

Jane Finch Initiative: Open House Sessions

November 25th, 2023, 12-5pm (In-person at the Jane Finch Mall)

November 28th, 2023, 6:30-8:30 pm (Virtual)

November 29th, 2023, 5-8 pm (In-person at the Jane Finch Mall)

November 30th, 2023, 5-8pm (In-person at the Jane Finch Mall)

December 7th, 2023, 5-8pm (In-person at the Jane Finch Mall)

OVERVIEW

From November 25th to December 7th, five open house sessions were hosted by the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre and the City of Toronto. Four of these consultation sessions were a part of the [Jane Finch Initiative's](#) comprehensive engagement process and were held in-person at the Jane Finch Mall and online over Zoom, and the final event, led by Bike Share Toronto, was attended by mobility leads from the JFI project team. The purpose of the events was to:

- Present, discuss, and receive feedback and ideas to refine the:
 - [Draft Jane Finch Secondary Plan](#),
 - [Draft Urban Design Guidelines](#),
 - [Draft Community Service Facilities Strategy](#),
 - [Draft Historic Context Statement](#), and
 - [Draft Community Development Plan Principles and Actions](#).

HOW WE ENGAGED

Open House Sessions

City staff from the Jane Finch Initiative team hosted public open house events in the EarlyON space in the Jane Finch Mall. Poster boards were displayed, and postcards, booklets, and refreshments were distributed to attendees. Community members were encouraged to share feedback directly in discussion with staff. Comments were captured on sticky notes posted to the display boards. The agenda for the November 28th virtual open house can be viewed in Appendix A.

Outreach efforts in advance of the open-house included mailing invitations, social media advertisements, distributing postcards and flyers in malls, community centres, and libraries, and an e-blast to the Jane Finch Initiative mailing list. Approximately 170 community members reviewed the display boards, shared feedback, and/or spoke with staff at the four open house sessions.

December 7, 2023 Bike Share Toronto Event

Staff from the Jane Finch Initiative team also attended a separate but related event for BikeShare in early December 2023 to provide participants with information on the mobility components of the draft Jane Finch Secondary Plan and Urban Design Guidelines. They were

also able to integrate any relevant feedback shared during these events into the draft documents. Approximately 15-20 community members were reached.

WHAT WE HEARD

This section includes the summaries of the feedback collected from the large group and small group discussions during the Zoom meeting and in-person open house sessions. A full record of feedback is included in Appendix B.

Key themes

- Prioritize affordability, and consider implications of the heights and density of new development
 - Many residents expressed significant concerns about housing affordability.
 - Residents noted that development should include a variety of housing types, including apartments with larger units, and affordable home ownership opportunities.
 - Residents expressed concerns related to higher density around the Jane and Finch intersection, including impacts on sunlight and shadows, wind, and feelings of congestion.
 - Residents expressed concerns about the depicted heights of potential buildings. Many residents associated taller buildings with prohibitive rental costs.
- Improve connectivity, the pedestrian network, and balance investments in multiple transportation options
 - Participants inquired about the new streets, and noted that extensive community consultation should be done when determining the locations and designs of new streets. New streets on the Jane Finch Mall site should prioritize pedestrian access to retail and to community gathering spaces.
 - Residents noted that pedestrian access and safety during construction should always be a priority.
 - Participants made suggestions for more efficient mobility options along Jane Street, including a dedicated bus or HOV lane.
- Preserve and improve access to local healthcare facilities
 - Many participants discussed important medical service locations, including Black Creek Community Health Centre in Yorkgate mall, facilities at Finch and Norfinch, and the Reactivation Care Centre. Access to these facilities should be a priority, and there is a need for new medical service facilities to respond to increasing demand.
- Existing community services and facilities are vital for supporting youth and community wellbeing
 - Many participants discussed violence and trauma in the community, and underscored the need for safe and accessible youth spaces with trauma support and programming related to community wellbeing and mental health.
 - Priorities included tailored services for children, youth, and seniors. Residents shared

that existing services are highly appreciated and beloved by users, and community organizations delivering services should be well-funded to support expansion of programming.

