

Laneways



TURNING LANEWAYS INTO PUBLIC PLACES

TOOLKIT

SHELAGH MCCARTNEY AND COURTNEY KAUPP, TOGETHER DESIGN LAB
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE LANEWAY PROJECT

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Together Design Lab at Ryerson University takes a collaborative approach to investigating and creating innovative solutions to housing issues with marginalized communities in Canada. Led by Dr. Shelagh McCartney, Together Design Lab relies on an immersive model of partnership bringing an interdisciplinary team of students and collaborators together with communities to understand the meaning of housing in shaping lived experience.

| togetherdesignlab.com



The Laneway Project is a non-profit planning and placemaking firm based in Toronto. In collaboration with community stakeholders, municipal staff and politicians, developers and business owners, The Laneway Project works to demonstrate best practices and spur policy changes that transform laneways into vibrant spaces that are alive with arts and culture, commerce, recreation and community.

| thelanewayproject.ca



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INTRODUCTION

Toronto has a vast network of more than 2,400 public laneways running throughout its fast-growing downtown and midtown neighbourhoods. Developing a better understanding of public laneways and their potential for integration into neighbourhood life helps us to create a complete and diverse public realm network in our city. This toolkit is intended as a guide to enable anyone to make improvements to a laneway or start a laneway revitalisation project.

Toronto is at the beginning of a laneway renaissance. In 2018, Toronto City Council began allowing the as of right construction of rental laneway suites in Toronto and East York districts.

The introduction of as of right laneway housing policies in the City of Toronto concentrates on one aspect of improving laneways – building density and providing more housing options. The introduction of laneway houses as a norm for building and approvals only adds to the importance of improving the public realm of laneways - as the front door access route for increasing the amounts homes, offices, studios and other commercial spaces.

Meanwhile, the number of laneway revitalization projects in the city has been steadily increasing. As Toronto continues to grow and with it demand for public space, the city faces increasing pressure to transform its laneways into vibrant shared spaces.

This toolkit lays out a process for identifying Toronto's common laneway types based on physical characteristics and identifies potential strategies that can be used to improve each of them. A set of case studies are also used to demonstrate what is possible and inspire local action.

Whether coordinating an entire laneway revitalization or simply making a small improvement to your nearest laneway, we encourage you to use this guide as inspiration for creating change.

This guide is designed to show the possibilities for laneway improvements that can help meet a range of goals for improving the public realm.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The primary objective of this guide is to inspire you to create and advocate for change in local laneways.

Across the more than 2,400 laneways in Toronto different laneway improvements will be better suited based on their physical characteristics, unique local features and the activities of neighbourhood users. By identifying and locating common types of laneways, this guide helps you recognize main laneway features, explore possible improvements which may be best suited to each type of laneway and examine how similar laneways have already been adapted, in North America and Australia. The classification also allows for the recognition of possible barriers or other considerations that must be taken before beginning an intervention.

This guide is designed to show the possibilities for laneway improvements that can help meet a range of goals for improving the public realm. The options for laneway improvements given are not exhaustive and the tools provided for creating change are not rigid; adapt what you find and create what works best to improve the public realm of your laneway – making it a high-quality public realm that is accessible, beautiful and enjoyable to use.

This toolkit builds upon other resources and programs available in the City of Toronto to help create a network and range of laneway public spaces. In this toolkit we link to these resources throughout and list them at the end of the guide.

GOALS

Creating change in laneways creates change in communities. While laneways are currently used primarily as utilitarian service corridors, they have the potential to be so much more, they can be people-friendly places for everyday use. The life of our city plays out in its public spaces and laneways can increasingly play a role in creating a vibrant Toronto and in creating new places where people live, work and play.

A set of goals guide the interventions discussed throughout this guide. These goals connect the sections of this guide on case studies, typologies and possible improvements by focusing on how they will impact the lives of users. The goals can also help to guide the actions you take by providing a focus and framework with which to use this guide.

Achieving these goals will only be possible through collaboration to plan, activate and steward local laneway revitalizations. Many laneway transformations start with a small improvement which acts as a catalyst for larger change over time.



PEOPLE ORIENTED



INCLUSIVE + ACCESSIBLE



BEAUTIFUL



CONNECTED



SUSTAINABLE + GREEN



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PEOPLE ORIENTED

DESIGNING SHARED SPACES FOR PEDESTRIANS THAT MAKE THE LANEWAY A PLACE

Laneways can be a shared place for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. People Oriented strategies prioritize amenities and environments that attract and encourage use by a diversity of people throughout the day. Putting people first changes the laneway from a strictly utilitarian space to a community place.

CONNECTED

BETTER INTEGRATING LANEWAYS INTO A LARGER NETWORK OF PUBLIC PLACES

Laneway improvements can help to better integrate laneways into the larger urban fabric, connecting places and providing alternative routes to destinations. Laneways also act as transition spaces; improvements can better integrate the various users and create connections within a community.

INCLUSIVE + ACCESSIBLE

CREATING SAFE SPACES THAT WELCOME EVERYONE AT ALL TIMES

Laneway transformations can increase comfort and accessibility within the public realm for all. Better lighting, clear wayfinding and signage, level surfaces and the reduction of physical barriers can help community members feel safe and welcome. Laneway improvements grow the public realm by creating new places in existing communities accessible to all.

SUSTAINABLE + GREEN

INSTALLING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND LANDSCAPING TO CREATE RESILIENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY LANEWAYS

Laneway improvements can become part of system-wide changes creating a more resilient and sustainable city. Incorporating green infrastructure and adding diverse landscaping features— from edible produce to habitat-friendly vegetation and trees—can provide elegant solutions while assisting stormwater management and reducing heat island effects.

BEAUTIFUL

NURTURING COMMUNITY AND CREATING WELCOMING SPACES THROUGH ART

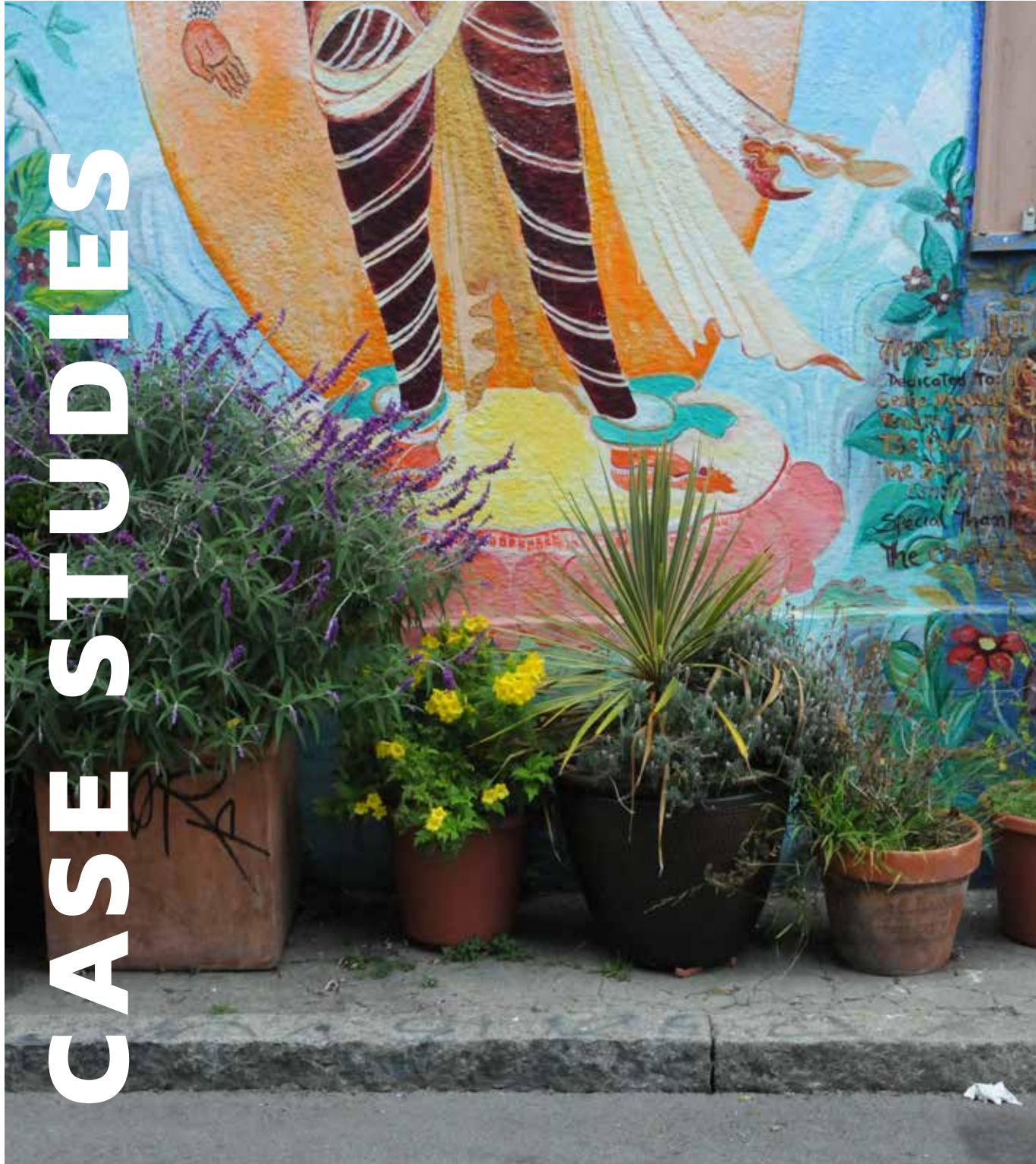
Laneways provide a canvas for community expression, allowing for the unique local character of an area to be symbolized. Through art, a laneway can turn into a free, accessible gallery and forum that develops and fosters a shared sense of community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TRANSFORMING LANEWAYS INTO VIBRANT COMMERCIAL SPACES

Enhancing laneway public realm designs can be seen as a strategy for economic development. Laneway improvements can coordinate with strategies that promote investment in neighbourhoods and encourage a diverse mix of commercial activities. Generating new traffic in laneways creates new opportunities for local businesses and social enterprises.

CASE STUDIES



Globally, cities are recognizing laneways as public spaces with which to achieve local objectives and increase public space in areas where it is lacking. By examining the interventions, outcomes and impacts of laneway changes already completed in other cities a set of best practices can be compiled.

The following case studies of laneways offer visual and design inspiration while also identifying policies, community organizing techniques and financing mechanisms which can be explored in Toronto. Each example has also been classified within this toolkit's set of goals; demonstrating how goals can be enacted as well as the interconnectivity of goals.

Together, these examples demonstrate best practices in laneway interventions. As we see increased interest in transforming Toronto's laneways we should continue to look beyond our city and search out leading examples of change to inspire the future of our city.

For more great laneway examples visit [Laneways We Love](#) or check out some existing [work in Toronto](#).

PIONEER PASSAGE AND NORD ALLEY

SEATTLE, USA

In 2007, the City of Seattle repaved laneways and removed large dumpsters on Nord Alley and Pioneer Passage – two laneways bordered by low- to mid-rise mixed use buildings to improve the appearance of the alleys. This City led intervention spurred the imagination of local businesses who then, in 2008, began hosting an ever-growing series of block parties.¹ With the leadership of the International Sustainability Institute², a non-profit organization located in a building adjacent to Nord Alley, community-desired programming of the space continued with screenings of the 2010 World Cup and art exhibitions.

In 2012, the City of Seattle designated Nord Alley a “festival street”.³ The event planning and activation of the laneways have benefited the surrounding neighbourhood, drawing in new retail shops, housing and offices. In 2015, funding was announced to extend the redevelopment of both laneways under the vision of the Alliance for Pioneer Square, “creating vibrant new infrastructure”.⁴ Street furniture and plants have been added along the edges of the laneway, maintaining space for servicing. Since its redevelopment, Nord Alley has been transformed into a destination, hosting exhibitions, screenings and gatherings which strengthened the surrounding community.



RELATED RESOURCES

ALLEY NETWORK PROJECT
ALLIANCE FOR PIONEER SQUARE
ACTIVATING ALLEYS FOR A LIVELY CITY

Nord Alley (above) and Pioneer Passage (below) were repaved in 2007 and several laneway improvements have followed including art, greening and lighting.

HOSIER LANE

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Supported through Melbourne’s Love Your Laneway program, Hosier Lane is one example of a city-centre laneway that has been transformed through art and business.⁵ Bordered by mid-rise buildings with a variety of uses including a theatre, restaurants, retail and non-profits, Hosier Lane has become a destination for street art. Hosier Lane and its “sister gallery” Rutledge Lane, a connected laneway, were improved through infrastructure upgrades and investment in authorized street art and have become popular destinations in their own right, as seen through various walking tours offered, while maintaining their servicing uses.⁶

Beyond the bright colours, Hosier Lane typifies the Love your Laneway program with its small-scale businesses that help to activate the laneway. A coffee shop, cocktail bar and tapas restaurant can all be found; demonstrating the efficacy of planning policy which permits a variety of uses.⁷



Hosier Lane has become a street art destination for locals and visitors alike.

RELATED RESOURCES

LOVE YOUR LANEWAY PROGRAM
GREEN YOUR LANEWAY PILOT PROJECT

BOYLE HEIGHTS
LOS ANGELES, USA

In Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles and the nearby City of Maywood, 20 low-rise, residential laneways have been transformed into functional public spaces through the Union de Vecinos [Union of Neighbours] an organization of neighbourhood committees and Green LA, a coalition of landscape architects and planners.^{8,9} The laneway designs, from wall and road murals to the addition of benches, tables and community notice boards, are rooted in community-identified needs and look to provide equity in some of Los Angeles’ least serviced neighbourhoods.

