

A Neighborhood Walk in Fairview

*Anchorage Design Week
February 25, 2024*

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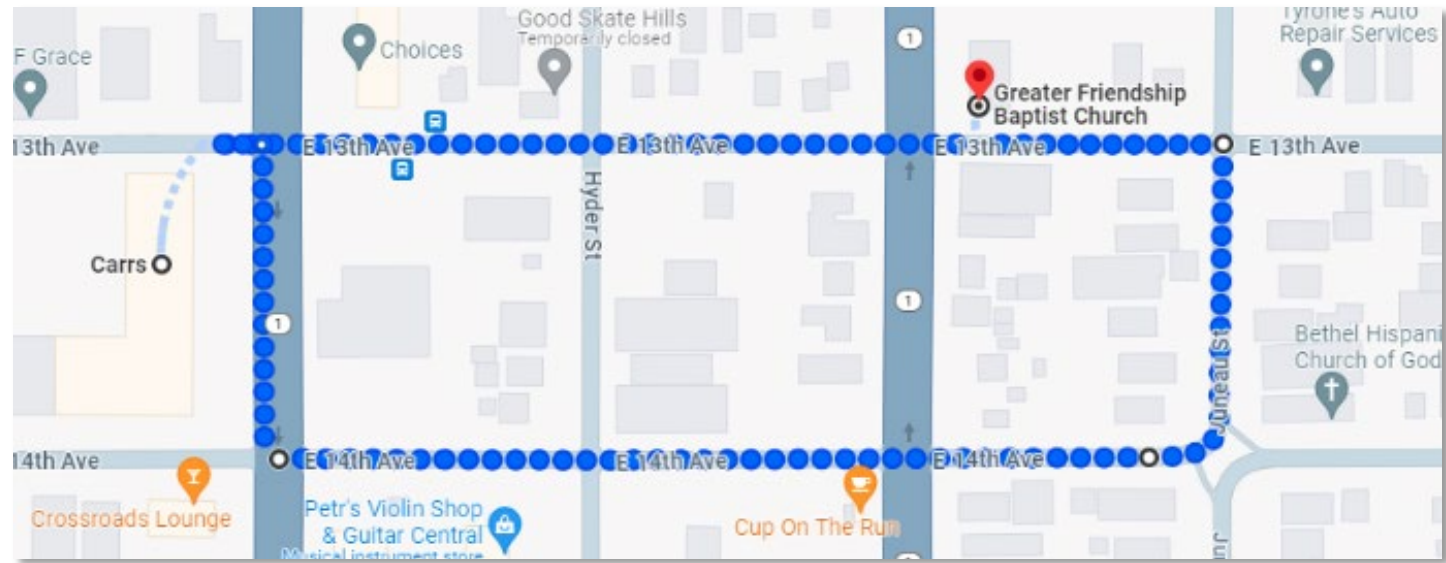
The Route for the Fairview Neighborhood Walk

Starting Point - parking lot of the Greater Friendship Baptist Church (GFBC)

West on E. 13th Ave crossing Ingra St., Hyder St. to the parking lot of the Carrs grocery store on Gambell St.

