

# WELCOME!

## Japantown Osaka Way/Buchanan Mall

### OPEN HOUSE #3

日本町

大阪ウェイ (ブキャナン モール)

アップグレードプロジェクト

JAPANTOWN

OSAKA WAY (BUCHANAN MALL)

UPGRADES PROJECT



# AGENDA

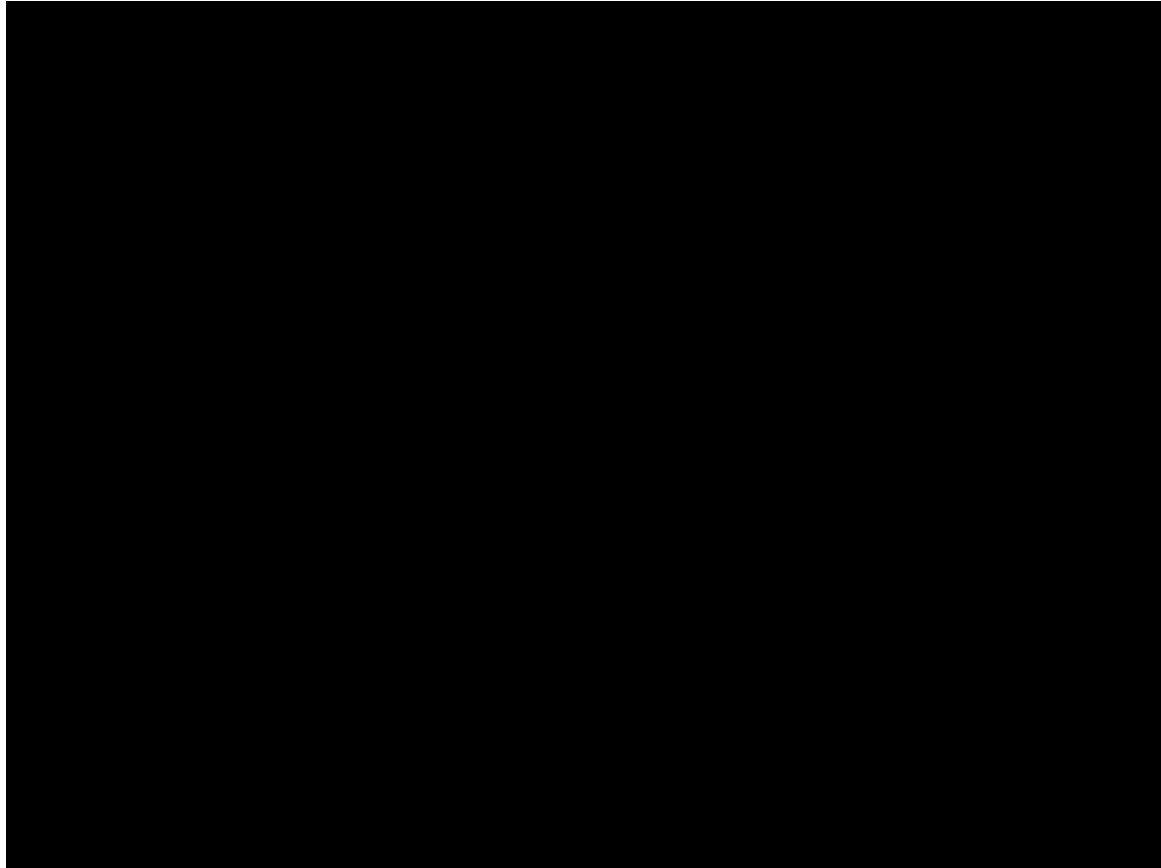
- Welcome (1 min.)
- Message from Assemblymember Phil Ting (1 min.)
- Ruth Asawa Legacy & Family Message (3 min.)
- Project Overview (5 min.)
- Outreach & Engagement Summary (5 min.)
- Site Analysis (1 min.)
- Design Development (5 min.)
- Preferred Design Direction (7 min.)
- Next Steps (3 min.)
- Q&A



## Land Acknowledgement

San Francisco Planning acknowledges that we are on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone, who are the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula. As the indigenous stewards of this land and in accordance with their traditions, the Ramaytush Ohlone have never ceded, lost, nor forgotten their responsibilities as the caretakers of this place, as well as for all peoples who reside in their traditional territory. As guests, we recognize that we benefit from living and working on their traditional homeland. We wish to pay our respects by acknowledging the Ancestors, Elders, and Relatives of the Ramaytush Ohlone community and by affirming their sovereign rights as First Peoples.

## ASSEMBLYMEMBER PHIL TING'S MESSAGE



# RUTH ASAWA LEGACY

- **Family Message**
- **Origami Fountains**
- **Cobblestone River**
- **Concrete Benches**



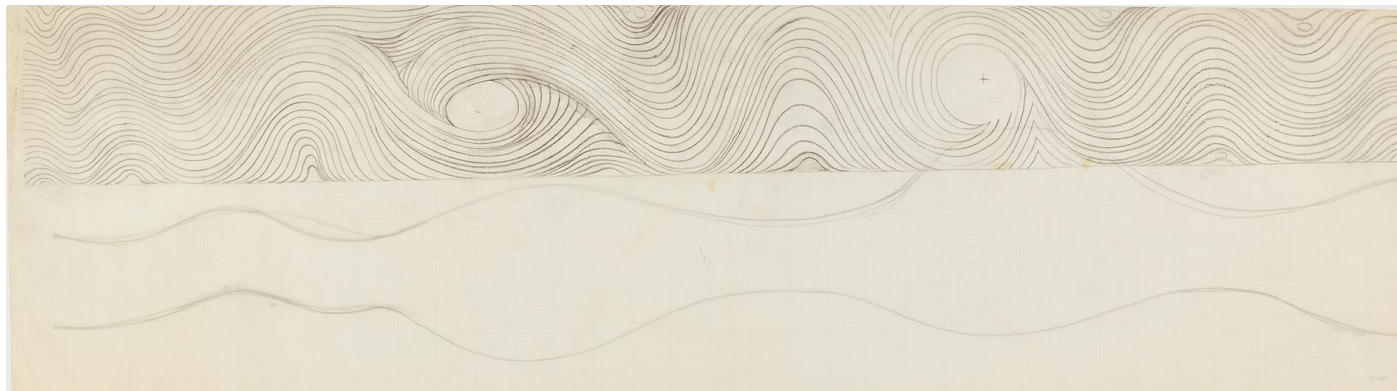
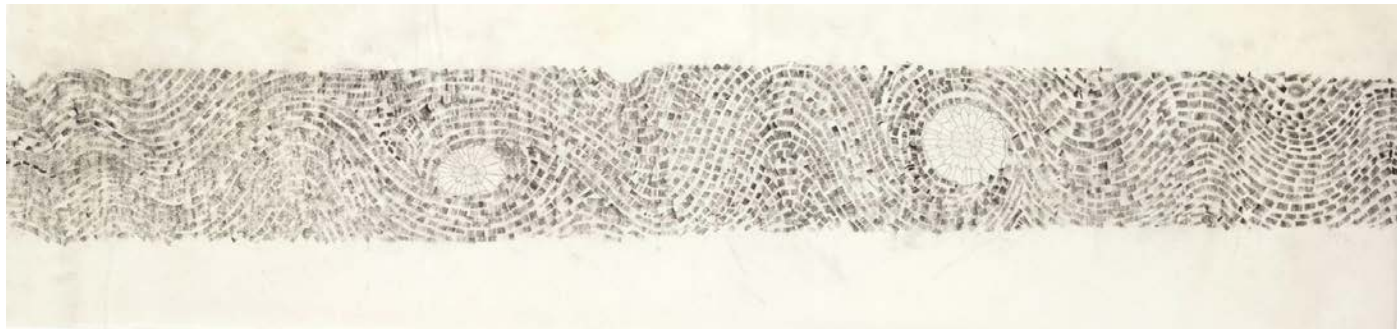
# ORIGAMI FOUNTAINS



