



## Memorandum

To: Rick Howell - City Manager  
From: Walter Scharer – Planning Director  
Date: February 9, 2015  
Subject: Arey Alley Repurpose Proposal

### Executive Summary of issue – Background

The developer of the property in Uptown Shelby at 213 South Lafayette Street has proposed improvements to Arey Alley adjacent to the building. Arey Alley is primarily used as a service corridor for utilities and other functions. There are a few parking spaces. The Alley is rarely used for through traffic.

The proposed improvements include limiting through vehicular movements to special events or emergency situations, thus creating more of a pedestrian way that could also serve as a functional mini park.

The Uptown core is characterized by an alley system which distinguishes the Uptown environment. In most places, the alleys provide glimpses of the courthouse and important pedestrian connections to Court Square. Segments of Trade and Arey alleys, in the block between Warren and Graham, are quite attractive with good examples of façade renovations and business signs. Most alleys, however, present a “back door” image to the businesses they serve.

### Review and Comments

Staff who have reviewed this proposal have the following comments:

- Public Works uses this alley for Garbage Collection for local Uptown businesses and residences. Repurposing the alley will not affect the Garbage Collection service.
- The Fire and Rescue Department will require access to any Fire Department Connection (FDC) associated with the development of 213 South Lafayette Street. In addition, a fire lane should be maintained in the alley. Also, emergency vehicular flow should be maintained in the alley.
- The Police Department recommends maintained vehicular flow for emergencies and special events.
- The Utility Department will need to make a water line extension to the building development at 213 South Lafayette Street. In addition, an old clay sewer pipe should be replaced in the alley and the storm drain system located in the alley should be upgraded to improve the existing storm water drainage deficiencies in the alley.
- The Planning and Development Department recommends that emergency vehicular flow through the alley be maintained. In addition, adequate pedestrian facilities should be maintained as recommended in the Center City Master Plan.

The alley system in the core of Shelby distinguishes Uptown from other communities' downtowns. Since some of the alleys in Shelby are already models for how attractive they can look, there is an opportunity to look long-term at how they can become an integral part of the pedestrian environment, particularly since they offer a more intimate scale and sometimes "funky" environment when compared to the sidewalks along the business fronts. There is the danger, however, that too much emphasis on pedestrian access via the alleys can take away from pedestrian activity along the streets and storefronts. A balanced approach should be taken. The street grid and alley system adds interest to downtown.

Please place this item on the agenda for the February 16, 2015 City Council meeting.

**Attachment:** Location Map