

**REPORT #1**

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# **SAWTELLE JAPANTOWN**

*The Trajectory of Japanese American Neighborhoods*

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## PREFACE

These reports represent Asian American Studies' commitment to engaged scholarship through teaching and community-oriented research that are mutually beneficial. Community partners are instrumental in identifying research needs, participating in and facilitating data collection, assisting in analyzing information, and disseminating findings to inform policy debates and program development. For community members, we hope that they will gain insights from student research. At the same time, students gain real-world understanding of Asian American issues. The class that sponsored a community project serves as a bridge for students' academic training and their life after graduation. We hope that this project enables students to acquire and apply research skills and engage in broader social justice movements.

This course, "Capstone Community-based Research: Asian American Enclaves and Community Institutions," connected students to Sawtelle Japantown Association (SJA). The class was offered through UCLA's Asian American Studies Department. This year's project examines the factors that contribute to the vitality of ethnic enclaves and community institutions to then provide recommendations to SJA. SJA has been working since 2014 to preserve the cultural and historic aspects of the Sawtelle area. They are working to mobilize and strengthen community and cultural organizations so that its members have an active, strong, and effective voice in planning their neighborhood's future. This project emerged from a joint planning effort that started during the summer of 2014. Students conducted interviews with key stakeholders around four topics:

- Background and history of Japanese settlements in California and contemporary issues that Japantowns and Japanese neighborhoods experience.
- Efforts by Los Angeles Asian enclaves in seeking official neighborhood designation.
- The role of cultural institutions in preserving and promoting Asian American neighborhoods.
- Review of community-based initiatives to engage in neighborhood planning processes, particularly in Asian neighborhoods.

Most of these interviewees were located in the Los Angeles area. Based on their interviews, each group developed evidence-based recommendations to help SJA with its efforts of community building and preservation. We believe that the analyses and findings are also useful to other neighborhoods interested in promoting their unique cultural and ethnic identity.

This project was conducted in partnership with the UCLA Asian American Studies Center and the George and Sakaye Aratani “Community Advancement Research Endowment” (C.A.R.E.), which provided funding to edit and produce the final reports. Additional funding was provided by the UCLA Office of Instructional Development mini-grants and UCLA Asian American Studies Department for guest speakers who spoke to students during the class. The Center for the Study of Inequality provided funds to cover the cost of a graduate teaching assistant. We also thank Professor Valerie Matsumoto for initiating the discussion with SJA and Alycia Cheng for her assistance with layout. Last but not least, we thank SJA, particularly Randy Sakamoto, Scott Nakaatari, Dr. Jack Fujimoto, and Randall Fujimoto, who provided our students with a wonderful experience.

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*Sawtelle Japantown sign on Sawtelle Blvd.*  
Photo: C. Aujean Lee

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Introduction.....9**

**Background.....10**

- History of Japanese Settlements
- Legislation: CA Senate Bill 307
- Contemporary Japanese Neighborhoods

**Findings.....16**

- Racism and Anti-Japanese Legislation affected early Japanese neighborhoods
- Generation gaps exist and are creating a concern for older community members
- Difficulty preserving history due to Japanese Americans moving away

**Recommendations.....21**

- Install physical markers to preserve Japanese American history and culture
- Gear programming to address generation gaps
- Continue improving relationships between businesses and Sawtelle Japantown Association

**Conclusion.....27**

**References.....28**

**Appendices.....32**

- Appendix A: Methodology
- Appendix B: Interview Protocol
- Appendix C: Sawtelle Neighborhood Analysis



*The Trajectory of Japanese American Neighborhoods*



*Los Angeles Little Tokyo neighborhood*  
Photo: Jean-Paul deGuzman

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to examine the history of Japanese settlements and describe challenges of contemporary Japanese American neighborhoods in California. It also reviews California Senate Bill 307, which established a temporary fund to help three Japantowns. This project utilizes academic sources, websites of Japanese American community institutes, and secondary data sources to describe the development and patterns of Japanese areas. Student researchers also conducted 9 interviews with community leaders from Pasadena, San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo, San Francisco’s Japantown, and San Jose’s Japantown. (For detailed information on the interviews and neighborhoods, please see Methodology in Appendix A.)

From the findings, this report provides recommendations for Sawtelle Japantown in helping to preserve the neighborhood’s history, culture, and identity. The three findings are:

1. racism and anti-Japanese legislation affected the establishments of early Japanese settlements;
2. senior residents are concerned about generation gaps in contemporary Japanese neighborhoods; and
3. community leaders find it difficult to preserve the history of Japanese neighborhoods because Japanese Americans have moved away.

This report concludes with recommendations developed for Sawtelle Japantown Association (SJA) to continue their efforts in preserving their neighborhood:

1. install physical markers;
2. cater programming towards building bridges between various generations; and
3. continue improving relationships between businesses and SJA.

*Hashimoto Nursery on Sawtelle Blvd.*  
Photo: Randy Sakamoto



## BACKGROUND

This report traces the history of Japanese settlements to contemporary neighborhoods, focusing on California. This section first describes the history of Japanese areas, contextualized by World War II. It then describes more recent trends among Japanese neighborhoods and preservation efforts, including California Senate Bill 307, which designated temporary funding to help with neighborhood projects. After, this section concludes with information about the challenges that contemporary neighborhoods experience, particularly around historic and cultural preservation.

### *History of Japanese Settlements*

Japanese American areas have dramatically changed since Japanese arrived during the 1860s. Much of these demographic shifts revolved around discrimination and anti-Japanese legislation, which were passed from 1908 to World War II. The aftermath has led to residential dispersion and suburbanization

of Japanese Americans, which has presented challenges to historic and cultural preservation.

During the 1860s, Japanese began immigrating to Hawai'i and California (Densho Learning Center, 2014). Issei, the first generation of Japanese, immigrated to the United States between 1885 and 1924 because they were recruited as laborers as a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which restricted Chinese from immigrating (Densho Learning Center, 2014; Nishi, 1955, p. 17-18). Many of them worked in farming or gardening because they were previously farmers in Japan (Jiobu, 1998, p. 42; Tengan, 2006, p. 2). While the majority of Japanese Americans lived on the West Coast, many moved to Southern California after the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 and because of Southern California's cheap agricultural land. After, approximately one-fourth of Japanese moved from San Francisco to Los Angeles (Jiobu, 1998, p. 42-45; Sato & Japanese

## *The Trajectory of Japanese American Neighborhoods*

American Historical Mapping Project, 1998, p. 226).

Similar to Chinese laborers, Japanese were discriminated against by legislation. For instance, the 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement between Japan and the United States limited Japanese immigrants to merchants, students, and relatives of residing Japanese immigrants. Thus, many Japanese women who were "picture brides" immigrated to marry Japanese men and shifted the Japanese community from male laborers to family settlements (Densho Learning Center, 2014; Morimoto, 1989, p. 60).

Additionally, the Alien Land Law of 1920 restricted immigrants from owning land, which discriminated against Japanese farmers in California and sought to discourage Japanese immigration (Kurashige, 2008). As a result, from 1920 to 1940, "Japanese-operated farms decreased from 361,276 acres in 1920 to 191,427 acres in 1930" (Tengan, 2006, p. 26-27). Thus, many Japanese became gardeners since they were no longer able to buy land. As with other minority groups, Japanese were also restricted by renting and purchasing homes in more desirable areas and lived "near commercial or industrial sites...frequently in proximity to African American and Mexican American neighborhoods" (Matsumoto, 2014, p. 14).

During World War II, Japanese neighborhoods also transformed significantly due to discrimination. In 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawai'i. As a result, President Roosevelt passed Executive Order 9066, which forced all people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast to enter concentration camps under armed guard, justifying it as a military necessity (Densho Learning Center, 2014). Japanese neighborhoods on the West Coast were then deserted, allowing for others to move into the vacated spaces. For



*Pasadena Japanese Culture*  
Photo: Joyce Park

example, the one square mile of Little Tokyo was known as Bronzeville, which became home to 25,000 people during the war and was filled with jazz venues and nightclubs, attracting different generations of people and people of different ethnic backgrounds (Kurashige, 2008, p. 161; Wild, 2005, p. 201).

Even though Executive Order 9066 was lifted on January 2, 1945, anti-Japanese sentiments and policies continued. California experienced immense postwar hostility "in the form of anti-Japanese signs, housing and job discrimination, vigilante violence, and harassment" (Matsumoto, 2014, p. 181). Consequently, many Japanese remained in concentration camps because they felt safer there and were uncertain about where they would live or work. For example, while 11,000 Japanese returned to

Los Angeles County, 80,000 chose to remain in camp until they were forced to leave in the fall of 1945 (Kurashige, 2005, p. 166).

After World War II, some Japanese areas returned to their pre-war population, but in a smaller bounded area. Japanese neighborhoods became smaller in size because their lands and property were taken over during their absence. Some of the larger Japanese areas quickly returned to their pre-war population, including Los Angeles and San Francisco by 1950. For example, even though Issei businesses experienced challenges to re-establish themselves, Little Tokyo remained a community for the older generation, cultural organizations and traditional businesses (Hayden, 1997, p. 216; Liu & Geron, 2008, p. 21).

On the other hand, other enclaves either took a decade to re-establish or never returned to their pre-war population. By 1951, Japanese areas suffered a 30% decline in population for several reasons. First, some Japanese Americans moved from farms to suburban, racially-mixed neighborhoods (Hirabayashi, 2002, p. 96; Spickard, 2009, p. 147). To look for job opportunities and move out of the West Coast and its prevalent anti-Japanese sentiments, Japanese also resettled, mainly in Chicago, Denver, and Salt Lake City. Their resettlement helped “broaden the occupational distribution of Japanese Americans. Many entered employment which had been virtually closed to them in pre-war days” (Nishi, 1955, p. 72).

With Japanese Americans moving across the country, many community members in these Japantowns and historic Japanese neighborhoods sought to preserve their unique histories, memories, and stories. The following section will discuss California Senate Bill 307 (SB 307), the legislation that initiated preservation

projects of three Japantowns in San Francisco, San Jose, and Los Angeles. Nevertheless, SB 307 was limited in funding and scope.

