

WHAT IS TAKACHIZU?

The Japanese words Takara ("Treasure") and Chizu ("Map") join to form "Takachizu" ("treasure map"). Takachizu was a temporary community "show & tell" gathering space designed to identify and reflect on that which is most valuable, celebrated, and most in need of protection in Little Tokyo.

Over the last year, we conducted dozens of workshops with residents, workers, shoppers, and visitors to Little Tokyo. Participants brought in "treasures" that represented Little Tokyo's values to them. These treasures were shared in a group setting, documented, and then added to a temporary exhibition and online archive.

The gathered treasures will help give guidance and focus to a multiyear planning initiative of Little Tokyo Service Center and Sustainable Little Tokyo.

This zine showcases treasures that relate to First Street North, a critical location to the future of Little Tokyo.

Visit the full archive at <u>TAKACHIZU.ORG</u>





Takachizu was developed and produced by artist Rosten Woo with Maya Santos and design by Tiffanie Tran and Tom Kracauer.

Takachizu, is a project of Sustainable Little Tokyo initiated by +LAB, LTSC's creative community development strategy utilizing collaboration and experimentation to advance Little Tokyo's power over its future.

WHAT IS FIRST STREET NORTH?

The community of Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles faces a looming threat to its future sustainability. The City of Los Angeles currently plans to allow development on one of its properties (commonly referred to as "First Street North") that is situated next to the historic commercial heart of Little Tokyo. In the wrong hands, development could fundamentally transform the area with irreversible impacts on the neighborhood.

#MyFSN is a Little Tokyo communitydriven campaign to reverse a history of displacement and assert community control over First Street North.

The First Street North property that the City plans to offer developers was once part of Little Tokyo. It sits immediately north of the Little Tokyo Historic District. Any development on the First Street North block should enhance and sustain Little Tokyo's vibrant culture and economy.

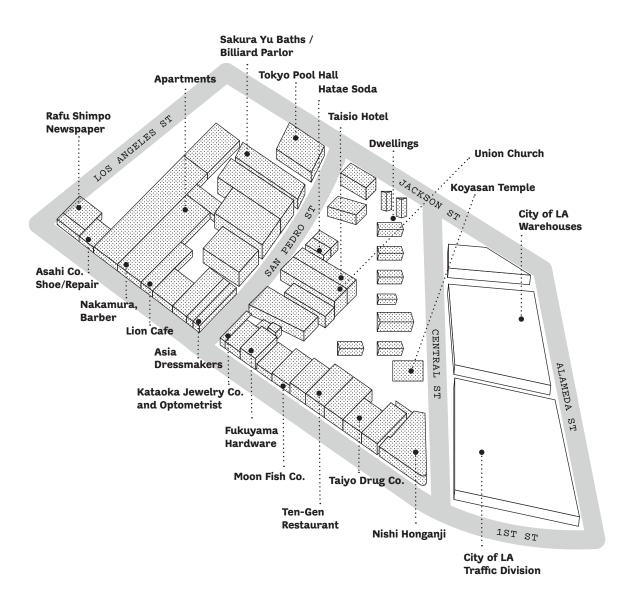
The Little Tokyo community has formulated a plan for First Street North and is currently seeking authority from the City to develop the site. Please support our campaign to claim First Street North so that Little Tokyo will be a thriving cultural treasure for years to come.



Do you have a story to tell about this block? Share it with us at #MyFSN.



