

Jane Finch Initiative
Youth Consultation #2
Summary Report
May 28, 2021 4:00 - 5:30 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**.

Meeting Summary

On Friday, May 28th, 2021, the Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre, in collaboration with the City of Toronto, hosted the second Jane Finch Initiative - Youth Consultations (you can access the summary for the first consultation here: [link](#)). This second consultation was held over Zoom from 4:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. and it is part of the Jane Finch Initiative's comprehensive engagement stream. See page 7, Appendix 1 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 attendees 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 participants to join the Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

How We Engaged

For this second youth consultation, the JFCF worked alongside the Success Beyond Limits (SBL) group to engage local youth and invite them to the May 28th consultation. As community partners for the youth consultations, SBL helped identify a co-facilitator as well as outreach to the youth population.

Similar to the first youth consultation, a poster (see Appendix 2) was created to be shared by SBL and Samatar Abdi, the co-facilitator, with their networks.

The goal of the consultation was to have 10 participants and while 10 youth expressed interest via google form, the meeting had an attendance of 7 youth residents. One participant had issues connecting to the zoom, so they provided their feedback via a google form.

The May 28th Youth Consultation was composed of:

- 2 JFCF centre staff, Berta Kaisr and Kirsten Desabrais;
- Samatar Abdi, a local resident as a co-facilitator;
- 2 City of Toronto Staff, Zahra Joseph-Wilson and Leah Birnbaum (City Planning);
- 7 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 and to also pick a vacation destination post COVID-19. The ice-breaker was followed by a 10 minute presentation on the Jane Finch Initiative by Zahra Joseph-Wilson from the City of Toronto's City Planning Division. Afterwards, Berta and Samatar began the discussion by asking a series of questions relating to the participants' experiences and vision for the future of Jane Finch. 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 summarizes the main themes of the conversation and the feedback that the participants provided in the May 28th Youth Consultation. Similar to the May 19th consultation, these themes explore the following two questions a) What aspects of the community do you love and want to preserve, b) What is your future vision for the community?

Each theme will have the answers to the two questions woven throughout.

→ Community Services/Programs:

This first subsection discusses the community spaces and programs that are important to the participants to preserve as well as improve for the future. Spaces such as the Driftwood Community centre and the Driftwood Public Library are important landmarks for the participants as they are walkable, provide space for informal gathering and programs that the participants used growing up and continue to use. In particular, the Driftwood Community centre was described as the place where you go to meet friends,

learn new skills (i.e. through their photography program) and participate in sports activities. A participant described it as a place where you could drop in anytime and something/a program was always taking place.

While the participants took advantage of many programs offered at different community centres, there are many programs and services they hope to have in the future such as financial literacy programs that focus on taxes, investing in stocks, and cryptocurrency education.

The consensus within the group was to have more programs in general that expose the community to different hobbies and interests aside from sports such as yoga classes, robotics, and coding. Participants mentioned feeling limited in the services and hobbies that they could access so they would also like to have more creative workshops that include creative writing, poetry and promotion of these skills. Mental health workshops are also important to the participants as well as mentorship programs to ensure the youth of the community feel represented.

→ **Green and Public Spaces:**

While previously stating that they would like to have more programs and services outside of the traditional sports programs offered, in this section, the participants requested for more spaces for outdoor sports activities. These activities include outdoor soccer, beach volleyball...etc. The current residents use York University services for youth and adult activities such as basketball because the local courts in the community are for younger children and are not accessible by the youth.

With regards to the green spaces of the community, one of the points the participants would like to have replicated from other spaces in the city is improved green spaces. The participants would like to have more gardens such as those in other areas of the city (i.e. High Park gardens), Gazebos for people to hang out at, shelters to protect people from the rain, and cleaner, well-maintained green spaces in general.

→ **Economic Opportunities:**

The youth participants emphasized the importance of having a focus on local hiring and providing opportunities to community residents first. These opportunities should be advanced positions and not solely minimum wage jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic affected job opportunities for youth in malls and summer camps, so facilitation of the path to employment in many organizations is necessary as it is often bureaucratic processes that create barriers for the youth. More job fairs where different employers in

different groups come to the community was also something the youth viewed as important.

The youth also wanted to focus on ensuring the preservation of local businesses as these are spaces that have made their marks on the community and have been there for decades. So while new franchises and stores provide new and exciting opportunities, the existing stores should have the opportunity to remain in the community. Within the participants, there is a concern of a repeat of the situation in Little Jamaica and how the businesses were affected during the construction of the Eglinton LRT paralleled now with the construction of the Finch West LRT.

→ **Mobility**

A question or topic that garnered a lot of feedback from the May 28th participants is around mobility and how it needs to be improved in the Jane Finch community. Suggestions were made for wider walking trails as the current ones are too small, not well maintained, unsafe and need better lighting. There were also strong suggestions for establishing Bike Share programs which are available in other parts of the City, but not in Jane Finch. Many of the participants are bikers but there are obstacles in their paths with the Finch West LRT construction so they would like designated bike lanes. Some lanes exist on Shoreham Drive near York University, but they're short and too narrow.

→ **Safety**

Issues of safety in the community were briefly discussed in the consultation and some participants asked for reduced gun violence while another asked for increased police presence. The subject of police surveillance is familiar in the Jane Finch community and often creates polarizing points of views such as in this consultation.

Consultation Reflections

The May 28th Youth Consultation was a great addition to the Youth-focused conversation as part of the Jane Finch Initiative. The feedback the 7 participants provided is invaluable and will serve an important role in the work surrounding the future of Jane Finch.

A few things to note include the importance of outreach. For all of the programs mentioned in this summary, better outreach strategies are necessary and more advertising so the community is aware of what services are available to them.

Additionally, when participants were asked if they would stay in the area, some said they would leave because of the stigma associated with living in Jane Finch and because they live in Toronto Community Housing units which need renovations. However, the participants clarified that they love the community aspect and the connections they have within Jane Finch, but the infrastructure needs investments and improvements as well as beautification to improve the image of the community.

The participants from the May 28th group were asked many of the same questions as their counterparts in the May 19th group. While the same themes and insights of a more bike-friendly community, better support for the arts, improved green spaces and support for local business were shared between the two groups, the participants from the second consultation were also able to provide fresh insights and perspectives to the conversation. It was a great opportunity having the chance to speak to all 7 participants and listen to their experiences and future vision for the JFCF Centre and the City of Toronto.

Appendix 1: Youth Consultation Agenda

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| 4:00 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 |
| 4:10 Icebreaker (Samatar) |
| 4:20 City Presentation (Zahra) |
| <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) |
| 4:30 Visioning Workshop (Samatar / 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? |
| 5:25 Meeting Wrap Up (Berta) |

| Roles | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Facilitator | Berta Kaisr |
| Co-facilitator | Samatar Abdi |
| In-meeting Tech support | Kirsten Desabrais |
| City of Toronto presenter | Zahra Joseph-Wilson |
| City staff attending | Leah Burnbaum |

| 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** :

**FRIDAY
MAY 28TH @ 4PM**



JANE FINCH
CENTRE
Community Matters

\$25 honorarium, link in bio to sign up