All Artwork © 2023 Ruth Asawa Lanier, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, Courtesy David Zwirner

Japantown Osaka Way Upgrades Project | OPEN HOUSE #3 | FEBRUARY 6, 2024

# COBBLESTONE RIVER



All Artwork © 2023 Ruth Asawa Lanier, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, Courtesy David Zwirner



# CAST CONCRETE BENCHES

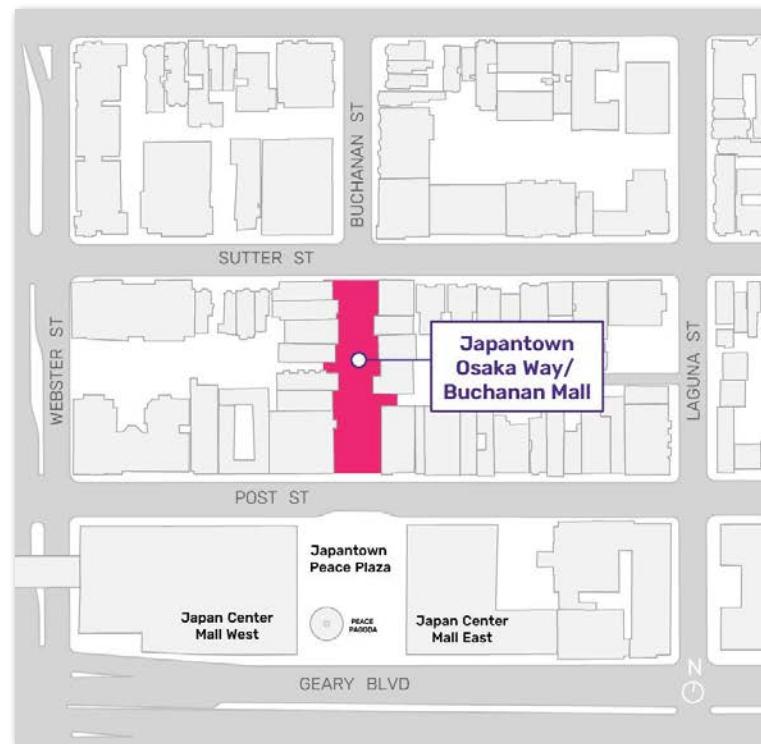


All Artwork © 2023 Ruth Asawa Lanier, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, Courtesy David Zwirner

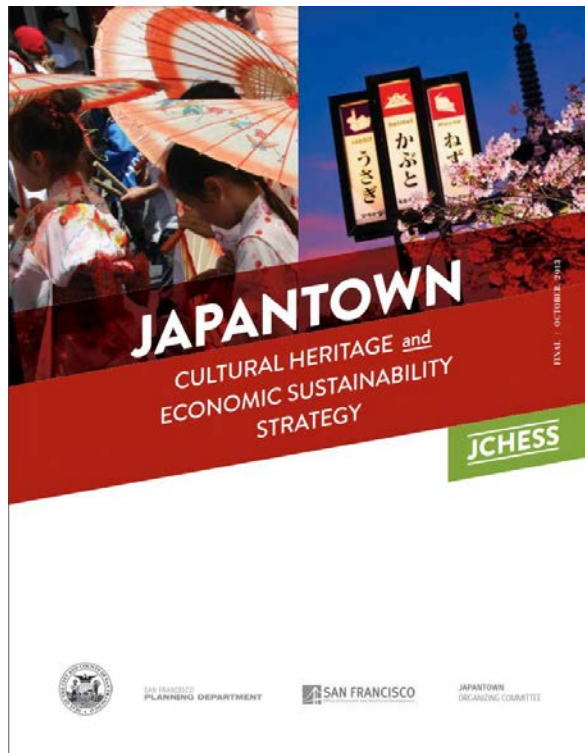
# PROJECT OVERVIEW

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 allowing residents and visitors to experience Japantown's culture in a pedestrian environment.



# PROJECT BACKGROUND



## 12. Implement Improvements to Buchanan Mall

### DESCRIPTION

Like Peace Plaza, Buchanan Mall is a publicly-owned plaza located at the geographic and cultural heart of Japantown. It is lined with shops which help to activate the space. Funding for its maintenance is provided by the Nihonmachi Parking Corporation, based on revenue generated from the two adjacent outdoor parking lots. However, the community perceives that Buchanan Mall is difficult to walk on, and that it could be further activated. To address this concern, the Planning Department and the Department of Public Works should work with the community on a strategy to improve Buchanan Mall. Potential concepts include:

- Repairing the side walkways, planting more trees, landscaping with culturally relevant plants, and enhancing the existing historic public art (historic fountains, cobblestone river and Torii gate) with new, complementary public art
- Encouraging businesses to provide outdoor seating and displays along the storefronts
- Utilizing new energy- and water-efficient technologies to light the plaza and maintain the fountains

In addition, adding required setbacks along Buchanan Mall (as via a Japantown Neighborhoods Commercial District, discussed above) could ensure that future development preserves sunlight along the Mall.

### BENEFITS

Improvements to Buchanan Mall could:

- Increase the attractiveness of the shopping district, thereby increasing business viability and helping keep Japantown the hub of the Japanese community in the region
- Help restaurants attract more customers with outdoor seating
- Create better public space, thereby increasing livability
- Draw more people to an area intended to reflect a modern version of the Japanese village aesthetic, thereby created a sense of Japan
- Improve the functionality of the fountain and street design
- Improve the neighborhood's landscaping, lighting, street furnishings, and wayfinding

### CHALLENGES

Planning any redesign of Buchanan Mall would require a substantial effort on the part of multiple City agencies, property owners, and the community. Implementing these changes would require substantial funding. No source of funding has been identified to date.

