



The City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

Office of the Public Works Department

STREET MAINTENANCE
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
REFUSE/ RECYCLING
RESOURCE RECOVERY
CENTRAL STORES

Memorandum

To: Anne Lewis, Assistant City Manager
From: Thanh Dang, Public Works Planner
CC: Jim Baker, Drew Williams, Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee
Date: 2/28/2013
Re: Alleys for Future Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

Dear Assistant City Manager Lewis:

Please find attached an updated spreadsheet to which notations have been added indicating alleys that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee in consultation with community members recommend that the City keep for possible future bicycle and pedestrian facilities (shared use paths, multi-use trails, walkways, etc.). *TND?*

I added a column "Please keep for possible future bike or ped connection..." to which the notations were added. At this time, I have not changed any data in the column "Eligible" so that you may compare. Although it may appear redundant that notations were added next to alleys which were already listed as not eligible for closing ("No"), the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee felt that it was important to go on record indicating that in addition to other city needs (sewer/water easements, emergency access, etc.) that there was also benefit to keep that alley for potential biking and walking facilities in case, for example, a water line easement was no longer needed at that location.

On January 23, 2013, I emailed a listserv of over 150 community members with information about the alleys and Council's request for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee to review. The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee had its regular meeting on January 28, 2013 and had a meeting on February 19 that was open to the public at which only the alleys were discussed. We had 5 citizens attend the February 19 meeting. Most of them had also done some outreach prior to and after this meeting with groups like the Northeast Neighborhood Association, Northend Greenway, Friends of Old Town, Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition, and general neighbors. We received 3 emails with recommendations from citizens.

Many of these alleys and rights of ways are already being used by for walking and biking by residents living in those neighborhoods.

There have also been discussions that although we are recommending an alley for potential development into a walking and/or biking facility that in many cases it is unknown whether all adjacent neighbors are supportive of the concept. We only recommend that the City not close these alleys and to explore possibilities in the future. It has also been acknowledged that the City has other bicycle and pedestrian facility priority projects underway, and therefore that most of these alleys will not be developed into formal biking and walking facilities any time soon. It was discussed that in most cases that the City

should prioritize constructing sidewalks in front of homes first, before pursuing the construction of pathways in alleys behind homes.

