



**Mid-Year Report July - December 2020**

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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 2020-21 fiscal year.

During the first half the JCBD continued its efforts to support the small businesses who are all facing uncertainty due to the COVID pandemic. As reported in our FY 19-20 Annual Report, the JCBD took on a key role in making sure that our small businesses received and understood the information flowing through from City departments.

JCBD staff continued to stay in direct contact with our small businesses and key community leaders. Strengthening these relationship was essential in staying on top of the health of our district and community at large.

During these difficult times, the JCBD Board of Directors has continued to support the work of the staff, making sure that our time and efforts do not go unrecognized. They continue guiding the organization to make sure its purpose remains on track through the essential programs and services that the JCBD provides, and remains in compliance with the Management Plan.

This report highlights what we were able to achieve even under these uncertain times.

JCBD stakeholders and the Japantown community recognizes the importance of our work and the value that the organization brings to Japantown. Keeping the community connected and working together to support the small businesses maintaining a clean and safe district is even more important today so that Japantown can again be a thriving destination for visitors and locals.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Horikiri

*Executive Director*

**Japantown Community Benefit District, Inc.**

# 2020 Mid-Year Highlights

## COVID Efforts

### **The Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund**

The Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund met and surpassed the goal of raising \$500,000.00 through the generosity of many individuals. To date \$505,850.00 has been raised.

Through the Fund we were able to purchase initial PPE supplies (face masks, face shields, and sneeze guards) and distribute to our small businesses. Grants in the amount of \$5,000 were awarded to 80 (\$400K total) Japantown small businesses through an application process. Grants to be used for rent, employee wages and other operating expenses. Remaining funds have also supported the final logistical costs for "Picnic at the Plaza," Kinokuniya merchants Shared Spaces build-out and provide translation services.

### **The Heart of Jtown Town Hall Meeting**

Presented a virtual town hall meeting with keynote speakers City Assessor, Carmen Chu and San Francisco Chamber of Commerce President, Rodney Fong to share the relief efforts of the City's Economic Recovery Task Force.

### **Collaboration with OEWD to Distribute PPE Supplies**

The JCBD was designated as one of the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to distribute PPE supplies to local businesses. Approximately 100 businesses received face masks, face shields and hand sanitizers.

### **Collaboration with SF Department of Health**

The JCBD continues to be a resource for businesses to have access to COVID flyers and posters that are required for posting.

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

From July 2019 - December 2020 a total of 99 e-newsletters were emailed. Compiling information and putting it into a format that was easily understandable for our small businesses without having to maneuver through the many layers of information was crucial. These timely efforts helped our small businesses stay in compliance with the many health orders, directives and guidelines throughout the various stages of the pandemic. Many merchant corridors shared our e-newsletters with their members.

### **Japantown COVID Testing**

Partnered with the Mayor's Office, COVID Command Center and SF Dept. of Health to host 3 COVID-19 testing events in November. A total of 910 individuals were tested.

### **COVIDzilla vs. Japantown Webinar**

Invited to be a panelist, representing San Francisco's Japantown for the US Japan

Council's COVIDzilla vs. Japantown webinar. Discussion surrounding the history of each Japantown, the impact of the pandemic in our communities and the organizations that are supporting relief efforts.

### **Where to San Francisco Webinar**

Invited to be a panelist for a webinar hosted by Cruise and Merchant leaders in District 5. In-depth conversation about the challenges being faced by small businesses due to COVID.

## **Keeping Japantown Safe**

### **Japantown SafeCity Camera Program**

With the completion of the Phase 4 of the implementation, 119 cameras are currently in operation. A total of 39 video retrieval requests was received from July 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020.

Invited the D5 first responders (SFPD, SFFD, and Park Rangers) to do a walk though and familiarize them with the SafeCity Camera Program.

### **Strengthening Relationship with Law Enforcement**

Participation in the SFPD Small Business Advisory Forum enabled us to conduct a Japantown Walk Through with Chief William Scott and Command Staff.

As a SFPD Northern Station Community Police Advisory Board member, we are able to have constant direct communication with the Northern Station Captain and staff.

## **Keeping Japantown Clean**

### **Community Ambassadors**

The pandemic did not stop the work of our Community Ambassadors. Their presence and visibility is even more important. Not only do they keep our streets clean, addressing graffiti, weeding tree wells and checking in with businesses 365 days a year, they have continued to be our eyes and ears.

Our small businesses look to our Ambassadors to address homeless issues. With more visible presence of homeless in Japantown, we have seen an increase in biohazard and sharps clean up.

