

DOWNSVIEW COMMUNITY CONTEXT STUDY

Submitted by the
Centre for Connected Communities
to Northcrest Developments
and Canada Lands Company





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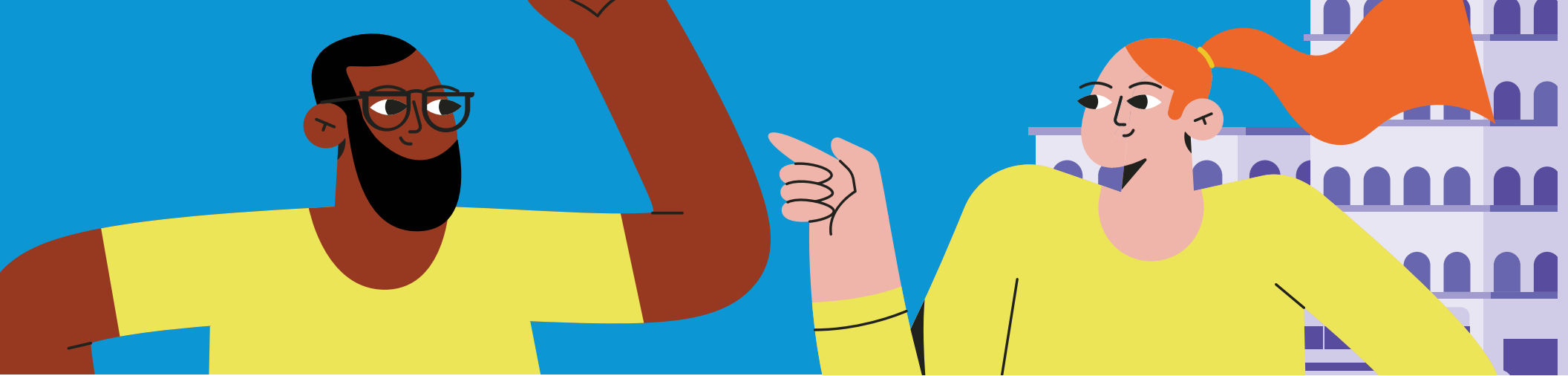
Preamble: Why a Community Context Study?

Northcrest Developments (Northcrest) and Canada Lands Company (Canada Lands) each owns hundreds of acres of land in Downsview. These landowners jointly invested in this Community Context Study following feedback received through the id8 Downsview engagement process and as a result of their own interests in understanding the community and the context better. The landowners called the process “Ideate” (id8) because many of ideas will be shared and discussed between a lot of people to plan a future for over 500 acres of land strategically located at the centre of the Greater Toronto Area.

Hundreds of people have participated in the id8 Downsview process to date and provided rich and comprehensive feedback on several topics and priorities (all feedback is available at www.id8downsview.ca). Participants emphasized the importance of understanding existing contexts, organizations and initiatives that are already working in and around Downsview. Participants encouraged Northcrest and Canada Lands to understand the local context, look at the area holistically, push boundaries, and deliver a truly innovative approach to planning and design.

In response to this feedback, and supported by their belief in the importance of connecting existing neighbourhood priorities and initiatives to the urban planning process, Northcrest and Canada Lands retained the Centre for Connected Communities (C3) to conduct this community context study. The results of this study are intended to strengthen the readers’ understanding of the community ecosystem which already exists in Downsview and its environs. It also identifies the opportunities for development and associated City processes to support that ecosystem.

This information will be useful to Northcrest and Canada Lands as landowners as they prepare their proposed plan for the future of the Downsview lands. It may also be helpful to the City of Toronto or other public agencies who are responsible for allocating funds collected through development to support important investments in public spaces, social and physical infrastructure.



Executive Summary

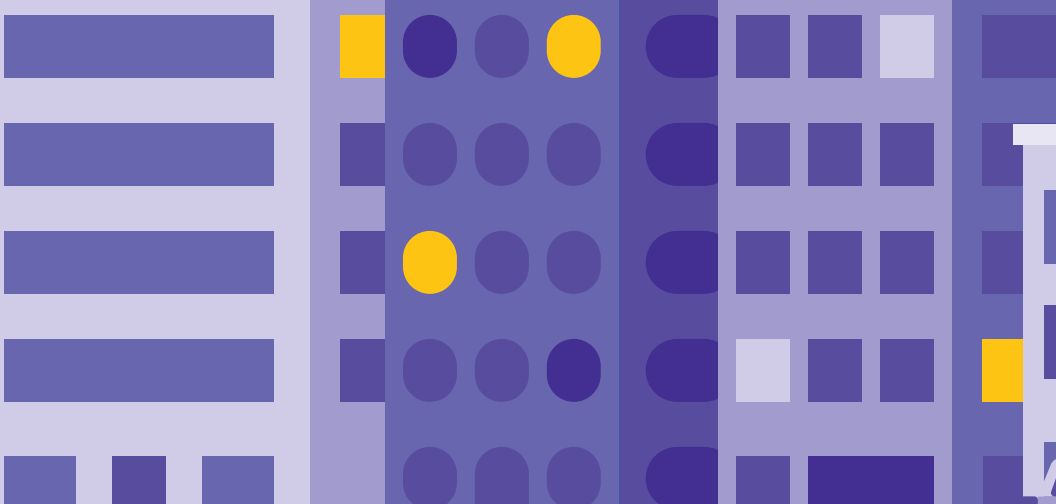
Land development takes place within the context of existing communities. As such land development projects become part of the local ecosystem. Creating new projects in an existing community ecosystem will inherently change it. The development of the Downsview lands takes place in the context of an ecosystem of established neighbourhoods including neighbourhoods that have been both racialized and marginalized and have seen decades of underinvestment. These neighbourhoods are rich in “by the community for the community” strategies and actions that seek to improve the community and increase the wellbeing of its residents. Investment in the development of these lands in Downsview creates opportunities to strengthen the communities that currently make up the local ecosystem; equally, without intentional processes in place, there is the potential for development to diminish local efforts and exacerbate the inequities that plague our city.

This Community Context Study provides Northcrest and Canada Lands with insight to better understand the local context and community building priorities of neighbourhoods including and surrounding the lands they own in Downsview. Its purpose is to provide the landowners with a starting place to use the opportunities available to them during the 30+ year development project to strengthen the local ecosystem, thereby creating desirable communities for both existing and future residents.

The Black Lives Matter movement and COVID-19 pandemic have increased awareness and magnified the need for change in the neighbourhoods surrounding these lands in Downsview. The residents and organizations in these neighbourhoods have a long history of research, creating collaborative community-led solutions, and advocacy to address structural inequalities.

This Study surfaced 76 unique grassroots groups, organizations, networks and institutions in total. Of these 76 players, approximately 60 are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour-led including approximately 38 of which were Black-led. These myriad of players in and surrounding the Downsview lands who work to build a stronger, healthier, and more prosperous community have been grouped into the following themes:

- racial justice,
- economic inclusion,
- housing and gentrification,
- food systems,
- community health and safety, and,
- climate mitigation and adaptation.



Social Infrastructure: For the purposes of this study, we define social infrastructure as the social and physical elements of a community that act as a conduit to bring people together, build social capital, support people's needs, celebrate culture and build community.

Community Builders: For the purposes of this study, we are calling players who are actively engaged in improving a community Community Builders.

Introduction

The purpose of this Community Context Study is to provide insights into “by the community for the community” priorities and initiatives in the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas surrounding the Downsview lands owned by Northcrest Developments (Northcrest) and Canada Lands Company (Canada Lands) in Downsview. These types of initiatives are typically disconnected from urban planning processes. This exclusion has increasingly been recognized as perpetuating and fomenting the inequities that plague our city. Northcrest and Canada Lands would like to ground their planning for the 500+ acre area in the context of the local community; using their investment to change the trajectory from marginalization to inclusion.

A Community Context Study seeks to help new players in a community understand the local context. Communities are ecosystems; just as a natural ecosystem has many complex organisms that interact with and impact each other, so too do players in a community affect one another in both obvious and subtle ways. Developers are but one of the many players interacting with the existing ecosystem, and in order to better understand how development can strengthen or weaken the ecosystem we must first understand who the players are, their drivers and their priorities. Developing a better understanding of the players in the ecosystem also provides key insight into what social infrastructure may already exist in the area and potential opportunities to strengthen social infrastructure. Community Builders in a community ecosystem are the people who are intentionally working towards improving a community and can include (but are not limited to):

- Grassroots groups;
- Organizations;
- Networks;
- Institutions;
- Municipal players.

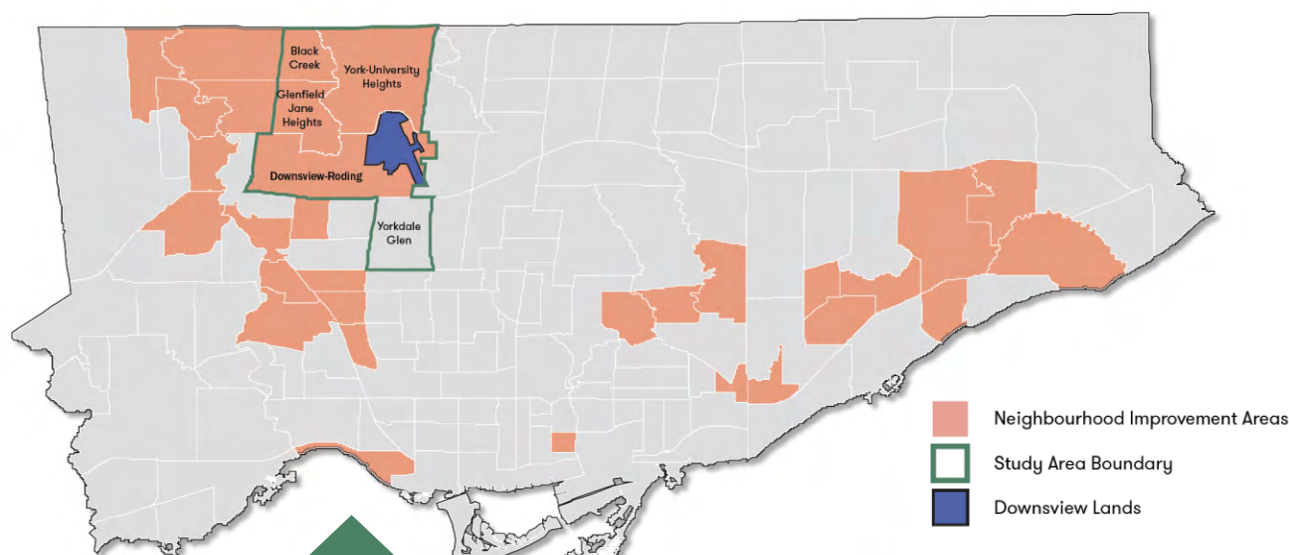


Methodology

This Downsview Community Context Study focuses on 5 neighbourhoods surrounding the Downsview lands which comprise our study area:

- Black Creek;
- York University Heights;
- Glenfield-Jane Heights;
- Downsview-Roding and;
- Yorkdale-Glen Park.

4 of 5 neighbourhoods are identified as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIA's) by the City's Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy and one as an "emerging neighbourhood". NIA's are neighbourhoods identified by the City of Toronto which fall below a neighbourhood equity score and require intentional investment and strategy to improve social, economic and health outcomes. Emerging neighbourhoods were previously identified as NIA's which are considered to be transitioning out of NIA status.^{1,2}



These neighbourhoods surrounding the Downsview lands are home to grassroots groups, organizations and networks, all seeking to improve the quality of life for local residents. This study provides a snapshot of these players, who they are, the context in which they are working and the outcomes they are working towards.

¹ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-67551.pdf>

² <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/neighbourhoods-communities/neighbourhood-profiles/>



Data Collection

This study was conducted by the Centre for Connected Communities (C3), a community development strategy organization. C3 used the following approaches to surface local knowledge:

- Engage and compensate local grassroots leaders to identify and document what is happening on the ground in their communities
- Compile unpublished local documents (grey literature) that describes community context
- Aggregate data from research and consultations from the study area from the past 5-10 years

Rationale

Working with grassroots leaders:

Best practice in community development and community engagement have affirmed that any efforts to research or engage communities must go beyond observing communities as subjects and extracting knowledge. Instead, the process of research should support goals of inclusion, power-sharing and knowledge generation by people with lived experiences.

Centre for Connected Communities (C3) is not in and of itself from the local community. However, as a community development strategy organization C3 uses methodologies that honour the wisdom and agency of community players, and seeks to amplify the importance of by the community for the community ideas and

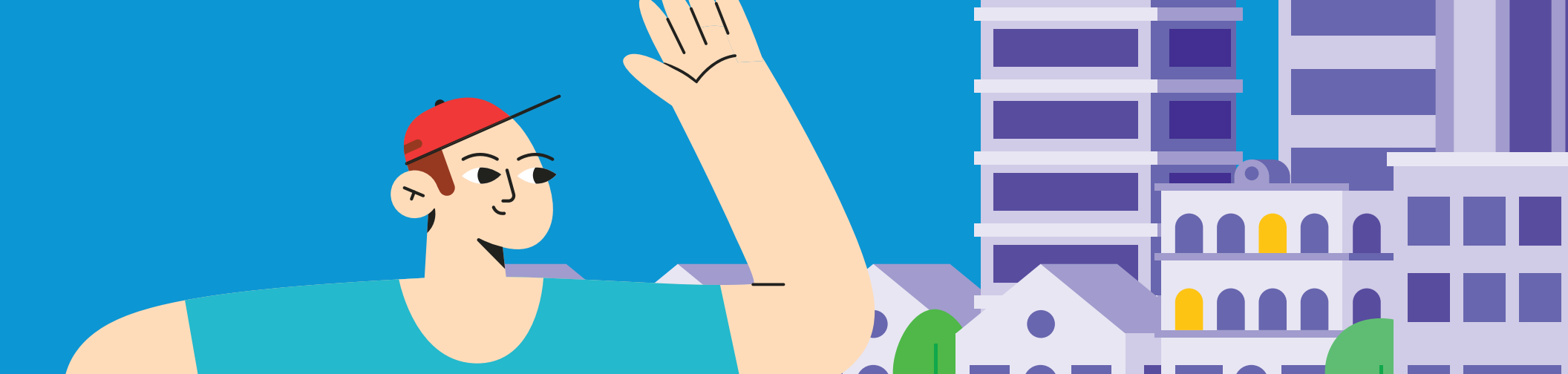
solutions. To that end, this study was created with the intentional involvement of grassroots leaders from each of the five communities in the study area.

