HOW-TO GUIDE: NAME YOUR LANEWAY

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1. TOP FIVE REASONS TO NAME YOUR LANEWAY

Safety and Security

Naming a laneway helps police, fire and paramedic services find it in the event of an emergency.

Commemorating History

Naming a laneway after a noteworthy person, place, event, or thing in the history of Toronto, Canada, or the world (something that is strongly encouraged under the City's street naming policy) helps preserve history.

Placemaking

Naming a laneway gives the lane an identity, and creates a sense of place, which also serves to invite more pedestrian traffic, making it safer.

Community Building

The collaborative process of naming a laneway (and it takes a collaborative process), helps build community connections, good will, and a feeling of neighbourhood pride.

Invites Further Laneway Improvements

Naming a laneway (and the community connections that this creates) opens the door to further laneway improvements, such as beautification, community events (such as laneway movie screenings, potlucks and local farmers' markets) or other investments.

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Bloordale Laneway Crawl
Photo by: Katrina Afonso

2. OFFICIAL LANEWAY NAMING PROCESS

From Application to Official Naming

1) File an application with the City of Toronto Engineering and Construction Services Division. (See the Step-by-Step Guide on pg. 6 for more details on the application)

2) The division reviews the application to ensure that the name being proposed is in accordance with the City of Toronto Honorific and Street Naming Policy.

3) If the name passes, it is circulated to Police, Fire, Toronto Paramedic Services, the local Preservation Panel and the local City Councillor for comments back to Engineering and Construction Services.

4) The Engineering and Construction Services Division then prepares a report on the proposed naming for the local Community Council to consider at a future meeting with recommendations to approve/reject the proposed name.

5) The Community Council considers the report and makes a decision as to the proposed name.

6) If the name is approved by the Community Council, signage is installed by the City.

Photo by: Katrina Afonso

3. STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

There are four components of a successful laneway naming process:

1) The laneway naming application (what you need to include, and where to send it)
2) The criteria of an acceptable laneway name
3) Securing the requirement of community support
4) Contacting your local City Councillor

Each component is described in detail below.

3.1 The Laneway Naming Application

As stipulated under section 6.3.2 of the City of Toronto Honorific and Street Naming Policy the laneway naming application must include the following elements:

- The proposed name(s) of the laneway(s)
- A map specifying the street location(s) of the laneway(s) to be named (either in paper of digital form—such as an edited screen shot of a Google maps page)
- Brief but complete background information on the proposed name(s)
- If applicable, the informed written consent of the individual, group or organization whose name is being proposed (or a representative thereof)

Optional: a signed petition providing evidence of general public support for the proposed name(s). (See the section titled *Securing the requirement of public support* on pg 08 for more details)

**An application form to help ensure all required elements are present is available here: Application Form

Send completed applications by email, fax, or mail to the following address:

Kerry Ferguson, Senior Ontario Land Surveyor, City of Toronto
Engineering & Construction Services, 18 Dyas Road, 4th Floor, Toronto, ON, M3B 1V5
email// kferguso@toronto.ca phone// 416-392-7757

3.2 The Criteria of an Acceptable Laneway Name

Proposed laneway names must meet several criteria, as laid out in the City of Toronto Honorific and Street Naming Policy.

Most important, proposed names must:

- Not already be in use (section 6.3.1.1). (A list of the existing names of streets in Toronto is available here: Toronto Street Names)
- Commemorate noteworthy people, places, events and things in Toronto, Canada and the world, with a preference for local people, places, events, and things of note (section 6.1-6.1.3)
- Have the informed written consent of the individual, group or organization whose name is being proposed (or a representative thereof) (section 5.2.1). (You should include this informed written consent with your application)
- Have general public support (section 6.1.1.1). (For more information on this important criterion, see the next section, titled *Securing the requirement of public support*)

If you're not aware of the local people, places, events and things that are most of note in your area you may wish to contact the City of Toronto Preservation Services (also see the contact list in the *helpful resources* section), or an historical association for more information regarding these matters, and for potential names. There are several historical associations in Toronto, many of which are affiliated with the umbrella organization the Toronto Historical Association.

