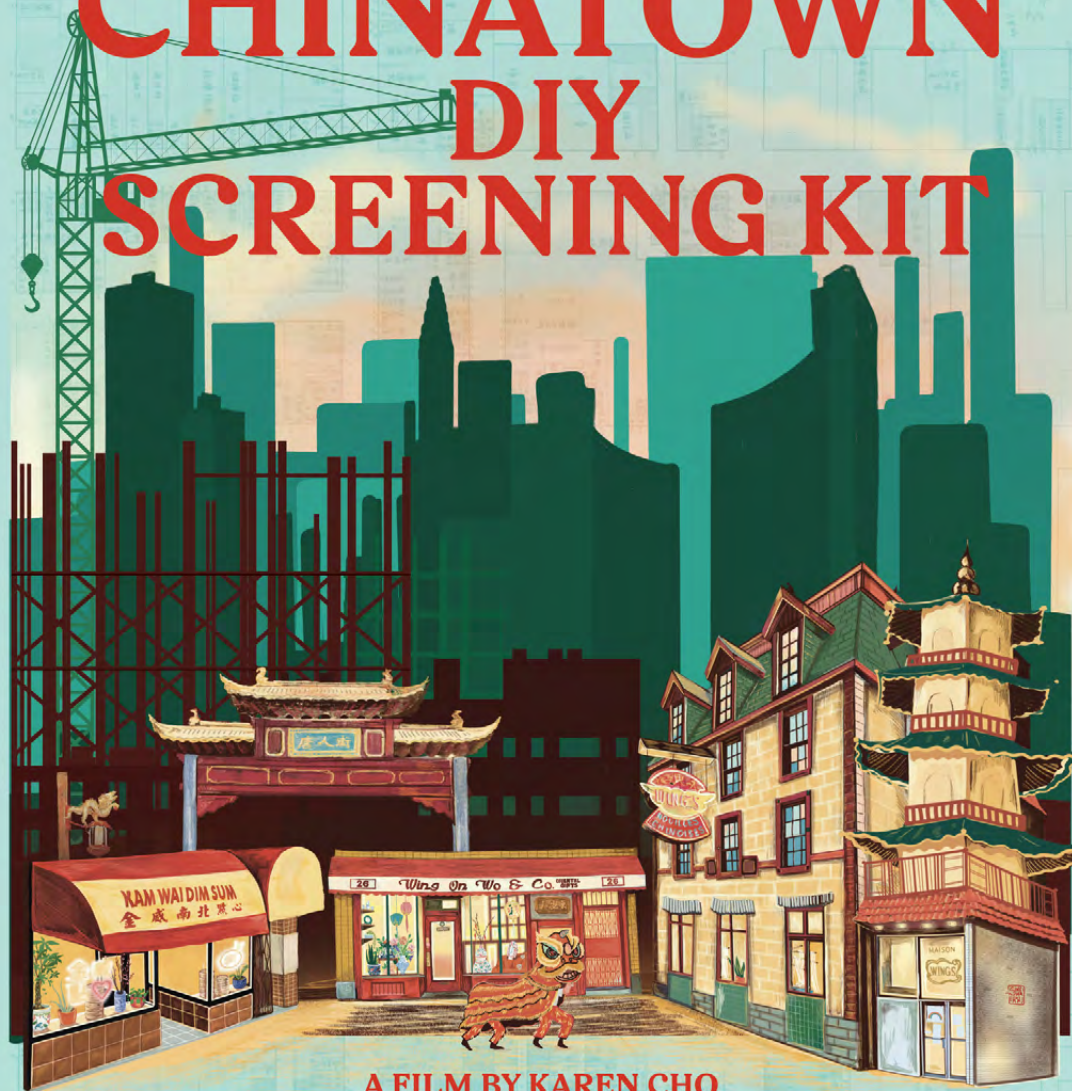


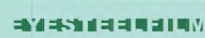
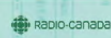
BIG FIGHT IN LITTLE CHINATOWN

