

Appendix C. Japantown Cultural Organizations Survey and Results

Survey method and response

To obtain information from community leaders for our brochure and to assess what they thought was the most important information for developers, we distributed a survey by mail (and by email when requested) to 20 community and cultural organizations in April 2005. To meet the needs of the Redevelopment Agency and align our survey with the one developed by the retail team, we added several pages of market-based questions about future development, facilities, and number and type of patrons. The list of surveyed organizations and the surveys are attached.

We received surveys from four organizations: Boys and Girls Clubs of Silicon Valley (BGCSV), Japanese American Citizens League (JAACL) – San Jose Chapter, San Jose Buddhist Judo Club (SBJJC), and Lotus Preschool. We followed up with phone calls to these and other organizations to see if they had received the survey and to ask additional questions.

Since we received so few surveys back (probably because of the survey length, our lack of acquaintance with community leaders, and the short turn-around time), we cannot draw any statistical conclusions or generalizations from the results. However, we can summarize some answers we did receive.

Geographic Draw of Patrons

We asked organization leaders to break down where their patrons came from by percentage. Answers were somewhat uniform, with most patrons or users coming from parts of San Jose outside of Japantown. Results are summarized below.

Percentage of Patrons from...	BGCSV	JAACL	SBJJC	Lotus
Japantown	25%		10%	5%
Nearby (downtown, the Alameda)	70%		10%	1%
Rest of San Jose	5%		70%	70%
Santa Clara County		Majority	10%	15%
Greater Bay Area				9%

Types of Information Desired for Developers

On question 7, (“What kind of information about Japantown is most important to include in a brochure produced for developers but also available to residents, visitors, and business owners?”), our respondents gave very different answers. The number of responses in each category is summarized below.

<i>Type of information</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Less Important</i>
Historical information	3	1	0
“Promotional” information – quotes, pictures, and copy “selling” the neighborhood	0	4	0
Visuals of possible types of development	1	3	0
An updated map of the neighborhood highlighting cultural sites	3	0	1
Statistics on neighborhood population and market draw of businesses	1	1	2
Detailed list of cultural organizations and events	3	1	0
Contacts for neighborhood businesses and organizations	2	2	0
Contact information for city officials working in Japantown	1	3	0

Based on these responses, there seems to be a slight preference for cultural information over marketing information. Our brochure does include two of the most highly ranked types of information – historical information and a list of organizations (although we do not have a list of events – www.japantownsanjose.org provides a more up-to-date listing). If these results are representative of what many community members would like to see, future work on a brochure, such as the one the JCC is planning, should incorporate more detailed historical information and certainly a map.

Preferred Development Types in Japantown

Question 8 on the survey, devised to be compatible with other Redevelopment Agency surveys, asked respondents: “What kind of new development or tenants in Japantown do you think would enhance or detract from your organization and the Japantown neighborhood?” Results are summarized in the following table.

<i>Type of Development</i>	<i>Enhance</i>	<i>Detract</i>
Housing	2	1
Restaurants: Describe types of restaurant	3	1
Sidewalk Cafes	3	
Stores for families	3	
Games	1	1
Sports/Activities/Crafts	4	
Beauty	1	1
Pacific Rim Artifacts/Products	2	1
Specialty Foods/Deli	3	1
Grocery	3	1
Entertainment	4	
Offices	2	1
Medical Office	3	
Senior Housing	4	
Assisted Living	4	
Theatre or Event Auditorium and Facility	3	
Other (Describe)	1 (small park)	

Respondents agreed that sports/activities/crafts, entertainment, senior housing, and assisted living would be desirable development. However, most answers are harder to interpret clearly. While there was some agreement on certain types of development, support for other types such as office space and housing was mixed. One respondent thought that housing would actively detract from his organization and the neighborhood, writing, “When is too much, too much?” And while three respondents wanted restaurants, one stated that there is already a “sufficient number of eateries,” one requested Japanese restaurants specifically, and another wanted “diversity” in restaurant choices. Two respondents wanted office space, one did not express an opinion, and a fourth wrote “no, no, no!”

