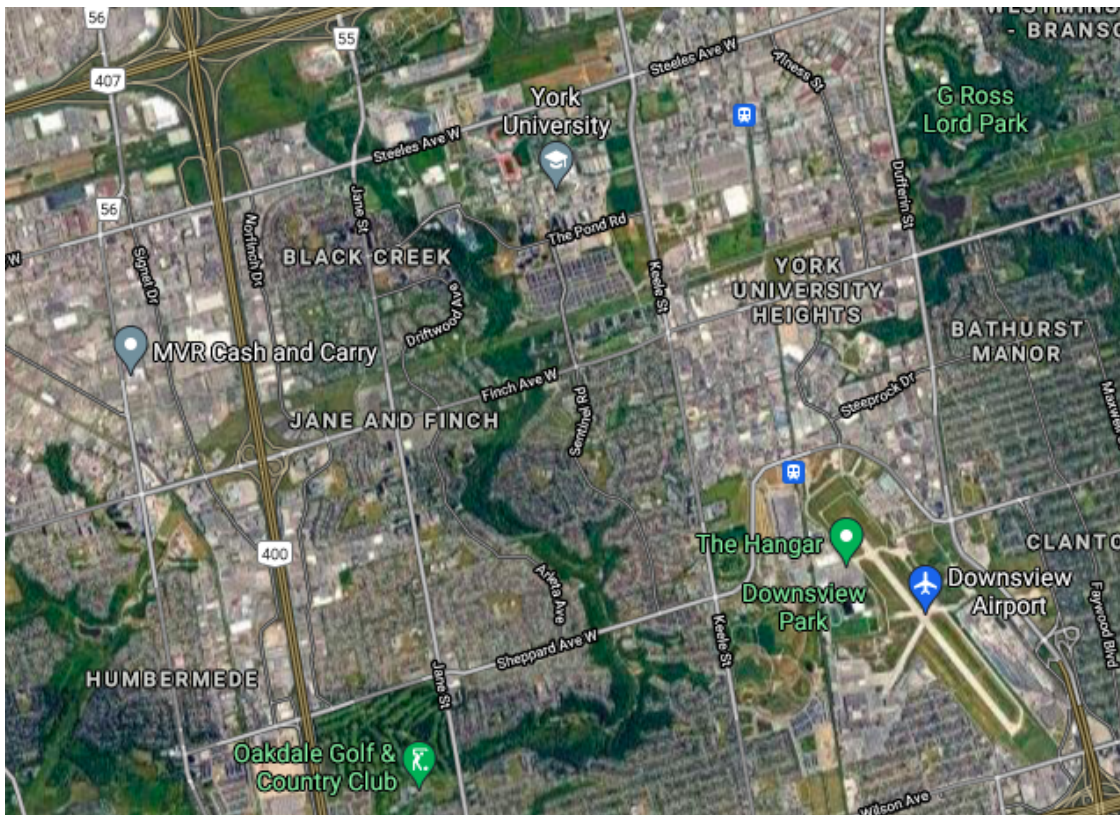


Jane-Finch Initiative

Virtual Visioning Workshop

Summary Report

May 11, 2021 6:30 - 8:30 PM



Report compiled by the 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**.

Meeting Summary

On Tuesday, May 11th, 2021, the Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre , in collaboration with the City of Toronto, hosted the Jane Finch Initiative Virtual Visioning Workshop from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. The JFCF Centre was joined by Councillor Anthony Perruzza (representing Humber River-Black Creek). The meeting was held online over Zoom and a recording of the meeting has been posted on the JFCF Centre's site as well as the City of Toronto's [Jane Finch Initiative](#) webpage. You can also view the recording here: <https://youtu.be/uAwn1Q2NS7M>

The purpose of the event was to:

- Re-introduce the Jane Finch Initiative and invite people to contribute to the Vision and Guiding Principles for the study;
- Inform attendees of upcoming consultations and the plan for phase 1;
- Engage Jane Finch residents about their general thoughts and vision for the future of Jane Finch
- Announce the formation of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Meeting notices were mailed to 18,529 residential and commercial addresses in the Black Creek and Glenfield-Jane Heights neighbourhoods. In addition to the neighbourhood mailing, promotion of the meeting occurred through the Jane Finch Initiative website and email subscribers list, which had 180 subscribers. An e-update was sent on April 22, 2021 promoting the Virtual Visioning Workshop. The JFCF Centre promoted the event through an e-blast and a web promotion by the [Downsview Advocate](#), a local community newspaper. The meeting information and notice was also

promoted through local networks and City Planning's official Twitter and Facebook Accounts.

