



LITTLE JAMAICA CULTURAL DISTRICT PLAN

Toronto's Inaugural Cultural District

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Ms. Pitter dedicates this work to her late grandmother, Doris Bryant, who purchased a home in Little Jamaica shortly after arriving in Canada in the late 1960s; to Candida Guiang, her mother-in-law who passed away during the final phase of this work; and to her daughter Kirsten Azan (and all young people) who represent the incredible possibility of every community across the city.

May the insights of many continue to inform the future of the Little Jamaica Cultural District.

About This Plan

In November 2021, City Council directed the General Manager of its Economic Development and Culture Division to undertake broad public engagement with the local City Councillors, community members, stakeholders, Business Improvement Areas and relevant Council Advisory Bodies on the development of a Cultural Districts Program. City Council indicated that the Program should strengthen local culture and communities, support small businesses and retail, and promote community-owned spaces. Moreover, it directed the development of a final Program design and implementation plan,¹ for which Jay Pitter Placemaking, hereinafter referred to as “the Practice,” also developed the proposal. The City has asserted that a Cultural Districts Program in Toronto will allow for more flexibility and opportunity for the City to engage in economic and cultural initiatives to help communities thrive, in particular Church-Wellesley Village, Little Jamaica, Downtown Chinatown and Geary Avenue, and at least one community and neighbourhood in the former cities of Etobicoke, North York or Scarborough.

Specifically, prompted by the unyielding advocacy efforts of passionate and insightful community members, Toronto City Council recognized the cultural heritage significance of Little Jamaica and acknowledged years of underinvestment, resulting in the adoption of six Member Motions with 26 recommendations and 61 action items that empower City staff to protect and strengthen this culturally important district of Toronto. An excerpt from a 2022 City of Toronto status and action report states that an “Interdivisional Team was established with membership from a number of City divisions with current mandates in Little Jamaica including actions to address anti-Black racism measures, mobility, housing, development review, and social development services.”²

This Plan includes a rigorous study of the local demographics, land use and natural resources of the area; 75+ academic and mainstream citations; mapping and archival research resulting in 200+ points exemplifying the century-long Black cultural imprint in the community; and recommendations, design and placemaking guidelines tethered to 50+ real-world precedents. Most importantly, this Plan honours local knowledge and represents a complex and broad range of aspirations of community stakeholders of all identities.

1 Jay Pitter Placemaking. (2022, April 8). *Cultural Districts Program Co-creation Update: Presentation to the Advisory Committee* [PowerPoint presentation]. Cultural Districts Advisory Committee Meeting, virtual.

2 City of Toronto. (2022, March 10). *Little Jamaica Initiative - Master Plan and Aligned Initiatives: Introduction and Status Report*. <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-222764.pdf>



Preface & Practice Perspective

My grandmother, a gifted seamstress and baker, made considerable sacrifices to immigrate to Canada from Jamaica in the late 1960s. I recall her sharing the story of how our family came to be Jamaican Canadian while she taught me how to make oxtail and black cake as a young woman in my 20s. “I humbled myself and cleaned the floor of a high-ranking judge so I could get a glowing referral letter to come to Canada,” she said. “God, manners and hard work will take you through the world.” Soon after arriving in Canada and making considerable sacrifices, like many newcomers of that era and today, my grandmother purchased our family’s first home in Little Jamaica—a home that would welcome me when I arrived in Canada as a young child in the mid-1970s.

My earliest memories of living in Canada are of my D.B. Hood Public School kindergarten class, which I immensely enjoyed, and the way that Eglinton Avenue West vibrated with culture. Its diverse culinary aromas, loudly spoken languages and its heartbeat of sound systems pumping reggae rhythms onto the streets were how I was welcomed into this country. Returning to the community more than four decades later at the helm of a bi-national practice leading the development of this Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan is indeed a homecoming.

Sadly, my return is on the heels of long-standing structural issues and more recent challenges precipitated by: the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, which continues to be a fraught and uncertain process a decade following its commencement; a global pandemic; and broader city-building challenges such as the public transit, housing and amenity-inequity crises impacting Toronto and other cities across North America.

While the Little Jamaica of today continues to maintain traces of its cultural ingenuity and vibrancy, my team was met by a community experiencing profound levels of displacement, despair and sheer exhaustion. Many community stakeholders within and outside the Little Jamaica area were extremely supportive of this Plan’s development. However, there was some resistance rooted in concerns about a new initiative—the City’s Cultural Districts Program—yet to be formally launched. New municipal programs often engender understandable skepticism and/or fear of change. Also, biases—whether related to race, ability, gender or class—are unfortunately a factor in urban growth processes. Relatedly,

many stakeholders noted that the local demographic has always been very diverse. Because of this, they questioned the City's decision to specifically recognize the cultural contributions of the Jamaican, broader Caribbean³ and Black communities, while addressing the disproportionate cultural erasure experienced by these same groups.⁴

The local demographic is indeed diverse, which is true of many culturally rich communities across Toronto. However, the area has been popularly referred to as Little Jamaica for decades and research shows a notable Black community presence for more than a century. Like other global cities with neighbourhoods steeped in the cultural imprints of various communities that have also moved on from their original places of arrival, demographics naturally shift and people of all identities continue to contribute to Toronto's urban vitality and evolution. For example, people of all identities pour into the College and Bathurst area to join Italian Canadians celebrating World Cup wins, and to indulge in delicious Mediterranean dishes along the Danforth, without questioning the beautiful Italian and Greek cultural contributions of those communities or citing current demographic data. The respectful and open-hearted embrace of these and other culturally rich areas must also apply to Little Jamaica, as well as a recognition of the dynamic nature of neighbourhood demographics.

Despite the complexity of the context in which this Plan was developed, I firmly believe that—together with our diverse group of community engagement team members and advisors—the Practice effectively addressed most of the community's concerns by leaning into uncomfortable and courageous conversations. This enabled us to strike a balance exemplified by this equity-based and comprehensive vision:

Together with Little Jamaica community stakeholders, co-create a cultural district that acknowledges its distinct Jamaican and Caribbean cultural imprint, celebrates broader collective cultural contributions, and proposes audacious placemaking strategies to revive the area in a manner that benefits everyone.

Although ambitious, we leveraged our specialized equity-based placemaking Practice expertise—which includes leading Black placemaking projects in cities such as Detroit, Memphis and Lexington—coupled with broader collaborations including co-developing a special \$31-million COVID recovery infrastructure federal funding program; supporting gender-responsive placemaking projects through UN Women; working with youth to develop an active school travel guide with the Town of Ajax; and numerous academic research initiatives. Equally important, we're confident that the Little Jamaica community stakeholders with whom we had the privilege of collaborating have contributed local knowledge and expertise, resulting in significant benefits to this entire process and its final deliverable.

3 It is important to note that when referencing Caribbean people, the Practice is pointing primarily, but not exclusively, to Black people due to their large demographics throughout the region. Caribbean people are diverse in terms of race, language and cultural practices. For example, Jamaica's motto is 'Out of Many, One People,' recognizing the presence and cultural contributions of people originally from places such as Spain, China and India, and also recognizing the ways that European colonial influences have impacted Caribbean culture.

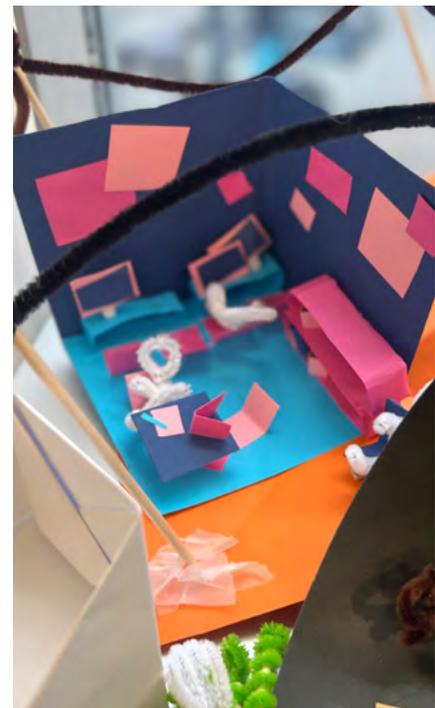
4 Jay Pitter Placemaking. (2022, April 8). *Cultural Districts Program Co-creation Update: Presentation to the Advisory Committee* [PowerPoint presentation]. Cultural Districts Advisory Committee Meeting, virtual..

It is our hope that this Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan ignites imagination and collective action to recognize the community's past while forging an urgent pathway toward its future.

In solidarity and service,



Jay Pitter, Principal Placemaker
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Adjunct Professor and Practitioner-in-Residence, University of Waterloo
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Models created by students from John Polanyi and York Memorial Collegiate Institutes—Youth Design Charrette hosted by Jay Pitter Placemaking and University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture.

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PART ONE

FAQ & Executive Summary

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

As with all new municipal initiatives, the City of Toronto’s new Cultural Districts Program and this Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan have generated a mix of excitement and concern. This is understandable. As a Practice, we believe in transparency, so we have decided to foreground this Plan with answers to questions—even the uncomfortable and socially contentious questions—we have received throughout the planning process.

Q: Who is this document for?

A: This document was developed to guide the work of the City of Toronto’s interdivisional staff team, which has been tasked by City Council with prioritizing the co-operative advancement of the development of the Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan. It is also intended for all community stakeholders, particularly those who live, love and labour in the Little Jamaica area, and those grassroots activists who’ve worked tirelessly to advocate for the development of this Plan.

Q: What is Cultural District Planning?

A: “Cultural planning is a ‘place-based’ approach to planning and development that’s undertaken by a local governing authority, such as a municipality. The cultural planning process begins with identifying and mapping a community’s cultural resources, then proceeds to developing a plan for managing those resources. Most importantly, the process outlines how cultural resources will be integrated across local government planning and decision-making to achieve the community’s goals.

“Cultural planning and land-use planning share common objectives, including building healthy communities and contributing to long-term economic prosperity. In fact, one of the ways the province of Ontario directs municipalities to support long-term economic prosperity is by ‘encouraging a sense of place, by promoting well-designed built form and cultural planning, and by conserving features that help define character ...’ (Section 1.7.1e of the Provincial Policy Statement 2020, under the Planning Act).”⁵

When cultural plans, such as this one, are authored and approved by city councils, they are integrated within ongoing municipal planning processes.

5 Government of Ontario, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. (2022, March 28). *Cultural planning*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/cultural-planning>

Q: Why did the City initiate a formal Cultural Districts Program?

A: The City initiated the development of a formal Cultural Districts Program in response to local advocates from neighbourhoods such as Little Jamaica, Kensington Market, Chinatown and Church-Wellesley Village. Mutual-aid organizers, housing justice activists, small business owners, artists and cultural animators have tirelessly called for the City to actively address the ongoing displacement of their local cultures and the displacement of the people who have contributed to building those cultures. In November 2021, based on the report, “Developing a Cultural Districts Program,”⁶ City Council directed the General Manager of its Economic Development and Culture Division to undertake broad public engagement with community members, stakeholders, Business Improvement Areas, local City Councillors and relevant Council Advisory Bodies on the development of a Cultural Districts Program, which would begin with the formal designation of the Little Jamaica Cultural District as the first such district in Toronto.

Q: What are the goals and objectives of Toronto’s Cultural Districts Program?

A: The Cultural Districts Program is intended to maintain and enhance the culture of Toronto’s unique and vibrant communities. Along with Minneapolis⁷ and San Francisco,⁸ Toronto’s Cultural Districts Program is on the cutting edge of equity-based and forward-thinking cultural planning. In keeping with the advocacy efforts that precipitated the Program, it acknowledges the ways that racialized individuals and those from other equity-deserving groups, such as 2SLGBTQ+ communities, face a disproportionate risk of cultural erasure, co-option and displacement across an increasing number of neighbourhoods. Equally important, the City’s Cultural Districts Program is also designed to continue leveraging the social, environmental and economic benefits inherent in cultural planning processes—including the City’s own long-standing, successful cultural planning initiatives prior to this Program—to enhance Toronto’s overall liveability and vibrancy.

Q: Does integrating an equity-based approach mean that the Cultural Districts Program isn’t going to celebrate all of our culturally rich neighbourhoods?

A: The Cultural Districts Program will absolutely create an opportunity for all types of culturally rich neighbourhoods and cultures to be celebrated. Building upon Toronto’s diverse demographic and history of culturally rich neighbourhoods, as well as Jay

6 City of Toronto. (2021, November 9). *Item - 2021.EC25.3*. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.EC25.3>

7 Bui, T. (n.d.). *A History of the Minneapolis Cultural Districts*. Meet Minneapolis. <https://www.minneapolis.org/cultural-districts/overview/>

8 City and County of San Francisco. (n.d.). *The San Francisco Cultural Districts Program*. <https://sf.gov/information/cultural-districts-program>

Pitter Placemaking’s practice ethos of “there is enough space, joy and justice for all of us,” the proposal guiding the City’s Cultural Districts Program, also developed by Jay Pitter Placemaking, recommended a two-stream Cultural Districts Program model:

Stream One: Formal Recognition and Celebration

Stream Two: Formal Recognition, Celebration and Anti-Displacement

Stream One eligibility welcomes all culturally rich neighbourhoods to apply for designation as a future cultural district while Stream Two eligibility welcomes racialized and other equity-deserving groups facing displacement to apply for that designation. Both streams are unified under one program umbrella, which is intended to formally promote, celebrate and support—locally, nationally and globally—Toronto’s distinct cultural character.

Q: Toronto is currently facing numerous complex challenges. How will the new Cultural Districts Program address our most urgent issues and benefit communities across Toronto?

A: Research and numerous practical case studies show that cultural planning, and culture more broadly, play an important role in fostering prosperous, socially connected cities. The return on investments in local economies and cultural sectors is exponential. Additionally, this Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan is unconventional and also includes core components such as mobility, housing and amenities, which are central aspects of Toronto’s current challenges. Addressing a comprehensive range of issues and opportunities within an equity-based cultural planning paradigm will not only benefit equity-deserving groups navigating cultural displacement or even designated cultural districts, it will also benefit the entire city.

Q: Is the Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan only for the Black community?

A: Cultural planning is a place-based approach, not a race-based approach. However, equity-based cultural planning and placemaking takes into account the diverse ways that different people experience places. It considers issues such as histories of displacement, exclusion due to physical and economic inaccessibility, and distinct safety issues experienced while navigating places. It also takes into account urban policies that have historically perpetuated, and continue to perpetuate, these and other issues across cities. This Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan was developed taking into account these and other place-based issues, tethered to Black individuals and groups while also considering how these issues similarly impact other equity-deserving groups, (2SLGBTQ+ individuals, women, elders, etc.) and Indigenous Peoples in the area. The Plan also includes core components such as mobility, housing and amenities—relevant and beneficial to every single individual and family in the Little Jamaica community, regardless of identity. In summary, the Plan proudly seeks to contribute to the restoration of Little Jamaica’s distinct Jamaican, Caribbean and broader Black cultural imprint, while celebrating everyone’s collective heritage and reviving a powerful sense of place for all.

Q: Isn't centring Jamaican, Caribbean and broader Black cultures inequitable or unfair?

A: A lot of people misunderstand the difference between equality and equity. Equality entails treating all people the same. Equity entails treating people in a manner that responds to their distinct diversities, histories and socio-spatial barriers. For example, expecting all people, regardless of their physical ability or age, to use stairs to enter a business is an equal approach. However, creating better access for individuals who are disabled, elders with reduced mobility and caregivers with children in strollers is an equity-based and compassionate approach. This example applies to everything from considering additional safety risks faced by women, transgender individuals and gender-diverse individuals on the streets to considering low-income families who cannot afford the full fees for children's summer programs. Centring Black communities in this Plan is both equitable and fair—based on having clarified the difference between equality and equity; understanding the disproportionate impact on Black businesses along the Eglinton Avenue West retail corridor; long-standing urban policies that have explicitly and adversely targeted Black communities such as racist housing ordinances and street-based police profiling; and ongoing economic oppression spurred by the transatlantic slave trade.

Q: In addition to Black-identified individuals who have been centred in this Plan, how were the many diverse community stakeholders in Little Jamaica consulted?

A: All Little Jamaica engagements were open to community stakeholders of all identities and co-led by a community engagement team, reflecting individuals of all identities in terms of race, age, abilities, tenure in the community, etc., who received honorariums for their work. In addition to Black-identified individuals, we heard about the cultural contributions of people from Indigenous, Jewish, Filipino, Italian and other communities, then followed up with individual interviews and research. For example, we conducted Indigenous-specific consultations including engagements and one-on-one interviews, understanding that all cultural districts are being conceived atop Indigenous Peoples' land. We also had lengthy follow-up interviews and one-on-one conversations with individuals from Jewish communities to hear more about their concerns, given their own histories of displacement. Our broad approach to listening also included grassroots organizations. For example, we worked very closely with the Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization (OVCO), a white-led group representing a broad cross-section of residents in the community, and Black Urbanism TO (BUTO), a Black-led group representing Black-led businesses and residents. Together with the support of the University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, we also had the opportunity to listen to local youth attending both Catholic and public schools. The Practice is appreciative of everyone of all identities who made both their concerns and aspirations known throughout the process.

Q: Okay, so now we have this Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan. What's next?

A: Cultural planning and, by extension, cultural plans are intended to create a vision for “how cultural resources will be integrated across local government planning and decision making, to achieve the community’s goals.”⁹ After approval by City Council, City staff should immediately launch the official Cultural Districts Program, given the urgency of the issues in Little Jamaica and other communities that advocated for the formalization of a Cultural Districts Program. This Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan needs to be approved by City Council, then the interdivisional team assigned to this initiative should resume regular meetings to identify clear roles, interdependencies and scope of influence. Community stakeholders should expect swift action from the City of Toronto—continued close collaboration in terms of prioritizing recommendations with City staff, establishing a work plan and employing two local cultural ambassadors.



Models created by students from John Polanyi and York Memorial Collegiate Institutes—Youth Design Charrette hosted by Jay Pitter Placemaking and University of Toronto’s John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture.

9 Government of Ontario, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. (2022, March 28). *Cultural planning*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/cultural-planning>

The background features a symmetrical arrangement of light grey peacock feathers. Overlaid on these feathers are several curved lines of small purple dots, creating a decorative pattern. The text 'Executive Summary' is centered horizontally across the middle of the page, overlaid on a white horizontal band.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

There is no place without culture and no culture without place. Over the past 18 months, Jay Pitter Placemaking—in close collaboration with our diverse group of community-engagement team members and advisors—has worked to develop this Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan. This precedent-setting, inaugural Plan is a part of the City of Toronto's first formal Cultural Districts Program, for which the Practice also developed the proposal. The intent of this Plan and the City's broader Cultural Districts Program is to mitigate cultural displacement and erasure while strengthening local culture and communities, supporting small businesses and retail outlets, and promoting community-owned spaces.¹⁰ This cultural planning and placemaking initiative is at the forefront of redefining economically prosperous, equity-based and sustainable cultural districts, alongside cities such as Minneapolis and San Francisco.¹¹

VISION

Together with Little Jamaica community stakeholders, co-create a cultural district that acknowledges its distinct Jamaican and Caribbean cultural imprint, celebrates broader collective cultural contributions, and proposes audacious placemaking strategies to revive the area in a manner that benefits everyone.

OBJECTIVES

- » Begin to meaningfully redress historical cultural planning and policy inequities;
- » Recognize Black peoples' (particularly long-standing Jamaican and Caribbean) cultural contributions;
- » Celebrate all local cultural contributions and encourage cultural curiosity, collaboration and learning;
- » Create flexible and generative space for the co-creation of cultural expression beyond racial, religious, class, gender and other identity-based social locations;
- » Increase both environmental and community resilience;
- » Provide the City and community with tangible tools, recommendations and precedents to restore an enviable and distinct sense of place, prosperity and connectivity for all;
- » Provide a model—inclusive of concepts, approaches, precedents and recommendations—that can be considered for the co-creation of other cultural districts following this precedent-setting initiative.

These objectives and overall approach support community capacity-building and transparency while ensuring that recommendations are supported by a rigorous evidence-based approach and community insights, not simply preferences by the Practice or the City, because the community is always our foremost client.

10 Jay Pitter Placemaking. (2022, April 8). *Cultural Districts Program Co-creation Update: Presentation to the Advisory Committee* [PowerPoint presentation]. Cultural Districts Advisory Committee Meeting, virtual.

11 Pitter, J. (2022, June). *Proposal—Cultural Districts Program* [Unpublished]. City of Toronto.

CORE COMPONENTS

The province of Ontario defines cultural planning as a “place-based” approach to planning and development that’s undertaken by a local governing authority, such as a municipality.¹² The process “encourages enhancement and coordination of City services, resources, technical expertise, policies and funding tools that support emerging approaches to protecting, retaining and celebrating local culture.”¹³ While conventional cultural plans narrowly focus on retail corridors, formal cultural institutions and tourism, this plan employs an equitable and comprehensive approach that considers place, people and practices, along with the following core components inherent in the boundless character of culture and paramount for creating complete communities.

Mobility



Accessing safety, joy and prosperity while moving through the community

Businesses & Collective Prosperity



Addressing historical and current barriers impeding equal opportunities to create new prosperity pathways for all

Indigeneity



Meaningfully responding to the dynamic dimensions of Indigenous placekeeping, both historical and contemporary

Cultural Heritage & Collective Cultural Imprint



Acknowledging and safeguarding Jamaican, Caribbean and broader Black cultural heritage while celebrating the diversity of the entire community

Amenities



Protecting and earmarking public amenities for public good while creating opportunities for everyone to also benefit from private amenities

Social Services



Centring compassion and mutual aid as the neighbourhood character evolves

Housing & Homeplace



Ensuring that everyone has access to safe, dignified and beautiful housing

Community Knowledge

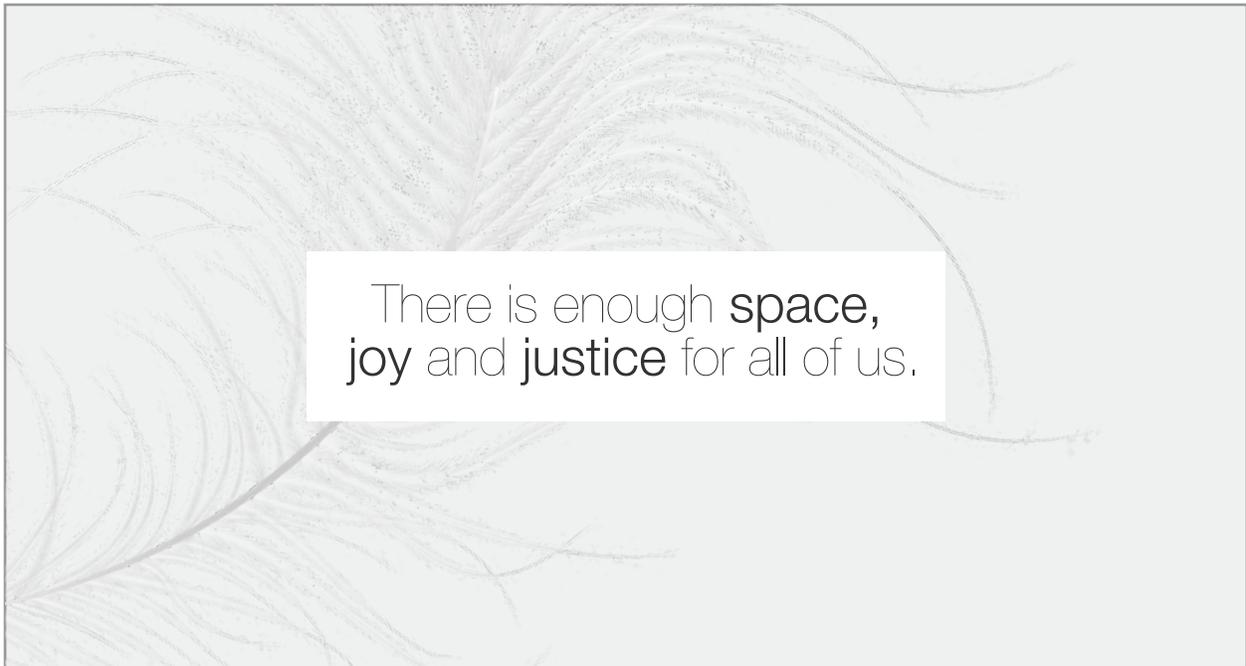


Respectfully listening to community stakeholder insights, concerns and aspirations, and translating them into place- and policy-based recommendations

¹² Government of Ontario, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. (2022, March 28). *Cultural planning*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/cultural-planning>

¹³ City of Toronto. (2023). *Cultural Districts Program*. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/long-term-vision-plans-and-strategies/cultural-districts-program>

AUDACIOUS BELIEF



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Urban design is not neutral; it is fraught with histories of restrictive ordinances and bylaws, top-down practices and exclusionary public processes.
2. Public land and property should be used to advance the public good, which should be defined and prioritized by the public through equitable public engagement processes.
3. Don't empower people; people are powerful. Instead, share space, resources and expertise so that communities can build their power.
4. The practice of placemaking requires an embrace of discomfort and courageous conversations.
5. The development and programming of public spaces creates a culture with unspoken rituals and expectations.
6. Notions of safety and belonging have social, structural, physical, psychological and historical dimensions—all of which should be equally considered.
7. Culture is boundless and the character of spaces and places is shaped by important intangible cultural heritage such as local stories, invisible sacred sites, dialects, daily practices and celebrations.

HOW WE WERE EQUITABLE

The application of an equity-based, place-based lens was a crucial component of this Plan's scope of work. Again, many individuals misunderstand the difference between equality and equity. Equality entails treating all people the same. Equity entails treating individuals and groups in a manner that responds to their distinct diversities, histories and socio-spatial barriers. Centring Black communities in this Plan is both equitable and fair—based on clarifying the difference between equality and equity; understanding the disproportionate impact on Black businesses along the Eglinton Avenue West retail corridor; long-standing urban policies that have explicitly and adversely targeted Black communities, such as racist housing ordinances and street-based police profiling; and ongoing economic oppression spurred by the transatlantic slave trade.

This Plan also considered other equity-deserving groups such as 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, women, individuals living on low incomes, youth, elders, disabled people, and Indigenous Peoples who are a sovereignty-deserving group. Here is how we tangibly demonstrated equity in relation to all of the aforementioned groups and others:

- » Initiated the process by conducting one-on-one interviews with local advocates and grassroots groups, and conducting a literature review, including 35+ documents—reports and meeting minutes—generated by them.
- » Contracted a full-time, local community engagement lead to co-facilitate stakeholder conversations (both individual and group) and support local mapping, along with providing small contracts and honorariums to numerous community members for attending half-day engagements (or longer).
- » Conducted a design charrette in collaboration with the University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, engaging approximately 100 students from John Polanyi Collegiate Institute and York Memorial Collegiate Institute.
- » Interviewed Indigenous Peoples and individuals from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds to acknowledge collective cultural contributions and histories beyond the area's Black cultural imprint.
- » Collaborated with Black community members, including a citizen historian and long-time local elder, to gather oral and grassroots local histories—200+ artifacts such as offline archived newspaper articles, photos, event brochures, etc. were gathered.
- » Employed an evidence-based and intersectional approach, resulting in 75+ academic and mainstream citations, and real-world equitable frameworks.
- » Established an advisory committee, reflective of the area's diverse demographic. This group co-shaped and co-led numerous engagements, reviewed and provided inputs into the Plan's framework, and apprised the Practice of emerging issues and priorities throughout the process.

- » Developed recommendations, design and placemaking guidelines tethered to 50+ real-world precedents.
- » Expanded the agreed-upon 6–8 supportive engagements to develop a robust community engagement strategy which included: devising and implementing 30+ engagements; conducting 125+ informal conversations; establishing a weekly presence at the Afro Caribbean Farmers' Market, York-Eglinton BIA and Maria A. Shchuka library for three months; delivering an Ontario Heritage Trust keynote, which included community voices on the discussion panel; installing Community Comment boxes at local businesses; and initiating targeted media outreach. The Backgrounder document—Appendix B—provides a full summary of community engagement activities.

People, Places and Valuable Perspectives



FRAMEWORKS/LENSES

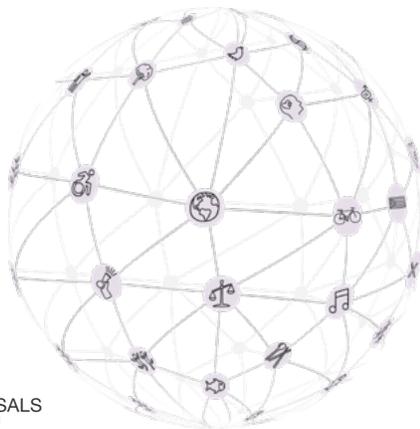
The following is a snapshot of the four primary frameworks/lenses used to guide this document:



Equity-Based Placemaking is conventionally defined as a collaborative approach to the design, programming and policies of public and semi-public spaces. It brings community knowledge and vision to the forefront of public realm design processes, historically going beyond the urbanism status quo and hierarchy.



Mobility Equity and Freedom Framework refers to the provision of transportation policies, funding, infrastructure and services that are responsive to diverse demographic needs and aspirations. Mobility equity is freedom.



Cultural Universals encompass overarching patterns or traits that are common across all societies, such as language, personal names and the family unit.



Sustainability, Resilience and Environmental Justice uses an intersectional approach, which considers the human, environmental and systemic factors contributing to sustainability.

The aforementioned frameworks are unpacked in the Backgrounder document—Appendix C — which provides additional information pertaining to our Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan process and research.

RECOMMENDATIONS & PRECEDENTS

The following recommendations and precedents are informed by evidence-based research, rich and diverse local insights, and Practice expertise.

COMPONENT: Mobility

Jay Pitter Placemaking recommends that the City should do the following:



Ensure that everyone accesses safety, joy and prosperity while moving through the community.

- » Address long-standing street safety issues, particularly at the five-point Oakwood Avenue and Vaughan Road intersection, by installing an all-way stoplight; creating a continuous bike lane along Vaughan Road; and addressing the sightline issue at the northeast corner of Vaughan Road.
- » Address street safety issues caused by construction site structures such as temporary safety fences as well as accumulated debris, which force pedestrians onto the roadway.
- » Explore a traffic management strategy at the Eglinton Avenue West and Allen Road intersection, which is often congested, contravening the rationale of the one-minute idling bylaw¹⁴ and diminishing a pedestrian feel to the retail corridor while increasing both noise and air pollution.
- » Repair cracked, uneven and slick sidewalks, which currently diminish accessibility and create tripping hazards in some instances (especially along Eglinton Avenue West); and increase sidewalk maintenance in problem areas.
- » Leverage the relatively new Toronto Community Crisis Service to resolve conflicts and support a growing street-involved population of individuals experiencing distress.
- » Implement, in collaboration with community members, street-based audits to collaboratively explore local concerns pertaining to race-based and class-based profiling on both streets and public transit; ticketing of small-scale vendors; and harassment of women, transgender people and gender-diverse individuals.
- » Optimize the use of spacious sidewalk widths along the Eglinton Avenue West retail corridor by encouraging an increased number of patios, street trees, seating areas and flexible places of pause.
- » Mitigate the stark street and sidewalk maintenance divide between the east and west sides of Allen Road along Eglinton Avenue.

14

City of Toronto. (2023). *Idling Control By-law*. <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/streets-parking-transportation/applying-for-a-parking-permit/parking-by-laws-regulations/idling-control-by-law/>

COMPONENT: Mobility (continued)

- » Install accessible sidewalk and street-crossing infrastructure such as tactile walking surface indicators, depressed curbs and crosswalks aligned with the desired path of travel.
- » Consider completing the Allen Greenway linear park and multi-use trail, and using Everden Road as a complete street to connect the Allen Greenway to Cedarvale Park.

Precedents

- **Plateau-Mont-Royal**, neighbourhood transformation—Montréal
- **Complete Street Ordinance**, centring equity—Baltimore
- **Small Business Impact Policy**, mitigating impact of construction—Montgomery County, Maryland

COMPONENT: Business and Collective Prosperity

Jay Pitter Placemaking recommends that the City should do the following:



Address historical and current barriers impeding equal opportunities to create new prosperity pathways for all.

- » Reallocate 75% of property taxes collected along the retail corridor for five years to directly support Black business owners and business owners who are renters. This will provide direct funding for emergency relief, capacity-building and small capital projects.
- » Amend residential zoning regulations and pilot a home-based business program that will enable entrepreneurs and informal workers operating outside of the BIA mandate to lawfully conduct businesses currently operating beneath the radar.
- » Revive and animate the cultural imprint of the retail corridor through placemaking interventions such as mounting art displays in empty storefronts, increasing the number of patios and integrating street trees. This will reignite the local economy while mitigating the growing sense of “blight” and discouraging street-involved behaviour.
- » Develop a framework and policies to close the racial wealth gap, prioritizing Black communities, and establish a culturally responsive entrepreneurial hub, inclusive of revenue-generating spaces, to support Black entrepreneurs along with other groups such as Indigenous Peoples, newcomers, middle-aged women, youth, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and disabled people.
- » Ensure that in the future the terms and use of resources such as the \$1-million grant issued to the Black Business and Professional Association—and earmarked for Black-owned businesses—are defined and co-administered by local stakeholders.

COMPONENT: Business and Collective Prosperity (continued)

- » While micro and small grants are helpful, they are not aligned with the scope of work required for many funded projects. Most Little Jamaica initiatives require greater funding levels and ongoing funding to ensure that community stakeholders are properly compensated for their time and expertise.
- » Establish, together with Tourism Ontario and relevant hospitality associations, a percentage of revenues to be redirected to Black communities—to be held in trust by the Black Opportunity Fund—to implement infrastructure projects (in keeping with arrangements made with other groups attracting comparable revenue).

Precedents

Entrepreneurial spaces and Business Incubators

- **Reset**, alternative and inclusive co-working space—Toronto
- **Venturepark Labs**, food incubator and mentorship space for entrepreneurs—Toronto
- **Dashmaawaan Bemaadzinjin**, Indigenous-led food market—Toronto
- **F.L.I.P. Kitchens**, food hall and rental space for historically marginalized food entrepreneurs—Toronto
- **East Portland Community Investment Trust**, Black-led, community-owned commercial properties—Portland, Ore.
- **Anchorage Community Land Trust**, community-owned commercial properties—Anchorage, Alaska

- **Legacy Business Program**, extending tenancy for long-term businesses—San Francisco
- **Lake Street Retail Corridor Revitalization Project**, equity-based business redevelopment—Minneapolis
- **Form-Based Codes**, expanding commercial use opportunities—Hartford, Conn.
- **Arts Facility Zoning**, expanding arts and culture spaces—Vancouver

Innovative use of shipping containers—Toronto

- **Market 707**, affordable retail spaces
- **Stackt Market**, market transforming empty lot
- **Toronto restaurateur Carl Cassell**, mixed-use development

COMPONENT: Indigeneity

Jay Pitter Placemaking recommends that the City should do the following:



Meaningfully respond to the dynamic dimensions of Indigenous placekeeping, both historical and contemporary.

