



# Detroit CHINATOWN Vision Committee

*Developing a new Pan Asian Community Center in Detroit*



Central United  
Methodist Church



To: Family & Friends of Detroit Chinatown Redevelopment Project

Greetings! We are supporters of the new Detroit Chinatown Vision Committee

Sparked by the July 29, 2023 demolition of the iconic 140-year-old building at 3143 Cass Avenue—the historic home of the Chinese Merchants Association and the mass meeting that resulted in the founding of the American Citizens for Justice (ACJ)—we are chairing a committee to design the re-birth of Detroit’s Chinatown into a Pan Asian community center. Dreaming big, we see a new 3143 Cass Avenue building that:

- Reflects the memory of the Chinese Merchants Association, including the services it provided;
- Celebrates the contributions of the Asian American community to the City of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan; and
- Recognizes American Citizens for Justice (ACJ), an initiative created to honor and seek justice for Vincent Chin, a 27-year-old Chinese American, killed in a racially motivated beating in 1982.

The first Chinese immigrants arrived in Detroit around 1873, and by 1917 the *Detroit Free Press* had identified the first Chinatown location at Third and Porter. By the 1920’s, the population had grown to 2,000 and it remained a stable neighborhood until around 1962, when the community was forced to move in the name of urban renewal. At that time the city offered the area around Cass and Peterboro as a replacement, and several businesses and families moved, sustaining a neighborhood through the 1980s, until conditions worsened, and the community dispersed to the suburbs.

Our vision is to surround a new building with a community district that will provide many services that a thriving neighborhood requires. We feel a duty and obligation to our ancestors to co-create a community that is symbolic and represents the gratitude we have for our grandparents, parents and the City of Detroit, for providing the strong, stable neighborhood for our immigrant families. This community supported each other and created the base for the family and friendships we have today. The neighborhood provided them with a foundation, opportunity to grow, flourish and become successful contributors to the City of Detroit and the Detroit Metropolitan area.

We would like to replicate these characteristics for the community that remains and for future growth planned for a new Chinatown and surrounding area. Our town center will include housing, businesses, retail, commercial, art and meeting spaces to grow in the area around Cass Avenue and Peterboro Street, the center of Detroit’s Chinatown. We are partnering with other Detroit Asian organizations to create the new Pan-Asian community center. Our plan is to join the businesses, residents, and other active organizations in the neighborhood, to pull our ideas together and develop a plan for a flourishing community so all can benefit from the success of this project

Our project compliments the recently submitted request for a Chinatown Historic District, a recommended local City of Detroit historic district, as well as the neighborhood wide planning study slated to begin in the summer of 2024, as part Olympia Development’s larger District Detroit Vision.

Did you grow up enjoying the benefits of the old Chinatown? We are looking to connect with friends and family of Chinatown who are interested in participating in our efforts.

If you want more information on our project, please email the committee Co-Chairs: Francis Grunow: [francisgrunow@gmail.com](mailto:francisgrunow@gmail.com) or Sandy Fatt: [sfsandyfatt@gmail.com](mailto:sfsandyfatt@gmail.com). We can arrange for one of our committee members to reach out to you.

Roland Hwang,  
ACJ President  
ACA Board Member

Gabriela Santiago-Romero  
Detroit City Council

Stephanie Chang  
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