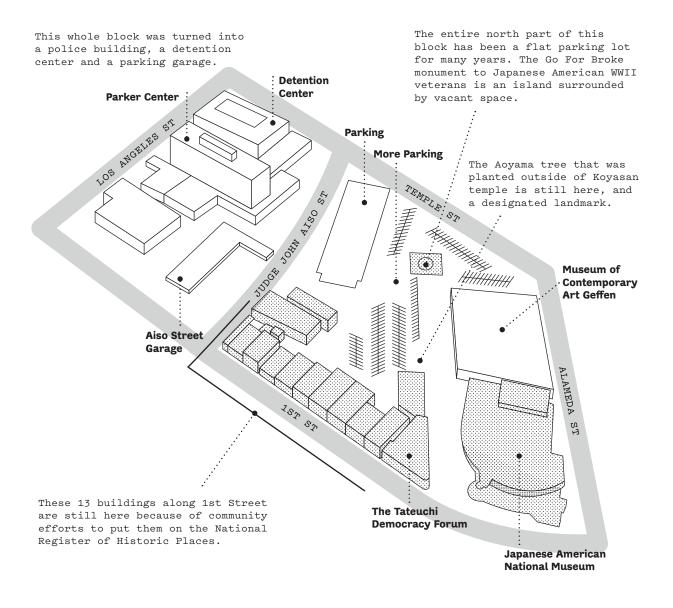
Before WWII incarceration, San Pedro and 1st was the heart of Little Tokyo and this block was packed with community businesses, residents and cultural institutions.



= Buildings connected to Little Tokyo

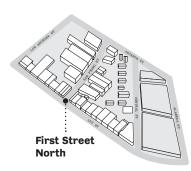
This map compiled from the Rafu Shimpo's maps of Little Tokyo in 1910 and 1940 (see page 10)

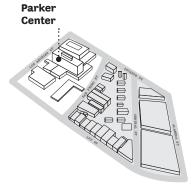
Today, most of this area has been taken.

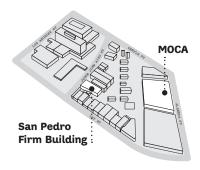


Now, there's a chance for the community to control this area again!

A FIRST STREET NORTH TIMELINE







1940

First Street North is the heart of a thriving Little Tokyo community. It housed many small mom-and-pop businesses and cultural organizations serving the Japanese-American comamunity. 75% of the 35,000 Japanese Americans living in Los Angeles lived within 3 miles of this intersection.

1941

Japanese internment during WWII changes Little Tokyo forever, with only 1/3 of its community remaining after the war. The City of LA acquires significant parcels of Little Tokyo during this time.

1948-1952

In 1948, the City earmarks these blocks as part of a Civic Center expansion plan and an early form of urban renewal. The site is cleared of all existing buildings - many of which would be considered historic if still standing. The property is remade into a single superblock, with Parker Center's construction beginning in 1952, demolishing housing for nearly 1,000 people and one-fourth of the district's commercial frontage.

1983

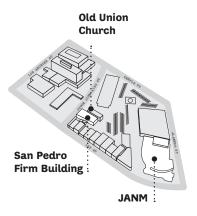
MOCA opens a "temporary" space on 1st Street while their Grand Avenue facility was being planned and under construction. Three years later, MOCA's ground lease is extended to 2038.

1985

The City decides to expand City Hall and put out a Request for Proposal to develop First Street North for a mixed use development which would include city hall office towers, shops, and housing. Three years later, Mayor Riordan decides it was too expensive to build more city hall space so he squashes the whole FSN plan. Little Tokyo Service Center wins the right to renovate the San Pedro Firm Building so that project was taken out of the RFP proposal plans.

1988

Little Tokyo is designated as a National Historic District after businesses on the north side of First Street are threatened by the city's master plan to expand the Civic Center.



1990

Little Tokyo Service Center completes the renovation of the Firm Bulding in 1990 which converts the mixed-use building into 42 units of affordable housing.

1992

The Japanese American National Museum is built in the former Nishi Hongwanji Temple at First Street and Central Avenue.

1994

The Northridge Earthquake results in massive damage to the Old Union Church but also allows for the use of FEMA funds to restore the building and prepare it for future uses. East West Players and LA Artcore Center are invited by Little Toyo Service Center and its partner Visual Communications to occupy the building which is renamed the Union Center for the Arts.



