VANCOUVER CHINATOWN FOOD SECURITY REPORT

By Angela Ho and Alan Chen

hua foundation | August 2017

Photo credit: Louis Lapprend, Chinatown Today

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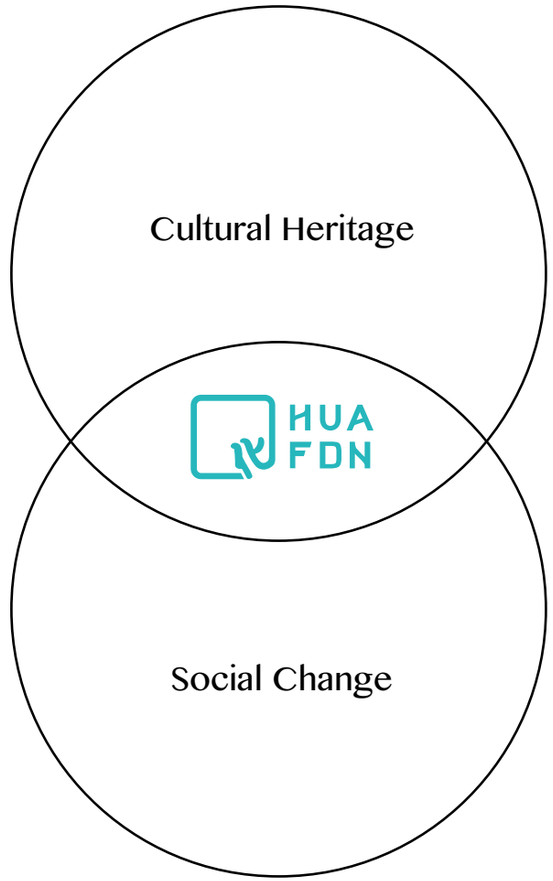
ABOUT HUA FOUNDATION

Hua foundation is a youth driven non-profit organization based in Vancouver, British Columbia, on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations. Our mission is to empower youth in the Asian diaspora to fully participate in advancing social change through exploring our racialized identities and building resilience in communities. This report is the result of 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. Through our work, we hope to build capacity and support spaces of learning that centre marginalized histories, voices, and lived experiences.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Angela Ho | 何嘉雯

Angela is a second-generation Chinese Canadian studying Geography and Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies at the University of British Columbia. Angela's engagement with local food system efforts dates back to her involvement in community initiatives with Windermere Secondary School. Through her work with hua foundation, Angela's interests have grown to using food as a vehicle for unpacking issues relating to race, power, and representation, as well as a means for intercultural learning.

Alan Chen | 陈晓征

Alan is a first-generation Chinese Canadian and holds a Bachelor of Arts and Science in Sustainability and Urban Systems from McGill University. While most of Alan's work to date engages with the social design of public spaces, such as why we should put comfy seats on streets instead of homeless spikes, his contributions to the Chinatown food report represent a different direction of interest. Spending time away from Vancouver in Montreal's diverse cultural context nurtured a desire to better understand how his cultural background shapes the way he navigates his identity. To this end, Alan joined hua foundation in Vancouver to explore his cultural heritage while supporting initiatives aligned with his passions for social justice, urban contexts, and sustainability.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Food assets are defined by the Vancouver Food Strategy as resources, facilities, services or spaces that are available to Vancouver residents, and which are used to support the local food system. Examples of food assets include community gardens and orchards, urban farms, farmers markets, food processing infrastructure, community composting facilities, and neighbourhood food networks.[1] Cultural food assets are businesses and services that provide a similar, if not identical function as food assets defined by City of Vancouver. Cultural food assets extend beyond the role of food assets identified by City of Vancouver by providing spaces that support the maintenance and transmission of culture. While cultural food assets are not limited to a particular cultural group, this report identifies greengrocers, fishmongers, barbecue meat stores and butcher shops, Chinese dry goods stores, as well as traditional Cantonese bakeries and restaurants as strong examples of cultural food assets. These assets support a cultural food distribution system (e.g., the Chinese food distribution system) that is not formally considered to be part of the local food movement.

The Chinese food distribution system refers to the older, long established network of local Chinese farmers, wholesalers, and retailers that operate in parallel to the newer, rapidly expanding local food movement consisting of farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and other publicly supported institutions.[2] Formed in the backdrop of systemic racism and social and economic segregation, the Chinese Food Distribution System has and continues to provide the Metro Vancouver region with access to fresh, often local, and culturally appropriate food.

Cultural food assets make important contributions to Vancouver's local food system by promoting the food security of its citizens while providing spaces that support the maintenance and transmission of culture. Due in part to how the early Chinese-Canadian community, including British Columbia's **Chinese food distribution system**, formed in the backdrop of systemic racism and exclusionary policies, a high concentration of cultural food assets are located in Vancouver's Chinatown. This makes Chinatown an area of particular interest given the intersection of various socioeconomic, cultural, and developmental pressures facing the neighbourhood in recent years. The impact of these pressures have been widely discussed and captured in many forms, including in local media, through the efforts of community organizers, and in academic studies. However, the state of cultural food assets and its rate of loss in Chinatown remains undocumented and is not well known.

This report documents the change in Chinatown retailers between 2009 to 2016. It demonstrates that cultural food assets are being lost at an alarmingly rapid rate. Fifty percent of Chinatown's fresh food stores—greengrocers, fishmongers, barbecue meat shops, and butchers—have been lost within this timeframe. Thirty-two percent of Chinese dry goods stores, as well as 56% of food service retailers that were in operation in 2009 have been lost as well. These results stand in stark contrast to City of Vancouver's target of increasing food assets by 50% by 2020,[1] and demonstrate the need for a closer examination of the intended and emergent outcomes of municipal policy.

While there are many factors that have contributed to the loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown, this report considers the degree to which cultural food assets are acknowledged within City of Vancouver's policy landscape.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyzes the following municipal documents related to food policy in Chinatown:

1. Vancouver Food Strategy (VFS);
2. Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan and Economic Revitalization Strategy (CNP);
3. Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan (DTES LAP);
4. Downtown Eastside Social Impact Assessment (DTES SIA);
5. Healthy City Strategy (HCS).

A careful examination of these policy documents reveals several paradoxes regarding their recognition and support for cultural food assets in Vancouver.

First, the documents tend not to recognize culture beyond its physical manifestations such as architecture or conventional forms of artistic expression; they also imply that food and culture are mutually exclusive. This results in the exclusion of unconventionally artistic and often intangible forms of culture, such as food, in policy discussions of arts and culture in Vancouver. Consequently, current policy frameworks have overlooked both the tangible and intangible culture of food and the role it can play in cultivating healthy communities.

Second, the significance and contributions of cultural food assets to Vancouver's local food system is not well captured within municipal policy documents, despite their overlap in achieving similar policy objectives. For example, while cultural food assets may not operate in the same channels as the assets defined by the Vancouver Food Strategy, they still support local food systems, such as B.C.'s Chinese food distribution system and contribute to the food security of Vancouver's neighbourhoods.

However, cultural food assets are not formally recognized as active contributors to food security within current policy frameworks, and the absence of cultural food assets from City of Vancouver's official definitions of local food system actors results in their lack of recognition, protection, and mobilization.

The rapid, recent loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown is, in part, a manifestation of municipal policy that falls short of providing meaningful recognition and support for systems that exist outside of formally recognized structures. Identifying the stakeholders that are being mobilized within municipal policy is critical for determining who is being included in city planning and public discourse. The loss of many cultural food assets in Chinatown demonstrates that there remains a significant area of untapped potential for building a more inclusive, just, and sustainable food system in Vancouver.

This report:

a) Reviews the history and formation of the Chinese food distribution system and its role in Vancouver's local food system;

b) Documents the rate of cultural food asset loss in Chinatown between 2009 to 2016;

c) Analyzes municipal policy to identify gaps relating to the inclusion and support for cultural food assets in Vancouver;

d) Highlights opportunities for the better recognition and protection of cultural food assets in Vancouver;

e) Lends support for the need to extend beyond standard analytical frameworks for advancing the potential of Vancouver's local food system and, relatedly, its cultural landscape.

BACKGROUND B.C.'s Chinese Food Distribution System, Past and Present

While not often recognized, Chinese immigrants have played a significant role in British Columbia's food economy since the mid-19th century. Barred from many forms of wage labour due to anti-Chinese racism and difficult economic conditions, Chinese immigrants turned towards agricultural production and grew much of B.C.'s produce supply. In fact, by the 1920s, Chinese immigrants produced and distributed 90% of B.C.'s vegetables.[2]

Despite the substantial contributions Chinese farmers made to B.C.'s local food system, the agricultural sector was not free of racism and anti-Chinese sentiments.[i] As the number of Chinese farmers grew and flourished, white settler Canadians perceived them as a threat to their economic viability and subsequently discriminated against them.[3] They put forth proposals to limit economic competition, including pledges to refuse the lease or sale of land to Chinese farmers, the implementation of special taxes on Chinese-grown produce, and enforcement of an occupational license that would have included a compulsory exam designed so that non-white applicants could not pass.[4] A harmful public discourse about Chinese farmers and their businesses also abounded; Chinese-grown vegetables were said to be too cheap, and the **greengrocers** where their vegetables were sold were perceived to be unsanitary.[2]

Eventually, anti-Chinese racism manifested in the form of the Produce Marketing Act of 1927, which was enacted by the provincial government to regulate the marketing of vegetables. Under this act, the volume of farm produce allowed into the market, as well as its selling price, was to be determined by an external board instead of the Chinese farmers and vegetable sellers themselves. This was perceived by Chinese farmers, wholesalers, peddlers, and storekeepers as a move to curtail their business activity, as they argued that the board would raise the prices for consumers while reducing the producers' return.[3]

Despite their social and economic segregation, Chinese farmers found creative ways to resist the racist nature of B.C.'s food system. To maintain their livelihoods, the early network of Chinese food businesses continued to operate through non-mainstream distribution channels, where Chinese farmers opted to sell their produce to Chinese wholesalers, greengrocers, and on roadside farms, rather than to white wholesalers.[2]

Greengrocers are "small markets often specializing in [the] cuisine of a particular population."[5] Although greengrocers are not currently defined by City of Vancouver nor are ethnic groups linked to business ownership, Chinese and Asian greengrocers are ubiquitous in Vancouver and serve as an important source for fresh, local Asian and non-Asian produce. They also serve as an important distributor for Asian farmers and other local food system producers.[5] While food circulated within the Chinese food distribution system tends to be sourced from local farms, imports are also distributed along this supply chain as a result of factors such as seasonality and availability (see Phan (2011) and Gibbs & Wittman (2013) for further reading). For this report, greengrocers have been identified based on their predominant offering of fresh fruits and vegetables. However, it should be noted that greengrocers often sell other goods in addition to produce, such as fresh meat, eggs, and dry goods.

