

**CITY OF HOMER  
HOMER, ALASKA**

Davis

**RESOLUTION 24-104**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA  
DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO ADDRESS SPEEDING ON WEST  
FAIRVIEW.

WHEREAS, The new connection between Fairview Avenue and Eric Lane has resulted in a significant increase in vehicle traffic on West Fairview Avenue; and

WHEREAS, The section of West Fairview Avenue where vehicles enter is 40 feet wide, a width that was intended to accommodate a future sidewalk, though any paving and sidewalk project is years away; and

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that wider roads encourage higher vehicle speeds, and this has been observed on the 40-foot wide section of West Fairview Avenue, with drivers regularly exceeding the 25 mph speed limit by 10 to 30 mph; and

WHEREAS, The excessively wide gravel road has also led to increased speeds on the narrower paved section of Fairview Avenue to the east, funneling speeding drivers into this area; and

WHEREAS, During the summer, the city effectively addressed this problem by using cones to reserve a 10-foot wide section of the road for pedestrian use, narrowing the drivable portion to 30 feet, and by placing a speed cart on the 40-foot wide section of West Fairview Avenue that displayed the 25 mph speed limit and flashed drivers' actual speeds, prompting most drivers to slow down; and

WHEREAS, The recent removal of these traffic calming measures has resulted in a significant increase in vehicle speeds, leading to multiple appeals to the city from residents and other users of the road to address this problem.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Homer, Alaska, directs the City Manager to work with the Public Works Department, in collaboration with the Police Department, to take timely action to address speeding on the excessively wide portion of West Fairview Avenue year round, by narrowing the drivable portion to the appropriate width outlined in city code and dedicating the remainder to pedestrian and other non-motorized use.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Homer City Council this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September, 2024.

CITY OF HOMER



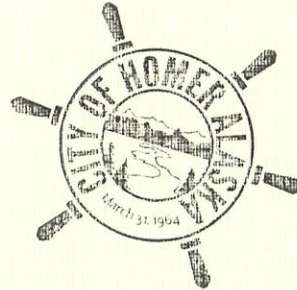
KEN CASTNER, MAYOR

ATTEST:



RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, CITY CLERK

Fiscal note: Staff time and materials







# MEMORANDUM

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## **Resolution 24-104, A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska Directing the City Manager to Address Speeding on West Fairview. Davis.**

**Item Type:** Backup Memorandum  
**Prepared For:** Mayor Castner and Homer City Council  
**Date:** September 19, 2024  
**From:** Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

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Council Member Davis and others who reside on West Fairview have provided comments to Council at their meetings and directly to Public Works regarding concerns of speeding and pedestrian safety following the development of the West Fairview connection from Eric Lane.

I've been in conversations with Public Works staff regarding this matter since it's come up and we've considered what solutions might be viable for the situation as we transition between summer and winter maintenance. It's not feasible to keep candlestick markers or cones along the roadway as was done during the summer because they interfere with the grader work that is being performed following recent rainfall and in preparing the road for winter maintenance.

We've talked internally about some interim solutions for the area that include installing colored stake whiskers (reflective tabs are affixed by adhesive and won't work on gravel) to delineate the pedestrian area from the road. These have to be ordered so will take some time to get here and then be installed. The grader could pass over these, however they would have to be replaced as they are pulled out of the gravel and won't be visible after it snows. We've also recently shared some emails regarding signage options that could be placed along the roadway to alert drivers and pedestrians to where the pedestrian path is.

It's my understanding that Homer Police increased their patrols of the area for a period of time and reported that they didn't observe speeding during their patrols. Chief Robl will be back in office on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and I'll confirm this prior to the meeting time.

It's important to remember this isn't the only area where there's a need, and as a result of doing this work it will create a staffing impact to attempt to address other areas for this short shoulder season between summer and winter.

Traffic calming is something staff and Council Members Lord and Davis have been discussing generally because it's important to remember this is an issue in other areas, not just West Fairview. There is a work session scheduled for October 14<sup>th</sup> to discuss traffic calming.

I'll appreciate any additional feedback on this specific to this matter from Council.

