

Japantown Neighborhood Pedestrian Safety & Traffic Community Plan



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Executive Summary

The Japantown Task Force, Inc. is a non-profit planning and preservation organization. JTF is committed to the revitalization and development of the Japantown community. San Francisco's Japantown is one of three remaining Japantowns across the United States.

The Japantown community is home to residents, restaurants, merchants, churches, non-profit organizations, and various programs for all ages. Many people come in and out of Japantown on a daily basis and it is a community-wide effort to keep it safe, clean, and welcoming. The Community Plan has identified many conditions that lead to hazardous streets. Safer streets for the entire community are possible if the on going projects in Japantown take the following suggestions into consideration in their planning processes.

The community stressed many concerns and were very vocal about problems that all pointed to improving pedestrian safety. The Japantown community is very busy and has a lot of programs and tourists visiting daily. It is important that the visitors and residents are provided a safe way to enter, get around, and exit the community. This Community Plan includes detailed suggestions to improve conditions at dangerous intersections, provide safer and longer pedestrian crossing times and raise awareness of not only motorists, bicyclists, but pedestrians as well.

The Community Plan highlights the following conditions that put pedestrians at risk:

- Insufficient time and long crosswalks to cross busy intersections
- Traffic laws not being obeyed by cars, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Trucks double-parking and blocking traffic to unload goods on a daily basis.
- The need for more police officers and traffic enforcement on a regular basis.
- Visitors and tourists of the Japantown community unaware of different traffic laws.

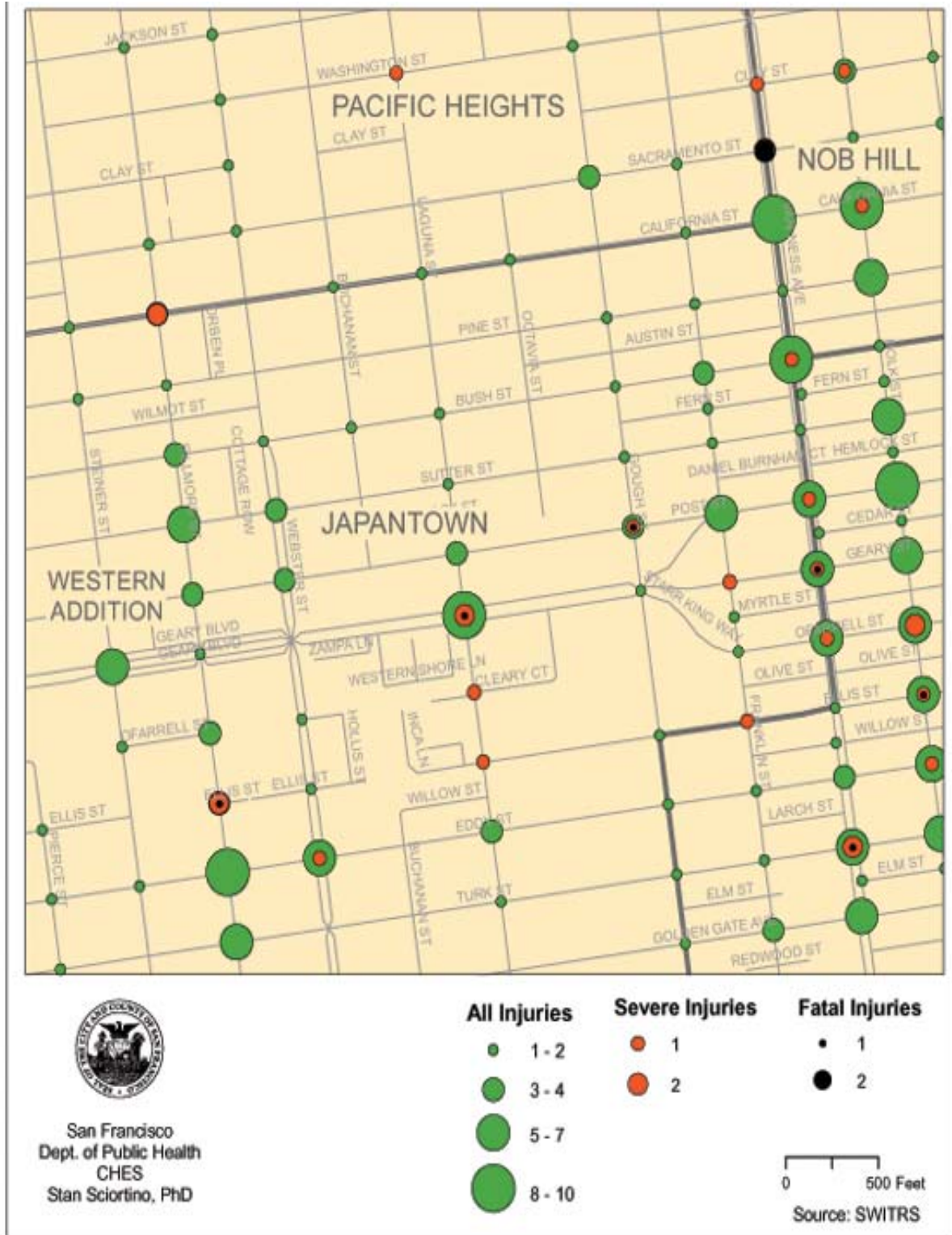
The Community Plan includes recommendations for improving pedestrian and traffic safety:

