

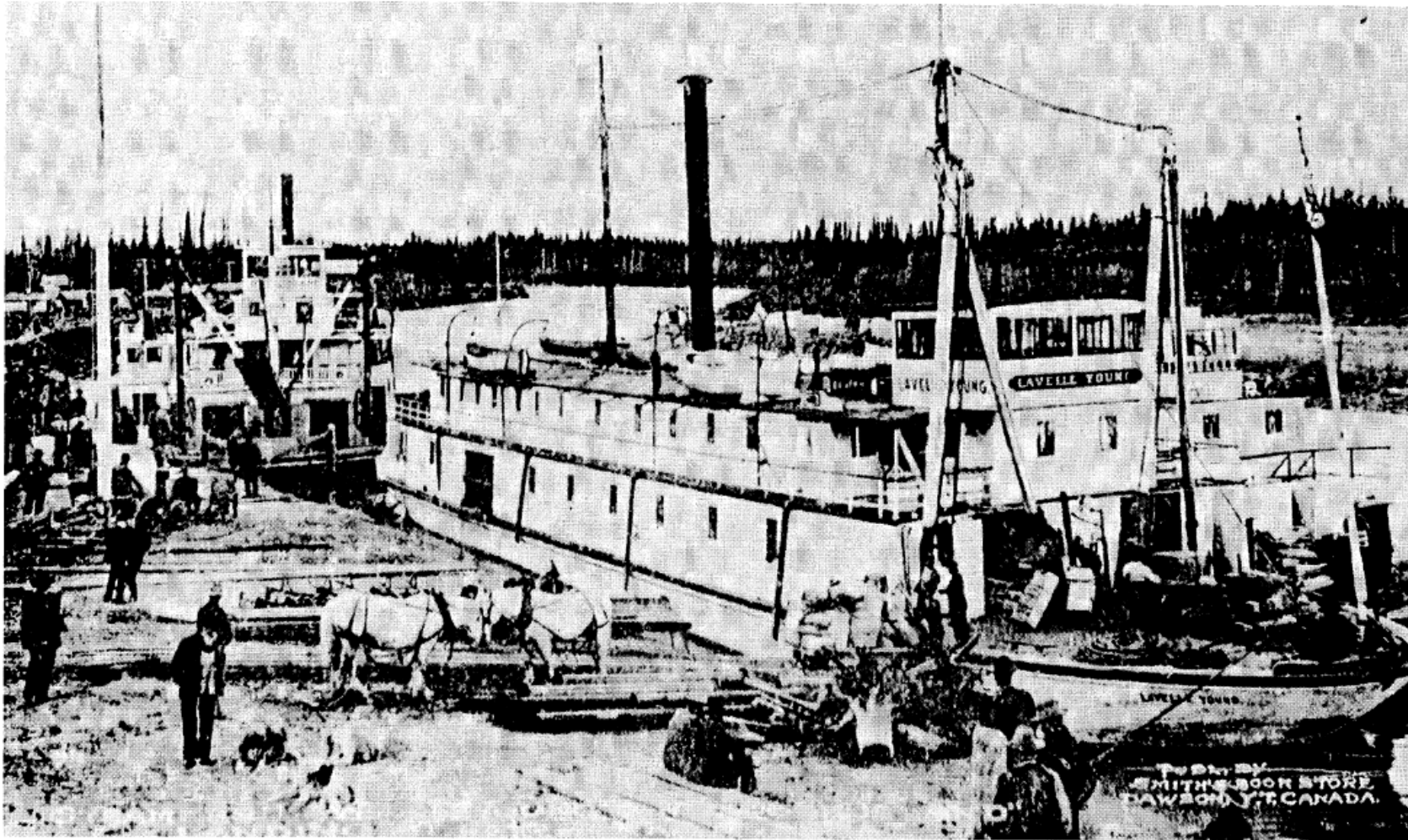
Fairbanks North Star Borough Chena Riverfront Commission

# CHENA RIVERFRONT PLAN

**ADOPTED JULY 10, 1997 Ord. # 97-007**

**AMENDED MARCH 26, 2009 Ord. # 2009-08**

**AMENDED JANUARY 28, 2016 Ord. # 2016-01**



## **GOALS, POLICIES and OBJECTIVES: The Riverfront Tomorrow**

This section presents GOALS, POLICIES and OBJECTIVES focused on five key issues affecting the riverfront: VALUE, OPPORTUNITIES, PARTICIPATION, ACCESS and STEWARDSHIP. Each goal statement is followed by general policy statements and specific objectives intended to carry out that goal. This section presents the public policy concerning the Chena River.