A 2010 report, The Forgotten and the Future: Reclaiming Back Alleys for a Sustainable City, demonstrated that laneways in Los Angeles are most dense in “park-poor, low-income Latino and African-American neighborhoods”.¹⁰ In response, Union de Vecinos created a 6-step protocol for creating change. The majority of laneway improvements and activities are DIY and resident-driven, completed without permits, that focus on increasing the use-value for current residents.¹¹ Laneways become programed spaces, home to birthday parties, movie viewing and karaoke nights; while also providing a place for kids to play after school and for plants and vegetables to grow.¹²



RELATED RESOURCES

UNION DE VECINOS
GREEN LA
AVALON GREEN ALLEY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

A community laneway transformation brought residents of all ages together to complete wall and road murals as well as adding planters along the laneway edge.

ALLEY OOP
VANCOUVER, CANADA

Focused on “play,” Alley Oop is a wide laneway, bordered by mid-to high-rise buildings, created in juxtaposition with its location, Vancouver’s central business district. Painted bright yellow and pink and adorned with basketball nets, lighting and furniture, Alley Oop is an attempt at creating a destination in a laneway previously used only for servicing and as a short cut walking through route.¹³ The laneway improvements helped to re-orient the environment for people to enjoy their walk, linger and feel welcome.

Through a partnership between the City of Vancouver, Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association and HCMA Architecture + Design, More Awesome Now, a pilot group and project dedicated to improving underutilized laneways was created. The More Awesome Now team oversaw the laneway transformation which took place over an 18 month period that included a research phase to understand how and who is using the laneway, concept development and consultation with stakeholders, fundraising, acquiring permits and contractors, construction and project completion launch.



The Alley Oop project has been deemed a success by nearly tripling its foot traffic. In addition to adding traffic the site has seen a particular growth in women visiting the laneway; demonstrating an ability to create a welcoming and inclusive community space.¹⁴

RELATED RESOURCES

CITY OF VANCOUVER
HCMA ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN/MORE AWESOME NOW

The downtown laneway was painted in bright colours. Road painting included a basketball court design.

RUELLES VERTES
MONTREAL, CANADA

Since it started in 1995,¹⁵ Ruelles Vertes de Montreal [Green Alleys of Montreal] has supported the greening of 300 of the City's laneways. The program was established with the goals of addressing environmental concerns, the lack of maintenance of laneways and improving the public realm. Laneway greening and improvements are citizen-led projects undertaken in partnership with neighbourhood and district organizations in primarily residential and dense urban areas.^{16,17} Ruelle Verte laneway projects require a high amount of co-ordination and planning before submitting applications to the City to be reviewed and to acquire appropriate permits. District-based environmental offices, called Eco-Quartiers, provide guidance and funding to citizen-groups that are collaborating through this process to make change. Residents are responsible for forming a committee, obtaining majority support from neighbours, creating laneway designs, expenditure plans, timelines and a management plan to maintain the lane after the changes are made.

In addition to turning residential alleyways into greener, more attractive spaces through planting vegetation the replacement of asphalt with porous pavers or plant beds, the program has been expanded to help manage rainwater locally throughout the city. The original program's successor, Ruelles Bleues-Vertes [Blue-Green Alleys] was developed to have a stronger focus on stormwater management and has expanded to include private and provincial government funding to assist in making these whole city benefitting projects.¹⁸



This multi-residential laneway was transformed with garden beds along the edges of the laneway and a permeable laneway surface.

RELATED RESOURCES

RUELLES VERTES DE MONTREAL
REGROUPEMENT DES ÉCO QUARTIERS

BALMY ALLEY
SAN FRANCISCO, USA



Balmy Alley, a one block alley, is located in San Francisco's historic Mission District; home to the city's largest concentration of murals. The earliest murals appeared on buildings, garages and fences of the primarily residential laneway in the 1970s by a two-woman mural team called Las Mujeres Muralistas, which focused on Latin American culture, history and mythologies. In 1984, an ambitious project to paint the entire laneway was proposed focusing on indigenous Central American cultures and in protest of U.S. intervention in Central America. A year later, through the support of a small grant and donations, 27 murals were painted by three dozen mural activists.¹⁹ The laneway murals are currently managed by Precita Eyes, a non-profit community-based murals art organization with deep roots in the community. As the lives and stories of nearby residents have changed and diversified, so too have the murals along Balmy Alley; allowing them to serve as a tool for community building and inclusiveness as well as beautification.

In 2006, residents worked with the City of San Francisco to pave Balmy Alley with a red brick pattern, add planters and change it from a two-way to a one-way route. Balmy Alley has a small volunteer group that manages its website, promotes the artists that have painted the murals and hosts laneway events and block parties throughout the year.²⁰

Balmy Alley has been transformed over the past five decades with new murals, interlock pavers and planters.

RELATED RESOURCES

BALMY ALLEY
PRECITA EYES MURALISTS

LANEWAY TYPES

Seven main laneway types can be found in Toronto. The common types take into consideration four urban conditions: zoning, width, building height and edges. Each condition can affect the feel, form, types of collaboration and potential interventions that can happen in a laneway.

Along with each common type is a set of recommendations for different laneway interventions that can help you get started with revitalizing your laneway. The recommendations are only a starting point. It is always best to walk through your laneway to identify its common and unique characteristics as well as to reflect on local knowledge to evaluate the most appropriate laneway interventions.

ZONE CATEGORY

The zone category indicates allowed uses (e.g. residential zone category) on properties adjacent to a laneway. Zoning can affect the type of activities that can occur on properties next to a laneway, the hours people would typically be in those spaces and the design of the laneway itself. Zoning can also help to tell us the relationship people have to a laneway. For example, laneways in residential zones are likely to be used by those living adjacent to the laneway while a laneway in a mixed use area may be accessed by residents, workers and visitors alike.

WIDTH

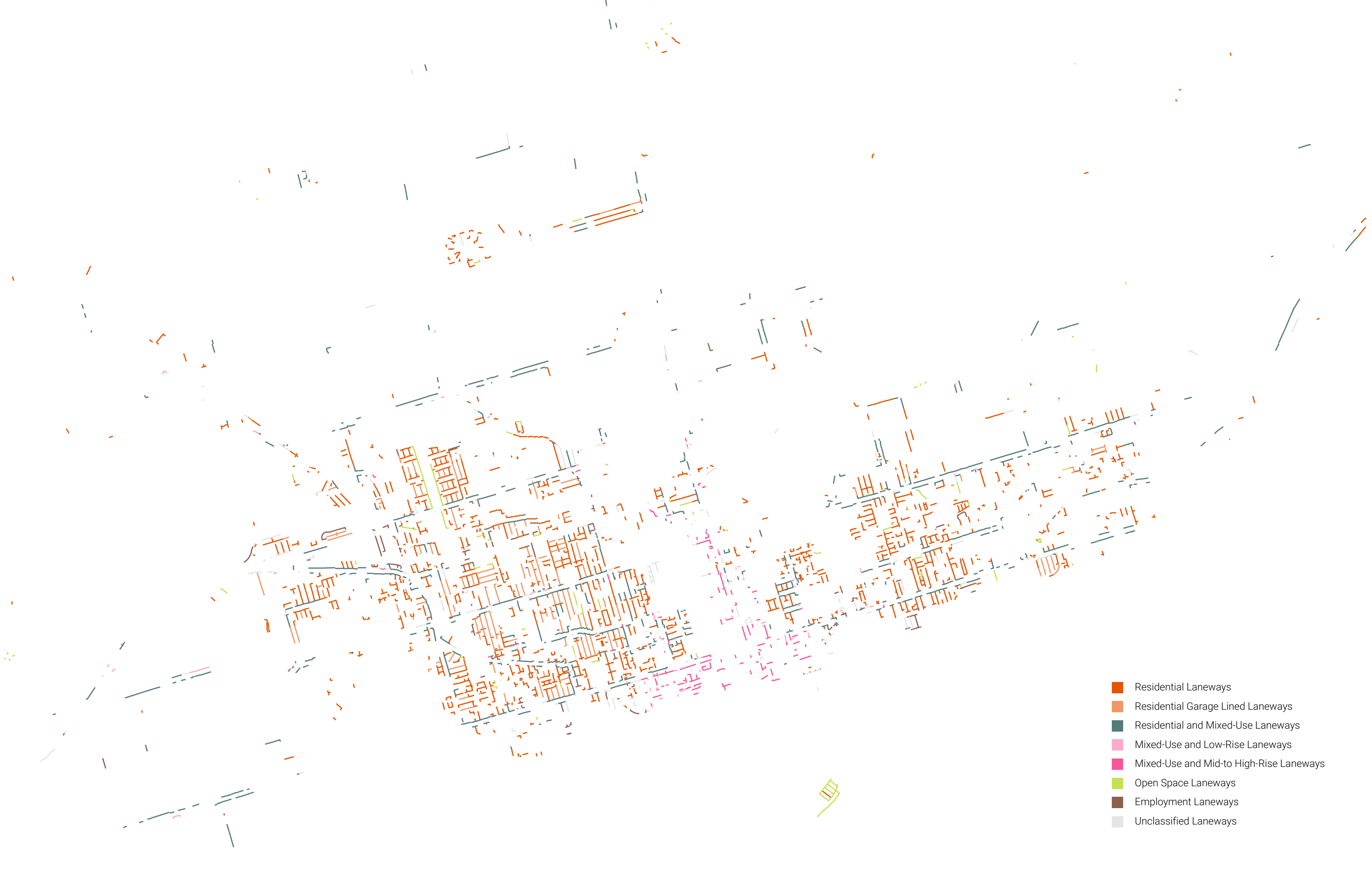
Laneway widths in Toronto commonly range from 2.5 metres to 6 metres. Laneways that are 3.5 metres or greater are considered wide and can accommodate large vehicles for servicing such as waste management and fire services. Whether large vehicles can access a laneway has implications on traffic levels, deliveries, emergency services, garbage disposal methods and how the space can be shared between all users.

BUILDING HEIGHT

Building height affects the character and microclimate of the laneway by determining how open or closed-in the space feels, how protected people in the laneway are from wind, the amount of sunlight the laneway receives, and what plants are able to grow. As well as informing the type of building-mounted improvements like lights, awnings, and hanging planters are possible. Building height can also indicate the density of people surrounding a laneway and the intensity of its use.

EDGES

The edges of a laneway can greatly affect its character and feel. Edges can vary from fences, garages, or buildings to more open spaces like parkland or parking pads. Different types of edges affect views for people located in buildings or backyards near the laneway as well as access to and from adjacent properties. The number of entrances and exits or windows looking directly into the laneway, available parking and delivery spaces, or garages that can be converted into laneway suites or painted with murals mean opportunities for people to be part of everyday laneway living or surfaces to improve.

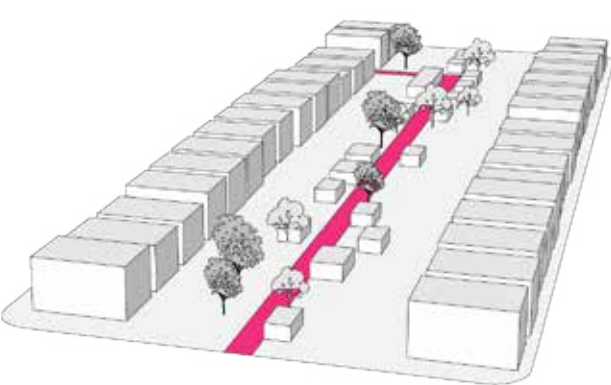


- Residential Laneways
- Residential Garage Lined Laneways
- Residential and Mixed-Use Laneways
- Mixed-Use and Low-Rise Laneways
- Mixed-Use and Mid-to High-Rise Laneways
- Open Space Laneways
- Employment Laneways
- Unclassified Laneways

RESIDENTIAL LANEWAYS

Residential laneways are the most common type of laneway in Toronto. Residential laneways separate the backyards of houses from each other and may be bordered by small adjacent garages and buildings, and other physical barriers to viewing the laneway from the house, but may provide viewing from the building/studio adjacent to the laneway. They are located in low-rise buildings (1-4 storeys), residential areas, and are often quieter than other types, as they tend to be used mostly by local traffic. They have a mix of edge conditions, including garage doors, house walls, fences and parking pads, which means that there is a variety of ground space available on adjacent properties for the furniture improvements that are possible at different points along their length, depending on access requirements and the space available. By using a “constellation” of small-scale interventions, it’s possible to transform these laneways into people-friendly shared places, enabled by green infrastructure, that complement the other public spaces of the neighbourhood.

Laneways of over 3.5 m wide allow for a greater number of surface level improvements including: community gardens, sculpture installations, planters and chicanes.



Greening and activity demonstrate how a traditional residential laneway can be converted into a beautiful space to be used by all occupants while contributing to environmental sustainability.