- Many residents noted the North/South divide as a significant barrier for youth accessing programming and services.
- Residents expressed concern that existing community services and facilities will be overwhelmed by increasing demand. Investments must be made so that services are appropriately expanded.
- Maintain and expand inclusive community spaces
 - Many participants expressed that the Jane Finch Mall is an invaluable community gathering space.
 - Prioritize spaces that are accessible and inclusive gathering spaces for seniors.
- Area stigma exacerbates threats to community safety
 - Participants noted the implications of area stigma on mental wellbeing, especially for youth.
 - Residents discussed the importance of nuanced approaches to police-youth interactions, and combating negative stigma for holistic community safety and wellbeing.
- Desire to make climate action a design priority, and to center resident leadership in climate advocacy
 - Residents suggested having a panel or working group of local climate leaders who can provide feedback to the Councillor's office, development applicants, and City divisions on a breadth of projects.
- Desire to maintain and expand local entrepreneurship and employment opportunities
 - Residents highlighted the importance of affordable commercial units in local malls and plazas as opportunities for local entrepreneurship.
 - Many emphasized the importance of youth employment opportunities.
 - Participants noted that employment opportunities should be diverse.
- Desire for continued engagement in community processes
 - Residents stressed the need for simplified language in the Community Development Plan, and sought clarity on how the Community Partnership Circle and Institutional Tables would operate and be accountable to residents.
 - Residents should be involved in the creation of any community governance structures, especially the Community Partnership Circle.

APPENDIX A: AGENDA (November 28th)

6:30 Participants Join

6:35 Welcome

- Land Acknowledgement [JFC]
- African Ancestral Acknowledgement [CoT]
- Introductions, agenda, introduction to Miro [JFC]

6:40 Draft secondary plan & urban design guidelines

- 6:40 - 7:40 Community acknowledgement, presentation & integrated discussion on the Draft Secondary Plan and Urban Design Guidelines [CoT]

7:40 - 8:20 Draft CDP

- 7:40 - 8:20: Presentation & integrated discussion on the Draft Community Development Plan Draft Principles and Actions [CoT]

8:20 - 8:30 Closing Notes

- Next steps & things to look out for [JFC]
 - Upcoming in-person meetings
 - Where to find reports
 - Contacts for future follow-up

APPENDIX B: RECORDED FEEDBACK

Draft Secondary Plan and Urban Design Guidelines

Directing Growth:

- Support for mixed-use at the intersection.
- More retail opportunities, please.
- Enclose the San Roman way tennis courts.
- Mixed-use redesignation between Driftwood and Topcliff makes good sense.
- Support for the corner being used for year-round gathering; not familiar with Corner Commons.
- Need more local job opportunities.
- Need to break the north/south social divide.
- Need legal services within walking distance of the Jane and Finch intersection
- I like seeing that there are some changes at the mall. It looks better.
- Build housing that is appropriate for newcomers

Shaping New Buildings | Creating New Retail Streets

- People need places to shop
- Proposal for 35 Street building near where I live is too tall and takes up too much green space. Prefer to keep it an open space.
- Please don't make streets like downtown. Make the sidewalks wider for pedestrians (cut into plazas). Make double lanes for cars. Cars need space.

The Intersection

- This is all well, if it is affordable for all, and not just for one set of people.
- Mall tenants want to know when it's being torn down.
- We need more jobs and long-term nursing homes in the area.

Norfinch District:

- How did the 30-storey figure for Norfinch District come about?
- Regarding coordination, what is the plan for the police station and the delivery of the park?
- In scenario 1, can passive walking and cycling connections along the MTO lands be considered?
- Has MTO been involved in determining the placement of the new streets at the intersection?
- Many people walk around; ensure that walkways are accessible.
- PMTSAs should strive to offer maximum affordability.
- The building setbacks should be 40-50 ft on main streets and 3m on side streets.

Jane Street District

- Keep views from towers.
- Keeping green space is good.
- The pathway from behind Topcliff Public School to Jane Street needs lighting

San Romanoway - Palisades District

- Year round beauty and vibrancy at the San Romanoway - Palisades garden and greenspaces.
- Need for more investment in the San Romanoway - Palisades gardens

Health District

- Need more access to health care and long-term care homes in the area
- The entrance to the ravine at London Green is inaccessible.

