

Jane-Finch Initiative
Youth Consultation #1
Summary Report
May 19, 2021 6:00 - 7:30 PM



Report compiled by Jane Finch Community and Family Centre

Background

The [Jane Finch Initiative](#) is about planning for the future of the area and how best to leverage the investment in light rail transit (LRT) for the benefit of local communities. It is a collaborative community planning exercise in 'Neighbourhood 24 - Black Creek' and 'Neighbourhood 25 - Glenfield-Jane Heights' (see [Neighbourhood Profiles](#)), centred on the intersection of Jane Street and Finch Avenue West.

The initiative involves three integrated streams of work:

- 1) **Comprehensive engagement** (ongoing)
- 2) A **community development plan** including a local economic opportunities plan;
- 3) An update to the **land use planning framework**.

The City is working in collaboration with the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre who will support community engagement and facilitate different community consultations to collect feedback.

Meeting Summary

On Wednesday, May 19th, 2021, from 6:00pm to 7:30pm, the first of two Jane Finch Initiative - Youth Consultations was hosted by the Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre with support from the City of Toronto. This consultation is part of the Jane Finch Initiative's comprehensive engagement stream. The meeting was held online over Zoom. See Appendix 1, page 7 for the agenda.

The purpose of the event was to:

- Introduce the Jane Finch Initiative to the community's youth population and invite them to contribute to the Vision and Guiding Principles for the study
- Inform participants of upcoming consultations and the plan for the phase 1;
- Engage the youth about their thoughts and vision for the future of Jane Finch
- Invite the youth to join the Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

How We Engaged

In order to outreach, a poster advertising the event was created to be shared by Nathan Baya, the co-facilitator, and the JFCF Centre on their social media. See Appendix 2, page 8 for the poster. The aim was to have 10 youth participants and with the help of Nathan, 10 people signed up via google form. 4 out of the 10 attended the event.

The May 19th Youth Consultation was composed of:

- 2 JFCF centre staff, Berta Kaisr and Amadeo Ventura;
- Nathan Baya, a local resident as a co-facilitator;
- 2 City of Toronto Staff, Lillian D'Souza and Dan Rosen;
- 4 local youth participants

The meeting opened with a land acknowledgement and agenda walk-through followed by two ice-breaker questions asking participants to rate how they felt that day on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being great, and to pick a vacation destination post COVID-19. Lillian D'Souza from the City of Toronto's City Planning Division provided a 10 minute presentation on the Jane Finch Initiative Then Nathan began the discussion. Berta and Nathan alternated in asking the questions and the participants had the chance to answer/ask questions at any point of the meeting. A google form where participants could add more feedback and submit their information to receive an honorarium was provided after the meeting.

What We Heard

This section includes the main themes of the conversation and the feedback the participants provided. During the consultation, the 4 participants were invited to answer questions about places that hold memories for them as well as what they deem as essential services to preserve. Once those areas were identified, participants were asked to imagine what a future vision for Jane Finch could look like. Below is a detailed summary of those answers.

→ Malls & Businesses:

When asked the question of what spaces in the community held special memories for the participants, the malls (Jane Finch and Yorkgate), were a common answer. With their location placement in the community, access to affordable food, clothing and other services, as well as providing a space where young people could hang out cited as some of the reasons for those answers.

With these locations holding special memories for the participants, they were also places they would like to preserve and include in the future plan for Jane Finch. Small businesses such as local convenience stores and restaurants were also mentioned as memorable places the participants grew up around. An example is "Yummy's" restaurant for one of the participants.

In terms of what else they would like to see in the future, study cafés with access to high-speed internet were mentioned as important for students in the area. Support for small and local businesses in addition to entrepreneurship incubation centres to provide more residents with better opportunities to grow and be independent, were also mentioned. Participants described how there are sometimes stereotypes around the Jane Finch community and how the community members do not want to work nor have businesses and other entrepreneurial opportunities, but that these assumptions are not accurate. Given better access to opportunities and more services could change that narrative.

→ **Green & Public Spaces:**

While the malls were cited as some of the main memorable locations, there was also a great amount of passion for green spaces in the community. Some of these locations include Firgrove Park and Hullmar Park. Having access to these spaces is essential for community members, however, it was mentioned that they are not very well maintained. The participants also described the green and public spaces as not very welcoming and suggested the addition of more benches, fountains, garbage bins and better lighting to create a more inviting space for people of all ages to spend time at.

In addition to parks, better maintained and more accessible basketball courts and spaces for outdoor physical activities were included in the participants' vision for the future.

