

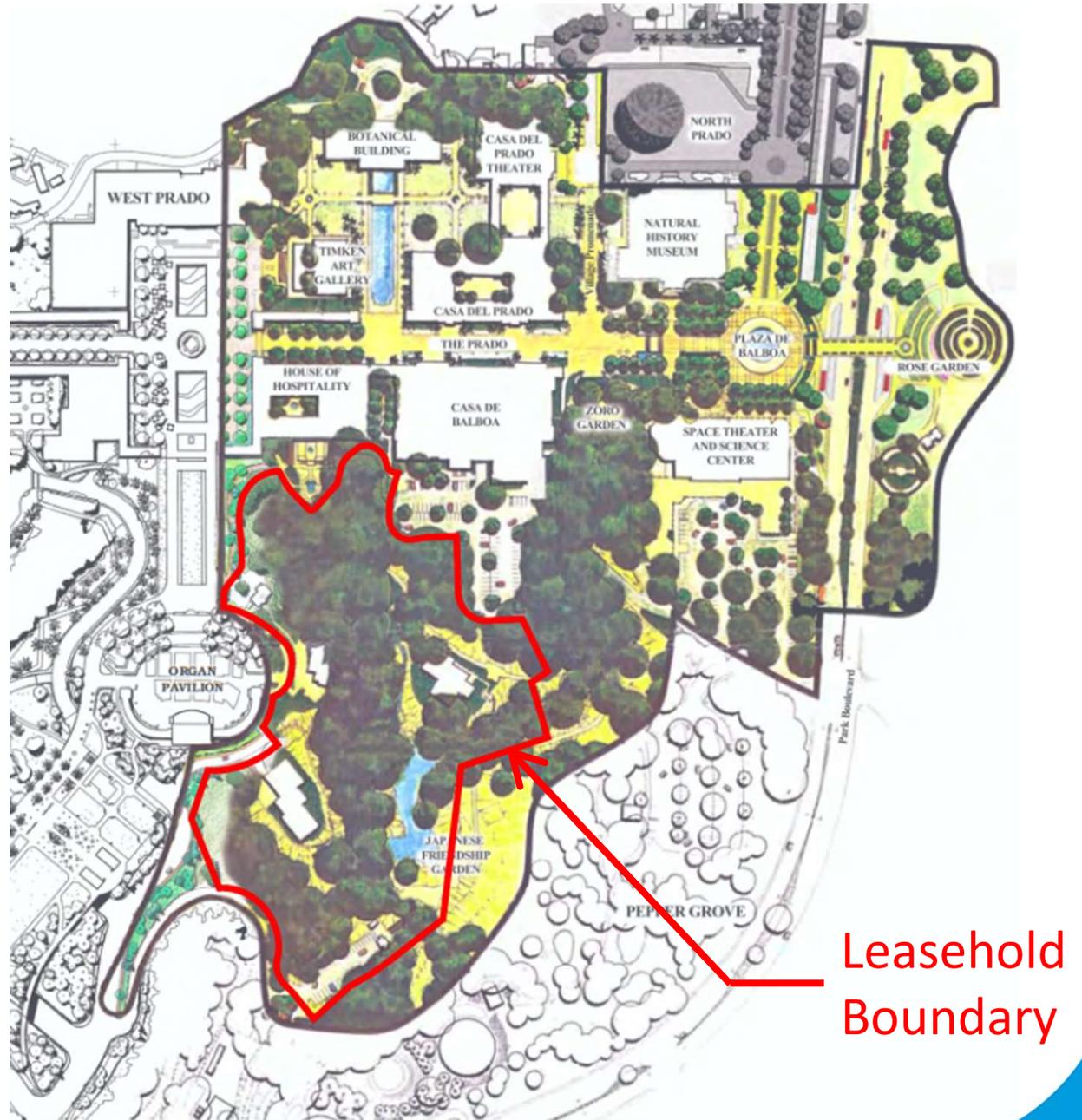
Parks and Recreation Department

# Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum (JFGM) General Development Plan (GDP) Amendment

