



Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan-2011
C/O Japantown Task Force
1765 Sutter Street
San Francisco, CA 94115-3217

Community Meeting

Issei Memorial Hall @ JCCCNC

1840 Sutter Street, SF (between Buchanan & Webster Streets)

Date: June 27, 2011, 6:30-9:10 pm

Topics: Public Realm/Transportation and Circulation

- **Japantown Landscape Vision:** Install professional, well orchestrated Japan-influenced landscape vision to increase canopy, greenery and Japanese botanical species.
- **Public Open Spaces:** Use Japantown landscape vision to enhance our central core of existing gathering spaces and create transition areas to other public open spaces.

Transportation and Circulation

- Leverage all city projects to fund improvements to traffic, pedestrian safety, signage and connections to adjacent neighborhoods and parks

Welcome and thank you for coming to this important Community Meeting. In advance of the meeting, we encourage you to study the recommendations that will be presented at the meeting and be prepared to ask questions and be open and candid with your suggestions and ideas. This preparation for the meeting and the participation on your part will truly make this a community-based plan.

For the past year the Japantown Organizing Committee has been conducting meetings in subcommittees to review the draft neighborhood plan written in 2009. With the staffing support and funding from the San Francisco Planning Department, the subcommittees have developed a set of recommended changes to the draft plan. It is now time to share those recommendations and get public feedback.

There will be three community meetings held over the summer to both educate you on the contents of the plan and to get your input. These meetings will be held on June 1st, June 27th, July 31st. Please mark your calendar and join us for these three meetings. It is hoped that a final set of changes will be presented to the Planning Commission before the end of the 2011. Your reaction and further input is being sought by the Organizing Committee before they make the final recommendations to the Planning Commission. Following Organizing Committee recommendation and prior to going to the Planning Commission, there will be a fourth Community Meeting on September 10th to share the final recommendations with the greater community.

This plan will be the vision and outline for the long-term sustainability and cultural preservation of Japantown. Please make time to attend these community meetings. Additionally, please feel free to send us your comments by letter or provide email comments at the japantown.sfplanning.org website.

The Japantown Organizing Committee thanks you again for your participation and continued support.



Included in this Handout:

- Community Meeting Agenda
- Planning Overview
- Planning Phases
- Summary of Recommended Plan Changes

Meeting Agenda

Time	Setting	Your role
6:30 – 6:55	Registration	Sign in, make name tag, get handouts
6:30 – 7:00	Hospitality	Meet each other. Talk about your vision for Japantown.
7:00 – 7:20	Large group get information about background and decision-making process	Listen and ask questions.
7:20 – 7:25	Move into smaller groups – 3 different stations around room.	Move your chair to your assigned station.
7:25 – 7:55	Round #1 Organizing committee member explains recommendation. Facilitator ensures all are heard. Recorder gets everyone’s ideas.	Hear about recommendations. Provide your input.
7:55 – 8:25	Round #2 Organizing committee member explains recommendation. Facilitator ensures all are heard. Recorder gets everyone’s ideas.	Select the station you want to go to next. You may also remain at the first station. Hear about recommendations. Provide your input.
8:25 – 8:55	Round #3 Organizing committee member explains recommendation. Facilitator ensures all are heard. Recorder gets everyone’s ideas.	Select the station you want to go to next. You may also remain at the first station. Hear about recommendations. Provide your input.
8:55 – 9:10	Large group Summary of input. How further input and decision-making will take place.	You may remain sitting where you are. Listen and ask questions.
9:10	Exit interviews	As you leave, talk to one of the people at the door. Tell us about how we can improve the meeting.



Planning Overview

In May 2009, the Planning Department published its draft "Better Neighborhood Plan" (<http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=1692>) for Japantown ("Draft BNP"), which presented a comprehensive plan for Japantown's future development. In June 2009, because public comment documented that the Japantown community had not had an adequate chance to evaluate the Draft BNP, the Planning Commission sent the Draft BNP back to the Japantown community for its review, analysis and any changes it believed appropriate. An ad hoc community committee immediately took up the organizing effort. After further community discussion with the Planning Department, a Japantown BNP Organizing Committee was formally established by invitation from Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi and Planning Department Director John Rahaim to conduct this review.

For the past year, the Japantown community has engaged in an intensive review of the Draft Plan, which has included two general community meetings hosted by the BNP Organizing Committee, and many smaller meetings of and surveys from its four sub-committees charged with the responsibility to analyze the Draft Plan's distinct subject-areas and garner community input on the Draft Plan's recommendations. Based on this analysis and input, the Organizing Committee and its subcommittees have formulated their own planning concepts, principles and recommendations which are designed to serve one overarching goal: to preserve, restore and enhance Japantown as a vital, prosperous, and livable community that authentically reflects, embodies and continues its cultural heritage and history into the future.

