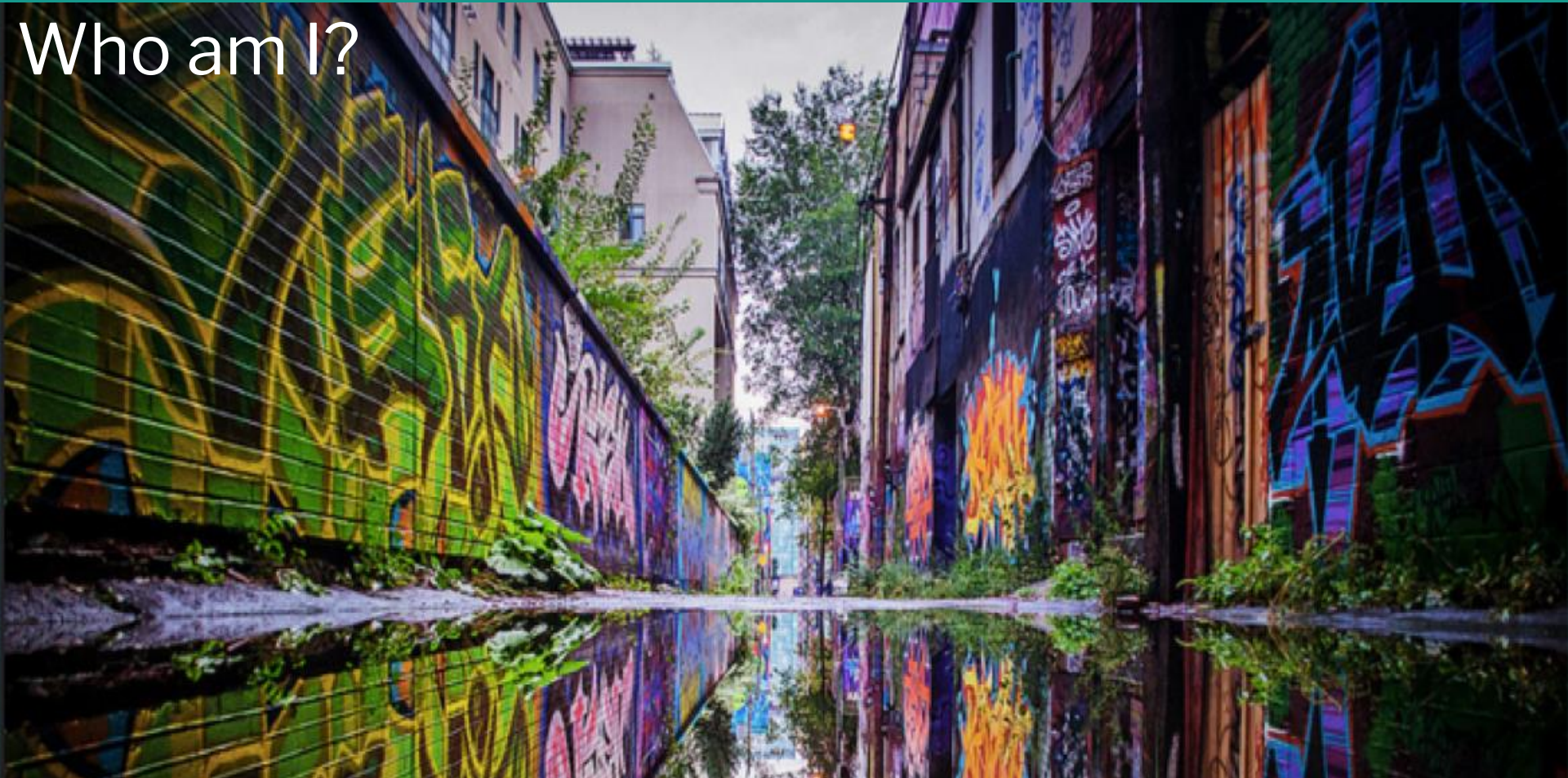




Thrive Community Symposium

A “Yes, And...!” Approach to Developing Community





Who am I?

Executive Director of The Laneway Project

Lanrick Bennett Jr. (I'm a
placemaker)*



*What is a Placemaker?

Maybe...

- Placemaking is a participatory process for shaping public space that harnesses the ideas and assets of the people who use it.
- Placemaking means creating places and focuses on transforming public spaces to strengthen the connections between people and these places.
- Placemaking is about improving the quality of public spaces and the lives of the people who use them.
- Placemaking is a people-centered approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces.

“Equitable placemaking does not simply entail advocating for dignified, accessible & beautiful spaces for yourself & individuals who look like you. It requires an intentional effort to advocate for others even when all of your needs and desires are honoured in a space or place.”

Jay Pitter

As an audience member...

This isn't an improv show

- I won't be performing, but I'll be sharing with you a few of my stories and how the art form of improv really got me to Yes, and a lot more.
- More times than not in a positive way, a few times it was exhausting, but 100% of the time, it moved me, my family, my abilities forward.
- You won't be judged if you say no. That is your right within this safe space, but I think you're going to look back and ask yourself why you didn't say yes.
- I'll tell you a little bit more about The Laneway Project, then I've got three stories to tell you over the next 45 mins but before that, we are ALL going to make a living, breathing MACHINE.

