

OCPM Written Statement on Chinatown Development

Timothy Chan June 10, 2022

I am Timothy Chan, Chairman of the Chinese Canadian History and Culture Research Association.

When Pierre Bourque was Mayor in 1998, I was a member of the Chinatown Roundtable Development Committee, whenever we held meetings to discuss new buildings in Chinatown that should not exceed six storeys because it would block the scenery of the mountain, people thought that was an unimportant matter, but it brought some significant and historic changes to Montreal.

When Jacque Cartier discovered Montreal, the first thing he found was Mount Royal, he exclaimed in surprise "Oh! Mont Royal!"

When we were driving back to Montreal from highway 15 South, I could see the whole land from a distance. I felt surprised by the love I had for Montreal, the scenery was so beautiful that I had immense admiration for it. The fatigue of long driving suddenly disappeared.

One day in 2014, a senior couple in their 60s came to Montreal from Paris, France, they were in front of the metro Place d'Armes. The lady politely asked me, "Sir, may I ask where Chinatown is?" I felt very strange and replied:

"You are in Chinatown now. We are in front of Holiday Inn on the street Saint Urbain, if you walk up the street, you will be in the heart of Chinatown in 2 minutes."

The three examples above have always made me wonder whether Chinatown is not appealing at all? Or is the municipal planning work not properly done?

In recent years, Chinatown seems to have no way to develop. What is the reason? Is there a holistic set of community development plans?

Entering the 21st century

Entering the 21st century, the community should determine a series of preservation measures to welcome the new culture by preserving the old history and culture. First, we should limit the heights of buildings. From 2021 to 2022, two tall buildings were built on the south side of Saint Laurent Street; the south arch was completely blocked by them.

Even if you are standing on the edge of Chinatown, like those two French tourists, you would still ask how to get to Chinatown. We can't see the characteristics of Chinatown anymore.

As Chinatown is being developed, there are many high-rise buildings, and there is no traditional and authentic Chinese touch. For tourists who visit Montreal, what are they looking for? In order to find the answer, it is best to carry out a survey.

From July 1st to October 30th we can distribute questionnaires to travel agencies, bus terminal stations and metro stations, airports, hotels and schools etc to understand what tourists like to see and their favourite tourist attractions.

I'd share my opinion on cultural preservation:

In the future, if Chinatown builds new buildings or renovates old buildings:

1) It is a top priority to preserve the original buildings of Chinatown, they cannot be demolished.

2) Taxation is one of the most representative economic supports in modern cities. Chinatown can function with two legislative rights, we can maintain the existing tax system. Those old buildings do not generate a lot of income, and the buildings are too old, they cannot afford the huge costs to repair them.

3) New buildings of 2019 and later must be included in a new regulation to increase the tax rate. This regulation can be called "New Century Chinatown Development

Tax System". New buildings from Berri Street in the East to Saint Alexander Street in the West, and from Viger Street in the South to Sherbrooke Street in the North, cannot exceed 6-7 storeys or 25m in height. This territory should be the one that new height limits should be imposed on.

Why? If buildings exceed the height limit, that will block the airflow and affect the living environment. Especially nowadays, the United Nations calls on all countries to protect our environment and support green energy.

Chinatown should take advantage of this opportunity to develop green energy, such as increasing the installation of solar panels on new and old buildings to absorb solar energy and collect electricity. If there is excess electricity, it could be sold to Hydro Quebec. Hydro Quebec could sell excess electricity to the United States to increase revenue.

Montreal can become a world model in terms of promotion and attract more tourists.

To improve the living environment, we must create a green environment by conditioning the air, sunlight, airflow and car emissions.

Since covid-19, our living environment has been affected. I suggest that the city make full use of the Chinatown empty spaces and coordinate with the communities on Chinatown development based on its norms and regulations. Traditional herbs can be planted in the empty space, those herbs are already there on the street. What is left to do is presenting its name in French, English and French on the side. This will attract a lot of tourists to Montreal's Chinatown.

By doing this, we are not only becoming the world model of environmental protection, but also a pioneer in educating citizens. Making optimal use of energy and environmental protection are also the next steps for the city's development direction.

What I just described is a summary of what the Chinese often call "feng shui".

Montreal's Chinatown has been declared a historical and cultural heritage. How to promote its long-term development?

The long-term cooperation between the city and the citizens in the development of Chinatown is very important. Because non-Chinese lack knowledge on Chinatown and its history, they failed to go deep into the core issues. The solution must be based on several dimensions. This time around, the city must implement a long-term plan such as building a library within 5 years, and a Chinese museum in another 5 years.

The location of the Chinese Library could be 1010 Clark Street. This building is a municipal government's property and has been vacant for more than ten years. This property could be converted to a Chinese Library, with a daycare attached to it behind. In front, there could be a coffee stall, a small rest place...the library could be on the second and third floor, and the office on the fourth floor. In one year, it could be demolished and tidied up. At the same time, we could think about the design and raise funds.

(2) Regarding the vacant lot at 1050 Saint Laurent, the city should buy it to build a museum with five storeys, three of those are basement parking space, the ground floor would be the exhibition hall with a display of Chinese medicine and herbs as well as various equipments for acupuncture, moxibustion etc or a small outpatient clinic can be opened for a small fee to cover expenses.

With these two new ideas, tourists can visit Chinatown for at least one or two hours. With a library, people can stay there for 4-5 hours, the land behind the library is city-owned, there are trees, it's a good rest place suitable for children and families. 1050 Saint Laurent is very suitable for a museum, the building next to it is sumptuous with good taste, it will catch tourists' attention so they would want to enter and visit the museum.