SEEK COMMUNITY CONSENSUS
ESTABLISH A LANEWAY FRIENDS GROUP
ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY GARDEN
ORGANIZE LANEWAY EVENTS

REGULAR COMMUNITY CLEANUP

WALL MURALS OR WALL ART

PLANTERS

STREET LIGHTS
WALL MOUNTED LED LIGHTS

PAVEMENT PATCHING
REPAVING - CONCRETE

LANEWAY NAME SIGNAGE

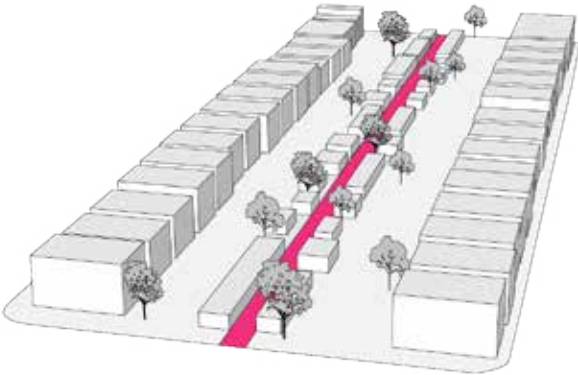
ADDRESS NUMBERS

RESIDENTIAL GARAGE LINED LANEWAYS

Residential Garage-Lined laneways are located in low-rise, residential areas. They are primarily lined with garages, creating both a regular amount of local car traffic that must be taken into account when planning interventions, and a consistent “street wall”. Garage-lined laneways create a continuous unvaried barrier to viewing laneway activities



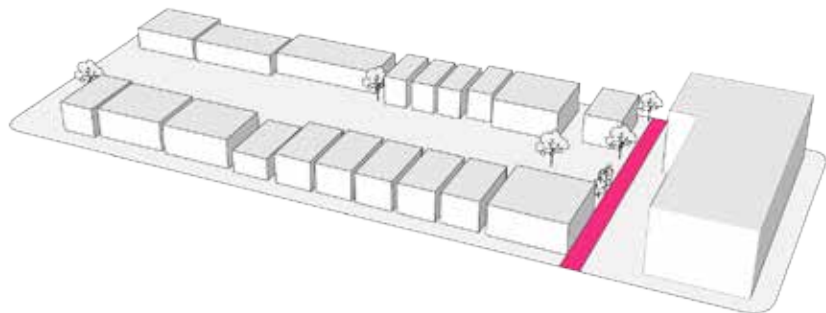
from the house. The ground space available may be limited on adjacent properties for things like planters and seating, but there is readily-accessible wall space for climbing plants, wall-mounted lights and murals. As with Residential laneways, Residential Garage-Lined laneways are best revitalized with a series of small-scale interventions.



This residential laneway is transformed by the addition of housing and green infrastructure adding to the sustainability of the city through housing density and storm water management.

- SEEK COMMUNITY CONSENSUS
- ESTABLISH A LANEWAY FRIENDS GROUP
- ORGANIZE LANEWAY EVENTS
- REGULAR COMMUNITY CLEANUP
- WALL MURALS OR WALL ART
- ROAD MURALS
- VINES
- STREET LIGHTS
- WALL MOUNTED LED FIXTURES
- PAVEMENT PATCHING
- REPAVING - CONCRETE
- LANEWAY NAME SIGNAGE
- ADDRESS NUMBERS

RESIDENTIAL + MIXED-USE LANEWAYS



Residential-Mixed Use laneways are mainly found where the backs of commercial and mixed use areas of Avenues meet low rise, residential neighbourhoods. These laneways are typically busier than purely residential ones, with a mix of activities including commercial deliveries, waste removal and parking as well as residential access and use. This means that traffic calming measures are often a good idea, to help all users to more easily share the space, as well as attention to waste management to ensure that food waste from adjacent restaurants is stored securely. Residential-Mixed Use laneways also present an opportunity for residents and businesses to work together on more complex or larger-scale interventions to transform the space. Laneways can become filled with active retail and space for potential businesses and open up new storefront opportunities in retail cores.

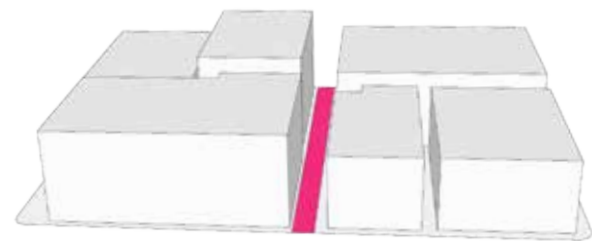


Reducing traffic speed and inviting a variety of modes of transportation into the laneway demonstrate how a variety of people and business can flourish in a shared space.

Laneways of over 3.5 m wide allow for a greater number of surface level improvements including: permanent street furniture, patio space, sculpture installations, and planters.

- SEEK COMMUNITY CONSENSUS
- ESTABLISH A LANEWAY FRIENDS GROUP
- ORGANIZE LANEWAY EVENTS
- PARKING RESTRICTION AGREEMENT
- REGULAR COMMUNITY CLEANUP
- TAKEOUT WINDOW - MAIN BUILDING
- MICRORETAIL/STUDIO - MAIN BUILDING
- WALL MURALS OR WALL ART
- ROAD MURALS
- EXTERIOR POWER SOCKETS
- BIKE PARKING
- PLANTERS
- VINES
- TERRACE OR BALCONY GREENING
- STREET LIGHTS
- WALL MOUNTED LED FIXTURES
- FENCE POST LIGHTING
- PAVEMENT PATCHING
- REPAVING - CONCRETE
- POWER WASHING
- SPEED HUMPS
- ROAD PAINTING
- DESIGNATED DELIVERY HOURS
- WASTE - EXTERNAL STORAGE ENCLOSURE
- COORDINATED PICKUP SCHEDULE
- BUSINESS SIGNAGE
- LANEWAY NAME SIGNAGE
- ADDRESS NUMBERS

MIXED-USE LOW-RISE LANEWAYS



Mixed-Use Low-Rise laneways are found near major streets and accommodate a mix of activities including commercial deliveries, waste removal and parking access. They tend to be wider than residential laneways with various setbacks and edge conditions, which means that a variety of improvements can be made at different points along their length depending on access requirements and the space available. Low-Rise laneways are likely to receive much more sunlight than their Mid-to-High Rise counterparts and improvements should take advantage of this positive sun exposure in creating gathering spaces and in greening initiatives.



Retail, bike parking, lighting and greenery have transformed this mixed-use laneway into a destination.

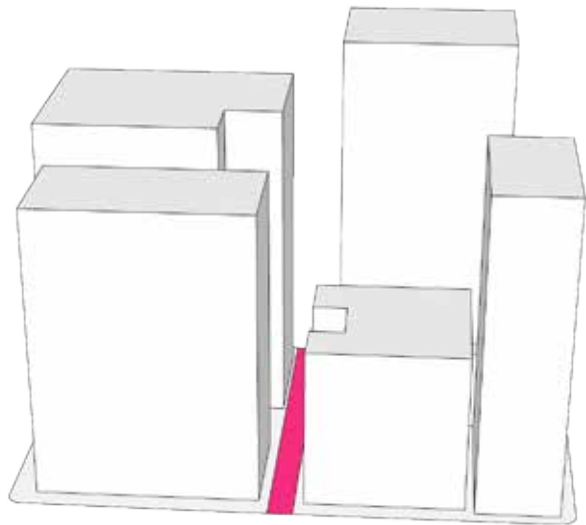
- SEEK COMMUNITY CONSENSUS
- ESTABLISH A LANEWAY FRIENDS GROUP
- ORGANIZE LANEWAY EVENTS
- PARKING RESTRICTION AGREEMENT
- REGULAR COMMUNITY CLEANUP
- MICRORETAIL/STUDIO - MAIN BUILDING
- RESTAURANT PATIO
- WALL MURALS OR WALL ART
- EXTERIOR POWER SOCKETS
- BENCHES
- BIKE PARKING
- PLANTERS
- STREET LIGHTS
- WALL MOUNTED LED FIXTURES
- REPAVING - CONCRETE
- POWER WASHING
- SPEED HUMPS
- DESIGNATED DELIVERY HOURS
- WASTE - INTERNAL STORAGE ROOM
- COORDINATED PICKUP SCHEDULE
- BUSINESS SIGNAGE
- LANEWAY NAME SIGNAGE
- ADDRESS NUMBERS

MIXED-USE MID-TO-HIGH RISE LANEWAYS

Mixed-Use Mid- to High Rise laneways are found primarily within the downtown core near stores, restaurants, office buildings and condominium towers. Tall adjacent buildings provide a sense of enclosure to these laneways allowing them to feel like rooms. The height of the building enables improvements that take advantage of tall walls to hang or grow things on.

These laneways are host to a mix of activities including commercial deliveries, waste removal and parking access. They tend to be wider than residential laneways, with a variation of setbacks and edge conditions, which means that a range of improvements are possible at different points along their length. Mixed-Use laneways provide an opportunity to use a combination of small-scale and larger-scale improvements to transform them into vibrant, appealing public spaces that complement the other high-traffic public spaces in the neighbourhood. They have the potential to become both active retail and gathering spaces while providing additional pedestrian passages and additional exterior space for businesses.

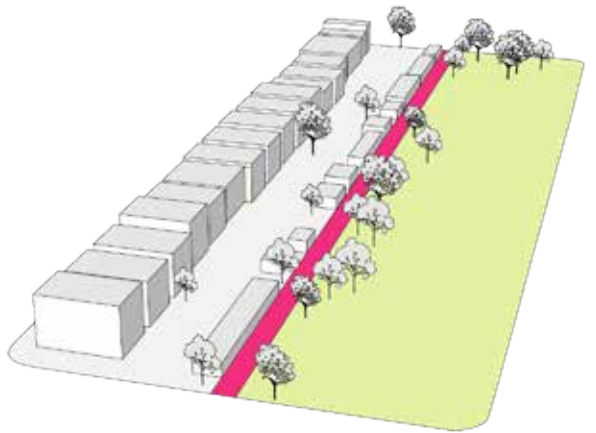
Laneways of over 3.5 m wide allow for a greater number of surface level improvements including: permanent street furniture, patio spaces, sidewalk retail, sculpture installations, and planters.



A more inclusive and pedestrian-oriented, this laneway between high-rise buildings remains functional while being transformed into a place for work and play.

- SEEK COMMUNITY CONSENSUS
- ESTABLISH A LANEWAY FRIENDS GROUP
- ORGANIZE LANEWAY EVENTS
- PARKING RESTRICTION AGREEMENT
- REGULAR COMMUNITY CLEANUP
- MICRORETAIL/STUDIO - MAIN BUILDING
- RESTAURANT PATIO
- WALL MURALS OR WALL ART
- EXTERIOR POWER SOCKETS
- BENCHES
- BIKE PARKING
- PLANTERS
- STREET LIGHTS
- WALL MOUNTED LED FIXTURES
- REPAVING - CONCRETE
- POWER WASHING
- SPEED HUMPS
- DESIGNATED DELIVERY HOURS
- WASTE - INTERNAL STORAGE ROOM
- COORDINATED PICKUP SCHEDULE
- BUSINESS SIGNAGE
- LANEWAY NAME SIGNAGE
- ADDRESS NUMBERS

OPEN SPACE LANEWAYS



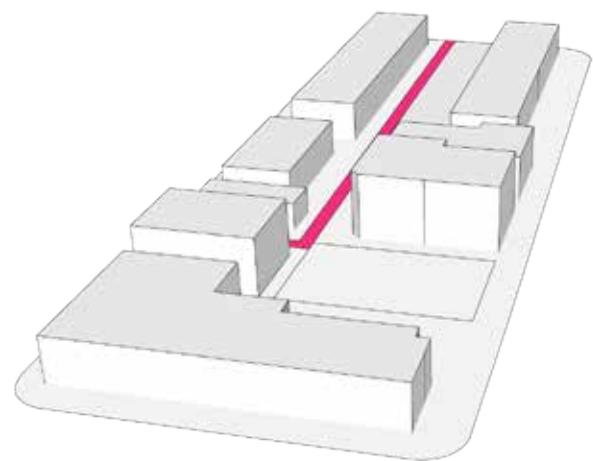
Open space laneways are located adjacent to parks and natural areas, often in residential zones. As they have just one “street wall”, these laneways become edges for the open space that they border. The form that the edges take can be a varied edge that adds to the open space or a continuous wall that is a strong boundary to the natural space they border. These laneways should be designed to complement the adjacent open space and provide a transition from private space to public space by using smaller-scale greening and beautification interventions that buffer the edges to become more park like.



Added lighting, greenery and new pavement make this open space transition more people oriented, sustainable and green.

SEEK COMMUNITY CONSENSUS	
ESTABLISH A LANEWAY FRIENDS GROUP	
ORGANIZE LANEWAY EVENTS	
REGULAR COMMUNITY CLEANUP	
RESIDENTIAL SUITE - FREESTANDING	
WALL MURALS OR WALL ART	
SCULPTURE INSTALLATION	
BENCHES	
BIKE PARKING	
PLANTERS	
STREET LIGHTS	
WALL MOUNTED LED FIXTURES	
PAVEMENT PATCHING	
REPAVING - CONCRETE	
PARTIAL REPAVING - OPEN-CELL	
SPEED HUMPS	
WASTE - EXTERNAL STORAGE ENCLOSURE	
LANEWAY NAME SIGNAGE	
ADDRESS NUMBERS	

EMPLOYMENT LANEWAYS



Employment laneways are found in employment zones and are less likely than other types of laneways to be near public space amenities. Other conditions such as widths, setbacks and building heights may vary, meaning that a variety of interventions are possible at different points along their length, depending on access requirements and the space available. Especially where they border residential neighbourhoods, Employment laneways have the potential to become a more people-friendly counterpoint to the adjacent utilitarian spaces, through interventions like large-scale murals, site furniture and traffic calming. They also are more likely to be located beside parking lots that could provide large amounts of ground space on adjacent properties for future improvements.



Transitioning from employment to residential this laneway focuses on reducing water runoff, and calming traffic while maintaining the utilitarian functions required.