[i] While this report focuses on the experiences of early Chinese-Canadian farmers in B.C.'s agricultural sector, it is important to note that broader anti-Asian sentiments were also experienced by other minority groups such as Japanese berry growers during that time. The form and intensity of opposition experienced by racial minorities in the agricultural sector varied over time, space, type of agriculture, and way in which different communities responded to their marginalization.[4]

B.C.'s Chinese Food Distribution System, Past and Present

Presently, B.C.'s Chinese food distribution system is unregulated, meaning that the sales and marketing of these crops are not maintained by an agency. Rather, the supply and demand of crops are dictated by the marketplace, as Chinese farmers are responsible for their own direct marketing and selling efforts, namely through the established local network of Chinese wholesalers, greengrocers, and direct purchasers.[5] In fact, many of the early distribution networks were built out of Vancouver's Chinatown, with a significant number of warehouses located on East Georgia and Union streets.[6]

As a result of their creative resistance against systemic racism and exclusionary policies, the older, long established Chinese food distribution system exists in parallel to Vancouver's newer, rapidly expanding network of farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and other institutions publicly supported by Metro Vancouver's local food movement.[2] Although often underrepresented within the mainstream local food movement, the Chinese food distribution system continues to play an integral role in providing fresh, local, and culturally appropriate food options for the region.[ii]

Photo credit: James Crookall, Vancouver Archives

The local food movement is an "umbrella term used to describe the growing popular response to the social, [political], and material consequences of globalized and industrial food systems."[iii] This network informs—and is informed by—what mainstream local food activists, policy-makers, and academics understand as "local food."[2] Action typically centres on consuming local and organic food, resulting in forms of participation that emphasizes voting with your fork (e.g., shopping at the farmers market) or growing your own food.[iv] These modes of participation are referred to as the mainstream local food movement; while they are commonly represented in public institutions and discourse, they do not capture the diverse ways of engaging with the local food system that may fall outside of this framework.[v]

Cultural acceptability or cultural appropriateness within food security literature refers to food that is familiar, acceptable, and desired by a cultural group. With that said, cultural appropriateness must be understood beyond the mere inclusion or substitution of certain food types. Indeed, scholars contend that it is important to understand the dynamic and nuanced role that culture plays throughout the food system. Within this framework, cultural appropriateness recognizes the centrality of cultural values in the production and consumption of food, involves cultural relationships built on trust and respect, and emphasizes the importance of shared decision-making power within the food system.[10]

[ii] While the Chinese food distribution system is a prominent example of a parallel food system, Gibbs & Wittman note that there may be other parallel food networks in which food from Metro Vancouver farms moves through to local consumers (2013). Currently, knowledge about other parallel food networks is constrained by the limited number of studies completed in this area.
[iii] [iv] [v] Definition courtesy of Stephanie Lim, 2017.

Photo credit: Jacky Chen, Chinatown Today

Produce Row: Vancouver's local distribution hub

The assembly of fresh food businesses along Malkin Avenue in Strathcona is better known as Produce Row, and is an example of a distribution hub whose networks were originally built out of Chinatown.[7] These networks play an integral part in supporting the local Chinatown economy, serving many of the neighbourhood's restaurants and greengrocers,[8] and employing generations of families in Strathcona and Chinatown. Produce Row currently serves as a critical food distribution hub that services most of western Canada, including cities as far east as Winnipeg.[9]

What is a parallel food system?

A parallel food system refers to a food supply chain that operates outside of and in parallel to the mainstream local food movement. It represents one of the many pathways through which food moves from local farms to consumers.[2] However, due to factors such as historic and contemporary racism, discrimination, as well as different language and cultural norms, parallel food systems are often underrepresented within the mainstream local food movement and have few points of intentional connection and collaboration.[2] The Chinese food distribution system is a prominent example of a parallel food system in Metro Vancouver.

Chinatown: What's at Stake

Vancouver's Chinatown is a historically and culturally significant neighbourhood that stands as an important symbol of the struggle and resilience experienced by members of the Chinese-Canadian community. A major node for businesses and activities, often run by early Chinese migrants from the Guangdong region during the 19th and 20th century, Chinatown has been experiencing social and economic pressures over the last several decades that threatens its integrity as a cultural hub.

Recently, Chinatown was identified on Vancouver Heritage's 2016 Top 10 Watch List[11] and National Trust for Canada's Top 10 Endangered Places 2016.[12] Both organizations cite recent development pressures as significant threats to the viability of Chinatown as an affordable and culturally unique neighbourhood. They also point to the need for protecting existing businesses that continue to provide affordable services and amenities for the area's low-income and senior residents, including those living in Chinatown, Strathcona, and the Downtown Eastside (DTES). These businesses include greengrocers, fishmongers, barbecue meat stores and butcher shops, **Chinese dry goods stores**, and **traditional** Cantonese bakeries and restaurants.

In the four years that hua foundation has been working in Chinatown, we have formed important community partnerships with stakeholders who have helped us realize the potential of our cultural food programming efforts. For example, our efforts to promote food and cultural literacy in the form of multilingual guides, in-store signage, and public workshops have been supported by greengrocers, who serve as important places for engaging in collaborative and community based learning. However, in light of the rapid changes that have been occurring in Chinatown over the last few years, we are also experiencing challenges. Our ability to continue to maintain partnerships and offer programming in the neighbourhood is at risk because many of our community partners, such as Chinatown's greengrocers, have closed down or are experiencing pressures that threaten their ability to remain in the neighbourhood. Given the historical and contemporary significance of Chinatown to a wide range of communities, a great deal is at stake with regard to future trajectories in this neighbourhood.

Chinese dry goods stores refer to retailers that sell dried goods used in Chinese cuisine and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Some retailers may also offer consultation with Chinese physicians who can assess and prescribe herbal medicines according to various needs.

Traditional businesses in Chinatown refer to businesses that carry on the function that Chinatown has played throughout time, that is, as a retailer that provides a safer and more accessible space that services immigrant, low-income and senior populations. These businesses tend to be well established in the community (e.g., have been in operation for at least 10 years) and have enduring relationships with the community members that make up this neighbourhood. Traditional businesses in Chinatown often have a Chinese (more specifically Cantonese) orientation, but can also include businesses run by other visible minorities. Examples of traditional businesses in Chinatown include Tin Lee Market, Hung Wing Seafood, Money Barbecue, and New Town Bakery.

BACKGROUND Recognizing the Role of Cultural Food Assets

Food assets are defined by the Vancouver Food Strategy (VFS) as "resources, facilities, services or spaces that are available to Vancouver residents, which are used to support the local food system."[1] Examples of food assets identified by City of Vancouver include community gardens, orchards, urban farms, farmers markets, food processing infrastructure, community composting facilities, and neighbourhood food networks. However, we contend that the definition of food assets should be extended to include cultural food assets such as greengrocers, fishmongers, or barbecue meat stores and butcher shops. These assets provide a similar, at times identical function as the food assets defined by City of Vancouver, while supporting a cultural food distribution system that is not formally considered to be part of the local food movement. We detail the significance of cultural food assets in the paragraphs that follow.

We consider local retailers such as greengrocers, fishmongers, barbecue meat stores and butcher shops, Chinese dry goods stores and traditional Cantonese bakeries and restaurants to be strong examples of cultural food assets. These retailers contribute to the growth and functioning of local economies. They purchase from local sources (such as the Chinese food distribution system), employ local residents, and provide neighbourhoods with access to fresh food and produce. Furthermore, rather than simply enabling access to food, these retailers play an important role in offering culturally appropriate food while fostering a sense of community. Smaller storefronts are more conducive to conversations between employees and shoppers, which can support the growth of more personal relationships over time. As many of these businesses are run by members from the same cultural group, cultural cues and practices are often recognized and reciprocated. Moreover, these businesses tend to offer their services in their mother tongue, which can empower and better accommodate those with English language barriers.

Cultural food assets also serve as important spaces that facilitate the maintenance and transmission of cultural knowledge, often intergenerationally and interculturally. As bi/tri-cultural individuals who have grown up feeling disconnected from our cultural identity, learning how to shop at Chinese greengrocers enables us to reconnect with our heritage by providing opportunities to practice our language or to learn how to identify and utilize traditional ingredients. Cultural food assets hold the unique potential of promoting intercultural and intergenerational learning, as well as cultivating intangible values, such as the reaffirmation of cultural identity and sense of belonging.

Photo credit: Julian Fok Photography

FOCUS & RESEARCH QUESTION

Cultural food assets play an important role in providing Vancouver residents with affordable and culturally appropriate services. Yet, Chinatown's cultural food assets face mounting pressures such as development pressure, increasing rental and property rates, and socio-economic change that can increase the likelihood of these businesses closing down or moving out of the neighbourhood.

Little research has been conducted to examine the rate of cultural food asset loss in Chinatown in recent years, let alone the implications of these losses on food security in Chinatown, the Chinese food distribution system, or Vancouver as a whole. Many neighbourhoods in the city are also home to an array of unique food assets, but face similar socioeconomic pressures as those experienced in Chinatown.[vi] The pressure of condominium development in the Joyce-Collingwood area is just one example of this.

By taking a closer look at food security in Chinatown, this report aims to provide a starting point for addressing current knowledge gaps. While our research is limited to the scope of Chinatown as a neighbourhood, we hope that the insights produced by this report will serve as a case study for understanding the state and importance of assets not formally recognized as active contributions to food security, such as cultural food assets in Vancouver.

