

JAPANTOWN

CULTURAL HERITAGE and
ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY
STRATEGY

FINAL / OCTOBER, 2013

JCHES



SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING DEPARTMENT



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JCHESS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS) is the first document in San Francisco to focus specifically on how to preserve and promote a neighborhood's cultural heritage. The Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy's (JCHESS) vision is that Japantown will thrive as a culturally rich, authentic, and economically vibrant neighborhood, which will serve as the cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come. Specifically, the JCHESS seeks to provide a strategy to:

- Secure Japantown's future as the historical and cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American Community
- Secure Japantown's future as a thriving commercial and retail district
- Secure Japantown's future as a home to residents and community-based institutions
- Secure Japantown's future as a physically attractive and vibrant environment

AREAS OF CONCERN

The JCHESS includes an assessment of the existing conditions in Japantown, and identifies particular "areas of concern" with regard to cultural heritage and economic sustainability, as follows:

AREAS OF CONCERN RELATED TO JAPANTOWN'S PEOPLE:

- It is difficult to maintain Japantown's critical mass as a community hub
- Not all age groups have an equal stake in the community
- Lack of collaboration for cultural preservation

AREAS OF CONCERN RELATED TO JAPANTOWN'S LAND:

- Utilization of developable parcels

AREAS OF CONCERN RELATED TO JAPANTOWN'S BUILDINGS:

- Compatibility of architectural style
- Lack of pedestrian scale
- Preservation of historic buildings and structures

AREAS OF CONCERN RELATED TO JAPANTOWN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS:

- Capacity challenges for community-serving organizations and institutions
- Lack of permanent space for existing organizations

AREAS OF CONCERN RELATED TO JAPANTOWN'S BUSINESSES:

- Business viability
- Business ownership transitions

- Finding and attracting culturally relevant businesses
- Attractiveness of the shopping district
- Potential business displacement
- The future of the Japan Center
- The future of the Japan Center Parking Garage

AREAS OF CONCERN RELATED TO JAPANTOWN'S CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS:

- Limited space for community activities
- Acquiring permits for festivals

AREAS OF CONCERN RELATED TO JAPANTOWN'S PUBLIC REALM:

- Peace Plaza design
- Buchanan Mall design
- Streetscape maintenance
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Street furnishings
- Wayfinding signage

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address these areas of concern, the JCHESS includes a series of recommendations that are considered by the City and community as having the best potential to fulfill the vision of the JCHESS. Given the range of concerns, there is no single tool that could fulfill this vision. It is more likely that a series of recommendations will need to be implemented in a complementary and coordinated manner to ensure maximum benefit to Japantown, including a combination of existing tools and new strategies.

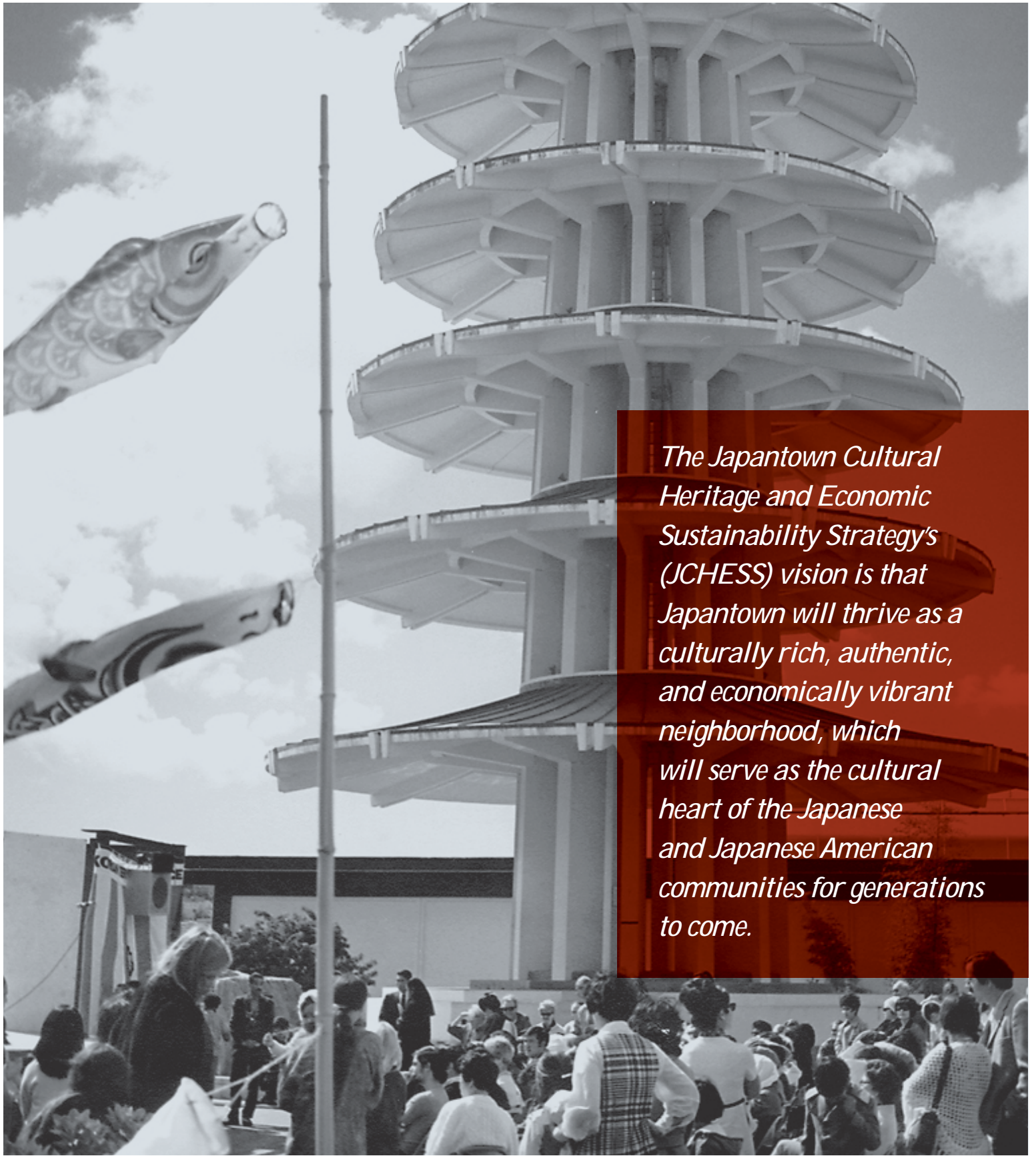
The recommendations of the JCHESS are listed below. To see a matrix showing which recommendations are good candidates to address each of the areas of concern, see the end of Chapter 5.

EXISTING STRATEGIES

- Utilize tools for preservation of historic buildings and structures
- Leverage the Japantown Special Use District to cultivate and attract new businesses appropriate to Japantown
- Utilize the City's Design Guidelines
- Implement streetscape and pedestrian improvements per the Better Streets Plan
- Implement proposed transportation improvements
- Market the neighborhood through SFTravel

PROPOSED STRATEGIES

- Create a Japantown Community Development Corporation
- Create a Japantown Community Land Trust
- Implement Invest in Neighborhoods
- Negotiate community benefits agreements with major new developments
- Create a Japantown Community Benefits District
- Implement a Japantown Mello-Roos Community Facilities District
- Utilize funds from the San Francisco Grants for the Arts
- Utilize Japan Center Garages' Capital Improvement Funds
- Create a Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District
- Create Japantown Design Guidelines
- Implement improvements to Peace Plaza
- Implement improvements to Buchanan Mall
- Develop a strategic plan for the Japan Center Malls



The Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy's (JCHESS) vision is that Japantown will thrive as a culturally rich, authentic, and economically vibrant neighborhood, which will serve as the cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come.



INTRODUCTION

A. ABOUT JAPANTOWN

Japantown has been the cultural heart of the Japanese American community in San Francisco and much of the Bay Area for over a century, serving a role that is unique to the city, region and country. The area known as Japantown today is considerably smaller than the neighborhood's previous boundaries, and future preservation cannot be taken for granted.¹ As one of three Japantowns remaining in the country, the area's cultural and historical resources are widely appreciated and play a significant role in the history of San Francisco and the region at large. Situated in the middle of the city, between downtown and the City's western neighborhoods on the major transit corridor of Geary Boulevard, Japantown attracts people from all over the Bay Area to participate in community events, watch cultural performances, conduct business, shop and receive services. Japanese and Japanese Americans throughout the Bay Area depend on San Francisco's Japantown as the focal point for community gatherings.

Much of what makes Japantown a culturally-rich and recognizable place are the Japanese American businesses and community-based organizations that are

clustered around Post, Buchanan and Sutter Streets, as well as found throughout the neighborhood (see Figure 1.1). A unique mix of businesses offers Japanese, Japanese American, Korean and other culturally specific services, wares and food products that can be found in only a few other places in the United States, while cultural and community institutions continue to draw people from around the Bay Area on a daily basis. The organizations serve a spectrum of ages from young to old, and range in their offerings from nutritional services, childcare and teen programs, Japanese cultural arts performances and instruction (e.g. flower arranging, calligraphy, tea ceremonies, dance, taiko drumming), Japanese language and martial arts schools and community-based long-term care services.

Japantown's cultural richness extends beyond the Japanese American community to include Jews, African Americans, Filipinos, Koreans, and other ethnic groups. The various heritages of these communities were instrumental and intertwined in the history, development, and current population of Japantown. Implementation of the recommendations of this document will necessarily seek to reflect this diversity.

¹ Japantown as we know it today is located north of Ellis Street, with the Fillmore District to the west, Western Addition to the south, and Cathedral Hill to the east. However, prior to World War II, the Japantown neighborhood stretched east to west from Gough Street to Presidio Avenue and north to south from California Street to McAllister Street. The reduced size of the neighborhood is due to the effects of both Internment during World War II and Urban Renewal (as discussed in Chapter 2).

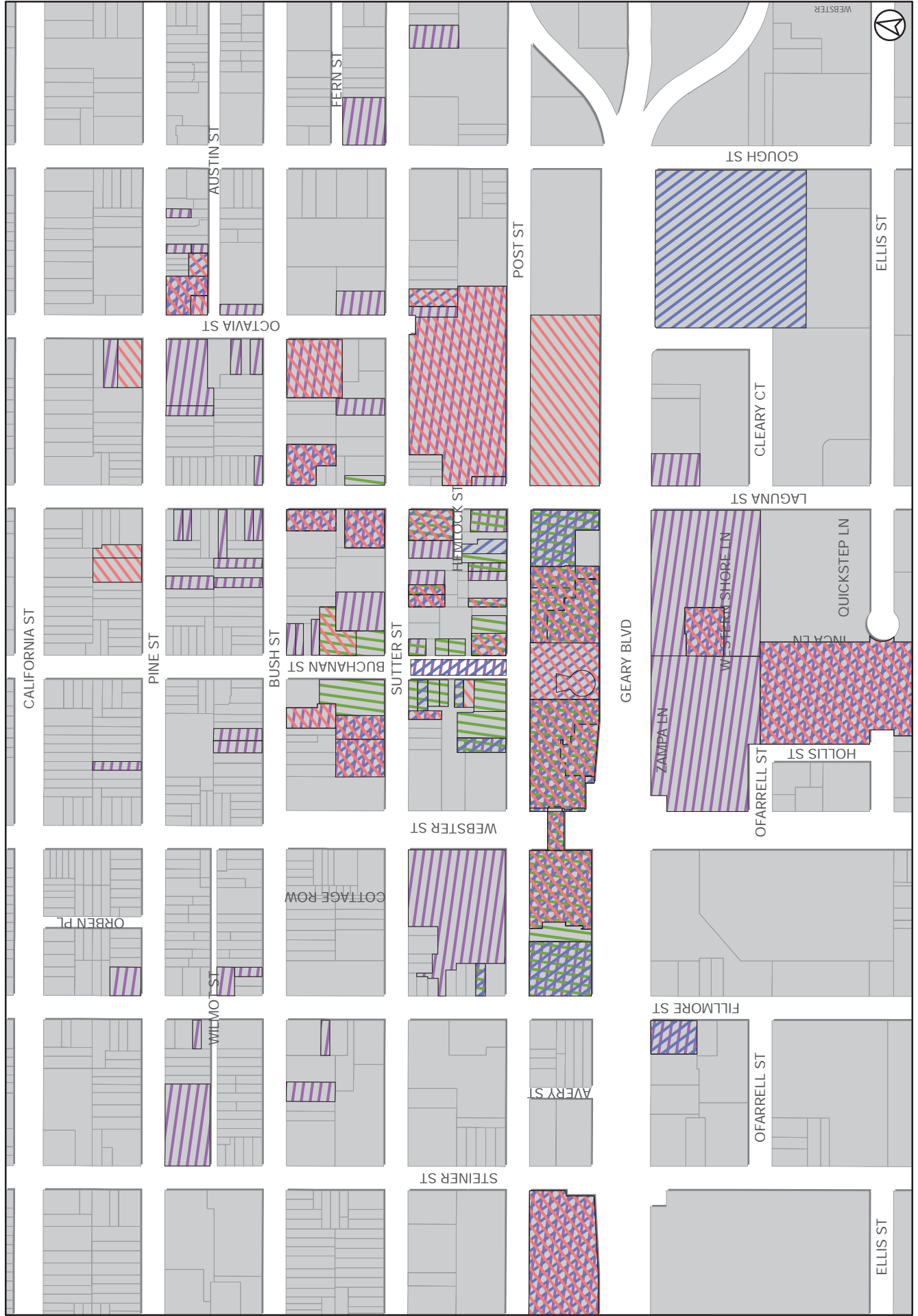


Figure 1.1
OVERVIEW OF JAPANTOWN'S
CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

B. VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

San Francisco is expected to grow substantially in the next few decades, as new residents and businesses are drawn to our beauty, economy, culture, and environment. While this growth can support the ongoing vibrancy of the city, it is also likely to lead to increased competition for our limited space. This competition can threaten businesses and organizations that are vital to the wellbeing of our communities.



GOAL 1
Secure Japantown's future as the historical and cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American Community.

- OBJECTIVES**
- A. Promote Japantown's value and history.
 - B. Promote a sense of Japan, in addition to the Japanese American culture.
 - C. Enhance historic and cultural landmarks.
 - D. Safeguard community-based institutions.
 - E. Promote events that attract youth and families (to live, visit, and shop).
 - F. Serve as the hub for the Japanese community in the region.

The Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy's (JCHES) vision is that Japantown will thrive as a culturally rich, authentic, and economically vibrant neighborhood which will serve as the cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come. Such a comprehensive vision contains many facets that are articulated in the following Goals and Objectives.



GOAL 2
Secure Japantown's future as a thriving commercial and retail district.

- OBJECTIVES**
- A. Preserve Japantown's livelihood, including existing local and historic businesses.
 - B. Encourage business development for new companies that reflect Japantown.
 - C. Provide retail/restaurants that cater to youth, families, neighbors, and tourists.
 - D. Provide consistent sidewalk and public space maintenance.
 - E. Generate demand outside of the immediate area.

...GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



GOAL 3

Secure Japantown's future as a home to residents and community-based institutions.

OBJECTIVES

- A. Provide more mixed-income housing (especially for families and seniors).
- B. Provide economic support for community-based, non-profit organizations.
- C. Improve public space and parks.
- D. Maintain a livable neighborhood that reflects San Francisco's diversity.



GOAL 4

Secure Japantown's future as a physically attractive and vibrant environment.

OBJECTIVES

- A. Enhance Japanese character.
- B. Increase sense of safety.
- C. Improve appearance and cleanliness.
- D. Re-establish pedestrian connections, social interaction and commerce between the neighborhoods on both sides of Geary Boulevard.
- E. Provide quality recreational opportunities.
- F. Provide spaces that cater to youth and families.
- G. Strive to utilize sustainable technology and materials.

C. CONTENT OF THE JCHESS

The JCHESS contains five chapters, in addition to the Executive Summary and this Introduction. They are as follows:

Chapter 2 provides a historic overview of Japantown and includes the roles of the Japanese community as well as other groups that have influenced the neighborhood;

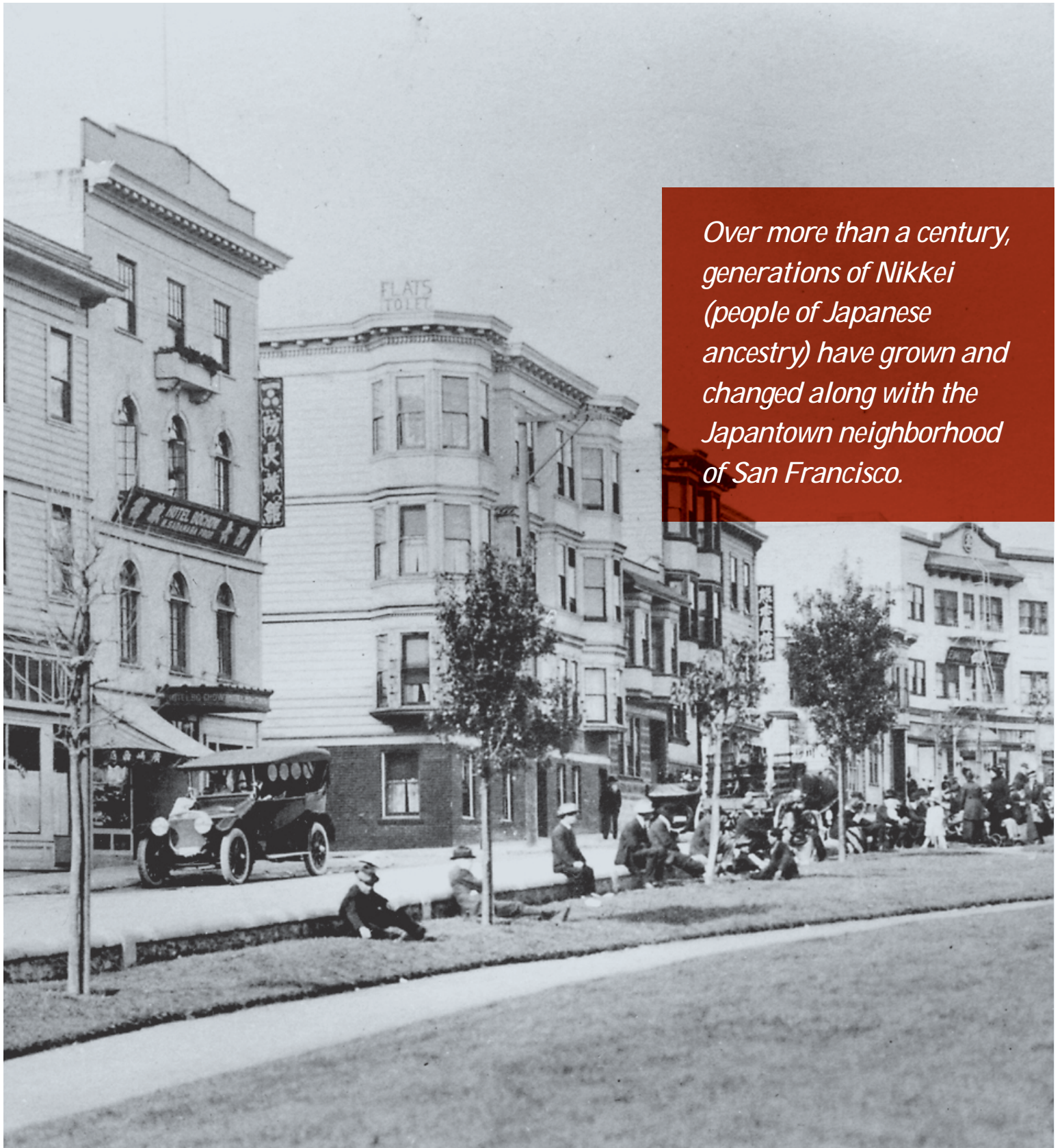
Chapter 3 delves into the concept of cultural heritage, its role in our society, and the methods that can be used to identify and understand Japantown's social heritage resources (i.e., buildings and structures, organizations and institutions, businesses, and cultural activities and events);

Chapter 4 is an overview of the existing conditions in Japantown and highlights those "areas of concern" identified by the community and the City; and

Chapter 5 offers a series of recommendations for how to address the identified areas of concern, and thereby fulfill the vision, goals, and objectives of this strategy.

D. ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

The JCHESS is the first document in San Francisco to focus specifically on how to preserve and promote a neighborhood's cultural heritage. It reflects many years of collaboration between the Japantown community and the City, particularly the Planning Department and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. The JCHESS would not be possible without the work of the Japantown Organizing Committee and its various subcommittees, who have spent the last 3½ years shepherding this process and promoting its innovative approach, as well as the myriad community members who contributed their knowledge and time. Much of the foundation of this document is based on the Planning Department's Draft Japantown Better Neighborhoods Plan (2009), which lends its goals and objectives to the JCHESS. The historic overview of this document is based on Japantown's Historic Context Statement (2009, revised 2011), written by Donna Graves and Page & Turnbull. The methodology for reviewing and analyzing Japantown's social heritage resources is based on the work of Planning Department staff, community members, Page & Turnbull, and San Francisco Heritage. Finally, many of the recommendations are based on Seifel, Inc.'s Economic Tools for Preserving Social Heritage in Japantown (2013), the first document to compile and assess economic tools that can support a neighborhood's social heritage. All of these documents are available on the project's webpage: <http://japantown.sfplanning.org>.



Over more than a century, generations of Nikkei (people of Japanese ancestry) have grown and changed along with the Japantown neighborhood of San Francisco.



HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF JAPANTOWN

Over more than a century, generations of Nikkei (people of Japanese ancestry) have grown and changed along with the Japantown neighborhood of San Francisco. Historic and cultural ties have deepened and strengthened even as the community has faced challenges to its social and physical fabric. This chapter briefly describes the history of this neighborhood, and of the Issei, Nisei, Sansei, and Yonsei (the first, second, third and fourth generations of Japanese in America).¹

A. PRE-1906 EARLY HISTORY OF JAPANTOWN AND JAPANESE IMMIGRATION

Japantown is part of a larger area of San Francisco known as the Western Addition, which was developed primarily during the latter part of the 19th century. During this time, the Western Addition evolved into a largely upper-middle-class and upper-class neighborhood. The families that occupied the Western

Addition's mostly two- and three-story houses typically had roots in European countries such as Germany, Austria, Ireland, England, Scotland, and France. A large proportion of these residents were Jewish, and today the area still includes a number of active synagogues and Jewish institutions, as well as former synagogues that have been re-purposed for other uses.

Significant numbers of Japanese people did not begin to settle in the area that became known as Japantown until after the 1906 earthquake. However, Japanese had already begun to arrive in California in 1869 – though the number of Japanese in the United States was extremely low until Japan liberalized emigration restrictions in the mid-1880s. Early Japanese immigrants to San Francisco had settled in Chinatown, as areas of town already inhabited by Chinese immigrants (who began arriving in the California during the Gold Rush) were often the only neighborhoods that permitted the first waves of Japanese immigrant men to find residences and set up small businesses. By 1900, there existed a second cluster of Japanese people and commercial establishments South of Market, along Jessie and Stevenson streets, between Fifth and Seventh Streets.

¹ The content of this chapter is derived from the revised Japantown Historic Context Statement (May 2011) by Donna Graves and Page & Turnbull (<http://www.sf-planning.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=1696>).

B. 1906 - 1920S

RESETTLEMENT AND RECOVERY

The demographics of the Western Addition had begun to shift by the turn of the 20th century, but it was the consequences of the 1906 earthquake and fires that transformed the neighborhood into what more recent chroniclers have called San Francisco's "Little United Nations." Many of the neighborhood's stately pre-disaster buildings, which had previously functioned as single-family dwellings, were divided into flats and rooms and let to boarders to satisfy the acute housing shortage. As the neighborhood became more densely occupied, it also grew more racially and ethnically diverse and more working class in character. The Jewish population grew, and Mexican Americans, African Americans, Filipinos and other ethnic groups also gravitated to the Western Addition-Fillmore area.

In addition, this period saw the majority of the Japanese community moving to the present Japantown area in the Western Addition, spurred by the destruction in the 1906 earthquake and fires that affected both Japanese enclaves in the Chinatown and South of Market neighborhoods. Japanese seeking new homes found that exclusionary housing practices, commonplace in San Francisco at the time, did not extend into parts of the Western Addition. The Japanese community reestablished homes, businesses, and institutions, forming the culturally distinctive neighborhood of Nihonjin Machi, or "Japanese person town," as it was called by Nikkei. Despite these inroads, Federal naturalization law barred the immigrant Japanese generation (Issei) from eligibility for citizenship until 1952, which denied the burgeoning community a political voice at a critical time in the community's development and left the community unduly vulnerable to exploitation and oppression. Additionally, California's Alien Land Law, enacted in 1913 denied the Issei the ability to buy, own or control most types of real property, thereby undermining the community's

ability to secure control over their community property and denying them one of the pillars of economic stability. The Alien Land Law was not overturned until 1952, making the community more vulnerable to the effects of Internment (discussed below).

