

JIA Foundation (jiafoundationmtl.org)

June 3, 2022

Dear Commissioners of the OCPM,

My name is Jessica Chen and I am writing on behalf of the Jia Foundation, the new non-profit community development organization with a mandate to foster cultural heritage of Montreal's Chinatown through storytelling and placemaking, and to offer pathways for people to connect with this historically and culturally significant space in meaningful ways.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed new height and density permissions of buildings situated in Chinatown. Jia Foundation strongly supports the City of Montréal's proposed change to the Plan d'urbanisme.

BACKGROUND

The concept for Jia originated around April 2021, when the community first learned that a developer was assembling land on Chinatown's most historic block. Members of CWG were also observing the active erasure or absence of Chinatown's presence and deep history in the narrative of the city, as well as in the marketing materials of luxury condo buildings and hotels that were going up within Chinatown. It became evident that there was an acute need to promote and valorise Chinatown's cultural production and to articulate its heritage and story in order to prevent the neighbourhood's continued erosion and erasure.

After Chinatown received a heritage designation and protections at both the provincial and municipal levels in January of 2022, a number of CWG members formed the Jia Steering Committee to concretize months of discussions and planning that had taken place. In April of 2022, the Jia Foundation was officially registering as a non-profit organization in Quebec (*organisme à but non lucrative au Québec*). The Jia foundation aims to continue and formalize some of the work initiated by CWG and to build community capacity, expertise, and leadership under the following objectives:

- Work to protect, preserve and grow Montreal Chinatown's tangible and intangible cultural heritage by creating projects that activate public and significant historic spaces through cultural and art-based practice.
- Foster a process of inclusive placemaking of Montreal's Chinatown by and for its diverse communities.
- Develop expertise, capacity and tools for Montreal's Chinatown communities, as well as Chinatowns at large, to map out, secure and advocate for their future.
- Act as a resource hub and project incubator for initiatives that advance the public's appreciation for the living culture and communities of Montreal's Chinatown and Chinatowns at large.

*What is JIA? Jia is a Mandarin word that has layers of meaning: **family and home**. Jia-ren means “members of family” and hui-jia means “to return home”. Like “chez-soi”, where the sense of home is more than just a roof over your head, Jia also goes beyond home. Jia offers a sense of refuge and security. Jia is where your roots are and where we return to. Jia is where you belong.*

Chinatown is a place that has offered generations of people a sense of home when they were excluded or marginalized by society at large. Chinatown is a place filled with stories of struggle and resistance, survival and resilience, that are ingrained in its buildings and development patterns. Chinatown is a place that symbolizes connection, and a sense of community. At its core, Chinatown is *Jia to many people in many different ways*.

This is why we set up the Jia Foundation. We want to make sure the Chinatown that has witnessed our collective past, can help weave together our often untold and disjointed histories, and provide an opportunity to demonstrate what an inclusive, equitable and sustainable community can be. For more information about the Jia Foundation and its upcoming projects, please visit:

<https://jiafoundationmtl.org>

Conservation of the urban and built environment of Chinatown is essential in order to preserve its historical, social and architectural value, and most importantly, to make it possible for the community’s way of life and cultural practices to not only survive, but to thrive. That is why we believe this consultation organized by the Office de Consultation Publique de Montréal (OCPM) about Chinatown heritage designation and proposed change to the Plan d’urbanisme is important for the work of the Jia Foundation.

MONTRÉAL CHINATOWN IS NOT ALONE

Montréal Chinatown is one of the oldest Chinatowns in Canada. Since its establishment, Montréal Chinatown has remained in the same location as a living and thriving neighbourhood in the first *faubourg* of Montréal. This long un-broken history makes Montréal Chinatown very unique, like Vancouver and Victoria’s Chinatowns in British Columbia, both of which are now designated as provincial and national historic sites.

Throughout its history, Montréal Chinatown has gone through growth, decline and regeneration. Today, Chinatown faces new complex challenges. Concerns about redevelopment that could accelerate land value increases, displace long-term residents and businesses and decrease affordable housing, goods and services. Many of Chinatown’s cultural heritage assets are fragile and rapidly disappearing. However, Montréal Chinatown is not alone in facing these challenges.