DIY SCREENING KIT



A FILM BY KAREN CHO

EYESTEELFILM PRESENTS BIG FIGHT IN LITTLE CHINATOWN WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY KAREN CHO FEATURING JAN LEE GARY LUM LORRAINE LUM MEI LUM NANCY SEID BETTY ENG PETER LEE GARNET LEE WALTER CHI-YAN TOM JESSICA CHEN BENNY SHEK ANDY YAN WILLIAM LIU SUSAN LIU KUAN CHEK YUN WENDY WONG WALLY LIU MAY CHIU RICK WONG HENRY YU MICHAEL TAN FRED MAH JUNE CHOW JEFFREY WONG DANNY QUON BRENDA JOY LEM BRYANT CHANG JEAN-PHILIPPE RIOPEL EDITOR RYAN MULLINS CINEMATOGRAPHERS NATHANIEL BROWN JOSHUA FRANK ORIGINAL MUSIC DAVID DRURY PRODUCER BOB MOORE LINE PRODUCER VALERIE SHAMASH CO-PRODUCER KATIE MCKAY EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MILA AUNG-THWIN DANIEL CROSS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, TWO JANE JANKOVIC INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION OFFICER, TWO LINDA FONG LOCATION SOUND RECORDING TOD VAN DYK TOBIAS HAYNES MILA AUNG-THWIN JUAN CRUZ FERNÁNDEZ ANIMATION FRED CASIA BRANDON BLOMMAERT ARCHIVAL CLEARANCE THEA TODD SOUND DESIGN CORY RIZDS CAS BUSINESS AFFAIRS VEE DI GREGORIO POST PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR SAMANTHA NEBOSCHIZKIJA COLORIST HAMED (ED) ALEALI COMMUNITY OUTREACH SHAWN TSE POSTER DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION SINGHA HON



Introduction

Thank you for bringing Big Fight in Little Chinatown into your community!

In 2023, we took the film on a year-long “Coast-to-Coast-In-Community-Tour” so the documentary could be used as a means to educate, create meaningful dialogue, and as a tool for change. To date, over 125 in-person screenings of Big Fight in Little Chinatown have taken place, over 7.5 thousand people have seen the film in person, we’ve brought the film into 15 North American Chinatowns, and our screenings have helped fundraise over 13K\$ for various Chinatown initiatives and community projects.

We have developed this **Do-it-Yourself Screening Kit** as part of our efforts to make the film as accessible as possible to audiences so that it can continue to have impact within communities far and wide.

This kit includes an **Activation Guide** with resources and ideas for planning, promoting and organizing your screening, an **Education Guide** that provides historical background, present-day context and deeper learning opportunities around the film themes, and lastly, a **Discussion Guide** tailored towards different audiences.



Montreal Chinatown Screening 2023 | photo credit: Karen Cho



We wish you a successful screening event!

- Karen Cho &
The Big Fight in Little Chinatown
Production Team at EyeSteelFilm



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Ken Li outside KK Discount in NYC Chinatown | photo credit: Nathaniel Brown

Activation Guide: Practical information

Practical information for screening organizers:

Film Length: 88 Minutes (84 minutes without credit roll)

Available versions of the film: (Make sure to request the version that's best suited for your audience.)

- With English Subtitles (original version – the majority of the film takes place in English)
- With English and Chinese (traditional) subtitles
- With French Subtitles
- With French and Chinese (traditional) subtitles

To organize and promote your screening:

We've also prepared this [Community Screening Media Kit](#) where you'll find the following resources to help organize and promote your screening event:

- Film Trailer
- Synopsis of the film (English, Chinese, French)
- Director Biography (English, Chinese, French)
- Production Stills with descriptions that can be used to promote your screening
- Graphic assets that can be used to create promotional material or social media posts for your screening event
- A customizable postcard-size version of the film poster that can be printed for promotional or fundraising purposes
- A flyer size version of the poster
- A graphic template for paper tickets



Outside Wing On Wo in New York Chinatown with film Subjects & Crew
Photo Credit: Vivian Sangsukwirasathien



Toronto Hot Docs Cinema Screening 2023
Photo Credit: Shawn Tse

Ideas for organizing an impactful screening event

Think of your screening event as an opportunity:

- To create a meaningful dialogue around Chinatown
- To give local organizers, organizations, Chinatown residents, or others stakeholders a voice
- To mobilize, educate, fundraise or be a call to action
- To activate Chinatown spaces and businesses
- To build connections, conversations, and understanding between different communities

We've organized a series of community screenings in Chinatowns across North America and worked with festivals, organizations, activists and schools. Here are some ideas we've employed to make our screenings more impactful. We hope they'll spark ideas for your screening event.



Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre Screening 2023
Photo Credit: Karen Cho

Location- Location-Location

Can you use your screening as an opportunity to activate an underutilized Chinatown space or highlight a beloved Chinatown institution? We've hosted screenings in Chinatown Churches, businesses, senior centres, family associations, cultural centres and outside in the park or city square. Often the success of a screening lies in how close and easily accessible you can make it for the community.

If you are lacking community gathering spaces, are there other places you can leverage for the community? We've hosted screenings in libraries, theatres, universities and even a curling club that was on the periphery of Chinatown. Sometimes these institutions can offer their spaces for free or at a reduced rate for community groups and the screening event can be used to forge relationships and networks for future community events.

If you're organizing your screening for a school or public institution, are there ways of inviting the Chinatown community into your space to make the event more meaningful for audiences?

Make it more than a screening

Turning the screening into a community event, membership drive, or fundraiser can be great ways to give your screening event more impact. Can you invite local groups and organizations to table at the event or sign people up for their causes? Maybe local artists, cultural workers or businesses can be invited to showcase or sell their goods. Can you work with local community groups or senior centres to make it an outing for their residents? Can you turn the screening into a fundraising event by selling tickets or postcards of the film poster, collecting donations, or holding a raffle?

Localize the issues to make the Q&A/discussion more relevant & meaningful

Although the film takes place in 5 Chinatowns, the themes and issues it explores are universal to all Chinatowns and marginalized communities. Why not invite local activists, community organizers, historians or elders to share their insight and knowledge on the challenges of your local Chinatown? Likewise, inviting other community groups, student groups, or organizations working on similar issues would be a good way to localize and deepen the discussion. The screening event can be a good opportunity to build solidarity amongst other neighbourhoods and social justice movements.

Give audiences a call to action

We've found that giving the audience a call to action at the end of a screening is very effective. Sometimes it is asking people to sign a petition, write to the city, or join an organization. We've also projected QR codes on the screen where people can give direct donations to worthy causes.

Education Guide

A Brief History

What is Chinatown?

While each Chinatown has its own unique history, with this overview we touch on some of the overarching commonalities that have affected Chinatowns throughout the years.

Chinatowns across North America were forged during an era of white supremacy and settler colonialism. The first waves of Chinese immigrants from southern China arrived in the mid-1800s along North America's West Coast. They came for the Gold Rush and moved inland as labourers in the building of the transcontinental railway. Chinatowns emerged in various cities and mining towns as settlements for Chinese labourers to find work, food, and shelter. Founded in an era of rampant Anti-Asian sentiment where racist laws and immigration policies often barred the Chinese from owning land, working in certain professions, accessing banking services, or bringing their families to North America, Chinatowns became important sites of mutual aid, sanctuary and community resilience for early Chinese immigrants and continue to play these roles in the present day.

'Yellow Peril' Fears give rise to Anti-Chinese Riots

Life in 'Gold Mountain' (what the Chinese called North America) was dangerous. Chinese labourers were paid lower wages than white workers, who blamed them for stealing jobs. After the railroad was completed in the US & Canada, [anti-Chinese attacks increased](#). White supremacist rhetoric dominated national politics with fears of a 'Yellow Peril' invasion. Politicians criticized the Chinese as incapable of assimilation and their Chinatowns, as havens for [filth and disease, drug use, prostitution and immorality](#).

Between 1870 – 1880 [153 anti-Chinese riots](#) erupted throughout the US with episodes of violence in Denver, Los Angeles and Seattle's Chinatowns. Canada was not immune. An [1892 riot](#) targeted Calgary's Chinatown after a Small Pox outbreak and in [1907](#) thousands of labour protestors in Vancouver destroyed businesses in [Chinatown](#) before heading to Japantown where they were fought off.



