



THE  
**LANEWAY**  
PROJECT



# HOW-TO GUIDE: ADD A LANEWAY MURAL

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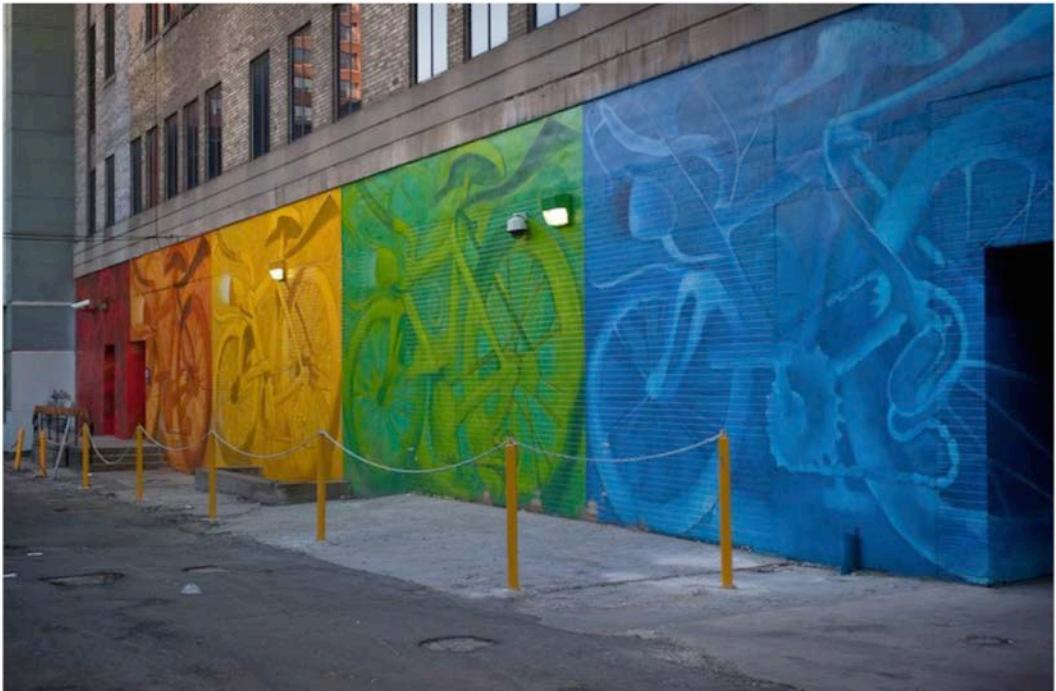
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## 1. ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide outlines the process of adding a mural to your laneway

Laneway murals have been used in cities around the world to help revitalize public space, reduce graffiti, and attract visitors to a neighbourhood. This document guides you through the process of adding a mural to your laneway, including developing a plan and a budget, finding partners and securing funding. It also includes a list of contacts and resources to get you started. As with all of our guides, we intend to add to this as we learn more about the challenges and opportunities for adding murals to laneways.



*This 2008 mural found in Ryerson's Victoria Street Lane was selected as a way of promoting and encouraging cycling as an alternative mode of transportation. Source: [www.murallocator.org](http://www.murallocator.org), 2012.*



Queen West Laneway, Toronto  
Photo by: Ariana Cancelli

## 2. WHY CREATE A LANeway MURAL?

Adding a street art mural can help to set laneways on the path to a brighter and more beautiful future.

While our city has more than 2400 laneways, many of them are underused and characterised by garbage and drab street walls. Vandalism is a major issue. The walls and garages along the laneway are often covered with unattractive and even offensive graffiti.

The addition of a mural can draw attention to your laneway and catalyse its transformation from dark, dirty, and vandalized into a welcoming public space that provides a bright and attractive destination and thoroughfare for local residents, workers and visitors.

**Laneway murals can:**

- Act as a free, accessible public art gallery that can be enjoyed by all;
- Function as a tool for both beautification and economic development - beautiful and vibrant public spaces draw people into a community, and those people then shop and eat at local businesses, boosting the community's economic activity;
- Prevent illegal activity through increased use of the spaces and "eyes on the street";
- Rid communities of unwanted graffiti by making tagging more difficult; and
- Strengthen community engagement by creating connections between business owners, residents, BIAs, community groups, and local artists.

