

I:: INTRODUCTION

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY²

Fairview is located east and southeast of Downtown Anchorage. It is bordered by Merrill Field and Sitka Street Park to the east, Chester Creek Greenbelt south, North Star neighborhood to the southwest, the South Addition and Downtown neighborhoods to the west and the extends north to the Ship Creek Greenbelt.

The Community Council boundaries are irregular, but the extremes align along East 1st Avenue on the north, Sitka Street (through Merrill Field) to the east, Chester Creek to the south, and C and Cordova streets to the west. Primary thoroughfares include Gambell Street (southbound) and Ingra Street (northbound), which connect to the Glenn Highway to the north and New Seward Highway to the south, as well as East 15th Street and the 5th and 6th Avenue couplet (east-westbound).

The community council neighborhood³ features an orthogonal street grid, though some street intersections on the east side of the neighborhood have been partially blocked in an effort to calm through-traffic and some street links in West Fairview are not constructed due to topography. The area is generally flat, though a bluff at East 15th Terrace drops down to East 16th Avenue west of Gambell Street, and another bluff are located at approximately East 16th Avenue east of Ingra Street. Few vacant lots remain in the area.

Figure I depicts the Fairview Community Council boundary with respect to the Anchorage Bowl area and adjoining neighborhoods.

² *Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan.*

³ Council boundaries were altered (reduced) between the 2000 and 2010 Census. North Star took the area south of Chester Creek, South Addition took most of the area between C Street and Cordova Street, and Downtown took the area from Cordova east to Gambell Street. Census data provided in this chapter reflects the changes in population and housing found within the current boundaries.



Figure 1: Fairview Community Council Boundary -----



RELATIONSHIP TO ANCHORAGE 2020⁴

The vision for Fairview follows the general direction for this area outlined in the *Anchorage 2020*. Relevant extracts from that document are presented below:

- Redevelopment of unused and partially developed parcels and obsolete buildings becomes more economically feasible as Anchorage's vacant land base shrinks. Infill, rehabilitation, and redevelopment will reshape and modernize older areas so they can better meet future needs for housing and other uses and activities.
- Neighborhoods and subareas in and around Downtown/Midtown are targeted for public/private reinvestment.
- Design standards mitigate impacts of higher densities and address architectural compatibility.
- Provide incentives for lot consolidation in infill/redevelopment to improve design and compatibility of housing.
- Avoid incompatible uses adjoining one another.
- Northwest subareas (including Fairview). This area has the greatest growth potential for renewal and redevelopment. This area has the most multi-family housing, with high occupancy rates by seniors, non-family households and single people. There are also some thriving older single-family neighborhoods. In general vacant and older or under-used residential and commercial properties are targeted for redevelopment.
- Utilities shall be located and designed with balanced regard for the environment, energy conservation, reliability, visual impacts, natural hazard survivability and cost.

The Fairview Neighborhood Plan is consistent with the Preferred Scenario adopted by the community *Anchorage 2020—Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage 2020)*. In fact, when the Fairview Neighborhood Plan is implemented, it will help Anchorage reach many of the goals articulated in *Anchorage 2020*.

⁴ *Fairview Economic Revitalization Plan - 2013*

The Anchorage 2020 Preferred Scenario identifies the priorities for Downtown/Midtown (including Fairview) in the following relevant passage:

Issue #1 Downtown/Midtown

“These are areas where most of Anchorage’s work places, civic and cultural buildings, and the busiest transportation corridors are located. There are significant opportunities for further development in these areas, including commercial and residential redevelopment. The continued success of Downtown/Midtown will affect Anchorage’s long-term economic vitality and the quality of life for all its residents. A dynamic and active set of policies will be required to realize these changes.” How Anchorage 2020 Addresses Downtown/Midtown with respect to the Fairview Neighborhood:

- Downtown/Midtown areas evolve to more intensive urban centers, with core office, business, arts and cultural facilities and activities.
- Downtown connects to a redeveloped and revitalized Ship Creek area
- Higher residential densities and compatible, pedestrian-oriented mixed land uses are promoted.
- Infill and redevelopment gradually revitalize older areas and bring more residents to Downtown/Midtown neighborhoods.
- Unique architecture and site design standards and incentives improve the appearance and function of Downtown/Midtown
- A multi-choice transportation system is provided.



Housing in Fairview



Fairview Alley



Gambell Street in Fairview



Fairview Lion's Park

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS + POLICIES

In addition to working with the directives of *Anchorage 2020*, the Fairview Community Council has been involved in many more recent and on-going planning processes that affect the neighborhood. Building from the 2009 Draft Fairview Community Plan, ideas, plans, and text were directly incorporated from the 2013 Fairview Community Council Economic Revitalization Plan, the *Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan*, and other plans. The table below summarizes the impacts and proposals that relate to the recommendations of the 2014 Fairview Neighborhood Plan.

