



Community in Public

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Date: July 8th, 2026

Re: TE34.17 - Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative - Final Report

Chinatown Planning Framework is now a displacement framework

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of Council,

My name is Cheryll Case. I am the Founder and Executive Director of Community in Public (formerly known as CP Planning), a Toronto-based community network practicing a human rights-based approach to urban planning. I am writing in support of the Chinatown community and the Chinatown Advocacy Network (CAN) as you consider the Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Framework on July 8th.

I write from experience with the same pattern a few kilometres North, in my neighbourhood of Little Jamaica. For years, residents, business owners, and cultural stewards along Eglinton West have organized, studied their own neighbourhood, and brought prepared, detailed direction to the City's planning process for the Oakwood–Vaughan area. That work has been received, recorded, and repeatedly praised. What it has not produced is the implementation of commitments the community asked for. Community in Public has since filed formal complaints with the City's Development Review division and then later with the Ombudsman Toronto, documenting a consistent failure to provide the information communities need to participate meaningfully, unacceptable delay, and a failure to follow through on commitments the City itself made.



I name this because what is arriving at your table for Chinatown is not an isolated shortfall. It is the same administrative pattern: a process that extracts community knowledge while keeping decision-making power in place to not take action, and that offers the language of equity and redress without the tools, funding, or legal force to deliver any of it. On April 1st, the Chinatown community brought forward four concrete demands and Council directed staff to revise the framework in response. The revised framework does not carry those demands forward. It does not include the scan of enforceable anti-displacement measures Council requested. It attaches no funding to its equity commitments.

This raises a question that belongs to you as elected representatives:

Who governs this city? Is it residents and the officials they elect, or is it the administrative staff?

And whose expertise is treated as authoritative?

the community members who have studied their own neighbourhoods and arrived with clear direction, or a process that has, across multiple neighbourhoods, declined to carry Council's and residents' housing and economic-rights direction into enforceable outcomes?

I want to be clear that I recognize that there are staff and elected representatives putting in the required effort to fulfill their public service duty to serve the public well. It is reports like this one that show significant barriers remain — barriers that prevent our municipal government from meeting the standard the public deserves. Identifying those barriers and holding this process accountable is all of our responsibility, and above all it is that of elected officials – those with the authority to direct outcomes that align with the housing rights set out in the [Toronto Housing Charter](#).

Namely:

- **Under Implementation --** the City of Toronto will:
 - Provide for participation by members of affected communities in decision-making related to housing, including by persons with lived experience of homelessness or of precarious or inadequate housing.
 - Develop and maintain a housing strategy to further the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing, through all appropriate means, including creating and maintaining affordable housing, planning, zoning, licensing, regulation, enforcement, taxation and other measures within its authority...
 - Require that any future City decisions, policies, services and programs that impact housing are screened and assessed for impact on the Toronto Housing Charter and revise them, as appropriate, to ensure that the City's Policy as stated in the Toronto Housing Charter is achieved and not negatively impacted.
 - Provide opportunities for organizations and affected communities to advance a human-rights based approach to housing and participate in decisions that affect it.



I therefore urge Council to give staff the direction the framework currently lacks:

- Upgrade the proposed West Chinatown Planning Framework to a Secondary Plan with enforceable policies; (Council to give directive to city planning);
- Establish a Chinatown Community Improvement Plan aimed at protecting and expanding small, locally serving business; (Council to give directive to community planning);
- Develop a city-wide anti-displacement strategy for designated Cultural Districts at-risk of gentrification and loss;
- Initiate a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study to protect Chinatown's full cultural fabric, including intangible cultural assets (Council to give directive to heritage staff through city planning); and
- Establish a Community Development Plan with an interdivisional approach for Chinatown (Council to give directive to Social Development Finance and Administration SDFA and Economic Development and Culture EDC)

Cultural redress and housing rights cannot be delivered through language alone. They are delivered when a community holds real authority over the decisions that shape its future, and when the City is held to the commitments it has made. I join the many others asking Council to meaningfully engage CAN, to act with the urgency this moment requires, and to hold this process to the standard the Toronto Housing Charter already sets.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cheryll Case
Founder and Executive Director, Community in Public