3 alleys

The Tale of Three Alleys
Integrating Green Infrastructure in Diverse Neighborhoods

Session Summary
Alley projects are hot topics in many cities and for good reason. They can create open space, manage runoff, link bike and pedestrian routes and build community. But the transformation of neglected and unsafe alleys into urban green networks embraced by the community can be a tough sell. This panel presents the challenges, rewards and lessons learned through engaging diverse communities in three green alley projects.

Alleys are forgotten and neglected spaces, at best. And at worst, they are emblematic of the blight and decay that make these spaces unsafe and therefore unusable for the community. Failed or missing street and alley infrastructure make matters worse. This presentation will discuss ways that neighborhoods in Seattle and Los Angeles are now transforming underutilized alleys into urban green networks that result in multiple benefits.

Learning Objectives
1. Understand approaches and techniques for engaging communities in green alley projects.
2. Identify the qualities and transferability of alley design typologies and components, including those addressing infrastructure inequality in urban landscapes.
3. Gain insights into successful green infrastructure project partnerships and collaborations.
4. Learn about tools and methods for evaluating the design process and performance of green alley projects.

Presenters
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## Project Details

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<th>Project</th>
<th>Typology / Function / Neighborhood Design</th>
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<th>Alley Activation Strategies</th>
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<th>Lessons Learned</th>
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<td><strong>Avalon Green Alley Network Demonstration Project</strong>&lt;br&gt;Los Angeles, CA&lt;br&gt;South Park Neighborhood of South Los Angeles&lt;br&gt;Severely disadvantaged community based on MHI&lt;br&gt;High density: ~20,000 ppl/sq. mi</td>
<td>Green alleys as shared spaces for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians&lt;br&gt;Mins’park’ spaces created by closing strategic portions of alleys to vehicle traffic&lt;br&gt;Neighborhood identity and signage through alley surface treatment, including marked fitness loop through n’hood&lt;br&gt;Network of alleys, link of destinations, commercial, civic, home, lack of open space, exercise loop&lt;br&gt;The drainage of the Avalon Green Alley Network is a localized sub-catchment area of a larger neighborhood</td>
<td>WATER: Infiltrate stormwater using permeable paving and drywells (subsurface infiltration galleries) - 3 to 4 acre ft per year; improve water quality&lt;br&gt;ACTIVE TRANSPORT: Add improved alternative pathways for bikes and pedestrians that are “shared spaces” with vehicles&lt;br&gt;ENERGY: Low-albedo materials and added vines and trees reduce urban heat island&lt;br&gt;HABITAT: 150 new street trees to improve canopy and connectivity&lt;br&gt;COMMUNITY: Add new green space and community gardening spaces to neighborhood; community education on watershed and trees</td>
<td>Green Alley Green Team&lt;br&gt;High Schools&lt;br&gt;Elementary School&lt;br&gt;Monthly Green Team Meeting and Neighborhood Watch&lt;br&gt;Alley Days of Service&lt;br&gt;Christmas Posada and end-of-school-year Art Walk&lt;br&gt;Community Tree-Planting, Tree Care and Fruit Tree Distribution</td>
<td>Unique Partnerships and Collaborations: CA State Natural Resources&lt;br&gt;LA City / Bureau of Sanitation / LA Prop O&lt;br&gt;Local Electeds: City Councilman Price and County Supervisor Ridley-Thomas&lt;br&gt;Los Angeles Police Department&lt;br&gt;Local High School and Elementary School&lt;br&gt;NGOs: Council for Watershed Health, TreePeople, Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Coalition for Responsible Community Development&lt;br&gt;SWLA Landscape Architects / Breen Engineering, Inc.</td>
<td>Frame the value of the project on communities’ top priorities. Nothing matters more than neighborhood safety. Water quality and groundwater recharge do not compete with a 50-hour work week. Custom-fit community design strategies to the realities of the community. It might take time before people and agencies take you seriously. DIY efforts and small, consistent successes on the ground build momentum and a track record. Partner = Engage the Community + Demonstrate + Monitor = Repeat. Prepare the community for this timeline and build in events and small success along the way (see above).</td>
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| **Elmer Paseo Stormwater Improvements**<br>Los Angeles, CA<br>Elmer Ave. Neighborhood of North Los Angeles<br>Sun Valley Watershed, a sub basin of the Los Angeles River Watershed | Complements Elmer Ave N’hood Retrofit Project. Prior to retrofit, the alleyway was blighted, attracted undesirable activity, and flooded in small stormevents<br>Reduces flooding, captures, cleans, and infiltrates stormwater runoff from 10 acres of a 60 acre localized sub-catchment area<br>Provides additional neighborhood green space and safer pedestrian passage to goods and services<br>Designed to accommodate future amenities if desired by residents. Used for neighborhood watch meetings and activities; used as outdoor classroom for care and maintenance workshops<br>Provides a laboratory for monitoring performance of green infrastructure strategies, native plants, and habitat for flora and fauna | WATER: Collect, clean, and infiltrate 4-6 acre ft/yr of stormwater runoff via pervious concrete pathway, infiltration trench, bio-swale of native grasses<br>ACTIVE TRANSPORT: Safer pedestrian connection to schools, goods and services, public transportation<br>ENERGY: Trees, vegetation provide micro-climate for adjacent residences and reduce urban heat island effect. Use of native plants reduces water use and reliance on imported potable water supply and associated energy-use for transport of imported water.<br>HABITAT: 100% local native plants to attract pollinators and native/migrating birds<br>COMMUNITY: Added new community green space. Interpretive signage engages community in monitoring performance and watershed stewardship | Neighborhood Watch Group Meetings<br>Annual neighborhood celebration<br>Community installation of interpretive signage<br>Stewardship program with community, local schools, City staff/NGOs<br>Learning Laboratory for ongoing Water Augmentation Study<br>Alley activation serves to revitalize historic urban neighborhoods<br>Alleys provide abundant public space in urbanized n’hood, functioning as commons that build and express life, relationships, community<br>Grassroots neighborhood alley activation is spreading to other alleys and influencing City policies to permit alley activation.<br>Ald. Price and County Supervisor Ridley-Thomas<br>Residents of Keswick and Lull Sts, Elmer Ave.<br>State of California Strategic Growth Council / Urban Greening Project<br>State of California Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy<br>LA Bureau of Sanitation<br>LA Dept of Water & Power<br>LA Bureau of Engineering<br>LA Prop O - Clean Water Bond<br>Council District 6<br>Graffiti Busters<br>NGOs: Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Theodore Payne, TreePeople<br>Construction Project Team: City, Tetra Tech, Inc., American Landscape, Inc. | Achieving multiple goals from multiple project partners / funders required a collaborative project approach. Designing alleys that are adjacent to private residences requires balancing competing desires for uses. Creative interpretive signage can be used to engage students and residents in citizen stewardship activities and performance monitoring. Care and maintenance activities can be collaborative opportunities with public agencies, NGOs, the community. |

