



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

**Date:** May 15, 2007  
**To:** Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair, and Transportation & Public Works Committee  
**Subject:** **Unpaved Alleys**

**Recommendation:**

Direct Staff to prepare a Feasibility Report for the establishment of a long-term program for permanently paving (new construction) the remaining eighty one (81) unpaved alleys.

**Previous Directives:** None

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Paul W. Ogren, P.E., Director, Field Services

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Steven A. Kotke, P. E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

**Presenters:** Paul W. Ogren P.E., Director, Field Services  
Jeffrey Johnson P.E., Field Services Division

Permanent Review Committee (PRC) Approval \_\_\_\_\_ Not applicable   X    
Policy Review Group Approval \_\_\_\_\_ Not applicable   X  

<p><b>Financial Impact</b> (Check those that apply)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget. (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Action requires use of contingency or reserves</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other financial impact (Explain):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator</p>
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**Community Impact**

**Neighborhood Notification:** Nothing required at this time  
**City Goals:** The City's infrastructure will be improved as well as enhancing our environment.  
**Comprehensive Plan:** Consistent  
**Zoning Code:** Not Applicable

## **Background/Supporting Information:**

There are 3,576 individual blocks of public alleys totaling 377.4 miles located within the City of Minneapolis. Although these alleys are located in commercial, industrial as well as residential neighborhoods, the vast majority are located in residential neighborhoods. The majority of the City's residential alleys were constructed prior to 1970. In fact the median alley construction date (by year) is 1954. The City's standard design for an alley pavement utilizes a 6 inch concrete pavement with an inverted crown (the "V" cross-section that places the low spot along the center of the alley). This design facilitates the alleys ability to provide positive drainage which is one of the primary functions of a paved alley. City-wide, 97% of all alleys are constructed of concrete. The balance of the alleys are "oiled dirt", asphalt, recycled asphalt millings, "paver" blocks or bricks, and just plain dirt. In the City's residential neighborhoods, all the alleys are concrete with the exception of the 81 alleys that have surfaces as described above.

Historically and at the present time, it is the City's policy to assess 100% of the alley construction project costs for a new concrete alley to the benefited (abutting) residential properties. Historically, if a storm drain is needed to facilitate drainage that cannot be mitigated by the paving alone; the City will construct the storm sewer utilizing storm sewer funds, such as the Miscellaneous Storm Drain program in the Capital Budget. Therefore the storm sewer need does not affect the assessment to the individual property owners.

Currently, there is no City program to systematical pave the residential unpaved alleys. If residents want to have their unpaved alley paved, they need to petition the City to have the work done. In the past seven years, Public Works have had only one instance where a new residential alley was constructed by this method. During this same period, there have been 5 occasions where the interest of the residents waned once the costs and assessments became know. These per lot assessments were estimated at that time to be from \$6,500 to over \$10,000 per parcel. The individual parcel cost is the overriding reason that the 81 unpaved alleys have not been constructed.

At the present time the City has several ongoing existing alley programs. These specific programs deal with the resurfacing of the existing alley surfaces (i.e. overlay) and the construction/renovation of alley retaining walls/fencing.

### **Recommendation:**

Direct Staff to return to the Transportation and Public Works Committee by February, 2008 (prior to CLIC presentations) with a Feasibility Report and recommendations that addresses:

- Review of the current and historical practices regarding all alleys
- Review of the inventory of unpaved alleys and known issues, including drainage issues
- Various funding options regarding the future funding of unpaved alley construction
- Establishment of the basis for a long-term program to address the paving of unpaved alleys

The funding for this Feasibility Report can be accommodated in the current 2007 capital appropriation within the Street/Bridge Maintenance Division.

Attachment: City of Minneapolis Unpaved Alleys