So... What is Improv?

From The Archives

- Improvisation, or improv, is a form of live theatre in which the plot, characters and dialogue of a game, scene or story are made up in the moment. Often improvisers will take a suggestion from the audience, or draw on some other source of inspiration to get started.

From My Life Experience

- Improvisation, or improv, gave me a hint of courage. The ability to think well outside of that box we're all clinging to. Improv allows me to meet new people, create new friendships. Improv allows me create a bridge of conversation, it forces me to look at things with equitable and, at times, a justice focussed lens. Improv allows me to embrace fun.

Tiny bit of history...

...because I need to give props

- Improvisation exercises were developed by Viola Spolin in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, and codified in her book *Improvisation For The Theater*
- Viola Spolin influenced the first generation of modern North American improvisers at The Compass Players in Chicago, which led to The Second City. Her son, Paul Sills, along with David Shepherd, started The Compass Players. Following the demise of the Compass Players, Paul Sills began The Second City. They were the first organized improv troupes in Chicago, and the modern Chicago improvisational comedy movement grew from their success

A tiny bit more history...

...because I need to give props

- If you grew up watching Saturday Night Live, many of their stars came from and continue to come from The Second City
- SCTV of course was our home grown version with the likes of:
 - John Candy
 - Robin Duke
 - Joe Flaherty
 - Eugene Levy
 - Catherine O'Hara (from Shitts Creek)
 - Andrea Martin
 - Rick Moranis
 - Martin Short (who I produced two variety shows for at Fallsview Casino!)

Promise this is it with the history...

...because I need to give props

- We've got main stage Canadian actors on TV now like Lauren Ash, Kris Siddiqi
- Darryl Hinds, Aurora Brown and Who's Line is It Anyways? Colin Mochrie...but no one really likes Colin

As an audience member...

I'm going to ask you to trust me

- To trust me not to hurt you physically or mentally
- To trust me not to put you in a situation you don't want to be in
- To trust me to ask permission

What do you bring to table?

- An open mind
- Understanding that No and Yes, But can really only hold back the story
- Understanding that saying Yes, And... can open up new worlds or just get another person to smile.

What's this game you want us to play?

Again this isn't an improv show

- Machine is a game
- Machine connects multiple simple, repetitive body motions in a sequence to represent an idea, theme, or process.
- In Machine, players explore vocal and body movements skills
 - like projection, articulation, level and shape in space, quality of motion, and tempo – as they consider how an individual action is part of a larger connected system.

How do we proceed?

- 1. Start with one player making a noise and a simple repeatable gesture.
- 2. When the player has a rhythm and another person has an idea for a movement which connects to the first gesture, that person joins the first person by making a new noise and movement which connects to the original gesture.
- 3. Each player joins in their own time with a new noise and gesture and connects to the others in some way until all players are involved in creating the machine.



