

**REIMAGINE JAPANTOWN FRAMEWORK
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Questions & Answers
Version 12.22.23**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Reimagine Japantown Committee. Listed below are the questions we received regarding the RFP and our responses to the inquiries. Please feel free to contact us if you have additional questions at info@japantowntaskforce.org. These will be added to the RFP website under “Documents.” Also contact us at this email address if you wish to be added to the RFP outreach list. Please use the subject line “**Reimagine Japantown Framework.**” We look forward to receiving your submissions.

The RFP website with key dates and documents is [here](https://www.japantowntaskforce.org/reimagine-japantown-framework):
<https://www.japantowntaskforce.org/reimagine-japantown-framework>
Please check the website for key updates.

[12/13/23 Pre-Proposal Conference Presentation Link:](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1OXjfCm5L7pxyKSZyAkDFv9TIAj9OYxsiMi1vO455GCY/edit#slide=id.g263ac377aeb_0_16)
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1OXjfCm5L7pxyKSZyAkDFv9TIAj9OYxsiMi1vO455GCY/edit#slide=id.g263ac377aeb_0_16

LEGEND

Q = Questions

A = Answers

RJC = Reimagine Japantown Committee

SF Planning = San Francisco Planning Department

D4D = Design for Development

QUESTION CATEGORIES

Task 1: Vision Statement & Site-Specific Goals

1.1. Q: Do you anticipate the visioning process will come from the document review, or from working with the community?

A: A mix of both. The consultant is expected to review past community planning efforts, and derive a Vision Statement and Site-Specific goals while working closely with the RJC (Reimagine Japantown Committee).

1.2. Q: Who currently owns the malls?

A: The major property owners of the Japan Center superblocks include:

- AMC Kabuki 8 Theater (1881 Post) and Kabuki Spa (1750 Geary), owned by MKD Kabuki Center LLC
- Bridge & Kinokuniya Building (1825 Post), owned by Kinokuniya Book Stores of America
- Japan Center West Mall (11 Peace Plaza), owned by Japan Center West Associates, LP
- Japan Center East Mall (22 Peace Plaza), owned by Japan Center West Associates, LP
- Hotel Kabuki (1625 Post), owned by Blackstone
- Pa'ina Restaurant (1865 Post), owned by Mar Living Trust
- Parking Garage, owned by City and County of San Francisco (SFMTA)
- Peace Plaza, owned by City and County of San Francisco (Recreation and Parks Department)
- US Bank & vacant storefront (1675 Post & 22 Peace Plaza), owned by Union Bank of California
- Vacant offices/Dental office (1600-30 Geary), owned by Harvest Small Business Finance
- Medical Clinics (1660 Geary), owned by Kyo and Ae Lee

See *Appendix B: Japan Center Ownership Diagrams*

Task 2: Articulation of Public Benefits

2.1. Q: Are you seeking design concepts, spatial recommendations as part of this task?

A: No. The deliverables from this task should be a list or table describing, prioritizing, and quantifying proposed public benefits.

Task 3: Baseline Financial Feasibility Study (Pro Forma Analysis)

3.1. Q: Is the desired result to determine feasibility of existing development scenarios, and not come up with new ones?

A: This task focuses on analyzing the feasibility of a preliminary development scenario provided by RJC and SF Planning, evaluating tradeoffs for delivering the public benefits identified in Task 2. No new scenarios will be developed for this task, but Task 4 could entail refining the provided scenario. Recommendations may include:

- Incorporation of business retention and attraction strategies and recommendations
- Recommendations for ownership or tenancy models for housing, including former residents of the Japantown/Western Addition community prior to Redevelopment
- Recommendations for ownership and tenancy models for community-based and nonprofit organizations
- Recommendations for financial incentives/programs

The consultant should develop a multi-year financial model (pro forma analysis) to capture pre-development process, entitlement process, construction, and lease-up or sales depending on the residential tenure. In addition, the analysis should present a dynamic model that has rental or sales growth shown over time (more than one year); ideally, rental or sales growths exceed the growth of the cost of construction. The financial model should include land price, soft costs, and hard costs.

3.2. Q: How many preliminary development scenarios do you anticipate?

A: This task will start with one preliminary development scenario provided by RJC and SF Planning. The scenario may need to be refined based on feasibility analysis.

3.3. Q: Don't the preliminary scenarios already incorporate community input? When you say “balance community benefit,” aren't the scenarios inclusive of these?

A: Community input is embedded in the reference documents listed in the RFP. The scenario to be provided was developed by a property owner and will serve as a starting point for the analysis to understand what public benefits are feasible and what changes to the scenario are needed to realize the public benefits.

3.4. Q: Are we to also conduct direct community interviews or just use what has already been documented?

A: The expectation is to build upon the community priorities identified in the reference documents listed in the RFP. At this time, the consultant is *not* expected to conduct direct community interviews.

3.5. Q: In what formats/forms will you deliver the provided scenarios?

A: A PDF document will be provided with the proposed scenario. The development assumptions will also be provided.

3.6. Q: Are the current scenarios proposed by the developer or the City of San Francisco?

A: The scenario that will be provided was developed by a property owner.