The [Kenwood Lane Art Initiative](#), for example, was launched in fall 2011 as a way to eliminate unwanted tagging from the neighbourhood's garage doors. As well as solving the graffiti problem, the murals that were painted "became a destination within the neighbourhood – there was a noticeable increase in foot and bicycle traffic, making for a safer laneway. The initiative not only galvanized the street, but the laneway became a source of pride and has helped build a sense of community." This is a great example of how laneway murals can help to transform laneways from forgotten spaces into shared community assets.



*Residents from Toronto's Peperonata Lane painted murals on their garage doors to mitigate graffiti. Source: [www.gutterpaint.wordpress.com](http://www.gutterpaint.wordpress.com), 2014.*

### 3. STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

#### 3.1 Idea, Location & Sketch

To get started, you should meet with interested neighbours and organizations to talk about the mural project and its goals.

For example, is addition of a laneway mural intended to increase the safety by drawing more “eyes on the street”? Beautify the space? Celebrate something or someone of importance to the neighbourhood? Or perhaps there is a combination of goals? The aims of the laneway mural project will help to set the desired content and style of the mural.

The mural’s content can interpret a theme or event relevant to the neighbourhood or the city, it can recognize an important local figure, or it can simply be bright and eye-catching. You can come up with content ideas by holding an informal community brainstorming meeting – which can have the dual benefit of strengthening community connections within the neighbourhood. It’s best if the artwork is not related to a business and is not used as a form of advertising, and it certainly must not promote violence, hatred or contempt against any group on the basis of colour, race, ancestry, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, language, or disability.

At the same time as working on the mural theme, you should think about the best location for the laneway mural. This may be in an area that sees high usage, on a wall that is highly visible at an entry point to the neighbourhood, or in an area that is currently underused and could do with a boost. The addition of a mural will likely draw people into the space, so its impact may be greater when placed in an area that is easily accessible or visible from a main road or busy park.

It is also essential to consult with the property owner as part of the location selection process, and to obtain his or her written consent if their wall is the desired mural location. If the structure is City-owned, contact [StreetARTToronto](#) (StART) for the consent and public consultation processes.



*A glimpse of the murals painted in Toronto's Rush Lane.*

*Source:*

[www.blogto.com/city/2010/05](http://www.blogto.com/city/2010/05)

## *3.2 Speak to the Neighbours*

Before you finalize the proposed location for the mural, you should consult with residents and business owners in the immediate area to address any concerns they may have with the proposed content and theme.

For sites with high visibility, the community's [BIA](#) and any active neighbourhood groups/organization should also be notified and included in the planning process. Proactively notifying the rest of the community will help to combat any potential opposition to the proposed project. People are more likely to accept change when they feel that they were consulted and included in the change-making process.

## *3.3 Contact your Councillor*

In addition to consulting with neighbours and business owners, it would be proactive to consult with your [local Councillor](#). The Councillor's office should be made aware of the proposed project; they can also provide you with useful information and resources. Although it is not a requirement, the Councillor's office can also review the content of the mural and give feedback.

## *3.4 Connect with the Relevant City Divisions*

When adding a mural to a laneway you must also give consideration to City of Toronto requirements. Depending on the scope and location of the project, you may need to obtain permits from the City of Toronto's [Transportation Services Division](#).

If you need to erect scaffolding or hoarding as part of the mural painting process, and if the laneway is publicly owned, you will need a [Street Occupation permit](#) to allow you to place ladders, scaffolding or other equipment and materials in the laneway while painting the mural. Permit processing generally takes a couple of weeks, but it's a good idea to submit your application well in advance to be sure that you're able to implement the mural in good time.

A general permit requirement is liability insurance. It will often be possible to partner with your [local BIA](#) and use their liability insurance if the mural is located within the BIA's boundaries. If you're unsure of the required permits for your mural project, contact your District's Right-of-Way Management Unit for further application requirements.

