

## Toronto East York Community Council

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**From:** Ryan Collins-Swartz <ryan@tapestrycapital.ca>  
**Sent:** March 30, 2026 5:09 PM  
**To:** Mayor Chow; Councillor Moise; Councillor Malik; Councillor Saxe; Councillor Bravo; Councillor Fletcher; Councillor Matlow; Councillor Perks; Councillor Bradford; Toronto East York Community Council  
**Subject:** [External Sender] Keep Chinatown Affordable: We Need Real Protections Now  
**Categories:** Marjo, Communication

Dear Mayor Chow, Members of the Toronto and East York Community Council and City Clerk,

My name is Ryan Collins-Swartz and I'm the Co-Executive Director of Tapestry Community Capital, a not-for-profit investment firm, based in Chinatown, that works nationally, enabling community members to invest locally in affordable housing (Kensington Market Land Trust), arts and culture (Hugh's Room Live), recreation (Argonaut Rowing Club), and renewable energy (SolarShare).

So often the neighbourhoods that provide the most cultural and social impacts are the one facing the greatest challenges with affordability. That case is very true in Toronto's Chinatown.

It has been seven years since Council approved the first Chinatown Area Study, yet the community remains exposed to ongoing displacement. The [Toronto Chinatown Land Trust](#) has observed an increase in land assemblies, and major infrastructure projects are reshaping the area, placing more residents, small legacy businesses, and cultural spaces at growing risk of being pushed out.

While the current draft is a step forward, it does not yet include the measures required to meaningfully prevent displacement.

### **Chinatown needs stronger protections now:**

- **Designate West Chinatown as a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) immediately, with dedicated, long-term public funding for legacy businesses, tenants, community infrastructure, and collectively-stewarded space.** Symbolic recognition without real investment is not enough.
- **Launch a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study that protects Chinatown's full cultural fabric, including clan associations, community institutions, locally-serving businesses, and built and intangible heritage.** Preserving buildings cannot come at the cost of displacing the communities that give them meaning.
- **Adopt a Secondary Plan with strong, enforceable anti-displacement measures.** Planning policy must have real legal force to protect the community.
- **Deliver meaningful cultural redress, alongside permanent public investment in housing and community infrastructure that reflects Chinatown's needs.** Recognition must be paired with repair.

Without these concrete measures, the planning framework will fail the very community it claims to support.

I support the ongoing advocacy of the [Chinatown Advocacy Network \(CAN\)](#). I urge Council to meaningfully engage CAN in this process, and act with the urgency this moment requires.

Thank you for your attention not only protecting the heritage of Chinatown, but for creating the conditions for it to thrive socially, culturally, and economically.

Best,

Ryan



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