At this point, the Organizing Committee is prepared to seek community response to its proposed revised planning recommendations. Key to this effort will be a series of four "community meeting" meetings that will present the Organizing Committee's proposed recommendations on the major issues in the plan to the community for its input. In addition, the Organizing Committee will be visiting many of the community's constituencies – e.g., the merchants, property owners, churches, schools, community organizations – to seek their input on the proposed planning recommendations. The Japantown BNP website hosted by the San Francisco Planning Department will also provide a means for the community comments on the proposed recommendations.

The community meetings are not the final step in the process. The Organizing Committee and its sub-committees will synthesize the public comment and make further changes to its recommendations, which could include summarizing minority views on the issues, as necessary and appropriate. To make sure that your voice and opinion is heard, participation in the community meetings is the first step. You can also contact us with you comments by sending us your comments email comments at the japantown.sfplanning.org website or you can mail us your comments at:

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The Organizing Committee's final recommendations will be presented to the Planning Department, which will incorporate and translate the recommendations in an appropriate planning document, which will be presented to the Planning Commission for its review and adoption.

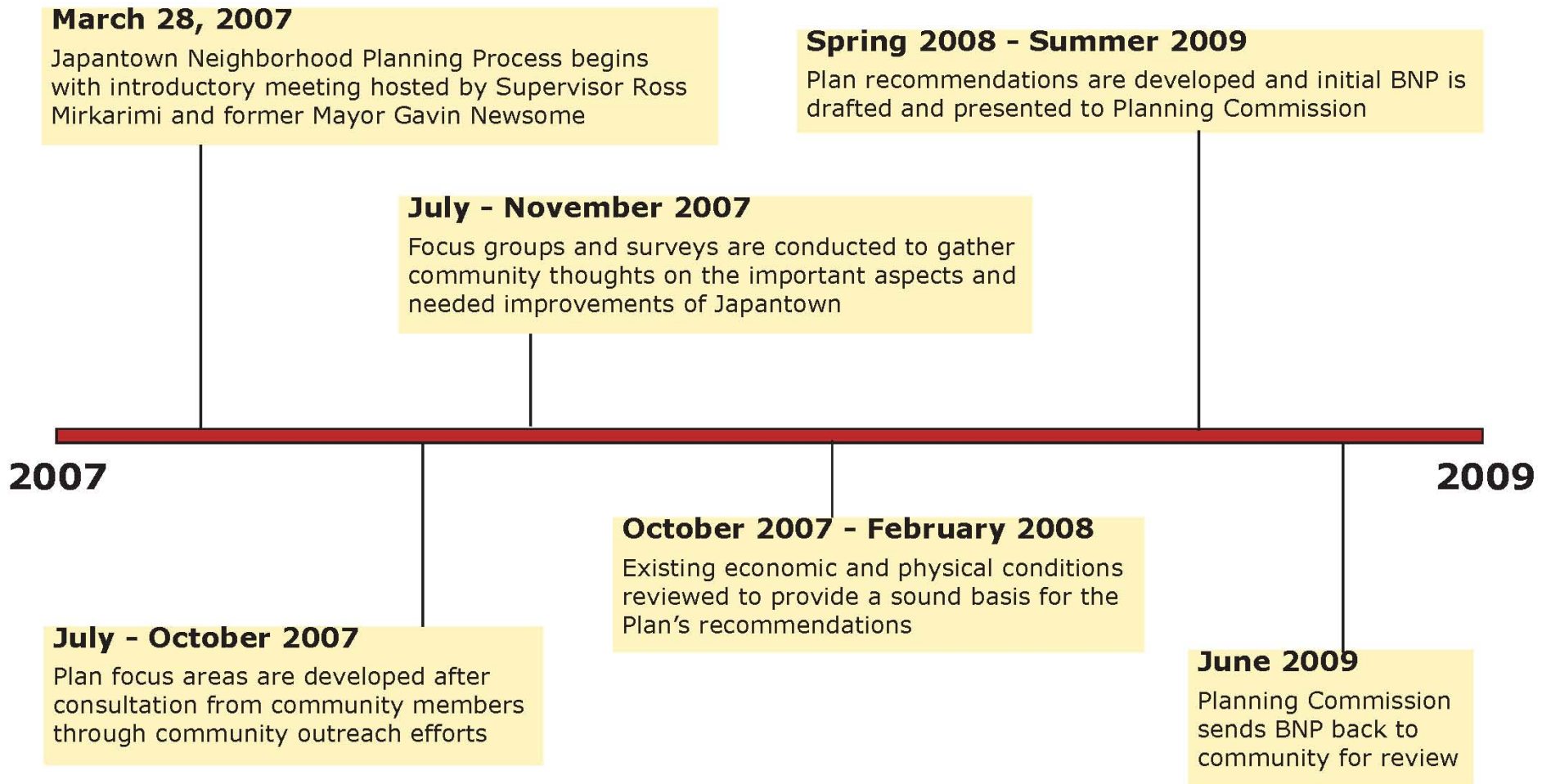
This document focuses on the community meetings, their design and structure, and the role of the Community Outreach Program (COP) in designing, facilitating, and reporting the meetings. As explained below, each of the meetings will focus on major topics presented by one or more of the Organizing Committee's sub-committees: Land Use & Built Form; Public Realm & Transportation; Community & Economic Development, including the Japan Center; and Cultural Heritage. During the community meeting, COP facilitators and recorders will lead small groups of the community to provide their input. After each community meeting, COP will further gather community input on their experience and about their recommendations for improving the meetings. Each community meeting's design will be further improved by considering these suggested improvements.