Toronto/East York	(416) 392-7877
North York	(416) 395-6303
Scarborough	(416) 396-7505
Etobicoke York	(416) 394-8418



*This mural enhances the streetscape on Queen St W and Brookfield St. Source: [www.ilovemycitytoronto.ca](http://www.ilovemycitytoronto.ca), 2014.*

“Proactively notifying the rest of the community will help combat any potential opposition to the proposed project”

### *3.5 Develop a Sketch, Project Plan & Budget*

Once you've done your initial consultations it's a good idea to start working with a mural artist to develop a sketch of what your laneway mural will look like, based on your project goals and desired content and style. You can connect with mural artists using Street Art Toronto's [Artist Directory](#) or the PATCH Project's [artist list](#).

You should also develop a project plan, which identifies the process and timeline required for the successful completion of your mural project. The plan should first identify the project's objectives and goals, then lay out the steps required to complete the mural (which you can base on this step-by-step guide) and the time required to complete each step.

[StreetARToronto](#) has provided an extremely helpful budgeting tool, which provides a recommended budget breakdown that accounts for all costs from artist fees to maintenance fees. You can use this tool to break down costs once you have determined a base project budget. In addition to the budget breakdown, consultation with other local neighbourhood organizations and business owners for guidance is helpful. Below is StreetARToronto's recommended budget breakdown:

<b>StART recommended budget breakdown</b>			<i>Example based on \$10,000 budget</i>
Artist Fees		25%	\$2,500.00
Project Materials (paint, brushes, aerosol, etc)		15%	\$1,500.00
Production Costs (Skyjack rentals, storage, etc)		15%	\$1,500.00
Publicity	*	5%	\$500.00
Documentation (video, photography)	*	5%	\$500.00
Events: Consultations, Unveiling	*	5%	\$500.00
Project Management		10%	\$1,000.00
Project Administration		5%	\$500.00
Maintenance		5%	\$500.00
Other (Variance)		10%	\$1,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>
	<i>*5% of budget up to a maximum of \$500</i>		



The above laneway mural was implemented with the help of the Kensington Market BIA. Source: [www.tayloronhistory.com](http://www.tayloronhistory.com), 2012.

### 3.6 *Arrange Funding*

Funding is essential to the successful implementation of a laneway mural. Numerous funding mechanisms are available for communities looking to raise money for mural projects, ranging from grants to crowd-funding, in-kind sponsorship and more. The following section of this guide, 4.0 Funding Mechanisms, will outline various funding opportunities in more detail.

### 3.7 *Obtain Approvals & Waivers*

Once you have the required funding in place, you can begin to obtain the required approvals for your mural project, including written consent from the property owner of the mural site and a [Street Occupation permit](#) for hoarding and scaffolding from the City's [Transportation Services Division](#). You should also obtain waivers signed by all participants in painting the mural.

### *3.8 Implement the Plan*

Now that the project is planned, funded and approved, you can begin to implement your mural vision by obtaining your materials, preparing the wall and painting the mural - and perhaps holding a community celebration to unveil the piece once it's complete!

### *3.9 Maintain your Mural*

As the initiator of the mural project, it's very important that you develop a maintenance plan to keep the mural beautiful after installation. Proper mural maintenance will help to protect the mural from exposure to the elements and other things that could impact its lifespan, like tagging. Combating the weather and elements can be a challenge, but the proper materials and maintenance should help your mural withstand harsh conditions. Your maintenance plan should include regular mural inspections, maintenance activities for both the mural and site (things like cleaning and minor repairs), and who to contact when more major repairs are required.