For more information about acceptable laneway names, interested parties should consider reading the City of Toronto Honorific and Street Naming Policy in full, and especially sections 6.1-6.1.4.

3.3 Securing the Requirement of Public Support

As mentioned above, acceptable laneway names must be deemed to have "general public support". The most important aspect of public support is that the proposed name has the approval of the residents and business owners whose properties abut the laneway in question (though wider public support than this does bolster an application).

Gaining public support can generally be achieved in one of two ways:

i. The top-down approach:

Involves contacting your local City Councillor and/or a community organization (such as a residents' or neighborhood association, or a Business Improvement Area organization), and working with the Councillor and community organization(s) to form a strategy to come up with a name for the laneway, and garner public support.

A good list of community organizations by city ward can be found here: Community Organizations. A map of residents' associations, with links to each, can be found here: Residents' Associations. A map of Toronto's Business Improvement Areas can be found here. Your local City Councillor can also provide suggestions on what organizations to contact.

ii. The bottom-up approach:

Involves contacting the relevant residents and business owners directly, and deciding on a name that is acceptable to all. From here you could submit your application to the City immediately, or go on to contact your local City Councillor and/or community organizations (such as those mentioned above).

Reaching Out to Your Neighbours

Both the top-down and bottom-up approaches require that the residents and business owners whose properties abut the laneway be contacted, and their support secured.

Often the easiest way to do this is to begin by dropping a leaflet in the mailboxes of the relevant parties. The leaflet should establish

1) The plan to name the laneway;
2) The benefits of naming laneways; and
3) A forum for future and ongoing discussion.

The forum for ongoing discussion may consist of an **in-person meeting** at a specific time and place (residents' and neighbourhood association meetings are good for this), or an **online forum** such as a Facebook group.

From here possible names can be proposed, and an attempt made to achieve a consensus—or, at the very least, an agreement to leave the name up to a vote. Finally, arrangements can be made to prepare and submit the laneway naming application. It is a good idea to include a signed petition with your application to prove that your proposal does indeed have general public support.

3.4 Contacting your Local City Councillor

Strictly speaking, you don't need to contact your local City Councillor in order to have a laneway named. However, it is a VERY good idea to do so, and to do so early in the process. This is because the ultimate decision to approve/reject your proposed name is up to your local Community Council, which is headed by your local City Councillor, and so it is very important to have their support. Besides, as mentioned above, your local City Councillor can provide excellent suggestions and advice to ensure your endeavor is a success.

Contact information for all City Councillors is available here: Toronto City Councillors

4. LANEWAY NAMING SUCCESS STORIES

When embarking on an endeavor such as naming a laneway, it's always nice to hear some success stories to get you going (and provide you with ideas). Here are some links to some such stories:

