

203-2195 W40th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6M 1W4
August 12, 2016

Mr. Kevin Mettert
Neighbourhood Transportation and Parking Unit
City Hall
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Dear Mr. Mettert,

I am a resident of 2195 W40th Avenue. I have compiled a report to investigate into the feasibility of eliminating back alley parking at the above-mentioned address. Opinion surveys of residents of 2195 W40th Avenue, as well as alley users including drivers who parked at the alley and pedestrians were gathered. There is an overwhelming support among residents and pedestrians for eliminating alley parking.

I would be grateful if you could take a look at my report and consider the recommendations listed. I can be reached at the above address or by email at darrenwongj@gmail.com.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Darren Wong

Darren Wong

Proposal to Eliminate Alley Parking at 2195 W40th Avenue

**Presented to
Neighbourhood Transportation and Parking Unit
City of Vancouver**

**by
Darren Wong
UBC Student**

August 12, 2016

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Abstract

This report aims to investigate into the feasibility of eliminating back alley parking at 2195 W40th Avenue. Opinion surveys of residents of 2195 W40th Avenue, as well as alley users including drivers who parked at the alley and pedestrians were gathered. There is an overwhelming support among residents and pedestrians for eliminating alley parking. Although there are opposition voices from drivers who regularly park at the alley, the City of Vancouver should protect the safety and well-being of those who live in the neighbourhood. This proposal will be forwarded to the Neighbourhood Transportation and Parking Unit of the City of Vancouver for consideration.

I. Introduction

Kerrisdale is considered one of the busiest and most vibrant neighbourhoods in Vancouver's west side. The area is home to elderly residents and young families with small children who primarily rent in the low rise apartments along W39th and W38th Avenue. Along W41st Avenue, there are six banks, three drugstores, fifteen restaurants, eight coffee shops, three bakeries, and four local grocers which attract local residents and people from neighbouring areas alike. Traffic, including foot traffic, is heavy in this area. I reside in a building on the corner of W40th Avenue and Yew Street, which is considered in the heart of Kerrisdale. The back alley is a short cut for residents of W38th and W39th Avenue to commute to and from W41st Avenue for shopping and dining purposes. The alley is frequented by all types of road users, and vehicles are allowed to park at the alley without restrictions. Thus, this poses a danger when seniors and families with small children are walking while drivers are coming through this narrow alley.

At the moment, alley parking is permitted without restrictions. The alley is narrow and as a result, pedestrians and drivers are always fighting for the right of way. Due to mobility issues, seniors using walkers take up more of the alley and due to their slower pace, block traffic. Furthermore, from time to time, drivers violate parking rules and park right outside of the garage exit which makes it impossible for residents of 2195 W40th Avenue to make a left turn.

By eliminating back alley parking, the alley will be wide enough for cars and pedestrians to share the road. This will enhance the safety of our local residents, especially those seniors with difficulty walking. Furthermore, this will reduce traffic by cars circling the alley trying to find parking.

To assess the feasibility of eliminating back alley parking at 2195 W40th Avenue, I have

investigated into the following areas of inquiry:

1. Will the elimination of back alley parking pose a problem on the already-tight parking situation in Kerrisdale?
2. When is traffic most congested at the corner of W40th Avenue and Yew Street?
3. What do the other eight households of 2195 W40th Avenue think about the proposal?
4. What do pedestrians think about the proposal?
5. What do drivers who park at the alley think about the proposal?
6. Can there be a compromise? For instance, should parking with restrictions be enforced?

I have conducted surveys from the eight other households of 2195 W40th Avenue and opinion surveys of alley users including drivers who parked at the alley and pedestrians. I have also conducted onsite observations of alley usage at various time intervals.

II. Collected Data

A. Survey Results of Residents of 2195 W40th Avenue

There are nine residential units in the building. Being one of the owners in the building, I fully support the proposal to eliminate alley parking. I have lived in this building for six years and have witnessed five accidents involving pedestrians and drivers going through the alley. Although these were mostly minor incidents, all accidents should be avoided at all cost. At present, our back alley has spots for four cars to be parked there with no restrictions whatsoever. That leaves only one lane for cars from both directions to go through. As mentioned before, this is considered the busiest corner of Kerrisdale, and pedestrians take advantage of this alley to cut through to the various

businesses on W41st Avenue. Pedestrians and drivers are constantly fighting for the right of way in the alley, especially during peak hours.

