DRAFT

JAPANTOWN CULTURAL DISTRICT

SUPPLEMENTAL

Cultural, History, Housing & Economic Sustainability Strategy

(CHHESS)

San Francisco, California

Internal Rough Draft – July 24th, 2020
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I. INTRODUCTION:

The San Francisco Japantown (Japantown) Cultural District is a community-wide program to collectively envision and develop strategies to sustain Japantown into the future. It is a formalized collaborative partnership between the Japantown Task Force and the City and County of San Francisco to stabilize this historic neighborhood that is at risk of further gentrification and displacement.

The Culture History, Housing & Economic Sustainability Strategies (CHHESS) is a strategy report based on extensive community input on 7 Key Areas of focus. Strategies for Japantown have been developed through the synthesis and analysis community input from three Town Hall meetings, eight focus groups, and one-on-one interviews with community members, along with extensive research of preceding documents and models from similar communities. The CHHESS builds off of the foundation laid by the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS), a vision planning document developed by a large, broad-based Organizing Committee over four years of intensive community-based work, and formally adopted as City policy by the Planning commission, the Historical Preservation Commission, and the Board of Supervisors.

The CHHESS strategies are intended to be implemented in the coming two years of the Japantown Cultural District Planning Grant. Longer-term strategies that may take longer than two years to accomplish but should initiated in the near-term are also included in this grant effort.

Research, interviews, and community input will continue until completion of a final Draft Japantown Cultural District Supplement to CHHESS to be reviewed for further input from the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development in July 2020. The goal is to have a final CHHESS report that the Japantown community members support, and to have it approved by the Board of Supervisors in the month of September.

This current version is titled the “Draft Japantown Cultural District Supplemental to CHHESS,” and provides the groundwork, and background which upholds the final CHHESS report. The final CHHESS report will be a concise, visual document of approximately 20 pages. The final CHHESS report will be closer to an executive summary of the “Draft Supplemental CHHESS,” and will communicate the most important points that will emerge from this process.

II. VISION:

Japantown will thrive as an ecologically and culturally regenerative, authentic, and economically vibrant neighborhood that serves as the cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American communities by honoring the transmission, co-creation and evolution of a living Japanese culture that reflects and continuously revitalizes the local and global communities.
III. OVERARCHING GOALS:

1. Create an environment that energizes the evolution to a new “Regenerative Japantown”
   Japanese/Japanese American eco-cultural paradigm (where Traditional Japanese culture and Innovation
   of new J/JA cultural expressions meet).
   a. Empower Japantown to recover and heal from its history of displacement.
   b. Build a strong, interconnected Japantown across the diversity of the J/JA community, including the
      Japanese-speaking community, the multiple-identity community, and the younger generations.
   c. Share and embody the narrative, spirit and essential values of J/JA culture.
   d. Reimagine and recreate Japantown’s physical environment to be attractive, ecologically sustainable
      and healthy.
2. Secure Japantown’s future as the historical and cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American
   Community.
   a. Ensure that Japantown remains a thriving commercial, retail, and arts district.
   b. Prevent displacement of Japantown’s culturally-relevant businesses and organizations.
   c. Make Japantown a home for residents and community-based institutions.

IV. OVERARCHING CONTEXT:

For over a Century, Japantown San Francisco has been an integral asset to the cultural fabric of San Francisco,
continues to serve as a regional hub, and the cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American (J/JA)
communities in Northern California. Japantown continues to be the home for community-based organizations,
arts and cultural groups, and unique cultural businesses. Japantown is the host of many seasonal celebrations
and festivals that invite people of all walks of life to experience and enjoy J/JA culture, all reflecting San
Francisco’s proud multi-cultural heritage.

Throughout its history, Japantown in San Francisco has already survived three major waves of forced removal
and displacement. In 2020, an already endangered Japantown is facing another blow, due to the economic
impacts of COVID-19. The residential base of Japantown has long been displaced and eroded, and the unique
cultural merchants and organizations serve an integral role as the cultural anchors of Japantown; however, they
too face a serious threat to their very existence today. Many people indeed wonder, if there will be a Japantown
in San Francisco in future, for the coming generations to return to? Or will the historic San Francisco Japantown
be disseminated like the other 40 Japantown that used to exist in the United States, leaving behind distant
remnants of a thriving neighborhood that used to exist? In an atmosphere of declining cultural diversity, amidst
multiple looming crises, there must be a coordinated effort to empower San Francisco’s unique cultural districts,
to be a vibrant, diverse, resilient City.

Established in 1906, San Francisco’s Japantown remains as one of the last of four remaining Historic Japantowns
of the 43 that used to exist in America. Historically, San Francisco has been the first and main port of entry from
Japan, and a major gateway into California and the United States. Since the 1860s, San Francisco’s
Japantown was originally located in the South of Market and also near Chinatown. It was after the destruction of
the neighborhoods during the 1906 Earthquake, that Japantown relocated to its current location in Western Addition, and emerged as an ethnic enclave and a vibrant immigrant neighborhood.

The 1906 earthquake was the first major forced removal of Japanese/Japanese Americans that would affect the future development, both socially and economically, of Japanese/Japanese Americans. Displacement occurred again at the outbreak of World War II in 1942, when Executive Order 9066 ordered the military to forcibly remove “All Persons of Japanese Ancestry” on the West Coast from their homes, their neighborhoods, and their communities. Over 112,000 Japanese Americans (65% of them US citizens), of which 5,000 were from San Francisco Japantown, and its surrounding area were forced to sell or leave behind their land, residences and businesses within a week, to be incarcerated in desolate concentration camps for the duration of the war. The evictions of the community resulted in the loss of a staggering amount of wealth for the families who had no choice but to accept whatever sale price was offered for their property, some sold their homes for as low as $50.1 Before WWII, Japantown was a thriving neighborhood which spanned 40 blocks; after the forced removal and dispossession of property, Japantown was reduced to a core of roughly 15 square blocks, and even smaller today.

By 1948, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency had already mapped out plans for Japantown and Western Addition as one of the nation’s first and controversial “Urban Renewal” areas. After returning to Japantown and attempting to resettle and rebuild their lives, the Japanese American community was once again, forced out and stripped of their properties by the long-drawn “Urban Renewal” project which took place between 1959 - 1979. This tragedy permanently destroyed historic buildings, apartments, homes, businesses, and sites of cultural and historic importance. This redevelopment wiped out over 17,000 residents, 2,600 homes and over 60 businesses, many of them Japanese American family owned establishments, and replaced it with the mall and the eight-lane Geary Expressway which sliced through the neighborhood. Those displaced received a “Certificate of Preferences” which to a limited extent, granted their return. To this date, only 4% of these “Certificate of Preferences” have been used. More historical context of Japantown San Francisco can be found in the JCHESS report.

The history of Japantown is one of resilience and regeneration. It is the story of “Gaman,” a Japanese term that can be roughly translated as “perseverance and patience” but more accurately means enduring the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity. It is a cultural value that helped the “Issei” first generation Japanese immigrants build a Japanese American community for their families that thrives today and will continue to strive to do so into the future. It is the Japantown Cultural District’s goal through the CHHESS to help keep Japantown a culturally vibrant, economically robust San Francisco neighborhood and the cultural and historic hub for the broader Japanese American community in the Bay Area and Northern California.

We continue to exist in a Euro-centric dominant culture that does not reflect the diversity of our City or Country. Some may say that “normal was a crisis,” however the situation has exacerbated with COVID-19, an unprecedented global pandemic we have never faced before. Cultural Districts are in a unique position to help our communities on a grass roots level. As more crises are expected to impact our communities’ due to threat multipliers like climate change, it is more important than ever that we re-imagine our futures creatively. The community does not want to see Japantown shrink anymore and envision that the Japantown would grow and regenerate as a place of a deeply rooted living culture. The hope is that through the CHHESS report and the

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1 America in the 1940s (The Decades of Twentieth-Century America)
Cultural Districts, the narrative and the spirit of J/IA culture will resonate with people of all walks of life, and that the essential values in Japanese culture could be leveraged to collectively build a more sustainable, just, and equitable society.
V. OVERARCHING CHALLENGES:

1. Japantown lacks an authentic, high-quality Japanese-oriented character/flavor or “Miryoku”.
   Japantown’s unattractive building and landscape design, collection of businesses and restaurants, and its small percentage of Japanese and Japanese American residents and business owners do not create a strong and authentic high-quality Japanese-oriented character consistent with traditional and contemporary Japanese culture. This contributes to a lack of "Ikiyoi" vigor, spirit, liveliness and appeal to many local Japanese Nationals and the younger generations.

2. Japantown arts & culture community lacks “space” and tools to connect, create and perform/exhibit.
   The traditional and contemporary arts are fundamental to the cultural heritage of the Japanese and Japanese American (J/JA) community. The coronavirus pandemic has critically impacted artists and cultural groups. Artists must find ways to make a living. They must rebuild their audience bases. They must rethink how they put on performances and exhibitions. As the natural cultural hub and focal point for J/JA communities in the City and Northern California, San Francisco’s Japantown is the natural nexus for arts and cultural organizations to confront these critical issues. However, Japantown lacks spaces for artists, arts organizations and cultural groups to gather, organize, restore their livelihoods and create. There are very few professional arts spaces, and no professional performance or gallery spaces in Japantown. The JCCNC (Center) seeks to meet these needs, but their spaces are limited in number and accessibility. New spaces need to be reflective of and attractive to the broader J/JA community. Moreover, as evidenced during the coronavirus shelter-in-place protocols, virtual “space” for arts and cultural events for the Cherry Blossom Festival, Children’s Day, and other activities are needed as well, so that the arts can build and sustain community connections online.

   In recent years, numerous Japantown businesses have closed due to retirements of long-time Nisei owners. As a result, the number of authentic J/JA-owned businesses that reflect the J/JA community in Japantown has decreased. In addition, Japantown lacks relationships with new Japanese companies, and thus inhibits those companies’ opening stores in Japantown. As with commercial districts everywhere, the survival of Japantown businesses hangs in the balance. Retail businesses relying on in-store customers have been affected by e-commerce and online shopping. The temporary closure of many businesses, including the Japan Center Malls, and sheltering-in-place by customers during the Covid-19 pandemic, the uncertainty of customers and visitors returning to Japantown as reopening occurs, and the Japan Center Malls covenant agreements present new challenges to the future viability of these businesses. The survival and success of Japantown businesses directly affect the economic and social vitality of the neighborhood, as well as the cultural identity of the Japantown community.

4. Japantown small businesses, arts & cultural groups, and independent artists lack business information and infrastructure support.
   Japantown’s small businesses, artists, and arts & cultural organizations lack fundamental resources and information in order to earn a living-wage and sustain themselves. They lack business and organizational succession plans, and do not incubate and support next generation businesses. They lack information and assistance with resources such as legal services, funding opportunities, tenant rights, loan applications, and permits. They lack expertise to maneuver bureaucracy, prepare proposals, write grants, and obtain permits, and particularly culturally-sensitive expertise and bi-lingual capability necessary to succeed and thrive. The challenge is to develop the knowledge and expertise to provide these essential skills, and to assist them to develop a stronger online presence.
5. The Japan Center Malls covenant agreements and its impacts on Japantown’s future.
Since 2006, the covenant agreement between 3D Investments, and Kintetsu Corporation (the seller) and the City of San Francisco have helped to preserve the Japan Center Malls as a culturally-relevant, commercially thriving, community supportive part of Japantown. In 2021, the 15-year ownership retention period will sunset, and 3D Investments could sell the Japan Center Malls. Under the agreements, 3D Investments is obligated to honor the covenants for as long as it owns the property, but the enforcement of the covenants rests solely with the owner. If 3D were to sell, develop and/or change the Japan Center Malls, its actions will affect Japan Center businesses, property owners, cultural activities, and the character of the surrounding neighborhood far into the future. It is vitally important that the community ensure that this single largest piece of property in Japantown continues to exist as a business and community hub for the Japanese American community.

The Japantown community is fragmented and lacks true collaboration, communication, cohesion, trust and resource sharing, akin to villagers in a village. The coronavirus pandemic crisis and other critical issues have prompted community organizations to band together, organize action and speak out on behalf of Japantown. The Japantown Task Force, the Japantown Community Benefits District, the Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Northern California, the Japanese Community Youth Council, the Japantown Merchants Association, other groups, and community members have relied on their own resources as well as their historic relationships to fight for Japantown. The pandemic has exposed the need for a central collaborative platform or entity where all community organizations and members can communicate and coordinate with each other on strategic visioning and planning, critical decision-making, and timely action to advocate for and build a thriving Japantown.

7. Lack of engagement and leadership of young adults in Japantown.
Young Japanese and Japanese American adults have limited opportunities or interests to engage in Japantown. The majority do not live in or near Japantown due to the lack of affordable housing. Japantown lacks recreational space, outlets for nightlife and attractions, as well as skill building and capacity building space for young adults. Young adults also lack mentorship opportunities, as there is limited succession planning in businesses, arts and culture organizations, and community-based organizations. Their engagement and leadership are vital to the future of Japantown.

8. Lack of a unified marketing plan for Japantown businesses and cultural activities.
Japantown must bring people back to the community. The community needs focused marketing and public relations planning to attract people to the neighborhood. The sheer number and scope of these activities makes this daunting. Also, while many organizations, businesses, and events are individually able to promote themselves, there are many that do not have the resources to do so. Efforts by the Japantown Community Benefits District and the Japan Center Malls Events group in active outreach to promote Japantown attractions are admirable and should be supported. Without a unified marketing plan which is implemented in a coordinated fashion with organizations and businesses within and beyond Japantown, the cultural vitality and economic customer base of the neighborhood will suffer.

Japantown occupies a small physical footprint in San Francisco, which continues to shrink to this day - the result of historic displacement, lack of community property ownership and retention, and loss of J/JA-owned businesses. There is limited room and opportunity for new construction and property development. Without land it is difficult to address community needs such as affordable housing for all generations, arts spaces, community gathering areas, and new business facilities. The community also needs more green landscaping, as
well as sustainable design in existing and new buildings. Some existing buildings and property in Japantown are historic and/or underutilized. The historic buildings are important symbols of Japantown’s past and its cultural identity. Underutilized space could be deployed to meet community needs. If existing buildings and property are owned, managed and developed by individuals and entities who are not connected to or supportive of the Japanese American and Japanese-speaking community or culture, then the cultural identity of Japantown will be eroded. Securing Japantown’s land and physical space will be a long-term, ongoing challenge.

**VI. OVERARCHING STRATEGIES:**

1. **Establish a SF Japantown Community Council**
   (Japantown Task Force )+ Art Action Committee (Physical & Online)

**DETAILS:**
Japantown Task Force shall develop another arm to function as the Japantown Community Council (SFJCC). SF Japantown needs a Community Council that continuously represents the united voice and common vision of the Japantown community. The Community Council would be a non-profit community coalition, a representative organization where religious, cultural and community organizations, businesses, residents, as well as other vested stakeholders have seats at the table. This kind of a structure would create more cohesion and coordination in decision-making, advocacy, resource-sharing, and planning for Japantown.

Benefits of the community council are that:

1) Enhances coordination & agility (especially in times of crisis)
2) A united voice & common vision
3) Addresses the Community’s diverse needs

The Japantown Community Council could also develop a 1-page “Cultural Competency” Information Sheet that helps people understand the unique narrative of Japantown in a clear united voice. This sheet can help developers, the City, and collaborative partners gain an awareness of how to work with Japantown. There also may be surveys to gain an understanding of how Japantown is perceived from the inside and outside. Does our current imagery reflect the diversity of our community? How does Japantown need to message what it offers better?

The Japantown Community Council would also work closely with the Art Action Committee, which develops community messaging and engagement around topics relevant to Japantown. The Community Council and the Art Action Committee would also work to strengthen relationships, build solidarity, and networks of reciprocity beyond borders with other Cultural Districts.

The SFJCC could also be instrumental in responses to crises like the Coronavirus Pandemic. There could also be a webpage developed to match needs and resources. It is an open source space where needs could be listed or posted. The Community Council should also work closely with the Japan Center Malls Technical Committee (JCMTC) to develop strategies for the Japan Center Malls, and also address the expiration of the Covenant Agreement with 3D Investments in 2021.
2. **Establish an Art Action Committee**

**DETAILS:**
The SF Japantown Arts Action Committee is a collective / think tank of community-based artists in partnership and close communication with Japantown organizations regarding relevant topics and evolving challenges of Japantown in order to develop art in response. Art is a powerful communication tool to educate, inform, engage, connect, unite, and activate the diverse members of the broader community around a united vision and messaging. It is also a powerful tool to explore new perspectives, multiple interpretations of a specific subject, exchange creative visions for the future, and to engage in transformative conversations for creative problem-solving. In this way, it sets a positive direction for the community to mobilize, while also providing an outlet for people to plug-in, in their own unique-ways. The Arts Action Committee also enhances the platform to articulate the community’s story, engage the world, and gain visibility and partnerships to accomplish these creative solutions toward the vision.

The SF Japantown Arts Action Committee creates a voice for the artists, creatives, and culture-bearers. This committee should have a seat at the Community Council to stay up-to-date on the current issues of Japantown, and dialogue with the rest of the community. The Committee should also have monthly meetings and function in conjunction with the “Intergenerational Co-Creative Space,” and the “Small Business and Artists Assistance Media Center” to develop platforms for interconnectivity and support for artists.

Little Tokyo also has a great model for SF Japantown’s Arts Action Committee, where they have been planning projects to educate, empower, and mobilize the larger LA communities, around reclaiming First Street North for community-driven development. +LAB is also an organization and a bold new initiative that centers the arts and cultural processes beyond traditional community development in Little Tokyo. “Creative perspectives challenge norms, break boundaries, and put the impossible within reach.” Through this approach, they promote positive social change by finding imaginative ways to empower their community. They also assist community organizations to incorporate more creative practices to positively impact their work. In this way, they empower all levels of the community by connecting organizations and artists.

Japantown San Francisco is currently facing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic with even some businesses facing a point of no return. Major changes are on the horizon including the 2021 expiration of Covenant of the Japan Center Malls, increasing development pressures, and the Geary BRT project. Japantown is currently fragile, and is at a critical tipping point, therefore it is an important time for the Japantown community to mobilize for Japantowns’ future. Increased engagement, involvement, and activation of the broader J/JA community is absolutely critical at this time, and the SF Japantown Arts Actions Community could play a vital role in regenerating Japantown for the entire community and future generations.

3. **Small Businesses and Artist Assistance and Media Center** *(Coaching, Enhancement of Online Platform & Channel to Increase Interconnectivity, Visibility & Shopping)*

**DETAILS:**
This Small Business & Artist Assistance Center would serve existing small businesses and legacy businesses in Japantown, Artists, and culturally-relevant new entrepreneurs that would like to be in Japantown. This program
may start out as an online assistance & resource center and scale up to more capacity as it develops. This program will help both emerging and also existing businesses to navigate City permits, provide education on the cultural history and heritage of Japantown, and help with online visibility. Eventually, an Incubator/accelerator program for culturally-relevant startups and new entrepreneurs could be developed. It will also be a reliable space which serves contemporary needs of Small Businesses and Artists during the COVID-19 Crisis.

This Resource Assistance & Media Center can also include support for Japantown businesses to become part of a unified Japantown online shopping platform and gain more visibility. People “shop for experiences;” the online promotions could promote both the merchants’ products as well as physical experiences at their locations. The online marketing will include professional Instagram-able photography, and videos that tell the stories and narratives of the business owner and workers.

The Resource, Assistance & Media Center should include assistance with marketing for both small businesses, and artists. This may include connecting them to a web designer, fundraiser, and/or a grants writer. The resource center could also serve as a platform to create visibility for artists. This could also include a podcast or channel to highlight artists, where cross-promotion could occur.

This Center could be initially housed at the Visitor Center Kiosk, and online, until it scales up.

The Small Business Assistance Center should develop partnerships with property owners for community spaces: artist performances, workshops, and events. For example, the community used to have access to the Kabuki Theatre before it became a movie theatre. The space was utilized by the community as a performance space, karaoke contests, and Japanese traditional “Buyo” dancing shows.

**For Small Businesses & Artists:**

1) Support for existing Small Businesses. (Assist them with website help, online promotion, and partner them with young adults/college students)
2) Increase opportunities for new entrepreneurs that want to be in Japantown
3) Support for emerging & artists through business assistance and grant writing assistance

**Small Business & Artist Assistance Center:**

1) Helps Small Businesses & Artists Navigate City Permits etc.
2) Boosts Online Visibility for both businesses and artists through marketing & communication
3) Creates a platform for artists through a channel or podcast
4) Online Information Center that connects artists & businesses to resources, organizations, and people equipped to provide assistance
5) Connector & Network of Resources to help artists and businesses deal with immediate needs (As each one of us are resources to a capacity)
6) Promote Social Learning—Social learning is way faster than vertical learning
7) Runs an Integrated Online Shopping platform – Integrating all Japantown businesses in a platform similar to Amazon. Business Liaison and shipping assistance staff could potentially be housed at the kiosk.
The Japantown Art & Media Center/ Channel:

1) Similar to a Disney Channel but for Japantown (Japan & Asia Themed) (Nikkei Channel) Showcases our diversity, our culture & talent
2) The Channels should be curated by Japantown- Focus on topics of value to J/JA Culture, and promote artists and small businesses
3) Offers Online Classes & Tutorials
4) Offers Online Events, Conferences, and Symposiums on Key Topics
5) Offers various channels ex) Asian Fusion Fashion, Cool Japanese Sustainable Products, Asian Healthy Cooking Classes (ingredients could be bought online)
6) Artists can have their own channel ex) Cosplay channel
7) Goal: 1 Million Subscribers
8) Support & sponsorship from Japanese Companies by offering visibility ex) SONY
9) Global Reach- Multi-directional, Multilateral, Grassroots- Artists are global, products are global
10) Online artist collaboration, fusion and jams across the globe
11) Based in Japantown SF as HQ even if offices expand
12) Fair, good treatment of the Artists
13) Engage Artists with a big following to bring traffic to the website channel Ex) Cosplay audience is large
14) Social Marketing & Cross-Promotion Approach
15) Infinite Royalty for Artists- Be Known as the Channel that treats Artists Fairly. The artists get a percent of all revenues coming in on their channel. This will be an incentive for them to promote the channel. Each participant will be promoting the channel

Membership & Subscription & Marketing for the Shopping Platform & Channel

1) Global Reach- Based in Japantown. Japantown is the distribution channel
2) Develop a large audience through engagement of influencers
3) Offer Season Passes, and discounts for more Subscriptions to channels. – Japantown gets 10% as the host to fund the website maintenance
4) Promote membership through email capture, profile set up (name, city, interests), and user-friendly design.
5) Promote easy-communication- so that people can ask questions from all platforms, Instagram, FB, LinkedIn.
6) Contest for free prizes & art– to promote the businesses, and artists while increasing subscriptions: Those subscribed will get notified, or automatically entered into the contest. There will be one contest, and one winner per month. Everybody loves free stuff!!
7) Compelling Content

Online Virtual Japantown Shopping Center:

1) Integrated Shopping platform – 3 top sellers form each store
2) Celebrate shops with top shop sales by posting monthly results (this will compel other that are not involved to join the platform)

4. **Develop an Intergenerational Cultural Co-Creative/Co-working Multi-Use Arts Gathering Space/Gallery w/ Recurring Micro-Events Programming (Physical & Online)** (Empowers diversity of community from Japanese-speaking to next generations, and enhance the interconnectivity of Japantown)

**DETAILS:**
This Intergenerational Cultural Co-Creative/Co-working Multi-Use Arts Space should be a versatile space that will serve many of the broader J/JA community’s needs and will address many of the challenges of Japantown. This flexible multi-purpose gathering space could serve as:

a) Intergenerational gathering space/ “hangout” space  
b) Co-creating space/ Makerspace/ studio/ workshop space  
c) Collaborative co-working space & entrepreneur coaching space  
d) Gallery/exhibition space  
e) Performance arts & rehearsal space  
f) Event/conference space  
g) An intergenerational space  
h) Space for pop-up vendors  
i) Non-profit office spaces  
j) Space for Capacity-building and Social Innovation  
k) Community garden  
l) Artists in Residence

The space should take root in underutilized community spaces in Japantown, while also operating in a network of spaces in Japantown. Potential spaces for usage are: Kinmon Gakuen, Visitor Kiosk in Japan Center Malls, Yoshi’s, and Nichi Bei Kai Building, Kimochi Lounge, SF Buddhist Church, Konko Church, Kokoro, storefronts, outdoors spaces, and other facilities upon negotiation and collaboration. The spaces that have the highest potential in availability are the Visitor Kiosk in the Japan Center Malls, and Kinmon Gakuen. Upon a robust, and comprehensive needs assessment, a closer assessment of underutilized properties, and negotiation with the entities, a prime location will be decided.

This intergenerational space is a place where the transmission and evolution of Japanese and Japanese American arts and culture flourishes. This is also a space for sharing and celebrating Japanese ancient wisdom, spirituality, diversity, and interconnection. First of all, it is a space where people can gather, and “hangout” during the daytime and the nighttime. With expansion of space, the space can also house culturally-relevant non-profits that currently do not operate in Japantown, or those that would like to be in Japantown.
It is a space where people can co-work during the day, creating a culturally-relevant environment for innovation, collaboration and social entrepreneurship. This can also be a space of capacity-building, and incubation for artists and small businesses. It is a space for nurturing and regenerating leadership from within the community.

It is a co-creating space that houses the imagination for the future; it is a space where people think and work creatively. There should be studio-spaces and practice spaces for artists, where new works of art could be developed. This includes a dance space, and various performing and visual arts.

This space should be a space where artists are given visibility and a platform to share their art. The walls can be used as a gallery space, while audio-visual capabilities could yield a performance space, day and night. Events, conferences, and workshops around various expansive cultural topics could create a thriving arts community. Local cultural crafters could also be given opportunities to pop-up and vend their creations. For example, there have been Japanese American Organic Farmers, such as Hikari Farms that have expressed interest in vending their fresh and organic produce in Japantown. Events with performers, and vendors can also take place at outdoors farmers markets as well.

Micro-events can bring more consistent foot-traffic into Japantown throughout the entire year, which will help support businesses and also help to create a platform for artists. Night life and spaces attractive to the younger generations should be increased, ranging from Japanese-style “Izakaya” sake bars, to music and arts events, with an open mic and guest performers to outdoor karaoke, or movie night screenings of Japanese films. Experiences found at Matsuri Festivals with Japanese games and food stalls like “Fusen” Balloon bobbing are attractive as well.

**Online Platform:**
This Intergenerational Co-creative gathering space can also have an online face as well, which should be closely intertwined with the Small business and artists assistance & media center. Building interconnectivity, and resource-sharing, and virtual collaboration should be a focus. The concept is that, if we can strengthen our online networks, our physical networks can be stronger once the Coronavirus pandemic is over.

This online platform could include:

1. An Online information center to connect many people, artists, events, and organizations
2. Online Arts & Culture lessons, performances, collaborations and events (Infinite scalability of attendees and collaborators)
3. Creating a network for a sustainable arts community of Japantown

As a hub for Japantown Creative Place-keeping, various members of the diverse community will be empowered to engage in programming. This space could also house the Art Action Committee, and a broader sustainable arts community. There can also be programming around Sustainability to engage the younger generations and also the Japanese-speaking community. A community garden could also be included in this space for mindfulness, health, wellbeing, intergenerational community building, workshops, exploring Japanese Eco-Culture, and increasing community resilience.

**3a) Creative Place-keeping:**
   a. Arts Action Committee + A Sustainable Arts Community
   b. Programming Around Sustainability
   c. Cultural Competency- Promotes Our Narrative & Establishes Solidarity
WHY:
This Strategy would address the areas of concern in the Key Areas: Art & Culture, Cultural Heritage Conservation & Sustainability, Economic Workforce Development, and also Land Use.

This strategy addresses Cultural Heritage Conservation & Sustainability, by bringing utilization, and life into underutilized Cultural Heritage sites. This will bring more visibility and maintenance to these historical sites and allows the transmission of Cultural Heritage through arts and programs.

5. **Develop a Strategic Plan to Address 2021 Expiration of Japan Center Malls (JCM) Covenant Agreement (JCMTC)**

4a.) **Negotiate Benefits Agreements with JCM Owners (JCMTC)**

The Japantown Task Force has established a Japan Center Malls Technical Committee (JCMTC) to communicate with the various property owners, and to develop strategies for the Japan Center Malls. The various property owners of the Malls who will be engaged are Union Bank, Kinokuniya, Flanagan, Mar, Lee, Blackstone, and 3D Investments to name a few. The JCMTC is a team of recruited individuals with technical expertise on land use, housing, and development. The community shall also be engaged through the process of developing plans for the Japan Center Malls through clear communication and a working relationship with the developers.

Community members expressed that this is one of the most pressing issues in Japantown. The Community Council and the JCMTC could help to reflect a clear, united voice of the community, so that all strategies developed would reflect the concerns and benefit the community as a whole. If there happens to be a redevelopment, the Japantown community urges to be included, respected, and have a voice in the planning processes, and that there is an equitable amount of space allocated for the community, apart from local businesses in the Malls. A Vision Plan involving design charrettes may be a helpful technique for both community and developer to envision and model the future of the malls. It is important to also note that the community may not necessarily want the Malls to be developed and may organize accordingly.

In the case that there is a development, the potential harm to both existing tenants inside the mall and surrounding businesses outside of the mall should be examined and mitigated. Utmost care should be taken to minimize damage and prevent the displacement of small businesses that serve as cultural anchors to Japantown, especially the 12 Legacy Businesses and long-term businesses that are not yet designated as legacy businesses. This may be accomplished by developing in phases and creating a plan for interim placement of the small businesses. Protections such as rent forgiveness for existing tenants during construction should be explored. Assistance in marketing and funding to help the cultural businesses tenants during the transition period may also help to mitigate the impacts of the disruption.

If there is a development, the negotiation should focus on long-term benefits to the community, such as control over ground level retail. The term “community benefits” is often associated with a one-time cash payout, which would be insufficient to offset impacts of a redevelopment of Japantown.

To sustain Japantown as a Cultural District, it is essential for the City government and Supervisors to be engaged. There shall also be codification of protections for Japanese small businesses, so that the Japan Center Malls can continue to be a landmark and cultural anchor for Japantown. As a Cultural District without such protections, it
may be inevitable for Japantown to lose its Japanese character. The Japan Center Malls Covenant is a valuable agreement, and fortunately, the property owner has been cooperative. Currently, the Japantown SUD, and Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District are helpful, yet not protective enough. Future Covenants should be codified into a policy to ensure the existence of Japantown into the future.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT (Many needs may overlap)
Space access is more equitable to the community than any one-time cash payout:

1. Convention or Event Center for large events (Indoors)
2. Bring a large community space back to the center of Japantown
3. Performance spaces
4. Co-working/ Co-creation spaces for cultural groups
5. Non-profit office space, artists space, small and large multi-purpose community spaces
6. Space for retail pop-ups in a critical mass
7. Culturally appropriate businesses and services
8. Affordable housing
9. Inclusion of Post and Buchanan street, so that Japantown is centered around more than just one street
10. Japantown Museum, where NJAHS and JA Historical Library artifacts could be accessed and displayed
11. More green spaces, rooftop gardens, and a community garden

6. Establish a Visitor Center Kiosk in Japan Center Malls

DETAILS: The Visitor Center Kiosk has been a project in the pipeline for many years. The purpose of the kiosk is to have a central location and orientation point for both community members and visitors. The Kiosk is an information center that will provide people with information about Japan and traveling in Japan as well as information about the local San Francisco Japantown. It will also provide a map and an introduction and information about the Cultural organizations, facilities and resources inside and outside of Japantown in addition to the calendar of upcoming and ongoing events.

The Visitor Center Kiosk has the ability to serve many functions and is intertwined with many of the other overarching CHHESS strategies. The Visitor Kiosk could serve as a physical location for the Artist/ “Small Business Assistance and Media Center,” and could to a degree house the programming of the “Intergenerational Co-Creative Gathering Space.” It may also be beneficial if there is a shuttle to take tourists to the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park as well, to address the strategy of expanding “Japantown beyond physical borders.” In addition, the Visitor Kiosk should be a space that bridges SF Japantown to Japan by offering information about Japan, but also building connections and operating as a satellite location to fulfill functions of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce (JCCNC), and the Japanese Consulate.

A partnership with the JCCNC should be developed to bring more Japanese businesses and curate Japantown to reflect what would attract a broader range of the community. The “Small Business Assistance and Media Center”
Supplemental CHHESS

I. Introduction & II. Vision

should have a partnership with the JCCNC to assist Japanese companies who would like to open up shop in Japantown. It is often the case that these Japanese companies lack information and resources that would incentivize them to set up shop in Japantown. This is a huge missed opportunity, especially because the number of Japanese companies have been increasing according to an 2018 survey conducted by JETRO. It is also the fact that many Japanese companies are interested in doing business in the United States because its market is much bigger than in Japan. Japantown can once again become a gateway for Japanese companies by positioning itself correctly.

The Kiosk can also help to re-establish and house a partnership with the Japan Information and Cultural Center (JICC), a division of the Japanese Consulate, and one of the most influential, resource rich organizations when it comes to Japanese Culture. JICC would be the best at providing information to the public about trips to Japan and has a vast array of information and services it can offer to the public including pamphlets and educational materials to promote Japanese Culture. This is connecting supply and demand, as many visitors come to Japantown looking for information like this. In fact, JICC used to occupy the premises at Japan Center Malls in the past, therefore it should be a natural option for them to be invited back.

A Volunteer base should be coordinated and organized to staff the kiosk and interact with visitors. A website should also be developed which could help visitors navigate the community. This page could also be closely linked to that of the Artist/ Small Business Assistance Center, and the Intergenerational Co-Creative Gathering Space.

This graph indicates the increase of Japanese companies in the Bay Area 1992-2018

7. **Develop a Japantown Vision Master Plan**

A. **Develop a Japantown Vision Master Plan**

DETAILS: A “Vision Plan” is an urban design / urban planning term that refers to a dynamic, long term plan to guide future growth and development in a neighborhood. It is about making the connection between buildings, social settings, and their surrounding environments, and includes analysis, and proposals for a neighborhood’s population, economy, housing, transportation, community facilities, public realm, streetscape, City regulations, zoning, and land use. It is based on community input, surveys, planning initiatives, existing development, physical characteristics, and social and economic conditions.
A “master plan” looks at all of these topics addressed above cohesively, as opposed to individual spheres, and can assume all or some of these roles:

- Develop a phasing and implementation schedule and identify priorities for action
- Act as a framework for regeneration and attract private sector investment.
- Conceptualize and shape the three-dimensional urban environment.
- Define public, semi private, and private spaces and public amenities.
- Determine the mix of uses and their physical relationship.
- Engage the local community and act as builder of consensus.

Historically, Japantown has never had a full, comprehensive Vision Plan that was directed by the community. The last time Japantown had a full Master Plan was the “Redevelopment” era, where the neighborhood was shaped by an outside agency with very little regard for the existing social, economic, and physical fabric of the neighborhood. To this day, the insensitive planning and design of the physical infrastructure in Japantown impacts its social and economic dynamics. For example, the car-oriented nature of the streetscape, fortress-like buildings, Brutalist style architecture, and the over-abundance of concrete yields a more enclosed, less interconnected, less inviting space. Despite what was done, the community has truly made the best of these spaces to make amends, bring back life, and a thriving culture that invites people of all backgrounds into the community.

What would a Japantown truly stewarded by its community look like, and what would it offer to San Francisco and its future generations? The time to map out the vision is now; this master planning process will finally allow the broader J/JA community to connect on a bright future that reflects what Japantown is meant to be. The next redevelopment should reflect a new era, of a sustainable, just, equitable world that we are all striving for, that addresses what it takes to heal, revive, and regenerate Japantown and its heartbeat.

A Regenerative Japantown that culturally advances and embodies San Francisco’s “0-80-100 Roots Framework” to its Climate Goals through also achieving social, and cultural rootedness and wellbeing. Promoting San Francisco’s biodiversity, and cultural diversity.

Work that constitutes some compartments of a master plan have already been accomplished in Japantown and could be useful in the process of informing a true Vision Plan. For example, the Japantown Design Guidelines, Japantown Special Use District, and Better Neighborhoods Plan has been helpful to maintaining the atmosphere of Japantown. Japantown should continue to include and utilize these resources to inform the Vison Plan and planning and general.