| **Nord Alley (and more!))**<br>Seattle, WA<br>Historic Pioneer Square Neighborhood (Nord Alley)<br>Historic International District Neighborhood (Canton Alley) | Service alley transformed to provide community space and cohesion.<br>Alley event programming and temporary installations precede alley renovation.<br>Daily trash removal allows alley to function as safe and active public space.<br>Alley activation serves to revitalize historic urban neighborhoods.<br>Alleys provide abundant public space in urbanized n’hood, functioning as commons that build and express life, relationships, community.<br>Grassroots neighborhood alley activation is spreading to other alleys and influencing City policies to permit alley activation.<br> | WATER: Collect and Display roof and alley runoff (can’t infiltrate)<br>ACTIVE TRANSPORT: Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle routes. Repaving strategies.<br>ENERGY: LED lighting planned.<br>HABITAT: Ranter boxes, moss (every little bit helps).<br>COMMUNITY: Sponsor, inspire and host community arts, cultural, social, and entertainment events. Alley planning and stewardship brings community together.<br> | Green Alley Competition<br>Alley Parties and Events @ First Thursday Art Walk: Art Openings, Food, Music, Dancers, Animatists, Lighting Installations, Poetry Carnivals, “Alley Cat” Pet Adoption, Dogs on Parade, Holiday Caroling, Film Screenings, Alley Renovation Displays, etc.<br>World Cup and Tour de France Viewing daily in summer<br>Monthly Art Installations<br>Opening facades on alley, new businesses<br>Lighting, walls and overhand | International Sustainability Institute<br>International Sustainability Institute | The ‘r’ship b/t programming and physical design interventions are “virtuous cycle,” reciprocally acting, mutually reinforcing. Alley activation requires a local champion who invites collaboration and expanded ownership. Alley activation can be contagious! Temporal variation – e.g. designating times for service access vs. events, and holding temporary public events – can be a reflexive way to address multiple-need challenges. Creatively addressing trash storage and removal methods and other service functions is essential and possible. Make alleys interesting, fun, active, social, artful; give people reasons to play and stay in them! |
The Tale of Three Alleys

