



**Mid-Year Report July - December 2022**

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## **Executive Summary**

The Japantown Community Benefit District (JCBD) is pleased to share this mid-year report outlining accomplishments, financial status, and other information for the first six months of the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

As a smaller Benefit District we know that our work is not always going to be in line with other districts. In many ways we are taking on a lot more due to the limitations of our merchants association and being recognized as a cultural destination for visitors, as well as surrounded by neighborhoods that have a long history with Japantown.

Staff began looking outside the box on ways to attract visitors, bring in new businesses, and meet in-person with those that can help us achieve our goals.

We did not renew our contract with LGPR, Inc. (Public Relations firm), as we felt that the money used could help support other marketing efforts.

Staff began reviewing our contract with Block by Block, which is set to renew July 2023. Since the change in leadership in the company and possibly due to the size of our District, we felt that Japantown was not getting enough support for our Community Ambassadors. More discussion will take place with our Board to look into other options and when ready, have a formal RFP to obtain bids.

Looking at other CBD/BIDs and merchant corridors we noticed the emphasis on bringing more arts and performances into their neighborhoods that has brought more foot traffic. The Heart of Jtown Mural Project, Jtown Jingle and the Heart of Jtown Pop-Up Shop are just some of the ways we are promoting arts and performances here in Japantown.

We also brought back our social media intern who has been helping us promote Japantown, especially to the 18-30 year old demographic that frequents Japantown.

With the help of one of our stakeholders/property owners, we were able to move our office into a more centrally located building where we can better serve our community and small businesses.

Now in our 5th year, JCBD staff along with our Board will continue to advocate for our district's future by supporting our small businesses, keeping our streets clean and safe and be at the forefront to make Japantown a thriving destination for locals as well as visitors.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Horikiri

*Executive Director*

**Japantown Community Benefit District, Inc.**

# 2022 Mid-Year Highlights

## COVID Efforts

### Japantown COVID Testing

Continued partnership with Virus Geeks to host COVID-19 PCR testing 6 days a week in Japantown. During the weekend of the 48th Annual Nihonmachi Street Fair we were able to again sponsor COVID testing for festival attendees. Between 7/1/2022 - 12/31/2022 close to 3,215 individuals were tested, which is an increase of 40% compared to this time last year.

Providing free testing to our community is still in great demand and we will continue to make sure it is available especially for those who work in Japantown and our most vulnerable, the senior community.

### Distribution of At-Home Test Kits

In partnership with the Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications Governor's Office of Planning and Research the JCBD received 2500 test kits that are being distributed to our small businesses and nonprofit organizations.

## Keeping Japantown Safe

### Japantown Safety Plan

Although many community organizations have attempted to create an Emergency Plan for Japantown, no real plan has ever been completed. Because of the JCBD's relationship with law enforcement, as well as other city agencies, we were able to connect with Jodi Traversaro of the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative of the City & County of SF. Jodi provided great information on how we can keep Japantown safe but also introduced us to Edgar Castor and Justin Brooks of the US Department of Homeland Security. Through this introduction and Zoom meetings we were able to share and inform our nonprofits about vulnerability assessments to their property and also grants that are available for their security needs. So far 2 Japantown organizations (Kinmon Gakuen and SF JAACL) have submitted grant applications.

### Japantown SafeCity Camera Program

3 additional cameras were added to the Japantown SafeCity Camera Program, due in part to the generous funding received from the Chris Larsen/Silicon Valley Community Foundation in 2018. For this implementation, the property owner assumed 100% ownership of the cameras. These cameras are part of the SafeCity network and will allow JCBD to access video retrieval requests that come in from law enforcement and the public.

In December, we met with Mr. Larsen to provide him an update on the camera program. He was especially pleased to hear that the JCBD is also actively looking for funding to help support the expansion of the program.

### **National Night Out - Northern Station Precinct - 8/2/2022**

As part of the SFPD Northern Station CPAB, the JCBD also assisted in helping to organize the National Night Out that was held at Ella Hill Hutch Community Center.

### **Citywide CPAB Symposium - 10/22/2023**

At the start of this fiscal year Grace was asked to serve on the City-Wide Community Police Advisory Board to bring more diversity to the group. She took part in the planning of the City Wide CPAB Symposium which was held on October 22, 2022 that was attended by Chief Bill Scott, DA Brooke Jenkins, Command staff and CPAB members.