B. Regenerative, Sustainable, Resilient Japantown (Midori Japantown)

The Japantown community would like to see Japantown grow into a greener, vibrant space that reflects the eco-culture of Japan. This is a wide spectrum ranging from more water bottle refilling stations, and more healthy organic Japanese food options, to greener infrastructure, and cultural experiences. There should be a collaboration with the San Francisco Planning Department on their “Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative to enhance sustainability in a culturally sensitive way, unique to Japantown. Similar initiatives have been accomplished in multiple neighborhoods including SOMA and Sustainable Chinatown.
C. Expanding and Connecting Japantown Beyond Physical Borders- Expanding to Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park etc.

Japantown is more than the geographical area specified on the map. Valuable J/JA cultural institutions and hubs extend throughout San Francisco, and the Bay Area. Although geographically dispersed, there is still a profound connection to Japantown. Building stronger support and interrelationships with these institutions, and spaces would increase mutual enhancement. For example, strengthening connections to valuable cultural heritage institutions like the Theatre of Yugen in the Mission and many others could benefit and support both Japantown and the institutions that exist in San Francisco.

In fact, the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park is a better-known tourist destination than Japantown itself. It is important that Japantown is reconnected to the Tea Garden to create a richer, integrated experience for tourists. For example, there could be shuttles ordered from the Visitor Kiosk in Japantown to bike maps to the Japanese Tea Garden. Integrating transportation options, and information connections is vital.

D. Support Improvements to Peace Plaza (JTF Peace Plaza Committee)

The Peace Plaza is the most valuable public space in Japantown, serving as a center point, and heart for San Francisco’s vibrant Japantown community. The Peace Plaza is used for both everyday activities and special events, as it has become a city, regional, and international icon.

The Peace Plaza, and the Peace Pagoda was created and donated to Japantown as a gesture of goodwill in 1968 by the City of Osaka, San Francisco’s sister city in Japan. The Peace pagoda was inspired by a series of round pagodas that exists in Nara, the ancient capital of Japan. The "eternal flame" monument, next to the granite reflecting pool was donated by the Sumida Shrine in Osaka, Japan. The Peace Plaza is the focal point of many community celebrations such as the Cherry Blossom Festival, Nihonmachi Street Fair, Japan Day Festival, Aki Matsuri, Children’s Day, Sumo, Origami, Tofu, and numerous other festivals.

Despite its significance as the cultural heart of Japantown, it has aged, and shown structural issues such as water leakages into the parking garage below, making a renovation necessary. There are also major design elements such as split levels, walls, and railings that obstruct circulation patterns, making it less effective as a public space for daily use. There have been many comments that there is too much concrete, and not enough green to make it a peaceful space.

The Japantown Peace Plaza Vision Plan for renovation was completed through extensive community engagement and was approved by the full San Francisco Parks & Recreation Commission in 2019 for the 2020 Parks Bond. San Francisco Parks and Recreation created this vision plan through comprehensive community outreach including surveys that yielded over 700 survey responses, design charrettes, and three community meetings. The Peace Plaza Vision Plan can be accessed at peaceplaza.org, and the video can be seen at https://vimeo.com/352125804. These processes, along with the expertise of professional architects, collectively informed a set of design principles. This culminated into a preferred concept design that has broad based community support, while both environmentally and financially friendly.
In the new design, the Peace Plaza would create a space for a contemplative moment in a dapple of shade, a spot for lunch with a group of friends in the sun, a place to stroll, relax and to reflect on the importance of peace plaza to this community and the City of San Francisco.

The Japantown community must be very active to ensure that the Peace Plaza renovation project will be approved for full funding by the Board of Supervisors and keep its position on the upcoming “2020 Mental Health Bond” budget to be approved. It has been an arduous, long process to get to this point; it is essential that the Peace Plaza Project stays on this bond or else there may be no opportunity for another four years if at all. Japantown cannot afford to lose the momentum that exists now thanks to many years of hard work.

The Peace Plaza renovation would address many of the challenges that the community has expressed, including the lack of attractive gathering spaces, and green, healthy spaces. In the future, the community wants to see more activities, planting, seating, as well as senior friendly design elements in the Peace Plaza. Indeed, it is important to honor the history and culture of the Peace Plaza, to serve justice to the many Japanese American residences that were cleared to create this space, by creating a vibrant, thriving environment that establishes a legacy for future generations, and the community of San Francisco.

**E. Support Improvements to Buchanan Mall (Osaka Way)**

The Buchanan Mall is a valuable open space in Japantown, resembling a Japanese streetscape with shops opening to cobblestone streets and apartments above. The Buchanan Mall was envisioned and created to serve as a place where visitors and locals could enjoy a natural Japanese inspired garden atmosphere. Buchanan Mall is also home to many historic businesses including two of Japantown’s oldest family-owned businesses; Benkyodo was established in 1906, and Soko Hardware in 1925. Both businesses were forced to close during World War II but were able to reopen after the war and remain in Japantown through Redevelopment.

The Buchanan Mall which was completed in 1980, needs revitalization. Recently the “Buchanan Mall Vision Plan,” was developed by the Japantown Community Benefits District (JCBD), with Japantown community representatives and organizations, city department consultants, and merchants that currently operate on Buchanan Mall. The plan details the issues found in Buchanan Mall that hinder desired improvements and includes suggestions for improvements for the revitalization of the commercial area.

The Origami fountains have not been functioning for many years, the lighting is inadequate for evening hours, and the cobblestone pathways present ADA and safety issues. This open space needs a “face lift” so the cultural pathway that it once was many years ago can come to life once again and remain a permanent part of Japantowns’ cultural landscape.

The Buchanan Mall was designed by Rai Okamoto, an architect and planner of the Redevelopment Agency, and was completed in 1980. In 1976, world renowned artist Ruth Asawa was commissioned to design the origami sculpture/fountains that join the cobblestone “river” which flows toward the Peace Plaza. The mall is owned by the Nihonmachi Parking Corporation (NPC). and is also an open space under the general dominion of the city’s Department of Parks and Recreation. As a retail space, it is also under City’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development. Because they are part of the city’s art collection, the Arts Commission oversees the fountains, which are maintained by the Department of Public Works under an agreement with NPC.

To increase attractive open spaces for people to gather in Japantown, the Japantown Cultural District should support JCBD in their effort to develop a strategy for Buchanan Mall. Taking care of what was given to us is
rooted in our culture, and Buchanan Mall will again awaken and fill with a peaceful and soothing ambiance. Ruth Asawa's hope that the fountains would symbolize the growth and life of the Japanese community was important then as it is today. Revitalizing and taking better care of the open space we still have in Japantown is crucial and part of the bigger picture of keeping Japantown thriving and preserving our community for future generations.

8. **Establish a Community Development Corporation/ Community Land Trust / Community Impact Fund, or a Similar Mechanism**

**DETAILS:**
A Community Development Corporation (CDC) or Community Land Trust for Japantown would help to keep existing property in the hands of the community, assist community development, and empower community land ownership and acquisition. Keeping more land in the hands of the Japantown community, would allow for more community-determination of its own future.

Both Community Development Corporation and Community Land Trust were strategies proposed in the JCHESS Document. A Community Development Corporation was the single most effective tool to address 22 out of 25 “areas of concerns,” while also addressing 15 out of 22 “goals and objectives” identified in the JCHESS. A Majority of the areas of concerns that were identified in the JCHESS in 2013 are relevant to what the community has identified as concerns today.

Community members have expressed the desire for at least starting the process to develop a Japantown CDC or Land Trust. There is also a necessity to identify and assess vulnerable spaces in the community, what kind of spaces the community needs, and where opportunities exist for development by the community. One potential location brought up was the Nihonmachi Parking Corporation (NPC) lots, which is an underutilized space with some degree of development potential. Another potential for a CDC or Land Trust is that it may also create Social Housing which is built by the community and owned by the community. Community members are also seeking a mechanism to publicly allow community members to sell property to other community members. Community members would like at least some consultation or dialogue before community-owned property is sold.

Developing a CDC takes a considerable amount of expertise, and also staff. Land Trusts may be difficult to sustain, since they need to be governed to eternity, and the management of a large pool of investments may cause complications. Perhaps a more realistic approach would be to develop a network of investors that are willing to invest on a project by project basis. Perhaps a great model to pursue may be something similar to the Little Tokyo Community Impact Fund.

9. **Explore Culturally-Competent Affordable Housing with Preferences to Descendants of Displaced with “Certificate of Preferences,” Community-based Artists, Younger Generations, Seniors, Families of the Community, and Employees of Community-based Non-Profits (Live- Work- Create-Space)**
How do you create housing that encourages Cultural Competency?
Without housing for the lower middle-class, and preferences for Japanese/Japanese Americans in Japantown, people that make Japantown, struggle to stay in San Francisco.

DETAILS:
A fair percentage of affordable housing should be included in any large development and should contain a mixture of micro-sized apartments, co-housing, as well as family-sized apartments to create space for younger generations as well as families of the community. Many community members have expressed their preferences for Japantown to be a sustainable space for people to live, work, and play.

Affordable Housing built in Japantown should have preferences to those who were:

A. Descendants of those displaced during Redevelopment and received the “Certificate of Preferences (COP)” because there was not enough affordable housing built for those community members who lost their homes. There should be codification for the return of the descendants of COP recipients.
B. Younger generations, families, seniors, and employees of community-based non-profits because their active engagement in Japantown is essential to a thriving Japantown into the future. Families are a great demographic, because the more children grow up in Japantown, the greater their emotional attachment, and motivation to sustain Japantown.
C. Community-based Artists and Culture-Bearers, because artists evolve the culture, create a destination point/a hub, bring economic well-being to the neighborhood

The creation of affordable housing is a long-term process, which is why there should be a mechanism where existing affordable units that become vacant are transferred to younger members of our community. At the current rate, these affordable housing units revert to market rate housing, once the inhabitant passes away. For example, the average age of residents at Nihonmachi Terrace, which is the only affordable housing with 50 percent Japanese residents, is 70 years old.
Nihonmachi Terrace, owned by JARF used to have 80 percent Japanese residents, however this percentage has decreased since JARF began accepting HUD funding, which does not allow any preferences in Japantown. Most community members could not afford rents in Japantown, however often do not qualify for low-income subsidized housing, therefore find it difficult to stay in Japantown. The big question here is, how do you create housing that encourages Cultural Competency?

10. **Increase Fundraising and Marketing Capacity, and Partnerships to Ensure Long-term Sustainability and to Support CHHES Strategies (Co-Create Collaborative Abundance)**

To support the strategies and tactics stipulated above, and ensure long term sustainability of these programs, the Japantown Cultural District would need to develop a business plan and also increase its fundraising capacity. This would entail increased revenue streams as a result of increased web-development and presence, increased marketing, and increased grant writing and partnerships.

Currently, there is not enough internal capacity to engage in dedicated fundraising strategies.
Diversification of sustainable revenue streams is essential; the Japantown Cultural District is currently solely funded by the City government. A fundraising strategy must be developed so that the funding for the second fiscal year and the implementation phase is re-invested in a regenerative funding strategy, which should include revenues from individual contributions, foundations, corporate sources, government, and earned revenue sources. The Japantown Cultural District should also look past conventional forms of fundraising by expanding its network, sharing its value and stories, developing partnerships in innovative projects, harboring social entrepreneurship, exploring community impact investments, and shifting to a mode of developing collaborative abundance.

**Expanding Japantowns’ Storytelling, Resonance, and Reach:**
There exists much potential for the Japantown Cultural District to expand its reach. Currently, many, even members of the broader J/JA community are not even aware of what is going on in Japantown, which makes it difficult to truly articulate the value and reach of Japantowns impactful, hard work.

The first step in the Japantown Cultural Districts’ fundraising strategy should focus on building increased community engagement, while also looking at ways to broaden the conversation (and funding) beyond the Japanese American community to the broader Asian American/racial and economic equity/arts/housing/cultural preservation conversations that are going on right now.

There is also a lot of activity is happening in the foundation space related to funding for Covid-19 and the racial equity movements. It would be beneficial for the Japantown Cultural District to fully engage in creative solution building for transformative change towards a regenerative future, to not only to inspire partnerships and attract visibility and funding, but to also truly initiate a more sustainable, just, equitable, healthy future for Japantown and the world.

**Enhanced Partnerships:**
Beyond monetary funding to support the CHHESS strategies, partnerships, skill-sharing, and resource-sharing are equally valuable. Upon developing and beginning the implementation of innovative programming, partnerships should be developed with organizations, companies, and individuals to gain support through skills and expertise shared, or joint pilot projects. Having a inspirational story, sharing the value of Japantown, and interesting programs that people want to invest into, and become of part of is important. One example could be the partnership with a San Francisco-based or Japanese Tech company to assist in building an innovative online web-platform with a global reach. Another example would be a partnership with a local Eco-solutions company or a Japanese Eco-based company to implement the Regenerative Japantown infrastructure solutions.

**Enhancing Connectivity, Skill-sharing, Capacity-Building, and Social Entrepreneurship in the Community:**
There should be partnerships and collaborations between community-based organizations, artists, and creative thinkers, and skilled experts within the community to bring together skills and resources to make the CHHESS strategies possible. These skills and capacity should be nurtured in the next generation as well, and they should be incubation and given tools to develop their own organizations, businesses, and social innovation. Other collectivist ways to generate funds for community sustainability include revolving funds for artists collectives and innovators to take turns in piloting projects, developing revenue-generating platforms, and community impact funds that generate returns on property and business investment.

**Evaluations Necessary to Developing a Fundraising Strategy:**
To truly understand what capacity, time, and cost it will take to develop and accomplish the Japantown Cultural Districts’ fundraising strategy, it is necessary to conduct an evaluation of the “Internal Considerations” to outline and weigh the internal capacity required with the amount of work required to seek new additional funds, in the areas of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity – Current and Proposed</th>
<th>Competition</th>
<th>Current Expertise</th>
<th>Projected Revenue</th>
<th>Hard Costs</th>
<th>Effort to Implement</th>
<th>Effort to Manage</th>
<th>Time to Fruition</th>
<th>Related Benefits</th>
<th>Related Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Multiple revenue types should also be carefully evaluated, as each type comes with its own advantages and disadvantages for organizations to consider, in order to build the business model that is right for Japantown Cultural District.

Capabilities Required:
- Fundraising Expert
- Marketing and Communications Expert
- Web-Developer
- Business Strategist
- The participation of community at large

RELEVANT STRATEGIES FROM THE JCHESS:

1. Develop a Strategic Plan for Japan Center Malls
2. Create a Community Development Corporation
3. Implement Improvements to Peace Plaza
4. Implement Improvements to Buchanan Mall

JCHESS STRATEGIES COMPLETED/IN PROCESS:

1. Japantown Community Benefits District
2. Japantown Design Guidelines
3. Invest in Neighborhoods
4. Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements per the Better Streets Plan

VII. OVERARCHING HOW:

(Specific Actions, Capabilities Required, Measurements of Success)
1. Establish a SF Japantown Community Council (JTF)+ Art Action Committee

This section explores how a community council that is uniquely well-suited Japantown SF could be formulated, by examining past structures that have existed in Japantown, identifying potential challenges, and examining how other neighborhoods, including the Japantown Community Congress of San Jose, and Little Tokyo Community Council have structured and operate their community councils.

THE JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE:
Japantown Task Force (JTF) is the most suitable organization to develop the arm of a Community Council, attributed by its current structure, mission, and function. In fact, Japantown Task Force functioned as a 50-member community council from its inception in 2001 until 2004. After 2004, JTF adopted its current structure with a maximum of 21 Board of Directors. The mission of the JTF is to “preserve and develop Japantown, strengthen the ethnic diversity, and create an atmosphere of safety, beauty, vitality, and prosperity.” The history of JTF started with a planning grant, extensive community engagement processes, and multiple reports published including the “Japantown Community Plan.” This plan identified the “creation of implementation organization” as a top priority with “community organizing” as a parallel activity, thus the inception of the JTF as a non-profit organization. From this point on, JTF has worked to facilitate the “community-based-organizations network” for communications and planning, in addition to a monthly “CBO-brown bag lunch” in its beginning stages.

The JTF continues to provide information and solicit input on all plans and activities, while establishing priorities of issues, goals, and objectives. It expands the community information network, acting as a resource, conduit and pivotal point of information critical to the future of the entities (both commercial and non-profit), residents and projects of the community. Among the many accomplishments of the JTF are the completion of the Better Neighborhoods Plan, and the JCHESS, which are the predecessors to the CHHESS. The Japantown Task Force innately functions as an organization that continuously works on economic development, planning, and preservation of Japantown San Francisco. The coming years from 2020 on will necessitate major community organizing power around these topics, therefore, recirculating back to its origins of a greater representative coalition will be crucial. Greater interconnectivity and communication with the key stakeholders and the broader Japantown community shall be systemized and enhanced through the community council arm.

CHALLENGES:
It is important to acknowledge the challenges of a community council that the JTF encountered in the past (2001-2004) to structure the proposed community council to be resilient and successful. The main challenge was that decision making had become a cumbersome process with the 50 members of the council. The sheer number of people brought a large variety of ideas, which made it difficult to build consensus and move forward effectively. However, examining other community councils have offered some solutions to these challenges.

MODELS BY SIMILAR COMMUNITIES:
1. Little Tokyo Community Council
The Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC) est. in ’99 and currently operating with 90 members, is the nonprofit community coalition of residents, businesses, and religious, cultural, and community organization as well as other vested stakeholders in the Little Tokyo community. The mission is “by bringing together a broad range of
Little Tokyo Stakeholders to speak with one voice, we protect, preserve, and promote the character and values of our historic community."
They build community power through organizing and education, build political power by engaging with public officials, and create a vision for Little Tokyo’s future.

The 90-member community council is organized with the general membership, the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and one full-time staff member, the Managing Director. Each of the 90-members has a vote, as there is 1 vote per organized body. HOAs have 1 vote as well, but individuals currently cannot vote without being part of an organized body. Ultimately, the Board of Directors has the final decision-making authority and legal responsibilities, while the larger memberships’ votes are advisory to the Board of Directors. This structure allows LTCC to gain broad-based input, consensus, and support while being able to move decisively.

Although the Board of Directors has the final decision-making authority, the members’ votes are still heavily weighted in the decision-making process. On topics with a very short timeline, the Executive Committee also has the ability to make the decision, making the process simpler.
For topics that affect only certain areas of the community, outreach is made to those specific entities before a position is taken, and decision-making may not have to involve the whole LTCC. On larger topics with divided perspectives, discussions are held to come closer to a consensus before the vote occurs. The process of decision-making is integral to LTCC, in that the process of discussion and negotiation leads to a position that feels good to the members, thus building an even stronger, united position with a broad base of support. This process yields successful outcomes in advocacy; the large number of supporters that could be shown on any given project is leveraged as a “power flex” by the community.

Shared values and visions established by the members also factors into the analysis for decision-making. Every year, the vision for the neighborhood is refreshed through an annual summit. Having a shared set of values as a basis to work off and guide decision-making helps the community move forward more swiftly and in unity. The processes described above have created a more neutral space for decision-making that is guiding by process instead of internal politics. It has become an inclusive space for better communication, coordination, and organizing.

2. Japantown Community Congress of San Jose
The Japantown Community Congress of San Jose (JCCsj) currently operates with a 14-member Board of Directors, who are representatives of multiple Japantown SJ organizations. Their mission is to preserve Japantown for future generations, advocate for Japantown, promote Japantown, ensure that Japantown develops thoughtfully, engage the youth in Japantown, and to develop a strong, diverse board, representative of Japantown.

This organization which meets once a month has been helpful for the stakeholders of Japantown San Jose to stay on the same page, share calendars to prevent the overlap of events, engage in joint marketing, and to function as a watchdog for development projects occurring in the neighborhood.

As a representative phrased it, it is an “organization of leaders of organizations.” Similar to JTF, in the past they functioned as a larger community congress, which was later reduced to a smaller membership to promote a less cumbersome decision-making process. Their logic was that if each of the members were representative of
multiple organizations, they could have a smaller number of members. This is another model that JTF can take into consideration.

JCCsj has been the “go to” place for elected officials and developers to engage. For example, San Jose City Council members attend JCCsj meetings consistently every month to check off. This great relationship is politically helpful to keep Japantown on the radar of the City. This can offer insights about how having a united and representative body can bring more clarity to developers and officials about which group to ultimately engage with for Japantown.

OPERATING A COMMUNITY COUNCIL DURING COVID-19:
Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, LTCC has found effective ways to hold meetings on ZOOM, complemented by the use of Google docs to post updates and comments that may not have to be verbally discussed or shared for the sake of time.

STEPS FOR JAPANTOWN SF TO ENHANCE FUNCTIONS OF A COMMUNITY COUNCIL:
Japantown Task Force already has a majority of the foundation and infrastructural framework intact to develop a community council arm. The steps to be taken are to first take a deeper look of the compatibility of the two models proposed. The LTCC model is a more promising model to develop a true community council for Japantown SF.

The JTF could keep its current Board of Directors and develop an additional membership body which includes representatives from Japantown arts, cultural, and religious organizations, as well as residents, and merchants. These members should be outreached to request their representation at Japantown Task Force (SF Japantown Community Council).

For the JTF to adapt to serve the role of a community council, an amendment should be inserted into the current Bylaws regarding the additional membership. Staff positions in the JTF including the Administrative Manager may also see a slight shift in responsibilities to accommodate the membership representation. Monthly meetings of the Board of Directors should continue, while the engagement of the broader membership will need to be defined.

OVERARCHING CAPABILITIES REQUIRED:
One Staff assigned to conduct outreach to community stakeholders for their involvement and run the community council, if the Community Council remains under the structure of JTF.

OVERARCHING MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS:

1. Establish a SF Japantown Community Council (JTF)+ Art Action Committee
   a) A Japantown Community Council is formed in fiscal year 2020-2021
   b) The SFJCC begins to hold bi-monthly meetings
   c) The SFJCC develops and circulates “Cultural Competency” material
   d) The Community Council responds to coronavirus pandemic
2. Small Businesses and Artist Assistance Media Center  
(Additionally assists with Online Visibility) Increase Communication, and Interconnectivity

A. What are the steps towards achieving this?

- Find resource center space, potentially Kinmon Gakuen Hall.
- Interview small business owners to assess their information needs.
- Mobilize Japantown artists and arts and cultural organizations and assess their information resource needs.
- Pursue Japantown collaborations with JCBD, JMA, Japan Center Malls festivals & events marketing.
- Find program models in other Asian American business and arts resource organizations. See Part C below.
- Develop program and service delivery development plan for resource center services
- Develop online virtual resource center capability.
- Write staffing proposal and seek funding for project staff

B. What are some policy tools we can use?

- Mayor’s Office of Housing & Community Development tenant education, outreach, and support programs.
- Office of Economic and Workforce Development training and employment
- San Francisco Planning Community Stabilization toolkit

C. What have other organizations/ communities done?

- Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach provides bi-lingual legal counseling to small businesses and non-profit organizations.
- Kearny Street Workshop offers art classes, exhibitions, performances, exhibitions for Asian American artists.
- The Little Tokyo Service Center offers free business counseling services through Asian Pacific Islander Small Business Program.
- Center for Asian American Media funds, promotes, and showcases films by Asian American filmmakers.
- SoMa Pilipinas Cultural District partners with Kultivate Labs as a small business accelerator.
- The San Francisco Office of Economic Workforce Development Center provides programs and services for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

D. How do you know this will be successful

- Covid-19 and Japan Center Malls covenant issues have established a real world need for small businesses, artists, and arts organizations to obtain fast, timely, expedient access to information in order to survive.

**OVERARCHING CAPABILITIES REQUIRED:**
- An expert of developing tech solutions and online platforms
- Partnership with a business coach and grant-writer’
- A staff with experience in communications, marketing, and promoting visibility for small business and artists

**OVERARCHING MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS:**

**Artists and Small Businesses Assistance, Coaching, and Media Center** (Additionally assists with Online Visibility)

- A stronger online presence, one-stop shop is developed through a well curated website platform that connects all community organizations and businesses, resources, as well as an integrated shopping platform, and media outlet for small businesses and artists in FY 2020-2021
- Increased traffic and visibility to the Japantown Cultural District website
- Partnerships are developed with JETRO, JCCNC, and the Japanese Consulates’ JICC
- Partnerships are developed with Business Coaches in FY 2020-2021

“Japantown Futurism Challenge/Contest” – Engage younger generations in developing innovative virtual platforms

1) Help develop an online resource center/shopping platform for Japantown Merchants and Artists.
2) Marketing for Online presence of merchants: Engage Audience by telling the Story of the Artist/Merchant (Put a Face on it) through both videotaping, and professional images. Stories sell! People shop for experiences.

### 3. Cultural Co-Creative Intergenerational Gathering Space

Empowers diversity of community from Japanese-speaking to next generations

This Strategy will have both near-term and long-term outcomes. It is quite feasible to develop the preliminary stage of such a space by creating programming from the Visitor Kiosk, in the Japan Center Malls. The JTF has sent a letter of request for a meeting with the Kinmon Gakuen Board of Directors to present the plan.

Kinmon Gakuen is the most ideal location to develop the Intergenerational Cultural Co-Creative/Co-working Multi-Use Arts Space/Gallery for its large size, underutilization, diversity of rooms, stage, and an outdoor area for gardening.

To make Kinmon Gakuen accessible, a railing must be designed to make the entrance ADA compatible. Developing a strong online presence, outreach platform, and programming is also essential to engage the community and activate these spaces.

**3a) Creative Place-making:**

d. Arts Action Committee + A Sustainable Arts Community
   - Creative space should be a priority
   - Preservation Plan: A document which evaluates a community’s historic resources and makes recommendations on steps which may be taken to ensure that they are preserved and reused to the community’s economic and social benefit.
   - Exhibition space is needed. It is important to have a shared space for artists to show their artworks in a gallery area.
o There is evident when galleries/exhibition spaces open, then a night life will also develop. Nightlife activities include, besides the increase of young people with disposable income: bars, coffee shops, and restaurants as well as other boutique businesses.
o Kinmon Gauken fits this idea of use of space well.

e. Programming Around Sustainability
   ● Hikari Farms – Organic Farmers Market in the Peace Plaza.
   ● Sustainable Little Tokyo
   ● Festivals and other outside events, for example, aki Matsui or Street Fair or Obon dancing at the local Buddhist temples.

f. Cultural Competency- Promotes Our Narrative & Establishes Solidarity
   ● Cultural Competency, our narrative and solidarity with other Cultural Districts.
   ● Kimochi, Inc/Kai. The word “kimochi” means “feelings” in Japanese. It was established in July 1971. The mission of Kimochi, Inc. is to provide a variety of culturally-sensitive programs and services to all seniors and their families to preserve their dignity and independence, with a focus on the Japanese American and Japanese speaking community.
   ● Nichi Bei Foundation is dedicated to keeping the Japanese American community connected, informed and empowered — primarily through a community newspaper (Nichi Bei Weekly) and its website. The Nichi Bei Foundation is a nonprofit educational organization that returned from the ashes of a community-serving media legacy which dates back to 1899.

g. How do you know this will be successful?
   ● all groups know the path it wants to follow and they need to get along, to listening to each other but like all communities regardless of ethnicity it is a hard to practice.
   ● Farmers market can enhance the local business (plus using the Japantown Center parking lot) by their ability to bring additional foot traffic into the area.
     ■ Everyone should have access to fresh produce
     ■ San Jose Sunday Farmers Markets
   ● From our Focus groups discussions, a few of their comments/questions:
     ■ “What is the future of the Center?”
     ■ “Does not need to “look” “oriental” since the community has a collection of designs”.
     ■ “Could look more “oriental-ish.””
     ■ “Japantown does not feel like Japantown anymore.”
     ■ “Culturally relevant retail businesses [are] declining”.
   ● There is a gap -- a divide -- between Japanese and Japanese Americans and Japanese and Japanese American Japanese and English speakers and how they (or don’t) see each other or hear each other. This division has been happening between the generations too. For example, the Issei (the first Japanese generation to arrive in America) could not discuss their differences or completely express their opinions or their feeling to the Nisei (second generation), and the Nisei had issues with their Sansei children (third generation). So it is
not surprising that they would end up fragmented and incomplete views of each other. [footnote: T. matsueda. Issei: the shadow generation. P7]

- 3D Investments has already agreed to build the kiosk in the Japan Center Mall.
- Ecotourism –
  - Geotourism: Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of the place being visited, including its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents
- Seek funding for part time staffing.
- Need to tell the story of Japanese/Japanese American veterans of all conflicts/wars that we were involved in (not just WWII).
  - NJAHS does have the MIS (Military Intelligences Service) museum in the Presidio but it is not in Japantown.

How: put together the list of amenities and Vett it by the artists.
http://oakstop.com/
https://www.artobjectgallery.com/
UNDSCVRD SF,
The Next Generation should be empowered and given opportunities for positions of leadership,
UNDSCVRD SF,

**OVERARCHING CAPABILITIES REQUIRED:**
- A staff assigned as an artist curator, facility manager, volunteer and artists coordinator and Programming development
- Fundraising, communications and marketing expert

**OVERARCHING MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS:**

a) A stronger online presence, one-stop shop is developed through a well curated website platform that connects all community organizations and artists
b) Develop 5 new micro-events in Japantown in 2020
c) Identify and create availability for a gallery and performance space
d) Engage and promote multiple artists of the community
e) Develop a revolving fund for artists

f) Activate the Visitor Kiosk in the Japan Center Malls

g) Develop plans for the location of a community garden

h) Develop a larger mailing list

4. Develop a Strategic Plan to Address Japan Center Malls

**Covenant Agreement 2021 Expiration (JCMTC)**

4a.) Negotiate Benefits Agreements with JCM Owners
The Japan Center Malls is the focal point of Japantown, and any change of use would have a significant impact on Japantown as a whole. The Japantown Task Force has developed an Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee (JCMTC) to develop a strategy and to engage in dialogue with all of the property owners of the Japan Center Malls, including 3D Investments. The Scope of work includes all properties between Laguna and Fillmore and between Post and Geary. The JCMTC currently has a team of 11 individuals with highly valued experience and expertise on relevant subject matters including Land Use, Planning and Development, Real Estate Development, Community Benefits Negotiations, Access to City Hall Leaders, and Housing. The Board President of the JTF is planning the very first virtual meeting of this committee.

The strategies and negotiations around the Japan Center Malls can be an opportunity that expands Japantown as the thriving cultural heart of J/JA communities for generations, or one that further diminishes and jeopardizes the future of Japantown. The Community could be at the crossroads of major change, which can be both exciting and daunting. Development has never reflected a cohesive vision of the Japantown community before, and this can be a crucial opportunity to turn the tides toward a Japantown that is shaped by the vision of the community for the first time in history.

Enhancements for thriving, authentic Japantown is a mutual benefit for everyone in San Francisco and the greater region, including the Property owners. The potential for Japantown is vast if stewarded by those who live, preserve and regenerate the culture. Japanese Culture is attractive and offers many benefits to the culture of San Francisco, the world at large, and to future generations. Therefore, negotiations to make Japantown mutually enhancing for all parties involved is essential.

The CHHESS recommends the JCMTC to take an integrated approach rather than a siloed approach. The majority of the strategy will be dictated by the JCMTC, however the best scenario for Japantowns’ future could be negotiated if the following steps are a part of the process:

1. Engagement of the Community Council
2. Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment
3. Process of the Japantown Vision Plan

Engagement of the Community Council in this process will be essential for keeping the broader J/JA community informed, developing shared values and visions, building community and political power, and developing a broad-base support for the future of Japantown. It is crucial that negotiations with the JCM property owners are properly informed by these agreed upon values, vision, and needs. In the past redevelopment, the future of Japantown dictated by only a small group created inequity and division in the community, resulting in a major diminishment of Japantown geographically and socially. Another redevelopment can go either way, one that expands Japantown and brings people back, or quite the opposite; the future is ours to choose.

A “Community Needs Assessment” is crucial to any negotiation of community benefits with the developers. As addressed previously, facilities and landscapes that serve the community will be much longer lasting than a one-
time cash payout. However, these facilities should be wisely assessed to ensure that they truly reflect the needs of the broader I/JA communities that will sustain Japantown. Some assessment work has been done in the focus groups, which would be reviewed and considered, however a more comprehensive assessment specific to Japan Center Malls will be necessary.

Lastly, the Japantown Master Plan would offer a concrete idea of how the community envisions to guide the future development of Japantown. Having a clear idea that has the potential for real-world applications would make any negotiation more promising by offering alternatives that could be quite mutually beneficial to both the community and the developers.

OVERARCHING CAPABILITIES REQUIRED:
- Staff person assigned to community council to work with the Ad Hoc JCMTC Committee

OVERARCHING MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS:
  a) A strategic plan is developed for the Japan Center Malls
  b) Information about the Covenant Agreements is disseminated widely through the community
  c) A Community Needs Assessment is conducted through various methods including a survey/assessment of the community’s vision and needs in fiscal year (FY) 2020-2021. May be accomplished by JCMTC in collaboration with community council.
  d) A stronger covenant agreement is developed with property owners of Japan Center Malls

5. Establish a Visitor Kiosk in Japan Center Malls

A. What are the steps towards achieving this?
   ● 3D Investments has already agreed to build the kiosk in the Japan Center Mall.
   ● Develop volunteer staffing patterns. Volunteer staffing initially.
   ● Establish collaboration with 3D Investments festivals & events marketing staff.
   ● Develop Japantown business, services, history, and cultural heritage guide.
   ● Incorporate City of San Francisco tourist information.
   ● Seek funding for part time staffing,

B. What are some policy tools we can use?
   ● Walk San Francisco program of the SFMTA.
   ● SF City Guides Program provides volunteer-led tours of Japantown and the Japanese Tea Garden.
   ● San Francisco Visitors Information Center could be a model for the kiosk.
   ● SF Travel (San Francisco Travel Assoc.) should market and promote Japantown.
   ● Chinatown Alley Tours (Chinatown Community Development Corp.) offers tours led by youth.

C. What have other communities/organizations done?
● Kimochi Kai Drop-In Senior Lounge operates rent-free under an agreement with the Japan Center.
● NJAHS Military Intelligence Service Historic Learning Center in the Presidio schedules docent-led tours.
● Japanese Tea Garden offers free tours conducted by City Guides Tours daily.
● Cameron House conducts a popular Lousy Chinatown Walking Tour.

D. How do you know this will be successful?

● Japan Center Mall placement with 3D Investments cooperation ensures long-term viability of the kiosk.
● No up-front costs to JCD.

OVERARCHING CAPABILITIES REQUIRED:
-A staff assigned as an artist curator, facility manager, volunteer and artists coordinator and Programming development – heavily focus on volunteer staffing of the Kiosk (May be the same staff person as assigned to the Co-creative Space.

OVERARCHING MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS:
   a) The Kiosk serves functions for the “Intergenerational co-creative space” and “Small Business, Artist Assistance Media Center”
   b) Partnerships with JICC, JCCNC and JETRO are developed and promoted through the Kiosk
   c) A volunteer mechanism is developed for the Kiosk
   d) Content of the monitor is linked to the Online platform
   e) Number of people who are informed about Japantown events, organizations and spaces has doubled
   f) Feedback that visitors are more engaged in Japantown activities

6. Japantown Vision Plan

A. Japantown Vision Plan

The Japantown Master Plan would be a dynamic, long term planning document to guide future growth and development in a Japantown that would address the connection between buildings, social settings, and their surrounding environments. It creates an opportunity for the community to articulate its vision, common values, and goals on Japantown’s built environment, and to conduct an analysis through this lens. For example, many members of the community have expressed that they would like to see more green, interconnected spaces in Japantown, this can be incorporated into the lens for the master plan. It is essential for the community to have a master plan to better articulate the vision to developers.

A master plan has never been done in Japantown before, other than the “urban renewal” by the Redevelopment Agency. The closest Japantown community got to a master plan led by the community is the Better Neighborhoods Plan, which focused on some aspects of the built environment, but not the full spectrum.
Although a master plan often involves a multidisciplinary group of experts, cost and time allocated could be greatly adjusted by the level of complexity desired. The community can decide how comprehensive they would like this master plan to be, with the understanding that there could always be more additions and revisions in the future. The CHHESS recommendation is that an initial simple master plan should be accomplished in the near future to get the process started; more complexity could be added incrementally over time depending on the development pressures on the horizon. Japantown should seek the assistance and expertise of the San Francisco Planning Department to accomplish this initial endeavor.

The following sections are strategies that should be implemented in the following years of the Japantown Cultural District planning grant that could also be incorporated into the Japantown Master Plan when it is initiated.