**Attachments:**

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Memorandum  
City Council  
September 19, 2024

CC-24-104

Memorandum from Public Works Director Kort  
Email correspondence from City Engineer Galbraith

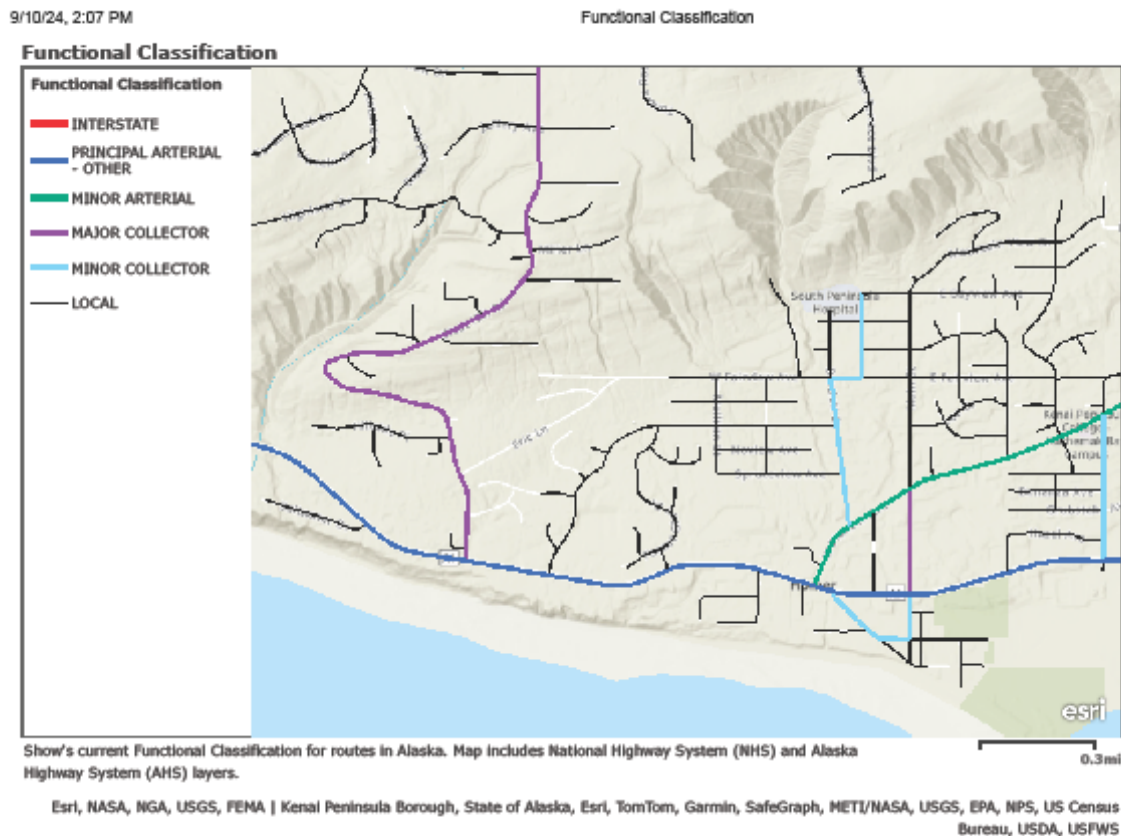


# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager  
**From:** Daniel Kort, Public Works Director  
**Date:** September 11, 2024  
**Subject:** Eric Lane / Fairview Avenue

## Background:

The project extending Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue was completed in the fall of 2022. This project opened up a lot of property to development and was a significant step towards connectivity improvement across the City of Homer (City). The 1998 and 2005 Transportation Plans had identified this route as a “minor collector route”. The image below, provided from the Alaska Department of Transportation’s website provides an indication of road way definition’s around the City of Homer. The term “arterial” is used to define a major transportation route, while the term “collector” is used to define a secondary transportation route, and the term “local” is used for local roads in areas such as residential areas.



