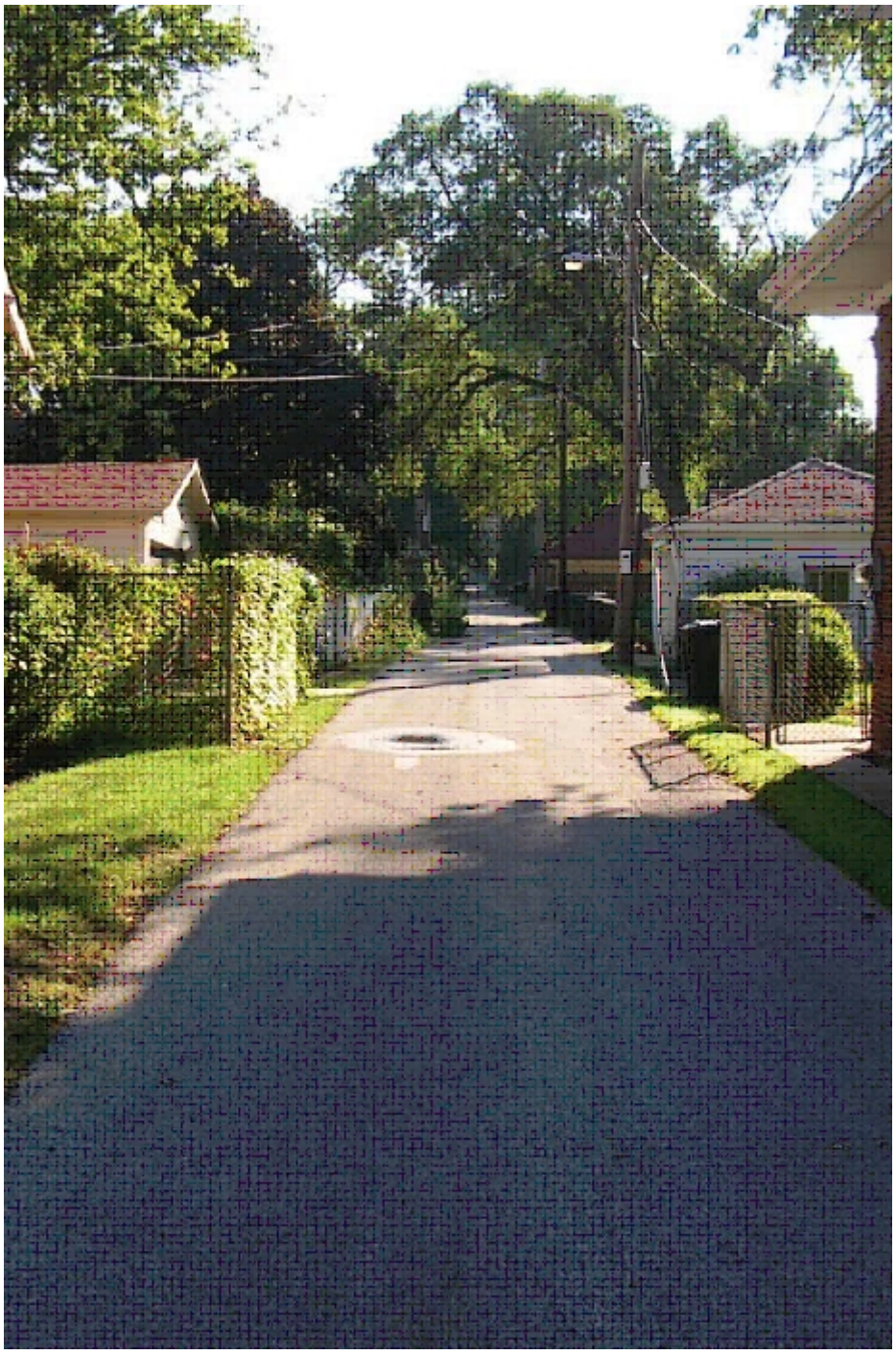
Presentation to Public Works Committee, June 19, 2017 - Eileen Shannon **6.4(i)(p)**

re Proposed Closure of Dundas Public Laneway

Public Laneway Projects around the World

Chicago
With more than 3000km of public alleys the city committed to a large-scale green alley program in 2006.

Chicago's initiative includes...
Alley drainage improvement by properly grading and pitching the alleys; Using permeable, high albedo, recycled paving materials; and Installing Dark Sky Compliant lighting.



Their project is collaborative, with area residents and business owners playing an active role in design and implementation. Hundreds of Chicago's alleys have now been transformed.

Take a look at their Green Alley Handbook, available online as a free PDF.

http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdot/Green_Alley_Handbook_2010.pdf

This image is from the handbook. This alley looks a lot like the laneway behind our house, between Alma Street and Cayley Street in Dundas.