# PROJECT GOALS

Available Funding: \$7M

## 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



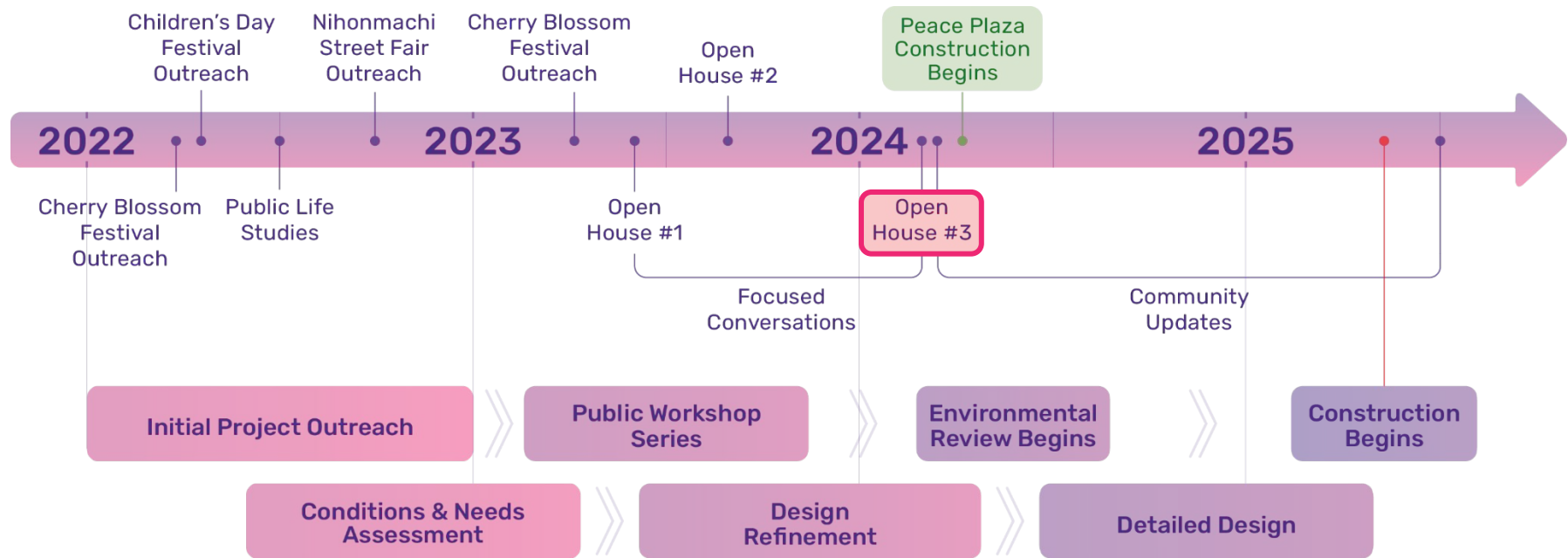
Support the business community by embellishing the sense of cultural authenticity and enhancing the commercial edges of Osaka Way.

# PROJECT TEAM

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- Community Partners
  - Japantown Task Force & Outreach and Design Consultants
  - Japantown CBD
  - Nihonmachi Parking Corporation
  - Ruth Asawa Family & Estate
- Public Works: Design Development & Implementation
  - Jennifer Cooper, Landscape Architecture Bureau Manager
  - Trent Tieger, Project Manager
  - Winnie Chang, Landscape Architect
  - Brett Demarais, Landscape Architect
- SF Planning: Outreach and Engagement
  - María De Alva, PM Outreach & Engagement
  - Patrick Race, Landscape Architecture & Outreach & Engagement
- Office of Economic and Workforce Development: Business liaison
  - Rafael Moreno, Invest In Neighborhoods

# PROJECT TIMELINE



# BRIEF SITE HISTORY



# OUTREACH SUMMARY

- Outreach & Engagement Timeline
- Main Takeaways
  - Ruth Asawa Elements
  - Lighting
  - Planting
  - Other Features / Programming
- Focus Groups
  - Youth
  - Seniors
  - Merchants



# OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE



## STAKEHOLDER SITE VISIT

March 31, 2022

"Ceiling art displays like Lee Tung street in Hong Kong that people will come in to order to take photos"

"Add a sign indicating this is Japantown"



## CHILDREN'S DAY FESTIVAL

May 7, 2022

"Better seating around the fountains (more comfortable)"

"Replace pavers with a non-tripping surface"



## NIHONMACHI STREET FAIR

August 6, 2022

"Wishing wall (write wishes and hang them)"



## CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

April 8-9 & 15-16, 2023

"Keep string lights year round"

"Plant more cherry trees"

"Study area for students"



## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

July 2023

Thank you to our community partners at the Japantown Task Force (JTF) for supporting and leading our outreach and engagement efforts!

## STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS

December 2023 - January 2024

- JTF Board Presentation
- Design Charette with core stakeholders (Asawa Family & Estate, Japantown CBD, JTF, NPC)
- Osaka Sister City Association and Deputy Consul General Briefing
- Community Conversations
- Design Charette with Community Consultant Megumi Aihara

## DESIGN SURVEYS

- Over 100 responses (online and paper surveys)
- See Design Survey Summary board

## OPEN HOUSE #3

February 2024

## OPEN HOUSE #2

October 3, 2023

## SENIOR ENGAGEMENT

Surveys with: Kokoro, The Carlisle, Sequoia, Nihonmachi Terrace, Kimochi, Ivy Living August 2023

## 1ST MERCHANT FOCUS GROUPS

9/12: In-person Focus Group  
9/13: Virtual Focus Group September 2023



## CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

April 9-10 & 16-17, 2022



## PUBLIC LIFE STUDIES

July, 2022

"More trees! Gardens! Modular/Moveable gardens :)"



## OPEN HOUSE #1

May 31, 2023

2022

2023

2024

# OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

RUTH ASAWA ELEMENTS | 루스·아사와의 요소 | RUTH ASAWA元素  
루스 아사와의 기본요소 | ELEMENTOS RUTH ASAWA

Create accessible walking surface at river while maintaining the essence of Ruth's design

Improved visibility of Ruth Asawa signage

Working fountains will help activate plaza

Consider making fountain walls more comfortable to sit on

"Outdoor seatings are helping boost the image of Osaka Way/Buchanan Mall."  
- Survey Respondent



"Would like to see [fountains] working again"  
- Open House #1 Participant



"Can the Osaka Way Mall be a kind of al fresco gallery that tells story of Asawa's community-based artwork? QR codes about her life + art?"  
- Open House #1 Participant



"Smooth the surface of the cobble stone for ADA"  
- Open House #1 Participant



LIGHTING | 照明 | 燈光 | 조명 | ILUMINACIÓN

Add more street and pedestrian scale lighting to enhance character of Osaka Way and surrounding neighborhood