You will note that Bartlett Street was identified as a “minor collector” in this map, and the development around Fairview Avenue and Eric Lane is shown on the figure, but had not been developed yet, so it’s shown in white. With the Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue project completion, it is anticipated that the Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue will be reclassified to a “minor collector” all the way to the Hospital, just like Bartlett Street. The City’s designed layout eventually will create complete connectivity of Fairview from West Hill Road to East End Road and the whole distance would likely all be classified as a “minor collector”.

The Subdivision Agreement for the Terra Bella Subdivision/Fairview Avenue West: Road and Sewer Improvement identifies requirements for gravel roads and an 8’ wide shoulder extension on the north. The final product of this request provides the appearance of an extra wide roadway.

The developer had verbally stated their intention to the Public Works Department (PWD) to pave the Eric Lane portion of the project, however this verbal agreement made 2-years ago. Since then, the developer sold their interest in the Fairview Avenue portion of the project and there was no agreement made to pave the Fairview Avenue portion of the project with the new developer.

Since the development of the Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue project, the residents of the area have noticed a shift in traffic patterns where people appear to be transiting to the medical district from the West Hill Road using the new Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue route as opposed to the Sterling Highway and Bartlett Street. The gravel roadway and sidewalk is also being utilized for parking and staging of construction materials and equipment for housing being developed.

The City has received input from homeowners along this roadway that vehicles are passing through this area at excessive speeds. The Police Department provided law enforcement presence on Fairview Avenue upon the initial complaints and noted they did not observe excessive speeds as indicated. It is likely the presence of law enforcement briefly changed driving behaviors. Additionally, the PWD installed speed limit signs at both ends of Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue in accordance with Alaska Department of Transportation standards. The PWD also re-graded the roadway to create a slight gravel berm to define the roadway from the sidewalk, painted the gravel berm, and placed candlestick cones along the sidewalk to more clearly defining the sidewalk from the roadway and create a narrower roadway. The PWD further placed a Speed Measurement Trailer (Speed Cart) along the Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue.

Based upon City Councilor’s and public feedback, the PWD’s efforts appeared to provide at least partial relief to the issue of pedestrian safety and reducing speed of traffic. However, it must be noted, the gravel berm and candle stick cones were a temporary summer measure. The gravel berm impedes stormwater migration off of the road surface. This impediment to stormwater means water is either trapped on the road surface making the road fall apart faster by ponding water, creation of potholes, and water running down the road surface eroding and carrying fine road material off the road and into waterways. Further, both the berm and candle stick cones prevent typical road maintenance, particularly in winter for snow plowing.

The City's PWD removed the Speed Cart from Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue to temporarily place it at the Ben Walters Sidewalk Construction project once school opened for the school year to provide additional safety to students walking between the Homer High School and McDonalds.

The City's PWD switches gears towards a "winter mode of operation" after the Labor Day holiday, which includes final grading of roads and removal of obstacles for winter plowing. The gravel berm on Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue had already created stormwater damage and with the ensuing fall rainy season, Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue were a priority to repair as well as remove the berm that was impeding stormwater flow. The cones impede grading and future snow removal, so the cones were also removed from the roadway.

The removal of the cones, gravel berm, and speed cart caused an increase in complaints from the public and Councilors about Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue sidewalk definition and speed reduction efforts.

### **Options:**

The PWD has put a lot of effort into evaluation of options related to Eric Lane and Fairview and come up with the following options or combination of options for City Council to consider.

#### **Short-Term**

Option 1 – Over the coming winter, the PWD will plow only an approximate 20-ft width of roadway and leave the remaining portion unplowed or as snowbanks.

Pro's: The narrower roadway will leave the perception of a narrower roadway and thereby in theory slow traffic down.

Con's: This will mean that pedestrians will need to navigate down an un-plowed pathway. The likely outcome of this is pedestrians will move into the plowed roadway rather than walk the unplowed pathway. This also stores water in the form of snow and ice upon the road/sidewalk surface. Water on a road surface only serves to weaken the road's integrity and means it's going to have a shorter life between re-building investment.

Option 2 – Plow the full width of the road and allow pedestrians and traffic share the same roadway width for the winter until a better solution is found.