While each Chinatown has a unique history with its distinct local political, social and economic context that shape its present-day challenges, all Chinatowns are, nonetheless, connected by shared values, purpose and cultural heritage. Montréal can learn from different Chinatowns about the strategies that have been employed and to understand what works and what does not work within different types of contexts. Appendix I “*Montréal Chinatown is Not Alone*” outlines trends and best practices in community organizing efforts and responding policy advocacy observed from other Chinatown struggles.

Generally there is a common understanding that we need a new approach to Chinatown planning. With the cultural heritage assets rapidly disappearing, **we cannot afford to look at Chinatown merely as a place of commercial and development opportunities**; instead, we need to take the *historic urban landscape (HUL) approach* to Chinatown.

HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE APPROACH TO CHINATOWN

HUL is an approach recommended by the UNESCO as a more appropriate and effective way to understand and plan for urban historic places with complex layers of histories and living communities, such as Montréal's Chinatown. It emphasizes the need to involve the community to identify the cultural heritage assets of a place and understand why they are valued by people. Such approach recognizes that **both tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets are expression of a community's values and protecting them contribute to the long-term goal of upholding a community's way of life.**

Apart from my involvement in the Jia Foundation, in my professional practice as a city planning consultant, I worked with the City of Vancouver and the University of British Columbia in 2021 to assist with the development of the [Chinatown Cultural Heritage Asset Management Plan \(CHAMP\)](#): a strategic framework that was co-created by the Council-appointed community Legacy Stewardship Group after 3 years of City-Community-University collaboration as part of Vancouver Chinatown's pursuit for a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.

In a living community where culture and traditions are practiced, many assets can be both tangible and intangible and they are often interconnected in order to thrive. In this Plan *CHAMP*, it cited *lion dance* as one such cultural heritage asset. Dating back nearly 2 millennia, *lion dance* is a tradition practiced by lion dancers with their *sifu* masters. These activities are often organized by the martial arts clubs of each Chinese family association, and take place inside the association's buildings. This is a great example of how an intangible cultural heritage asset (*lion dance*) that is still practiced by the people of a community organization, takes place in a tangible historic space (Chinese family association building).

Therefore, we need to look at the tangible heritage of Chinatown beyond just a few heritage buildings. It is the architecture, the family association buildings, the existing finer-grained scale (smaller frontage storefronts), the incremental development with courtyards and alleyways and the transition to its nearby downtown development that makes up the Chinatown character. **These spaces need to be supported as cultural spaces for continued cultural practice and production. Strong cultural presence, production and growth will in turn anchor the economic regeneration in Chinatown.** Today Chinatown is no longer the only point of entry for the Chinese immigrants in Montréal or the only place to shop for the Asian goods. There are the so-called "new Chinatowns" near Concordia University and in Brossard. In order to compete, our historic Chinatown needs to focus, support and reinvest in what makes it special and unique in the first place: its history, its culture, its community infrastructure, its long-term residents, its legacy businesses and its unique built environment. The rich historic patina of the original Chinatown is what lends it authenticity and gives it a deeper connection to people than simply a place of commercial transaction. The staying-power and revitalization potential of the neighbourhood is rooted in its deep history.

RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED MODIFICATION OF PLAN D'URBANISME

It is with the Historic Urban Landscape approach in mind that the Jia Foundation supports the proposed changes to the Plan d'urbanisme by the City of Montréal, including:

- The heritage designation by the City of Montréal of Chinatown as a historic site with its new boundary from Blvd René-Levesque to the north, Ave. Viger to the south, de Bleury to the west and Saint-Elizabeth to the east.
- The identification of Chinatown as *un secteur de valeur exceptionnelle*.
- Adding Chinatown as one of the “territories of archaeological interest” in Plan d'urbanisme.
- The proposal to reduce allowable height and density in Chinatown.

Together with many other community organizations in Chinatown, the Jia Foundation hopes the proposed changes will be part of the steps taken to implement the Chinatown Plan d'action and support Chinatown as a heritage area with planning regulations that foster **a human-scale urban environment** centred around its living communities and urban cultural landscapes. This is an essential step needed to reinforce Chinatown's heritage status, deter further land speculation, and start setting up a basic framework that can guide development in the area in ways that respect both Chinatown's tangible and intangible heritage.