SEEK COMMUNITY CONSENSUS	
ESTABLISH A LANEWAY FRIENDS GROUP	
REGULAR COMMUNITY CLEANUP	
MICRORETAIL/STUDIO - MAIN BUILDING	
MICRORETAIL/STUDIO - FREESTANDING	
RESTAURANT PATIO	
WALL MURALS OR WALL ART	
EXTERIOR POWER SOCKETS	
BENCHES	
BIKE PARKING	
PLANTERS	
VINES	
STREET LIGHTS	
WALL MOUNTED LED FIXTURES	
PAVEMENT PATCHING	
REPAVING - CONCRETE	
POWER WASHING	
SPEED HUMPS	
DESIGNATED DELIVERY HOURS	
WASTE - EXTERNAL STORAGE ENCLOSURE	
WASTE - INTERNAL STORAGE ROOM	
LANEWAY NAME SIGNAGE	
ADDRESS NUMBERS	

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

When planning to meet your laneway revitalization goals it is important to also consider: collaboration with other neighbours, businesses, local organizations; the management of waste and traffic; how accessible and connected the laneway is and can be; funding of improvements and maintenance of improvements and the laneway space.

COLLABORATION

Laneways are shared spaces, and collaboration between community members plays a key role in the success of improving the public space. Everyone benefits when collaboration occurs – the project meets local preferences and needs through participant involvement, neighbours get to know each other and build a stronger community, pride that fosters public ownership of the laneway occurs and this ensures that the laneway is maintained. Local stakeholder involvement can help to ensure that spaces remain accessible to everyone, are well-integrated into the surrounding community and that local ideas and expertise are part of the laneway revitalization process. The involvement of City staff, the local Councillor, and developers can help to ensure that a revitalization is well-coordinated with other City programs and operations as well as with other planned changes to the neighbourhood.

For more tips on laneway collaboration, see the Laneway Project's [How-to Guide: Collaborate to Revitalize Your Local Laneway](#).

MANAGEMENT OF WASTE AND TRAFFIC

Toronto's laneways provide important service functions. They are used for deliveries, garbage pick-up and parking access, and also serve as emergency access routes. Laneways function best when people using all modes of transportation trucks, cars, bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers and their feet - can easily and safely move through the space in both width and height requirements. Unobtrusive temporary waste storage areas and timely removal of waste, especially food waste, from adjacent properties are also important factors. Planning for this type of efficiency, and enforcing the resulting waste and traffic regulations, can ensure the service needs of adjacent properties are met, while also creating more appealing, safe and sanitary conditions for all laneway users.

ACCESSIBILITY

Most laneway revitalizations have important goals to increase pedestrian comfort and safety by giving more space to people and less to cars. The design and maintenance of laneways is an opportunity to make these laneways into public spaces that work for all members of the neighbourhood. When adding structures, from lighting to furniture to planter boxes, on adjacent properties, consider how pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles may share and experience the space. Make sure that interventions do not create obstacles or barriers for pedestrians to move safely through the laneway. Transforming public spaces, including laneways, should increase access for

all. The City of Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines provide technical information for planning, designing and constructing accessible spaces. To best enhance usability and accessibility, connectivity should be an important consideration.

CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS

The number of access points a laneway has affects its intensity of use, such as its potential as a shortcut for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. As a result, the greater the number of access points in a laneway, the greater the number of tools, particularly traffic calming measures, that will need to be used to revitalize a laneway. Laneways may have dead ends, provide mid-block connections or have multiple access points forming a laneway network. By improving connections between laneways, they can provide an alternative network for local users to busy arterial streets. Connections to public parks and open spaces, school yards and community gardens should be prioritized. Wayfinding and signage can help laneway users to navigate laneways better and safely as they become used for more diverse purposes.

MAINTENANCE

Periodic and seasonal maintenance of laneways can help to ensure they are safe, welcoming places. Toronto's laneways are currently cleaned and maintained periodically by Transportation Services, however there is not a regular cleaning and repair schedule similar to the one that exists for city streets. Local communities can also help with laneway maintenance

through annual clean-ups and everyday stewardship of the spaces. Different types of laneway improvements will require different levels and frequency of maintenance. When planning a longer-term improvement, like a road mural, landscaping or community garden, make sure to consider how the intervention will be maintained over time and who can help to maintain it.

FUNDING

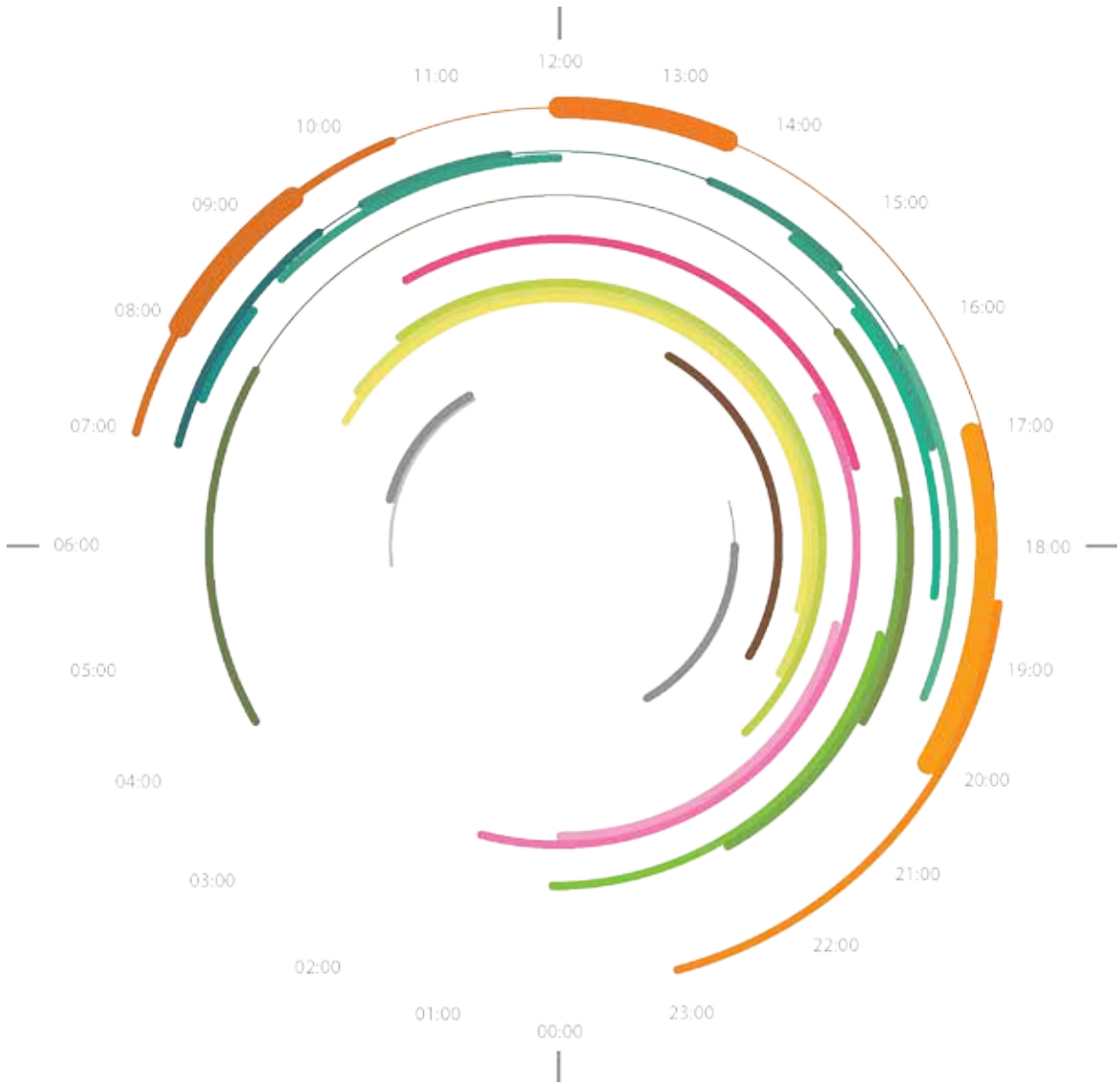
Laneway revitalizations can be funded by a variety of sources, including grants, corporate sponsorship, crowdfunding, the City, and Section 37 funding – development charges on adjacent projects that is spent at the discretion of the local Councillor. Funds can be raised from these sources by local stakeholders, including Residents Associations and Business Improvement Associations (BIAs), for specific laneway improvement projects, or allocated on the initiative of Councillors, developers and property owners wishing to catalyse a revitalization themselves.

For more planning considerations, refer to The Laneway Project's [Laneway No-Brainers](#).

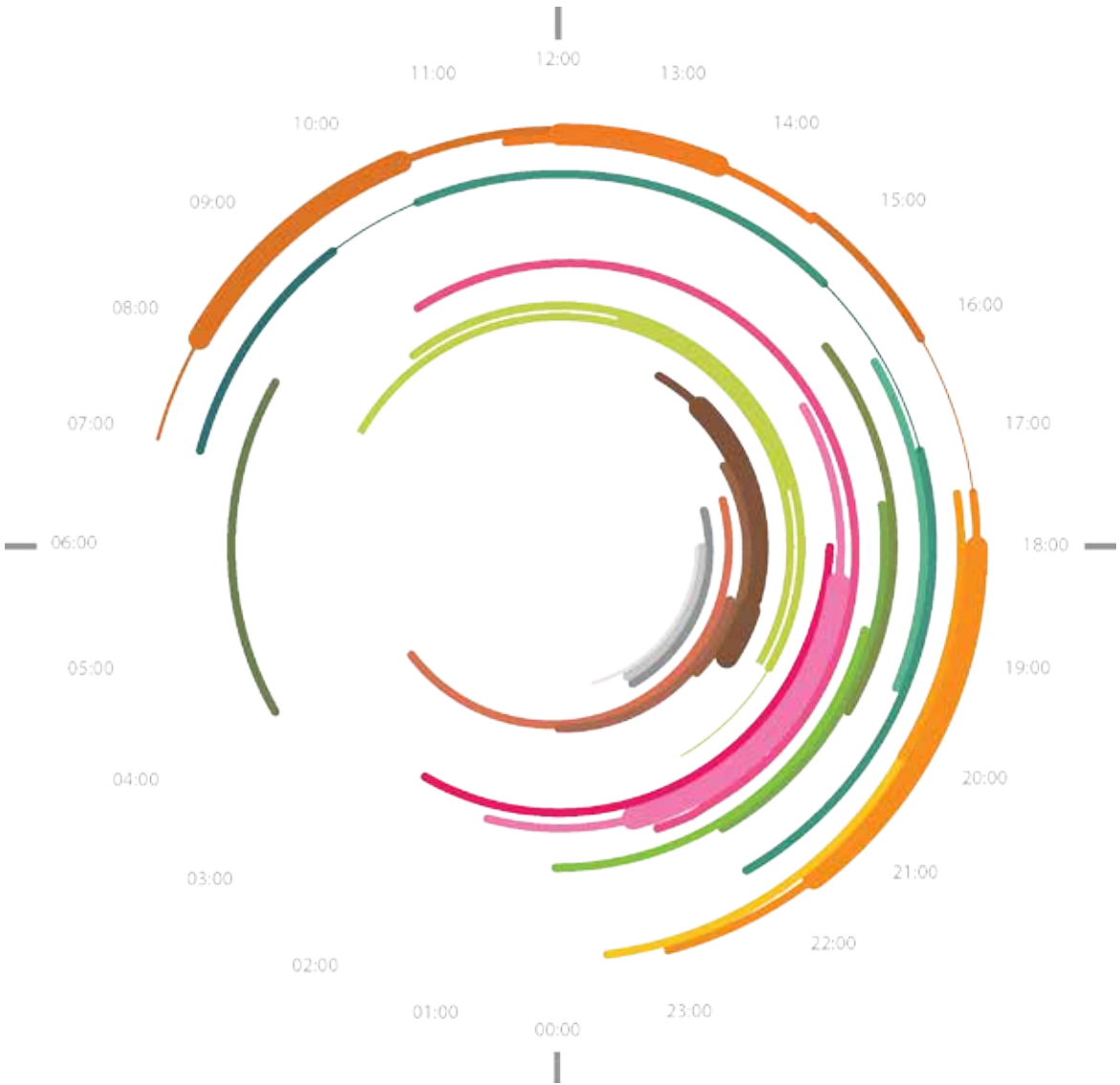
DAY IN THE LIFE

When planning your laneway transformation, it is important to think about who will use your laneway and how they will use it. Thinking the activities of a 'day in the life' of the laneway can help you to explore which improvements you need to make to allow for all existing uses and any future desired activities and uses. The examples presented demonstrate the variety of types of activities that are possible and can act as inspiration for you as you plan your own space.

It is important to keep in mind how different physical or planning changes can help make your laneway an inviting or hospitable space to different uses at different times. Think about how traffic calming measures, maintenance schedules, furniture, lighting, greening and other changes can impact a day in the life of your laneway when you undertake your planning process.



Day in the life - residential focus.



Day in the life - mixed-use focus.

Food & Beverage

- Coffee & Laneway Breakfast
- Lunch in Laneway Café
- Dinner Gatherings in Laneway
- Cocktails in the Laneway
- Happy Hour Gatherings

Commute & Leisure

- Walking and Biking to work
- Walking Children to School and Daycare
- Daycare & School Events
- Toddlers Playing
- School and Daycare Pickup
- Walking and Biking from Work

Recreation

- Daily Exercise
- Play Time
- Sport After Work
- Evening Walk

Art & Performance

- Tourist Visits
- Music Events
- Dancing Events

Retail and Business

- Shopping
- Work Meetings
- Workshops
- Offices

Community Events

- Food Market
- Sports Tournament
- Movie in the Laneway
- Night Market

Maintenance

- Services & Trash
- Planting & Maintenance
- Deliveries



LANEWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Collected here are common laneway interventions used to transform laneways. They have been organized to provide you with ideas, tips and resources to help meet your laneway project goals.