Pro's: This is what has occurred over the past year or two. This is the easiest and most cost effective. This serves to best protect the road surface from damage by stored water on the surface.

Con's: This does nothing to solve the problem of slowing traffic or pedestrian safety.

Option 3 – Plow the full width of the road and utilize volunteers to remove and replace cones during snow storm events, and plow road and sidewalk the full width of the roadway.

Pro's: This meets the needs of the PWD for plowing and getting the snow (water) off of the driving surface.

Con's: Gaining cooperation and full participation from a volunteer workforce is unlikely. The PWD begins plowing at 4:00am and the likelihood of the cones being removed prior to plowing is unlikely. The PWD could plow and knock the cones into the ditch and let the volunteer force recover the cones, however this is likely to damage a majority of these cones and further, there is a high likelihood the cones will be buried by the snow and unfindable until spring. There's a high likelihood we will need a substantial supply of cones to replenish the lost and damaged cones.

Option 4 – The PWD purchase fixed speed limit radar signs and install them near the mid-points of Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue in opposing directions.

Pro's: This will monitor the speed of traffic and accumulate data on speeds of traffic. The fixed speed limit radar sign would be out of the roadway for winter plowing.

Con's: Over time, these devices lose effectiveness as people become used to them. These devices are fixed to one location, so the drawback is they are only intended for one location.

Option 5 – The PWD purchase an additional Speed Cart to dedicate to Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue.

Pro's: This will monitor the speed of traffic and accumulate data on speeds of traffic. The existing speed cart no longer can record data, so it needs to be replaced regardless. This is a technology that can be deployed and removed as needed, so it provides flexibility that the fixed signs do not.

Con's: Over time, these devices lose effectiveness as people become used to them. The Speed Cart uses a battery for operation and winter operation will require re-charging the battery. This is also duplicative of the fixed sign's ability. The Speed Cart would be an obstacle to plowing in the winter.

Option 6 – Increased Police patrol efforts along the Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue corridor.

Pro's: Previous efforts seemed to have the desired effect of slowing traffic.

Con's: The Police Department had expressed they do not have adequate staffing to provide additional support to one long-term effort and their resources are frequently called to work on other public safety issues.

## **Long-Term**



Option 1 – Paving the entire Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue (or portions of the road that the developer does not pave) to the full width including the pathway and painting a white line defining the sidewalk from the driving surface.

Pro's: This will improve the road surface and provide a sidewalk that has demarcation from the roadway. This would provide a robust solid surface for the addition of a maintainable traffic calming measure such as speed humps.

Con's: This clear demarcation between the roadway and sidewalk will become obscured in winter as snow and ice cover up the white line. The loss of clear demarcation will put the road back into the same condition it currently is where pedestrians do not have a clearly defined pedestrian path. From current use of the sidewalk along this roadway, it is quite probable the sidewalk will also be used as street parking as some residents have taken to street parking along the road. Additionally, an order of magnitude cost estimate of this option is likely to be between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 depending upon how much is done by the contractor. It is also likely a Local Improvement District would be required to pay for this effort.

Option 2 – Re-design Eric Lane and Fairview to place the sidewalk on the south side of the entire roadway until the “old section” of Fairview Avenue or along whatever length of roadway that the engineering design allows, and relocate the cross walk to the redesign suggests. Then make the sidewalk elevated with curb and gutter.

Pro's: This will improve the road surface and provide a year round maintainable road and sidewalk with a well defined separation between the road surface and pedestrian sidewalk to meet the expectations of the public based upon current feedback.

Con's: This option would require some re-engineering of the roadway/sidewalk and stormwater. An order of magnitude cost estimate of this option is likely to be between \$1,200,000 and \$1,800,000 depending upon how much road is paved by the contractor. It is likely a Local Improvement District would be required to pay for this effort.

Option 3 – Add speed humps/tables or rumble strips to Eric Lane and Fairview Avenue.

Pro's: These are probably the least intrusive traffic calming measures when it comes to construction and maintenance. Other traffic calming measures create significant maintenance concerns when it comes to winter. Most traffic calming measures mentioned in the updated Transportation Plan either not applicable, require more space than available, are not suitable for gravel roads, or are not suitable for the slopes in the area of the roadway.