Beyond affirming the heritage designation of Chinatown and the height and density limits, we join our fellow neighbours and community members in their concerns that the current measures alone will not be sufficient in bringing about the desired results mentioned above. We strongly urge the adoption of the proposed changes to the Plan d'Urbanisme, the City of Montréal and the Borough of Ville-Marie to create a more holistic development plan for Montréal's historic Chinatown that aims to protect, preserve, and promote the history and culture of its historical populations. This should also include considerations to place Chinatown's cultural heritage as the foundation and future that will drive a cultural heritage economy regeneration centering around Chinatown's values, long-term residents' way of life, legacy businesses retention, cultural food assets, and highlight Chinatown as a cultural tourism destination.

This historic neighbourhood is in fact the neighbourhood of the future: accessible to multimodal transportation, culturally diverse with a strong social circular economy and community infrastructure that we can reinvest in. The future of Chinatown will rely on us to take care of this incredible cultural legacy that has been passed down so that we can ensure that it not only survives but thrives for future generations to come.

Regards,

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Appendix I: MONTRÉAL CHINATOWN IS NOT ALONE

Montréal Chinatown is not alone in the context of today's Save Chinatown movement. While the Save Chinatown movement first emerged in the 1960s, amongst the backdrop of mass land expropriation and displacement that took place in many cities across North America for their urban renewal programs, today there is a renewed resurgence of consciousness and collaboration to protect Chinatowns. What is happening in our Chinatown today is happening in [Chinatowns all over North America](#).

Today's Save Chinatown movement also intersects with several social justice issues and struggles that have been brought to the fore including: the fight against Anti-Asian Racism in solidarity with other communities, Indigenous reconciliation and redress, and combating gentrification and displacement. The Save Chinatown movement of today is much more than simply preserving *the old*; but looking towards mapping the future for Chinatown and seeing this place as a model for the type of cities and neighbourhoods we want to build. Please see the full Statement by the Chinatown Working Group for more background information on the *Chinatown Movement in Context* in Appendix II.

While each Chinatown has a unique history with its distinct local political, social and economic context that shape its present-day challenges, all Chinatowns are, nonetheless, connected by shared values, purpose and cultural heritage. Montreal can learn from different Chinatowns about the strategies that have been employed and to understand what works and what does not work within different types of contexts. By looking at other Chinatown struggles, we can observe trends and best practices in community organizing efforts and responding policy advocacy:

1. Building alliances with neighbouring communities to fight against big urban infrastructure that still fails to take Chinatown's future and community into proper consideration. For example:
 - [Neighbors United Below Canal \(NUBC\)](#) brought together thousands of stakeholders from diverse and unique communities to fight the construction of a [40-Story Jail in New York's Chinatown](#);
 - [light rail that sliced through Edmonton's Chinatown](#) cutting off the South end;
 - the recent proposal for the [REM de l'Est in Montréal](#); and
 - [North East False Creek](#) in Vancouver Chinatown.

2. The question of "[Whose Chinatown](#)" and "[Who Owns Chinatown](#)" broadens the discussion and raises the issue of the types of inclusive community desired and specific strategies to achieve that. For example:
 - Peter Kwong's article highlights how [the poor are being zoned out](#) of their own neighbourhood in New York's Chinatown;
 - Collaboration among grassroots community organizers from Chinatowns across North America to fight against displacement: [Coast to Coast Chinatown \(C2C\)](#);
 - Advocacy for [culturally and linguistically appropriate senior housing](#) in Vancouver;
 - [Equitable development plan](#) centred around the new rail park in Philadelphia Chinatown;
 - Chinatown Community Development Centre's long history in San Francisco since 1977 and its mission to be a [place-based community development](#) organization at the forefront of community advocacy, planning and affordable housing development.

3. Increased emphasis on intangible heritage, storytelling and the living community as the integral part of heritage planning in Chinatown.
 - Diane Wong draws attention to the importance of [shop talk and everyday sites](#) of resistance to gentrification and the [W.O.W. project](#) is a community arts and activism initiative run out of the basement of [Wing on Wo & Co.](#) the oldest storefront in Manhattan's Chinatown.
 - Vancouver Chinatown's focus on [living heritage](#) and its [Cultural Heritage Asset Management Plan](#) as the first step toward its aspiration for UNESCO designation.
 - [Wing Luke](#) in Seattle, Chinese Canadian Museum and Chinatown Storytelling Centre in Vancouver and Museum of Chinese in America in New York.
 - Tomorrow's Chinatown project that created a first-of-its-kind [Cultural Plan for Calgary's Chinatown](#)
 - [Community-Serving Retail](#) – creating opportunities for affordable and culturally important businesses in Vancouver's Chinatown

4. A new generation of community organizers forming grassroot collectives and non-profit community organizations to focus on cultural legacy and new social economy.
 - [Youth Collaborative for Chinatown](#) and [Hua Foundation](#) in Vancouver.
 - [Chinatown-International District Coalition](#) in Seattle
 - [Welcome to Chinatown](#) and [Think! Chinatown](#) in New York.
 - [Aiya Collective](#) in Edmonton.
 - [Friends of Chinatown \(FOCT\)](#) in Toronto;
 - [Chinatown Working Group](#) and [Jia Foundation](#) in Montréal.

