

## **HUA FOUNDATION LAUNCHES CHINATOWN FOOD SECURITY REPORT, DRAWS ATTENTION TO INCREASING FOOD RETAIL LOSS**

(Vancouver, Unceded Coast Salish Territories) Following the growing concerns over the state and future of Vancouver's Chinatown, a new food security report launched by hua foundation documents the change in Chinatown retailers over the last seven years and demonstrates that cultural food assets are being lost at an alarmingly rapid rate.

The report finds that 50% of Chinatown's fresh food stores—greengrocers, fishmongers, barbecue meat shops, and butchers—have been lost between 2009 to 2016. Thirty-two percent of Chinese dry goods stores, and 56% of food service retailers that were in operation in 2009 have also been lost during the seven year timeframe.

“Chinatown is at the intersection of various socioeconomic, cultural and developmental pressures. We've seen a lot of stores close down or move out of the neighbourhood over the years, but their rate of loss was unknown. Conducting this study was important for understanding the degree to which traditional businesses in Chinatown are being impacted by the changes occurring in the neighbourhood,” notes primary author, Angela Ho.

Despite City of Vancouver's goal of fostering a healthy, just and sustainable food system, the authors highlight how their study on the loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown have yielded results that stand in stark contrast to the municipal target of increasing food assets by 50% by 2020. Cultural food assets, such as greengrocers, fishmongers and barbecue meat shops, are not currently recognized by municipal policy as assets that actively contribute to food security, thereby resulting in their lack of recognition, protection and support in Vancouver.

The absence of support for cultural food assets within municipal documents, such as the Vancouver Food Strategy, is in part a result of policy that does not fully capture the diverse ways of engaging with the local food system. “Shopping at neighbourhood greengrocers or fishmongers are legitimate contributions to the local food system; however, these forms of participation are underrepresented and not often acknowledged within the local food movement here in Metro Vancouver,” says Kevin Huang, executive director of hua foundation.

The report put forth several recommendations for improving the recognition and protection of cultural food assets in Chinatown, and Vancouver as a whole. They include supporting the inclusion of culture as a fourth pillar of sustainability, and explicitly including and supporting cultural food assets in the next iteration of the Vancouver Food Strategy. “We hope that this report will draw critical attention to the state of cultural food assets in Chinatown that continue to

serve the area's low-income and senior populations, and highlight the role that culture plays in fostering an inclusive, just and sustainable food system here in Vancouver," says Ho.

The Vancouver Chinatown Food Security Report can be accessed in full at <http://www.huafoundation.org/foodreport/>.

Hua foundation is a youth driven non-profit organization based in Vancouver's Chinatown that has been in operation since 2013. Their mission is to empower youth in the Asian diaspora to fully participate in advancing social change through exploring racialized identities and building resilience in communities. Hua foundation's main program is the Choi Project, which aims to advance the role of culture in food security efforts by promoting food and cultural literacy, education, and community engagement. Please visit <http://www.huafoundation.org/> for more information.

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