

Jane Finch Initiative **Greening**

Parks and Public Realm Strategy





City of Toronto

City Planning

Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Transportation Services

Environment & Climate

Economic Development & Culture

Toronto Children's Services

Toronto Water

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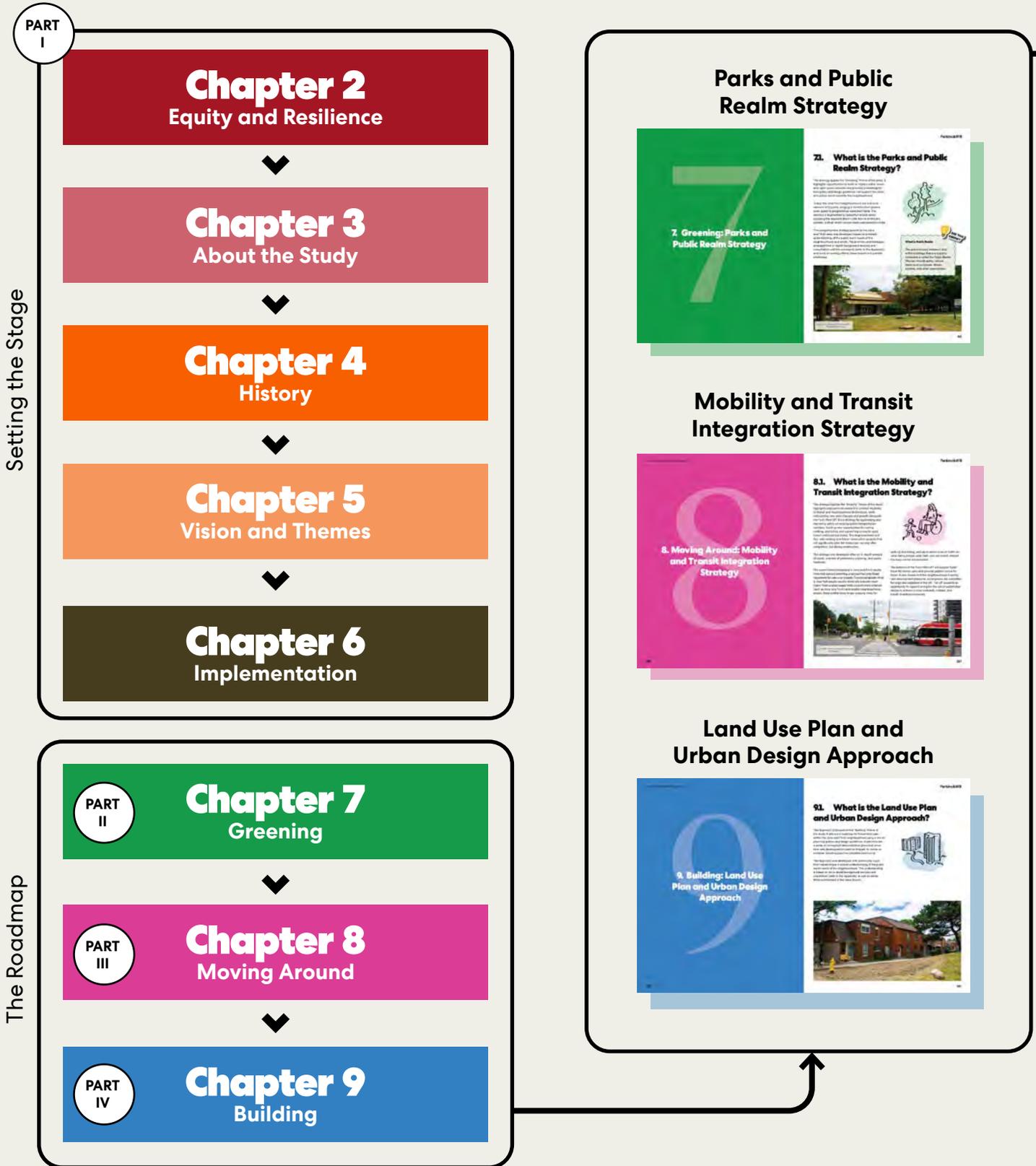
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How to Read this Report



WHAT?

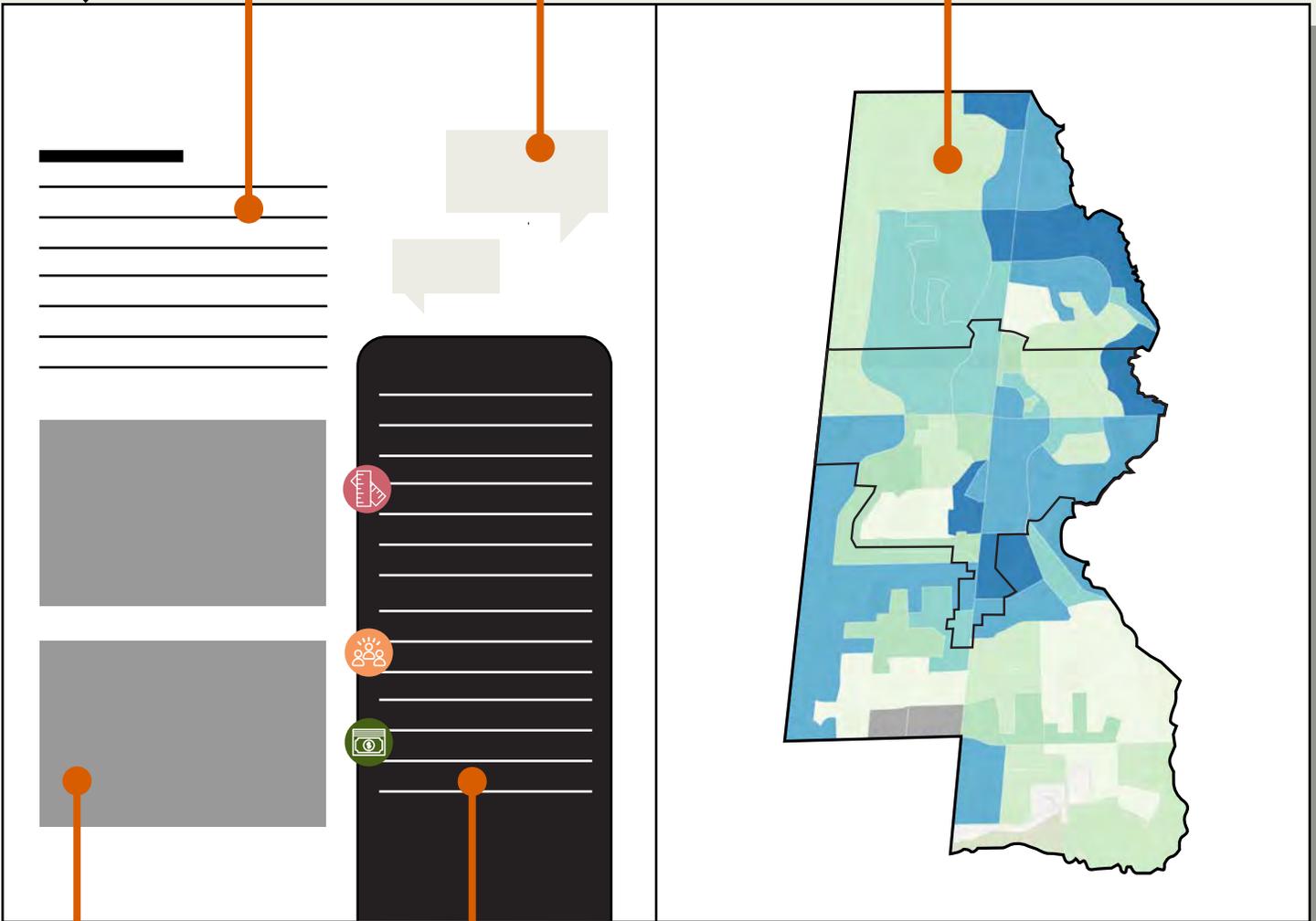
Explanatory text and introduction

WHY?

Feedback from engagement or findings from analysis

WHERE?

Map or diagrams demonstrating rationale or where this can be implemented



Photos of the existing condition or precedent photos (examples from other places)

HOW? WHO?

Recommendations, strategies, and guidelines with 'tags' to demonstrate path of implementation



Planning Policy



Collaborative Effort



Design Guidelines



Capital Project



Community Development Plan



Follow Up Study

A large, stylized number '7' graphic in a light green color, positioned in the background of the slide. The '7' is composed of a horizontal bar at the top and a diagonal stem extending downwards to the right.

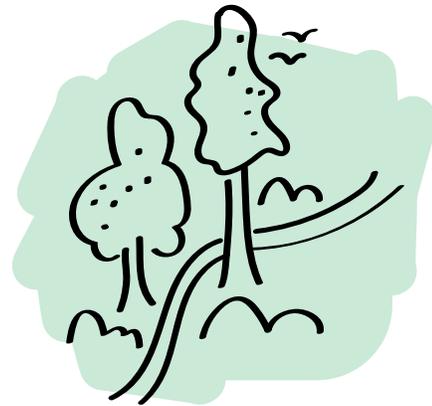
7. Greening

7.1. What is the Parks and Public Realm Strategy?

This strategy applies the “Greening” theme of the study. It highlights opportunities to build on today’s public realm and open space networks and provides a roadmap for how policy and design guidelines can support the parks and public realm vision for the area.

Today, the Jane Finch study area has a diverse network of 22 parks, ranging in function from passive open space to programmed recreation fields. This network is augmented by beautiful natural areas including the adjacent Black Creek Ravine and hydro corridor, both of which contain multi-use recreation trails.

This comprehensive strategy specific to the Jane Finch area was developed based on a shared understanding of the public realm needs of the area as a whole. The priorities and strategies emerged from in-depth background analysis and consultation with the community (refer to the Appendix) and build on existing efforts (Ideas Report and parallel initiatives).



DID YOU KNOW?

What is Public Realm?

The space around, between, and within buildings that are publicly-accessible is called the Public Realm. This can include parks, natural areas such as ravines, streets, squares, and other open spaces.



Figure 37. Driftwood Community Recreation Centre (Perkins&Will)

7.2. Outcomes and Topic Areas

The Parks and Public Realm Strategy for Jane Finch is a tailored set of recommendations, guidelines, and approaches to improving the open space network in the area. It will support the City in decision-making, development review, partnerships, and budget allocation.

What are we trying to achieve? This strategy includes 7 Big Moves and 6 Topic Areas.

BIG MOVE – Create New Accessible, Welcoming, and Vibrant Parks

Although most of the area has a good supply of parkland and open space, there are still neighbourhoods that need higher access to green space, better access and walkability to open spaces, and to support areas of anticipated growth. There are gaps in the overall public realm network that can be filled with new diverse parks or squares, expansions to our parks today, new green connections, and a fine-grained and vibrant network of streets. A complete and robust parks and public realm network will be established, especially with the opportunities and pressures presented on the large sites in the Intersection District.

BIG MOVE – Anchor and Honour the intersection of Jane and Finch with New Public Squares

The main intersection of Jane and Finch is evolving. It has always been a busy intersection, but also a place to gather, sit and rest, or host community events – as seen through the community-led pop-up public space, Corner Commons. To recognize this existing function, new public squares should be implemented within the north-west and south-east quadrants, to preserve the intersection as a place for community gathering, especially amidst new development.

BIG MOVE – Support The Hub as a new Community Destination in the Neighbourhood

The future Jane Finch Community Hub and Centre for the Arts, south of the new Maintenance and Storage Facility, will be a new neighbourhood anchor and destination. It will be vital that this hub is celebrated as a landmark, honours the cultural histories of the neighbourhood, can be easily and comfortably accessed, and is supported by a vibrant public realm.

BIG MOVE – Reinforce Green Spines to Preserve the Green Assets along Jane Street and Finch Avenue

Jane Street and Finch Avenue are characterized by deep, green landscaped areas. Deep setbacks to new development will protect this unique characteristic of the area. These spines will aid in creating a pedestrian-friendly environment through street trees, lush landscaping, and placemaking.

BIG MOVE – Embody Indigenous Heritage and Cultural Placekeeping

The lands and waters of Jane Finch have deep natural, cultural, and Indigenous importance. Within proximity of the study area is one of Toronto’s most significant



- Create new parks, prioritizing areas with lower parkland provision rates and areas with walkability gaps.
- Make parks and public spaces inclusive, welcoming, accessible, safe and fun.
- Work with community members to evaluate the quality and function of parks and public realm and determine what and where improvements should be prioritized.
- Explore opportunities to celebrate Indigenous cultures and histories in public spaces.
- Protect the Black Creek Ravine, invest in improvements to the trail system and crossings, and connect Jane Finch to the City’s wider ravine system.
- Create streets that function as community gathering spaces and are animated through local-serving businesses.

Indigenous archaeological sites and it is critical that reconciliation and placekeeping is a foundational objective of the planning framework for Jane Finch.

BIG MOVE – Improve and Enhance our Existing Parks and Open Spaces

In addition to identifying priority areas for new parks and squares there is also an opportunity to improve the existing parks and public realm network in Jane Finch. This could include new facilities (playgrounds, splashpads, sports courts), features like lighting, park expansions, landscaping, but also a commitment to maintenance and upkeep, to ensure that these parks can be enjoyed by everyone.

BIG MOVE – Celebrate and Enhance the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail and Black Creek Ravine

Central features such as the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail and the Black Creek Ravine are beloved assets in the community. Strategies and establishing partnerships will support recreational opportunities through trail improvements, new connections, placemaking, and wayfinding while preserving important biodiversity and hydro utility functions.

The Greening: Parks and Public Realm Strategy in the following pages is organized by 5 Topic Areas that speak to delivering these big moves:

1. Open Spaces
2. Stitching it Together (Greening Streets)
3. Safe and Inclusive Spaces
4. Joyful and Active Spaces
5. Placekeeping



Figure 38. Oakdale Park (Perkins&Will)

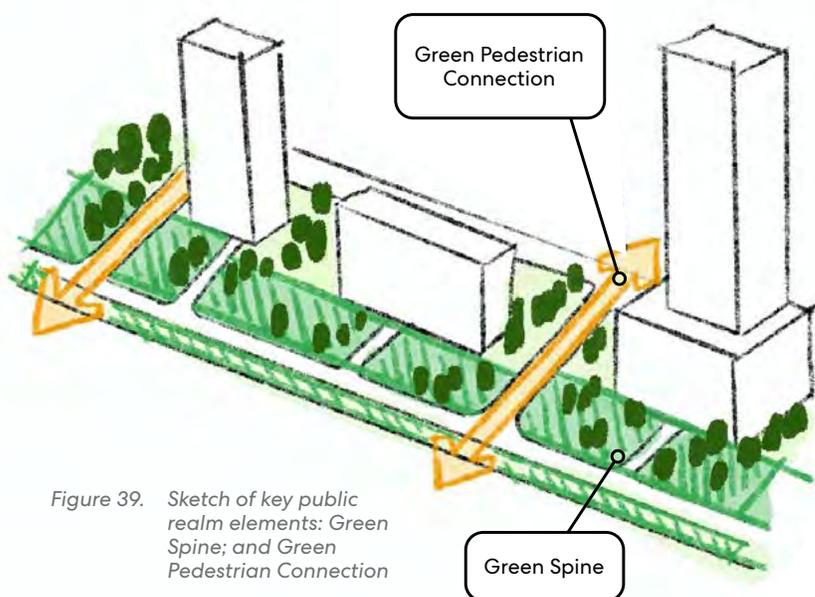


Figure 39. Sketch of key public realm elements: Green Spine; and Green Pedestrian Connection



Figure 40. Finch Hydro Corridor Recreational Trail (Perkins&Will)

Identifying Need

The City of Toronto's Parkland Strategy guides long-term parks planning, prioritization, and investment throughout the city through identifying areas of low or high parkland provision, as well as areas of parkland need. According to the Strategy, the Jane Finch area includes areas of high and low parkland provision (metres per person). As the area changes and more people move to the area, this provision rate will change, as the same amount of parkland will be serving more people, unless more parkland is secured through the development process or purchased by the City. Even in areas where there is a high provision rate, the quality of local parks may be such that they are in need of re-investment to make them more useful public spaces.

Many previous studies and engagements have brought interesting ideas to the table and will be carried through this Parks and Public Realm strategy. For example, the idea of "Greening" is not new; Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) through their Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) program held a design competition to revitalize the green spaces around the San Romanoway towers (image on the right).



Figure 42. Graphic from design competition by TRCA SNAP (York West Advocate)

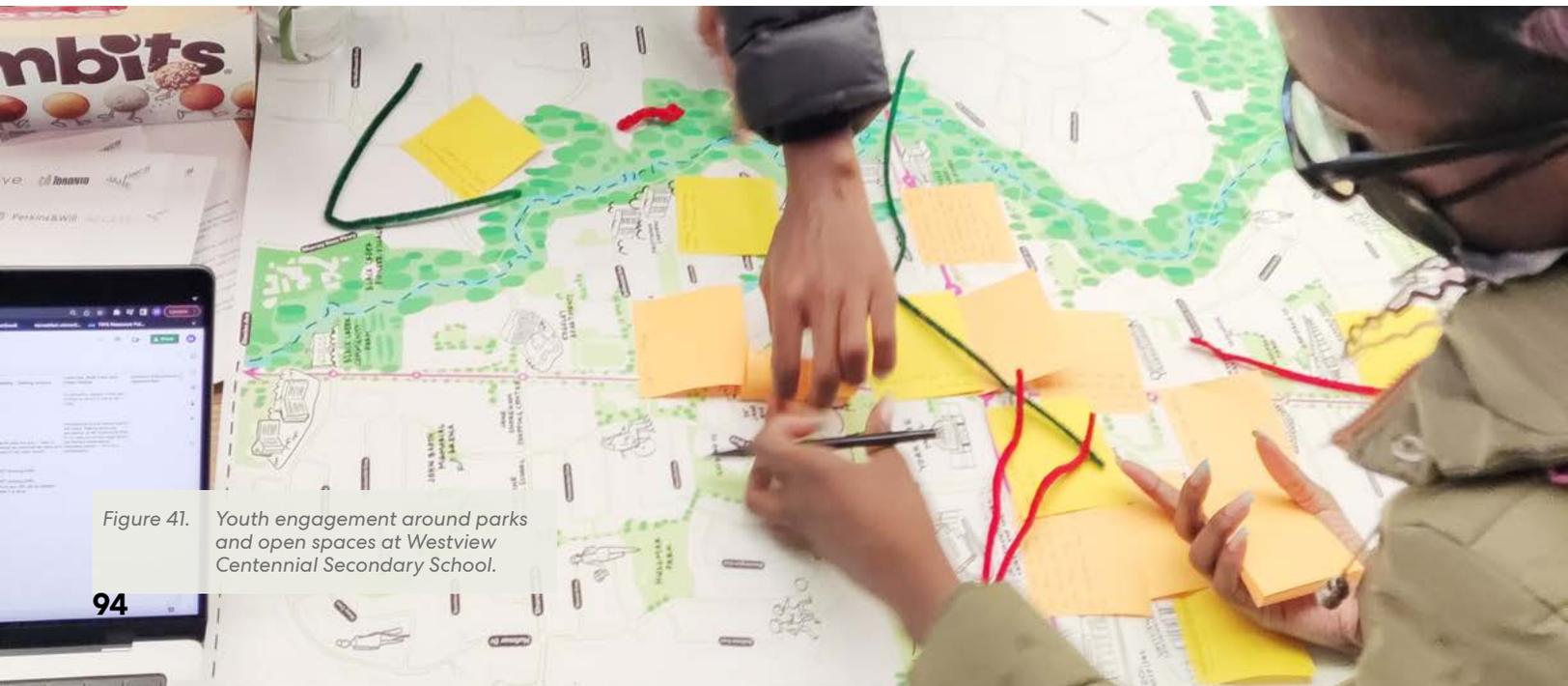
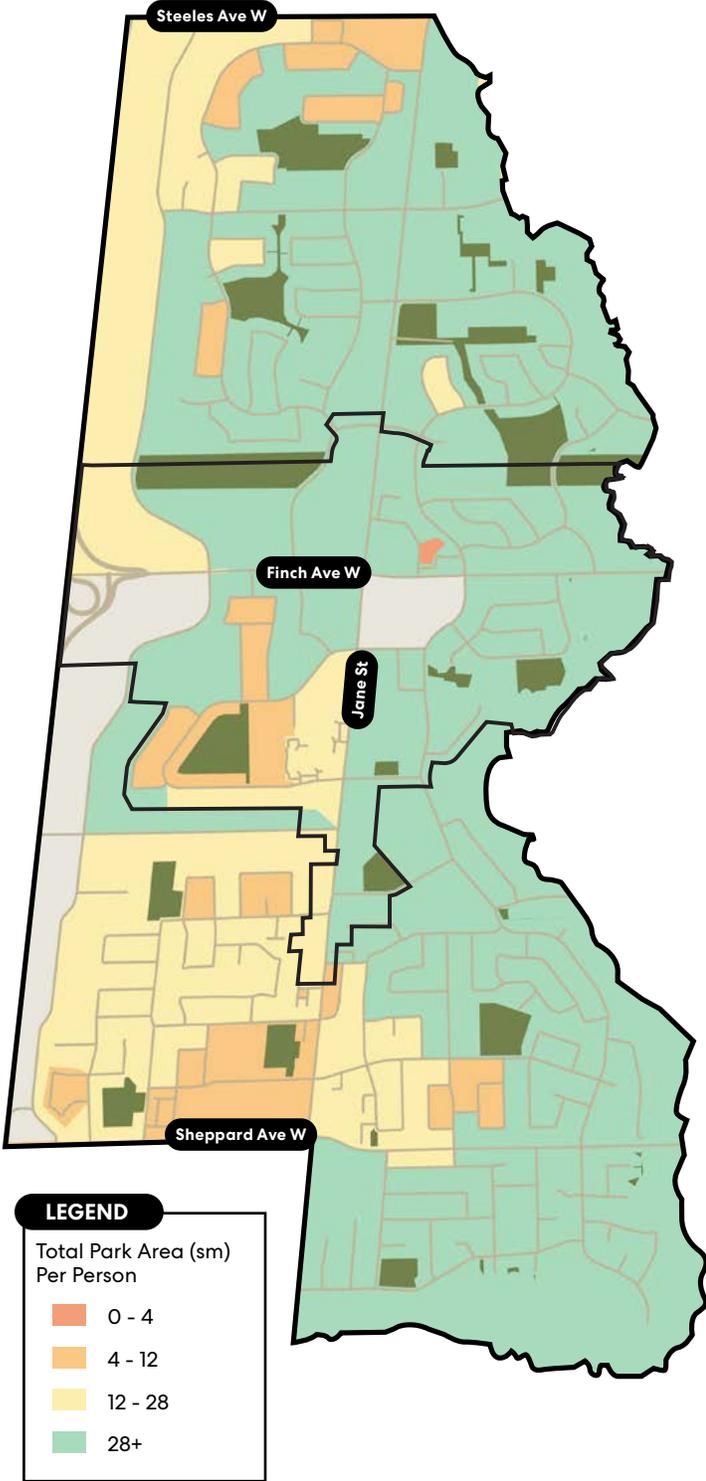


Figure 41. Youth engagement around parks and open spaces at Westview Centennial Secondary School.

