COMMUNITY MEETING NOTES
July 31, 2011
GROUP 2 OF 2: COMMUNITY HERITAGE
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Questions and Answers / Comments
Is it true that Japanese nationals do not participate in Japanese community?
Is there an age threshold for City Landmarks? No.
What's the difference between national designation and local? Local has more protection. National has no added local protection. Federal incentives are not available in this instance.
Sites of round-ups should be designated.
#1 recommendation is for Pagoda only.
Difference between a structure and the land it sits on?
#1 recommendation is only the Pagoda as an object.
Some locations can also be protected.
How is the Pagoda seen? As a religious structure?
Other Japantowns may not have collapsed - they dispersed.
Ability to close streets for festivals so that neighbors can't prohibit them.
Pros and cons regarding Peace Pagoda as Landmark: 1. Protected - demolitions with greater difficulty. 2. owned by City. 3. Economics if we want the land for something else. 4. City responsible for repair costs. 5. 262 landmarks in City and none are related to Japanese heritage.
What made Japantown Japantown historically? What can we bring back that is no longer here?
How do we maintain continuity in interest in culture, e.g. there was a renaissance in Hawaiian culture. How do we
Show off the Peace Wall behind the Pagoda.
Hula festivals in Hawaii have been vital.
Increase focus on festivals and art.
What's the state of the fountain?
Is there a way to make Japantown a historic district? "Historic district" doesn't address cultural use, but it's a
If BNP includes policies than it can prevent more.
What does the SUD have to do with the BNP?
What things should be added rather than just what to preserve?
SUD - change of use is proposed = reviewed
BNP - prescriptive plan = template to guide
SUD doesn't trigger taxes
Are there demographics for J-Town? No.

Sticky Note Comments
Other Issues
Buchanan Fountain
New generations are organizing and being involved in new ways that are not always recognized by Sansei and more established generations - how will they be recognized, reached and involved in J-Town?
Parking Lot Issues: Small children's park + teahouse; Areas for *senior* citizens due to census data showing older

Other thoughts/ideas per topic: #1) The Peace Pagoda being the *only landmark in this Japantown* (3/SF) it should definitely be preserved!! (5) #2) I've always enjoyed JT's cultural festivals and parades since after 1970!! I feel all ethnic groups need to have these ways to share their history. (5) #3) Why not? As long as they are relevant to our area and people, we need to have our rights to speak out. #4) While I agree/feel JT needs to be preserved as an historical landmark, after Ross spoke, I'm not sure I like the idea of a private group owning part of the city. If in the future that owner could block city 'growth' (building, changes, up-grading?) But I guess if JT is not a private entity (sp?), you're safe. F-ck uneven sidewalks/streets - get better cross walks for disabled (sp?) -
Parking is an on-going issue in Jtown. Actually more parking is needed, at an affordable price.
Japanese Interim (sp?) Army Building (Laguna Street and Geary Blvd.)
(4) What do demographic changes mean for Japantown's future?
If more kids are "multi cultural or ethnic" - then more need for strengthening Japanese cultural focus - food, dance, drum, arts, etc.
Needs to outreach more diverse groups to preserve Jtown.
Since majority are mixed provide opportunities to let them find/understand their Japanese roots, i.e. bookstore,
Important to strengthen ties to Japan/Japanese language in culture for youth Yomsei + Shin-Nisei participate in community primarily through voluntary involvement in community orgs + events.
44%: 1-34, 40%: 35-64. What would bring the new generations to J-town? What speaks to the multi-racial, multi-ethnic JT? Is it food, activities, sports classes? Separate effort needed targeting them to get their input.
Japantown has always been and is now a culturally diverse community. Planning can't focus or protect *only* Japanese American culture even if it *predominates* . How does the planning committee propose to do that if it
I feel strongly that shin-Issei and shin-Nisei residents need to be incorporated into the JA community. Nihanmachi Roots outreached to this population and got a huge response, so there are a lot in the bay area. If they are not incorporated, J-town loses the support of this population. For example, these kids usually don't know about J-league basketball. Sin-Nisei & Issei kids contribute to Japanese American culture. I am a Yonsei and learn a lot from Shin-Nisei/Issei. Just imagine if they were part of existing organizations like JCCCNC, JCYC, etc.