Around 70 participants joined the visioning workshop, not including 12 JFCF and City staff. The participants were asked to engage in a poll during the workshop that indicated how they heard about the event. 41 of the participants provided answers. 32% of the respondents found out through the meeting notice in the mail, 12% through social media, 12% through word of mouth, 15% through the Downsview Advocate, and the remaining 29% found out through other unspecified channels.

The workshop opened with a land acknowledgement followed by remarks from Councillor Perruzza and an ice-breaker question that asked residents to describe the Jane Finch community in one word to form a word-cloud using the Mentimeter platform (see Appendix 1). Zahra Joseph-Wilson from the City of Toronto's City Planning Division provided a 10 minute presentation on the Jane Finch Initiative which can be viewed here: [link](#).

Following the City's presentation, Berta Kaisr, the Jane Finch Initiative coordinator for the Jane Finch Centre, began the engagement process of the workshop by posing questions around what is important to the community for preservation and what they want to see in the future (see Appendix 2). Participants were then invited through a link in the chat to contribute answers and feedback by writing on the Jamboard. They could also provide their answers in the chat and verbally through unmuting themselves or using the Raise Hand function.

Participants were provided with a google form throughout the workshop that would allow them to contribute further feedback. There was also an anonymous google form that allowed for participants to submit anonymous questions. At the end of the workshop, a document with the links mentioned throughout the meeting was also provided.

Jamboard Engagement

This section provides a summary of the main themes that came out of the engagement. A detailed and unedited version of the engagement summary begins on page 9, see Appendix 2. Breakout rooms were also used and their feedback is summarized in this section.

a) Aspects to preserve:

In this section, participants were asked to answer the question of "what do you value about your neighborhood" in relation to services they like/want to preserve, aspects they deem as essential, and spaces/aspects they love. There was a great variety of

responses which have been sorted into different themes such as affordability, access to green spaces, community services...etc.

The general feedback indicated a love for the diversity and the existing great sense of community in Jane-Finch. Jane-Finch is a very multicultural community and that diversity and culture should be capitalized on by the community. Access to green spaces and ravines was also pointed out as well as a desire to preserve affordable homes and co-op housing. In addition, participants expressed wanting to maintain the financial, mental health and various other community services. A strong sense of preserving the community's local residents and protecting their livelihood was also expressed throughout the workshop.

b) Future Vision

Participants were then promoted to answer questions regarding their vision for the future. They were asked to imagine walking in Jane and Finch at some point in the future and noting down what they see: How are people moving around? What do the buildings and neighbourhoods look like? Below is a summary of the themes that emerged from the responses.

Affordable housing: The community participants requested for more co-op housing, more mixed mid-high density dwellings and more government control on vacant units, rent control, as well as limits on random rent increases. There also needs to be an “attract and maintain” approach to ensure that people in the neighborhood/moving to the neighborhood are able to stay and live affordably.

Outdoor activity/access to public space: Access to public space and creating gathering places for seniors and youth is very important to the community as well as an accessibility to outdoor gyms and skate parks. Additionally, there were a number of requests for bike lanes and repurposed streets by creating car-free “Finch” days or reduced lanes. There is a concern around privatization and how much big landowners have over the land as well as how car-centric the community tends to be. Making the community more walkable is hence an important theme that can be achieved through improved trail systems, clean parks, and beautification through the use of plants and flowers. Finally, creating better connections between sections of the ravine by adding pedestrian tunnels is also an important step in achieving the walkability goal.