**Project
Kickoff**

**Master
Planning**

**Detailed
Design**

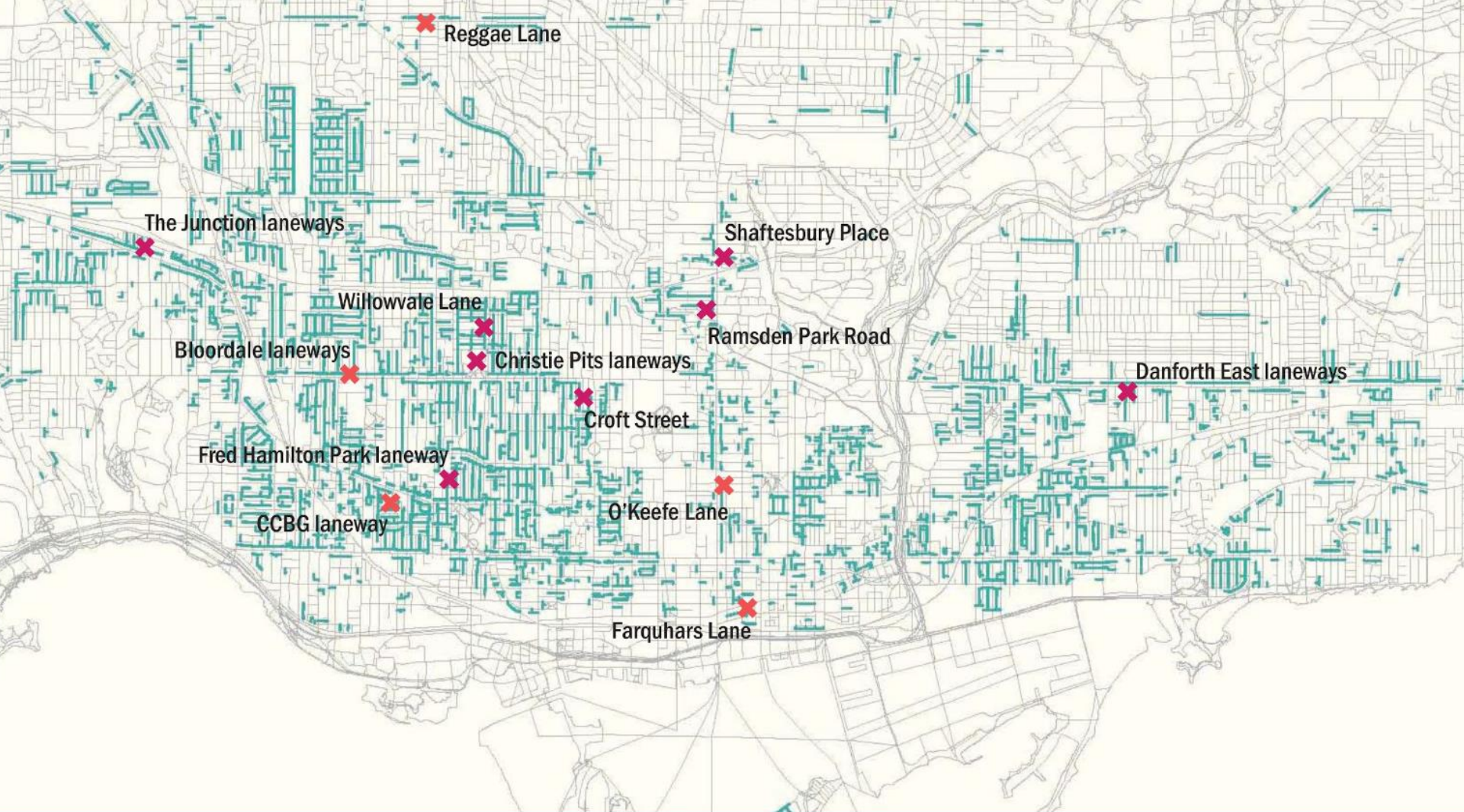
Implementation

**Site
Analysis**

WHAT IS THE LANEWAY PROJECT?

The Laneway Project is an independent, non-profit social enterprise. We are urban planners, designers and placemakers, and we work with public, private, and community-level stakeholders to transform laneways and other neglected public spaces into complete, living public places: building collaborative teams, implementing best practices and catalyzing policy changes.

We are recognized internationally and have become Canada's leading expert on the community-integrated transformation of underutilized spaces into social infrastructure assets. We take our projects from planning through implementation and evaluation which uniquely positions us to unlock the full potential of laneways with cohesive projects while building community relationships and capacity.



UNLOCKING TORONTO'S LANEWAYS

A place for public art to thrive

Toronto's more than 2400 public laneways are a massive untapped resource of public space.

The first step in transforming these neglected spaces into vibrant places is to change how we think about them.

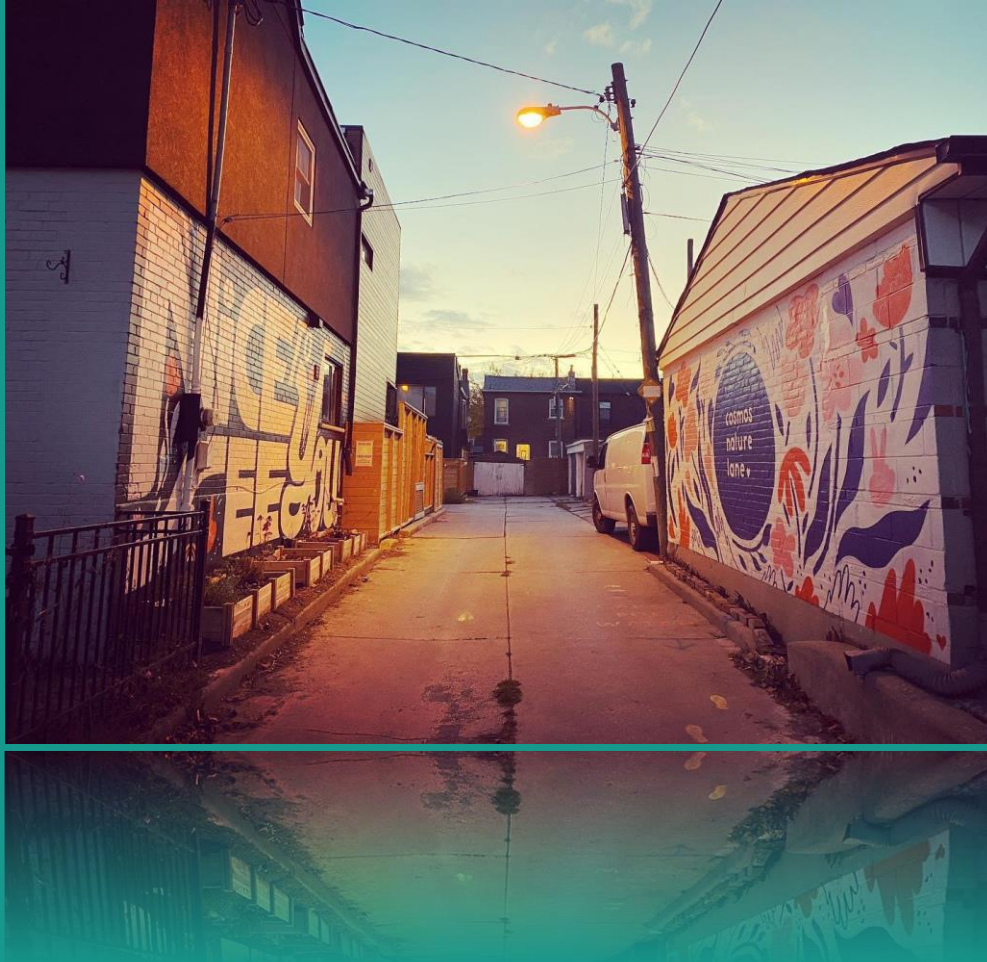
Mural art in our laneways is one way we demonstrate the potential of our city's underutilized public spaces. They allow communities to activate these spaces with fun, colourful and vibrant acts of artists prowess.

