

**Jane Finch Initiative:
Confronting Anti-Black
Racism (CABR) – Partnership
and Accountability Circle
(PAC) Meeting
October 13th, 2021
5:00-6:15 pm**



Summary Report by the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre

BACKGROUND

The [Jane Finch Initiative](#) (JFI) is a community-informed project to plan for the future of the Jane and Finch area. Together, we are developing a community development plan and a land use plan so that residents and businesses are supported as the area changes over time with the opening of the Finch West LRT. 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 opportunity plan.
- 3) An update to the **land use planning framework**.

Community engagement is at the heart of the Jane Finch Initiative. The City is working in collaboration with the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre which is supporting community engagement and facilitating different community conversations to collect ideas and feedback. This includes facilitating monthly meetings of a Community Advisory Committee.

MEETING OVERVIEW

On Wednesday October 13th, 2021, from 5:00 pm to 6:15 p.m., City of Toronto staff and Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre staff were invited to present at the regular meeting of the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Partnership and Accountability Circle (CABR PAC) meeting. This presentation is part of the Jane Finch Initiative's comprehensive engagement stream, and it was held online over Webex.

The purpose of the event was to:

- Introduce the Jane Finch Initiative (JFI) to the CABR PAC staff/members.
- Provide a presentation from the City of Toronto and JFCF Centre staff to CABR PAC staff/members about our findings in phase 1 engagement thus far.
- Discuss and explore a pathway to further partnership and participation.
- Answer questions following the presentation.

ATTENDEES:

- **1 JFCF centre staff;** Maymun Abukar (Jane Finch Initiative Coordinator).
- **3 City Planning Staff:** Leah Birnbaum (Senior Planner); Zahra Joseph-Wilson (Assistant Planner); Andrew Farncombe (Project Manager).
- **Social Development, Finance & Administration Staff:** John Smith (Manager, Community Development); and Meseret Asneke, Yao Togobo, Melana Roberts, Teshini Harrison, Anthony Morgan, Ebony Davitt, Jamila Gowie, Gabriela Roberts (CABR Unit Staff).
- **CABR- PAC members**

MEETING SUMMARY

- Meseret Asneke welcomed everyone to the meeting, invited Elder Migdalia Jones and Elder Margaret (Meeting Chair) to offer the Land Acknowledgement and African Ancestral Acknowledgement.
- Yao Togobo went over the evening agenda and introduced City of Toronto and Jane Finch Community and Family Centre staff to the PAC.
- John, Zahra and Maymun presented the Jane Finch Initiative (JFI) and the Phase 1 findings to the CABR staff and PAC members. This included an overview of the early collaboration with the CABR unit in developing an equitable engagement framework and place-making principles for the JFI, through a co-design process with Black leaders in the community facilitated by Jay Pitter.
- Following the presentation, Yao opened the floor for a discussion as well as question and answer period with the CABR PAC with a focus on pathways for ongoing collaboration and implementation of the Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism within the initiative.
- John, Leah, and Zahra answered follow up questions pertaining to the JFI presentation. Following the discussion, John, Leah, Zahra and Maymun left the meeting, which continued with the remainder of the meeting agenda.

WHAT WE HEARD

This section includes the summaries of the feedback collected from the discussions during the Webex meeting. There will be continued discussion with the CABR PAC in

Phase 2 of the JFI.

Questions Discussed:

- **Q:** What is the plan for the Jane Finch Initiative (JFI) to be inclusive of Jane and Finch Toronto Community Housing (TCH) communities in the study area?
 - Firgrove-Grassways, a TCH community located within the JFI study area, is currently undergoing a major revitalization process that is being led by staff from the TCH Corporation. To ensure alignment of these separate processes, City staff have organized a meeting with the Firgrove Tenant Advisory Group to discuss vision and guiding principles for the Jane Finch Initiative, ensuring that residents' perspectives are folded into the engagement process and reflected our Phase 1 Ideas report, which will set the directions for our more detailed planning work in 2022. Further engagement with the other TCHC communities in the area will be explored as we continue to implement the JFI.

- **Q:** I have a lot of comments and questions that we may not have time to address in this meeting. Who would I direct my input to?
 - Zahra provided contact information for city staff present at the meeting and the general project email, janefinch@toronto.ca.

- **Q:** Are the geographical boundaries of the study area set? How can those living in the surrounding areas still be a part of the conversations?
 - City Council made a decision on the study area boundary, to include the Black Creek and Glenfield-Jane Heights, at its meeting in June 2020. This boundary is shown on the project website at www.toronto.ca/janefinch. The engagement process is open to anyone, and you can sign up for e-updates on the website to stay informed about when events are happening and to learn about other ways to get involved and have a say.

- **Q:** What are some priorities for youth in this conversation? Is there a focus on children and youth in this Initiative (in terms of employment, safety, education etc.)?
 - The Jane Finch Centre has hosted two youth-focused engagement events to speak to youth about what matters to them and what they envision for the future of the area. The summaries of those meetings are posted under Meetings & Events at www.toronto.ca/janefinch. We've heard that access to good employment is a top issue as is access to safe and welcoming places to gather. We also heard that youth have great interest in arts and culture development in the area. Engagement with youth will continue to be a key focus of our community consultations as we move into Phase 2 of our detailed planning work.

- **Q:** With respect to community safety, are police a part of these discussions or approaches in Jane and Finch?
 - Toronto Police Service are involved in the consultation process through a table of public agencies operating in the North West sector of Toronto, which will be advisory to the Jane Finch Initiative. As we develop policy directions for the next phase of work, the ideas developed in phase 1 for the future of the area, including those related to community safety, will be shared for feedback with all participants of that advisory group, including the police.

- **Q:** For development in the future, has the city spoken to any developers and are they going to be creating any inclusive spaces (like Regent Park and Daniels Spectrum)?
 - The spaces in neighbourhoods like Regent Park were created through a different process than most spaces in the Jane and Finch area will undergo. Regent Park was a TCH revitalization project on publicly owned lands, whereas most of the large-scale redevelopment we can expect within the Jane and Finch study area will be on private lands through a development application review process that can be shaped by the Official Plan Amendment that will be an outcome of this work.

City Planning staff have started conversations with landowners in the area; however these have been preliminary in nature – no development proposals have been submitted yet for the large sites at the intersection of Jane and Finch. City staff expect to have further discussions about the provision of publicly accessible spaces through development as proposals are submitted. The Jane Finch Initiative will be focusing on the need for inclusive spaces in the community. This will happen by way of policies related to parks and public spaces, as well as an assessment of existing and future needs for community facilities, such as community centres, library, child care, schools and human service agency space. In addition, the City is currently working with Metrolinx to secure the transfer of land at the Finch West LRT maintenance and storage facility for the development of the Community Hub and Centre for the Arts.

Discussion Themes

Discussion themes that were noted from this meeting include:

- The use of public space in the community and the need for inclusive parks, public spaces and community facilities
- Community safety and police relations in Jane and Finch
- Inclusion of children and youth and their needs in planning for the future

- Involve residents of all TCH communities in the JFI
- Ensure opportunities for involvement of residents outside of the study area, who may be involved in the community.

Next Steps

- The CABR-PAC's "Growing in Place Initiative" Working Group will support JFI. The next meeting for the JFI with the CABR PAC could be through this working group. JFI Team to connect with CABR team to coordinate a follow up meeting.
- Explore opportunities to link PAC members to the Community Advisory Committee on efforts to implement the CABR Action Plan within the area.