

Food-Friendly Neighbourhood Plan Bathurst-Finch: Phase 2

Neighbourhood profile

Population: 24,403

Area: 3.6 km2

Median after-tax income: \$39,925

% low income after-tax: 24.9%



About this neighbourhood

Bathurst-Finch, also known as Westminster-Branson, is located at the top of the city and is anchored by a corridor of high rise apartments extending north to Steeles Ave along Bathurst St. The percentage of high rise dwellings in this neighbourhood is double the city average and they are home to a largely senior and Russian-speaking population. G. Ross Lord Park is a key landmark in this neighbourhood.

Special thanks to City of Toronto, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Food Strategy, the Bathurst & Finch Food Action Team and Bathurst & Finch residents who participated in neighbourhood consultations.

Opportunity:

The 8000 square foot Northview community garden is located on Northview Public School grounds in front of the Bathurst-Finch Community Hub. Since its opening in 2013, Northview Garden, which runs programs from the spring to fall, has been coordinated by a Unison Garden Coordinator with support from North York Harvest Food Bank and the Northview Garden Steering Committee, comprised of volunteers and staff. Harvests are shared with volunteers and the Bathurst-Finch Community Food Bank. Garden volunteers can sign up for teams that maintain themed mini-gardens throughout this large garden space. Volunteer gardeners also engage youth groups once per week during the summer. Northview gardeners are also building connections with Bathurst-Finch Community Food Bank community members, students at Northview Public School, and community kitchen programs offered at the Hub. Although many residents surveyed are aware of this garden, there are limited opportunities for engagement at the moment due to limited funding. Local agencies that work in the neighbourhood can partner to create more programs to ensure this incredible community space continues to build on its successful start.

Who should be involved:

- Unison
- NYHFB/ BFCFB
- Northview Garden Steering Committee & volunteers
- Hub community kitchen
- Northview Public School

Opportunity:

The Bathurst Finch Community Food Bank (BFCFB), run by North York Harvest Food Bank, is open two times per week and operates out of the Northview Heights Secondary School. The program offers a three day supply of food to residents every two weeks. Fresh food items are in high demand among BFCFB community members, the most common requests are for milk, eggs, and vegetables.

There is an opportunity for BFCFB to increase client access to fresh produce by strengthening collaboration with community garden programs offered at the Bathurst-Finch Hub. Improving BFCFB client access to the Hub's programs will also mean more opportunities for clients to participate in these programs, combatting social isolation and nurturing community engagement.

Who should be involved:

- NYHFB
- Northview Heights Secondary School
- Other agency partners at the Hub

Findings



Residents surveyed are mostly satisfied with affordability, price-matching initiatives, and selection at neighbourhood grocers and felt an improvement from a C grade to a B grade was justified. Three of the five chain grocers are discount chains with five small speciality or cultural grocers located in Bathurst & Finch. However, some residents noted limited access to fresh produce, and transit to and from grocers as issues. Residents identified better access to affordable grocers as one of their top priorities for a more food-friendly neighbourhood.

Grade

B ↑



A Mobile Good Food Market runs once per week, year-round at 6091 Bathurst St, in the neighbourhood. However, many residents surveyed have not heard about it. Some residents travel to markets outside the neighbourhood for fresh, affordable produce. Community members are concerned about high prices at produce markets and are concerned food prices at produce markets would be too expensive and not compete with discount chain prices.

D ↔



North York Harvest's Bathurst-Finch Community Food Bank operates three times per week out of Northview Heights Secondary School. This complements a kosher food bank at Pride of Israel Synagogue. There is also a food bank at the Willowdale Seventh Day Adventist Church, but it is a closed program. Some residents who access neighbourhood food banks feel there is not enough variety in the foods offered and would like to see more fresh produce available.

B ↔



Unison's Bathurst-Finch Community Hub offers a variety of programs facilitated by agency partners such as a Northview community garden, a community kitchen and cook book program, two nutrition programs, and two parenting/prenatal programs. The location and variety of services offered at the Hub make it an ideal central space to promote programs and collaboration. There is also an individual plot garden at Rockford Park, but it has a waiting list.

