



**NOTES FROM THE
JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE
LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING
1765 SUTTER STREET
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2015**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Paul Wermer, David Ishida, Glynis Nakahara, David Ishida,

STAFF PRESENT:

Bob Hamaguchi, Greg Marutani

OTHERS PRESENT:

Karen Kai, Robert Rusky, Robert Sakai, Kent Iwamiya, Tomo Hirai, Jade Nelson, Augie Phillips, Kent Iwamiya, Paul Rainville, Eric Cordoba, Colin Dentel-Post, Wahid Amiri, Monica Munowitch, Tilly Chang, Kathie Cheatham, Paul Jacobsen, Vallie Brown,

Meeting began at 6:05 p.m.

GEARY BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)

Tilly Chang provided a brief history of the Geary BRT as well as the long-term plan for a more comprehensive and faster public transportation network. The “calming” of Geary Street would be the first stage that would include reducing the number of lanes available to automobiles and the designation of “bus only” lanes.

Regarding the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) to remove the current bridges, Tilly stated it would take place in the final stage of the project.

Representatives from Nihonmachi Little Friends and Rosa Parks Elementary School shared their concern that the proposed “at grade” crossing at Buchanan Street would not be safe or feasible to get children across Geary.

Paul Jacobsen, principal at Rosa Parks Elementary School stated that if the bridge is removed he will not allow walking field trips north of Geary, which would eliminate a number of visits to Japantown. And as a Japanese bilingual school, would be unfortunate for everyone.

This concern was expanded to include the high concentration of seniors living in the area, who are often seen crossing Geary and not waiting at the median when the countdown shows they would not complete the crossing before the signal changed.

On behalf of President London Breed, Vallie Brown stated that the District 5 supervisor would like to see something worked out with the city agencies and the community regarding the bridge as she recognizes the importance of the bridge to the community, the parents of children and the seniors. She said the Supervisor is not in favor of the removal of the bridge until after the traffic calming and pedestrian crossings are installed and acceptable to the community. The SFCTA staff confirmed that the bridge was not planned to be removed until after the improvements are completed and tested.

Paul suggested having a smaller working group meet with CTA/MTA staff regarding the specific items raised that included the staff sharing proposed plans regarding:

- * the number of lanes shown on the maps for the project;
- * data on the proposed “calming” effects and anticipated results;
- * examples of where “calming” effects have been implemented in San Francisco;
- * seek an opinion from the City Attorney’s office regarding the perceived need to rebuild the bridges to be ADA compliant if there is “at grade” crossing available;
- * cost estimate for taking down the bridge versus repairing/retrofitting it.

A tentative meeting with the Geary BRT team and interested community representatives was scheduled for Wednesday, January 6, 2016 starting at 6:00 p.m. at 1765 Sutter Street.

A neighbors’ meeting to plan for the January 6th meeting with the Geary BRT team, including documenting the concerns and discuss the cultural significance of the bridge as a part of Japantown and ensuring that once all of the “calming” plans have been implemented that there is adequate time for the JTF and SFMTA/SFCTA to discuss the results before any final determination is made regarding the demolition of the bridge.

A tentative meeting date was scheduled for Tuesday, December 21, 2015 at 1765 Sutter to begin at 6:00 p.m.

JAPANTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (NCD)

Paul reported that the Japantown designation as a Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) was adopted by the Land Use and Transportation Committee at its November 30, 2015 and will move to the Board of Supervisors agenda set for December 8, 2015.

1481 POST STREET PROJECT

Paul reported that Allan Low, VP of the Recreation and Parks (R&P) Commission who was interested in finding out about the shadow impact of the proposed 1481 Post Street project on a number of R&P properties in the neighborhood.

He added that it is likely that a combined hearing of the R&P and Planning Commissions will be scheduled and the JTF will need to be on the watch to see when this item is placed on the agenda.

1805 BUCHANAN STREET PROJECT

Paul reported that in a meeting with the architects, would work on designing a sidewalk garden along the front of the property.

With the consensus of the Committee, Paul will prepare a request to the JTF Board to reach out to the owners of the two adjacent properties to consider participating in extending the sidewalk garden along the entire block but to maintain the existing cherry trees that were planted to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the arrival of the Kanrin Maru at the Vallejo Street Pier in San Francisco in 1860.

UPDATE ON 1656 POST STREET

Robert Sakai provided an update on the construction work at 1656 Post Street apartments is moving forward, though rather slowly. He is hoping to see the project completed in late 2016.

He also reported that the work on the spa is also progressing, but a bit slower than desired.

NEW BUSINESS:

None at this time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next meeting of the Land Use and Transportation Committee will be Tuesday for January 12, 2015 at 1765 Sutter Street.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.