- Additions of corner bulb outs and countdown timers at intersections.
- Improving signage location and additions of signs around the community.
- Raising awareness of drivers, bicycle riders and pedestrians on safer behavior.
- Bilingual signage for Japanese tourists to raise awareness of pedestrian behavior.
- Improving the conditions along the Geary Corridor for pedestrians, bus riders, and drivers through the Geary Bus Rapid Transit Project.

The Japantown community looks forward to improving conditions through the help of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, San Francisco Police Department, San Francisco County Transportation Authority, Municipal Transportation Agency, and other organizations in the future.

The Community Plan will be integrated with other city initiatives, including but not limited to, Better Neighborhood Plan and Geary Bus Rapid Transit.

Pedestrian Injuries in Japantown from 2000 – 2004



Developing the Community Plan

Step 1: Information Gathering

An ongoing process of conducting research on pedestrian and traffic safety in Japantown, including statistics and surveys related to pedestrian safety in key parts of the community and possible traffic safety solutions.

Step 2: Community Observation

Japantown Task Force staff walked the neighborhood to observe existing conditions for general pedestrian and traffic behavior.



Step 3: Pedestrian Safety Issue Surveys

Develop, distribute, and collect at least 50 community surveys in English and Japanese regarding pedestrian safety issues to Japantown residents.

Step 4: Community Based Distribution

Pedestrian safety surveys were distributed throughout the community merchants, residents and organizations.



Step 5: Community Presentations of Survey Results

After tabulating and analyzing the 150 surveys, the results were presented on a PowerPoint slideshow to various community-based organizations.

Step 6: Develop Conceptual Plan:

The Japantown Task Force, Inc. analyzed all of the information gathered from statistics, comments, surveys, discussions and observations to prepare a conceptual area-wide pedestrian traffic and safety plan.

Step 7: Final Town Hall Meeting

The plan developed during these steps was presented at a community-wide town hall meeting. JTF presented the details of the community plan, followed by presentations by guest speakers and a final comment session. Guest speakers were Sergeant Bob Guinan; SFPD, Julie Kirschbaum; SFCTA and Frank Markowitz; MTA.



Community Plan Discussed in Detail

Working with the community is an on-going process of open communication. At the beginning of the project, background information, past statistics and comments from local patrons and residents provided a starting point. From this information, we gathered several key intersections that were either a real problem based on supporting data (See Appendix D) or intersections that were a problem waiting to happen. Throughout the project, surveys and presentations have been conducted and attendees have given feedback in order to ensure the most accurate and current information.

JTF staff walked through the community to survey the present condition of sidewalks, general traffic and pedestrian behavior. Notes were written down and were taken into consideration while developing the Pedestrian Safety Survey.

The next step was to take all of the previous information gathered and develop, distribute and collect at least 50 community pedestrian safety surveys in English and Japanese.

The survey was distributed to various merchants, residents and organizations including the Sequoias, Japantown Merchants Association, Buchanan YMCA, Nihonmachi Little Friends, Kimochi Nutrition Program and other locations throughout the community. JTF collected over 100 surveys; 33 in Japanese and 124 in English.

After tabulating and analyzing the information from the surveys (See Appendix A), a PowerPoint presentation was created to present the information gathered from the surveys to the Sequoia's, Nihonmachi Little Friends and Christ United Presbyterian Church. At the end of the presentation, each group was provided an opportunity for comments and questions.. Afterwards, they were asked to prioritize their top list of recommendations for the future (See Appendix B).

The Japantown Task Force, Inc. analyzed all of the information gathered from statistics, comments, surveys, discussions and observations to prepare a conceptual area-wide pedestrian traffic and safety plan. The plan is a collaborative effort between the Japanese Community and the JTF Ad-Hoc Committee.