C ↑

Opportunity:

There is an opportunity to start another produce market in the neighbourhood. Residents surveyed identified more access to fresh produce as their top priority for a more food-friendly neighbourhood. FoodShare runs a Mobile Good Food Market that visits the neighbourhood at 6091 Bathurst St. This could be an important source of fresh produce for residents, but most people surveyed had not heard of the market, highlighting the potential for more outreach in the community. However, any new market should ideally have prices that are competitive with neighbourhood grocers, as many residents said they would only shop at a produce market if it's affordable. Local organizations could support the produce markets in the neighbourhood by directing some of their food budget towards purchases from the market to ensure sustainability.

Who should be involved:

- Bathurst & Finch Food Action Team
- Organizations with food purchasing budgets, including Circle of Care, Unison Health & Community Services, North York Community House and Toronto Public Health
- FoodShare

Bathurst-Finch Food-Friendly Highlights

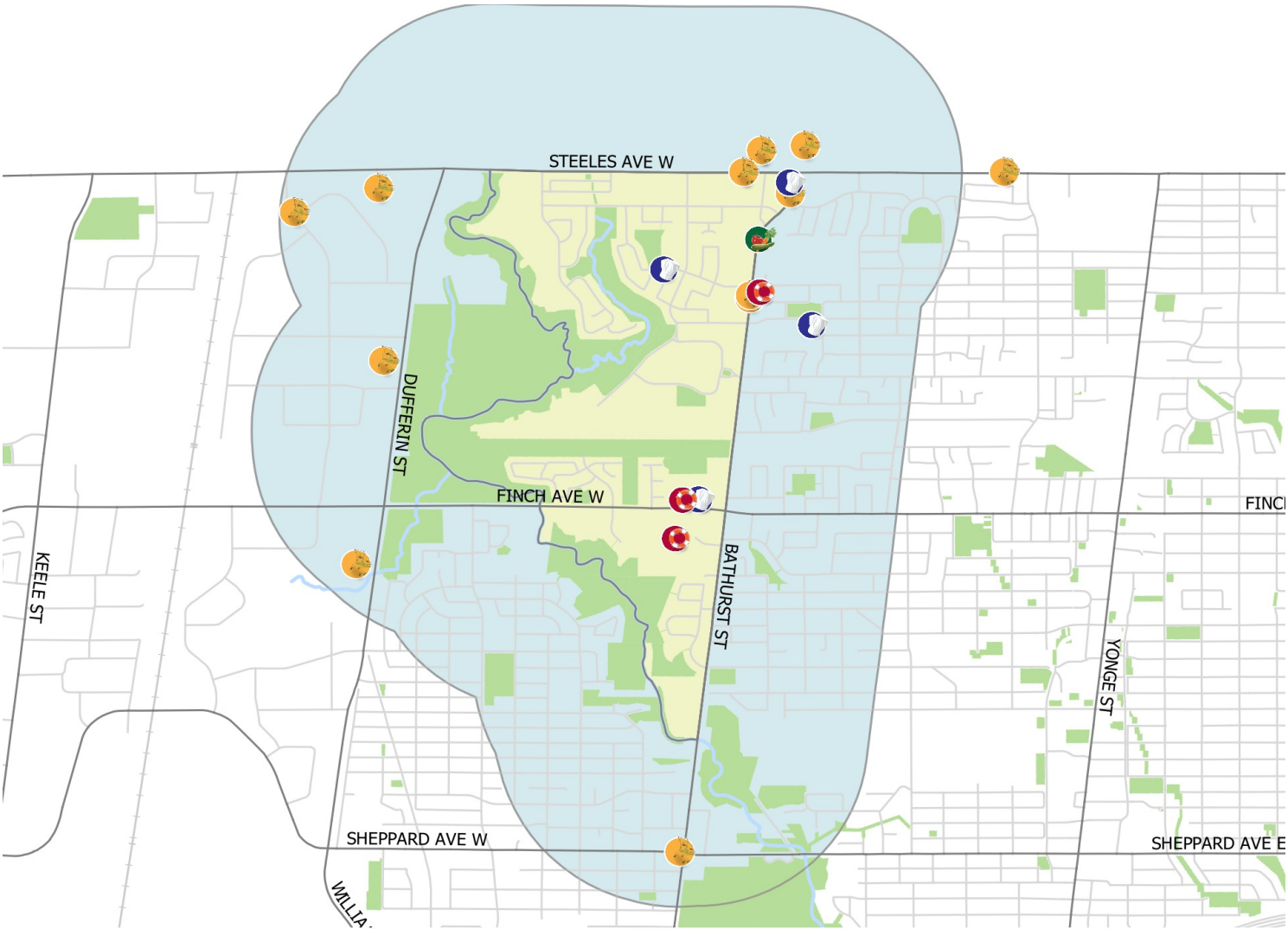


Highlight

The Hot Pot Cookbook project, organized by the Bathurst Finch Community Food Bank and a volunteer editorial board, was inspired by a traditional way of cooking in Asia that gathers community members around a simmering pot to cook together. The Hot Pot project works with seniors in the Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood to cook together and develop a community cookbook to promote social inclusion and cross-cultural exchange. The cookbook will capture the cultural vibrancy of the neighbourhood and tell the stories of its seniors. The project will foster social engagement by providing opportunities for seniors to prepare meals and eat together and educational exchanges of culinary skills and cultural traditions. Limited copies of the cookbook will be available in 2015 and distributed free of charge to community members in Bathurst and Finch.

About this document