- » Ensure that Indigenous business owners are meaningfully considered when reimagining the retail corridor, are included in local markets and are supported through entrepreneurial investments and capacity-building initiatives.
- » Incorporate Indigenous design principles, co-created with both professional and grassroots Indigenous placekeepers, in all housing, amenity and public space developments.
- » Daylight Indigenous placenames, native species and oral stories as part of knitting together the cultural identity of the community.
- » Amend park policies to better respond to Indigenous cultural practices in green spaces, such as hosting sacred fire gatherings, foraging and building traditional structures such as wigwams.
- » Conduct deeper consultation with Indigenous individuals and urban Indigenous groups, in addition to consultation with larger formalized groups, to gain more nuanced and diverse Indigenous placekeeping perspectives.
- » Build upon and support the work of grassroots and informal Indigenous groups in the area.
- » Actively gather a diverse range of intangible Indigenous cultural expressions to avoid unresponsive, flattened monolithic narratives and placekeeping approaches.
- » Provide culturally responsive services geared toward Indigenous Peoples to address the disproportionate issues they face, often perpetuated by the intergenerational trauma and ongoing inequities related to colonization.

Precedents

- **Skwachàys Lodge**, Indigenous art boutique hotel—Vancouver
- **312 Main**, community hub built with Indigenous design principles—Vancouver
- **“Towards integrating Indigenous culture in urban form,”** re-Indigenizing Christchurch—Christchurch, New Zealand
- **Indigenous Hub**, Indigenous-led and designed development—Toronto
- **Te Ara Mua - Future Streets**, Indigenous urban street redesign—Auckland, New Zealand

COMPONENT: Cultural Heritage and Collective Cultural Imprint

Jay Pitter Placemaking recommends that the City should do the following:



Acknowledge and safeguard Jamaican, Caribbean and broader Black cultural heritage while celebrating the diversity of the entire community.

- » Reallocate 30% of funding currently directed to a handful of well-established, well-funded arts institutions to support cultural programming and practices in Little Jamaica (and future cultural districts).
- » Compel developers to contribute to a Little Jamaica cultural investment fund as part of their broader community benefits requirement.
- » Establish spaces and funds for the co-creation of hybrid culture, cultural collaborations and evolving culture beyond the bounds of race.
- » Proactively and courageously invest in spaces, participatory-learning experiences and informational resources to foster cross-cultural conflict resolution, understanding and co-creation to address resistance and/or concerns pertaining to the establishment of a Black cultural district within an extraordinarily diverse community.
- » Enhance the City's capacity to understand, curate and recognize intangible cultural heritage to ensure that Black culture—rarely expressed through the built environment or through the ownership of places due to historical inequities—is respectfully recognized.
- » Ensure there are varying scales and types of cultural spaces, ranging from large institutions, such as the Nia Centre for the Arts, to micro cultural spaces on the ground floor of new residential and business developments; cultural spaces embedded in natural local ecologies; porch performances throughout the residential neighbourhoods; and pop-up/seasonal cultural spaces.

Precedents

- **[murmur]**, self-described documentary oral “history from the ground up”—Toronto
- **First Story Toronto (FST)**, app allows people to access interactive historical map inclusive of Indigenous Peoples’ stories, video clips, photographs and other archival materials—Toronto
- **Afro Caribbean Farmers’ Market**, Toronto Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective seeks to foster sustainable community development by improving community-led market, supports local farmers and products—Toronto
- **Nuit Blanche**, all-night art exhibition made its debut—Scarborough

COMPONENT: Amenities

Jay Pitter Placemaking recommends that the City should do the following:



Protect and earmark public amenities for public good while creating opportunities for everyone to also benefit from private amenities.

- » Immediately identify three City properties, or work with other orders of government to identify three public properties, that can be used as a designated Black Cultural Centre (see below), and two spaces that can serve broader community needs such as intergenerational, recreational and entrepreneurial programming for community stakeholders of all identities.
- » Develop an equitable amenities framework to ensure all new developments provide the appropriate scale and types of both public and private amenities for healthy and comfortable living amid neighbourhood intensification.
- » Compel private developers to negotiate with community members about the provision of both culturally responsive and broader amenities to ensure mutual benefits are gleaned from significant local intensification.
- » Encourage private developers to explore the provision of one amenity open to the entire community—above and beyond the typical extension of amenities provided through community benefits—to mitigate the current gaps and to encourage connection between existing and new residents.
- » Develop, in collaboration with community members of all identities, a stewardship and social plan articulating collective values, compassionate and place-based conflict negotiation approaches, and equitable access to guide the harmonious use of all new amenities.
- » Provide space for growing food and food-based entrepreneurship.
- » Design and develop the area's first Black community centre, given the tenure of, and Black cultural imprint in, Little Jamaica, particularly from people of Jamaican and Caribbean descent impacted by the transatlantic slave trade. Much like how The 519, an agency of the City of Toronto, is mandated to address the health, happiness and full participation of the 2SLGBTQ+ communities, this proposed centre could serve as a permanent cultural, economic and wellness hub for Black community members while also engaging in collaborations with community stakeholders of all identities.
- » Develop a local food security strategy, beyond food banks, that supports both food retailers and customers.

Precedents

- **Wesley Community Centre**, church turned community hub—Montreal
- **Black Cultural Centre**, programming and support for the Black community—Vancouver
- **Beerline Trail**, linear park fostering community relations and investments—Milwaukee
- **"More Inclusive Parks Planning"** study, equitable amenity planning—Houston
- **Edible Bus Stop**, urban greenscaping at local bus stops—Thunder Bay, Ont.

COMPONENT: Social Services

Jay Pitter Placemaking recommends that the City should do the following:



Centre compassion and mutual aid as the neighbourhood character evolves.

- » Develop a support strategy—in collaboration with community members who have been historically, and are currently, confronted by structural-service provision gaps—integrating public, charity and not-for-profit, and mutual-aid models.
- » Leverage its institutional networks to engage service providers across the City to establish an increased number of satellite sites—employing local community members whenever possible.
- » Establish a small fund to compensate community members engaged in mutual-aid and grassroots initiatives with honorariums to recognize their labour and basic costs (travel, meals, meeting supplies, etc.).
- » Recognize the importance of social infrastructure and invest in initiatives that educate, connect and celebrate community stakeholders of all identities.
- » Monitor the growing number of predatory businesses such as high-interest cheque-cashing outlets and cryptocurrency exchanges.
- » Collaborate with social service providers to address the current gap to access culturally responsive services and broader services such as dental care, health care, elder care, gender-based services, and fresh produce.
- » Building on the library’s exceptional programming, establish a community lending library to ensure that individuals and groups impacted by the digital divide, such as seniors and people living on low incomes, have access to information, entertainment and life-saving services.¹⁵

Precedents

- **East Scarborough Storefront**, connecting local services and resources to community—Toronto
- **Greater Washington Community Foundation**, funding mutual-aid networks—Washington, D.C.
- **Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction**, supporting Indigenous Peoples with stigmatized experiences—Toronto
- **Be a Buddy**, community-led climate resiliency model—New York City
- **Community Resilience to Extreme Weather**, on-the-ground community network that mutually ensures community members’ safety during extreme weather events—Toronto

¹⁵ Inspired by the “Wi-Fi Lending Library” by Black urbanist Darryl Gaston, a deceased, Charlotte-based practice elder who worked on improving equitable access to information technologies.

COMPONENT: Housing & Homeplace

Jay Pitter Placemaking recommends that the City should do the following:



Ensure that everyone has access to safe, dignified and beautiful housing.

- » Institute, in collaboration with community members, an equitable development model that enables community members to participate in the selection of developers, to prioritize meaningful community benefits and to receive training and employment opportunities.
- » Ensure all new development supports population health and mental health, sustainability imperatives and community development principles by considering “good density indicators,”¹⁶ such as consideration of green spaces; internal and external amenities; emergency isolation spaces for residents; cooling centres; food-growing and food-sharing spaces; intergenerational social spaces; zero waste and upcycling programs;¹⁷ and resilient design features.
- » Establish, using a comprehensive accessibility lens, clear targets for housing developments that are economically, physically and socially accessible because these core principles are not reflected in the current housing development pipeline.
- » Provide support to both BUTO and OVCO to advance their respective land trust initiatives focused on the provision of affordable housing.
- » Provide greater on-the-ground support for unhoused individuals and emergency funding for individuals at risk of being unhoused.
- » Support a Black not-for-profit organization—through capacity-building and meaningful financial investment—to develop affordable housing for Black elders, Black 2SLGBTQ+ individuals (both youth and elders) and Black artists.

Precedents

- **Africatown Community Land Trust**, Black-owned housing and commercial properties—Seattle
- **Community Development Advocates of Detroit**, participatory and community-based planning—Detroit
- **“Embedding Cultural Sensitivity into the Housing Delivery Process,”** co-designed and culturally appropriate housing—Nunavik
- **Tiny Homes**, affordable housing model—Detroit
- **Nora Hendrix Place**, modular social housing prioritizing Black people and Indigenous Peoples—Vancouver

16 Pitter, J. (2020, April 17). Urban Density: Confronting the Distance Between Desire and Disparity. *Azure*. <https://www.azuremagazine.com/article/urban-density-confronting-the-distance-between-desire-and-disparity/>

17 Rider, D. (2016, March 5). Scarborough condo leading way toward ‘zero waste’. *Toronto Star*. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2016/03/05/scarborough-condo-leading-way-toward-zero-waste.html>



MARKETING & FUNDRAISING RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Marketing Tactics

- » Establish and promote a municipal platform for marketing the Little Jamaica Cultural District and all other future cultural districts. This platform should include the Cultural Districts Program overview; five-to-seven Little Jamaica Cultural District attractions; an up-to-the-moment calendar of cultural activities; self-guided cultural walk/roll maps (Jamaican and Caribbean History Walk, Reggae Music Lovers Walk, Indigenous History Walk, Legacy Businesses Walk, Ecological Walk, Collective Cultural Contributions Walk, etc.); customized visitor itineraries (Foodies For Life, History Buffs, Music Lovers, Patio Hop, etc.); a community photo album; and fun fact sheets.
- » Launch a Little Jamaica Cultural District social media page to amplify local people, places and cultural practices.
- » Collaborate with mainstream media outlets to launch a series sharing local stories pertaining to intangible cultural heritage, unsung local leaders and notable local histories.

City-Wide Marketing Tactics

- » Leverage existing City initiatives such as Nuit Blanche and Doors Open Toronto by adding Little Jamaica as a key programming site.
- » Collaborate with large cultural institutions such as the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Harbourfront Centre to leverage exhibitions and performances related to Caribbean culture by hosting smaller engagements (special artist talks, community arts workshops, small satellite exhibits) in the Little Jamaica community.
- » Host a series of pop-up events (for example, Caribbean cookoffs and Caribana costume-making workshops) and temporary placemaking interventions (for example, transform Reggae Lane into a Caribbean beach for a weekend).
- » Collaborate with the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) for event amplification in bus shelters and subways, and encourage the TTC to implement “families ride free” days for major events.
- » Program all-season events, particularly in the fall/winter season when tourism engagement is particularly low (for example, Caribbean carolling night and newcomer skating lesson nights).

Marketing & Fundraising Recommendations (continued)

National and Global Marketing Tactics

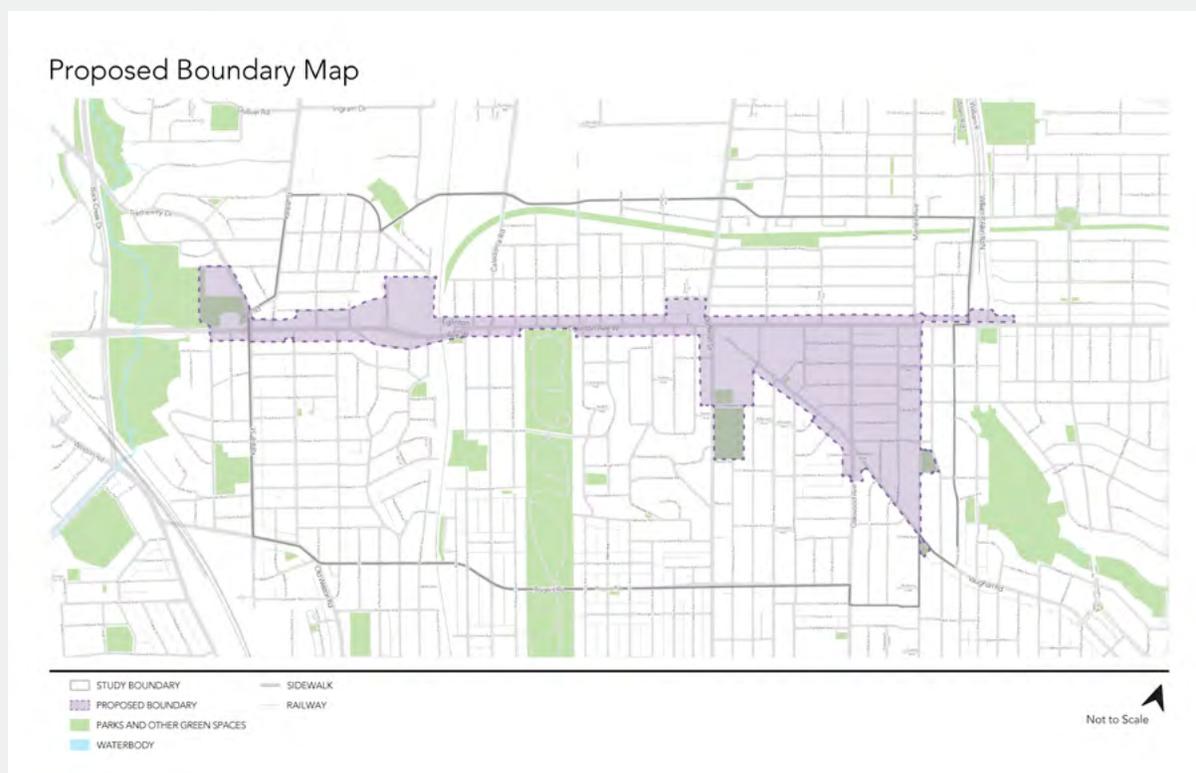
- » Collaborate with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to identify reciprocal and synergistic opportunities for amplifying Little Jamaica as a premier tourism destination.
- » Establish partnerships with the tourism departments of different countries throughout the Caribbean, such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados.
- » Partner with national and international transportation companies such as railways and airlines to promote Little Jamaica as a national and global cultural destination.
- » Establish partnerships with touring companies and promoters to add small appearances and performances on major tour dates for Little Jamaica artists.

Recommended Fundraising Tactics

- » Convene a group of corporate and philanthropic leaders to establish a collective Little Jamaica Cultural District fund-matching strategy.
- » Reallocate 75% of property taxes collected along the Eglinton Avenue West retail corridor for five years to directly support business owners of all identities who are predominantly renters to provide them with funding for emergency relief, capacity-building and small capital projects.
- » Reallocate 30% of funding currently directed to a handful of well-established, well-funded arts institutions to support cultural programming and practices in Little Jamaica (and future cultural districts).
- » Compel developers to contribute to a Little Jamaica cultural investment fund as part of their broader community benefits requirement.
- » Identify 10-12 corporate and individual donors who have extended philanthropic gifts to aligned cultural initiatives in the past—and who may be inclined to support similar cultural initiatives in Little Jamaica.
- » Collaborate with the City's Partnerships Office to develop investment partnerships to raise required revenue for Little Jamaica and the broader Cultural Districts Program.

STUDY BOUNDARY TO PROPOSED BOUNDARY

To impose boundaries on culture is at once counterintuitive and pragmatic within the context of establishing formal cultural districts. Keeping this tension in mind, the following map depicts the Practice's proposed Little Jamaica Cultural District boundary. This proposed boundary has been amended from the one presented in the preliminary report, which was an atypical two-part cultural district with a short break along the Eglinton Avenue West retail corridor due to a less-prominent retail and cultural presence. Based on the Practice's commitment to listen to community stakeholders through every stage of the process, we've created a continuous boundary, maintaining all other features, particularly our original commitment to include residential neighbourhoods. While no single boundary completely reflects the desires of all stakeholders, the following proposed boundary reflects what we heard and continues to be aligned with evidence-based research, mapping activities and our equity-based placemaking principles.



Map 1: Proposed Boundary Map

Rationale and Considerations

- » Recognizes the long-time cultural imprint along the Eglinton Avenue West retail corridor;
- » Although atypical, includes and deeply considers residential neighbourhoods, ensuring that amenities such as the provision of food, shelter, green space, child care

and elder care are prioritized, while recognizing the need for policy amendments that recognize and support home-based businesses—this approach also resists touristification;

- » Promotes prosperity by responding to synergies related to the co-location of businesses in both the eastern and western ends of the proposed boundary;
- » Fosters sustainability by encouraging a pedestrian-oriented experience in both eastern and western areas of the cultural district while leveraging upcoming active and public transportation options (bike lanes, LRT, etc.);
- » Does not diminish the City's ability to provide focused resources (infrastructure, funding and programming) or render them too thinly distributed to make meaningful impact because the combined areas are not too sizable.



The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) and Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) congratulate Ms. Pitter, her team, and the City of Toronto on the successful completion of the first Official Cultural District Plan in Canada for Little Jamaica, Toronto. As a plan that centres equity and inclusion, as well as building respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples, considerations of climate change, the supply of housing, and the importance of heritage, culture, and individual and collective expressions in creating healthy communities, OPPI and CIP look forward to seeing how this work will be implemented in Toronto—with the exciting potential of using this plan as a precedent for similar projects in other cities across the province and country.”

**Susan Wiggins, Executive Director
The Ontario Professional Planners
Institute (OPPI)**

**Beth McMahon, CEO / Directrice générale
Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) /
L'institut canadien des urbanistes (ICU)**

Given the precedent-setting nature of this initiative and the need for inter-governmental and institutional collaboration, the Practice shared an almost-final version of this Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan with community reviewers, as well as sector leaders and dignitaries. The above quote is one of several kindly provided by sector leaders upon review of this Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan in its totality and/or imperative highlights. Additional quotes can be found at the end of this document.

PART TWO

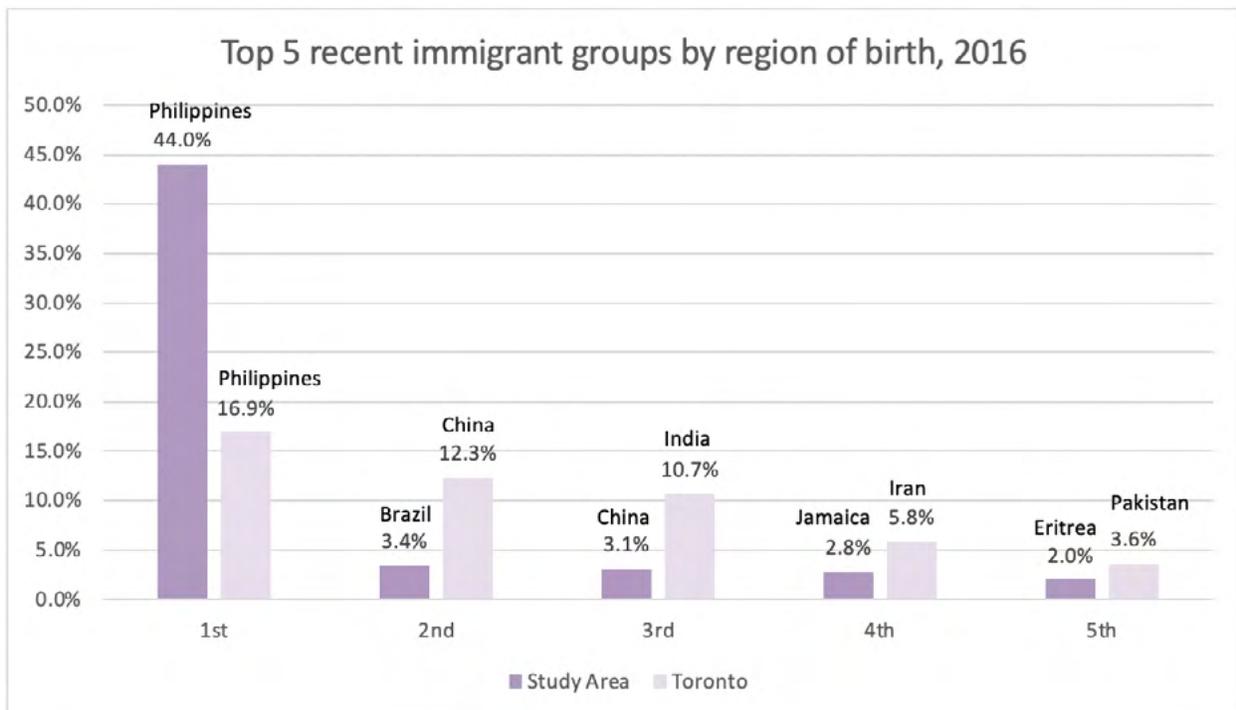
Context, Conditions &
Community Inputs

As always, we begin with the people.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Conventional land-use planning, cultural policy and heritage designations place considerable focus on the “uses” of places—restrictive bylaws/policies, the number of residential units in development pipelines and preserving the facade of buildings. While these and other spatial aspects of placemaking are important, we begin with the people, understanding that community concerns, aspirations and distinct connections to place are paramount.

First, we recognize Indigenous Peoples, the original stewards of these lands, which in Toronto are covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, although the area is the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations. Today, Little Jamaica is also home to 41,990 people, many of whom are first- and second-generation immigrants from Jamaica and other Caribbean islands, Portugal, Italy and the British Isles, along with newer immigrants from the Philippines, Eritrea and other countries. It has a higher percentage of immigrant residents and a higher percentage of families with children while having lower income levels than the rest of the city.



Demographic Chart 1: Top 5 Recent Immigrant Groups by Region of Birth, 2016

The aforementioned demographic chart and others are unpacked in the Backgrounder document—Appendix D—which provides additional information pertaining to our Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan process and research.

LAND-USE EVOLUTION & DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Eglinton Avenue began as an east-west concession road planned to be parallel to Lake Ontario's shoreline to the south. It extends across the farthest eastern and western points of Toronto, bearing witness to the city's changing communities and landscapes. It is the only major road to stretch the full east-west length of Toronto through all four districts of the city: Etobicoke, North York, Toronto-East York and Scarborough. The specific stretch of Eglinton Avenue West commonly referred to as Little Jamaica had several intersecting rail lines in the 19th century, which precipitated industrial development, transforming farm properties into storefronts and modestly sized residential housing.

The built form in Little Jamaica harkens back to the pre-war "high street," consisting of two- and three-storey utilitarian buildings that form a continuous streetwall. In the post-war period, other neighbourhoods along Eglinton Avenue intensified while Little Jamaica underwent significantly smaller-scale development. Much like the construction of the early rail lines a century ago, the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT will again be a catalyst for change. The LRT will increase both transportation options and density within Little Jamaica and thus will fundamentally address economic, environmental and social imperatives. However, the adverse impacts of a decade-long (started in 2015) construction project—coupled with the unaffordable, monolithic condo developments currently in the pipeline—have contributed to disruption, displacement and uncertainty for this once-thriving and culturally rich community.

- EGLINTON AND DUFFERIN
- HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- 16 STOREYS MAX



Examples, such as the one above, of building typologies in Little Jamaica were developed by LGA Architectural Partners. They are unpacked in the Backgrounder document—Appendix D—which provides additional information pertaining to our Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan process and research.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

While we begin with people, we honour the sovereignty and life-giving force of the natural environment. The Practice also recognizes our shared responsibility to co-exist in a symbiotic, stewardship-based relationship alongside each other and all living beings.

There are several significant areas of natural heritage that abut the study area boundary, including the Humber River, Black Creek and Cedarvale Ravine. Additionally, the York Beltline Trail is located to the northeast, creating a linear path and active transportation route that the City's Biodiversity Strategy also points to as a "green corridor" important for the local ecology. The Humber River was once known as the Carrying Place Trail. Both Indigenous Peoples and early European settlers travelled its course for trade. It continues to hold important cultural meaning for Indigenous Peoples within the area and across the city. For example, along the Humber River, there is currently a wigwam and two sweat lodges, which are meeting places for land-based learning, ceremony and events such as drumming, sacred fires and healing.

Urban development has also made its mark on the area's natural environment. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s, Cedarvale Ravine was under serious threat because of a proposed expansion of the Spadina Expressway (known as Allen Road today). The development of the expressway would have caused serious tree loss, parkland loss and pollution. However, community protests and advocacy, amplified by well-known activist Jane Jacobs, stopped the expansion of the Spadina Expressway. While Cedarvale Ravine was saved at that time, the later Spadina Subway expansion "profoundly altered"¹⁸ the topography of the ravine. Community stakeholders care deeply about the natural environment and there are a number of other current City of Toronto strategies that while not specific to Little Jamaica, are applicable to the area.

Sacred & Significant Waterways Map



Map 2: Sacred & Significant Waterways Map

The aforementioned example of the waterways adjacent to the Little Jamaica study area and one other showing disappearing waterways from 1802 are unpacked in the Background document—Appendix D—which provides additional information pertaining to our Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan process and research.

18 Lost Rivers. (n.d.). *Cedarvale Ravine*. <https://www.lostrivers.ca/content/CedarvaleRavine.html>

Context, Conditions & Community Inputs

Culture is at once amorphous and inextricably embedded in place.

It is impossible to establish a collective, future-focused Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan without explicitly understanding the past as well as the current planning, placemaking and policy context of the area. The Practice placed an emphasis on important cultural and business venues while recognizing the boundlessness of culture and responding to the ways that culture permeates every aspect of the community.

To understand and validate these complex layers of the local landscape, we have used City of Toronto sources, multiple external secondary sources and multidisciplinary research, and we conducted a high-level residential and retail typology overview. Additionally, the Practice incorporated unconventional grassroots approaches such as collaborating with community members on mapping for components such as mobility, food security and social services. Finally, we collected personal artifacts and oral stories, worked with a citizen historian to gather archival artifacts and conducted one-on-one interviews with local stakeholders.

Each component in this section includes an overview underpinned by both equity and evidence-based placemaking analysis, visual representations and summarized community feedback ascertained through open house events and 30+ additional engagements. This comprehensive, atypical cultural planning approach reveals the social, spatial and cultural fabric of the community.

NOTE: Most of the maps in this section have been developed using a base map provided by the City of Toronto. In a few instances, the base map has been slightly amended to accommodate the data generated from Practice research—archival, academic, community engagement and City documents—along with social mapping activities alongside community stakeholders.



Models created by students from John Polanyi and York Memorial Collegiate Institutes—Youth Design Charrette hosted by Jay Pitter Placemaking and University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture.

MOBILITY

The formalization of Little Jamaica as a cultural district finds its origin story in a complex, decade-long mobility saga centred around the disruptions caused by the ongoing challenges related to the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT. These challenges include: lost business revenues, business closures, public space design issues and diminished mental wellness for many local stakeholders. In addition to providing community members and the broader city with a sustainable and affordable mobility option, this initiative has begun, and will continue, to ignite transit-oriented development (TOD). This type of development is defined as a mixed-use community within an average 2,000-foot walking distance of a transit stop and core commercial area.¹⁹

While the benefits—economic, health, environmental and social—of active and public transit mobility initiatives are undeniable, it is also true that TOD is increasingly referred to colloquially as transit-oriented displacement, and also transit-induced gentrification and transit-induced displacement. The meanings of these terms are synonymous, implied in the terms themselves. Transit-oriented displacement means to face displacement due to a public transit initiative. Transit-induced gentrification offers a rationale and specifies disproportionately impacted groups: “Since the enhanced accessibility offered by transit proximity is often capitalized into land and housing prices, many express concern that new transit investments will result in the displacement of the low-income populations likely to benefit most from transit access, a phenomenon which we term transit-induced gentrification.”²⁰ Finally, transit-induced displacement provides aligned analysis: “Neighbourhood socioeconomic change, including gentrification, can be viewed as the product of shifts in residential sorting of residents reacting to the placement of a new (transit) amenity which may place increased demand for living in a particular area. This demand may place an upward pressure on nearby housing values and rents, affecting the socioeconomic composition of those willing and able to afford these price premiums, thus spurring or accelerating gentrification. Rising land values may also lead to the disproportionate exit of lower-income residents unable to keep up with elevated rents or property taxes.”²¹

The Little Jamaica community is grappling with the loss spurred by transit-oriented development while concurrently hoping to be a primary beneficiary of the opportunities arising from that development. Business owners, vocal community advocates and long-time residents alike are insistent that transit-oriented development in the area should result in more than just moving bodies and goods from Point A to Point B, but rather deliver on increasing social and economic mobility while honouring the natural environment.

19 Jacobson, J., & Forsyth, A. (2008). Seven American TODs: Good Practices for Urban Design in Transit-Oriented Development Projects. *Journal of Transport and Land Use*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.5198/jtlu.v1i2.67>

20 Dawkins, C., & Moeckel, R. (2016). Transit-Induced Gentrification: Who Will Stay, and Who Will Go? *Housing Policy Debate*, 26(4-5), 801-818. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2016.1138986>

21 Delmelle, E. C. (2021). Transit-Induced Gentrification and Displacement: The State of the Debate. In R.H.M. Pereira & G. Boisjoly (Eds.), *Advances in Transport Policy and Planning*, Vol. 8 (pp. 173–190). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.atpp.2021.06.005>

This Sidewalk Map depicts full and partial sidewalks tethered to streets, walkways, laneways and trails.



Map 3: Sidewalk Map

Highlights

- » Almost all sidewalks in Little Jamaica are complete and located on both sides of the street.
- » Partial sidewalks and the absence of sidewalks are concentrated at the edge of and just outside the study boundary.
- » There are many laneways within the study boundary, which are sites of play and informal gathering, as well as disconcerting street-involved activities.



Recommendation

Optimize the use of spacious sidewalk widths along the Eglinton West retail corridor by encouraging an increased number of patios, street trees, seating areas and flexible places of pause.



Recommendation

Repair cracked, uneven and slick sidewalks, which currently diminish accessibility and create tripping hazards in some instances (especially along Eglinton Avenue West); and increase sidewalk maintenance in problem areas.



Recommendation

Install accessible sidewalk and street-crossing infrastructure such as tactile walking surface indicators, depressed curbs and crosswalks aligned with the desired path of travel.



Recommendation

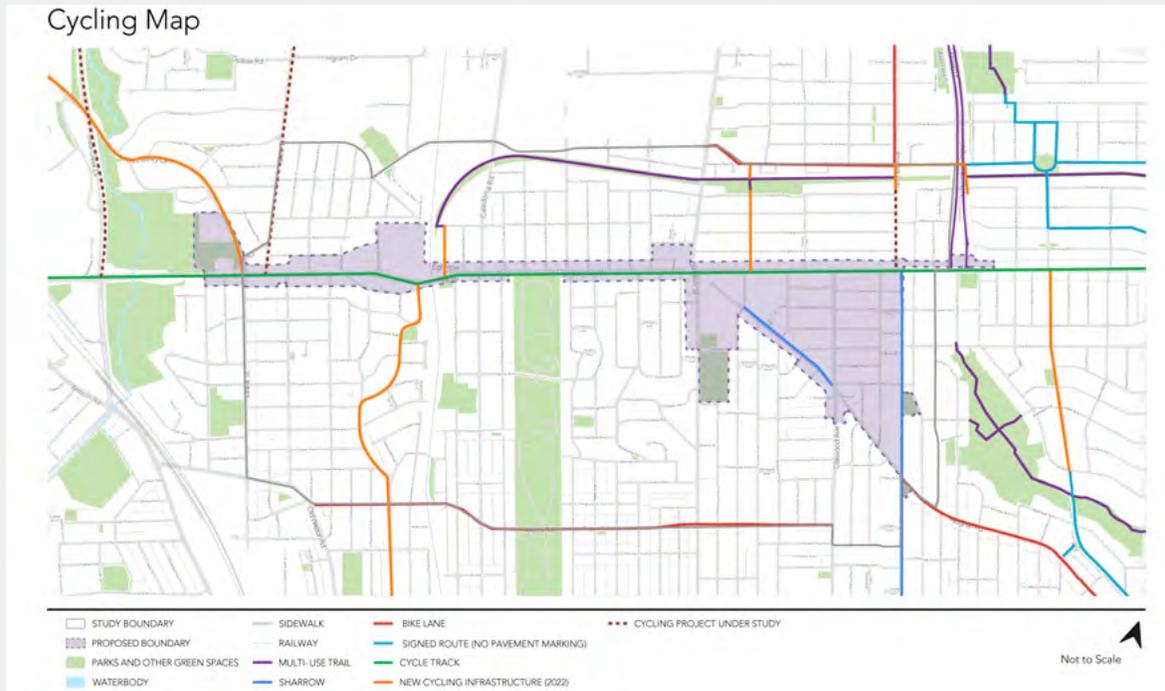
Mitigate the stark street and sidewalk maintenance divide between the east and west sides of Allen Road along Eglinton Avenue.



Recommendation

Leverage the relatively new Toronto Community Crisis Service to resolve conflicts and support a growing street-involved population of individuals experiencing distress.

This Cycling Map depicts different types of existing cycling trails, new cycling infrastructure, and cycling projects under study.



Map 4: Cycling Map

Highlights

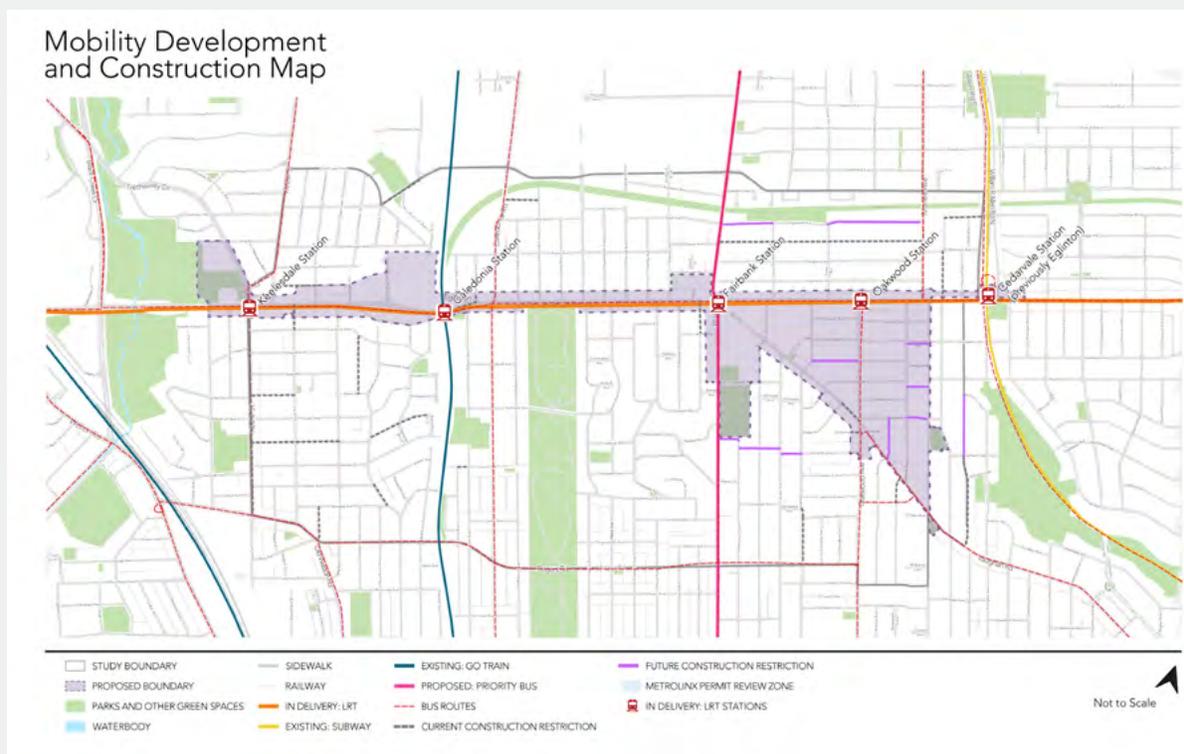
- » Raised cycle tracks have been completed in front of some stations along Eglinton Avenue West. They were completed in 2022 as part of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and complement nearby existing cycling infrastructure. The sections between station frontages are currently being studied as part of the eglintonTOday Complete Street Project (Phase 1). The eglintonTOday project proposes complete street features, including bikeways and public realm upgrades such as art installations on Eglinton Avenue between Keele Street and Mount Pleasant Road. This project could align with other City of Toronto projects to improve cycling and pedestrian experiences such as CaféTO, Vision Zero and RapidTO.
- » More recent cycling infrastructure projects, including completely new bike lanes and upgrades to existing ones, are located in and around the western portion of Little Jamaica.
- » There is an opportunity to improve cycling in the area; the City is currently undertaking cycling project studies along Black Creek Drive, Keele Street and Marlee Avenue.