Mixed opinions on Japanese language lantern posts

"Need better lighting. It is a little too dark."  
- Survey Respondent



"Origami lantern structures need to be replaced (upgraded)"  
- Survey Respondent



"Would it be possible to incorporate more traditional-looking lighting into the space?"  
- Open House #1 Participant



"More imaginative lighting in Japanese designs"  
- Survey Respondent



# OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

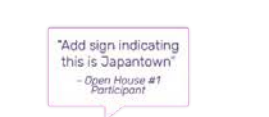
## PLANTING | 植栽 | 種植 | 식목 | PLANTADO

Desire for more trees/larger canopies

Improved appearance and locations of planters

Culturally relevant planting appropriate for local environment

Regular maintenance of planting



## MAIN TAKEAWAYS | 主な学び | 主要要點 | 주요 액션 포인트 | CONCLUSIONES

Improved wayfinding, signage, seating, and outdoor dining to support day-to-day functions and festival days

Consider tables if space allows

Complementary art opportunities



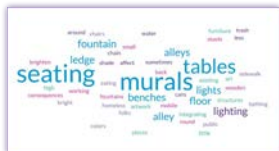
# FOCUS GROUPS - YOUTH, SENIORS, MERCHANTS

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT, JULY 2023

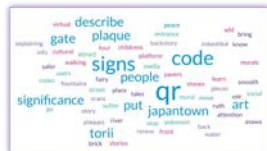
- Japanese Community Youth Council Workshop
- JCYC Nikkei Intern Tour & Roundtable



SEATING



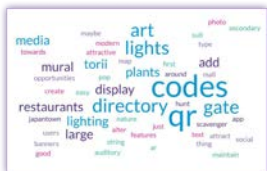
CULTURAL ELEMENTS



PLANTS & LIGHTING



INTERACTIVE FEATURES



## SENIOR ENGAGEMENT, AUGUST 2023

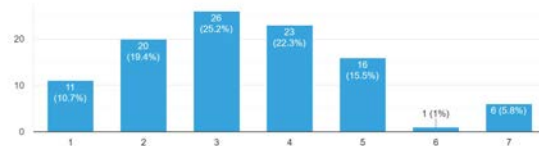
Paper and online surveys distributed to:

Kokoro Assisted Living for Seniors, The Carlisle Ivy Signature Living, Sequoia Living, Nihonmachi Terrace, Kimochi



## More than 120 respondents

7a. On a scale of 1-7 (1 being the worst and 7 being the best), how would you rate the existing Greenery in Osaka Way? あなたは1...低、7が最高、大阪道の現在の緑をどのように評価しますか?  
103 responses



## MERCHANT ENGAGEMENT, SEPTEMBER 2023

- In-person focus group at Fermentation Lab
- Virtual Focus Group, presentation recorded



# SITE ANALYSIS

- **Accessibility Improvements**
- **Circulation and Pinch Points**
- **Sun and Views**

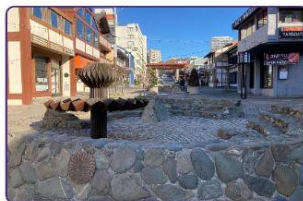


# EXISTING FORMS

RUTH ASAWA FOUNTAINS TO BE RESTORED



FOUNTAIN WALLS



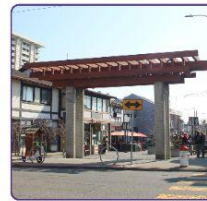
COBBLE PAVING



CONCRETE PAVING



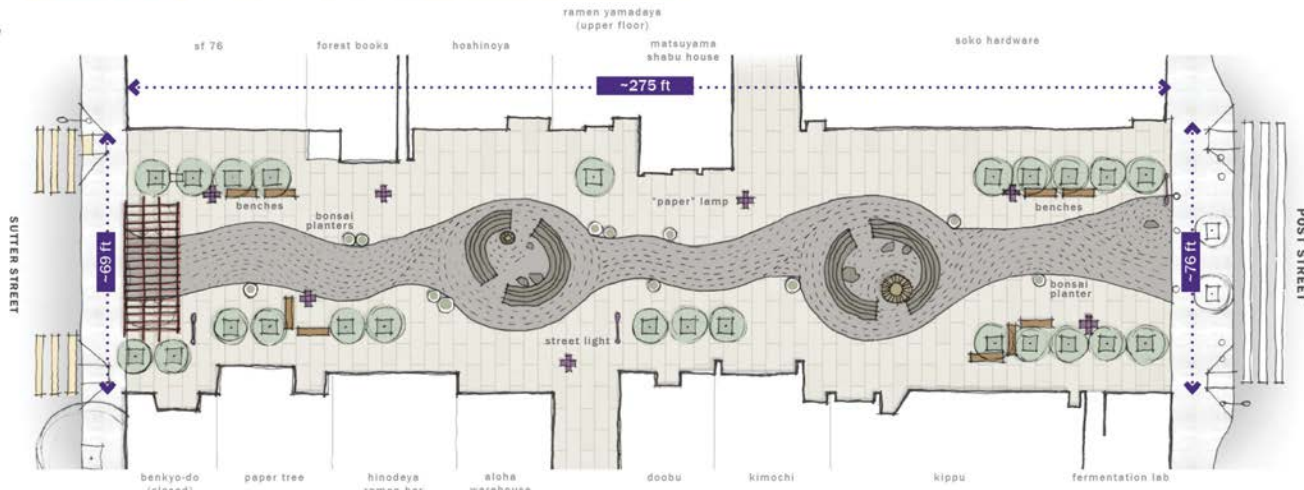
TORII GATE



PLANTERS



BOULDER



TREE WELLS



CHERRY BLOSSOM TREES



STREET LIGHTS



PAPER LAMPS



STRING LIGHTS



TORII GATE LIGHTING



RUTH ASAWA BENCHES



UTILITY CABINET

# HISTORIC SIGNAGE

## Existing Singage



Ruth Asawa's Origami Fountains Plaque.



Plaques to commemorate Kanrin Maru arrival and honor cherry tree donors.



Plaque installed in 1999 for the Origami Fountains Rededication Ceremony, commemorating Rai Okamoto with his signature and family crest, on the bench where he often sat.



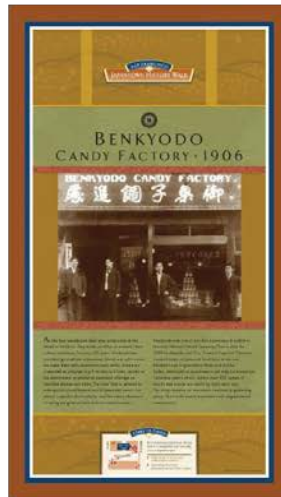
Plaque commemorating Architect Rai Okamoto's design concept.

