

UCLA

Student Reports

Title

WELCOME TO LITTLE TOKYO! PLEASE TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES. A Case Study on the 2018-2020 Little Tokyo Arts District Station Joint Development Process in Los Angeles, California

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8hs0r43v>

Author

Kohaya, Brian

Publication Date

2024-06-13



WELCOME TO LITTLE TOKYO! PLEASE TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES.

A comprehensive project submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Urban & Regional Planning

Brian Kohaya • 2024

Client: Little Tokyo Community Council

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Karen Umemoto

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my parents, Keith and Jean, for instilling the desire to continuously learn and improve myself. I honor Harry and Mae Kohaya and David and Betty Yee for their sacrifices to support their children and give them the best opportunities possible. I also honor the 120,000 Japanese Americans who were forcibly removed from their communities after the signing of Executive Order 9066.

This project would not exist without the support of Dr. Karen Umemoto and her constant guidance and knowledge of Little Tokyo. I also thank Kristin Fukushima of the Little Tokyo Community Council for sponsoring this project and giving me an excuse to be nosy. Thank you to Stephen Commins and Katherine Taylor-Hasty for guiding me through the capstone project process. Thank you to my interview subjects for their crucial insight into the planning process. I am grateful to the Lewis Center for Regional Studies and the Institute of Transportation Studies for funding this project.

As a land grant institution, the Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies at UCLA acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (Los Angeles basin, So. Channel Islands).

Disclaimer

This report was prepared in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master in Urban and Regional Planning degree in the Department of Urban Planning at the University of California, Los Angeles. It was prepared at the direction of the Little Tokyo Community Council as a planning client. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department, the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, UCLA as a whole, or the client.



Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	2
Disclaimer	2
Table of Contents	3
Executive Summary	4
Acronym and Jargon List	5
Organizations	5
Planning Terms	5
Introduction	6
Methodology	7
A Brief Historical Background of Planning and Development in Little Tokyo	8
The Origins of Little Tokyo and World War II	8
The Redevelopment Era	9
The Formation of LTCC	11
Contemporary Little Tokyo Organizations	12
Emergence of a Community-Based Vision: Sustainable Little Tokyo	12
History of Regional Connector Site and 2018-2020 RFP Process	14
“Always feels under construction”: Little Tokyo’s Relationship with Regional Rail	14
The Regional Connector Site	14
2017- 2019: The RFP Process and Community Engagement	15
March - November 2020: Pushback on Metro’s Decision	17
Findings and Recommendations	18
Evaluation/Selection Process	18
Development Team Composition	19
Affordable Housing	19
Project Design	20
Ground Floor Space	21
Parking	22
Recommendations for the Mangrove Planning Process	24
Recommendations for Little Tokyo Stakeholders	25
Conclusion	27
Appendix 1: Scoring Criteria	28
Appendix 2: Roster of LTCC (2022)	29
References	30



Executive Summary

Little Tokyo is a culturally diverse, multi-generation community in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles. Its 140-year-long history contains many conflicts ranging from the government imprisonment and forced removal of the community during World War II to the loss of land during the redevelopment era. In the mid-2000s, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) began a decades-long process to construct the Regional Connector, a significant realignment of its rail infrastructure that included the reconstruction and relocation of the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station. In 2018, Metro initiated a joint development process to construct a development on top of the station. After selecting four finalists, Metro selected Innovative Housing Opportunities (IHO) as the site developer. Little Tokyo community members, organized by the Little Tokyo Community Council, opposed the selection of IHO and cited six reasons why Metro failed to prioritize community desires. The concerns revolved around the evaluation/selection process, development team composition, affordable housing, project design, ground floor space, and parking. Ultimately, Metro withdrew its offer to IHO, and the station remains without additional development despite its opening in 2023.

This report aims to investigate the community engagement process so planners can more effectively work with communities and reckon with the historical trauma caused by planners in the past. Planning as an industry is responsible for the forceful removal of communities under the name of “urban decay” and is a direct cause of why some communities remain impoverished today. This history has not been long forgotten; it continues to live on in the communities directly affected, and trust when working with public agencies is low. Public agencies must understand this trauma as they work with these communities to build a better future.

This report chronicles the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station joint development process by interviewing Little Tokyo residents and other stakeholders involved with the process and examining archival documents. While relatively small, Little Tokyo has a long history of asserting its autonomy in community development issues. I highlight the history of community-based organization and planning that has sustained Little Tokyo into the community it remains today. Based off of my findings, I review the arguments of the six concerns and provide recommendations on how to improve those areas.

Throughout the report, history-informed and community-informed planning are important factors when working with historically marginalized communities. Through extensive research and interviews, I present the following recommendations:

- Recognizing the need for community-guided and history-informed planning
- Provide opportunities for direct community engagement in all stages of the process
- Honor the importance of community coalition and community-led planning
- Support an inclusive approach to community development

In the near future, Metro and the City of Los Angeles, spearheaded by the Economic Workforce Development Department, will restart the joint development process, this time including the 4.5-acre Mangrove site. Regardless of what is developed, the land's development will heavily determine Little Tokyo's direction for the foreseeable future.



Acronym and Jargon List

Organizations

Centre Urban - Centre Urban Real Estate Partners

CRA - Community Redevelopment Agency

IHO - Innovative Housing Opportunities

Kaji & Assoc. - Kaji & Associates

LACMTA/Metro - Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

LTBA - Little Tokyo Business Association

LTBID - Little Tokyo Business Improvement District

LTPRO - Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization

LTCC - Little Tokyo Community Council

LTSC - Little Tokyo Service Center

SLT - Sustainable Little Tokyo

Planning Terms

ENA - Exclusive Negotiation Agreement

TOC/TOD - Transit Oriented Communities/Transit Oriented Development

Joint Development - A real property asset development and management program under Metro designed to secure the most appropriate private and/or public sector developments for Metro-owned properties.



Introduction

“Welcome to Little Tokyo! Please take off your shoes” is a phrase coined by academic activist Christina Heatherton after listening to a speech by the late and great Alan Nishio. The phrase references the Japanese cultural practice of taking off one's shoes before entering a home and “expresses the ethos that newcomers are welcome, but people need to acknowledge and respect that they are entering a place with a pre-existing identity and normative culture.”¹ This report provides a post-mortem on the first iteration of the Arts District Little Tokyo Station Joint Development project that took place between 2017 and 2020. By exploring the multi-faceted arguments and discussion between Little Tokyo stakeholders and Metro, this report seeks to understand the balance of cooperation and contestation that community organizations and public agencies seek to improve their communities.

