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HANA + Walkable Arlington Walk Audit

Arlington, Texas

REPORT WRITTEN BY

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Background

Who we are

Walkable Arlington:

Walkable Arlington is a coalition of residents, students, professors, and local professionals advocating for more walkable and bikeable spaces and greater transportation options in the City of Arlington.

Heart of Arlington Neighborhood Association:

HANA represents residents and business owners in Downtown and Central Arlington. It aims to build strong neighborhoods and to facilitate communication with city hall and the University of Texas at Arlington about issues affecting residents and businesses. HANA's members are neighbors who have voluntarily come together to preserve, protect, and enhance the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

The Heart of Arlington Neighborhood Association is a coalition of neighborhoods located immediately south of downtown Arlington and extending south to Pioneer Parkway.

HANA+ Walkable Arlington Walk Audit:

On October 9, 2021, the Heart of Arlington Neighborhood Association and Walkable Arlington came together and held a walk audit across four different locations within HANA

neighborhoods including South Center Street, Blanton Elementary School, Julia Burgen Park, and Inwood Drive. Both organizations collaborated on this project as there are shared concerns of driver behavior and infrastructure gaps in the selected area of Arlington. Participants of the HANA + Walkable Arlington audit included Walkable Arlington Coordinators, HANA members, City Council Representative Rebecca Boxall, and UTA College of Architecture, Planning and



Public Affairs (CAPPA) faculty. By inviting a diverse group of stakeholders including city council members, locals, and student leaders we can make more observations in data collection, share a variety of ideas, experiences, and resources, as well as foster a collaborative work environment. Together we can come up with solutions and create actionable goals for a walkable City of Arlington. The walk audit was conducted using ArcGIS Survey 123 software, with survey questions focused on crossing streets & intersections, sidewalks, driver behavior, and comfort & appeal. Questions from the AARP Walk Audit tool kit were used, in combination with Arlington-focused questions (See AARP Walk Audit toolkit link in the Appendix). For full survey questions and responses, please see the Appendix.

Summary of Observations

South Center Street

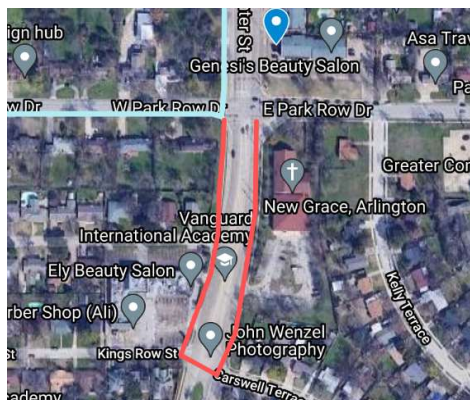


Figure 1. S. Center Street Audit Route

The S. Center Street audit area encompassed the E. Park Row intersection to crossing S. Center Street at Carswell Terrace surrounded by neighborhood streets. This location includes destinations such as Sunny's foodmart, beauty salons, restaurants, New Grace Church, Vanguard International Academy (school), and nearby Carter Junior Highschool and shopping locations; only a seven minute bike ride away from Downtown Arlington. This location was chosen as part of the HANA/Walkable Arlington Walk Audit due to complaints of unsafe driver behavior and speeding from Arlington residents.

The greatest issue encountered in the S. Center Street route was the lack of intersection safety. During the course of the audit, pedestrians and cyclists were observed crossing six lanes of traffic to get to the strip mall on the

east side of S. Center Street (see Figure 2). Audit participant and long-time resident Jim Gayda observed that during weekday morning and evening traffic it would be very difficult if not impossible for pedestrians and cyclists to cross over S. Center street. Although a median can be found on S. Center Street, it does not serve as a pedestrian/bicycle walkway/island. The closest signalized crossing is approximately 700 feet away. The audit team observed unsafe driver behavior on S. Center Street. Drivers did not respect stop signs and did not look for pedestrians when leaving neighborhood streets and entering on S. Center street. Gayda reported concerns of speeding and reckless driver behavior along S. Center during weekday afternoons. With the exception of some cyclists riding on the street to make way for pedestrians present on sidewalks, cyclists of different ages (school age and adults) were observed riding on the sidewalks. Bicycle infrastructure was rated as very bad as there were no safe alternatives from sidewalks. Broken and cracked sidewalks, interrupted by poles and wires and low hanging trees were found on both sides of S. Center street (see Appendix, Figure 3). Some sidewalk gaps were up to two inches tall, making it a trip hazard and going against ADA sidewalk requirements (See Appendix, Figure 4). Litter was found scattered throughout the entire audit area along with overgrown grasses and dead plants, disrupting the textured markings on crossings (see Appendix, Figure 5). The audit team discussed safety concerns of wheelchair users and slower walkers including children and elderly (which were observed during the audit) using the sidewalks and crossings on S. Center Street.