5. Museums and Storytelling Centres open up in Chinatown's historic buildings.
 - [Wing Luke Museum](#) in Seattle
 - [Chinatown Storytelling Centre](#) and [Chinese Canadian Museum](#) (to be opened in June 2023) in Vancouver.
 - [Chinese Historical Society of America Museum](#) in San Francisco.
 - [Museum of Chinese in America](#) and [Tenement Museum](#) in New York.
 - [Chinatown Heritage Centre](#) and [Peranakan Museum](#) in Singapore.

Many of these strategies and initiatives are advocating for a new approach to Chinatown planning that centres around its people and cultural heritage.

Appendix II: CHINATOWN WORKING GROUP STATEMENT (May 29, 2022)

BACKGROUND

Chinatown Working Group (CWG) was formed as a community collective in 2019 to fight gentrification in Chinatown. As a collective, our vision of Chinatown is for our history, living culture and diverse communities to be protected, preserved, and promoted.¹ CWG called for a community consultation for a Chinatown plan. As such, between 2019 and 2020, we actively participated in the advisory committee and workshops organized by the Centre d'écologie urbaine de Montréal (CEUM) mandated by the City of Montréal to develop a plan for Chinatown. The work led to the City's declaration of Chinatown's historical significance in December 2020.

In May 2021, in response to the public outcry over a big developer's land assembly of the most historic block in Chinatown, CWG started community mobilization efforts along with many other Chinatown residents and organizations. Our main objective was to advocate for Chinatown's heritage designation and immediate development control measures. With a sense of urgency, a tripartite heritage working group was formed with representatives from the municipal and provincial governments, and community representatives from organisations such as Héritage Montréal and CWG to develop recommendations for appropriate heritage protection measures. In June 2021, the *Plan d'action pour le quartier chinois* was announced by the City, including a \$2M initial funding for implementation. In January 2022, Chinatown received heritage designation and protections at both the provincial and municipal levels.

For the provincial protection:

- Part of Chinatown was designated as an Institutional Hub (*site patrimonial du Noyau-Institutionnel-du-Quartier-Chinois*) by the provincial government. This protection will cover the Wing Noodles' block, delineated by de la Gauchetière, St-Urbain, Côté and Viger streets.
- Two buildings were granted heritage status, including the British and Canadian School (Wings Noodles) and S. Davis and Sons' factory (where the Chinese Family Services of Greater Montreal was formerly located)

For the city protection:

- The city designated all of Chinatown, within the borders of de Bleury, René-Lévesque Blvd., Sainte Elizabeth and Viger Ave., as a historic site, adding further protection. This new boundary of Chinatown aimed to better include the residential part of Chinatown.
- The city will modify its urban plan to preserve Chinatown by reducing high-rise zoning that could have incentivized owners to demolish or alter heritage buildings.
- It also passed an interim development control measure called "contrôl intérimaire" preventing new developments that do not respect the intended new zoning.

¹ For more information about the Chinatown Working Group, please visit: <http://cwgmtl.org>

- Public consultations, facilitated by the Office de Consultation Publique de Montréal (OCPM), are being held on the zoning changes.

The Chinatown Working Group would like to thank the OCPM for the opportunity to share our statement. You will find below our full statement, including our response to the proposed modification of the Plan d'urbanisme.

