

Changing Lanes: Review and Monitoring Info Session



AGENDA

7:30 Introductions

Claire Stevenson-Blythe
Robert Walter-Joseph
Chris Hilbrecht
Graig Uens

Gladki Planning Associates
Gladki Planning Associates
Toronto City Planning
Toronto City Planning

7:35 Presentation

8:20 Next Steps

8:30 Questions and Comments

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit and is within the territory of the Dish With One Spoon treaty.

We are all Treaty people. Many of us have come here as settlers, immigrants, newcomers in this generation or generations past. We'd like to also acknowledge and honour those who came here involuntarily, particularly those who are descended from those brought here through enslavement.

Please be aware that **this meeting is being recorded** and personal information, such as your opinions, statements and voice will become part of a public record. Under Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, records created for the general public do not restrict access and may be made available on the City Planning website. Your registration information will not be disclosed as part of the public record.

Meeting Rules

- One voice at a time. Be direct and frame questions to specific speakers.
- Be brief and limit yourself to one question or comment at the time, there will be other opportunities to engage.
- Be a good listener and keep an open mind.
- Raise hand to ask questions.
- Be respectful. City of Toronto is an inclusive public organization. Racist or other forms of discriminatory, prejudicial, or hateful comments and questions will not be tolerated.
- Engage with high energy, be personable as you would in person!
- For more instructions [City of Toronto Public Consultation Webpage](#).

Why are we here?



Why are we here?

As of 2019 Laneway Suites can be built across the city on properties next to a public lane.

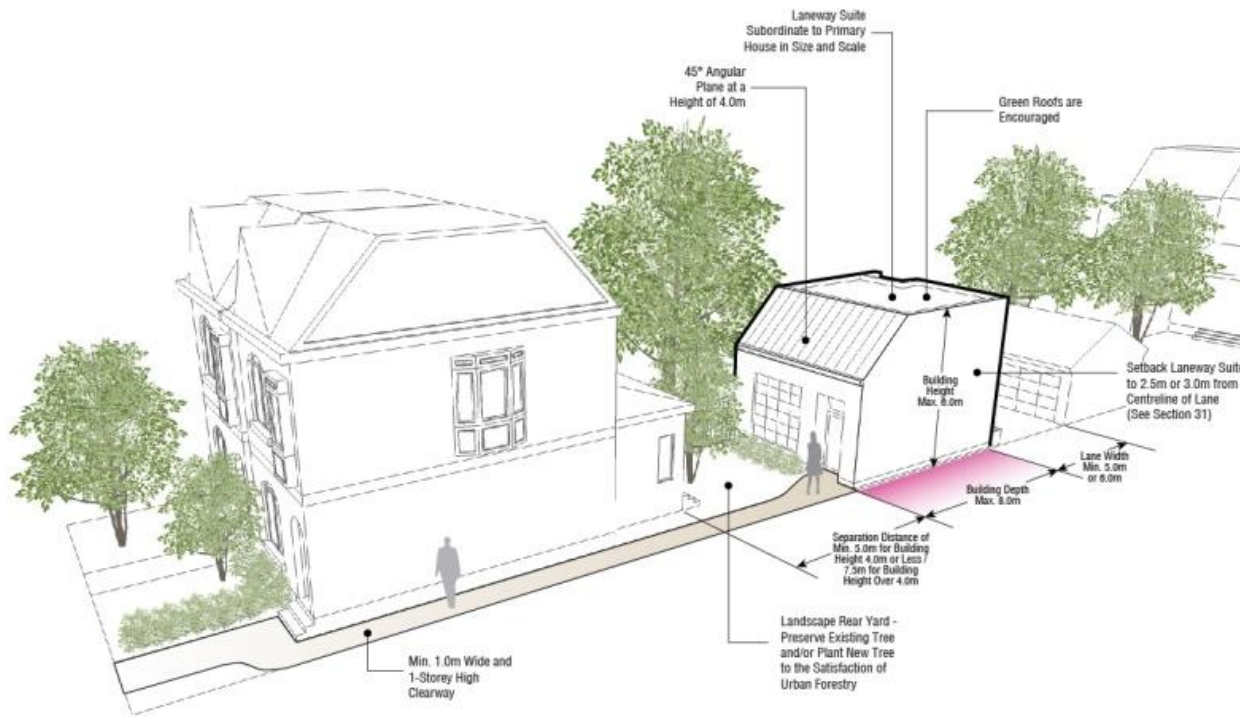
When permitting Laneway Suites, City Council requested that City staff undertake the Laneway Suite Monitoring Program with a variety of components.

At this meeting, we will share our observations from the monitoring work as we determine whether or not any amendments to the Laneway Suite By-law are necessary to facilitate Laneway Suite Construction.



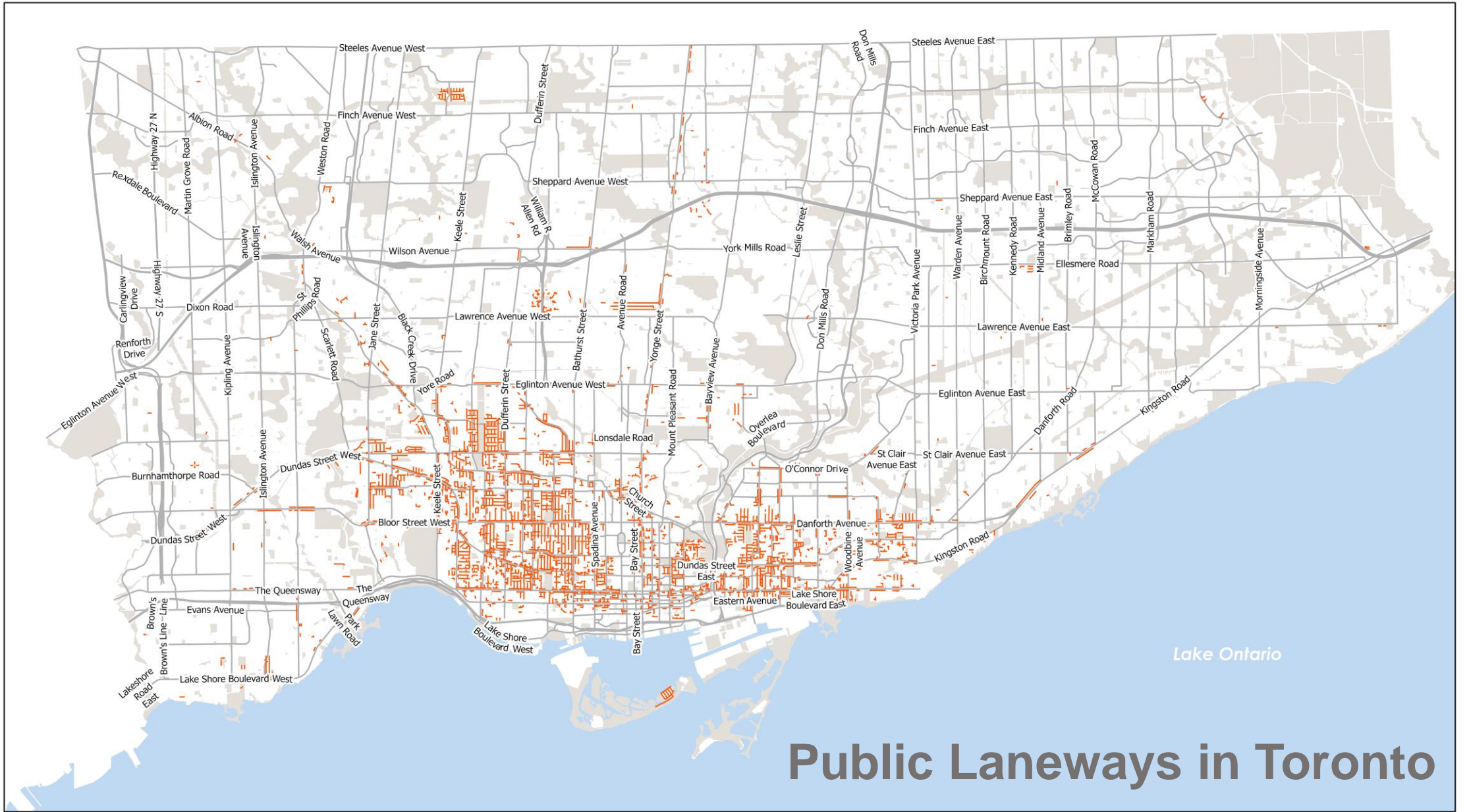
Image: Lanescape

What is a Laneway Suite?



Laneway Suites are self-contained dwelling units situated on the same lot as a detached house, semi-detached house or townhouse, generally located in the back yard next to a public laneway.

They are generally smaller and completely detached from the main house on the lot which fronts the street. They have outdoor access via both the street and the lane.



What *is* the Monitoring Program?



The Monitoring Program

City Council has asked that City Staff Monitor Laneway Suite activity and consider the following:

- Characteristics of laneway suite construction,
- Minor variances sought,
- Trees removals to facilitate laneway suites,
- Municipal property assessment appeals,
- Changes in on-site parking,
- Consultation with seniors advisory groups,
- Assessment of rent levels,
- The nature of suite occupants
- Potential By-law changes,
- Consultation with FoNTRA, and,
- Results of the affordable rental pilot program.



