

From Invisible to Visible:

Creating a Model of Alley Revitalization by Studying Canton Alley in Seattle

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What Is Alley & Alley Revitalization

An alley is defined as a public way used primarily as a means of access to the rear of residences and business establishments. The poor physical condition in the alley, such as the rough or unpaved road and big dumpsters that smells bad, gives people uncomfortable feeling for walking. Alley revitalization is an effort of redefining the physical environment as well as the psychological identity of alley, transforming it into a welcoming space for transportation connection and community gathering in the neighborhood.

Alley Revitalization in Seattle

There are 217,500 square feet of alleys in Seattle and 85% of them are underused. By revitalizing the alleys, we could increase the public space by 50%. The Clear Alley Program (CAP) issued in 2009 is an effort of government that greatly contributes to alley revitalization process in Seattle, which requires removing all the dumpsters from alleys and using individual household garbage collection instead.

Why Study Canton Alley Revitalization

Canton Alley is one of the only two alleys that have names in Seattle's Chinatown-International District. It locates in between East and West Kong Yick Buildings, which were once the commercial center of Chinatown Area but currently become with high vacancy rate due to deterioration of entire neighborhood. Canton Alley revitalization began in 2009 by Chinatown Historic Alley Partnership (CHAP). It is the starting point to recall the memory and pride of glory among local residents and reactivate the entire neighborhood.

What Is Model of Alley Revitalization

The model of alley revitalization aims to use the simple illustration and short text to explain the process of alley revitalization to the public in minimum amount of time. As a tool of public education, it encourages local residents to get involved in alley revitalization process.

Methodology



Case Studies

- Nord Alley, Seattle**
- One of the earliest alleys began the alley revitalization movement in Seattle.
 - Temporary event, such as world cup party and Tour d'Alley, and annually events, such as alley art walk, that attract different population all year round

- Beldon Alley, San Francisco**
- Famous outdoor dining place with various types of restaurants
 - Great interactive relationship between the local business owners and the policy makers allows the responsibilities to be allocated to both parties and benefit from each other

- Blagden Alley, Washington D.C.**
- One of few alleys remaining intact as the example of Washington D.C. style alley dwelling phenomenon
 - Alley revitalizing through tourism as one stop of the city's official African American Heritage Trail

- Nanluoguxiang, Beijing**
- One of the most famous Hutong (Beijing style's alley) for commercial uses
 - The alley renews and transforms according to local needs with mixture of eastern and western elements as a modern shopping place



Canton Alley Study

- Site Analysis**
- East Kong Yick Building used by Wing Luke Asian Museum
 - West Kong Yick Building, currently owned by Kong Yick Investment Co., used by various Chinese restaurants on the Kong street side and some low-rate apartment in the building
 - Six historic storefronts on the south end of both building, which were painted in colors as shown in the site plan



Revitalization Timeline



Revitalization Strategy



Model Interpretation