Balboa Park Committee – Workshop Item  
Agenda of March 5, 2026

# Location

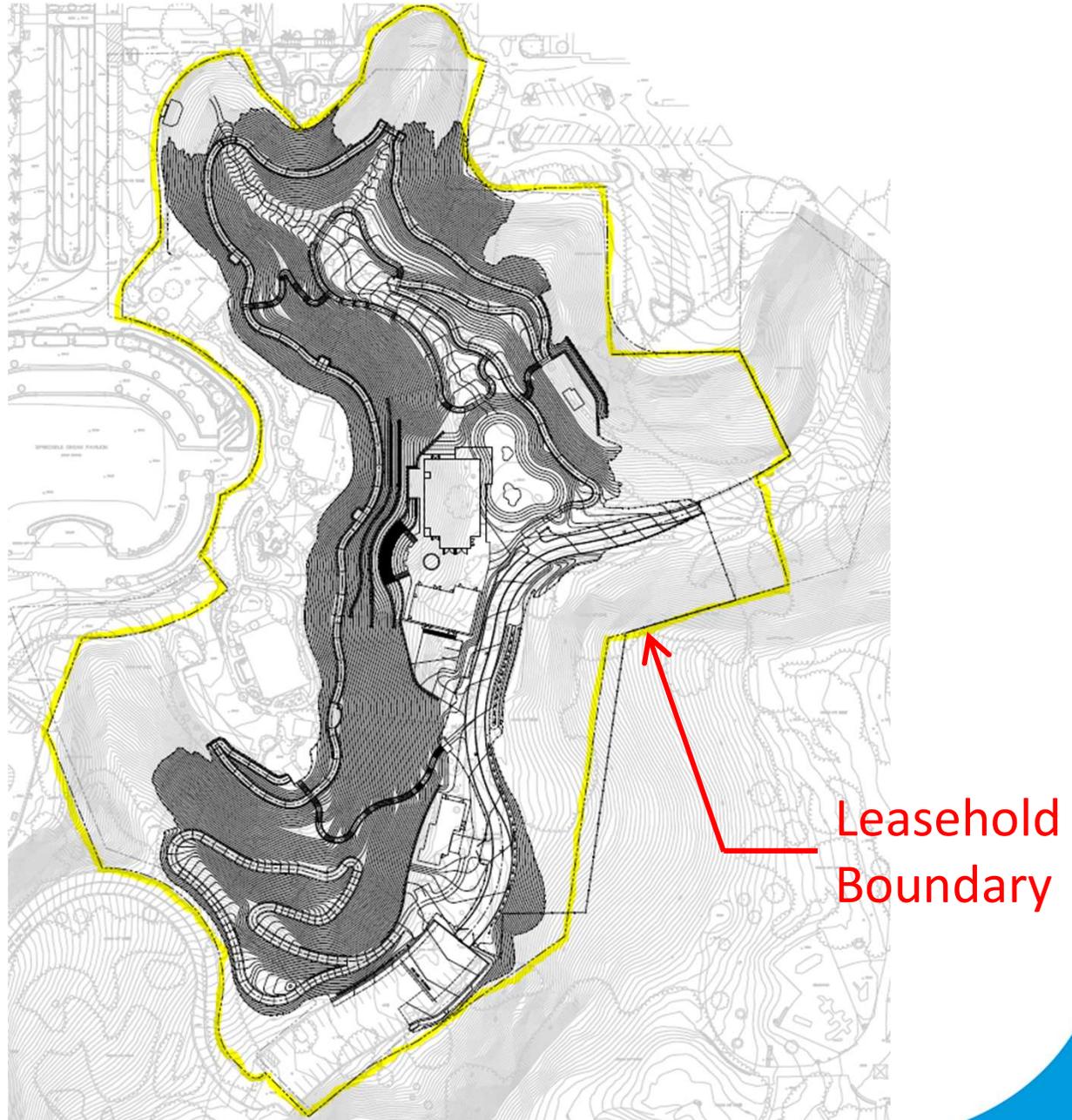
- Central Mesa
- East Prado Subarea
- Adjacencies
- Organ Pavilion
- The Mall
- Plaza de Panama
- House of Hospitality
- Casa de Balboa
- Pepper Grove
- Centro Cultural de la Raza & WorldBeat
- Palisades