## Potential Additional Singage

Examples of additional signage to commemorate and elevate Japanese culture and connections could be added to the space in addition to existing signage.



Commemorative signage in Japantown, San Jose.



Benkyodo commemorative signage on Osaka Way.

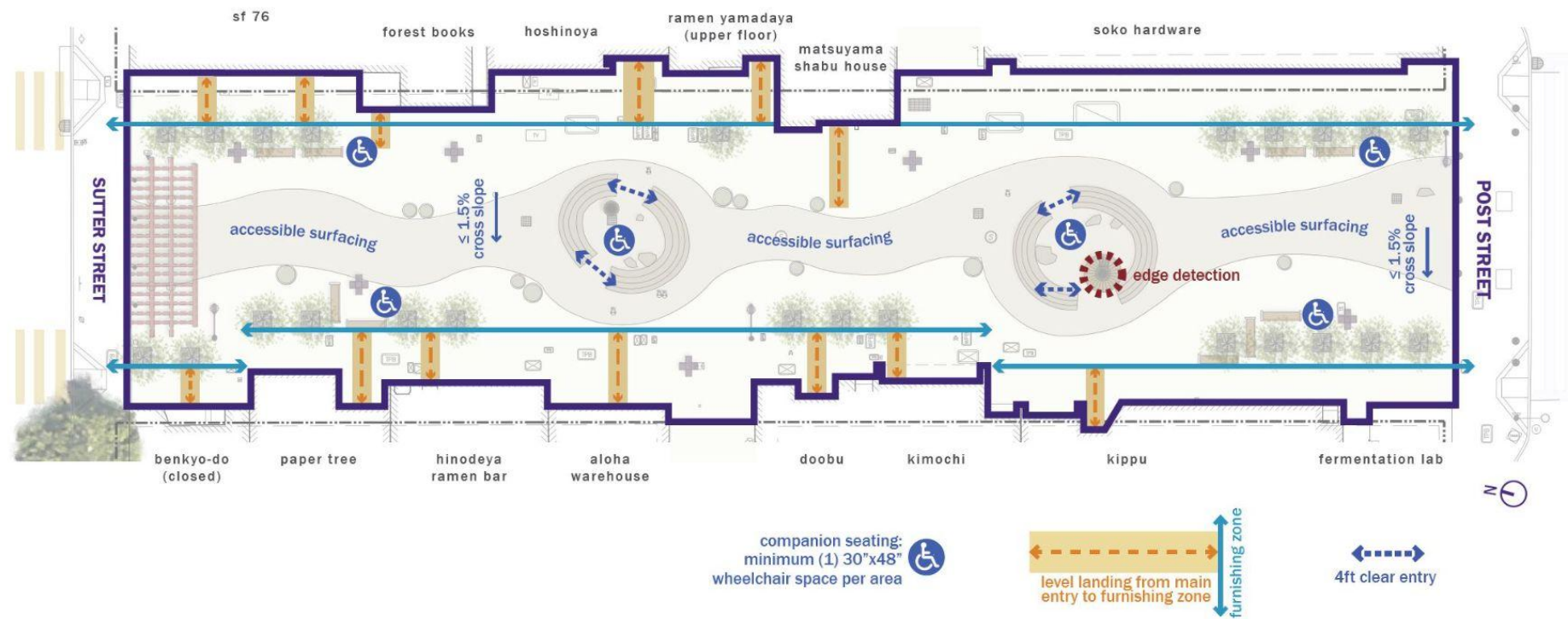


Japantown History Walk signage.

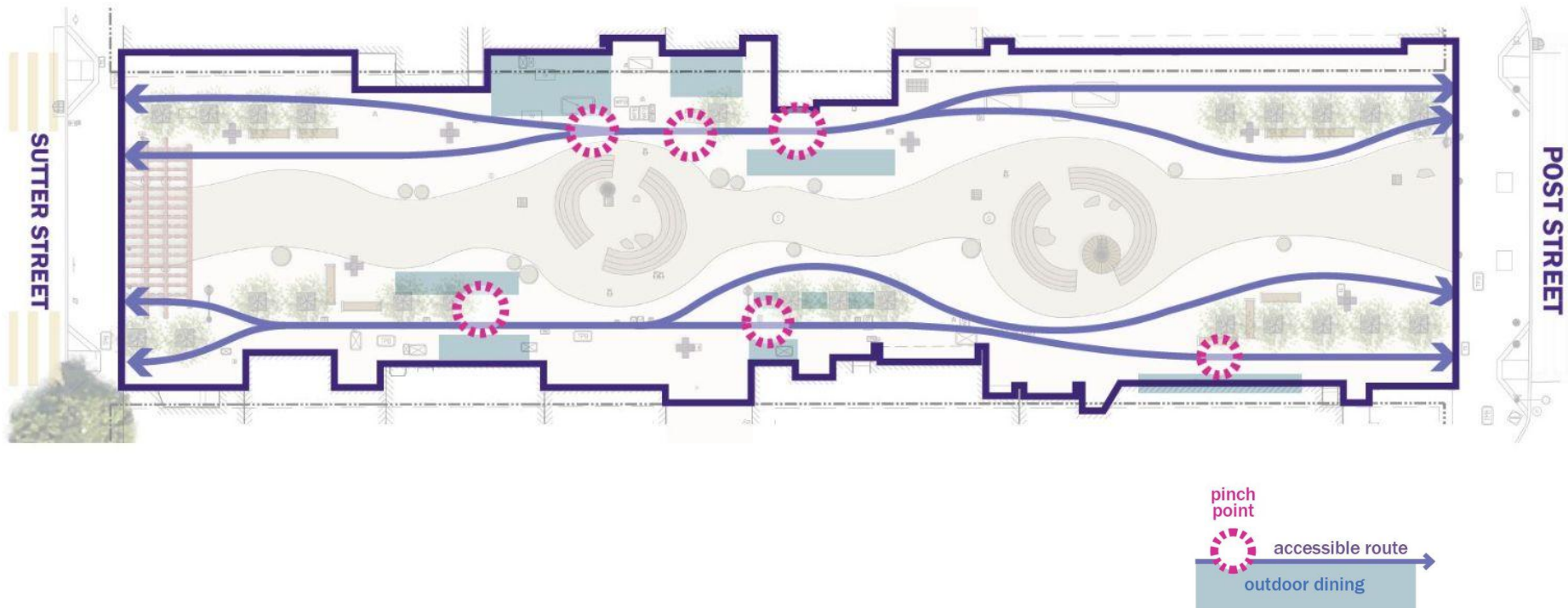


Commemorative signage in Japantown, San Jose.

