

Context of VERA Group Development



VERA

Minto

VERA

Omega

Importance of Block

- This Block is Important for:
- Transit Oriented Development
 - Active Mobility
 - Climate Strategy Goals

VERA

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Downtown
20 Min. Walk

Shops & Restaurants

LRT Station

Safeway



Previous Plans for Laneway
Bow to Bluff Urban Design Framework - 2012
(Cover Page)

BOW TO BLUFF URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

29 FEBRUARY 2012



CITY OF CALGARY
RECEIVED
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

APR 04 2023

ITEM: 6.1.5 CPC2023-0185
Distrib - Presentation 3
CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT



PLANNING + DESIGN

Previous Plans for Laneway Bow to Bluff Urban Design Framework - 2012 (Pages Regarding Laneway Mews)

4.6 The Overall Concept Plan

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gradual ramp up McHugh Bluff with stairs to the half way point 2. Park development (new park extending from the McHugh Bluff access point to 10th Street NW) 3. Wifi internet in the corridor 4. Public art installation within the parks 5. Active living / fitness equipment 6. Improved connectivity between corridor and Riley Park over 10th Street NW 7. Vegetated Green wall along section of the LRT transit bridge | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Temporary refurbishment to the LRT fence by installing rentable art panels and removing the top 0.5m of the fence 9. improved recreational pathway on 9A Street NW north of 5 Avenue NW 10. Streetscape improvements through alley to extend pedestrian travel zone between 4 Avenue NW and 5 Avenue NW 11. Integrated planting / wire / corten along LRT transit fence | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Surface treatment across key intersections to allow for safe crossings 13. LRT station platform improvements 14. Art installation on the large Safeway wall 15. Woonerf 16. Green infrastructure integrated into the new building and the surrounding streetscape 17. Open air market 18. Temporary pavillion for public art 19. Laneway Mews | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Kiosk at active living park 21. Park development (4 Avenue NW park) 22. Park development (3 Avenue NW park) 23. Central corridor civic space 24. Park development (2 Avenue NW park) 25. Park development (1 Avenue NW park) 26. Park development (Memorial Drive Active Living park) |
|--|---|--|---|

Study Area Boundary - - - - -



Figure 4.3 Overall Concept Plan

Previous Plans for Laneway Bow to Bluff Urban Design Framework - 2012 (Pages Regarding Laneway Mews)

7 over the asphalt to increase slip resistance and user safety.

Key map



Laneway Mews

Laneways provide locations for important utilities, services, parking and loading zones. However, they also expand the usable public realm and active frontage within the corridor.

A mews is a British term describing laneways or alleys that have been converted overtime from being used for rows of horse stable buildings servicing larger dwellings to that of back-street secondary residential dwellings, as well as small businesses. These laneways are often transformed into pleasant and desirable areas that create the qualities of a modest front street.

The Bow to Bluff Corridor's laneways should be seen as more than functional elements. Properly designed they can provide pleasant pedestrian circulation corridors and also serve private businesses as entries and patios. Improvements to back lanes should include permeable paving, planting, burying utilities, and allowing for housing and small business to exist. In some residential areas, there are opportunities for secondary suites.

The evaluation of the Laneway Mews arose from both, an expressed community desire during the engagement process and from the 'Livable Laneways' project, which was a project by Sustainable Calgary.

The design direction for the Laneway Mews is as follows:

- Lane access may be limited or reconfigured to complete streetscapes and provide opportunities for community gathering, open space, landscaping, mid-block pathways, courtyards and plazas.
- Lanes will only be closed where adequate street circulation can be maintained and where access to utilities, parking, deliveries and garbage collection will not be impeded.
- Development along lanes should be designed to provide adequate sight lines among buildings, open spaces, streets, and lanes for the benefit of both visual interest and public safety.
- Lane frontages should provide clearly visible pedestrian routes among features such as courtyard entries, pathways, landscaping, common building entranceways, and individual entrances to dwelling units.
- Lane access to buildings should be clearly indicated and well lit to promote not only safety, but also the perception of safety, especially in corners and other secluded areas.
- Lighting, landscaping, paving and burying of utilities along lanes should be coordinated to prevent unnecessary or inefficient duplication, reinstallation, or reconstruction.