The HVRA Laneway Naming Project

Harbord Village Sets the Lane Naming Standard

Seaton Village's Lane Naming Project

'Crestfallen Lane' May Soon Commemorate Piece of Seaton Village History

The Hidden History in Toronto's Back Lanes

Laneway Names Celebrate Cabbagetown's Heritage

City to Name Sky Gilbert Lane

Toronto Gets Some of its First Aboriginally Named Streets

New Laneway Names Rooted in Toronto's History

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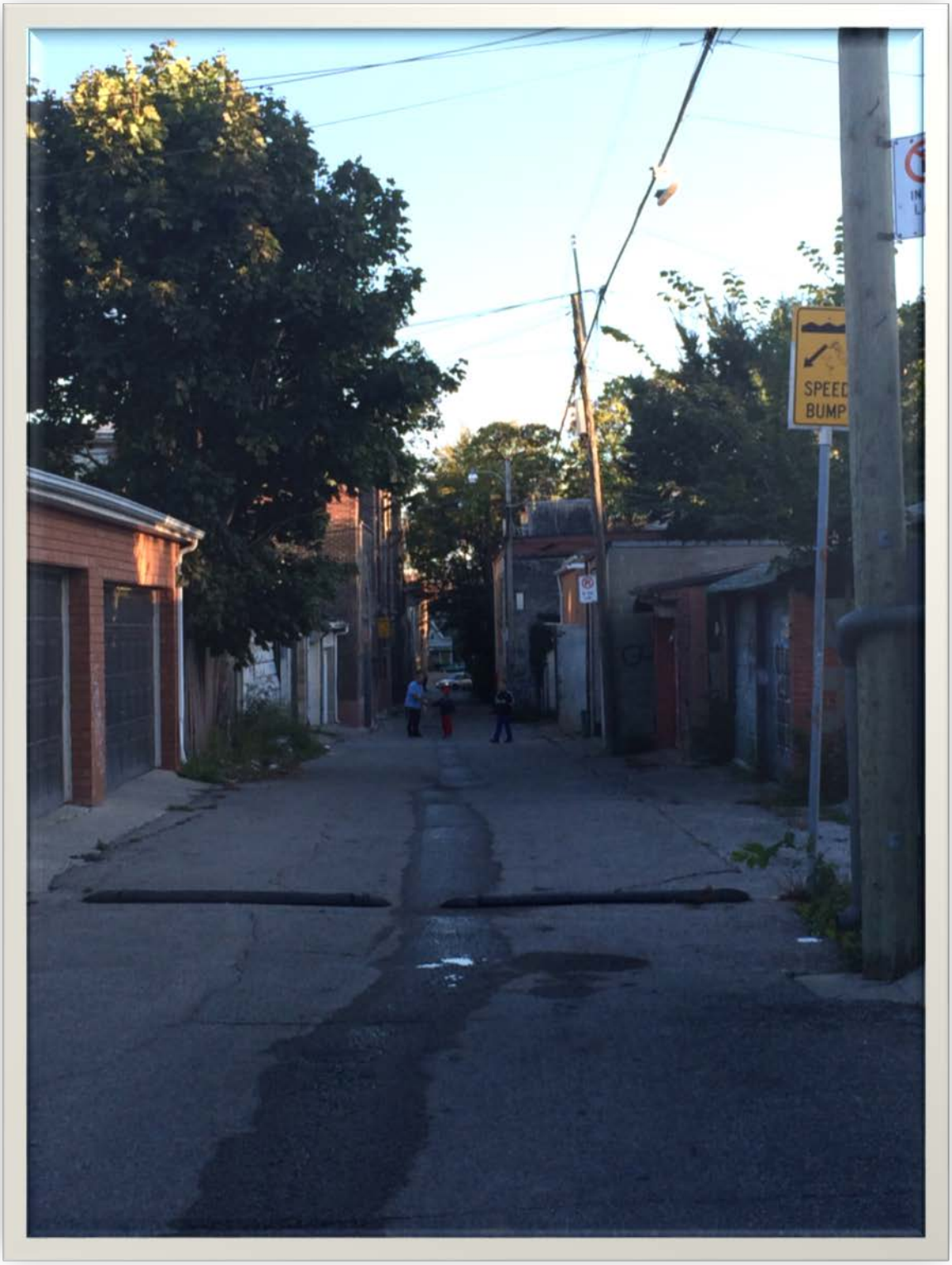

Photo by: Ariana Cancelli

5. LINKS TO HELPFUL RESOURCES

Laneway Naming Application Form

City of Toronto Honorific and Street Naming Policy

Contact Information for Local City Councillors

Important Community Organizations in Toronto, by City Ward

Map of Residents Associations in Toronto, with Links to Each

Map of Toronto's Business Improvement Areas

Toronto Historical Association

Toronto Preservation Services
Toronto East York Preservation Panel: Penchetta Barnett// psbillionaire@yahoo.com
Etobicoke York Preservation Panel: Mary Louise Ashbourne// mashbour@idirect.com
North York Preservation Panel: Geoff Kettel// gkettel@gmail.com
Scarborough Preservation Panel: Richard Schofield// rick.schofield@rogers.com

List of Existing Street Names in Toronto

How to Create a Facebook Group

THE LANEWAY PROJECT

The Laneway Project is an innovative urban design and planning organization that is fundamentally changing Toronto's relationship with its laneways.

Learn more at thelanewayproject.ca