Robust community services. Social care, sports, cultural clubs, interest-based clubs.
Does not matter as long community can still gather together.
Demographic changes mean for Japantown's future, aging, multiracial, more Japanese National. We need to bring in young families to help them encourage family traditions involving Japantown that grows with the family. We need social gathering areas that serve a wide age range. We need events to bring in the community into town, as they now have moved away from J Town.
The plan needs to include strategies and tactics to bring Japanese-American youth into Japantown - from pre-teen through recent college grads/newly employed: Programs - youth-oriented business, youth-oriented entertainment. Needs to recognize differences with age groups. Youth and young adult vision is a start - how does it fit in the Plan? Need strategies to capture the history to build a sense of roots and community - to bridge from the experience of serious to the curiosity of youth. oral histories are one approach, but needs more than just
Need more activities culturally specific targeting Japanese national and general public for the vitality of Japantown. Activities recognizing the Korean community here should be a part of the acknowledgement.
J Town needs to address and attract more hapas to the area.
Youth Demographic. The demographic that *most* needs attention is the middle school - high school - early college ate group. Currently Jtown has few facilities or attractions allowing their unstructured but sustained participation in the community. Without their involvement all our planning is for naught. But neither the draft plan for our current planning has proposed any viable plan to secure this youth involvement.
Demographic changes. We need to let youth and young adults have a greater role in leadership and decision making in Japantown otherwise their needs will continue to be ignored and there will not be future generations who feel that Japantown is culturally relevant or important to them.
While our primary focus should be preserving and growing the Japanese American cultural presence, we should explore complimentary Asian American cultural and commercial opportunities.
This means Japantown area needs to become a "draw" by providing cultural events, activities, including historical and current events like manga (sp?). This makes Japantown unique and interesting for all as an overall draw for all interested in Japanese culture.

The census data reinforces what we've known for a long time - more Hapa. J Town hasn't been a JA residential community since redevelopment. What is the committee doing to address the needs of upcoming generations, especially those that have been traditionally marginalized and underserved such as young adults, youth, and
There is tremendous opportunity for intergenerational activity and opportunity to use this to advance cultural continuity between young and old. It doesn't matter what your race is. What matters is your love and interest in the culture and your interest in perpetuating its practice and value.
If people need to travel further to get here it must be a *safe* , interesting place.
How do you retain Shin-Nisei participation in Japantown for the future. Culturally. Economically.
J Town will be no more if the next generations are not brought back to J Town. Current resources don't do
What is the impact of increasing percentage of Japanese immigrants? Does this move Japantown away from Japanese-American culture towards Japanese culture, and how does this impact Japantown's viability as a
How can you address the shifting demographics of the community without looking specifically at youth young adult issues? What good are stats if they don't address J Town specifically. We need to look at bringing in next 4th/5th generation into community through performing arts, youth and young space that we as a community don't currently support? #4 doesn't address issues of a changing community! Stats don't mean anything.
Demographic changes - how does this effect/impact employer and employment needs? Is there a specific community group to focus on? Or is audience more general because Japanese are not specifically located
Demographics and multi-ethnic people are everywhere Jtown should emphasize Japanese/J-American first - not make another pan-Asian ethnic community center. Center itself should sell or offer authentic Japanese stuff otherwise Jtown will be like any other city mall, streetscape, not likely to be visited as much by Japanese people from Japan as a *destination* point. If the # of full Japanese blooded people are on decline, it's more reason to emphasize the importance of the *Japanese* part over the others - may combine with SUD rules so we do not get
I feel that Japantown should cater more to Japanese nationals. May need more businesses, festivals, theatrical events, i.e. NOH.
For sustainability there must be services and programs that appeal to all ages. Need play space appropriate for 0-5 years and youth hang out.