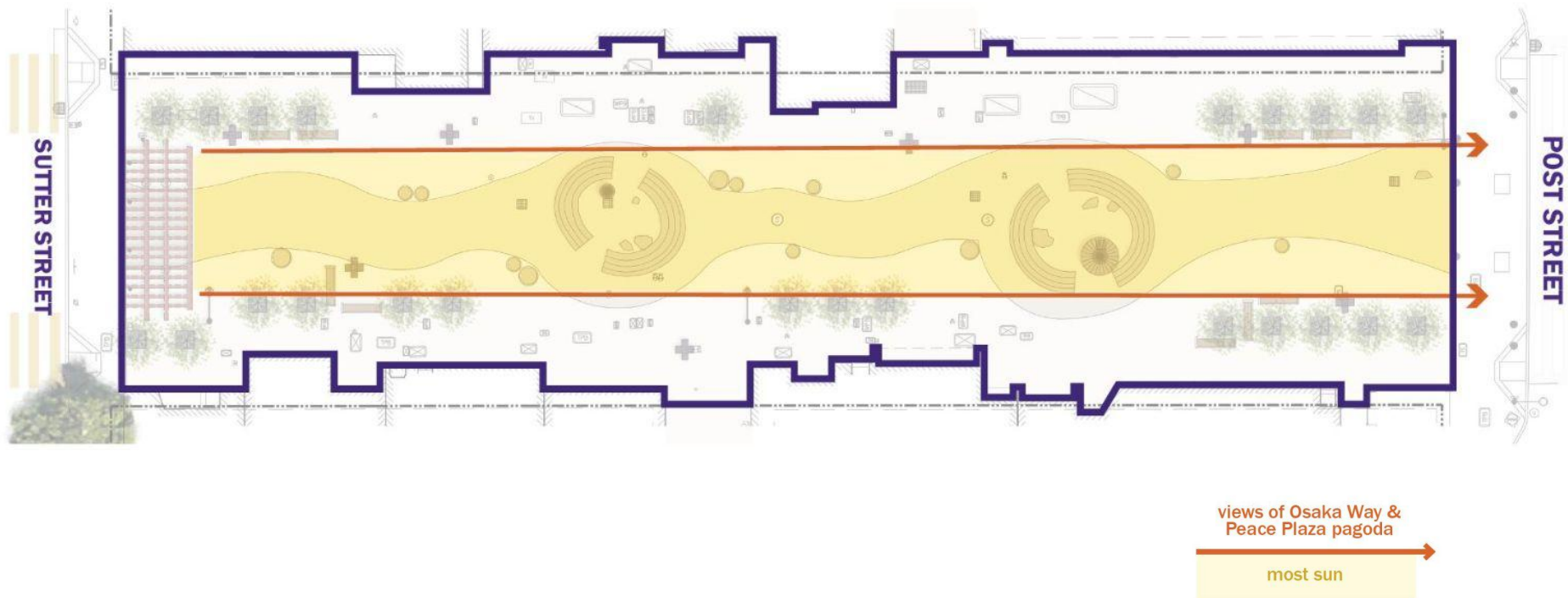
# REQUIRED ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS



# OUTDOOR DINING AND CIRCULATION PINCH POINTS



# SUN EXPOSURE AND VIEWS



# MOOD/VISION BOARD

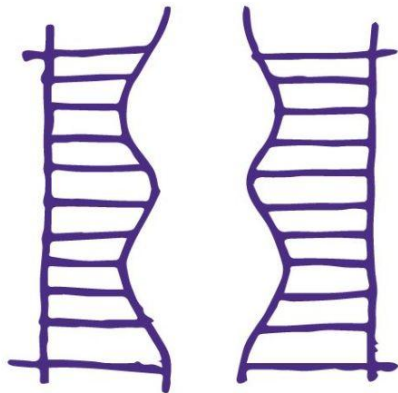


# DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

- **Design Concepts Development**
- **Design Survey Highlights**
- **Preferred Design Concept**
- **Project Priorities**

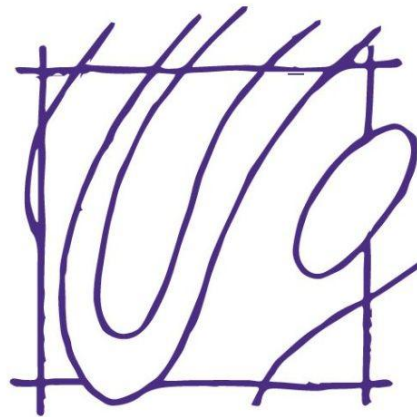


# INITIAL DESIGN CONCEPTS OVERVIEW



**Kanso (簡素):**  
*simplicity*

At the heart of both concepts is celebration of the Ruth Asawa fountains



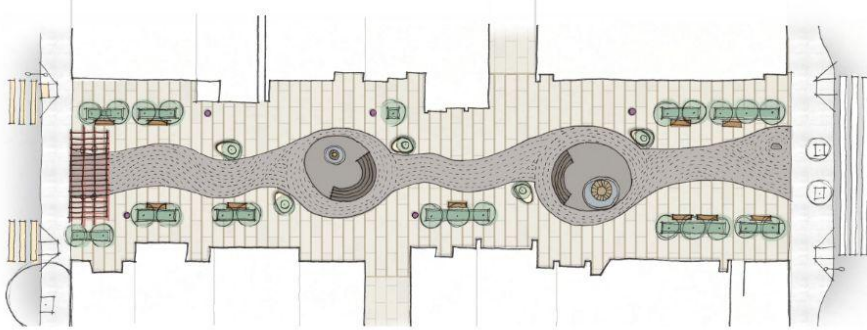
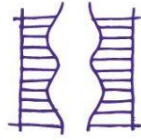
**Datsuzoku (脱俗):**  
*unbounded by convention*

A preservation-minded approach that refreshes the existing geometries of the space using mostly city-standard materials and furnishings.

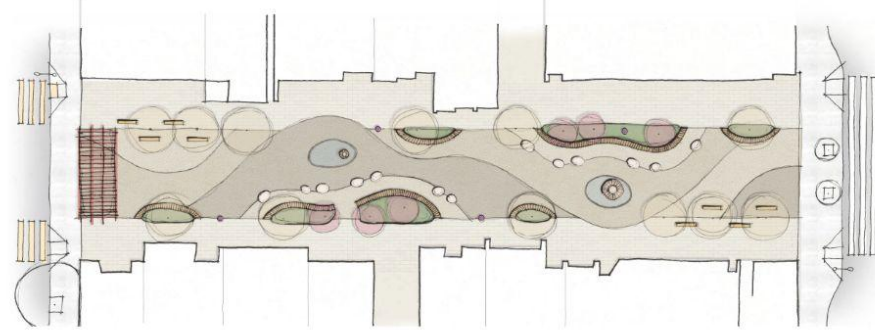
An alternative vision for the space inspired by Japanese gardens featuring new materials and furnishings.