The heart of Nihonjin Machi was the area bounded by Geary, Webster, Bush, and Laguna Streets, although Nikkei presence extended over a 30-block area, as far as Presidio, California, McAllister and Gough Streets. Many Japanese stores, personal services, and professionals were found concentrated in storefronts along Post and Buchanan Streets, the primary commercial corridors of Nihonjin Machi, as well on Fillmore Street. Other Nikkei businesses, services, schools, churches, and hotels operated in the houses of the neighborhood.

C. 1920S - 1942

NIHONJIN MACHI OF SAN FRANCISCO

By the 1920s and 1930s, the growing influence and resource base of several established Japanese institutions allowed them to construct dedicated structures such as Japanese schools, churches, and social and cultural halls which became the new cornerstones of the neighborhood in Nihonjin Machi. Nikkei institutions also converted 19th century buildings such as synagogues and mansions. While the Western Addition area was home to cultural groups other than Japanese (as discussed above), the character of Nihonjin Machi was decidedly Nikkei. The neighborhood reached its zenith, in total numbers and in geographic extent of Nikkei population, businesses, and community and social resources, by about 1940. The cultural community of Nihonjin Machi thrived despite legal restrictions such as the Alien Land Act of 1913, which disallowed Japanese and other "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning property, and the Immigration Act of 1924, which curtailed immigration from Japan.

D. 1942 - 1945

WORLD WAR II AND INTERNMENT

The World War II Internment had and continues to have a major impact on the identity and character of the Japantown community. Several months after the United States entered World War II following the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which authorized the forced removal of the entire West Coast Japanese and Japanese American population from their homes and communities, and their incarceration for the duration in hastily constructed permanent internment camps located in desolate areas of the Western and interior states. Seeing no viable alternatives, the Nikkei of San Francisco Nihonmachi, together with other Japantown communities from Arizona to Washington, largely complied with the internment orders, making arrangements as best they could for their homes, businesses and possessions (many losing virtually all they had). Ultimately, over 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry were incarcerated in the camps from 1942 to 1946, with some held to as late as 1948. Scholars and historians have almost universally condemned the incarceration as a civil liberties disaster and one of the most shameful acts in U.S. history. In 1976, President Ford formally declared the incarceration a "national mistake," and through the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, Congress formally investigated and apologized to the Japanese American community, citing the cause to have been the result of "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership."

E. 1945 - 1960S

NIKKEI RETURN TO JAPANTOWN

When the three-year incarceration ended at the end of the war, many Japanese returned to the neighborhoods that they had been forced to leave. However,

many others relocated to other Japantowns on the West Coast, to other neighborhoods and communities throughout the U.S., or to Japan. While the Nikkei population in San Francisco reached the same level as before the war, it was more dispersed, and consisted of many newcomers. These factors contributed to the challenges that the community faced in regaining social cohesion. Even the name of the neighborhood as known to Nikkei changed to reflect the more dispersed character of the postwar community, from Nihonjin Machi to Nihonmachi, or "Japantown." Nonetheless, the neighborhood continued to function as the cultural and commercial heart for Nikkei in San Francisco.

Overall, the postwar population of the Western Addition increased and became even more ethnically and culturally mixed. The wartime expansion of the African American community, the postwar return of Nikkei to the neighborhood, and an influx of other groups such as Filipinos and Koreans, resulted in an even more diverse cultural atmosphere than had existed previously in the Western Addition.

F. 1950S - 1980S

REDEVELOPMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL

By the 1950s, local agencies had identified San Francisco's Western Addition as the site of one of the first federally funded urban renewal projects in the nation. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, vast swaths of Western Addition neighborhoods (including parts of the Japantown-Fillmore area) were cleared by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency for eventual new development. This era of "Redevelopment" resulted in displacement of thousands of established residents and scores of businesses, razing of hundreds of structures and relocating buildings, and disruption of social fabric. The criticism leveled by the Western Addition community at these outcomes led directly

to Redevelopment Agency policy shifts related to displacement of people, rehabilitation and relocation of older buildings, and involvement of the local community in project planning. The redevelopment of the Western Addition was especially painful for those Japanese individuals and families who also suffered greatly with the internment during World War II.

Occurring under the auspices of the Redevelopment Agency, but with increasing influence from the Nikkei community, the “urban renewal” of Japantown displayed a cultural focus that was unusual for redevelopment projects. From the 1960s to the 1980s, much of the heart of Japantown was reconstructed with Japanese culturally-themed designs and uses. The earlier stages of urban renewal in Japantown generally resulted in large-scale complexes, including apartments and a commercial mall. Later phases tended to result in smaller projects that were integrated into the neighborhood and that addressed specific community needs. These included a pedestrian commercial plaza with public art, Nikkei churches, organizational headquarters, libraries, and a community and cultural center.

The redevelopment of Japantown’s physical landscape during the mid- to late-20th century occurred during a time when the social and political landscapes for Nikkei also changed in important ways. Decades-old restrictions on “alien” immigration and property ownership were lifted in the 1950s, and exclusionary housing practices and anti-miscegenation laws were struck down in the 1960s. Movements and campaigns to obtain official redress from the U.S. government for wartime internment were momentous in the 1970s and 1980s. Although significant changes in Nikkei social fabric that occurred over time led to closures of schools, churches, and organizations in Japantown, many other established institutions remained vital. In addition, new organizations and groups formed to fill the service voids and to meet the changing, diversifying needs of the multi-generational Nikkei cultural community.

G. 1990S - PRESENT

MODERN JAPANTOWN

World War II internment, post-war redevelopment, and the assimilation of Japanese Americans into the broader social fabric has meant that Japantown is no longer the site of a highly concentrated residential population of Nikkei. By 1990, more than 90 percent of Japanese Americans in San Francisco lived outside of Japantown. In addition, more than half of the Nikkei population of California is of mixed ethnic heritage, further complicating the issue of cultural identity.

As the neighborhood’s demographics shifted to a more diverse and pan-Asian population, and Nisei retirements led to the closure of long-time businesses ranging from manga shops to markets, bookstores to bowling alleys, community energies have focused on the question of what is essential to Nihonmachi.

At the same time, San Francisco’s Japantown continues to hold immeasurable symbolic and cultural meaning. Nihonmachi is the foundation for a regional community through the cultural, educational and spiritual ties it creates for Japanese and Japanese Americans. In addition to ethnically specific goods and services, Nikkei throughout the Bay Area visit Japantown for cultural and educational events. The streets of Nihonmachi are the site for annual events such as Obon festival, Cherry Blossom festival and parade, and the Japantown Street Fair, which bring the regional community together.

By the 1990s, Japanese Americans in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Jose recognized that they shared a common challenge – envisioning the future for the last three remaining historic Japantowns in the United States. In San Francisco, community-based efforts to support Japantown’s cultural heritage and economic sustainability formally began in 1997. This process led to the completion of a conceptual community

plan in 2000, the creation of an implementing body (Japantown Task Force), and was integral in the passage of Senate Bill 307 in September 2001, which acknowledged the significance of the state's three Japantowns through a California Japantown Preservation Pilot Project. From 2007-2009, the Japantown Task Force and neighborhood groups worked with the Planning Department to create the draft Japantown Better Neighborhoods Plan (BNP). Though never adopted, the draft BNP and the preceding processes were all forbearers of this document.



Japantown has been the cultural heart of the Japanese American community in San Francisco and much of the Bay Area for over a century.



Japantown should serve as the cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come.



PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE

1. In the late 1800s, this neighborhood had a substantial Jewish population, who built institutions such as Temple Ohabei Shalom (1895).

Image courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library.

2. The earliest Japanese immigrants lived in neighborhoods such as South Park.

Image courtesy of the Japanese American Historical Archive.

3. By the mid 1910s, the Western Addition had an established Japanese American community, as exemplified by these volunteers to the US Army.

Image courtesy of JAHA/JCCNC.

4. Japantown has always been a diverse neighborhood, as shown by the students at the Rafael Weill School (now Rosa Parks Elementary) in 1933.

Image courtesy of Hatsuro Aizawa.

PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE

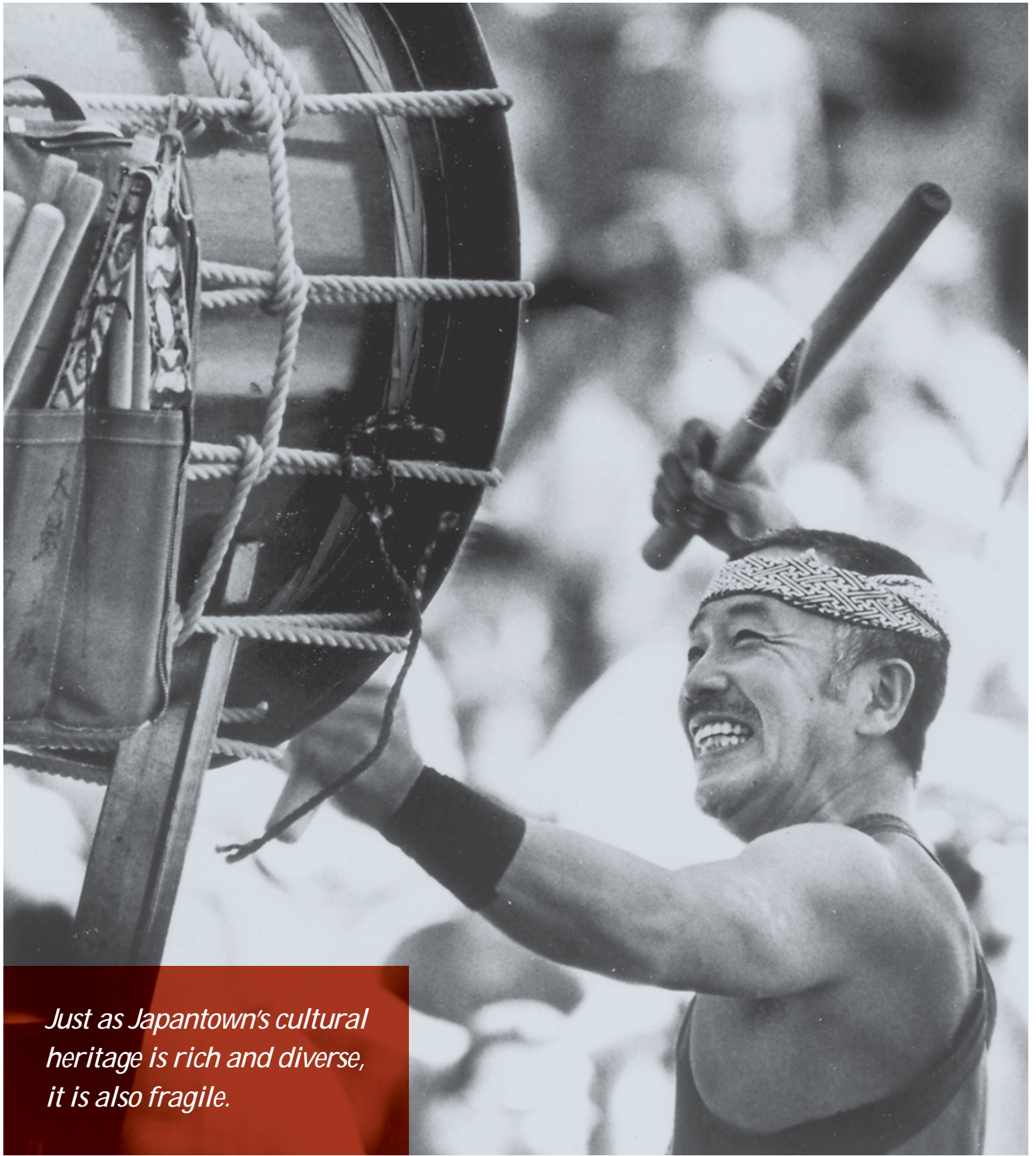
1. During the period between the wars, Japantown's organizations and institutions flourished, such as the Japanese Americans Citizens League (1929). *Image courtesy of the Japanese American National Library.*
2. During World War II, Japanese Americans were forced to register before being sent to internment camps. *Image courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*
3. After World War II, Japantown returned to being the cultural heart of the Japanese American community, including this women's bowling team from 1953. *Image from Generations.*
4. Japanese Americans were not allowed to become citizens of the United States until 1952, when Naturalization ceremonies such as this were held.



PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE

5. The creation of Geary Boulevard (1960) required the demolition of the surrounding blocks. *Image courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library.*
6. Citizens Against Nihonmachi Evictions (shown circa 1974) formed in response to the actions of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. *Image courtesy of the Japanese American National Library.*
7. The attractions of modern Japantown draws in visitors from all over the world. *Image courtesy of Todd Lappin.*





Just as Japantown's cultural heritage is rich and diverse, it is also fragile.



CULTURAL HERITAGE OVERVIEW & METHODOLOGY

A. CULTURAL HERITAGE OVERVIEW

This section is intended to (1) articulate the value and purpose of preserving the various elements of cultural heritage in Japantown and across the City, and (2) describe how the Planning Department has begun to identify cultural heritage resources in the Japantown community.

Cultural heritage may be defined as those elements, both tangible and intangible, that help define the beliefs, customs and practices of a particular community. Tangible elements may include a community's land, buildings, public spaces or artwork, while intangible elements may include organizations and institutions, businesses, cultural activities and events, and even people. These elements are rooted in the community's history and/or are important in maintaining its identity.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Japantown's history as an ethnically diverse neighborhood goes back to the 19th Century. The neighborhood has been an enclave for many ethnic and social groups over time, including African American, Filipino American, and Jewish American communities. However, for much of

the last century the neighborhood has predominantly been the center of the city's Japanese-American community. As noted in the Historic Overview Chapter, the Japanese American community largely moved to the area after the 1906 earthquake and fires which displaced them from the downtown area. Over time the neighborhood has established all the hallmarks of cultural heritage described above, including: landmark buildings, scores of organizations and institutions, hundreds of businesses serving the needs of the local community as well as the region's Japanese Americans, cultural activities including traditional practices such as taiko drumming and bonsai, as well as annual festivals and events that draw tens of thousands of people, such as the Cherry Blossom Festival and the J-POP festival.

Just as Japantown's cultural heritage is rich and diverse, it is also fragile. The disruption of the Japanese American community, particularly its residential base, dispersed the clientele for culturally-related businesses and exacerbated the obstacles to the community's capacity to pass on the skills and values of its traditional arts, crafts and cultural practices, and unique historical legacy. These conditions escalated

the need for community-serving organizations to address these needs. The increasing value of property in San Francisco can create rents that specialized businesses such as those that contribute to the unique character of Japantown cannot afford. This increased value can also create pressure to demolish older buildings for the opportunity to build something more modern and potentially larger. Tight public budgets and limited philanthropy can threaten the sustainability of community-serving organizations and the ability to maintain and enhance the public spaces in which the community gathers. These risks to Japantown’s cultural heritage and others are discussed in Chapter 4 – Existing Conditions.

Despite these obstacles and challenges, the Japantown community has shown a tenacious desire and capacity to thrive and take charge of its own destiny. From a community-wide standpoint, this includes overcoming two devastating displacements. On a more localized level, this includes confronting critical threats to its cultural heritage, as exemplified by the successful effort to prevent the threatened sale and demolition of the former Japanese YWCA building at 1830 Sutter Street, and to restore that building to community ownership and use.

Recognizing the tenuous state of Japantown’s neighborhood identity in this quickly changing development environment, and the capacity for the community to preserve itself even under substantial duress, the City and community have come together to determine how to maintain the neighborhood’s cultural significance and to reduce its economic fragility. This goal presented the working group with a novel task – to find out what are the tangible and intangible elements of Japantown that make it the instantly recognizable and unique place that it is today and then to find out how to protect those elements. While the City has a substantial toolkit for preserving and maintaining the older and tangible parts of the community’s culture, such as landmark ordinances to protect architecturally significant buildings, there is not a similar toolkit developed for preserving and maintaining the

intangible parts of a community’s cultural heritage, such as festivals or an art form. Moreover, in historic preservation practice, resources generally are required to be 50 years old or more to be considered for listing on historic resource registers, which creates a hurdle for culturally significant resources in Japantown, such as the Day of Remembrance (1979) or the Oshogatsu Festival (1971). Increasing the novelty of the task, the Department has not found any precedents for this kind of work in the United States. As such, the City, community, and our consultants had to work collaboratively and creatively to develop a methodology for this work, discussed below. Because this process will be precedent-setting for San Francisco, the team also maintained a goal that this work be replicable for use elsewhere in the City and in other similar communities nationally.

B. METHODOLOGY FOR IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

IDENTIFYING CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

To help identify and analyze Japantown’s cultural heritage resources, the Japantown Organizing Committee¹ created a Cultural Heritage Subcommittee. Through its work, this Subcommittee identified 279 potential cultural heritage resources by name and address and then began to categorize them according to type, such as sports/games, celebrations/festivals, folklore, literature, business, or institution. This inventory was then provided to the City’s consultant, Page & Turnbull, who was able to supplement the list with additional research with a thorough review of available documentation. A final review of the results by the community resulted in the identification of additional resources, bringing the total to 322. These resources are shown in Figures 3.1 – 3.4.

¹ The Japantown Organizing Committee is a community group dedicated to the creation of a plan for Japantown. It is the successor to the Japantown Steering Committee, which had a similar role during the creation of the Japantown Better Neighborhoods Plan.

Page & Turnbull, with support from the community and Planning Department, also created criteria by which the community could describe and weigh the significance of each resource and identified the time period in which the resource became important in the community. The database categorizes the resources into “traditions and history,” “cultural property, buildings, structures, archives,” “businesses,” and “institutions.” For each resource, the database includes such information as the resource’s name and address, its nature (business, festival, etc.), sources of information, and period and type of significance.

Not surprisingly, the majority of the cultural resources identified so far are associated with the Japanese-American community in Japantown. However, the database is intended to be a flexible and broad tool that can and has been used to identify Japantown cultural resources that have other historical, ethnic, or social affiliations. Also, while there are some relatively new and important cultural elements on the list, the intent was to focus on long-standing elements that have been around for at least a generation and have arguably left a larger impact on the neighborhood. The updated inventory with Page & Turnbull’s added information is available on the project website at <http://japantown.sfplanning.org>. This is a document that can and should grow as more people learn about the inventory effort and contribute their knowledge of the neighborhood.

It is important to note that this is meant to be a “living” database that can continue to be updated as new information becomes available and as changes occur in the neighborhood. The special nature of cultural heritage resources, and particularly intangible resource, requires an immense scouring of the collective memory of the community since these are often elements that are not readily seen or apparent by a researcher from outside the community. At a later time, the City or community may expand this process to include resources important to other community groups that have been historically significant in Japantown, such as African Americans and Jewish Americans.

PRIORITIZING RESOURCES

While the database attempts to be a complete list of resources, the community recognizes certain resources are a priority for preservation and support. As such, this database also attempts to identify those resources that might be considered to be “priority” cultural resources, based on their being documented as having a significant and longstanding association with the Japantown community.

To help document priority cultural resources, the City and Page & Turnbull have developed a Social Heritage Inventory Form. This Inventory Form is modeled after the standard documentation template used by the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) for historic buildings, thereby making it more comprehensible to preservation specialists and therefore more replicable. To make it more applicable to analyzing cultural resources, the Inventory Form distinguishes between tangible resources (sites, structures, buildings and objects) and intangible resources (organizations/institutions/businesses, cultural events, and traditional arts/crafts/practices). To make it more specific to Japantown, the Inventory Form identifies “periods of significance” based on the Japantown Historic Context Statement.² This information is captured to act as a snapshot of the resource at the time of the inventory.

To ensure that the Inventory Forms would be a useful tool and to put their methodology for describing cultural resources to the test, Page & Turnbull completed Inventory Forms for 24 of Japantown’s cultural resources. The completed forms now serve as a record of these cultural resources for posterity, with the recognition that these can be amended and updated as new information becomes available. The completed Inventory Forms are available on the project website at <http://japantown.sfplanning.org>.

² This document is available via the Planning Department’s webpage, <http://www.sfplanning.org>

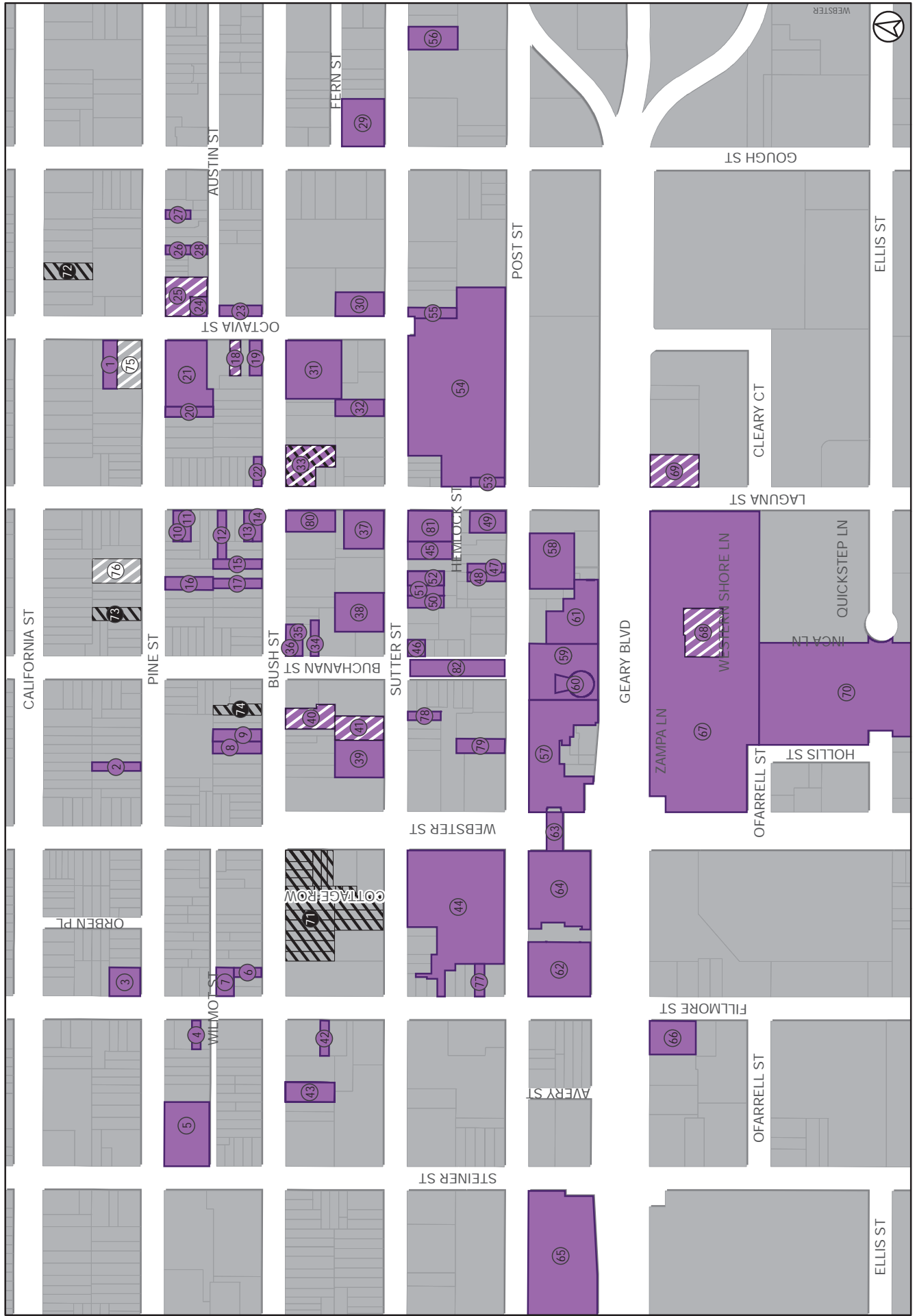





Figure 3.1
JAPANTOWN'S CULTURAL
RESOURCES: BUILDINGS &
STRUCTURES

-  (1) Community Identified Buildings and Structures of Importance
-  (2) Eligible for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places
-  (3) Article 10 Landmarks and Districts

(1) and (2)

(1), (2) and (3)

1,000 Feet

Table 3.1

JAPANTOWN'S CULTURAL RESOURCES: BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

Refer to the map on the previous page for location.