The road condition in the alley is not as good as in the paved road ways. Senior citizens who have trouble walking will use walkers or canes to maintain balance. Due to the bumpy nature of the alley, senior citizens have a hard time balancing themselves and I have seen three of them fall over during the six years I have lived here. Furthermore, some of the senior citizens have difficulty hearing and sometimes they are startled when an impatient driver tries to squeeze through the alley beside them.

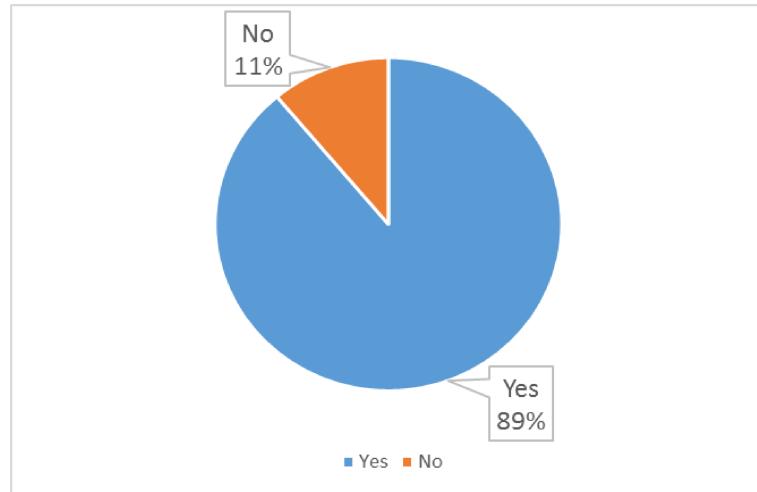


Figure 1. Pie Chart Showing the Percentage of Residents For and Against the Proposal

I have conducted face to face interviews with the other eight owners in the building to gauge their opinion about the proposal to eliminate alley parking (Figure 1). All but one owners support the proposal citing the following reasons:

- a) Most drivers are annoyed by the slow pace of seniors with walkers and families with strollers walking through the alley. These pedestrians are being

honked at from time to time. Hence, their safety is extremely at risk especially if they get startled and fall.

- b) Even though there is space for only four cars to be parked at the alley, some drivers violate the rule and illegally park in front of the no-parking zone (see photo below – Figure 2). As a result, our garage entrance is blocked and it is not possible to make a left turn. One owner even had his car scratched when attempting to make a left turn when a car was illegally parked there blocking our entrance.



Figure 2. Car Parked Illegally in Alley

- c) Some drivers take advantage of the no-restriction alley parking and leave their car there for a long period of time. One owner recalled that there were a few occasions where abandoned cars were parked at the alley for a few months and he had to call the City of Vancouver to tow them away.

d) One owner cited that given the narrowness of the alley and the frequent traffic, the City of Vancouver should seriously consider banning parking in the alley, or at least introduce some sort of restrictions.

e) Another owner stated that alleys are not supposed to provide unlimited parking. They should be used for commercial vehicles to park there when they have to make a delivery or pick up. In addition, it will be much safer for garbage collection trucks to pass through the alley without having the potential of running over parked cars and pedestrians.

f) The owner who opposes to the proposal responded that he sometimes parked his vehicle there when he had guests staying over at his place. Each owner has two parking spots in our garage so this owner finds it convenient to have unlimited alley parking when necessary.

