**INTRODUCTION**

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Japantown’s Osaka Way (Buchanan Mall) is the pedestrian portion of Buchanan Street that runs for one block between Post and Sutter streets. Along with Peace Plaza, it’s the geographic and cultural heart of the neighborhood. This walkway is lined by restaurants, stores, and cultural institutions on both sides, allowing residents and visitors to experience Japantown’s culture in a pedestrian environment. Designed in the 1960s, Osaka Way is paved with a river of cobblestones, connecting two fountain installations, consisting of origami flower forms designed by renowned artist Ruth Asawa, and surrounded by low, circular stone walls. In 2022, the project received a General Fund Grant of $5,000,000 from the California Natural Resources Agency. The City has submitted applications for additional funding to implement the project.

The community has identified some areas where Osaka Way needs upgrades. What are your ideas for this space?

**SITE MAP**

![Site Map of Japantown Osaka Way/Buchanan Mall](image)

**PROJECT TIMELINE**

![Project Timeline Diagram](image)

**PROJECT GOALS**

1. **ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY**
   - Enhance accessibility of Osaka Way for seniors and people with disabilities and limited mobility.

2. **RESTORE THE RUTH ASAWA FOUNTAINS**
   - Rehabilitate the Ruth Asawa fountains that are iconic to Osaka Way.

3. **SUPPORT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**
   - Support the business community by embellishing the sense of cultural authenticity and enhancing the commercial edges of Osaka Way.
1945
San Francisco’s General Plan:
SF Planning’s first General Plan identified neighborhoods that were predominately people of color as “blighted” – including the Western Addition, South of Market, Chinatown, the Mission, and Bayview/Hunter’s Point.
The Redevelopment Agency used this designation to justify the wholesale removal of Black, Japanese and Japanese American, and other communities of color through eminent domain.

1956
Redevelopment Phase A-1:
The wholesale eviction of residents and businesses and the flattening of entire blocks of buildings on and south of Post Street began.
Communities across Japantown and Western Addition began organizing against redevelopment efforts. This empowerment led to the birth of new community-serving organizations, an organized effort to protect their physical community base and a willingness to resist the forces pushing people of color out of the Western Addition.

1966
Redevelopment Phase A-2:
The A-1 protests had a marked effect on the Redevelopment Phase A-2, which sought community input, invested in the rehabilitation of existing structures, and concentrated on constructing residential and community buildings with a smaller, neighborhood scale.

1970s & 1980s
Redevelopment buildings of the 1970s–1980s, such as Buchanan Mall, the JCCCNC, Nichi Bei Kai, JACL, Konko Church and Soto Zen Sokoji Temple, all proudly expressing traditional Japanese architectural influences.
### SITE HISTORY | サイトの歴史 | HISTORIA DEL SITIO

#### BRIEF HISTORY | 略歴 | BREVE HISTORIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Urban design study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Ruth Asawa commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Project completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Fountains recast in bronze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Renamed Osaka Way</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*“...urban hallway, linking the various elements of Nihonmachi and designed to be used by walkers only.”
“...lively and active,” but with “contrast to the larger scale, highly stylized development across Post Street to the south [to] be sharp.”*  
(excerpts from Van Bourg-Nakamura Architects & Rai Okamato's 1963 urban design study)
Ruth Asawa (1926 – 2013), a second-generation Japanese American artist was best known for her looped- and tied-wire sculptures and many public artworks throughout San Francisco and the Bay Area. In 1975-1976, artist Ruth Asawa designed the Origami Fountains in the plaza at the Buchanan Street Mall. The plaza and entrance gate were completed in 1976. At their initial installation, the fountains experienced pump problems and did not function as designed. The fountains corroded due to disuse and were removed as a safety hazard in 1995.