Pedestrian / Traffic Calming and Improving Conditions

Traffic calming is originally a concept from Europe using a system of design strategies to balance the traffic on streets with other uses. Major traffic calming tools such as speed humps, traffic circles and chicanes interrupt visual lines on long, straight roads attempting to slow motorists to safe speeds. Japantown could benefit more from tools such as curb bulbs, cutouts in median islands, extending refuge areas, etc

Curb Bulbs

Curb bulbs reduce the distance pedestrians must travel to the opposite corner by extending the corners of already existing sidewalks. Making pedestrians more visible is necessary because cars will slow down while turning to avoid the addition of the curb as well as the pedestrians being able to physically stand further into the crosswalk area. The intentions of curb bulbs are to slow traffic that is turning, shorten the distance to cross streets, and increase pedestrian visibility.

Countdown Signals

Countdown signals allow pedestrians to gauge whether it is safe for them to begin crossing the street. Countdown signals have three different stages for pedestrians to use. When the traffic signal is red, the countdown will display a solid red hand. When it is safe for pedestrians to cross, a white pedestrian will be displayed. When the light is stale, the pedestrian will be red and display the number of seconds before the light will turn yellow. The pedestrian should use their personal judgment of how long it will take them to cross. Depending on how long the crosswalk is, this stage will vary. A long intersection may begin counting down at 30 seconds while a shorter crosswalk may begin counting down at 10 seconds.



Median

In the event a pedestrian is unable to cross the entire intersection, the presence of a median could provide a safe refuge for pedestrians. The size and presence of a median will vary according to the size of the street. A very small intersection of two lanes of traffic may not have a median or a small curb to divide the directions of traffic. A wide street with multiple lanes of traffic or a street with a long crosswalk will need a median down the middle of the street to divide the traffic. Depending on how fast the flow of traffic is and the amount of space available will determine the size that best suits that street. Medians are used as a way to divide traffic, provide pedestrian refuge and an opportunity for landscaping.



Cutouts

Cutouts are associated with medians because medians are extended through the crosswalk and a portion of the median is essentially cut out of the median. Cutouts are important for pedestrian safety because it provides pedestrians a safer way to take refuge when they are unable to cross the street during the walk cycle. Cutouts are especially helpful to young children, elders, and physically handicapped people. Elderly and people in wheelchairs have difficult getting onto the median where it is safer and can rest in the cutout being more protected



Blind Intersections

Blind intersections are sidewalks where the parking is extended to the end of the block decreasing pedestrian visibility of oncoming traffic. Drivers have no read or enough vision to gauge the situation. If parking at the corner was reduced by one car, drivers would have a better view of the intersection, thus giving them a better read on the situation to gauge whether it is safe or not to turn while approaching the intersection.



Existing Conditions

Buchanan Street

The intersections and each street along Buchanan are all unique in Japantown. At the intersection of Geary Boulevard and what would be Buchanan Street is an unofficial crossway for many pedestrians to cross the fast paced Geary Corridor. Pedestrians find it is the easiest and safest way from their endeavors exiting and entering Japantown. While there are other legal ways to cross Geary Blvd., they find those options are more dangerous or too physically demanding (for example, the walkway overpass). Between Sutter St. and Geary Blvd, Buchanan is home to the Peace Plaza and the Buchanan St. Mall.



In the Buchanan Mall, there are various offices, storefronts and restaurants. The Buchanan Mall is not a regular sidewalk; it has a cobblestone river designed by Rai Okamoto and two origami water fountains designed by Ruth Asawa. As you travel north onto the next block, the Torii Gates symbolize a Japanese mountain temple gate to enhance the garden atmosphere of Buchanan Mall. Between Sutter St. and Bush St. are more offices and the Best Western Miyako Inn. At Buchanan and Sutter, a t-intersection is created with the absence of vehicles on Buchanan St. Consequently this intersection makes it easy for cars traveling on these streets to make frequent right turns on red lights and running the red lights. Visitors of Japantown often jaywalk while visiting the area or while going to various programs in the community.



Existing Conditions

Fillmore Street

Fillmore Street is filled with merchants and heavy traffic. If one is taking public transportation to Japantown or Fillmore's jazz district the first step off the bus will be a crowded one. At Geary Blvd. and Fillmore St. there are bus stops for the 38 Geary and the 22 Fillmore; however the bus stations for these buses are located on narrow sidewalks. Fillmore Street has only one lane of traffic in each direction. Traffic often gets congested because of limited space for cars and buses. When trucks or cars double park in designated bus stops, buses are forced to swing around into the bus stop trying to get close to the curb for passengers. This causes the back of the bus to stick out into the lanes causing a temporary backup. At the intersections of Post and Sutter there are many times where pedestrians will wait in the intersection for the light to turn green instead of waiting on the curb where it is safe. While many pedestrians wait for the right of way, Fillmore St. has many pedestrians who cross on the red light. Cars make turns both while having the green light and on the red light at fast speeds close to the curb. These two situations combined put pedestrians at a high risk for injury. According to the SWITRS map provided by the SFDPH, this is confirmed with multiple incidents of pedestrians injuries from 2000-2004.