2005

Parker Center is slated for demolition for unsafe conditions after years of decay and the police headquarters are moved out.

Metro jail and replacement police headquarters are proposed for the corner of First and Alameda Streets. Community protests the project.

2009

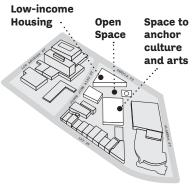
Little Tokyo/Arts District Metro Gold Line Station opens November 15. Anytime a major line of public transportation enters a neighborhood, development interests spike.

2013

Over 200 members of the community come together to plan for the future of the three remaining publicly owned parcels in Little Tokyo.

2014

Construction of the Regional Connector scheduled to beginwill be the busiest traffic hub in Los Angeles outside of Union Station.



2016

MYFSN projects begin to raise awareness of the possibilities.

The future the community is fighting for, as envisioned through SLT, would include low-income housing, parking for businesses, open space, and development to anchor the arts and culture institutions on the block. Treasure #005

HIROSHIMA/VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS



This treasure added by Rosten Woo

"Little Tokyo through and through: Pioneering fusion group Hiroshima (formed in Little Tokyo in 1974) is seen here performing in stills from Duane Kubo's 1976 film "Cruisin' J-Town." This film and many others are preserved, screened, and distributed by Visual Communications, the first non-profit organization in the nation dedicated to the honest and accurate portrayals of the Asian Pacific American peoples, communities, and heritage through the media arts, founded in 1970!"

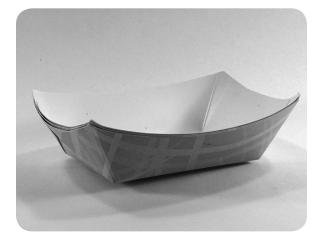
First Street North is already home to some of the most important institutions in Little Tokyo, organizations that have national and global reach.

FRE SI RES

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES FIND FIRST STREET TREASURES COLLECTED BY TAKACHIZU

FOOD BOATS FROM TUESDAY NIGHT CAFE

DAVID HENRY HWANG THEATER



This treasure added by Sophie Wang

"I brought these paper boats from Tuesday Night Cafe(TNC). It's a performing arts series that happens outside Union Arts, where East West Players and Visual Communications are housed. TNC was really my first introduction to Little Tokyo at all when I was still going to school out in Claremont. I used to come out for meetings there when I was a senior and we'd meet weekly for meetings or to stage manage or volunteer and they'd feed us and the folks who would feed us would come from Park's Finest, the Filipino bbg restaurant. They would donate all the food. I'm Chinese American, they make Filipino food, Little Tokyo has Japanese roots, and so does TNC so it's really a representation of how Little Tokyo can bring folks together and how food can be representative of that."



This treasure added by Alison De La Cruz Photo by Abraham Ferrer/ Visual Communications Photographic Archive

"The David Henry Hwang Theatre is a treasure in Little Tokyo for many reasons. It is a home to East West Plavers. the oldest theatre of color in the United States; it is named after Tony-Award winning playwright and LA native David Henry Hwang; and has been home to multiple productions, film festivals and special events of note. The DHH Theatre means alot to me because it was the first place I saw a Stephen Sondheim musical "Pacific Overatures" in person or even got to meet Sir Tim Rice when he stopped by East West Players' production of "Chess" and in the Spring of 2000 my first solo theatre show "Sungka" was produced there by the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center's Fresh Track Series. This photo means a lot too because it was the last time that Asian American activist (and treasure) Grace Lee Boggs was visiting LA and Scott Kurashige organized a panel and opportunity for the community to see her."

MAPS OF LITTLE TOKYO, 1940



In 1940, Little Tokyo's heart was at 1st and San Pedro. 75% of the 35,000 Japanese Americans living in Los Angeles lived within 3 miles of this intersection.