However, at the urging of the community and Ruth Asawa herself, Buchanan Mall was revitalized and the refabricated bronze fountains, created by Asawa, were installed in 1999. At that time they were designated as City Art Pieces by the San Francisco Arts Commission. The Origami Fontains were designed with a “river” of cobblestones referencing early San Francisco streets. The “river” flows toward Peace Plaza. Currently, the fountains are not operational. The main objective of this project is to restore the fountain’s operation and provide the necessary masonry and concrete work needed to do so.
Asawa also created the wood and concrete benches located at intervals along the Mall. She enlisted the help of the Buchanan Mall merchants’ children in making the relief panels that adorn the benches. Depicting scenes from Japanese fairy tales and festivals, the panels were sculpted in Baker’s Clay dough (one of Asawa’s favored mediums when working with children) before being cast in concrete.


Cast concrete sculpted with children of the neighboring shopkeepers. Photo by James Jue.

Detailed views of two concrete bench end panels, 2023.


HOW TO GET INVOLVED
SFPlanning.org/JapantownOsakaWay
SIGN UP FOR OUR MAILING LIST!
Nihonmachi Parking Corporation
OPEN HOUSE #1
MAY 31, 2023
JAPANTOWN UPGRADES PROJECT
OSAKA WAY (BUCHANAN MALL)
CONNECTIVITY | 接続性 | CONECTIVIDAD
SITE CONTEXT | サイトの歴史的背景 | CONTEXTO DE SITIO
Osaka Way - Buchanan St, Post St to Sutter St
OPEN HOUSE #1
MAY 31, 2023
Translations | Translations | Translations
Translations | Translations | Translations
Translations | Translations | Translations
Translations | Translations | Translations
Translations | Translations | Translations
Translations | Translations | Translations
1. Bird’s eye view

2. Osaka Way
大阪ウェイ

3. Japantown Peace Plaza
ピースプラザ

Rai Okamoto and Van Bourg/Nakamura’s concept plans for a “village-scale” community center reflects “the wishes of the local citizens” for an environment characterized by an “intimate scale of buildings and spaces”.

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Nihonmachi
Parking Corporation
JAPANTOWN UPGRADES PROJECT
OSAKA WAY (BUCHANAN MALL)
OPEN HOUSE #1
MAY 31, 2023
EXISTING FORMS | 既存のフォーム | FORMAS EXISTENTES
POST STREET TO SUTTER STREET
EXISTING SITE PLAN
RUTH ASAWA BENCHES
UTILITY CABINET
EXISTING LIGHTING | 既存の照明 | ILUMINACIÓN EXISTENTE
What lighting do you like and what would improve your experience in this space?

EXISTING LIGHTING | 既存の照明 | ILUMINACIÓN EXISTENTE
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Nihonmachi
Parking Corporation
OPEN HOUSE #1
MAY 31, 2023
EXISTING PLANTING | 既存の植栽 | VEGETACIÓN EXISTENTE

EXISTING SITE PLAN

EXISTING PLANTING:

- CHERRY BLOSSOM TREES
- TREE WELLS
- PLANTERS

EXISTING BUSINESS PLACES:

- KIPPU
- KIMOCHI
- DOOBU
- ALOHA WAREHOUSE
- HINO DEYA RAMEN BAR
- PAPER TREE
- SOKO HARDWARE
- SHABUSEN (CLOSED)
- RAMEN YAMADAYA (UPPER FLOOR)
- HOSHINOYA
- BENKO-DO (CLOSED)
- FOREST BOOKS
- SANKO KITCHEN ESSENTIALS
What planting do you like and what would improve your experience in this space?

Esta página contiene información sobre cómo involucrarse en los proyectos de mejora en el barrio de Nihonmachi, incluyendo la opción de registrarse en su lista de correo. El mapa muestra la ubicación de los sitios actuales y propuestos, así como encuestas para obtener comentarios de los residentes sobre qué plantas o árboles le gustaría ver en el espacio.

La página también incluye opciones para la urbanización de la calle Osaka (Osaka Way / Buchanan Street Mall), con áreas para plantas, árboles y espacios para el público. Se puede ver la ubicación de los sitios actuales y propuestos, así como encuestas para obtener comentarios de los residentes sobre qué plantas o árboles le gustaría ver en el espacio.

Las encuestas están disponibles en inglés, japonés y español, y se pueden encontrar en el sitio web SFPlanning.org/JapantownOsakaWay.