This report first explores the history of development in Little Tokyo, which underscores its long legacy of community activism and self-determination. It then provides an overview of the joint development process and the steps Metro and organizations like the Little Tokyo Community Council took to engage Little Tokyo constituents. I then discuss the six areas of concern Metro provided as the reasons why they are restarting the joint development process. I end the report by suggesting next step recommendations that public agencies and community-based organizations can take to increase participation in the planning process and build trust amongst constituents. As the second iteration of the joint development process begins, the report seeks to find understanding amongst the parties involved and elucidate underlying tensions formed by decades of racist planning practices.

¹ Ishimatsu, J., & Matsubayashi, D. (2017). Sustainable Little Tokyo: Resisting Gentrification and Displacement Through Holistic Community Engagement and Development. *Community Development Innovation Review*, 12(1), 53–61.



Methodology

This project utilizes qualitative methods. Data is collected through two methods: archival research and interviews. Archival documents come from a mixture of LTCC's archives and Metro's public records. LTCC submitted a public records request in 2020 for many of these documents, and I submitted public records requests in 2024 for additional documents. The documents reviewed include meeting meetings and notes, letters, private correspondence, and Metro guidelines and planning documents.

I selected interviewees due to their involvement in the joint development process as key informant interviews. All participants held a leadership or decision-making position during this time. The organizations interviewed include a former Community Redevelopment Agency planner, Little Tokyo Community Council, Little Tokyo Service Center, Metro, and East West Players. While efforts were made to include as many opinions and views as possible, I recognize there may be gaps in the data and uneven representation of perspectives. Some participants also declined an interview and referred me to their publicly accessible written communication.



A Brief Historical Background of Planning and Development in Little Tokyo

The Origins of Little Tokyo and World War II

Located in downtown Los Angeles, Little Tokyo has over 140 years of cultural significance to the Japanese American community. Its present-day borders include the Civic Center in the West, Chinatown in the North, the Arts District in the East, and Skid Row in the South. Figure 1 shows the current borders of the neighborhood superimposed onto a map of Little Tokyo's border at its peak. Little Tokyo, as is the majority of the greater Los Angeles region, is located on the traditional land of the Gabrelino Tongva people.

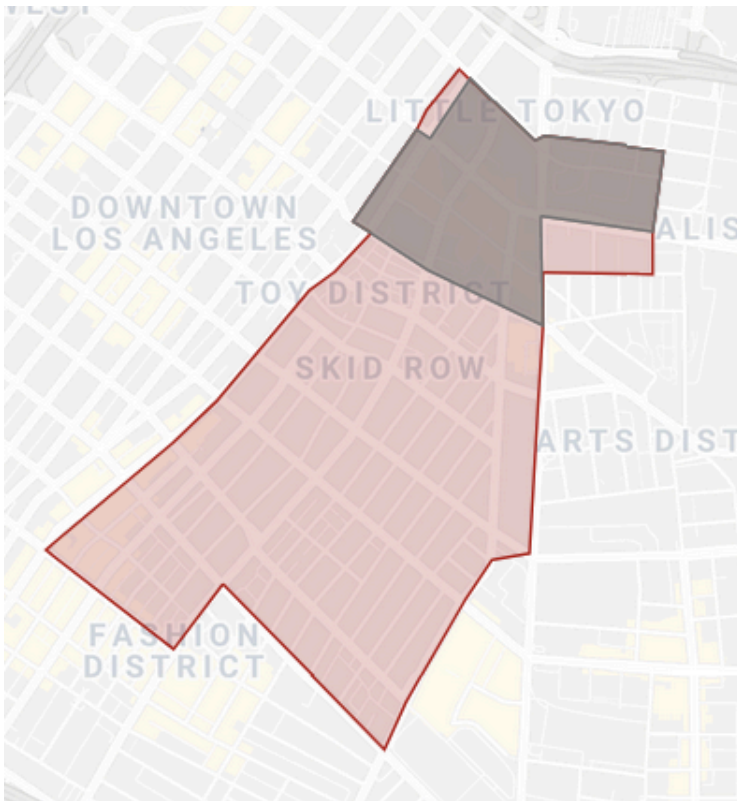


Figure 1: Overview Map of Little Tokyo

The boundary of historic Little Tokyo (circa 1934) overlaid with present-day Little Tokyo.

(Source: LTCC)

After the abolition of slavery, California's agriculture and railroad industries required an influx of workers to meet labor demands. Recruiters began to employ Japanese laborers to work in these industries in the territory of



Hawaii and the continental United States². In 1884, Kame restaurant opened, which signified the first Japanese business in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles.³ The community continued to grow until the United States enacted the Gentleman's Agreement in 1907, preventing the immigration of new Japanese migrants. However, due to chain migration rules, women were still able to immigrate, and the Japanese community continued to grow in America⁴.

Across the ocean, Japan began its imperial expansion throughout the rest of Asia and the Pacific. As the tensions in Europe boiled over, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Soon after, in 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which sent 120,000 people of Japanese descent, a majority of whom were US citizens, to US military-controlled concentration camps.⁵ During this time, Little Tokyo became known as Bronzeville due to the influx of Black Americans moving into the newly uninhabited housing. After the conclusion of World War II, the Japanese returned to Little Tokyo and began to rebuild their community.⁶ Internment did not come without both the economic and cultural loss of the Japanese American community. Historians estimated that around \$400 million worth of capital was lost, though it may be even in the billions (unadjusted).⁷ In addition, due to the trauma of being targeted for their ethnic identity, many survivors of the camps found security in becoming more American. As they resettled and began raising families, their children, the sansei, were unlikely to learn to speak Japanese and families moved out of Little Tokyo to areas such as South Bay and San Gabriel Valley, mainly during the 1950s.⁸

The Redevelopment Era

Two factors primarily influenced the development of Little Tokyo between the '60s and '80s: the influx of Japanese capital and the emergence of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

The birth of the CRA came during an era of "urban decay" in civic centers around the country, especially as it affected commercial and industrial areas. In order to rid these areas of blight, the U.S. Congress passed the

² Okihiro, G. (1993). The Japanese in America. In B. Niiya (Ed.), *Japanese American History: An A-to-Z Reference from 1868 to the Present* (pp. 1–23). Essay, Facts on File.

³ Rafu Staff. (2022, January 13). L.A. Honors Former Restaurant as First Japanese-Owned Business in Little Tokyo. *Rafu Shimpo*.

⁴ Lee, E. (2021). *The Making of Asian America: A History*. Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.

⁵ ibed

⁶ Kurashige, S. (2010). *Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles*. Princeton University Press.

⁷ Taylor, S. (1991). Evacuation and Economic Loss: Questions and Perspectives. In S. C. Taylor, R. Daniels, & H. H. L. Kitano (Eds.), *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress* (REV-Revised, 2, pp. 163–167). University of Washington Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvcwnbcj.36>

⁸ Toji, D., & Umemoto, K. (2003). The Paradox of Dispersal: Ethnic Continuity & Community Development Among Japanese Americans in Little Tokyo. *AAPI Nexus*, 1(1), 21–46.