No.	Name	Address
1	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1807 OCTAVIA ST.
2	CATHOLIC JAPANESE HOME	2158 PINE ST.
3	APARTMENT BUILDING	2000 - 2016 FILLMORE ST., 2280 PINE ST.
4	MIXED-USE BUILDING	1919 FILLMORE ST.
5	PACIFIC TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH BUILDING	1930 STEINER ST.
6	MIXED-USE BUILDING	2178 - 2182 BUSH ST.
7	ITALIANATE MIXED-USE BUILDING	1908 - 1914 FILLMORE ST.
8	FLAT FRONT ITALIANATE HOUSE	2020 BUSH ST.
9	ITALIANATE HOUSE	2018 BUSH ST.
9	STICK STYLE HOUSE	2014 BUSH ST.
10	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1855 LAGUNA ST.
11	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1849 - 1851 LAGUNA ST.
12	TERSCHUREN HOUSE	1825 - 1829 LAGUNA ST.
13	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1803 LAGUNA ST.
14	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1801 LAGUNA ST.
15	ALTERED RESIDENCE	1936 - 1938 BUSH ST.
16	APARTMENT BUILDING	2025 PINE ST.
17	QUEEN ANN HOUSE	1948 - 1950 BUSH ST.
18	MORNING STAR SCHOOL	1715 OCTAVIA ST.
19	FLAT FRONT ITALIANATE MIXED-USE BUILDING	1701 OCTAVIA ST.
20	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1947 - 1951 PINE ST.
21	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1907 - 1909 PINE ST.
21	SISTER'S HOME ASSOCIATED WITH MORNING STAR SCHOOL AND ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH	1911 PINE ST.
22	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1800 LAGUNA ST.
23	GOthic REVIVAL APARTMENTS	1700 OCTAVIA ST.
24	BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA	1710 OCTAVIA ST.
25	BUDDHIST CHURCH OF SAN FRANCISCO	1881 PINE ST.
26	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1855 - 1857 PINE ST.
27	ALTERED ITALIANATE HOUSE	1829 PINE ST.
28	AUSTIN ALLEY (VARIOUS RESIDENCES)	AUSTIN ALLEY
29	SUTTER APARTMENTS	1480 SUTTER ST.
30	QUEEN ANNE HOTEL	1590 SUTTER ST.
31	MARY ELLEN PLEASANT EUCALYPTUS TREES	SOUTHWEST CORNER OF BUSH AND OCTAVIA
32	EDWARDIAN APARTMENT BUILDING	1646 SUTTER ST.
33	KOKORO ASSISTED LIVING CENTER - FORMER SOTO ZEN TEMPLE	1881 - 1899 BUSH ST.
34	DR. TOGASAKI HOUSE	1848 BUCHANAN ST.
35	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1860 BUCHANAN ST.
36	ITALIANATE HOUSE	1868 BUCHANAN ST.
37	CHRIST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH	1700 SUTTER ST.
38	NAMIKI APARTMENTS	1776 SUTTER ST.
39	JAPANESE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY CENTER OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA	1840 - 1864 SUTTER ST.
40	KINMON GAKUEN	2031 BUSH ST.
41	NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS (FORMERLY JAPANESE YWCA BUILDING)	1830 SUTTER ST.
42	MIXED-USE BUILDING	1843 - 1849 FILLMORE ST.
43	UTILITY BUILDING	2255 BUSH ST.
44	GOLDEN GATE APARTMENTS	1870 POST ST.
45	APARTMENT BUILDING	1725 - 1735 SUTTER ST.

No.	Name	Address
46	BUCHANAN MALL (NIHONMACHI PEDESTRIAN MALL - OSAKA WAY) - INCLUDES BUCHANAN MALL GATE AND RUTH ASAWA ORIGAMI FOUNTAINS AND RIVER OF COBBLESTONES	BUCHANAN ST. B/N POST & SUTTER
47	KOREA HOUSE	1640 POST ST.
48	MASAYASU ASHIZAWA HOUSE	1644 - 1648 POST ST.
49	MISAWA DRUG STORE	1602 POST ST.
50	JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE (JACL) HEADQUARTERS BUILDING	1765 SUTTER ST.
51	NICHI BEI KAI: TEA CEREMONY, ODORI, INCENCE, SUMI-E, OMOTOSENKE,	1759 SUTTER ST.
52	EDWARDIAN APARTMENT BUILDING	1745-1751 SUTTER ST.
53	INTERNATIONAL STYLE COMMERCIAL BUILDING	1596 POST ST.
54	HINODE TOWERS/NIHONMACHI TERRACE	1615 SUTTER ST.
55	WILFORD WOODRUFF HOUSE	1533 SUTTER ST.
56	JAPANESE YMCA (FORMER)	1409 SUTTER ST.
57	JAPAN CENTER WEST	1630 GEARY BLVD.
58	MIYAKO HOTEL	1625 POST ST.
59	PEACE PLAZA	POST ST. @ BUCHANAN
59	THREE JAPANTOWNS MONUMENT	PEACE PLAZA
60	PEACE PAGODA	PEACE PLAZA
61	JAPAN CENTER EAST	1610 GEARY BLVD.
62	SUNDANCE KABUKI CINEMAS	1881 POST ST.
63	JAPANTOWN FAN SCULPTURE	BELOW BRIDGE ON WEBSTER
64	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING	1581 WEBSTER ST.
65	WESTERN ADDITION LIBRARY - JAPANESE COLLECTION	1550 SCOTT ST.
66	FILLMORE AUDITORIUM	1539 FILLMORE ST.
67	ST. FRANCIS SQUARE COOPERATIVE APARTMENTS	10 BERTIE MINOR LANE
68	BUCHANAN YMCA	1530 BUCHANAN ST.
69	CHINESE CONSULATE (FORMER JAPANESE SALVATION ARMY BUILDING)	1450 LAGUNA ST.
70	FRIENDSHIP TREES (OHANAMI GROVE)	1501 O'FARRELL ST.
70	ROSA PARKS SCHOOL (FORMERLY RAPHAEL WEILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL)	1501 O'FARRELL ST.
71	BUSH STREET COTTAGE ROW	COTTAGE ROW
72	TOBIN HOUSE	1969 CALIFORNIA ST.
73	MADAME C J WALKER HOUSE	2066 PINE ST.
74	STANYAN HOUSE	2006 BUSH ST.
75	ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHOLIC CHURCH	1801 OCTAVIA ST.
76	NICHIREN BUDDHIST CHURCH	2016 PINE ST.
77	MARCUS BOOKS/JIMBO'S BOP CITY	1712 FILLMORE ST.
78	ILOILO CIRCLE	1809 SUTTER ST.
79	NEW PEOPLE (FORMER HOKUBEI MAINICHI)	1746 POST ST.
80	KONKO-KYO CHURCH	1900 BUSH ST.
81	SOKOJI SOTO-ZEN TEMPLE	1691 LAGUNA ST.
82	BUCHANAN STREET MALL	1700 BLOCK OF LAGUNA

Not Shown on Map

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH (SEI KO KAI)	2140 PIERCE ST.
JAPANESE TEA GARDEN	75 HAGIWARA TEA GARDEN DR.
PINE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH	426 33RD ST.
SAKURA 150 CHERRY TREES	VARIOUS THROUGHOUT JTOWN



Figure 3.2
JAPANTOWN'S CULTURAL RESOURCES:
ORGANIZATIONS & INSTITUTIONS

Table 3.2

JAPANTOWN’S CULTURAL RESOURCES: ORGANIZATIONS & INSTITUTIONS

Refer to the map on the previous page for location.

No.	Name	Address
4	ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH / ST. BENEDICT’S	1801 OCTAVIA ST.
5	JAPANESE COMMUNITY YOUTH COUNCIL	2012 PINE ST.
6	NICHIREN BUDDHIST CHURCH	2016 PINE ST.
8	BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA	1710 OCTAVIA ST.
9	BOY SCOUT TROOP 29	1881 PINE ST.
9	GIRL SCOUTS - SF BUDDHIST CHURCH	1881 PINE ST.
9	SOKO GAKUEN LANGUAGE SCHOOL	440 AUSTIN ST.
10	GREEN’S EYE HOSPITAL	1801 BUSH ST.
11	KOKORO ASSISTED LIVING CENTER - FORMER SOTO ZEN TEMPLE	1881 - 1899 BUSH ST.
12	BOY SCOUT TROOP 58	1909 BUSH ST.
12	KONKO-KYO CHURCH	1909 BUSH ST.
13	BOY SCOUT TROOP 12	1700 SUTTER ST.
13	CUPC SUMMER CAMP	1700 SUTTER ST.
13	NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM	1700 SUTTER ST.
14	NICHI BEI WEEKLY / NICHI BEI FOUNDATION	1832 BUCHANAN ST.
14	NIHONMACHI PARKING CORP.	1832 BUCHANAN ST.
14	SAKURA 150	1832 BUCHANAN ST.
15	NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS OFFICES AND PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM	1830 SUTTER ST.
16	BAMBI CHILDREN’S GROUP	1840 - 1864 SUTTER ST.
16	GOLDEN GATE OPTIMIST CLUB	1840 - 1864 SUTTER ST.
16	JAPANESE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY CENTER OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA	1840 - 1864 SUTTER ST.
16	KIMOCHI LUNCH PROGRAM	1840 - 1864 SUTTER ST.
16	NIHONMACHIROOTS	1840 - 1864 SUTTER ST.
16	NIKKEI AND RETIREMENT	1840 - 1864 SUTTER ST.
16	NOBIRU-KAI (JAPANESE NEWCOMER SERVICES)	1840 - 1864 SUTTER ST.
16	TOMODACHI YOUTH SUMMER CAMP	1840 - 1864 SUTTER ST.
17	JTOWN ARTS	2031 BUSH ST.
17	KINMON GAKUEN	2031 BUSH ST.
17	NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS BILINGUAL & MULTICULTURAL CHILDCARE	2031 BUSH ST.
18	KIMOCHI, INC.	1715 BUCHANAN ST.
19	SOKOJI SOTO-ZEN TEMPLE, SOTO ZEN MISSION	1691 LAGUNA ST.
20	NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY	1684 POST ST.
21	JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE (JAACL)	1765 SUTTER ST.
21	JAPANESE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA (JIKEIKAI)	1765 SUTTER ST., 2ND FLOOR
21	JAPANTOWN TASKFORCE	1765 SUTTER ST.
21	NAKAYOSHI YOUNG PROFESSIONALS	1765 SUTTER ST.

No.	Name	Address
22	BUNKA HALL OF FAME	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	HIBAKUSHAYOUKAI	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	JAPAN CLUB	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	JAPANESE AMERICAN TEA SOCIETY	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	JAPANTOWN MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	NICHI BEI KAI (JAPANESE AMERICAN CLUB)	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	OMOTESENKE DOMONIKAI	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	SAKURA MATSURI INC.	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	SAN FRANCISCO SHOGI CLUB	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	URASENKE - SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	ZEN NIPPON SHUDO	1759 SUTTER ST.
23	JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL LIBRARY	1615 SUTTER ST.
23	JAPANESE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS FEDERATION (SHUKYOKA KONWAKAI)	1615 SUTTER ST.
24	KIMOCHI HOME	1531 SUTTER ST.
25	SEQUIOIAS - NIKKEI GROUP	1400 GEARY BLVD.
26	JAPAN CENTER GARAGE CORP.	1610 GEARY BLVD.
27	KIMOCHI LOUNGE	1581 WEBSTER ST. KINOKUNIYA (BRIDGE)
27	SAN FRANCISCO TAIKO DOJO	1581 WEBSTER ST.
28	IKENOBO IKEBANA	1581 WEBSTER ST.
29	HAMILTON SENIOR CENTER (WED. JAPANESE SENIOR LUNCH)	1900 GEARY BLVD.
30	JAPANESE BILINGUAL BICULTURAL PROGRAM (JBBP) AT ROSA PARKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	1501 O’FARRELL ST.
30	ROSA PARKS SCHOOL (FORMERLY RAPHAEL WEILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL)	1501 O’FARRELL ST.
31	BUDDHIST CHURCH OF SAN FRANCISCO	1881 PINE ST.
32	ILOILO CIRCLE	1809 SUTTER ST.
33	BUCHANAN YMCA	1530 BUCHANAN ST.
34	ST. FRANCIS SQUARE HOA	ST. FRANCIS SQUARE

Not Shown on Map

BONSAI SOCIETY SAN FRANCISCO	COUNTY FAIR BUILDING, 9TH AVENUE AND LINCOLN WAY
CHIBI CHAN PRESCHOOL	2507 PINE ST.
FRIENDS OF HIBAKUSHA	
JAPANESE AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CLUB	
JAPANTOWN FOUNDATION	306 POST ST., 8TH FLOOR
KAGAMI KAI	1919 18TH AVE.
KENJIN KAI (VARIOUS GROUPS)	VARIOUS
NIKKEI LIONS CLUB OF SAN FRANCISCO	601 VAN NESS AVE.
PINE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH	426 33RD AVE.
SEIKO-KAI CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH	2140 PIERCE ST.
SF-OSAKA SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION	C/O M. SACK, 425 MARKET ST.
URASENKE FOUNDATION - SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH	2143 POWELL ST.



Figure 3.3
JAPANTOWN'S CULTURAL RESOURCES:
BUSINESSES

Table 3.3

JAPANTOWN'S CULTURAL RESOURCES: BUSINESSES

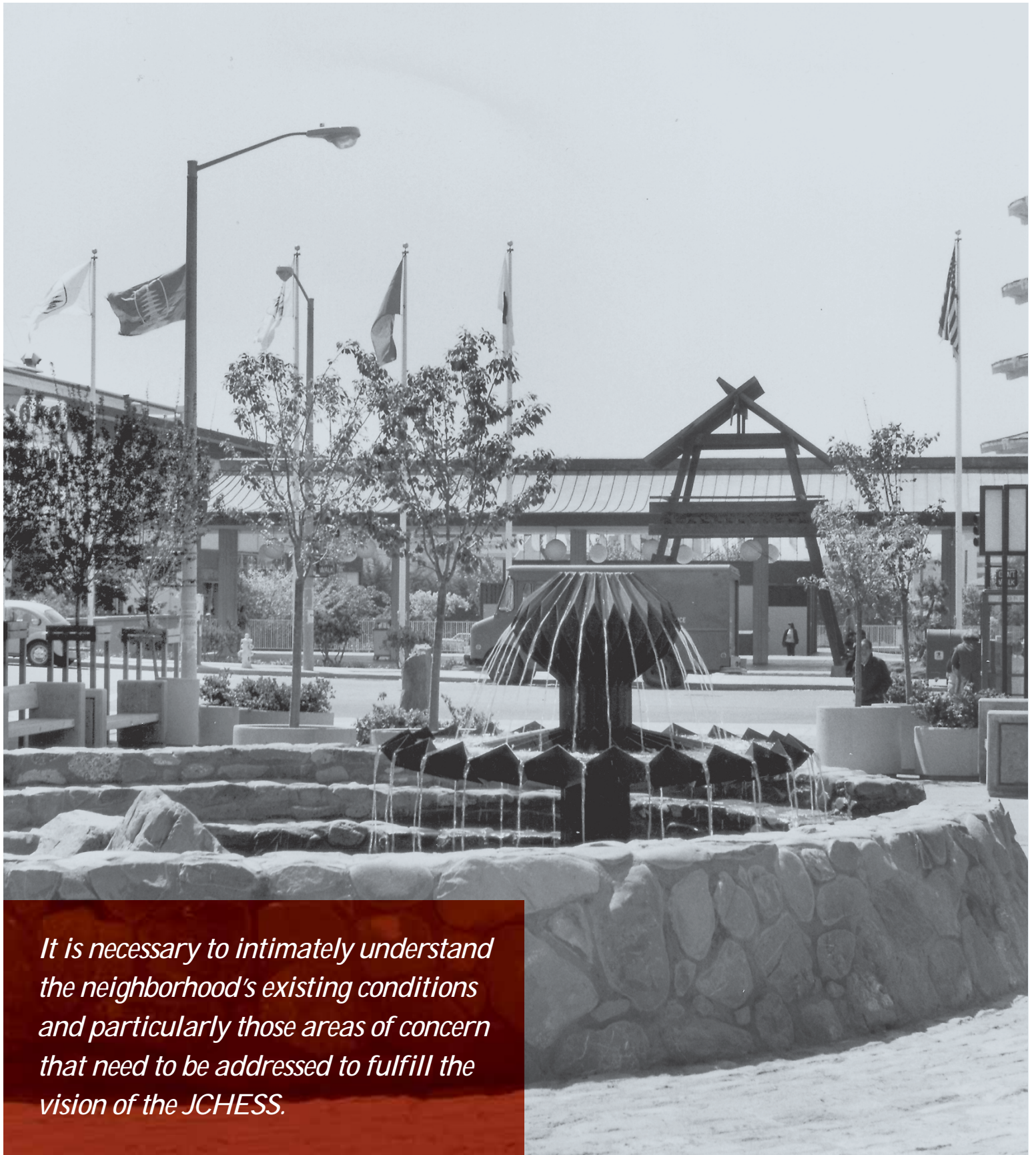
Refer to the map on the previous page for location.

No.	Name	Address
1	KISS SEAFOOD RESTAURANT	1700 LAGUNA ST.
2	SUPER MIRA	1790 SUTTER ST.
2	YASUKOCHI'S SWEET STOP	1790 SUTTER ST.
3	JITLADA THAI CUISINE	1832 BUCHANAN ST.
3	KYOTO CLEANERS	1832 BUCHANAN ST.
3	T. OKAMOTO & CO.	1832 BUCHANAN ST.
3	THOUSAND CRANES PHARMACY	1832 BUCHANAN ST.
3	LAW OFFICES OF SCOTT T. OKAMOTO	1826 BUCHANAN ST.
3	WONG & TOTSUBO OPTOMETRIST	1826 BUCHANAN ST.
4	HOTEL TOMO (BEST WESTERN)	1800 SUTTER ST.
4	CAFE MUMS	1800 SUTTER ST.
4	SHINBORI / FONG DDS	1788 SUTTER ST.
5	SHARAKU	1726 POST ST.
5	TORAYA RESTAURANT	1734 POST ST.
6	BABY, THE STARS SHINE BRIGHT	1746 POST ST. (NEW PEOPLE BUILDING)
6	CROWN & CRUMPET TEA SHOP CAFÉ	NEW PEOPLE BUILDING
6	SOU SOU	NEW PEOPLE BUILDING
6	SUPER FROG GALLERY	NEW PEOPLE BUILDING
6	VIZ CINEMA	NEW PEOPLE BUILDING
7	PAPER TREE	1743 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
7	MORIGUCHI ACCOUNTING	1741 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
7	PACIFIC LEISURE MANAGEMENT	1739 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
8	SUSHI AKA TOMBO	1737 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
9	ALOHA WAREHOUSE	1731 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
10	DOOBU	1723 BUCHANAN ST.
10	FUJI SHIATSU	1723 BUCHANAN ST.
11	KAPPA SUSHI	1700 POST ST.
11	KIPPU	1707 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
11	SANPOO SUSHI	1702 POST ST.
11	DIMPLES	1705 BUCHANAN ST.
11	MIO LOUNGE	1705 BUCHANAN ST.
11	PLAYGROUND	1705 BUCHANAN ST.
11	SSISO	1705 BUCHANAN ST.
12	BENKYO-DO MANJU SHOP	1747 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
13	ONG & KIMURA ACCOUNTING	1750 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
13	SANKO	1758 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
14	YAKINIQ	1640 POST ST.
15	ARTY HAIR SALON	1680 - 1682 POST ST.
15	SAM WANG RESTAURANT	1680 - 1682 POST ST.
16	SOKO HARDWARE	1698 POST ST.
16	CALIFORNIA BANK & TRUST	1696 POST ST.
16	SOKO INTERIORS	1672 POST ST.
17	IROHA	1728 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
17	SHABUSEN	1726 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
18	PEOPLE VIDEO	1740 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
18	TAMPOPO	1740 BUCHANAN ST. (BUCHANAN MALL)
19	WARAKU	1638 POST ST.
20	DO RE ME MUSIC STUDIO KARAOKI	1604 POST ST.
20	DEAN OSUMI, DDS	1610 POST ST.
20	LAWRENCE NAKAMURA, DDS	1610 POST ST.
20	THEODORE UYEMOTO, DDS	1610 POST ST.
20	YUJI MITANI LAW OFFICE	1610 POST ST.
21	JAPANTOWN MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION	1759 SUTTER ST.
22	FUJIYA SHISEIDO	1662 POST ST.
23	JAPAN CENTER WEST	1630 GEARY BLVD.
23	AMIKO BOUTIQUE	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	ANDERSON BAKERY	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	ASAKICHI ANTIQUES	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	AUTO FREAK, TALK FREAK	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	BELLY GOOD CAFE & CREPES	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	BENIHANA	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	CAFE HANA	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	CAKO	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	FACESHOP	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	ISOBUNE	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	JAPAN VIDEO & MEDIA	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	JPNTOYS	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	KATACHI	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)

No.	Name	Address
23	KOHSHI MASTER OF SCENTS	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	KUSHI TSURU	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	MAY'S COFFEESHOP	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	MIFUNE	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	MISEKI JEWELRY	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	MORITAYA	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	MOYO'S FROZEN YOGURT	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	NIPPON-YA	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	NJIYA SUPER MARKET	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	OSAKAYA	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	PLAYLAND JAPAN	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	SAKURA SAKURA	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	SANRIO	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	SHIBUYA SF	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
23	YUKI BOUTIQUE	JAPAN CENTER (WEST MALL)
24	HOTEL KABUKI	1625 POST ST.
24	O IZAKAYA LOUNGE	1625 POST ST.
25	JAPAN CENTER EAST	1610 GEARY BLVD.
25	AKABANAA	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	BOUTIQUE HARAJUKU	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	DAISO JAPAN	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	GLAM-UP	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	ICHIBAN KAN	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	INO SUSHI	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	KUI SHIN BO	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	MIFUNE DON	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	RAMEN UNDERGROUND	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	SEOUL GARDEN	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	TAKARA	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	UNION BANK OF CALIFORNIA	JAPAN CENTER (EAST MALL)
25	MAGIC AUTO DETAIL	JAPAN CENTER GARAGE
26	KABUKI SPRINGS AND SPA	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
26	SUNDANCE KABUKI CINEMAS	1881 POST ST.
27	PA'INA RESTAURANT	1865 POST ST.
28	ASAKICHI (CAST IRON)	KINOKUNIYA (BRIDGE)
28	ASAKICHI INCENSE	KINOKUNIYA (BRIDGE)
28	INTERNATIONAL ART GALLERY	KINOKUNIYA (BRIDGE)
28	ON THE BRIDGE	KINOKUNIYA (BRIDGE)
28	SAN FRANCISCO TAIKO DOJO SHOWROOM	KINOKUNIYA (BRIDGE)
28	SHIGE KIMONO	KINOKUNIYA (BRIDGE)
29	CLUB MARI'S	1581 WEBSTER (KINOKUNIYA BUILDING)
29	FESTA KARAOKE LOUNGE	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	FUKU SUSHI	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	IZUMIYA	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	JAPANTOWN COLLECTABLES	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	JC BEAUTY SALON	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	J-TOWN VIDEO	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	JUBAN YAKINIKU	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	KATSURA GARDEN	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	KINOKUNIYA BOOK STORE	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	KISSAKO TEA	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	MAI DO STATIONERY	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	MAI DO TOYS	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	MAKI	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	MASHIKO FOLK CRAFT	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	MIFUNE BISTRO	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	MOGURA	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	NEAT ASIAN THINGS	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	NEGISHI JEWELRY	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	PIKA PIKA	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	PMP ADVERTISING	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	SAPPORO YA	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	SOPHIES CREPES	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	SUPER MATH	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
29	SUZU NOODLE SHOP	KINOKUNIYA BUILDING
30	NARUMI JAPANESE ANTIQUES	1902B FILLMORE ST.
31	MIO	2035 FILLMORE ST.



Figure 3.4
JAPANTOWN'S CULTURAL RESOURCES:
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES & EVENTS



It is necessary to intimately understand the neighborhood's existing conditions and particularly those areas of concern that need to be addressed to fulfill the vision of the JCHESS.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

As stated in Chapter 1, the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy's (JCHESS) vision is that Japantown will thrive as a culturally rich, authentic, and economically vibrant neighborhood which will serve as the cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come. To fulfill the vision of this Strategy, it is necessary to intimately understand the neighborhood's existing conditions and particularly those areas of concern that need to be addressed to fulfill the vision. This includes the following elements:

A. People who live, work, play, and create community in Japantown

B. Land that is used for residential, commercial, and institutional uses

C. Buildings that create a neighborhood's urban design and transmit an essence of cultural identity and history

D. Organizations and institutions that support social cohesion and that promote cultural identity

E. Businesses that contribute to day-to-day cultural life-ways such as cuisine, apparel, and recreation

F. Culture of Japanese, Japanese American, and other traditions, including customs, events, language, literature, and arts, that are important to the community's identity

G. Public realm consisting of the spaces in a community that are common to everyone, such as the streets, sidewalks, parks, and plazas¹

Each of these elements is explored below, in detail, including any areas of concern that could be addressed by this Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy.

¹ Another important aspect of the community is its connectivity for people and their vehicles, both within the neighborhood and between Japantown and the rest of the city and region. Improving connectivity typically requires significant infrastructure projects that are beyond the scope and objective of the JCHESS. It is recommended that the City and community continue exploring issues around connectivity, and leverage proposed improvements to enhance the safety and convenience of connections, such as Geary Bus Rapid Transit and the Transit Effectiveness Project.

A. PEOPLE

As discussed in Chapter 2 – Historic Overview, Japantown has been the primary hub for the city and the region’s Japanese American community for over a century, which always maintained a diverse mix of residents and businesses. As shown in Table 4.1, the current residents of Japantown have a diverse ethnicity, age, income, and education. The population of residents of Japanese ancestry is relatively low (5%), meaning that many Japanese Americans and others who see Japantown as their cultural center reside outside of the neighborhood. Nonetheless, its institutions and businesses make Japantown a regional as well as local community center.