With the inclusion and creative space made for art, laneways are transformed into vital, active parts of our public realm.



Why is art so important to the urban landscape?

It reflects and reveals our society, adds meaning to our cities and uniqueness to our communities. Public art humanizes the built environment and invigorates public spaces. It provides an intersection between past, present and future, between disciplines, and between ideas.





The evolution of art that is equitable for those with a disability

By sight, touch, sound, smell and even by taste.

We've only touched on a small fraction of the art that can be created and/or brought into the public spaces we've worked on.

We clearly aren't there yet, but equitable spaces makes sense to allow access and enjoyment for all people equally.



We work from the bottom up, collaborating actively with communities to assess and develop a vision for their laneways.



We then translate that vision into multi-phase master plans and implementation plans...



...demonstration projects for innovative laneway greening techniques...



...and pop-up activations that turn laneways into active community spaces.

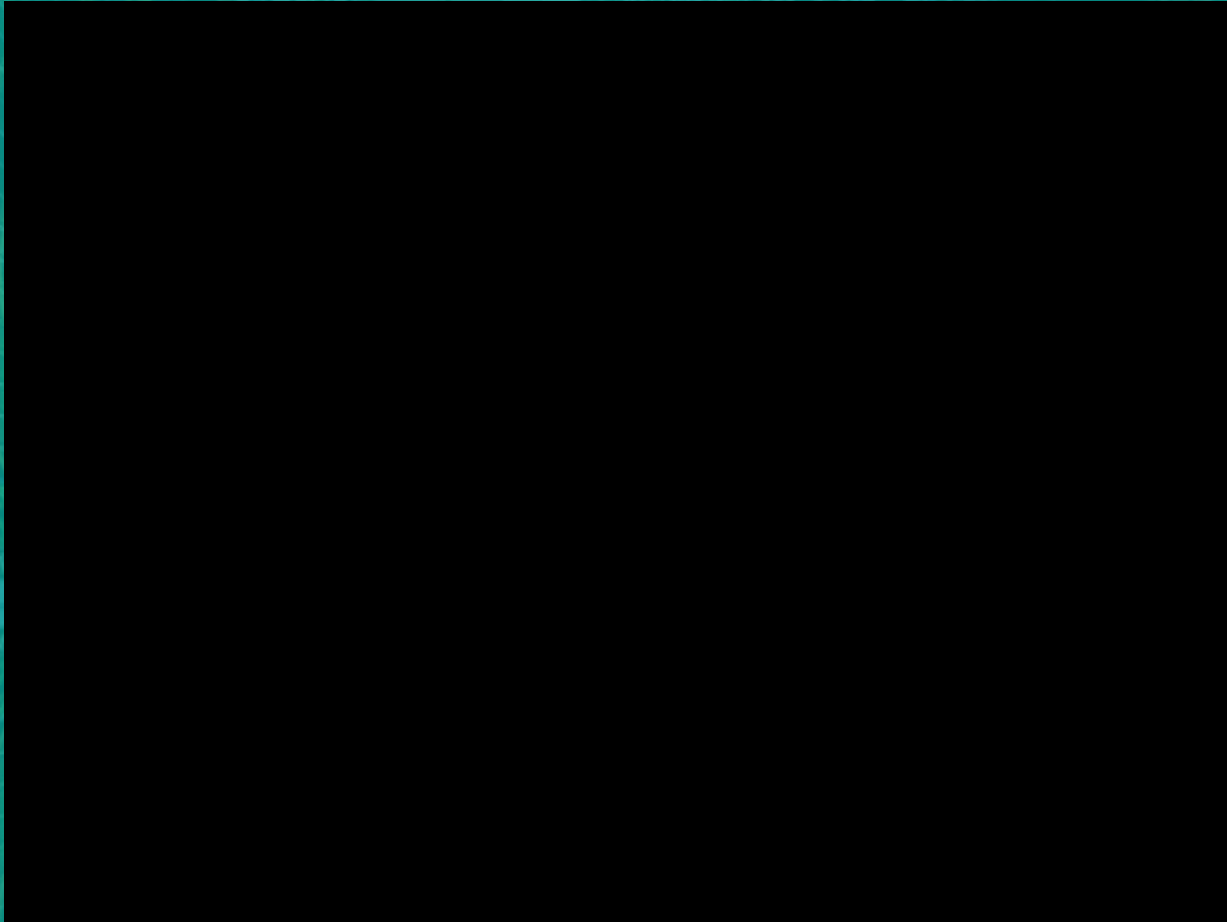


...and we dabble in a little bit of art too.



