

# THE LAND DIGEST

## Laneway Housing – Truth or Dare

### Economic Indicators:

<b>Real GDP Growth</b> Q2 2016	-1.6%
<b>Toronto Employment Growth</b> Sep 2016	-0.2%
<b>Toronto Unemployment Rate</b> Sep 2016	7.1%
<b>Inflation</b> Sep 2016	1.3%
<b>Bank of Canada Overnight Rate</b> Wep 2016	0.5%
<b>Prime Rate</b> Sep 2016	2.7%
<b>5 Year Mortgage Rate Fixed</b> Sep 2016	4.6%

While they were just launching Shim-Sutcliffe Architects – today one of Canada’s most decorated architecture firms – the couple fought to make their own change to the city. First they bought “a junker lot,” as Ms. Shim puts it; a landlocked rectangle just 17- by 45-feet in the middle of the block near Queen and Leslie, clogged with abandoned cars. Then they purchased three more lots, “stitching them together to form one the same size as a regular lot,” a north-south strip in a block where the neighbouring lots run east-west.

But that was the easy part. The biggest challenges were getting services in to the lot, and then getting planning permission. A local city planner was worried – truly worried, as Ms. Shim recalls – about the young couple: “He said our quality of life would be ruined living in a lane,” she says ruefully.

Why? Privacy. Noise. Smells. Somehow this place, smack in the middle of a residential neighbourhood, seemed to the planner like a profoundly inappropriate place to live – a place that would make them miserable.

ee needn’t have worried. Ms. Shim and Mr. Sutcliffe are profoundly talented architects,

and they put years of effort into this place. It shows. The walls are made of concrete block, and the house is in many ways modest. There are just two bedrooms, a bath and a small office upstairs. Yet the house is pierced by a skylit central stair lined with glimmering walls of Venetian plaster. The windows framed in mahogany add to the sense of quality and solidity. It sings.

Now, if the city adopts new regulations, a “laneway suite” will probably be an inexpensive apartment on top of a garage, and not a boutique house like the Shim-Sutcliffe’s. But what makes that house so magical is the design and the site. Contrary to the planner’s worries, you don’t feel hemmed in here; in fact from the main rooms, you can’t see anybody at all. Ms. Shim and Mr. Sutcliffe dropped the house’s main floor below ground by three feet, and the garden even lower to five feet below ground; this changes your perspective so that you can’t see anything beyond the garden wall.

Yet laneway housing in Toronto has stalled for many years, despite a few one-off projects. The City of Toronto’s planning department studied the idea in 2006, and imposed so

many conditions on laneway sites that they remained effectively unbuildable. The issues: How do people find the place? How do emergency services reach it in an emergency? Who takes out the garbage, and where?

All of these issues are solvable, if you want to solve them. In fact they have already been solved as the city deals with the exceptions that already exist.

The real problem is cultural. In neighbourhoods such as Leslieville, the lowrise Victorian and Edwardian blocks that surround the downtown core, there is a widespread feeling that the fabric of the city should not be touched. This idea goes back to the 1970s, when progressive activists, planners and politicians were defending these areas from being redeveloped with highrise towers.

In the early 1990s, few people could imagine that living in a laneway would be a reasonable choice. But few people would have imagined that middle-class neighbourhoods would become inaccessibly expensive. In 2016, it’s time to think differently.

Source: *Globe and Mail*  
Alex Bozikovic

## Condo Prices up Over 20% in the last year

October 24, 2016 -- Toronto Real Estate Board President Larry Cerqua announced that condominium apartment sales reported through TREB's MLS® System in the third quarter of 2016 were up by 22.1 per cent on a year-over-year basis to 8,014. Over the same period, new listings for condominium apartments were down by 13.3 per cent.

"While the low-rise market has been top-of-mind in the supply discussion, it is very important to note that supply pressures have also been experienced in the condominium apartment market segment over the past year. The completion of new units was down substantially during the first three quarters of 2016 compared to the same period in 2015. This arguably played a role in the decline in new condominium apartment listings on TREB's MLS® System," said Mr. Cerqua.

The average price of a condominium apartment in the Q3 2016 was \$415,643 – up 9.6 per cent compared to Q3 2015. The MLS® Home Price Index (HPI) apartment benchmark price was up by a similar amount on an annual basis throughout the third quarter.

"The annual rate of condominium apartment price growth has accelerated over the past year as the supply of units available for sale became more constrained while demand remained strong. With this said, however, annual rates of price growth remain well-below those for low-rise home types. Condo apartments continue to be an affordable entry point into home ownership for first-time buyers," said Jason Mercer, TREB's Director of Market Analysis.

The number of lease agreements signed for condominium apartments listed on TREB's MLS® System was down by 4.8

per cent on a year-over-year basis to 9,164 in the third quarter of 2016 compared to 9,629 a year earlier. Over the same period, the number of condominium apartments listed for rent was down by a greater annual rate of 17.3 per cent.

Average one-bedroom and two-bedroom condominium apartment rents were up substantially in the third quarter compared to 2015. The average one-bedroom rent was up by 7.2 per cent to \$1,777. The average two-bedroom rent was up by 7.9 per cent to \$2,419.

Source: TREB

### Condominium Apartment Market Summary<sup>1,6</sup> Third Quarter 2016

	2016		2015	
	Sales	Average Price	Sales	Average Price
Total TREB	8,014	\$415,643	6,564	\$379,322
Halton Region	247	\$437,482	210	\$378,881
Peel Region	1,127	\$316,199	926	\$275,987
City of Toronto	5,619	\$440,096	4,632	\$406,094
York Region	882	\$396,964	655	\$361,334
Durham Region	123	\$323,148	131	\$266,111
Other Areas	16	\$236,216	10	\$217,500

## FOR SALE – GTA

Address	Acres	Price	BUYER
38 Ossington St.	0.16	\$10.00MM	Hullmark Developments
41 Roehampton Ave.	0.18	\$4.03MM	Metropia
1780 Lawrence Ave. W.	7.39	\$23.20MM	Fernbrook Homes
1926 Lake Shore B. W.	1.10	\$40.00MM	Diamante Developments
Toronto	5.0	\$58.00MM	Great Gulf Homes
Source: CEAS and RealTrak			

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The Land Development Group started in 2012 and to date has sold over \$80 million worth product.

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