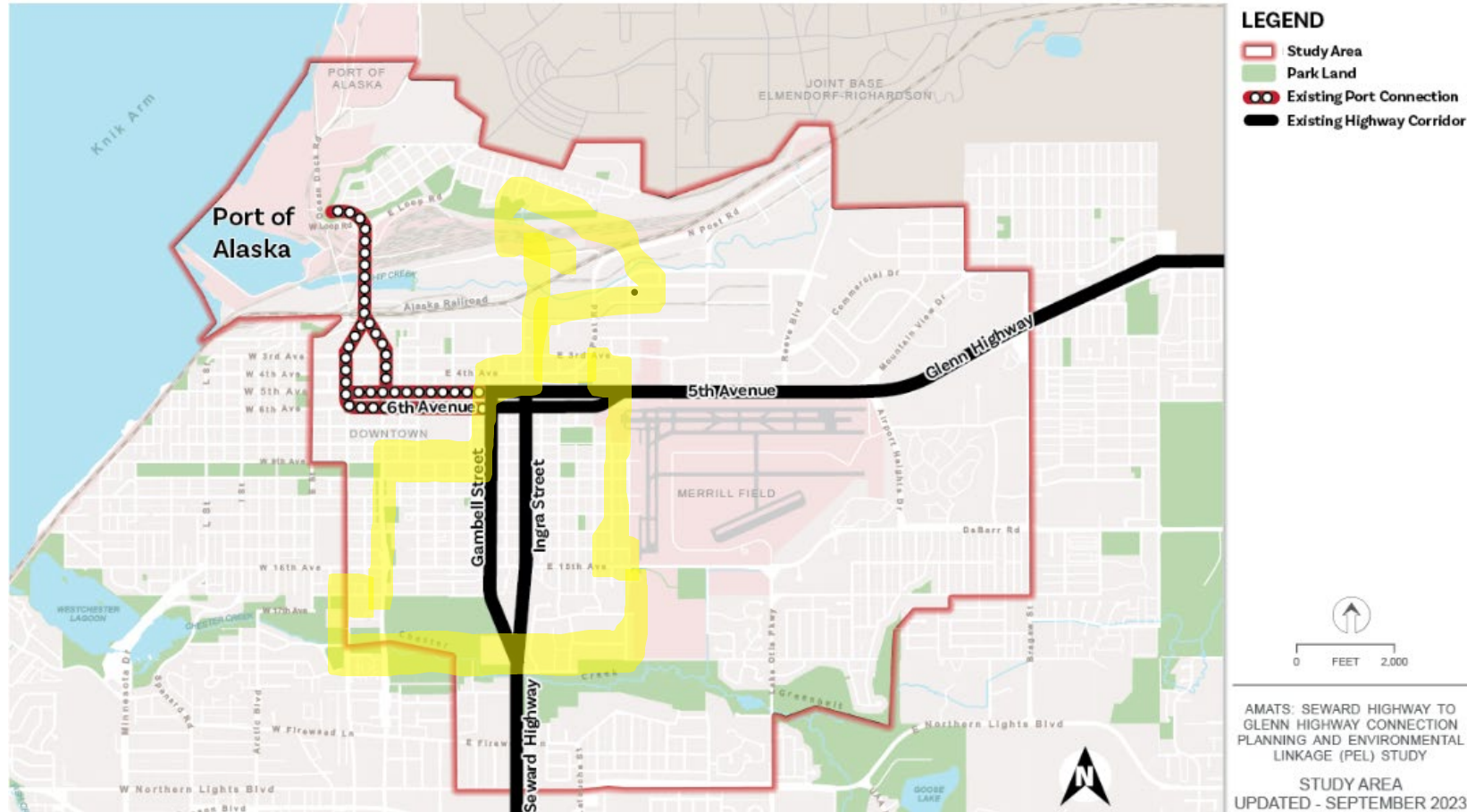
Return – From Carrs east on E. 14th Ave. crossing Hyder and Ingra then north on Juneau to E. 14th.

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.



The 'Ingra/Gambell Couplet'

A very rough depiction of the Fairview neighborhood in **YELLOW**



After the Good Friday earthquake in 1964 planners targeted Fairview for urban renewal. That included turning Gambell and Ingra into the 4 lane one-way roads that chop up the community today.

Currently there are multiple efforts underway (again) to address the issues caused by the 'highway' dividing the neighborhood.

'Recent' History of Gambell and Ingra

The following information is from 'An Oral & Written History of Fairview: Past, Present, & Future' By David Reamer, Historian With Clare Dannenberg, Ph.D. 2014. Most remains true today.

Fairview lies directly between terminuses for the Seward and Glenn Highways. The Ingra/Gambell corridor was expanded in response to the need for a connection.

“They put the freeway through there, it knocked out a lot of the businesses, you know, it's difficult to walk across the street. There was no consultation with the neighborhood, they just came in and bulldozed it and set it up.”

"It's possible that our main business corridor, which is Ingra and Gambell, is possibly going to be a freeway.”

“The state DOT has claimed Hyder [Street] for a possible alignment for like a highway to-highway connection where they wouldn't have any stop lights... which means if you own property on Hyder, you're not going to invest in it, you're not going to do anything with it.”

Community members view the indecision about what should be done with the Ingra/Gambell corridor) as crippling their ability to promote positive economic growth in Fairview.

Sidewalks, Streets and Crossings

E. 13th Ave. & E. 14th Ave. Sidewalks

- The sidewalks were sometimes partially cleared of 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.



Ingra St. & E. 14th Ave.

Sidewalks

- **No sidewalk was visible on Ingra, Gambell, or E. 14th Ave.**
- Near Hyder St. the E. 14th 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



E. 14th Ave. & Hyder St.



Sidewalk or Street?

Several members of our group braved walking on the sidewalks on E. 13th Ave. Most 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. Traffic was light as it was a Sunday.

All neighborhood pedestrians we saw were walking on the street. Several used walkers and appeared to be struggling on the road.



The Streets

There are traffic lights with crossing signals at Ingra and Gambel on both 13th and 14th Ave. There is no audible component for the crosswalk.