*Fred Mah on the balcony of the Mah Association of Canada's building in Vancouver's Chinatown
Photo Credit: Josh Frank*



Chefs from New York Chinatown's Hop Kee Restaurant.
Photo Credit: Nathaniel Brown

■ Exclusion Acts, Head Taxes and Restricting Chinatown Growth

Hysteria around 'Yellow Peril' brought on a series of restrictive and racist immigration policies in the US & Canada. The U.S. Chinese Exclusion Act, (1882) Canada's [Chinese Head Tax](#) (1885-1923), [Chinese Immigration \(Exclusion\) Act](#) (1923-47) and immigration quota systems successively restricted the population growth of Chinese in North America. These laws [marked the first time](#) immigration was restricted explicitly based on race and nationality. As a result, Chinatowns also saw a period of population stagnation and decline as bachelor Chinese men couldn't bring their families to North America.

■ Chinatowns as Crucibles of Struggle, Survival and Mutual Aid

Chinatowns were products of extreme [racial segregation](#). During the exclusion era, many Chinese could not live outside Chinatown with legal barriers limiting their ability to own land and property. In the US, [Alien Land laws](#) prohibited Chinese and Japanese from becoming land owners. Canada's Chinese Immigration Act barred them from voting, holding public office or owning property.

In response to exclusion, bigoted laws, and [racist attacks](#), informal networks, organizations and [Chinese Clan Associations](#) were established in Chinatowns to provide mutual aid and a safe haven to Chinese immigrants. Given their 160 years+ history of community resistance against erasure, Chinatowns are a symbol of resilience and remain a touchstone for Asians across North America.

What is Chinatown Facing

Today's Context

While Chinatowns were shaped by racist immigration laws and policies that effectively limited where Chinese could live, work, and own property, today's Chinatowns face new challenges. Modern urban renewal projects often target Chinatowns and other racialized neighbourhoods, displacing individuals, rupturing community ties, and changing the social fabric of low-income areas. When immigration opened up, suburban exodus further weakened Chinatown's residential base and factors like the availability of Asian produce and services outside of historic Chinatowns lessened their role as the centres of Asian Canadian/American life. But still, many seniors, low-income earners and newcomers continue to call Chinatown home and face threats of displacement as their neighbourhoods become increasingly unaffordable.

From the City Beautiful era (c. 1890s -1930s), to the urban renewal that took place in the decades following the Second World War (1940s-1980s), to today's downtown revitalization and gentrification, historic Chinatowns in North America share a clear pattern of planned destruction across generations.

The [life cycle of Chinatowns](#) as described by David Chuenyan Lai (1988) touches on various development stages of Chinatowns. The "budding" stage is brought on by the clustering of new immigrants into an area of a city, the "blooming" stage is activated through the establishment of anchor businesses that attract further residents, and the decline or "withering" stage is often caused by exclusionary immigration policies or city divestment. Some Chinatowns survive into a "revival" stage often spurred by the opening up of immigration policy, population growth and family reunification, while the fate of Chinatowns who could not reinvent themselves is ultimately "extinction."

Today many Chinatowns find themselves at a crossroads between revival and extinction. Decades of municipal divestment, real estate speculation and rising land value make Chinatowns a target for gentrification and 'renewal' projects like highways, stadiums, government buildings, convention centres, prisons etc. Once situated in the least desirable areas of town, historic Chinatowns are now located on some of the most expensive real estate in a city.



*May Chiu of Montreal's Chinatown Working Group
Photo Credit: Josh Frank*



*Montreal Chinatown Gate swallowed by condo construction
Photo Credit: Van Royko*



*Chung Szeto and Ngan Oi Lo Ho praying in Montreal Chinatown Buddhist temple
Photo Credit: Zachary Faye*



*William Liu, 2nd generation owner of Kam Wai Dim Sum in Vancouver's Chinatown
Photo Credit: Karen Cho*

Struggling Chinatown businesses that shuttered during the COVID pandemic and the emptying of the downtown core only added to these gentrification and displacement pressures.