Recommendation

Consider completing the Allen Greenway linear park and multi-use trail, and using Everden Road as a complete street, to connect the Allen Greenway to Cedarvale Park.

This Mobility Development and Construction Map shows mobility-oriented development and construction within the study boundary.



Map 5: Mobility Development and Construction Map

Highlights

- » The major mode of public transit for residents in Little Jamaica is buses.
- » A 2020 heat map depicting crowding on Toronto buses showed that the 29 Dufferin and the 41 Keele, two major bus routes within the study boundary, experienced significant crowding during the morning rush hour.
- » The Eglinton Crosstown LRT will create five new stops in Little Jamaica—Keelesdale, Caledonia, Oakwood, Fairbank and Cedarvale—providing an unprecedented level of transit service.
- » There are several lane restrictions now due to mobility-oriented developments such as roadway and sidewalk reconstruction, resurfacing and construction. Much of this ongoing construction is concentrated toward the more eastern end of Little Jamaica, while upcoming construction is concentrated in the western end.
- » While there are many benefits from ongoing mobility-oriented development in the area, adverse impacts continue to be experienced by local businesses, organizations and residents.



Recommendation

Address street safety issues caused by construction site structures such as temporary safety fences as well as accumulated debris, which force pedestrians onto the roadway.



Recommendation

Implement, in collaboration with community members, street-based audits to collaboratively explore local concerns pertaining to race-based and class-based profiling on both streets and public transit; ticketing of small-scale vendors; and harassment of women, transgender people and gender-diverse individuals.



Recommendation

Explore a traffic management strategy at the Eglinton Avenue and Allen Road intersection, which is often congested, contravening the rationale of the one-minute idling bylaw and diminishing a pedestrian feel to the retail corridor while increasing both noise and air pollution.



Recommendation

Address long-standing street safety issues, particularly at the five-point Oakwood Avenue and Vaughan Road intersection, by installing an all-way stoplight; creating a continuous bike lane along Vaughan Road; and addressing the sightline issue at the northeast corner of Vaughan Road.

Community Inputs

While eager for the increased mobility that the Eglinton Crosstown LRT will bring, the community has expressed throughout the process the urgent need for all orders of government to take their fair share of responsibility for the transit-oriented displacement that has occurred. This has disproportionately impacted Black individuals and renters of all identities while disrupting the delights of daily life for almost everyone in the area. Community stakeholders raised concerns pertaining to the lack of sidewalk maintenance and unsafe, aging infrastructure; diminished sidewalk access to many businesses, which has contributed to closures; the erasure of vibrant street life, which has contributed to concerning street-involved behaviours such as public drug use and defecation; and loss of sidewalk and street space for both formal and informal cultural events. Many of these events celebrate Caribbean culture while bringing revenue into the community, thus benefiting everyone. Community stakeholders also expressed a desire for safe(r), more-connected bike lanes; enough parking for patrons from outside of the area; and ensuring that new residents refrain from policing the area's fluid and dynamic street culture.

BUSINESSES & COLLECTIVE PROSPERITY

The fundamental cornerstone of successful local businesses and broader collective prosperity is equitable economic development, which is defined as unlocking “the full potential of the local economy by dismantling barriers and expanding opportunities for lower-income citizens and communities of emphasis.”²² This ambitious aspiration is “achieved when the policies and programs used to spur growth are specifically designed to ensure that traditionally underserved communities and individuals share in the benefits of growth. The end goal is for individuals to be both benefactors and beneficiaries of community and economic development initiatives.”²³

This model and its expressed goals are especially relevant to Toronto because, according to research, the city has “become the most unequal and the most polarized”²⁴ in comparison to other metropolitan areas across Canada. Middle-income neighbourhoods are disappearing, illuminating stark inequities and related tensions between low-income and high-income neighbourhoods. In addition to being unaligned with Toronto’s status as one of the most culturally diverse and prosperous cities in the world, economic inequity and polarity contribute to violence, hopelessness, and poor health and mental health outcomes. Unfortunately, economic inequity and its adverse impacts are palpable throughout, and adjacent to, the Little Jamaica community.

The loss of business revenue resulting from decades of slow decline, COVID-19, and the lengthy and uncertain LRT construction process has profoundly harmed businesses and the broader community. Despite these challenges, businesses have deepened their advocacy efforts to fill institutional resource and service-provision gaps. For example, Centro Cultural Latinoamericano is a thriving performance space for Latin American music, poetry and literature. At the beginning of the pandemic, in recognition of the rising food insecurity in the neighbourhood and the urgent community need, the establishment quickly pivoted to launch a neighbourhood food bank, honouring one of its mandates “to be in solidarity and generate solidarity.”²⁵ Similarly, the owners of the Smile Back Mattresses & Furniture store increased its food bank operations by two days a week as a result of the pandemic. Many other business owners are also finding ways of accommodating individuals struggling with street-involved behaviours, alongside typical paying patrons, within their premises.

The City has also made important contributions. Its Economic Development and Culture Division has provided micro and small grants through its Cultural Hotspots funding program.

22 Wake County Economic Development. (2023). *Equitable Economic Development*. <https://raleigh-wake.org/business-advantages/equitable-economic-development>

23 Fourth Economy. (2023). *Equitable Economic Development Defined*. <https://www.fourtheconomy.com/equitable-development>

24 Dinca-Panaitescu, M., Hulchanski, D., Lafèche, M., McDonough, L., Maaranen, R., & Procyk, S. (2017). *The Opportunity Equation in the Greater Toronto Area: An update on neighbourhood income inequality and polarization. United Way Toronto and York Region. Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. Neighbourhood Change Research Group at the University of Toronto*. <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/documents/2020/01/opportunity-equation-toronto-inequality-update.pdf>

25 Herrera, R. (2021, March 16). *Save the Centro Cultural Latinoamericano Toronto*. GoFundMe. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-the-centro-cultural-latinoamericano-toronto>

Perhaps most significantly, the City played an integral role in securing a \$1-million Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario²⁶ grant, managed by the Black Business and Professional Association (BBPA),²⁷ which opened a satellite office in the area. These and other extensions are part of a broader structural commitment the City has made through separate City Council motions to support the area's Black-owned and operated businesses on "their stabilization, reopening, recovery and rebuild strategy,"²⁸ while guiding "future growth and transit development to support the cultural district and commercial retail businesses on main streets," which will benefit the entire community.²⁹ With the imminent arrival of new businesses and residents, coupled with a collective questioning of who gets to prosper and who gets left behind, the definition, allocation and manifestation of true local collective prosperity is among the most contentious and promising aspects of Little Jamaica's recovery.

One Community Supported By Four BIAs

There are more than 80 Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) across Toronto, which is more than any other urban centre in the world.³⁰ These organizations are legal entities mandated to be "catalysts for civic improvements, ultimately enhancing the business climate and quality of life of the neighbourhood."³¹ Through municipal funding, the collection of levies and the contribution of considerable volunteer labour, these organizations support individual businesses and the broader local economy. They provide services and support activities such as sidewalk beautification, business amplification and co-hosting revenue-generating events that also strengthen community connectivity.

The businesses in Little Jamaica operating out of brick-and-mortar facilities are supported by four BIAs: Oakwood Village BIA, York-Eglinton BIA, Eglinton Hill BIA and Fairbank Village BIA. United by a shared mandate to provide support to businesses and to be an overall asset to the community, these BIAs have distinct cultures and serve a broad range of businesses. Their geographic boundaries related to this proposed Cultural District boundary are also distinct. For example, The Eglinton Hill BIA catchment area falls entirely within the proposed Little Jamaica Cultural District boundary while the Oakwood Village BIA has a catchment area that covers approximately 25% of the Little Jamaica boundary. Both the York-Eglinton and Fairbank Village BIAs have catchment areas that fall somewhere between 60-75% within the proposed Little Jamaica boundary.

26 Government of Canada. (2022, June 15). *Tourism Relief Fund in southern Ontario*. <https://feddev-ontario.canada.ca/en/funding-southern-ontario-organizations/past-programs/tourism-relief-fund>

27 Draaisma, M. (2021, November 21). *Little Jamaica receives \$1M federal grant to help it sustain Black-owned businesses*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/business-owners-little-jamaica-federal-grant-one-million-revitalization-1.6257709>

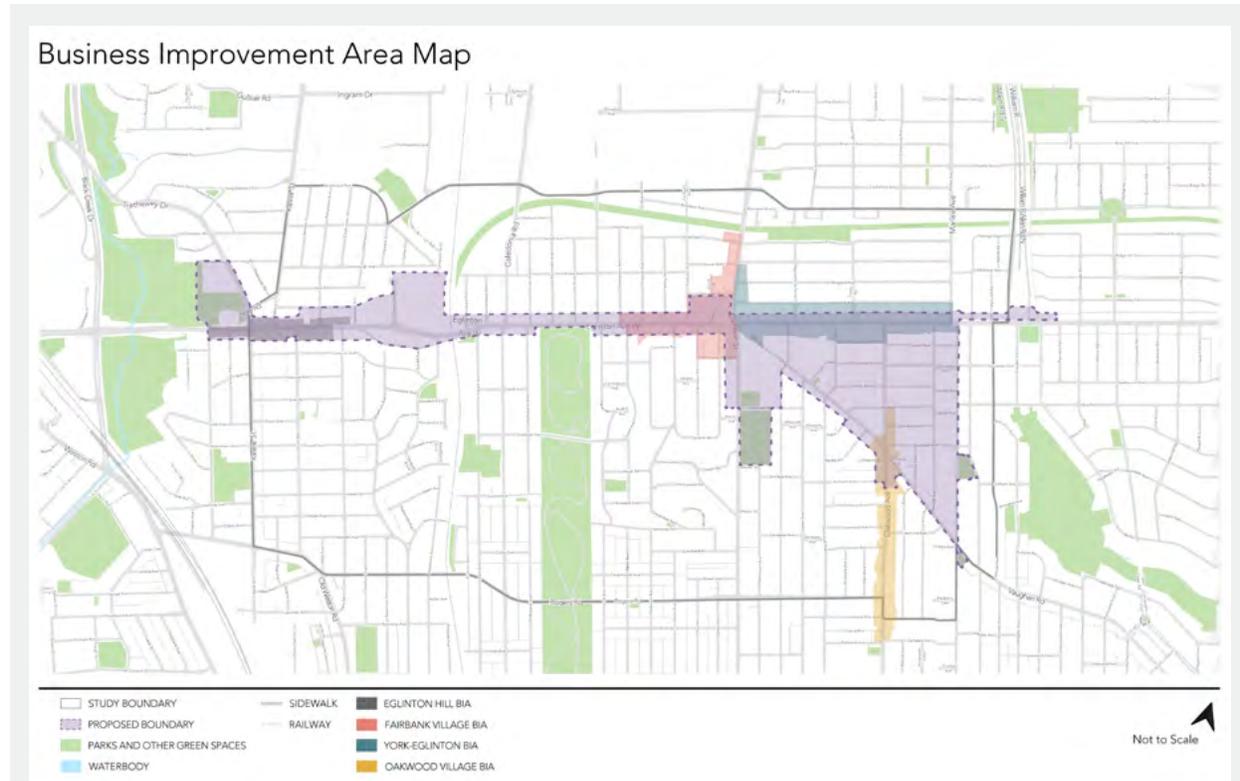
28 City of Toronto. (2020, September 30). *Item - 2020.MM24.36*. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.MM24.36>

29 Pitter, J. (2022). *Preliminary Report Research, Mapping & Engagement Little Jamaica Cultural District Planning Process*. City of Toronto. <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/96e8-city-planning-little-jamaica-cultural-district-plan-preliminary-report.pdf>

30 Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas. (2021). *What is a BIA?* <https://www.toronto-bia.com/whats-a-bia/>

31 Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas. (2021). *What is a BIA?* <https://www.toronto-bia.com/whats-a-bia/>

The following Business Improvement Area Map depicts the catchment area of the four BIAs within (and beyond) the proposed Little Jamaica boundary.



Map 6: Business Improvement Area Map

Highlights

- » In accordance with the Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 19, Business Improvement Areas, BIA levies cannot support individual businesses. Funds must support area-wide initiatives, including public realm improvements, marketing and promotion.³² Fundamentally, business owners of all identities and all cultural backgrounds and expressions are supported by BIAs.
- » The York-Eglinton BIA serves businesses in the retail corridor along Eglinton Avenue West between Dufferin Street and Marlee Avenue. It dubs this area the “heart of Little Jamaica.” This area includes numerous beloved businesses, past and present, such as Monica’s Cosmetic Supplies, Randy’s Patties, Rap’s and Jamall Caribbean Custom Tailor, significant to Black and broader communities. This BIA has also supported the Afro Caribbean Farmers’ Market, which has played a pivotal role in supporting the animation and revival of the area.
- » The Fairbank Village BIA serves businesses in the retail corridor along Eglinton Avenue West between Chamberlain Avenue and Dufferin Street. While Black businesses such as Glamourama Hair operate in this area, the Fairbank Village BIA generally has a higher concentration of Latin American- and Filipino-owned businesses.

32 City of Toronto. (2023). *Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 19, Business Improvement Areas*. https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_019.pdf

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- » The Oakwood Village BIA serves businesses in the area along Oakwood Avenue between Bude Street and Earlsdale Avenue. While the proposed Little Jamaica Cultural District boundary includes only approximately 25% of the businesses served by this BIA, several important Black and Caribbean businesses and services, such as Share Newspaper and the Nia Centre for the Arts, are located within its parameters. As well, this BIA has led several important initiatives celebrating the Black and Caribbean community, including Our Crowns, a mural celebrating Black hair; a metal palm tree installation; and the recent Honouring Black History in Oakwood Village project, where Black businesses featured window art and stories.
- » The Eglinton Hill BIA serves businesses located further west than the three other BIAs, running along Eglinton Avenue West between Kane Avenue and Bicknell Avenue. There have been, and are currently, many important Black-owned businesses in the area, such as Irie Veggie and King Culture Records Co.
- » There are a number of cultural sites celebrating Black and Caribbean heritage in this area, including the Rita Cox Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection at the Maria A. Shchuka Library, Jimmy Wisdom Way and Reggae Lane. Over the years, the four BIAs have partnered with, and supported, community stakeholders to animate these cultural sites and other places that hold significance for people of all identities in the area.

Businesses Beneath the Radar

As a site of arrival for many Caribbean newcomers, as well as newcomers from across the globe, Little Jamaica is home to many creative and industrious individuals chasing the city's promise. There are numerous home-based businesses operating beneath the radar within Little Jamaica, including, but not limited to: kitchen sink hair stylists; basement recording studios; eBay sellers and traders; and living room day-care providers. During warmer months, informal workers selling fresh juices and handmade jewellery animate the retail corridor, while seasonal workers sell multiple products at annual festivals. While many of these business types are unsanctioned, they contribute to the vibrancy of the community and represent the tenacity of its people. All of the aforementioned business types contribute to Little Jamaica's rich business ecology.



Recommendation

Reallocate 75% of property taxes collected along the retail corridor for five years to directly support Black business owners and business owners who are renters. This will provide direct funding for emergency relief, capacity-building and small capital projects.



Recommendation

Amend residential zoning regulations and pilot a home-based business program that will enable entrepreneurs and informal workers operating outside of the BIA mandate to lawfully conduct businesses currently operating beneath the radar.

The primary business types in the area include, but are not limited to, food and drink, beauty salons, barber shops, financial services, office services, grocery stores, clothing stores and record shops. Many of these businesses also serve as community hubs and contribute to the overall vitality of the neighbourhood.



Source: Google Earth

Black Peoples' Distinct Challenges & Cultural Contributions

In addition to being an egregious human rights violation—characterized by forced separation from ancestral homelands, language and faith—the transatlantic slave trade was predicated upon economic oppression. The legacy of this violation persists through the same capitalistic structures that were built upon, and/or benefited from, the exploitation of Black labour, the minimization of Black brilliance and the diminishing of Black humanity. While Black people are not the only racialized or oppressed group to face economic oppression or inhumane state-sanctioned treatment, they have not received compensation commensurate with what other historically marginalized groups have received—due in large part to a legacy of continued structural anti-Black racism.

Despite the fact that Black Canadians aged 25 to 54 were more likely to hold a bachelor's degree or higher (42.8%) than Canadians in the same age group who were not a visible minority (33.6%),³³ these same Black individuals have a lower employment rate than their non-visible minority counterparts. Black men are also approximately 40% less likely to work in management occupations than non-visible minority men (6.3% compared to 11.3%).³³ Black women are also underrepresented in management occupations (4.3%) compared with non-visible minority women (6.9%).³³ There is also a disturbing discrepancy regarding fair wages. On average, Black Canadians (and Latin American Canadians, some of whom are also Black), earn the least out of 10 minority groups each week in this country.³³

An alarming COVID-related stat released in early 2021 indicated that the unemployment rate among Black Canadians (13.1%) was about 70% higher than that of non-visible minority Canadians (7.7%).³⁴

These and other evidence-based findings—coupled with an acknowledgment of how the transatlantic slave trade was the starting point for the immense economic oppression that continues and compounds these issues to this day—are fundamental to understanding the disproportionate and devastating impacts to Black businesses in Little Jamaica, which has the highest concentration of Black and Caribbean businesses in Toronto. According to Black Urbanism TO (BUTO), the Eglinton LRT construction has resulted in 140 Black business closures.³⁵ It's been reported that more than 50 of those closures have occurred within the past five years.³⁶

33 Statistics Canada. (2021, February 24). *Study: A labour market snapshot of Black Canadians during the pandemic*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210224/dq210224b-eng.htm>

34 Qiu, T., & Schellenberg, G. (2022, January 26). *The weekly earnings of Canadian-born individuals in designated visible minority and White categories in the mid-2010s*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2022001/article/00004-eng.htm>

35 Saba, R. (2020, August 26). 'Little Jamaica could be lost to history': Advocates renew call for official recognition of cultural gem in wake of COVID-19, LRT construction and gentrification. *Toronto Star*. https://www.thestar.com/business/little-jamaica-could-be-lost-to-history-advocates-renew-call-for-official-recognition-of-cultural/article_9d564477-860b-52e9-9ce5-37ea16783209.html

36 Draaisma, M. (2021, November 21). *Little Jamaica receives \$1M federal grant to help it sustain Black-owned businesses*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/business-owners-little-jamaica-federal-grant-one-million-revitalization-1.6257709>

However, these long-standing and relatively recent economic inequities have not deterred Black businesses, and Black Torontonians more broadly, from making substantial contributions to the community's economy and culture. For example, the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, formerly known as Caribana, hosted the Junior Carnival in Little Jamaica for many years.

The Junior Carnival contributes significantly to the community's local economy. The annual Caribana event itself attracts more than 1.2 million people, including 180,000 tourists, to Toronto and generates approximately \$338 million for Ontario. Smaller cultural festivals, such as the former Air Jamaica Day, as well as iconic retail institutions like Randy's Patties³⁷ and Monica's Cosmetic Supplies, have also contributed to the economic prosperity in the area. Unfortunately, many of these economic contributions, which have benefited all businesses in Little Jamaica, have been overlooked.

The City itself has acknowledged that “historically, Toronto has credited its economic successes and opportunities to its cultural vibrancy. However, this success has not been equitably distributed to Toronto's lower-income and Indigenous, Black and/or equity-deserving residents.”³⁸ As a result, a commitment has been made to “support economic recovery and improved outcomes” by “adopting inclusive approaches to economic and cultural policy and program development.”³⁹ Contending with this broader economic inequity, while addressing Black peoples' distinct economic oppression, is the pathway toward creating shared prosperity in Little Jamaica.



Recommendation

Ensure that in the future, the terms and use of resources such as the \$1-million grant issued to the Black Business and Professional Association—and earmarked for Black-owned businesses—are defined and co-administered by local stakeholders.



Recommendation

Revive and animate the cultural imprint of the retail corridor through placemaking interventions such as mounting art displays in empty storefronts, increasing the number of patios and integrating street trees. This will reignite the local economy while mitigating the growing sense of “blight” and discouraging street-involved behaviour.



Recommendation

Develop a framework and policies to close the racial wealth gap, prioritizing Black communities, and establish a culturally responsive entrepreneurial hub, inclusive of revenue-generating spaces, to support Black entrepreneurs along with other groups such as Indigenous Peoples, newcomers, middle-aged women, youth, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and disabled people.



Recommendation

Establish, together with Tourism Ontario and relevant hospitality associations, a percentage of revenues to be redirected to Black communities—to be held in trust by the Black Opportunity Fund—to implement infrastructure projects (in keeping with arrangements made with other groups attracting comparable revenue).

37 Randy's Take Out is lovingly referred to by the local population as “Randy's Patties” and is hereinafter referred to as such.

38 City of Toronto. (2022). *2022 Council Briefing: Inclusive Economic Development & Culture*. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/city-administration/for-your-information-toronto/2022-start-of-council-term-briefing/2022-council-briefing-inclusive-economic-development-culture/>

39 City of Toronto. (2022). *2022 Council Briefing: Inclusive Economic Development & Culture*. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/city-administration/for-your-information-toronto/2022-start-of-council-term-briefing/2022-council-briefing-inclusive-economic-development-culture/>



Source: CaribanaToronto.com



Community Inputs

Overall, community stakeholders expressed a desire for the City to make special provisions that would increase funding to the BIAs and enable impacted business owners of all identities to receive direct and meaningful emergency funding to align with the City's public apology for its role in the ongoing LRT disruption. Also, many Black business owners conveyed that while grateful for the federal funding issued through the City, things such as capacity-building workshops and the initiation of a festival—versus more direct funding to business owners in crisis—were not aligned with meeting their key pain points. However, business owners and community members alike echoed the importance of restoring previous festivals and other cultural events that have been proven to attract audiences and generate revenue. There was also general consensus regarding the importance of fixing sidewalks, beautifying business facades and addressing boarded-up storefronts to welcome both old and new patrons while decreasing a sense of blight and despair along the retail corridor.

INDIGENEITY

All cultural districts are sited on Indigenous lands and therefore must respectfully root themselves in Indigenous placekeeping practices and worldviews. It is important to understand that Indigenous cultures are extraordinarily diverse and that core elements of Indigenous placekeeping include a fundamental recognition of Indigenous Peoples as being both historical and current stewards of these lands, including urban places. This is critically important because Indigenous Peoples are often erased from the contemporary city and narrowly situated as peoples of the past sojourning in pastoral places or living on reservations.

Fundamentally, placekeeping practised by people of all identities is “an approach to city building that prioritizes ecological, historical and cultural relationships in the care of ‘place.’ Placekeeping goes beyond the planning and design of public spaces—it’s the active care and maintenance of the space.”⁴⁰ These values are tethered to Indigenous Peoples of these lands and more broadly across individuals and groups of all identities. Specifically, Indigenous placekeeping is “aimed at restoring Indigenous presence in Canada through art and design that is created, produced, and driven by Indigenous communities and underpinned by Indigenous knowledge,” including “the spiritual, the emotional, the physical and the mental ways of being into urban development at multiple levels.”⁴¹

Moreover, “Indigenous ontological and epistemological constructions of ‘place’ may relate significantly and intergenerationally to ‘custodial responsibilities, narratives, or spiritual awareness’,”⁴² while their “ways of boundary making and connection to the land often vary from Eurocentric conceptualizations of land ownership and exchange value. The sense of place may be interwoven with a relationship to the land not easily translated through political, social and technical processes of Western planning and architecture that seem fixated upon land ownership, property demarcation and power.”⁴³

The Indigenous Affairs Office—mandated to support City divisions in their work with First Nations, Inuit, Métis peoples and all urban Indigenous communities to strengthen relationships and advance reconciliation—collaborated with the City’s Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee to establish a four-pronged placemaking framework: Public Art; Places & Naming; Policy & Capacity; and Engagement/Consultation. They had the following goals:

40 Evergreen. (2022, June 15). *Through an Indigenous Lens: A Shift From Placemaking to Placekeeping*. <https://www.evergreen.ca/blog/entry/through-an-indigenous-lens-a-shift-from-placemaking-to-placekeeping/>

41 Pritchard, G. (2011, November). *Indigenous Place Making & Ethical Space*. Canadian Environmental Law Association. <https://cela.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Indigenous-Place-Making-Ethical-Space.pdf>

42 Porter, L. (2013). Coexistence in cities: The challenge of indigenous urban planning in the twenty-first century. In R. Walker, T. Jojola, & D. Natcher (Eds.), *Reclaiming indigenous planning* (p. 41). McGill-Queen’s University Press.

43 McGaw, J., Pieris, A., & Potter, E. (2011). Indigenous place-making in the city: Dispossessions, occupations and implications for cultural architecture. *Architectural Theory Review*, 16(3), 296–311.

Nejad, S., & Walker, R. (2018). Contemporary Urban Indigenous Placemaking in Canada. In E. Grant, K. Greenop, A. Refiti, & D. Glenn (Eds.), *The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture*. (pp. 223–251). Springer.

- » Expanding and ensuring presentation and commemoration of Indigenous histories and cultures;
- » Creating space—physically, and in process and policy—for ceremony, teaching and community;
- » Strengthening Indigenous connections with lands and waters, both traditionally and contemporarily used;
- » Building capacity for land-based Indigenous engagement and for greater cultural competency in City of Toronto staff.

The City has also developed its first Reconciliation Action Plan that will guide “actions to advance truth, justice and reconciliation for the next 10 years.”⁴⁴ There are inherent tensions in terms of how to respectfully recognize a diverse range of Indigenous Peoples in Little Jamaica and all future cultural districts on Indigenous lands. There are also layers of sacrifice and cultural contributions of individuals and groups of all identities, creating the possibility for dynamic and harmonious placekeeping exchanges among all community stakeholders.



Recommendation

Conduct deeper consultation with Indigenous individuals and urban Indigenous groups, in addition to consultation with larger formalized groups, to gain more nuanced and diverse Indigenous placekeeping perspectives.



Recommendation

Daylight Indigenous placenames, native species and oral stories as part of knitting together the cultural identity of the community.



Recommendation

Build upon and support the work of grassroots and informal Indigenous groups in the area.

Listening to Indigenous Insights

The following is a summary of key insights and questions emerging from City-initiated meetings with the Indigenous Affairs Office and Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee, which took place in 2021 and 2022:

- » Cultural districts can help people understand the true history and contemporary Indigenous realities of places across the city.
- » There is an opportunity to leverage cultural districts in a manner that expands the “settler story” from white communities to the international diaspora, immigrants, refugees and international Indigenous communities in Toronto.
- » It is important to include designated sites for sacred fires and larger ceremonial places, teaching lodges, art markets, farmers’ markets, and pop-up shops to support and honour Indigenous placekeeping.

44 City of Toronto. (n.d.). *Reconciliation Action Plan*. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/long-term-vision-plans-and-strategies/reconciliation-action-plan/>

- » Given that all land is Indigenous land, it is important to embrace an approach that highlights Indigeneity across all cultural districts and the broader city while also identifying a few key areas to specifically support Indigenous economies and cultures.
- » The terms “equitable” and “equitable placemaking” do not always or necessarily include Indigenous Peoples; it is therefore important that Indigenous placekeeping be an explicit aspect of the development of cultural districts.
- » Affordability and access to bricks-and-mortar retail, cultural and service provision spaces are barriers to Indigenous placekeeping and economic agency; this should be addressed in the formalization of cultural districts.



Recommendation

Ensure that Indigenous business owners are meaningfully considered when reimagining the retail corridor, are included in local markets and are supported through entrepreneurial investments and capacity-building initiatives.



Recommendation

Actively gather a diverse range of intangible Indigenous cultural expressions to avoid unresponsive, flattened monolithic narratives and placekeeping approaches.



Recommendation

Provide culturally responsive services geared toward Indigenous Peoples to address the disproportionate issues they face, often perpetuated by the intergenerational trauma and ongoing inequities related to colonization.



Recommendation

Amend park policies to better respond to Indigenous cultural practices in green spaces, such as hosting sacred fire gatherings, foraging and building traditional structures such as wigwams.

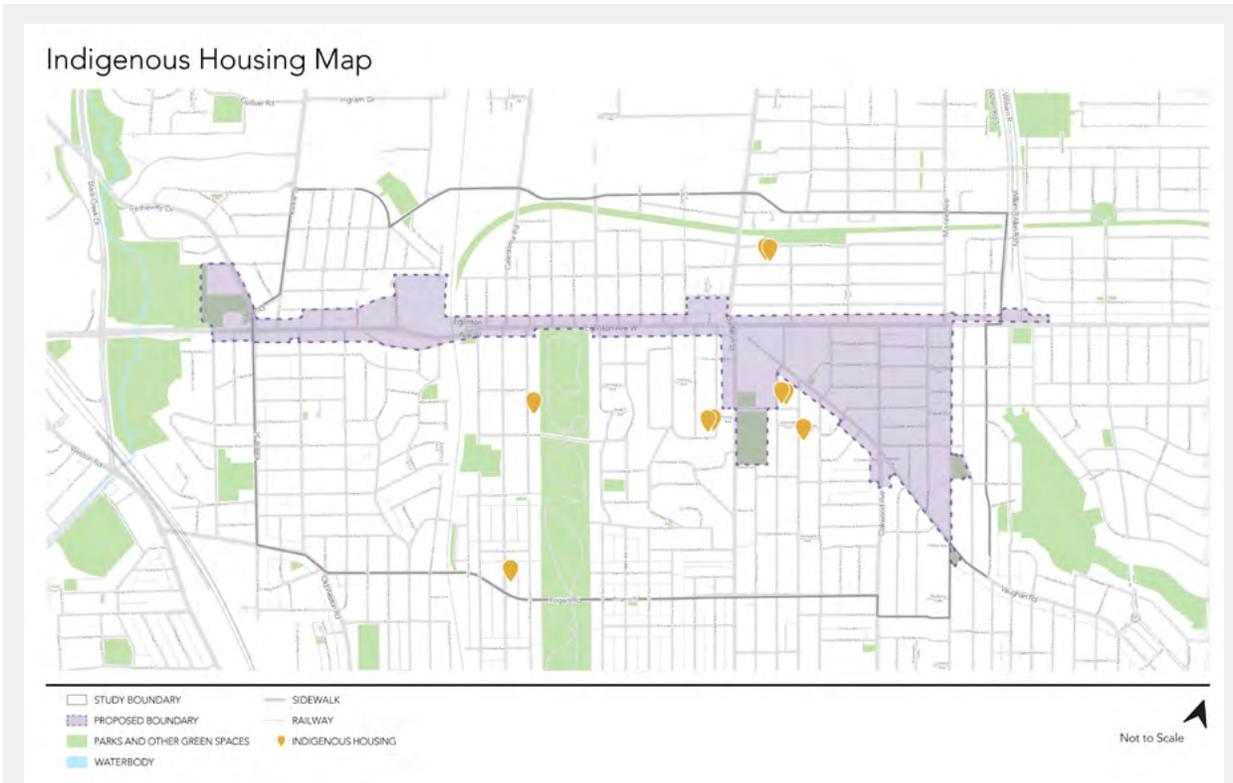
Indigenous Housing

Indigenous Peoples live in a diverse range of both private and public housing types within and adjacent to Little Jamaica. However, there are a number of housing sites operated by Wigwamen Incorporated, a non-profit that is Ontario’s oldest and largest urban Aboriginal housing provider serving families, singles and seniors. It has 221 sites all over Toronto, ranging from single-detached housing to apartment complexes.⁴⁵ In the study boundary, there are nine Indigenous housing sites made up of single-detached or semi-detached houses, dispersed throughout residential neighbourhoods.

Just outside the area, there are two identified Indigenous housing services. West of the area is Nekenan Second Stage Housing near Weston Road and Ray Avenue. This is a transitional housing service for Indigenous women, providing safe and temporary housing. East of the area is Na-Me-Res near Bathurst Street and St. Clair Avenue West, an Indigenous men’s shelter that provides a range of housing services at different stages (temporary, transitional and permanent).

45 *Home page.* (n.d.). Wigwamen. <https://www.wigwamen.com/>

This Indigenous Housing Map depicts existing Indigenous housing adjacent to the proposed Little Jamaica boundary.



Map 7: Indigenous Housing Map

Highlights

- » There is no Indigenous-designated housing that directly falls within the proposed boundaries. At most, four Indigenous housing sites are within close proximity while four others are relatively close.
- » The Indigenous housing sites mapped are predominantly semi-detached or multi-plex housing, which may suggest a gap in diverse Indigenous housing typologies and options.
- » Naturally, Indigenous Peoples may live within the proposed area boundaries outside of Indigenous housing, which is not represented on the aforementioned map.



Recommendation

Incorporate Indigenous design principles, co-created with both professional and grassroots Indigenous placekeepers, in all housing, amenity and public space developments.

Community Insights

Indigenous community stakeholders indicated that they would like financial support for their business initiatives, prioritizing space and resources for collaboration within and beyond their communities. They also expressed that community spaces such as public libraries and schools have been used as sites for cultural programming. However, there is a desire to have greater access to sites with direct access to the earth such as local parks and the Humber River. Such sites are integral to facilitating individual and collective Indigenous placekeeping. It was also noted that some Indigenous community members share private backyards and other amenities for collective benefit. There are also a number of existing grassroots initiatives that should be respectfully supported and/or referenced, rather than centring large institutions.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND COLLECTIVE CULTURAL IMPRINT

Culture, an omnibus word, finds its poetic roots in the Latin word *cultura* stemming from *colere*, meaning “to cultivate.” Cultural practices and praxes are “understood as systems of symbols and meanings that even their creators contest, that lack fixed boundaries, that are constantly in flux, and that interact and compete with one another,”⁴⁶ which is why Raymond Henry Williams, a Welsh socialist scholar and writer, asserted, “Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language.”⁴⁷

The complication that he notes is incisively described by the late and incomparable bell hooks, a foremost author and social activist, who stated: “Dominant culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community.”⁴⁸

Additionally, UNESCO⁴⁹—which has shaped several important initiatives and conversations pertaining to cultural planning as innovation, sustainability and heritage preservation—defines culture in the following manner: “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art

46 Findley, C. V., & Rothney, J.A.M. (1941). *Twentieth-century world* (2nd Edition). Houghton Mifflin Co.

47 Williams, R. (1976). *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Oxford University Press, https://www.d.umn.edu/~cstroupe/handouts/general/culture_williams_keywords.pdf

48 Jenks, C. (2002). *Culture: Critical Concepts in Sociology* (1st Edition). Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Culture-Critical-Concepts-in-Sociology/Jenks/p/book/9780415226905>

49 The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”⁵⁰

Unfortunately, these and other discourses pertaining to the complexity, uneven power relations, intangible cultural practices within communities and collective aspirations interwoven throughout multiple dimensions of culture have not been addressed by conventional cultural planning and policy in Canada. While these policies and approaches have inarguably contributed to the vibrancy of the city, they are not equitably applied to individuals and groups of all identities nor are they responsive to hyper-local contexts.