Con's: The rumble strips may be undesirable in a residential area due to noise. The speed humps can create a condition where snow and ice are left behind from plowing causing icy conditions. The speed humps make maintenance of the road surface more difficult

and can damage equipment. Speed humps also delay emergency response time and Eric Lane and Fairview Ave have established a quicker connection to West Hill Rd, and therefore is now an emergency access route. Speed humps have been identified as devices that have caused injury to emergency personnel who traverse these structures.

**Discussion/Recommendations:**

Short-term

For the short-term, the PWD's opinion that the best option is a combination of Options #2, #4, #5, and #6. This would allow for proper winter road maintenance until a long-term solution can be deployed while also utilizing a traffic control device that will hopefully deter speeding.

Long-term

The choice for long-term solution depends upon the City's desired outcome. Based strictly upon the feedback and expectations by the public that was conveyed to the PWD, Option #2 combined with Option #3 is the proper selection. Choosing Option #2 comes at great expense that was previously unplanned for. However, the City (in coordination with the developer) has chosen the road design that leads to Option #1. It is the opinion of the PWD that choosing Option #1 will still result in the seasonal appearance of a "super wide road" like the current conditions and places pedestrians and non-motorized traffic in the same road profile, and thus does not increase the safety aspect expressed by Councilors and the public.

**From:** [Leon Galbraith](#)  
**To:** [Melissa Jacobsen](#); [Daniel Kort](#)  
**Cc:** [Jean Arno](#); [Mike Zelinski](#); [Julie Engebretsen](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Fairview/Eric Lane concerns  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 9:30:08 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)

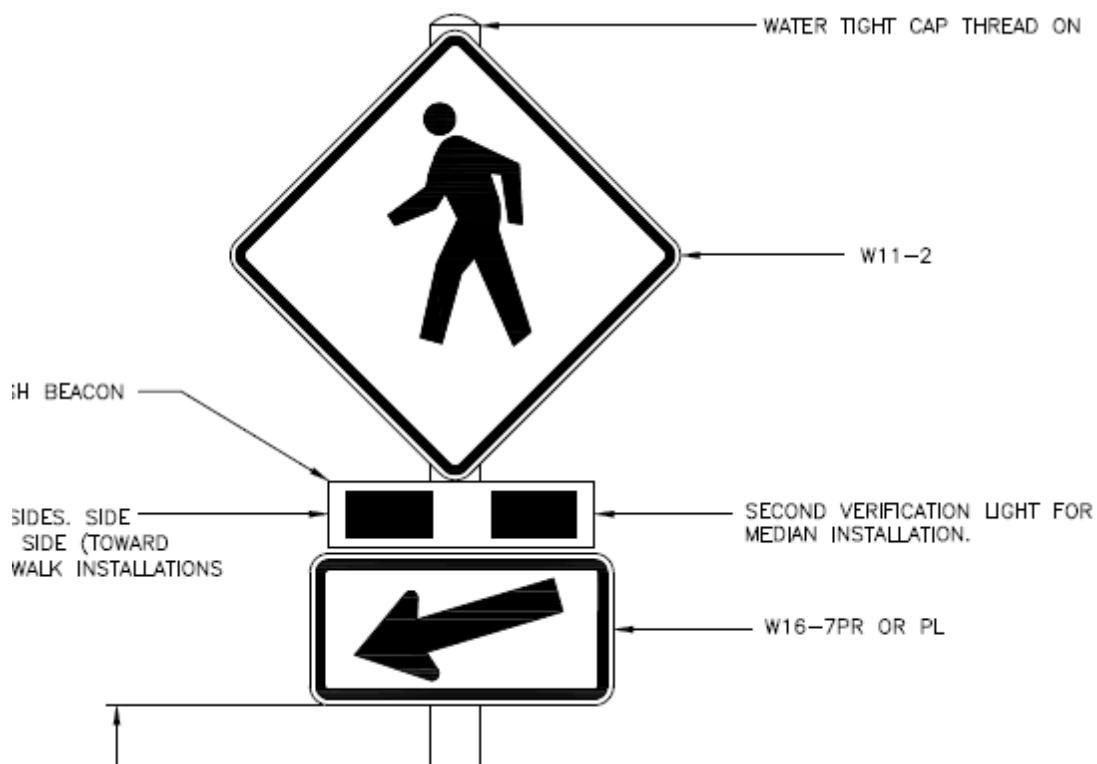
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Hey Melissa and Dan,