Credit: West Vancouver Thurlow Laneway. (Hiscock, Keough, & Zoldak (2011))



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Previous Plans for Laneway Bow to Bluff Urban Design Framework - 2012 (Pages Regarding Laneway Mews)

The key design elements for Laneway Mews improvements have been communicated to the Bow to Bluff team through the Livable Laneways Project conducted in 2011 (Hiscock, Keough, & Zoldak (2011) Livable Laneways Project. Sustainable Calgary Society, Calgary, Alberta) are as follows:

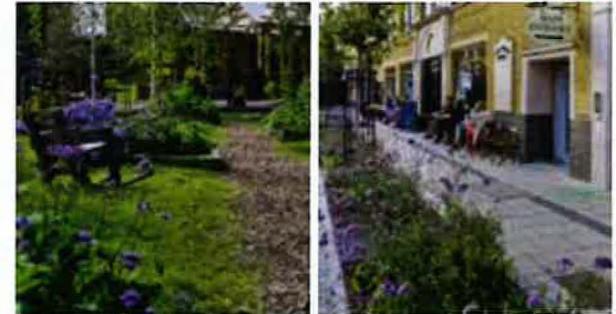
- **Laneway Signs.** Use a distinctive sign design with names placed at the entrance to the lane and name the lanes thematically or use a local historical figure or event. Many of the inventoried lanes have heritage items on 'display' (e.g. vintage cars) or original turn of the century carriage houses or barns (there are likely other items of historical significance within these structures that could be featured in a Heritage Lane).
- **Feature Lighting.** Install lighting throughout the laneway and coordinate this with other fixtures in the corridor to save on purchase and maintenance costs.
- **Communal Gardens.** Install linear or small plot laneway gardens - vegetables, flowers, fruit trees or berry bushes.
- **Mini-Plazas.** Where extra wide parking spaces are located, these can be transformed into small community plazas with multi-layered purposes.
- **Local Business Establishments.** Laneways and unused garages could be used as spaces for small local business. This could be supported by an innovative 'local business license'. Such a license would be available to local businesses defined as those designed to serve the local community. With

such a license parking requirements could be waived as the locals can all easily access the business by bike or walking. Types of businesses may include: bakery, laundromat, Re-use/Recycling store, Small tool rental and repair business, hair salon, Yoga or Artist studios.

- **Laneway Housing.** Several laneway houses exist in Sunnyside (e.g. two carriage house heritage style houses currently at the corner of 1st Avenue and 2nd Avenue, lanes on 6th Street, and a new townhouse construction at 7th Street on the 3rd Avenue and 4th Avenue lane). Appropriately-scaled secondary residential dwellings along the laneway should be encouraged to activate the laneway back-yard frontage with doors and 'eyes-on-the-lane.'
- **Cluster Parking.** Vehicle parking in lanes could be redeployed to the outer edge of the lane leaving the interior of the lane a pedestrian zone except for utility vehicles and periodic resident drop off and pickup.
- **Car-Share Parking.** Provide parking for Car-Share vehicle(s)
- **Permeable Surface.** Install hard permeable surfaces (e.g. bricks) to aid water filtration and pedestrianization.
- **Elevated Linear Gardens.** The New York Highline inspired elevated linear gardens could be incorporated into laneways with public stairway access and direct elevated access from condominium and apartment buildings. Alternatively Green roof structures can be added to existing or new buildings and would create additional public space.



Credit: Crack Garden by CMG Landscape Architecture



Credit: Making Space in Dalston by J & L Gibbons Landscape Architects / MUF Architecture /

Previous Plans for Laneway Bow to Bluff Public Realm Plan - 2017 (Cover Page)

Calgary



Bow to Bluff Public Realm Plan —
Design Update

December 2017

Great public spaces encourage people to gather, recreate, explore and discover.

Previous Plans for Laneway Bow to Bluff Public Realm Plan - 2017 (Heavy Cycling Connection)

Issues + Opportunities

The most prominent condition on site is the LRT corridor running north-south, with a fence dividing the Hillhurst and Sunnyside communities.

The LRT corridor shifts from elevated to street level and presents a significant visual and physical barrier east-west across the corridor. **The issues of the current conditions are as follows:**

- The existing LRT line creates a visual barrier and impedes east-west connections
- Underused and uninviting spaces due to a lack of defined uses and maintenance, particularly for the triangular parkettes