This report:

a) Reviews the history and formation of the Chinese food distribution system and its role in Vancouver's local food system;

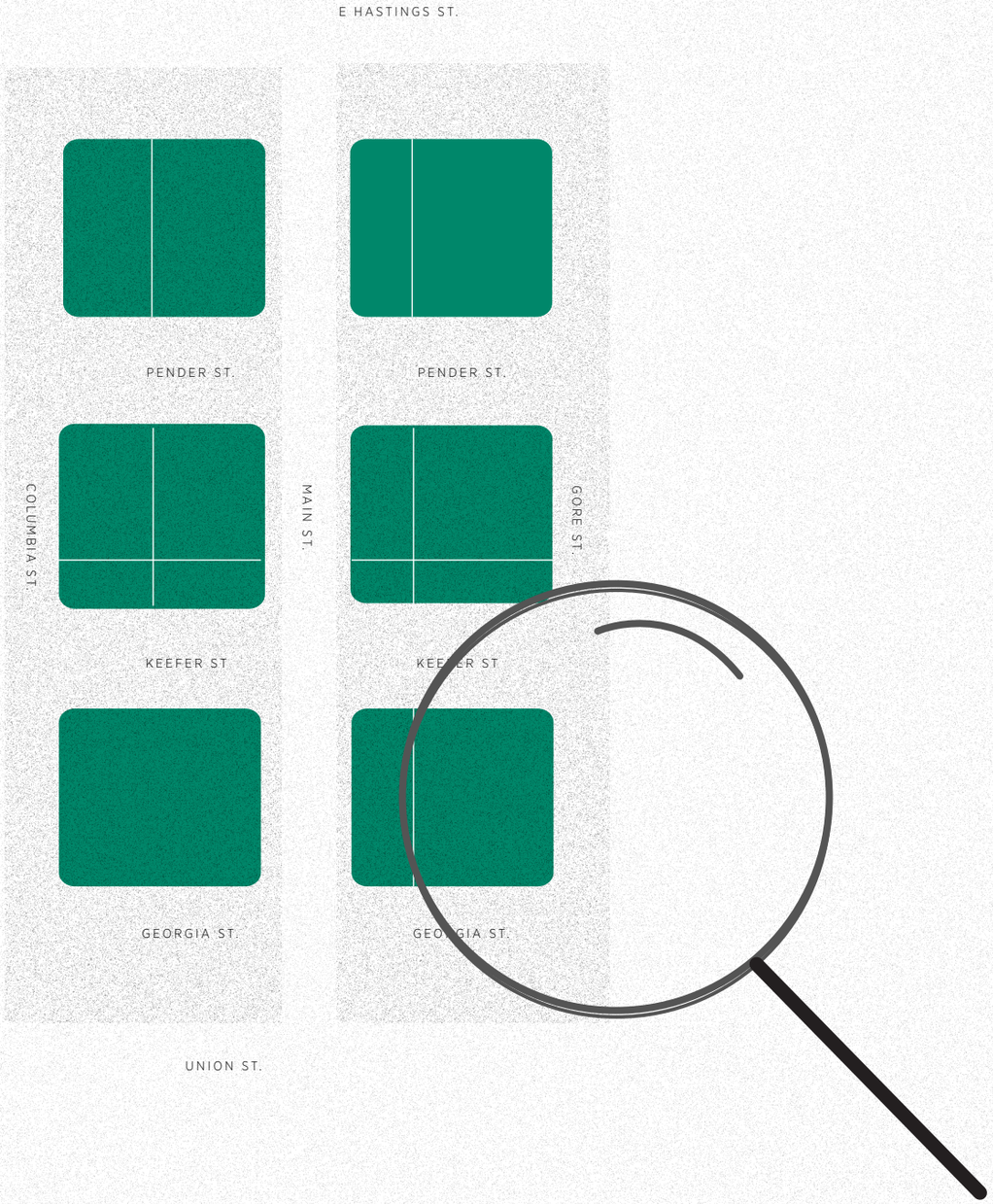
b) Documents the rate of cultural food asset loss in Chinatown between 2009 to 2016;

c) Analyzes municipal policy to identify gaps relating to the inclusion and support for cultural food assets in Vancouver;

d) Highlights opportunities for the better recognition and protection of cultural food assets in Vancouver;

e) Lends support for the need to extend beyond standard analytical frameworks for advancing the potential of Vancouver's local food system and, relatedly, its cultural landscape.

[vi] Other neighbourhoods include (but are not limited to) Joyce-Collingwood, Victoria-Fraserview, and the DTES.



METHODS

Using the Google Maps Street View function, we conducted quantitative primary research in order to survey the rate of cultural food asset loss in Chinatown between 2009 and 2016. Data was available and recorded for the following years: 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2016.[vii]

Losses were identified through the observation of one or more of the following characteristics: changes in store signs, different property use, closures, and construction activity. Businesses that exhibited such changes were identified, and screencaptures of each site were taken for each year of available data. We also noted the type of businesses that replaced previously existing stores, as well as the new food retailers that were gained between 2009 to 2016.

A comprehensive list was compiled to identify changes in Chinatown's foodscape between 2009 to 2016. Data was organized into the following categories: greengrocers, fishmongers, barbecue meat stores and butcher shops, Chinese dry goods stores, and food service retailers (i.e., restaurants, bakeries, and cafes). Rate of loss for each category was calculated using the following method:

$$\frac{\text{\# of cultural food assets lost between 2009 - 2016}}{\text{Existing number of cultural food assets in operation in 2009}} \times 100 = \text{\% of cultural food assets lost between 2009 - 2016}$$

[vii] While our analysis is bounded by a seven-year timeframe, cultural food assets continue to be lost in Chinatown, such as with the recent closure of Hon's Wun-Tun House in June 2017. Changes in 2017 have not been included for analysis in this report.

METHODS

Area Surveyed

THE FOLLOWING AREA WAS SURVEYED FOR CULTURAL FOOD ASSET LOSS.

Our surveyed area largely aligns with the Chinatown Plan Area outlined by CIty of Vancouver in the Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan and Economic Revitalization Strategy.

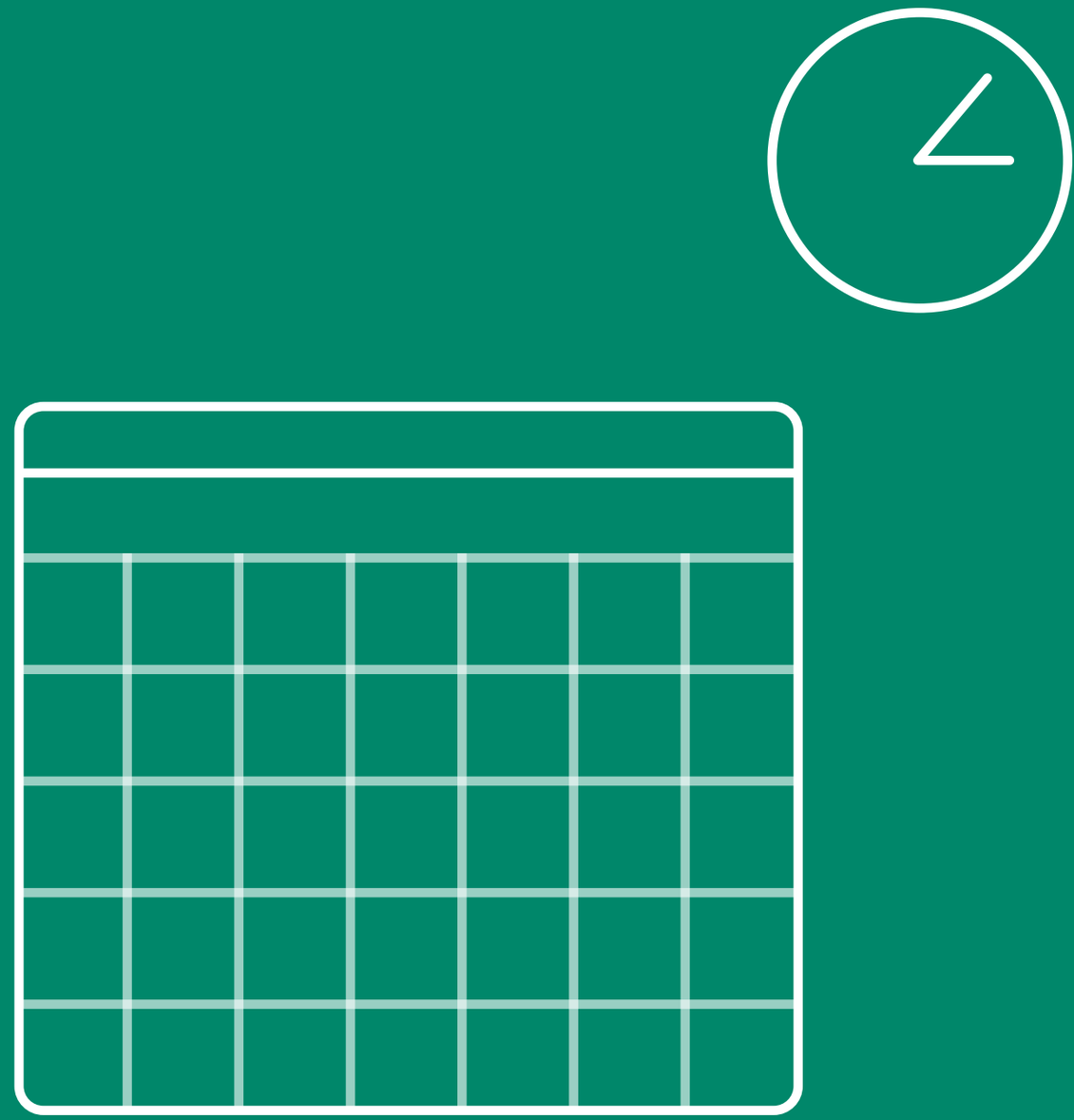
Additional areas that have been included in our assessment include the properties along the north-facing side of East Hastings between Gore and Columbia Street. Although these areas do not fall under formally recognized areas of Chinatown, their close proximity to the neighbourhood, as well our awareness of different local understandings of what constitutes Chinatown, justified our decision to extend our analysis slightly beyond official boundaries.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations with using Google Maps data in our survey of cultural food assets. While we had a sizeable timeframe of data to analyze, we were unable to determine specific timepoints (e.g., day or month of year) in which the changes occurred, as Google Maps is not updated regularly on a daily or monthly basis. Moreover, we were unable to analyze changes within larger establishments such as part of Golden Gate Centre and Chinatown Plaza.