Tenants in LA's Chinatown are increasingly being priced out of their neighbourhood as luxury condos and tourist-facing infrastructure like a [gondola for Dodger Stadium](#) threaten their quality of life. Recent light-rail projects have severed [Edmonton's Chinatown](#), threatened [Montreal's Chinatown](#) and caused community discord in [Seattle's CID / Chinatown district](#). Despite years of community opposition to a market-rate condo development on a key Vancouver Chinatown site, the project at [105 Keefer](#) was approved increasing division in the neighbourhood. Washington's Chinatown has one of the most ornate gates in all of North America, yet nearly all the residents, businesses and culture were displaced with the [building of a sports arena](#) and focus on tourist façadism. [Philadelphia's Chinatown](#) which has successively fought against an expressway, convention centre, rail tunnel, stadium, and Casino, is now actively fighting another new proposed sports arena.

Yet Chinatowns remain. These generational sites of community resistance and resilience challenge the notion that gentrification and displacement are inevitable. Today's 'Save Chinatown Movement' looks beyond the Chinatown gate focusing on the intersections of wider issues like social housing, public safety, affordability, and building an inclusive future for diverse and marginalized groups.

Quintessentially human-scale, walkable, affordable, and sustainable, Chinatowns also show us what a dream neighbourhood could be. While rooted in the past, these historic neighbourhoods are also key to unlocking the future potential of our cities.

A Brief Timeline of Chinatowns

Key Dates

History of North American Chinese

Chinatown moments

Patterns of Urban Development affecting Chinatown



1848

Gold Rush fever in North America's west coast attracts Chinese from southern China

1848

First US Chinatown in San Francisco, CA

1870s & 1880s

Over 150 anti-Chinese riots, expulsions, & massacres in Western US, some Chinatowns destroyed

1885

Chinese Head Tax introduced in Canada

1906

San Francisco earthquake levels Chinatown; Community fights to keep Chinatown

1858

First Canadian Chinatown in Victoria, BC

1860s & 1880s

Chinese laborers help build transcontinental railroads in the US & Canada

1882

US Chinese Exclusion Act passed

1902

US Chinese Exclusion Act made permanent

1907

Vancouver riot nearly destroys Chinatown and Japantown; spurred by anti-Chinese riots in Bellingham & San Francisco



1890 - 1930

Patterns of Urban Development affecting Chinatown

City Beautiful Movement: Chinatowns seen as sites of disease and blight



1960+

Patterns of Urban Development affecting Chinatown

New Waves of Chinese immigration, Suburban Exodus, continued Land Expropriation

1965 & 1967

Immigration quota system abolished in the US & overtly racist restrictions removed from Canada's Immigration Act

1947

Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act in Canada / Chinese gain right to vote.

1923

Chinese Exclusion Act passed in Canada (replaces 'Head Tax')

1930s

Dramatic decline in Chinatown populations; largely a bachelor society

1943

Repeal of US Chinese exclusion Act during WWII when China is an Allied Nation

1923- 1947

Patterns of Urban Development affecting Chinatown

Decline & Stagnation of Chinatowns due to restrictive immigration policies

1960s – 1980s

200+ buildings in Montreal's Chinatown destroyed for public infrastructure projects

1960s – 1970s

Vancouver Chinatown fights city's freeway plan; Hogan's Alley neighbourhood is destroyed

1950s – 1960s

Most of Toronto's Chinatown demolished to build City Hall & Nathan Philips Square / Save Chinatown Campaign stops remaining expropriation

1952

Chinese gain right to vote in US

1950 - 1980

Patterns of Urban Development affecting Chinatown

Urban Renewal projects target Chinatowns and other marginalized communities

1980+

Patterns of Urban Development affecting Chinatown

Gentrification, Displacement

1980s

Surge of population growth in Chinatowns with newcomers from Vietnam, Hong Kong, Taiwan & mainland China

1982

Protest against plan to build prison next to New York's Chinatown draws 12,000 people

2017

Plans for a new skyscraper jail in New York's Chinatown are approved / The community unites with other neighbourhoods to protest.