AREA OF CONCERN

A.1. It is Difficult to Sustain Japantown’s Critical Mass as a Community Hub.

The displacements caused by internment and redevelopment (as discussed in Chapter 2) means that the great majority of the region’s Japanese Americans do not live in Japantown. Additionally, there is limited in-migration of Japanese to the United States, compared to other ethnic groups. There is concern that this makes it more difficult to sustain the critical mass necessary to support the businesses and institutions that make Japantown the hub of the city and region’s Japanese and Japanese American community.

AREA OF CONCERN

A.2. Not All Age Groups Have an Equal Stake in the Community.

Currently, Japantown has substantial resources for children from pre-K through elementary school, and for seniors, as well as businesses and activities that serve older adults. There is concern that young adults and youth outside of formal programs and organizations lack facilities where they can participate fully given their limited economic resources, and that they need to be integrated into the community’s decision-making processes.

AREA OF CONCERN

A.3. Lack of Collaboration for Cultural Preservation.

Preserving and supporting Japantown’s cultural and social resources requires collaboration and compromise within the community, within City government, and between the community and City. There is concern within the community that the importance of collaboration necessary to realize the JCHESS’s goals may not be sufficiently appreciated.

**Table 4.1
RESIDENTS OF JAPANTOWN:
A STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT ***

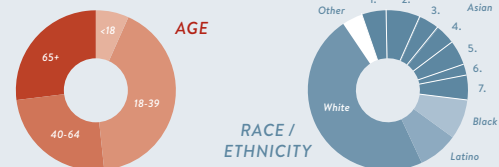
Total Residents 11,228

Age

UNDER 18	7%
18-39	42%
40-64	25%
OVER 65	27%

Race / Ethnicity:

ASIAN	33%
1. CHINESE	5%
2. FILIPINO	7%
3. HMONG	4%
4. INDIAN	4%
5. JAPANESE	5%
6. KOREAN	2%
7. OTHER ASIAN	5%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	8%
LATINO	8%
WHITE	47%
NONE OF THE ABOVE	4%



Median Household Income \$53,900

NORTH OF SUTTER STREET	\$62,800
SUTTER STREET TO GEARY BOULEVARD	\$53,900
SOUTH OF GEARY BOULEVARD	\$35,600

Education

LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	10%
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	11%
SOME COLLEGE/ASSOCIATES DEGREE	19%
BACHELOR’S DEGREE	31%
MASTERS, PROFESSIONAL, OR DOCTORATE DEGREE	29%

* Data on total residents, age, and race/ethnicity from the 2010 Decennial Census. Data on income and education are estimates from the 2011 American Community Survey.

B. LAND

LAND USES

Japantown is comprised of a mix of land uses, including purely residential blocks, blocks combining a mixture of residential, institutional and commercial uses, and blocks entirely made up of commercial uses (see Figure 4.1 for a map of land uses in Japantown).²

Residential Uses

Japantown contains about 7,150 housing units. Residential uses predominate in the area north of Bush, consisting mostly of fine-grained, single- and two-family homes, typically not wider than 25 feet, and less than 40 feet in height. Residential uses south of Bush Street include a number of apartment buildings that contain anywhere from four to fifty residential units, although a few large-scale, apartment buildings containing upward of one hundred residential units also exist.

Institutional Uses

Japantown contains over 200 institutional uses, including community centers, schools, civic organizations, business associations, and religious institutions. These uses are largely interspersed throughout the community.

For more information about institutional uses, see Section 4.D, below.

Commercial Uses

Japantown contains over 700 businesses utilizing over 2 million square feet of space.³ Many of these are home businesses and other small offices. More visible are the customer-oriented businesses that are south of Bush Street, along Geary, Post, Fillmore, and Buchanan Streets. These are typically retail in nature, including many restaurants. Many of the commercial uses are located on the ground floor of buildings with residential units above. The relatively few large-scale, commercial buildings were constructed during the urban renewal era between Post Street and Geary

Boulevard to form the Japan Trade Center (now referred to as Japan Center). The three buildings that make up Japan Center are two tall stories in height, yet the buildings have large footprints (taking up three city blocks), and contain numerous commercial units and interior public spaces. Small-scale, single-use commercial buildings are not that common, although they can be found interspersed with mixed-use buildings along the neighborhood's commercial corridors, like Fillmore and Post streets.

For more information about commercial uses, see Section 4.E, below.

Open Space/Recreational Uses

Other areas of interest include the pedestrian-only part of Buchanan Street between Post and Sutter Streets, and Peace Plaza, a Recreation and Parks Department open space located between Post and Geary between two of the Japan Center mall buildings.

For more information about open space and recreational uses, see Section 4.G, below.

ZONING AND HEIGHTS

In terms of zoning, Japantown includes ten existing zoning districts, most of which are Residential, Mixed Residential or Neighborhood Commercial zones (see Figure 4.2 for a map of the zoning in Japantown). Bush Street is a noticeable east-west division between residential zones to the north and mixed residential and commercial zones to the south. Bush Street is also a dividing line for height limits, with the height limit being 40 feet to the north. To the south, the predominant height limits are 40 and 50 feet, although there are several blocks with notably higher height limits, up to 240 feet (see Figure 4.3 for a map of permitted heights in Japantown). The range of height limits south of Post Street is a legacy of the Redevelopment era, when some consolidated lots were targeted for larger buildings, while others were targeted for low-to mid-rise buildings.

² The JCHESS does not propose a definitive area as "Japantown". However, for purposes of data analysis, the area considered Japantown is the same as utilized in the Japantown Better Neighborhoods Plan. This area is bounded by California Street on the north, Gough Street on the east, Steiner on the west, and a combination of O'Farrell, Ellis, and Cleary on the south.

³ Information derived from Dun and Bradstreet, 2012

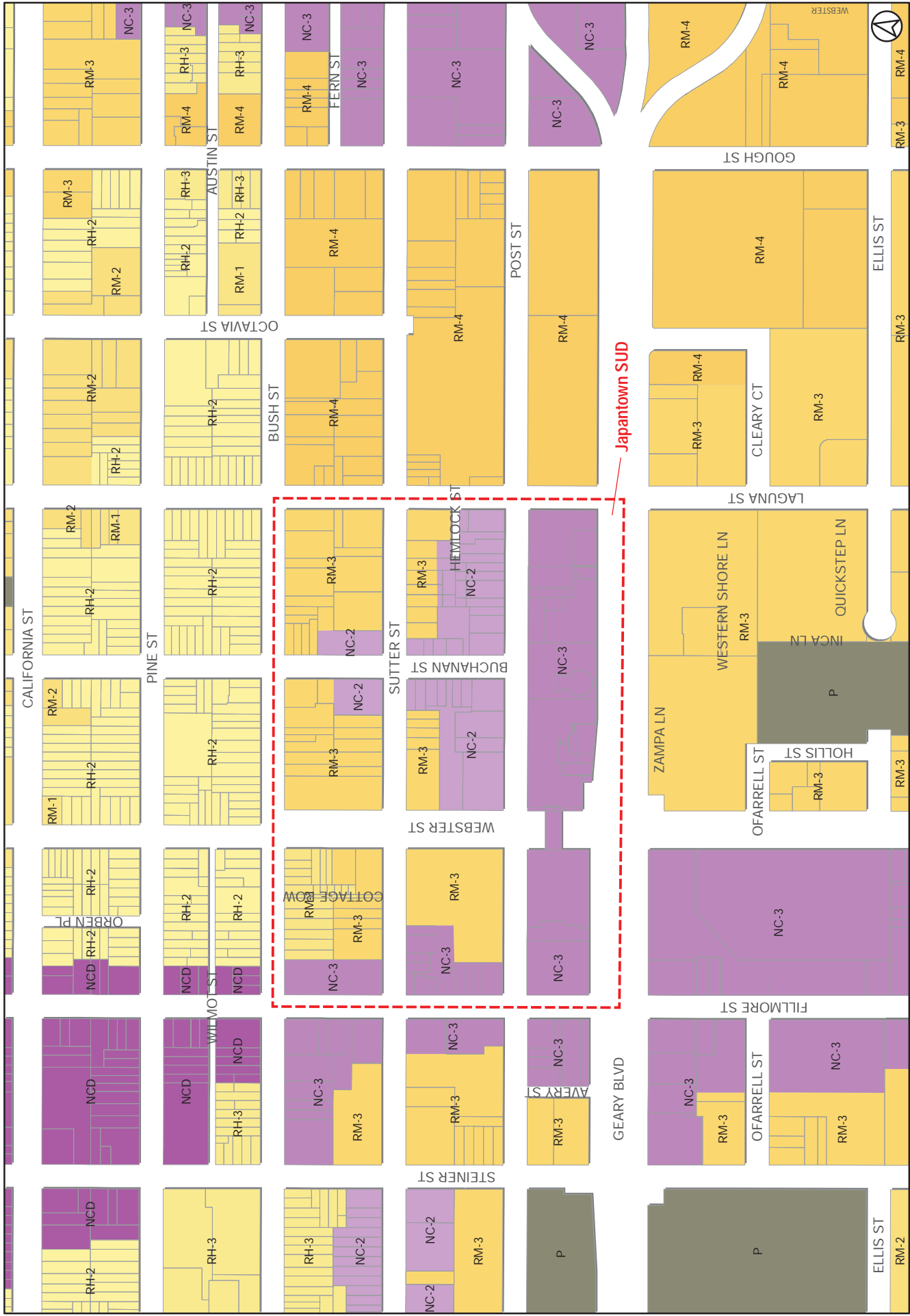


Figure 4.1
JAPTOWN
LAND USES

- Mixed Use (Residential)
- Mixed Use (No Residential)
- Residential
- Office
- Cultural, Institutional, Educational
- Open Space
- Production, Distribution, Repair
- Retail, Entertainment
- Hotel, Visitor Services
- Medical
- Vacant
- No Data

1,000 Feet





- Residential, Mixed (Houses & Apartments) Districts**
- RM-1 Low Density (1 Unit per 800 sf)
 - RM-2 Moderate Density (1 Unit per 600 sf)
 - RM-3 Medium Density (1 Unit per 400 sf)
 - RM-4 High Density (1 Unit per 200 sf)
- Residential, House Character Districts**
- RH-2 Two Units Per Lot
 - RH-3 Three Units Per Lot
 - Public
- Neighborhood Commercial Districts**
- NC-2 Small-Scale (2 Commercial Stories)
 - NC-3 Moderate-Scale (3+ Commercial Stories)
 - NCD Individual (Fillmore NCD, Controls Vary)
- Public**
- P

Figure 4.2
JAPANTOWN ZONING DISTRICTS



Figure 4.3
JAPTOWN HEIGHT LIMITS

Numbers Represent Height Limits in Feet
See Planning Code Section 250

Letters Represent Bulk Limits
See Planning Code Section 270

Height/Bulk Districts On This Map:
40-X, 50-X, 65-A, 80-B, 130-E, 130-F, 160-B,
160-F, 240-E, 240-G, and OS (Open Space)

The Draft Better Neighborhoods Plan (2009) proposed increases to allowed heights at the Japan Center Malls, including three potential towers of 200 – 250 feet, as well as another tower further east nearer to Gough Street, and proposed increased height limits along Geary Boulevard. Both at that time and over the ensuing course of community review, the preponderance of vocal community views opposed these proposals on the ground that, in their perspective, the proposals were inconsistent with preserving Japantown’s cultural legacy and remaining small scale neighborhood character. This opposition was a significant reason that the Better Neighborhoods Plan process evolved into the JCHES, which does not directly address changes to development or height limits, other than minor changes in the proposed Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District.

The one zoning district unique to Japantown is the Japantown Special Use District (SUD).⁴ This SUD, established in 2006, covers the area between Fillmore Street, Bush Street, Laguna Street and Geary Boulevard. The SUD is unique in the city in that its specific aim is to protect cultural character of a specific community – in this instance, the Japanese American community. It does so by requiring conditional use authorizations from the Planning Commission for:

- Any change of use in excess of 4,000 square feet.
- Any merger of one or more existing uses in excess of 2,500 square feet.
- The establishment of any formula retail use (which is defined as any retail establishment with eleven or more locations within the United States).

To receive this conditional use authorization, the Planning Commission has to determine that the land use is compatible with the cultural and historic integrity, neighborhood character, development pattern, and design aesthetic of the neighborhood.

⁴ San Francisco Planning Code, Section 249.31., “Japantown Special Use District,” July 2006.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Compared to San Francisco neighborhoods such as the South of Market, Mission Bay, and Hunters Point, there is not a broadly distributed potential for major new development in Japantown. This is because many of the buildings in the area are built at or near their development capacity. North of Bush Street, the area is largely comprised of residential buildings on small parcels with a height limit of 40 feet, meaning that no new large development is likely to occur in this area. South of Bush Street, parcels are larger, height limits are greater, and there is less existing residential use – all factors which contribute to the potential for new development.

An analysis of development capacity in Japantown reveals that 21% of the parcels in the area (136 of 634) could reasonably be considered to have potential for new development based on existing zoning.⁵ On these parcels, there is potential for approximately 2,700 new housing units and 470,000 new square feet of commercial space. Although only 15 development parcels are located south of Geary Boulevard, these parcels (such as the Safeway and affiliated parking lot) contain about half of the neighborhood’s development potential, due to their size and relatively higher height limits. The rest of the potential is dispersed on parcels north of Geary that tend to be smaller in size and/or have lower height limits.

AREA OF CONCERN

B.1. Utilization of Developable Parcels. There are a number of parcels in the neighborhood that are not developed to their full capacity, relative to what they are allowed under current zoning. There is community interest in ensuring that those parcels are able to be developed to their potential under current zoning.

⁵ In this instance, “high potential” means that a parcel is currently developed to less than 30% of its potential, that it contains less than three residential units, it is not a historic building, and that it contains no significant cultural resources. It should be noted that this analysis is based on the City’s data, which is likely to contain substantial errors. As such, the available information can be useful in the aggregate, but should not be used to predict the redevelopment of any particular parcel.

C. BUILDINGS

Japantown has a diverse built environment—everything from its street widths, block sizes, architectural styles and building heights vary noticeably within the 30 blocks that comprise Japantown. The following section describes the specific characteristics of the buildings that shape Japantown’s urban design, including the architectural styles, how they interact, and their historic nature.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Japantown exhibits a wide range of architectural styles, reflecting the city’s historical shifts in architectural trends. For example, San Francisco’s trademark Victorians contrast with urban renewal’s block-long, modernist structures (i.e. Japan Center, Namiki Apartments), and Japanese-inspired structures.

Single-family dwellings within Japantown take on many architectural forms and styles, though most date back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries and most adhere to Victorian-era architectural styles. The most typical form of single-family residence in the Japantown neighborhood is the Italianate or Stick style row house; flats are more prevalent than duplexes within the neighborhood.

Apartment buildings typically date to the 1920s and onward, with the large-scale apartment blocks and towers dating to the mid-20th century and later and reflect a variety of architectural styles. Many of the small and mid-scale apartment buildings exhibit the Edwardian-era and Revival styles of the late 1910s and 1920s. Those with later construction dates exhibit the International and Modernist styles. The large apartment buildings that date to the 1960s and 1970s, are typically designed in the Modernist (and in some cases Brutalist) style. There are a number of garden apartment complexes grouped together in a series of smaller buildings unified by a landscaped site. These complexes are relatively modern adaptations of the multiple-family dwelling type and typically feature Modernist architecture.

Mixed-use buildings, combining both commercial and residential uses, commonly are of the Victorian era, especially the Italianate style. However, those constructed during redevelopment, especially those along Post Street, were designed in a Japanese-influenced Modernist style. Many first-story storefronts on mixed-use buildings have been noticeably altered by many commercial tenants over the years.

The construction dates and architectural styles of small-scale commercial buildings vary. The most common styles are those from the 1910s to 1950s, such as the 20th Century Commercial style, Mediterranean Revival style, and Art Deco and Art Moderne styles. Conversely, the commercial buildings within redeveloped areas were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s and most often exhibit a Japanese-inspired Modernist style.

The neighborhood is sprinkled with many institutional buildings. Some buildings date to the early 20th century, while others date to the late 20th century and are the products of redevelopment-related activism that secured new buildings for existing organizations. The neighborhood’s institutional buildings represent a variety of architectural styles, but commonly have some Japanese stylistic influence. The buildings that house school activities date to the early 20th century and represent a variety of architectural styles, such as Japanese-influenced and Mediterranean Revival styles.

There are a large number of churches located in the Japantown neighborhood. These buildings date from the early 20th century to the 1970s and represent a variety of architectural styles, many of which have high style elements.

AREA OF CONCERN

C.1. Compatibility of Architectural Style.

Many of the buildings in Japantown reflect Japanese culture and traditions. However, many of these buildings (including many along Post Street) are reaching the end of their functional lifespan. There is concern that replacement buildings will not be culturally sensitive and will not be compatible with existing neighborhood character.

BUILDING INTERACTION

A neighborhood is affected by how well the buildings relate to each other and to the human scale. The way buildings relate to each other is described as the “street wall.” Typically, San Francisco’s neighborhoods with the strongest street walls are those with buildings constructed prior to the 1950s and 60s because they tended to be constructed on smaller parcels and because they were built to the property line with entrances typically spaced less than 20 feet apart. In Japantown, as elsewhere, this manner of construction provides a pedestrian-scaled environment, through a consistent street wall, transparent storefronts, and regularly spaced entrance markers (e.g., awnings, signs, recessed entries). There are also interesting building facades. The best examples of this are along Fillmore Street, between Post and California Streets; the north side of Post Street between Webster and Laguna Streets; and Sutter Street between Fillmore and Laguna Streets.

On the blocks constructed during and after the redevelopment era, parcels were consolidated, allowing for larger developments. Here the architectural style shifted away from the pedestrian scale and focused on vehicular access and circulation. The blocks between Geary Boulevard and Post Street are the most obvious examples of this, where buildings are designed for car entrances rather than pedestrians, and the street wall fails to define the street or provide interest to pedestrians. The large buildings on these blocks are comprised of blank walls, with few or no openings, and lack interest at the ground-floor that might otherwise be provided by active ground floor uses or facades with human-scaled detailing. These buildings are often described as “fortress-like” by the community.

AREA OF CONCERN

C.2. Lack of Pedestrian Scale. As described above, many buildings in Japantown are not designed with the pedestrian experience in mind, and this method of development discourages walking and livability.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Buildings and structures can be deemed historic because of what happened there or because of their architectural merit.⁶ Japantown contains a number of such buildings and structures with varying degrees of historic significance, as shown in Figure 3.1 – Buildings and Structures. This includes four individual buildings and one collection of buildings that have been designated by the City of San Francisco as Historic Landmarks. This also includes nine buildings identified by the 2009 Japantown Historic Resources Survey as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to these buildings, the community has identified 75 buildings and structures as being historically significant to the community.

AREA OF CONCERN

C.3. Preservation of Historic Buildings and Structures. Without proper maintenance and upkeep, Japantown’s historic buildings and structures will deteriorate until they are no longer functional and/or lose their historic character.

⁶ For example, eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places includes whether a building is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, associated with lives of persons significant in our past; or have distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, work of a master, high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.



1

PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE

1. Japantown has a diverse residential population, including many Japanese seniors.
2. Victorian duplexes, such as these, are a typical housing style in the northern part of Japantown.
3. The century-old family business, Benkyodo, is the only place to buy handmade mochi (Japanese rice cakes).
4. The Konko Church of San Francisco is one of many religious institutions in Japantown.
5. Buchanan Mall is one of Japantown's most important open spaces.



2



3



4



5



PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE

1. Japantown includes several parcels with development potential under the existing zoning, including the Safeway and affiliated parking lot
2. This view from Sutter Street exemplifies the various kinds of architectural styles and scales found in Japantown.
3. The north side of Post Street is a good example of a consistent street wall that creates a pedestrian-friendly environment.
4. Since 1926, the Japanese language school Kinmon Gakuen has been operating at 2031 Bush Street.
5. Built in 1895, the former Temple Ohabei Shalom (1881 Bush) has been re-purposed as part of the Kokoro Senior Housing complex.
6. Japantown's organizations serve to connect members of the community (and 22B).



D. ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

Japantown has a rich network of community-serving organizations and institutions (See Figure 3.2: Organizations and Institutions). These organizations and institutions provide a range of services and benefits to the local community, as well as to Japanese Americans from around the region. These services are offered by way of many community activities, educational and youth programs, teaching and performing of traditional arts and crafts, and senior programs, among others.

Some of Japantown's organizations pre-date the neighborhood, while others are relatively new. Many of Japantown's existing community-based organizations were founded in the 1960s or 1970s by *Sansei* (third-generation Japanese Americans), including the Japanese Community Youth Council, Nihonmachi Little Friends, the Japanese Community and Cultural Center of Northern California, Nobiru-kai, the Japanese American National Library, the Japantown Arts and Media Workshop, Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach, the Japanese American Historical Society, and Kimochi, Inc. Other organizations were founded by the *Issei* or *Nisei* (first- or second-generation), and have transitioned to *Sansei* leadership.

AREA OF CONCERN

D.1. Capacity Challenges for Community-Serving Organizations and Institutions.

While many of these organizations continue to provide invaluable services and programming, the non-profit community is concerned that some organizations are facing financial difficulties, shrinking memberships, and/or overlapping missions. There is also concern that the community is saturated with non-profits, which makes it difficult to find funding and support for both existing and potential new organizations.

AREA OF CONCERN

D.2. Lack of Space for Organizations.

The community includes a number of organizations that are struggling to maintain a physical presence in the neighborhood because they do not have permanent facilities and/or access to affordable spaces.

E. BUSINESSES

Japantown has nearly 250 customer-oriented businesses.⁷ These businesses are relatively small, averaging less than six employees and under 3,000 square feet. These businesses are clustered around the Japan Center, Peace Plaza, and the Buchanan Mall, as well as elsewhere along Post Street and Fillmore Street (See Figure 3.3: Businesses). These businesses rely on their geographical concentration to maintain Japantown's unique cultural draw. While some visitors may come for annual events such as the Cherry Blossom Festival and stay to dine and shop for gifts and clothing, others come regularly to buy groceries, attend classes or meetings, or utilize community services. The mix of retail and cultural institutions (discussed above) also serves local residents well, providing goods, support services, and a sense of community for an ethnically- and income-diverse population.

In Japantown, many retail operations cater to Japanese American and Japanese clientele. There has been a substantial effort to ensure that new businesses are culturally relevant. In addition to the Japantown SUD (discussed earlier), the Japan Center's owners have signed a covenant with the City of San Francisco which requires that, to the extent commercially feasible, the malls' tenants "offer goods and services that reflect that culture, heritage, tradition or arts of Japan or of Japanese Americans. . . ."⁸

City tax data indicate a general increase in sales in Japantown over the past two decades, though there can be substantial fluctuations from year-to-year. Another way to gauge the business viability of the neighborhood is measuring visitor parking at the Japantown Garage. Over the past decade, visitor parking has been quite consistent (averaging between 500-550,000 vehicles per year), despite the economic upheavals of that time. This may convey that Japantown is less susceptible to larger economic conditions than other business districts inside the City and beyond.

Japan Center and Garage

The Japan Center Malls (Kintetsu, Miyako, and Kinokuniya) occupy the blocks between Fillmore Street, Laguna Street, Geary Boulevard, and Post Streets. They were completed in 1968 as an exhibition space for Japanese companies such as Toyota, Mitsubishi, Hitachi, and Kikkoman. However, as time progressed these large corporate tenants were replaced by more domestically and locally oriented businesses, but those that still had Japanese and Japanese American connections.

Today, these malls play a central role in Japantown's economic and community life. The malls provide space for many Japanese American and pan-Asian businesses, including a grocery store, several restaurants and cafes, and many jewelry, apparel, arts and gift stores. Many of these businesses are small and locally owned. In addition, the malls serve as a community center, providing space for community festivals and daily informal gatherings.

The Japan Center garage also plays an important role in the community by providing parking for shoppers patronizing businesses throughout the district, and for visitors participating in community meetings and events, including those who come to Japantown from around the region. It is the primary off-street parking facility in the Japantown neighborhood, with 924 parking spaces. The majority of these spaces (747) are located in the main garage, which is bounded by Geary to the south, Post to the north, Webster to the west, and Laguna to the east. An additional 177 parking spaces are located in the Annex Garage, which is bounded by Geary, Post, Webster, and Fillmore. The Annex Garage primarily serves the Sundance Kabuki Cinema, whereas the main garage serves the hotel, restaurants, and shops in Japan Center. The garage also provides parking for carshare vehicles. The garage is owned by the City of San Francisco and operated by the Japan Center Garage Corporation.

⁷ Information derived from Dun and Bradstreet, 2012. This discussion does not include home businesses, small offices, and small manufacturing businesses that also exist in Japantown, but would not be directly affected by the JCHESS.

⁸ "Post Closing Agreement – Kintetsu Mall," April 2006.

AREA OF CONCERN

E.1. Business Viability. The viability of Japantown's businesses is an ongoing concern. Particularly, there is the desire to see Japantown's culturally-oriented businesses thrive despite the dispersion of the Japanese American population that began decades ago and continues today. Key issues include maintaining a sufficient customer base and ensuring long-term affordability of commercial rents. Maintaining a sufficient customer base requires that the neighborhood do a better job of tapping into the billions of dollars spent annually by tourists in San Francisco.