Arts: The JF community is rich with talented, diverse and multicultural artists and the participants want to see more opportunities to highlight this talent and diversity through community art spaces, fairs and festivals, art workshops (Dance, performance, poetry...etc). Some participants explained how a vibrant art scene in the community could help revive Jane Finch's reputation through collaborations with streetARTtoronto

and local arts groups. Affordable space that artists can use for creating art is essential to ensuring they feel supported as many have to move out in order to afford practicing their craft. Art is what attracts tourists and Jane Finch can be the “arts oasis that is authentic and multicultural” as Jane Finch’s multiculturalism and diversity is what sets it apart from other neighbourhoods in the city. Capitalizing on these aspects as well on the post-secondary students in surrounding schools such as York university and Humber College would be beneficial as they have a desire and need to be surrounded by vibrant and artistic scenes. Street art gives soul and vibrancy to the neighbourhood and murals could help beautify the buildings in the community. Bringing back Caribana to the neighbourhood was also mentioned as a point that the community has been asking for to encourage more live art and performances. A community theatre was also requested.

Economic: Small businesses need more support and opportunities to be independent rather than reliant on big retail centres like the JF Mall which has been inaccessible during COVID-19. Residents would also find opportunities like small business incubation centres useful. Additionally, in the future, participants want more employment opportunities at the Maintenance and Storage facilities, and at the long term care facility being built near the old Humber River hospital.

Q&A Segment

This section includes a summary of the questions posed during the Question & Answer segment and throughout the Virtual Visioning Workshop. To read the unedited questions and answers, see Appendix #3 on page 17.

The questions that participants asked were along the themes of affordable housing and how new development could affect access to housing and affordable living in the community, the availability of co-op housing, timelines for the Jane Finch Initiative, purpose of the secondary plan, and concerns around the delayed roll out of the CAC.

Question: Will the information collected from the community and subsequent reports be available for the community to view?

Response: Yes, summaries of all information collected will be accessible through the project website at toronto.ca/janefinch as well as meeting recordings and presentation material. Community members are invited to review the summaries and contact that project team with comments, if anything was missed.

Question: Regarding the Firgrove Revitalization, is there a plan for more additional deeply affordable housing units?

Response: The current plan is to replace and refurbish the existing TCHC dwelling units at rents subsidized in the same manner as before.

Question: What definition of “affordable housing” is being used?

Response: Affordable rental housing, as defined by the City’s Official Plan, is housing where the total monthly shelter cost (gross monthly rent including utilities – heat, hydro and hot water – but excluding parking and cable television charges) is at or below one times the average City of Toronto rent, by unit type (number of bedrooms), as reported annually by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

- Affordable rental and affordable ownership housing is typically secured within new private, including non-profit, housing developments. These units are meant to provide housing that is more affordable to low and moderate-income households than typical private market housing.

- The City often works to layer together affordable housing policies and programs in order to deepen or extend the affordability of units secured through agreements with the City.

- Affordable rental housing and affordable ownership housing is distinct from social housing, such as rent-geared-to-income housing offered through Toronto Community Housing. Social housing is typically intended for households who cannot afford affordable rental housing or affordable ownership housing.

Question: Will there be more co-op housing in the area?

Response: Although secondary plans do not identify the tenure of residential units, we will further consult with staff undertaking work on housing policies and zoning on the feasibility of incorporating co-op housing tenancies.

Question: Is the City accounting for the risk of setting up the CAC after engagement has already begun?

- Response: We did want to take our time with the recruitment model and how we’re building the CAC - we wanted to get it right and we had paused engagement for a little bit because of the pandemic as well. The CAC will be providing input on all of the work as it’s rolling out as no decisions have been made yet. All of their input will be taken into account. The core work is starting now - it’s the vision and guiding principles and the key issues but in terms of policy, that’s when the CAC will be fully set up and running and they will have full input in that.

Question: What are the three different phases and what are their timelines?

What will the process look like?



- **Phase 1: Taking Stock and Analysis (Spring - Fall 2021)**
City staff, together with the community, will take stock of existing conditions and assets in the area, and develop a Vision and Guiding Principles for the Jane Finch Initiative.
- **Phase 2: Options (Fall 2021 - Spring 2022)**
In collaboration with the community, the City will develop planning and development options for analysis and testing.
- **Phase 3: Towards Implementation (Spring/Summer 2022)**
Using the input gathered through phases 1 and 2, the City will present a new Secondary Plan and Community Development Plan to the community and City Council for consideration

Question: What is the purpose of the secondary plan?