CHINATOWN MOVEMENT IN CONTEXT

The Save Chinatowns movement emerged in the 1960s in the face of mass land expropriation and displacement that took place in many cities across North America for their urban renewal programs.² In Montréal, between the 1960s and 1980s, over 200 structures were demolished in Chinatown for government projects, in the process draining away 90% of the residential population.³

We saw the same thing happening in Toronto in the late 1950s and early 1960s whose Chinatown was demolished when, despite community outcry and resistance, the city expropriated land to build city hall and Nathan Phillips Square. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Vancouver's Chinatown fought back against residential "slum clearance" and stopped a freeway from being built through their neighbourhood. The late 1970s also saw American Chinatowns like those of Philadelphia and Seattle fight against interstates and expressways that would slice through their neighbourhoods. Beginning in the 1980s there was a huge push in Chinatowns across North America, including Montréal's Chinatown, to preserve their cultural heritage and maintain their geographical footprints in the city. These movements built upon the struggle to save North America's first Chinatown, [San Francisco](#), after the 1906 earthquake when the city planned to relocate Chinatown and its Chinese community out of the city core. To survive, the local community had to create an exoticized so-called Chinatown architecture for tourism to prevent its erasure.

Montréal Chinatown is, again, not alone in the context of today's Save Chinatowns movement. What is happening in our Chinatown is happening in [Chinatowns all over North America](#). New condos and hotel developments that have no relevance to Chinatowns chip away their identity and living culture. The old Chinatowns, their architecture and even their population, become a marketing backdrop for businesses and luxury developments that are accelerating the displacement of Chinatowns' most vulnerable residents and legacy businesses. With the living community and culture of Chinatowns being driven out, several of these neighbourhoods are being reduced to nostalgic settings for museums, art galleries, or tourism. Still today, the planning of major infrastructure projects in different cities continually fails to take Chinatowns' future and community into proper consideration. Examples include the construction of a [40-Story Jail in New York's Chinatown](#), a [light rail that sliced through Edmonton's Chinatown](#) cutting off the South end, and the recent proposal for the [REM de l'Est in Montréal](#) that would have significantly impacted Chinatown.

Meanwhile, this phenomenon is paralleled with the increased visibility of a number of related social justice issues, including addressing increased anti-Asian racism in solidarity with other communities,

² D. Vitiello, *The Planned Destruction of Chinatowns in the United States and Canada since C.1900*. University of Pennsylvania. (2018).

³ Ingrid Peritz, "City Tearing us apart Brick by Brick, say Montreal's Chinese", *The Montreal Gazette* (Nov 18th 1981).

Indigenous reconciliation and cultural redress, and fighting gentrification and displacements. Therefore, the discussion of Chinatowns is much more than preserving *the old*; the efforts are also about mapping the future for Chinatowns and the type of cities we want to build. We strongly advocate for an alternative conservation-focused development vision that is inclusive, equitable, and takes care of vulnerable populations. We seek a new approach to cultural and heritage planning.

Within this context, the Chinatown Working Group, with its diverse expertise, grass-roots involvement and a focus on community sensitization and empowerment, has taken the lead to inform and mobilize the Chinatown communities in Montréal regarding various developments, such as the proposed REM de l'Est, the application for derogation on the site of 1050 St. Laurent, designation of Chinatown as a historic area of Montréal, advocating for the creation of the Chinatown Roundtable and the Jia Foundation, and participating in national and international networks to Save Chinatowns.

RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED MODIFICATION OF THE PLAN D'URBANISME

CWG supports the proposed changes to the Plan d'urbanisme by the City of Montréal. We hope that it will be part of the steps taken to implement the Chinatown Plan d'action and support Chinatown as a heritage area with planning regulations that facilitate **a human-scale urban environment** centred around its living communities and urban cultural landscapes.

We support the heritage designation by the City of Montréal of Chinatown as a historic site with its new boundary from Blvd René-Levesque to the north, Ave. Viger to the south, de Bleury to the west and Saint-Elizabeth to the east.

We support the identification of Chinatown as *un secteur de valeur exceptionnelle* and adding Chinatown as one of the "territories of archaeological interest" in Plan d'urbanisme.

We also support the proposal to reduce allowable height and density in Chinatown as an essential step needed to reinforce Chinatown's heritage status, deter further land speculation, and start setting up a basic framework that can guide development in the area in ways that respect both Chinatown's tangible and intangible heritage.

