



**KENSINGTON MARKET
COMMUNITY LAND TRUST**

March 30, 2026

Subject: Keep Chinatown Affordable: We Need Real Protections Now

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

This letter is being submitted by the Kensington Market Community Land Trust. The Kensington Market Community Land Trust is incorporated to acquire and provide for the management of land, in perpetuity, in or near the area bounded by the west side of Spadina Avenue, the south side of College Street, the east side of Bathurst Street, and the north side of Dundas Street. We are writing regarding agenda item [TE31.20: Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative – Proposals Report](#), coming to Toronto and East York Community Council on April 1, 2026.

Chinatown is our neighbour, and as such the health of our communities is intertwined. We are writing in support of stronger protections for Chinatown, to keep it affordable, and to respect and implement the actions presented in this letter. The measures listed below are the result of long and thoughtful community-based organizing within Chinatown; measures that we, as the Kensington Market Community Land Trust, would like to see implemented by the City of Toronto.

Chinatown is a historic immigrant community shaped by generations who endured systemic discrimination, including the [Chinese Head Tax](#) and the [Chinese Exclusion Act](#). Despite these injustices, Chinatown has never had strong, enforceable long-term protections. Before the Chinatown Area Study, the City of Toronto had never adopted a plan or policy that explicitly named Chinatown, except for an [expropriation plan that displaced Toronto's original Chinatown in the 1960s](#) in order to build present-day City Hall. That history continues to shape the neighbourhood today, and Toronto has a responsibility to address and repair the harms of this displacement.

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,**



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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. Kensington Market and Chinatown are distinct communities and we wish to see Chinatown receive the same privileges, protections, and resources that Kensington Market has secured through a HCD. We are fully supportive of the development of Chinatown’s own Heritage Conservation District Study.
- **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.

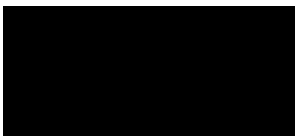
Without these concrete measures, the planning framework will fail the very community it claims to support.

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

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kensington Market Community Land Trust



Alix Aylen, Co-Chair, Kensington Market Community Land Trust