- Response: The purpose of developing a secondary plan is so that you bring a holistic, comprehensive approach to growth. We can encourage developers through planning documents like the secondary plan and land use policies to push for things like street retails and more local businesses as part of new building developments that the community can access. Instead of developers coming into the community and viewing their developments with a “sky's the limit” approach, with a secondary plan, the community can present them with boundaries and policies that push for the benefit of the community.

Appendix 1: Ice Breaker Word Cloud

Photo #1: Mentimeter Word Cloud

What is one word you would use to describe the Jane Finch community?



Mentimeter words: Iconic, beautiful, progressive, unhappy, so much potential, loving, vibrant, proletarian, future, caring, home, diverse, resilient, traumatized, welcoming, important, fabulous, grassroot, historical, mis-understood, multicultural, marginalized, green spaces, hard working, connected, supportive, underfunded, don't announce, underserved, scary, family, roots, complex, forgotten, fragmented, strong, deserving.

Appendix 2: Jamboard feedback

Photo #2: Jamboard Slide 1



Main question: What do you value about your neighborhood now?

Sub questions:

1) What Spaces do you want to preserve?:

- Open spaces
- Affordable homes
- Stopping gentrification
- Green space/ravine/parkland
- Local and diverse stores
- Keep schools open
- Access to nature
- Dream vision of connecting west humberland parkland with derrydown for the benefit of wildlife
- Community centres
- Make the corner of the JF mall parking lot in SE corner of intersection into parkette with furniture - and place for 'speaker's corner'

2) What Services do you deem essential?

- Hold TCH accountable regarding renovations
- Expand Mcdonalds with Playstation for kids
- Government control on vacant units, rent control, limits on random rent increases, check overcrowded houses with illegal rent or tenants
- Co-living in mixed use high density area
- Affordable housing
- Food security
- Financial services
- Mental health supports
- Revitalize empty Humber Finch Hospital
- More investment that will benefit local residents
- Community Arts
- More control against under the table semi-legal shady activities
- Employment opportunities
- Community theatre at library
- Non-profit financial advising
- Community services and supports
- Make the space more walk/bike-friendly. Slow down cars.

3) Which Spaces/aspects do you love?

- Social entrepreneurial environment
- Parks
- Creativity
- Central community space
- Great square for community to gather at the corner of Jane/Finch
- Working class neighbourhood that hasn't been overrun by bougies
- Co-working and co-housing buildings
- Cinema
- Concert halls/theatre
- Startup incubator

Photo #3: Jamboard Slide 2



Main question: What is your vision for the future of the area?