<https://doi.org/10.17953/appc.1.1.002170106p24t787>



Housing Act of 1949 which authorized slum clearance, later known as urban renewal. The CRA designated project areas that included neighborhoods such as Little Tokyo, Chinatown, and South Los Angeles. Famously, the CRA demolished the neighborhood of Bunker Hill, located on the western portion of Downtown Los Angeles, and displaced the residents of more than 7,000 homes.⁹ The neighborhood's demolition served as a warning to the rest of the Los Angeles project areas of the CRA's potential destructive powers.

As the economy of Japan recovered post-WWII, Japanese investors became interested in Little Tokyo as a site of investment. The Kajima Corporation purchased land in Little Tokyo to construct the Kajima Building, still located on the corner of 2nd and San Pedro today¹⁰. Little Tokyo activists also started noticing that these new developments were not serving the incumbent community. Instead, the target audience was Japanese businessmen. In response, community members established organizations such as The Little Tokyo Anti-Eviction Task Force and the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization (LTPRO)¹¹. Thus began the beginning of the ebb and flow of development prerogatives between business and local interests that still exist today.

Urban historian Mike Davis notes the complicated nature of post-1965 foreign investment in Asian communities. He describes Downtown Los Angeles as a paradigm of "the intended and unintended spatial consequences of the rise of new, globalized circuits of finance and luxury consumption amid the decline of much of the old mass-consumption and high-wage industrial economy (67)".¹² An especially poignant point written before the 1992 Japanese bubble burst and 1997 Asian financial crisis, Davis describes the massive and rapid influx of Asian capital into the downtown region during the 1980s. Additionally, these investors pushed for redevelopment in areas such as Little Tokyo's neighbor, Skid Row, for further investments.

A rarely noted point is the disaggregation of the difference between Asian investment and Asian American investment. Community institutions, like the now defunct Merit Savings and Loan, prioritized keeping the money within the local community. At the same time, foreign investors like Sumitomo or Kajima Corporation intend to send American-made profits back to the homeland. The invisible schism between Japanese and Japanese American financial interests continues to play a role in feelings of ownership and belonging in Little Tokyo. Meanwhile, the CRA worked with Japanese corporations to create tax incentives for new development in Little Tokyo.

⁹ Marks, M. A. (2004). Shifting Ground: The Rise and Fall of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency. *Southern California Quarterly*, 86(3), 241–290. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41172224>

¹⁰ Iwama, D., Umemoto, K., & Masuda, K. (2021). Calling Nikkei to Empire: Diaspora and Trans/Nationalism in the Redevelopment of Historic Little Tokyo. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 74, 44–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2021.08.007>

¹¹ Ishizuka, K. L. (2018). *Serve the people: Making Asian America in the Sixties*. Verso.

¹² Davis, M. (1987). "Chinatown", Part Two? the "Internationalization" of Downtown Los Angeles. *New Left Review*, 1(164), 65–86.

<https://newleftreview.org/issues/i164/articles/mike-davis-chinatown-part-two-the-internationalization-of-downtown-los-angeles>





Photo of the Kajima Building, 2024. (Source: Brian Kohaya)

The Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) and its subsidiary, the Little Tokyo Community Redevelopment Agency (LT/CRA), also initiated plans for revitalizing Little Tokyo. The plans included redeveloping parts of Little Tokyo as part of the Civic Center expansion. In the 1970s, Little Tokyo community members began fighting back against new developments. This came to a head when the Sun Building and Sun Hotel were slated for demolition to construct Weller Court. The Sun Building was home to many community organizations while the Sun Hotel housed many seniors in SRO units. Protestors, primarily organized by LTPRO, squatted in The Sun Building, leading to their removal and arrest. While the protest was unsuccessful in saving the building, it laid the foundation for community organizing in the coming decades. Organizers of LTPRO would go on to become organizers and community developers at community-based organizations such as Little Tokyo Service Center and the Little Tokyo Community Council.

The Formation of LTCC

One important community-based coalition that formed was the Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC), established in 1999 to create a central forum for planning and organizing in Little Tokyo. The organization was established by Bill Watanabe, then executive director of Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC), and Irene Hirano Inouye, then president of the Japanese American National Museum (JANM).

One of LTCC's first endeavors took place in 2000 when the city of LA proposed the construction of a new 512-bed jail across the street from the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. Opponents within the community came



together to denounce this development, gathering more than 13,000 signatures expressing concern and opposition. Soon, Mayor James K. Hahn and Jan Perry, the city council member representing Little Tokyo, openly opposed the jail¹³. The jail was not built and eventually moved to a more industrial downtown district. This land struggle signified the collective strength of the recently-formed LTCC and demonstrated to city officials that Little Tokyo would no longer passively accept city-imposed plans.

One legacy of LTCC is its commitment to maintaining community unity despite differences that have arisen. For example, co-founders Watanabe and Inouye were in heated discussions about the future of the First Street North block of Little Tokyo, with LTSC proposing building a basketball gym and JANM proposing an art park. The proposed gym was nixed, but advocates on both sides remained collegial. This example exemplifies the council's purpose as a space where community members can come together, despite other issues, to discuss the shared goal of preserving Little Tokyo for future generations.

Contemporary Little Tokyo Organizations

Little Tokyo is currently home to many non-profit organizations and groups. Organizations that specifically serve Little Tokyo include the Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC), the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC), the Japanese American National Museum (JANM), the Go For Broke (GFB) Education Center, Keiro, Kizuna, the Little Tokyo Business Association (LTBA), Little Tokyo Business Improvement District (BID), plus many more. In addition, other Asian American Pacific Islander organizations such as Visual Communications, Center for Asian Americans United for Self Empowerment (CAUSE), East West Players, and Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP) also have their offices in Little Tokyo.

Emergence of a Community-Based Vision: Sustainable Little Tokyo

In 2012, LTSC and LTCC formed Sustainable Little Tokyo (SLT), “a community-driven initiative working to ensure a healthy, equitable, and culturally rich Little Tokyo for generations to come.”¹⁴ Through many community meetings and discussions with over 200 Little Tokyo stakeholders, SLT developed the Community Vision Plan, which guided what the community wanted on the First Street North block, the Mangrove site, and the Regional Connector station. This was a direct response to Metro's Regional Connector plan that centrally situated the Little Tokyo/Arts District station, which is projected to become the second busiest station in the county. The goals articulated in the SLT vision included:

- Strong Community Fabric that:
 - is intergenerational and multicultural.
 - strengthens and celebrates the identity and history of Little Tokyo.
- Economic Vitality and Small Business Development that:
 - complements, not replaces, existing small businesses.

