



## Sustainable Little Tokyo

Azusa Street Permanent Improvements Plan

### Azusa Street

Azusa Street is a historically and culturally significant city street off San Pedro Street, between 2nd St and 3rd St, which serves as a critical link in a community-identified pedestrian path through many of Little Tokyo's cultural assets. Through a participatory design process, committee-led meetings, and two community events, Little Tokyo community stakeholders identified and prioritized improvements to Azusa Street that would improve the daily life for residents and the experience of visitors.



### History

Biddy Mason, a former slave and one of the first African American women to own property in Los Angeles, purchased land on Azusa Street and later founded and constructed the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1888. In 1906, William Seymour founded the Apostolic Faith Mission (1906–1931) at this same location, marking the beginning of the Azusa Street Revival, which would later grow into the Pentecostal Movement. During a time of racial segregation, Seymour's followers were multi-racial and multi-ethnic. Azusa Street is now a city street adjacent to the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, the nation's largest Asian American cultural arts center.

### Community-Driven Planning Process



#### 1) Formulation of Sustainable Little Tokyo

Sustainable Little Tokyo (SLT) is a community-driven initiative working to ensure a healthy, equitable, and culturally rich Little Tokyo for generations to come. SLT began in 2013 as a multi-day participatory design and community vision effort, and has evolved into a holistic, neighborhood-wide campaign to promote the environmental, economic, and cultural sustainability of Little Tokyo.



## 2) Identification of the Cultural Pathway

During the SLT design process, community members highlighted and refined the existing Little Tokyo Cultural Pathway or Spine, a pedestrian footpath that linked many of Little Tokyo's assets: cultural institutions and longstanding small businesses.



-  Azusa Street
-  Little Tokyo Cultural Pathway/Spine
-  Community Assets





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#### 3) SLT Committee Meetings

The SLT Real Estate and Built Environment Committee and community stakeholders identified and prioritized Azusa Street as a historically and culturally significant space where improvements would improve the daily life for residents and the experience for visitors. The Outreach Committee initiated community engagement to elicit more feedback from the community about specific improvements.

#### 3) Temporary Activations of Azusa Street

SLT organized two community events to address these problems with temporary improvements: murals, trees, street furniture, shade, activities, and design improvements), and to re-imagine the alley as functional public space. Community input was also gathered during these events.





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#### Existing Conditions

- Lack of maintenance (clogged drains, unsafe street surface)
- Trash
- Graffiti
- Insufficient Lighting
- Parked vehicles



#### Community Priorities and Goals

- More trees, vegetation, and green features
- Reclaim Azusa Street as functional public space
- Public safety and mitigation of graffiti
- Public art that shows the history of Azusa Street
- Improvements to the street
- Prohibit parking and automobile traffic
- Clean space and eliminate odors and trash





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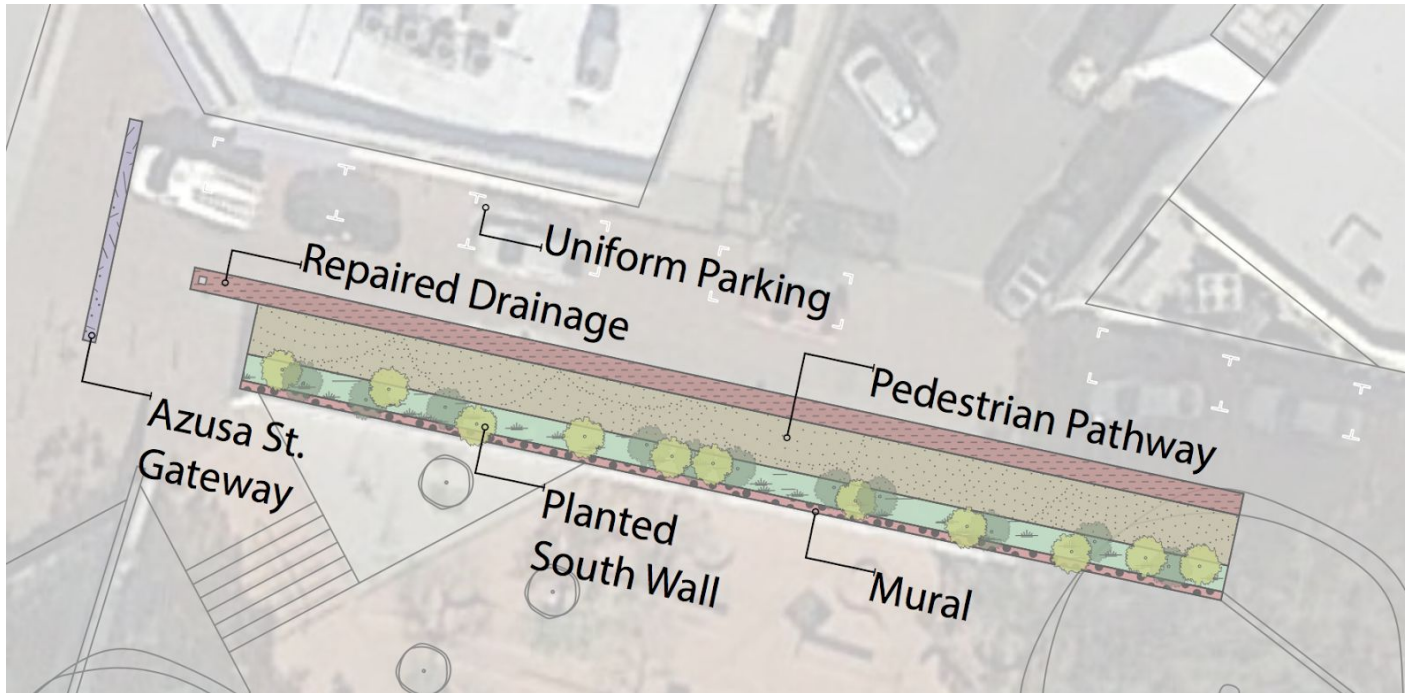
**Proposed Site Plan**







**Proposed Site Plan**



**Other Recommendations**

- Repair the damaged bricks
- Surface treatment of drainage area (e.g. brick veneers)
- Raised curb instead of bollards next to south wall
- Trees/vegetation next to south wall (with space for future mural/public art)
- Trees in containers along north wall (with vehicle parking between)
- Canopy or structure to create "room" (hang lights from structure, possibly new location for Tanabata festival)
- Azusa St gateway/arch