Grassroots leaders are autonomous community builders with deep experience, knowledge and relationships in their communities. Our purpose in working with grassroots leaders is to support a more equitable process in engaging communities, establish accountability and shift power dynamics, particularly in these marginalized and over-researched/over-consulted communities.

For the purposes of this study, grassroots leaders connected with their networks engaged in community building in the study neighbourhoods to learn about the community priorities. While this study seeks to better understand the community perspective in the study neighbourhoods, it was not intended to be an exhaustive study.

Aggregating data:

Communities are complex ecosystems. In any one community there are a myriad of voices, ideas and activities. As a community development strategy organization C3 uses methodologies that respect the integrity of each voice, project or organization and at the same time aggregates information to surface themes and identify commonalities, connections and disparities of opinion. C3's role as an external strategist without a local community building mandate means we are an effective aggregator of information, able to take a birds eye view of the community building efforts that could be strengthened through the development of the Downsview lands.



Limitations of the Community Context Study

As with natural ecosystems, communities involve dynamic interplay of ever evolving relationships. This community context study is a snapshot of the players and priorities as of June, 2021, and is not intended to capture the dynamic interplay of relationships in the communities, nor does it seek to provide specific recommendations on how to move forward with working with the individual players identified.

This research attempts to surface and amplify the context-specific priorities the study neighbourhoods have identified, however we recognize that since the Centre for Connected Communities (C3) is not located on the ground in these communities the findings of this report may overlook community building efforts which are not publicly documented or accessible to those outside of these neighbourhoods.

The ongoing pandemic posed limitations to C3's approach to this study. Marginalized communities have been forced to pivot their work towards activities including food security, physical and mental health care and poverty reduction in response to the pandemic. As a result, many people had less time to participate in phone calls, some community building initiatives became dormant and others emerged; these changes in the ecosystem may not all be reflected in this study.

This study is not intended to be an end product, but rather provide information to lay the foundation for future relationship building.

It is through relationship building with community builders that Downsview lands development can strengthen the local ecosystem.



Local Grassroots Groups: Informal, resident-led initiatives typically underfunded and under the radar of decision makers

Organizations: Social service providers and community development organizations

Networks: Loosely connected groups of players working towards aligned outcomes

The Local Communities and Community Building

People living in the marginalized neighbourhoods surrounding the Downsview lands have a long history of being at the forefront of community change efforts that respond to structural social and economic inequities. The legacy of local action on systemic issues remains stronger than ever in these communities today.

Toronto neighbourhoods have been divided by race and class. Neighbourhoods within the inner-suburbs are home to large concentrations of Black, Indigenous³ and People of Colour (BIPOC) Torontonians, along with newcomers, and other marginalized populations.⁴ This trend of racialized and geographic poverty is well documented. This divide is not a new phenomenon, decades of research have shone spotlights on this growing geographic inequality through many domains and Toronto's 33 NIA's, the majority of which exist in its inner-suburban neighbourhoods are where this growing trend is most concentrated.⁵

The harmful effects of underinvestment and various forms of marginalization towards BIPOC Torontonians have played out most prominently in the neighbourhoods included in this study.

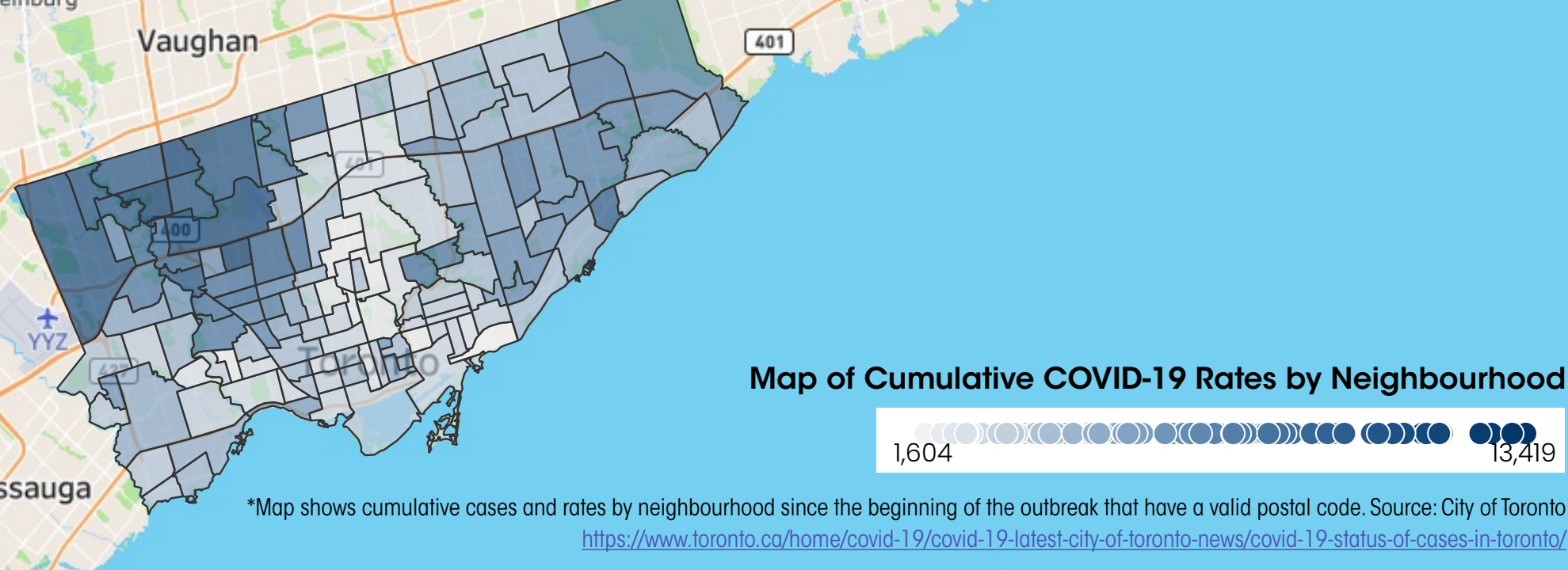
Structural inequities and limited institutional and policy responses necessitated the strong development of community-led neighbourhood change initiatives. Local grassroots groups, organizations, and networks work largely under the radar of formalized systems, to advance community-led strategies and action plans. While they are traditionally left out of city-building discourse, these community-led efforts are “by-the-community, for-the-community” approaches to community-building that prioritize healthy, resilient, prosperous and sustainable communities; the people behind these initiatives design by and for some of the city's most marginalized residents.

Long histories of advocating for and developing local solutions to complex urban issues have equipped these neighbourhoods with the knowledge and technical expertise to build the future of their communities. There is no shortage of local assets to draw on to inform the future Downsview development, and many grassroots groups and organizations have long been positioned to work in collaboration to build stronger communities.

3 Engagement of Indigenous communities is critical to understanding the local Downsview context. Nbsiing Consulting has been retained separately to lead this engagement. A brief summary of some of the Indigenous engagement work and feedback is included in the Round Two Feedback Summary available on the [id8 Downsview website](https://www.downtowntoronto.ca/engagement/indigenous-engagement).

4 <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/documents/2018/09/hulchanski-2018-toronto-segregation-presentation.pdf>

5 <http://www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca/pdfs/curp/tnnr/Three-Cities-Within-Toronto-2010-Final.pdf>



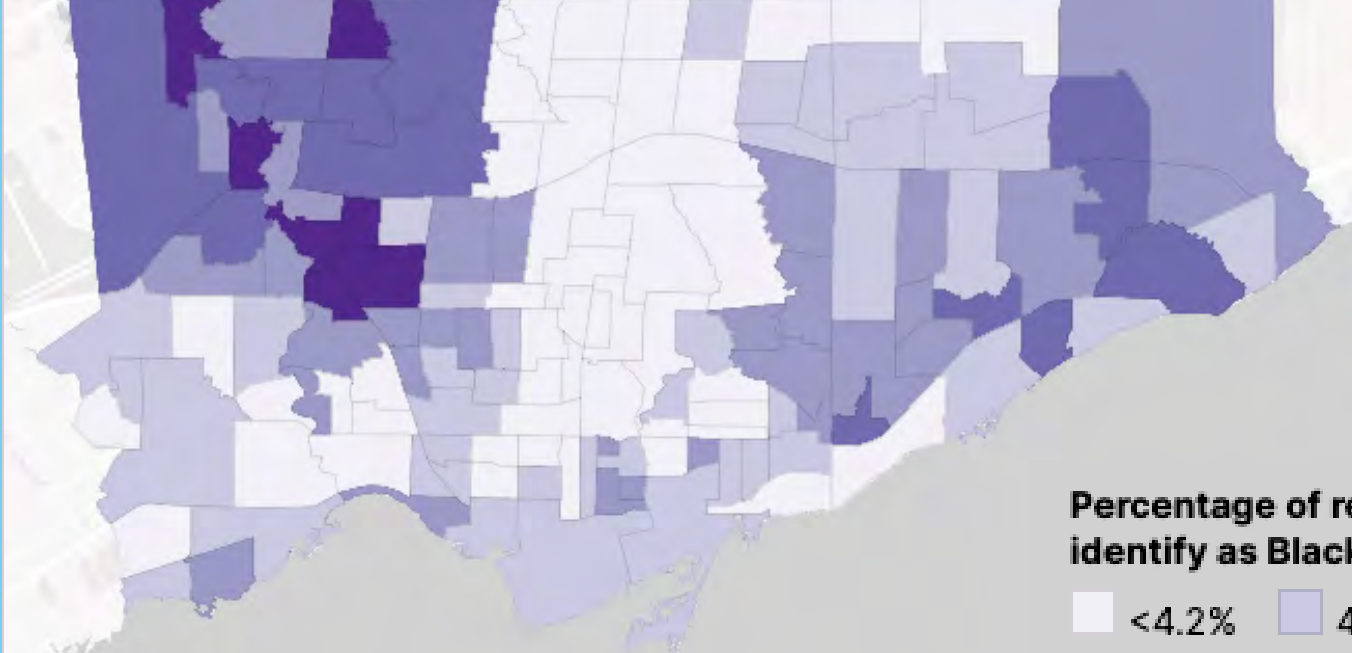
Community building in the context of COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter Movement

The simultaneous global social events of 2020; the COVID-19 pandemic taking root in Canada in March 2020 and the renewed awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement, had unignorable implications for marginalized and racialized communities including the 5 communities in the study area. These events have permeated the priorities of all community-building efforts.

The pandemic has highlighted and reinforced structural inequities in our society, disproportionately impacting BIPOC communities, people with pre-existing health conditions, essential workers, and neighbourhoods where transit overcrowding, manufacturing and warehouse employment and poverty intersect. All of these factors converge in the neighbourhoods in our study area. In Black Creek for example, a neighbourhood where rates of Diabetes are among the highest in the City, COVID-19 cases can have more severe outcomes. The unequal spread of the pandemic has resulted in the majority of our study neighbourhoods being hit hardest by the pandemic.

The same issues that these neighbourhoods have been organizing around for decades are the very issues that made them vulnerable to the catastrophic spread of COVID-19 in their communities.

In addition to the shock of the pandemic, the murder of George Floyd by police on May 25th, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota and more locally, the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet in Toronto after an encounter with police two days later on May 27th, placed a global spotlight on the Black Lives Matter movement. This Movement



**Black households are
3.5 times more likely
to be food insecure
than white households**

Percentage of residents who identify as Black



Source: Statistics Canada — 2016 Census

builds on calls to address systemic anti-Black racism including improved access to housing, employment, food security, public transit, public health, and community-led anti-violence programs. In the Downsview ecosystem, this also includes a particular focus on understanding and addressing the potential impact of growth and development on the gentrification and displacement of Black People and culture.

A heightened awareness of systemic anti-Black racism has contextualized the pandemic spread in Northwest Toronto where the highest proportion of Black Torontonians live:

- Black people make up 9% of Toronto's population while representing 13% of all COVID-19 cases. This number was as high as 33% in August 2020⁶,
- Black households are 3.5 times more likely to be food insecure than white households⁷,
- Racialized communities make up the highest percentage of working poor, and Black People have the highest rate at 10.5%, increasing among subsequent generations⁸.

Given the current crises, many grassroots groups and organizations in the study neighbourhoods are in response and survival mode: protecting and preserving their communities through the compounded shocks they are facing with a particular focus on the Black community. While some saw the development of the Downsview lands as an opportunity, the overwhelming response was fear that the development will exacerbate the inequities that have led to today's crisis. There is, likewise an opportunity for the development to act as a catalyst for positive change in the northwest part of the city.

6 <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-latest-city-of-toronto-news/covid-19-status-of-cases-in-toronto/>

7 https://foodshare.net/custom/uploads/2019/11/PROOF_factsheet_press_FINAL.6.pdf

8 <https://metcalfoundation.com/site/uploads/2019/11/Working-Poor-2019-NEW.pdf>



"We've dreamed, came to the table and built, got funds, resources to build spaces our community has organized and created. We are here again and will continue to fight against these historic harms of systemic/structural racism and deep-rooted neglect."

- Butterfly Gopaul, resident and member of JFAAP

Historical Context/ Community Relations with Developers

While many of the people engaged by the local grassroots leaders had varying degrees of information about the Downsview lands development, distrust was a common theme. Local groups characterized the Downsview lands development as yet another development project which claims to do better but is unlikely to follow through on new ways of working in partnership and collaboration with the community.

Based on the feedback from the leaders, this study revealed:

- There has long been a fraught relationship between community builders acting on community priorities in the 5 neighbourhoods in the study area and land developers. The relationship has been locally characterized by grief, distrust, trauma and resistance.
- This dynamic did not develop in a vacuum, it is the result of decades of planning processes that have: ignored or excluded the local context; over promised and

under delivered; and ultimately resulted in racialized people being displaced from their homes and priced-out of their neighbourhoods.