**B. Midori Japantown Streetscape**

The Japantown community would like to see Japantown grow into a greener, resilient, vibrant space that reflects the eco-culture of Japan. Simple improvements such as edible community gardens, vertical gardens, and water bottle filling stations can also be accomplished. This can fall under a project called “Midori Japantown.” Midori is a Japanese word that translates to “green” or “greenery.” The landscape in Japantown should become greener and more welcoming to its residents and visitors. “Streetscape” is a term used in the JCHHESS Report that included the landscaping, and the pedestrian viewpoint as well as safety issues in Japantown. The Japantown Cultural District could incorporate topics around the eco-culture and traditional Japanese wisdom in its arts and cultural programming to create spaces for engagement around this topic.

The second step or simultaneous step would be to partner with the San Francisco Planning Department on their “Sustainable Neighborhoods” Initiative to enhance sustainability in a culturally sensitive way, unique to Japantown.

We are influencers and have influenced our neighboring communities. A cultural landscape embodies the suggestions and uses that evoke a sense of history for a specific place. Physical features of cultural landscapes can include trees, buildings, pathways, site furnishings, water bodies – basically any element that expresses cultural values and the history of a site. Cultural landscapes also include intangible elements such as land uses and associations of people that influenced the development of a landscape.

**C. Beyond Japantown’s Forgotten Borders**

Our mission is to broaden through education San Francisco’s footprint of SF Japantown. Beside the need to educate within, we need to educate the general public that Japantown was larger by many more blocks than the four-block area that is commonly expressed today.

Japantown is a place where Japanese/Japanese Americans can go when they need a place of self or foodscapes or a place for personal reflections in a place of worship or for those who want a place for recreational activities that has an essence of being “Japanese American.”

And because of the “essence” it makes Japantown exist beyond its so-called borders. Although there is only technically four designated Japantowns, Japantown[s] do exist in one’s heart and spirit. Those markers outside
of the City so-called boundaries include the Buchanan YMCA, the Hamilton Center Library, and other institutions and buildings.

- **Walk San Francisco program of the SFMTA**
- **The Golden Gate Park’s Japanese Tea Garden**, one of the world’s most famous Japanese style garden and is one of the most popular attractions in San Francisco, is not even in Japantown. The Japanese Tea Garden offers free daily tours.
- **The Issei Commemorative Garden at Cottage Row** (SF Japantown) was selected for the development of a Zen garden. With its 22 Victorian houses from the 1860s and 70s, the secluded pedestrian side street known as Cottage Row. The 25-foot Zen garden honors the history of nearby Japantown and its residents who were sent to internment camps during World War II. It is located on the Sutter entrance to the pedestrian street. It was opened in 2019.
- **Located on the campus of San Francisco State University is the Garden of Remembrance.** It was dedicated in 2002. It honors the 19 former SF State students who were pulled from their classes under U.S. military and government orders and forced to live in remote internment camps across the country during World War II, along with the more than 120,000 Japanese Americans who suffered the same fate. It was designed by Japanese American artist Ruth Asawa. The garden contains 10 boulders that serve as symbolic reminders of the different concentration camps. A waterfall on the east side of the memorial represents energy and renewal, and the Japanese Americans’ return to their homes. The garden also features a plaque, which provides historical information regarding internment and the SF State Students directly affected by it. The garden is a gathering spot for San Francisco State University students, faculty and staff. Green lawn, rocks, tall trees, and water elements create a meditative space at the Garden of Remembrance.
- **Tanforan Shopping Center**: historic site of the Tanforan detention center.
  - In 2007, Tanforan Japanese Garden was designed by Mr. Isao Ogura and Mr. Shigeru Namba, who also were the landscape designers for the SFSU Garden of Remembrance. The Garden is located near the statue of the race horse, Seabiscuit.
  - In 2019, the Tanforan Assembly Center Memorial Committee (TACMC) is currently working on two related projects located at the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) train station in San Bruno, CA.
  - The site of the first SF Bay Area Day of Remembrance ceremony in 1979. (Seattle, Washington in 1978 held the first Day of Remembrance).
- **Partnering with the Asian Art Museum and to help with the marketing between Japantown and the Asian Art Museum or vice versa.** Although, in the past Asian Art Museum has been somewhat resistant to placing Japanese American/Asian American artist works in their collection or exhibitions, maybe with the coronavirus pandemic they would be more willing to reconsider their guideline. And Japantown can display artifacts from their collection in Japantown.

## D. Improvements to Peace Plaza

The Japantown Cultural District will play primarily a supporting role in advocating for the project, and keeping the community at large informed about its progress.

- **Establish collaboration with 3D Investments and their festivals & events marketing staff.**
- **Restoration**: The act of returning a historic property as closely as possible to its exact appearance at a
particular point in time, based on careful research. Few buildings call for this kind of treatment, which often involves removing modern systems, technological improvements and additions.

- Destination: Japantown as a place/space for visitors to go and to tell their family and friends about.
- Cultural “rooted”
- Hospitality

**E. Support Improvements to Buchanan Mall (Osaka Way)**

The Japantown Cultural District will play a primarily a supporting role in advocating for the project, and keeping the community at large informed about its progress. One block of Buchanan Street, in Japantown, was renamed Osaka Way in 2007. A few of the original stores (and their owners) are still located on Osaka Way. This short street, with no car traffic, has challenges like, a walkable surface which presently is constructed with a rough stone pathway. It does not create a friendlier, nor welcoming feeling towards pedestrians, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

- A “Walk San Francisco” program of the SFMTA should be developed for Japantown.
- Outdoors travel – get visitors out of your comfort zone. A new experience, something different and to encourage neighbors to spend time outside.

- Historic District: A defined geographical area which may be as small as a few contiguous buildings, or as large as an entire neighborhood, central business district, or community, within which historic properties associated with a particular time or theme in a community’s history predominate. Often the collective significance of the district may be greater than that of any one building or archaeological site. As a planning tool, historic district designation is often used to ensure the preservation of historic properties within the defined boundary, or to encourage reinvestment of the buildings. For example, Little Tokyo their First Street or San Francisco’s Fillmore District with its jazz scene that extended in Japantown during World War II.

- Music:
  - Outdoor afternoon/weekend performances in the Peace Plaza or on Buchanan Street. In the evening, inside near our Visitor’s Center kiosk.
- Artists/Arts:
  - Outdoor/inside programs including performance artists.
  - Both – music and artists – will attract listeners and other visitors to browse and purchase items from local Japanese American/Asian Pacific Americans artisans and walk into the local brick@mortar shops.
- Night Life:
  - Create an “open” mike night for singers or poets or dancers to perform live and a space for filmmakers to screen their current production.
  - A bar-scene can be established to crater to the over 21-crowd. Give them a sense of a place.
  - With a healthy nightlife scene, eateries will be converging on the area.
- Recreational Outfitters:
  - bike rental
  - scooters
- Business owners of shops, theaters, restaurants, hotels, souvenir shops and their staff.
There are B&Bs and AirB&B businesses already established in the area, and with a vibrant social scene it will help those businesses as well as the more established hotels.

- Culturally-relevant Festivals:
  - Yearly church bazaars (usually held in the summertime on weekends).
  - Matsuri (seasonal based)
  - Obon (Buddhist churches and held on weekends during the summer months).
  - NihonMachi Street Fair (August)
  - Tofu Festival - a fundraiser event that also promotes for healthier eating and lifestyle.
  - Sake Tasting Festival - brings in sake makers from all over the world.

- Other traditional and/or cultural performances:
  - JCCNC schedules many activities
  - NJAHS has exhibitions
  - Musical and other performances are conducted by local AA groups, such as One Voice, etc.

- Guides who can provide regional tours.
  - Gray line-like services

If we think of cultural heritage tourism, the list gets even longer for jobs that are either directly involved in tourism or indirectly involved.

A. Steps towards Achievement:

- The keys that open the doors to a sustainable cultural heritage environment is the ability to evaluate what your community has to offer in attractions, visitor services, organizational capabilities, ability to protect resources, and marketing.
  - These goals are measured by setting priorities and measurable goals.
  - The CHHESS report has listed the partners in local, regional, state, national, international groups. Do not have to reinvent the wheel! They have already been pointed out and with newer establishments/businesses being uncovered and/or wanting to move into the area, we have possible future partners/partnerships. We only need to recruit them.

- Developing a volunteer staff with a full time coordinator.
- Assisting Japantown business with staff persons who have knowledge in technology which will help the businesses have virtual presents.
- History, and cultural heritage guide.
- Incorporate City of San Francisco tourist information.
- Digital virtual self-guided tour.
  - A downloadable app can be added at the Visitor’s Kiosk desk.
  - A digital tilted board of a map of Japantown now and what the borders are (40 blocks), to show and explain to the visitor where they are at and where they may want to go.

- Street banners in English and Japanese.
- Increasing Signage in English and Japanese.
- Stabilization: Short-term measures to halt deterioration of a historic property.
- Preservation Plan: A document which will evaluate Japantown’s historic resources and make recommendations on steps which may be taken to ensure that they are preserved and reused to the community’s economic and social benefit.
  - Preservation: The conservation of the qualities and materials that make historic buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts significant. Approaches to preservation include stabilization, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.
Supplemental CHHESS
I. Introduction & II. Vision

- Preservation Ordinance: Learn and use local law that can protect our community’s historic resources.

B. What are some policy tools we can use?

- Walk San Francisco program of the SFMTA.
- SF City Guides Program provides volunteer-led tours of Japantown and the Japanese Tea Garden.
- San Francisco Visitors Information Center could be a model for the kiosk.
- SF Travel (San Francisco Travel Assoc.) should market and promote Japantown.
- A self-guided tour of Japantown that consists of 16 interpretive signs already exists. Or the National Japanese American Historical Society has trained docent-led tours.
- National Endowment for the Arts: Independent agency of the United States federal government serving the public good by nurturing human creativity, supporting community spirit and fostering appreciation of the excellence and diversity of America’s artistic accomplishments through grantmaking, leadership initiatives, partnerships, and public information. www.arts.endow.gov
- National Register of Historic Places: The nation’s official roster of properties that should be preserved because of their significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or culture. The National Register recognizes important historic buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts. It includes properties of local, state or national importance. www.cr.nps.gov/nr/
- Virtual tourism
  - Virtual tourism -- Anyone can visit any place in the world with a computer, with technology. This form of “visiting” has increased with the COVID-19 pandemic which has given us all a forced “shelter-in-place” lifestyle.
  - GPS (Global Positioning System) -- allows visitors to follow directions on their smartphones or other devices. Can get to any point of interest of their choosing, and can advise them of possible places/spots that they were not aware of but may find interesting.
  - Maps -- old technology, paper printed. Maps can be found at AAA offices, tourist bureau desks, hotels, car rentals.
  - Smartphone/Ipod/ipad-like devices for apps that will give visitors a self-guiding tour. This app will be free and if visitors may ask for assistance from the Kiosk Center aides.
  - Visitor Kiosk Center:
    ■ This serves as a multi-purpose objectives (not in any order):
      - brings the tourist to Japantown which will assist the tourist
      - Will encourage them to check out the area further for example towards JCCCN or NJAHS for additional community information will be current since additional information can also be given out on ipod/podcast.
      - At times, additional work on the front-line staff will occur and they will be taken away from other duties. Will need additional volunteer assistance or increase the number of staff members.

C. What have other communities/organizations done?

- Kimochi Kai Drop-In Senior Lounge operates rent-free under an agreement with the Japan Center.
- NJAHS Military Intelligence Service Historic Learning Center in the Presidio has scheduled tours with trained docents.
- Japanese Community and Cultural Center of Northern California (JCCCN)
Hokka Nichi Bei Kai also known as JAANC (Japanese American Association of Northern California) was established in 1895. It is the oldest Japanese American Community organization in North America. Its goal is to create better relations between America and Japan, Americans and Japanese. And to help to resolve problems for the primarily Japanese speaking Japanese American community.

Japanese Americans veterans have been very successful/AA Peace Garden.

Chinatown Alley Tours (Chinatown Community Development Corp.) offers tours led by youth.

Compton ---

name the other SF Cultural Districts

Little Tokyo Survey: A study of historic properties or historic resources within a defined geographic area such as a neighborhood, community or township. A survey often serves as the foundation for a historic preservation plan for a neighborhood, community or region.

National Heritage Area: A place designated by the United States Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography.

National Park Service (NPS): A division of the U.S. Department of Interior, the National Park Service administers the joint federal-state-local historic preservation program established by Congress in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. It also oversees the National Register of Historic Places and assists federally-designated national heritage areas. www.nps.gov

National Register of Historic Places: The nation’s official roster of properties that should be preserved because of their significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or culture. The National Register recognizes important historic buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts. It includes properties of local, state or national importance. www.cr.nps.gov/nr/

National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP): National nonprofit organization chartered by Congress to protect and preserve the nation’s historic resources and cultural heritage. The National Trust operates historic properties and provides advice and assistance to communities in preserving historic properties. It also manages the nation’s first cultural heritage tourism program and the National Main Street Center. www.nthp.org

D. How do you know this will be successful?

Many of our established community organizations and cultural groups have been able to sustain themselves for decades.

Bring in a more understanding, awareness, and sensitivity to our visitors.


No up-front costs to JCD.

Stay-cations: usually person[s] taking a trip of 100 or miles away from home. Especially to invite persons who have been staying-in-place and ready to venture out, but still do not feel comfortable about traveling too far from home.

Federal Government created and sponsors the institutions (i.e., NPS).

We bring in a more understanding, more awareness, and sensitivity to our community.

Culture is symbolic communication........???

Tourism is part of a diversified economy. Tourism jobs means salaries which means their paycheck has additional buying power, not only for their local economy but outside of that area. As well as their salaries they pay – vary widely depending on what the job is.

- public transportation
- auto transportation (includes car dealers, gas stations, car rental and leasing)
- lodging
- food service
- entertainment
- general retail
  - vendors – t-shirt, hoodies/sweat shirts
  - ord
- travel planning
  - airlines

- Success is measured by the number of people we will attract, by the quality of the experience that we know we can offer, and by the economic impact that can be generated for our community.
- We understand that the City will assist us in the technical and, hopefully, financial support that is available for our cultural heritage tourism model to be effective. In some places, it will be easier to secure support for cultural efforts and activities, while in other places, heritage effort and activities are needed for funding help.
- We will collaborate with the other Cultural Districts to find a fit between our communities and tourism.
  - Make sites and programs come alive.
  - Focus on authenticity and quality.
  - Preserve and protect our resources.
- will develop a publicity plan and keep the media informed as plans develop or changes.
- We will not be inclusive or lease out the usual community activists to participate and recruit new volunteers, invite participation
- Will target our marketing to selective events that are realistic to accomplish. Later we can become more ambitious and creative with our planning[s].
- Diversity keeps us dynamic.
- The Hokka Nichi Bei Kai goal is to create better relations between America and Japan, Americans and Japanese. And to help to resolve problems for the primarily Japanese speaking Japanese American community.

**OVERARCHING CAPABILITIES REQUIRED:**
- Members of the Japantown Community Council
- Staff Assigned to Co-Creative Space in organizing a visioning process centered around the arts
- Partnership with the Planning Department

**OVERARCHING MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS:**

a) Support and partnerships for a Japantown Vision Master Plan is developed in FY 2020-2021
b) A Japantown Vision Master Plan is developed
c) Sustainable, green spaces are actively increased in Japantown

a) The Peace Plaza renovation project is approved by San Francisco voters in FY 2020-2021
b) The Peace Plaza renovation project construction begins

c) A Strategic plan is developed for Buchanan Mall
7. Establish a Community Development Corporation (CDC)/Community Land Trust (CLT) or Community Impact Fund (CIF)

Establishing a CDC, CLT or CIF will take adequate funding and expertise. A Japantown CDC or CLT will likely be developed over a longer timeline, while receiving technical advice from CDCs that already exist in San Francisco. CDCs and CLTs could provide ongoing resources and/or other assistance to implement strategies for preserving and promoting social heritage in Japantown.[1]

CDC or a CLT?

As mentioned in the sections above, a Community Development Corporation (CDC) or a Community Land Trust (CLT) could greatly benefit Japantown by increasing the ownership of real estate to ensure that inexpensive spaces for community-based organizations, institutions, businesses, residents, and cultural activities could thrive for generations to come.

Although CDCs and CLTs are similar and accomplish many of the same goals, CDCs offer a wider breadth of services than a CLT. CDCs often focus on the production of affordable housing, owning and leasing property, and also offering social services such as business consulting, and community advocacy. Similarly, CLTs are able to acquire property for community preservation and use, and offer inexpensive space for organizations, institutions, businesses, residents, and cultural activities while also controlling land for potential future development. Japantown could opt for establishing a CDC that operates on a smaller scale without all of the social services, or a CLT supplemented with additional tools and roles such as small business assistance.

Japantown already has dedicated social service organizations, however would benefit from better management and ownership of properties, as well as more economic development assistance such as small business assistance. For this reason, a Community Land Trust with such functions or a smaller scale CDC with less roles would be beneficial to Japantown.

Other Options: A Community Impact Fund

Another option similar to a CDCs or CLT is a Community Impact Fund, such as the Little Tokyo Community Impact Fund (LTCIF), SPC which is a real-estate investment fund, that would seek to purchase and manage properties for the purpose of supporting heritage-based businesses and properties in Little Tokyo. Similar to San Francisco Japantown, Little Tokyo was experiencing an increasing number of closures and relocations of heritage-based business largely due to gentrification and sought to address this by launching the LTCIF in 2018. In 2019, the Commissioner of the California Department of Business Oversight issued a permit for LTCIF to sell two classes of shares directly to California residents.

A Community Impact Fund may be another approach to preserving and protecting the historical legacy of SF Japantown. Controlling real estate within the community will help keep gentrification from changing the cultural identity and landscape of the area. Some benefits are that the CIF could help family-owned businesses to continue to operate within the community. A CIF would also create an opportunity for Legacy business to sell their property to the CIF rather than a corporate developer, in order to maintain the historical value, priorities, and character of the historic SF Japantown.
Lessons from History of CDCs in Japantown

The only time Japantown had a CDC was the controversial Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation which did not address the housing needs of the Japantown community. In the 1980s, Citizens Against Nihonmachi Evictions (CANE) evolved into Japanese Community Progressive Alliance (JPCA) and formed a non-profit CDC named Japanese Community United for Housing (JCUH) to develop low-moderate income housing in Nihonmachi. JCUH got as far as working with the RDA to develop a site for their first project but plans fell through due to the lack of funding sources, partially attributed to political opposition against activities of CANE.

A Community Development Corporation has always been necessary in Japantown, however, divided interests and the lack of unity led to these two unsuccessful attempts. With development pressures rising in 2020, the necessity of such an entity has not disappeared. The broader J/JA community would like to see Japantown grow rather than shrink more.

Prior Japantown Reports Recommend CDC or CLT

There have been numerous reports such as the Better Neighborhoods Plan (2009), the JCHESS (2013), and the Economic Tools for Preserving Social Heritage in Japantown (2013), that have identified a Japantown CDC or CLT as a high priority. In 2010, funding was committed by the Ford Foundation to assist the Japantown community assess the feasibility of establishing a community land trust to preserve the historical and authentic cultural legacy of Japantown. With the assistance of Burlington Associates in Community Development, a steering committee comprised of representatives of the Japantown community determined there is an established and growing need for a local community land trust in Japantown and recommended to the Japantown community that a community land trust be created, and a campaign initiated to raise the community capital needed to commercial properties and community assets in Japantown.[2]

The Japantown Community Land Trust Business Planning Assumptions report (2013) conducts a feasibility analysis of a CLT in Japantown and outlines the steps necessary to successfully implement such an entity. This report includes multiple scenarios and budgets, and is quite detailed, therefore a great resource.

The final conclusion of this report is that:

1. The Japantown community should proceed with establishing a local community land trust as soon as sufficient funding is secured to cover start-up and initial operating costs.
2. Establishing a community land trust program under the corporate structure and governance of an existing nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization would be considerably less expensive than creating a new, standalone community land trust organization and could begin carrying out its mission and work plan sooner. Consequently, efforts will focus on identifying an existing organization that has a compatible mission and the organizational capacity required to take on the operation of a successful community land trust program as envisioned in this business plan. In the event that a willing ‘parent’ organization that meets these requirements can be found, the CLT will be established and operated, at least initially, as a program of that organization. In the event, however, that such an organization cannot be found, efforts will then focus on incorporating and establishing a new, standalone, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) community land trust organization for Japantown. [3]
Challenges to Developing a CLT or CDC in Japantown

The main challenges of successfully implementing a sustainable CDC or CLT has always been the necessity of enough funding to accomplish its goals, appropriate expertise, and the need for united cooperation and engagement from the entire community.

Challenges for a Community Land Trust

- It would take time, energy and commitment to build organizational capacity to meet ongoing administrative, programmatic and stewardship responsibilities
- A 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.[4]

Challenges for a Community Development Corporations

- 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.[5]

Challenges for both CDCs and CLTs Specific to Japantown

- A lot of the land in Japantown is already developed
- Land and property costs are extremely high in Japantown

Potential for Development Opportunities in Japantown:

Compared to many other San Francisco neighborhoods, there is not a broadly distributed potential for major new development in Japantown because many of the buildings in the area are built at or near their development capacity. No development is likely to occur North of Bush Street due to the small parcels and high limit of 40ft. [6]

There is greater development potential south of Bush Street, especially across Geary Street where parcels are larger, height limits are greater, and there is less existing residential use. According to the JCHESS, 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. On these parcels, there is potential for approximately 2,700 new housing units and 470,000 new square feet of commercial space.[7]

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. [8]

Next Steps to Be Taken:
A CLT and CDC would be more possible with the inclusion and engagement of the broader J/JA community now dispersed throughout the region. The first step before getting anywhere close to such major accomplishments is to build community power and re-establishing community interconnectivity, and support for Japantown.

**To implement a Community Development Corporation, the community should:**

1. Determine if a CDC is desired- Determine an appropriate model and scale for Japantown
2. Outreach Campaign: Engage, educate, outreach & gain widespread support
3. Identify sources of funding & develop a formation plan [9]

**To Implement the Community Land Trust, the community should:**

1. Clearly define the role of the CLT in preserving Japantown’s social heritage
2. Determine which community-based organization can take on this role
3. Outreach Campaign: Engage, educate, outreach & gain widespread support
4. Identify sources of funding & develop a business plan

1) **Determine which community-based organization:**

Upon an initial analysis of organizational mission statements, it is recommended that Japantown Task Force takes on the role of a CLT or a CDC, when ready. The Economic Tools for Preserving Social Heritage in Japantown (2013) also identifies JTF and community stakeholders to take lead on either a CDC or a CLT. JTF’s role is similar to that of a CDC in that it already engages in the economic development, planning, and preservation of Japantown.

2) **Engage, educate, outreach & gain widespread support**

The community should conduct an outreach campaign to determine interest in a CLT, educate the community on the role of a CLT and how it would contribute to the preservation of Japantown’s social heritage. [10]

3) **Identify Sources of Funding & Develop a business plan:**

According to the Japantown Community Land Trust (2013) Report, revenue to offset Japantown CLT’s operating costs can be expected to come from three primary sources:

- Revenue generated through fees-for-service collected by JCLT
- Revenue generated through JCLT’s real estate holdings
- Revenue that comes from outside the organization, including grants and operating support from public sector and private sector philanthropic sources.

A business plan could be modeled after the recommendations in the Community Land Trust Report.

**OVERARCHING CAPABILITIES REQUIRED:**

- A Team of Experts with background on CDCs/ CLTs/ CIFs

**OVERARCHING MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS:**

a) Research for a CDC/CLT/Community Impact Fund are continued in FY 2020-2021
b) Presentations and advice from other CDC/CLT/CIFs are obtained in FY 2020-2021
8. Explore Culturally-Competent Housing with Preferences to Descendants of Displaced with “Certificate of Preferences,” Young Adults, Artists, Seniors, Family, Community Workers

A. What are the steps towards achieving this?

- Determine the current status of the JCCNC’s Japantown Community Development Corporation feasibility study.
- Research options for Japantown Certificate of Preference holders and initiate a dialogue with them to determine what they would like to do.
- Work with Japantown real estate agents and property owners to develop a real estate portfolio to list and track affordable housing in the Japantown neighborhood.
- Ensure that Japan Center covenant discussions include community input on affordable housing options should the property be redesigned.

B. What are some policy tools we can use?

- Japantown Community Development Corporation – JCCNC has completed a study for the creation of a JCDC.
- Research nonprofit affordable rental housing programs through the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development

C. What have other communities/organizations done?

- Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC), Los Angeles, has rehabilitated two historic buildings into commercial space with affordable housing and built affordable housing for low-income seniors and young families and is working on another rehab project.
- LTSC and the Go for Broke Foundation partnered to build an educational facility with affordable housing.
- First Community Housing, a public benefit housing corporation, built Japantown Senior Apartments in
San Jose, which serves low-income seniors.

D. How do you know this will be successful

- Frankly, unknown at this time. Space and land available for development in Japantown is extremely limited, but other communities facing this challenge have been successful.
- The implementation of this would also be over a long-term timeline; although affordable housing with preferences may not be developed in the next two years, the next step is to gain technical assistance to prepare such housing preferences.

OVERARCHING CAPABILITIES REQUIRED:
-A staff to work on developing a policy around housing preferences
-A team working on a CDC, CLT, or CIF

OVERARCHING MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS:

a) Mechanisms are created and negotiated to secure in new affordable housing, preferences for descendants of COP Holders, employees of community-based nonprofit organizations, community-based artists, and multiple generations of the community
b) Assuming new housing is a mix of market-rate and affordable housing, required amounts of affordable housing by unit type and affordability levels are identified and negotiated with developers
c) A CDC/CLT/CIF is involved in the development and ownership/management of new affordable housing
d) Develop a mechanism where existing affordable units are transferred to younger members of the community
e) Develop an ordinance for housing preferences for descendants of COP Holders
f) Develop an ordinance for housing preferences for Community Workers/Employees Develop an ordinance for artist housing

VIII. THE 7 KEY AREAS OF FOCUS:

1. CULTURAL COMPETENCY
Cultural Competency ensures that community infrastructure – building design, social services, public safety, public spaces – are designed and operated with a sensitivity to the diverse population that makes up Japantown and that City services respect Japantown’s unique cultural personality.

2. REGENERATIVE, SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT FUTURES
“To support movements toward culturally, environmentally, economically, and socially regenerative communities that will be culturally, environmentally, economically, and socially resilient to health,
energy, resource, economic, and climate-related disasters, while promoting the holistic wellbeing of the Cultural Districts.”

3. LAND USE
Land Use recognizes the importance of both preserving and expanding Japantown’s unique physical and social infrastructure. It seeks to ensure that existing and new structures, buildings, and spaces reflect and enrich the culture, history, and needs of Japantown.

4. CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY
Cultural Heritage Conservation will preserve the cultural and historic resources of Japantown with a goal to promote cultural connections to Japantown and to make Japantown an environment that will nurture expressions of culture and history for the community.

5. ARTS AND CULTURE
Arts and Culture seeks to grow, develop, and sustain Japanese American and Japanese artists and creative activities; traditional, contemporary, and experimental that express the beliefs, customs, and soul of the Japanese American community.

6. ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Economic Workforce Development reinforces the historic importance of economic opportunity as a force for stability, opportunity, and resiliency for the Japantown community. Its goal is to promote and develop economic opportunity and employment to make Nihonmachi a destination that nurtures culturally relevant businesses and nurtures legacy businesses.

7. TENANT PROTECTIONS
Tenant Protections focuses on securing Japantown’s future as an affordable home to residents, organizations that serve the community, and businesses that reflect the needs and interests of the community. It is about making Japantown a safe, attractive, livable neighborhood.

KEY AREA 1: CULTURAL COMPETENCY -by Mark Izu

Context
The Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles has two doors for entry, one says “Prejudiced” and the other says “Unprejudiced,” The Unprejudiced door is locked--everyone must enter through the Prejudiced door. The museum’s statement is clear: everyone is prejudiced in America. The dominating culture in America is a Euro-centric white culture. From K-12 thru college we are all indoctrinated into believing that white supremacist culture is the norm and that it’s superior. By comparison, Japanese American culture, like other ethnic cultures, is often considered second class. For example, our art forms from odori (dance) to ongaku (music) are not considered as good as ballet or the symphony.
San Francisco is home to such a diverse cosmology of cultures, it’s difficult for everyone to understand everyone else’s cultures. The City government is challenged to understand all of our distinct and unique cultural districts. This is a systemic issue that has existed since Europeans landed in the Americas. We’ve made strides in understanding the problems, but we have a long way to go.

Cultural Competency is a way of thinking, feeling and being, a cultural compass that guides us as individuals and as a culture. Cultural Competency is the overlaying criteria for all the action items listed in this report. By doing this, we are more culturally competent, we are evolving our culture, we are making our culture stronger.

**Cultural Competency: A Cultural Way of Being**

Japanese have a trait called *gaman*, a coarse translation: “grin and bear it, do not complain. White culture has a saying “the squeaky wheel gets the grease.” If we are competing for the same goods and services, who will get them in a white American society? The people who complain the most -- “if you don’t complain you don’t need it”. This is opposed to the Japanese way of expression.

Japanese Culture is about harmony; it is spiritual by nature.
慈悲、和合、精神、一緒に、知恵
Compassion (*Jihi*), Harmony (*Wagou*), Spirit/Mind/Essence (*Seishin*), Together (*Isshoni*), Wisdom (*Chie*): our Culture is Harmony, Health, Well Being, Healing.

(Julia’s image here)

**Striving for a Just and Equitable Society: Righting a Wrong in History.**
In the key areas of Cultural Heritage and Land Use & Environmental Resilience we address the displacement of San Francisco’s Japanese American community by the incarceration and urban renewal from its historic home, Japantown. If we lived in a Culturally Competent society these travesties against the Japanese American population would not have happened.

**Naming Our Place.**
Places had indigenous names before the Europeans arrived in America. Now there is no majority racial group in San Francisco and yet most of the streets and places are named after white people. We only have one street named after a Japanese American and that was done this year, in 2020.

It is our hope that through Cultural Competency our narrative and the spirit of our culture resonates with people
of all walks of life, from tech workers, to city and government officials, to developers, to people of other cultures. We envision that we can leverage the essential values in Japanese culture to cooperate and build a more sustainable, just, and equitable society together.

At the time of this writing the world is going through a worldwide crisis. The COVID-19 is an unprecedented global pandemic we have never faced before. The world is trying to cope with it as the situation exacerbates. The Coronavirus is changing the way we exist as a culture and society. The World Health Organization, when asked how to deal with this pandemic says we must start at the grassroots level. The government can only do so much. As a cultural district we are in a unique position to help our community on a grass roots level. We know what we need and how we can help our community. This is Cultural Competency at its most basic and important level.

**KEY AREA 2: REGENERATIVE, SUSTAINABLE & RESILIENT FUTURES**

“To support movements toward culturally, environmentally, economically, and socially regenerative communities that will be culturally, environmentally, economically, and socially resilient to health, energy, resource, economic, and climate-related disasters, while promoting holistic wellbeing for thriving Cultural Districts.”

**A. VISION/ GOALS**

The Vision is that, Japantown will thrive as an ecologically and culturally regenerative, authentic, economically vibrant, cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American communities, honoring the transmission, co-creation, and evolution of a living culture that reflects, and continuously revitalizes the local and global community.

That Japantown will become a Regenerative Japantown that takes lead as a sanctuary, and a hub for culturally relevant innovation for a regenerative future for many generations to come.

**B. CONTEXT/BACKGROUND**

**WHAT IS THE REGENERATIVE FRAMEWORK?**

People do not want to see Japantown shrink any more than it already has; they want to give it more life and ensure that the space and culture grows and thrives into the future. As fragile as Japantown already was, the COVID-19 crises just made Japantown even more vulnerable; the shops that define Japantown are at the brink of extinction. Today’s business-as-usual threatens the very life-support systems of the Earth; this crisis may be the last straw on the camel’s back. A new approach is necessary, for the benefit and survival of Japantown, and
the world. This current crisis can be taken as the opportunity for the emergence of a new regenerative society, and a rapid shift from a degenerative economy to one that supports the mutual thriving of people and planet. This transition will not be quick or easy and may even seem like a utopian dream. However, as the challenges facing us begin to cascade, what now seems impossible will become the inevitable. ² It is now the time to take this crisis as an opportunity for BOLD Creative solutions.

Regenerative Japantown is a declaration for the goal of a socially, culturally, and ecologically regenerative neighborhood and community. The word “regenerative if often associated with ecology, however is inextricably intertwined with the sustainability and reinvigoration of communities and cultures.

Regenerative development is a process by which cities, towns, and communities bring themselves back into life-giving alignment with the ecological systems that support them, through biomimicry. As a practice, it seeks to create a built environment and human systems that are capable of co-evolving with nature. While Sustainability has a net-zero impact on Earth, “regenerative urbanism” has a net-positive impact and embodies a circular economy of inclusive abundance that is necessary for sustainable, resilient and equitable cities and society.³ Regenerative development is unique to each bio-cultural environment, thus is innately a participatory, and community empowering approach.

This section will both introduce the “Regenerative & Resilient Cultural Districts” framework for the entire CHHESS, while also addressing this Key Area to identify strategies for how Japantown will thrive as culturally rich, authentic, economically vibrant cultural heart of Japanese/ Japanese American communities for generations to come, while activating its unique cultural expressions to transition into a regenerative, resilient, community hub that empowers and benefits humanity as a whole.

Many nations, states, and local communities, including Japantown were ill-prepared to handle the impacts of the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to wreak havoc, without a definitive end date. This major health, economic, and social crisis is just the beginning of many global crises that will continue to exacerbate and threaten communities of their very existence.

Our current social, economic, and governance systems are rigid, fragile, and ill-equipped to respond, mitigate, or even adapt to the impacts of the global economic, social, and environmental crises that are to come. The impacts will continue to have disparate impacts on cultural districts and ethnic and lower-income communities, further exacerbating inequity.

On the other hand, regenerative cultures and systems are healthy, equitable, resilient and adaptable; it cares for the planet and life on it and is the most effective way to create a thriving future for all of humanity. The concept of resilience is closely related to health and wellbeing, as it describes the ability to recover basic vital functions and bounce back from any kind of temporary breakdown or crisis.⁴ Cultural and ecological diversity is also a crucial aspect of increasing resilience. For example, a monoculture corn crop that extends for hundreds of thousands of acres are less resilient to land degradation and crop failure, compared to smaller scale permaculture farms with a diversity of crops. The empowerment of local governance and local communities will continue to play an increasingly vital role in the transition toward regenerative cities that are resilient to these increasing crises.

³ https://www.fastcompany.com/3020653/creating-a-regenerative-economy-to-transform-global-finance-into-a-force-for-good
² https://www.planning.org/conference/nationalconferenceactivity/9165280/
“The local and regional scale is not only the scale at which we can act most effectively to preserve biological diversity, it is also the scale at which we can preserve cultural diversity and indigenous local wisdom.”

The City of San Francisco describes Resilience as, “the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems within a city to survive, adapt and grow, no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. Approaching challenges through the lens of resilience helps cities better serve their residents today and plan for the longer term. Resilience demands moving beyond reaction through proactive planning. The approach calls for considering problems systematically, seeking out departmental and conceptual relationships from which solutions can be more completely developed, and bridging the practice gaps between social justice, sustainability, disaster recovery and other areas.”

It is important that San Francisco Cultural Districts like Japantown are not only equipped to provide immediate relief and responses for their communities, but are also activating their roles in mitigating, and addressing the root causes of these global crises that will continue to exacerbate and impact our local communities. Japantown must consider long-term impacts, and plan with a long-term vision. There should be a revaluation of what is currently working, and what is not working for us collectively. Humanity needs a completely new approach for how we inhabit Earth if we are to survive here. Our solutions must root from a different mindset from the mindset that caused the problems in the first place. As R. Buckminster Fuller has quoted: “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

Regenerative design and planning framework approaches for communities can provide unique, ground-up solutions for each cultural district to thrive and meet their highest potential for wellbeing and continuity of culture. “The term ‘regenerative’ describes processes that restore, renew or revitalize their own sources of energy and materials, ensuring the capacity to sustain and nurture all life. Regenerative approaches use whole-systems thinking to build equitable resilience that responds to the needs of society while respecting the integrity of nature.” Similarly, Regenerative economics is defined as the application of nature’s laws and patterns of systemic health, self-organization, and self-renewal, to the vitality of Socio-economic systems.

“Exploitative and degenerative cultures tend to have economic systems focused around notions of scarcity and competitive advantage, whereas regenerative cultures understand how collaborative advantage can foster shared abundance.”

