

Placemaking in Little Jamaica – Toronto

Work BUTO has completed during COVID-19

As with many of Toronto's culturally distinct retail strips, Little Jamaica has faced continued challenges of demographic change and gentrification, which has been further exacerbated by the construction of the new LRT line and, more recently, COVID-19. Black Urbanism Toronto, the Studio of Contemporary Architecture, and Open Architecture Collaborative Canada co-authored a report titled: A Black Business Conversation: On Planning for the Future of black Business and Residents on Eglinton Ave. West. The report outlined a future urban design vision for Toronto's 'Little Jamaica' to inspire and address issues of affordability, new development, and other challenges facing Toronto's largest Black and Caribbean neighbourhood.

Our team drafted the report to inform a City of Toronto planning framework study to help guide the future development of the neighbourhood holistically, with full consideration of Little Jamaica's economic and cultural needs. The report includes design guidelines for preserving and constructing affordable housing and commercial spaces, incremental densification that enhances the existing community character, along with pedestrian-centred public space that celebrates Toronto's Black, Caribbean and African-Canadian cultures.

Our team participated in the planning and facilitation of community consultation sessions with local Black business owners and residents, which informed the final report presented to the City of Toronto. The document was successful in helping initiate city council to pass a motion allowing Little Jamaica to be surveyed for heritage designation and supported Councilor Josh Matlow's motion to introduce rent control for commercial units along Eglinton West.

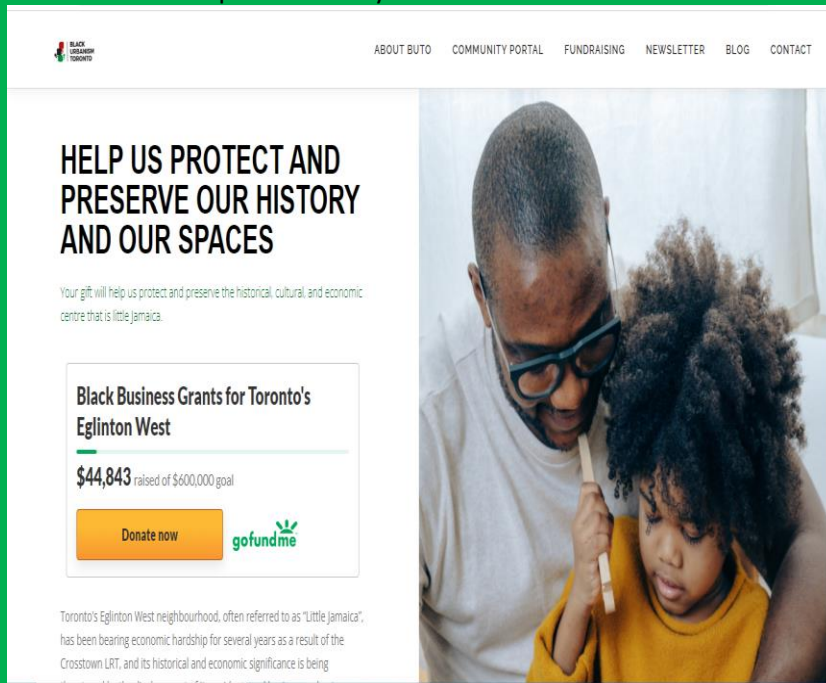


REPORT: A BLACK BUSINESS CONVERSATION *ON PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF BLACK BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS ON EGLINTON AVE W.*



Black Business Grant

Toronto's Eglinton West neighbourhood, often referred to as "Little Jamaica", had been bearing economic hardship for several years as a result of the Crosstown LRT and its historical and economic




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HELP US PROTECT AND PRESERVE OUR HISTORY AND OUR SPACES

Your gift will help us protect and preserve the historical, cultural, and economic centre that is Little Jamaica.

Black Business Grants for Toronto's Eglinton West

\$44,843 raised of \$400,000 goal

Donate now 

Toronto's Eglinton West neighbourhood, often referred to as "Little Jamaica", has been bearing economic hardship for several years as a result of the Crosstown LRT, and its historical and economic significance is being

significance was being threatened by the displacement of its residents and business due to prolonged construction. The COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated the economic hardship and set black communities even further behind. The Black Business Grant was created as a call to action to support Black-owned businesses along Eglinton West as many of the business owners have been unable to pay their rents, invest in themselves and prepare for the future. The grant was looking to support Black Businesses to not only meet their short-term needs so they can survive during

the economic recovery from COVID-19, but also to chart a path for long-term economic sustainability through ownership.

In partnership with Rebuild Reclaim Eglinton West, Black Urbanism TO (BUTO), we as an organization have been engaged with the Eglinton West community for over two years to ensure that the community's voice is reflected in the City's plans for the area. BUTO held two major community consultations (The future of Housing in Little Jamaica and most recently "A Black Business Conversation" consultation series in February 2020. This GoFundMe campaign supports some of the recommendations coming out of the consultation session. The application not only asks businesses to demonstrate immediate needs, but also captured the barriers to ownership and allowed businesses to identify and actualize their long-term goals. To date we have raised upwards of \$44,843 and have provided funding to 6 businesses on Eglinton West. We are hoping to continue to provide funding relief to Black Business owners who need the support.