AREA OF CONCERN

E.2. Business Ownership Transitions. Some long-established, family-owned businesses may require assistance with ownership transitions as aging business owners retire.

AREA OF CONCERN

E.3. Finding and Attracting Culturally Relevant Businesses. While the community preference is for new businesses to be culturally relevant, it is not always easy to locate such businesses. Additionally, some culturally relevant businesses have chosen to locate elsewhere in San Francisco, rather than Japantown. New businesses attracted to Japantown have the potential to displace existing, culturally relevant businesses.

AREA OF CONCERN

E.4. Attractiveness of Shopping District. Residents and business owners have identified a need for improved maintenance of the sidewalks, landscaping, and building facades. Additionally, the community has expressed serious concern about security in the area, and particularly robberies. These issues have the ability to dissuade shoppers and visitors from coming to Japantown.

AREA OF CONCERN

E.5. Potential Business Displacement. Owners of commercial properties have the incentive to seek the highest rents. During strong economic times, these rents may exceed what is affordable to existing businesses, including those that have been identified as being cultural resources.

AREA OF CONCERN

E.6: The Future of the Japan Center. The Japan Center Malls (see sidebar) are the economic heart of Japantown.

However, they lack modern amenities and were not designed for retail use, making them less competitive than other shopping districts in the city. Updating these facilities would require a significant renovation or reconstruction project. Such a project would likely disrupt activities in the Malls. Such disruption, even if temporary, could potentially force many small businesses to close for good, which in turn could precipitate larger changes in the neighborhood. Rents and parking prices are likely to increase if the malls are rebuilt to justify the investment, and some small businesses and community events may need to relocate temporarily or permanently.

On the other hand, the malls and the parking garage are aging, and an improved Japan Center could potentially draw new and more frequent shoppers, visitors, and residents to the community. As mentioned above, the inward-facing physical design of the malls themselves is frequently identified by all as one of the most significant shortcomings of the neighborhood and a possible obstacle to long-term viability and attractiveness of the shopping district as a whole. In addition, while individual stores may be struggling, data on sales tax revenues indicate that most of the stores in the malls have performed well in recent years, and may therefore be able to survive the disruption or displacement caused by construction.

AREA OF CONCERN

E.7. The Future of the Japan Center Parking Garage. The Japan Center Garage is aging, and likely needs upgrades. Additionally, because of its physical integration with the mall buildings, in the event that the Japan Center is substantially rehabilitated and/or rebuilt, the garage may need to be rebuilt as well. There is community concern that, should the Japantown Center Garage be removed, even for a temporary period, there will be insufficient parking for this regional-serving neighborhood that will undermine the viability of businesses both within and near the Japan Center.

F. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITIES

Japantown's culture includes customs, traditions, events, language, literature, and arts that are important to the community's identity (see Figure 3.4 – Cultural Activities and Events). Much of this culture was imported from Japan, ranging from ancient traditions to modern trends. Other aspects are unique to the Japanese American experience, and even more specifically, to San Francisco's Japantown.

AREA OF CONCERN

F.1. Limited Space for Community

Activities. The Japanese Community and Cultural Center of Northern California

(JCCCNC), the Japanese Community Youth Council (JCYC) and other facilities throughout Japantown provide space for many artistic, cultural, youth, and community activities. However, some community members and organizations without dedicated facilities have identified a need for additional, affordable space. In particular, the community identified the following types of space needs as priorities:

- New performing arts space (or improved access to existing space) for rehearsals and performances
- Space for art, cultural and historic displays
- Space for intergenerational gatherings and activities, to replace the function that the Japantown Bowl served prior to its demolition
- Space for youth activities, including unstructured gathering and "hanging-out" space, open recreation facilities such as audio/video mixing and screening rooms, computer facilities, a garden, a youth-friendly kitchen, and/or pool tables; and exhibit space for youth artwork.
- Space that is affordable and that does not have overly complicated reservation processes.

FESTIVALS

The Japanese community is renowned for its array of annual festivals, including the Obon (celebration of ancestors) Festival, Nihonmachi (Japantown) Street Fair, Aki Matsuri (Fall Festival), JPOP Festival, and the Cherry Blossom Festival (Sakura Matsuri). The Cherry Blossom Festival, the largest of these events, has been held in Spring in Japantown since 1967. The two-weekend long festival features traditional customs and culture that are part of the rich heritage of Japanese Americans, and includes thousands of performers and organizers.

AREA OF CONCERN

F.2. Acquiring Permits for Festivals.

Concern has been expressed that it is difficult to navigate the City's permitting process, and that permit fees have become excessive for public festivals, particularly for Peace Plaza.

G. PUBLIC REALM

The term “public realm” is used to refer to the spaces in a community which are common to everyone – the streets, sidewalks, parks, plazas and other open spaces. Japantown’s public realm has some notable features, such as community-oriented plazas and regional thoroughfares, which distinguishes it from other San Francisco neighborhoods. Japantown’s public realm is notably influenced by mid-century urban renewal-related ideas, which placed more emphasis on automobile access and less on streets as places for pedestrians.

PUBLIC PLAZAS

Japantown’s public plazas, Peace Plaza and Buchanan Mall, are the geographic and cultural heart of the neighborhood. These plazas serve as gathering spaces, are the location of festivals, and are access points to many of the neighborhood’s businesses.

Peace Plaza

Peace Plaza is situated in the heart of the neighborhood. Peace Plaza is a 0.7 acre space managed by the City’s Recreation and Parks Department. The Plaza was originally constructed as part of the Japan Trade Center in the early 1970s, and redesigned in 1999/2000 due to water leakage problems. The Plaza has a Japanese aesthetic, including the Peace Pagoda, Japantown’s most recognizable public icon, a hard-scape plaza with a small stage, geometric arrangement of tree planters, wood benches, boulders, and a reflective pool. In addition to drawing tourists daily, the plaza is home to all of the community’s large events (as discussed above in Section F. Culture Activities and Events).

AREA OF CONCERN

G.1. Peace Plaza Design. There is substantial community concern that, since its redesign, the Plaza is too uninviting and in need of more landscaping and seating options. Some of the features, such as the fountain and Peace Flame, are not currently functioning as intended. The Plaza could also benefit from activation through such means as a better connection to the malls and to Geary Boulevard.

Buchanan Mall

Buchanan Mall, recently renamed Osaka Way, is a pedestrian-only portion of Buchanan Street that runs for a full block between Post and Sutter streets. The area, directly north of the Peace Plaza, is also considered the heart of Japantown. The mall is lined by retail uses on both sides. The mall was designed in the 1960s, and was intended to reflect a modern version of the Japanese village aesthetic, with intimate scale of buildings and varied facades.

As a public right-of-way, the maintenance of the infrastructure along Buchanan Mall is managed by the City’s Department of Public Works. In addition, the Nihonmachi Parking Corporation uses proceeds from the adjacent parking lots to pay for street cleaning and surface maintenance of Buchanan Mall.

AREA OF CONCERN

G.2. Buchanan Mall Design. Buchanan Mall’s uneven paving materials are difficult to walk on, and considered unsafe by seniors. There is also need for more activation of the plaza by protecting sunlight exposure, repairing the plumbing serving the two fountains designed by renowned artist Ruth Asawa, pursuing economic strategies to increase business to the shops and restaurants that line the plaza, and increasing outdoor seating.

STREETSCAPE

The term “streetscape” entails all those things that influence a pedestrian’s experience, including landscaping, lighting, sidewalk, furnishings, and upkeep.

AREA OF CONCERN

G.3. Streetscape Maintenance. In Japantown, a widely-voiced concern from the community is the maintenance quality of the existing streetscape, in addition to the desire for improvements. Merchants are concerned that if visitors view the neighborhood as an unpleasant place to walk, shop, or gather, they will not return. Compared to other areas of the city, Japantown’s sidewalk pavement is in relatively good condition,⁹ however there are

⁹ Sidewalk repair is typically the responsibility of the fronting property owner, except on streets maintained by DPW.

areas where tree roots have created unwalkable/unsafe conditions, especially for seniors. In terms of upkeep, there is a perception that trash pick-up and street sweeping is inconsistent. Additionally, there are regular concerns about graffiti.

AREA OF CONCERN

G.4. Landscaping. In terms of landscaping, the neighborhood has inconsistent tree planting. Tree canopies are too dense along Sutter Street making visibility at night difficult. Post Street and the neighborhood's north-south streets could benefit from regularly-spaced, culturally relevant, and environmentally appropriate tree planting. In addition to trees, planters are sparse and in need of regular maintenance by individual business owners along the commercial and mixed-use streets.

AREA OF CONCERN

G.5. Lighting. Special Japanese-themed light posts were erected along all streets bordering the Japan Trade Center and in Buchanan Mall. They add to the neighborhood's special character. In the neighborhood outside of these limited areas, street and sidewalk lighting is inconsistent.

AREA OF CONCERN

G.6. Street Furnishings. Japantown's sidewalks have minimal furnishings (e.g., benches, newspaper stands and trash receptacles). Given the high numbers of tourists and seniors in the area, more seating and amenities could make a significant difference in their time spent in the neighborhood.

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

Wayfinding signage is often a visitor's first introduction to a community and place. A neighborhood's signage and wayfinding network should provide orientation, directional information and identification of significant places and activities. Japantown has distinct Japanese-influenced signage and lighting along key corridors and open spaces. Neighborhood banners and lighting design, in addition to business signs and building design, in the heart of Japantown along Post Street, make the special character of Japantown more evident.

Some recent additions, such as the Japantown History Walk interpretive signs, and the "sensu" (Japanese folding fan) sculpture which marks one of the neighborhood's southern gateways on Webster Street at Geary Boulevard, are useful prototypes to foster Japantown's wayfinding and history.

AREA OF CONCERN

G.7. Wayfinding Signage. The current signage and directional orientation for Japantown is scattered and does not adequately promote the neighborhood as a unified, culturally-rich neighborhood. The signage lacks cohesive identity. The neighborhood also lacks prominent gateways and design elements that signify the neighborhood to passersby traveling along major thoroughways such as Geary Boulevard and Bush/Pine Streets or the MUNI stops at Fillmore and Geary.



PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE

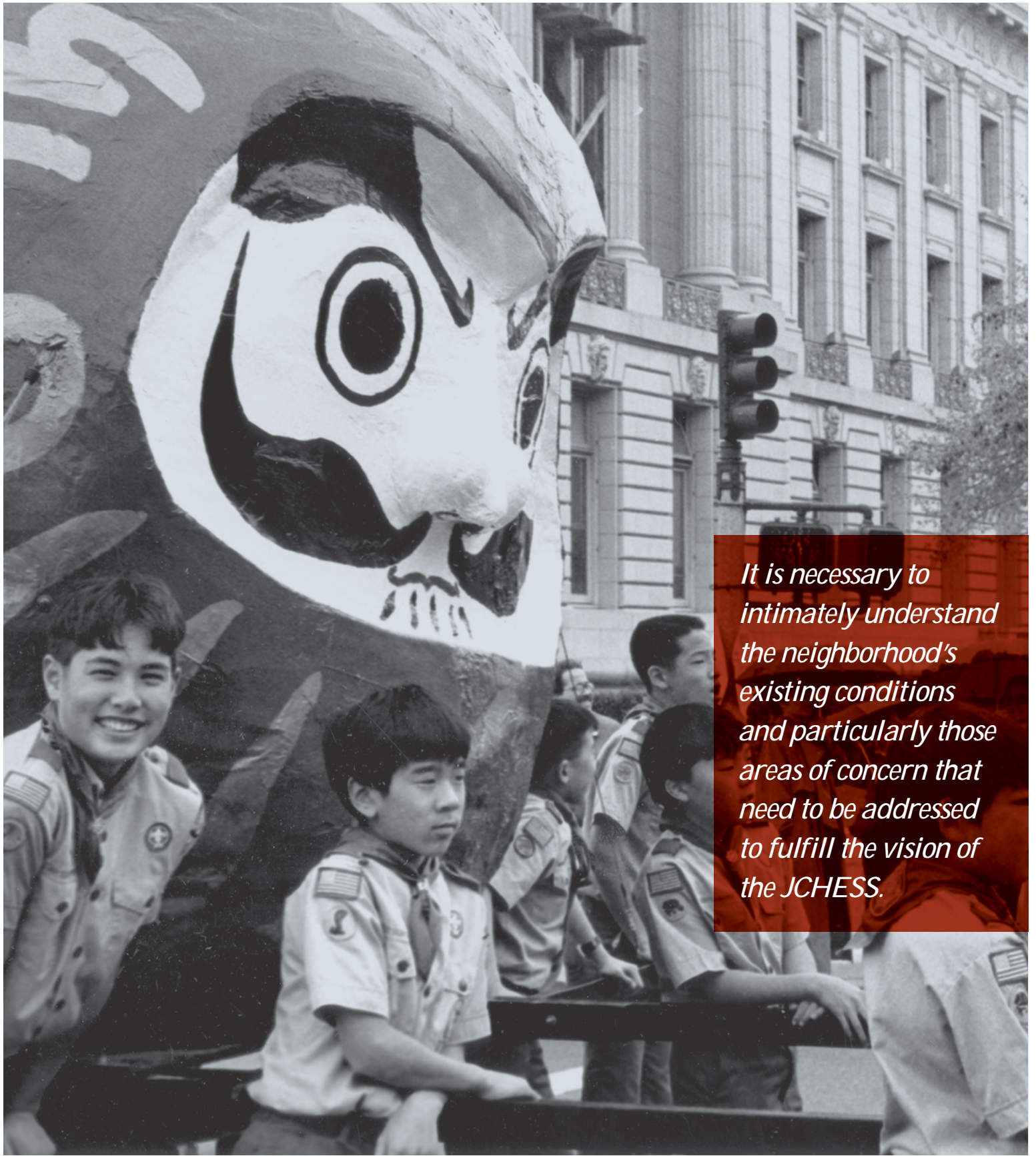
1. Japantown offers many unique businesses, such as the Paper Tree, which sells Japanese papers and has an origami gallery.
2. The Japan Center under construction in the 1960s.
3. The attractiveness of the neighborhood could be enhanced through measures such as fixing graffitied and broken lanterns on the bridge over Geary Boulevard.
4. Activity inside the Japan Center spills out of the shops into the common area.
5. Cultural events bring tradition, fun, and lots of people to Japantown. Pictured here are the Cherry Blossom Festival, J-Pop Summit Festival, Nihonmachi Street Fair, and the Soy and Tofu Festival.
Image courtesy of Glynis Nakahara.



PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE

1. The lack of landscaping and seating options makes Peace Plaza uninviting.
2. Buchanan Malls' Ruth Asawa-designed fountains have not worked in several years.
3. Street furnishings, like the benches on Buchanan Mall, provide a comfortable seating environment for the community.
4. Cultural events bring tradition, fun, and lots of people to Japantown. Pictured here are the J-Pop Summit Festival and the Soy and Tofu Festival. *Images courtesy of David Yu, Soy and Tofu Festival.*
5. Special lighting on Buchanan Mall serves a functional and cultural purpose
6. The Senu Fan serves as a gateway on Webster between Geary and Post. Japantown could benefit from more such gateways. *Image courtesy of NDD Creative.*





It is necessary to intimately understand the neighborhood's existing conditions and particularly those areas of concern that need to be addressed to fulfill the vision of the JCHESS.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Fulfilling the vision, goals, and objectives of the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy requires addressing the “areas of concern” identified in the Existing Conditions chapter. Given the range of concerns, there is no single tool that could address them all. It is more likely that a series of strategies will need to be implemented. These will need to be complementary and coordinated to ensure maximum benefit to Japantown.

This chapter recommends those strategies that are considered by the City and community as having the best potential to fulfill the vision of the JCHESS. Strategies that would not likely be efficacious were not included in this chapter. Additionally, it was beyond the scope of this document to include strategies that might benefit the Japantown community in general, but did not have a specific cultural heritage and/or economic sustainability benefit.

To help provide clarity and thoroughness, each recommendation includes:

- A description of the strategy
- An examination of its benefits, particularly how it addresses identified areas of concern and how it fulfills the goals and objectives of the JCHESS
- Any challenges to the implementation of the recommendation
- Key leaders who will be responsible for its implementation
- Potential next steps for those key leaders

To clarify the potential benefit of each of the recommendations, two matrices have been created and are included at the end of this chapter. Matrix A conveys how these recommendations address the identified areas of concern. Matrix B conveys how these recommendations address the goals and objectives of the JCHESS.

A. EXISTING STRATEGIES

There are a number of strategies currently in place to support and promote Japantown's cultural heritage and economic sustainability. The following is a list of some of those strategies which are implemented by the City, and which should be continued for the foreseeable future.

1. Utilize Tools for Preservation of Historic Buildings and Structures

DESCRIPTION

The City utilizes a number of tools to encourage and help property owners preserve, maintain and rehabilitate historic buildings and structures. Several of the tools are designed to provide financial relief to the owners of historic properties either through the flexible application of building codes or by applying tax credits. These tools are as follows:

- ***Designate Buildings in Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code.*** Article 10 of the Planning Code contains lists of individual buildings and districts considered historically and architecturally significant, either individually or as contributors to historic districts. Buildings listed in Article 10 receive specialized review and protection by the City. As a benefit, the buildings' owners are eligible for some special economic incentives to help keep their buildings economically viable.
- ***Encourage the use of the Mills Act for designated historic resources.*** The Mills Act is the one of the best preservation incentives available to private property owners to help rehabilitate, restore and maintain their historic buildings. Enacted by the State of California in 1976 and adopted by San Francisco in 1996, the Mills Act allows the City to enter into contracts with owners of privately-owned historical property to ensure its rehabilitation, restoration, preservation and long-term maintenance. In return, the property owner enjoys a reduction in property taxes for a given period. Mills Act contracts have the

net effect of freezing the base value of the property, thereby keeping property taxes low.

- ***Encourage the use of the California Historic Building Code (CHBC).*** The renovation of historic buildings is often difficult when older buildings must meet the standards of modern building codes (including Uniform Building Code, City Building Code, Fire Code, Plumbing Code) whose regulations are designed for contemporary construction technologies. Application of the CHBC can provide creative solutions to achieve the health, safety and welfare requirements for these historic buildings. The measures permitted by the CHBC are more sensitive to the historic conditions of a building than standard building codes. The CHBC allows flexibility in meeting building code requirements for rehabilitated structures. Generally, building owners can enjoy substantial cost savings when rehabilitating an historic structure by using the CHBC. The Department of Building Inspection applies the CHBC, including determining which buildings are eligible.
- ***Encourage the use of the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Incentives.*** The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program is one of the nation's most successful and cost-effective community revitalization programs. There are two levels of tax incentives: 20% and 10%. The 20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit applies to any project that the Secretary of the Interior designates a certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. The 20% credit is available for properties rehabilitated for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes, but it is not available for properties used exclusively as the owner's private residence. The 10% Rehabilitation Tax Credit is available for the rehabilitation of non-historic buildings placed in service before 1936. The building must be rehabilitated for non-residential use.
- ***Encourage façade easements for designated historic resources.*** One of the oldest strategies for historic preservation is a historic preservation façade easement. An easement ensures the preservation of a property's significant architectural and essential features while allowing the owner to continue to occupy and use the property subject to the

provisions of the easement. A preservation easement is created by deed and is typically donated or sold to a public or private preservation organization. Either the City or a qualified preservation group, such as San Francisco Architectural Heritage can hold title to the easement, which allows the property owner a one-time tax deduction and the holder has the right to review any changes to features covered by the easement.

BENEFITS

Each of the tools described above could be used to rehabilitate and preserve important buildings and structures. Doing so also helps maintain space for the businesses and organizations that are housed in these buildings.

CHALLENGES

Most preservation tools require that buildings meet rigorous criteria, as described below. This is a challenge in Japantown because many of the cherished buildings and buildings occupied by social heritage resources may not rise to the level of significance necessary for local, state or national designation.

The criteria for each tool are as follows:

- Designation to Article 10 of the Planning Code is limited to properties of substantial historic and/or architectural significance, as evaluated by the Historic Preservation Commission and approved by the Board of Supervisors.
- Eligibility for the Mills Act requires that buildings must be listed in Article 10 of the Planning Code or listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources. Eligibility is further limited to a property tax assessment value of \$3 million or less for residential, and \$5 million or less for commercial, industrial or mixed use buildings, unless the property exhibits exceptional qualities.
- Application of the 20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit requires that buildings that are National Historic Landmarks, listed in the National Register, and/or

that contribute to National Register Historic Districts and certain local historic districts that have been certified by the National Park Service. To qualify, properties must be income producing and must be rehabilitated according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

- Application of the 10% Rehabilitation Tax Credit requires that buildings were in use before 1936. There are criteria requiring that a substantial percentage of existing walls must stay in place. Additionally, the building must be rehabilitated for non-residential use. There is no formal review process for rehabilitations of non-historic buildings.
- Façade easement programs are limited to buildings that are National Historic Landmarks, listed in the National Register, and that contribute to National Register Historic Districts and certain local historic districts that have been certified by the National Park Service. These programs restrict the future development of the front building wall in perpetuity. The easement agreement also requires periodic inspections of the property to ensure that the contract continues to be honored.
- Application of the California Historic Building Code requires developers, architects, and contractors to understand an additional set of rules with which they may not otherwise be familiar.

KEY LEADERS

Community stakeholders, property owners, the Planning Department

NEXT STEPS

Each tool has its own next steps, as follows:

- For local designation in Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code, the City could designate new Landmarks in Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code based upon further review of the existing historic resource surveys and community outreach efforts. The recommended list of these new Landmarks must be vetted by the Historic Preservation Commission, as recommended

by Planning Department with community input and outreach.

- For potential Mills Act properties, the community would identify properties based on eligibility requirements described above and work with the Planning Department to apply for Mills Act contracts for individual qualifying properties, including an appropriate maintenance plan.
- For the California Historic Building Code, the Planning Department should advise local property owners, business owners, contractors, and architects to request use of this Code when proposing improvements for qualifying properties.
- For the 20% or 10% Federal Tax Credit Programs, the community would identify eligible properties and engage a historic preservation professional to aid in planning an appropriate rehabilitation project and preparing the application for review by the National Park Service.
- For façade easement programs, property owners of eligible buildings should be notified by the Planning Department and put in contact with preservation organizations that implement such programs, such as San Francisco Heritage.

2. Leverage the Japantown Special Use District to Cultivate and Attract New Businesses Appropriate to Japantown

DESCRIPTION

As discussed in the Existing Conditions Chapter, the intent of the Japantown Special Use District (SUD) is to help protect cultural character by requiring Planning Commission approval for many retail uses in the neighborhood.

BENEFIT

This SUD has and will continue to help ensure that the community has a voice in ensuring that businesses that locate in Japantown reflect the neighborhood's culture and history and that Japantown will continue to serve as a hub for Japanese Americans throughout the region, enhancing the viability of the individual businesses.

CHALLENGES

The Japantown SUD requires finding a continuous stream of culturally-appropriate businesses that are economically viable. Given the lack of explicit or coordinated effort to attract, develop and cultivate interest from such businesses, finding appropriate businesses is a challenge. Further, given the dispersion and relatively small size of the Japanese American community, both locally and regionally, finding such businesses and ensuring their economic viability may be challenging over time.

KEY LEADERS

Planning Department, The Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), Property owners, business owners, community stakeholders, the Planning Commission

NEXT STEPS

OEWD could recruit and cultivate culturally-appropriate businesses from throughout the region, country, and from Japan. The community could develop a set of guidelines for property owners and realtors to help them locate appropriate tenants and to help secure local support.

3. Utilize the City's Design Guidelines

DESCRIPTION

The City maintains multiple design guidelines, including the Residential Design Guidelines, the Draft Ground Floor Residential Design Guidelines, and the General Plan's Urban Design Element. The goal of these guidelines is to improve the city's aesthetic quality and to ensure all development supports an active, diverse and vibrant public realm. A fundamental principle guiding San Francisco's urban design is the priority the City places on buildings to meet human needs, primarily defined from the pedestrian perspective. The guidelines are intended to result in a more coherent architectural landscape, improve upon the current neighborhood image, and encourage new development to be more consistent with San Francisco's essential qualities. They achieve these goals through clear guidance for site design, massing and articulation, façade treatment, ground floor design, parking and access, and private open space.

BENEFITS

Along with the Japantown Design Guidelines (discussed below in Section B.10), consistency with the City's various design guidelines can enhance the quality of architectural styles and landscaping in Japantown – including in portions of Japantown that do not exhibit traditional Japanese and Japanese American architecture. This will help create a more attractive shopping district, improve appearance and cleanliness of the neighborhood and its public space, and enhance the surrounding cultural and historic landmarks.

CHALLENGES

Design guidelines unto themselves do not guarantee quality architecture. Also, given the small quantity of new developments expected in Japantown, there are limited opportunities to implement these guidelines.

KEY LEADERS

Planning Department, community stakeholders, property developers

NEXT STEPS

Individual project proposals should conform to all relevant design guidelines. Adherence to the City's design guidelines will be an important criterion used to guide City and community review and approval of individual projects within the neighborhood.

