

From: [Anyika Mark](#)
To: [Planning and Housing](#)
Subject: [External Sender] My comments for 2026.PH29.2 on April 14, 2026 Planning and Housing Committee
Date: April 13, 2026 3:18:40 PM

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the April 14, 2026 Planning and Housing Committee meeting on item 2026.PH29.2, Little Jamaica and Oakwood Vaughan Planning Framework - Proposals Report

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

My name is Anyika Mark, and I am the Managing Director of the Little Jamaica Community Land Trust (LJCLT). LJCLT is a Black-led, serving, and focused community land trust with a mandate to ensure that the Afri-Caribbean cultural legacy of Little Jamaica remains in place throughout accelerated development and that the people that make this community home are not displaced in the process. Through our work we are committed to stewarding community assets and resources that allow for self-determination and the creation of thriving Black communities.

The Eglinton West/Oakwood Vaughan, also known as Little Jamaica, has been a cultural and economic anchor for Toronto's Black community since the 1960s. For over 10 years, Black residents, Black business owners, Black-led non-profit organizations, cultural leaders and thousands of people across the GTA have shared their concerns and **vocalized the need for critical municipal and provincial intervention to immediately stop displacement** and create avenues for financial compensation / authentic cooperation with community governance models.

We want to commend City Staff, and our local City Councillors for their continued commitment to driving policy change forward in Eglinton West and Oakwood Vaughan, also known as Little Jamaica. We want to acknowledge that we understand this is a draft proposal and that City Staff will be undertaking further community consultation to perfect the final planning framework.

Little Jamaica CLT is concerned with the vagueness of Afri-Caribbean peoples contributions to the study area and that the language is reminiscent of the eglintonCONNECTS Planning Framework which completely erased the enduring Afri-Caribbean legacy, normalizing our nuanced experience of displacement. This draft proposal makes no mention of the shortcomings of that initial planning framework, while also not making any mention of the displacement and harm already caused during transit and residential development within Little Jamaica. Additionally, there is no mention of anti-Black racism and how this correlates with the current state of Little Jamaica within the Equity Statement and there is no Background section to articulate the neighbourhood's vibrant and culturally significant history.

As a result, we are concerned that the draft framework does not demonstrate a culturally responsive or applied understanding of Afri-Caribbean ways of life in the values identified for plan.

In comparison, our peers and friends in Chinatown recently passed the *Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative*. The following language and phrasing are what we, in Little Jamaica, intend to use as reference for all future policy-making discussions related to the Little Jamaica study area.

They begin first with: What is a Chinatown?

1. **Chinatown is a Meeting Place:** Chinatown is situated on Anishinabewaki, Haudenasaunee, and Wendake Territory and is a place where many nations have gathered for millennia due to its prominent location. Many immigrant groups continue to meet here to find support and acceptance.
2. **Chinatown is a Refuge for All:** Chinatown is a place that historically and continues to be a place where people fleeing economic and political hardship can self-determine a future for themselves.
3. **Chinatown is a Home for Chinese-Canadian Identity:** Chinatown has local and national significance in our identity as a multicultural society and is a place where Chinese-Canadians and the Asian diaspora at large can find a sense of belonging.

They list their Key Community Values as:

1. Deep Affordability
2. Cultural Specificity Authenticity
3. Right to Self Determination
4. Intergenerationally
5. Micro-Enterprise
6. Mutual Aid
7. Informality
8. Working Class
9. Solidarity

I have attached the Chinatown Tomorrow Plan below for reference.

It is critical that City Staff work with community members in Little Jamaica, a priority placed on Black community members, to refine principles and policies similar to the ones articulated in *Chinatown Tomorrow*, to ensure that neighborhood change in Little Jamaica not just honors the area's history but creates a new path forward for collaboration and Black leadership in said change.

Sincerely,
Anyika Mark

Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative: <https://share.google/IQ5ASBnbKxJ6JusKP>
eglintonCONNECTS: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/eglinton-connects/>