Greening: Parks and Public Realm

- Don't want to lose any green space or parks.
- More space to ride bicycles.
- Bike lanes cause more traffic, and nobody uses them. It's a waste of space.
- Add lighting to the path between Jane Street and Topcliff school.
- More seating and picnic tables to support BBQs.
- Nice new park where Firgrove is.
- Make BBQs available.
- Make event bookings easier at parks and public spaces

Moving:

- There are numerous medical and community facilities around Pelican Gate and Finch Avenue; prioritize convenient access for drivers entering medical facilities from Finch Avenue.
- The LRT is beneficial for Jane and Finch; it will bring convenience.
- Making left turns along Finch should be easier for drivers; consider them in the creation of new streets.
- Implement dedicated bus lanes or HOV lanes on Jane Street.
- Prioritize pedestrian safety during development
- Safety during construction of new and existing infrastructure projects
- Construction impacts from Finch West creates a barrier.
- Integration with VisionZero is vital. Cyclists must be protected.
- Jane Finch Residents use all kinds of transport.
- Regulate e-bikes.

Community Services and Facilities:

- Seniors meet at the mall; we need a dedicated space for elderly people to connect.
- Love services for seniors at EarlyOn; want them to continue providing programming.
- More targeted services for youth and kids; consider employment assistance and opportunities.
- Services for child and youth recreation need to be consistent for local low-income youth.
- Make the Hub an AOCC (Association of Community Centres); benefits of both private and PFR-run facilities.

- Underhousing means greater demand for public gathering spaces. When residents have nowhere to go, we experience more social problems.

Housing:

- Will I be able to afford living here?
- Affordable rental units.
- Strong interest in protecting major transit station areas.
- "How affordable is affordable?"
- Want to grow in place? Need a wide range of affordable rental housing forms.
- This is a great plan as long as it is inclusive for everyone (low income families) in the community.
- Need the province to approve inclusionary zoning for affordable housing.
- Keep the rents down!
- Affordability of housing
- Need mixed housing types.
- Residents are concerned about missing rent
- Affordable housing is the priority.
- Want affordable ownership opportunities.
- Displacement from high housing costs.
- Affordability for low-income families.

Heritage:

- Wayne Black is an active social worker and a good contact to speak on inadequate support for youth issues and needs around Grandravine and Edgeley.
- Many places here have stories linked to trauma, but it's still home. Consider speaking to Chris Blackwood.

Climate Action

- What about Indigenous-led stewardship of the land?
- Replace all mature trees that are lost through construction.

Development applications in Jane and Finch.

- We need safe youth spaces to protect kids from social issues at Jane Finch Mall.
- Trauma/therapy and support for youth.
- Support for midrise and higher density around the plaza.

- What percentage of LRT-related hiring was from Jane and Finch?
- People are not going to church anymore, feeling silenced, trauma, and violence; no cops at Grandravine, but they are not really welcome anyway.
- There is a cycle of violence at the Grandravine TCHC community. People are being traumatized by ongoing violence, and yet there is a lack of police presence and a fear of policy by community members because of police violence in the past
- Area stigma
- Stigma may prevent development in the area.
- Love the use of QR codes on display boards. Very accessible.

Draft Community Development Plan Draft Principles and Actions

Community Development Plan Implementation:

- Use simpler language throughout the CDP.
- Consider how the Jane Finch City Institutional Table will be accountable to local stakeholders?

CDP Principles:

- Engaging with the community honors ancestral knowledge; all are important in a circle.
- What do the Confronting Anti-Black Racism principles mean for a newcomer from Africa?

Inclusive Employment Opportunities:

- Hire people living in shelters; for example, health workers.
- Settlement case workers should connect newcomers with upskilling opportunities.
- Strengthen communication networks to make people aware of opportunities.
- Youth jobs can bring good ideas to the community.
- More social supports for formerly incarcerated individuals; consider opportunities in trades training and development.
- How do immigrants get their credentials validated?
- Publicize programs/opportunities to help immigrants find jobs in their field.
- More jobs for local people

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Opportunities:

- Should have more of a youth focus.