Table 1: Relevant Plans and Planning Processes

Name	Relevance to Fairview Neighborhood Plan
2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2012)	Public transit: 7-10 residential units and 25 employees per acre for frequent public transit; twice for premium service (i.e., rail). Recommendation of a new ramp to a new freeway that connects Seward and Gambell Hwy at the Gambell-Ingra couplet and Phase II of the Knik Arm Crossing, extension of the Ingra-Gambell couplet to the Government Hill tunnel (page 5-55). Projects: #201 Seward/Glenn Hwy Connection, Chester Creek to Airport Heights Drive; #209 A-C Couple Restripe; # 213 Ingra-Gambell Couplet Extension 3rd Ave to Whitney Road; #513 10th Ave P Street to Medfra Bicycle Boulevard; #515 C Street O'Malley Rd to 10th Ave Bicycle Lanes; #531 A Street Fireweed Lane north to 13th Construction of missing sidewalk; #538 Chester Creek Trail Goose Lake to Westchester trail widening; #541 Ingra-Gambell Couplet Reconnaissance pedestrian safety study; # 576 Fairview Pedestrian Safety Study.
Anchorage Bicycle Plan (2010)	Identified a special study area for Fairview. Calls for east-west and north-south connections through Fairview. See map that follows.
Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource and Recreation Facility Plan (2006)	Fairview is deficient in neighborhood use parks. Plan suggests developing school-park joint facilities at Fairview Elementary and completing 5th and 6th Avenue improvements east from C Street to Ingra. Plan also calls for improvements to the Fairview Rec Center and Chester Creek Sports Complex facilities including the Charles Smith Park (develop play area, picnic area, playfield, and parking.)
Anchorage Downtown Comprehensive Plan (2007)	Goals emphasize connectivity, more housing, public sector investment to catalyze private development and a clear regulatory framework. Strategies include a bike/pedestrian connection along 4th, 9th and Cordova (connecting to Ship Creek Trail). Zones "downtown mixed use" for three blocks north and two blocks east of the Memorial Cemetery (page 48), conversion of 5th to two-way traffic and a "Downtown circulator."
Anchorage Pedestrian Plan (2007)	Identified a special study area for Fairview. Calls for east-west and north-south connections through Fairview. See map below.
Chester Creek Sports Complex Master Plan Update (2006)	See more recent plan for update.

Name	Relevance to Fairview Neighborhood Plan
Chester Creek Sports Complex Parking Area and Mulcahy Stadium Reconstruction Concept Report (2013)	Impact on neighborhood results mostly from changes to parking and traffic flow. Proposals such as widening 16th, rearranging lots and facilities, adding new streets and/or parking structures. Plan is in conceptual stage with five alternatives - "competition", "recreation" (includes street next to greenbelt), "improve traffic flow", UAA sports addition, incl. parking garage on west of Gambell (different than GSRP), "Public-private partnership" with garage to north east across Gambell;
Fairview Business Survey	Incorporated into the Fairview Economic Revitalization Plan.
Fairview Community Council Community Draft Plan (2009)	Incorporated into this 2014 Fairview Neighborhood Plan.
Preliminary findings from Highway to Highway Environmental Impact Study (2011)	Noise levels documented in excess of 65 decibels (dB) along Gambell and Ingra Streets.
Fairview Community Council Draft Economic Revitalization Plan (2013)	Incorporated into 2013 Fairview Neighborhood Plan, with full Revitalization Plan included in Appendix A. Many of the strategies that promote economic development are also good for the residents. Highlights include: concentrating mixed-use, higher density development in the Gambell-Ingra Corridor; a municipal tax abatement policy, a coordinated program for addressing chronic public inebriates, a comprehensive approach towards utilities improvements; extending the parking waiver to promote commercial infill, workforce development strategies and marketing Fairview as a place to do business.
Gambell Street Redevelopment Plan (2013)	Incorporated into and endorsed by this plan. Primary recommendation is to reduce Gambell Street from 4 to 3 lanes from 3 rd Avenue to 15 th Avenue with future conversion to two-way local main street upon completion of the Seward to Glenn highways (formerly Highway – 2- Highway) connection.
Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) (2013)	Major goals included adopt the 2009 Draft Community Plan, preserve historic properties, identify opportunities to highlight Fairview's African American history, restore small business corridors, overcome past land-use and transportation decisions, and improve walkability and easy access to Downtown, interpret history and culture, land marks to save and maintain housing affordability in order to preserve Fairview's demographic composition, building stock, and character. Additionally the plan called for tools to determine mitigation for large infrastructure projects. This process helped residents identify several goals for Fairview that were not specific to historic preservation and have been incorporated. HPP has four recommended historic districts in Fairview.
Merrill Field Airport Master Plan Update and Noise Study (2013)	The airport has commissioned a noise study, which was published December 2013. Exploring options for addressing noise will be a part of the plan. Safety is always a part of the plan, which includes evaluating the airport's built environment against FAA standards to identify if capital improvements are warranted.
Ship Creek Framework Plan – adopted November 2014	Planning boundary extends into northern Fairview Community Council. Initial alternatives included a signature bridge to the Gambell-Ingra couplet.