- Distrust stems from the evidence of the multitude of development projects in Toronto which have contributed to the gentrification, displacement, erosion of culture, lack of affordability and deepening segregation in Toronto. Despite this distrust, C3's approach to working with contracted grassroots leaders on this study enabled more transparent and collaborative responses from the community builders who were engaged.
- The Toronto Community Housing Lawrence Heights revitalization project and the recent Metrolinx renege of the Jane-Finch Community Hub facility are two examples identified by residents where development has run counter to community priorities. While there are a mix of views of the Lawrence Heights revitalization with some residents being in favour of the project, residents referred to concerns about lack of communication, gentrification, displacement and ongoing concerns of community safety that have not yet been addressed effectively.⁹ The recent reversal of the Metrolinx decision to approve the acquisition of the land for the Jane Finch Community Hub and Centre for the Arts however, was directly attributed to the community-led advocacy. Advocacy recognized by Mayor Tory in his May 5th, 2021 press release. While these examples may seem significantly different from the development of



the Downsview lands, (site-specific community asset contributing to public housing revitalization vs. hundreds of acres of new neighbourhoods and supporting infrastructure), land development in general has a local reputation as directly and indirectly contributing to a housing affordability crisis, gentrification, and displacement of racialized communities. Northcrest and Canada Lands inherit this reputation by nature of their role as a land developer.

Context in Relation to City Strategies and Action Plans

The City of Toronto has produced a broad range of social and economic development strategies and action plans which seek to name and curb alarming trends affecting marginalized populations and growing complex urban issues. These trends have resulted in municipal action plans such as Toronto's Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism to prioritize finding ways of addressing gentrification and Black displacement. While committed to the production of evidence and a regulatory environment to enable positive change to occur, implementation and execution of these plans has been limited, due in part to under-resourcing. Beyond under-resourcing is the siloed nature of City departments and strategies. While levers to mitigate and reverse inequities exist across multiple divisions at the City of Toronto, development projects are typically only connected with one division (City Planning), which means that when large scale investments are made, particularly in and around marginalized communities, existing policy levers go unutilized.

The Findings of this study intersect with numerous City of Toronto strategies and action plans such as:

- TO Prosperity - Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020
- Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism
- Toronto Resilience Strategy
- Toronto Newcomer Strategy
- Toronto Youth Equity Strategy
- Transform TO
- Anchor TO

Understanding and utilizing the existing and potential levers associated with these strategies offers a critical first step to maximizing community benefit while simultaneously meeting Northcrest/Canada Lands objectives and City priorities.

[Appendix A](#) lists City strategies and action plans that intersect with “by the community for the community” priority areas identified in this report.

Findings

This section provides a short summary of the key areas where community-led action is taking place in the neighbourhoods surrounding the Downsview lands. More detailed descriptions of each of these local initiatives can be found in the Findings by Priorities section below.

Racial Justice

“Racial justice is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.”¹⁰

The study neighbourhoods have a long history of building new models, and approaches to address the impacts of systemic racism experienced by racialized people in this area of Toronto. Racial justice is a priority that runs through the majority of community based initiatives including education, food and health, safety, climate action. As an issue that impacts the lives of people of colour, almost all community-led initiatives hold addressing racial injustice (particularly anti-Black racism) as a high priority.

“By now, it should be abundantly clear that we cannot talk about food, food security, or food justice without talking about the role racism and injustice plays in the food landscape.”¹¹

- Letecia Deawou, Director, Black Creek Community Farm

Deliberate planning across the following community-identified priority areas in the pages that follow can build on and strengthen existing racial justice initiatives in the communities within and surrounding the development.

11 organizations, **3** grassroots groups and **3** institutions including York University TD Engagement Centre and The City of Toronto through several divisions particularly the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit are advancing racial justice and anti-Black racism efforts.

¹⁰ <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

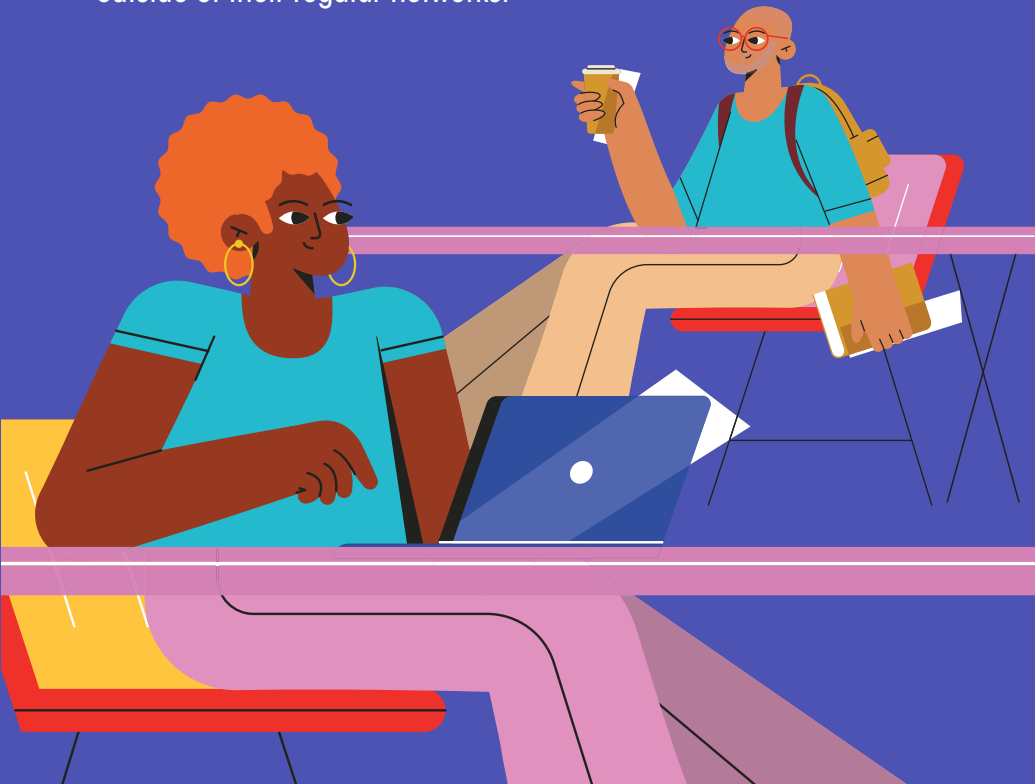
¹¹ <https://weseedchange.org/words-from-seedchange-chair-we-cannot-talk-about-food-without-talking-about-racism/>



Economic Inclusion

“We need concrete infrastructural and capital investments in the community in terms of job creation and economic and social opportunities as opposed to small grants of a couple of thousand dollars here and there to do community BBQs and similar events.”¹²

Among its priorities, the Lawrence Heights (revitalization) Community Development Plan 2019-2022 calls for “the establishment of greater employment pathways with local anchor employers and institutions; give youth and newcomers exposure to careers and employment fields outside of their regular networks.”



The study neighbourhoods have a long history of being a test bed for economic inclusion policies and programmatic strategies, with expectations of positive impact historically unmet. At the same time, these neighbourhoods have been seeing increased temporary employment agency work resulting in precarious and predatory employment for already marginalized residents.^{13,14,15} This trend has resulted in distrust towards those outside of the community, particularly large institutions which hold power such as governments and land owners who propose economic inclusion strategies which do not integrate a community leadership approach. Distrust has resulted in a growth of by-the-community, for-the-community economic inclusion advocacy with a strong focus on coordination of employment services, demand-led skills training, youth employment, and entrepreneurship support.

While economic inclusion and poverty reduction strategies have wide ranging priorities and projects, place-based workforce development is a common theme throughout.

Infrastructure and development projects carry some of the greatest potential of advancing workforce development in marginalized communities. The development of the Downsview lands, while viewed with trepidation by some community players, was also viewed as holding promise for advancing economic inclusion priorities and increasing decent work.

There are **6** organizations, **7** grassroots groups actively working on by the community for the community economic inclusion strategies. Concurrently, there are municipally driven efforts by the TCHC through strategies such as the Lawrence Heights Social Development Plan and by the City of Toronto (see Appendix A) in these neighbourhoods.

¹² <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/cc/comm/communicationfile-96138.pdf>

¹³ https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Access-Alliance_Working-Rough-Living-Poor-Final-Report-June-2011-E-version.pdf

¹⁴ https://www.tccltd.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/JaneFinch_2011-12_CRNA.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/bu/comm/communicationfile-91529.pdf>

Housing and Gentrification

“Displacement isn’t just physical displacement...It’s also our networks and relationships and when things get rebuilt and it’s not affordable for residents to live in the community we can still be displaced.”¹⁶



Land development in Toronto has often resulted in the displacement of marginalized communities as a result of direct and involuntary forces such as revitalizations and market growth. The housing affordability crisis in Toronto coupled with limited success of policy intervention has hit marginalized communities the hardest. In particular, gentrification has impacted Black People in Toronto at disproportionate rates.¹⁷ Neighbourhoods in the Downsview ecosystem have long histories of organizing against gentrification and the protection and preservation of culturally significant businesses and public spaces.

The development of the Downsview Lands offers the potential to explore innovative models to housing across a spectrum to meet the diverse needs of residents and increase access to housing. Innovative models and strategies can also be explored to preserve, maintain and grow culturally significant businesses, public spaces and networks.

There are **2** organizations, **4** grassroots groups, and **1** institution with currently active initiatives to address the issue of gentrification and/or housing.

¹⁶ <https://www.toronto.com/news-story/9587193-toronto-s-lawrence-heights-is-moving-on-up-and-residents-want-their-say/>

¹⁷ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-157931.pdf>

Food Systems

“Food Justice means many things at once to the community. It means being able to access affordable, culturally relevant and healthy food. It means being able to easily get to and from grocery stores. It means not having food locked away from your access and not being policed by virtue of your race and socio-economic status.”¹⁸



Inner-suburban neighbourhoods across Toronto, and particularly North West Toronto experience significant barriers to accessing food. Food deserts are defined by the City as lower income areas with relatively few nearby supermarkets generally within a 1 kilometre walking radius¹⁹. Distance coupled with affordability issues and food that is not culturally appropriate result in significant barriers to accessing healthy food.

Designing food systems which increase food access to culturally appropriate foods and prioritize community owned and operated lands are a long standing priority in the study neighbourhoods; a priority which has been brought to the forefront by the pandemic.

There are dozens of local initiatives advancing food systems priorities. The purpose of each initiative ranges significantly, from service providers offering meals, to urban farms operating social enterprises and Black-led farming food sovereignty initiatives.

The Downsview lands development offers an opportunity to build on the existing food systems work taking place on the lands already. Access to land is a key barrier for food justice work.

There are **17** organizations, **8** grassroots groups and **3** institutions in these neighborhoods advancing food systems priorities. The purpose of each initiative ranges significantly, from service providers offering meals, to urban farms operating social enterprises and Black-led farming food sovereignty initiatives.

¹⁸ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-157931.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://cec.info.yorku.ca/black-creek-food-justice-action-network/>

Community Health and Safety

“The city’s poorest neighbourhoods are contained in northwest Toronto. When the City of Toronto developed their neighbourhood equity score system back in 2014, which looks at issues such as economic opportunity, social development and health, they ranked Black Creek.... as the least healthy, equitable neighbourhoods in the city. This did not happen overnight – this has been the case for over three decades.”²⁰



A local understanding of community health and safety reframes safety from an individualized, criminal and stigmatized perspective to taking a public health and health equity approach. This invites an understanding of context, where socio-economic factors are primarily responsible for the roots of violence such as:

- Income inequality is increasing at a faster rate in Toronto than provincial and national averages.
- Black residents have an unemployment rate of 12 percent, nearly double the provincial rate.
- Black residents are overrepresented in the child welfare system, school suspensions, academic streaming, and early leaving from high school.
- Black residents are overrepresented in police street checks and serious confrontations (use of force/shootings) with the police.
- Perceptions of social injustice due to racial discrimination are also associated with an increased likelihood of violence-related behaviours.
- Lack of attention to the mental health needs of Black youth coupled with other social and economic inequities contribute to self-stigmatization and the perpetuation of community violence.²¹

Community violence and safety is not commonly understood from a public health perspective. The result is often an increased demand for more police presence to deter crime which in turn results in more harm, distrust and over-policing of Black People. This dynamic is playing out in the Downsview ecosystem. Community-led, community-based violence initiatives seek systemic interventions, safer spaces for young people and a focus on intentional strategies to mitigate collateral effects of gentrification such as over-policing.

There are **8** organizations, **4** grassroots organizations, and **3** institutions leading initiatives in community health and safety including robust multi-faceted approaches being led locally by grassroots groups and the City of Toronto.

²⁰ <https://www.downsviewadvocate.ca/news/jane-finch-in-crisis-for-forty-years>

²¹ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-139315.pdf>

Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

“The Field guide hopes to inform ... community organizations, partner agencies, city staff and developers about the value of these green spaces and how they can work to support and maintain the valuable resident engagement that is happening in these parks already.”²²

Climate mitigation and climate adaptation are two sides of the same coin. Climate mitigation focuses on slowing down the effects of climate change; climate adaptation supports communities to cope and survive the adverse effects of climate.

In the context of the study area, climate mitigation includes efforts which seek to build more environmentally just communities through increased green spaces and making use of underutilized parks. Climate mitigation is also a primary goal for nearly all of the food systems players identified in this study, as this issue is intersectional. Climate adaptation includes local, community-led crisis response action where formalized emergency response fails to meet the needs of local communities.

As climate change continues to bring hotter summer temperatures, more unpredictable below freezing temperatures, and more flooding, the Downsview development has the opportunity to support community-wide climate mitigation efforts through access to space, investments and infrastructure which builds on existing communities strategies. Additionally, investment in the coordination and space to support community-led climate adaptation strategies will enable community-led resilience strategies which provide more effective responses and recoveries for those most marginalized who will experience the most adverse effects of climate shocks.

There are **6** organizations, **3** grassroots groups and **3** institutions in the study neighbourhoods currently leading climate action and/or adaptation strategies.