THE RAFU SHIMPO



This treasure added by Gwen Muranaka

Much of Little Tokyo has been taken through acts like City condemnation through Urban Renewal and Federal Incarceration in WWII. "The Rafu Shimpo began publishing in 1903. In this image we see the final edition published by Togo Tanaka before he was sent to Manzanar. The second page was left blank. Publication resumed in 1946 and continues to this day."

PICTURE OF GRANDPARENTS, NAGIISA & KAZUKO MIZUSHIMA IN GRANDFATHER'S DENTAL OFFICE

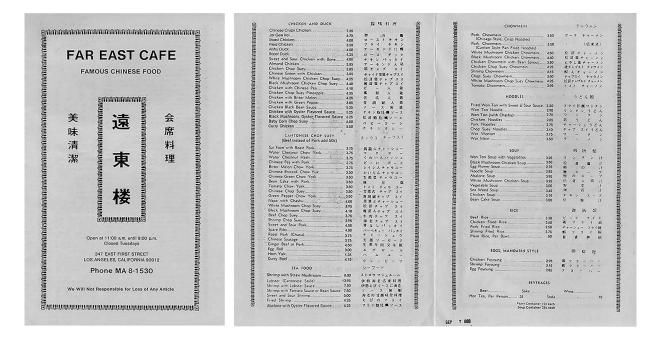


This treasure added by Karen Chu

"September 1947. Dental office was located on San Pedro St. (pre parking center), and later on the second floor of the Democracy Center building on 1st, above a barber shop. I remember the colorful barber shop pole in front of the shop. I liked to watch the Nisei Week parade from the 2nd floor office window. In the 60s, office was moved to 2525 E. 1st St. across from the Japanese hospital. In my early childhood, I spent Sundays attending Union Church Sunday School."

Many Japanese Americans have strong memories connected to friends and family, businesses, homes, and clubs that lined First Street, areas that are now parking lots and police facilities.

ALMOND DUCK AT THE FAR EAST



This treasure added by Bill Watanabe

"After World War II ended in 1945, many Japanese Americans sought to return to Southern California but they found there were few places for them to live. A number of families were housed temporarily at the Koyasan Temple on First Street in Little Tokyo - including members of my own family. According to some folks who recall those days, after spending years in the camps and losing most if not all of their possessions, they had little spending money. They would go to the Far East Café across the street from the Koyasan Temple and the Chinese owners of the restaurant, who were familiar with many of these returnees, allowed them to eat "on credit," asking to be paid when they were able to do so. It could truthfully be

said that this kind of goodwill helped to make the Far East Café, along with its famous cheap and tasty menu, the most popular and well-known restaurant in the entire Japanese American community.

During the 1950's when I was growing up, our family would often eat at the Far East. It might have been a wedding or funeral reception and we would have a banquet in the mezzanine when every space would be crammed with guests - I would guess far beyond the legal limit. The almond duck served at the Far East was my favorite Chinese dish and as Chinese cuisine became more "gourmet", fewer places served the dish until now it has become the subject of a hunt among almond duck aficionados." Treasure #077

OLD NISHI/BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY



This treasure added by Evelyn Yoshimura Photo by "Taka" Takashi Nakada "The other day, I was walking from the Gold Line station, headed back to my job at the Little Tokyo Service Center. As I passed the old historic JANM building, I had a big flashback.

My earliest memories of Little Tokyo include Hanamatsuri-the Buddha's birthday. Children from temples all over Southern California converged at the old Nishi Hongwanji-our Mother Temple, the previous inhabitant of the JANM historic building on First & Central.

I remember nothing of the service except the smell of incense. But afterwards, noisy kids rumbled down the stairs from the hondo, down to the ground floor, and burst out through the double doors and spilling onto the streets of Little Tokyo, clutching tightly to little pink tickets in hand.

The tickets were our reward for good behavior during the service and could be redeemed in any number of the shops for treats like manju, the best snow cones in town, gum, candy or an ice cream cone at Kyodo drugstore with the old-fashion soda fountain counter; or comic books from the drug store at First & San Pedro, where you could sit and read them for hours at the very corner of the store that looked out onto that bustling intersection.