Leasehold Boundary

# JFGM - Lease

- 50-year Lease approved in 1984 (2034)
- Leasehold boundary adjusted in 2019



# JFGM - GDP

## Current General Development Plan

- Approved 2003
- Provided for guiding development of gardens and structures



Leasehold Boundary



# JFGM - Proposed GDP Amendment Process

**Winter**  
2026

**Spring**  
2026

**Summer**  
2026

**Summer**  
2026

**Fall**  
2026



**Balboa Park  
Committee**  
Workshop #1  
TODAY!

**Balboa Park  
Committee**  
Workshop #2

**Balboa Park  
Committee**  
Action Item

**Development  
Service Dept.**  
Environmental  
Review

**Parks and  
Recreation  
Board**  
Action Item



# Consistency

## Staff review will include consistency with:

- Balboa Park Master Plan – Goals
- Central Mesa Precise Plan & East Prado Subarea
  - Architectural design guidelines
  - Land Use
  - View Sheds
- Existing Master Plan
- Historic preservation standards (Planning)
- Lease (Real Estate)



# Project Presentation

Dennis Otsuji, President  
Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum

Luanne Kanzawa, Executive Director/CEO  
Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum

Keiji Uesugi, FASLA, Landscape Architect  
Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum

Kelly Sutherlin McLeod, FAIA, Architect  
Kelly Sutherlin McLeod Architecture, Inc.

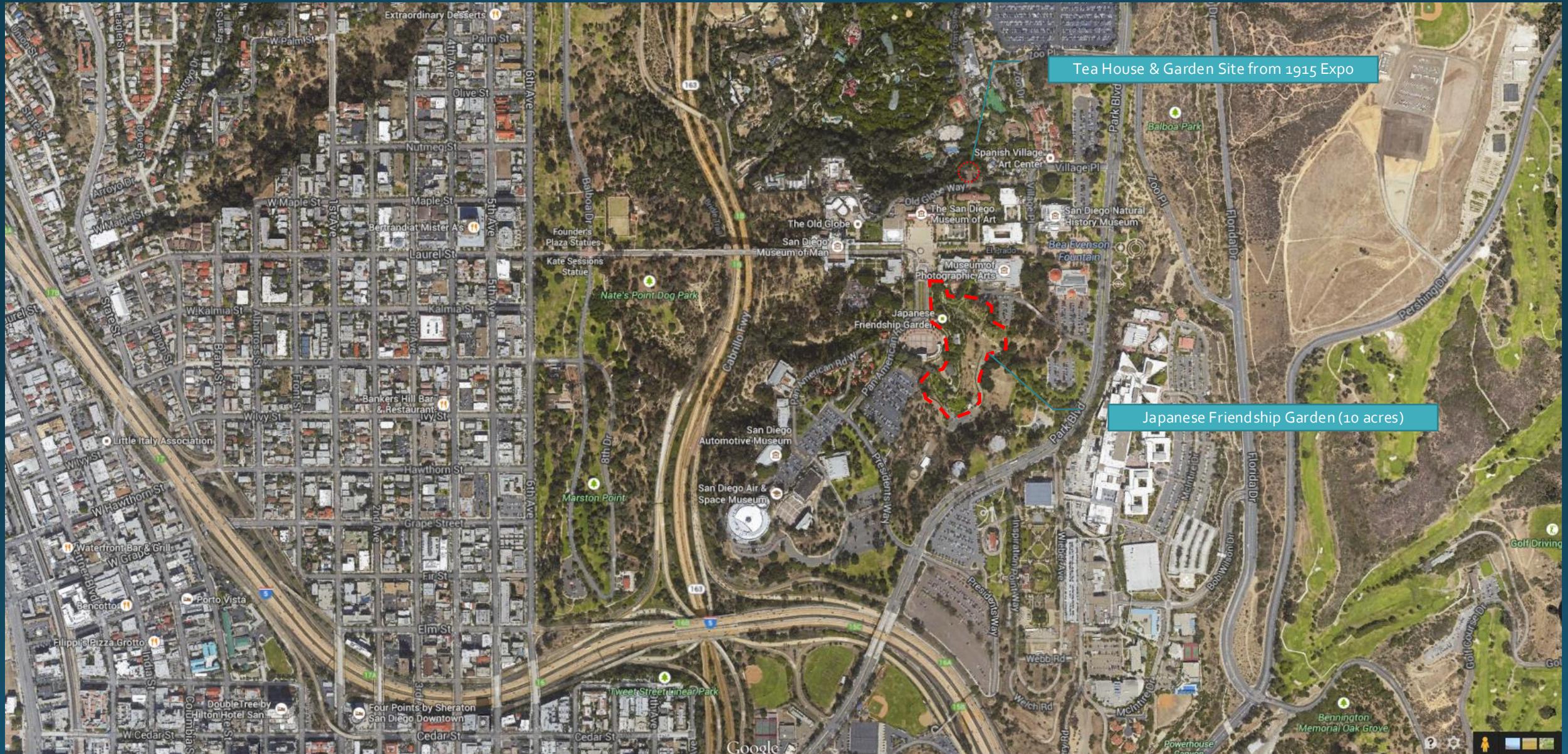
Marcela Escobar, President/CEO  
Atlantis Group