The establishment of a museum is to increase multicultural exchanges, mutual understanding, and reduce racial discrimination. It is a very good cultural investment project.

滿地可唐人街發展計劃,
陳超萬 2022年6月10日

我是陳超萬,加拿大華僑历史文化研究会主席,
1998年 Pierre Bourque 當市長時候,我是唐人街圓桌会议發展委员会委員,每當我們召开会议討論唐人街新樓盤建築不能超過六層。因為擋了山頂風景,一般人以為這是小事,但是它給滿地可帶來了非常具有歷史價值的大事,
Jacque Cartier發現滿地可,第一就是發現皇家山,當時他驚喜地大聲說“Oh! Mont Royal!”
當我們駛車從15號南公路回滿地可。遠遠望見滿地可就在眼前,我會覺得驚喜的愛,因為它那美的風景吸引着我的愛慕之情,長途駕駛的疲勞,孰時消失,
2014年的一天,兩位從法國巴黎來滿地可旅遊老年夫婦,年紀大約有60歲左右,他們正在 place De Amire 地鐵站門口,她禮貌地問我:“先生!請問那裡是唐人街?”我頓時感覺很奇怪,我回答她:“你現在就在唐人街了,”前面 Holiday Inn,從這條馬路 saint urbain street往上步行2分鐘就是唐人街中心地段,
以上三個例子長期給我心裡埋藏着一個非之不去的問號,唐人街号召力是不是沒有一丁點特性為号召力?還是政府市政規劃工作沒有做好?
近年來,唐人街好象沒有一丁點發展門路,什麼原因?是不是社區發展規劃沒有完整的套路?
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進入21世紀

進入21世紀,社區應為迎接新文化,保護舊有历史文化而制定一系列保護措施,首先要很制高建築群林立,2021年至2022年, Saint Laurent 街南邊,建築兩座高樓,南牌樓完全被阻擋了視野,即使你站在唐人街邊緣地帶,也許象那兩位法國遊客,問路如何去唐人街。根本看不到原味。唐人街發展,高樓林立,一點中國傳統味道都沒有了,遊客來滿地可,為什麼想找到答案,最好是問卷調查。從7月1日至10月30。發放問卷到各旅行社,車站總站,機場,酒店,學校等單位,了解遊客喜愛專題,旅遊景點。對保護傳統文化的看法?!

今後若唐人街新建建築,或改建舊樓:

- 1) 要保護唐人街原有傳統文化,為要務。不能拆除。
- 2) 稅收是現代都市中一個最具代表性的經濟支柱。唐人街可為兩個立法權利,傳統文化保護單位,保持列年傳統稅收制度,那些舊樓收入不豐,加以太舊不能重用大量資本返修。
- 3) 新建建築物,例如2019年至今後一定要列入新條例,增加稅收率。這條例列名“新世紀唐人街發展稅收制。新建築不能超過6-7層或25m高,規定從東邊Berri 街至西邊的 Saint Alexander 街,南從 Viger街至北 Sherbrooke 街,這幅地段為唐人街新建築群的高度。為什麼呢?若建築群超過這個標準,將會阻擋氣流,影響生活環境,特別新世紀,聯合國号召各國保護環保,綠色能源,唐人街就利用這個機會,大力發展綠色能源,例如新舊建築物,增加安裝太陽能板,吸收能源,充實大樓電力,若多餘電力可以賣給 Hydro Quebec . Hydro Quebec 將多餘電力賣給美國,增加收入。

滿地可在宣傳上可以成為世界上一個範例,更加吸引遊客。

生活環境改善,一定要綠化環境,調和空氣,陽光,氣流,汽車排放廢氣。我有大膽的設想。

自 Covid-19 以來,也影響到我們的生活環境,我建議市府充份利用唐人街空地,

有規範地配合唐人街市府發展。將所有空地種植生草藥,生草藥目前街邊已有現我的。主要在植物傍邊按上一個法,英,中,文牌子名字,就可以了。這樣做更加為滿地可市召來大量遊客參觀。不但是世界環保的範例,也是教育市民的先行者。要充份利用能源,環保。也是今後市政的發展方向。

我上面所陳述的是中國人常說的“風水學”的總結。

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滿地可唐人街法定為历史文化遺產。如何促進其長久發展？

市政府与市民長久配合發展唐人街,是甚為重要的一環。因為非华裔对唐人街的認識。未能深入了解,一定要通过几个渠道這次市政府一定要落实計劃,作一個長久打算,打算用5年時間建立一間圖書館,5年時間建立一間华裔博物館。

华人圖書館地点1010 Clark 街,此樓是市府物業,空置有十餘年,建议將此物業改為华人圖書館,地面後边托兒所。前面设咖啡檔,小休息场所,二樓和三樓圖書館,四樓办公室,用一年時間,將拆除清理垃圾,边設計,边拆除,边筹资金,

(2)1050 Saint Laurent 空地,市府將它購買建築一座博物館,五層高,地庫叁層 拍車位,地面開始即設立展覽廳,內設中医中藥,陳列各項器材.例如:針灸,艾灸,也可以開設一個小门诊,收取少許費用補助經費,

有了這兩個新点子,遊客到唐人街,可以参观,他们会注足一兩個小時,圖書館則四五個小時,圖書館后面的地方是市政府,有樹木,好個休閒地方,是很适合幼兒小朋友活动地方.1050 Saint Laurent 是一個非常适合博物館的,门前建設莊嚴大方遊客很容易注足進入参观,

建立博物館是增加多元文化溝通,相互了解,減少種族岐視,不失為非常好的文化投資項目。