SPEAKERS:

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Japantown’s cultural resources

Buildings | Objects | Sites | Structures

- Buchanan Mall
- Buddhist Church of San Francisco
- Japan Center
- Peace Pagoda
- Masayasu Ashizawa House
- Bush Street-Cottage Row Historic District
- Kinmon Gakuen
- Nihonmachi Little Friends / YMCA
Japantown’s cultural resources

Organizations | Institutions | Businesses | Cultural Events | Traditional Arts

- Cherry Blossom Festival
- Obon Festival
- Benkyo-do Manju Shop
- Kinokinuya Bookstores
- Soko Hardware
- Michiya Hanayagi Japanese Classical Dance
• Japantown is prime real estate and vulnerable to change, especially small businesses, non-profit institutions, and historic buildings

• Redevelopment of 1960’s was a mistake

• Major change to malls requires closing the garage which will result in elimination of cultural businesses

• The community does not have a recognized document of what we want for Japantown or laws to guide its land use or preservation
How has Japantown addressed threats?

California Senate Bill 307
Passed in September of 2001, allowed for the creation of a California Japantown Preservation Pilot Project, which provided grants to Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Francisco to promote the preservation of their Japantown neighborhoods.

History Walk
The San Francisco Japantown History Walk is a self-guided tour consisting of 16 interpretive signs along an approximately 10-block route through the heart of Japantown, providing visitors with a unique insight into the community’s fight hundred years of history and culture.
Preserve America Designation

Preserve America is a federal initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the program include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of our communities.

Local Landmark Designation

The City of San Francisco maintains a list of locally designated City Landmarks and Historic Districts. Owners of Landmark properties, or of contributors to Historic Districts, may be eligible for property tax relief and other incentives.
How does Japantown plan to address future threats?

Japantown Historic Context & Cultural Heritage Inventory

- Identifies Important Cultural Resources in Japantown
- Based on community input and review of historic documents.
- 306 total resources – and counting – including
  - 67 buildings and structures
  - 123 businesses
  - 79 cultural activities and events
  - 37 organizations and institutions
- Purpose is to help inform and prioritize recommendations
How does Japantown plan to address future threats?

Japantown Cultural Heritage & Economical Sustainability Strategy

A strategy document to implement neighborhood improvements and attract funding.

- Create a Community Development Corporation – economic development, advocacy, technical support
- Create a Community Land Trust – community stewardship of land
- Create a Community Benefits District – maintenance and safety, streetscape improvements
- Implement Invest in Neighborhoods – financial assistance, marketing, organizational support
- Implement the Better Streets Plan – more attractive neighborhood, better signage
- Adopt a Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District and Japantown-specific design guidelines
What Japantown needs are not being met?

- Japantown does not benefit sufficiently from Cultural Heritage Tourism
- The number of traditional business, art, and craft practitioners is diminishing
What can be done to meet Japantown’s needs?

• Create a local or citywide Cultural Heritage Tourism program

• Create job training programs for cultural businesses

• Create financial incentives for the retention of cultural businesses

• Collaborate with heritage communities across the city and state to share ideas and resources