For Cultural Districts, it is recognized that what works, is cooperation and synergy with one another as well as nature, instead of competition. The shift from a fragmented worldview to a whole systems mental model is the significant leap our culture must make; it is framing and understanding living system interrelationships in an integrated way. Regenerative design creates regenerative cultures capable of continuous learning and transformation in response to, and anticipation of, inevitable change. Regenerative cultures safeguard and grow
biocultural abundance for future generations of humanity and for life as a whole.¹¹ Now is the time to learn to collaborate in the healing of the whole, through cultivating interconnectivity, and nurturing transformative innovation and regenerative design to create vibrant cultures and thriving communities for all.¹²

It is important to recognize that the massive extinction and loss of cultural diversity globally alongside the loss of biodiversity, are caused by the same degenerative forces. The goal of regenerative designs is to develop restorative systems that are beneficial to humans and other species. To address our contemporary challenges of gentrification, displacement, and ultimately the loss of our cultural diversity in San Francisco, we must take a regenerative approach, “elegant solutions, carefully adapted to the bio-cultural uniqueness of the place.”¹³

Regeneration is about empowering the local unique characters to build capacity to heal, and reimagine their space, while at the same time spurring social innovation and positively impacting the planet. “Regenerative practice is about unleashing the potential of people in place by listening deeply into the story the land and its people want to tell. It is about finding ways to manifest the unique bio-cultural essence of each locality in ways that meet human needs while enriching and healing the wider biological community we are embedded in.”¹⁴

This regeneration process is participatory, iterative and individual to the community and environment it is applied to. This process intends to revitalize communities, human and natural resources, and society as a whole.¹⁵

Many of the cultural district communities, such as Japantown has historically been marginalized, displaced, and dispossessed of their culture and connection to land. ‘Sustainability’ interacts with the world in a ‘do less harm’ model, whereas ‘Regenerative development’ is an ‘actively healing’ one. Through the regeneration of place, people, and culture, spirit and community be revitalized.¹⁶ It is essential that the historical context of Japantown is understood to heal and regenerate the space and how it serves the community into the future.

Japanese and Japanese American culture has never been separate from nature; in fact, it is a symbiotic relationship. If Earth is in crisis, Japantown will also be in crisis. Japantown has an integral role in the regenerating and rehabilitating Earth, by first ensuring that Japantown itself becoming regenerative in order to better serve its current and future generations. Building regenerative futures also addresses intergenerational equity so we are passing the planet to the next generation without ecological debt, and also so that we aren’t passing Japantown to our current and future generations in a culturally depleted state.

Japanese culture innately has wisdom and values integral to healing our relationship with the planet. Like many other indigenous cultures, our symbiotic and sophisticated partnerships with the land used to be mutually enhancing. This is where our cultural tradition and innovation meets contemporary needs. Regenerative development is to rekindle this ancient wisdom, and partner it within the evolutionary insights of modern science and apply it to the development and regeneration of physical places. It compels us to work as nature, opposed to merely doing things to nature. This approach, in its essence, asks us to become indigenous once again.¹⁷

¹² https://upliftconnect.com/regenerative-cultures-are-about-thriving-together/
¹³ Daniel Wahl, https://www.re-alliance.org/regenerative/
¹⁵ https://www.eduardmuller.com/regenerativedesign
To support this process of a Regenerative Japantown, it would be beneficial for the Cultural Districts align with the City’s 4 Goals:

- **GOAL 1: Plan and Prepare**
- **GOAL 2: Retrofit Mitigate Adapt**
- **GOAL 3: Ensure Housing**
- **GOAL 4: Empower Neighborhoods**: San Francisco is a city of neighborhoods and neighbors. This goal seeks to build on the strength of our city’s character and vibrancy, by being effective governmental stewards of resilient, healthy and cohesive neighborhoods based in trust, equity and partnership.\(^\text{18}\)

**LEARNING FROM THE PAST - JAPANESE CULTURE IN A REGENERATIVE WAY OF LIFE:**

Japanese culture is innately rooted in sustainable and regenerative practices. The wisdom contained in Japanese culture is part of the key to unlock and unleash a more regenerative world for all of humanity. This aspect of Japanese Culture could be explored more though engaging in programming and brought into the forefront of Japantown to play a vital role in San Francisco’s transition to a regenerative, sustainable, resilient future.

Japan’s ancient name was Yamato(大和) which translates to “Great Harmony.” Japanese culture is embodies the idea of living in harmony with the natural world, with one another, and a state of “inter-being.” Thanks to the influence of Shintoism, and Buddhism, Japanese culture recognizes that there is a spirit in all things and does not view human beings as separate from nature and the rest of the world. This wisdom gives rise to concepts such as “Mottainai,” which loosely translates as “waste not, want not,” or “too good to waste,” and will be explained

\(^{18}\) https://onesanfrancisco.org/resiliency/overview
more in detail in the following sections. This paradigm and wisdom have permeated all aspects of Japanese culture from economics, land use, and resource management, to art, fashion, and architecture.

During the Edo period, (1603-1868) Japan was an ecologically-conscious, zero-waste society with a circular economy which sustained a high quality of life for over 30 million people. The capital, Edo Tokyo was a dense urban environment of over 1.3 million people that benefited from an enormous tree canopy, clean permeable streets, and urban agriculture. The literacy rate among the peasants was around 60%, and there was a thriving middle class. The poor in Japan still had a humane living standard, and even the beggars had no appearance of despair, filth, or misfortune. This was a sharp contrast to the abject poverty and the moral collapse in the slums of Europe at that time. The Edo society had developed a sophisticated means of living simply, but elegantly.

Scholars world-wide continue to gain inspiration from the Edo period to develop insightful solutions for our transition toward a more just, equitable, sustainable, post-industrial future that values wellbeing. It is worthy to note that, just as life on Earth is facing an existential threat due to the impacts of climate change today, Japan faced similar problems before the Edo period, such as a large population, fuel scarcity, limited arable land, deforestation, a damaged watershed. However, Japan was able to bring itself back from the brink and regenerate by a shifting toward policies that reinforced existing cultural values, and technical and economic innovation that in turn enhanced the environment. This can be done again, through a paradigm-shift.

**A CLOSED LOOP SYSTEM**

During the Edo period, Japan was self-sufficient in all resources, since nothing could be imported from overseas due to the national policy of isolation. The society was also extremely energy efficient and relied on plant and solar energy. Nothing was thrown away, and everything was repaired until it could truly be used no more. Artisans made things to last, and easy to repair. The art of recycling and repairing had flourished, and there were many repair experts, and specialized recyclers ranging from tinkers, and ceramic-repairers, to used paper, cloth, and ash buyers. The most significant example is the “Human waste dipper” who bought night soil from residents, a valued resource that compelled landlords and tenants to fight over ownership rights. Farmers also had contracts with residents to regularly exchange their vegetables in return for night soil to be used as fertilizer. Retailers would pay an especially high price for Daimyo feces. These kinds of closed-loop recycling systems were possible because of the interdependent relationship between consumers and producers. This is quite a contrast to the “throw-away” mentality that predominates our modern world, creating an insurmountable waste problem. “pollution is a symbol of design failure” and we too can develop another design.

**MOTTAINAI**

“Mottainai” or “too good to waste,” is a concept that is integral to Japanese culture. Tatsuo Nanai, Chief of the official MOTTAINAI campaign explains that “Mottainai’s potential power lies in its complex meaning, which draws on ancient Buddhist beliefs. Mottai comes from the Buddhist word that refers to the essence of things. It

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can be applied to everything in our physical world, showing that objects don’t exist in isolation but are connected to one another” Nanai said, adding that, “‘-nai’ is a negation, so ‘mottainai’ becomes an expression of sadness over the loss of the link between two entities, living and non-living.” This concept of Mottainai is now spreading worldwide and impacting our throwaway cultures to shift away from mass-consumption and waste. Now, annual mottainai festivals are held in Vietnam, and there is even an organization called “Sustainable Little Tokyo” that is spearheading the concept of Mottainai in Los Angeles.

Before the proliferation of plastic bags, the concept of mottainai was also reflected in “Furoshiki,” a simple cloth wrapping techniques were used to carry a large variety of items regardless of shape or size, ranging from personal belongings, to heavy objects such as large sake bottles and watermelons. Furoshiki is a great solution to the plastic problem because it is highly resistant, reusable, and multipurpose.

**DIVERSITY, SELF-RELIANCE, RESILIENCE**

Japanese life in the Edo Period, before the Meiji Restoration and rapid Westernization, was built on diversity. Today, our world is characterized by hyper dependence on imports, and fossil-fuel intensive industrial monoculture agriculture that conquers vast amounts of land. In the Edo Period, Japan consisted of self-reliant regions, each acting as small "worlds" formed together like a collection of biological cells. During this time, real power belonged to those who had the ability to trade highly valued local specialties rather than those who owned large sums of land or produced a large amount of rice. Specialties were cultivated through harmony with local conditions, which helped develop a tremendous variety of products. There was knowledge that the forests and mountains must be respected instead of ravaged to have healthy abundant crops. Due to the abundance and diversity of products, there were large profits generated from domestic trades, negating any need to invade foreign countries in order to sustain a population of 30 million. This showed how developing harmony with the local environment, engaging in permaculture, and building a strong, diverse local economy will create great self-reliance and resilience especially in unstable global conditions.

**A STEADY-STATE ECONOMIC SYSTEM**

Japan during the Edo-period maintained a Steady-State Economic System, in which the throughput of economic activity was constant, like a bicycle moving forward at the same pace, instead of exponentially accelerating. The word for “economy” was “keiseikaimin” (経世済民) which translates to governing a nation and providing relief to people; this clearly expresses the what the goals of this economy were.

There was a thriving middle class with high living standards, and according to Basil Hall Chamberlain, a British Japanologist who came to Japan in 1873, “even though there are poor, there is no poverty.” The analysis of this statement by author, Kyoji Watanabe is that, “in the eyes of Europeans who visited Japan and admired the people’s richness and happiness, Japanese poorness provides a sharp contrast with the poverty and moral collapse of the slums, one of by-products of industrialization in Europe.” Similarly, Friedrich Engels described the wretchedness brought by the Industrialization in his book, The Condition of the Working Class in England. “In the West, poor people are given either a soggy basement or a leaky attic for shelter... shabby rags for clothes, and coarse, adulterated indigestible food. They are driven as wild animals and not allowed to get rest or have peaceful joy of life. Compared with these dirty slums, it might be miraculous that the Japanese poor
keep their clothes and houses clean.”

It is clear to see that there indeed can be a thriving economy as an alternative to the current economic system which perpetuates and exacerbates inequity.

Some philosophies that governed the Japanese society were, “Sho-yoku-chi-soku” which translates as “Small-greed-learn-sufficiency,” and conveys “I will know sufficiency if I have no greed.” Similarly, “taru wo shiru,” or to “know sufficiency,” is included in an ancient proverb that expresses that “content is the philosopher’s stone, that turns all it touches into gold.” Another well-known proverb is that “Only those who know when they have enough will find contentment in this world.” This kind of paradigm, and economy provided “wellbeing within limits” of Earths’ carrying capacity.

Another philosophy is “Sanpou-yoshi,” 三法よし translates to “All is well, if all three players are happy: the buyers, the vendors, and society. This is similar to the philosophy of Corporate Social Responsibility, and that business is not solely for profit, but to bring a benefit to the world. This kind of mentality promotes mutually beneficial relationships and equity, whereas our modern global economic system does not account for externalities such as exploited workers and the exploited environment.

The oldest company in the world is in Japan; Kongo Gumi, an Osaka construction company established in 578 AD still builds temples to this day. There are close to a hundred of these thousand-year-old Japanese companies. This may be attributed to the prioritization of sustainability and longevity, over than short term profits. In Asia, Bhutan is governed by Gross National Happiness (GNH) instead of GDP. Indicators of GNH are based on nine "dimensions," which are: psychological well-being, living standards, good governance, health, education, community vitality, cultural diversity and resilience, time use, and ecological diversity and resilience. If we are seeking more a more just, equitable, sustainable world that brings us more wellbeing, these examples of alternative economic systems should be examined.

SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

Japanese traditional architecture and architectural concepts are world-renowned for sustainability and wellbeing. Traditional architectural structures were built from natural materials, and some structures have lasted over 1400 years without the need to be rebuilt. Structures often coexists, accentuates, and honors the nature around it, rather than dominate over it. In residences, slatted screens and large windows create harmony between outdoor greenery and interior living spaces. Most traditional structures incorporate ample natural light, natural ventilation and cooling, Flexible use spaces, and rooms that open up to gardens.

Some traditional architecture techniques are Yakisugi, Shikkui Lime Plastering, and over 150 variations of Tsugite, a method of fitting wooden joints together without glue, nails, or metal supports. The structures employing these techniques are sturdy and last hundreds of years even in Earthquake prone Japan. The countryside of Japan has plenty of farmhouses in great shape that were built over 200 years ago. Quite a contrast, in 1999 construction-related waste accounted for 39.5% of modern-day Tokyo’s industrial waste. These traditional building techniques could offer great alternatives or enhancements to a majority of modern architecture which only has a life-span of approximately 30-50 years. These kinds of techniques of Japanese

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25 Ibid.
culture should not be forgotten and lost, and should instead be considered for any future developments, especially in Japantown.

**SUSTAINABILITY SPIRIT REFLECTED IN THE ARTS**

As sustainability and resilience was reflected in Japanese traditional economics and architecture, it was very much reflected in the arts as well. For example, “Kintsugi” is a 500-year-old art form that repairs broken pottery with beautiful seams of gold.\(^{28}\) Kintsugi beautifies the breakage and treats it as an important part of the object's history, and the broken pot not as something to discard, but as something more precious than it was before.

The traditional Japanese “Boro” upcycled patchwork style that began centuries ago as peasant clothing have made a global comeback as they have hit runways worldwide, impacted cutting-edge creators, featured on Vogue magazine, and continue to inspire the Fashion industry with sustainable alternatives. “Boro” which translates as *rags* or *tatters*, is the Japanese term for textiles and garments that have been patched, mended, and pieced together from scraps of fabric, leaving behind little to no waste.\(^ {29}\) The idea that underlies Boro is that, once the clothing is made, it should last the owners whole life, or even transcend their lifetime.\(^{30}\) These garments repeatedly reworked from generation to generation, builds bridges through resourcefulness and finding beauty in survival.\(^ {31}\)

In Boro, garments once damaged, do not intend to return to their original state, but rather gives visibility to where it was mended, adding to the story, value, and beauty of the garment.\(^ {32}\) For example, “Sashiko” stitching styles which are meant to give greater resistance and durability to a fabric also becomes the defining element in the design. In this way, Boro expresses the strength and beauty of reuse while extending respect towards the materials and the environment. Culture is a hybrid of tradition and innovation, it is important to revive the wisdom in our culture that has been greatly forgotten in order to advance the common vision for a positive, regenerative future.

**C. CHALLENGES**

**GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN JAPANTOWN:**

Japantown along with the rest of the world is facing major devastating economic and social destabilization due to the Coronavirus pandemic; after this, things will never be the same. Culturally relevant small businesses and community-based organizations, which are the anchors that define Japantown are facing an existential crisis; for some, an extinction due to unceasing rent costs and late penalty fees, compounded by the impacts of the


\(^{29}\) [https://www.japansociety.org/page/about/press/boro-textiles-sustainable-aesthetics](https://www.japansociety.org/page/about/press/boro-textiles-sustainable-aesthetics)

\(^{30}\) [https://threadstories.co/japanese-boro-teachings-sustainable-fashion/](https://threadstories.co/japanese-boro-teachings-sustainable-fashion/)


\(^{32}\) [https://threadstories.co/japanese-boro-teachings-sustainable-fashion/](https://threadstories.co/japanese-boro-teachings-sustainable-fashion/)
“shelter-in-place” order. Some businesses only have a month of rent in their savings and are at risk of permanently going out of business.

Resilience has always played an integral role in Japanese American heritage. Existential threats are nothing new; the Japanese American community has already survived multiple major crises that threatened their cultural sustainability. However, each big blow does tear away at the fabric of the JJA community, further dispersing the community and diminishing the support network.

The Coronavirus’ impact is paramount, however there are larger crises looming behind this. If we do not take this crisis as an opportunity to learn, drastically shift, and build in more resilience, the coming crises will have an even more large and devastating impact. The costs of mitigation now, is dwarfed by the projected costs of inaction. This needs to be taken as a learning opportunity to mitigate, and also prepare for future climate-related disasters. To be resilient to these looming crises, a community must become regenerative and sustainable.

In fact, the movement toward developing a regenerative community is an attractive process, that will re-engage the dispersed community, strengthening the network. Many of the younger generations, mixed ethnicity, Shin-Nikkei and Japanese-speaking members of the community have already expressed a desire to see Japantown as a space where reconnection to ancestral wisdom in Japanese culture and an ecologically regenerative future could occur.

Planning around short-term crisis response and recovery is essential, however planning for long-term resilience is even more crucial. This is because the costs required to dramatically shift and U-turn our current trajectory by building in regenerative resilience now, will be dwarfed by the cost and impacts of inaction. For example, if a hypothetical town was made completely out of dry straw in a fire-prone area; reactionary approaches of continuously putting out little fires is not a sustainable long-term strategy; the town must rethink and prioritize restructuring the town so that it is resilient to fires in the first place. Ultimately, it is essential that communities define near-term steps necessary to address the long-term sustainability goals, or else we will reach the “tipping point” and it will be too late.

CLIMATE CHANGE: THE GREATEST THREAT TO GLOBAL SECURITY & HEALTH OF COMMUNITIES

According the United Nations, “Climate Change is the greatest threat to global security.” This is not merely an environmental problem, or a narrow national security threat, but is rather a threat to collective security in a fragile and increasingly interdependent world. Some consequences are flooding, disease, and famine, resulting from increased drought and crop-failures, leading to intensified competition for food, water, and energy in already resource-stressed regions. According to the UN, “there is an emerging global consensus is that climate change will stress the economic, social, and political systems that underpin each nation state.” UN Political Affairs Chief DiCarlo reflects that, “the risks associated with climate-related disasters are already a reality.

millions of people across the globe, and they are not going away.” The U.S. Military Advisory Board stated in a 2007 report that “Climate change can act as a threat multiplier for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world, and it presents significant national security challenges for the United States,” and adds that crises will be felt “even in stable regions.”

This “threat multiplier” is quite apparent in California, as raging wild fires have intensified, causing the loss of many homes and massive power-outages affecting millions of people in the Bay Area. As these climate-related crises increase and intensify, they could be compounded by concurrent hazards such as the Coronavirus pandemic compounded with wild fires, energy shortage, drought, water-shortage, food-shortage, and earthquakes. Scientists, national security experts, and U.S. defense officials have long warned that the climate crisis will act as “a threat amplifier,” magnifying the impacts of all crises. Air quality degradation from wildfires compounded with the Coronavirus is a deadly concoction for the lungs, while fires may be poorly-managed due to the work-restrictions on fire fighters caused by the pandemic. This also may not be the last pandemic; vector-borne viruses and diseases are also expected to increase globally, as warmer temperatures expand their geographic reach. According to Robert Muir-Wood at (RMS) Risk Management Solutions, “It’s one plus one equals three.”

Our communities, within the current socio-economic system, are not resilient to these great disruptions. Our communities are dependent on fragile systems that rely on a global series of mechanisms that all need to be functioning, at all times, in all places, for supply-chains to run smoothly. In a world of increasing climate volatility, resource depletion, and destabilization, such dependence is a recipe for disruptions. “Cities are disaster risk hotspots.” Without immediate action on Climate Change now, these public threats to our health, food, water, infrastructure, economy, and security, will only increase. The social costs will be colossal, and so will the economic toll of inaction. Reliance on a stronger knit community, rather than the global economy is essential for resilience to disruptions and shocks. It is essential that communities and Cultural districts are prepared for more instability and disruptions.

COVID-19 LESSONS FOR RESILIENCE TO PREPARE FOR CLIMATE DISASTERS, AND TRANSITION TO A GREEN ECONOMY

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic provides lessons for resiliency and has exposed many weak points of current disaster mitigation and preparedness. There is no doubt about the disastrous impacts on the artists, and small businesses of local communities. Even before the virus, it has been difficult for communities like Japantown to survive, but things just got even more difficult. There is no going back to business as usual after the coronavirus. There needs to be a drastic shift, for recovery and wellbeing of communities more than before the pandemic.

The COVID-19 crises also offer insight into how our societies should be restructured to both mitigate and respond to the Climate crisis. As Gernot Wagner, economist at NYU put is it, “A good way to think about the coronavirus pandemic is that it is like climate change at warp speed. That speed focuses the mind and offers
lessons in how to think about risk in an interconnected world.” A lesson learned is that being proactive and acting early for mitigation will “flatten the curve,” and will significantly reduce social and economic ramifications rather than a hasty, reactive response. In both pandemics and climate-related crises, it is important to take a preventative, and anticipatory approach, rather than a reactive approach. The second lesson is to invest in improved health care systems and building more health and wellbeing into communities to be resilient to the coming crises. An additional lesson is to build strong local economies of self-sufficiency and support systems for times of global economic volatility.

The coronavirus is disastrous for people’s health and the economy; however, its effects are likely to be temporary when compared to the inescapable threat of climate change and ecosystem collapse, which will continue to have far more devastating impacts on public health, the economy, and life on Earth itself. As the economy falls into a recession, or even a depression, there is a danger that US economic stimuli deepens our reliance on fossil fuels, further feeding into the downward spiral. These industries of the old economy as fossil fuels, toxic manufacturing, industrial agriculture, and others that have historically received subsidies and are driving the collapse of natural systems must be replaced by investments into a real economy that regenerates human and natural capital.

This crisis is an opportunity to transition into a green economy, which is a more efficient job creator than fossil-fuel dependent industries. To tackle both the impacts of the coronavirus, and climate change, we need a Green Stimulus that creates jobs that uplift communities and increase resiliency, while building an equitable, just, green economy. The United States should be bailing out small businesses that contribute to vitality of communities, and firms that are tackling climate change, rather than big businesses. The “Green New Deal” lead by NY Senator Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez should also be placed at the forefront.

Local and State governments, especially California and San Francisco have been leading the way on efforts in climate action and building equity into its communities. Local and State governments should continue to pursue policies that support its neighborhoods and the environment. This is also an opportunity for local governments to launch stimulus packages and help accelerate clean energy for communities at the same time. Neighborhoods and local governments should explore partnerships to help manage disaster risk now and offer near-term development benefits, while reducing vulnerability over the longer term.

THE CURRENT GLOBAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEM VS. A REGENERATIVE ECONOMY:

Our communities need a new kind of economy, whether it is a Green Economy, Steady-State Economy, Regenerative Economy, or a Sharing Economy, an economy that is non-exploitative will be crucial for becoming resilient to crises even more severe than the coronavirus. Currently, the health and wellbeing of communities are negatively impacted by an economic “down-turn;” on the other hand, the environment is actually recovering. However, and slower “growth” should not mean reduced health and wellbeing for people, and human activity does not necessarily have to be destructive to the planet. The idea of sustainable “de-growth” is very different from a recession. It involves scaling back environmentally damaging sectors of the economy and

40 https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/covid19-is-climate-change-on-steroids-by-gernot-wagner-2020-03
strengthening others. This means bringing the power back to local economies, rather than the domination by franchises and multi-national corporations.

Health and wellbeing do not need to depend on a destructive socio-economic system like “finance capitalism;” destroying Earth is destroying us. The kind of “growth” exemplified by the current global economic order is cancerous rather than healthy. In fact, the current economic system has not increased equity and wellbeing; the GDP has grown more than 5000% since the 1960s, yet inequality has increased to a point that “the top 1 percent of earners have accrued 91 percent of gains in the first few years of economic recovery after the Great Recession in 2008.”

The current global economy is an extractive, growth dependent system operating outside of ecological limits. Endless growth encourages the continuous conversion of nature to products for consumption and waste. This economic system behaves as if it is in a fantasy world where “infinite growth” is possible on a finite planet. However, continuing at this rate will completely erode Earth’s resource base and lead to an inevitable point of collapse. A collapse of the environment that supports humans, ultimately is a collapse of the economy as well.

The current economic system upholds GDP as a measurement of prosperity and increased living standards. The GDP is measured by three approaches: the production approach measures the total value of goods and services produced; the spending approach measures total amount spent in the economy, and the resource cost-income approach measures the total amount of income from profits and wages. However, this measurement misses huge swathes of the economy and society that cannot be quantified in monetary terms. For example, environmental degradation is not calculated in the GDP, while disasters like the Exxon Valdez oil spill have boosted the US GDP because of the amount of funds expended for cleanups. The large amounts of output captured and calculated into the GDP are also wasteful; waste produced from overproduction, hyper-consumerism, and inequitable distribution of resources all increase the GDP. Bobby Kennedy famously said in a speech that the GDP “measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.” Even Simon Kuznets, the inventor of the GDP warned that it is not a sufficient proxy for prosperity alone. Climate change, ecosystem collapse, soil degradation and biodiversity loss, driven by the fundamental unsustainability of short-term, finance-driven business as usual will continue to deliver shocks to the global economy. This outmoded conceptual framework is incapable of connecting the economy with social and environmental outcomes that determine our planetary wellbeing, thus does not suit the 21st Century at all.

Even the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the OECD and the International Energy Agency, organizations that have traditionally promoted a neo-liberal position, all agree now that the solution to these global crises would not be solved by the same thinking, but through systemic change that addresses the root causes. Without shifting to a new economic model, the result will be a series of mutually reinforcing crises–economic, social, and ecological, a catastrophe on a scale without historical precedent.

There are examples of alternative economic systems that include the health and wellbeing of communities and the environment. Affluence or wealth of a nation should not be measured using per capita GDP; it should be measured in terms of well-being, or happiness and must pursue "well-being within limits." In the next section, such an alternative economic model is examined.
A REGENERATIVE ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF THE NEAR-FUTURE:

A Regenerative Economy is an economic system governed by the regenerative process that defines thriving, living systems, in order to deliver shared prosperity on a thriving planet. There is a general consensus that the definition of a Regenerative Economy is underpinned by the core concept provided by John Fullerton in *Regenerative Capitalism (2015)* which states that: “The universal patterns and principles the cosmos uses to build stable, healthy, and sustainable systems throughout the real world can and must be used as a model for economic-system design.”

Regenerative Capitalism has two components:

- A shift to a “regenerative paradigm”
- An evolution to a more complex understanding of “capital”

Regenerative Capitalism expands the meaning of “capital” to include multiple forms of capital, and the vital patterns of their interdependencies, keeping a holistic understanding of true wealth. It places true value on the original capital assets which support life, the Earth and the Sun, and the regenerative energy flow networks that undergird systemic economic health. Through this framework, there exists an opportunity reimagine society’s public interest in what does and does not get financed, and repurpose our financial institutions to be in service of the interdependent human well-being and ecosystem integrity.

The research of the think tank, Capital Institute is guided by modern science and grounded in timeless wisdom traditions. *Regenerative Capitalism (2015)* by John Fullerton provides 8 key interconnected principles of a Regenerative Economy:

1. **In Right Relationship**: Humanity is an integral part of an interconnected web of life in which there is no real separation between “us” and “it.” The scale of the human economy matters in relation to the biosphere in which it is embedded. What is more, we are all connected to one another and to all locales of our global civilization. Damage to any part of that web ripples back to harm every other part as well.

2. **Views Wealth Holistically**: True wealth is not merely money in the bank. It must be defined and managed in terms of the well-being of the whole, achieved through the harmonization of multiple kinds of wealth or capital, including social, cultural, living, and experiential. It must also be defined by a broadly shared prosperity across all of these varied forms of capital. The whole is only as strong as the weakest link.

3. **Innovative, Adaptive, Responsive (Resiliency)** In a world in which change is both ever-present and accelerating, the qualities of innovation and adaptability are critical to health. It is this idea that Charles Darwin intended to convey in this often-misconstrued statement attributed to him: “In the struggle for survival, the fittest win out at the expense of their...

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48 [https://capitalinstitute.org/8-principles-regenerative-economy/](https://capitalinstitute.org/8-principles-regenerative-economy/)
rivals.” What Darwin actually meant is that: the most “fit” is the one that fits best i.e., the one that is most adaptable to a changing environment.

4. Empowered Participation: In an interdependent system, fitness comes from contributing in some way to the health of the whole. The quality of empowered participation means that all parts must be “in relationship” with the larger whole in ways that not only empower them to negotiate for their own needs but also enable them to add their unique contribution towards the health and well-being of the larger wholes in which they are embedded.

5. Honors Community and Place: Each human community consists of a mosaic of peoples, traditions, beliefs, and institutions uniquely shaped by long-term pressures of geography, human history, culture, local environment, and changing human needs. Honoring this fact, a Regenerative Economy nurtures healthy and resilient communities and bioregions, both real and virtual, each one uniquely informed by the essence of its individual history and place.

6. Edge Effect Abundance: Creativity and abundance flourish synergistically at the “edges” of systems, where the bonds holding the dominant pattern in place are weakest. For example, there is an abundance of interdependent life in salt marshes where a river meets the ocean. At those edges the opportunities for innovation and cross-fertilization are the greatest. Working collaboratively across edges – with ongoing learning and development sourced from the diversity that exists there – is transformative for both the communities where the exchanges are happening, and for the individuals involved.

7. Robust Circulatory Flow: Just as human health depends on the robust circulation of oxygen, nutrients, etc., so too does economic health depend on robust circulatory flows of money, information, resources, and goods and services to support exchange, flush toxins, and nourish every cell at every level of our human networks. The circulation of money and information and the efficient use and reuse of materials are particularly critical to individuals, businesses, and economies reaching their regenerative potential.

8. Seeks Balance: Being in balance is more than just a nice way to be; it is actually essential to systemic health. Like a unicycle rider, regenerative systems are always engaged in this delicate dance in search of balance. Achieving it requires that they harmonize multiple variables instead of optimizing single ones. A Regenerative Economy seeks to balance: efficiency and resilience; collaboration and competition; diversity and coherence; and small, medium, and large organizations and needs. The resulting theory shows us how to build a vibrant, long-lived, regenerative economy and society using the same holistic principles of health found consistently across widely different types of systems throughout the cosmos. This theory grounds our understanding of why integrity, ethics, caring, and sharing lead to socially vibrant communities and healthy economies – while at the same time making perfect practical and scientific sense.52

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52 https://capitalinstitute.org/8-principles-regenerative-economy/
Ultimately, for an economic system to be healthy and sustainable, it must align with the natural systems that exist in the real world, and the universe. Science now understands that everything, from matter to living beings and even human consciousness, is all energy.\textsuperscript{53} Truly sustainable systems are systems that are healthy, regenerative energy flow networks.\textsuperscript{4}

Economics value is created through relationships. The current economic values have transpired into how we interact with the world and one another; it is essential to transition away from extractive relationships to regenerative, mutually enhancing relationships grounded in the principles of reciprocity and care. When the energy flow is stifled due to lack of re-circulation and hyper-accumulation at the top, there is economic stagnation, as there is no true value being created. True value comes from investing in communities, and positive initiatives that will re-circulate value, growing an infinite tree of abundance.

An economic system that is extractive by design will not lead to a prosperous equitable, just future for humans nor the planet that we depend on.\textsuperscript{54} An alignment with how living systems work in the real world is the key to the future source of prosperity of humanity.\textsuperscript{55} What will drive this transformation toward a Regenerative Economy is a paradigm shift to an ecological world view in which nature is the model. Through this, Finance can be transformed, and there can be a shift in the flow of investment capital to perpetuate an economy that serves humanity and is a steward of Earth’s ecosystems. It is about transitioning from an economy driven by the vicious cycle of fear, separation, scarcity, and competition toward an economy driven by co-creating collaborative abundance.\textsuperscript{56}

There are already early examples of Regenerative Economies manifesting in a multitude of scalable projects and enterprises on the ground. There are communities engaging in the sharing economy, collaborative and cooperative ownership structures, economic democracy, investments in renewable energy, regenerative agriculture, and real investments in resilient communities.\textsuperscript{57} The creation of worker cooperatives and support for local businesses have been shown to multiply local wealth and wellbeing, and will be needed to create more cohesive living and working communities.\textsuperscript{58} A tangible and innovative example close to home, is the Little

\begin{itemize}
  \item https://capitalinstitute.org/regenerative-communities/
  \item https://capitalinstitute.org/regenerative-communities/
  \item https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/towards-a-regenerative-economy-bf1c2ed6792
  \item https://www.fastcompany.com/3020653/creating-a-regenerative-economy-to-transform-global-finance-into-a-force-for-good
  \item https://www.resilience.org/stories/2020-04-07/no-more-business-as-usual-rethinking-economic-value-for-a-post-covid-world/
\end{itemize}
Tokyo Community Impact Fund for cooperative ownership of property for a community benefit. There are also communities creating local currencies that stay in the community. One such example is “Loaves,” the local currency of a community in New Zealand, which keeps re-circulating while 100 percent stays in the local community. It is not in competition with the national currency, in fact, it is actually complimentary to it. If there is an economic crash, collapse or a depression, such a new local and regional parallel currencies can counteract and fill the void and disappearance of bank money. Localizing our economies would also assist with reducing carbon-intensive global trade and build resilience in the face of an uncertain and turbulent future. These changes will be bottom up, rather than top down.

**LEVERAGE POINTS: PLACES TO INTERVENE IN A SYSTEM**

(In Order of Increasing Effectiveness) By Donella Meadows

12. Constants, parameters, numbers (such as subsidies, taxes, standards).
11. The sizes of buffers and other stabilizing stocks, relative to their flows.
10. The structure of material stocks and flows (such as transport networks, population age structures).
  9. The lengths of delays, relative to the rate of system change.
  8. The strength of negative feedback loops, relative to the impacts they are trying to correct against.
  7. The gain around driving positive feedback loops.
  6. The structure of information flows (who does and does not have access to information).
  5. The rules of the system (such as incentives, punishments, constraints).
  4. The power to add, change, evolve, or self-organize system structure.
  3. The goals of the system.
  2. The mindset or paradigm out of which the system — its goals, structure, rules, delays, parameters — arises.
  1. The power to transcend paradigms.59

**THE LEADERS ARE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & COMMUNITIES:**

It is quite clear that the State and local governments have taken a lead on coronavirus mitigation, and this trend will likely continue for future disaster preparedness and response. The local governments have taken this role due to the inefficiency and inefficacy of the federal government response. “The lesson is, help isn’t coming” said Frances Colon, a former advisor to the U.S. Secretary of State, “We learned we cannot put our faith in the federal government.”60

Local governments are also better equipped to respond the needs of their local communities, while piloting innovative ideas and creating positive feedback loops.

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Given that resources are limited in the wake of an emergency, it is increasingly recognized that communities may need to be on their own after an emergency before help arrives. Thus, they need to build resilience before an emergency. Resilience is also critical to a community’s ability to reduce long recovery periods.\(^6\) It is important to develop a sustainable structure for community-level collaboration linked to clearly defined and measurable programmatic outcomes.\(^2\)

A great model for local community governance is the Kirari Yoshijima Network, in a small community in Japan, where residents engage in “Sustainable Community Building.” In a small community, it’s often the case in Japan that numerous organizations are created to achieve different objectives, but there may be many issues, such as sectionalism, lack of mutual coordination, overlapping of managerial positions, activities falling into routine habits, and surplus funds of each organization which should be used as collective fund for entire community, not for each specific purpose.

To address this issue which in also prevalent in Japantown San Francisco, a unified community management framework can facilitate quick consensus-building and simplified, efficient processes. It can also help create a functional and equitable relationship with the government, by consolidating and prioritizing the wishes of the community.\(^3\)

### 3.2. Principle 2: regenerative re-investment

The flow networks we care most about – living organisms, ecosystems, and societies – have naturally co-evolved to be self-nourishing. Their continuation requires they continually pump resources into building, maintaining, and repairing their internal capacities.

### HEALING AND CREATING A SUSTAINABLE JAPANTOWN-CHALLENGES:

#### RESILIENCE CHALLENGES IN JAPANTOWN:

Japantown is vulnerable, and fragile. There exists a certain amount of rigidity, a resistance to change. This resistance to change is understandable; the community rightfully senses a need to preserve and protect Japantown, for so much has already been forcibly seized and in terms of cultural and physical property of the community. Japantown is in “survival mode” which is a mode of managing emergencies one after another in reactive approaches; however, “survival mode” in any system stifles long-term visioning for sustainability and growth. Survival mode exists in a paradigm of “scarcity,” however there is much “abundance” that Japantown could be harnessing by engaging and celebrating its diverse community.

