

Alors, merci beaucoup, Monsieur Hum. Encore une fois, votre contribution est très appréciée, sachez-le. Merci.

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**M. VICTOR HUM :**

The public consultation is good. It's a good point to start. I hope the city will make more and listen to the people, especially the ones that pay taxes. Merci.

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**Mme JESSICA CHEN**  
**Fondation Jia**

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**LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Merci. Alors, prochaine intervenante, Jessica Chen. Bonsoir, Madame Chen. Donc, vous avez également de l'interprétation pour les deux dernières minutes de votre présentation, c'est bien ça?

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**Mme JESSICA CHEN :**

D'accord, je sais.

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**LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Merci.

**Mme JESSICA CHEN :**

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Bonsoir, commissionnaires, je m'appelle Jessica Chen, je suis membre du groupe de travail sur le Quartier chinois. Je vais vous présenter aujourd'hui au nom de la Fondation Jia, le

630 nouvel organisme de développement communautaire sans but lucratif qui a pour mandat de promouvoir le patrimoine culturel du Quartier chinois de Montréal.

Nous vous remercions de nous donner l'occasion de commenter les nouvelles autorisations proposées en matière de hauteur et de densité des bâtiments situés dans le Quartier chinois.

635 La Fondation Jia appuie la modification proposée par la Ville de Montréal au plan d'urbanisme. La conservation de l'environnement urbain et bâti du Quartier chinois, est essentielle pour préserver sa valeur historique, sociale, culturelle, architecturale, et surtout pour permettre aux modes de vie, aux pratiques culturelles de la communauté non seulement de survivre, mais de prospérer.

640 Also instead of reiterating the points all in the written submission that I submitted to the commission, I hope to use my time here to share some of my personal experiences and learnings, based on my years of working in different Chinatowns in North America, particularly in Vancouver's Chinatown.

645 In my written submission on behalf of the Jia Foundation, I outline some of the shared struggles in different Chinatowns in North America and strategies tried by different community groups and policy makers.

650 Generally, there is a common understanding that Chinatown discussion is much more than revitalization or just heritage building conservation. It is about its people, its cultural heritage, and their way of life that we have heard from the earlier speakers.

655 And any economic revitalization strategy will need to surround around these issues, otherwise you will erase the community in the process of revitalizing it.

I was a city planner with the city of Vancouver from 1999 to 2010 working with the inner city neighbourhoods, commonly known as the downtown Eastside for over ten years.

660 Chinatown is one of the neighbourhoods included in the downtown Eastside. Basically downtown Eastside is the first faubourg in Vancouver, just like our Montreal Chinatown being in faubourg Saint-Laurent.

665 Situated in the same location with this unbroken history makes our Chinatown here in Montreal, together with Vancouver and Victoria, very unique, unlike Toronto's Chinatown that was relocated.

670 So, Vancouver's Chinatown is a very interesting and a good case study for Montreal to see what has worked well and what has not, even though those events happened at different times in different sequences. So, we can avoid the mistakes and do better.

With some of the shared city planning and other public policy histories in North America, for example the 1970s urban renewal programs that Karen Cho earlier talked about, highways, government projects, land expropriation.

675 1980s, suburbanization happens. Middleclass families started moving to the suburbs. 1990s, federal government stop its funding program for affordable housing in 1993. Then the institutionalization of psychiatric care without sufficient community care program.

680 All of this resulting in different social economic issues in different cities, depending on how different cities respond to it. So, following that affordable housing issues, drug use, mental health, et cetera.

685 So, in that shared history, Vancouver's Chinatown managed to stop the highway. So, they didn't build a highway and Vancouver's Chinatown was designated by both the city and the province in the 1970s.

690 So, heritage zoning, design guidelines, list of heritage buildings, and their building heritage building value statement, they all start to put in place since the 1970s. Kind of like what we're trying to do right now.

695 However, those other social economic challenges due to the prolonged public disinvestment and the misaligned public policies, among many other reasons, they make the things more difficult to resolve.

700 So, revitalisation of Chinatown discussion, it has a very long history in Vancouver. In the 1980s, we see new social and cultural organizations formed to serve the growing and changing Chinese community and the construction of Chinatown gate is become very popular in various Chinatown, including ours in Montreal.

705 In the 1990s and 2000s, there was increased concerns about equitable development with gentrification pressure, similar to what we're discussing today. So the Chinatown discussion in Vancouver shifted to how we can revitalize without displacement.