²² <https://www.janefinchcentre.org/greenchange>

Who Could Use this Information and How

The creation of this Community Context Study in the Downsview lands development process is, in and of itself an innovation. Community feedback from the consultations articulated that Northcrest and Canada Lands should invest in understanding existing contexts, organizations and initiatives to enable them to look at the area holistically, push boundaries, and deliver a truly innovative approach to planning and design.

By including this Community Context Study as part of the Communities Services and Facilities requirement, Northcrest and Canada Lands are demonstrating:

- *That what people said in consultations matter*
- *A desire as land developers to do things differently*
- *The important connection between development, communities, and the City of Toronto's Community Services & Facilities work*

The Community Context Study is designed to lay a foundation for development that is more equitable, resilient, and more effective. This important innovation in the planning process has the potential to inform innovative approaches to social infrastructure not just for Northcrest and Canada Lands Company, but for governmental and community-based players as well.

Local Communities

The Community Context Study is a comprehensive inventory of who is doing what in the community which can be used as a strategic tool to support future community building efforts. These types of community-centred tools are not conventionally supported through the funding streams available in the non-profit or public sector. Access to this study will provide community-based players with an aggregate of community-wide efforts and support potential collaboration and knowledge sharing.

City of Toronto

The Community Context Study will provide City players with an understanding of who is invested and who has knowledge about community building in the study area. Further, by also identifying the City strategies that are or can be realized through local actions, City staff will have context as to why and how reimagining their traditional planning processes can be leveraged to realize development potential. In doing so, helping to achieve more public policy priorities more comprehensively.

Northcrest and Canada Lands

This report demonstrates Northcrest and Canada Lands commitment to understand the local context and to approach. The Community Context Study was originally commissioned to inform the Community Services and Facilities Study. Beyond thinking about Community Services and Facilities in the light of a more fulsome definition of “social infrastructure”, Northcrest and Canada Lands can use this report to inform their deliberations about how to use their heft to facilitate, advocate, co-create and invest in innovative ways to create sustainable, resilient, vibrant, healthy communities while contributing to the neighbourhoods and city-region that surround it.

The id8 Downsview engagement process will continue its ongoing outreach to – and discussions with – individuals and organizations locally and citywide about the future of these lands, and connections back to the results of the community context study will be made as the long-term process of land use planning and development continues.



FINDINGS BY PRIORITIES



Priority: Racial Justice

Summary of Findings:

- By definition, much of the community-based initiatives we found in the study area are actively leading racial justice work across multiple systems (education, food, health, policing etc.)
- 11 organizations, 3 grassroots groups and 3 institutions (York U and City of Toronto) are currently leading initiatives
- Organizations such as Success Beyond Limits and YAAACE have long histories of leading educational reform, publishing academic research and leading innovative partnerships to address systemic issues now recognized as the school to prison pipeline, policing of BIPOC youth in schools and streaming. Strong partnerships with TDSB exist.

ORGANIZATION

Organization	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
Afri-Can Food Basket		Afri-Can Food Basket is dedicated towards advancing food justice, health and social enterprise in the African-Canadian Community. Ultimately encouraging and promoting opportunities and services for African-Canadian residents.	Website
Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF)		The BCCF seeks to help and engage people of the community through a thriving farm, healthy food, hands-on training and learning experiences, as well as inspire future generations of people by providing education on leadership in food justice, and supporting diverse natural and social ecosystems, particularly for marginalized communities.	Website
Black Creek Community Health Centre		Provides comprehensive, supportive, and accessible health services to marginalized and underrepresented residents of Black Creek and Surrounding neighbourhoods, enhancing the health and well-being of the community.	Website
Caribbean African Canadian Social Services (CAFCAN)		CAFCAN is a registered charitable organization that primarily focuses on building, strengthening and enriching the service framework for African Canadian children, youth and families through culturally safe individual and group counselling supports, case management services, employment services, youth mentorship, and youth outreach programs.	Website
FoodShare		FoodShare is a food security and food justice non profit organization producing and distributing healthy, affordable food with and to BIPOC and other marginalized communities in Toronto. They aim to resolve food insecurities in their communities and promote local farming.	Website

Organization	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA)		The JCA looks to provide services programs, services, a physical hub, and strongly advocates to improve the well-being and equity of Jamaican, Caribbean and African-Canadian Communities in the GTA.	Website
Jane-Finch Centre		The Jane-Finch Centre is a multi-service community-based organization that looks to provide programs and services to residents of the Jane-Finch Community. They play a key role in the community supporting a range of local initiatives related to economic inclusion, housing and health.	Website
	Green Change	The Green Change initiative works with residents, grassroots groups, and organizations in order to challenge and confront systematic barriers to food justice, racial inequality and climate change.	Web Page
Success Beyond Limits		Success Beyond Limits (SBL) is a collaborative, youth-led, community based organization that provides youth with holistic support to complete their education. Based in Jane-Finch, SBL supports marginalized and racialized youth experiencing education inequality to experience success in their lives and overcome systemic barriers to educational attainment.	Website
Sundance Harvest		Sundance Harvest is an urban farm which aims to provide resources, knowledge and guidance for marginalized youth to start their own food and land sovereignty movements, create their own urban farms, and work to eradicate systemic and institutionalized racism in the realm of food Justice.	Website
SWP Community Ministry	Jane Finch Community Ministry	The Jane Finch Community Ministry provides community development and community organizing support, pastoral care and is engaged in advocacy through coalitions and networks in order to help serve the diverse groups of residents in the Jane-Finch Area, while aiming to tackle issues related to poverty and public housing.	Web Page Facebook
Youth Association for Academics, Athletics and Character Education (YAAACE)		Youth Association for Academics, Athletics and Character Education (YAAACE) is an organization that supports the education and skills development of children and youth from all communities - particularly marginalized, low-income and under-resourced communities. YAAACE uses a social inclusion framework that helps participants gain access to a number of opportunities, engage in academic activities, build self-confidence, and enhance self-identification.	Website

GRASSROOTS GROUPS

Grassroots Groups	Name of Initiative	Description	
Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective		Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective aims to encourage the accessibility of fresh produce in Marginalized Communities in Toronto and the GTA by hosting programs which teach Black residents of marginalized neighbourhoods the skills they need to be able to grow healthy, fresh food options, compared the cheap, unhealthy fast food options that are readily and easily available in their neighbourhoods.	Website
Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP)		JFAAP is a resident-led grassroots coalition of community residents, activists, workers and organizations working to eliminate poverty in their community. While their efforts are poverty focused, JFAAP is a leading voice on intersecting issues related to racial justice including, food justice, police violence, poverty reduction and affordable housing.	Website
SWP Community Ministry	Beyond Carding Coalition	The Beyond Carding Coalition is a group of dedicated and concerned residents that advocate for the ending of carding by police in Toronto, with a specific focus on eradicating carding incidents in the Jane and Finch area.	Web Page

INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
City of Toronto	Confront anti-Black Racism Unit, SDFA	The City of Toronto's Confronting anti-Black Racism Unit's Growing in Place strategy aims to contribute to broad scale policy level change and alignment that transforms the way infra-structural growth, development, and change in neighbourhoods with high Black populations are approached by relevant City divisions.	Growing in Place
TCHC	Confronting Anti-Black Racism Strategy	TCHC's <i>Confronting Anti-Black Racism Strategy</i> looks to further the quality of life for Black residents and staff, allowing them to live and work in spaces that are respectful and acknowledge the history associated with the disenfranchisement of black people, especially in the context of housing.	Report
York University	CEC, Anti-Black Racism Framework	As an Anchor institution for the surrounding neighbourhoods, YorkU has taken great pride in having a diverse group of students, faculty and staff, thus, have put in place several initiatives through their Community Engagement Centre and Anti-Black Racism Framework to work to improve the lives of marginalized individuals in and around the University.	Report
	TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC)	The York University - TD Community Engagement Centre aims to increase academic innovation through community building and experiential learning, increase in post-secondary students in the Black Creek Community, and foster collaborative research and partnerships with local organizations and community groups to understand more about community engagement and the relationship with the community and the University, destabilizing systemic issues that affect marginalized communities.	Website

Institution	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
The Community Healing Project Year 1 Evaluation Findings	Stella's Place, City of Toronto, multiple community partners	The Community Healing Project (CHP) is a peer-based approach to addressing the impact of exposure to violence on youth and their communities.	Link

CONSULTATIONS AND RESEARCH

Summary of consultations and research

Consultation	Led by	Summary	Reference
Public Forum on Black History Month Panel on Food Justice	Black Creek Community Farm	<p>The main points of the consultation were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The community needs to step up and understand that the "Emergency Box" is not enough. An increase in Funds, from donations or grants from the Government, would help. - It would also be helpful for the BCCF to have a physical site "bank of sorts" where they can act as an intermediary for residents, thus being able to provide, fresh, and health produce that is locally grown and is of little to no charge to them - If the Police is defunded, a lot of the money that is designated for policing in the Black Creek Community could be diverted to provide healthy and fresh produce, rather than policing that has consistently negatively impacted so many people in the community via carding and racial profiling - In Canada, food is heavily controlled and distributed by large corporations, much of that which goes to waste, when in reality, smaller, local farms do a much better job of producing produce that is more sustainable, and that does not require migrant labour, many of whom are overworked, underpaid, and heavily exploited in Canada - Accountability needs to be key for politicians and large corporations that refuse to acknowledge the issues faced by people that are less privileged - The city of Toronto and its Councillors need to help the development of small farms across the city and create a network of local farms in and around Toronto 	Facebook Live Stream
Public Forum: Building Power in our Communities: The fight for Racial and Economic Justice	<p>Hosted by: Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP)</p> <p>Endorsed by: Network for the Elimination of Police Violence, Socialist Project, Centre for Social Justice</p>	The Purpose of this Public forum was to start a dialogue about empowering, engaging and uplifting the community, from the community especially about creating a better dialogue about how to introduce economic growth of People of Colour, as well as how to fight for racial justice and protecting the community from police profiling and prejudice.	Website Link Facebook Link

Consultation	Led by	Summary	Reference
Community Violence, Trauma and Healing in the Jane and Finch Community	Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness, City of Toronto	This report will examine community led initiatives and use narrative data derived from MHFA, Community Healing Project as well as the City of Toronto's Community Safety Forums as a source of knowledge for building and increasing the ability of the City of Toronto to implement successful programming that is culturally appropriate, and to build a plan to create a trauma informed response to community safety and community violence.	Report
Improving Mental Health Services in Jane Finch Community	Black Creek Community Health Centre, Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre, CAMH, LOFT Community Services, Ontario's Community Health Centres	The North West Community Mental Health Network conducted a research project to find out what different community members thought about mental health, what kinds of experiences they had had with mental health services in the community, and how they thought these mental health services could be improved, especially in ways to make them more culturally appropriate and accessible.	Web Page

LIST OF GREY LITERATURE

Resource title	Led by	Summary	Reference
The Black Creek Living History Project	Toronto Public Library (unclear who the community partners involved were)	This site brings together stories and remembrances about the Black Creek community located in North-Western Toronto, Ontario Canada. Through a series of oral history interviews the community has captured local seniors' recollections on video. This website showcases and celebrates the local history of the Black Creek community through collected oral history interviews, photographs, and other resources.	Website

Priority: Economic Inclusion

Summary of Findings:

- Over 6 organizations, 7 grassroots groups and 3 institutions (TCHC, York U, City) are leading active initiatives
- A large body of research and consultation findings recommend economic inclusion as the key intervention to health and well-being priorities in the community
- Lack of coordination and demand-led employment is a large concern for these communities which have experienced a plethora of ineffective economic inclusion strategies and increased temp agency worker conditions
- The Lawrence Heights (revitalization) Community Development Plan 2019-2022 calls for “the establishment of greater employment pathways with local anchor employers and institutions; give youth and newcomers exposure to careers and employment fields outside of their regular networks.”

ORGANIZATIONS

Organization(s)	Initiatives	Description	Additional Information
Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF)		The Black Creek Community Farm is a community-led urban farm with the primary goals to increase the accessibility of fresh and affordable produce in the Black Creek neighbourhood, encouraging residents to use fresh ingredients in order to create healthier meals instead of unhealthy fast food options that are rampant in the area.	Website
Jane Finch Centre, YorkU, The SPOT	Our Strong Jane and Finch	A Joint effort by residents of the Jane and Finch Neighbourhood, Jane Finch Centre, York University, and The SPOT that aims to support local residents to secure employment opportunities at York University.	Toronto.com Article on the impact of the initiative
Mamás Latinas en Canadá (Latin Moms in Canada)		Mamás Latinas en Canadá is a grassroots group that looks to empower and provide Latin-Canadian women and mothers by coordinating workshops and seminars that look to provide employable skills, most notable of which was a Sewing workshop.	Facebook
Promoting Education and Community Health (PEACH)		PEACH is a community-based organization in the Jane-Finch community helping marginalized and at-risk youth overcome social, mental, and residential challenges to reconnect with their education and develop skills that will lead to a better quality of life.	Website
Several Community Groups and Institutions, including York University	Black Creek Financial Action Network	The Black Creek Financial Action Network is an initiative spearheaded by a network of 18 institutions and organizations working together to increase financial literacy within the Black Creek Neighbourhood.	Web Page

Organization(s)	Initiatives	Description	Additional Information
Skills for Change		Skills for Change provides learning and training opportunities for immigrants and refugees to access and fully participate in the workplace and wider community, as well as helps individuals connect their skills to relevant jobs.	Website
	Jane Finch Collaborative Bridging Education to Employment (JFBEE)	The Jane Finch Collaborative Bridging Education to Employment (JFBEE) is currently in two parallel engagement phases looking at 1) understanding how youth want to tackle systematic barriers to post-secondary education and training; and 2) working with stakeholders and organizations to see what options to ensure youth get post-secondary education and training to get quality jobs.	Web Page
Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN)		The Toronto Community Benefits Network is an organization that builds partnerships with community-labour, workforce development agencies, learning institutions and funders to support economic opportunities for people in Toronto.	Website
The SPOT		A satellite of the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre, The Spot offers programs and services for youth that are committed to increasing and building the leadership skills of youth, optimizing their personal, social, and vocational competency in order to achieve his or her full potential, ultimately reducing the effects of poverty, prevent violence and drug misuse and promote healthy lifestyles.	Website

GRASSROOTS GROUPS

Grassroots Groups	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
Black Youth Jobs		Black Youth Jobs is an initiative that looks to pair black youth in the GTA with quality jobs in the neighbourhoods that they live in, primarily serving the youth of the Jane-Finch area.	Facebook
Community Benefits	Community Action Planning Group (CAPG)	With the creation of the Finch West LRT, The Community Action Planning Group (CAPG) was created in order to bring long term community benefits that extends beyond transit to include things such as desperately needed community amenities, an improved streetscape, and improved walkability.	Web Page
Infinite Modesty Designs, Chalkfarm Group	Free Sewing Workshops	The Free Sewing Workshops by the Chalkfarm Group and Infinite Modesty Designs looks to allow women to make African head coverings, skirts and wraps and develop sewing techniques and skills so that they can save money and have marketable skills.	

