

Naming of an existing Public Lane North of King Street East, extending Westerly from Bright Street

Date: September 12, 2025

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Director, Engineering Support Services, Engineering and Construction Services
General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

Wards: Ward 13 - Toronto Centre

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the name "Joyce Wieland Lane" be approved to identify an existing public lane located north of King Street East, extending westerly from Bright Street.

This naming proposal complies with the City of Toronto Street Naming Policy which can be found at <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/street-naming/>

This naming proposal is in alignment with the objectives of the Guiding Principles for Commemoration in the Public Realm.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Engineering and Construction Services and the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture recommend that Toronto and East York Community Council:

1. Approve the name "Joyce Wieland Lane" for an existing public lane located north of King Street East, extending westerly from Bright Street.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The cost to install street name signage is approximately \$600 and is included within the Transportation Services Division's Operating Budget.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

This is the first time that this issue is before Community Council.

COMMENTS

At its meeting on July 19, 2022, City Council adopted the City of Toronto Commemorative Framework and approved revisions to the Street Naming Policy. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.6>

Community Councils have delegated authority to decide street naming matters which comply with the City of Toronto Street Naming Policy.

An application was received, from a resident requesting to name the existing public lane located north of King Street East, extending westerly from Bright Street, as Joyce Wieland Lane, in honour of a renowned Canadian artist and local community figure.

The applicant provided the following background and rationale:

“Joyce Wieland Lane”

“Joyce Wieland (1930-1998) lived and worked a block away from this lane at 497 Queen Street East - in an old "ginger-bread" style rowhouse that still stands. Given her status as an important Canadian artist - that is, a painter, a textile artist and a filmmaker - and with a career spanning decades, going back to the early 60's up to the 90's it seems appropriate to honour her memory by naming this short but lovely lane after her.

Joyce Wieland Lane pays respect to an important Canadian artist, a woman artist - who had an amazing career both in Toronto and in New York City. Wieland was married to Michael Snow, another renowned Canadian artist, who also has had a lane named after him in downtown Toronto.

Joyce Wieland's work has been collected by major art museums in Canada and the United States. For instance, her work is in the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario and the National Gallery of Canada. Finally, Wieland's work is seen daily by commuters on the Toronto subway line - where her major public commission is on view. This textile work was commissioned for the Spadina subway stop and is titled: Barren Ground Caribou, 1977-78.”

Historical Research on Joyce Wieland

Joyce Wieland (1931–1998) was a Canadian visual artist and filmmaker celebrated for innovative works that blended experimental film, mixed media, and political commentary. Spanning painting, drawing, experimental film, and textile work, her multidisciplinary practice defied conventional boundaries between “high” and “low” art. Known for her unique integration of personal and political narratives, she helped shape the direction of Canadian art in the 20th century.

Born in Toronto in 1930, Wieland began her career as a painter in the 1950s before relocating to New York City in 1962, where she gained recognition as an experimental filmmaker; she returned to Toronto in 1971. That same year, her exhibition titled True Patriot Love exhibition opened at the National Gallery of Canada. It was the first solo show by a living Canadian woman artist, cementing her role as a central figure in the Canadian art world. Through her career, Wieland received numerous accolades, including being named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1982 and winning the Toronto Arts Foundation’s Visual Arts Award in 1987.

As the application outlines and City staff research confirms, Wieland’s legacy endures through the continued exhibition and collection of her work in major institutions across Canada and internationally. Currently, the City of Toronto’s commissioned Wieland work, Barren Land Caribou (1975), is part of Joyce Wieland: Heart-On, a major retrospective exhibition co-organized by the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal and the Art Gallery of Ontario and presented at both venues in 2025.

Wieland’s work can be found in the collections of numerous museums and institutions, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, the National Gallery of Canada, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Canada Council Art Bank, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA, New York), the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Yale Art Gallery, New Haven. Her works have been exhibited internationally, reflecting her global influence and reach.

Research reveals Wieland was also active in social and political causes. She participated in various protests, including those against a hydroelectric dam in James Bay, supporting Cree communities in the area. In addition, as a founding member of Canadian Artist Representation (CAR), she contributed to the establishment of a system that ensured artists were compensated for the exhibition or reproduction of their works.

A substantial list of publications focussed on Wieland’s artistic practice and works, including most recently the exhibition catalogue for Joyce Wieland: Heart-On, confirms that Wieland’s art remains relevant and reflects her lasting influence on generations of artists.