Image: Lanescape

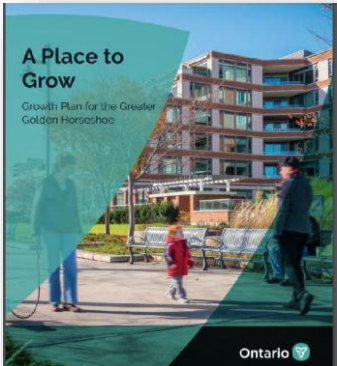
Laneway Suites and Policy



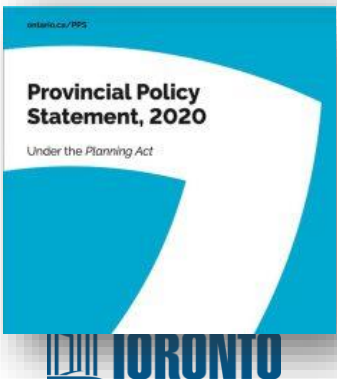
Provincial Legislation and Policy



The Planning Act - “the Official Plan shall contain policies that authorize the use of a second residential unit on a lot and ... a residential unit in a building or structure ancillary to a detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse.”. Section 16.(3)



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



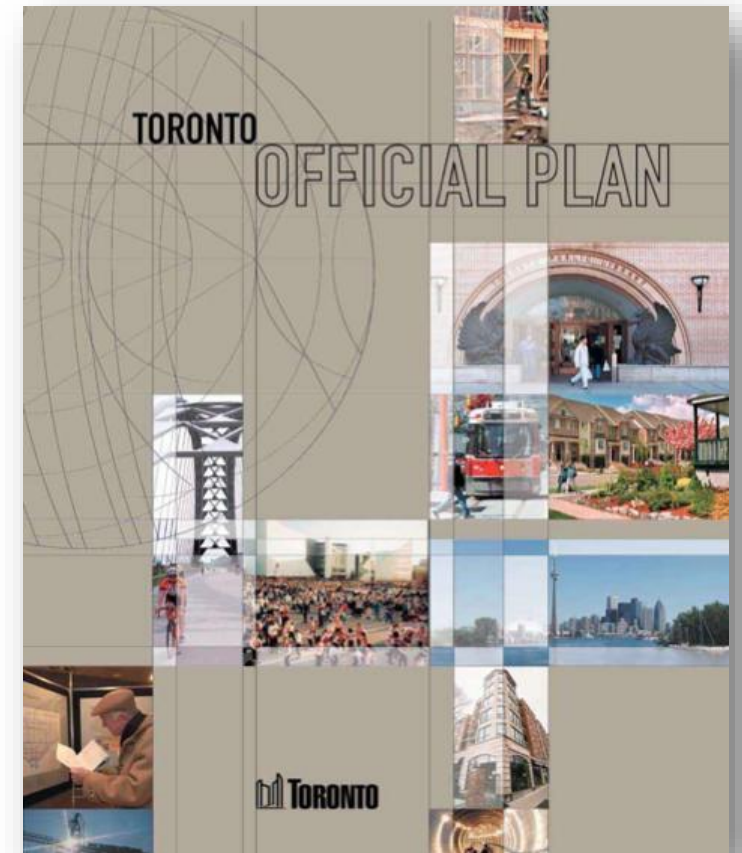
The Provincial Policy Statement - Healthy, liveable communities are sustained by an appropriate range and mix of residential uses, including second units, affordable housing and housing for older persons. Policy 1.1.1.b)

The Official Plan: A Successful Toronto

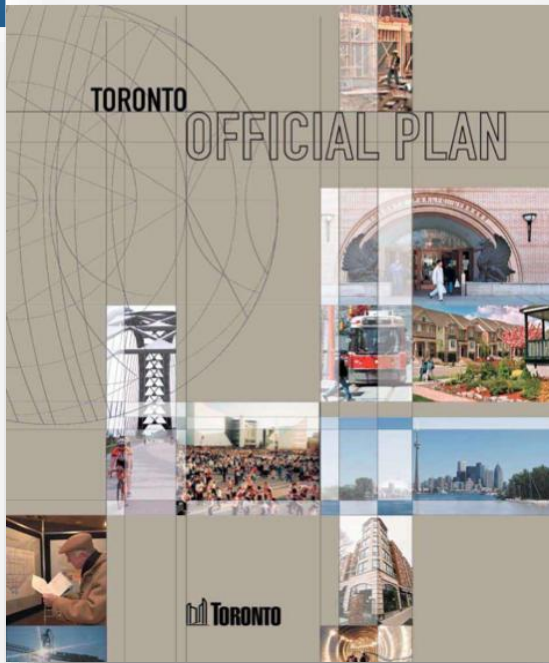
The Changing Lanes amendments are based on the guiding principles and vision, found at the outset of the Plan.

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.

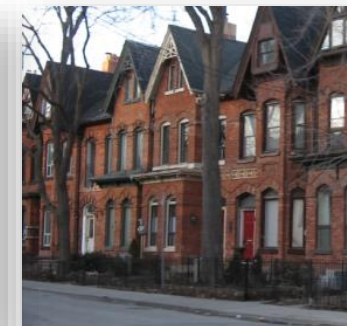


The Official Plan: Housing



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)**



Laneway Suites and Missing Middle Housing

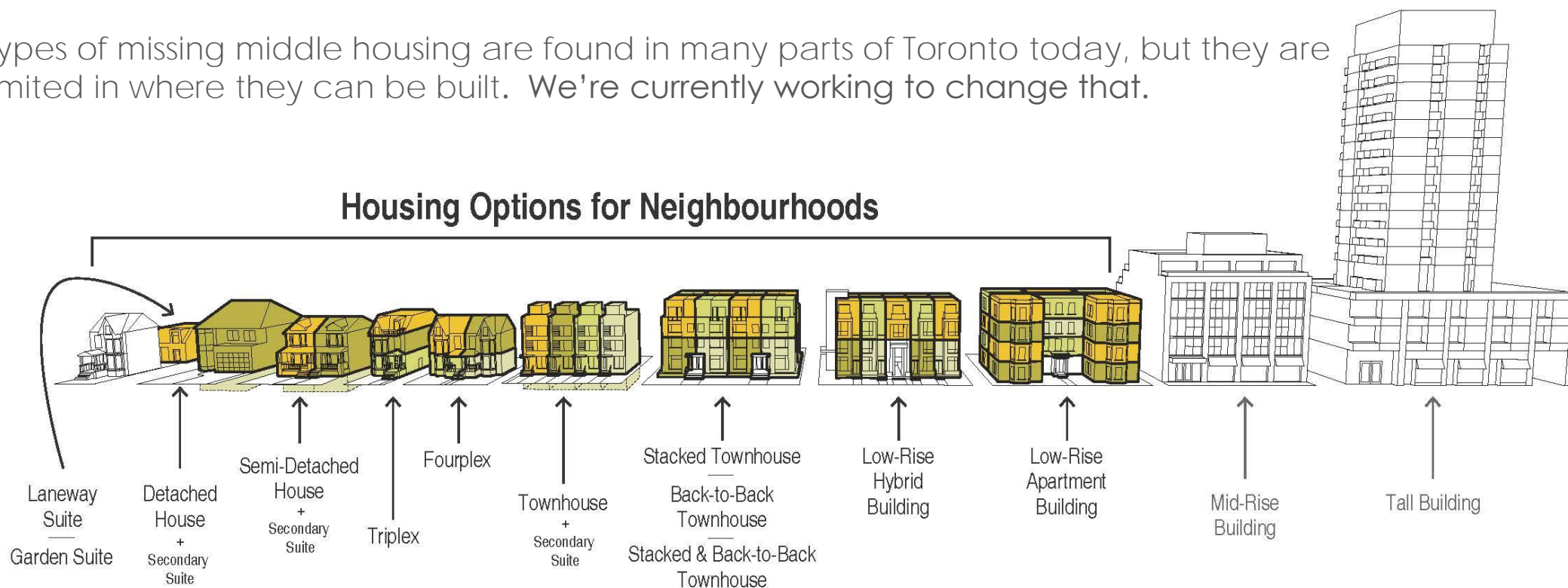




Laneway Suites as Missing Middle Housing

The “missing middle” generally refers to housing forms that range from duplexes to low-rise walk-up apartments as well as detached accessory suites such as laneway suites and garden suites.