FAIRVIEW HISTORY⁵

EARLY HISTORY

The Fairview Community Council consists of two additions to the Original 1916 Anchorage Townsite: the East Addition (east of Cordova Street and bounded by 9th Avenue on the South) and the Third Addition (south to 16th Avenue). The East Addition consisted of three types of lots: “townsite” sized lots (50 by 140 feet), one-acre lots, and five-acre lots. The townsite-sized lots adjoined the original townsite; the others were farther removed with all five-acre lots located east of Gambell Street. The differences in the original lot size tended to shape the land use patterns of the area. Close to town, the small lots were developed similarly to townsite lots. The one-acre lots were subdivided in very small parcels or developed with larger buildings. Where five-acre lots originally existed, the use of large parcels is still maintained, primarily by auto dealerships (“Patterns of the Past,” MOA, Michael Carberry).

Tomas S. Bevers was a 1930s real estate developer who was instrumental in developing what is now known as Fairview Subdivision in Anchorage. He served on the City Council for six years and was the driving force in the development of Merrill Field, our first municipal airport. By 1929 both Anchorage and its aviation demands were growing so rapidly that the golf course/park strip could no longer safely accommodate the aviation needs of the city. The park strip was being surrounded by residential development. This created numerous conflicts with the surface traffic, power poles and the activities of the local population. This also created the demand to relocate the landing facilities. A petition was circulated requesting the acquisition of land and matching city funds to construct a suitable new landing strip for Anchorage.



Gambell Street 1950s

⁵ Draft 2009 Fairview Community Plan.

The City purchased portions of two homesteads, and President Wilson released the remainder of the land for aviation purposes. Aviation Field was cleared, plowed, and available for use by August 1929. The Anchorage Woman's Club pushed a resolution to name "Aviation Field" in honor of the late Russell Hyde Merrill. This resolution passed and on April 2, 1930, Merrill Field received its current name. By the summer of 1931, aircraft operators were advised to discontinue use of the Park Strip. Merrill Field was the new aviation facility for Anchorage.

ANCHORAGE MEMORIAL PARK CEMETERY

The Anchorage Memorial Park Cemetery, located between 6th and 9th Avenues and Fairbanks and President Woodrow Wilson originally established Cordova Streets as the Cemetery Reserve in 1915, coincident with the federal survey of the original Anchorage Townsite. Through the years, the cemetery has undergone many changes. In 1951, a portion of the original Cemetery Reserve was conditionally sold to the Alaska Housing Authority for public housing in the form of the Willow Park Apartments. Subsequently, the Willow Park Apartments were razed in 1991, and the lands reverted to the Municipality of Anchorage and ultimately back to the Cemetery. This land is now the "new" cemetery grounds and has added 4,690 graves to the existing 12,835. On April 26, 1993, the Anchorage Memorial Park Cemetery was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

POST WORLD WAR II GROWTH

Anchorage experienced a major growth spurt after World War II. The construction of Fort Richardson and later Elmendorf Air Force Base (now Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson) on the bluff north of Ship Creek, and continued military build-up after the war resulted in a population boom; from 4,000 in 1940 to 44,000 in 1960. The first annexation of a suburban area - South Addition - occurred in 1945, and the first zoning ordinance was enacted in 1946.

As the federal government expanded its presence, demand grew for development of the platted lots in the Third Addition. The residential city continued to spread south and east.

Fairview became an established community after World War II as veterans built homes and started small businesses in the area. Gambell Street was the easternmost north/south route out of town and provided a connection to many of the homesteads in the lower half of the Anchorage Bowl.

It took on a Main Street feel as abutting lots were developed for commercial purposes. Many local entrepreneurs started their enterprises in the area including the first store of the Carrs Grocery Chain. The Lucky Wishbone opened in 1955 at Fifth Avenue and Karluk Street.

The citizens of the Fairview Public Utility District were an independent and self-sufficient group and liked the idea of being beyond the City limits in the “boondocks.” South of 16th Avenue were the old Smith and White Homesteads. The White homestead came to be the site of East Chester Flats, an eclectic mix of individuals, dwellings and activities that was transformed by urban renewal efforts in the 1960s.