### *California Senate Bill 307 (SB 307)*

SB 307 was approved on October 13, 2001 and provided \$450,000 to support the three Japantowns in the state and create the California Japantown Preservation Pilot Project. However, the funding ended on July 1, 2004 (SB 307, 2001). This limited amount of time and funding, however, initiated the process of preserving these Japantowns.

Community leaders from the designated Japantowns in San Jose, San Francisco, and Los Angeles pushed for SB 307 because they noticed significant challenges to preservation. For example, Japanese populations in Japantowns declined in part due to its aging residents. Additionally, Japanese American business owners sold their businesses to Korean American and Chinese American merchants (Tsukuda, 2014, p. 596). In addition, public redevelopment and urban renewal diminished Japanese areas to the point where Japanese communities were severely reduced or nearly eliminated (Liu & Geron, 2008, p. 21). Community leaders from the three Japantowns held conferences to address their concerns and need to preserve their area’s historical significance (Tsukuda, 2014, p. 596). They sent reports to their elected officials, which resulted in Senator John Vasconcellos of San Jose authoring SB 307 (Japantown San Jose, 2015). Senator Vasconcellos introduced it to the State Assembly in 2000, where it was voted on several times during the year until it passed with seventy-five unanimous votes on September 10, 2001 (Little Hoover Commission, 2002).

SB 307 created the California Japantown Preservation Pilot Project, which would be used

## The Trajectory of Japanese American Neighborhoods



*Gardena Japanese Cultural Institute*  
Photo: C. Aujean Lee

to inform how other historic ethnic neighborhoods could work to preserve their own communities (Japantown San Jose, 2015; SB 307, 2001). The purpose of the California Japantown Preservation Pilot Project was to:

*require the State Librarian to provide a one-time grant to the [Japantowns of Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Francisco] in order to aid with the preparation, adoption or implementation of specific plans that promote the preservation of existing Japantown neighborhoods in those jurisdictions (SB 307, 2001).*

Japantowns were also required to define cultural preservation when establishing their projects. As a result, Japantown groups came together to plan preservation projects. For example, the Japanese American National Museum and the Little Tokyo Community Council in Los Angeles completed a Pilot Study Report (Benbow, 2006, p. 3). After SB 307, the legacy of preservation continues through community organizations, such as the Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Commission in San Francisco, and the Little Tokyo Service Center in Los Angeles (City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, 2015; Little Tokyo Service Center, 2015).

While SB 307 began the process of identifying historic Japantowns, this legislation only provided funding from 2001 and 2004 through a single grant. It also did not financially assist other Japanese neighborhoods since they were not officially designated as Japantowns. In the next section, In the next section, we discuss other contemporary Japantowns and Japanese communities and the prevalent issues they experience.

### *Contemporary Japanese Areas Today*

As of today, there are four official Japantowns: Los Angeles' Little Tokyo and Sawtelle Japantown, San Francisco Japantown, and San Jose Japantown. (For more details on Sawtelle Japantown, see Appendix C.) However, there are many other Japanese neighborhoods that are not officially designated. These areas experience several common themes, including gentrification, spatial assimilation, and tourism, which impact their ability to preserve the culture and history of these neighborhoods.

Gentrification is a prevalent issue in contemporary Japanese American neighborhoods. It is a form of urban renewal that occurs when urban neighborhoods experience shifts due to a declining housing market and new, incoming residents of different races and socioeconomic status (Liu, 2013). It can lead to wealthier residents and businesses in the area, and higher property values. For instance, Little Tokyo in Los Angeles is impacted by the incoming regional connector, a Metro rail extension, which will allow commuters to directly access Los Angeles County without transferring from Union Station or other metro lines (Metro, 2014). Despite the benefits of allowing tourism in the future, it may still gentrify the neighborhood (Bill Watanabe, personal communication, January 15, 2015; Nakaoka, 2012).



*Bellefontaine Nursery in Pasadena*  
Photo: C. Aujean Lee

Also, as Japanese Americans have moved away, or spatial assimilation, Japanese neighborhoods and businesses have been negatively affected. As Japanese Americans have access to more socioeconomic mobility and economic opportunities, they are spatially assimilating and disperse from traditional Japanese neighborhoods (Ellis, Wright, & Parks, 2006). As a result, traditional Japanese establishments are becoming less prevalent. For example, Pasadena's Bellefontaine Nursery is one of the last Japanese nurseries in the area. However, with the declining presence of Japanese Americans,

## *The Trajectory of Japanese American Neighborhoods*

there are fewer nurseries that can stay in business. Furthermore, younger generations of Japanese Americans move out of the community to reside elsewhere due to housing and job opportunities. As a result, Nancy Takayama from the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Citizens League stated that it is difficult to maintain Japanese American culture and a sense of community (personal communication, February 25, 2015).

With fewer Japanese Americans in historic Japanese neighborhoods, these areas have become sites of tourism. For example, of San Francisco's 12,000 Japanese Americans, only a few hundred live in the Japantown. Consequently, San Francisco's Japantown is no longer a place of population concentration, but is becoming more of a tourist attraction (Sinclair, 2004). Little Tokyo also has remained a popular tourist attraction and a place for Japanese Americans to visit with its restaurants, museum, and other businesses (California Japantowns, 2015).

There are cases where residents have been working to preserve the history and culture of Japanese neighborhoods. For example, Nancy Oda, from the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center, spoke on how she was able to preserve the community center when there was a financial crisis two years ago. By working with a committee on endowments and a legacy fund, she was able to gather donations from community residents (personal communication, February, 19, 2015). Also, unlike other cities in Los Angeles County, Pasadena's homes and nurseries survived urban development with many pre-war building still preserved. These buildings touch on Japanese experiences before, during, and after World War II (Ho, 2007, p. 1). Additionally, some areas have worked to bring Japanese Americans

back to these neighborhoods. For instance, Little Tokyo developed Budokan, which will provide a recreation space and attract younger Japanese Americans to Little Tokyo (Nakaoka, 2012).

Although contemporary Japanese areas vary in issues and status, they face the common issue of preserving their historically significant neighborhoods. Contemporary Japanese areas are all facing issues of gentrification, declining presence of Japanese Americans due to them moving elsewhere, and preserving historical and cultural institutions. As a result, contemporary Japanese American communities are still working to resolve these issues.

San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center  
Photo: Jean-Paul deGuzman



## REPORT FINDINGS

This section discusses three major findings generated from this project’s research:

1. ongoing racism and anti-Japanese legislation affected the historic establishments of Japanese communities;
2. it is difficult to preserve the distinct and unique history of Japanese areas because Japanese Americans are moving away; and
3. generation gaps exist in Japanese American communities.

Each finding is described in further detail in this section.

### **1. Ongoing racism and anti-Japanese legislation affected the historic establishment of Japanese communities.**

Throughout Japanese history, it was difficult for Japanese Americans to find neighborhoods to reside in due to racism and anti-Japanese legislation. For example, Nancy Takayama describes how the “early 1900s...was a time period where Japanese immigrants were allowed to purchase land but very few did and then of course the area law occurred and they were denied the purchase of land” (personal communication, February, 25, 2015). As described earlier, Japanese Americans were also prevented from renting and buying homes in affluent areas such as Beverly Hills and Brentwood, and were placed near commercial and industrial sites (Matsumoto, 2014, p. 14). Brian Kito of the Little Tokyo Koban and Visitor’s Center describes a similar pattern in Los Angeles:

## The Trajectory of Japanese American Neighborhoods

*Before the war, and just after the war, there was a purpose for all these people to come together...because they weren't wanted anywhere else...After the war they didn't want to move places where they didn't have fellow Japanese Americans, for safety and for cultural reasons, but more for I think safety and comfort (personal communication, February 11, 2015).*

Japanese Americans also continued to live in some restricted neighborhoods due to discrimination and racial covenants. Nancy Takayama acknowledges that prejudice and discrimination led many Japanese to reside in other neighborhoods, such as Pacoima. She adds:

*When [Japanese] left the internment camps after 1945, not all of them came back to the West Coast. Eventually, they did, but when they came back... there was still a lot of prejudice and there are some documents that actually state...on people's homes that say do not sell to Japanese [or restrictive covenants] (personal communication, February 26, 2014).*

As with other neighborhoods that Japanese Americans lived in, Pacoima was not the most desirable neighborhood to reside in. Nancy Oda recalls "it was probably the least desirable place...because Los Angeles calls it the 'armpit of the city'... the discrimination was very clear at that time" (personal communication, February 19, 2015).

When racial covenants became illegal, some Japanese Americans were able to move out of these neighborhoods. Phil Shigekuni from San Fernando Valley's Japanese American Citizens League describes how:



*The front of Little Tokyo's Koban Center and Fuget-su-Do Confectionery in Downtown Los Angeles*

Photo: Joyce Park

*After the Supreme Court decided that restrictive covenants in housing were unconstitutional, things changed and that's the good news. The bad news is that it's made for Japanese to be more dispersed and not being able to particularly identify an area geographically as being a Japanese neighborhood (personal communication, March 3, 2015).*

While it is beneficial that Japanese Americans do not experience formal housing discrimination, spatial assimilation presents issues with creating a concentrated Japanese neighborhood that can help residents to connect with the cultural and historic background of these areas.

Thus, these post war communities were formed by Japanese Americans due to economic mobility, restrictive covenants, and seeking safety and comfort because they were experiencing prejudice and discrimination. However, after restrictive legislation was banned, some Japanese Americans have been able to move to other neighborhoods, which simultaneously presents

strains on cultivating an identifiable Japanese American neighborhood.

## **2. It is difficult to preserve the distinct and unique history of Japanese neighborhoods due to Japanese Americans moving away.**

The histories of Japanese areas are unique and distinct. However, it has become challenging to pass on this history to younger generations, who have moved away from historic Japanese neighborhoods. When Japanese Americans move away from Japanese areas, they have fewer opportunities to meet residents who can share their stories.

