

About Us

The Chinese Canadian Collective is an Ottawa-based organization dedicated towards examining Chinese Canadian experiences, issues, and representation. The collective hosts community events and digital media campaigns in the city to meet its goals.

As settlers of Turtle Island, CCC acknowledges the colonial history and oppression that has shaped this land also known as Canada. CCC operates within the city of Ottawa, which is built on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin territories.

Demographics

Chinese Canadians make up approximately 35,000 of the city's population and is the 2nd biggest ethnic minority in Ottawa. It is also one of the fastest growing Chinese Canadian hubs in the country.

Municipal Impact

Municipal policy impacts the everyday lives of Ottawa residents and marginalized groups. We have created a questionnaire focusing on issues in the Chinese community to inform voters on candidates' policies and give a voice to our concerns.

The questionnaire is being sent out to all mayoral and city councillor candidates who have publicly listed emails. We will be publishing our received answers on our social media platforms to inform voters of candidates' policy.

We are asking candidates to respond in short answer with a recommendation of a 150 word count per response. Please submit your answers by email to chinesecanadianco@gmail.com by Wednesday, September 26 @ 5pm. We look forward to your responses.

Chinese Canadian Collective chinesecanadianco.weebly.com
chinesecanadianco@gmail.com

Questionnaire

(Thierry Harris, Candidate for Municipal Council in Ward 12 Rideau–Vanier)

1. *Many newcomers and marginalized folks, including Chinese seniors and families, use and frequent community centres to stay active and involved. Some community centres are located in neighbourhoods with high concentrations of the Chinese community such as the Kanata Recreation Centre, Richcraft Recreation Complex (Kanata), Minto Recreation Complex (Barrhaven), Walter Baker Sports Centre, Plant Recreation Centre, McNabb Community Centre and more. How will you ensure these community centres are accessible to those who do not speak or read the dominant languages, being English or French?*

The language barrier can be a challenge for many newcomers and particularly for Chinese-Canadians. This can create significant difficulties in accessing basic services, finding employment or getting help from police and that makes people feel isolated. I would work to put in place a progressive language access policy at the City and support the creation of a sociocultural department to provide interpretation and translation services in the most-used non-English languages, such as mandarin. I also think our city should better consult with different cultural communities to provide specialized programming tailored to their needs.

2. OC Transpo

- a. *This fall, numerous bus routes were changed and shortened to encourage LRT transfers. The LRT has since been delayed to Winter of 2019. Shortened routes like that of the #11 that passes through Somerset St. West and the Chinatown area impact the Chinese community, including seniors, where additional transfers and shortages may affect their accessibility to and from destinations. What will you do to address these issues while the LRT is delayed and while the LRT is operating?*

To begin with, I feel our elected representatives should be held accountable for these delays and the impact they are having on the quality of service as well as our pocketbook, as taxpayers. I would put immediately put in place a damage mitigation plan to address the impact of the LRT delays. This includes expanding the frequency of service and routes. Moreover, I would lead a full performance review of OC Transpo's management and efficiency. We pay some of the highest transit fares in North America yet our buses are constantly late, overcrowded, or no-shows. If we are unable as a city to deliver quality public transport, then I would explore opening it up to competition: see if independent companies can provide better service at a lower cost.

b. How will you engage customers whose dominant language is not English or French in public consultations regarding issues such as bus route changes, town halls and customer feedback?

The creation of the sociocultural department I mentioned earlier could play a crucial role in facilitating such consultations. I would also look to hire community organizers that speak the language and can interface with the community in their own ways. I think one mistake the City is making is to expect that people will conform to the systems that are in place. But we should be looking at it the other way around, the onus should be on the City to adapt their approach to residents and ensure those voices are heard.

c. What will you do to ensure that OC Transpo's services are more affordable and accessible for low-income folks?

I would support reduced fares across the board for students, seniors and all low-income residents. I would also push for seniors to have free transportation everyday (outside of rush hour and weekends.)

3. Current Rideau Raceway casino ads are targeting the Chinese community in Ottawa with orientalist graphics and advertisements written entirely in Chinese characters. Gambling is a social activity ingrained in Chinese culture and is also a common problem within the community. How will you ensure that the community is not being unfairly targeted for gambling? What will you do to also challenge the stereotypes and racial bias that is prevalent in the city and that Chinese Canadians continue to face?

I would work with Ottawa Public Health to put out a public awareness campaign warning of the pitfalls of gambling, targeted to the Chinese community. I would also work to provide more support for gambling addiction. We could pilot a program to deliver counselling services in different languages, for example. In terms of addressing the stereotypes and racial bias, I think it starts at the City itself. We should review our policies to address racial bias and stereotyping and encourage all city-funded organizations to do the same. All employees, vendors, service providers and residents of the city should be aware that discrimination is unacceptable. I would also work with partners to create diversity training workshops focused on recognizing and addressing different forms of racism. Canada is known worldwide for its multiculturalism. As the nation's capital, we have an opportunity to lead on this.

4. Post-amalgamation, the City of Ottawa has never had a Black, East or Southeast Asian councillor on city council. What will you do to ensure that marginalized groups have the same opportunity and chance to be involved in municipal politics as others do?

Running for office is exciting because it gives you a chance to shape the future of our city. We need to do a better job of engaging diverse voices into the municipal process because in the end, this will make our communities richer, better places to live. It's important to communicate the tangible impacts of participating in the process, across cultural lines. At the same time, we need to identify and remove the barriers to entry. One idea would be to put in place a mentorship program, where former councillors can share their knowledge with aspiring politicians. Diversity is one of our city's greatest assets and we have to be proactive in cultivating the political leadership that truly reflects our community.

5. Chinatown has been experiencing gentrification for years. Newer development is pushing out lower income families and local businesses, changing its landscape and affordability. Chinatown is not only a home to many, but a hub for those from the Chinese community living in other wards to come together to reconnect with food, family and history. How will you ensure that affordable housing and suitable businesses remain while retaining the history and heart of the neighbourhood?

I see parallels between what's happening Chinatown and what we're experiencing in different parts of Ward 12. This is a unique opportunity for us to collaborate on joint efforts to protect the heritage and character of our neighbourhoods. At the same time, we need to enforce aggressive inclusionary zoning policies and quotas that create more affordable housing so that local families don't get pushed out of the neighbourhood. And lastly, we need to help local businesses thrive in this changing landscape. Rents have to stay affordable.