watershed in Yosemite Creek which flows through the Portola continues to feed plant growth and enrich the soil, and residential parcels tend to have large rear yards protected from wind and ideal for gardening; and
WHEREAS, The Portola prides itself on being San Francisco’s Garden District based on a vibrant urban-agricultural heritage, an identity that stems from a rich history of commercially operating greenhouses as well as current community-driven efforts such as the Portola Garden Tour as well as the SF Bee-Cause bee farm, a new pocket park at the terminus of Burrows Street, and a multitude of public works reflecting the Portola’s rich agricultural history; and

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

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

WHEREAS, From Fall 2014 through Spring 2015, the Steering Committee engaged a professional community planning consultant to help facilitate and produce a community-led
Portola Green Plan, which was published in July 2015 to provide an environmental history and context for the neighborhood, as well as a general roadmap for promoting a safe, healthy and enriching public realm based on community feedback and the Portola’s Garden history; and

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

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

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

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors supports and will assist the Portola in all its gardening and green works, including the Portola Green Plan as an important community-based statement of neighborhood goals and identity, rooted in gardening, urban agriculture, green infrastructure and community greening; and, be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors formally recognizes the Portola as San Francisco’s Garden District and commends the neighborhood’s environmental, residential, and small business leaders for success in advancing a bold vision of community sustainability and resilience.
Resolution recognizing the Portola neighborhood as San Francisco's Garden District and supporting the implementation of the Portola Green Plan.

October 13, 2016 Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee - RECOMMENDED

October 25, 2016 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Avalos, Breed, Campos, Cohen, Farrell, Kim, Mar, Peskin, Tang, Wiener and Yee

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 10/25/2016 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board