¹³ Tamaki, J. (2003, August 1). Activists Persuade City to Drop Plan for Jail in Little Tokyo. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2003-aug-01-me-jail1-story.html>

¹⁴ *Sustainable Little Tokyo*. Sustainable Little Tokyo. (n.d.). <http://sustainablelittletokyo.org/about>



- supports independent, nonchain retail and strengthens long-time businesses.
- Mobility and Linkages that:
 - ensures safety and multi-modal transportation for ages 5-85.
 - foster connections to surrounding neighborhoods.
 - creates pedestrian pathways that access all parts of the neighborhood.
- Mottainai/Sustainability that:
 - ensures green practices including recycling and limiting waste.
 - promotes the “Take off your shoes” practice and respect for existing rituals and practices.
- Complete, Balanced, Human Scale Development that:
 - promotes projects and programs that allow the existing community to thrive.
 - ensures affordable and low-income housing for all, including seniors.
 - encourages appropriate density that maintains the character and feel of Little Tokyo.¹⁵

After the initial visioning process in 2014, an updated version of the plan was completed in 2022.

¹⁵ ibed



History of Regional Connector Site and 2018-2020 RFP Process

“Always feels under construction”: Little Tokyo’s Relationship with Regional Rail

Rail-related construction seemed neverending over the past three decades for many Little Tokyo stakeholders. Plans for the Regional Connector began in 2003, though earlier plans and feasibility studies exist.¹⁶ The project’s goal was to connect and improve connectivity in the Downtown region by rerouting the E and A (then Expo and Gold lines) lines and constructing three new stations. In the original plan for the new Little Tokyo/Arts District station, the alignment was at-grade with tracks at the corner of Alameda and 1st, directly in front of JANM. Community members protested this plan, but Metro stated this was the only viable route. United States Senator Daniel Inouye, then chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, wrote a strongly worded letter to Metro to consider the community’s concerns over the alignment of the station and the potential impacts it may have on the Little Tokyo community¹⁷. The route was then changed to underground, though the budget increased significantly.

Construction on the Regional Connector began in 2013. As part of the realignment, the at-grade Little Tokyo/Arts District Station, located on the northeast corner of 1st and Alameda, was torn down in 2020. The at-grade station began operations in 2009, having operated for only 11 years.¹⁸ The new underground station is located a block South of the original location, previously the home of The Atomic Cafe and the Tory Cafe, both famous punk incubator and community space.

Metro initiated a joint development process for the Arts District/Little Tokyo Station. The Metro Joint Development Program is a real estate development program designed to activate Metro-owned properties. The three main priorities are 1) transit prioritization, 2) community integration, engagement, affordable housing, and design, and 3) fiscal responsibility. The program allows for Metro and a developer to become partners on the site for both financial and management purposes.¹⁹

¹⁶ Bicknell, K. (2023, May 31). *Metro Regional Connector: History and Resources*. Metro’s Primary Resources. <https://metroprimaryresources.info/metro-regional-connector-history-and-resources/15918/>

¹⁷ Inouye, D. K. (2009, September 18). Washington, DC.

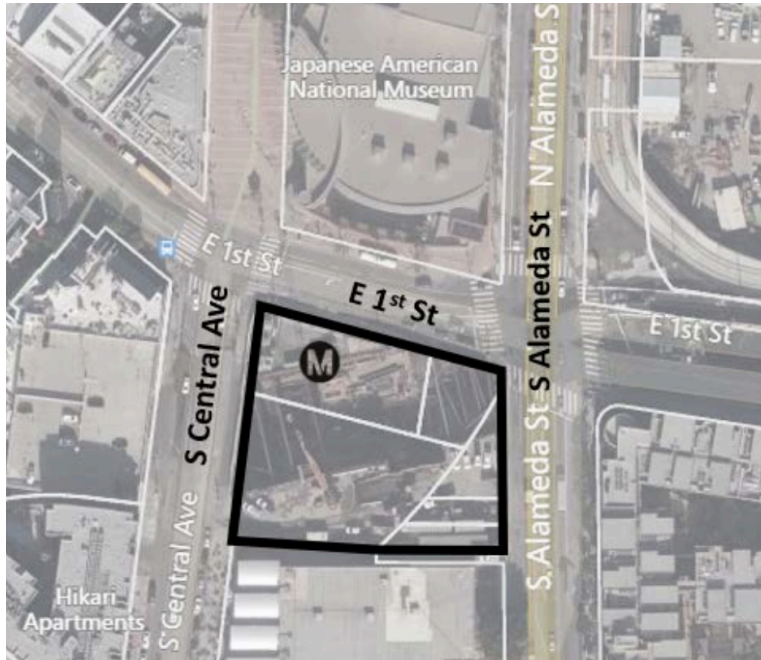
¹⁸ Bloomekatz, A., & Becerra, H. (2009, November 16). After Decades of Waiting, their Trains have Arrived : Residents Share a Sense of Kinship and Progress Aboard East L.A.’s New Gold Line Route. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2009-nov-16-me-gold-line16-story.html>.

¹⁹ Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. (2016, February). *Metro Joint Development Program: Policies and Process*.

http://media.metro.net/projects_studies/joint_development/images/JDP_Policy_0225_2016.pdf



The Regional Connector Site



(Source: Metro)

The site, located directly above the new Regional Connector station, is approximately 48,000 SF, with 30,000 SF available for development. It falls under Metro’s Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) initiative, which seeks to create communities that allow for easy movement via environmentally conscious means. The site contains the station box for the Little Tokyo Arts District Station, which is not designed for additional weight directly on top. The site is one of three sites identified in the 2013 Sustainable Little Tokyo Visioning Plan.

2017- 2019: The RFP Process and Community Engagement

Metro coordinated a large amount of community engagement opportunities throughout the process. The Little Tokyo/Arts District Station Joint Development Project commenced in 2017. Metro hired consultants to study the site’s feasibility relating to urban design, community outreach, connectivity design, and structural engineering. In early 2018, Metro hosted community roundtables to discuss their desired programming with local stakeholders from Little Tokyo and the Arts District. In addition, Metro conducted an online survey with the public, which received over 600 responses. The online survey found restaurants and affordable housing to be the most desired programming type.

In July 2018, Metro released the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station Joint Development Opportunity Overview, which also served as a reference document for the Request for Interest/Qualifications (RFI/Q). The document contained the community outreach findings, specifications on development limitations, and design guidelines. Eight proposals were received.