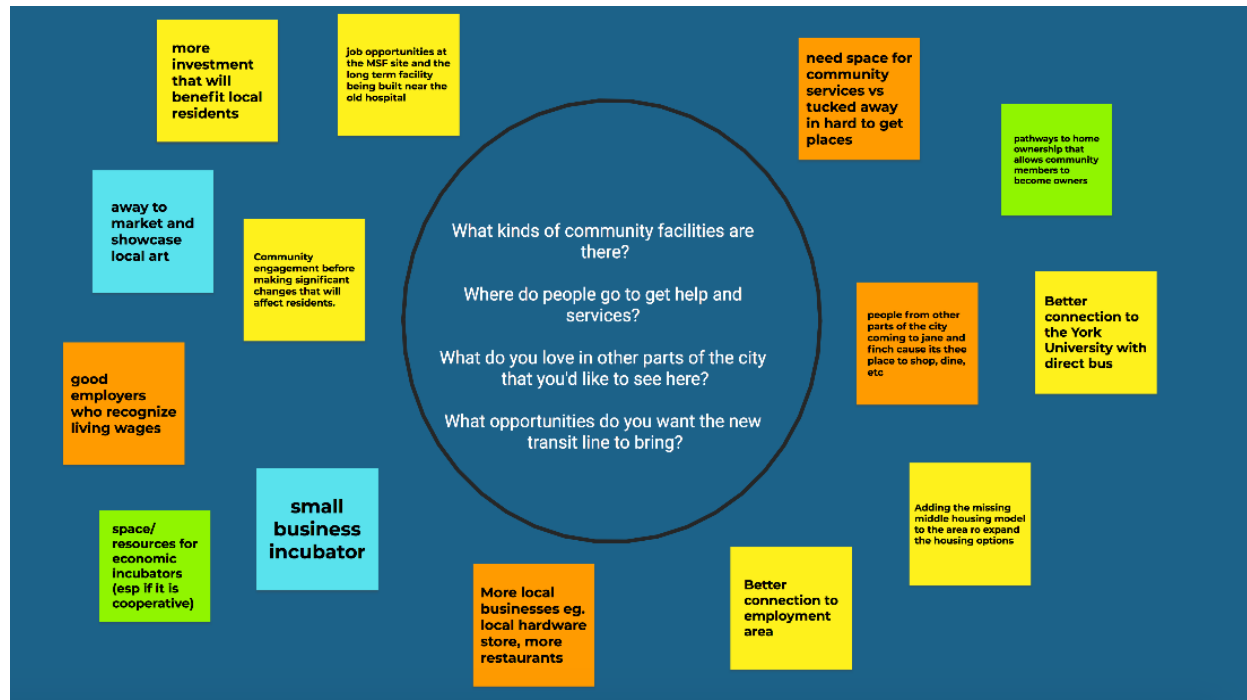
Sub questions:

Imagine that you're in Jane and Finch at some point in the future. What do you see? How are people moving around? What do the buildings and neighbourhoods look like?

- Art, art, art
- More community centres
- Affordable housing to ensure people with limited income aren't pushed out
- Garbage bins that are cleaned and maintained weekly
- Bike lanes and safety for cyclists
- Job opportunities at the MSF site and the long term care facility being built near the old hospital
- Minimize displacement of residents
- Dog parks that are well maintained!
- Interesting architecture
- Ice skating arena
- Fair/festival ground
- Finch ave facing development - reworking of JF Mall land.
- Workshops in dance, beatboxing, poetry, art

- Gathering places for seniors
- Floral baskets hanging from lights
- A skate park or two
- Cultural events
- Improvement of trail system
- Benches - places to sit down (public)
- Make space more walkable/bikeable. Slower cars
- Public wifi
- Mixed Use High Density area to create great living space with employment and shops
- Less oil tanker trucks on Finch. Bring them south through rail line from steeles
- Co-op/shared affordable housing
- Murals
- Street festivals
- Car-free Finch days
- Increased density building - town home, low-rise housing
- Remove control from landowners over JF street space
- Create a streetscape with stores on the street not just in malls
- With LRT, less car traffic, add bike lanes
- Water bottle filling stations (public)
- Testing
- Fill up the spaces between the towers with housing/small business
- Connection between sections of ravine by adding pedestrian tunnels
- Reducing finch ave to two lanes during weekends/off hours
- Streetscape art
- Outdoor gyms
- Yes to outdoor gym stuff
- Bike trail in ravine woods
- Community concerts
- Art there art installments as part of the LRT plans?
- Co-living space
- Shared/communal commercial spaces
- More Coop housing
- Yes - to more Coops!
- Celebrations of diversity that make Jane Finch Unique

Photo #4: Jamboard Slide 3



Main question from Slide 2: What is your vision for the future of the area?