Existing Conditions

Geary Boulevard

In Japantown, Geary Boulevard is an eight-lane expressway filled with cars driving fast and pedestrians having trouble getting from one side to the other safely. At Fillmore St. and Geary Blvd., one would be cramped while waiting or boarding/unloading the bus due to the limited amount of space at the bus station. Sidewalks are narrow and have bus shelters that are too large for the narrow sidewalk. At Geary Blvd. and Webster St., pedestrians are only allowed one way of getting from one side to the other; a physically demanding overpass bridge overlooking the eight lanes of traffic. While this may be the safest way, pedestrians will often walk beneath the bridge or choose to jaywalk closer to where Buchanan St. would intersect with Geary where there is no official crosswalk. With no crosswalk where Buchanan St. would be at Geary Blvd., visitors of the Buchanan YMCA or the housing units along Geary Blvd. are given three options; walk over the tiring bridge, walk up the hill to Laguna St with little time to cross and a history of accidents or jaywalk at Buchanan St. Although jaywalking is illegal, it is the preferred method by pedestrians. Through discussion with the community, they feel it is the safest because they can watch traffic pass in one direction and wait at the median (where Buchanan St. would be) while the opposite direction of traffic passed. Laguna St. and Geary Blvd. is the number one intersection with reported pedestrian injuries and fatalities in the Japantown Area. Possible factors contributing to the high amount of accidents at this intersection include poor signage, traffic laws not being obeyed, insufficient time to cross and driving faster than conditions permit.



Existing Conditions

Laguna Street

Laguna is the eastern boundary of Japantown and for the most part is somewhat quiet with the exception of Geary Blvd. Although Laguna is not filled with many storefront or offices, this location has a high number of pedestrian incidents from 2000-2004. At the corner of Sutter and Laguna Streets, there are bus stops at each corner and the 2-Clement, 3-Jackson, and 4-Sutter. Muni buses turn south on to Laguna from Sutter. On Laguna you will find many children and elderly people attending programs or summer camp at various organizations close by. The main problem however is at the intersection of Geary Blvd. and Laguna. Crossing northbound and southbound on Laguna has presented a major problem for the Japantown community. There are many people crossing at this intersection during peak times of 7 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. daily. There is no single factor causing this problem, but a combination of many problems; poor placement of signage, lack of sufficient time to cross at Geary Blvd, long distances to cross, fast traffic and cars, bicycles and pedestrians not obeying traffic laws. Currently, there are signs stating “No Turn on Red” at the intersection of Geary and Laguna. Signage for no right on red is a good preventative measure, but the sign is placed at the opposite corner with Geary Blvd. being 150 feet wide. There is no signage before the intersections and the signage posted has a tree that blocks streetlights in the evening.



Existing Conditions

Post Street

Filled with merchants, restaurants, and offices, Post Street is always filled with pedestrians and cars. With many businesses on Post St. there is a high level of deliveries made by large trucks and big rigs. This is a problem when there is only one lane of traffic westbound and two lanes of traffic eastbound. These trucks will double-park anywhere they can fit their large vehicle whether it is in the only lane of traffic, in an illegal parking space or even blocking the entire crosswalk. Many tourists and patrons are attracted to the diverse selection of dining, entertainment and services offered, but the community gets dirtier with more visitors. The cars are not the only ones disobeying traffic laws, but also bicycles and pedestrians. Post St. has signage communicating bicycles full usage of the lane, but bicycles will often ride on the sidewalk instead causing dangerous situations for pedestrians. While conducting the SF Department of Public Health Intersection Safety Survey (See Appendix C), pedestrians would repeatedly jaywalk, cross the street on the red, and standing off of the curb in the crosswalk. Pedestrians who stand off of the curb put themselves at risk especially at locations along Post St. and Webster where cars frequently turn at fast speeds and do not always make a complete stop. Webster is a very wide street allowing cars to travel at unsafe speeds through the intersection. Red light running and speeding causes this intersection to be high in car-to-car and car-to-pedestrian accidents.



Existing Conditions

Sutter Street

Sutter St. is a combination of residential, businesses and community organizations. It is very busy at the western boundary of Fillmore St., but gets less busy as you travel east toward Laguna St. The intersection of Fillmore and Sutter Sts. is filled with buses, cars, pedestrians and bicycles. The 22 Fillmore travels along Fillmore and the 4 Sutter and 2 Clement travel along Sutter St. Bus riders along Sutter get anxious while waiting for their particular bus to arrive. Often times when these riders are eager to see how far the next bus will be, they will step into the street, putting them in the way of traffic. At times some riders will be overly eager and go as far as 2 or 3 lanes out into the street. From Fillmore to Sutter St, there are 3 locations where the sidewalk is cracked and/or raised possibly caused by the roots of existing trees. Not only are portions of the sidewalk cracked, but there are numerous sewer covers that are not covered.