Many members of the broader Japanese/ Japanese American community, which has grown to become quite diverse, have expressed that they do not feel reflected very much in the current Japantown, and sense a

\(^{6}\) https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9574.html
\(^{2}\) https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3682619/
difficulty finding a place to plug-in. Specifically, those that need to be engaged more are the Japanese-speaking recent immigrant community, Shin-Nikkeis, mixed-ethnicity Japanese, and the younger generations of the broader J/JA community, dispersed throughout the Bay Area. This current lack of engagement of the broader J/JA community is a point of fragility, harnessing the diversity and creativity of the broader community will build more sustainability and resilience for Japantown.

If a community relies only on traditional local bonds to sustain itself, it will face resistance to change and stagnation in the community. This is why it is so important to change our styles in order to accept resources from outside and openly welcome people who come with ideas, knowledge and experience to share with the community.\textsuperscript{64}

\textbf{A REGENERATIVE CULTURE & COMMUNITY DIVERSITY}

Many have expressed that Japantown has been stagnant and has not evolved very much in the last 40 years. Many Japantown businesses and organizations are struggling to develop succession plans. There is a gap between the dominant culture in Japantown, and the emergent culture. It is the fact that the power structure in Japantown is aging and will need younger generations to fill those positions of leadership. Without succession planning for businesses and organizations, an integral part of Japantown may be lost forever. However, if businesses and organizations do not evolve to be inclusive and reflect the diversity and visions of the next generation, Japantown may continue to fall out of relevance for those members. This means that the opportunities to transmit unique cultural heritage, historical spaces, traditions, and cultural wisdom may be lost.

There is a need for a shift to a “Regenerative Japantown” culture, which goes beyond the sustainability of J/JA culture. It creates spaces and processes for the continuous transmission, co-creation, and evolution of a living culture that reflects, and revitalizes the community. Cultures have always evolved with influences and time, and this evolution occurs when tradition and innovation converge. In fact, many members of the younger generation gain much inspiration from ancient Japanese culture. Culture is like a tree that grows, but the foundation and the roots need to be stable for its growth. Recreating or reinterpreting the culture is what preserves the culture. This means that there needs to be an openness to the new ideas that the newer generations bring, as well as nurturing and incubating them with the wisdom and intelligence that is within the culture.

The dominant power structure of Japantown is also recognizing a need for a “culture-shift.” A “Regenerative Japantown” culture also means uplifting the voices of the diverse multigenerational J/JA community, so that new forms of leadership are able to sprout, capacity is enhanced, and a Japantown that reflects the visions of the broader community is fully actualized.

‘Regenerative’ refers to life’s inherent ability to express the unique essence of each place through elegantly adapted diversity. This diversity not only keeps constantly changing and evolving to higher levels of complexity and collaboration but actually contributes to making the place more abundant, vibrant, and conducive to more life over time.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{65} https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/what-is-life-a-regenerative-community-14ad170ee27
The challenge is that the ecosystem of a regenerative Japantown was once torn up by a Redevelopment process that lasted 20-years, and never fully restored. The majority of the younger generations do not live near Japantown, nor do immigrants from Japan find it easy to find accommodations in this neighborhood. The lack of affordable housing for the community, and little land ownership presents a difficulty in community self-determination and creates a gap between the generation which makes engagement difficult.

COMMUNITY SELF SUFFICIENCY VS. DEPENDENCY

When a community is uprooted and dispossessed of their land, their means of sustainability, local economies, inter-relationships, and self-sufficiency is deprived, and replaced by dependency. Japantown is now greatly dependent on City funding and struggles to develop independent sustainable revenue streams, or wealth. This dependence is also due to the lack of wealth-creating means such as collective land ownership, or ability to incubate social purpose entrepreneurship.

Chronic underfunding also creates a difficulty of attracting talent and capacity necessary to address Japantowns’ dire challenges. In this way, the workforce development is not regenerative, and is quite fragile. Young professionals will most likely not work in retail, or afford to live in San Francisco at non-profit rates, thus will not work in Japantown unless more entrepreneurship is nurtured.

Since the community does not own the large properties that define Japantown, such as the Japan Center Malls or Kabuki theatre, it is difficult to design Japantown to reflect the community’s vision and serve the community’s needs. For example, the community has expressed the need for more multi-generational gathering spaces, however the current Japantown is somewhat like a retail Disneyland, catering and depending on temporary visitors. In short, there needs to be more focus on the people, the arts, and a living culture.

Becoming dependent on visitors to drive the economy to become dangerous in times of crises, as seen in the Coronavirus pandemic. Without tourists and foot-traffic, Japantown’s businesses are in a dire situation. One elder of the community said, “I used to be able to walk to get everything that I needed within Japantown.” Strong local economies that meets essential needs of the community are key to resilience. For example, food insecurity will exacerbate in the future, and having local food production through urban farms would create more stability.

Unlike Regenerative Development, conventional, and even sustainable development has an emphasis on the standardization of places. Conventional design generates places like retail malls and chain stores where one can experience virtually identical environments on opposite sides of the world. This model of development pays no attention to the unique heritage nor inherent potential of a place. It is life-degrading, both biologically and spiritually, and contributes to what author James Howard Kunstler calls ‘geographies of nowhere’, or places that are not worth caring about. Japantown’s unique assets should be protected and cultivated with an emphasis on Regenerative Development rather than conventional development.

CHALLENGE: NEED FOR MORE INCLUSION & AUTHENTICITY

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Many members of the Japanese-speaking and Japanese American community do not feel the authenticity of the current Japantown. The community has expressed that their needs are not reflected enough, and that Japantown feels rather like a caricature of Japan created for non-Japanese to consume and experience. This fact is grounded in the history that the Redevelopment Agency and the merchant-planners focused on creating a tourist destination through centering “Japan” in the neighborhoods’ identity. However, this produced a filtered and incomplete portrayal of the Japanese American community and excluded those who did not conform to this Nihonmachi’s revised image or the RDA’s priorities.

Today, many of the Japanese-speaking community come to Japantown only to buy Japanese groceries at Nijiya Market, then leave, according to many interviews. What became clear is that the community would like to engage in creative place-keeping, so that Japantown reflects the People, Spirit, and Culture in a decolonized way. The Japanese-speaking, and younger generations of the community would like to see more of an emphasis on the profound meaning, and sacred wisdom behind Japanese culture, but also programming that expresses its authentic evolution. They would like to be a part of such a culture that is merging tradition and progression, that will also address global issues. Many of the younger generations have expressed the need for arts-based programming with a focus on reconnecting to Japanese ancient culture and ecosystems. Many have also expressed having collaborations and joint-programming with the Fillmore to share the wisdom of our cultures to co-create a more regenerative, just, equitable future. Many of the younger generations have also expressed the importance of a developing programming around a community garden.

They also expressed that nature is an important aspect of Japanese culture, and that there is too much concrete and not enough trees. Many people that come to Japantown ask, “where are the Japanese gardens?” The power of trees, “木の力” is an important aspect of Japanese culture.

**CHALLENGE: FRAGMENTATION AND DISPERSION**

Not many communities were prepared for the COVID-19 crises, some lessons learned is that we are dependent on a fragile system. Japantown needs to build more cooperation rather than fragmentation and needs to harness its diversity to build more connectivity, like villagers. Japantown could also benefit from activities such as growing edible urban gardens to provide local food. The more there is local interdependence, strong relationships, community self-sufficiency there is, the less dependency on fragile, unstable systems.

More interconnectivity in the J/JA community should be developed. There should be a greater engagement through a stronger online presence and platform for connectivity. Such an online platform could quickly disseminate information, and get everyone on the same page, toward greater resource sharing and action. For example, fundraisers could be done online from selling T-shirts, or a donation for a meal etc. SOMA Pilipinas has been greatly successful at this.

We are dependent on fragile centralized systems, that can be disrupted easily; if something goes wrong in China, it impacts the whole supply-chain and all of the sudden our grocery store shelves are empty. With greater disruptions on the horizon, it is crucial to develop self-reliance and sufficiency through hyper-local decentralized systems that can sustain local communities to be resilient.

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67 https://books.google.com/books?id=YS16DwAAQBAJ&pg=PA270&lpg=PA270&dq=CANE%20Japantown%20San%20Francisco&source=bl&ots=8ZxfyPHwos&sig=ACfU3U3xegN2C5DzqHA8ZF Eh_enK4FQjhs&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiysK7u5Y7pAhUyPn0KHU/V3AD4Q6AewDHoECAoQAQ6v=onepage&q=CANE%20Japantown%20San%20Francisco&f=false
The truth is, Japantown is very much influenced by capitalist, and neoliberal undercurrents that create division, separation, scarcity, lack of authenticity and trust. It is essential to re-evaluate what is truly, for and by the community at large when it comes to planning. Future planning for Japantown will need to focus more on the process of true collaboration.

**D. STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS**

**JAPANTOWN TOWARD A REGENERATIVE FUTURE:**

*For a Healthy, Thriving, Resilient Japantown*

The Vision is that:

“Japantown will thrive as an ecologically and culturally regenerative, authentic, economically vibrant, cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American communities, honoring the transmission, co-creation, and evolution of a living culture that reflects, and continuously revitalizes the local and global community.”

It is the time to transition toward a more just, equitable, sustainable society that allows the unique essence of local communities like Japantown to thrive. However, Japantown cannot become resilient to these increasing crises by viewing survival narrowly and taking only a reactive approach for its own survival. It is essential that Japantown releases its “4-block” mentality and begins to view itself as global citizens embedded in the larger struggle for justice and as an essential agent for change in these national and global crises. Only then will Japantown truly be on its path to true healing and transformation toward a thriving, regenerative neighborhood.

Regeneration focuses on learning, innovation, and developing the means to continually increase the vitality, viability and evolution of a place by creating beneficial interrelationships that improve the resilience and ability of a community to adapt and survive in dynamic and challenging conditions.68

A regenerative Japantown empowers the unique culture of Japantown while also contributing to the United Nation and San Francisco’s Climate and Equity Goals. Empowering Japantown as an essential agent for this transformation, and as part of the unique cultural fabric that makes San Francisco an attractive destination, will also bring major international attention to the City as a model success story.

This is the direction that many global communities are moving toward, and there are already great networks of Cities achieving these goals, co-creating knowledge, and setting examples. San Francisco should live up to its name as an innovative global regenerative hub, where people come to meet, learn, and share information. A transition to an ecological neighborhood is inevitable. San Francisco could incubate what makes San Francisco what it is, its cultural diversity, and its eco-culture. This aspect of San Francisco is rapidly being lost and is worth keeping.

The Regenerative city, economy, and planning approach empowers and enhances the unique cultural identity of each neighborhood, while contributing to a more ecological environment that is mutually beneficial both to inhabitants and the planet. Such a framework for ecological and social empowerment would allow Japantown to

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meet its fullest potential of cultural expression and evolution. This focus on regenerative culture would also create more opportunities for intergenerational transmission of culture and evolution of the local culture. Japanese culture is innately ecological and could benefit the global community. Many members of the community have expressed that they would like to revive, explore, and share that ancestral culture.

Many have expressed their hope to see a greener Japantown; to many, the overabundance of concrete does not feel peaceful. As quoted by Wendell Berry, “there are no unsacred places; there are only sacred places and desecrated places.” The last time Japantown was designed, the community’s vision was barely reflected. Now is the opportunity for the community to re-envision their sacred cultural home and heal Japantown while healing the planet.

Declaring the goals for a “Regenerative Japantown” would create pathways for more involvement from community members of the younger generation, mixed ethnicity, and Japanese-speaking communities, while attracting partnerships with Japanese companies and global innovators, thus creating both an ecologically, and socially regenerative space.

THE LONG-TERM VISION & GOALS: A REGENERATIVE JAPANTOWN

This section is a synthesis of the imagination and vision of community members. It is important to bear in mind that this will be a long-term process; however, it is essential to identify the first steps that can be taken now to start the process.

A Regenerative Japantown of the future, is an “urban eco-village” which reflects the ancient eco-wisdom in Japanese and Japanese American culture. It is a refuge and a hub that attracts innovative minds worldwide, physically and virtually. The buildings and spaces are alive and embody biophilic design. The buildings will have multiple levels of visible rooftop and vertical gardens; the buildings will be porous and interactive with the outside environment, a contrast to the vertical walls that characterize the current Brutalist style. There will be restaurants can have outdoor seating which intersect with the rooftop gardens while serving delicious, healthy, Japanese cuisine made of locally-grown organic produce. Children will be playing outside at the gardens, interacting with the flora and fauna while receiving cultural competency-based transformative education.

Regenerative Infrastructure & Systems:

The community will also be resilient to global disruptions caused by the climate crisis, by becoming self-sufficient in energy, food, and water. Edible landscapes and community gardens will bring local food-security, for they do not have to travel long distances. Regenerative development is deeply rooted in permaculture, which is first and foremost about working with the land. It asks us to become indigenous once again, to deepen our roots to the places where we live, and to provide more meaning and value to them. Decentralized renewable energy such as solar panels on micro-grids will increase resilience to power outages. Urban composting or bio-filter toilets that allow composting onsite will reduce dependence on sewer systems and decrease water pollution. Greywater systems will be used to minimize water waste, while rainwater, and fog water harvesting will decrease water consumption. Living buildings will create a livable, enjoyable landscape for social interaction or mindful

contemplation. These kinds of buildings are already in existence, the Bullitt Center in Seattle has not all but many of these characteristics. The Bullitt Center goes beyond the LEED Certifications and brings international attention. If there is new development in Japantown, it should also surpass the sustainability measures included in the LEED Certifications.

A Master Plan: Development Potential & Partnerships w/ Interdisciplinary Team:

As will be explained in the Key Area Land Use, there is still development potential in Japantown to grow and expand. A Japantown Vision Plan would allow an opportunity for the community to reflect their shared values and visions for the future through the reimagining of space.

For example, the Japantown could purchase “air rights” over the massive Safeway parking lot across the Geary street to bring more life to the space, while still keeping a parking lot, if necessary. It could be multi-story building that could embody the elements described above. This space could create more interconnectivity across the divide that Geary street has become. There can be an attractive sky walk filled with art and projections that people can cross Geary street safely into the Japan Center Malls. There is also development potential in the Japan Center Malls and it is essential that the vision of the community is reflected there as well.

Such a reimagining of space in Japantown and actualizing it into the built environment will require an interdisciplinary team with a diversity of skillsets ranging from architects, systems designers, solar experts, and sociologist to name a few. Such partnerships could be developed, especially with a clear, exciting, bold, innovative vision that inspires people to join efforts.

DEVELOPING INTERCONNECTIVITY – Hyper-Local and Global Eco-Cultural Hub for Japanese and Japanese American Community & Partners + Festivals, Events, Conferences:

This will be a hub that attracts and converges Japanese and global sustainable, green-tech businesses, thought-leaders, Artists, and innovators that are pioneering solutions for the world. There will be conferences, conventions, and exhibitions, expositions, events, and festivals. Interdisciplinary partnerships will be developed across many sectors, bringing an exciting synergy of co-creative innovation. There will be investment and partnerships with Artists and Culture-bearers to create new work, develop programming and awareness around key topics. Youth and Young Adults will play an essential role in developing culture and addressing the most pressing topics of the century.

The vision described above will be developed over the long term, however establishing the first steps now is essential. The initial steps before achieving such an important yet massive goal is to first enhance community strength, interconnectivity, communication and collaboration. Nothing will be achieved until these aspects of the community is strengthened and the broader community is engaged. These steps should be taken in the first year of implantation for this is a lot of organizing momentum occurring due to the impacts of the pandemic compounded by the amplification of injustices and by the sparking of protests.

A great start is to activate the Young Adults and develop spaces for programming around equity, justice, sustainability, healing, and culture through the arts. This is already beginning to organically occur as the Young Adults have taken an initiative to activate the Peace Plaza on June 20th to engage in arts programming around “Black Lives Matter,” and have successfully persisted despite some resistance. This is quite an occurrence which
has not happened in a while and may have amalgamated due to the sense of urgency that we cannot persist as before anymore; humanity is amidst the chaos where old paradigms are crumbling and a transformation is emerging.

Programming is how the community could create opportunities for peer to peer (P2P) learning, skill-sharing, and capacity-building while exploring valuable topics. A regenerative future is a knowledge-based system. Reviving ancestral wisdom and ways of life that can benefit us in our modern world today are also a critical area of focus. Platforms for P2P learning and co-creation of knowledge can manifest in many forms and can include programming such as Japanese Boro-style Eco Fashion workshops, repair cafes, think tanks, and edible city urban gardens that provide for Japanese cooking classes made of fresh picked ingredients. Anime-enthusiasts and cosplayers could also be engaged around the theme of “Solar Punk Festival.” In expositions, Japanese sustainable technology companies and cutting-edge initiatives can be given visibility. An example of such an innovative technology would be the Spirulina Bio-Fuel Cell released by Osaka University in 2018, which utilizes the photosynthesis function of spirulina to capture solar-light and generate electricity by while sequestering CO2 in water as source material. Another example is Fujitsu’s Local Virtual Power Plant (VPP) Program, which uses IoT, blockchain and renewable energy to run a remotely-controlled system that integrates multiple distributed energy resources to provide functions as if it was one consolidated power plant, thus eliminating the uncertainty that weather brings to renewable power generation. Japantown could become a hub for cultural fusion, and evolutionary culture.

Partnerships inside and outside of the community will be essential in propelling this vision into actualization. To gain partnerships, it is first important to tell the story of Japantown and transmit ideas that inspire people to participate and support. Improved communications, publicity, and engagement of the press to share Japantowns’ BOLD vision and invite participation will play a critical role. Currently, Japantown is not reaching and harnessing the support of those who will potentially care about the future of Japantown. There are people that want to be involved, develop partnerships, and support Japantown, that just need a place to plug-in. A BOLD statement, vision that people support, and a call-to-action for partnerships in innovative solution-oriented pilot projects can create pathways for involvement, support and contributions. This can be a way to attract more expertise and funding to achieve the vision while spurring a new regenerative economy, and a thriving environment.

Best Practices Shared During State-wide Japantown Focus Group on Resiliency:
Many have emphasized the importance of strategically taking the current crisis as an opportunity for transformation and growth.

- Increase collaboration, communication, and coordination to act nimbly (existing coalitions have been helpful)
- Empower Leadership Transition: Empower younger generations to take lead in transition (DIVERSE AGES, VOICES, EXPERIENCES) = More resilience
  Boards with younger more diverse members are nimbler and more responsive. It is important to bring in younger generations and more diverse experiences. Develop a strategy to galvanize the next generation to help work on this long-term challenge.
- Increasing programming on digital platforms, streaming of events:
Distance is no longer a barrier for participation, enhance ability to reach wider audiences

- Cross-sharing and highlighting organizations and businesses
- Resource-Sharing in the Community: ex) “Community Feeding Community” meal subsidization while also supporting local businesses
- Peer 2 Peer Knowledge-Sharing platforms
- Higher Utilization of Outdoor Spaces
- Weekly Zoom meetings between supervisors and constituents
- Community Ownership of Land (Those who own their property or have a sympathetic owner vs outside non-community-concerned owners
- Promote Japantowns as assets to the City and neighborhood. Get more people on board to realize the value of Japantowns to their ecosystems. Inform neighbors on what actions can be taken to support Japantown. Quantify the Economic Impact of COVID to Japantown

**Strategies Derived from SF Japantown’s Ideas from Regenerative, Sustainable, Resilient Futures Focus Group:**

- A connected community is a resilient community
  - Build an Ecosystem for communication: In Japantown, there is a necessity for increased collaboration, communication, and coordination
  - Enhancement of online platforms for interconnectivity
  - Necessity for Resource and Information-Sharing Platforms; such a platform can help to connect resources and meet collective needs, to engage broader audiences without distance as a factor
  - More activities that bring groups together to share and create; intentional "interdisciplinary" approaches
  - Empower the leadership of the next generation
  - Assistance for Artists and Small Businesses

- Green, Sustainable, Attractive Spaces to Promote Health
  - Necessity for urban edible community gardens, as many people are gardening now because of the pandemic.
  - Necessity for Ecological, Sustainable and Green Spaces & Japantown Vision Plan- There is an increased importance of well-planned public outdoor spaces that are attractive, reflective of the community, and provide well-being.
  - Future development of Japantown (of all scales and levels of intervention): Do no harm; meet net-zero / carbon neutral / regenerative benchmarks (all petals of the Living Building Challenge); this includes infrastructure
  - more biophilic interventions: nature / outdoors-in / open space
  - prioritize flexibility of spaces and modular designs
  - Explore becoming a healthy, blue-zone neighborhood
I. Introduction & II. Vision

Development of a Community Resilience Plan
- community organizing to explore shared systems and contingency plans
- focus on a framework of communication (Japantown is challenged by communication)
- comprehensive coordination -- involve all stakeholders
- Build in resilience for future pandemics, drought/extreme weather, fire, outages, earthquake, economic crises

VIEWS OF THE COMMUNITY FOR ARTS & CULTURE, LAND USE, AND YOUNG ADULTS FOCUS GROUP:

The artists of Japantown have expressed that the arts are essential in re-storying and mobilizing the community for a mobilizing the community for a more optimistic future. The artists have also expressed the importance of transmitting the wisdom of the traditional Japanese culture, and the importance to share that spirit. Japan used to be called “Yamato” or country of great harmony. It is essential to keep and share that spirit and take care of the Earth that takes care of us.

Some artists have expressed that honoring some of the ancient cultural ways are helpful to move into a sustainable future. Bridging the ancient culture with innovation keeps the arts rooted, yet fresh and new, for example a Japanese Sustainable fashion show. It also creates valuable opportunities for intergenerational exchange.

Young people are looking for ways to more authentically connect to Japantown. They are particularly interested in exploring the “ancestral aspects” and “indigenous ways of life” of Japanese culture through food, music and the arts. They are particularly fond of “Values and purpose-based spaces” and “Earth-based cultural connections” through a community edible garden/ farm in order to authentically connect with the space, and also learn ancestral food practices such as fermentation and pickling. This can also be an intergenerational space, and kids can also learn about plants. Japanese American history is also very much tied to agriculture and the young adults find empowerment in connecting to that. Young Adults are also interested in seeing programming around this green growing space to highlight Japanese Eco-culture. This would engage and attract more people all over the Bay Area who are interested in sustainability and Japanese culture around this “trendy” yet necessary topic.

Some young adults have emphasized that in order to maintain Japantown for future generations, sustainability must be in the forefront and tied into everything, and that at any capacity and any point, a community can be sustainable if it makes that choice. Traditional Japanese culture is rooted in sustainability and environmentally friendly practices and concepts such as “mottainai,” which is important to convey to the future generations so that they have a place to thrive on the planet. Incorporating this culture into the cityscape will make sustainability possible, especially in infrastructure that will last decades. It is essential that if parts of Japantown are rebuilt or redeveloped, regenerative designs should be included. There is too much concrete in Japantown and old infrastructure, however even without a rebuilding, retrofits such as lower energy HVAC systems could be integrated. Some have also suggested EV infrastructure to increase Japantown’s accessibility in a sustainable way.

Participants of the Land Use focus group have expressed that rooftop gardens and open spaces for playgrounds where kids can play safely are needed. Currently, there are no green spaces or playgrounds for kids. A rooftop
garden could serve as a space all generations; a safe space for kids to play, while adults can enjoy the nature and sunshine, working people can have lunch, or a picnic on the weekends. The community would like to see these kinds of spaces increase, and especially see gardens on under-utilized rooftops.

**STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS: NEAR TERM STEPS FOR THE NEAR TERM AND LONG-TERM GOAL (LONG TERM RESILIENCE)**

**SPECIFIC TACTICS: NEAR TERM STEPS FOR THE NEAR TERM AND LONG-TERM GOAL (LONG TERM RESILIENCE)**

**NEAR TERM STEPS FOR THE SHORT TERM (IMMEDIATE RESILIENCE)**

E. **STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS**

**STRATEGY 1: RE-STORY A REGENERATIVE, HEALTHY JAPANTOWN & LEAD WITH BOLD ACTIONS: Centering J/JA Culture in Socio-ecological Regeneration: Develop a Declaration for a “Regenerative Japantown/ Edo-Futurism**

The J/JA community have emphasized the need for a Cultural Innovation and Evolution “kakushin 革新” in Japantown to better to reflect the J/JA community. It is essential to Lead by Bold Actions that will inspire people to see the bigger cause and get involved, in the beginning it may be hard to gain momentum, but the path will widen with more involvement and broader base support.

Into the new normal of the COVID-19 pandemic, the community does not want to see just surface level fixes in the same modes and methods of the “business as usual.” They want to see a deeply transformative re-making /rebuilding of Japantown for a brighter future with the active involvement and empowerment of the younger generations.

It is first essential to set the goals and intentions for “Regenerative Japantown” then develop arts & action programming centering Japanese culture in socio-ecological health regeneration. Through the arts, re-storying, cultivating the intersection of tradition and innovation to pilot innovative projects, and articulating Japantown’s the story and unique value to San Francisco’s ecosystem, and the world, Japantown can attract support and partners. Support and partnerships can range from the members of the community that were not engaged before, to the City, organizations, and companies.

**STRATEGY 2: PROGRAMMING & EDUCATION ON J/JA ECO-CULTURE & ENGAGE THE DIVERSITY OF THE J/JA COMMUNITY:**
The topic of Japanese/Japanese American Eco-Culture and reconnecting to Earth and ancestral roots would engage the broader community and would allow the community to creatively envision and develop solutions for a sustainable, regenerative future. This strategy could be implemented to the Overarching Tactic: “Intergenerational Cultural Co-Creative Multi-Use Gathering Space.”

Innovation and partnerships and entrepreneurship can be incubated from this space. It is a space to empower and inspire. For example, there can also be a “Hands-on Challenge” with students to use technologies such as VR, Graphics, and programming to depict a bright future for Japantown. It is also a space where traditional knowledge could be transmitted. Many knowledge-based systems of existing are nearing extinction and need to be revived as we face crisis where we need knowledge and innovation more than ever. This Cultural Sustainability education should be approached in a way that is demographically relatable.

The J/JA community, especially the Japanese-speaking population, and the younger generations have emphasized the desire to experience, share, and learn more about Japanese Ancestral Eco-Sustainability culture. The community would like to participate in a Japantown that is the innovation point that highlights and transmits this Japanese Eco-Culture to benefit and advance the world. The Bay Area is a hotbed for this topic, and a spearheading in regenerative sustainability with this aspect of Japanese culture will surely inspire and increase support and engagement in Japantown. A focus on this aspect of Japanese culture would also create an engaging and accepting space where the diversity of our community could feel more at home and invited, take part, grow, thrive, and evolve culture though honoring tradition.

A focus on Japanese Traditional Eco-Sustainability culture would also promote the healing of Japantown, and the Earth it is undeniably embedded in. It will be a place of diversity and the intersection of multiple identities for a common cause to heal our planet, and our communities, resulting in transformation, innovation, and an evolutionary culture.

This kind of community-building and education can occur through both through the overarching strategies: “Intergenerational Cultural Co-Creative Multi-Use Gathering Space” which exists in a network of spaces, and also the “Small Business & Artist Assistance Media Center.” Both generate spaces for education, community building, and creative solutions through arts and entrepreneurship. Therefore, this section very much intersects with Strategy 3.

The Top Tactics the Emphasized by Community:

A. Intergenerational Community Permaculture Edible Garden with Programming on Environmental Arts, Japanese Eco-Culture, and Healing, and Transformative Education: Connecting to Earth & Ancestral Roots

The Community, especially the younger generations are looking for ways to more authentically connect to Japantown. They are particularly interested in exploring the “ancestral aspects” and “indigenous ways of life” of Japanese culture through food, music and the arts. They are particularly fond of “Values and purpose-based spaces” and “Earth-based cultural connections” through a community edible garden/ farm in order to authentically connect with the space, and also learn ancestral food practices such as fermentation and pickling. Permaculture is a set of design principles centered on whole systems thinking, simulating, or directly utilizing the
patterns and resilient features observed in natural ecosystems. It uses these principles in a growing number of fields from regenerative agriculture, rewilding, and community resilience.

1. **Create a Community Permaculture Garden with Programming**

Engaged permaculture is a knowledge-based system—that doesn’t need complex technologies and can be done in the Cities. Permaculture is about collaboration, localization, food resiliency, networking—connecting whole systems—and integrating whole systems in one’s life.

This can also be an intergenerational space, and kids can also learn about plants. Japanese American history is also very much tied to agriculture and the young adults find empowerment in connecting to that. Young Adults are also interested in seeing programming around this green growing space to highlight Japanese Eco-culture. This would engage and attract more people all over the Bay Area who are interested in sustainability and Japanese culture around this “trendy” yet necessary topic.

This Garden can also serve as:
- Source of fresh, local, community products
- An opportunity for intergenerational community engagement
- Open space for disaster management (evacuation space)
- Resource for recreation, leisure, health, and wellbeing
- Transformative Education on Japanese culture in addressing global issues, and also a space where kids can play and learn about plants
- Intergenerational space to explore, and exchange traditional knowledge

2. **Cultural Environmental Arts Programming with Focus on Japanese Traditional Eco-Culture**

The artists of Japantown have expressed that the arts are essential in re-storying and mobilizing the community for a mobilizing the community for a more optimistic future. The artists have also expressed the importance of transmitting the wisdom of the traditional Japanese culture, and the importance to share that spirit. Japan used to be called “Yamato” or country of “great harmony.” It is essential to keep and share that spirit and take care of the Earth that takes care of us.

Some artists have expressed that honoring some of the ancient cultural ways are helpful to move into a sustainable future. Bridging the ancient culture with innovation keeps the arts rooted, yet fresh and new, for example a Japanese Sustainable fashion show. It also creates valuable opportunities for intergenerational exchange.

- Japanese Sustainable Fashion Programming
- Workshops on Japanese fermented and preserved foods such as Miso, Katsuo Bushi, Hoshi Gaki, Shoyu, Natto etc, which are healthy and great for emergencies
- A way to develop connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods

3. **Green Spaces Multiple Generations and Kids can Play**
Participants of the Land Use focus group have expressed that rooftop gardens and open spaces for playgrounds where kids can play safely are needed. Currently, there are no green spaces or playgrounds for kids. A rooftop garden could serve as a space all generations; a safe space for kids to play, while adults can enjoy the nature and sunshine, working people can have lunch, or a picnic on the weekends. The community would like to see these kinds of spaces increase, and especially see gardens on under-utilized rooftops.

4. Businesses & Spaces
   - Authentic Japanese Health Food Shops
   - Outdoor Food Hall with Pop-ups/ Farmers Markets
   - Roof top green spaces and play areas
   - A “Ryokan” Air-bnb like lodging experience of a traditional Japanese house in a very small minimal space. The one room is a multipurpose “kukan” space that opens to a “tsubo-niwa” tiny garden; the floor is made of “tatami” grass mat where a futon can be unfolded onto the floor when it is time to sleep. This conveys the value of minimalism, but sufficiency.

5. Sustainability at Japantown Festivals
   - Partner with Zero Waste Services at large events
   - Add a Carbon Footprint calculator at events as a visual way to see impact

STRATEGY 3: ENGAGE & HIGHLIGHT JAPANESE ECO-CULTURE THROUGH BUSINESSES THAT HAVE AN APPEAL & DEVELOP REGENERATIVE ECONOMICS IN THE COMMUNITY:

Spaces that feel authentic to the community should be curated and cultivated to better reflect the J/JA community. People shop for experiences, and the spaces in Japantown could be rejuvenated by incubating and highlighting local craftmanship and next generation entrepreneurship, enhancing relationships and inviting businesses that have connections to Japan into the space, and centering the space around authentic experiences beyond just shopping. Better relationships should be cultivated between property owners, merchants, and artists, so that artists can be given an opportunity to activate the spaces through performances and workshops. People are keen to learn about the deep culture of Japan, especially in areas of health and eco-culture. A great example of this would be Miso-making and pickling workshops.

This particular strategy could be initiated through the Overarching Strategy: “Small Business & Artist Assistance Media Center.” The Small Business Assistance Media Center should assist in business incubation and succession-planning so historical aspects could be preserved yet evolved to meet evolving needs. Trendy Hot Spots that are reflective of Japanese & Japanese American traditional culture, contemporary culture, as well as a focus on deeper culture of Japan especially centered around Health and Eco-Culture experiences would be more attractive to the Bay Area community. Examples that the community were asking for are more vegetarian and healthy Japanese restaurants and stores, Japanese Eco-businesses, hand-made crafts, Instagram-able experiences like “Nitrogen Ice Cream,” J/JA “Oshare Trendy” Streetwear Brands, and Japanese-owned businesses that showcase and highlight the quality of Japan. This would attract a whole customer base and crowd that has not been engaged and will bring a livelier atmosphere.
Develop partnerships with JETRO and JCCNC to provide information regarding Japantown and invite Japanese businesses with an emphasis on businesses that highlight Japanese Eco-culture.

Cultivate Next Generation Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship through Incubation

Assist Artists and community groups to develop partnerships with property owners and businesses to bring more activities into spaces

Support local culturally relevant crafts people with popups

Develop a platform for Resource-sharing

Partnership with the City Initiative, SEED program for business succession planning

Engage in the City’s Shop & Dine 49 “Driving Shared Prosperity Through Shopping Local” Initiative to highlight Japantown businesses, and also encourage participation in “SF Biz Connect,” a buy local initiative that aims to increase local business-to-business (BtoB) relationships. The benefits of buying local are not also immediate to large businesses and smaller businesses may have obstacles navigating the procurement processes of large businesses. This program aims to mitigate these challenges by facilitating targeted procurement events, educational panels, and online buy local resources.

Promote “Shop Local” in Japantown: the more times a dollar circulates in a community, the more economically empowered it will be, while also reducing carbon footprint

Develop Catering Partnerships between local Japantown restaurants and Tech Companies

Pilot a case-study for a regenerative economy: explore a local Japantown currency, Local Exchange Trading Scheme (LETS) time-banking, skill-shares as models.

Develop a Community Impact Fund

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**STRATEGY 4: RE-IMAGINE DESIGN OF SPACE & BUILDINGS: Empower Community-Driven Vision for Japantowns’ Spaces While Promoting Green Spaces and Japanese Sustainable Design Elements at Multiple Scales:**

The community is seeking more livable, healthy, sustainable, regenerative, green spaces in Japantown. This should be a standard for any new developments, and also for any renovation and retrofits. There are near-term “low hanging” targets, and more long-term targets.

Some highly visible, and near-term targets that the community has suggested are:

1. Accessible Green Spaces & Japanese Gardens
2. An Intergenerational Community Edible Garden Space with programming
3. Water bottle filling stations
4. Biophilic building design elements, rooftop gardens and green spaces in general
5. More Japanese Eco-Culture businesses
6. The Peace Plaza Redesign Project approval by voters
Longer-term targets that the community has suggest are:
- Japantown Vision Master Plan
- Biophillic Building Design in new developments
- Exceed LEED Certifications
- Increase community spaces
- Net-Zero Buildings
- Affordable Housing

A. Utilize the “Japantown Design Guidelines” and add more benchmarks for Sustainable Design, and Biophillic green spaces. Many of the targets described above can be incorporated into the design guidelines. The “Japantown Design Guidelines,” a basic set of design guidelines that were approved by the Planning Commission and codified in December 2019 to map out some of the community’s priorities to help shape any new developments. This means that when any new development occurs, the developers must gain a Planning permit, and the Planning Department will look at the guidelines to see if they are being checked off. Any supplementary guidelines to the “Japantown Design Guidelines” can be developed but won’t be legislated for another 5 years.

B. Develop a Japantown Master Vision Plan
The details of this strategy are addressed in **Section V: Overarching Strategies**.

C. **Establish a Community Development Corporation/ Community Land Trust or Community Investment Fund**
CDC, CLT, or CIF (able to control rent prices for merchants & cultural orgs - right now paying market price) (2 years ago, all 3 Jtowns spoke to land trust)
The details of this strategy are addressed in **Section V: Overarching Strategies**.

D. **Develop a Strategic Plan to Address 2021 Expiration of Japan Center Malls (JCM) Covenant Agreement (JCMTC) Negotiate Benefits Agreements with JCM Owners (JCMTC)**
The details of this strategy are addressed in **Section V: Overarching Strategies**.

**STRATEGY 5: EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS & NETWORKS FOR A COLLABORATIVE ADVANTAGE:**

Partnerships and the involvement of multiple stakeholders help to advance Japantown toward a regenerative future. Innovative pilot projects with a purpose will attract and inspire many to find ways to plug in and share
their skills to accomplish these goals. Being a part of a network of communities will also be helpful to share best practices and knowledge.