**VALUE:** Recognize and restore the river as the crown jewel of the community.

**OPPORTUNITIES:** Develop and integrate the river's multiple orientations to create an integrated whole.

**PARTICIPATION:** Encourage community participation in implementing the Chena Riverfront Plan.

**ACCESS:** Create and enhance physical and visual access to the river for all people.

**STEWARDSHIP:** Ensure that appropriate elements of public safety, protection of private property values and river planning efforts are maintained.

# VALUE

## Intent

The Fairbanks community has both treated and mistreated the Chena River in several ways over the years. It is time now for Fairbanks to recognize the river as its crown jewel and to make sure it takes its rightful place as the central focus of the community. The time has come for all area residents and visitors to do what they can to promote the health and sustainability of the Chena River, the second, most productive young King Salmon (Chinook) stream in the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River.

## **GOAL I: RECOGNIZE AND RESTORE THE RIVER AS THE CROWN JEWEL OF THE COMMUNITY.**

- 1. POLICY:** Encourage the creation and maintenance of areas of natural and man-made beauty along the river corridor.
  - A. OBJECTIVE:** Develop voluntary riverbank management guidelines to assist property owners with erosion control and landscaping concerns.
  - B. OBJECTIVE:** Implement litter control and river cleanup projects.
- 2. POLICY:** Conserve as much as feasible the integrity of the river's natural system.
  - A. OBJECTIVE:** Identify and inventory important habitats within the river corridor.
  - B. OBJECTIVE:** Create and maintain greenbelts in the watershed and river corridor.
  - C. OBJECTIVE:** Consider hydrologic and sediment transport impacts of new bridge construction.
- 3. POLICY:** Evaluate and review public and private development projects in the context of how well the project meets the adopted goals and objectives of the Chena Riverfront Plan.
  - A. OBJECTIVE:** Create voluntary architectural and landscaping design guidelines for use along the river corridor.
  - B. OBJECTIVE:** Require landscaping of all borough funded projects, request landscaping for all other publicly funded projects along the corridor and strongly recommend landscaping for all private commercial and industrial projects.
- 4. POLICY:** Maintain riverfront residential property land use through use of consistent zoning.

- 5. POLICY:** Reduce pollution of the river.
- A. OBJECTIVE:** Apply economically achievable, best available technology to mitigate the effects of invasive aquatic species such as Elodea and possible pollutants, including those borne in storm-water runoff, on the river.
  - B. OBJECTIVE:** Encourage riverfront property owners (public and private) to use shoreline practices that provide for healthy fish and wildlife habitat, such as: retaining some natural stream bank vegetation to filter upland run-off and reduce erosion; properly disposing yard waste by avoiding the river or riverbank; and minimizing upland pollutants that could wash into the river.
- 6. POLICY:** Support Chena River recreational fishery and habitat improvement efforts, such as supporting river cleanup efforts; improving filtration methods for storm-water runoff and educating riverfront property owners about pollution sources.
- 7. POLICY:** Enhance recreation value by encouraging incorporation of the river into the various other uses, such as community events, recreation and fisheries.
- 8. POLICY:** Update the Chena Riverfront Plan at least every ten (10) years.

# OPPORTUNITIES

## Intent

The intent of this goal is to take advantage of present and future opportunities as they relate to new economic investments, expanded historical/cultural awareness and recreational uses.

The Chena River presents numerous opportunities to the Fairbanks community. The Main Street Fairbanks (now called the Downtown Association) Chena Riverfront Design Workshop of 1990 representing a broad cross section of the community, identified the following three:

- 1) Economic linkages between existing developments can be strengthened. Tourism expansion can be enhanced by how we treat the river.
- 2) Historical and cultural ties to the river have been lost over the years. A sense of place developed through the river will promote Fairbanks' identity and image as a desirable place to live, visit and do business.
- 3) Opportunities to improve recreational uses exist up and down the river in both the urban and rural contexts.

## **GOAL II: DEVELOP AND INTEGRATE THE RIVER'S MULTIPLE ORIENTATIONS TO CREATE AN INTEGRATED WHOLE.**

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

1. **POLICY:** Encourage strategies to stimulate new private sector riverfront development.
  - A. **OBJECTIVE:** Develop methods by which use of property tax codes can provide incentives and encouragement for riverfront property enhancements.
  - B. **OBJECTIVE:** Use public land resources and facilities to enhance river-oriented business opportunities.
  - C. **OBJECTIVE:** Develop a marketing plan that centers on the river to be used in attracting new private sector investment.
  - D. **OBJECTIVE:** Expand river-related winter tourism.