Tension pertaining to the varied and complex nature of cultural planning is increasingly interrogated by scholars who note, “these policies are often replicated without taking into consideration the distinctive aspects of places and circumstances”⁵¹ and “the combined notion and practice of culture and planning conjure up a tension between not only tradition, resistance and change, heritage and contemporary expression, but also the ideals of cultural rights, equity and amenity.”⁵² Relatedly, while the *Ontario Heritage Act* provides tools and guidelines to both protect and honour heritage, emphasis has usually been placed on European histories, architecture and the built environment more broadly. Intangible cultural heritage—meaning local stories, dialects, daily practices and celebrations—is rarely acknowledged within the mainstream heritage planning paradigm, which has also contributed to inequities.

By no coincidence, we see that the same racialized people (and other equity-deserving groups such as 2SLGBTQ+ communities) who have invested their lifeblood into neighbourhoods that were largely historically excluded from Cultural Districts Program and planning schemes are now facing disproportionate risks of cultural displacement. To address these issues, the City has committed to advancing an equitable cultural district program.⁵³ Achieving this ambitious and structurally complex aspiration will mean it is imperative to transform policy, invest in initiatives and centre community insights to respond to a challenging number of interests and priorities—often competing—while inspiring a collective cultural vision.

50 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2001). *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/universal-declaration-cultural-diversity?ControlMode=Edit&DisplayMode=Design#2>

51 Comunian, R. (2011). Rethinking the Creative City: The Role of Complexity, Networks and Interactions in the Urban Creative Economy. *Urban Studies*, 48(6), 1157–1179. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43082003>

52 Evans, G. (2001). *Cultural planning: An urban renaissance?* (1st Edition). Routledge. p. 1

53 Pitter, J. (2022, June). *Proposal—Cultural Districts Program* [Unpublished]. City of Toronto.

Beautiful and Complex Collective Cultural Contributions

Throughout the development of this Plan, the Practice team, inclusive of community members, spoke with many individuals and groups, who had overlapping cultural practices and memories intertwined with long-standing Caribbean community members. These community members, who are neither Caribbean nor Black, also shared their own important and distinct cultural practices and memories. The Practice opted to lean into this complexity by creating space for community members of all identities to share their memories and practices as a way of demonstrating part of our guiding ethos—*there is enough space, justice and joy for all of us*. Keeping this distinct ethos in mind, the Practice gathered and summarized the following collective cultural contributions from community members at weekly engagements over the course of three months during both participatory open houses and through one-on-one interviews.

- » Caribbean festivals such as Jamaica Day and Caribana's Junior Carnival Parade have been established in Little Jamaica, often expanding to other areas across the GTHA with significant Caribbean and other Black populations. In addition to generating economic activity benefiting business owners of all identities, these festivals have created an opportunity for the community to experience the very best of Caribbean culture. Many community members described attending these festivals—lauded within and beyond the community—as “an enjoyable window into Caribbean culture” and contributing to their “curiosity about other cultures” and their “comfort with Black and other racialized communities.”⁵⁴
- » While the retail corridor has an undeniable Caribbean cultural imprint, local businesses owned by individuals of all identities have contributed to shaping a “world market” cultural cartography in Little Jamaica. These businesses reflect the overall diversity of the area and cater to Italian, Portuguese, Filipino, Ethiopian and Latin American community members. Additionally, Jewish-owned businesses further east of the area cater to Jewish people living within and adjacent to Little Jamaica. Many of these businesses—particularly small businesses owned by racialized individuals and newcomers of all racial identities—have historically served, and currently serve, as important cultural hubs providing informal support and gathering spaces. Moreover, over the past half-century, there have been special moments of co-operation and support between business owners of all identities. For example, a community member pointed out that while there is a mix of businesses that cater to specific cultural groups, there is also much cross-cultural exchange that takes place. Another community member noted that: “One café was clearly started by Italians but now Ethiopian taxi drivers hang out there. You can hear Italian, Amharic or Tigrinya [languages] stepping into that shop.”⁵⁵ For decades, long lineups out in front of Randy's Patties have created an informal opportunity for cross-cultural connection over the love of this popular savoury delight. Overall, sidewalks emerged as an unconventional site of cross-cultural exchanges. From students across local high schools gathering to hang out after classes, to elders engaged in their daily

54 Community Engagement Feedback

55 Community Engagement Feedback

coffee and chat ritual on the corner, to business owners breaking out their grills and enticing patrons with the aroma of foods from across the globe, the streets of Little Jamaica, seemingly simple, are an important local site of cross-cultural exchanges.

- » Public institutions such as schools, parks and libraries have been vital in facilitating positive cross-cultural exchanges, especially among youth and young families. Laughlin Park is one of numerous examples shared by community members: “Laughlin Park was a real gathering point for families and lots of mixing with parents watching kids (very multicultural), especially for families in apartments who do not have much personal space.”⁵⁶ Multiple community members, across race and generations, lamented the loss of the now-closed Vaughan Road Academy, which was a primary gathering space for cross-cultural exchanges. In addition to collaborating with Caribbean organizations to host culturally responsive extracurricular programming, school officials worked with a range of not-for-profit organizations and community members of all racial identities to co-create programming that knitted together all corners of the community. The loss of these and other spaces hasn’t simply reduced programming opportunities, it’s also contributed to increasing racial and class tensions.
- » Faith-based institutions and cultural practices were identified as important community spaces for cultural and religious groups. For example, Christ Church, The British Methodist Episcopal Church located at Dufferin Street and Eglinton Avenue, serves as an important community hub for many Black people residing within and beyond the community. Similarly, many long-standing Italian and Portuguese community members, and newer Filipino community members, find a sense of solace and cultural connectivity in the local Catholic churches. Moreover, Jewish people within and adjacent to Little Jamaica referenced the Beth Sholom Synagogue as being a significant faith- and community-based site, while Cedarvale Park is also a site where some Jewish community members observe the Sabbath and socialize.
- » Residential spaces such as low-rise rental apartment buildings and single-detached homes, which have in many ways defined the physical landscape, were also referenced as sites of cross-cultural exchanges. Community members living in single-detached homes in the area referenced informal chats on front porches and over backyard fences as exemplifying a type of “natural” and “intimate” way of getting to know each other across differences while strategizing for neighbourhood improvements. Similarly, community members, including Eastern European tenants residing in low-rise rental buildings, fondly recount memories of Caribbean music and aromatic scents emanating from kitchens wafting through the hallways. They recall cross-cultural exchanges involving the sharing of food, learning basic greetings across their respective cultures and sharing external amenities due to building restrictions and lack of space. These and other examples reinforce the fundamental fact that home is where cultural respect and understanding are first fostered.

Cultural Space Audit

Throughout the development of this Plan, the loss of both formal and informal cultural space was a recurring theme. To better understand the depth and scope of this loss, the Practice gathered examples of space types, in some instances specific locations. Additionally, to ensure that the conversations remained productive and aspirational, the Practice also queried the community about desired future spaces. The following chart is a summary of 350+ responses gathered throughout the project lifecycle. For brevity, repeated responses have been consolidated and are represented using asterisks. The responses in the chart validate the Practice's approach of expanding the definition of cultural planning to embrace the multiplicity of place and space types where culture is practised, performed, co-created and embodied.



Cultural Space Audit Summary

Legend * More Than Three Mentions *** More Than Ten Mentions

Community members submitted the following comments on sticky notes during the engagement process organized by the Practice. As such, colloquial or informal place names are included in this chart.

LOST CULTURAL & COMMUNITY SPACE

Randy's Patties *** • Honey Bee's * • West Indian/Caribbean grocery store * • Checo's Café & Amusements - (youth space in the '90s - safe space for girls) • Pizza Pizza - safe spaces for youth to hang out • Sam's (7/11) Oakwood Vaughan Plaza (youth hangout) • Club Focus/The Cave (youth space in the '90s) – currently same site as Nia Centre for the Arts • Chakula Tamu • Long-term care gone (tears) • Fairbank Memorial Park (closed with construction) • Vaughan Road Academy • Affordable event spaces for artisans • Loss of small businesses • All the lost shops from the Eglinton Crosstown LRT construction

Additional Comments

Unity between culture & business • Too much traffic • So much history – sad to be pushed out for development • Feeling pushed out by rich • The cost of rent will be high • Stop shutting down our community • Business can't afford increased rent • Loss of identity due to poor representation

CURRENT CULTURAL & COMMUNITY SPACE

Sinting Fest On Eglinton West * • Afro Caribbean Farmers' Market * • TreaJah Isle * • Rap's Restaurant * • Bike Stop • Barbershops • Sheryl's Caribbean Cuisine (formerly Judy's Island Grill Toronto) • Laughlin Park • Cy Townsend Park • Vibes Convenience Store • Toronto Public Library – Maria A. Shchuka Branch • Fresh fruit shops • BBQ on the street

Additional Comments

Excellent festivals, hope they continue • Construction needs to be completed quicker • Respect from local and provincial government • Vibrant community • Love the music during summer • Just keep the diverse community • More community Caribbean street festivals • Need more diverse business types

DESIRED FUTURE CULTURAL & COMMUNITY SPACE

Community centre *** • Child and elder care spaces *** • Sports centre * • Indoor pool at Fairbank Memorial Community Recreation Centre * • Splash pad * • Safe playgrounds * (adult exercise stations, kids' play structures & natural ecologies) • Clean & safe parks * (including basketball courts, * volleyball courts (2), chess tables) • Safe youth spaces * • Small green spaces across community *** • Kids' programs • Community garden *** • Shaded gathering spaces * • Street trees and flower boxes * • Increased cycling and pedestrian infrastructure *** • Improved sidewalk maintenance *** • Lower traffic speeds * • Reinstate cultural festivals *** • Diversify business types *** • Increased patios *** • Bring back Caribbean supermarkets *** • Develop an entrepreneurial food co-op space *** • Affordable housing *** • Culturally responsive affordable housing *** • Local employment and entrepreneurial literacy centre ***

Black Cultural Heritage Archival Research & Mapping

The moniker “Little Jamaica” has been used to describe the area for more than a half-century. However, as due diligence, the Practice conducted extensive oral interviews, hands-on local archival research and social mapping in collaboration with community members. Academic research and validation of all content highlighted in this section was conducted following the aforementioned activities. Through this extensive work, the Practice uncovered a rich Black cultural presence dating back to the early 1920s and extending well beyond the retail corridor.

That being said, the role that reggae music played in putting this area on the map, both within and beyond Toronto, is both impressive and undeniable. During the 1960s, an influx of Jamaicans, including many talented musicians, arrived in Toronto and settled in Little Jamaica.⁵⁷ With this migration came the innovative sounds and universal messages of reggae music. Soon after, Eglinton Avenue West became lined with clubs, record shops, music studios and performance venues, creating a vibrant reggae music scene. Reggae artists such as Jackie Mittoo and Leroy Sibbles recorded their music in Little Jamaica, while the Grammy Award-winning reggae group Black Uhuru “immortalized the strip with their song ‘Youth of Eglinton.’”⁵⁸ Eglinton Avenue West has long been tethered to the powerful story regarding the rise of reggae in Toronto. Equally important, the area is the site of Black cultural contributions more broadly—business, arts and culture, leadership and advocacy, and community co-operation. This section of the Plan unpacks this popularly known reggae music history as well as lesser-known histories pertaining to Black cultural heritage.

The following is a small sampling of the 75+ archival content/items retrieved by citizen-historian Kathy Grant, who was contracted by the Practice for this project. Ms. Grant spent countless hours conducting hands-on archival research and collaborated with the Practice to clarify the context of what she found.

GRASSROOTS ARCHIVAL ARTIFACTS



57 Barbara. (2016). *Research Guide to Reggae Lane: Toronto's Jamaican Music Scene, 1960s to the Present*. Toronto Public Library. <https://torontopubliclibrary.typepad.com/local-history-genealogy/2016/06/research-guide-to-reggae-lane-torontos-jamaican-music-scene-1960s-to-the-present.html#comments>

58 Reggae North. (2021, December 10). RZee Jackson Recalls The Glory Days Of Reggae In Canada. <https://reggaenorthca.com/rzee-jackson-recalls-the-glory-days-of-reggae-in-canada>



Source: Kathy Grant³

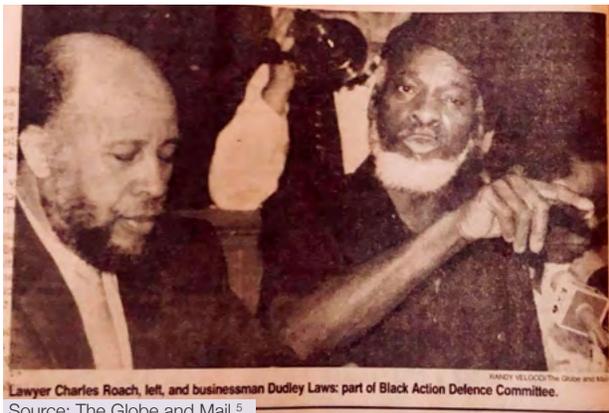


MONICA'S EXPANDS: Earlier this week SHARE caught the staff at Monica's Records and Hairdressing, 1553 Eglinton Ave. W., full speed ahead to expand the store for their growing line of records and other products as well as the new sign which for years operated at the rear of the store has now moved into beautifully decorated storefront.

Source: Share⁴



Source: Don Moore: An Autobiography⁷



Lawyer Charles Roach, left, and businessman Dudley Laws: part of Black Action Defence Committee.

Source: The Globe and Mail⁵



Source: Chakula Tamu⁶

4 *CONTRAST*, June 13, 1975

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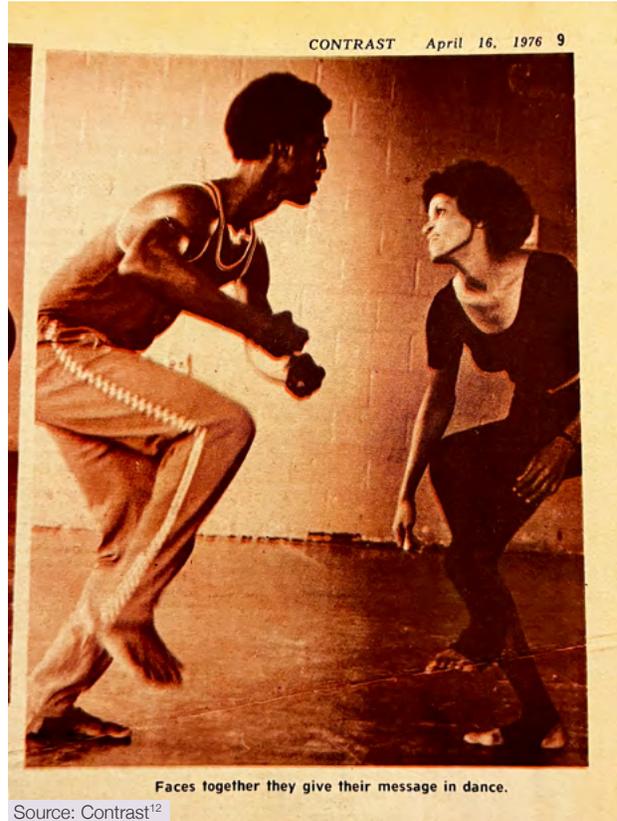
1802 EGLINTON AVE. W.
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PHONE 787-7731



Source: Contrast⁸



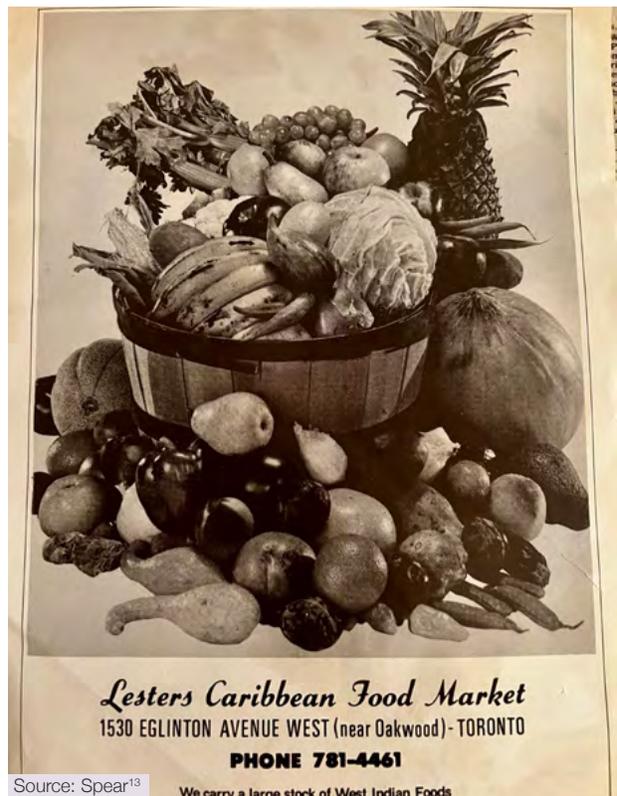
Source: Toronto Star⁹



Source: Contrast¹²



Source: Share¹⁰ has been | are also more accessible to | Indian businesses can survive in this city.



Source: Spear¹³



Source: Kathy Grant¹¹



JEAN GAMMAGE [2nd from right] is the Liberal candidate for Oakwood. Last weekend before leaving on a campaign swing through the riding, she conferred with her campaign workers outside her campaign office at 1696 Eglinton
Photo by Eddie Grant

Source: Share¹⁴

Average Steel Band aims at being best

Members of the newly formed Average Steel Band are working hard at their music in preparation for this year's Caribana celebration. It is very important that they win the prize for the best beating steelband this year and for a very special reason. For the past two years the members of Average have walked away with the top prize but not an Average Steel Band. They were members of the Harriet Tubman Survivors Steelband. But the Survivors, sponsored by the Harriet Tubman Centre in Toronto in part of the Centre's teaching program and all but four of the 18 members of Average learned to beat the steel drum through this program. Now that they are on their own, they feel they must continue to be the best steelband in Toronto and this year they will be able to prove themselves. Arranger Earl La Pierre says that Average will make steelband music as popular as any other kind of music in Toronto. With the kind of effort the members, both the guys and the girls, are putting into Average it is surely going to be one of the better bands in town and may even be the best.



Pan beating is serious business for these folks. Pictured from left to right are Judi Keith Nicholson on second pans Earl LaPierre, Leslie Williams, Donna Bishop and L. Tenors and Jerome Fox, on the double tenor.



Noel Chee Awa is full of rhythm on the drums.

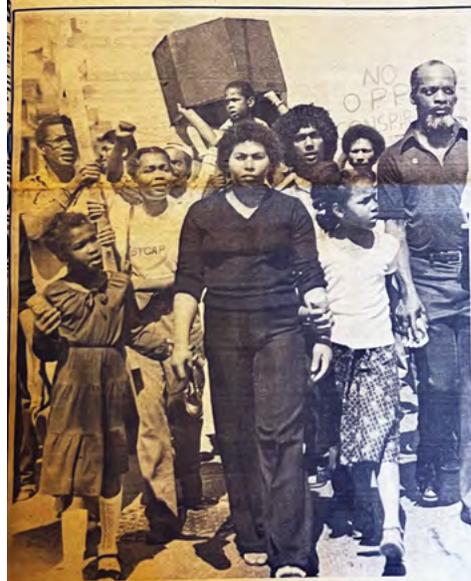


La Pierre listens attentively. Everyone must have their parts right.

Source: Contrast¹⁷



Weekend of marching, mourning — pgs. 8, 9



The black community moved swiftly to protest the killing of Albert Johnson by Metro police and at the same time rallied support for Johnson's widow and her children. Over 2,000 people from Christie and Bloor Streets to Eglinton and Marlee. As if not wanting to aggravate a tense situation, no uniformed policemen were in the crowd. Photo shows the Johnson family leading the massive protest.

Source: Contrast¹⁸

INSIDE
'You and the police' starts on p. 6
Evans inquest report on p. 3
Hunter says Adamson should resign. P. 5

November 7, 1975 PUBLISHED EVERY WEEK

Two black groups get \$36,000 grants

The Universal African Improvement Association (U.A.I.A.), with the help of a \$9,000 Local Initiatives Program (L.I.P.) grant has started a new program for Black Senior Citizens, called Uni-L.I.P. Dudley Lewis, co-ordinator said: "Our program involves visiting homes, hospitals and so, writing letters and accompanying them on other..."

Now 50 students can attend classes

He regretted that the "volunteer teaching plan" did not work in the past. "Volunteers were incalculable in keeping their appointments to teach classes. Sometimes the kids would turn up spontaneously, because val...

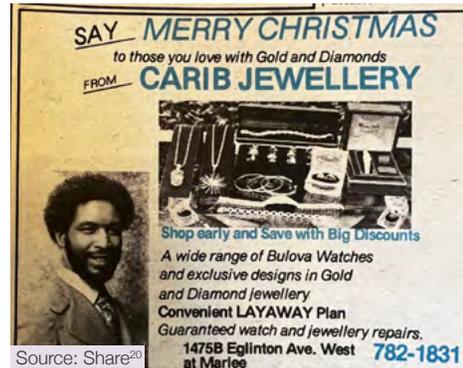
Source: Contrast¹⁵



Source: Kathy Grant¹⁶



Source: Kahty Grant¹⁹



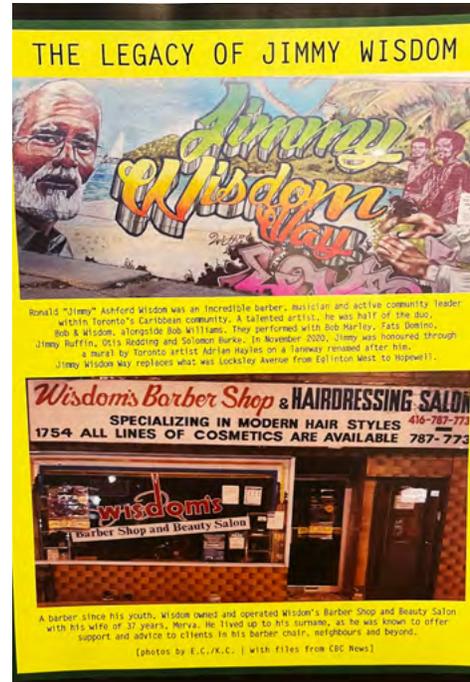
Source: Share²⁰

Archival Image References

- 1 [Images of workshop participants] [Photograph]. (1975, July 18). From "Harriet Tubman Centre holds Black family day," *Contrast*, p. 9.
- 2 Johndougaylor. (2015, March 16). Toronto's old Grant Theatre-Post II. Historic Toronto. Retrieved September 12, 2023, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20230604045603/https://tayloronhistory.com/2015/03/16/torontos-old-grant-theatre-post-ii/>
- 3 Grant, K. (2022, September 30). Monica's Cosmetic Supplies Ltd., 1553 Eglinton West [Photograph].
- 4 Elder, J. (1979, August 18). [Business owners hold up albums showing how they are expanding the business] [Photograph]. *Monica's Expands*. Share, p. 11.
- 5 Velocci, R. (1936). Lawyer Charles Roach, left, and businessman Dudley Laws: part of Black Action Defence Committee [Photograph]. From "'Something Shocking' predicted by accused in violinist's death," by Claridge, T. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A11.
- 6 Luyombo, M. (2021, February 27). *Chakula Tamu East African Food Store, 1690 Eglinton Ave. W.* [Photograph]. Chakula Tamu. <https://chakulatamu.ca/blog/mariam-luyombo-the-lady-behind-chakula-tamu/>
- 7 [Donald Moore outside his home and business, Occidental Cleaners & Dyers, 1924] [Photograph]. (1985). From *Don Moore: An Autobiography*.
- 8 Wisdom's Barber Shop. (1975, June 13). [Advertisement]. *Contrast*, p. 4.
- 9 Slaughter, M. (1978, June 15). [Jamaican specialities bring Clara Lemontagne, 24, left, to shop at store run by Florrie Temple] [Photograph]. From "Jamaicans in Metro see Rapid Changes," by Stevens, V. *The Toronto Star*, p. A10.
- 10 Elder, J. (1981, April 18). [Spence's Bakery owner inside his shop] [Photograph]. From "Where old friends meet for a 'chat'," by Elder, J. Share, p. 22.
- 11 Grant, K. (2022, September 30). Rap's Restaurant, 1474 Eglinton West [Photograph].
- 12 *Faces together they give their message in dance* [Photograph]. (1976, April 16). From "Concert disappointing but troupe woos crowd at Harriet Tubman," *Contrast* newspaper, p. 9.
- 13 Lesters Caribbean Food Market (1976, December). [Advertisement]. *Spear*, p. 55.
- 14 Grant, E. (1981, February 24). [Jean Gammage (Liberal Candidate for Oakwood) and campaign workers outside her campaign office at 1696 Eglinton Ave. W.]. [Photograph]. Share.
- 15 Ramoutar, P. (1975, November 7). "Two black groups get \$36,000 grants." *Contrast*, p. 1.
- 16 Grant, K. (2022, September 30). Spence's Bakery, 1539 Eglinton Ave. W. [Photograph].
- 17 "Average Steel Band aims at being best." (1973, April 4). *Contrast*, p.16.
- 18 "Weekend of marching, mourning—pgs. 8, 9." (1979, September 6). *Contrast*, p. 1.
- 19 Grant, K. (2022, September 30). Carib Jewellery and Watch Repairs, 1475B Eglinton West [Photograph].
- 20 Carib Jewellery and Watch Repairs, Merry Christmas [Advertisement]. (1981, December). Share, p. 14.

BLACK ELDER PERSONAL ARTIFACTS

The following is a small sampling of the 150+ personal artifacts collected (via digital documentation) from a local elder and business owner, commonly referred to as King Culture. This process extended over three meetings, one including another Black elder to gain context, and a fourth meeting dedicated to digitization, for which King Culture was remunerated.



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Event: (King Culture) Cooper

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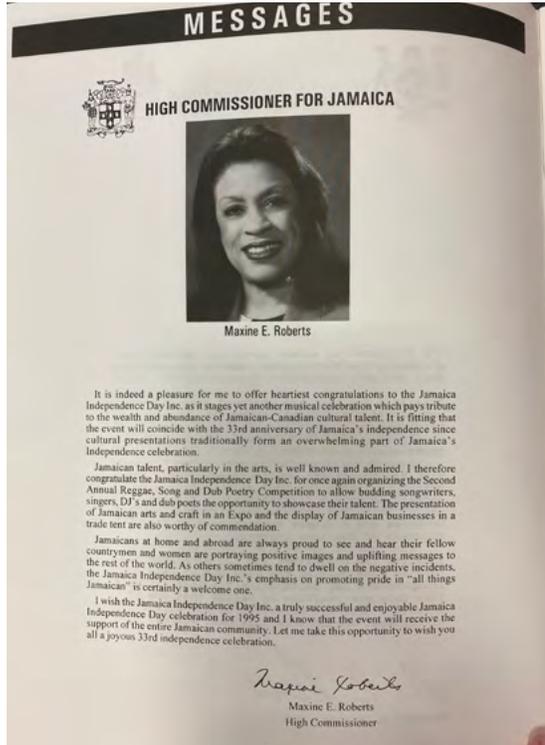
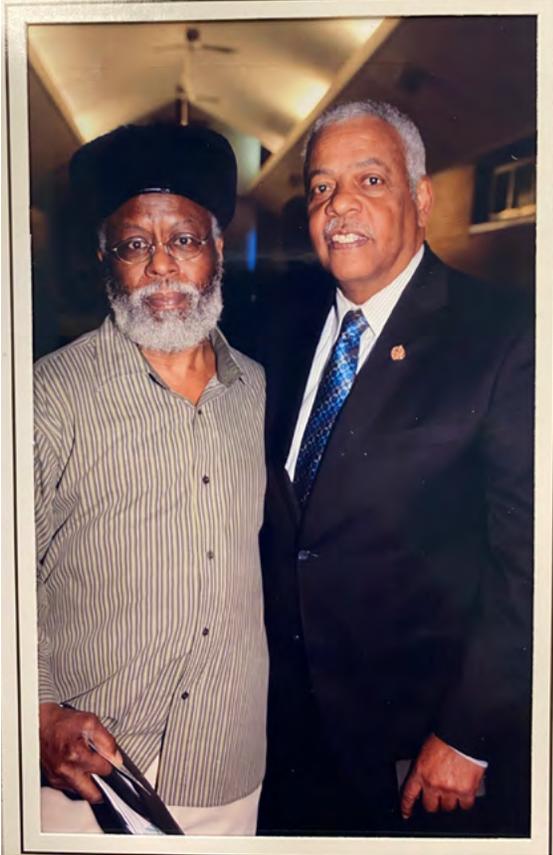
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Black Cultural Heritage Map

The Black Cultural Heritage Map below has been co-created using a social mapping approach, which is intended to daylight/make visible histories and cultural contributions that have historically been excluded from mainstream cartography processes. The Practice's specific process includes the archival research—select examples shown above; supplementary mapping conducted with community members from Black Urbanism TO (BUTO), the Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization (OVCO), the Amexem Mu Centre and King Culture; community engagement conversations; and extensive academic research and validation of community inputs.

The map includes slightly more than 100 pinpoints—constituting a solid data set—exemplifying the area's Black cultural history and imprint. It is not meant to be comprehensive but rather to serve as a foundation for further Black cultural heritage mapping in the area. Building on community stakeholder efforts identifying and listing Black-owned businesses, which often double as community hubs, this map goes a step further to not only visualize the concentration of Black businesses but also to include information pertaining to these categories: Arts and Culture; Leadership and Advocacy; and Other.

It is also important to note the Jamaican, Caribbean and broader Black community presence in terms of businesses and cultural institutions originated long before the moniker Little Jamaica became popularized. For example, Donald Moore established Occidental Cleaners in 1924,⁵⁹ while the Grant Theatre⁶⁰ and St. Hilda's Anglican Church⁶¹ were both established in the early 1930s. Long-standing Black-owned businesses such as Wisdom's Barber Shop & Beauty Salon⁶² and Jamall Caribbean Custom Tailor,⁶³ established in the mid- to late-1970s, are still in operation.

The community is also a site of political action, ranging from the march protesting the police killing of Albert Johnson in 1979⁶⁴ to Jean Gammage, now known as Kamala-Jean Gopie,⁶⁵ opening a campaign office in the area when she ran as a Liberal candidate in the 1981⁶⁶ provincial election. Today, initiatives such as the Afro Caribbean Farmers' Market,⁶⁷ led by Lori Beazer, in collaboration with the Toronto Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective,⁶⁸

59 [Donald Moore outside his home and business, Occidental Cleaners & Dyers, 1924] [Photograph]. (1985). From Don Moore: An Autobiography.

60 johndougaylor. (2015, March 16). Toronto's old Grant Theatre-Post II. Historic Toronto. Retrieved September 12, 2023, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20230604045603/https://tayloronhistory.com/2015/03/16/torontos-old-grant-theatre-post-ii/>

61 [St. Hilda's (Fairbank) Anglican Church, Dufferin Street, east side, south of Vaughan Road, Toronto, Ontario] [Photograph]. (1934). Toronto Star.

62 Wisdom's Barber Shop. (1975, June 13). [Advertisement]. Contrast, p. 4.

63 Elder J., (1979, April 4) [Vernal Small, owner of Jamall Caribbean Custom Tailors] [Photograph]. Share.

64 "Weekend of marching, mourning—pgs. 8, 9." (1979, September 6). Contrast, p. 1.

65 Jamaican Canadian Association. (2022). JCA History. <https://jcaontario.org/about-us/jca-history/>

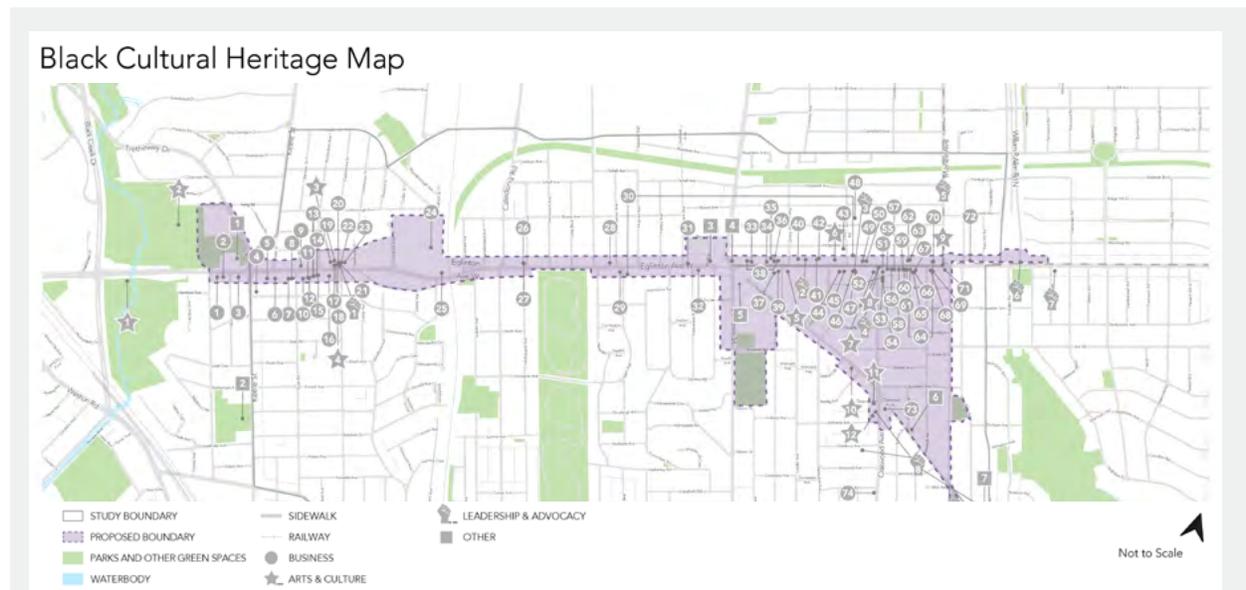
66 Grant, E. (1981, February 24). [Jean Gammage (Liberal Candidate for Oakwood) and campaign workers outside her campaign office at 1696 Eglinton Ave. W.]. [Photograph]. Share..