In June 2019, Metro invited four short-listed developers to submit a response to Metro’s RFP. The four shortlisted organizations were Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC), Innovative Housing Opportunities (IHO), Kaji & Associates (Kaji & Assoc), and Centre Urban Real Estate Partners (Centre Urban). Metro entered its “blackout” period when it could no longer meet with the developers or community members regarding this project. In October 2019, Metro organized an open house that allowed the developers to answer questions regarding their proposals from community members. This event marked the first time Metro held an open house after the blackout period began. To incentivize the importance of this event, the developer’s response to community concerns was worth 10% of the final scoring. Table 1 provides an overview of the four proposals. The scoring sheet Metro used can be found in Appendix A. Table 2 is the final score of the four applications.

Table 1. Development Summary

Column 1 (Calibri Bold 10)	LTSC	Centre Urban	IHO	Kaji & Assoc.
Total Development Cost	\$47,792,992	NA	\$39,487,325	\$150,547,112
Height	69 FT	NA	75 FT	233 FT
Units (Market Rate)	0	0	1 (Manager unit)	0
Units (Affordable)	0	0	77	0
Hotel Rooms	0	0	0	180
Commercial Space	20,700 SQFT	46,500 SQFT	11,500 SQFT	50,000 SQFT
Parking Spaces	130	0	18	0
Other amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automated parking Community space Legacy business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Hall Amphitheater Atomic Cafe revival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Retail Art Gallery Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotel Co-work space Community space

Table 2. Final Scoring of the Proposals

Developer	Vision, Scope, and Design (25)	Public Benefits (20)	Financial Information (40)	Public Workshop & Community Engagement (10)	Project Timeline (5)	Total Score
IHO	14.0	14.2	24.8	6.2	3.1	62.30
Centre Urban	15.75	13.4	22.4	5.0	3.2	59.75
Kaji & Assoc.	17.5	15.0	12.8	5.8	3.25	54.35
LTSC	9.5	10.4	11.6	5.3	3.2	40.00



On March 18, 2020, the Planning and Programming Committee voted to authorize Metro to enter an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement (ENA) with Innovative Housing Opportunities. The committee found the proposal's strengths to be:

- Demonstrated capacity and experience to deliver project proposal
- Responsive to community goals outlined in Opportunity Overview
- Offers a number of community benefits

While the committee authorized Metro to proceed with the ENA, the agreement was never officially formalized, particularly due to the chaos of COVID-19 lockdowns that began the same week.

March - November 2020: Pushback on Metro's Decision

After Metro's decision was announced, the Little Tokyo community members pushed back. The two main organizations that led this were the Little Tokyo Community Council and the Little Tokyo Business Association. LTBA claimed that they were given misinformation by Metro staff who they said advised the developers that "housing will not work" on the site. In response, Metro claimed that this was not what the Opportunity Overview advised and that respondents should have asked Metro for clarification.

LTCC had their own set of objections to the final selection. In August, LTCC sent letters to Metro and IHO, requesting that Metro: 1) revisit the scoring process, 2) conduct a 3rd party analysis of the IHO's financial information, and 3) take into account the priorities of Little Tokyo stakeholders, particularly as they pertain to affordable housing and parking. LTCC sent IHO a list of requests and clarifications regarding their project design, programming, and oversight. IHO responded by agreeing to allow for additional community input on the make-up of housing and commercial tenant selection and canceling letters of intent with chain businesses.

On November 6, LTCC sent a letter to Metro's CEO Phil Washington stating, "The LTCC Board moved to not approve Metro's selection of IHO as the proposed developer (for the Regional Connector Station Site), and requests that Metro restart the RFP process, and include Little Tokyo community concerns." On November 18, Metro's Planning and Programming Committee voted to withdraw the joint development offer to IHO. They cited the following six concerns made by the Little Tokyo community: Evaluation/selection process, development team composition, affordable housing, project design, ground floor space, and parking. After holding over 20 meetings, it was found that IHO's vision, Little Tokyo's vision, and the site constraints could not align to move forward on this project.



Findings and Recommendations

In their presentation about withdrawing the ENA with IHO, Metro cited six concerns that led to the withdrawal of the offer. This section discusses the nuances of each of the arguments to understand the disagreement that took place

Evaluation/Selection Process

Background:

Little Tokyo stakeholders, including LTCC and LTBA, found the evaluation and selection process flawed and unclear. The issues they found were a disproportionate emphasis on residential uses, especially affordable housing, and a large weight given to financial feasibility.

Several respondents took issue with the reviewers' emphasis on constructing affordable housing as it was not clearly conveyed in the Opportunity Overview. In public meetings, Metro staff stated that the site contains physical constraints that would limit the type of development possible. Some developers took this to mean that housing would not fit the site well and proposed other uses. However, once the reviewers began to score the proposals, they negatively scored proposals that did not include a residential aspect. One reviewer commented, "No affordable housing/residential uses; priority expressed in the Opportunity Overview outreach efforts," specifically referencing the Opportunity Overview as a guideline to follow. However, the Opportunity Overview mentions several times that "there is a need for affordable housing, but it may not be appropriate for the Opportunity Site." Members of LTCC and LTBA found this wording confusing and did not properly convey the importance of housing for this site. The exclusion of housing significantly affected the scores, with IHO and LTSC receiving 28.20/45 and 19.90/45 points, respectively, for "Vision, Scope and Design" and "Public Benefits."

LTCC raised concerns about the financial feasibility aspect, which comprised 40% of the scoring. Specifically, no additional inquiries were made to respondents to scrutinize the financials further. Metro hired a financial consultant, Maxima, to review the documents and provide additional financial analysis to the reviewers. LTCC found a lack of transparency concerning how the consultant reviewed the financial statements, which "leaves the impression that the evaluators had prejudices against different developers' financials." Metro countered that stakeholders found financial sustainability to be an important factor in the project.

Recommendations:

1. Allow for community engagement during the creation of the evaluation scoring sheet. Allow stakeholders to provide specific priorities for the site rather than general visioning sessions.
2. Clarify the criteria and weights of each criterion that will be used to judge the proposals transparently. Phrases such as "reasonable and financially feasible" should have specific meanings, especially in terms of financing affordable housing.



3. Allow stakeholders, not just proposers, to submit formal questions to Metro, with written responses that are publicly posted.

Development Team Composition

Background:

A reoccurring point of contention between interview subjects is the type of relationship that the developer should have with Little Tokyo. All developers— except for IHO— had pre-existing relationships with the Little Tokyo community before the process began. LTSC has a history of community-driven development, including the recently completed Budokan gymnasium and 100-unit affordable housing development, Casa Heiwa Apartments. Jonathan Kaji of Kaji & Associates comes from a family with long-lasting roots in Little Tokyo and is the son of the founding president of the Japanese American National Museum. Centre Urban’s office is located within the border of Little Tokyo.

