COMMUNITY MEETING NOTES
JUNE 1, 2011
GROUP 1 OF 3: LAND USE
TOPIC LEADERS: : KAREN KAI

JAPANTOWN FLIP CHARTS – LAND USE

Recorder #1's notes
Sorted by: Jay Cataudella
Typed by: Kris Schaeffer

Japanese Department Store
I think a combination of high-end retail and more local/community-based family owned business are essential. I am in favor of a trendy Japanese department store but it must strike the right balance of being authentically Japanese and attracting Asian Americans.

Mom & Pops
Maintain Mom & Pop store. Affordability without large stores putting them out of business.

Japanese Company Retail Presence
I would like to see Japanese companies have a presence in JTown. Sony, Hitachi, Sharp and even say Honda.

High-End Building retail Uses
Diversify:

1. Japanese department store would be nice.
2. Add some high-end retail
3. Love the Japanese hardware store. Don't change.
4. No high-rises though larger / more diverse
5. Farmer's Market like Ferry Building or Fisherman's Warf

More Senior/Disabled Housing
Senior family care
Housing for disabled that is more affordable than current skilled nursing.

Shopping Hours
Keep the mall stores open till 8 or 9 p.m. to create a more active evening life besides the restaurants and dining.

Residential/Commercial Mix
Would like to have more mixed use residential / commercial buildings.

Building with ground-level commercial space mixed with residential use will help to create community and street activity.

I feel that a "community" ____(word?) an ideal combination / ratio of residential and commercial property. I feel that a good ratio is about (?) residential to 2 commercial. Therefore, a mixed zone community works best because it guarantees a certain residential mix.

More residences could be built on top of commercial spaces. Just a couple of floors up. Not a high-rise. Just small apartment buildings, possibly one of two bedroom sized.

Market rate, vertical mixed use.
    Would consider mixed income. E.g,, 25% low; 75% market.
Above Japan Canter 6-8 stories
    Need to increase commercial activity on streets. More attractive to pedestrians.
Surrounding areas of Japan Center. (1 block radius) about 5 stories
Connect each side of Geary
Connect families to neighborhood.

Buildings should be mixed-use with businesses on the ground floor and apartments above.
We need more residential space so families can move back to JTown.

Height: some increases based on use, e.g., Housing
General 4-6 stories
Have H-16 like Kabuki
Depends on location, shadow, views, adjacency to street, neighborhood scale.
    Need to define "feel" of neighborhood.
        Shops, housing, cultural

Attract active businesses that offer Japanese / Japanese-American goods & services. Size does not matter.
Any business that attracts clients / tourists / visitors and locals to Japantown tour and Japan Center should be welcomed.
Be realistic in terms of present buildings & structure which cannot be changed easily.

Per the BNP that was "acknowledged" by the Planning Commission, the high rises were necessary for the BNP to work out economically. Has the Committee considered the height limit restrictions on the economic feasibility of a revised BNP?

No height increases
I think we should target housing development towards seniors and young people. I do not think we should build high rises that take away from the community character that attracts people to live here. We should also provide incentives for current apartment buildings to remodel and attract new tenants. People who want o live in high rise buildings move downtown. We want to expand housing but keep the neighborhood feel.

No high rises. The Hotel Kabuki is already pretty tall for the area. I worry about shadows & making it too much like the Tenderloin.

The most high building is the Japanese temple. It is important for children to view.
It is a town for children.

I think the Geary wall should not be more than it is now. My concern would be that Japantown would not be visible to cars and buses and pedestrians if it blocks the pagoda.

I do like the idea of more shops visible on street level on Geary.

In order to preserve its historic "village" character, JTown must maintain its existing height limits. No high rises. The 1481 Post proposed development should not be allowed.

I would like to see no height increases and no high rises since I think it would ruin the character of the community and make it look like any of downtown areas if height increase were allowed.

Post Street should stay low height as commercial area.

I agree with the height limits for most of JTown but would that recommendation prevent any large buildings in the future?

Keep height of buildings as it is in JapanTown.
Mix shops and housing.

My recommendation is to keep the height in Japantown just as it currently is, with no dramatic changes.

Pedestrian access / Geary
There is no access to Jtown mall from Geary. If this continues, Geary is just a pass-by so height probably doesn't matter.
If there are ped accesses from Geary, the mall height should stay low.