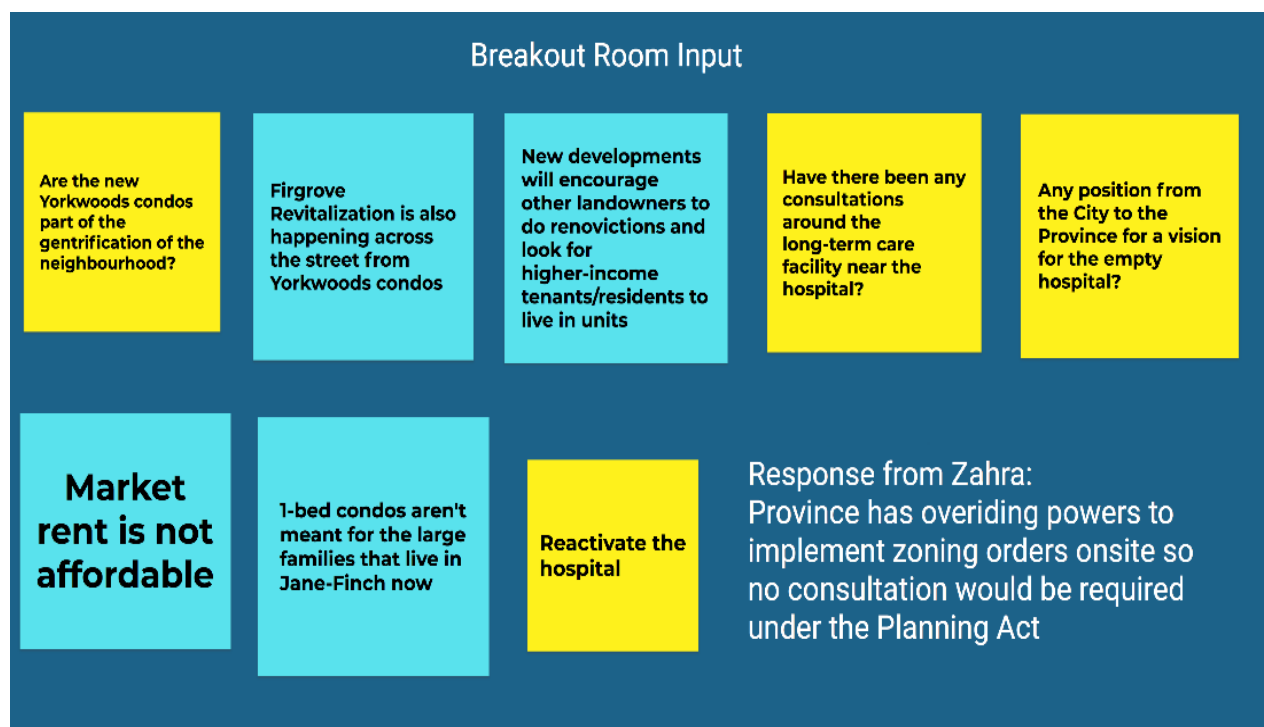
Sub questions:

What kind of community facilities are there? Where do people go to get help and services? What do you live in other parts of the city that you'd like to see here? What opportunities do you want the new transit line to bring?

- More investment that will benefit local residents
- Job opportunities at the MSF site and the long term facility being built near the hospital
- Away to market and showcase local art
- Good employers who recognize living wages
- Space/resources for economic incubators (esp if it is cooperative)
- Small Business incubator
- Community engagement before making significant changes that will affect residents
- More local businesses local hardware store, more restaurants
- Better connection to employment area
- Need space for community services vs tucked away in hard to get places

- People from other parts of the city coming to Jane and Finch cause it's the place to shop, dine, etc
- Adding the missing middle housing model to the area to expand the housing options
- Better connection to the York University with direct bus
- Pathways to home ownership that allows community members to become owners
- Go-karts

Photo #5: Breakout Room Jamboard



Comment: Are the new Yorkwoods condos part of the gentrification of the new neighborhood?

Response: The approval of Yorkwoods Condos represents an intensification that City staff considers good planning in that it appropriately creates a built form that fits within the planned context, provides an appropriate number and sizes of residential units to accommodate the range of families, and provides a mix of land uses, being residential and commercial in support of a complete community.

Comment: New developments will encourage other landowners to do renovations and look for higher-income tenants/residents to live in units.

Response: Existing rental replacement policies in the Official Plan (see Policy 6 under Section 3.2.1) protect existing rental housing stock when developers are proposing to demolish 6 or more rental units. The City requires like-for-like replacement of the existing rental housing and support for tenants, including the opportunity to return to the replaced rental housing at similar rents to what were previously paid.

- Other Official Plan policies (Official Plan Amendment 453) address the loss of dwelling rooms (some of the most affordable housing stock in the city) and social housing development.