- 2. **POLICY:** Establish the Chena Riverfront as a major focus of downtown core area revitalization.
- 3. **POLICY:** Give strong consideration for Borough funding to those who further the economic development elements of the Chena Riverfront Plan.

## HISTORICAL / CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 4. **POLICY:** Celebrate the river’s contribution to Fairbanks history.
  - A. **OBJECTIVE:** Develop appropriate signage for historic buildings and districts, natural features and associated points of interest within the riverfront corridor.
  - B. **OBJECTIVE:** Support and promote the designation and restoration of historic districts, historic sites, and historic buildings within the riverfront corridor.
- 5. **POLICY:** Support the creation and development of a native cultural center at an appropriate location.

## RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6. **POLICY:** Build upon and increase the recreational opportunities of the river for individual, public, and commercial purposes.
  - A. **OBJECTIVE:** Expand winter tourism through use of a variety of creative concepts.
  - B. **OBJECTIVE:** Provide linkages between parks through use of greenbelts, designated pathways, conservation easements or consistent landscaping.
- 7. **POLICY:** Focus existing riverfront properties such as Pioneer Park and Griffin Park toward the river.
  - A. **OBJECTIVE:** Maintain and enhance year-round public access to the river at Griffin Park, the greenspace at the FNSB administrative center, Golden Heart Plaza and additional access points in order to enhance their contributions to the Yukon Quest, the Open North American, cross country ski races, Golden Days and other river-related activities.
- 8. **POLICY:** Plan for both passive and active year-round recreation on the riverfront and the river.

# PARTICIPATION

## Intent

The success of any plan is measured by the degree to which the plan is implemented. All aspects of the Chena Riverfront Plan must, therefore, involve people from the community. This goal promotes and encourages formal participation by community groups and individuals in the riverfront planning process now and in the future.

### **GOAL III: ENCOURAGE FULL PARTICIPATION BY THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY IN IMPLEMENTING THE CHENA RIVERFRONT PLAN.**

1. **POLICY:** Provide for community-wide involvement of volunteers and civic organizations in the development, improvement and implementation of existing and future riverfront projects.
  - A. **OBJECTIVE:** Establish a volunteer database.
  - B. **OBJECTIVE:** Develop educational programs about the river's cultural and natural history.
  - C. **OBJECTIVE:** Develop a task list to implement the Plan's goals, policies and objectives.
2. **POLICY:** Encourage marketing assistance for businesses that cooperate with design and riverbank management.
3. **POLICY:** Inspire a riverfront-promotions campaign that involves some aspects of the river into various celebrations or events of all seasons.
  - A. **OBJECTIVE:** Support ongoing growth and development of riverfront events such as ice/snow sculpting, dog mushing, canoe races, ski races and other races.
4. **POLICY:** Develop a review procedure for the Chena Riverfront Commission to review development in the river corridor in order to determine consistency with this Plan.
5. **POLICY:** Provide the FNSB Planning Commission and the Fairbanks City Council with annual updates on progress and challenges in implementing the Chena Riverfront Plan.

# ACCESS

## Intent

Making physical connections between town and river is fundamental to any riverfront planning effort. Parks, greenways, trails, boating access points and other public lands can guarantee that people can reach the water. Landowners also can make useful connections by 1) orienting uses to the water in ways that result in a heightened awareness of river qualities, and 2) encouraging public access to and along the river to establish continuous connections for public trail systems. The Riverfront Plan does not advocate the use of eminent domain or inverse condemnation on property to achieve its goals, policies or projects and, instead, the Plan advocates the use of incentives, negotiated agreements and other positive inducements to implement the Plan.

## **GOAL IV: CREATE AND ENHANCE PHYSICAL AND VISUAL ACCESS TO THE RIVER FOR ALL PEOPLE.**

1. **POLICY:** Incorporate the river into the community's daily life by increasing visual and physical access to and along the river when it is compatible with riverfront habitat sustainability.
  - A. **OBJECTIVE:** Improve existing access points with landscaping, parking, signage, maps and seating where practical.
  - B. **OBJECTIVE:** Create a safe environment for public riverfront use through additional lighting, appropriate landscaping and maintenance.
  - C. **OBJECTIVE:** Add new public access points to the river designed to accommodate public use for year-round activities.
  - D. **OBJECTIVE:** Construct new paths along, above, and as close as possible to the riverbank in order to take full advantage of river views.
  - E. **OBJECTIVE:** Enhance boat accessibility to and along the Chena River downtown and elsewhere.
  - F. **OBJECTIVE:** Enhance trails along the riverfront.



