

Jane Finch Initiative: Spring Pop-ups on Draft Strategies.



3-6pm, April 20th, 2023 (Jane Finch Mall)

1-4pm April 24th, 2023 (Yorkgate Mall)

1-4pm May 5th, 2023 (Yorkgate Mall)

OVERVIEW

In Spring 2023, three Pop-up sessions were hosted by the Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre in collaboration with the City of Toronto. These consultation events are a part of the Jane Finch Initiative's comprehensive engagement process and were held in-person at the Jane Finch Mall and Yorkgate Mall.

The purpose of the event was to:

- Present, discuss, and receive feedback on a draft parks and public spaces plan, a draft mobility strategy, and draft concepts of new building locations and forms.
- Increase general awareness of the Jane Finch Initiative, and encourage residents to participate in the wider Jane Finch Initiative engagement process.

WHAT WE HEARD

This section includes the summaries of the feedback collected from the discussions and sticky notes shared during the Pop-ups. A full list of the recorded feedback can be viewed in Appendix A.

KEY THEMES

- Greening
 - Many participants expressed that new and existing parks should be activated with community programming, events, festivals, and markets.
 - Many participants expressed concern that existing green spaces will become overcrowded as population density increases.
 - Several participants expressed that new and existing green spaces, including small spaces such as setbacks and medians, should be well-designed and landscaped wherever possible to improve aesthetics.
 - Several participants expressed that green spaces should be used for food purposes, including community gardens, allotment gardens, and farmers markets.

- Some participants suggested adding amenities to parks, including outdoor workout equipment, sports equipment, playgrounds and barbecue pits, and additional seating.
- Some participants expressed that gathering spaces in parks and plazas should be highly visible and look intentional.
- **Moving: Getting around**
 - Many participants expressed frustration at the impact of construction on sidewalks and roads.
 - Several participants expressed support for bike lanes and new Bikeshare stations, especially along the Black Creek Parklands.
 - A few participants expressed that sidewalks and roads should be more frequently maintained, including re-paving and filling potholes as needed.
- **Building**
 - Many participants expressed concerns about housing affordability, gentrification, and displacement.
 - Several participants noted that development should be accompanied by economic and employment opportunities.
 - Several residents expressed that a wide variety of retail space should be incorporated into design, including affordable commercial spaces for small businesses.
 - Several participants expressed the importance of including community gathering spaces in designs.

APPENDIX A: RECORDED FEEDBACK

Greening

- Setbacks should be full of trees and plantings
- Setbacks should be well-landscaped.
- Keep all parkland, especially pioneer village and black creek farm.
- There used to be cultural festivals at parks, but these are no longer operating.
- Support for improving access to the park.
- A new park should be added on the Yorkgate mall site.
- Food growing spaces and beehives could be created at Topcliffe Park and along the Black Creek Parklands.
- Outdoor workout equipment should be added to parks as a new amenity.
- Parks should be activated by community events and programming, including sports programming and community gardening programming.
- Parts of the Finch Corridor Trail and the Black Creek Parklands can be used for community gardens and allotment gardens.
- Some sports programming was paused due to COVID-19 and was never re-established.
- Amenities such as playgrounds and barbecue pits may make parks more family friendly.

- Many residents are unwilling to spend time in public green spaces because they are perceived as unsafe. New amenities and activations (including festivals) will encourage these residents to better utilize parks, the Finch Corridor Trail, and the Black Creek Parklands.
- Outdoor workout equipment would be a valued amenity, but it must be in a shaded area.
- Landscaped islands or medians with trees should be added on Jane Street. Medians can be a pedestrian safety measure, and would have aesthetic and environmental benefits.
- Green spaces around schools should be protected from development. It is important for students to have access to green spaces for sport and recreation.
- Parks should have more seating.
- Access to green spaces is important, and green spaces should not be developed. The amount of green space should increase as population density is expected to increase.
- Park activation is important, and can include artisan markets and food markets to create opportunities for local businesses and entrepreneurs.
- How can green space be used to avoid feelings of congestion and maintain privacy?
- The Oakdale Golf and Country Club should be a public park.
- Community food gardens should be added into parks.
- Need for more plazas and highly-visible community gathering spaces.
- Access to well-designed communal green space in “tower in the park” buildings should be considered in future developments.

Moving: Getting Around

- Create better regional transit connections for people living in one area and working in another.
- Maintenance of roads, including filling potholes, should be a priority.
- Coordinate road work better to avoid constant re-paving, which can be wasteful.
- Need to consider the pedestrian experience during construction.
- Poor paving conditions are unsafe and cause damage to vehicles.
- Add more Bikeshare stations west of Jane Street.
- Support for bike lanes along recreational areas, including Black Creek Parklands and the Finch Corridor Trail.
- Support for bike lanes in side streets and narrower roads, but not on Jane Street.
- More crosswalks should be added along Jane Street to reduce mid-block crossing.
- Support for traffic calming measures along Jane Street, including corner extensions at intersections.
- Access points to Black Creek Parklands south of Sheppard are completely inaccessible to cyclists and difficult for many pedestrians.
- Bikeshare stations should be added along the Black Creek Parklands.
- Bike lanes must be fully protected from vehicular traffic. It would not feel safe to cycle on Jane street without protected bike lanes.
- Buses are often stuck in traffic, including the 1008 Sentinel bus.

Building

- Concern that new homes will be unaffordable for current residents.
- Fear of displacement from current residential buildings and TCHC property.
- New development should be accompanied by opportunities for local residents in the skilled trades.
- Driftwood and Yorkwoods theatre were community hubs.
- Townhouses are a waste of space.
- Establish a technology sector hub.
- The institutional health node will bring good jobs to the community,

- New buildings should consider the large families in Jane and Finch, including more three bedroom units.
- There is a need for more housing options for low-income people.
- How will the City ensure that ground level retail is actually vibrant and relevant to local residents?
- We have to go to Yorkdale and the Eaton Centre for shopping. There is a desire for more big-box and brand name stores in Jane and Finch.
- Small local businesses are valued by the community and important for the local economy. How can we ensure that small businesses can afford retail space?
- Jane and Finch has a stigma of being unsafe, but it feels much safer than many areas downtown. Jane and Finch should not feel like downtown.
- Residents need free educational programming.
- Jane and Finch used to be called the intersection of 100 languages. This diversity should be commemorated somehow.
- Winter gathering spaces are important.
- Corner commons is a great gathering space, but it feels too temporary. Preference for a more permanent, weatherproof community space.
- Make the area attractive for young families.
- Put towers at Finch and Driftwood, including mixed income housing.
- We need multiple shopping opportunities around the intersection.

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](#)), centred 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**.