



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

Date: March 25, 2008
To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee
Subject: **Unpaved Residential Alleys**

Recommendation:

1. Receive and File the Feasibility Study for Paving of Minneapolis Residential Unpaved Alleys.
2. Direct staff to return to the Transportation and Public Works Committee with final recommendations for alley vacations, more rigorous estimates of actual costs, and recommendations as to when and how an Alley Paving Program could be inserted into the Capital Improvement Program.

Previous Directives:

- May 15th, 2007: The Transportation & Public Works Committee directed Public Works to proceed with the preparation of a feasibility report to establish a long term program for permanently paving (new construction) the remaining 81 unpaved alleys.

Prepared by: Michael D. Kennedy, P.E., Director, Transportation Maint. & Repair

Approved by:

Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Michael D. Kennedy, P.E., Director, Transportation Maint. & Repair

Reviews: N/A

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)
 Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
 Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
 Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
 Action requires use of contingency or reserves
 Business Plan: Action is within the plan. Action requires a change to plan.
 Other financial impact (Explain):
 Request provided to department's Finance Dept. contact when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: Not Applicable
City Goals: A SAFE PLACE TO CALL HOME: the city's infrastructure will be well-maintained, people will feel safe in the city.
Comprehensive Plan: Not Applicable
Zoning Code: Not Applicable

Background/Supporting Information

The purpose of this report is to identify, inventory and define a process to accomplish the paving of the remaining 81 unpaved residential alleys within the City of Minneapolis, and to provide recommendations regarding the best way to address them. The report includes suggestions for vacating some alleys, as well as a long term program for the permanent paving the remainder of these alleys. It only addresses public alleys (alleys in the public right-of-way) and not the private alleys that exist throughout the City.

To determine a proposed course of action physical surveys were performed of all the alleys to understand the general condition of each alley, the current use and/or need, possibility to vacate, need for retaining walls, storm water management and drainage issues and requirements, possible encroachment issues, and any factors that would lead to the understanding of why they were never paved. It identifies reasons why it is in the interest of the City to complete all alley paving. Research was done to understand how other municipalities managed the funding and construction of their public alleys. Cost analyses for both new construction and life-cycle costs were performed to establish baseline, order of magnitude estimates for all aspects of new alley construction. Modern stormwater management methods such as the potential for pervious pavements were identified for further investigation. Finally, historical funding mechanisms were identified, and proposals for funding the paving and related infrastructure needs of the remaining unpaved residential alleys are presented.

Funding for new alley construction has historically been 100% assessed to the benefiting property owners. Alley retaining wall funding has been inconsistent as many may have been built by the property owners, but the City built walls were 100% assessed. Storm sewers were typically funded by the City. It is recommended that storm sewer funding not be changed. But in order to complete the paving of these alleys a new funding strategy that utilizes the successful concepts of uniform assessment rates is identified for pavement and retaining wall construction. However, it requires that the City also share in the funding utilizing Net Debt Bonds to cover the costs for affected properties that are exempt from being assessed for alley construction, such as railroads.

This strategy is consistent with the historical practice of property owners paying for their fair share of new construction, but eliminates the inequities and unbalanced burden that is introduced when individual property owners are forced to carry the assessment burden for other, inaccessible properties. It would allow for the Council to implement a program that is much more likely to be successful in ensuring that the remaining alleys be paved.

Recommendation:

That the City Council receive and file the study and the recommended funding strategies, and direct staff return to the Transportation & Public Works Committee by with:

- Final recommendations for alley vacations
- More rigorous estimates of actual costs
- Recommendations as to when and how an Alley Paving Program could be inserted into the Capital Improvement Program

Funding for further analysis and reporting can be accommodated in the 2008 capital appropriation within the Street/Bridge Maintenance Division.

Attachments: Unpaved Alley Feasibility Study
Unpaved alley map