710 So how can we try to balance these diverse ranges of issues that we are facing? And I see that in the recent adopted Plan d'action pour le Quartier chinois par la Ville de Montreal. They a long list of... the plan has a long list of comprehensive objectives that we want.

715 But eventually with that plan, we will need to find ways to prioritize all these objectives with a very coherent development and urban design vision, because not all the objectives will fit in all the development projects in Chinatown. So how are we going to put, get them all to fit together?

And we will need a designated team with the right background and expertise to carry that out, intentionally its implementation.

715 So even with such a long history of Chinatown being a heritage site in Vancouver, Vancouver City Council in 2010 wanted to try something different, something new. So, they start

to look at how height and density, similar to today's subject, can be a tool, not only to help revitalization but help pay for some of the public amenities that we want. As we know, cities always short on budget.

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So, two arguments at that time were put forward and you will find it very familiar in various speakers in public submissions we hear. Two arguments at that time in Vancouver were put forward: first we need more people to live in Chinatown so we need more density, therefore we need more condos.

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Two: allow rezoning projects to take place in some small area that we think will not affect the heritage value of Chinatown's core and negotiate with the developers for those projects to help pay for the public amenity that we want. Affordable housing, heritage conservation comes with a cost.

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Earlier, Mr Hum talk about these buildings are deteriorating, we need help. So, it sounds very familiar and the result of it was a very contentious public process and then the rezoning policy got put in place in 2012.

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Allow only a very small portion of this long designated heritage area to allow for rezoning from 9 stories to 15. So, we do think undercurrent proposed zoning is relatively high, but that was one proposing Vancouver, from 9 to 15.

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So, since that policy put in place 2012, within short five years, major changes took place in Vancouver's Chinatown. These condo projects were built, new population moved in as expected, but they do not have much connection to Chinatown.

Earlier I forgot to mention the population, the intended clientele of these condo projects are different and so they moving, they have no connection to Chinatown.

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And on the other side of that coin, the public benefit that city was hoping to get it was minimal, because the land left for areas like this was way too small to be able to retrieve enough

public benefit. So, and then the legacy businesses start to leave because things get expensive and all that.

750 So, all that would become very visible in five years. There are lot of data that if commissioners are interested I can forward later. Those are very well documented in Vancouver's report.

755 So Chinatown becomes coffee town as one of the local seniors told me that: « I don't even go to these hipster coffee shops, it's become coffee town. »

760 So, in 2017, when another rezoning project was proposed, a major community mobilization took place. Generation young and old, Chinese and non-Chinese, many other communities in solidarity can be united to oppose to this rezoning, I believe it was the 4th rezoning project, fearing that the Chinatown as we know it will disappear completely, forever. And that is now known as the key for clash, that's on 105 Keefer. O.K. We will finish.

765 And that's (inaudible) today. Last year, the alarm sound by the Wing's Noodle block and mobilization followed in Montreal sounds very familiar.

770 So since then, city of Vancouver has reversed their rezoning policy in 2018 and started their new approach to city planning in Chinatown, focus on the cultural heritage and seeing Chinatown as a place for reconciliation and culture redress, and not just a place for development potential.

775 Today earlier, Karen mentioned the cultural heritage asset management plan which I helped the assisting developing is going to Vancouver City Council. In fact, the same day, today, and they're in the middle of this kind of process too.

775 So, I just want to end; Montreal Chinatown, we are not alone obviously, and what we're doing today is important. I believe it's one step toward the right direction and I do have other

concerns I think I shared in the written submission, so I look forward and with many other elements that need to be addressed beyond height density.

780 Jia Foundation is looking forward to work with the City and other community organizations to keep things moving forward.

**LE PRÉSIDENT :**

785 Merci.

**Mme JESSICA CHEN :**

790 Thank you, and I think I ran out time for Wai.

**LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Yes, very, very briefly. Oui, très rapidement.

795 **Mme WAI YIN KWOK, traduction en cantonnais.**

**LE PRÉSIDENT :**

800 Merci beaucoup. Je veux préciser qu'on a reçu votre mémoire, votre document, en anglais et en français. Donc, merci beaucoup, en plus d'avoir fait l'effort de traduction. Alors, les trois commissaires on a lu et on a plusieurs questions pour vous.

Je vais d'abord laisser Bruno-Serge poser la première.