Figure 2. Crossing six lanes on S. Center Street (each lane is 12 ft wide)

Blanton Elementary School

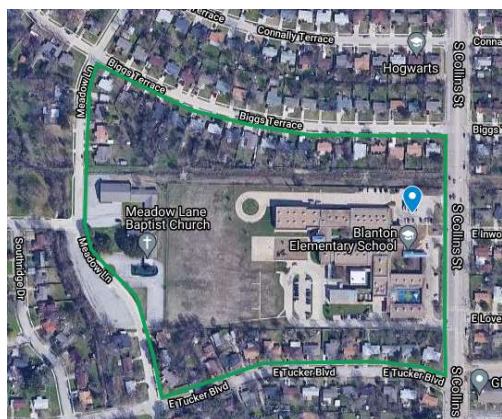


Figure 7: Blanton Elementary School Audit Route

The route began at the front of the Blanton Elementary proceeding north to Biggs Terr, south along Meadow Lane to E Tucker, then east to Collins and north back to the point of beginning at the school. Collins St just underwent a complete street rebuild that was completed earlier this year so the street and sidewalks here are new. The street is seven lanes wide with a 40 mph speed limit; although, a school zone provides some additional safety before and after school. It was noted that the crosswalk from Lovers Ln to

the school sidewalk was barely visible on the street, even though it was just painted a few months ago. Crossing guards are typically present to assist students before and after school. Another issue at the school property is a pedestrian crossing light, just south of the traffic signal at Lovers and on the south side of the school's entrance driveway. The crossing signal is of little value to students at the school who never have to cross that driveway at Collins due to school sidewalks on either side of the driveway. For pedestrians on the west side of Collins, the signal was timed through two cycles. The signal was red for 6:35:00 then changed for 15 seconds to permit crossing. Biggs Terr and Meadow Ln also received recent street rebuilds so the street and sidewalks there were in excellent condition. There are few trees providing shade along Biggs Terr but overall, walking was comfortable. Meadow Ln had two major problems. First, when the street was rebuilt the existing sidewalks were replaced. Apparently there was never a sidewalk on either side of the street along the Meadow Lane Baptist Church property and no new sidewalk was installed during the street rebuild. There is a gentle S-curve in the street along church property (See figure 4) which makes it difficult to see down the street and for drivers traveling in both directions to see any bicycles or pedestrians on the street in that area. The church is directly behind Blanton Elementary property and there is a rear entrance to the school from the church parking lot and the second major problem in this area. A sidewalk from Meadow goes uphill to an opening in the fence and continues all the way to the school buildings; however, approximately 12 ft of sidewalk is missing before the entrance and the ground there has eroded considerably leaving only a narrow dirt path with steep drop off to the adjacent parking lot before the entrance to the

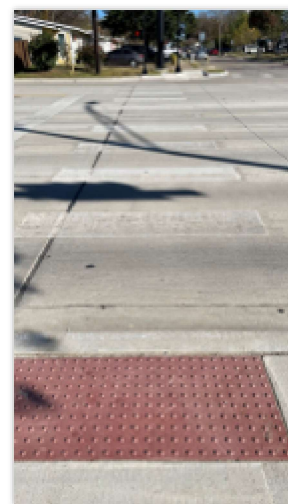


Figure 8: Lovers Ln to Blanton sidewalk faded crosswalk



Figure 9: Sidewalk abruptly ends on Meadow Ln



Figure 10: S Shape along Meadow Ln

school property. The sidewalk resumes about 5 feet past the entryway but there is a piece of fence that completely blocks the sidewalk. Once past those obstacles, the sidewalk on the school property provides safe passage to the school as a shortcut. East Tucker is an older street with older sidewalks. There are missing sections and trip hazards about each four feet where settlement and tree roots have caused the sidewalk to separate at each joint and where