A. Partner with the City of San Francisco

Regenerative & Sustainable City projects that have already occurred in San Francisco, along with potential programs to engage in:

- Planning Departments Sustainable City & Neighborhoods Initiative
- Office of Resilience and Recovery
- SF Planning Departments Eco-Districts program

San Francisco Planning Department is already building Eco-Districts - a community of property owners, businesses and residents within a neighborhood that collaborate to develop and initiate sustainable development projects in their area. Using a set of performance metrics, neighborhoods can shape their projects with custom strategies for their community. The Eco-District is fundamentally a community-driven development that has the potential to achieve the smart growth of sustainable ideas but also build local urban identity and enforce a sense of place among its residents.70

- Draw ideas from the model of SF Planning Departments’ Central SOMA Plan, and work done around “Goal #6: Create an Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient Neighborhood” Central SOMA plan-

Regenerative City Assessment Program

REGENERATIVE CITY ASSESSMENT & GRID DESIGN FOR SAN FRANCISCO

Regensia is a public-benefit strategy and design firm helping organizations and communities innovate - contracted to lead a first-of-its-kind regenerative city assessment and district grid design for San Francisco. The study helped define regenerative urbanism and introduced its unique value proposition for the city. It included an overview of path-breaking global precedents and utilized Regensia’s Regenerative Cities Assessment™ tool to benchmark and assess the regenerative potential of Central SoMa (a 230-acre district adjacent to downtown) as a local test case. Building on the assessment, Regensia and ZGF Architects developed a Proposal for Central SoMa to envision it as fully regenerative. The Proposal featured a customized Integrated Utility Hub (IUH), Integrated Utility System (IUS), and public realm improvements. Associated cost-benefit analysis determined that a 10% investment could yield regenerative levels of performance, while generating $2B+ of additional public benefits for the district. It was suggested that this value could be captured through new community-based coordination and governance models.

- Explore Partnership with San Francisco, A Member of the Biophilic Cities Network Biophilia creates deep and powerful connections, benefits economic growth, creates healthier cities, positively impacts education, and biophilic cities are happier and more productive. As San Francisco strives to increase access to nature within city limits, it has become a pioneer in the creation of small urban spaces through programs such as Pavement to Parks, Green Connections Network, SF Better Streets, and the Urban Forest Plan. San Francisco is also an

international leader in sustainability, aspiring to produce all the energy it needs from renewable sources and to become “zero-waste” by 2030.71

B. Partner with the State, and Country

- Explore Partnership with the California Strategic Growth Council, which supports healthy, thriving, resilient communities for all. Over 70% of “Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) funds have benefited disadvantaged communities thus far, providing: 9,400 affordable homes, improved air quality, affordable transportation options, and better access to jobs and amenities.
- Align with the Green New Deal, and the Green Stimulus

C. Develop Relationships with Japanese Eco-Initiatives

- Fujisawa Sustainable Smart Town
- Kashiwa-no-ha Smart City
  Create a relationship with Kashiwa-no-ha Smart City in Japan, a comprehensive smart City program that enhances environmental performance, and social cohesion

D. Join Global Networks

- Develop a Partnership with and Regen Villages for a pilot project
- Regenerative Communities Network
- Leverage the “100 Resilient Cities (100RC)” Network, which centers regenerative resiliency to meet the challenges of safe, healthy and secure communities in dynamically changing times. The City of San Francisco is a member.

E. Partner with Companies

- Panasonic

F. Develop Statewide Japantown Collaborations

1) California Japantown virtual arts collaboration and event
2) Virtual Festival of All 4 Japantowns
3) State Level Policy Advocacy
4) Virtual Knowledge and Best Practice-sharing
5) Honoring and exploring the Resilience of Japantowns historically (ex) Japantown after Internment

G. Study Little Tokyo’s Cultural Eco District Initiative & Sustainable Little Tokyo

71 https://www.biophiliccities.org/san-francisco
STRATEGY 6: COMMUNITY INTERCONNECTIVITY & COMMUNICATION PLATFORM TO BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY:

1. Increase Collaboration, Connectivity, Communication, and bring stakeholders to the table.
2. Develop Strong Online & Physical Platforms for Increased Interconnectivity: Develop a Platform for Resource and Information-Sharing, Peer to Peer Learning and Skill-Sharing, Capacity-Building, and Cross-Promotion
3. Develop Connections to the Japanese Tea Garden- Discount vouchers for Japantown shops should be available at the Tea Garden

The Small Business Assistance Center should collaborate with the JCBD on improving Japantown’s Marketing. Marketing can also be improved by increasing connectivity and “Signal Boosting” by highlighting J/JA events all over the Bay area, so that they also in return can highlight Japantown. Building relationships of reciprocity with the Bay Area broader community is essential. Young people should also be better engaged through the social media and online platforms, including a uniform Japantown Instagram and online shopping / media platform, in addition to the growth of contacts in the traditional list servers. This should be a platform which increases the online presence of Japantown, small businesses, and artists, and also a space where virtual classes and workshops, events, and performances could be held.

4. Establish a SF Japantown Community Council & Arts Action Committee

The details of this strategy are addressed in Section V: Overarching Strategies.

A community council will help build a Japantown to become more regenerative, sustainable, and resilient. In Little Tokyo, existing coalitions have been helpful for better collaboration, communication, and coordination.

ENGAGE THE DIVERSITY OF THE COMMUNITY:

EMPOWER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NEXT GENERATION-
Empower Young Adults in Recovery and Transition to Online Platforms:

Increase Fundraising and Marketing Capacity of Japantown Cultural District to Support CHHESS Strategies

Cater more to young people and diversity of the community-
Invite shops with connections to Japan,
Sustainable culture and youth culture

9. Have more virtual events
10. Need Cultural Evolution
11. Focus on Japanese Eco-Culture Programming and Shops
12. Community Garden with programming
13. Partnerships with Japanese Eco-Companies
I. CONTEXT

This section will highlight the importance of Land Use to sustaining Japantown as a culturally rich, authentic, economically vibrant cultural heart for Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come. The way we design and implement both our physical and social infrastructure has a huge impact on how Japantown will be sustained as an authentic neighborhood with a vibrant living culture, as opposed to becoming an empty shell, shaped and directed by non-community developers to perpetuate Japanese culture solely for the purpose of economic gains, and consumption. This physical and social design of Japantown must be directed by the Japanese/Japanese American community or else it will have no true growth or direction for its sustainability into the future.

Historically, Japantown San Francisco has already survived several significant waves of displacement that have changed and impacted its social and physical fabric. Before 1942, Japantown was a thriving neighborhood which spanned 40 square blocks. After 1942, Japantown was reduced to 15 square blocks due to the forced removal, dispossession, and internment of “All Persons of Japanese Ancestry.” After the war, members of the Japanese community resettled, and rebuilt their lives, until the “Urban Renewal” project was established, which once again, upon no negotiation stripped Japanese Americans of their property through eminent domain. The community members displaced received a coupon called the “Certificate of Preferences” which to a limited extent, granted their return. To this date, only 4% of these “Certificate of Preferences” have been used, correlated to many factors including the document itself’s weak language, and also with the fact that the “Redevelopment” in Japantown was a long process, spanning almost 20 years and completed with very little affordable housing options available for the community that was displaced. Indeed, even the Director of the SF Redevelopment agency Herman himself warned in 1960 that “without adequate housing for the poor, critics will rightly condemn urban renewal as a land-grab for the rich and a heartless push-out for the poor and nonwhites.” To this day, Japantown is recognized to have been forcibly reduced from 40 square blocks to its current size depicted in the Japantown SUD map. Despite the eroded residential base, Japantown San Francisco continues to serve as the cultural heart of Japanese/Japanese American communities, and a vital regional hub.
The Japantown Task Force (JTF) has played an integral role in the economic development, planning and preservation of Japantown San Francisco. Many initiatives have been accomplished with respect to Land Use by the JTF as well. The predecessor of the CHHESS is the JCHESS (2013), which was a strategy report completed by the Japantown Organizing Committee, OEWD, SF Planning, as well as the Japantown Task Force.

The JCHESS (2013) has provided many recommendations for Japantown regarding Land Use. Some of these recommendations have been successfully implemented by the JTF while others are currently being accomplished. Recommendations yet to be accomplished, and identified to still be relevant today will be carried into this current CHHESS strategy.

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.

1. STRATEGIES ACCOMPLISHED & CONTINUE TO BE LEVERAGED
   A. The Establishment of the Japantown Community Benefits District
   B. The Establishment of the Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District
   C. Leveraging the Japantown Special Use District
   D. The Creation of the Japantown Design Guidelines
   E. Implement Streetscape & Pedestrian Improvements Per the Better Streets Plan

2. STRATEGIES CURRENTLY IN PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION:
   A. Implement Improvements to Peace Plaza
   B. Negotiate Benefits Agreements with Major New Developments
   C. Implement Invest in Neighborhoods
   D. Develop a Strategic Plan for Japan Center Malls

II. CHALLENGES

This section reflects the concerns expressed by the Japantown community through the multiple Town Hall Meetings, and the Focus Groups.

1. The impacts of Redevelopment have not been remedied. Due to dispossession, the community owns very little land, therefore has very little control in determining the direction of its own future development. (No land, no community control or self-determination)

There is limited community control, and self-determination if the community does not own, acquire, and keep the existing properties in community ownership. There is only an extent to which the
community can influence property owners, and developers. At the current rate, there exists a sentiment that Japantown may eventually cease to exist as an authentic cultural district. Without land, it is difficult to reflect the community’s needs such as intergenerational community gathering spaces, community-oriented businesses, and housing. Attracting the Japanese/ Japanese American community back is essential to sustaining and regenerating the very existence of a living culture in Japantown.

There is also a barrier for community members to be involved in the decision-making of Japantown, as many have already been dispersed and displaced. During the focus groups, it was expressed that long distances and commute times are indeed a barrier to involvement, even within San Francisco’s distant districts and especially if outside of San Francisco. Ultimately, a community is stronger when it is supported by those who live in it. Many community members would appreciate land being returned to back to community control.

There is a lack of a mechanism for transferring property ownership within the community, as well as a lack of business succession planning. Japantown also struggles with any designation in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a Historic District, because most of the significant historic architecture has been destroyed during Redevelopment. However, Japantown is a historic neighborhood with significant cultural and physical assets that should be recognized, maintained, and enhanced.

2. There is a lack of below-market rate housing for J/ JA community members in Japantown, especially for families, artists, and younger generations:

The Redevelopment of Japantown took over 20 years, leaving the space barren, and unpromising for community members to move back for a long time. When housing was built, there was a significantly lower stock of affordable housing, or even housing for families. To this day, valuable community spaces like the Japantown Bowling Alley have been turned into high-priced condominiums. The community displaced were given a “Certificate of Preferences,” a coupon in exchange for State sponsored gentrification; only 4 percent of them were used for people to move back.

Not enough affordable housing, and long commuting distances are a major impediment and a restrictive prohibition for younger generations to be involved and contribute to the community. Many community members have voiced that they would live in Japantown if they could, but simply cannot because it is unaffordable. Many have voiced that more engagement in Japantown is a direct result of being in closer proximity to Japantown, and having affordable housing with preferences is crucial to sustaining and growing an authentic living culture in Japantown.

Just a couple units of affordable housing within fancy condominiums, to just meet City requirements are not enough to revive, and retain an authentic, thriving Japantown community. The answer is a large lot of affordable rentals with preferences to community workers, members, culture-bearers, and artists, that are actively engaged, and present for a purpose to build, and give back to the community. A place where people can live-work-play, where people have a context for themselves.
It was repeatedly expressed by countless people, that “It is the People that hold the culture in their hearts, and their hands.” If we are to continue to be the Japantown Cultural District, we need to keep our culture-bearers here. If we do not keep those who create and live the culture in Japantown, it may continue to lose its authenticity to only be perpetuated as a caricature of Japanese culture. When more housing is built in Japantown, the “Certificate of Preferences” should be re-examined to allow community members and the descendants of those displaced to redeem access to affordable housing in Japantown.

3. **There has been a major gap/void of multiple generations in their involvement in Japantown:**

This creates a challenge for Japantown because leadership succession, and the transmission of both cultural and institutional knowledge, the passage of the baton, is essential at this time to sustain Japantown into the future. Youth and young adults are also important to Japantown because they are a key part of drawing people and whole families into the neighborhood.

Many young adults expressed that being in social and organizing spaces together is crucial to putting any of these CHHESS strategies into action, and that this kind of engagement is a direct result of being in close proximity. There is a desire for the younger generations to organize and address major issues Japantown is facing in the near future, however, the lack of a gathering space, a platform, and a youth culture, compounded by long commute times act as a barrier to the involvement of younger generations in Japantown. The necessity for affordable housing for community workers, members, and families becomes apparent once again.

4. **There are not enough multigenerational social gathering spaces in Japantown:**

A gathering space that people could simply “hangout” is missing in Japantown. There used to be a multigenerational family orientation here in Japantown before the Redevelopment. People have mentioned that there is a sterility that didn’t exist before the “urban renewal,” and a gap that has never been refilled. Since it is unaffordable for the community to live in Japantown now, a strong hub, a gathering space that draws and keeps the commuting community in Japantown is of the utmost importance to sustain a living culture.

The Japantown Bowl, which existed 1976-2000 served as a social hub that united a diverse community, and a space that many generations of the community could casually spend time together. Japantown Bowl was more than just a bowling alley, it was a multigenerational community gathering space, that served as the resemblance of the many blocks of Japantown that was present before the Redevelopment. This kind of a valuable social hub was never replaced since it was turned into condominiums, despite the fight that was taken in an attempt to preserve it.

The Japantown community desires more of an attraction, space that keeps people there; some quoted that “restaurants and trinket stores” would only keep people for an hour, and some people may not
feel comfortable and obligated to buy something. These kinds of hub spaces, that attract multigenerational community members, families, and the young generation to socialize, develop art, share their art, and celebrate culture are invaluable to keeping a Japantown community here.

5. **Japan Center Malls Covenant Agreement is Expiring in 2021, and Unique, Small Businesses that Serve as Cultural Anchors are at High Risk of Disappearing:**

This year 2020 is a critical time for the Japantown community to develop a united vision, and an action plan to make sure that Japantown thrives, even in the face of potential major land use changes. The Japan Center Malls Covenant Agreement is Expiring in 2021. This Covenant agreement has helped to maintain the Japanese aesthetic, atmosphere, and cultural small businesses in the Mall, and has also prevented any resale or redevelopment of the Japan Center Malls. There is 1 year until this Covenant expires, and there has been no consultation or discussion with the community, nor surrounding property owners regarding the plans of the (3D) investment company that owns the malls. The Malls are an integral center point of Japantown, and houses many unique cultural businesses that function as an anchor for Japanese Culture. If there is a sale or a redevelopment of the Malls, there is a large risk that the small businesses will get displaced, and lost forever. Temporary relocations of businesses must be thought of extremely carefully, like an organ transplant, as many cases of these have not gone so well in the past.

6. **Disjointed, in need of a Common Vision and Voice:**

Historically, there has been a great deal of property lost due to the lack of cohesive community planning. If there is no representative decision-making mechanism with a united community voice and vision, the same results may occur, potentially leading to a significant diminishment of the Japantown we know of today.

7. **New Japanese Businesses do not see an incentive to open up shop in Japantown:**

The Consulate of Japan, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), and Japanese companies like Nissan all used to be in Japantown. However, they have all moved away and dispersed throughout San Francisco, and the Peninsula. Currently, Japanese corporations make very little investments in Japantown. Japantown could be mutually beneficial for both Japanese businesses, and the broader J/JA community. It is important that this disassociation is resolved by more mutual enhancement, and collective empowerment.

III. **STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS:**

To address the challenges identified above, this section will examine some key strategies that may be worth implementing. The two Town Hall meetings and 7 Focus Groups have highlighted and reinforced the strategic directions favored by the community. The key details of many of the strategies identified
for Land Use are explained in the “Overarching Strategies” section above, for they also address all 7 Key Areas.

CHESS STRATEGIES FOR LAND USE

1- Establish a SF Japantown Community Council (JTF)+ Art Action Committee
2- Develop a Japantown Master Plan
3- Develop a Strategic Plan to Address 2021 Expiration of Japan Center Malls Covenant Agreement (Japan Center Malls Technical Committee)
   3a) Negotiate Benefits Agreements with JCM Owners (JCMTC)
4- Establish a Community Development Corporation, Community Land Trust, or a Similar Mechanism
5- Negotiate Affordable Housing with Preferences; Large Lot of 40% to Descendants of Displaced with “Certificate of Preferences,” Young Adults, Artists, and Employees of Community Non-Profits (Live-Work-Create Space)
6- Develop an Intergenerational Cultural Co-Creative/Co-working Multi-Use Arts Space/Gallery (Empowers diversity of community from Japanese-speaking to next generations)
   6a) Creative Place-making:
      a. Arts Action Committee + A Sustainable Arts Community
      b. Programming Around Sustainability
      c. Cultural Competency- Promotes Our Narrative & Establishes Solidarity
7- Small Businesses and Artist Assistance, Coaching, Media Center
8- Establish a Visitor Kiosk in Japan Center Malls
9- Support Improvements to Peace Plaza (JTF Peace Plaza Committee)
10- Support Improvements to Buchanan Mall (JCBD)

JCHESS STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO LAND USE

11- Establish a Community Development Corporation/ Land Trust
12- Develop a Strategic Plan for Japan Center Malls
13- Negotiate Benefits Agreements with Major New Developments
14- Implement Improvements to Peace Plaza
15- Implement Improvements to Buchanan Mall
16- Implement Streetscape & Pedestrian Improvements Per the Better Streets Plan
17- Implement Proposed Transportation Improvements
18- Leverage the Japantown Special Use District to Cultivate and Attract New Businesses Appropriate to Japantown
19- Leverage the Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District
20- Utilize Tools for Preservation of Historic Buildings and Structures
1. SF Japantown Community Council (JTF) + Art Action Committee

The details of this strategy are addressed in Section V: Overarching Strategies.

WHY?
Japantown needs a representative coalition with a united voice and vision, so that the community can be informed, stay on the same page, and move with agility in trying times. Such an organization would help build community power, political power, and planning that the community can fully support and accomplish. This coalition/organization would also be able to quickly organize around urgent, or unexpected issues and create community power that involves everyone of Japantown to rally around these issues.

There is a lot of sentiment that the Japantown community needs more collaboration, resource-sharing and cohesion rather than fragmentation. In the past, a lack of a representative uniting organization, and a cohesive plan in saving Japantown during the Redevelopment had resulted in division, chaos, and infighting, that in the end, left the community with very little. In the past, developers have played the community groups against each other to take advantage of this lack of cohesion. There is a concern that this kind of division may happen again in the future if faced with major development. In negotiations with developers, there also needs to be a clear, defined vision of “what is non-negotiable and what we will not allow, what we will work with them on, and what we will meet them halfway on.” Therefore, it is important that the community develops a common vision for Japantown, and the reimagining of spaces.

Japantown is indeed moving in a direction of greater cooperation for the purpose of sustaining Japantown into the future. With the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, Japantown groups have joined forces to organize a coordinated response to the ongoing crisis, and support the community groups, cultural institutions, and small businesses that are heavily impacted. There is now a website called theheartofjtown.org which connects all of the entities of Japantown.

It is vital that Japantown continues to enhance its interconnectivity into the future even beyond this current crisis. Japantown Task Force has served as a significant representative body for Japantown, however could be even more effective with a Community Council arm developed.

2. Develop a Strategic Plan to Address The 2021 Expiration of The Japan Center Malls Covenant Agreement

The details of this strategy are addressed in Section V: Overarching Strategies.

WHY?
Japantown is often almost synonymous with the Japan Center Malls, which is almost a 3-block area in the heart of Japantown. There are over 75 small Japanese-themed businesses inside the malls that are the cultural anchors that maintain the character of Japantown. Japan Center Malls Covenant Agreement expires in 2021, bringing uncertainty to the future of Japantown itself. This Covenant is integral to helping maintain the Japanese Aesthetic, Atmosphere, and Small Businesses in the Mall, and has also prevented any resale or redevelopment of the Japan Center Malls. The expiration of the Covenant coupled with Scott Weiner’s SB827 for lifting of height restrictions on transit corridors could potentially increase redevelopment pressures in Japantown.

The community is concerned that Japantown may eventually cease to exist, if the Malls are lost, causing a 4th wave of major displacement. The Japan Center Malls today, stands on land where many Japanese American Mom and Pop shops and residents were evicted, then razed for its creation in the late 1960s. Major loss is nothing new, but the community would like to retain even the little left of what Japantown used to be.

To prevent any more major waves of displacement, it is important that the Community and small businesses are included in the discussion of what will happen to the Malls. There is 1 year until this Covenant expires, and there has been no consultation or discussion with the community, nor surrounding property owners yet regarding the expiration of the covenant with 3D Investments. Surrounding property and business owners are also concerned about how the 2021 Covenant expiration will impact the surrounding business, and are hoping for more communication and a working relationship.

The community is concerned that major development disruptions may threaten the existing small businesses to a point that they may not be able to survive. When there was a similar scare before, some businesses went into panic-mode, packed up, and left. There is also a study that, if multiple blocks are ripped up without any phasing, 60-80% of the surrounding businesses will go away. Property owners are hoping for a structure and a plan in advance, that they can prepare for. Negotiations with 3D through the Japan Center Malls Technical Committee will be essential.

The Community Urges for:
1. Respect and inclusion in the planning process and discussion
2. Community benefits that are not a quid quo pro
3. To minimize damage of development on Japanese small businesses

3. Develop a Japantown Vision Plan

The details of this strategy are addressed in Section V: Overarching Strategies.

WHY?
Historically, Japantown has never had a full, comprehensive Vision Plan that was directed by the community. The last time Japantown had a full Master Plan was the “Redevelopment” era, where the neighborhood was shaped by an outside agency with very little regard for the existing social, economic, and physical fabric of the neighborhood. To this day, the insensitive planning and design of the physical infrastructure in Japantown impacts its social and economic dynamics. For example, the car-oriented nature of the streetscape, fortress-like buildings, Brutalist style architecture, and the over-abundance of concrete yields a more enclosed, less interconnected, less inviting space. Despite what was done, the community has truly made the best of these spaces to make amends, bring back life, and a thriving culture that invites people of all backgrounds into the community.

4. **Establish a Community Development Corporation/ Community Land Trust or a Similar Mechanism**

The details of this strategy are addressed in Section V: Overarching Strategies.

**WHY?**

Japantown, which historically was 40 blocks, has lost much land due to injustices, and is a mere 4-blocks today. “Japantown used to be a space that served the needs of the community; everything people needed to live here was in walking distance.”

Since the community owns very little land today, there is little choice in determining the direction of the development in Japantown. Currently, there is a lack of space to address the community’s evolving needs. There is also no space to place any emerging culturally relevant businesses and new businesses from Japan into Japantown. For the Japantown community to control the direction of Japantown, they must own the land in Japantown. It would bring empowerment, and justice to the community, if the impacts of Redevelopment were remedied to some degree, through assistance developing a CDC that could help return some land from private control to community control and for the land would be used for the public good.

**History of CDC in Japantown**

In the past, Japantown had the Nihonmachi Development Corporation (NCDC) which was formed in 1964 and dissolved in 1995, less active in its latter days. NCDC was formed by a group of local businessmen who were concerned about the impacts of Redevelopment on their businesses and worked with the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) to take advantage of the commercial part of the Nihonmachi redevelopment plan. [1] Therefore, the NCDC aligned itself with the RDA’s goals of renewing Japantown, to become the RDA’s designated local community representative.

The NCDC purchased a 4-block area from the RDA and became responsible for “allocating development sites to its members, undertaking the financing and development of shared facilities, [and]
coordination of community interests” with the Redevelopment Agency. With this, “Nihonmachi” became the formal designation for the four-block area bounded by Webster, Sutter, Bush and Laguna streets. [2]

There was a lot of sentiment, especially from Citizens Against Nihonmachi Eviction (CANE) that the NCDC did not represent the interests of J-town’s residents because NCDC’s membership was restricted to propertied landholders and business owners who could afford to purchase voting shares. [3] Therefore, NCDC did not represent the security of the entire Japantown community nor any areas outside of the designated 4-blocks. CANE’s membership, which swelled to over 300, revealed widespread discontent with redevelopment and tensions within the Japanese American community over NCDC’s role as the Agency-appointed community representative. [4]

The NCDC had a heavier focus on merchants and no affordable housing was built in the area that they purchased from the RDA. Many residents and businesses were displaced, and this reallocation within this new limited area of Japantown created many divisions in the community. The only affordable housing secured for Japantown was Nihonmachi Terrace Complex on Laguna and Sutter Streets, a result of the advocacy of CANE and JARF in 1975.

Since the Redevelopment, there have been efforts to develop more affordable housing in Japantown, and to also develop a community-led master plan. In the 1980s CANE evolved into the Japanese Community Progressive Alliance (JCPA) which shifted away from activism around the redevelopment and focused on general community organizing. During this time, JCPA initiated the formation of a non-profit Community Development Corporation to develop low-moderate income housing in Nihonmachi. The Japanese community responded positively, and a board of directors was formed. The non-profit corporation was named the Japanese Community United for Housing (JCUH). [5]

JCUH began working with the RDA to develop a site in Nihonmachi for their first project, however, the lack of funding sources became a problem. JCUH had secured funding from the JACL to build affordable housing, however the plan fell through due to the political oppositions against CANE. Eventually, the expanding and eventually successful fight for Redress and Reparations in the Japanese American community overtook the energy that supported JCPA and JCUH.

It is time for the community to take a united position rather than a divided position to protect Japantown as a space for residents.

**A CDC could benefit Japantown by taking on roles such as:**

- **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 pro-vided 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 advocate to 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

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In the past, Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation (NCDC), Citizens Against Nihonmachi Eviction (CANE), and Japanese American Religious Federation (JARF) worked on land issues in Japantown. Although neither CANE, or NCDC exist anymore, there should be discussions with JARF regarding a Japantown CDC.

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. While many CDCs are active in the production of affordable housing, CDCs nationwide have historically been involved in: developing, owning and leasing commercial property; business enterprises; asset building; and workforce programs, as well as providing community social services and creating and operating community gardens. [1]

Examples of CDCs are Chinatown CDC, Little Tokyo Service Center, Mission Housing CDC, Tenderloin CDC, and EBALDC. CDCs can also function on a smaller scale serving as facilitator and advocate for economic development and other activities in the neighborhoods they serve by collaborating and coordinating with existing community organizations. [2] Therefore, a CDC could link or merge with existing nonprofits in the Japantown neighborhood. In Japantown, a CDC on a smaller scale would likely be the most realistic. [3]

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 proper-ties, 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.


5. **Explore Affordable Housing with Preferences to Descendants of Displaced with “Certificate of Preferences,” Younger Generations, Families, Seniors, and Artists of the Community, and Employees of Community-based Non-profits** (Live-Work-Create Space)

The details of this strategy are addressed in **Section V: Overarching Strategies**.

**How do you create housing that encourages Cultural Competency?**

Without affordable housing, and affirmative action or preferences for descendants of the J/JA community displaced, there is little opportunity for the people that make Japantown to stay or return to Japantown, or even San Francisco. Honoring the “Certificate of Preferences” is a major project to untangle, that would involve multiple agencies that due to the fact that the Redevelopment Agency has ceased to exist. However, it is an essential area to address the unresolved, unique housing crisis of Japantown.

**WHY?**

Affordable housing for multigenerational community members is a huge necessity to revitalize and sustain Japantown into the future. Proximity to Japantown is crucial for the community to stay involved; proximity plays a huge role in the community engagement, political power, and for the next generation to take leadership to continue the living culture in Japantown.

Currently, Japantown does not have the family orientation that used to exist here before the tremendous displacement of community members during the Redevelopment. People feel that there is a sterility, and a gap that has not been refilled as there are very little young adults of the community living in the neighborhood, due to unaffordability. Being far away from Japantown, and long commuting distances are a barrier for the community’s involvement. Affordable housing preferences are essential because it is the “people that hold the culture in their hearts and hands.” Without the community and its people, Japantown is not Japantown.
Affordable housing with many units (20-30+), with an emphasis to bring back those displaced, culture-bearers and artists is of essence because it would invite and foster an actively engaged community of people that contribute to the community with a purpose. Artist collective, live-work-create spaces would allow the community to find a context for themselves in Japantown again, and would infuse Japantown with cultural energy that would revitalize and transform Japantown into an attraction overnight. Artists and culture-bearers would also contribute to a sustainable arts community in Japantown through offering classes, training others, and also creating a space where the culture could be transmitted and evolve. In this model, there could be options for smaller units, and more units with lower rent, as well as options for group housing. The story of the community would be integrated into the housing design.

6. **Develop an Intergenerational Cultural Co-Creative/Co-working Multi-Use Arts Space/Gallery w/ Programming + Visitor Kiosk**  
(Empowers diversity of community from Japanese-speaking to next generations)

The details of this strategy are addressed in **Section V: Overarching Strategies**.

WHY?
Many community members, both younger and older generations have remarked that “there’s nothing to do in Japantown,” “there no night life at all,” and that “there’s no space to really be at.” Some community members have remarked that “We need an unstructured community space; a place you can drop in and sit and chat. The cafes in the mall are not necessarily welcoming to use.” People are also seeking family friendly cultural spaces, where the parents could let the kids play, such as a community garden where kids can learn about plants. People are looking for community spaces beyond just retail, and restaurants. Since valuable social hubs like Japantown Bowl were turned into condominiums, there is a void that needs to be filled. There needs to be more of a draw than just “restaurants and trinket stores.”

The Japantown Bowl, which existed 1976-2000 served as a social hub that united a diverse community, and a space that many generations of the community could casually spend time together. Japantown Bowl was more than just a bowling alley, it was a multigenerational community gathering space, that served as the resemblance of the many blocks of Japantown that was present before the Redevelopment. This kind of a valuable social hub was never replaced since it was turned into spacious condominiums, despite the fight it took in the attempt to preserve it.

6. **Small Businesses and Artist Assistance and Media Center**

The details of this strategy are addressed in **Section V: Overarching Strategies**.
WHY?
The small business merchants are the cultural anchors of Japantown, and it is important to support them so that they continue to exist. Rents keep rising for merchants, while online shopping contributes to the “Retail Apocalypse.” Recently the COVID-19 outbreak, and the Mayor’s order for “Stay-in place” has significantly reduced foot traffic. Although stores remain closed, they are still being charged late penalty fees for their rent. This situation has created an acute existential crisis for Japantown merchants. It is critical that there is immediate action to develop innovative strategies to support these businesses for times like these.

7. Establish a Visitor Kiosk in Japan Center Malls

The details of this strategy are addressed in Section V: Overarching Strategies.

CHHESS STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING ROLES
(This section is led by various Japantown organizations)

8. Support Improvements to Peace Plaza (JTF Peace Plaza Committee)

The details of this strategy are addressed in Section V: Overarching Strategies.

9. Support Improvements to Buchanan Mall (JCBD)

The details of this strategy are addressed in Section V: Overarching Strategies.

KEY AREA 4: CULTURAL HERITAGE SUSTAINABILITY & CONSERVATION

1. CONTEXT

The decisions we make today will determine how we live tomorrow. The Cultural Heritage focus area will highlight the resilient and regenerative nature of the San Francisco Japanese/Japanese American community’s cultural roots and the importance of maintaining the culture, heritage, and traditions of San Francisco’s Japantown.
During World War II, Executive Order 9066 forced the removal of persons of Japanese ancestry from their homes, their neighborhood, their community. San Francisco’s Japantown was shuttered and other Japantowns up and down the West Coast became “ghost towns.” Prior to the war, there were 43 Japantowns in California; now there are four: Los Angeles, Sawtelle, San Jose, and San Francisco. The incarceration forcibly ransacked the cultural heritage of the Japanese American community. Japanese Americans were forced to sell their land, their residences, and businesses. They destroyed anything “Japanese” for fear of being associated with Japan -- the “enemy.” Family heirlooms or treasured items like photo albums, kimono, scrolls, ningyo dolls, and Japanese books were left behind or rendered useless or burnt. Culture, heritage, and family histories were lost.

In 1965 when the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency initiated its urban renewal program for the Western Addition, it eroded the physical framework for the cultural heritage of the community. Single-family homes and Victorian-style multi-unit residences were torn down to widen Geary Street into a six-lane boulevard and to make room for new construction. Office buildings, small businesses storefronts, grocery stores, retail stores, and restaurants were relocated to other parts of San Francisco and removed from the community customer base they served. Many did not survive the move.

The term “cultural heritage” encompasses several aspects. These include: tangible cultural heritage (such as paintings, sculptures, coins, manuscripts); immovable cultural heritage (such as monuments, archaeological sites, historic buildings); intangible cultural heritage (such as oral traditions, performing arts, rituals); and natural cultural heritage (natural sites with cultural aspects such as cultural landscapes).

Japantown embraces all of these as the cultural heart of the Japanese American community. The Japantown Cultural District program is committed to safeguarding the historical, social, and cultural value of our community to strengthen understanding and appreciation of the significant place the Japanese community holds in the history and culture of San Francisco. This Section will highlight the importance of Cultural Heritage to sustaining Japantown as a culturally rich, authentic, and vibrant cultural heart for Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come.

II. CHALLENGES

1. As the cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American community, Japantown should be a place where arts groups, cultural organizations, and artists can get support to secure resources, funding, and space.

Historically arts and culture has served as a means to bring community together. Cultural Heritage finds expression in the many forms of artistic expression in Japantown. It is the natural locus for Japanese and Japanese American arts in the City, the Bay Area, and Northern California. In the Japantown community there is a broad spectrum of traditional and contemporary arts and educational institutions, and arts groups that practice them. Many traditional Japanese arts trace their roots to the
Issei pioneer generation and continue to provide a cultural link to Japan. The Japanese American community embraces these and all forms of contemporary arts as well. In San Francisco, Japanese American artists have made noteworthy contributions to the arts as cited in the Arts & Crafts section of this report.

In fact, there are so many Japanese and Japanese American arts groups based in San Francisco and the Bay Area that the challenge lies in finding ways to accommodate the needs of as many of them as possible. Whether traditional or contemporary, every arts group has needs that are as diverse as the number of individual arts themselves. Traditional Japanese arts often require specialized spaces such as a tea ceremony room. Likewise, contemporary arts groups need spaces suitable to teach, practice, perform, and grow their specific art forms.

Moreover, all community arts and cultural groups have common needs. They need access to resources to build organizations, pay performers, and fund showcases and performances. They need venues where they can share their talents with the community to build audiences, teach their traditions, and to develop new generations of artists. They need opportunities to nurture cultural heritage by showcasing their respective arts to the community in performances, festivals, and celebrations. To keep its cultural heritage robust, Japantown needs a strategy that addresses the needs and concerns of Japanese and Japanese American arts organizations.

2. The Japan Center covenant between the Japanese American community, 3D Investments (Center ownership), and the City of San Francisco is expiring in 2021. It ensures that the Center retains a Japanese theme in both physical design and types of businesses. The outcome of this negotiation will have major implications for cultural heritage in Japantown in the future.

The Japan Center is a retail anchor for Japantown, but it also makes important contributions to the cultural landscape of the neighborhood. It is the dominant structure in Japantown, composed of three mall buildings: the Kinokuniya Mall, Kintetsu Mall (now Japan Center West), and Miyako Mall (now Japan Center East). Between these is the Peace Plaza, a site used for special cultural events, community celebrations, and major festivals such as the annual Cherry Blossom Festival and the Nihonmachi Street Fair.

With the cessation of the covenant, 3D Investments could decide to back away from its agreement to keep the Center design reflective of the surrounding Japantown neighborhood and its commitment to promoting culturally relevant businesses. It could also sell its interests in the property to another party. Such changes would have an adverse effect on the look, feel, and livelihood of the surrounding neighborhood.
Should 3D decide to maintain the agreement, any major refurbishment to the design and structures of the Malls would mean years of reconstruction that would also have major impact on the neighborhood in particular to the businesses in the Mall (some of which might not survive). However, such a situation could potentially present the opportunity to negotiate additional community space and culturally relevant open spaces in a renovated Mall.

The Japan Center is the economic hub, but in many ways a cultural focus of Japantown, too. The Japantown Task Force has organized an Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Committee to pursue talks with 3D Investments and the City. Any future vision for this site should be centered on a strong commitment to the cultural heritage of the Japanese American community.