Grassroots Groups	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP)		Consisting of several residents of the Jane and Finch community, the Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP) looks to fight systemic barriers that have kept residents of Jane-Finch living below the poverty line.	Website
	Jane Finch Economic Opportunities Action Group	The Jane Finch Economic Opportunities Action Group is a sub-committee of the Jane Finch Task Force that looks to expand high-quality, high-paying jobs in the Jane and Finch community, while fighting for employee rights.	A Facebook post in which the Jane Finch Economic Opportunities Action Group called on the city and province to put better health and safety, and economic safeguards for workers in warehouses and factories during the COVID-19 Pandemic
Mamás Latinas en Canadá (Latin Moms in Canada)		Mamás Latinas en Canadá is a grassroots group that looks to empower and provide Latin-Canadian women and mothers by coordinating workshops and seminars that look to provide employable skills, most notable of which was a Sewing workshop.	Facebook
Neighbourhood Action Youth Employment Committee (NAYEC)		The Neighbourhood Action Youth Employment Committee (NAYEC) is a collective of youth that look to bring youth-based employment opportunities, skills, and programs in the Jane-Finch community.	NAYEC was granted \$75,000 by the city of Toronto in order to host free programs that taught youth important employable skills for free (Page 7).
Our Greenway		Our Greenway is a non-profit that looks to create a 21 kilometre long, eco-friendly, off-street bicycle network in Jane and Finch in order to facilitate transportation options to those who can't rely on cars or busses.	Website

INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
City of Toronto	TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy	The City of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy looks to address the increasing poverty gap that is prevalent in the city by introducing a number of initiatives, namely, creating job opportunities in neighbourhoods with high unemployment numbers and residents that live below the poverty line.	Report
YorkU	Anchor YorkU: An Anchor Institution & Community Benefits Framework	The goal of this framework is to spark a discourse around the development of mutually favourable community benefits and help propel York to the forefront of progressive and innovative sustainability approaches among universities worldwide.	Anchor YorkU Strategy

CONSULTATIONS AND RESEARCH

Summary of consultations and research

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Public Forum: Building Power in our Communities: The fight for Racial and Economic Justice	Hosted by: Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP) Endorsed by: Network for the Elimination of Police Violence, Socialist Project, Centre for Social Justice	The Purpose of this Public forum was to start a dialogue about empowering, engaging and uplifting the community, from the community especially about creating a better dialogue about how to introduce economic growth of POC, as well as how to fight for racial justice and protecting the community from police profiling and prejudice	Website Facebook
Working Rough, Living Poor: Employment and Income Insecurities Faced by Racialized Groups in the Black Creek area and their Impacts on Health	Wellesley Institute and Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services	<p>This Working Rough, Living Poor report discusses salient findings from this study about systemic causes and adverse economic and health impacts of the labour market discriminations and employment insecurity faced by racialized groups.</p> <p>The focus area, Black Creek, which is a composite of four neighbourhoods located in the northwest peri-urban region of Toronto, was selected because of the high proportion of low income racialized families living there, but also because of its rich history of community activism. Key findings identify how racialized people (immigrant and Canadian born) face numerous systemic barriers in the labour market that preclude them from getting good, stable employment in spite of exhaustive use of existing services.</p>	Web Page

LIST OF GREY LITERATURE

Resource title	Led by	Summary	Reference
The Jane Finch TSNS Task Force	Economic Opportunities Action Group	The group submitted a memo to City Council in April 2019 upon the Community Benefits Framework vote recommending 1.) Mandate strong, hard targets for local hiring, and a plan to support training, 2) Ensure community leadership in negotiating and monitoring Community Benefits Agreements, 3.) Ensure Community Benefits for private development.	Link to Document
YorkU	Anchor YorkU: An Anchor Institution & Community Benefits Framework	The goal of this framework is to spark a discourse around the development of mutually favourable community benefits and help propel York to the forefront of progressive and innovative sustainability approaches among universities worldwide.	Anchor YorkU Strategy
Jane/Finch Centre, CAPG	Community Hub & Centre for the Arts Feasibility Study - Final Report	From September 2017 to June 2019, the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre collaborated with the Community Action Planning Group (CAPG) to facilitate a comprehensive and inclusive community engagement process to develop the vision, programming, and concept design for a proposed new community hub and centre for the arts in Toronto's Jane-Finch neighbourhood. Economic Opportunities were a key community identified priority for the Hub.	Report
The Black Creek Living History Project	Toronto Public Library (unclear who the community partners involved were)	This site brings together stories and remembrances about the Black Creek community located in North-Western Toronto, Ontario Canada. Through a series of oral history interviews the community has captured local seniors' recollections on video. This website showcases and celebrates the local history of the Black Creek community through collected oral history interviews, photographs, and other resources.	Website
Black Creek Community Collective	Workplan	The overall goal of the Black Creek Community Collective in 2019 was to gear their work toward increased strategic thinking as a collaborative through skills, opportunities, and information sharing. These efforts are a key example of social infrastructure in communities.	Workplan
Toronto Community Centre for Learning & Development	Community Needs Assessment 2011	The survey questionnaire was prepared by the IWIP trainees and finalized by the professional team of CCL&D. The Community Needs Assessment report in Jane/Finch has been conducted by Jamila Ghairat, Immigrant Women Integration Program Trainee in 2010/2011 and organized by the Toronto Centre for Community Learning and Development. The report recommends an increase in employment opportunities, programs and services for residents.	Report

Priority: Housing and Gentrification

Summary of Findings:

- 2 organizations, 4 grassroots groups and 1 institutions (City) are leading active initiatives
- Affordability, displacement, memorialization are among key issues in neighbourhoods surrounding Downsview Existing
- Community planning, education and tenant groups are very active. Some specific to their residences which are being revitalized and others more broadly interested in guiding development along the Finch West LRT corridor. Many of these groups demonstrate a willingness to participate and collaborate in future development.

ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations	Initiatives	Description	Additional Information
Jamaican Canadian Association		The Jamaican Canadian Association provides programs and services, a physical hub, and to advocate to improve the well-being and equity of Jamaicann-Canadian and African-Canadian communities in the GTA and does so with a focus on improving the quality of life for all minorities.	Website
Jane Finch Centre		The Jane Finch Centre is a community backbone organization with a multi-service delivery approach for residents of Jane and Finch that focuses on poverty reduction, capacity building, and anti-oppression through resident engagement.	Website
	Green Change	Green Change is a resident-led capacity-building initiative that aims to connect people with nature and their environment by way of hosting a number of programs on environmentalism, urban planning, food, and social justice.	Web Page

GRASSROOTS GROUPS

Grassroots Groups	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
ACORN Jane Finch Chapter	ACORN Canada	The Jane and Finch Chapter of ACORN Canada is a multi-issue, membership-based community union of moderate-low income people. The Jane and Finch chapter has fought to preserve and expand the rights of residents, especially rights tenants, and housing	Website
Jane Finch Centre, Black Creek Community Health Centre, Community Benefits, Social Planning, Jane Finch Action Against Poverty, Grow Our Grassways, CLASP	The Jane Finch Housing Coalition	The Jane Finch Housing Coalition is a grassroots organization that is composed of members of several groups that wish to push better access to livable, affordable housing in the Jane-Finch area. The coalition hosts regular programs and workshops that help residents understand their housing rights, apply for different housing options, and encourage residents to actively and regularly participate in urban planning processes.	Website
Residents of the Grassway Complexes (supported by JFAAP, and Social Planning Toronto)	Grow our Grassways	Grow our Grassways is a resident-led advisory group that formed in response to the relocation of the Grassway complex residents by the TCHC during the Lawrence Heights Revitalization in Toronto. The group is concerned with the possibility of not being returned to their residences after the Grassways complex is revitalized, and advocates for the rights of their fellow residents, as well as to hold TCHC accountable to their promises.	Grow Our Grassways Petition link
York University Students, Regenesis	Regenesis-YorkU-Keele chapter	Regenesis-YorkU-Keele chapter is the York University chapter of Regenesis, a Canadian student-involved university and college based environmental and community-building organization. We believe in empowering students as initiators of change in addressing today's social and environmental concerns, through advocacy and service in local chapters. Regenesis York creates and manages initiatives and social enterprises that provide services to the university community as well as offer quality leadership experience for students. All of the initiatives are inspired by the needs of the York University community and raise the quality of life on campus.	Website Regenesis-YorkU-Keele Chapter was noted to fight for affordable housing for students that live on, or off campus.

INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
City of Toronto City Planning, Economic Development, Social Development Finance Administration	The Jane/Finch Initiative	The Jane/Finch Initiative is a strategic initiative partnering City Planning, SDFA, and Economic Development divisions along with local community organizations in Jane Finch to create a Land Use Framework and Community Development Strategy which will guide future publicly funded development projects.	City of Toronto Jane-Finch Initiative
Confronting anti-Black Racism Unit	Growing in Place	The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit at the City of Toronto pushes to address systemic issues that have diminished the quality of life African-Canadians in Canada- more specifically- in Toronto. One of the focus areas includes addressing the lack of affordable housing, gentrification, and the lack of adequate social housing, all which have negatively affected the quality of living of African-Canadian Torontonians.	Website Addressing Gentrification and Black Displacement

CONSULTATIONS AND RESEARCH

Summary of consultations and research

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Housing TO 2020-2030 Consultation Summary	Jane/Finch Centre and Jane Finch Housing Coalition	<p>From April 27 to June 24, 2019, the Jane/Finch Centre and Jane Finch Housing Coalition hosted consultation activities to collect input on the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan from community members living in the Jane-Finch area. Members of the Housing Coalition designed and delivered the consultation activities, with support from three local residents who were hired as Community Facilitators for the project. In total, we engaged over 150 people in identifying their housing challenges and priorities.</p> <p>This consultation summary is based on community input received verbally and in writing through the Jane Finch Housing Town Hall and three pop-up consultation events. To help ensure that the Housing Plan aligns with other city-led strategies, it also highlights resident housing experiences, challenges, and ideas collected through recent community conversations about the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan, which were led by the Jane/Finch Centre, Jane Finch Housing Coalition, and Jane Finch Economic Opportunities Group.</p>	Summary Report

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Lawrence Heights Revitalization	Planning Department at the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC)	<p>The purpose of the Lawrence Heights Revitalization is to revitalize the Toronto Community Housing Corporation's residential and commercial properties to Lawrence Heights, especially as a replacement to the aging infrastructure in the area and offer a more attractive area to live.</p> <p>Several Consultations were conducted over the years resulting in the creation of the Lawrence Heights Social Development Plan, and the implementation of the Lawrence Heights Revitalization. The Revitalization has experienced significant dissatisfaction from residents and housing advocates for creating a revitalization plan that primarily relies on relocating residents in smaller homes than those that they resided in previously, and would be receiving homes that are smaller than the ones that were available to them for decades. Along with several other controversies, TCHC residents stated that they experienced segregation of housing complexes when many were denied access to upper floors, where non-subsidized housing residents lived.</p> <p>To this day, many TCHC residents of Lawrence Heights say that their homes were systematically taken away against their wishes and have been displaced from the neighbourhoods that they grew up in, and raised their families in. Currently, the Lawrence Heights Revitalization has completed its first phase, having a second, third and fourth phases planned.</p>	<p>An Article discussing the worry amongst residents on the phases on revitalization</p> <p>An academic paper that looks to understand the neo-liberal and neo-colonialist approach to the way residents were treated and experienced revitalization</p>
William Baker Neighbourhood District Plan	Canada Lands Company	<p>The purpose for this project was to understand the wants and needs of the community that will help influence the outcome of what will be included in the proposed William Baker Neighbourhood District Plan.</p> <p>After a series of proposals and consultations, the Residents of the William Neighbourhood District mentioned several key needs and wants. One of the categories that were mentioned was that of Housing, specifically affordable housing. Many residents professed that the neighbourhood is very expensive for residents, especially younger families, to rent or own homes, thus making it harder for residents to live in the neighbourhood. Residents claimed that there needs to be affordable housing options in the neighbourhood, otherwise no one would wish to reside there.</p>	Web Page

LIST OF GREY LITERATURE

Resource title	Led by	Summary	Reference
The Black Creek Living History Project	Toronto Public Library (unclear who the community partners involved were)	This site brings together stories and remembrances about the Black Creek community located in North-Western Toronto, Ontario Canada. Through a series of oral history interviews the community has captured local seniors' recollections on video. This website showcases and celebrates the local history of the Black Creek community through collected oral history interviews, photographs, and other resources.	Website

Priority: Food Systems

Summary of Findings:

- 17 organizations, 8 grassroots groups and 3 institutions (York U, TCHC, City) in the study area run initiatives related to food security, urban farming and food sovereignty and food justice.
- The sheer volume of initiatives speak to the long standing priority of food systems in this area (exacerbated by COVID-19). The purpose of each initiative ranges significantly, from service providers providing people meals, to urban farms operating social enterprises, and long term food and nutrition programming for youth.

