



TE31.20 - Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative - Proposals Report

Mayor Chow and Members of the Committee,

I am here to speak today on behalf of the Kensington Market Community Land Trust - a non-profit that acquires and provides for the management of land off the speculative real estate market in the bounded area which includes the west side of Spadina Avenue – neighbouring and overlapping with Chinatown. Chinatown is our neighbour, and as such the health of our communities is intertwined. I also speak as someone who loves Chinatown. As a proud member of the Chinese-Indonesian diaspora, I frequented Chinatown since I was 4 years old when my family first immigrated to this country in the year 2000. Chinatown was always the place my parents brought my brother and I to to buy affordable groceries, affordable clothes, affordable haircuts, and cheap long distance phone cards to call my grandparents back in Indonesia. Chinatown was the place to network and access culturally appropriate services that allowed our family to integrate into Toronto.

The cultural vibrancy of Chinatown has always been under attack, just like in Kensington Market. Chinatown is a historic immigrant community shaped by generations who endured systemic discrimination. The solutions to these structural issues isn't simply more parades and Chinese holiday shout-outs, it's rooted fundamentally in protecting the neighbourhood from market forces which seek to gentrify out the affordable retailers, homes, and culturally relevant services. The [Toronto Chinatown Land Trust](#) has observed an increase in land assemblies, and major infrastructure projects that 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.



**KENSINGTON MARKET
COMMUNITY LAND TRUST**

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 them in this process, and act with the urgency this moment requires. Thank you.

In solidarity,

Sebastian Tansil

Kensington Market Community Land Trust