There is a generation divide in where Japanese Americans choose to live. Nancy Oda shared how older Japanese Americans have stayed around the San Fernando Valley within 10 to 20 minutes of each other (personal communication, February 19, 2015). However:

*...younger people...live in a larger radius...There are people who belong to my grandson's generation but they live in...Stevenson Ranch, New Hall, Camarillo...My own son, who started the Japanese Cultural language School, is a member and he lives in Georgia (personal communication, February 19, 2015).*

Nancy Takayama described similar patterns, as “more Japanese – the children of Japanese who built their lives here – [are] moving out of the community because it just wasn’t a place that they wanted to live” (personal communication, February 26, 2015).

With Japanese Americans living further away, community members have to work harder

to preserve their history. According to Bryan Takeda, historical preservation of a community is very significant because:

*For people who grew up here like myself, this place would just be torn down and a condo or apartment [would be built]...If I have grandkids someday, they'll drive by here and I would say 'well that's where I went to school'...It's important to preserve the stories, the history...I don't know what life would be like without knowing that (personal communication, February 13, 2015).*

It is important to know the history of an area, especially sites or institutions that have previously been there because they contribute to people's personal legacies and contribute to the collective Japanese American experience. By getting to know community members such as Bryan, people are able to learn new, yet historic, facts about Pasadena's Japanese neighborhood. Without associating with community members, it is difficult to understand a Japanese area due to the complexity of Japanese history.

The San Fernando Valley is also working to preserve their history because many Japanese Americans have moved away from Pacoima. According to Nancy Takayama, the history of Japanese farmers in San Fernando Valley is not specifically written in books, even though they helped to contribute to supplying produce to the country, because many Japanese Americans were tenant farmers and did not have any formal documentation. However, through the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Citizens League, people are learning this history because they are actively capturing these stories (Nancy Takayama, personal communication, February 25, 2015).

## *The Trajectory of Japanese American Neighborhoods*



Since Japanese American families continue to move away from Japanese American areas, it is hard to pass on culture and knowledge to those who are not in the community anymore because they are harder to reach out to. This is why it is important to attract the younger generations to contemporary Japanese American communities; in this way, they can inherit the culture and history of their ancestry.

### **3. Generation gaps exist in Japanese American communities.**

In every contemporary Japanese neighborhood, generation gaps are a major issue. There

are two types of generation gaps— one between the younger and older generations of Japanese Americans, and one between Shin Issei and Japanese Americans. Interviewees were concerned about these generation gaps.

As previously described, there is a gap between younger and older generations, in part because of a geographic divide. Consequently, younger people are not participating in Japanese organizations, while older generations of Japanese Americans primarily comprise the board and members. If this generation gap is not addressed, Japanese areas will struggle to maintain and preserve their community. For

example, Kiyomi Yamamoto, from San Jose Japantown, advocates for the younger generation's participation:

*You need the younger generation to become involved and to care and to pick up where our predecessors will leave us. ... When there's a lack of interest in a subject and it's forgotten... for the Japantown community to continue, you have to get the younger generation to buy in and you have to get them to want to support you (personal communication, February 23, 2015).*

Some neighborhoods are discovering what the younger generation is interested in and using these interests as programs in cultural institutions. For example, Bryan Takeda, from Pasadena Japanese Cultural Institution (JCI), gave an example of how to engage the younger generation:

*I asked the young people, "What is it that you guys are interested in?"...I would say that it's really important to engage as many young people...because that is the future. They need to be part of the process...I want [the younger generation] to have a booth [of their interest] at the bazaar...maybe come to the annual luncheon...just be there (personal communication, February 13, 2015).*

By asking the younger generation what they are interested in, the older and younger generation can bond. Without the engagement of the newer generations of Japanese Americans, their culture, history and memories will gradually disappear.

The second generation gap is between Japanese Americans and Shin Issei, Japanese who are now immigrating to the United States. As Toyota (2012) explained differences between Japanese Americans and Shin Issei, long-term residents of Sawtelle in her study describe differences in life experiences and culture: "We [U.S. born Japanese and Shin Issei] look Japanese but we're different. They don't have the same beliefs, the same values as we [American-born Japanese] do. They don't have the same experiences as we had" (p.18).

Due to the differences between Shin Issei and Japanese Americans, it is hard to connect these groups. This generation gap is a prevalent issue for Sawtelle Japantown (Randy Sakamoto, personal communication, January 8, 2015). Both generation gaps present challenges to cultivate a sense of community within Japanese neighborhoods that are becoming more dispersed.

These findings were developed after analyzing existing literature on Japanese neighborhoods and conducted interviews. They demonstrate the importance of preserving the legacy and history of Japanese areas, and connecting Shin Issei and Japanese Americans. These findings reiterate prevalent issues in contemporary Japanese neighborhoods. In order to address the findings and the issue of preserving Japanese American neighborhoods, the next section will consist of recommendations for SJA.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on research and interviews, this project recommends three actions for SJA:

1. preserve Japanese American history and culture by installing physical markers;
2. continue improving relationships between businesses and SJA; and
3. gear programming to address two prevalent generation gaps.

Each action is discussed in further detail in the following section.

### **1. Preserve Japanese American history and culture in Sawtelle Japantown by installing physical markers.**

One method to preserve Sawtelle Japantown's unique history is to install physical markers

in the community, such as commemorative plaques, statues, or monuments. SJA was officially designated by the City Council with a neighborhood sign on February 25, 2015 (Rafu Shimpo, 2015). Keith Kamisugi agrees that:

*[Japantowns are] special because of the cultural characteristics of the community...so whether they are cultural markers or...physical markings in the area that help make a community what it is and as change develops, you just want to make sure those things are not wiped out (personal communication, February 25, 2015).*

A physical landmark can commemorate a specific person or event, and contribute to the importance of the community. Two other Japantowns have cultural landmarks in their communities, including the peace pagoda tower and plaza tower in San Francisco, and the yagura fire tower in Little Tokyo. Little Tokyo

*A physical landmark can commemorate a specific person or event, and contribute to the importance of the community.*



From left to right:  
Yagura Fire  
Tower and Nikkei  
Veterans Monu-  
ment

Photos:  
Suhyun Joy Cho

also has several other landmarks: the Friendship Knot and the Nikkei Veterans Monument. The Friendship Knot symbolizes unity between cultures and the Nikkei Veterans Monument honors all Nikkei who served in the United States military (Wallach, 2010). These structures represent the Japanese American community and indicate that the surrounding area has historical and cultural importance.

SJA may also consider a mural that can commemorate its history. For instance, in Little Tokyo, there is a prominent landmark in the form of a large mural titled “Home is Little Tokyo” (Jenks, 2008, p. 232). This mural is displayed at a popular intersection shared by the Japanese American National Museum, a luxury condominium development, and the Gold Line Metro Station. The purpose of this mural was to build a sense of community of Japanese Americans in Southern California. The mural allows people to know that they have entered Little Tokyo, that Little Tokyo has a history, and that

Little Tokyo has a community connected to it (Jenks, 2008, p. 232). SJA can begin the process of developing a mural similar to Little Tokyo to highlight its rich history.

SJA can decide as a community what types of physical landmarks are appropriate for the neighborhood. One method includes a design competition to choose the community landmark. Other neighborhoods use design competitions for artists to collaborate and submit ideas for landmarks. A design competition would encourage and increase public interest. Additionally, design students can use this opportunity for their portfolio and freelance at no cost. For example, the Go for Broke Monument in Little Tokyo was initiated by the Go for Broke Educational Foundation (Simpson, 2012). It was created by Sansei architect Roger Yanagita, who won the foundation’s international design competition (Simpson, 2012). A similar competition would allow for more creativity in implementing a landmark by permitting not only

*The Trajectory of Japanese American Neighborhoods*

From left to right:  
Little Tokyo  
Friendship Knot

Photo:  
Suhyun Joy Cho



*These structures represent the Japanese American community and indicate that the surrounding area has historical and cultural importance.*

monuments and statues, but also sculptures and murals.

However, installing physical markers is financially costly. For example, a two feet by four feet bronze plaque that designates a Historical-Cultural Monument in Los Angeles costs \$443 plus shipping costs (Office of Historic Resources, 2015). SJA can gather support for physical markers through different methods. SJA can ask for donations from private corporations and families. This is a common practice as many physical markers and buildings are sponsored by affluent individuals and groups, such as the Bishop Museum in Hawai'i that was created by Charles Reed Bishop to honor his late wife Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop and her Hawaiian culture (Bishop Museum, 2015).

SJA can also apply for specific grants from the City of Los Angeles for these public landmarks.

For example, SJA can register Sawtelle Japantown with the California Office for Historic Preservation to be considered a California historical landmark, allowing it to also register for state highway signage and official state plaques (Office of Historic Preservation, 2015). SJA can also apply for funds with the National Trust for Historic Preservation for various preservation projects (Preservation Directory, 2015). For historic buildings in particular, SJA can preserve existing buildings by applying for the Mills Act Historical Property Contract program through the Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources (Office of Historic Resources, 2015).

Since Sawtelle is now an official Japantown, it can benefit from installing a physical landmark similar to other Japantowns. Sawtelle Japantown is one of the areas that formed as a safe community for Japanese Americans and has its

own unique history that deserves to be recognized and preserved.

## **2. Continue improving relationships between businesses and Sawtelle Japantown Association (SJA).**

It is essential for business owners, residents, and community members to support each other because they are part of the same neighborhood. SJA should continue supporting businesses in Sawtelle Japantown to develop a mutually benefiting relationship. For instance, a community member from San Jose Japantown, from San Jose Japantown explained how Gordon Bierse opened a beer factory near San Jose's Japantown. Their business supports San Jose's Japantown by attending community events and donating resources (personal communication, February 19, 2015). By fostering a relationship with businesses around Sawtelle Japantown, SJA and businesses can have a stronger presence in the surrounding community. Furthermore, SJA can continue to support local businesses by purchasing their products or requesting restaurants to cater for different events. By mutually assisting and supporting one another, SJA and businesses in Sawtelle can continue developing a positive relationship.

SJA can also continue hosting meetings with business owners, residents and community members. Through these meetings, they should discuss programming that can benefit both SJA and businesses. For example, SJA can also adapt a walking tour to incorporate a food tour, which would allow for SJA to address the generation gap and for businesses to gain more customers. Furthermore, to increase participation, SJA can give discount lunch coupons for those who go on the tour, which would help promote restaurants and SJA. This is an example of how SJA and businesses can work

together towards a common goal.