ORGANIZATIONS

Organization	Initiatives	Description	Additional Material
Afri-Can Food Basket, City of Toronto, Akobea Inc.	Black Food Toronto	Black Food Toronto was established in response to the growing issues of food insecurities that are faced by Toronto's African, Caribbean and Black-Canadian families, further elevated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, which has disproportionately affected people of colour in low-income neighbourhoods.	Website
Black Creek Community Farm		The BCCF looks to help and engage people of the community through a thriving farm, healthy food, hands-on training and learning experiences, as well as inspire future generations of people by providing education on leadership in food justice, and supporting diverse natural and social ecosystems, especially for those that are members of marginalized communities.	Website
Caribbean African Canadian Social Services (CAFCAN), Afri-Can Food Basket	Grocery Delivery Service	A temporary program, CAFCAN and Afri-Can worked hand in hand to provide grocery delivery services to people who did not have access to get fresh produce from the Afri-Can Food Basket.	
Downsview Park	The Harvest Club	The Harvest Club at Downsview Park was created in order to teach residents on wild/native edibles, gardening and urban farming in the area.	Website
FoodShare		FoodShare is a food security and food justice non profit organization producing and distributing healthy, affordable food with and to BIPOC and other marginalized communities in Toronto. They aim to resolve food insecurities in their communities and promote local farming.	Website

Organization	Initiatives	Description	Additional Material
Fresh City Farms		With a location in the heart of Downsview Park, Fresh City Farms aims to provide high quality, locally grown, organic foods, encouraging nearby residents to access healthy, affordable ingredients and meals, rather than buying easier to access fast foods.	Website An article that highlights Fresh City Farms commitment to deliver locally grown foods to groups that have been affected by the pandemic, as well as commit to the research of food security in Toronto amongst marginalized communities.
Community Food Centres Canada	Good Food Organization	The Good Food Organizations program works to increase, connect, and support community food security organizations that strive to offer healthy and dignified food programs in their communities by offering resources, training, funding, and chances to network and promote shared priorities.	Website
Kitchen 24	Kitchen 24 Food Incubator	Kitchen 24 Food Incubator looks to provide meals for families affected by COVID-19, free of charge.	Website
	Cloud Kitchen 24	Cloud Kitchen 24 looks to hire employees of the food industry that were laid off due to the COVID-19 Pandemic to help create the largest "ghost kitchen" in North America.	
North York Community House	Good Food Box	The North York Community House aims to provide services to marginalized people of North York. One of the initiatives they conduct is a Good Food Box, which helps deliver high quality, healthy meals to families of Lotherton, Neptune, and Lawrence Heights that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.	Web Page
North York Harvest Food Bank		North York Harvest Food Bank aims to engage in the community by meeting the food needs of northern Toronto by providing dignified food assistance, education, focused advocacy, and long-term food solutions.	Website
Orchard People	Fruit Tree Care Training Program	The Food Tree Care Training Program seeks to teach people of all ages the correct techniques to assess whether fruits and fruit trees are safe and free of any diseases, rot, insects, or any maladies. Each participant received a certificate for acquiring the skill.	Web Page
PACT Urban Peace Program	Grow to Learn Program	The Grow to Learn Program looks to educate schools and communities on the importance and techniques of urban farming, allowing for people to learn tangible skills, as well as ecological benefits of local and home grown foods.	Web Page

Organization	Initiatives	Description	Additional Material
Regenesis-YorkU-Keele Chapter	YUM Market	The YUM Market provides access to a diverse selection of fresh & healthy, locally-grown, locally-made or locally-sourced, fairly-traded, natural and organic foods & products delivered and packaged using an eco-friendly process.	Web Page
	Seed Market	The Seed Market at YorkU is design to allow people to take seeds home, plant them, and once the plant blooms, bring a few of the seeds back to the library, allowing others a chance to grow foods at their homes, as well as encouraging people to continue gardening in the future, as a part of a larger community.	
San Lorenzo Community Centre	San Lorenzo Community Garden	The San Lorenzo Community Garden looks to provide both fresh and healthy produce to residents of North York, as well as beautify the community centre. The community garden provides education and programs to allow residents to understand the importance of food security and ecology.	Web Page
	Mama Caya's Food Bank	Named in honour of Mama Caya, a dedicated volunteer and community member, Mama Caya's Food Bank is a once-a-week food bank that looks to provide food supplies to marginalized people.	Web Page
San Romanoway Revitalization Association	Breakfast and Afterschool Program	The Breakfast and Afterschool Programs by the San Romanoway Revitalization Association were created in order to help families provide meals for children before, and after school, especially those who did not have the ability to have any.	Description of the services
Sundance Harvest		Sundance Harvest is an urban farm which aims to provide resources, knowledge and guidance for marginalized youth to start their own food and land sovereignty movements, create their own urban farms, and work to eradicate systemic and institutionalized racism in the realm of food Justice.	Website
Toronto Foundation for Student Success	Beyond 3:30	Beyond 3:30, Food for Kids COVID-19 Response Program, and the Student Nutrition Program were all created in order to allow students to have access to meals who wouldn't typically have access to complete and nutritious meals.	Web Page
	Food for Kids COVID-19 Response Program		Web Page
	Student Nutrition Program		Web Page

GRASSROOTS GROUPS

Grassroots Group	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
Afri-Can Food Basket		Afri-Can Food Basket is dedicated towards advancing food justice, health and social enterprise in the African-Canadian Community. Ultimately encouraging and promoting opportunities and services for African-Canadian residents.	Website
Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective		Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective aims to encourage the accessibility of fresh produce in Marginalized Communities in Toronto and the GTA by hosting programs which teach Black residents of marginalized neighbourhoods the skills they need to be able to grow healthy, fresh food options, compared the cheap, unhealthy fast food options that are readily and easily available in their neighbourhoods.	Website
FoodShare	Toronto Beekeeper's Collective	The Toronto Beekeepers Collective (TBC) is a collective that aims to teach communities about bees, beekeeping, and regularly involves itself in political advocacy on behalf of bees.	Website
Black Creek Community Health Network, York University - TD Community Engagement Centre	Black Creek Food Justice Network	The Black Creek Food Justice Network is a group of Jane-Finch residents, partnering with community organizations and agencies to fight for food justice in the Jane-Finch community. They believe that fighting for food justice requires addressing the intersections of food with health, income, labour, migration, race, policing, the environment, gender and other systemic issues that affect marginalized individuals.	Web Page
Black Creek Food Justice Network	Humans of Black Creek	The Black Creek Food Justice Network (BCFJN) is a resident-led group concerned with the challenge and issues related to food injustice in the Black Creek Community.	
Delta Family Resource Center	Community Kitchen/ Food Pantry	The Delta Family Resource Center offers several services that help accommodate the needs of the residents, two of which are the community kitchen and the community food pantry, which aim to help provide families with healthy ingredients and snacks, as well as learn cooking skills, and if needed, use the kitchen to cook meals.	Website
Black Creek Community Farm	Black Creek Garden Resource Network	The Black Creek Garden Resource Network is a collective of multiple organizations that each contribute resources and services to better food justice issues in the City of Toronto.	Web Page
Justica For Migrant Workers (J4MW)		J4MW strives to promote the rights of migrant farm workers (participating in agricultural streams of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, including the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program) and farm workers without a formal immigration status.	Website

INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
City of Toronto	Toronto Food Strategy	The Toronto Food Strategy Team, working alongside the Toronto Food Policy Council, partners with City staff, institutions, community agencies and the private sector to facilitate effective policy and regulatory change and to incubate initiatives to expand access to healthy, affordable and diverse food, and create good food jobs.	Web Page
Toronto Community Food Animators (FoodShare, Afri-Can Food Basket, STOP Community Food Center)	TCHC Garden Strategy	Residents using TCH funding (Social Investments fund) have started community gardens. TCH residents also actively engage with the community through tours, workshops, networks, and the formation of partnerships (Lawrence Heights Community center).	Document
Toronto Community Housing	Community Garden	Community Garden and Green Spaces are part of the Toronto Housing Corporation's Green Initiatives by which they wish to address several issues that affect marginalized communities and residents of their housing complexes, especially food security.	Web Page
	Green Spaces		Web Page
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)	Urban Agriculture Programs	The Urban Agriculture Program hosted by the TRCA aims to promote community gardens and urban farms as a method to curb food insecurity in the city and suburbs, with a community farm in the Black Creek neighbourhood.	Web Page

CONSULTATIONS AND RESEARCH

Summary of consultations and research

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Public Forum on Black History Month Panel on Food Justice	Black Creek Community Farm	<p>The Black Creek Community Farm held a Public forum on Black History Month: Panel on Food Justice. The aim of the public forum was to allow for Black Urban Farmers to talk about issues of food justice plaguing Black Canadians. The forum was opened to the public to ask questions to the experts and express their wants and needs for food justice for Black Canadians, especially in the North of Toronto.</p> <p>The following is comments made by the public and panel on what needs to happen for Black Canadians in Toronto and the GTA to achieve Food Justice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offentimes at the beginning of every month, many payday loans places have long line ups, especially in order to provide meals and food for their families. The community needs to step up and understand that the "Emergency Box" is not enough. An increase in Funds, from donations or grants from the Government, would help. - It would also be helpful for the BCCF to have a physical site "bank of sorts" where they can act as an intermediary for residents, thus being able to provide, fresh, and healthy produce that is locally grown and is of little to no charge to them, furthermore, it would allow the community to come in and learn about fresh and healthy ingredients and the benefits that they have - If the Police is defunded, a lot of the money that is designated for policing in the Black Creek Community could be diverted to provide healthy and fresh produce, rather than policing that has consistently negatively impacted so many people in the community via carding and racial profiling - In Canada, food is heavily controlled and distributed by large corporations, much of that which goes to waste, when in reality, smaller, local farms do a much better job of producing produce that is more sustainable, and that does not require Migrant Labour, many of whom are overworked, underpaid, and heavily exploited in Canada - Accountability needs to be key for politicians and large corporations that refuse to acknowledge the issues faced by people that are less privileged - The commodification of food and resources need to be stopped, pressure needs to be applied all across the nation to force the government to treat food as what it is: a basic human right - The city of Toronto and its Councillors need to help the development of small farms across the city and create a network of local farms in and around Toronto 	Facebook Live Stream

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Fighting for Food Justice in the Black Creek Community Summary	Black Creek Food Justice Network	<p>The <i>Fighting for Food Justice in the Black Creek Community Summary</i> report was compiled by the Black Creek Food Justice Network. By engaging residents of the community, the Black Creek Food Justice Network was able to understand the needs and wants to challenge food insecurity in the neighbourhood.</p> <p>Based on the input, the Black Creek Food Justice Network proposed the following recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve Growing Spaces and Support for Urban Growing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have an increase in investment and spaces where communities can hold community gardens while governments from all three levels increase their support to combat food insecurity 2. Make food more affordable by raising Wages and Social Safety Nets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Push for an increase for higher minimum wage that is a liveable wage rate, and Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works rates 3. Fight for justice for those that work to feed us <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased support for Migrant Farm workers including programs that allow them options to permanent citizenship, same employment rights and protections under the Provincial Employment Standards Act and Regulations, access to social programs, fair appeal process before any repatriation order, and subsidize small farmers and promote ecologically informed farming policies that support young, new, and racialized farmers 4. Stop Criminalizing our communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removal of any and all security and undercover police from grocery stores in predominantly racialized, working class communities 5. Connect food and Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make healthy food more accessible to people with mental and physical health challenges and mandate published images be representative of a variety of bodies, body shapes, sizes, and skin tones 	Report

LIST OF GREY LITERATURE

Resource title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Jane/Finch Centre, CAPG	Community Hub & Centre for the Arts Feasibility Study - Final Report	From September 2017 to June 2019, the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre collaborated with the Community Action Planning Group (CAPG) to facilitate a comprehensive and inclusive community engagement process to develop the vision, programming, and concept design for a proposed new community hub and centre for the arts in Toronto's Jane-Finch neighbourhood. A community kitchen, restaurant and community garden were a key community identified priorities for the Hub.	Report
The Black Creek Living History Project	Toronto Public Library (unclear who the community partners involved were)	This site brings together stories and remembrances about the Black Creek community located in North-Western Toronto, Ontario Canada. Through a series of oral history interviews the community has captured local seniors' recollections on video. This website showcases and celebrates the local history of the Black Creek community through collected oral history interviews, photographs, and other resources.	Website

Priority: Community Health and Safety

Summary of Findings:

- 9 organizations, 5 grassroots groups, 3 institutions (York U, City, TCHC) are leading active initiatives.
- Reframing safety: the issue of safety is extremely complex - gun violence and crime are concerns for all residents however who do you call when you can't trust the police?
- A community safety definition: should prioritize community-led anti-violence programming and safer spaces for youth.
- There is robust work happening around health in the broadest sense with direct social service provision and strategy around social determinants of health such as access to public and green space, mental health, physical health, access to extended healthcare, employment, food and chronic care management.
- There seem to be strong health provider networks and collaboratives exist in the area.