MAP 8. PARKLAND PROVISION (2021)



What does this mean for Jane Finch?

Generally, there are high amounts of park area per person in Jane Finch. However, after applying other criteria (low park supply, projected growth, and low income residents), there are specific priority areas for new parks or park expansions.

MAP 9. AREAS OF PARKLAND NEED

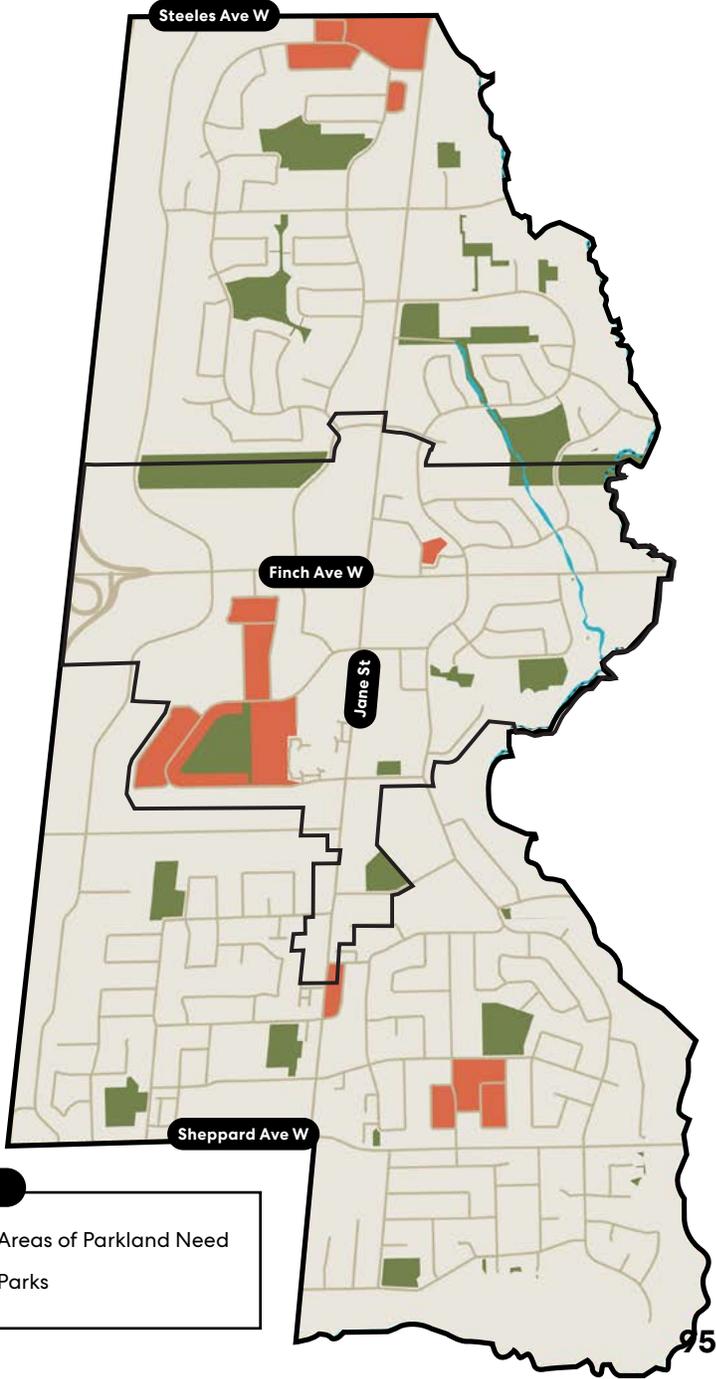


Figure 43. City of Toronto Parkland Strategy

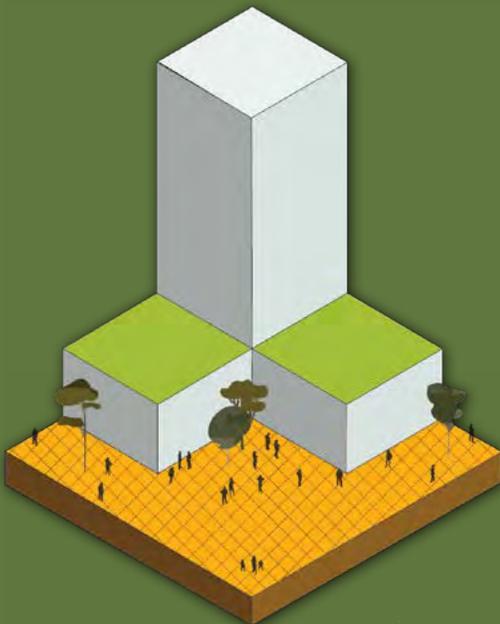
We're not just talking about parks.

Open spaces in Jane Finch – today and tomorrow – come in all shapes, sizes, functions, landscapes, and contexts. They are all critical in creating a network of vibrant, inclusive, and publicly-accessible spaces.



Parks

Places to play sports, enjoy a picnic with friends, visit a playground, rest under the shade of a tree, and enjoy nature. Parks are an essential part of a healthy and complete community. These publicly-owned outdoor spaces are incredibly valuable as they support health and recreation, ways to move around, places to gather with friends and family, and opportunities to support nature within urban environments. Parks serve as community destinations and help visitor connect to other open spaces like the ravine and hydro corridor. As the Jane Finch community grows, so too must the parks serving this area.



Public Squares

Places to sit on a patio, rest after grocery shopping, or meet with friends. There are opportunities to create vibrant and inclusive gathering spaces that serve as hearts of the community.

Much like the spaces or parking lots around malls and strip plazas that provide a space for social activity, these squares will hold similar functions. Framed by retail, commercial, or community uses, these often hardscaped squares can be extensions of the interior uses. These squares are located further from main roads or transit corridors, so could offer more intimate programming. These squares will also have higher pedestrian traffic, visibility and access to multiple modes of transportation, and act almost as transit plazas or a landmark destination in the community. Much like Corner Commons – a pop-up public space at the Jane Finch Mall – they could include outdoor patios, shaded canopies with seating areas, performance spaces, food vendors, bike parking, public art, signage and wayfinding.

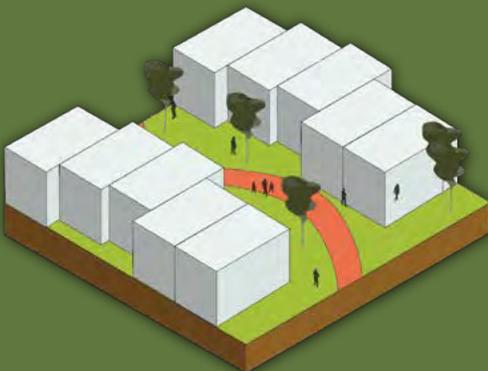
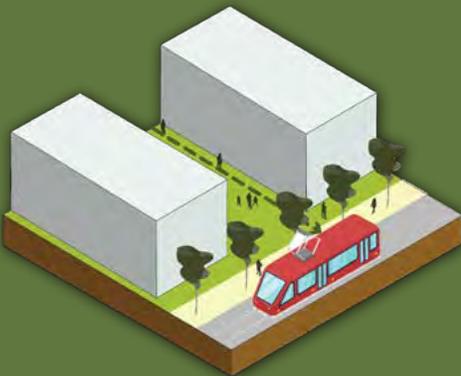


Green Connections

Places to connect you between major destinations, that also offer space to rest, wait, gather, and socialize.

These are typically the spaces between buildings that provide connections from roads like Finch Avenue West or Jane Street into the neighbourhoods to the rear. Especially with the Finch West LRT and RapidTO initiatives along Jane, these connections can facilitate last-mile travel - for example, getting off the bus along Jane Street, and walking along these connections to get to work, home, or school in a convenient and efficient manner. These can be implemented through publicly- or privately-owned lands, as long as they are publicly-accessible.

In addition to these areas providing enhanced connectivity and porosity throughout the area, they can also be spaces to rest, socialize, or gather. Potentially, if the buildings framing these connections have non-residential uses in them (such as retail), these connections can become spill-out spaces - benches to drink your coffee, shaded areas to wait for daycare pick-up, or an outdoor area to host a community gathering.





Ravines and Trails

Places to go for a leisurely walk, jog, or to ride your bike, while being immersed in nature.

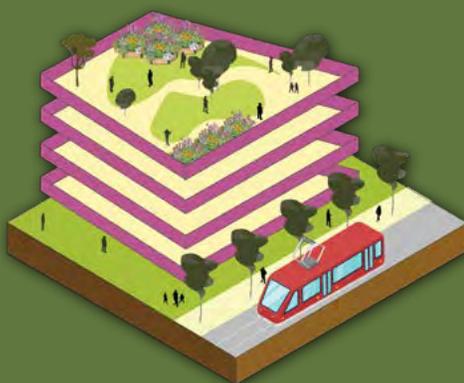
Jane Finch benefits from proximity and access to the Black Creek ravine and trail system, that extends its reach to neighbouring areas like Downsview and York University. The ravine system provides residents with a direct connection to nature's wonders and biodiversity, fostering a sense of tranquility and respite from the hustle and bustle of urban life. It is also crucial to acknowledge and honour the Indigenous histories embedded within these ravine systems, recognizing them as sacred spaces with deep cultural significance. The ravine system also provides benefits of supporting ecology, enhancing climate resiliency, and offering generous tree canopies.



Hydro Corridor and Trails

Places to walk, jog, ride your bike, or get around the area.

The hydro corridor plays a multifaceted role that extends far beyond the primacy of their utility functions. These corridors have evolved into dynamic spaces that offer a wide array of amenities, transforming into recreational trails, sports fields, gardens, and lush meadows. The Finch Hydro Corridor Trail enhances east-west connectivity into the broader network throughout the city. A new multi-use path connection as part of the Loop Trail also connects the hydro corridor trail to Finch Avenue West and its bike lanes.



Spaces around Community Uses

Places to meet up with friends, wait for the bus, or hang out after an event.

These spaces will serve as the picturesque frames that envelop active anchor destinations and essential community resources such as libraries, the Jane Finch Community Hub and Centre for the Arts, The Spot, community centers, and satellite campuses. These spaces will be thoughtfully designed, adorned with lush trees offering refreshing shade, inviting benches for comfortable seating, and sheltered areas to seek respite from inclement weather. These spaces cater to the diverse needs of the community offering comfort and safety to residents of all age, gender and ability alike. Moreover, these open spaces serve as canvases for cultural expression and artistic vitality, featuring integrated public art installations and vibrant murals that showcase and celebrate the rich tapestry of local culture and artistic creativity.

Community Gardens

Places to plant crops, harvest local produce, meet your neighbours, volunteer, or learn new skills.

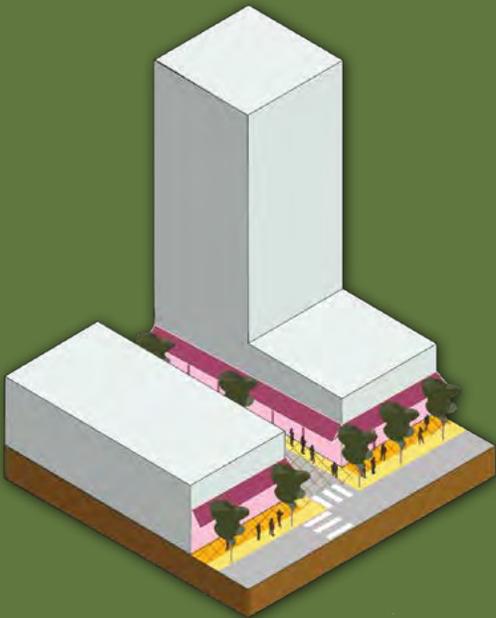
Community gardens are flourishing in the Jane Finch area, with notable examples like the San Romanoway Community Gardens and the Black Creek Community Farm serving as vibrant hubs of activity. These green spaces go beyond just cultivating fruits and vegetables; they serve as places where residents come together to foster social interactions and a strong sense of belonging. By partnering with local food justice initiatives like the Black Creek Community Farm, Jane Finch Action Against Poverty, Black Farmers and Urban Growers Collective, and Afri-Can FoodBasket, these community gardens become powerful tools for positive change, enhancing both the environment and the well-being of the community they serve.



Priority Retail Streets

Places to shop, meet up with friends at a cafe, support local businesses, or run errands.

The commercial streets within the Jane Finch area can embody an intimate and inviting atmosphere, characterized by a comfortable streetscape framed by vibrant retail and commercial and cultural establishments. These streets will be alive with activity, boasting active edges that beckon pedestrians and shoppers alike. Not only can they serve as bustling hubs for commerce, but they also play a pivotal role in supporting and stimulating the local economy. Here, one can witness a rich tapestry of local culture on display, providing a platform for small, locally-owned businesses to flourish, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. Importantly, these streets can generate employment opportunities, contributing to the livelihoods of the community. This vibrant street scene mirrors the existing social and commercial functions of the malls today, offering a weather-protected and walkable experience. With comfortable pedestrian furniture, lush street trees, and a fine-grained pattern of units, these streets will epitomize the essence of a thriving, people-centered neighbourhood.



7.3. Open Spaces

7.3.1. New Parks

This strategy identifies opportunities to implement new parks, as the community grows and evolves. Jane Finch is rich with parks today, with 22 parks throughout the study area. These parks serve different functions and are of different sizes, from small parkettes to larger parks with active programming like sports fields. The City of Toronto Parkland Strategy classifies these parks into three functional categories:

Passive and Ecological: Due to the Black Creek forming the eastern edge of the study area, many of the parks like Derrydowns Park or the Black Creek Parkland are spaces that serve more passive forms of recreation, with a focus on biodiversity and access to nature. Trails are the most common facility within these parks. Naturalized areas can be enhanced through improvements to lighting and wayfinding that carefully balance ecological preservation and accessibility. As the Toronto Ravine Strategy outlines, we are all guardians of these spaces and we must treat them with care and respect – the overarching goal of protecting these spaces by maintaining and improving their ecological health is core to this strategy as it refers to the Black Creek ravine.

Sport and Play: There are many parks in Jane Finch today that support organized or programmed recreation, such as Edgeley Park (with basketball court, pool, playground, trail, and proximity to Driftwood Community Centre) and Firgrove Park (with courts for basketball, tennis, bocce, and soccer). These areas are well used, due to their more active sport programming, but can be further enhanced and improved by incorporating more outdoor facilities appropriate for a varied demographic as well as more facilities appropriate for passive activity, such as shaded seating and other pedestrian amenities.

Community and Civic: These community and civic parks help support formal and informal community activity, such as Reading Sprouts Garden, which has some seating and shade structures. Others include the park space surrounding, or adjacent to community uses, such as Stanley Park by the Domenico DiLuca Community Recreation Centre or Northwood Park by the Northwood Community Centre. There are not many parks of this type in Jane Finch today, and this Parks and Public Realm strategy seeks to expand these functions at existing or new parks in the area.





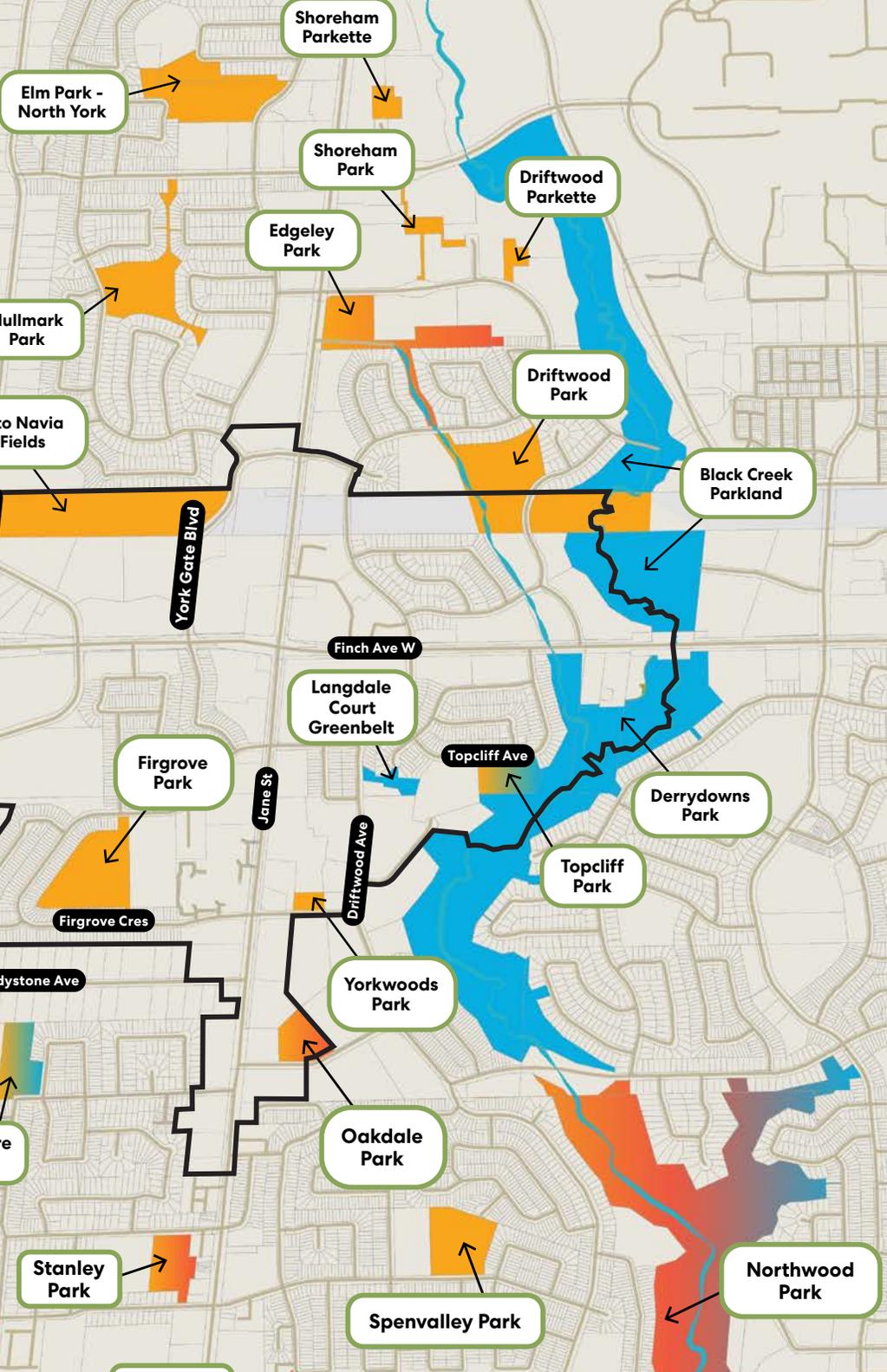
What We Heard

- There are existing barriers to accessing the green spaces in Jane Finch today. Some are physical barriers (stairs, fences) whereas other issues are largely around belonging, social connection, safety, and maintenance
- Residents enjoy their parks today and would like to see more green spaces, additional programming, amenities like washrooms, and more trees
- Racialized residents have structural and systemic barriers to accessing green spaces

Figure 44. The “Greening” theme board at a Jane Finch Initiative open house.

