

**Jane Finch Initiative:  
Heritage Focus Group  
November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021  
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

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**Summary Report by the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre**

## **BACKGROUND**

The [Jane Finch Initiative](#) (JFI) is a City of Toronto and resident-led 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 November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, from 6:00 pm to 7:00 p.m., City of Toronto staff, Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre staff, Common Bond Collective (CBC) staff and the project's Community Researcher hosted the second of two Phase 1 meetings of the Heritage Focus Group. These meetings are part of the Jane Finch Initiative's comprehensive engagement stream, and were held online over Webex. The agenda and discussion questions are appended to this document on pages 7 and 8.

The purpose of the event was to:

- Provide a presentation recap from the first Heritage Focus Group meeting by the City's Heritage Planning staff, CBC staff and the Community Researcher to focus group participants
- Answer questions following the presentation
- Hold a discussion with focus group participants about what's missing from the heritage discussion of Jane Finch

## **ATTENDEES**

- **1 JFCF centre staff:** Maymun Abukar (Jane Finch Initiative Coordinator)
- **3 City Planning staff:** Gary Miedema (Project Manager, Heritage Planning), Tatum Taylor (Heritage Planner), Zahra Joseph-Wilson (Assistant Planner)
- **2 Common Bond Collective staff:** Ellen Kowalchuk (Partner), David Deo (Partner)
- **1 Community Researcher:** Sam Tecele
- **3 Focus Group participants:** Jerome Johnson, Sayem Khan, Leticia Ama Amponsah

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

- Maymun welcomes everyone, reads the Land Acknowledgement, and goes over the evening agenda.
- Tatum presents a recap on the discussion themes from focus group #1 to the participants.
- Sam presents on research findings that have stemmed from the previous focus group discussion, indicating the scope of research done thus far.
- David presents the research framework, indicating themes from the previous focus group discussion.
- After the presentation, Maymun facilitates the discussion.
- At the end of discussion, the meeting is adjourned.

## **WHAT WE HEARD**

This section includes the summaries of the feedback collected from the discussions during the Webex meeting. The discussion questions can be found in Appendix 2 on page 8.

### **Discussion Feedback**

***Question 1: What topics related to Jane and Finch's history and identity were not captured at the last meeting?***

- **Participant:** How Jane-Finch relates to the broader community. How areas adjacent are immediately impacted. Prayer Palace Church at Weston Road and

Finch Avenue West, by the 400; they used to have a food festival with diverse foods. York University is also impactful, many residents from Jane-Finch also go to this institution. Pioneer Village needs more promotion as a community attraction. Things that are cancelled like the Jane LRT, something should be done for transit connections on Jane Street, hopefully it can be reinstated as a project.

- **Response:** (David) How much does the Jane-Finch area have a singular identity compared to the surrounding area? The area we are studying is the boundaries (natural/major road) – is it a self-contained area or does it have functional/ cultural connections to the areas beyond it?
- **Participant:** It is very much connected to Weston Road and Finch Avenue West. It expands west, almost to Rexdale. A broad community of Caribbean, newcomers, immigrants etc. You don't want the character of the community to be lost through development, an example is Regent Park. No drastic change, we want to sustain some places like the Yorkgate and Jane Finch Mall. In terms of housing, Jane-Finch ranks lower to buy or rent housing, this is due to the stigma of the area; more needs to be addressed about this issue. Postal code discrimination is also an issue.
- **Participant:** In our community, many different languages and dialects are spoken, so maybe something to support people who speak English as a second language ex. Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples at Jane and Wilson.

**Question 2: Is there anything further you want to add about any of the topics? (follow up from team about food, etc.)?**

- **Participant:** The conversation from last time was comprehensive, there isn't much to add.

**Question 3: What key moments, milestones, movements, etc, in Jane and Finch's past do you think are important?**

- **Participant:** The Pan-Am games was a big deal for the area in 2015. The Rogers Cup. Different activities in High Schools (multi-cultural events at Driftwood Community Centre/ CW Jeffreys C.I.), concerts.
- **Participant:** How the area is changing politically, from Liberal to NDP, and electing officials who are addressing the needs of the community, ex. Abolishing carding.
- **Participant:** I saw a picture from 20 years ago, a rally from the Spanish Community on the Jane-Finch intersection.
- **Participant:** More construction in the area. I noticed a new maintenance and service yard for the LRT; I hope that this will create job opportunities for people in the neighbourhood. Beautify the yard with some green space.

**Question: Do people tend to leave the Jane-Finch community for services?**

- **Participant:** People had to leave the community for some services like Highschool prom, church, events, food festivals etc.

**Question: How in the built environment does music happen in Jane-Finch?**

- **Participant:** Not too sure, I went to a studio downtown.
- **Participant:** We has a summer camp help students with music, we had Drake come to perform one year at CW Jeffreys C.I.

## **Appendix 1: Meeting Agenda**

6:00 – 6:20

- Welcome and land acknowledgement
- Recap of what we heard at Meeting #1

6:20 – 7:45

- Discussion
  - What topics related to Jane and Finch's history and identity were not captured at the last meeting?
  - Is there anything further you want to add about any of the topics?
  - What key moments, milestones, movements, etc, in Jane and Finch's past do you think are important?

7:45 – 8:00

- Next Steps

## **Appendix 2: Discussion Questions**

Discussion Questions for focus group participants:

1. What topics related to Jane and Finch's history and identity were not captured at the last meeting?
2. Is there anything further you want to add about any of the topics? (follow up from team about food, etc.)
3. What key moments, milestones, movements, etc, in Jane and Finch's past do you think are important? As a backup, the question could be got at through another angle: "How has Jane and Finch changed since you've known it? When? Why?"