Figure 11: Sidewalk gaps on E. Tucker St.

they meet driveways all down the street. The sidewalks are in poor condition and could not be easily navigated by anyone using any type of mobility assistance device, such as canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, or motorized mobility devices. There is ample shade on both sides of the street in this area. There are a significant number of cars parked along the street and often cars parked in driveways block the sidewalks. Most of the homes in this neighborhood have single car width driveways, a situation in common with the Inwood route. When these homes were built in the mid 1900s, most families had only one car so the driveways and parking were adequate but today most homes have at least two cars and often more so two cars parked in tandem on the driveway will block the sidewalk or the additional cars must be parked on the street. This situation is shared with many older neighborhoods in central and east Arlington, often in lower income neighborhoods. The City of Arlington should investigate sources of funding to provide grants to homeowners in these neighborhoods for expansion of their driveways. Additionally, the City could assist homeowners by making curb cuts for the expanded driveways and offering to pour concrete to expand driveways as part of a single project for multiple homeowners along the same street at one time and at an affordable rate. The Code Compliance Neighborhood Enhancement Team could coordinate with neighbors who wanted to participate. The combined efforts would result in safer streets for all users of the street.

Julia Burgen Park

The Julia Burgen Park route began with a looping walking trail within the namesake park, entered S. Center Street, moved down to W. Park Row Drive, and finally cut through the Center Street Trail back to its starting point at the walking trail. This specific route focused on Julia Burgen Park as well as the major streets that pass by it. The two major problems of the Julia Burgen Park route were sidewalk safety and overall comfort. Some sidewalks on S. Cooper Street and W. Park Row Drive were noticeably damaged, much too small, or missing entirely; meanwhile, Julia Burgen Park itself was very

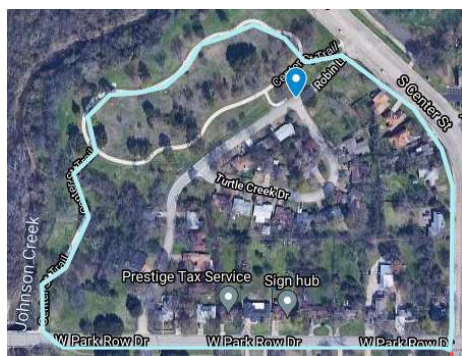


Figure 20: Julia Burgen Park Audit Route

well-kept in terms of sidewalk safety, as the sidewalks were wide enough and freshly painted. The section of S. Center Street that the audit members took cut through a neighborhood that was missing sidewalks, causing the group to walk between driveways and front yards. A missing sidewalk poses a major problem for people in wheelchairs, people pushing strollers, and others with some form of mobility issue. Additionally, any sidewalks that did exist on S. Center Street were badly cracked, narrow, and had poles and power lines that cut through the middle. W. Park Row Drive was in noticeably better shape, but still had its fair share of problems. The sidewalks were too narrow, as the two members of our group could not comfortably walk side by side, and while cracks were fewer and farther between, they were still visible. One positive note about W. Park Row Street is that its tall trees allow for ample shading, which cools down the sidewalk and increases overall comfort. Overall comfort along the trail was inconsistent at best. S. Center Street offered very little shade. All three streets outside of the looping walking trail were missing water fountains and public bathrooms, two things that should be present in some form on two streets as important as S. Cooper and W. Park Row. Grass and landscaping maintenance is urgently needed in some locations, as some portions of the walking trail had bushes, shrubs, and trees poking out of their areas and causing walkers to move around them. Additionally, the grass of Julia Burgen Park was poorly maintained. When landscaping cuts into sidewalks, some people are required to move away from the sidewalk, which is a problem for people with mobility issues.



Figure 21. Bushes and shrubs overlapping a sidewalk.



Figure 22. Graffiti underneath the S. Center Street bridge.

Vacant parking lots to nearby churches and schools were large, but sparsely populated. This is bad, because the portion of the parking lots that people are not using could be used for other buildings, houses, or nature. Another problem was trash and graffiti. Trash like soda cans, chip bags, balled-up paper, and more were littered about, and homeless camps had been left behind with no signs of the homeless still living there. Graffiti sat underneath the bridge on S. Center Street, some saying vulgar curse words, and other being general eye sores to look at. All in all, these issues made the walking experience generally uncomfortable.

The Julia Burgen Park trail is best described as 'good, not great'. Easy fixes like general maintenance, cleaning up, and the fixing of sidewalks would make the trail much better. Our group discussed many ways to easily fix the problems, such as regular maintenance for a cleaner and safer environment, encouraging people to pick up after themselves, and giving people an incentive to use this trail in a positive way. Julia Burgen Park is popular with high school and college-age kids, and by completing general maintenance, the park will undoubtedly become a gem amongst the younger generation within the heart of Arlington.

Inwood Drive

The team started on Inwood Drive and encountered some damage to sidewalks which would be a peril to pedestrians having to walk in the street. Because of the narrow driveways in the majority of the houses on Inwood, families ran out of their own space to park and therefore either parked on the street or parked over the sidewalks. At the intersection of Inwood and Cooper, the team saw a memorial to [an 18-year-old motorcyclist who died at this location](#). Walking down Cooper Street was another

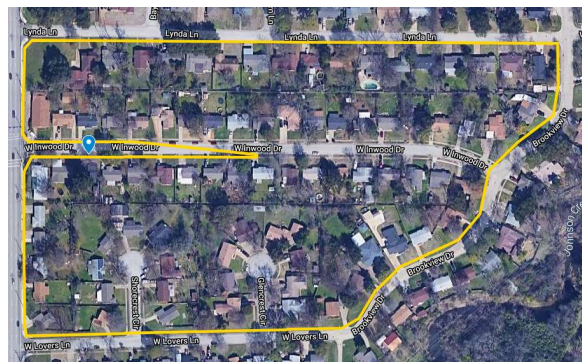


Figure 27: Inwood Dr. Audit Route



Figure 28. Lynda/Brookview intersection. This intersection can use traffic calming measures such as a roundabout.

challenge: the team did not feel safe walking by vehicles despite the slightly wider sidewalks (6 ft as opposed to the usual 4 ft in the area) because the vehicles were driving at an uncomfortable speed for pedestrians to walk next to. The sidewalks on Lovers Lane were okay but midway through the street, the sidewalks stopped and we were forced to walk on the street. Despite the lack of sidewalks, the streets themselves (Lovers Lane and Brookview) are relatively wide so vehicles traversing the route would be driving relatively fast, which was the observation we took note of. At

the intersections of Inwood/Brookview and Lynda/Brookview, even though the stop signs were present, they were not highly visible so drivers sometimes skipped the stop sign and kept going. Even more concerning at Lynda/Brookview is that there are no sidewalk connections to the intersection and no other protective infrastructure despite the fact that the intersection is a bus stop for school children. The rest of the walk audit continued pleasantly on Lynda, but there were several lots at the intersection of Cooper Street that were empty which could benefit from infill developments/upzoning.

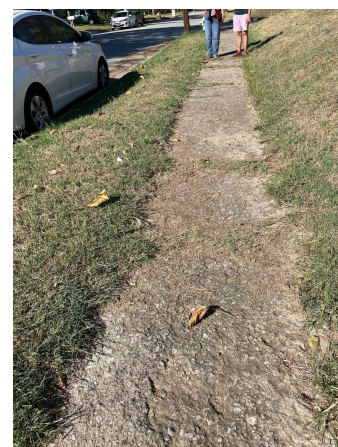


Figure 29. The general state of sidewalks in the area.

