Changing Lanes
Toronto's Laneway Suites Strategy

Toronto and East York Community Council

May 2, 2018
2,433 Total number of Laneways in the City of Toronto

295 km Of Laneways in the City of Toronto.
Toronto's Laneways

• Toronto’s Laneways date back to the 1870s

• Originally used as a variety of uses, incl. stables, blacksmiths, and, much later, garages.

• Utilitarian in nature, with form following function.

• Through naming, Toronto's laneways have been utilized in commemorating some of the City’s interesting people and historical events.
What is a Laneway Suite?
A Laneway Suite is a house on the same lot as a detached house, semi-detached house or townhouse, generally located in the rear yard abutting a laneway.

They are subordinate in scale, completely detached from the main house, and may have outdoor access via both the side yard of the main house, and the lane.
Previous Consideration of Laneway Suites
In 2006, the City prepared the “Housing in Laneways” report to advise on permitting laneway housing.

It was primarily concerned with the severance of new laneway houses.

The report raised three concerns with laneway housing:

1. Compliance with the City’s ‘Neighborhood’ policies.
2. Possible privacy, overlook and shadowing issues.
3. Lack of municipal infrastructure in rear lanes.
Toronto’s Laneways - Under Study

Developed by Lanescape and Evergreen
Released May 26, 2017

The Report includes:
• A summary description of Laneway Suites
• A history and description of Toronto’s lanes
• Current legislation
• Examples from other jurisdictions
• A summary of performance standards
• A consultation summary
• Test scenarios
• Toronto Technical Staff comments
• Other City’s approaches
Council Direction to Study (2017)
May 2017 – Toronto and East York Community Council approve a motion from Councillors Bailao and McMahon titled: Bringing Laneway Suites (LWS) to the Toronto and East York District

Motion Summary – City Staff are requested to:

- Consult with appropriate City Divisions,
- Plan for communication and consultation with RA’s,
- Consider an implementation Strategy for Laneway Suites in TEY District,
- Consider potential staff resources required should LWS be approved,
- Align LWS Strategy with laneway animation initiatives,
- Work with AHO to ensure affordable housing is delivered in LWS,
- Analyse the incremental increase in cost to laneway services.
The City’s Guiding Principles for Laneway Suites

The City’s Study of laneway suites was based on the following principles:

Laneway Suites:

- Are rental units
- Should not be severed
- Are subordinate to the principal house
- Should be permitted as-of-right
- May not be possible on all lots with a lane.
Changing Lanes:
The City of Toronto's Review of Laneway Suites
What is Changing Lanes?

1. An **Official Plan Amendment** to permit laneway suites, subject to a range of criteria in the Toronto and East York Area.

2. A **Zoning By-law Amendment** to permit and governs the height, form, separation distance, and many other criteria of self laneway suites in the Toronto and East York Area.

3. A **Set of Guidelines** to assist those considering building a new laneway suite, or modifying an existing accessory structure to create a new rental housing unit.
Toronto and East York Laneways

1907 Laneways
227 km

Toronto and East York contains the majority of the City’s laneways.
Why Laneway Suites?

- **Provincial Policies** Support Laneway Suites
- City’s policies intend a **range of housing** form and tenure.
- **Neighbourhoods** can accommodate gradual growth and change over time.
- **Laneways can evolve** as new, interesting, multi-function public spaces
- Suites provide a **New form of housing** for an aging population, large families, downsizing seniors, and people of different abilities.
Changing Lanes
Provincial Policy and Legislation
Provincial Legislation and Policy

The Planning Act - “the Official Plan shall contain policies that authorize the use of a second residential unit on a lot”. Section 16.(3)

The Growth Plan - Complete communities include a diverse range and mix of housing options, including second units... to accommodate people at all stages of life, household sizes and incomes. Section 2.2.1.4 c)

The Provincial Policy Statement - Healthy, liveable communities are sustained by an appropriate range and mix of residential uses, including second units, affordable housing and housing for older persons. Policy 1.1.1.b)
Changing Lanes
The Official Plan and Laneway Suites
The proposed amendments are based on the guiding principles and vision, found at the outset of the Plan.

A successful Toronto is characterized by a city where:

• Housing choices are available for all people in their communities at all stages of their lives;

• Where individuals and communities actively participate in decisions affecting them; and,

• Where we meet the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
The Official Plan: Housing

The Official Plan states that a full range of housing in terms of form, tenure, and affordability, be provided across the City and in neighbourhoods, to meet the needs of current and future residents. (Policy 3.2.1.1)

Current and future residents must be able to access and maintain adequate, affordable and appropriate housing. The City’s quality of life, economic competitiveness, social cohesion, as well as its balance and diversity depend on it. (Page 3.21)
The Official Plan: Land Use

The City’s Official Plan guides change and growth differently in different areas of the City.