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Fast-forward to today. Construction has begun on the Regional Connector train line, taking out Señor Fish, Weilands Brewery and the Spice Table restaurantformally housing Atomic Cafe, then Troy Cafe, as well. This construction will change everything.

Predicted to be the second busiest station next to Union Station, this train

will bring lots of people to Little Tokyo from all over the region. Could be good for business for those who survive the five-year construction. But the hyperdevelopment that it promises to bring could speed up the changes we already see in the 130-year-old neighborhood.

As a Buddhist, I know that change is the norm and inevitable. Little Tokyo will never be that neighborhood I grew up visiting for Hanamatsuri, Nisei Week carnivals or to buy Japanese goods. I can already see subtle but profound changes with the new shops and cafes that spill out onto the sidewalk, young people walking around dressed like anime characters. Lots of dogs and even baby carriages crowding the sidewalks. The liveliness and excitement is pumping new life and energy into the area. This is a big improvement from the empty storefronts and broken car windows of the 1990s. But where is the tipping point when Little Tokyo is no longer our neighborhood?

Many in the community who live, work, run businesses, attend temples & churches here, are asking ourselves that very question. We are coming together, looking past old differences and disagreements, trying to keep a handle on this suddenly trendy area. The vibrancy is good, but we also need to keep a connection to that 130 year old story. It's not easy - to be inclusive and embrace the future and the new while remaining connected to so much history and culture. And all in a genuine way. But we 're trying. And we welcome participation from any of you out there who wants to help. The next 5-10 years could be make-or-break time for our neighborhood."

GO CLUB



This treasure added by Florence Nishida

"The Go Club was all men, I never saw a woman playing in there. I never heard my father speak of a female Go player anyways. So, after the war, late 40s and 50s it was on the 3rd floor of the building on the corner of San Pedro and 1st Street. I think it was called the Taul building. Someone can check that. A brick building. My father was a gardener and he would come to the Go Kaisho on the weekends when he wasn't working or on rainy days. Because, gardeners don't work on rainy days. I would come with him on the weekends. I grew up in South LA on Exposition and Normandie so it gave me a chance to get out of the house. They probably had it before the war, but my father was really involved with the club. It was a very tall ceilinged room and all along one wall there were all these sheets of paper that had all the names of the players in Kanji. It was very beautiful and I saw them when I was a kid and you'd see long rows of tables, a whole long room, easily 40 to 50 people at any one time. Very quiet, no conversation, no chatter. You would hear the sounds of the stones being played and they resonate beautifully on the wood. So you would hear that clicking of the stones and then the smoke! Because everybody smoked in those days. The room was just hazy with smoke. A total lack of conversation, an occasional cough. Those sensory memories stay with you for a very long time. There was a big stuffed leather sofa and I would like to lie down there and I remembered the feeling of the coolness of the leather. On a hot day, I would lie there on my back, and smell the smoke, and hear the goishi being played and I would take a book and lie there and read."

AOYAMA TREE/KOYASAN



This treasure added by Frances Nakamura

"Nishi Hongwanji has a large history and a large congregation. I represent Koyasan. My father was the head priest there for many years. The Aoyama treethat's where our temple was from 1920 to 1940. Here is the tree now. We were able to chronicle this tree, every time they took a group picture in front of the old temple. SO you can watch it grow. It's now designated as a city historiccultural monument.

Our temple moved from Central Avenue to East 1st Street, the middle of the block there. Everyone calls it an alley but it's more of a driveway! We had a parade down from that little corner, and we went in there in October of 1940. So, when the war broke out, it was just over 1 year old. Timing, timing. They retained a security company to watch the temple during the war. It was intact with the Terminal Island people's belongings because they were the first that had to leave. So, that was the beginning of Koyasan. It started in 1912.

