

**Jane Finch Initiative:
Jane Finch Hub Organizing
Committee Consultation
July 13, 2021 12:00-1:30**



Summary Report 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**.

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 Tuesday, July 13th, 2021, from 12:00-1:30pm, the Jane Finch Hub Organizing Committee consultation 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 and it was held online over Zoom. See agenda on page 7.

The purpose of the event was to:

- Provide a brief explanation of the Jane Finch Initiative and upcoming consultations;
- Share how the City's updated Land Use Plan and Community Development Plan can and will impact the arts and different services in the community;
- Engage the JF Hub Organizing Committee to receive feedback on what is needed

Attendees:

- 3 JFCF centre staff, Berta Kaisr, Amadeo Ventura and Clara Stewart-Robertson;
- 4 City of Toronto Staff, Leah Birnbaum, Lillian D'Souza, Dan Rosen, Andrew Farncombe.
- 10 JF Hub Organizing Committee members

How We Engaged

This consultation was held during the bi-weekly Jane Finch Community Hub and Centre for the Arts Committee which will be referred to as the Committee throughout this summary. Members of the Committee were informed of the consultation via emails and during their bi-weekly meetings leading up to the July 13th consultation.

The JFI team including City of Toronto staff introduced themselves then City staff provided a presentation about the Jane Finch Initiative and its relevance to the work of the JF Hub Committee. After the presentation, members of the Committee were invited to provide feedback and answer questions through jamboard slides as well through the chat and verbally through unmuting themselves. A tutorial on how to use the jamboard was also provided, but the participants opted for having a free flowing conversation and no feedback was collected through the jamboard.

What We Heard

During the Jane Finch Community Hub and Centre for the Arts Committee Consultation, the participants were asked to answer 5 main questions:

- 1) What is your vision for the future of the area?
- 2) What should the guiding principles of the plans be?
- 3) Thinking of the Community Hub and Centre for the Arts in the future, how are people getting to and from the Hub?
- 4) What improvements can be made to the surrounding public spaces and places to build better connections to the Hub?
- 5) What other issues or priorities do you think the plans should address?

The answers to these questions are grouped into themes within two parts and summarized below:

a) Future Vision of the area and guiding principles of the Secondary Plan

The question of what the future vision for the Jane Finch looks like was answered beginning with the comment that the Jane Finch community should not always need to be resilient or in survival mode and that it should be possible for residents and community members to reach their full potential in the community.

Below are some of the ways the Committee members suggest could facilitate this process:

→ Community First:

Community members should be prioritized and engaged at every stage of processes such as the Jane Finch Initiative as well as any development projects such as the Jane Finch Hub and Centre for the Arts (The Hub). The Hub should be community and resident-led.

If and when a community is unable to take part in a certain process, the barriers of “why” should be highlighted and questioned. Oftentimes, residents don’t have access to the education, resources or the training needed for certain jobs or opportunities. However, involving the community in these processes that affect its residents shouldn’t be an option and wherever possible, there should be research into what the missing resources are and how to improve them.

→ Inclusivity:

The Jane Finch community should be more inclusive and accessible when discussing transportation, information, and services. The transformation of Jane Finch into a more walkable area is needed, but also an area that prioritizes and does not neglect the most vulnerable groups: seniors, residents with disabilities, immigrants, homeless, and single parents.

The information distributed about services and new projects should be in multiple languages to better serve the growing immigrant population in the community which would also help facilitate access to services at different institutions and community centres.

→ Affordable Housing:

There should be growth, but without displacement. There are many existing and upcoming development projects in the community, especially condominium projects. However, these are not opportunities the community members can afford to invest or participate in due to high maintenance and rent/purchase prices. What happens to the community that is left behind once the initial sellers and investors leave? There needs to be plans for affordable housing for community members.

→ Economic Opportunities:

New developments should also be an opportunity for the community to access pathways to jobs with pay grades above minimum wage. Regardless of the status of

developments in the community, the community should and needs to have access to good, fair and living wages that support the residents and local businesses.

With the addition of the Finch West LRT, it is an opportunity to reflect on and learn from what happened to local small businesses in Little Jamaica with the Eglinton Crosstown project. While they are two different communities, the JF community does want a repetition of the negative consequences to the local businesses in Little Jamaica.

b) The Community Hub and Centre for the Arts in the future: how are people getting to and from the Hub and what improvement can be made to the surrounding public spaces and places to build better connections to the Hub?

While many of the answers and themes in part a are applicable to this part as well, the following are two themes specific to the Hub questions.

→ Accessible Transportation

The Community Hub and Centre for the Arts needs to be accessible to all residents. Safe and accessible transportation infrastructure is needed such as wider sidewalks and bike lanes of higher quality and safety, not vulnerable to automobile accidents. Accessibility for seniors is important as expressed in part a, especially those with mobility issues. Not only is it important to create accessible spaces throughout the community for seniors, it is equally important to add accessible “short-cuts” for residents to use. Shovelling bike lanes in the winter and surrounding areas to increase accessibility is also necessary.

→ Beautification

If the community's image is more aesthetically improved, it can allow for more opportunities to foster the education of the arts and arts industry. This type of beautification and change should be done with the future in mind as well, so the community's youth can grow with it and thrive. Green spaces can and investing in public gathering places with additions of more park benches, for example, can be different methods of beautifying the community.

It should also be highlighted that the beauty of the neighbourhood is in its residents' and their history, so it is necessary that any beautification projects reflect the history, diverse culture and heritage of the community.

Consultation Reflections:

As with all of the JFI consultations, The Jane Finch Community Hub and Centre for the Arts Committee consultation included passionate members of the Jane Finch community who are eager for change, but tired of repeatedly being asked the same questions without any concrete actions.

This frustration was expressed throughout the consultation with the question “what is the difference this time” being emphasized when discussing the Jane Finch Initiative and the entire process for the project.

Overall, members of the Committee want the community to be complete, inclusive, accessible, affordable and prioritizing its current residents. The Jane Finch Hub and Centre for the Arts is one resource to further these goals for the community as long as it is designed and led by and for the community, reflective of Jane Finch’s history, and accessible for all residents, especially the more vulnerable members.

The Hub Committee’s members concluded by adding that any future plans for the community should also provide opportunities for the growing ambition of the youth of Jane Finch. The City should also be regularly checking in with the progress of initiatives in Jane Finch as well reflecting on what worked and what needed improvements to better serve the community.

Appendix 1: Agenda

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| 12:00 Welcome and Introductions (Berta) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the purpose of this evening?• Overall structure of the workshop |
| 12:05 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 |
| 12:20 Visioning Workshop |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening questions<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is your vision for the future of the area?○ What should the guiding principles of the plans be?○ Thinking of the Community Hub and Centre for the Arts in the future - how are people getting to and from the Hub?○ What improvements can be made to the surrounding public spaces and places to build better connections to the Hub?○ What other issues or priorities do you think the plans should address? |
| 1:00 wrap up |