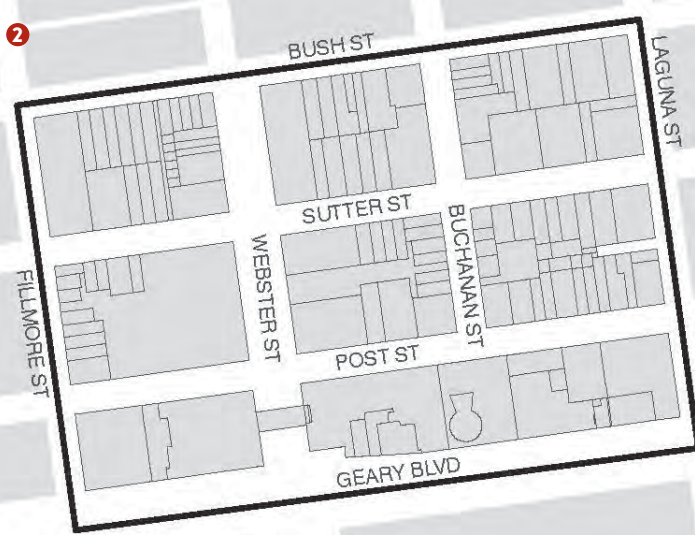
4. Implement Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements per the Better Streets Plan

DESCRIPTION

The City adopted the Better Streets Plan (BSP) in December, 2010. The BSP provides a blueprint for the future of San Francisco's streets, which make up 25% of the city's land area. The purpose of the BSP is to ensure that streets are able to fulfill their multiple purposes, including movement of vehicles, but also for recreational opportunities, ecological benefits, and as community space. Fulfilling all of these purposes can result in increased neighborhood attractiveness and therefore enhanced economic activity.

To help fulfill its purpose, the BSP provides guidance on how streets should be designed such as for the residential and commercial streets that comprise Japantown. The BSP guides the design of the streets, curb alignments, crosswalks, and parking lanes. The BSP also offers guidance for the use of the sidewalks and makes allowances for street trees and plantings, lighting, paving, site furnishings, and wayfinding signage. As part of the adoption of the BSP, the City completed an environmental review that enables streetscape and pedestrian improvements in conformance with the BSP to be implemented.

Implementation of the Better Streets Plan is handled by the Department of Public Works, in coordination with other City agencies involved in streetscapes and the pedestrian realm, such as the Planning Department, Public Utilities Commission, and Municipal Transportation Agency. To help involve



IMAGES ON THIS PAGE

1. Several historic properties in San Francisco already have Mills Act Contracts, such as 1080 Haight Street. *Image courtesy of FoundSF / Chris Carlson.*
2. The Japantown Special Use District covers the area between Bush Street, Laguna Street, Geary Boulevard, and Fillmore Street.
3. The City's existing design guidelines ensure that new infill development, such as the New People building at 1746 Post Street, is compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood.
4. The Playland Japan arcade in the Japan Center is an example of the types of uses supported by the Japantown Special Use District.
5. Implementing the Better Streets Plan can support improvements such as the planting of new cherry trees along Buchanan Mall, undertaken in the Spring of 2013
6. The Geary BRT project would include buses with dedicated lanes, a practice utilized in many cities, such as Curitiba, Brazil, such as shown here in image of Bus Rapid. *Image courtesy of gogeary.org.*
7. SFpark's pilot program in Japantown includes meters which you can pay by phone, credit card, or coins.



community members, the Better Streets website (www.sfbetterstreets.org) provides details on how residents and merchants can get involved, and the requirements for property developers. This guidance includes information on funding mechanisms and other technical considerations that can help get improvements implemented.

BENEFITS

Implementing streetscape and pedestrian improvements per the Better Streets Plan can help enhance Japantown's pedestrian realm. Projects that could be implemented under the Better Streets Plan include:

- Safer pedestrian connections throughout the neighborhood, including crosswalks and corner bulbouts. One area of focus should be from Peace Plaza to Buchanan Mall across Post Street.
- Improved lighting to brighten dark areas that feel unsafe throughout the neighborhood, especially along commercial corridors and Sutter Street
- Increased outdoor dining where appropriate and space permits
- Interpretive and wayfinding signage that is characteristic of Japantown throughout the neighborhood. This signage should be internally consistent, and serve both to orient people in the neighborhood and celebrate Japantown's culture
- Accentuation of Post Street as the neighborhood's main street, through special planting, lighting, paving, street furnishings, public art and directional and interpretive signage to celebrate its function
- Improvements to Geary Boulevard as appropriate for a "commercial thoroughway" street, as detailed in the Better Streets Plan
- Improvements to alleyways, including Hemlock, Wilmot, Orben, and Avery, to help them serve the dual purpose of additional open space and an alternative means of circulation for residents

CHALLENGES

Streetscape and pedestrian improvements can require substantial funding to design and implement.

KEY LEADERS

Department of Public Works, Planning Department, other relevant City agencies (depending on the project), community stakeholders

NEXT STEPS

The community and City should evaluate all the streets in the area against BSP standards. Then the community and City should seek to fund and implement improvements in order to achieve the BSP standards at a minimum, and preferably exceed those standards.

5. Implement Proposed Transportation Improvements

DESCRIPTION

The City is currently exploring a number of transportation improvements that would affect Japantown. These include:

- The Geary Corridor Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a project led by the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) to provide faster and more comfortable transit service along Geary Boulevard, from the Outer Richmond to Downtown. The improvements could include safer and more attractive pedestrian crossings of Geary Boulevard in Japantown. The proposed changes are currently undergoing environmental review.
- The Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP) is a program led by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to provide faster and more reliable MUNI service. The program includes restructuring many MUNI routes and

implementing on-street improvements to improve transit. The proposed changes are currently undergoing environmental review.

- SFpark is an ongoing SFMTA program that seeks to improve parking management through demand-responsive variable pricing and more flexible time limits and payment options on parking meters to ensure that there is available parking at any given time, thereby reducing time spent searching for a spot and reducing the incidence of parking tickets. The program is currently being piloted in a few neighborhoods, including Japantown.

BENEFITS

Implementing proposed transportation improvements in Japantown can help bring more customers to Japantown's businesses and better connect the neighborhoods organizations and institutions to their constituents, many of whom are dispersed across the city and the region. It can also help make better connections within the neighborhood, particularly across Geary Boulevard.

CHALLENGES

Implementing transportation projects typically requires many years of design, analysis, outreach, and environmental review, as well as significant funding to build. In addition, the transportation improvements proposed in Japantown are part of much larger projects or programs based on citywide objectives. As a pilot project, SFpark needs to be evaluated and, as necessary, adjusted to ensure it is meeting its goals.

KEY LEADERS

SFCTA, SFMTA, Japan Center Garage Corporation (JCGC), community stakeholders.

NEXT STEPS

SFCTA, SFMTA, JCGC, and community stakeholders need to continue to engage on the specifics of the proposed transportation improvements as they relate to Japantown.

6. Market the Neighborhood through SFTravel

DESCRIPTION

San Francisco Travel Association (SFTravel) is a non-profit whose mission is to "enhance the local economy by marketing San Francisco and the Bay Area as the premier destination for conventions, meetings, events and leisure travel." It functions as the City's convention and visitors bureau, aggressively marketing and selling San Francisco to attract visitors. About half of SFTravel's funding is public money generated from the City's assessment on gross hotel room revenue. Most of the rest comes from the private sector in the form of membership dues, advertising, e-commerce and program revenues.¹

SFTravel provides visitors with the information they need for an enjoyable and productive visit, including where to stay, eat, and shop, how to get around, and what to do (e.g. arts, culture, and nightlife). In addition to citywide information, the city is broken into 15 neighborhoods, one of which is Japantown/Fillmore.

The Japantown Merchants Association currently has a reciprocal partnership with San Francisco Travel in which both are members of each other's organization. San Francisco Travel membership provides admission to events, market briefings, outlook forums and partner business exchanges, listings online and in publications, and access to the convention calendar.

BENEFITS

SFTravel's marketing materials, website, and partnerships can be used to emphasize Japantown's social heritage and other visitor attractions. This can help increase business and turnout at cultural performances, events, and festivals, and thereby support the affiliated organizations and institutions. This process can help Japantown better capture some of the billions of dollars spent annually by tourists in San Francisco.

¹ Information in this paragraph accessed from <http://www.sanfrancisco.travel/about/about.html> on January 15, 2013.

CHALLENGES

Currently, Japantown is not enough of a tourist destination to merit substantial marketing efforts by SFTravel.

KEY LEADERS

San Francisco Travel, Japantown Merchants Association, community stakeholders

NEXT STEPS

Japantown community stakeholders and SFTravel could develop more focused and additional marketing and partnership opportunities. This could be part of a larger cultural tourism program in the city. Efforts identified elsewhere in this Strategy could make Japantown a more viable tourist destination, which reciprocally could create more marketing from SFTravel.

B. PROPOSED STRATEGIES

The following tools have been identified as ways to address one or more of the areas of concern identified in the previous chapter. These include tools that would be implemented by City agencies, such as the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and the Planning Department. They also include tools that would need to be implemented by the community itself, via new or existing non-profit organizations or other means.

1. Create a Japantown Community Development Corporation

DESCRIPTION

Community development corporations (CDCs) are nonprofit, community-based organizations dedicated to revitalizing neighborhoods and/or undertaking specific community development projects. CDCs usually service a defined geography such as a neighborhood. Typical CDC activities include economic development, real estate development and ownership, technical support, education, social services, and organizing and advocacy activities. Examples of such CDCs exist in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles and Chinatown in San Francisco. CDCs can also function on a smaller scale serving as facilitator and advocate for economic development and other activities in the neighborhoods they serve. An example of such a CDC is the Tenderloin Economic Development Project.

BENEFITS

A Japantown CDC could play many roles in the community. Among the benefits are:

- **Ownership of real estate** could help ensure that historic buildings are preserved, can help provide inexpensive space for organizations, institutions, businesses, and cultural activities

- **Development of real estate** can provide additional space for residents and businesses, particularly for lower-income, youth and young adult, and senior communities that need additional support
- **Economic development activities**, such as marketing, could provide value for particular buildings and businesses, and promote the neighborhood within San Francisco
- **Technical support and social services** could be provided to help organizations deal with capacity challenges, businesses deal with ownership transitions, property owners, realtors, and tenants understand the controls and policies of the Japantown NCD, and organizations that hold cultural events navigate the City permitting process
- **Advocacy activities** can provide a point of contact for the City in helping develop ongoing strategies in Japantown, to lobby the City on behalf of the neighborhood, and help focus community cultural preservation efforts, including a long-term strategy for the Japan Center and its garage, and enhancing and redesigning public spaces

CHALLENGES

A CDC requires active community participation and extensive fundraising efforts to help generate cash flow to support its work and accomplish the goals of the organization. CDCs require a diverse knowledge base ranging from finance, insurance, real estate, community development, economic development and small business development, to architecture and planning and zoning laws. The implications of creating another community-based nonprofit organization in Japantown, which already has a dense nonprofit infrastructure, would need to be considered.

KEY LEADERS

Community stakeholders

NEXT STEPS

Creating a CDC requires active community participation and fundraising efforts. The community would need to determine whether a CDC is something that is desired. Determining this could include a review of existing CDCs to determine an appropriate model and scale for Japantown and an outreach campaign to gauge interest in a CDC. Subsequent steps could involve identifying funding sources and developing a CDC formation plan.

2. Create a Japantown Community Land Trust

DESCRIPTION

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to acquire or facilitate the preservation of targeted properties within a specific area for community preservation and use. This acquisition would remove these properties from the speculative market and place long-term control of their use and disposition into the hands of the local community. CLTs generally lease the land they own to others who live on or operate businesses on the CLT land, although some CLTs own buildings and other improvements and lease out space to individual users.

Most of the hundreds of CLTs that have been formed in the U.S. focus on affordable housing, including the San Francisco Community Land Trust. However, some CLT missions encompass more than housing and include owning, leasing and selling commercial properties, owning community gardens, and controlling land for potential future development.

Typically, non-profit organizations have formed CLTs, however, more recently some local governments have taken the lead in adopting CLTs.

BENEFITS

A Japantown CLT, through ownership of real estate, could help ensure that historic buildings are preserved and can help provide inexpensive space for organizations, institutions, businesses, and cultural activities.

CHALLENGES

It would take time, energy and commitment to build organizational capacity to meet ongoing administrative, programmatic and stewardship responsibilities of a CLT. Essential to the success of the CLT, and the achievement of its primary purposes, is the formation of a governing board whose vision broadly encompasses Japantown as a whole community with sensitivity both to its cultural heritage and historical legacy. A CLT would require a substantial infusion of financial resources in addition to securing potential land. Some concern may exist over the implications of creating another community-based nonprofit organization in Japantown, which already has a dense nonprofit infrastructure.

KEY LEADERS

Community stakeholders

NEXT STEPS

In 2011, a study commissioned by the Ford Foundation concluded that it was feasible to create a CLT in Japantown focusing on commercial properties.² An additional study, Seifel Inc.'s 2011 *Economic Analysis of the Japan Center by a Community Land Trust*, identified ways to enhance the economic viability of the Japan Center. The community has received a second round of funding for an analysis of how a CLT could be structured, with the analysis to occur during 2013. During that time, the community would need to ensure that a CLT is something they want to create. If so, they would need to begin fundraising efforts for the CLT. Also, the community would need to determine if the CLT will be a standalone non-profit, or if it should be folded into a larger Community Development Corporation (described above).

² Burlington Associates in Community Development, "Assessing the Feasibility of a Community Land Trust in Japantown", 2011. Study was commissioned by the Japantown Task Force and paid for by George McCarthy and the Ford Foundation.

3. Implement Invest in Neighborhoods

DESCRIPTION

Invest in Neighborhoods (IIN) is a new program of OEWD. The purpose of IIN is to foster job creation and economic development in neighborhood commercial districts through the strategic and coordinated deployment of existing City programs from across multiple departments. These programs offer an array of tools focused on neighborhood revitalization and business assistance that could assist with the preservation of social heritage in Japantown. OEWD has identified Japantown as one of its priority neighborhoods, and will participate in the first wave of implementation of the program in early 2013.

BENEFITS

Invest in Neighborhoods can provide a range of benefits, including:

- Design and development assistance services that could be targeted to specific businesses and buildings (e.g., compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act) and/or be provided to the neighborhood in general (e.g., graffiti abatement)
- Loans/grants/financial assistance services that could be targeted to businesses, organizations, and institutions
- Marketing services, business recruitment, and programming and activation services that could all be targeted to specific business, properties, and for cultural activities and events, and that could be used to market the neighborhood to other San Franciscans.
- Technical assistance that can help businesses, organizations, and cultural events navigate the City's permit system
- Organizational support services that could be targeted to specific organizations, including those that are involved with traditional arts, crafts, and practices

- Having a single point of contact within City government that can help support all cultural preservation and enhancement efforts

CHALLENGES

IIN involves coordination amongst numerous City agencies that may otherwise not have much interaction, and thus will require careful navigation of these institutions. Additionally, IIN is a new program, which invariably will encounter a learning curve as OEWD begins implementation.

KEY LEADERS

OEWD, community stakeholders.

NEXT STEPS

OEWD is completing an assessment of Japantown's needs and existing business conditions. Upon completion of that assessment, OEWD, in conjunction with the community and various agencies, will begin implementing the baseline services package. OEWD will also be crafting a tailored set of interventions intended to directly address the particular concerns of Japantown.

4. Negotiate Benefits Agreements with Major New Developments

Major new developments can cause impacts to existing neighborhoods, such as increased demand for services, traffic, and change in neighborhood character. To help ameliorate those impacts, benefits agreements may be negotiated with developers of large projects. Such agreements can include Community Benefits Agreements and Development Agreements.

Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) are project-specific contracts between developers and communities designed to ensure that the local community shares in the benefits of major developments. Examples of negotiated community benefits include living wage requirements for employees, local hiring agreements,

job training and/or placement programs, affordable housing or retail space, community space, green building practices, child care facilities, and traffic mitigation. To date, most CBAs have been voluntary agreements among private entities (typically, developers and community groups) that provide benefits for the community in exchange for community support.

Development Agreements are project-specific contracts between developers and the City in which the developer agrees to provide additional public benefits above and beyond existing requirements. Such agreements typically incorporate substantial input from the community. To date, Development Agreements have been created for such major new developments as Park Merced and Trinity Plaza.

BENEFITS

Benefits Agreements can provide financial resources directly to organizations and institutions and for cultural events and activities. They can also provide for facilities for such uses. Additionally, they can provide benefits to the public realm, such as new or improved open space, sidewalks, and landscaping.

CHALLENGES

Benefits Agreements generally only make sense for large developments, of which there are very limited opportunities in Japantown. There is no guarantee that the broader needs identified in Japantown would be met by the benefits individually negotiated in a Benefit Agreement between developers, community stakeholders, and/or the City. Such a practice could also decrease certainty in the development process. It could also increase the cost to the end users and/or deter developers from undertaking projects if costs are too high. The negotiations for creating Community Benefits Agreements are often challenging, and would benefit from the support of a neutral party.

KEY LEADERS

Community stakeholders, developers of individual projects, Office of Economic and Workforce Development

NEXT STEPS

Prior to the next major development in Japantown, a community- and/or City-led transparent process should assess the community deficiencies and prioritize community needs that could potentially be provided through a Benefits Agreement, and to develop a process for how to communicate these priorities and how to negotiate agreements. The community should actively monitor proposed new development within Japantown and be ready to follow the negotiating process previously identified. CBA's should be facilitated by a neutral party to minimize potential conflicts between existing groups. A group which currently has grant-making capacity, such as the Japantown Foundation, should be considered to disperse any financial resources committed through a CBA.

5. Create a Japantown Community Benefit District

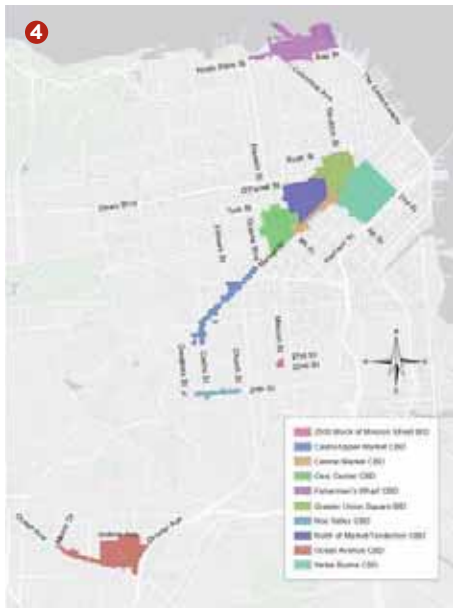
DESCRIPTION

Community Benefit Districts (CBDs) are public-private partnerships that enable property owners within set boundaries to pay for enhanced services that confer a benefit to the real property owner over and above what a local government normally provides through its general fund. CBDs are established by a specialized assessment district that requires property owners to contribute towards a fund for such services as maintenance, marketing, economic development, parking, special events, and streetscape improvements. Cities throughout California typically adopt "baseline services agreements" that require the city not to withdraw services once the special benefits district has been formed – thereby ensuring that the CBD is providing enhanced services, not replacing basic services. There are currently 12 CBDs in San Francisco, including Castro/Upper Market, Civic Center, Noe Valley, and Union Square.



IMAGES ON THIS PAGE

1. SFTravel's website includes some information on Japantown and the Fillmore. *Image courtesy of SFTravel.*
2. Both Community Development Corporations and Community Land Trusts can own property in a way that serves the community, such as this senior housing project at 701 Golden Gate, owned by the Chinatown CDC. *Image courtesy of Chinatown CDC.*
3. A portion of revenues from the Japan Center Garage goes towards marketing for Japantown.
4. San Francisco currently has 10 Community Benefits Districts, as shown in this map.
5. San Francisco Grants for the Arts funds organizations such as the Center for Asian American Media, which has hosted film screenings in Peace Plaza. *Image courtesy of Jennifer Yin.*



BENEFITS

Funds generated through a CBD could be used to provide a number of benefits in Japantown, such as maintenance and public safety, streetscape improvements like signage, trees, and interpretive displays, economic development such as business retention, and beautification. These benefits could be targeted to heritage businesses and to support important local events and performances.

CHALLENGES

Creating a CBD is a substantial challenge. Logistically, it requires extensive outreach to property owners and businesses that would be assessed and community stakeholders in order to develop a management plan with defined boundaries, services, assessment rates, terms, and a governing body. Typically, a two-phase special election must take place beginning with a petition vote, followed by legislation approved by the Board of Supervisors, a mailed ballot election and additional legislation and public hearings at the Board of Supervisors.

In addition to logistics, a CBD must be something that is supported by those property owners who will pay the assessment. Business owners in Japantown previously considered adoption of a CBD and prepared a preliminary plan. They did not, however, proceed with adoption due to a lack of broad enough support by property and business owners. Key property owners continue to express a lack of support for this strategy.

KEY LEADERS

Property owners and businesses, community stakeholders, Office of Economic and Workforce Development

NEXT STEPS

Creating a CBD requires active and motivated participation from and extensive outreach to community members, property owners and business owners. A first step would be to contact OEWD to revisit the feasibility of creating a CBD for Japantown. Second, a steering committee could be formed among interested

parties, including property owners and businesses. The committee would re-evaluate the district boundaries and analyze the current level of support for district formation. If enough support exists, the steering committee would enter into the formation stage, including expansion of the committee to all interested parties, endorsing a focused district plan that would benefit district property owners and businesses, and submission of the plan to the City for review and certification.

6. Implement a Japantown Mello-Roos Community Facilities District

DESCRIPTION

The California Legislature enacted the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act in 1982, which allows local governments to form Community Facilities Districts (CFDs) to finance public improvements. CFDs can be funded on a “pay-as-you-go” basis. However, facilities are more frequently paid for using long-term tax-exempt bonds to fund public improvements, which are repaid through the levy of special taxes collected on the property tax bill of property owners within the boundary of the CFD. A CFD is created by a sponsoring local government entity and requires approval by two-thirds of voters living within the proposed boundaries, or a vote of current landowners if there are fewer than 12 registered voters within these boundaries. The landowner vote is weighted based on the amount of land each owns, and two-thirds support is required for approval. After approval, a lien is placed against each property in the CFD, and property owners pay an annual special tax. The taxes continue at least until the infrastructure is paid for and/or bonds are repaid. At such a point, the taxes will either be discontinued or lowered and used to maintain improvements.

BENEFITS

A CFD in Japantown could be used to fund and maintain capital investments such as street and sidewalk improvements, parks, public plazas (such as improvements to Peace Plaza and Buchanan Mall),

and community facilities. It can also be used to fund ongoing needs such as police protection and operation of museums and important neighborhood cultural facilities.

CHALLENGES

Logistically, establishing a CFD requires holding a special election of registered voters and/or land owners (depending on the size of the CFD and the number of registered voters therein). CFDs require property owners to agree to tax themselves to finance these improvements. In already built-out areas such as Japantown, it might be difficult to get two-thirds of property owners to agree to such a tax.

KEY LEADERS

Community stakeholders, Office of Economic and Workforce Development

NEXT STEPS

The community would conduct a needs assessment to determine what improvements and services a CFD could potentially fund. The community would then conduct community outreach to assess interest in a CFD.

7. Utilize Funds from San Francisco Grants for the Arts

DESCRIPTION

The City of San Francisco levies a Transient Occupancy Tax on every hotel room in San Francisco. Five percent of this revenue is directed to the San Francisco Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund (GFTA). The City established GFTA in 1961 as an independent agency under the City's

Office of the City Administrator to administer the program. GFTA has a goal of providing general operating funding for performing, visual, literary, and media arts organizations ranging from at least 15 percent of expense budgets for small organizations to approximately 2.5 percent of expense budgets of the largest groups. GFTA also provides funding for annual celebrations and parades. Since its inception, GFTA has distributed more than \$320 million to hundreds of nonprofit cultural organizations in San Francisco, including \$11.2 million in Fiscal Year 2011/12 .

BENEFITS

GFTA funding can be used to help fund Japantown's publicly performing cultural activities, as well as annual celebrations and parades. For example, in Fiscal Year 2012/13, GFTA allocated \$30,000 to Japantown's Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival.

CHALLENGES

For GFTA grants, an applicant's mission must be clearly focused on developing, producing and/or presenting art activities in San Francisco. Applicants must have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. Funds cannot be used for start-up money for a program not yet established, non-reoccurring projects or events, or activities not available to the general public.

KEY LEADERS

GFTA, community nonprofits and other community stakeholders

NEXT STEPS

The community could identify non-profits that qualify for the GFTA. The deadline for applications is mid-February for funding the following fiscal year. Interested non-profits should contact GFTA for guidance in the application process.

8. Utilize Japan Center Garages' Capital Improvement Funds

DESCRIPTION

The Japan Center Garages consist of the Main Garage located at 1610 Geary Boulevard, under the Japan Center East and West malls, and the Fillmore Street Annex Garage located underneath the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas. The City of San Francisco owns the garages under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). On July 2, 2002 the City leased the garages to the Japan Center Garage Corporation (JCGC) for an initial term of 15 years, with the option to renew the lease for an additional 15 years. In 2013 a new lease was approved with an initial term of five years with two five-year options.