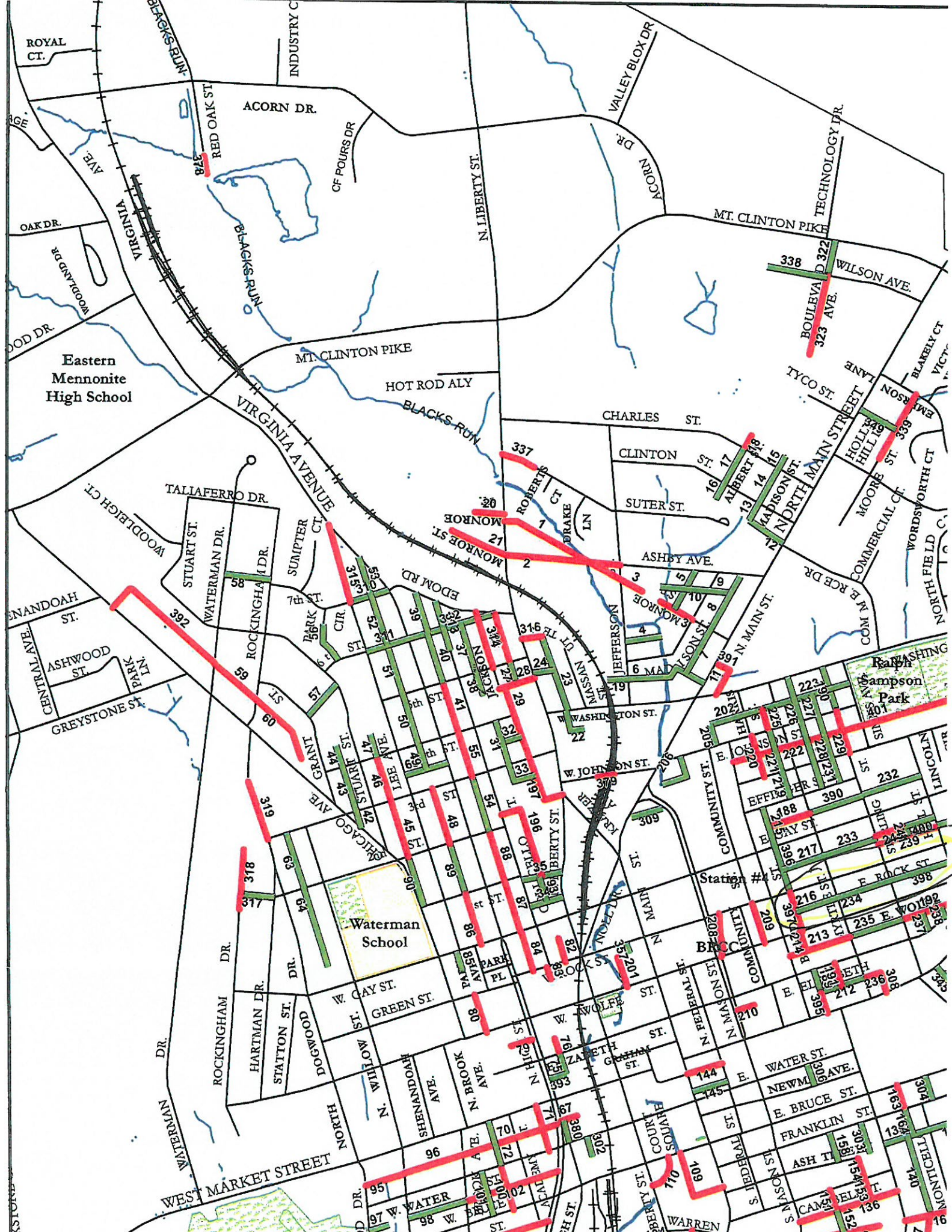
This exercise has been helpful to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee and information compiled will be reviewed again in the City's next update to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanh Dang

Alley Inventory 2013

Alley #	To-From	Eligible
136	Mason St to Ott St	No
137	Paul St to End	No
139	Monticello Ave to Ott St	Yes
140	From Alley to Alley behind 438 Ott St to rear of 338 Ott St	Yes
144	Main St to Federal St	No
145	Main St to Federal St	Yes
148	Paul St to end of Alley	Yes
149	Paul St to Alley	Yes
150	Mason St to End	No
151	Campbell St to Alley between 239 and 247 Campbell St	No
152	Alley to Alley behind 478 S Mason St	Yes
153	Campbell St to Alley between 281 and 285 Campbell St	No
154	Campbell St to Ash Tree Ln	No
158	Ash Tree Ln to Franklin St	Yes
163	Bruce St to Franklin St	No
164	Franklin St to Alley	Yes
165	Monticello Ave to Myers Ave	Yes
166	Monticello Ave to Ott St	No
167	Alley to Paul St	No
168	Paul St to Westview St	No
170	Alley Off End of S Brook Ave	No
171	Weaver Ave to Hillcrest Dr	No
175	S Main St to End	No
176	Alley to End	No
177	Maplehurst Ave to Alley	No
178	Maplehurst Ave to Fairview Ave	No
179	Alley to End	No
180	Fairview Ave to Port Republic Rd	No
182	Hillcrest Dr to Newman Ave	No
188	Myrtle St to Alley 215	No
189	Alley 212 to E Elizabeth St	No
190	E Johnson St to E Washington St	Yes
191	E Elizabeth St to Alley 212	No
192	Hill St to Sterling St	No
196	Collicello to Alley 199	No
197	3rd St to N Liberty St	No
201	W Wolfe St to Llneweaver Apts Parking Lot	No
202	Harris St to Alley 205	Yes
205	Johnson St to Alley 202	Yes
206	E Johnson St to End	Yes
208	Mason St to Rock St	No
209	Rock St to Wolfe St	No
210	N Mason St to End	No
212	Myrtle St to Alley 189	Yes
213	Broad St to Myrtle St	No
214	E Wolfe St To Alley 213	No
215	E Rock St to E Wolfe St	No
216	Myrtle to Alley 215 Between 235 Myrtle St and 396 E Wolfe St	Yes
217	Myrtle to Alley 215 Between 345 and 355 Myrtle St	Yes
219	Kelley St to Effinger St	Yes
220	Kelley St to Johnson St	No