"Laneway murals can play an important role in celebrating these laneways and integrating them into the public realm of their neighbourhoods"



*Proper  
maintenance  
has allowed this  
Ossington and  
Bloor laneway  
mural to remain  
bright and  
beautiful, even  
in winter.*

*Source:  
[www.gutterpaint.wordpress.com](http://www.gutterpaint.wordpress.com), 2014.*

## **4. FUNDING MECHANISMS**

Communities have numerous resources available to them to help fund their mural project. The following section outlines the various funding mechanisms communities can utilize to gain financial support

### ***4.1 In-Kind Contributions***

In-kind contributions are donations of goods or services rather than cash. In the context of a laneway mural, local paint or hardware stores may be willing to contribute some or all of the required painting materials such as paint, brushes, buckets and aerosols - don't be afraid to reach out.

### ***4.2 Crowdfunding***

Crowdfunding is the practice of raising small amounts of money from a large number of people to fund a project, typically over the internet where crowdfunding sites such as [Kickstarter](#) and [Indiegogo](#) help to bring together project initiators with individuals in support of the project. Crowdfunding sites provide a safe platform for those requesting financial support and for those donating funds, but is about more than just asking for donations; it allows you to reach beyond your community to connect with a wider network of potential supporters, to generate the needed revenue while also increasing awareness of and interest in your project.

Before getting started, you can review Fundable's Crowdfunding Guide here (<https://www.fundable.com/learn/resources/guides/crowdfunding-guide>), which provides some background on crowdfunding, helps you to assess how appropriate crowdfunding is to your project, and provides some crowdfunding tools to help you on your way. You can also check out their crowdfunding best practices here. (<https://www.fundable.com/crowdfunding101/crowdfunding-best-practices>)

“Crowdfunding allows you to reach beyond your community to connect with a wider network of potential supporters, to generate the needed revenue while also increasing awareness and interest in your project”

### ***4.3 Grants***

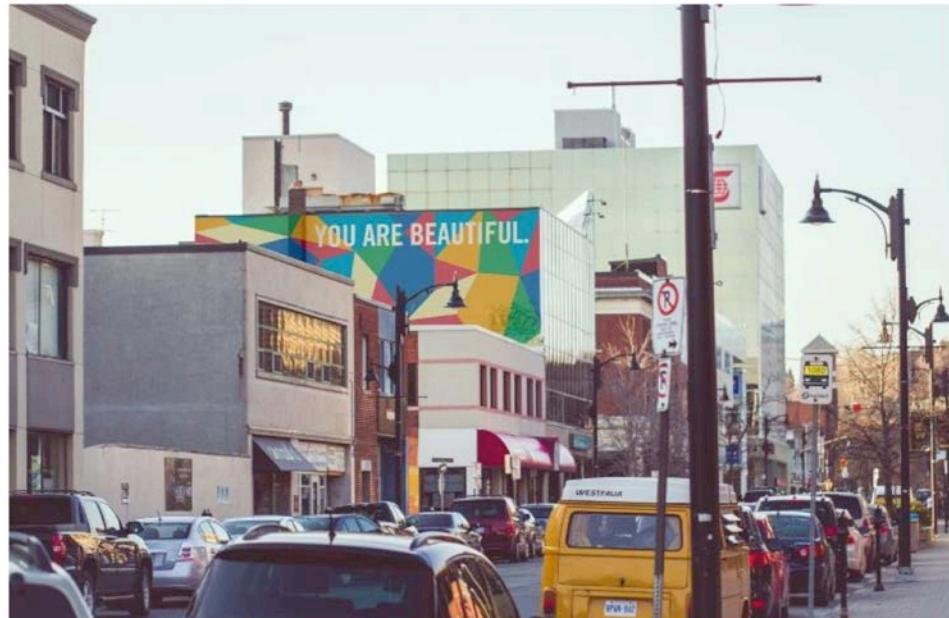
Grants are the transfer of money or funding from one organization to another. Grants are generally offered to organizations by the three levels government (municipal, provincial, and federal), government agencies, or not-for-profit organizations. Numerous grants are available to communities undertaking projects to improve their neighbourhoods, and most have an application requirement for which the organization identifies what the project aims to achieve, the individuals it will serve, and how the grant would be used.