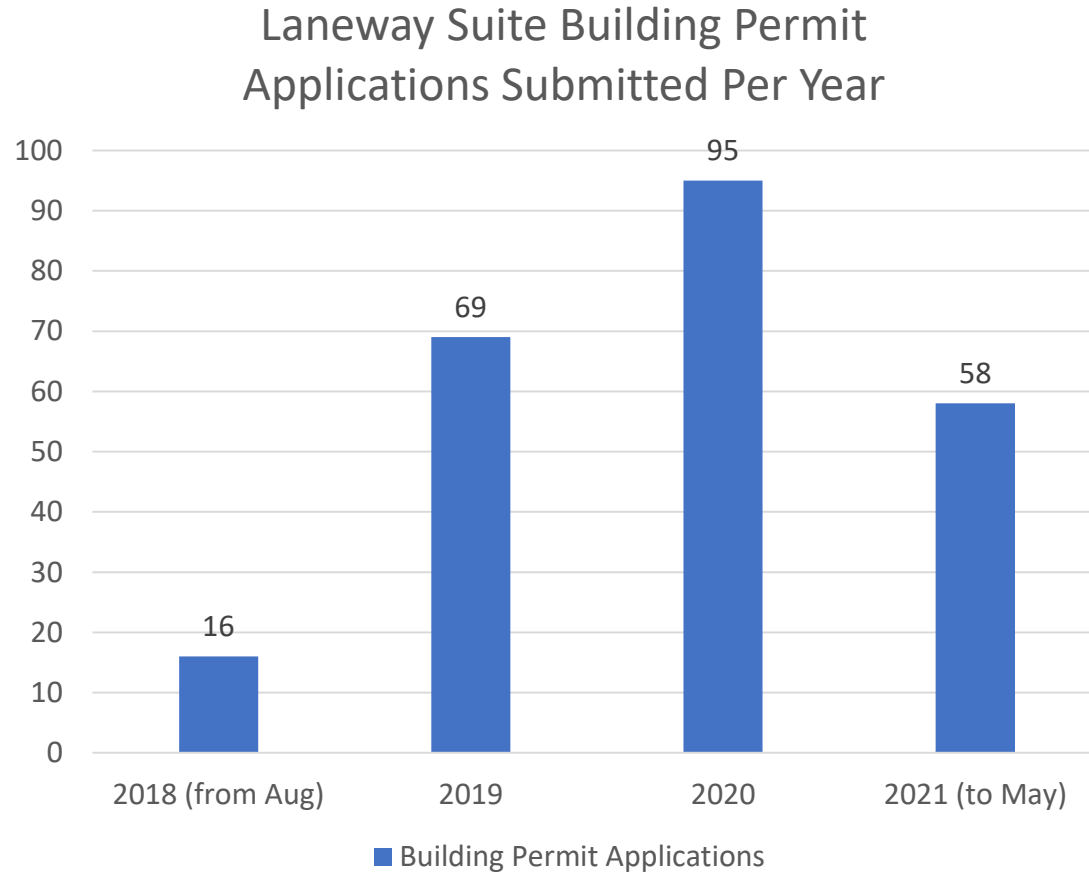
Types of missing middle housing are found in many parts of Toronto today, but they are limited in where they can be built. We’re currently working to change that.



Laneway Suite Building Permits



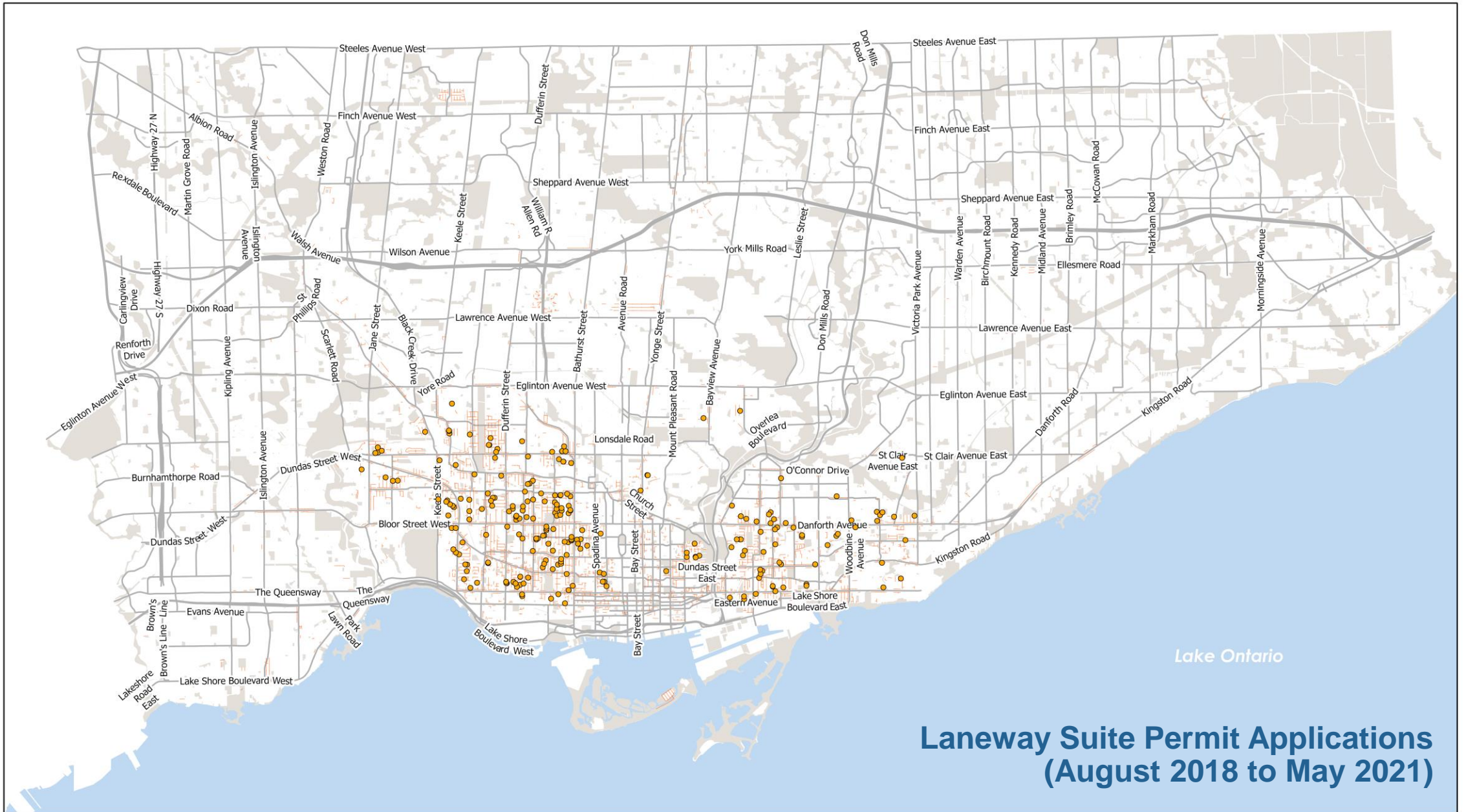
Laneway Suites Permit Activity



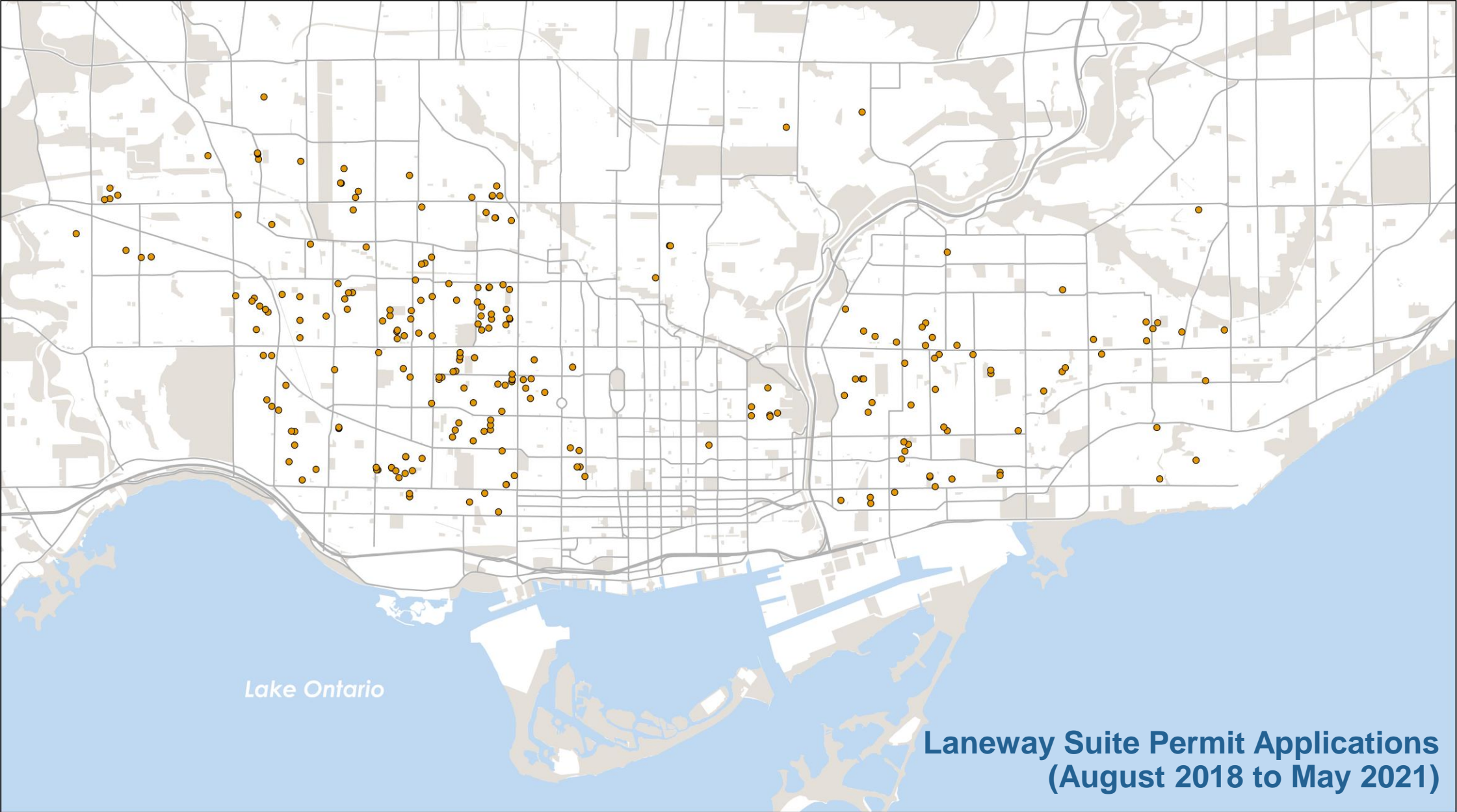
Between August 2018 and May 2021, a total of 239 Building Permit Applications for Laneway Suites were submitted to the City.