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**LE COMMISSAIRE :**

810 Bonsoir. Vous avez parlé de plusieurs groupes qui travaillent, plusieurs objectifs qui ont été énoncés. Vous avez même dit qu'il faudrait, à un moment donné, faire le ménage là-dedans et en prioriser certains, parce qu'on ne peut pas tout faire en même temps. Je vous ai bien compris.

815 Alors, selon vous, quel serait, par exemple, les trois objectifs à prioriser, à faire d'abord, dans toute cette liste de choses que vous jugez nécessaires et essentielles?

**Mme JESSICA CHEN :**

Est-ce que je peux répondre en anglais?

820 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

Oui, bien sûr.

**Mme JESSICA CHEN :**

825 So, I think the priority what we have is right to first, I think the city now will declare that Chinatown is a heritage site, and you make the vision very clear. Because before we don't know which direction the city wants to go, and even for the property owners and the small businesses in Chinatown, they want to know.

830 People care, city care. We want the investment back into the community.

835 So first is to have a very clear vision that it demonstrates what's announced. And then, next, it is to show the commitment of that vision with concrete actions. And then, so right I think right now we are trying to do with regulation but with on top of regulation, it needs to come with



incentives, because we're not about a type of development. This is about facilitating the type and form of development we want to see.

840 Certain developments will need more support because they're disinvested for a long time and they've been, for example, the family association earlier, I think one commissioner mentioned ask: "What's the function?" In my view, they're providing social services that the city probably had not provided for this particular community for a long time.

845 So, I think these kinds of disinvestment, it would need support in order to do that.

So, regulations... second priority will be regulation need to directly come with incentive programs in order to show how we can facilitate the development we want.

850 And the last is building. Now we know the building will be here, we are not going to get displayed then is actually we're doing the building conservation because of the people, because the way of life, because the way we remember how Chinatown.

855 Without the people, it's just a shell, it's not Chinatown. So I think that's the third priority will be making sure our values statement about why Chinatown matters actually more than just a set of buildings.

So that will be my (inaudible) vision and then development comes with regulation, incentives, and then it's the people.

860 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

So maintaining the residents that are already there?

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**Mme JESSICA CHEN :**

870 Yes. I think... yes. So, residents, they have existing support that we need to make sure they are there. Because otherwise what's the alternative? Displacement.

I think that's not... we need to bring in new additional residents as well but in complementary to the way of life that's already existing, not in replacement of it.

**LE COMMISSAIRE :**

875 Parfait, merci.

**LA COMMISSAIRE :**

880 Est-ce que vous pourriez expliquer un peu plus précisément? Parce que vous avez parlé de l'importance d'augmenter le nombre de résidents, mais pas de façon comme ça a été fait à Vancouver, en construisant des condos de plus de 10, 12, 15 étages où les gens qui sont venus y habiter n'étaient pas nécessairement des gens d'origine chinoise.

885 Il faudrait garder à Montréal ce statut sans que ce soit exclusivement réservé à la population chinoise, il faudrait quand même que les d'édifices résidentiels qui sont construits soient quand même, gardent quand même une – projettent une image de la communauté chinoise. Est-ce que vous comptez pour arriver à cet objectif-là sur la mise en valeur de la culture chinoise?

890 Je pense que dans votre mémoire, vous mentionnez l'importance de valoriser la culture, les activités chinoises. Est-ce que vous pourriez nous parler un petit peu plus de ce patrimoine intangible que vous voulez mettre en valeur?

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**Mme JESSICA CHEN :**

Oui. Je pense qu'il y a deux façons, on peut le faire.

900 The first will be I think existing... yes, when we talk about residential and bringing in, we are not saying: it's only for Chinese people, not Chinese people.

905 But I do think with the senior (inaudible) Chinese senior population, when we build senior housing, they become a very important value, glue. They become a glue to the community because young generations come visit their seniors, and that's what we're seeing right now in Vancouver's Chinatown.

910 They are having a main focus on the senior housing strategy for their Chinese seniors. And this is not going to be the only place people can choose to be but they can be one of the places. Because then the seniors, they will be able to access the type of culture, culturally and linguistically accessible type of service in Chinatown.

915 In return, you don't need to regulate the size and things to have the Chinese culture to continue to be there, because once the population is there, they will want the services in certain ways. The culture can continue.

920 The second part will be there are existing community organisations continue practicing those cultures, not matter if it's dragon dance, in the memoire I talk about the lion dance as one very good example. So, we need to make sure the space, the space will be retrofitted in way that these services, these practices can continue so they don't get displaced out of it.