StreetARToronto offers numerous grants for street art mural projects, with the aim of helping to adding beauty and character to neighbourhoods across Toronto. In the case of laneways murals, it's important to note that StART is quite focused on ensuring that the murals that they fund remain tag-

free; for this reason it can be very difficult to secure StART funding for laneway murals as the organization feels that these are more likely to be tagged. StART does have a special funding program in place to provide paint funding (but not funding for artist's fees) for laneway murals that face parks or other public spaces through the local police division, so it's still worth getting in contact with them if your mural wall fits the criteria for this program.

Grants are also available from organizations like the Ontario Arts Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, to name just a few.

- StreetARToronto Toronto Police Partnership Program:  
<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=bebb4074781e1410VgnVCM10000071d6of8qRCRD>
- Ontario Arts Council Art in the Community/Workplace grant:  
<http://www.arts.on.ca/Page95.aspx>
- Canada Council for the Arts Visual Art grants:  
<http://canadacouncil.ca/visual-arts/find-a-grant>



*This mural was one of three murals funded through a crowdfunding campaign in Sudbury, Ontario as part of the "We Live Up Here" project. Source: www.thesudburystar.com, 2013.*

## 4.4 Sponsorships

A sponsorship provides support, promotion, and/or funding to an organization in return of rights of association with the project that could be used for commercial advantage. Sponsorships are mutually beneficial in that they provide organizations with the resources that they require while giving the sponsor publicity as a good corporate citizen.

Some potential sponsors to reach out to are:

- Local bank branches
- Local retail locations of large store chains
- Local retail locations or offices of large corporations eg. telecoms, financial services
- Local universities and colleges (if any have nearby campuses)
- Local home-improvement stores (often best for in-kind sponsorship of paint and other required materials)

When approaching a potential sponsor, make sure to have a description of how your mural will enhance the community, a map and photos of the existing mural wall, some sketches of the proposed mural, and a plan for how you're going to publicly recognize and thank your sponsor if they do support the project.



*A mural painted through the StreetARToronto program is found in a Spadina Ave lane. Source: [www.urbantoronto.ca](http://www.urbantoronto.ca), 2015.*

## 5. USEFUL LINKS & CONTACTS

Not sure who to contact and how? This section provides resources and contacts to help as you add a mural to your laneway

### *StreetART Toronto*

The City of Toronto's StreetARToronto can be used as a useful contact and as a resource. StART provides information on their partnership programs, profiles of local artists, and further outlines aspects of the laneway mural and street art processes as well as contact information for the StART team.

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=bebb4074781e1410VgnVCM1ooooo71d6of89RCRD>

### *City of Toronto Councillor's Contact Information*

Want to contact your Councillor? This resource provides all the information needed to contact your Councillor's office.

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=c3a832q3dc3ef310VgnVCM1ooooo71d6of89RCRD>

### *City of Toronto Transportation Services Permit Information*

Learn about the permits you will need during the painting of your mural, how to apply for those permits, and permit fees.

<HTTP://WWW1.TORONTO.CA/WPS/PORTAL/CONTENTONLY?VGNEXTOID=2BDB4074781E1410VGNCVM1ooooo71D6oF8gRCRD>

### *Street Art Gallery Interactive Map*

Use this resource to look for existing laneway and street murals across Toronto. StreetARToronto provides users with an interactive map to find and view pieces. This source will provide inspiration for those communities looking to commission their own mural.

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=7865a84c9f6e1410VgnVCM1ooooo71d6of89RCRD#>

### *Business Improvement Associations (BIA) Listings*

Not sure if your community has a Business Improvement Association? Use this resource to find if your community has a BIA, learn about their goals and objectives, and how to contact members of your local BIA.

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=8e3032dob6d1e310VgnVCM1ooooo71d6of89RCRD>



The Laneway Project is an independent planning and urban design-based not-for-profit that is transforming Toronto's relationship with its laneways. Our role is to initiate and implement demonstration projects to improve and activate laneways throughout the city, work with the City of Toronto and other stakeholders to create laneway-friendly policies and procedures, and inspire, empower and support communities in undertaking their own laneway projects.

Learn more at  
[www.thelanewayproject.ca](http://www.thelanewayproject.ca)