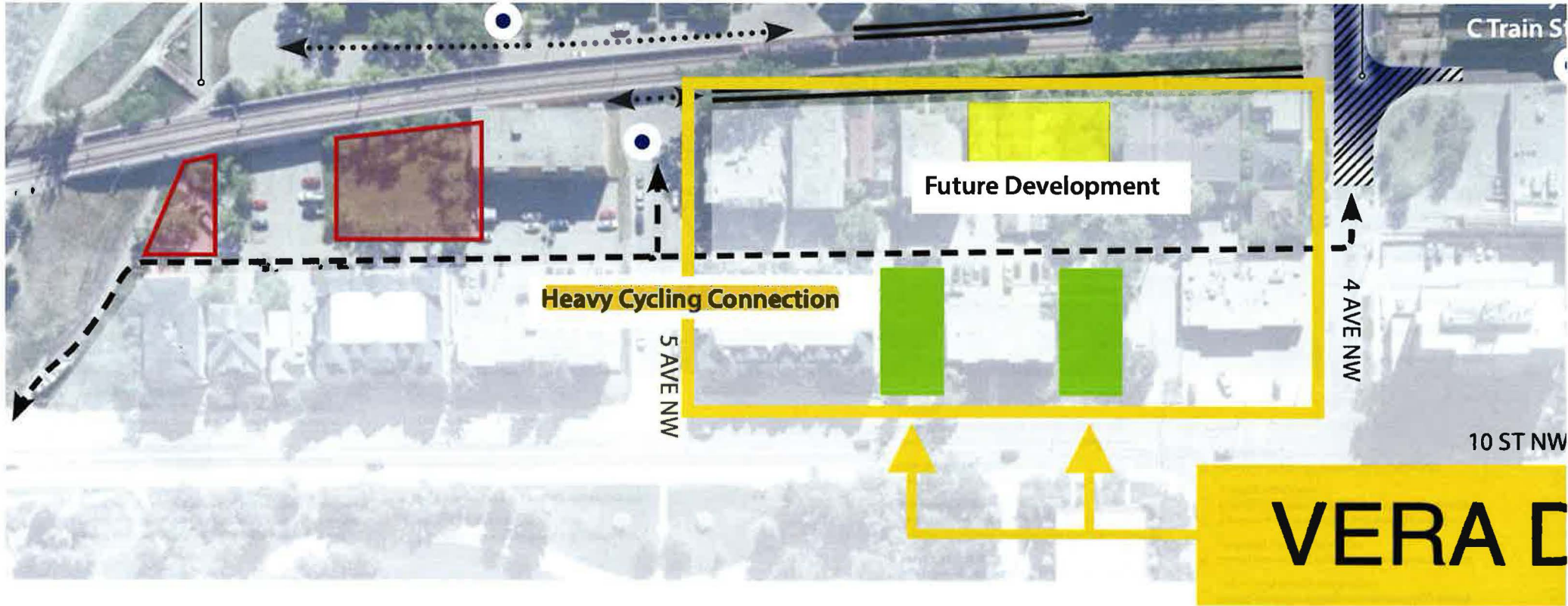
- Memorial Drive is an obstacle for north-south pedestrian and cycle movement
- Poor connections for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the corridor due to insufficient bike routes through the area
- Low visibility from outside the corridor
- Lack of active edges along key routes

Key opportunities for the public realm:

- Protect and enhance existing park spaces and routes
- Create new spaces and routes that are clear, accessible and convenient for diverse modes of travel and user groups
- Expand the cycling network and strengthen specific pedestrian connections, specifically across the LRT line and high-vehicle traffic zones
- Ensure new public spaces and routes complement new and future development
- Design street furniture that is high-quality and contributes to a cohesive identity within the corridor
- Design versatility into the layout as well as the details of site furnishings, accommodating weekly community events and festivals
- Create year-round visual interests and recreational amenities in the park spaces
- Promote a sense of safety and increase sightlines through the renewal of the LRT fence and upkeep of existing vegetation
- Integrate the local heritage and culture into the design

