



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, MARCH 11, 2019

BOARD MEMBER PRESENT:

Judy Hamaguchi, Glynis Nakahara, Rosalyn Tonai, Alice Kawahatsu, Kenta Takamori, Sandy Mori

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Nakajo

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jeremy Chan, Linda Walsh, Sheffield Hale

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

BIKE

In response to the questions posed at the last meeting, Kenta will compile studies/articles and share with the committee (ex. docked / undocked bikes).

Kenta communicated with GoBike that we need more time before pushing forward with it. GoBike was not aggressive about pushing it forward, and was willing to work with us. We are waiting for more data from them regarding the economic impact of bikeshare. Bikeshare should be considered seriously if the economic impact is compelling.

Kenta also discussed the cost of wanting to add bikeshare later. In Oakland, they wanted to add bikeshare to additional parts of the neighborhood, and had to raise an additional \$80,000 to do that.

Kenta said his personal opinion is that docked bikes are better than undocked bikes, because studies have shown that docked bikes have a higher usage rate.

Judy commented that on NextDoor in her neighborhood (Pacific Heights/Hayes Valley etc.), there are many comments against Bikeshare. She spoke about the number of families and seniors and agreed with doing more research.

Ros echoed that we should do more research about the current and future needs of the community, and also discussed the differing needs between families/seniors, as well as tourists and young people.

Alice commented about how construction will impact bike usage. She said her concern was with respect to bike safety, both with regards to bikers as well as pedestrians. She also commented on the aesthetic of the bikes in relation to Japantown.

Kenta commented that the environmental impact of bikeshare should also be considered.

Ros commented on the lack of flexibility as to how large the station should be / the number of bikes.

Kenta said that GoBike offered to do a trial period of ~6 months, and that if the data doesn't show significant usage, they'll remove it. He saw this as a gesture of good faith from GoBike as to tailoring the program to meet community needs.

Judy commented that the church congregations could be impacted by the lack of parking spots, in particular seniors. Community first. Judy commented that since we've been discussing GoBike for a while, so it would be good to move forward to a decision.

Sheffield commented that some studies show that it's easier to park because of bikeshare, because drivers who switch to bikes free parking spots for other people.

Glynis said we could provide specific criteria for the trial period and remove the bike stations pending those criteria.

Ros asked for specific data with respect to commuters in this neighborhood.

Steve commented that the community needs should be placed first. He said that most people in his peer group drive. He does not want the community to accommodate and lose its priorities.

Kenta said if the committee has already made up its mind, then there's no point to beleaguer the issue. Glynis asked if there is any data that may change people's minds.

Jeremy commented that Tomo did a research expose that includes economic data from the city with respect to Bikeshare, and he would like to read that report before making a decision. He also commented that the community is complex and doesn't fit specifically into the dichotomy of "senior community members" vs. "young tourists."

Steve said the dynamics of the community are changing and that we don't necessarily have a good grip on the issue. He's anecdotally observed that more people use scooters than bikes. There was some discussion about the price of parking in Japantown.

Kenta said if it's going to take a lot for the community to support bikeshare, then why bother.

Three buckets: people who work/volunteer in Japantown vs. people who live in Japantown vs. people who visit Japantown. The survey shows visitors are most pro bikeshare, followed by people who live in Japantown, followed by people who work / volunteer in Japantown.

Ros said if there could be a win-win situation where the racks are placed without parking spots, then it wouldn't be an issue.

Kenta discussed future proofing - there could be dock stations all around the city except Japantown, and that could later affect who comes to Japantown.

Jeremy commented that the committee should set a deadline as to when to make a decision. Kenta and Glynis said we should come to a conclusion by the next meeting.

CAR SHARE

Glynis reported that the JTF board voted to approve the moving of the Zipcar spot. Andy Thornley said their next step was to reach out to the Sequoias to get further input.

CPMC

CPMC has a right to 400 spots in the parking garage. So far they haven't been using them, but if they do, it will impact the garage, which has a total of 900-1000 spots.

Glynis said that the 400 spots are not being used all the time. But this is likely to change with the opening of the Van Ness hospital. Kenta contrasted this potential loss of hundreds of spots vs. the 3 spots from bikeshare.

Steve reported that CPMC is requesting 100 more spots. The shuttle route has changed. They eliminated the K line and added a J line, which picks up in front of the garage entrance on Post Street.

Glynis suggested specifically asking Rich Hashimoto to give a report on the garage changes.

Ros commented that Japantown and Chinatown are the only two neighborhood organized garages (via nonprofit boards). Money from parking fees goes to banners, revenue, etc. and this is a critical source of community power.

The garage is shifting to automated structures, so many of the staff will be laid off in six months.

GEARY BRT KICK OFF

Glynis reported that it was held at the Buchanan YMCA due to rain. It was a good event, and Glynis and Linda both participated

PEACE PLAZA / PEACE PAGODA LANDMARKING AND IMPROVEMENTS

Rich Hashimoto, Steve Nakajima, and Sandy Mori will be meeting with Rec and Park to zero in on the cost estimates of the Peace Plaza project. Sandy and the committee believe the cost estimates are too low.

The next community meeting is Tuesday, March 19.

NEW BUSINESS:

COMMITTEE PLANNING INITIATIVES

Kenta said the committee should develop a strategy with respect to land use and transportation. Currently we deal with issues on a one-off basis, as opposed to in relation to a broader strategy. The idea is to fund a study about what's happening here.

Sandy said (1) referring to the JCHESS is helpful, and (2) a study now will be skewed by construction (ex. Van Ness). Kenta commented that a traffic study is always skewed, and that it would at least provide an important benchmark moving forward.

Jeremy commented that some of this data is already collected by the city. Tomo has reported that there is data with respect to how often rideshare is used to get to/from Japantown and its effect on congestion. Congestion has increased by over 50% due to rideshare.

Steve commented on how different traffic measures have impacted firefighters.

Kenta commented that it would be good to get a snapshot before construction starts.

Judy commented that it's important for LUT to have a set plan, lest the board takes away power from the committee.

Ros talked about multiple stages - visions/values to guide the strategic initiatives.

Judy suggested that the committee should review the relevant pages of JCHESS.

Emergency planning is another topic that may/may not be within the committee scope. The JCCCNC is starting to spearhead a community organized emergency plan.

Kenta and Alice are both NERTs (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team) and talked about the importance of getting a local Japantown NERT.

MONTHLY MEETING DATE

Based on the straw poll, Glynis reported that everyone is okay to move the meeting to the second Thursday of the month.

Ros moved, and Alice seconded. The move was approved. Glynis said they will consider moving the meeting venue to Union Bank.

The April meeting will stay on the second Monday, April 8. Starting in May, the meeting will move to the second Thursday, May 9th.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Linda Walsh asked if anyone is open to talking to community college students from Redding

(Shasta Community College). Ros said they could do a tour with NJAHS again.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The meeting adjourned a 7:33 p.m.

The next meeting will be at 6:00 p.m. April 8, 2019 at the JACL HQ.