Summary of community feedback

A follow-up conversation with one survey respondent made it clear that community members are concerned with retaining and defending Japanese-American businesses and establishments. To quote one respondent: “I would like to see businesses remain Japanese since this is Japantown and independent/family owned. I feel that ‘chains’ would detract from all efforts to preserve and support Japantown.” This view was echoed by another respondent, though the need for Japanese-American businesses was not explicitly mentioned: “Every effort should be made to not allow big businesses to come in and force the small shops and stores out of business.” While all of the people we surveyed or spoke wanted to preserve Japantown’s character, one conversation made it clear that not everyone is as opposed to chain stores. One respondent in fact expressed his concern that the

neighborhood would not thrive if it did not allow a large chain grocery store such as Trader Joe's to come in.

Overall, our surveys and conversations reflected a good deal of pride in community organizations and in Japantown. Three of the four organizations surveyed have operated for 30 or more years; the remaining organization had been in business for over 16 years. Interestingly, while all organizations expressed a loyalty to Japantown and its community members – expressed through Japanese-themed programming, a desire to instill values or young people, or to provide affordable after-school activities – they also revealed that the majority of their patrons did not live in Japantown. This reflects the changing demographics of the area. The Lotus Preschool and the Japanese American Citizens League have mostly Japanese-American clientele, but the Boys and Girls Clubs of Silicon Valley – which draws from a small geographic area – prides itself on diversity.

Again, four surveys are not enough to draw any sort of conclusions about community opinion. But the divergent views and emotional opinions expressed here warrant further study. If these views are representative of general opinion in Japantown, there are some clear points of consensus and of divergence. Everyone agrees that they wish to preserve Japantown's character, but they differ on what type of development should be encouraged and who defines the neighborhood.

Cultural Organizations Survey – Recommendations for SJRA

- Include historical information, a map of cultural sites, and a detailed list of cultural organizations in community information prepared for developers.
- Follow up on survey responses with phone or in-person interviews and try to get information from more respondents if possible.
- To improve future response rate, more concise surveys, more response time, and email distribution or stamped return envelopes could be considered.

List of Surveyed Cultural Organizations

- San Jose Taiko
- San Jose Kendo Dojo
- San Jose Buddhist Judo Club – *survey completed by Mr. Vaughn T. Imada*
- Aikido of Japantown
- Nagareda Studio
- Ikebana Arts
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Silicon Valley (San Jose Northside) – *survey completed by Mr. Ray McCasland, Senior Unit Director*
- Lotus Preschool – *survey completed by Ms. Lynne Santo Yamaichi, Director*
- Fuji Towers
- Northside Community Center
- Yu-Ai Kai Community Center
- Oriental Christian Center
- Wesley United Methodist Church
- San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin
- Holy Cross Catholic Church
- Ethiopian Community Service, Inc.
- Filipino Community Center
- Japanese American Citizens League, San Jose Chapter – *survey completed by Mr. Tom Oshidari, President*
- Japanese-American Museum of San Jose
- Seicho-No-Ie

JAPANTOWN CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS SURVEY

To ensure that we can include your opinions, it is necessary that we receive your survey by **April 22**. We appreciate your input on all questions – thank you!

Organization Name:

Preferred contact person and title:

Address:

Phone number:

Website:

Hours:

Questions 1-6 ask for a basic description of your organization or group.

1. What is your organization's basic mission or purpose? *Please circle.*
 - (a) health
 - (b) education in cultural art / traditions
 - (c) display or performance of cultural art
 - (d) history
 - (e) religious teaching & practice
 - (f) social services
 - (g) education
 - (h) other (please describe)

2. What services do you provide to the community?

3. How long has your organization been operating in Japantown? *Please circle.*
 - (a) 1 – 5 years
 - (b) 6 – 10 years
 - (c) 11 – 15 years
 - (d) 16 – 20 years
 - (e) 21 – 25 years
 - (f) 26 – 30 years
 - (g) more than 30 years

Feel free to add any comments on the history of your organization.

4. What makes your organization unique and a draw for patrons compared with other organizations in San Jose?

5. How does your organization contribute to Japantown’s identity?
 Answers could include the following:
- (a) maintaining traditions/art
 - (b) reaching audiences to present tradition/art
 - (c) providing context for Japanese American people to maintain contact
6. What are your goals for how your organization will serve the community in 5 years?
Please state specific contributions of your organization in your own words:

Questions 7-8 ask for your opinions on new development in Japantown.

