



Edwin M. Lee, Mayor  
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

**Date:** June 1, 2017

**To:** Recreation and Park Commission  
Operations Committee

**Through:** Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager  
Lisa Bransten, Director of Partnerships

**From:** Abigail Maher, Deputy Director of Partnerships

**Subject:** Cottage Row – Japanese Garden Project and Grant Acceptance

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### **Agenda Wording**

Discussion and possible action to accept an in kind grant valued at approximately \$56,000.00 from the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California to install new landscaping in the southern, front ornamental bed in Cottage Row Mini Park to honor the Issei (first) generation of Japanese people in San Francisco. Approval of this proposed action by the Commission is the Approval Action as defined by S.F Administrative Code Chapter 31.

### **Strategic Plan**

**Strategy 1: Inspire Public Space:** Keep today's parks safe, clean and fun; promote our parks' historic and cultural heritage; and build the great parks of tomorrow.

**Objective: 1.4.:** Preserve and celebrate historic and cultural resources

**Strategy 3: Inspire Investment:** Through community engagement, advocacy, and partnerships, cultivate more financial resources to keep San Francisco's parks and programs accessible for all.

**Objective 3.3** Cultivate increased philanthropic support

### **Background: Location**

The Recreation and Park Department manages the Cottage Row Mini Park, located on Sutter Street between Webster and Fillmore Street, in Supervisorial District 5. The Bush Street-Cottage Row Historic District, which includes the mini-park, became part of the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. The park runs adjacent to a line of Victorian houses that have stood since the 1800s, many of which were built by William Hollis during the late 1860s and 1870s. The park is primarily a brick walkway with two small green areas for recreation. A few scattered benches and some landscaping fill out the park.



## **Background:Project**

The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) is celebrating the 110th anniversary of Japantown by proposing to update the existing Cottage Row Mini Park frontage with a Japanese Zen rock garden to commemorate the Issei, the first generation of Japanese in America.

The proposed Issei garden will be located at the front of the park facing Sutter Street (approximately 30' x 25'), occupying less than 15 percent of the total park space. The proposed project will replace existing plants and bushes on the front south side of the park with rocks, plants, and trees that make up the elements and landscaping of a Japanese Zen rock garden. There are two existing short walls in the mini park. Plans call for enhancing the existing stone wall with additional stones and to cover the existing wood wall with stones so that the new garden design will have two stone walls, as shown in Exhibit B, Project Plan.

The plan will not change the structure or grade of the planted area, nor will it change any pathways or encroach upon the lawn area or any other usable or accessible space in the park. The passive use of the park will remain the same.

## **Project Outreach**

A total of five community meetings have been held to receive community input on the project design and implementation. Total attendance for the meetings combined was approximately 160 people.

These meetings were held in 2016:

- July 7: JCCCNC
- August 11: JCCCNC
- September 13: Union Bank Hospitality Room
- October 3: National Japanese American Citizens League Headquarters
- October 18: Union Bank Hospitality Room

In addition to meetings, JCCCNC has conducted additional outreach, such as reached out directly to the adjacent landowners on Cottage Row and sent mailings to approximately 300 residences within 300 feet of Cottage Row.

## **Environmental Action**

The proposed changes to Cottage Row Mini Park received Categorical Exemption and the Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness is Case No.: 2017-004228COA.

**Staff Recommendation**

Department staff recommends accepting an in kind grant valued at approximately \$56,000.00 from the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) to install new landscaping in the southern, front ornamental bed in Cottage Row Mini Park to honor the Issei (first) generation of Japanese people in San Francisco.

**Supported By:**

- (100) Residents within 300 feet to 3 block radius
- (23) Community Organizations
- (463) Signatures on stakeholder/user petition

**Opposed By:**

(10) Residents within 300 feet to 3 block radius:

1. Kiran Alvie
2. Nabeel Alvie
3. Marvin Lambert
4. Mary King
5. Audrey Sherlock
6. Benjamin Horne
7. James A Ingwalson
8. Gary Whalen
9. Karl G. Smith
10. Andre Matsuda

(1) San Francisco Resident

1. Karen Kai

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Project Location Maps

Attachment B: Project Plan

Attachment C: Existing Photos and Proposed Drawings

Attachment D: Plant Palette

Attachment E: Letters of Support

- (100) Residents within 300 feet to 3 block radius
- (23) Community Organizations
- (463) Signatures on stakeholder/user petition

Attachment F: Letters of Opposition, Emails, and Information

- (11) Residents

Attachment G: Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness