

**From:** [Michelle German](#)  
**To:** [Executive Committee](#); [Councillor Ainslie](#); [Councillor Bailao](#); [Councillor Burnside](#); [Councillor Crawford](#); [Councillor Di Giorgio](#); [Councillor McMahon](#); [Councillor Minnan-Wong](#); [Councillor Palacio](#); [Councillor Pasternak](#); [Councillor Jaye Robinson](#); [Councillor Shiner](#); [Councillor Thompson](#); [Mayor Tory](#)  
**Cc:** [Antonette DiNovo](#); [Angela Glor](#); [Robert Cerjanec](#); [Ghazal Zazai](#); [Gail \(Executive Asst\) Ross](#); [Rosanna Foti \(Ward12\)](#); [Abby Ramcharan](#); [Tausha Michaud](#); [Anthony Ferrari](#); [Jacob Katz](#); [Ashlee Babcock](#); [Nick Chan](#); [Ihor Wons](#); [Matt Buckman](#); [Julie Fader](#); [Robin Buxton Potts](#); [Jeff Evenson](#); [Ariana Cancelli](#)  
**Subject:** Letter to Exec Committee re: item EX33.3  
**Date:** April 17, 2018 9:56:55 AM  
**Attachments:** [HAL Letter Laneway Guidelines to EXEC.pdf](#)

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Dear Members of the Executive Committee:

I would like to submit the following letter to the Executive Committee in response to Item EX33.3 on today's agenda. Below is a summary of our recommendations.

Thank you for your leadership at the City of Toronto in creating the draft guidelines for laneway suites. The Housing Action Lab has been a champion of gentle density in our cities and has supported the development of two reports [Laneway Suites: A New Housing Typology for Toronto](#) and [Make Way for Laneway Housing](#). As the laneway suites guidelines are finalized, select members of the Housing Action Lab's Missing Middle Working Group ask you to consider the following:

- Laneway suites should not require the home owner to pay development charges for the new suite.
- Ensure that the adopted framework makes it easy for community members to build new laneway suites where and when appropriate. This means that development standards should be supportive of new suites. It should also be clearly noted in the document that the intent of the guidelines is to be permissive and provide guidelines and not rules for this development type.
- Continue to build on these guidelines, be iterative, and learn as you go from newly built laneway suites, drawing from best practices to inform a made-in-Toronto policy.
- Coordinate policies so they are easy to navigate for the user. To this end, city staff should identify the relationship of the guidelines to the Official Plan, to ensure that an official plan amendment would not be required for this type of development, and that the two documents are complementary. Going forward, alleviating zoning restrictions should be made a priority for the successful implementation of laneway housing.
- Implement a means of tracking how the new guidelines are being implemented, what challenges they are creating, and what unintended consequences arise.

Please see attached for a more detailed letter.

Sincerely,  
Michelle German

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April 17, 2018

Dear Members of the Executive Committee:

**Re: Letter to Executive Committee re: Development Charge Review EX33.3**

Select members of the Housing Action Lab's Missing Middle Working Group would like to applaud the City of Toronto for its leadership in creating the draft guidelines for laneway suites. The Housing Action Lab has been a champion of gentle density in our cities and has supported the development of two reports [Laneway Suites: A New Housing Typology for Toronto](#) and [Make Way for Laneway Housing](#). We have also convened several consultations across the city to inform and engage residents on the topic. Based on this work, we believe that creating more options to increase the supply of housing in Toronto is paramount to meeting the challenges of historically low vacancy rates, rising costs of rent and unprecedented population growth.

Increasing the availability of laneway suites is part of a combination of solutions we would like to see happen in Toronto. They have the potential to incrementally, responsibly, and gently increase density, while preserving neighbourhood character and scale.

We are hopeful that these guidelines will provide a course for the City of Toronto to work with Torontonians to support development of a new kind of housing so that our communities can enjoy the benefits of livable, walkable and complete neighbourhoods. We understand laneway suites as an appropriate means of gentle density which can deliver needed housing within existing neighbourhoods. This is an affordable, service-efficient and transit accessible solution to our housing affordability challenge. This broad-based solution will create more choice for renter households by providing access to communities from which they may previously have been excluded. Toronto has many older, established neighbourhoods with excellent walkability and transit access. By creating more small-scale housing in these areas, homeowners can provide new housing options on their properties located on low-rise residential streets.

As the laneway suites guidelines are finalized, members of the Housing Action Lab's Missing Middle Working Group ask you to consider the following:

1. Laneway suites should not require the home owner to pay development charges for the new suite.
2. Ensure that the adopted framework makes it easy for community members to build new laneway suites where and when appropriate. This means that development standards should be supportive of new suites. It should also be clearly noted in the document that the intent of the guidelines is to be permissive and provide guidelines and not rules for this development type.
3. Continue to build on these guidelines, be iterative, and learn as you go from newly built laneway suites, drawing from best practices to inform a made-in-Toronto policy.
4. Coordinate policies so they are easy to navigate for the user. To this end, city staff should identify the relationship of the guidelines to the Official Plan, to ensure that an official plan amendment would not be required for this type of development, and that the two documents are complementary. Going forward, alleviating zoning restrictions should be made a priority for the successful implementation of laneway housing.
5. Implement a means of tracking how the new guidelines are being implemented, what challenges they are creating, and what unintended consequences arise.

We look forward to reviewing the final version of the guidelines and for the opportunity to provide additional input into their formation, and support for their adoption by Council.



Sincerely,

Michelle German  
Evergreen

Jeff Evenson  
Canadian Urban Institute

Jan De Silva  
Toronto Region Board of Trade

Pedro Barata  
United Way Toronto & York Region

Michael McClelland, OAA, CAHP, FRAIC  
ERA Architects Inc.

Paul Smetanin  
Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis

Danielle Chin, MCIP, RPP  
BILD

Graham Haines  
Ryerson City Building Institute

Sean Galbraith, MCIP, RPP  
Galbraith & Associates, Inc.

Robert Freedman MRAIC, AICP  
Freedman Urban Solutions Ltd.

Leith Moore  
Waverly Projects

Paul Bedford  
Former Chief Planner for the City of Toronto

Heather Tremain  
Options for Homes

**About the Housing Action Lab**

The Housing Action Lab (HAL) is convened by Evergreen, a non-profit organization working towards creating greener, more sustainable cities. HAL is a multi-sector collaborative working group that has come together to develop and propose policies and programs that support the affordability of housing for residents of all income levels and encourage regulatory frameworks that enable diversity on form and tenure of housing.



## Annex A – Reports from Housing Action Lab in support of Laneway Housing

[Laneway Suites: A New Housing Typology for Toronto](#)

[Make Way for Laneway Housing, 2015](#)

## Annex B – Benefits to Laneway Suites in Toronto (taken from **Laneway Suites: A New Housing Typology for Toronto**)

1. **Respect character.** Laneway suites present the opportunity of creating more homes in established walkable neighbourhoods that have access to transit and key amenities, without changing the look, feel and character of these low-rise residential streets.
2. **Access to established neighbourhoods.** They increase the supply of rental housing in established neighbourhoods. They do this without requiring any new infrastructure, as branching of services is the homeowner's responsibility.
3. **Increase income and viability of home ownership.** More and more, first-time homebuyers are seeking extra income and security to cover escalating home costs by creating secondary rental suites. Laneway suites provide an enhanced opportunity for home ownership.
4. **Co-habitation and multi-generational living.** Laneway suites present an opportunity for multigenerational households — with adult children, empty nesters, and care-takers living in the same home. Security, care, and family-closeness can be provided while retaining privacy.
5. **Safety.** Laneway suites improve the look and safety of a laneway by bringing more eyes to the streets and lighting infrastructure.
6. **Slower pace of development.** Laneway houses are usually built at a much slower pace than a neighbourhood or high-rise development. Change will occur gradually. During the first two years of Vancouver's laneway pilot project, an average of 11 laneway house permits were approved each month, and these were dispersed throughout the city.

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