# Vision and Concept Design of The Cultural Education Center

Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum San Diego



# Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum in Balboa Park



Tea House & Garden Site from 1915 Expo

Japanese Friendship Garden (10 acres)

# Brief Historic Overview of the Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum San Diego

During the 1915 Panama-California Expo in Balboa Park, a Japanese tea garden and pavilion was constructed.

In 1955, the Tea House and Garden was removed to make space to build the Children's Zoo.

In 1979, a Japanese Garden Master Plan for Balboa Park was approved by the City. The plan was prepared by architect firm Fong & LaRocca Associates w/ Takeo Uesugi (TUA) providing consultation.

Landscape architect Ken Nakajima was hired in the 1980's to design the garden. He named it "Sankei-en," which means garden of three sceneries: pastoral, mountain and lake. It is also the name of a garden in Yokohama, which is the sister city of San Diego.

In the 1990s, Takeo Uesugi was brought back in for renovations and a revised expansion master plan.

Between 2000 and 2015, Phase 2 of the JFG master plan was developed with the garden expanding to 10 acres featuring a central stream, strolling pathways, and the Inamori Pavilion.

Between 2015 and 2025, remaining projects of Phase 2 completed.

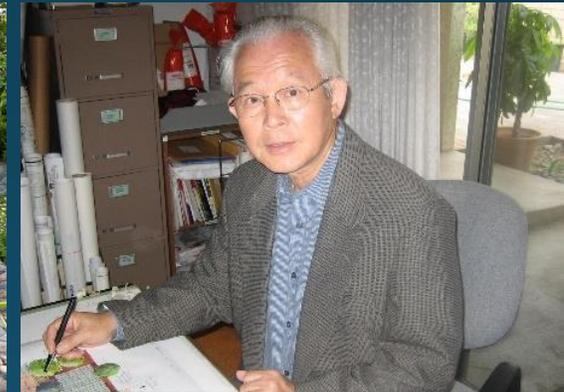
Currently a new master plan is in development.



Tea house & garden at the Panama-California Expo in 1915.



Children's Zoo when it first opened in 1957 was built on the grounds of the Japanese Tea House and Garden. (photo: sandiegouniontribune.com)



Takeo Uesugi led renovations to the first phase and the expansion master plan. The second phase was completed in 2015.