Current assets do not reflect contemporary Japan with the notable exception of New People. Why not highlight Japanese electronics, Japanese cars, other technologies?
If Jtown gets taken over by groups who do not prioritize Japanese authentic features/ stores/ restaurants/ services then Jtown is not really much of a Jtown and Japanese people will not want to return since most live outside the area - get Jtown to have things that are unique with authentic Japanese qualities - 20% of Japanese nationals in SF, 34% of mixed Japanese ethnicity, still emphasize Japanese and bilingual J-Eng. services, events.
Should Japantown BNP include city policies, procedures, and codes? Rate importance: 1-5 scale.
I rate a 4.
Young adults and youth need a dedicated, permanent place where they can gather informally (outside of structured programs or organizations.)
The plan seems to ignore the cross-cultural factors that made the Fillmore so vibrant. Doesn't this create a misleading historical perspective? Risk of a Solvang/Disneyland: tourists without authentic community.
Immediate protection of enforceable laws should be the priority. If BNP allows enforcement of law then priority.
Rating of SUD important (4) fairly important. It would be nice to maintain cultural heritage, but I think it's also important to encourage business in the neighborhood to operate in existing retail space. I would especially like to see Japan-based businesses (retail, big box or formula stores / fast food) be encouraged to establish locations in Japantown - i.e.. Family-Mart, Uniqlo, MasBurger, etc. I support including policies in BNP.
Why is the SUD the right place to incorporate use conditions?
5
5
BNP should include policies 5
4
Special Use District laws that protect Japantown are a good idea, but it sounds like there are a number of different approaches. I don't think there was enough information presented to say how important the SUD is in comparison to the other laws mentioned in the discussion.

Concern is would SUD add bureaucracy? Would SUD enhance business and jobs development? Priority = need more info to decide. SUD could be good to align preservation of community resources with new development.
Why wasn't the SUD proposal brought to the Organizing committee before it went to Supervisor Mirkarimi.
4. A possible consideration is to exempt major Japanese chain store from the city's prohibitions on opening in neighborhood. This would be a case by case determination if the proposed store would fit the criteria of preserving and promoting Japanese culture and identity.
Yes, codes should be used as a tool in the BNP. *But* we must be careful to *balance* protections with opportunities for appropriate change and development. I am not in favor of, for example, of restricting all formula retail or wholesale restriction of anything. We cannot predict the future
Legislating protections for cultural assets could be important. But to do that properly requires that we decide 1) what and who is the community? 2) what are the cultural assets we need to or should protect? 3) what are the appropriate tools to address or provide protection to each asset category? 4) how define cultural asset without legal problems? The recommendations listed on the handout are very vague. In this kind of legislation, the details are critical. Whether I would support an amended SUD (or other legislation) depends on the substance of the
I wanted to hear what Paul Warmer had to say!! SUD import? While they are important who gets to decide what that criteria is? What fits into that criteria? Who does that review? What if a business wants to come into Jtown? What procedures and codes would be included?
SUD should help to preserve resources and assets of Jtown. 5 out of 5. However, public needs another meeting on *details* of SUD controls. Attach building inventory in plan and reference in city code when adopted.
SUD should not be expanded past Pine Street. Any important cultural or historic building north of Pine could be
#1 very important
This is very confusing. Very difficult to rate without details.
1 - Sounds like a good idea, but would have liked more information on restrictions that SUD would impose.
5
4 - Although cultural heritage is very important, the SUD has to be flexible in what is allowed. I.e. the city's definition of formula retail may restrict a needed commodity.
The summary of the SUD that is presented is too vague to comment on - it's good to protect and nurture J Town's cultural community, but its not clear what this SUD proposal is or would do.
2 What resources should be protected and preserves? What's essential?
Perhaps a cultural activities investment can be created on a platform crossing Geary between J.C and YMCA
1- All Japanese cultural arts practiced, and horsed in Japantown need to be preserved.
2- Peace Plaza maintained and promoted essential to continue legacy.
