Japantown Osaka Way/Buchanan Mall

OPEN HOUSE #3

WELCOME!
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
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.
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
COBBLESTONE RIVER

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

- Repaving 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 creating 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

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.

Available Funding: $7M
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

2022
- Cherry Blossom Festival Outreach
- Initial Project Outreach
- Conditions & Needs Assessment

2023
- Children’s Day Festival Outreach
- Nihonmachi Street Fair Outreach
- Public Life Studies
- Public Workshop Series

2024
- Cherry Blossom Festival Outreach
- Open House #1
- Focused Conversations
- Environmental Review Begins
- Design Refinement

2025
- Peace Plaza Construction Begins
- Open House #2
- Open House #3
- Community Updates
- Construction Begins
- Detailed Design
BRIEF SITE HISTORY

1963
Nihon Machi
March 15, 1963
Rai Y. Okamoto
San Francisco Redevelopment Agency
Van Buren/Nakamura
An Urban Design Study in the Western Addition Area

1970s
URBAN DESIGN STUDY

RUTH ASAWA COMMISSION

1970s
CONSTRUCTION

1976
PROJECT COMPLETION

1999
FOUNTAINS RECAST IN BRONZE

2007
RENAAMED OSAKA WAY
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

CHILDREN'S DAY FESTIVAL
May 7, 2022

NIHONMACHI STREET FAIR
August 6, 2022

CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL
April 8-9 & 15-16, 2023

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
July 2023

OPEN HOUSE #1
May 31, 2023

2022

OPEN HOUSE #2
October 3, 2023

SENIOR ENGAGEMENT
Surveys with: Kitano, The Carlyle, Sequoia, Nihonmachi Terrace, Kimochi, Ivy Living
August 2023

OPEN HOUSE #3
February 2024

STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS
December 2023 - January 2024
- JTF Board Presentation
- Design Charette with core stakeholders (Asao Family & Estate, Japantown CBD, JTF, RPC)
- 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

2023

2024
OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

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 seating are helping boost the image of Osaka Way/Buchanan Mall.”
- Survey Respondent

“Would like to see [fountain] working again”
- Open House #1 Participant

“Can the Osaka Way Mall be a kind of an outdoor gallery that tells story of Asawa’s community-based artwork? Give credit about her life + art?”
- Open House #1 Participant

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

“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

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

Mixed opinions on Japanese language lantern posts
OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

PLANTING | 植栽 | Pflanz | 栽培 | PLANTADO
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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요 학습 | 주요 학습 포인트 | CONCLUSIONES
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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...7が最も、大阪駅の現在の緑をどのように評価しますか？
F10 respondents

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
HISTORIC SIGNAGE

Existing Signage

All existing signage will be carefully documented, preserved, and re-installed on site.

Potential Additional Signage

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

- Plaque installed in 1999 for origami fountain dedication ceremony, commemorating Rai Okamoto with his signature and family crest, on the bench where he often sat.
- Plaque to commemorate Karin Moru arrival and honor cherry tree donors.
- Plaque commemorating Architect Rai Okamoto's design concept.
- Commemorative signage in Japantown.
- Benyodo 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

views of Osaka Way & Peace Plaza pagoda

most sun
MOOD/VISION BOARD
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

- Design Concepts Development
- Design Survey Highlights
- Preferred Design Concept
- Project Priorities
INITIAL DESIGN CONCEPTS OVERVIEW

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

Kanso (簡素): simplicity
A preservation-minded approach that refreshes the existing geometries of the space using mostly city-standard materials and furnishings.

Datsuzoku (脱俗): unbounded by convention
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 | · Repairs Ruth Asawa fountains |
| 2. Addresses code compliance issues | · Addresses code compliance issues |
| 3. Fewer changes | · More changes |
| 4. Maintains overall existing site layout | · Introduces an alternative site design |
| 5. Uses mostly standard materials (paving, furnishings, etc.) | · Uses more custom and non City-standard materials |
| 6. Less opportunity for unique design elements | · Greater opportunity for unique design elements |
| 7. Keeps existing cherry trees with new under-planting | · Adds more planting types, including canopy trees |
| 8. Restores existing cobble in a code-compliant condition | · Replaces cobble with new paving |
### DESIGN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

**What do you like most about...?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1: KANSO</th>
<th>2: DATSUZOKU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like that the cobble could be restored but in a way that is still ADA compliant.</td>
<td>Additional planting and seating/tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintains the original character but makes some needed improvements.</td>
<td>It looks much more natural and scenic. There are many more places to sit. It seems more community inviting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planter seating</td>
<td>Addition of Gingko trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserves the Asawa landscape design</td>
<td>More long seating so people can stay longer and enjoy themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear understanding of movement winding down the center with more static space on the edges for businesses.</td>
<td>Path seems more open creating accessibility for all type of pedestrians.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DESIGN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS: TREE SPECIES

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

- Cherry trees and Ginkgo trees in a new layout: 62%
- Existing Cherry trees plus additional Cherry trees: 22%
- Original Cherry trees layout: 5%
DESIGN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS: SEATING

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

- **Strongly Dislike**
- **Strongly Like**
How much do you like the seating options of Option 1: Kanso?

[Bar chart showing preferences]

1. Strongly Dislike
2. Strongly Like
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
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 polo lighting (36ft)

**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

2023
- Initial Project Outreach
- Conditions & Needs Assessment

2024
- Public Workshop Series
- Conceptual Design Refinement
- Environmental Review Begins

2025
- Detailed Design Phase
- Construction Begins

Ongoing Community Updates
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

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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?

![Bar chart showing the preference between prioritizing preservation and exploring new materials. The chart indicates a strong preference for exploring new materials.]

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