From Chicago's Handbook:
"The Green Alley Program is a new approach to CDOT's existing alley program. Alleys provide a great benefit for the City, but like all infrastructure, they also require maintenance and periodic reconstruction. Flooding is often an issue in alleys because many alleys in the City were built without a connection to the City's combined sewer and stormwater system. While one solution to this problem is to install expensive connections to the City sewer system, the Green Alley Program also looks at other more

sustainable solutions. In particular, where soil conditions are appropriate, water is allowed to infiltrate into the soils through permeable pavement or infiltration basins, instead of being directed into the sewer system or onto adjacent property. This not only solves a persistent problem, but it also provides an environmental benefit by cleaning and recharging the ground water. Furthermore, by not sending additional water to the combined sewer system a green alley can help alleviate basement and other flooding issues.
You, the adjacent property owner, can make a difference by instituting other best management practices (BMPs) on your property. These can range from recycling to installing your own rain garden, which can help alleviate flooding even further.
This handbook will explain why the city is interested in sustainable alley design, illustrate the BMP techniques the City will use in green alley design, and provide sample layouts of how these elements have been combined in pilot applications. In addition, information and resources are provided for property owners interested in implementing their own environmental BMPs."

Here are before and after shots of a completed alley renovation in Chicago, along with an explanation of the benefits of greening alleys, taken directly from their handbook.

"Why is the City Interested in Green Alleys?

With approximately 1,900 miles of public alleys, Chicago has one of the most extensive and important pieces of infrastructure of any city in the world. That's approximately 3,500 acres of paved impermeable surface that provides an opportunity to better manage our resources and improve our environment.

Stormwater Management

Imagine if all of the alleys in Chicago were green alleys. Up to 80% of the rainwater falling on these surfaces throughout the year could pass through permeable paving back into the earth, thereby reducing localized flooding, recharging groundwater and saving taxpayer money that would otherwise be spent treating stormwater.

Heat Reduction

Imagine if all the alleys had a light, reflective surface (high albedo) that reflected heat energy, staying cool on hot days and thereby reducing the "urban heat island effect", a condition where dense urban areas become several degrees warmer due to the density of buildings and amount of heat-absorbing paved areas.

Material Recycling

Imagine if all of the alleys were constructed with recycled materials, thereby reducing the amount of construction and industrial waste hauled to landfills and reducing the burden on our natural resources.

Energy Conservation and Glare Reduction

Imagine if the thousands of light fixtures that provide a safe environment in the alleys were energy efficient and reduced glare and light pollution to the point where you could see the stars at night.

All of these benefits can be accomplished within the alley's right of way! In this document you can learn what you can do to increase the benefits of the green alley by implementing your own sustainable practices on your property."

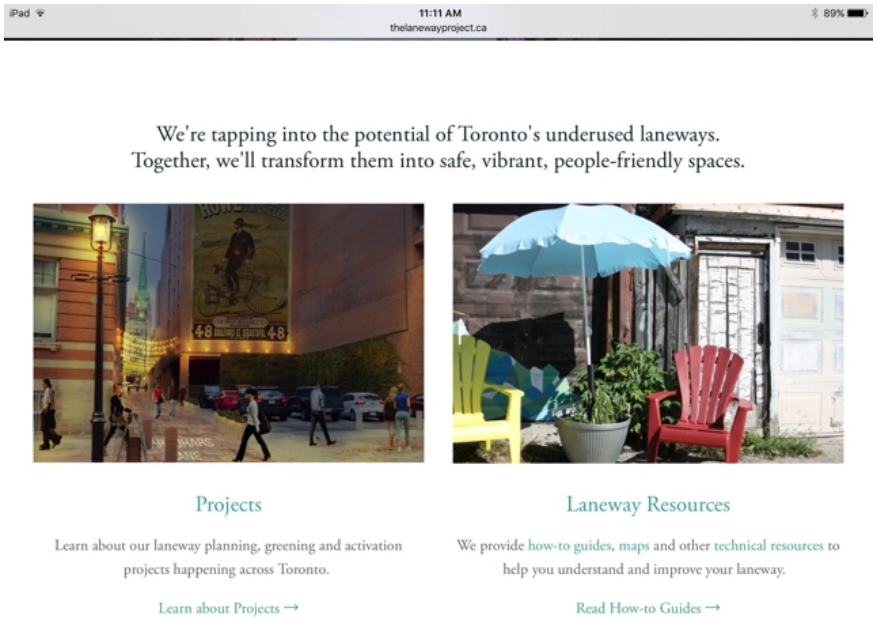
Toronto

Toronto's Laneway Project is looking to repurpose the city's more than 2000 alleys into green, plant-filled respites from the concrete jungle, while still allowing for vehicles to reach garages and parking spots. Like Chicago, planners in Toronto are also trying to reduce the impact of rainfall on the city's stormwater system by using permeable surfaces and planted areas.

When this project started just over a year ago, planners were overwhelmed when they put out a call for residents to participate.

Take a look at their website, http://thelanewayproject.ca/lanewayswelove/

Here is an image from the Toronto Laneway Project website.



Clicking on to Toronto's Laneway Project Website will take you to other projects in cities around the world.

Here are some more examples ....

Melbourne, Australia's "Love Your Laneway" Project.

Seattle, "Clear Alleys."