2020s

Racially motivated hate crimes directed at Asians during COVID19 pandemic

2022

Montreal's Chinatown receives heritage status after community mobilization



Discussion Guide

Students, Youth & Educators (High School to University)

Big Fight in Little Chinatown sheds light on the little-known history of Chinatowns in North America, the challenges they face, and how these neighbourhoods continue to be sites of meaning and memory for the community. The absence of Chinatown's story from the mainstream narrative of our cities as well as a lack of Asian Canadian/ American stories in our history books and school curriculum makes it easier to erase, displace, and discount a people's place and community. Educators and students alike have a role to play in learning about the richness and contributions of communities like Chinatown that are facing active erasure. The storytelling of Chinatown is important to helping safeguard these endangered spaces into the future.



Chinese American Museum of Chicago Screening 2023

Pre-Screening Reflective Prompts for Teachers

- Select and share an article from the “Additional Resources” list or parts of the discussion guide as pre-reading.
- Select a question(s) as a reflective prompt and share it with students before the film

Reflective Questions and Prompts

Opening questions ...

- Why does Chinatown Matter? What does it mean to you?
- How has this film changed your understanding of Chinatown?
- Share a key moment in history, a character, or an example of resistance that stood out for you in the film. Why was this important to you?
- Is Chinatown just a place to eat and shop – Is it more? Why?

Content-driven prompts...

- How does the history of Chinatown link to the situation of Chinatowns today?
- What is the impact of large-scale urban development and gentrification on the communities living in Chinatown? What are the pros and cons? How can government and community stop the negative effects of gentrification?
- The film speaks to anti-Asian racism in the past and today, what parallels do you see?

Call to Action Prompts ...

- What can be done to shift people's understanding of the story of Chinatown?
- What is the history of your own Chinatown? What pressures and challenges does it face today?
- Who is the local group in your area working to promote or protect Chinatown? What are their current projects, actions, or concerns?

Discussion Guide

Community Agencies, Organizers and Groups

Chinatowns have a rich history of 160+ years of community resistance and resilience. Generational “Save Chinatown” movements are a testament to a community’s ability to galvanize, mobilize and speak truth to power. Community organizing of the past can help inform today’s struggles and teach us powerful lessons about what has worked and what needs to change so that the movement can continue to evolve. Chinatown is no longer an enclave and the challenges that today’s Chinatowns face are often part of larger social justice issues that bring into question the “type” of Chinatown we want to envision and “who” Chinatown is for. There is a need to find solidarity with other marginalized groups in and outside of Chinatown. Often amongst the last surviving ethnic neighbourhoods in a city, Chinatown is also a beacon for other communities facing active erasure and displacement.



*Friends of Chinatown YYC
screening in Calgary 2023
Photo Credit: Shawn Tse*

*Toronto Chinatown
Community Screening 2023
Photo Credit: Shawn Tse*



Reflective Questions and Prompts

Building Community Capacity...

- What can we learn from the Chinatown struggles of the past? What has and hasn't worked? What needs to change in our approach to community organizing?
- What is the best way to build community capacity in Chinatown to broaden your base of support and mobilize newer groups that have not traditionally been involved?
- How do you mobilize youth and engage their involvement? How do you go beyond engaging youth solely as volunteers and build their capacity and agency in the movement?

Inclusive Community Engagement...

- What is the role of elders and eldership? How do you share power and at the same time respect traditional and/or older ways of community building? How can inter-generational dialogue be built into organizing?
- How best can you work with the traditional 'power brokers'? How do you build bridges with the many Chinatown stakeholders around a common cause?
- How can you work to include the voices and needs of the most marginalized groups in the neighbourhood?

Beyond Chinatown ...

- How best can you shift the mainstream narrative to understand your views?
- Who are your best neighbours and allies and how do you build bridges for solidarity?

Discussion Guide

Government Policymakers, Urban Planners, Heritage Preservationists

Big Fight in Little Chinatown sheds light on the importance of, and/or the lack of, public policy to support the sustained growth of Chinatowns across North America. The film reflects on direct and indirect racist policies that served to eradicate Chinatowns, as well as modern-day large-scale urban development that has displaced, dismantled and diminished Chinatowns. The film challenges policymakers, urban planners, and heritage preservationists to shift the narrative around Chinatowns, to value them beyond tourist or historic facades, and to recognize their significance in both the history and future of city development.



