

# Staff Report

Presented By: Mark Paoli, Director, Development Services  
Meeting Date: August 11, 2025  
Subject: Laneway Real Estate Review – Resource Analysis  
Attachment(s): None

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## **Recommendation**

That Council receive the “Laneway Real Estate Review – Resource Analysis” report for information.

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## **Report Summary**

This report outlines the resources required for an inventory and strategic review of laneways, that would result in Town policy direction about disposition that would be specific to laneways. A two-year plan to complete the project is included for discussion.

## **Background/Analysis**

The Town is often approached by parties, usually owners of adjacent properties, about the Town’s interest to sell, allow encroachments into, or provide easements over, laneways. In some instances, the interest arises from a building permit or planning application.

It has been noted that the approach to these situations should be guided by a policy that is informed by a strategic review of laneways from a long-term municipal asset management perspective. This thinking led to the 2025 Business Plan Engineering Division Highlight that led to the preparation of this report, outlining the resources required for an inventory and strategic review of laneways. The result would be a Town policy direction about disposition that would be specific to laneways.

This project will focus on:

- a) mid-block road allowances across rear lot lines that were established in the original Town Plans for Southampton and Port Elgin;
- b) access points between a road (such as Saugeen Beach Road or Blanchfield Road) and the lakeshore; and

- c) lanes owned by the Town which were originally obtained through dedication (identification on a plan of subdivision by an original subdivider) or conveyance (i.e. a transfer via a deed, etc.).

The above are the situations that most frequently have inquiries, requests, or disputes and are therefore most in need of a strategy and policy.