The Black Creek Pioneer Village was also mentioned as a memorable key location in the area that every elementary school student remembers as part of their childhood.

→ **Community Services:**

For this section, participants were eager to discuss different community services that they enjoy, want to preserve and want to see more of in the future. Places such as the Driftwood Community and Recreation Centre, Black Creek Community Health Centre, Black Creek Community Farm, the Driftwood Library, and JFCF Centre's "The Spot" Program.

These services have been used and continue to be used by the majority of the participants who mentioned them when describing what helped them feel a sense of belonging to the community. They would hence like to preserve as well as improve these services through more core funding and better advertising of what they offer so that others are also aware of what services they can access within the community.

Some other services that were mentioned include:

- Better dental care and payment plans
- Healthier food options and more communal/commercial kitchen spaces to enrich the pre-existing sense of community
- More study spaces with wifi and meeting centres
- Improved access to menstrual products

→ **Mobility:**

When asked the question of how people get around in the Jane Finch community, the participants answered with the TTC and cars as the two main modes of transportation. Walking and biking were also included, but better maintenance of walking and biking paths is necessary.

One of the most prominent pieces of feedback from the consultation was around biking. There was enthusiasm for the idea of having Bike Share services, more bike lanes and more stations where bikes could be parked. Some participants mentioned the issue of safety when biking on the street or around the Finch West LRT construction and they were curious about how it would change in the future.

→ **Multiculturalism:**

Throughout the consultation, the participants discussed the diversity and multiculturalism of the community and the importance of preserving the different cultures as well as the artwork and murals that highlight the diverse aspects of Jane Finch.

Consultation Reflections

The participants and co-facilitators for the Youth Consultation provided a very enriching conversation with ample feedback to inform the community development and secondary plan. Although a small pool of participants, they were able to highlight some key issues such as the lack of maintenance in parks/green spaces and the lack of access to biking trails and bike sharing services present in other parts of the city.

Participants were also passionate about dismantling the idea that Jane Finch residents do not care for their health or to be businesses owners/advance in their careers hence the suggestions for healthier food options and more local business opportunities.

Wherever possible, participants were notified of existing programs in answer to some of the feedback they provided such as JFCF Centre's [Corner Commons](#) program which hosts public space installations holding performances and demonstrations in areas such as the parking lots on the southeast corner of Jane street and Finch avenue.

Overall, it was a great opportunity discussing these questions with the four participants who all came from different parts of the community and who kindly shared their experiences and feedback with the JFCF Centre and the City of Toronto.

Appendix 1: Youth Consultation Agenda

6:00 Welcome and Introductions (Berta)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of this evening? • Overall structure of the workshop • Who to contact if you're having tech issues
6:10 Icebreaker (Nathan)
6:20 City Presentation (Lillian)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to JFI • Why Visioning Matters • What we've heard about Community Visions and Guiding Principles (Segue into workshop)
6:30/7:25 Visioning Workshop (Nathan / Berta)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What locations in your neighbourhood are most special to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe your favourite elements of those places. ○ What do you love about your community that you want to see preserved and/ or improved? ○ Imagine that you're in Jane Finch at some point in the future. What do you see? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What steps or supports do you need to help us get there?
7:25 Meeting Wrap Up (Berta)

Roles	
Facilitator	Berta Kaisr
Co-facilitator	Nathan Baya
In-meeting Tech support	Amadeo Ventura
City of Toronto presenter	Lillian D'Souza
City staff attending	Dan Rosen

Questions to guide the discussion:
<p>What is your vision for the future of the area? Imagine that you're in Jane Finch at some point in the future. What do you see? How are people moving around? What do the buildings and neighbourhoods look like? Where do people like to go to meet each other or play sports? How do you imagine the parks and public spaces? What kinds of community facilities are there? Where do people go to get help and services? What do you love in other parts of the city that you'd like to see here? What opportunities do you want the new transit line to bring?</p>

Appendix 2:

Photo: Youth Call Out

JANE-FINCH YOUTH CALL OUT

Are you a youth living in the Jane-Finch area (M3N or M3L postal codes)? Would you like the chance to participate in a discussion about your thoughts and vision for the future of the neighbourhood?

The Jane Finch Community and Family Centre is looking for **10** residents aged 18-30 to participate in a short consultation as part of the **Jane Finch Initiative** :

**WEDNESDAY
MAY 19TH @ 6PM**



JANE FINCH
CENTRE
Community Matters

\$25 honorarium, link in bio to sign up