INTEGRATING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS

Moderator
MaraLee Olson, RLA, ASLA, ZDA & University of Wisconsin - Madison

Presenters
Laura Ballock, ASLA, The Trust for Public Land
Eileen Alduenda, ASLA, Council for Watershed Health
Nancy Rottle, RLA, ASLA, University of Washington

What is an alley?

1 a garden or park walk bordered by trees or bushes
2 a) a grassed enclosure for bowling or skittles; a hardwood lane for bowling; a room or building housing a group of such lanes
   b) the space on each side of a tennis doubles court between the sideline and the service sideline
   c) an area in a baseball outfield between two outfielders when they are in normal positions
3 a narrow street; especially: a thoroughfare through the middle of a block giving access to the rear of lots or buildings

Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Are they a place of opportunities?

1: Launch from either the bottom up or the top down
2: Demonstrate and inspire paradigm shifts

8 principles of green alley projects

1 Launch from the bottom up or the top down, but success requires the input of both, at some point.
2 Demonstrate and inspire paradigm shifts. Small projects catalyze big changes; talk leads to action.
3 Provide many multiple benefits: open space, stormwater management, community building, local ownership, economic growth, wildlife habitat...
4 Allow endless creativity for green infrastructure. Stormwater management is just one of many tools to work with.
5 Move a community beyond neighborhood buy-in – people become vested, become stewards.
6 Re-establish public space as a forum – inviting participation, ideas, creativity, sustainability, resiliency.
7 Produce an iterative planning process – there’s no need to completely reinvent the wheel. The great news: anybody can do this!
8 Offer/supply measurable results: property values, stormwater management, popularity, foot traffic, crime rates...

GREEN ALLEY PROJECTS ...

- Chicago
- Los Angeles
- Seattle
- San Francisco
- Detroit
- Montreal
- Melbourne
3: Provide many multiple benefits

4: Allow endless creativity for green infrastructure

5: Move a community beyond neighborhood buy-in

6: Re-establish public space as a forum

7: Produce an iterative planning process

8: Offer / supply measurable results
Avalon Green Alley Network
South Los Angeles

Regional conditions

Regional Opportunity

Design: Avalon Green Alley Network
Avalon Green Alley - South

Avalon Green Alley - North

Make green infrastructure matter

Custom-fit and site-specific community design

DIY efforts build momentum and a track record

Partner + Engage + Demonstrate + Monitor + Repeat
Eileen Alduenda, ASLA

Elmer Paseo Stormwater Improvements Project
Sun Valley - Los Angeles

The region’s hub for watershed research and analysis
- Working at the intersection of research and policy
- Driving applied research to improve policy and practice
- Connecting diverse perspectives to address timely issues

Why we do what we do

Sun Valley Watershed

Elmer Avenue Neighborhood

Elmer Paseo Goals

Updated Concept Design
Community engagement

Elmer Paseo - October 2012

Capture, Clean, Infiltrate
Safer Passage
Community Green Space
Habitat

Elmer Paseo – December 2012

Collaboration

Performance Monitoring

Creative interpretive signage
Growing a Movement: Activating Seattle’s Urban Alleys

Nancy D. Rottle, RLA, ASLA

Alleys as Downtown Seattle’s green lungs.

Gehl Architects’ Seattle Downtown Pedestrian Study: Activate Alleys

Pioneer Square Neighborhood

• Upgrade waterfront - waterfront city
• East-west streets as green connectors
• "Alleys as green lungs"

Nord Alley, Pioneer Square. Alley parties!

Activating Alleys for A Lively City

- Seattle Integrated Alley Handbook

UW Green Futures Lab Intern Project: Alley Guide

Organizing: Alley Network Project

Programming: Pioneer Square Alleys
Guide: Alley event handbook

Permanent Edge Activation: Back Alley Bikes

Design: Alley Corridor Project
Paving, Stormwater and Lighting Standards

Alley activation spreading...Pioneer Passage

Alley activation spreading...Canton Alley

Lesson: Make alleys interesting, fun, active, social, artful!