### Historical Map Excerpts showing Lanes in Original Town Plans:

Part of Port Elgin, 1874



Example of a mid-block lane

## Part of Southampton, 1857



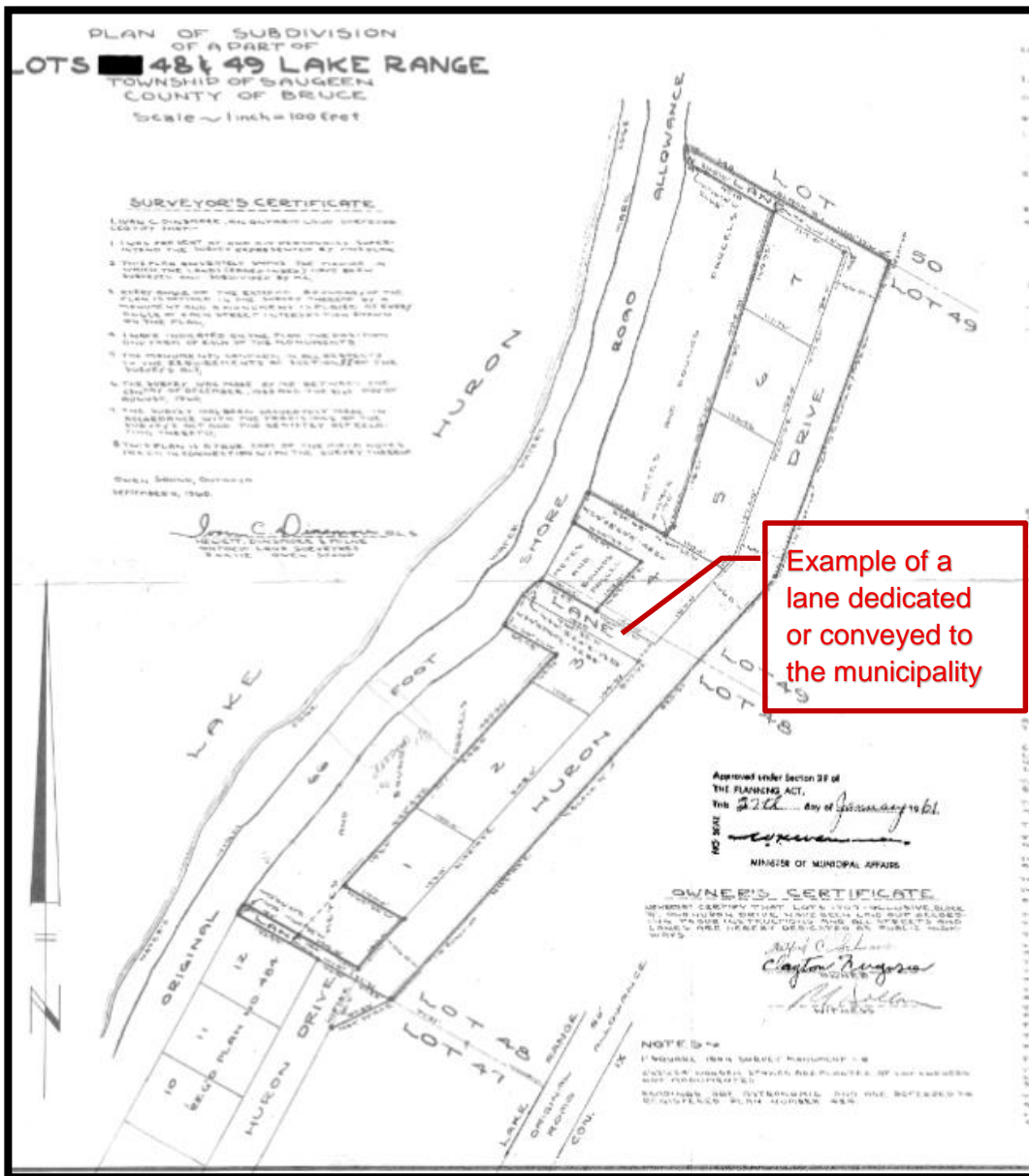
Example of a mid-block lane

The mid-block lanes seen today are remnants of original town plan surveys.

### Private Dedication or Transfer to Municipality:

In addition to lanes being created by Crown surveyors, as described above, the review will also focus on those lanes owned by the Town which were originally obtained through dedication (identification on a plan of subdivision by an original subdivider) or conveyance (i.e. a transfer via a deed, etc.). Typically, these lanes were created and conveyed to the municipality to provide vehicular and pedestrian access to other roads such as a shore road allowance or a beach area as shown below in Plan 524 - a Plan of Subdivision dated November 15, 1960.

# Partial of Plan 524



## Project Phases and Main Tasks:

The laneway real estate review is designed to be carried out in three phases with the main tasks in each phase noted below:

### Phase 1: Inventory

- Mapping and database management to inventory.
- Ground truthing.
- Surveys, title searches.
- Previous agreements.
- Infrastructure overlays.

## Phase 2: Strategic Review

Review laneways in terms of their municipal purposes as Town assets, including such considerations as:

- Active transportation connections.
- Utility corridors.
- Beach access.
- Environmental functions.
- Maintenance.
- Liability.

## Phase 3: Develop Amendment to Sale and Disposal of Lands Policy

- Develop Criteria for Retention vs Disposal.
- Present Draft Policy Changes to Council.
- Finalize for Council Approval.

### Timing and Business Plan Considerations:

The map inventory, data management, policy drafting, and strategy development would be done in-house with the Town solicitor involved in coordinating the legal aspects. The main budget expenditures will relate to title searching, legal services, and surveying. The geographic extent of the work will entail in-depth review involving reviewing abutting lands, current real estate documents, as well as historical documents dating back to when the lane was established. This review could expand to include the municipality's non-real estate documents review. It is also worth noting that each lane will be a unique situation with its own set of facts and challenges.

The Engineering Division Highlight in the 2025 Business Plan noted that the work, beyond this current resource analysis, is to be completed in 2026-2028 with a budget of \$225,000 (set out with \$75,000 in each of 2026, 2027 and 2028). However, there would be advantages to completing this project in two years rather than three, including:

- Uncertainty around Town ownership, in some cases, limits or complicates infrastructure project advancement, planning files, and a variety of legal processes.
- The three-year timeframe risks changes in ownership occurring during the project which would further complicate matters.
- Certainty about the Town's policy and strategy would streamline processes saving time for the Town and for landowners.

### **Discussion**

With the above points in mind, the intention is to compress the project to two budget years (i.e. 2026 and 2027) while maintaining the amount budgeted (\$225,000) based on the following general timeline:

Phase 1: Inventory	Q4 2025 through Q4 2026
Phase 2: Strategic Review	Q1 through Q2 2027
Phase 3: Policy	Q3 2027 through Q4 2027

## **Linkages**

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 1: Meeting the Needs of a Growing Community
- Business Plan Alignment: Development Services Division Highlight

## **Financial Impacts/Source of Funding**

Estimated revenue/costs of \$225,000 associated with this program will be included in the 2026 Business Plan for Council consideration.

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Prepared By: Mark Paoli, Director, Development Services

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