67 Home page. (2023). Afro Caribbean Farmers' Market. <https://afrocaribbeanfarmersmarket.com/>

68 Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre. (2016, November 6). *The Toronto Black Farmers & Food Growers Collective – A CONC Drop-In Partnership on the Rise!* <https://www.conccommunity.org/hello-world/>

led by Jacqueline Dwyer and Noel Livingston, play an integral role in maintaining the community’s special cultural identity. Also, the Black Action Defence Committee, a long-standing advocacy group founded in 1988,⁶⁹ has had offices in three different locations in the area. BUTO,⁷⁰ a newer advocacy group that was founded in 2018, is also carrying out powerful advocacy initiatives on behalf of Black community stakeholders. Finally, community stakeholders noted that there are numerous other Black businesses and establishments, such as Albert’s Real Jamaican Foods,⁷¹ just outside the study boundary and proposed boundary.

Many of the businesses and organizations listed below on the Black Cultural Heritage Map have used slightly different names or spellings across various platforms. In addition to academic research and community mapping, the Practice validated the names based on Google searches/Google maps. After that process, if there was still any conflict, the Practice used storefront signs, where visible, and/or the City of Toronto’s business licence database to determine which version of the name to use.



Map 8: Black Cultural Heritage Map

● Business

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Jacko’s Restaurant 2679 Eglinton Ave. W. | 6. Black Culture 2573 Eglinton Ave. W. |
| 2. Captains Barber Shop 2667 Eglinton Ave. W. | 7. Team Taxman 2565 Eglinton Ave. W. |
| 3. Natural Vybes Juice & Tea Bar 2637 Eglinton Ave. W. | 8. Ther’s Beauty Salon 2561 Eglinton Ave. W. |
| 4. Zac’s Convenience 1977 Keele St. | 9. Lingerie Store 2566 Eglinton Ave. W. |
| 5. Irie Veggie 2593 Eglinton Ave. W. | 10. Smile Back Bed & Breakfast 2549 Eglinton Ave. W. |

69 Coyle, J. (2013, October 19). Black Action Defence Committee celebrates 25th anniversary. *The Toronto Star*. https://www.thestar.com/news/insight/black-action-defence-committee-celebrates-25th-anniversary/article_7630efcd-eeee-5dc6-8673-ee06a6f52e70.html

70 Black Urbanism Toronto. (2022). *Our Story, BUTO: Empowering Black Communities through Urbanism and Social Equity*. <https://www.blackurbanismto.com/mission/>

71 Home page. (n.d.). Albert’s Real Jamaican Foods. <https://albertsrealjamaican.ca/>

● Business (continued)

11. Smile Back Mattresses & Furniture | 2547 Eglinton Ave. W.
12. Dr. Nana Barnor, Pediatrician | 2545 Eglinton Ave. W.
13. Super Smart Styles | 2541 Eglinton Ave. W.
14. Notable Cleaners | 2535 Eglinton Ave. W.
15. The Place of Beauty Hair Studio | 2533B Eglinton Ave. W.
16. TinNel's Patties | 2517 Eglinton Ave. W.
17. Warrior Love Band Entertainment Studios | 2526 Eglinton Ave. W.
18. Beni Boo Styles | 2522 Eglinton Ave. W.
19. King Culture Record Co. | 2520 Eglinton Ave. W.
20. Say Jah Kitchen | 2516 Eglinton Ave. W.
21. Emeye Injera and Mini Mart Variety | 2514 Eglinton Ave. W.
22. Sun-Light Bakery | 2512 Eglinton Ave. W.
23. Spanky Papers, and DJ Records and Clothing | 2508 Eglinton Ave. W.
24. Westside Mall | 2400 Eglinton Ave. W.
25. Cliff's Hair Place | 2322 Eglinton Ave. W.
26. McRoberts Cleaners | 2176 Eglinton Ave. W.
27. Miss Unity Beauty Salon | 2174 Eglinton Ave. W.
28. Eric's Upholstering | 2036 Eglinton Ave. W.
29. Glamourama Hair | 2033 Eglinton Ave. W.
30. Ross Courier Carpet | 2019 Eglinton Ave. W. and 1639 Eglinton Ave. W.
31. Spice Isle Sports Bar | 1928 Eglinton Ave. W.
32. Tee Shirt People | 1897 Eglinton Ave. W.
33. Ondre's Convenience Store | 1790 Eglinton Ave. W.
34. Roman's N Care | 1772 Eglinton Ave. W.
35. Caribbean Slice | 1764 Eglinton Ave. W.
36. Lady Ann Superstore African Boutique and Victoria Food Market | 1758 Eglinton Ave. W.
37. Blue Nile Bar and Grill | 1757 Eglinton Ave. W.
38. Wisdom's Barber Shop & Beauty Salon | 1754 Eglinton Ave. W. and 1802 Eglinton Ave. W.
39. Roy's Ladies and Men's Fashion | 1753 Eglinton Ave. W.
40. Sheryl's Caribbean Cuisine (formerly Judy's Island Grill) | 1720 Eglinton Ave. W.
41. Chakula Tamu East African Food Store | 1690 Eglinton Ave. W.
42. Roti King | 1688 Eglinton Ave. W.
43. Wailer's Connection | 6 Times Rd.
44. Sankofa Restaurant and Bar | 1653 Eglinton Ave. W.
45. U-2 Fly Cut Barber Shop & Salon | 1635 Eglinton Ave. W.
46. The Barber | 1627 Eglinton Ave. W.
47. Family Tree Variety Grocery Store | 1621 Eglinton Ave. W.
48. Redmon Haulage | 122 Belgravia Ave.
49. Rasta Flex Clothing, Shoes, Accessories | 1604 Eglinton Ave. W.
50. The River's Restaurant and Bar | 1602 Eglinton Ave. W.
51. Jamall Caribbean Custom Tailor | 609 - 611 Oakwood Ave.
52. Tropical Food King | 605 Oakwood Ave.
53. Pringle's Jerk Pit, Errol's Caribbean Cuisine, The Jerk House Restaurant and One Stop Restaurant | 603 Oakwood Ave.
54. Flea Flea Furniture | 601 Oakwood Ave.
55. Randy's Take Out/Randy's Patties | 1569 Eglinton Ave. W.
56. Castries Salon | 1567A Eglinton Ave. W.
57. The Barbers of Eglinton | 1565A Eglinton Ave. W.
58. The Entertainment Kitchen | 1559 Eglinton Ave. W.
59. All Season Food Market | 1555 Eglinton Ave. W.
60. Monica's Cosmetic Supplies | 1553 Eglinton Ave. W.
61. Just Incredible | 1551 Eglinton Ave. W.
62. Lesters Caribbean Food Market | 1530 Eglinton Ave. W.

● Business (continued)

63. TreaJah Isle | 1514 Eglinton Ave. W.
64. Rap's | 1541 Eglinton Ave. W., previously 1474 Eglinton Ave. W.
65. Spence's Bakery | 1539 Eglinton Ave. W.
66. Michael's Hair Salon | 1537 Eglinton Ave. W.
67. Afro Caribbean Farmers' Market | 1531 Eglinton Ave. W.
68. Pure-Vibes Barber Shop | 1491 Eglinton Ave. W.
69. Styles Hair Salon | 1489 Eglinton Ave. W.
70. Celebrity Vegetarian | 1474 Eglinton Ave. W.
71. Carib Jewellery | 1475b Eglinton Ave. W.
72. Jamaica National Bank | 1390 Eglinton Ave. W.
73. Sam's Food Store | 620 Vaughan Rd.
74. Occidental Cleaners | 416 Oakwood Ave.
75. Danny's W.I. Food Store | Oakwood Avenue at Rogers Road
76. Checo's Café and Amusements | 354 Oakwood Ave.

★ Arts & Culture

1. Keelesdale Park | 2801 Eglinton Ave. W. (Jamaica Day Celebrations)
2. Coronation Park | 2700 Eglinton Ave. W. (2000 Marcus Garvey Day Celebrations)
3. Toronto Calvary Cross Church | 2528 Eglinton Ave. W. (Kiddies Winter Carnival)
4. Currently Sleek Stylez Salon | 2524 Eglinton Ave. W. (First Book Affair)
5. Maria A. Shchuka Branch, Toronto Public Library | 1745 Eglinton Ave. W. (Rita Cox Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection)
6. Studio M | 1672 Eglinton Ave. W. (Rastafest)
7. The Durham Caribbean Festival | 1603 Eglinton Ave. W.
8. Kiddies Carnival | Eglinton Avenue West at Oakwood Avenue
9. Sinting Fest | Eglinton Avenue West from Dufferin Avenue to Marlee Avenue

10. Share Newspaper | 658 Vaughan Rd.
11. Nia Centre for the Arts, Club Focus/The Cave, Grant Theatre | 524 Oakwood Ave.
12. For Youth Initiative | 504 Oakwood Ave.

Leadership & Advocacy

1. Black Inmates and Friends Assembly | 2518 Eglinton Ave. W.
2. Constituency Office of Jean Gammage | 1696 Eglinton Ave. W. (Liberal Candidate for Oakwood in the 1981 provincial election)
3. Black Business and Professional Association (BBPA) | 1621A Eglinton Ave. W.
4. Reclaim, Rebuild, Eglinton West (RREW) Little Jamaica Rally | Eglinton Avenue West and Oakwood Avenue
5. Albert Johnson police protest route | Eglinton Avenue West and Marlee Avenue
6. BLM Protest, Justice for Jermaine Carby and Andrew Loku | Eglinton Avenue West and Allen Road
7. Black Urbanism TO | 1061 Eglinton Ave. W.
8. Black Action Defence Committee Head Office | 508 Oakwood Ave., 7 Ashbury Ave. and 393 Vaughan Rd.

■ Other

1. York Board of Education | 2 Trethewey Dr.
2. York Memorial Collegiate Institute | 1700 Keele St.
3. New Dawn Moravian Church | 5 - 7 Glenora Ave.
4. Informal Community Gathering Place (sitting area near TD Bank) | 1886 Eglinton Ave. W.
5. Christ Church, The British Methodist Episcopal Church, and St. Cuthbert's United Church | 1828 Eglinton Ave. W.
6. St. Hilda's Anglican Church | 2353 Dufferin St.
7. Verity Centre for Better Living | 447 Vaughan Rd.

**Recommendation**

Enhance the City's capacity to understand, curate and recognize intangible cultural heritage to ensure that Black culture—rarely expressed through the built environment or through the ownership of places due to historical inequities—is respectfully recognized.

**Recommendation**

Reallocate 30% of funding currently directed to a handful of well-established, well-funded arts institutions to support cultural programming and practices in Little Jamaica (and future cultural districts).

**Recommendation**

Compel developers to contribute to a Little Jamaica cultural investment fund as part of their broader community benefits requirement.

**Recommendation**

Establish spaces and funds for the co-creation of hybrid culture, cultural collaborations and evolving culture beyond the bounds of race.

**Recommendation**

Proactively and courageously invest in spaces, participatory-learning experiences and informational resources to foster cross-cultural conflict resolution, understanding and co-creation to address resistance and/or concerns pertaining to the establishment of a district that explicitly acknowledges Black culture while serving and benefitting an extraordinarily diverse community.

**Recommendation**

Ensure there are varying scales and types of cultural spaces, ranging from large institutions, such as the Nia Centre for the Arts, to micro cultural spaces on the ground floor of new residential and business developments; cultural spaces embedded in natural local ecologies; porch performances throughout the residential neighbourhoods; and pop-up/seasonal cultural spaces.

Community Inputs

Like every community, there are tensions between a diverse range of people with both shared and distinct lived experiences. It is also true that the vast majority of community members agree that Jamaican and broader Caribbean cultural practices and presence have enriched the community and expanded their sense of cultural appreciation and, in some instances, their individual identities. Community stakeholders also agreed that the reinstatement of Caribbean spaces and festivals was important to the area's sustained cultural identity and vibrancy. Many community stakeholders strongly felt it was important to employ an approach that also prioritized the establishment of community spaces that foster culture more broadly, responding to elders, youth, young families, business owners and community animators of all identities. Overall, there is consensus that the area has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, both formal and informal, which should be reflected in the Plan to ensure that everyone truly feels at home within the Little Jamaica Cultural District.

AMENITIES

An amenity refers to a space, both natural and built, that contributes to the quality and character of a community. Examples of amenities include parks, libraries, food markets, schools and health-care facilities. There is well-established evidence that the absence or prevalence of these and other amenities directly correlates with equity-based planning and development. For example, a report exploring the spatial-economics of cities indicates that, along with high-paying jobs and reduced commute times, “part of the attractiveness of neighbourhoods is driven by public amenities such as parks, public schools ... financed by local governments.”⁷² Another report indicates that “inequities can manifest through, among other things, disparate access to opportunities like public amenities.”⁷³

This particular pattern of urban inequity disproportionately impacts communities with a high number of racialized residents, which is concerning because, as the United Way Greater Toronto points out, strong social infrastructure comprised of numerous amenity types, “reflective of a community’s distinct and multi-layered cultural geographies and identities,” is indicative of “inclusive communities.”⁷⁴ However, a report examining public investments in Black infrastructure found “community-led cultural centres in Toronto demonstrate a lack of Black-led assets, particularly in proximity to where much of the Black population in Toronto lives,” correlating this with diminished opportunities to accrue revenue.⁷⁵ This report also refers to the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, which highlights how Black people often live in neighbourhoods described as “service deserts,”⁷⁶ further confirming the need to increase amenities in places where Black people live.⁷⁷

The importance of amenities for everyone, regardless of identity, requires little formal evidence because their value is experienced every time an unhoused individual is able to access a public restroom; a family living in an apartment is able to spread a blanket across the grass at their local park; patrons are able to sway to a saxophone solo emanating from a restaurant patio; and newcomers are able to access services at their local library.

The City makes numerous references and commitments pertaining to amenities in Chapter

72 Couture, V., Gaubert, C., Handbury, J., & Hurst, E. (2019, Revised 2020). *Income growth and the distributional effects of urban spatial sorting* (NBER working paper series, no. 26142). National Bureau of Economic Research. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w26142.pdf>

73 Logan, T. M., Anderson, M. J., Williams, T. G., & Conrow, L. (2021). Measuring inequalities in urban systems: An approach for evaluating the distribution of amenities and burdens. *Computers, Environment and Urban Systems*, 86, 101590. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compenvurbsys.2020.101590>

74 United Way Greater Toronto. (2023, January). *Building Inclusive Communities: Learning from Programs and Policies that Work*. https://www.unitedwaygt.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Building-Inclusive-Communities-FINAL-REVJan9-ONLINE_compressed.pdf

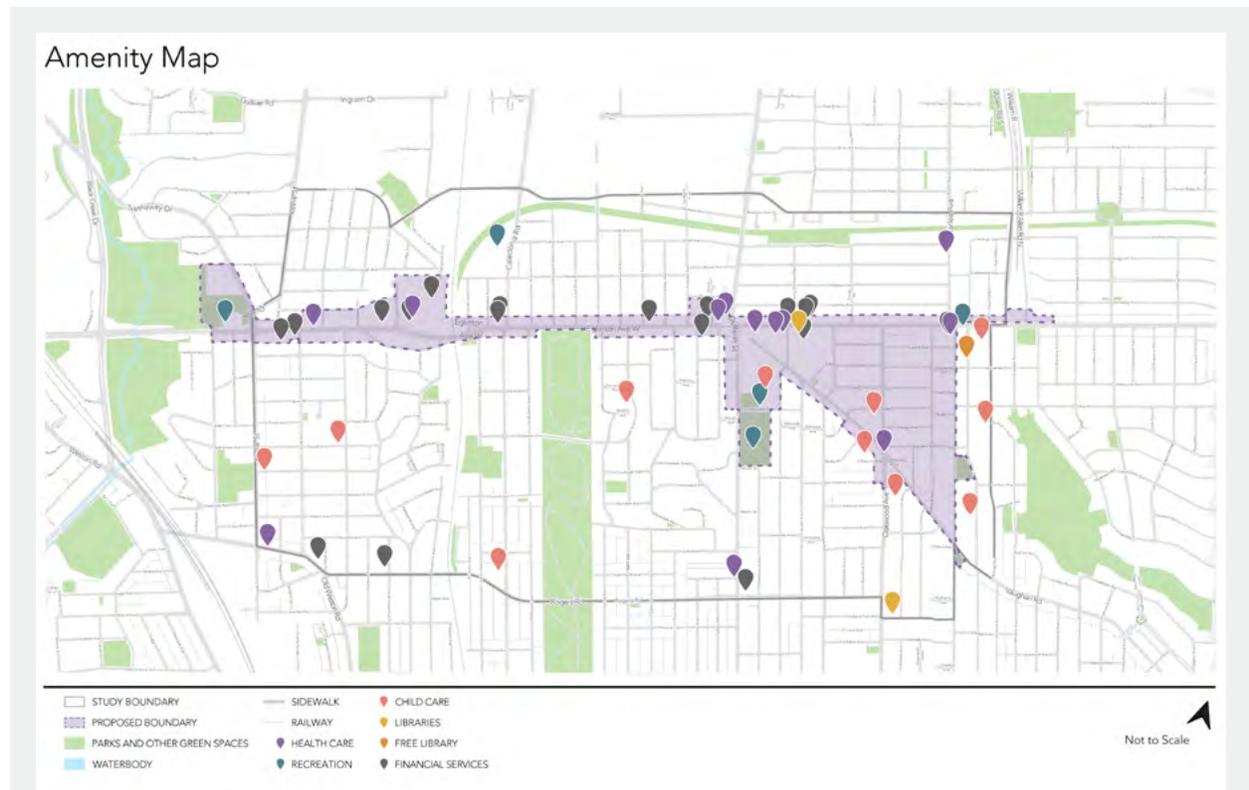
75 Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation. (2022, December). *Inhibited Growth: Examining Public Investment Gaps in Black Infrastructure Needs*. <https://buildourcommunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/SCCR-Brief-UofT-SchoolofCities.pdf>

76 City of Toronto. (2017). *Toronto Action Plan to Combat Anti-Black Racism*. <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/9875-EDC-TORONTO-ACTION-PLAN-TO-CONFRONT-ANTI-BLACK-RACISM.pdf>

77 Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation. (2022, December). *Inhibited Growth: Examining Public Investment Gaps in Black Infrastructure Needs*. <https://buildourcommunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/SCCR-Brief-UofT-SchoolofCities.pdf>

3 and Chapter 4 of its Official Plan, including, “increasing pedestrian and cycling facilities and amenities along the route;”⁷⁸ and “adding new parks and amenities, particularly in growth areas and maintaining, improving and expanding existing parks;”⁷⁹ and “Where Utility Corridors are declared surplus, they may be acquired or leased by the City or other public agencies for public services and amenities, such as public transportation routes, bicycle and pedestrian trails, community and allotment gardens, linear parks and open space or shared parking facilities.”⁸⁰

The following Amenity Map depicts City and privately operated amenity spaces such as recreational facilities, child-care centres, financial institutions, fitness centres and health-care facilities. Green space and outdoor recreational facilities/features are addressed in the Parks Map.



Map 9: Amenity Map

Highlights

- » There are two Toronto public libraries in the area and one resident-led free library, which spans the residential neighbourhoods.

78 City of Toronto. (2022, March). *Official Plan: Chapter 3—Building a Successful City* (policy 22c). <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/chapters-1-5/>

79 City of Toronto. (2022, March). *Official Plan: Chapter 3—Building a Successful City* (policy 1a). <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/chapters-1-5/>

80 City of Toronto. (2022, March). *Official Plan: Chapter 4—Land Use Designations* (policy 4). <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/chapters-1-5/>

Highlights (continued)

- » Many of the City-operated recreational activities, such as swimming, basketball and drop-in programs, are either free or reasonably affordable.
- » Child-care centres that offer subsidized day care are concentrated toward the west end of Little Jamaica. There are seven centres that have a subsidy (64%) and four that do not (36%).
- » There is no hospital within this area. However, there are four pharmacies, two substance-use clinics, five health centres and walk-in clinics, and a Unison Health and Community Centre. Overall, there is a lack of primary health-care services in the area, with many residents travelling far from home to access family doctors. At the same time, physicians are retiring, leaving a gap for mobility-challenged seniors and other high-needs patients.⁸¹
- » There are numerous Payday loans⁸² and alternative cheque-cashing services in the area. These have historically and disproportionately been harmful to individuals living on low incomes, Black people, Indigenous Peoples and other racialized communities.

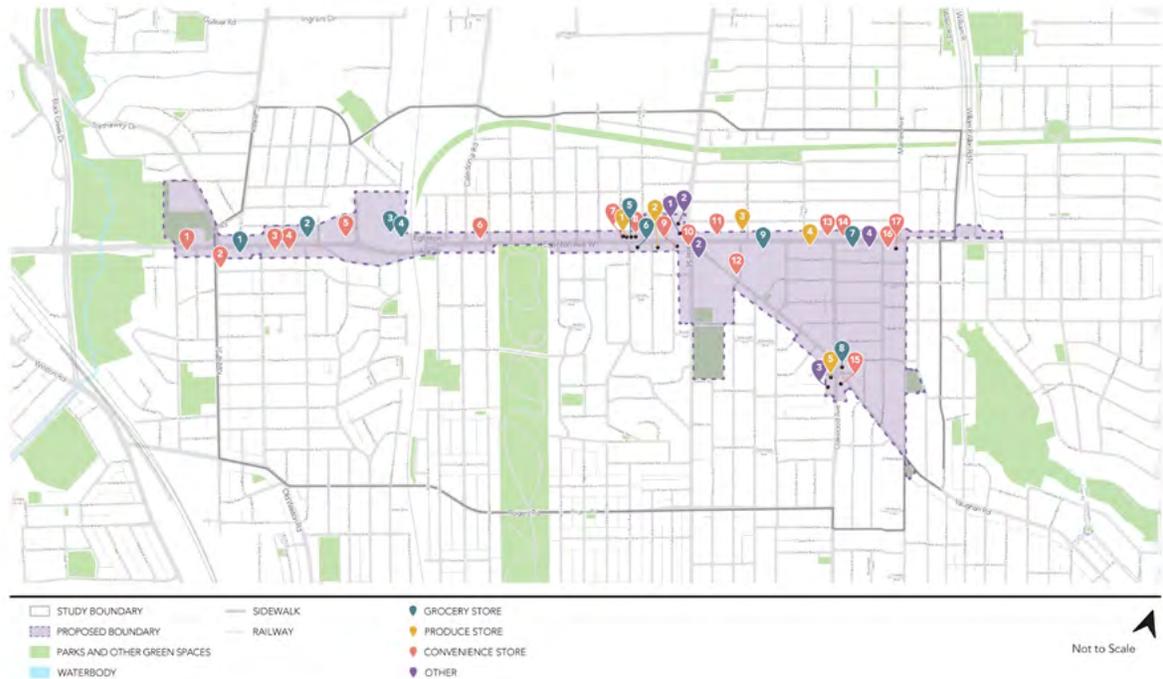
FOOD SECURITY

Using a food-security lens, an assessment of food retail options was undertaken in response to community stakeholders—primarily residents—who often expressed the view that the closure of neighbourhood food retail outlets over the years had reduced their access to cultural foods. As well, many local residents also expressed a desire for more healthy food options. The Food Security Map below depicts food retail businesses that primarily provide perishable and non-perishable items commonly found on a weekly shopping list and meant for off-premises consumption. Thus, food-based businesses that primarily provide prepared foods, such as restaurants and bakeries, were exempted. Also, food banks were exempted from this map (please refer to the Social Services Map for them). However, it is imperative to note that local food banks, such as the one operating out of the Syme Woolner Neighbourhood and Family Centre, play an important role in nourishing an alarmingly high number of individuals across Toronto and other cities. The food retail analysis was created using a hybrid of online and on-the-ground mapping—the latter also included 14 interviews with store owners and employees. In some instances, a few food retail shops were not included on this list due to unclarity pertaining to the items carried because of lack of access to the store and/or store owner.

81 Santis Health. (2015). *Central West Toronto Community-Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis Report*. Toronto Central LHIN, Government of Ontario. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KH3wvneJlabZWbpjUq2kgFntzw5Z9kf3/view>

82 Cyprien, J. (n.d.). *The Racial Wealth Gap and Payday Loans*. University of North Georgia. <https://ung.edu/student-money-management-center/money-minute/racial-wealth-gap-payday-loans.php>

Food Security Map



Map 10: Food Security Map

📍 Grocery Stores

1. Mundial Envios | 1950 Eglinton Ave. W.
1. Monarca Latin Store | 2581 Eglinton Ave. W.
2. G&J West Indian Grocery & Kitchen | 2502 Eglinton Ave. W.
3. Lucky Meats Inc | 2330 Eglinton Ave. W.
4. FreshCo Eglinton & Gabian | 2330 Eglinton Ave. W.
5. Chakula Tamu | 1960 Eglinton Ave. W.
6. My Little Butcher Shop | 1948 Eglinton Ave. W.
7. Gino's No Frills | 1951 Eglinton Ave. W.
8. Freta Food Convenience Store & Meat Shop | 1721 Eglinton Ave. W.
9. Kera Fresh Meat | 621 Vaughan Rd.
10. Caribbean Farm Fresh Grocery | 1596A Eglinton Ave. W.
11. All-Season Food Market | 1555 Eglinton Ave. W.

🍌 Produce Stores

1. Mundial Envios | 1950 Eglinton Ave. W.
2. Sunlong Natural Market | 1895 Eglinton Ave. W.
3. MA Starbank Convenience - Swiftly Market | 1736 Eglinton Ave. W.
4. Family Tree Variety Grocery Store | 1623 Eglinton Ave. W.
5. Best Choice | 526 Oakwood Ave.

📍 Convenience Stores

1. York Variety | 2669 Eglinton Ave. W.
2. Zac's Convenience | 1977 Keele St.
3. Eglinton Hill Variety & Dollar Store | 2543 Eglinton Ave. W.
4. Easy Shopping Grocery & Variety | 2521 Eglinton Ave. W.
5. Family Food Mart | 2468 Eglinton Ave. W.

♥ Convenience Stores (continued)

6. Caledonia Smoke Shop | 2186 Eglinton Ave. W.
7. Jiang's Convenience Store | 1960 Eglinton Ave. W.
8. Bargain Club | 1940 Eglinton Ave. W.
9. Filipino n Toronto | 1859 Eglinton Ave. W.
10. Pat's Gift and Variety | 1835 Eglinton Ave. W.
11. Ondre's Convenience Store (closed at the time) | 1790 Eglinton Ave. W.
12. JZ Milk Store | 775 Vaughan Rd.
13. Golden Market | 1584 Eglinton Ave. W.
14. People's Choice Grocery & More | 1574 Eglinton Ave. W.
15. Sam's Food Store | 620 Vaughan Rd.
16. Wonderfood Convenience | 1493 Eglinton Ave. W.
17. King's Variety | 1477 Eglinton Ave. W.

♥ Other

1. Shoppers Drug Mart | 1840 Eglinton Ave. W.
2. Dollarama | 2388 Dufferin St.
3. Freta Food Wholesale (closed during regular business hours) | 483 Oakwood Ave.
4. Afro Caribbean Farmers' Market | 1531 Eglinton Ave. W.

Highlights:

- » There has been a reduction in customers in the last few years. According to grocery and convenience store owners who were interviewed, this loss of business is attributed to the Eglinton Crosstown LRT construction, the COVID-19 pandemic and economically stretched households.
- » A few food retailers noted that it has become more expensive for them to purchase products, resulting in significantly lower profit margins.
- » Many food retailers noted that they reduce the charge of purchases for regular customers who cannot afford to pay the full bill and/or allow for a grassroots pay-later/honour system.
- » In multiple instances, food-security and customer-behaviour conversations transitioned into conversations about the desperate need for affordable housing in the area.
- » In some instances, store owners indicated that they supplement their typical products with items that cater to the needs of a particular customer base. For example, culturally relevant products were available in both culturally specific and mainstream food retail stores. In another example, a food retail store also sold baby clothes.
- » The western portion of Eglinton Avenue West was noticeably different, with a stronger Filipino presence in both food retail and observed customer demographics. While there has been a general trend of reduced business and customers for food retail, anecdotally, Filipino grocery stores reported a consistent and loyal customer base.
- » Many businesses in the eastern portion of Little Jamaica are experiencing a demographic shift; they are serving an increased number of white and Latin American customers.
- » Most food items nearing or past their expiry date are either thrown out, provided at a discounted rate or given to staff. A few food retailers manage their food waste in creative ways, such as turning it into compost for their residential gardens.



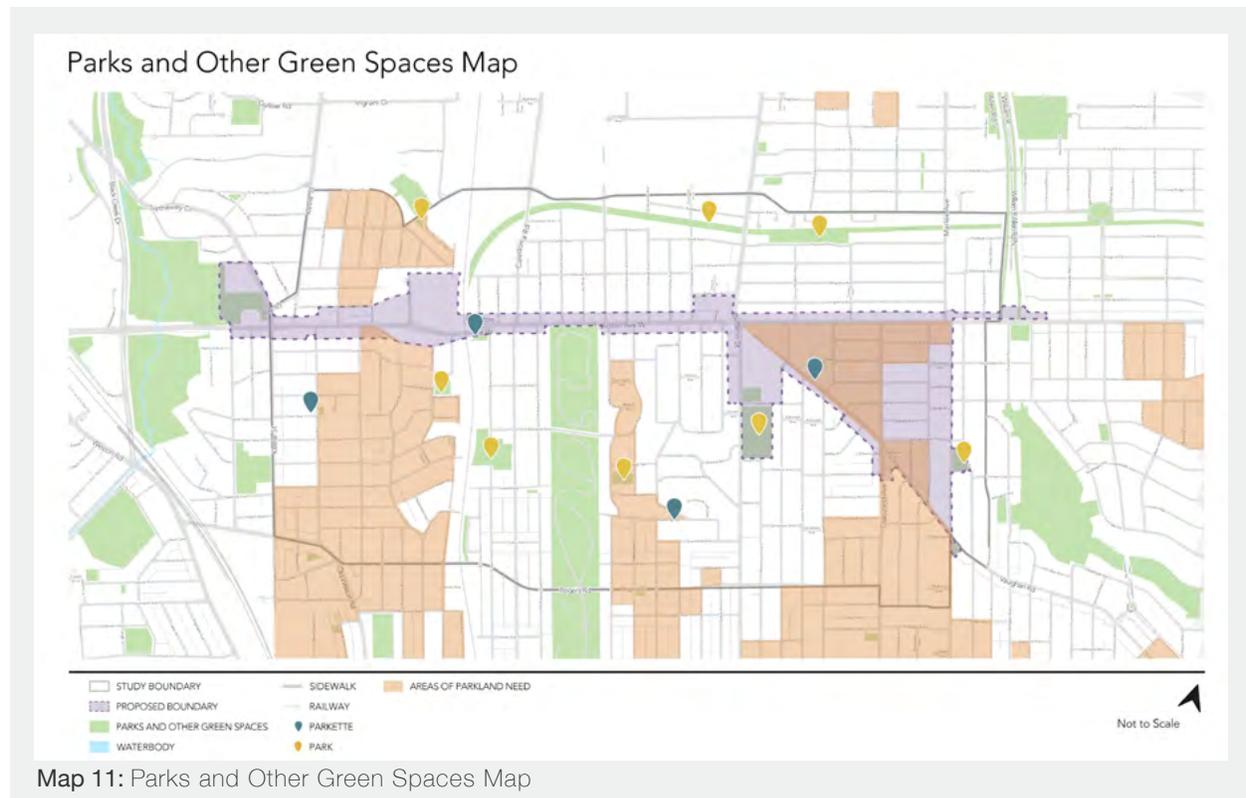
Recommendation

Develop a local food security strategy, beyond food banks, that supports both food retailers and customers.

PARKS AND OTHER GREEN SPACES

In addition to mapping the diverse range of amenities above, an assessment of parks and other green spaces was conducted because they fulfil a distinct and extraordinarily broad range of placemaking imperatives. Parks create a habitat for numerous plant and wildlife species. They play an integral role in combating climate change and enhancing the resilience of cities by protecting water resources, reducing the effects of urban heat islands, storing carbon and mitigating flooding. Parks also enhance population health, including mental health, are sites of economic development and provide space for countless recreational activities as well as solace. However, over the past decade, parks have increasingly become contested sites where conflicts related to unhoused people, public drinking, off-leash dog walking and atypical cultural uses have arisen.

The following Parks and Other Green Spaces Map depicts parks, parkettes and other green spaces within Little Jamaica. The parks shown on this map have a diverse range of amenities and design features such as baseball diamonds, basketball courts, playgrounds and winter-maintained pathways.



Map 11: Parks and Other Green Spaces Map

Highlights

- » Of the eight parks, five have winter-maintained pathways and six feature a playground and at least one other facility (e.g., a splash pad). Three of four parkettes have a playground. Public washrooms are available at Fairbank Memorial Community Centre in Fairbank Memorial Park.
- » One park, Walter Saunders Memorial Park, has a community garden. Community gardens are valuable for food security, bolstering local economies, addressing social isolation and growing culturally appropriate food. There is an opportunity to leverage and animate parks within the area to support cultural animation and the local economy.
- » There are three major parks right outside Little Jamaica. To the west are Coronation Park, as well as Keelesdale North Park, which connects to Black Creek, while to the east is Cedarvale Park, which connects to Cedarvale Ravine.
- » The Little Jamaica community is located within an “area of parkland need” as highlighted in the 2019 Parkland Strategy.⁸³ As the area further develops and welcomes more residents, “parkland need” will increase.



Recommendation

Immediately identify three City properties, or work with other orders of government to identify three public properties, that can be used as a designated Black Cultural Centre (see below), and two spaces that can serve broader community needs such as intergenerational, recreational and entrepreneurial programming for community stakeholders of all identities.



Recommendation

Provide space for growing food and food-based entrepreneurship.



Recommendation

Compel private developers to negotiate with community members about the provision of both culturally responsive and broader amenities to ensure mutual benefits are gleaned from significant local intensification.



Recommendation

Encourage private developers to explore the provision of one amenity open to the entire community—above and beyond the typical extension of amenities provided through community benefits—to mitigate the current gaps and to encourage connection between existing and new residents.



Recommendation

Develop an equity-based amenities framework to ensure all new developments provide the appropriate scale and types of both public and private amenities for healthy and comfortable living amid neighbourhood intensification.



Recommendation

Develop, in collaboration with community members of all identities, a stewardship and social plan articulating collective values, compassionate and place-based conflict negotiation approaches, and equitable access to guide the harmonious use of all new amenities.



Recommendation

Design and develop the area’s first Black community centre, given the tenure of, and Black cultural imprint in, Little Jamaica, particularly from people of Jamaican and Caribbean descent impacted by the transatlantic slave trade. Much like how The 519, an agency of the City of Toronto, is mandated to address the health, happiness and full participation of the 2SLGBTQ+ communities, this proposed centre could serve as a permanent cultural, economic and wellness hub for Black community members while also engaging in collaborations with community stakeholders of all identities.