Existing Conditions

Webster Street

Many cars drive on Webster St. using Japantown as a shortcut to other communities or other routes that are fast. Cars dash down the hill between Bush St. and Sutter St. and keep on going past Geary Blvd. There are two lanes of traffic in each direction and left-hand turn lanes at Sutter St. (westbound), at Geary Blvd. (eastbound) and Post St. (eastbound). Webster is the only place in Japantown with a dedicated left turn lane. Cars driving at excessive speeds are not the only problem. Countless cars will make right turns when the traffic signal is red. While conducting the DPH intersection safety survey, it was observed that multiple cars barely slowed down before entering the turn. The intersections of Post/Webster and Sutter/Webster have a high number of car-to-car and car-to-pedestrian incidents. With two lanes of traffic in both directions, pedestrians must travel a long distance. This is a problem for pedestrians of all ages, from the children of Nihonmachi Little Friends to the seniors going to the Kimochi Nutrition Program.



Geary Boulevard



Problems	Possible Solutions
<p>Geary Boulevard @ Fillmore Street</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trucks double-parking while unloading • Buses get block traffic because they have to maneuver around double-parked trucks. • Sidewalks in poor condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trucks need a designated loading time, zone or dock to prevent double parking. • With a designated loading area or time, buses would not be block traffic. • Working with the Geary BRT Project to properly plan to improve sidewalks along Geary Blvd.
<p>Geary Boulevard @ Webster Street</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webster St. Bridge is too exhausting and people jaywalk at Webster & Buchanan instead of using bridge. • Cars not obeying traffic laws (Running Red Lights, Illegal U-Turns, Speeding) • Cars not yielding to pedestrians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning with the Geary BRT Project or designating a legal crosswalk at Buchanan Street will accommodate for those pedestrians having difficulties with the Webster St. Bridge. • More police visibility will be seen with recent police funding and if signage improvements are made or red-light running cameras. • Corner bulb-outs and improved signage will slow cars aimed at

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks are cracked, raised and in poor condition 	<p>raising pedestrian safety.</p>
<p>Geary Boulevard @ Buchanan Street</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians jaywalking where Buchanan Street would be because they feel safer jaywalking than crossing at Laguna St. or the Webster St. Bridge is too exhausting. • Cars driving at excessive speeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a safer and less physically demanding way of crossing Geary Blvd like a walkway with lights activated by movement or by pedestrians. • Provide a safe and legal way to cross at this intersection • Radar detectors displaying speeds, more police enforcement, narrowing roads
<p>Geary Boulevard @ Laguna Street</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars do not yield to pedestrians. • The countdown signals do not provide enough time for pedestrians to cross the Geary Blvd. • The signage posted for 'No Right Turn on Red' is not posted in a location that is easy to see. It is posted across the boulevard at a high location. • Cars who park on Geary Blvd. are at a high risk for having their windows broken (This location is well known for repeated incidents). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corner bulb-outs and moving signage to improve visibility will slow drivers down making them more aware of dangerous conditions for pedestrians. • Work with the MTA to increase crossing times for intersections along Geary or all red light time. Extend the median through the crosswalk to provide cutouts in addition to the corner bulb-outs. • Add more 'No Right on Red' signs before the intersection and move existing signs to be seen more easily. Red-light running camera installation. • Work with the new owners of the Kintetsu Mall and the Japan Center Garage on possible security solutions. Increased Police visibility will deter vandalisms as well.

Post Street



Problems	Possible Solutions
Post Street @ Fillmore Street	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic becomes congested at peak periods of travel because one lane in both directions is not sufficient for cars and buses. • Cars turn without making a complete stop and checking if it is safe to turn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a loading area will decrease the amount of traffic jams caused by unloading trucks. Creating a line of communication with the MTA will enable what possible traffic improvements can be made. • Encourage the MTA to look into this intersection to see what can be done and possibly surveying this intersection as a no right on red or the Geary BRT Project to see if there are possible solutions that will affect this intersection.
Post Street @ Webster Street	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars that are making turns do not yield to pedestrian right-of-way. • Bicyclists are riding on the sidewalks and do not obey traffic laws. • Cars make illegal U-turns, drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the amount of parking at the corner to increase visibility at 'blind intersections'. • Bicycle education and signage posted with consequences will • Place radar detectors along

<p>at excessive speeds and run red lights without regard for other traffic or pedestrian safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent location for car-to-car and car-to-pedestrian accidents. 	<p>Webster, increase police traffic enforcement and/or visibility. Add signs telling traffic to slow down.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combined measures with the measures above are added with the goal to reduce accidents and fix those problems.
<p style="text-align: center;">Post Street @ Buchanan Street</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trucks double-park to unload daily throughout the day. • Cars are traveling at unsafe speeds and not yielding to pedestrians. • Tourists not following local traffic laws. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special loading zones are important to decrease double parking and putting other drivers and pedestrians at risk. • Add corner bulb-outs • Bilingual signage of local traffic laws.
<p style="text-align: center;">Post Street @ Laguna Street</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic gets congested at peak times because cars use Laguna as a passageway to other communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MTA can recommend as to the best solution if green lights should be increased to allow more cars per light is the proper solution.