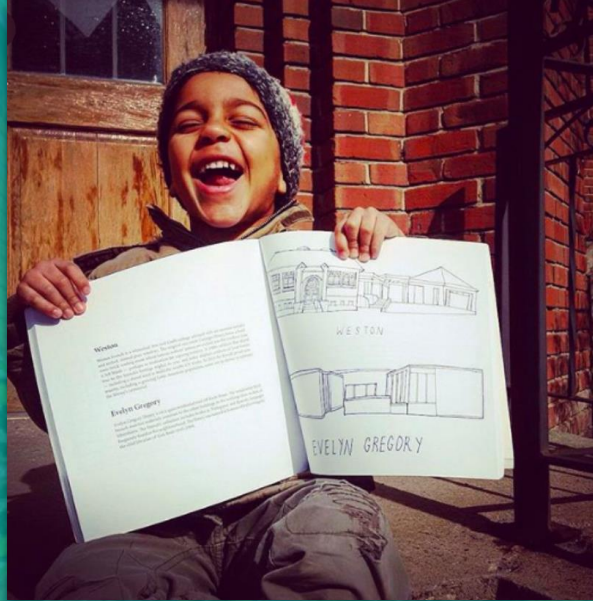
- **#JacksLibraryTour**
- **The Bike Brigade**
- **#HousingNowTO**

... #JacksLibraryTour



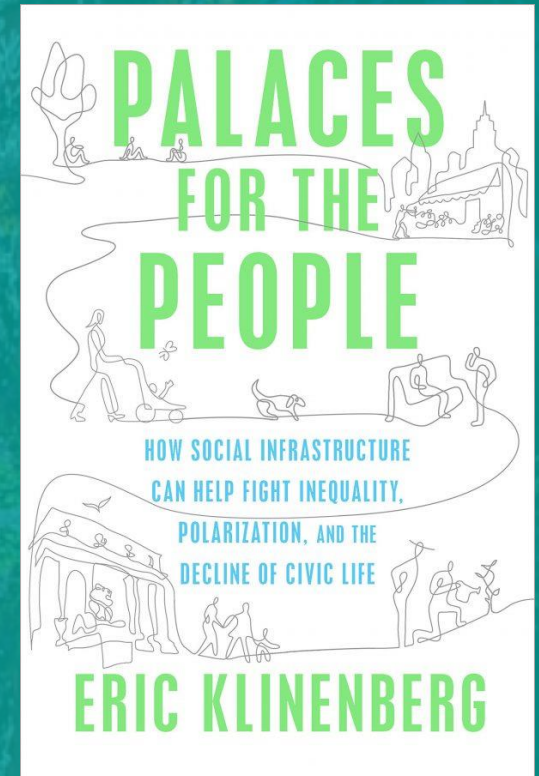
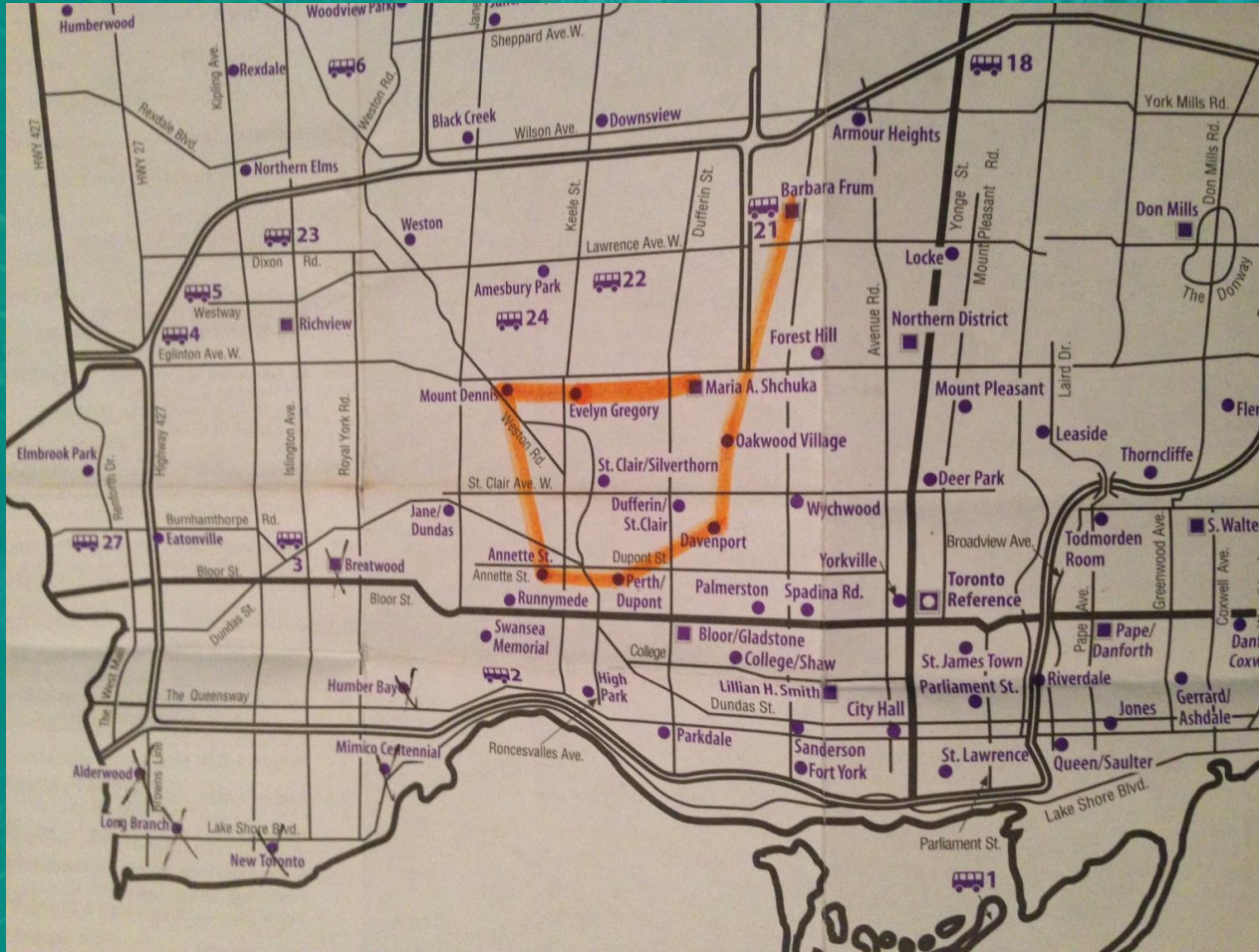
#ImLibraryPeople