A greater time frame of data could have been analyzed through the use of City of Vancouver's Business License data set, which contains annual business license records since 1997. However, the categorization scheme used to organize these records does not provide a precise indication of the type of businesses that are in operation. For example, Tin Lee Supermarket, a Chinatown greengrocer, was categorized as a "Retail Dealer - Food" and assigned a subcategory of "Convenience Store" in 2014.

For the purposes of our study, categorizing a greengrocer as a convenience store would not have been reflective of its role and function in the community. Conducting primary research using Google Maps data was more accessible and allowed us to develop categorization schemes that were more specific and reflective of the businesses of interest.



SUMMARY OF DATA RESULTS

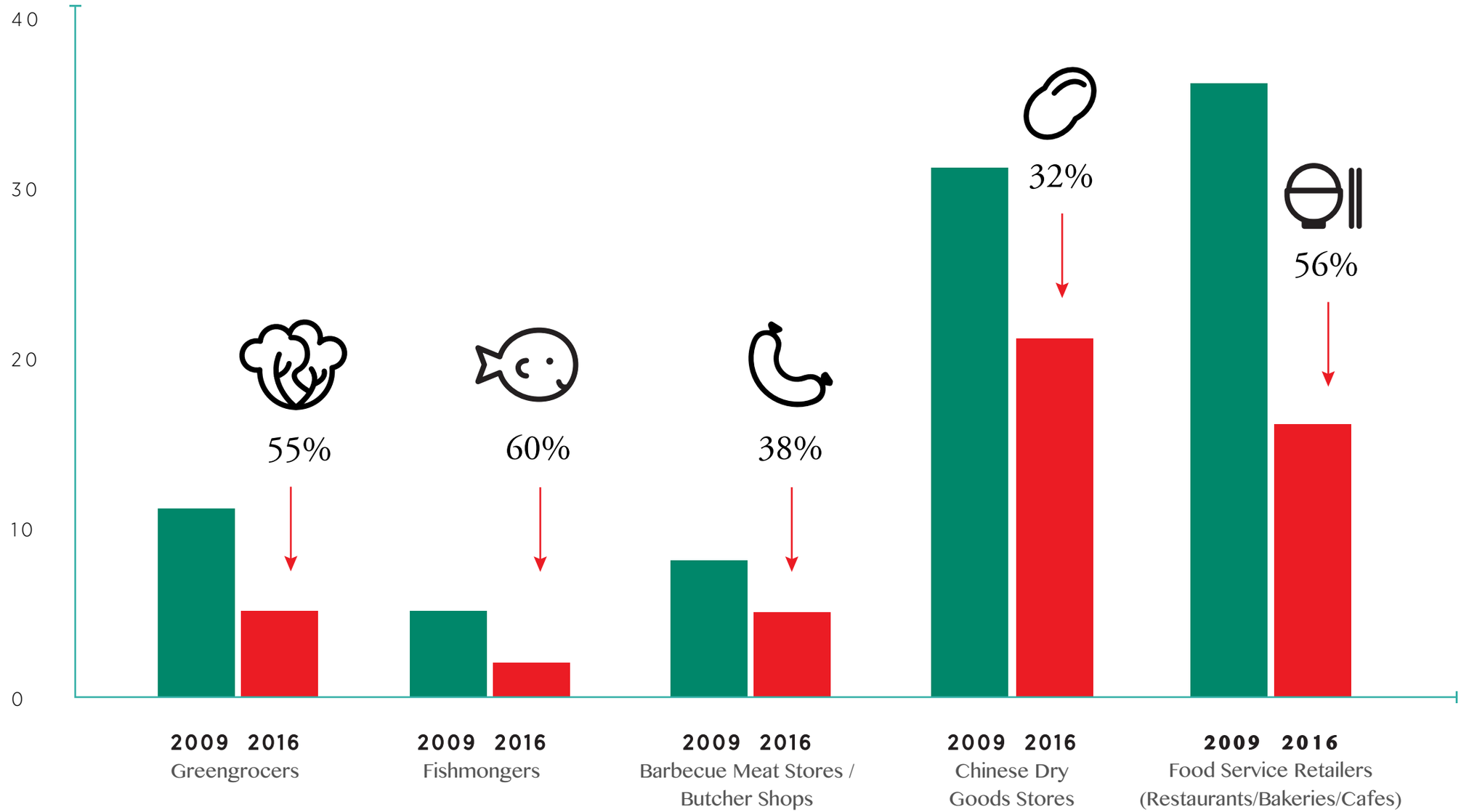
Below is a summary of our survey results. A comprehensive list documenting the change in Chinatown retailers between 2009 to 2016 can be found in Appendix A.

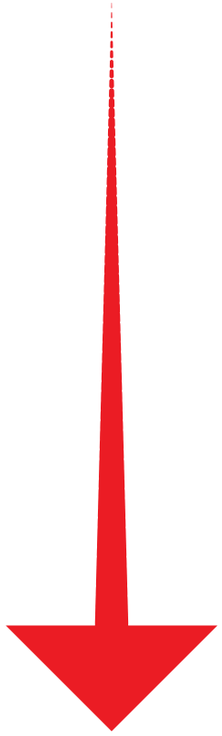
	Number In Operation		Number Lost	Percent Lost
Business Type	2009	2016		
Greengrocers	11	5	6	55%
Fishmongers	5	2	3	60%
Barbecue meat stores/Butcher shops	8	5	3	38%
Chinese dry goods stores	31	21	10	32%
Food Service Retailers	36	16*	20	56% [viii]

* of the 36 in operation in 2009

[viii] Due to the absence of baseline data, this figure does not include the change in food retailers in the Chinatown Plaza cafeteria.

Loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown between 2009 to 2016





50% of fresh food stores[ix] lost between 2009 to 2016

[ix] For this report, fresh food stores refer greengrocers, fishmongers, barbecue meat stores/butcher shops.

+33 FOOD SERVICE RETAILERS GAINED

It should be noted that the increase of food service retailers between 2009 to 2016 **does not compensate for the simultaneous loss of food service retailers during this period**, as new food service retailers tend to cater to higher income brackets and differ in terms of cultural specificity and/or orientation compared to the traditional Cantonese food service retailers that were in operation in 2009.

DISCUSSION

Our survey of Chinatown's foodscape has produced alarming results that point to the need for greater attention to the state of cultural food assets in Vancouver. The following section will offer insight into several factors contributing to the losses that have been documented. Although there is a wide range of factors contributing to the decline of cultural food assets in Chinatown, several key trends are worth noting as they can augment the current pressures faced by these businesses. While these factors contribute to different pressures in Chinatown on their own, it should also be noted that these factors often interact with and reinforce one another in a way that compounds the sensitivity of the system as a whole.

Factors

1. Decreased Chinese businesses

While Chinatown continues to serve as an important node for many Chinese businesses, the neighbourhood has also been experiencing economic decline for the past several decades. This can be partially explained by the spatial and economic diversification of the Chinese-Canadian community. With the influx of Chinese immigrants after World War II, the residential and business concentration of the Chinese-Canadian community began to expand out to other parts of the city. For example, in 1981, 10 Chinese greengrocers (3%) existed in Chinatown whereas 324 (97%) Chinese greengrocers existed outside of the neighbourhood, across the Lower Mainland.[13]

The proliferation and success of Chinese businesses, combined with the greater consumer demand elsewhere in the city, has overshadowed the role of Chinatown as the centre for cultural services and retailers and contributed to its marked economic decline.[13] With that said, the increase and success of Chinese businesses outside of Chinatown does not diminish the importance of those within, as they continue to provide the local community with access to affordable and culturally appropriate services.

2. Increasing property value

The overall trend of rising property values in Metro Vancouver is of particular concern in Chinatown, given the neighbourhood's concentration of businesses that service low-income and senior populations. In City of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Local Area Profile, Chinatown's land value was documented to have increased from $167 million in 2001 to $564 million in 2013, while its building value increased from $110 million in 2001 to $209 million in 2013.[13]

Rising property values and increasing rental prices exacerbates the broader trend of economic decline in Chinatown by amplifying economic pressures on businesses that provide affordable and culturally appropriate services. As a result, these businesses can be priced out of the neighbourhood.

3. Changing socio-economic landscape

Chinatown has and continues to be a home for a large number of low-income residents and Chinese seniors. With plans for development and revitalization, Chinatown has seen an increase in new businesses and developments catering to higher socioeconomic backgrounds in recent years. This can increase pressures on affordable and culturally appropriate businesses in Chinatown, as audiences with higher social and economic capital may not have the cultural competency and literacy to support traditional businesses, and/or would prefer to frequent newer business retailers.

Although data on the degree to which traditional businesses are being supported (i.e., economically) by Chinatown's higher socioeconomic bracket is absent, it is apparent that Chinatown will continue to be an attractive neighbourhood for newer retailers and developments. If this trend continues and is coupled by the displacement of existing low income residents and seniors, we expect that affordable and culturally appropriate businesses will face growing challenges with maintaining a sustainable customer base, thus threatening their ability to remain in the neighbourhood.

4. Lack of succession planning & continuity

Many of the cultural food assets in Chinatown are traditional businesses that have been in operation for decades. The lack of business succession plans for many of these businesses highlights the critical need for younger generations to continue and steward these trades. However, younger generations may lack the capacity, knowledge or interest to maintain these businesses. This may be a result of various factors including the presence of language barriers that prevent the transmission of traditional and cultural knowledge, high lease rates, and lack of resources and support for younger entrepreneurs, or these trades being perceived as difficult and less economically viable than other entrepreneurial activities.

As a result, many traditional businesses may eventually retire without a succession plan, which can lead to the loss of cultural knowledge and disruption of established business networks and contacts. For example, the Chinese food distribution network primarily works off of a system of social credibility and trust that is reinforced by the community. Without proper succession planning and active efforts to build social capital, business relationships are often difficult to pass on. The lack of succession planning and business continuity can also contribute to the loss of affordable and culturally appropriate services in Chinatown.

Photo credit: Jacky Chen, Chinatown Today

CHINATOWN FOOD POLICY ANALYSIS **OVERVIEW**

While the discussion above reviews the impact of socioeconomic, demographic, and generational factors on the loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown, it is equally important to highlight relevant gaps and opportunities present in the current municipal policy landscape. Better understanding its texture will help yield further insights about what has potentially contributed to the loss of cultural food assets that we see in Chinatown today.