- 2. POLICY:** Encourage public and private partnerships that facilitate appropriate access to, on and along the river.
- A. OBJECTIVE:** Provide for and encourage multi-modal transportation options, such as boat launches, canoe/kayak launch sites and river marina.
  - B. OBJECTIVE:** Develop year-round transportation and design linkages that will serve and connect riverfront attractions to other nearby attractions with emphasis on the downtown core area.
  - C. OBJECTIVE:** Develop appropriate incentives for landowners who provide public access along the river.
  - D. OBJECTIVE:** Develop new bike path routes that are compatible with adjacent land use and are safe and relaxing to use.
  - E. OBJECTIVE:** Support beneficial projects that utilize waste heat from the Aurora power plant.
  - F. OBJECTIVE:** Encourage and assist commercial property owners to seek public funding to develop boat launches.
  - G. OBJECTIVE:** Work to enhance the connection between Pioneer Park and downtown along the river corridor.
- 3. POLICY:** Ensure that the urban riverfront corridor is pedestrian friendly.
- A. OBJECTIVE:** Encourage riverfront development that gives aesthetic consideration to all new and existing facilities within the riverfront corridor, including transportation projects.
  - B. OBJECTIVE:** Encourage proposed riverfront development be consistent with the adopted Chena Riverfront Plan.
  - C. OBJECTIVE:** Support public events scheduled along roadways adjacent to the river, including events that involve pedestrian-only roadway use.
- 4. POLICY:** Consider the aesthetic effect of all new bridge construction and evaluate new bridge projects from the perspective to the river as well as from the river.
- 5. POLICY:** Refer to comprehensive road plan policies for all new transportation projects planned within the river corridor.

# STEWARDSHIP

## Intent

Coordinating with agencies, groups and organizations that have interest in the river is a fundamental responsibility of the Commission. Many functions are well-established and others are continually evolving. This Plan advocates for actions that will improve and sustain the riverine health of the river, without adding additional regulatory oversight. Working within existing legal and policy structures, the Plan will continue to promote the well-being of the river and its riverfront for all Borough residents.

## **GOAL V: ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC SAFETY, PROTECTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY VALUES AND RIVER PLANNING EFFORTS ARE MAINTAINED.**

### **FLOOD-PLAIN MANAGEMENT**

1. **POLICY:** Support and encourage local flood-plain management efforts related to land use planning for the areas affected by the flood control project, including riparian zone management, channel capacity, impacts to fisheries, and public awareness programs related to flood hazards.
  - A. **OBJECTIVE:** Work proactively to pursue a plan to educate the public on river sedimentation dynamics.
  - B. **OBJECTIVE:** Work proactively to pursue a plan to avoid sedimentation buildup within the Chena River.
  - C. **OBJECTIVE:** Support pertinent local, state and federal agencies in gathering new information on the basic physical and habitat characteristics of the Chena River through cost-shared studies, such as the 1997 USGS Chena River Watershed Study for future planning purposes.

### **REGULATORY**

2. **POLICY:** Support appropriate comprehensive planning and zoning to achieve development that is consistent with this plan.

- A. **OBJECTIVE:** Modify the FNSB zoning code to include an optional “Riverfront Influence Area” that offers greater flexibility to riverfront property owners in exchange for certain public amenities.
- B. **OBJECTIVE:** Create a rational and variable river setback distance based on consideration of river erosion rates, bank stability, aesthetics and habitat.
- C. **OBJECTIVE:** Promote provision of a comprehensive, public source of all waterway regulations by all agencies affecting development and use within the riverfront corridor.

**COORDINATE PROACTIVELY WITH OTHER AGENCIES ON EDUCATION**

- 3. **POLICY:** Coordinate with other river-interested parties to minimize duplication of regulatory and educational effort.
  - A. **OBJECTIVE:** Support further development of collaborative programs to assist property owners with bank erosion control guidelines.
  - B. **OBJECTIVE:** In cooperation with the US Coast Guard and other enforcement agencies (including ADF&G and USFWS), create and implement a series of short courses and a signage program that address boat safety, multi-use courtesy and navigational hazards of the river.
  - C. **OBJECTIVE:** Work with appropriate local, state and federal agencies, and the private sector to plan for the implementation of NPDES Storm Water regulations in both urban and rural areas along the Chena River corridor.
  - D. **OBJECTIVE:** Support the continuation of studies on the basic physical and biological habitat of the Chena River Watershed.
  - E. **OBJECTIVE:** Support corrective action to increase the water flow through the Chena River Watershed, including Badger (Chena) Slough and Noyes Slough.
  - F. **OBJECTIVE:** Coordinate closely with the Tanana Valley Watershed Association (TVWA) to enhance the progress of both the Chena Riverfront Commission and the TVWA.

**END**