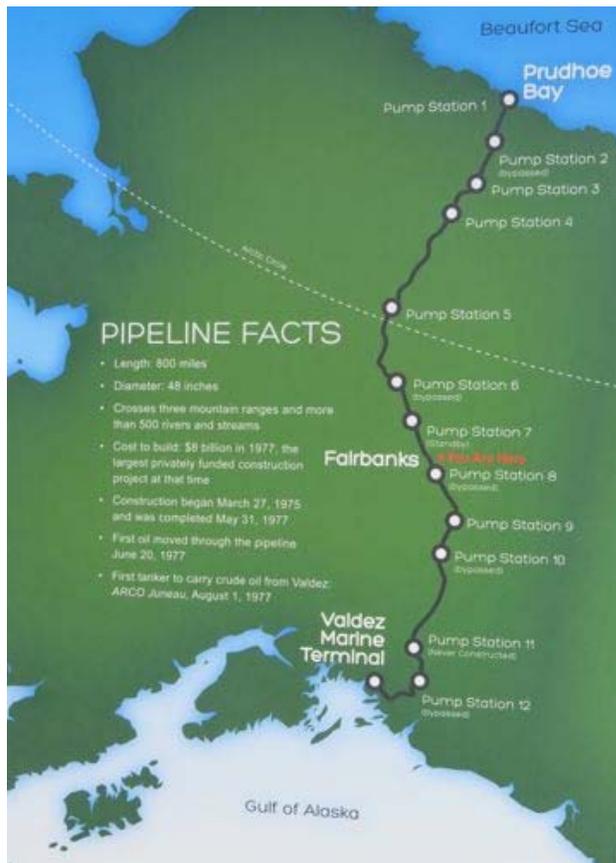


First Carrs Market on Gambell Street 1950s

As the area population increased and community growth placed increasing demands on basic services, civic leaders began advocating for consolidation. There was a great deal of resistance from Fairview property owners. They took the forced consolidation of Fairview into the City to the highest possible courts but were eventually forced to accept merger with the City of Anchorage. The Greater Anchorage Area Borough (GAAB) was incorporated on January 1, 1964. The scarcity of housing during this period of population growth caused city leaders to respond to developer desire to take advantage of new-to-Alaska workers. The new Greater Anchorage Area Borough enacted interim zoning regulations for all areas outside the City on June 7, 1965, and final zoning regulations four years later. The small lots and homesteads of Fairview were zoned to allow for medium to high-density residential development. Over time, these land use policies resulted in a significant change in the character of the Fairview area.

OIL YEARS

The discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay in 1968 resulted in another boom for Anchorage, which became regional headquarters to the oil companies. Between 1970 and 1980, the population grew from 48,000 to 174,000 and the City of Anchorage consolidated with the surrounding borough.



The Municipality of Anchorage was formed by the “unification” of the GAAB, the cities of Anchorage, Basher, and Girdwood, and Spenard Public Utility District No. 1 on September 16, 1975. The zoning regulations of the Borough continued in force until Title 21 of the Municipal Code replaced them on November 22, 1977.

Beginning in the spring of 1974, pipeline workers began entering the state. At peak construction, more than 28,000 workers were drawing pipeline wages. Housing was at a premium and large numbers of rental units were constructed to satisfy the demand associated with the pipeline boom. The majority of Anchorage’s housing stock was built between 1970 and 1986. The Anchorage economy experienced a significant downturn with the dramatic 1986 drop in oil prices.

The significant number of four-plexes built during the seventy and eighties to provide affordable housing were severely impacted by the recession of the late eighties when the price of oil collapsed. Vacancy rates reached 26% in 1989 and landlords were desperate to find renters. Absentee property owners contributed to a negative situation. Tenant screening was a low priority as cash flow took precedence over civic responsibility. Many people with very low incomes came into the area. There was a notable increase in “undesirables” on neighborhood streets and sidewalks, including public inebriates and people engaging in illegal activities.

THE NEW MILLENIUM

In recent years, Fairview has taken a more proactive role in guiding its future. Like many older urban districts around the U.S., Fairview is working to retain what is best about the neighborhood, take full advantage of the district's strengths, and respond to growth and change with a well thought out plan.



AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The Fairview Community Council has initiated, sustained, and led several successful efforts:

- Fairview Community Patrol
- Block Watchers
- Fairview Sub-Area Transportation Study
- 15th Avenue Project
- Reconstruction of Denali Elementary and Fairview Elementary schools
- Community Action Policing
- Park improvements
- Chronic Public Inebriates Initiative
- 13th Avenue Pedestrian lighting
- Fairview's Future Image ~ Children Successful In School ~ A Fairview Community 1997 Compass Action Plan
- Fairview Education Summit
- The community effort to close the Nevada Tavern

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