	Parks within the Study Area	Area (m ²)	Area (ha)	Park Size Classification	Primary Park Function(s)
1	Black Creek Parkland	249,429	24.9	Legacy Park	Passive + Ecological
2	Derrydowns Park (portion)	278,932	27.9	Legacy Park	Passive + Ecological
3	Downsview Dells Park (portion)	748,646	74.9	Legacy Park	Passive + Ecological, Community + Civic
4	Driftwood Park	87,065	8.7	Legacy Park	Sport + Play
5	Driftwood Parkette	5,319	0.5	Small Park	Sport + Play
6	Edgeley Park	42,030	4.2	Large Park	Sport + Play, Community + Civic
7	Elm Park - North York	47,745	4.8	Large Park	Sport + Play
8	Fennimore Park	19,716	2	Medium Park	Sport + Play, Passive + Ecological
9	Firgrove Park	40,971	4.1	Large Park	Sport + Play
10	Giltspur Park	13,017	1.3	Small Park	Sport + Play
11	Hullmar Park	36,080	3.6	Large Park	Sport + Play
12	Langdale Court Greenbelt	5,607	0.6	Small Park	Passive + Ecological
13	Northwood Park (portion)	252,030	25.2	Legacy Park	Sport + Play, Passive + Ecological, Community + Civic
14	Oakdale Park	14,557	1.5	Small Park	Sport + Play, Community + Civic
15	Reading Sprouts Garden	1,210	0.1	Parkette	Community + Civic
16	Remberto Navia Sport Fields	78,004	7.8	City Park	Sport + Play
17	Shoreham Park	1,353	0.1	Parkette	Sport + Play
18	Silvio Colella Park	19,171	1.9	Medium Park	Sport + Play
19	Spenvalley Park	28,142	2.8	Medium Park	Sport + Play
20	Stanley Park	17,885	1.8	Medium Park	Sport + Play, Community + Civic
21	Topcliff Park	15,810	1.6	Medium Park	Sport + Play, Passive + Ecological
22	Yorkwoods Park	4,053	0.4	Parkette	Sport + Play

MAP 10. PARK INVENTORY IN THE JANE FINCH STUDY AREA



LEGEND

- Passive and Ecological
- Sport and Play
- Community and Civic
- Creek
- Secondary Plan Boundary
- Jane Finch Initiative Boundary

I also would like to see more green spaces, perhaps a greater amount of native plants along streets.

New Park Recommendations

7. New parks* in Jane Finch will meet the needs of everyone, with specific attention given to Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving groups such as older adults, children, women, racialized people, and those with accessibility needs. New parks should be universally accessible.

Criteria for locating New Parks

8. New parks, through parkland dedication, should be prioritized in this order:

- a. On-site parkland;
- b. Off-site parkland;
- c. Cash-in-lieu of parkland.

9. The location of new parks should consider existing walkability gaps and areas of lower parkland provision, ensuring that new parks improve access and supply in areas where it is most needed.

10. New park locations should reflect and support future population growth, ensuring that new parks are developed alongside, or before new development.

11. New parks will be prioritized in areas such as:
a. Large sites, or areas appropriate for denser development, such as existing Apartment Neighbourhoods or Mixed Use Areas. Refer to the Building chapter for District-specific guidance and recommendations in regards to Parks.
b. Areas of low parkland provision.



Figure 46. Parks framed by buildings - Regent Park, Toronto (NAK)



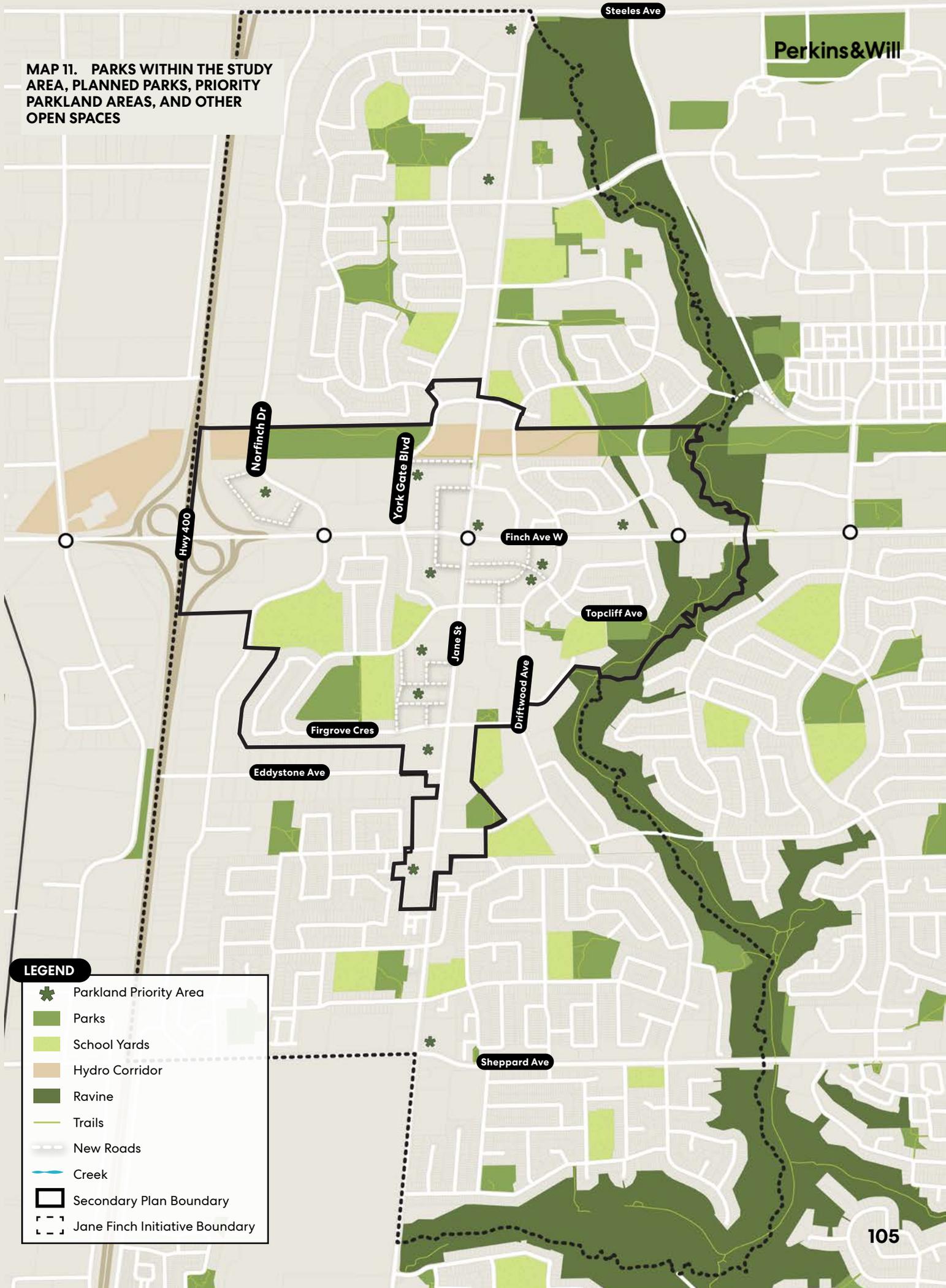
Figure 45. A mix of soft and hard landscaping - Lisgar Park, Toronto (Victor Ford)



Figure 47. Parks offer direct access to nature, provide shade, and mitigate the urban heat island effect (Urbaner)

* New parks refers to publicly-owned parkland

MAP 11. PARKS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA, PLANNED PARKS, PRIORITY PARKLAND AREAS, AND OTHER OPEN SPACES

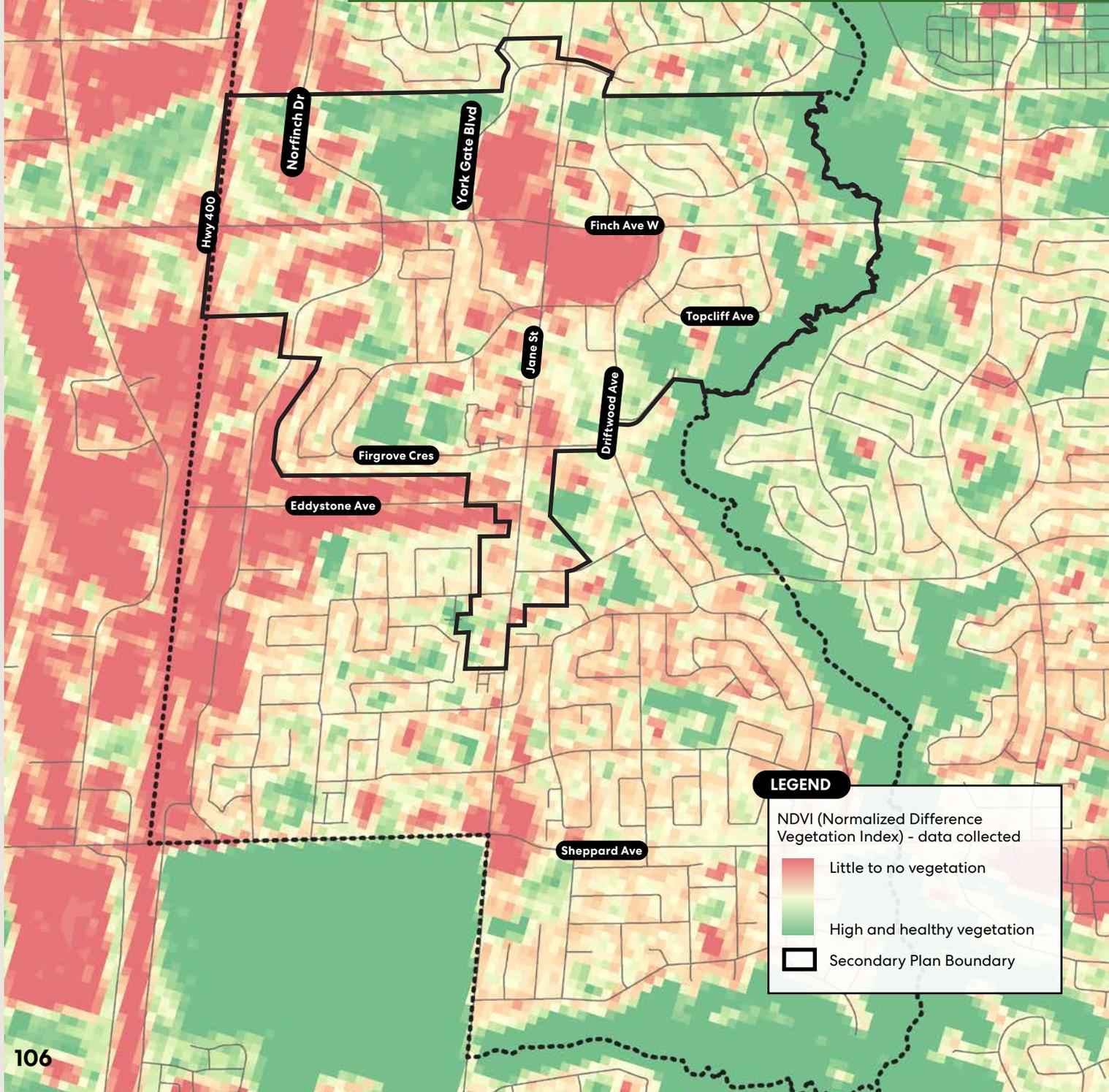


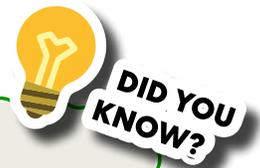
LEGEND

-  Parkland Priority Area
-  Parks
-  School Yards
-  Hydro Corridor
-  Ravine
-  Trails
-  New Roads
-  Creek
-  Secondary Plan Boundary
-  Jane Finch Initiative Boundary

EQUITY CONSIDERATION: VEGETATION DENSITY

Based on NDVI analysis, which maps the vegetation density (or 'greenness') of the area via satellite imagery and an assessment of overall land cover, the intersection of Jane Finch today has high coverage of asphalt. The urban heat island – which is exacerbated by paved surfaces and high density – may put heat-vulnerable populations at risk. Parks, green spaces, and tree canopy will help counteract this effect, reducing the overall temperatures of nearby areas. Vegetation such as trees can also act as windbreaks to slow down and redirect air flow.





What is the Urban Heat Island Effect?

The urban heat island effect is the phenomenon where urban areas (cities) experience higher temperatures compared to rural areas. Asphalt, concrete and buildings absorb and store heat more effectively than natural vegetation and soil.

As per the Toronto Official Plan, the public realm will not only provide opportunities for recreation, create vibrant settings for civic life and social interaction, but also contribute to the City's climate resilience. (3.1.1)

7.3.2. Parks near the corner of Jane and Finch

The Intersection District will accommodate much of the growth in Jane Finch. New parks and open spaces in this part of the study area would address existing areas of low parkland provision, reinforce the core function of the intersection as a gathering space, and grow the tree canopy to reduce heat vulnerability.



- BI: Introduce new parkland around the Jane and Finch intersection where there is currently a parkland walkability gap and very low tree canopy.

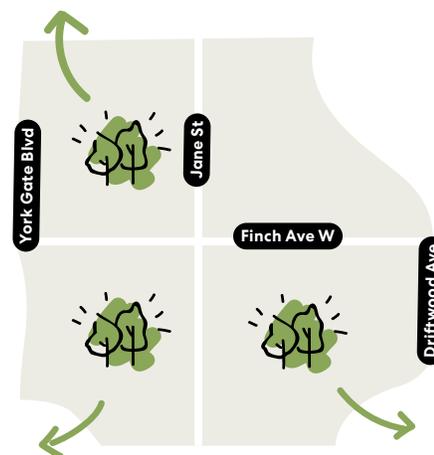
Implementation Tools

	Planning Policy		Community Development Plan		Capital Project
	Design Guidelines		Collaborative Effort		Follow Up Study

- 12. Residents of Jane Finch should be able to access parks that meet all categories of function (passive and ecological, community and civic, and sport and play).

Criteria for the Design of New Parks

- 13. New parks within the three quadrants of the Intersection District will become signature green spaces within the area and support a wide range of both active and passive programming.
- 14. New parks should include intuitive and accessible connections to and from the Finch West LRT and other area transit stops.
- 15. Parks should be tree-lined, well-lit, and well-furnished with amenities such as seating, washrooms, garbage receptacles, and drinking water fountains.



new parks, trees, and vegetation to reduce heat absorption and serve surrounding community

7.3.3. Parks as part of a broader open space network

Parks are core foundational elements of the broader open space network. Other open spaces can be designed to complement the parks system. These can include POPS, green pedestrian connections, and public realm amenities, such as sidewalks, bike infrastructure, courtyards, and natural heritage areas.

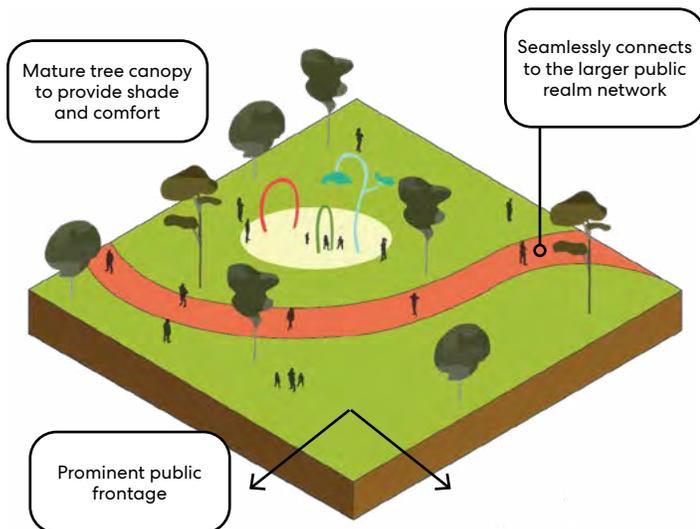


Figure 48. First Nations Pavilion - Awen' Gathering Place in Collingwood is an example of a structure in a Park that is a symbol of gathering, sharing, learning, celebration and beauty in the public realm (Brook McIlroy)



16. Consult with community groups and initiatives such as the Jane Finch Centre Green Change program on appropriate features, facilities, and public space improvements that address existing needs.



17. Develop an interconnected open space network through collaboration and partnership with school boards.



18. New parks in Jane Finch will contribute to and connect to the existing open space network through:

- Establishing a prominent public frontage with clear physical and visual connections;
- Creating seamless connections to the pedestrian network; and
- Providing visibility from key destinations and public roadways.



19. New parks within the three quadrants of the Jane Finch area (in the Intersection District) will become signature green spaces within the Jane Finch Secondary Plan area and support a wide range of both active and passive programming.

Criteria for Development Adjacent to Existing and New Parks



20. Development, especially edges that have active, non-residential frontages and entries such as a community, commercial, or retail uses, should be located adjacent to parks. Appropriate setback(s) between building faces and parks should be provided to ensure that servicing and maintenance can be adequately achieved.



21. Development should be shaped and designed to respond to micro-climate conditions such as wind and sun access in parks.



Figure 49. St James Park themed playground is an example of a programmed Park space with tree canopy and seating (Earthscape)

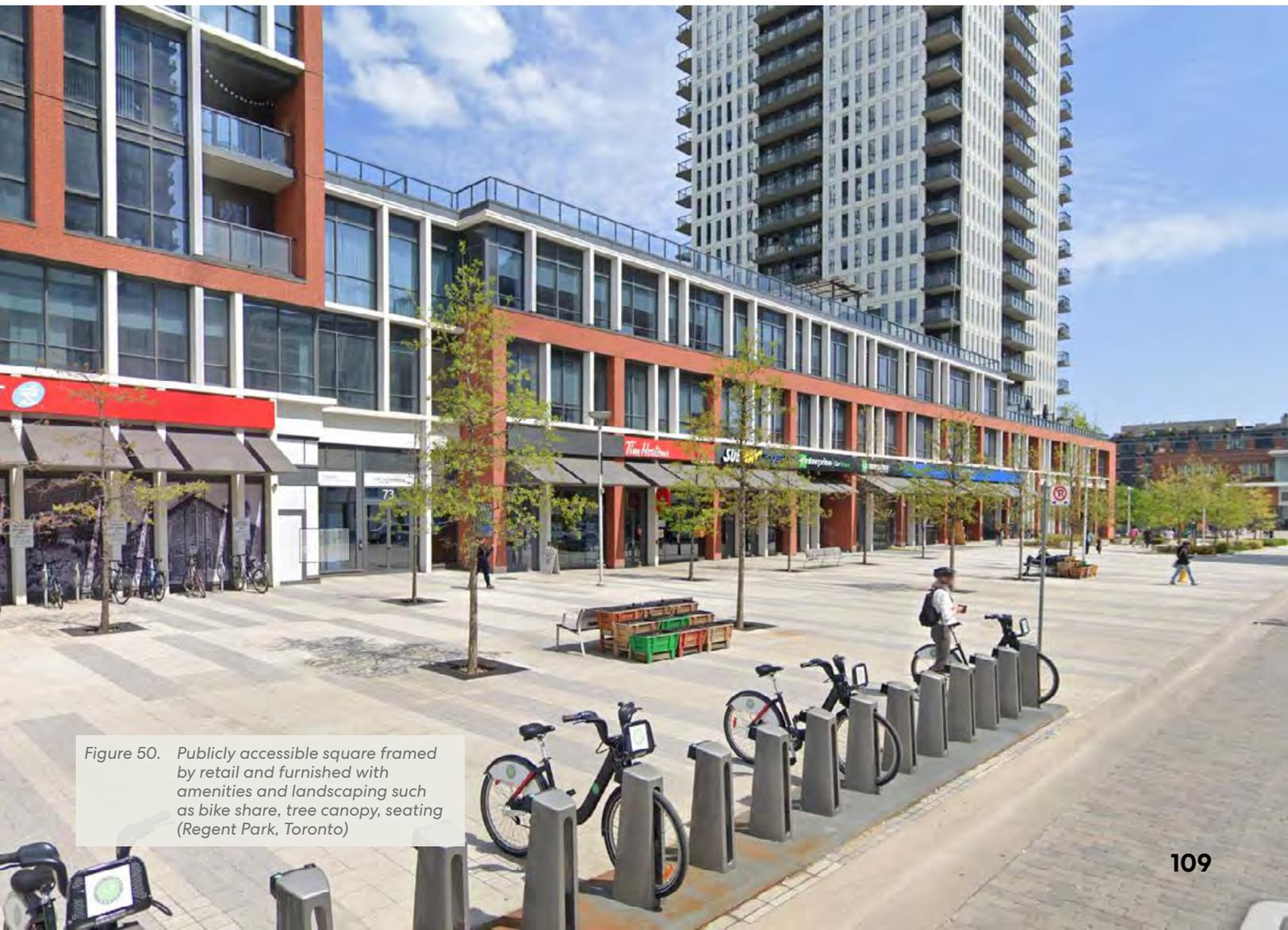


Figure 50. Publicly accessible square framed by retail and furnished with amenities and landscaping such as bike share, tree canopy, seating (Regent Park, Toronto)