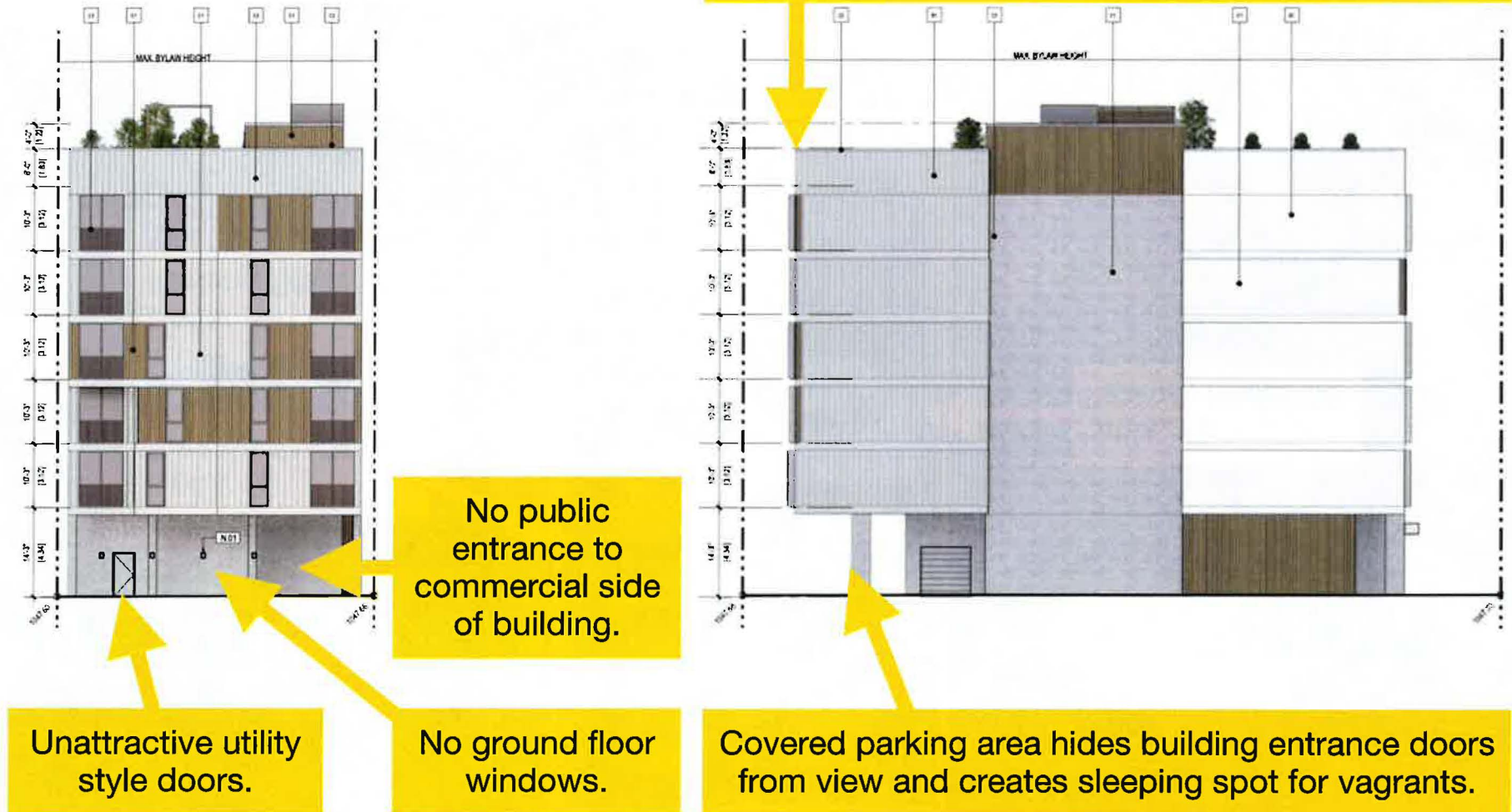


Previous Plans for Laneway
Bow to Bluff Public Realm Plan - 2017
(Heavy Cycling Connection)



Issues With VERA Buildings Laneway Interface

The VERA Group buildings do not have an “active frontage” on the laneway, which jeopardizes the viability of the Bow to Bluff plans for “Laneway Mews” and the “Heavy Cycling Connection.”



Arguments for “Active Frontage” on the Laneway - #1



These buildings will be designed for residents commuting by foot and bicycle.
Why not develop the laneway for them to use?

Arguments for “Active Frontage” on the Laneway - #2

The laneway is already used by many residents on the block as the shortest walking route to the LRT Station and the shops and restaurants on 10th St. / Kensington Rd.



To Shops & Restaurants

LRT Station

Arguments for “Active Frontage” on the Laneway - #3

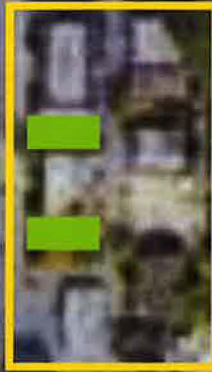


The east side of the block lost its front street in 1986 when it was replaced by the LRT line.

The laneway could become “a modest front street” for the east side of the block.

Arguments for “Active Frontage” on the Laneway - #4

VERA Development



The Annex
(2021 - Minto)

PIXEL
(2014 - Battistella)

Arguments for “Active Frontage” on the Laneway - #4

The Annex building has an “active frontage” facing the laneway.