Sutter Street



Problems	Possible Solutions
Sutter Street @ Fillmore Street	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars driving and turning at excessive speeds putting others at danger. • Cars do not yield to pedestrians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic calming measures such as adding landscaping to visually narrow the road and corner bulb-outs may be necessary. • Increase driver awareness of pedestrians through signage and pedestrian safety techniques.
Sutter Street @ Webster Street	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The long distance, short signal lights and speeding traffic make it difficult and dangerous to cross Webster • Cars dash down the hill and are a potential danger to pedestrians and other traffic with recent accidents. • Community desire to have a countdown signal requested by various organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase crossing times, median extension and cutouts added will provide a safer refuge area. Radar detectors posted at different and police enforcement on motorcycles. • Communicating with the MTA to adjust the timing of the lights so cars are stuck at the bottom of the hill will reduce speeds of cars going down the hill. • Countdown signals and children and senior crossing signs are important to raise awareness of

	pedestrian demographics in the area.
Sutter Street @ Buchanan Street	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of a traffic signal at this T-intersection. • • Trucks illegally double-park in the middle of the street while unloading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a street signal to enhance safety of pedestrians. • Assign a designated loading area or time to accommodate deliveries.
Sutter Street @ Laguna Street	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus riders poke out into the street to satisfy curiosity for the delay in bus schedules. • Cars and bicycles turning do not yield to pedestrians and pedestrians jaywalk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muni buses to follow posted schedules and at certain stops the community desires bus stations improvements. • Pedestrians need to be more responsible and engage in safer behavior. Cars and bicycles need to be punished for not yielding to pedestrians for near collision incidents.

Final Recommendations

With the help of the residents, merchants and visitors of the community, a long list of concerns and recommendations are presented in this Community Plan with the intentions of making Japantown a safer, cleaner and more welcoming area. Japantown as a community looks forward to seeing the changes implemented as a result of this project or through the results of other projects using this community plan.

Along Geary Boulevard, changes need to be made along the whole corridor as well as specific areas. Along the entire corridor safer ways need to be provided to cross the eight-lane expressway, traffic enforcement and visibility needs to increase and sidewalks extended to accommodate buses, bus riders, traffic and pedestrians. More specifically at Fillmore and Geary, bus stations need to be improved. This is a target area for the Geary Bus Rapid Transit Project as a key location for major improvements including wider sidewalks, landscaping opportunities, traffic calming, a station more adequate for riders waiting for the next bus as well as unloading and loading zones. Geary and Webster is a location that needs help in providing a safer way for pedestrians to cross. Pedestrians choose to cross at Geary and Buchanan at an illegal crosswalk where they wait for traffic to pass in one direction and cross after the opposite flow of traffic has passed. This is a common place for jaywalking, thus a legal and safe way to cross at Buchanan is a common recommendation from the community. Having the highest rate of car-to-pedestrian injury and fatality rate, Geary and Laguna is a very dangerous location for pedestrians to cross. It is a location in dire need of signage placing improvements, traffic enforcement, shortened sidewalks through corner bulb-outs, increased time on countdown signals and possible landscaping and widening sidewalks to visually narrow this eight-lane expressway.

Fillmore is filled with all types of restaurants and businesses attracting people from all over the city. Many people take the bus to the Japantown area on the 22 Fillmore or the 38 Geary buses. Often times the buses congest the streets because of double-parked cars blocking traffic when having to swing around these double-parked cars in order to get into the bus stops. Fillmore is a narrow street with one lane of traffic in each direction so one lane blocked by a bus causes a big backup. Fillmore was observed to have cars while turning right cut very close to the corner at high speeds. This was done mostly while stopping at the green but also at times around buses. Pedestrians also were observed at the same intersections to be standing off of the curb and in the sidewalk while waiting for the light to turn green. The two combined is an accident waiting to happen.

Post Street is filled with cars going to various programs, offices, non-profit organizations, restaurants and malls near the Peace Plaza. This street is not only filled with people visiting and utilizing the many services offered by the community, but also trucks double-parking on a daily basis blocking the crosswalk and the streets, this causes congestion and dangerous situations for pedestrians. Pedestrians are put at risk because cars cannot see them and they have to poke their head around the double parked trucks to check if it is safe to cross. These trucks need a specific loading zone, a specific loading time or a special loading dock so they do not Post St. There is a sign for the delivery people not to

make deliveries on Peace Plaza, but that does nothing to prevent or stop them from double-parking along Post St.