- Note: OPA 453 is under appeal so not yet in force

- [This response has been updated as policy on Inclusionary Zoning continues to evolve] The City is currently developing an Inclusionary Zoning policy that would require new residential developments to include affordable housing. The final recommended policy will be made publicly available later this summer and will include details around how much affordable housing is required, where inclusionary zoning will be implemented and when the requirements will come into force. At this time, we expect inclusionary zoning could apply to developments located generally within 500-800m of the Finch West LRT stations in the JFI study area.

- Tools like Section 37 and the City's large site policy (see Policy 9 in Section 3.2.1 of the Official Plan) could be used to negotiate community benefits, including affordable housing, in exchange for additional height and density permissions as part of the development approval process.

- Additionally through the Open Door Affordable Housing Program, developers are incentivized to provide affordable housing in new developments through reduced development charges and tax exemptions.

Comment: Have there been any consultations around the long-term care facility near the hospital?

Response: No public consultation occurred as this facility is being implemented through a Ministerial Zoning Order. Under the Planning Act, the Province has overruling powers to implement zoning orders which do not require consultation.

Comment: Any position from the city to the province for a vision for the empty hospital?

Response: The Hospital is currently an active hospital site for Humber River Hospital and there has been no alternative vision developed by the City.

Comment: Market rent is not affordable / 1-bed condos aren't meant for the large families that live in Jane-Finch now

Response: The City's recently adopted Growing Up Guidelines address planning in vertical communities at three scales – the neighbourhood, the building and the unit. This includes ensuring the provision of a range of housing sizes to accommodate larger households, including multi-generational households with seniors. It includes guidance on the proportion and size of larger units recommended in new multi-unit residential developments, including guidance that a residential building should provide a minimum of 25% large (two and three-bedroom) units.

Comment: Reactivate the hospital

Comment: Firgrove Revitalization is also happening across the street from Yorkwoods condos.

Appendix #3: Q&A Session

Question: With this whole phase 1 consultation, I know York university is interested in doing some planning and consultation. Jane Finch mall is also looking at trying to figure out what they end up doing. Parts of the networks I'm involved in are also interested in the findings from this, **so will the information that's going to be coming forward from the community - will that be readily available so that we can also plan accordingly as well?**

City Staff response: Yes, we will be posting meeting summaries. The meeting recording will also go online on our website. So all the information that we're gathering, all the feedback we've received - will go back into the community. It will all be used to build on whatever other projects or initiatives you're involved in and we're more than happy to share.

Question: My question is around the revitalization of Firgrove, and I know that Toronto Housing is looking to build the exact amount of units that they will be tearing down and **I'm just trying to figure out if there is any more room for more additional affordable, truly affordable, housing to be built?** And also, **what is their definition of affordable units or affordability, I should say - affordable housing? Is that a city definition or is that, they've come up with this definition through community consultation?** Thank you.

City Staff response: We have an application right now for the re-development. You're correct, they are looking to replace old units that they're taking down. They're also going to have additional units. One thing that is being contemplated that will likely be part of the secondary Plan is something that we're calling "inclusionary zoning" and that will require some form of affordable housing if your site is of a certain size. Now the City's planning definition of affordable housing is a little bit different. It's not necessarily rent geared to income affordable housing, but it's sort of on the lower end of market housing. We're always happy to have an offsite conversation about Firgrove and give you more additional information.

Question: I want some co-op housing in this area which also helps seniors.

Councillor Anthony Perruzza Response; In relation to co-op housing in Firgrove, the Toronto Community Housing homes that are going to be taken down will be replaced, like for like. Toronto Community Housing tries to intensify across the site, and market housing will backstop the replacement units. The balance of the developments that will come along will be similar to Lawrence Heights and Regent Park in the way those communities were regenerated. Toronto Community Housing gets into deals with private developers who then bring

forward an application that says “right now you have a plan to build a building there, maybe a condo, maybe a rental building. The City defines affordable as 80% of the average market rental price across the city. It is achieved by the City granting some concessions to prospective developers by way of development charges, foregone taxes, maybe slightly higher densities overall for their projects as well as the federal government coming in and making contributions through the CMHC (Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation). The intention is to ensure that whatever is built at this site continues to have affordable components in its housing. How you get there, that’s not completely prescribed upfront in terms of how it would work. Co-op and rent-geard-to income housing are not being built as much anymore.