A clear difference is drawn between how Little Tokyo stakeholders and Metro viewed the nature of the relationship between the community and the developer. Interview participants from LTSC argued that developers with a long history of development within the Little Tokyo boundary and those prioritizing community needs are best suited for the job. LTBA commented that three of the four finalists had “long-standing personal as well as institutional connections to Little Tokyo.” In correspondence, Metro agreed that IHO had limited exposure working with Little Tokyo and Arts District stakeholders. Had their ENA been approved, IHO would have been required to work with a community-based organization that has demonstrated a history of working in the community. There is a difference in priorities regarding community connections between entities. Whereas Metro found that community values and needs could be learned along the way, Little Tokyo stakeholders believed that developers should come to the table already knowing this information.

Recommendations:

1. Expand the criteria of the “Public Workshop & Community Engagement” section to include previous community engagement work conducted within the community. The current criteria only allow for engagement within this specific project's context to be considered.
2. Increase the percentage weight to the criterion of “Public Workshop & Community Engagement.” Developers and community-based organizations with years of experience working in a specific community are more likely to propose a project with pre-existing community buy-in.

Affordable Housing

Background:

The discussion of affordable housing reflected a difference in planning perspectives between Little Tokyo stakeholders and Metro. According to the SLT Visioning Plan, Little Tokyo stakeholders found the regional



connector site to be an ill-suited location for housing development. Instead, the plan identified two nearby lots, Mangrove and First Street North, as areas where housing development would be better suited for needs. LTCC wrote to Metro that the “community welcomes adding Affordable Housing in Little Tokyo, but it has concerns about doing so at the site.” There is a difference in the scale of planning the visioning plan and Metro employs; the visioning plan approaches development on a community level by envisioning a master-planned community, whereas Metro’s goal is to maximize the usage of the site. Metro, as well as other public agencies, is not an entity that can easily participate in long-term community-level planning, nor is the joint development program currently able to consider planning decisions on this scale.

Recommendations:

1. The Mangrove site should be considered in the context of the planning of the Regional Connector site. This will enable a community-level planning process that creates a sustainable future for Little Tokyo. Planners can work with community stakeholders to build upon community-led plans to identify sites that can be viewed as complementary sets of sites to meet identified needs and goals.
2. Create evaluative criteria that consider different uses across multiple sites within a set of complementary sites within a community. For example, if parking is better suited for one site and affordable housing for a complementary site, this should be reflected in the criteria and weighting.

Project Design

Background:

The project’s scale and physical attributes raised concern amongst Little Tokyo stakeholders. Some community members found the 5-story development out of scale with the rest of Little Tokyo. They cited the nearby Japanese Village Plaza and Honda Plaza as examples of 1-to-2-story-scale developments. Metro found that IHO’s development was consistent with the neighborhood’s scale and would be similar in height to the Savoy Apartments located directly to the east. It also included aspects of the Little Tokyo Community Design Overlay and principles of TOC developments.

Some Little Tokyo stakeholders brought up concerns with the design choices in IHO’s renderings. The renderings depicted a billboard that used a still from the movie *Bladerunner*, a piece of media infamous for its techno-orientalist depiction of a futuristic Los Angeles. A member of Little Tokyo’s artist community mentioned how the usage of this imagery in official renderings demonstrates a more significant misunderstanding of Little Tokyo’s character and future. Instead of seeing Little Tokyo for the community that exists in the present, IHO took an approach that imagined Los Angeles, and by extension Little Tokyo, as an orientalist reproduction. In addition, there is the conflation of Little Tokyo with its counterpart, “Big Tokyo.” This perspective is reminiscent of the CRA’s view of Little Tokyo, in which the desires of overseas business interests took precedence over the needs of local residents.





Rendering of IHO's Lotus (Source: IHO)

Recommendations:

1. Greater discussion is needed regarding height limits, considering various factors such as visual aesthetics, compatibility with and proximity to surrounding buildings, site limitations, the feasibility of building affordable housing, walkability to transit nodes, and other variables. Intentional conversations must be had with Little Tokyo stakeholders regarding sustainable development in Little Tokyo.
2. Ensure that developers are knowledgeable about the history and cultural nuances among the major population groups within the community to avoid offensive use of imagery, such as those displayed in murals, public art, architectural designs, and other features of the built environment. While many of these decisions are accidental, they contribute to the sentiment that the developer does not understand the neighborhood and the people who live and work in it.

Ground Floor Space

Background:

Little Tokyo stakeholders emphasized the need to protect legacy businesses while also fostering an environment that incubates new businesses. In their original programming proposal, IHO listed QWNCH and Fatburger, both national chains, as having letters of intent (LOI) to have storefronts in their development. The SLT Visioning Plan promotes the growth of non-chain businesses within Little Tokyo. After pushback from community organizations



such as LTBA, IHO terminated their LOIs with the chain businesses. New LOIs were not signed before Metro withdrew the ENA.

Recommendations:

1. Prioritize commercial space for businesses that “complements, not replaces, existing small businesses.” Little Tokyo businesses have traditionally collaborated under umbrella organizations such as LTBA or the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California (JCCSC). New businesses should be open to the spirit of collaboration and innovation that has existed in Little Tokyo’s business community for generations.
2. Avoid bringing chain retail and restaurants to Little Tokyo. Instead, “support independent, nonchain retail and strengthens long-time businesses.”
3. Construct small-footprint retail that is affordable to small businesses. Retail space that is too large may not be efficient for small businesses. Smaller footprints would also allow for more commercial units in the development.

Parking

Background:

Many stakeholders of Little Tokyo referenced an increased need for parking in Little Tokyo, especially as the community faces the uncertain future of the Aiso Parking lot. The LTSC development team mentioned how their proposal for 130 parking spots came from discussions with community members and as a response to this need. In contrast, Metro, which prioritizes TOD initiatives, did not find the development of parking appropriate for their site. Metro cited internally conducted parking studies as evidence that the Little Tokyo area has adequate parking and argued that the development of parking would go against the principles of joint development by increasing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled.²⁰ LTCC noted that many Little Tokyo visitors travel by car from outlying communities and that public transportation is not viable. They also mentioned how the Regional Connector construction resulted in over 500 parking stalls being removed from Little Tokyo due to the construction of the station itself as well as the construction’s staging area.

Recommendations:

1. In cases such as Little Tokyo, which is one of the last remaining centers for the largest Japanese American population in the US, Metro should reconsider its policy regarding parking, acknowledging the fact that Little Tokyo is an important ‘pilgrimage’ destination for the larger stakeholder community of Japanese Americans who come from across the region and need adequate parking to maintain their engagement as an ethnic community.

²⁰ The Connector Partnership. (2019, April). *Little Tokyo Parking Needs Assessment Memorandum 2018 Annual Update*. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.



2. While parking may be available in the area, it may not be close to events and commercial areas such as the Union Center for the Arts, JANM, or Japanese Village Plaza. One should consider the distance one must walk, specifically at night, and the high crime rates of Downtown Los Angeles. Additional consideration must be made regarding the safety of the high number of seniors who come to Little Tokyo for religious practices, cultural events, and senior services.