At Post and Webster, there is a high rate of car-to-car and car-to-pedestrian accidents that needs to be fixed by slowing cars down and making them take a little more time to be more aware that this is a high rate intersection for collisions. Corner bulb-outs could be a feasible solution by shortening the distance pedestrians must cross Webster and will slow cars turning to avoid the addition to the curb. Sidewalks could be extended to give pedestrians more space to walk or switching the parking from parallel to slot parking can increase parking. Cars on Webster travel at high speeds using Japantown as a means from one location to another and disregard the community. They speed through Webster after going down the steep hill between Bush and Sutter St.

Sutter St. has many visitors that are seniors and young children through the various programs at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, Christ United Presbyterian Church and at Nihonmachi Little Friends. Seniors of the Kimochi Nutrition Program enter and exit the community on the Muni bus lines that run on Sutter including the 2 Clement and 4 Sutter. The young children of the Nihonmachi Little Friends frequently travel in and out of Japantown by foot and have trouble crossing the long streets in the community. The kids take longer to cross the street. They have been forced often times to split into two groups to accommodate this problem of not all being able to cross at once. The request has been frequent at Webster and Sutter to have a countdown signal as well as shortening the distance for the crosswalk. Sutter and Webster is a frequent location that the seniors and young children get stuck at the median in the middle of the street and a cutout in the median would be a good spot for refuge in addition to the widened sidewalks. While waiting for the buses, many will step out into the street to see when the next bus will arrive. Improved bus stations that indicate how many minutes it will be before the next bus is a solution that could help aide the anxiety of bus riders. Many tourists stay at the Best Western Miyako Inn and sometimes are unaware of the different traffic laws. Bilingual signage around Japantown has been a suggestion, helping to reminding tourists that traffic is traveling on the opposite side of the road and to look left first and right second.

While the many projects in the future are happening in the Japantown community, the Community Plan is a good guide for the planning stages of these projects. Many of the recommendations for the future can be incorporated into these projects if planning is done correctly.

Implementing the Community Action Plan with Future Projects

Other projects in the Japantown area are currently in progress and provide an opportunity for the Japantown pedestrian safety traffic plan to be taken into consideration while these projects are in their planning stages. Some of the organizations the Japantown Task Force, Inc. has been working with include the San Francisco Police Department, Municipal Transportation Authority, San Francisco County Transportation Agency and the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

The Japantown community has repeatedly expressed their need for aid in police visibility and enforcement of traffic laws in the community. Many people feel they would feel safer and hope problems will decline if people see that others are getting caught for violating laws.

The San Francisco Transportation Agency is currently working on the Geary Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit Study and can take into consideration our recommendations to improve Geary Blvd. including widening sidewalks, improving bus stations, adding cutouts and curb bulbs.

JTF has been in contact with the Municipal Transportation Authority to improve signage in Japantown at key locations. It is important to not only have proper signage, but also for signs to be located so they can be utilized to the fullest.

Appendix A: Japantown Task Force Pedestrian Safety Surveys

The Japantown Pedestrian / Traffic Safety Survey was to be distributed in both English and Japanese to local newspapers, hotels, organizations, merchants, businesses and residents of the community with at least 50 to be collected, tabulated, and analyzed. The Japantown Task Force, Inc. met the requirement of 50 and went beyond; collecting 33 surveys in Japanese and 124 in English with 157 in total. Seniors over the age of 70 were the majority of survey respondents, 96 in English and 16 in Japanese. Of those surveyed, they responded that the purpose for coming to Japantown is as a regular visitor or resident. The survey also asked respondents how often they walked in Japantown and most of the respondents replied everyday or a few times a week. This is important with our studies because we are examining the safety of those who walk in Japantown on a daily basis.

Many of the questions in the survey asked respondents to rank or prioritize how they felt on issues that concerns them. We found that respondents did not follow directions and would mark issues that they felt were important or only if certain questions were of high concern to them. The tables below show different demographics of the survey and rankings of key questions and views of pedestrian safety.

About Survey Respondents

Ages:

Youth – 18 and under	0
Adults – 18 – 65	61
Seniors – 65 and over	96

Languages of Surveys:

English	124
Japanese	33

Reason for coming to Japantown

Resident	42
Work in Japantown	13
Leisure or Activity	54
Other (neighbor, volunteer, church)	25

Specific Street Problems:

Top 4 Problematic Intersections
1. Geary Blvd. & Laguna St.
2. Post St. & Webster St.
3. Post St. & Sutter St.
4. Geary Blvd. & Webster St.