7.3.4. New Public Squares

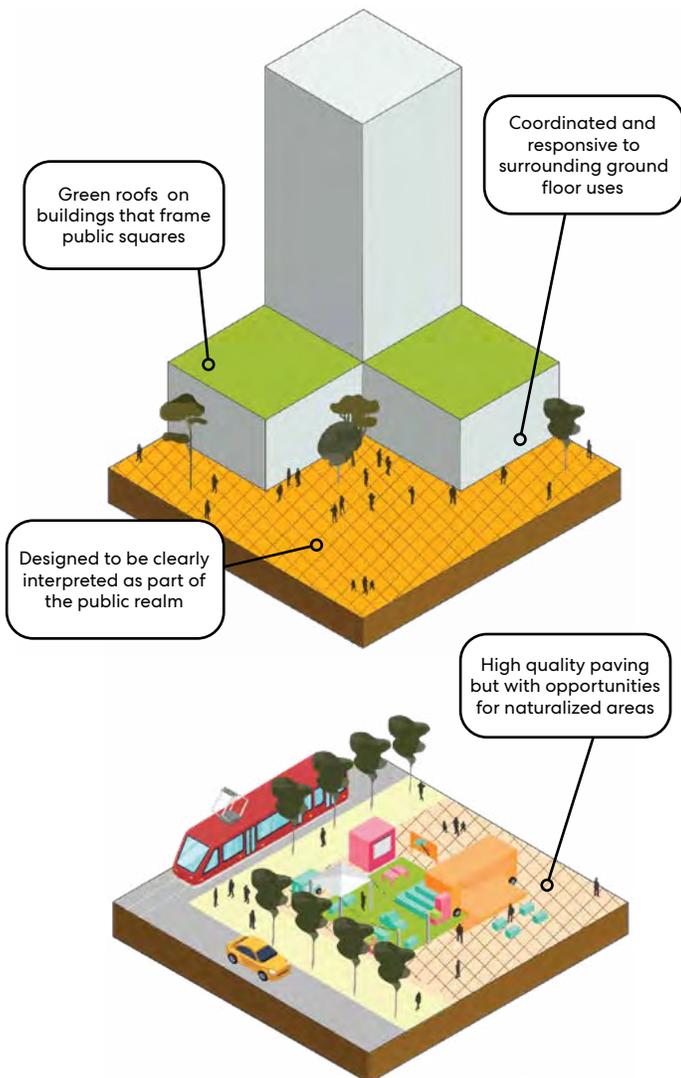
Public squares are also important elements of the larger public realm network. These hardscaped areas can create inviting, multi-functional, and visually appealing places at the crossroads of everyday life to foster sense of belonging, community gathering and a third place. These areas can be ‘spill out’ areas of ground-floor commercial or civic uses functions, offer flexible programming like farmers markets or community events, or passive areas for sitting and resting.



Figure 51. Paved open spaces can be connected to park spaces, extending the broader public realm network – High Park, Toronto

The role of public squares in the public realm

Public squares provide hardscaped open spaces, and are common in more urban or dense areas. New public square locations considered factors such as: density, proximity to transit, adjacency to ground-floor uses and entries like retail, and micro-climate conditions.



22. New public squares are planned around the intersection of Jane and Finch and should be designed to:



- a. Have at least one significant street frontage and be directly accessible from public sidewalks;
- b. Be framed and defined by buildings on at least two sides, offering a sense of enclosure without limiting public access;
- c. Be clearly interpreted as publicly accessible and part of the larger public realm network (for example, by providing inviting signage and no fences surrounding the public square);
- d. Be framed by an active use and/or a high degree of transparency;
- e. Encourage a wide variety of activities, including walking, resting, and gathering by providing ample seating, tree canopy and other elements that promote comfort;

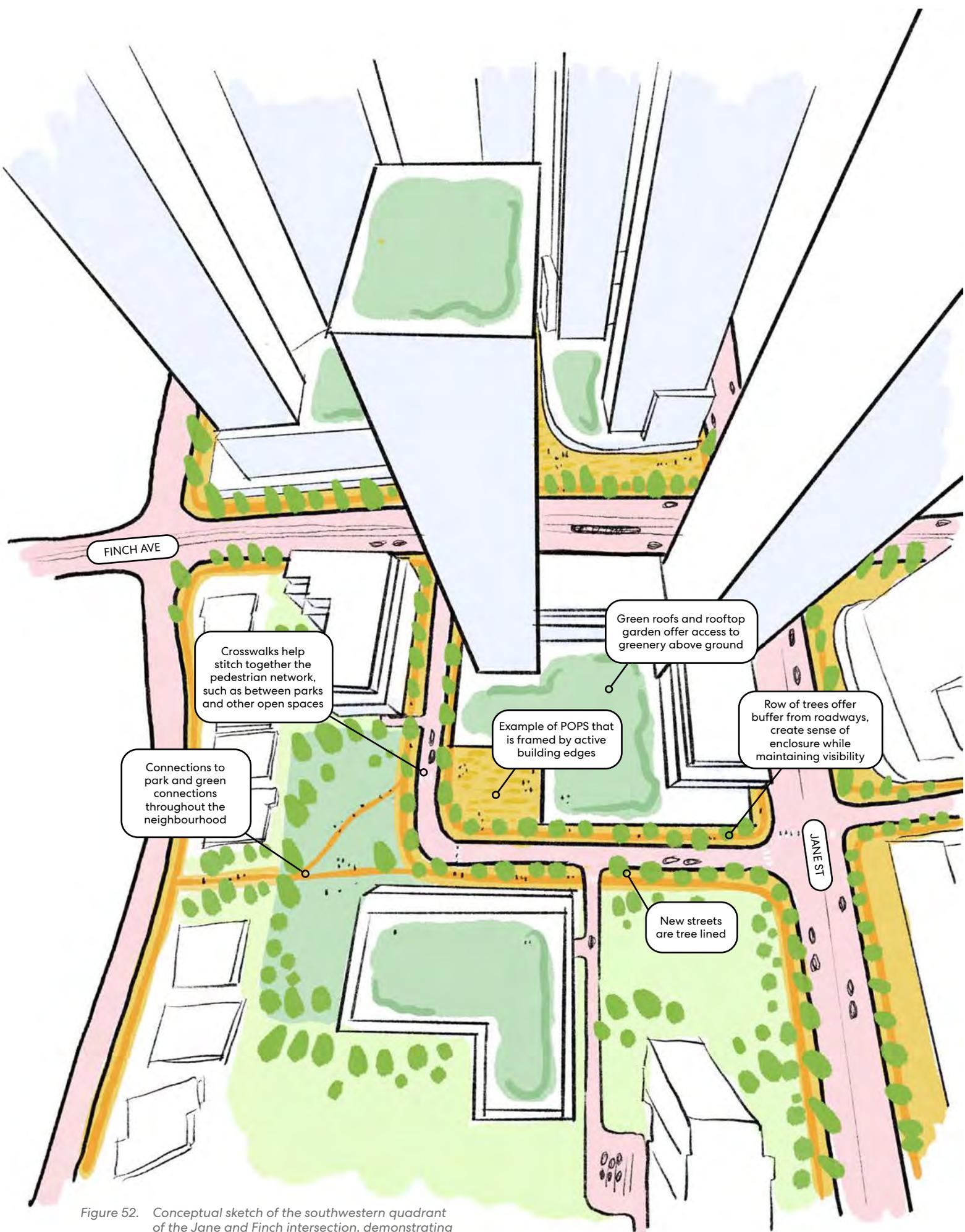


Figure 52. Conceptual sketch of the southwestern quadrant of the Jane and Finch intersection, demonstrating how various public realm improvements and new publicly-accessible spaces work together

- f. Have a mix of hard and soft landscaping, with consideration for stormwater management, such as using permeable paving, and accommodating sufficient soil depth and volumes to ensure mature tree growth;
- g. Be marked as a primary entryway to transit, retail and businesses;
- h. Recognize and preserve existing community spaces and functions at the intersection;
- i. Include wayfinding elements that orient visitors to additional access points and connect to key pedestrian paths into the interior of these large sites;
- j. Be large enough to accommodate high volumes of pedestrians safely and comfortably;
- k. Where feasible, integrate a row of trees along edges to offer shelter from sun and wind and create a sense of enclosure and buffering from vehicular traffic, while still providing multiple access points and visibility to streets and, where possible, the LRT;
- l. Have high-quality landscaping, such as area-specific plantings and decorative pavers, as well as street furniture;
- m. Include public realm features and public art that emphasize the importance of the intersection; and
- n. Be welcoming to community gathering and activation, such as public markets, live music and art fairs; and
- o. Include access to public wifi, electrical outlets and other features to support community programming.



23. Public Squares should be co-created and co-designed with the community, learning from the processes of the development of Corner Commons. The square at that corner should have strong public realm and pedestrian connections to both Jane Street and Finch Avenue West.



Figure 53. Corner Commons is an example of a public square, consisting of mostly hardscape. This example was a community-led pop-up public space with modular furniture, planters, shade structures, and a stage area.



Figure 54. Amenities such as lighting, seating, and shade help program a public square - Oakville Town Square



Figure 55. Place Émilie-Gamelin is a public space in Montreal that features patios, seating, planters, and temporary installations (Sday.Design)

MAP 13. PROPOSED PUBLIC SQUARES AND POPS

Perkins&Will



DID YOU KNOW?

What are Public Squares?

A public square is an animated gathering place. It usually has paving rather than grass, to support community-based programming.



LEGEND

- Priority Area for Public Square
- Priority Area for POPS (Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces)
- Priority Area for New Park
- Parks
- School Yards
- Hydro Corridor
- Ravine
- New Streets
- Trails
- Creek
- Secondary Plan Boundary
- Jane Finch Initiative Boundary



- B8. Pursue privately-owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS) to complement the area's public parks and contribute to the overall parks and open space network (POPS will not count towards parkland dedication and do not replace the need for public parkland).
- B13: Seek opportunities to introduce more flexible open spaces for community gathering and events, such as public plazas and squares, either in existing parks, future parks, or other publicly-accessible spaces.

7.3.5. Hydro Corridor as Public Space

The Finch West hydro corridor is a publicly-accessible, significant open green space, spanning east-west across the top of the Secondary Plan area. The entire stretch of the corridor spans from Dufferin Street to the Humber River, with the majority of it including the Finch Hydro Corridor Recreational Trail. Any enhancements or additions to the hydro corridor will require approval, collaboration and partnership with Hydro One Networks Inc, with a focus on preserving the utility functions.

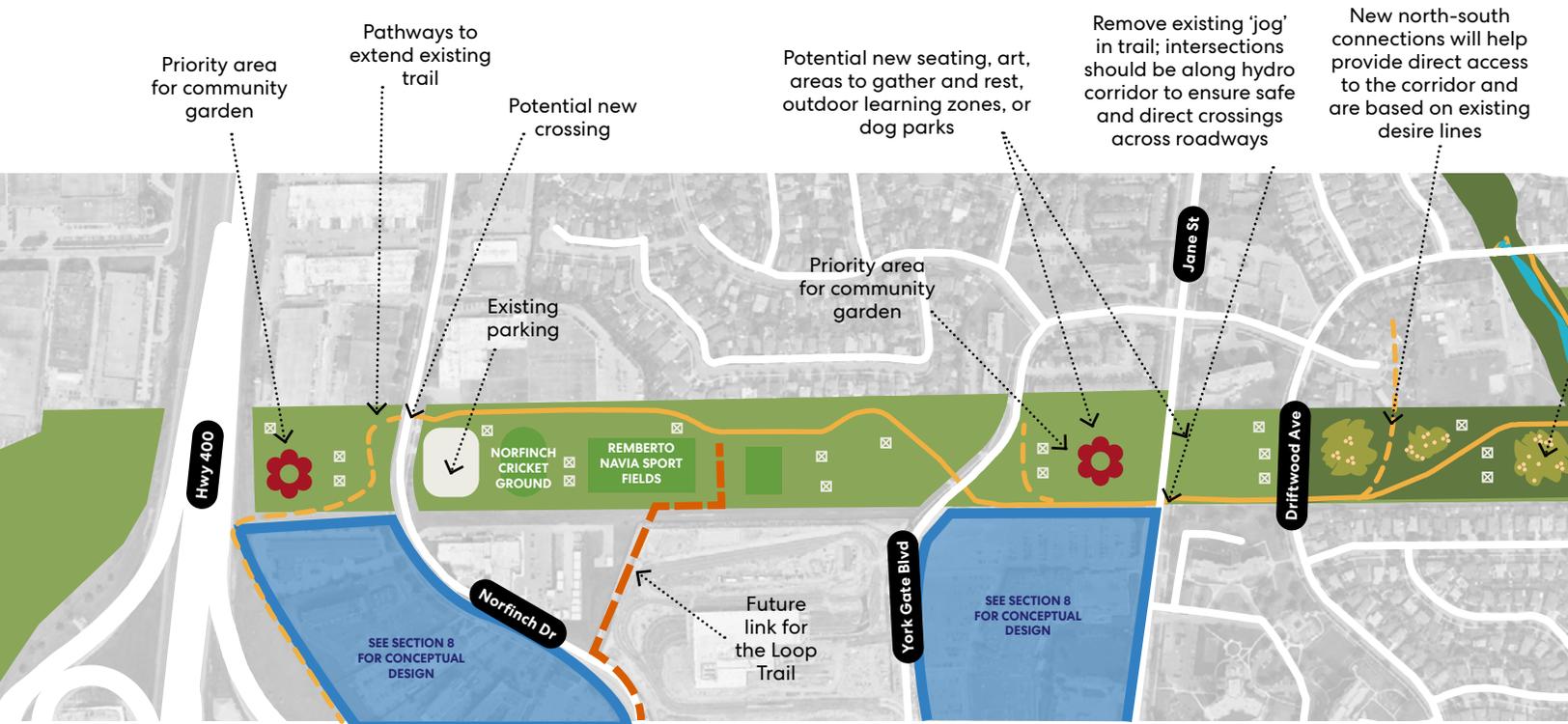


Figure 56. Community gardens, like the Malvern Urban Farm (Toronto Life)



Figure 57. Furniture such as seating or bike racks can support use of existing facilities (The Meadoway)



Figure 58. Hydro can be used for multiple uses - such as a dog-off-leash area (Toronto.com)



Figure 59. Introduction of meadow habitats that serve as pollination corridors (BC Hydro)



Programming and landscaping activates the hydro corridor space

Potential new meadow habitats

Today, many residents use the space for both recreation and leisure, on top of it being an utility corridor. Some of these spaces are formalized sports fields – Remberto Navia Sport Fields and Norfinch Cricket Ground – whereas the rest are mowed grasses. As an important asset to the community, this open space has the opportunity to be a signature destination within the neighbourhood.

Segment 1: Highway 400 to Norfinch

These lands should remain designated as *Utility Corridor* since that designation allows greater opportunities to realize urban agriculture in this segment. Potential locations for community gardens should be explored by the City in collaboration with community groups and Hydro One Networks Inc. This segment could provide a new potential community garden to serve the *Employment Areas* along Norfinch, and potential new developments in the direct vicinity. Much like the gardens at San Romanoway, future residents to the south could have direct access to these gardens.

Segment 2: Norfinch to York Gate

This segment is currently designated as *Parks*, with an existing function of recreation (sport fields and cricket pitch). This area should be enhanced with supporting amenities (seating, shade), considering upgrades to existing facilities. A new connection as part of the Loop Trail initiative will provide direct access to Finch Avenue West and the new LRT.

Segment 3: York Gate to Driftwood

These lands, straddling Jane Street, should remain designated as *Utility Corridor*. With its central location in the area and potential redevelopment of surrounding lands, there is the potential for this segment to include additional amenities, where appropriate given the core utility function. This could include a potential new community garden, outdoor learning areas, dog off-leash areas, and public art – any additions should be explored through consultation with the community and Hydro One Networks Inc. New path connections that branch off the existing trail are based on existing desired paths seen in the grasses today. These should be formalized.

Segment 4: Driftwood to Tobermory

This segment provides a lead into, and out of the ravine system. These lands should be enhanced with rich landscaping, wayfinding, and habitat creation, such as meadows. Some of the restoration processes from the Meadoway (a 16-kilometre hydro corridor turned multi-use trail and urban meadowlands in Scarborough) could be applied here. This area is also an opportunity to acknowledge the Indigenous histories of the land and water – including the Huron-Wendat trail. This area also includes Rudy's Garden, a valued community space that should be supported and maintained.



Figure 60. Branding can enhance intuitive wayfinding and navigation (Spacing)

Figure 62. Meadow habitats under a hydro corridor, The Meadowway, Scarborough (BlogTO)

Implementation Tools

 Planning Policy	 Community Development Plan	 Capital Project
 Design Guidelines	 Collaborative Effort	 Follow Up Study

Hydro Corridor Improvements

-  24. Collaborate with the community to explore potential new community garden locations, building community capacity for ongoing maintenance and stewardship.
-  25. Enhance the hydro corridor as a connection route and space that is safe and accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. Corridor enhancement strategies should be co-created with the community. All new structures within the hydro corridor lands will need to be planned and designed in accordance with Hydro One Networks Inc. Hydro corridor enhancements may include the following:
 - a. Ecological restoration or new native plantings, such as meadow landscapes that promote biodiversity;
 - b. Urban agriculture, which contributes to local food security and sovereignty;
 - c. Shade and seating, where possible, to create a more inviting and comfortable environment to sit, rest, and gather, especially around active programming (such as sport fields);
 - d. Lighting to create a safe and accessible

- space, particularly in the evenings and at night;
- e. Public art installations or educational plaques;
- f. Expressions of identity such as art, wayfinding, plaques, signage, or asphalt paint, to create a unique and memorable character for the corridor while also engaging and inspiring visitors;
- g. Areas to support local education, such as outdoor learning spaces with seating, or informative plaques about plantings, habitats, flora and fauna species, and Indigenous knowledge and histories.

-  26. Create new pedestrian and cycling connections, to add more north-south connectivity from the hydro corridor to the surrounding neighbourhoods.
-  27. Recognize the present and historical importance of the corridor and surrounding areas, including the Parsons Site, the Huron-Wendat Trail, and Rudy's Garden.

7.3.6. Celebrating the Black Creek Ravine

Once a source of fresh water and nourishment for Indigenous communities, the Black Creek is an important natural environment system within Jane Finch. The City’s ravine systems connect people with nature, with history, and with Indigenous heritage. The Jane Finch community has indicated that they value the ravine network, both as an area of retreat to nature, and as a recreational asset. As part of the ‘green lungs’ of the city, it is important that these areas are protected and enhanced. As the city’s Ravine Strategy emphasizes, addressing gaps in the system and connections to trails that run east-west (such as the Finch Hydro Corridor trail) is a priority for this area.

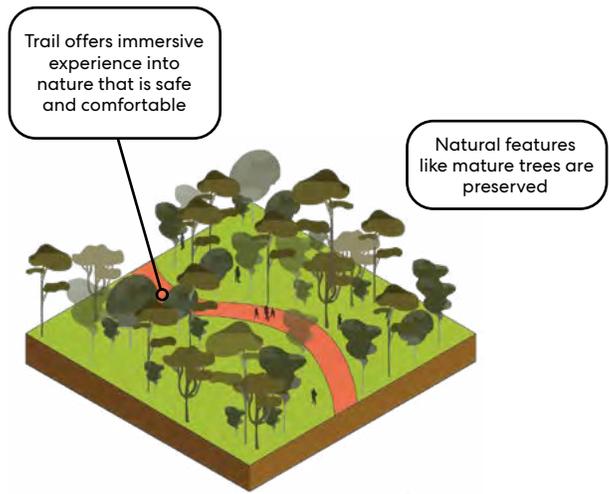


Figure 63. Excerpt of the Our Greenway Plan, which is a local, community-led initiative that advocates for a 40 kilometre park network across Toronto

Celebrating the Black Creek Ravine

- 

28. Limit impacts on the Black Creek Ravine through strategies such as larger building setbacks (with the opportunity to use the space for additional access points, walking trails, and pedestrian amenities), transition in building heights to limit shadow impacts on the ecological function of the ravine, and reducing impervious surfaces on a site to limit runoff into ravines.
- 

29. Preserve mature trees and other natural features adjacent to the ravine and within the broader natural heritage areas along the ravine.
- 

30. Where appropriate, development adjacent to Black Creek should explore providing safe and controlled passage into the ravine, as well as activity 'hubs' where residents and visitors can enjoy the ravine, while minimizing disruptions to the natural environment.
- 

31. Collaborate with local initiatives that are advocating for improvements to the ravine and broader public realm network, such as Our Greenway, Park People, and inTOtheRavines.
- 

32. Improve the public realm around existing ravine access points, so they are visible and inviting.
- 

33. Implement the Toronto Parks and Trails Wayfinding Strategy within the study area through new signs and trail maps.
- 

34. Collaborate with Black Creek Pioneer Village and TRCA to explore extending the Black Creek trail through the site northward.



