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## Alleys within CRA to be made one-way

Eventual widening to 20 feet also planned

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Alleyways generally make people think of delivery trucks, potholes and traffic congestion.

With the stated ideal of converting the Cape Coral Community Redevelopment Area from a blighted city downtown to a vibrant residential, work and recreational area, a CRA committee unanimously decided to make some changes to alleys.

"Alleys are a concern for the CRA, as they have been an integral part of the downtown master plan," CRA board member John Jacobsen said.

Two-way traffic moving through the alleys sometimes backs up because 60 of the 64 alleys listed in a CRA inventory are 15 feet wide. The other four are 20 feet wide.

When someone parks in the alley it can take up one lane causing traffic from both directions to use the other lane. "Those alleys at the ends of Big John's are a problem. The one next to Wendy's and the one behind the Italian American Club are trouble when trucks decide to use them as parking," said Luke Fitzherbert, a barber at Sgt. Peppers Headquarters on Southeast 47th Terrace. "The one behind our shop sometimes gets backed up."

The committee, Jacobsen, Bob Greco and Jason Tramonte, unanimously voted to have alleys made one-way. With development, the alleys would need to be enlarged to 20 feet, stated the committee's motion. The widening could be by the addition of 2.5 feet to either side of the alley or 5 feet to one side, Suzanne Kuehn, CRA director, said.

"As major projects are built alleyways might not be part of the plans," Kuehn said "Until then it will be part of the building code that alleys be one way and eventually 20 feet wide."

The codes require access to parking areas from the alleys for smaller businesses, Bob Greco, CRA chairman, said.

"The idea is to get the buildings closer to the streets and

create a pedestrian-friendly area," Greco said. "The smaller developments would still need alleys to get to the parking behind their buildings and places to hide dumpsters."

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To further improve the alleys the committee asked city engineers to find out how much paving the more than five miles of alleys in the CRA would need and what it would cost.

If the CRA Board decides to pave the alleys there could be an assessment to property owners or the CRA Board would research other ways such as grants to pay for the work.

A Lafayette Street chiropractor said he'd been after the city to fix the alley behind his office for years.

"They come out and patch it and then in two or three weeks it is full of potholes again," Ernest Risley said. "The other problem is the big trucks using it to park."

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