3.7. Q: Reference is made to refinement of design. Who will be responsible for making the design refinements and what level of architectural/design work is expected?

A: The consultant will be responsible for making design refinements at a conceptual design level (e.g., massing, heights, and land use program) based on the feasibility analysis. RJC is also looking for a consultant who can identify creative solutions for delivering community benefits within the bounds of the feasibility analysis.

3.8. Q: Could you describe and/or show any of the proposed development scenarios that the owners have submitted?

A: The scenario will be shared with the selected consultant after contracting.

Task 4: Public Benefits + Financial Feasibility

4.1. Q: Would the developer be involved?

A: There is no developer at this point. SF Planning and the RJC are aiming to create a working group that would include representation from the property owners, the RJC, relevant City agencies, and the consultant.

4.2. Q: How creative is the consultant tasked to be (e.g., Enhanced Infrastructure Finance District, private bonds, etc.)?

A: The consultant is encouraged to identify innovative and creative ways to ensure any future development retains the Japan Center Malls as a strong anchor for the Japantown neighborhood and provides additional community benefits that achieves the goals of preserving and promoting the Japanese and Japanese American community.

4.3. Q: Would you be willing to share this deck after the call to the attendees?

A: Yes. The link is at the top of this document and posted to the RFP website:

<https://www.japantowntaskforce.org/reimagine-japantown-framework>

4.4. Q: Would the outcome of this process result in a D4D (Design for Development) and/or change of zoning? Or should we be working within a zoning envelope? Should the consultant consider "realistic" development envelopes?

A: The Reimagine Japantown Framework is a community planning effort intended to align the community's vision for the future of Japan Center Malls. This effort will not result in a D4D and/or change in zoning. Any future proposal for redeveloping the Japan Center Malls would need to submit an application to the City and may include a D4D, rezoning and/or a Development Agreement.

4.5. Q: The evaluation is limited ONLY to existing proposed plans/designs right?

A. The financial feasibility analysis will examine the development scenario provided to the consultant. Task 4 would allow the consultant to refine the scenario based on the feasibility analysis and the identified community benefits.

4.6. Q: Would the consultants on this project be excluded from participating in future work?

A. No.

4.7. Q: Is there some determined metric for the calculated cost of the cessation of existing retail operations in the Project Area if one of the development scenarios require demolition – or is the Consultant expected to calculate this?

A: The City would work with the consultant on all assumptions used for the feasibility analysis.

4.8 Q: Do you anticipate any visualization that may challenge the given scenarios as a result of this exercise?

A: It will depend on the feasibility analysis (Task 4). Visualizations may be helpful if there is no alignment between the development scenario and desired community benefits. Visualizations may be helpful to show what a feasible project might look like and the tradeoffs that might be needed.

Task 5: Framework Document

5.0: *No questions asked*

Task 6: Sharing the Framework Document

6.1 Q: Should we plan for translation services as part of this scope? Or will the City/Committee provide any translation that may be necessary?

A: No. The RJC and SF Planning will support translation and interpretation services as needed throughout the development of the Reimagine Japantown Framework.

6.2 Q: Do you anticipate one set of proposed revisions coming out of this process in Task 6?

A: Most revisions should happen during the development of Task 4. Any revisions deriving from Task 6 and meetings with the working group will be evaluated by the RJC and the consultant.

6.3 Q: Will the information provided to the consultant also include the economic needs/goals/limits of the real estate and mall owners in addition to public benefits so that the consultant can work on finding the right balance?

A: Yes, development assumptions will be provided. The City will work with the property owners to provide as much information as possible to ensure this effort is grounded on a realistic proposal.

6.4 Q: Can some of the meetings happen before the Framework is developed, or you anticipate afterwards?

A: Working group meetings will be scheduled based on the RJC and consultant input once the consultant is selected.

6.5 Q: Do you know if the committee prefers to meet in person or over zoom?

A: Case by case. The RJC is flexible and this can be determined with the consultant.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

SUBMISSION *No questions asked*

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

QUALIFICATIONS: *No questions asked*

SELECTION CRITERIA

SELECTION 1.0 Q: A key question for us in our decision to respond to this RFP is if this effort would exclude team members from participating in future work at this site -- either with the City, the Committee, or with the site ownership.

A: Per discussion with Planning, OEWD, and RJC, this effort would **NOT** exclude team members from participating in future work at this site.

SCHEDULE

SCHEDULE 1.1 Q: Could you describe and/or show any of the proposed development scenarios that the owners have submitted?

A: The scenario will be shared with the selected consultant after contracting.

SCHEDULE 1.2 Q: will the answers to the chat questions be published?

A: Yes, the Q&A document will be posted on the RFP website on Fri, 12/22/23.

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1OXjfCm5L7pxyKSZyAkDFv9TIAj9OYxsiMi1vO455GCY/edit#slide=id.g263ac377aeb_0_16

SCHEDULE 1.3 Q: Is there a target timeline (e.g., 10-years, 20-years) for implementation of the Reimagine Japantown Framework?

A. Not at this time.