Recommendations for the Mangrove Planning Process

1. Recognizing the need for community-guided and history-informed planning

The memory of past injustices is alive and well among Little Tokyo community members, many of whom were direct victims of policies such as redevelopment, eminent domain, and redlining. One interview subject recalled the displacement of their grandfather's business during the redevelopment of the Civic Center. The City eminent domain the land, forcing the business to move to another part of Little Tokyo. Many years later, the interview subject became integral to discussions around development in Little Tokyo and directly worked with Metro during the Regional Connector construction. The memories of racialized development live on in their mind and influence their approach when working with Metro regarding plans involving both the station and joint development.

Williams and Steil studied the steps needed to gain community support and trust in Black communities. They concluded that public recognition of past injustices is an important step in working with communities that have historically faced urban planning-related injustices.²¹ While working with the Little Tokyo community, potential developers should recognize the decades of dispossession that the community has faced. After the forced removal and loss of property during WWII, the Little Tokyo community slowly began to regain strength and eventually earned formal redress and reparations from the United States government. This legacy of the organization continues through battles against Japanese-led development, the construction of the prison, and changing the alignment of the Regional Connector line, demonstrating the community is organized and prepared to fight for development that best addresses their needs.

2. Provide opportunities for direct community engagement in all stages of the process

Public agencies must take the community engagement process seriously if they desire to serve the communities they work in. It is not enough to go through the motions of community engagement. Agencies must take to heart what is revealed during the process, both acknowledging community needs and past traumas that may come up. Metro's finding that affordable housing was a community need during the engagement process was an important recognition, yet the conversation around affordable housing required more nuance than Metro allowed. Metro placed an overemphasis on its community engagement findings over findings by community organizations. Despite the repeated comment that the Regional Connector site would not be optimal for housing, Metro pursued the decision, which was met with pushback. Little Tokyo is home to many community organizations that frequently check the pulse of needs and can supplement those needs with historical and social contexts. While parking may not be an ideal program to be placed on top of an active rail station, the historical dispersal of Japanese Americans provides context as to why Little Tokyo stakeholders cite parking as a need despite Metro parking studies finding the contrary.

²¹ Williams, R., & Steil, J. (2023). "The Past We Step Into and How We Repair It." *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 89(4), 580–591. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2022.2154247>



Harkening back to the CRA era, one successful aspect was the implementation of the Little Tokyo Community Development Advisory Committee (LTCDAC). LTCDAC was a mayor-appointed citizens' committee that served as a liaison between the City of Los Angeles, the CRA, and the stakeholders of Little Tokyo.²² Metro can appoint a diverse group of Little Tokyo stakeholders: community organizations, business owners, commercial property owners, renters, residential property owners, and cultural bearers to provide oversight and guidance on Metro-related planning issues that affect Little Tokyo. The committee can provide oversight on hiring consultants, short-listing reviewers, assigning scoring weights, and providing relevant context to potential planning issues. This committee would not replace the work of LTCC but would complement the Council's work by hyper-focusing on transit-related issues. Little Tokyo stakeholders have a long history of working with Metro and issues, and the relationship will continue with the second iteration of the joint development process and the potential construction of the Southeast Gateway Line (previously West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor). Understandably, Metro has rules and processes that need to be followed to maintain a fair and unbiased selection process. There is also a balance to be made between open communication and the expenses and time associated with intentional community engagement. Metro should continue to follow guidelines that protect the integrity of the joint development process, including allowing for a blackout period to reduce external influence.

Recommendations for Little Tokyo Stakeholders

1. Honor the importance of community coalition and community-led planning

LTCC is a unique space that has established itself as a legitimate and successful entity in advocating for the needs of Little Tokyo. As it celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2024, past accomplishments should be celebrated as it looks toward the future. Little Tokyo is one of the most organized communities in Los Angeles, and LTCC can serve as a model in community planning and organizing. This status was only achievable through thousands of hours of labor among stakeholders and community leaders. The growth was not always linear. LTCC learned difficult lessons about working with developers when community benefits agreed upon with Related California failed to materialize.

LTCC must continue to be a space where ideas can be discussed. It must not become a place of unquestionable dogma nor a place where a side must "win." LTCC's origins lie in the spirit of collaboration and debate. While many groups had different ideas and strategies about working with Metro during the joint development process, organizations came together under the LTCC umbrella to organize against an unfavorable plan. Ultimately, while approaches may be different, the underlying goal of all organizations under LTCC is to preserve Little Tokyo for generations to come.

LTCC is an organization that cannot be easily established if it disappears. There must be a continued investment in the internal infrastructure of LTCC. This includes members recognizing when it may be time to step down and

²² Suga, M. (2004). Little Tokyo Reconsidered: Transformation of Japanese American Community through the Early Redevelopment Projects. *The Japanese Journal of American Studies*, 15, 237–255.



let a younger generation lead. It is important to invest in the operations of LTCC as well as train the next generation of leaders to be equipped at the table

2. Support an Inclusive Approach to Community Development

As Little Tokyo becomes more diverse in ethnic identity, class, and other identifiers, Little Tokyo will need to continue tough conversations about who gets to be considered a stakeholder. Little Tokyo has a dual identity of being the sacred cultural space for Japanese Americans while also being a multicultural institution. Throughout its history, Little Tokyo has learned to evolve and grow as new cycles of immigration and people arrived. Diversity of backgrounds and perspectives makes Little Tokyo a hub of innovation and progress. It took an ad hoc team of urban planners, financial professionals, artists, and concerned community members to understand the joint development decision and convince Metro to restart the process.

When community engagement is conducted, the objective should be to include everyone, even those on the margins. This includes groups such as affordable housing renters and those who utilize homeless services. These groups are part of the fabric of Little Tokyo as a historically low-income community. Both public agencies and LTCC can provide more space and opportunities for these groups to participate in the planning process. Public agencies should provide a small stipend to low-income participants to prevent costs from being the preventative factor.



Conclusion

The Little Tokyo Arts District Station Joint Development process offers a unique case study on the tumultuous relationship between community organizations and public agencies. Community organizations must find the balance between collaboration and contestation to reach planning goals. My findings highlight the need for a history-informed approach to planning. Public agencies must reckon with the planning-related injustices they committed while moving forward to create a better future. Planning, especially when working from a place of power, requires humility to understand and empathize, even when it slows down your work or makes it more difficult.

As the second iteration of the RFP process approaches, this report seeks to learn from past mistakes to ensure a more efficient process. With the addition of the Mangrove site, a 4.5-acre site diagonal from the regional connector site, the amount of capital and community engagement has increased, raising the stakes to get the process “right.” No matter who becomes the developer on the site, Little Tokyo will be a different place with the completion of the Mangrove site project.



