

# Jane Finch Initiative: Artist Collective Meeting



6:00-8:00pm, March 7th, 2023

## OVERVIEW

On March 7th, 2023, the Jane Finch Initiative Artist Collective meeting was hosted by the Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre with support from the City of Toronto. This consultation is part of the [Jane Finch Initiative](#)'s comprehensive engagement stream and it was held online over Zoom. The agenda and project background can be viewed in the appendices.

The purpose of the event was to:

- Propose short, medium, and long-term actions on arts and culture opportunities based on the Ideas Report and associated engagement sessions.
- Receive feedback from members on the proposed actions.

## WHAT WE HEARD

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

### JFM+ Breakout Room

- Question: What should artists expect from this meeting and future participation in the Jane Finch Initiative? These meetings should be productive, not just a session to receive information.
  - Response from City staff: Moving forward, the quarterly meetings with artists may function like workshops. Some of the ideas in the Ideas Report, such as implementing the Cultural Hotspot program in Jane and Finch are immediately actionable, and we can begin working on them through these quarterly meetings.
- Question: Is there an opportunity through the Jane Finch Initiative to create a directory of people connected with the arts community in Jane and Finch?
- Comment: The Jane Finch Arts Collective started building a spreadsheet of individual artists and groups. The idea of combining networks was a big point of conversation. This could be something actionable through these quarterly meetings.
- Comment: When organizing Toronto Ravers, a participant used Squarespace to create a directory. Using Squarespace to add artists, pictures, and links, was relatively easy to make and update. A similar directory could be made for artists in Jane and Finch. Another benefit of having a directory is that it can be a central place for artists to seek collaborators for funded projects.
- Comment: Flaunt It has begun creating a directory of artists, so that they can refer organizations to other artists when their team is not able to take on opportunities.

- Comment: North York Arts has also started creating an artist database. Would be happy to share those lists.
- Comment: The theater at YorkWoods library and the gallery at York University are significant assets in the community, and they should be present at this table.
- Comment: No Man's Land was a really empowering theater group based in the YorkWoods library, and made a big impact on people's ability to express and communicate and process their experiences and traumas. This is an example of how life changing arts programs are.
- Question: How can there be more opportunities for amateurs, especially youth, to participate in these engagement processes? We should be considering both professional artists and hobby artists.
- Comment: We should find better ways to reach artists, because these meetings are often dominated by service providers.
- Comment: It would be helpful to educate the community about working with artists. Too often, organizations expect young artists to work without compensation. This education piece should happen in tandem with services for artists.
- Comment: Many professional supports are aimed at youth and young, aspiring artists, but mature artists also need these supports and resources. Many of these resources already exist in libraries and community centers, they just need to be repurposed and well-publicized.
- Comment: Both Jane and Finch artists and local arts service organizations are uncertain about which areas in Jane and Finch fall within their catchment. There is a desire for the local arts service organizations to work out their boundaries so that artists in Jane and Finch are being served properly.
- Comment: Having a central place to post job opportunities and professional development opportunities would be helpful. It is very difficult for artists to keep track of all of the grant deadlines and upskilling programs that are often necessary to progress in one's career.
- Comment: resource sharing and tool rental programs are very useful. These programs can be accompanied by workshops on using tools.
- Comment: Community Music Schools of Toronto builds the cost of instrument rentals into their funding, so students have access to all of the instruments and related resources that they need. A future goal is to create a space when people outside of CMST will be able to access instruments and recording spaces. Since CMST does not usually operate during school hours or in the late evening, a space sharing program with other organizations may be possible.
- Comment: A music lending library will be operated out of the York Woods library.
- Comment: Community Music Schools of Toronto receives grants from York University. Many of the professors are interested in collaborating with artists in Jane and Finch, and offering opportunities to artists outside of York University, and they have access to grants. Perhaps there is an opportunity to partner with these professors on mentorship programs and youth educational programs.

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

- Comment: The biggest issue is that people don't know about the resources and programs that already exist.
- Question: People who are not using the internet are completely left behind, and have no access to information about resources and programs. How can we do engagements and outreach that does not rely on email and social media?
- Comment: The malls are a great place to share information. People also pick up flyers from community centers and waiting rooms in healthcare facilities, schools, churches, and libraries.
- Comment: There are three community centres along Jane that are effectively just storage spaces, but can be transformed and used for workshops. These workshops can be a good way to get people connected to a larger network of artists.

## APPENDIX A: AGENDA

<b>6:00 Participants Join</b>
<b>6:05 Welcome</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcoming remarks, land acknowledgement, and agenda. [JFC staff]</li></ul>
<b>6:10 Presentation by City of Toronto staff</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation on arts and Culture ideas and proposed actions.</li><li>• Q&amp;A</li></ul>
<b>6:30 Discussion</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion on short, medium, and long-term actions on arts and culture opportunities.</li></ul>
<b>7:50 Closing notes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Closing notes. [JFC staff]</li></ul>

## **APPENDIX B: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The City of Toronto's Jane Finch Initiative is a resident-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.

The [Jane Finch Initiative](#) is a resident-informed project to plan for the future of the Jane and Finch area and to determine 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](#)), centered on the intersection of Jane Street and Finch Avenue West.

The Jane Finch Community and Family Centre are supporting the City's community engagement process by facilitating community consultations.

The initiative involves three integrated streams of work:

- 1) **Comprehensive engagement**
- 2) A **community development plan** including a local economic opportunities plan;
- 3) An update to the **land use planning framework**.