Eastern Mennonite High School

Waterman School

Campson Park



The Land Use Guide

The Land Use Guide and associated map provided at the end of this chapter, recommends future long-term (20+ year) land uses in the City. All three development types must be considered for the Land Use Guide: new development, infill development, and redevelopment. The Land Use Guide descriptions and map make up the official land use policy of the Comprehensive Plan and is to be used as a guide in decisions on such matters as rezonings, special use permit proposals, and the location of public facilities. The categories of land use are described below.

Land Use designations for residential development allow for different types of housing, ranging from single-family detached, single-family attached (duplexes and townhomes), and multi-family dwellings (apartments and mixed-use buildings). While a variety of housing types at a range of densities is desired in the City, Chapter 7, Neighborhoods and Housing, identifies one objective of housing is to have more single-family detached and duplex homes. Table 7-1, in Chapter 7, shows that the total number of dwelling units in the City has increased from 10,900 in 1990 to 18,039 in 2016. While additional single-family detached homes have been constructed during this time, single-family detached homes make up a smaller percentage of total dwelling units at 42.4 percent (4,599 dwelling units) in 1990 to 37.7 percent (6,799 dwelling units) in 2016. Another objective identified is a need for more affordable housing options.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)

Adopted principles Not a plan

Traditional neighborhood development (TND) is not a land use designation, but it refers to the pattern of development of a complete neighborhood or community using traditional town planning principles. As described later in this chapter, this Comprehensive Plan declares that the entire incorporated limits of the City of Harrisonburg is designated as an Urban Development Area (UDA), as authorized by §15.2-2223.1 of the Code of Virginia. Section §15.2-2223.1 of the Code requires that areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan as UDAs incorporate principles of traditional neighborhood development (TND).

To the greatest extent possible, all developments throughout the City shall include TND principles such as those listed below.

BIKE P&D REVIEW MOST RELEVANT?

- The design of the neighborhood allows residents to work, shop, and carry out many of life's other activities within the neighborhood.
- A mix of land uses is provided. The proximity of uses allows residents to walk, ride a bicycle, or take transit for many trips between home, work, shopping, and school.
- A variety of housing types is provided at a range of densities, types (multi-family, attached and detached dwelling units), and costs. Neighborhoods are heterogeneous mixes of residences in close proximity to commercial and employment uses.
- The neighborhood includes a retail, office, employment, and/or entertainment core to provide economic and social vitality, as well as a major focus and meeting place in the community.
- The circulation system serves many modes of transportation and provides choices for alternative transportation routes. Streets, alleys, and pedestrian and bike paths connect to the surrounding area. Streets and alleys generally follow a grid pattern to provide these route choices and

ALLEYS NOT NEEDED

SIDEWALKS?

BIKE LANES?

connections. Traffic calming techniques may be used to reduce vehicle speed and increase pedestrian and bicycle safety. *NOTHING WHAT'S EVER*

- The overall intensity of development is designed to be high enough to support transit service.
- A system of parks; open spaces; and civic, public, and institutional uses is included to create a high quality of life and civic identity for the community.
- The cluster concept is embraced so as to concentrate development in environmentally suitable areas and to preserve and protect important environmental and cultural resources.