Much of Japantown’s history and cultural legacy are embodied in its historic buildings. The neighborhood is sprinkled with many institutional buildings, including community centers, schools, and churches that have strong historic ties to the Japanese American community. The San Francisco Buddhist Church was one of the first Japanese community buildings constructed in the neighborhood. St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, constructed in the mid-1930s, integrates a mix of Japanese temple ornamentation and Euro-American Christian church elements. The historic Kinmon Gakuen Japanese Language School was built in 1926 in a Mediterranean-rival style.

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, such as the Japanese American Citizens League national headquarters building, the Nichi Bei Kai building, and the Japanese Community Center. These buildings represent a variety of architectural styles, but commonly have some Japanese stylistic influence. They are all utilized by a variety of organizations.

Historic preservation provides an understanding of the location, distribution, and significance of historic and cultural resources. It is an effective strategy for conserving significant elements of the built environment to maintain a tangible physical connection to the past. The challenge is to keep these historic structures in good condition and relevant to the community. Some organizations associated with buildings face changing priorities and dwindling membership with the passage of time. They are contemplating the future for their property. Many buildings need maintenance and upkeep. In practical terms, maintaining and rehabilitating older buildings and neighborhoods can mean savings in energy, time, money, and materials; preservation is an inherently "green" strategy. Additionally, in
practical terms these buildings house precious community multi-use space that can be used to address a variety of issues addressed in this report.


Japantown’s small businesses represent the physical foundation for the community’s cultural heritage, and legacy businesses are the cornerstones. Many of these are family-run and trace their personal histories to Issei predecessors who founded them. Others are businesses that started in the wake of Redevelopment. All are deeply ingrained in the community’s cultural heritage. Their economic livelihood and preservation are an ongoing topic of concern in Japantown.

Over the years, these businesses have built generationally loyal customer bases. People come to Japantown specifically to purchase goods, services, and foods from them because they and their families have done so all their lives. They are destination businesses steeped in the history and culture of the community for Japanese Americans around the Bay Area and tourists as well. For example, Benkyo-do, a Japanese confectionary has been run by the Okamura family since 1906. It is well-known for its Japanese mochi confections called manju and as the originator of the fortune cookie, first sold at the San Francisco Pacific Exposition. In the 1950’s Japantown merchant Tokinobu Mihara published the first English language book about origami, the Japanese art of paper folding. In 1968, the Mihara family opened Paper Tree, a stationery and art supply shop that has since become the destination store for enthusiasts of origami and is nationally-recognized as an advocate of the art.

The Japantown Task Force has successfully registered 12 neighborhood businesses in the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry and has more in line for that program. Legacy businesses face the same challenges and concerns as all small businesses in the neighborhood, but as family run enterprises they face unique issues of succession planning should family members decide to seek other paths in life. As resource planning and future planning for small business takes place in Japantown, legacy businesses deserve special attention. A focused effort should be made to keep them a vibrant part of the cultural heritage of Japantown.

III. STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

CHHESS STRATEGIES FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE

1. As the cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American community, Japantown can be a place where arts groups, cultural organizations, and artists can get support to secure resources, funding, and space.

2. The Japan Center covenant between the Japanese American community, 3D Investments (Center ownership), and the City of San Francisco is expiring in 2021. It ensures that the Center retain a
Japanese theme in both physical design and types of businesses. The outcome of this negotiation will have major implications for cultural heritage in Japantown.


JCHESS STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO CULTURAL HERITAGE

5. Utilize Funds from the San Francisco Grants for the Arts
6. Implement Improvements to Peace Plaza
7. Develop a Strategic Plan for Japan Center Malls

1. Create an Arts Action Committee

2. The Community Must Have a Voice in the Renegotiation of the Japan Center Malls Covenant.

DETAILS:

The Japan Center should remain sensitive to the cultural heritage of the Japanese and Japanese American community. It should be a community-oriented retail and cultural center which attracts and serves Japanese Americans and Japanese from around the Bay Area as well as local residents and visitors. The Japantown Task Force in cooperation with businesses, organizations, residents, and Japantown supporters is setting up negotiations with 3D Investments and the City of San Francisco to ensure that the community’s voice is heard in the renegotiation of the covenant agreement.

WHY?

The Japan Center is the dominant physical structure in Japantown. It is a hub for businesses and man cultural activities in the community. Any changes to the Center will impact the Japanese American community for years to come.

The majority of the shops and restaurants in the Malls have Japanese, Japanese American, or Asian ownership, who are committed to keeping their businesses relevant to the community. Construction associated with a refurbished Center should be managed in a way that does not disrupt the businesses in the neighborhood and currently in the Malls that serve as cultural anchors in the community.

New or substantially remodeled buildings here should embrace the neighborhood through physical design. They should also continue to fulfill the function of the current malls as community gathering spaces and be designed in keeping with the Japanese-influenced architectural expression in the neighborhood. In focus groups the desire was expressed that the plaza be designed to be more welcoming and “greener” in its use of materials. The attention to open space within and outside of the malls should include culturally expressive design features, landscaping and public art.
3. Utilize City Tools for the Preservation of Historic Buildings

DETAILED

The JCHESS identified historically significant buildings that are considered Japantown cultural resources. These include four individual buildings and one collection of buildings that have been designated by the City of San Francisco as Historic Landmarks. Nine buildings were identified by the Japantown Historic Resources Survey as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, 55 buildings and structures are identified as being historically significant to the community. By way of follow up, it is necessary to initiate dialog with property owners to determine the feasibility of improving historic buildings.

WHY?

Historic buildings are the roots of Japantown. The community owns little land, but these structures are community property in the sense that they represent the history legacy and cultural heritage of the Japanese American community. They also offer precious space that can be used by arts groups, social service organizations, and various activities. The JCHESS identified City tools to help property owners preserve, maintain, and rehabilitate historic buildings and structures such as the San Francisco Planning Code, California Historic Building Code, and others. This is an opportunity to revisit those possibilities.

4. Create a Small Business Resource Center

DETAILED:

Legacy business owners, shopkeepers, mall business owners, and artists are standard bearers for cultural heritage. They are also faced with common challenges and common needs to make a living. With a focused mission to research, develop expertise, and communicate up-to-date information regarding such topics as funding, city resources, loans, permits, legal matters, and succession planning, a resource center would help them thrive. Information relevant to becoming successful and solvent as a business in Japantown could be provided in-person and online. It’s possible that information could be communicated bi-lingually in Japanese and other Asian languages spoken in Japantown.

WHY?

Artists and business people need information that is relevant to their needs. They need it in a timely fashion. They need expertise.
KEY AREA 5: ARTS & CULTURE - By Mark Izu

1. CONTEXT
A vital component of Japanese American history is the Asian American arts. As a historic community rooted in a Japanese and American cultural continuity, we have a rich tradition with arts and artists that flows across all creative spectrums that include visual arts, martial arts, performing arts, acting, theater, writing, poetry, and all forms of music both traditional and contemporary.

Moreover, San Francisco has been home to Japanese American pioneers in all genres of the arts. Janice Mirikitani, who founded the Third World Press, is the second poet laureate of San Francisco. Sachiko Nakamura founded the Asian American Dance Collective here. Brothers Eric and Mark Hayashi founded the Asian American Theater Company in the Richmond District. Nisei George Yoshida was a pioneer swing musician, and Gerald Oshita was a Sansei pioneer in the avant garde jazz scene. Mark Izu is in the Grove Dictionary of Music as a founder of the new genre, Asian American Jazz. Brenda Wong Aoki is the first nationally recognized Asian American storyteller in the country. The San Francisco Taiko Dojo founded by Seiichi Tanaka brought Japanese taiko drumming to America and has taught over 10,000 students in its 50 years of existence. In 1981, the Asian American Jazz Festival, the first of its kind, was founded in the City. And City Lights, the iconic North Beach bookstore, was managed and curated by Shig Murao for many years.

Our vision for Arts & Culture in Japantown is to grow, develop, and sustain artists, art makers, culture bearers, and works of art that contribute to a deeply rooted living culture.

“Art and culture are the soul of a people; without it we have no identity. Without our cultural identity, our children’s children will be like floating weeds, rootless, mindless consumers - rushing like lemmings towards the cliff. Ungrounded. Unconnected. The Walking Dead.” -- Brenda Wong Aoki

CHALLENGES

A Place Where Artists Can Gather, Share, Create, and Perform.

The community needs a place where all artists of all ages can gather and discuss their different needs. How do we accommodate all art forms, genres, generations of artist? In the townhalls and focus groups the conversation discussed the diversity of arts in J-town and Japanese culture and comments always returned to the need for space. Different art forms have different needs. From traditional to contemporary in all the genres; dance, music, spoken word, rap, martial arts, writing, song writing, film, theater, etc. our needs are vast. Dance needs a Marley covering on a wood floor and mirrors, Tea Ceremony needs a specialized tea room, Taiko needs a sound proofed space, film-makers need a viewing room, theater needs a theater space, writers need a space to share work, martial arts needs...
floor mats, music and performing arts need a performance space with tech, sound, lights, video projection, the list goes on. How do we accommodate everyone?

Strategy.

Utilize the Information Center as a place to gather. List and expand all the different needs for each art form in the challenge area. Discuss together how this can be achieved. Present ideas to the action committee. COVID-19 With the shelter in place and later the prohibition of small gatherings, we may not be able to achieve this in a physical place. We will need to use an online gathering place such as zoom or other online platforms.

Measures of Success
Organize an online platform to use for all JCD group networking. Have 4 online meetings. Submit finds to the action committee.

Capabilities:
Hire an administrator to administer an online platform. Hire an arts curator to curate the 4 online discussions with artists and compile data for the action committee. This money needs to come from the JCD. The SOMA Filipinas have raised 100,000 for the arts. (web link) San Jose J-town has a 100,000 Augmented Reality initiative to use arts as a community organizing tool. (add web info)
San Jose J-town is using the shelter in place as a time to organize artists and the curator is creating a timeline and curatorial vision for the planning stage of initiative.

Activating Underutilized Community Spaces
Challenge:
Artist feel there is no gathering place or platform to share or create their art.
Is there a place that artist can use for their art forms?

Strategy
Japantown has many underutilized community places and spaces that can accommodate a wide variety of arts genres. Some of these are historic facilities built by the first generation Issei such as the Kinmon Gakuen Language School and the Nichibei Kai (Japanese American Association) Building. Churches have meetings and multi-use gym space. There are restaurants interested in live music and performances. Movie nights are sometimes conducted outdoors in the Japantown Mall. At the Townhalls and focus groups participants suggested that although they love weekend celebrations festivals, monthly or weekly smaller happenings would be great, such as poetry slams, songwriter’s nights, storytelling, buskers in the malls, small Peace Plaza noon performances or arts demonstrations. There is a need to identify space that each arts genre can sure to thrive in J-Town. These existing underutilized spaces should be used to fulfill these needs.

Actions
During our focus group Ben Nakajo said he knows most of the building owners. Ben is willing to be part of a committee to help research, find and reach out to owners of underutilized spaces. This will be driven by the arts curator.

Measures of Success
In the time of COVID we will not be able to activate these underutilized spaces. We will identify which spaces are compatible for our needs and which owners are willing and able to help artists. Based on the 4 online meetings, the arts curator will create a template for the potential venues and fit the artists with the appropriate venues.

Capabilities:
This will need to be coordinated by the arts curator and presented to the action committee for implementation. Like San Jose this time of shelter in place can be used to organize and meet online.

Challenge

Artists Need to Get Paid a livable wage
Currently, “community artist” means “low paid” artists. The term gig economy came from gig musicians. Musicians living from gig to gig with no stable income. For an artist who is making a living “gig to gig” it’s hard to accept a low paying community gig with the possibility of turning down a high paid gig later. As a community we need to pay our artists their worth to say, “We respect what you do and to show this we pay you what you’re worth.”

Strategies
In order to pay artist the JCD needs to raise money for the arts, and hire an arts fundraiser
As stated above SOMA Filipinas and San Jose J-town have raised 100,000 for the arts.

Actions:
As part of the arts curator’s online focus groups stakeholders need to determine a baseline for payment and guidelines for hiring.

Measures of Success:
Raise 100,000 like the SOMA Filipinas and San Jose J-town
Have a published pay scale for artists hired by the JCD

Capabilities:
A Fundraiser – Someone with the expertise to raise monies after the cultural district’s money expires. Someone that knows how to write arts grants such as: GFTA, SFAC, Rainin Foundation, Hewlett, NEA, NEH, Film Foundation, California for the Humanities, CAC, Japan Foundation, and Bunkacho in Japan. A dedicated fundraiser for Japantown can spearhead appeals campaigns and lobby arts funds at the city, state and national levels.
Artists need a dedicated arts place in Japantown.

Challenge
Artists want a dedicated arts space in Japantown. Finding a building that can be used as a multi-use arts space

Strategies
Find an existing space that can be renovated for the arts. In the 4 discussion groups find out what is needed by each genre and discuss everything that can be presented in a multipurpose arts facility. Find possible locations in Jtown.

Actions.
Find possible locations in Jtown. Do feasibility studies. What needs to be done, ADA, seismic, etc. Determine costs. Capital campaign
One location that is under consideration today is the Kimon Gukuen Building on Bush Street. Negotiations have already started and possible funding has been discussed.
Hire a facilities manager: upkeep & maintenance, schedule for usage by arts groups. Invoice and bill for usage.

Measures of Success.
In the next 3 years we will probably not have a facility ready for us. In the next report we can determine measures of success.

Capabilities
A dedicated arts center will need staffing. This will be determined by the usage.

Long range Possibilities
With the end of the current covenant and possible sale and renovation of the mall, many of the townhall participants wanted to build a dedicated arts center. Each type of art needs to have its own dedicated home. Theatre arts need a hall with lights, stage and sound. Music rehearsal rooms need a soundproof rehearsal studio. Visual arts need a gallery space. Next generation needs a co-creative space. Dancers need a studio with a dance floor and mirrors. Martial arts need a space with mats. A performance space that can accommodate multi-use. i.e. traditional, contemporary art, workshop spaces. Film and video room with equipment.
The design and building of this space will take a long planning period and is beyond the scope of this report. Ideas will need to be discussed in the action committee.

Nurture the Next Generation
The next generation is critical to the survival of JA Arts and Culture. Little Tokyo is a model to study. The SOMA Filipino attract many generations of people as well. We need to find dedicated talented artists that want to put in the time to really excel in their art form. As Malcolm Gladwell says, you need to put in your 10,000 hours in order to get good at something and even more to achieve mastery in your form.
Nurturing the next generation of artists is critical to the survival of JA Arts and Culture. LA’s Little Tokyo Service Center and SF’s SOMA Filipino Cultural District are good examples of groups that attract next generation artists. We need to find dedicated talented artists that want to put in the time to really excel in their art form. Young artists need help with the pathway to the different stages of artist growth. Emerging, mid-career to master artists. As author Malcolm Gladwell (author of Outliers) says, “You need to put in your 10,000 hours in order to get good at something and even more to achieve mastery in your form.” There needs to be a power-sharing pathway for young creative people to try new ideas, develop new genre’s, and feel ownership in the community. Additionally, next gen workers in the tech industry have disposable income and want to give something back to the community.

Next generation arts want a platform where art could be seen, a place where like minded artists from different genres, work on projects together. - a co-creating place to work on ideas, a platform where artists can share their art and get paid for it. Creating visibility and community around it. i.e. program and workshops, events at night. like minded artists, interdisciplinary place.

Create new work for a living culture.
“A way to determine the health of a nation is through their art and culture.” - Old Proverb. Japanese Americans have created a unique art and culture that could only be born in America. Writers, film-makers, composers, choreographers, playwrights have been creating new work about their American (JA) experience. (solutions of underutilized spaces)

Centralization - Speaking with One Community Voice
Moving the entire JA/Japanese Art and culture as a community to show SF and CA, USA, global how important JA Culture is. How do we unify all the different community groups to speak with one voice about art & culture?

Unified Marketing Planning/Centralization of the Arts

Challenge
How does J-town get the word out for the arts programing
At the focus group the idea of a unified marketing group that can create messaging for the entire community was an important theme. The main messaging would be: “Why Japantown is the place to be.” Japantown has a rich array of arts and cultural offerings that will draw people to the community: families, customers, and tourists for business, teachers and students for arts classes and events, people attracted to cultural events. Isn’t this how we get Uniqlo and other larger anchor stores to invest in the mall?”

The Problem: There are too many different groups marketing different arts and cultural events. Merchants only promote events in the mall. JCCCN only promotes JCCCN events. Community orgs have their own newsletters to promote their own events. The community needs a centralized calendar, where everyone will go to find out what’s happening in Japantown.
Strategies and Actions

No Duplication of Services.
To create a unified marketing plan, community organizations focused on arts and culture should be unified. We should support a collaborative effort. The JCBD has a large budget for marketing and has already hired a marketing manager for 14 months. Part of the responsibility of a joint community marketing group would be to create a long term marketing plan with obtainable goals. We need to understand who is doing what and how we can work together. This will help cut costs and staff time.

Systemic Issues Must Be Addressed
Challenge
POC artists are under served
The arts & culture of People of Color are not recognized as equal by the arts in America. Now because of white supremacist cultural norms our creative expressions are considered ethnic arts and not American arts. An example is Global Fest in New York. We are considered “others music & performance” POC artists in general need to also see that they are American artists doing their American art form. In America, first class art comes from everyone.

Strategies/Actions
Japanese American artists, arts organizations and JA cultural workers in general need to show up on the national level to understand: 1) How we fit in America. 2) That what we have been doing is just as important and does not need to be limited to “community arts.” 3) JA artists need to strive to be at the master level in their respective genres. How artists view themselves and how the community views artists affect how the rest of the world views all of us. Now we are second class citizens in the world of art.
Hire a marketing person. Community leaders lobby for the arts. Talk about SFAC commissioners presentation.

Measures of success
As for many of the systemic issues that plague POC arts in America there will be no quick fix and success will not be accomplished or measurable for years to come.

Capabilities
Marketing person creates a plan that showcases Japanese arts as equal to European Am arts.
Community leaders lobby mainstream venues to showcase AS artist on the main stage.

Unified Marketing Planning
At the focus group the idea of a unified marketing group that can create messaging for the entire community was an important theme. The main messaging would be: “Why Japantown is the place to be.” Japantown has a rich array of arts and cultural offerings that will draw people to the community: families, customers, and tourists for business, teachers and students for arts classes and events, people
attracted to cultural events. Isn’t this how we get Uniqlo and other larger anchor stores to invest in the mall?”

The Problem: There are too many different groups marketing different arts and cultural events. Merchants only promote events in the mall. JCCNC only promotes JCCNC events. Community orgs have their own newsletters to promote their own events. The community needs a centralized calendar, where everyone will go to find out what’s happening in Japantown.

**No Duplication of Services.**
To create a unified marketing plan, community organizations focused on arts and culture should be unified. We should support a collaborative effort. The JCBD has a large budget for marketing and has already hired a marketing manager for 14 months. Part of the responsibility of a joint community marketing group would be to create a long term marketing plan with obtainable goals. Social services are a well-defined model that we should use as an example that works in our community. Do senior services do youth and children services? These are done by youth and children groups. It would be a waste of resources for a senior group to start a competing youth service group. We need to understand who is doing what and how we can work together. This will help cut costs and staff time.

**Create Funded Positions for J-Town**
These 3 positions are key for the successful implementation of an art and culture program in Japantown.

Marketing Director -- to develop a long range unified marketing strategy and a centralized marketing campaign, oversee website development, manage social media and email messaging, and coordinate with community groups to focus J-Town marketing. The MD needs to take advantage of all the free publicity opportunities that exist. All travel magazines, airline magazines, San Francisco Magazine, Airbnb magazine, Apartment Association Magazine, AAA magazine, and Sunset magazine are always looking for great images and stories about San Francisco. These publications are all free and will get people to Japantown. There are also many free online media opportunities to publicize Japantown. The JCBD has already hired a marketing manager for 14 months. Can we work together as a community?

Fundraiser – Someone with the expertise to raise monies after the cultural district’s money expires. Someone that knows how to write an arts grants to such arts groups as: GFTA, SFAC, Rainin Foundation, Hewlett, NEA, NEH, Film Foundation, Cal for the Humanities, CAC, Japan Foundation, and Bunkacho in Japan. A dedicated fund raiser for Japantown can spearhead appeals campaigns and lobby arts funds at the city, state and national levels.

Arts Curator – This person would set up meetings with stakeholders, develop a long range plan for the arts in Japantown. Work with festival coordination, commission new work; collaborate with arts groups to produce weekly programming, workshops, noon concerts, web events, and other activities.

Secondary position - dependent on finding an arts space
Facilities Manager - communication with owners, upkeep & maintenance of building, maintain a schedule for usage by arts groups. Invoice and bill for usage, work with marketing person to help publicize the arts place.

**Connect Artists and Arts Groups with Services They Need.**
Many traditional arts groups do not know that:

1) Foundations like the Japan Foundation will help master artists come to the United States. Now many traditional arts group members chip in to help pay for their sensei’s airfare and room & board.

2) An umbrella 501(c)(3) that can serve as a fiscal sponsor for small groups to apply for funds and services on their behalf. Shared writers & fundraisers.

3) A shared grants writer, fundraiser can help groups get to the next level. Many small groups do not have the capacity or knowledge to write a competitive proposal.

4) Shared marketing can help with the public marketing events for artists and arts orgs. This includes PR, social media and marketing strategy and planning.

Utilizing CHHESS funding, the JCD can develop the means to provide these services, making J-Town a more vibrant place for artists and visitors.

**Maximize the Free Publicity Available to J-Town**
We should take advantage in a unified fashion of all the free publicity opportunities that exist. All travel magazines, airline magazines, San Francisco Magazine, Airbnb magazine, Apartment Association Magazine, AAA magazine, and Sunset magazine are always looking for great images and stories about San Francisco. These publications are all free. Get people to Japantown. There are also many free online media opportunities to publicize Japantown.

**Collaborate with the JCBD**
The Japantown Cultural Business District is so far ahead of any other group in J-Town that it would be a disservice not to support their efforts to promote Japantown. In our leadership role we need to work with them and demonstrate a united front to the community.

**Attend This Year’s New York APAP (Association of Performing Arts Professionals) Convention -**
This is the largest arts convening in the world, which attracts many non-artist organizations and participants. Universities, municipalities, and others send high level representatives to seek out funding for arts programs and projects. If Japantown feels that art & culture is important we should send high level representatives, too.
KEY AREA 6: ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  -By Wes Nihei

I. CONTEXT:

The Economic & Workforce Development focus area recognizes that Japantown’s business community is a foundational element in the long-term health of the Japanese and Japanese American community. Much of what makes Japantown a culturally-rich neighborhood are its businesses and community-based organizations. The unique mix of businesses offers Japanese, Japanese American, Korean and other culturally specific services, wares, and foods that can be found in few other places in the United States, while cultural and community institutions continue to draw people from around the Bay Area.

A thriving and stable economic atmosphere creates employment and economic opportunity. It provides the goods and services that feed a Japanese community that is spread throughout the City and sustains the residents of the immediate Japantown neighborhood. A thriving Japantown business environment also nurtures a stimulating creative atmosphere for the arts to preserve and promote Japantown’s diverse and unique cultural heritage and history.

In 1880 Japanese Issei pioneers came to America through the port of San Francisco like other Asian immigrants. They began to build their future home by establishing “Nihonjinmachi” (“Japanese people’s town”), where businesses servicing the new arrivals were the anchor of the burgeoning community. Then came the 1906 earthquake, the World War II forced removal and incarceration, and redevelopment and urban renewal. Japantown businesses played a major role in the recovery and rebuilding of the Japanese American community by providing a stabilizing economic base with goods, services, commerce, and employment that enabled it to survive, grow, and prosper.

The coronavirus pandemic and the Japan Center Malls covenant expiration are the latest challenges confronting Japantown. Businesses are struggling to maintain day-to-day operations and prepare for an unknown future. Japantown’s future is intimately tied to the health of its business, culture, and community. Economic & Workforce Development addresses challenges and strategies for the continued prosperity and health of San Francisco’s Japantown.

II. CHALLENGES:

1. The expiring Japan Trade Center Malls community covenant will affect the future of all Japantown businesses.

The Japan Center East and West Malls represent, at least symbolically, the cultural and economic center of the Japantown neighborhood. As stated in other Key Areas, should 3D Investments decide
not to renew the covenant, it could sell the property or decide to redesign it in a style that does not reflect Japantown’s cultural heritage.

Japantown is facing with another disruption of its neighborhood, whatever the outcome of covenant negotiations. Should reconstruction and refurbishment of the Japan Center take place, they will impact business tenants and the other Mall property owners such as Kinokuniya Bookstore and the Union Bank. Small business tenants are already reeling from income due to the coronavirus pandemic, and the unfortunate likelihood is that some tenants in the Malls will not survive a transition. The surrounding neighborhood and businesses will also be affected. Precious community space could be lost. Construction could constrict traffic, impede pedestrian walkways, and reduce customer flow. Community concerns must be considered during covenant discussions.

2. Japantown’s business community must speak with a unified voice.

Economic damage from the coronavirus pandemic and the uncertain outcome of the looming Japan Center Malls covenant negotiations emphasize the need for Japantown merchants to band together to collectively plan for short-term survival, mid-term recovery, and long-term regeneration. Although the immediate outlook for business is dire, it presents the opportunity for dialogue, decision-making, and action that will shape Japantown’s future.

Japantown merchants, shopkeepers, and business owners tend to operate independently and handle issues individually. Business information is often communicated person-to-person. Traditionally, the Japantown Merchants Association has served as the representative body for collective decision-making for businesses. The Japantown Community Benefit District (JCBD) has emerged as an organizer and advocate for businesses within its mission to keep Japantown an economically vibrant neighborhood. In particular, the JCBD has stepped up and extended its resources to help businesses weather the pandemic by providing timely information and assistance.

Japantown’s business community is comprised primarily of Japanese Americans, Japanese, Korean, and other Asian ethnicities. This cultural diversity is one of the community’s attractions. Merchants often work cooperatively to the benefit of the community; however, cultural and language differences can sometimes hamper efforts to organize meetings, reach consensus, and disseminate information. Moreover, individual business owners for whom English is not the primary language can be reluctant to engage city services that support community businesses.

Japantown’s merchant community face the challenges confronting all businesses and business districts in the City. At this time, they are also confronted with major decisions that will affect not only their well-being but that of Japantown far into the future. Japantown’s business community should approach these with a unified strategy that a representative business group with a collective mindset and decision-making authority could provide.

Japantown is home to several legacy businesses that are key contributors to the community economy and community keystones. These, for-profit and non-profit establishments, represent the historic and cultural heritage of San Francisco’s Japanese community. Some family-owned businesses trace their beginnings back generations to Issei founders who helped build Japantown.

The Japantown Task Force is successfully registering businesses in the San Francisco Legacy Business program. Benkyo-do, operating since 1906, is one of the few remaining bakeries producing Japanese wagashi and manju confections, and is the creator of the “fortune cookie.” The Nichi Bei Weekly traces its origin to the Nichi Bei Times, the first Japanese American newspaper. Established in 1911, Kinmon Gakuen was one of the first Japanese language schools in the country and a school for children of Japanese immigrants who were not allowed to attend San Francisco public schools.

As much as their products or services represent the cultural and historical legacy of the Japanese community, their presence in Japantown represents its heart and soul. To remain in Japantown legacy businesses face challenges. Decisions about ownership transition can be difficult as aging owners consider retirement. The sale of a legacy business could mean a loss of valuable community property. If a legacy business closes, finding a culturally-relevant replacement can pose a problem. Legacy businesses are a precious Japantown resource.

4. Attracting new, culturally relevant businesses to Japantown.

At the townhalls and focus groups, community members raised the need to attract more culturally relevant businesses to Japantown. They expressed a desire to see more Japanese and Japanese American businesses present in the community. It was also suggested that the Japan Center Malls find a Japanese anchor business. Currently when business space becomes available, there is no means to coordinate a search for potential new businesses or to evaluate their viability for Japantown.

Japantown’s cultural environment draws people to the neighborhood. Attracting businesses that reflect the Japantown’s culture heritage will ensure that it continues to serve as a hub for Japanese Americans throughout the Bay Area and Northern California. This is an opportunity for a focused, unified organization of merchants and business leaders who understand the business climate of the community to develop guidelines for culturally relevant new businesses and then work collectively with property owners and realtors to seek out appropriate new businesses for J-Town.

5. Japantown needs a comprehensive marketing plan.

A theme common to several CHHESS focus areas was a need for Japantown’s many attractions to be marketed more effectively. For Economic & Workforce Development this means communicating the message that Japantown features an abundance of specialty shops, grocery and specialty food stores, restaurants, arts and cultural activities, social services, and special events to attract prospective customers and supporters alike.
The sheer number of marketable activities makes effectively marketing Japantown a challenge. Whatever time businesses can devote to marketing planning must focus on attracting their customers. They do not often have the time to consider broader strategies to promote Japantown businesses. Some small businesses and restaurants simply do not have the budgets and expertise to market themselves. Similarly, service organizations and cultural groups must devote precious resources and manpower to promote themselves. Moreover, a mechanism for coordinating special events and ongoing activities does not exist often resulting in conflicting event dates and times. Also, promotion and publicity to J/JA communities around the Bay Area, which would benefit Japantown, is uncoordinated and not comprehensive.

To recover from the pandemic, Japantown needs people to return to the community and support its businesses. A well-planned, coordinated marketing strategy that makes efficient use of available media resources will reconnect Japantown with the J/JA community as well as people from throughout the City and the Bay Area. Additionally, a collective community strategy could initiate projects to promote small businesses, non-profit organizations, and arts and cultural activities that might not have marketing resources or expertise.

III. STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS:

1. The Japan Center Malls covenant discussions present an opportunity for the community to shape the future of Japantown.

DETAILS:
The future of the Japan Center Malls is uncertain. The covenant agreement between the City of San Francisco and 3D Investments made in 2006 up for review in 2021. The Japantown Task Force is organizing a community coalition to create a strategic plan to ensure that community input is considered in any decisions made about the future of the Japan Center.

WHY?
The Japan Center Malls and the Peace Plaza, which sits atop the Japan Center Garage, play an important role in the business and social activity of Japantown. They also occupy a significant amount of space on Post Street between Laguna and Webster Streets. Maintaining the Japanese and Japanese American personality and cultural relevancy will have a significant impact on the future of the business community and the community as a whole. Should the Center be sold and redesigned, many businesses would not survive the reconstruction period and many will possibly just leave Japantown.

2. Support efforts to organize Japantown’s shopkeepers and small businesses for collective decision-making.

DETAILS:
Japantown merchants recognize the need to gather to discuss common issues and concerns. Focused, unified efforts to solve problems and address needs result in better decision-making and planning for
Japantown. The Japantown Community Benefit District and the Japantown Merchants Association are advocates for Japantown businesses.

WHY?
Japantown’s merchants, shopkeepers, and legacy businesses are one of the foundations of the community. They secure property, create an economic infrastructure, create jobs, support the neighborhood for residents, bring people into the community, provide a base for social service organizations and arts and cultural groups. Together as a unified front they could present a powerful voice to speak out on issues of major importance to Japantown.

Japantown is facing game-changing decisions to address concerns raised earlier in this section such as: attracting culturally relevant businesses, seeking an anchor business for the mall, planning for next generation Japantown businesses, and negotiating the expiring Japan Center Malls covenant. Japantown’s merchants and business owners need a mechanism through which they can gather as a group and begin to work together to plan collective action.

3. Collaborate with the JCBD and the Japan Center Malls marketing group to implement a unified marketing plan for Japantown.

DETAILS:
Japantown is home to a diverse range of commercial and community activities including restaurants, shops, arts and cultural activities and events, social services, professional and medical services, and entertainment. All of these stimulate the community economy by drawing an active, diverse customer base to Japantown. As the commercial and cultural hub for the Japanese/Japanese American community, interest in Japantown’s businesses and events extends throughout the City, the Bay Area, and the Northern California region. It is a major draw for tourism.

San Francisco is a major media market, and local and regional mass media outlets are always looking for a good story. Community marketing and publicity resources are available. For example, the Nichi Bei Weekly community newspaper and website based in Japantown regularly publishes information about businesses, community organizations, events, and advertising. Many businesses, community service organizations, churches, and arts and cultural groups have websites or a web presence. Free marketing opportunities in print and digital formats and in a variety of Asian languages are available to the community.

Japantown sustains a large, diverse, active community that in turn sustains Japantown. As the recovery from the pandemic evolves, it is critical that Japantown reconnect with the community.

WHY?
The JCBD and Japan Center Community Affairs and Marketing are clearly in the forefront of the effort to market activities that not only promote the business community, but also highlight the many arts and cultural activities that take place in Japantown. They are in the process of creating a marketing plan, and their efforts should be supported.

The customer and user bases are there as are the attractions. Unlike other neighborhoods and districts, Japantown offers a year-round slate of weekend festivals and events, cultural performances, performing arts, specialty film screenings that bring crowds to J-Town. There are many social services, arts and cultural classes, youth and adult sports, and family activities that take place on a regular basis. A multitude of marketing vehicles exist in Japantown including publications, websites, social media platforms, and even free publicity, too. The Nichi Bei Weekly is a Japantown-based community newspaper and website that regularly publishes news and information about the Japanese American community. A coordinated marketing strategy would ensure that all these are used to maximum advantage to make Japantown a thriving economic and cultural hub.

The JCBD and Japan Center Community Affairs and Marketing are clearly in the forefront of the effort to market activities that not only promote the business community but also highlight the many arts and cultural activities that take place in Japantown. They are in the process of creating a marketing plan, and their efforts should be supported.

4. Create a Japantown small business resource center.

DETAILS:

Japantown’s businesses are its economic foundation. The business owners, managers, and shopkeepers represent the Japanese, Japanese American, and pan-Asian culture of the community. In normal times, businesses are faced with a challenging range of information needs. During this pandemic, acquiring resources and timely up-to-date information is critical. Moreover, language and cultural differences are an added burden for Japantown business owners. Changes in resource availability, regulations, and deadlines are sometimes immediately communicated. As the history of displacement overcome by the Japanese American community has shown, businesses will play a vital role in the regeneration of Japantown. A resource center that serves an advisory and advocacy role can keep businesses in tune with developments and opportunities in the best interests of Japantown.

WHY?

Japantown’s businesses need timely access to information, infrastructure assistance, and business expertise to survive, especially in a pandemic business climate. A business information and resource center will deliver assistance and expertise in multi-lingual formats that is geared for Japantown’s merchants, shopkeepers, and business owners. Information could also be tailored to the business needs of artists, cultural groups, and community service organizations. Valuable information could be provided onsite and online to help businesses identify problems, efficiently navigate city bureaucracy, and more. The pandemic has demonstrated that business conditions can rapidly change in dramatic
fashion. Information related to managing business especially during hard times must be available as soon as it is needed. A resource center would serve an advisory and an advocacy role, to stay in tune with developments, regulations, and opportunities in the best interests of Japantown.

IV. SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

1. The Japan Center Malls covenant discussions present an opportunity for the community to shape the future of Japantown.
   - Assist Japan Center Malls Technical Committee (JCMTC) with efforts to produce a community plan for the Japan Center Malls covenant.
   - Support the interests of Japan Center Malls business tenants.
   - Work with the JCMTC to produce a community needs assessment.

2. Support efforts to organize Japantown’s shopkeepers and small businesses for collective decision-making.
   - Work with the JCBD and Japantown Merchants Association to organize Japantown merchants into a collective, decision-making body.
   - Support the creation of a Japantown Community Council.

3. Collaborate with the JCBD and the Japan Center Malls community events and marketing group to implement a unified marketing plan for Japantown.
   - Work with JCBD on selected marketing projects and marketing research for businesses and arts & cultural groups.
   - Develop a JCD web development team by securing funding and recruiting volunteers

4. Create a Japantown small business resource center.
   - Research: Produce a business needs assessment for small businesses, arts & cultural groups, and community service organizations as the basis for an online/onsite resource & referral database.
   - Establish the JTF Visitor Center Kiosk in the Japan Center Malls.
   - Support the Japantown Task Force Legacy Business Registry project and register all legacy businesses in the community.
   - Continue search for suitable resource center location including Kinmon Gakuen building.
   - Conduct ongoing research & surveys: Japantown business needs assessment, Japantown nighttime business, Japantown employment statistics, ethnic breakdown of Japantown businesses, etc.
KEY AREA 7: TENANT PROTECTIONS - By Wes Nihei

I. CONTEXT

The Tenant Protections key area focuses on securing Japantown’s future by making it an affordable, attractive home for residents, organizations that serve the community, and businesses that reflect the needs and interests of the community. It is about making Japantown a culturally sensitive neighborhood where people can work and live with protections against displacement.

