

# A Neighborhood Walk in Fairview

*Anchorage Design Week  
February 25, 2024*

Mary Dean Broussard  
AARP AK  
Age-Friendly Anchorage



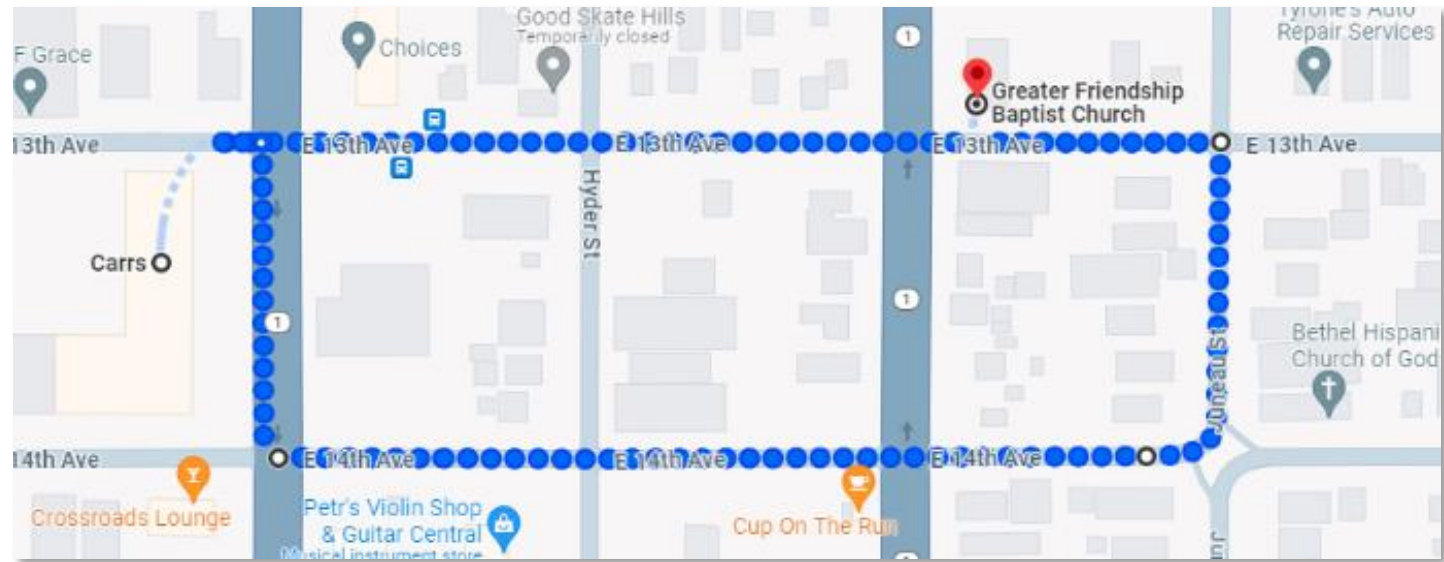
# The Route for the Fairview Neighborhood Walk

The starting point for our walk was the parking lot of the Greater Friendship Baptist Church (GFBC.)

We headed west on E. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave crossing Ingra St., Hyder St. then Gambell St. to the parking lot of the Carrs grocery store.

The return walk took us on E. 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. headed east crossing the same 3 streets.

2024 Anchorage Design Week was hosted by the Anchorage Museum in partnership with the Fairview Community Council and NeighborWorks Alaska. This walk audit was hosted by AARP Alaska and Anchorage Park Foundation, with a special thank you to Greater Friendship Baptist Church for hosting and participating in the event.



# Sidewalks, Streets and Crossings

## E. 13th Ave. Sidewalks

- Between the church and Ingra St., the sidewalk was partially cleared of snow however there was a thick layer of bumpy ice covering the sidewalk.
- The sidewalks on the remainder of 13th Ave. were sometimes partially cleared of some snow, however there was always a hardened layer of ice and snow on all visible sidewalks.
- It was not possible to determine the width of any of the sidewalks due to the snow cover. The sidewalks that were shoveled only had a path that was less than two feet wide. Shoveling was very sporadic.