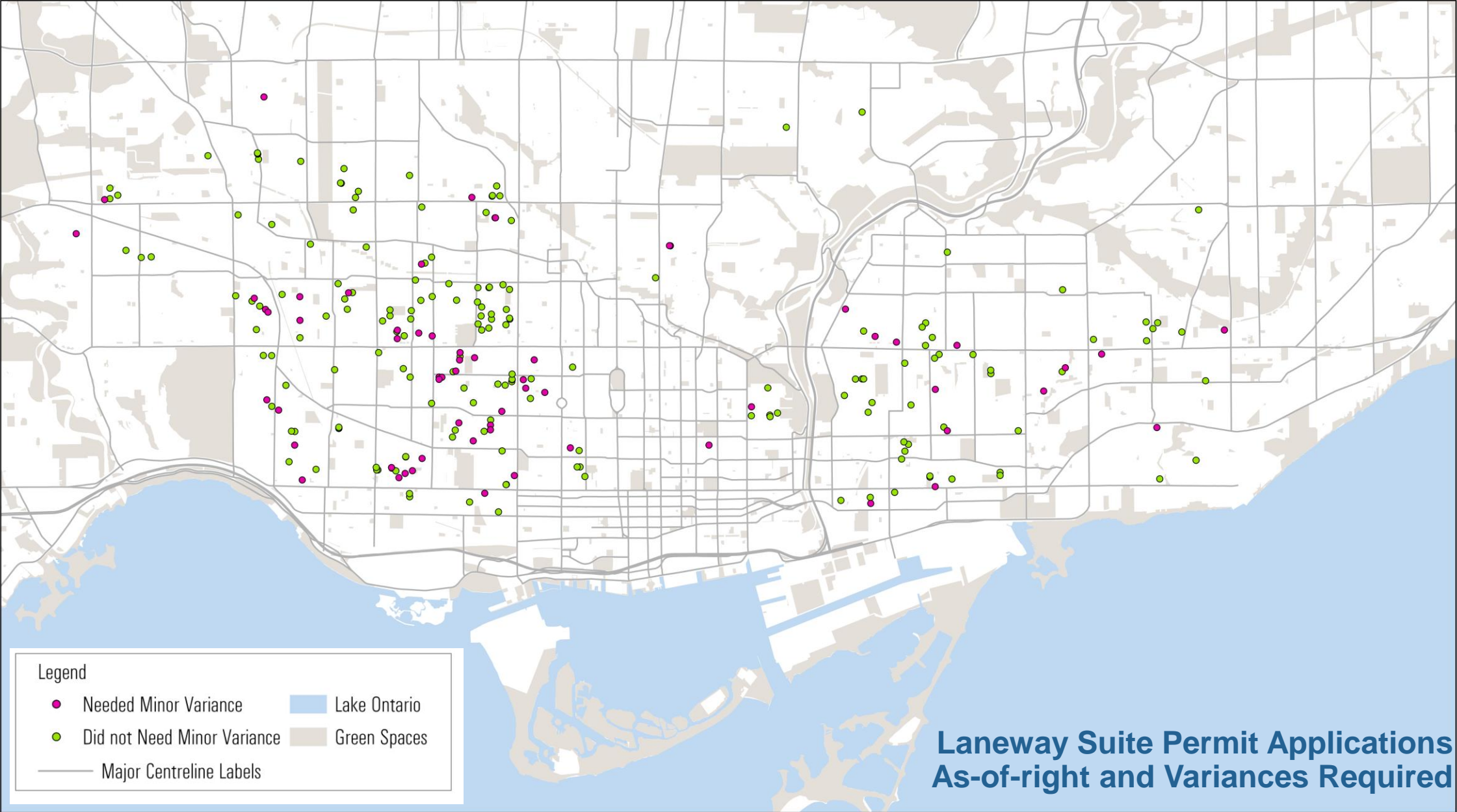
Applications for Suite are increasing year over year. Permits for the year 2021 are on track to eclipse those submitted in 2020.

As of May 2021, 50 suites have been completed and building permits have been issued for 131 more.



**Laneway Suite Permit Applications
(August 2018 to May 2021)**



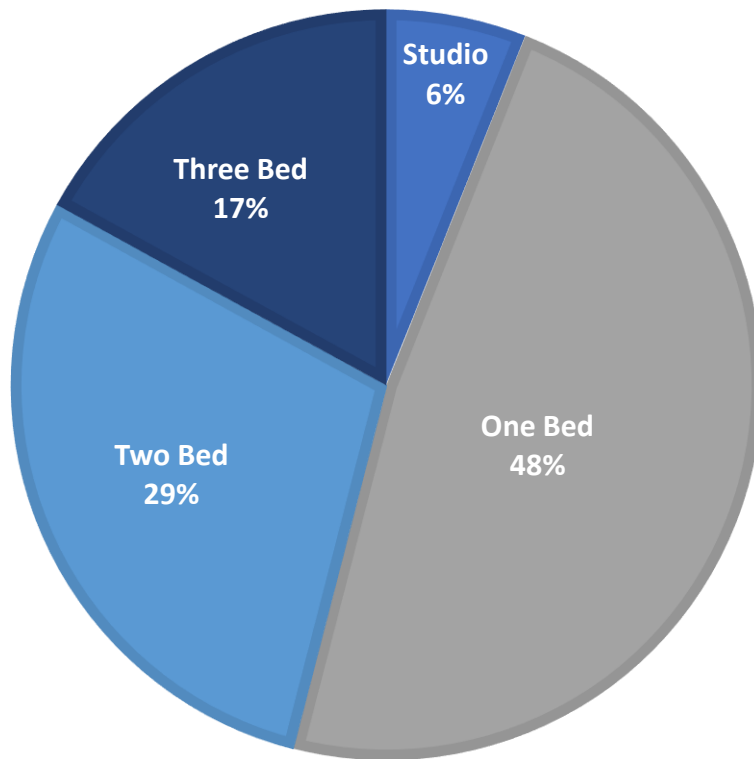


What kind of Suites are Being Built?

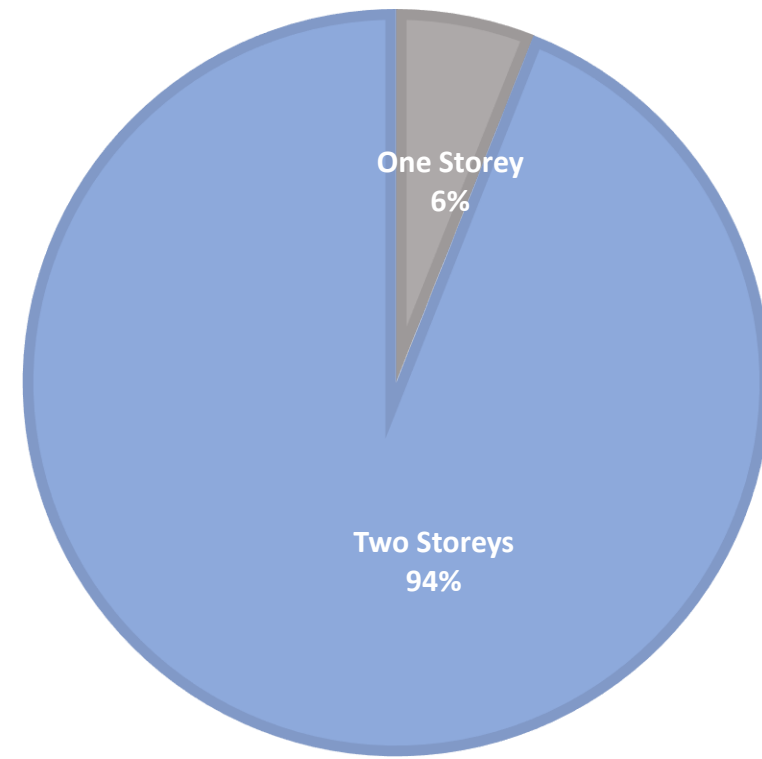


Laneway Suite Statistics Review

The City reviewed 100 randomly selected building permit applications for Laneway Suites submitted since August 2018. The purpose of this was to get an overall picture of what kind of suites are being proposed and built.