# COMPARISON

1: KANSO



2: DATSUZOKU



1. Repairs Ruth Asawa fountains

2. Addresses code compliance issues

3. Fewer changes

4. Maintains overall existing site layout

5. Uses mostly standard materials (paving, furnishings, etc.)

6. Less opportunity for unique design elements

7. Keeps existing cherry trees with new under-planting

8. Restores existing cobble in a code-compliant condition

• Repairs Ruth Asawa fountains

• Addresses code compliance issues

• More changes

• Introduces an alternative site design

• Uses more custom and non City-standard materials

• Greater opportunity for unique design elements

• Adds more planting types, including canopy trees

• Replaces cobble with new paving

# DESIGN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

What do you like most about...?

## 1: KANSO

I like that the cobble could be restored but in a way that is still ADA compliant.

Maintains the original character but makes some needed improvements.

Planter seating

Preserves the Asawa landscape design

Clear understanding of movement winding down the center with more static space on the edges for businesses.

## 2: DATSUZOKU

Additional planting and seating/tables

It looks much more natural and scenic. There are many more places to sit. It seems more community inviting

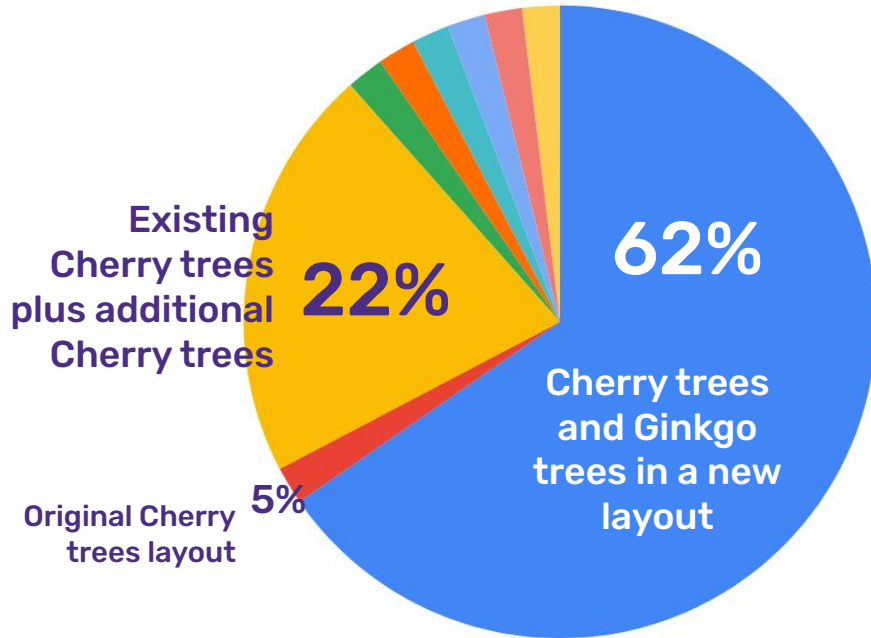
Addition of Gingko trees

More long seating so people can stay longer and enjoy themselves.

Path seems more open creating accessibility for all type of pedestrians.

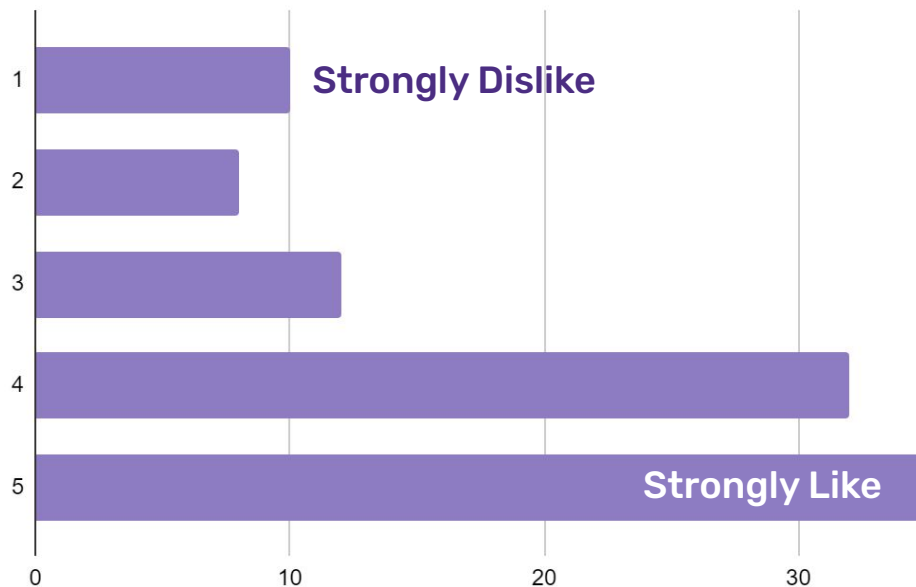
# DESIGN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS: TREE SPECIES

From the tree species options shown above, which design proposal do you like best?



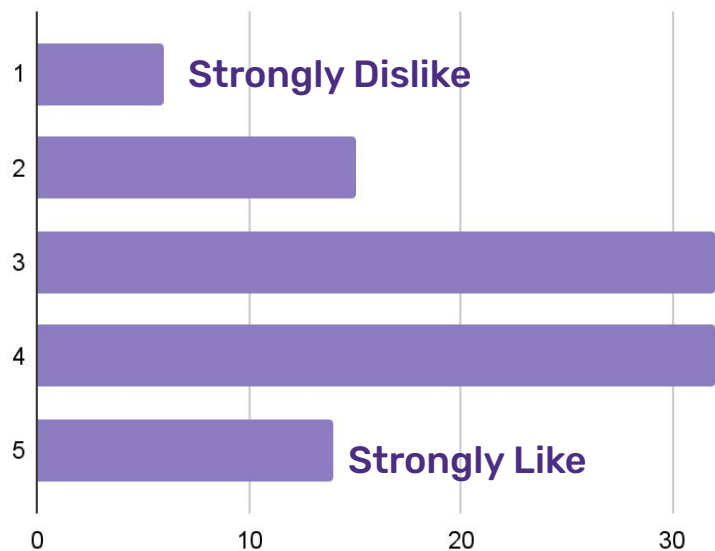
# DESIGN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS: SEATING

How much do you like the seating options of Option 2: Datsuzoku?



# DESIGN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS: SEATING

How much do you like the seating options of Option 1: Kanso?



