# Memorandum

CITY OF DALLAS

DATE February 6, 2009

TO Honorable Members of the Quality of Life Committee: Pauline Medrano (Chair), Vonciel Jones Hill (Vice Chair), Carolyn R. Davis, Angela Hunt, Sheffie Kadane, David A. Neumann, Steve Salazar

SUBJECT Alley Vegetation Abatement briefing

On Monday, February 9, 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
Mary K. Suhm, 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

# Alley Overgrown Vegetation

Presented to the Quality of Life & Government Services Committee

February 9, 2009

City of Dallas

Dallas Code Compliance, what it all means
COMMUNITY

Key Focus Area
Clean, Healthy Environment

# 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]

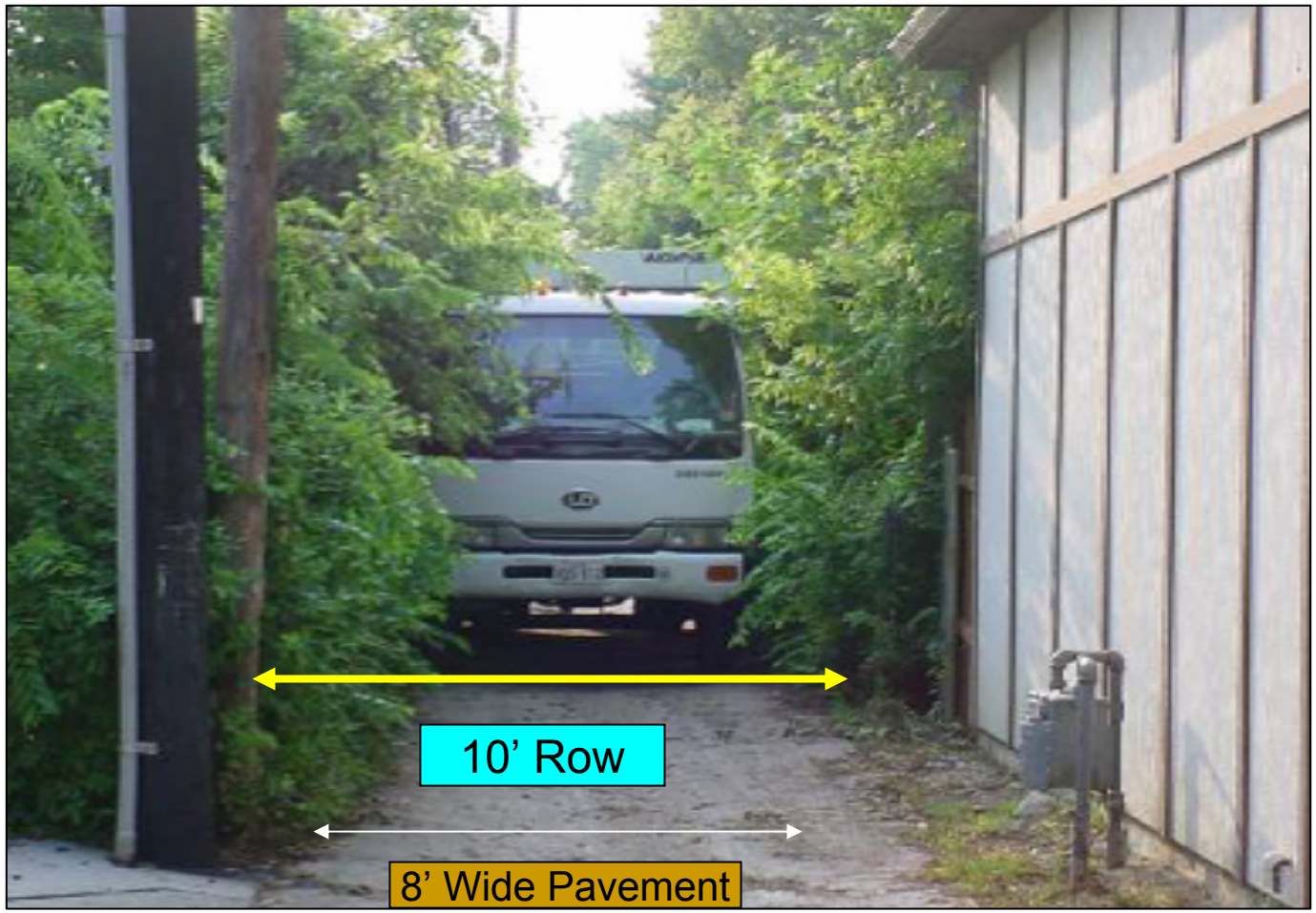
# Dallas City Code Provisions Chapter 18