Por favor, proporcione comentarios sobre qué plantas o árboles le gustaría ver en este espacio.
Oriented north/south, Osaka Way is oriented to allow for mid-day sun exposure, staying shaded in early morning and evening hours. The central area containing the fountains are the sunniest spots throughout the year.
OUTDOOR DINING, RETAIL & CIRCULATION

Site circulation and elements channel pedestrians around certain areas which allows for the outdoor dining opportunities seen here.
## Preliminary Outreach

### What People Enjoy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cherry trees</th>
<th>shops</th>
<th>paving</th>
<th>art</th>
<th>lanterns</th>
<th>ceremonial</th>
<th>gateway</th>
<th>furniture + blue green infrastructure for flood protection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Asawa</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Cherry Trees!
- Love the shops!
- More restaurants and outdoor dining

### What Could Improve People's Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenery</th>
<th>Furniture</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Arts &amp; Culture</th>
<th>Programming</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

- More festivals (and games traditional to Japan)
- More group seating and tables (picnic tables?)
- More community events and more days of Art Mart!
- A Gateway on the south end
- Love the shops!
- More restaurants and outdoor dining
- More festivals (and games traditional to Japan)
- More group seating and tables (picnic tables?)
- More community events and more days of Art Mart!
- A Gateway on the south end

City staff attended several community events through 2022 and 2023 to inform people about the project and gather initial feedback.
How many people enter and exit Osaka Way? More people visit the space on a weekend than on a weekday, and those entering and exiting the space are relatively equal.

People also ride their bike, run, scoot, and use wheelchairs in the space. Upgrades will take other mobility options into account to create a more accessible space.
What’s already working?
What should be preserved?
What could be improved?

Let us know your thoughts!

FOUNTAINS & WALLS
喷水と壁
FUENTES Y PAREDES

SEATING
座席
ASIENTOS

PAVING
舗装
PAVIMENTADO

TORII GATE
鳥居
ENTRADA TORII

OTHER
他の
OTROS
**How to Get Involved**

SFPlanning.org/JapantownOsakaWay

**Sign up for our mailing list!**

Nihonmachi Parking Corporation

**Japantown Upgrades Project**

**Osaka Way**

(Buchanan Mall)

**Open House #1**

May 31, 2023

**Focus:**
- Project overview, Goals and objectives, Site history, Existing conditions, Community feedback, Projected timeline
- Initial conceptual design alternatives, gather feedback on preferred options
- Focused outreach with merchants, children and youth, seniors and people with disabilities
- Present a revised conceptual design and address remaining concerns

**Project Timeline**

- Spring 2022 - Winter 2023
  - Conditions & Needs Assessment, Initial Project Outreach
- Spring 2023 - Summer 2023
  - Public Workshop Series and Conceptual Design Development
- Fall 2023 - Spring 2024
  - Design Refinement, Environmental Review
- Summer 2024
  - Detailed Design
- Spring 2025
  - Construction begins

**Stay Involved!**

SFPlanning.org/JapantownOsakaWay

**Comment Board**

What else should we know?

- He ni o knowi kuredeka
- ¿Qué más deberíamos saber?

**Your input will move the project forward by:**

- Prioritizing the preservation of elements that are most significant and valuable to the Japantown community
- Flagging the community’s main concerns that will inform the development of design alternatives
- Sourcing creative solutions to address the space’s challenges
- Helping strategize the project’s implementation to mitigate its impacts and continue supporting Osaka Way’s local businesses

**Visit our website for updates!**

SFPlanning.org/JapantownOsakaWay

**Today!**

**Public Workshop #1**

Focus: Project overview, Goals and objectives, Site history, Existing conditions, Community feedback, Projected timeline

**Public Workshop #2**

Focus: Initial conceptual design alternatives, gather feedback on preferred options

**Public Workshop #3**

Focus: Present a revised conceptual design and address remaining concerns

**Summer 2023**

**Focused Conversations & Surveys**

Focused outreach with merchants, children and youth, seniors and people with disabilities

**Fall 2023**

**Public Workshop #4**

Focus: Present a revised conceptual design and address remaining concerns