To this end, we conducted a cross-content analysis of the following five municipal policy documents relating to food policy in Chinatown:

1. Vancouver Food Strategy (VFS);
2. Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan and Economic Revitalization Strategy (CNP);
3. Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan (DTES LAP);
4. Downtown Eastside Social Impact Assessment (DTES SIA);
5. Healthy City Strategy (HCS).

Each document presents its own set of aspirations and motivations. We analyzed the content of these documents in order to highlight their synergies and contradictions, as well as to identify key intersections between the existing policy landscape and the increasing loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown. While we recognize that the loss of Chinatown's cultural food assets are the result of a range of interacting factors, the scope of this analysis focuses on the degree to which cultural food assets are acknowledged and understood within the municipal policy landscape. We hope that by identifying gaps and opportunities in the City's policy literature, we can craft a new starting point from which we can provide suggestions for action moving forward.

The following discussion will be split into two sections, each reflecting core themes present throughout the five food policy documents listed above.

1.The Arts & Culture Paradox

As a critical pillar of city life and livelihood, food is considered a main focus through dedicated policies and actions outlined in most of the policy documents.

In each of these sections, the cultural facet of food is explicitly recognized. For example, both the DTES LAP and the VFS highlight [improving] "access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate/diverse foods" as a major policy goal.[14, 1] Within municipal and food justice definitions, **food access** refers to the need for food to be acceptable in addition to four other criteria.

On the other hand, considerations regarding food and culture appear to become mutually exclusive when each document begins its discussion of culture as a focal point. This is a good example of what one might describe as the "Arts & Culture Paradox:" while the arts, as understood colloquially, can be considered an integral part of culture, it does not represent all forms of culture on its own. One of the fallacies that this paradox creates is an exclusion of unconventionally artistic, often intangible forms of culture including food, during discussions of arts and culture in Vancouver.

Architecture, street facades, and other forms of physical assets constitute much of what is considered by the city as cultural heritage worthy of longevity and protection. This arises in each of the five policy documents observed, most notably in the DTES LAP and CNP. For example, when describing Chinatown's "Rich Cultural Assets," the CNP refers to 33 heritage designated buildings and facilities.[15] For unclear reasons, food assets in Chinatown are not included in this discussion. There is culture and heritage embedded not only in Chinatown's food and cuisine, but also in the people and the environment through which it is served and/or distributed. As Aronson contends, "Food is only culturally appropriate in context,"[16] and right now we are bearing witness to the erasure of these sociocultural contexts.

Goal #5 of the Vancouver Food Strategy aims to "advocate for a just and sustainable food system."[1] A just and sustainable food system requires that food be recognized as a cultural right, and that this recognition is reflected in the policies that function to uphold the rights of our citizens. Our current frameworks fail to do so, as references to cultural assets only encompass things that are tangible and visibly cultural such as buildings or gardens. By exclusively recognizing only the arts and tangible manifestations of culture, policy frameworks have overlooked both the tangible and intangible culture of food and the role it can play in cultivating healthy communities. We believe that this is a factor that has contributed to the rapid loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown.

Food Access is defined by the City of Vancouver as the policies, processes or programs that create the conditions for the following food security attributes to be met:

Availability:	Sufficient food for all people at all times
Accessibility:	Physical and economic access to food for all at all times
Adequacy:	Access to food that is nutritious and safe, and produced in environmentally sustainable ways
Acceptability:	Access to culturally appropriate food, which is produced and obtained in ways that do not compromise people's dignity, self respect or human rights
Agency:	The policies and processes that enable the achievement of food security[1]

2. Exclusion By Omission: Who Is Included in Policy?

Notes of inclusivity are embedded into the five municipal policy documents of relevance to our study. In particular, these documents state efforts to promote diversity and inclusion through the support of culturally diverse foods and protection of key community assets. Specific instances of these commitments can be found in both the concrete policies and the bodies of text leading up to them:

POLICY OBJECTIVES: INCLUSION & SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY ASSETS

POLICY ID	EXCERPT
VFS Goal #3	Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents (p.45)
DTES LAP 6.0 Policy Context	Retain, improve and celebrate key community assets, and foster a sense of community belonging, inclusion, dignity and safety for all. (p.40)
DTES LAP: 10.3.2 Enhance Local-Serving Retail	Assist and support existing retail areas (including Chinatown, Powell Street (Japantown) and Gastown) to have a vibrant mix of shops and services. (p.117)
DTES SIA: 6.0 Managing Community Assets and Impacts	*Our Well Being - Inclusion and Belonging:* Identify and protect places with social and cultural meaning to the community with emphasis on Aboriginal, Chinese and Japanese communities. (p.55)[17]

Given that one of the core objectives of the VFS is to "improve access to healthy, affordable, and culturally diverse food"[1] and that supporting and protecting the integrity of key community assets is an intended outcome shared across multiple policy documents, what might explain the rapid loss of cultural food assets observed in Chinatown?

To make sense of this paradox, it is necessary to consider the extent to which cultural food assets are acknowledged and mobilized within municipal policy through an examination of local food system actors that are formally recognized by the City of Vancouver. Identifying the stakeholders that are being mobilized within municipal policy is critical for determining who is being included in city planning and public discourse.

Several terms used in the policy documents are relevant to our analysis as their definitions outline the key contributions of local food system actors. They include: food assets, community food markets, healthy food retail, and low-cost meal, as defined by the VFS and the DTES SIA. The following section summarizes the baseline definitions outlined by municipal policy and compares the extent to which they overlap with the function of cultural food assets. The following section summarizes the baseline definitions outlined by municipal policy and compares the extent to which they overlap with the function of cultural food assets.

Definition of food assets

POLICY ID	EXCERPT
VFS: Baseline Analysis of Vancouver's food system	Food assets are defined as resources, facilities, services or spaces that are available to Vancouver residents, and which are used to support the local food system. This includes physical assets such as: • community composting sites • community food market • community fruit tree orchards • community gardens • community kitchens • farmers markets • street food vendors • urban farms (p. 23 - 24)
DTES SIA: 5.0 Assessing Potential Impacts of	*Our Well-Being - Food Access & Security:* Some of the assets that support the local food system are community gardens, urban farms, community kitchens, community food markets, farmers markets, community composting sites, street food vendors and neighbourhood food networks. (p.43)

Comparable: Cultural Food Assets

Cultural food assets are present in many neighbourhoods in Vancouver and contribute to the local food system and economy. For example, greengrocers, fishmongers and barbecue meat stores/butcher shops provide residents with access to fresh, often local, affordable, and culturally appropriate food options.

Cultural food assets also provide spaces that support the maintenance of social connections and cultural practices. While cultural food assets may not operate in the same channels as the assets defined by the VFS, they still support local food systems, such as the Chinese food distribution system. Their lack of formal recognition as assets contributing to Vancouver's food systems points toward significant potential yet to be realized within municipal policy.

Definition of community food markets

POLICY ID	EXCERPT
VFS: What are community food markets?	Community Food Markets (CFM), previously referred to as pocket markets, are small markets for the sale of fresh and/or locally-prepared fruits and vegetables. These food options benefit: • residents by increasing access to fresh foods and healthy locally- prepared foods • small-scale businesses by providing a local market base • market operators by allowing them to diversify their vendors. (p.104)
VFS: Baseline analysis of Vancouver's food system	Community food markets (mini farmers markets with fewer than 10 booths) have a mandate to improve access to fresh, affordable food. There are four community food markets, all operated by nonprofit groups. (p.24)

Comparable: Greengrocers

These definitions and sets of criteria overlap with what constitutes a greengrocer.

Chinese greengrocers do a great deal to support the Chinese Food Distribution System through their procurement and sale of fresh and local produce. They are also small-scale in business size and play an important role in providing their surrounding local community with access to fresh foods. However, Chinese greengrocers are not formally recognized as Community Food Markets, as Community Food Markets are exclusively defined as smaller, official farmers markets operated by non-profits.

Definition of healthy food retail

POLICY ID	EXCERPT
VFS: Healthy Food Retail	What is healthy food retail? Healthy food retail differs from regular food retail in: 1. scale of operation (generally small-scale, low impact) 2. a focus on healthier food options, and local, where possible 3. attention to underserved parts of the city, and 4. use of infrastructure that can be relocated to different sites based on need, such as pop up grocery stores or mobile green grocers. (p.109)

Comparable: Cultural food assets

Cultural food assets are small-scale, sell local and affordable products, and give attention to a critically underserved part of the city, especially in Chinatown.

The fact that they are not mobile should not preclude them for consideration. In fact, their geographic permanence creates a valuable sense of place, grounding Chinatown's character in its importance as a cultural hub of relevant assets and services through the **cultural food security** it provides to the neighbourhood.

Food security is defined by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization as "a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."[1]

Cultural food security expands upon the United Nations definition by emphasizing food security as a state where people are "able to acquire food in ways that are culturally acceptable, [empowering], and personally dignifying."[20]

Definition of low-cost meal

POLICY ID	EXCERPT
DTES SIA: 5.0 Assessing Potential Impacts of Development	*High-Cost vs Low-Cost Restaurants:* Presence of low-cost restaurant options increases the possibility of low-income patronage of local restaurants. Being able to patronize local restaurants promotes feelings of belonging and inclusion. (p. 46)
DTES SIA: 5.0 Assessing Potential Impacts of Development	*Our Well Being - Food Access & Security:* There are numerous free or low-cost meal services run by social service organizations, housing providers, the health authority and faith-based groups. (p.44)

Comparable: Cultural food assets

Traditional Cantonese bakeries and restaurants provide affordable food options that encourage low-income patronage in the local economy. For example, a steamed bun can be purchased in Chinatown for approximately $2.00, which is comparable to the price of a low-cost breakfast or lunch offered by various community organizations in the DTES.

While not all food items are offered at low-cost meal rates (i.e., $2.00 - $3.75) or considered non-profit, charitable ventures, many of these businesses still provide affordable food options (e.g., $2.00 - $10.00) that services a range of income brackets, including low-income residents. For example, a breakfast or lunch meal set can be purchased from the Boss Restaurant for under $10.00.

Purchasing from cultural food assets are legitimate contributions to the local economy and food system.

By examining the benchmark from which local food system actors are recognized, the following can be observed: while cultural food assets overlap and achieve similar policy objectives in terms of impact and function, their significance and contributions to Vancouver's local food system is not well captured in current municipal policy documents. The lack of awareness about cultural food assets in municipal policy represents a substantial area of missed opportunities and takes away from a meaningful bottom line from which we can measure our progress forwards or backwards.