3- Art Center Serving - 1 Historical legacy (tourism) 2- Gallery art space for Asian American Arts. 3- Dedicated performing arts space.
2- A youth hangout with the loss of the Japan town bowl, there is a vacuum for where young people can gather. JCYC is now primarily office space.
3- Need Japanese - themed green space
1- Small Businesses, e.g. backyard. 2-cherry blossom parade. 3-dance, martial arts. 4- food 5- landscape 6- support for JCCCNC- Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Northern California
Restore some original functions of J.T 1- Move back Japan council and outreach. 2- Restore corporate outreach Japanese part of J.C. 3- Japan crafts education center.
4- There needs to be a dedicated space for childcare/after school care. While Christ United has worked as a venue for NLF. The community needs to invest in a permanent home for childcare/ afterschool care/ youth
Japanese book store - National Japanese American historical society - Commitment for Kabuki and new people cinema/ Japanese films. - Japanese language school
Bring back what made Japan Town, Japan Town to modern Japan Town.
Explore the return of the Japanese Consulate to Japantown. The Center counsel General is highly community
Community organizations, events programs based in the geographical area
2- The goal? Is how to maintain interest and continuity of human engagement in cultural activities. Marie Monarch Festival is a model for using the outs as a fundamental platform for cultural revitalization.

Ruth away foundations

Resources that are needed- 1- A "tot lot" for 0-5 years old use tottoro as a theme.

Cultural Festivals Architecture
Perhaps some events and interpretive tools can be multi - ethnic to reflect history and demographic trends (with out overshadowing Native Heritage Culture)
www.projectjt.ning.com is a site which started from a design class at academy of art university graduate school of architecture, it is a network site people can propose idea to San Francisco JapanTown.
Cherry Blossom Festival should be protected. - Benkyo-do and Japan video should be protected
Protecting resources - The arts need all the support they can get - especially small groups Japantown needs to showcase its artists (both visual and per forming arts)
Churches, store, and social / youth organizations need to be encouraged to stay in the Japantown area, since the residents and not a per predominance of Japanese, the area has to attract JA to the area to keep Japantown
Cherry Blossom + street fair representative of resources Ben Kyodo / Mays / JCYC / NLF need for Japantown and currently have. Not enough need to add space for youth/ young adults to gather for unstructured activity currently resources JCCCNC / JCYC don't fill need for unstructured community space. All current resources discussed work for current committee members back to Japantown.
Street fair, urban, kinmon gakuen, JCCCNC, Japanese YMCA, Buchanan mall, Jtown businesses / restaurant
cultural resources inventory needs to capture all cultural resources within the mall plaza area - not just Japanese specific resources. (inventory seems ok with Japanese tourism events)
2- J town needs a performing arts venue that will serve the needs of community - based, JPNZ / JA culture oriented organization that currently have difficulty finding venues due to affordability or lack of appropriate
2- Although all categories resources are essential and critical for Japantown - how can we assure that these resources will be maintained? - who will be the next leader of these institutions businesses.
2- The list of buildings on the wall needs more input to decide which are A.) most authentically Japanese - priority! B.) Sell/Serve truly Japanese goods + food. Regional Japanese J-A events that could be showcased in SF Jtown - Tori gate at Buchanan Mall - eternal flame - cherry tree - language on street Japanese signs - Historical Museums Archives - boy scouts troop 29 - Japanese benevolent society - JCYC Volleyball - Martial Arts - Miyako
2- Venue for cultural performances + gatherings would be important - Historical museums space to provide a space for education of places of cultural + historical Japanese retail / restaurants essential for keeping Jtown heritage. Community organization space are important resources to keep. need new retail --- modern Japanese i.e. - electronics entertainment, arcades etc.