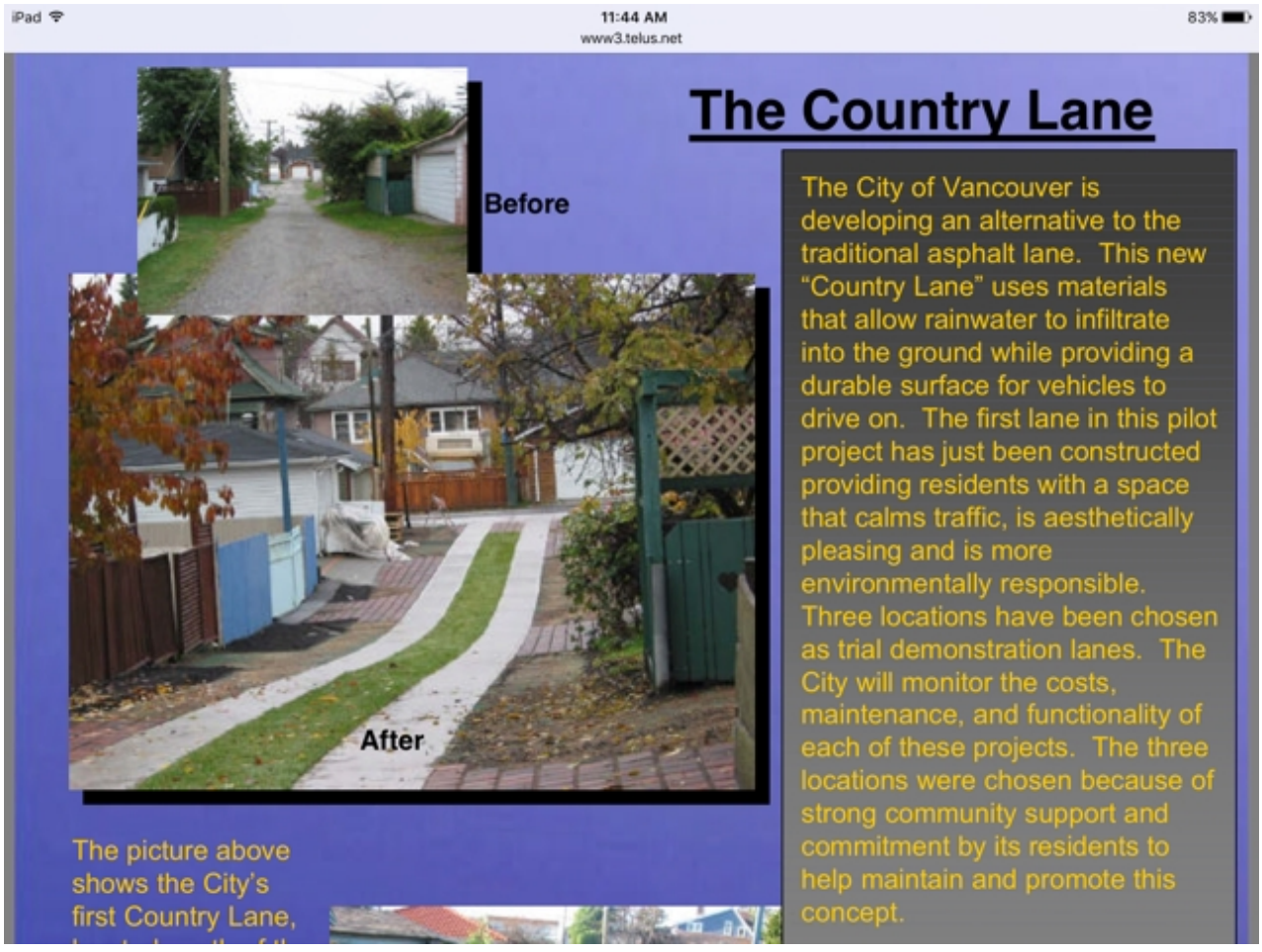
Another photo from **Chicago's "Green Alley" project**.

A before and after shot from **Detroit's green alley project**.

Montreal's "Ruelle Verte." Begun in 1997 by volunteers, more than 100 alleys have now been reclaimed. The city provides the funding for the planting and greening.

San Francisco's "Living Alley" project. These alleys are repurposed primarily for pedestrians and cyclists.

Finally, **Vancouver's "Country Lanes" project**. Begun in 2002 it is now an integral part of their rain and stormwater management program.



It is time for us in Hamilton to catch up!

You need to begin by refusing all current and future applications to purchase our “unassumed” alleys. Once they are removed from our public spaces, there is no way to turn back the clock.

As you have seen in this small sampling, cities are viewing their public laneways as a resource to be valued and kept in public hands.

The projects developed are environmentally sensitive, and collaborative.

You have the power to change direction in line with your policies, particularly those which deal with the environment and climate change.

If you allow “unassumed” alleys to be sold off you will also lose control over how they are treated. If they are paved in the way the alley in question has been paved, this will only add to the burden of stormwater runoff in the city and increase the likelihood of flooding.

I trust that you will refuse this application, order the applicant to remove the asphalt paving and then set about revisiting and updating your current policies.

Finally, in the words of the late Jane Jacobs.... "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created for everybody." The Death and Life of Great American Cities.