

PROS AND CONS OF ALLEYS

October 22, 2014

Note: Also see Fact Sheet on Alleys

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased access to residential and commercial properties (street at front and alley at rear), and to potential accessory dwelling units behind homes.• Because alleys allow parking and/or garage access at the back of a property:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ There are fewer curb cuts for driveways along the street frontage, reducing turning vehicles across the sidewalks, and improving the pedestrian safety and comfort.○ There can be more on-street parking.○ Building design is improved without driveways and garage doors (avoids “garagescape”).○ There is more space for street trees.• Consistent with City’s “neotraditional” design vision -- urban form that supports social interaction and a welcoming pedestrian environment (front porches instead of driveways and garages, for example).• Services such as recycling and waste collection can occur behind homes and businesses, which improves neighborhood street aesthetics.• Added emergency access (firefighting from rear).• More route options for bicyclists and pedestrians, and to a lesser degree, drivers. (Alleys are not convenient or intended as route options for drivers except to access individual properties.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce flexibility in the development of a property; more property must be dedicated to alleys in a site plan.• Funding is not in place to maintain the City’s current alleys. More alleys would be difficult for the City to maintain.• Because alleys are typically paved or compacted gravel, more alleys will result in more impervious surfaces. With more impervious surfaces, there will be more rainwater runoff that must be treated and/or conveyed offsite. Future Low Impact Development Standards may result in increased opportunity for pervious alleys.• Slight reduction in development density, unless off-set by less street right-of-way.• May not be consistent with some floor plans; plans may not include doorways and garages at rear of building.• Potential location for crime if an alley is not easily visible by people in adjacent buildings.

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for better freight access for commercial uses (access can be provided through back door of businesses instead of front). • More public space for multiple uses (basketball hoops in residential areas, place making in downtown and mixed use areas, for example). • More efficient/less costly location for utility lines. • Helps provide a separation/buffer between different land uses in mixed use areas. • Adds capacity to street grid. Vehicles can choose to turn into an alley instead of a street which means at street intersections, there are fewer turning vehicles causing delay. • Buildings on narrow lots can more easily comply with the City's design criteria. 	

Articles about alleys:

http://www.tndtownpaper.com/Volume2/alleys_the_comeback_kids.htm

<http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/city-life/165271/reimagined-laneway>

http://www.architectureweek.com/2005/0720/building_1-1.html

<http://allaboutcities.ca/alleys-paths-to-urban-revitalization/>