Ground Floor Windows and Glass Doors

Patios

Bicycle Stalls

Planters

WICKLIFFS OF VANCOUVER



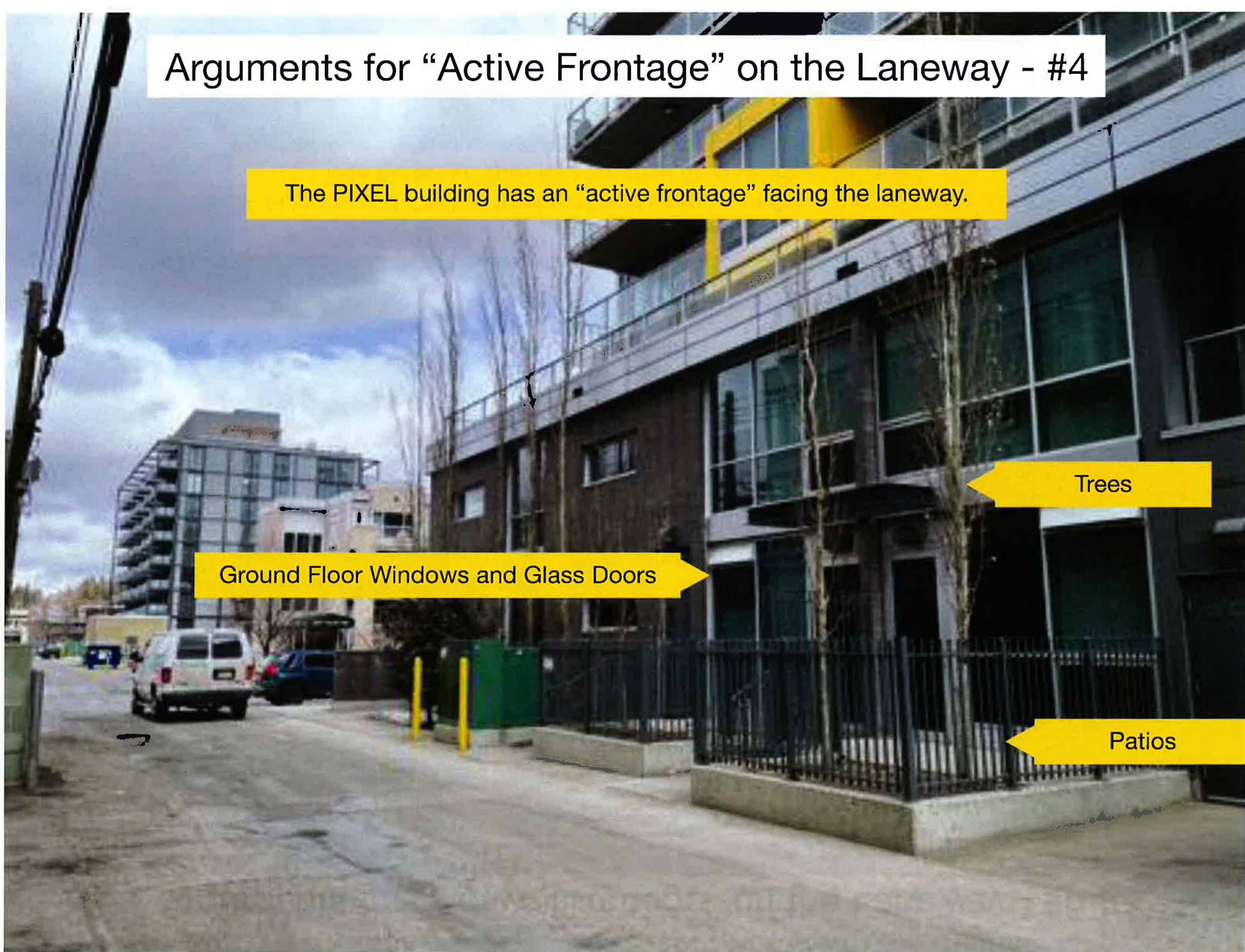
Arguments for “Active Frontage” on the Laneway - #4

The PIXEL building has an “active frontage” facing the laneway.

Ground Floor Windows and Glass Doors

Trees

Patios



Arguments for “Active Frontage” on the Laneway - #5



Crime Prevention

A laneway with “active frontage” and used by pedestrians will make it a less attractive spot for vagrants, drug users and thieves.



Request of Council

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Approve application with condition that VERA Group design buildings with “active frontage” on laneway, keeping the Bow to Bluff plans viable in the future.