

Jane Finch Initiative



Ideas Booklet: Inclusive Entrepreneurship 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 Entrepreneurship Opportunities -

Vision for the future: Jane and Finch residents are supported to start and grow businesses within and beyond the community and have access to appropriate and affordable space .

Through community engagement we heard about the need to support local entrepreneurs to start and grow their business. It has been difficult to locate and get feedback from potential entrepreneurs who do not yet have a place of business and a business address where they can be contacted. However the importance of small business development opportunities has been consistently raised by community members.

The Jane and Finch Community Development Plan can help ensure that local entrepreneurs trying to start businesses are aware of and can access support programs. New policies and programs can also be developed through the next phases of work.

1. Promote awareness and accessibility of City of Toronto business supports.

The City offers a variety of programs to support business entrepreneurs. Before the pandemic, City advisors had also been working to expand the reach of their services with a focus on equity through things like business forums in different neighbourhoods. There has also been a recent focus on support for Black entrepreneurs through the Mayor's Black Business Roundtable and collaborative work with the Black Business and Professional Association in the Little Jamaica neighbourhood. The development of a Community Development Plan provides an opportunity to gauge awareness of programs that are available to potential entrepreneurs in Jane and Finch, and to further build awareness by marketing them.

Ideas

- Additionally, several organizations in or close to the study area are providing supports to entrepreneurs and business start-ups. Through subsequent phases of work, City staff can engage with these organizations to consider partnerships and tailor entrepreneurship support services to better address local needs.
- Help build awareness of City of Toronto business support programs and ensure that they are accessible to Jane and Finch residents.
- Work with existing organizations supporting local entrepreneurs, including those with a focus on equity-deserving groups, youth and newcomers, and consider partnerships to deliver programming that is accessible within the community.

2. Help secure affordable and appropriate space for business start-ups and locally owned small businesses.

One of the primary considerations for business start-ups is being able to secure affordable, appropriate space. This becomes even more of an issue in locations where land values and rents are increasing. In the next phase of Jane Finch Initiative work, the City and other stakeholders can consider where space for start-up businesses could be created or made more accessible, and what policy and funding levers are available.

Ideas

- Support the development of an implementation strategy for the proposed Jane Finch Community Hub and Centre for the Arts including for any space envisioned by community within it that could be available to start-up enterprises.
- Engage with private sector, institutional and community organization partners to identify potential spaces within or near the study area for business incubation and entrepreneurship supports.

3. Maintain space to accommodate locally owned, independent and community serving businesses.

People have expressed concern about the possible displacement of existing communities as neighbourhoods grow and change over time. Among the important amenities that Jane and Finch community members have pointed to are the malls and retail plazas which serve as gathering places and allow residents to find key goods, services and food options nearby. Office buildings within the neighbourhood also include necessary services like doctor and dentist offices. Recently, both the COVID-19 pandemic and the construction of the Finch West LRT have created challenges for local businesses. As growth and change occur, City staff and partners will explore tools to maintain space that can accommodate locally-owned, independent and community serving businesses.

Ideas

- Explore possible policies or incentives to maintain space that can accommodate locally owned, independent and community serving businesses as part of redevelopment.

4. Promote social/local procurement.

The concept of social procurement is intended to leverage large-scale purchasing of goods and services to support supplier companies facing various barriers. The City has implemented a Social Procurement Program that requires City divisions to include at least one quote from a supplier that is majority owned by equity-deserving people and/or is certified as a social enterprise. The City has also encouraged public sector 'anchor' institutions to adopt similar policies through the AnchorTO network.

This social procurement concept can be advanced with possible benefits for Jane and Finch area entrepreneurs if they are not already aware of certified diverse supplier lists or upcoming procurement contracts. Additionally, through the AnchorTO network, the City of Toronto can continue to encourage and share best practices with other public sector institutions to help them consider how procurement can supply their needs while also providing benefits to surrounding communities.

Ideas

- Consider ways to identify and provide outreach and assistance to diverse supplier companies to qualify for and have access to City of Toronto procurement contracts.
- Support local 'anchor' institutions and businesses in or near the study area to further develop their own social procurement policies and practices.

5. Support social enterprises that provide necessary products and services while also advancing employment and ownership opportunities.

Social enterprises are businesses that produce various products but have additional goals beyond maximization of revenues. These goals could include hiring workers facing various barriers, advancing environmental sustainability, or providing products where other enterprises don't see a viable return on investment.

The City has supported social enterprises by including them as eligible for the Social Procurement Program. While the City does not otherwise have an established policy or program to directly support the formation of social enterprises, the idea that they could help achieve multiple objectives in Jane and Finch has been raised through community engagement.

Ideas

- Develop sector analysis that indicates how key goods and services could be provided by social enterprises including food and financial services.
- Explore the potential for the City to support the concept development and start-up needs of social enterprises.
- Engage anchor institutions that have worked with social enterprises to learn from best practices.

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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.



Find out more about the Jane Finch Initiative at toronto.ca/janefinch, or scan the QR code below.



Give us a call at 416-338-0775.

