

Ties That Bind 3: Strategies for the Preservation of Little Tokyo as an Historic Heritage Community

September 17, 2005

Workshop Summaries

1. Introduction to Historic Preservation

- conduct LT survey and connect to the broader LA City plan
- actively protect historic buildings
- N.C. -> engage them in historic preservation process
- new housing -> new population
- hire and expand LA City Preservation plan

2. Arts & Preservation

- lack of green spaces, more continuity
- pedestrian friendly environment
- public art -> enhancement
- human scale
- gateways
- Challenges:
 - lack of coordination
 - How to convey JA values through art?

3. Design Overlay

- discussion on other areas/sites
- expiration of CRA
- background on SB 307

4. Cultural Heritage Education

- Questions to address
 - Who are we preserving it for?
 - What info for public
 - How to market
 - Place vs. meaning
 - Develop connection to ethnic heritage
 - How to document and present institutional histories
- Best Practices
 - Learn in place physically
 - Utilize technology (i.e. podcasting) when you can't bring people to a place
 - Programs that have worked in the past: picnics, internships, etc.
- Next step: I.D. group to do a strategic plan for cultural heritage education
 - LTCC—new subcommittee?

5. Places and Activities

- Main discussion points:
 - Rec Center
 - LTCC PCPC committee
 - Nisei Week
 - affordable housing
 - ongoing activities -> create ties to LT
 - parking

- marketing
- Future sites:
 - Rec Center
 - key ingredient for the future, but not the only one
 - Block 8
 - close off streets
 - how to face the Rec Center properly
- Current issues
 - Nisei Week
 - Fading now, used to draw everyone
 - Needs more cultural crafts/artists
 - Nikkei Games is the thriving part
 - Demographic changes in businesses and residents
 - JACCC
 - Issei and Japanese-speakers served mostly in the South Bay
- What works in Little Tokyo?
 - keeping neighborhood livable, affordable
 - cultural tourism should just be part of the strategy
 - ongoing activities and internships: need to create experiences that connect people and create stories, like with the Far East Café
 - marketing program
- Barriers
 - Japanese culture and activities are accessible everywhere now
 - parking and traffic (currently proposing a shuttle)
 - thriving neighborhoods outside of LT have an impact within LT
 - Go For Broke LT office attracts:
 - people who are lost b/c it says “Visitor’s Center”
 - people with family on the Monument
 - Veterans themselves
 - otherwise, rarely people who don’t already have a connection
- Other points:
 - Little Tokyo is defined by use; borders aren’t well defined
 - Little Tokyo Community Council can provide leadership
 - importance of design guidelines: signage, icons etc.
 - basketball as culture—consider its assets and resources
- Rising Stars as a good example
 - starting to attract b-ball playing segment of high schoolers
 - provides experience for parents also

6. Researching Strategies

- beyond structures, tangible things, how to build community
- impact of new residents and changes (i.e. LTCC)
- advocacy
- other case studies as examples (San Diego’s Douglas Hotel, Chinese Mission)
- know the community dynamics/politics