B. Survey Results of Pedestrians using the Alley

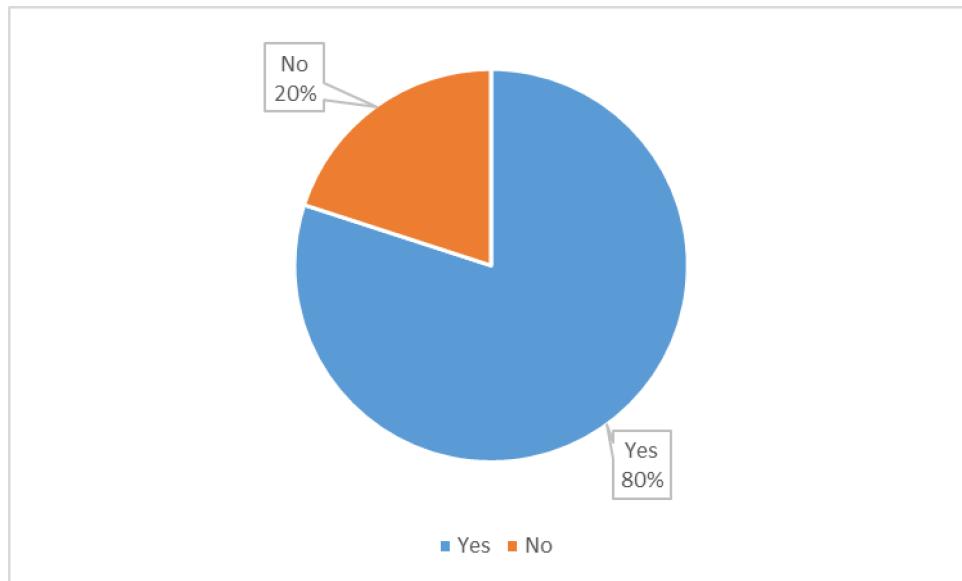


Figure 3. Pie Chart Showing the Percentage of Pedestrians For and Against the Proposal

I have conducted face to face interviews with 70 pedestrians during the week of July 3. Out of the 70 pedestrians, an overwhelmingly 80% of them supported the proposal to eliminate alley parking at 2195 W40th Avenue (Figure 3). The major reasons are summarized as follows:

- a) Some pedestrians reflected that sharing one lane with cars is scary, especially if it is an oversized vehicle. They commented that drivers are getting more impatient and they drive really close to them. Although some drivers are quite courteous and wave them though, they have encountered some rude ones.
- b) Nowadays, some hybrid cars are extremely quiet and they do not even notice them until they are right behind them. One lady told me that her elderly mother was once startled and tripped.
- c) A few pedestrians said that since it is difficult for drivers to find parking around this area, they constantly circle around the alley. This makes the alley congested even more. Some drivers even dangerously back out of the alley when they noticed there are no more parking spots available.
- d) A few young mothers walking with strollers said they are especially vigilant when walking through the alley. They said they had no choice but taking up the whole alley since one lane is taken up by parked cars.
- e) 35 out of the 70 pedestrians said even though they welcome a proposal to eliminate alley parking, they feel it might not be possible since parking spot is really tight around this area. During lunch hour, you have to be extremely

lucky to find a parking spot since there are many restaurants within two blocks from the alley. They suggested that some sort of restrictions be introduced during rush hours and weekends.

Out of the 70 pedestrians I interviewed, 14 of them were not supportive of the proposal to eliminate alley parking citing the following reasons:

- a) 12 of the 14 pedestrians whom I interviewed actually parked their car further down from the alley. They were on their way back to the car when I approached them for interview. They cited that by taking away the four parking spots in the alley, it would be much more difficult to secure a parking spot when they come to this area to run some errands. Even though they do not shop around this area every single day, they feel frustrated because there are inadequate parking spots nearby.
- b) Six of the pedestrians said they lived nearby and would like to have the flexibility for their out of town guests to enjoy non-restricted parking when they come for a visit.

