

Jane Finch Initiative: September and October 2022 Information and Feedback Sessions

- Corner Commons, September 14th, 2022, 3-6pm
 - The Spot, September 27th, 2022, 5-7pm
 - Community Classic, October 15th, 2022, 11-3pm
 - PEACH, October 20th, 2022, 6-8pm
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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 are supporting community engagement and facilitating community consultations to collect feedback.

MEETING SUMMARY

On September 14th from 3-6pm, September 27th from 5-7pm, October 15th from 11-3pm, and October 20th from 6-8pm, Jane Finch Initiative Information and Feedback Sessions were hosted by the Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre. These informal consultations are a part of the Jane Finch Initiative's comprehensive engagement stream and were held in person at various locations in Jane and Finch.

The purpose of the events was to:

- Inform residents of the Jane Finch Initiative engagement process.
- Collect notes on residents' concerns, interests, and valued features.
- Distribute flyers and booklets about the Jane Finch Initiative

ATTENDEES:

- 1 JFCF centre staff, Denelle Carvalho

HOW WE ENGAGED

A Jane Finch Centre staff member attended community spaces and events. Flyers, and booklets were distributed to community members, and community members had the opportunity to share feedback with the staff member in informal conversation.

WHAT WE HEARD

This section includes the summaries of the feedback collected from the discussions during the Zoom meeting.

The main questions asked of the participants were the following:

- What matters to you about how Jane and Finch might change with the LRT coming in?
- What do you think about the community centres, libraries, and parks in Jane and Finch?
- Which arts programs do you or your family members participate in? Do you experience any barriers to accessing arts programming?
- How do you get around the neighbourhood? Does it depend on the type of activity you are doing?
- What features of this neighbourhood do you love? What would you want to see change?

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

- Staff shared flyers about the Jane Finch Initiative and invited people to get in touch through email or phone if they would like to provide their input or ask questions.
- Discussions touched on the following topics:
 - Housing affordability. Several residents expressed fear that rent prices will increase when the LRT is completed, and existing residents will be pushed out. Multiple residents mentioned that they know someone who was evicted or forced to move because they were not able to pay higher housing costs.
 - Diversity of rental units. Multiple residents mentioned that more people live in their rental unit than the unit is designed to accommodate.
 - Need for health and safety hazards in Toronto Community Housing properties to be addressed, especially insect and rodent infestations.
 - Desire for improved and expanded amenities at community centres and parks, especially adding more basketball courts and more frequent maintenance of existing basketball courts and equipment. Residents also expressed interest in swimming pools, ice skating rinks, soccer fields, and volleyball courts.

- Desire for more community events and festivals.
- Need to invest in job opportunities, especially for youth and young adults. Residents expressed frustration that the Employment and Social Services branch at the Yorkgate mall is not able to help youth find employment.
- Need to improve transit connectivity and frequency, including more frequent buses at night and dedicated bus lanes for crowded roads.
- Need to improve the streetscape for pedestrians and cyclists. Residents suggested widening the sidewalks, creating raised and separated bike lanes, and adding plants and lights to improve the appearance of streets.
- Safety concerns in public spaces, including fear of gun and gang related violence. Several female residents expressed fear of walking alone after sunset, which limits access to social events and programming.
- Concerns about gentrification and affordability, especially affordability of housing, programs, stores, and services.
- Appreciation for the Jane Finch Mall and Yorkgate Mall, both because of the diversity of shops and services they offer, and because they function as important meeting spaces.
- Need for immediate, short term support for unhoused residents, especially warming spaces and respite sites for the winter. Libraries, malls, and community centres should have information on accessing short term and long term housing support.
- Libraries, malls, and community centres should have information to connect newcomers to programs and services.
- Appreciation for the breadth of existing programs and services available in Jane and Finch, especially children and youth programming.
- Concern about arts programming being too expensive and too far away from homes.
- Concern about the lack of arts programming for adults, especially for young adults who have aged out of youth programming and are no longer able to access arts programming in schools.
- Concern that the available spaces for arts programming do not meet the needs of the arts. For example, insufficient space for dance studios and insufficient space to accommodate loud or large instruments. Residents also noted the need for community spaces which can also function as event venues; for example, spaces to host open mic nights, community theatre, and dance performances.
- Desire to connect aspiring artists with more established artists in the community. Residents suggested hiring local arts educators to lead arts programming, and creating mentorship opportunities to foster community and knowledge sharing.
- Desire for arts events and programming in schools, parks, and drop in spaces where youth already spend time. Residents expressed the importance of meeting youth where they are, rather than requiring them to seek out third party arts organizations.