Ped access. No bridges on Geary

Seems important to consider residential potential of area south of Geary (for Jtown) since there is surprisingly large Japanese and Korean American residential population there.
2 ideas: (1) increase cross-Geary access. (2) Locate some attraction south side of Geary.

Have car-free areas.
Have micro-mini open spaces.

Affordability (family & youth)

High rise along Geary is OK abaout the height of Kabuki Hotel
240 ft. tower to allow for more inclusionary housing.
Incorporate small roof gardens and court yards in high rises to maximize sun and open space for housing units.

Affordable housing on site.

There should be a goal to provide incentives to the developer to construct more than 15% affordable housing for any new residential project.

JTown needs facilities or a facility that provides a space for unstructured time for youth (middle school thru high school).

Miscellaneous

- Retail store frontage along courtyard to invite people to the Hotel Kabuki side
- There are already a lot of low income housing in area.
- I am for market rate housing.
- This will support the businesses.
- More parking for regional people drawn to JTown.
- Smaller units young people, night life)
- More affordable senior housing. Socialization
- Live/work units on Geary
- Better access across Geary to Japanese American populat6ion across the street.
- New families (Inner Richmond District). They come to eat & shop.
- Kyleoura@yahoo.com

In long run, seems important for Japanese and Korean groups to work together, combine people resources toward one dual cultural "Japantown" (rename?)

Specific Height Restrictions
Building heights along south Geary: 150 feet
Along Post: 85 feet
Along Sutter: 85 feet

What has been the reaction of property owners to the proposed height limit of 40 feet?

Community Land Use:
Keep height to current zoning but where zoned substantially higher than adjacent buildings, increase by one story only over lower building heights.

Accommodate new families
JTown most needs housing that will accommodate new families.

Specific building uses
Land use:

Need to make performing arts space(s) a priority. Could be Japan Center or other building

2-4 stories of housing over shops if possible.
Church sponsored, using portions of church property?

Diversity in businesses; Space allotment

1. Cultural performing arts center (east end)
2. Japanese art crafts. Artist workshops, pottery, glass, wood, textiles
3. Incrased retail footage for more retail goods stores
4. Professional office for Japanese doctors, dentist, optical, CPA services
5. Japanese consulate office
6. Education institute space for (thought not finished)

Look to St. Francis Square, Buchanan Y for creative infill opportunity & bridge over Geary

I think we need both family* and young adult SRO/studio units, including affordable housing. *Many of them live in JTown.
Like to see integration of community facility meeting space, exercise space, gardening spaces, with housing.

Land Use

1. Keep small local merchants
2. Affordable housing
3. Height limitation
4. Japanese craft, art, and print shops

Foot Traffic
I think foot traffic and nightlife is essential. In New York City, St. Mark's (?) Street (Square?) features many Japanese restaurants and shops and is so attractive because of its trendy couture and foot traffic that is welcoming to young adults especially at night. (open late)

Housing General

We lost Japanese & Japanese American families when the redevelopment happened. If there was housing it would be nice to bring this demographic back to the area. Also to the people who were displaced during the redevelopment, they are seniors now. Housing for seniors and families.

There is a need for more housing. Some buildings have a year-long wait lsit. Big apartment / condo complexes may hurt JTown and the culture of people who live here. Smaller housing would be great to keep JTown a quiet, safe comfortable space for residents.

Housing is an important component to bring vitality to the area. There would be mixed use buildings; residential / commercial & public services. Housing should be subsidized for seniors/ families.

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Recorder #2's notes

Recorded by: Angella Bernal
Typed by: Kris Schaeffer

Affordable housing in JTown should not be offsite

Retail ideas:
One department store, not like upper Fillmore Area
Sony Store @ Metreon
    Tech Store
    Showroom & sales
Steady business flow throughout the year
Collaborative effort
Japan business-like Ferry Building
    Open market

Free wi-fi in JTown
Attractive communal space
Open Market for foot traffic (not like Geary Street)

Housing & Parking Needs in JTown
Form follows function
Inner Richmond – attract families
Zone for work/loft
Parking needed if attracting outside of area
Youth hostel to attract tourists & youth
More public transportation
Connecting retail spaces for foot traffic