Figure 64. Parsons site plaque (Heritage Toronto)

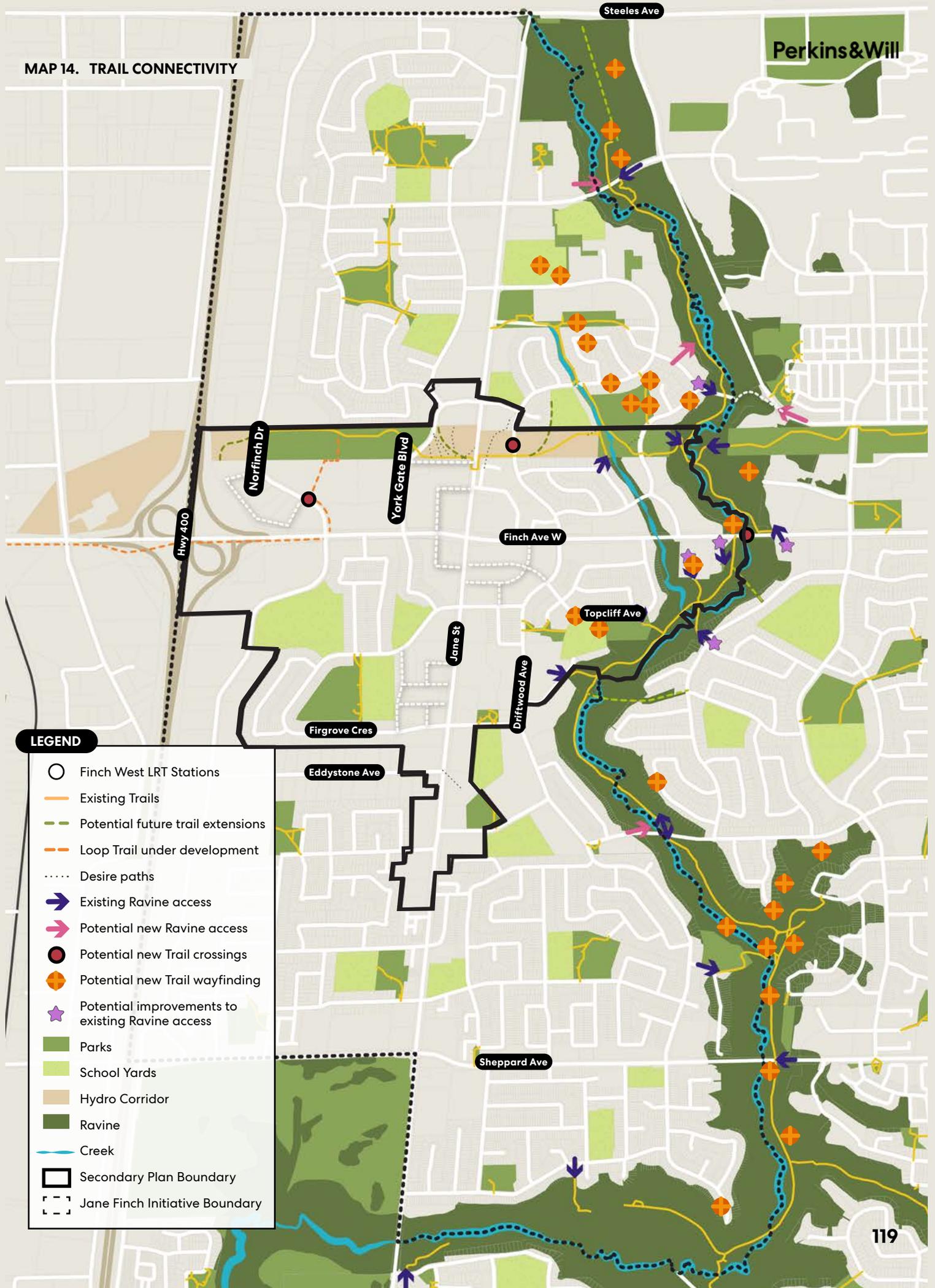


Figure 65. Entrance to ravine from Giltspur Drive is inaccessible (no curb cut) and grown over pathway – could benefit from a depressed curb, trail improvements, and signage



Figure 66. Potential new entrance/trail connection from Tobermory can provide residents with more direct access to the ravine

MAP 14. TRAIL CONNECTIVITY



LEGEND

-  Finch West LRT Stations
-  Existing Trails
-  Potential future trail extensions
-  Loop Trail under development
-  Desire paths
-  Existing Ravine access
-  Potential new Ravine access
-  Potential new Trail crossings
-  Potential new Trail wayfinding
-  Potential improvements to existing Ravine access
-  Parks
-  School Yards
-  Hydro Corridor
-  Ravine
-  Creek
-  Secondary Plan Boundary
-  Jane Finch Initiative Boundary

7.3.7. Ecology and Sustainability

This strategy emphasizes the importance of preserving and protecting ecosystems, promoting sustainable practices, and ensuring the responsible use of resources to meet both present and future needs. This strategy will contribute to the City’s efforts to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. These are particularly important for an area like Jane Finch which is adjacent to a ravine network and has a high supply of open space.

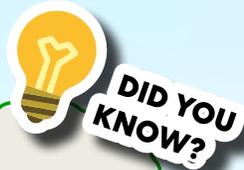
Climate Responsive Design

35. Mitigate extreme heat conditions, through strategies such as:
 - a. Increasing mature tree canopy throughout the area to provide shade, relief from high temperatures, improved air quality, and to impact overall health and wellbeing and beautify the area. Increased tree canopy should be prioritized in:
 - i. Areas with low tree canopy;
 - ii. Areas along major roadways (particularly Finch Avenue, Jane Street, Norfinch Drive, Firgrove Crescent, Driftwood Avenue, Oakdale Road and York Gate Boulevard); and
 - iii. Areas around bus stops, in new parks, Green Spines, and along the perimeter of public squares and along new streets.
 - b. Providing shading devices such as awnings, canopies, and stand-alone shade structures to provide relief from heat, especially at high-traffic areas like transit stops, patios, and commercial main streets.
 - c. Integrating water features such as drinking fountains and splash pads in parks or squares and longer operation times going into fall months.



Figure 67. Splash Pad, Corktown Common. Source: Waterfront Toronto

36. Green infrastructure integrated into all new development and streetscapes, such as bioswales, to enhance the ecological functions of the public realm (refer to Green Streets Guidelines).
37. Mitigate extreme cold and snowy conditions, through strategies such as:
 - a. Windbreaks such as trees, vegetation, and hedges to reduce snow drifts and absorb snow melt;
 - b. Surface treatments on high-traffic areas such as key intersections, bus stops (particularly along Jane Street), and sidewalks along major roadways, to help with melting snow, de-icing, and increasing visibility;
 - c. Incorporating snow storage areas to prevent snow piles getting in the way of pedestrian or cyclist movements.



Have you seen these other City documents that speak to Ecology and Sustainability?

TransformTO: The City of Toronto has targeted [reaching net zero by 2040](#). This means lowering greenhouse gas emissions city-wide.

Toronto's First Resilience Strategy: To help [Toronto survive, adapt, and thrive in the face of both climate and inequity challenges](#), the actions across all scales identify critical partnerships, and next steps in building resilience across the City.

Ravine Strategy: In the midst of pressures from climate change and densifying urban conditions, this strategy aims to protect and improve Toronto's 'green lungs'.

Biodiversity

The built environment of Jane Finch is deeply intertwined with its natural surroundings – from large scale ravine networks to smaller scaled gardens or lawns. As a community embedded and committed to the natural environment, we have to ensure that nature is visible, accessible, and vibrant.



38. Leverage existing programs and grants such as PollinateTO to incorporate natural ecology and systems into our built environment, from our public spaces, to our streetscape and infrastructure.



39. Development should protect, restore, and enhance natural heritage and water resource systems. It should prioritize ongoing maintenance and improvements to the surrounding natural ecosystems in the neighbourhood.



40. Street trees, rain gardens, buffers like Green Spines, native plantings, rooftop gardens, Parks, and community gardens should be provided where possible, to support connectivity for wildlife and maintain biodiversity.

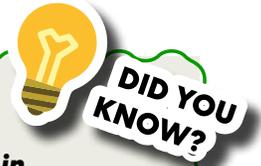


41. Create diverse plant communities that mimic natural ecosystems and attract various species of birds, insects, and other wildlife.

Figure 68. Black Creek Community Farm (Earth to Tables)

7.3.8. Expanding and Improving Existing Parks

Park expansion offers a range of benefits to both the environment and the community. It not only increases the overall amount of green space in urban areas, but also creates new access points for pedestrians in Jane Finch, especially in areas with walkability gaps or lower Park provision rates. Larger parks also provide greater opportunities to recreational facilities. Larger parks can also support a more diverse range of ecosystems for biodiversity and space for amenities and programming for residents.



How do we expand and improve the network of parks in Jane Finch?

When land is redeveloped, the City can require a portion of that land to be dedicated as park. The City can accept a cash payment of equivalent value from developers, and can use these funds to buy parkland nearby or make improvements to existing park facilities. The City also funds park improvements through its capital budget.



Figure 69. Lisgar Park, Toronto, is an example of a more 'urban' park, framed by buildings, roads, and at-grade non-residential uses



Figure 70. Some existing parks, such as Firgrove Park (above) or Oakdale Park (below), lack a prominent street frontage and can benefit from potential expansion in the future

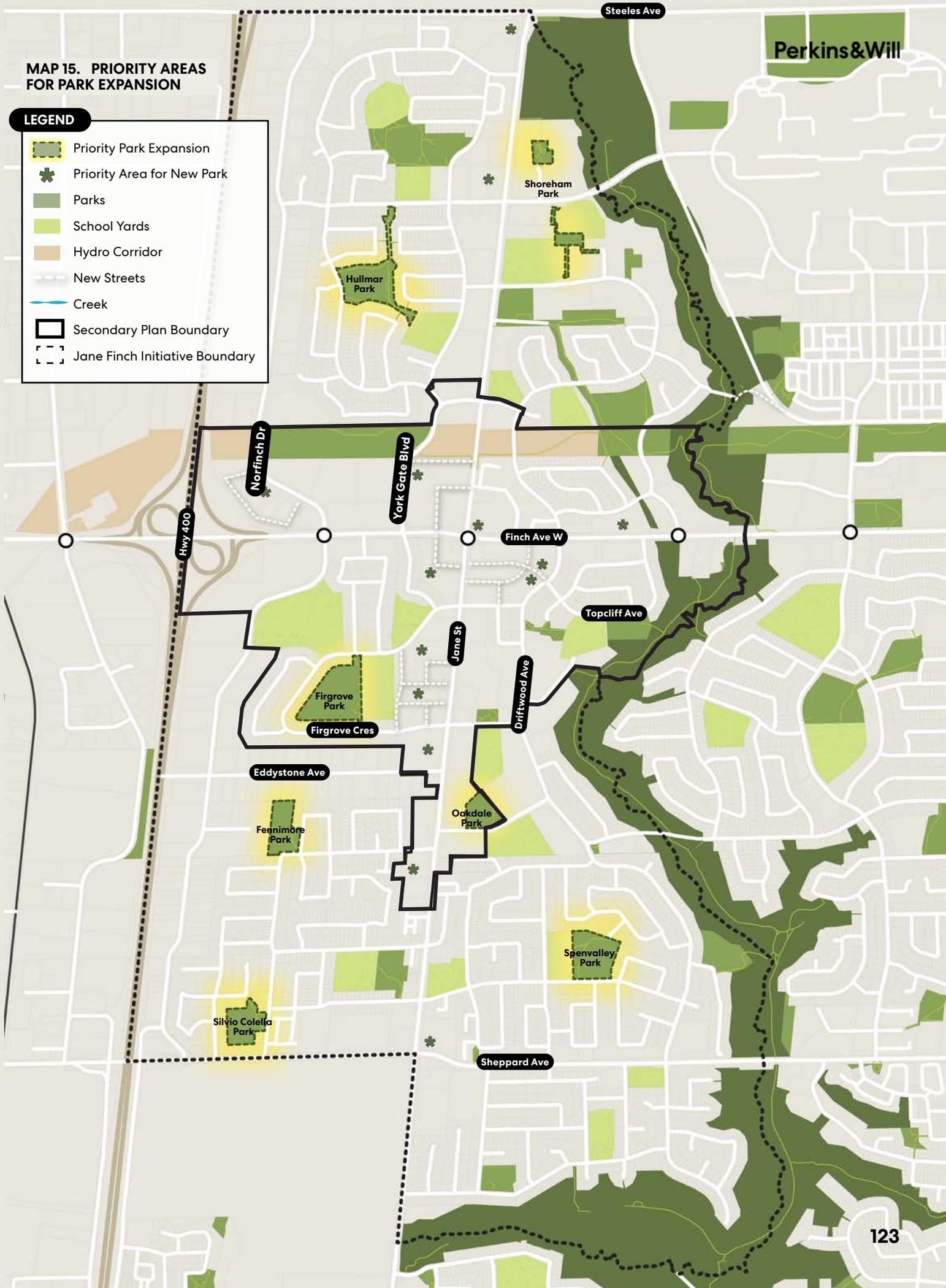
Expanding and Improving existing parks

42. Prioritize expanding or improving existing parks, especially parks that:
- Have low walkability;
 - In an area of low park provision (currently and in the future as development occurs); and
 - Do not have existing street frontage.

MAP 15. PRIORITY AREAS FOR PARK EXPANSION

LEGEND

-  Priority Park Expansion
-  Priority Area for New Park
-  Parks
-  School Yards
-  Hydro Corridor
-  New Streets
-  Creek
-  Secondary Plan Boundary
-  Jane Finch Initiative Boundary



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7.4. Stitching it Together (Greening Streets)

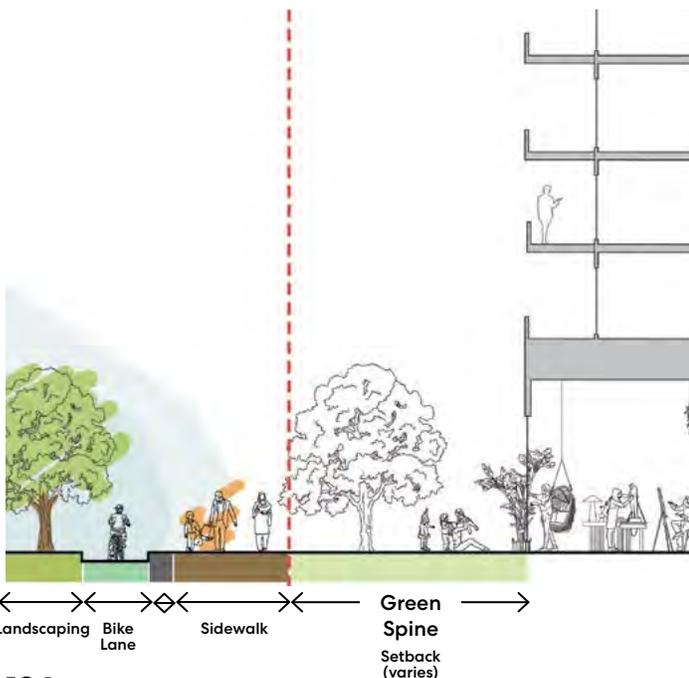
Individual parks, squares, and other open spaces are not enough to create a robust and complete public realm. Key park destinations should be well-connected and stitched together by accessible streets, pathways, trails, and sidewalks. The network has to ensure high-quality pathways for people of all ages and abilities to travel along. This section of the strategy aims to ‘connect-the-dots’ and create a complete public realm network.

7.4.1. Green Spines

The landscapes of Jane Finch stand out as a defining characteristic of the area. It is particularly evident along the streets of Jane Street and Finch Avenue West through features such as: deep setbacks, a sense of openness, respite from concrete, skyview, consistent tree canopy, and lush landscaping. Many of the buildings along these streets leave ample room in the setbacks from the roadway for trees and green landscaping.

This character along Jane Street and Finch Avenue West offers a range of benefits, such as beauty, buffers, and aid to curb the urban heat island effect. New or enhanced tree canopy will improve air quality, reduce noise levels, and provide a buffer between pedestrians and roadway traffic. Overall exposure to nature and greenery have been shown to have a positive impact on physical health, mental health and wellbeing, such as reducing stress and improving moodⁱ. This defining character of these streets should be preserved and enhanced as the area evolves.

ⁱ City of Toronto Public Health, “Green City: Why Nature Matters to Health - An Evidence Review, 2015



Green Spines along Jane and Finch

- 43. Green Spines are along:
 - a. Jane Street (specifically segments: between the northern boundary of the study area and the northern edge of the hydro corridor; and between Firgrove Crescent/Yewtree Boulevard and the southern boundary of the study area); and
 - b. Finch Avenue West (specifically segments: between the highway ramps and York Gate Boulevard/Elana Drive; and between the eastern boundary of the study area and Driftwood Avenue).

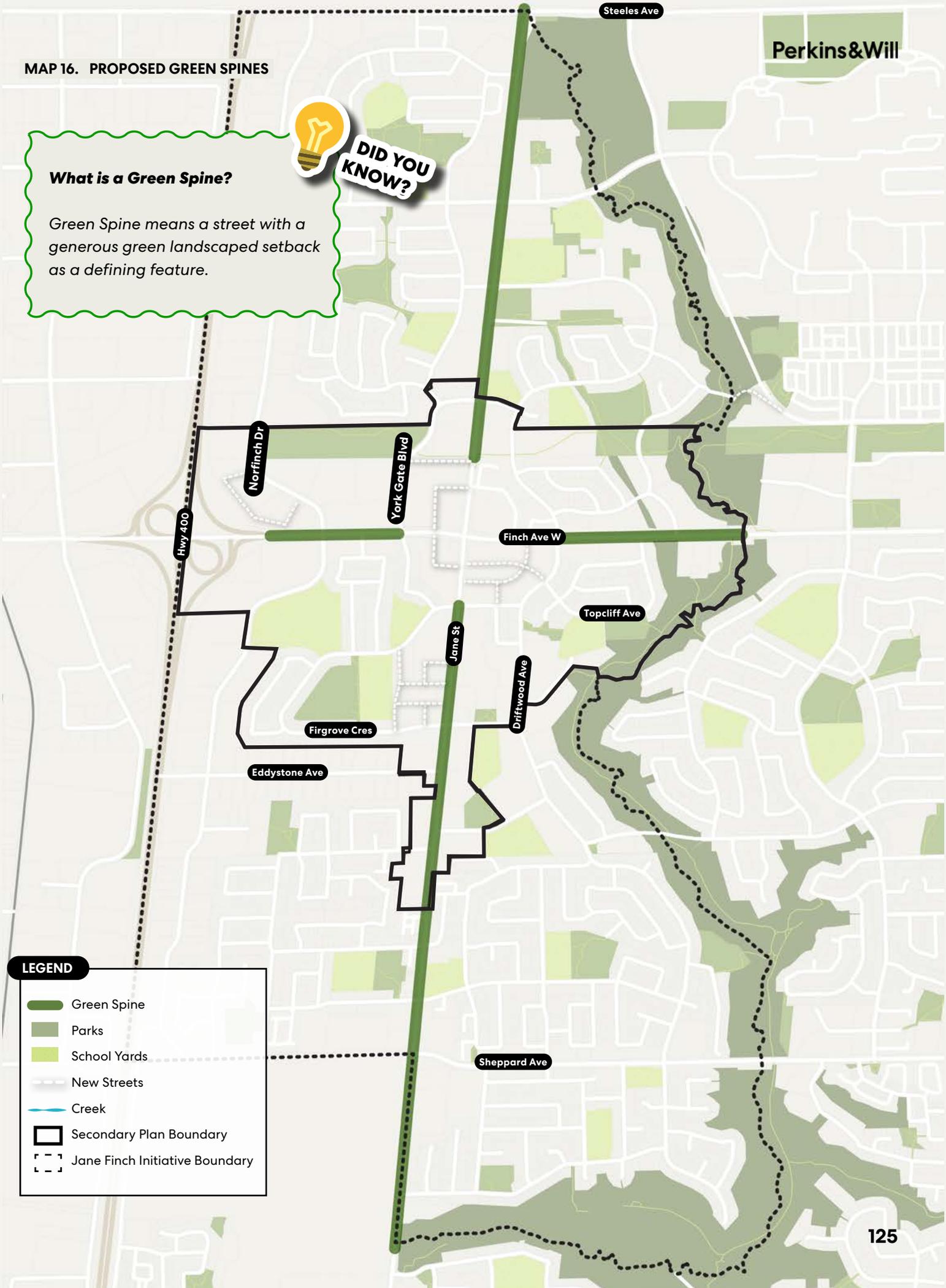
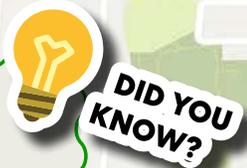
- 44. The Green Spine will help to link together disconnected pedestrian walkways from private development to the Jane Street and Finch Avenue street network. Pedestrian connections to the Green Spine reflect a transit-supportive public realm by creating access from private developments to a comfortable streetscape leading to

MAP 16. PROPOSED GREEN SPINES

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What is a Green Spine?