Heritage resources protected / preserved - keep up cherry blossom festivals, taiko, obon koto / shamisen concerts + dance. Water tower - Buchanan Mall + water fountain, keep as is - Moon Bridge in Miyoko Mall. Japan Center Building East + West - don't demolish or change looks drastically - Kinmon building. Benkyodo / cafe - Sakai Uoki Co - landmark Kinmont + YMCA if possible. Post St. historical building (still standing businesses?). Kokoro / Jewish Temple building. Kinokuniy a bookstore - Nichi ren church all Jtown churches because tourists
2- Buddhist of USA building are beautiful stuppa (?) on roof with relic of the Buddhist (only one in USA / North
2- Food / beverage / gathering places / meeting/ retail. Houses of worship and places for the community to gather. Festivals are important. Education, language & traditional sports & cultural activities community events tie together all the different individual bricks and modern places.
Japanese salvation army building site right over own the Chinese consulate general offices site.
2- the exterior mall buildings were designed by famous Japanese architect.
2- The mall building as well as the connecting hotel was designed to look like shoji Panels and should be protected as a physical cultural representation.
2- performances if Pagoda protected the stage area needs to be remodeled JCYC is important for sports & as cultural center specialty. Stores i.e. benkyodo obons need to remain.
1- Peace Pagoda as SF landmark?
1- Is there as issue of seeing the pagoda as a religious symbol?

The peace plaza is important to Japan town for events and open space. It needs to be completely redone so it shouldn't be landmarked until there is a good design.
The peace pagoda is the symbol of Japantown and needs to be protected. It also needs repairs. Will landmarking helps get the peace pagoda fixed?
1- I like idea of exploring minimum qualifications to establish landmark status. 2- who would be liable for
peace pagoda - important landmark for Jtown. Yes- peace pagoda should be landmarked.
Pagoda the view from Sutter street from toril gate through Buchanan mall to the pagoda is very special, lovely. It is ok to move it but it is unique as a neighborhood icon.
1- Peace Pagoda as SF landmark? Yes. I think the plaza as an "open space" should also be landmarked so it cannot be infilled. Also views to the pagoda should also be protected.
Peace pagoda landmarking a must as SF doesn't have any landmark for Japanese American Community. Landmarking may help get funds for maintenance and it doesn't affect private property rights since its owned by the city. Allows Jtown to be recognized as an important heritage location.
Design and restore plaza area around pagoda as will as the pagoda itself.
Has rec & park been approached about landmarking the pagoda?
Yes, unless we can find a better landmark the current design is rather a 70's "contemporary" design it would be nice to get something more traditional.
Yes good idea to bring in more tourism but what are the cons. Is just the pagoda preserved? Or plaza as well?
What are the specifics pros/ cons of designation? What does that mean if we want to move it? I could only say go forward after we address any granted changes to the pagoda or peace plaza. Who is responsible for repair now? If designated when will it be repaired because it needs it now.
landmark pagoda Buchanan mall Japantown. Education + Cultural: paper tree on Buchanan mall has a origami art gallery and it's the only place in the whole state. Also to obtain all the origami information.
I agree that the peace pagoda should be a SF Landmark. It will create recognition and hopefully bring more tourists or interested residents to the area. The fact that there are 262 city landmarks and none are related to Japanese /JA community there should be one.
Peace Plaza iconic. Major physical space critical to vitality of Japantown. Would hike it to be a landmark and given public notice and vote if a alteration or demolishment of this icon.. Need public noticed and input before
Does land marking peace pagoda provide resources or avenues to resources for maintenance, structural retrofitting? I would support landmarking of the pagoda if it also provides resolutions for its maintenance.
Landmarking - The peace pagoda is an important symbol of Japantown and its connection with Japan. But landmarking protection is possibly unnecessary because it is a public artifacts in a public park. Other properties such as Kimon, are more vulnerable, and should be given higher landmarking priority. e.g.: Kimon Gateulm, tea
1-Most essentials characteristics of essential resources: A- Passing on history & tradition. B- Gathering of people to share cultural. 2- recommended focus on celebration / festivals (i.e. cherry blossom) B- folklore stories
yes but would have liked more info on the pros and cons of landmarking. How long is the landmarking for? What activity does the landmarking prevent?