Vancouver UBC Robson Square Screening 2023
Photo Credit: Shawn Tse

Reflective Questions and Prompts

- What can be done to enhance and shift the narrative around Chinatowns to ensure that policymakers, urban planners and heritage preservationists gain a deeper understanding and respect for the heritage, history, and socio-cultural realities of Chinatowns?
- What is the current impact of overdevelopment and gentrification in Chinatowns today? What specific policies, programs and practices can be used to counter the negative effects on community vitality and growth of Chinatowns in your city?
- In what ways can we look beyond the tourist needs of Chinatown and develop policy to address quality of life and the needs of Chinatown's residents? What can be done to adapt, align and change policy to support community-facing, equitable and sustainable Chinatown development?
- How best can policymakers, urban planners and heritage preservationists include the Chinatown community and its neighbours in the current and future planning process of the community?
- How is heritage defined? Whose history is deemed important? Who gets to have a future in a neighbourhood? How can heritage and urban planning policy work for living heritage communities?

Additional Resources

Articles

■ **Let Us Be Water: Grieving Gentrification in the Heart of the City**

Chang, Céline, GUTS Magazine, Vol. 11, Jan 2020

[Read article here](#)

■ **How Racism Created America's Chinatowns**

Goyette, Braden. Huffpost 2014 / 2019

[Read article here](#)

■ **Why does the U.S. have so many Chinatowns?**

Ng, Rachel. National Geographic, 2020

[Read article here](#)

■ **The History of Canada's Chinatowns from an Urban Planner's Perspective**

Walter-Joseph, Walter, Medium, May 2022

[Read article here](#)

■ **The planned destruction of Chinatowns in the United States and Canada since c.1900**

Vitiello, Domenic & Blickenderfer, Zoe. Planning Perspectives, Vol 35, Sept 2018

[Read full text here](#)

Books

■ **White Riot: the 1907 Anti-Asian Riots in Vancouver**

By Henry Tsang (2023)

[Buy book here](#)

■ **Interior Chinatown: A Novel**

by Charles Yu (2020) - Fiction

[Buy book here](#)

■ **American Chinatown: A People's History of Five Neighborhoods**

By Bonnie Tsui (2009)

[Buy book here](#)

■ **Chinatowns: Towns Within Cities in Canada,**

by Chuen-yan Lai (1988)

[Buy book here](#)

Additional Resources

Online Resources, Videos & Podcasts

■ **Chinatown Reimagined Forum II online resources & report**

(Montreal 2023)

[Watch videos here \(Resources\)](#)

[Read about the forum \(Report\)](#)

■ **Powerful Spoken Word Poems on Chinatown**

Chris Tse, Chinatown Reimagined Forum II 2023

[Watch video here](#)

■ **Chinatown Reimagined Forum I online resources**

(Vancouver 2021)

[Learn more here](#)

■ **Preserving Chinatowns in the US – The Formation of Chinatowns in US (timeline)**

Di Gao & Priya Chhaya, National Trust for Historic Preservation

[Check out the timeline here](#)

■ **The Surprising Reason Behind Chinatown's Aesthetic**

Chakraborty, Ranjani & Hirsch, Melissa. Vox May 2021

[Read article here](#)

■ **In Chinatown: Episodes 1, 2 & 3**

Series by Stephanie Chong and Bryce Quan (2018)

[Watch Episode 1](#)

[Watch Episode 2](#)

[Watch Episode 3](#)

■ **It's Chinatown**

99% Invisible Podcast. Episode 319

[Listen here](#)

■ **Backstory Live! Big Fight in Little Chinatown ft. Karen Cho and Angela Hong of Friends of Chinatown Toronto**

Backstory Podcast: Season 3 Episode 11

[Listen Here](#)

■ **Soul Lounge Primetime interview with Jan Lee and Karen Cho about Big Fight in Little Chinatown**

(New York 2022)

[Watch Interview here](#)