Planning Phases

Phase 1: March 2007 - June 2009

Original BNP Planning Process up to 2009 Presentation to the Planning Commission





Planning Phases

Phase 2: August 2010 - October 2011

Community Review and Preparation of Planning Commission Recommendations





Planning Phases

Phase 3: November 2011 - June 2012

Plan Redrafting and Environmental Evaluation in advance of Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors Actions



Phase 4

Implementation of Approved Actions through the joint efforts of the City Family and Japantown Community



Summary of Proposed Changes to Draft Plan

The proposed Draft Plan modifications are intended to better support the Japantown BNP Goals:

GOAL 1: SECURE JAPANTOWN'S FUTURE AS THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HEART OF JAPANESE AND JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY.

- a. Promote Japantown's value and history.
- b. Promote a sense of Japan, in addition to the Japanese American culture.
- c. Enhance historic and cultural landmarks.
- d. Safeguard community-based institutions.
- e. Promote events that attract youth and families (to live, visit, and shop).
- f. Serve as the hub for the Japanese community in the region.

GOAL 2: SECURE JAPANTOWN'S FUTURE AS A THRIVING COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL DISTRICT.

- a. Preserve Japantown's livelihood, existing local and historic businesses.
- b. Encourage business development for new companies that reflect Japantown.
- c. Provide retail/restaurants that cater to youth, families, neighbors and tourists.
- d. Provide consistent sidewalk and public space maintenance.
- e. Generate demand outside of the immediate area.

GOAL 3: SECURE JAPANTOWN'S FUTURE AS A HOME TO RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY-BASED INSTITUTIONS.

- a. Provide more mixed-income housing, especially for families and seniors.
- b. Provide economic support for community-based, non-profit organizations.
- c. Improve public space and parks.
- d. Maintain a livable neighborhood that reflects San Francisco's diversity.

GOAL 4: SECURE JAPANTOWN'S FUTURE AS A PHYSICALLY ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT ENVIRONMENT.

- a. Enhance the Japanese character.
- b. Increase the sense of safety.
- c. Improve the appearance and cleanliness.
- d. Reestablish pedestrian connections, social interaction and commerce between the neighborhoods on either side of Geary Boulevard.
- e. Provide quality recreational opportunities.
- f. Provide spaces that cater to youth and families.
- g. Strive to utilize sustainable technology and materials.

Chapter 2 – Community Heritage

Recommendations that should be retained:

1. Establish a Community-based Body to Guide Preservation Efforts.
2. Recognize Important Properties of the Japanese and Japanese American Communities.
3. Encourage the Use of California Historic Building Code.
4. Facilitate Façade Easement program.
5. Develop Community Land Trust.
6. Consider Other Preservation Strategies.

