

Resurfacing of Paved Alleys

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Notice of Motion was approved to investigate the costs to administer and execute resurfacing of paved alleys (lanes). There are 475 linear kilometers of paved alleys in Calgary. In 2017, Administration initiated a 2-year condition assessment program of paved alleys in Calgary. Approximately 93% of the paved alley inventory is in Good/Fair condition and an estimated 33 linear km (7%) of paved alleys are estimated to be in Poor condition and could be considered for resurfacing. These alleys are located in Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 14. The total cost to resurface 33 linear km of these alleys is estimated to be \$5.5 million.

The Local Improvement process is the mechanism that was largely used to pave alleys and this process is recommended for resurfacing. Property owners can initiate an alley to be resurfaced through the existing Local Improvement process. Benefiting property owners pay for the full cost of Local Improvements. Maintenance for these assets will continue to be funded and done by The City of Calgary for activities such as pothole repair.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That the SPC on Transportation and Transit recommends that Council receive this report for information.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT, DATED 2017 DECEMBER 08:

That the Administration Recommendation contained in Report TT2017-1104 be approved.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At the 2017 July 31 Combined Meeting of Council, Notice of Motion 2017-23 (Attachment 1) was approved, directing Administration to report back to the Transportation and Transit Committee no later than 2017 September 8 (amended to 2017 December 8), with recommendations on a mechanism to have older alleys resurfaced, including but not limited to a local improvement bylaw, and secondly, to investigate the costs to administer and execute this work.

BACKGROUND

For many years, it has been standard practice to construct alleys with a gravel surface. Through the Local Improvement process, adjacent property owners can petition The City to pave their alley, with the benefitting property owners paying the full cost for this paving. This has resulted in a significant number of paved alleys throughout the city. Additionally, some alleys have been paved in conjunction with adjacent developments. The paved surfaces are then received by the City without future lifecycle funding.

The Municipal Government Act provides statutes for the administration of Local Improvements. A Notice of Intention to Undertake a Local Improvement is sent to affected property owners by The City after a valid petition has been received. Local improvement projects can improve amenities in a specific area and can contribute to increased attractiveness and accessibility. The Local Improvement process provides a mechanism for adjacent residents to improve public

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infrastructure such as paving an alley, while sharing the cost with other benefitting property owners.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

There are approximately 1800 linear kilometers of back alleys in Calgary, of which 475 linear kilometers have an asphalt surface. A coordinated program of visual inspections for paved alleys was initiated in 2017 to evaluate pavement condition. Over 75% of the city was inspected as of November 2017 and conditions assessments are summarized below:

- 60% (Estimated 285 linear km) in Good condition – no maintenance required
- 33% (Estimated 157 linear km) in Fair condition – will require preventative maintenance or resurfacing in the future
- 7% (Estimated 33 linear km) in Poor condition – resurfacing could be recommended

Three possible mechanisms have been identified for resurfacing older alleys as follows:

- 1) Local Improvement (LI) Process – Through the LI process, adjacent property owners can petition the City to resurface their alley at their expense. This can be done presently, with no changes required to the LI process.
- 2) Establishment of a City funded lifecycle program – A City funded lifecycle program could be established, similar to the current Surface Overlay Capital Program for resurfacing roads. If funding is made available, this would allow The City to resurface some older paved alleys.
- 3) Cost Share - A cost share between adjacent property owners and the City could be explored to minimize the associated maintenance costs for poor condition alleys.

The current method for resurfacing alleys involves grinding down the existing pavement and replacing with the same depth of new asphalt, similar to the process used for roadways. Maintenance of these alleys is undertaken by City of Calgary crews. Every Spring, the entire network is inspected and repairs are scheduled in priority order as needed.

The estimated total cost to resurface paved alleys in Poor condition is approximately \$5.5 million. The annual average cost to maintain a paved alley in Poor condition is approximately \$2,000 per kilometer. As the payback period for resurfacing an alley is greater than 10 years compared to regular maintenance, resurfacing would not be recommended as grading and spot repairs are a more cost-effective option.

Generally, adjacent property owners gather the most benefit from paved alleys versus the greater public. Basic maintenance for alleys will continue to be done by Roads for activities such as pothole repair and addressing safety issues.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

The City of Calgary has received very few requests from residents enquiring about using the Local Improvement process to have their existing paved alley resurfaced. These residents are typically referred to the Roads Maintenance Division, as some degree of asphalt maintenance may be done as an alternative. Residents are also advised they can pursue a Local

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Improvement to get an alley resurfaced. To date, Administration has not received a formal petition request to provide cost estimates for alley resurfacing.

Strategic Alignment

This report aligns with the sustainability principles of providing transportation services in an affordable manner, balancing demand for City services with affordable taxes and to be as efficient and effective as possible, with a focus on value for money.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Property owners can already initiate a request to have their alley resurfaced through a Local Improvement. Low effective interest rates, as set by the Alberta Capital Finance Authority, and a 15-year amortization help lower annual costs for affected property owners.

Alley paving prevents erosion of the alley surface and is an effective means of dust reduction and drainage control. Proper maintenance of the paved surface ensures these benefits continue over time.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

There are no anticipated changes in operating budget based on the recommendations within this report.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

There are no anticipated changes to current or future capital budget based on the recommendations within this report.

Risk Assessment

If the City of Calgary considered funding for the resurfacing of 33 linear km of asphalt alleys, available funding for lifecycle work on residential and arterial roads would decrease. Using the existing Local Improvement process for resurfacing alleys avoids impact to existing capital budgets.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

As adjacent property owners receive the most benefit from paved alleys versus the greater public, continuing current maintenance practices and utilizing the Local Improvement process for lifecycle maintenance is recommended. This is more feasible from a cost benefit perspective as alleys can be regraded as a lower cost alternative.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Notice of Motion on Resurfacing of Older Alleys (NM2017-23)
2. City of Calgary Back Alley (Lane) Inventory