There is no signage alerting drivers to pedestrians crossing near the intersection of E. 13th and 14 Ave. at either Ingra St. or Gambell St. The highest speed we recorded was 40; on a weekday with many Semis whizzing by the max speed is likely higher.

The streets east of Ingra are more residential, there are some traffic calming features and the area seems more like a neighborhood however on both sides of Ingra the following is lacking:

- Places to sit
- Sheltered bus stops and seating for bus stops



Street Safety and Appeal

Impressions of the Route:

- The streets on in this area 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

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

The neighborhood has two distinct areas:

East of Ingra

More residential and better maintained.

More sidewalks shoveled.

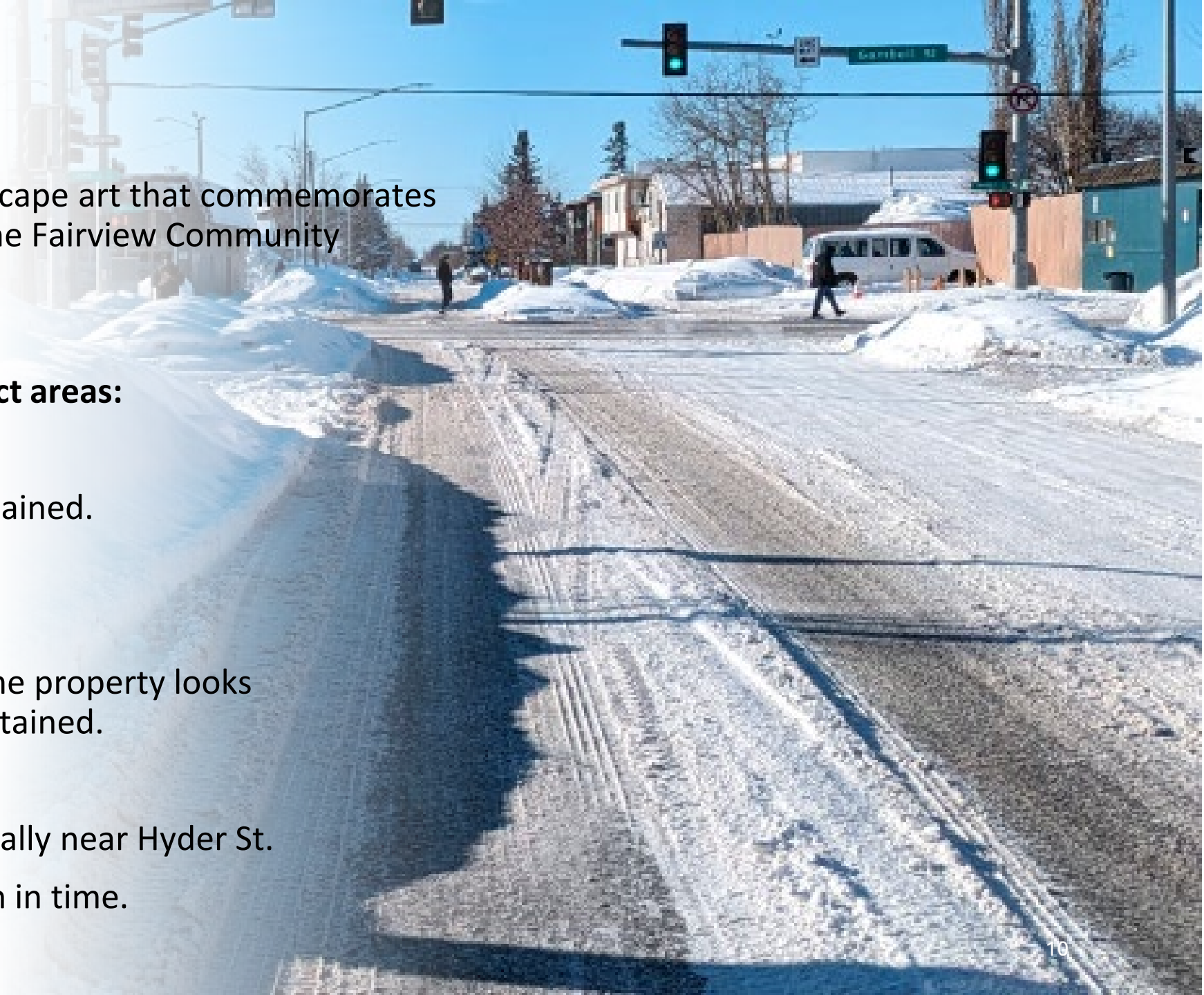
West of Ingra

Has clearly seen better days – some property looks abandoned, buildings poorly maintained.

Few sidewalks shoveled.

Multiple large snow dumps especially near Hyder St.