Included in the glossary are cost estimates, level of planning or complexity required to carry out the intervention and who should be engaged in order to make the intervention successful.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| \$ | less than \$500 |
| \$\$ | \$500 to \$5,000 |
| \$\$\$ | greater than \$5,000 |
| ● | Low level of planning or complexity |
| ●○ | Low to medium level of planning or complexity |
| ●● | Medium level of planning or complexity |
| ●●○ | Medium to high level of planning or complexity |
| ●●● | High level of planning or complexity |

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Laneways are public spaces, shared by many different people and groups. They may be people that are local residents or people from offices and other businesses that surround a laneway. While many improvements can be done individually on a small scale, transforming a laneway into an active and welcoming public space requires community organizing and collaboration. Through collaboration community is built and this ensures that when improving public spaces everyone benefits.

Developing shared visions and goals and gathering broad support from those who live, work or are responsible for a laneway is an important first step to help ensuring project success. Organizing and reaching out can make sure that projects reflect the local community, incorporate local knowledge and different perspectives to ensure transformations are inclusive and equitable.

For more tips on community organization tactics, see the Laneway Project's [How-to Guide: Collaborate to Revitalize Your Local Laneway](#).

COMMUNITY CONSENSUS

\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Active local organizations: BIA; Residents Association; Adjacent property owners; Tenants; Civic associations

Community consensus refers to the process through which neighbours agree on a plan for their laneway. Throughout the planning process– from ideas to implementation– it is important that all stakeholders be involved. Beyond those who use the laneway, it is important to engage organizations and city divisions who may be partners in creating laneway changes. Maximizing participation will help laneway transformations reflect the diversity of voices present in a given community.

Suggestions of different stages of community participation include:

- 1) Analyzing the laneway at different times of day together as a group (assets, opportunities and challenges);
- 2) Develop a vision and compile and prioritize project goals and potential spatial and logistical solutions;
- 3) Review options available to meet the project goals. Ask everyone to assign a level of priority to each action that addresses the project goals;
- 4) Make a plan with a budget for the design and implementation for your laneway revitalization, consider using a professional;
- 5) Review a completed plan and make necessary changes as needed until community consensus is achieved.

An effective way to track the process of involvement and approval of households, is going door to door on the block, to notify neighbours of any proposed changes and getting their signatures. This ensures that the majority of people directly affected by a local laneway improvement project are satisfied and informed throughout the process of and intended changes before they are initiated.

ESTABLISH A LANEWAYS FRIENDS GROUP \$ ●●

Who should be involved: Active local organizations: BIA; Residents Association; Adjacent property owners; Tenants; Civic associations

A laneway friends' group is a voluntary group of neighbours that care for a laneway. These groups may organize laneway events such as a laneway party or a laneway art show, organize annual laneway clean-ups, and advocate for capital improvements from the City, much as Friends of Parks groups do for parks. A laneway friends group should be inclusive and open to all neighbours and active local groups, so laneway improvements can suit the needs and goals of the whole community. It is good practice to partner with an existing local Business Improvement Area (BIA) or Neighbourhood Association (NA) to get a laneway friends groups off the ground.

The Laneway Project's interactive online laneway map shows if a laneway is within a BIA an NA, or near any cultural spaces. Further information about Toronto's BIAs can be found on the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas website.

If you have established a laneway friends group already, [let us know online](#), and join a growing network of laneway lovers across the city!

ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY GARDEN \$ - \$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: "Friends of" group; City (If located on public land)

Community gardens make use of space on adjacent properties using laneway tools like planters to provide access to gardening space for groups of people who wish to grow their own plants and food.

An ideal community garden site:

- Receives at least 6 hours of sunlight per day
- Has a source of water nearby
- Is easily accessible for community members

Planters are best used as community gardens as part of a shared greening effort by a local laneway friends or other neighbourhood group and should be clearly indicated as such. Community Gardens established on private pieces of land next to the laneway, must obtain permission of the landowner to use the space.

If the community garden is established on a public piece of land next to a laneway, such as a City of Toronto park, at least five community members must be accountable for the upkeep of the garden, and the garden must be established with the permission of the City. Check out the [How-to Guide: Green Your Laneway](#) for more tips and information.

ORGANIZE LANEWAY EVENTS \$ - \$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: "Friends of" group; City; Councillor (Notify)

Public events are a great way to get people involved in laneway stewardship. The [Laneway Project's How-To Throw a Laneway Event Guide](#) has information and tips, such as how to get the proper permit for an event.



PARKING RESTRICTION AGREEMENTS \$ ●●

Who should be involved: Adjacent property owners; "Friends of" group; Transportation Services; Councillor (Notify)

Parking restriction agreements can be adopted by laneway-side property owners and tenants to limit access to their parking pads from motorized vehicles during specific hours. This, combined with designated delivery hours can help facilitate timed uses of the laneway, for example, having the space outside businesses be used as a patio at certain times, and a space for garbage and delivery trucks at other times.

Restricted parking access should be agreed by all affected parties and communicated clearly through signs. Remember, this restriction can only occur on adjacent properties to the laneway and not on the laneway right of way, in which parking is never allowed.

COMMUNITY BOARD \$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Community boards are used to communicate local messages to the community at large. Community boards are best used in laneways with an active group of citizens, who can update the board on a continual basis. As these boards cannot go in the laneway right-of-way, they will need to be hung on an adjacent building or fence or secured in the ground of an adjacent property with the consent of the property owner.

REGULAR COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP \$ ●

Who should be involved: "Friends of" group; City (Coordinate with larger cleanup days); Councillor (Notify)

Community clean-ups are great ways to keep laneways clean and tidy and build community with neighbours in the process. Clean-ups can be organized with a few neighbours, and then promoted through the local councillor's office, BIA or resident's association. Regular community clean-ups become much easier to organize if a Laneway Friends Group is in place.

Cleaners should be careful never to touch waste directly, so make sure to bring gloves, garbage collection bags, and garbage grabber sticks or dustpans to your clean-up, and to report any needles to 311.



AUXILIARY SUITES

Auxiliary suites that contain micro-retail, studio spaces and restaurants bring people to the laneway. More people in the laneway translates into increased pedestrian activity and safety. Auxiliary suites should be seen as a strategy for economic development that can create unique opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Active uses at the ground floor may inspire enhanced public amenities on the street such as tables and chairs, and landscaping that support a quality pedestrian experience. Laneways can also provide access to secondary residential suites that are adding housing options and density to existing residential neighbourhoods. Reopening or constructing any new facades with windows and doors will help improve the quality of space within alleys.

TAKEOUT UNIT & WINDOW (MAIN BUILDING) \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Architect; Engineer; Toronto Building

Takeout windows are great additions to the sides or backs of existing cafes and restaurants next to laneways. These can increase business, while creating a more diverse use of activities within the laneway.

MICRORETAIL/STUDIO UNIT (MAIN BUILDING) \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; Architect; Engineer; Toronto Building

Micro-units are small storefront units on the laneway side of a building. They can be an offshoot of the business in the main street front unit or completely independent. Micro-units that face onto a laneway can diversify the retail and cultural offerings of a neighbourhood by providing relatively affordable storefront space in vibrant neighbourhoods for retail, cultural, and studio use by small and emerging businesses and organizations, while contributing to the animation of the laneways.



RESIDENTIAL SECONDARY SUITE (MAIN BUILDING) \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; Architect; Engineer; Toronto Building

Providing entrances to secondary suites units attached to the main building on the property, including basement apartments from laneways can enhance opportunities for laneway stewardship, diversify laneway activities, and promote laneways as places to live.

For technical information and guidelines on secondary suites from the City of Toronto, [click here](#).

MICRORETAIL/STUDIO UNIT (FREESTANDING) \$\$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; Architect; Engineer; Toronto Building

A freestanding micro-retail unit can be an artist studio, a home office space, a workshop, or a myriad of other uses. Many garages can serve as freestanding micro-retail units. Micro-retail is a great way to provide alternative uses to laneways beyond parking and servicing. Make sure to always check the use zoning by-laws to make sure of zoning permissions on the property.



RESIDENTIAL LANEWAY SUITE (FREESTANDING) \$\$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; Architect; Engineer; Toronto Building

A laneway suite is a freestanding dwelling that faces the laneway but is separate from the main house on the property. Laneway suites must be serviced by utilities that run from the main house, and must follow planning guidelines on their height, density and other built characteristics. Laneway suites at this time are only allowed to be built in the Toronto and East York District.

RESTAURANT PATIO \$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; Architect; Engineer; Toronto Building; Licence & Permit Issuing Office

Patios can be established at the back of restaurants on properties adjacent to the laneway, including on spaces traditionally used as parking pads. Patios can significantly contribute to the vitality and economic activity within a laneway. If a parking pad is needed for deliveries, consider turning it into a patio at specific times of day.



BEAUTIFICATION THROUGH ART

Laneways can become collective spaces for creative expression, turning laneways into a destination and important shared spaces. Beautifying laneways through art provides opportunities for people to build community and share their many talents and can turn a laneway into a free, accessible art gallery. Artwork, temporary or permanent, can bring communities together, tell stories, share histories and support other placemaking efforts.

TAG REMOVAL \$ - \$\$ ●

Who should be involved: Property owner

Though lots of graffiti takes the form of murals by talented street artists, some of it can also be vandalism. Tag removal helps to keep a laneway looking well-kept, provides a feeling of ownership to the space, and frees up more room for street art murals in the laneway. Consider removing graffiti tags as part of a laneway clean-up day.

If the laneway side of a property is subject to repeated graffiti vandalism, it may be entitled to a mural grant from the [Toronto Street Art \(StART\) Support Program](#).

WALL MURALS \$ - \$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Artist; Transportation Services (Street occupation permit if using scaffolding)

Wall murals are a great way to reflect the character of a neighbourhood in its laneways, engage local artists, and prevent tagging. While murals can be painted by property owners alone, the [Toronto Street Art \(StART\) Partnership Program](#) can also be a partner for a community mural project.

For more information, see [The Laneway Projects' How-To Add a Laneway Mural Guide](#).

HANGING INSTALLATION \$ - \$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Artist; Transportation Services (Street occupation permit if using scaffolding)

Hanging art can draw people into laneways and provide a new canvas for artists. Hanging art must be at least 3.5m above the ground to allow for emergency vehicles to safely pass.



SCULPTURE INSTALLATION \$ - \$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Artist; Transportation Services (Street occupation permit if using scaffolding)

Sculptures can provide a sense of place and reflect or memorialize things within a community or the city at large. In laneways, sculptures can draw the attention of passers-by, and provide a public art component to the lane-scape.

Sculptures cannot be placed within the laneway right-of-way. Instead, they must be placed on adjacent properties, such as on building walls (at least 3.5 m above the ground), in building alcoves or on parking pads. To introduce a sculpture into a laneway make sure to consult with the surrounding community, so it is appropriate in content, scale and other characteristics.

ROAD MURALS \$ - \$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: StreetARToronto; Artist; "Friends of" group; BIA; Residents Association

Road Murals are painted directly onto the surface of the laneway. This expands the canvas for artists, and hence, the beautification potential of laneways. As road murals only last for one or two years, they'll need to be planned with an ongoing renewal program. This can be a great annual community-building exercise.

To ensure both traffic safety, and the survival of the mural through a Toronto winter, road murals should use non-reflective, and weather-resistant paint like epoxy mastic. Do not use alkyd paints, as these are not water resistant, and can cause vehicles to skid in the rain.

Road murals are located in the laneway right-of-way and must therefore have the permission of the City to proceed. The [Toronto Street Art \(StART\) program](#) can also provide further guidance on how to get a road mural onto the ground.



FIXTURES

The addition of fixtures works best when complementing other interventions in a laneway by making the space more serviceable and comfortable for events or regular use.

BUILT-IN EXTERIOR SPEAKERS \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; "Friends of" group

Built-in exterior speakers are a great way to get laneways ready to host events. Make sure to check [municipal noise by-laws](#) to see what decibel of noise is allowed, whether a permit will be required, and if there are certain hours where the speakers must be turned off.

EXTERIOR POWER SOCKETS \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; "Friends of" group

Lockable exterior power sockets greatly simplify the pop-up activation of laneways, as they make it easier to provide electrical equipment like temporary laneway lighting and exterior speakers.

RETRACTABLE AWNINGS \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; "Friends of" group

Awnings are a great way to provide spatial reconfiguration in laneways. Laneways can be long, narrow and surrounded by tall walls, so awnings can create spaces that feel more at the scale of people and more intimate. These more intimate spaces for people are created while also protecting them from the natural elements and bringing interest to the laneways. Awnings and canopies also draw attention to entrances along laneways. Awnings can be attached to the entryways of buildings and can double as a zone for a pop-up market or a lounge area if they are out of the right-of-way. Awnings must be hung over adjacent properties in the laneway and cannot impede or hang over the laneway right-of-way.



FURNITURE

Adding furniture to laneways is a great way to encourage people to stay, rest, socialize and enjoy public space. The presence of furniture is a way to reclaim the laneway for pedestrians and public space. Furniture can also complement other laneway initiatives such as micro retail and take out windows or be used for temporary events. The addition of furniture such as seating and play infrastructure can help to establish a laneway as destination and welcoming space. Laneways are great places to locate bike racks and air stations off streets and sidewalks and can be sheltered from the elements. By activating the underused space in laneways, we can improve our quality of life while maintaining clear sidewalks. Any furniture that will be placed in the right of way requires a permit to remain.