Commemorating Joyce Wieland through the naming of a laneway honours both her artistic achievements and her deep connections to Toronto. Wieland lived at 497 Queen Street East in the Corktown neighbourhood for many years, where she also maintained a studio. A heritage plaque now marks her former residence, acknowledging her important place in the city’s cultural history.

As noted in the application and confirmed by City staff, the proposal to name a laneway after Wieland has received widespread community support. Corktown residents, in particular, have long celebrated her ties to the neighbourhood and have championed efforts to preserve and honour that legacy. Toronto Ward 13 Councillor Chris Moise's website hosted a poll regarding this naming; the poll received 66 votes of support, including 5 comments. The application also received a letter of support from the Art Gallery of Ontario (Attachment No. 2).

Naming a laneway in memory of Joyce Wieland affirms Toronto's recognition of her substantive contributions to local, national and international art history.

A complete Historical Research Report is available upon request.

The proposed name has been circulated for comment and is acceptable to Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Services, and Toronto Paramedic Services.

Councillor Chris Moise, Ward 13 - Toronto Centre, supports this naming.

Consent was provided by "Su Rynard," the commemorated party's niece.

Community support was demonstrated with a petition of signatures from the local community as well as a letter from Curators at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

The lane is shown as PART 1 on Attachment No.1 Sketch No. **PS-2025-041**.

CONTACT

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Patrick Tobin, General Manager, Economic Development & Culture

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 Sketch No. **PS-2025-041**

Attachment No. 2 Letter of Support from Art Gallery of Ontario dated August 28, 2025

Attachment No. 1 Sketch No. PS-2025-041, showing the location of an existing public lane located north of King Street East, extending westerly from Bright Street.





August 28, 2025

RE: AGO letter of support for Joyce Wieland laneway naming application

Joyce Wieland (1930 – 1998) was a Canadian artist and filmmaker whose practice of five decades has only grown more relevant with time. Honouring this legendary artist with a laneway name in the city where she lived, worked and played is worthy recognition of her legacy and continuing impact.

Convinced of the transformative power of art, Wieland developed a practice that delved into politics, feminism, social equity, and ecology. Her intelligence, wit, and audacity, along with her passion for history and literature, underpinned her artistic vision, allowing her, as the critic Susan Crean wrote, to take the serious lightly and the light-hearted seriously.

Wieland was a trailblazer who received considerable recognition in her time. She became the first living woman artist to be given her own exhibition, *True Patriot Love*, at the National Gallery of Canada in 1971. Her career retrospective at the AGO in 1987 marked the first time the museum dedicated such an exhibition to a living woman artist. Subsequent generations of artists continue to feel the influence of Wieland's drawings, paintings, films, textiles, and prints. The themes she explored, in addition to her unorthodox approach to materials, continue to resonate closely with contemporary art practices today.

Wieland's film work is baked into the DNA of Toronto film culture. It continues to have a profound influence on her peers, and on generations of film and media artists who followed her path. Her influence ranges from being a DIY visionary to being a woman who created freely in a male-dominated culture, to working outside the system of conventional narrative (and then deciding to work within that system), and in the process developing a deeply original and compelling aesthetic that created new models for other artists working in film.

Toronto is Joyce Wieland's city. She was born here and she died here and her artwork and life took her throughout Toronto. She grew up downtown going to the movies, going to school at Central Tech, visiting the shores of Lake Ontario, and enjoying Toronto's parks – all at a time when Toronto was not the art centre it is today. Wieland travelled the world but always returned home.

Of importance to Wieland was taking her work and her message to where people are, and her works continue to be in public collections today. Her textile work *Barren Ground Caribou* lives at the TTC's Spadina Station, Kendal Avenue entrance as part of the City of Toronto's collection. In August 1982, as



part of an outdoor public commission, Wieland planted *Venus of Scarborough*, a flower garden in the shape of a goddess at Guild Inn in Scarborough.

As a public tribute, naming a Joyce Wieland laneway is fitting and the AGO sincerely supports this application.

Sincerely,

Georgiana Uhlyarik, Fredrik S. Eaton Curator, Canadian Art, Art Gallery of Ontario
and
Jim Shedden, Curator, Special Projects & Director, Publishing, Art Gallery of Ontario.