... #JacksLibraryTour



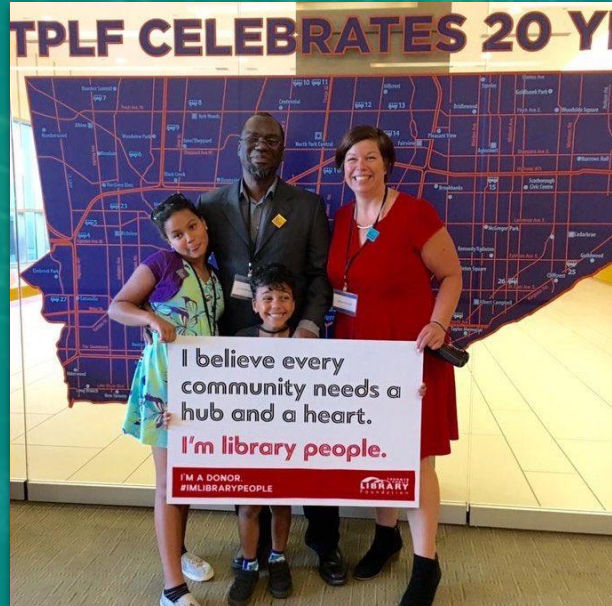
#ImLibraryPeople

... What's social Infrastructure?



#ImLibraryPeople

... #JacksLibraryTour



#ImLibraryPeople

Getting to the Bike Brigade

Toronto · Safer Streets

'Political will' needed to solve city's bike lane disparity, advocates say



Cycling advocates question city's 'piecemeal' approach, lack of infrastructure 'equity'



Lauren Pelley · CBC News · Posted: Sep 17, 2018 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: September 17, 2018



Every morning, Danforth resident Lanrick Bennett bikes alongside his 10-year-old daughter Zoë when she heads to school. The pair uses an unprotected bike lane with faded road markings - and Bennett questions why some neighbourhoods like his are years behind when it comes to cycling infrastructure. (Lauren Pelley/CBC News)



MEET THE BICYCLE MAYORS

LANRICK JR BENNETT

TORONTO | CANADA

One day, not too far in the future, I hope to see significantly more people that look like me, parents, people of color, and people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, cycling year-round in protected, beautiful bike infrastructure, right here in the City of Toronto. This

#BikeTO

...Getting to the Bike Brigade



The Bike Brigade Celebrated three years of volunteer service on March 16th

#BikeTO



...Getting to the Bike Brigade



#BikeTO

...What does Food Insecurity Look Like?



#BikeTO

...How fear leads you to say yes.



#BikeTO

2018 - #BikeStrike & 2022 #BicycleMayor

Toronto · Safer Streets

'Political will' needed to solve city's bike lane disparity, advocates say



Cycling advocates question city's 'piecemeal' approach, lack of infrastructure 'equity'



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#BikeTO

...What is #HousingNowTO



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...What is #HousingNowTO



HousingNowTO.com
is a pro-bono professional services collective



<http://rich-analytics.com/>



<https://www.tmu planners.com/>



<https://www.mapyourproperty.com/>



<https://taeh.ca/>



<https://smartdensity.com/>



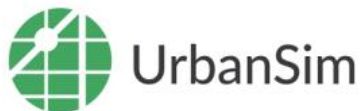
<https://trolleybusdevelopment.com/>

KEARNS MANCINI ARCHITECTS

<https://kmai.com/>

Sweeny&Co
Architects

<https://www.sweenyandco.com/>



<https://urbansim.com>



<https://agileform.ca/>



<http://bee vision.com/digital/>



<https://www.squeeze cmm.com/>

#HousingNowTO

...What is #HousingNowTO

“GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTED AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING” (*Toronto 2023)