Depending upon the circumstances of new development, infill development, and redevelopment projects in the City, TND principles could be independently realized or such projects may rely upon the surrounding or nearby existing neighborhood to work in unison toward TND principles as noted above.

NOT Happening
The following descriptions explain the different designations for the Land Use Guide:

Neighborhood Residential

These areas are typically older residential neighborhoods, which contain a mixture of densities and a mixture of housing types, but should have more single-family detached homes than other types of housing. This type of land use highlights those neighborhoods in which existing conditions dictate the need for careful consideration of the types and densities of future residential development. Infill development and redevelopment must be designed so as to be compatible with the desired character of the neighborhood.

Low Density Residential

These areas consist of single-family detached dwellings in and around well-established neighborhoods with a target density of around 4 dwelling units per acre. The low density residential areas are designed to maintain the character of existing neighborhoods. It should be understood that established neighborhoods in this designation could already be above 4 dwelling units per acre.

Low Density Mixed Residential

These areas have been developed or are planned for residential development containing a mix of large and small-lot single-family detached dwellings, where commercial and service uses might be finely mixed within residential uses or located nearby along collector and arterial streets. Duplexes may be appropriate in certain circumstances. Mixed use buildings containing residential and non-residential uses might be appropriate with residential dwelling units limited to one or two dwelling units per building. Attractive green and open spaces are important for these areas and should be incorporated. Open space development (also known as cluster development) is encouraged, which provides for grouping of residential properties on a development site to use the extra land for open space or recreation. The intent is to have innovative residential building types and allow creative subdivision designs that promote neighborhood cohesiveness, walkability, connected street grids, community green spaces, and the protection of environmental resources or sensitive areas (i.e. trees and floodplains). Residential building

City records indicate that there are no public water or sanitary sewer mains within the alley. However, the Public Utilities Department has noted that a future sanitary sewer service within portions of this alley would best serve the homes along East Rock Street in this block. Although at this time there are no plans to construct a new public sanitary sewer line, if the alley is closed, the City should reserve a public sewer line easement over the entire section of the alley to be closed behind 374 East Wolfe Street.

In addition, there is currently a 24-inch stormwater pipe within the portion of the alley requested for closure. If the alley is closed, the property owners that purchase that portion of the alley will take on the ownership of the stormwater facility. Prior to closure, the City should reserve an easement so that it is clear that private property owners cannot make changes to the land that obstruct the storm drain pipe or change the function of the storm drain pipe.

Within chapter six of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, the concept of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is discussed. The TND concept is a pattern of development of a complete neighborhood or community using traditional town planning principles; the Comprehensive Plan encourages the City to incorporate TND practices to the greatest extent possible throughout the entire City. One principal of TND is that the circulation system should serve many modes of transportation and provide choices for alternative transportation routes. **Streets, alleys, and pedestrian and bike paths should connect to the surrounding area.** Streets and alleys should generally follow a grid pattern to provide these route choices and connections. **The Northeast Neighborhood is a good example of the TND grid pattern having a gridded public street network and numerous alleyways that connect to public streets.**

✂

PLAN

An alley can provide the opportunity for homeowners to access the rear of their property for parking vehicles or perhaps to access a detached garage. Parking in the rear of the property off of an alley can help to improve the appearance of the public street by reducing the number of vehicles parked along the street and opening the view from the public street to the front of homes instead of vehicles, driveways, and garages. The street and alley grid system can help to limit the number of driveway entrances along public streets; thus, helping to reduce the number of conflicts with pedestrians along the sidewalks.

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How DOES THIS happen

Staff believes that the grid system of streets and alleys throughout the Northeast Neighborhood is beneficial to the neighborhood and the City. Connectivity to all parcels is a very important aspect for neighborhoods and traffic **both vehicular and pedestrian.** Closing an alleyway mid-block is not consistent with what the City desires for neighborhoods and loses the opportunity for future redevelopment or infill development of the area utilizing the TND pattern. For these reasons, staff recommends denial of the alley closing request. If the alley closing is approved, as noted above, staff recommends that a private storm drainage easement be reserved across the entire portion of the alley being closed and a public sanitary sewer line easement be reserved over the entire section of the alley to be closed behind 374 East Wolfe Street.