83 Parks, Forestry and Recreation. (2019, November). *Parkland Strategy, Growing Toronto Parkland*. City of Toronto. <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/97fb-parkland-strategy-full-report-final.pdf>

Community Inputs

Throughout the process, the community has expressed the urgent need for restored and new local amenities. That was passionately articulated during the community engagement process, as well as spanning back over two decades. While appreciative of the support of the two local libraries and collaborations with the four local BIAs, which have helped to fill existing gaps, residents highlighted the desperate need for a local community centre for all; increased green space (parks, community gardens, street trees, etc.) for all; patios and informal gathering spaces along the retail corridor for all; culturally responsive and supportive entrepreneurial spaces for groups historically excluded from the mainstream; non-predatory financial institutions or banks (mainstream banks versus high-interest, cheque-cashing businesses); affordable fresh food markets; spaces for all youth, elders and families; and a multi-use Black cultural hub. There are several City-owned recreation centres outside of both the proposed Little Jamaica Cultural District boundary and the study area boundary (hence not on the map), such as Joseph J. Piccininni Community Centre and the York Recreation Centre. While these centres are reported to be used by Little Jamaica residents, there has been long-standing advocacy for a community centre to be built in the neighbourhood and residents continued to advocate for this action to be taken. The community also stressed the importance of reducing bureaucratic barriers to amenities, such as complex application processes, park use regulations and unaffordable fees.



Models created by students from John Polanyi and York Memorial Collegiate Institutes—Youth Design Charrette hosted by Jay Pitter Placemaking and University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture.

SOCIAL SERVICES

While unconventional within the context of cultural planning, the Practice mapped social services and explored notions of mutual aid during community engagement processes. Building on the Practice's proposal guiding the development of the City's first official Cultural Districts Program more broadly, this process reiterated and followed the notion that "cultural policy and planning should more thoroughly concern itself with contemporary socio-spatial issues, such as the lack of affordable housing, and be aligned with cultural universals, which are aspects of culture common across the globe. Cultural universals, a concept developed by anthropologist George Murdock, are articulated through multiple matrices and frameworks. What is consistent across frameworks is the recognition of basic needs such as food and shelter alongside the arts, economic prosperity, technology and one of our favourites—humour."⁸⁴

In addition to being geographically boundless, culture permeates every aspect of life, including basic needs and services. Moreover, individuals are unable to fully participate in, and/or support, cultural practices, economies and enriching activities if they are housing-insecure or unemployed. Integrating cultural universals into formal cultural planning and policy processes is both pragmatic and compassionate.

Cultural universals that meet rights-based human needs, such as housing, nourishing food and educational opportunities, are primarily delivered by public institutions, including the City, which has committed to "Identify areas for strategic investment in social development. In consultation with the community, the City must determine the key areas for investment that will significantly improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Investment decisions must be guided by both community need and the principle of equitable access to services and facilities throughout the city."⁸⁵ The coupling of services and facilities is particularly notable in this commitment because the only remedy for displacement of any kind is the provision of place, not simply services, programs and micro grants.

Charities and not-for-profit organizations, many of which do good work meeting urgent needs, also provide cultural universals that meet rights-based human needs. It's also true that the conventional charity model, "promotes the idea that most poverty is a result of laziness or immorality and that only the poor people who can prove their moral worth deserve help."⁸⁶ This approach negates the structural causes of social issues, which in the specific case of poverty include structural racism, the gender-wage gap, ableism and numerous forms of discrimination, and historical violations. Moreover, the charity and not-for-profit model is not always able to respond to urgent needs in an agile and informal manner, which is precisely the strength of the mutual-aid model.

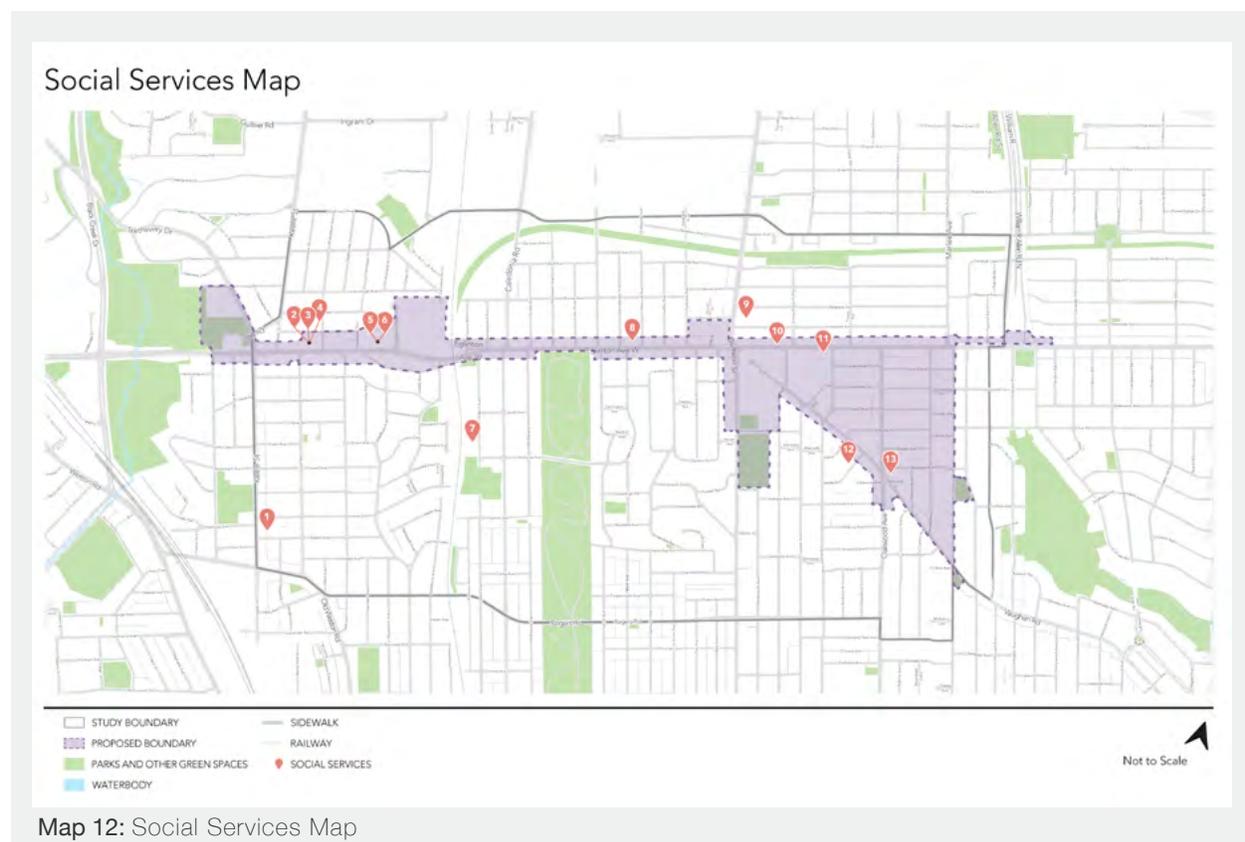
84 Pitter, J. (2022, June). *Proposal—Cultural Districts Program* [Unpublished]. City of Toronto.

85 City of Toronto. (2001). *A Social Development Strategy for the City of Toronto*. <http://swanseatownhall.ca/sth/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Reference-Manual-TAB-5-Social-Development-Strategy-of-the-City-of-Toronto.pdf>

86 Spade, D. (2020). *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next)*. Verso.

The mutual-aid model is defined as occurring when “a group of people organise to meet their own needs, outside of the formal frameworks of charities, NGOs and government”⁸⁷ and is predicated on “an awareness that the systems we have in place are not going to meet them.”⁸⁸ Although mutual aid has existed since the beginning of human history, extreme weather events, pandemics, mass loneliness and economic crises, etc. increasingly necessitate this grassroots intervention, which places an emphasis on heterarchy and reciprocity rather than “saving” people. All three models—public, charitable and not-for-profit, and mutual aid—offer distinct benefits while having the potential to be integrated into a unified and comprehensive strategy for deepening and sustaining impact.

Anecdotally, through community engagement, the Practice learned (and witnessed) that volunteers affiliated with groups such as BUTO and OVCO, as well as all four BIA leaders and community stakeholders without institutional affiliations, have contributed considerable volunteer mutual aid and advocacy hours to address structural gaps. The following Social Services Map depicts institutional social services provided within the area, including employment services, health services and family services.



Map 12: Social Services Map

87 Kavada, A. (2022). Creating a Hyperlocal Infrastructure of Care: COVID-19 Mutual Aid Groups in the UK. In B. Bringel & G. Pleyers (Eds.), *Social Movements and Politics During COVID-19* (pp. 147–154). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.51952/9781529217254.ch019>

88 Spade, D. (2020). *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next)*. Verso.

♥ Social Services

1. Unison Health & Community Services | 1651 Keele St.
2. Youth Employment Services | 2562 Eglinton Ave. W. Suite #101
3. Hazel Burns Hospice | 2562 Eglinton Ave. W. Suite #203
4. Reconnect Community Health Services | 2562 Eglinton Ave. W. Suite #202
5. Syme Woolner Neighbourhood & Family Centre | 2468 Eglinton Ave. W. Unit #3
6. Access Independent Living Services | 2468 Eglinton Ave. W. Unit #315
7. Horizons for Youth | 422 Gilbert Ave.
8. Yorktown Family Services | 2010 Eglinton Ave. W. Suite 300
9. York-Fairbank Centre for Seniors | 2213 Dufferin St.
10. Centro Cultural Latinoamericano | 1756 Eglinton Ave. W.
11. John Howard Society of Toronto | 1669 Eglinton Ave. W.
12. Across Boundaries: An Ethnoracial Mental Health Centre | D'Arcy McGee Catholic School | 20 Bansley Ave.
13. Unison Health and Community Services - Oakwood Vaughan Site | 501 Oakwood Ave.

Highlights

- » A concentration of social service supports is notable to the north, just outside the study boundary (e.g., Lawrence Heights), as well as the western study boundary (Keele-Rogers). There is a noticeable absence of services between Marlee and Dufferin, and Eglinton and Rogers—what many community members consider the heart of Little Jamaica.
- » Within the study boundary, there are five social service organizations. Notably, three of the larger agencies—Unison Health and Community Services, the For Youth Initiative and the John Howard Society—have multiple locations across neighbourhoods within the broader city. Overall, their satellite services in Little Jamaica are smaller and have fewer resources than their primary sites outside the area boundary.
- » There is one active food bank operating within the study boundary at Syme Woolner Neighbourhood and Family Centre.* An arts and culture organization located at Eglinton and Northcliffe, called Centro Cultural Latinoamericano, pivoted during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to provide essential food bank services but is not currently providing this service.
- » Residents feel that the lack of culturally responsive social services and support for informal, grassroots social supports is greatly contributing to street-involved activities and diminished mental wellness of equity-deserving groups in the area.

*Note: Some church-based food banks closed down during the pandemic and have not reopened operations at this time.

**Recommendation**

Recognize the importance of social infrastructure and invest in initiatives that educate, connect and celebrate community stakeholders of all identities.

**Recommendation**

Leverage the City’s institutional networks to engage service providers across the City to establish an increased number of satellite sites—employing local community members whenever possible.

**Recommendation**

Establish a small fund to compensate community members engaged in mutual-aid and grassroots initiatives with honorariums to recognize their labour and basic costs (travel, meals, meeting supplies, etc.).

**Recommendation**

Building on the library’s exceptional programming, establish a community lending library to ensure that individuals and groups impacted by the digital divide, such as seniors and people living on low incomes, have access to information, entertainment and life-saving services.

**Recommendation**

Monitor the growing number of predatory businesses such as high-interest cheque-cashing outlets and cryptocurrency exchanges.

**Recommendation**

Develop—in collaboration with community members who have been historically, and are currently, addressing structural-service provision gaps—a support strategy integrating public, charity and not-for-profit, and mutual-aid models.

**Recommendation**

Collaborate with social service providers to address the current gaps in accessing culturally responsive services and broader services such as dental care, health care, elder care, gender-based services and fresh produce.

Community Inputs

First and foremost, the community stressed the need for culturally competent and accessible services, many of which would be best delivered by grassroots groups and individuals with a feel for the pulse of the community. The specific services noted include culturally specific mental health support; compassionate harm-reduction support; discreet healthy food access support; responsive housing support; intergenerational caregiver support (children and elders); and support accessing space and basic supplies for informal community-led, mutual-aid initiatives.

HOUSING

Canada's housing crisis is a complex web entangled in many ways, including the colonial project, volatile markets, cross-sectoral policies and social hierarchies. It is located at the nexus of all other rights-based services, such as education and health care. Housing is a universal right and human need that is essential for Canada to live up to its global reputation of being a democratic and compassionate society. Most experts trace the current crisis back to the 1990s when the Canadian housing market crashed. This problem was compounded by the federal government downloading responsibility for social housing to the provinces while it also made cuts to the funds it transferred to the provinces to pay for the program.

However, an equity-based, rights-based lens compels us to confront and reconcile the uncomfortable truth that the overall crisis dates back to first contact, resulting in Indigenous Peoples being displaced from their own lands over the centuries. Since that time, despite Canada being one of the most desirable countries in the world in which to build safe and spacious lives, numerous historically marginalized groups have suffered from housing discrimination.⁸⁹ The vast majority of public discourse and advocacy about Little Jamaica has focused on the challenges that have occurred along the retail corridor. However, individuals and families residing atop many of those businesses, along with those residing in the adjoining neighbourhoods, are also facing housing challenges.

In Little Jamaica, business owners aren't the only community members facing displacement. Through our engagement, we heard considerable concerns pertaining to residential displacement, defined as "a situation in which incumbent residents have fewer options within, are forced out of, or cannot move into neighbourhoods," and non-physical displacement such as, "a sense of loss of place and belonging, erosion of cultural cohesion, loss of community supports, and/or diminution of political power."⁹⁰ Moreover, "People can be displaced—unable to (re)construct place—without spatial dislocation."⁹¹

Keeping in mind these complex psychological and spatial dimensions of displacement, it is inarguable that many Little Jamaica community members are experiencing a profound sense of displacement. This is especially pronounced among unhoused people, renters, individuals living on low incomes and elders. Black community members are over-represented in a few of the aforementioned groups and are experiencing a distinct intergenerational displacement.

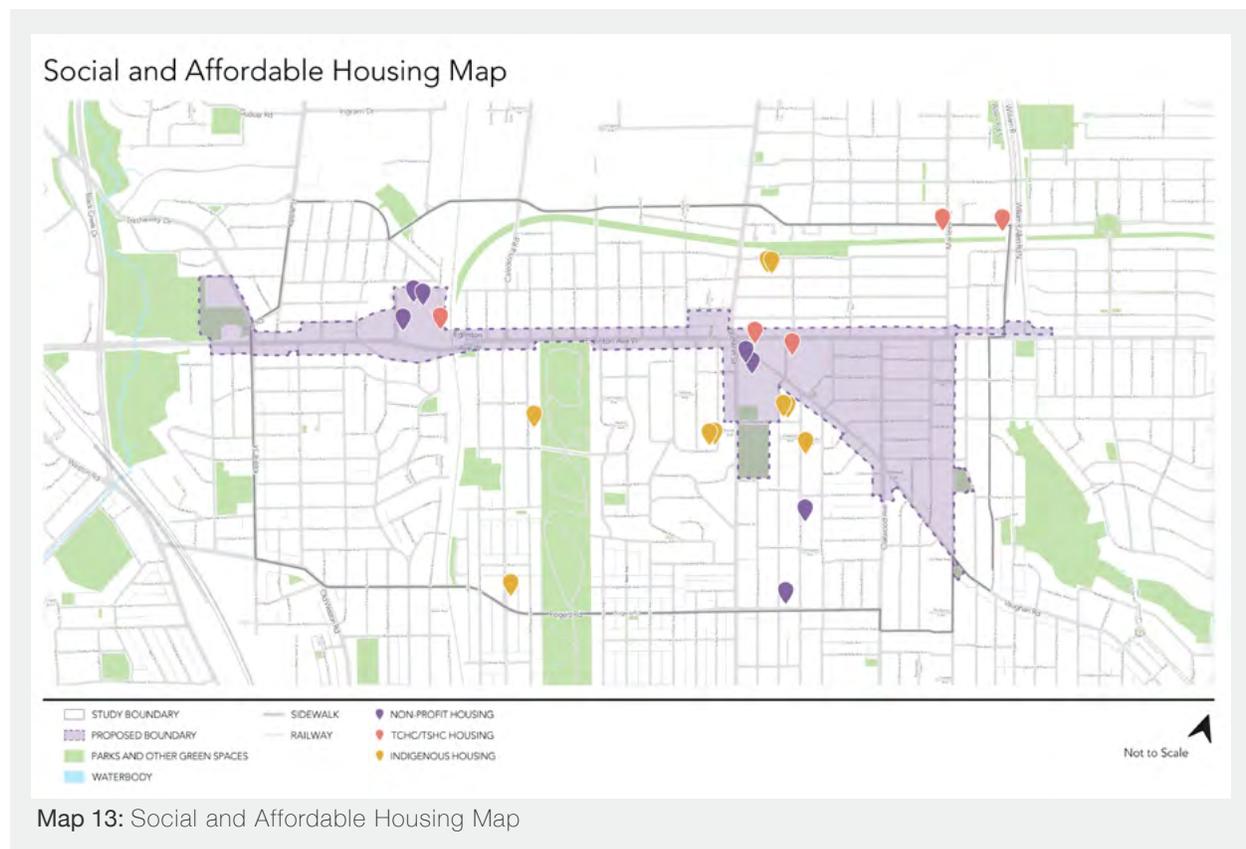
89 Pitter, J. (2023). *Advocacy Primer—Making the Case for a Black Canadian Housing Plan*. [Unpublished]. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

90 Chapple, K., & Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2019). *Transit-Oriented Displacement or Community Dividends?: Understanding the Effects of Smarter Growth on Communities*. MIT Press. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/9780262536851/transit-oriented-displacement-or-community-dividends/>

91 Davidson, M. (2009). Displacement, Space and Dwelling: Placing Gentrification Debate. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 12(2), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790902863465>

The provision of housing is fundamentally bound up in human rights, requiring a lens that responds to the aforementioned issues along with numerous other identities and historical inequities. Doing so will require an intersectional, multi-pronged approach, prioritizing the needs of all individuals and groups experiencing disproportionate housing precarity and/or discrimination while embracing aspirational initiatives that restore pathways to homeownership and agency to transform living spaces. Transformation of the current housing challenges is also contingent on reimagining the notion of “maintaining community character,” which is essential for change. Resisting good density, diminishing renters and/or criminalizing unhoused neighbours has nothing to do with maintaining community character. The extent to which other community members care for the most vulnerable community members, co-steward public spaces and respectfully engage across differences is what defines both community character and personal character.

This Social and Affordable Housing Map depicts existing supportive and/or rent-gear-to-income housing in the study boundary.



Map 13: Social and Affordable Housing Map

Highlights

- » These supportive and social housing projects are delivered by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation (TSHC) and a range of other non-profit and Indigenous housing organizations.
- » There are three seniors' housing sites in the area, all located near the York-Fairbank Centre for Seniors, which provides recreation and social programs geared toward older adults. There are also nine Indigenous social housing sites. Most of these sites are located throughout the residential neighbourhoods and are primarily single-detached or semi-detached houses. Conversely, the bulk of the TCHC/TSHC and non-profit housing sites have numerous units within apartments and high-rise buildings located close to commercial and main streets.
- » There is a growing number of people experiencing homelessness, individuals and families experiencing precarious housing such as couch surfing and crowded conditions, and low- to moderate-income renters concerned that they may be displaced amid the neighbourhood's rapid transformation over the next few years.



Recommendation

Provide greater on-the-ground support for unhoused individuals and emergency funding for individuals at risk of being unhoused.

Development Pipeline

Like all communities in Ontario, future housing development in Little Jamaica will largely be governed by Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act*.⁹² That provincial bill is designed to reduce bureaucratic barriers and increase the construction of housing. Under the new bill, the long-controversial Section 37 of the provincial *Planning Act* has been replaced with the Community Benefits Charge,⁹³ relatedly intended to compel developers to provide communities with amenities such as parks and community centres,⁹⁴ and other place-based assets such as public art. To meet complex housing needs in Little Jamaica and beyond, an equity-based development model is required. This is defined as a “form of community development and urban planning aimed at revitalizing disinvested communities and ensuring that all residents of urban places can shape urban development and benefit from economic growth in an equitable fashion,” which “holds great promise as a form of planning and community development that can make communities of low- and moderate-income and minority people into places that provide economic opportunities, affordable living, and

92 Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act*, 2022, 1st Session, 43rd Legislature, Ontario. <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-23>

93 Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, & Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning. (2022, June 27). *Growth-Related Funding Tools - Community Benefits Charge*. City of Toronto. <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-228204.pdf>

94 Keenan, E. (2015, January 16). Section 37 - What it is, and why everybody's fighting about it. *The Toronto Star*. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/01/16/section-37-what-it-is-and-why-everybodys-fighting-about-it-keenan.html>

cultural expression for all residents.”⁹⁵ The expedition of housing development, the provision of meaningful community benefits, and equitable community engagement and impacts are paramount issues for the Little Jamaica community.



Recommendation

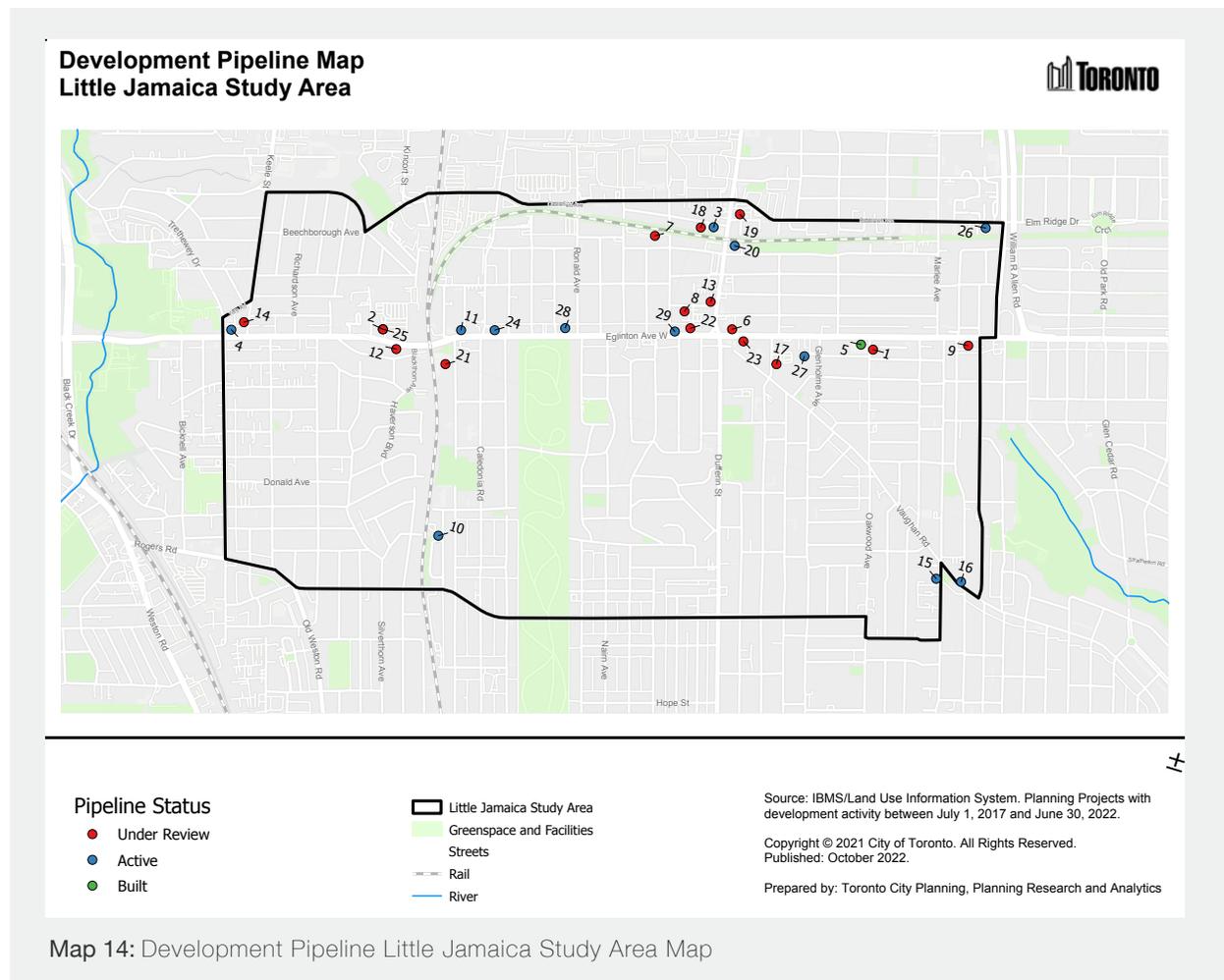
Consider alternative procurement models for selecting developers that prioritize meaningful community benefits, including training and employment opportunities through equity-based and non-discriminatory participatory models that include community representatives.



Recommendation

Establish, using a comprehensive accessibility lens, clear targets for housing developments that are economically, physically and socially accessible because these core principles are not reflected in the current housing development pipeline.

The following Development Pipeline map—provided by the City of Toronto and unedited by the Practice—depicts applications at various stages of development from 2016 to 2021. The developments are limited to OPA/Rezoning and Site Plan Approvals, which are larger developments—not minor variances and other smaller applications.



Map 14: Development Pipeline Little Jamaica Study Area Map

95 Von Hoffman, A. (2019). *The Ingredients of Equitable Development Planning*. Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Harvard_JCHS_Ingredients_Equitable_Development_Planning.pdf

Highlights

- » There are 29 Development Pipeline applications. A few include bicycle parking and improving community services and/or spaces, and one is designated for affordable housing, including a range of supports for people with disabilities.
- » There are 15 applications (about 50%) currently under review, including eight for mixed-use, three for residential, three for improving places of worship and one for a storage facility. Of the three applications for residential developments, none offer rental units.
- » One application under review, at 1801 Eglinton Ave. W., is required to provide 47 replacement rental dwelling units, 30 affordable rental units and 17 mid-range rental units, as defined in the Official Plan.
- » The developments in the pipeline are not diverse in terms of scale/typology or affordability, and they are not aligned with the area's diverse housing needs in terms of the provision of community benefits such as creating recreational and community spaces; innovative ground floor activation; and sustainability features.



Recommendation

Ensure all new development supports population health and mental health, sustainability imperatives and community development principles by considering “good density indicators,” such as consideration of green space; internal and external amenities; emergency isolation spaces for residents; cooling centres; food-growing and food-sharing spaces; intergenerational social spaces; zero-waste and upcycling programs; and resilient design features.



Recommendation

Provide support to both BUTO and OVCO to advance their respective land trust initiatives focused on the provision of affordable housing.



Models created by students from John Polanyi and York Memorial Collegiate Institutes—Youth Design Charrette hosted by Jay Pitter Placemaking and University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture.

BLACK HOMEPLACE

*The following is taken from a document prepared by the Practice for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, entitled Advocacy Primer--Making the Case for a Black Canadian Housing Plan.*⁹⁶

In the essay Homeplace,⁹⁷ renowned scholar bell hooks culturally contextualizes the home, “fragile and tenuous,” as a site constructed with a “radical dimension” where Black people could reclaim their dignity, transcending the structural violence of being deemed dehumanized public objects. Black people have been metaphorically, and literally, rebuilding homeplace since the transatlantic slave trade and, equally important, establishing homes and entire cities across the African continent since the genesis of human history.

The following provides insights into Black histories, cultural meanings and values pertaining to housing. These statements are not meant to be prescriptive or comprehensive—rather, they are intended to illuminate under-explored and sometimes challenging topics that contribute to Black peoples’ distinct racialized precarity and discrimination in Canada. This foundational context is important to understand when thinking about and addressing the displacement Black people are facing in Little Jamaica.

For Black People . . .

 **For Black people**, notions of home have historically been connected to restriction and resilience.

Universal conceptualizations of home are bound up in notions of safety, nurturing and belonging. However, individuals and groups of all identities have far more complex and divergent experiences of domestic space, which can also be the site of isolation and abuse. Depending on the typology and location of our domestic spaces—for example, a downtown condominium versus a mobile home in a trailer park—our homes can also be bound up in considerable social stigma or pride, and can immediately signal hierarchical class identities. These and other housing-related complexities are distinctly applicable to Black people stolen from their African homelands, enslaved and relegated

to plantations and later to public housing projects, prisons and other peripheries. This marginalization, according to renowned geographer Katherine McKittrick, constitutes the “sanctioning [of] black placelessness and constraint.” It is remarkable that while shackled and sullen in the beastly belly of slave ships, Africans transported placemaking practices in their hearts across an unknown ocean, creating innovative, hybrid, home-based rituals in North America. While this form of resilience is commendable, there has been substantial, unreconciled structural damage to the Black homeplace, beginning with restricted Black bodies and extending to restricted landscapes. The transatlantic slave trade established the foundation for a form of racialized housing discrimination, which distinctly impacts Black people.

96 Pitter, J. (2023). *Advocacy Primer—Making the Case for a Black Canadian Housing Plan*. [Unpublished]. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

97 hooks, b. (2015). Homeplace: A Site of Resistance. In *Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics* (pp. 41–49). Routledge. <https://thepoliticsofglobalart2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/09/bell-hooks.pdf>

 **For Black people**, housing supports can't simply be tethered to research and program grants; investments must be made in the direct provision of place.

For decades, all orders of government and the philanthropic sector have extended funds for research and social services to address racialized housing discrimination. While this type of funding is helpful, it has distinct limitations. The only way to truly address centuries-long displacement and violation of the sacred homeplace is through the provision of place. Extending funding for research to name and rename issues long identified—or to engage in housing design and development ideation without actually funding the provision of housing—is both a waste of resources and a wilful strategy to maintain the status quo. Providing people with place creates the foundation for achieving emotional, physical and economic stability. It also optimizes the return on investment because it gets to the core of distinct Black housing discrimination.

 **For Black people**, the call for a Black Canadian Housing Plan in no way diminishes discriminatory housing challenges faced by other racialized people and broader equity-deserving groups.

It is inarguable that Indigenous Peoples should have deep and distinct housing provision, given the ongoing violation of home on their lands spanning colonization, the residential school system, the Sixties Scoop, countless broken treaties and over-representation in the child welfare system. Other racialized groups have suffered housing discrimination, such as

the Japanese Canadians stripped of their homes and placed in internment camps during the Second World War. A Black Canadian Housing Plan, which centres the distinct racialized housing discrimination faced by Black people, in no way competes or compares itself with the challenges for Indigenous Peoples and/or other racialized groups. That said, it is important to note that all racialized groups do not face the same type and severity of housing precarity and discrimination. For example, in a 2003 Statistics Canada study, Hou and Myles point to several sources which show that Chinese families in Canada are housing privileged or “house rich.”⁹⁸ They cited a report finding that across nine major Canadian cities, next to Italian households, Chinese households were most likely to own their homes at 74.1%.⁹⁹ In comparison, the rate of home ownership amongst Black households was 34% (second lowest, next to Indigenous groups at 16.8%). This is not to suggest that Chinese people facing housing precarity shouldn't receive compassionate and responsive housing support. This and other research simply daylight and honours divergences among racialized groups rather than simplistically clumping everyone together beneath a BIPOC umbrella.¹⁰⁰

 **For Black people**, financial affluence and success provide little protection from housing discrimination.

Economic stability and ascension typically open pathways to greater socio-geographic mobility. While this is true to some extent for all people, regardless of race, many Black people cannot buy their way out of

98 Hou, F., & Myles, J. (2003). *Neighbourhood Attainment and Residential Segregation Among Toronto's Visible Minorities*. Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/11F0019M2003206>.

99 Balakrishnan, T. R., & Wu, Z. (1992). Home Ownership Patterns and Ethnicity in Selected Canadian Cities. *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie*, 17(4), 389–403. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3341216>

100 The acronym “BIPOC” stands for “Black, Indigenous, and people of colour.”

distinctly racialized housing discrimination in Canada. For example, one Black couple earning \$45,000 a month had trouble finding a temporary rental apartment prior to moving into the \$1-million home they had purchased. A single renter, who had a high-income-earning relative's support as a guarantor, was still forced to file a complaint after constantly being turned down for housing. "A lot of people in the community believe their money speaks and that race becomes obsolete when you have money, but I had to file a dispute with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario because of the discrimination we faced," the renter said. These two stories, and numerous others, are substantiated by real estate professionals such as Davelle Morrison, who says her colleagues frequently complain about not being able to secure housing for Black clients with excellent jobs and credit scores. While many economically secure Black people eventually obtain housing that measures up to their standards and desires, the difficulties and indignities they face in their housing journey remain with them long after they've settled in their new homes.

This kind of forced insecurity is further compounded by the continued risks of racial profiling, surveillance and lack of belonging in the neighbourhoods where they're trying to create a foothold for themselves and their families.

 **For Black people**, distinct racialized housing discrimination and precarity have persisted throughout history. Since emancipation in Canada, "free" Black people have continued to experience a distinct form of racialized housing discrimination perpetuated by numerous policies reinforcing restriction and loss. For example, restrictive housing covenants—a tool used to prohibit Black people and other racialized groups from renting, purchasing, occupying and/or inheriting property in particular areas of Canadian cities—was one way of implementing racially based residential segregation. While segregation of all kinds, in terms of policies and cultural values, has been popularly associated with the United States, Canadian reports such as "Housing Discrimination and Spatial Segregation in Canada"¹⁰¹ and "Neighbourhood Trends in Divided Cities: Income Inequality, Social Polarization & Spatial Segregation"¹⁰² substantiate that the same phenomenon occurred on this side of the border. So did immigration policies from the early 1900s, including Canadian Order-in-Council PC 1911-1324,¹⁰³ which stated, "the Negro race [...] is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada."

101 Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation, National Right to Housing Network, Social Rights Advocacy Centre. (2021, May). *Housing Discrimination & Spatial Segregation in Canada*. UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Housing/SubmissionsCFIhousingdiscrimin/CERA-NRHN-SRAC.pdf>

102 Contenta, S. (2018, October 1). Toronto is segregated by race and income. And the numbers are ugly. *Toronto Star*. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2018/09/30/toronto-is-segregated-by-race-and-income-and-the-numbers-are-ugly.html>

Hulchanski, J.D. (2010, June). *Neighbourhood Trends in Divided Cities: Income Inequality, Social Polarization & Spatial Segregation. A Selected Bibliography*. Neighbourhood Change Community University Research. <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/wp-content/uploads//2011/06/Hulchanski-2010-June-DIVIDED-CITIES-selected-annotated-bibliography.pdf>

103 Library and Archives Canada. (1911). *Orders in Council – Décrets-du-Conseil. RG2-A-1-a, volume 1021, PC 1911-1324*. Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. <https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/order-in-council-pc-1911-1324>

A few decades later, car-centric urban renewal schemes pierced the hearts of thriving Black communities such as Africville¹⁰⁴ in Halifax and Hogan's Alley¹⁰⁵ in Vancouver. It is, therefore, imperative to recognize that although the transatlantic slave trade ended more than a century ago, numerous contemporary policies and structural barriers have prevented Black people from both healing and re-establishing a hopeful homeplace in both American and in Canadian Black communities.

 **For Black people**, housing discrimination must be explored through an intersectional lens to both respond to, and address, a diverse range of housing challenges within Black communities.