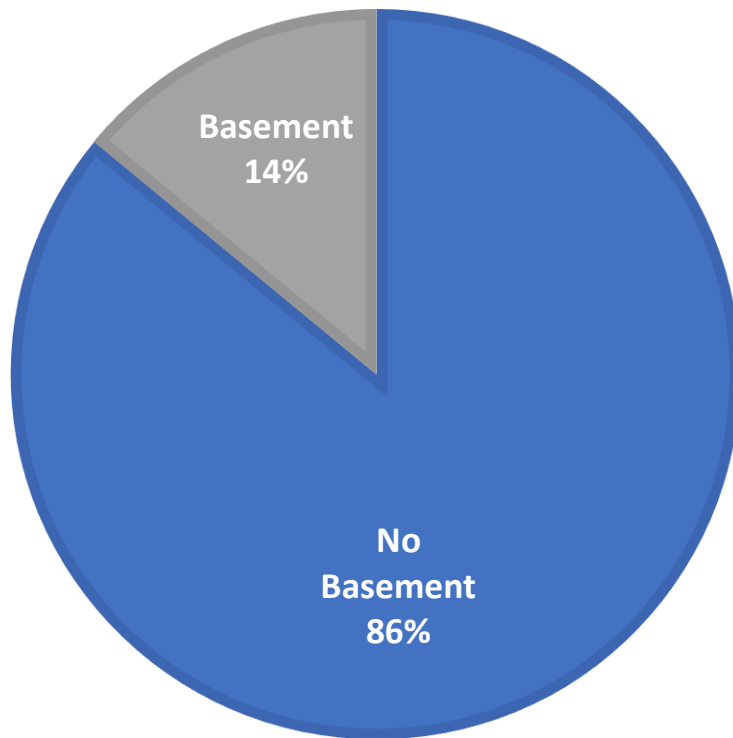
NUMBER OF BEDROOMS IN
LANEWAY SUITES



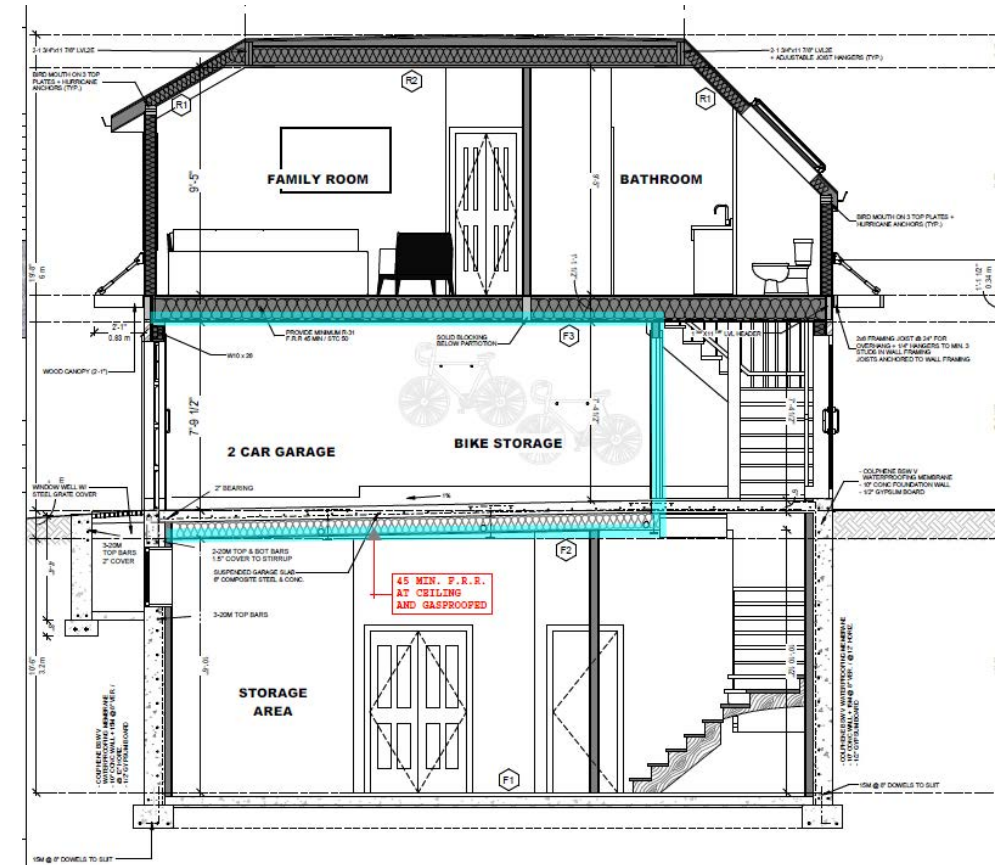
LANEWAY SUITE BUILDING HEIGHT

100%

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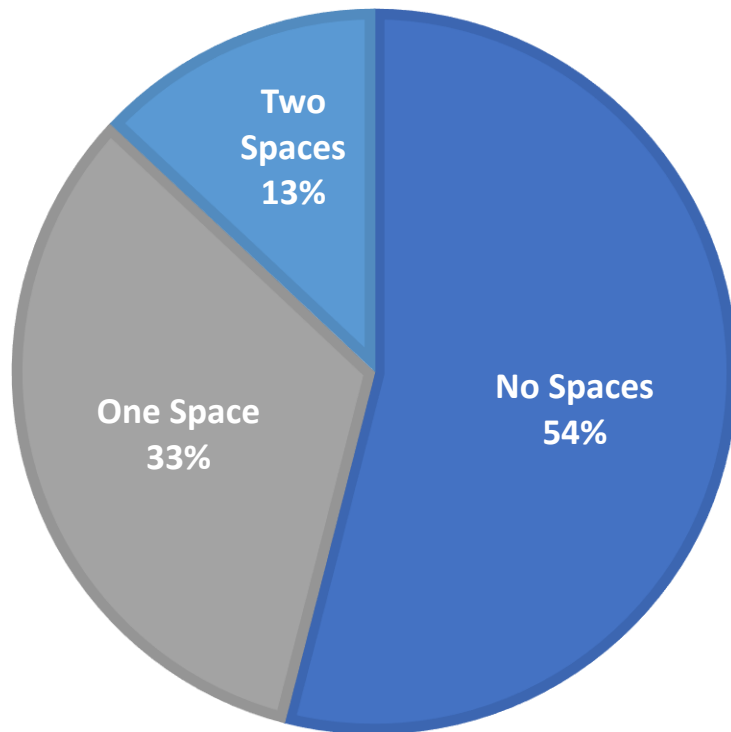


BASEMENTS IN LANEWAY SUITES



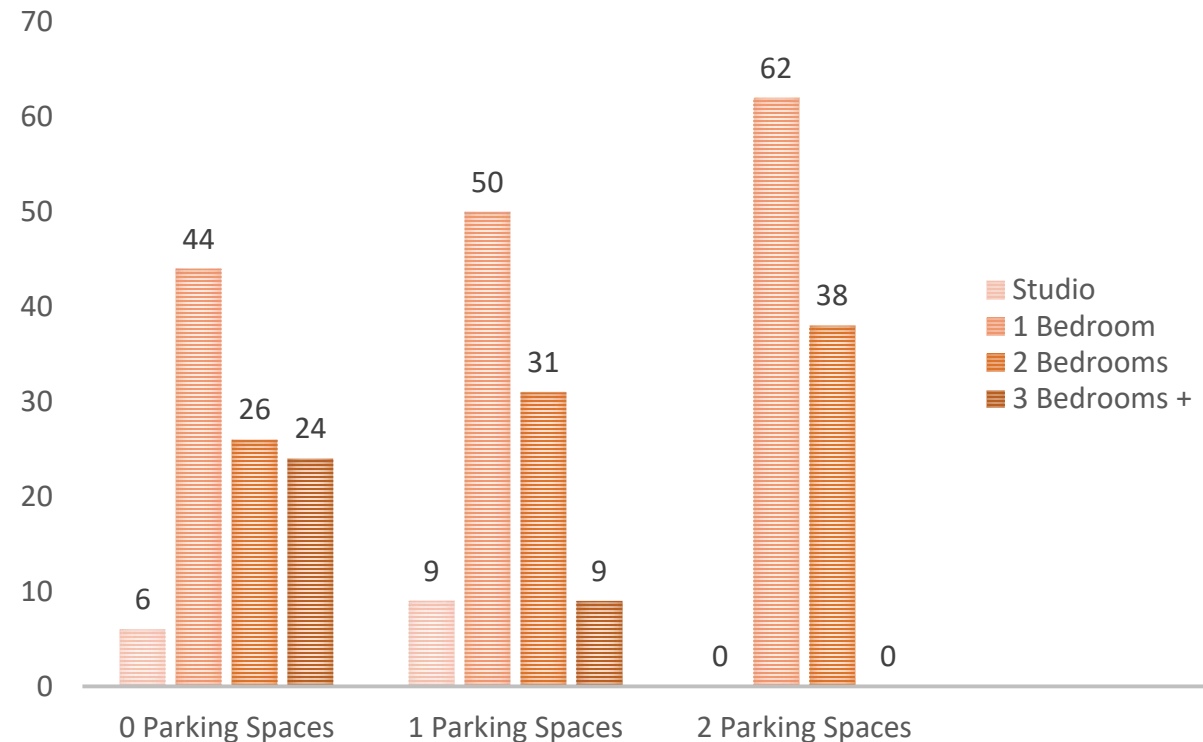
General Observations from Review

We reviewed the number of parking spaces provided, as well as the parking being provided relative to the number of bedrooms constructed in a suite. Generally speaking, parking diminishes the overall living space within a suite.



PARKING IN LANEWAY SUITES

% Of Suites with 0 to 3 Bedrooms Relative to Parking Spaces Constructed



Other Observations

- Units often have ground floor bedrooms.
- Several suites feature ground floor “storage” which is obviously parking.
- Few conversions of existing structures, mostly rebuilds.
- Loft style 2nd storeys rare.
- Suite designs with both parking and basements are rare.
- Basement are often used for storage, limited windows.
- Several designs with whole and partial green roofs.



