

Councillor Gord Perks  
Chair, Toronto and East York Community Council  
By email

29 March 2026

Dear Councillor Perks,

**Subject: Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative**

The Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice (CCNC-SJ) urges the Toronto and East York Community Council at its meeting on April 1, 2026 to request the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York, to amend the Chinatown Toronto Planning Initiative Proposals Report, in collaboration with the Chinatown Advocacy Network. The goal of the amendment is to put forward comprehensive, systemic, and impactful strategies that will assure the protection of Chinatown West against displacement.

The CCNC-SJ educates, engages, and advocates for equity and social justice. Building on over four decades of community activism, including redress for the Chinese Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act, CCNC-SJ has been at the forefront of the movement to combat anti-Asian racism since our inception in 2019.

Chinatowns in Canada were born out of historic and systemic anti-Asian racism, including laws and policies that excluded Chinese communities from economic, civic, social, and political participation. Chinatowns and people that live and work in them continue to face displacement due to profit-driven development and expansion. CCNC-SJ has lent our support to grassroots community efforts to not only protect Chinatown from unscrupulous development but more importantly to ensure respect and dignity for the most marginalized members living and working in Chinatowns.

To this end, we invited representatives of Chinatown groups from Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal to our National Forum held in Toronto on March 20 and 21, 2026. Loudly and clearly, representatives from various Chinatown groups are calling for meaningful engagement by different levels of government to develop and implement policies and strategies with dedicated resources to prevent displacement. A consensus shared by all those in attendance is that true progress of any community, including Chinatown, is measured by its ability to lift those that are most vulnerable and marginalized. To all of us, a healthy and thriving Chinatown should provide truly affordable housing, gainful employment opportunities, equitable health (including mental health) and social services, as well as collaborative community development.

Chinatown is critical to the development of Chinese Canadian identity. It is a symbol of community resilience in our long history in Canada. It exemplifies a courageous assertion by the community that we belong in Canada, despite persistent stereotypes that treat us as perpetual foreigners. Each Chinatown's unique Chinese Canadian identity – as embodied by the heritage, collective trauma, resilience, courage and hopes – contributes to underpinning the community advocacy to have Chinatowns recognized for their historical and cultural significance.

CCNC-SJ invited an expert advisor from UNESCO as a keynote speaker at the National Forum to open a dialogue between UNESCO and Chinatown groups in different cities to explore recognition of Chinatowns at a global level. The conversations resulted in a consensus towards preserving and recognizing Chinatowns' cultural significance in a way that must come with actions to not only protect the tangible and intangible expression of culture and heritage of Chinese Canadian identity; more importantly, it should protect Chinatowns, their residents and local business operators from displacement.

We believe that our vision of thriving Chinatowns is shared by Toronto and East York Community Council and the whole City Council. The current Chinatown Planning Initiatives Proposals Report represents an important first step for the City Council to realize this vision. Further deliberation is needed to build on this foundation for bolder and concrete measures to help Chinatowns succeed. We therefore urge you and the TEYCC to take this golden opportunity to engage the Chinatown Advocacy Network to bring about these transformative strategies and investment in the future of thriving and enduring Chinatowns.

Sincerely,



Agnes Man  
Executive Director, CCNC-SJ

cc:

Mayor Olivia Chow  
Councillor Chris Moise  
Councillor Ausma Malik  
Councillor Dianne Saxe  
Councillor Alejandra Bravo  
Councillor Paula Fletcher  
Councillor Josh Matlow  
Councillor Brad Bradford