JCBD has been an active participant in monthly meetings for:

- SFPD's Small Business Advisory Forum
- SF Safe City Wide Community Police Advisory Board
- SFPD Northern Station Community Police Advisory Board
- SFPD Northern Station Community Meetings
- Nihonmachi Community Coalition
- Hayes Valley Public Safety Meeting
- Chief Scott's Virtual Community Safety Meetings

### **Partnering with Surrounding Neighborhoods**

In November, Grace began meeting with community leaders in District 5: James Spingola - Executive Director of Ella Hill Hutch Community Center, Shakirah Simley - Executive Director of Booker T. Washington, and Michael Young - Camphouse Director of the Boys and Girls Club Tenderloin. These meetings give us the opportunity to support each other, share resources, look at potential collaborations and mutual aid.

Together we are planning for the first **D5 United Day** on March 9 & 10. The purpose is to learn more about each neighborhood, have discussions on the new boundaries for D5, and listen to the concerns from the community.

## **Keeping Japantown Clean**

### **Community Ambassadors**

We have seen the high demand for our Japantown Community Ambassadors work to keep the district clean, especially due to SF Public Works' delay in responding to 311 requests. Illegal dumping, graffiti on public property, and removing trash left by the unhoused are just a few things that our Ambassadors are taking on.

The JCBD is now part of the 311 Connected Workers App and many requests are forwarded to our Ambassadors. It took a while for the Ambassadors to get used to

accepting the requests via email and reporting out on the app so that any data collected is recorded. Staff also assisted to make sure the requests were completed. Our hope is that the app will improve with time to demonstrate to the City the important work our Ambassadors are doing in the place of missing City services, and to demonstrate the value the Community Ambassadors bring to the districts they serve.

The Board approved to move 10% of the economic budget towards the environmental budget as allowed based on our Management Plan.

### **J-Town Community Clean-Up**

On August 27th, the JCBD put the call out to the community and participants of our J-Town Community Clean Up to participate in the SF Public Works' Neighborhood Beautification Day. Approximately 11 individuals signed up for the Japantown area.

### **Big Belly Trash Receptacles**

The 4 Big Belly smart waste receptacles units continue to be highly used by the public. As we go into the 4th year of having Big Belly's in Japantown, we utilized the Big Belly grant funding to purchase new solar panels and interior bins. We are in the process of getting all the graphics replaced.

### **Monthly Meetings with Recology and SF Public Works**

These monthly check-ins enable JCBD staff to present any concerns in service and also address any specific cleaning needs. One of the discussions focused on the 311 Connect App and how that would be beneficial for the district.

- Bi-weekly meetings with Community Ambassadors
- Monthly meetings with Recology and SF Public Works

## **Keeping Japantown Informed**

### **Keeping Our Small Business Connected E-Newsletter**

From July 2022 - December 2022 a total of 40 e-newsletters were distributed. These e-newsletters and Safety Alerts give the JCBD the opportunity to promote Japantown beyond our neighborhood and keep our communities up-to-date on business related information and safety concerns.

## **Making Connections and Collaborating**

### **Collaborating with the Community & Beyond**

As a small organization with limited staff hours it's important that we actively look within our community for opportunities to partner in various efforts/activations. The first half of this fiscal year we had the opportunity to work with many organizations as well as stakeholders to work on cleaning efforts and marketing/promotional activations. These efforts included: power washing the district, community clean-ups, holiday lighting, and housing/displaying murals.

JCBD staff has also remained in contact with Japanese community leaders in San Jose and Los Angeles with a focus on organizations that help small businesses and promote their neighborhoods. Grace also had the opportunity to meet counterparts in New York to learn more about their efforts and possible future collaborations.

## **Keeping Our Businesses Informed**

### **Shared Spaces**

We worked closely with Shared Spaces staff to make sure restaurants that will be applying for the Legislated Permits are well informed of the updated design guidelines and application requirements. We also took part in a walk through which included representatives from Shared Spaces, SFFD, OEWD, and SFDPH.

### **Sharing Information from City Agencies**

We continually shared information to our small businesses about updates in conducting business in SF as well as any new grants that are available.