NOT IN PLAN

The applicants are aware that if City Council votes to approve closing the alley (first reading at City Council), the applicants are responsible for having a survey and plat prepared in order for the City Attorney to draft the ordinance to finalize the closure (second reading). After City Council's first reading, letters will be sent to the adjoining property owners on the other side of the alley, who will be given 60-days from the date of the letter to notify the City of their interest to purchase half of the alley. Once all property owners have decided on whether they want to purchase the alley and have submitted the funds to buy the property, the plat should show the portions of the closed alley being added to adjoining parcels and all public and private easements that might be reserved by the City for the purposes herein identified.

Chair Way asked if there were any questions for staff.

Commissioner Finnegan asked if the storm system is one of the old clay systems.

Ms. Banks replied yes, it is a 24-inch clay pipe.

and want to have their home. It is very important to all of us to be able to have our home and do the things that we would like to do to improve our home, which are well within the law.

Commissioner Finks said that he would love to have 10 feet of property show up in the back of his yard, as well.

Commissioner Whitten explained that you have to pay for it. That is what you have to do. And it goes on the tax map, too.

Chair Way said that another thing that we need to balance here is the broader neighborhood thing, the immediate, current use of the block. What the TND idea gets at is the general permeability through the neighborhood and the ability to walk-through and get through in alternative routes as pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles, as well. I am trying to make sure that we think about whole neighborhoods and the patterns, where the other alleys are, where people who come through from other parts of the neighborhood through that area. Every traditional neighborhood design has many upsides to it and one of the upsides is that ability to find many ways through the neighborhood.

Commissioner Finks said that the part that concerns me is that this alley continues up to Hill Street. If it was just contained in that block, that alley between East Rock and Wolfe and ended on Myrtle, it would not seem so much of a concern. That alley goes up to Hill Street from there. It connects to another alley. It is not an alley unto itself. There is a connectivity issue there. If you cut that off, then what is the usage? Does that kill the usage for that next block for future usage for walking or any other future usage? We have to keep these things in mind. Neighborhoods are changing in a big way. They are going to continue to change. As the City gets more dense, more people move in, we are going to have to think of new and better ways to manage our property. We will have to look at building adjacent buildings in the back to house our grandmothers or our children. Alleys could be really useful for something like that.

Commissioner Whitten said so could having 10 extra feet.

Commissioner Finks said that it would be useful today, but not for being able to access that property.

Commissioner Whitten said that, two generations from now, our grandmother can live in the back yard, but not now.

Commissioner Colman said that if we want to encourage that, which I agree would be ideal, to have a path there that people can use. As far as connectivity, it seems that the City should be doing its job in maintaining those alleys and keeping them clear so that people can walk through them. The debris could be charged to whoever is doing that, but in terms of the overgrowth of trees, that should be the City's responsibility.

Chair Way said that he would suggest an "Alley Task Force" to be proactive in maintaining the alleys and looking at things strategically. Where are the valuable ones? Where are the important ones? It might be something worth adding to the list regarding another potential thing to do, especially in light of the Downtown Master Plan. If we think of connectivity to Downtown and through these areas, thinking a bit bigger picture about the neighborhood might be valuable.

Commissioner Whitten said that if we are going to bring up TND, then we should have some sort of idea about what we would like to see before we deny an alley closure request because we think we might want to do this in the future. It needs to be a little more concrete if you are going to use it as the main reason. When you look at the way that alley looks now, there is no way you could make your way through there, unless you had a machete.

Commissioner Finnegan said that he agrees with Commissioner Whitten that we should not be prioritizing or deprioritizing the closing of any portion of that alley based on where the house is. Whether it is on the Myrtle Street end of the alley or next to the other alley. That makes no difference because closing the