Coined by scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, the term “intersectionality” refers to how multiple and overlapping identities of each individual can result in the reproduction of barriers and power imbalances. For example, according to a report by Eva's Initiatives for Homeless Youth, titled *Facts About Youth Homelessness*,¹⁰⁶ Black youth, along with Indigenous youth, are over-represented in homeless populations. Those who also identify as 2SLGBTQ+, particularly transgender youth, face heightened threats related to their physical safety, social stigmatization and mental health. Another example is highlighted in the report, “Barriers and outcomes in the housing searches of new immigrants and refugees: A case study of

“black” Africans in Toronto's rental market.”¹⁰⁷ The report found that new immigrants from three Portuguese-speaking countries—Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde—had divergent experiences with Portuguese landlords based on the shade of their skin. Newcomers from Cape Verde, who tend to have lighter brown skin, faced fewer barriers than their counterparts from Angola and Mozambique, who tend to have darker skin. These examples, along with many others, exemplify how aspects of Black identity such as sexual identity, skin shade, citizenship, ability and language can coalesce or, more pointedly, intersect to reproduce a range of severe housing-related barriers and power imbalances within Black communities.

 **For Black people**, housing benefits have not been accessible or fairly distributed. A little-known fact is that while people of European descent have received housing subsidies throughout Canada's history, Black people have not had fair access to the same level of support. For example, following the War of 1812—during which soldiers in the Coloured Corps were subjected to segregation and servitude to their white peers—Black soldiers did not receive equal housing-related benefits.¹⁰⁸ Retired Colonel Gilbert Taylor wrote in the *Toronto Sun*, “Once the war was over and grants were distributed, veterans of the

104 Library and Archives Canada. (1996). *Africville National Historic Site of Canada*. PA-170741. Government of Canada. https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=1763

105 Hogan's Alley Society. (n.d.) *What was Hogan's Alley?* <https://www.hogansalleysociety.org/about-hogans-alley/>

106 Eva's Initiatives for Homeless Youth. (n.d.). *About Youth Homelessness*. <https://www.evas.ca/about-us/facts-about-youth-homelessness/>

107 Teixeira, C. (2008). Barriers and outcomes in the housing searches of new immigrants and refugees: A case study of “black” Africans in Toronto's rental market. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 23(4), 253–276. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41107435>

108 Taylor, G. (2020, November 10). Taylor: Black Canadians have served in our military with distinction. *Toronto Sun*. <https://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/taylor-black-canadians-have-served-in-our-military-with-distinction>

Coloured Corps received 100 acres of very poor land compared to 200 acres to their white comrades in arms.” Similarly, an African Nova Scotian archive notes that after the American Revolution, “Black Loyalists received indifferent and inferior treatment compared to white Loyalists when it came to granting land, provisions and other resources to begin their new lives. As a result, some 1,200 Black Loyalists left Nova Scotia in 1792 for Sierra Leone in West Africa.”¹⁰⁹ These and many other examples, spanning wartime, immigration and policies of financial institutions, validate structural inequities while invalidating the notion that Black people are seeking a “handout” or “playing the race card” or seeking to be treated as a “special interest group.” The precedent of instituting policies that support various groups is well-established in this country; Black people are simply advocating for similar, fair treatment.

 **For Black people**, the housing crisis disproportionately impacts children.

The practice of removing Black children from the home traces itself back to the plantation where precious little ones, considered chattel, were regularly sold and separated from their families. Much like the situation with Indigenous children ensnared by the Sixties Scoop and residential schools, the state—which is no longer able to explicitly kidnap minors—now uses the child welfare system to continue the capture of both Indigenous and Black children. This has resulted in their respective overrepresentation in the child welfare system. When it comes

to Black children, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies published a report, “Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018: Understanding the Over-Representation of Black Children in Ontario Child Welfare Services,”¹¹⁰ showing that “four in 10 children in the care of the Children's Aid Society (CAS) of Toronto are Black in a city where only eight per cent of children are Black. Worse, the problem is not just in Toronto, but throughout the province.” This disproportionate representation noted below represents a single dimension of this challenge, which spans a complex range of issues such as investigation, substantiation and duration within the system. Black families with children are:

- » 2.2 times as likely to be investigated by the CAS;
- » 2.5 times as likely to have investigations substantiated;
- » 1.7 times as likely to have children transferred to ongoing services;
- » 2.5 times as likely to have children placed with other families during the investigation.

 **For Black people**, the rental housing market is extraordinarily fraught with numerous explicit expressions of anti-Black racism.

In response to this issue, an online group, Renting While Black,¹¹¹ was established to provide support and information to Black renters in Toronto. Many of the disturbing experiences shared by Black renters include having to change non-European-sounding

109 Nova Scotia Archives. (2023, March). *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Documenting the Heritage of African Nova Scotians, People of African Heritage in Nova Scotia*. Province of Nova Scotia. <https://archives.novascotia.ca/african-heritage/settlement/#:~:text=The%20earliest%20documentary%20evidence%20of,French%20r%C3%A9gime%2C%201713%2D58>

110 Bonnie, N., & Facey, K. (2018). *Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018: Understanding the Over-Representation of Black Children in Ontario Child Welfare Services*. Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. <https://www.oacas.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Black-Children-in-Care-OIS-Report-2022-Final.pdf>

111 Vincent, D. (2019, May 3). ‘Renting while Black’ forum aims to be an antidote to housing discrimination in Toronto. *The Toronto Star*. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2019/05/03/renting-while-black-forum-aims-to-be-an-antidote-to-housing-discrimination-in-toronto.html>

names to elicit responses from potential landlords; being rudely received at in-person viewings after having cordial email exchanges; and being told that a rental apartment or house is no longer available at in-person viewings, then seeing the same properties listed online as vacant. These occurrences can be categorized as subtle in contrast to overt racist incidents such as the one described by a Toronto-based, Black renter,¹¹² who was critiqued for speaking “too intelligently for a Black person” and, in another instance, cautioned against destroying the property because he was told, “Other Jamaicans who lived here destroyed the house. You guys are Jamaican; that’s what Jamaicans do.” Amid the rise of unprecedented stigmatization and housing precarity faced by renters of all races, Black people are once again distinctly disadvantaged. According to a recent Statistics Canada report,¹¹³ Black people are more likely (52%) than the total population (27%) to live in rental dwellings. They are also more likely to live in subsidized rental housing (14%, compared to three per cent of the total population).

 **For Black people**, creating home amid crisis and marginalization has been a cultural art form.

Despite violations of homeplace, Black communities have persisted in redefining and fostering new conceptualizations of home. Throughout history, root vegetables and greens have been cultivated between cracks of concrete, and the placentas of newborn babies have been planted at the base of trees. Front porches and verandas have been reimagined as semi third-spaces for collective conversations, hair-braiding and non-intrusive neighbourhood watches. Catering and sewing businesses have been conceived at kitchen tables. Living rooms adorned with plastic-covered furniture have hosted music rehearsals and community mobilizing meetings. In the process of intuitively creating new, hybrid homeplace, imaginative memorials and rituals have been created for mourning unknown homelands as a form of resistance but also of healing and tenderness. Born of distinct racialized housing discrimination, but shaped by Black peoples’ infinite imagination and indomitability, Black homeplace is often generative, caring and co-operative.

112 Newman-Bremang, K., & Ebrahim, N. (2021, March 26). *6 Women On the Reality of Renting While Black In Canada*. Refinery29. <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca/2021/03/9367732/racism-while-renting-canada>

113 Randle, J., Hu, Z., & Thurston, Z. (2021, November 22). *Housing Statistics in Canada, Housing experiences in Canada: Black people in 2018*. Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/46-28-0001/2021001/article/00006-eng.htm>

From humble huts to grand Egyptian pyramids, African structures have had an immense impact on architecture across and beyond the continent. Within the context of North America, enslaved people of African descent were the primary builders of structures in the Southern U.S. and—even while under the oppressive supervision of the enslaver—acted as the supervisor-designer-builder of many of them.¹¹⁴ Many African Americans became prominent architects after slavery was abolished. While Canadian contributions haven't been as well-documented, Black people have conceived

and/or contributed to numerous housing typologies including, but not limited to, the following: The African Round House; The African Compound and Jamaican “Yawd”; The African American Shotgun House; Favelas; Shanty Towns and So-Called Slums; and Mid-Century Modern. As such, in addition to understanding Black peoples’ distinct racialized housing precarity and advocacy efforts, it is imperative to understand Black peoples’ collective contributions and cultural approaches to creating homeplace.



Source: Migrationology



Source: Monovisions



Source: Shutterstock



Source: Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans



Source: Alfred and Dorothy Knox Recreation Room Bar, October 14, 2012. Photographer: Lydia A. Harris

114 Northern Architecture. (2023, January 2). *Slavery*. <https://www.northernarchitecture.us/reconstructing-architecture/slavery.html>



Recommendation

Support a Black not-for-profit organization—through capacity-building and meaningful financial investment—to develop affordable housing for Black elders, Black 2SLGBTQ+ individuals (both youth and elders) and Black artists.

Community Input

Community members in Little Jamaica have mixed feelings and perceptions about the impending intensification of the community. Some individuals feel strongly that new residential development will attract economic growth and vitality. Others feel strongly that the types of development in the pipeline will ignite gentrification and alienation of historically marginalized groups. For example, residents of a broad range of identities affiliated with groups such as OVCO and BUTO have publicly contested a few of the current developments and are pursuing the possibility of residential land trusts. Additionally, many community members also have divergent viewpoints on how to address the issue of homelessness. Some community members feel strongly about a policing approach while others feel strongly about a community-care approach, including social service interventions. While community members have vastly different priorities and perspectives, almost everyone agrees that they want their beloved community to be restored to a safe, welcoming and vibrant place to live.

Part Two Conclusion

The aforementioned content atypically integrates institutional, technical placemaking and grassroots community stakeholder knowledges, and knits together a complex narrative of a beautiful neighbourhood undergoing a difficult transition amid multifarious structural forces across all levels of government. While Black community stakeholders are centred—again, as instructed by City Council—a powerful place-based vision emerges that includes and benefits everyone. The concerns and aspirations related to fundamental priorities for complete communities—such as the provision of green space, safe streets and the provision of dignified housing—have been grounded and translated into clear recommendations, thus creating the foundation for a roadmap for action.

PART THREE

Toolkit: Placemaking, Cultural
Planning & Urban Design



Toolkit:

PLACEMAKING, CULTURAL PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN

When contemplating an overall design approach, water emerges as a unifying cultural symbol—complex, creative and flexible enough to represent the beautiful cultural layers in the Little Jamaica community.

Water as a visual placemaking and urban design inspiration is consistent with how the Plan has been developed in terms of flowing between multiple community stakeholders and priorities in the area. This pluralistic and flexible approach, which seeks to address distinct and collective needs, is a core principle that should be applied to the built environment.

Water is at once a unifying symbol with shared cultural meanings related to life/birth, transformation and human journeys—both forced and joyful. Water also has specific cultural meanings for different cultural groups. For many Black people, water represents the transatlantic slave trade, marked by forced journeys across an unknown ocean, which separated individuals from their names, faith, languages, cultural lineages and resource-rich lands. Water also surrounds and exemplifies the beauty of the Caribbean islands. For Indigenous Peoples, water on these lands has historically held numerous meanings related to trade, Indigenous women water-keepers, and the centuries-long separation from water on their own homelands and water crises on many reservations. For many immigrants from different cultures, water represents crossing oceans with hopes of creating a life in Canada, sometimes precipitated by free will and vision, sometimes precipitated by colonial forces, and other times precipitated by both.

Regardless of identity or historical moment, water and similar referential cultural symbols may serve as an ideal design prompt and inspiration. This is why water and similar elemental and interpretive design ideas may be suitable for collectively defining a public realm and amenities design approach that visually acknowledges Jamaican, Caribbean and broader Black cultural contributions while honouring all local stakeholders.

Key components of the Toolkit are as follows:

Collective Design Guidelines & Placemaking Approaches

This section unpacks high-level design principles and precedents for addressing a range of design elements including, but not limited to, wayfinding, accessibility, sustainability and cultural recognition in the built environment.

Small Design Interventions for BIG Impact

Within the Collective Design Guidelines & Placemaking Approaches, there are also 10 small design concepts intended to create a big impact. Rather than speaking over the community with fully conceived renderings, these approaches are flexible and allow community stakeholders to prioritize, enhance and decide where some or all of these concepts should be situated. Also, they are cost-effective and can be imagined in residential areas and retail corridors—focusing on “stickiness,” flexibility, economic prosperity, connectivity and safety.

Indigenous Design Principles

These Indigenous design principles were developed by Brian Porter, Principal of Two Row Architect. Based on his practice expertise, this section offers a high-level overview of how Indigeneity can be respected and expressed in the built environment.

Contemporary Black Placemaking Concepts

This section outlines an array of contemporary Black placemaking precedents, including, but not limited to, public art installations, urban agriculture, park design and architecture. This section also summarizes notions of Black homeplace, offering high-level considerations for developing culturally responsive housing for Black communities and other groups that share similar cultural practices and priorities. All precedents reflect Black cultural histories, expressions and hopeful futures.

COLLECTIVE PLACEMAKING, CULTURAL PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

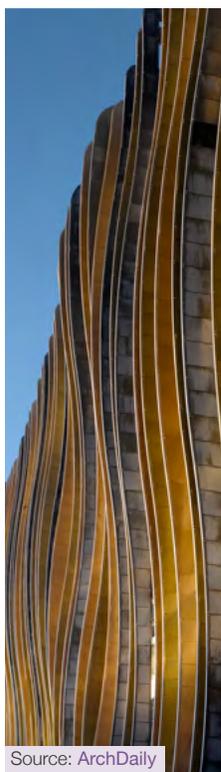
Building on the design-related interventions articulated in some of the aforementioned recommendations, this section outlines additional high-level design guidelines and placemaking approaches.

Embrace nuanced, culturally responsive design approaches.

- » Together with Indigenous communities, identify meaningful ways of recognizing their distinct status and stewardship on the land.
- » Integrate referential cultural symbolism and memory without being too literal, especially if doing so may perpetuate inaccessibility (for example, cobblestones in historic districts) or nationalism, such as the inclusion of a large number of flags representing any one country.
- » Avoid the deification of high-profile individuals through commemoration.
- » When commemorating high-profile individuals, reference the communities upon whose shoulders they stand.
- » Recognize unsung local leaders, whose contributions have been historically excluded from public commemoration, such as racialized people, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, newcomers, domestic workers/labourers, women and grassroots activists.
- » Consider collective commemoration—a term coined by the Practice—to describe the recognition of community contributions and shared values.



Source: Kairos Canada



Source: ArchDaily



Source: Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation



Source: Better Future

COLLECTIVE GUIDELINES (continued)

- » Ensure wayfinding signs include visual cues for individuals who do not speak English as a first language.
- » Observe desired pathways and formalize them within flexible, permanent design concepts.
- » Incorporate and formally recognize intangible cultural heritage (place-based stories, rituals, traditions) into the built environment.
- » Balance grids and linear lines with curvatures and parametric architecture emerging from Indigenous cultures throughout the world.
- » Create flexible design features where various cultural contributions and expressions can be featured throughout the year.
- » Include non-denominational quiet spaces for prayer, reflection and/or meditation.
- » Incorporate native and “invasive” species in landscapes within the site program.
- » Consider ways that internal and external spaces can be designed to accommodate a wide range of ethno-cultural sports, everyday practices and celebrations.

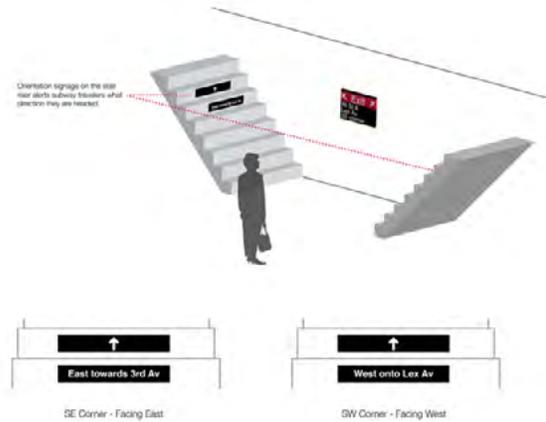
Address multiple dimensions of accessibility—spatial, social and economic.

- » Ensure that all interior and exterior surfaces should be firm, stable and slip-resistant.
- » Consider space for assistive devices such as wheelchairs, scooters and strollers when designing interior and exterior communal seating.



COLLECTIVE GUIDELINES (continued)

- » Provide depressed curbs, curb ramps and building ramps to accommodate mobility devices and strollers.
- » Install shared-access aisles between two accessible parking spaces instead of having single accessible parking spaces beside non-accessible parking spaces.
- » Integrate accessible and all-gender washrooms into all amenity types.
- » Install wayfinding signs, clearly marking all primary interior and exterior spaces and places.
- » Create places of pause and rest, especially for families, individuals with mobility challenges and elders.
- » Where possible, ensure that signage includes braille, print and pictograms, and use contrast in colour to indicate contrast in space, function, type and boundaries.
- » Design interior and exterior spaces with private spaces, quiet spaces and spaces with “low stimulation” spaces to accommodate neurodivergent individuals.
- » Design in a manner that allows the public to access some private amenities in new and future developments. Based on the current development pipeline, this would add 25+ amenities in the short-term and medium-term.
- » Design amenities with modest maintenance costs that are not reliant on high user fees.



Source: 99% Invisible



Source: The Guardian



Source: The Guardian

COLLECTIVE GUIDELINES (continued)

Public art should be governed by, and co-created with, the public.

- » Take a “more than murals” approach by incorporating three-dimensional design concepts such as edible landscapes and community gardens, as well as embedded historical markers in sidewalks, and subtle Caribbean pattern references and broader pan-African design vernacular incorporated in building facades, light posts and water features.
- » Commission local artists with current or past connections to the community, including Indigenous artists, emerging artists of all ages, and artists who engage communities in co-creation processes, rather than parachuting in big names from far-away places.
- » Ensure that public art placed on private lands is visible and accessible to, and informed by, the public.
- » Ensure that 75% or more of public art is acquired through transparent RFP processes and competitions with requirements that explicitly include artists who haven't had equitable opportunities to pursue large public art projects.
- » Commission small-scale vacant storefront installations to beautify and animate the retail corridor while reducing the existing sense of “blight.”



Source: blogTO



Source: STEPS Public Art



Source: Yung Yemi

COLLECTIVE GUIDELINES (continued)

Create accessible, dynamic and safe digital spaces.

- » Provide free public Wi-Fi throughout indoor and outdoor public spaces.
- » Integrate QR codes across public spaces to animate intangible cultural heritage; amplify local stories; daylight paved-over ecologies; update individuals and groups about the status of construction projects; and promote self-directed walking/rolling/cycling cultural tours.
- » Develop transparent policies pertaining to privacy and the use of surveillance technologies, given that CCTV cameras can perpetuate public profiling, which disproportionately impacts marginalized communities.
- » Encourage cultural learning landscapes in design concepts using physical signs coupled with QR codes and interpretive panels that invite visitors to explore Indigenous Peoples' histories, Black peoples' histories and broader collective histories that have defined the community's character. This type of intervention attracts school groups, local visitors and tourists, which also contributes to reviving pedestrian culture and supporting the local economy.



Source: Geek Intersection



Source: Patch



Source: Global News

Incorporate creative & compassionate safety design concepts.

- » Avoid hostile/defensive architecture approaches.
- » Design for safety sightlines that make pedestrians and cyclists clearly visible from the roadway, businesses, cultural venues and residential homes.



Source: The Globe and Mail

COLLECTIVE GUIDELINES (continued)

- » Increase lighting throughout the community while being mindful of glare.
- » Reduce light pollution, eliminating direct upward lighting and light spill, which can be harsh and/or convey surveillance.
- » Examine and design all interior and exterior spaces through a gender-based lens.
- » Wherever possible, transform laneways into pedestrian pathways and daily routes.
- » Animate laneways through art installations, with explicit spaces for micro cultural activities.
- » Identify safe(r) publicly operated community spaces throughout the area for children, youth, seniors, women, transgender individuals and others facing disproportionate safety risks while navigating the public realm.
- » Incorporate comprehensive street-safety design interventions using a mobility equity approach.



Design for Environmental and Community Resilience.

- » Balance intensification (building upwards) with the provision of increased green space on the ground. The City's Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division should use its policy tools to more acutely articulate the guidelines for parkland and green space dedication requirements to support comfort, respite, and optimal physical and mental wellness.
- » Leverage publicly owned lands to increase the provision of green space.
- » Develop edible landscapes.



COLLECTIVE GUIDELINES (continued)

- » Provide, and encourage developers to provide, green space within buildings over four storeys, including internal community vertical gardens, green walls, and green roofs, and design for balcony, window-sill and counter-top gardening.
- » Prioritize placemaking interventions that include depavement and renaturalization approaches.
- » Encourage front-yard edible gardens across both single-detached and multi-family housing types instead of traditional lawns. Encourage hardy landscaping with four-season interest.
- » Implement green streets infrastructure such as bioswales, roadside planting, edible landscapes and permeable pavements across the retail corridor, retail node and residential neighbourhoods within the proposed Little Jamaica Cultural District boundary.
- » Consider the use of mass timber in mid-scale housing developments, and repurposed wood and other upcycled materials for public spaces and public art.
- » Address environmental justice and community resilience by considering groups most impacted by the climate crisis; groups most susceptible to harm caused by social and climate tragedies and extreme weather events; capacity-building/retraining for workers most impacted by future environmentally sustainable technologies and sectors; and considering community members without social networks.



Source: Bowery Project



Source: Google Maps



Source: TimeOut

COLLECTIVE GUIDELINES (continued)

- » Create a community network of local stewards tasked with identifying and conducting check-ins with vulnerable community members during social and environmental crises, and leverage the knowledge of both long-standing residents and newcomers to identify good approaches for addressing these crises.
- » Ensure that there are spaces for historically marginalized communities to stay safe during pandemics and extreme weather events, such as cooling centres and spaces for short-term social distancing and non-institutional spaces to regain mental wellness.



Source: health



Source: Los Angeles Times

Small-Scale Concepts for BIG Impact

Shipping Containers



JPP Sketch/Technical Drawing 1: Shipping Containers

In Jamaica, primarily in rural areas, shipping containers are sometimes repurposed as residential home facades and used for small roadside businesses. Building on this cultural practice, these multi-purpose shipping containers could be used to facilitate retail pop-ups, which may be beneficial to entrepreneurs who lack the financial resources to invest in permanent brick-and-mortar facilities. Also, they could be strategically used to animate underutilized sites such as parking lots and alleyways.

Storefront Animation



JPP Sketch/Technical Drawing 2: Storefront Animation

Boarded-up or empty storefronts indicate blight, institutional neglect and speculation, and overall they diminish a sense of pride in the community. The beautification and animation of boarded-up storefronts could help to mitigate these issues while creating opportunities for local artists and increasing presence on the streets to enhance safety and community cohesion. These storefront installations could include interior installations, graffiti art on boards and rotating youth art displays.

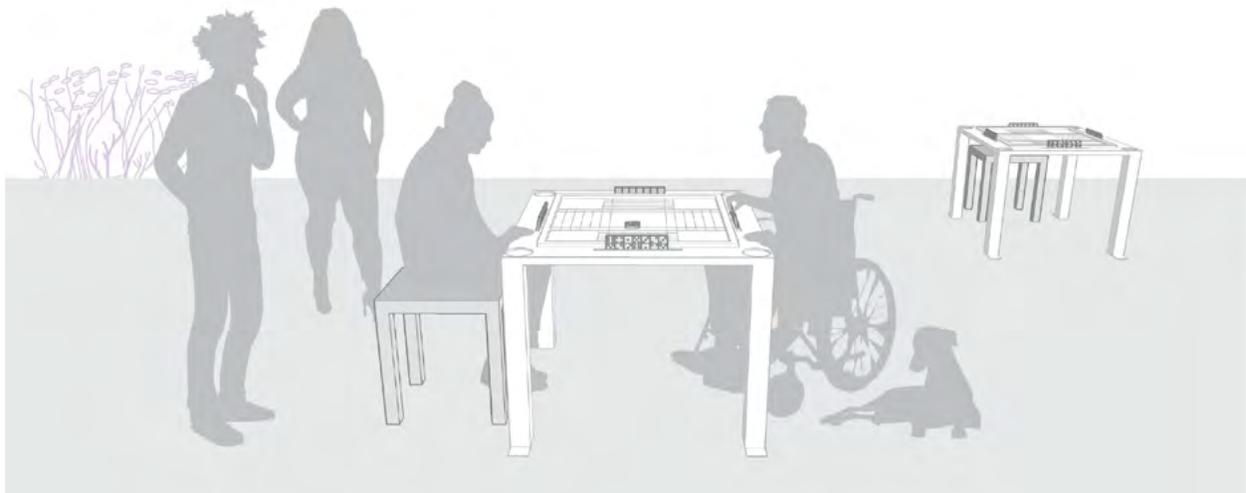
Fire Pit



JPP Sketch/Technical Drawing 3: Fire Pit

This covered fire pit features seating with a backrest as well as a wheelchair-accessible seating space. Designed to be a year-round amenity, this fire pit could be sited on both public and private properties (new developments) and could facilitate everything from small family gatherings to community group meetings, as well as support fire-based cultural practices.

Dominoes X Ludo Table



JPP Sketch/Technical Drawing 4: Dominoes X Ludo Table

Similar to chess tables in parks and other spaces within the public realm, these hybrid dominoes and ludo tables could be built by community stakeholders and installed throughout the community. These outdoor game tables may promote social interaction between new and old friends, and may be used for similar games such as mahjong, thus encouraging cross-cultural connections.

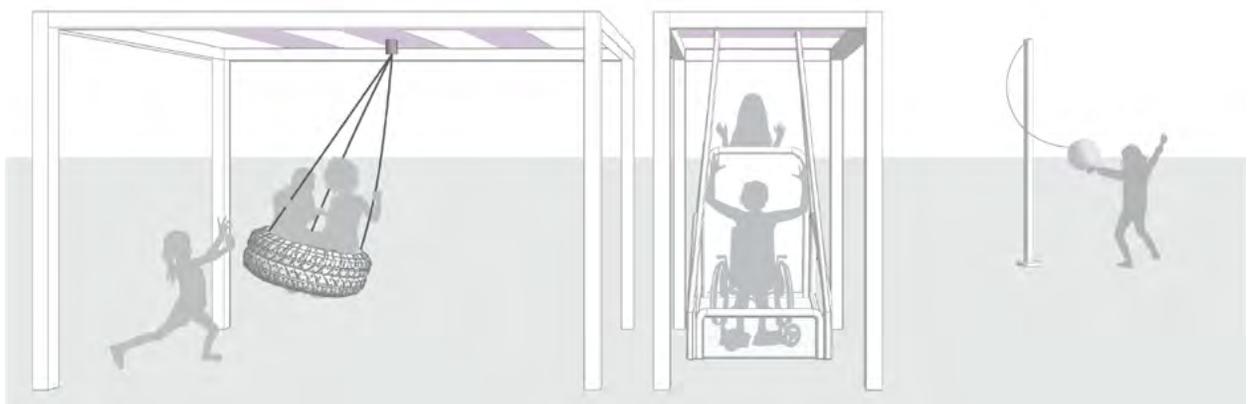
Porch Animation



JPP Sketch/Technical Drawing 5: Porch Animation

Respect for culture and cultural practices begins in the home. Specifically, porches serve as interstitial spaces bridging private and public life. Leveraging their unique function, porches could be programmed as cultural sites for initiatives such as porch concert series and meal-sharing gatherings. By extending cultural programming into the residential neighbourhoods, the Little Jamaica Cultural District will exemplify the boundlessness of culture while meaningfully including local residents as cultural contributors and innovators.

Play Stations



JPP Sketch/Technical Drawing 6: Play Stations

These simple, mini play stations could be built by community members and installed throughout the community, encouraging play for people of all ages and abilities. These stations may create stickiness and animation along the retail corridors—which increases revenue—while increasing access to play opportunities along residential streets.

Urban Agriculture (Greenhouse and Green Roof)



JPP Sketch/Technical Drawing 7: Urban Agriculture (Greenhouse and Green Roof)

In addition to the provision of land for Black people and Indigenous Peoples to farm as one form of recognition of histories of stolen lands and stolen people forced to labour on these same lands, small greenhouses, green roofs and vertical gardening interventions could be installed throughout the new developments and broader community. These amenities and design features may help to ensure that the significant development of the area is balanced with sustainable approaches and could provide existing and new community members with adequate access to green space.

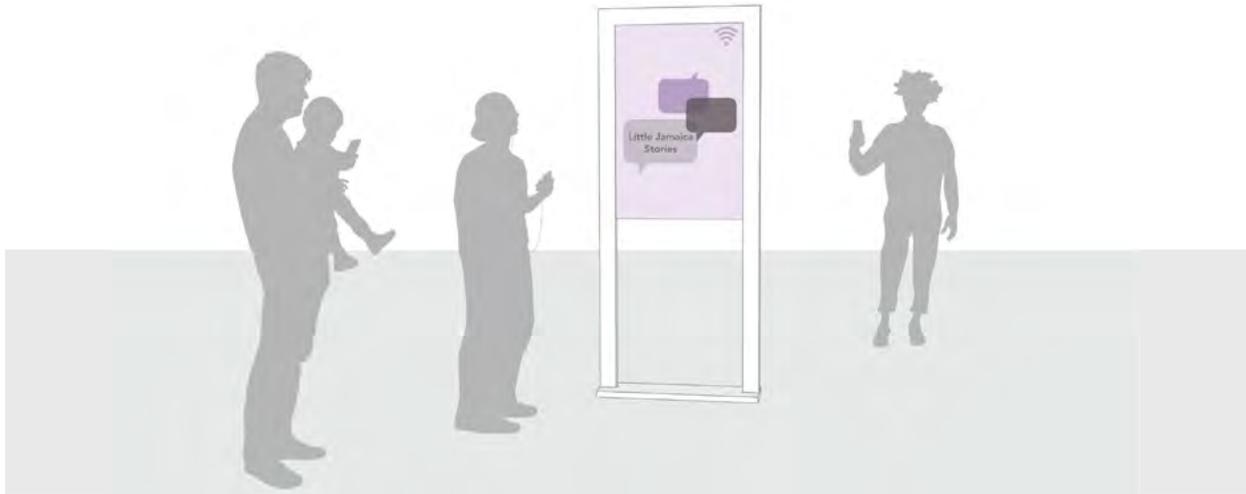
Community Cultural Podium™



JPP Sketch/Technical Drawing 8: Community Cultural Podium™

Community Cultural Podiums could respond to the lack of cultural, amenity and social service spaces. These simple and versatile podiums could be used for cultural performances, food demonstrations and social service program outreach. These podiums could evolve in terms of use. However, most immediately, they could be used to engage street-involved individuals, who for a variety of reasons wouldn't normally access formal social service support.

Cultural Storytelling Stations



JPP Sketch/Technical Drawing 9: Cultural Storytelling Stations

Cultural Storytelling Stations—equipped with QR codes—may be installed to maintain the intangible cultural heritage of the community. These stations may centre the stories of Jamaican, Caribbean and broader Black communities while also including the local stories of Indigenous Peoples and of community stakeholders of all identities with long-standing histories in the area. These stations may create spontaneous, delightful places to pause as individuals travel throughout the community and/or be leveraged as part of a strategy for engaging students of all ages, social service groups and tourists—local, national and international.

Patios



JPP Sketch/Technical Drawing 10: Patios

Patios are a feature that could both support and complement Little Jamaica’s once-vibrant and culturally rich sidewalk culture. They may encourage patrons to linger, provide accessible opportunities to experience live culture and increase presence on the streets to enhance safety and community cohesion. Ideally, new patios would be heated and would feature accessible seating to encourage participation from people of diverse abilities across all seasons.

INDIGENOUS DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following Indigenous design principles were developed by Brian Porter, Principal of Two Row Architect.¹¹⁵

Indigenous Knowledge

- » The art, architecture and design expression should reflect the public Indigenous knowledge, values and history.

Allegory and Metaphor

- » Establish an Indigenous identity through allegory and metaphor by referencing the meaning of the Miziwe Biik name as “ripples in a body of water.”

Materiality

- » Grade-related building materials should reflect the raw natural material pallet used on the Anishnawbe Health Toronto (AHT) building, including corten steel and precast concrete.

Directionality

- » Imagery in the architecture should refer to orientation and be inclusive of the larger Indigenous population. Place glazing in support of internal program requirements in combination with an understanding of the movements of the sun and how this impacts the comfort of the building's occupants.



115 Porter, B. (2022, December 7). *Acknowledging Indigeneity in the Little Jamaica Cultural District*. [PowerPoint presentation]. Two Row Architect.

INDIGENOUS DESIGN PRINCIPLES (continued)

Place

- » Grade-related building elements should reflect the “pebbles in a stream” theme used in the AHT building.

Relationship

- » The upper-level architectural expression should be a lighter reflection of the themes used in the AHT building.

Solar Tracking, Light and Views

- » Where appropriate, the architecture should acknowledge the movement of the sun. Maximize access to daylight and views to nature. This benefits occupant comfort, reduces energy consumption and responds to our biophilic nature.

Night

- » The design should be as impactful during the night as the day.

Biodiversity

- » Green roofs should be provided with Indigenous species.

Craft

- » Attention to detail and expression of craftsmanship within the building’s construction is important. Minimize building materials by thoughtfully revealing the crafted constructed elements of the building. Source: Brian Porter



CONTEMPORARY BLACK PLACEMAKING CONCEPTS

Black placemaking is defined as...

The term Black placemaking is used to describe the cultural competence and historical practice of Black people transforming “otherwise oppressive geographies” into “sites of play, pleasure, celebration, and politics.”¹¹⁶ While conventional notions of placemaking tend to overlook issues of race and their expressions in the built environment, “black placemaking seeks to analyze and recover the agency” of Black people and “offer opportunities to create new sites of gathering.”¹¹⁷ Lastly, Black placemaking challenges mainstream values of individualism as it “draws on the notions of linked fate”¹¹⁸—the belief that Black peoples’ “individual outcomes are tied to the well-being of the group bind them economically and politically, even as internal practices of marginalization threaten unity.”¹¹⁹

The following contemporary Black placemaking concepts exemplify both the definition of Black placemaking and the competency of Black placemakers across various land-use-related disciplines and sectors.



Source: Studio Cooke John

Jamaican-born architect Nina Cooke John’s “Point of Action” is an installation set in a New York City pedestrian plaza to create “multiple opportunities for connection with fellow viewers and with passersby.”



Source: The Urbanist

A rendering of the “Africatown Plaza,” part of Seattle’s Africatown Community Land Trust, aims to reflect traditional African architecture by referencing African patterns, fabrics and colours in the building facade.



Source: Africatown Community Land Trust

The Liberty Bank Building, part of Seattle’s Africatown Community Land Trust, is an affordable mixed-use development with ground-floor retail reserved for Black-owned businesses and housing units marketed to the Black community.

- 116 Hunter, M. A., Pattillo, M., Robinson, Z. F., & Taylor, K.-Y. (2016). Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33(7–8), 31–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416635259>
- 117 Hunter, M. A., Pattillo, M., Robinson, Z. F., & Taylor, K.-Y. (2016). Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33(7–8), 31–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416635259>
- 118 Hunter, M. A., Pattillo, M., Robinson, Z. F., & Taylor, K.-Y. (2016). Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33(7–8), 31–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416635259>
- 119 Hunter, M. A., Pattillo, M., Robinson, Z. F., & Taylor, K.-Y. (2016). Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33(7–8), 31–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416635259>

CONTEMPORARY BLACK PLACEMAKING CONCEPTS (continued)



Source: The Architect's Newspaper

Nina Cooke John's "Two Boxes of Oranges and Admonia Jackson" public art installation in Alexandria, Va., reveals the histories of slave ships, carrying cargo and enslaved people.