Food Justice and Sovereignty:

- Community gardens are good for mental wellbeing and socialization, especially for seniors; they should be in every building.
- Food banks at community centres, churches, and other accessible places.
- Need for more affordable food options.
- The local councillor could have a list of people to engage with on environmental issues.

Community Safety and Wellbeing:

- Would like more programming for seniors.
- Inclusive, realistic support at youth program spaces, especially for difficult to reach youth dealing with trauma.
- Police and youth require a different approach.
- Shopping is a social event for wellbeing for seniors; ensure they are not isolated.
- Actively address the unfair stigma.
- Mentorship programs for youth.
- Programs for youth to address stigma.
- Ensure there are crossing guards at lights during construction.

Arts, Culture, and Heritage:

- Create a Jane and Finch museum, including areas along Jane from Highway 7 to Dundas.

Gentrification and Displacement:

- It's crucial for Jane Finch Mall to stay, and the community not to get pushed out.
- New investment might lead to displacement; need for cheaper housing.
- Services and programs to connect newcomers with affordable housing.
- Settlement programs should conduct outreach and educational sessions at shelters and hotels.
- Housing is the number one priority.
- The Jane Finch Mall is a place for community; prioritize seniors for low-income housing.
- Consider the replacement of senior services when the mall changes.
- Cheaper housing.
- Think about the replacement of senior services when the mall is changed.

Access to Space and Mobility:

- Increase senior funding for seniors to connect; increase space for seniors.
- Everyone should feel comfortable being themselves; otherwise, social anxiety may arise.
- People meet at the mall with loved ones and the community, especially important for seniors.
- Support funds for local leaders to activate community spaces.
- English as a second language services and supports.
- Ensure residents can access all services inside the community.

Additional questions and feedback:

- Will the land use plan return to the design review panel?
 - Response from City Staff: No. We visited the Design Review Panel in January and June 2023 to receive input on emerging designs.
- Will existing rental and condo buildings stay intact?
 - Response from City Staff: All of the recent applications we've seen have been for infill development - new buildings on spaces between existing buildings or on parking lots. They have not included applications to demolish any existing buildings. If an application includes demolition of a building that contains six or more rental units, the same number and size of rental units need to be replaced in the new development.
- What do we mean by "mixed use"?
 - Response from City Staff: Areas designated as Mixed Use under the Official Plan can include a broad array of residential uses, offices, retail and services, institutions, entertainment, recreation and cultural activities, and parks and open spaces. They allow for people to live, work, and shop in the same area, or even the same building, giving people an opportunity to depend less on their cars, and create districts along transit routes that are animated, attractive and safe at all hours of the day and night.
- Consider how intensification can be limited.
- Where can we review key proposal dates for applications?
- It should be easier for residents to access information about proposed developments, their size, and the number of units.
 - Response from City Staff. All applications for development are available through the [Application Information Centre](#). Below the search bar, click on Refine Search. Then select Ward 7: Humber River Black Creek and click on Apply Filters. The map will then show all the current development applications around Jane and Finch.
- What is the timeframe for the completion of the Jane Finch Initiative?

- Response from City Staff. The Jane Finch Initiative project will be complete once the Secondary Plan and Community Development Plan have been adopted by City Council. We will bring the plans forward for adoption in March 2024. After that, the implementation of both plans will take place over many decades with ongoing opportunities for community involvement in the review of individual development applications and the design and implementation of the community development plan.

APPENDIX C: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City of Toronto's Jane Finch Initiative is a resident-informed project to plan for the future of the Jane and Finch area. Together, we are developing a community development plan and a land use plan so that residents and businesses are supported as the area changes over time with the opening of the Finch West LRT.

The Jane Finch Initiative is a resident-informed project to plan for the future of the Jane and Finch area and to determine how best to leverage the investment in light rail transit (LRT) for the benefit of local communities. It is a collaborative community planning exercise in 'Neighbourhood 24 - Black Creek' and 'Neighbourhood 25 - Glenfield-Jane Heights' (see Neighbourhood Profiles), centered on the intersection of Jane Street and Finch Avenue West.

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

The initiative involves three integrated streams of work:

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