Given the rapid loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown, what does the VFS's overall policy goal to increase food assets by 50% by 2020 mean when we are not supporting what already exists?

Recognizing Chinatown as an important food hub in Vancouver would be a concrete contribution to the VFS as it currently stands. Additionally, we believe that cultural food assets deserve explicit inclusion in future iterations of municipal food policy. As we have demonstrated, cultural food assets in Chinatown are disappearing at a rapid rate and require immediate and meaningful forms of support against the many pressures that threaten their long-term viability. Taking these first steps would help protect the cultural food security that Chinatown offers, and encourage better structural support for cultural food assets and other assets not formally recognized as active contributors to food security in Vancouver.

Towards 2020: Revaluating performance indicators?

The City's goal to increase food assets by 2020 is a target shared across the Vancouver Food Strategy, Greenest City Action Plan, and Park Board Local Food Action Plan. These policy documents are united under the Healthy City Strategy (HCS), which is a plan comprised of 13 long-term goals that aim to promote the wellbeing of the city and its people. Fostering a just and sustainable food system is an integral part of reaching this broader vision.

Three performance indicators are identified by the HCS in their goal of "increasing city-wide and neighbourhood food assets by a minimum of 50% over 2010 levels."[18] Those indicators include the number of food assets, the number of neighbourhood food networks, and the cost of Health Canada's National Nutritious Food Basket.

While recent figures suggest a 42% increase in neighbourhood food assets in Vancouver since 2010,[19] our case study in Chinatown reveals an opposite trend whereby cultural food assets are being lost at an alarmingly rapid rate. Evidently, evaluation and monitoring of progress within policy falls short in acknowledging assets that exist beyond what is formally recognized, such as cultural food assets. Given this, how might evaluation metrics be improved to better capture and assess progress and/or stagnation within municipal policy?

Photo credit: Theo Wong, Chinatown Today

CONCLUSION

By examining the state of food security in Chinatown, this report demonstrates that cultural food assets are being lost at an alarmingly rapid rate. The following table illustrates the loss of Chinatown's cultural food assets between 2009 to 2016:

	Number In Operation		Number Lost	Percent Lost
Business Type	2009	2016		
Greengrocers	11	5	6	55%
Fishmongers	5	2	3	60%
Barbecue meat stores/Butcher shops	8	5	3	38%
Chinese dry goods stores	31	21	10	32%
Food Service Retailers	36	16*	20	56%

* of the 36 in operation in 2009

CONCLUSION

There are many factors that have contributed to the loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown, such as decreasing business, increasing property values, increasing socioeconomic polarization, and lack of business succession planning. Given City of Vancouver's commitment to creating a "healthy, just and sustainable food system,"[1] this report assesses the degree to which cultural food assets are acknowledged within the municipal policy landscape. A careful examination of municipal documents relating to food policy in Chinatown reveals several paradoxes regarding their recognition and support for cultural food assets in Vancouver.

First, while the cultural facet of food is explicitly recognized within policy, considerations regarding food and culture tend to become mutually exclusive when culture is invoked as a central point of discussion in the policy documents. This is an example of the "Arts & Culture Paradox" whereby physical assets, such as architecture and street facades, are regarded as cultural assets, whereas the heritage and culture of food (both tangible and intangible) are not recognized as integral components of culture. This results in the exclusion of unconventionally artistic and often intangible forms of culture, including food, in discussions of arts and culture in Vancouver.

Second, despite their overlap in achieving similar policy objectives, the significance and contributions of cultural food assets to Vancouver's local food system is not well captured within municipal policy documents. Cultural food assets are absent from City of Vancouver's formal definitions of local food system actors, thereby resulting in their lack of recognition, protection, and mobilization. Evidently, our analysis has demonstrated that cultural food assets are not well acknowledged within the current municipal policy landscape, and that there remains a significant area of untapped potential with regard to building a more inclusive, just and sustainable food system in Vancouver.

In highlighting the absences and omissions that are present within current municipal policy, it is critical to underscore the legacy of earlier policies, systems and governments under which our city continues to operate. Despite the past and present contributions of the Chinese food distribution system to our city and province, much of their history and significance remains less known within the public sphere. The existence of the Chinese food distribution system as a network that operates in parallel to the mainstream local food movement is a tangible result of systemic racism and exclusionary policies. Although the systemic oppressions that early Chinese-Canadian farmers experienced remain in the periphery of public and institutional memory, their legacy continues to inform the ways in which city planning and decision making takes form. The lack of recognition and inclusion of cultural food assets within municipal policy is in part a result of the use of formalized frameworks that do not fully comprehend and acknowledge the histories and lived experiences of those who fall outside of our dominant structures. These frameworks can result in contradictions and shortcomings, such as in the paradoxes identified through our analysis of municipal food policy in this report.

CONCLUSION

A closer examination of whom our systems are designed by and for is in order. Which frameworks tend to be privileged in processes of city building, and how might that shape the institutions we live with? With regard to municipal policy and decision-making, who has the capacity to determine who and what is worthy of inclusion and support? How might this reinforce asymmetrical representation and access to power within civic processes?

Bearing the limits of our formalized frameworks in mind, our city has both the challenge and opportunity to support the integrity and growth of diverse food system actors, including those who are actively contributing to our local food system but are not currently being provided due attention. Given the complex and varied demographic of Vancouver's population, how can the City of Vancouver contribute to advancing a food system that can better serve the diverse needs of its citizens? While future iterations of municipal policy have been identified as critical areas to leverage, it is valuable to remember that policy in and of itself can only play a part in addressing some of the issues raised in this report. Equally important is the need to extend beyond formalized frameworks to meaningfully acknowledge and make space for less-known and often peripheral local histories, life experiences, and ways of engaging with the local food system, for they play a crucial role in disrupting our normative patterns of thought and action. Taking these steps are concrete efforts towards reaching the broader vision of fostering a more inclusive, just, and sustainable food system in Vancouver.

Locally grown (本地) vegetables sold in Chinatown, August 2017.

OPPORTUNITIES

SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING THE RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION OF CULTURAL FOOD ASSETS IN VANCOUVER ARE PRESENT. THIS REPORT RECOMMENDS THAT THE CITY OF VANCOUVER:

1 Support the inclusion of culture as a fourth pillar of sustainability

The City of Vancouver's motion to investigate the adoption of the Agenda 21 policy statement, "Culture as the Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development," presents an exciting opportunity for culture to be recognized and adopted as an integral part of city building processes. Given the lack of acknowledgement of culture outside of the context of artistic expression within municipal planning strategies, endorsing culture as a fourth pillar of sustainability can help ensure that culture is recognized and advanced as a foundational component to future growth and development in the city. With regards to municipal food system efforts, adopting culture as a fourth pillar of sustainability can promote the development of policy frameworks that better understand and support the contributions of cultural food assets to Vancouver's overall health, vitality, and diversity as a city.

2 Explicitly include and support cultural food assets in the next iteration of the Vancouver Food Strategy

In consideration of the role they play in enhancing the food security of a neighbourhood, cultural food assets should be explicitly included and supported in future iterations of the Vancouver Food Strategy. Specific measures should be made to increase the resilience of cultural food assets and better support their contributions to Vancouver's local food system. While the overarching policy goal of increasing food assets is necessary and important, future iterations of the Vancouver Food Strategy should also take concrete steps to assess and support what already exists.

Policy 10.3.1 of the DTES LAP states to "ensure all residents, in particular low-income residents, have access to necessary affordable goods and services near where they live." More specifically under this policy, the DTES LAP aims to "facilitate the establishment of suitable and culturally appropriate affordable food and retail enterprises (e.g. restaurant, greengrocer and produce markets) to areas of the neighbourhood where there are gaps in retail and amenities." This is a promising commitment that should be incorporated into the next iteration of the Vancouver Food Strategy and extrapolated to other neighbourhoods in Vancouver.

3 Support further research and education on cultural food assets and parallel food systems

Given the lack of discourse regarding the Chinese food distribution system, concrete efforts (such as in the form of dedicated resources and funding) should be made to educate and promote public awareness regarding the history and legacy of systemic racism and exclusionary policies in our local food system.

Further research should be conducted to better understand the state of cultural food assets in other neighbourhoods in Vancouver, such as in the Renfrew-Collingwood, Victoria-Fraserview and Sunset neighbourhoods. Studies can also be conducted to better understand the nature of parallel food systems in our province, as the Chinese Food Distribution System is merely one example of such alternative networks. Conducting research in these areas is important for increasing our local food system knowledge, and enhancing our capacity to identify and leverage opportunities for structural support.

Photo credit: James Crookall, City of Vancouver Archives

GLOSSARY

This report is shaped by our interpretation of the following key terms. Although different understandings exist outside of our chosen definitions, these definitions are important for framing the approach to our work in Chinatown and beyond.

Chinese dry goods stores refer to retailers that sell dried goods used in Chinese cuisine and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Some retailers may also offer consultation with Chinese physicians who can prescribe herbal medicines according to various needs.

The **Chinese food distribution system** refers to the older, long established network of local Chinese farmers, wholesalers, and retailers that operate in parallel to the newer, rapidly expanding local food movement consisting of farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and other publicly supported institutions.[2] Formed in the backdrop of systemic racism and social and economic segregation, the Chinese Food Distribution System has and continues to provide the Metro Vancouver region with access to fresh, often local, and culturally appropriate food.