The tree was saved because I became a member of the LTHS and there was a graduate student who wanted to summarize our 50th anniversary book and she said, wouldn't it be great if the tree were still around and I said, well, the tree's right there. So they took it on as one of their first projects. They are maintaining the tree, there's no water source there. It did get trimmed by JANM. Before it became a historic monument they got an arborist to come. I always thought it was a rubber tree but no it's a Moreton Bay Fig tree. The fruit comes down, but over on the MOCA side."

WOLFSKILL GRAPEFRUIT TREE



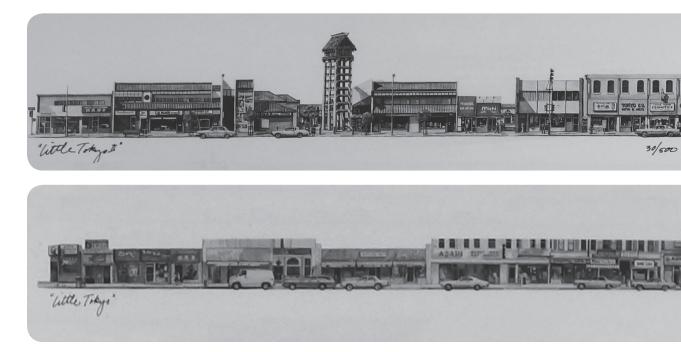
This treasure added by Kristen Hayashi & Wakana Kimura Photo by Scott Oshima

"By the mid-late 19th century, citrus groves dominated the landscape in the greater Los Angeles area. William Wolfskill introduced large-scale citrus production to Southern California. Although the growth of industry and suburbanization caused the demise of the citrus industry, Japanese American gardeners had the foresight to save one of the original Wolfskill grapefruit trees. This grapefruit tree represents several layers of Los Angeles' past."

- Kristen Hayashi

I was coordinating the tree offering ceremony for the SLT project at the JACCC in 2015. When I was researching about the grape fruits tree at the JACCC Plaza, I was living in the San Pedro Firm Building on the First Street. One day, I went to my backyard and looked up at the grapefruit tree which looked exactly the same size as the JACCC plaza tree which I was writing about. I went to Mr. Bill Watanabe, who was the president of the LTSC, and he said that it is part of the William Wolfskill's 70-acre citrus orchard." Treasure #146

FIRST STREET PANOPTICS



This treasure added by Grant Suno Art by Bob Yoneda

"Panoptic paintings of First Street circa late 70's documents the changing nature of that block and shows thriving Japanese American institutions." The 13 buildings along First Street were named a National Historic Landmark district in 1995 which provided protection for these buildings against future demolition.



Treasure #007

FUGETSU-DO

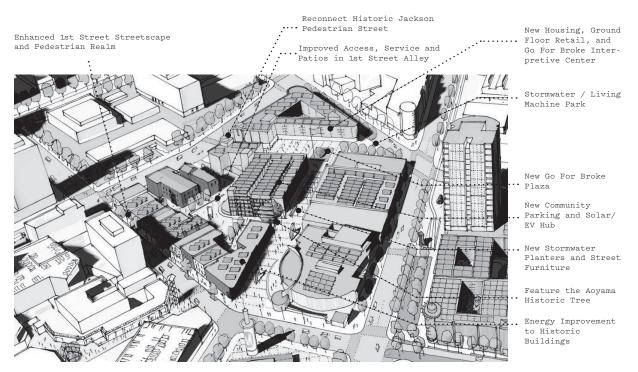


This treasure added by Maya Santos

"Fugetsu-Do has been a family owned and operated confectionery store in Little Tokyo since 1903. Japanese rice cakes, more commonly known as mochi (rice cake) and manju (sweet bean-filled rice cake), are the staple. The shop, which is currently operated by Brian Kito, is located on East First Street, in the heart of the Historic District of Little Tokyo."