925 So, I think the patrimoine culturel has two ways. One is around the economic life and the other is about cultural and traditional practice, and make sure we have space for that.

**LA COMMISSAIRE :**

Oui, thank you.

930 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Dans votre mémoire, vous donnez des exemples à un moment de ce que vous avez vu ailleurs, notamment vous parlez de l'approche de historic urban landscape. Pouvez-vous expliquer un petit peu ce que c'est?

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**Mme JESSICA CHEN :**

Oui. The historic urban landscape approach is an approach recommended by UNESCO and that is exactly the approach that Vancouver's Chinatown is going for. And their cultural heritage asset management plan is a tool, a step towards UNESCO designation.

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So, what it means is that a neighbourhood like Chinatown that has a long history, layers of history, of different communities coming together and then we are in our generation apply on own interpretation, apply our history here too.

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So, you actually need to start from not just about which buildings are important to protect, you have to get to why are they important to be protected. And then so we start from the community value, their way of life. Why we even save Chinatown to start. And understanding that and identify the significance these buildings, these activities they bring about.

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So that is the approach you need to start to really understand the value behind each of the conservation. So, the building of society, building not just because they are old, they have a certain significance that is a lot deeper and layer. And then we need to understand that, so then the protection...

955           Once you understand that, then the protection will go beyond the façades, the corners, the door, it will go deeper into the activities the organisations. How do we help them to continue to thrive and provide the type of activity they are providing?

**LE COMMISSAIRE :**

960           Est-ce que vous pensez que le Quartier chinois de Montréal pourrait être désigné par l'UNESCO?

**Mme JESSICA CHEN :**

965           Yes, so that is... I do think Montreal, we are in a very unique time and that's why I mentioned Vancouver, Victoria, and Montreal. And there are a lot of other smaller cities Chinatown also located in the same place.

970           They were thinking about a serial nomination, so that means all these Chinatowns are equally important because of how Chinese as foreign migration cannot settle in this place. So there was discussion about that.

          And definitely Vancouver will be reaching out to Montreal to talk about next steps.

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**LE PRÉSIDENT :**

          Serge, dernière question.

980           **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

          Oui. En ce moment, à peu près 50 % plus ou moins de la population du Quartier chinois est âgée. On aimerait tous que grand-papa et grand-maman soient éternels, mais malheureusement, ce n'est pas le cas. Et ces gens-là vont disparaître à un moment donné.

985 Croyez-vous que les gens qui n'ont pas vécu leur vie dans le Quartier chinois, et qui aujourd'hui sont à Brossard ou ailleurs, une fois âgés, vont revenir dans le Quartier chinois, ou ils vont plutôt vouloir demeurer dans leur communauté brossardienne, par exemple?

**Mme JESSICA CHEN :**

990 Yes, of course in talking about Chinatown there's always talk about the so-called « new Chinatowns » and every city in Vancouver has that, the Montreal has. And I think they are not mutually exclusive.

995 And historic Chinatown will always be historic Chinatown, what it offers is different from what Brossard and Concordia University, that every commercial activities is very different, and I don't think I need to mention why it's different.

1000 And I think what we need to do is a neighbourhood that is not new, is old. And then any older neighbourhood require reinvestment in the infrastructure that hasn't been invested back in. And so, the old building, no matters older buildings or the housing, and housing we do is... housing is not just housing for any housing, we need to think about the type of housing we want to encourage.

1005 You know, sometimes you get only urban singles, is that the type of neighbourhood I want to encourage? I do think it's a place of family.

1010 And then in terms of the seniors I can only say that in Vancouver, it really starts to looking at if we want to encourage more quality senior housing, then that means we need to start to think about a campus of care, and how do we have that continuum of care to build into that. So that will be a bigger conversation, yes.

1015 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

Thank you.

1020 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Merci. Merci beaucoup. Si vous voulez traduire très rapidement, parce qu'on a déjà dépassé notre temps.

**Mme WAI YIN KWOK, traduction en cantonnais.**

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It's okay.

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**M. WALTER CHI-YAN TOM**

**Concordia Student Union Legal Information Clinic**

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**LE PRÉSIDENT :**

It's okay. Merci. Merci beaucoup, Madame Chen, encore pour votre contribution, vraiment apprécié. Prochain intervenant, Walter Chi-Yan TOM. Bonsoir.

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**M. WALTER CHI-YAN TOM :**

Bonsoir, bonsoir.

1040 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Bienvenu. Alors, vous avez dix minutes.