The JCGC is a non-profit public benefit corporation that augments marketing efforts in Japantown. Additionally, JCGC serves as a steward of the garage providing oversight to the best interest of the City and the community. A professional garage management company operates the garages on a day-to-day basis.

In previous years JCGC had collected a portion of the garage's revenue in a Capital Improvement Fund for seismic improvements and maintenance of the garage. SFMTA recently utilized the Capital Improvement Fund balance in order to help pay for a structural examination of all of the City's garages. The ongoing structural examination of the Japan Center's garages will convey the scope of repairs that may be necessary. As part of JCGC's new agreement with the City, JCGC surrendered its Capital Improvement Account balance to the City through 2017, as part of the MTA Capital Improvement Series A & B Bond Measures. Once reinstated, the Capital Improvement Account will receive monthly transfers of \$37,500 with a cap of \$1,350,000.

BENEFITS

This Capital Improvement Fund could be used to improve the seismic safety of the Japan Center Garages or to help rebuild these garages as necessary. The continued use of the garages is seen by the community as vital for serving local businesses and enabling Japantown to stay as the hub for the Japanese community in the region. Any significant improvement to the garage may affect Peace Plaza, which is sited directly above the garage. As such, changes to the garage could incorporate positive changes to Peace Plaza.

CHALLENGES

New funds will not begin accruing in the Capital Improvement Fund until 2017. Depending on the results of the structural survey, significant and time-consuming reconstruction of the garages may be necessary, which would affect the Japan Center and Japantown as well. Such a scenario would require substantial coordination between City agencies, the JCGC, the Japan Center's owners, and the community.

KEY LEADERS

SFMTA, JCGC, Japan Center property owners, community stakeholders

NEXT STEPS

If the structural examination of the garages reveals significant concerns, then the community and City could coordinate on a strategy for rehabilitating or rebuilding the garages and managing the impact of such a project on both the Japan Center and the broader neighborhood. If the examination does not reveal significant concerns that would necessitate such a project, then the JCGC and SFMTA could consider assessing the viability of revising the lease agreement. For example, a portion of garage revenues could be used for social heritage events and marketing activities, particularly as they relate to Japan Center, or other neighborhood improvements (such as pedestrian, open space and streetscape improvements).

9. Create a Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District

DESCRIPTION

Japantown's core commercial areas are Geary Boulevard and Post Street between Fillmore Street and Laguna Street, and Buchanan Street from Post Street to just north of Sutter Street. Currently, the part of this commercial area south of Post Street is zoned NC-3 (Moderate-Scale Neighborhood Commercial District), while the part north of Post Street is zoned NC-2 (Small-Scale Neighborhood Commercial District). In addition to Japantown, the NC-2 and NC-3 Districts are utilized in disparate neighborhoods across San Francisco, including along Geary Boulevard in the Richmond, along Mission Street south of Cesar Chavez, along 3rd Street in Bayview, and other pockets of neighborhood commercial uses throughout the city. By comparison, the city also has 27 "named" NC Districts that are specific to particular commercial streets or corridors (e.g., the Upper Fillmore Street NC District, which spans along Fillmore from Bush Street to Jackson Street). These specific NC Districts enable more fine-tuned controls over commercial uses, physical building characteristics, and other important considerations.

Creating a "named" NC District in Japantown could reflect the particular characteristics of the neighborhood and community goals. Important considerations discussed to date are to enable restaurants and non-profits on the second floor of buildings, provide an additional five feet of height in buildings with active ground floors, require ground floor commercial uses on portions of Buchanan Street and Post Street while simultaneously limiting driveways that could break the flow of pedestrians, increase the allowed density of residential development (though there are no proposed changes in height limits), and set a maximum amount of parking, as opposed to the current minimum parking requirement.

BENEFITS

Creating a Japantown NC District can help shape this core area in a number of subtle and beneficial ways. The requirement for ground floor commercial, the limits of driveways, and the allowance for additional heights on ground floors all serve to enhance the pedestrian scale of the community and enhance the attractiveness of this shopping district. The slight increase in residential development potential could help the development of parcels in the NC District with development potential. The neighborhood can show its willingness to support restaurants and non-profits, while limiting uses it finds less compatible with this fine-grained and family-oriented neighborhood, such as automobile-oriented uses and adult entertainment. Combined with the Japantown Special Use District (discussed above), the Japantown community would have powerful tools for shaping their neighborhood business district.

CHALLENGES

Implementing the Japantown NC District will require legislation to be approved by the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and Mayor.

KEY LEADERS

Planning Department, community stakeholders, District Supervisor

NEXT STEPS

The Planning Department shall ensure that the legislation meets the objectives of the key leaders, and then the legislation can be introduced by the Department, by the Supervisor, or through other means.

10. Create Japantown Design Guidelines

DESCRIPTION

As described in the existing conditions section, Japantown displays an eclectic mix of building styles, open spaces, landscaping, and public art that contribute to a unique neighborhood character. Japanese-inspired design is an element that adds to Japantown's built environment. A draft set of Japantown Design Guidelines were developed by the City and community in order to encourage culturally relevant architecture in new building/site designs and in renovations and additions to older buildings/sites. The draft Japantown Design Guidelines are intended to promote, maintain, and accentuate the authentically expressive qualities of Japanese-inspired designs that contribute to the uniqueness of Japantown.

The draft Japantown Design Guidelines are intended to complement the City's existing design guidelines (described above). Nothing in the draft Japantown Design Guidelines should be interpreted as limiting new development to specific architectural styles, periods of construction, or cultural expressions. These additional Japantown Design Guidelines are intended to embellish building and site development in the neighborhood by integrating Japanese-inspired design aesthetics into suitable building features. The Guidelines specifically speak to building form, massing, ornamentation, materials, and landscaping. It includes sections on "Form and Structure", "Roofs", "Materials and Ornamentation", and "Landscaping, Open Space, and Public Art".

The draft Japantown Design Guidelines are intended to apply to properties within the blocks bounded by Sutter Street, Geary Boulevard, Fillmore Street and Laguna Street, as well as to major development projects located anywhere within the neighborhood based upon recommendations of Planning staff and community input.

BENEFITS

A set of Japantown Design Guidelines can enhance Japanese character and the quality of architectural styles and landscaping in Japantown, thereby creating a more attractive shopping district, improving appearance and cleanliness of the neighborhood and its public space, and enhancing the surrounding cultural and historic landmarks.

CHALLENGES

Design guidelines unto themselves do not guarantee high-quality architecture. Also, given the small quantity of new developments expected in Japantown, there are limited opportunities to implement such guidelines to improve the physical fabric of the neighborhood.

KEY LEADERS

Planning Department, community stakeholders, property developers

NEXT STEPS

The Planning Department should complete development of these Japantown Design Guidelines in conjunction with the community and submit them to the Planning Commission for adoption.

11. Implement Improvements to Peace Plaza

DESCRIPTION

As discussed in Chapter 4 - Existing Conditions, Peace Plaza is the public space located at the geographic and cultural heart of Japantown. However, the community perceives that it is not well designed or activated. To address this concern, the Planning Department and Recreation and Parks Department should work with

the community on a strategy to improve Peace Plaza. Potential concepts include:

- Renovating the plaza decks to include a durable waterproofing membrane
- Planting more trees, grass areas, and plants that are culturally relevant to the community
- Installing a visitor’s information and wayfinding kiosk
- Providing outdoor dining/seating opportunities and scheduling programmed activities and events
- Developing areas for different age groups such as a children’s play area
- Redesigning the connection between Peace Plaza and Geary Boulevard to include a prominent, terraced stairway that allows visual connections to Geary Boulevard and serves as the grand gateway into the neighborhood and aligning it with the proposed crosswalk across Geary Boulevard

BENEFITS

Being at the heart of the community, improvements to Peace Plaza can significantly enhance Japantown, including:

- Increasing the attractiveness of the shopping district, thereby increasing business viability and helping keep Japantown the hub of the Japanese community in the region
- Creating better public space and recreational opportunities for all aspects of the community, thereby increasing livability
- Drawing more people to the Japanese-inspired Peace Plaza (featuring Peace Pagoda) and thereby conveying a sense of the essence of Japan
- Increasing connectivity across Geary Boulevard
- Improving the neighborhood’s landscaping, lighting, street furnishings, and wayfinding

CHALLENGES

Planning any redesign of Peace Plaza would require a substantial effort on the part of multiple City agencies and the community. Implementing these changes would require substantial funding. No source of funding has been identified to date. Any strategy would be affected by the potential need to rebuild the Japan Center garages, and/or the need to seismically retrofit Peace Pagoda.

KEY LEADERS

Recreation and Parks Department, Planning Department, Japan Center property owners, Japan Center Garage Corporation, community stakeholders

NEXT STEPS

The Planning Department should coordinate with the Recreation and Parks Department to develop a scope for planning improvements to Peace Plaza.

12. Implement Improvements to Buchanan Mall

DESCRIPTION

Like Peace Plaza, Buchanan Mall is a publicly-owned plaza located at the geographic and cultural heart of Japantown. It is lined with shops which help to activate the space. Funding for its maintenance is provided by the Nihonmachi Parking Corporation, based on revenue generated from the two adjacent outdoor parking lots. However, the community perceives that Buchanan Mall is difficult to walk on, and that it could be further activated. To address this concern, the Planning Department and the Department of Public Works should work with the community on a strategy to improve Buchanan Mall. Potential concepts include:

- Repaving the side walkways, planting more trees, landscaping with culturally relevant plants, and enhancing the existing historic public art (historic fountains, cobblestone river and Torii gate) with new, complementary public art

- Encouraging businesses to provide outdoor seating and displays along the storefronts
- Utilizing new energy- and water-efficient technologies to light the plaza and maintain the fountains

In addition, adding required setbacks along Buchanan Mall (as via a Japantown Neighborhoods Commercial District, discussed above) could ensure that future development preserves sunlight along the Mall.

BENEFITS

Improvements to Buchanan Mall could:

- Increase the attractiveness of the shopping district, thereby increasing business viability and helping keep Japantown the hub of the Japanese community in the region
- Help restaurants attract more customers with outdoor seating
- Create better public space, thereby increasing livability
- Draw more people to an area intended to reflect a modern version of the Japanese village aesthetic, thereby created a sense of Japan
- Improve the functionality of the fountain and street design
- Improve the neighborhood’s landscaping, lighting, street furnishings, and wayfinding

CHALLENGES

Planning any redesign of Buchanan Mall would require a substantial effort on the part of multiple City agencies, property owners, and the community. Implementing these changes would require substantial funding. No source of funding has been identified to date.

KEY LEADERS

Department of Public Works, Planning Department, community stakeholders

NEXT STEPS

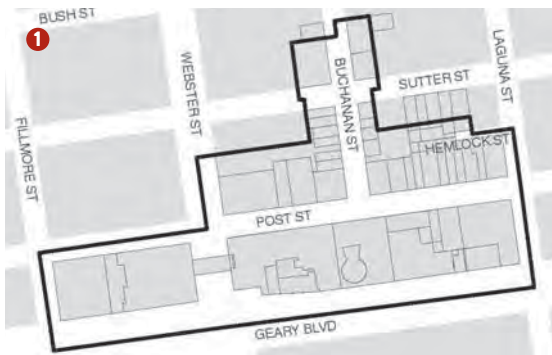
The Planning Department should coordinate with the Department of Public Works to develop a scope for planning improvements to Buchanan Mall and then seek funding for design and improvements.

13. Develop a Strategic Plan for the Japan Center Malls

DESCRIPTION

As described in Chapter 4 - Existing Conditions, the Japan Center malls lack modern amenities, do not have a strong street presence, and were not designed for retail use. All of these factors make the malls less competitive than other shopping districts in the city. Yet, their viability is a key to fulfilling the vision of this Strategy, as the Japan Center malls and the businesses therein continue to serve as the heart of Japantown.

Therefore, it is imperative that the property’s owners, the City, and the community begin developing a strategy specific to the future of the Japan Center. Part of this strategy will consider the best ways to increase visibility and access from the outside, and better utilization of the malls’ interiors. Another consideration will be how to support an appropriate tenant mix, including a strategy regarding both local and international chain stores, and how to incorporate space for community organizations that provide activities for groups such as children, youth, seniors, and families. The major consideration will be whether it is practical and feasible to make these improvements with the existing facilities or whether new construction would be necessary. This decision will be informed by the results of the City’s structural study of the Japan Center’s garages, which are sited directly below the malls. Additional considerations will include phasing, how to support and a re-integrate displaced businesses, and how to better share maintenance and marketing costs that support the malls.



IMAGES ON THIS PAGE

1. The proposed Japantown NCD would include all of the parcels that are already zoned as “Neighborhood Commercial” within Japantown.
2. The YWCA designed by Julia Morgan in 1932 is a good example of the integration of Japanese materials and ornamentation that could be part of Japantown-specific design guidelines.

3. Hotel Kabuki’s courtyard is a good example of the culturally appropriate landscaping that would be required by the Japantown-specific Design Guidelines.

4. Changes to Peace Plaza could activate the space every day, rather than just during festivals and special events.

5. Outdoor seating, such as shown here, could enliven Buchanan Mall.

6. This rendering shows how opening out the Japan Center Malls onto Peace Plaza could benefit both spaces. *(image courtesy of Van Meter Williams Pollack, LLP)*

BENEFITS

Given the Japan Center's preeminence in the neighborhood, developing an implementing a strategy specific to the malls could have many benefits on Japantown, including:

- Improving the competitiveness of the malls could increase business viability, help attract more culturally relevant businesses, cement the Center's role as the hub for the Japanese community in the region, and attract more visitors from other communities, including more tourists from around the world
- Internal and external design enhancements could improve the attractiveness and appearance of the shopping district
- Additional access points could improve the pedestrian scale
- A re-design could create more space for community activities, youth, and families
- Opening the malls' storefronts onto the plaza could better activate that space
- Improvements to the Japan Center could coincide with desired improvements to the adjacent Peace Plaza

CHALLENGES

Although the Japan Center has an important public and community function, it is privately owned property. As such, all decisions on the space will be ultimately up to the property owners. Having multiple ownership entities over various parts of the integrated mall complex is a challenge to getting agreement on proposed changes. It is also possible that any substantial changes to improve the existing buildings in their current form could come at a prohibitive cost.

The viability of the Japan Center will also be affected by the results of the structural analysis of the garages, which sit directly underneath. It is possible that the garages would need to be completely rebuilt, which would likely necessitate demolition of some or all of the malls.

KEY LEADERS

The Japan Center's property owners, OEWD, Planning, community stakeholders

NEXT STEPS

The City should contact the Japan Center's owners and facilitate this discussion. As a starting point, the City could utilize the report Seifel, Inc.'s 2011 report ***Economic Analysis of the Japan Center by a Community Land Trust***, which identified ways to enhance the economic viability of the Japan Center.

MATRIX A: APPLYING TOOLS TO ADDRESS CONCERNS

The following matrix is intended to show how areas of concern (rows) could be addressed by the various tools (columns). The areas of concern are detailed in Chapter 4 - Existing Conditions. The tools are detailed in Chapter 5 - Recommendations.

	<i>Existing Strategies</i>					
	1. UTILIZE TOOLS FOR PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES	2. LEVERAGE THE JAPANTOWN SPECIAL USE DISTRICT TO CULTIVATE AND ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES APPROPRIATE TO JAPANTOWN	3. UTILIZE THE CITY'S DESIGN GUIDELINES	4. IMPLEMENT STREETScape AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS PER THE BETTER STREETS PLAN	5. IMPLEMENT PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS	6. MARKET THE NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH SFTRAVEL
A.1 IT IS DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN JAPANTOWN'S CRITICAL MASS AS A COMMUNITY HUB	●	●	●	●	●	●
A.2 NOT ALL AGE GROUPS HAVE EQUAL STAKE IN THE COMMUNITY						
A.3 LACK OF COLLABORATION FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION						
B.1 UTILIZATION OF DEVELOPABLE PARCELS						
C.1 COMPATIBILITY OF ARCHITECTURAL STYLE			●			
C.2 LACK OF PEDESTRIAN SCALE						
C.3 PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES	●					
D.1 CAPACITY CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITY-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS					●	●
D.2 LACK OF PERMANENT SPACE FOR EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS	●					
E.1 BUSINESS VIABILITY	●	●			●	●
E.2 BUSINESS OWNERSHIP TRANSITIONS						
E.3 FINDING AND ATTRACTING CULTURALLY RELEVANT BUSINESSES		●				
E.4 ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE SHOPPING DISTRICT			●	●		
E.5 POTENTIAL BUSINESS DISPLACEMENT						
E.6 THE FUTURE OF THE JAPAN CENTER						
E.7 THE FUTURE OF THE JAPAN CENTER PARKING GARAGE						
F.1 LIMITED SPACE FOR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES						
F.2 ACQUIRING PERMITS FOR FESTIVALS						
G.1 PEACE PLAZA DESIGN						
G.2 BUCHANAN MALL DESIGN						
G.3 STREETScape MAINTENANCE						
G.4 LANDSCAPING				●		
G.5 LIGHTING				●		
G.6 STREET FURNISHINGS				●		
G.7 WAYFINDING SIGNAGE				●		

Proposed Strategies

	1. CREATE A JAPANTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION	2. CREATE A JAPANTOWN COMMUNITY LAND TRUST	3. IMPLEMENT INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS	4. NEGOTIATE BENEFITS AGREEMENTS WITH MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS	5. CREATE A JAPANTOWN COMMUNITY BENEFITS DISTRICT	6. IMPLEMENT A JAPANTOWN MELLO-ROOS COMMUNITY FACILITIES DISTRICT	7. UTILIZE FUNDS FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO GRANTS FOR THE ARTS	8. UTILIZE JAPAN CENTER GARAGES' CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS	9. CREATE JAPANTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	10. CREATE JAPANTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES	11. IMPLEMENT IMPROVEMENTS TO PEACE PLAZA	12. IMPLEMENT IMPROVEMENTS TO BUCHANAN MALL	13. DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE JAPAN CENTER WALLS
A.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
A.2	●					●							●
A.3	●		●										
B.1	●							●					
C.1									●				
C.2								●					●
C.3	●	●	●										
D.1	●		●	●			●						
D.2	●	●	●	●		●							●
E.1	●	●	●		●						●	●	●
E.2	●												
E.3	●		●		●								●
E.4			●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●
E.5	●	●											
E.6	●							●					●
E.7	●					●		●					●
F.1	●	●	●	●			●	●					●
F.2	●		●		●								
G.1	●					●		●			●		●
G.2	●					●						●	
G.3	●		●		●	●							
G.4	●				●	●			●	●	●	●	
G.5	●				●	●				●	●	●	
G.6	●				●	●				●	●	●	
G.7	●				●	●				●	●	●	

**MATRIX B:
APPLYING TOOLS TO FULFILL GOALS
AND OBJECTIVES**

The following matrix is intended to show how the plans Goals and Objectives (rows) could be addressed by the various tools (columns). The Goals and Objectives detailed in Chapter 1 – Introduction. The tools are detailed in Chapter 5 – Recommendations.

	<i>Existing Strategies</i>					
	1. UTILIZE TOOLS FOR PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES	2. LEVERAGE THE JAPANTOWN SPECIAL USE DISTRICT TO CULTIVATE AND ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES APPROPRIATE TO JAPANTOWN	3. UTILIZE THE CITY'S DESIGN GUIDELINES	4. IMPLEMENT STREETScape AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS PER THE BETTER STREETS PLAN	5. IMPLEMENT PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS	6. MARKET THE NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH SF TRAVEL
<i>Goal 1: Secure Japantown's future as the historical and cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American Community</i>						
A. PROMOTE JAPANTOWN'S VALUE AND HISTORY.						●
B. PROMOTE A SENSE OF JAPAN, IN ADDITION TO THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CULTURE.						●
C. ENHANCE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LANDMARKS.	●		●			
D. SAFEGUARD COMMUNITY-BASED INSTITUTIONS.						
E. PROMOTE EVENTS THAT ATTRACT YOUTH AND FAMILIES (TO LIVE, VISIT, AND SHOP).						●
F. SERVE AS THE HUB FOR THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY IN THE REGION.		●				
<i>Goal 2: Secure Japantown's future as a thriving commercial and retail district</i>						
A. PRESERVE JAPANTOWN'S LIVELIHOOD, INCLUDING EXISTING LOCAL AND HISTORIC BUSINESSES.		●				●
B. ENCOURAGE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FOR NEW COMPANIES THAT REFLECT JAPANTOWN.		●				
C. PROVIDE RETAIL/RESTAURANTS THAT CATER TO YOUTH, FAMILIES, NEIGHBORS & TOURISTS.						
D. PROVIDE CONSISTENT SIDEWALK AND PUBLIC SPACE MAINTENANCE.						
E. GENERATE DEMAND OUTSIDE OF THE IMMEDIATE AREA.		●				●
<i>Goal 3: Secure Japantown's future as a home to residents and community-based institutions</i>						
A. PROVIDE MORE MIXED-INCOME HOUSING (ESPECIALLY FOR FAMILIES AND SENIORS).						
B. PROVIDE ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY-BASED, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.						
C. IMPROVE PUBLIC SPACE AND PARKS.			●	●		
D. MAINTAIN A LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT REFLECTS SAN FRANCISCO'S DIVERSITY.				●	●	
<i>Goal 4: Secure Japantown's future as a physically attractive and vibrant environment</i>						
A. ENHANCE JAPANESE CHARACTER.						
B. INCREASE SENSE OF SAFETY.				●		
C. IMPROVE APPEARANCE AND CLEANLINESS.			●	●		
D. RE-ESTABLISH PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS, SOCIAL INTERACTION AND COMMERCE BETWEEN THE NEIGHBORHOODS ON EITHER SIDE OF GEARY BOULEVARD.					●	
E. PROVIDE QUALITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.						
F. PROVIDE SPACES THAT CATER TO YOUTH AND FAMILIES.				●		
G. STRIVE TO UTILIZE SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIALS.			●	●		

Proposed Strategies

	1. CREATE A JAPANTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION	2. CREATE A JAPANTOWN COMMUNITY LAND TRUST	3. IMPLEMENT INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS	4. NEGOTIATE BENEFITS AGREEMENTS WITH MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS	5. CREATE A JAPANTOWN COMMUNITY BENEFITS DISTRICT	6. IMPLEMENT A JAPANTOWN MELLO-ROOS COMMUNITY FACILITIES DISTRICT	7. UTILIZE FUNDS FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO GRANTS FOR THE ARTS	8. UTILIZE JAPAN CENTER GARAGES' CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS	9. CREATE A JAPANTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	10. CREATE JAPANTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES	11. IMPLEMENT IMPROVEMENTS TO PEACE PLAZA	12. IMPLEMENT IMPROVEMENTS TO BUCHANAN MALL	13. DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE JAPAN CENTER WALLS
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Goal 1: Secure Japantown's future as the historical and cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American Community

A.	●		●		●								
B.	●										●	●	
C.	●	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	
D.	●	●	●	●		●							
E.	●		●		●		●						
F.	●							●			●	●	●

Goal 2: Secure Japantown's future as a thriving commercial and retail district

A.	●	●	●		●			●					●
B.	●		●		●				●				●
C.	●	●							●			●	●
D.			●		●	●							
E.	●		●		●								●

Goal 3: Secure Japantown's future as a home to residents and community-based institutions

A.	●								●				
B.	●		●	●			●						
C.						●				●	●	●	●
D.	●	●			●	●					●	●	

Goal 4: Secure Japantown's future as a physically attractive and vibrant environment

A.	●				●					●	●	●	
B.	●		●		●	●							
C.			●		●	●				●			●
D.						●					●		
E.						●					●		
F.	●				●	●					●		●
G.			●							●			

MATRIX C: KEY LEADERS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE JCHESS

The following matrix is intended to show which entities would be involved in implementing the recommendations of the JCHESS, summarizing the “Key Leaders” section of each recommendation in Chapter 5.

	<i>Existing Strategies</i>					
	1. UTILIZE TOOLS FOR PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES	2. LEVERAGE THE JAPANTOWN SPECIAL USE DISTRICT TO CULTIVATE AND ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES APPROPRIATE TO JAPANTOWN	3. UTILIZE THE CITY'S DESIGN GUIDELINES	4. IMPLEMENT STREETSCAPE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS PER THE BETTER STREETS PLAN	5. IMPLEMENT PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS	6. MARKET THE NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH SFTRAVEL
<i>Public Stakeholders</i>						
A. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS				●		
B. DISTRICT SUPERVISOR						
C. OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT		●				
D. PLANNING DEPARTMENT AND PLANNING COMMISSION	●	●	●	●		
E. RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT						
F. SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY				●		
G. SAN FRANCISCO GRANTS FOR THE ARTS						
H. SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY				●		
I. SAN FRANCISCO TRAVEL					●	
<i>Private Stakeholders</i>						
A. BUSINESS OWNERS		●				
B. COMMUNITY ARTS NON-PROFITS						
C. COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS	●	●	●	●	●	●
D. JAPAN CENTER GARAGE CORPORATION					●	
E. JAPANTOWN MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION						●
F. PROPERTY DEVELOPERS			●			
G. PROPERTY OWNERS	●	●				



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 711

HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2013

Project Name: Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHES)

Staff Contacts: Steve Wertheim, Citywide Policy & Analysis Planner
(415) 558-6612 | steve.wertheim@sfgov.org
Shelley Caltagirone, NW Preservation Planner
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Reviewed By: Tim Frye, Preservation Coordinator
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Recommendation: Approval

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RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE "JAPANTOWN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (JCHES)".