Mixed Use Areas (red)

Regeneration Areas (brown)

Apartment Neighbourhoods (orange)

Employment Areas (purple)

Parks and Open Spaces (green)

Neighbourhoods (yellow)
The Official Plan: Land Use

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- Neighbourhoods (yellow)
The Official Plan: Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods contain a range of housing, parks, community spaces, schools, and local businesses.

They are intended to remain stable over time, but not static.

The Changing Lanes report recommends amending the Official Policies to permit laneway suites in Neighbourhoods in Toronto and East York District.
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City Technical and Design Review
Changing Lanes: Technical Review

The City’s 2006 Laneway Housing Study, raised the location of services as a challenge to allowing laneways suites.

The Changing Lanes initiative has considered and reviewed the servicing aspects of laneway suites, including consideration of capacity.
Changing Lanes: Design Review

Changing Lanes proposes zoning and guidelines to guide the physical form of laneway suites, to minimize impacts to adjacent property and ensure, subordinate structures that contribute to neighbourhood character.
Changing Lanes: Other Matters

In addition to the physical form of laneway suites and how they receive City services, the City has also explored the following areas with regard to laneway suites.
Changing Lanes
Consultation
Changing Lanes Large Consultation Meetings

- November 30, 2017: 250+ People In Attendance at each meeting
- March 29, 2018: 100+ Comment Forms Submitted at Kickoff Meeting

Laneway Improvements

93%

- I support
- I am concerned
- Undecided

November 30, 2017

March 29, 2018

250+

People In Attendance at each meeting

100+

Comment Forms Submitted at Kickoff Meeting

Changing Lanes: The City of Toronto's Review of Laneway Suites

Laneway Suites: An Opportunity for Affordable Housing

- Compact design
- Infill development
- Affordable housing

4% 3%
Working with Residents Associations

February 24, 2018

Invite only Presentation and Workshop meeting for Residents Associations

20 + Residents Association Representatives in attendance

Several individual working meetings, conference calls and other consultation with Residents Associations and each Individuals.

Periodic Updates were sent to each RA and TEY Ward Councillor’s office throughout the Study process.
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Laneway Suites Design Criteria
Summary
Emergency Access

Constraints
The Emergency Access requirements limit the number of lots that might be able to construct a laneway suite.

On longer laneways and where housing has limited side yard setbacks and/or shallow lots, the opportunity for laneway housing is limited.

On shorter laneways and where there are wider side yards and deeper lots, laneway housing is more likely to be possible.
Changing Lanes
The Lanes
Laneway Improvements

The condition of lanes varies across the City, but they have enormous potential as new and interesting public spaces.

- Development will be monitored on laneways.
- Improvements are made and maintenance requirements be addressed as required
- Increased setbacks provide space for lighting and landscaping.
Changing Lanes
Other Matters
Other Matters Related to Laneway Suites

Deterring Severances
The policies, Zoning and Guidelines regarding laneway suites will deter severances. Application fees, development charges, and process further discourages severance applications.

Monitoring Period (3 Years)
A 3 year monitoring period is proposed. Staff in numerous Divisions (Forestry, Transportation, etc) will be involved.

Staff Training
Staff will receive training on this initiative to ensure consistent, clear application of the policies and guidelines.
Application Process

As of Right Zoning
Laneway Suites that comply with the Zoning By-law may only require a building permit.

Minor Variances
Laneway suites may require minor variances in some cases. The City intends to give additional consideration to suites which need variances to:

- meets the accessible building standards,
- includes sustainable building technologies, including solar panels or a green roof,
- maintain existing mature trees; and
- accommodate a laneway suite within an existing accessory building.
Pilot Program: Affordable Rental

Ontario Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy – “Second units are a potential source of affordable rental housing and allow homeowners to earn additional income.”

“Exempting second units such as laneway suites or basement apartments, from development charges makes them less costly to build.”

Staff recommend a pilot program with financial incentives to maintain rents at an affordable level for a period of time.
Changing Lanes

In Summary
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Laneway Suites

- Consistent with Provincial Legislation and City Policies
- Have been successfully implemented in many other cities
- Will limit their impact on adjacent properties
- Can introduce a new form of rental accommodation
- Provide new opportunities for the aging population multi-gen living
- Provide new opportunities for young families to live in neighbourhoods
- Represent appropriate Neighbourhood infill and change
- Subject to ongoing analysis and reporting
- Reduced application and financial requirements, streamlined approach
- Can enhance and improve the safety of our under utilized laneways
- Represent good planning.
Thank you