

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Request for Federal Proclamation of February as Chinese Canadian Heritage Month

Moved by: Councillor

Cheng

Seconded by: Councillor

Saxe

#### SUMMARY:

Chinese Canadians have played an essential role in shaping Canada's economic growth, cultural life, and social fabric since the 1800s, including their contributions to major nation-building efforts such as the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway construction and the development of communities across the country. This legacy exists alongside a history of exclusion and discrimination, including policies such as the Chinese Head Tax and the Chinese Immigration Act, 1923, which impacted generations of Chinese Canadians. Despite these barriers, the community has demonstrated enduring strength and continues to make significant contributions to Canadian society.

In Toronto, Chinese Canadians have been part of the city's history since the late 19th century, establishing some of its earliest Chinese businesses and cultural institutions. Over time, successive waves of immigration have contributed to the growth of vibrant neighbourhoods such as the First Chinatown, West Chinatown, East Chinatown and the emerging Chinatown in North York, as well as suburban centres in the Greater Toronto Area. Today, the Toronto region is home to one of the largest Chinese populations outside of Asia, with hundreds of thousands of residents of Chinese origin contributing to the city's economic vitality, culinary landscape, and cultural life. Annual celebrations such as Chinese New Year, the Toronto Chinatown Festival, and Mid-Autumn Festival draw residents and visitors alike, highlighting traditions, arts, and community pride.

Recognition of Chinese heritage has advanced in Ontario through the enactment of the Chinese Heritage Month Act, 2024, reflecting the importance of acknowledging these contributions and histories. With approximately 1.8 million Canadians identifying as having Chinese origin or ancestry, this community represents a significant and diverse part of the country's population, including a substantial and growing presence in the Greater Toronto Area.

Although Asian Heritage Month provides an opportunity to celebrate the many cultures that make up Canada's Asian communities, it does not fully reflect the distinct history and experiences of Chinese Canadians. In contrast, several other communities are

recognized through dedicated heritage months at the national level, including Sikh Heritage Month, Filipino Heritage Month, Islamic Heritage Month, and Hindu Heritage Month. Our City's proclamation of February as Chinese Heritage Month beginning in 2026 reflects a commitment to recognizing this history locally, particularly in a city like Toronto where Chinese heritage is deeply rooted, and a corresponding national designation would further advance awareness, education, and inclusion across Canada.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. City Council request the Government of Canada to formally proclaim the month of February as Chinese Canadian Heritage Month nationwide.
2. City Council affirm its commitment to recognizing and celebrating Chinese Heritage Month annually and to supporting initiatives that promote cultural understanding, inclusion, and community engagement across Toronto.
3. City Council forward this motion to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, all Toronto Members of Parliament, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, as well as to large urban municipalities across Canada.

May 20-21, 2026