- 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



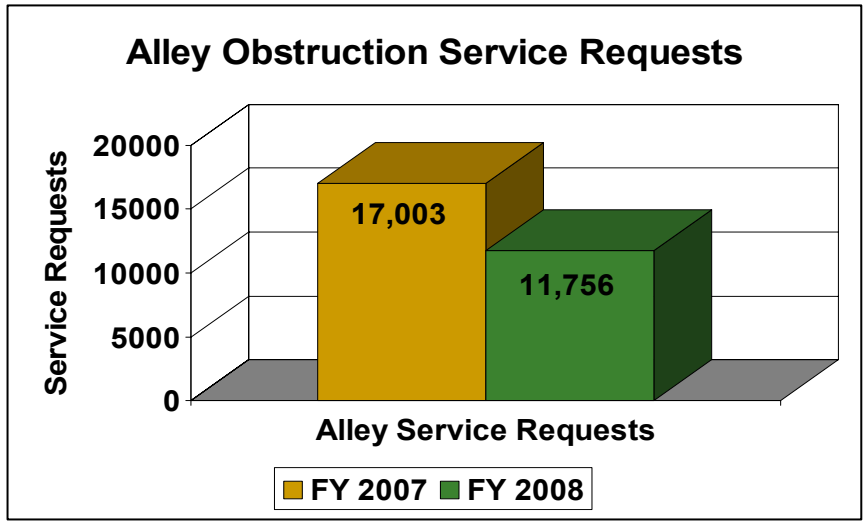

- Sanitation trucks are 8’ wheel-to-wheel and 9.6’ mirror-to-mirror

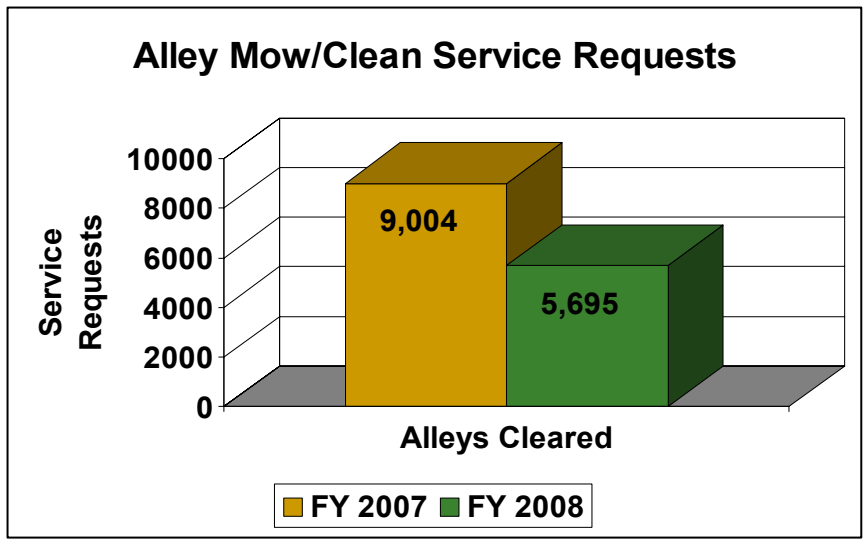
# Effects of Alley Overgrowth

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

# 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

City of Dallas

Dallas-Together we do it better

**Hey!**

**We're going to clean up your neighborhood today, but we need you to help keep it clean.**

- Grass in your neighborhood can not be taller than this ruler. If it is, report it to the City using 311, or better, you clean it up. If the property in violation belongs to someone physically unable to do the work please consider offering them help to get it done.
- Junk Motor Vehicles really make neighborhoods look bad. If you see inoperable vehicles parked for extended periods of time in your neighborhood tell us by calling *311*.
- Know your bulk trash pick-up day. Your neighborhoods bulk trash pickup day is:

Place it out no earlier than 7:00a.m. the Thursday before your pickup week.

**Finally,)** Realize that how your neighborhood looks affects the value of your home. If there are violations within your neighborhood report them to 311 or work with your neighbors to correct the problems. Your neighborhood is in this together!

Dallas Code Compliance, what it all means COMMUNITY

www.dallascityhall.com
Code Problem? Call: *311*

*Questions??? Your Code Compliance contact person is:*

# 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

Serenade and Fern Glen Trail

Serenade and Fern Glen Trail

9800 Blk Old Seagoville Rd and Ancestry

Courtland and Thurston

# Appendix

Sumatra and Shady Crest

Sumatra and Trailwood

Sumatra and Shady Crest

Sumatra and Trailwood

# Appendix

5402 McCommas

5600 Blk McCommas and Morningside

McCommas and Morningside

Mercedes and McCommas