



# JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE

日本町の経済発展・計画・保存

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING & PRESERVATION OF JAPANTOWN

## NOTES FROM THE LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE

1765 SUTTER STREET

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2018

### BOARD MEMBER PRESENT:

Glynis Nakahara, Judy Hamaguchi, Sandy Mori

### STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Nakajo

### OTHERS PRESENT:

Jeremy Chan, Grace Horikiri, Andy Thornley, Jerry Ono, Alexander Garcia, Adrian Leung, Angelica Ramirez

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

#### ZIPCAR

Andy Thornley from SFMTA came to speak about the current Zipcar parking spots and plans for relocating them. SFMTA has been experimenting with placing dedicated carshare parking spots on streets.

The current spot is located on Laguna near Post. It has had successful usage, as about 25-30 different people use it 1 or more times a day. Usage includes residential use (visiting other relatives) or business use (ex. an architect who uses Zipcar instead of a company car). It is generally not used by commuters.

However, as Steve Nakajo noted, the current location is controversial because it took up a prime parking spot that was used by Japantown customers who were visiting the bank, barber shops, and other retail on Post Street.

Andy Thornley proposed potential locations to move the Zipcar spot. The potential locations were suggested to avoid taking up metered spaces, being in front of someone's house, and interfering with retail/restaurants. Sometimes spots are placed behind a white school loading zone.

Potential locations include:

- (1) On Post between Laguna/Gough. It's a back entrance to the Sequoias, so it's not an ideal place for passenger loading anyway. It's currently a 1 hour parking zone.
- (2) Behind Hotel Kabuki - on Geary, left of Laguna (not in front of any retail)
- (3) On Laguna, just north of Geary (not in front of any retail).

The timeline for the Zipcar spots is as follows: Initial proposal => notice for public hearing (signs on telephone poles) - perhaps a month from now => additional meetings. This takes about 3

months, but it may take longer because of the holidays. However, the holiday time also makes it easier to move the spots because they are used less often.

Geary BRT construction might affect the placement of Zipcar spots.

There are currently 3-4 Zipcar spots in the garage. The spots for Getaround (a gig economy car sharing service) are going away because usage wasn't consistent enough to justify the parking spot.

## BIKESHARE

Adrian Leung - SFMTA Bikeshare Program Manager

Alexander Garcia - Ford GoBike - Outreach Coordinator for Motivate/Ford

The above two speakers spoke about Bikeshare and potential locations for Bikeshare spots in Japantown. The goal of Bikeshare is to provide alternative methods of transportation and reduce the number of drivers in San Francisco. With Bikeshare, riders do not have to worry about storing their bike at home or on transit.

Bikeshare operates on a subscription model, costing \$15/month for unlimited trips. The types of bikes include blue pedal bikes, and electric bikes for no additional charge; these electric bikes are popular with seniors and for returning to hilly areas like Chinatown and North Beach. Popular starting areas include the Ferry Building and Caltrain stations. Although Ford will remove unpopular stations, most stations are used by hundreds of people, so they have not had to remove any in SF.

The October 2018 data for the two closest Bikeshare locations to Japantown are as follows:

Raymond Kimbell Playground - 357 unique riders, 887 total trips

Webster St at O'Farrell St (Safeway) - 487 unique riders, 1379 total trips

Bikeshare stations take about 3-4 parking spots to store 15-23 bikes. They prefer to place stations near transit and in front of businesses. It was said that unlike carshare users, bikeshare users are more likely to patronize businesses. They are not placed in front of public utilities. The stations are like "lego blocks" that take 3 hours to put in and remove, at Ford's expense. This is commonly done during festivals and events.

Several proposed locations were discussed for bikeshare stations. See <http://bit.ly/japantownbikeshare>, which also contains a survey for people to comment on the proposed station locations. The survey will be distributed to bikeshare users as well as local businesses and community members.

Several people expressed concern that the bikeshare stations would reduce Japantown's already limited parking. Steve Nakajo also said that his constituents are not bike riders and that therefore community members would not benefit from bikeshare. He stressed that any bikeshare locations would only exist because the community is intentionally accommodating them.

Linda suggested that Bikeshare could bring more young people to Japantown and increase economic development. Adrian mentioned a New York study demonstrating how bikeshare increases retail activity. Some skepticism was expressed as to the transferability of this study to San Francisco, so Adrian will collect data on to what extent users from nearby stations (Raymond Kimbell Park, Safeway) are visiting Japantown. Ford GoBike is also willing to partner with businesses to do promotions (ex. GoBike pays for your coffee at a certain business), or creating sponsored merchant maps at stations.