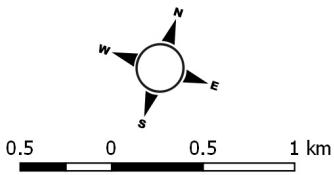
This Food Friendly Neighbourhood Food Plan is the product of a year-long consultation process with North York Harvest member agencies, community organizations and local residents. The yellow priority area highlighted in this map is the following City of Toronto, Social Planning Neighbourhood; Westminster Branson



Legend

- Retail
- Produce Market
- Food Assistance
- Food Skills and Growing

- Major Arterial Street
- Priority Area
- 1 km Buffer (15 minute walk)
- Park or Greenspace



Toronto
Source: City of Toronto, Open Data;
Toronto Food Strategy, Toronto Public Health



From top: Northview Community Garden, the Bathurst-Finch Hot Pot Cookbook team at the Unison Bathurst-Finch Hub

Published by



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Catalogue of primary food assets
For information about food assistance programs please call 211 or visit <http://www.211toronto.ca/>

Retail	
Bathurst Village Fine Foods	5984 Bathurst St
Concord Oriental Market	1051 Steeles Ave W
Dalisay Filipino	800 Steeles Ave W
Favourite Market	800 Steeles Ave W
Freshco	800 Steeles Ave W

Green Fruits
Hartman's Kosher Meats
Highland Farms
Kitchen Food Fair
Metro
Price Chopper
Real Canadian Superstore
Sabatini Gourmet Foods
Yummy Market
Sunlong Natural Market

1-330 Steeles Ave W
5988 Bathurst St
4750 Dufferin St
1051 Steeles Ave
600 Sheppard Ave W
6201 Bathurst St
51 Gerry Fitzgerald Dr
925 Alness St
4400 Dufferin St
2-7077 Bathurst St

Produce Markets	
Bathurst-Finch Good Food Market	6091 Bathurst St
Food Assistance	
Bathurst-Finch Community Food Bank	550 Finch Ave W
Pride of Israel	59 Lissom Cres
Willowdale Seventh Day Adventist Church	535 Finch Ave W
Food Skills and Growing	
Bathurst-Finch Community Garden	425 Patricia Ave

Rockford Park Community Garden	70 Rockford Rd
Northview Community Garden	540 Finch Ave W
Bathurst-Finch Community Food Bank Cookbook Program	540 Finch Ave W
Peer Nutrition Program-Toronto Public Health	540 Finch Ave W
Bathurst-Finch Community Hub Seniors Health Club	6250 Bathurst St