Action Requested

Short Term Priorities

- Blanton Elementary
 - Clearly defined crosswalk on Collins at Lovers Ln
 - Adjust timing of the pedestrian crossing signal at the Blanton entrance driveway (or remove it altogether as it offers no value to pedestrians in this area.)
 - Planting street trees along Biggs Terr to provide shade for sidewalks
 - Work with AISD and Meadow Lane Baptist church to develop a longer range plan to improve safety to the rear entry to Blanton Elementary School property.
- South Center street
 - Trash cans available on S. Center street
 - Greater upkeep in landscaping, removing overgrown vegetation/grasses interrupting sidewalks
 - Closing sidewalk gaps, making sidewalks ADA friendly
- Julia Burgen Park
 - Clean up landscaping throughout route
 - Remove graffiti within Julia Burgen Park, under the bridge on S. Center Street
 - Paint a crosswalk at Robin Ln., Park Row
- Inwood
 - Car ports: other methods of permeable paving (long term)
 - Interim strategies of bulb-outs and traffic circles to calm traffic

Mid Term Priorities

- Blanton Elementary School
 - Coordinated program and incentives to assist homeowners expand driveways
 - Shore up existing sidewalk and replace missing sections on the path to the rear school entrance.
- South Center street
 - Landscaping allowing for greater shade
 - Interim strategy- transform a lane into a bike lane from Downtown Arlington, down S. Center Street using paint (temporary), flexible delineator posts and planters. Community grants, funding from the City of Arlington, donations from local businesses, and support from



Figure 33: Pop-up Bicycle lane in San Francisco with paint, delineator posts, and planters. Source: San Francisco Bicycle Coalition

the University of Texas at Arlington, the project can help test out a bike network at an affordable cost.

Funding options:

-AARP Community Challenge (application opens February 2022)

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2021/2021-grantees.html>

-People for Bikes Community Grant: 1-2 open grant cycles (funds up to \$10,000)

<https://www.peopleforbikes.org/grant-guidelines>

- Julia Burgen Park
 - Traffic signs on Park Row
 - Add public bathrooms and water fountains across the route
- Inwood
 - Permanent bulb-outs and traffic circles

Long Term Priorities

- Blanton Elementary School
 - Rebuild sidewalks along E Tucker St
 - Install new sidewalks to improve safety in the vicinity of Meadow Lane Baptist Church where no sidewalks currently exist
- South Center Street
 - Re-visiting Arlington Hike and Bike plan: updates for safer pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
 - Pedestrian islands across S. Center Street (crossing over to strip mall on the west side)
 - Safe bicycle infrastructure: change sharrows to protected bicycle lanes with barriers allowing movement up to downtown Arlington
- Julia Burgen Park
 - Increase sidewalk width and add sidewalks where there are none (especially in front of houses)
 - Narrowing/reducing car lanes
- Inwood:
 - Street rebuilding + community engagement to fix sidewalks and enlarge driveways if necessary
 - Narrow Cooper Street
 - Infill developments

Appendix: Notes from each Team (full survey responses)

AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit:

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/getting-around/info-2014/aarp-walk-audit-tool-kit.html>

South Center Street

Time: 10:12 AM

Overall rating of survey area: between Bad and Neutral

Crossing Streets & Intersections

Overall rating of street crossing in the survey area: Bad

- Crossing does not have a pedestrian signal or audible signal
- Does not give slow walkers enough time to cross
- Location needs a traffic signal or crosswalk
- Push-to Walk signal is not available
- People need to walk >300 ft for a safe place to cross the street
- The road is too wide to safely cross

Sidewalks

Overall rating of the sidewalks in the survey area: Neutral

- Sidewalk is broken or cracked
- Curb cuts are not textured or marked for people with visual impairments
- The sidewalk is blocked or interrupted by poles, signs, shrubs

Bicycle lanes

Overall rating of the bike lanes in the survey area: Bad

- Bike lanes are shared with autos

Driver Behavior

Overall rating of driver behavior in the survey area: Bad

- Drivers do not stop at stop signs
- Drivers do not yield to pedestrians especially at right turns
- Other issues and observations: Jim Gayda observes much speeding during afternoons and higher traffic during weekday mornings (compared to Saturday morning, audit day/time)

Comfort & Appeal

Overall rating of the comfort & appeal in the survey area: Neutral

- Street lacks shading/trees
- The street needs landscaping
- The street needs benches and places to rest
- The grass and/or landscaping needs maintenance
- There are no water fountains and/or public restrooms
- No safe area for Via drop-off

- Presence of trash/litter
- Other observations: west side of S. Center street has morning shade but in the afternoon it becomes uncomfortable to walk through

