Memorandum

DATE: March 20, 2009

TO: Transportation and Environment Committee Members: Linda L. Koop (Chair), Sheffie Kadane (Vice Chair), Jerry R. Allen, Carolyn R. Davis, Voncie Jones Hill, Angela Hunt, Pauline Medrano, Ron Natinsky

SUBJECT: Alley Vegetation Abatement Briefing

On Monday, March 23, 2009, the Alley Vegetation Abatement briefing will be presented to you. Attached is the briefing material for your review prior to Monday’s discussion.

If you have questions or need additional information, please let me know.

Forest E. Turner
Interim Assistant City Manager

cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
Muslim, City Manager
Deborah A. Watkins, City Secretary
Thomas P. Perkins, Jr., City Attorney
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor
Judge C. Victor Lander, Judiciary
Ryan S. Evans, First Assistant City Manager
Ramon F. Miguez, P.E., Assistant City Manager
A.C. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager
Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager
David K. Cook, Chief Financial Officer
Helena Stevens-Thompson, Assistant to the City Manager
Jeanne Chipperfield, Director, Budget and Management Services
Edward Scott, Director, Controller’s Office
Rick Galaczeran, P.E., Director, Public Works and Transportation

*Dallas, the City that Works: Diverse, Vibrant and Progressive*
Alley Overgrown Vegetation

Presented to the Transportation and Environment Committee
March 23, 2009
Purpose

- Review the process used to address alleys with overgrown vegetation and proposed efforts to expedite abatement
Alley Overgrown Vegetation

- Purpose
- Dallas City Code Provisions
- Effects of Overgrowth
- Alley Obstruction Resolution Processes
- Optional Programs for Clearing Alley
Dallas City Code Provisions

Chapter 18

- An owner, occupant, or person in control of any private premises abutting an alley, street, or sidewalk within the city commits an offense if he allows any vegetation, including, but not limited to, trees, shrubbery, bushes, and vines, to grow on the premises so as to project across the property line over or into the right-of-way of the alley, street, or sidewalk [Sec. 18-14.1]

- PREMISES is defined as the lot, plot, or parcel of land, plus the front or side parkway between the property line or sidewalk and the curb or traveled way, and the rear or side parkway between the property line and the center line of an adjacent alley [Sec. 18-12]
Dallas City Code Provisions  Chapter 18

- No violation exists if:
  - Vegetation consisted solely of weeds or grass not more than **12 inches** high [Sec. 18-14.1(b)(1)]
  - No part of the vegetation projected over or into the alley or street at a height of less than **15 feet** above the ground [Sec. 18-14.1(b)(2)]
- Vegetation growing in violation of this section is a nuisance and may be abated by the city [Sec. 18-14.1(c)]
Effects of Alley Overgrowth

- Impedes Public Safety
  - Provides cover for illegal activities
  - Potential fire hazard from dried overgrowth
  - Limits alley access to Police, Fire-Rescue

- Obstructs Utility Services
  - Impedes efficient sanitation collection
    - Recent count identified 2,035 alley segments (each averaging 14 households) impaired by overgrown vegetation
  - Increases utility repairs and maintenance

- Diminishes Quality of Life
  - Decreased property values (broken window theory)
  - Impacts neighborhood harmony between those who do and don’t comply
Effects of Alley Overgrowth

- Sanitation trucks are 8’ wheel-to-wheel and 9.6’ mirror-to-mirror
Effects of Alley Overgrowth

- Property damage may occur when utility vehicles attempting to avoid overgrowth strike fences and leave ruts.
- Additional sample alley photos in appendix section.

Damage from avoiding growth
Alley Obstruction Resolution Processes

- Alley Obstruction service requests decreased 31% from FY06-07 to FY07-08
- Alleys requiring abatement by City decreased 37% from FY06-07 to FY07-08
Alley Obstruction Resolution Processes

311 Service Request Process

- Request received in 311 and routed to Code Compliance
- District code officer inspects site, confirms any violations and, if necessary, issues annual notice of violation (NOV) for high weeds, giving owner seven (7) days to comply
- District code officer re-inspects site to confirm compliance, and issues citations and makes referrals to the Nuisance Abatement – Mow/Clean Unit, as necessary
- Mow/Clean abates violation and processes lien for actual cost of abatement
  - Internal Response Time (ERT) goal 10 days once referral received
  - Service Level Agreement (SLA) 38 Days once referral received
- Subsequent violations during annual NOV term are abated without additional notice and liens processed
Alley Obstruction Resolution Processes

- Alley Assessments (Sweeps)
  - Code inspectors conduct neighborhood assessments to determine alley condition
  - Neighborhood Code Representatives (NCRs) distribute door hangers educating citizens of code requirements and informing of pending weed notice if violation remains (sample at right; actual door hangers have Spanish version on reverse side)
  - Annual notice of violation (NOV) for high weeds issued, subsequent re-inspection, citation and referral to Mow/Clean Unit
  - Mow/Clean Unit groups these locations by geographical location and directs convoy of equipment/personnel in a concentrated effort to abate all vegetation violations identified
  - Liens processed and subsequent violations during annual NOV term are abated without additional notice
Alley Obstruction Resolution Processes

- Alley Assessments (Sweeps)
  - Some owners will comply with education and outreach

Before

After
Optional Programs for Clearing Alleys

- Dedicated alley-clearing units in Mow/Clean
  - Add new work forces to Mow/Clean Unit
    - Four work crews (with 4 equipment operators and 6 laborers each)
    - More expansive use of the sweep concept to be conducted during winter months
  - August 2008 project and cost estimates
    - Target approximately 675 alley segments annually
    - Annual cost of $1.54M
      - Recurring cost of $1.54 million for on-going maintenance
  - Bid consideration during the FY09-10 Budget development process
Optional Programs for Clearing Alleys

- Targeted Sweeps and Partnerships
  - Alley clearing may be achieved by partnering with volunteers and members of the community
    - Youth Commission
    - Corporate Volunteers
    - Homeowners – Utilizing the Hand Tool Program
    - Neighborhood Clean-Ups (Joppa, Trash Attack concept)
  - Benefits include neighborhood ownership and maintenance of alleys
  - Target areas monthly during autumn/winter seasons based on 311 cases
Appendix

Sumatra and Shady Crest

Sumatra and Trailwood

Sumatra and Shady Crest

Sumatra and Trailwood

02/03/2009

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