Source: The Coast

The Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia in Cherry Brook, N.S., near Dartmouth, shares four centuries of the rich and complicated history of Black culture and heritage in Canada.



Source: Studio Barnes

Studio Barnes' "Porch Politics" is a multi-media installation in Chicago that invites visitors to explore the largely undermined and ignored, yet liberating, communal and political space that is the porch.

CONTEMPORARY BLACK PLACEMAKING CONCEPTS (continued)



Source: My Modern Met

Kehinde Wiley's "Rumors of War" in New York challenges and complicates statues of Confederate "heroes" by inserting a young African American in place of what would typically be a white general.



Source: Adjaye Associates

The Alara Concept Store in Lagos, Nigeria, is a creative hub featuring talent, art, fashion and style from Africa and the African diaspora.



Source: Kéré Architecture

Burkinabé architect Francis Kéré's work is deeply influenced by his hometown and community in Gando, Burkina Faso. Here, the Serpentine Pavilion in Kensington Gardens, London, England, is inspired by "the great tree" in Gando, where community members would gather and meet, connecting with one another and with nature.

CONTEMPORARY BLACK PLACEMAKING CONCEPTS (continued)



Source: Success

Ron Finley, the “Gangsta Gardener,” transitioned from guerilla gardening in South Central Los Angeles to challenging city codes and bylaws to enhance food landscapes in impoverished communities impacted by food insecurity.



Source: Flash Art

Led by a group of African American artists, Project Row Houses restored 22 dilapidated shotgun houses and transformed them into art studios and housing for single mothers in Houston.



Source: NYC Parks

While Mitchell Silver was Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, he deeply transformed parks and public spaces throughout the city to address racial equity by renaming 16 parks to honour Black Americans and by launching “Parks Without Borders,” a project to remove physical barriers in public spaces to make them more accessible, as well as the “Juneteenth Grove” with the planting of 19 flowering trees to recognize the “Black community’s complicated relationship with trees,” among other projects.



Source: Afro-Caribbean Farmers' Market

The Afro Caribbean Farmers' Market, led by Lori Beazer, in collaboration with the Toronto Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective, led by Jacqueline Dwyer and Noel Livingston, plays an integral role in maintaining the community's special cultural identity.

CONTEMPORARY BLACK PLACEMAKING CONCEPTS (continued)



Source: GoogleMaps



Source: Black Daddy's Club



Source: SOCA | Studio of Contemporary Architecture

The Black Daddies Club (BDC) is a Toronto-based organization dedicated to fostering inclusivity and accessibility for Black fathers, families and communities of diverse backgrounds, including the Black 2SLGBTQ+ community. With a range of venues from cherished Black barbershops to the vibrant Evergreen Brick Works, the BDC provides a diverse range of Black fathers with services and events such as the mental health speaking series, financial strategies for Black families and family hikes.



Source: SOCA | Studio of Contemporary Architecture

Tura Cousins Wilson and Shane Laptiste—Founders and Principals of the Studio of Contemporary Architecture (SOCA)—explore the expansion and redesign of Reggae Lane in Toronto. They build on the laneway housing concept by proposing an animated retail laneway that would transform current garages into sites of commerce, creative placemaking and community gathering. This approach may include leaving residential garages intact as well as building new, small-scale structures informed by the needs and vision of local residents.

CONTEMPORARY BLACK PLACEMAKING CONCEPTS (continued)



Source: Toronto Life



Source: Toronto Life



Source: Toronto Life

Conceived by Harlem Restaurant Owners and Creatives Carl Cassell and Ana Silva, this lauded and striking prefabricated steel shipping container residential space above their restaurant in Toronto exemplifies a visionary approach for mixed-use development.

Black Housing Design Concepts

Following a generative community-engagement process focused on possible housing development sites identified by OVCO, and keeping in mind Black peoples' housing history—both precarity and contributions—the Practice continued to work in close collaboration with LGA Architectural Partners to generate a few scenarios to address the provision of a culturally responsive Black housing development in the community (see page 125 for an example and the Backgrounder Appendix D pp 37-41 for all 4). These scenarios are informed by engagement with the community, design approaches that the Practice has observed and begun to codify through research and professional collaborations across multiple Black-majority cities and neighbourhoods in North America. The simple sketches below are a small sample of African housing typologies across time and place.

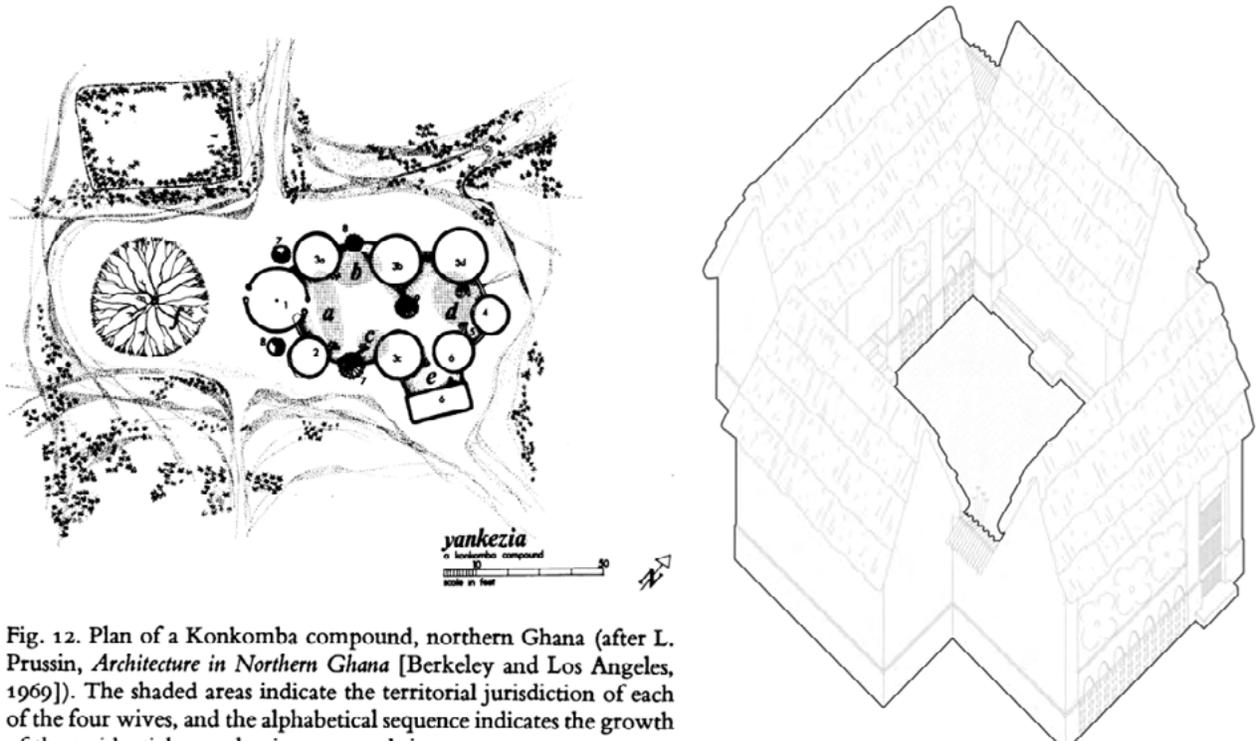
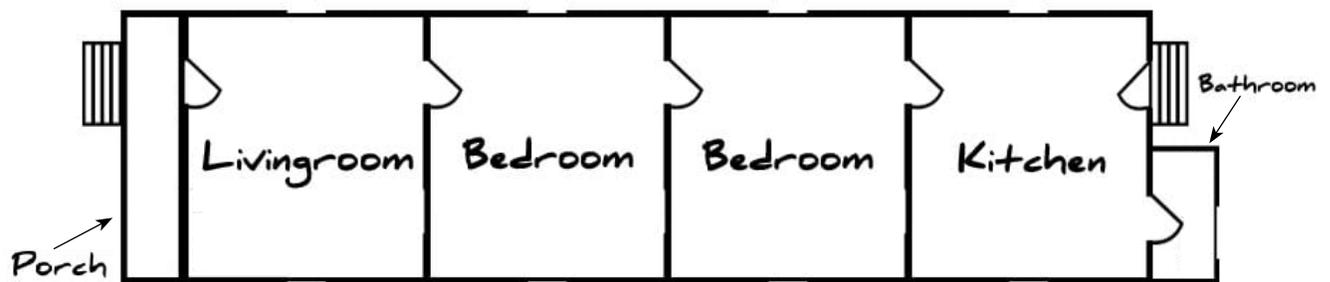


Fig. 12. Plan of a Konkomba compound, northern Ghana (after L. Prussin, *Architecture in Northern Ghana* [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969]). The shaded areas indicate the territorial jurisdiction of each of the four wives, and the alphabetical sequence indicates the growth of the residential complex in space and time.

Source: *An Introduction to Indigenous African Architecture*

Source: Finhankra: could the traditional compound house answer today's needs?



UniqueNOLA

CONTEMPORARY BLACK PLACEMAKING CONCEPTS (continued)

Some of the culturally responsive approaches below would be beneficial to other racialized and equity-deserving groups that share values pertaining to communal, intergenerational and sustainable residential living arrangements.

- » Due to policies that perpetuated segregation, coupled with barriers limiting Black peoples' participation in the mainstream workforce, Black peoples' homes have been “work-live” sites and community gathering spaces long before this notion was popularized within urbanism. It is important that zoning, design and funding accommodate housing development that enables income-generation and commerce for Black communities and groups that have faced disproportionate housing discrimination.
- » Despite suffering extreme land-based discrimination, Black people have passed down place-based knowledge related to intergenerational design approaches, construction, development and use of sustainable materials.
- » Black communities possess considerable overlooked land-based knowledge and practices. Housing provision should both respect, and respond to, this place-based knowledge through the provision of space for the continued cultivation of land-based cultural practices as a form of restitution and intergenerational healing.
- » The front stoop and porch are powerful Black cultural iconography and a three-dimensional placemaking intervention. They represent one of the first places where Black people were legally permitted to defend their bodies and possessions; serve as a place where neighbours watch out for each other; and are a type of third-space where food is shared, hair is braided and music is played. Housing development geared toward Black communities should translate the form and cultural function of the front stoop—including multi-family dwellings—in its design approach across housing typologies.
- » Much like the front stoop, the circular communal yard connecting various households—even in single-detached home developments—is another form of cultural iconography and a three-dimensional placemaking intervention. Not to be conflated with the impositional tower-in-the-park housing design, this approach is sensitive to density levels, includes connectivity to the street and centres communal space rather than the building itself. This idea of circles which align with the natural environment, and social patterns rather than grids, is reflective of a broader decolonial design approach and values pertaining to community connectivity.
- » The Black homeplace isn't contained within the building envelope. The stoop, communal spaces, streets and green spaces are all a part of the Black homeplace. This comprehensive conceptualization of home transforms housing from simply being a place where people reside to being a dynamic and integral part of community life, contesting conventional notions of private domestic space, public space and everything in between.

CONTEMPORARY BLACK PLACEMAKING CONCEPTS (continued)

Housing Option: School Scenario

743 Vaughan Rd.
Little Jamaica, Toronto, ON

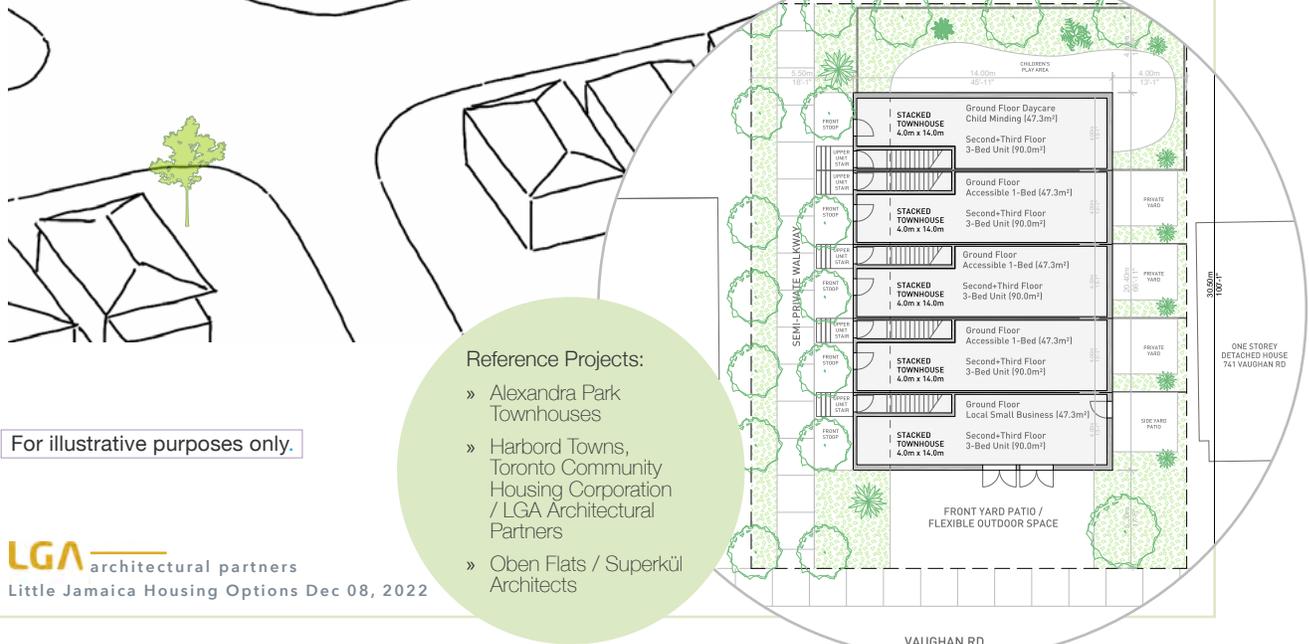
This scenario proposes to partner with the Toronto District School Board to develop an unused portion of a school property. The concept is a row of three-storey stacked townhouses at the “missing middle” scale conforming to the low-rise character of the neighbourhood.

Each unit would have its own front door, with three-bedroom family-sized units on the second/third floors, and an accessible one-bedroom unit on the ground floor. The building would be book-ended with a ground-floor commercial space for a local small business, a large patio facing out to the street,

and a child-minding/small day-care space and playground facing the rear of the school property.

This housing could be built as prefabricated modular units (limited by the maximum dimensions for flatbed truck transport) to reduce cost and construction time.

This design would also introduce significant re-wilding and softcover landscaping of the property—in stark contrast to the current proposal for a small parking lot on this land.



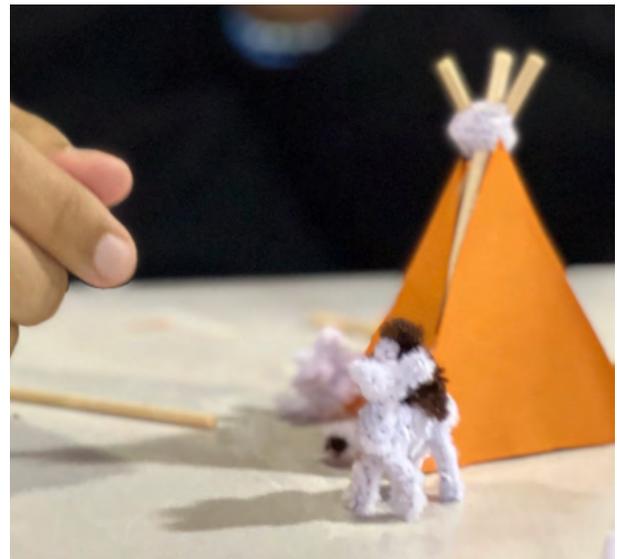
Reference Projects:

- » Alexandra Park Townhouses
- » Harbord Towns, Toronto Community Housing Corporation / LGA Architectural Partners
- » Oben Flats / Superkül Architects

LGA architectural partners
Little Jamaica Housing Options Dec 08, 2022

Toolkit Conclusion

Again, the content that has been presented in this Toolkit is not intended to be prescriptive. While it is informed by a deeply collaborative community engagement process and by Practice approaches, it is important to create space for local stakeholders to challenge, prioritize, improve upon and add to the content provided in this Toolkit. Also, policy transformation, meaningful municipal investments and community stewardship models are paramount because design of any kind is never a comprehensive answer to complex placemaking challenges. The work ahead requires a combination of design, and social and structural interventions co-created with community stakeholders.



Models created by students from John Polanyi and York Memorial Collegiate Institutes—Youth Design Charrette hosted by Jay Pitter Placemaking and University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture.

ALIGNED CITY PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

Given the scope and urgency of this initiative, an assessment of existing aligned City programs and initiatives is both prudent and paramount. This is a good starting point for identifying existing resources—monetary, staff expertise and program frameworks—that can support the implementation of the recommendations.

Business, Community & Cultural Development Programs



Community Space Tenancy Program: involves City-owned or City-managed spaces that are available to eligible non-profit organizations to deliver services to residents of Toronto for a nominal below-market rent.

Arts & Culture Grants:

Toronto Arts Council (TAC) Grants: are funding provided by the City of Toronto to artists and arts organizations through TAC. TAC has a wide range of grants for artists and community non-profits, including the Black Arts Program, Indigenous Arts Program and the Open Door Program, as well as grants in arts disciplines such as music, visual art, dance, theatre and community-engaged art.

The Cultural Festivals Funding Program: supports the development of the festival sector in a manner that is accessible, transparent and accountable.

StART Partnership Program: is a suite of programs designed specifically for streets and public spaces.

Cultural Hotspot: encompasses 2023 Cultural Hotspot Signature and SPARK project funding; Applications for Little Jamaica are now closed. Deadline to apply was January 16, 2023. Signature Projects are eligible for funding of up to \$22,000 each. SPARK Projects are eligible for funding of up to \$9,000.

Community Services & Investment Grants:

Community Investment Funding: consists of grants to help achieve social, economic and cultural goals for Toronto residents, including

Community Crisis Response, Youth Violence Prevention, Neighbourhood Grants, Community Events, Capacity-Building, and funding for grassroots youth-led groups.

Community Service Partnerships: support not-for-profit community organizations to offer high-quality and relevant services that respond to the changing needs of the community and strengthen the City's well-being.

Grants for Indigenous Grassroots Groups:

Capacity-building Grant for Indigenous-led Collectives & Grassroots Groups: supports capacity-building activities and projects by Indigenous-led organizations and collectives. Administered by the City's Indigenous Affairs Office (IAO).

Indigenous Arts and Culture Partnership Fund: supports partnerships and collaborations that create new opportunities and visibility for Indigenous-led arts and culture.

Opportunities for Partnerships & Support:

Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs): provide inclusive and affordable opportunities for local residents, artists and arts organizations, with a focus on underserved children, youth and participants from a broad demographic spectrum.

Business Grants & Programs: BIA Local Leadership Fund: supports emerging leaders in the BIA movement by funding full tuition to the Local Economic Development (LED)

Certificate Program through the Chang School of Continuing Education at Toronto Metropolitan University as well as support through mentoring and networking opportunities.

Transit Expansion Construction Mitigation Grant Program: provides funding to Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and business associations for community-driven initiatives that mitigate the impacts of construction on local businesses.

Business Incubation and Commercialization Grant Program: supports not-for-profit organizations, including incubators, accelerators and entrepreneurial organizations, aimed at creating business formation, innovation and job-creation. These organizations may receive grants to help provide programming to nascent entrepreneurs, businesses and start-ups.

CaféTO Property Improvement Program: supports the cost of improvements to café spaces on City property (where a valid permit has been issued) or on private property; 50 per cent fund matching available for eligible applicants.

Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program: supports the cost of improvements, redesign, renovation or restoration of commercial building facades up to a maximum \$12,500 grant for \$25,000 in spending.

Commercial Space Rehabilitation Program: supports interior improvements of commercial businesses and storefronts that are vacant (or at risk of becoming vacant); 50-per-cent fund matching available for eligible applicants.

Main Street Innovation Fund: supports projects that address main street challenges, engage in innovative placemaking and animate main streets to support business recovery and success. Grants of \$25,000, \$50,000 or \$100,000 available.

Outdoor Mural and Street Art Program: supports one-time funding up to \$7,500 for outdoor mural projects that help promote a local theme and facilitate commercial or industrial neighbourhood identity.

Housing Support & Homelessness Grants: support a range of grant opportunities for non-profit, community-based organizations to provide a variety of housing supports and homelessness services to residents, including grants for street outreach, homelessness prevention, housing-focused client supports, housing access, housing-focused system supports, daytime drop-in programs funding and the Toronto tenant support program.

Tax Incentives:

Creative Co-Location Facilities Property Tax Subclass: offers 50-per-cent property tax relief for eligible properties.

Property Tax Rebate for Registered Charities: is a program to help registered charities determine eligibility for a rebate of 40 per cent of their property taxes.

IMIT Program (Imagination, Manufacturing, Innovation and Technology): supports new building construction and/or building expansion in targeted sectors by offering a grant of 60 per cent of the increase in the municipal taxes attributable to the eligible development over a 10-year period.

Economic Development and Culture Initiatives

Office for Cultural Space

The City's Economic Development and Culture (EDC) Division has increased its support for the cultural sector on the issue of creative space. The new Office of Creative Space (OCS) was established in 2022 to address the City's cultural space challenges by providing a one-window approach to supporting artists, arts organizations, and City Divisions, Agencies and Corporations. Through strategic partnerships, cultural planning, policy development, capital projects and sectoral capacity-building initiatives, the OCS helps to create and retain affordable, accessible and sustainable cultural spaces. It will also support the development of the City's forthcoming Cultural Plan that will prioritize equity, accessibility and spatial justice. The OCS is tasked with developing the City's first Cultural Infrastructure Strategy, a long-term approach to invest in cultural facilities city-wide. It will undertake a series of community consultations and engagements in 2023 that will inform the Culture Plan and the Cultural Infrastructure Strategy.

EDC Collaboration with Toronto Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR)

The City is making multiple investments through the EDC in the Black arts and culture community and the Black business sector to address the systemic, economic, social and cultural exclusion facing Black communities in Toronto. That division is committed to investments in new cultural hubs such as the Blackhurst Cultural Centre (BCC) and the Nia Centre for the Arts. The EDC is currently working with the BCC to secure a permanent home within Mirvish Village, and has secured a commitment from City Council to donate land via a 49-year nominal lease along with \$2.78 million in capital funding; to waive municipal taxes via a Municipal Capital Facility designation; to waive building permit fees; to accept donations and offer tax receipts on behalf of the BCC; and to provide technical support to the BCC through an interdivisional staff team. The EDC is also working to support the Nia Centre in the final stages of its capital project to open its new home in Little Jamaica.

EDC Cultural Grant Reform

In alignment with the City's strategic priority to invest in people and neighbourhoods, EDC grants both support and enhance the business sector and the cultural fabric of Toronto, helping make it a city that celebrates diversity. While EDC grants are critical to the sustainability of organizations in the business and cultural sectors, efforts are needed to improve their accessibility, transparency and accountability. The EDC is currently reviewing its approach to grant programs and practices, in alignment with the City of Toronto Community Grants Policy, the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism and the Indigenous Affairs Office Reconciliation Action Plan. Informed by this process, some changes have already been implemented in specific programs, such as the Business Incubation and Commercialization Grant Program, which was adopted by Council in April 2022, and the Cultural Festivals Funding Program, which was adopted by Council in November 2021. In 2023, the City will also implement changes to its grant programs and to its directed grants to increase available funds that will prioritize equity-deserving organizations, emerging organizations and organizations working outside the downtown. Cultural grant reform aims to improve granting practices within the EDC while recognizing the necessity of retaining a measure of flexibility to support Council priorities to incentivize innovation and address changing market conditions.

Business Improvement Area (BIA) Governance Review

To address the evolving needs and challenges of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), the City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 19, Business Improvement Areas will be reviewed by the Toronto BIA Office in consultation with the City's Legal Services Division and the City Clerk's Office. The City will undertake the review in consultation with its 84 BIAs and TABIA (the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas). The City of Toronto Municipal Code's Chapter 19 establishes rules for the governance and operation of the City's BIAs, including the establishment of new BIAs, activities that BIAs are permitted to undertake, and the appointment of board directors. The review will consider a series of proposed amendments to Chapter 19, developed in consultation with BIAs and TABIA, that reflect the changing nature, scale and scope of BIAs. A report will be brought forward for Council's consideration in Q4 2023 and will focus on the growing complexity and different needs, challenges and opportunities for BIAs in Toronto.

Neighbourhood Retail and Services (By-law 820-2022)

City Council has approved a plan to expand the number and locations of low-rise housing forms—ranging from duplexes to walk-up apartments—in all areas of Toronto to meet the needs of its growing population. While all these housing types can be found in many parts of the city today, they had been previously blocked from being built in some neighbourhoods. The Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods program is one solution among a range of City initiatives to increase housing choice and access, and to create a more equitable, sustainable city.

Toronto Community Crisis Service

The new Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) is a community-based, client-centred, trauma-informed response to non-emergency crisis calls and wellness checks that is a long-sought alternative to police interactions with people in distress. The TCCS aims to establish trust and confidence in a new community-based response model.

The following list—provided by the City of Toronto and unedited by the Practice—includes, but is not limited to, initiatives and organizations that have been supported through a diverse range of the aforementioned programs and grants:

"A Little Reset in Little Jamaica" by RESET	"More than Little" by NIA Centre for the Arts	"Tween Creative Arts Program" by Canadian Reggae Music Association
"Camp Reset" by RESET	"Little Jamaica Retail Strategy & Business Opportunity" by BBPA	"Under the Banyan Tree 5" by Patrick Walters and VIBE Arts
"Archiving Black Futures" by Oddside Arts	"Get to know Eglinton West" by BBPA	"This is me, Photovoice!" by TO Hub 365
"Beat of Your Own Drum" by VIBE Arts	"Little Jamaica Rising Stars" by Keele & Eglinton Residents	"Tallawah Sound" by Sydanie & STRIVE Toronto
"Bring the Beat Back" by Diversified Youth Initiative	"The Toronto Black Farmers and Food Grower Collective" by Afro-Caribbean Farmers' Market & Toronto Black Farmers	"Sound of Your Neighbourhood" by CIUT-FM
"Taste the Caribbean Food Festival" by CariFestival Association	"Toronto Patty Festival" by Toronto Black Farmers	"Friendly Neighbourhood Screenwriting" by Paul Daniel Torres & Centro Cultural Latinoamericano
"Toronto Pan Afrikan Film Festival" by Lori Beazer & Toronto Black Farmers' Collective	"Little Jamaica Community Ramp Project" by StopGap Foundation	"Eglinton West in Poetry" by Clifton Joseph and RastaFest
"Visual Tokens: To Community, from Community" by NIA Centre for the Arts		"DiverCITY on the Hill" by STEPS Public Art



Getting to Work

Contributing to the mitigation of Black cultural erasure and discrimination while also addressing the revival and healing of an entire community is a significant undertaking. It's time for the City of Toronto to leverage all of its financial resources, policy tools, public properties, staff expertise, and institutional and intergovernmental relationships to meet the moment with meaningful action. In addition to the recommendations outlined in this document, the Practice is imploring the City to take these immediate actions by February 2024:



Formally launch—using the Cultural Districts Program Proposal submitted by the Practice in the summer of 2022—a significant web presence to provide Little Jamaica stakeholders and the broader public with the necessary context for this inaugural Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan. This should include: specific content for Little Jamaica inclusive of marketing/amplification (visuals and key messages); downloadable resources for Little Jamaica stakeholders; prompts for institutional and intergovernmental partnerships; a resource development portal; and outreach for external institutional co-stewards, etc.



Designate one City-owned property to be used as a Little Jamaica Cultural District community hub and visitor centre.



Identify, in collaboration with community stakeholders, 10 short-term actions—including three that will be taken within this fiscal year—to advance the objectives of this Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan.



Reconvene the City's interdivisional team which was originally established to take actions that support the success of the Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan; and create a publicly accessible two-year work plan inclusive of clear divisional roles, milestone timelines and success indicators. Also, budgetary allocations for collectively agreed-upon priorities should be established through a participatory budgeting process.



Provide a community report pertaining to the City's 90-day social plan, which was spurred by community concerns and implemented in 2022. Include actions taken and outcomes along with re-establishing a longer-term social plan for the community.



Develop job postings for, and hire, two Little Jamaica Cultural District community animators to co-lead the implementation of a collectively agreed-upon Little Jamaica Cultural District work plan alongside the City.

Given the precedent-setting nature of this initiative and the need for inter-governmental and institutional collaboration, the Practice shared an almost-final version and/or imperative highlights of this Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan with community reviewers, as well as the following sector leaders and dignitaries.



The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) and Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) congratulate Ms. Pitter, her team, and the City of Toronto on the successful completion of the first Official Cultural District Plan in Canada for Little Jamaica, Toronto. As a plan that centres equity and inclusion, as well as building respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples, considerations of climate change, the supply of housing, and the importance of heritage, culture, and individual and collective expressions in creating healthy communities, OPPI and CIP look forward to seeing how this work will be implemented in Toronto—with the exciting potential of using this plan as a precedent for similar projects in other cities across the province and country.”

**Susan Wiggins, Executive Director
The Ontario Professional Planners
Institute (OPPI)**

**Beth McMahon, CEO / Directrice générale
Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) /
L’institut canadien des urbanistes (ICU)**



As the CEO of the Ontario Arts Council, I am thrilled to lend my voice to the Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan. This visionary initiative not only recognizes the rich cultural heritage of the Jamaican community in Ontario but also paves the way for the preservation and celebration of the vibrant traditions from the diaspora. By fostering a space where art, music, and history intertwine, this plan will undoubtedly empower the Little Jamaica community and enrich the cultural landscape of our province.”

**Michael Murray, CEO / Directeur général
Ontario Arts Council / Conseil des arts de l’Ontario**



At Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation, we believe that strong cities are arts and culture cities. We also know that arts and culture does not exist in a vacuum – it is embedded in our city’s services, on our streets and in the hearts and lived experience of people. The Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan recognizes this with its inclusive vision to honour and amplify Caribbean and Black peoples’ integral cultural contributions to the City for the benefit of all Torontonians.”

**Kelly Langgard, Director and CEO
Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation**



The release of the Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan by Jay Pitter Placemaking is a moment of collective celebration for communities and cultures that deserve respect, acknowledgement and commemoration. The City of Toronto's first official cultural district plan is a tremendous milestone and it will inspire cities around the world to replicate. I am proud of Jay Pitter for guiding and co-creating this landmark plan with the community which will help Little Jamaica preserve its heritage past, present and future. This plan will change the way cultural district plans are envisaged and that is to honor place, people and identity."

**Mitchell Silver, Principal, Vice President of Urban Planning
McAdams
Former New York City Parks Department Commissioner**



My name is Jill Andrew and I have had the privilege of working for my community of Toronto—St. Paul's as the elected Member of Provincial Parliament since June 7, 2018. Our community will tell you there is no St. Paul's without 'Little Jamaica'. Supporting culturally relevant, community-based initiatives rooted in the goals of Little Jamaica's people, arts and culture, heritage, health, economic vitality and sustainability is key to our community wellness. Little Jamaica is home to many Caribbean, Black and racialized community members and boasts a history of many legendary artists, entrepreneurs and small businesses. This cultural district also welcomes many tourists and visitors passing through as well as other non-racialized community members who call 'Little Jamaica' home. 'Little Jamaica' is not without its challenges many of which are systemic and reflect the inequitable distribution of wealth, infrastructure, real affordable housing, and community benefits among other necessities. Jay Pitter Placemaking has co-led alongside Little Jamaica community members and stakeholders the city's first ever, official cultural district plan: Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan. Critical to this work has been its commitment to an intersectional, gender responsive design and approach to community engagement. As a Black queer woman, I am here to tell you that 2SLGBTQIA+ community exists in St. Paul's and that includes 'Little Jamaica'. Little Jamaica thrives when all community members including its queer, Trans and non-binary community members thrive. I was honoured to have participated in the Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan's Deep Listening Circle last spring 2022 and I look forward to continuing my support."

**Dr. Jill Andrew, PhD, MPP Toronto—St. Paul's
NDP Critic for Culture and Heritage
NDP Critic for Women's Social and Economic Opportunity**



Consideration of the unique needs and experiences of women and gender diverse people in cultural planning and urban policy using a gender equity lens is extremely important, but it's still a rarity. The incorporation of gender-responsive design approaches in this plan for the beloved Little Jamaica Cultural District is a refreshing element and best practice. It helps ensure we are seen and celebrated, in all our diversities, in the landscape of the neighbourhoods where we live.”

**Paulette Senior, President and CEO
Canadian Women's Foundation**

English version



I'm proud to support the Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan. This transformative initiative acknowledges the distinct Jamaican and Caribbean cultural imprint while celebrating the diverse contributions of our entire community. Additionally, the inclusion of an innovative gender responsive design shows the clear commitment to empowering our youth, while raising the bar for future cultural and community planning. By recognizing barriers, promoting collective prosperity and affordable housing, this plan carves out a space to celebrate and protect cultures that have given so much to Toronto.”

**The Hon. Marci Ien, Minister for
Women and Gender Equality and Youth
Federal Liberal Cabinet
MP, Toronto Centre**

French version

« Je suis fier de soutenir le Plan du district culturel de Little Jamaica. Cette initiative transformative reconnaît l'empreinte culturelle distincte de la Jamaïque et des Caraïbes tout en célébrant les contributions diverses de l'ensemble de notre communauté. De plus, l'inclusion d'une conception innovante tenant compte de l'égalité de genre témoigne d'un engagement clair en faveur de l'autonomisation de nos jeunes, tout en plaçant la barre plus haut pour la planification culturelle et communautaire future. En reconnaissant les obstacles, en favorisant la prospérité collective et le logement abordable, ce plan crée un espace pour célébrer et protéger les cultures qui ont tant apporté à Toronto. »

**L'hon. Marci Ien, ministre des Femmes et
de l'Égalité des genres et de la Jeunesse
Cabinet libéral fédéral
Députée, Toronto Centre**

Jay Pitter Placemaking is an award-winning, bi-national practice mitigating growing divides in cities across North America. The Practice leads institutional city-building projects focused on public space design and policy, mobility equity, cultural planning, gender-responsive design, transformative public engagement and healing fraught sites. Additionally, Jay Pitter, Principal Placemaker, shapes urgent urbanism discourse through media platforms such as the Los Angeles Times and Canadian Architect. Ms. Pitter is a sought-after speaker who has delivered keynotes for organizations such as United Nations Women and the Canadian Urban Transit Association, and is also an urban planning lecturer who has engaged students at Cornell University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Princeton University and numerous other post-secondary institutions. Guided by Ms. Pitter's expertise, which is located at the nexus of urban design and social justice, the team translates community insights into the built environment and urban policy.

Jay Pitter Placemaking

Jay Pitter, Principal Placemaker

Adjunct Professor and Practitioner-In-Residence, University of Waterloo

Visiting Fellow, University of Windsor Law Centre for Cities

Forthcoming books with McClelland and Stewart, Penguin Random House Canada



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