### **Block by Block**

Working with Block by Block we were able to hire two outstanding Ambassadors who have been embraced by the Japantown community. Retaining these individuals and keeping their hourly wages in line with other districts, our Board voted to move 10% of the economic enhancement budget towards the environmental budget.

## **Big Belly's**

Japantown's 4 Big Belly smart waste receptacles continue to be a highly used by the public. Our Ambassadors maintain the cleanliness of the units and we work constantly with Recology to ensure that service is on a timely matter.

## **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.

## **Keeping Japantown Informed**

### **SFMTA Small Business Working Group**

Participating in this working group gives us an opportunity to weigh in and stay abreast of current SFMTA projects such as the Geary BRT, Pedestrian Safety, and Extended Parking Meters.

### **Sharing Our Progress with Community Organizations**

Monthly attendance in Japan Center Garage Board and Japantown Task Force meetings. Providing JCBD updates, cleaning highlights and crime report.

Weekly check-ins with the Japantown Task Force and Japantown Merchants Association to discuss not only efforts but address areas of concerns that we can working together on.

## **Promoting Japantown**

### **Social Media**

Retained the services of Next-SF to create six 15 second marketing reels to promote Japantown small businesses on social media.

### **SFMTA MUNI Bus Ads**

As part of the Geary BRT project, we received advertising opportunities to promote Japantown on MUNI buses. These advertisements included branded exterior and interior bus ads and way finding.

### **Holiday Lights**

Organized the installation of Holiday Lights in the Buchanan Mall, Peace Plaza and the Peace Pagoda.

### **Symbol of Hope Campaign**

Partnered with Paper Tree to create origami cranes, which symbolizes hope and peace in the Japanese culture. Neighborhood Arts incorporated the origami cranes into the Buchanan Mall Holiday Bistro Lights. Additionally the JCBD coordinated the efforts to bring past origami cranes used in Tree of Hope exhibit to decorate trees inside the Japan Center Malls.

## **JCBD Board**

In June of 2020 Board President David Ishida stepped down from the board and Emily Glick was voted to lead the organization. In October Board members Lawrence Nakamura and Abraham Sanes also stepped down and in December, Board President Glick submitted her resignation. Currently there are 10 board members (8 property owners and 2 small business owners).

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## **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 2020.

### **Block by Block**

In July of 2020, JCBD signed our 3rd 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, 365 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.

### **LGPR, Inc.**

Due to the pandemic we negotiated with LGPR, Inc. to reduce the monthly contract fee of \$4500 to \$2225 from August 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. This was requested due to the slow down in any PR related activities. Both parties agreed that we would revisit PR activities again in Spring of 2021. Remaining \$11,250 due will be carried over in the 2nd half of the FY PR work.

### **Ziel Creatives**

Ziel Creatives continues to provide monthly back end updates for the [JapantownSF.org](http://JapantownSF.org) website.

### **Carry Overs**

See attached

## **Non-Assessment Revenue**

- The Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund \$472,630.67
- Donation for JCBD COVID efforts \$100
- Donation for Holiday Lighting \$1,000
- Japantown Task Force \$4,600.00  
(Staff assistance for Neighborhood Mini Grant implementation)

## **Summary of Changes**

None at this time

## **Proposed Budget**

See attached.

## **Statistical Summary of Services Provided 7/1/20 - 12/31/2020**

- Answered Hotline – 9
- Business Contact – 106
- 311 Requests – 153
- Request for SFPD, SFFD & EMS – 11
- Pounds of Trash Removed – 8030
- Trash Bags Collected – 354
- Cigarette Butt Picked Up – 11,756
- Power Washing (block faces) – 2
- Auto Glass Clean Up – 294
- Graffiti & Sticker Removed – 504
- Sharps (Needle) Clean Up – 89
- Weed Abatement (block faces) – 1
- Sidewalk Power Washing – 8

**Japantown Community Benefit District**  
Carry Over Report  
1/31/2021

<b>PROJECTED CARRYOVER DISBURSEMENT</b>	<b>As of 6/30/20 Budgeted</b>	<b>Budgeted for FY20-21</b>	<b>Budgeted for Future Years</b>
Economic Enhancement	\$ 154,850.13	50,763.02	104,087.10
Environmentla Enhancement	\$ 164,840.46	-	164,840.46
Advocacy/Administration	\$ 69,932.32	6,822.38	63,109.93
Reserve (2.5%)	\$ 9,990.33	-	9,990.33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 399,613.23</b>	<b>57,585.41</b>	<b>342,027.82</b>