

Naming of an existing Public Lane located north of Robinson Street, extending easterly from Palmerston Avenue

Date: May 28, 2026

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 10 - Spadina - Fort York

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the name "De Sa Lane" be approved to identify the existing public lane located north of Robinson Street, extending easterly from Palmerston Avenue.

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 [Guiding Principles](#) for Commemoration in the Public Realm.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Approve the name "De Sa Lane" for an existing public lane located north of Robinson Street, extending easterly from Palmerston Avenue.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The cost to install street name signage is approximately \$600.00 and is included within the Transportation Services Division's approved 2026 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 on August 25, 2025 from a resident requesting to name the existing public lane located north of Robinson Street, extending easterly from Palmerston Avenue, as “De Sa Lane” honouring the cultural and historical legacy of Toronto’s Portuguese community and the De Sa family’s presence, contribution, and legacy in the neighbourhood.

The following background and rationale were provided by the applicant:

“De Sa Lane”

The proposal to name the unnamed laneway “De Sa Lane” is grounded in the need to preserve and honour the cultural and historical legacy of Toronto’s Portuguese community. For more than half a century, this laneway and the surrounding streets served as the cradle of a fledgling immigrant community who made the area their home in the second half of the twentieth century—and who continue to have a presence here today.

Portuguese immigrants left an indelible mark on this neighbourhood. They opened bakeries, restaurants, and small businesses, brought music and tradition into the streets, and established faith and cultural institutions that nurtured families for generations. They made wine in these laneways, pickled peppers and canned goods in their garages, their doors flung open to the laneway.

The name De Sa Lane acknowledges the community that built this neighbourhood and, in particular, honours the many families whose names, stories, and sacrifices form part of the city’s living history. It signals respect for the working-class immigrants who laid down roots here, who worked long hours in factories and construction, and who raised children who went on to become integral to Toronto’s civic, cultural and professional life.

De Sa Lane Research and Review

The Economic Development and Culture Division (EDC) has reviewed the application to name the unnamed laneway north of Robinson Street, east of Palmerston Avenue (the

most southern lane between Palmerston Ave and Robinson Place), in the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood. The proposed name, "De Sa Lane," commemorates two generations of the De Sa family, namely Manuel Rebelo De Sa (1925–1985), Georgina De Sa (1937–1997), and Anthony De Sa (born 1966). The application includes family history and a description of Anthony De Sa's literary career. Evidence of community engagement and letters of support for the proposed naming are also included. The following summarizes EDC's research and review of the proposed name, undertaken in accordance with the City's Guiding Principles for Commemoration.

According to the applicant, and as confirmed by staff, the De Sa family home was located near the proposed laneway. Manuel De Sa came to Canada from Azores, Portugal in the mid-1950s during the first major wave of Portuguese immigration. Many early Portuguese immigrants were men who initially came to Canada for temporary labour, often working on farms or railways projects, before later settling in urban centres. Manuel De Sa's experience reflects this history, as the application reports he worked for Canadian Pacific Railway upon his arrival in Canada.

After becoming one of the first Portuguese immigrants to purchase a home on Palmerston Avenue, Manuel De Sa returned to the Azores to find a spouse. In the early 1960s, Manuel and Georgina De Sa returned to Toronto, where they raised their family. During this time, a Portuguese community became established within the area generally bounded by Spadina Avenue, College Street, Dufferin Street, and Queen Street West, supported by the growth of Portuguese businesses, restaurants, and Catholic parish communities. This community was characterized by multi-generational networks, with grandparents providing childcare while parents often worked long hours. The Portuguese community has contributed to Toronto's cultural diversity and continues to be an important part of the city's social fabric.

Anthony De Sa, one of Manuel and Georgina's two children, is an award-winning author. His first two novels draw upon the lived experience of Toronto's Portuguese community during the 1970s. Both works were finalists for the Toronto Book Award, reflecting the cultural significance of his writing and its contribution to documenting the Portuguese-Canadian experience in Toronto.

De Sa's 2008 book *Barnacle Love* is a collection of related short stories loosely based on De Sa's family. The first half of the book follows a father's journey from the Azores, Portugal to Canada, while its second half focuses on the son's experiences growing up in Toronto's Portuguese community during the 1970s. *Barnacle Love* was a finalist for the Scotiabank Giller Book Prize (2008) and won Portugal's Premios de Talento Award for Literature (2009).