We agree with the approach to have a core area of Chinatown with lower height and density, and the edges with higher limits, as a transition space to its downtown surrounding areas. **However, we do find the core of Chinatown with a height limit of 25-35 metres (around 8-10 stories) and density of 4, too high in terms of scale, in comparison to the existing buildings, especially along rue de la Gauchetière.**

In addition, there are lots of critical unknown factors at play that are not addressed in the proposal and might counter the desired result of Chinatown being a human-scale environment centering around its existing community. We hope with the adoption of the proposed changes to the Plan d'Urbanisme et de Mobilité, the City of Montréal and the Borough of Ville-Marie will further consider the following issues related to the design and development of Chinatown:

I. Chinatown Heritage, Characters and Scales

- Family associations are an important part of Chinatown social-economic infrastructure because of their history, the community roles they play and the cultural traditions their members continue to practice. The buildings they own also hold important heritage significance because of their shophouse architectural typology and various historic objects inside the buildings that are part of the buildings' interior heritage. This aspect of Chinatown heritage needs to be better understood and supported as they are not included in the Study by Luce Lafontaine Architects (December 2021).
- We need to better define Chinatown's unique architecture style and have tools to ensure architectural integration for new projects proposed. In addition, there are several projects recently built that didn't respect Chinatown's heritage and character, and they should not be considered as the "existing context" reference for future projects.
- Chinatown's existing scales are built on smaller lots that tend to have smaller storefronts, resulting in a more human-scale urban environment. Such scale is an integral part of the Chinatown character. We need to ensure new developments respect and respond to such scale, especially when there is a tendency toward land assembly for bigger projects.
- Incremental development with courtyard and alleyways as secondary public spaces is another Chinatown character. We need to ensure retention and improvement of the existing courtyards and alleyways, and to encourage new developments to include such types of elements.

2. A Development and Urban Design Vision Needed

- It is encouraging to see the new 2021-2026 *Plan d'action* with its four themes: (1) quality of life, housing and public spaces; (2) commercial vitality (3) identity, outreach and heritage (4) neighbourhood consultation. However, it is still not clear who is the team with relevant expertise that is overseeing and accountable for the Plan implementation.
- Furthermore, the Plan does not yet have a holistic development or urban design vision for Chinatown that could illustrate how different aspirations for housing, economic, social, cultural and public space development in Chinatown can come together coherently.
- A study of existing vacant lots and under-utilized properties is needed as part of the preparation work for a development plan so existing density and development potential can be optimized. There is also a need to carry out a study of "at-risk buildings" that are deteriorating and facing pressure of demolition, acquisition or consolidation. Such study is critical in order to better assess gentrification pressure faced by individual buildings and the area as a whole.
- There is a need for development economic analysis to better understand how the proposed new zoning can facilitate the form of development desired and whether specific incentive programs will be required to assist renovation of old historic buildings. After all, we are not anti-development; we are advocating for conservation-focused development.

- Better modelling and visualization of possible achievable projects under the new zoning will also be helpful for the community to understand the impact of such regulation changes.

3. Development Projects Review Criteria and Process

- Determining whether a proposed development project will contribute to Chinatown's social, cultural and economic life requires a more holistic set of criteria that is more than height and density. Design and uses are also very important. It is unclear with the current proposal how the community will be informed about the future development projects and which set of the criteria will be used to consider these projects.
- The tripartite heritage working group with representatives from the municipal and provincial governments, and community representatives should continue to keep watch of the progress.
- A subcommittee with Chinatown planning and heritage expertise should join the *Comité consultative d'urbanisme de Ville-Marie* (CCU) to play an advisory role in project review. Other than the criteria set by the current revised *Plan d'implantation et d'intégration architecturale* (PIIA), additional Chinatown specific design criteria should also be developed and applied.
- City staff needs to inform the community when major development permits are requested so that the community can have an opportunity to respond. In situations where there are adverse impacts to the neighbouring residents due to a development project, concrete mitigation measures and/or compensation should be facilitated as conditions of the issuance of the permit.

CONCLUSION

Chinatown Working Group supports the proposal by the City of Montréal to modify the *Plan d'urbanisme* and reduce allowable height and density in Chinatown as part of the steps taken to implement the *Plan d'action pour le quartier chinois*. However, we find the proposed height limit of 25-35 meters (about 8-10 stories) too high in terms of scale for the core of Chinatown, in comparison to the existing buildings, and encourage the City of Montréal and the Borough of Ville-Marie to further consider the three issues outlined above on: 1) Chinatown's heritage, character and scale; 2) Chinatown's development and urban design vision; and 3) Development project review criteria and process. Conservation of the urban and built environment of Chinatown is essential in order to preserve its historical, social and architectural values, and most importantly, it makes it possible for the way of life and the cultural practices to not only survive, but to thrive.