Other Pictures of S. Center Street Route



Figure 3. Overgrown grass blocking textured markings



Figure 4. Trip hazard: 2 inch sidewalk crack



Figure 5. Poles and cables blocking pedestrians and cyclists on sidewalks



Figure 6: Litter present: broken bricks and glass bottles, trash next to sidewalks

Blanton Elementary School

Collins/Biggs Terr/Meadow Ln/E Tucker
Time 10:07 am

Overall rating of survey area: Neutral

Crossing streets & Intersections

Overall rating of street crossing in the survey area: Neutral

- The crossing does not have a pedestrian signal or audible signal
- People need to walk >300 ft for a safe place to cross the street

Sidewalks

Overall rating of the sidewalks in the survey area: Neutral

- The sidewalks are not continuous
- The sidewalk is broken or cracked
- There is no buffer between traffic and sidewalk
- Cars, trucks, vendors are blocking sidewalks

Bicycle lanes

Overall rating of the bike lanes in the survey area: Neutral

- Bicycle lanes are shared with autos

Driver Behavior

Overall rating of driver behavior in the survey area: Good

- Drivers appear to be speeding
- Drivers do not yield to pedestrians, especially at right turns
- Drivers do not stop behind the crosswalk

Comfort & Appeal

Overall rating of the comfort & appeal in the survey area: Good

- The street lacks shade/trees

Observations

While Collins St is a major thoroughfare, the other three streets are residential. Three of the four streets have been rebuilt recently so streets and sidewalks are good, except on E Tucker or where missing on Meadow. Intersections outside Collins have 4-way stop signs. The crosswalk on Collins at Lovers is the only crossing with a traffic signal and pedestrian crossing signal between E Park Row and Pioneer Parkway. Biggs and Collins could benefit from additional trees to shade the sidewalks.

Other pictures from Blanton Elementary School Route



Figure 12



Figure 13

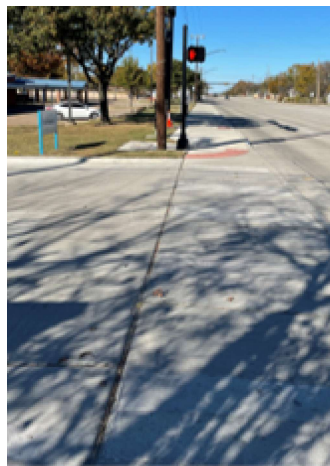


Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19

Julia Burgen Park

Park Row/Cooper intersection

Time: 10:00 AM

Overall rating of survey area: Neutral

Crossing Streets & Intersections

Overall rating of street crossing in the survey area: Neutral

- The crossing does not have a pedestrian signal or audible signal
- The pedestrian signal does not give people walking at an average speed enough time to cross
- The signal does not give slow walkers enough time to cross
- The location needs a traffic signal or crosswalk
- People need to walk > 300 ft for a safe place to cross the street
- The road is too wide to safely cross
- There is no median on a street with four or more lanes

Sidewalks

Overall rating of the sidewalks in the survey area: Bad

- There are no sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
- The sidewalk is not wide enough for two people to walk together side-by-side (minimum width 5ft)
- The sidewalk is broken or cracked
- The sidewalks are interrupted by driveways
- The sidewalk is blocked or interrupted by poles, signs, shrubs, dumpsters, low-hanging trees, etc.

Bicycle lanes

Overall rating of the bike lanes in the survey area: Neutral

- Bike lanes are shared with autos
- Designated bike lane
- Buffer exists between bicyclists & autos
- Buffer is a pavement marking

Driver Behavior

Overall rating of driver behavior in the survey area: Good

- Drivers appear to be speeding
- Drivers make unexpected turns/maneuver

Comfort & Appeal

Overall rating of the comfort & appeal in the survey area: Neutral

- The street lacks shade/trees
- The street needs benches and places to rest
- The grass and or landscaping needs maintenance
- There are no water fountains and/or public restrooms
- Presence of graffiti
- Vacant parking lot(s)
- Presence of trash/litter

Other pictures from Julia Burgen Park Route

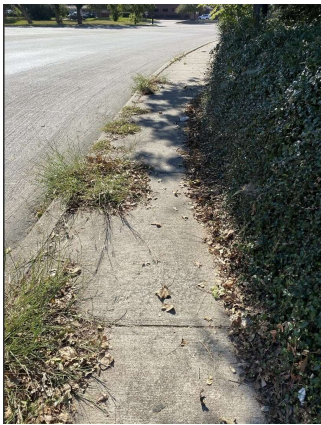


Figure 23: Grass growing from underneath the Sidewalk



Figure 24: No sidewalk and no buffer between grass and street



Figure 25: Graffiti at Julia Burgen Park, near the underneath of the S. Center Street bridge.