ORGANIZATIONS

Organization(s)	Initiative	Description	Additional Material
Across Boundaries, Black Creek Community Health Centre, Black Creek Local Immigration Partnership, Central Community Care Access Centre, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, COTA Health, Family Association for Mental Health Everywhere, Humber River Regional Hospital, Jamaican Canadian Association, Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre, LOFT Community Services, St. Elizabeth Health Care, Toronto Police Service, Toronto Public Health, Y Connect, York University Psychology Clinic, YWCA Toronto	North West Community Mental Health Network	The North West Community Mental Health Network consists of representatives from local grassroots organizations, and institutions that provide mental health services to residents in the broader Jane and Finch community of Toronto. The purpose of the network is to collaborate and partner with others by responding to mental health issues identified by the network and by residents and service providers in the community. The Network also aims to address systemic issues that impact the ability for people of marginalized communities from accessing proper mental health services.	Document

Organization(s)	Initiative	Description	Additional Material
Black Creek Youth Initiative		The Black Creek Youth Initiative provides a space for the Youth of Black Creek/ Tretheway neighbourhoods, ultimately being formed to address various challenges and issues that they felt were young people in those communities and neighbourhoods.	Website
Caribbean African Canadian Social Services (CAFCAN)		CAFCAN is a registered charitable organization that primarily focuses on building, strengthening and enriching the service framework for African Canadian children, youth and families through culturally safe individual and group counselling supports, case management services, employment services, youth mentorship, and youth outreach programs.	Website
Hope & Hustle Heights		Based in Lawrence Heights, Hope & Hustle Heights looks to promote Mental Health and overall wellness through Art. The group uses Instagram to promote their programs, events, services, and initiatives for the community.	Instagram
FoodShare		FoodShare is a food security and food justice non profit organization producing and distributing healthy, affordable food with and to BIPOC and other marginalized communities in Toronto. They aim to resolve food insecurities in their communities and promote local farming.	Website
Friends in Toronto Community Services (FIT)	After School Essential	<p>Friends In Toronto Community Service (F.I.T) is a non-profit, community based, charitable organization with a mission to break the cycle of poverty by inspiring and empowering communities.</p> <p>F.I.T. provides crucial services to children, youth, women and families across Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). They do this through a combination of Arts, Education, Leadership, Sports & Recreation, professional counselling and Training services.</p>	Web Page
Residents of Jane Finch, Residents of the Black Creek Neighbourhood, Black Creek Community Health Centre, Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women, Jane Finch Centre, Jane & Finch community Ministry, Northwood Neighbourhood Services, Luma Care, YorkU-TD Centre Engagement Centre, Skills for Change	Black Creek Community Collective	The Black Creek Community Collective comprises residents, community groups, grassroots organizations, local institutions, and stakeholders who aim to increase resident engagement, health, diversity, access, and equity to a better quality of life for all who live in the Black Creek Neighbourhood. As part of their services, the Black Creek Community Collective offers a Micro-Credit Lending program which aims to help those who want to learn new skills, start a business, or enhance their business by helping fund their initiative, as well as assist them in providing additional services, road mapping to success, and partnerships.	Website

Organization(s)	Initiative	Description	Additional Material
The SPOT		A satellite of the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre, The Spot offers programs and services for youth that are committed to increasing and building the leadership skills of youth, optimizing their personal, social, and vocational competency in order to achieve his or her full potential, ultimately reducing the effects of poverty, prevent violence and drug misuse and promote healthy lifestyles.	

GRASSROOTS GROUPS

Grassroots Groups	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
Blanket Project		The Blanket Project is a sexual abuse awareness campaign for youth living at home, on the streets and in the sex trade to help youth identify signs that can lead to sexual abuse and also refer youth to community services.	Website
Mamás Latinas en Canadá (Latin Moms in Canada)		Mamás Latinas en Canadá is a grassroots group that looks to empower and provide Latin-Canadian women and mothers by coordinating workshops and seminars that look to provide employable skills, most notable of which was a Sewing workshop.	Facebook
SWP Community Ministry	Beyond Carding Coalition	The Beyond Carding Coalition is a group of dedicated and concerned residents that advocate for the ending of carding by police in Toronto, with a specific focus on eradicating carding incidents in the Jane and Finch area.	Web Page
	Jane Finch Street Involved Youth Issues Coalition	The Jane Finch Street Involved Youth Issues Coalition is a grassroots community group aimed to engage youth on issues relating to community safety.	A Globe and Mail Article which discusses Community Leaders in Jane and Finch which featured the founder of the Jane Finch Street Involved Youth Issues Coalition, Barry Rieder
	Jane Finch Unity	Jane Finch Unity is a grassroots Organization that looks to end gun violence in Jane and Finch.	
Tamil Women Rising		Tamil Women Rising is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization that empowers Tamil women in all areas of the GTA to achieve greater success in their careers. They provide opportunities where Tamil women and their allies can connect, share ideas, learn and grow by conducting workshops and networking events.	Website

INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
City of Toronto	SafeTO	An initiative of the City of Toronto, SafeTO looks to review and shift the framework of safety from emergency response to a culture of prevention. The initiative has conducted several consultations around the city and is currently under development.	Website
Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC)	Community Safety Unit	In collaboration with Crime Stoppers, the TCHC established the Community Safety Unit. The Unit looks to facilitate programs for the community that educate residents of when to contact crime stoppers, youth outreach activities, and installation of crime stoppers signs and public awareness.	Web Page
York University	York University - TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC)	The York University - TD Community Engagement Centre aims to increase academic innovation through community building and experiential learning, increase in post-secondary students in the Black Creek Community, and foster collaborative research and partnerships with local organizations and community groups to understand more about community engagement and the relationship with the community and the University, destabilizing systemic issues that affect marginalized communities.	Website

CONSULTATIONS AND RESEARCH

Summary of consultations and research

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
SafeTO: North York	City of Toronto	<p>Currently under development, SafeTO is a community safety and wellbeing plan which aims to switch approach from emergency response to move to a culture of crime prevention.</p> <p>As a result, the City of Toronto conducted four consultations in an effort to understand community needs and wants to change the approach models, as well as understanding how traditionally marginalized communities experienced Policing in their neighbourhoods.</p> <p>One of the consultations that was conducted was in North York. This consultation was attended by members of various communities, residents, and police officers from the local precinct, all in dialogue with one another.</p> <p>The SafeTO report is yet to be released.</p>	SafeTO Web Page

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Community Response to the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020: What Neighbourhood Improvement looks like from the perspective of Residents in Jane-Finch	Jane-Finch TSNS Task Force which is comprised of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Across Boundaries - Belka Enrichment Centre - Black Creek Community Health Centre - Community and Legal Aid Services Programme (CLASP) - Elspeth Heyworth - Friends in Trouble - Jamaican Canadian Association - Jane-Finch Action Against Poverty - Jane-Finch Community Legal Services - Jane-Finch Community Ministry - Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre - JVS Toronto - York U - TD Community Engagement Centre 	<p>The document was created in response to the City of Toronto's "<i>Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy</i>" by looking at what community members and residents of Jane-Finch think a healthy and happy community should look like.</p> <p>To understand what residents want in their communities, furthermore, understanding what changes need to be made in the community and how these changes can be met.</p> <p>Healthy Living:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many participants cited that the lack of quality of healthcare and healthcare access (i.e. long wait times) discouraged them from seeking medical attention, furthered by existing language barriers between healthcare professionals and patients; - There is a lack of awareness regarding mental health services. Furthermore, when asked about their experience with accessing mental health services, participants claimed that those who did seek mental health services were often deterred due to the lack of proactive approach by mental health professionals to follow up, or fully explain multiple factors that could be affecting their mental health - Access to healthy foods was an extreme barrier with many stating that it is far too expensive for them to adopt healthier options due to A) a lack of healthy food stores being present in the area, and B) what ever healthy food that is there tends to be of poorer quality than the rest of the city <p>Economic Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many cited that High Auto Insurance Rates for residents in the Jane-Finch area deterred them from purchasing a vehicle, forcing them to rely on public transportation, which forces them to find employment opportunities that are along transit routes; - Most factory and warehouse jobs that are available, tend to be only available in Peel and York regions, not many exist in the Jane-Finch area- or quite frankly in Toronto. The fact that well paying, factory/warehouse jobs would require double fare caused by using two different transit systems and lengthy commutes via transit has deterred them from being able to commute to work, further enhanced by increasing transit fares; - Participants mentioned that there is a clear lack of job opportunities which is further fueled due to the lack of businesses and institutions in the area, furthermore, women stated that the lack of, and availability of affordable and subsidized child care was a barrier on their success; - Private Temporary Employment agencies also proved to be barriers as more often than not, they provided underpaid positions, unstable employment and employment opportunities that almost never had any benefits or paid sick leaves. 	Document

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Community Response to the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020: What Neighbourhood Improvement looks like from the perspective of Residents in Jane-Finch (cont.)		Social Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of quality education in the area was of great concern, especially for access to education for adults hindered by barriers such as stable finances, lack of child care, and lack of information for existing programs. In the adult-aged groups, there was a pervasive theme of a lack of programs in the community targeted at supporting adults in their educational endeavours in opposition to the many programs supporting youth. - Lack of Accountability on the part of landlords (both public and private) to provide high quality housing, leading to many issues such as rodent infestations, eroding infrastructure, and residents being exposed to health hazards due to a log of backorder needs to be addressed and fixed - Groups also expanded on security issues within the community and how it has impacted their lives. Participants spoke about over-policing in their community, especially of racial profiling of black youth, stating that increased police presence in the area has resulted in an increased sense of anxiety rather than safety. 	Document
Community Safety Meeting	Toronto Police 31 Division	<p>The purpose of the Community Safety meeting was to discuss how to prevent and reduce ongoing crimes that are prevalent in the Downsview-Roding Community.</p> <p>The details of the consultation have yet to be released.</p>	Facebook
Improving Mental Health Services in Jane Finch Community	Black Creek Community Health Centre, Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre, CAMH, LOFT Community Services, Ontario's Community Health Centres	The North West Community Mental Health Network conducted a research project to find out what different community members thought about mental health, what kinds of experiences they had had with mental health services in the community, and how they thought these mental health services could be improved, especially in ways to make them more culturally appropriate and accessible.	Web Page
Community Violence, Trauma and Healing in the Jane and Finch Community	Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness, City of Toronto	This report will examine community led initiatives and use narrative data derived from Mental Health First Aid, Community Healing Project as well as the City of Toronto's Community Safety Forums as a source of knowledge for building and increasing the ability of the City of Toronto to implement successful programming that is culturally appropriate, and to build a plan to create a trauma informed response to community safety and community violence.	Report

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Lawrence Heights CIW Report: Measure of Safety and Security	The Immigrant Women's Integration Program at the Toronto Centre of Community Learning and Development	The Neighbourhood Index of Well-Being is a method of examining the societal progress of individuals in the 13 priority neighbourhoods of Toronto in relation to numbers historically. It measures societal progress through a number of indicators of socio-economic well-being including healthy population, living standards, community vitality, democratic engagement, time use, arts, culture, recreation, education, and environment.	Report

LIST OF GREY LITERATURE

Resource title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Youth in Motion Zine	The Black Creek Youth Initiative	This zine was created to challenge stereotypes around gender, race and intersecting identities. Raising awareness about these stereotypes that are enacted by our teachers, social workers, peers and even family members, creates more opportunities and inclusiveness in our communities.	https://speakingrights.ca/uploads/ZINE.pdf
Jane/Finch Centre, CAPG	Community Hub & Centre for the Arts Feasibility Study - Final Report	From September 2017 to June 2019, the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre collaborated with the Community Action Planning Group (CAPG) to facilitate a comprehensive and inclusive community engagement process to develop the vision, programming, and concept design for a proposed new community hub and centre for the arts in Toronto's Jane-Finch neighbourhood. Mental health services and communal spaces including a youth lounge were a key community identified priority for the Hub.	Report
The Black Creek Living History Project	Toronto Public Library (unclear who the community partners involved were)	This site brings together stories and remembrances about the Black Creek community located in North-Western Toronto, Ontario Canada. Through a series of oral history interviews the community has captured local seniors' recollections on video. This website showcases and celebrates the local history of the Black Creek community through collected oral history interviews, photographs, and other resources.	Website
Black Creek Community Collective Work Plan	Black Creek Community Collective	The overall goal of the Black Creek Community Collective in 2019 was to gear their work toward increased strategic thinking as a collaborative through skills, opportunities, and information sharing. These efforts are a key example of social infrastructure in communities.	Workplan
FoodShare Toronto Research, reports and presentations database	FoodShare Toronto	FoodShare Toronto has an extensive database of research, reports and presentations exploring food systems and issues related to food insecurity.	Website

Priority: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

Summary of Findings:

- 6 organizations, 3 grassroots groups and 3 institutions (TCHC, The City, York U) are leading work in this area including initiatives such as Green Change's community planning efforts which seek to build a more environmentally just Jane Finch through increased green spaces and improving underutilized parks.
- Climate mitigation and adaptation include organizations leading initiatives which are either taking action to slow the effects of climate change or organizations supporting communities to cope with and survive the adverse effects of climate change.
- Adaptation and social infrastructure are closely linked as strategies to increase community-centered resilience rely on people-centered functions of social infrastructure.

ORGANIZATIONS

Organization(s)	Initiative	Description	Additional Material
Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF)		The BCCF looks to help and engage people of the community through a thriving farm, healthy food, hands-on training and learning experiences, as well as inspire future generations of people by providing education on leadership in food justice, and supporting diverse natural and social ecosystems, especially for those that are members of marginalized communities.	Website
Community Food Centres Canada	Good Food Organization	The Good Food Organizations program works to increase, connect, and support community food security organizations that strive to offer healthy and dignified food programs in their communities by offering resources, training, funding, and chances to network and promote shared priorities.	Website
Fresh City Farms		With a location in the heart of Downsview Park, Fresh City Farms aims to provide high quality, locally grown, organic foods, encouraging nearby residents to access healthy, affordable ingredients and meals, rather than buying easier to access fast foods.	Website An article that highlights Fresh City Farms commitment to deliver locally grown foods to groups that have been affected by the pandemic, as well as commit to the research of food security in Toronto amongst marginalized communities.

Organization(s)	Initiative	Description	Additional Material
Jane Finch Centre	Green Change	The Green Change initiative looks to work with a wide variety of residents, community groups, and city wide organizations in order to challenge and confront systematic forces that negatively impact Food Justice, Racial inequality and Climate Change.	Web Page
PACT Urban Peace Program	Grow-to-Learn	PACT Grow-To-Learn Program looks to teach Schools and communities the importance of Gardening and Farming, resulting in a growing understanding of food insecurity in their local communities.	Web Page
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)	Black Creek SNAP (Sustainable Neighbourhood Program)	Black Creek SNAP has been developed with local residents to help transform the northwest Toronto neighbourhood of Black Creek into a healthy, green and self-sufficient community. The Black Creek SNAP focuses on Growing Food and Green Opportunities through four primary action areas: vegetable gardening (supported by rain harvesting) in homes and open spaces, stormwater management and basement flooding prevention, urban forest enhancement and energy conservation and renewables.	Web Page

GRASSROOTS GROUPS

Grassroots Groups	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
BCCF, City of Toronto, Foodshare	Urban Harvest Community Leaders	The aim is then to redistribute these fruits and vegetables to local food banks, children and youth programs, seniors, and local community programming.	Web page
Our Greenway		Our Greenway is a non-profit that looks to create a 21 kilometre long, eco-friendly, off-street bicycle network in Jane and Finch in order to facilitate transportation options to those who can't rely on cars or busses. Our Greenway also advocates for affordable housing, and infrastructure for multiple transportation options to be available for affordable housing.	Website
York University Students	Maloca Community Garden	The Maloca Community Garden features approximately 2,000 sq. ft. devoted to both individual and communal plots for growing vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers according to the principles of organic agriculture.	Website
	Regenesis-YorkU-Keele Chapter	Regenesis-YorkU-Keele chapter is the York University chapter of Regenesis, a Canadian student-involved university and college based environmental and community-building organization. We believe in empowering students as initiators of change in addressing today's social and environmental concerns, through advocacy and service in local chapters. Regenesis York creates and manages initiatives and social enterprises that provide services to the university community as well as offer quality leadership experience for students. All of the initiatives are inspired by the needs of the York University community and raise the quality of life on campus.	Website Regenesis-YorkU-Keele Chapter was noted to fight for affordable housing for students that live on, or off campus.