Image: BlogTO



Laneway Suites and the Committee of Adjustment

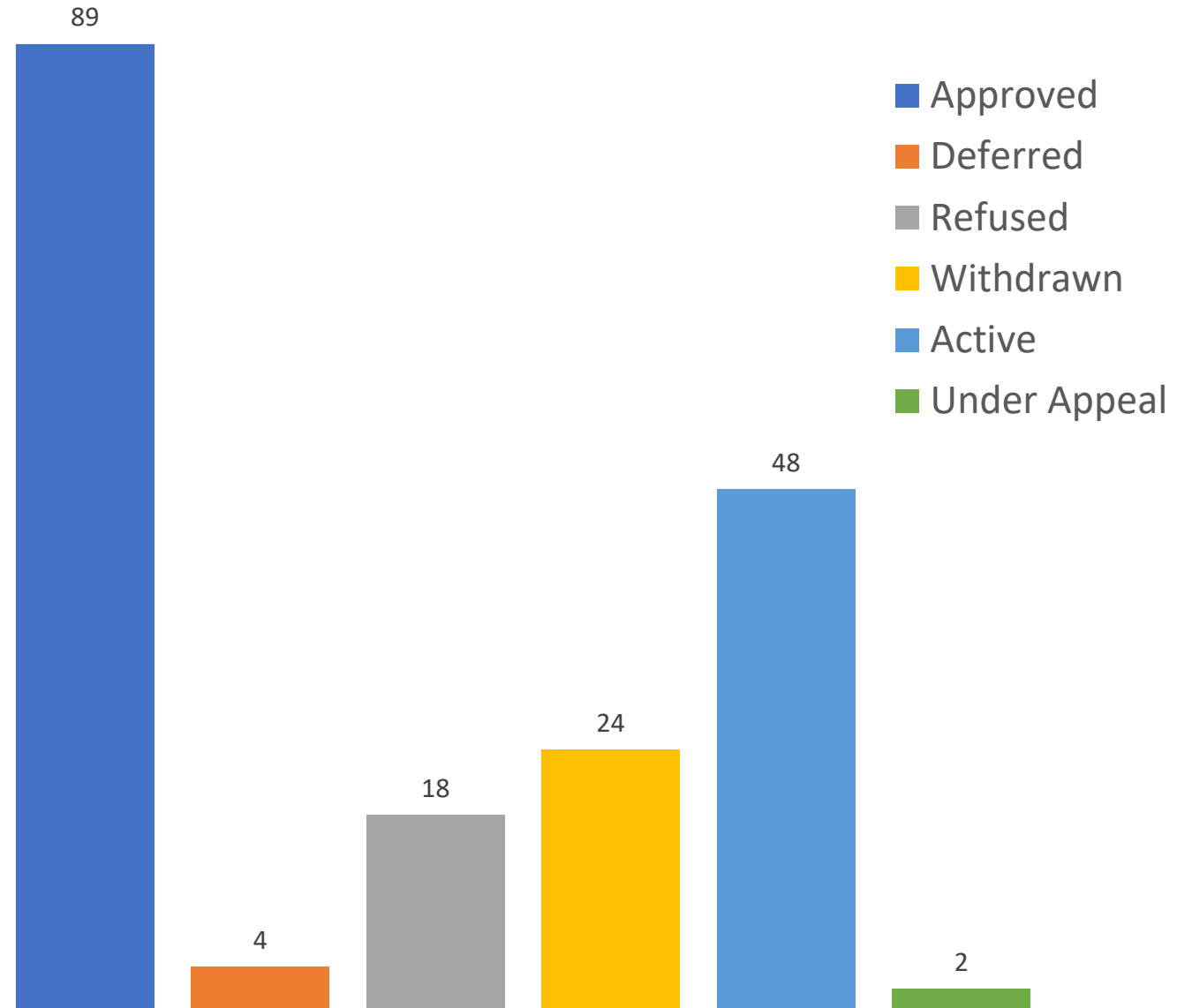


Number and Status of Minor Variance Applications

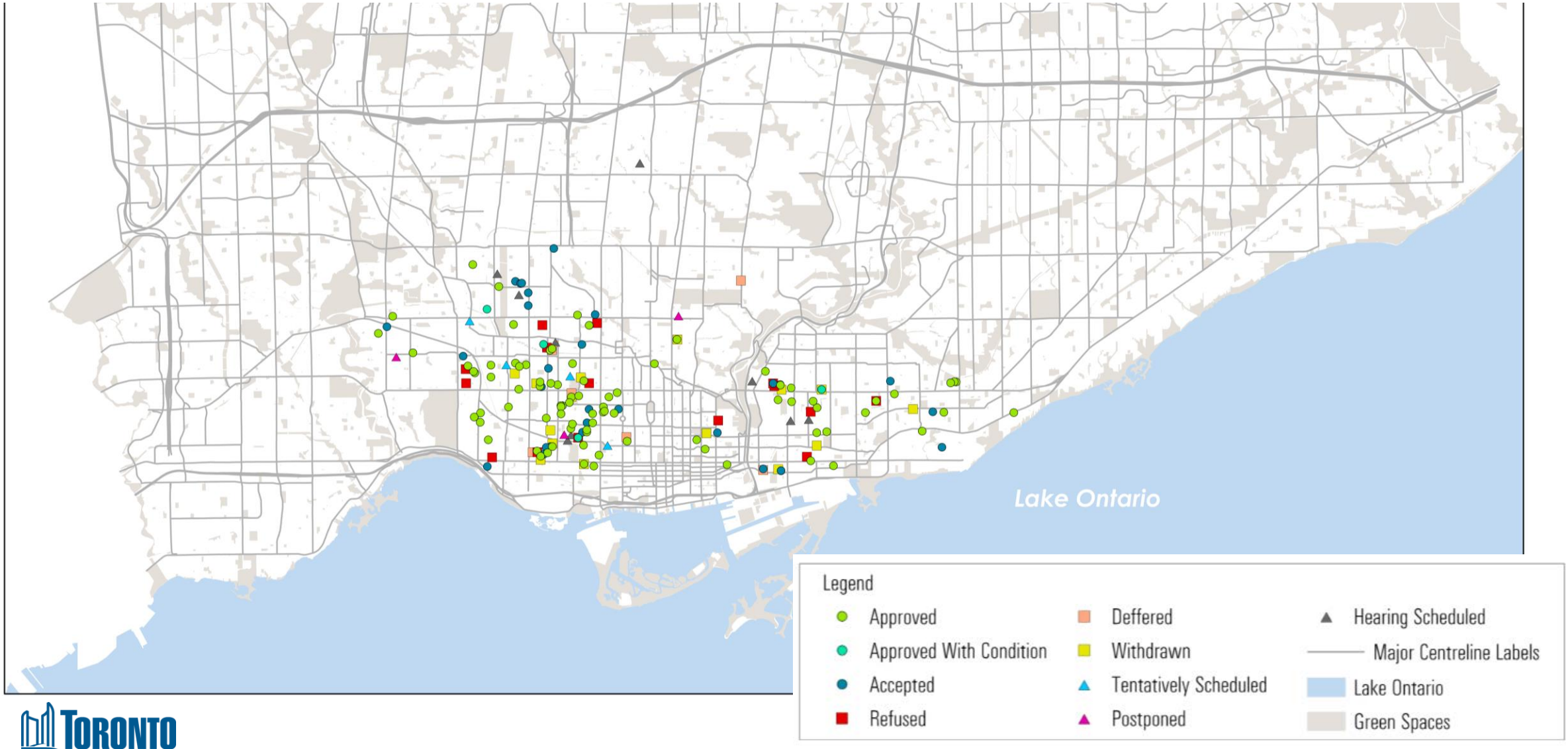
As of May 2021, the City has received 185 applications associated with 167 unique addresses.

A total of 137 applications have been resolved while 48 applications remain active.

The Committee of Adjustment has approved the majority of completed applications.



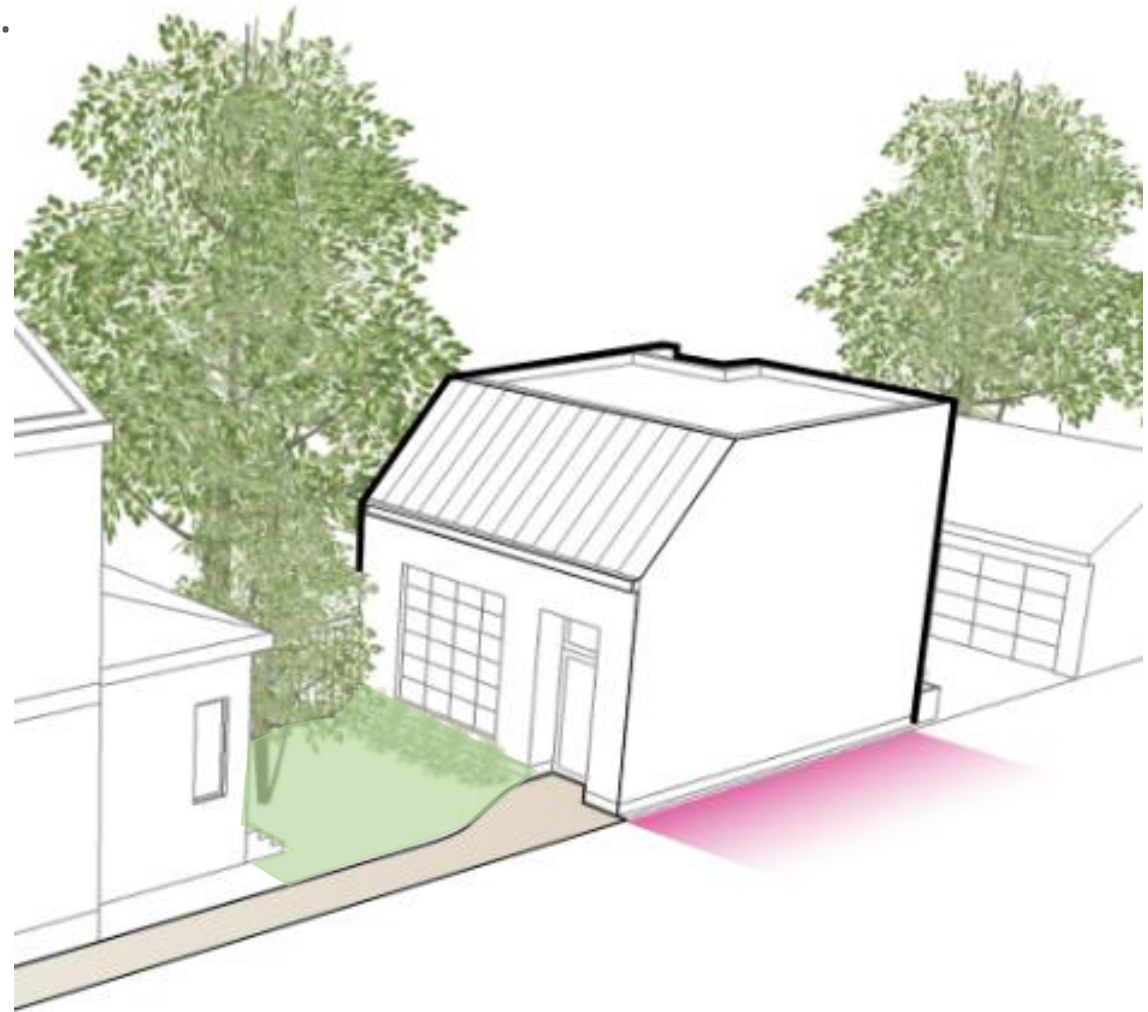
Committee of Adjustment Applications for Laneway Suites



Most Common Variance Requests

The following 5 requested minor variances appeared most often in a review of all minor variance applications for Laneway Suites.