CHAIRS \$ - \$\$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Chairs are a simple way to provide seating in a laneway, encouraging people to congregate, socialize, and linger. Chairs must be placed on adjacent property, and out of the right-of-way. They can be permanent or moveable.

BENCHES \$ - \$\$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Benches are a more permanent way of providing seating in a laneway, as they are heavier, and can more easily be bolted to an adjacent surface. Like chairs, benches cannot be placed within the right-of-way, and must instead be put on adjacent property. Benches can also double as steps for loading docks in commercial laneways.

TABLES \$ - \$\$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Tables compliment seating in a laneway by providing a place to work or eat. They can be installed as part of a restaurant patio and restricted to only patrons of that patio or made public for everyone to sit and enjoy. Tables must be placed out of the laneway right-of-way. Consider putting tables in close proximity to food stands or restaurants and adding patio umbrellas close by to provide shade.



LOUNGERS \$ - \$\$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Like chairs, loungers provide seating in a laneway, which can encourage people to congregate, socialize and linger. Loungers must be placed on adjacent property, and out of the laneway right of way. Loungers can be placed out temporarily by individuals or can be built into the property by property owners.

LEDGES \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; "Friends of" group

Ledges are often present in commercial laneways for loading and unloading vehicles. By adapting these ledges, new seats can be added to the laneway with little expense and no impact to local traffic. Higher ledges can also be adapted into countertops or used as bars by businesses facing into the laneway.

PLAY INFRASTRUCTURE \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Play infrastructure can include basketball hoops, hopscotch painted on the ground or soccer or hockey nets painted on garage doors. Ultimately, the range of activities for play in a laneway is endless.

Play infrastructure works best in residential laneways, and especially dead ends, where there is little traffic. In commercial laneways, where traffic is heavier and more frequent, play equipment needs to be paired with restricted vehicle hours to ensure safety.



BICYCLE PARKING

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Who should be involved: Property owner; "Friends of" group

Providing bike parking in a laneway encourages the use of active transportation and helps to address a growing demand in Toronto. In commercial laneways especially, providing bicycle parking meets a need while promoting local shopping, similar to bike parking on a commercial road, and can also be used by employees. Locating bike parking with city staff will ensure that these public amenities help to maintain clear sidewalks on busier streets while recognising that they are normally located in right of ways. The laneway location could have added benefits by providing coverage from elements and include air stations and other bicycling infrastructure.

UMBRELLAS

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Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Umbrellas like awnings can create spaces that feel more at the scale of people and provide protection from the natural elements while bringing interest to the laneways. Umbrellas also draw attention to places where people are sitting, goods displayed and to entrances along laneways. Umbrellas compliment laneway seating and furniture by providing shade and weather protection. Umbrellas must be located on adjacent properties out of the laneway right-of-way.

HEAT LAMPS

\$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Heat lamps are a great way to ensure that laneways are comfortable beyond the summer months and therefore extend the seasons of use. In commercial laneways, heat lamps are especially helpful on restaurant patios that back onto the laneway. In residential laneways, heat lamps can also provide a warm refuge for winter community events. Heat lamps must be located on adjacent properties out of the laneway right-of-way.



GREENING

Laneway greening can soften and beautify otherwise harsh, dull spaces, while at the same time engage communities in the environmental stewardship of their neighbourhoods and improving their quality of life. Greening is one of the fastest and most effective ways of making a noticeable improvement to laneway public spaces. There are many ways to green a laneway from small interventions like the addition of potted plant gardens and window boxes to larger interventions such as planting trees along a property edge. Plants and trees will help improve the air quality, atmosphere, and inviting feel of a laneway. In addition trees promote positive outcomes for stormwater runoff.

For pedestrians, trees and landscaping promote a safer and more pleasant pedestrian experience by slowing down vehicular traffic and providing natural shade and cooling. Plant life can also be tied to the overall identity of and reflect the neighbourhood’s history, culture, and values. Greening laneways supports biodiversity and resilience of urban habitats for wildlife and insects while also providing benefits for people such as shade, reducing wind speeds, reducing the urban heat island effect and providing attractive spaces to congregate. Edible alley gardens can also be planted, incorporating herbs and vegetables.

Before planting any flowers or plants in a laneway make sure to get an idea of soil quality, and the amount of sunlight received. Finding the right plants for existing sun and shade levels as well as wind and weather patterns will help ensure plant survival. This [City of Toronto webpage](#) has more information on which native Toronto plants thrive in certain soil and sun conditions.

PLANTING BEDS \$ - \$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Planting beds can be added at ground level on the edge of properties adjacent to a laneway. Planting beds are great places for rain gardens, which help to reduce runoff, prevent flooding in the laneway and on adjacent properties while also creating of urban habitats for wildlife and insects. Dealing with water is a large part of designing urban environments and it is important to deal with water on site as much as possible to avoid sewer overflows and pollution. It is important to make sure that new paving is pitched properly towards planting beds for water runoff. Planting beds should be maintained and signage should be used to clearly communicate any rules.

Planting beds work best in low-traffic laneways, where there is less chance of the plants being damaged by passing vehicles. Planting beds cannot be placed within the laneway right-of-way.

PLANTERS \$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Free-standing planters and flower pots are a great way to green laneways relatively quickly and cheaply. Planters can be used for flowers, shrubs, or even local agriculture. Planters can be used to define the boundary between public and private space. Like all forms of vegetation, freestanding planters provide natural passive cooling. Planters composed of drought-tolerant plants, can also reduce water and maintenance costs typically associated with landscape maintenance. Planters cannot be placed within the laneway right-of-way.



WALL HANGING PLANTERS \$ - \$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Hanging planters can be harnessed to any surface, including backyard fences, garages, and the walls of buildings. Hanging planters are a great way to add vegetation to the laneway at multiple levels, and can be used for flowers, shrubs, or even local agriculture. This is a great tool to use in laneways with lots of blank wall or fence space. When enough plants are hanging they can begin to create living walls to make use of underutilized wall surfaces. Living walls are made by attaching planters onto a structural support system mounted to an exterior wall to make vertical gardens. They can help green a laneway that does not have enough space to grow plants on the ground or adding trees may be difficult.

VINES \$ - \$\$ ●

Who should be involved: Property owner; "Friends of" group

Provided they have enough sunlight to grow, vines are a beautiful way to green the “walls” of a laneway, whether they’re fences, garages, or other buildings. Vines do not take up ground space and can remain with leaves on them throughout winter. Vines can be grown from pots or small containers both located on the ground or attached to walls. They can also grow up ladders, and telephone poles.

Montreal’s Centre d’écologie urbaine has a [great resource](#) on climbing plants for the best species to use for different growing surfaces. While the document is in French, the Latin names of plants are used and can help with translation.



TREES \$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Property owner

Trees promote a safer and more pleasant pedestrian experience in laneways by slowing down vehicular traffic, reducing the urban heat island effect, and removing carbon from the atmosphere. Trees on adjacent properties are a fantastic way to green a laneway. Planting trees at the ends of parking areas can increase the storm water capacity and parking spaces may be located between trees. Trees can also become a prominent aesthetic feature depending on the choice of seasonality (deciduous vs. evergreen), foliage, and colour. Based on laneway conditions and the location of existing utilities, trees can be planted in above ground planters or inside tree basins. The non-profit organizations [Tree for Me](#), [Every Tree Counts](#), and [LEAF](#) have subsidized backyard tree planting programs, which offer native trees and shrubs to property owners at a subsidized cost.

Arborists can help to make an educated decision about the type of tree that best suits a property. In lieu of an arborist, individuals can [check soil and sun conditions](#) against the type of tree being planted, to maximize its growth.

TERRACE OR BALCONY GREENING \$ - \$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; Tenants

Planters or hanging baskets on the edge of a second-floor terraces or balconies are great greening options, especially if there is a limited setback area or sunlight available at ground level. Greening on walls, terraces or balconies can double as public art or prominent centerpieces in a laneway and can thus become a design feature that draws people into the alley.

LIGHTING

Adding lighting to laneways can extend the hours that a laneway is active and are imperative to creating safer environments for pedestrians and cyclists. Well-lit laneways encourage pedestrian use and can introduce artful elements. Pedestrian-scale lighting improves walkability and is placed lower to the ground so it does not need to be as bright as street pole lighting. While adding street lights may be cost prohibitive or time intensive for many projects, small scale lighting interventions like string lights or fence post lighting can make a difference for the usability and atmosphere of a laneway. Consider low-level illumination options, downlighting or dark sky lighting to minimize disturbance to upper storey residents and light pollution at night. Lights should be at least 5m above street level to avoid conflicts with vehicles.

STREET LIGHTS \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●●

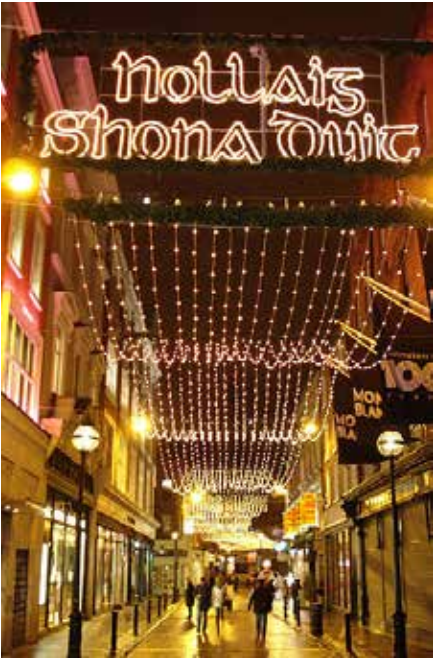
Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Toronto Hydro; Property owners; "Friends of" group

Street lights are installed by the City of Toronto and provide basic lighting for laneways at night. Around a third of Toronto's laneways do not have street lights. If there is an agreed need for a streetlight to be installed, the process can be initiated by calling the local councillor's office, to initiate a safety walk to assess the laneway. This is the most expensive and complex and expensive lighting to implement.

WALL MOUNTED LED FIXTURES \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Property owners; "Friends of" group

Building-mounted LED fixtures are attached to adjacent buildings and provide a way for private landowners to light up and animate a laneway, supplement City-provided street lights, and provide a constant level of lighting along the laneway. Shielded, and downward-facing fixtures should be used to minimize light pollution and overspill into neighbouring windows.



OVERHEAD (CATENARY) LIGHTS \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Toronto Hydro; Property owners; "Friends of" group

Catenary lights can draw people into a laneway at night by creating ambience as well as increasing safety and visibility. Light strings can provide a 'ceiling' to laneways and create a more 'human scaled' space. Lights must be suspended a minimum of 3.5 metres above a laneway and can require engineering to make sure they will stay suspended.

FENCE POST LIGHTING \$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Property owners; "Friends of" group

Fence-post lighting is a great way for private landowners to light up otherwise dark residential laneways, supplement existing street lights, and create an environment that can be used safely at all times of day. Consider using warm toned LED lighting placed lower to the ground so it does not need to be as bright as street lighting/light poles to create ambience within the laneway. To prevent light pollution and overspill, energy-efficient and shielded lights should be used.

PAVEMENT LIGHTS \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; "Friends of" group

Pavement lights are embedded into the pavement and shine upwards. They can be programmed to shine a simple white, or in a variety of colours, which can help create an identity for local events and add character to the space.

To prevent pavement lights from exacerbating light pollution, they can be dimmed and used with brighter, downward-facing building-mounted lighting to create a "gate" at a laneway entrance. Pavement lights are best installed during a repaving of the laneway, which must be facilitated with permission from the City.

PAVING

Paving laneways provides an opportunity for improving infrastructure and making spaces safer by eliminating tripping hazards and bumps. Different repaving methods can help reduce the heat island effect by choosing high albedo or reflective materials, manage water runoff by selecting as permeable as possible - such as tiled pavers rather than asphalt or concrete that filter and retain runoff instead of conveying polluted water into the street drains, or creating surfaces that are easier and safer to travel through, paint road murals on or play. Materials should be strong enough to withstand the loads of necessary service trucks. New paving should be selected for their environmental impact, material, and strength, in addition to their ability to enhance the overall aesthetics of a laneway. The underlying subgrade of permeable paving on roadways must be engineered to take heavier vehicle loads and still allow water to percolate through.

The City of Toronto repaves public laneways on a 25-year cycle. Anything more frequent than this typically needs to be funded privately. All repaving of public laneways must either be led by the City or facilitated with the City’s permission and required permits.

PATCHING \$ - \$\$ ●●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; "Friends of" group

Fixing potholes and cracks helps to help maintain laneways and keep people safe by eliminating traffic bumps and tripping hazards. Eliminating cracks and potholes provides better access in the laneway for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians alike.

The City of Toronto fixes potholes and pavement cracks. Pavement issues can be reported to local councillors and [311 Toronto](#).

REPAVING - CONCRETE \$\$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Civil engineer; "Friends of" group

If a laneway is filled with potholes or is currently unpaved, concrete repaving can provide an upgrade that lasts up to 30 years. Concrete has the advantage of longevity, and can be coloured during its pouring, or painted after it is dry. If repaving a laneway with concrete it is important to make sure it is pitched properly for water runoff to streets and to consider selecting high albedo or reflective concrete to reduce heat island effect.