Green Spine means a street with a generous green landscaped setback as a defining feature.



LEGEND

- Green Spine
- Parks
- School Yards
- New Streets
- Creek
- Secondary Plan Boundary
- Jane Finch Initiative Boundary

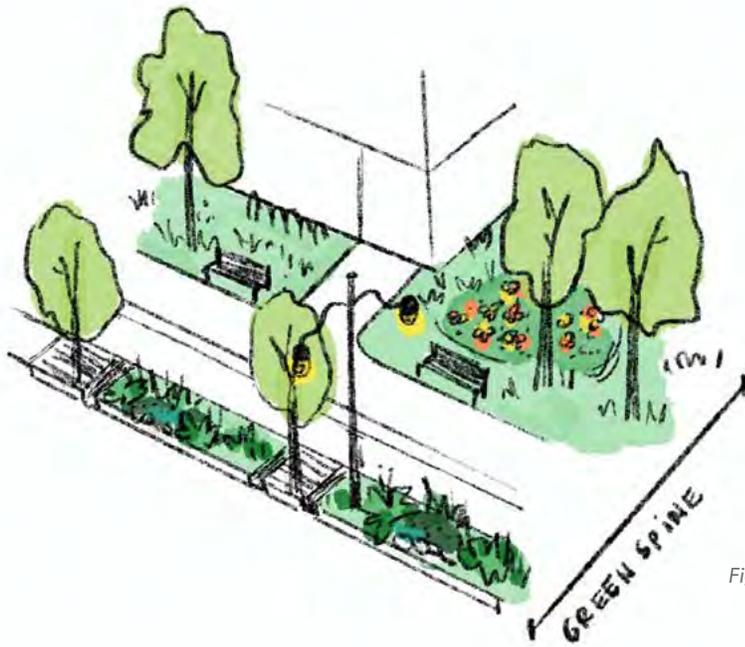


Figure 71. Sketch of elements that can be included in Green Spines: stormwater management measures, trees, gardens, pedestrian amenities

convenient access to a variety of transit options, reducing dependency on vehicular trips.

- 45. Green Spines will be a minimum of 5.0 metres wide. Development will be set back from the property line to achieve the Green Spine;
- 46. The setback area and private open spaces should include:
 - a. Lush and generous soft landscaped areas that aid in water infiltration;
 - b. Amenities such as public art, pedestrian-scale lighting, wayfinding measures, and places to sit, particularly near transit stops; and
 - c. A row of trees planted on either side of the pedestrian clearway on both sides of the street to provide shade, with adequate soil volumes to promote healthy and mature tree canopy growth; and
 - d. Green infrastructure measures such as rain gardens, bio-retention areas, green gutters and bioswales to aid in stormwater management (refer to the Green Streets Technical Guidelines for further details);

- 47. Improve connections to key destinations along Jane Street and Finch Avenue West - parks, community and civic destinations like libraries or schools, employment hubs, residential nodes, and transit stops.
- 48. Avoid monocultured planting and manicured lawns and introduce diverse native planting that are drought and pollutant tolerant and easy to maintain.
- 49. Buildings located facing the Green Spine should feature prominent entrances and visibility into the ground floor to support a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians.
- 50. Consider landscape transition areas where architectural elements such as integrated planters and low screening can help distinguish between public and private uses that may face the Green Spines. Where private outdoor spaces are visible from the Green Spines, they will provide high-quality design to enrich the pedestrian experience.



Figure 72. Jane Street today includes segments that have diverse plantings



Figure 73. Deep setbacks could benefit from formal amenities, such as benches and lighting

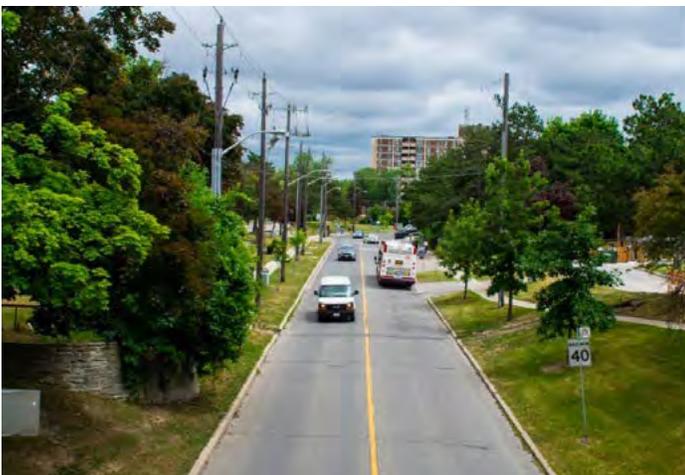


Figure 74. Deep setbacks are common throughout Jane Finch, with lots of softscape and mature trees

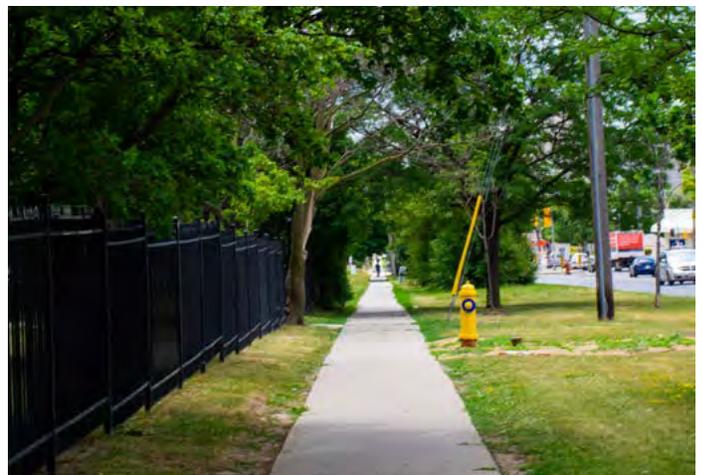


Figure 75. Portions of Jane Street and Finch Avenue today have mature trees that offer shade



Figure 76. Eglinton Avenue West is another example of a street with deep, green setbacks, enhanced with new pedestrian pathways and plantings

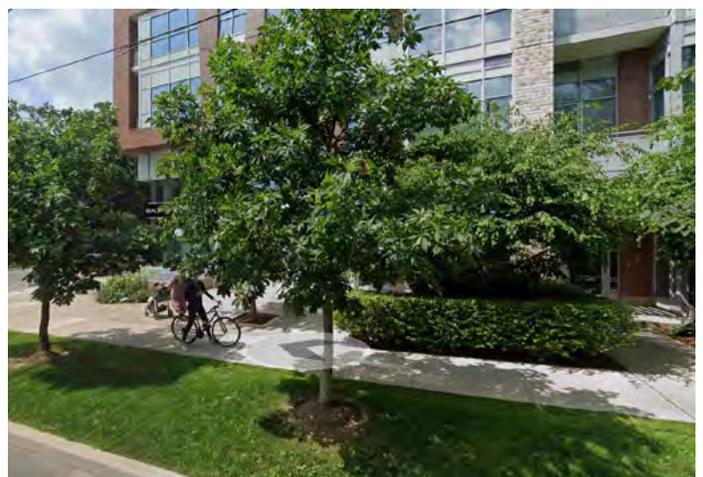


Figure 77. Landscape transition areas (e.g. hedges) help distinguish between private and public areas – Oakmount Road, Toronto

This analysis demonstrates the gaps and opportunities to implement the Green Spines along Finch Avenue and Jane Street: The **Solar Access** map is a demonstration of how much sun the areas get cumulatively throughout the day; The **Land Cover** map is an analysis of the types of landscape along these streets, ranging from lush tree or shrubbed areas to asphalt. Lastly, the **Topography** map is a overview of the grade changes along these streets.

Finch Avenue: Solar Access



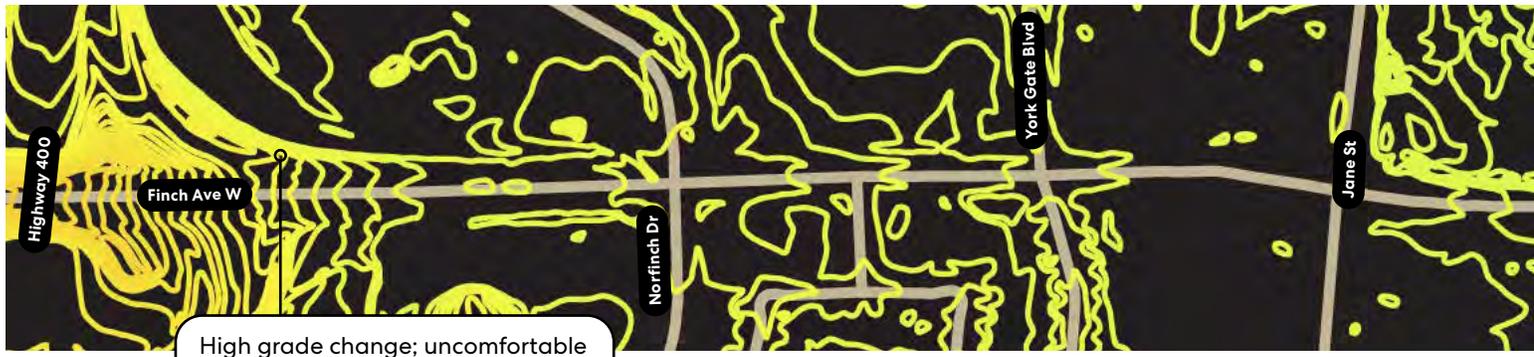
Large swathes of parking; hostile pedestrian environment with lack of shade, and chemical exposure

Finch Avenue: Land Cover



parking lots

Finch Avenue: Topography



High grade change; uncomfortable for vulnerable populations

Revised tree canopy will be introduced with the Finch West LRT



well vegetated edges and open spaces



High grade change; uncomfortable for vulnerable populations

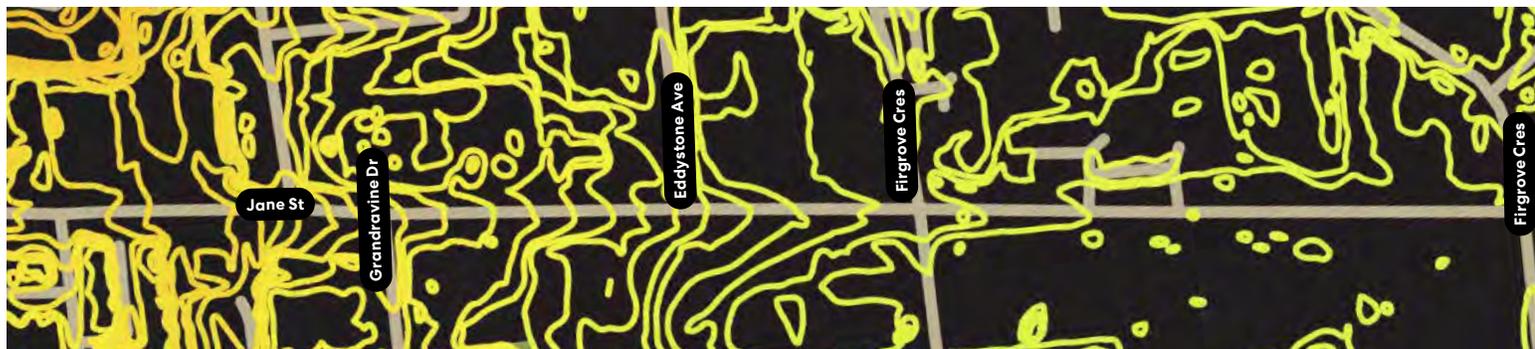
Jane Street: Solar Access

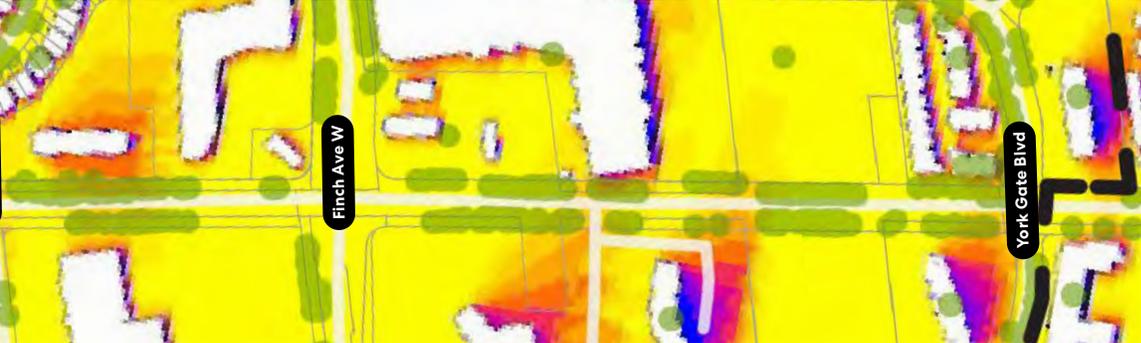


Jane Street: Land Cover

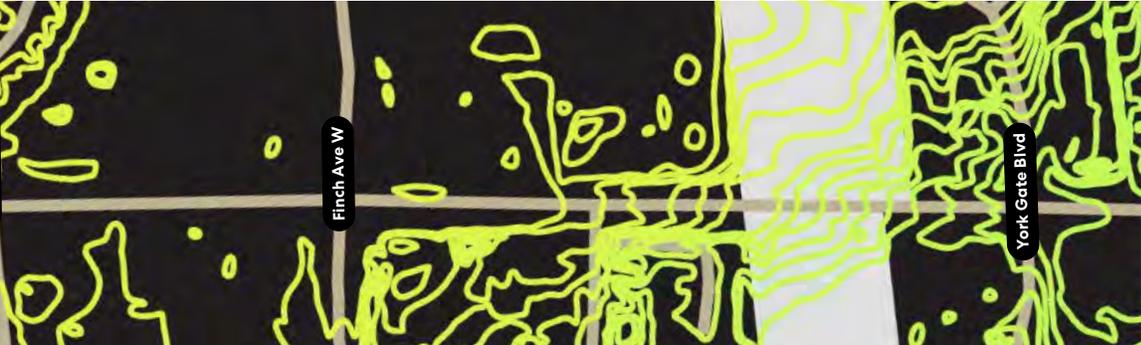


Jane Street: Topography





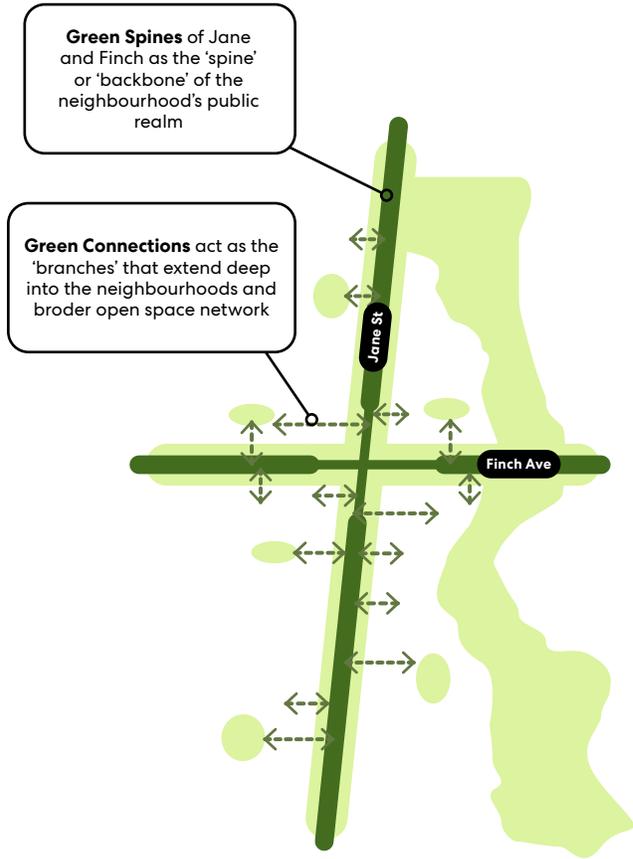
Large swathes of parking; hostile pedestrian environment with lack of shade, urban heat island effect and exposure to exhaust fumes



7.4.2. Green Pedestrian Connections

The historically auto-centric nature of Jane Finch can make it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to move around easily, conveniently and safely. This is largely due to large block sizes, wide roadways, and indirect paths. “Desire lines,” or informal paths through the area created by people taking shortcuts, demonstrate that people are forced to create their own routes because the available formal paths do not meet their needs.

The new street network will be complemented by Green Pedestrian Connections which create porosity through blocks for pedestrians and people cycling where vehicle movement is not possible or required. Green Pedestrian Connections allow pedestrians and people cycling to travel shorter distances to access transit stops, workplaces, shopping, community facilities and other neighbourhood destinations. They will be safe, green “short cuts” through the area that provide convenient route options beyond the street network for those travelling by active transportation.



- *B26: Provide visual and physical connections between public spaces, parks and trails with pathways and trails connecting destinations within and surrounding the neighbourhood with clear connections and wayfinding to the wider city.*
- *B29. Require new development, especially on large sites, to deliver a fine-grain public street grid network scaled for pedestrian movement and experienced as safe public spaces, in addition to providing important links within a multi-modal transportation network.*
- *B32. Strengthen the relationship between streets and parks to ensure the integration of pedestrian and cycling networks and to form a cohesive, connected and safe public realm.*

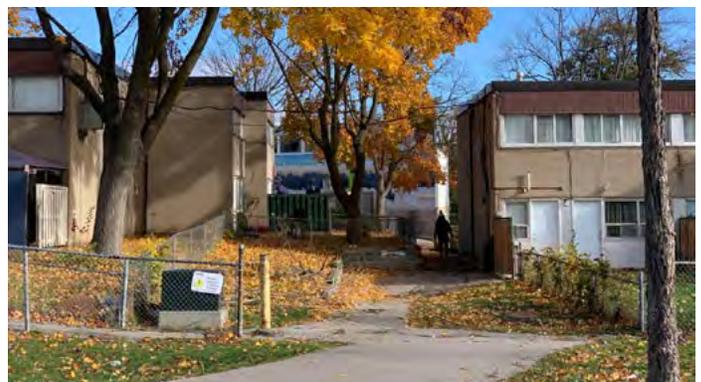
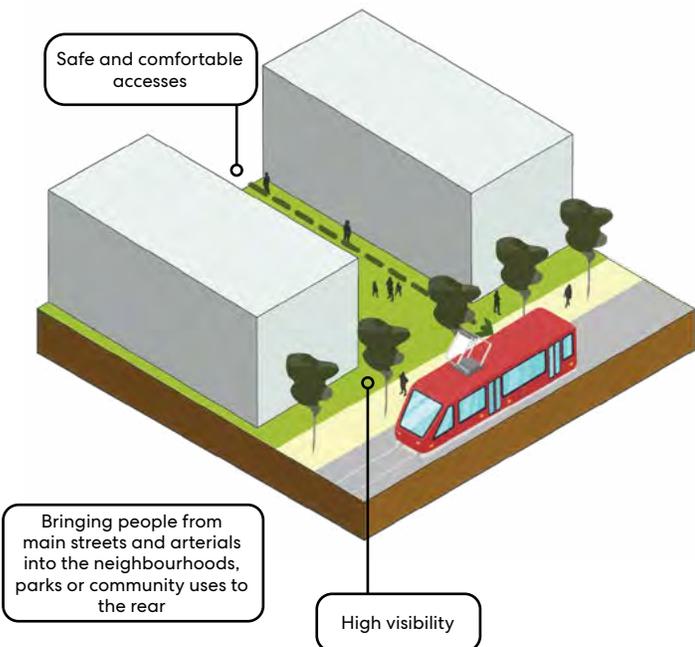


Figure 78. Currently, there are some good pathways that provide access to key destinations

MAP 17. PROPOSED GREEN PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

Perkins & Will



LEGEND

-  Green Pedestrian Connections
-  Priority Area for Public Square
-  Priority Area for POPS (Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces)
-  Priority Area for New Park
-  Parks
-  School Yards
-  Hydro Corridor
-  Ravine
-  New Streets
-  Trails
-  Creek
-  Secondary Plan Boundary
-  Jane Finch Initiative Boundary



DID YOU KNOW?

