

# Ideas Booklet: Inclusive Employment Opportunities

**This is one of 12 booklets that summarizes the Jane Finch Initiative Ideas Report. Booklet topics:**



- Arts & Culture
- Climate action
- Community Service Facilities
- Heritage
- Housing
- Inclusive employment opportunities
- Inclusive entrepreneurship opportunities
- Land use, built form, and urban design
- Mobility: getting around
- Parks & public spaces
- Resources, partnerships and governance
- Social development

**The Jane Finch Initiative is a resident-informed project to plan for the future of the area- so that residents, local groups and businesses are supported as the area changes over time with the opening of the Finch West Light Rail Transit.**

# Inclusive Employment Opportunities

**Vision for the future: Jane and Finch residents have access to stable and well-paid job opportunities, including with local employers, and are supported to further develop qualifications and access to job openings.**

In community conversations, people expressed a clear desire for public and private investments in Jane and Finch to result in good jobs and training opportunities for local residents. Community members have made a point to emphasize the impact of a lack of employment opportunities for youth but have noted the need for good jobs across labour force age categories. It has also been clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has especially impacted workers in parts of the city including Jane and Finch where case rates were higher and common occupations may not have allowed for working from home and/or did not provide adequate supports for sickness or dependent care.

## **1. Encourage employers to outreach to local candidates and accredited workforce development agencies, and to provide improved measures of job quality and career pathways.**

Local residents have pointed out that having a large concentration of businesses in the immediate vicinity does not necessarily result in employment opportunities for local job seekers. We also heard that City supports for businesses, including Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), have benefitted businesses and led to investment in many parts of Toronto, yet the needs of local residents are not the same as those of local businesses. To deliver inclusive economic development, some residents have advised that business supports should be accompanied by efforts to encourage businesses to provide increased employment opportunities via good jobs and career pathways.

Overall, municipal government and community organizations' ability to influence private sector hiring decisions and job quality is narrow as companies are only required to meet the minimum requirements of provincial labour laws. In consultations, we heard that this is an issue, particularly in cases where employers rely on temporary workers. Considering and advancing the City's ability to influence employment opportunities despite limited policy levers is therefore identified here as an important idea to be explored.

In many cases, Toronto-based employers have signaled a desire or willingness to look for local job candidates and to work through accredited workforce development agencies. City staff and community partners will explore what is possible to encourage local employers to provide more economic opportunity and what policies, programs and partnerships could be most impactful.

- Consider how to effectively stay in touch with employers and how they can be encouraged to provide quality jobs, career pathways and draw on local and equity-deserving candidates even where municipal government authority is limited.
- Explore how City of Toronto business supports can secure corresponding commitments from eligible employers such as with the employment requirement attached to the City's Imagination, Manufacturing, Innovation and Technology property tax grant.

## **2. Explore community benefits hiring and training opportunities in public sector infrastructure projects.**

As compared to its ability to influence private sector employers, the City of Toronto clearly has more direct authority over its own hiring practices and contracts. Improved inclusive economic development is a key objective of the City's recently developed Community Benefits Framework and of community benefits clauses attached to City-funded projects.

Additionally, other public sector entities and agencies have begun to incorporate community benefits hiring and training as part of their own capital projects. The City of Toronto has been clear that its Community Benefits Framework does not cover other orders of government or other public agencies as the City has no jurisdiction or leverage over these entities. Nonetheless, the Jane Finch Initiative provides an opportunity to engage the provincial government (and affiliated agencies) to explore the broader application of community benefits and to share best practices.

Finally, community organizations within the study area have direct understanding of community needs and have led discussion and advocacy related to community benefits models. There is therefore an opportunity for the City to learn from existing research and engage with community partners to advance community benefit hiring.

- Forecast and consider hiring opportunities related to upcoming City capital projects in the study area, and consider how community benefits hiring can be incorporated in these projects. Consider in particular upcoming City capital projects related to the Jane Finch Initiative including improvements to parks, public realm, water and broadband infrastructure.
- Engage provincial government agencies to explore opportunities for community benefits hiring and social procurement as part of their capital projects and purchasing, and share best practices.
- In an ongoing way, work with local organizations actively conducting research and advocacy for more community benefits hiring.

### **3. Invest in education including ongoing STEAM and skilled trades training, employment skills and certification programs for residents.**

As a clear suggestion for Jane Finch Initiative policies and programs, community members have stated that government needs to work with agencies and private entities to invest in education, skills development and career pathways. All Toronto residents can benefit from support to develop qualifications and establish connection points to employers with job vacancies.

The City does not directly deliver employment upskilling and education programs. Education and training are a provincial responsibility as are the majority of workforce development supports that focus on soft skills or employment readiness. Nonetheless, through subsequent phases of the Jane Finch Initiative, City staff can engage with community partners and local education institutions to amplify and complement education and training supports in Jane and Finch and assess gaps in preparing residents for job and entrepreneurship opportunities. By leveraging influence and relationships, the City can explore new ways to enhance opportunities for upskilling, employment, training, and future forward educational programming.

#### Ideas

- Work with community partners to assess STEAM education, skilled trades training, and other employment skills programming in Jane and Finch to identify gaps and opportunities for the City to amplify and support the lead of other orders of government and funders.
- Identify opportunities for City, community, and private sector partnerships to promote the participation of Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving groups in training related to growth sectors including ICT, green tech and creative industries.

### **4. Assess and strengthen workforce development supports in Jane and Finch.**

In addition to education, training and certification programs, job seekers also require broader workforce development supports (including soft skills) and connection points to employers informed by good labour market information. The City is currently trying to assess its role in the context of provincial plans regarding employment services transformation across Ontario regions, and much remains to be determined. Despite this uncertainty, there is an opportunity in the next phase of the Jane Finch Initiative to explore ways to address workforce development gaps.

#### Ideas

- Assess the network of workforce development supports available to residents of Jane and Finch with a focus on any gaps identified by community members.
- Support the City's role in the local workforce development network through the services provided by the local TESS Access and Resource Centre.
- Explore the potential of a local workforce intermediary in Jane and Finch to support hiring and training opportunities including community benefits.

# Jane Finch Initiative



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**We want to hear what you think of these ideas – are we on the right track? What's missing? What could be better?**



Send us an email us at [janefinch@toronto.ca](mailto:janefinch@toronto.ca).



Find out more about the Jane Finch Initiative at [toronto.ca/janefinch](https://toronto.ca/janefinch), or scan the QR code below.



Give us a call at 416-338-0775.