## **3. Gear programming to address the generation gaps in Sawtelle Japantown.**

### *Multi-Generational Gaps*

SJA should continue organizing events that attract and engage older and younger residents. SJA membership consists primarily of senior members with minimal participation from youth because they are not actively participating in SJA's meetings. Community leaders want younger generations to engage in the neighborhood by participating in activities and programs. By doing so, youth can return to Japanese American areas with the possibility of taking on leadership roles to help continue these organizations.

To achieve this goal of bridging multigenerational gaps, SJA should survey younger community members in the Japanese Institute of Sawtelle (JIS), churches, and temples. Afterward, SJA can better understand how to cater its programming that will engage younger generations. As Bryan Takeda previously addressed, Pasadena JCI works to directly ask younger community members on how to involve them in their activities.

Aside from a survey, SJA can also learn from and work with existing programs. For example, Kizuna is a nonprofit in the Los Angeles area that works with Japanese Americans across generations and with other nonprofits. They have a number of programs that target elementary school students to young adults. Kizuna offers several programs that can help SJA, including the Nikkei Community Internship, which places college students at local Japanese American nonprofits during the summer (Kizuna, 2013). Students are then paid \$2,000 to participate in

## The Trajectory of Japanese American Neighborhoods

the program and are given the opportunities to connect with local nonprofits and gain leadership experience (Kizuna, 2013). In return, SJA would gain additional assistance from a young adult and can learn how to cultivate relationships with younger community members.

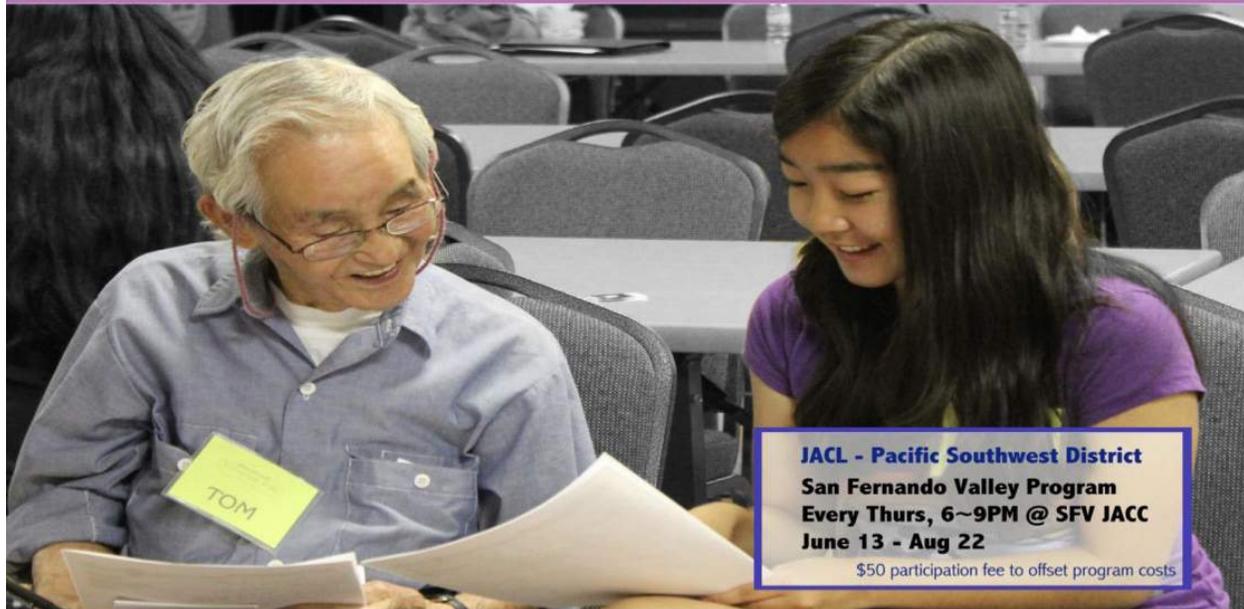
Additionally, SJA can create programs to bridge generations through an oral history project. The San Fernando Valley's Japanese American Citizens League has a Katarou oral history project:

*...a program designed to engage Nikkei youth (ages 15-21) and adults in the preservation of Japanese American history in the San Fernando Valley through the sharing of personal stories. Katarou...means 'let's share stories' in Japanese and this is the primary purpose — to tell our stories for our*

*communities across generation (Rafu Shimpō, 2012).*

SJA could try to create its own program or it could try to work with the San Fernando Valley's Japanese American Citizens League. This project will help youth learn from the older generation of Japanese Americans and bridge this generation gap.

SJA could also work with local college groups to bring their resources to Sawtelle. For example, Mitzi Kushida from the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Citizens League described how a UCLA student is coming to the San Fernando Valley to teach Taiko to children at the community center (personal communication, February 25, 2015). Since UCLA is very close to Sawtelle, SJA can ask Japanese American student organizations, such as UCLA's Kyodo



**JACL** Pacific Southwest District

**katarou HISTORIES**

San Fernando Valley  
**JACL**  
Civil Rights • Justice

San Fernando Valley  
JAPANESE AMERICAN  
COMMUNITY CENTER

**JACL - Pacific Southwest District**  
**San Fernando Valley Program**  
**Every Thurs, 6~9PM @ SFV JACC**  
**June 13 - Aug 22**  
\$50 participation fee to offset program costs

Discover & Become a Part of San Fernando Valley's Japanese American History!  
Registration forms now available online!

[www.jaclpsw.org](http://www.jaclpsw.org) | [programs@jaclpsw.org](mailto:programs@jaclpsw.org) | 213.626.4471

*Katarou Histories program flier*

Photo: Japanese Americans Citizens League San Fernando Valley Chapter



*Businesses along Sawtelle Blvd.*

Photo: Joyce Park

Taiko or Yukai Daiko, so that they can teach youth Japanese cultural values.

#### *Shin Issei and Japanese Americans*

To engage Shin Issei and Japanese Americans, SJA can develop several programs that range in logistics and time. The first is a walking tour that specifically engages Shin Issei by translating the tour into Japanese and help them understand Sawtelle's rich history. Some of the tour guides could also speak English and Japanese to help attendees understand. To recruit participants, SJA can distribute flyers that are written in English and Japanese to apartments and local businesses.

While it may take more effort, they can also develop programs that not only address the historic preservation of Sawtelle, but also cultural preservation. For example, SJA can develop a Go Club. Go is a board game that originated in East Asia. By starting a Go Club in Sawtelle Japantown, SJA can bring together the different generations of Japanese and Shin Issei who live

in Sawtelle Japantown. Randy Sakamoto and other SJA members applied and successfully received a grant from the American Go Foundation, which provides a basic classroom set and tournament funds for future events. With the grant, SJA can now work towards promoting the Sawtelle Japantown Go Club so that they can bridge the generation gap between the different generations of Japanese Americans and Shin Issei. Similar cultural programs also can help to connect Japanese Americans and Shin Issei, even when there are language barriers.

This section connects each finding to an applicable recommendation for SJA. These recommendations provide suggestions to address the historic and cultural preservation of Sawtelle, as well as the generation gaps of Shin Issei and generations of Japanese Americans. These recommendations can further SJA's efforts and the programming they already provide.

*The Trajectory of Japanese American Neighborhoods*



*SJA and Asian American Studies students*  
Photo: C. Aujean Lee

# CONCLUSION

This project sought to research and understand the history of Japanese areas and current issues that Japanese neighborhood experience through interviews with community leaders. Additionally, the report described SB307 and its aftermath to highlight one way that the three Japantowns in the 2000s worked to preserve the unique history of their neighborhoods. With Sawtelle Japantown’s official designation, the neighborhood has more to leverage to apply for grants and cultivate programming that attracts multiple generations to the neighborhood. However, Japanese areas that are less active have an uncertain future about how well they will be preserved. The recommendations for this project addressed the preservation of Japanese American history, generation gaps, and relationships between businesses and SJA. In addition to Sawtelle Japantown, Japanese areas or other ethnic neighborhoods can also adapt these recommendations.

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# APPENDICES

## *Appendix A: METHODOLOGY*

A total of 9 interviews were conducted in Little Tokyo, Pasadena, San Jose, and San Fernando Valley. These neighborhoods were identified as historic Japanese areas and some are designated Japantowns. Individuals were identified as those who were or are current community leaders and could speak about their experiences in their neighborhood. Most organizations were identified through internet searches, while others were recommended by other interviewees or class instructors. While some interviews were conducted in person, the majority was conducted on the phone or Skype. A total of 25 organizations were contacted for interviews. In the end, interviews were conducted with 5 organizations.

The following provides more detailed information about the key research questions, each neighborhood, and the interviewed organizations (see Table 1). This section also includes materials used during the interviews, including the consent form, interview guide and script, and interview questions. All but one interviewee consented to having their name used for the report. In developing the research questions and interview protocol, two mock interviews were done. These interviews help to understand the trajectory and challenges that Japanese neighborhoods experience in California and how they preserve the history and culture of its residents.

### **Key Research Questions**

The research questions targeted community leaders who are or were involved with Japanese neighborhoods. The following lists the key research questions. However, questions regarding California Senate Bill 307 were directed towards interviewees associated with Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, San Francisco's Japantown or San Jose's Japantown.

- How have things changed in the area?
- What issues does [the respective neighborhood] face today?
- How did SB 307 impact San Francisco's Japantown, San Jose's Japantown and Los Angeles' Little Tokyo?
- What do you want [the respective neighborhood]'s legacy to be?
- What advice would you give to Sawtelle and Sawtelle Japantown Association (SJA) in terms of preserving Japanese neighborhoods?