Appendix

Appendix 1: Scoring Criteria

Category	Weight	Criteria
Vision, Scope and Design	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project concept creatively address the unique Site opportunities and constraints? Is there clarity about the project concept's uses and activities, and will they meet the goals as outlined in the Opportunity Overview? Is it clear how the project concept will improve the customer experience for transit riders?
Public Benefits	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the proposed project provide benefits to transit riders and/or Little Tokyo and Arts District visitors, businesses and residents? Do these benefits align with the priorities outlined in the Opportunity Overview?
Financial Information	40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the proposed project pro forma reasonable and financially feasible? Is the financial proposal based on reasonable assumptions? Does the proposal compensate LACMTA at a fair market value of the land?
Public Workshop & Community Engagement	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If any concerns were expressed by the attendees at the public workshop, has the Proposer adequately identified methods to resolve those concerns? How effectively does the Proposer describe a plan for engaging with community stakeholders?
Project Timeline	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the Proposer have a clear schedule for implementation of key steps in the joint development process? (Important milestones such as securing entitlements, construction start/completion, lease-up, final occupancy, etc. should be described.)

(Source: RFP NO. PS63932 Little Tokyo/Arts District Joint Development Opportunity Technical Evaluation Scoring Sheet)



Appendix 2: Roster of LTCC (2022)

Aihara & Associates
Anime Jungle
Asian American Architect /Engineers Association (AAa/e)
Azay
Brunswig Square
BUCK
Bunkado
Cafe Dulce
Centenary United Methodist
California Japanese American Community Leadership Council (CJACL)
East West Players
Friends of LT Library
Fugetsu-do
Fukui Mortuary
Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC)
Hapa Consulting Services
Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple
Allan Harris (Higgins Building)
Innovative Housing Opportunities
J. Morey Insurance
Japanese American Citizens League-Pacific Southwest District (JACL-PSW)
Japanese American National Museum (JANM)
Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California (JCCSC)
Japanese Evangelical Missionary Society (JEMS)
Jtown Action & Solidarity
Kaji & Associates
Keiro
Kimura Buildings LLC
Kizuna
Koyasan
Kumamoto Associates
Kurata Eyecare Center
LA Art Core
Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP)
Little Tokyo Business Association
Little Tokyo Historical Society (LTHS)
LT Lions Club
Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC)
LT Teramachi Homeowners
LT Senior Residents
LT Towers
LT Vibes
Los Angeles Eyecare Optometry Group
MOCA
NASA Services
NCRR
Nikkei Progressives
Nisei Week Foundation
Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
Perfect Parking
Rockfire Grill
Savoy HOA
St. Francis Xavier Chapel Maryknoll
Sushi and Teri
Sushi Gen
Taiko Project
Tasty Design
TD Wang
Tokyo Villa Home Owners Association
Total Vision (former LA EyeCare)
UCLA Asian American Studies Center
Union Bank
Union Church
Upper Crust
Visual Communications
Zenshuji Soto Mission

Membership also includes individual members.



References

- Bicknell, K. (2023, May 31). *Metro Regional Connector: History and Resources*. Metro's Primary Resources. <https://metroprimaryresources.info/metro-regional-connector-history-and-resources/15918/>
- Bloomekatz, A., & Becerra, H. (2009, November 16). After Decades of Waiting, their Trains have Arrived : Residents Share a Sense of Kinship and Progress Aboard East L.A.'s New Gold Line Route. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2009-nov-16-me-gold-line16-story.html>
- Davis, M. (1987). "Chinatown", Part Two? the "Internationalization" of Downtown Los Angeles. *New Left Review*, 1(164), 65–86. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/i164/articles/mike-davis-chinatown-part-two-the-internationalization-of-downtown-los-angeles>
- Inouye, D. K. (2009, September 18). Washington, DC.
- Ishimatsu, J., & Matsubayashi, D. (2017). Sustainable Little Tokyo: Resisting Gentrification and Displacement Through Holistic Community Engagement and Development. *Community Development Innovation Review*, 12(1), 53–61. <https://www.frbsf.org/research-and-insights/publications/community-development-investment-review/2017/09/sustainable-little-tokyo-resisting-gentrification-and-displacement-through-holistic-community-engagement-and-development/>
- Ishizuka, K. L. (2018). *Serve the people: Making Asian America in the Sixties*. Verso.
- Iwama, D., Umemoto, K., & Masuda, K. (2021). Calling Nikkei to Empire: Diaspora and Trans/Nationalism in the Redevelopment of Historic Little Tokyo. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 74, 44–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2021.08.007>
- Kurashige, S. (2010). *Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles*. Princeton University Press.
- Lee, E. (2021). *The Making of Asian America: A History*. Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. (2016, February). *Metro Joint Development Program: Policies and Process*. http://media.metro.net/projects_studies/joint_development/images/JDP_Policy_0225_2016.pdf
- Marks, M. A. (2004). Shifting Ground: The Rise and Fall of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency. *Southern California Quarterly*, 86(3), 241–290. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41172224>
- Okihiro, G. (1993). The Japanese in America. In B. Niiya (Ed.), *Japanese American History: An A-to-Z Reference from 1868 to the Present* (pp. 1–23). Essay, Facts on File.
- Rafu Staff. (2022, January 13). L.A. Honors Former Restaurant as First Japanese-Owned Business in Little Tokyo. *Rafu Shimpo*.
- Suga, M. (2004). Little Tokyo Reconsidered: Transformation of Japanese American Community through the Early Redevelopment Projects. *The Japanese Journal of American Studies*, 15, 237–255.
- Sustainable Little Tokyo. Sustainable Little Tokyo. (n.d.). <http://sustainablelittletokyo.org/about>
- Tamaki, J. (2003, August 1). Activists Persuade City to Drop Plan for Jail in Little Tokyo. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2003-aug-01-me-jail1-story.html>



- Taylor, S. (1991). Evacuation and Economic Loss: Questions and Perspectives. In S. C. Taylor, R. Daniels, & H. H. L. Kitano (Eds.), *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress (REV-Revised, 2)*, pp. 163–167. University of Washington Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvcwnbcj.36>
- The Connector Partnership. (2019, April). Little Tokyo Parking Needs Assessment Memorandum 2018 Annual Update. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.
- Toji, D., & Umemoto, K. (2003). The Paradox of Dispersal: Ethnic Continuity & Community Development Among Japanese Americans in Little Tokyo. *AAPJ Nexus*, 1(1), 21–46. <https://doi.org/10.17953/appc.1.1.002170106p24t787>
- Williams, R., & Steil, J. (2023). “The Past We Step Into and How We Repair It.” *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 89(4), 580–591. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2022.2154247>