There are MANY options for how the pathway could be signed and I am using the latest Alaska Sign Design Specifications since Homer does not have a local signing policy guide this is a good default I have used for designing street signs on previous Homer projects. It's a large PDF but can be accessed here:

[https://dot.alaska.gov/stwddes/dcstraffic/assets/pdf/asds/asds\\_all\\_linked\\_061110.pdf](https://dot.alaska.gov/stwddes/dcstraffic/assets/pdf/asds/asds_all_linked_061110.pdf)

Normally a pedestrian crossing has this warning signage: this is from Heath Street that I designed with a flashing beacon as well.

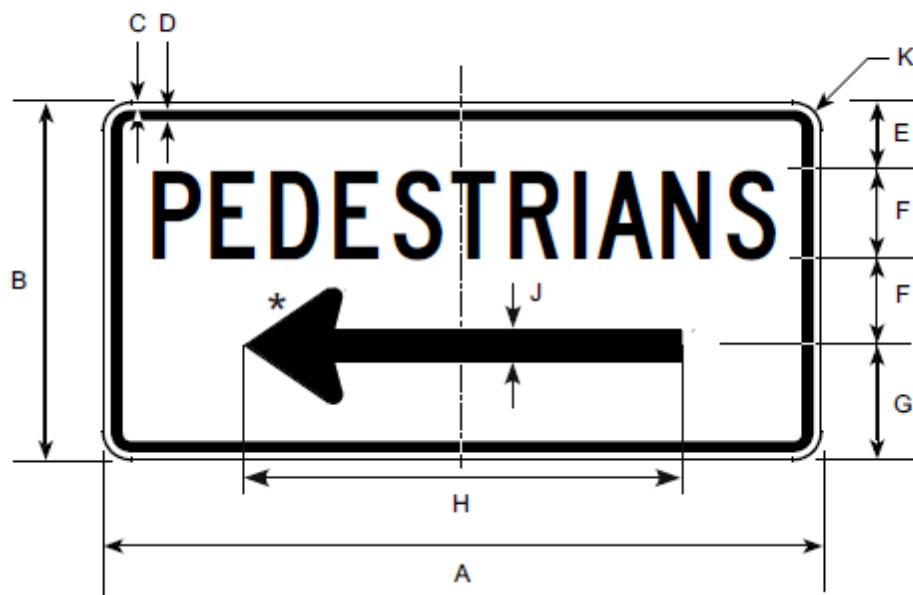


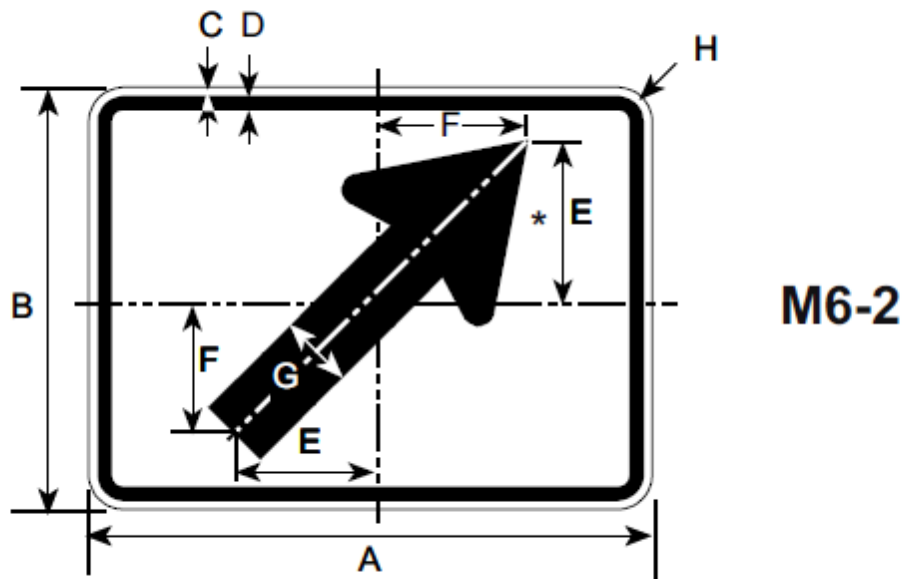
As far as the sidewalk/pathway itself I would recommend keeping it simple as too many signs is not a great thing either: here are some options.