A general sense of being forgotten in time.

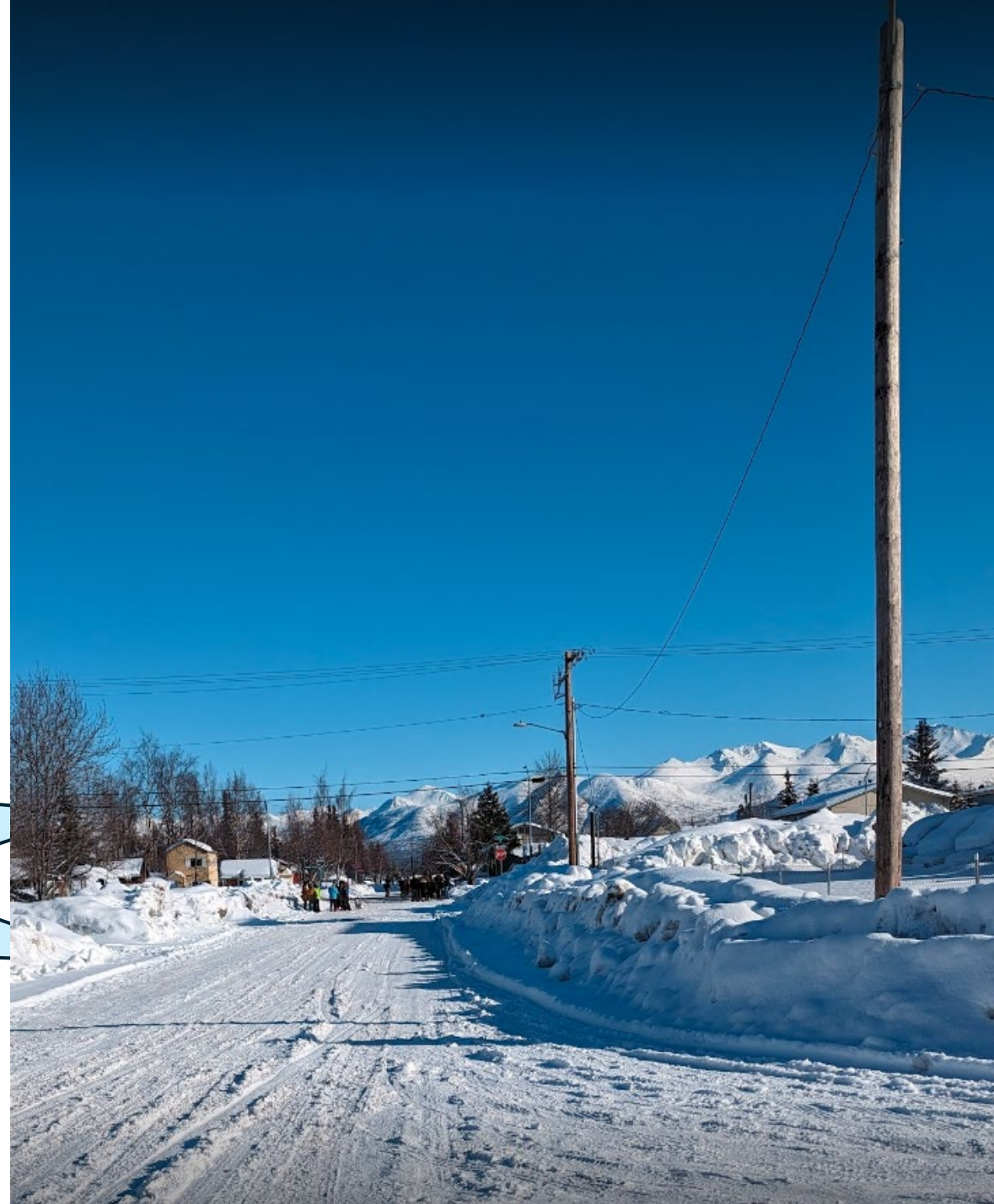


Recommendations?

This area is a mix of commercial and residential buildings. 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 improvement.

The route covered in this walk 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. In the middle is the area that time forgot. Thriving is not a word that can be used to describe it, just barely getting by is more like it.

Maybe, just maybe Hyder St. Is the perfect location for a Woonerf!!





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.

Let's imagine Hyder St. with less traffic and more places to play. It could be a place for pedestrians, bikers and runners to travel north and south instead of attempting travel on the highways of Ingra and Gambell. This could pump life back into an area that truly does seem like it has been forgotten. We saw many people on foot in this area, 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 many of them. A Woonerf would provide places to sit, places for people to meet, enjoy a coffee and where children can play.

A winter Woonerf perhaps?