Japantown has been the cultural heart of the Japanese American community in San Francisco for over a century, serving a role that is unique to the city, region, and country. It is the first and oldest Japanese American neighborhood community; now one of three Japantowns remaining in the country. Its cultural heritage and historical legacy are a significant part of the history of San Francisco and the region at large. Historically, it has overcome several major displacement events. After the 1906 earthquake levelled San Francisco’s original Japantown called “Nihonjinmachi” (Japanese people’s town) located Downtown, the community moved to the Western Addition. In 1942, when forced incarceration imprisoned all Japanese and Japanese Americans from the West Coast, the community survived and returned to the City. Then, in 1965 Japanese Americans were again displaced by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency’s redevelopment plan for urban renewal when Japantown taken apart and J/JA’s residents and businesses were forced to relocate across the city. Each time this community demonstrated the resiliency, resourcefulness, and cultural tenacity to regenerate itself.

Now, in many ways, Japantown is still recovering from redevelopment. It occupies a smaller geographic area, and as reported in the JCHESS, many Japanese Americans who see Japantown as their cultural center reside outside the neighborhood and the city. The challenge of Tenant Protection is to keep a focus on Japantown’s current residents and to attract new residents to the area. From a generational perspective, it is to keep ties to Japantown strong, to protect current tenants from displacement, and to promote affordable rental housing and homeownership to draw the community to Japantown and the neighborhood.

II. CHALLENGES

1. Japantown does not have property available on which to develop new rental units and housing.

Within the 4-block radius area of Japantown, there is precious little available land space on which to develop new rental and home ownership opportunities. The possibility of new development taking place will be years in the making. This given the high cost of land and rents in San Francisco makes it vitally important that existing tenants and renters be able to maintain residence in Japantown and the surrounding area and that existing rental properties remain in community hands. While promoting affordable housing and home ownership is goal of Tenant Protections it is major challenge.
2. Residential and commercial tenants have a common need for information and resources.

To keep their lives and livelihoods secure, renters both residential and commercial need ready access to information and expertise to understand and assert their rights and to deal with problems they encounter. Legal services, tenants’ rights education, tenant counseling, mediation with landlords and property owners, and rental assistance are just a few examples of information valuable to any tenant. The recent corona-virus pandemic also demonstrates that resource needs can be immediate and critical, particularly in the case of shopkeepers faced with threats to their livelihoods and workers facing an inability to pay rents.

Moreover, for Japantown that information must also be culturally sensitive and relevant to the Japanese American community, the surrounding neighborhood, and the City of San Francisco. There are language needs for information in Japanese and other Asian languages. Existing community organizations such as the Japantown Community Benefit District (JCBD), Kimochi Inc. (senior services), and Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach are dependable resources for expertise in their particular areas of focus, that must allocate precious, often times limited resources to that task. The challenge moving forward is develop a community-based mechanism that is prepared with expertise and information relevant to residential and business tenants that can be communicated in an efficient and timely fashion.

3. There is a need for tenants, residents, and property owners to address the issues of Japantown with a unified voice.

Ultimately, a community is stronger when it is supported by those who live in it. Tenants should have strong representation in decisions affecting the community and the neighborhood. Japantown’s residents represent both tenants and property owners who have an equal stake in seeing that the neighborhood remains a culturally vibrant community. Issues affecting Japantown should be viewed from the perspectives of both groups. The aftermath of the Covid-19 protocols and the Japan Center covenant expiration, both mentioned throughout the CHHESS, are examples of immediate issues that will affect tenants and owners alike. To develop practical short-term solutions and long-range planning for these and other challenges facing Japantown, the needs and concerns of both groups should be considered. The Japantown Task Force, the JCBD, and other organizations deal with the broad issues affecting the community and have tenants, residents, landlords, and property owners in their memberships and leadership. Tenants’ rights and protections are an area of focus to Japantown a thriving culturally vibrant community. group of Japantown residents should have a voice and a dedicated advocate in the community.

4. The future of the Japan Center is a critical area of concern for small business tenants.

The seriousness of the upcoming 2021 Japan Center Malls covenant agreement negotiations has been identified in several Key Areas of Focus in this CHHESS report. The outcome of these community discussions with 3D Investments and the City of San Francisco will have far-reaching implications for the small businesses and shops that are tenants of the Center. From the perspective of Tenant Protections it will be noted that while 3D Investments, holder of the Japan Center Malls covenant, is the largest property owner in the Center, there are other stakeholders, too, including the Kinokuniya Bookstore, Union Bank, a various individual property owners who along with the small business tenants will be affected by any decisions emerging from covenant discussions.
Refurbishment, redevelopment, or redesign will involve these stakeholders and impact the businesses and environment of the surrounding neighborhood as well. The economic stability of tenants of the Japan Center Malls and the adjacent Kinokuniya Building are already severely impacted by the coronavirus shelter-in-place shutdown. It is possible that many businesses will not survive even once shelter-in-place protocols are lifted. Business tenants in the Center facing an uphill climb back to profitability as it is will be majorly challenged by any decision that comes in the wake of the covenant negotiations to remain in business. Additionally, the extent to which changes to the Japan Center affect the surrounding area will have serious consequences for business tenants located in the neighborhood.

5. Displacement of the Japantown community is an ongoing community challenge.

Key components of Tenant Protections for both the JCHESS and the CHHESS are to protect tenants from displacement and to stop the displacement of community residents. In this respect San Francisco’s Japantown has been continually engaged in tenant protections in the face of the two historic displacements that it has overcome: World War II’s forced evacuation and San Francisco’s urban renewal and redevelopment. Now, the coronavirus pandemic poses yet another challenge to Japantown tenants and landlords alike.

New construction, housing development, and the high cost of living in San Francisco are daunting, ongoing, and long-term challenges for Japantown. In the mid-term, drawing the local and extended community to Japantown should be a focus. Sustaining arts and cultural groups, supporting community service organizations, patronizing small businesses and legacy businesses, improving physical infrastructure, improving open spaces, and other specific activities detailed in this CHHESS are challenges to Tenant Protections as well.

III. STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

1. A Japantown Community Council

DETAILS:

The Community Council concept has been introduced in other areas of the CHHESS. For the purposes of Tenant Protections, it is critical that a representative community organization address the needs of residential and business tenants and speak on their behalf. For example, a community council, working closely with the Japan Center Malls Technical Committee for the Japan Center covenant could ensure that future plans for the Center take into account the specific needs and challenges facing business tenants housed there or lobby for community space and housing as part of a new Japan Center design. A community council could also encompass a tenant’s information resource program in addition to arts action and business resource centers also proposed here in conjunction with the council.

WHY?

In general, Japantown needs a representative coalition with a united voice and vision, so that the community can be informed and act quickly in the face of unforeseen circumstances like the recent pandemic or other public and political issues. Also, the Tenants Protections focus area addresses major long-term issues such
Supplemental CHHESS

I. Introduction & II. Vision

Finding or acquiring space for housing and rental properties that will need unified community decision-making, planning and action to take place.

2. Create a Tenants Association to disseminate information to tenants and landlords.

DETAILS:

A tenants association to provide information, resources, and referral for tenants and landlords could exist within the umbrella of the business and artists resource center. It would have an online presence and be a source of information about issues such as tenant advocacy, tenant education, legal issues, landlord/tenant mediation, building maintenance, and rental assistance. The key would be dedicated staffing to research and develop knowledge and expertise about tenant issues, city and community resources, navigating bureaucracies, and an understanding of language and cultural difficulties, all related to the Japantown community and surrounding neighborhood.

WHY?

Residential and business tenants and renters have specific information needs that a community-based resource center could supply. There are city and community agencies and resources to assist tenants, but often finding the correct agency to work with is a challenge. Some Japantown residents also have cultural and language challenges that make it difficult to approach city agencies for help. Negotiating bureaucracies is especially problematic and time-consuming. Often tenants only find information by word of mouth. A resource center with expertise relevant to the Japantown neighborhood and community would solve this problem.

3. Collaborate with the Japantown Community Business District.

DETAILS:

The JCBD has emerged as a leading advocate for the business community in Japantown. Working in conjunction with the Japantown Merchants Association, it has organized a coalition of most Japanese American, Japanese, Korean, and other Asian shopkeepers, who are tenants in the Japan Center, the Malls, and other areas of Japantown, initiated community improvement projects, and spearheaded assistance for businesses during the coronavirus pandemic. Along with Japan Center Malls Community Affairs & Marketing, it is developing a strategic marketing plan for Japantown.

WHY?

The JCBD is already actively engaged with the Nihonmachi business community to address problems and concerns. It has actively organized and implemented initiatives to assist businesses during the pandemic. Business tenants are critical to sustaining the culture and community atmosphere of Japantown. JCBD programs and projects to improve the physical space and safety of Japantown are also in line with future goals of the JCD to improve the neighborhood for residents.

4. Support the Japantown Task Force Japan Center Malls Technical Committee.
DETAILS:

The 3D Investments covenant ensures that the Japan Center remains culturally relevant to the Japanese community both in overall physical design and in the types of businesses that occupy the Malls. Decisions emerging from any discussions about the future of the Malls will have serious implications for all business tenants in the buildings, who are already struggling to survive the coronavirus pandemic. As the symbolic hub of Japantown, any changes to the Japan Center will have serious consequences to the surrounding neighborhood that will affect business and residential tenants alike. It is critical that the community provide input into this discussion particularly on behalf of the business tenants of the Japan Center and the Malls. The Japantown Task Force Japan Center Malls Technical Committee is already organizing to develop a community plan and rally the community behind this issue.

WHY?

The covenant discussions present an opportunity for the community to have its say in the future of the Japan Center Malls and for Japantown. The business tenants of the Japan Center, the Malls, and the adjacent Kinokuniya Building have already suffered major losses of revenue due to the covid-19 protocols. Already some businesses may not recover. The covenant renegotiations loom in front of them, a major consideration to any recovery plan they may have and any decision they may make about remaining in Japantown. Additionally, should the Japan Center be sold and redesigned, many current business tenants would not survive the reconstruction period and businesses who are tenants in the surrounding neighborhood could also be negatively impacted.

V. SPECIFIC ACTIONS

   ● Research existing community councils in San Jose Japantown and Los Angeles Little Tokyo.
   ● Begin feelers with key Japantowns about their interest in participating on a community council.

2. Create a Tenants Association as part of the Small Business and Artists resource center.
   ● Add Information and expertise about tenants’ rights to the program planning for the Small Business and Artists resource center that is one of the Overarching Strategies of the CHHESS.
   ● Ongoing research and documentation of tenant/landlord needs in Japantown.

3. Collaborate with the Japantown Community Business District.
   ● Initiate close discussions with the JCBD to determine strategies for sharing resources, plan partnerships, and participate in JCBD programs and projects.

4. Support the Japan Center covenant negotiations through the JTF Japan Center Malls Technical Committee.
- Participate in Japan Center Malls Technical Committee discussions and provide support for its organizing activities.

IX. **TIMELINES AND SCENARIOS:**

The Strategies specified in this Supplemental CHHESS include takes a comprehensive view on strategies that would enable the long-term sustainability of Japantown into the future. While it includes strategies likely to be implemented in the following 2-3 years of the planning grant, it also includes strategies that are likely to take much longer. The hope is that future projects will build upon the content of the 2020 Supplemental CHHESS.

Some strategies should be implemented first as they serve as a foundation to the success of the other strategies. Many of the strategies are interconnected in that they support the success of one another. The Following images depict the prioritization of strategies.

1. The first step is to establish a “Community Council,” as it will be a representative organization which bring many stakeholders to the table. Essentially, the first step for Japantown is to enhance “inner interconnectivity.” With increased communication, coordination and collaboration, the community will be able to exercise more agility and power to accomplish larger strategies which will require broad-based support.

2. The second step is to develop the “Intergenerational, Cultural Co-Creative Space with Arts-based Micro-event Programming.” Essentially, the second or concurrent step for Japantown is to enhance “interconnectivity with the broader community.” Japantown is a regional hub, and the broader community dispersed throughout the region has expressed the need for a Japantown that attracts and reflects them through a living and evolving culture. In other words, people are looking for ways to be engaged and plug-in on a more consistent basis rather than the festivals that happen only a few times a year. It is essential that Japantown reflects the diversity and harnesses the creativity of the community. With more engagement of the broader community in the creating and telling the story, there will be more advocacy and visibility and a larger base of support for Japantown. Through connecting and organizing the community and a broader-base of support, larger strategies such as a Japantown Vision Plan, Housing, and Community Land Trusts can be accomplished.

3. The third, and concurrent strategy is to establish the “Artist and Small Business Assistance and Media Center.” Artists, Culture-bearers, and Small Businesses are what make Japantown so unique and attractive.

5. Increase fundraising capacity to – by bringing visibility to these bold exciting projects like Regenerative Japantown

6. Establish a Visitor Kiosk is concurrent, yet supported by strategy 2&3

7. Community engagement and input is essential for JCMTC- therefore this is supported by the community council. Also the broad base community engagement from strategy 2&3 will help with a. vision that is reflective of the community

8. The Japan town Vision plan would definitely support strategy #7 as having a Clear vision to show the developers is always helpful. However, the JCMTC is having its first meeting in July and the Covenant expiration is coming up soon, therefore the Master Plan although is an extensive process should be a prioritized strategy for 2020 to early 2021.

9. Establishing a community land trust is a strategy which may occur more over a longer timeframe. However, the necessity of a CLT or CDC has been promoted for over a decade. Therefore, initial steps to get this started is important. However, funding and broad base support is a necessity, therefore. Strategy 1, 2, 3, and 5 will be the groundwork to gain the community power and broad-base support necessary to accomplish this.

10. Housing may also occur over a longer timeline- never the less is important to conduct research and have a policy to support this. Although it may be years before the community sees housing being developed- the policy support implications for housing preferences can start now. Researching Certificate of Preferences? Housing should be Explored. A CDC, CLT, or a CIF could also help to establish housing without relying in an outside developer.
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CHHESS TIMELINE TREE

01 Establish a 3D Japanese Community Council
02 Develop an International Cultural EXPO/Cultural Complex Model for American Culture
03 Support 2018-2019 Small Business and Arts
04 Establish 2018-2019 Small Business and Arts
05 Establish a Visitor Center Guidebook to Japan’s Cultural Malls
06 Develop a Strategic Plan to Achieve 2020: Execution of Japan Center Mal; JCM-Covered Agreements
07 Support Development of Japan Center Mal; JCM-Covered Agreements
08 Establish Community Development Corporation’s Community-based Trust on Social Mechanics
09 Sign an Economic Development Agreement for the Growth of Japan Center Mal; JCM-Covered Agreements

2020
CHHESS Strategy Road Map

**STEP 1: ENHANCE INNER INTERCONNECTIVITY**

**STRATEGY 1: Establish a SF J-town Community Council (JTF) + Art Action Committee**

This Strategy will create a strong foundation to accomplish the other strategies.

**STRATEGY 2: INTERCONNECTIVITY w/ BROADER COMMUNITY w/ CREATIVE PLACE-KEEPING**

**STRATEGY 2: Develop an Intergenerational Cultural Co-Creative/Co-working Multi-Use Arts Gathering Space/Gallery w/ Arts-Based Micro-Events Programming (Physical & Online)**

**STRATEGY 3: ESTABLISH A VISITOR KIOSK IN JAPAN CENTER MALLS**

(Empowers diversity of community from Japanese-speaking next generations, and enhance the interconnectivity of Japantown)

**STEP 3: ENHANCING & INCUBATING CAPACITY**

**STRATEGY 4: Small Businesses & Artist Assistance**

Resource, and Media Center (Coaching, Enhancement of Online Presence & Channel to Increase Awareness with Media)

Incubate businesses to gain greater online presence & sales. Assist Artists with grant-writing etc.

**STEP 4: INCREASE VISIBILITY, PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDRAISING:**

**STRATEGY 5: Increase Fundraising and Marketing Capacity of Japantown Cultural District to Support CHHESS Strategies**

Invest in Fundraising Director After Gaining Traction with Strategies 1, 2, 3

**STRATEGY 6: DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN TO ADDRESS 2021 EXPIRATION OF JAPAN CENTER MALL (JCM) COVENANT AGREEMENT (JCMTC)**

4a.) Negotiate Benefits Agreements with JCM Owners (JCMTC)

Have an inclusive Community process to Determine Benefits

**Strategy 7: Develop a Japantown Master Plan**

A. Develop a Japantown Master Plan
B. Regenerative, Sustainable, Resilient Japantown (Midori Japantown)
C. Expanding and Connecting Japantown Beyond Physical Borders - Expanding to Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park etc.
D. Support Improvements to Peace Plaza (JTF Peace Plaza Committee) (Near Term

**Strategy 8:**
Establish a Community Development Corporation/ Community Land Trust or a Similar Mechanism

**Strategy 9: Negotiate Culturally-Competent Affordable Housing with Preferences; Large Lot of 40% to Descendants of Displaced with “Certificate of Preferences,” Community-based Artists, Younger Generations, Seniors, Families of the Community,
### SHORT RANGE PRIORIZED STRATEGIES:

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<th>CHHES ORDER OF IMPLEMENTATION</th>
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### LONG RANGE PRIORIZED STRATEGIES:

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<tr>
<th>CHHES ORDER OF IMPLEMENTATION</th>
<th>OCTOBER 2021</th>
<th>NOVEMBER 2021</th>
<th>DEC 2021</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STRATEGIES:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a Community Development Corporation</td>
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X. CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS:

San Francisco Japantown (Japantown) Cultural District, and the CHHESS strategy is a major opportunity for J/JA communities to shape Japantown’s future. Through extensive community input and research, the CHHESS strategies and tactics have been developed through a truly grassroot process. Japantown has survived much adversity in its 114-year history in San Francisco, however, the legacies of its past are foundational to this work. San Francisco’s Japantown has a rich history and lasting legacy of resilience in the face of adversity left by past generations who endured displacement from the Internment to the Redevelopment, and the continued threats of gentrification. Japantown has a long history of activism, commitment, and achievement, and is a valuable home base to many organizations, businesses and dedicated community members who have been diligently working on these challenges. As one of four remaining historic Japantowns in the United States, preserving, protecting, regenerating, and promoting its cultural assets are crucial so that it remains as the vital cultural heart, and regional hub for the Japanese/Japanese American communities for generations to come.

The CHHESS was developed amidst the global coronavirus pandemic, and its completion speaks volumes about the community’s ability to turn crisis into an opportunity for transformation. Through this formalized collaborative partnership with the City of San Francisco’s Cultural Districts Initiative to stabilize its unique cultural assets from disappearing, the Japantown community expects to not only survive these crises, but also become truly resilient and thrive into the future.

The CHHESS initiative is an iterative process between the Japantown community and the City of San Francisco. This Final CHHESS Draft will be reviewed by the community at large, and will incorporate further input. It will then be considered for approval by the Japantown Task Force Board of Directors before it is submitted to the MOHCD (Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development) for further review and feedback. MOHCD will engage other City departments in a collaborative review process around the CHHESS strategies and tactics. The City will also be adding the “City Data Snapshot” section on Japantown into the report. The revised Final CHHESS Draft will be shared with the Japantown community before it is submitted to the Board of Supervisors for consideration and adoption. Advocacy for adoption of the Final CHHESS by the Board of Supervisors is projected to begin in late September. This advocacy process will require engagement by the community at large, and is a valuable opportunity for Japantown’s voice to be heard.

Realizing the Japantown Cultural District vision and goals through the implementation of its strategies and tactics will depend on the engagement and determination of the broader community, in continuous collaboration with the City of San Francisco. Both the Final CHHESS and the Supplemental CHHESS, a living document, will serve as a roadmap to guide the implementation of the strategies and tactics over the next few years. After three years of the Cultural Districts program, both the community and the City will reflect on what has been accomplished and identify the next steps necessary to achieve Japantown’s goals. Building on the Cultural District program, the CHHESS living roadmap will enable Japantown to thrive, by setting priorities and directions for Japantown’s future.
XI. APPENDIX- GLOSSARY:

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation works to promote the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of our Nation’s historic resources, and advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. www.achp.gov

Alliance of National Heritage Areas: Informal organization of federally-designated heritage areas and corridors. www.nationalheritageareas.com

American Association for State & Local History (AASLH): Nonprofit organization provides leadership, service and support for its members who preserve and interpret state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful in American society. www.aaslh.org/

American Association of Museums (AAM): National organization representing the museum community – including cultural, historic and natural museums – and addressing its needs, and enhancing the ability of museums to serve the public interest. www.aam-us.org

American Automobile Association (AAA): Membership organization providing information relating to owning and operating automobiles. Also operates retail travel agencies. www.aaa.org

American Bus Association (ABA): Trade association representing charter and intercity bus companies. www.buses.org

American Craft Council: National, nonprofit educational organization dedicated to fostering an environment in which craft is understood and valued. www.craftcouncil.org

American Hotel & Motel Association (AHMA): Trade association for accommodations. www.ahma.com

American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA): Trade association of retail travel agents. www.astanet.com

Americans for the Arts: National organization that strives to make arts more accessible to every adult and child in American by working with cultural organizations, arts and business leaders and individuals to foster leadership, education and information that will encourage support for the arts and culture in U.S. communities. www.artsusa.org

Association of Retail Travel Agents (ARTA): Trade association of American travel retailers. www.artonline.com

Bed and Breakfast: Overnight accommodations, usually in a private home or boarding house, with a full American-style breakfast included in the rate.


Blocked Space: Reservations made with suppliers by wholesalers or travel agents in anticipation of resale.

Booking/Reservation Form: Signed by customers purchasing tours stating exactly which tour is being purchased. The form also outlines all liability.
Certificate of Appropriateness: Permit granted by a historic preservation commission or design review board under local law in some communities recognizing that proposed work to an officially designated local landmark or historic district conforms to community guidelines for historic preservation projects. **Certified Local Governments (CLG):** Participants in a program that provides preservation assistance and grants to communities who have passed laws to encourage preservation of historic places and set up a commission of qualified citizens to advise on preservation of local historic resources. **Charter Flight:** A flight booked exclusively for the use of a specific group or groups who are traveling on an inclusive tour charter program. **CHHESS:** Culture, History, Housing, Economic Sustainability, Strategy **Commission (Preservation):** A governmental body appropriated by the mayor or city council under local law in some communities to advise on matters affective historic resources. To recommend official designation of significant historic properties and historic districts as local landmarks, and to review proposed work to the community’s officially designated local landmarks and in its official historic districts. Although the responsibilities and composition of commissions vary by local law, most have five to 10 members representing a variety of interests and areas of expertise related to preservation and revitalization of historic properties. **Commission (Travel):** The amount which travel agents receive from a supplier for selling transportation, accommodations or other services. **community artist:** **Consolidator:** A person or company which forms groups to travel on air charters or at group fares on scheduled flights to increase sales, earn override commissions or reduce the possibility of tour cancellations. **Cultural & Heritage Tourism Alliance:** Informal group of U.S. practitioners responsible for cultural and heritage tourism programs in states, cities and regions. **Cultural Heritage Tourism:** Cultural heritage tourism is traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic and natural resources. **Design Review:** A tool used by many communities to ensure that changes to local landmarks are made in a way that is sympathetic to the buildings’ historic character, and in the best interest of conserving the buildings’ historic fabric. **Destination:** The place to which a traveler is going; or any city, area, region or country being marketed as a single entity to tourists. **Easement:** Tool for preserving historic properties. An owner may donate a part of his/her historic property to a nonprofit organization, granting the organization permission to see that the features on which it holds the rights are maintained and preserved by the owner and any future owners. The nonprofit organization monitors the property to ensure compliance with preservation standards and/or guidelines.
Escort: A person, usually employed by a tour operator, who accompanies a tour from departure to return as guide or trouble-shooter; or a person who performs such functions only at the destination. The terms host-escort or host are often used, and are preferred, to describe this service.

Escorted Tour: A prearranged travel program, usually for a group, with escort service. Fully escorted tours may also use local guide services.

Ecotourism –
Familiarization Tour: A complimentary or reduced-rate travel program for travel agents, airline or rail employees or other travel buyers, designed to acquaint participants with specific destinations or suppliers and to stimulate the sale of travel. Familiarization tours, also called fam tours, are sometimes offered to travel journalists as research trips for the purpose of cultivating media coverage of specific travel products.

Foreign Independent Travel or Foreign Individual Travel (FIT): An international prepaid unescorted tour that includes several travel elements such as accommodations, rental cars and sightseeing. An FIT operator specializes in preparing FIT documents at the request of retail travel agents. FITs usually receive travel vouchers to present to on-site services as verification of pre-payment.

Geotourism: Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of the place being visited, including its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents

Ground Operator: A company that provides local travel services, including transportation or guide services.

Historic Guidelines: A set of parameters for making decisions about the appropriateness of alterations to historic properties or districts. Historic preservation commissions charged with reviewing the appropriateness of proposed alterations to historic properties in their communities use written design guidelines to help them make fair and consistent decisions that allow change to take place while preserving and enhancing the historic character of local landmarks.

Historic Property: A site which has qualities that make it significant in history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or culture; sometimes more specifically a site which is eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or on a local or state register of significant sites.

Historic District: A defined geographical area which may be as small as a few contiguous buildings, or as large as an entire neighborhood, central business district, or community, within which historic properties associated with a particular time or theme in a community’s history predominate. Often the collective significance of the district may be greater than that of any one building or archaeological site. As a planning tool, historic district designation is often used to ensure the preservation of historic properties within the defined boundary, or to encourage reinvestment of the buildings.

Historic Resource: A historic building, site, structure, object or district which has the potential to benefit the community economically, educationally or in some other way if it is preserved.

Hostel: An inexpensive, supervised lodging, particularly used by young people or elders.
**Hotel package**: A package offered by a hotel, sometimes consisting of no more than a room and breakfast; sometimes, especially at resort hotels, consisting of (ground) transportation, room, meals, sports facilities and other components.

**House Museum**: A residence which has been preserved or restored to represent a particular point in time or a particular theme in history, and which is open to the public as a museum.

**Institute of Museum and Library Services – IMLS**: An independent federal agency that fosters leadership, innovation and lifetime of learning through support of all types of museums and libraries. www.imls.fed.us

**International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions - IAAPA**: The trade association of theme parks, zoos, resorts, tourist attractions and other fixed-location entertainment facilities. www.iaapa.org


**Issei** – born in the Meiji Era (1867-1912)

**Itinerary**: Travel schedule provided by a travel agent for his/her customer. A proposed or preliminary itinerary may be rather vague or specific. A final itinerary, however, provides all details – flight numbers, departure times, reservation confirmation numbers – and describes planned activities.

**J/JA**: Japanese/ Japanese American

**Japantown (J-Town)**: San Francisco and San Jose

**JCHESS ()**: Landmark: A building, structure or object that marks the land – the familiar old building or other property – that provides orientation to a community or region.

**Little Tokyo** (Los Angeles, CA):

**Matsuri**: Festival in Japanese

**Midori**: Green in Japanese

**Museum**: Institution devoted to the procurement, care, study and display of objects of lasting value or interest.

**Museum Store Association**: International organization representing museum store professionals worldwide from more than 1,900 institutions.

**National Association of State Arts Agencies – NASAA**: Membership organization of the nation’s state and jurisdictional arts agencies that advances and promotes a meaningful role for the arts in the lives of individuals, families and communities throughout the United States. www.nasaa-arts.org

**National Endowment for the Arts**: Independent agency of the United States federal government serving the public good by nurturing human creativity, supporting community spirit and fostering
appreciation of the excellence and diversity of America’s artistic accomplishments through grantmaking, leadership initiatives, partnerships, and public information. www.arts.endow.gov

**National Endowment for the Humanities**: Independent grant-making agency of the United States government dedicated to supporting research, education and public programs in the humanities. www.neh.fed.us

**National Heritage Area**: A place designated by the United States Congress, where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography.

**National Park Service – NPS**: A division of the U.S. Department of Interior, the National Park Service administers the joint federal-state-local historic preservation program established by Congress in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. It also oversees the National Register of Historic Places and assists federally-designated national heritage areas. www.nps.gov

**National Register of Historic Places**: The nation’s official roster of properties that should be preserved because of their significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or culture. The National Register recognizes important historic buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts. It includes properties of local, state or national importance. www.cr.nps.gov/nr/

**National Tour Association (NTA)**: A trade association of motorcoach tour operators and group travel buyers. www.nta.org

**National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP)**: National nonprofit organization chartered by Congress to protect and preserve the nation’s historic resources and cultural heritage. The National Trust operates historic properties and provides advice and assistance to communities in preserving historic properties. It also manages the nation’s first cultural heritage tourism program and the National Main Street Center. www.nthp.org

**Nisei** – Second Generation Japanese American

**Nihonmachi- Japantown**

**Packager**: Anyone organizing a tour including prepaid transportation and travel services, usually to more than one destination.

**Package Tour**: A saleable travel product offering an inclusive price with several travel elements that would otherwise be purchased separately. Usually has a predetermined price, length of time and features but can also offer options for separate purchase.

**Partners in Tourism**: Coalition among national service organizations and federal agencies broadly representing the arts, humanities, heritage and tourism organizations around the country. Partners in Tourism include: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Alliance for National Heritage Areas, American Association of Museums, Americans for the Arts, Cultural & Heritage Tourism Alliance, Federation of State Humanities Councils, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, National
Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, National Geographic Society, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Travel Industry Association of America, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Institute for Museum and Library Services, and the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, U.S. Department of Agriculture (Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Interior (Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service).

**Person-trip**: The research term for one person taking one trip of 100 or more miles, one way, away from home.

**Preservation**: The conservation of the qualities and materials that make historic buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts significant. Approaches to preservation include stabilization, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

**Preservation Ordinance**: A local law enacted to protect a community’s historic resources. Although such ordinances vary in specifics from community to community, typically they establish the preservation of a community’s historic resources as being in the public interest, provide for the creation of a historic preservation commission to advise the mayor and council on historic preservation matters, establish a procedure for designating local landmarks and historic districts and authorize the commission to review proposed alterations, additions and demolitions affecting local landmarks and historic districts to see that they are in accord with a set of broad community guidelines for such work which are part of the ordinance.

**Preservation Plan**: A document which evaluates a community’s historic resources and makes recommendations on steps which may be taken to ensure that they are preserved and reused to the community’s economic and social benefit.

**President Committee on the Arts and Humanities**: The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities helps to incorporate the arts and humanities into White House objectives. The committee bridges federal agencies and the private sector. It recognizes cultural excellence, engages in research; initiates special projects; and stimulates private funding. www.pcah.gov

**Receptive Operator**: A tour operator or travel agent specializing in services for incoming visitors, such as meeting them at the airport and facilitating their transfer to lodging facilities.

**Reconstruction**: The recreation of a historic building or feature that has been demolished or destroyed, based on documentation or research. The product resembles its historic predecessor, but is not historic.

**Restoration**: The act of returning a historic property as closely as possible to its exact appearance at a particular point in time, based on careful research. Few buildings call for this kind of treatment, which often involves removing modern systems, technological improvements and additions.
Retail Agency: Travel company selling directly to the public, sometimes a subdivision of a wholesale and/or retail travel organization.

Revolving Fund: Fund established for acquisition and rehabilitation of historic properties. When the acquisition and rehabilitation of a historic property has been completed, the property is sold, and the proceeds of the sale go back in to the revolving fund, which is then used to acquire and rehabilitate additional properties.

Sansei – Third generation Japanese American

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation: A broad set of guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic properties designated to encourage work which is in keeping with the historic character of the building, and which does not do damage to the building’s historic fabric. Projects receiving federal tax credits or grants from the federal Historic Preservation Fund must conform to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation; however, the Standards are also widely accepted among professionals in historic preservation as sound strategies for people working with any historic property.

Section 106: A portion of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 directing agencies of the federal government and peoples using federal funds, permits or licenses to consider the effects of their proposed projects on properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places during the planning stage of their project, and to allow the State Historic Preservation Officer and the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to comment on their findings. A Section 106 Review is a routine part of the planning phase that is federally assisted and is meant to ensure that federal funds are being spent in a way which is consistent with the policy of preserving historic properties whenever possible set forth by Congress in the National Historic Preservation Act.

Single Supplement: An extra charge assessed to individuals traveling alone who do not want to share accommodations.

Society of American Travel Writers (SATW): An association of journalists whose primary occupation is writing about or photographing travel destinations. www.satw.org

Supplier: The actual producer of a unit of travel merchandise, such as a carrier, hotel or sightseeing operator.

Survey: A study of historic properties or historic resources within a defined geographic area such as a neighborhood, community or township. A survey often serves as the foundation for a historic preservation plan for a neighborhood, community or region.

Tax credit: The 20% Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit available to owners of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places who invest in a substantial rehabilitation of their buildings, provided the work they do is certified by the National Park Service as conforming to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
**Technical Visit:** Tour designed for a special interest group, usually to visit a place of business with a common interest. The tour usually includes part business/part leisure and is customized for the group.

**Tour:** Any prearranged (but not necessarily prepaid) journey to one or more places and back to the point of origin.

**Tourism:** The business of providing and marketing services and facilities for pleasure travelers. Thus, the concept of tourism is of direct concern to governments, carriers and the lodging, restaurant and entertainment industries and of indirect concern to virtually every industry and business in the world.

**Tour Leader:** A person with special qualifications to conduct a particular travel group, such as a botanist who conducts a garden tour.

**Tour Operator:** A company that creates and/or markets inclusive tours and/or performs tour services.

**Tourism Industries, U.S. Department of Commerce:** The federal agency responsible for tracking and analyzing international visitation to the United States. www.tinet.ita.doc.gov.

**Travel Agent:** The individual who sells travel services, issues tickets and provides other travel services to the traveler at the retail level.

**Travel Industry Association of America (TIA):** The nonprofit umbrella trade organization of companies and government agencies representing all segments of the travel industry formed to promote travel to and within the US. www.tia.org

**Travel & Tourism Research Association – TTRA:** A professional society of market research specializing in the travel industry. www.ttra.com

### NEW CHHESS STRATEGIES (OVERARCHING)

**APPLYING CHHESS STRATEGIES TO CHALLENGES & CONCERNS**

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**NEW CHHESS STRATEGIES (LAND USE)**

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<td>Japantown needs to be more of a destination point</td>
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<td>The need for new culturally relevant entrepreneurship</td>
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## RELEVANT JCHESS STRATEGIES
### APPLYING CHHESS STRATEGIES TO CHALLENGES & CONCERNS

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<td>Develop a Strategic Plan for Japan Center Malls</td>
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<td>(LAND USE)</td>
<td>There is no unified voice, fragmentation</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(LAND USE)</td>
<td>Small businesses are at risk of displacement/ In need of support</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>(LAND USE)</td>
<td>There is no multi-generational space for the community to simply “hangout”</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>(LAND USE)</td>
<td>Need for more Culturally Relevant businesses</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>(LAND USE)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>need to Engage Younger Generations; Long commutes are a barrier to involvement</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need to attract Japanese-speaking community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need to address Japan Center Malls with a unified voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Only 4% of Certificate of Preferences were used after urban renewal displacement</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japantown needs to be more of a destination point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japantown doesn’t have a night life</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>The need for new culturally relevant entrepreneurship</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
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### OVERVIEW ON STATUS OF JCHHESS PROPOSED STRATEGIES

(PRIORITY=P STRATEGY, PT= PRIORITY TOOL, IN PROCESS= IP, ACCOMPLISHED= X, LATER=Z)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>P</th>
<th>PT</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Z</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CREATE A JAPANTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CREATE A JAPANTOWN COMMUNITY LAND TRUST</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>IMPLEMENT INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>NEGOTIATE BENEFITS AGREEMENTS WITH MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>CREATE A JAPANTOWN COMMUNITY BENEFITS DISTRICT</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>IMPLEMENT A JAPANTOWN MELLO-ROOS COMMUNITY FACILITIES DISTRICT</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>UTILIZE FUNDS FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO GRANTS FOR THE ARTS</td>
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## OVERVIEW ON STATUS OF JCHHESS EXISTING STRATEGIES

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. UTILIZE TOOLS FOR PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES</td>
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## Supplemental CHHESS

### I. Introduction & II. Vision

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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>2. LEVERAGE THE JAPANTOWN SPECIAL USE DISTRICT TO CULTIVATE AND ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES APPROPRIATE TO JAPANTOWN</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>3. UTILIZE THE CITY’S DESIGN GUIDELINES</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4. IMPLEMENT STREETSCAPE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS PER THE BETTER STREETS PLAN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5. IMPLEMENT PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6. MARKET THE NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH SFTRAVEL</strong></td>
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