WHEREAS, For over 100 years, Japantown has been the cultural heart of San Francisco's and the region's Japanese American and Japanese communities; and

WHEREAS, Japantown has endured multiple challenges to its survival over this last century, including entrenched societal and political racism; the denial of citizenship to the Issei (first generation immigrant) generation, which denied them a political voice; the 1913 and later Alien Land Laws, which prevented the Issei from owning most property; the World War II Internment, which forcibly removed and incarcerated 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry in desolate concentration camps for the duration of the war; and the Redevelopment of the Western Addition in the 1950s-1970s, which devastated the residential and commercial bases of the Japantown and Fillmore communities; and

WHEREAS, There are only three Japantowns left in the United States (Los Angeles, San Jose and San Francisco); and

WHEREAS, California Senate Bill 307 was passed in 2001, which recognized the significance of the state's three remaining Japantowns and created the California Japantown Preservation Pilot Project that provided grants to promote the preservation of Japantown neighborhoods. The San Francisco Japantown community has also been recognized by the federal Preserve America Program as a place that embodies a unique cultural heritage that deserves preservation; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco's Japantown contains hundreds of culturally significant buildings, businesses, and organizations and it hosts many cultural events and activities that are important to the region's Japanese American and Japanese community. The community has developed memorials to its cultural history, including the Three Japantowns Monument, and created the Japantown History Walk to perpetuate and share its history and culture; and

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WHEREAS, Japantown is a central and desirable location in San Francisco that will continue to face substantial economic development pressure to change and grow; and

WHEREAS, On December 7, 2011, the Historic Preservation Commission directed Planning Department staff to pursue local landmark designations representing social and cultural significance per National Register evaluation Criteria A (Events) and B (Persons) during its review and approval of the Landmark Designation Work Program for Fiscal Year 2011-2012, and the JCHESS aligns with this goal by encouraging local landmarking of eligible heritage resources in Japantown; and

WHEREAS, On December 19, 2012, the Historic Preservation Commission passed Resolution No. 0698 endorsing further exploration of programs to document, designate, and incentivize social and cultural heritage. This resolution recognized that any social and cultural heritage program requires strong support, development, and continued involvement by the community stakeholders that value and define the resources; it recognized that historical integrity and economic viability are issues that need to be further examined in the context of social and cultural heritage resources; it recognized that social and cultural heritage resources are often a series of networks of people and that they overlap to varying degrees and that, therefore, careful documentation and understanding of the evolution of community and how each group has contributed to the fabric is essential to the establishment of a social heritage program; and, it acknowledged that social and cultural heritage is a vast and important issue confronting the City's communities and recommended that any future social and cultural heritage program should be an educational effort and discussion across the entire City family; and

WHEREAS, The Japantown neighborhood has been the subject of various planning efforts over the past fourteen years. In 1999, the Japantown Planning Preservation and Development Task Force created the "Concepts for the Japantown Community Plan". This Plan was never adopted by the City. In 2006, the City enacted a Japantown Special Use District to help "maintain the cultural and historic integrity and neighborhood of Japantown". From 2007-2009 the San Francisco Planning Department drafted a Better Neighborhoods Plan ("BNP") for Japantown with community input, but the BNP was not adopted by the City due to community concerns related to lack of focus on supporting culturally significant businesses and resources as well as to the potential for adverse effects of new development in the area, including the potential disruption, displacement and elimination of important community-based businesses, organizations and activities; and

WHEREAS, From 2009-2013 the community facilitated a that focused on ascertaining and articulating the community's vision of its future and its preferred cultural and economic strategies for achieving that vision; and

WHEREAS, This process involved dozens of community and stakeholder meetings over this four-year period, during which the community identified the need to protect and support Japantown's cultural heritage as the neighborhood's top priority; and

WHEREAS, The Japantown community, Planning Department staff, and the City's historic preservation consultants worked together to develop a new methodology for analyzing and recording both the tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage, which can serve as a precedent for other communities within and outside of San Francisco. This work resulted in an inventory of over 300

important cultural resources, including buildings, businesses, organizations and institutions, and cultural activities and events; and

WHEREAS, The Japantown community, Planning Department staff, staff of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and the City's economic consultants created a compendium of economic and other tools to help support cultural resources, which was the first time such a toolkit had been created in San Francisco or anywhere else in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Japantown Cultural Resource and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS) is the result of the process of identifying the community's concerns, the types of cultural resources in the area, and the potential tools to address the concerns and to support these resources; and

WHEREAS, The vision of the JCHESS is that Japantown will thrive as a culturally rich, authentic, and economically vibrant neighborhood, which will serve as the cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, The goals of the JCHESS are to 1) secure Japantown's future as the historical and cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American Community of the Bay Area, 2) secure Japantown's future as a thriving commercial and retail district, 3) secure Japantown's future as a home to residents and community-based institutions, and 4) secure Japantown's future as a physically attractive and vibrant environment; and

WHEREAS, To provide context, the JCHESS captures the existing conditions in Japantown, as relates to its land, buildings, organizations and institutions, businesses, culture, and public realm; and

WHEREAS, The JCHESS lists twenty-three "Areas of Concern" identified by the community as issues that have or could prevent the fulfillment of the vision of the JCHESS; and

WHEREAS, To fulfill the goals, and address the Areas of Concern, the JCHESS includes nineteen Recommendations, which are designed to encourage economic development and re-investment in the buildings, businesses, organizations and institutions of Japantown; and

WHEREAS, Some of these Recommendations include the ongoing implementation of existing programs, while others are newly proposed and may require further review, such as environmental review, by the Department prior to implementation; and

WHEREAS, Some of the strategies would be implemented primarily by the City, and others primarily by the community; and

WHEREAS, The Recommendations fulfill the goals of the JCHESS and address the community's identified Areas of Concern; and

WHEREAS, The JCHESS itself was vetted in over 30 community and stakeholder meetings in the Spring of 2013 and public hearings at the Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Commission in July of 2013; and

WHEREAS, The JCHESS has the written support of 22 community groups, including multiple property owners, businesses and business associations, and community-based organizations; and

WHEREAS, The Planning Department has determined that the JCHESS is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per CEQA Guidelines 15060(c), and is thus not subject to environmental review; and

WHEREAS, The Historic Preservation 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, the Japantown Organizing Committee, and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, All pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the custodian of records, at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission endorses as City policy to support Japantown as a culturally and economically vibrant community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission endorses the Vision, Goals, and Objectives of the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS) as City policy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission endorses the Recommendations of the JCHESS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission endorses the cultural heritage evaluation methodology developed by the community, Department staff, and the City's historic preservation consultants as a fair and rational means of analyzing and recording both the tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage. In so doing, the Commission also adopts the definition of cultural heritage developed for the JCHESS as "those elements, both tangible and intangible, that help define the beliefs, customs and practices of a particular community. These elements are rooted in the community's history and/or are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community." In so doing, the Commission also promotes the use of the Japantown Social Heritage Resource Inventory by the community as a cultural heritage management tool; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission understands that the Japantown Social Heritage Resource Inventory is a living document requiring ongoing curation by its stakeholders and recommends that the Japantown community identify a responsible party to serve as custodians of the inventory; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission directs Planning Department staff to include the completion of inventory forms for the approximately 100 cultural heritage resources recommended by the City's historic preservation consultant for documentation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission directs Planning Department staff to work with the community in future cultural heritage resource management efforts,

including adding resources to the Japantown Social Heritage Resource Inventory, pursuing recognition for Japantown resources in SF Heritage's "Legacy Bars & Restaurants" program, or pursuing listing on local, state or national historic resource registers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission directs Planning Department staff to add the Japanese YWCA at 1830 Sutter Street, the Kinmon Gakuen Building at 2031 Bush Street, and Peace Plaza to its work program to explore the potential for designating the site as a Cultural Landscape in Article 10 of the Planning Code, and to work with the Recreation and Parks Department on this designation in association with improvements to Peace Plaza as envisioned in the JCHESS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission directs Planning Department staff to conduct a community clinic on the available historic preservation tools listed in the JCHESS in Fiscal Year 2013-14; and

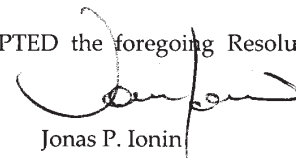
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission directs Planning Department staff to disseminate the JCHESS to organizations within the San Jose and Los Angeles Japantowns, to the State Historic Preservation Office, to the Asian & Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation organization, and any other groups that may benefit from or wish to participate in the work of the JCHESS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission supports the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) in using the Invest in Neighborhoods initiative as the framework to deploy services and resources to Japantown; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission recommends that SFTravel help implement the JCHESS through the creation of a Cultural Heritage Program that would include Japantown; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Historic Preservation Commission recommends that the community implement those aspects of the JCHESS which are in their purview.

I hereby certify that the Historic Preservation Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Resolution on September 18, 2013.



Jonas P. Ionin
Acting Commission Secretary

AYES: Hasz, Hyland, Johnck, Matsuda, Pearlman, Wolfram,

NAYS:

ABSENT: Johns

ADOPTED: September 18, 2013



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Planning Commission Resolution No. 18965

HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

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Project Name: Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHES)

Staff Contacts: Steve Wertheim, Citywide Policy & Analysis Planner
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Shelley Caltagirone, NW Preservation Planner
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Reviewed By: Joshua Switzky, Acting Chief of Citywide Planning
(415) 575-6815 | joshua.switzky@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Approval

RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE "JAPANTOWN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (JCHES)".

WHEREAS, For over 100 years, Japantown has been the cultural heart of San Francisco's and the region's Japanese American and Japanese communities; and

WHEREAS, Japantown has endured multiple challenges to its survival over this last century, including entrenched societal and political racism; the denial of citizenship to the Issei (first generation immigrant) generation, which denied them a political voice; the 1913 and later Alien Land Laws, which prevented the Issei from owning most property; the World War II Internment, which forcibly removed and incarcerated 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry in desolate concentration camps for the duration of the war; and the Redevelopment of the Western Addition in the 1950s-1970s, which devastated the residential and commercial bases of the Japantown and Fillmore communities; and

WHEREAS, There are only three Japantowns left in the United States (Los Angeles, San Jose and San Francisco); and

WHEREAS, California Senate Bill 307 was passed in 2001, which recognized the significance of the state's three remaining Japantowns and created the California Japantown Preservation Pilot Project that provided grants to promote the preservation of Japantown neighborhoods. The San Francisco Japantown community has also been recognized by the federal Preserve America Program as a place that embodies a unique cultural heritage that deserves preservation; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco's Japantown contains hundreds of culturally significant buildings, businesses, and organizations and it hosts many cultural events and activities that are important to the region's Japanese American and Japanese community. The community has developed memorials to its cultural history, including the Three Japantowns Monument, and created the Japantown History Walk to perpetuate and share its history and culture; and

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WHEREAS, Japantown is a central and desirable location in San Francisco that will continue to face substantial economic development pressure to change and grow; and

WHEREAS, The Japantown neighborhood has been the subject of various planning efforts over the past fourteen years. In 1999, the Japantown Planning Preservation and Development Task Force created the "Concepts for the Japantown Community Plan". This Plan was never adopted by the City. In 2006, the City enacted a Japantown Special Use District to help "maintain the cultural and historic integrity and neighborhood of Japantown". From 2007-2009 the San Francisco Planning Department drafted a Better Neighborhoods Plan ("BNP") for Japantown with community input, but the BNP was not adopted by the City due to community concerns related to lack of focus on supporting culturally significant businesses and resources as well as to the potential for adverse effects of new development in the area, including the potential disruption, displacement and elimination of important community-based businesses, organizations and activities; and

WHEREAS, From 2009-2013 the community facilitated a process that focused on ascertaining and articulating the community's vision of its future and its preferred cultural and economic strategies for achieving that vision; and

WHEREAS, This process involved dozens of community and stakeholder meetings over this four-year period, during which the community identified the need to protect and support Japantown's cultural heritage as the neighborhood's top priority; and

WHEREAS, The Japantown community, Planning Department staff, and the City's historic preservation consultants worked together to develop a new methodology for analyzing and recording both the tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage, which can serve as a precedent for other communities within and outside of San Francisco. This work resulted in an inventory of over 300 important cultural resources, including buildings, businesses, organizations and institutions, and cultural activities and events; and

WHEREAS, The Japantown community, Planning Department staff, staff of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and the City's economic consultants created a compendium of economic and other tools to help support cultural resources, which was the first time such a toolkit had been created in San Francisco or anywhere else in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Japantown Cultural Resource and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS) is the result of the process of identifying the community's concerns, the types of cultural resources in the area, and the potential tools to address the concerns and to support these resources; and

WHEREAS, The vision of the JCHESS is that Japantown will thrive as a culturally rich, authentic, and economically vibrant neighborhood, which will serve as the cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, The goals of the JCHESS are to 1) secure Japantown's future as the historical and cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American Community of the Bay Area, 2) secure Japantown's future as a thriving commercial and retail district, 3) secure Japantown's future as a home to residents and

community-based institutions, and 4) secure Japantown's future as a physically attractive and vibrant environment; and

WHEREAS, To provide context, the JCHESS captures the existing conditions in Japantown, as relates to its land, buildings, organizations and institutions, businesses, culture, and public realm; and

WHEREAS, The JCHESS lists twenty-three "Areas of Concern" identified by the community as issues that have or could prevent the fulfillment of the vision of the JCHESS; and

WHEREAS, To fulfill the goals, and address the Areas of Concern, the JCHESS includes nineteen Recommendations, which are designed to encourage economic development and re-investment in the buildings, businesses, organizations and institutions of Japantown; and

WHEREAS, Some of these Recommendations include the ongoing implementation of existing programs, while others are newly proposed and may require further review, such as environmental review, by the Department prior to implementation; and

WHEREAS, Some of the strategies would be implemented primarily by the City, and others primarily by the community; and

WHEREAS, The Recommendations fulfill the goals of the JCHESS and address the community's identified Areas of Concern; and

WHEREAS, The JCHESS itself was vetted in over 30 community and stakeholder meetings in the Spring of 2013 and public hearings at the Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Commission in July of 2013; and

WHEREAS, The JCHESS has the written support of 22 community groups, including multiple property owners, businesses and business associations, and community-based organizations; and

WHEREAS, The Planning Department has determined that the JCHESS is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per CEQA Guidelines 15060(c), and is thus not subject to environmental review; and

WHEREAS, The Planning 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, the Japantown Organizing Committee, and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, All pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the custodian of records, at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission endorses as City policy to support Japantown as a culturally and economically vibrant community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission endorses the Visions, Goals, and Objectives of the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS) as City policy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission endorses the Recommendations of the JCHESS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission directs Planning Department staff to propose possible legislation, and initiate review of any proposed legislation under the CEQA, to create the Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District as recommended in the JCHESS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission directs Planning Department staff to review and propose for possible adoption Japantown Design Guidelines which meets the goals and objectives of the JCHESS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission direct Planning Department staff, through its existing implementation activities, to proactively work with the Department of Public Works, the Recreation and Parks Department, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, and any other relevant agency to review for possible implementation those recommendations of the JCHESS which involve capital outlay for infrastructure projects, such as improvements to Peace Plaza and Buchanan Mall; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission supports the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) in using the Invest in Neighborhoods initiative as the framework to deploy services and resources to Japantown; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission recommends that OEWD reach out to the property owners of the Japan Center Malls to discuss potential improvements to the Malls; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission recommends that SFTravel help implement the JCHESS through the creation of a Cultural Heritage Program that would include Japantown; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission recommends that the San Francisco County Transportation Authority and San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency design the Geary Bus Rapid Transit project in a timely manner that provides better access to Japantown, and creates safer and more attractive pedestrian conditions for crossing Geary Boulevard; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the HPC review and implement those portions of JCHESS under their purview; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission recommends that other City agencies with jurisdiction and/or programs in Japantown review and implement those aspects of the JCHESS which are in their purview; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission recommends that the community implement those aspects of the JCHESS which are in their purview.

I hereby certify that the Planning Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Resolution on September 19, 2013.



Jonas P. Ionin
Acting Commission Secretary

AYES: Fong, Antonini, Borden, Hillis, Moore, Sugaya, Wu

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: September 19, 2013

1 [Endorsement of the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy]

2

3 **Resolution endorsing the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability**
4 **Strategy (JCHESS).**

5

6 WHEREAS, For over 100 years, Japantown has been the cultural heart of San
7 Francisco's and the region's Japanese American and Japanese communities; and

8 WHEREAS, Japantown has endured multiple challenges to its survival over this last
9 century, including entrenched societal and political racism; the denial of citizenship to the Issei
10 (first generation immigrant) generation, which denied them a political voice; the 1913 and later
11 Alien Land Laws, which prevented the Issei from owning most property; the World War II
12 Internment, which forcibly removed and incarcerated 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry
13 in desolate concentration camps for the duration of the war; and the Redevelopment of the
14 Western Addition in the 1950s-1970s, which devastated the residential and commercial bases
15 of the Japantown and Fillmore communities; and

16 WHEREAS, There are only three Japantowns left in the United States (Los Angeles,
17 San Jose and San Francisco); and

18 WHEREAS, California Senate Bill 307 was passed in 2001, which recognized the
19 significance of the state's three remaining Japantowns and created the California Japantown
20 Preservation Pilot Project that provided grants to promote the preservation of Japantown
21 neighborhoods. The San Francisco Japantown community has also been recognized by the
22 federal Preserve America Program as a place that embodies a unique cultural heritage that
23 deserves preservation; and

24 WHEREAS, San Francisco's Japantown contains hundreds of culturally significant
25 buildings, businesses, and organizations and it hosts many cultural events and activities that

1 are important to the region's Japanese American and Japanese community. The community
2 has developed memorials to its cultural history, including the Three Japantowns Monument,
3 and created the Japantown History Walk to perpetuate and share its history and culture; and

4 WHEREAS, Japantown is a central and desirable location in San Francisco that will
5 continue to face substantial economic development pressure to change and grow; and

6 WHEREAS, The Japantown neighborhood has been the subject of various planning
7 efforts over the past fourteen years. In 1999, the Japantown Planning Preservation and
8 Development Task Force created the "Concepts for the Japantown Community Plan". This
9 Plan was never adopted by the City. In 2006, the City enacted a Japantown Special Use
10 District to help "maintain the cultural and historic integrity and neighborhood of Japantown".
11 From 2007-2009 the San Francisco Planning Department drafted a Better Neighborhoods
12 Plan ("BNP") for Japantown with community input, but the BNP was not adopted by the City
13 due to community concerns related to lack of focus on supporting culturally significant
14 businesses and resources as well as to the potential for adverse effects of new development
15 in the area, including the potential disruption, displacement and elimination of important
16 community-based businesses, organizations and activities; and

17 WHEREAS, From 2009-2013 the community facilitated a process that focused on
18 ascertaining and articulating the community's vision of its future and its preferred cultural and
19 economic strategies for achieving that vision; and

20 WHEREAS, This process involved dozens of community and stakeholder meetings
21 over this four-year period, during which the community identified the need to protect and
22 support Japantown's cultural heritage as the neighborhood's top priority; and

23 WHEREAS, The Japantown community, Planning Department staff, and the City's
24 historic preservation consultants worked together to develop a new methodology for analyzing
25 and recording both the tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage, which can serve

1 as a precedent for other communities within and outside of San Francisco. This work resulted
2 in an inventory of over 300 important cultural resources, including buildings, businesses,
3 organizations and institutions, and cultural activities and events; and

4 WHEREAS, The Japantown community, Planning Department staff, staff of the Office
5 of Economic and Workforce Development, and the City's economic consultants created a
6 compendium of economic and other tools to help support cultural resources, which was the
7 first time such a toolkit had been created in San Francisco or anywhere else in the United
8 States; and

9 WHEREAS, The Japantown Cultural Resource and Economic Sustainability Strategy
10 (JCHESS) is the result of the process of identifying the community's concerns, the types of
11 cultural resources in the area, and the potential tools to address the concerns and to support
12 these resources; and

13 WHEREAS, The vision of the JCHESS is that Japantown will thrive as a culturally rich,
14 authentic, and economically vibrant neighborhood, which will serve as the cultural heart of the
15 Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come; and

16 WHEREAS, The goals of the JCHESS are to 1) secure Japantown's future as the
17 historical and cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American Community of the Bay Area,
18 2) secure Japantown's future as a thriving commercial and retail district, 3) secure
19 Japantown's future as a home to residents and community-based institutions, and 4) secure
20 Japantown's future as a physically attractive and vibrant environment; and

21 WHEREAS, To provide context, the JCHESS captures the existing conditions in
22 Japantown, as relates to its land, buildings, organizations and institutions, businesses, culture,
23 and public realm; and

1 WHEREAS, The JCHESS lists twenty-three "Areas of Concern" identified by the
2 community as issues that have or could prevent the fulfillment of the vision of the JCHESS;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, To fulfill the goals, and address the Areas of Concern, the JCHESS
5 includes nineteen Recommendations, which are designed to encourage economic
6 development and re-investment in the buildings, businesses, organizations and institutions of
7 Japantown; and

8 WHEREAS, Some of these Recommendations include the ongoing implementation of
9 existing programs, while others are newly proposed and may require further review, such as
10 environmental review, by the Department prior to implementation; and

11 WHEREAS, Some of the strategies would be implemented primarily by the City, and
12 others primarily by the community; and

13 WHEREAS, The Recommendations fulfill the goals of the JCHESS and address the
14 community's identified Areas of Concern; and

15 WHEREAS, The JCHESS itself was vetted in over 30 community and stakeholder
16 meetings in the Spring of 2013 and public hearings at the Historic Preservation Commission
17 and Planning Commission in July of 2013; and

18 WHEREAS, The JCHESS has the written support of 22 community groups, including
19 multiple property owners, businesses and business associations, and community-based
20 organizations; and

21 WHEREAS, The Planning Department has determined that the JCHESS is not a
22 project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per CEQA Guidelines
23 15060(c), and is thus not subject to environmental review; and

24

25

1 WHEREAS, The JCHESS has received the endorsement of the Historic Preservation
2 Commission and the Planning Commission through Resolutions 711 and 18965, respectively;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, All pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as
5 the custodian of records, at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco; now, therefore, be
6 it

7 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors endorses as City policy to support
8 Japantown as a culturally and economically vibrant community; and, be it

9 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors endorses the Visions, Goals,
10 and Objectives of the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy
11 (JCHESS) as City policy; and, be it

12 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors endorses the
13 Recommendations of the JCHESS; and, be it

14 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors supports initiation of legislation
15 to create the Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District which meets the goals and
16 objectives of the JCHESS; and, be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors supports adoption of
18 Japantown Design Guidelines that meets the goals and objectives of the JCHESS; and, be it

19 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors requests that the Planning
20 Department, Department of Public Works, Recreation and Parks Department, the San
21 Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, and any other relevant agencies proactively work
22 together to review for possible implementation those recommendations of the JCHESS which
23 involve capital outlay for infrastructure projects, such as improvements to Peace Plaza and
24 Buchanan Mall; and, be it

25

1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors supports the Office of
2 Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) in using the Invest in Neighborhoods
3 initiative as the framework to deploy services and resources to Japantown; and, be it

4 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors recommends that OEWD reach
5 out to the property owners of the Japan Center Malls to discuss potential improvements to the
6 Malls; and, be it

7 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors recommends that SFTravel
8 help implement the JCHESS through the creation of a Cultural Heritage Program that would
9 include Japantown; and, be it

10 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors recommends that the San
11 Francisco County Transportation Authority and San Francisco Municipal Transportation
12 Agency design the Geary Bus Rapid Transit project in a timely manner that provides better
13 access to Japantown, and creates safer and more attractive pedestrian conditions for crossing
14 Geary Boulevard; and, be it

15 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors recommends that other City
16 agencies with jurisdiction and/or programs in Japantown implement those aspects of the
17 JCHESS which are in their purview; and, be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors recommends that the
19 community implement those aspects of the JCHESS which are in their purview.
20
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City and County of San Francisco

Tails
Resolution

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

File Number: 130945

Date Passed: October 01, 2013

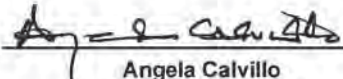
Resolution endorsing the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHES).

October 01, 2013 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

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

File No. 130945

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 10/1/2013 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.


Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

Unsigned
Mayor

10/11/13
Date Approved

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without his approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.


Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

[HTTP://JAPANTOWN.SFPLANNING.ORG](http://JAPANTOWN.SFPLANNING.ORG)