**Table 1. Interviewee Information and Affiliated Organizations**

NEIGHBORHOOD	INTERVIEWEE NAME	ORGANIZATION
Little Tokyo	Brian Kito	Little Tokyo Koban and Visitor's Center
Pasadena	Bryan Takeda	Pasadena Japanese Cultural Institute
San Jose	Community Member	No Affiliation
San Jose	Kiyomi Yamamoto	No Affiliation
San Francisco	Keith Kamisugi	San Francisco Japantown Foundation
San Fernando Valley	Nancy Oda	SFV Japanese American Community Center
San Fernando Valley	Mitzi Kushida	SFV Japanese American Citizens League
San Fernando Valley	Phil Shigekuni	SFV Japanese American Citizens League
San Fernando Valley	Nancy Takayama	SFV Japanese American Citizens League

*Note: Compiled by authors*

## **Case Studies**

Selected neighborhoods are located in California and are either a designated Japantown or are Japanese neighborhoods. However, the report focuses on areas in San Francisco, San Jose, and Los Angeles County. Of organizations contacted from a variety of neighborhoods, final interviewees lived in or worked in the San Fernando Valley, Little Tokyo, and Pasadena. These areas were historic Japanese neighborhoods and have experienced varying demographic shifts with increasing diversity. Japanese organizations are still active in these areas even with decreasing Japanese American populations, which help them serve as comparisons for Sawtelle. (See Table 1 for the full list of interviewees and organizations.)

### *San Francisco*

San Francisco's Japantown was established in the 1860s and most of these Japanese lived in Chinatown. After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, Japanese started moving into Western Addition, west of San Francisco, in addition to Southern California. Japanese-based churches and businesses started opening and helped to establish the Japanese community (War Relocation Authority, 1943). After World War II and internment, as previously described, Japanese Americans were able to recreate Japantown similar to how it was prior to the war.

### *San Jose*

San Jose's Japantown was established next to Chinatown and began to form in 1902. Many Japanese Americans were men who worked as seasonal farm labor (Japantown San Jose, 2015). As

with other areas, due to internment, Japanese businesses closed down. By 1947, community members returned to reestablish the Japantown (Japantown San Jose, 2015).

### *Little Tokyo*

Little Tokyo is one of the four Japantowns located in California. Established in 1886, there were many Nisei who thrived in the city. When the population of Little Tokyo started decreasing, Little Tokyo lost its social cohesiveness. The incarceration camp relocation made the population drop even more (Several, 1998). Little Tokyo Koban and Visitor's Center is the place where people go to get information on Little Tokyo and community safety needs (Little Tokyo Koban and Visitor's Center, 2011).

### *Pasadena*

Pasadena was established in the 1900s, where many Japanese American businesses were nurseries. After the 1950s, cultural institutions were devastated. The Presbyterian Church served as a place for Japanese to develop a sense of safety because during the war, it stores belongings for its members; additionally, the church housed people while being a job placement facility for returning Japanese (California Japantown, 2015).

### *San Fernando Valley*

Although the Los Angeles's San Fernando Valley never developed a Japantown, Japanese and Japanese Americans have a long history in the region. Issei immigrants settled in the Valley and worked as farm laborers, truck farmers, and flower growers beginning in the early 20th century. By the Great Depression, Japanese Americans established farmers associations as well as community institutions such as language schools and Buddhist congregations in Pacoima due to racially restrictive covenants elsewhere. After WWII, Japanese Americans returned to Pacoima and Sun Valley where they built new community centers and reactivated the pre-war institutions. Since the 1960s, the community experienced residential and labor market integration yet Pacoima remains a center of social and activity (deGuzman, 2014).

## **Appendix B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

### **Participant Information Sheet**

Historical Background Research for Japanese Neighborhoods in California  
University of California, Los Angeles

Jenny Huang, Joann Kweon, Joyce Park, and Tony Zhang are undergraduate students from the Asian American Studies Department at UCLA. We are currently conducting a research study on the background and history of Japantowns and Japanese neighborhoods, as part of our Asian American Studies class. We invite you to be a participant in this project. We have selected future interviewees through recommendations, online searches, or previous connections. You were selected as a possible participant because you have worked as a community leader in a community organization. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary and confidential.

#### **Why is this study being done?**

We are conducting interviews with community leaders who are familiar with and work in Japantowns and Japanese neighborhoods in California. The purpose of this research project is to collect background information and history about Japantowns and Japanese neighborhoods, as part of a larger class research project on Asian American enclaves and communities.

#### **What will happen if I take part in this research study?**

If you decide to volunteer to participate in this study, we will ask you to do the following:

- Discuss the history of the Japantown or Japanese neighborhood you work in and are familiar with. We would like to hear about your views on the community, its cultural activities, and its presence as a Japantown or Japanese neighborhood.
- With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded.
- Any information provided will be used only for research purposes to better understand how Japanese neighborhoods developed and became communities, especially its ongoing history and emerging ethnic institutions. If at any time you would not like to be recorded, you may let us know and we will make sure to stop recording.

#### **How long will I be in the research study?**

Interviews will take about 30-60 minutes.

**Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?**

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts. However, some of the questions may be personal or sensitive in nature to you. You have the right to refuse to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time.

**Are there any potential benefits if I participate?**

Our findings may provide information that could assist us in our research of Japantowns and Japanese neighborhoods, and in our class' research of Asian American enclaves, communities, and community institutions. As a class, we will use our research to assist the Sawtelle Japantown Association in its efforts to designate Sawtelle as an official Japantown and to preserve its Japanese history and culture.

**Will information about me and/or my participation be kept confidential?**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential upon request. Recordings will not be disclosed at any time and will be kept in a password sensitive computer.

**What are my rights if I take part in this study?**

You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

**Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?**

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, please contact:

Jenny Huang, Joann Kweon, Joyce Park, and Tony Zhang  
Undergraduate Students  
Department of Asian American Studies

Paul Ong, Ph.D., Faculty Sponsor  
Professor, UCLA Asian American Studies Department

## ***Interview Guide***

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to thank you for taking time to participate in this interview. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a student researcher at UCLA. We are conducting interviews about Japantowns and Japanese neighborhoods and your personal experiences in [neighborhood]. Please let me know if you have any questions as we go through the interview.

First, we will be going over the consent form.

1. (Give the information sheet) This form explains the purpose of the research, which, in a nutshell, is to study the Japantowns and Japanese neighborhoods in California.
2. I will also be asking you questions about your personal experiences and perspective working in the Japanese communities.
3. The interview should last about 30-60 minutes.
4. If at any point during the interview, you feel uncomfortable or you do not feel like not answering a question that is completely fine. You do not have to answer all of the questions and may end the interview at any time without any consequences.
5. This research project is voluntary and the information that you provide will be confidential upon request.
6. Would it be okay to record you during the interview? This recording will be for our notes purpose but will not be distributed publicly in any way.
  - a. (Yes) Please feel free to tell me to stop the recording at any time during the interview.
  - b. (No) Reiterate that it's only for research purposes and ask again; if no, take detailed handwritten notes.
7. Would it be okay to take handwritten notes during the interview? This will also be for reference but will not be distributed publicly in any way.
8. In the Participant information sheet, it includes information on who you may contact if you have any questions about the study after we are done.

- a. Do I have your consent to participate? (And do you consent with being recorded?)
- b. [If yes, proceed with interview.]
- c. Now, we are ready to start the interview. A few logistics before we get started: Although we'll be audio-recording the conversation, I want to assure you that we will not share the recording with anyone outside of our group. We will connect information to you and your organization. If you do not want your name to be connected, please let us know. If at any point in time you would like me to stop recording the interview, please let me know and I will do so.
- d. Do you have any questions before we begin?
- e. [Start recorder. Reminder: take notes on key responses and write down the time when key quotes were stated by interviewee to go back to the recording later. Key concepts are highlighted.]

**Personal Experience (Ask prior if they grew up in a Japantown/area and if yes, ask these questions)**

1. Did you grow up in [X]? (If no, what was your first experience in [X]?)
  - a. What cultural or historic sites serve as “home spaces” for residents in [X]?
  - b. In your perspective, how have things changed in the area? Since your childhood or first experience in [X]?
2. How did you become involved in the [Name of their organization]?
  - a. How has your view of the Japanese community changed since you started becoming more involved in the organization?

**Defining Japanese Neighborhoods**

3. What is your definition of a Japanese neighborhood?
4. What issues do you believe [X] faces today?
5. Which cultural institutions play large roles in defining [X] as a Japanese neighborhood?

## **Your Organization**

6. What role does your organization play in the community?
7. What are [your org's] short term and long-term goals?
8. Where does your organization receive its funding from?
9. How does your organization communicate and work with other organizations, city leaders, and/or community members?

## **SB 307 [Ask only people from three major Japantowns]**

(California Japantown Preservation Pilot Project, requires State Librarian to provide \$450,000 grant to the Cities of Los Angeles, San Jose and San Francisco to promote the preservation of these important neighborhoods.)

10. How did SB 307 impact your community?
11. Was your organization involved in the efforts to pass SB 307?
12. What were you able to accomplish from SB 307 funding?
13. How did SB 307 funding contribute to preservation efforts?

## **Legacy**

14. In order to continue as a Japanese neighborhood, what does [X] need? (Such as more funding, a particular institution or org, a residing JA population, or official designation)
  - a. What does [X] have now that it did not have before?
15. What needs to be protected in [X neighborhood]? (Could be protecting against incoming development etc)
  - a. What is being done to protect it/them?
16. What do you want [X neighborhood]'s legacy to be?

### **Advice for Sawtelle**

17. Based on your experience, what advice would you give to Sawtelle and SJA in terms of preserving Japanese neighborhoods?

### **Conclusion**

18. Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule for this interview!

a. Is there anything else you would like to add?

b. Are there any additional questions you have for us?

19. Is there anyone else that you could recommend to us to help further our research?

### **Post-Interview Notes**

Date:

Time:

Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Affiliation:

Age:

Ethnicity:

Notes:

How did the interview go? What was unique about this interview?

Any challenges?

Improvements for next time?

## ***Appendix C: SAWTELLE NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT***

Sawtelle is a popular city in West Los Angeles due to its location near University of California, Los Angeles. Despite its attractions with Asian fusion restaurants and cafes, Sawtelle has a rich Japanese American history. Although the Sawtelle neighborhood is relatively small, Asian Americans comprise a third of the neighborhood. Sawtelle is also becoming more commercialized and has a younger population. Sawtelle is 75% renter occupied and has mostly professional and food service jobs.