Question: So this is a question more so for the city, hopefully they can help me clarify something. This is back to the three phases. **Could you quickly, you don’t have to go in depth, but quickly re-highlight what those are and the timelines for those phases?**

City Staff Response: The presentation will be posted on our website so you can review at your leisure. In Phase 2 we will create thematic policy directions to indicate where we’re headed with the specific policies. We’ll be workshopping those and asking the community for feedback on the policy direction, hopefully in person by that time. The feedback on the policy directions will be used to develop the policies in the draft plan in Phase 3.

Question: What are the timelines for these phases?

City Staff Response: The timelines will be out in the spring. We’ll narrow it down to the months soon, but it will be in the spring when we kick off phase 2 and then our final plans will be going to Council in 2022.

Question: I’m just trying to figure these things out, so phase 2 comes with policy proposals that come from phase 1 which is what I’m assuming and I don’t want to assume, **so can we redefine what phase 1 is?**

City Staff Response: We’re currently in phase 1 where we will develop the vision and guiding principles and also highlighting the issues that the community would like us to explore and address through policies. The vision and guiding principles give us the focus we need as we head into policy writing. What are the values that we’re holding as we head into this work? What does the community want to see? So that’s where we’re at right now and we’ll be engaging through the spring, through the summer and into the fall and then we’ll get into more report-writing phase.

Question: Okay quick problematizing, not critiquing: this phase between now and spring, we're developing values with community and then in phase 2 which is spring 'till possibly fall, we're reviewing the policy that the City is putting over - the community's reviewing it - and then we're making sure that there's adjustments there. Here's the problematizing piece of this: between now and spring to develop a vision of what community input comes now, **do we think that's adequate enough time?** But second, I and the economic opportunities group, proposed at the beginning of this project in February of last year, that the advisory community be formed just to have residents look over these things, work together, work better and just really work through any potential problems that might come up and we do this collectively. That advisory group hasn't been created, but a lot of that work is going to be done between now and spring and then spring and fall, there's no advisory group yet committed...**how do we effectively do the things that were mentioned in the deputations and with City past on working together and making sure we don't replicate harm when many of these things are happening without community focus?** The Jane Finch Community & Family Centre is great to be a partner on this, but **What was the thought process there [CAC Planning] and what was the risk mitigation?** Because it seems like a lot of work is going to be happening in a few months...

City Staff Responses: Yes, thank you for that and we totally take your point. I remember your deputation from way back when and we have been working towards building the Community Advisory Committee. It might be a good segue back into the recruitment of the Community Advisory Committee which is now beginning and we're hoping we can start rolling out those meetings pretty soon. We did want to take our time with the recruitment model and how we're building the Community Advisory Committee- we wanted to get it right and we had paused engagement for a little bit because of the pandemic. No decisions have been made yet. The Community Advisory Committee Will be providing input on all of the work as it's rolling out. There's no missed opportunities, they will still have the chance to give us that feedback and all that input will be taken into account. The core work is starting now, it's the vision and guiding principles and the key issues but in terms of policy, that's when the Community Advisory Committee will be fully set up and running and they will have full input in that.

Question: I think it will be useful for everybody working on this to document to know that this is a potential risk, and that is that there's a lot of work that's going to happen and it hasn't been overseen. It's great that you've taken the time and consideration to make that piece work right, but I think there are the proper procedures for an advisory group versus not having the advisory group and not taking the time to figure out this community engagement strategy which is significant, right. We're talking about Jane Finch. Our first plan for this neighbourhood in 1964 has historically been done without

real forethought. I think taking the time on the community consultation piece, it seems that we could have re-prioritized it. . If there's a strategy in place, that'd be great. I think it'd be great if we can discuss it. As the co-chair of the economic opportunities group, it'd be great to maybe check in to maybe figure out what's happening and that we're at least on the same page here. But if there's a strategy, there's a strategy..It's hard for me to see it, but once again problematizing, not critiquing.

City Staff response: We appreciate that. Thank you and we can certainly discuss this offline as well and discuss this in more detail.