



Cheryll Case

Founder and Executive Director

Phone: 647-905-0197

Email: Cheryll.Case@CPplanning.ca

Web: <https://CommunityInPublic.ca>

2575 Eglinton Ave W, Toronto, ON M6M 1T3

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To:

mayor_chow@toronto.ca; councillor_moise@toronto.ca; councillor_malik@toronto.ca;
councillor_saxe@toronto.ca; councillor_bravo@toronto.ca; councillor_fletcher@toronto.ca;
councillor_matlow@toronto.ca; councillor_perks@toronto.ca; councillor_bradford@toronto.ca;
teycc@toronto.ca

Re: 2026.TE31.20, Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative - Proposals Report

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

On behalf of Community in Public, I am writing to express our strong support for immediate and meaningful protections for Chinatown in relation to agenda item TE31.20: *Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative – Proposals Report*, coming before Toronto and East York Community Council on April 1, 2026.

Chinatown must be understood within a longer history of shared settlement and struggle across racialized communities in Toronto. Early formations of the neighbourhood are rooted in The Ward, where Chinese, Black, Jewish, and other immigrant communities lived in close proximity, building collective pathways to survive systemic exclusion. These geographies remind us that the story of Chinatown is not isolated - it is part of a broader pattern of how racialized communities have made space for themselves in a city that has often denied them equitable access to land, resources, and decision-making power.

Despite this history, planning tools have repeatedly enabled displacement rather than prevented it. The destruction of Toronto's original Chinatown to build City Hall is a clear example of how public policy has facilitated cultural and economic erasure. This pattern continues today, not only in Chinatown but across Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities. The pressures currently facing Chinatown - land speculation, infrastructure-driven development, and rising costs - mirror those unfolding in Little Jamaica and other neighbourhoods where cultural districts are being destabilized.

In my work, I see these parallels clearly. Little Jamaica, my home, and Chinatown are both experiencing significant displacement pressures that threaten long-standing residents, businesses, and cultural life. In response, both communities have organized and called on the City to implement meaningful, enforceable policies that reflect their needs and priorities. The emergence of community land trusts and collective stewardship models in both contexts signals a shared demand: that communities must have real power over land and development processes that shape their futures.

While the current draft proposals represent a step forward, they do not yet establish the level of protection required to interrupt these patterns of displacement.

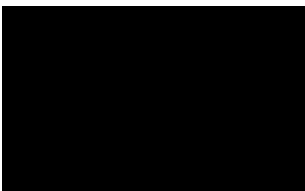
We urge Council to adopt the following measures:

- **Designate West Chinatown as a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA)** with sustained public investment that supports legacy businesses, tenants, community infrastructure, and community-owned or collectively stewarded spaces. Recognition must be paired with the material conditions necessary for long-term community stability and wealth building.
- **Initiate a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study** that protects Chinatown's full cultural ecosystem, including clan associations, community institutions, locally serving businesses, and intangible heritage. Preservation must center the people and practices that give the neighbourhood its meaning.
- **Adopt a Secondary Plan** with strong, enforceable anti-displacement policies, ensuring that planning tools have the legal force required to protect existing communities from speculative pressures.
- **Advance meaningful cultural redress alongside permanent investment** in affordable housing and community infrastructure, recognizing that addressing historical harm requires both acknowledgment and repair.

Without these measures, the planning framework risks reinforcing the very dynamics it seeks to address.

We support the ongoing advocacy of the [Chinatown Advocacy Network](#) (CAN) and urge Council to meaningfully engage them as essential partners in shaping this work. This is a critical opportunity for the City to move beyond symbolic recognition and toward policies that uphold the rights of communities to remain, to belong, and to shape their own futures.

Thank you for your consideration,



Cheryll Case
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