### **Introduction**

The Sawtelle Japantown Association (SJA) defines Sawtelle with the following boundaries: Santa Monica Boulevard to the north, Barrington to the west, Pico Boulevard to the south, and Sepulveda to the east (see Figure 1). Because there are no census tracts that match these boundaries, this analysis uses census tract 2677 (see Figure 2). However, the limitation to using this tract is that it does not cover the northern part of Sawtelle towards Santa Monica. Nevertheless, it includes the blocks that include the majority of businesses. The report also uses three sources of data: American Community Survey, Decennial Census, and the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD). Decennial Census data was used primarily for general population trends and ACS was used to gather more specific information (e.g. education and tenure). LEHD provides a profile of Sawtelle's workers for 2011.

### **Background**

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 halted the immigration of Chinese laborers, resulting in the immigration of Japanese laborers by the early 20th century (Kanazawa, 2005). However, due to the racially restrictive covenants in Westwood, Bel Air, and Brentwood, Japanese Americans in the area settled in Sawtelle (Fujimoto, 2007). Sawtelle was also an ideal area to start farming due to its fertile, rich soil and its mild climate (Horn, 2013). Issei started farming and gardening work in Sawtelle (Tsuchida, 1984). Before WWII, Sawtelle used to be a tight-knit community of Issei families where they supported one another (Fujimoto, 2007). After WWII, Sawtelle did not have the same Japanese American community. Starting from the 1950s, Sawtelle experienced gentrification—a majority of the original businesses disappeared and expensive, modern housing took over older residences (Horn, 2013).

Sawtelle has transformed immensely when compared to its pre-WWII neighborhood. It has a combination of Japanese businesses (i.e. ramen shops, coffee shops, Japanese grocery stores, and nurseries) and non-Japanese businesses (Fujimoto, 2007). The rising land values in the area have led to demolition, sale, and replacement of smaller shops and homes in Sawtelle (Horn, 2013). Because the neighborhood is directly next to the freeway, it has heavy traffic. Many businesses moved elsewhere or went out of business because of the declining presence of both Japanese and non-Japanese customers; therefore, there are only a few Japanese American family-owned businesses left in Sawtelle (Fujimoto, 2007).

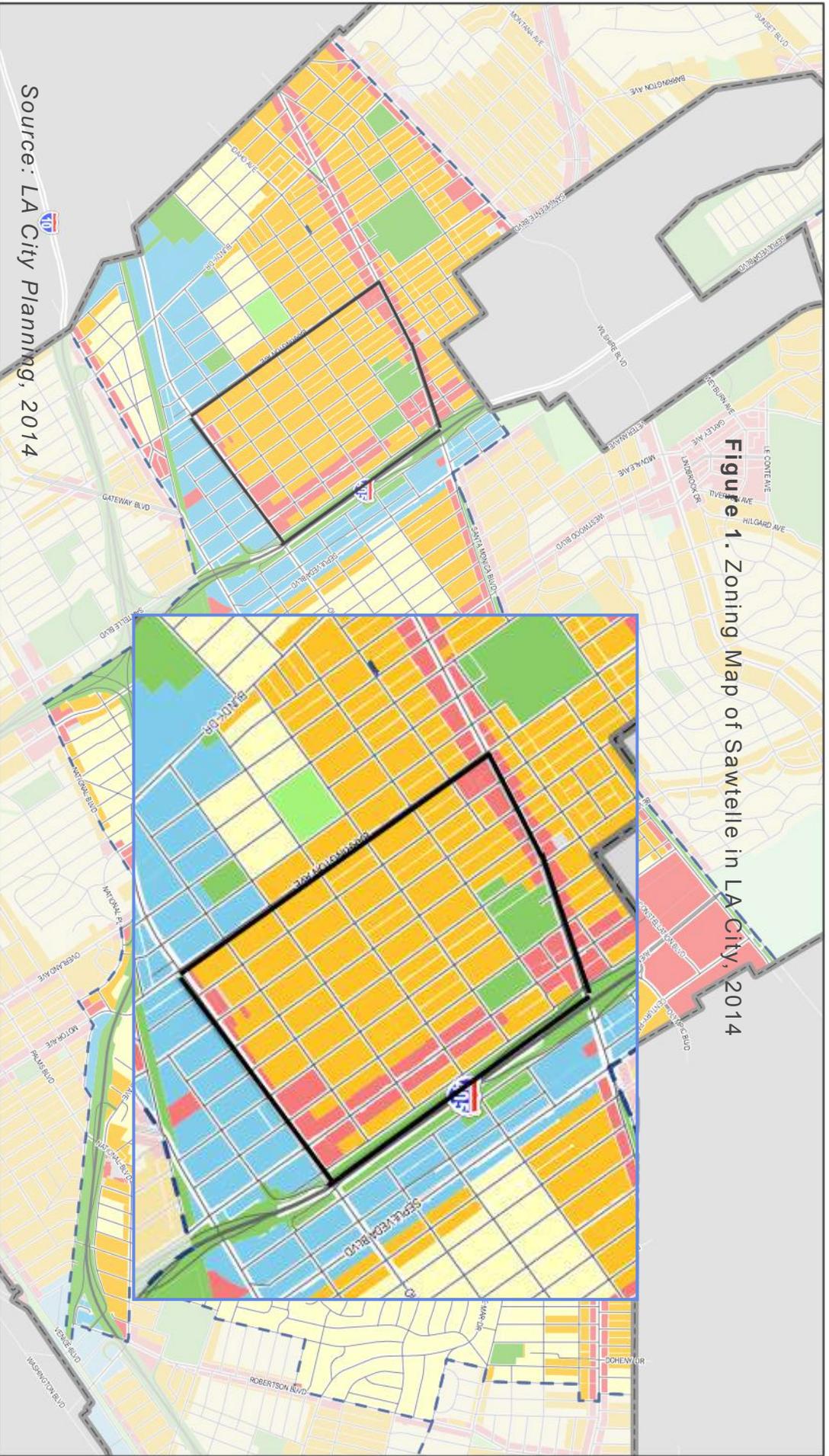


Figure 1. Zoning Map of Sawtelle in LA City, 2014

# Generalized Zoning

## West Los Angeles Community Plan Area

- Agricultural: Suburban
- Single Family Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Commercial
- Manufacturing
- Parking
- Open Space
- Public Facilities
- City Boundary
- Community Plan Boundary

- Agricultural: Suburban**
- A-1 (S)
- Single Family Residential**
- RS-1, RS-1.5, RS-2, RS-3
- Multiple Family Residential**
- ML-1, ML-2, ML-3, ML-4, ML-5, ML-6, ML-7, ML-8, ML-9, ML-10, ML-11, ML-12, ML-13, ML-14, ML-15, ML-16, ML-17, ML-18, ML-19, ML-20, ML-21, ML-22, ML-23, ML-24, ML-25, ML-26, ML-27, ML-28, ML-29, ML-30, ML-31, ML-32, ML-33, ML-34, ML-35, ML-36, ML-37, ML-38, ML-39, ML-40, ML-41, ML-42, ML-43, ML-44, ML-45, ML-46, ML-47, ML-48, ML-49, ML-50, ML-51, ML-52, ML-53, ML-54, ML-55, ML-56, ML-57, ML-58, ML-59, ML-60, ML-61, ML-62, ML-63, ML-64, ML-65, ML-66, ML-67, ML-68, ML-69, ML-70, ML-71, ML-72, ML-73, ML-74, ML-75, ML-76, ML-77, ML-78, ML-79, ML-80, ML-81, ML-82, ML-83, ML-84, ML-85, ML-86, ML-87, ML-88, ML-89, ML-90, ML-91, ML-92, ML-93, ML-94, ML-95, ML-96, ML-97, ML-98, ML-99, ML-100
- Commercial**
- C-1, C-1.5, C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, C-6, C-7, C-8, C-9, C-10, C-11, C-12, C-13, C-14, C-15, C-16, C-17, C-18, C-19, C-20, C-21, C-22, C-23, C-24, C-25, C-26, C-27, C-28, C-29, C-30, C-31, C-32, C-33, C-34, C-35, C-36, C-37, C-38, C-39, C-40, C-41, C-42, C-43, C-44, C-45, C-46, C-47, C-48, C-49, C-50, C-51, C-52, C-53, C-54, C-55, C-56, C-57, C-58, C-59, C-60, C-61, C-62, C-63, C-64, C-65, C-66, C-67, C-68, C-69, C-70, C-71, C-72, C-73, C-74, C-75, C-76, C-77, C-78, C-79, C-80, C-81, C-82, C-83, C-84, C-85, C-86, C-87, C-88, C-89, C-90, C-91, C-92, C-93, C-94, C-95, C-96, C-97, C-98, C-99, C-100
- Manufacturing**
- M-1, M-2, M-3, M-4, M-5, M-6, M-7, M-8, M-9, M-10, M-11, M-12, M-13, M-14, M-15, M-16, M-17, M-18, M-19, M-20, M-21, M-22, M-23, M-24, M-25, M-26, M-27, M-28, M-29, M-30, M-31, M-32, M-33, M-34, M-35, M-36, M-37, M-38, M-39, M-40, M-41, M-42, M-43, M-44, M-45, M-46, M-47, M-48, M-49, M-50, M-51, M-52, M-53, M-54, M-55, M-56, M-57, M-58, M-59, M-60, M-61, M-62, M-63, M-64, M-65, M-66, M-67, M-68, M-69, M-70, M-71, M-72, M-73, M-74, M-75, M-76, M-77, M-78, M-79, M-80, M-81, M-82, M-83, M-84, M-85, M-86, M-87, M-88, M-89, M-90, M-91, M-92, M-93, M-94, M-95, M-96, M-97, M-98, M-99, M-100
- Parking**
- P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4, P-5, P-6, P-7, P-8, P-9, P-10, P-11, P-12, P-13, P-14, P-15, P-16, P-17, P-18, P-19, P-20, P-21, P-22, P-23, P-24, P-25, P-26, P-27, P-28, P-29, P-30, P-31, P-32, P-33, P-34, P-35, P-36, P-37, P-38, P-39, P-40, P-41, P-42, P-43, P-44, P-45, P-46, P-47, P-48, P-49, P-50, P-51, P-52, P-53, P-54, P-55, P-56, P-57, P-58, P-59, P-60, P-61, P-62, P-63, P-64, P-65, P-66, P-67, P-68, P-69, P-70, P-71, P-72, P-73, P-74, P-75, P-76, P-77, P-78, P-79, P-80, P-81, P-82, P-83, P-84, P-85, P-86, P-87, P-88, P-89, P-90, P-91, P-92, P-93, P-94, P-95, P-96, P-97, P-98, P-99, P-100
- Open Space**
- OS-1, OS-2, OS-3, OS-4, OS-5, OS-6, OS-7, OS-8, OS-9, OS-10, OS-11, OS-12, OS-13, OS-14, OS-15, OS-16, OS-17, OS-18, OS-19, OS-20, OS-21, OS-22, OS-23, OS-24, OS-25, OS-26, OS-27, OS-28, OS-29, OS-30, OS-31, OS-32, OS-33, OS-34, OS-35, OS-36, OS-37, OS-38, OS-39, OS-40, OS-41, OS-42, OS-43, OS-44, OS-45, OS-46, OS-47, OS-48, OS-49, OS-50, OS-51, OS-52, OS-53, OS-54, OS-55, OS-56, OS-57, OS-58, OS-59, OS-60, OS-61, OS-62, OS-63, OS-64, OS-65, OS-66, OS-67, OS-68, OS-69, OS-70, OS-71, OS-72, OS-73, OS-74, OS-75, OS-76, OS-77, OS-78, OS-79, OS-80, OS-81, OS-82, OS-83, OS-84, OS-85, OS-86, OS-87, OS-88, OS-89, OS-90, OS-91, OS-92, OS-93, OS-94, OS-95, OS-96, OS-97, OS-98, OS-99, OS-100
- Public Facilities**
- PF-1, PF-2, PF-3, PF-4, PF-5, PF-6, PF-7, PF-8, PF-9, PF-10, PF-11, PF-12, PF-13, PF-14, PF-15, PF-16, PF-17, PF-18, PF-19, PF-20, PF-21, PF-22, PF-23, PF-24, PF-25, PF-26, PF-27, PF-28, PF-29, PF-30, PF-31, PF-32, PF-33, PF-34, PF-35, PF-36, PF-37, PF-38, PF-39, PF-40, PF-41, PF-42, PF-43, PF-44, PF-45, PF-46, PF-47, PF-48, PF-49, PF-50, PF-51, PF-52, PF-53, PF-54, PF-55, PF-56, PF-57, PF-58, PF-59, PF-60, PF-61, PF-62, PF-63, PF-64, PF-65, PF-66, PF-67, PF-68, PF-69, PF-70, PF-71, PF-72, PF-73, PF-74, PF-75, PF-76, PF-77, PF-78, PF-79, PF-80, PF-81, PF-82, PF-83, PF-84, PF-85, PF-86, PF-87, PF-88, PF-89, PF-90, PF-91, PF-92, PF-93, PF-94, PF-95, PF-96, PF-97, PF-98, PF-99, PF-100