Bikeshare stations on Post Street were especially objected to due to it being a commercial corridor. Jerry Ono of Union Bank objected to the Post Street spots (yellow grid Point A) for being in front of Union Bank as well as being near a wheelchair access point frequently used by seniors and persons with disabilities.

In earlier discussions, Rich Hashimoto suggested the Garage as a location. However, the garage is not 24 hour accessible, but they could look into available access.

It was discussed that parking in the Japantown garage is cheaper than street parking. Educating the public about this might reduce street parking congestion. The garage generally does not reach capacity during the weekdays, but it does on the weekend and during festivals. There was a question of whether the revenue from the garage goes towards the community.

The current timeline is that Ford GoBike will conduct one round of surveys before the holiday season. and then again afterwards. Glynis asked and will follow up for a more detailed written timeline/schedule regarding the process.

The median bikeshare age is 36-38, which is generally older than expected. Jeremy asked about demographics with respect to race and socioeconomic status, which SFMTA will be collecting soon via a survey. Angelica asked about bike education training / youth programs, and Adrian confirmed that this is something Ford GoBike has done in other neighborhoods and could be a way to directly support the community.

The Peace Plaza has been looked at as a potential location, but it could interfere with the renovation process.

Judy mentioned the previous discussion several years ago to keep a bike lane off of Post Street to avoid congestion, especially with respect to Uoki Market deliveries. The fact that Japantown is "landlocked" has a huge impact on the development of Japantown.

The committee makes no recommendation about bikeshare stations at this time. The committee will follow up to collect more information regarding the timeline/schedule, current economic impact of bikeshare, and the demographics of bikeshare users.

#### CANNABIS LEGISLATION

Judy is still looking into it. She asked if there is a hard deadline, which there is not. Glynis said that to update the NCD guidelines to include cannabis dispensaries, we would ask

Vallie Brown to issue an amendment.

Sandy said the cannabis moratorium in Chinatown was “stone cold politics,” and Japantown does not have that level of political power to implement a similar policy.

Glynis said amending the NCD guidelines would have a similar effect to existing protocols already in place as part of the City’s process for Cannabis retail, unless the community decided to prohibit Cannabis retail.

#### SUD ZONING FOR MEZZANINES

No update.

#### PEACE PLAZA MEETING

The next Peace Plaza meeting will be on November 7th in the Union Bank at 5pm. This will be a meeting with design advisors. The discussion will center around the three proposals, as well as a debrief of the last community meeting.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD CPMC MEETING

The CPMC meeting regarding the impact of the new hospital on the neighborhood has been postponed. Glynis toured the hospital. The interior is very extravagant - for example, they quarried the stone here, and then shipped the stone to Italy to be milled.

#### BUCHANAN / SUTTER BUS BENCH

There is currently a bench at the MUNI bus stop in front of Super Mira. Once someone requests a bench, SFMTA has to install one. Mr. Miura, the owner of Super Mira, doesn’t want a bench because it’s interfering with the entrance to and signage in front of his store.

The committee’s next step is to do more research and inquire as to who to contact about the bus shelters.

#### GEARY TREE

No update.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

None

#### DECEMBER/JANUARY MEETING DATES

Second Monday of the Month. December 10th.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**JACL Spaghetti / Crab Feed**

Saturday December 1st. 5pm-8:30pm

Location: Christ United Presbyterian Church (Cup-C)

Tickets: \$40 pre-sell, \$50 walk-in. \$15 for youth up to 12

This year they are raising money for the Buchanan YMCA's youth/family programs. Last year they raised \$3000 for Jon Osaki's film project. They will also be celebrating the 90th anniversary of the SF JACL. Entertainment is to be determined.

**Buchanan Crosswalk - Geary Rapid Kickoff Ribbon Cutting**

Amy Fowler from SFMTA reached out about hosting this event. They'll be revealing the art panels designed by Grace Horikiri and Kaz, highlighting the Fillmore, St. Francis Square, and Japantown. The tentative date is Wednesday January 23, at 11am.

Reactivate Fillmore Heritage Center - located inside Yoshi's.

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

The next meeting will be at 6:00 p.m., December 10, 2018 at the JACL HQ.