



COBURG CITY COUNCIL ACTION/ISSUE ITEM

Topic: Alley Project Update

Meeting Date: October 12, 2021

Staff Contact: Anne Heath, City Administrator

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REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

Information Only

POLICIES OR CITY COUNCIL GOAL(S)

- **Livability, Health, and Vitality**
 - **Utilities & Infrastructure**
 - **Strategic Planning**
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BACKGROUND

Over the last few months there have been many discussions regarding alleys in Coburg.

In August, 2021, the Council approved moving this topic to the staff work plan for Fiscal Year 2022.

WORKPLAN DEVELOPMENT

In order to tackle this very complicated topic, there will need to be a work plan designed as follows:

1. Determine alleys that contain City infrastructure such as water and sewer lines, and alleys that are required where garages and access for homes are in the alley. Please see attached City Map which shows the existing alleys as follows:
 - a. The blue marked alleys have City infrastructure in them and should be maintained.
 - b. Orange marked alleys do not have City infrastructure, but may have other utilities in them. However, are not likely of value to the City of Coburg as far as infrastructure needs.
 - c. Purple marked alleys are required for access to garages for homes on this block
2. Survey property owners abutting the alleys. Collect data as to whether or not they use

- the alley. If they do use it, how do they use it?
3. Photograph each alley and determine if there are encroaching structures, vegetation, fences, etc.
 4. Conduct surveys of alleys only when necessary to determine if there are encroachments that would interrupt the City's ability to utilize the alley.
 5. Prepare a report to City Council which provides the results of all of the above.
 6. Mayor would then appoint City Councilors to a Council/Staff Committee to look at the report and make recommendations
 7. Recommendations are received by City Council
 8. Community is notified of any recommendations to change alley easements and citizens are given the ability to provide comment.
 9. Final decisions are made as to whether the City should vacate alleys.
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IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO BE CONSIDERED

- 20 year look out at existing buildings, lot density, and approaches to housing in the future
 - Alley vacation must be agreed upon by all properties abutting the alley and 2/3 of properties affected within 200 feet
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ADDITIONAL POLICY OR ALTERNATIVES TO VACATING ALLEY

- Reestablish a Revocable Right of Way Permit. In the past, the City did offer this permit, However, it was blended into the standard Right of Way Permit. This is a very different use as facility permits are usually used for other utility agencies. This would allow for the City to allow for structures in non-infrastructure right of ways which could be revoked should the City need to utilize the alley. This could be a way of bringing current encroachments into compliance.
 - Clarify, strengthen and possibly establish more language on the responsibilities of maintaining the right-of-way abutting a property. This could be by updating a current ordinance, or establishing a new ordinance. More research is needed on this.
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RECOMMENDATION AND ALTERNATIVES

Staff recommends that we move forward with the preliminary work of inventorying all alleys in town, photographing, and establishing where utilities exist. In addition, communicate with the community to find out how the alleys are being used. At the same time, look at policy for managing the right-of-ways.

TIMING

It is anticipated that it will take the rest of the fiscal year for the staff to gather initial information on the alleys.

BUDGET / FINANCIAL IMPACT

The initial work will be done by City staff and will be included in the budgeted personal services budget.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

1. Surveys to abutting property owners
 2. Public comment when recommendation has been made to City Council and Council will be making a decision
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NEXT STEPS

Assign staff to take initial steps in designing alley survey and inventory of alleys

ATTACHMENTS

- A. City Map with alleys color coded
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REVIEWED THROUGH

Anne Heath, City Administrator

Damien Gilbert, City Engineer

Burke Hansen, Public Works