In 2021 Census, the median total household income within City of Toronto was -

\$84,000

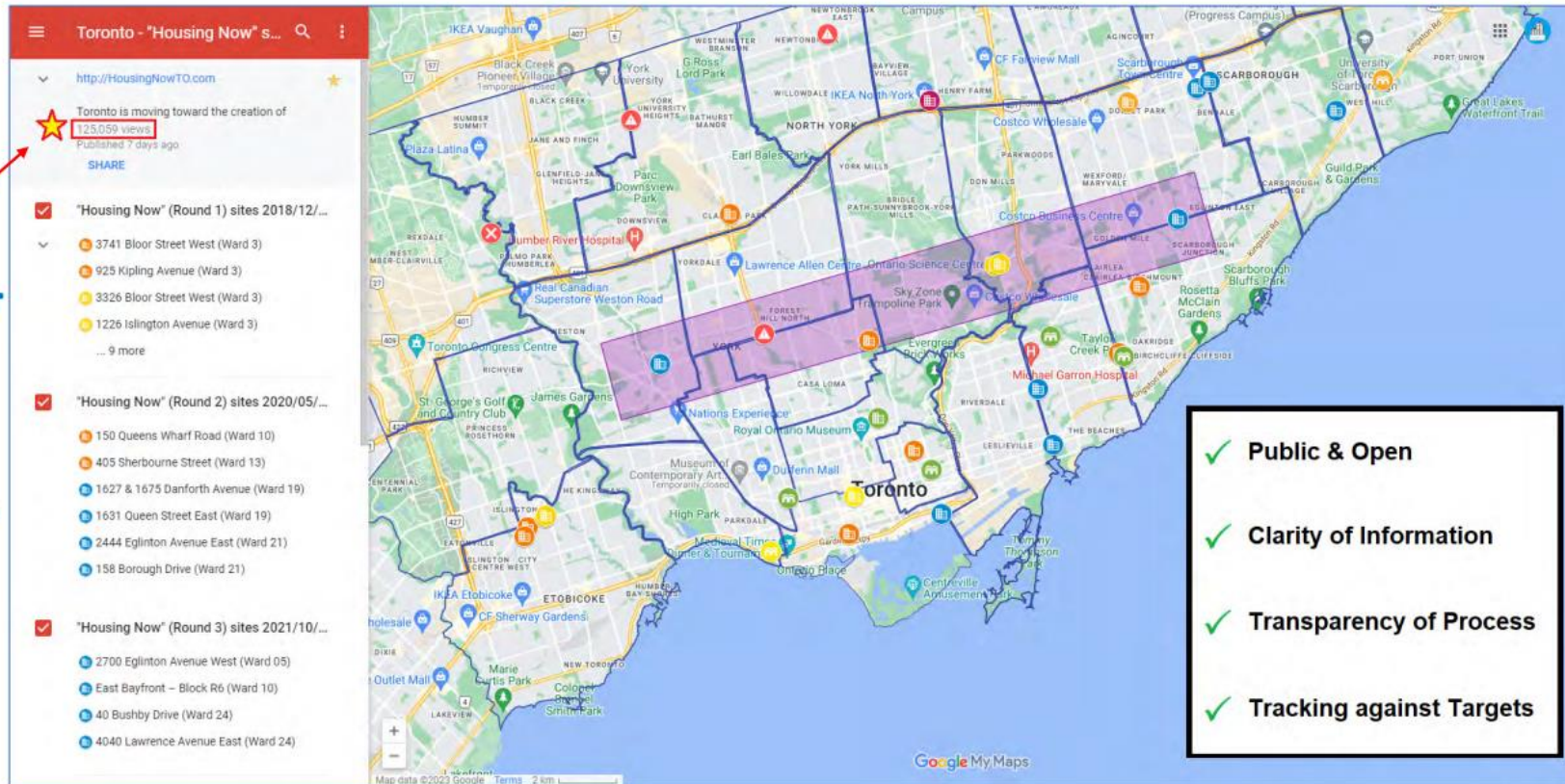
<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/9877-City-Planning-2021-Census-Backgrounder-Families-Hhlds-Marital-Status-Income.pdf>