### **Surveys**

JCBD conducted 2 surveys:

**Formula Retail Survey** to find out if our small business we knowledgeable about formural retain and how that affects future Japantown businesses

**Cherry Blossom Festival Survey** to see if organizers communicated efficiently with merchants, promoted the event, kept areas clean and safe.

### **Assisting Pop-Ups**

Hikari Farms is a family owned organic greenhouse farm located in Watsonville, CA. The owners contact the JCBD for assistance in getting a pop-up inside the Kinokuniya Building. We connected them with the Office of Small Business as well as the SF Department of Health and helped them walk-through some of the permitting process.

## **Promoting Japantown through Performances & Art**

### **Fleet Week 2022**

The Fleet Week Neighborhood Concert Series returned to Japantown. The Navy Band Southwest FUNK Band entertained the community on October 5th at the Peace Plaza. Over 100 visitors came to enjoy the upbeat music of the Naval South West FUNK Band. Fleet Week is heavily promoted throughout the City, and Japantown merchants as well as the community are grateful to be a part of the festivities which brings additional foot traffic.

### **Holiday Lights**

Organized the installation of Holiday Lights at the Peace Plaza. Funding for this project came from various sources, including Japantown Merchants Association (through funding from Avenue Greenlight), Japan Center Malls, Buchanan Hotel, Nihonmachi

Parking Corporation and individual donors. The Holiday Lights also provided much needed lighting in the Peace Plaza and we hope that ample lighting will be part of the renovation plans to keep the public safe.

### **The Heart of Jtown Mural Project**

The mural art by Japantown community artists: Derrick Higa, Brenden Oshima, Nate Tan and Eryn Kimura were displayed inside vacant storefronts in the Kinokuniya Building. In mid-December the murals found a new home inside the Hotel Kabuki lobby where the artists are getting more exposure to hotel guests.

### **Jtown Jingle**

This year for the first time we partnered with MEaN a capella group, to bring the holiday spirit into Japantown. Our hope is to make this an annual event and expand the Jtown Jingle trail to include the entire district.

### **The Heart of J-Town Pop-Up Shop**

This year the JCBD negotiated with Kinokuniya Mall to utilize an empty restaurant storefront to open the Heart of Jtown Pop-up Shop from December 2022 to April 2023. The shop is open Friday to Sunday from 12pm to 6pm.

The Pop-Up Shop provides a space where our community artists that provided their talents to create the street lamp banners and murals to also promote, sell and showcase their creativity. Some positives we have seen in the short time thus far are the artists sharing business practices and mentoring each other. Additionally, we have encouraged community nonprofits, who have leftover stock of event t-shirts, to sell their merchandise as well. The Pop-Up shop also serves as a visitors hub to inform the public on upcoming activities in Japantown and provide directory assistance. The presence of Pop-Up Shop has helped draw visitors to the area of the Kinokuniya Mall that lacked foot traffic.

### **Collaborating with the Heart of J-town Artists and Restaurants**

Creating exterior murals can be time consuming and the public open areas that are available would also involve community input and permitting. We took another direction by connecting our community artists to small businesses to create interior murals. Planning with community artists has begun for Kippu Japanese Restaurant, Jitlada Thai Cuisine and Hikari Bullet Train Sushi. Funding for this will come from our Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund.

### **First Ever Japanese Heritage Night with the Golden State Warriors**

Due to our good relationship with the Golden State Warriors, the Warriors contacted the JCBD to help plan out the first ever Japanese Heritage Night. We became the point organization, working closely with the Consul General of Japan staff, contacting cultural performances to create an event that will help promote local Japanese culture.

## **JCBD Board**

As of July 1, 2021, the JCBD is still in the process of voting in a Board President. Vice President Robert Sakai is acting Board President until the board nominates and elects a new Board President. Currently there are 11 board members (8 property owners/representatives and 3 small business owners).



## **Description and Status of Each Contract that Provide Programs/Services**

### **Applied Video Solutions**

The JCBD entered a one year Service Agreement with Applied Video Solutions (AVS) in November of 2021.

### **Block by Block**

In July of 2022, JCBD signed our 5th year contract with Block by Block to provide daily cleaning services and hospitality through their Community Ambassador program. Contract includes 1 full time Operations Supervisor/Ambassador and 1 full time Ambassador. Ambassadors work from 7:30am to 4:00pm, 7 days a week.