Figure 26: sharrow on S. Center Street, faded paint, unsafe infrastructure for cyclists

Inwood Drive

Lovers/Cooper intersection

Time: 9:29 AM

Overall rating of survey area: Bad

Crossing Streets & Intersections

Overall rating of street crossing in the survey area: Very bad

- The crossing does not have a pedestrian signal or audible signal
- The signal does not give slow walkers enough time to cross
- The traffic signal makes pedestrians wait too long before crossing
- The location needs a traffic signal or crosswalk
- A Push-to-Walk signal is not available/operating/accessible

- The crosswalk is not marked or is poorly marked
- People need to walk >300 ft for a safe place to cross the street
- The road is too wide to safely cross
- Parked cars or utility poles block the pedestrian view of traffic

Sidewalks

Overall rating of the sidewalks in the survey area: Bad

- The sidewalk is not wide enough for two people to walk together side-by-side
- The sidewalk is broken or cracked
- The sidewalks are interrupted by driveways
- Cars, trucks, vendors are blocking the sidewalk

Driver Behavior

Overall rating of driver behavior in the survey area: Very bad

- Drivers do not obey traffic signal
- Drivers appear to be speeding
- Drivers make unexpected turns/maneuvers

Overall Safety

Overall rating of safety in the survey area: Very bad

- Drivers make unexpected turns/maneuvers
- There is too much traffic
- Drivers are distracted
- Other observation: There is a memorial for a traffic crash victim

Comfort & Appeal

Overall rating of the comfort & appeal in the survey area: Bad

- The street needs grass, flowers, and landscaping
- The street needs benches and places to rest
- The grass and/or landscaping needs maintenance
- There are no water fountains and/or public restrooms
- No safe area for Via drop-off
- Inadequate lighting

Brookview/Lynda intersection

Time: 10:40 AM

Overall rating of survey area: Neutral

Crossing Streets & Intersections

Overall rating of street crossing in the survey area: Very bad

- The crosswalk is not marked or is poorly marked
- Other observation: School bus stops here! There's absolutely no sidewalks connecting here

Sidewalks

Overall rating of the sidewalks in the survey area: Very bad

- There are no sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
- The sidewalks are not continuous
- The sidewalk is not wide enough for two people to walk together side-by-side
- Other observation: no sidewalks connecting to intersection

Driver Behavior

Overall rating of driver behavior in the survey area: Bad

- Drivers do not stop at stop sign
- Drivers appear to be speeding

Overall Safety

Overall rating of the safety in the survey area: Neutral

- The signage or directions for drivers/pedestrians are confusing
- Other observation: no stop sign at Lynda/Mashburn

Comfort & Appeal

Overall rating of the comfort & appeal in the survey area: Good

- Other observation: very pleasant street, yards are taken care of, besides the sidewalks not being there, the trees are nice and cool

Other Pictures of Inwood Street Route

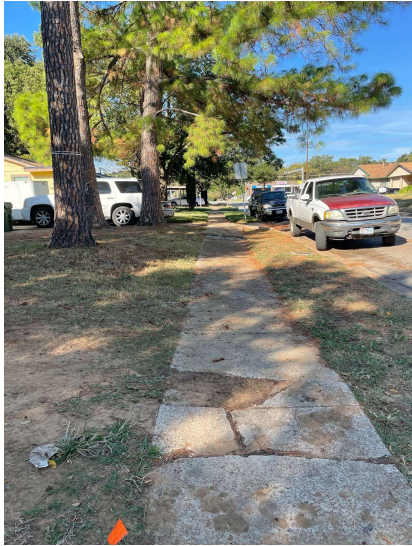


Figure 30: A poorly maintained sidewalk on Inwood Street near Cooper Street intersection



Figure 31: Cooper Street west sidewalk



Figure 32: The general state of sidewalks in the area