**Figure 2. LEHD census tract 2677 map, 2011**



Source: LEHD, 2011

### **Population Trends**

Sawtelle has experienced a growth in population. In 1990, there were 1,566 residents living in Sawtelle, and in 2000, there were 1,591 reported residents. From 2000 to 2010, there was an 88% population increase. In 2010, there were 2,990 reported residents living in Sawtelle.

Among residents, non-Hispanic Whites and Asians make up most of the population (see Table 2). Latinos are the third largest population in Sawtelle, making up about 22%. The lowest percentage is the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander group, with only 0.2%. Among Asian American ethnic groups, Japanese Americans are the largest group and comprise almost 43% of the Asian American population (see Figure 3). The majority of Sawtelle is native born, or about 59%. Out of the foreign born, 59% are US citizens.

The male to female ratio is nearly 1:1. The majority of residents living in Sawtelle are mostly middle-aged men and women from 25 to 39 years of age (see Figure 4).

Sawtelle is also comprised of non-family, renter occupied households. Among residents, 24% are owner occupied and 76% are renter occupied (see Table 3). Out of the total 1,634 total households, about 51% are non-family households. Non-family households have a higher renter occupied percentage (54%) and the family household had a higher owner occupied percentage (60%). The higher percentage of rent-occupied, non-family households may be due to UCLA students and the close distance to UCLA.

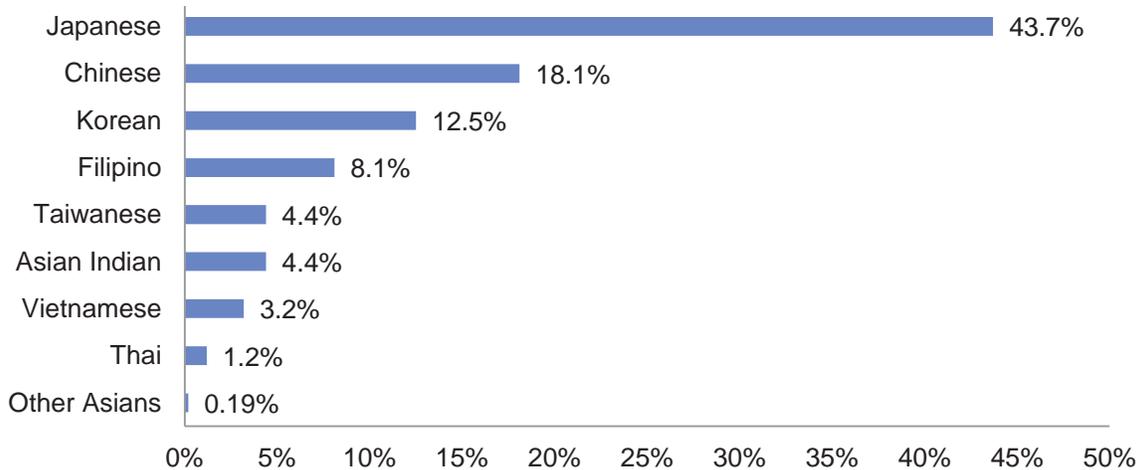
**Table 2. Racial groups, Census Tract 2677, 2010**

Race	Number	Percentage
Non-Hispanic White	1,503	50%
Asian Alone	1,007	34%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	558	19%
Two or more races	186	6%
Black or African American Alone	78	3%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	37	1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	6	0.2%

Source: 2010 Census, Table QTP3 and QTP6

Note: The percentages do not add to 100 because Latinos are of any race and overlap with other categories.

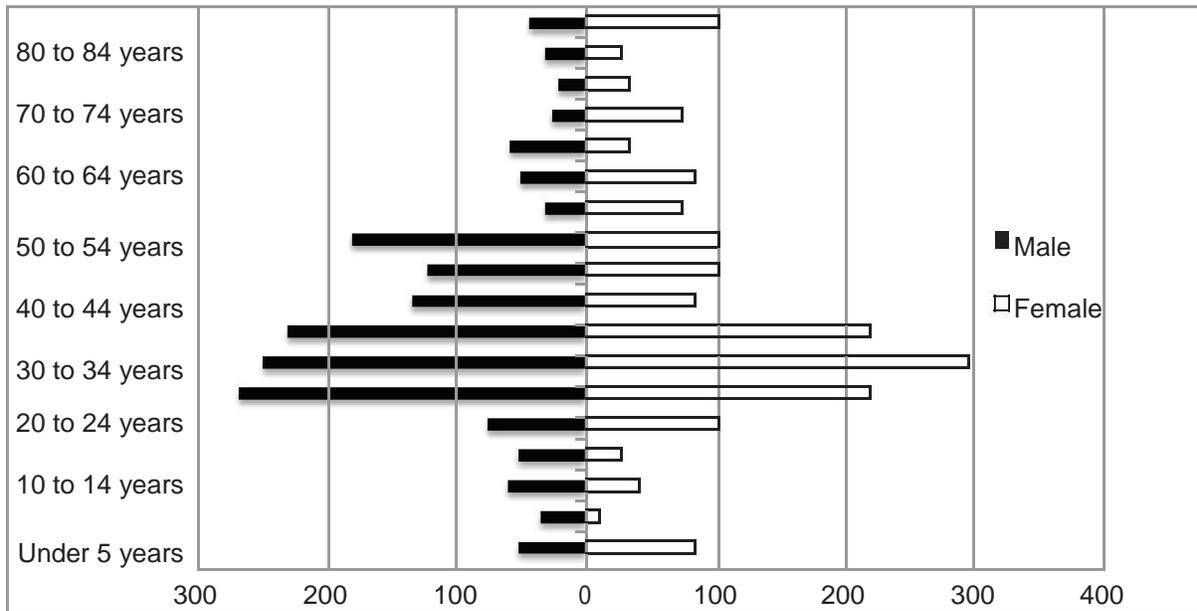
**Figure 3. Asian ethnic groups in Census Tract 2677, 2010**



Source: 2010 Census, Table QTP8

Note: Other Asians” include Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indonesian, Malaysian, Laotian and Cambodian.

**Figure 4. Age of Residents, Census Tract 2677, 2009-2013**



Source: ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2009-2013, Table S0101

**Table 3. Tenure, Census Tract 2677, 2009-2013**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	1,634	
<b>Owner occupied</b>	387	24%
Family Household	231	60%
Non-family Household	156	40%
<b>Renter occupied</b>	1,247	76%
Family Household	576	46%
Non-family Household	671	54%

Source: ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2009-2013, Table B25003 and Table S0101

The median household income in Sawtelle is approximately \$69,545 (see Table 4). Sawtelle is mainly made up of middle class, making up almost 37.5% of the population. About 36.3% of the population fall under the upper class and only 26.2% make up the lower class (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Median household incomes, Census Tract 2677, 2009-2013**

Income	Numbers	Percent
<b>Per capita income (dollars)</b>	44,299	
<b>Less than \$25,000 to \$34,999</b>	428	26%
<b>\$35,000 to \$99,999</b>	613	38%
<b>\$100,000 or more</b>	593	36%

Source: ACS 5 Year Estimate, 2009-2013, Table DP03

The ratio of family to nonfamily households is almost 1:1 (see Table 5). Nearly half of family households are married or have children under 18 years of age. Among families, nearly 71% are married households. The rest of the households (51%) are nonfamily households that consist of householders living alone, who make up 67%, and 65 years and over households, who make up about 19%.