His 2013 novel *Kicking the Sky* explores the lasting impact on Toronto's Portuguese community following the murder of young Emanuel Jaques in 1977. The novel draws on De Sa's childhood memories as well as historical research into the event. *Kicking the Sky* was shortlisted for the 2014 LIBRIS award and the Canadian Authors Association Fiction Award.

The application includes documentation of community support, with 50% of abutting residents supporting the proposed name. Additionally, three letters of support from

community members are included. Deputy Mayor Malik has also written a letter of support for the proposed name.

In summary, the application and staff research demonstrate the De Sa family was a part of Toronto's early Portuguese-Canadian community. Manuel and Georgina established their home within a growing network of Portuguese newcomers, contributing to the development of a close-knit community and culturally distinct neighbourhood. In addition, Anthony De Sa's literary work offers perspectives on Portuguese-Canadian experiences in Toronto, with recognized contributions to the city's cultural and literary landscape.

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.

Manuel De Sa passed away on September 18, 1985.

Consent was provided by Anthony De Sa, son of Manuel De Sa.

Councillor Ausma Malik, Ward 10 Spadina-Fort York, supports this naming.

Community support was demonstrated with emails and petition signatures of support as well as a letter of support provided by the ward councillor, Ausma Malik, see Attachment No. 2

The lane is shown as PART 1 on Attachment No.1 Sketch No. PS-2026-020.

CONTACT

Tony Rodrigues, Manager, Land and Property Surveys, Engineering Support Services, Engineering and Construction Services, Telephone: 416 396-7140, Email: Tony.F.Rodrigues@toronto.ca

Shiralee Hudson Hill, Director (Acting), Museums and Heritage Services, Economic Development & Culture, Telephone: 416-339692-4802, Email: Shiralee.Hudsonhill@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Avi Bachar, P. Eng., Director, Engineering Support Services, Engineering and Construction Services

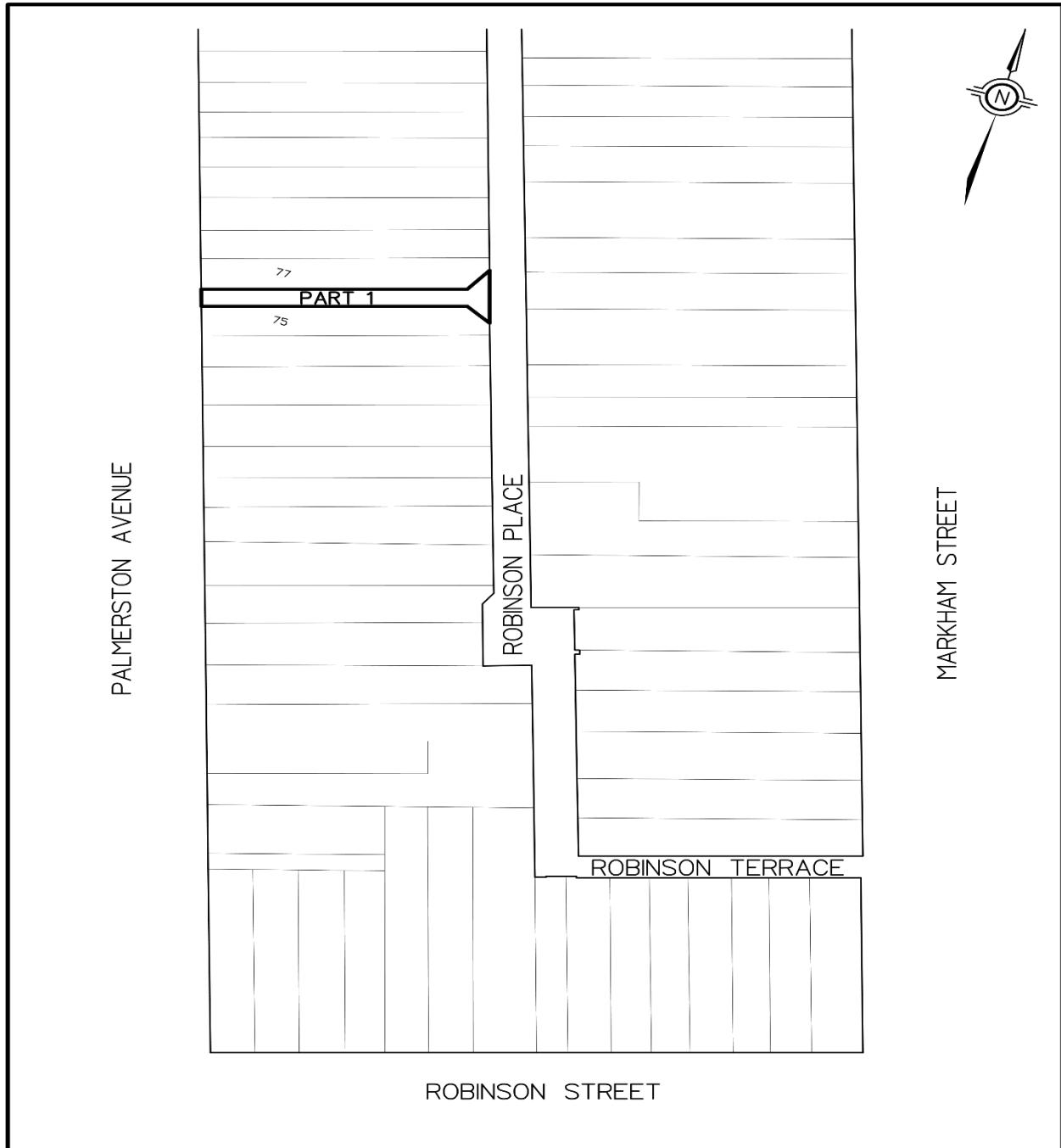
Patrick Tobin, General Manager, Economic Development & Culture


ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 Sketch No. PS-2026-020

Attachment No. 2 – Letter of Support from Councillor Ausma Malik

Attachment No. 1 Sketch No. PS-2026-020, showing the location of an existing public lane located north of Robinson Street, extending easterly from Palmerston Avenue.



 <p>ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION SERVICES ENGINEERING SUPPORT SERVICES LAND & PROPERTY SURVEYS</p>	<p>PROPERTY INFORMATION SHEET</p> <p>NAMING OF A PUBLIC LANE LOCATED NORTH OF ROBINSON STREET, EXTENDING EASTERLY FROM PALMERSTON AVENUE</p>	
	<p>NOTE: THIS SKETCH HAS BEEN COMPILED FROM OFFICE RECORDS. MEASUREMENTS ARE APPROXIMATE</p>	
	<p>CHECKED BY: R. SEGUIN PREPARED BY: S. LOMBARDO</p>	<p>WARD 10 - SPADINA-FORT YORK DATE: MAY 19, 2026</p>

Attachment No. 2 – Letter of Support from Councillor Ausma Malik, Toronto City Councillor for Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York



December 9, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the application submitted by Anthony De Sa to name the laneway off Palmerston Avenue as De Sa Lane, in honour of his father, Manuel De Sa.

Toronto's neighbourhoods are defined by the people who have shaped them, and the Palmerston area is home to a rich history deeply influenced by generations of Portuguese immigrants. For more than fifty years, families who arrived in Toronto seeking opportunity and community helped establish the cultural, economic, and social character of this part of the city. Their legacy is seen not only in the homes they built and the businesses they opened, but in the traditions, values, and resilience they brought to Toronto's evolving identity.

Mr. De Sa's request highlights one of these important stories. His father, Manuel De Sa, was among Canada's earliest Portuguese immigrants and one of the first to purchase a home at 55 Palmerston Avenue in 1960. He contributed to the foundation of a neighbourhood that became a vital centre of cultural life in Toronto for decades. The laneway and surrounding streets were part of the daily fabric of families like the De SAs, who worked hard, raised children, built local institutions, and shaped the city's growing multicultural identity.

Designating this laneway as De Sa Lane offers a meaningful opportunity to recognize and preserve that legacy. In a neighbourhood where change continues at a rapid pace, this naming would serve to honour the past while reminding future generations of the immigrant communities whose presence continues to enrich Toronto. It acknowledges the profound contributions of Portuguese families and ensures that their stories remain part of the city's living history.

I am pleased to support Anthony De Sa's application and believe that naming the laneway De Sa Lane will help anchor an important chapter of our shared heritage within the urban fabric of Toronto. Please do not hesitate to contact my office should you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Ausma Malik
Deputy Mayor and City Councillor - Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York
100 Queen St W, Suite C54
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Telephone: 416-392-4044
Email: Councillor_Malik@toronto.ca