FIRST STREET NORTH VISION

Approved by the LTCC board as of July 2016, these are the updated concepts and needs of the Little Tokyo community vision for future developments on First Street North, as generated by input on the 2013 Sustainable Little Tokyo Vision Document by block stakeholders (cultural institutions, residents, businesses), the Little Tokyo Community Council, and other community members.



WHAT WE WANT:

Culture/History

- Equitable, sustainable development that contributes to and fortifies Little Tokyo as an authentic, vibrant cultural destination reflecting contemporary and traditional Japanese culture and arts.
- Integration of Go For Broke monument and future Go For Broke development.

Business

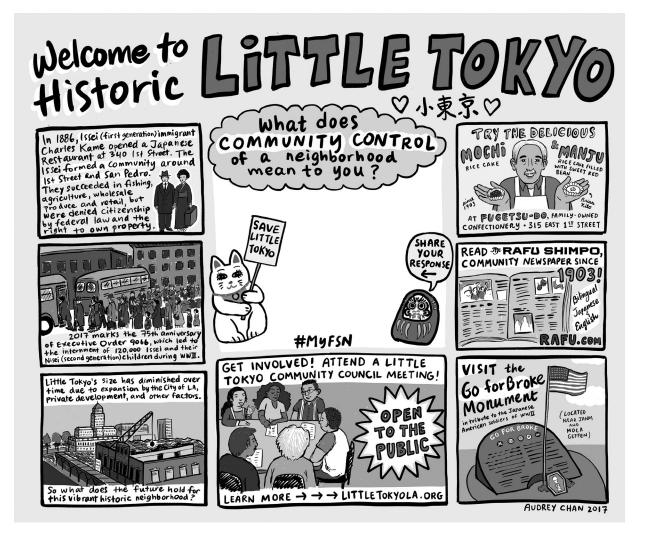
- Development of low-income/ affordable housing with affordable, groundfloor commercial/ office space.
- Affordable parking for tenants and visitors.
- Maintain trash and vehicle access behind 1st St. businesses

Housing

• Lower-income and affordable housing for individuals and families.

Environment

- Green, sustainable building and infrastructure.
- Public open space for active use, designed to mitigate security issues.
- Taller buildings would be acceptable in the NW corner with a maximum height of 5-6 stories.
- Linkages and connectivity throughout the block and to the rest of Little Tokyo.



To learn more visit www.sustainablelittletokyo.org/updatedfsn

SPREAD THE WORD!

Use **#myFSN** to share what you love about First Street North.

TAKE ACTION!

Call Councilmember Jose Huizar 213.473.7014 or tweet @josehuizar and tell him: "I support the #myFSN campaign and want you to keep First Street North development in the hands of the Little Tokyo Community!"

Support other great small businesses and institutions in Little Tokyo. Visit www.golittletokyo.com for more options!

STAY CONNECTED!

Email us at sustainable@littletokyola. org to stay informed and involved in our campaign for community control over First Street North.

Learn more about the #myFSN campaign at: www.sustainablelittletokyo.org/firststreetnorth

Sustainable Little Tokyo

is a community-driven initiative working to ensure a healthy, equitable, and culturally rich Little Tokyo for generations to come. Led by Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC), Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC), and Japanese Cultural & Community Center (JACCC), Sustainable Little Tokyo began in 2013 as a multi-day community vision effort and has evolved into a holistic, neighborhood-wide campaign to promote the environmental, economic, and cultural sustainability of Little Tokyo. sustainablelittletokyo.org

+LAB

is LTSC's effort to strategically incorporate collaborative and experimental creative strategies into key community development efforts in Little Tokyo. +LAB works to advance equity, sustainability, community empowerment, and cultural vibrancy within a community of color.

Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC)

is a social service and community development organization committed to improving the lives of individuals and families through culturally sensitive social service care, strengthening neighborhoods through housing and community development, and promoting the rich heritage of our ethnic communities. <u>ltsc.org</u>