Cultural acceptability or **cultural appropriateness** within food security literature refers to food that is familiar, acceptable, and desired by a cultural group. With that said, cultural appropriateness must be understood beyond the mere inclusion or substitution of certain food types. Indeed, scholars contend that it is important to understand the dynamic and nuanced role that culture plays throughout the food system. Within this framework, cultural appropriateness recognizes the centrality of cultural values in the production and consumption of food, involves cultural relationships built on trust and respect, and emphasizes the importance of shared decision-making power within the food system.[10]

Food Access is defined by the City of Vancouver as the policies, processes or programs that create the conditions for the following food security attributes to be met:
Availability: Sufficient food for all people at all times
Accessibility: Physical and economic access to food for all at all times
Adequacy: Access to food that is nutritious and safe, and produced in environmentally sustainable ways
Acceptability: Access to culturally appropriate food, which is produced and obtained in ways that do not compromise people's dignity, self respect or human rights
Agency: The policies and processes that enable the achievement of food security[1]

Food assets are defined by the Vancouver Food Strategy as resources, facilities, services or spaces that are available to Vancouver residents, and which are used to support the local food system. Examples of food assets include community gardens and orchards, urban farms, farmers markets, food processing infrastructure, community composting facilities, and neighbourhood food networks.[1]

Cultural food assets are businesses and services that provide a similar, if not identical function as food assets defined by City of Vancouver. Cultural food assets extend beyond the role of food assets identified by City of Vancouver by providing spaces that support the maintenance and transmission of culture. While cultural food assets are not limited to a particular cultural group, this report identifies greengrocers, fishmongers, barbecue meat stores and butcher shops, Chinese dry goods stores, as well as traditional Cantonese bakeries and restaurants as strong examples of cultural

food assets. These assets support a cultural food distribution system (e.g., the Chinese food distribution system) that is not formally considered to be part of the local food movement.

Food security is defined by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization as "a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."[1]

Cultural food security expands this definition by emphasizing food security as a state where people are "able to acquire food in ways that are culturally acceptable, [empowering], and personally dignifying."[20]

Greengrocers are "small markets often specializing in [the] cuisine of a particular population."[5] Although greengrocers are not currently defined by City of Vancouver nor are ethnic groups linked to business ownership, Chinese and Asian greengrocers are ubiquitous in Vancouver and serve as an important source for fresh, local Asian and non-Asian produce. They also serve as an important distributor for Asian farmers and other local food system producers.[5] While food circulated within the Chinese food distribution system tends to be sourced from local farms, imports are also distributed along this supply chain as a result of factors such as seasonality and availability (see Phan (2011) and Gibbs & Wittman (2013) for further reading). For this report, greengrocers have been identified based on their predominant offering of fresh fruits and vegetables. However, it should be noted that greengrocers often sell other goods in addition to produce, such as fresh meat, eggs, and dry goods.

The **local food movement** is an "umbrella term used to describe the growing popular response to the social, [political], and material consequences of globalized and industrial food systems."[x] This network informs—and is informed by—what mainstream local food activists, policy-makers and academics understand as "local food."[2] Action typically centres on consuming local and organic food, resulting in forms of participation that emphasizes voting with your fork (e.g., shopping at the farmers market) or growing your own food.[xi]

These modes of participation are referred to as the **mainstream local food movement**; while they are commonly represented in public institutions and discourse, they do not capture the diverse ways of engaging with the local food system that may fall outside of this framework.[xii]

A **parallel food system** refers to a food supply chain that operates outside of and in parallel to the mainstream local food movement. It represents one of the many pathways through which food moves from local farms to consumers. However, due to factors such as historic and contemporary racism, discrimination, as well as different language and cultural norms, parallel food systems are often underrepresented within the mainstream local food movement and have few points of intentional connection and collaboration.[2] The Chinese food distribution system is a prominent example of a parallel food system in Metro Vancouver.

Traditional businesses in Chinatown refer to businesses that carry on the function that Chinatown has played throughout time, that is, as a retailer that provides a safer and more accessible space that services immigrant, low-income and senior populations. These businesses tend to be well established in the community (e.g., have been in operation for at least 10 years) and have enduring relationships with the community members that make up this neighbourhood. Traditional businesses in Chinatown often have a Chinese (more specifically Cantonese) orientation, but can also include businesses run by other visible minorities. Examples of traditional businesses in Chinatown include Tin Lee Market, Hung Wing Seafood, Money Barbecue, and New Town Bakery.

[ix] [x] [xi] Definition courtesy of Stephanie Lim, 2017.

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APPENDIX A - CHINATOWN BUSINESS COUNT

GREENGROCERS

TOTAL IN OPERATION	
2009	11
2016	5

TOTAL LOSSES BETWEEN 2009 - 2016:
6

LEGEND

LOSS OF BUSINESS FROM CATEGORY OF INTEREST | LOSS OF BUSINESS OUTSIDE OF CATEGORY OF INTEREST | RELOCATED BUSINESS | NEW FOOD BUSINESS | NEW BUSINESS | BUSINESSES CLOSED PRIOR TO 2009

ADDRESS	2009	2016
441 Gore Ave	Canwa Produce	Black Medicine Tattoo
747 Gore Ave	Sieu Thi Wong Xing Market Ltd.	DSC Fitness Martial Arts
751 Gore Ave	Red Star Vegetable Fruit & Co.	The Standard Bicycle Service & Repair
246 E Georgia	Quality Enterprises Ltd.	Quality Enterprises Ltd.
255 E Georgia	Carley Quality Meat Ltd. (2nd location)	Carley Quality Meat Ltd.
256 E Georgia	33 Market	Chinese clothing store
260 E Georgia	Tin Lee Market	Tin Lee Market
269 E Georgia	Fresh Egg Mart	Empty unit
288 E Georgia	Lok's Produce	Empty unit
293 E Georgia	Carley Quality Meat Ltd. (1st location)	Jia Mei Market Ltd.
230 E Pender	C.Z. Kwong Hing Enterprises Ltd	Space Lab, Bootleg Barbers, Aubade Coffee
239 Keefer St	Chinatown Supermarket	Empty unit
267 Keefer St	San Lee Enterprises	San Lee Enterprises

APPENDIX A - CHINATOWN BUSINESS COUNT

FISHMONGERS

TOTAL IN OPERATION	
2009	5
2016	2

TOTAL LOSSES BETWEEN 2009 - 2016:
3

LEGEND

LOSS OF BUSINESS FROM CATEGORY OF INTEREST | LOSS OF BUSINESS OUTSIDE OF CATEGORY OF INTEREST | RELOCATED BUSINESS | NEW FOOD BUSINESS | NEW BUSINESS | BUSINESSES CLOSED PRIOR TO 2009

ADDRESS	2009	2016
595 Gore Ave	Hung Wing Seafood	Hung Wing Seafood
264 E Hastings	Seasonal Seafood Market Ltd	Empty unit
254 E Georgia	Gar-lock Seafood & Meat Ltd.	Gar-lock Seafood & Meat Ltd.
284 E Pender	Pender Seafoods	Empty unit
290 Keefer St	Ocean 2U Seafood	Blue Ling's Hair Salon

BARBECUE MEAT STORES AND BUTCHER SHOPS

TOTAL IN OPERATION	
2009	8
2016	5

TOTAL LOSSES BETWEEN 2009 - 2016:
3

LEGEND

LOSS OF BUSINESS FROM CATEGORY OF INTEREST | LOSS OF BUSINESS OUTSIDE OF CATEGORY OF INTEREST | RELOCATED BUSINESS | NEW FOOD BUSINESS | NEW BUSINESS | BUSINESSES CLOSED PRIOR TO 2009

ADDRESS	2009	2016
425 Gore Ave	Lee Loy BBQ Meats Co. Ltd.	Construction
427 Gore Ave	Ferry Market	Construction
595 Gore Ave	Money Foods Enterprises Ltd	Money Food Ent.
128 E Pender	Quon H. Wong Agencies	Quon H. Wong Agencies
255 E Pender	Topper Poultry	Topper Poultry
258 E Pender	利僑雞鴨公司	Empty unit
266 E Pender	Dollar Meat Store	Dollar Meat Store
276 E Pender	Top King BBQ & Meat Co Ltd.	Empty unit
282 E Pender	Kam Wah Meat Ltd.	嘉華參茸燕窩行 (Chinese dry goods store)
231 E Georgia	Mah Roy Market Ltd.	Mah Roy Market Ltd.
253 Keefer St	Sing Cheong Food Centre	Sing Cheong Food Centre
273 Union St	鴻發蔬菓鮮凍肉食公司	Empty unit

APPENDIX A - CHINATOWN BUSINESS COUNT

CHINESE DRY GOODS STORES

TOTAL IN OPERATION	
2009	31
2016	21

TOTAL LOSSES BETWEEN 2009 - 2016:
10

LEGEND

LOSS OF BUSINESS FROM CATEGORY OF INTEREST | LOSS OF BUSINESS OUTSIDE OF CATEGORY OF INTEREST | RELOCATED BUSINESS | NEW FOOD BUSINESS | NEW BUSINESS | BUSINESSES CLOSED PRIOR TO 2009

ADDRESS	2009	2016
749 Gore Ave	Tiem Thuoc Bac Cathay	DSC Fitness Martial Arts
663 Gore Ave	Tung Yun Tong Herbal Co. Ltd.	Fluffy Kittens
595 Gore Ave	Hang Fung Herbal Products Inc	Hang Fung Herbal Products Inc
437 Gore Ave	Chung Shan Co. Ltd.	Chung Shan Co. Ltd.
264 E Hastings	Chinese Herbs Co. Ltd. (relocated to 236 E Hastings in 2016)	Construction
89 E Pender	Beijing Trading Co Ltd.	Beijing Trading Co Ltd.
126 E Pender	Vitality Enterprises Ltd.	Studio 126
209 E Pender	Gibo Health Food Ltd. (參燕莊)	Propaganda Coffee
212 E Pender	Ca Wah Herbal	Ten Fu Tea & Ginseng
236 E Pender	華豐參茸海味	Art Gallery
250 E Pender	Hang Loong Herbal Products Inc.	Hang Loong Herbal Products Inc.
262 E Pender	Nutra Trading Co, Ltd.	Nutra Trading Co, Ltd.
265 E Pender	Tai Hing Company Ltd.	Tai Hing Company Ltd.

