

Gentrification in Vanier

Chinese Canadian Collective

The gentrification we are seeing in Vanier is not unlike what we have seen in neighbourhoods such as Westboro, Hintonburg and currently Chinatown.

Ottawa's Chinatown has historically been home to immigrants and working class folks, and the addition of condos, renovictions and businesses in the area such as upscale bicycle stores, coffee shops and art galleries directly contribute to the gentrification and elimination of Chinatowns, and pushes out those such as low-income residents, racialized folks, drug users, sex workers and those without status.

We currently see children living in the Chinatown area receiving less educational care from the school board at Cambridge Street Public School with only 55 students enrolled and triple split classes. All this while higher income families moving in the area transfer their kids to other schools.

In Vanier, we see similar concerns with gentrification and income disparities as there has been no clear understanding about what will happen to Green Fresh Supermarket -- a large-scale asian grocery store -- and the local shops and food outlets at Eastview Plaza. These local small business owners, many who are racialized, were served eviction notices in an effort to tear down the buildings by a development company. This came to public notice last year.

The development company, Main+Main, wants to create "forward-looking statements" and while evicting tenants they don't deem "desirable" are seeking new ones to anchor their complex.

All after Green Fresh and their local business owners went through significant renovations and invested time and money towards renewing their store. Green Fresh serves as an accessible location and grocery store with low-cost prices and a short walking distance from community housing.

While the city ignores concerns from residents about what will happen to Eastview Plaza, they are endorsing an upscale Porsche outlet with no issue. The distance between these two locations is 2 km.

This action is not only dismissive and counterintuitive to already raised concerns, but it is alarmingly problematic, and will no doubt lead to many changes and issues in the neighbourhood that do not serve people who need assistance the most.

In allowing this to happen, the city will show once again that it does not care about residents who matter the most during these times. It will show once again that they do not care about low-income and racialized residents.

The movement and transparency on these issues is not clear, and we thank individuals on the ground holding accountability to institutions and bringing needed attention to these matters. We also thank Horizon and their representative for vocalizing these issues, acting as allies and speaking on our behalf.