Grassroots Groups	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
York University Students	Off the Grid - Working Group	Off the Grid is a student group that aims to bring awareness of environmental sustainability and sustainable options, with hopes of adding solar panels to every building on campus and reducing overall carbon emissions.	Web Page

INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Name of Initiative	Description	Additional Information
City of Toronto	Resilience Strategy	The City of Toronto's Resilience Strategy outlines the steps the city has been taking, and is wanting to take in order to address significant issues the city may face in the future, particularly in the realm of Climate Change and growing inequities.	Website
	TransformTO	TransformTO is a climate action strategy that was created by the city in order to meet net zero carbon emissions by 2050 or sooner in response to the City Council's decision to declare that the city is in a Climate Emergency. It looks to achieve this by making significant changes to the way Torontonians work, live, commute in and around the city.	Website
Toronto Atmospheric Fund (TAF), Toronto Community Housing (TCHC)	Towerwise Retrofit Project	Acquiring financing to upgrade its Community housing units from TAF, the TCHC aims to retrofit aging units with better quality, environmentally friendly technology in order to reduce the environmental impact produced by each unit.	Web Page
York University	Project Climate Change/Climate Change Solutions Park	Project Climate Change aims to be world class leaders in bringing about environmental research and initiatives that work to bring about change in environmental sustainability. In order to achieve this, YorkU has established the Climate Change Solutions Park, a building where research from the university on environmental sustainability will be conducted.	Website

CONSULTATIONS AND RESEARCH

Summary of consultations and research

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Public Engagement for the Downsview Park Educational Program	Downsview Park in partnership with TD Friends of the Environment Foundation	<p>The Public Engagement for the Downsview Park Education Program to gain a better understanding of how to expand and enhance Downsview Park's Education Programs that are offered to the Public- to the wider community, allowing families to better connect with the natural world that they inhabit.</p> <p>Members of Downsview park consulted the residents of the local neighbourhoods, communities, and students from 96 schools that came as part of field trips. The findings are yet to be reported.</p>	Web Page

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Black Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan (SNAP)	<p>Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) City of Toronto Jane and Finch Community and Family Centre Black Creek Conservation Project</p> <p>In partnership with: Toronto Hydro Enbridge Black Creek Green Energy Coalition Afri-Can FoodBasket Live Green Animators ACORN San Romano Way Revitalization Association Yorkwoods Library Driftwood Community Centre LINC Centre Reaching Up Homework Club Signs of Science</p>	<p>The Black Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan (SNAP) aims to help develop programs in coordination of local residents that work to transform the Northwest Toronto Neighbourhood into a healthy, green and self-sufficient community</p> <p>During the development of the Black Creek SNAP, the TRCA via Swerhun Facilitation, engaged with communities in order to get an understanding on what the people of the Black Creek Community and work with them on facing climate change head on through proactive options</p> <p>The following was recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neighbourhood-wide Agriculture Supported by Rain Harvesting 2. Single-Family Residential Eco-edible Landscaping and Other Strategic Retrofits 3. Greening of Paved Areas and Buildings on Institutional, Commercial and Multi-Unit Residential Properties 4. Urban Forest Enhancement <p>Ultimately, other than Environmental sustainability, the overwhelming amount of the feedback meetings were focused on job growth/opportunities and food security.</p>	<p>Report</p> <p>Website</p>

Report title	Led by	Summary	Reference
Black Creek Drainage Improvement Study	City of Toronto	<p>The Black Creek Drainage Improvement Study looked to restructure water/drainage management for the growing populations in and around the Black Creek neighbourhoods.</p> <p>The City of Toronto held 3 consultations. During the second consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The common consensus in the room was that Alternative #2 seemed to be the best option to combat and deal with the issue of flooding, with many residents agreeing that no matter which option is selected, it needs to be implemented quickly, and correctly as there has been an extensive history of flooding in the study area; - Many members of the community questioned the effectiveness of the proposed systems citing existing conditions of the current system being severely overwhelmed; - Asked to be continuously and regularly updated by the city if any information developed at later dates. <p>During the third consultation, facilitators sought to provide feedback on the appeal of design concepts for the preferred solution, and on the recommended design concept in Phase 3 of the project. The following are the recommendations proposed by the city:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) and Wet Weather Flow Reduction (WWF) 2. Sanitary Relief Trunk / Diversion Design Concepts 3. Black Creek Sanitary Relief at Jane Street 4. Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Design Concepts <p>Public Feedback from the third consultation is yet to be released.</p>	<p>Project Portal</p> <p>Community Feedback for Second Consultation</p> <p>Second Consultation Information</p> <p>Third Consultation Information</p>

LIST OF GREY LITERATURE

Resource title	Led by	Summary	Reference
The Black Creek Living History Project	Toronto Public Library (unclear who the community partners involved were)	This site brings together stories and remembrances about the Black Creek community located in North-Western Toronto, Ontario Canada. Through a series of oral history interviews the community has captured local seniors' recollections on video. This website showcases and celebrates the local history of the Black Creek community through collected oral history interviews, photographs, and other resources.	Website
Transforming the San Romanoway Towers	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority	Through the successful San Romanoway Towers Revival Case Study, this report demonstrates how the Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program's (SNAP) collaborative, neighbourhood-based model for tower revitalization effectively delivered on property owners' priorities and residents' needs, while benefiting the environment and society as a whole.	Report

Findings by Neighbourhoods

Black Creek Neighbourhood (#24)

Black Creek Community Collective
Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF)
Black Creek Community Health Centre
Black Creek Financial Network
Black Creek Youth Initiative
Jane and Finch Community and Family Centre
 Green Change: Field Guide
Lovely Women Rising
Neighbourhood Action Youth Employment Committee
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA): Black Creek SNAP
Urban Harvest Community Leaders
York University TD Engagement Centre

Glenfield-Jane Heights Neighbourhood (#25)

Community Action Planning Group (CAPG)
Dancing Life
Grow our Grassways
Jamaican Canadian Association
Jane and Finch Community and Family Centre
 • Ourstrong Jane and Finch
 • York University Partnership on Workforce Development
 • The Spot

Jane and Finch Community Legal Clinic
Jane Finch Community Ministry
Jane Finch Crisis Response Table
Jane Finch Economic Opportunities Action Group
Jane Finch Street Involved Youth Coalition
Jane Finch Unity
Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP)
The Jane Finch Collective for Youth Employment
Noble Solutions
Our Greenway
Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC)
TowerWise Retrofit Project (In-Partnership with Toronto Atmospheric Fund [TAF])

Downsview-Roding Neighbourhood (#26)

Black farmers and Food Growers Collective
Blanket Project
Chalkfarm Group
FoodShare
Toronto Beekeeper's Collective
Fresh City Farms
Friends of Roding Park
Kitchen24
Sundance Harvest

York-University Heights Neighbourhood (#27)

Derrydowns Park Revival

Inner City Outreach

Lawrence Heights Inter-Organizational Network: Authentic Collaboration - A Journey in Community Networks

Regenesi:s:YUM Market/Seed Market at York University

Success Beyond Limits

York University

- Climate Solutions Park - Project Climate Change
- York University Students Union (YUSU)
- Maloca Community Garden
- Off the Grid
- York University TD Engagement Centre

Youth Association for Academics, Athletics, and Character Education (YAAACE)

Yorkdale-Glen-Park (#31)

PACT Urban Peace Program: Grow-to-Learn

Unison Health and Community Services

Latin Moms in Canada

Lawrence Heights Community Centre: Community Garden

Lawrence Heights Social Development Planning Table

North York Community House

San Lorenzo Community Centre

- San Lorenzo Community Garden
- Mama Caya's Food Bank

Toronto Community Housing Corporation Green Spaces

All Neighbourhoods

Afri-Can Food Basket

- Black Food Toronto (in-partnership with the City of Toronto and Akobea Inc.)

Beyond Carding Coalition

Black Youth Jobs

Caribbean African Canadian Social Services (CAFCAN)

City of Toronto

Friends in Toronto Community Services (FIT)

FoodShare

North West Community Mental Health Network

North York Harvest Food Bank

PEACH (Promoting Education and Community Health)

Skills for Change

Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC)

- Toronto Food Animators
- Garden Strategy (in-partnership with FoodShare, Afri-can Food Basket and STOP Community Food Centre)

Toronto Foundation for Student Success

- Beyond 3:30
- Food for Kids COVID-19 Response Program
- Student Nutrition Program

Toronto Community Benefits Network

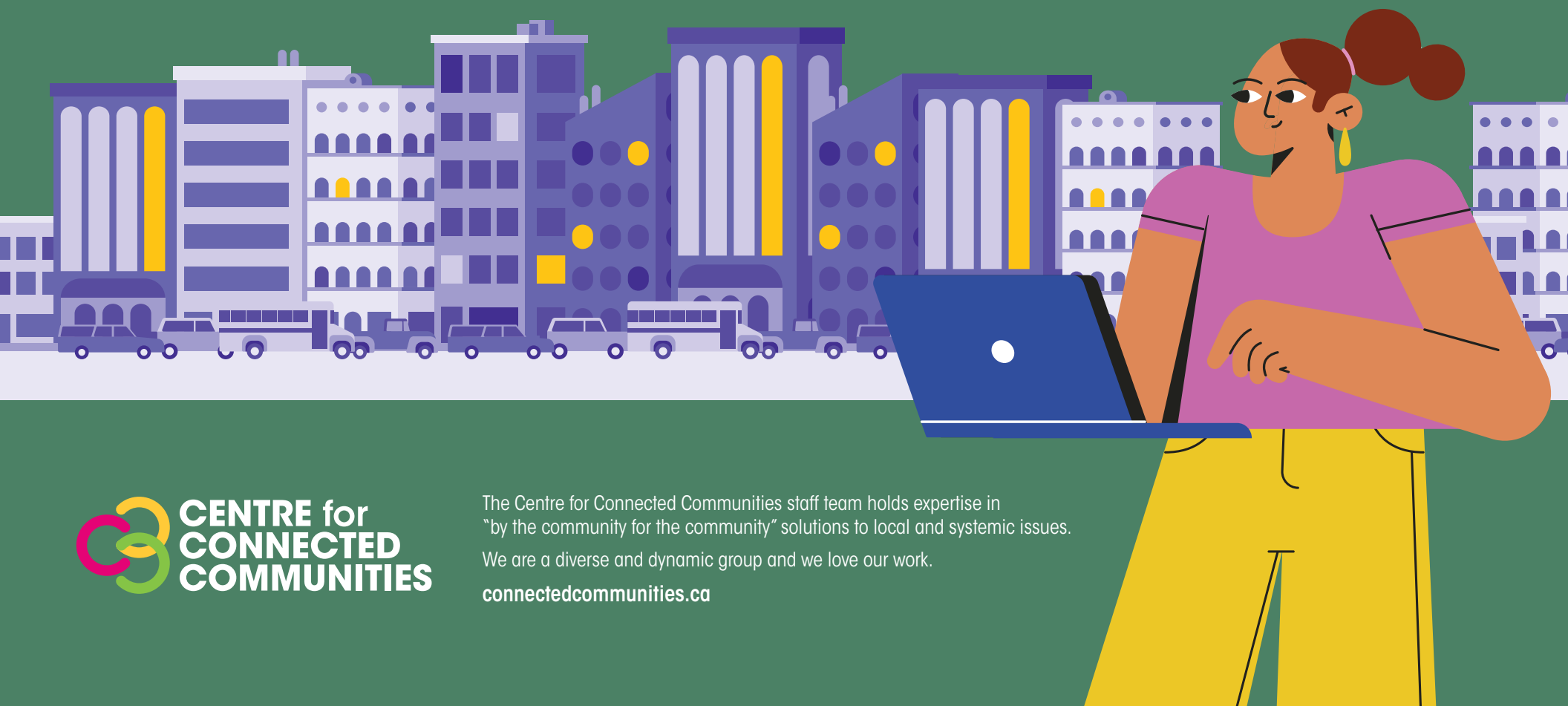
APPENDIX A

RELATED CITY STRATEGIES



Appendix A: Table of Related City Strategies

Racial Justice	Economic Inclusion	Housing and Gentrification	Food Systems	Community Health and Safety	Climate Adaptation and Mitigation
Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit - Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism	TO Prosperity - Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy	Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit - Growing in place 3-year strategy in Jane Finch	Resilience Strategy	Resilience Strategy	Resilience Strategy
Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit - Growing in place 3-year strategy in Jane Finch	Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020	Jane-Finch Initiative	Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit - Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism	Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit - Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism	Transform TO
Resilience Strategy	Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit - Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism	HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan	Toronto Public Health -Toronto's First Indigenous Health Strategy	Toronto Public Health - Toronto's First Indigenous Health Strategy	
	Resilience Strategy	Toronto Seniors Strategy 2.0	Toronto Seniors Strategy 2.0	Toronto Newcomer Strategy	
	Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit - Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism	Toronto Youth Equity Strategy		Toronto Seniors Strategy 2.0	
	Toronto Newcomer Strategy			Toronto Youth Equity Strategy	
	Toronto Youth Equity Strategy			Safe T.O. Community Safety and Well-Being Plan	
	Working as One - A Workforce Development Strategy for Toronto				
	Transform TO				
	Anchor TO				
	Economic Development & Culture Divisional Strategy 2018-2022				



The Centre for Connected Communities staff team holds expertise in
"by the community for the community" solutions to local and systemic issues.

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