Description	Count	Approved
85% Soft Landscaping	37	62%
1.5 m Rear Yard Setback	21	81%
45 Degree Angular Plane	18	78%
Rear Landscape Buffer	11	91%
Max Height of Laneway Suite	10	70%



Potential By-law Adjustments

Based on a review of the most commonly occurring minor variance applications the City could amend:

- 85% soft landscaping requirement with a lot frontage greater than 6.0 metres;
- 1.5 metre setback from the lane;
- 75% soft landscaping between the laneway suite and the lane;
- 4.0/ 6.0 metre maximum height of one/two storey laneway suite, respectively;

Further review and consultation may suggest other amendments beyond those discussed here.



Other Monitoring



Laneway Suites and Trees

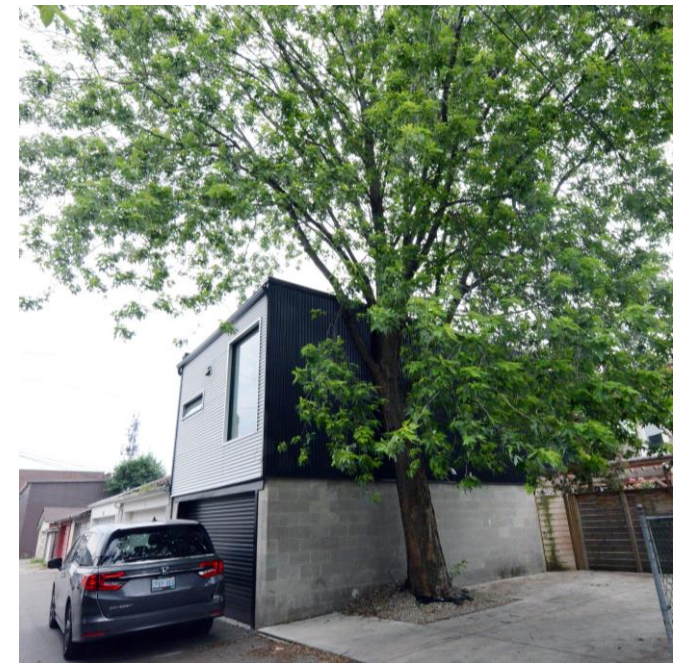
The City's Urban Forestry Staff monitored and reviewed applications for laneway suites that impacted trees protected under the Municipal Code.



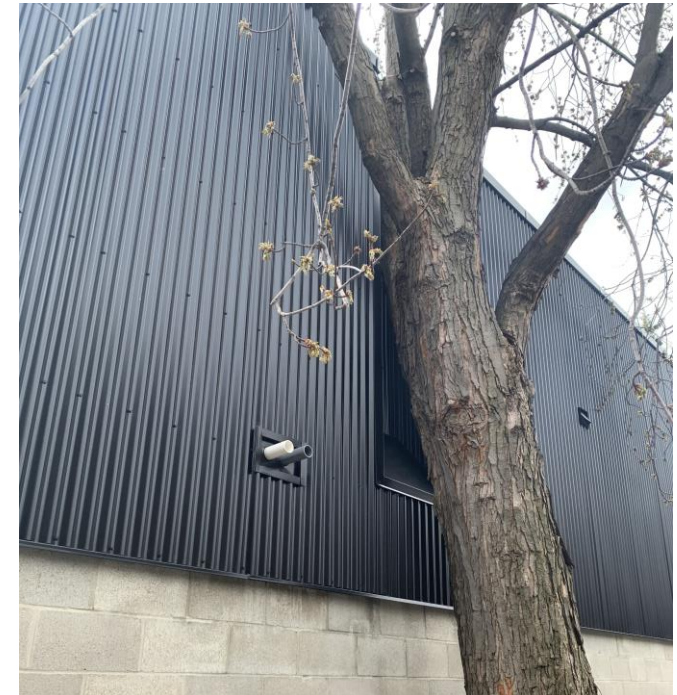
5% of Laneway Suite Proposals resulted in injury or removal of a tree

The City was able to resolve most concerns with laneway suite builders. Some suite designs were adjusted to accommodate trees.

The City's Neighbourhoods are losing pervious ground area at the highest rate in the City. Innovative approaches to growing green space and facilitating tree planting and protection are necessary.



Images: Lanescape



Affordable Laneway Suite Pilot

The Affordable Laneway Suites Pilot Program provides funding in form of a forgivable **loan of up to \$50,000** for eligible property owners developing a laneway suite.

To date a total of **7 of the 20 loans** funded by the City have been granted or are in process.

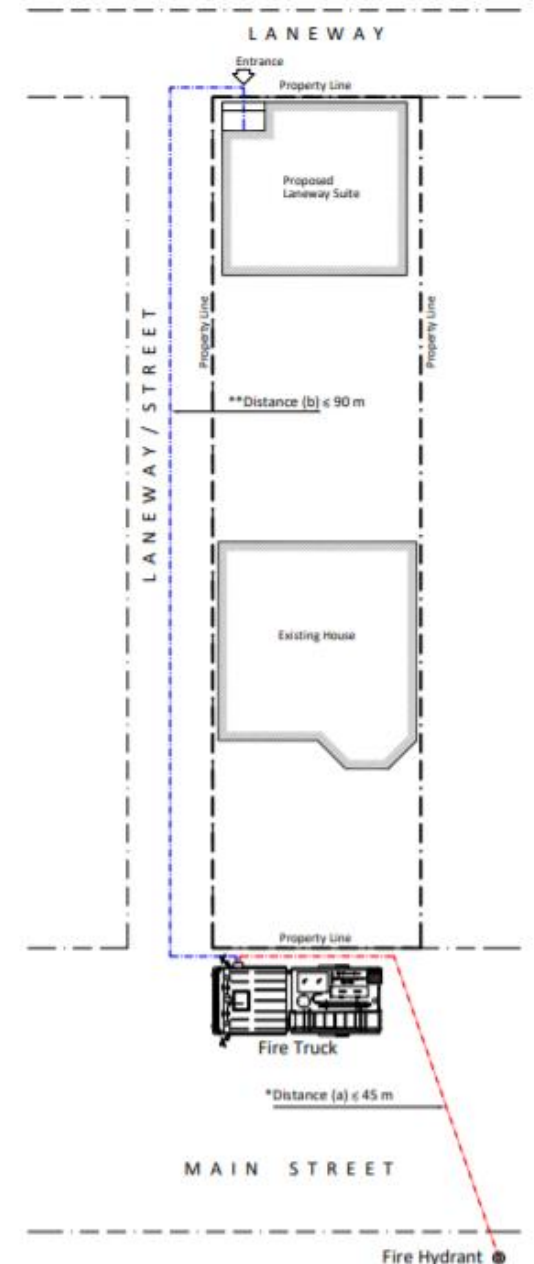
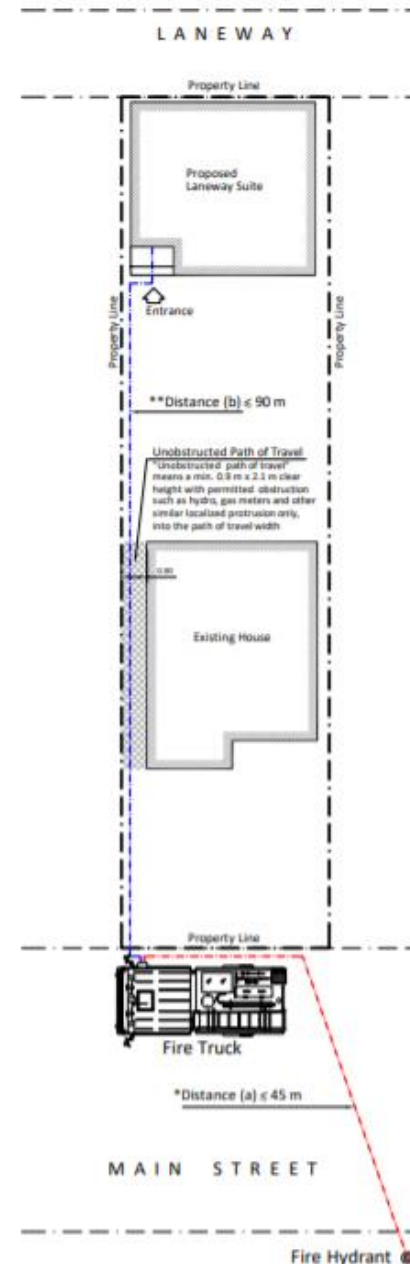
Suites applying for the grant are typically one bedroom designs and have to be rented at or below “Average Market Rent” for a one-bedroom suite which is **\$1431**.