#HousingNowTO

...What is #HousingNowTO



Public-Demand for Open & Accurate Data



HousingNowTO – <http://HousingNowTO.com>

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#HousingNowTO

...What is #HousingNowTO



Real-World Affordable-Housing



Three-Questions

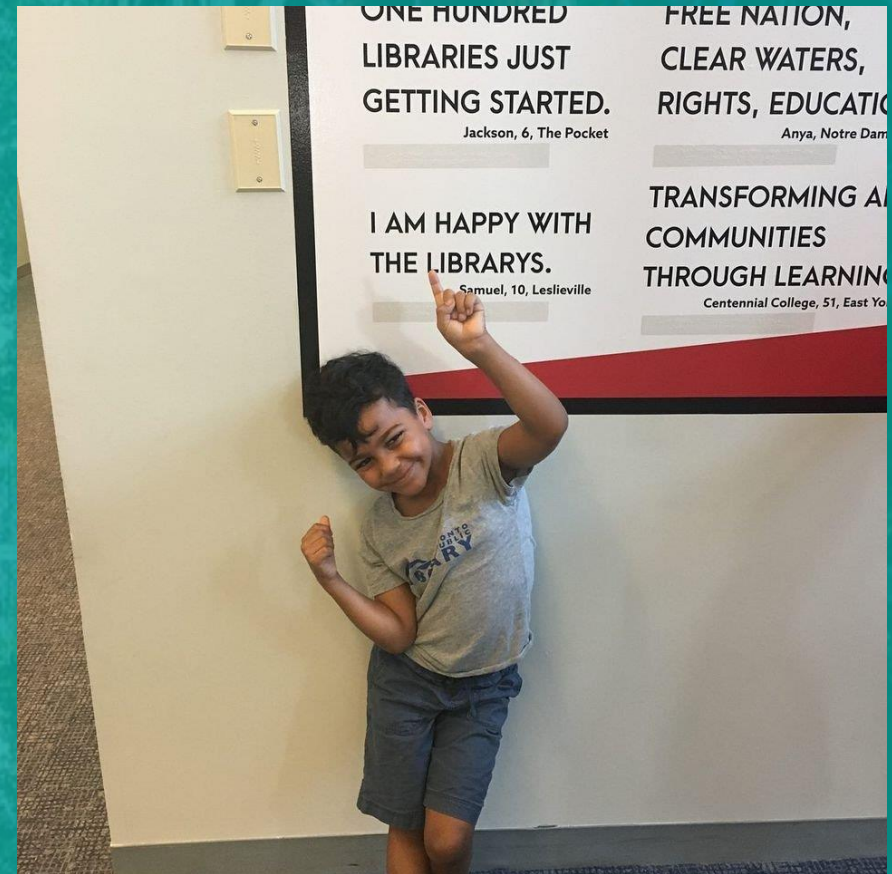
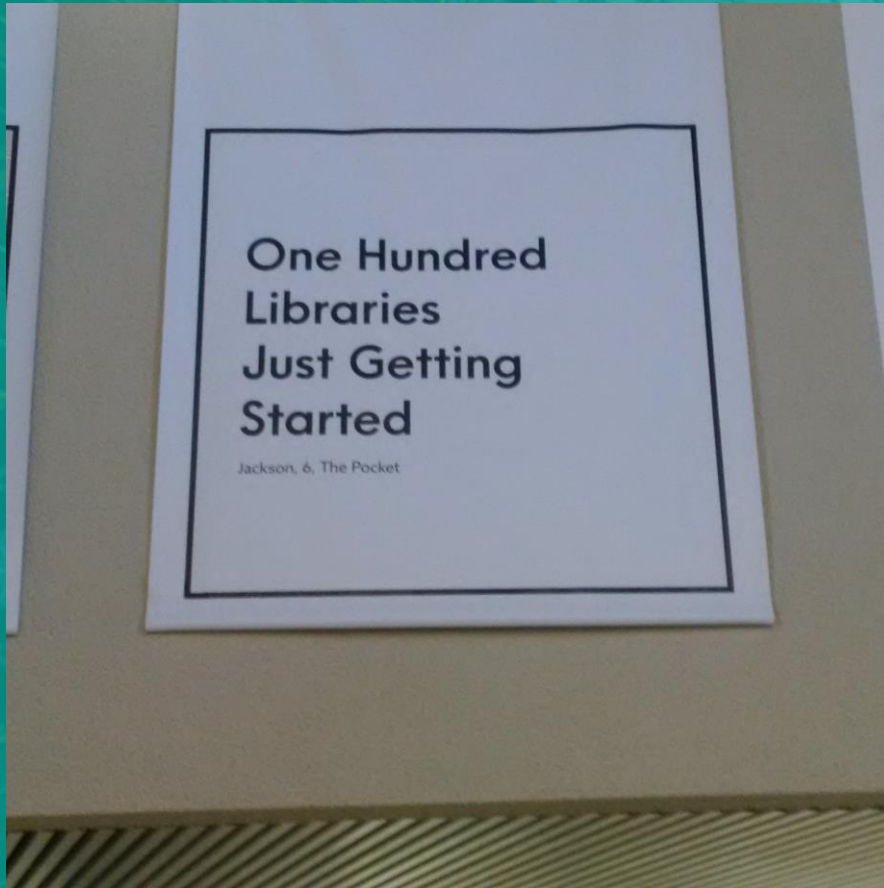
1. *Does it Pencil..?*
2. *Does it Scale..?*
3. *How can we Speed-Up the Delivery..?*

#HousingNowTO

...your YIMBY super-power is Showing Up



You're just getting started!



#ImLibraryPeople



GET IN TOUCH



lanrick@thelanewayproject.ca



@lanewayproject



/lanewayproject



@lanewayproject