C. Survey Results of Drivers Who Parked at the Alley

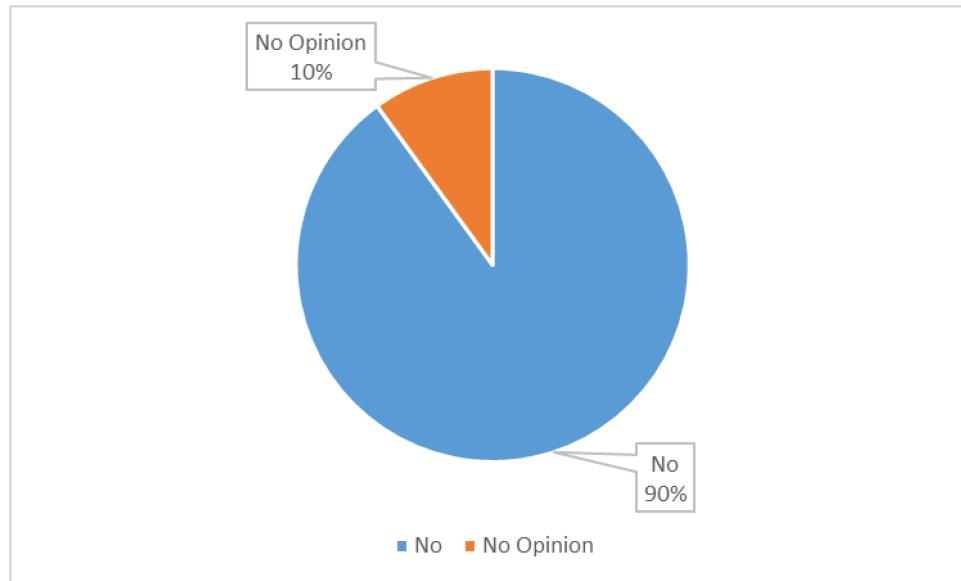


Figure 4. Pie Chart Showing the Percentage of Drivers Who were Against the Proposal

I intended to interview 40 drivers who parked at the alley. However, I rarely encountered the drivers and it was impossible for me to stand outside the whole day to wait for them. In the end, I had the opportunity to interview 20 drivers during the week of July 3 (Figure 4). Out of the 20 drivers, 18 of them said they would oppose to the proposal to eliminate alley parking due to the following reasons:

- a) Three drivers said they lived at a condo nearby which did not provide a parking spot. They have identified a few alley parking spots around the neighbourhood and would park there overnight when they come back from work.
- b) Six of the drivers said they worked in this neighborhood. Their company does not provide them with a parking spot and they could not afford to pay for one. They usually arrive before 8am in the morning and they can usually

secure a parking spot in the alley. They would park there every weekday until around 5pm. They commented that if non-restricted alley parking was eliminated, they would have to take transit to work since everywhere else in this area has parking restrictions.

- c) Nine drivers parked their car at the alley and then went to run some errands. They said they were lucky in a sense that they did not have to pay for parking. They commented that they came to this neighbourhood three to four times a week and it was nice not to have to pay for parking once in a while.
- d) The other two drivers said they rarely came to this area so they did not have a strong opinion on this matter.

III. Conclusion

The Kerrisdale neighbourhood is getting busier and I would like to ensure the safety of our residents walking around the area. I have been living in my building for six years. Ever since I lived there, I have witnessed several accidents involving drivers and pedestrians who fight for their right of way in the alley. During peak hours, it is extremely difficult to exit the garage since there are always people walking in the narrow alley. The problem has gotten worse lately since there are newer housing developments being built around the area.

The busiest hours at the corner of 2195 W40th Avenue and Yew Street are between 11:30am to 2:30pm on the weekdays. This is the time when local residents come out to shop and workers from a few blocks away drive here for lunch. During Saturdays, this corner is busiest

from 10am to 4pm. The situation on Sundays is a little bit better since some of the businesses are not open.

Since there is an overwhelming support among residents and pedestrians for eliminating alley parking, the City of Vancouver should take this matter into consideration. Although there are opposition voices, the City should protect the safety and well-being of those who live in the neighbourhood.

IV. Recommendations

Due to the limit of my research, I was not able to survey each and every resident who reside in this neighbourhood. However, I believe this is a task which could easily be undertaken by the City of Vancouver. My recommendations are as follows:

- a) The City of Vancouver could write to all the home owners, strata councils and management companies and ask for their opinion regarding the elimination of back alley parking at 2195 W40th Avenue.
- b) The City of Vancouver could conduct a review on the parking situations in the Kerrisdale area. They could gather views and opinions of all the business establishments and see if there will be any impact if parking regulations are altered. I have seen parking regulations being altered after neighbourhood-wide consultations, and this can also another project to improve the quality of life of residents in this area.
- c) The City of Vancouver could send out more traffic patrols to ensure drivers are adhering to parking regulations, especially during peak hours.

References

“Kerrisdale.” City of Vancouver, <http://vancouver.ca/news-calendar/kerrisdale.aspx>. Accessed 12 August 2016.

“Kerrisdale Village.” Kerrisdale Business Association, <http://www.kerrisdalevillage.com/>. Accessed 12 August 2016.

“Parking tips, regulations, and bylaws.” City of Vancouver, <http://vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/parking-tips-regulations-and-bylaws.aspx>. Accessed 12 August 2016.