Summary of Proposed Changes:

1. Update/Correct information in the Sec 2.1 – Existing Conditions
2. Transfer some items to other Chapters/committees more suited to the topic
3. Added various items relevant to community Heritage (see Matrix)

Chapter 3 – Community Economic Development

Recommendations that should be retained:

1. Establish Implementation Organization
2. Increase Business Retention Efforts to Address Ongoing Pressures on Existing Businesses
3. Recruit New, Culturally Appropriate Businesses.
4. Improve Access to Community Activities
5. Strengthen Community Organizations Administrative Capacity

Summary of Proposed Changes:

1. Assess various funding opportunities/strategies for Japantown programs:
Mello Roos Financing, Dedicated Hotel Room Tax, Parking Benefit District
City/State/Federal Small Business loan opportunities
2. Increase focus and more in-depth analysis of Community Benefits District issues
Build on 2007 JTF assessment and what was learned then Study Fillmore Jazz
District CBD performance: Possible merger? How to deal with high assessment
costs
3. Increase focus on existing small business retention strategies
Ownership transitions. Management transitions without ownership change
4. Understand cumulative impacts of area construction (from Gough to Masonic)
Construction Impacts – Temporary disruptions to business
“Permanent” Impacts – changes resulting from completed projects/programs
Traffic flows, parking demand, population changes
5. Revise criteria for Implementing Organization (IO)
Does it make sense to use existing non-profit as IO? (expertise & resources?)
Board membership to include residents, active Japantown participants

Chapter 4 – Land Use

Recommendations that should be retained:

1. Activate Ground Floor Spaces
 - ✓ Require active Ground Floor Commercial Uses that encourage pedestrian traffic.
 - ✓ Protect Pedestrian and Transit-oriented Street Frontages.
 - ✓ Promote Life with Outdoor Activities Areas.

Summary of Proposed Changes:

1. Delete the proposed "Zone3: Regional Commercial District"
 - Focus on flexible zoning controls that support Goals
 - Develop clear guidelines on Conditional Use (CU) criteria (e.g., Size, Formula Retail, certain uses, etc.)
2. Revise Parking requirements to reflect regional hub nature
 - Parking for residents should not compete with regional visitor parking

Chapter 5 – Built Form

Recommendations that should be retained:

1. Apply Japantown-specific Design Guidelines
 - Buildings: form and structure, roofs, materials and ornamentation
2. Open Space: Landscaping, public art.

Summary of Proposed Changes:

1. Update existing conditions section to recognize:
 - ✓ The desire to 'undo' the negative impacts of redevelopment
 - ✓ Multiple contributing cultural and architectural sources
 - ✓ Prevalent "human" scale of the area
2. Remove recommendations for towers and significant height increases
 - ✓ Keep heights close to current zoning
 - ✓ Permit some moderate increases in commercial areas.
 - ✓ Heights of new development over 40 (?) feet requires conditional use.
3. Delete concept of "Gateway" buildings with increased height and bulk
4. Design Guidelines should support cultural and community continuity and continuation.
 - Work with SF Architectural Heritage to develop Japantown design criteria

Chapter 6 – Public Realm

Recommendations that should be retained:

1. Retains most of the high level recommendations of the Chapter

Summary of Proposed Changes

1. Remove proposal for Webster Street Park; instead identify and enhance all open space opportunities
2. Evaluate potential for a public arts program with culturally relevant art as a focus
3. Revise the existing proposal for a Children’s Play Area to reflect the need to gathering places for various age groups – Children, young adults, seniors all have different needs.
4. Make the Eternal Flame a focal point, not some obscure hidden object.
5. Explicitly call for landscaping that reflects Japanese horticulture and landscape design
6. Japan Center renovations should include making the Geary aspect more inviting.

Chapter 7 – Transportation

Retains most non-parking related recommendations

There are continued concerns about the following items:

- ✓ SFMTA’s SFPark strategy and impact on Japantown
- ✓ Proposals to reduce resident parking to less than 1:1
- ✓ Impacts of the BRT design. New chapter proposals should include:
- ✓ Updated chapter to reflect current BRT options, eliminating excluded options.
- ✓ Work with Fillmore Jazz District and BRT design team to ensure:
- ✓ Appropriate Japanese cultural design elements at the Fillmore crossing
- ✓ Recognition of the Fillmore’s multicultural heritage– Including Japanese
- ✓ Inadequacy of strategies/plans to encourage pedestrian crossings of Geary

Chapter 8 – Japan Center

Major changes proposed.

Committee consensus:

The proposals for major redevelopment of the Japan Center are inconsistent with overall goals and objectives - that the displacement of existing business from the Center, and the disruption of surrounding businesses during construction, would lead to even more damage to Japantown.

For this reason, the Committee believes a commercial community land trust that can help preserve the Japan Center, while permitting renovations, remodeling and upgrades to the existing structure needs to be thoroughly evaluated. The Japan Center will be included in the study done by Burlington Associates as to the formation of a commercial community land trust. The study will examine constructive ways to improve the malls without closure of the garage or other significant disruption to mall tenants and neighboring businesses.

In addition, the committee recommends evaluating the possibility addition of two levels of housing over the Miyako Mall without closing the garage.