## 2035-2040 Updated Master Plan

1. Cultural Education Center
2. Entry Plaza Redesign
3. Children's Garden

# Cultural Education Center



## Education Building

- Classrooms
- Auditorium

## Cultural Building

- Research Labs
- Tea Ceremony Classroom
- Library/Archival Collection

## Administration Building

- Conference Room & Offices

## Visitor Center

- Living/Green Roof
- Café with Outdoor Terrace
- Gift Shop

## Waterfall Plaza

## Amphitheater



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# Cultural Education Center



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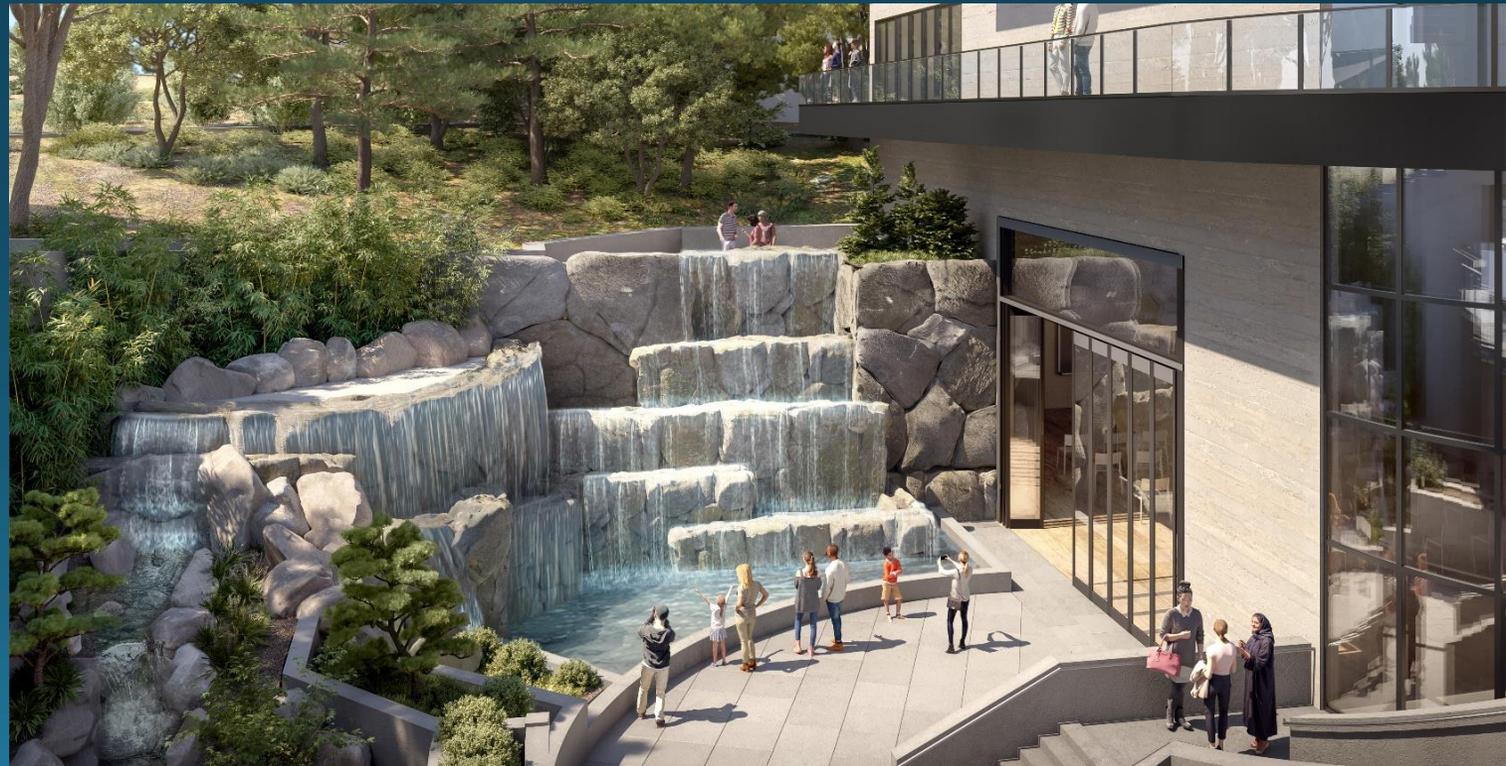
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## Visitor Center

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## Administration Building

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- Amphitheater  
Waterfall Plaza



# Cultural Education Center

Existing view within the garden nursery looking north



View of proposed Multi-purpose Auditorium



View of proposed amphitheater and conference



# Cultural Education Center

Existing view within garden looking north toward Ceremonial Steps and Friendship Plaza



Proposed view of Multi-purpose Auditorium looking northeast



Proposed view of Multi-purpose Auditorium & waterfall garden



# Entry Plaza



# Proposed view of Entry Plaza



# Existing view of Entry Plaza



The Garden is a place of storytelling,  
contemplation and imagining new possibilities

The Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum of San Diego  
weaves together the traditions of Japanese garden art with  
San Diego's natural and cultural legacy.

The JFGMSD represents not only the history of Japanese  
gardens in North America, but it also honors those who  
contributed to the garden's existence and growth.

As JFGMSD looks forward to the future, it is exciting to think  
about how the Japanese garden will evolve and inspire the  
next generation.



# Questions and Discussion



**Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum**  
General Development Plan Amendment