Question: When you don't feel safe, why not? (Top 5 Responses)

1. Cars are traveling at unsafe speeds.
2. Pedestrians are not provided enough time to cross the street.
3. Cars turning do not wait for pedestrians in the crosswalk.
4. There is not enough police enforcement of traffic laws.
5. Drivers do not see pedestrians in general.

Question: What are your concerns about traffic? Top 5 Responses)

1. Cars are traveling at unsafe speeds.
2. Vehicles are double-parked, blocking traffic.
3. Cars are making illegal U-turns and running red lights.
4. Right on red turns.
5. Not enough law enforcement.

Appendix B: Community Presentations of Bilingual Surveys

Christ United Presbyterian Church
 Nihonmachi Little Friends
 Sequoia's Assisted Living Facility

Recommendation	C.U.P.C.	N.L.F.	Sequoia's	Total
Bilingual/Japanese Signage for tourists to look left first, then right (opposite flow of traffic than in Japan)	0	1	2	3
Increased time at countdown signals & added countdowns at more intersections to provide more time to cross the street	7	8	10	25
Provide safer way to cross Geary Blvd than jaywalking at illegal intersection at Buchanan St.	8	5	15	28
Installation of traffic signals at locations without 4-way traffic	0	0	8	8
Property owners should be advised to fix cracked/raised sidewalks.	1	0	15	16
Educate pedestrians/bicyclists about traffic laws and safer behavior	2	1	4	7
Educate drivers about traffic laws and safer behavior.	6	2	9	17
Add 'curb bulbs' or limit parking at corners to increase visibility @ "Blind intersections"	3	0	12	15
Additionmore police visibility to enforce traffic laws	N/a	7	N/a	7
Total Participants	27	24	75	

**Appendix C: Department of Public Health Intersection Safety Surveys
Post St. & Buchanan St. / Laguna St. & Geary Blvd.**

The Department of Public Health; San Francisco Safe Communities Coalition provided JTF with an Intersection Safety Survey which has the conductor of the survey stand at an intersection for a period of 10 minutes directly observing patterns of behavior by pedestrians and drivers. The survey also takes note of different types of signage, average times for signal lights, how the crosswalk is marked and things visible from the intersection. JTF’s Pedestrian Safety Survey identified two key intersections that were perceived as a dangerous intersection; Geary Blvd. at Laguna St. and Post at Webster St. The survey was conducted at peak travel times during the morning peak time of 7 to 9 a.m. and the evening peak time of 4 to 6 p.m. The survey was conducted at both intersections during both peak times.

Intersection Name: Geary Blvd. & Laguna St.

What Types of Signs are at this intersection? Signal Light, Yield Sign, No Turn Sign

Average time for each street:	Geary St.	Laguna St.
How long is the green light?	41	35
How long is the red light?	43	48
If there are turn arrows, how long are the lights?	n/a	n/a
Is there a pedestrian walk signal?	No	Yes
If yes, how long is the “walk” signal?	n/a	9
If yes, how long is the “don’t walk” phase?	n/a	27

Count the number of pedestrians crossing the street. Indicate the following:

	Geary St.	Laguna St.
How many pedestrians crossed?	35	18
How many did not get across during the walk cycle?	3	2
Any near misses for car/pedestrian crashes?	4	0

Intersection Name: Post St. & Webster St.

What Types of Signs are at this intersection? Signal Light, Yield, Bike Route 16, Bikes Allowed Full Use of Lane

Average time for each street:	Webster St.	Post St.
How long is the green light?	22	29
How long is the red light?	32	27
If there are turn arrows, how long are the lights?	n/a	n/a
Is there a pedestrian walk signal?	Yes	Yes
If yes, how long is the “walk” signal?	13	9
If yes, how long is the “don’t walk” phase?	9	20

Count the number of pedestrians crossing the street. Indicate the following:

How many pedestrians crossed?	47	32
How many did not get across during the walk cycle?	1	0
Any near misses for car/pedestrian crashes?	3	1

Appendix D: Pedestrian-Auto Collisions in Japantown Sept. 1998 – December 2005
(note: missing 2004 statistics)
 San Francisco County Transportation Authority

Cause of Collision		
	Number of Collisions	Total Collisions
Pedestrian Right of Way	18	35
Pedestrian Violation	11	35
Driving Under the Influence	2	35
Traffic Signal / Unsafe speed	3	35
Unknown	1	35
Location of Collision		
	Number of Collisions	Total Collisions
Crossing in Crosswalk	24	35
In Road	4	35
Not Crossing in Crosswalk	6	35
Not in Road	1	35
Results of Collision		
	Number of Collisions	Total Collisions
Deaths	4	35
Injuries	30	35
Non-injuries	1	35