### **Big Belly Solar, Inc.**

The Office of Economic Workforce Development (OEWD) Big Belly Pilot Program Grant was extended for another fiscal year. This grant was to cover for any new graphics application and one year of service.

### **Ziel Creatives**

Ziel Creatives continues to provide monthly back end updates for the [JapantownSF.org](http://JapantownSF.org) website as well as graphics service to create postcard mini maps.

### **Holiday Lighting, Inc.**

Contracted with Holiday Lighting, Inc. to provide holiday lighting implementation on the trees located on the Peace Plaza.

### **ColorTone**

Fabrication of the Heart of Jtown interior murals

### **ARC**

Fabrication of in-door signages to help promote the Heart Jtown Pop-Up Shop

### **Hufana Design**

Fabrication of vinyl interior signage for the Heart of Jtown interior murals

### **Neighborhood Arts**

Provided seating for Fleet Week Neighborhood Concert.

### **Rareform**

To be environmentally friendly, Rareform took our previous street lamp banners and repurposed them into tote bags and pouches that are on sale at the Heart of Jtown Pop-Up Shop.

## Summary Financial Data

We do not expect any significant changes from our approved FY22-23 annual budget.

	<b>Actuals thru 12/31/2022</b>	<b>Budget thru 12/31/2022</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Assessment Revenue	\$ 236,317	\$ 196,500
Non Assessment Revenues	\$ 28,921	\$ 200,230
Carryover from Previous Years	\$ 343,564	\$ 343,564
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 608,802</b>	<b>\$ 740,294</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Economic Enhancement Expense	\$ 37,290	\$ 70,709
NCC /Small Business Assistance	\$ 60,199	\$ 141,330
Environmental Enhancement Expense	\$ 56,924	\$ 87,810
Advocacy/Admin Expense	\$ 52,380	\$ 40,797
SafeCity Camera Maintenance	\$ -	\$ 22,676
Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund	\$ 1,827	\$ 5,000
Other Expenses (i.e. Covid Efforts, Holiday Lights)	\$ 36,837	\$ 43,340
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 245,457</b>	<b>\$ 411,662</b>
<b>Net Gain/(Loss)</b>	<b>\$ 363,345</b>	<b>\$ 328,632</b>

## JCBD Mid-Year Financial Notes

### Income

JCBD mid-year 2023 financial summary report shows an income of \$608,802 which includes the assessment revenues from the City in the amount of \$236,317. This is a 18% negative variance when compared to the mid-year budget of \$740,294. In the remainder of the fiscal year, we expect to receive additional assessment revenues and grant reimbursements from the City of San Francisco.

### Expenses

The actual expenses during mid-year is \$245,457 and the budget ytd is \$411,662. This is \$166,205 under the budget or roughly 40%. Majority of the program costs under the NCC/Small Business Assistance project, the Safecity Maintenance, and Economic and Environmental Enhancement programs will come in during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the fiscal year.

Overall, the mid-year under budget in revenues is a smaller variance compared to the under budget variance in total expenses thereby resulting to a positive 11% variance in the net gain.

### **Non-Assessment Revenue**

- Donations for Holiday Lighting \$11,000.00
- Other Donations \$3,906.81
- General Benefits \$8,500.00
- The Heart of Jtown Pop-Up Shop Revenue \$5,514.08

### **Summary of Changes**

None at this time

### **Proposed Budget**

See attached.

# Statistical Summary of Services Provided 7/1/22 - 12/31/2023

## FY 22-23 Cleaning Stats

- Answered Hotline – 5
- Business Contact – 110
- Hospitality Assistance – 977
- 311 Requests – 115
- Request for SFPD, SFFD & EMS – 3
- Pounds of Trash Removed – 11,200
- Trash Bags Collected – 448
- Cigarette Butt Picked Up – 17,361
- Biohazard Clean Up - 94
- Power Washing (block faces) – 3
- Auto Glass Clean Up – 129
- Graffiti & Sticker Removed – 396
- Sharps (Needle) Clean Up – 109
- Weed Abatement (block faces) – 6
- Sidewalk Power Washing – 0

## FY 22-23 Video Retrieval Requests

Daly Pipeline  
Douglas Bright  
Hotel Kabuki  
Kelly Yau Barria  
Kimochoi, Inc.  
San Francisco Police Department  
San Wang  
Super Mira