ADDRESS	2009	2016
269 E Pender	Ng Fung Enterprises Ltd	Empty unit
278 E Pender	Continental Herbal Co Ltd.	Continental Herbal Co Ltd.
282 E Pender	嘉華參茸燕窩行	嘉華參茸燕窩行
299 E Pender	Hang Hing Herbal Medicine Ltd.	Hang Hing Herbal Medicine Ltd.
223 Keefer St	Tak Hing Loong Trading Co. Ltd.	Tak Hing Loong Trading Co. Ltd.
227 Keefer St	Gibo Health Food Ltd. (裕豐行)	Gibo Health Food Ltd. (裕豐行)
240 Keefer St	Yue Ha Trading Co. Ltd.	Kwong Tak Hong Herbal Products Ltd.
247 Keefer St	Four Seas Herbal & Health Products Ltd.	Tone Ren Hong Enterprises Ltd.
261 Keefer St	Kiu Shun Trading Co Ltd.	Kiu Shun Trading Co Ltd.
212 E Georgia	Tak Sing Co Trading Co. Ltd.	Cafe Brixton
233 E Georgia	EAS Chinese Traditional Herbs Ltd.	EAS Chinese Traditional Herbs Ltd.
248 E Georgia	Nam Bak Enterprises Ltd.	Nam Bak Enterprises Ltd.
263 E Georgia	Kwong Hing Herbal Products Inc.	Kwong Hing Herbal Products Inc.
434 Main St	Sunny Day dry goods store	Empty unit
506 Main St	百昌參茸藥行	百昌參茸藥行
524 Main St	National Herbs	Chinese clothing store
526 Main St	國華燕窩參茸行	國華燕窩參茸行
536 Main St	Cheung Sing Herbal and Birds Nest Ltd.	Cheung Sing Herbal and Birds Nest Ltd.
530 Main St	Yuen Tai Hong	Yuen Tai Hong

APPENDIX A - CHINATOWN BUSINESS COUNT

RESTAURANTS / BAKERIES / CAFES

[BUSINESSES IN OPERATION SINCE 2009] TOTAL IN OPERATION: 16

[BUSINESSES IN OPERATION SINCE 2009] TOTAL LOST: 20

LEGEND

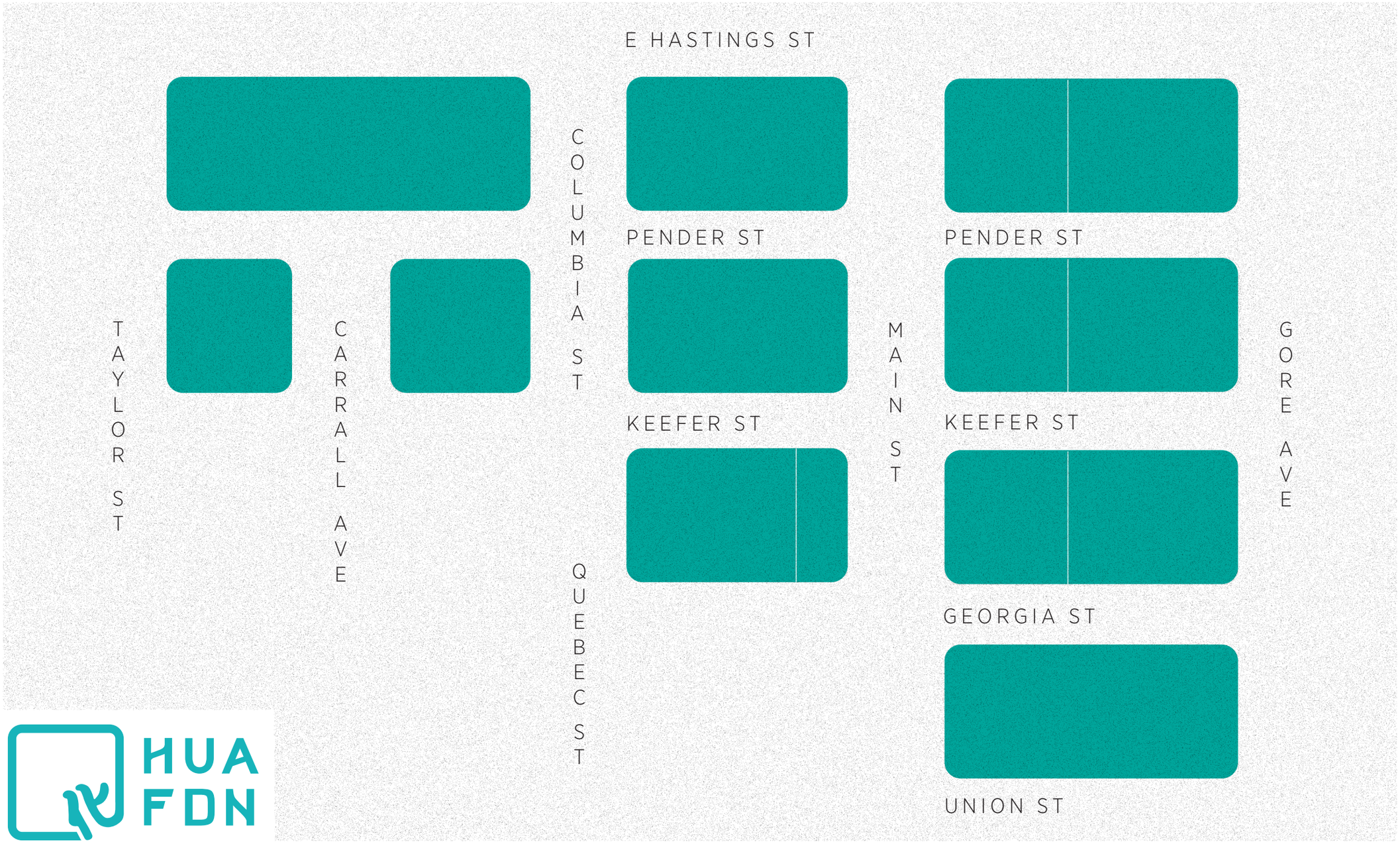
LOSS OF BUSINESS FROM CATEGORY OF INTEREST | LOSS OF BUSINESS OUTSIDE OF CATEGORY OF INTEREST | RELOCATED BUSINESS | NEW FOOD BUSINESS | NEW BUSINESS | BUSINESSES CLOSED PRIOR TO 2009

ADDRESS	2009	2016
425 Gore Ave	Golden Wheat Bakery Ltd.	Construction
525 Gore Ave	Kam Wai 862 Bakery & Dimsum Ltd.	Tongsing Foods Ltd.
555 Gore Ave	New Tong Garden Restaurant	The Emerald
663 Gore Ave	Tung Yun Tong Herbal Co. Ltd.	Fluffy Kittens
721 Gore Ave	Green Valley Trading Ltd.	Pie Shoppe
789 Gore Ave	Bean Around The World	Roost Cafe
290 E Hastings	Pasteur Vietnamese Restaurant	Empty unit
18 E Pender	Chinese Arts & Crafts Co.	Half Fool
41 E Pender	Mr Coffee	Perks Cafe
75 E Pender	Construction	Everything Cafe, Musette Cafe
102 E Pender	Foo Ho Ho's Restaurant	Empty unit
105 E Pender	Panda on Pender	Bestie Cafe
127 E Pender	Garden Villa Seafood Restaurant	Empty unit

ADDRESS	2009	2016
137 E Pender	Jade Dynasty Restaurant	Empty unit
142 E Pender	Daisy Garden	Empty unit
145 E Pender	Construction	Construction
148 E Pender	Houseware Store	New Town Bakery & Restaurant
156 E Pender	KK Boutique	Empty unit
158 E Pender	New Town Bakery & Restaurant	Sai Woo
179 E Pender	New Mitzie's Restaurant	New Mitzie's Restaurant
209 E Pender	Gibo Health Food Ltd. (參燕莊)	Propaganda Coffee
223 E Pender	Empty unit	Ramen Butcher
249 E Pender	Kam Wai Dim Sum	Kam Wai Dim Sum
263 E Pender	Hankang Swatow Restaurant	Kissa Tanto
277 E Pender	Kwong Wong Kee BBQ Wonton House	Empty unit
284 E Pender	Top Taste Food Restaurant	Phen Phen Filipino Restaurant
280 E Pender	Zhao Mah Bakery	Zhao Mah Bakery
291 E Pender	Sally's Cake House	Klaus's Kaffee Haus
135 Keefer St	Construction	The Keefer Bar
139 Keefer St	Goldstone Bakery & Restaurant	Goldstone Bakery & Restaurant
163 Keefer St	Mylite Soya Foods Cafe	Bao Bei
178 Keefer St	Streamland Bakery	Octopus House Canada Ltd.

ADDRESS	2009	2016
180 Keefer St	No data	V Taste
180 Keefer St	No data	民豐快餐 (99 Fast Food)
180 Keefer St	No data	Fu Wei Mandarin Cuisine
182 Keefer St	Vikon Foods (Part of Golden Gate Centre)	Juke
185 Keefer St	Travel agency	Juniper
257 Keefer St	Maxim's Bakery Ltd.	Maxim's Bakery Ltd.
245 Keefer St	Sun Fresh Bakery House	Sun Fresh Bakery House
218 Keefer St	Gain Wah Restaurant	Gain Wah Restaurant
232 Keefer St	Kent's Kitchen	Kent's Kitchen
268 Keefer St	Hon's Wun Tun House Ltd.	Hon's Wun Tun House Ltd.
400 - 180 Keefer St	Floata Restaurant	Floata Restaurant
212 E Georgia	Tak Sing Co Trading Co. Ltd.	Cafe Brixton
213 E Georgia	Unidentified dim sum store	Matchstick Coffee Roasters
217 E Georgia	Empty unit (parking lot)	Fat Mao
244 E Georgia	Phnom Penh	Phnom Penh
251 E Georgia	Keefer Bakery	Mamie Taylor's
416 Main St	Marilyn's Restaurant	同福 林中菜館
495 Main St	Waves Cafe	Waves Cafe
509 Main St	Golden Garden Vietnamese Cuisine	Golden Garden Vietnamese Cuisine

ADDRESS	2009	2016
532 Main St	The Boss Restaurant	The Boss Restaurant
544 Main St	Park Lock Seafood Restaurant	Empty unit
550 Main St	Empty unit	Empty unit
583 Main St	Mandarin Health Centre	Virtuous Pie
587 Main St	Sing Tao Office	Starbucks Coffee
625 Main St	Mandarin Centre	Pacific Poke
633 Main St	Printing company	Ba Le Sandwich Shop
648 Main St	Phoenix Jewelry Inc.	A20 Authentic Italian Pizza
687 Main St	Golden Gate Centre	Dalina
700 Main St	Unidentified use of unit	London Pub
730 Main St	Brickhouse Bistro	Brickhouse Bistro
620 Quebec St	District electoral office	Pazzo Cafe
219 Union St	Construction	The Union
237 Union St	Construction	The Tuck Shoppe
243 Union St	Hair Salon	Harvest Community Foods
261 Union St	Unidentified noodle Store	Tight Club Athletics



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