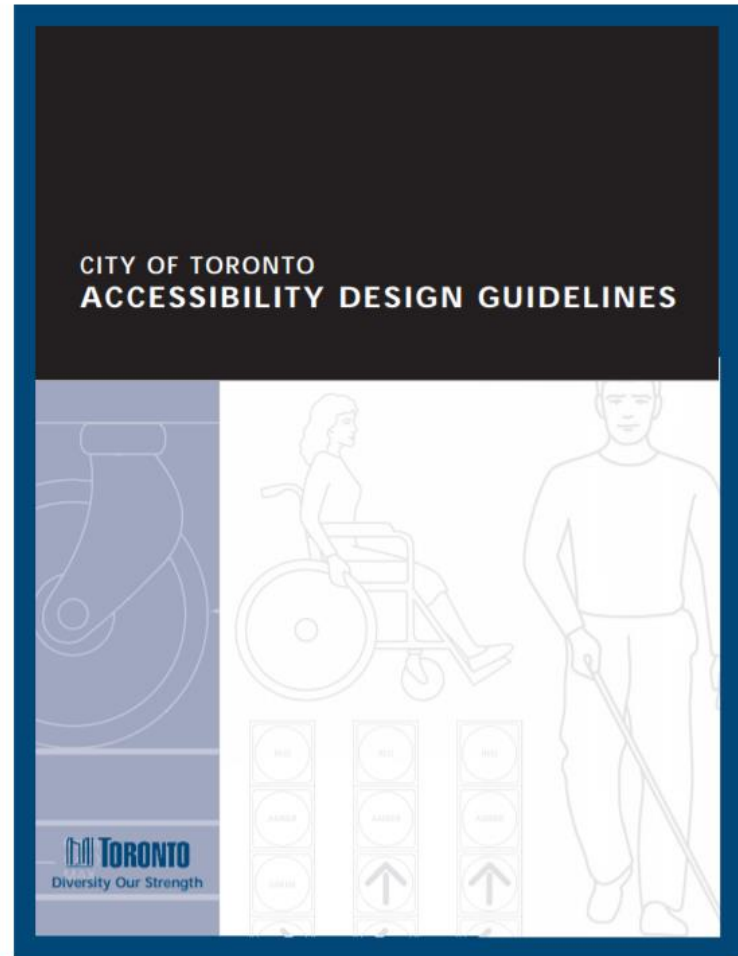
Emergency Access

Since 2018, the City has, on two occasions, revised the emergency access requirements or suites to better facilitate laneway Suite Construction.

Emergency Access can be provided via the laneway and/or via a side yard in a variety of configurations. If you have questions, please consult the City's website or contact Toronto Building Department Staff.



Accessibility



Laneway Suites present an opportunity for units to be designed in accordance with a range of accessibility standards, including the City's Accessibility Design Guidelines.

The lack of a parking requirement helps facilitate the use of the entire ground floor area of a suite as living space.

City Staff who developed these guidelines recommend that:

- a best practices document for laneway suite construction which includes information about Accessible Design Standards be developed, and,
- Preapproved accessible designs be endorsed by the City.

Rent Levels, Assessments, and Occupancy

City Planning does not have sufficient data to comment on or ascertain any trends regarding rent level or the substance of property assessment appeals related to laneway suites.

City Planning is also not able to ascertain the occupancy of a laneway suite.

It's important to note that nothing in the Zoning By-law can restrict the nature of tenancy.



Rear Yards and Side Yards

In some cases, suites have been built to the side lot line of a property facing into the rear yard of an adjacent lot.

City Planning is reviewing this and considering whether an adjustment to the By-law standards for laneway suites is necessary.



Observations from Industry Interviews and Correspondence



Laneway Building Industry Interviews

As part of the monitoring program we interviewed architects, builders and planners involved in laneway suite construction. Their comments are summarized as follows:

- Zoning By-law is generally working well, allowing homeowners to follow as-of-right zoning without seeking a minor variance where they choose to do so;
- Landscaping requirements, height, bicycle parking, and setback from lane were highlighted as provisions in need of amendment;
- There is a need to consider perpendicular/ irregular lot relationships
- The timeline for the review of building permit and committee of adjustment applications as well as the overall cost of applications was highlighted as barrier to homeowners;
- Currently laneway suites range between \$400-\$700 per square foot; and,
- Applicants sometimes found it difficult to navigate the process between the various City agencies, such as Urban Forestry, that have a role in reviewing laneway suite applications



Image: R-Hauz

Review of correspondence from Changing Lanes



As part of the monitoring program we have reviewed correspondence from the original Changing Lanes study and recent correspondence from members of the public who have shared comments regarding:

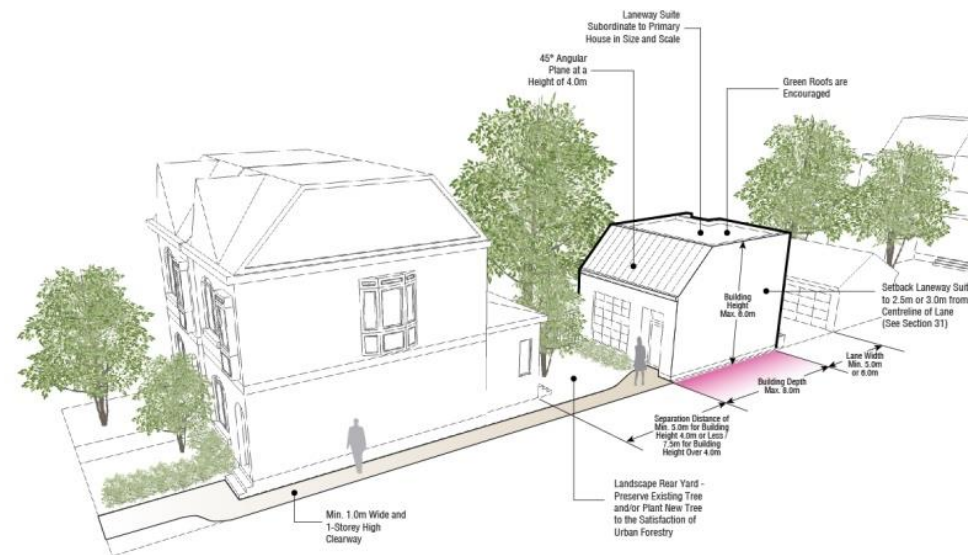
- Privacy and overlook;
- Building footprint;
- Loss of Trees and Green space;
- Open street access and service from the primary dwelling;
- Impact on affordability and rental stock levels;
- Impact on neighbouring properties; and, separation distances between laneway suites and adjacent properties

Next Steps



Next Steps

- Drafting By-law amendments to facilitate more as-of-right laneway suite construction.
- Further consultation + comment form on webpage + posted materials
- Continuing to work on a Garden Suites By-law
- Final Report on Laneway Suite Monitoring work before the end of 2021.
- How-To Guide as part of the *Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods* work
- Continued training and education of staff to support and facilitate suite construction.



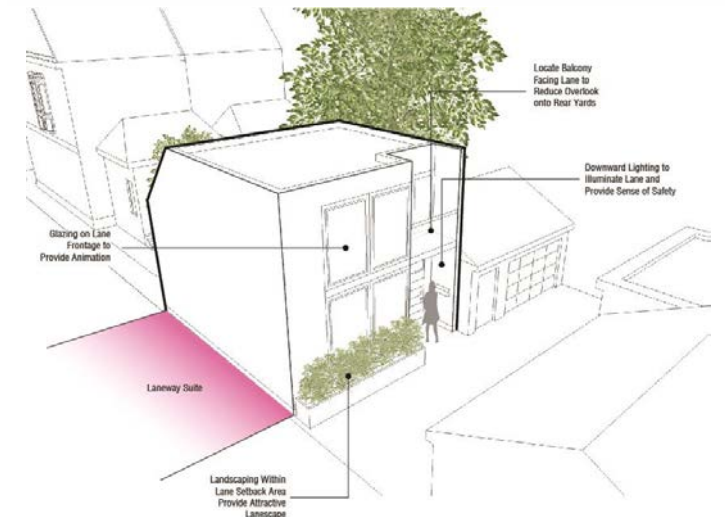
[Toronto.ca/ChangingLanes](https://toronto.ca/ChangingLanes)



[Toronto.ca/Garden Suites](https://toronto.ca/GardenSuites)

Laneway Suites

- ✓ Consistent with Provincial and City Policies;
- ✓ Have been successfully implemented in many other cities;
- ✓ Have limited impacts on adjacent properties;
- ✓ Are a new form of rental accommodation;
- ✓ Provide new opportunities for the aging population, multi-gen living;
- ✓ Provide new opportunities for living in neighbourhoods;
- ✓ Are just one example of necessary Neighbourhood growth and change;
- ✓ Are often constructed without a trip to the Committee of Adjustment;
- ✓ Can enhance and improve the safety of our laneways; and
- ✓ Are Good Planning.



Thank You

www.Toronto.ca/ChangingLanes



Discussion

How to participate:

- Raise Hand Function

- Q&A Function

- Chat Function

- Participants Calling-in can dial *3 to raise hand

Questions, Comments?

