



## California State Senate Bill 307

### State Legislation to Preserve the Three Remaining Japantowns

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For the first time in history, communities across the state of California collaborated in a statewide campaign to preserve the cultural heritage of the three remaining historic Japantowns in San Francisco, San Jose and Los Angeles. Together, these community forces rallied for California's state legislature to pass Senate Bill 307 (SB307), which would officially recognize the contributions of California's Japantowns to the state's diverse heritage for the first time in history.

Authored by Senator Vasconcellos of San Jose, SB307 was strongly endorsed by the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC). To highlight the urgency of SB307, the JCCCNC pointed out that there were once over 40 Japantowns on the West Coast; today, only three remain in California. Considering that these three are potentially the only historic Japantowns left in the entire nation, SB307 would serve as a vital support mechanism to preserve their cultural integrities. Under SB307, the city governments of San Francisco, San Jose, and Los Angeles would be required to work with their respective Japantowns to ensure that each community would be protected.

In October 2001, SB307 successfully passed in the state's legislature and was signed into law. The SB307 helped raise awareness both within and beyond the Japanese American community that the tangible legacies of the past will only sustain if they are recognized, protected, and cared for.