I would use the square pathway sign with a down arrow and install right on the outside edge of the pathway. I call it a pathway because generally anything over 6 feet wide and or detached from the roadway is more of a "pathway" than a traditional sidewalk.



**R9-100**





Leon Galbraith, P.E.  
 City Engineer / Special Projects Coordinator  
 City of Homer, Alaska  
 W: 907-435-3100 ext. 3227  
 C: 907-435-4172



**From:** Melissa Jacobsen <MJacobsen@ci.homer.ak.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 8:23 AM  
**To:** Leon Galbraith <Lgalbraith@ci.homer.ak.us>; Mike Zelinski <mzelinski@ci.homer.ak.us>; Daniel Kort <dkort@ci.homer.ak.us>  
**Cc:** Jean Arno <jarno@ci.homer.ak.us>; Julie Engebretsen <JEngebretsen@ci.homer.ak.us>  
**Subject:** RE: Fairview/Eric Lane concerns

Thanks for taking the time to share this. I'm not clear on what you're referring to with traffic signal design and what the signage would look like. If you're at city hall today or could come a little early tomorrow before our 9am we could talk more about it?

-Melissa



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**From:** Leon Galbraith <[Lgalbraith@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:Lgalbraith@ci.homer.ak.us)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 17, 2024 5:10 PM  
**To:** Melissa Jacobsen <[MJacobsen@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:MJacobsen@ci.homer.ak.us)>; Mike Zelinski <[mzelinski@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:mzelinski@ci.homer.ak.us)>; Daniel Kort <[dkort@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:dkort@ci.homer.ak.us)>  
**Cc:** Jean Arno <[jarno@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:jarno@ci.homer.ak.us)>; Julie Engebretsen <[JEngebretsen@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:JEngebretsen@ci.homer.ak.us)>  
**Subject:** Fairview/Eric Lane concerns

Hi all,

I took another drive down this road the other day and actually got out and walked it as well. Apologies if this has already been discussed but I wanted to offer my engineer perspective on the concerns that have been raised. As discussed the best possible solution would have been to construct this road the same as the far west end of Eric Lane that I actually designed with the curb and paved sidewalk on the south side. There are of course many traffic calming measures that you can do on pavement like raised crosswalks, speed humps, stripe a narrow 10' lane, etc... I have done many designs like that on other projects, even the small radius reverse curves we designed on either end of Grubstake for example.

For a gravel road the only real options I know of are to treat it like we do traffic signal design for example where you have to use lane use signage to give people direction in winter when no striping is visible. I think the whisker hubs idea has merit to act as the striping until winter but we need some lane use signage installed that tells people there are two lanes AND a pathway present. It's not immediately obvious there is a pathway and on which side of the road since it changes sides. Also speed limit signs and enforcement of course could help even if just a few speeding tickets are written.

I think people will eventually get used to that being a road connection with pedestrian traffic now where it wasn't before and average speeds will drop. DOT only designs things and sets speed limits to accommodate the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile so they acknowledge there will always be about 20% of the drivers breaking the law and that's just the way it is.

We could just get some traffic counts too on an average Wednesday during peak hours in the morning and evening the old fashioned way with me sitting out there with a pen and paper. If we want to do that it should be before winter driving conditions.

Just my thoughts, thanks.

Leon Galbraith, P.E.  
City Engineer / Special Projects Coordinator  
City of Homer, Alaska  
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