7. What kind of information about Japantown is most important to include in a brochure produced for developers but also available to residents, visitors and business owners? *Check the appropriate boxes.*

<i>Type of information</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Less Important</i>
Historical information			
“Promotional” information – quotes, pictures, and copy “selling” the neighborhood			
Visuals of possible types of development			
An updated map of the neighborhood highlighting cultural sites			
Statistics on neighborhood population and market draw of businesses			
Detailed list of cultural organizations and events			
Contacts for neighborhood businesses and organizations			
Contact information for city officials working in Japantown			

8. What kind of new development or tenants in Japantown do you think would enhance or detract your organization and the Japantown neighborhood? If any detract, why? *Please use the following table and feel free to add comments in the space below.*

<i>Type of Development</i>	<i>Enhance</i>	<i>Detract</i>	<i>Why?</i>
Housing			
Restaurants: Describe types of restaurant			
Sidewalk Cafes			
Stores for families			
Games			
Sports/Activities/Crafts			
Beauty			
Pacific Rim Artifacts/Products			
Specialty Foods/Deli			
Grocery			
Entertainment			
Offices			
Medical Office			
Senior Housing			
Assisted Living			
Theatre or Event Auditorium and Facility			
Other (Describe)			

Questions 9-18 ask for information on your patrons.

9. How many patrons do you see in an average week? _____

10. In your opinion, where do the majority of your patrons live? (please give percentages)

- (a) Japantown _____
- (b) Areas close to Japantown (Downtown, the Alameda) _____
- (c) Areas beyond Downtown, but within San Jose _____
- (d) Areas beyond San Jose, but within Santa Clara County _____
- (e) Areas beyond Santa Clara County, but within the Greater Bay Area _____

Do you track patrons' zip codes? If yes, would you share the zip code distribution of your patrons?

11. What family types and age groups tend to visit your organization the most?

TYPES:

- (a) Children of elementary school age (under 12) _____
- (b) Teenagers (12 – 18) _____
- (c) College Students (18 – 24) _____
- (d) Adults (25 and 65) _____
- (e) Seniors/retired (65 and up) _____

GROUPS:

- (a) Adults with children or teenagers _____
- (b) Senior with adults _____
- (c) Seniors with children or teenagers _____
- (d) Seniors, adults, children or teenagers _____

12. Which best describes how frequently the majority of your patrons use your business? *Please circle one.*

- (a) At least once a week
- (b) At least once a month
- (c) Less than once a month
- (d) One-time visitors only
- (e) Other _____

13. How long do the majority of your patrons stay while visiting your organization? *Please circle one.*

- (a) Less than 5 minutes
- (b) Five to fifteen minutes
- (c) Sixteen to thirty minutes
- (d) One to two hours
- (e) More than two hours

14. Why do you think your patrons patronize your organization?

15. Are your patrons significantly different now than the patrons five years ago?

- (a) Yes. How?
- (b) No

16. Over the last five years, has the number of patrons you serve

- (a) Increased. How? Why?
- (b) Declined. How? Why?
- (c) Stayed the same. Why?

Reasons could include:

- Economic conditions
- Quality and variety of nearby restaurants and shops
- Good service/Benefit of your organization
- Referrals. Reputation
- New residents / new & more housing in neighborhood
- Growth of activity in Downtown
- Growth of businesses in Downtown area
- Increasing numbers of residents in Downtown area
- Presence of new restaurants in Japantown (Hukilau, Sushimaru, Omagari)
- Japantown Activities (Nikkei, Obon, Farmer's Market, etc.)
- Advertising: What advertising? _____ Who does it bring? _____

17. Could you provide us with an estimate of your monthly revenues in ticket sales, admissions, tuition, fees and/or sales? _____

18. What type of patron and customer would you like to see come to Japantown in the next few years?

Questions 19-22 ask about your facilities.

19. Do you own your facilities, rent your facilities, or use space in a community facility?

20. If you own, are you planning to make any improvements to your building?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

21. If yes to question 18, what are they?

- (a) Interior improvements _____
- (b) Building front/façade _____
- (c) More building area. Please describe purpose and size: _____
- (d) Upgrading displays _____
- (e) Upgrading equipment/service area _____
- (f) Other _____

22. Do you feel that you need more or different facilities to serve your patrons better?

Would you be willing to answer questions or have a conversation with us about this survey and your organization? If so, please provide your preferred means of contact information:

_____.

Any other comments or questions?

Thank you for your time!

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