What is a Green Pedestrian Connection?

Green Pedestrian Connections are publicly accessible, pedestrian-prioritized paths of travel, at least 10 metres in width, where possible, that provide porosity through a block.

Green Pedestrian Connections

51. Green Pedestrian Connections should be a minimum of 10 metres, where possible, to provide accessible paths of travel that prioritize the wellbeing and safety of pedestrians. They should also include design features such as:
 - a. Lighting, to ensure visibility and comfort both day and night;
 - b. Landscaping and greenery, such as trees, shrubs, and flowers to provide shade and an attractive path of travel;
 - c. High-quality paving materials that are durable, require minimal maintenance, and have patterns that help differentiate pedestrian areas from vehicular zones;
 - d. Accessible ramps and tactile paving to respond to grade changes, instead of stairs;
 - e. Signage and wayfinding, to guide pedestrians to and from important destinations in the neighbourhood such as transit, schools, the ravine, and community centres; and
 - f. Cycling amenities such as bicycle racks.

52. Green Pedestrian Connections should limit barriers such as fences. Collaboration between landowners is encouraged, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and welcoming open spaces. Collaboration with school boards to provide and maintain Green Pedestrian Connections is also encouraged.

53. Green Pedestrian Connections should be direct paths of travel. Avoid winding paths that reduce visibility and hamper safety.

54. Green Pedestrian Connections should be linked to the broader pedestrian network and help formalize existing desire paths, recognizing the convenient routes people in



Figure 82. Example of a visible and clear access point in Jane Finch

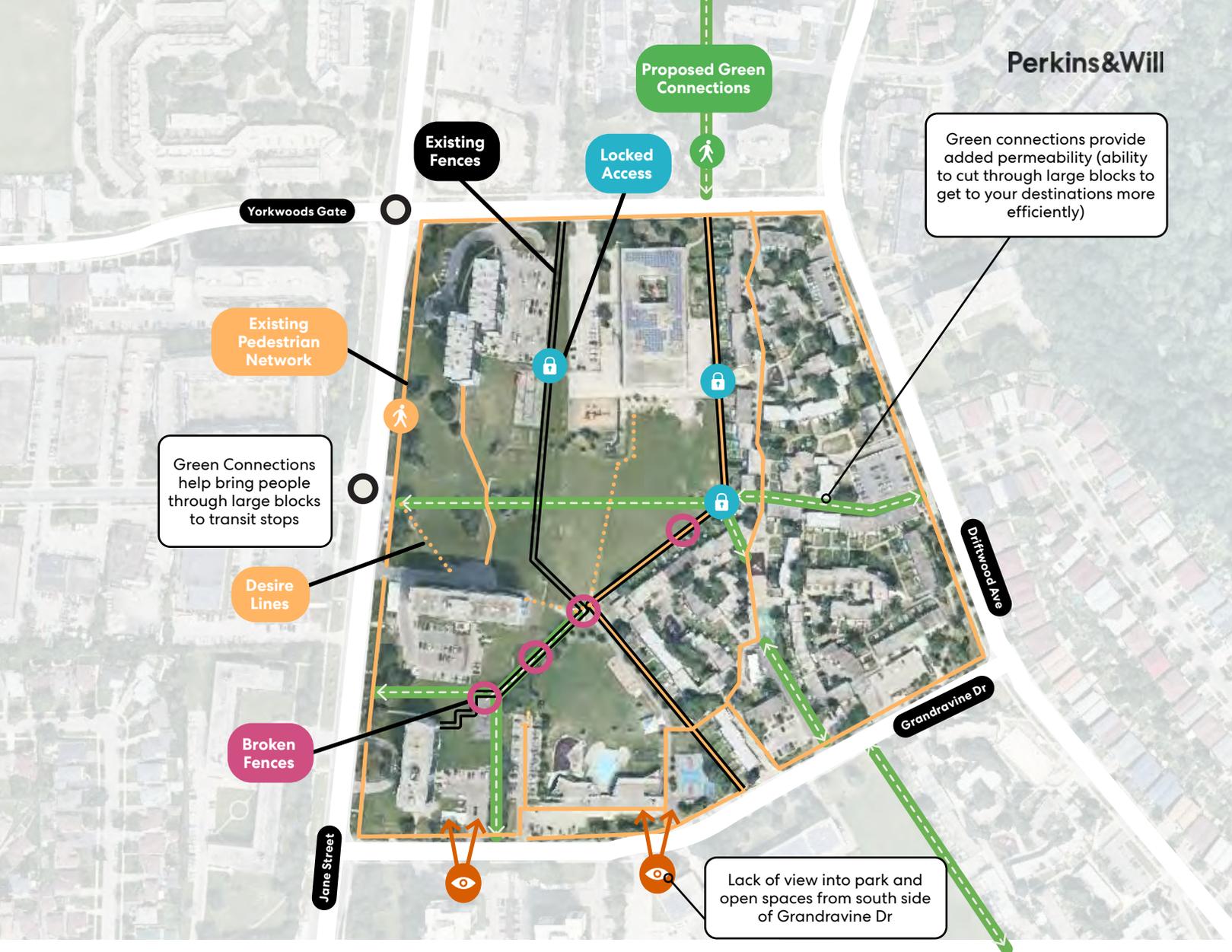
the community have already established. This can improve the usability and accessibility of the pedestrian network.

55. All Green Pedestrian Connections will be designed to limit vehicular movement and accommodate a dedicated multi-use path or shared pedestrian and vehicular path with generous boulevard space on either side.

56. Where Green Pedestrian Connections share space with vehicles, drive aisles should be limited in length, have a minimum paved width of 6 metres, and use high-quality surface materials and other design measures to prioritize pedestrian and cyclist movement.

57. The landscaping/boulevard zone will be separated from the shared pedestrian and vehicular pathway with features such as bollards or planters to improve pedestrian safety.

58. Street elements and furniture such as lighting poles, curbs, planters, bollards and benches should be used to distinguish between the different zones of the Green Pedestrian Connections.



The above diagram highlights existing barriers in the open space network in the block bound by Yorkwoods Gate, Jane Street, Grandravine Drive, and Driftwood Avenue. There is a mix of uses, with taller buildings fronting Jane Street and townhouse complexes facing Driftwood on the east side of these blocks. These residential blocks sandwich important destinations like Oakdale Community Centre, Oakdale Park, and Yorkwoods Public School. This analysis is a demonstration of how green connections and related improvements to the pedestrian network (coordination between landowners to limit fences, repair infrastructure, formalize desire paths, and expand the public realm) can create a more comfortable and safe environment.



Figure 83. Fences near apartments have human-made openings that demonstrate the need to create more direct accesses



Figure 84. Examples of desire paths today through apartment neighbourhoods



Figure 85. Paving and landscaping help slow down traffic, North York



Figure 86. Planting and landscaping on shared pedestrian connection, Vancouver

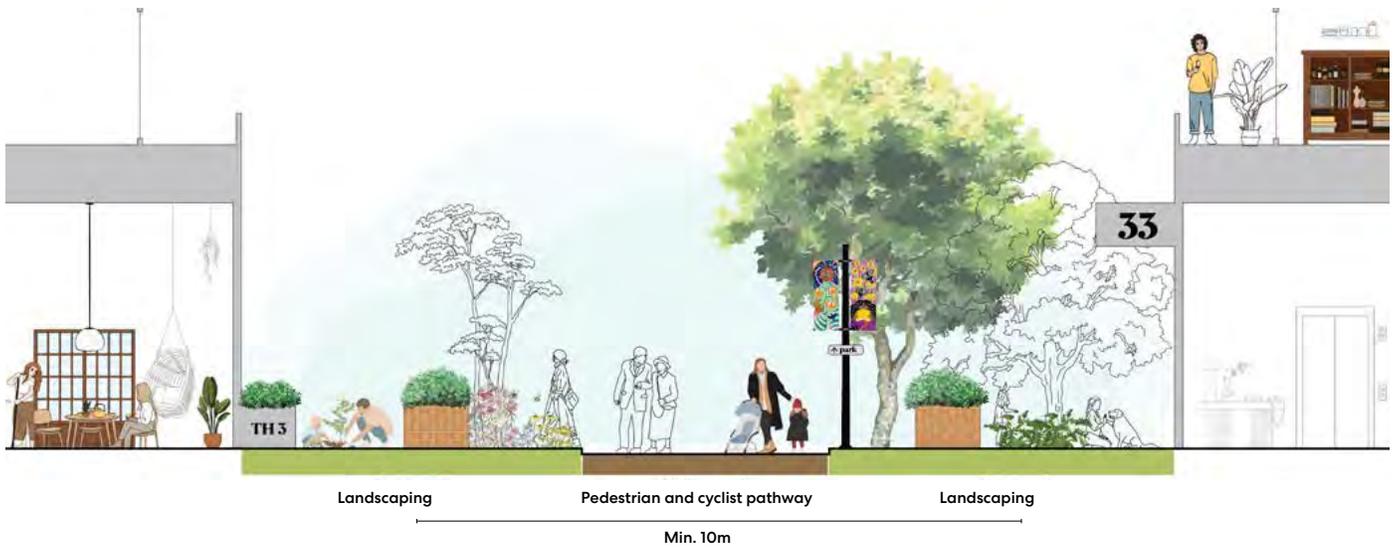


Figure 87. Green Pedestrian Connection - Pedestrian and cyclist pathway

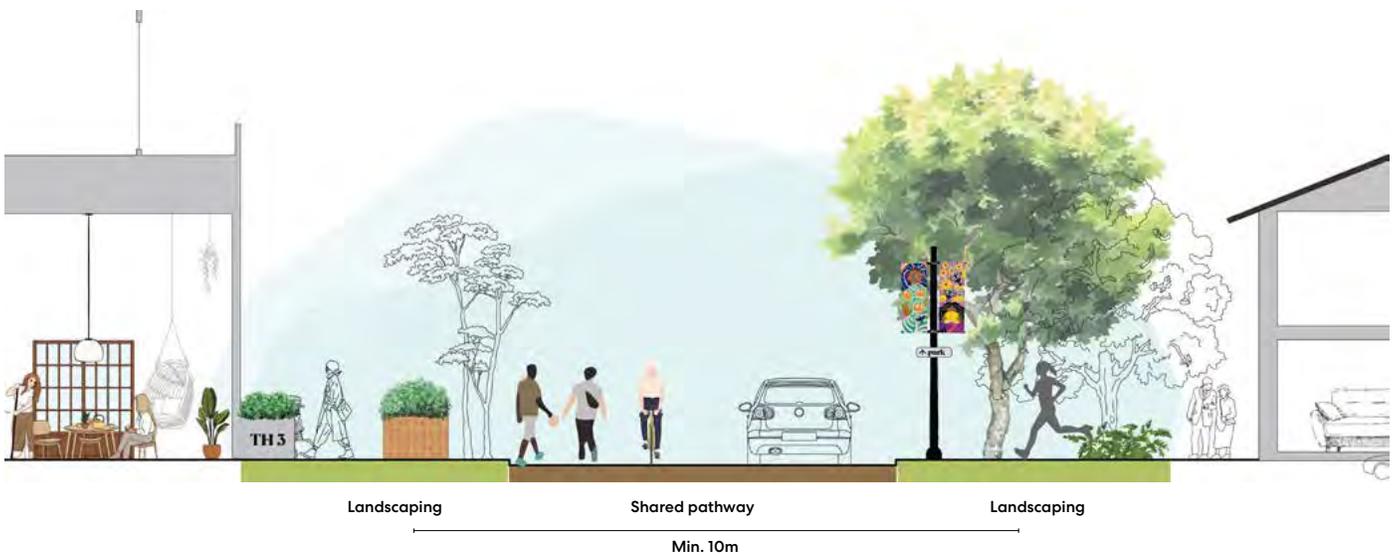
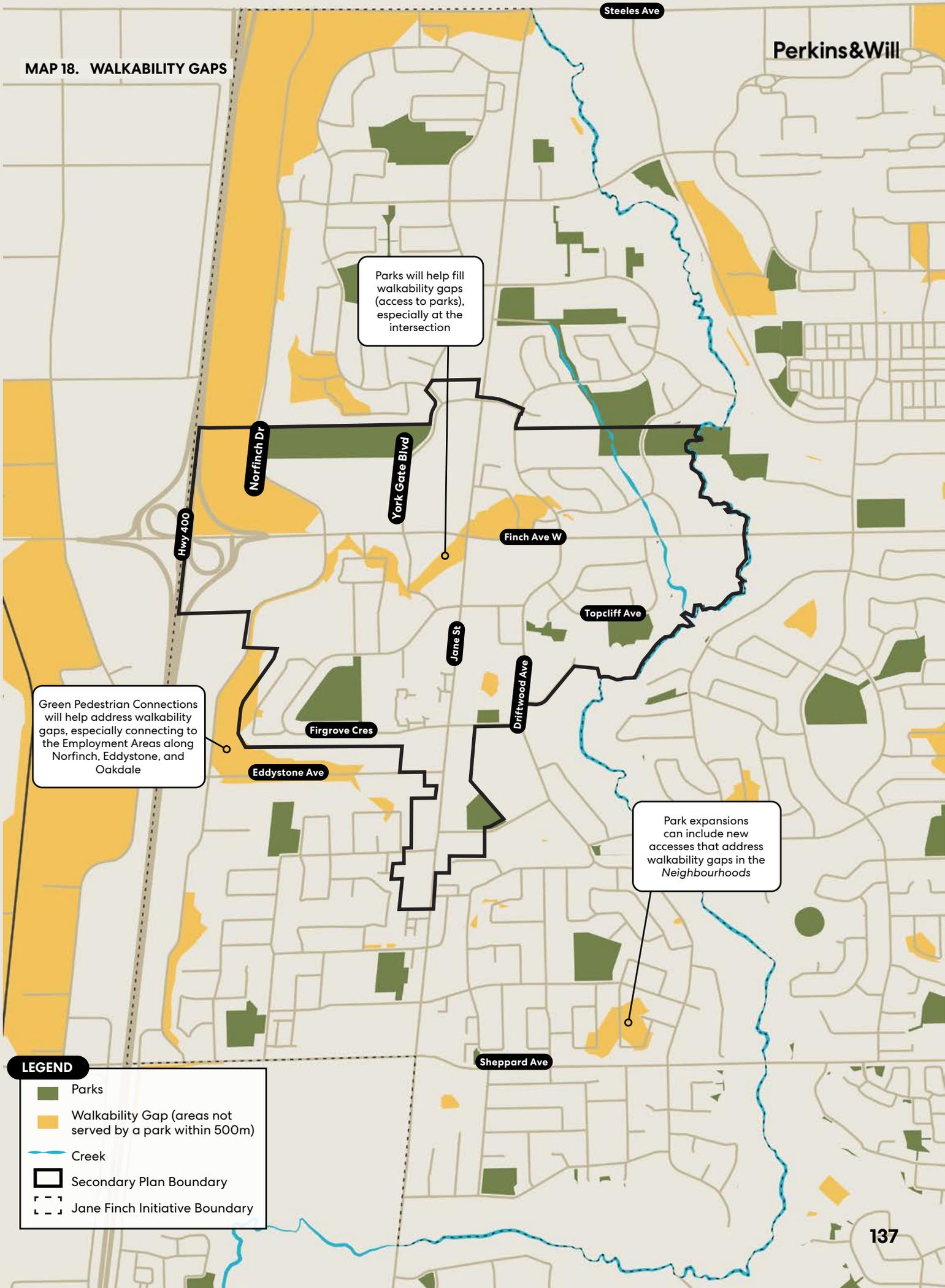


Figure 88. Green Pedestrian Connection - Pedestrian and Cyclist Priority (Cars Permitted)

MAP 18. WALKABILITY GAPS



Parks will help fill walkability gaps (access to parks), especially at the intersection

Green Pedestrian Connections will help address walkability gaps, especially connecting to the Employment Areas along Norfinch, Eddystone, and Oakdale

Park expansions can include new accesses that address walkability gaps in the Neighbourhoods

LEGEND

- Parks
- Walkability Gap (areas not served by a park within 500m)
- Creek
- Secondary Plan Boundary
- Jane Finch Initiative Boundary

7.5. Safe and Inclusive Spaces

Residents, workers, and visitors of Jane Finch should feel safe, empowered, and free within the area. Through community conversations, we heard that the Jane Finch area has faced challenges related to safety and inclusion, including crime and negative stereotypes and perceptions of the area – all contributing to an isolation amongst residents, and with other communities in the city.

Studies and community engagement have documented where feelings of safety and inclusion are most, and least felt in Jane Finch. For example, a photography exercise from a York University studyⁱ noted that a number of built environment factors limit feelings of safety and inclusion in the neighbourhood. These include pedestrian infrastructure, proper lighting, protection from harassment or violence, and cleanliness. Some of the themes regarding safe and inclusive spaces to emerge from studies and public engagement are listed in this section.

7.5.1. Removing Barriers

A number of barriers could prevent residents from accessing, using, or participating in the network of parks and public realm in Jane Finch. These barriers can be exacerbated by factors such as climate – hot summer days, winter storms.

From talking to residents and referencing research like this York University study, some barriers in Jane Finch include:

- Physical accessibility (inaccessible entrances, unmaintained or damaged amenities, stairs, narrow or uneven paths of travel, navigating around construction sites)
- Absence of infrastructure (lack of seating, washrooms, drinking fountains, bike parking)
- Safety concerns (lighting, crime, social isolation, visibility, overpolicing)
- Non-diverse programming or amenities (lack of

representation, age-friendly programs)

- Information barriers (lack of signage or wayfinding, language barriers)
- Economic barriers (lack of free programming, unaffordability of equipment)



- C7: Ensure that safety and good access is a high priority during construction of the Finch West LRT and future infrastructure improvements.
- J16. Collaboratively develop actions focused on providing safe space and access to Indigenous, Black, racialized and newcomer +2SLGBTQI community groups and not for profits.



Figure 89. Excerpts from the York University [“Park Perceptions & Racialized Realities in Two Toronto Neighbourhoods”](#) study (2022)

Implementation Tools

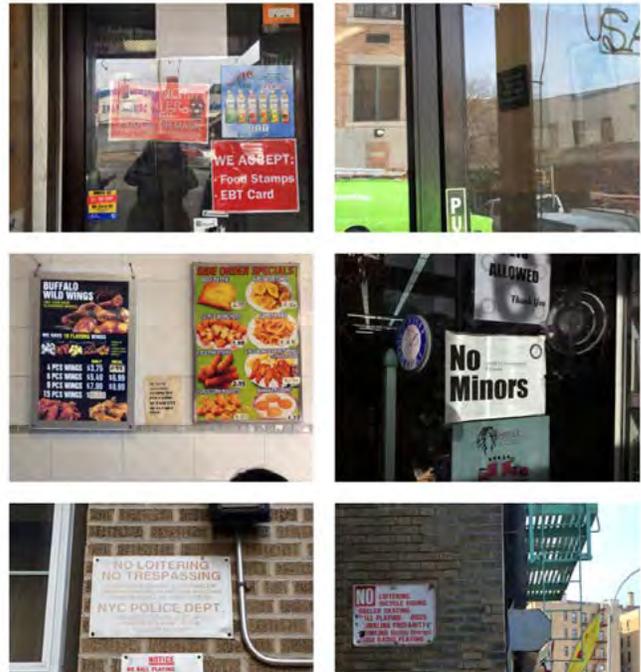
- Planning Policy
- Community Development Plan
- Capital Project
- Design Guidelines
- Collaborative Effort
- Follow Up Study

ⁱ Nadha Hassen, Darryl D’Souza, Sayem Khan, Minakshi Das, Caitlin Arizala, Josephine Grey, Sarah Flicker. (2022). *Park Perceptions and Racialized Realities in Two Toronto Neighbourhoods*. Community Report. Toronto.

CASE STUDY Yes Loitering: New York

The “Yes Loitering” project is a youth-led research project to investigate the ways that teens are targeted in public spaces and develop ideas to create more youth-powered spaces. Through consultation – interviews, public space designers, folks from the criminal justice system, and observations of existing places where youth frequent – they identified a set of ideas that can make spaces more youth-affirming.

Many of these ideas - like including seating that is interactive and playful, integrating charging stations and free Wi-Fi, and signage that is more inviting - can be explored in Jane Finch. Much of this overlaps with findings from local research efforts and what was shared at youth engagement events for the Jane Finch Initiative.