REPAVING - INTERLOCK \$\$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Civil engineer; "Friends of" group

Compared to concrete, interlock paving is a more expensive, but is a beautiful way to improve the look of laneways but also to improve the urban water systems for the entire city. Permeable interlock pavers can filter water to soil below, and more slowly into the ground to help avoid washout and flooding. Interlock paving is less durable than concrete and requires frequent maintenance by replacing individual bricks. This paving option has the most longevity in laneways that don't see much large-vehicle traffic. Often roofs drain into laneways and interlock paving is a permeable option that importantly allows water to be dealt with water on-site as much as possible to avoid sewer overflows and pollution. Consider selecting interlock of high albedo or reflective materials to reduce heat island effect.



REPAVING - HIGH ALBEDO PAVING \$\$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Civil engineer; "Friends of" group

High-albedo concrete is a light-coloured pavement that reflects more light than dark-coloured materials and helps reduce the urban heat-island effect. This type of paving is more expensive than regular concrete paving, but less expensive than interlock paving. Like concrete paving, regular maintenance is required - and patching of cracks must be done using the same reflective materials.

PARTIAL REPAVING - OPEN-CELL (PUNCTURE) \$\$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Civil engineer; "Friends of" group

If your laneway is made of impermeable concrete and a goal of your improvement project is to reduce pooling water and runoff then removing the centre section of the impermeable laneway paving surface, between vehicle tire tracks, and installing interlock or open cell pavers in the centre allows storm water to percolate into the soil rather than flowing into the sewer system. These open cells can also be planted with low-growing vegetation to further green the space.

Open cell or interlock paving is less durable than impermeable paving, its usage is most effective in residential laneways, rather than commercial laneways, as residential laneways have less traffic and fewer large vehicles passing through them.

POWER-WASHING \$ - \$\$ ●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; "Friends of" group

Power washing the pavement can make a laneway and its surrounding parking pads look new again. If multiple neighbours have parking pads in need of a clean, it is good practice to pool resources, and power wash them all at once.



TRAFFIC CALMING

Laneways can be a shared place for drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, business owners and residents. Traffic calming measures can help manage spaces that are heavily used by drivers and pedestrians by prioritizing the entire right-of-way for pedestrians and bicyclists and by providing alternative but clear physical boundaries between accessible areas of exclusive pedestrian use and those where vehicles are allowed to share space with pedestrians and bicyclists. These tools can help balance the needs of all users to ensure that spaces are shared safely.

All traffic calming measures in a public laneway right-of-way must be approved by the City's transportation department. If there is an agreed need for traffic calming measures from the local community, the process can be initiated by contacting the local city councillor.



SPEED BUMPS \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Property owners; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Speed bumps are a low-cost method of calming traffic. By reducing vehicle speeds, they both increase safety in the laneway, and reduce noise levels. Speed bumps can be challenging to navigate for those on bicycles or in wheelchairs and unless implemented with other methods do not provide clear physical boundaries between accessible areas of exclusive pedestrian or vehicular use. If speed bumps are chosen for a laneway improvement, narrow gaps should be added in the middle or on the sides, so everyone, whether on a bicycle or in a wheelchair, can pass safely.

SPEED HUMPS \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Property owners; Tenants; "Friends of" group

A speed hump is a deeper speed bump. These are more effective when placed at intersections between laneways and roads, particularly in high traffic areas that have more truck traffic. Speed humps have the advantage of being wheelchair friendly compared to speed bumps, as they are easier to navigate, yet still retain the characteristics of speed bumps of not having clear physical boundaries between accessible areas of exclusive pedestrian or vehicular use.



RUMBLE STRIPS \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Property owners; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Rumble strips are a series of small raised bumps across a road that warn drivers to slow down and proceed with caution. While these improve pedestrian safety, rumble strips can also be challenging to navigate for those in wheelchairs, and for this reason they should be used with caution. Rumble strips are most effectively used where the laneway intersects with the street, or near heavily-used building entrances accessed from the laneway. Although they provide more safety for pedestrians, without other improvements vehicles still share the same space with pedestrians.

CHICANES \$\$ - \$\$\$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Property owners; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Chicanes are small bump-outs from a roadway, that force vehicles to weave around them, and so reduce their speeds. These can be used at the entrances and exits to laneways, to signal to drivers to slow down. Typically the bumpouts are also used as places for new pedestrian space, which can be filled with seating, landscaping, and stormwater management elements. Plant vegetation can provide further greenery to a laneway, or mark pedestrian zones if they are planted. Chicanes are also wheelchair friendly, as they are easy to navigate around. Chicanes can only be used if they leave 3.5m of the laneway right-of-way unimpeded for emergency vehicle access.



STEEL BOLLARDS \$ - \$\$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Property owners; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Bollards are barriers to control vehicle movement that are made by vertical posts. They can be fixed or removable to allow some vehicles and prohibit others. Bollards can be used to physically separate and protect space for people from traffic and parked cars. These are great traffic-calming measures for laneways that improve pedestrian safety and comfort by preventing or redirecting vehicles from entering some laneway spaces, allowing for play activities and on-street furnishings. Bollards may also be equipped with lighting and signage or be specially designed to double as temporary table supports.

FOLDABLE STEEL BOLLARDS \$ - \$\$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Property owners; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Foldable steel bollards can be folded down towards the road, to restrict or enable vehicle access. Some foldable bollards are automatic and can be programmed to fold down at certain hours, while others must be done manually. These bollards are great for laneways with specific delivery hours or that are frequently pedestrianized for events but need to be accessed in a hurry by emergency vehicles.

TEMPORARY BARRIERS \$ ●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; Property owners; Tenants; "Friends of" group

Temporary barriers like pylons and crowd barriers are a low-cost option for restricting vehicle access during temporary laneway events. A street event permit is needed to close a public laneway to vehicles, even temporarily. The [Laneway Project's How-To Throw a Laneway Event Guide](#) has more information on how to obtain a permit.

SIGNAGE \$\$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; "Friends of" group

Signage informs all laneway users of the rules of particular laneways, such as delivery hours, allowable vehicle speeds, whether the laneway is frequently used as a play space by kids and where there are hidden entrances and driveways.

Municipal signage is installed by the City of Toronto, so if there is an agreed need from the local community, the process can be initiated by contacting the local city councillor.

CROSSWALK \$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; "Friends of" group

For laneways that cross a main street and have a high level of pedestrians, a painted or raised crosswalk or road mural can help pedestrians safely cross from one stretch of the laneway to the other. These crosswalks should be considered as an extension of the sidewalk continuing across a road, and should aim to create a visual appearance of a pedestrian path from one side of the sidewalk to the other, while at the same time signaling to motorists to slow down and take greater care as they enter or leave a laneway

If raised crosswalks are considered as an option to connect from sidewalk to sidewalk it is important to consider the effect on blocking or diverting natural overland water flows.

Crosswalks are installed and controlled by the City of Toronto. If there is an agreed need for a crosswalk from the local community, the process can be initiated by contacting the local city councillor.



ROAD PAINTING \$\$ ●●●

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; "Friends of" group

Road painting is another way to let drivers know information such as speed limits, traffic direction, whether a laneway is a bikeway or to outline parking pads. Road painting can also be used artistically to signal a reduction of the design speed of a laneway, by signalling to all users that they are entering a shared-mode space.

Road paintings are a useful supplement in constrained laneways where road signage is challenging to implement. They are also wheelchair-friendly, as they do not create any physical barriers within the laneway.

All traffic calming measures in the public laneway right-of-way must be approved by the City's transportation department. If there is an agreed need for traffic calming measures from the local community, the process can be initiated by contacting the local city councillor.

DESIGNATED DELIVERY HOURS \$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Building owners; Tenants; Transportation Services; "Friends of" group

Designated delivery hours are an important traffic management tool in laneways that have multiple businesses backing onto them, and which each rely on deliveries at different times of day. Having designated delivery hours in conjunction with parking restriction agreements allows for local traffic to safely move through the laneways and can reduce the conflict between deliveries and other uses and users in the space.

Designated delivery hours can be agreed to by laneway-side property owners but must be enforced by the City. If there is an agreed need for delivery specific hours from the businesses on the laneway, the process can be initiated by contacting the local city councillor.

FISHEYE MIRROR \$ ●

Who should be involved: Property owner; "Friends of" group

Fisheye mirrors help to make a laneway safer by allowing drivers and cyclists to see around blind corners. This is especially important for laneways that have high pedestrian or play use. Fisheye mirrors can also be used to enhance safety by revealing hidden entrances to laneways.



WASTE

Organizing waste storage and waste pick-up can help to keep a laneway organized and make it functional for other pedestrian-oriented activities. Functional areas should be relocated, when possible, away from pedestrian activity, so that people can use the laneway safely and comfortably. Laneway transformations do not have to eliminate the utility of laneways in order to make them spaces for people to use and enjoy. Waste management strategies can help balance the needs of different users while maintaining the function of laneways as servicing locations. Where feasible new construction should combine garage and loading access functions behind a single façade opening.

EXTERNAL STORAGE ENCLOSURE \$\$ ●

Who should be involved: Property owner

Waste is often stored on the laneway-facing portions of adjacent properties. An external storage enclosure, surrounded by a fence, should be used to organize and shield waste storage bins on a property adjacent to a laneway. This makes the laneway appear cleaner and less cluttered.

INTERNAL STORAGE ROOM \$\$\$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Property owner

An internal storage room is a place to store waste so individual waste containers are not blocking accessibility or connectivity to the laneway network nor are they visible to laneway users. Many mid-rise and high-rise buildings have the facilities necessary to hold waste inside their buildings. The owners of buildings that lack these facilities can work with their neighbours to arrange to store their waste in nearby buildings to avoid noxious smells and not support urban wildlife through food waste. This also helps to facilitate coordinated waste pickups on the laneway block. This also helps to facilitate coordinated waste pickups on the laneway block.

WASTE DISPOSAL CONTAINER \$ - \$\$ ●

Who should be involved: Property owner

Small waste bins that are out of the laneway right of way help to keep a laneway clean especially within well used commercial laneways. To prevent overflow, waste bins must be paired with a robust management program from nearby residents, businesses or [Business Improvement Areas](#).

COORDINATE PICK-UP SCHEDULE \$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Property owners; Tenants; Private waste management company

Coordinated private garbage pickups are important for laneways that have multiple adjacent businesses, and which each rely on private garbage, recycling or compost collection at different times of day.

Having a coordinated pickup time for all businesses on the laneway can cut down on costs for the businesses, reduce overall truck traffic to the laneway, and predictively make the laneway more usable and safe to pedestrians and cyclists.

WAYFINDING

Wayfinding signage helps laneway visitors to locate businesses, amenities, and other destinations in the area. Signage not only can inform and orient people to better navigate the laneways, communicate connections to surrounding neighbourhoods and amenities, but also help draw people to the uniqueness of the laneway and establish a sense of place. Signs should be placed around existing features and around the ideal future locations of plantings, lighting, and site furnishings.



BUSINESS SIGNAGE \$ - \$\$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; "Friends of" group; Sign By-law Unit

Business signage is a way to draw attention to unique business along the laneway. In laneways, business signage can be put up on the back of commercial buildings, on the garage doors of micro-retail units, on the sides of buildings next to take out windows and elsewhere.

Before putting up any signage, it is important to check lighting standards under municipal property standard by-laws, to see what sizes of signs are allowed, how bright the signage can be, and if there are certain hours where the signage must be dimmed or turned off.

LANEWAY NAME SIGNAGE \$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; "Friends of" group

A laneway name sign helps to establish a local identity for a laneway, locate it on a map, and provide easier access for deliveries. For more information on how to name a laneway, please see [The Laneway Project's How-To Guide](#).

STREET NAME SIGNAGE \$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; "Friends of" group

Street name signage at laneway intersections can help people exiting a laneway to place themselves within the city and locate where they are. This is especially important if the laneway has two or more access points. Street sign names can be installed at the same time as a laneway sign.



STREET DIRECTION SIGNAGE \$ ●●○

Who should be involved: Transportation Services; Councillor; "Friends of" group

Direction signage shows whether a street is one-way. Signage is installed by the City of Toronto, so if there is an agreed need for it from the local community, the process can be initiated by contacting the local city councillor.

ADDRESS NUMBERS \$ ●○

Who should be involved: Property owner; "Friends of" group

As more freestanding residential laneway suites and micro-retail units are approved by the City of Toronto, it will be important to have address numbers for laneways as well. Numbers should be clearly visible and are especially useful once a laneway has been named and given proper wayfinding signage.