## E. 13th Ave. Sidewalks (continued)

Some members of our group braved walking on the 13th Ave. sidewalks but most people, neighborhood and our group, walked in the street. The condition of the street was far from ideal, it was covered with hard packed snow and ice but at least it was flat. Wearing crampons made the walk safer. There was not much traffic on E. 13<sup>th</sup> St but that might be because we were there on a Sunday

There is no separation between E. 13<sup>th</sup> St and the sidewalks. The current sidewalk condition for the entire stretch we covered was poor to extremely poor given the accumulation of snow and ice. At some points boulders of ice were present on the sidewalk path (top photo.)

The E. 13th Ave. sidewalks have many interruptions for driveways from both homes and businesses.

Due to snow and ice accumulation, it was impossible to determine if sidewalks have curb cuts on Ingra St., Hyder St and Gambell St.

## E. 14th Sidewalks

- E. 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. Sidewalks have not been cleared. Perhaps they have never been cleared since the first snowfall in Nov. 2023.
- In the Hyder St. area, the E. 14<sup>th</sup> Ave sidewalk area was covered with a large pile of snow. It looked like it was used as an area to dump plowed snow (see photo.)
- In the current conditions (accumulated snow and ice) it is impossible to determine whether there are:
  - Curb cut ramps to assist people crossing using wheelchairs, walkers or strollers.
  - Tactile ground surfaces when a sidewalk is ending (such as at an intersection.
  - Any separation or barrier from the street
  - Although the sidewalks are not currently visible it is likely that there are many interruptions for driveways.



## Juneau St. Sidewalks

The residential feel of Juneau St. was enhanced by traffic calming measures including a small island to the south and bollards bumping out from sidewalks to slow traffic.

There was snow and ice accumulation on Juneau St. But about half of the sidewalks had been cleared recently as shown in the photo on the bottom left.

Although both are north/south cross streets between E. 13th and 14th Ave., as a pedestrian the difference in the appearance of Juneau and Hyder St. is striking.



# The Streets

- Traffic lights seen are at the intersection of E. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Ingra St. and E. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Gambell St. are clearly visible to drivers and pedestrians. Each has a crosswalk and a push button crosswalk signal. The crosswalk are only partially visible due to snow and ice accumulation.
- There is no audible component for the crosswalk.
- There is no signage alerting drivers to pedestrians crossing at the intersection of E. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. and either Ingra St. or Gambell St. Nor is there signage alerting drivers to pedestrians crossing at the intersection of E.14th Ave. And Ingra St. And Gambell St.
- Due to snow and ice accumulation, it is not clear if there is a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of E. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave and Hyder St.
- There is no dedicated bike lane in any of the area covered in the walk.



# Street Safety and Appeal

The parts of E. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. and E. 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. east of Ingra St. have a more residential feeling than the same streets on the west side of Ingra St. More of the properties are in better repair east of Ingra St. sidewalks were better shoveled (although not great.) The Greater Friendship Baptist Church is the largest building in this neighborhood east of Ingra St. It appears the GFBC is a good neighbor and helps keep the neighborhood functioning as a welcoming and well-kept area. Unfortunately, the sections of E. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. And E. 14<sup>th</sup> Ave that are west of Ingra St. and east of Gambell do not have that sense of a reasonably well-maintained neighborhood. There is a mixture of residential and commercial properties; as noted in the previous section almost all sidewalks had not been shoveled for quite a while.

While Fairview east of Ingra St. and west of Ingra St. have some very distinct characteristics, there are also common features, or more often lack of features. This includes:

- There are no places to sit.
- The bus stops recorded did not have any seating or shelter. However, shoveling had been done to reduce the snow berm between the street and the posted bus schedule at the bus stop on E. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. between Hyder St. and Gambell St.
- The types of street lighting were mixed. There was some pedestrian scale lighting on both E. 13<sup>th</sup> and E. 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. between Hyder and Gambell St. The most common type of lighting was not scaled for pedestrians.
- Only 1 speed limit sign was seen on the .5-mile loop we covered. The sign was not actually on the path of our walk but was spotted in the distance north on Ingra St. From E. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- There were no trash receptacles on the streets covered in our walk.





