



March 30, 2026

Dear members of the Toronto and East York Community Council,

My name is Diana Yoon and I am writing as a concerned citizen to request changes to the Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative. I speak to this as a former Friends of ChinatownTO (FOCT) community organizer, former Board of Director for Cecil Community Centre, and current member of the Toronto Chinatown Land Trust.

Our downtown Chinatown (or “West Chinatown”) is more than a neighbourhood; it is a place of deep relationships and important cultural space for numerous diverse communities. However, it is also a place that has historically been neglected and taken advantage of. The City has a responsibility to own up to the displacement of Toronto’s original Chinatown in the 1960’s and put forward meaningful actions for change. In this spirit, the City must proactively plan to conserve and support the existing neighbourhood while working to meet community needs like parks, affordable housing, and community services.

The *Chinatown Tomorrow* Initiative came after years of our community shining a light from 2019 onwards regarding the potential threat of gentrification from 315 Spadina’s development proposal; I was involved in bringing community members together who had historically been excluded from traditional city planning processes. From this, City Council urged the Directors of City Planning, Housing Secretariat, and Social Development and Finance Administration (SDFA) to “*protect existing and create new affordable housing and community services in the area*” in 2019.

I echo the demands from the Chinatown Advocacy Network, asking you to:

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **Adopt a Secondary Plan with strong, enforceable anti-displacement measures.**
4. **Deliver meaningful cultural redress**, alongside **permanent public investment in housing and community infrastructure that reflects Chinatown’s needs.**



Toronto's cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, is a significant attribute to the City and should be preserved, as outlined in Section 3.1.6 of the Official Plan. But the question remains – in what way is the City proactively preserving the tangible and intangible heritage in neighbourhoods like West Chinatown?

Further, housing and livability are key pillars in the new draft West Chinatown Planning Framework. These recommendations do not amount to any serious commitments from the City of Toronto. While the City can encourage developers to work with social housing providers and community land trusts, and build age-friendly multigenerational living, this is unlikely to occur without public investment and facilitated engagement.

I urge the Committee to consider revising the planning framework so that it can stand true to its name: *Chinatown Tomorrow*. Chinatown is home to working class, multicultural immigrant communities, businesses and residents who rely on our neighbourhood's success.

Thank you to our Chinatown residents, neighbours, workers, and those at the City who care deeply about Chinatown today. I hope the City can make these changes for a stronger Chinatown for many future generations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diana Yoon".

Diana Yoon
University-Rosedale resident