# DESIGN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS: PROJECT PRIORITIES

Preserve Ruth Asawa's Work /  
Restore Origami Fountains



More Greenery  
& Trees



More Lighting



Gathering Spaces /  
Flexible Seating



Maintain the Visual Corridor



Enhance Historic Signage



Thriving Businesses



# PREFERRED DESIGN DIRECTION

- Preferred Design Concept
- Lighting Options



# PREFERRED DESIGN DIRECTION



9 pedestrian scale pole lighting (16ft)



7 garden gate lighting



10 lanterns (see options)



11 string lights (see options)



12 reinstall lamp posts



13 movable furnishings + storage structure



1 precast seat walls



2 restored fountains w/ new plumbing and lighting



3 cobble w/ compliant walking surface



4 stone paving w/ metal inlay accents



5 refurbished Ruth Asawa benches



6 ginkgo trees



7 cherry trees

## PERSPECTIVE - POST ST LOOKING NORTH



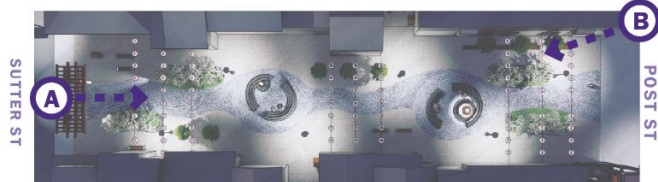
## PERSPECTIVE - SUTTER ST LOOKING SOUTH



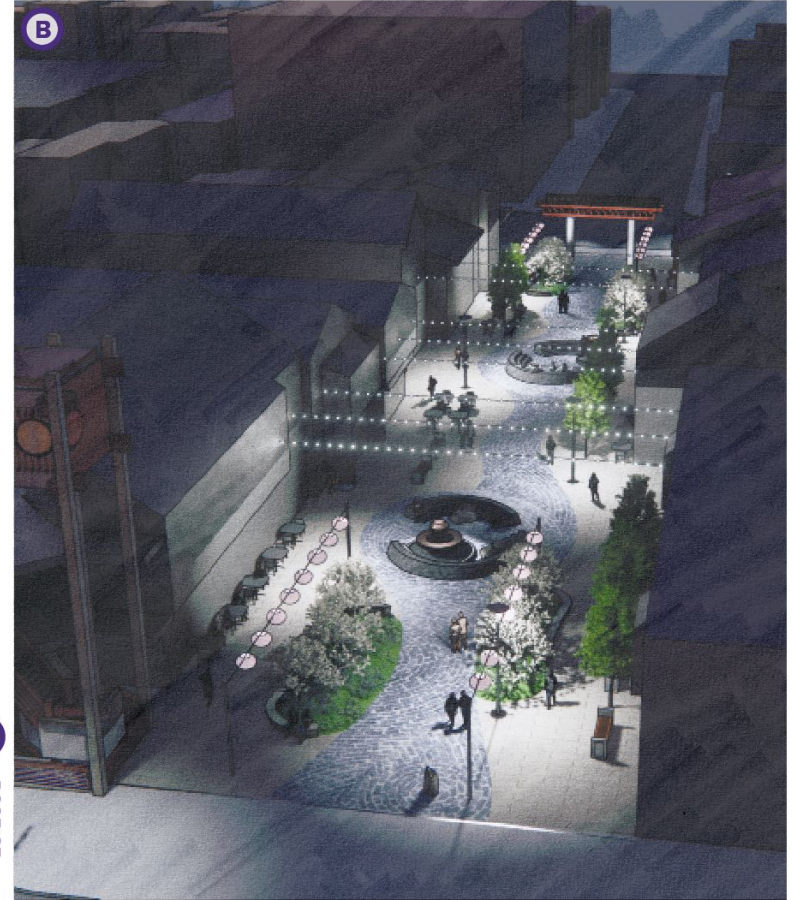
## OVERHEAD LIGHTING - OPTION 1: STRING LIGHTS



## OVERHEAD LIGHTING - OPTION 2: LANTERNS (EAST-WEST)



# OVERHEAD LIGHTING - OPTION 3: LANTERNS (NORTH-SOUTH) + STRING LIGHTS



# PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

## Specialty lighting



lanterns



garden gate lighting



string lighting



fountain lighting



Japanese language  
lamp posts



pedestrian scale  
pole lighting (16ft)

## Fountains



fountain maintenance



## Furnishings



Ruth Asawa benches



precast seat walls



movable furnishings

## Understory planting



\*trees will be maintained by the City

# OVERHEAD LIGHTING OPTIONS COMPARISON

## 1 String lights



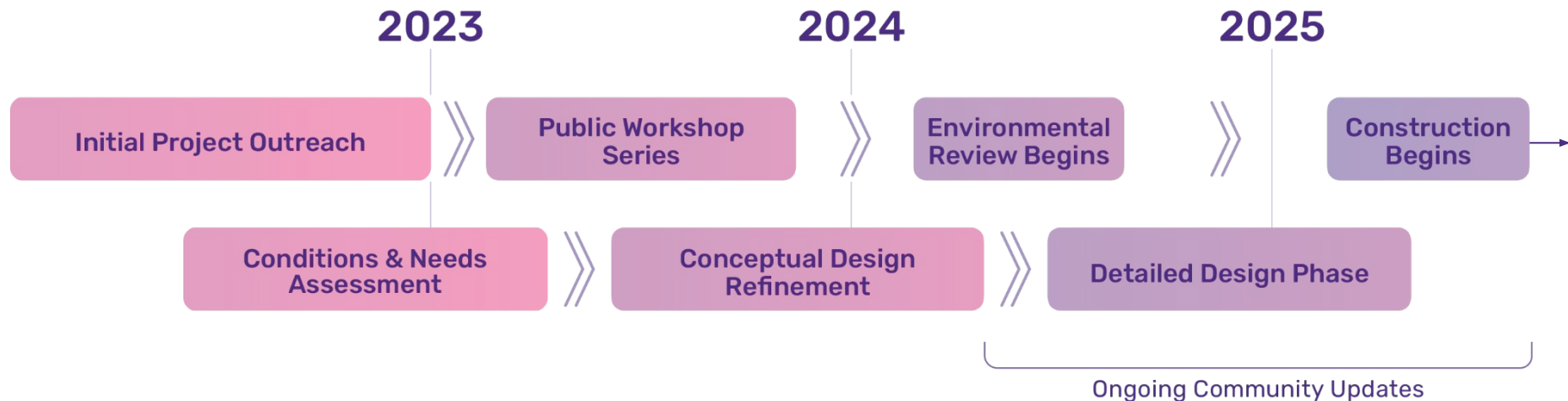
## 2 Lanterns (east-west)



## 3 Lanterns (north-south) + string lights



# NEXT STEPS



# CULTURAL HERITAGE

Sign up! Projects in the works:

- Friends of Osaka Way
- Sutter Street Japantown Gateway
- Post Street Crosswalk
- Fire Watch Tower



## Any Questions or Comments?

- If you're joining via Zoom, please add your comments in the chat for us to read out loud
- If you're joining in person, please step forward and line up behind the microphone



# THANK YOU!

**[SFPlanning.org/JapantownBuchananMall](https://sfplanning.org/JapantownBuchananMall)**

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# DESIGN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS: COBBLESTONE

Should the project prioritize the preservation and reuse of the existing cobblestone or should it explore new materials that also convey the flowing river concept?