SEEK COMMUNITY CONSENSUS	
ESTABLISH A LANEWAY FRIENDS GROUP	
ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY GARDEN	
ORGANIZE LANEWAY EVENTS	
PARKING RESTRICTION AGREEMENTS	
COMMUNITY BOARD	
REGULAR COMMUNITY CLEANUP	
TAKEOUT UNIT & WINDOW - MAIN BUILDING	
MICRORETAIL/STUDIO - MAIN BUILDING	
RESIDENTIAL SECONDARY SUITE- MAIN BUILDING	
MICRORETAIL/STUDIO - FREESTANDING	
RESIDENTIAL SECONDARY SUITE- FREESTANDING	
RESTAURANT PATIO	
TAG REMOVAL	
WALL MURALS OR WALL ART	
HANGING INSTALLATION	
SCULPTURE INSTALLATION	
ROAD MURALS	
BUILT-IN EXTERIOR SPEAKERS	
EXTERIOR POWER SOCKETS	
RETRACTABLE AWNINGS	
CHAIRS	
BENCHES	
TABLES	
LOUNGERS	
LEDGES	
PLAY INFRASTRUCTURE	
BIKE PARKING	
UMBRELLAS	
HEAT LAMP	
PLANTING BEDS	
PLANTERS	
WALL HANGING	
VINES	
TREES	
TERRACE OR BALCONY GREENING	
STREET LIGHTS	
WALL MOUNTED LED FIXTURES	
OVERHEAD (CATENARY) LIGHTS	
FENCE POST LIGHTING	
PAVEMENT LIGHTS	
PATCHING	
REPAVING - CONCRETE	
REPAVING - INTERLOCK	
REPAVING - HIGH ALBEDO	
PARTIAL REPAVING - OPEN-CELL (PUNCTURE)	
POWER WASHING	
SPEED BUMPS	
SPEED HUMPS	
RUMBLE STRIPS	
CHICANES	
STEEL BOLLARDS	
FOLDABLE STEEL BOLLARDS	
TEMPORARY BARRIERS	
SIGNAGE	
CROSSWALK INTO LANEWAY	
ROAD PAINTING	
DESIGNATED DELIVERY HOURS	
FISHEYE MIRRORS	
WASTE - EXTERNAL STORAGE ENCLOSURE	
WASTE - INTERNAL STORAGE ROOM	
WASTE DISPOSAL CONTAINER	
COORDINATED PICKUP SCHEDULING	
BUSINESS SIGNAGE	
LANEWAY NAME SIGNAGE	
STREET NAME SIGNAGE	
STREET DIRECTION SIGNAGE	
ADDRESS NUMBERS	

IMPROVEMENT BY TYPE

LANEWAY IMPROVEMENT	RESIDENTIAL	RESIDENTIAL GARAGE-LINED	RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED-USE	MIXED-USE LOW-RISE	MIXED-USE HIGH-RISE	OPEN SPACE	EMPLOYMENT
Seek Community Consensus	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Establish a Laneway Friends Group	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Establish a Community Garden	●		○				
Organize Laneway Events	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Parking Restriction Agreements			●	●	●		
Community board	○	○	○			○	
Regular Community Cleanup	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Takeout unit & window - main building			●				
Microretail / studio unit & door - main building			●	●	●		●
Residential secondary suite - main building	○	○	○			○	
Microretail / studio unit - freestanding	○	○	○	○	○		●
Residential laneway suite - freestanding	○	○	○			●	
Restaurant Patio				●	●		●
Tag removal	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Wall murals or Wall Art	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Hanging Installation					○		
Sculpture Installation						○	
Road murals	○	○	●	○	○		○
Built-in exterior speakers				○	○		○
Exterior power sockets	○	○	●	●	●	○	●
Retractable Awnings				●	●		
Chairs	○					○	○
Benches	○		○	●	●	●	●
Tables	○			○	○	○	○
Loungers	○					○	○
Ledges		○	○	○	○		
Play Infrastructure	○						
Bike Parking	○		●	●	●	●	●
Umbrellas	○		○	○	○	○	○
Heat Lamp				○	○		
Planting Beds	○		●			●	
Planters	●		●	●	●	●	●
Wall Hanging Planters	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Vines	○	●	●	○	○	○	●

LANEWAY IMPROVEMENT	RESIDENTIAL	RESIDENTIAL GARAGE-LINED	RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED-USE	MIXED-USE LOW-RISE	MIXED-USE HIGH-RISE	OPEN SPACE	EMPLOYMENT
Trees	○	○	○			○	○
Terrace or Balcony Greening	○	○	●				
Street Lights	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Wall Mounted LED fixtures	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Overhead (catenary lights)					○		○
Fence Post Lighting	○	○	○			○	○
Pavement Lights				○	○		
Power-washing	○	○	●	●	●	○	●
Patching to eliminate potholes & cracks	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
Repaving - Concrete	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Repaving - Interlock			○			○	
Repaving - High Albedo Paving			○	○	○	○	○
Partial repaving - Open-cell (Puncture)	○	○				●	
Speed bumps				○	○		○
Speed humps	○	○	●	●	●	●	●
Rumble strips							○
Chicanes	○	○				○	
Removable steel bollards				○	○		
Foldable steel bollards				○	○		
Temporary barriers	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Signage	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Crosswalk into Laneway			○	○	○	○	
Road painting	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
Designated Delivery Hours			●	●	●		●
Fisheye mirrors	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
External storage enclosure	○		●	○	○	●	●
Internal storage room			○	●	●	○	●
Waste Disposal Container			○	○	○	○	○
Coordinated pickup scheduling			●	●	●		○
Business signage			●	●	●		○
Laneway Name signage t	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Street Name signage	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Street Direction signage	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Address numbers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

RESOURCES

THE LANEWAY PROJECT

- The Laneway Project How-To Guide: Add a Laneway Mural
- The Laneway Project How-To Guide: Throw a Laneway Event
- The Laneway Project How-To Guide: Green Your Laneway
- The Laneway Project How-To Guide: Name Your Laneway
- The Laneway Project Friends of Laneways Sign-up
- The Laneway Project Toronto Laneway Map

TORONTO

- City of Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines
- City of Toronto Community Gardens Guidelines
- City of Toronto Changing Lanes Final Report
- City of Toronto Changing Lanes Supplementary Report
- City of Toronto Changing Lanes Official Plan Amendment
- City of Toronto Changing Lanes Zoning by-law 569 Amendment
- City of Toronto Municipal Noise by-law 591
- City of Toronto Property Standard by-law 629
- City of Toronto Tree Planting Guide
- City of Toronto Zoning by-law 569
- Every Tree Counts
- Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests (LEAF)
- StreetARToronto (StART) Program
- Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas
- Tree For Me Backyard Tree Planting Program

OTHER RESOURCES

- Centre D’Ecologie Urbaine De Montreal Les Plantes
- Grimpantes: Une Solution Rafraîchissante
- City of Baltimore Alley Makeover Program
- City of Chicago Green Alley Handbook
- City of Melbourne Love Your Laneway Program
- City of Melbourne Green Your Laneway Pilot Project
- City of Montreal Ruelles Verte de Montreal [Green Alleys of Montreal]
- City of Montreal Ruelles Bleues-Vertes [Blue-Green Alleys program]
- City of Portland Alley Allies Toolkit
- City of San Francisco Living Alleys Toolkit
- City of Seattle Seattle Integrated Alley Handbook
- City of Vancouver Laneway Housing How-To Guide
- City of Vancouver Laneway Housing Zoning by-law section 11.24
- HCMA Architecture + Design More Awesome Now Laneway Activations
- Union de Vecinos Right to Health and Stable Neighbourhoods

IMAGE LIST

PAGE	IMAGE DESCRIPTION	IMAGE BY	LICENSE	PAGE	IMAGE DESCRIPTION	IMAGE BY	LICENSE
8	Mural and potted plants in Balmy Alley, San Francisco	Shelagh McCartney		50	Bench, bollards and planting beds, San Francisco (right)	Shelagh McCartney	
10	Nord Alley, Seattle (top)	Arron Griffioen			Bench and hanging umbrellas (left)	Alex Bettencourt	
	Pioneer Passage, Seattle (bottom)	Arron Griffioen		51	Ledge in Graffiti Lane	Katrina Afonso	
11	Hosier Lane murals and lightboxes, Melbourne	Vincent Q		52	Laneway bicycle parking and café seating	Oran Viriyincy	CC BY-SA 2.0
12	Boyle Heights laneway, Los Angeles	Kris Fortin, LA Street Blog		53	Hopscotch, Iowa City (top left)	Alan Light	CC BY 2.0
	Boyle Heights mural, Los Angeles	Kris Fortin, LA Street Blog			Galactic hopscotch in Kensington Market (top right)	Laneway Project	
13	Alley Oop, Vancouver	Arron Griffioen			Basketball net mounted on garage (middle right)	Courtney Kaupp	
14	Ruelle Verte - Ogilvy Jean-Talon, Montreal	Baty Arnaud, Alex Hartunian	CC BY-SA 3.0		Laneway seating and tables, Athens, Greece (bottom right)	Atenistas	
15	Balmy Alley, San Francisco	Shelagh McCartney			Laneway café bar seating and tables, Melbourne (bottom left)	Monique Pizzica	
20	Residential laneway	Anna Guidoccio		55	Laneway vines and greening (left)	Dominic Tremblay	
22	Residential garage lined laneway	Courtney Kaupp			Laneway planters (right)	Laneway Project	
24	Residential + mixed use	Anna Guidoccio		56	Laneway trees and planting beds	Michelle Seneyah	
26	Mixed-use low-rise laneway	Courtney Kaupp		57	Laneway planter at Luttrell Loop (top left)	Laneway Project	
28	Mixed-use high-rise laneway	Courtney Kaupp			Laneway planters, Balmy Alley (top right)	Shelagh McCartney	
30	Open space laneway	Google Earth			Ruelle Verte (bottom)	Matthieu Guyonnet-Duluc	CC BY 2.0
32	Employment laneway	Courtney Kaupp		58	Building mounted lights	Lauren Purves	
38	Laneway adjacent to Trinity Bellwoods Park	Nikolas Koschany			Street lights in Jack Kerouac Alley, San Francisco	Shelagh McCartney	
41	Name your laneway (top)	Katrina Afonso		59	Caternary Lights	Katrina Afonso	
	Laneway event (bottom)	Katrina Afonso			Hanging lights at seasonal market	PabloBarcelona	CC BY-SA 3.0
42	Community laneway clean up (right)	Katrina Afonso		61	Interlock pavers, Seattle (top left)	Arron Griffioen	
	Community board mounted on building wall (left)	Joe Mabel	CC BY-SA 3.0		Pavement puncture (top right)	Laneway Project	
43	Laneway microretail and pop-up at event	Katrina Afonso			Cement pavement pattern (bottom right)	Nikolas Koschany	
	Kensington Market laneway retail	Laneway Project			Cement pavement (bottom left)	Arron Griffioen	
44	Laneway house	M Canzi	CC BY-NC 2.0	62	Green laneway, Detroit	cartobasmaj	CC BY 2.0
	Lippincott Lane house by LGA Architectural Partners	Ben Rahn/A Frame		63	Cyclist navigating speed bumps	Courtney Kaupp	
45	Melbourne retail and restaurant laneway	Monique Pizzica			Rumble strip and pavement texture (left)	Shelagh McCartney	
	Laneway patio space, Seattle	Arron Griffioen		64	Chicane in Ringold Alley, San Francisco	Cold Storage	CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
46	Laneway garage with mural (left)	Kevo89	CC BY-SA 2.0		Green chicanes, Philadelphia	NACTO	
	Laneway fence with mural (right)	Anna Guidoccio		65	Red bollards, San Francisco	throgers	CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
47	Laneway sculpture mounted on building wall (top left)	Arron Griffioen			Bollards being decorated	calafellvalo	CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
	Laneway temporary installation by Maria Ezcurra Presented as part of "The possibility of everything," Scotia Bank Nuit Blanche, Toronto, Canada (top right)	Maria Ezcurra	CC BY-SA 4.0	66	Crosswalk into a laneway, Melbourne	Monique Pizzica	
	Reggae Lane mural (bottom)	Laneway Project			Speed and parking signs	Shelagh McCartney	
48	Road and wall mural, Baltimore	Chris Beall		69	Laneway name signagae and street signage	Michelle Seneyah	
49	Awnings and patio in a laneway, Melbourne	City of Melbourne		70	Laneway address	Francesco Mariani	CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
					Laneway name and direction signage	Francesco Mariani	CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

ENDNOTES

¹ Seattle Department of Transportation (n.d.) Canton, Nord, & Pioneer Passage Alley Improvement Project

² Mary Fialko and Jennifer Hampton in collaboration with UW Green Futures Lab, Scan Design Foundation, Gehl Architects (2011) Seattle Integrated Alley Handbook: Activating Alleys for a Lively City

³ Alliance for Pioneer Square (n.d.) Alley Network Project

⁴ Seattle Department of Transportation (2015) Making Space for Community

⁵ City of Melbourne (2019) Love Your Laneway

⁶ Visit Melbourne (2019) Hosier Lane

⁷ Visit Melbourne (2019) Hosier Lane

⁸ UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation and The Trust for Public Land (2014) The Avalon Green Alley Network Demonstration Project

⁹ Imelda Mercado, Boyle Heights Beat (2013) Reclaiming the alleys in Boyle Heights: A community effort converts blighted areas into play zones

¹⁰ Wolch, J., Newell, J., Seymour, M., Huang, H. B., Reynolds, K., & Mapes, J. (2010). The Forgotten and the Future: Reclaiming Back Alleys for a Sustainable City. Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space, 42(12), 2874–2896. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a42259>

¹¹ UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation and The Trust for Public Land (2014) The Avalon Green Alley Network Demonstration Project

¹² Union de Vecinos (n.d.) Right to Health & Stable Neighbourhoods

¹³ HCMA (n.d.) More Awesome Now Laneway Activations

¹⁴ Canadian Institute of Planners, Great Places in Canada (n.d.) Alley Oop

¹⁵ Pierre Bélec (2014) Les Ruelles Vertes de Montreal... Quelle Histoire!

¹⁶ Laris Ardis [Master's Thesis] (2014) Laneway Revitalization Through The Lens of Community Capital

¹⁷ Laris Ardis [Master's Thesis] (2014) Laneway Revitalization Through The Lens of Community Capital

¹⁸ Nuala Sawyer, SF Weekly (2018) Behind Clarion Alley Hides the Lesser-Known Balmy Alley

¹⁹ Timothy W. Drescher (n.d.) Balmy Alley: a Modernist Approach

²⁰ Balmy Alley (2009)