## More about Ingra St. and Gambell St.

This is often referred to as the Ingra/Gambell couplet. South of Ingra and Gambell Streets is the Seward Highway, the 2 streets become the Glenn Highway at 5th and 6th Avenue. The volume of traffic is generally very high and often has many Semis passing through.

Both Ingra and Gambell St. have sidewalks however there was no sidewalk visible on the day of our walk. We were not comfortable walking on the sidewalks along Gambell or Ingra Streets. Snow from the roadway was recently plowed onto the sidewalks making a narrow and unsafe walking surface. Gambell Street, like Hyder Street, also has utility poles in the middle of the sidewalks. Rather than walking on Gambell St. sidewalks, our group instead walked in the maintained Carr's parking lot

The speed limit is 35 MPH. The fastest vehicle we recorded during our walk on a quiet Sunday afternoon was travelling 40 MPH. One of the walkers reported that "even when vehicles are going the speed limit it is uncomfortable to walk directly next to them and it still feels too fast."

*Ingra St. & E. 14th Ave.*

# Street Safety and Appeal continued

In the current conditions (accumulated snow and ice) it is impossible to determine whether there are:

- Curb cut ramps to assist people crossing using wheelchairs, walkers or strollers.
- Tactile ground surfaces when a sidewalk is ending (such as at an intersection.
- Any separation or barrier from the street

Although the sidewalks are not currently visible it is likely that there are many interruptions for driveways.

## **Impressions of the route include:**

- The streets on the route do not have a safe and appealing presentation, particularly west of Ingra St.
- Overall, the location does not appear to be safe from crime, harassment or similar threats. Again, this is true particularly west of Ingra St.

## Final Thoughts and Recommendations

We saw one installation of streetscape art that commemorates civic heroes and was created by the Fairview Community Council.

The neighborhood we walked includes two distinct areas:

- One area is east of Ingra St. where the Greater Fellowship Baptist Church is located. The neighborhood is primarily residential, and the homes were mostly well maintained. The sidewalks' condition was not great due to snow and ice, but at least some effort had been made to maintain them. The area was quieter and felt safer than the same streets across Ingra.
- The area west of Ingra St. has clearly seen better days.

## West of Ingra St.

This area is a mix of commercial and residential buildings leaning towards being more commercial. Some buildings appear unoccupied, and many have not received any love for quite a while. The area around Hyder St. seems eerily vacant and a perfect location for a Woonerf. The conditions of buildings and the maintenance of the road decline the closer one gets to Gambell St.

The route covered in this walk audit seems to exemplify the damage that is done to a community when a highway is placed right in the middle of it. East of Ingra St. And West of Gambell St. are vibrant middle-class communities that are thriving, or at least making a good attempt at thriving. The stretch of E. 13<sup>th</sup> and E. 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. that lies in between Ingra and Gambell St seems like the land that time forgot. Thriving is not a word that can be used to describe it, just barely getting by is more like it. E. 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. leading up to the intersection with Hyder St. almost felt like it was being used as a snow dump (see photos.) There are some decent buildings in this area as well.



# What's a Woonerf?

A woonerf is a living street – where lower speed limits for vehicles are required. It is a street where active transportation and safety is the priority.

Viewing the small section of Hyder St. that we covered in this walk audit it seems like creating a Woonerf on Hyder St. would benefit this area greatly. It could be such a nice area to travel north and south for pedestrians, bikers and runners instead of attempting travel on the highways of Ingra and Gambell St. It could pump life back into an area that truly does seem like it has been forgotten. We saw many people on foot in this section, primarily navigating the streets because the sidewalks were not passable. More than half of the people we saw were disabled. Having a bit of a haven from traffic and weary buildings could be life-changing for some of them. There was a school crossing sign nearly buried in the snow off in the distance north on Hyder St. (p.9), maybe a Woonerf would give those children a safe place to play.

*A winter Woonerf perhaps?*