Creating a more Safe and Inclusive Public Realm Network

- 59. Perform safety audits with members of the community in the parks and public realm network to identify interventions that will help with feelings of safety and belonging. Continue the conversations around safety and violence through regular dialogues.
- 60. Allocate resources to improve existing facilities in parks, based on community engagement. Identify and prioritize the ‘quick wins’ that will make the largest impact to the neighbourhood (e.g. removal of fences, formalizing pathways, repairing cracks, fixing amenities like basketball nets).
- 61. Audit existing parks and public realm network for any ‘hostile’ architecture that may be inaccessible or unwelcoming.



Figure 90. Hostile architecture is a term to define design that purposefully guides or restricts behaviour. An example is shown here, where spikes are used to restrict people loitering or sleeping on furniture (Vancouver, VIA)

- 62. Ensure programming and events in public spaces are culturally-representative, free of cost or affordable, and accessible.

7.6. Joyful and Active Spaces

Spaces that invite joy, culture-sharing, recreation, and social activity are important to Jane Finch, as they contribute to the overall well-being, community cohesion, and positive development of the area. A complete community should be vibrant, familiar, inspiring, and engaging for everyone, but especially for vulnerable members of the community. Providing appropriate programming, spaces for food and stewardship, and amplifying community identity can all encourage joy and well-being. The Jane Finch Community Development Plan (CDP) includes an action area focused on food sovereignty and justice. Refer to the actions in the CDP for additional strategies centered around building community capacity and developing inclusive food justice programs.

7.6.1. Growing Food

Supporting Indigenous communities (including preserving traditional knowledge, access to foods and medicines) and enhancing local food security is an important part of this Parks and Public Realm strategy for Jane Finch. Community members have also vocalized the benefits of growing, or tending to plants in the neighbourhood, noting that it enhances both mental and physical health. Food justice requires an intersectional approach that considers race, class, gender, age, ability and other identities.

Gardens and food landscapes come in many different shapes and sizes, including allotment gardens, community gardens, large-scale urban agricultural



Figure 92. Sky Garden, Toronto. Source: University of Toronto

Garden Recommendations

-  63. Explore the feasibility of new community gardens as per the map on the right. All new gardens and enhancements for existing gardens should go through deep consultation and collaboration with local partners that are already doing important food justice and community garden work in the area.
-  64. Conduct small working groups for existing community gardens to explore desired enhancements (such as access, expansions, required tools or resources).
-  65. Existing and new gardens in Jane Finch should continually audit and explore opportunities to support Indigenous farmers markets and Indigenous-led growing/harvesting programs.
-  66. Development should mitigate impacts on existing or potential future gardens, ensure favourable year-round sun conditions for growing, create an appropriate buffer from traffic (and related air pollution), and enhance access.
-  67. Landscaping around new developments, redevelopments and improvements to existing developments, should prioritize the planting of Indigenous medicines, nuts and berries, as per the Reconciliation Action Plan.
-  68. Information for how to create, join, or become members of community gardens should be made accessible or advertised publicly, such as through new signage.
-  69. Explore collaborations with schools to create gardens on school grounds, which can serve as an educational and stewardship asset for youth.

MAP 19. EXISTING GARDENS AND POTENTIAL FUTURE GARDENS



Perkins&Will

Black Creek Community Farm

TCHC community garden at Edgeley Apartments

San Romanoway Sunshine Allotment Garden

Reaching Up Homework Club Garden

Rudy's Garden

Finch Ave W

Topcliff Ave

TCHC community garden at Finch Topcliffe

School/children's garden at Yorkwoods Public School

Oakdale Community Garden

DID YOU KNOW?

What is a Community Garden?

Community gardens provide access to land within the City parks system, and on other City-owned lands, for groups of people who wish to grow their own plants.

What is an Allotment Garden?

Individuals can rent a plot in an allotment garden to grow plants for personal use.

LEGEND

-  Potential Future Gardens
-  Gardens
-  Hydro Corridor
-  Parks
-  Existing School Yards
-  Creek
-  Secondary Plan Boundary
-  Jane Finch Initiative Boundary

centers like Black Creek Community Farm with a focus on education, rain gardens and biodiverse landscapes embedded in streetscapes, and other resident-led gardens, like Rudy’s Garden in Black Creek. All are important in promoting well-being, stewardship, education, and beauty within the neighbourhood today.

There are a number of existing community gardens in Jane Finch today that should be protected and enhanced, with potential new gardens, to extend and access to more residents. It’s important to acknowledge the larger network of gardens and the decades-long role that local residents have had in turning forgotten spaces into well-loved garden spaces.

7.6.2. Appropriate and upgraded programming

It is important that parks and their facilities and programming are also inclusive, enjoyable, and well-maintained. There may be some barriers that prevent full utility and enjoyment of Park programming such as – ability, cultural appropriateness/representation, maintenance, access, and level of understanding of rules and regulations.

Priorities for improvements and additions to outdoor facilities across the Study Area have been developed, based on community feedback and findings from recreational analysis. This builds on several planned

improvement projects (dates are approximate and may be subject to shift). Priorities shown on Map 20 focus on outdoor recreation facilities. Supportive amenities, such as benches, lighting, and drinking fountains, should be considered alongside other major facility investments. An upcoming 5-year review of the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan will provide a process for exploring and advancing these opportunities further.



- 70. Increase visibility and access (through integration into wayfinding/signage) of the Black Creek Farm, an important asset in the neighbourhood.



More inclusive programming

- 71. Building on Parks, Forestry, and Recreation’s existing consultation process, consult the community on appropriate programming, to ensure facilities like sport fields support the diversity of the neighbourhood.



- 72. Consider conversion of existing facilities that may be underutilized or not appropriate (as determined through community consultation). For example, tennis courts can be converted to pickleball courts.



- 73. Consider locations for potential new outdoor facilities within the study area (conceptual locations on the map), such as:
 - a. Basketball/multipurpose courts;
 - b. Outdoor fitness equipment;
 - c. Splash pads;
 - d. Dog off-leash areas; and
 - e. Skateboard facilities.



- 74. Work collaboratively with school boards to ensure sport fields, playgrounds, or asphalt play areas on school grounds are publicly accessible. Visibly advertise the hours these would be available for anyone to use.

What is the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan?



DID YOU KNOW?

The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2019 – 2038) is a 20-year plan to build and renew facilities in order to meet recreation needs in a changing Toronto. The plan identifies gaps and develops investment priorities based on a principle of equitable distribution across the city.

MAP 20. PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS AND PRIORITY AREAS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS



7.6.3. Public Art

Public art has a profound impact on a neighbourhood, influencing its aesthetics, sense of identity, social dynamics, and activating its public spaces. It can enliven space across all scales in Jane Finch, from large-scale sculptures to murals on building facades. It creates a more inclusive, vibrant, and visually engaging neighbourhood that reflects the values, aspirations, and diversity of its residents.

Public art should be encouraged at every opportunity, and can be implemented in a variety of ways: private development, commissions by the City, or led by the community.



Figure 93. Mural at Black Creek Community Farm (Earth to Tables: Legacies)

Incorporation of Public Art into Development

- 75. Integrate public art, especially on larger sites and redevelopment projects. This could occur at many scales:
 - a. Small scale: Signage, painted mailboxes or traffic signal boxes, environmental art;
 - b. Medium scale: Murals or paintings on walls, jersey barriers, transit shelters, or parking lots;
 - c. Large scale: Sculptures, photo or light installations;
 - d. Interactive scale: Community-based or participatory art that requires interaction.
- 76. Consider providing public art in the public realm such as in boulevard spaces or publicly visible areas of private developments.
- 77. Consider providing public art or other art installations and engage with City programs such as the Percent for Public Art, StreetARToronto, and Arts and Culture Services in the Economic Development & Culture division.

- 78. Artwork should respond directly to the specific site and surrounding context. Public art is encouraged to consider:
 - a. Scale, fit and proportion;
 - b. Material selection, durability, and maintenance;
 - c. Views from the public realm, including to aid with navigation; and
 - d. The history of Jane Finch and its communities, including as described in the Jane Finch Historic Context Statement, to provide inspiration for public art that further supports a distinctive sense of place.
- 79. Public art should be designed collaboratively and through consultation with Indigenous communities, as well as local artists, community members, historians, and organizations.
- 80. Integrate with the Finch West LRT, to add colour along the transit route.



Figure 94. Mural in Mount Dennis, Toronto (Toronto.com)



Figure 95. Interactive opportunities for art such as chalk art festivals, Denver (Uncover Colorado)



Figure 96. Interactive installation in Corner Commons (intersection of Jane and Finch) as part of the artist-in-residency initiative (Lila Nguyen)



Figure 97. Neighbourhood-specific signage creates a strong display of identity - Pape Village, Toronto (Pape Village BIA)



Figure 98. Jiimaan'ndewemgadnong (The Place Where the Heart of the Canoe Beats) Pocket Park, Peterborough (Ben Hargreaves)

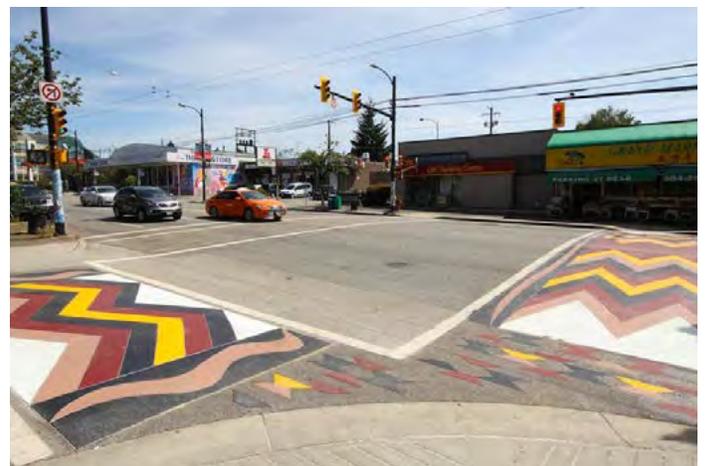


Figure 99. First Nations-designed crosswalk installation, Granville Street, Vancouver (Daily Hive)

Signature Art Opportunities

81. There are spaces within Jane Finch that offer unique opportunities for 'signature' art and should be priority areas for art implementation. These include:
 - a. Creating a gateway by Highway 400: Unique lighting and painting can celebrate this entry into the neighbourhood, while providing a more comfortable and lively sense of place;
 - b. At large sites such as Jane Finch Mall, Yorkgate Mall, and Norfinch Shopping Centre: Art at these corners can celebrate the cultural significance of this intersection;
 - c. By ravine and trailheads: Acknowledge the Huron-Wendat Trail and Northwest Cultural Trail and celebrate the natural heritage of the ravine system;
 - d. At community facilities such as the Jane Finch Community Hub and Centre for the Arts, community recreation centres including a new community centre at Firgrove/Grassways, or at the Toronto Public Library branches; and
 - e. Black Creek Community Farm.

Murals

82. Provide attractive treatments and articulation on visible side wall(s) of buildings.
83. Consider murals for the exterior walls of new developments where they are visible from the public realm. Through consultation with the local community, ensure that artwork accurately supports Jane Finch's distinct sense of place, history, and culture.
84. Prioritize local artists for art commissions in the area.



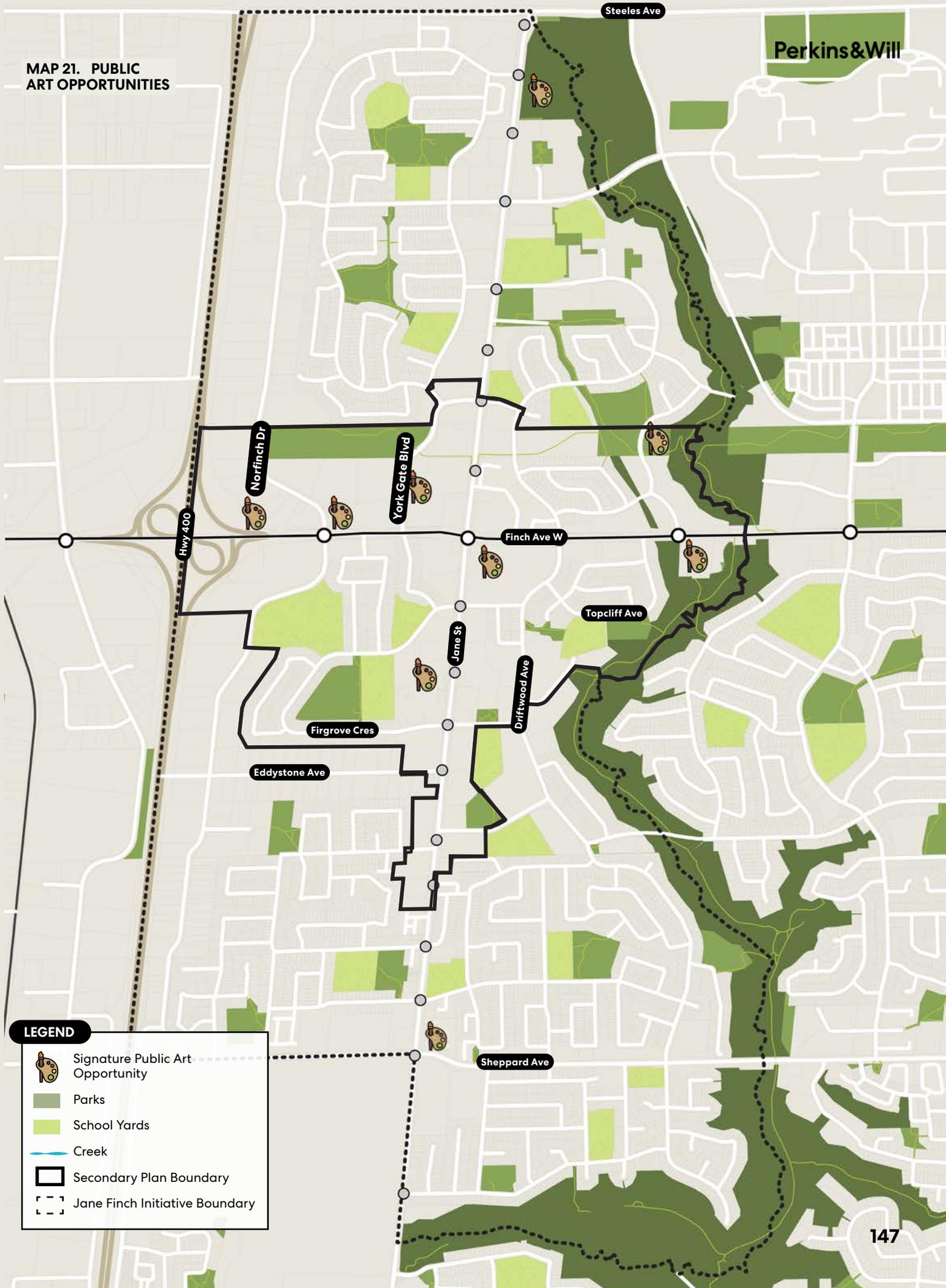
Figure 100. 'Be Inspired, Love Yourself, Educate Others' by the BeLovEd movement, painted by Shalak Attack and Fiya Bruxas, 2011, at 25 San Romanoway (Mcfcrandall.blog)



Figure 101. 'United Freedom' by Essencia, at Driftwood Community and Recreation Centre (Mcfcrandall.blog)

MAP 21. PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITIES

Perkins & Will



LEGEND

-  Signature Public Art Opportunity
-  Parks
-  School Yards
-  Creek
-  Secondary Plan Boundary
-  Jane Finch Initiative Boundary

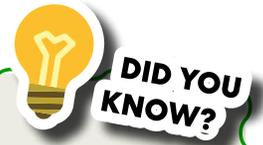
7.7. Placekeeping

Placekeeping, a re-imagining of urban planning’s “placemaking” term, is a key focus within this Parks and Public Realm strategy. When it comes to parks and other open spaces, it is important that conventional relationships to ‘land’ and ‘place’ are decolonized and unlearned. Many of our public spaces are connected to many diverse and distinct Indigenous communities, so our approaches to open space in Jane Finch must also encourage and advocate for Indigenous-led placekeeping and land stewardship.

7.7.1. Indigenous Placekeeping

Indigenous placekeeping in Jane Finch involves providing access to lands and waters for ceremony, stewardship, and cultural activities – essential for honouring Indigenous cultures and histories.

With the Black Creek Ravine and the Parsons Site adjacent to the Jane Finch area, there are opportunities to both acknowledge the territory and improve education for the non-Indigenous population of the area. There are also critical opportunities to restore Indigenous identity within the ravine. This planning framework looks to advance opportunities identified through engagement and the City of Toronto’s Reconciliation Action Plan. It will be important to continue conducting engagement with Indigenous communities, such as to identify specific locations for ceremony or cultural activities.



Why “Placekeeping” instead of “Placemaking”?

The term “Placekeeping” helps to acknowledge that the definition ‘place’ is defined by the ecological, historical, and cultural relationships that have always existed. The priority and focus is to highlight, honour, and/or celebrate these places instead of only making new ones.

Indigenous Placekeeping



85. Continue to increase access and identify spaces for ceremony and cultural activities (e.g. sacred fires, medicine gardens) in new or existing parks. Conduct consultations to identify specific locations, and implement them as permanent park assets.



86. Explore the establishment of an Indigenous community garden, which is Indigenous-led in the design, maintenance, and programming.



87. Audit existing naming of signage, roads, parks, and other public realm assets in Jane Finch to identify opportunities to reclaim Indigenous place names.



88. Indigenous languages should be given priority in the naming (or renaming) of new streets and new parks within Jane Finch. Work with Indigenous communities to reflect Indigenous histories, including oral histories.

- 89. Reduce barriers to land and water, specifically in the Black Creek Ravine. Conduct consultation with Indigenous groups to identify specific locations for enhancements, creation of new connections, removal of barriers, and public realm strategies to increase privacy and safety.
- 90. Improve visibility and integration of Indigenous art at all scales. See 6.5.3 for Public Art strategies in Jane Finch.
- 91. Support the practice of Indigenous ceremonies such as smudging, burning traditional medicines in Jane Finch by removing barriers and restrictions in open spaces. Conduct an audit on the existing rules and restrictions in outdoor and indoor public spaces (e.g. parks, libraries, recreation centres).
- 92. Integrate educational pieces or acknowledgements on wayfinding, such as the planned wayfinding improvements for Black Creek Trail. Take advantage of the modularity of the signage to install additional acknowledgements and educational content.
- 93. Collaborate with the Indigenous Affairs Office to develop an approach to signage and wayfinding, such as integrating local Indigenous languages.
- 94. Build on the Indigenous Affairs Office's commitment in the Reconciliation Action Plan to convene an Indigenous Placemaking Advisory Circle to advise where placekeeping activities can occur in Jane Finch, including parks, squares, trails, and other open spaces.



Figure 102. Indigenous gardens, like this one at University of Toronto Scarborough, invites both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to come together and see the work that Indigenous people have been doing for thousands of years (University of Toronto Scarborough)

Implementation Tools



Planning Policy



Community Development Plan



Capital Project



Design Guidelines



Collaborative Effort



Follow Up Study

CASE STUDY Indigenous Placemaking Strategy: Lethbridge, Alberta

The City of Lethbridge, Alberta, has created an Indigenous Placemaking Strategy and Public Realm audit, to look specifically at how public spaces can be improved through the lenses of truth, reconciliation, and inclusion. The plan looks to build bridges: to restore Indigenous presence and invite non-Indigenous people in to learn. The plan has three main pillars of 'opportunities', which Jane Finch can learn from to potentially adapt locally:

Renaming: Assessing existing public spaces to see if any names or designs hold oppressive histories. This can include road names, park names, or names of public artwork.

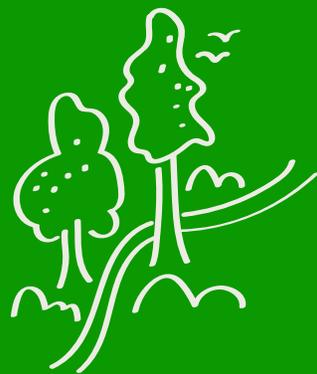
Reframing: Addressing existing public realm assets to ensure that they are presented and interpreted to the public to ensure education. It helps contextualize art, historic plaques, and landscapes and emphasizes goals of truth-telling and education.

Placemaking: This includes new murals, signage, landscape designs, programming, and heritage interpretation, intended to help Blackfoot and other Indigenous residents and visitors feel more reflected, connected, and welcomed. The city says the new installations create an ecosystem of Blackfoot cultural representation with a goal to reflect the diversity of the community in the public realm.



Figure 104. Clockwise from top left: Electrical box wrapping design by Rudy Black Plume - Kainai Nation/Blood Tribe - Lethbridge (Public Art Lethbridge); Ak'hstimani Galt Museum Medicine Wheel installation as part of a broader Indigenous landscape design initiative (Galt Museum); Blackfoot Confederacy flag raised in Lethbridge to mark National Indigenous Peoples Day (Lethbridge News); New Indigenous mural on Lethbridge's fire station #5 (Tyler Hay).





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