**Table 5. Household type, Census Tract 2677, 2010**

Households by Type	Percent
<b>Family Households</b>	49%
<b>Married Family Household</b>	71%
<b>Single Male Headed Household</b>	15%
<b>Single Female Headed Household</b>	14%
<b>Nonfamily Households</b>	51%
<b>Householder living alone</b>	67%
<b>65 years and over</b>	19%

Source: ACS 5 Year Estimate, 2010, Table DP02

Overall, Sawtelle residents are fairly well educated. About 61% of the Sawtelle residents who are 25 years and older have a bachelor's degree or higher, while only 15% of Sawtelle residents have less than a high school diploma (see Table 6).

**Table 6. Educational attainment, Census Tract 2677, 2009-2013**

Residents	%	Workers	%
Less than high school	15%	Less than high school	12%
High school or equivalent	8%	High school or equivalent	11%
Some college or Associate's Degree	16%	Some college or Associate's Degree	20%
Bachelor's Degree or advanced degree	61%	Bachelor's Degree or advanced degree	33%
		Educational attainment not available	25%

Source: ACS 5 Year Estimate, 2009-2013, Table S1501 and LEHD, 2011

Note: Only people 15 years or older are included.

### Worker Socioeconomic Characteristics

The following includes information about people who work in the neighborhood. Because of LEHD's geographic tools, we compare census tract 2677 to three blocks on Sawtelle Boulevard north of Olympic Boulevard, which is the commercial heart of the Sawtelle neighborhood (see Figure 5).

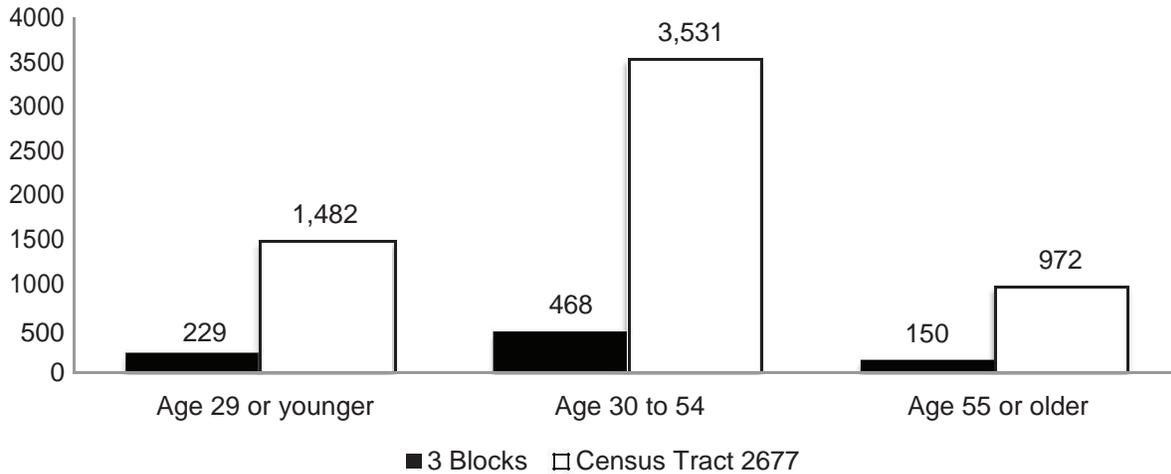
**Figure 5. LEHD census tract 2677 map and 3 blocks, Sawtelle 2011**



Source: LEHD, 2011

In the tract, there are about 5,985 jobs. The ratio of male to female workers in Sawtelle during 2011 was approximately 1:1. Sawtelle is mostly a middle-aged working class (59%) (see Figure 6). Those who are younger than 29 years of age make up only 25% of the working population and those who are older than 55 years or older make up about 16%.

**Figure 6. Jobs by Worker Age, Census Tract 2677 and 3 Blocks, 2013**



Source: LEHD, 2011

The three blocks north of Olympic is where Sawtelle is very congested and mostly consists of Japanese or Asian businesses. There are 847 jobs in this area, and similar to the rest of the census tract, the three blocks are made up of mostly middle-aged workers, or 55%. Those younger than 29 years old are at 27% and those older than 55 years old are at 18%.

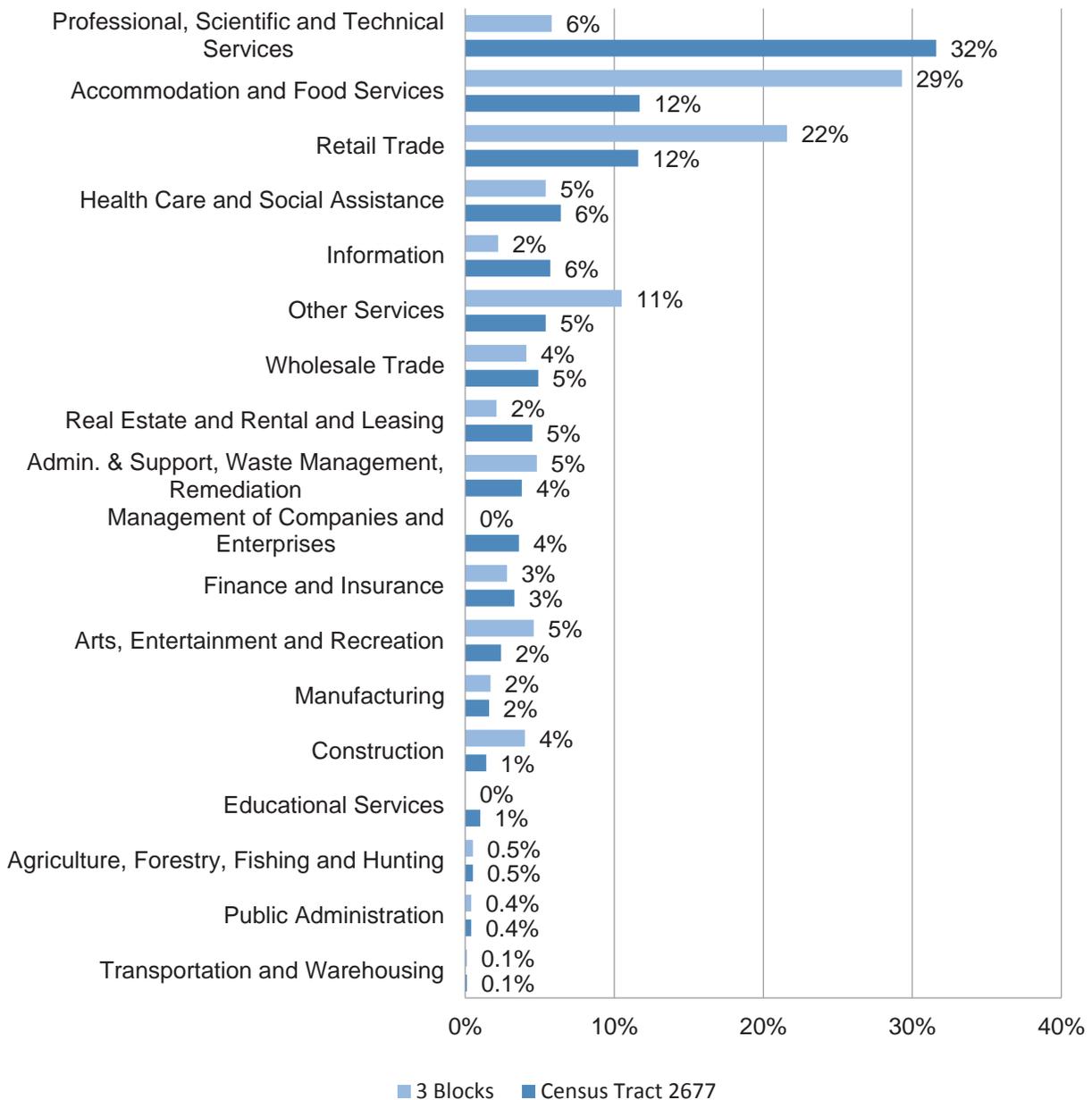
According to LEHD, 54% of the workers who work in the census tract earn more than \$3,333 per month, 31% make up to \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month and the rest of 15% make \$1,250 or less.

**Table 7. Jobs by Worker Race, Census Tract 2677 and 3 Blocks, 2011**

Race	Census Tract Count	Census Tract %	3 Block Count	3 Block %
<b>White Alone</b>	4297	72%	513	61%
<b>Asian Alone</b>	1073	18%	267	32%
<b>Black or African American Alone</b>	414	7%	38	5%
<b>Two or More Race Groups</b>	143	2%	23	3%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native Alone</b>	44	1%	5	1%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone</b>	14	0.2%	1	0.1%

Source: LEHD, 2011

**Figure 7. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector, Census Tract 2677 and 3 Blocks, 2011**



Source: LEHD, 2011

The workers in the tract are also relatively well educated. The majority of the workers have attained at least some college or Associate’s degree or higher and only about 23% have either a high school degree or lower (see Table 6).

In 2011, Asian Americans and Whites comprised the majority of jobs (see Table 7). As with the tract demographics for residents, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander groups comprised the lowest percentage among workers. The census tract and 3 block area had similar demographics,

except that the block had a higher percentage of Asian American workers than Whites.

In census tract 2677, the largest sector is professional, scientific and technical services, which comprises 32% of all jobs. The second highest job is accommodation and food services with about 12%; however, in the three blocks, the highest jobs are accommodation and food services at about 29% and second highest jobs are retail trade at about 22% (see Figure 7). There are more accommodation and food services and retail trade jobs in the three blocks due to the very high commercialism in this area, which is why this part of Sawtelle is very congested. Transportation and Warehousing has the fewest jobs (see Figure 7).





*Japanese Institute of Sawtelle mural*  
Photo: C. Aujean Lee